

Archaeological trial trench evaluation on land at A605, Kings Dyke Crossing, Whittlesey, Cambridgeshire October 2014

Report No. 14/227

Author: Jim Burke

Illustrator: James Ladocha



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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS	Molanort1 - 198360			
Project title	Archaeological trial trench evaluation on land at A605, Kings Dyke Crossing, Whittlesey, Cambridgeshire, October 2014			
Short description	MOLA Northampton was commissioned by Cambridgeshire County Council to carry out a trial trench evaluation on land at the proposed site of the alternate crossing of the Kings Dyke level crossing. The evaluation identified remains of modern buildings aligned with the frontage of the A605, industrial and modern dumping, and remains of the brick industry stock yards.			
Project type	Trial Trench evaluation			
Previous work	Historic Environment A	ssessment (MOLA 2014)		
Current land use	Pasture & Industrial			
Future work	Unknown			
Monument type and period	Modern building founda	ations		
Significant finds	None			
PROJECT LOCATION				
County	Cambridgeshire			
Site address	A605, Kings Dyke Cros	sing, Whittlesey, Cambridgeshire.		
Easting Northing	524400 297060			
Area (sq m/ha)	c.10 ha			
Height aOD	6.6m aOD			
PROJECT CREATORS				
Organisation	MOLA Northampton			
Project brief originator	Cambridgeshire County	y Council, Planning Officer Kasia Gdaneic		
Project Design originator	MOLA (2014)			
Director/Supervisor	Jim Burke			
Project Manager	Adam Yates MOLA			
Sponsor or funding body	Cambridgeshire County	y Council		
PROJECT DATE				
Start date	13/10/2014			
End date	16/10/2014			
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession nos.)	Contents		
Physical	A605 (MOLA)			
Paper		Site records		
Digital	ECB 4193 Site pictures			
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Archaeological trial trench evaluation on land at A605, Kings Dyke crossing, Whittlesey, Cambridgeshire October 2014 ECB 4193

Abstract

MOLA was commissioned by Cambridgeshire County Council to carry out a trial trench evaluation on land at the proposed site of the alternate crossing of the Kings Dyke level crossing. The evaluation identified remains of modern buildings aligned with the frontage of the A605, industrial and modern dumping, and remains of the brick industry stock yards.

1 INTRODUCTION

MOLA was commissioned by Cambridgeshire County Council to conduct a trial trench evaluation in advance of proposed development at the A605 Kings Dyke level crossing west of Whittlesey, Cambridgeshire (NGR TL 244 970) (Fig 1) as part of Cambridgeshire County Council's Framework Agreement. It follows an Historic Environment Assessment (MOLA 2014a) of the development area. Five options have been proposed to alleviate delays caused by the crossing. The options include either the construction of a road bridge or a diversion away from the level crossing. The evaluation was undertaken between the 13 and 16 October 2014 and sampled areas across all proposed options.

The works conformed to a Brief for Archaeological Evaluation prepared by Cambridgeshire County Council (Gdaniec 2013), a WSI (MOLA 2013), the procedural document MoRPHE issued by English Heritage (EH 2009) and the appropriate national standards and guidelines, as recommended by the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA 2008).

2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The archaeological trial trench evaluation was designed to:

- determine and understand the nature, function, and character of the archaeological site in its cultural and environmental setting,
- determine the location, extent, nature and date of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present,
- ascertain the integrity and state of preservation of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present, and
- recover artefacts to assist in the development of type series within the region.

If and where relevant, the results of the work will be discussed with reference to national and regional research frameworks documents (English Heritage 1997; Glazebrook 1997; and Brown and Glazebrook 2000, Medlycott 2011).

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 Location and geology

The five proposed options for development follow one of two routes. The first is aligned slightly north of the current A605 and cuts through the store yards of industrial units and brick kilns to the north. The second route curves south around existing industrial units and stock yards. It is bounded to the south by open scrub pasture fields and to the south-east by a former quarry pit.

The site lies at a height of c 6.6m aOD. The underlying geology comprises mudstone, siltstone and sandstone of the Kellaways and Oxford Clays formation. These are overlain by superficial deposits of sand and gravel of River Terrace Deposits (BGS 2014).

