



An archaeological test pit evaluation at The Compleat Angler Hotel Marlow, Buckinghamshire July 2014

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Report No. 14/139

Author: S Markus

Illustrator: A Bassir



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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		Oasis No. Molanort1-184467
Project title	An archaeological test pit evaluation at The Compleat Angler Hotel, Marlow, Buckinghamshire. July 2014	
Short description	An archaeological test pit evaluation was undertaken by MOLA at The Compleat Angler Hotel, Marlow, prior to the proposed development of the site. One test pit was excavated within the footprint of the proposed development. Alluvial deposits were revealed, overlain by several levelling layers probably linked to the construction of the car park. Cut into the higher layers was a cable trench from the 20th century. No further archaeological finds or features were recorded.	
Project type	Test pit evaluation	
Site Status	None	
Previous work	None	
Current land use	Car park	
Future work	None	
Monument type and period	N/A	
Significant finds	None	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Buckinghamshire	
Site address	The Compleat Angler Hotel, Marlow	
Post code	SL7 1RG	
OS co-ordinates	NGR SU 85193 86066	
Area (sq m/ha)	600 sq m	
Height aOD	29m	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	MOLA Northampton	
Project Brief originator	None	
Project Design originator	Ian Meadows (MOLA)	
Director/Supervisor	Simon Markus (MOLA)	
Project Managers	Ian Meadows (MOLA)	
Sponsor or funding body	Macdonald Hotels	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	07/07/2014	
End date	08/07/2014	
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Contents
Physical	MOLA Offices	None
Paper		Site records (1 small archive box)
Digital		Client report PDF
BIBLIOGRAPHY	Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (NA report)	
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Abstract

An archaeological test pit evaluation was undertaken by MOLA at The Compleat Angler Hotel, Marlow, prior to the proposed development of the site. One test pit was excavated within the footprint of the proposed development. Alluvial deposits were revealed, overlain by several levelling layers probably linked to the construction of the car park. Cut into the higher layers was a cable trench from the last century. No further archaeological finds or features were recorded.

