Archaeological observation, investigation, recording and analysis at Hughenden Manor High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire November 2014

Report No. 14/256

Authors: Ian Fisher and Claire Finn

Illustrators: Ian Fisher and James Ladocha

Project Manager: Mark Holmes
Site Code: TBC
NGR: SU859 957

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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS	**Oasis No. molanort1-198130**	
Project title	Archaeological observation, investigation, recording and analysis at Hughenden Manor, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire	
Short description	A programme of archaeological observation, investigation and recording was undertaken in 2014 during the construction of a new car park on land at Hughenden Manor, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire. No archaeological features were identified.	
Project type	Watching brief	
Site Status	None	
Previous work	Geophysical survey (Walford 2014)	
Current land use	Former car park and rough grassland	
Future work	Unknown	
Monument type/period	None	
Significant finds	None	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Buckinghamshire	
Site address	Hughenden Manor	
Post code	HP14 4LA	
OS co-ordinates	SU 859 957	
Area (sq m/ha)	*c*1ha	
Height aOD	*c*160 – 165 aOD	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	MOLA Northampton	
Project brief originator	Eliza Alqassar, Buckinghamshire Archaeological Planning Officer	
Project Design originator	MOLA Northampton	
Director/Supervisor	Ian Fisher, MOLA	
Project Manager	Mark Holmes, MOLA	
Sponsor or funding body	National Trust	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	19/11/2014	
End date	05/12/2014	
ARCHIVES	**Location (Accession no.)**	**Contents**
Physical	MOLA Northampton office	Site records (1 small archive box)
Paper		Client report PDF
Digital		Reports; digital photographs
BIBLIOGRAPHY	Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (MOLA report)	
Title	Archaeological observation, investigation, recording and analysis at Hughenden Manor, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, November 2014	
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Abstract

A programme of archaeological observation, investigation and recording was undertaken in 2014 during the construction of a new car park on land at Hughenden Manor, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire. No archaeological features were identified.

1 INTRODUCTION

MOLA was commissioned by the National Trust to provide archaeological observation, investigation, recording and analysis on land at Hughenden Manor, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire (Fig 1; NGR SU859 957). The work was carried out during the construction of the car park, access roads and drainage (planning application 14/06897/FUL).

The excavation followed an approved *Written Scheme of Investigation* prepared by MOLA (Holmes 2014) following a request for archaeological observation and investigation by the Buckinghamshire Archaeological Planning Officer. The project was assigned National Trust archaeology event number ENA7473.

