

Desk-Based Assessment & Archaeological Evaluation

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Report specification:

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1. Non Technical Summary

The site lies on the southern verge of Ermin Street (now Denmark Road), leading west to the Roman fortress at Kingsholm established in the mid-1st century, and two pits excavated at No.107 Denmark Road contained a large assemblage of pottery of this date.

Throughout the Middle Ages and well into the post-medieval period it is likely that the area was under cultivation and by the 1840s market garden allotments formed part of the Wheeler Nursery (later known as the Kingsholm Nursery).

The existing house at No. 101 Denmark Road dates from the 1920-30s, contemporary with the extensive suburban development that took place in this part of Gloucester during the interwar period, and the archaeological observation revealed evidence of activity relating to this period of construction.

No earlier archaeological features, structures or deposits were identified, although a single residual sherd of medieval pottery was located within the subsoil.

2. Introduction

Border Archaeology was instructed by Mr. Denis Higgs to undertake a desk-based assessment and archaeological observation of groundworks relating to development of the site at No. 101 Denmark Road, Gloucester (NGR SO 836 193), in pursuance of an archaeological brief issued by Phil Greateorex, Gloucester City Council on June 14th 2005.

Copies of this report will be submitted to Mr Higgs, Gloucester City Council and the Regional Sites and Monuments Record.

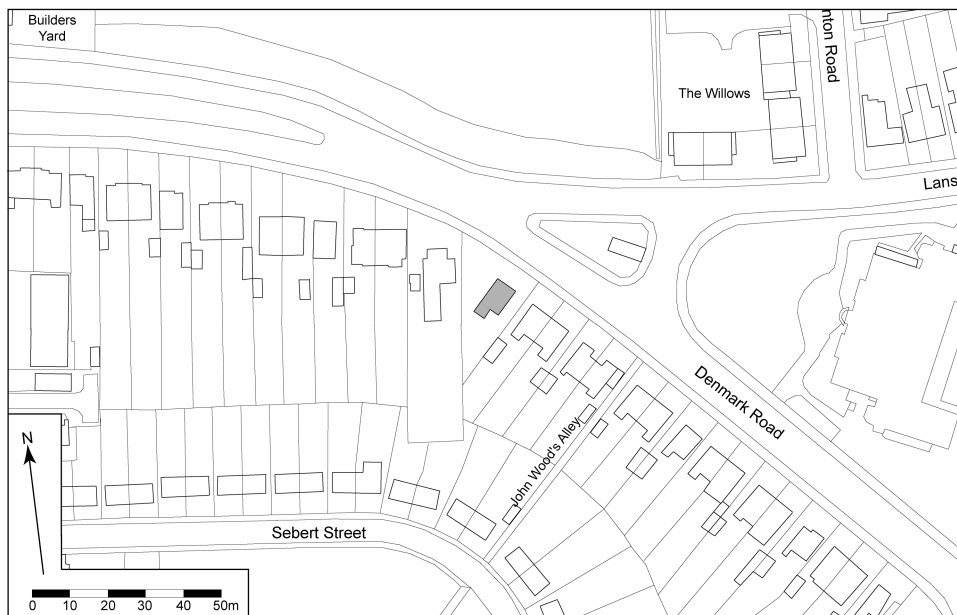


Fig. 1: Site Location Map

2.1 Geology

The study area lies within a heavily urbanized and industrialized suburb of Gloucester, and has not been surveyed in the Soil Survey of England and Wales. Consequently, no information is available regarding the geology of the specific study area.

3. Desk Based Assessment

3.1 Methodology

The research carried out for this DBA consisted of the following elements:

3.1.1 Evaluation and study of archaeological databases

The Gloucester City Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) held at Gloucester Museum and the National Monuments Record (NMR) at Swindon were both consulted, and lists

were obtained of all known archaeological sites, listed buildings and scheduled ancient monuments in the study area, and any relevant backup files.

3.1.2 Evaluation and study of cartographic and other pictorial evidence:

A detailed map regression analysis of the study area was carried out, examining all available editions of the Ordnance Survey (from the 19th century to the present), 17th-19th century historic maps of the city of Gloucester and its suburbs (including an enclosure map dated 1799 and Cawston's 1843 map of Gloucester). This information was obtained from the Gloucestershire Record Office and the Gloucestershire County Library.

