



**HERITAGE
DESK BASED
ASSESSMENT**

**LAND AT
OVERSTONE LEYS
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**

**SALLY DICKS BA AIFA &
PAUL CHADWICK BA FSA MIFA**

MARCH 2009

**HERITAGE
DESK BASED
ASSESSMENT**

**LAND AT
OVERSTONE LEYS
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**

**LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY:
DAVENTRY DISTRICT COUNCIL
& NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH
COUNCIL**

SITE CENTRED AT: SP 798 664

**SALLY DICKS BA AIFA &
PAUL CHADWICK BA FSA MIFA**

MARCH 2009

CONTENTS

Executive Summary

- 1.0 Introduction and Scope of Study
- 2.0 Planning Background and Development Plan Framework
- 3.0 Geology and Topography
- 4.0 Archaeological and Historical Background,
including Map Regression Exercise
- 5.0 Site Conditions and the Proposed Development
- 6.0 Summary and Conclusions

Sources Consulted

Appendix 1: SMR Data Map

Appendix 2: Excavations at Thorplands near Northampton, 1970 and 1974 (Hunter, R and
Maynard, D NAJ 1977 Vol. 12)

Appendix 3: Gazetteer of SMR data

Appendix 4: Historic Landscape Character Area 3a Sywell Clay Plateau

Appendix 5: List description Pytchley Gates

Appendix 6: List description Church of St Nicholas

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- Fig. 1 Site location
- Fig. 2 Site details
- Fig. 3 1763 Plan of Thomas Drury Estate, Overstone and Sywell
- Fig. 4 1932 copy of 1803 plan of field names in the Parish of Overstone
- Fig. 5 1832 Overstone Estate Map
- Fig. 6 1856 Map of the Parish of Overstone
- Fig. 7 1886 Ordnance Survey 6" scale
- Fig. 8 1901 Ordnance Survey 6" scale
- Fig. 9 1982-1988 Ordnance Survey 1:10,000 scale

Executive Summary

This desk-based assessment considers heritage resources within a study area incorporating two sites at Overstone, on the north-eastern edge of Northampton. The majority of the study area is within Daventry District, however an area of proposed road improvement at the A5076/A43 junction, lies in Northampton Borough.

There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments on or particularly near the study area; the nearest is 2km away. In addition, there are no Registered Parks and Gardens or Conservation Areas on or in the vicinity of the study area.

Pytchley Gates, a Grade II listed gateway to Overstone Park lies c.20m east of the main study site. Although, views locally are interrupted by tall trees, any development proposals will need to consider the setting of the gateway.

Overstone Park is not a Registered Historic Park and Garden, however the Northamptonshire Historic Landscape Character Assessment identifies the park, with its deserted village of Overstone and garden remains, as an important historic landscape. Any development proposals will need to consider impacts on the setting of this historic landscape resource.

The remains of a Roman settlement were partially excavated in the southern part of the site in the 1970's. In addition, researches have identified a Roman settlement site and number of isolated sites which suggest late prehistoric and Medieval/Post-Medieval activity on parts of the main site.

In view of the findings of this desk-based assessment, it can be anticipated that the planning authority's archaeological advisor will require a programme of archaeological evaluation on the site.

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE OF STUDY

- 1.1 This cultural heritage desk-based assessment has been researched and prepared by Sally Dicks and Paul Chadwick of CgMs Consulting on behalf of Barratt Strategic.
- 1.2 The assessment considers land c.140 hectares in extent at two sites (referred to as the main site (133 ha) and the Park site (6.8 ha)), on the north-eastern edge of Northampton.
- 1.2.1 The main site is irregular in shape and is bounded to the west by Kettering Road (A43), to the north by a field boundary and agricultural land beyond, to the east by Cowpasture Spinney, Sywell Road and Billing Lane, and to the south by a stream and Round Spinney Industrial Estate. The Park site is irregular in shape and lies within Overstone Park to the east of the main site. The main site is centred on National Grid Reference SP 798 664 (Figs 1 and 2).
- 1.3 In accordance with government guidance on planning, the historic environment and archaeology (PPGs 15 and 16), this assessment draws together the available archaeological, historic, topographic and land-use information in order to clarify the extent of any cultural heritage resources on or near the study sites. The study has also been prepared following the guidance and standards issued by the Institute of Archaeologists (IfA).
- 1.4 Information relating to statutory designations has been obtained from English Heritage and Daventry District Council. The assessment comprises an examination of evidence in the Northamptonshire Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), Northamptonshire County Record Office (CRO) and various internet sites. The assessment considers the results of archaeological investigations undertaken on the site, incorporates published material and charts historic land-use through a map regression exercise. Site inspections were undertaken during December 2008.
- 1.5 This assessment has been prepared to inform the masterplanning of a proposed development at Overstone Leys and forms one of a number of baseline studies for an Environmental Statement.

2.0 PLANNING BACKGROUND AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN FRAMEWORK

2.1 In November 1990 the Department of the Environment issued Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (PPG16) "Archaeology and Planning", providing guidance for planning authorities, property owners, developers and others on the preservation and investigation of archaeological remains. More recently, the government has published Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (PPG15) "Planning and the Historic Environment" which sets out government policy in relation to historic buildings, historic parks & gardens, battlefields and the wider historic landscape.

2.1.1 In short, government guidance provides a framework which:

- Protects Scheduled Ancient Monuments;
- Protects Listed Buildings
- Protects Conservation Areas
- Protects the settings of these designations;
- Protects Registered Historic Parks and Gardens
- Protects Registered Battlefield sites;
- Has a presumption in favour of in-situ preservation of nationally important archaeological monuments;
- In appropriate circumstances requires adequate information (from field evaluation) to enable informed planning decisions; and
- Provides for the excavation and investigation of sites not important enough to merit in-situ preservation;

2.2 In considering any allocation through the LDF process or in considering planning applications, the planning authority will be mindful of the policy framework set by government guidance, in this instance PPGs 15 and 16, by current Development Plan policy and by other material considerations.

2.3 The Regional Spatial Strategy for the East Midlands (RSS8) replaced by the East Midlands Regional Plan.

2.3.1 East Midlands Plan adopted in March 2009. Policy relating to protection and treatment of archaeological remains and other aspects of the Historic Environment are set out in Policies 26 and 27:

'POLICY 26: PROTECTING AND ENHANCING THE REGION'S NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SHOULD ENSURE THE PROTECTION, APPROPRIATE MANAGEMENT AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE REGION'S NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE. AS A RESULT THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES SHOULD BE APPLIED:

- THE REGION'S INTERNATIONALLY AND NATIONALLY DESIGNATED NATURAL AND HISTORIC ASSETS SHOULD RECEIVE THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF PROTECTION;
- NEITHER DIRECT NOR INDIRECT DAMAGE TO EU DESIGNATED NATURA 2000 SITES WILL BE PERMITTED;
- DAMAGE TO OTHER NATURAL AND HISTORIC ASSETS OR THEIR SETTINGS SHOULD BE AVOIDED WHEREVER AND AS FAR AS POSSIBLE, RECOGNISING THAT SUCH ASSETS ARE USUALLY IRREPLACEABLE;
- UNAVOIDABLE DAMAGE MUST BE MINIMISED AND CLEARLY JUSTIFIED BY A NEED FOR DEVELOPMENT IN THAT LOCATION WHICH OUTWEIGHS THE DAMAGE THAT WOULD RESULT;
- UNAVOIDABLE DAMAGE WHICH CANNOT BE MITIGATED SHOULD BE COMPENSATED FOR, PREFERABLY IN A RELEVANT LOCAL CONTEXT AND WHERE POSSIBLE IN WAYS WHICH ALSO CONTRIBUTE TO SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC OBJECTIVES;
- THERE SHOULD BE A NET INCREASE IN THE QUALITY AND ACTIVE MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL AND HISTORIC ASSETS ACROSS THE REGION IN WAYS THAT PROMOTE ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE, AND AN INCREASE IN THE QUANTITY OF ENVIRONMENTAL ASSETS GENERALLY;
- THE REGION'S BEST AND MOST VERSATILE AGRICULTURAL LAND SHOULD BE PROTECTED FROM PERMANENT DAMAGE.'

'POLICY 27: REGIONAL PRIORITIES FOR THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT SHOULD BE UNDERSTOOD, CONSERVED AND ENHANCED, IN RECOGNITION OF ITS OWN INTRINSIC VALUE, AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO THE REGION'S QUALITY OF LIFE.

ACROSS THE REGION AND PARTICULARLY IN AREAS WHERE GROWTH OR REGENERATION IS A PRIORITY, DEVELOPMENT SHOULD PROMOTE SENSITIVE CHANGE OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT. TO ACHIEVE THIS, LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITIES SHOULD:

- IDENTIFY AND ASSESS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SPECIFIC HISTORIC ASSETS AND THEIR SETTINGS;
- USE CHARACTERISATION TO UNDERSTAND THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO THE LANDSCAPE OR TOWNSCAPE IN AREAS OF CHANGE;
- ENCOURAGE THE REFURBISHMENT AND RE-USE OF DISUSED OR UNDER-USED BUILDINGS OF SOME HISTORIC OR ARCHITECTURAL MERIT AND INCORPORATING THEM SENSITIVELY INTO REGENERATION SCHEMES;
- PROMOTE THE USE OF LOCAL BUILDING MATERIALS; AND
- RECOGNISE THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENHANCING EXISTING TOURISM ATTRACTIONS AND FOR DEVELOPING THE POTENTIAL OF OTHER AREAS AND SITES OF HISTORIC INTEREST AS PART OF GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE, HAVING REGARD TO POTENTIAL IMPACTS ON BIODIVERSITY.'

2.4 The Regional Spatial Strategy for the East Midlands has identified Northampton as a growth location. The Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy (MKSMSRS 2005) allocates a minimum of 30,000 dwellings to Northampton in the period 2001-2021.

2.5 Following September 2007 and the introduction of the new planning system, some policies in the Northamptonshire Structure Plan (adopted February 2002) have been saved and others deleted. The policies relating to Archaeology and the Historic

Environment have been deleted and are now covered by the RSS8 Policy 27 and 31, Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (Planning and the Historic Environment), Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (PPG16) "Archaeology and Planning".

- 2.6 Until the adoption of the LDF, development plan policy is provided by the 'saved policies' in the Daventry District Local Plan (adopted June 1997) and Northampton Borough Local Plan (adopted June 1997). In this instance the Daventry District Local Plan contains a General Policy relating to archaeological sites and built heritage and a policy relating to Conservation Areas.

POLICY GN2

UNDER THE PROPOSALS AND POLICIES OF THIS LOCAL PLAN, PLANNING PERMISSION WILL NORMALLY BE GRANTED FOR DEVELOPMENT PROVIDED IT:

- E. WILL NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT A CONSERVATION AREA OR A BUILDING LISTED AS BEING OF ARCHITECTURAL OR HISTORIC INTEREST AND THEIR SETTING
- F. WILL NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT SITES OF NATURE CONSERVATION, GEOLOGICAL OR ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE OR THE SETTINGS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES.

POLICY EN2

PLANNING PERMISSION FOR DEVELOPMENT WITHIN CONSERVATION AREAS WILL BE GRANTED PROVIDED THAT THE DEVELOPMENT PRESERVES OR ENHANCES THE CHARACTER OF THE AREA. SPECIAL CONSIDERATION WILL BE GIVEN TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF VACANT SITES AND THE REDEVELOPMENT OF EXISTING BUILDINGS. PROPOSALS FOR DEVELOPMENT SHOULD NOT INTRUDE INTO THE SETTING OF IMPORTANT BUILDINGS. DEVELOPMENT WILL ONLY BE FAVOURABLY CONSIDERED IF THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA ARE MET:

- A. DEVELOPMENT SHOULD REFLECT THE GENERAL ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER OF THE EXISTING BUILDINGS.
- B. BUILDINGS SHOULD BE CLOSELY RELATED TO THE CHARACTER OF THE CONSERVATION AREA IN SCALE.
- C. ATTENTION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO DETAILING IN ORDER TO ADD INTEREST IN GENERAL TO NEW BUILDINGS.
- D. TRADITIONAL MATERIALS APPROPRIATE TO THE AREA SHOULD BE USED FOR WALLS, ROOFS AND ALL EXTERNAL JOINERY.
- E. PROPOSALS FOR THE ALTERATION OR REPAIR OF BUILDINGS SHOULD BE SYMPATHETIC TO THE CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE BUILDING AND THE CONSERVATION AREA.

- 2.7 In addition, one of four policies relating to archaeology and the historic environment in the Northampton Borough Local Plan has been saved:

POLICY E38 ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC LANDSCAPES

PLANNING PERMISSION WILL NOT BE GRANTED FOR DEVELOPMENT WHICH WOULD ADVERSELY AFFECT THE CHARACTER OR SETTING OF A NATIONALLY IMPORTANT ANCIENT MONUMENT (WHETHER SCHEDULED OR NOT), IMPORTANT HISTORIC LANDSCAPE OR THE SITE OF THE BATTLE OF NORTHAMPTON.

2.7.1 Accordingly, the strategic and local development plan framework is now provided by Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (Planning and the Historic Environment) and Planning Policy Guidance 16 (PPG16) "Archaeology and Planning", RSS8 Policies 27 and 31, Policy GN2 and EN2 of the Daventry District Local Plan and Policy E38 of the Northampton Borough Local Plan.

2.8 This desk-based assessment considers cultural heritage resources on the two study sites within the current policy framework, in order that an informed Masterplan process can be progressed and the need for the further baseline studies, design, civil engineering, and/or other mitigation measures can be identified.

3.0 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

3.1 Geology

3.1.1 The solid geology of the study area is shown by the Institute of Geological Sciences (IGS 1979) comprising Northamptonshire Sand and Upper Lias deposits of Lower Jurassic date.

