Land Opposite Windmill Banks Higham Ferrers Northamptonshire



Archaeological Excavation Interim Report



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LAND OPPOSITE WINDMILL BANKS, HIGHAM FERRERS

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION INTERIM REPORT

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LAND OPPOSITE WINDMILL BANKS, HIGHAM FERRERS ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION INTERIM REPORT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

O.T.	ЈММ	ARY	
		TRODUCTION	1
1		ROJECT BACKGROUND	
2		Location and scope of work	
		Geology and topography	
VI.		Archaeological and historical background	
3		XCAVATION METHODOLOGY	
		Fieldwork methods and recording	
		Finds	
		Palaeo-environmental evidence	
4		ESULTS	
		Distribution and summary of archaeological deposits	
		Preservation of archaeological deposits	
5	D	ESCRIPTION	4
	5.1	General	4
	5.2	Note on the phasing	4
	P1	nase 1 Middle Saxon (7th-9th centuries AD)	4
	P1	hase 2 Late Saxon (9th-11th centuries AD)	4
		hase 3 Medieval (12th-14th centuries AD)	
	P	hase 4 Late medieval (15th century)	5
		hase 5 Post-medieval and modern	
6		INDS	
	6.1	Pottery	6
	6.2	Animal bone	7
	6.3	Small Finds	7
	6.4	Environmental remains	7
7	P	ROVISIONAL INTERPRETATION	7
	7.1	Phase 1 Middle Saxon (7th - 9th centuries)	7
	7.2	Phase 2 Late Saxon (9th - 11th centuries)	8
	7.3	Phase 3 Medieval (12th -14th centuries)	8
	7.4	Phase 4 Late medieval (15th century)	8

•	7.5 Phase 5 Post-medieval (16th century - present)	8
8	POST-EXCAVATION ANALYSIS	9
8	8.1 Introduction	9
8	8.2 Research potential	g
	Middle Saxon	9
	Late Saxon	9
	Medieval	10
	Post-medieval	
9	LOCATION OF ARCHIVE	10
10	Bibliography	10
11	APPENDICES	
1	Appendix 1: Archive quantification	11
	Appendix 2: Finds quantification	
	Appendix 3: Assessment of pottery	
	Appendix 4: Assessment of the metalwork and bone assemblages	
	Appendix 5: Animal Bone Assessment	
	Appendix 6: Assessment of the charred plant remains	
	-	

SUMMARY

Excavations by Oxford Archaeology on land opposite Windmill Banks, Higham Ferrers revealed Saxon, medieval and post-medieval occupation and activity. The most significant features were a Middle Saxon enclosure ditch, a late Saxon sunken featured building and the remnants of a fifteenth century pottery kiln.

1 INTRODUCTION

This interim report is intended to provide a brief summary of the 1.1 archaeological results and an assessment of their significance in the light of the post-excavation research priorities established for the overall Kings (Kings Meadow Meadow Lane project Lane. Higham Northamptonshire. Post-excavation Assessment and Research Design OA 2002). It is intended that the results of this excavation will be fully published together with the evidence that has been collected from the other investigations, thus bringing the Saxon and medieval evidence together in one volume. Detailed analysis of the records and materials collected from this excavation will take place at a later date and any interpretations and phasing reported here should be regarded as provisional only.

2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

2.1 Location and scope of work

2.1.1 The development area lies to the north of Kings Meadow Lane and to the west of Windmill Banks, on the northern outskirts of modern Higham Ferrers limits, centred on NGR SP 9599 6926. Prior to excavation the northern part of the site was a green open area while the southern area was the site of a disused electricity substation and also formerly occupied by Chamberlains factory site.

2.2 Geology and topography

2.2.1 The underlying geology consists of limestone rich clays and silts. The site is situated between 61 and 64m OD, sloping down from north to south.

2.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 2.3.1 The development area lies on the northern outskirts of Higham Ferrers, immediately north-east of a major focus of middle and late Saxon and early medieval activity. This fieldwork represents the last phase of a series of excavations in the area starting in 1995 and continuing in 2001 and 2002. These excavations revealed a large middle Saxon enclosure with associated buildings, evidence for late Saxon and early medieval activity, and a late medieval pottery kiln.
- 2.3.2 Part of the northern area of the site was subject to an evaluation by OA in 1995 (OAU 1996).
- 2.3.3 An estate map of 1773 shows the location of the site as an area of common land, bordered to the west by ridge and furrow arable plots.

3 EXCAVATION METHODOLOGY

3.1 Fieldwork methods and recording

Owing to the lack of room for spoil around the site, and the obligation to 3.1.1 maintain the public footpath across the centre of the site, it was excavated in two stages. The southern area, which mainly encompassed the northern edge of the Chamberlains Factory site and the area of the disused electricity substation, was excavated, fully recorded and backfilled. The northern area, which included most of the evaluation area investigated in 1996, was then investigated. In both areas the overburden was removed to the level of the highest significant archaeological horizon. This was done under close archaeological supervision using a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket. The area was cleaned by hand and the revealed features were excavated to determine their extent and nature, and to retrieve finds. All archaeological features were planned at a scale of 1:50 and, where excavated, their sections were drawn at 1:20. Features were photographed using colour slide and black and white print. Recording followed procedures laid down in the OAU Fieldwork Manual (Wilkinson 1992).

3.2 Finds

3.2.1 Finds were recovered by hand during the course of the excavation and bagged by context. Finds of special interest were given a unique small find number.

Archaeological Excavation Interim Report

3.3 Palaeo-environmental evidence

3.3.1 Environmental samples were taken from a range of features in order to inform discussion on the ancient environment, farming and subsistence as well as providing a fine screen for small finds in particular features. The selection of sampled deposits was achieved after consultation with Lisa Moffet (of English Heritage).

4 RESULTS

4.1 Distribution and summary of archaeological deposits

- 4.1.1 The archaeological deposits were fairly evenly distributed across the site, although their frequency tailed off towards the north-east. To the extreme south of the site considerable truncation was evident due to excavations on construction of the Chamberlain's factory site, and an electricity substation.
- 4.1.2 The northern part of the site was dominated by ditches and stone-built drains although considerable pitting had occurred, and fragmentary walls and surfaces survived. To the south was the base of a pottery kiln cut by a succession of linear ditches. These ditches were mirrored by a similar sequence to the south with a stone wall marking their final phase. A rubble trackway, oriented WSW-ENE, was identified between these two sets of ditches. A post-medieval well with associated surfacing was located in the south-east of the excavation area.

4.2 Preservation of archaeological deposits

4.2.1 The patchy nature of many of the walls and the related surfaces suggests truncation over the site as a whole - probably due to ploughing, which it is believed continued into the late 1970's. The preservation of cut features however was mainly good, and bone and pottery generally survived well within the predominantly silty clay fills.

5 DESCRIPTION

5.1 General

5.1.1 Over the northern part of the site the natural clays (15005) were overlain by up to 0.2m of a grey silty clay plough-soil (15002), which in turn was overlain by a dark brown clay loam topsoil (15265). To the south layer 15002 had been removed and replaced by a modern made ground (15001). All archaeological features were sealed by layers 15001 or 15002.

