



**Archaeological trial trench evaluation at
the former Goldings Middle School
Northampton
March 2014**

Planning consent: N/2011/1267

Report No. 14/80

Author: Yvonne Wolframm-Murray

Illustrator: Amir Bassir



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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		Oasis No. molanort1-176834	
Project title	Archaeological trial trench evaluation at the former Goldings Middle School, Northampton		
Short description	A trial trench evaluation was undertaken by MOLA on land at the former Goldings Middle School, Northampton in March 2013. In total six trenches were opened. A modern ditch and an undated ditch were recorded. Modern areas of disturbances were noted, which included service trenches, geotechnical test pits, modern pits and landscaping.		
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	Northamptonshire		
Site address	Former Goldings Middle School		
Post code	NN3 8JJ		
OS co-ordinates	SP 7992 6411		
Area (sq m/ha)	1.43ha		
Height aOD	87-93m aOD		
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation	MOLA		
Project brief originator	Northamptonshire County Council		
Project Design originator	MOLA		
Director/Supervisor	Yvonne Wolfram-Murray		
Project Managers	Liz Muldowney		
Sponsor or funding body	Bellway Homes		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date	17 March 2014		
End date	19 March 2014		
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Contents	
Physical	MOLA Northampton 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BIBLIOGRAPHY	Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (NA report)		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 the former Goldings Middle School, Northampton		
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Archaeological trial trench evaluation at the former Goldings Middle School Northampton March 2014

Abstract

A trial trench evaluation was undertaken by MOLA on land at the former Goldings Middle School, Northampton in March 2013. In total six trenches were opened. A modern ditch and an undated ditch were recorded. Modern areas of disturbances were noted, which included service trenches, geotechnical test pits, modern pits and landscaping.

1 INTRODUCTION

Bellway Homes commissioned MOLA to carry out archaeological trial trenching on land adjacent at the former Goldings Middle School, Crestwood Avenue, Northampton (NGR 7992 6411, Fig 1). The site has received outline planning consent for residential development from Northampton Borough Council (N/2011/1267).

As a condition on planning consent there is a requirement for archaeological investigation in accordance with Section 12, paragraph 128 and Appendix 2 of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012). This document has been prepared by MOLA in response to a brief provided by the Assistant Archaeological Advisor at Northamptonshire County Council setting out the requirements for works. It covers evaluation works only; any further mitigation works required will be detailed under future documentation.

