



**Archaeological watching brief and  
trial trench evaluation on land off  
Coventry Road, Coleshill  
Warwickshire  
January 2014 to February 2015**

Report No. 15/99

Author: Ben Kidd

Illustrator: James Ladocha



# Archaeological watching brief and trial trench evaluation on land off Coventry Road, Coleshill Warwickshire January, October 2014 and February 2015

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**OASIS REPORT FORM**

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>		<b>OASIS No: molanort1-212657</b>	
Project name	Archaeological watching brief and trial trench evaluation on land off Coventry Road Colehill, Warwickshire January, October 2014 and February 2015		
Short description	MOLA Northampton was commissioned by CgMs Consulting, on behalf of their clients Bellway Homes, to carry out an archaeological watching brief and trial trench evaluation on land off Coventry Road, Colehill prior to proposed development. Eight trenches were excavated with no archaeology being observed.		
Project type	Evaluation and watching brief		
Site status	None		
Previous work	DBA (Gajos 2012)		
Current Land use	Buildings and associated gardens		
Future work	Unknown		
Monument type/ period	None		
Significant finds	None		
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>			
County	Warwickshire		
Site address (including postcode)	Land off Coventry Road, Colehill		
Study area (sq.m or ha)	c 3 ha		
OS Easting & Northing (use grid sq. letter code)	SP 2024 8844		
Height OD	99m aOD to 102m aOD		
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>			
Organisation	MOLA Northampton		
Project brief originator	Planning Archaeologist Warwickshire County Council (PA WCC)		
Project Design originator	MOLA Northampton		
Director/Supervisor	Ben Kidd, Jonathan Elston, Simon Markus		
Project Manager	Adam Yates		
Sponsor or funding body	CgMs Consulting on behalf of Bellway homes		
<b>PROJECT DATE</b>			
Start date/End date	January 2014 – February 2015		
<b>ARCHIVES</b>	<b>Location (Accession no.)</b>	<b>Content</b>	
Physical	None	None	
Paper	CCR14/15	Site documents – context sheets et al	
Digital	CCR14/15	Mapinfo plans, Word report, dxf data, digital photographs	
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>			
Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (MOLA report)			
Title	Trial Trench Evaluation on land off Coventry Road, Colehill, Warwickshire		
Serial title & volume	15/99		
Author(s)	Ben Kidd		
Page numbers	17 pages including text and illustrations		
Date	22/05/2015		

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Back cover: General site view

# Archaeological watching brief and trial trench evaluation on land off Coventry Road Coleshill, Warwickshire January, October 2014 and February 2015

## Abstract

*MOLA Northampton was commissioned by CgMs Consulting, on behalf of their clients Bellway Homes, to carry out an archaeological watching brief and trial trench evaluation on land off Coventry Road, Coleshill prior to proposed development. Eight trenches were excavated with no archaeology being observed.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

In October 2014 and February 2015, MOLA Northampton was commissioned by CgMs Consulting, on behalf of their clients, Bellway Homes to conduct an archaeological watching brief and evaluation on land off Coventry Road, Coleshill, Warwickshire (NGR SP 2024 8844, Fig 1).

The Planning Archaeologist for Warwickshire County Council (WCC) had advised that a programme of archaeological evaluation should be undertaken to determine the nature and extent of any archaeological remains within the development area. The requirements were outlined in a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by CgMs (Gajos 2014).

