

Undated features on the Moulton Relief Road Moulton, Northamptonshire



Archaeological Evaluation Report



December 2014

Client: Parsons Brinckerhoff Limited

OA East Report No: 1709

OASIS No: oxfordar3-201191

NGR: SP 7915 6558

Undated features on the Moulton Relief Road, Moulton, Northamptonshire

Archaeological Evaluation

By Robin Webb (BA MA)


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Report Date: December 2014

Report Number: 1709
Site Name: Moulton, Northamptonshire
Date of Works: November 2014
Client Name: Parsons Brinckerhoff Limited
Client Ref: 287512A
Grid Ref: SP 7915 6558
Site Code: XNNMRR14
Finance Code: XNNMRR14
Receiving Body: Northamptonshire Archaeological Resource Centre

Prepared by: Robin Webb
Position: Assistant Supervisor
Date: December 2014

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Position: Senior Project Manager
Date: December 2014
Signed: 

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Summary

An archaeological evaluation was carried out on land to the east of the A43 at Moulton, Northamptonshire. The work took place as part of investigative fieldwork ahead of the construction of a 2.5km stretch of dual carriageway to ease congestion alongside the A43 and to service a planned housing development. The site area was centred on NGR SP 7915 6558. The fieldwork took place between 25/11/14 and 26/11/14. Three trenches were excavated within two fields.

The trench located in the northern field contained no archaeological features.

The evaluation uncovered three undated ditches and two undated ditch termini within the two trenches of the southern field. These ditches were probably medieval or post-medieval agricultural field system ditches related to a field system located to the north-west of the site. The likely scenario is that the undulating topography of the site limited the use of the land to agriculture. Settlements would have been located on the flatter land to the north, west and south.

No artefacts were recovered from the trenches, and the only ecofact was a small fragment of animal bone from a ditch running east to west.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 An archaeological evaluation was conducted at land to the east of the A43 to the east of Moulton, Northamptonshire (SP 7915 6558), in advance of the construction of a dual carriageway to alleviate congestion on the A43 and to service a planned housing development (see figure 1 for location). The work took place between the 25th and 26th of November 2014.
- 1.1.2 This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) and a written scheme of investigation by Parsons Brinckerhoff (2014); ahead of a planning application, and supplemented by a project design (Connor 2014) prepared by OA East.
- 1.1.3 The work was designed to assist in defining the character and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed redevelopment area, in accordance with the guidelines set out in *National Planning Policy Framework* (Department for Communities and Local Government March 2012). The results will enable decisions to be made by NCC, on behalf of the Local Planning Authority, with regard to the treatment of any archaeological remains found.

1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The site was located directly to the west of a tributary of the River Nene and on the fringe of housing and an industrial estate, with the A43 to the west. Trenches 1 and 2 were located in a paddock field bounded by further fields and woodland, whilst trench 4 was located at the south end of a large open field. The topology of both fields was undulating, with trench 1 sloping down from the west to the east and trench 4 located in a hollow.
- 1.2.2 The geology of the area is Northampton Sand (comprising ironstone, ferruginous and sandy limestones) overlying Upper Lias (mudstones with thin layers of limestones and shales at the base) (British Geological Survey Sheet 185, 1:50 000 series).

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The following has been adapted from Parsons Brinckerhoff 2014.
- Mesolithic** (c.10000-4000BC)
- 1.3.2 There was little Mesolithic activity near the development area. Within the vicinity of Northampton, Mesolithic worked flint has been recovered from Neolithic sites at Aldwinckle (NGR SP 996 803), Briar Hill (NGR SP 7362 5923), Ecton (NGR SP 8389 6165) and the Long Mound at West Cotton (NGR SP 976 725) (Chapman 1999:5).
- Neolithic** (c.4000-2500BC)
- 1.3.3 Archaeological evidence suggests an increase in settlement levels during the Neolithic within Northamptonshire, with causewayed enclosures at Briar Hill, Dallington near Northampton, and Southwick in the north of the county (Chapman 1999:5). Excavation at Ecton, near Northampton, revealed a late Neolithic habitation site with hearth debris, a flint scatter and pottery (Chapman 1999:6).
- 1.3.4 Assessment of cropmarks indicates that there was possible prehistoric settlement to the north of the site (Joyce 2009:4), whilst leaf-shaped arrowheads have been found to

the north and north-west of the site (NMR SP 76 NE 20 at NGR SP 7899 6614. and NMR SP 76 NE 21 at NGR SP 7803 6613).

