



**A programme of archaeological observation
investigation, recording, analysis and publication
on land adjacent to the M1, Junction 15
Northamptonshire
August 2014**

ENN107576

Report No. 14/179

Author: Edmund Taylor

Illustrator: Amir Bassir



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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		Oasis No. molanort1-191324	
Project title	Land adjacent to M1, Junction 15, Northampton		
A programme of archaeological observation, investigation, recording, analysis and publication was undertaken by MOLA in August 2014 during the excavation of geotechnical test pits on land adjacent to Junction 15 of the M1, Northamptonshire. Evidence of medieval ridge and furrow cultivation was recorded in the northern part of the site. No other archaeological deposits or artefacts were present.			
Project type	Watching Brief		
Site Status	None		
Previous work	None		
Current land use	Arable		
Future work	None		
Monument type and period	None		
Significant finds	None		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County	Northamptonshire		
Site address	Land adjacent to M1 Junction15		
Post code			
OS co-ordinates	SP75190 54740		
Area (sq m/ha)	155 ha		
Height aOD	85m-95m		
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation	MOLA Northampton		
Project brief originator	Northamptonshire County Council		
Project Design originator	MOLA Northampton		
Attendant Archaeologist	Anne Foard-Colby		
Project Manager	Anthony Maull		
Sponsor or funding body	CgMs Consulting		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date	26th August 2014		
End date	29th August 2014		
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Contents	
Physical	ENN107576	None	
Paper		Site records (1 small archive box)	
Digital		Client report PDF; digital images	
BIBLIOGRAPHY	Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (NA report)		
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Abstract

A programme of archaeological observation, investigation, recording, analysis and publication was undertaken by MOLA in September 2014 during the excavation of geotechnical test pits on land adjacent to Junction 15 of the M1, Northamptonshire. Evidence of medieval ridge and furrow cultivation was recorded in the northern part of the site. No other archaeological deposits or artefacts were present.

1 INTRODUCTION

A programme of archaeological observation, investigation, recording, analysis and publication was carried out by MOLA during the excavation of geotechnical test pits on land adjacent to the M1 Junction 15, Northamptonshire (NGR SP75190 54740, Fig 1).

