JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

A SUMMARY REPORT OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION AT FORMER HAWKINS SALMON SITE, MILL LANE, BRACKLEY, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

NGR: SP 59459 37132

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Summary

John Moore Heritage Services carried out an evaluation at the former Hawkins Salmon site, Mill Lane, Brackley, Northamptonshire. The evaluation identified a post-medieval mill stream ditch in the east of the site on a NNW-SSE alignment running towards the millstream. In the north of the site the ground was disturbed by modern services and made ground. In the south-west of the site three features were identified including a small undated pit, an undated ditch and a ditch containing single rim sherd of Roman pottery. This report constitutes a summary report of the background to the archaeological work and the results of the evaluation. A fuller report of all the phases of the archaeological programme of works will follow the completion of archaeological works on the site.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The site is located on the eastern edge of the town of Brackley, in an area of land to the immediate west of the River Great Ouse and the A43 dual carriageway. It comprises of an irregular parcel of land centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) SP 59459 37132 centred. There was a former timber yard in the centre of the site, and there is an area containing a residential property and garages to the south west. The underlying geology of the site is mudstone of the Whitby Mudstone Formation.

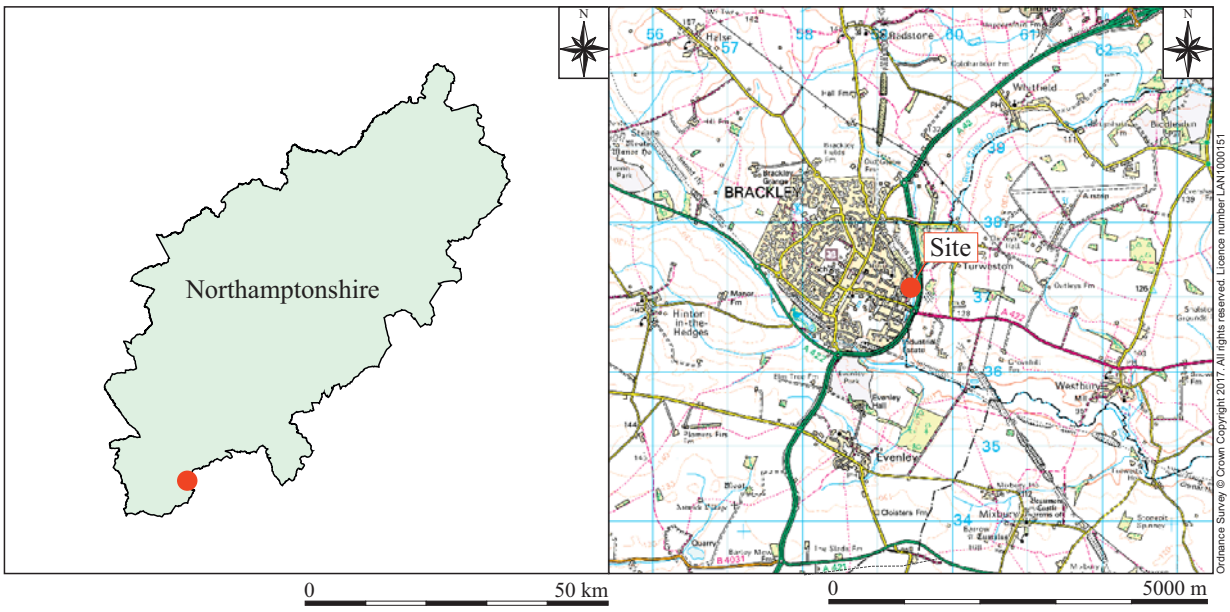
1.2 Planning Background

South Northamptonshire Council granted planning consent for Demolition of existing buildings and redevelopment comprising of 7 dwellings with associated landscaping and parking (S/2015/2758/FUL). A condition relating to archaeology was attached to the permission stating that:

No development shall take place until the applicant (or their agents or successors in title) has submitted to and had approved in writing by the local planning authority a programme of archaeological work consisting of a written scheme of investigation (WSI) and a timetable for that work. The development shall thereafter proceed in accordance with the approved WSI and timetable.