Bronze Age (c.2500-800BC)

- 1.3.5 There is little Bronze Age archaeology near the development area. Stanwick, 15 miles away, had two roundhouses and their associated boundary ditches (Chapman 1999:7); and Briar Hill had a cremation cemetery (Chapman 1999:12).

Iron Age (c.800BC-AD43)

- 1.3.6 Iron Age settlement has been identified at Booth Rise to the South West of the study area (NMR SP 76 SE 11 at NGR SP 7850 6454), and an Iron Age ditch is located to the west of the site (NMR 642318 at NGR SP 77620 64880) (RCHM 1985:313).

Romano-British (c.AD43-410)

- 1.3.7 Evidence for Romano-British occupation has been found at Booth Rise: fragments of tessellated pavement, tiles and bricks may indicate a possible villa site. Building debris from the second to fourth centuries has been recovered at Thorplands (NMR SP 76 NE 36 at NGR 789 650).

Anglo-Saxon (c.AD410-1066) **and Medieval** (c.AD1066-1500)

- 1.3.8 The Church of St Peter and St Paul, within the village of Moulton and north-west of the development area, indicates Anglo-Saxon settlement with the 12th and 13th century phases of the structure incorporating the remains of the Saxon church (NMR SP 76 NE 10 at NGR SP 7836 6642). A fragment of an Anglo-Saxon cross was also recovered within the grounds of the church (NMR SP 76 NE 9 at NGR SP 7836 6642).
- 1.3.9 Moulton is referred to in the Domesday Survey, with the Countess Judith holding the manor of Moulton by 1086 (Salzman 1937). By 1276, the manor house, at Castle Hill (NMR SP 76 NE 55 at NGR SP7860 6715) had been acquired from the Grimbald family by John Fitz John (Salzman 1937). Henry VII acquired the manor through Anne Neville, the wife of the 'King Maker' Sir Richard Neville, surrendering her estates to the king. However, after Charles I ascended to the throne the estate was divided between trustees for the City of London, and gradually sold off (Salzman 1937).
- 1.3.10 To the south-west of the development area, a deer park (NMR SP 76 SE 107 at NGR SP770 648) is first mentioned as existing in 1201 when it is said that hay was bought to feed the animals in the park of Northampton. By 1560 the park was in a state of decay, with deer managing to breach the walls. The two lodges of the park were extant between 1397 and 1861. Now, the only surviving feature of the park is part of the surrounding wall along Broughton Lane, although present boundaries around the area of the park respect the prior limits of the park (RCHM 1985:figure 32).

Post-medieval (c.1500-1750) **and modern** (c.1750 to present)

- 1.3.11 Post medieval settlement has continued in Moulton, with agriculture reflected in the ridge and furrow and field boundaries showing up in aerial photographs (Palmer 1994:3) and Moulton windmill (NMR TL 08 NW 112 at NGR TL 038 886).
- 1.3.12 The fields of the development are have been open since before 1885 (OS County 1885), with buildings only encroaching the southern and western edges of the site after 1900 (OS County 1900).
- 1.3.13 World War II saw a limited impact in the area surrounding the development, with concrete road blocks installed in Moulton (to the west of the site) (Defence of Britain reference S0013339 and S0014979).

1.4 Previous studies and investigations

- 1.4.1 A geophysical survey by GSB Prospection Ltd at Moulton College, to the north-west of the development area, indicated the presence of an enclosure, trackway and ridge and furrow (Shiel 2005).
- 1.4.2 Cotswold Archaeology carried out an 11 trench evaluation to the north-west of the site, on Sandy Hill Lane (Joyce 2009). This evaluation revealed a medieval or post-medieval field system of north-east to south-west aligned ditches. In addition to this field system, a series of undated ditches and pits are thought to have been Iron Age and Roman.