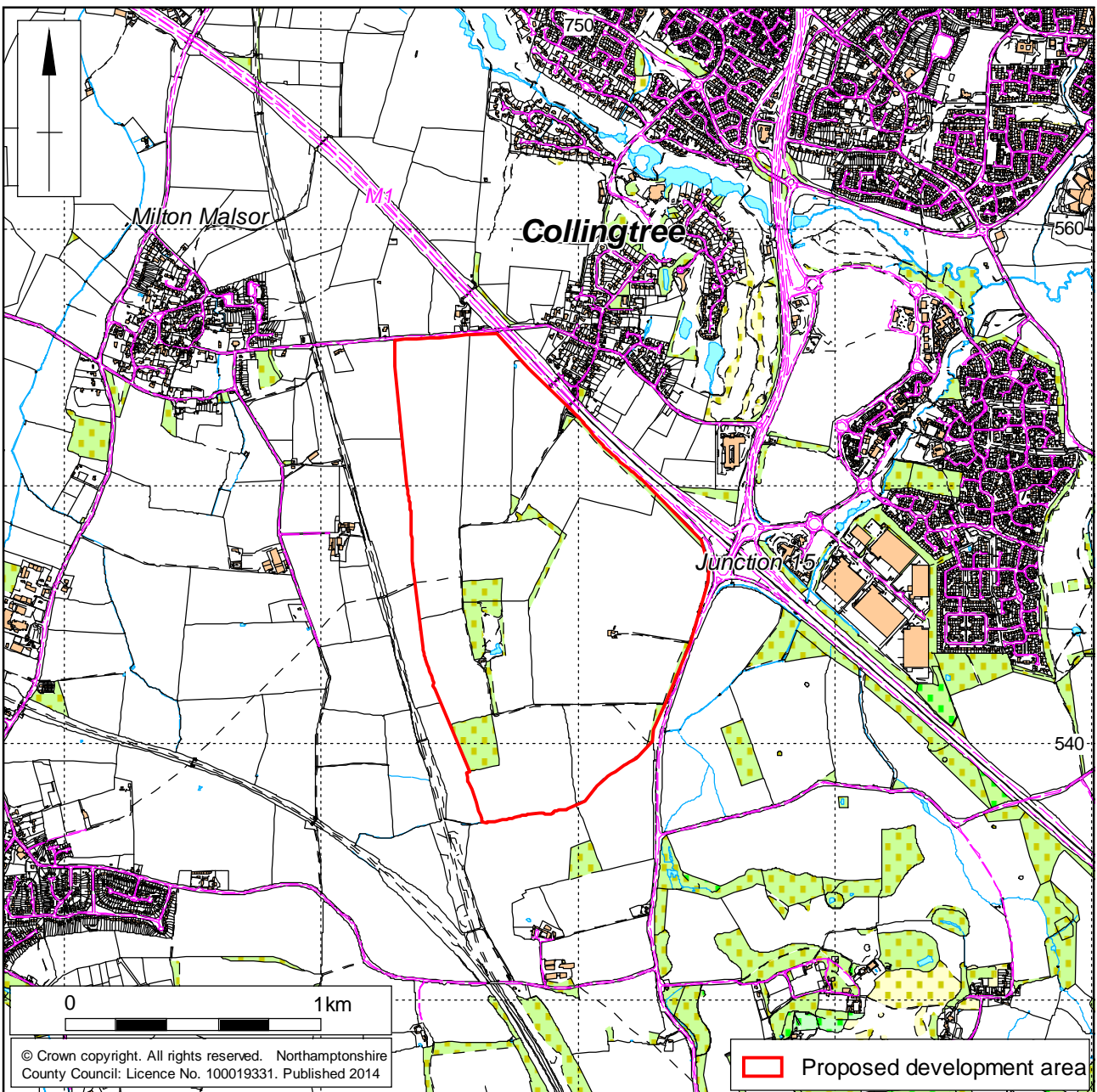
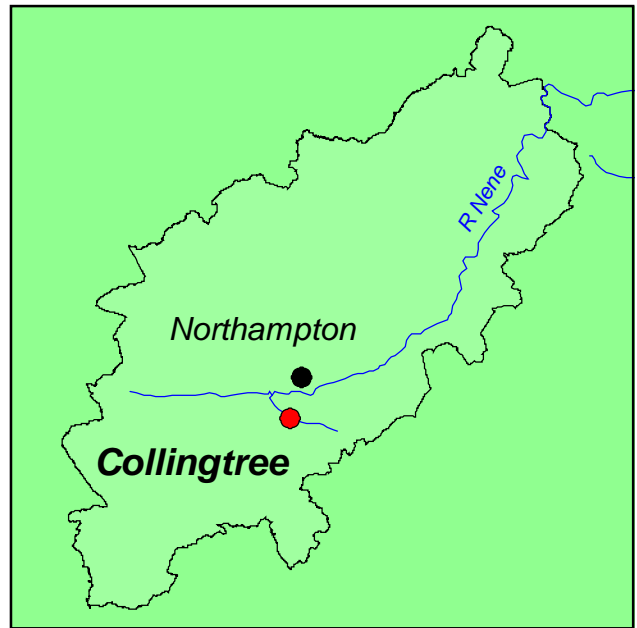
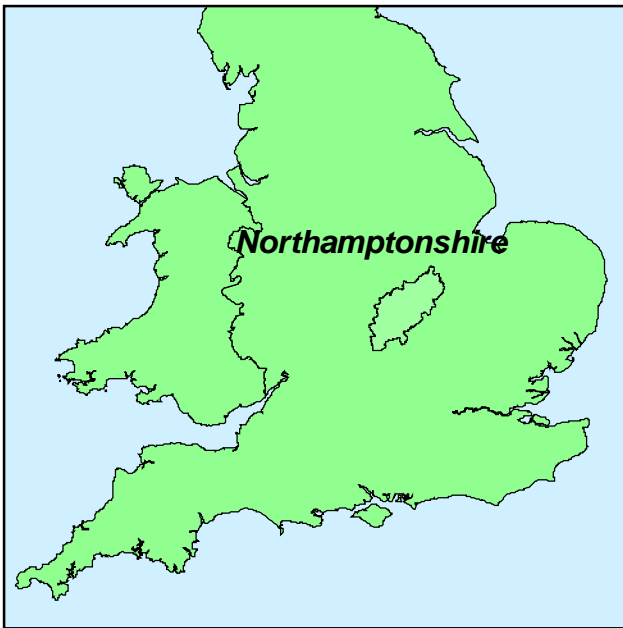
The work was commissioned by CgMs Consulting on behalf of their clients and followed an approved Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by MOLA (Muldowney and Simmonds 2014). It adhered to the procedural document MoRPHE issued by English Heritage (EH 2009) and the appropriate national standards and guidelines, as recommended by the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA 2008) and was carried out in line with *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012).

