

Archaeological Evaluation at Land South of Napton Lane, Napton on the Hill, Warwickshire



© Worcestershire County Council

Worcestershire Archaeology
Archive and Archaeology Service
The Hive, Sawmill Walk,
The Butts, Worcester
WR1 3PD

Date: 1st June 2015
Status: Revision 1
Author: Tim Cornah tcornah@worcestershire.gov.uk
Contributors: Rob Hedge
Illustrator: Carolyn Hunt
Project reference: P4574
Report reference: 2226

**Contents
Summary**

1

Report

1 Background.....	2
1.1 Reasons for the project	2
2 Aims.....	2
3 Methods.....	2
3.1 Personnel.....	2
3.2 Documentary research	2
3.3 Fieldwork strategy	2
3.4 Structural analysis	3
3.5 Artefact methodology, by Rob Hedge	3
3.5.1 Recovery policy	3
3.5.2 Method of analysis.....	3
3.5.3 Discard policy	3
3.6 Statement of confidence in the methods and results	3
4 The application site	4
4.1 Topography, geology and archaeological context.....	4
4.2 Current land-use	4
5 Structural analysis.....	4
5.1.1 Phase 1: Natural deposits	4
5.1.2 Phase 2: Medieval to post medieval deposits.....	5
5.1.3 Phase 3: Modern deposits	5
5.2 Artefactual analysis, by Rob Hedge.....	5
6 Synthesis	7
7 Significance	7
8 Publication summary	8
9 Acknowledgements	8
10 Bibliography	8

Archaeological Evaluation at Land South of Napton Lane, Napton on the Hill, Warwickshire

Tim Cornah

With a contribution by Rob Hedge

Summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at land south of Napton Lane, Napton on the Hill, Warwickshire (NGR 446377 261958). It was undertaken on behalf of Cathy Patrick of CgMs, whose client intends to develop the site for residential use, for which a planning application is in preparation.

Napton is known to have existed by the time of the Domesday Book and the village grew around the 12th century Church of St Lawrence 560m to the south of the development site.

A potential for the survival of medieval remains within the site was recognised from the presence of earthworks recorded to the east and west of the site. Ridge and furrow was identified within the site as slight earthworks and as anomalies in a geophysical survey. A possible house platform in the central part of the site was also identified from a LiDAR image of the site.

Six trenches were excavated within the site. The remnants of furrows were recorded within a trench in the northern part of the site but all other features related to modern drainage. Two of these drainage features were shallow topsoil-filled depressions which gave the outward impression of a house platform. Two sherds of abraded Roman pottery were recovered from topsoil.

Report

1 Background

1.1 Reasons for the project

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at land south of Napton Lane, Napton on the Hill, Warwickshire (NGR 446377 261958). It was undertaken on behalf of Cathy Patrick of CgMS, whose client, Bloor Homes, intend residential development of the site, for which a planning application is in preparation.

An archaeological desk-based assessment of the site was prepared (CgMs 2014). This identified the presence of house platforms is located in the fields immediately to the east and west of the study site suggesting that it is located between two possible Medieval shrunken settlements (HER MWA745 and MWA747).

A theoretical moderate potential for the survival of Medieval settlement and agricultural activity was recognized, although following the results of a geophysical survey, the potential for the survival of settlement remains was considered to be low.

Earthworks including a possible medieval house platform and the remains of ridge and furrow were identified within the site. The potential house platform was also identified on a LiDAR image of the site.

No brief was provided for this project but it confirmed to the generality of briefs within Warwickshire. A detailed specification for this work was produced (WA2015) and approved by the Planning Archaeologist in advance of the evaluation commencing.

The project also conforms to the *Standard and guidance: Archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2014); *Standard and guidance: Archaeological excavation* (ClfA 2014).

2 Aims

The aims of this evaluation are:

- to describe and assess the significance of the heritage asset with archaeological interest;
- to establish the nature, importance and extent of the archaeological site;
- to assess the impact of the application on the archaeological site.

3 Methods

3.1 Personnel

The project was undertaken by Timothy Cornah (BA (hons.)), who joined Worcestershire Archaeology in 2006 and has been practicing archaeology since 2004. The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Tom Rogers (BA (hons), MSc). Illustrations were prepared by Carolyn Hunt (BSc (hons.); PG Cert; MClfA). Robert Hedge (MA Cantab) contributed the finds report.