## 2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

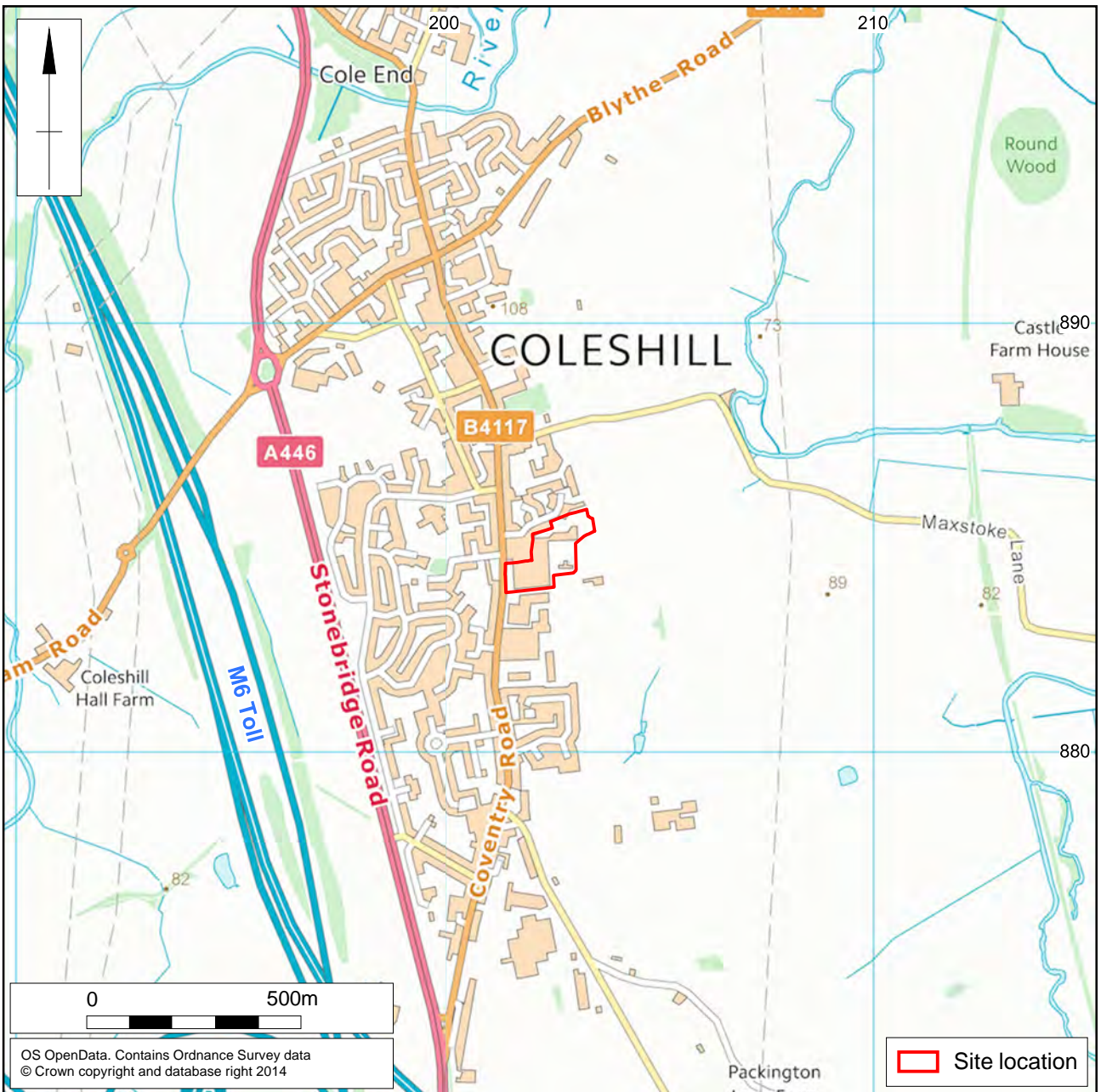
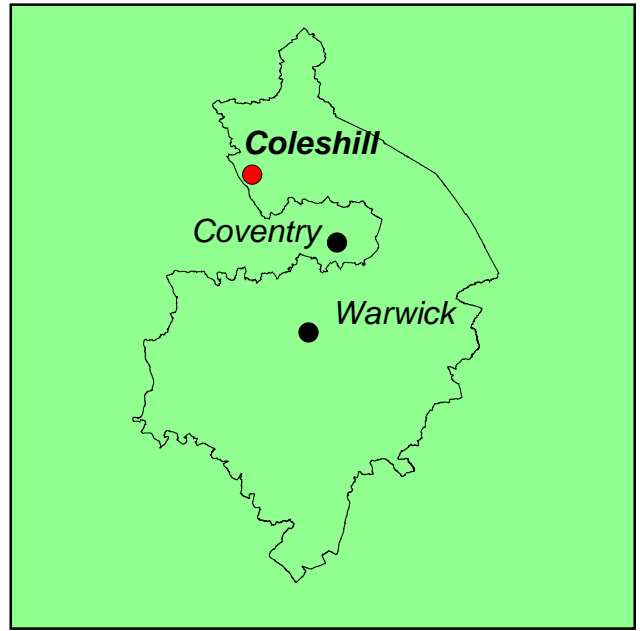
The evaluation of the site was designed to provide information that will allow for the effective targeting of further investigation of the site, if required, prior to or during the early phases of its development.

The following information was required to allow the development of a strategy for further investigation of the site:

- *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.*
- *To assess the impact of previous land use.*

The evaluation was carried out following the guidelines suggested by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists *Standards and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (CIfA 2014), the MOLA Fieldwork Manual (2014).

All stages of the project were undertaken in accordance with English Heritage, Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) (EH 2006).



Scale 1:15,000

Site location Fig 1

The evaluation was carried out in accordance with Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by CgMs (Gajos 2014).