3.2 Historical and archaeological background

A historic environment assessment (MOLA 2014a) was prepared in advance of works and the following background information is taken from this.

No previous archaeological works have been undertaken within the site itself, but over twenty archaeological investigations have been undertaken within the vicinity. As a consequence the archaeology of the general area is fairly well understood with extensive evidence of prehistoric and Roman activity known from around the development area.

At Must Farm, *c* 1km to the west of development area, archaeological investigations between 2004 and 2011 revealed several phases of prehistoric activity. This included a pit, palisade, and burnt mound dating from the early Neolithic to early Bronze Age. Preserved Bronze Age wooden fish weirs and log boats were found in palaeochannels and a single crouched inhumation was found within a barrow.

Other Bronze Age activity has been identified at Bradley Fen, *c* 1.2km north-west of the development site. A settlement and a weapon hoard were recovered during excavations between 2000 and 2004.

Evidence of Roman activity has been found at Itter Farm, *c* 650m north-east of the site, where pits and ditches were found during archaeological investigations in the 1950s. During quarrying in 1951 a Roman cemetery was found to the north of the development site near Funtham's Lane. Remains of a Roman settlement were discovered 1km north of the development site at King's Dyke pit. Ditches, pits, kilns and a possible structure were identified.

4 METHODOLOGY

The trenches were excavated using a JCB 3CX excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket (Fig 2). Trenches 3, 4, 6 and 9 were excavated to their full length. Trenches 7, 10, 13 and 14 were partially opened, but had to be stopped due to asbestos. With the agreement of Kasia Gdaniec (Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Adviser) Trenches 1, 5, 11, and 12 were not opened.

The trial trenches were surveyed using Leica Viva Global Positioning System (GPS) survey equipment using SMARTNET real-time corrections, operating to a 3D tolerance of \pm 0.05m. All the trial trenches were mechanically excavated under constant archaeological supervision to reveal archaeological remains or, where these were absent, undisturbed natural horizons. The topsoil and subsoil were stacked separately at

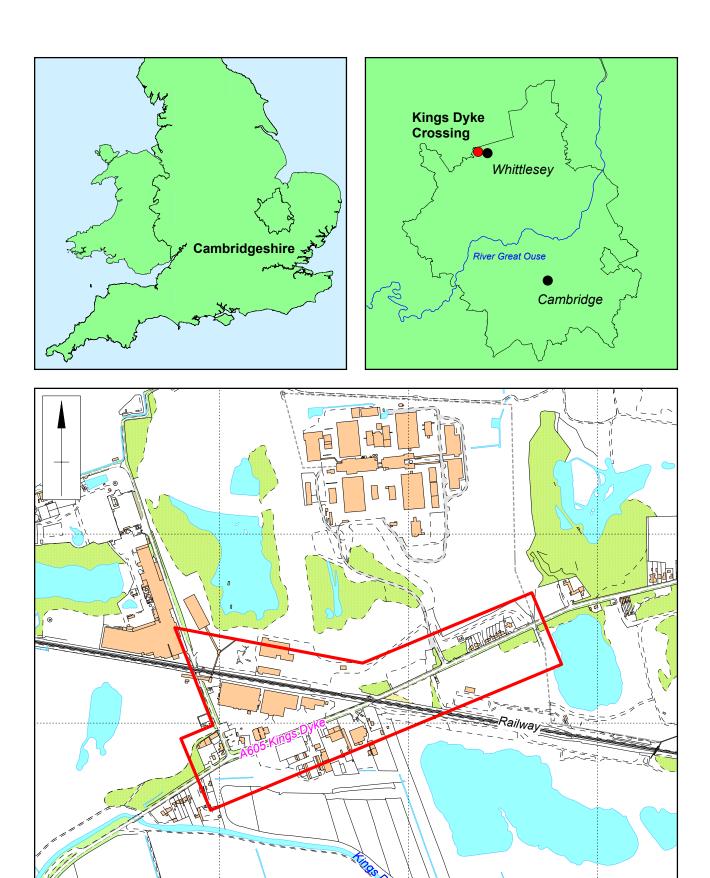
the side of the excavated trench.

The excavation and recording were carried out in accordance with MOLA guidelines, following the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (IfA 2008). All stages of the project were undertaken in accordance with English Heritage, *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (MoRPHE) (EH 2006).