3.2 Documentary research

Documentary research into this site has previously taken place in the form of a Desk Based Assessment (CgMs 2014). This report included cartographic as well as documentary evidence.

3.3 Fieldwork strategy

A detailed specification has been prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2015) and has been approved by the Planning Archaeologist.

Fieldwork was undertaken between the 11th and the 13th of May 2015.

Six trenches, amounting to just over 315m² in area, were excavated over the site area of 20,714m². The location of the trenches is indicated in Figure 1.

Trench 1 was located to test anomalies identified in the geophysical survey and Trenches 4, 5 and 6 were located to test the potential for Medieval settlement activity in the east of the site in the proximity of an HER record of shrunken settlement (MWA 747).

Deposits considered not to be significant were removed using a wheeled excavator, employing a toothless bucket and under archaeological supervision. Subsequent excavation was undertaken by hand. Clean surfaces were inspected and selected deposits were excavated to retrieve artefactual material and environmental samples, as well as to determine their nature. Deposits were recorded according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012a). On completion of excavation, trenches were reinstated by replacing the excavated material.

3.4 Structural analysis

All fieldwork records were checked and cross-referenced. Analysis was effected through a combination of structural and artefactual, allied to the information derived from other sources.

3.5 Artefact methodology, by Rob Hedge

3.5.1 Recovery policy

The artefact recovery policy conformed to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012).

3.5.2 Method of analysis

All hand-retrieved finds were examined. They were identified, quantified and dated to period. A *terminus post quem (tpq)* date was produced for each stratified context. The date was used for determining the broad date of phases defined for the site. All information was recorded on *pro forma* sheets.

The pottery and ceramic building material was examined under x20 magnification and referenced as appropriate by fabric type and form according to the medieval and post-medieval fabric reference series published for Warwickshire by Soden and Ratkai (1998), and the Roman fabric reference series published by Lee, Lindquist and Evans (Cracknell and Mahany 1994).

3.5.3 Discard policy

The following categories/types of material will be discarded after a period of 6 months following the submission of this report, unless there is a specific request to retain them (and subject to the collection policy of the relevant depository):

- where unstratified, including fieldwalked material;
- post-medieval pottery, and;
- generally where material has been assessed as having no obvious grounds for retention.

See the environmental section for other discard where appropriate.

3.6 Statement of confidence in the methods and results

The methods adopted allow a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved.

4 The application site

4.1 Topography, geology and archaeological context

The site is located to the north of the village of Napton on the Hill. The site itself is located at the base of the hill and is relatively flat, sloping only slightly from the southern end of the field at 110m AOD to 103m AOD at the northern end. The bedrock geology of the site is recorded as Charmouth Mudstone Formation. No superficial deposits are recorded (BGS 2015).

The archaeological context given here is summarised from the Desk Based Assessment (CgMs 2014) unless otherwise specified. Little evidence for prehistoric activity is recorded in the area around the site, the only evidence being a Neolithic flint axe and a possible ring ditch recognised from a crop mark. Both of these were located nearly a kilometre from the site.

No Roman features are recorded with the site but a number of finds and features have been recognised to the south of the site. These were within the vicinity of St Lawrence's Church within Napton itself and Windmill Business Park, 780m to the south west of the site. The features identified were ditches and gullies and contained Roman pottery. Three further find spots of Roman pottery have been recovered from around the site including to its north and west though not within its immediate vicinity.

The village of Napton on the Hill is believed to have had Saxon origins and is recorded within Domesday. This is confirmed to some degree by the presence of at least one inhumation burial of this period 1km south west of the site. The place name is thought to derive from an Anglian word "cnaepp" (hill-top; a short sharp ascent, a hillock) or possibly the Old English word "hnaepp" (a bowl). This is combined with Old English word "tun" (an enclosure, farmstead or village) (KEPN 2015). Although the location of the settlement at this time is unknown, it is likely to have been within the area of the later medieval settlement to the south of the site.

The medieval settlement of Napton on the Hill is thought to have developed within the 12th century around the Church of St Lawrence which is also of this date. The village may have extended almost as far as the site as possible medieval shrunken settlements have been suggested immediately to both the west and east of the site. A feature identified within the site itself was suggested as possible house platform, potentially indicating the site as an area of settlement during this era. The northern half of the site shows extant ridge and furrow earth works, suggesting that this part of the site was under strip field cultivation.