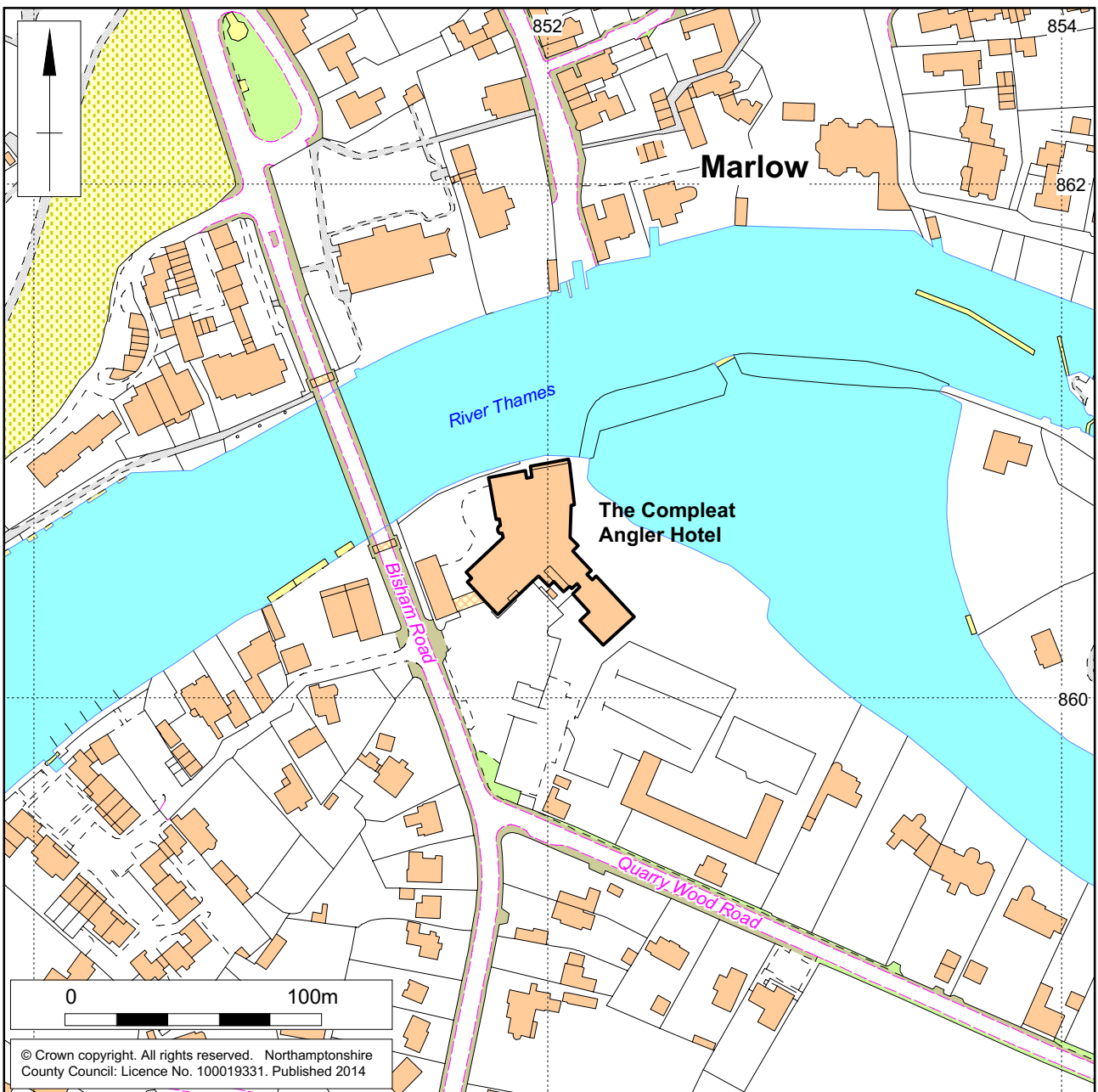
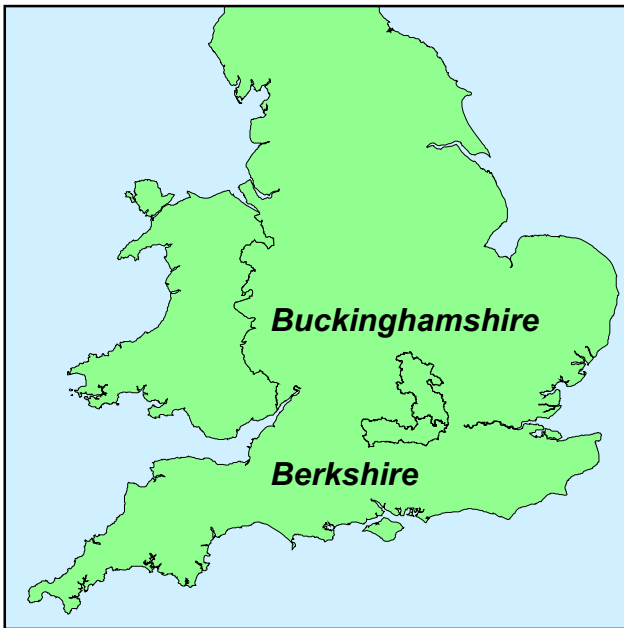
1 INTRODUCTION

MOLA was commissioned by Prospect Archaeology on behalf of Macdonald Hotels to carry out archaeological test excavation on the proposed development site at The Compleat Angler Hotel, Marlow, Buckinghamshire (NGR SU 85193 86066; Fig 1).

The works were undertaken in accordance with *the National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012) and with the *Written Scheme of Investigation* produced by MOLA (Meadows 2014). All works were conducted in accordance with the IfA's *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation and Code of conduct* (IfA 2008; 2010).

2 TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

The development area lies within the town of Marlow, approximately 34km south of Aylesbury. The site is located on relatively level ground on the southern side of the River Thames, at a height of c29m aOD. The underlying geology has been mapped by the British Geological Survey of Great Britain as comprising White Chalk subgroup (BGS Geoindex; <http://www.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex>).



Scale 1:2500

Site Location Fig 1

3 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The site lies within an area of archaeological interest and within the historic town of Marlow. The town lies on the banks of the River Thames and was formerly referred to as Great Marlow. Evidence suggests that there has been a settlement on the site since at least the Anglo-Saxon period (EH 2012).