Each trench was hand cleaned sufficiently to enhance the definition of features, unless it was certain that there were no archaeological remains present.

All archaeological deposits and artefacts identified during the course of the evaluation were recorded following standard MOLA procedures (MOLA 2014b). Levels were related to the Ordnance Datum.

Photographs were taken of all trenches and any relevant deposits on 35mm monochrome print film and high resolution digital images.



Scale 1:10,000

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500m

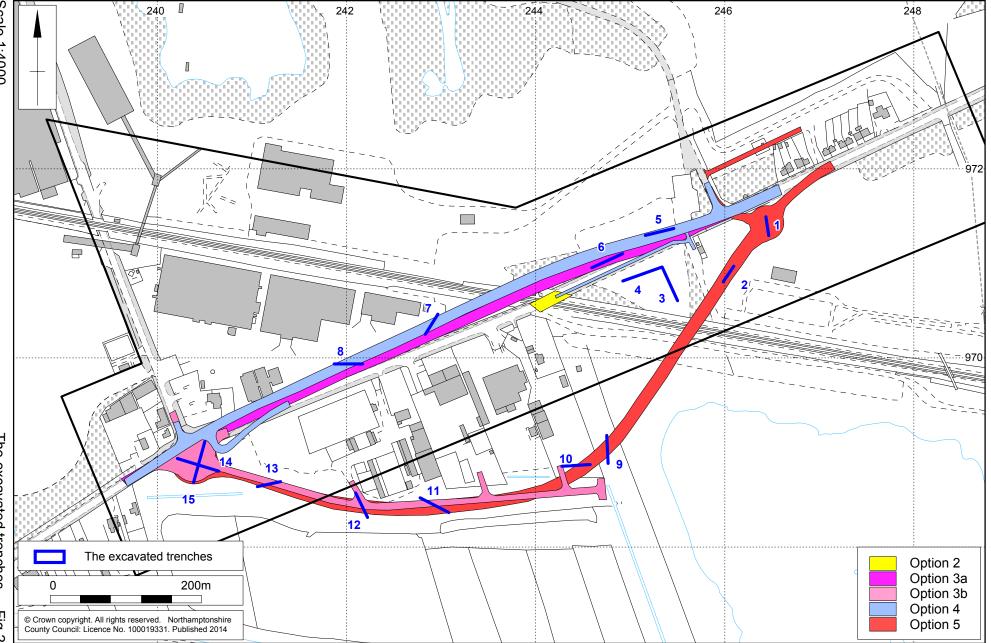
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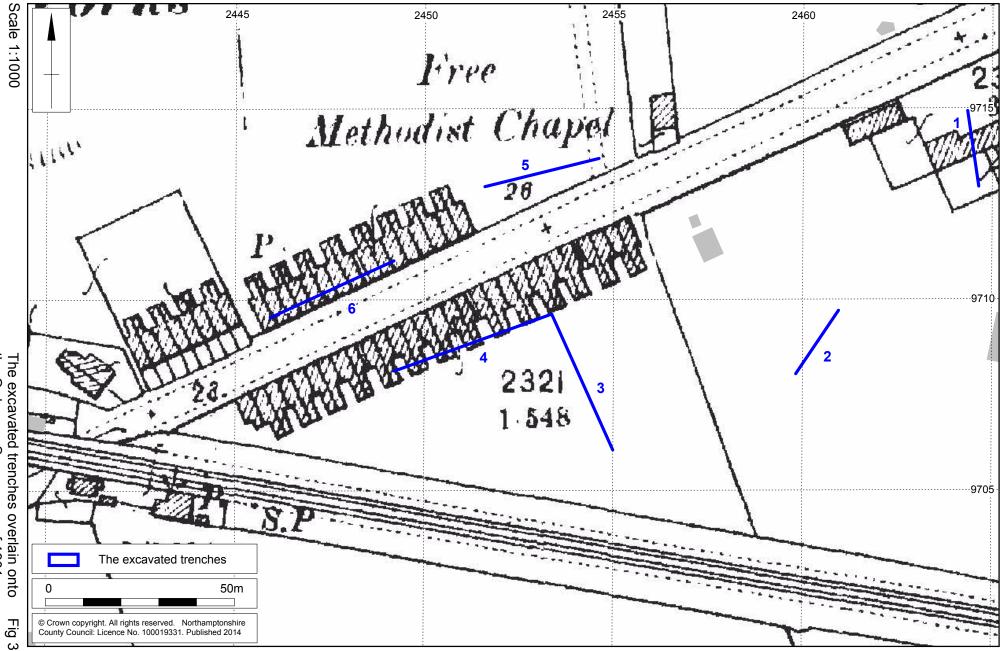
Site location Fig 1

