

NEWARK

The Early Prehistoric (12,500-800 BC)



Activity during early prehistoric periods within the development area was fairly low level, although at times highly significant, and focused upon the environs of the River Trent and Devon to the west, its tributaries, such as Middlebeck, and the rich resources this provided.



Previous investigations associated with development of the A46 demonstrated that the area known as Farndon Fields, either side of the A46 to the west of the development, contained significant lithic resources associated with the Late Upper Palaeolithic (LUP), a period of recolonisation as the ice sheets of the last glacial period retreated. This consisted of *in situ* scatters and individual finds of flint tools used to exploit the resource rich margins of the River Devon and Trent.

In response to this potential, OA conducted extensive evaluation in and around Farndon Fields and the western extent of the development, including, watching brief during ground investigation test pitting, fieldwalking (*highlighted*), trial trench and test pitting evaluation, and multiple open excavation areas. This identified and allowed geological modelling of the area around Farndon Fields and the testing of geological models, as well as prospection for *in situ* lithic scatters. It did not identify any *in situ* scatters, but did recover an array of lithic tools and debitage, largely of Mesolithic to Bronze Age date, but also isolated LUP tools, mostly as residual finds in Roman features, as well as a small number of neolithic pits and a scatter of ceramic finds. This demonstrated the importance of the river margins and its resources to prehistoric peoples, who exploited the area perhaps on a transitory basis for hunting and gathering, but did not locate further *in situ* evidence specifically for the LUP.

Sometime from the neolithic to Iron Age, the course of Middlebeck was also the focus of further probably ceremonial activity, with the creation of a burnt mound.

Burnt Mounds are a focused build up of heat effected stones, thought to be associated with the heating of water, possibly for ritual purposes. They can vary in size and often are accompanied by a series of pits and troughs cut into the ground as well as other deposits.



Faience beads and a decorated jet stone from the Hengiform monument

Further to the east of the development and probably located at the head of a spring feeding into Middlebeck, at some point during the neolithic to Bronze Age, a religious monument called a hengiform was created. This first appeared as a circular ditched enclosure, possibly with one or more rows of upright probably wooden posts within the centre. This may have acted as the focus for depositional activity.

This monument was probably modified at least once, with the posts probably being removed and the ditch probably recut, and during the Bronze Age it became the focus for funeral activity involving the burial of cremation deposits, sometimes associated with funerary offering such as ceramic urns, faience beads, bone objects and jewellery created using jet stone, before going out of use in the Middle to Late Bronze Age.