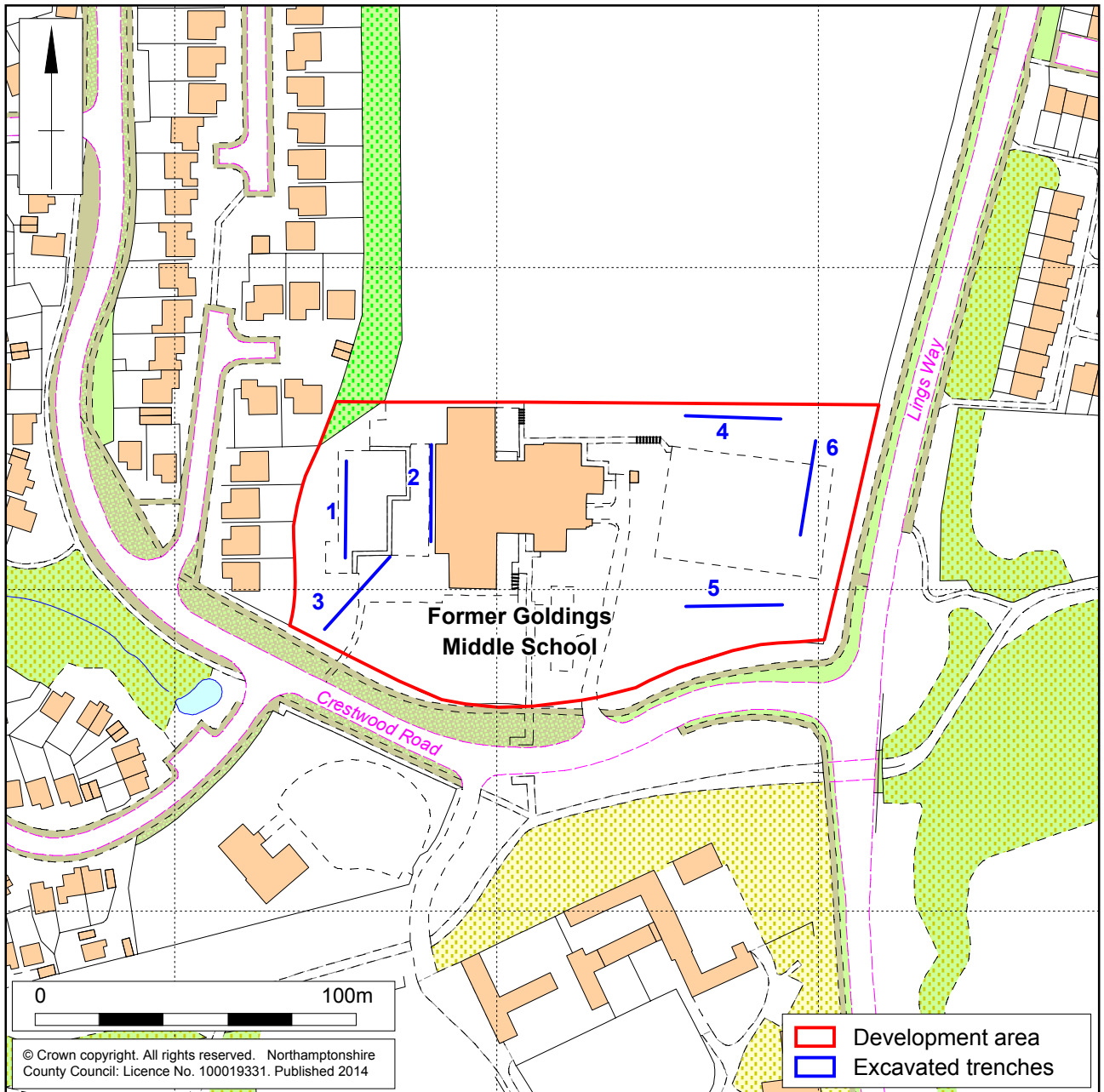
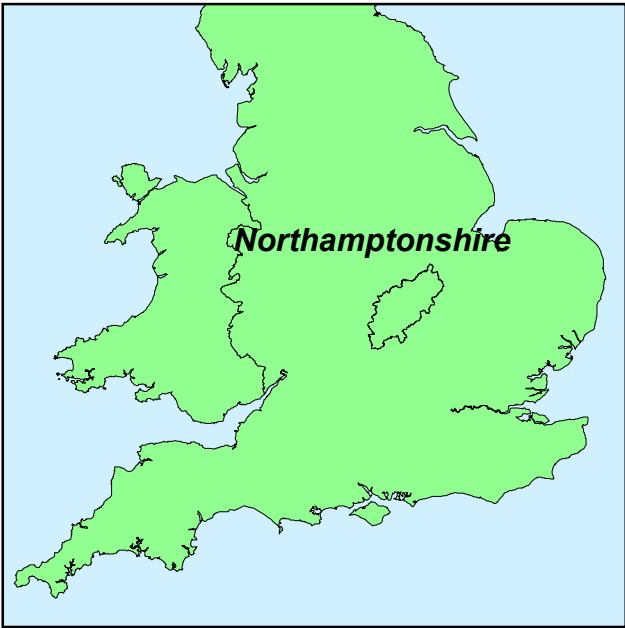
MOLA is an Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) registered organisation. This document has been prepared in accordance with the current best archaeological practice as defined in the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (IfA 2008) and the procedural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

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location and topography

The site is located close to the northern edge of Northampton and is part of the former Goldings Middle School. The school buildings have been demolished, but the concrete pads and associated areas of hardstanding are still present. The site is bounded by Crestwood Avenue to the south, Lings Way to the east, residential development to the west and the Woodvale Primary School to the north.