Within the post-medieval era, the turnpike road beyond the southern boundary of the site was established. The village itself continued in use and a number of other features are known in the area such as brick works, tile works, a windmill and a quarry. The site itself is first mapped in 1887 and is shown in much its current configuration and largely agricultural use. The only exception to this is that the plot shown on this map includes that where the police house in the south east corner now stands. The police house was extant by the time of the 1974 mapping.

4.2 Current land-use

The site remains as agricultural pasture land with a footpath crossing at its southern end. It also contains a pond within the northern end of the field.

5 Structural analysis

The trenches and features recorded are shown in Fig 1. The results of the structural analysis are presented in Appendix 1.

5.1.1 Phase 1: Natural deposits

The natural substrate consisted of a compact yellow brown clay that also contained patches of blue grey mottling. This was numbered 101, 201, 302, 402, 50 and 602.

5.1.2 Phase 2: Medieval to post medieval deposits

Subsoil was present in Trenches 2 to 6 and was recorded as contexts 203, 301, 401, 501 and 601. It consisted of a firm med reddish brown silty clay. It was not present in Trench 1, possibly as a result of ploughing as suggested by the presence of ridge and furrow.

At the western end of Trench 2, deposit 202 consisted of a mid reddish brown silty clay overlying the subsoil. This is interpreted as one section of a ridge or headland.

The bases of two furrows were also present in Trench 1, confirming the former presence of ridge and furrow in this location.

5.1.3 Phase 3: Modern deposits

Topsoil deposits over all of the trenches consisted of a soft mid greyish brown silty clay loam and numbered 100, 200, 300, 400, 500 and 600.

Within Trench 2, slight depressions at either end correspond with linear features apparent on the LiDAR image. These depressions appear to have been drainage features that are filled with topsoil deposits. The depression at the western end of the trench also contained a ceramic land drain. It is these depressions that correspond with the feature that was interpreted as a house platform.

Trench 1 also contained a ceramic land drain.

5.2 Artefactual analysis, by Rob Hedge

The artefactual assemblage recovered is summarised in Tables 1–3.

The assemblage came from four stratified contexts and could be dated from the Roman period onwards (see Table 1). Using pottery as an index of artefact condition, this was generally poor with the majority of sherds displaying high levels of abrasion. The mean sherd size was 5g, which is considered substantially below average.

period	material class	material subtype	object specific type	count	weight(g)
Roman	ceramic		pot	2	16
medieval	ceramic		pot	1	6
medieval/post-medieval	ceramic		brick/tile	8	52
medieval/post-medieval	ceramic		tile	1	6
post-medieval	ceramic		brick	1	40
post-medieval	ceramic		brick/tile	1	14
post-medieval	ceramic		clay pipe	1	6
post-medieval	ceramic		pot	5	44
post-medieval/modern	ceramic		pot	1	4
modern	ceramic		pot	6	6
undated	organic	animal bone		6	98
Totals:				31	276

Table 1: Quantification of the assemblage

Broad period	fabric code	Fabric Common Name	count	weight(g)
Roman	DI	Severn Valley Ware	1	4
Roman	BC/BE	Reduced local sandy ware	1	12
medieval	CS02/CS05	Calcareous shelly ware	1	6
post-medieval	CRW	Creamware	4	12
post-medieval	MY01	Midland yellow ware	1	32
post-medieval/modern	STE02	Nottingham salt glazed stoneware	1	4
modern	MGW	Modern Glazed Ware	6	6
Totals			15	76

Table 2 Quantification of the pottery by fabric

Summary of artefactual evidence

For the finds from individual features, including specific types of pottery, see Tables 3 and 2 in that order and in combination.

Overall, there was little artefactual material associated with the site. The majority of finds were recovered from the topsoil deposits within Trenches 1, 2 and 3.

Topsoil deposit (100) produced:

- four sherds of late 18th century creamware (fabric CRW), five small sherds of 19th or 20th century modern glazed ware (fabric MGW) and a single sherd of later 18th or 19th century Nottingham stoneware;
- three very abraded fragments of undiagnostic medieval or post-medieval ceramic building material, and a small piece of post-medieval brick or tile;
- a highly abraded base sherd of medieval Calcareous shelly ware. The condition precludes precise identification to fabric type, but it is likely to be either fabric CS02 or CS05, and of 11th to 14th century date.

Within Trench 2, topsoil (200) contained:

- a fragment of an early 18th century clay tobacco pipe bowl (Oswald 1975, fig. 4,G no. 21);
- a sherd of modern porcelain;
- a small fragment of undiagnostic medieval or post-medieval ceramic building material.