3.1.2 Further detail is provided by the 1:50,000 series Geological Survey (Sheet 185: Northampton) which indicates that the sites are dominated by Northampton Sand. There are outcrops of Upper Lias along the southern and eastern edges of the main site, where a tributary of the River Nene marks the main site's southern boundary. Within the northern part of the main site, Glacial sands and gravels overly Lower Estuarine Sand and Sandstone.

3.1.3 To-date, no geotechnical investigations have been carried out on the sites. However, the results of the archaeological investigation near Round Spinney (see Appendix 2) noted that the site is on Northampton Sands which appear as broken ironstone with pockets of sand at an average depth of 0.5m below the ground surface.

3.2 Topography

3.2.1 The study area occupies a generally level area within an undulating landscape on the north-eastern edge of Northampton. A ridgeline at between c. 103m AOD (Above Ordnance Datum) and c.112m AOD forms the western boundary of the main site followed by Kettering Road (A43). From the western boundary, levels fall to the eastern boundary at c.97m – c. 99m AOD, formed by a tributary of the River Nene, Sywell Road and Billing Lane. The Park site lies on a west facing slope at between 95m and 99m AOD.

3.2.2 Historically, the two study sites formed part of the Overstone Estate, comprising agricultural land (arable and pasture) and Overstone Farm.

3.2.3 The sites drain into a tributary of the River Nene which feeds into Overstone Park Lake and then drains along the southern site boundary to the River Nene.

4.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Including Map Regression Exercise.

4.1 Timescales used in this report.

Prehistoric

Palaeolithic	450,000	-	12,000	BC
Mesolithic	12,000	-	4,000	BC
Neolithic	4,000	-	1,800	BC
Bronze Age	1,800	-	600	BC
Iron Age	600	-	AD 43	

Historic

Roman	AD	43	-	410
Saxon/Early Medieval	AD	410	-	1066
Medieval	AD	1066	-	1485
Post Medieval	AD	1486	-	1899
Modern	AD	1900	-	Present

4.1.1 Examination of data in the Northamptonshire Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), the Northamptonshire County Record Office and published sources, indicates that the two study sites lie within land historically part of the Overstone Estate.

4.1.2 Overstone Park House c. 1km east of the main site was a Grade II Listed building until a fire gutted 60% of the property in 2001. Overstone Park is not a Registered Historic Park and Garden. However, the Northamptonshire Historic Landscape Character Assessment identifies Overstone Park, with its deserted village of Overstone and garden remains, as an important historic landscape (Northamptonshire CC 2006).

4.1.3 Pytchley Gates a Grade II listed structure lies c.20m east of the main site.

4.1.4 Excavations at Round Spinney within the southern part of the main site in the 1970's recorded Roman settlement and evidence of industrial activity. In addition, the RCHME records a Roman settlement on the main site.

4.1.5 A map showing the location of SMR data and aerial photographic plots mentioned in the text can be found at Appendix 1 and a Gazetteer of SMR sites can be found at Appendix 3.

4.2 **Palaeolithic**

4.2.1 Pleistocene geological deposits on the study sites are identified by the Geological Survey as pre-dating the Anglian glaciation when occupation was particularly sparse. Indeed, there are no sites or finds of Palaeolithic date recorded on the Northamptonshire SMR within the study area. Accordingly, a low/no potential is identified for this period within the two study sites.

4.2.2 The nearest in-situ Palaeolithic evidence comes from Little Houghton (c.6km south of the study sites) where a watering hollow containing evidence of reindeer, rhino, woolly bison, mammoth and straight tusked elephant was identified below glacial gravels (Wymer 1999, vol 1 121-128 & vol 2 Maps 36, 37).

4.2.3 In view of the general paucity of Palaeolithic evidence from the Nene Valley and its tributaries, the two study sites are considered to have a nil potential for in-situ remains or re-deposited lithics.

4.3 **Mesolithic**

4.3.1 Within the study area there are no sites or finds of Mesolithic date recorded on the Northamptonshire SMR. Accordingly, a low potential is identified for significant sites or artefact scatters of this period.

4.4 **Neolithic**

4.4.1 From around 4000BC the mobile hunter-gatherer economy of the Mesolithic gradually gave way to a more settled and agriculture-based subsistence. It was a period of change in the landscape which resulted in the clearance of large areas of lowland and river valley. Within river valleys such as the Nene, the Neolithic saw the development of large communal monuments, and settlement activity also tends to focus in these valleys.

4.4.2 Unstratified prehistoric fragments of worked flint was recovered during fieldwalking in the 1970's within the southern part of the main site (Site 25) and prehistoric flint was recovered from the 1970's excavation at Round Spinney.

4.4.3 Within the study area, the Northamptonshire SMR records a Neolithic leaf-shaped flint arrowhead found in the garden of "Sunnycroft" c. 200m west of the main site (Site 29,

Appendix 1), a fragment of prehistoric polished stone axe found c. 500m south of the main site (Site 28) and a flint axe discovered c.100m east of the main site (Site 36, Appendix 1). In addition, 35 prehistoric flints and 1 Neolithic leaf-shaped arrowhead discovered c. 200m to the southeast (Site 30, Appendix 1) and unstratified prehistoric flints were recovered from immediately east of the main site (Site 9, Appendix 1).

4.4.4 There are a number of cropmarks recorded on the SMR within the main site. Although undated by analogy with other similar sites, they are likely to date to the later prehistoric or Roman periods. In particular, cropmarks within the northern part of the site, identified as 'possible prehistoric funerary activity' (AP Plots 17 and 24, Appendix 1), may contain features of Bronze Age date.

4.4.5 In view of the SMR evidence, a low potential is identified for Late Neolithic sub-surface features and a moderate to high potential is identified for a small number of lithics (worked and waste flint) within topsoil and subsoil horizons across the sites.

4.5 **Bronze Age-Iron Age**

4.5.1 By the 1st millennium, ie 1000 BC, the landscape probably comprised a mix of extensive tracts of open farmland, punctuated by earthwork burial and ceremonial monuments from distant generations, with settlements, ritual areas and defended locations reflecting an increasingly hierarchical society.

4.5.2 The Iron Age is characterised in this region by increased settlement stability and the large-scale organisation of the landscape, developments that began in the Late Bronze Age. Settlement evidence is plentiful and diverse, ranging from individual farmsteads occupied by a single household, to hillforts and enclosed settlements holding much larger communities.

4.5.3 The Northamptonshire SMR records two cropmark complexes within the northern part of the main site which probably date to these periods. The northern most complex is recorded as a 'possible prehistoric settlement' (AP Plots 7 - 16, Appendix 1) and the complex immediately to the south is recorded as 'possible prehistoric funerary activity' (AP Plots 17 and 24, Appendix 1). Both complexes comprise circular features likely to be the remains of Bronze Age burial monuments or Iron Age hut circles.

4.5.4 Within the study area, the SMR records the cropmark of a possible Bronze Age round barrow (Site 34, Appendix 1: c.400m northwest of the main site), two possible areas of Bronze Age/prehistoric activity (AP Plots 33-40 and AP Plots 7-16, Appendix 1) and various lithic scatters (3 flint scrapers and 6 flakes found 400m south of the main site

(Site 16, Appendix 1) and a flint scraper and other prehistoric worked flints c. 400m southwest of the main site (Site 27, Appendix 1)).

4.5.5 Within the study area, the SMR records a probable Iron Age settlement c. 400m northwest of the main site and on the main site, fieldwalking in 1982 recovered Iron Age finds from an area of dark soil (Site 17, Appendix 1). Aerial photographs of the site identified a series of enclosures, possible pits and ditches (AP Plots 33-40, Appendix 1).

4.5.6 Although, it seems probable that Bronze Age burial monuments (ploughed down Round Barrows) occur within the study area, there is little evidence to suggest extensive concentrations of Bronze Age settlement evidence. A moderate to high potential is identified for isolated sub-surface features although lithics could occur across the site.

4.5.7 Although Iron Age settlement is not evidenced on the sites, there is a potential for features related to the nearby Iron Age settlement including trackways and field boundaries extending into the main site. However, overall, a low-moderate potential is identified for evidence of this period on the main site and Park site.

4.6 **Roman**

4.6.1 At Thorplands Farm (now Round Spinney), within the southern part of the main site, 2nd century Roman circular timber buildings were succeeded in the late 3rd century by a circular building with stone foundations and a courtyard (see Appendix 2). Evidence of ironworking was also recorded (Sites 19-22, Appendix 1). Fieldwalking at the site prior to excavation recorded a scatter of 2nd-4th century Roman pottery sherds extending over 0.25 hectares (Site 6, Appendix 1).

4.6.2 The Royal Commission on Historical Monuments records a Roman settlement within the main site (RCHME: Central Northamptonshire 1979, p120). The site was identified by the discovery of pottery of 2nd and 4th-century date, roof tiles, iron slag, a number of 3rd and 4th century coins, limestone rubble and part of a quern (Site 30, 31 and 32, Appendix 1). The Air Photographic Plot at Appendix 1 records a cropmark complex to the south of this site, suggesting possible further settlement evidence in this area (AP Plots 2-6, Appendix 1).

4.6.3 A third possible Roman site is noted within the northern part of the main site, where Roman pottery was recovered from an area of dark soil (Site 16, Appendix 1).

- 4.6.4 Within the study area, the SMR records a Roman Villa at Boothville c. 500m south west of the main site (Site 15, Appendix 1). The villa is suggested by the discovery of a tessellated pavement, flue tiles, painted plaster and other Roman artefacts.
- 4.6.5 Other finds recorded on the SMR include Roman pottery sherds c. 300m south of the main site (Site 26, Appendix 1) and the discovery of Roman artefacts 400m west of the main site (Site 38, Appendix 1).
- 4.6.6 In view of the results of 1970's archaeological excavation, further Roman settlement remains are expected in the southern part of the main site. In addition, there may be a further two Roman sites within the main site, possibly comprising the remains of individual farmsteads. Within the remainder of the main site and the Park site, there is a moderate potential for the remains of related features including trackways and field boundaries. In addition, a moderate potential is identified for Roman stray finds within topsoil and subsoil horizons. Overall, a high potential is identified for settlement and related evidence of this period.

4.7 **Saxon-early Medieval-Medieval**

- 4.7.1 The character, extent and location of Post-Roman/Saxon settlement in the area is poorly understood. Although, the settlement and communication pattern that replaced the Roman one remains obscure, a complete abandonment of fertile, well-drained agricultural land seems inconceivable.
- 4.7.2 Never the less, there are no Saxon sites or finds recorded on the Northamptonshire SMR within the study area.
- 4.7.3 In the 13th century Northampton developed as an important market centre, and with this came prosperity for the surrounding villages. These economic factors, allied to social and demographic trends, resulted in a further expansion of population and the area of cultivated land. As a result, the ploughing of open-field strips was at a maximum and the acidic heathlands were correspondingly small during the 13th century. However, from the mid 14th century, a decline set in which resulted in the abandonment and shrinkage of settlement and agricultural land, due particularly to the Black Death.
- 4.7.4 The Royal Commission on Historical Monuments records a complex of earthworks to the west of Overstone Park House, thought to be the remains of a Deserted Medieval Village and garden remains associated with the house and grounds (DMV)(RCHME: Central Northamptonshire 1979, p122).

4.7.5 In view of the site's distance from nearby villages and the remains of the deserted village near Overstone Park House, it is likely that the two sites lay beyond settlement within agricultural land during the Medieval period. A low-nil potential is identified for Saxon and Medieval settlement on the sites.

4.8 **Post-Medieval & Modern**

4.8.1 In this period cartographic and documentary evidence supplements evidence in the Northamptonshire Sites and Monuments Record (SMR).

4.8.2 During the Post-Medieval period the study area encompassed parts of the parishes of Overstone, Moulton and Northampton Town. Initially the landscape was open, with the Parish boundaries forming the only significant field boundaries (as shown on the 1671 Map of the Manor of Overstone).

4.8.3 The Midland Open Fields Project (Hall & Palmer 2001) did not identify any extensive ridge and furrow within the study site. However, more recently the Northamptonshire SMR has identified one field with ploughed-out ridge and furrow within the northern part of the main site and this has been plotted on the GIS database (AP Plots 17-23, Appendix 1).

4.8.4 The 1671 Map of the Manor of Overstone (not reproduced here) shows the main site comprising parts of two fields, West Field and Mill Field and a piece of common land called Cow Common. This map shows a windmill on the north side of the road to Overstone (later called The Avenue). The Northamptonshire SMR records a windmill at SP 79494 65992 (Site 33, Appendix 1). However, following an examination of this map, the location of the Windmill is thought to lie within the study site, but further west at SP 7939 6595. This map shows the Park site comprising parts of three fields.

4.8.5 In the early 18th century, land within the parish of Overstone was enclosed and the resulting landscape is shown on the 1763 Plan of Thomas Drury Estate (Fig.3). At this time the Park site lay beyond the limits of Overstone Park within agricultural land.

4.8.6 By the early 18th century land within the two sites was enclosed (see Figure 3). The 1763 Plan of Thomas Drury Estate shows the layout of the enclosed fields. This map also shows a complex of buildings to the north of Sywell Road (later known as Overstone Farm) and shows the Park site comprising parts of three fields called Portway, Flute Closes and Drylands.