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location, topography and geology

The site comprises 155ha of land centred on Rectory Farm, located to the south of Northampton. It lies between the villages of Milton Malsor (**NHER 4639**) and Collingtree (**4851**) and Grange Park (**1658**). Its north-eastern boundary is defined by the M1 motorway, with Junction 15 forming the south-eastern corner. The northern boundary is defined by Collingtree Road, with fields beyond. Fields lie to the south and the railway line between London and Northampton is situated to the west.

The geology has been mapped as Upper Lias Clays or Boulder Clays with pockets of sands and gravels.



Scale 1:25,000

Site location Fig 1

2.2 Archaeological and historical background

Historic Environment Record data

A rapid search of the Northamptonshire Historic Environment Record (NHER) was undertaken. The principal sites with accompanying figure (Fig 2) are presented below. The only recorded site within the site boundary refers to medieval open field system (NHER **2144/0/1**).

The Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) recorded six find spots (MNN **147448**, **149088**, **151506**, **152601**, **153217** and **154327**) within 1km of the site.

A combination of field walking, aerial photographs, geophysical survey, metal detecting and excavation indicated that the land around the site has been extensively and continuously occupied from the prehistoric period to the present day. There are some undated landscape features, particularly those recorded on aerial photographs. Undated and potential prehistoric sites were visible on aerial photographs lay to the south (**4714** and **5783**) and to the north of Collingtree (**4850**). Prehistoric artefacts have been recovered to the south of Collingtree (**4844** and **4845**).

Excavations in advance of development at Grange Park recorded settlement remains dating from the Iron Age to the Saxon periods (Jones *et al* 2006). A site (**4638**) listed in the NHER to the north-west of the site, on the northern side of Collingtree Road, is also thought to have prehistoric and Saxon remains. Neolithic (**8751**), Roman (**8750**) and Late Saxon (**8748**) pottery and other artefacts have been recovered on land to the south-west of the site.