Ridge deposit (202) contained several highly abraded fragments of ceramic building material that could only be firmly ascribed a broad 13th – 18th century date, although they are thought to belong to the latter part of that period, as well as a small assemblage of undated, abraded mammal bone.

Recovered from the topsoil within Trench 3 (300) were:

- small abraded fragments of undiagnostic brick or tile of 13th to 18th century date, in addition to a small piece of post-medieval brick;
- a single large sherd of an upright, rolled rim from a later 16th to early 18th century Midland yellow ware straight-sided vessel (fabric MY01), with an internal diameter of 240mm (Woodfield 1966);
- two sherds of highly abraded Roman pottery. Due to the condition and extensive surface abrasion, they could not be definitely ascribed to fabric but a soft, micaceous oxidised body

sherd is thought to be a piece of mid-1st to 4th century Severn Valley Ware (fabric DI) and an everted, slightly overhanging jar rim sherd of reduced sandy greyware is thought to belong to fabric BC or BE, likewise of mid-1st to 4th century date.

context	material class	material subtype	object specific type	count	weight(g)	start date	end date	TPQ Date range
100	ceramic		pot	4	12	1740	1790	1800 - 2000
	ceramic		brick/tile	3	16	1200	1800	
	ceramic		brick/tile	1	14	1550	2000	
	ceramic		pot	5	4	1800	1950	
	ceramic		pot	1	4	1750	1900	
	ceramic		pot	1	6	1100	1400	
200	ceramic		clay pipe	1	6	1700	1740	1800 - 2000
	ceramic		tile	1	6	1200	1800	
	ceramic		pot	1	2	1800	2000	
202	ceramic		brick/tile	2	20	1200	1800	1200 - 1800
	organic	animal bone		6	98	0	0	
300	ceramic		brick/tile	3	16	1200	1800	1550 - 1900
	ceramic		brick	1	40	1550	1900	
	ceramic		pot	1	32	1550	1720	
	ceramic		pot	1	4	43	400	
	ceramic		pot	1	12	43	400	

Table 3: Summary of context dating based on artefacts

6 Synthesis

Two highly abraded sherds of Roman pottery were recovered from topsoil in Trench 3. Their presence is likely to have been due to the process of manuring but reflects the known occurrence of activity of this period in the vicinity.

A potential for the survival of medieval remains within the site was recognised from the presence of earthworks recorded. No medieval settlement features were recorded and the potential house platform was shown to be the result of two lines of drainage delineating a slightly raised, squareish area. It is clear that the medieval settlement did not extend into the development site.

The northern area of the site was shown to contain ridge and furrow, a remnant of medieval strip farming. This was visible on the LiDAR as well as the geophysical survey and confirmed by some evidence of furrowing within Trench 1.

The recovered pottery assemblage is consistent with residual material incorporated into agricultural soils through activities such as manuring, and is not thought to reflect the presence of settlement activity within the evaluated area.

7 Significance

The only significant archaeological features that were observed on site were ridge and furrow earthworks, the remnants of strip fields which would have formed a part of Napton on the Hill's medieval open field system. Ridge and furrow is a relatively common feature representing a pre-enclosure landscape which, in this case, has been impacted on by modern ploughing.

8 Publication summary

Worcestershire Archaeology has a professional obligation to publish the results of archaeological projects within a reasonable period of time. To this end, Worcestershire Archaeology intends to use this summary as the basis for publication through local or regional journals. The client is requested to consider the content of this section as being acceptable for such publication.

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at land south of Napton Lane, Napton on the Hill, Warwickshire (NGR 446377 261958). It was undertaken on behalf of Cathy Patrick of CgMs, whose client intends to develop the site for residential use, for which a planning application is in preparation.

Napton is known to have existed by the time of the Domesday Book and the village grew around the 12th century Church of St Lawrence 560m to the south of the development site.

A potential for the survival of medieval remains within the site was recognised from the presence of earthworks recorded to the east and west of the site. Ridge and furrow was identified within the site as slight earthworks and as anomalies in a geophysical survey. A possible house platform in the central part of the site was also identified from a LiDAR image of the site.

Six trenches were excavated within the site. The remnants of furrows were recorded within a trench in the northern part of the site but all other features related to modern drainage. Two of these drainage features were shallow topsoil-filled depressions which gave the outward impression of a house platform. Two sherds of abraded Roman pottery were recovered from topsoil.

