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MILL MOUNT, YORK.

REPORT ON AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF.
OSA REPORT No: OSA04WB08.

APRIL 2004.

OSA

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Report Summary

REPORT NO: OSA04WB08

SITE NAME: Mill Mount, York

COUNTY: North Yorkshire.

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE: NGR SE 5946 5108.

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TIMING: Fieldwork
16th & 22nd March 2004.
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PERIODS REPRESENTED: Roman, Modern

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1.0 Abstract

A total of eight geotechnical test pits were excavated to the south of Mill Mount in the area between and behind Mill Mount House and Mill Mount Lodge during March 2004. The test pits revealed that natural deposits formed a downward slope from the southwest to the northeast of the site. One test pit yielded the remains of a possibly roman burial located in the southeast of the site; these were the remains of a mature male with the head buried to the northwest. No other archaeological remains were encountered. The test pits in the lawn area south of Mill Mount House revealed thick layers of 19-20th century dump deposits.

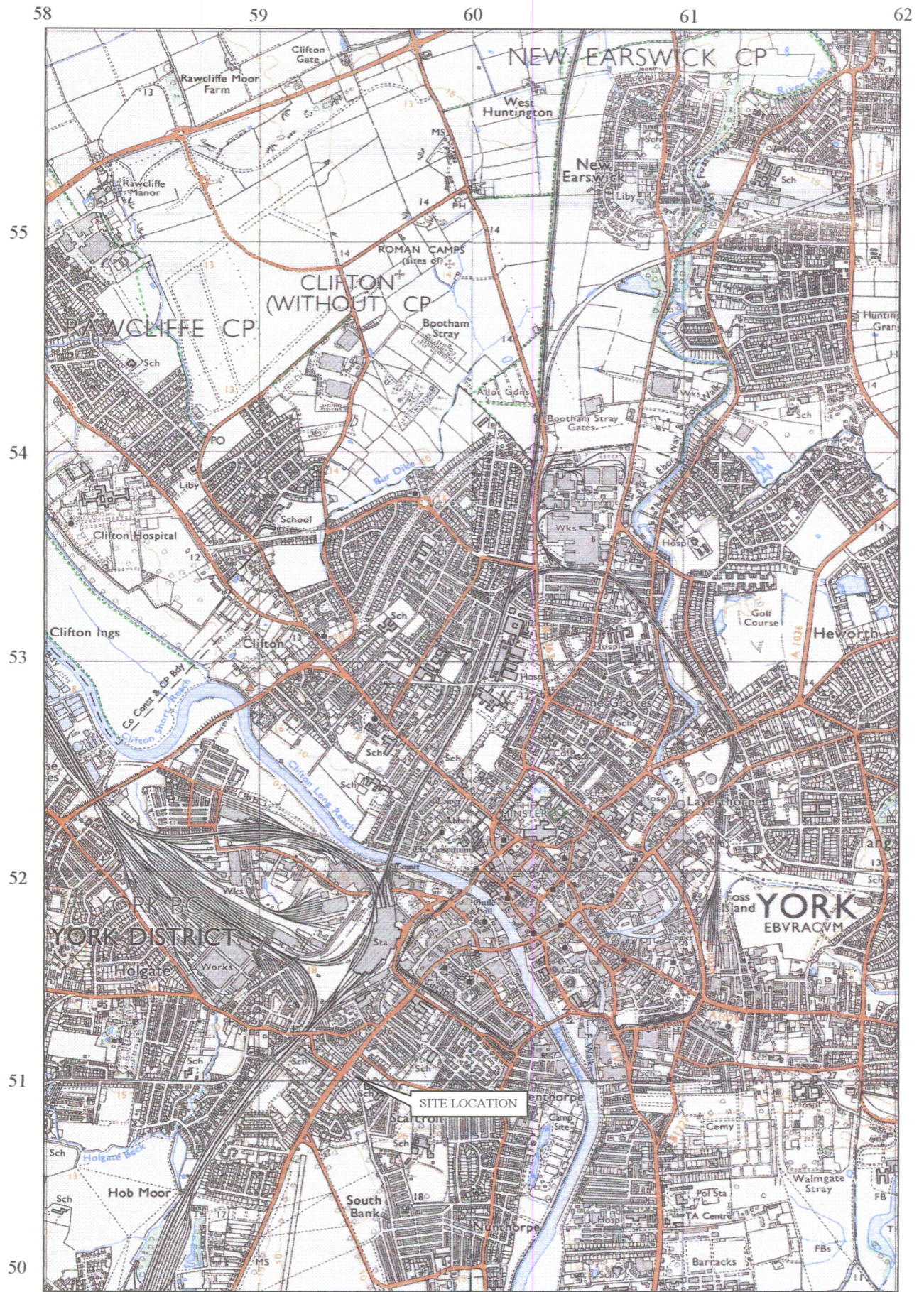


Figure 1. Site Location (NGR SE 5946 5108).
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2.0 Site Location, Geology, Topography and Land Use.