2/4

Site location







The excavated trenches overlain onto the Ordnance Survey map of 1901

4 EVALUATION RESULTS

Four of the fifteen trenches could not be excavated. Trench 1 was in a brick yard and it was substituted for a test pit in the position of Trench 2 (described as Trench 2 below). Trench 5 was positioned too close to a live gas main and Trenches 11 and 12 were positioned across live access routes, however, it was clear at the point of work that the ground had been recently heavily disturbed.

Of the remaining eleven trenches, four were excavated to their full length. The remaining nine were shortened due to a variety of factors. In the case of those to the south of the A605 this was due to the presence of asbestos within made ground. Trench 7 was shortened as it was clear that this lay within highly compacted made ground.

All alterations were undertaken in consultation with and with the agreement of the Senior Archaeologist at the Historic Environment Team at Cambridgeshire County Council.

No remains of archaeological features that pre-date the modern period were found within the evaluation trenches. Modern housing foundations were found in Trenches 4 and 6. Considerable depths of made ground were encountered across the site, and natural deposits were only seen in Trenches 9 and 15.

4.1 Trench 2

Trench 2 was located within an old brick storage yard at the eastern side of the development area. Due to the compaction of the surface only the south-western end of the trench was excavated (Fig 4).

The trench was excavated to a depth of 0.92m and at the base exposed compacted redeposited clay-gravel containing occasional fragments of brick. This was overlain by three make up layers of brick mixed with sandy gravels and clinker. The bricks were all stamped with 'LBC' (London Brick Company) within the 'frog'. The bricks were laid directly on top of each other, with no bonding, in alternating directions. Below this fine ash was mixed with fused and broken brick, probably from one of the local brick kilns. The trench was not excavated further due to the very compacted layers.



Trench 2, looking south-east Fig 4

4.2 Trenches 3, 4 and 6

Trenches 3, 4 and 6 were excavated to a depth of 0.90m. The natural clay was encountered at a depth of 2m in a sondage in Trench 6 (Fig 5). It was overlain by redeposited clay mixed with brick fragments.

The wall foundations in trenches 4 and 6 were built directly on top of the re-deposited clays. The foundations were aligned north-west to south-east and north-east to south-west. The wall was two bricks wide and bonded with a coarse yellow sandy mortar. Trench 4 had an associated salt-glazed drainage and sewerage pipe that were linked to two man-hole inspection chambers. The gaps between the walls were filled with redeposited sands and gravels containing brick fragments, most likely forming a levelling layer.

These structures were on either side of the A605 and form part of demolished residential buildings which first appear on the Ordnance Survey map of 1901 (Fig 3). They last appear on the Ordnance Survey map of 1976. Between 1976 and 1991 the buildings were demolished as they do not appear on the later mapping.



Trench 6, looking south Fig 5

4.3 Trench 9

Trench 9 was excavated in the south-east of the development, near to the former quarry. The natural substrate was encountered at 0.50m below the modern ground surface and comprised yellow-grey clay with bands of gravels. It was overlain by 0.30m of yellow brown clay-silt subsoil. The topsoil was dark grey-black silty sand (Fig 6). No archaeological features were present.



Trench 9, section, looking north Fig 6

4.4 Trenches 10, 13, 14 and 15

Trenches 10, 13, 14 and 15 were excavated to a depth of 1.00m, except for a sondage in trench 15. The yellow-brown clay and gravel natural was only encountered in trench 14. It was overlain by modern make up layers which contained large amounts of corrugated and pipe lagging asbestos. Due to the presence of the asbestos these trenches were not fully excavated (Fig 7), although it was possible to excavate a sondage at the north-west end of Trench 15.