Reason: To secure the provision of archaeological investigation and the subsequent recording of the remains, to comply with Government advice in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Section 12).

The Assistant Archaeological Advisor of Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) prepared a brief outlining a first stage of archaeological work by a trenching evaluation following the demolition of buildings to ground level. The discovery of asbestos on site, however, resulted in an agreement with the County Archaeological Advisor to carry out an archaeological watching brief during the excavation of foundations and soil removal from some parts of the site prior to the evaluation. It was also agreed that the excavation of geotechnical and water percolation test pits could be carried out during this phase of work under archaeological watching brief conditions. This work was followed by the required evaluation.



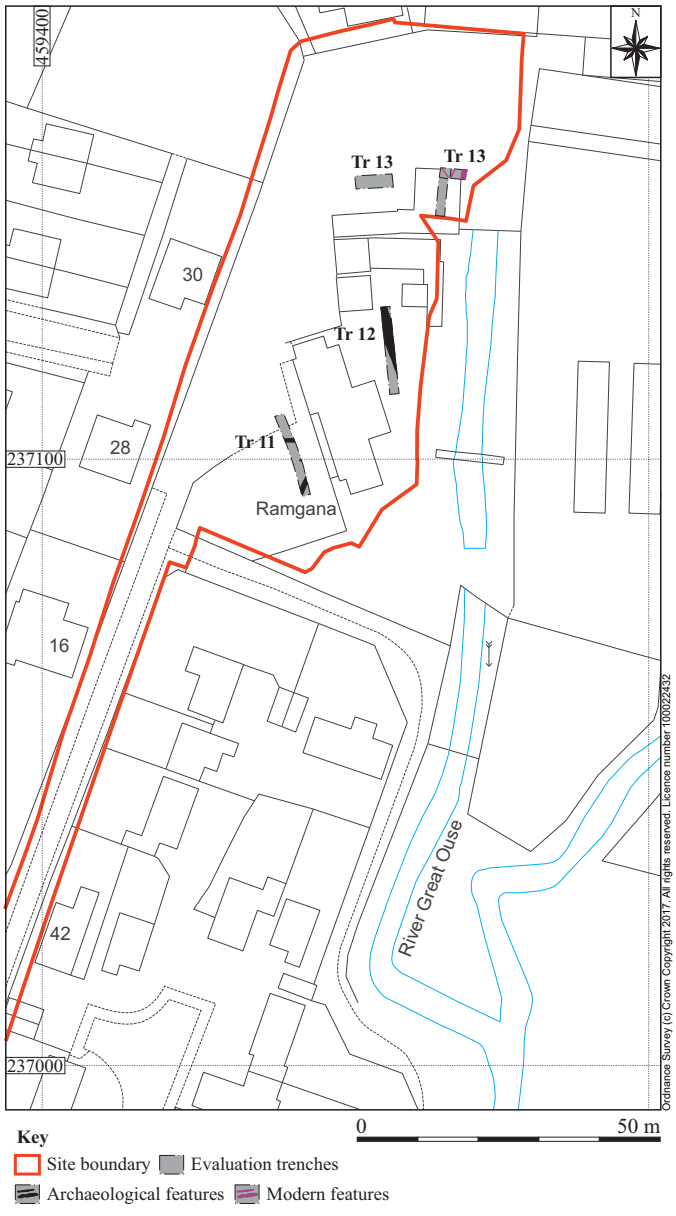


Figure 1: Site location

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The aims of the investigation as laid out in the Written Scheme of Investigation were as follows:

- To provide information that will allow the effective targeting of further investigation of the site prior to or during the early phases of its development.

- To determine the location, extent, nature, and date of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present.

- To establish the integrity and state of preservation of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present.

- To set the results within the national research context (English Heritage 1991 & 1997) and regionally (Cooper 2006, Knight, Vyner & Allen 2012) depending on the results of the investigation

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation (JMHS 2018) agreed with the County Archaeological Advisor to South Northamptonshire Council.