The site is situated to south-southwest of York city centre on Mill Mount to the east of the Mount. A total of 8 geotechnical test pits were excavated to the south-southwest of Mill Mount during March 2004. The pits were located in the car parking areas of Mill Mount House and Mill Mount Lodge and at the garden and car park behind these dwelling along the north side of Albemarle Road.

The Natural revealed comprised mixed layers of boulder clay and yellow sands.

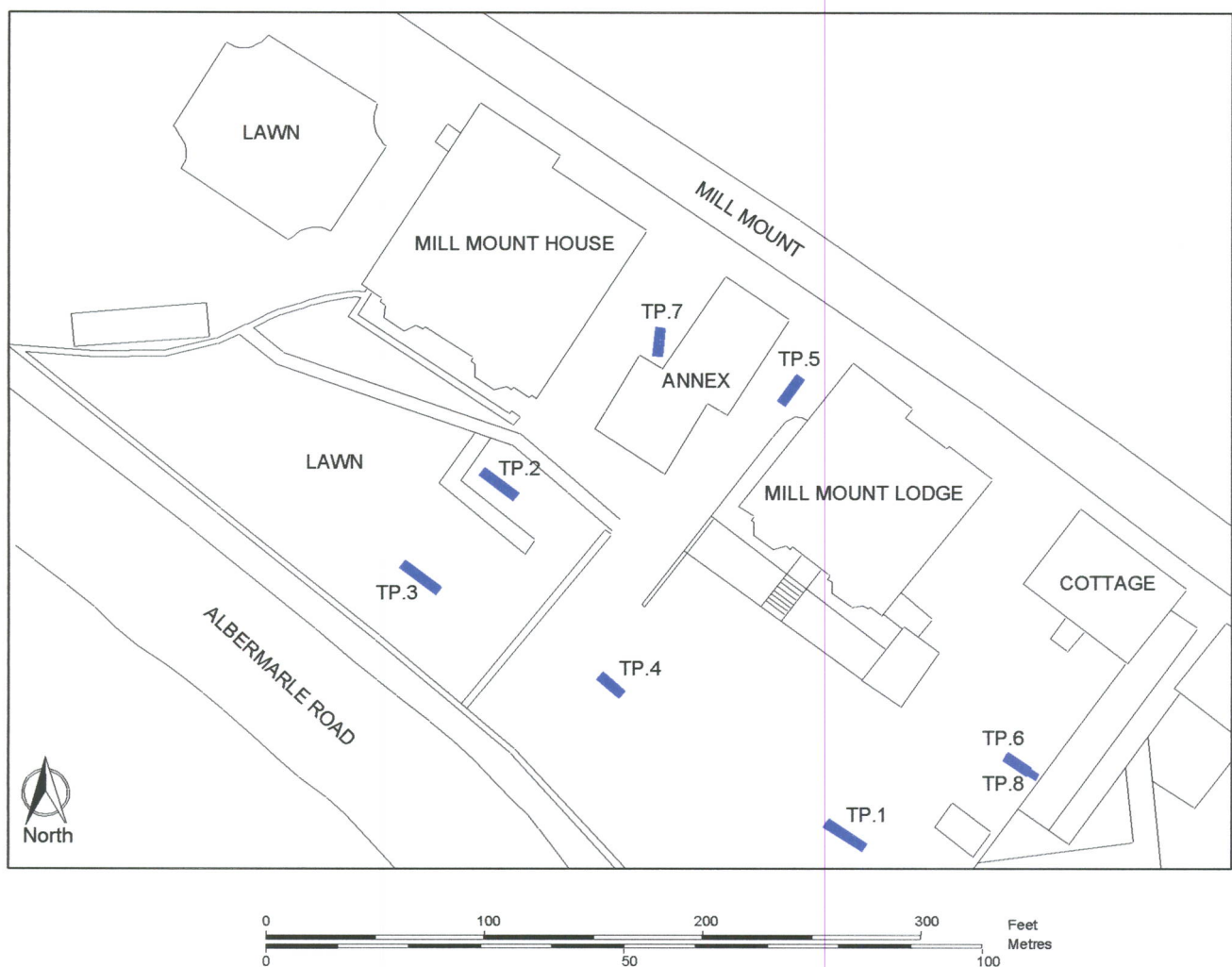


Figure 2. Trench location plan. (Scale 1:500).