The site is situated on high ground at c 90m aOD above Billing Brook to the west. The bedrock geology comprises Northampton Sand and Ironstone, no superficial geology has been recorded (<http://www.bgs.ac.uk> accessed 5/02/14).



Scale 1:2000

Site location Fig 1

2.2 Historical and archaeological background

There are no records of archaeological remains within the Historic Environment Record (HER) for the development area and its immediate environment other than for Billing Lodge Farm immediately to the south. However, this is likely to reflect the lack of directed archaeological investigation that was undertaken when this area was developed in the later 20th century.

A barbed and tanged arrowhead has been found 180m to the south-east of the site (1706/0/0), although this is likely to be a result of casual loss.

An area of Iron Age and Roman settlement has been identified to the east, largely from aerial photographs taken prior to development. A double-ditched rectangular enclosure containing for a single roundhouse was excavated in 1972-3 (Williams 1974). Pottery suggest that the site was in use during the 2nd-1st centuries BC and the lack of other structural evidence suggest that the site was probably only in use for a short time (HER 2094/2/1). Further enclosures are visible on old aerial photographs and the extent of the site has not yet been fully defined.

During the medieval period the site lay within the open fields of Great Billing. The site lay within an area of ancient enclosure known in 1629 as *Caswell* and *Caswell Head* (Hall 1978). The remainder of the parish was enclosed in 1778.

3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The aims of the archaeological evaluation were:

- *to determine and understand the nature, function, and character of the archaeological site in its cultural and environmental setting;*
- *the location, extent, nature and date of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present;*
- *the integrity and state of preservation of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present.*

The 1.43ha development site was subjected to archaeological evaluation through trial trench excavation. Six trial trenches, each measuring 30m x 1.60m were excavated in the study area. The trench plan has been limited in part by the remaining concrete pads of the buildings, trees and services.

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 1.60m wide, to reveal archaeological remains or, where absent, undisturbed natural horizons. A toothed bucket was only used to break up tarmac when needed.

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 MOLA procedures (MOLA 2014). 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

The development site was at two different heights, the western area with Trenches 1 to 3 was lower than the eastern area with Trenches 4 to 6. Modern disturbances were noted in all trenches, which included geotechnical test pits, service trenches and landscaping. The difference in height reflects previous landscaping associated with the middle school.

4.1 The lower western area

Three trial trenches, each 30m long and 1.60m wide, were opened. Trenches 1 and 2 were aligned north to south and Trench 3 was aligned north-east to south-west (Figs 2 and 3). The area around Trenches 1 and 2 was heavily truncated. The natural substrate was light yellow-blue sandy clay with patches of mid orange-brown ironstone gravel. This was overlain by mid blue-grey sandy gravel, mid orange-brown sandy gravel and tarmac (Figs 4 and 5).

The south-western part of Trench 3 was not truncated and the natural substrate comprised mid orange-brown sand with ironstone gravel (307). In the first 5.00m of the trench buried topsoil (306) was present.