Trench 13, looking north Fig 7

The sondage was excavated as close to the A605 as possible in an attempt to be clear of any contaminated ground to establish the depth of the natural horizon. The natural substrate was encountered at a depth of 1.35m and appeared as clean blue-grey clay (Fig 8).



Trench 15, looking north Fig 8

In the case of Trench 14 the level of the natural substrate could be seen to fall away to the south. This probably represents the original slope on the southern side of Whittlesey Island, before it was modified by subsequent dumping and levelling.

6 THE FINDS

6.1 **Post-medieval pottery** by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 27 sherds with a total weight of 419g. It was all modern, being of late 19th – 20th century date, and consisted of a mixture of transferprinted and plain white earthenware tablewares and utilitarian stonewares in the form of marmalade jars, etc.

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 1. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*.

Table 1: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (g) of sherds per context by fabric type

Context	No	Weight	Date
		(g)	
302 layer	16	306	late19th century
303 layer	1	4	late 19th century
304 layer	7	105	late 19th century
606 layer (top)	1	1	late 19th century
606 layer	2	3	late 19th century
Total	27	419	

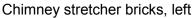
6.2 Bricks and tile by Pat Chapman

There are two brick assemblages, one comprising nine complete and five broken from trial trenches 4 and 6 (Table 2), the other assemblage consisting of 22 complete but slightly damaged bricks with company stamps (Table 3).

The bricks from trenches 4 and 6 are all pale red to white in colour, with significant heat damage, the surfaces are finely cracked or 'crazed' and there is discolouration on unprotected areas from red to black. Broken bricks reveal a black core, either an indication of incomplete firing or areas exposure to smoke and fire. One fragment is slaggy from intense heat. All these bricks have mortar of varying thickness still adhering to various surfaces.

Four slightly curved bricks are chimney or well stretchers, one with a stamp too damaged to decipher, and there is one convex header which also used in chimney construction (Fig 9; Frost and Boughton 1954, 15, figs 38 and 40). One frog is arrow-headed. These bricks are the remnants from old housing.







convex header brick, right Fig 9

Context	Dimensions	Description
Τ4	295-235 x 108 x 68	Chimney/well/pit stretcher, mortar over frog, brick impression
Τ4	230 x 105-85 x 70	Convex header. Slightly tapered, mortar down middle of stretcher, overfired each side.
Τ4	222 x 105 x 70	Black showing on each stretcher, plain rectangular frog
T 4	x x 60	Wide black core.
T 6 dyke crossing	295-235 x108 x 68	Chimney/well stretcher , rectangular frog, stamp damaged, crazed,
Т6	295-235 x 108 x 68	Chimney/well stretcher ,thick mortar, burning and brick impression
T 6 crossing	210x102x45-50-45	Crazed, plain rectangular frog
Т 6	224 x 104 x 65	Overfired bottom half, plain rectangular frog, thick mortar on top
Т 6	x 104 x 65	Thin black core, crazed
Т 6	220 x 100 x 65	Reddish where protected, otherwise white, crazed surface, plain rectangular frog
Т 6	x 102 x 62	Black core to stretchers; plain rectangular frog
Т 6	220 x 108 x 63	Key brick indented/flat grooved on three sides for plaster or render, arrow-headed plain frog
T 6 foundation	x 105 x 60	Broken, blackened, plain rectangular frog, some mortar
Т 6	x x 60	Almost completely overfired, blown and slaggy

Table 2: Bricks from trenches 4 and 6

The company bricks

The assemblage of 22 complete bricks comprises examples from five different brickworks (Table 3).

A brief fletton brick history

Fletton bricks are made from shaley Lower Oxford Clays which can be ground down without added water and then pressed twice under extreme pressure to create a brick. They can be stacked in the kiln to dry before firing and the carbonaceous material within the clay ensures that the brick, once heated, is almost self-firing (Hillier 1981).

This cost-effective brickmaking explains why flettons have become the most common brick available.

