



Land at Church Street, Irthlingborough, Northamptonshire Archaeological Excavation Report

December 2017

Client: CgMs Consulting

Issue No: 1

OA Reference No: 6856

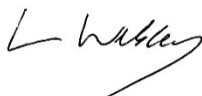
NGR: SP 9485 7075



Client Name: CgMs Consulting
Document Title: Land at Church Street, Irthlingborough, Northamptonshire
Document Type: Excavation and watching brief report
Grid Reference: SP 9485 7075
Planning Reference: 16/02336/FUL
Site Code: IRCS17
Invoice Code: IRLSPX
Receiving Body: Under review, archive currently held at Oxford Archaeology
HER No.: Northamptonshire HER Event No. ENN108725

OA Document File Location: X:\i\Irthlingborough church street\Post_ex\Report\IRCS17_Report.docx
OA Graphics File Location: \\SAMBA\invoice codes i thru q\i_codes\IRLSPX

Issue No: 1
Date: December 2017
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Land at Church Street, Irthlingborough, Northamptonshire

Archaeological Excavation and Watching Brief Report

Written by Steven Teague

With contributions from Edward Biddulph, Paul Blinkhorn, Lee Broderick, Sharon Cook, Rebecca Nicholson, Cynthia Poole, Ian Scott and Ruth Shaffrey, and illustrations by Sophie Lamb and Steven Teague

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Summary

Oxford Archaeology were commissioned by CgMs Consulting to undertake an archaeological excavation and watching brief in advance of a new retail development at Church Street, Irthlingborough. An enclosure ditch was revealed that contained late Roman and early to middle Saxon pottery together with Roman ceramic building material. There was slight evidence for late Saxon activity, but otherwise the main occupation of the site dates to the 12th century. This included a number of rubbish pits, one of which contained evidence for iron smithing, together with postholes possibly associated with contemporary structures. A shallow enclosure ditch probably formed part of the later use of the site as farmland, possibly associated with a nearby manor estate of 13th or 14th century date.

Acknowledgements

Oxford Archaeology would like to thank Simon Mortimer, CgMs Consulting, for his advice and guidance during the project. The project was commissioned by Geda Construction. Thanks are also extended to Lesley-Ann Mather (Northamptonshire County Council) who monitored the work on behalf of the local borough council.

The project was managed for Oxford Archaeology by Carl Champness. The fieldwork was directed by Dana Chard, who was supported by Peter Vellet and Mark Gibson. Survey and digitizing was carried out by Anne Kilgour. Thanks is also extended to the teams of OA staff that cleaned and packaged the finds under the management of Leigh Allen, processed the environmental remains under the management of Rebecca Nicholson, and prepared the archive under the management of Nicky Scott.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA) has been commissioned by CgMs Consulting on Behalf of Geda Construction to undertake an archaeological excavation and watching brief on the site of a proposed new retail development at the former Express Shoeworks, Church Street, Irthlingborough, Northamptonshire.
- 1.1.2 The work was undertaken as a condition of Planning Permission (planning ref: 16/02336/FUL). A brief had been set by Lesley-Ann Mather (Archaeological Advisor to Northamptonshire County Council) detailing the work necessary to discharge the planning condition. A written scheme of investigation was produced by OA detailing how the Local Authority's requirements would be met (OA 2017a). This document outlines how OA implemented the specified requirements.
- 1.1.3 The archaeological work was undertaken between 3rd-22nd August and 9th-10th November 2017. This followed an earlier watching brief on the site undertaken on 18th May 2017 that monitored ten geotechnical pits (OA 2017b).

1.2 Location, topography and geology

- 1.2.1 The site is located within the north-east of the core of Irthlingborough (Fig. 1) and lies at a height of 53-57m aOD. It lies on the edge of the River Nene floodplain with the ground level dropping to the south towards the river. The proposed development area is bounded to the west by Church Street, to the north by properties fronting Station Road, to the east by Meeting Lane and to the south by properties fronting Nene View. The site is currently an area of waste ground.
- 1.2.2 Irthlingborough is located across a mixed geology consisting of the Blisworth Limestone formation, Rutland Formation of mudstone, Wellingborough Limestone Member and the Northampton Sand Formation (BGS). Previous ground investigations on the proposed development have identified the underlying geology of the site as Wellingborough Limestone, comprising interbedded Limestone and Mudstone.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological and historical background of the site has been described in detail in a report produced by AOC Archaeology following their archaeological evaluation of the site in 2010 (AOC 2011). This summary information is included below and was derived from a variety of sources including a desk-based assessment of the site (CgMs 2010), information available through the Archaeological Data Service's online resource, the Nene Valley Archaeological and Environmental Synthesis (Northamptonshire Archaeology and Exeter University 2009), the Northamptonshire Extensive Urban Survey (Ballinger 2000) and the Victoria County History of Northamptonshire Vol. III (VCH 1930).
- 1.3.2 The Nene Valley is one of the longest river systems in England and has been the location of a number of very extensive archaeological investigations; these have

identified the Nene as a focus for human activity from the Palaeolithic period onwards. Very significant settlement and ritual sites of prehistoric, Roman and Saxon date have been recognised beside the Nene at Irchester, Ditchford, Wollaston, Stanwick, Raunds and Higham Ferrers.

- 1.3.3 Within this context it is important to note that Irthlingborough is a recorded fording point across the Nene with the peculiar lantern of St Peter's Church tower possibly acting as a beacon to mark the crossing. This ford may have been established during the prehistoric period and it is possible that Church Lane follows a line which extends to a historic ford over the Nene linking Irthlingborough to Higham Ferrers.

Prehistoric period (c 450,000BC-AD43)

- 1.3.4 Extensive prehistoric evidence has been identified on the valley sides of the River Nene. This includes evidence for Neolithic and Early Bronze Age ritual and funerary activity such as causeway enclosures, round barrows and ring ditches; these include a number of ring ditches identified on the higher ground around Irthlingborough. No archaeological evidence for these periods has, however been recorded from within 250m of the site.
- 1.3.5 Numerous and often extensive settlement sites of later Bronze Age and Iron Age date have been identified along the Nene Valley, either through excavation or surmised from the evidence of aerial photography. Cropmarks suggestive of later prehistoric settlement and land use have been identified on the higher ground on which Irthlingborough lies. In addition, there is excavated evidence from Irthlingborough itself with Iron Age activity, possibly indicative of settlement, in the form of pits and ditches being identified during excavations on Lime Street, c 150 m to the east of the site (Chapman *et al.* 2003).