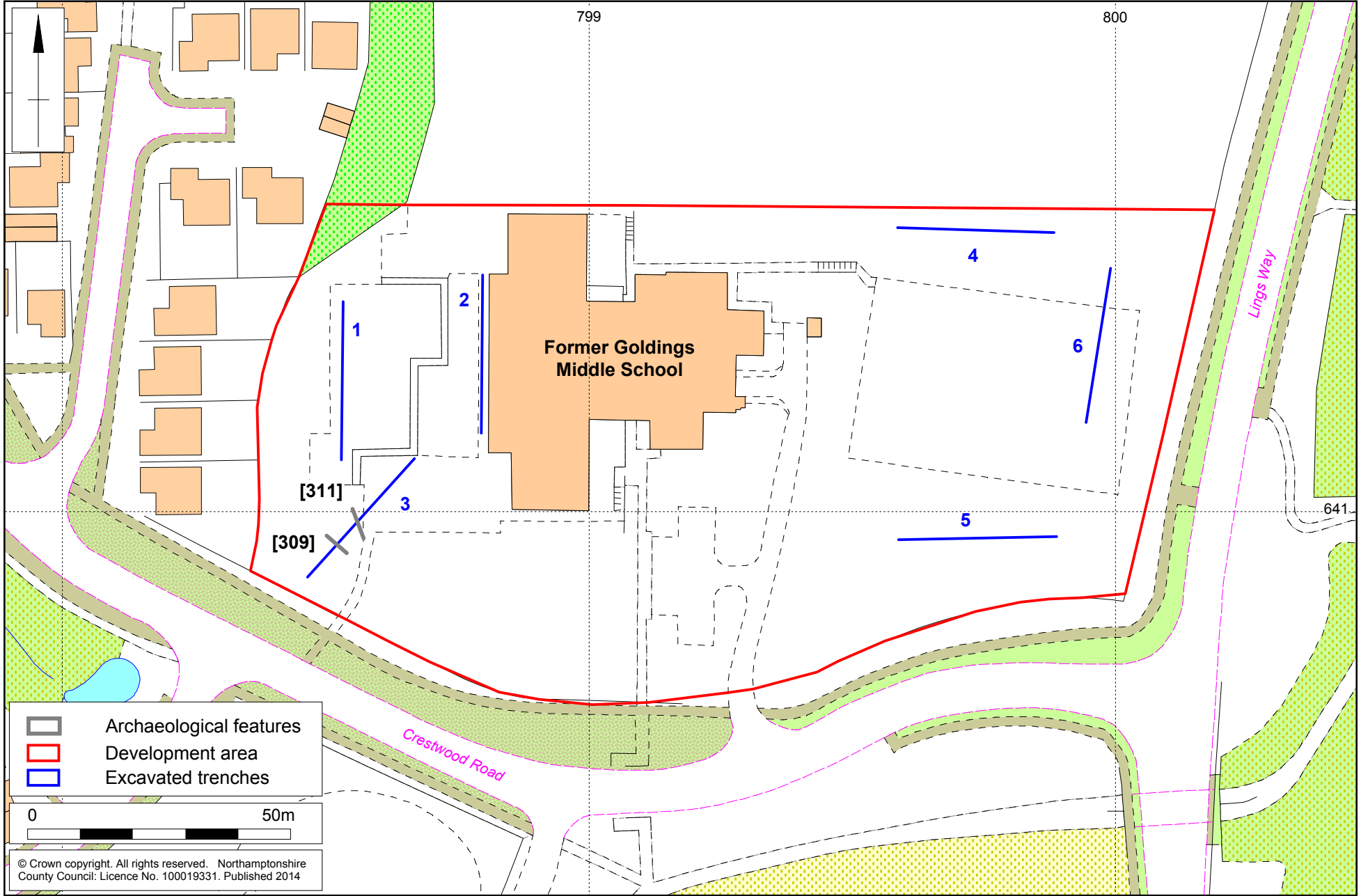
Cutting the natural substrate were Ditches [309] and [311] in the south-western half of the trench (Fig 3). Ditch [309] was 1.10m wide and 0.10m deep, and had irregular sides and base (Fig 6). The mid brown sandy loam fill (308) contained modern ceramic, drain pipe and glass. Ditch [311] was 1.00m wide and 0.25m deep, with a U-shaped profile (Fig 7). The mid brown sandy clay fill (310) did not contain any finds.

The buried topsoil and ditch fills were overlain by a layer of re-deposited mid orange-brown sandy clay (305) and mid yellow-brown sand (312). This was overlain by topsoil (304). In the north-eastern half of the trench the natural substrate was overlain by grey sandy clay gravel (303) and mid brown-orange sandy clay (302) under the tarmac (301).