5.2 Note on the phasing

5.2.1 The provisional phasing of the site is based on the stratigraphic sequence and the spot-dating of the pottery. While the stratigraphic sequence was for the most part clear, it is expected that further post-excavation analysis will refine the chronology of the phasing.

Phase 1 Middle Saxon (7th-9th centuries AD)

- 5.2.2 The eastern arm of the enclosure ditch identified in the 1996 evaluation was located. Much of the ditch (15370) is now under a recent housing development. However, enough was accessible to enable limited excavation. While the fills yielded no dating material additional to that recovered from previous excavations, it was noted that the upper fill of the ditch had spread up to 3.5 m to the east, and had formed a layer (15423) up to 0.2m deep. It is possible that this material (a mid reddish-brown silty clay) is the remnant of a bank east of the ditch that eroded out over time. This layer is cut by many of the features that provisionally date to the late Saxon period.
- 5.2.3 Neither the enclosure ditch nor the silty clay layer (15423) was revealed in the southern part of the excavation. However, it was understood that it could have been truncated by the later medieval activity revealed in the southern area. Therefore, after consultation with Planning Archaeologist Myk Flitcroft, it was agreed that, before the final backfilling, a W-E oriented machine slot would be inserted into the western baulk at the junction of the two excavation areas, to test for the presence or absence of the enclosure ditch at this point. The machine excavated slot (see Figure 2) revealed no evidence of the ditch or the silty clay layer.
- 5.2.4 A second N-S oriented ditch (15165) may also belong to this period, and represent an addition to the enclosure. Again no pottery was recovered from the fills, but ten bone needles, many complete, were found closely clustered together in a basal fill (Pl. 1). Swan bones were also recovered from secure contexts possibly indicative of high status settlement (see Appendix 4).

Phase 2 Late Saxon (9th-11th centuries AD)

5.2.5 A large ditch (15190), oriented NW-SE, extended from the western site limit

before turning due south, and continued beyond the southern limit of the excavation area. This ditch cut the Phase 1 layer 15423 and was in turn cut by early medieval pitting. A smaller ditch (15330) on a N-S alignment, and another (15160) running west-east to the south of the site, also belong to this period, and taken together the three form parts of one or more enclosures. Within this a sunken featured building (15300) and a ring ditch with associated postholes (15365) were identified. It is possible that the ring ditch (measuring approximately 5 m in diameter) had an agricultural function, potentially drying hay, with the ditch catching water run off. Several pits also date to this period, the largest of which are located to the extreme east of the site.

Phase 3 Medieval (12th-14th centuries AD)

- 5.2.6 The earliest activity in this phase is represented by a large ditch (15320), over two metres wide at points, oriented NE-SW and extending across the north of the site. Loosely grouped close to the eastern side of the ditch are a number of pits. Some of these pits are very sheer sided, undercutting in places, and may be interpreted as quarry pits. A later development of this phase is represented by a number of drains and lightly founded walls and surfaces. These have been heavily truncated, probably by post-medieval ploughing.
- 5.2.7 A short section of wall (15381) and associated robber trench are all that remains of a potentially fairly substantial building. The more ephemeral walls and surfaces to the north-west (15495) may represent an annex to this building. Two stone-lined drains with a 'v' profile are associated with these structures. Another series of drains with a square profile run into a rubble filled soakaway. These drains do not clearly relate to any surviving structures, but given the level of truncation, other buildings could have existed on the site.
- 5.2.8 At least three ovens or hearths (e.g. 15294) were identified that do not appear to relate to the structures as currently understood, and seem to be late in the sequence (one overlies ditch 15320, another truncates a stretch of wall) perhaps signifying a further change in the function of the site towards the end of the early medieval period.

Phase 4 Late medieval (15th century)

- 5.2.9 No features of this date were identified in the northern part of the site.
- 5.2.10 The principal remains of this phase are represented by the heavily truncated remains of a late medieval pottery kiln (15275) and possibly associated cobbled surfaces (?drying areas). The kiln appeared to be very similar in construction to that found in the excavation to the south, in the factory grounds (OA 2002b), and produced similar grey reduced ware pottery. A large pit situated to the southeast of the kiln may have been a clay quarry.

- 5.2.11 To the south of the kiln two N-S oriented ditches (15170 and 15080) may have demarcated access to the kiln.
- 5.2.12 To the south-east of the excavation area a trackway surfaced with limestone rubble was identified (15105). The trackway ran WSW-ENE and was bordered by a sequence of boundary ditches to the north (15350, 15355 and 15360), and two sets of ditches later replaced by limestone walls to the south (15009 and 15010). A gap between these two walls would have allowed access from the trackway to the south. The trackway follows the same route as a current footpath.
 - 5.2.13 The trackway appears to post-date the kiln activity, as the northernmost track boundary ditch (15350) cuts the base of the kiln, and the southern sequence cuts ditch (15180). All of these boundary ditches contain large amounts of reduced wares, which are also present in the matrix of the trackway. While the pottery may derive from the earlier kiln, it is also possible that there was another kiln to the south, in the area truncated by the ground works relating to the Chamberlain's factory site.

Phase 5 Post-medieval and modern

- 5.2.14 A single curving ditch (15325) was identified in the northern part of the site. A stone-lined well (15155) and associated surfaces and features were identified in the extreme south-east of the site dating to the 19th century. Two narrow ditches may form part of an enclosure.
- 5.2.15 Evidence was revealed of the terracing of the southern part of the site and the installation of an electricity substation. Two geotechnical pits, excavated in the early 1990's, were also identified.
- 6 FINDS
- 6.1 Pottery
- 6.1.1 The pottery assemblage comprised 6,570 sherds weighing 63,573g. The majority of the material (5660 sherds) was late medieval in date and represented waste from pottery production on, or in the vicinity of the site. Most of the remainder of the pottery was of Late Saxon or early medieval date, with a few Middle Saxon and post medieval sherds present.

6.2 Animal bone

6.2.1 The animal bone assemblage comprised 2314 fragments of bone and teeth weighing 23,831g. The bone from phase 1 and 2 deposits was dominated by cattle, sheep/goat, pig and bird species. The bone from phase 3 and 4 deposits has less pig and bird species present, although cattle and sheep/goat remains are still well represented.

6.3 Small Finds

6.3.1 There were 45 small finds including ten bone needles and one other piece of worked bone, three copper buckles, three silver coins, one copper coin, a quern stone fragment and several miscellaneous iron and lead objects.

6.4 Environmental remains

6.4.1 Samples were taken from the sunken featured building, one Middle Saxon and several Late Saxon ditch fills, the kiln, an oven, and several medieval ditches and pits. At present these have only been subject to characterisation to determine their potential. The majority of the samples appear to offer fairly good potential for further more detailed analysis.

7 PROVISIONAL INTERPRETATION

7.1 Phase 1 Middle Saxon (7th - 9th centuries)

7.1.1 The first phase of activity on the site consisted of two ditches - the eastern arm of the large enclosure ditch, and a smaller (later?) ditch to the south. Although no further dating evidence was recovered from the enclosure ditch, its interpreted phasing is supported by the stratigraphy. As far as could be determined by the excavation and the supplementary machine slot, the enclosure ditch did not extend into the southern part of the site, and appears to curve to the west and terminate (possibly as suggested on Figure 2). The other ditch, from which ten bone needles were recovered, may represent a later extension of the enclosure, possibly indicating a change in function, and conceivably a counterpart to the straight extension on the west side of the enclosure found in the 2001 excavation.