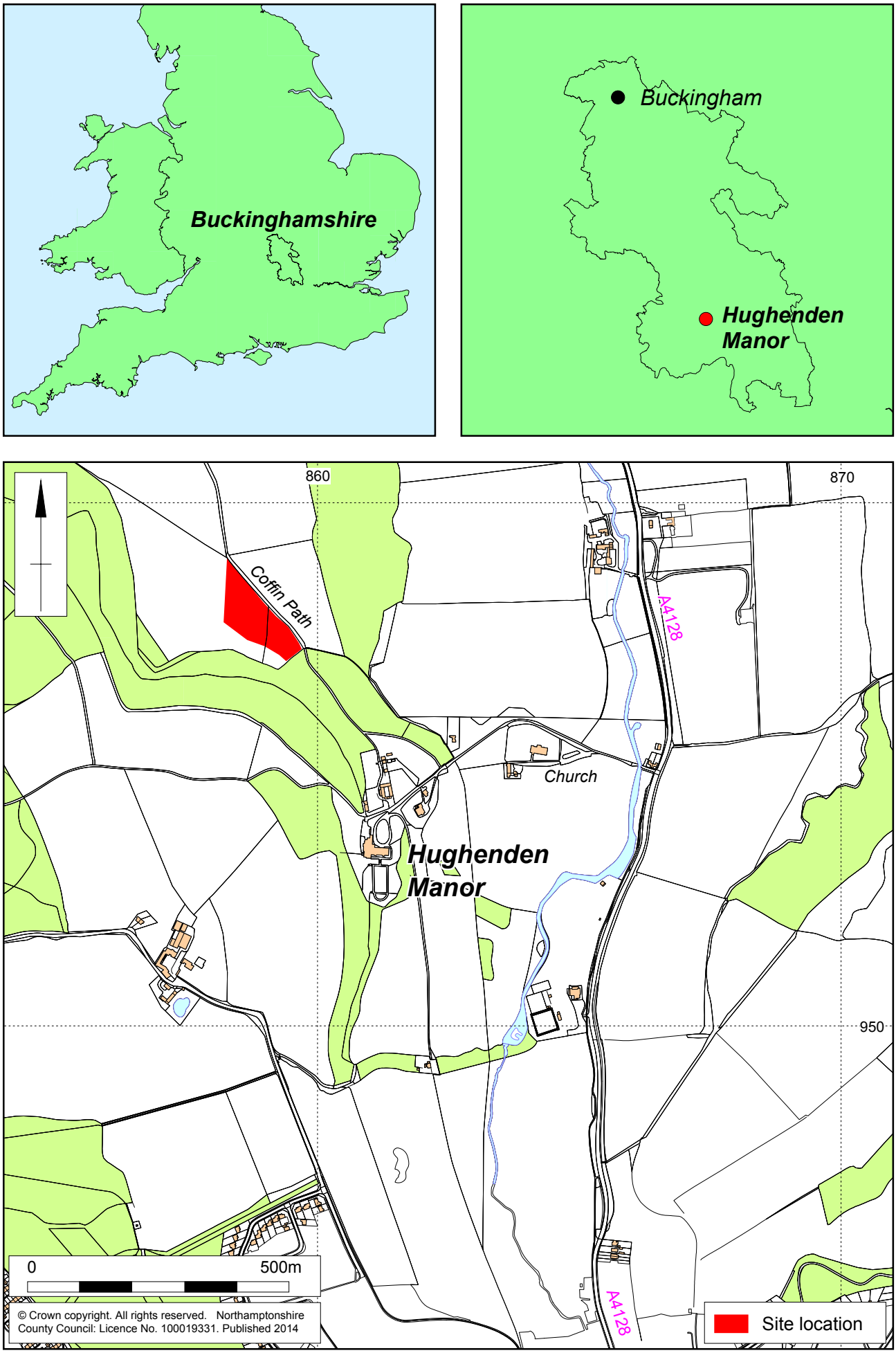
This report has been prepared in accordance with current best archaeological practice as defined in the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for archaeological watching brief* (IfA 2008) and the *Code of Conduct* (IfA 2014). Work was carried out in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG 2012).

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Topography and geology

The car park lies within the National Trust's Hughenden Manor estate, approximately 400m north of the manor house itself (Fig 1). The southern half of the site previously functioned as an un-metalled overflow car park, surfaced with a rubber re-enforcing mesh. Its northern half comprises an area of fallow land covered with grass. The southern edge is bounded by woodland, and the remaining sides by arable land.

The car park is situated on a crest of land which projects between the Hughenden Valley to the east and a dry valley to the west. It stands between the 160m and 165m contours on a gentle, south-facing slope. Its geology is mapped as chalk overlain by a mantle of clay-with-flints (BGS 2014).



Scale 1:10,000

Site location Fig 1

2.2 Historical and archaeological background

Hughenden Manor is a 19th-century manor house incorporating minor elements from an earlier building (National Trust HBSMR 150743). It is situated within extensive grounds which are listed number 1000318 on the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens. The parish church of St Michael and All Angels stands to the south of the house, within its grounds. The church is of 14th-century origin, but was substantially rebuilt in the 19th century.

The proposed development area is situated to the north of the manor house, and just outside the boundary of the registered park and garden grounds. Along the eastern edge of the site runs the historic 'coffin path'; a traditional road by which the deceased from the hamlet of Naphill were brought to the parish church (NT HBSMR 150755). The woods which bound the area to the west contain various earthworks, including wood-banks, lynchets and a pond (NT HBSMR 150788-92). The area of the proposed development had previously been under cultivation until four years prior to the commencement of the car park construction. The activity is likely to have caused disturbance in the upper soil horizons across the site.