Romano-British period (AD43-410)

- 1.3.6 The Nene Valley is the location of an extensive Roman pottery industry and a number of settlement sites have been identified from excavation and aerial photographs. These include villas at Stanwick, Wollaston and just across the Nene at Higham Ferrers and the Roman small town at Irchester, as well as numerous smaller farmsteads with associated field systems. The Nene Valley has also been identified as an area at least partly cultivated for vines, with a vineyard being identified at Wollaston. In this context it is worthy of note that the site lies on a well-drained south-facing slope.
- 1.3.7 Cropmarks of potential settlement features and field systems have been identified on the higher ground around Irthlingborough; these could represent settlement and agricultural evidence of later Prehistoric and Romano-British date.
- 1.3.8 Within Irthlingborough, it is believed that the line of High Street and Station Road immediately to the north of the site follows the line of a Roman routeway linking Lowick with the small Roman town at Irchester. It is also possible that the fording point across the Nene at Irthlingborough had already become established by the Romano-British period.

1.3.9 Roman features including an enclosure were also recorded during the excavations on Lime Street, c 150m to the east of the site (Chapman *et al.* 2003). In addition, a small quantity of Roman pottery is recorded as having been found on St Peter's Lane. Finds of Roman pottery along with roof tile and tesserae have also been recorded from excavations on the site of the former All Saints Church to the east of the site; this is highly suggestive of a substantial and high-status building.

Early medieval period (AD410-1066)

1.3.10 The first historical record of a settlement at Irthlingborough comes from a charter of 780 which refers to *Yrtlingaburg*. This Old English place name links *l* (ploughman) with *burg* (fort) which may suggest the presence of a defended enclosure for cattle of early Saxon date (Eckwall 1980).

1.3.11 Extensive Saxon evidence has been recorded during excavations at Kings Meadow, Higham Ferrers on the opposite bank of the Nene and within 1.5 km of the site. Higham Ferrers has been identified as an important middle to late Saxon estate centre, which may have its origins in the early Saxon period as an estate centre focused at Irthlingborough (Foard and Ballinger 2004). It is interesting to note that Kings Meadow Lane at Higham Ferrers and Church Lane immediately to the west of the site lie opposite each other either side of the Nene, suggesting they may be the original fording route across the river. Recent excavations at Higham Ferrers have however also identified early Saxon settlement evidence on this site (Hardy *et al.* 2007).

1.3.12 Within Irthlingborough, later Saxon activity in the form of ditches and gullies has been identified during the excavations on Lime Street, c 150m to the east of the site. In addition, late Saxon pottery was also identified during demolition work undertaken on St Peter's Lane, immediately to the west of the site.

Medieval period (AD1066-1536)

1.3.13 Irthlingborough is recorded as Edinburne in the Domesday survey of 1086 and as Hyrtlingberi in a charter of 1137. Throughout the medieval period the manor at Irthlingborough was held by Peterborough Abbey. A market had also been established at Irthlingborough by the mid 12th century, the market cross once lying at the crossroads of High Street/Station Road with Church Street, immediately to the north of the site.

1.3.14 Until the 16th century, Irthlingborough was also divided into two parishes; one based on St Peter's Church, immediately to the south-west of the site, and the other on the Church of All Saints, which once stood c 300m to the east of the site. By 1428, All Saints was already in significant disrepair and had been pulled down sometime before 1724. St Peter's Church was made collegiate in the late 14th century (VCH 1930).

1.3.15 The medieval settlement at Irthlingborough is clustered around the road leading from the late Saxon estate at Higham Ferrers to Kettering and it is believed that the existing stone bridge, c 400m to the south-east of the site, was first constructed during the 13th century (VCH 1930). Earthworks, including possible fishponds associated with the

Manor at Irthlingborough, lie in the fields to the east of the village, c 250m from the site.

- 1.3.16 Medieval settlement activity has been identified during the excavations on Lime Street, c 150m to the east of the site. The remains were interpreted as being part of a manorial farm dating to the 14th century with evidence for a malthouse, dovecote, large barn and boundary walls; there was also some evidence for possible 13th century industrial activity (Chapman *et al.* 2003).

Post-medieval period (AD1536 to present)

- 1.3.17 During the post-medieval period, Irthlingborough developed from an agricultural settlement into a small industrial town. The focus of the town remained on the line of High Street and Station Road immediately to the north of the site. The main phase of development was in the late 18th and 19th century when a significant shoe manufactory became established in the town. In 1777, 16 shoemakers are recorded in the town; this had increased to 127 in 1841 and 268 by 1851 (Ballinger 2001). This tradition continued almost up to the present day with the Express Shoeworks, which stood on the site, closing in the 1990s and Doc Marten's principal UK manufactory only being moved to China in 2003.
- 1.3.18 Buildings are first shown on the site on the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1886 with what appears to be an industrial building occupying the eastern section of the site with a cluster of smaller buildings around a courtyard to the west. The site appears to have been mainly cleared to make way for the expansion of the Express Shoeworks factory by 1965. The factory became disused in the 1990s and was demolished in 2008.

Previous archaeological work on the site

- 1.3.19 An archaeological evaluation carried out on the development site by AOC in 2010 revealed a number of 12th-13th century features, including pits and boundary ditches (AOC 2011).
- 1.3.20 In May 2017, OA carried out a watching brief on geotechnical test pits. 20th-century made ground was recorded across the area, and no archaeological features were observed (OA 2017b).

2 EXCAVATION AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 The general aims of the project were to determine and understand the nature, function and character of any archaeological remains within their cultural and environmental setting.
- 2.1.2 The specific project aims and objectives were as follows:
- i. To determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any archaeological remains within the excavation area, in particular the 12th-13th century features identified in the previous phase of work;
 - ii. To consider the site within its local, regional, and national context as appropriate;
 - iii. To consider the remains and their relationship to the medieval manorial farm at Lime Street and the medieval development of Irthlingborough (including trade and industry);
 - iv. To determine the effectiveness of the field evaluation in the light of results of the extensive archaeological investigation that comprises this project;
 - v. To produce an archive (finds and records) that will be organised and deposited in a registered museum, to facilitate access for future research and interpretation for public benefit.

2.2 Research Framework

- 2.2.1 The programme of fieldwork was undertaken within the research parameters and objectives defined by *The Archaeology of the East Midlands: An Archaeological Resource Assessment and Research Agenda for the East Midlands* (Cooper 2006) and the subsequent *East Midlands Heritage: An Updated Research Agenda and Strategy for the Historic Environment* (Knight *et al.* 2012). The results of previous fieldwork indicated that the excavation may contribute towards the High Medieval (1066-1485) research agenda, including 6.7.2 'Rural Settlement' and 6.7.3 'Manors and manorial estates'.