7.2 Phase 2 Late Saxon (9th - 11th centuries)

7.2.1 The second phase of activity consists of two possible foci of Late Saxon occupation. The large ditch which cuts the Phase 1 enclosure ditch appears to limit one focus of occupation activity to the south and west, with just a scatter of rubbish pits to the north and east. Another ditch, this one orientated west-east, may mark the southern extent of this settlement area. The north-south aligned ditch, (to the north of the large ditch) encloses the area occupied by the sunken featured building. The ring gully feature remains problematic in its interpretation at this juncture, although further research may shed some light on its function.

7.3 Phase 3 Medieval (12th -14th centuries)

7.3.1 It appears likely that much of the evidence for activity during this phase has been subject to considerable truncation. Although there is evidence for occupation (i.e. the walls and surfaces) its nature and status remain unclear. It seems probable that one or more buildings or structures have disappeared from the archaeological record entirely. Several of the drains (those associated with the soakaway for example) no longer appear to be draining away from anything structural, and possibly survive only because they are cut features. There is potentially more than one sub-phase within this phase

7.4 Phase 4 Late medieval (15th century)

7.4.1 It appears likely that nearly all the activity on the site at this time relates to the production of reduced ware pottery. Many of the boundary ditches around the rubble trackway are full of this material. The rubble cores of the two walls, the material of the trackway and some of the surfaces also contain reduced ware. It is probable that reduced wares of this type were continuing to be produced on the site after the demise of the kiln described above, although the overall number of kilns in operation is at present unclear. The two N-S orientated ditches may have delineated an earlier droveway, or they may represent access to the kiln site. They contain considerably less reduced ware than other features of this phase in the vicinity.

7.5 Phase 5 Post-medieval (16th century - present)

The well and associated surfaces may be the remains of the backyards of a series of buildings shown on the estate map of 1737. These houses would therefore have been located in the area now under the pavement to the east of the site. The linear features may correspond to field boundaries also recorded

on this map. The remainder of features grouped with this phase are modern and contain varying amounts of modern rubbish.

8 POST-EXCAVATION ANALYSIS

8.1 Introduction

- 8.1.1 It is accepted that the best way to satisfy the analysis and publication requirement of the archaeological evidence from this site should be to incorporate it into the analysis programme for the adjacent Saxon and medieval sites (OA 2002). The details of the programme will not be reiterated here but it is worth summarising the research potential of this site, and how the evidence will contribute to the proposed programme.
- 8.1.2 The overall research potential for the site is assessed below, and Appendices 3,4 and 5 detail the proposed artefactual and ecofactual analsis. However, it is anticipated that the proposed post-excavation seminar may well inspire additional and more refined research questions.

8.2 Research potential.

- 8.2.1 Chronologically the site fits within the parameters of the proposed publication.
- 8.2.2 Each phase of activity identified on the site will add to the overall understanding of the Kings Meadow Lane area in the following ways:

Middle Saxon

Despite the disturbance and truncation of later activity, the overall layout of the enclosure complex is now potentially much clearer. The provisional impression that there is at least a degree of symmetry between the east and west sides of the enclosure can now be examined in detail.

Material from the possible enclosure extension ditch 15165, principally one of the bone needles and the swan bone, will be submitted for radiocarbon dating. The results, apart from their value in dating the ditch, will provide a valuable comparison with the radiocarbon dates already recovered for the burial in the enclosure extension ditch revealed in the 2001 excavation.

Late Saxon

The excavation has clarified the relationship between this phase of occupation and the preceding enclosure complex. How this occupation related to both the embryonic N-S road (now Windmill Banks), and the suggested possible route

southwest to link with Kings Meadow Lane will inform understanding of the settlement form and character.

The sunken featured building appears to be considerably later in date than those excavated during the 1995 and 2001 fieldwork, and as such is unusual. Close examination of its structure and associated finds and features may shed light on the character of the settlement.

Medieval

Although not of high priority in terms of the original research programme, and compromised by the apparent truncation of significant parts of the stratigraphy, the medieval evidence, in conjunction with that from the Chamberlains Factory excavation (HFCF02) is important to enhance understanding of the area at a time when it was on the northern outskirts of the established medieval borough. The changing nature of the medieval activity, although as yet imperfectly understood, clearly points to a fluid and dynamic settlement character.

The later medieval evidence, apparently centred around pottery production, suggests a more focussed and functional role for the area. Again, in conjunction with the kiln related evidence from HFCF02, the two (excavated) kilns and their associated features represent an opportunity to examine the working methods of an example of a late medieval industrial site.

Post-medieval

Although the post-medieval evidence is of low priority in the research agenda it does appear to confirm the cartographic evidence, and provides archaeological evidence of the recent evolution of the local landscape.

9 LOCATION OF ARCHIVE

9.1 The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX20ES, and will be deposited with a suitable archive facility within Northamptonshire when this is available.

10 BIBLIOGRAPHY

OA 2002 Kings Meadow Lane, Higham Ferrers Northamptonshire - Post-excavation Assessment and Research Design

OA 2002b Chamberlains Factory Higham Ferrers, Northamptonshire Archaeological Excavation - Interim Report

OAU 1996 Land off Station Road /North End Higham Ferrers - Evaluation Report

Wilkinson 1992, OAU Fieldwork Manual

11 APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Archive quantification

CONTEXTS (No's 15000 - 15572)

Void - 3

573 contexts listed on 19 context register sheets.

Recorded on 573 context sheets and 55 additional sheets.

SECTIONS (No's 2000 - 2121)

Void - none

122 sections listed on 4 section register sheets.

Recorded on 90 A4 permatrace sheets.

PLANS (No's 1000 - 1019)

23 plans listed on 1 plan register sheet.

10 recorded on A1 permatrace.

13 recorded on A4 permatrace.

LEVELS (sheet no's 1 - 9)

Levels listed on 9 level register sheets.

PHOTOGRAPHS (film no's 300 - 317)

18 black and white print films.

18 colour slide films.

ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLES (No's 800 - 813)

14 environmental samples listed on 3 environmental sample register sheets.

SMALL FINDS (No's 4000 - 4044)

45 small finds listed on 2 small find register sheets.