- 4.8.7 A 1932 copy of an 1803 plan showing field names within the Parish of Overstone is shown on Figures 4. The map records a field called Clay Pit Close to the north of Sywell Road. The name suggests clay extraction in this area. The map also records a field, to the south of The Avenue, called Windmill Field and a road joining The Avenue and Kettering Road enclosing a field called Moulton Corner. Land within the Park site is called Portway. A Gashouse is recorded within or close to the north-western corner of the Park site.
- 4.8.8 The Church of St. Nicholas lies immediately east of the Park site and is Grade II Listed (see Appendices 1 and 6).
- 4.8.9 The 1832 Overstone Estate Map (Fig. 5) refers to Overstone Farm as Craddocks, possibly the name of the family that ran the farm.
- 4.8.10 In the mid 19th century the gates at Pytchley Hall were moved to the entrance of Overstone Park. The gates which lie c.20m east of the main site are, Grade II Listed (see Appendix 1).
- 4.8.11 The 1856 Map of the Overstone Estate (Fig. 6: OS 1856) shows little change to the study sites and little changes on the site between 1856 and 1902 (Fig. 6, Fig. 7: OS 1886 and Fig. 8: OS 1901).
- 4.8.12 By the 1950's field boundaries had been removed to create larger fields. The 1982-1988 Ordnance Survey (Fig. 9: 1982 OS) shows the layout of the fields and the route of a pylon-mounted electricity cable.
- 4.8.13 The 1982-1988 Ordnance Survey (Fig. 9: 1982 OS) shows out-buildings and paddocks within the south-western part of the main site. The Survey also shows a bund enclosed by mature trees in the far south of the main site. The bund was probably created following the levelling of the neighbouring land for the construction of Round Spinney Industrial Estate and to screen it from nearby housing.
- 4.8.14 This map regression exercise demonstrates that the majority of the study area was in agricultural use during the Post-Medieval period. However, in the 17th and 18th century, on a parish-by-parish basis, land holdings were reorganised and enclosed fields were created. The majority of the Post-Medieval field boundaries were removed in the mid 19th century.

- 4.8.15 The site has a potential to contain the remains of a windmill or windmill mound and a field of ploughed out ridge of furrow. Post-Medieval evidence on this site is of modest historic interest.
- 4.8.16 Pytchley Gates and Church of St. Nicholas are Grade II Listed buildings which lie close to the study sites. Any development proposals will need to consider the setting of the Listed buildings.
- 4.8.17 The Northamptonshire Historic Landscape Character Assessment identifies Overstone Park, with its deserted village of Overstone and garden remains, as an important landscape. Any proposals within the Park site will need to consider the setting of the historic Parkland.

5.0 SITE CONDITIONS AND THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

5.1 Site Conditions

5.1.1 As has been detailed above, the two study sites comprise 1) agricultural land (pasture and arable), horse paddocks and an earthwork bund, and 2) Parkland. Figure 9 shows the site in detail.

5.2 The Proposed Development

5.2.1 This desk-based assessment has been prepared to inform the preparation of a Masterplan for development at Overstone Leys. As a result, the project is still at a constraints sieving stage and development proposals have yet to be formulated.

5.2.2 In due course this desk study and any other baseline studies will form Technical Appendices to an Environmental Assessment, and that document will also detail the proposed development, identify potential impacts and necessary mitigation measures.

5.2.3 This assessment has identified that there are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments on or near the study site. In addition, there are no Registered Parks and Gardens and Conservation Areas on or in the vicinity of the study site.

5.2.4 Pytchley Gates, a Grade II Listed structure lies c.20m east of the main site. Although, views towards the main site from the gates are interrupted by tall trees, any development proposals will need to consider the setting of the gates.

5.2.5 The Grade II Church of St. Nicholas lies immediately east of the Park site. Any proposals there will need to consider the setting of the Listed church.

5.2.6 Although, Overstone Park is not a Registered Historic Park and Garden, the Northamptonshire Historic Landscape Character Assessment identifies the Park, with its deserted village of Overstone and garden remains, as an important landscape. Any proposals for the Park site will need to consider this historic resource.

5.2.7 The remains of a Roman settlement and related cropmark evidence on air photographs, have been investigated in the southern part of the main site in the 1970's. The RCHME has identified a Roman settlement within the main site. In addition, researches have identified a number of smaller sites which suggest late prehistoric, Roman settlement/activity and Medieval/Post-Medieval activity on parts of the main site.

5.2.8 This assessment has identified a potential for the remains of a windmill or windmill mound immediately north of the The Avenue and an area of ploughed-out ridge and furrow within the northern part of the main site. These Post-Medieval remains are considered to be of local historic interest.

6.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 This desk-based assessment considers heritage resources within a study area, comprising the main site (133 hectares) and the Park site (6.8 hectares), and a 500m zone around them at Overstone, on the north-eastern edge of Northampton.
- 6.2 There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields designated on the site or in its vicinity.
- 6.2.1 Two Grade II Listed buildings (Pytchley Gates and the Church of St Nicholas) occur nearby and their settings will need to be considered and respected.
- 6.2.2 Although, Overstone Park is not a Registered Historic Park and Garden, the Northamptonshire Historic Landscape Character Assessment identifies the Park, with its deserted village of Overstone and garden remains, as an important historic landscape.
- 6.3 The remains of a Roman settlement were excavated within the southern part of the main site and a second area of Roman settlement has been identified within the main site. In addition, researches for this desk study site have identified a number of isolated sites which suggest late prehistoric settlement/activity, the remains of a windmill mound and ploughed-out ridge and furrow within the main site. These Post-Medieval remains are considered to be of modest local historic interest.
- 6.4 In order to establish the *condition* of any surviving sub-surface deposits and therefore the *importance* of any archaeological constraint, further information on the extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of the surviving archaeological remains is required from field evaluation. This could take the form of geophysical survey followed, if appropriate, by targeted evaluation trenching.

↓
very

SOURCES CONSULTED

1. **General**

Myk Flitcroft Northamptonshire Historic Environment Team Leader
Chris Addision Northamptonshire Sites and Monuments Record Officer
Northamptonshire Sites and Monuments Record (SMR)
Northamptonshire County Record Office (CRO)
Northampton Local Studies Library
National Monuments Record, Swindon (NMR)
Register of Parks and Gardens of special historic interest in England
Register of Historic Battlefields

<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/>

2. **Bibliographic**

Chapman A, 1999 The Neolithic and Bronze Age in Northamptonshire,
E Midlands, Research Frameworks

DOE Statutory Lists of Historic Buildings in England

Hall, 1997 Northamptonshire Heathlands Past and Present

Hall D & Palmer R, 2001 Midland Open Fields Project: Digital Archive

Hall D, 2001 Turning the Plough –Midland Open Fields: Landscape Character and
Proposals for Management.

Northamptonshire CC 2006 Historic Landscape Character Assessment

Kidd A, 1999 East Midlands Regional Research Framework Northamptonshire: The First
Millennium BC A Resource Assessment, E Midlands Research Framework

NIAG, 2001 A Guide to the Industrial Heritage of Northamptonshire, Northampton

Roe D A, 1968 A Gazetteer of British Lower and Middle Palaeolithic Sites, CBA Res Rep 8

RCHME 1979 An Inventory of Archaeological Sites in Central Northamptonshire

Taylor J 1999 East Midlands Research Framework Northamptonshire. The Roman Period
Resource Assessment, E Midlands Research Framework

VCH, 1937 Victoria History of the County of Northampton, Vol 4.

Wymer J 1999 The Lower Palaeolithic Occupation of Britain, Archaeology and English
Heritage, 2 vols Trust for Wessex

3. **Cartographic**

1671A Map of the manor of Overstone

1763 Plan of Thomas Drury Estate, Overstone and Sywell

1932 copy of 1803 plan of field names in the Parish of Overstone

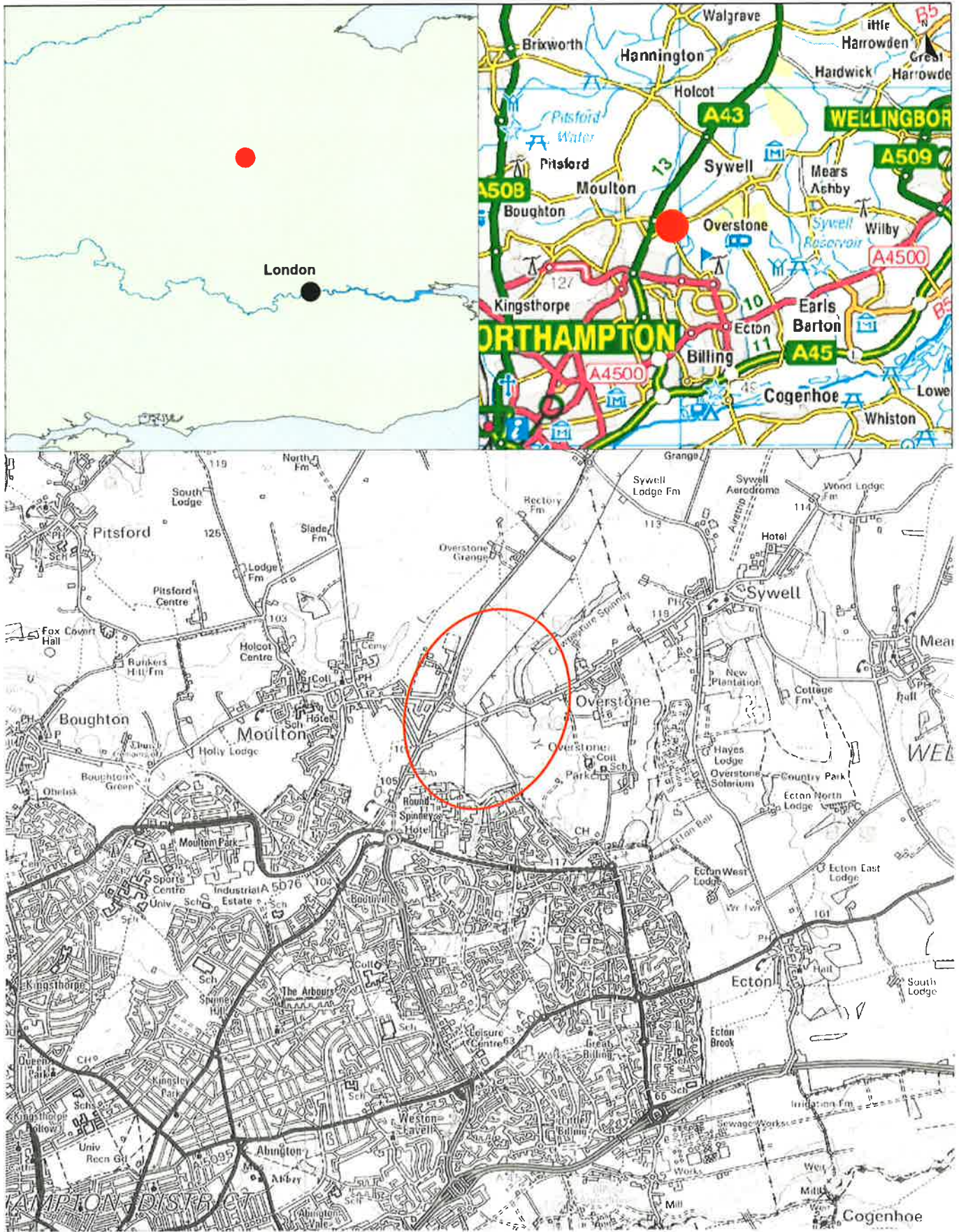
1832 Overstone Estate Map

1856 Map of the Parish of Overstone

1886 Ordnance Survey 6" scale

1901 Ordnance Survey 6" scale

1982-1988 Ordnance Survey 1:10,000 scale

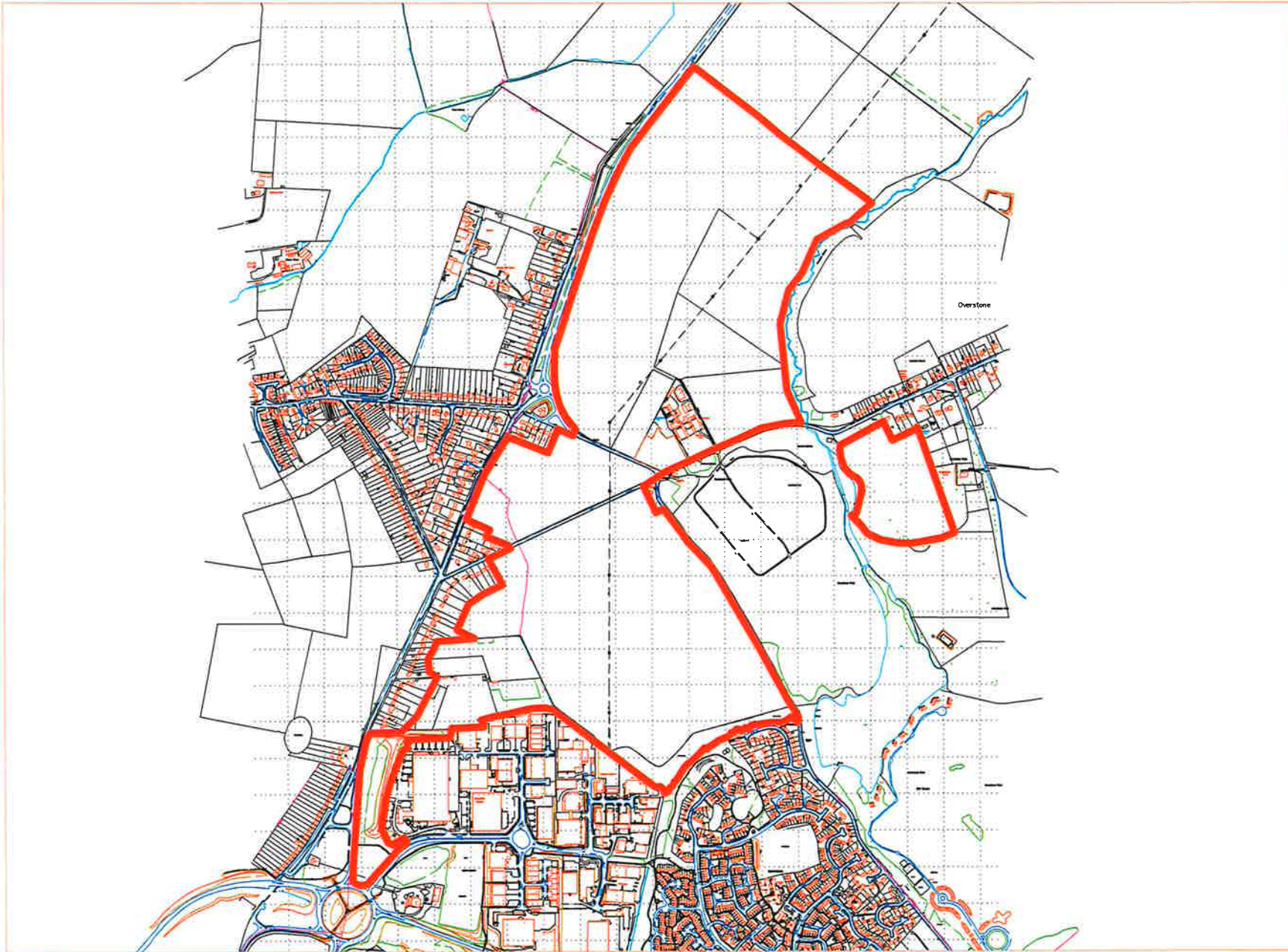


○ Site location


 London
 Cheltenham
 Exeter
 Glasgow
 Newcastle
 Birmingham
 www.cgms.co.uk
 Planning & Development
 Archaeology & Historic Buildings