2.3 Methodology

- 2.3.1 Two areas of the development site were stripped of modern overburden with a machine using a toothless bucket operating under archaeological supervision. Over much of the site modern footings, basements and other features had removed all archaeological deposits (Fig. 2).
- 2.3.2 Those areas that contained archaeological features were sufficiently hand-cleaned to produce a base plan, recorded digitally using a total station theodolite/GPS. After monitoring by the client all archaeological features were targeted for excavation by hand. They were excavated and recorded stratigraphically in accordance with the WSI and OA's recording system.

- 2.3.3 The area between the two stripped areas, unavailable for during the initial strip due to access considerations, was subsequently monitored under watching brief conditions on 9th-10th November 2017. No archaeological deposits or features were observed within this area.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 The results of the excavation are presented below, and include a stratigraphic description of the archaeological remains by chronological phase. Finds reports are presented in Appendix A and the environmental reports are presented in Appendix B.
- 3.1.2 A residual sherd of Beaker pottery indicates some activity at the site in the late Neolithic/early Bronze Age, but the earliest features date to the 1st millennium AD.

3.2 Phase 1 (late Romano-British/early to middle Saxon) (Figs 2-3; Plate 1)

- 3.2.1 Part of a rectangular enclosure was exposed in the north-eastern corner of the site. Its western side was defined by ditch group 40 and its northern side by contemporary ditch group 39, suggesting that the enclosure measured at least 14.0m (NE-SW) by 9.1m (NW-SE). The ditches both had steep sides and a flattish base, measuring between 0.90-1.02m in width. The ditches survived to depths of between 0.07-0.25m and contained a single fill of compact light grey fine clay silt, possibly deliberate infill. The ditch had been significantly truncated by modern disturbance and its surface contained intrusive modern material. Two sherds of Romano-British pottery were recovered from ditch 40, whilst a piece of probable Romano-British tile and a single sherd of early/middle Anglo-Saxon granitic ware pottery was recovered from ditch 39. The latter sherd, if not intrusive, would imply that the enclosure dates to between the 5th-9th centuries. A small amount of animal bone and fired clay was also recovered from the ditches.

3.3 Phase 2 (late Saxon) (Figs 2-3)

- 3.3.1 Located towards the south-western corner of the site, a shallow gully (group 42) was aligned approximately NE-SW. It had a concave profile, measured 0.29m in width and 0.07m in depth, and was filled with mid greyish-brown silt clay. It survived for a length of 3.6m and contained single sherd of St Neots ware pottery dating to the mid 9th-11th centuries.

3.4 Phase 3 (12th Century) (Figs 2-3; Plates 2-5)

- 3.4.1 Features datable to this phase were confined to the western part of the site. They comprised an apparent ditch (group 82) that partially overlay a line of pits.

Pits

- 3.4.2 Intercutting oval pits 9, 11/13, 15 and 37 all predated ditch 82 (Sections 2 and 6, contexts 7 and 37). All were apparently oval, measured 0.43-0.80m across, and varied in depth from 0.20-0.64m. All contained appreciable quantities of 12th century pottery and animal bone suggesting that they were used for the disposal of rubbish. Pit 9 was also notable for containing a limestone hone used to sharpen metal implements. Three further pits lay immediately to the north-east though only elongated pit 18 contained significant quantities of pottery and animal bone.

Ditches 74 and 82

- 3.4.3 The feature was somewhat poorly defined though it appeared to represent a shallow ditch on an NW-SE alignment that cut into the tops of pits 9, 11, 15 and 34 (sections 2 and 6). It had concave sides and base and varied from 0.67-1.16m in width and 0.20-0.45m in depth. An apparent terminus at its north-western extent may have been a result of truncation given its shallow depth at this point. It was filled with dark grey silt and contained 12th century pottery. It is possible that shallow ditch 74, located 28m further to the north-west, may have represented the right-angled return towards the north-east of ditch 82. It was of a similar size, measuring 0.78m in width and 0.12m deep, and also contained 12th century pottery.
- 3.4.4 Two oval pits (69 and 72) were located towards the north-west of the site. Both measured 2.0m across, were 0.37-0.50 in depth, and contained moderate amounts of 12th century pottery and animal bone.

3.5 Undated

Undated features comprised postholes 52, 56, 65, 67, 72, 78 and 80 and pit 43.

4 DISCUSSION

- 4.1.1 Much of the site has been subject to considerable modern truncation, and consequently survival of archaeological features was mainly along the south-east edge of the site.
- 4.1.2 The sherd of Beaker pottery of late Neolithic/early Bronze Age date that was found residually within a ditch of Roman or later date is of some significance. It is unlikely to have been deposited any significant distance from its original location, given the rather fragile nature of such early pottery. The sherd was from a vessel with corded decoration, typically associated with inhumation burials contained within barrows. Two bell barrows are known 1.4 and 1.9km north-west of the site, occupying islands within the floor of the Nene Valley (Scheduled Monument numbers 1012452 and 1020235 respectively). Therefore, it is possible that the pottery sherd derived from a disturbed funerary monument or settlement located nearby, adjacent to the valley floor of the Nene.
- 4.1.3 The presence of a small but significant assemblage of Roman pottery suggests that occupation during the period was located on or nearby the site. It is possible that the rectangular enclosure formed by ditches 39 and 40 dates to the later Roman period given the presence of a tegula fragment and two sherds of Roman pottery, one dating to the late 3rd or 4th century. However, the presence of a sherd of early or middle Anglo-Saxon granitic ware implies a later date unless the enclosure remained open until the fifth century or beyond. A similar enclosure was found during excavations at Lime Street and was associated with activity dating from the 2nd to 4th centuries (Chapman *et al.* 2003). Roman activity including evidence for a substantial Roman building has also been found during excavations in 1965 at the site of the former of All Saints' Church, c 200m east of the site (Brown 1966). The tegula fragment from ditch 39 suggests that there may have been other substantial buildings within the vicinity of the site.
- 4.1.4 There is some slight evidence for late Saxon activity, but otherwise the main focus of occupation on the site is during the 12th century. Part of a possible rectangular enclosure was revealed, together with a number of pits and undated postholes. They were all located towards the west of the site, adjacent to Church Street and immediately opposite St Peter's Church, which is of 12th century origin. Assuming the street is of medieval origin, these features presumably pertain to contemporary occupation comprising possible timber structures on the frontage with rubbish pits located immediately to their rear. At some subsequent point, possibly during the later 12th century, a possible enclosure (ditches 82 and 74) was laid across the site, suggesting a change of use of the area, possibly to a more agricultural landscape. No further evidence for later medieval activity was found.
- 4.1.5 Evidence from the pits suggests that occupation was predominately domestic with a relatively large amount of pottery and animal bone deposited in them. There is also some evidence of metalworking since part of a smithing hearth and large lumps of slag were deposited into one of the pits. This could suggest that a smithing workshop was

situated on or close to the site, feasibly associated with the undated postholes. It is possible that the stone hone recovered from pit 9 may have been used by this postulated workshop.