Appendix 2: Finds quantification

POTTERY

6,570 sherds weighing 63,573g

ANIMAL BONE

23,831g of animal bone

CBM

44 sherds weighing 1703g

FLINT

5 pieces weighing 45g

CLAY PIPE

13 pieces weighing 51g

FIRED CLAY

149 pieces weighing 7530g

GLASS

16 pieces weighing 262g

SLAG

17 pieces weighing 459g

SMALL FINDS

- 1 bone pendant
- 10 bone needles
- 1 bone pin
- 3 copper alloy buckles
- 1 copper alloy coin
- 1 copper alloy strap end
- 1 copper alloy brooch
- 3 silver coins
- 1 quern stone
- 1 iron key
- 1 1ron hook
- 1 lead loom weight
- 1 copper alloy miscellaneous object
- 10 iron miscellaneous objects
- 1 silver miscellaneous object
- 7 lead miscellaneous objects
- 1 stone miscellaneous object

Appendix 3: Assessment of pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 6,570 sherds with a total weight of 63,573g. The estimated vessel equivalent (EVE), by summation of surviving rimsherd circumference was 23.17. The range of ware types present indicates that there was post-Roman activity at the site from around the 8th or 9th century onwards, with most pottery dating to two distinct periods, one to around the time of the Norman Conquest, and the other to the 15th century, when there was a Reduced ware pottery kiln in use. There is some evidence to suggest that this kiln may date to the second half of the 15th century, and thus supersede that which was operating at the nearby Chamberlains Factory site (HFCF02).

The range of forms and fabrics of the pottery made at this kiln is similar to that from the other one, although there appear to be some differences in the area of rimforms in particular.

Fabrics

The middle Saxon and later pottery assemblage comprised types which are all well-known within the county, and thus the material was quantified using the chronology and coding system of the Northamptonshire County Ceramic Type-Series (CTS), as follows:

F95: Ipswich Ware Group 1 fabrics, c.AD725-850. 1 sherd, 10 g, EVE = 0.

F97: Raunds-type Maxey Ware, c. AD650 – 850. 5 sherds, 185 g, EVE = 0.22.

F100: T1(1) type St. Neots Ware, AD850-1100. 91 sherds, 843 g, EVE = 1.64.

F102: Thetford-type ware, AD850-1100. 5 sherds, 273 g, EVE = 0.

F200: T1 (2) type St. Neots Ware, AD1000-1200. 333 sherds, 2150 g, EVE = 1.42.

F205: Stamford ware, AD850-1250. 36 sherds, 300 g, EVE = 0.64.

F330: Shelly Coarseware, AD1100-1400. 288 sherds, 2163 g, EVE = 2.15.

F360: Miscellaneous Sandy Coarsewares, AD1100-1400. 2 sherds, 15g, EVE = 0.

F319: Lyveden/Stanion 'A' ware, AD1150-1400. 9 sherds, 122g, EVE = 0.12.

F320: Lyveden/Stanion 'B' ware, AD1225-1400. 11 sherds, 191 g, EVE = 0.12.

F329: Potterspury ware, AD1250-1600. 42 sherds, 476 g, EVE = 0.04.

F322: Lyveden/Stanion 'D' ware, AD1400-?1500. 1 sherd, 3 g, EVE = 0.

F365: Late Medieval Reduced ware, AD1400-?1500. 5660 sherds, 54998 g, EVE = 16.35.

F369: Brill/Boarstall 'Tudor Green' types, late 15th 17th century. 1 sherd, 1 g, EVE = 0.

F401: Late Medieval Oxidized ware, ?AD1450-?1500. 7 sherds, 177g, EVE = 0.18.

F403: Midland Purple ware, AD1450-1600. 17 sherds, 197 g, EVE = 0.07.

F404: Cistercian ware, AD1470-1550. 3 sherds, 12 g, EVE = 0.12.

F407: Red Earthenwares, AD1400+. 27 sherds, 248 g, EVE = 0.

F408: Rhenish Stonewares, AD1450+. 3 sherds, 38 g, EVE = 0.10.

F409: Staffordshire slipware, AD1680-1750. 1 sherd, 3 g, EVE = 0.

F411: Midland Blackware, AD1550-1700. 1 sherd, 41 g, EVE = 0.

F413: Manganese Glazed ware, late 17th - 18th century. 1 sherd, 5 g, EVE = 0.

F415: Creamware, mid 18th – early 19th century. 3 sherds, 3 g, EVE = 0.

F426: Iron-glazed Earthenware, late 17th – 19th century. 6 sherds, 109 g, EVE = 0.

F429: Staffordshire White Salt-Glazed Stoneware, 1720-80. 1 sherd, 3 g, EVE = 0.

In addition, 7 sherds (24 g) of miscellaneous 19th and 20th century wares were noted, along with 4 sherds (213 g) of Romano-British material.

In addition, a small assemblage of hand-built early/middle Anglo-Saxon wares were noted, as follows:

F1: Chaff-tempered. Moderate to dense chaff voids up to 4mm, rare quartz grains up to 1mm. 1 sherd, 4 g, EVE = 0.

F2: Sparse quartz up to 1mm, few other visible inclusions. 2 sherds, 64 g, EVE = 0.

All the fabrics are well-known in the area. The range of pottery types present suggests that there was virtually unbroken activity at the site from the middle Saxon period until the present day, with the bulk of the assemblage made up of Late Medieval Reduced ware waste from the kiln. This will be considered in greater detail below.

In addition, two sherds of red-painted Stamford ware were noted. These are extremely unusual finds at sites outside the eponymous production centre, and are thought to date to the earliest years of the industry's life (Kilmurry 1980, 34-7), the second half of the 9th century.

Chronology

Each context-specific assemblage was given a seriated phase-date based on the methodology defined in the Northamptonshire County Ceramic Type-Series (Tables 1 and 2, below). In this case, the range of fabric types present suggests that there was occupation at the site from the early Saxon period until just after the Norman conquest, the another period of activity in the 15th century.

Table 1: RSP Phases and Major Defining Wares for the Post-Roman Ceramics of Northamptonshire c. 450-1100

RSP Phase	Defining Wares	Chronology
ES	Decorated Early Saxon	<u>c</u> . AD450-650
E/MS	Undecorated Early/Middle Saxon	<u>c</u> . AD450-850**
MS	Ipswich Ware, Maxey-type Wares	<u>c</u> . AD650-850
LS1	T1(4) St. Neots Ware	<u>c</u> . AD850-900
LS2	T1(3) St. Neots Ware, Stamford Ware, Northampton Ware	<u>c</u> . AD900-975
LS3	Cotswolds-type Oolitic Ware	<u>c</u> . AD975-1000
LS4	T1(2) St. Neots Ware	<u>c</u> . AD1000-1100

Table 2: RSP Phases and Major Defining Wares for the Medieval Ceramics of Northamptonshire

RSP Phase	Defining Wares	Chronology
Ph0	Shelly Coarsewares, Sandy Coarsewares	<u>c</u> . AD1100-1150
Ph1	Lyveden/Stanion 'A' Ware	c. AD1150-1225
Ph2/0	Lyveden/Stanion 'B', Brill/Boarstall ware	c. AD1225-1250
Ph2/2*	Potterspury Ware	<u>c</u> . AD1250-1300
Ph3/2	Raunds-type Reduced Ware	<u>c</u> . AD1300-1400
Ph4	Lyveden/Stanion 'D' Ware	<u>c</u> . AD1400-1450
Ph5	Late Medieval Oxidized Ware	<u>c</u> . AD1450-1500

The pottery occurrence per ceramic phase is shown in Table 3:

Table 3: Pottery occurrence per ceramic phase, all post-Roman fabrics

Phase	No sherds	Wt sherds (g)	EVE
MS	3	146	0.12
LS1	22	260	0.41
LS2	50	429	0.89
LS3	0		101 T 301
LS4	205	1389	0.55
Ph0	330	3369	2.65
Ph1	14	136	0.12
Ph2/0	21	303	0.37
Ph2/2	33	463	0.13
Ph4	4214	39355	11.43
Ph5	1432	15349	6.25
Total	6324	60364	21.5

The general pattern is comparable with that at the other Higham Ferrers sites excavated during the course of this project. It is virtually identical to the pattern at HFCF02 with the majority of the activity (excluding late medieval pottery production) dating to the later part of the late Saxon and early medieval period, then low levels of pottery deposition until the kilns are established. At HFKML01, the site appears to have been abandoned as a settlement by the first half of the 12th century. Conversely, the two sites at which Reduced ware was produced show relatively low levels of post-Roman activity until around the time of the Norman conquest.