1.5 Acknowledgements

- 1.5.1 The author would like to thank Parsons Brinckerhoff on behalf of Northamptonshire County Council as the client. The project was managed by Aileen Connor and run by Helen Stocks-Morgan. The project was monitored by Lesley-Ann Mather of Northamptonshire County Council. The machining was undertaken by Lattenbury Plant hire.

2 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 The objective of this evaluation was to determine as far as reasonably possible the presence/absence, location, nature, extent, date, quality, condition and significance of any surviving archaeological deposits within the development area in order to ascertain whether any further works are necessary.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 The Brief required that three trenches, each 50 metres by two metres, were excavated as part of Phase 1.
- 2.2.2 Machine excavation was carried out under constant archaeological supervision with a tracked 15 tonne excavator using a toothless ditching bucket.
- 2.2.3 The site survey was carried out with a Leica GPS fitted with Smartnet.
- 2.2.4 Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal detector. All metal-detected and hand-collected finds were retained for inspection, other than those which were obviously modern.
- 2.2.5 All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using OA East's *pro-forma* sheets. Trench locations, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales and colour and monochrome photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits. These will be deposited in the archive.
- 2.2.6 Site conditions were damp underfoot, with a mixture of sun and rain. Machine movements were kept to a minimum to prevent disturbing winter grazing for horses, and this did not affect trench excavation.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 The results for each trench are presented below in numerical order (see figure 1 for the locations of the trenches). General descriptions and full details of the trenches have been given in Appendix A.

3.2 Trenches

- 3.2.1 The natural geology of the area consisted of sandstone that was overlain by firm mid reddish brown clay-silt (002) of between 0.05m and 0.34m thickness, which in turn was overlain by a friable dark greyish brown clay-silt topsoil layer (001) of between 0.1m and 0.33m thickness.

Trench 1

- 3.2.2 This 50m by 2m trench was located on a slope running from 97.8mOD at the west end to 95.8mOD at the east end. It contained a ditch (**013**), running north-east to south-west (see figure 2) with gentle sides and a concave base. This ditch was filled by a friable mid reddish brown silty clay (012). To the east of this ditch was a ditch terminus (**015**), again running north-east to south-west with steep sides and a concave base. It was filled by a friable mid reddish brown silty clay (014). A firm mid reddish brown silty clay (016) followed the slope of the land in getting deeper as it extended eastwards. This was probably a colluvium or hill wash. There were no finds in this trench.

Trench 2

- 3.2.3 This 50m by 2m trench was located on a slight slope from 96.6mOD at the south-west end to 96.2mOD at the north-east end. It contained two ditches (**003** and **008**), each running north-west to south east across the trench (see figure 2 and plate 1). Ditch **003** (see plate 2) had a gentle slope with a concave base and was filled by a loose dark brownish red clay-silt (004) overlying a friable dark brownish red clay-silt (005). Ditch **008**, to the north-east of ditch **003**, had a stepped edge to the south, a gentle slope on its northern side and a flat base. It was filled by a friable mid brownish red sandy silt (006) overlying a friable mid reddish brown clay-silt (007). To the north-east of ditch **008** was ditch terminus (**011**) with steep sides and a flat base. This terminus was filled by a loose dark brownish red sandy silt (009) overlying a friable mid reddish brown clay-silt (010). There was a small fragment of animal bone in fill 004 of ditch **003**.

Trench 4

- 3.2.4 No archaeological features were recorded in this 50m by 2m trench, which was located on a slope running from 94.3mOD at the west-south-west end to 93.3mOD at the east-north-east end, and sloped down from its northern edge by half-a-metre to the southern edge.

3.3 Finds summary

- 3.3.1 No artefacts were recovered from this evaluation. There was one ecofact – a small fragment of animal bone recovered from ditch **003**.