- 4.1.6 The nearest evidence for contemporary settlement has been found at Lime Street, c 150m to the east, where pits and deep quarries dating from the 12th to early 13th century were excavated (Chapman *et al.* 2003). By the early 14th century a manorial farm was established on the Lime Street site (*ibid.*), and enclosure ditches 82 and 74 may have belonged to this landscape. The dominant cereal obtained from two samples from ditch 82 was barley, which was also the main crop at Lime Street.

APPENDIX A FINDS REPORTS

A.1 Prehistoric and Roman Pottery

By Edward Biddulph

A.1.1 Twelve sherds of prehistoric or Roman pottery were recovered (Table 1). A small fragment from a Beaker with corded decoration was collected from context 23. This dates to the late Neolithic/early Bronze Age. A base sherd in a shelly fabric (E40) of probable later Iron Age/early Roman date was found in context 75, along with a body sherd in a Roman-period medium sandy reduced ware (R30). More sherds in fabric R30 were recovered from context 77. The context also contained a sherd of fine reduced ware (R10), possibly with London ware-style decoration, typically of late 1st or early 2nd century date. Nene Valley colour-coated ware (F52) was recovered from contexts 8, 27, 41 and 77. This spans the later 2nd to late 4th century, but a more diagnostic piece, a rim sherd from a dropped-flange bowl from context 8, dates to the late 3rd or 4th century. This date is shared by the sherd of Oxfordshire red colour-coated ware (F51) from context 21.

A.1.2 All the pottery is likely to be residual, but likely to derive from nearby prehistoric and Roman activity.

Context	Count	Weight (g)	Description
8	1	20	F52 (dropped-flanged bowl - 0.03 EVE). Sample 2
21	1	1	F51 body sherd
23	1	1	Body sherd from Beaker. Grog-tempered with faint corded decoration
27	1	4	F52 base sherd from dish or bowl
41	1	4	F52 body sherd
75	2	27	R30 body sherd with burnished surfaces; E40 base sherd
77	6	28	R30 flange from bowl or dish (0.06 EVE), R30 body sherds, R10 body sherd with ?London ware-style compass-scribed decoration, F52 body sherd

Table 1: Summary of the prehistoric and Roman pottery

A.2 Post-Roman Pottery

By Paul Blinkhorn

A.2.1 The pottery assemblage comprised 300 sherds with a total weight of 3048g. The estimated vessel equivalent (EVE), by summation of surviving rim sherd circumference, was 2.62. It is mostly of early to mid 12th century date, although sherds of early/middle and late Anglo-Saxon pottery were also present.

A.2.2 The material was recorded using the conventions of the Northamptonshire County Ceramic Type-Series (CTS), as follows:

F100: T1(1) type St Neots Ware, AD 850-1100. 1 sherd, 3g, EVE = 0.

F200: T1(2) type St Neots Ware, AD 1000-1200. 60 sherds, 247g, EVE = 0.39.

F205: Stamford Ware, AD 850-1250. 10 sherds, 98g, EVE = 0.11.

F209: Oolitic Ware, AD 975-1350. 1 sherd, 5g, EVE = 0.

F330: Shelly Coarseware, AD 1100-1400. 220 sherds, 2660g, EVE = 2.06.

F360: Miscellaneous Sandy Coarsewares, AD 1100-1400. 6 sherds, 24g, EVE = 0.06.

F1000: Miscellaneous 19th and 20th Century Wares. 1 sherd, 9g.

A.2.3 The following was also noted:

E/MSAX: Early/middle Anglo-Saxon Granitic Ware, 5th-9th century. 1 sherd, 2g.

A.2.4 The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 2. The assemblage was generally in good condition, with a number of contexts producing refits, although no cross-fits were noted. The F330 assemblage included many large and fresh sherds, indicating that it was mostly the product of primary deposition, whereas the F200 assemblage consists of fairly small and slightly abraded fragments, suggesting that much of it is either residual or of a secondary nature. This suggests that the main period of activity at the site may have begun in the 11th century, although no features of such date were noted.

A.2.5 The vast majority of the context-specific assemblages date to the first half of the 12th century, and are typical of that period in the region, consisting mainly of large quantities of Shelly Coarseware (fabric F330), along with smaller quantities of late St Neots Ware (F200), Stamford Ware (F205) and a few sherds of Sandy Coarsewares (F360) and Oolitic Ware (F209). Medieval wares of the mid-12th century onwards, particularly Lyveden/Stanion 'A' Ware (CTS fabric F319) and 13th-14th century wares such as Lyveden/Stanion 'B' Ware (F320), Brill/Boarstall Ware (F324) and Potterspury Ware (F329), are entirely absent, as were late medieval wares such as Reduced Ware (F365) and Oxidized Ware (F401). All these wares are common at other sites in Irthlingborough (e.g. Blinkhorn 2003, 90), as are large quantities of late Saxon pottery (*ibid.*).

A.2.6 All the rim sherds were from jars (EVE = 1.66) and bowls (EVE = 0.85), apart from a single Stamford Ware pitcher (EVE = 0.11). The latter has a type 4 rim (Kilmurry 1980, fig. 50), a form which was common during the 12th and 13th centuries (*ibid.*, fig. 29).

All the body sherds are plain, other than a single fragment in fabric F330 with a thumbled applied strip from context 6. This is likely to be part of a large storage vessel.