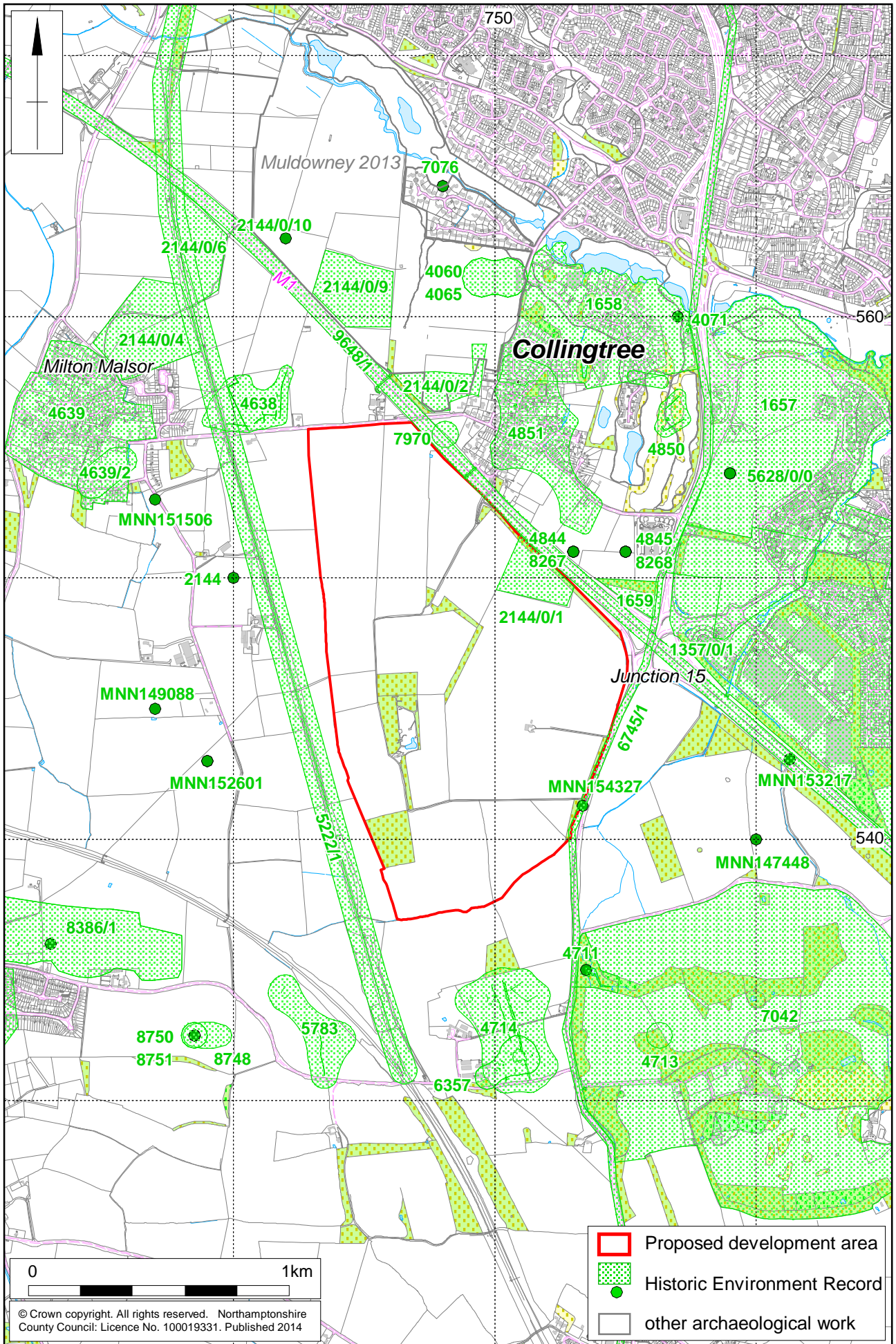
Northampton itself is an important Middle Saxon royal centre and the NHER records settlement remains or artefact scatters around the site dating from the early Saxon period. They include artefacts to the west (**4060** and **7076**) and north (**4071**) of Collingtree.

Medieval settlement at Milton Malsor (**4639**) included a manorial site (**4639/2**). The most extensively recorded indication of medieval occupation was the remnants of the open field system comprising ridge and furrow. There are records of such remains located around the site, including to the north-west (**2144/0/4**, **2144/0/6**), to the north (**2144/0/2**, **2144/0/9**, **2144/0/10**) and also to the west (**2144**). Remnants of the open field system (**1357/0/1**) also once lay to the east in Courteenhall township. Medieval and later artefacts have been noted at Collingtree (**4065**, **8267** and **8268**), Grange Park (**5628/0/0**).