3.4 Environmental summary

- 3.4.1 No suitable archaeological deposits were identified for environmental samples to be taken during the evaluation.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Archaeology

- 4.1.1 This phase of the evaluation did not reveal any datable archaeology. Five ditches were found. Ditches **003**, **008** and **011** were aligned perpendicularly to **013** and **015**, and are all likely to represent part of an agricultural field system. Each of the ditches coincides with features that were identified by geophysics. The likelihood is that the undulating topography of the site limited the use of the area to agriculture, with settlements located on flatter land to the north, west and south.

4.2 Significance

- 4.2.1 The results of this evaluation indicate that there are limited archaeological remains within the area that was studied, with those that are present pertaining to agricultural field systems.

4.3 Recommendations

- 4.3.1 Recommendations for any future work based upon this report will be made by the County Archaeology Office.

APPENDIX A. TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

| Trench 1 | | | | | | |
|--|-------|-----------|-----------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|---------|
| General description | | | | | Orientation | E-W |
| Trench contained an undated ditch orientated north-east to south-west, and a ditch terminus running north-east to south-west, with colluvium at the eastern side of the trench. Consists of soil and subsoil overlying a natural of cornbrash. | | | | | Avg. depth (m) | 0.43 |
| | | | | | Width (m) | 2 |
| | | | | | Length (m) | 48.7 |
| Contexts | | | | | | |
| context no | type | Width (m) | Depth (m) | comment | finds | date |
| 001 | Layer | - | 0.13 | Topsoil | - | - |
| 002 | Layer | - | 0.3 | Subsoil | - | - |
| 012 | Fill | 0.9 | 0.18 | Fill of ditch 013 | - | - |
| 013 | Cut | 0.9 | 0.18 | Linear ditch | - | - |
| 014 | Fill | 0.9 | 0.3 | Fill of ditch terminus 015 | - | - |
| 015 | Cut | 0.9 | 0.3 | Ditch terminus | - | - |
| 016 | Layer | - | 0.43 | Colluvium | - | - |
| Trench 2 | | | | | | |
| General description | | | | | Orientation | NE-SW |
| Trench contained 2 linear ditches running north-west to south-east, and a ditch terminus running north-west to south-east. Consists of soil and subsoil overlying sandy limestone. | | | | | Avg. depth (m) | 0.44 |
| | | | | | Width (m) | 2 |
| | | | | | Length (m) | 50 |
| Contexts | | | | | | |
| context no | type | Width (m) | Depth (m) | comment | finds | date |
| 001 | Layer | - | 0.28 | Topsoil | - | - |
| 002 | Layer | - | 0.16 | Subsoil | - | - |
| 003 | Cut | 1.82 | 0.4 | Linear ditch | - | - |
| 004 | Fill | 0.52 | 0.32 | Upper fill of ditch 003 | Bone | - |
| 005 | Fill | 1.82 | 0.4 | Lower fill of ditch 003 | - | - |
| 006 | Fill | 2.05 | 0.08 | Upper fill of ditch 008 | - | - |
| 007 | Fill | 1.25 | 0.2 | Lower fill of ditch 008 | - | - |
| 008 | Cut | 2.05 | 0.3 | Linear ditch | - | - |
| 009 | Fill | 1.22 | 0.36 | Upper fill of ditch terminus 011 | - | - |
| 010 | Fill | 0.82 | 0.05 | Lower fill of ditch terminus 011 | - | - |
| 011 | Cut | 1.22 | 0.41 | Linear ditch | - | - |
| Trench 4 | | | | | | |
| General description | | | | | Orientation | ENE-WSW |

| Trench devoid of archaeology, but was disturbed by a field drain at the WSW end, and was shortened to avoid a sewage pipe to the south. Consists of soil and subsoil overlying a sandy limestone natural with sand patches. | | | | | Avg. depth (m) | 0.43 |
|---|-------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| | | | | | Width (m) | 2 |
| | | | | | Length (m) | 40.2 |
| Contexts | | | | | | |
| context no | type | Width (m) | Depth (m) | comment | finds | date |
| 001 | Layer | - | 0.21 | Topsoil | - | - |
| 002 | Layer | - | 0.22 | Subsoil | - | - |

APPENDIX B. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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APPENDIX C. OASIS REPORT FORM

All fields are required unless they are not applicable.