The recording was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2014).

3.2 Methodology

The investigation was to involve the mechanical excavation of three trenches to be carried out post-demolition of the buildings on site to ground level and removal of the existing slabs. The foundations were to be left in place until the results of the evaluation were known. However, following the discovery of asbestos on the site it was agreed that an archaeological watching brief (results to follow) would be carried out during the removal of foundations ahead of the evaluation. It was also agreed that a water percolation test pits and geotechnical test pits would be excavated during this phase of work and monitored as an archaeological watching brief.

Following the first phase of watching brief the evaluation was carried out and consisted of three trenches numbered 11 to 13 each 1.65m wide. Two trenches, 11 and 12 were 15m in length. Due to obstructions, Trench 13 was split into two trenches. The western 5m of the trench was excavated in an area of concrete hard standing. There was then a 7.7m gap at the eastern edge of this length of trenching in order to avoid the area of further concrete hardstanding and a wooden electric pylon. The trench then continued to the east for 5m but was stopped short to avoid the excavations intruding into the area of the culverted mill stream and associated made ground. At the western end of this length of trenching a 6m length of trenching was excavated creating an L shaped trench.

Excavation was taken down to the top of "natural" deposits by an 8t mechanical excavator using a toothless bucket.

Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each deposit encountered, with scale plans and section drawings compiled where appropriate. A photographic record was also produced.

4 RESULTS (Figure 2)

The results identified deep made ground deposits across the site, with archaeology at depths of 1m below the current ground level in the south-west of the site.

4.1 Trench 11 (Fig. 2, Tr 11 Plan, Sections 11.01 to 11.05; Plates 1 and 2)

Trench 11 was excavated in the south-west of the site. The lowest deposit identified was a red sandy clay with a dominant inclusion of gravel (11/08) which was identified as the natural geology (Fig. 2, Tr 11 Plan, Sections 11.01 & 11.02). There were three features cutting this geology. At the north of the trench was a ditch orientated east-west, 11/10 (Fig. 2, Sections 11.02 & 11.03) The ditch was greater than 1.6m long, 0.7m wide and 0.27m deep. It contained single fill (11/09) which contained no finds and a very frequent inclusion of stones. Towards the middle of the trench was a small shallow pit 11/12 (Fig. 2, Section 11.04). The pit was 0.45m by greater than 0.35m and 0.08m deep. It contained a single fill (11/11) which included frequent burnt material and fragments of ceramic which were mostly identified as degraded ceramic building material. At the south end of the trench was a NNE-SSW orientated ditch 11/14 (Fig. 2, Section 11.05; Plates 1 & 2). Ditch 11/14 was greater than 2.2m in length, 1m wide and 0.35m deep. It contained a single fill of mid to dark grey clay loam with orange sandy clay inclusions, inclusions of angular limestone and sub-rounded stone (11/13). The fill contained a single rim sherd of Roman pottery identified as Oxfordshire White Ware.

Overlying these archaeological features was a buried soil horizon (11/07). And this in turn was overlaid by later deposits identified as made ground.

Plate 1. Trench 11.

Plate 2. Section.11.05 of ditch 11/14. NNE view

4.2 Trench 12 (Fig. 2, Tr 12 Plan, Sections 12.01 to 12.03)

The Lowest deposit identified in Trench 12 was a mid-orange brown clay natural (12/07) (Fig. 2, Section 12.02). Cut into the natural was a linear ditch identified as a mill stream ditch. The ditch was not clearly visible against the natural into which it had been cut resulting in the feature being overcut in plan (Fig. 2, Section 12.01). The shape of the cut was identified as stepped and the width extended beyond the limits of the excavation (Fig. 2, Section 12.03 to 12.03). The ditch was greater than 2.2m wide, 0.91m deep and greater than 10.8m in length. The fill (12/05) contained fragments of animal bone and piece of ceramic tile. It also contained large fragments of limestone in the lower part of the cut. Overlying the deposit were several layers of made ground (Fig.2, Section 12.01).