3.0 Archaeological Background

Previous archaeological investigations in the area have revealed the presence of extensive roman activity.

The site is located to the southwest of the roman *colonia* and situated close to the junction of the roman roads from York to Tadcaster (*Calcaria*) and Aldborough (*Isurium*). The presence of roman burials in the area is fairly extensive and has been collated by the Royal Commission on Historic Monuments of England (RCHME, 1962) and included both cremations and inhumations.

An Archaeological evaluation was undertaken by *On-Site-Archaeology* during November 2002 and revealed the remains of post medieval activity as well as one roman inhumation situated to the southeast of Mill Mount Lodge in the adjacent car park.

Two excavations carried out during 1991 at 89 The Mount by YAT and at All Saints School at Mill Mount by MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd yielded evidence of roman activity. At All Saints, Mill Mount, 4 inhumations were uncovered dating to the Roman period later than 250AD.

To the north of Mill Mount an evaluation was carried out by *On-Site-Archaeology* during 2001/2002 within the grounds of Mill Mount close. The investigation produced evidence of Post medieval, medieval and Roman activity including one possible Roman inhumation. Further burials have been encountered at 31-41 Blossom Street by York Archaeological Trust in 1989 where 31 inhumations and 1 cremation were exhumed. To the north along Nunnery Lane one Roman burial was uncovered at All Saints School by *On-Site-Archaeology* in 2002. Evidence from numerous archaeological investigations suggests an extensive roman cemetery extending south along the mount from the city walls.

Later activities have also been recorded with finds of medieval and post medieval dates, notably of a gun emplacement on the Mount during the siege of York in 1644. Dickenson & Wenham (1957) recorded the presence of 3 skeletons unearthed in the vicinity, which were interpreted as bodies of soldiers killed during the siege.

4.0 Methodology.

The geotechnical test pits were excavated with a JCB fitted with a 2ft wide toothed bucket to the level of the first visible archaeological horizon. The exposed surfaces were then cleaned by hand in order to detect any archaeological features revealed through textural or colour changes in the deposits. Once this had been completed the pits were further excavated down to the level required for the geotechnical survey.

Standard *On-Site Archaeology* techniques were followed throughout the watching brief. This involved the completion of trench record sheets, along with plans and/or sections drawn to scale in cases where any archaeology was revealed. Heights were measured from the ground level. A digital photographic record of the sections and any features was also maintained.

5.0 Results.

5.1 Test pit 1.

Test pit 1 was situated in the car park to the rear of Mill Mount Lodge and measured 3.20 x 0.70m and reached a depth of 1.80m to the northwest.

Natural was encountered 1.00m below the present ground level and was made up of bands of boulder clay and yellow sands (1005) & (1006). Above the natural was a 0.24m thick layer of light brown pinkish gravelly clay (1004). Cut into this was [1008] a 0.90m long and 0.36m wide burial in the southeast corner of the trench revealing the skull and the upper left half of the torso of a mature male (1009) buried in northwest to southeast direction with the head to the northwest. The fill of this consisted of a light brown pinkish gravelly clay (1007). The cut of the grave was unclear and no grave goods were uncovered. Overlying the burial was a 0.20m thick layer of plastic greenish grey gravelly clay, (1003) capped by 0.18m deep brownish grey gravel rich clay (1002). The surface was made up of a 0.20m thick layer of hardcore consisting of whitish yellow limestone (1001) situated below a 0.15m thick layer of tarmac (1000).

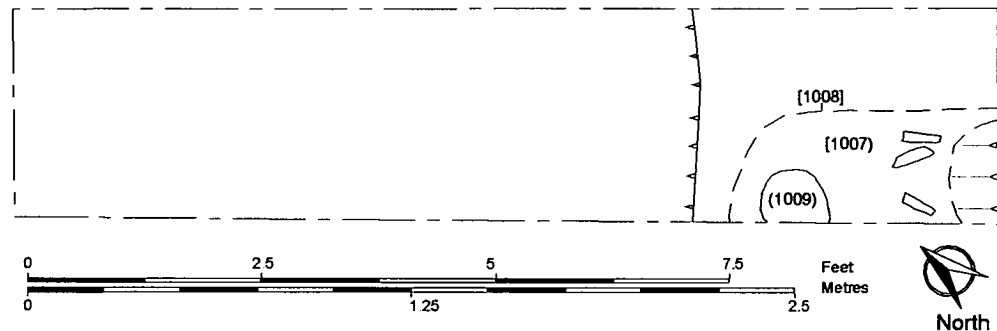


Figure 3. Plan of skeleton (1009) in Test pit 1. (Scale 1:25).