Context	E/MSAX		F100		F200		F205		F209		F330		F360		F1000		Date
	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
6											1	24					12thC
8					3	5					8	67					12thC
10							3	59			40	832					12thC
12					11	51					19	289	1	9			12thC
14											1	6					12thC
16							2	5			17	313					12thC
19					14	84	1	2			1	43					12thC
25											1	41			1	9	MOD
27	1	2															E/MSAX
31			1	3													LSAX
35					11	37					13	139					12thC
38					8	26	1	8			63	510	1	4			12thC
41					3	10	2	12	1	5	41	326	2	7			12thC
45							1	12			4	14					12thC
47											1	1					12thC
51					2	10					3	23					12thC
71					1	3					1	2					12thC
75					1	3					1	11					12thC
77					6	18					5	19	2	4			12thC
Total	1	2	1	3	60	247	10	98	1	5	220	2660	6	24	1	9	

Table 2: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type

A.2.7 All the jar rims were in Shelly Coarseware (EVE = 1.29) or T1(2) St Neots Ware (EVE = 0.31), except for a single small fragment in Sandy Coarseware (EVE = 0.06). The latter has a thumbled “piecrust” rim, which is typical of the 12th century in the region. Many

of the body sherds were externally sooted. Nearly 40% (EVE = 0.63) of the F330 jar rims were the wide, lid-seated forms typical of cylindrical jars, specialist cooking vessels which, in this fabric, are largely of 12th to mid 13th century date (Blinkhorn 2010, 263). The bowls are all the wide, straight-sided and shallow type which are typical of the tradition. These occurred in large quantities at West Cotton in association with a bake-house, where it is thought that they were used primarily as flour-measures (ibid., 274), but it is likely that they also had numerous other uses in the medieval household.

- A.2.8 Overall, the pottery assemblage suggests that the medieval activity at the site was very short-lived, perhaps starting in the 11th century, but with most of the pottery assemblages dating to the first half of the 12th century. The range of vessel forms and the common occurrence of sooting on jars suggests that the settlement was of a domestic nature.

A.3 Ceramic Building Material and Fired Clay

By Cynthia Poole

- A.3.1 A few small scraps of ceramic building material (CBM) and fired clay amounting to 12 fragments weighing 39g were recovered from the excavation. The CBM derived from ditches in the eastern sector of the site. A fragment of flat tile 24mm thick from the fill (29) of Phase 1 ditch 39 is likely to derive from a Roman tegula. A group of nine amorphous and highly abraded fragments from context 27 are also likely to derive from CBM, though their form and date is indeterminable. In view of their occurrence in ditch 40, dated to the early-middle Saxon period, they are likely to be Roman unless intrusive. A small abraded amorphous lump of pink lightly baked clay was recovered from a 12th century ditch fill (12), but it too cannot be dated.

A.4 Stone

By Ruth Shaffrey

Introduction

- A.4.1 A single piece of worn flat stone of shelly fine-grained limestone was found in the fill of pit 9, dated to the 12th century. This is broken but has been used as a hone to sharpen metal implements. Whetstones and hones are common finds on medieval sites and could represent either domestic or industrial use, but the style of this hone suggests domestic exploitation of resources rather than industrial use of imported fully finished whetstones.

Catalogue of worked stone

- A.4.2 Hone. Fine-grained shelly limestone. Small flat fragment with worn face and edge to provide a slightly rounded arris. Now a triangular shape but one of these is a broken edge so presumably a larger hone originally. Measures 9mm thick. Weighs 27g. Context 10, fill of pit 9.

A.5 Slag

By Ian Scott

A.5.1 Five pieces of slag, probably all from iron working, and a small piece of probable ironstone were recovered.

Context 10, pit 11, Phase 3

- (1) Slag, vesicular slag, possibly a small smithing hearth bottom. Wt: 292g.
- (2) Slag, undiagnostic. Wt: 324g.
- (3) Slag, small vesicular fragment, undiagnostic. Wt: 10g

Context 27, ditch 26, Phase 1

- (4) Slag, small fragment with glassy top, undiagnostic Wt: 4g

Context 38, ditch 37, Phase 3

- (5) Slag, small fragment, with burnt clay, undiagnostic. Wt: 15g.

Context 45, pit 34, Phase 3

- (6) Ironstone, small fragment.

A.6 Metal

By Ian Scott

A.6.1 The only metal object is a fragment of a small T-headed nail with only a short length of its rectangular section stem surviving. The head is 16mm long. This was recovered from the fill of ditch 7 (group 82), dated to the 12th century.

APPENDIX B ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTS

B.1 Charred Plant Remains

By Sharon Cook and Rebecca Nicholson

Introduction

B.1.1 Two 40L bulk soil samples from 12th century deposits were processed by water flotation using a modified Siraf-tank with meshes of 250µm mesh (flot) and 500µm (residue). Sample <1> was from the single fill of pit 37 and sample <2> was taken from the single fill of ditch 7, part of enclosure ditch 82. The resulting flots were sorted using a low power (x10) binocular microscope to extract cereal grains and chaff, smaller seeds and other quantifiable remains. Identifications were carried out where possible using standard morphological criteria for the cereals (e.g. Jacomet 2006), and by comparison with modern reference material. Classification and nomenclature of plant material follows Stace (2010).

Results

B.1.2 Cereal grains are fairly abundant in both samples (Table 3), but unfortunately are mostly fragmented with diagnostic areas of the grain largely missing or obscured as a result of burning. The general morphology of those grains that are identifiable and the lack of any chaff indicates that these are most likely to be a free-threshing wheat such as bread wheat *Triticum aestivum*. Wild plant seeds are fairly common but again also largely in poor condition showing distortion and fragmentation. Only a single legume is complete, but here too a large amount of the exterior detail is missing allowing identification only to pea or bean (Fabaceae).

Discussion

B.1.3 The material extracted from the flots is fairly typical of charred assemblages recovered from the medieval period in Britain. Free-threshing wheat (*Triticum* sp.) becomes a dominant crop from the mid eleventh century (Rippon *et al.* 2014) with a corresponding drop in the presence of other crops such as barley (*Hordeum vulgare*), rye (*Secale cereal*) and oats (*Avena sativa*). It would seem likely that the oat/brome grains noted in these samples are crop contaminants rather than the result of oats being used as a crop; no floret bases were present to firmly identify domestic oats. The other seeds identified in the samples include common crop contaminants and plants which inhabit waste ground and field edges such as dock, vetch and field gromwell. It is likely that these plants were collected accidentally together with the crop. Small quantities of hazelnut shell may be related to utilisation of wild resources.

B.1.4 The presence of larger legumes indicates the possibility of a legume crop but the condition of these was so poor further identification was not possible. As many of the legumes are fragmented it is possible that some of those characterised as >2mm should actually be grouped with the larger category. Even if this were the case,

however, the number would still be small, but this is not unexpected since legumes are often poorly represented within charred assemblages (Rippon *et al.* 2014).