View of the lower western area, looking west Fig 2

Scale 1:1000



The excavated trenches Fig 3

- Archaeological features
- Development area
- Excavated trenches



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Trench 2 showing the natural substrate, looking south Fig 4



Truncated natural overlain by gravels and tarmac in Trench 1, looking west Fig 5



Ditch [309], looking north-west Fig 6



Ditch [311], looking north-west Fig 7

4.2 The higher eastern area

Three trial trenches, each 30m long and 1.60m, were opened. Trenches 4 and 5 aligned west to east, and Trench 6 aligned north-north-east to south-south-west (Figs 3 and 8). The eastern part of this area was partially truncated and the south and western part had been built up to provide a level surface for the tennis courts.

The natural substrate comprised mid brown-yellow sandy clay with frequent ironstone inclusions and occasional blue clay patches (Figs 9 and 11). This was overlain by mid brown sandy clay subsoil, 0.15m to 0.25m deep, which was largely present in the trenches. It was absent in the central part of Trench 6 and in the eastern end of Trench 4 where the ground had been truncated. Mid brown sandy clay buried topsoil, 0.20m to 0.30m deep, was present in the western ends of Trenches 4 and 5 (Figs 10 and 12).

The buried topsoil was overlain by a make-up layer, between 0.10m and 0.40m deep, of re-deposited mid orange-brown sandy clay natural in Trench 5, including the black asphalt gravel in the western part the trench (Fig 10), and in the western part of Trench 4 (Fig 12).

In Trench 6 the subsoil was overlain by gravels, 0.30m deep, and tarmac forming the tennis court surface (Fig 13). Outside the asphalt area the site was covered in 0.30m of newly deposited topsoil.



View of the higher eastern area, looking west Fig 8



Trench 5, looking east Fig 9



Trench 5 with surface and make-up layers, looking south Fig 10



Trench 4, looking west Fig 11



Section in Trench 4 showing make-up layers Fig 12



Section in Trench 6, looking east Fig 13

5 DISCUSSION

The development area was split in to two levels, a lower western area and a higher eastern area. Both areas were highly disturbed by landscaping, modern pits, geotechnical test pits, and service trenches. No re-deposited artefacts predating the modern period were found.

The western area, which included the concrete foundations of the demolished school, was heavily truncated except in the south-western corner of the site. This corner had contained a pond and had been built up. A modern ditch and an undated ditch were excavated and recorded in the south-western half of Trench 3.

The higher eastern area had been landscaped in preparation for the tennis courts. The north-eastern part had been truncated, however, the south-western part had been built up where a buried topsoil was recorded. Trench 5 had the remnants of an old asphalt gravel surface at the level of the buried topsoil.