Project title: Overstone Leys, Northants.	
Not to scale Illustrative only	
Date printed: 29/01/09	Drawn by: PW Checked by:

Figure 1: Site location



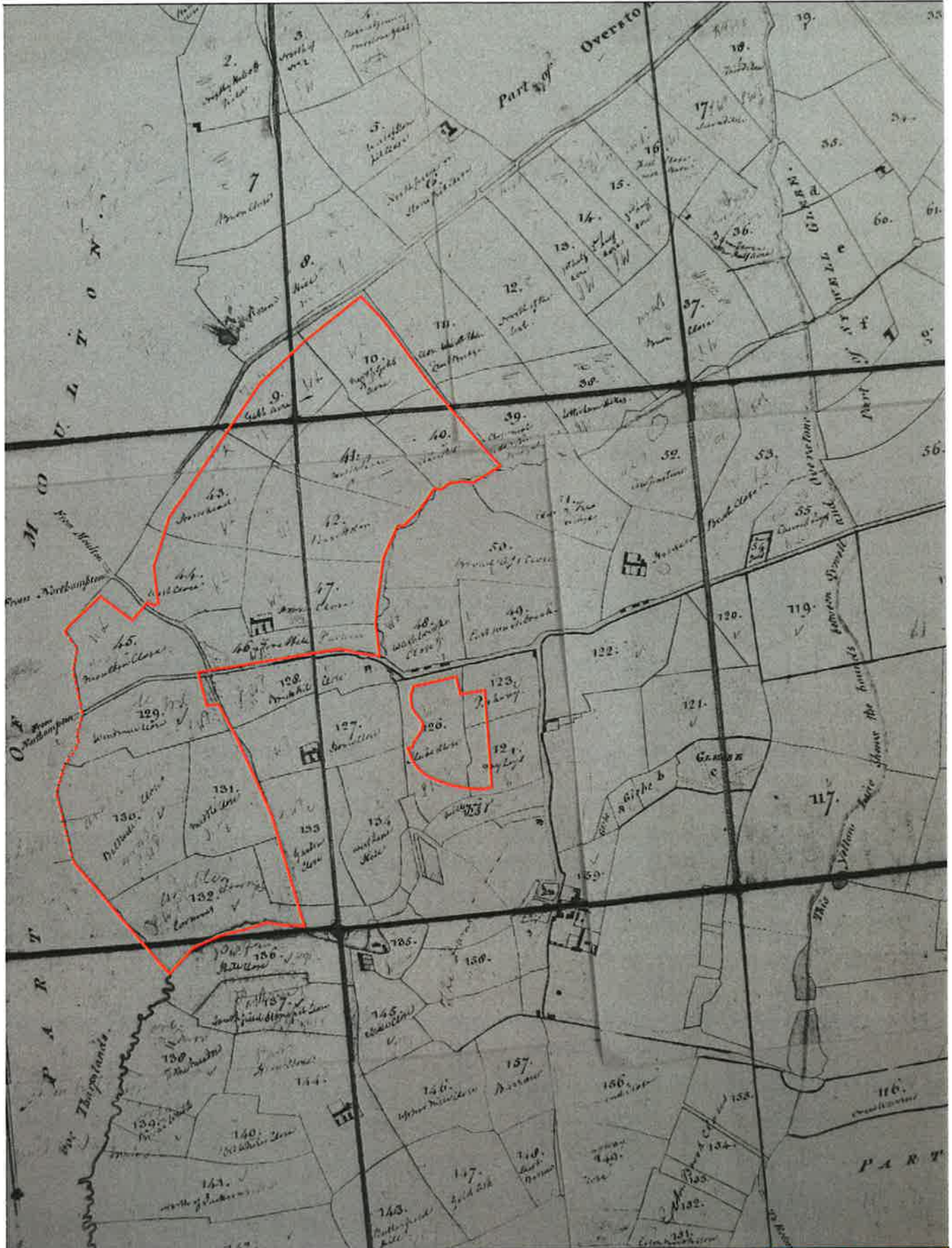
Project title:
Overstone Leys



Date printed:
20.03.09

Drawn by: SD
Checked by: PRC

Figure 2: Site details



Site boundary



Project title:
Overstone Leys, Northants.

Not to scale
Illustrative only

Date printed:
29/01/09

Drawn by: PW
Checked by:

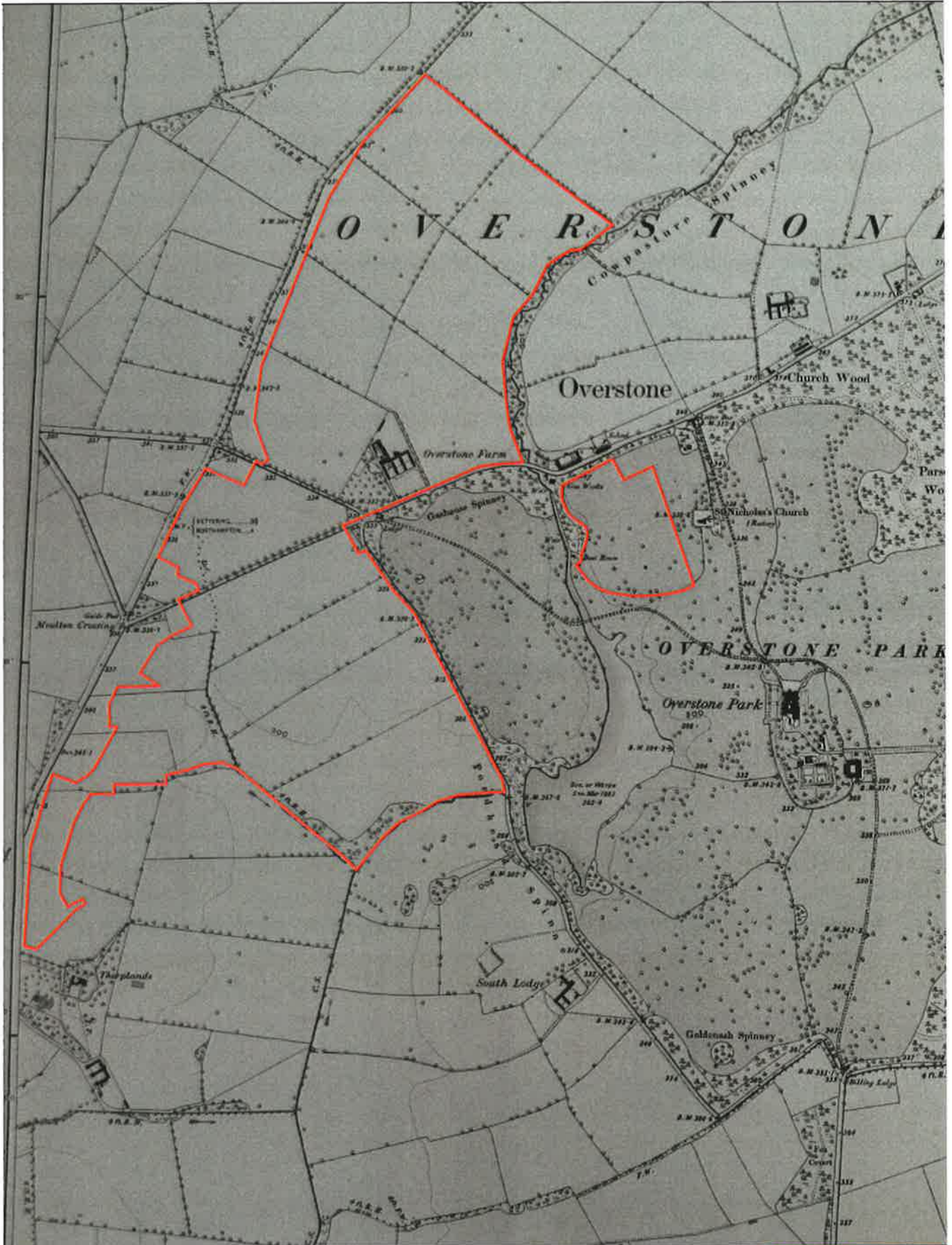
	London Cheltenham Kettering Newark Birmingham
	www.cgms.co.uk Planning & Development Archaeology & Historic Buildings

Figure 3: 1763 Plan of Thomas Drury Estate, Overstone and Sywell



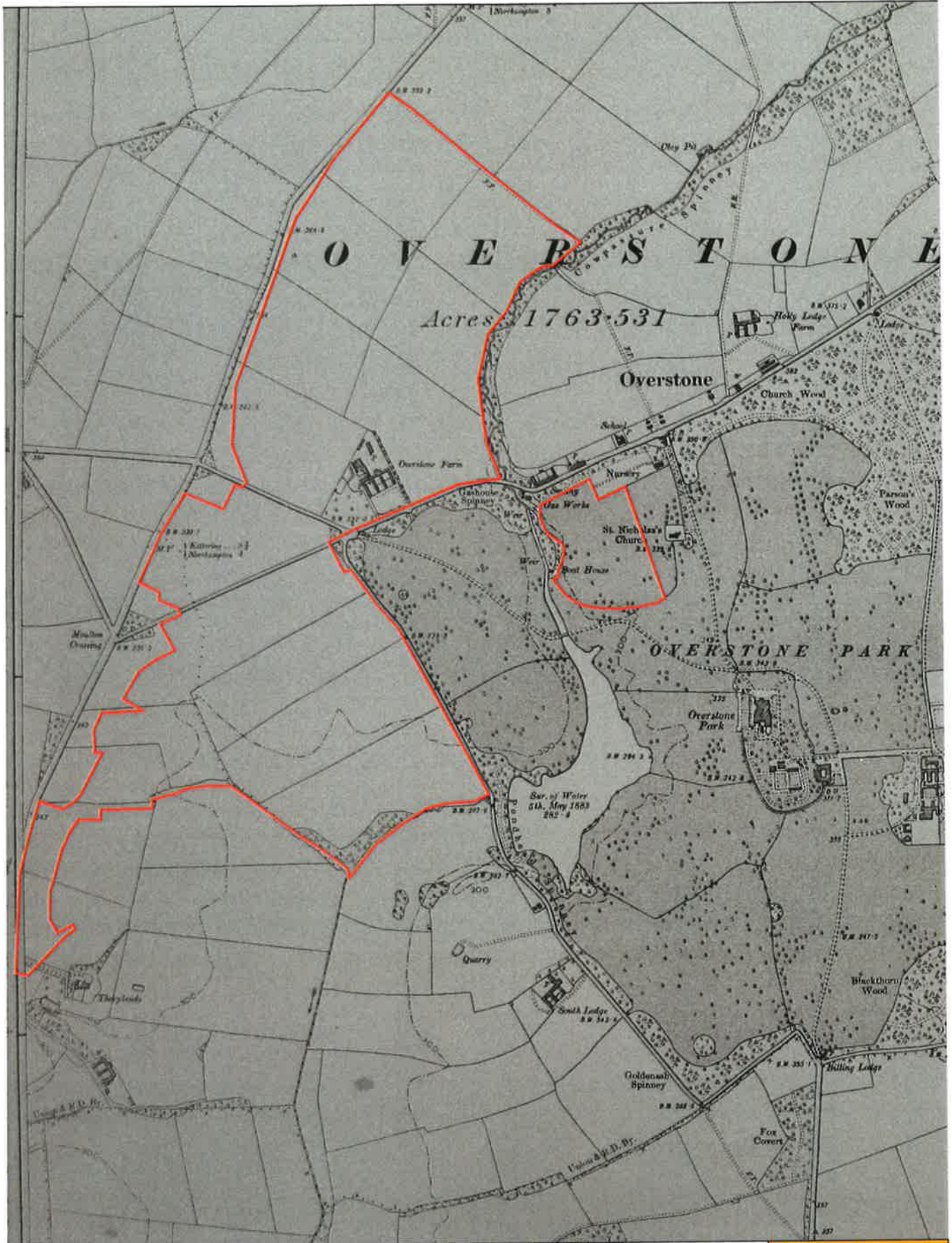
 Site boundary		Project title: Overstone Leys, Northants.		 London Cheltenham Kettering Newark Birmingham www.cgms.co.uk Planning & Development Archaeology & Historic Buildings
		Not to scale Illustrative only		
Date printed: 29/01/09		Drawn by: PW Checked by:		

Figure 6: 1856 Map of the Parish of Overstone



 Site boundary		Project title: Overstone Leys, Northants.		 London Cheltenham Kettering Newark Birmingham www.cgms.co.uk
		Not to scale Illustrative only		
Date printed: 29/01/09		Drawn by: PW Checked by:		CONSULTING Planning & Development Archaeology & Historic Buildings

Figure 7: 1886 Ordnance Survey 6" Scale



Site boundary



Project title:
Overstone Leys, Northants.

