



**Archaeological observation, investigation
recording and analysis at Oundle School
Blackpot Lane, Oundle
Northamptonshire
May 2015**

Report No:15/121

Author: Adam Meadows and Adam Reid

Illustrator: James Ladocha



**Archaeological observation, investigation
recording and analysis at Oundle School
Blackpot Lane, Oundle
Northamptonshire
May 2015**

Report No. 15/121

Quality control and sign off:

Issue No.	Date approved:	Checked by:	Verified by:	Approved by:	Reason for Issue:
1	24-Jun-15	Pat Chapman	Jim Brown	Andy Chapman	Draft for client review
2					

Author: Adam Meadows and Adam Reid

Illustrator: James Ladocha

© MOLA Northampton 2015

MOLA
Bolton House
Wootton Hall Park
Northampton
NN4 8BN
01604 700 493
www.mola.org.uk
sparry@mola.org.uk

*MOLA Northampton is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales
with company registration number 8727508 and charity registration number 1155198.
Registered office: Mortimer Wheeler House, 46 Eagle Wharf Road, London N1 7ED.*

STAFF

Project Manager Jim Brown BSc PGDip MCIfA

Text Adam Meadows BSc

Fieldwork Adam Meadows
 Adam Reid Bsc Msc
 John Walford BSc MSc

Illustrations James Ladocha BA

OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		OASIS No: molanort1-215337	
Project title	Archaeological observation, investigation, recording and analysis at Oundle School, Blackpot Lane, Oundle, Northamptonshire, May 2015		
Short description	Archaeological observation, investigation, recording and analysis was carried out by MOLA during construction work at Oundle School, Blackpot Lane, Oundle, Northamptonshire. No archaeological features or finds were identified.		
Project type	watching brief		
Previous work	Holmes & Hylton 1997; Burrow 2005		
Current land use	school site		
Future work	unknown		
Monument type and period	not applicable		
Significant finds	none		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County	Northamptonshire		
Site address	Oundle School, Oundle, Northamptonshire.		
Easting Northing	TL 0404 8838		
Area (sq m/ha)	0.13ha		
Height aOD	36m above Ordnance Datum (aOD)		
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation	MOLA Northampton		
Project brief originator	Northamptonshire County Council		
Project Design originator	Claire Finn, MOLA		
Director/Supervisor	Adam Meadows, Adam Reid, John Walford, MOLA		
Project Manager	Jim Brown, MOLA		
Sponsor or funding body	Kier Construction		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date	11/05/2015		
End date	21/05/2015		
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Contents	
Physical	Northamptonshire Archive Store	Watching brief forms	
Paper			
Digital		Client report PDF	
BIBLIOGRAPHY			
Unpublished client report			
Title	Archaeological observation, investigation, recording and analysis and recording at Oundle School, Blackpot Lane, Oundle, Northamptonshire, May 2015		
Serial title & volume	15/121		
Author(s)	Adam Meadows, Adam Reid		
Page numbers	7		
Date	24 June 2015		

Contents

1	INTRODUCTION	1
2	BACKGROUND	1
	2.1 Location and geology	1
	2.2 Historical and archaeological background	4
3	OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY	4
	3.1 Objectives	4
	3.2 Methodology	5
4	THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE	5
6	DISCUSSION	5
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	7

Figures

Front Cover: The fully stripped western area

Fig 1: Site location

Fig 2: Area of observation

Fig 3: Section of the wall cutting for the Palmer building, looking south-west

Fig 4: Concrete capped ceramic pipes, looking south-west

Back Cover: The *Smith and Co Brewery* bottle

Archaeological observation, investigation recording and analysis at Oundle School, Blackpot Lane, Oundle Northamptonshire May 2015

Abstract

Archaeological observation, investigation, recording and analysis was undertaken by MOLA in May 2015 for Kier Construction in advance of a proposed development on land at Oundle School, Blackpot Lane, Oundle, Northamptonshire. No pre-modern archaeological features or finds were identified.

1 INTRODUCTION

MOLA Northampton was commissioned by Kier Construction to undertake a programme of archaeological observation, investigation, recording and analysis at Oundle School's Blackpot Lane campus. Preparatory groundwork was undertaken for a new two-storey mathematics block and an extension to an existing engineering block. The development site lies on the north side of Blackpot Lane in the town of Oundle (Fig 1; NGR TL 0404 8838). Fieldwork was carried out 11th-21st May 2015.

