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**Archaeological Trial Excavation Report
Land East of Albert street,
Horncastle, Lincolnshire**

Site Code: ASH 99

LCNCC Acc No: Pre Planning Consult



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Site Code: ASH 99
LCNCC Acc No.: - Pre Planning Consultation
NGR: TF ~~2510 6939~~
2647 6939

Report prepared for BF Riddel
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Summary

- An archaeological trial excavation was undertaken on land east of Albert Street, Horncastle, Lincolnshire (Fig 1).
- Three trenches were investigated to evaluate the archaeological potential of the land, which is intended to be used for residential development
- Evidence was found of extensive gravel quarrying in the late post-medieval period, and no significant archaeological features were exposed.
- Six sherds of Romano-British pottery were recovered from quarry backfill.
- In consideration of the extent of gravel extraction, it is suggested that the site is now probably of limited archaeological potential.

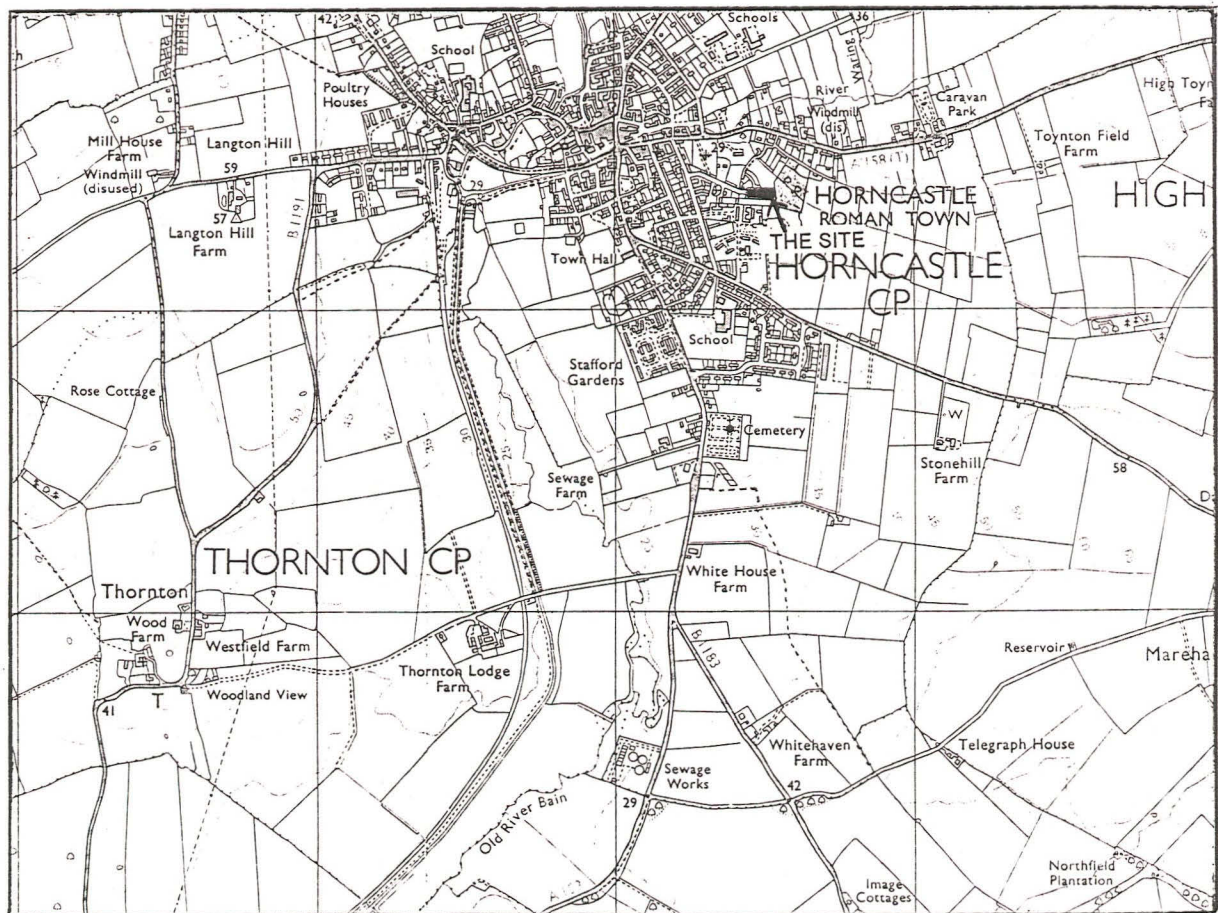


Fig. 1 General site location (1:25000)
(OS Copyright Ref. AL 515 21 A0001)

1.0 Introduction

A two-day programme of archaeological trial excavation was carried out on a site east of Albert Street, Horncastle, Lincolnshire (Fig. 1). The excavation was commissioned by Mr BF Riddell in advance of a possible residential development.

The three trenches were positioned to provide an assessment of the overall archaeological potential of the land.

The results of this investigation will assist the local planning authority and the client to assess the archaeological significance of the site, the potential impacts which may be imposed by development and the requirement or non-requirement for further archaeological investigation in advance of or during development,

A copy of this report will be deposited at the County SMR, and a short text will be submitted to the editor of the County journal '*Lincolnshire History and Archaeology*' to put this information in the public domain. Reports will be deposited at the City and County Museum, Lincoln, accompanied with an ordered project archive.

2.0 Location and description

Horncastle is in east Lincolnshire, in the administrative district of East Lindsey. The town lies approximately 28km east of Lincoln and 30km west of the coast.

The proposed development site is a rectangular unit measuring approximately 96m x 40m, located on the eastern periphery of town. It centres on NGR TF 2510 6939.

Outline planning consent may be sought from East Lindsey District Council for residential development. It has been recommended, prior to the determination of any such application, that the archaeological potential of the site be determined. This approach is consistent with the national guidelines established since the introduction of *Archaeology and Planning: Planning Policy Guidance Note 16*, 1990.

Immediately prior to the investigation the site was overgrown, although most of the overlying vegetation was cleared by the developer on conclusion of the project.

3.0 Archaeological Background

Horncastle was an important Roman town with substantial walled developments in the third – fourth centuries AD. Romano-British settlement evidence is usually found in areas favoured by indigenous populations, unless such settlements were established for purely military purposes. At Horncastle, there is ample evidence for a pre-existing native settlement structure, predominantly on the south side of the town.

The proposed development site is beyond the limits of the Roman walled area, although scatters of domestic pottery have been recovered close by, indicating a degree of human

activity. Of particular significance are at least three cremation burials that have been recorded in the vicinity of the site. As it was Roman custom to dispose of the dead outside of the town and usually close to a road, there is a possibility that further burials will occur within the vicinity of the present site, unless removed as a result of post-Roman settlement or industrial activity.

Much of the recorded Romano-British development outside of the later walled enclosure appears (largely on the basis of cropmark evidence) to have taken place to the south-west of the site, particularly around the area of Mareham Road and Boston Road; the walled development being to the north west.

Recent excavations to the east of the present site, near Holt Lane and Banovallum Gardens, failed to identify any significant archaeological remains, although that area had been extensively disturbed by gravel quarrying (Albone 1999). Possibly, this was associated with similarly extensive quarrying on the Albert Street site, which lies immediately to the west.

4.0 Methodology

A specification was approved to investigate three archaeological trenches, each measuring 20m x 1.5m as follows:-

Trench 1 was located at the west end of the site, and was orientated east-west

Trench 2 was located close to the centre of the site, and was orientated north-south

Trench 3 was located at the east end of the site and was orientated east-west.

The locations of each trench are shown on Figure 2.

The aim of the trenching scheme was to determine the nature of any archaeological features; character, date, depth, state of preservation and significance. From this information, evidence could be presented to the client and the District Planning Authority with a set of data from which reasoned decisions could be taken regarding the future management of the archaeological resource.

Recording was undertaken using standard context record sheets (physical descriptions, interpretations and stratigraphic relationships). As no features were exposed, a one to one hundred scale plan was made of each trench, incorporating Ordnance Survey datum heights OD.

The trenches were opened using a JCB fitted with back actor and smooth ditching blade. Mechanical excavation took place to a depth not exceeding 1.2m. All of the trenches were cleaned, examined and photographed.

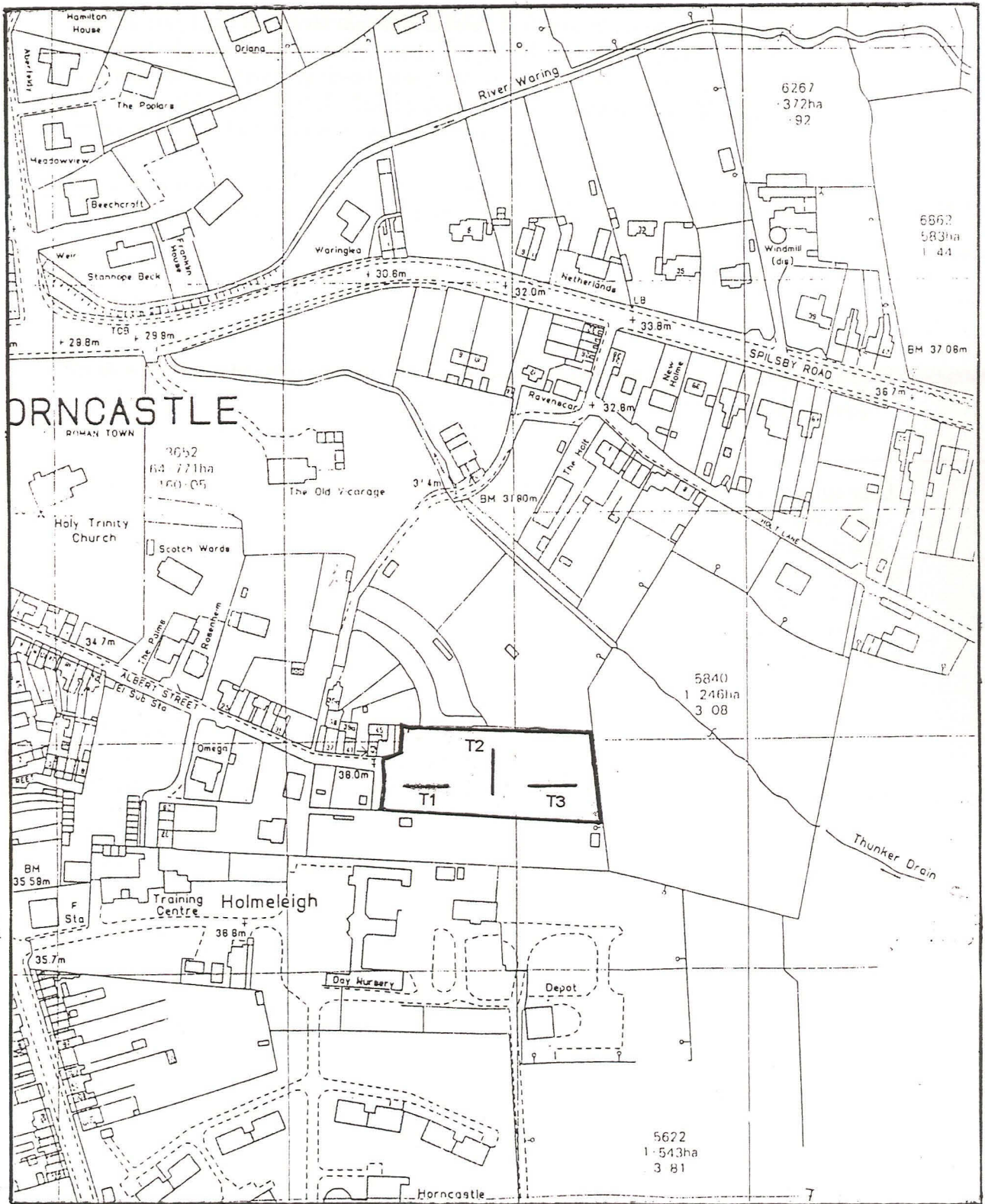


Fig. 2 Site / Trench location (1:2500)
(OS Copyright Ref. AL 515 21 A0001)

The drawings and the paper record will form the basis of a long-term project archive, which may be accessed by reference to the global accession number 249.99. A small number of pottery sherds were recovered, comprising a mixture of both modern (C19th) and Romano-British. The modern pottery was discarded. Also discarded was modern glass and iron exposed by the machining.

The evaluation was supervised by this writer, assisted by two experienced field archaeologists, and it took place between the 18 – 19th October 1999.

5.0 Results

5.1 Trench 1.

No significant archaeological remains were exposed within the area excavated, which bottomed to what appeared to be *in situ* natural orange sand at a depth approximately 80cms beneath the modern ground surface.

At the east end of the trench was an obvious cut [102], which truncated the orange sand described above. On examining the fill and sides of this cut, it was established that the orange sand was in fact redeposited natural, and that the entire length of the trench had been effectively disturbed to a depth greater than 1.2m by gravel quarrying. One sherd of Romano-British pottery was recovered during machining of the trench, along with a quantity of modern pottery, glass and iron. The Romano-British sherd is not closely datable and could fall almost anywhere between the second and fourth centuries AD (see enclosed report by Darling)

5.2 Trench 2. This trench was orientated north-south in a central area of the site. Like Trench 1, it was extensively disturbed as a result of relatively recent gravel extraction. The trench was excavated to a depth of 70cms, revealing numerous dumped deposits backfilling the quarry pits. It did not reveal any significant archaeology or any *in situ* natural deposits, which must lie at a depth greater than 70cms from the modern ground surface. Five pieces of Roman pottery were recovered and, again, these sherds are not closely datable: a mid-third century or later date has been suggested.

Modern finds were discarded.

5.3 Trench 3. The trench was positioned on the east side of the site, and was orientated east-west. The trench did not reveal the same evidence of gravel quarrying as the first two. However the overburden of sandy silt contained no finds; modern or Romano-British. Here, natural deposits were exposed at a depth 80cms below modern ground surface.

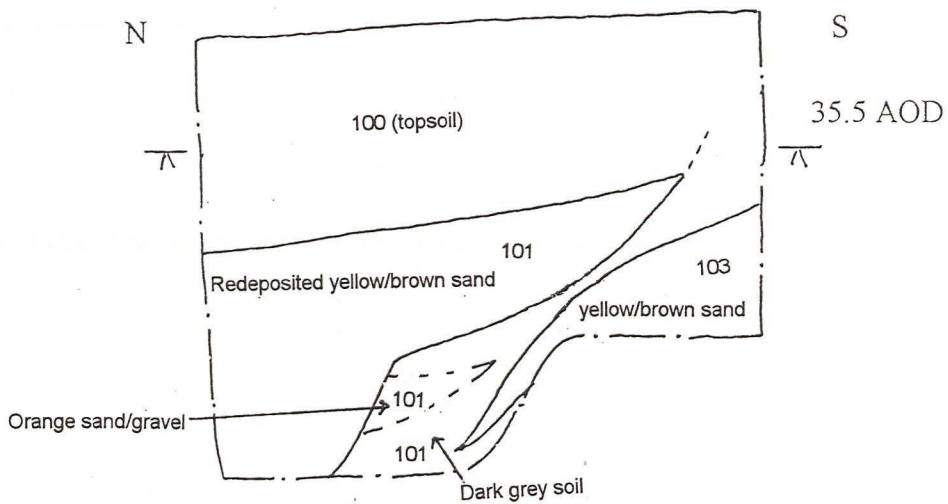


Fig. 3 Section, east end of Trench 1 showing quarry disturbance (1:20)

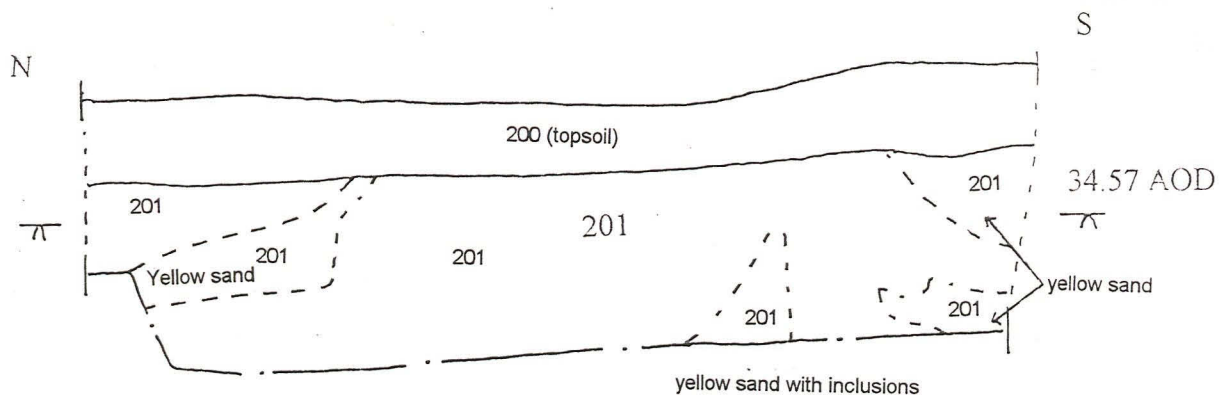


Fig. 4 Central part of east section face, Trench 2 (1:20)

6.0 Discussion and Conclusions

The trial excavation did not identify any significant *in situ* archaeological deposits, although large, fresh unabraded Romano-British sherds were recovered from residual / unstratified contexts. Both Trenches 1 and 2 contained evidence of extensive gravel quarrying to a depth greater than 70cms, and possibly (as seen in Trench 1) to a depth greater than 1.2m.

The recovery of fresh unabraded Romano-British pottery sherds suggests that, prior to quarrying in relatively recent times, there must have existed some form of occupation at the site, although the nature of this cannot be determined on present evidence.

The client has indicated that foundation trenches associated with the proposed development will extend to a depth of 60cms. The evaluation results indicate that previous quarrying disturbances appear to be deeper than this and that development should not pose a significant threat to archaeological remains, which are likely to have been extensively truncated as a result of later activity. However, just how much of this land has been disturbed by quarrying is not known.

The disturbance associated with quarrying appears to cover a large area; a situation further illuminated by the results of a recent evaluation close to the Holt Lane/ Banovallum Gardens immediately to the east.

In Trench 3 there was little evidence of modern disturbance, although archaeological features were not exposed in this area.

The extensive disturbance encountered would suggest that the archaeological potential of the site is relatively limited and that, had any archaeological remains been originally present, it is likely they would have been destroyed or significantly damaged.

7.0 Acknowledgments

Pre Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) express thanks to the client, Mr BF Riddel for this Commission. Thanks are also expressed to Beryl Lott of Lincolnshire County Council Archaeology Section., and to the Site team; Andy Kirkham and Jim Snee.

8.0 Appendices

8.1 References

- | | | |
|-------------------------|------|---|
| Albone, J | 1999 | Archaeological Field Evaluation Report: Land off Holt Lane/Banovallum Gardens, Horncastle (unpublished) |
| Field, N. and Hurst, H. | 1984 | <i>Roman Horncastle.</i> |
| Morris, J. | 1986 | <i>'Lincolnshire' Domesday Book.</i> |

Pevsner, N. , Harris,J., 1995 *The Buildings of England : Lincolnshire*
Antram, N.

8.2 Site Archive

Primary records associated with this field evaluation are currently with Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln). An ordered archive of both paper and object elements is in preparation and will be deposited at the City and County Museum, Lincoln, within six months. The site archive may be accessed at the City and County Museum, Lincoln by quoting the global accession number 249.99

8.3 Colour photographs



P1. General view of site looking west towards Trench 3



P2. Quarry backfill in Trench 1, looking west



P3. Quarry backfill in Trench 2, looking south



P4. General view of site looking west (Trench 3 in foreground)

REPORT 54 ON THE POTTERY FROM LAND OFF ALBERT STREET HORNCastle, ASH99

for PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY

by Margaret J. Darling, M.Phil., F.S.A., M.I.F.A.

27 October 1999

QUANTITY AND CONDITION

The pottery came from two contexts 101 and 201, and amounted to six sherds. The sherds are in moderate condition; no weighing was considered necessary. No problems are anticipated for long term storage. The pottery has been archived according to the guidelines laid down for the minimum archive by *The Study Group for Roman Pottery*. A copy of the database is attached (and can be supplied on disk), and will be curated for future study.

DISCUSSION

Context 101 produced just a single rim from a grey wheel-thrown jar or bowl with an everted rim, burnished on the upper side, and the vessel probably had a grooved shoulder zone. There is nothing intrinsically closely datable about this rim, and it is likely to date from the 2nd century onwards, possibly into the 3rd century. A 4th-century date would be improbable.

Context 201, five sherds, no rims. Four are grey fabric, with a body sherd possibly from a lug-handled jar, another sherd with coarse rouletted zone decoration (impossible to tell if from an open or closed form, although the latter is probable), and a fragment of wall from a bowl, undecorated. A base fragment is in a vesicular fabric, the lost tempering probably shell fragments, and comes from a bowl or dish. None of the sherds are closely datable. Romanised lug-handled jars start in the 2nd century, and continue through to the 4th century. The bowl bodysherd could be later 2nd to 3rd century, and the fragment from a vesicular bowl or dish is more likely to the later Roman. A mid 3rd century or later date seems most probable.

Cxt	Fabric	Form	Manuf+	Ves	D?	DNo	Details	Links	Shs	Wt
101	GREY	JBEV	-	-	-	-	RIM/PT NECK;BURNISH RIM TOP;PROB GROOVE SHLDR	-	1	-
101	ZDATE	-	-	-	-	-	2ND C+	-	-	-
201	GREY	JLH?	-	-	-	-	BS GROOVED;FRAG ?HDLE STUMP	-	1	-
201	GREY	-	ROUZ	-	-	-	BS COARSE ?OPEN/CLSD	-	1	-
201	GREY	B	-	-	-	-	BS WALL	-	1	-
201	GREY	-	-	-	-	-	BS	-	1	-
201	VESIC	BD	-	-	-	-	BASE FRAG WM	-	1	-
201	ZDATE	-	-	-	-	-	3RD C POSS	-	-	-
201	ZZZ	-	-	-	-	-	NO STRONG DIAGNOSTIC DATING	-	-	-

8.5 List of archaeological contexts

Context	Description
Trench 1	
100	Topsoil
101	Composite of several deposits, collectively constituting later post-medieval quarry backfill
102	Cut number allocated to quarry pit(s)
103	Redeposited yellow/brown natural sand (=101)
Trench 2	
200	Topsoil
201	Composite of several deposits, collectively constituting later post-medieval quarry backfill
202	Generic cut number allocated to quarry pit(s)
Trench 3	
300	Topsoil
301	?Former cultivation horizon (undated)
302	Orange/brown/grey sand, probably of glacial origin