The brickmakers in the village of Fletton were forced into using Hoffman kilns in 1881, to reduce 'noxious' fumes from the clamp kilns caused by the oily smoke released from the clay, and in doing so improved the firing and thus paved the way for large-scale production. The success of the fletton bricks can be measured by the fact that London was the major non local market for the bricks, in direct competition with the London stock bricks. A combination of mechanised production which could not be matched by the stock bricks without a major increase in costs, and consistent relatively cheap freight charges on the Great Northern Railway, the direct link to London from Peterborough, ensured that the fletton brick manufacturers retained a market that ensured their eventual dominance (Hillier 1981).

House building grew spectacularly between 1895 and 1903, and so did the number of brick companies around Peterborough, including the Kings Dyke area, with the abundance of Oxford Clay in the local area. Then a decline in house building and the First World War caused a drop in sales, although bricks were produced at a reduced rate and stockpiled.

In 1919 Addison's Housing Act increased demand as the government put out an order for eight million bricks. However, during this period and into the 1920s and the Depression, as well as the problem of boom and bust in the brickmaking industry, the brick companies began to amalgamate with takeovers and buy-outs until by 1921 there were four groups, the London Brick Company, otherwise L.B.C. being one. In 1923 the firms of London Brick and the major Bedfordshire company Forders, who also produced lime and cement, combined to be L.B.C & Forders. This was the time when the first fletton bricks were designed for aesthetic appeal. A roughened zig-zag pattern was machined into the surface and a wide range of textures and colours became available. The name 'Forders' was dropped in 1936 and the company was just known as London Brick (Hillier 1981).

The brick companies

Around Dogsthorpe there were two sites, one being the Star Pressed Brick Company which traded from 1899-1914, until it was sold to the Dogsthorpe Star company in 1915 (Fig 10). In 1898 the Whittlesea Central Brick Company was formed and remained an independent company until the 1960s when it was bought by the National Coal Board, then sold in 1973 to the London Brick Company (Fig 10).



Star and Central Whittlesea bricks Fig 10

The years between 1890 and 1914 saw the beginning of the London Brick Company under J C Hill, who purchased land in Fletton and the surrounding area and began the process of buying out or controlling local companies. This period also saw the growth of fletton brick companies outside this area, particularly in Bedfordshire, including the lime, cement and brick company run by the Forder Company who became a major player in the industry (see above).

The seven bricks with the LONDON BRICK stamp also include reference numbers in the frog; they all have 34 at one end and five have various numbers at the other (see Table 3; Figs 11 and 12). One facing brick has a zigzag rusticated stretcher and header designed in 1923, a type still in use today, another is dimpled on three sides.



The London bricks Fig 11



London rusticated brick with reference numbers in frog Fig 12

The trade-name Phorpres came about because fletton bricks made in Bedfordshire are pressed twice in each direction so that they are literally 'four pressed', PHORPRES, hence the stamp (www.penmorfa.com/bricks). The four bricks of this type are all

damaged and blackened, three have a stamped number at one end of the frog (Fig 13). These were the London Brick Stewartby works in Bedfordshire. The name is registered in 1926 as a trademark (uk.trademarkdirect.co.uk).



L B C PHORPRES bricks Fig 13

Kempston in Bedfordshire was another of the early fletton brickworks. When these works were closed some of the bricks were collected and stacked locally near Kings Dyke in case they were required (Fig 14).



Kempston bricks Fig 14

These bricks are all 20th century in date and chart the history of the Fletton brick industry from small local Cambridgeshire/Peterborough companies such as the Star company at Dogsthorpe and Whittlesea, and Bedfordshire companies like Kempston through to the giant London Brick Company and its uniform dispersal of bricks across the country.

Brick company	No	Dimensions mm inches	Description
LONDON BRICK	7	215 x 105 x 65 8¼ x 4¼ x 2½	Deep stamped frog, each with 34 one end of frog – 5 with one other number other end of frog; 2,11,12, 22, 24
			1 dimpled (12), one zigzag (22)
LBC PHORPRES	4	212 x 100 x 62	Damaged, blackened, deep frog,
		8½ x 4 x 2½	2 with 13 one end, one with 18
KEMPSTON	9	210 x 110 x 65	Deep oval frog
		8¼ x 4¾ x 2½	
STAR	1	225 x 105 x 70	Damaged
		8¾ x 4⅛ x 2¾	
CENTRAL	1	220 x 105 x 67	Damaged
WHITTLESEA		8¾ x 4⅛ x 25⁄8	

Table 3: The company bricks

Floor tiles

The three floor tiles are all 6 inches square by $\frac{3}{4}$ inch thick (150mm x 20mm). Two are red and complete, one keyed with shallow rectangles, one keyed with a circle and four small external circles and an inner circle with an O and P stamp. The one black tile is broken and with rectangular keys.