### **3 BACKGROUND**

#### **3.1 Topography and geology**

The proposed development area is located on the eastern edge of Coleshill, to the south of the town centre. The site is bounded by the B4117 Coventry Road immediately to the west, extant residential development to the north, farmland to the east and further buildings to the south (Figs 1 and 2).

The site lies on the crest of a broad ridge running north-south and occupies an east facing slope, with the land dropping from c102m in the west to c99m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). The underlying geology has been mapped by the British Geological Society as comprising Mudstone of the Mercia Mudstone Group overlain by glacio fluvial deposits of devensian sand and gravel (BGS 2015).

#### **3.2 Historical and archaeological background**

The site lies at the outer edge of the historic parish of Coleshill. There is little record of prehistoric activity near the site with the only example being flint scatters (EWA 7075) located c800m to the west and south-west of the site, uncovered ahead of construction of the M6 Toll road (Powell *et al* 2008).

The Roman period is not well evidenced near the site. A small amount of Roman pottery was recovered during field walking, however, subsequent trial trenching did not uncover any further evidence of Roman activity (EWA 7072). Finds of Roman coins were found 1km to the north-east (MWA 9774), 500m to the east (MWA9299) and 950m to the south (MWA4406).

Coleshill is mentioned in the Domesday book of 1086 and is described as a royal demesne, containing a church and mill (Coles 1913) and it is assumed that the Saxon settlement would have been located within the historic core of Coleshill, well to the north of the site (Gajos 2014).

During the early medieval period the area of Coleshill is thought to have been relatively poor and it is not until the 12th and 13th centuries that the area saw an economic expansion, with the vast areas of woodland being exploited (Watkins 1982). The majority of medieval activity recorded in the HER lie to the north in the historic core of Coleshill, though a medieval deer park (MWA3683) also lies c950m to the west of the site. It is likely that the site lay within Coleshill's open field system throughout the later medieval period (Watkins 1982).

From 1910 the site was occupied by the Father Hudson society, the society was concerned with the care and protection of children and young persons and as such a number of residential homes, schools, hospital and a church were built over a number of years (Gajos 2014), some of which were demolished ahead of the new development.



## **4 EXCAVATION METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1 Trial trenches**

Eight trenches were excavated in several stages using a 360 mechanical excavator fitted with a 2.0m-wide toothless ditching bucket (Fig 2). The topsoil and subsoil, where present, were removed under archaeological direction to reveal natural substrate.

Twelve trenches were originally planned for excavation, however, following the negative results of the watching brief and the first eight trenches it was agreed with the planning archaeologist that trenches 1, 7, 8 and 11 need not be excavated (Fig 2).

The location of the trenches were surveyed and related to the Ordnance Survey National Grid using Leica Viva GPS survey equipment using SMARTNET real-time corrections, operating to a 3D tolerance of  $\pm 0.05\text{m}$ . A full photographic record comprising both 35mm black and white negatives and digital images was maintained. The field data from the evaluation has been compiled into a site archive with appropriate cross-referencing.