In the arable field to the immediate north-west of the survey area there is a slight hollow within which a very dense surface scatter of burnt flint is visible (pers. obs. J Walford September 2014). The date and significance of this feature is unknown.

Previous archaeological work on the proposed development site includes a magnetometer survey undertaken in September 2014 (Walford 2014) (Fig 2). The site surveyed was divided into two areas by modern fencing, the southern half of which did not produce any usable results due to interference from the re-enforcement matting laid down here as surfacing for the car park. The remainder of the survey area was dominated by weak anomalies caused by the clay-with-flints geology. No features of archaeological significance were identified (*ibid)*.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

In order to examine the archaeological resource within the proposed development area, the objectives of the investigation were to:

- Identify, investigate and record all archaeological deposits exposed during the construction of the new extension and any associated groundwork;
- Determine and record the date, extent, character, state of preservation and depth of burial of any archaeological deposits;
- Recover any artefacts that may assist in the development of pottery type series within the region;
- Establish the relationship of any archaeological deposits within the wider contemporary landscape;
- Create a permanent archive and record of the archaeological information collected during the course of the fieldwork and analysis.

1:2000

Geophysical survey plot of the proposed survey area Fig 2

4 METHODOLOGY

All works were conducted in accordance with the procedural documents *The Management of Archaeological Projects 2* issued by English Heritage (1991), *The Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)* (EH 2006), the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Brief* (2008) and *Code of Conduct* (IfA 2014). Where appropriate, other research frameworks were borne in mind (English Heritage 1991 and Knight *et al* 2012).

Within the development area the topsoil was removed by a mechanical excavator, fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, to reveal significant archaeological remains or, where these were absent, the natural substrate.

Archaeological features were to be plotted on plans at a scale of 1:50. Sections or profiles through features and areas of complex stratigraphy were to be drawn at a scale of 1:10 or 1:20 as appropriate. All levels were related to Ordnance Datum.

The character, composition and general depositional sequence of the site stratification was recorded on *pro-forma* sheets, with a unique context number being allocated to each distinct deposit and feature. All recording followed the guidelines detailed in the MOLA *Archaeological Fieldwork Manual* (2014).

A full photographic record comprising both 35mm black and white negatives and digital images was maintained.

All records were compiled during fieldwork into a comprehensive and fully cross-referenced site archive. All records and materials will be compiled in a structured archive in accordance with the guidelines of Appendix 3 in the English Heritage procedural document, *Management of Archaeological Projects 2* (1991).