- B.1.5 The similarity of material within these two features would seem to indicate either contemporaneity between the infilling episodes or a continuity of practices over this period. The larger quantity of material observed within the pit fill is likely to be a result of preferential preservation since on the whole pit fills suffer less disturbance over time than ditches, which are frequently cleaned and/or otherwise disturbed.
- B.1.6 Samples taken from 12th-13th century deposits during excavations at Lime Street, Irthlingborough were similarly dominated by cereals with very little chaff and relatively few wild plant seeds. The most frequent cereal in this case was barley, although here too there were large numbers of indeterminate wheat/barley grains and some bread wheat. It was suggested that the remains relate to a late stage in crop processing, with the wild plant seeds accidentally included when harvesting the crop (Deighton 2003). The variation in cereal crops between the sites could be consistent with the traditional medieval two or three field arable system where different cereals or legumes were planted in the spring and autumn on rotation, with one field left fallow. At West Cotton, near Raunds in Northamptonshire, while barley was the main crop associated with 12th-14th century malhouses some oats, rye and free-threshing wheat as well as legumes were also identified and it was suggested in this case that fodder and legumes were dried for winter storage (Campbell 2010).

Sample no.		1	2
Context		38	8
Feature		37	7
Description		Ditch fill	Ditch fill
Dates		12th C	12th C
Phase		3	3
Volume (L)		40	40
Flot Volume (ml)		60	30
Cereal grain			
<i>Triticum</i> sp.	wheat	45	8
<i>cf. Triticum</i> sp.	cf. wheat	108*	57*
<i>Avena/Bromus</i>	oat/brome	37*	15*

Cerealia	indet. cereal	476*	259*
Legumes, fruits and nuts			
<i>Corylus avellana</i>	hazelnut shell	6*	2*
Fabaceae >4mm	pea/bean	2*	3*
Wild species			
<i>Vicia/Lathyrus</i> sp. >2 mm	vetch/vetchling/tare, etc	22*	8*
<i>Vicia/Lathyrus</i> sp. <2 mm	vetch/vetchling/tare, etc	1*	
<i>Medicago/Trifolium</i> sp.	medicks/clover	4*	
<i>Malva</i> sp.	mallow		1*
Polygonaceae (trigonous)	knotweed family	5*	1*
<i>Rumex</i> sp.	dock	1*	4*
Amaranthaceae	goosefoot family	3*	2*
<i>Galium aparine</i>	cleavers	1	
<i>Lithospermum arvense</i>	field gromwell	3	5
<i>Centaurea</i> sp.	knapweeds	1*	
<i>Anthemis cotula</i>	stinking chamomile	10	9
<i>Tripleurospermum</i> sp.	mayweeds (interiors only)	4*	4*
<i>cf. Juncus</i> sp.	rushes	9	7*
Cyperaceae	sedge family	5*	
<i>Carex</i> sp. (trigonous)	sedge, 3-faced		1*
Poaceae undiff.	grass, large		1
Poaceae undiff.	grass, small	19*	7*
Other			

Indet.	seed/fruit	15*	7*
*denotes number of fragments			

Table 3. Charred plant remains

B.2 Animal Bone

By Lee Broderick

Introduction

B.2.1 Text

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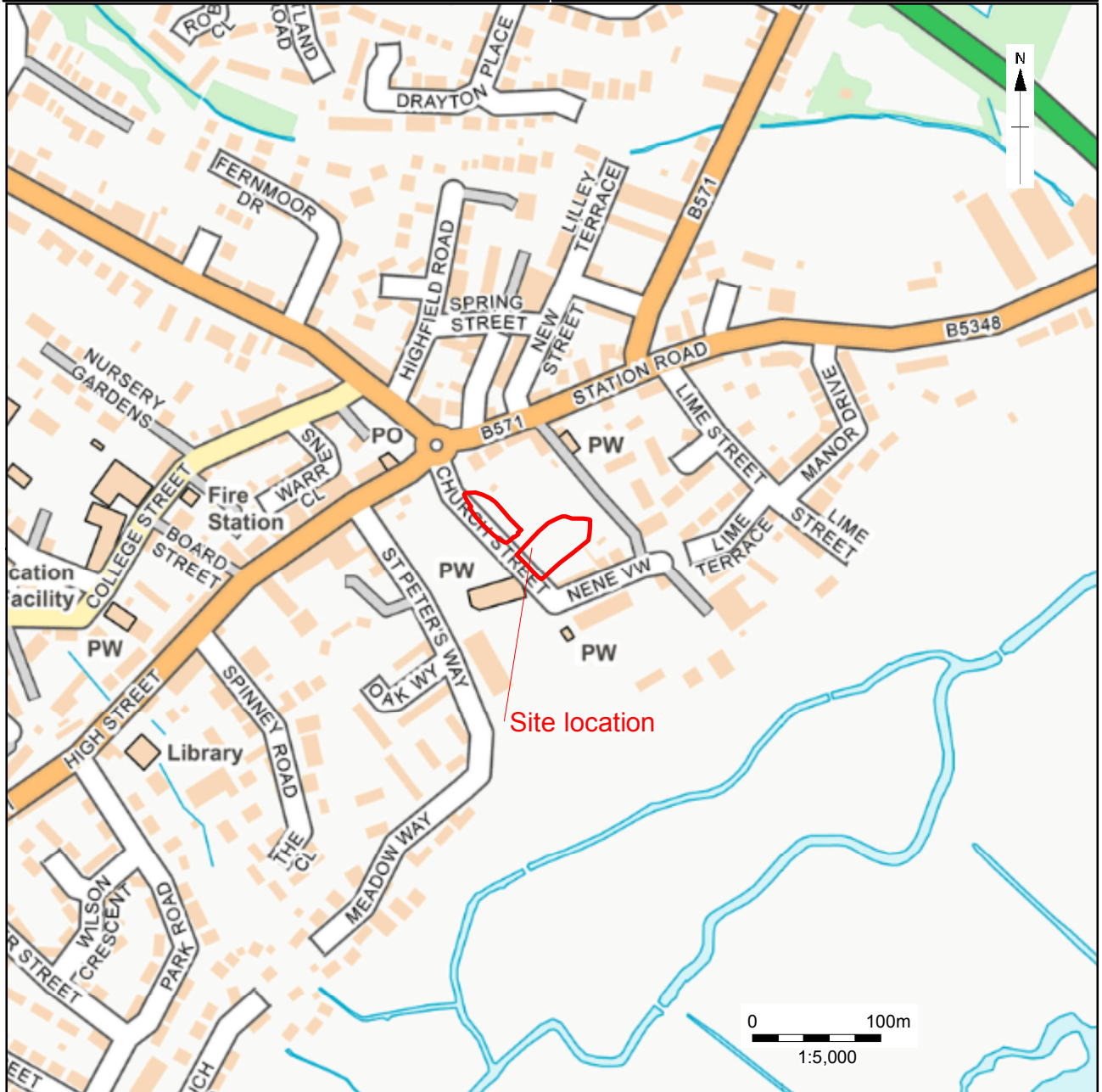
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APPENDIX D SITE SUMMARY DETAILS