4.3 Trench 13 (Fig. 2, Tr 13 Plan, Sections 13.01 to 13.03)

Trench 13 was split into two trenches resulting in a 5m western length that was 2.15m wide and a further L shaped trench orientated east to west and north to south with a combined length of 11m. The western length of Trench 13 was excavated in an area of concrete hard standing. The lowest layer was an orange sandy clay (13/04) (Fig. 2, Tr 13 plan, Section 13.01). Deposited above this was a 0.54m thick very dark grey clay loam which was probably associated with alluvial activity from nearby watercourses (13/03). Overlying this layer was 0.15m thick deposit of light yellow and grey sandy limestone gravel (13/02) which formed the levelling deposit for the concrete hard standing. Above this was a 0.29m thick concrete slab which was the platform of a former building and was the uppermost deposit in this part of Trench 13 (13/01).

The natural orange clay (13/04) was observed in the north-south length of Trench 13 (Fig. 2, Tr 13 plan, Section 13.03). The east to west length of Trench 13 showed evidence for modern disturbance and made ground overlying the natural. The disturbance and made ground in this area appeared to be associated with drainage and services from the nearby houses or related to the culverting of the mill stream. Deposit (13/09) was a mid to light grey deposit at the east end of the trench. The deposit contained frequent angular limestone and the deposit may have been part of a