3.1.3 Evaluation and study of primary written evidence:

Original written and cartographic records relating to the study area were consulted at the Gloucestershire City Library and the Gloucestershire Record Office.

3.1.4 Evaluation and study of secondary (published) sources:

All published works relating to sites and structures of archaeological and historical interest within the study area were evaluated, including published and unpublished archaeological reports, local and county histories and appropriate archaeological and historical journals, including the Victoria County History of Gloucester, *Glevensis*, the *Proceedings of the Cotswold Naturalists Field Club* and the *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society*.

3.1.5 Site visit

A site visit was carried out to assess the potential for extant archaeology on the site. The site was walked over in a systematic manner and a detailed photographic record was taken.

3.2 Historical & Archaeological Overview

3.2.1 Roman

The specific study area, No. 101 Denmark Road, is located on the southern verge of the Roman road Ermin Street (the alignment of which is closely followed by the modern Denmark Road) running W towards the site of the Roman fortress of Kingsholm. The fortress was apparently established in about AD 49 to protect a strategic crossing of the Severn, as part of the military campaign to suppress the Silures tribe in South Wales and may have occupied the site of an earlier Iron Age settlement.

The site of the Roman fortress of Kingsholm, located approximately 200m W of the study area, was identified during excavations carried out by H. Hurst in 1972 at Kingsholm Square (Hurst, 1975, 267-94; Hurst, 1985). Excavations revealed two distinct phases of timber buildings, the first consisting of a fort for auxiliary troops, probably located in the vicinity of Kingsholm Close, while the second consisted of a larger fortress probably built for legionary units, extending from the site of the modern Kingsholm Rugby Ground up to Sandhurst Road and eastward from Deans Way to Kingsholm Road.

There was also a large civil settlement attached to the fortress which appears to have extended E along Denmark Road, possibly as far as the junction of Denmark Road and Lansdown Road. To the N and E of this civil settlement a cemetery was established, centred upon the site of the present Denmark Road High School, approximately 80m E of the study area.

Archaeological evidence indicates that the Kingsholm fort was abandoned at some point between AD64 and AD66. It was superseded by another fortress, some 17ha in size, built on the low hill now occupied by Gloucester city centre. Parts of the fortress were excavated in 1966-7 at the new Eastgate Market Hall and in 1969 at the Telephone Exchange. After the abandonment of the fortress at Kingsholm, a large part of the site appears to have been used as a burial ground. Further excavations carried out in 1983 at Gambier Parry Gardens, approximately 300m N of Denmark Road, during the construction of a new housing estate, revealed two large cemeteries.

The first burial ground consisted of hundreds of burials and cremations, dating from the 1st-4th centuries AD, which contained many fine grave goods including pottery, glass, coins and jewellery. The boundaries of the second cemetery overlapped with the earlier burial ground and extended well to the S, covering much of Denmark Road, although it is unclear whether it extended as far as the study area at No. 101 Denmark Road.

It was different in character from the earlier burial site, as the burials did not have grave goods and were all aligned roughly E-W. It has been suggested that this was a Christian burial ground, apparently established sometime in the 4th century (when Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire) and remaining in use until the 5th century.

3.2.2 Medieval (5th-16th centuries AD)

No archaeological evidence for medieval occupation in the immediate vicinity of the study area has yet come to light. However, documentary and archaeological evidence attests to the existence of a large pre-Conquest manorial estate at Kingsholm, centred upon a royal palace established on the site of the former Roman fortress, probably in the 10th century (Heighway, 1993, 3). It is likely that the study area came within the boundaries of the manor of Kingsholm.

The Danish King Cnut and Edward the Confessor are known to have resided at Kingsholm and it is possible that William the Conqueror may have held his Christmas court there in 1085, when he commissioned Domesday Book to be written. The royal palace later became a manor house held by the Daubeney family in the 13th century and was largely demolished in 1591 although remains of some of the manorial buildings may have survived until as late as the 18th century (Herbert, 1988, 386). The focus of medieval settlement at Kingsholm appears to have been concentrated near the palace site and there is little documentary evidence of further building activity eastwards along Denmark Road during this period.