7 CONCLUSION

The evaluation has demonstrated that no archaeological remains survive within the development area, despite being located within a wider landscape of known prehistoric and Roman remains. The lack of archaeology was due to a significant amount of intrusive modern activity, including ground make-up and dumps of building-related waste material, which have raised the ground surface to its present level. The southwest and south part of the site have had extensive amounts of modern building, tarmac, concrete, and road waste dumping. In some areas this included asbestos that meant investigations could not be completed.

Trenches 4 and 6 in the north-east part of the site contained foundation remains of modern buildings aligned with the A605 road frontage. These houses first appear on the Ordnance Survey maps of 1901-2 up to 1976 mapping. Sometime after 1976 they are demolished and do not appear on the 1991 Ordnance Survey Map. Waste from the brick industry including some kiln waste was also noted in some of the trenches.

Within the whole development area, of the trenches that could be excavated, only Trench 9 did not show evidence of modern disturbance nor contain any archaeological remains. If archaeological remains were once present, it is clear that they have already been destroyed by the intense and widespread modern intrusions. An absence of archaeological remains where no modern truncation has taken place further indicates that this area was not used in the prehistoric and historic periods and that the remains lie elsewhere.

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MOLA December 2014

APPENDIX: CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
2	2m x 5m, NE-SW			
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
201	Layer	3 layers of LBC Brick.	0.20m	-
202	Layer	Layer of mixed ash, fused brick and brocken brick	0.50-0.60m	-
203	Layer	Silty gravel	0.15m	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
3	2m x 40m, NW-SE			
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
301	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown silty clay, gravel, brick	0.15-0.30m	-
302	Layer	Black sandy silty layer frequent bricks	0.30m	-
303	Layer	Yellow-brown gravel layer, frequent brick, pottery	0.25-0.28m	-
304	Layer	Made ground, dark silty layer with frequent brick	0.30m	

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
4	2m x 45m, N-E x S-W			
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
401	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown silty clay, gravel, brick	0.10-0.20m	-
402	Layer	Yellow-brown sandy clay, frequent gravels, bricks, and salt glazed sanitary pot	0.20-0.80m	-
403	Walls	Remains of building foundations, associated drainage pipes and manhole inspection chambers with concrete areas.		-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
6	2m x 50m, NE-SW			
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
601	Topsoil	Grey-brown silty clay, frequent gravels, brick.	0.20m	-
602	Layer	Orange gravel layer with brick fragments	0.80m	-
603	Wall	Part of wall foundations	0.40m	-
604	Wall	Part of wall foundations		
605	Wall	Part of wall foundations		
606	Clay	Levelling layer mixed clay with brick fragments	0.50m	
607	Natural	Yellow sandy pea gravel	0.10	

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
9	2m x 15m, N-S			
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
901	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown silty sandy clay	0.05m	-
902	Subsoil	Yellow-brown sandy gravels	0.30m	-
903	Natural	Yellow-grey gravels with sandy clay from root disturbance	0.10m	

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
10	2m x 5m, E-W			
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
1001	Topsoil	Grey-brown silty sandy clay	0.20m	
1002	Layer	Yellow-brown sandy clay made ground, brick, plastic etc.	0.60m	
1003	Layer	Made ground, stopped due to asbestos	0.20m	

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
14	2m x 5m, E-W			
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
1401	Topsoil	Grey-brown silty sandy clay organic layer	0.10m	
1402	Layer	Yellow-brown sandy clay made ground, brick, plastic etc.	0.60 - 0.90m	
1403	Layer	Made ground, stopped due to asbestos	0.20m	
1404	Natural	Yellow-brown silty clay with gravels	Sondage NW 1.25m	

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
15	3 x 2m x 3.5m, SE-NW			
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
1501	Topsoil	Grey-brown silty sandy clay	0.20m	
1502	Layer	Yellow-brown sandy clay made ground, brick, plastic etc. Stopped due to asbestos	0.80m	









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