Not to scale
Illustrative only

Date printed: 29/01/09

Drawn by: PW
Checked by:

	London Cheltenham Kettering Newark Birmingham
	CONSULTING www.cgms.co.uk Planning & Development Archaeology & Historic Buildings

Figure 8: 1901 Ordnance Survey 6" Scale

Appendix 1: SMR Data Map

Appendix 2: Excavations at Thorplands
near Northampton, 1970 and 1974 (Hunter,
R and Maynard, D NAJ 1977 Vol. 12)

Excavations at Thorplands near Northampton, 1970 and 1974

By RICHARD HUNTER and DENNIS MYNARD

with contributions from

A. BURNETT, H. PENGELLY, GWYNNE OAKLEY, Mrs. M. GREEN,
JOHN H. WILLIAMS, Mrs. E. HEALEY and MARY HARMAN,
and an Appendix by Dr. DAVID WILLIAMS

INTRODUCTION

In August 1970, and from August to November 1974, a Roman rural site was excavated at Thorplands near Northampton (site numbers N70 R29 and N74 R29). Ditches and circular timber buildings were succeeded by a circular building with stone foundations and an associated yard area. A large group of pottery from a pit of mid to late 3rd century date is a major feature of the site and there is also evidence to suggest iron-working.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The work was carried out by the Northampton Development Corporation supported by the Department of the Environment, under the direction of D. Mynard in 1970 and J. Williams in 1974. The 1970 excavations were supervised by J. Small and those of 1974 by Miss M. Day and R. Hunter. We are grateful to Mrs. K. Hartley, Dr. J. P. Wild and C. Young for their comments respectively on the mortaria, the Lower Nene Valley and the Oxfordshire Wares. P. J. Woods also advised on the local coarse wares. D. T. Moore of the British Museum examined the whetstones and Dr. F. W. Anderson identified the other stone objects. Drawings for the report were prepared by K. Connor and R. Hunter. Both J. Williams and M. McCarthy have given considerable advice and assistance in all aspects of the publication.

THE SITE (FIGS. 1 and 2)

LOCATION

The site lies to the north of the Round Spinney roundabout at SP 78936506 just within the designated development area of Northampton and in the parish of Moulton. It occupies a relatively commanding position at about 340 feet above sea level on the brow of a gentle south eastward facing slope.

GEOLOGY

The site is on the Northampton Sands which appear as broken ironstone with pockets of sand at an average depth of half a metre below the present ground surface. Considerable problems were encountered in the 1974 excavations with periglacial features (solution holes and fissures) which initially gave the false impression of being post holes and slots.

GENERAL BACKGROUND

The area appears to have been settled from prehistoric times. A number of flints and a small quantity of Iron Age pottery have been found on the Thorplands

Thorplands: Site Location

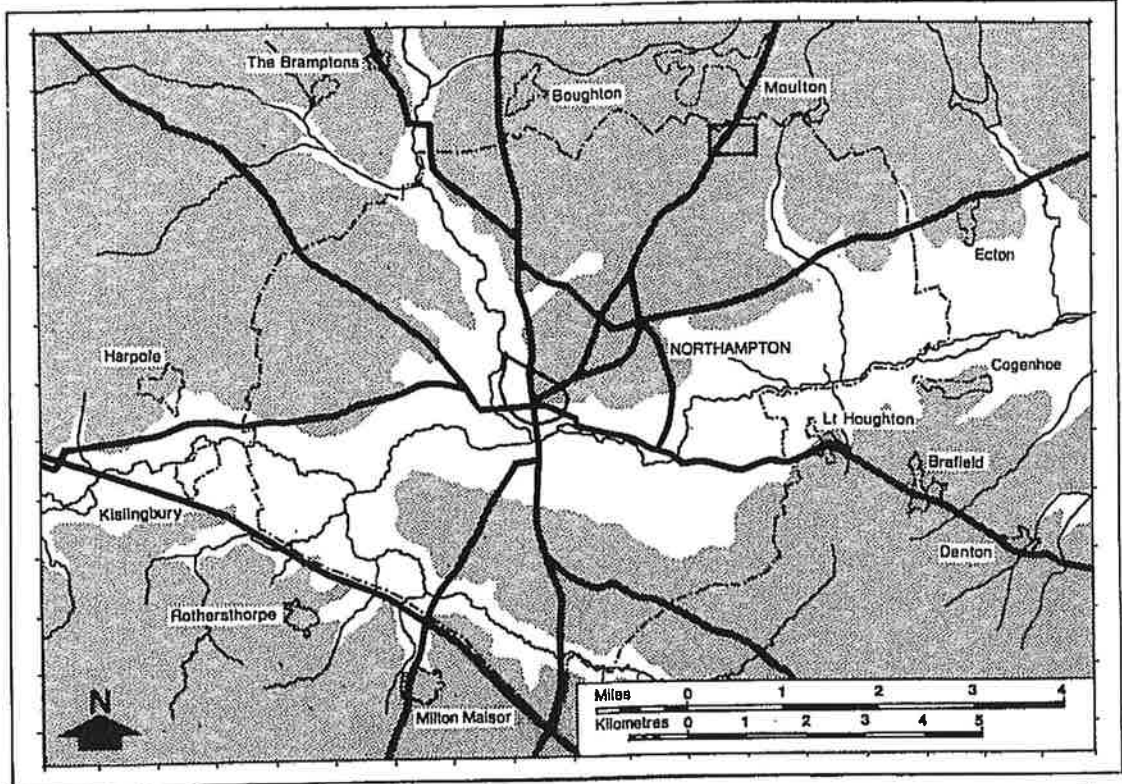
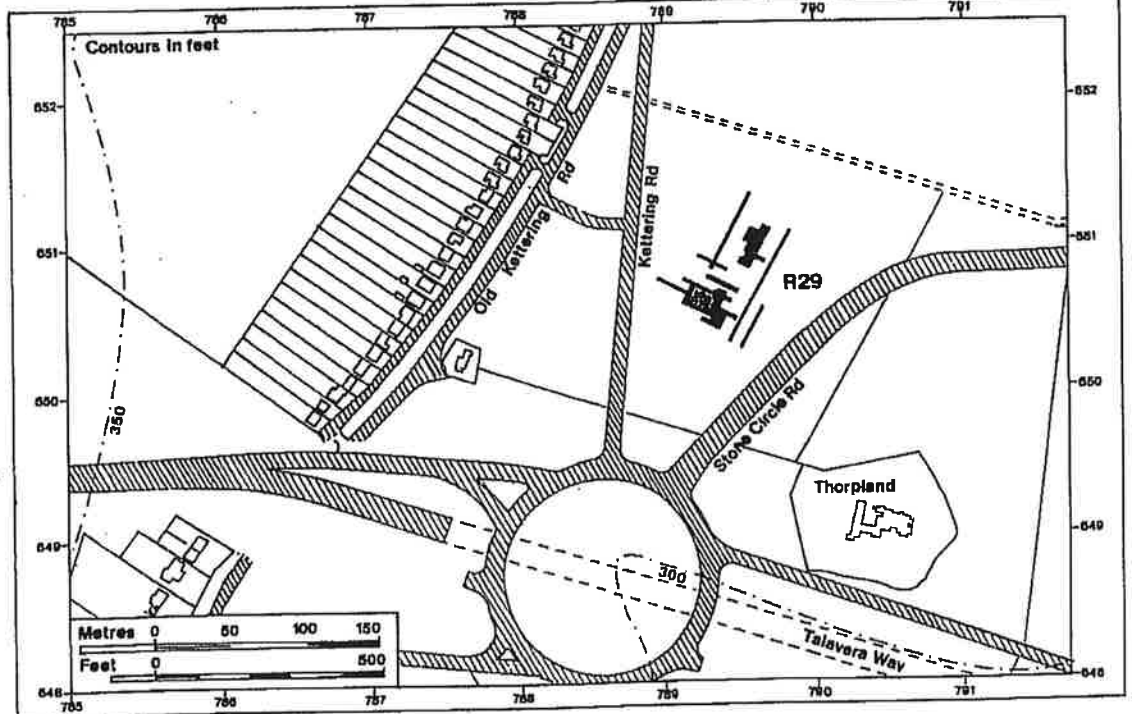


Fig 1

Fig 2



EXCAVATIONS AT THORPLANDS

site while the Iron Age settlement at Moulton and the Blackthorn Iron Age enclosure (Williams, 1974) are both about a mile distant. It is perhaps important to note that the line of the nearby A43 Kettering Road (FIG. 2) has been suggested as the possible course of a prehistoric route, the Jurassic Way (Grimes, 1951, 149) but the local Roman road network east of Duston is as yet unknown.

Other Roman rural sites occur within easy reach of Thorplands. The neighbouring Overstone site to the east, SP 805646 (Williams, 1976) and the Roman building with tessellated pavement to the south west, SP 785646 (Brown, 1940; *Northamptonshire Archaeol.* 9, (1974), 91) were probably both within view, while fieldwalking evidence suggests extensive Roman activity throughout the vicinity.

DISCOVERY OF THE SITE

Fragments of Roman pottery and worked flints were recovered by R. Hollowell in the 1960's. Further fieldwalking by D. Mynard in May 1970 in advance of development revealed a dense scatter of prehistoric flints and 2nd to 4th century pottery over an area of almost an acre. Building materials were noted in two areas.

THE EXCAVATIONS (FIG. 3)

In 1970, trial trenching was undertaken by hand and by machine, in order to define more closely the areas of building. Subsequently, areas 2/3 and 5/6 were excavated down to the Phase 4 late Roman levels. The Phase 3 pit was also partially excavated. Excavations were recommenced in 1974 in area 2/3 with the intention of examining and removing the circular stone building. Earlier phases of circular timber buildings and ditches were also revealed. No further examination of area 5/6 was carried out.

For preliminary reports of the excavations see *B.N.F.A.S.* 5 (1971), 22-24 (1970 excavations), and *Northants. Archaeol.* 10, (1975), 157 (1974 excavations).
LAYER LIST.

The layer numbers used in the site recording of the 1974 excavations are retained in this report. The 1970 excavations operated a recording system that involved 'finds group' numbers based on find type (pottery, bone, coin, etc.); layer numbers as such were not used. A card index was used to cross-reference associated finds groups of different finds type. In the processing of the site material these finds group numbers were allocated new layer numbers based on the 1970 site notes and were added to the 1974 excavations layer list. However, in the layer list below, the original 1970 finds group numbers for pottery and bone, denoted by the prefixes 'P' for pottery and 'B' for bone, have also been retained to facilitate cross-referencing of the two excavations. Bracketed numbers refer to layers or finds groups recorded separately in the site notes but now amalgamated with unbracketed layers.

Area 2/3

1. Wall of circular stone building. Chiefly limestone blocks with rubble core of limestone, ironstone and pebble. Two to three courses remaining in places to a height of 0.15m. Phase 4.
2. (2A, 7, 10, 11, 25, 49). Yard surface. Chiefly limestone. Evidence of re-surfacing in some areas. Phase 4.