9 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project; Cathy Patrick of CgMs Consulting.

10 Bibliography

BGS 2014 *Geology of Britain Viewer*, <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>, British Geological Survey, accessed 15th May 2015

ClfA 2014 *Standard and guidance: Archaeological field evaluation*, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists

CgMs 2014 Land south of Napton Road, Napton on the Hill Warwickshire. CgMs Consulting unpublished document

DCLG 2012 *National Planning Policy Framework*, Department for Communities and Local Government

DCLG/DCMS/EH 2010 *PPS5 Planning for the historic environment: historic environment planning practice guide*, Department for Communities and Local Government/Department for Culture, Media and Sport/English Heritage

KEPN 2015 *Key to English Place-Names*, <http://kepn.nottingham.ac.uk/map/place/Warwickshire/Napton%20on%20the%20Hill>, Institute for Name-Studies, University of Nottingham, accessed 15th of May 2015

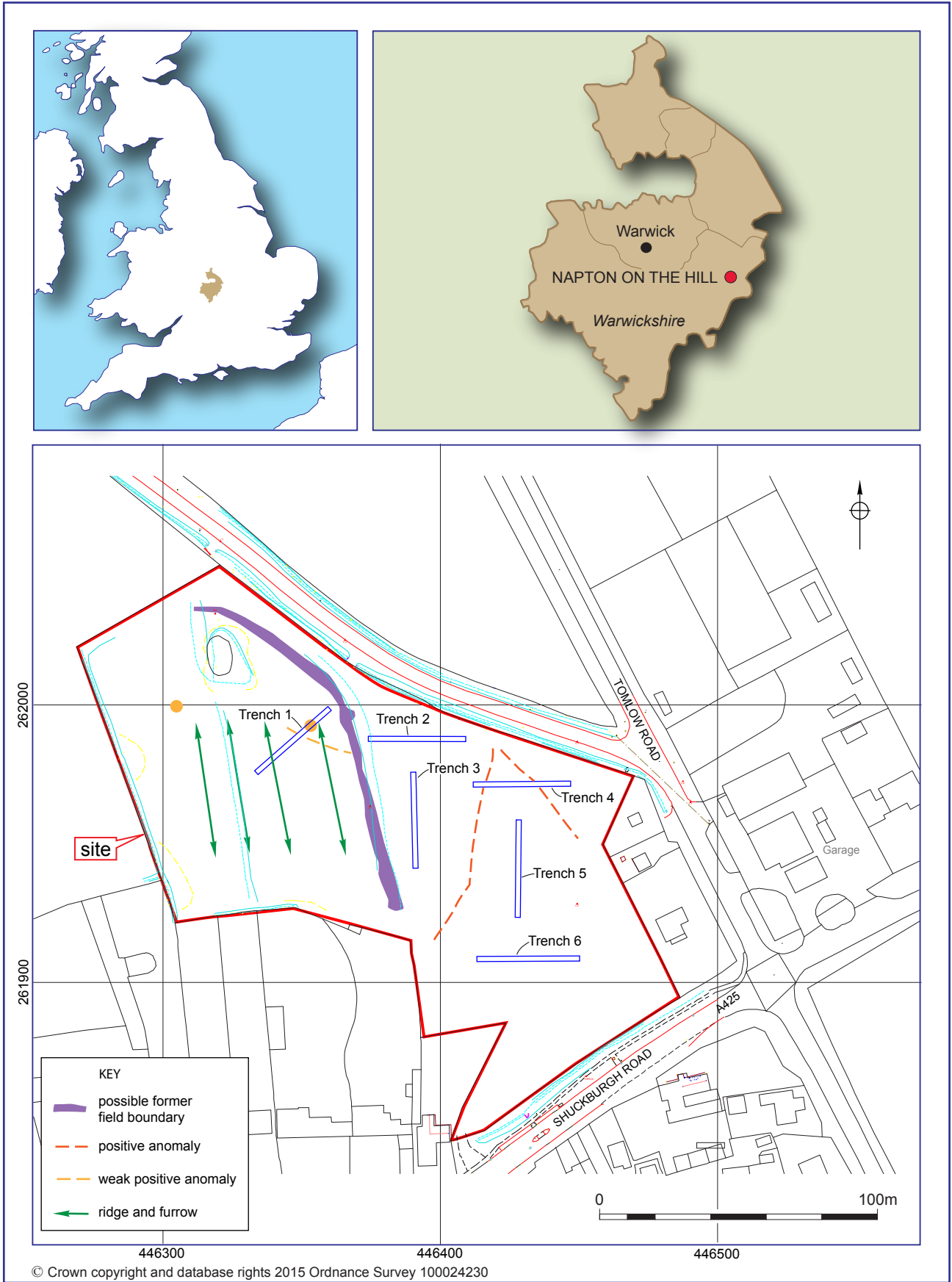
Ragg, J M, Beard, G R, George, H, Heaven, F W, Hollis, J M, Jones, R J A, Palmer, R C, Reeve, M J, Robson, J D, and Whitfield, W A D, 1984 *Soils and their use in midland and western England*, Soil Survey of England and Wales, **12**