Project Details

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------------------|
| OASIS Number | <input type="text"/> | | |
| Project Name | <input type="text"/> | | |
| Project Dates (fieldwork) Start | <input type="text"/> | Finish | <input type="text"/> |
| Previous Work (by OA East) | <input type="text"/> | Future Work | <input type="text"/> |

Project Reference Codes

| | | | |
|-----------|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Site Code | <input type="text"/> | Planning App. No. | <input type="text"/> |
| HER No. | <input type="text"/> | Related HER/OASIS No. | <input type="text"/> |

Type of Project/Techniques Used

| | |
|------------------|----------------------|
| Prompt | <input type="text"/> |
| Development Type | <input type="text"/> |

Please select all techniques used:

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photography - interpretation | <input type="checkbox"/> Grab-Sampling | <input type="checkbox"/> Remote Operated Vehicle Survey |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photography - new | <input type="checkbox"/> Gravity-Core | <input type="checkbox"/> Sample Trenches |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Annotated Sketch | <input type="checkbox"/> Laser Scanning | <input type="checkbox"/> Survey/Recording Of Fabric/Structure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Augering | <input type="checkbox"/> Measured Survey | <input type="checkbox"/> Targeted Trenches |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dendrochronological Survey | <input type="checkbox"/> Metal Detectors | <input type="checkbox"/> Test Pits |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Documentary Search | <input type="checkbox"/> Phosphate Survey | <input type="checkbox"/> Topographic Survey |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Sampling | <input type="checkbox"/> Photogrammetric Survey | <input type="checkbox"/> Vibro-core |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fieldwalking | <input type="checkbox"/> Photographic Survey | <input type="checkbox"/> Visual Inspection (Initial Site Visit) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Geophysical Survey | <input type="checkbox"/> Rectified Photography | |

Monument Types/Significant Finds & Their Periods

List feature types using the [NMR Monument Type Thesaurus](#) and significant finds using the [MDA Object type Thesaurus](#) together with their respective periods. If no features/finds were found, please state "none".

| Monument | Period | Object | Period |
|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |

Project Location

| | | |
|------------|----------------------|---|
| County | <input type="text"/> | Site Address (including postcode if possible) |
| District | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| Parish | <input type="text"/> | |
| HER | <input type="text"/> | |
| Study Area | <input type="text"/> | National Grid Reference <input type="text"/> |

Project Originators

| | |
|---------------------------|----------------------|
| Organisation | <input type="text"/> |
| Project Brief Originator | <input type="text"/> |
| Project Design Originator | <input type="text"/> |
| Project Manager | <input type="text"/> |
| Supervisor | <input type="text"/> |