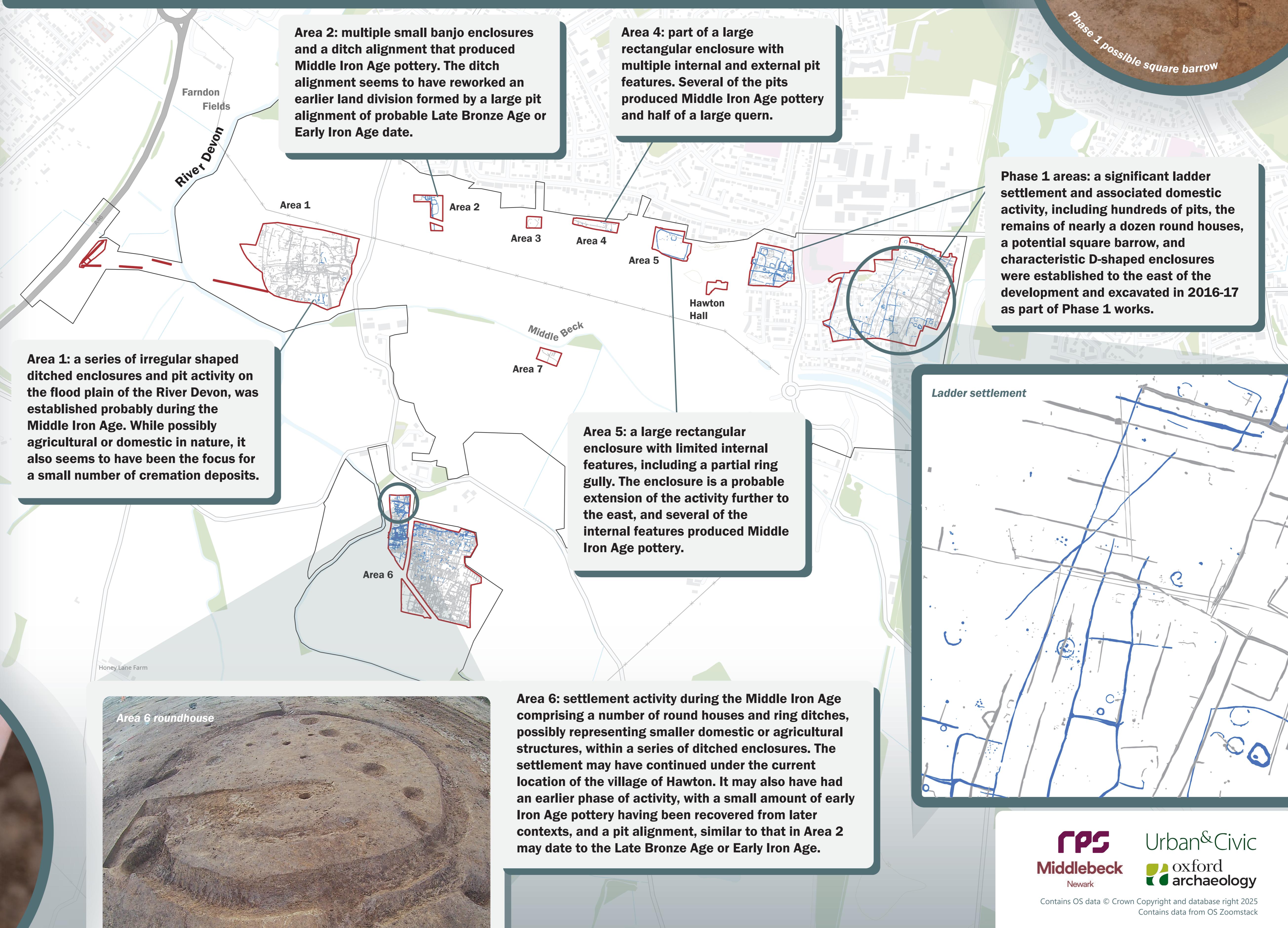


NEW HAWTHORN

The Iron Age (800 BC-46 AD)



The first structured settlement of the area occurs during the Middle to Late Iron Age, with the division of the landscape into multiple ditched enclosure systems that mainly focus upon the ridge of high ground extending east from the River Devon along the northern boundary of the development (Area 1, 2, 4, 5 and Phase 1 area). While pottery has dated the majority of this to the Middle to Late Iron Age, traces of an earlier genesis during the Late Bronze Age to Early Iron Age, were identified in places.