Thorplands: General Site Plan

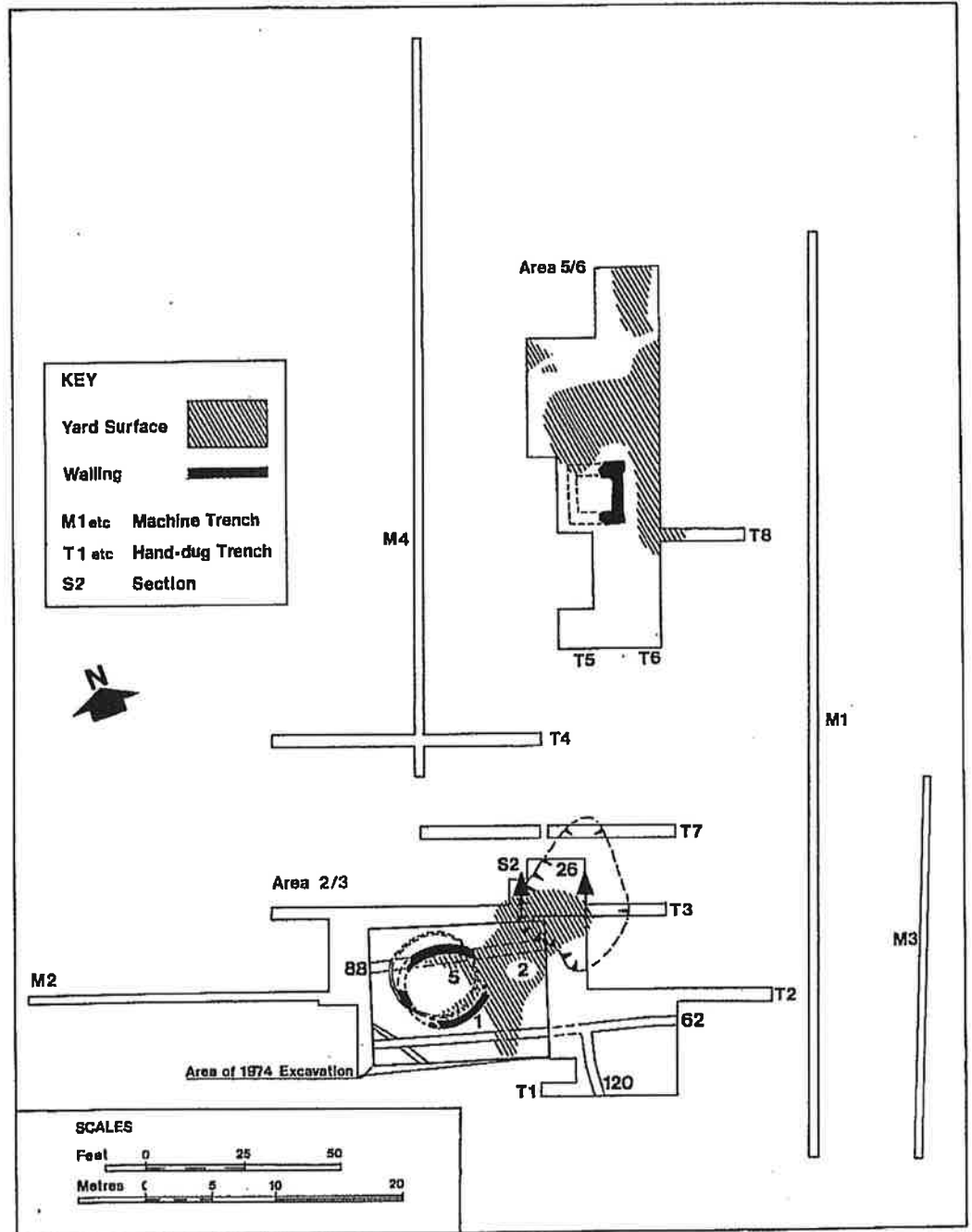


Fig 3

EXCAVATIONS AT THORPLANDS

3. Post hole. Dark brown soil with charcoal. Limestone packing. Door post. Phase 4.
4. Hearth. Ash and charcoal. ?Underlies 5. Phase 1, 2 or 4.
5. Floor of limestone slabs within building. ?Overlies 4. Phase 4.
6. (18, 123; P45, P48). Dark grey clayey soil with limestone. ?Make up for 5. Not on plan. Phase 4.
8. (16, 19, 23, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 45, 46, 47, 91, 144). Stone scatter in dark brown soil. Overlies 32 and subsiding into 62. Phase 4, 72 or ?1.
9. (17, 24). Orange sandy soil with ironstone and burnt ironstone. Not on plan. Phase 2 or ?1.
14. Foundation trench for 1. Ironstone in orange brown sandy soil. Not on plan. Phase 4.
15. (20, 21, 36, 63, 92, 142, 143). Brown soil with ironstone and charcoal. Underlies 2; overlies 37, 42, 50. Not on plan. Phase 2 or ?1.
22. (24, 41, 44). Brown sandy soil with orange sandy patches. Underlies 15, 37 and subsiding into 88. Not on plan. Phase 2 or ?1.
26. Pit. Layer 1 (P5, P9, P10, P18, P19, P20, B1, B2, B4): dark grey soil. Coin of Elagabalus, AD 218-222. Layer 2: yellow sandy clay. Layer 3 (P43, B23): yellow sandy soil. Depth 0.72m. max. Underlies 2. Cuts 37, 88. Phase 3.
32. (48, 52). Medium to dark brown soil with limestone and ironstone, some burnt. Overlies 62; underlies 8; subsiding into 62. Not on plan. Phase 2 or ?1.
35. (140). Post hole. Dark brown soil with limestone and ironstone packing. Depth 0.27m. Phase 1 or 2.
37. (86). Dark brown soil with ironstone. Subsiding into 88. May be equivalent to 15. Not on plan. Phase 2 or ?1.
39. Post hole. Orange sandy soil with charcoal, burnt mortar and ash. Phase 1 or 2.
40. Post hole. Black soil with charcoal and limestone packing. Door post for gully 57. Depth 0.25m. Phase 2.
42. Hearth. Bowl-shaped. Burnt ironstone, limestone, clay and charcoal. Depth 0.15m. Underlies 15. Phase 1 or 2.
43. Post hole. Black soil with limestone and ironstone on edge. Underlies 15. Phase 1 or 2.
50. (53). Hearth. Bowl-shaped. Dark grey clayey soil with charcoal and burnt clay. Depth 0.09m. Underlies 15. Phase 1 or 2.
54. Post hole. Medium brown sandy soil. Depth 0.08m. Phase 1, 2 or 4.
55. Post hole. Dark brown soil. Phase 1, 2 or 4.
56. (134). Post hole. Dark brown soil with yellow sandy patches. Phase 1, 2 or 4.
57. (60). Gully. Foundation trench for circular timber building. Medium or dark brown sandy soil with ironstone. Cuts 37. Depth 0.12m. max. Phase 2.
59. Post hole. Dark brown soil with limestone and ironstone packing. Depth 0.27m. Phase 1, 2 or ?4.
61. Post hole. Dark brown soil with ironstone packing. Door post for gully 57. Depth 0.11m. Phase 2.
62. (121; P41, B21). Ditch. Dark brown soil with some ironstone. Depth 0.30m. max. Phase 1 or 2.
64. Ditch. Medium to dark brown soil with orange patches. Cut by 62. Depth 0.18m. max. Phase 1 or 2.
114. Post hole. Dark brown soil. Phase 1, 2 or 4.
115. Post hole. Dark brown soil. Phase 1, 2 or 4.
116. ?Post hole. Brown soil with ironstone. Underlies 37; cuts 88. Depth 0.32m. Phase 1 or 2.
120. (P37, B22). Ditch. Brown soil. See general site plan (FIG. 3). Phase 1, 2 or ?4.
122. (P35, P44, B17, B24). Layer overlying yard surface 2. Not on plan. Phase 4.
124. (P31, P34, P46, P47, B12, B16, B25). Layer overlying floor 5. Not on plan. Phase 4.
125. (P7, P24, B9). Destruction debris overlying circular stone building. ?Overlies 124. Not on plan. Phase 4.
126. (P29, B10). Destruction debris overlying yard area. ?Overlies 122. Not on plan. Phase 4.
132. Post hole. Dark brown soil. Phase 1, 2 or 4.
133. Post hole. Dark brown soil. Phase 1, 2 or 4.
135. Post hole. Dark grey sandy soil. Depth 0.04m. Underlies 1. Phase 2.
136. Post hole. Dark grey sandy soil. Depth 0.05m. Underlies 1. Phase 2.
137. Post hole. Dark grey sandy soil with charcoal and ironstone packing. Depth 0.05m. Underlies 1. Phase 2.

138. Post hole. Dark grey sandy soil. Depth 0.05 m. Underlies 1. Phase 2.
139. Post hole. Grey clay and dark grey sandy soil. Depth 0.06 m. Underlies 1. Phase 2.
141. Post hole. Dark grey soil with ironstone. Depth 0.07 m. Underlies 5. Phase 1 or 2.

The following layer numbers and finds groups are regarded as unstratified:

Area 2/3: +, 12, 13, 51, 65, 127 (P1, P1A, P2, P2A, P3, P4, P8, P11-17, P21, P23, P25, P26, P28, P39, P42; B3, B6, B8, B13), 128 (P6, P22; B5), 129 (P32, P33; B14, B15), 145.

Area 5/6: 130 (P30, P36, P38, P40; B11, B18, B19, B20).

The following layer numbers relate to geological features, e.g. solution holes and fissures which were initially regarded as archaeological:

Area 2/3: 33, 34, 58, 66-85, 87, 89, 90, 93-113.

THE STRATIGRAPHY

Although the excavated features are considered within a 'phase' framework, the stratigraphical relationships between phases were not always clear cut. Phase 4 is relatively well-defined through its stone-built features but while features assigned to Phases 1, 2 and 3 could be seen to be stratigraphically earlier than Phase 4, the relationships between these earlier phases were not always distinguishable. Broad phase distinctions based chiefly on function and finds have therefore been adopted and although highly likely it cannot be categorically stated that a chronological sequence of ditches (Phase 1), circular timber buildings (Phase 2) and pit (Phase 3) actually occurred.

PRE-PHASE 1

Prehistoric activity was shown by the considerable number of flints. A small quantity of residual Iron Age pottery was also found but no structures or features were located that could be definitely dated to a pre-Roman period.

PHASE 1 (FIGS. 4 and 6)

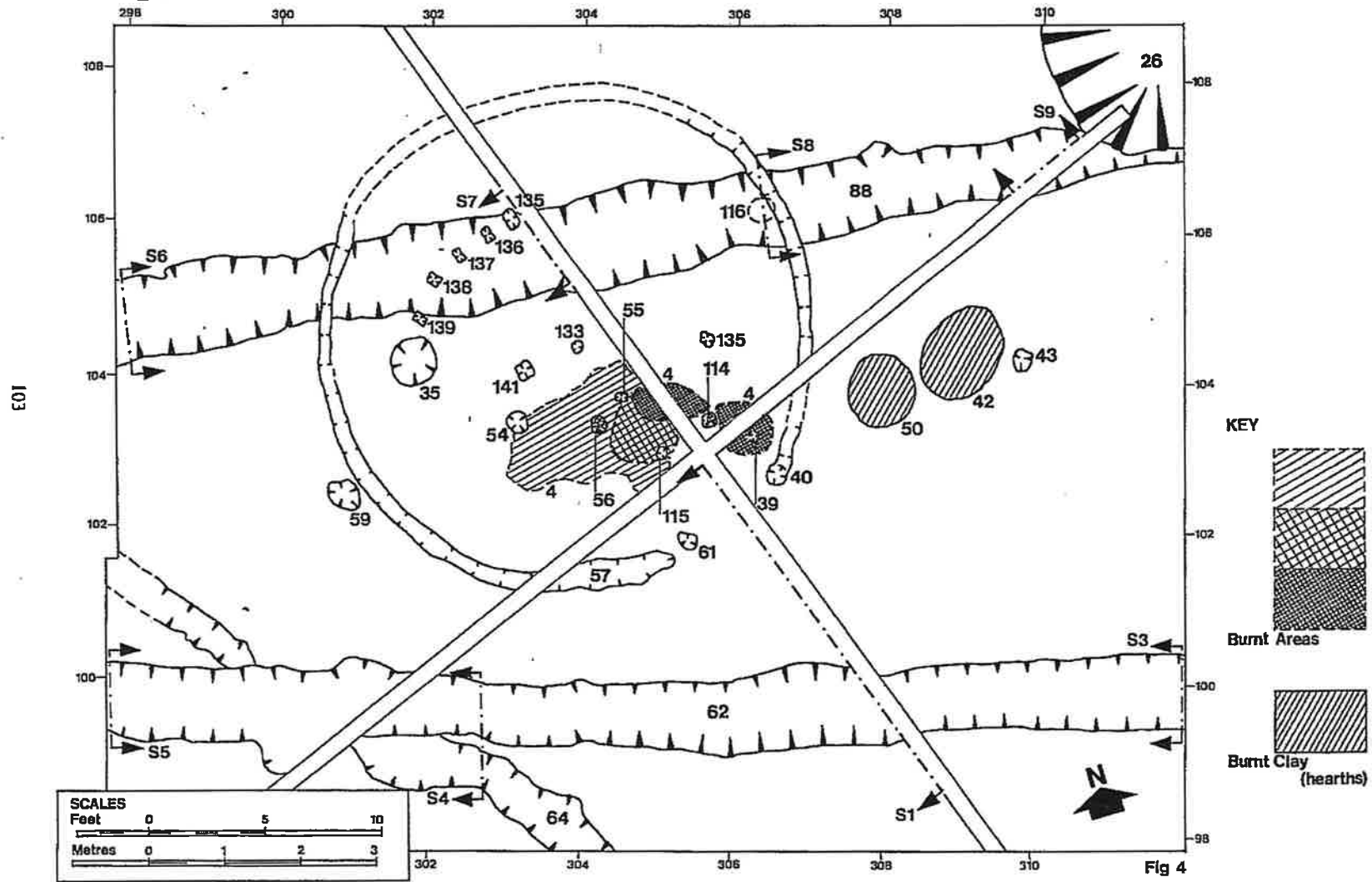
The earliest feature was ditch 88, the fill of which was cut by the gully of the Phase 2 circular timber building. Other ditches 62, 64 and 120 are included in Phase 1 on functional grounds but they are not stratigraphically related to ditch 88. Indeed, ditches 62, 64 and 120 could all have been operational while the Phase 2 buildings were standing. Ditch 64 was cut by ditch 62 but no relationship was established between ditches 62 and 120 (see FIG. 3).

The ditches all contained Roman pottery of chiefly late 1st and 2nd century date but the small quantities involved preclude any more definite dating. The function of these ditches is unclear although they may represent boundary features. No traces of post holes within the ditches were found except for 116 which was cut through the fill of ditch 88 and therefore probably belongs to Phase 2.

PHASE 2 (FIGS. 4 and 6)

One or possibly two circular timber buildings on the same site form the major features of Phase 2. However, no stratigraphic relationship was established between the circular building defined by the penannular gully, 57, and the possible building suggested by the arc of post holes 35, 135-139 and ?116. Both structures cut the fill of the Phase 1 ditch, 88, and were sealed by the Phase 4 stone building and yard. The gully, 57, is presumed to be the structural remains of a building because of the positioning of the post holes 40 and 61 which suggest an entrance on the south-east side.

Thorplands: Phases 1, 2 & 3



Also probably attributable to Phase 2 (or, less likely, Phase 1) are the two burnt clay, bowl-shaped features, 42 and 50. Sited outside the buildings, these may possibly be hearths related to the ironworking evidence that was found in Phases 2, 3 and 4 (see p. 141 below).

A number of other features can be less certainly assigned to Phase 2. The area of burning, 4, may represent a hearth for one or both of the Phase 2 structures but as it was imperfectly sealed by the floor of the Phase 4 stone building it may well be associated with this latter phase or even with Phase 1. Again, this feature may perhaps be related to the iron working. Isolated post holes, 39, 43, 54, 55, 56, 59, 114, 115, 132, 133, 141, may or may not be related to this area of burning, the circular buildings and, in the case of 43, the outdoor hearths 42 and 50.

As with the Phase 1 features, the quantities of associated pottery were small and appeared to cover a late 1st and 2nd century date range, perhaps extending into the 3rd century also.