Project Archives

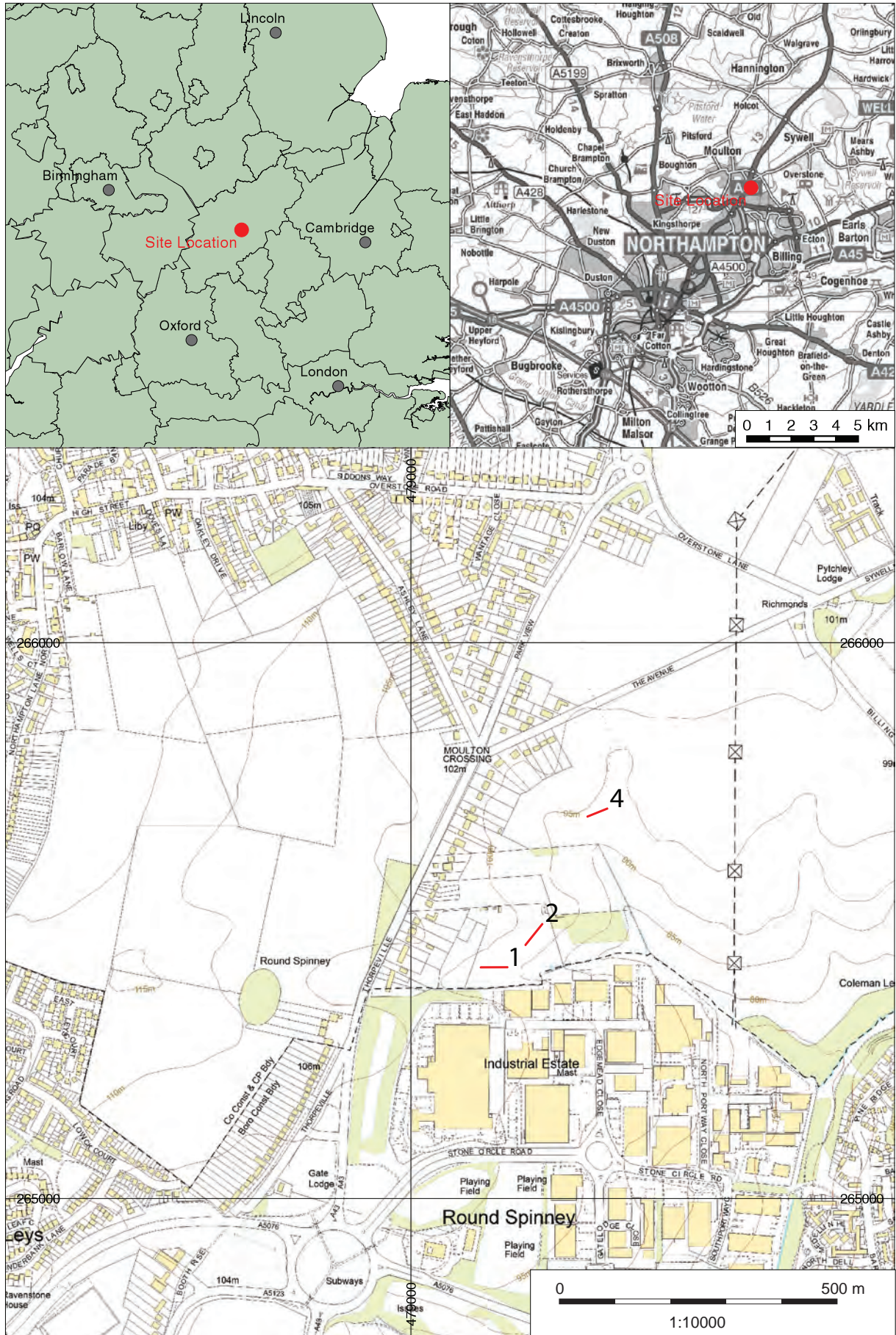
| Physical Archive | Digital Archive | Paper Archive |
|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |

Archive Contents/Media

| | Physical Contents | Digital Contents | Paper Contents |
|---------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
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| Ceramics | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Environmental | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
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| Human Bones | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Industrial | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Leather | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Metal | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Stratigraphic | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Survey | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Textiles | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Wood | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Worked Bone | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Worked Stone/Lithic | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| None | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| Digital Media | Paper Media |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Database | <input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photos |
| <input type="checkbox"/> GIS | <input type="checkbox"/> Context Sheet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Geophysics | <input type="checkbox"/> Correspondence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Images | <input type="checkbox"/> Diary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Illustrations | <input type="checkbox"/> Drawing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Moving Image | <input type="checkbox"/> Manuscript |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spreadsheets | <input type="checkbox"/> Map |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Survey | <input type="checkbox"/> Matrices |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Text | <input type="checkbox"/> Microfilm |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Virtual Reality | <input type="checkbox"/> Misc. |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Research/Notes |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Photos |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Plans |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Report |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Sections |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Survey |

Notes:



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Figure 1: Site location showing archaeological trenches (red)