The kiln waste

The material from the kiln, fabric F365, comprised 5660 sherds (54998 g, EVE = 16.35). As with the material from the kiln at the nearby HFCF02 site, the material was all unglazed, and undecorated apart from stabbing on handles. The range of vessels was also very similar, comprising jars (EVE = 1.04), pancheons (EVE = 5.90) and jugs/cisterns (EVE = 9.41). No other forms were present, although a few handles from skillets or dripping dishes were noted.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the kiln is the chronology. The material has been given a provisional 15th century date which corresponds with the general floruit of the tradition, but at this site, where kiln waste was found with broadly contemporary or later pottery of other types, it suggests that the kiln was in use during the middle to late 15th century. This is reflected in the pottery occurrence data (Table 3, above), where all the pottery from ceramic phases Ph4 and Ph5 is kiln waste, along with small quantities of other wares. In the case of the Ph4 groups, all the pottery which is not kiln waste is residual early material. The data is shown in detail in Table 4 (below). The table shows that c 28% (by weight) of the Reduced ware is in contexts that can be dated to the second half of the 15th century. This will be examined at the report stage and the stratigraphic matrix consulted to allow any adjusted of context-specific chronology is possible; it seems likely that at least some of the Ph4 groups may be later, and lack the necessary defining wares.

Table 4: Pottery Occurrence by fabric type, late medieval ceramic phases (by weight in g)

Phase	Medieval	F365	F369	F401	F403	F404	F408
Ph4	1006g	38349g	0	0	0	0	0
Ph5	191g	15001g	1g	71g	61g	9g	15g

This would suggest that this kiln was a replacement for the kiln at the nearby HFCF02 site, which was given an archaeomagnetic date of 1385-1435 for its latest use (Linford 2002).

As with the other kiln, the range of forms etc will be fully analysed and published at the report stage. While the pottery produced at this site is very similar, there do appear to be a few differences, mainly in the area of rimforms.

Assessment

Non-kiln material

The non-kiln material from this site will be analysed and published along with the material from the previous excavations (sites HFKML01 and HFCF02). This will require databases to be integrated and the appropriate tables/analyses as defined in the assessment of that site to be updated, and will require one day's work.

Kiln waste

The report will concentrate mainly on the typological traits of the pottery. Each vessel type has a range of rimforms which will be illustrated, and the size range and occurrence of each type examined and discussed. The range of types of feature sherds such as handles, bungholes and bases will also be examined and, where appropriate, illustrated.

Analysis of assemblage: 2 days

Discussion of results, including comparison with material from the other kiln: 1 day Catalogue and preparation of vessels for illustration, report preparation, general liaison, editing, etc: 1 day

Total = 4 days

A small collection of sherds demonstrating the range of the fabric will be lodged with the Northamptonshire Ceramic County Type Series for future integration into the resource.

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Appendix 4: Assessment of the metalwork and bone assemblages by Leigh Allen

A total of 59 metal objects and 11 bone objects were recovered from the excavations at Higham Ferrers, Land opposite Windmill Banks. The metalwork assemblage comprises 4 silver objects, 9 copper alloy objects, 39 iron objects and 7 lead objects. The metalwork has not been x-rayed at this stage but it is recommended that all the objects are x-rayed before full analysis takes place.

In general the copper alloy assemblage is in a reasonable condition, however the ironwork is highly corroded and fragmentary. The objects range in date from the Roman period through to the present with the bulk of the assemblage dating from the late 15th century. There are however a number of objects of metal and bone that date to the Saxon period.

Methodology

The objects have been visually examined, the preliminary identification together with other basic details including contextual information, dimensions and a description have been recorded on the finds assessment database. X-radiography will be necessary for more detailed identification of a selection of the metalwork together with some cleaning to complete the next stage of work.

The objects have been grouped according to function; coins, personal items, tools, horsegear, structural objects (including nails) and miscellaneous fragments. The miscellaneous category includes fragments of sheet, strips and unidentifiable fragments, there are a further 5 objects that are categorised under the heading 'query' these are the objects that require further x-radiography /investigation before they can be identified.

The assemblage will be discussed by material and by function and then briefly summarised by phase.

Coins and Jetons

Four coins and one jeton were recovered from the excavation. The earliest is a Roman coin SF 4030 dating to the late 3rd century that was recovered from context 15322. The remaining three coins are silver; a Viking coin of St Edmund (SF 4028) dating to AD 885-915 was recovered from context 15265; an Edward I penny (SF 4032) dating to AD 1278-1307 came from context 15494 and a small fragment from a clipped coin SF 4033 was recovered from context 15520. The single Nuremburg jeton from context 15006 is probably Hans Krauwinkel II (1586-1635).

Personal items (copper alloy and silver)

A total of 5 objects associated with dress were recovered from the excavation 3 of these items were buckles. SF 4034 from context 15520 is a small oval buckle with a lipped frame and a folded plate. The frame has an offset bar and the plate is recessed for the pin (which is still insitu) and it has two rivets to attach the plate to the strap.

Similar examples recovered from London date from the late 14th-early 15th century (Egan and Pritchard 1991, 74-75, Fig. 45, Nos 306-310). SF 4021 is another oval buckle with a lipped frame; this example is also bevelled and it has an integral forked spacer. It is from a composite buckle, which would have had the plates soldered to the spacer. This distinctive form of buckle appears to have been a widespread mid 14th-early 15th century form in this country (Egan and Pritchard 1991, 78-82). The third buckle SF 4015 from context 15130 has an elongated oval frame with a folded sheet metal plate; there are 2 rivet holes through the plates to secure the buckle to the strap. A fourth possible strap fitting is SF 4037 from context 15523 is a tongue-shaped fragment of sheet with 2 small circular perforations through the centre. A single lace tag was recovered from context 15246; the edges of the sheet overlap along the length of the lace. Tags such as these were commonly used throughout the 15th century and well into the 16th and 17th century.

SF 4038 from context 15423 is a possible pendant, in the form of an equal-arm cross with a circular domed centre and has decorated bosses at the end of the arms. Two opposing arms are forked above the boss and transversely perforated forming a hinge attachment. The back of the pendant is flat. Medieval pendants were attached to belts and straps as well as necklaces. They could be worn as personal adornment (see Oakley 1979, 250-251, Fig CA1, No.8) or they could decorate horse harness (see Griffiths 1995, 61-71, Fig.50, Nos. 67-72).

An irregular shaped fragment of silver sheet SF 4014 recovered from context 15119, has a small area of interlace design possibly Scandinavian in origin; this fragment needs further examination.