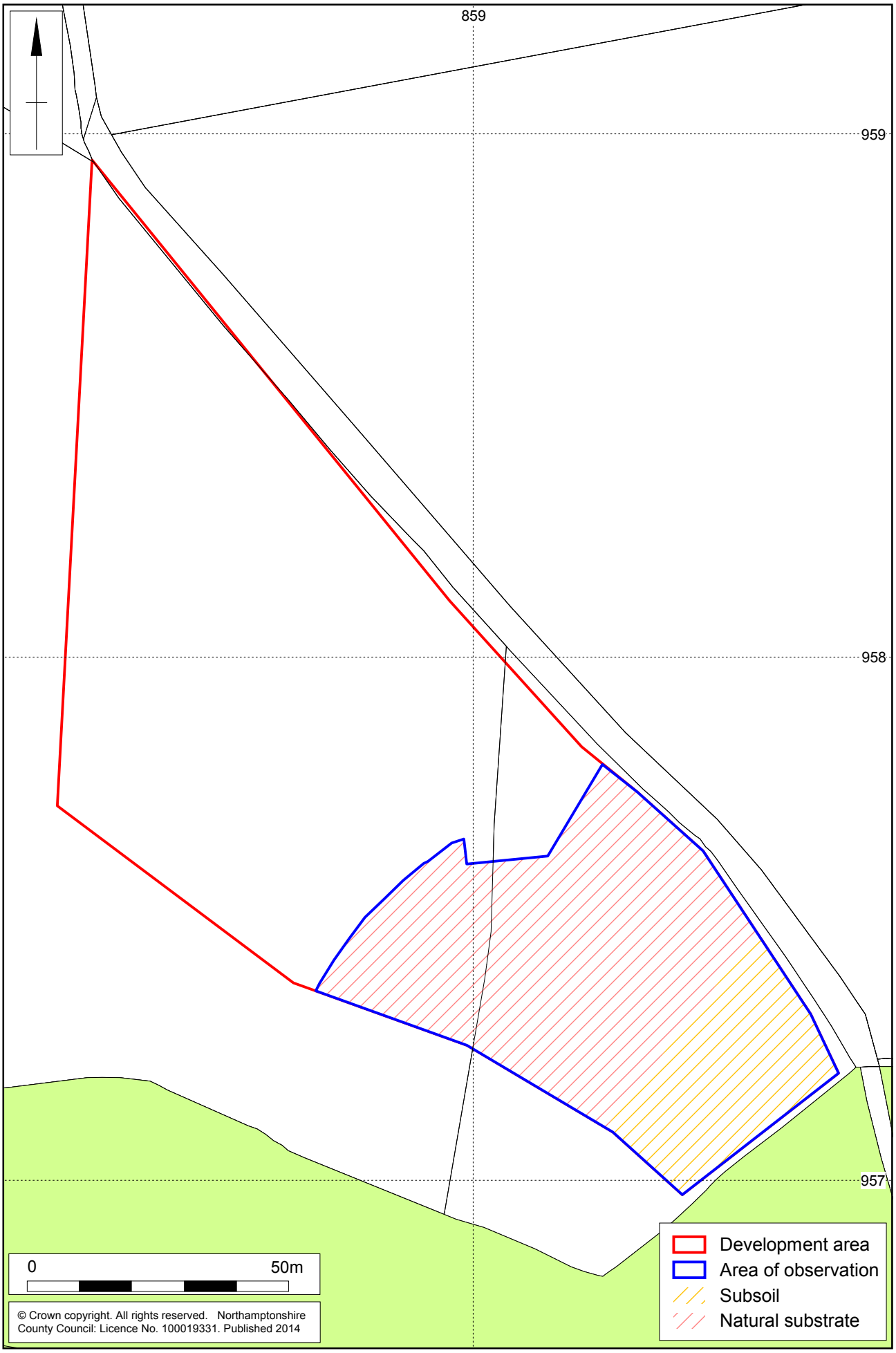
5 THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

No features of archaeological significance were identified during the current phase of works.

Around 0.4ha of the total *c*1ha proposed development site was stripped during the watching brief. The topsoil, a mid-dark brown silt-clay with occasional small flint inclusions, was around 0.5m thick. The natural substratum (102) was yellow/orange silty clay with frequent flint nodules (between 5–200mm). The groundwork did not fully remove the subsoil across the entire site, as this soil horizon proved to be very shallow towards the north-west. In this area of the site, the topsoil and subsoil were both stripped down to the natural substrate (*c*0.3ha). In the south-eastern part of the site, the subsoil proved to be a thicker layer 0.10 to 0.30m in depth. In this area, the subsoil was not completely stripped (*c*0.1ha) (see Fig 3).

7 DISCUSSION

The geophysical survey which took place earlier in the year did not produce any anomalies indicative of archaeological activity within the proposed development area (Walford 2014). The watching brief programme concurred with this result, and no archaeological features were found within the area during this phase of the work. Linear soil features identifiable in the site photographs proved to be trackways from modern machinery, and no other features were extant. No finds were recovered.



1:1000

Area of observation Fig 3

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MOLA Northampton
17th December 2014

APPENDIX: CONTEXT TABLES

Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
100	Topsoil	Dark brown-grey clay-loam with 1-2% small gravels and occasional small flint inclusions	D: up to 0.50m	--
101	Subsoil	Mid orange-brown clay with 1-2% flint and quartzite gravels, angular and sub-angular flint nodule inclusions	D: 0.10 to 0.30m	--
102	Natural	Yellow-orange silty-clay with sub-rounded and sub-angular flint nodule inclusions		--

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