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MOLA
April 2014

APPENDIX: CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
1	30m x 1.8m N - S		86.97m aOD	0.25m, 86.72m aOD
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/samples
101	Layer	Tarmac layer	0.05m thick	-
102	Layer	Mid orange-brown sandy clay and gravel; infrequent small sub-angular ironstone inclusions. Probable re-deposited natural	0.11m thick	-
103	Layer	Dark brown sandy clay; no inclusions; only present c.2m from north edge of trench; result of modern disturbance	0.15m thick	-
104	Layer	Grey silty clay gravels; levelling layer	0.09m thick	-
105	Natural	Mid orange-brown sandy clay; frequent small to medium ironstone inclusions; light yellow and blue sand and clay in places, possibly as a result of being truncated deeper.	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
2	30m x 1.8m N - S		87.88m aOD	0.29m, 87.59m aOD
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/samples
201	Layer	Tarmac layer	0.08m thick	-
202	Layer	Mid orange-brown sandy gravel; moderate small-medium sub angular stones; levelling layer	0.03m thick	-
203	Layer	Mid blue-grey sandy gravel; moderate small to medium mixed stone inclusions; also frequent bricks, especially above service trenches	0.18m thick	-
204	Natural	Light yellow-blue sandy clay; mid orange-brown gravel and sand present in S end of trench	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
3	30m x 1.8m NE-SW		86.91m aOD	0.65m, 86.26m aOD
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/samples
301	Layer	Tarmac layer	0.08m thick	-
302	Layer	Mid brown-orange sandy clay; rare small sub-angular ironstone inclusions; re-deposited natural; only visible in 15m of trench from NE edge	0.10m thick	-
303	Layer	Grey sandy clay gravels; infrequent small to medium sub-angular stone inclusions; also moderate bricks and rubble present; made up/levelling layer.	0.20m thick	-
304	Topsoil	Mid brown silty sand; no inclusions; new topsoil; only visible in 10-12m of the trench from SW edge.	0.25m thick	-
305	Layer	Mid orange-brown sandy clay; infrequent small sub angular iron stone inclusions; a layer of re-deposited natural; only visible in 10-12m of trench from SW edge.	0.15m thick	-
306	Layer	Mid brown sandy clay; no inclusions; layer of buried soil; only visible in 5m of trench from SW edge	0.25m thick	-
307	Natural	Mid orange-brown sand; frequent small-large ironstone inclusions.	-	-
308	Fill of [309]	Mid brown sandy loam; rare small sub angular ironstone inclusions.	0.10m deep 1.10m wide	Modern ceramic drain pipe and glass (not retained)
309	Ditch	E-W orientated; Irregular sides; 90o edge on SW; very shallow c.20o edge on NE; irregular to flat base; likely modern disturbance.	0.10m deep 1.10m wide	
310	Fill of [311]	Mid brown sandy clay; infrequent small to medium sub-angular ironstone inclusions	0.25m deep 1.0m wide	-
311	Ditch	N-S orientated; U-shaped profile; 45o slopes with concave base	0.25m deep 1.0m wide	-
312	Layer	Mid yellow-brown sand; moderate small stone inclusions; made up layer/levelling	0.40m deep	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
4	30m x 1.8m E-W		93.15m aOD	1.20m, 91.95m aOD
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/samples
401	Topsoil	Mid brown sandy clay; rare small sub-angular stone inclusions.	0.50m thick	-
402	Layer	Mid orange-brown sandy clay; rare small sub-angular ironstone inclusions; re-deposited natural; not represented in the entire trench; only visible for 15m from W edge of trench.	0.30m thick	-
403	Layer	Mid brown sandy clay; no inclusions; buried topsoil	0.25m thick	-
404	Subsoil	Mid brown sandy clay; rare small sub-angular stone inclusions	0.20m thick	-
405	Natural	Bands of yellow-brown sand; frequent small-medium ironstone inclusions.	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
5	35m x 1.8m E-W		92.51m aOD	1.18m, 91.33m aOD
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/samples
501	Topsoil	Mid brown sandy clay; no inclusions; new topsoil layer	0.30m thick	-
502	Layer	Mid brown-orange sandy clay; moderate small sub-angular ironstone inclusions.	0.40m thick	-
503	Layer	Mid brown sandy clay; rare small sub-angular stone inclusions; buried topsoil layer	0.30m thick	-
504	Subsoil	Mid brown sandy clay; rare medium sub angular stone inclusions	0.25m thick	-
505	Natural	Mid brown-yellow sandy clay; moderate small to medium ironstone inclusions	-	-
506	Layer	Black waste material; frequent small sub-angular stone inclusions; modern waste material/surface; only visible in W end of trench for 15-20m	0.08m thick	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
6	35m x 1.8m N-S		93.32m aOD	0.80m, 92.52m aOD
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/samples
601	Topsoil	Mid brown sandy silt; no inclusions	0.30m thick	-
602	Subsoil	Mid yellow-brown; infrequent small sub-angular iron stone inclusions	0.50m thick	-
603	Layer	Mid brown sandy clay and gravels; frequent small sub-angular stones;	0.30m thick	-
604	Natural	Yellow-brown sand with occasional blue clay and stone patches	-	-
605	Layer	Mid brown sandy clay; visible underneath layer 603 for approx 15m of trench S to N	0.05m thick	-
606	Layer	Mid brown sandy clay; infrequent small sub-angular stone inclusions; visible 4m from S end of trench; probable modern disturbance.	0.45m thick 1.2m wide	-
607	Layer	Tarmac layer above layer 603	0.04m thick	-

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