Horsegear (iron)

A possible arm from a prick spur SF 4029 was recovered from context 15305. The object is very corroded and consists of a curved strip and a rectangular terminal. Similar fragments from Thetford are dated typologically to the 10th-11th century (Ellis 1984, 101-104, Fig 140 and 141, Nos.267, and 274). A fragment from a horseshoe came from context 15170, the fragment appears to have a plain outline and there is a nail still in situ. The form of the nail holes should be clear when the assemblage has been x-rayed. A fiddle key form of horseshoe nail was recovered from context 15212.

Tools (iron)

A possible knife SF 4027 was recovered from 15259. The blade is very corroded and only a small section of the tang survives.

A large iron key SF 4035 from context 15260 has a kidney shaped bow and a solid stem that continues beyond the end of the bit. The detail of the bit itself is obscured by corrosion. Keys with kidney shaped bows were introduced at the end of the medieval period but are more common in subsequent periods. The bit is probably symmetrical, designed to open locks from both sides (Goodall 1993, 155-163, fig.119, Nos. 1294 and 1296).

Structural ironwork

A hinge pivot SF 4044 was recovered from context 15512 and a triangular hooked plate from context 15901.

Structural nails were recovered from the following contexts; 15091, 15100, 15159, 15191, 15520, 15540, 15512, 15506, 15486, 15366, 15134, 15091, 15007, 15044, 15064, 15084 and 15172.

Unidentified (iron)

Unidentified objects/fragments were recovered from the following contexts; 15159, 15083, 15305, 15512, 15188, 15259 and 15100; x-radiography may reveal their identity.

Lead objects

A cylindrical lead weight SF 4036 was recovered from context 15523 weighing 97g. The remaining 8 fragments of lead are scraps and offcuts.

Bone/antler objects

A notable group of 9 bone implements fashioned from pig fibulae were recovered from context 15100. All the implements have expanded heads, rounded and roughly finished, with a single circular perforation cut from both sides. The tapering shanks show varying amounts of polish from wear. Described in various reports as either pins or needles there is some discussion as to their use. They are more usually identified as dress pins, because their broad and roughly finished heads would be poorly suited to needlework (Macgregor 1985, 121). However Elisabeth Crowfoot suggests that they may have been used for auxiliary textile techniques such as netting and looped needle knitting. This type of implement is commonly found on sites of the Anglian and Anglo Scandinavian period such as York, Thetford, Northampton and Shakenoak in Oxfordshire.

The remaining two objects are the tip from a fine bone pin SF 4023 from context 15101 and a fragment of antler tine SF 4000 from context 15028. The fragment is from the very tip of the tine with a groove around the base where a cord may have been wrapped around it so that it could be worn possibly as an amulet.

Statement of potential

The assemblage although small contains a number of notable finds of Saxon and Medieval date. The St. Edmund memorial penny, the possible spur arm, the bone needles and the fragment of sheet metal with interlace design all indicate activity on or near to the site in the Saxon/Early Medieval period. The small collection of personal items date to the Medieval period. There are objects associated with horsegear and a small number of structural items.

Further work

- ♦ X-radiography of the metalwork assemblage
- Identification of coins/jetons by specialist
- ♦ Identification of sheet metal fragment with interlace pattern by specialist
- ♦ Full and detailed catalogue
- ♦ Report writing
- ♦ Illustration briefs

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Appendix 5: Animal Bone Assessment

by Emma-Jayne Evans

Introduction

This report encompasses animal bones from the site at Windmill Banks, Higham Ferrers. A total of 2314 (23831 g) fragments of bone and teeth were excavated from the site, of which many broken fragments were re-fitted, reducing the number to 1795 fragments.

Methodology

Identification of the bone was undertaken at Oxford Archaeology with access to the reference collection and published guides. All the animal remains were counted and weighed, and where possible identified to species, element, side and zone (Serjeantson 1996). Also, fusion data, butchery marks (Binford 1981), gnawing, burning and pathological changes were noted. Ribs and vertebrae were only recorded to species when they were substantially complete and could accurately be identified, or were from an identifiable articulated skeleton in which there could be no doubt as to their species. Undiagnostic bones were recorded as small (small mammal size), medium (sheep size) or large (cattle size). The separation of sheep and goat bones was done using the criteria of Boessneck (1969) and Prummel and Frisch (1986), in addition to the use of the reference material housed at OA. Where distinctions could not be made, the bone was recorded as sheep/goat (s/g).

The condition of the bone was graded using the criteria stipulated by Lyman (1996), grade 0 being the best preserved bone and grade 5 indicating that the bone had suffered such structural and attritional damage as to make it unrecognisable.

Tooth eruption and wear stages were measured using a combination of Halstead (1985) and Grant (1982), and fusion data was analysed according to Silver (1969). Measurements of adult, that is, fully fused bones were taken according to the methods of von den Driesch (1976), with asterisked (*) measurements indicating bones that were reconstructed or had slight abrasion of the surface.

Results

The bone from this site has survived in good condition, with the majority of the bone attaining grade 2 using Lyman's method, as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Condition of the bone using the criteria stipulated by Lyman (1996)

Phase	Period		Condition	1	
		1	2	3	Total
	Mid Saxon	89.7%	10.3%	0.0%	100.0%
1	Later mid Saxon	33.4%	65.0%	1.6%	100.0%
2	Late Saxon	51.7%	44.8%	3.4%	100.0%
3	Medieval	56.1%	42.6%	1.3%	100.0%
4	15th century	31.1%	66.3%	2.6%	100.0%
	16th century	41.9%	58.1%	0.0%	100.0%
5	17th century	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	Post- medieval	46.3%	50.7%	3.0%	100.0%
	Unphased	36.7%	63.3%	0.0%	100.0%
	Total	39.2%	59.1%	1.8%	100.0%

The good condition in which the bones have survived has allowed for the identification of 35% of the bones excavated, as highlighted in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Percentage of bones identified at the site

Phase	Period	Identified	Unidentified	Total
1	Mid Saxon	35.9%	64.1%	100.0%
	Later mid Saxon	34.3%	65.7%	100.0%
2	Late Saxon	37.9%	62.1%	100.0%
3	Medieval	38.3%	61.7%	100.0%
4	Late medieval	33.3%	66.7%	100.0%
	16th century	48.4%	51.6%	100.0%
5	17th century	33.3%	66.7%	100.0%
	Post medieval	35.8%	64.2%	100.0%
	Unphased	31.7%	68.3%	100.0%
	Total	35.0%	65.0%	100.0%

Table 3 below lists all the species identified from each of the different dates on the site. From the Saxon period cattle, sheep/goat and pig dominate the assemblage, with domestic fowl also present in numbers only slightly lower. It appears that birds form an important part of the diet during this period, as is commonly found on Anglo-Saxon sites (Clutton-Brock, 1976). During the later periods it can be noted that birds become less important, with cattle and sheep/goat emerging as the dominant species.