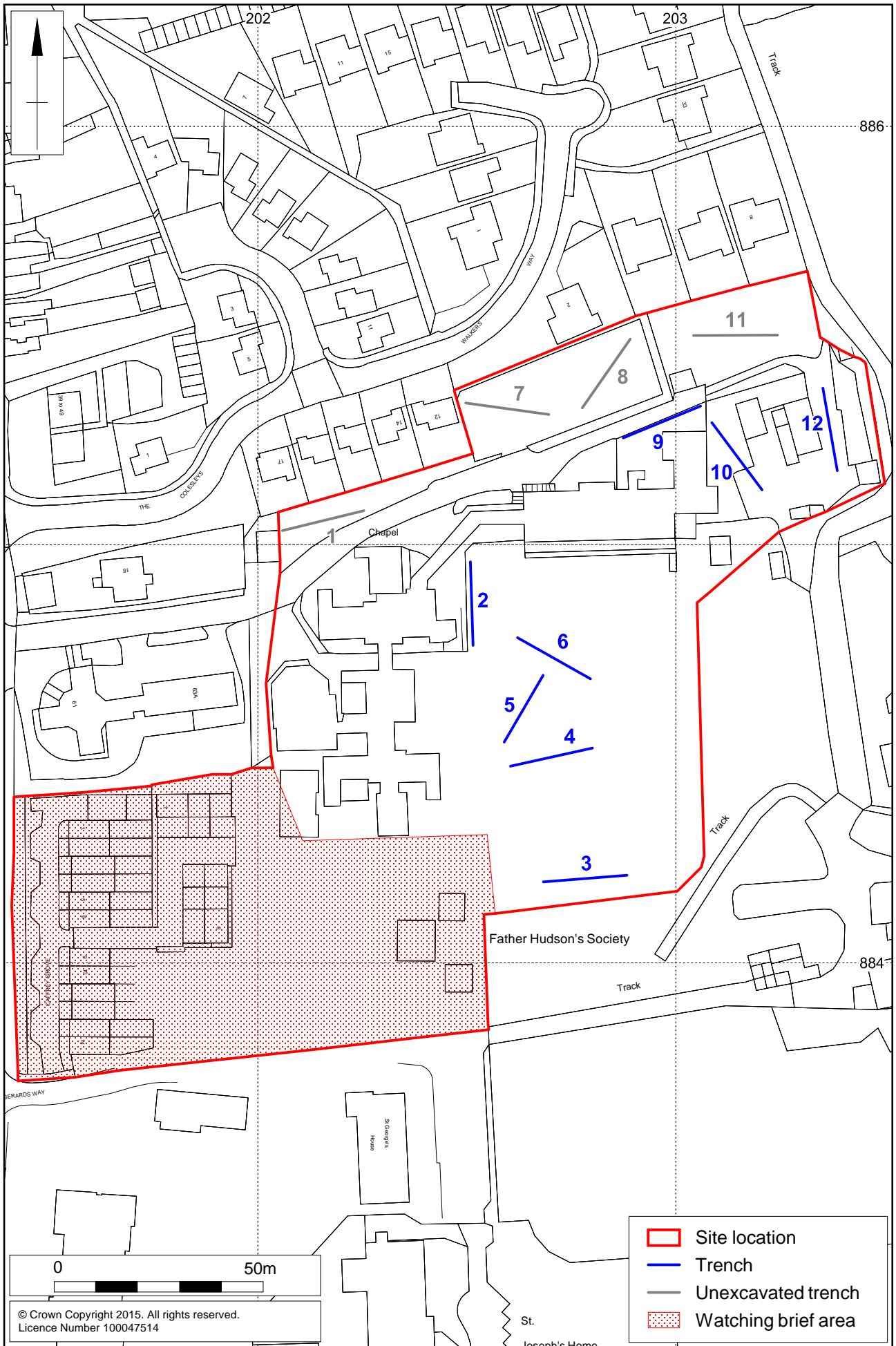
The excavated area was cleaned sufficiently to define any features.

All archaeological deposits encountered during the course of the excavation were fully recorded, following standard MOLA Northampton procedures (MOLA 2014). All deposits were given a separate context number. They were described on *pro-forma* context sheets to include details of the context, its relationships and interpretation.

All trenches were backfilled with their up-cast, lightly compacted by the mechanical excavator.

### **4.2 Watching brief**

Following demolition and removal of concrete slabs in the south-western part of the site, the resulting surface was mechanically cleaned and inspected for archaeological remains. Recording followed the procedures outlined above.



Scale 1: 1,250

Trench locations and watching brief area Fig 2

## 5 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

### 5.1 General stratigraphy

The natural substrate was consistent across the site and comprised red-brown and orange sands with occasional gravels and occurred 0.30-1.20m below the present ground surface.

There was no topsoil visible across the site, due to successive phases of disturbance associated with the demolished structures of the Father Hudson society complex.

A full list of deposits by trench can be found in the Context Inventory (Appendix).

### 5.2 The trial trench evaluation

#### *Trenches 1, 7, 8, 11*

These trenches were located along the northern boundary and were not excavated due to a change in requirements (Fig 2).

#### *Trenches 3 – 6*

These trenches were located in the central area of the site (Fig 2) and were excavated in October 2014, they were all 20m in length and revealed disturbed ground and make-up layers to the natural substrate, no archaeology was observed (see Context Inventory).

#### *Trenches 2, 9, 10, 12*

These trenches were located in the central area and the north-east corner of the site (Fig 2) and were excavated in February 2015. They were all 20m in length and revealed disturbed ground and make up layers to the natural substrate, no archaeology was observed (see Context Inventory).

### 5.3 The archaeological watching brief

This took place in February 2014 during the demolition of existing buildings and excavation of an area in the south-west of the site (Fig 2 and 3).



Area of watching brief, pre excavation

Fig 3



Heavily disturbed ground in watching brief area Fig 4

The natural sub-stratum uncovered in the watching brief area was consistent with that uncovered during the trial trench evaluation and comprised red-brown and orange sands with occasional gravels and occurred 0.40-1.0m below the present ground surface. Heavily disturbed ground and make-up layers were also identified (Fig 4).