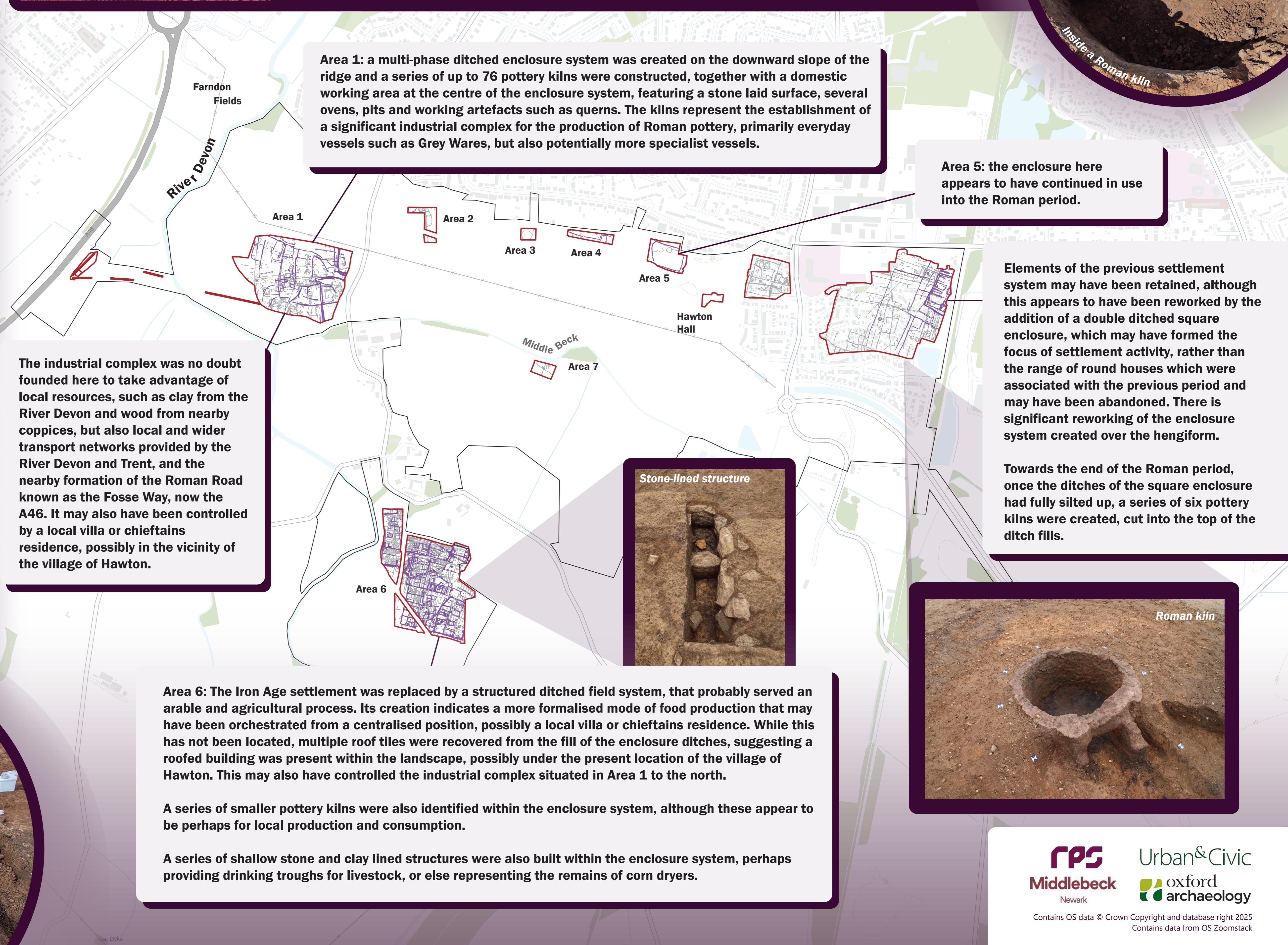


NEWARK

The Roman Period (46-410 AD)



Activity during the Roman period sees a focus upon and reworking of most of the settlement areas featured during the Iron Age, with the exception of Area 2, which appears to have been entirely abandoned. During this period we also see the introduction of intensive industrial and agricultural activity, possibly associated with the nucleation of a local estate or some other power base, possibly focused on the village of Hawton.



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The Medieval Period and Beyond (AD 410-present)

Area 1: a small settlement was created on the spur of higher ground above the River Devon and partially over the earlier Roman industrial complex. This consisted of 4-5 sunken feature buildings (SFBs), from which various artefacts were recovered, including parts of two antler combs (image), and pottery, dating to between the 5th and 9th centuries AD.

