



**Archaeological trial trench evaluation
at New Century Park, Stoke
Coventry, West Midlands
January 2014**

OUT/2012/0888 / NCP'14

Report No. 14/27

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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		Oasis No. Molanort1-170698	
Project title	Archaeological trial trench evaluation at New Century Park, Stoke, Coventry, West Midlands		
Short description	A trial trench evaluation was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology, now trading as MOLA, on land at New Century Park, Stoke, Coventry, West Midlands in January 2013. Six trenches were opened in Zones 2 to 4, Access could not be gained to Zone 1. A trench in Zone 4 was targeted to locate an air raid shelter, a pit with backfill and a make-up layer were uncovered. No archaeological features were uncovered, only modern areas of disturbances, service trenches, pits and golf course pits were noted.		
Project type	Trial trench evaluation		
Site Status	-		
Previous work			
Current land use	Waste land		
Future work	unknown		
Monument type and period	-		
Significant finds	-		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County	West Midlands		
Site address	New Century Park, Stoke, Coventry		
Post code	-		
OS co-ordinates	SP 36626 78534		
Area (sq m/ha)	10710m ²		
Height aOD	75-80m aOD		
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology, now trading as MOLA		
Project brief originator	Planning Archaeologist for Coventry City Council, Chris Patrick		
Project Design originator	CgMs Consulting		
Director/Supervisor	Yvonne Wolfram-Murray		
Project Managers	Adam Yates		
Sponsor or funding body	CgMs Consulting for Morris Homes (Midlands)		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date	20 January 2014		
End date	21 January 2014		
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Contents	
Physical	NA store	-	
Paper		Site records (1 small archive box)	
Digital		Client report PDF	
BIBLIOGRAPHY	Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (NA report)		
Title	Archaeological trial trench evaluation at New Century Park, Stoke, Coventry, West Midlands		
Serial title & volume	14/27		
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Contents

1	INTRODUCTION
2	BACKGROUND
2.1	Location and topography
2.2	Historical and archaeological background
3	OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY
4	THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE
4.1	Zone 2
4.2	Zone 3
4.3	Zone 4
5	DISCUSSION
	BIBLIOGRAPHY
	APPENDIX: CONTEXT

Tables

Table 1	Summary of Trenches
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Figures

Front cover: Zone 4 pre-excavation, looking south

Fig 1: Site location

Fig 2: The excavated trenches

Fig 3: Trench 4 showing general geology of the zone, looking east

Fig 4: Trench 5 showing typical stratigraphy, looking north

Fig 5: Trench 2 showing general geology of the zone, looking south-east

Fig 6: Trench 1 showing typical stratigraphy, looking west

Fig 7: Trench 6 showing geology and air raid shelter, looking south

Fig 8: Trench 6 showing the stratigraphy at the south edge of pit [605], looking east

Fig 9: The uneven south edge of the pit [605], looking south

Fig 10: 1946 RAF aerial photograph

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION
AT NEW CENTURY PARK, STOKE, COVENTRY
WARWICKSHIRE
JANUARY 2014**

Abstract

A trial trench evaluation was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology, now trading as MOLA, on land at New Century Park, Stoke, Coventry, West Midlands in January 2013. In total six trenches were opened in Zones 2 to 4, Access could not be gained to Zone 1. A trench in Zone 4 was targeted to locate an air raid shelter, a pit with backfill and a make-up layer were uncovered. No archaeological features were uncovered, only modern areas of disturbances, service trenches, pits and golf course bunkers were noted.

1 INTRODUCTION

Northamptonshire Archaeology, now trading as MOLA, was commissioned by CgMs Consulting, on behalf of Morris Homes (Midlands), to carry out a trial trench evaluation on land at New Century Park, Stoke, Coventry, Warwickshire (NGR SP 36626 78534, Fig 1). An outline planning permission has been granted for residential development (OUT/2012/0888).

The Planning Archaeologist for Coventry City Council required that the potential for prehistoric or medieval artefacts and features be investigated as there may be preservation in the areas of lawn and green areas around The Grange and The Lodge. There was also potential preservation of a Second World War air raid complex at the junction of Brindle Avenue and Second Avenue. A Written Scheme of Investigation was produced by CgMs Consulting (Flitcroft 2013). The works were monitored by the Planning Archaeologist.

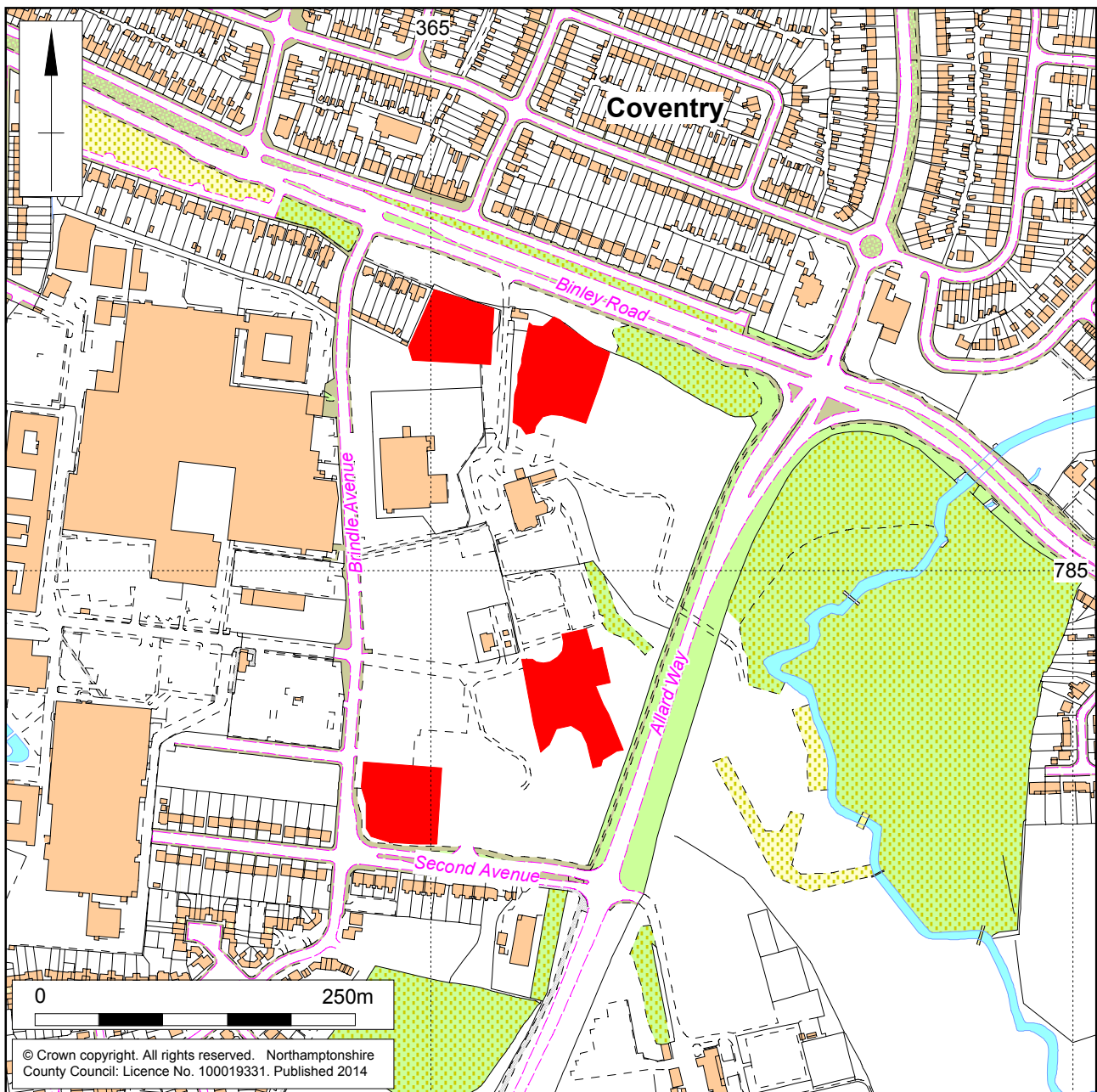
MOLA is an Institute for Archaeologists' (IfA) registered organisation. This document was prepared in accordance with the current best archaeological practice as defined in the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standards and Guidance for an Archaeological Field Evaluation* (IfA 2008) and the procedural document *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (MoRPHE) (EH 2009).

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location and topography

The development site is situated within Stoke, to the east of Coventry town centre. The site is bound by Binley Road to the north, Allard Way to the east, Second Avenue to the south, and Brindle Avenue to the west. It occupies part of the land that was formerly associated with Copsewood Grange. The site currently is wasteland comprising overgrown garden and golf course, tarmac car parks, and cleared air raid shelters.

The topography comprises a relatively level site situated at a height of between c 75m and 80m aOD. The underlying bedrock geology has been mapped as Bromsgrove Sandstone Formation with the eastern limit underlain by Mercian Mudstone Group (Flitcroft 2013).



Scale 1:5000

Site Location Fig 1

2.2 Historical and archaeological background

The archaeology section of the WSI compiled by CgMs Consulting can be summarised as follows. There were no designated or undesignated archaeological assets present on site. The development site comprised fields from the medieval period onwards which were enclosed in 1655. The 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of 1888 showed the House and Lodge of Copsewood Grange with an agricultural landscape.

Previous archaeological work, a trial trench evaluation carried out in 2011 prior to construction of initial road and infrastructure found activity possibly relating to Copsewood Grange. The only datable artefacts recovered were dated to the post-medieval period and no earlier stratified or re-deposited artefacts were recovered (Flitcroft 2013).

3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The objectives of the programme of works were to:

- Clarify the presence/absence and extent of any buried archaeological remains within the site that may be impacted on by development;
- Identify, within the constraints of the evaluation, the date, character, condition and depth of any surviving remains within the site;
- To assess the impact of previous land use on the site;
- To inform formulation of further measures – if required – to mitigate impacts of the development on surviving archaeological remains.

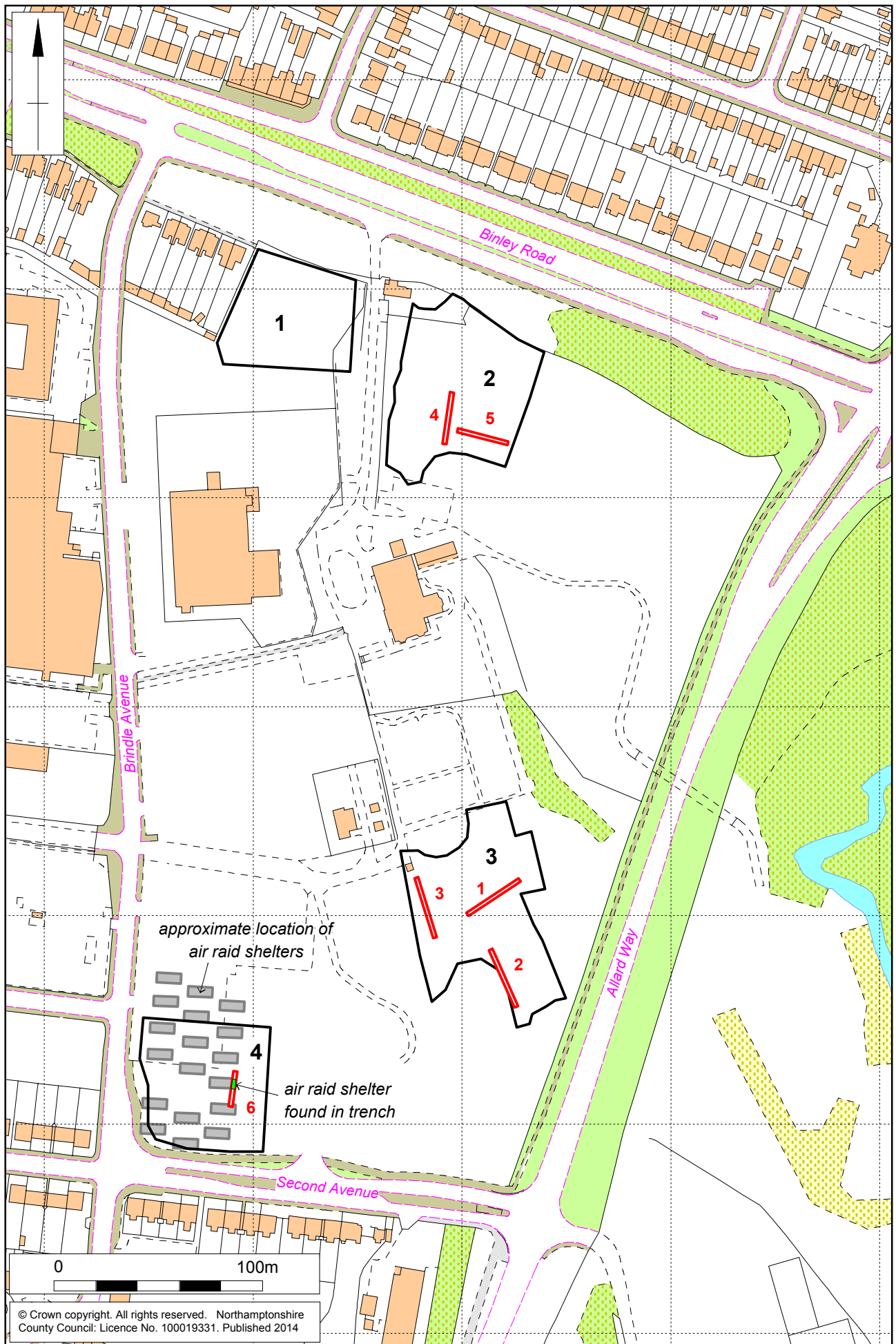
Four zones for investigation were identified for their potential to contain surviving pre-20th-century archaeological features and an area of known Second World War air raid complex (Table 1, Fig 2). In zones 1 to 3 the trial trenching was a 4% sample. Exact location of the trenches was determined on site to account for site conditions. Zone 4 only required a single targeted trench.

Table 1: Summary of Trenches

Investigation Zone	Location	Approx area (m2)	Proposed Trenching
1	NW	2260	2 - 25x1.8m trench
2	NE	2250	2 - 25x1.8m trench
3	SE	3700	3 - 30x1.8m trench
4	SW	2500	1 - 25x1.8m trench

All areas of ground disturbance were accurately surveyed in using Leica 1200 GPS survey equipment and tied into the Ordnance Survey.

Machine excavation was undertaken under the direction of a suitably experienced archaeologist. Trenches were excavated by machine using a toothless ditching bucket 1.80m wide, to reveal archaeological remains or, where absent, undisturbed natural horizons.



Scale 1:2500 (A4)

The excavated trenches Fig 2

Each trench was cleaned sufficiently to enhance the definition of features. All archaeological features were investigated. All archaeological deposits encountered during the course of evaluation were fully recorded. Recording followed standard Northamptonshire Archaeology procedures (NA 2011). All archaeological features were given a separate context number. Deposits were described on pro-forma context sheets to include details of the context, its relationships and interpretation.

A photographic record was maintained using black and white film supplemented by digital photography. Photographic views of the site were taken prior to excavation and after backfilling. Each trench was photographed, together with views of individual features.

The field data was compiled into a site archive with appropriate cross-referencing. All records were compiled during fieldwork into a comprehensive and fully cross-referenced site archive.

4 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

Access to Zone 1 one could not be gained due to fencing and soil bunds. It was also very overgrown with trees and shrubs. All other zones were evaluated.

4.1 Zone 2

Two trial trenches, each 25m long, were opened. Trench 4 was aligned north to south and Trench 5 was aligned east to west (Fig 2). The natural substrate consisted of brown-red silty sand and clay with gravels; this was overlain by mid brown sandy silt subsoil. The topsoil was mid brown sandy silt. Trench 4 contained modern disturbance, a sand bunker in the northern end of the trench from when the area was used as a golf course (Figs 3 and 4).



Trench 4 showing general geology of the zone, looking east Fig 3



Trench 5 showing typical stratigraphy, looking north Fig 4

4.2 Zone 3

Three trial trenches, each 30m long, were opened. Trench 1, aligned south-west to north-east, and Trenches 2 and 3 were aligned north-west to south-east (Fig 2). The natural substrate was red-brown silty sand, overlain by red-brown sandy clay subsoil and dark brown sandy loam topsoil. Modern disturbance was present in all three trenches comprising pits, service trenches, and demolition material (Figs 5 and 6). Asbestos was found in the pit in Trench 2.



Trench 2 showing general geology of the zone, looking south-east Fig 5



Trench 1 showing typical stratigraphy, looking west Fig 6

4.3 Zone 4

Trench 6, 19m long and aligned north to south, was targeted to locate the remains of the air raid shelters (Fig 2). The natural substrate comprised mid brown-red silty sand overlain by mid red-brown sandy silty layer comprising brick and tile fragments, metal and asbestos. The topsoil was dark grey-brown sandy loam. In the northern half of the trench the possible location of an air raid shelter was established. Only a pit [605], 6m wide, with a mixed backfill (604) comprising silt, sand and clay with brick and metal fragments, and asbestos remained. Due to the asbestos the fill was only excavated to a depth of 0.80m below current ground level.



Trench 6 showing geology and air raid shelter, looking south Fig 7



Trench 6 showing the stratigraphy at the south edge of pit [605], looking east Fig 8



The uneven southern edge of the pit [605], looking south Fig 9

5 DISCUSSION

No archaeological remains were uncovered in Zones 2 and 3. Both areas had modern disturbances that included golf course remnants, service trenches, demolition rubble and pits. The findings are consistent with the development site's previous uses. Also, like the previous trial trench evaluation no re-deposited artefacts predating the post-medieval period were found.

An air raid shelter was located; several in this area can be seen in an aerial photograph of 1946 (Fig 10). The shelters have been removed and the area has been extensively remodelled. It appears the only evidence remaining comprises of pits with backfill and a layer, overlaying the natural, of building debris possibly relating to the air raid shelters.



1946 RAF aerial photograph Fig 10

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EH 2009 *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The MoRPHE Project Managers Guide*, English Heritage

Flitcroft, M, 2013 *Written scheme of investigation for a programme of archaeological works, New Century Park, Stoke, Coventry*, CgMS Consulting

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NA 2011 *Archaeological Fieldwork Manual*, Northamptonshire Archaeology

APPENDIX: CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
1	30 x 1.8m E - W		75.76m aOD	0.60m, 75.16m aOD
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/samples
101	Topsoil	Dark brown sandy clay; occasional small sub-angular stone inclusions	0.30m thick	-
102	Subsoil	Mid brown sandy clay; occasional small sub-angular stone inclusions	0.30m thick	-
103	Natural	Red-brown silty sand; rare sub-angular stone inclusions	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
2	30m x 1.8m N - S		74.55m aOD	0.50m, 74.05m aOD
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/samples
201	Topsoil	Dark brown sandy clay	0.30m thick	-
202	Subsoil	Red-brown sandy clay	0.20 thick	-
203	Natural	Red-brown sandy clay; frequent small sub angular stones.	-	-
204	Fill of [205]	Dark brown silty clay; frequent small sub-angular stones; lumps of clay and red brick frag present in fill.	0.65m wide	-
205	Modern gully	Small gully/ditch; possible modern service trench capped in concrete	0.65m wide	-
206	Fill of [207]	Modern 'rubbish' including red brick frag, rubble and asbestos	-	-
207	Pit	Modern 'rubbish' pit	-	-
208	Layer	Burnt stone, coal; possibly post-med or modern	1.20m long 0.08m thick	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
3	30m x 1.8m N - S		75.65m aOD	0.70m, 74.95m aOD
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/samples
301	Topsoil	Dark brown sandy clay; modern brick inclusions	0.50m thick	-
302	Subsoil	Mid brown sandy clay	0.20-0.50m thick	-
303	Natural	Red-brown silty sand	-	-
304	Layer	Mixed modern building material	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
4	25 x 1.8m N-S		81.51m aOD	0.35m, 81.18m aOD
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/samples
401	Topsoil	Mid brown sandy silt; occasional small sub-angular stones	0.20m	-
402	Subsoil	Mid brown sandy silt; frequent small sub-angular stones	0.15m thick	-
403	Natural	Brown- red silty sand with gravels	-	-
404	Fill of [405]	Grey-brown sandy silt with infrequent small sub-angular stones	1.0m wide (to edge of trench)	-
405	Pit	Possible modern disturbance/bunker	1.0m wide (to edge of trench)	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
5	20m x 1.8m W - E		80.78m aOD	0.35m, 80.43m aOD
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/samples
501	Topsoil	Dark brown sandy silt; occasional small sub-angular stones	0.25m thick	-
502	Subsoil	Mid brown sandy silt; frequent small sub-angular stone	0.05-0.10m thick	-
503	Natural	Mid brown sandy clay with frequent gravels	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
6	19m x 1.8m N - S		74.18m aOD	0.70m, 73.48m aOD
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/samples
601	Topsoil	Friable dark grey-brown sandy silt	0.20m thick	-
602	Subsoil/ Make up layer	Friable-firm mid red-brown sandy silt and clay mix; CBM inclusions; possible made up ground	0.20-0.50m thick	-
603	Natural	Friable mid brown-red silty sand	-	-
604	Fill of [605]	Mixed backfill (including asbestos); Silts, sands and clays; frequent small sub angular stone; intermixed with (602) at S end	0.20m (excavated depth)	Modern rubbish including glass bottle
605	Pit	Modern structure footing; possible WW2 air raid shelter.	0.20m (excavated depth)	-

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