Table 3. Total number of bones identified, according to species and date.

total	98	755	53		303	205	34	თ	29	99	1795
D L	22	496	18		187	335	16	9	43	14	1167
hare	*:	-			Œ	6	,	,	,		-
crow	,	-	ja -			i.	5			40	-
	7	-	(30)		12	40	ot		2.	0.	-
sheep cat		-	1182		-	40	(0):	э	-	95	က
goat	*	•0				-	refi	¥	3		-
deer	,	•	6		-	×	(3)	9	3	ķ	-
fallow deer	\(\)		•6			-	0.	í,	j.		-
red deer	i.v	2	E		-		•		o.	•	6
		m			¥.	v	42	in.	,		m
goose mallard swan	2				-	•	1	1		r	က
goose	9	-			-	2	x	10	100		4
pird	-	=	14.		2	-	6	Š	100	2	11
gob	((*))				4	6	æ	į.	m	Ä	24
horse Domestic fowl	-	41	2		6	14	v	•	-	-	49
horse		12	-		7	19	2	10	-	2	47
pig	Û	62	-	1.6	16	17	-		7	2	104
6/s	2	65	2		28	65	2	-	10	4	182
cattle	2	55	2		51	52	2	2	9	2	183
	Mid Saxon	Later mid Saxon	Late Saxon		Medieval	Late medieval	16th century	17th century	Post medieval	Unphased	Total
Phase		-		7	8	4			2		

Conclusions and recommendations

There is potential from this site to highlight the differences in animal husbandry practices through the different phases. The good condition of the bones has resulted in butchery marks being noted on many of the bones, as well as the identification of pathologies. Further analysis of the bones from this site will reveal age at death patterns from both tooth eruption and wear stages and fusion data. Measurements from the bones may increase our understanding of changes in stature of the animals possibly due to improved farming techniques or variations in breeds. It would also be valuable to note the spatial distribution of the bones.

Analysis of the sieved material may also reveal the presence of small mammals and fish. This analysis may identify, if any, which species of fish that were contributing to the diet of the populations present through the phases of the site.

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Appendix 6: Assessment of the charred plant remains by Lisa Moffett

Introduction

Samples for charred plant remains were taken at the excavator's discretion, following a site visit and discussion with the author. The contexts targeted for sampling were those which contained visible evidence of occupation remains, such as bone, pot and charcoal. Fourteen samples were taken in total. These were processed by OA staff using water flotation.

The dried flots were assessed by the author by scanning under a binocular microscope at x10 or occasionally higher magnification. Larger flots were subsampled. No items were removed from the samples. The purpose of the scanning was to characterise the sample and determine its potential to provide further information if analysed. Provisional identifications were made of some of the material seen during scanning, but these were made rapidly and without the use of a modern reference collection. Some identifications, therefore, may be in error, and it is likely that some items, especially very small seeds, may have been overlooked during scanning.

Saxon

The Saxon samples were mainly ditch fills and the fill of a sunken featured building. All but one of the samples were from phase 2. One sample was from Phase 1. Most of the ditch fills had fairly sparse amounts of charred material, though there was abundant material from a burnt lens in one of the ditches. Despite the sparseness of these samples it is recommended that several of them be analysed as the material from these fills will add to the picture from the rest of the Saxon settlement at Higham Ferrers, and botanical information on this period is poor generally. Two samples are not recommended for analysis as the material in them is so sparse it is unlikely that analysis will add any information not already gained in this assessment. The samples from the burnt lens and sunken featured building both contain significant amounts of material that can give information about agricultural economy at this site.

Table 1 Summary of Saxon samples

Sample number	Phase	Context type	Further analysis Y/N
801	1	Ditch fill	Y
802	2	Upper ditch fill	
803	2	Middle ditch fill	Y
804	2	Primary ditch fill	Y
805	2	Middle ditch fill	N
809	2	SFB fill	Y
810	2	Burnt lens in ditch	Y

Medieval

The medieval samples were pit fills, a ditch fill, an oven fill, and the fill of a kiln fire pit or flue. All but one of these samples contained moderate to abundant material suggesting fairly intensive use, or disposal of, agricultural products during these phases. Some of the samples were abundant in remains of cultivated legumes, which is somewhat unusual, perhaps because legumes were less often exposed to fire than cereals. Cereals were also abundant in some samples. Agricultural weeds were present but less common. These samples all have the potential to give information about agricultural activities. The one sample with few charred plant remains is not recommended for further analysis of the botanical material, but did have fish scales and a fragment of oyster shell, suggesting that it may be derived from domestic activity.

Table 2 Summary of medieval samples

Sample number	Phase	Context type	Further analysis Y/N
800	5	Pit fill	Y
806	4	Pit fill	Y
807	4	Ditch fill	N
808	5	Kiln fire pit/flue	Y
811	4	Oven fill	Y
812	4	Pit fill	Y
813	3	Lower pit fill	Y

Further details of samples are given in Table 3.

Table 3 Assessment of botanical samples from Higham Ferrers, HFWIB03

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Comments	A reasonable amount of material for a small flot. Large legumes of varied size, some may be identifiable. Legume pod fragments. Rumex sp. (dock), Prunus/Crataegus thom (sloe/hawthom), tree/shrub bud.	Sparse, only a few grains seen, but worth going through as the only phase 1 sample from the site. Triticum (wheat) free-threshing grain, Corylus ((hazel) fragment.	Fairly sparse and a small flot. Probably little more information to be gained. The species can be compared with 803. Triticum free-threshing grain, cf Avena (oat) grain, Hordeum (barley) hulled grain, a tail grain of Hordeum with naked-type wrinkles, a large legume, some cereal fragments, a seed of Galium sp.(bedstraw) and a fragment of Corylus.	Lots of modern root material and uncharred Sambucus nigra (elder). Not large amounts of charred material but a certain amount of diversity. Triticum free-threshing, large legumes, several types of weeds.	Flot mostly modern roots. Fairly sparse charred material. Worth doing as the better of the 2 samples from this ditch. Hordeum hulled grain, Triticum free-threshing grain, cf. Avena, large legumes, Galium sp., Poaceace indet. (grass).	Only a few grains seen of <i>Triticum</i> and a legume fragment. A bit of burnt bone. Mostly modern roots.	Fairly abundant free-threshing <i>Triticum</i> grain, large legumes of varied sizes, a bit of <i>Hordeum</i> and <i>Avena</i> , <i>Corylus</i> fragment and cereal fragments. Also some weed seeds including <i>Polygonum aviculare</i> (knotweed), <i>Anthemis cotula</i> (stinking mayweed), small <i>Vicia</i> sp. (vetch/tare), large Poaceae indet. Uncharred seeds and some modem roots. A bit of burnt bone and clay.	A few grains of <i>Hordeum</i> , a seed of <i>Trifolium</i> type and a few cereal fragments. Abundant modern roots. Also fish scales, an oyster shell fragment and some small bones not fish.	Very abundant large legumes of various sizes. Scarse cereal and scarse charcoal. Abundant weeds and possibly some grassland spp.	Moderately abundant grains of wheat and cereal with some legumes and weed seeds. Also fish scale.
More	>	>	z	X	X	z	>	z	7	>
0	>-	7	z	z	z	>	7	>-	z	>-
Se	X	z	>	>	>	z	>-	>-	7	>
2	>-	z	z	>	7	>	>	z	>	z
មី	z	z	z	z	z	z	z	z	z	z
ප්	z	¥	>	7	×	>	>-	>	>	>
5	_	2	_	_	_	7	-	2	-	2
Su	>	>	>	>-	>	>	>	>	>	>
Amt scanned mls	10	20	8	18	30	20	35	40	25	15
Flot vol mls	01	145	vo.	18	99	125	35	95	200	30
ype		ditch	ditch	ditch	ditch	ditch			fire	
Context type	pit fill	Saxon 6	fill	middle fill	primary fill	middle	pit fill	ditch fill	kiln pit/flue	SFB fill
Phase	S	1	2	2	2	2	4	4	S	2
Context	15199	15218	15164	15149	15221	15100	15255	15322	15280	15305
Sample	800	801	802	803	804	805	806	807	808	608