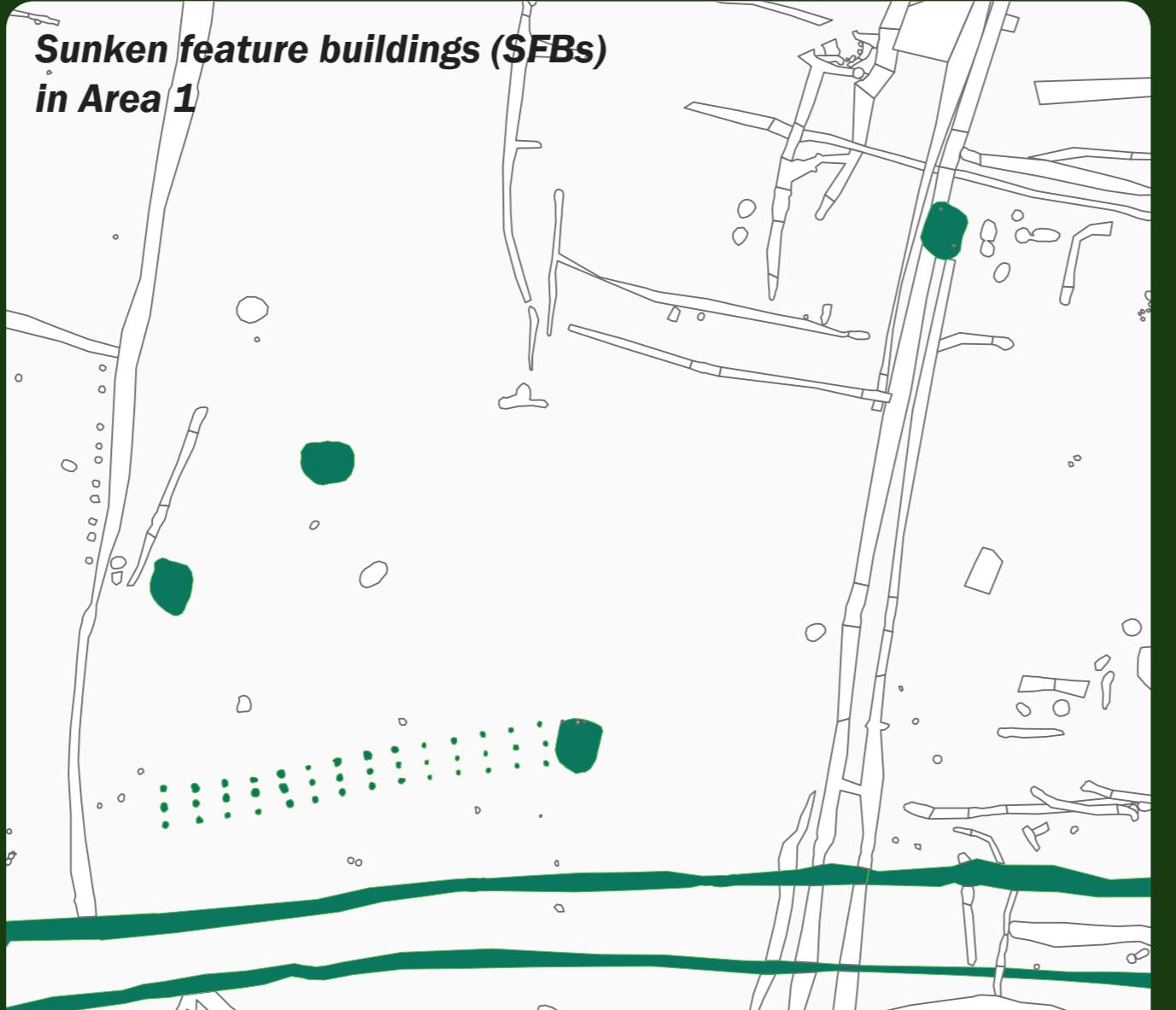
Activity during periods subsequent to the Roman period are surprisingly few and far between, despite the proximity of numerous significant sites, including the village of Hawton, which was known from at least 1086, having been mentioned in the Domesday Book, the Church of All Saints, which dates from at least the 13th century AD, the scheduled monument of a Civil War era redoubt and to the larger redoubt of Queens Sconce etc.

Area 3: a small, square, ditched enclosure, with an entrance to the south, was first thought to be Iron Age in date. However, excavations recovered a belt buckle from the terminus of one ditch in the entrance, which is datable to the Civil War era structure therefore is one of the few that can convincingly be related to the period.

Phase 1 areas: despite the primary reason for archaeological works in Phase 1 being the potential to identify remains associated with the defence of Newark during the Civil War, no such remains were identified in the area, or indeed across much of the development.

An enigmatic triple alignment of post holes was also identified in the same area as the SFBs and while no definitive dating evidence was obtained from the structure, it was aligned perfectly upon one of the SFBs. It is therefore also of likely early medieval date, although its function remains unclear.

There is no clear evidence when the settlement was abandoned, although it may have been relatively short lived. This may have formed part of the village of Hawton, or else the settlement migrated to its current location.



Area 6: very little evidence was identified within Area 6 for activity after the Roman occupation, this mainly comprising very late post medieval field boundaries. However, adjacent to the River Devon and within the very edge of the excavation area, extending beyond its limits, were the partial remains of a rectangular stone-built building.

Limited investigation of this structure did not reveal any dating evidence, although the structure appeared to overlay Roman era ditch fills. The structure did not feature on any historic mapping and is assumed to be medieval or very early post medieval in origin, with a very slight chance it might be Roman.



Hawton Hall, as seen from an Air Photo Mosaic taken March, 1948 (Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland)