

TOTON UNEARTHED, TOTON, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Report on test pits

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TPA Project Code – TOF2



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Summary

- Trent & Peak Archaeology was commissioned by the Friends of Toton Fields to complete an integrated survey at the site of Toton Manor Farm Recreation Ground in Nottinghamshire, centred on SK501342, as part of the Heritage Lottery-funded community archaeology project *Toton Unearthed*.
- The fieldwork was conducted as a community venture with the help of local volunteers.
- The site is situated on deposits of alluvial riverine clays overlying river terrace gravels and the waterstones of the Mercia Mudstone Formation. Geotechnical trial pits had previously revealed a consistent stratigraphical sequence of topsoil overlying alluvial clays of up to 2.6m in depth and river terrace gravels (Webb 2010).
- 5, 1x1m, test pits were excavated in the north-west corner of the study area, in the area historically dominated by ridge and furrow activity. They were designed as a random sampling strategy in order to establish the stratigraphy of the area and identify previously unknown, subsurface archaeological features.
- No archaeological features were identified during the excavation. The pits consistently presented a similar stratigraphic sequence consisting of dark brown clayey silty loams to a depth of 300-400mm, with underlying natural deposits of river clays.
- All material culture recovered from the test pits can be attributed to the post-medieval or modern periods. Finds consisted of CBM, pot, tile, slag, iron, charcoal, glass and clay pipe. Several pieces of yellow glazed ware may date from the 17th century. 5 small flint flakes, initially considered prehistoric, appear to be natural and unworked.
- The test pits have demonstrated that, aside from the known ridge and furrow, there does not appear to be further potentially medieval period or earlier activity evidenced within the topsoil/subsoil in the north-west area of the study area.

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Acknowledgements

The Toton Unearthed project was developed by the Friends of Toton Fields in partnership with Trent & Peak Archaeology, and is managed by Gill Morral and Norman Lewis. The Test pits were managed by Gareth Davies and the TPA team was Genevieve Carver. Curatorial monitoring was by Ursilla Spence, Archaeology Leader for Nottinghamshire County Council.

1. Introduction

Following the first phase of integrated survey, a series of test pits were carried out as part of phase 2 of Toton Unearthed, a Heritage Lottery-funded community project developed by the Friends of Toton Fields in partnership with Trent & Peak Archaeology. The project will also incorporate several other stages including further archaeological excavation, educational outreach, public dissemination and on-site interpretation, and its aims are to investigate the development of domestic and industrial activity at the site, including evidence of a medieval and post-medieval Manor House and water mill. The project is designed as a community venture with public engagement and volunteer involvement throughout.

For this stage, Trent & Peak Archaeology were commissioned supervise the excavation of 5 c.1x1m test pits in order to investigate the nature of subsurface archaeological remains within the study area.

The site is mapped as lying on the waterstones (siltstones, mudstones and sandstones) of the Mercia Mudstone Formation (British Geological Survey 1:50,000 Series, Sheet 125, Derby, Solid and Drift Edition). However, due to the proximity of the of the Erewash river and subsidiary channels, which run through the middle of the recreation ground, the geomorphology of the site is also characterised by more nuanced alluvium deposits.

Geotechnical trial pits revealed a consistent stratigraphical sequence of topsoil overlying alluvial clays of up to 2.6m in depth and river terrace gravels (Webb 2010).

On-site training and supervision was provided for a team of project volunteers whose help was integral to completing the work.

Following consultation with the archaeological leader for Nottinghamshire County Council, an approved Written Scheme of Investigation was agreed. The work was completed in June 2014.

2. Project Background

2.1 Research context and previous work

Toton Manor was a medieval township located along the River Erewash and administered by the parish church of Attenborough. The settlement may have Anglo-Saxon origins, but certainly by the time Domesday was written in 1086 a Manor House and two associated water mills were in existence. Since the foundation of the Manor almost a thousand years ago, the agricultural and industrial landscape has changed considerably, but also showed much continuity. By 1271 documentary evidence records only one mill, but it is likely that this can be equated with the 'flour mill' that appears on 19th century maps and continued to be used into the 20th century. Management of the water courses has developed over the years, with old leets going out of use and new canal systems being put in place.

The area of interest is now taken up by Toton Manor Farm Recreation Ground, a public space managed by Broxtowe Borough Council and incorporated into Toton Fields, a conservation area managed by Broxtowe Borough Council and Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust. Neither the Manor House nor either of the mills survives as standing remains, but recent investigations have shed light onto the potential of the underground heritage.

In 2012, amateur historians Gill Morral and Rex Wyatt produced a volume entitled *Toton Revealed* (Wyatt and Morral 2012), which brought together memories and photographs of Toton from the last century alongside documentary historical research stretching further back.

In June 2013 the Friends of Toton Fields learned of a planned play area to be situated on a potential site of one of the ancient water mills. Through the *Connected Communities* scheme funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, they were able to commission a geophysical survey of the area, which was conducted by the University of Nottingham in partnership with Trent & Peak Archaeology. Both magnetometry and resistivity methods were employed to reveal reasonably clear anomalies, particularly in the resistance data. High-resistance anomalies in the north-east of the area were interpreted as sub-surface structural remains of a mill building, while low-resistance anomalies were interpreted as the northernmost extent of the in-filled millpond (see *Johnson 2013*). As a result of this work, Broxtowe Borough Council agreed to move the location of the proposed play area to the south-west.

Following on from this, the Friends of Toton Fields prepared an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for the current project *Toton Unearthed*. The project's main foci are the medieval and post-medieval Manor House and its associated agricultural and industrial landscape, including a mill and water management systems.

2.2 Potential remains

The previous work mentioned has provided a clear indication of the archaeological potential of the site, which can be summarised as the following targets:

- **Medieval and Post-Medieval Manor House**

Map regression and topographic anomalies give a good indication of the Manor House location, and photographs exist of its latest expression. Geophysical and topographic survey should provide information regarding form and orientation and thereby be able to inform the positioning of trenches on the site.

- **Medieval and Post-Medieval water mill(s)**

Two mills are mentioned at Toton in the Domesday Book of 1086, and photographic and documentary evidence shows that one mill continued to function into the 20th century. The geophysical survey completed last year (*Johnson 2013*) located what appeared to be the extent of a mill pond as well as the structural remains of mill buildings. The

relationship between the mill known to have existed into the 20th century and its earlier expressions remains unclear, as does the location of the second mill.

- **Mill leat and other channels**

Site visits, records and plans have determined several topographic anomalies including a very steep extant bank and v-shaped ditch that is thought to be a mill leat. The integrated survey will help locate and characterise these anomalies, providing more detailed information about water management over time.

- **Medieval and Post-Medieval agricultural landscape**

Ridge and furrow is visible in some parts of the recreation ground, and records document the operation of the Manor House as a farm. The ridge and furrow as well as any sub-surface anomalies such as ditches or hedgerows, are likely targets for the topographic and geophysical surveys.

- **20th century landscaping**

Manor Farm Recreation ground has undergone much landscaping work in recent time, including the levelling of the Manor House, infilling of the millpond and installation of a cricket pitch. The integrated survey will produce key information regarding the implications of landscaping for sub-surface remains.

2.3 Proposed fieldwork

In order to identify and characterise the specified targets at Manor Farm Recreation Ground, the following stages of archaeological investigation were proposed within the WSI (Davies 2014)

- Production of a digital terrain model through Lidar survey
- Geophysics - magnetometer survey within the 5ha survey area
- Topographic survey – a combination of laser scanning, walkover survey and hand survey (in areas of dense undergrowth)
- Borehole survey, including one pollen sample and one C14 date.
- Five test-pits, each one metre squared and no deeper than 1.20m
- Two 'evaluation-style' trenches on the site of the Manor House, measuring 2m x 20m
- The excavation of a 300 square metre open area on the proposed site of the water mill

This report deals with the first three of these elements, which were carried out during April and May 2014

3. Objectives

The research objectives identified for the *Toton Unearthed* project as a whole are as follows:

Objective 1: The location and form of the medieval and post-medieval Manor House

Objective 2: The location and extent of the water mill(s)

Objective 3: The character, function and date of the water mill

Objective 4: The character and development of water management and the industrial landscape over time

Objective 5: The existence of earlier, possibly Anglo-Saxon activity on the site.

The test pits focused on objectives 4 and 5. Additionally, stratigraphy information derived from the test pits could be used to inform further evaluation and open area excavation, through testing the results of the first phase site survey and identifying archaeological features of potential interest.

4. Methodology

The test pits were concentrated in the north-west corner of the study area. They were designed as a random sampling strategy in order to establish the stratigraphy of the area and characterise the phases of activity in the area as evidenced by artefacts recovered from topsoil/subsoil deposits.

The north-western area of the site is not currently scheduled for large open area excavation or evaluation trenches, as these will be concentrated on the known features of the water mill, in the centre, and the manor house to the east.

Initially, the WSI had provisioned for 5 test pits, over 2 rows, running parallel to the river Erewash. This was amended on site to include a 6th pit on a third row, to the north-east.

All test pits were to be 1x1m in size and to be excavated to the depth of natural, undisturbed geology. No excavation was to exceed 1m in depth without additional shoring.

Fieldwork and recording was carried out in accordance with the WSI:

All fieldwork will be carried out in accordance with the code of conduct of The Institute for Archaeologists.

Features were hand-cleaned and planned.

Deposits and feature fills were removed by spits no greater than 100mm. Substantial features were hand excavated to a maximum depth of 1m, or a perceived safe depth if the sides are unstable.

All finds of medieval date or earlier were recorded three dimensionally. Post-medieval finds or abundant redeposited structural material were recorded by context/spit.

Representative sections of each test pit recorded at a scale of 1:20. Sections showed the same information, including a datum line with O.D/arbitrary value; the locations of all sections were shown on plan.

Digital images and B&W photos of each context were taken (as per Brown 2007) together with general views illustrating the locations of the test pits.

Written records were maintained as laid down in the TPA recording manual.

4.1 Post excavation

Finds were cleaned and stored in accordance with the project WSI:

All finds will be cleaned and stored as recommended in "First aid for finds" (by the Archaeology section of the United Kingdom Institute for Conservation, 2nd edition 1987), and marked with the site and find codes, and relevant accession numbers. These will be deposited with the appropriate museum on completion of the report, subject to the provisions of the brief and the agreement of the client.

Depending on availability any Prehistoric pottery will be submitted for assessment to the specialists listed in full in Appendix 2 (Davies, 2014)

5. Results

5.1 Test pit 1

Test pit 01 was located in Area 02 close to the northern extent of the overall study area. After the removal of c.100mm dark brown, silt loam topsoil (0001), 3 further 100mm spits were excavated, giving the pit a total depth of 400mm. 100-300mm was occupied by a firm, brown clayey loam with occasional sub-rounded stone inclusions and charcoal fragments (0002).

Finds comprised of CBM, glass, pottery and charcoal (finds AAA-AAK). Beneath these subsoils the test pit hit natural, reddish brown clay from 300mm onwards (0003), which contained occasional charcoal flecks. Hand augering in Test Pit 1 only demonstrated that (0003) continued for a further 200mm before giving way to gravel layers. The relationship between the gravel layers and the alluvial gravel deposits and local mudstone is unclear.



Figure 1: Test pit 1. South facing section. North facing shot.

5.2 Test pit 2

Test pit 02 was located in Area 03 to the west of the study area. It lay south-east of TP3 and north-west of TP4, in a linear alignment running parallel to the River Erewash. The topsoil (0004), a dark brown silty clay loam, extended 160mm from the top of the pit, sealing a mid brown, silty clay subsoil (0005). (0004) contained a number of finds including glass, CBM (post-medieval) and a possible flint waste flake (finds AAAL-AAN). (0005) continued for a depth of 150mm and contained a variety of archaeological material including post-medieval pottery, clay pipe and glass (finds AAO-AAT, ABA-ABB). (0006), a light reddish brown compacted clay, continued for 200mm below (0005). Within this layer a single piece of yellow glazed pottery (ABC) can be dated to the post medieval period. (0006) gave way to natural blue clay (0007) from a depth of 450mm that continued below the limit of excavation.



Figure 2: Test pit 2. South facing section. North facing shot.

5.3 Test pit 3

Located to the north-west of TP2, test pit 03 was sealed by a c.150mm of topsoil (0008). (0008) was composed of a dark brown silty clay with small stone and charcoal inclusions. It contained a selection of CBM, mortar and pottery (ABF-ABM). The subsoil (0009) is a firm, mid brown silty clay with small stones and charcoal but no material culture. (0009) continued for c.100-120mm before giving way to natural; a compact, stiff, reddish brown clay (0010).



Figure 3: Test pit 3. West facing section. East facing shot.

5.4 Test pit 4

South-east of TP2, test pit 4 contained a dark brownish-grey, silty loam topsoil (0011) which continued to a depth of 150-200mm. Within this layer were a number CBM, coal and pottery fragments (ABN-ABS), all of post medieval or modern date. The light brown, silty-clay subsoil (0012) beneath contained a Fe object (Nail; ABT) and green glazed modern ceramic fragment (ABU). This layer continued for 100-150mm. A small 300mm sondage was dug on the

northern side of the test pit. It revealed a compact layer of red clay (0013) which extended for c.100m before giving way to very compact, natural light blue clay (0014).



Figure 4: Test pit 4. South facing section. North facing shot.

5.5 Test pit 5

The fifth test pit was located to the north-east of TP4. It revealed 200mm of dark, greyish brown topsoil (0025), from within which a post medieval pot sherd (ABV) was recovered, as well as 2 fragments of slag/clinker (ABW, ABX). The underlying subsoil (0026) consisted of mid greyish-brown silty clay, with finds of clay pipe and glass (ABY, ABZ) which sealed a compact reddish brown clay (0027). Beneath (0027), in the north-west corner of the test pit was light yellowish brown clay (0028) which continued beneath the limit of excavation.



Figure 5: Test pit 5. West facing section. East facing shot.

6. Finds

See appendix B for full list of finds.

The nature of the finds recovered indicates that the layers excavated were unanimously modern or post medieval in date. The mixed nature of the finds means that we are unable to attribute a specific period to a single, stratigraphic layer, however, the majority of material culture appears to be associated with the post medieval period, suggesting a concentration of activity during this time.

Pottery of note includes two sherds of yellow glazed ware (ABC, ABL, usually dated to the 17th century. Brown (AAH) and dark glazed (AMB, AAR) earthenware fragments may also date to the 17th-18th century.

A number of flint fragments (AAN, AAV, AAX) were retained in the hope of demonstrating prehistoric activity. However, further examination indicated that these were unworked, natural flakes.

7. Discussion and Conclusion

The undertaking of this test pit survey has revealed similar results to those achieved by Webb, 2010, indicating a consistent stratigraphical sequence of topsoil overlying alluvial clays. The clay layers, however, on this side of the river appear to be significantly thinner, perhaps due to a shift in ancient river coursing or the local topography. The geotechnical data and local geology is discussed in greater detail within the borehole and supplementary test pit report (Flintoft, 2014).

No archaeological features were identified during the excavation, despite the known ridge and furrow activity within the test pit area. No further information was obtained regarding Anglo-Saxon activity (Objective 5) which may go some way to excluding this area from early medieval potential.

Evidence of localised industrial activity (Objective 4) is present in the discovery of a wide range of modern industrial material culture, including slag and CBM. This indicates that urban and industrial activity was taking place in the wider surrounding area, if not directly on the site of itself. The finds recovered are representative of a post medieval/modern urban site, with a range of utilitarian pottery and building materials present within the top and subsoils.

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Cartographic references

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1847 tithe map

1835 map from Sanderson's *Twenty Miles around Mansfield*

1789 map of Toton Manor, Sir John Borlase Warren

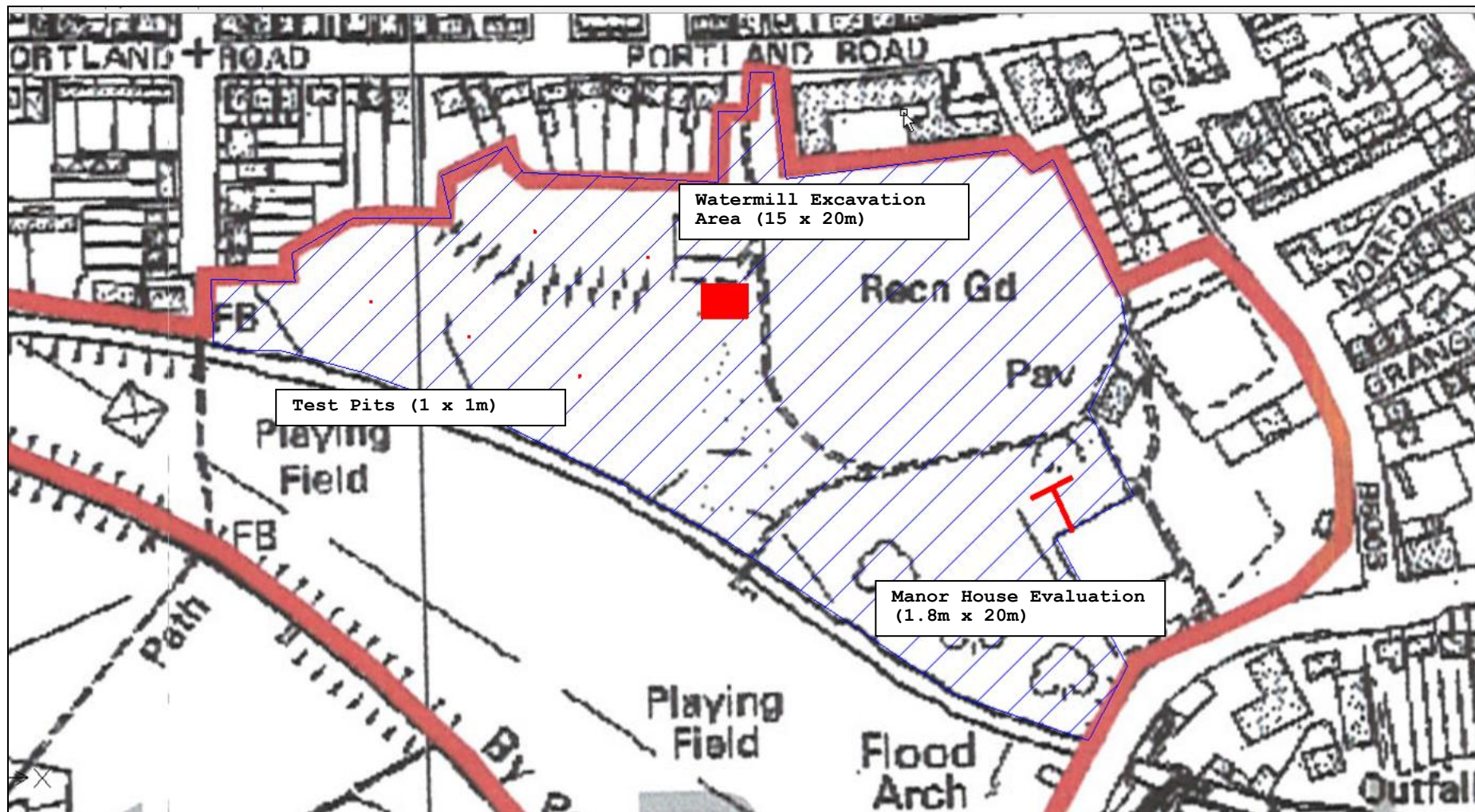


Figure 6: Study Area: Blue Hachure: Area for Geophysical Survey, Red Solid Polygons: Excavation Areas (Davies, 2014)

Appendix A: Context Register

Context	Area	Test Pit	Category	Description	Depth (mm)
0001	2	1	Layer	Topsoil; Dark brown silt loam	100
0002	2	1	Layer	Subsoil; Brown clay loam	200
0003	2	1	Layer	Natural/Alluvial; Light reddish brown clay	100
0004	3	2	Layer	Topsoil; Dark brown silty clay loam	160
0005	3	2	Layer	Subsoil; Mid brown silty clay	150
0006	3	2	Layer	Subsoil; Light reddish brown silty clay	200
0007	3	2	Layer	Natural/Alluvial; Blue/grey clay	N/A
0008	4	3	Layer	Topsoil; Dark brown silty clay	200
0009	4	3	Layer	Subsoil; Mid brown silty clay	100
0010	4	3	Layer	Natural/Alluvial; Mid reddish brown silty clay	50-80
0011	5	4	Layer	Topsoil; Dark brownish grey silty loam	150-200
0012	5	4	Layer	Subsoil; Light brown silty clay	100-150
0013	5	4	Layer	Natural Clay; Mid reddish brown clay	100
0014	5	4	Layer	Natural Clay; Light greyish blue clay	N/A
0015 – 0024 are attributed to supplementary test pit 1 (Flintoft, 2014)					
0025	6	5	Layer	Topsoil; Dark greyish brown	200
0026	6	5	Layer	Subsoil; Mid greyish brown	100
0027	6	5	Layer	Natural/Alluvial; Light reddish brown clay	100
0028	6	5	Layer	Natural; Light yellowish brown clay	N/A

N.B. Due to an absence of archaeological remains, whilst full plans and sections were made of each test pit, they have not been published here. These are available for consultation within the Toton Unearthed archive.

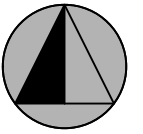
Appendix B: List of finds

Site Code	Find Code	Material	Object	Period	Context	Test Pit	Cut	Spit	Count	NoBags	Comment
TOF2	AAA	Pot	Rim	P/M	0002	01		02	1	1	
TOF2	AAB	Pot	Base, blue/white pattern	P/M	0002	01		03	1	1	
TOF2	AAC	Pot	Body, yellow	P/M	0002	01		03	1	1	
TOF2	AAD	Pot	Body, white glaze	P/M	0002	01		02	1	1	
TOF2	AAE	Pot	Body, white glaze	P/M	0002	01		02	1	1	
TOF2	AAF	Coal	Fragment	P/M	0002	01		02	1	1	
TOF2	AAG	Glass	Fragment, green	P/M	0002	01		02	1	1	
TOF2	AAH	Pot	Rim, yellow with blue edge	P/M	0002	01		03	1	1	
TOF2	AAI	Pot	Body, Cistercian?	P/M	0002	01		03	1	1	
TOF2	AAJ	Brick/tile	Fragment	P/M	0002	01		03	1	1	
TOF2	AAK	Charcoal	Fragments	P/M	0002	01		02	2	1	
TOF2	AAL	Glass	Clear fragment	P/M	0004	02		07	1	1	
TOF2	AAM	Brick/tile	Fragment	P/M	0004	02		01	1	1	
TOF2	AAN	Flint	Natural	P/M	0004	02		02	1	1	
TOF2	AAO	Pot	Body, white glaze	P/M	0005	02		02	1	1	
TOF2	AAP	Pot	Body, white glaze	P/M	0005	02		02	1	1	
TOF2	AAQ	Ceramic	Clay pipe stem	P/M	0005	02		02	1	1	
TOF2	AAR	Pot	Body, earthenware, black internal glaze	P/M	0005	02		02	1	1	
TOF2	AAS	Coal	Fragments	P/M	0005	02		02	3	1	
TOF2	AAT	Glass	Dark green fragment	P/M	0005	02		02	1	1	
TOF2	AAU	Glass	Dark green fragment	P/M	0005	02		02	1	1	
TOF2	AAV	Pot	Rim, very fine, decorated	P/M	0005	02		03	1	1	
TOF2	AAW	Pot	Body, white glaze	P/M	0005	02		03	1	1	
TOF2	AAX	Flint	Natural	-	0005	02		03	1	1	
TOF2	AAZ	Glass	Green fragment	P/M	0005	02		03	1	1	
TOF2	AAZ	Slag	Fragment	P/M?	0004	02		02	1	1	
TOF2	ABA	Pot	Body, earthenware, black glaze	P/M	0005	02		03	1	1	
TOF2	ABB	Ceramic	Clay pipe stem	P/M	0005	02		03	1	1	



TOF2	ABC	Pot	Rim, yellow, slip decoration	P/M	0006	02		04	1	1	
TOF2	ABD	Brick/tile	Fragment	P/M	0005	02		03	1	1	
TOF2	ABE	Brick/tile	Fragment	P/M	0005	02		03	1	1	
TOF2	ABF	Pot	Rim, black glaze	P/M	0008	03		01	1	1	
TOF2	ABG	Pot	Body, plantpot?	P/M	0008	03		01	1	1	
TOF2	ABH	Pot	Body, white glaze	P/M	0008	03		01	1	1	
TOF2	ABI	Mortar	Fragment	P/M	0008	03		01	1	1	
TOF2	ABJ	Pot	Body, white glaze	P/M	0008	03		02	1	1	
TOF2	ABK	Pot	Body, white glaze	P/M	0008	03		02	1	1	
TOF2	ABL	Pot	Body, yellow glaze	P/M	0008	03		02	1	1	
TOF2	ABM	Pot	Body, black glaze	P/M	0008	03		02	1	1	
TOF2	ABN	Pot	Base, white glaze, basket weave pattern	P/M	0011	04		02	1	1	
TOF2	ABO	Pot	Body, white glaze	P/M	0011	04		02	1	1	
TOF2	ABP	Shale?	Fragment	-	0011	04		02	1	1	
TOF2	ABQ	Brick/tile	Fragment	P/M	0011	04		02	1	1	
TOF2	ABR	Brick/tile	Fragment	P/M	0011	04		02	1	1	
TOF2	ABS	Brick/tile	Tile fragment	P/M	0011	04		02	1	1	
TOF2	ABT	Metal (Fe)	Nail	P/M	0012	04		03	1	1	
TOF2	ABU	Pot	Body, green glaze	P/M	0012	04		03	1	1	
TOF2	ABV	Pot	Body, earthenware, black internal glaze	P/M	0018	05		02	1	1	
TOF2	ABW	Slag	Fragment	P/M?	0018	05		02	2	1	
TOF2	ABX	Slag	Fragments	P/M?	0018	05		02	1	1	
TOF2	ABY	Ceramic	Clay pipe	P/M	0018	05		03	1	1	
TOF2	ABZ	Glass	Green fragment	P/M	0018	05		03	1	1	





Playground

Bushes

Tree

Tree

TP3

Bushes

TP2

Mown Path

Mown Path

Bushes

Bushes

Mown Path

TP1

Mown Path

TP5

TP4

0m

50m

Figure 7: Location of test pits 1-5