There is sparse evidence for Romano-British activity within the town, however, to the north of the site, during gravel extraction at Hillside, fragments of painted wall plaster (Historic Environment No: 1188901022) and pottery (0188900000) dating from the Romano-British period was recorded.

The earliest recording of the town dates from 1015AD, where it is referred to as *Merelafan* in the *Codex Diplomaticus Aevi Saxonici*. Documentary sources indicate that the town became a borough in the 12th century, when it was mentioned regarding a reference to burgage rights (Pipe Rolls 29, Henry II). In 1278AD the town gained a market charter and a fair.

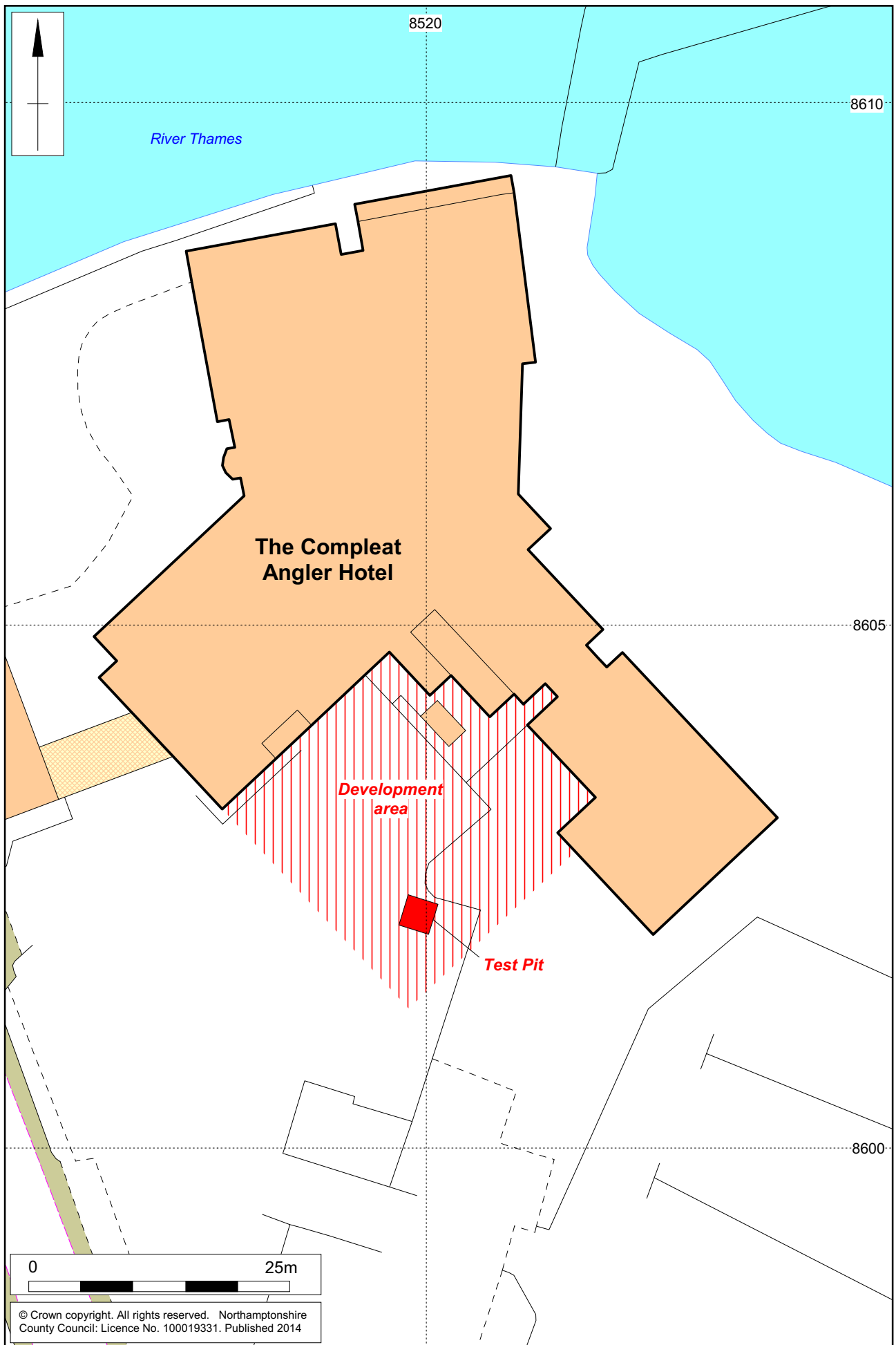
Currently, the site is used as a car park for the Compleat Angler Hotel, sections of which were built some time in the mid 17th century.