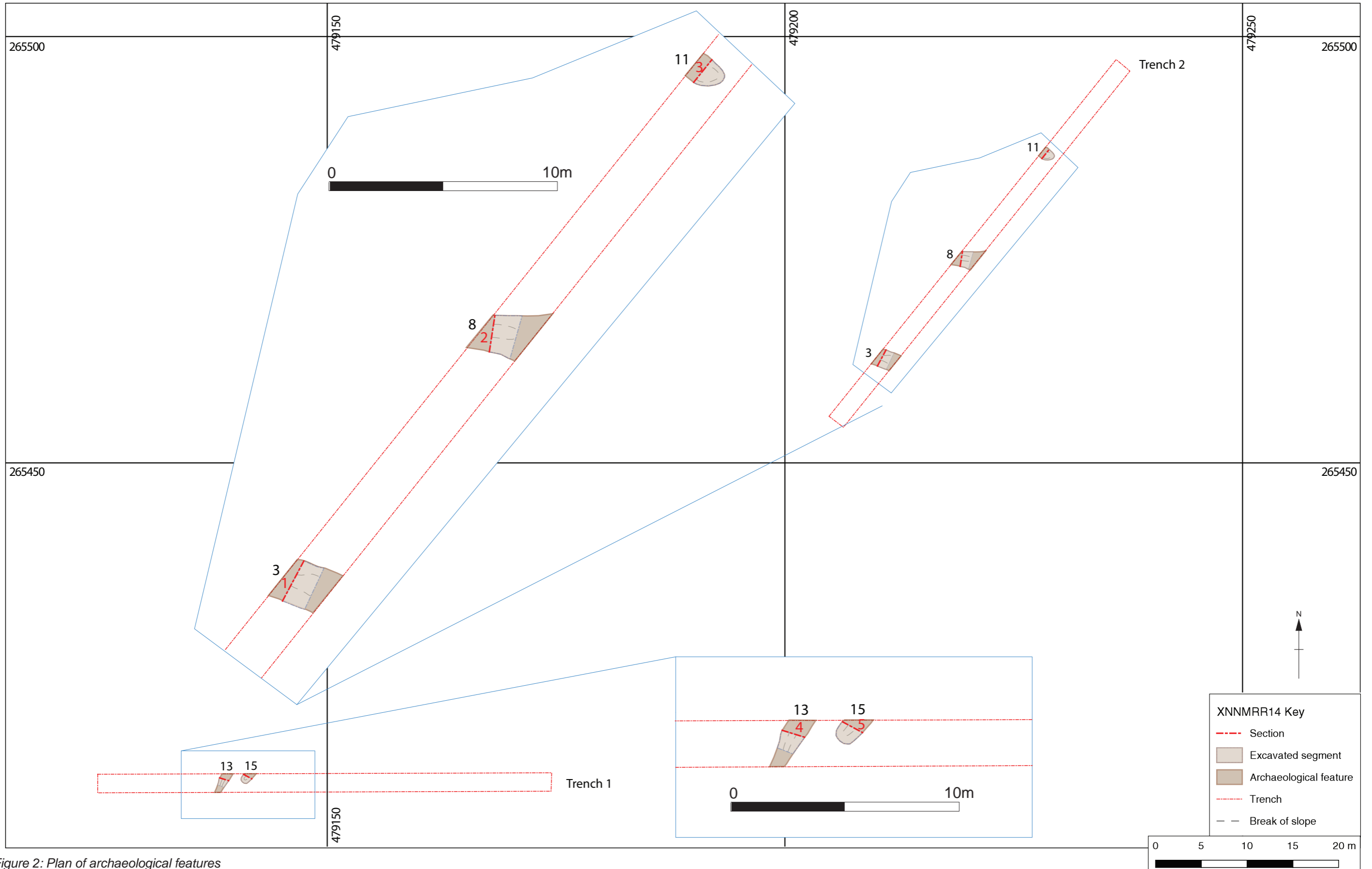


Figure 2: Plan of archaeological features



Plate 1: Photo of Trench 2, showing ditches **3** and **8** crossing the trench. Photo taken from the SW.



Plate 2: Photo of undated ditch **3**. Photo taken from the SE.



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