5.2 Test pit 2.

Test pit 2 was situated in the northeastern corner of the lawn area behind Mill Mount House. The trench measured 3.00 x 0.70m and reached a depth of 1.20m.

Natural was encountered as a yellowish brown clay at a level of 1.10m below the ground level (2003). Overlying this was a 0.40m deep 19th century dark brownish grey layer of silty clay and building rubble (2002). This was covered by a 0.40m yellowish brown sandy clay, (2001) again overlain by 0.30m of topsoil, a dark brown silty clay (2000).

5.3 *Test pit 3.*

Test pit 3 was likewise situated in the lawn area but in the south-southeast corner measuring 3.20 x 0.70m with a depth of 1.80m.

Here natural was encountered at a level of 1.80m below the ground level (3004) and was again overlain by a 0.20m thick layer of very dark brownish grey sandy clay with abundant building debris dated to the 19-20th century, (3003). Overlying this was a 0.10m thin layer of fine grey sand (3002) covered by a 1.00m thick layer of brownish yellow gravel rich clay with flecks of charcoal (3001). This layer was finally capped by a 0.50m topsoil of thick very dark brown soft silty clay (3000).

5.4 *Test pit 4.*

Test pit 4 was situated in the northwestern area of the car park southwest of Mill Mount Lodge. The pit measured 2.10 x 0.70m and reached a depth of 0.58m below ground level.

The natural was uncovered at a level of 0.50m below the ground and was revealed as a stiff yellow brown clay (4006). Above this was a 0.12m layer of redeposited natural consisting of yellowish brown gravelly sandy clay (4005). This was overlain by a 0.05m thin band of yellow limestone hardcore (4004) capped by a 0.10m thick layer of mid brown clay with frequent cobbles and CBM (4003). Above (4003) was a 0.05m thin layer of tarmac (4002) again covered by a 0.20m layer of limestone hardcore (4001) with an overlying surface of 0.06m thick tarmac (4000).

5.5 *Test pit 5.*

Test pit 5 was situated in the passage between the annex and Mill Mount Lodge, leading up to the car park behind the lodge. The pit measured 2.30 x 0.70m and was excavated to a depth of 0.70m.

Natural was encountered at a level of 0.40m below ground level and consisted of a stiff yellowish brown boulder clay (5003). Cut into the natural to the northeast was a 0.50m wide and 0.30m deep service trench [5004] containing a ceramic drainage pipe (5005). Overlying this trench was a 0.17m thick layer of limestone hardcore (5001) capped by a 0.06m thin layer of tarmac (5000).

5.6 *Test pit 6.*

Test pit 6 was situated in the small car park southeast of Mill Mount Lodge in the southwestern end of a previous evaluation trench excavated by *On-Site-Archaeology* in 2002. The trench measured 2.00 x 0.70m and was excavated to a depth of 2.40m.

Natural was encountered at a level of 0.50m below the surface as a yellow gravel rich boulder clay (6001). This was overlain by a 0.50m thick layer of back fill from the previous evaluation (6000).

5.7 *Test pit 7.*

Test pit 7 was situated in the car park southwest of Mill Mount House. The pit measured 2.00 x 0.70m and was excavated to a depth of 0.85m.

The natural consisted of gravelly pink clay encountered at a level of 0.55m below the ground level (7004). Above this was a 0.15m thick brown gravelly clay (7003) overlain by a 0.10m layer of gravel rich yellow clay (7002). This was covered by a 0.20m thick layer of yellow limestone hardcore with a 0.10m thick overlying tarmac.

5.8 *Test pit 8.*

Test pit 8 was situated as an extension of test pit 6 to include the foundations of the walls running along the southeastern border of the car park. The trench measured 0.50 x 0.70m and was excavated to a depth of 0.50m.

The natural was yellow boulder clay encountered at a level of 0.50m below ground level overlain by a loose soft gravelly brown sandy clay, this was the backfill of the foundation of the wall built directly onto the natural clay (8000).

6.0 Conclusions.

The natural was found at variable levels across the site, deepest in the lawn area behind Mill Mount House, where it had been truncated by a 19-20th century layer of building rubble. The natural consisted of a mixture of boulder clays and yellow sands with a natural downward slope from the southwest to the northeast of the site.