Soil Survey of England and Wales, 1983 *Midland and Western England*, sheet 3, scale 1:250,000 + Legend for the 1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales (A brief explanation of the constituent soil associations)

WA 2012 *Manual of service practice, recording manual*, Worcestershire Archaeology, Worcestershire County Council, report **1842**

WA 2014 *Written Scheme of Investigation for an archaeological evaluation at Land south of Napton Road, Napton-on-the-Hill, Warwickshire*, Worcestershire Archaeology, Worcestershire County Council, unpublished document dated 7th of May 2015, **P4574**

Figures



Location of the site and trenches

Figure 1

Plates



Plate 1 The site, looking south



Plate 2 Natural substrate within Trench 4 looking west



Plate 3 Natural substrate within Trench 1 looking south west



Plate 4 Ridge deposit within the western end of Trench 2 looking north

Appendix 1 Trench descriptions

Trench 1

Maximum dimensions: Length: 35m Width: 1.5m Depth: 0.41m

Orientation: NE-SW

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
100	Topsoil	Soft dark grey brown silty clay loam	0-0.35m
101	Natural	Firm orangey yellow brown clay	0.35m

Trench 2

Maximum dimensions: Length: 35m Width: 1.5m Depth: 0.60m

Orientation: E-W

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
200	Topsoil	Soft dark grey brown silty clay loam	0-0.22m
201	Natural	Firm orangey yellow brown clay	0.60m
202	Ridge deposit	Firm mid reddish brown silty clay	0.22-0.38m
203	Subsoil	Firm mid reddish brown silty clay	0.22-0.60m

Trench 3

Maximum dimensions: Length: 35m Width: 1.5m Depth: 0.39m

Orientation: N-S

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
---------	----------------	-------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
300	Topsoil	Soft mid greyish brown silty clay loam	0-0.15m
301	Subsoil	Firm mid reddish brown silty clay	0.15-0.39m
302	Natural	Mid yellow brown clay with areas of blue grey mottling	0.32->0.39m

Trench 4

Maximum dimensions: Length: 35m Width: 1.5m Depth: 0.37m

Orientation: E-W

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
400	Topsoil	Soft mid greyish brown silty clay loam	0-0.16m
401	Subsoil	Firm mid reddish brown silty clay	0.16-0.37m
402	Natural	Mid yellow brown clay with areas of blue grey mottling	0.30->0.37m

Trench 5

Maximum dimensions: Length: 35m Width: 1.5m Depth: 0.37m

Orientation: N-S

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
500	Topsoil	Soft mid greyish brown silty clay loam	0-0.17m
501	Subsoil	Firm mid reddish brown silty clay	0.17-0.29m
502	Natural	Mid yellow brown clay with areas of blue grey mottling	0.29->0.37m

Trench 6

Maximum dimensions: Length: 35m Width: 1.5m Depth: 0.50m

Orientation: E-W

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
600	Topsoil	Soft mid greyish brown silty clay loam	0-0.21m
601	Subsoil	Firm mid reddish brown silty clay	0.21-0.46m
602	Natural	Mid yellow brown clay with areas of blue grey mottling	0.46->0.50m

Appendix 2 Technical information

The archive

The archive consists of:

- 1 Field progress reports AS2
- 1 Photographic records AS3
- 51 Digital photographs
- 6 Trench record sheets AS41
- 1 Box of finds
- 1 CD-Rom/DVDs
- 1 Copy of this report (bound hard copy)

The project archive is intended to be placed at:

Warwickshire Museum

The Butts

Warwick Warwickshire, CV34 4SS

Tel. Warwick (01926) 412500