3.2.3 Post-medieval (16th century to present)

Cartographic and documentary evidence indicates that the Denmark Road area remained predominantly rural in character until the middle of the 19th century, with little indication of significant building activity. From the early 17th century until the mid-1860s, Denmark Road was known as Gallows Road or Lane, although the precise location of the gallows from which it derived its name is unknown (Herbert, 1988, 385). The name

Denmark Road first appears in a document of 1864 concerning the failure of the parishioners of St Catherine's Kingsholm to maintain the road properly.

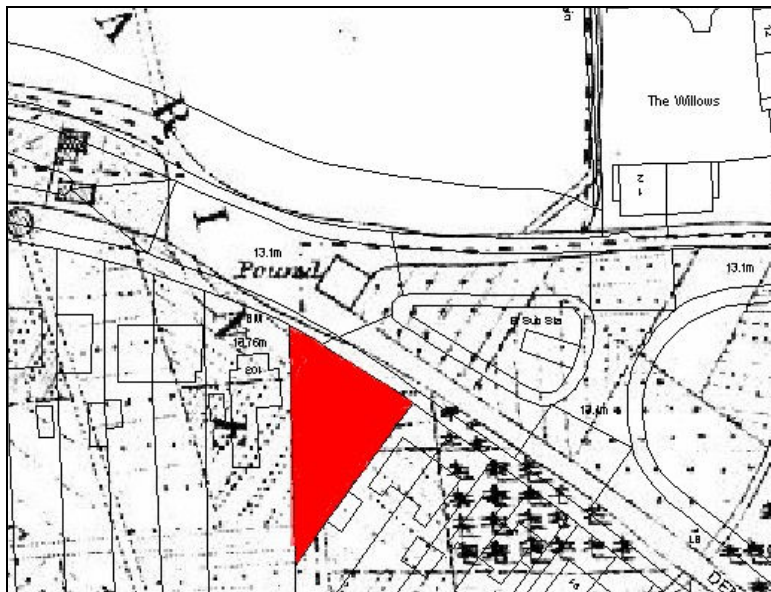


Fig. 2: Extract from Cawston's Map of Gloucester (1843) showing the site at No 101 Denmark Road and the surrounding area (*Reproduced courtesy of Gloucester City Council Historic Environment Record*)

Cawston's Map of 1843 (**Fig. 2**) shows that the site at No.101 Denmark Road and much of the surrounding area was under cultivation as market garden allotments, forming part of a large area known as Wheeler's Nursery, a name it retained until the late 19th century. The 1843 map also shows a livestock pound situated immediately NE of the site at the junction of Gallows Lane and Pedmarsh Lane (now Lansdown Road), which was erected in 1822 when it was moved from its original location at the angle of the Tewkesbury and Sandhurst roads, where it had stood since 1607 (Herbert, 1988, 386).

By the 1880s, it appears that the study area and its immediate vicinity had been landscaped and planted with trees, forming part of what was then known as the Kingsholm Nursery, which extended E along Pedmarsh Lane and SE along Denmark Road down to the junction with Heathville Road. The OS 1st edition map of 1881 also shows an iron foundry situated to the SW of the study area, possibly suggesting that the district was beginning to lose its rural character.

However, the present topography of the site and its environs was not established until the 1920s, when extensive suburban building activity took place, with the construction of rows of detached and semidetached houses along the entire length of Denmark Road and adjoining streets, as shown on the OS 3rd edition map of 1924. It is likely that the present house at No. 101 Denmark Road was built at about this time. The catalyst for this wave of suburban development may have been the building of the High School for Girls at the junction of Denmark Road and Lansdown Road. The original school building, erected in 1907 in a florid neo-Tudor style, is Grade II Listed.

3.3 Site Specific

In view of the proximity of No. 101 Denmark Road to the Roman road Ermin Street and to the civil settlement E of the mid 1st century fortress at Kingsholm, it is not surprising that evidence of Roman settlement and funerary activity has been identified in the

immediate vicinity. At No. 77 Denmark Road, approximately 100m SE of the site, inhumations, pottery and coins of Roman date were found during the construction of a Second World War air raid shelter (SMR Record No. 64; Hurst, 1975, 282).

At No. 107 Denmark Road, a watching brief carried out during the excavation of foundation trenches for an extension to the main house in 2001 revealed two large pits which probably date from the 1st or 2nd century AD (SMR Record No. 1500). The deeper of the two pits contained pottery of mid 1st century date contemporary with the occupation of the fortress at Kingsholm, as well as a large amount of heavily butchered animal bone (including cow, pig, sheep, deer), a copper alloy hook and a rare pottery lamp fragment. The substantial nature of the finds assemblage showed that settlement activity associated with the fort at Kingsholm extended further eastwards than had been previously thought.