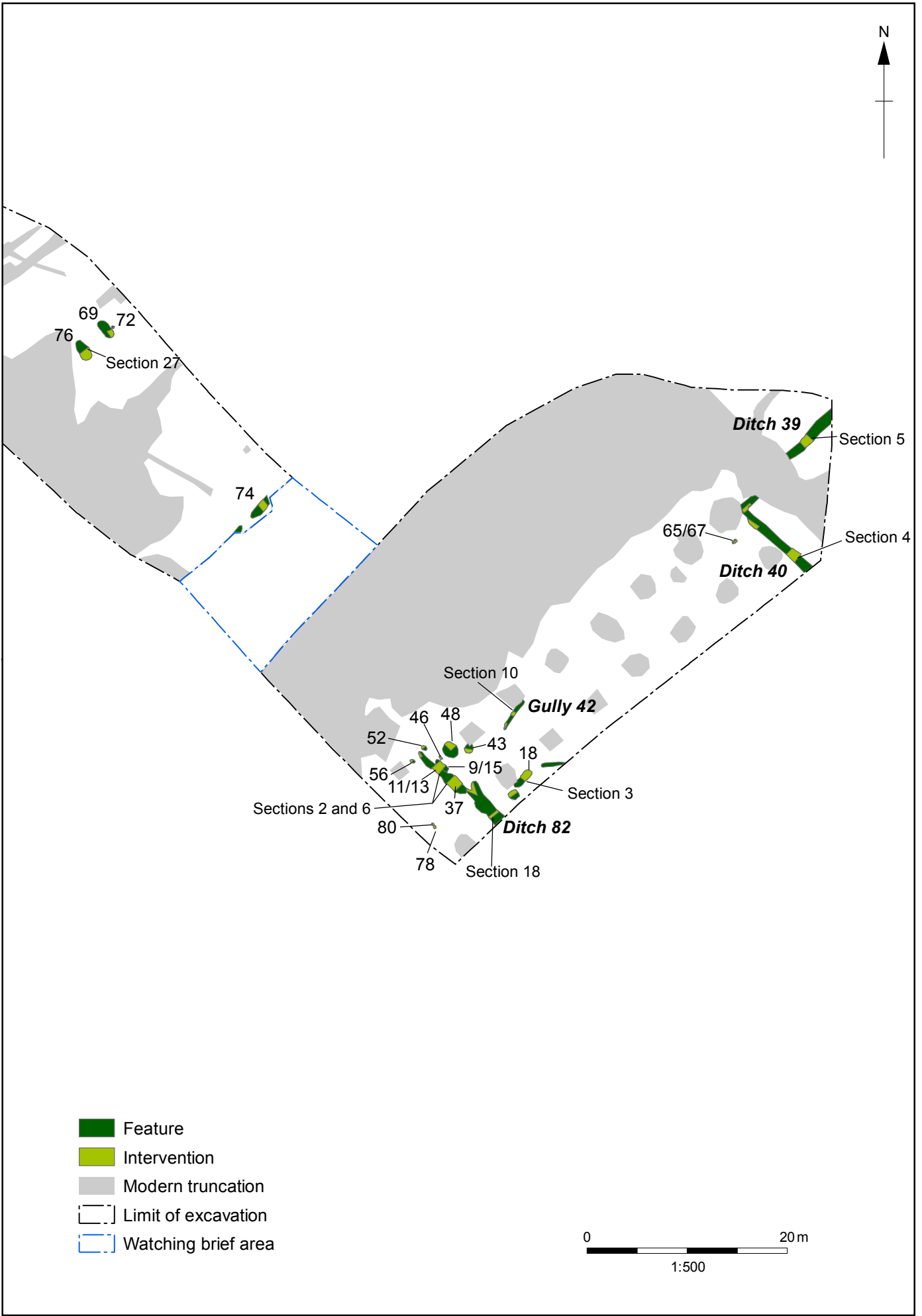
Site name:	Church Street, Irthlingborough, Northamptonshire
Site code:	IRCS17
Grid reference:	SP 9485 7075
Type:	Excavation and watching brief
Date and duration:	3rd-22nd August (excavation) and 9th-10th November (WB) 2017
Area of site:	2514m ²
Location of archive:	The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, pending deposition with an appropriate repository
Summary of results:	Oxford Archaeology were commissioned by CgMs Consulting to undertake an archaeological excavation in advance of a new retail development at Church Street, Irthlingborough. An enclosure ditch was revealed that contained late Roman and early to middle Saxon pottery together with Roman ceramic building material. There was slight evidence for late Saxon activity, but otherwise the main occupation of the site dates to the 12th century. This included a number of rubbish pits, one of which contained evidence for iron smithing, together with postholes possibly associated with contemporary structures. A shallow enclosure ditch probably formed part of the later use of the site as farmland, possibly associated with a nearby manor estate of 13th or 14th century date.



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Figure 1: Site location

X:\Wilmington\church_street\010\Geomatics\03 GIS Projects\IRLSPX_Figure 2_SCT.mxd\steveteague\07/12/2017



- Feature
- Intervention
- Modern truncation
- - - Limit of excavation
- - - Watching brief area