## 6 DISCUSSION

The evaluation and watching brief observed no archaeological remains and recorded heavily disturbed ground and truncated natural across the entire site, likely relating to the buildings and gardens of the Father Hudson complex.

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MOLA  
5 June 2015

**APPENDIX: CONTEXT INVENTORY**

Trench No.	Length, width & alignment		Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
2	2.0m x 20m N-S		?	1.20m ?
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/ Samples</i>
201	Made ground	Layer of crush rubble	0.30m thick	-
202	Made ground	Mixed brick rubble, stone and silty sand	0.90m thick	-
203	Natural	Friable red-brown and orange sands with occasional gravels	-	-



Trench 2, looking north

Fig 5

<b>Trench No.</b>	<b>Length, width &amp; alignment</b>		<b>Surface height (aOD)</b>	<b>Depth &amp; height of natural (aOD)</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>2.0m x 20m E-W</b>		<b>102.86m</b>	<b>0.70m 102.16m</b>
<b>Context</b>	<b>Context type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Artefacts/ Samples</b>
301	Made ground	Friable mid grey-brown sandy silt with brick and small stone inclusions	0.70m thick	-
302	Natural	Friable red-brown and orange sands with occasional gravels	-	-



Trench 3, looking east

Fig 6

<b>Trench No.</b>	<b>Length, width &amp; alignment</b>		<b>Surface height (aOD)</b>	<b>Depth &amp; height of natural (aOD)</b>
4	2.0m x 20m E-W		103.59m	0.80m 102.79m
<b>Context</b>	<b>Context type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Artefacts/ Samples</b>
401	Made ground	Friable mid grey-brown sandy silt with brick and small stone inclusions	0.80m thick	-
402	Natural	Friable red-brown and orange sands with occasional gravels	-	-



Trench 4, looking west      Fig 7



Trench No.	Length, width & alignment		Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
5	2.0m x 20m NE-SW		102.0m	0.55m 101.55m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
501	Tarmac	-	0.05m thick	-
502	Made ground	Friable mid grey-brown sandy silt with brick and small stone inclusions	0.50m thick	-
503	Natural	Friable red-brown and orange sands with occasional gravels	-	-



Trench 5, looking south-west

Fig 8

<b>Trench No.</b>	<b>Length, width &amp; alignment</b>		<b>Surface height (aOD)</b>	<b>Depth &amp; height of natural (aOD)</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>2.0m x 20m NW-SE</b>		<b>102.45m</b>	<b>0.70m 101.75m</b>
<b>Context</b>	<b>Context type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Artefacts/ Samples</b>
601	Made ground	Mixed gravels, sand and brick rubble	0.50m thick	-
602	Re-deposited natural	Friable yellow-brown silty clay with frequent brick fragments and small stones	0.20m thick	-
603	Natural	Friable red-brown and orange sands with occasional gravels	-	-



Trench 6, looking north-west Fig 9

<b>Trench No.</b>	<b>Length, width &amp; alignment</b>		<b>Surface height (aOD)</b>	<b>Depth &amp; height of natural (aOD)</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>2.0m x 20m NE-SW</b>		<b>?</b>	<b>0.70m ?</b>
<b>Context</b>	<b>Context type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Artefacts/ Samples</b>
901	Made ground	Mixed crush and sand	0.30m thick	-
902	Made ground	Mixed stone, brick rubble and sand	0.40m thick	-
903	Natural	Friable red-brown and orange sands with occasional gravels	-	-



Trench 9, looking east

Fig 10

<b>Trench No.</b>	<b>Length, width &amp; alignment</b>		<b>Surface height (aOD)</b>	<b>Depth &amp; height of natural (aOD)</b>
10	2.0m x 20m NW-SE		?	1.05m ?
<b>Context</b>	<b>Context type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Artefacts/ Samples</b>
1001	Made ground	Mixed crush and sand	0.30m thick	-
1002	Made ground	Mixed stone, brick rubble and sand	0.75m thick	-
1003	Natural	Friable red-brown and orange sands with occasional gravels	-	-



Trench 10, looking south-east

Fig 11

Trench No.	Length, width & alignment		Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
12	2.0m x 20m N-S		?	1.16m ?
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
1201	Made ground	Mixed crush and sand	0.30m thick	-
1202	Made ground/clinker	Dark grey clinker-coal	0.40m thick	-
1203	Made ground	Mid brown stony deposit	0.30m thick	-
1204	Natural	Friable red-brown and orange sands with occasional gravels	-	-



Trench 12, looking south

Fig 12



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