Several gold coins of mid 4th century date have been discovered at Nos. 105 and 113 Denmark Road respectively (SMR Record Nos. 65, 66) while an assemblage of Roman pottery, including late 1st century mortaria, was found in 1907 during construction of the Girls School immediately E of the junction of Denmark Road and Lansdown Road (SMR Record No. 69; Kennard, 1908, 125-6; Green, 1934, 199-204). A watching brief carried out at 43 Sebert Street, to the SW of the study area revealed a quantity of 1st/2nd century pottery (SMR Record No. 778).



Fig. 3: Extract from the OS 1st edition 6-inch map of 1881 showing the site at No 101 Denmark Road (Reproduced courtesy of Gloucestershire Record Office)

No archaeological or documentary evidence has been found indicative of occupation on the specific site or in the immediate environs during the medieval period. During this period, the site came within the boundaries of the manor of Kingsholm, a large estate centred upon a pre-Conquest royal palace (which later became a manor house), the site of which was located in Kingsholm Square.

Cartographic evidence, specifically Cawston's Map of 1843 and the OS 1st edition map of 1881 (Fig. 3), reveals that the specific site and its surrounding area was under cultivation as market garden allotments forming part of Wheeler's Nursery (later known

as the Kingsholm Nursery). By 1881, a degree of landscaping appears to have taken place on the site, which is shown as being heavily planted with trees.

It was not until the 1920s that the present-day topography of the site was established, with the construction of numerous detached and semidetached houses along the entirety of Denmark Road and adjoining streets. The existing house at No. 101 Denmark Road dates from the 1920-30s, contemporary with the extensive suburban development which took place in this part of Gloucester during the interwar period.

3.4 Conclusion

The study area at No. 101 Denmark Road is situated on the southern verge of Ermin Street, leading W to the Roman fortress at Kingsholm established in the mid-1st century.

Substantial evidence of Roman settlement and funerary activity has been identified in the wider locality of the study area, probably associated with a civil settlement attached to the fortress at Kingsholm extending E along the alignment of Ermin Street (now Denmark Road).

However, the only features of archaeological significance to be identified in the immediate vicinity were two pits excavated at No.107 Denmark Road, which contained a large assemblage of pottery of mid 1st century date.

No archaeological or documentary evidence of medieval settlement in the study area or its immediate environs has been identified. It is likely that the area was under cultivation throughout the Middle Ages and well into the post-medieval period.

By the 1840s, the site was under cultivation as market garden allotments, forming part of the Wheeler Nursery (later known as the Kingsholm Nursery).

It was not until the 1920s that the present-day topography of the site was established, with the construction of numerous detached and semidetached houses stretching along the entirety of Denmark Road and adjoining streets. The existing house at No. 101 Denmark Road dates from the 1920-30s, contemporary with the extensive suburban development that took place in this part of Gloucester during the interwar period.

4. Archaeological Observation

4.1 Methodology

The groundworks were carried out in a single phase between July 1st and July 4th 2005 and comprised the excavation of building foundations for an extension to the existing property. The depth of trenching varied between 0.8m and 1.6m (width 0.5-0.6m) and was dependant on the depth at which stable natural deposits were encountered. The excavations were carried out using a mini-digger equipped with a toothless bucket under strict archaeological supervision.

Full written and drawn records of all excavated contexts were made in accordance with archaeological practices set out by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994; revised

2001). A detailed stratigraphic record was made using a context numbering system. The groundworks revealed only modern features such as construction and utility trenching and these were recorded in section at a scale of 1:20 and photographed using 35mm colour print and 4 megapixel digital formats. A temporary benchmark of 13.5m AOD was established on the site, with all surveying values being taken from a known spot height of 13.4m AOD located in Lansdown Road.