0 20m
1:500

Figure 2: Site plan

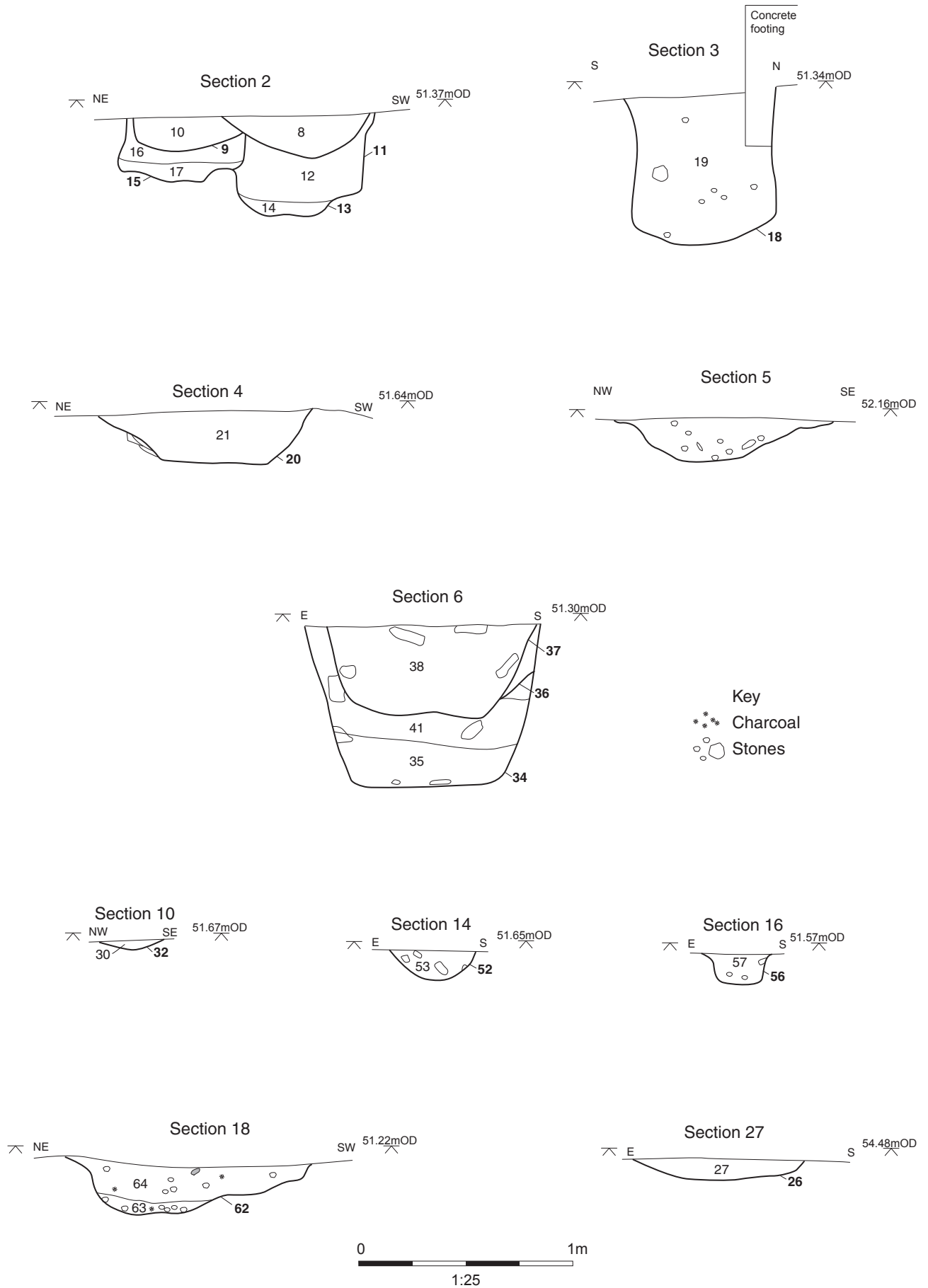


Figure 3: Selected sections



Plate 1: Ditch 40, view SSE



Plate 2: Pit 9 and later ditch 82, view NW

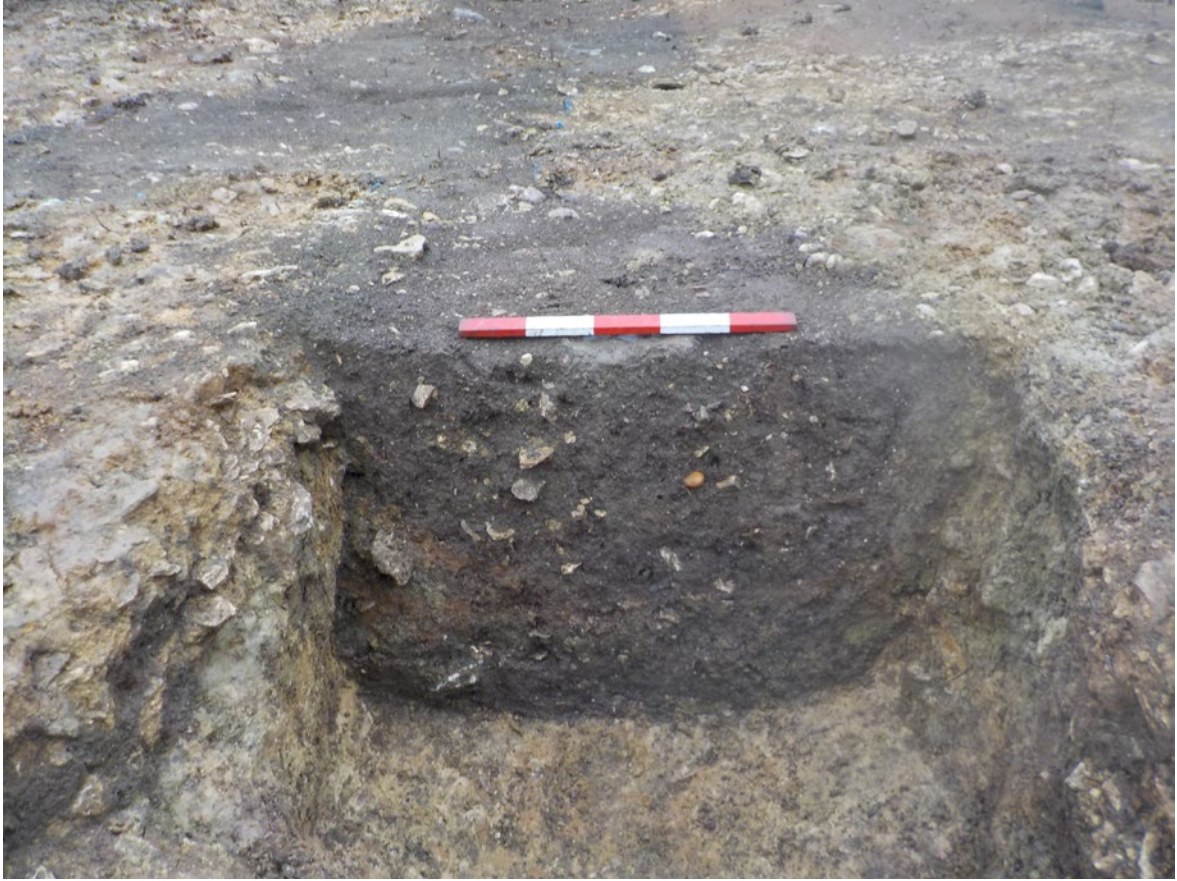


Plate 3: Pit 34 and later ditch 82, view SE



Plate 4: Pit 18, view SW



Plate 5: Pit 69, view NW



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