The Courteenhall estate, located to the south-east of the site comprises a house set within 134ha of parkland (**7042**). A medieval water mill (**4711**) and a post-medieval mill (**4713**) were located within the western part of the park. Courteenhall Grange (**1657**) was located to the north-east of the site and there are indications that there may have been possible settlement adjacent to Junction 15 (**1659**).

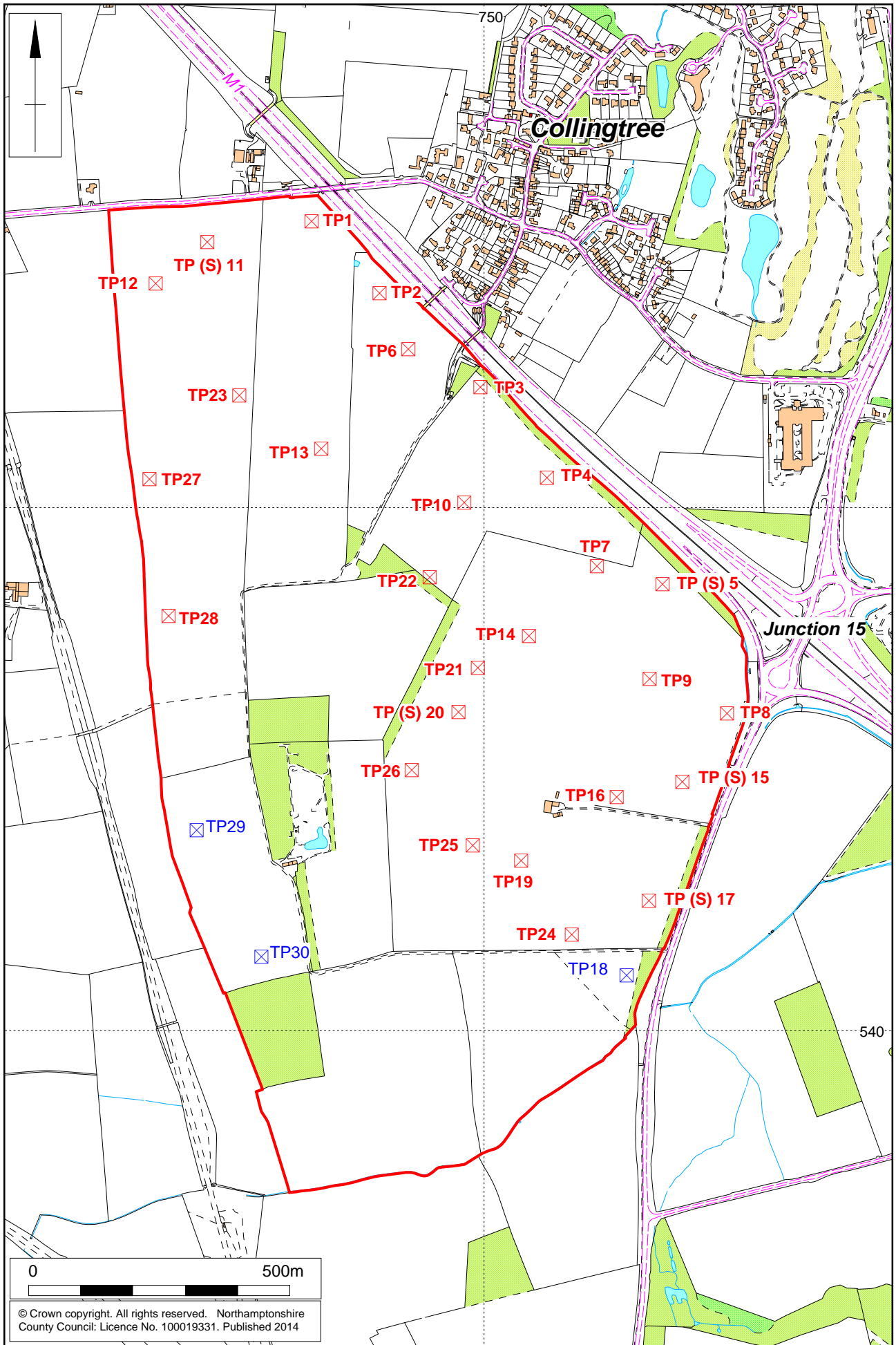
Local industry ranged from post-medieval period quarry works at Blisworth (**8386/1**) and other industrial activity to the south of the site (**6357**). During World War II Northampton was also part of the land defence scheme with a defensive site (**7970**), probably comprising a searchlight battery, constructed on the south-western fringes of Collingtree.