Plate 1: No. 101 Denmark Road, facing S

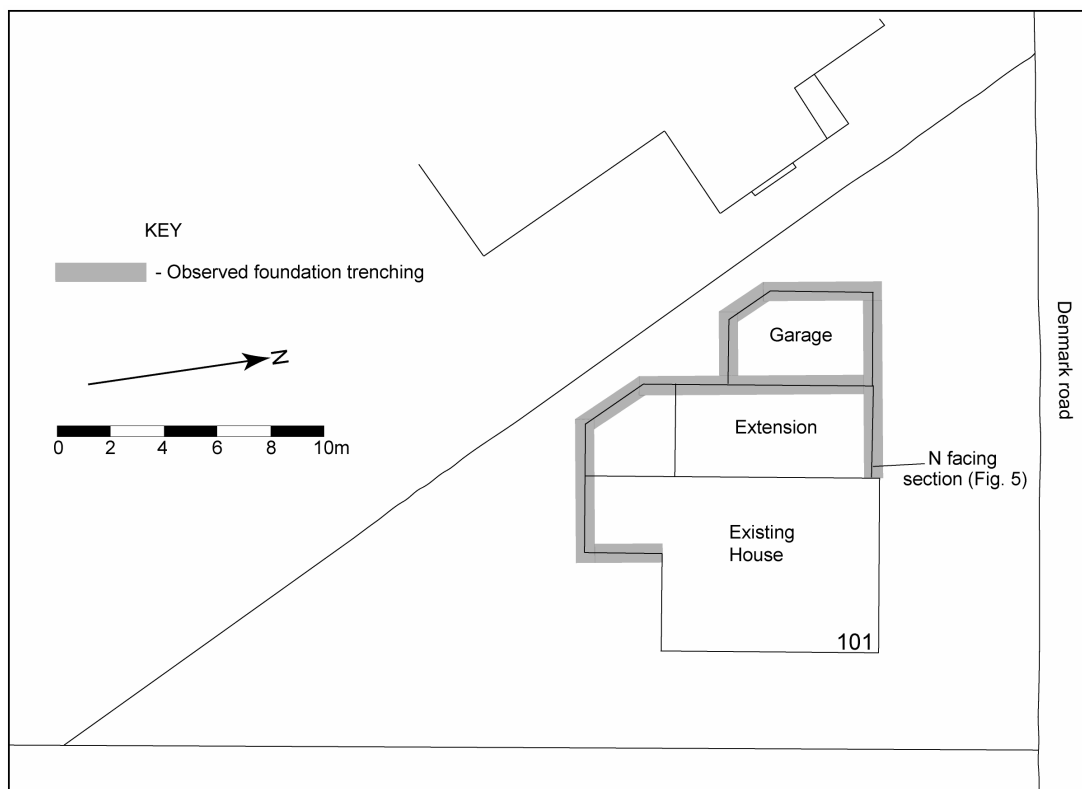


Fig. 4: Plan showing trench location

4.2 Archaeological Observation

A total of eight contexts and two features were identified.

Within trenching located immediately to the S of the property (**Fig. 4**) the uppermost context was a dark brown sandy silt garden soil (001) measuring 0.25m in thickness. Underlying (001) was a dark brown sandy silt deposit with occasional post-medieval CBM, animal bone and a single residual sherd of medieval pottery (003). Underlying (003) was a tightly compacted, yellowish-brown sandy gravel interpreted as natural (008).