One possibly roman inhumation burial was encountered in test pit 1 at a level of 1.00m below the present ground surface approximately 17m west-southwest of the burial uncovered during the evaluation. The individual was that of an elderly male buried with the head to the northwest. None of the other test pits yielded any archaeology material.

7.0 Appendix 1 ~ List of Contexts

Context	Description	Extent	Depth
Test pit 1.			
1000	Black tarmac	Whole trench	0.16m
1001	Hardcore, yellowish white limestone	Whole trench	0.20m
1002	Brownish grey gravel rich clay	Whole trench	0.20m
1003	Plastic greenish grey gravel rich clay	Whole trench	0.24m
1004	Light brown pinkish clay with frequent gravel	Whole trench	0.24m
1005	Light brown pinkish gravel rich boulder clay	Whole trench	0.70m
1006	Yellow sand	Whole trench	0.56m
1007	Fill of grave [1008], Light brown pinkish clay with frequent gravel	0.86x0.38m	0.20m
1008	Cut of grave	0.86x0.38m	0.20m
1009	Skeleton	0.86x0.38m	0.20m
2000	Topsoil, dark brown silty clay	Whole trench	0.30m
2001	Yellowish brown sandy clay	Whole trench	0.40m
Test pit 2.			
2002	19-20 th century dump deposit of dark brownish grey sandy clay with abundant building debris	Whole trench	0.40m
2003	Natural, yellow brown clay	Whole trench	0.10m+
Test pit 3.			
3000	Topsoil, dark brown silty clay	Whole trench	0.50m
3001	Brownish yellow clay with flecks of charcoal and animal bone	Whole trench	1.00m
3002	Grey sand	Whole trench	0.10m
3003	19-20 th century dump deposit of dark brownish grey sandy clay with abundant building debris	Whole trench	0.20m
3004	Natural, yellow brown clay	Whole trench	-
Test pit 4.			
4000	Tarmac	Whole trench	0.06m
4001	Hardcore, yellow white limestone	Whole trench	0.20m
4002	Tarmac	Whole trench	0.05m
4003	Mid brown clay with freq. Cobbles and CBM	Whole trench	0.10m
4004	Hardcore, yellow white limestone	Whole trench	0.05m
4005	Yellowish brown gravelly sandy clay	Whole trench	0.12m
4006	Natural stiff yellow brown clay	Whole trench	-
Test pit 5.			
5000	Tarmac	Whole trench	0.06m
5001	Hardcore, yellow white limestone and building rubble	Whole trench	0.17m
5002	Dark greenish grey stiff silty clay	Whole trench	0.20m
5003	Natural stiff yellow brown boulder clay	Whole trench	0.30m+
Test pit 6.			
6000	Backfill from evaluation trench	Whole trench	0.50m
6001	Natural stiff yellow brown boulder clay	Whole trench	-
Test pit 7.			
7000	Tarmac	Whole trench	0.10m
7001	Hardcore, yellow white limestone	Whole trench	0.20m
7002	Redeposited natural, yellow gravel rich clay	Whole trench	0.10m
7003	Brown gravelly clay	Whole trench	0.15m
7004	Natural pink clay	Whole trench	0.30m+
Test pit 8.			

8000	Loose soft gravelly brown sandy clay	Whole trench	0.50m
8001	Natural stiff yellow brown boulder clay	Whole trench	-

8.0 Appendix 2 ~ Archive Index.

8.1 Drawing Register.

Dwg No	Description	Scale	Date	Initials
1	Test pit 1, Burial (1009)	1:20	16-3-04	TK
2	NW facing section of test pit 1	1:20	16-3-04	TK

8.2 Photographic Register.

Frame	Description	Scale	Initials/Date	View
Film Digital 16-3-04				
1	Skeleton (1009)	0.5	TK 16-3-04	S
2	East facing section of TP1	0.5	TK 16-3-04	W
3	East facing section of TP2	0.5	TK 16-3-04	W
4	East facing section of TP3	0.5	TK 16-3-04	W
5	East facing section of TP4	0.5	TK 16-3-04	W
6	East facing section of TP5	0.5	TK 16-3-04	N
Film Digital 22-3-04				
1	North facing section of TP7	0.5	TK 22-3-04	S
2	North facing section of TP6	0.5	TK 22-3-04	S
3	North Facing Section of TP8	0.5	TK 22-3-04	S

9.0 The Plates.



Plate 1. Test pit 1, showing skeleton (1009). (Scale of 0.5m).



Plate 2. East facing section of Test pit 2. (Scale of 0.5m).