4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The principal aim of the archaeological evaluation was to quantify the quality and extent of the archaeological resource and inform further decisions regarding the suitability of the site for development.

The Test Pit evaluation was designed to gather sufficient information to generate a reliable predictive model of the extent, character, date, state of preservation and depth of important archaeological remains within the application area. Specifically this will be through the listed aims and objectives, which were as follows:

- To determine or confirm the general nature of any archaeological levels or dated environmental levels present;
- To determine or confirm the approximate date or date range of any remains, by means of artefactual or other evidence;
- To determine or confirm the approximate extent of any remains;
- To determine the condition and state of preservation of any remains;
- To determine the degree of complexity of the horizontal and/or vertical stratigraphy present;
- To determine or confirm the likely range, quality and quantity of any artefactual evidence present;
- To determine the potential of the site to provide palaeoenvironmental and/or economic evidence and the forms in which such evidence may be present.



Scale 1:500

The development area, showing the excavated test pit Fig 2

5 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

A single test pit measuring 3m by 3m and up to 2m deep was excavated within the proposed development area (Fig 2).

The location of the excavated area was plotted on the ground using hand tapes, measuring from known points, and tied into the Ordnance Survey. All site levels were related to Ordnance Datum.

Tarmac, Type I and any other non-structural soils or undated river deposits were removed under archaeological supervision by mechanical excavator, fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. These materials were stacked separately and adjacent to the excavation area.

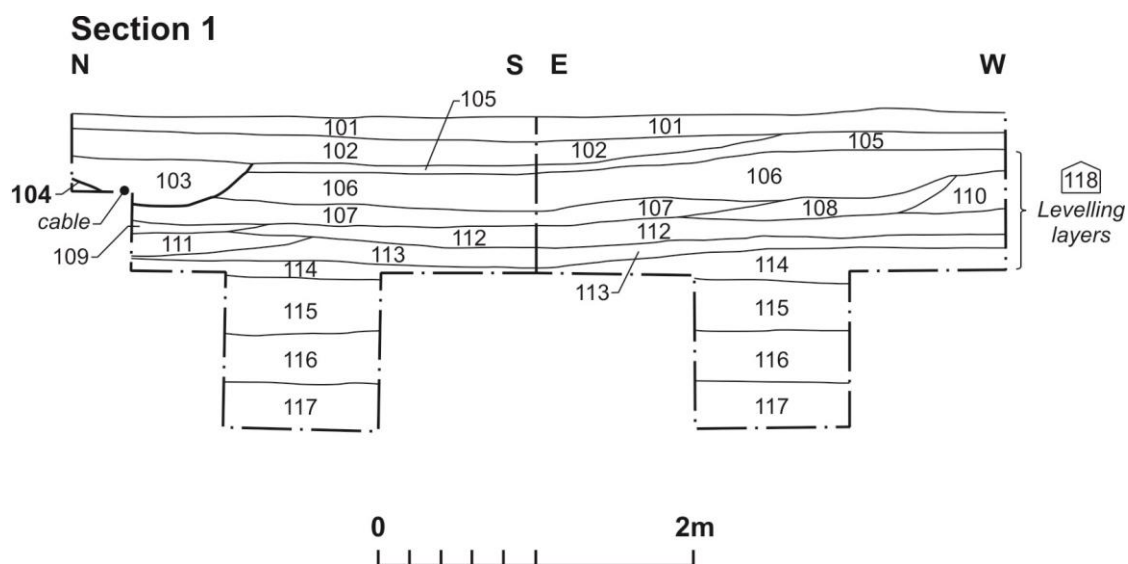
All archaeological deposits encountered during the course of excavation were fully recorded. Recording followed standard MOLA procedures (MOLA 2014). All archaeological deposits were given individual context numbers and were described on *pro-forma* context sheets, to include details of the context, its relationships and interpretation.

Photographs were taken as digital images. A photographic record of reinstatement was maintained.

All records were compiled during fieldwork into a comprehensive and fully cross-referenced site archive.