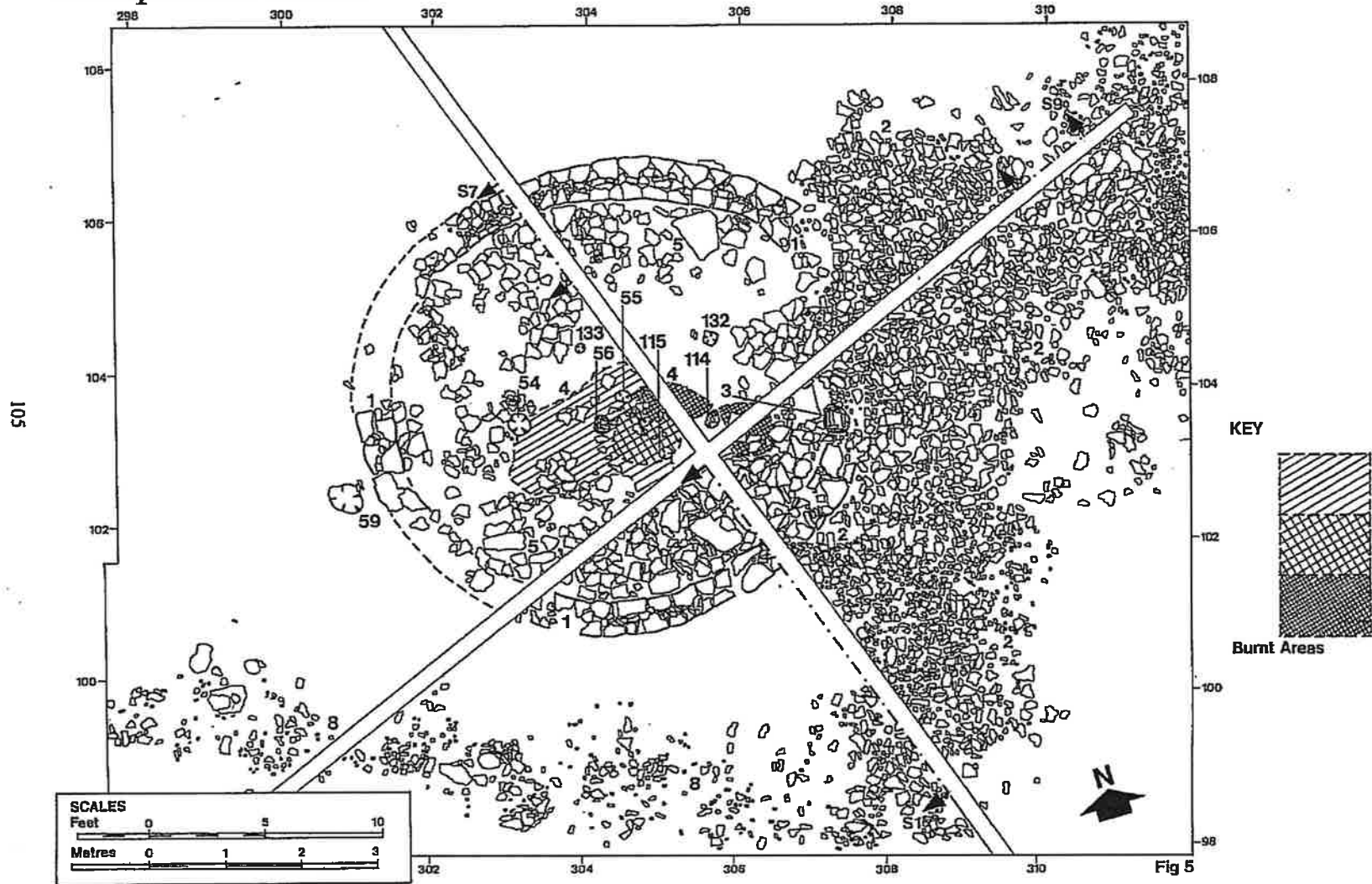
PHASE 3 (FIGS. 3, 4 and 6)

Phase 3 is reserved solely for pit 26 which, in terms of finds, effectively overshadows all other features on the site. Although the pit appears to underlie the Phase 4 yard, 2, and cuts the Phase 1 ditch, 88, there is no definite stratigraphic link with the structures of Phase 2. Furthermore, the yard also showed signs of re-surfacing so it is not impossible that the pit may have been contemporary with the Phase 4 building at an early stage.

The pit was not fully excavated but its dimensions are probably in the region of 10m. in diameter and 0.7m. in depth. No tip lines were recognised but it seems likely that all or part of the pit may have been filled quickly on the evidence of the unusual ceramic assemblage. It was also noticeable that the overlying yard surface showed little sign of subsidence thereby suggesting that the fill had settled and become compacted by the time the Phase 4 occupation began.

In many ways it perhaps seems unreasonable to regard the feature as being dug originally as a conventional rubbish pit for everyday use. It is particularly large to serve buildings of the size revealed by the excavations and, as noted above, appears to have been rapidly filled. Two possible interpretations can be suggested. Firstly, it could be a stone pit although it must be said that the ironstone bedrock on the site hardly appears suitable for building purposes: it is relatively soft and easily shattered, and contains numerous pockets of sand. Equally significant, perhaps, is that the subsequent Phase 4 building and yard are chiefly constructed from limestone which is not immediately available on site. Nevertheless, the stone, or indeed sand, may have served some constructional purpose. Secondly, there is the possibility that the stone was being quarried for its iron content and is connected with the evidence for iron working on the site. It must be stressed, however, that no scientific proof has been sought regarding the feasibility of smelting the ironstone on the site although the 19th century smelting of Northampton Ironstone from nearby Hunsbury Hill, Duston and Earls Barton should perhaps be borne in mind. It is interesting to note also that experiments conducted on local ore (Wynne and Tylecote, 1958) have shown that smelting of deposits of this nature was well within the capabilities of Roman technology.

Thorplands: Phase 4



The finds from pit 26, and particularly the pottery (see p. 115 below) are of considerable interest. An estimate of at least 1000 pots is not extravagant and it is postulated that some or all of these vessels may relate to a nearby kiln or store, or possibly even an assemblage destroyed in transit.

The chronological implications of the pottery evidence are dealt with in detail in the pottery report. The suggested mid to late 3rd century date is supported by the single coin of Elagabalus (A.D. 218-222).

PHASE 4 (FIGS. 5 and 6, PL. 1)

At some point, probably in the late 3rd century, a circular building with stone foundations, 1, was erected on the site of the earlier timber structures, and an area of yard, 2, laid down. Limestone, probably local although not outcropping in the immediate vicinity of the site, was the dominant material used. *Tegulae* fragments — ?unlikely on a circular building — may relate to another building close at hand. Also a few small fragments of window glass were found, as were some possible *tubuli* fragments and a Purbeck Marble slab which, if not re-used, again suggest the presence of a more substantial structure nearby. The external diameter of the circular building was approximately 6.5m. and the width of the foundations between 0.5 and 0.6m. The foundations were partially robbed away (?destroyed by ploughing) but a doorway on the east side was indicated by the stone-lined post hole, 3, while the interior of the building had the remains of a limestone-flagged floor, 5. It was unclear whether the area of burning, 4, and post holes 54, 55, 56, 114, 115, 132, 133 related to this building or its predecessors. The yard surface, 2, merged with the floor, 5, and abutted the stone foundations, 1, but traces of re-surfacing were apparent in places. Possibly the yard only extended over a roughly rectangular area to the south-east of the building but it is equally likely that further areas of paving have been lost through plough damage. The intermittent scatter of stone, 8, may represent yard remnants subsided into the top of the Phase 1 ditch, 62.

The finds from the building and yard, and their overlying destruction levels, 122, 124-126 — chiefly coarse pottery and animal bone — suggest that the major usage of the buildings was domestic while the presence of quern fragments, whetstones, a spindle whorl and the possible evidence for small scale iron-working, are quite consistent with a small farm. The few choice items, brooches and other bronze, bone and glass artifacts that were recovered, in no way contradict this.

In terms of dating Phase 4, an *antoninianus* of Carausius (A.D. 287-293) found between the flagstones of the floor, 5, indicates that the building was probably standing in the late 3rd century. The seven coins found in the destruction layers immediately over the building range in date from c. A.D. 270 to 380 and the other unstratified coins cover a similar period. It is probable, therefore, that the building went out of use in the later 4th or early 5th century. The ceramic and other dating evidence does not conflict with such an interpretation.

Thorplands: Sections

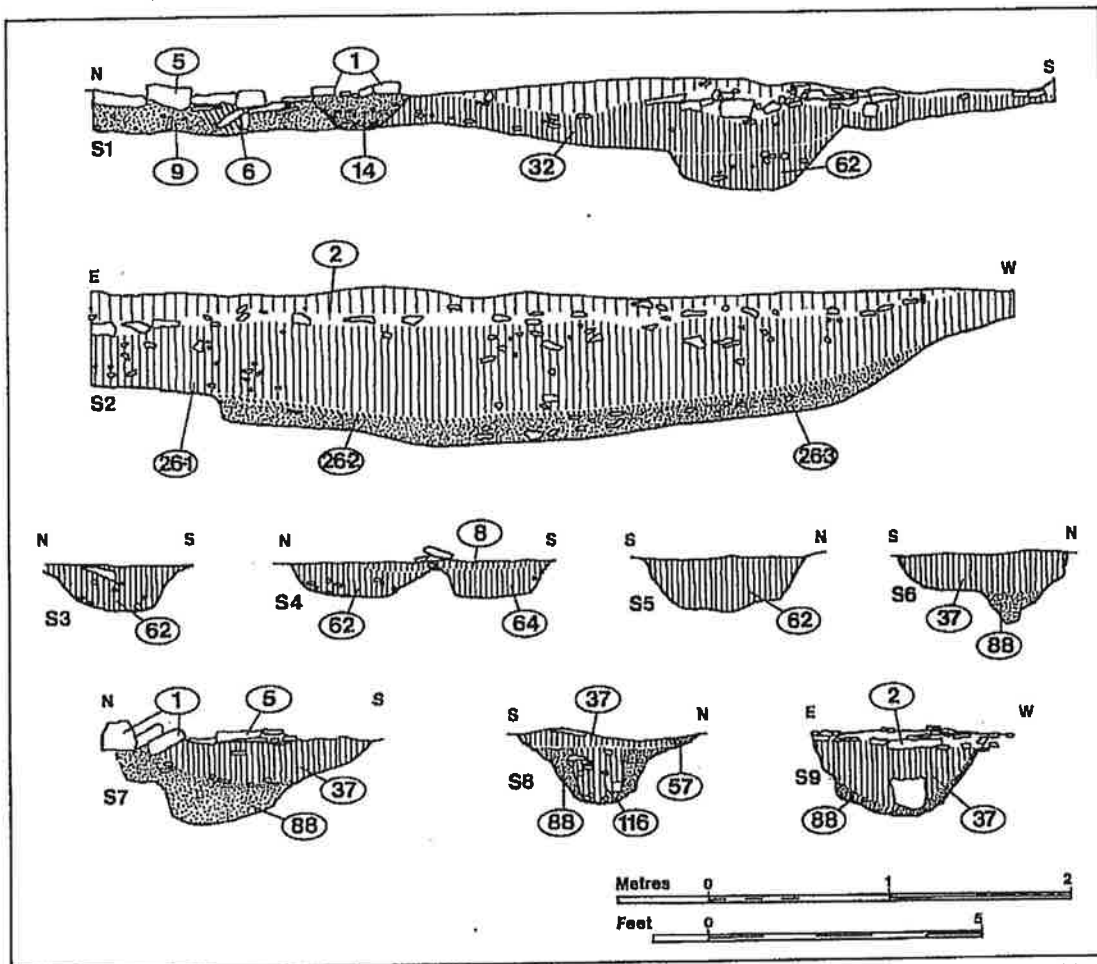


Fig 6

AREA 5/6 (FIG. 3)

Area 5/6, excavated in 1970 only, revealed a probable yard surface and remains of a small structure, square in plan, and constructed on limestone foundations, but of unknown function. Three coins of the later 3rd century, and 3rd or 4th century pottery (all regarded as unstratified) suggest that these remains may be equivalent to Phase 4 of area 2/3.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

It is extremely difficult to attribute a precise chronology to the site. Prehistoric flint working is clearly evident in the vicinity and it is interesting to note that Thorplands is situated on the 'crescent' of light soils lying to the east and north of Northampton. This area is now being recognised as the scene of much prehistoric activity (Hall, 1977; Hall and Martin, forthcoming). However, the

earliest features revealed by excavation are ditches of uncertain function but probably of the 1st and 2nd century A.D. A sequence of two, possibly three circular buildings appears to exist on the site from the 2nd to the late 4th century but the exact point at which occupation began and ended is indeterminate. Although probably the case, it is not possible to say whether the Romano-British occupation was unbroken. Overall, the excavated remains are consistent with what one would expect from a small farm. Finds of pottery and metalwork suggest reasonable prosperity and the animal bones indicate that animal husbandry was probably practised. The evidence for small scale ironworking is also of interest while the large pit, discussed elsewhere in the report, is an unusual and prominent feature of the site in the 3rd century.

The Thorplands sequence of circular buildings falls within a tradition that is relatively common in the lowland zone of Roman Britain. A summary of the current evidence has been recently published (Williams, 1976, 112-114) so discussion will aim to place this particular site in the context of that synthesis.

Circular timber buildings of the types found at Thorplands are common throughout the Roman period. It seems necessary to point only to the parallels at Overstone less than a mile away (Williams, 1976) where similar arcs of post holes and circular gullies were found.