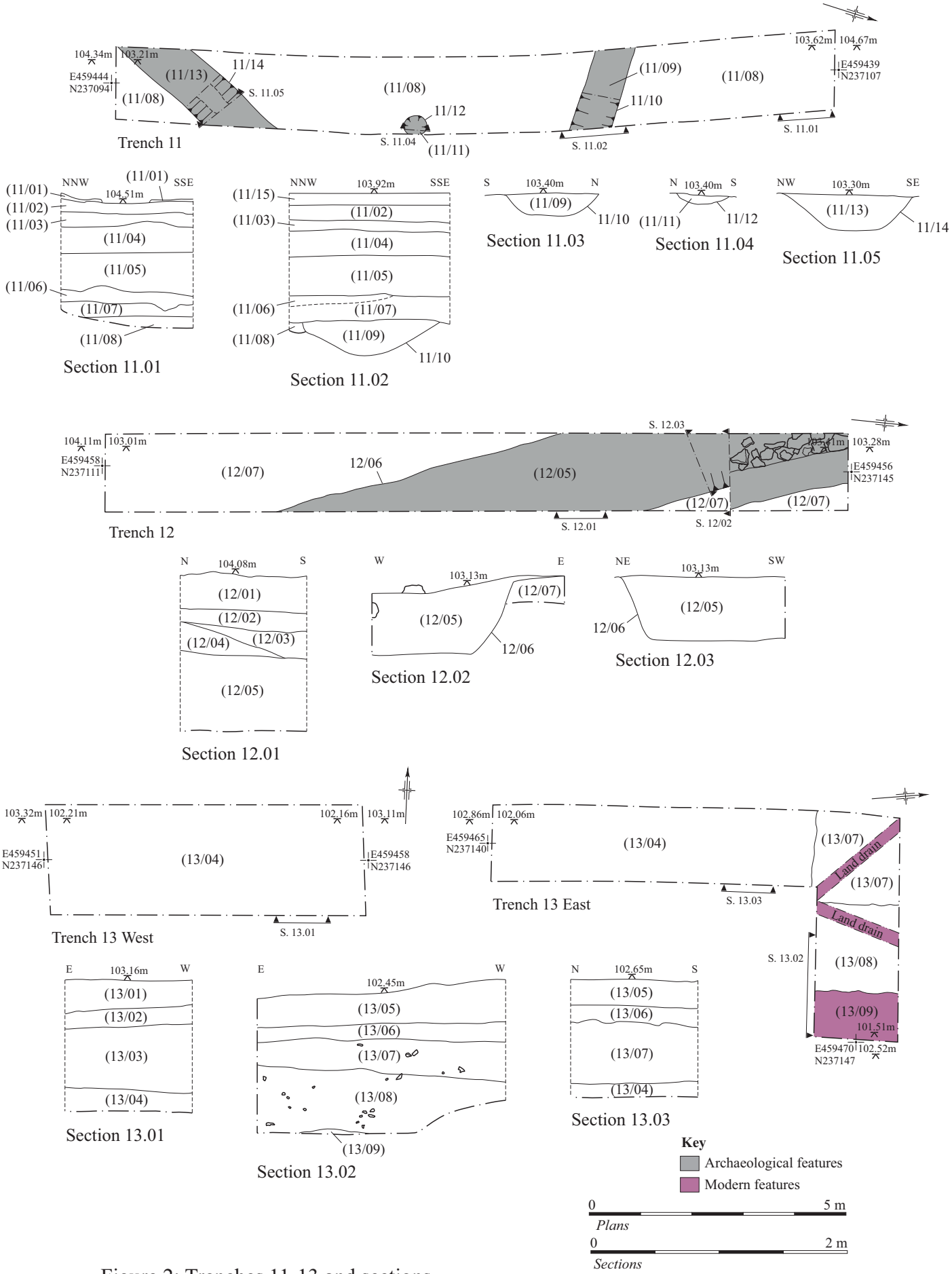


Figure 2: Trenches 11-13 and sections

soakaway or possibly the stone backfilling of the millstream bank when this part of the stream was culverted. Deposited above this was a mid-grey clayey deposit with a moderate stone inclusion (13/08). This deposit was identified as made ground and above this was a 0.31m thick deposit of firm mid brown and orange clay loam with rare small stone (13/07) which was also identified as made ground. This deposit was overlain by (13/06) a 0.16m thick dark grey brown clay loam. Above this was a 0.36m thick levelling deposit of blue grey and yellow clay (13/05).

5 FINDS

5.1 Pottery *by Paul Blinkhorn*

A single sherd of pottery weighing 12g occurred in context 11/13. It is a rim from a jar or bowl in Oxfordshire White Ware, fabric OXF WH in the National Roman Fabric Reference Collection (Tomber abnd Dore 1998). Such pottery is a fairly common find in the region.

5.2 Faunal Remains *by Simona Denis*

A small collection of 5 animal bone fragments, of a combined weight of 261g, was recovered from deposit (12/05). The state of preservation of the material is generally fair, although extremely fragmentary.

With the exception of the near complete metatarsus, tentatively identified as deer, all of the animal bone fragments recovered belonged to sheep/goat.

No butchering marks were observed.

Context	Genus	Type	No. of Items	Weight (g)
12/05	Sheep/Goat	Mandible body with molar	1	30
		?Orbit	1	8
		Mandible coronoid process	1	11
		Rib	1	10
	?Deer	Metatarsus	1	202

Table 1: Animal bone occurrence by context and type

It is not recommended to retain the animal bone assemblage, due to its extremely low potential for further analysis.

Ceramic Building Material *by Simona Denis*

Six fragments of ceramic building material, weighing 178g in total, were collected from two deposits.

Context	Type	No. of Items	Weight (g)	Dimensions (mm)	Fabric	Date Range
11/11	CBM	4	1.5	Max 12x10x6	Dark orange,	Undetermined

					gritty	
	?Fired clay	1	1.5	16x12x7	Light brown-orange, sandy	
12/05	Quarry tile	1	175	75x67x23	Light orange-pink, sandy with grey core	1850+

Table 2: Ceramic building material occurrence by context and type

The extremely limited size of the fragments recovered from deposit (11/11) prevented from any attempt of function identification.

The item found in deposit (12/05), measuring 76x67mm and 23mm in thickness, preserved one complete corner and was positively identified as a modern quarry tile. Plain tiles of this kind were used in utilitarian areas of the house, such as kitchens (McComish 2015).

The ceramic building material fragments are not recommended for retention, due to their modern provenience and low potential for further analysis.

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