6 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

The test pit was excavated to a maximum depth of 2m and the natural substrate was not observed (Figs 3 – 5).



West facing and north facing sections of test pit Fig 3

The lowest observed deposits (117) and (116) were of mid to dark brown-grey silty clay, 0.32m thick, and extending below the limit of excavation. These were overlain by a thick layer (115) of light pink-white crushed chalk, up to 0.30m thick (Fig 4).



Section of lower test pit, looking south Fig 4

Above this was a series of levelling deposits (106) – (114) consisting of nine varying layers mid orange clayey sandy gravels, and light pink-white crushed chalk, with a total depth of 1.00m. Above this was a layer of dark grey-black clay (105), 0.20m thick, overlain by a layer of light red sand with 80% small-medium stone fragments, up to 0.15m thick. This was overlain by tarmac 0.1m thick (Fig 5).



Section of upper test pit, looking south Fig 5

Cut into layer (105) and the upper layers of [118] was a linear cable trench [104], aligned north-east – south-west, 1.17m wide and 0.25m deep, with a fill (103) of dark grey-black clay with 1% small gravels. This feature also has a disused cable running along its base.

No further archaeological finds or features were present within the test pit.

7 DISCUSSION

The lower deposits of silty clays within the test pit likely relate to alluvial deposits from the Thames, which are believed to have ceased their regular build-up during the 15th century (Robinson 2011).

The thick layer of chalk overlaying these was likely a capping deposit to cover the alluvial deposits. The multiple layers of sandy gravels and thin layers of chalk are levelling deposits probably relating to the construction of parts of the hotel in the mid 17th century or the later use of the area as a car park. These layers consisted of very clean material, with little or no man-made inclusions, suggesting the importation of clean natural material for this specific purpose. These layers probably extend across the entire car park site, with slight variations in material. Deposition of these materials appears to have occurred from the west and south, suggesting dumping from the higher, drier ground.

The small cable trench cut into the upper levelling deposits dating to some time during the 20th century, with the stone and tarmac layers post-dating this.

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APPENDIX: CONTEXT TABLES

Test pit 1 3m x 3m				
Context	Type	Description	Dimensions	Finds/Samples
101	Tarmac	Black tarmac forming car park surface	D: 0.10m	--
102	Stone layer	Light red sand with 80% stone fragments	D: 0.15m	--
103	Fill of [104]	Dark grey-black clay with 1% small gravels and <i>in situ</i> disused cable, clear boundaries	W: 1.17m D: 0.25m	--
104	Cable trench	Linear U-shaped ditch, aligned NE – SW.	W: 1.17m D: 0.25m	--
105	Layer – dump material	Dark grey-black clay with 1% small gravels, clear boundaries	D: 0.20m	--
106	Layer – dump material	Light yellow-orange clayey sand with 40-50% small-medium gravels, clear to merging boundaries	D: 0.20m	--
107	Layer – dump material	Mid orange-red clayey sand with 40-50% small-medium gravels, clear to merging boundaries	D: 0.20m	--
108	Layer – dump material	Light pink-white crushed chalk, clear boundaries	D: 0.15m	--
109	Layer – dump material	Mid brown-grey silty clay, clear to merging boundaries	D: 0.07m	--
110	Layer – dump material	Mid brown-grey silty clay, clear to merging boundaries	D: 0.21m	--
111	Layer – dump material	Light yellow clayey sand with 40-50% small-medium gravels, clear to merging boundaries	D: 0.16m	--
112	Layer – dump material	Light orange clayey sand with 40-50% small-medium gravels, clear to merging boundaries	D: 0.16m	--
113	Layer – dump material	Light pink-white crushed chalk, clear boundaries	D: 0.10m	--
114	Layer – dump material	Mid grey-brown clayey sand with 40-50% small-medium gravels, clear to merging boundaries	D: 0.34m	--
115	Layer – dump material	Light pink-white crushed chalk, clear boundaries	D: 0.30m	--
116	Layer – alluvial clay	Dark brown-grey silty clay, clear to merging boundaries	D: 0.32m	--
117	Layer – alluvial clay	Mid brown-grey silty clay, clear to merging boundaries	--	--
118	Group of levelling deposits	Contexts (106) – (114). Series of levelling layers designed to raise the ground level.	D: 1.00m	--



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