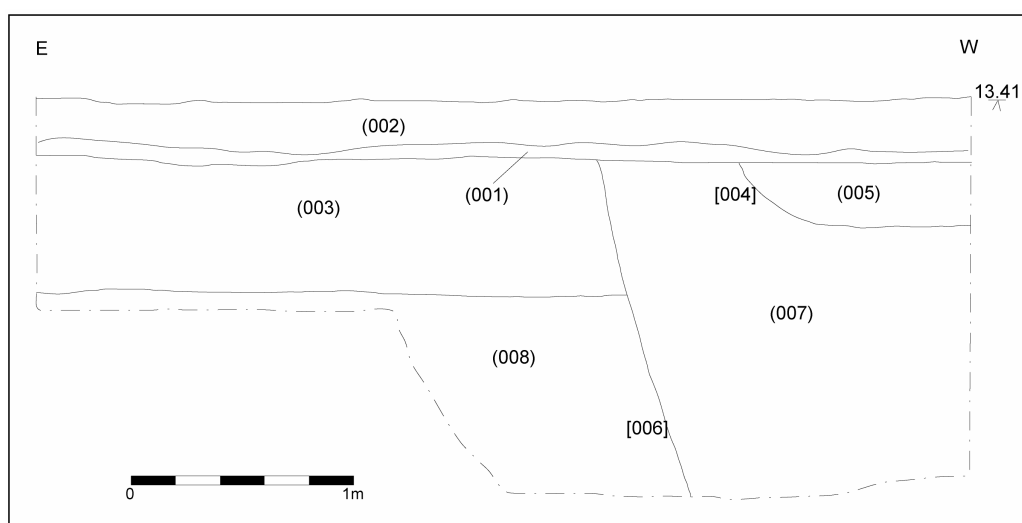


Fig. 5: N-facing section of trenching adjacent to side of property



Plate 2: View S showing cut adjacent to NW wall of house [006]

Within trenching located immediately W and SW of the property (**Fig. 4**) the uppermost context was a pinkish-red gravel comprising the existing yard surface (002), beneath which was buried topsoil (001) overlying context (003). A shallow U-shaped water and electricity service cut [004] ran N-S across the trench and was filled by a dark brown clayey silt with moderate post-medieval CBM (005). This truncated a moderately compacted mid brown clayey silt with occasional post-medieval CBM and charcoal flecking (007), which was contained within a roughly linear cut [006] through (003) and into the natural (008) (**Figs. 4 & 5**). This cut was located next to the existing wall of No. 101 Denmark Road and probably related to the construction of the property (**Plate 2**).

4.3 Conclusion

All features identified during the groundworks appeared to relate to the construction of the existing property. It is probable that the allotments that were present on the site from the late 18th century to the beginning of the 20th century together with subsequent building work carried out during the 1920s and 1930s impacted heavily on the survival of archaeological deposits.

5. Copyright

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6. Bibliography & Cartography

6.1 Primary Sources

6.1.1 Gloucestershire Record Office

Gloucester Corporation Deeds 17th-19th c. (D 3117)

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6.2 Secondary Sources

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6.3 Cartography

Kip's Map of Gloucester (1712)

GRO Ref. Q/RI 70 Enclosure Map of Gloucester (1799)

OS 1st edition 1-inch map of Gloucester (1830)

Dawson's Map of Gloucester taken from the Ordnance Survey (1837)

Cawston's Map of Gloucester (1843)

Moore's Map of Gloucester (c.1870)

OS 1st edition 25-inch map (1881)

OS 1st edition 6-inch map Gloucester 25 NE (1887-90)

OS 3rd edition 6-inch map Gloucester 25 NE (1924)

7. Context Register

CONTEXT NUMBER	Description
(001)	Dark brown moderately compacted sandy silt, occasional charcoal flecking, moderate amounts of post-medieval CBM, 1 x medieval pottery sherd, extended over entirety of southern rear of the property to a depth of 0.15m.
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Garden topsoil</i>
(002)	Loosely compacted pinkish-red gravel extending over W and N of property to a thickness of 0.1m.
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Modern driveway / hard standing</i>
(003)	Moderately compacted dark brown clayey silt, occasional post-medieval CBM and animal bone, measured 5m x 0.6m x c.0.7m (visible dimensions)
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Post-medieval garden soil</i>
[004]	Cut, rectilinear in plan, corners outside foundation trench, measured 0.83m x >0.6m x 0.3m (visible dimensions), break of slope top sharp, sides concave, break of slope base gradual, base flat, orientation: N – S. Filled by (005)
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Cut of modern utility trench</i>
(005)	Loosely compacted dark brown clayey silt. Frequent post-medieval CBM. Measured 0.83 x >0.6 x 0.3m (visible dimensions). Fill of [004].
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Fill of modern utility trench</i>
[006]	Cut, rectangular in plan, corners not visible within trench, measured 1.6m x 0.6m x 1m (visible dimensions), break of slope top sharp, sides steeply sloping, base not reached within trench, orientation unclear from section revealed in trench. Filled by (007).
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Cut of pit / trench possibly associated with construction of No. 101 Denmark Road.</i>
(007)	Moderately compacted mid brown clayey silt. Occasional post-medieval CBM and charcoal flecking. Measured 1.6m x 0.6m x 1.5m. Fill of [006]
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Post-medieval backfill of construction cut [006].</i>
(008)	Tightly compacted yellowish-brown sandy gravel. Extended across site.
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Natural</i>

Document Control

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