From the 19th century Northampton rapidly expanded, in part to its shoe making industry, although its connection to the country's rail network was late, with a line between London and Birmingham constructed from the 1850s. The railway line (**5222/1**) lies 100m away from the western boundary of the site. Many of the roads around Northampton were maintained under turnpike regulations or were historic thoroughfares such as the road linking London and Derby (**6745/1**).



Scale 1:20,000

Historic Environment Record data Fig 2



Scale 1:10,000

Geotechnical test pit locations Fig 3

In the 20th century the need to build new higher speed roads resulted in the construction of the country's first motorway.

The southern section of the new M1 motorway between London and the north of England was opened in the late 1950s, with part of its route bypassing Northampton (9648/1).

Previous Archaeological Investigation

No previous archaeological investigation has been undertaken on the site. However a corpus of archaeological work has been undertaken as part of the wider expansion of Northampton. Excavations were undertaken by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (BUFAU) at Grange Park, to the east of the site identified Iron Age, Roman and Saxon remains (Jones, Woodward and Buteux 2006). More recent evaluation work was undertaken by MOLA Northampton, formerly Northamptonshire Archaeology, on land to the west of Collingtree and to the north of the site (Muldowney 2013; Fig 2). This identified a small enclosed Roman settlement.

3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The main objectives of the observation and investigation exercise where:

- to record the stratigraphic sequence from the topsoil to the top of the natural substrate;
- to record the presence of any archaeological deposits revealed by the geotechnical test pits and recover any artefacts from the upcast.

The fieldwork comprised four visits to the site during the excavation of 27 geotechnical test pits (Fig 3). Test pits 18, 29 and 30 were not excavated due to crop coverage and were subsequently removed from the programme.

A digital photographic record was maintained during the works in accordance with Northamptonshire's Archaeological Archives Standard (NARC 2014). The written record used pro-forma sheets. The observation and recording was carried out in accordance with the standards and guidelines for an archaeological watching brief (IfA 2008).

4 THE RECORDED EVIDENCE

The natural substrate was encountered between 0.33m and 0.70m below current ground level and comprised orange-brown sandy clay with patches of orange-brown sand. The subsoil comprised mid grey sandy clay, 0.15m-0.40m thick and was overlain by a dark grey-brown clay loam topsoil, 0.30m-0.40m thick (Fig 4).

Shallow furrows, aligned north-east to south-west, were encountered in test pits 1, 2 and 6 in the northern part of the site. These were 0.10m-0.30m deep and filled with subsoil which produced no dating evidence. They were at least 1m wide but their full width could not be ascertained within the confines of the test pits.

No other archaeological deposits or artefacts were encountered during the investigation.



The stratigraphic sequence in Test Pit 7

Fig 4

5 CONCLUSIONS

Evidence of medieval ridge and furrow cultivation was present in the northern part of the site. Later ploughing had removed the ridges and only the bases of the furrows could be seen in the test pits. These furrows are likely to be part of the similar system of better preserved ridge and furrow visible in fields on the opposite side of the M1.

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