Fairly abundant grains of Secale (tye) and Triticum with a few large legumes and weeds. Some lumps of fused ash with remains of silica skeletons, but distorted and probably difficult to identify.	Fairly abundant grains of free-threshing Triticum, Hordeum, Secale, Avena. A large legume and some weeds. About half modern roots	Fairly abundant grains of Hordeum with a few grains of Triticum and Avena. Some fragments of large legumes and a seed of Fallopia convolvulus (black bindweed). About a third to a half modern roots.	Fairly abundant grain, mostly Triticum and Hordeum. A large legume and a seed of Centaurea cyanus (cornflower).
Y	Y	Y	X
2 Y N Y Y Y Y	2 Y N Y Y N Y	2 Y N Y Y N Y	Y Z Y N Y Y Y
¥	>	>	>-
Y	Y	7	7
z	z	z	z
Y	>	>	>-
2	7	2	2
Y	>	X	>
18	25	25	30
18	160	150	30
 burnt lens in 18 ditch	oven fill and 160 daub	pit fill	lower pit fill
2	4	4	3
15428	15494	15557	15566
810	811	812	813

Key

Sn= snails

Cl= charcoal

Gr= grain

Ch= chaff

Le= legume

Se= seeds

O= other

Charcoal key

1 = 1 - 10 ml

2 = 10-100 ml

3 = 100 + ml

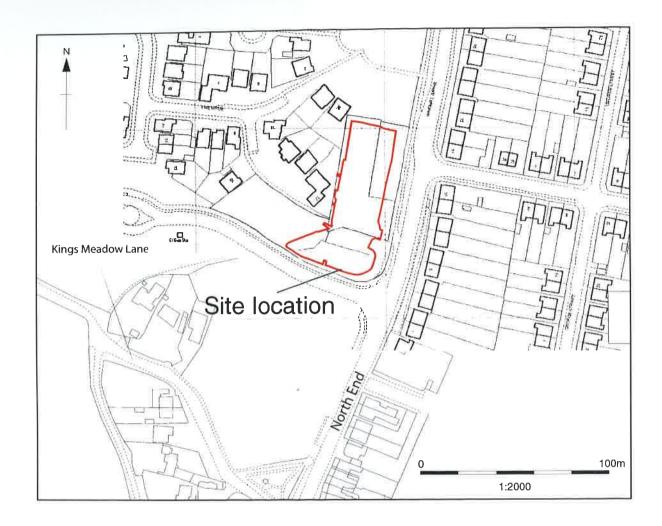
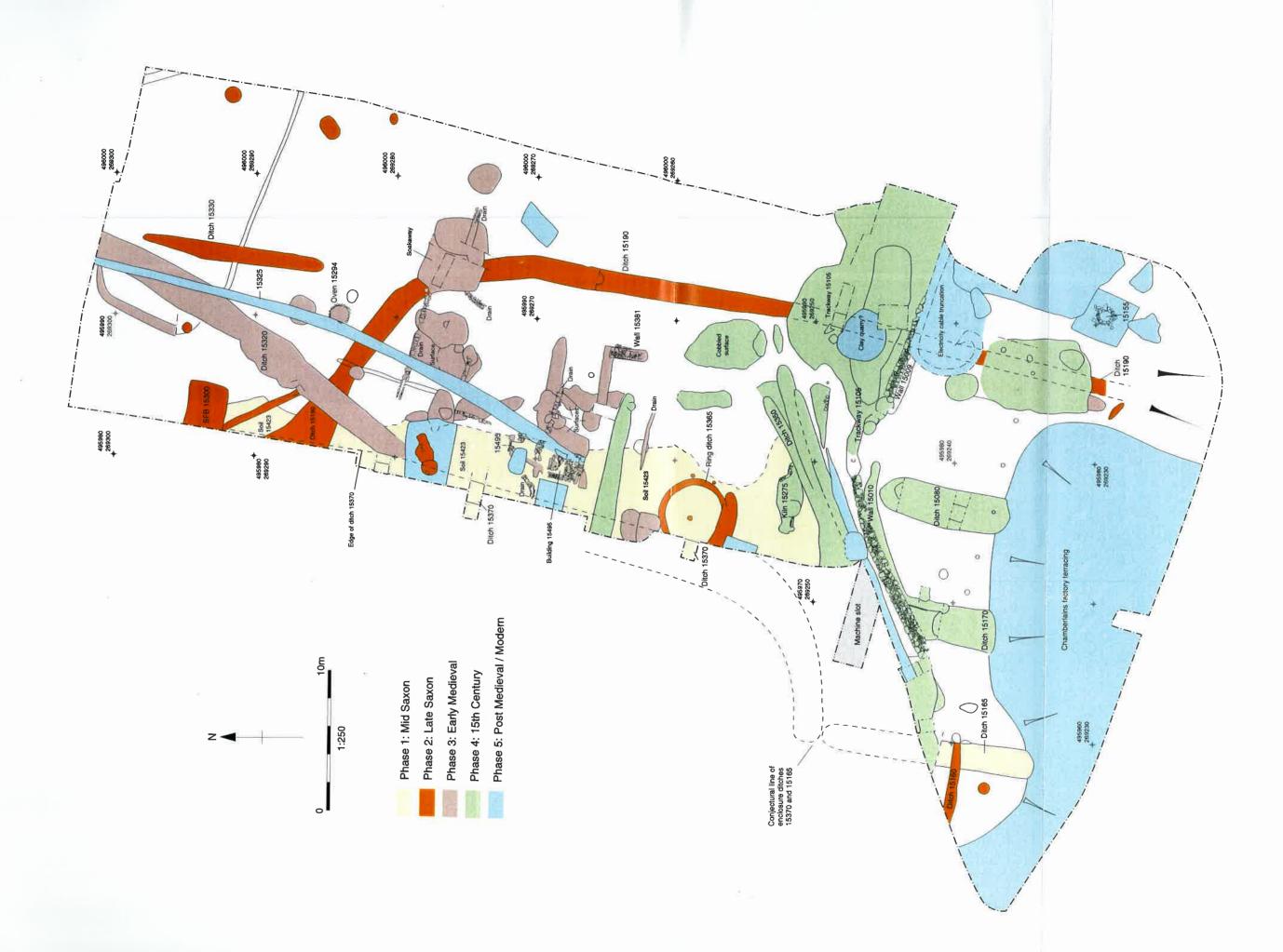


Figure 1: Site location







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