The Thorplands Phase 4 stone structure with an external diameter of c. 6.5 m. lies at the lower end of the scale of building size noted elsewhere but in some of its attributes it shows a resemblance to other excavated examples. The stone-flagged floor, for instance, is paralleled at Overstone, Brigstock (Greenfield, 1963) and Barnsley Park (Webster, 1967) while the limestone wall foundations and yard can be seen again at nearby Overstone although the stone foundations at this latter site were pitched and not laid flat.

The sequence of circular timber buildings to circular stone replacements is also attested at Overstone and certainly, in the case of Thorplands, the erection of the stone building on almost the exact site of its predecessors argues strongly for continuity of occupation.

The suggested farm status of the Thorplands site supports the view that circular stone buildings should perhaps not be attributed to specific uses. Also, with the presence less than a mile to the south west of an unexcavated late Roman building with a tessellated pavement, the point should perhaps be made that the Thorplands site on its own may not necessarily form a single property unit, i.e. it could ultimately prove to be attached to some larger establishment. Finally, the sequence of buildings on the site also confirms a major point concerning structures of this nature: namely that they form part of a single building tradition which, in certain parts of the country, undergoes a conversion from timber into stone. It is interesting to note that, in the case of both the Thorplands and Overstone sites, this conversion appears to take place in the later 3rd century.

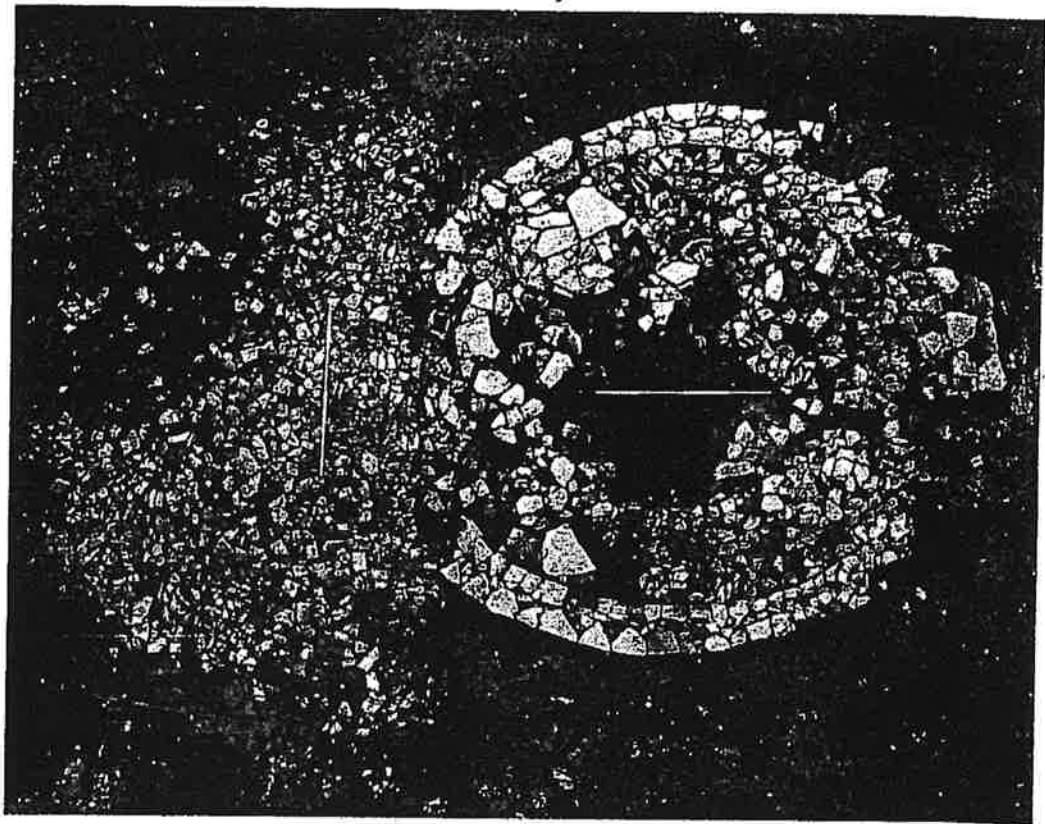


Plate 1 Thorplands: the Phase 4 circular stone building and yard.

Appendix 3: Gazetteer of SMR data

CgMs Site	MonUID	Name	Prefref	Type
	0	MNN140223 Possible ironworking site	5107/0/9	MON
	1	MNN140222 Possible building and yard	5107/0/8	MON
	2	MNN140221 Series of post holes of uncertain type	5107/0/6	MON
	3	MNN140220 Possible hearths	5107/0/5	MON
	4	MNN135290 Thorplands Farm	6931	MON
	5	MNN116415 NN116415	4533/0/3	FS
	6	MNN104203 Anti-Aircraft Battery (Training?)	9044/1	MON
	7	MNN104202 Modern military site	9044	MON
	8	MNN6063 Possible post medieval industrial site	4532	MON
	9	MNN32640 Unstratified Prehistoric & Romano-British Finds	4534/0/0	FS
	10	MNN32639 Unstratified Iron Age Finds	5515/0/0	FS
	11	MNN31656 Ornamental Lake	2005/0/1	MON
	12	MNN28607 Pit containing finds associated with Romano-British settlement	5107/0/7	MON
	13	MNN28327 Uncertain Cropmarks	4535/0/1	MON
	14	MNN28322 Possibly Roman ditches	5107/0/1	MON
	15	MNN28130 Undated Enclosures	4534/0/1	MON
	16	MNN27212 Roman finds	9794/0/0	FS
	17	MNN25499 Unstratified Iron Age Finds	5515/0/0	FS
	18	MNN25146 Unstratified Flints, Probably Bronze Age	5112/0/0	FS
	19	MNN25136 Late Roman Courtyard	5107/0/4	MON
	20	MNN25135 Late Roman Building	5107/0/3	MON
	21	MNN25134 Romano-British Buildings	5107/0/2	MON
	22	MNN25133 Unstratified Romano-British Finds	5107/0/0	FS
	23	MNN25130 Unstratified Prehistoric Finds	5106/0/0	FS
	24	MNN25127 Unstratified Roman Find	5105/1/0	FS
	25	MNN25120 Unstratified Romano-British Find	5102/0/0	FS
	26	MNN25119 Unstratified Romano-British Finds	5101/0/0	FS
	27	MNN25118 Unstratified Prehistoric Finds	5100/0/0	FS
	28	MNN25117 Unstratified Prehistoric Find	5098/0/0	FS
	29	MNN24447 Prehistoric finds	4536/0/0	MON
	30	MNN24446 Unstratified Prehistoric & Romano-British Finds	4535/0/0	FS
	31	MNN24445 Possible Roman building	4533/0/2	MON
	32	MNN24444 Possible undated enclosures	4533/0/1	MON
	33	MNN24443 Possible windmill site	4532/1	MON
	34	MNN24442 Possible Bronze Age Round Barrow	5515/0/5	MON
	35	MNN24441 Possible undated ditches	4530/0/1	MON
	36	MNN21327 Prehistoric finds	2006/0/0	FS
	37	MNN103801 WWII Searchlight Battery	7963/0/1	MON
	38	MNN103548 Roman finds	7655/0/0	FS
	39	MNN103543 Medieval finds	7725/0/0	FS
	40	MNN103542 Post medieval finds	7725/0/0	FS
	41	MNN103463 Roman finds	7655/0/0	FS
	42	MNN102689 Roman finds	4533/0/0	FS

Appendix 4: Historic Landscape Character Area
3a Sywell Clay Plateau

HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

3a Sywell Clay Plateau

© Crown copyright. All rights reserved.
Northamptonshire County Council.
Licence No. 100019331. Published 2005.



KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Upper ground around watersheds and heads of valleys
- Clay and valley side geologies
- Irregular field patterns
- Historic parkland and garden remains
- Replanted ancient woodland
- Little ridge and furrow survival
- Small winding historic road and track systems
- Modern Aerodrome

INTRODUCTION

HLCA 3 occupies a single location in the middle of the county between Wellingborough and Northampton. It sits upon the southern end of a Boulder clay plateau which itself overlooks the Ise Valley at the west and the Nene Valley at the south. It comprises areas of pre-parliamentary enclosure surrounding Hardwick and Sywell villages. The area is characterised by the presence of historic parkland, replanted ancient woodland and an airfield, which fragment the fieldscape.

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and Soils

The northern half of the area sits on the end of a clay plateau which caps a north-south ridge overlooking the River Ise at the west. At the south, Northampton Sand Formation geology predominates around the heads of the stream valleys.

Hydrology

The area is a watershed for a number of tributary streams that cut through the Boulder clay and drain southward into the River Nene valley.

3 FRAGMENTED NON PARLIAMENTARY ENCLOSURE

INFLUENCES ON EVOLUTION OF LANDSCAPE

The proximity of Northampton has seen significant modern development occurring within the area, principally in the vicinity of Overstone park. Further commercial development has occurred around Sywell Aerodrome, which was founded in 1928 as a private air club. During the war the aerodrome saw service as a pilot training ground and aircraft repair facility and has been in constant use since. Two areas of replanted ancient woodland (Hardwick Wood and Sywell Wood) occupy the north of the area. Hardwick wood was replanted prior to the 1880 Ordnance Survey mapping but Sywell wood appears to have been replanted more recently, possibly in the 20th century.

PRINCIPAL HISTORIC ELEMENTS

- Fieldsapes** The fields within the area predominantly represent a pre-19th century enclosure pattern. The open fields within Hardwick parish were enclosed in the early 17th century whilst those of Sywell were enclosed 100 years later (Fig 6). Overstone was one of the first parishes to be enclosed under Parliamentary Act in 1727, however much of the parish was already enclosed at this time. The parts of the parish that lie within HLCA 3a represent either these 'old enclosures' or Overstone Park, a small medieval park which was altered over the years before being expanded to its current size in the early 19th century.
- Settlements** Although both Hardwick and Sywell have retained their small late 19th century sizes there has been considerable post 1950s ribbon development out from Overstone. Overstone village itself was moved to its current location sometime in the early 18th century and the remains of the earlier medieval village survive within the bounds of the Overstone Park. As elsewhere, earthworks associated with earlier stages of village development survive in and around both Hardwick and Sywell.
- Communication** No major communication routes pass through the area and the line of the road system remains much as it was in the early 19th century.
- Ridge and Furrow** Little ridge and furrow survives in the area.
- Monuments** The principal historic monuments comprise the earthwork remains of the deserted medieval village at Overstone and further earthworks of an Elizabethan knot Garden associated with the 16th century manor house at Hardwick.



FIG 6: Fragmented Non Parliamentary Enclosure, Sywell (HLCA 3a) SP 8366 6953

3. FRAGMENTED NON PARLIAMENTARY ENCLOSURE

IMPORTANT SITES AND LANDSCAPES

Scheduled Ancient Monuments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Conservation Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sywell
Parks and Gardens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overstone Park with deserted village of Overstone and garden remains (non-registered).
Registered Battlefields	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Relict landscapes	<p>Open fields (including meadow):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None <p>Other relict landscapes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hardwick and Sywell Woods – ancient woodland. • Part of – Northampton to Kettering turnpike (A43)
Other key sites	<p>Non SAMs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hardwick, settlement, ponds and garden remains. <p>Other:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sywell aerodrome with WW2 defences.
Ancient and replanted Ancient Woodland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hardwick Wood • Sywell Wood

Appendix 5: List description Pycthley Gates

SP7866
16/201
02/11/54

OVERSTONE

SYWELL ROAD
(South side)
Pytchley Gates
(Formerly listed as Gateway to
Overstone Park originally of
Pytchley Old Hall)

II

Archway. Early C17. Limestone ashlar. Gate arch flanked by similar pedestrian arches each with semi-circular heads and moulded keystones. Central arch has decorated voussoir. Fluted Doric column between arches support an entablature the frieze of which is decorated with triglyphs and disc ornaments in the metopes. Curved gable over and flanking scrolls over pedestrian arches. Five obelisks on moulded plinths at centre and ends. C19 cast iron gates to each arch. Originally located at Pytchley Old Hall, repositioned in mid C19. (Buildings of England: Northamptonshire, p.369).

Listing NGR: SP797666075

Appendix 6: List description Church of St Nicholas

OVERSTONE

OVERSTONE PARK

SP86NW
13/187

Church of St. Nicholas

II

Church. c.1807, remodelled 1903. Limestone ashlar with slate roof. Nave, chancel, south aisle, south chapel, north vestry and west tower. Chancel east window of 3 lights with 4 centred arch head. South aisle c.1903 of 3-window range of 3-light square headed windows, 2-light west window. Lean-to roof with ashlar gable parapets. South chapel, also c.1903: south window 3-lights with pointed head and tracery; east window of 3-lights with square head. Nave, north elevation; one 3-light window with 4-centred arch head. Pitched roof with ashlar cornices and ashlar gable parapets with finial. Octagonal ashlar lateral stack. North vestry c.1903 has 2-light north window with pointed head and west door also with pointed head. Gabled roof with ashlar parapets. North porch at base of west tower has ashlar gable parapets and finial. West tower of 3 stages with flat string course between 2-light west windows at ground floor and similar windows to 3 faces of second stage. 2-light square-headed bell-chamber openings to each face of third stage. Castellated parapet with corner pinnacles. Polygonal stair turret in corner. Interior: Double chamfered chancel arch, 3 bay south arcade of triple chamfered arches on circular piers. Double chamfered tower arch and similar arches to south chapel (now vestry). Stained glass: East window has C16 French glass reset, north window of nave has early C20 armorial glass commemorating Lord Overstone's family. Monuments: North wall of chancel. Early C18 tablet to Strafford family with fluted pilasters with open pediment and puttii above. South wall of chancel has similar smaller tablet. Both reset from earlier church in Overstone Park now demolished. Oval tablet in tower to Elizabeth Ives died 1792. Brass tablet under inscribed to John Kipling 1831. Various other C19 tablets. (Buildings of England: Northamptonshire, p.368).

Listing NGR: SP8056066073