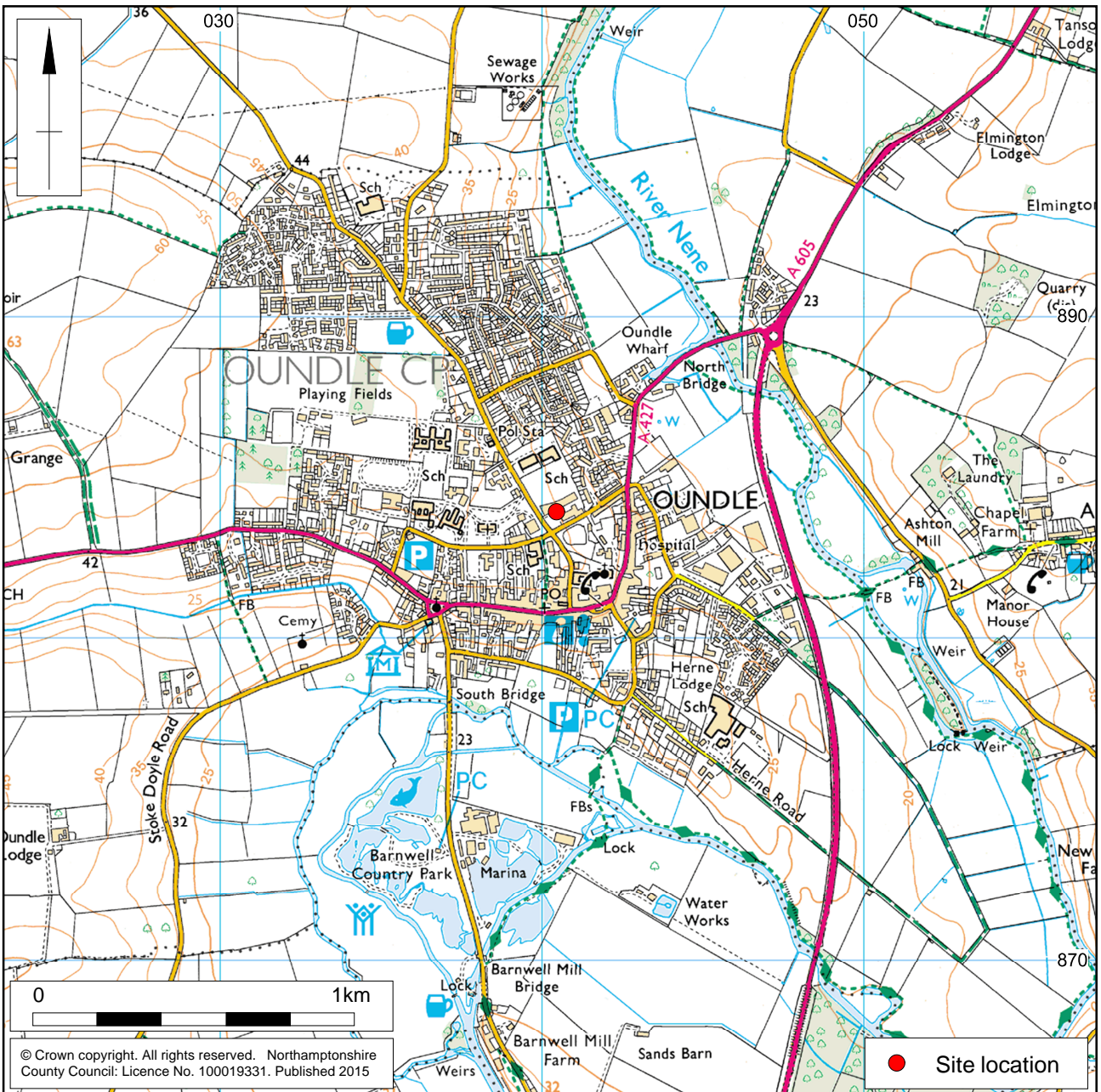
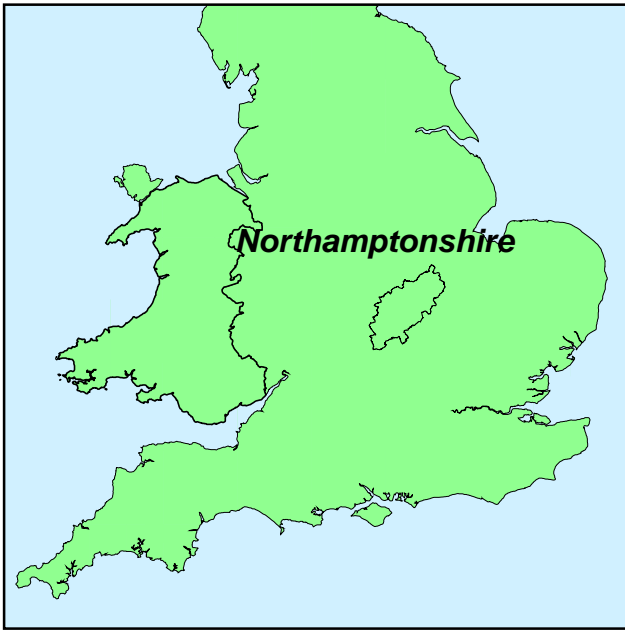
The work was required by the Assistant Archaeological Advisor, Northamptonshire County Council, in a brief for archaeological work issued on the 25 March 2015 (NCC 2015). The works were carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by MOLA Northampton (Finn 2015). The fieldwork was designed to ensure that any archaeological remains within the area of proposed groundwork was appropriately investigated and recorded before construction proceeded.

MOLA Northampton is a Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (CIfA) registered organisation. The work was carried out in accordance with the current best archaeological practice as defined in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standards and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (CIfA 2014) and the Historic England procedural document *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (MoRPHE) (HE 2015).

2 BACKGROUND

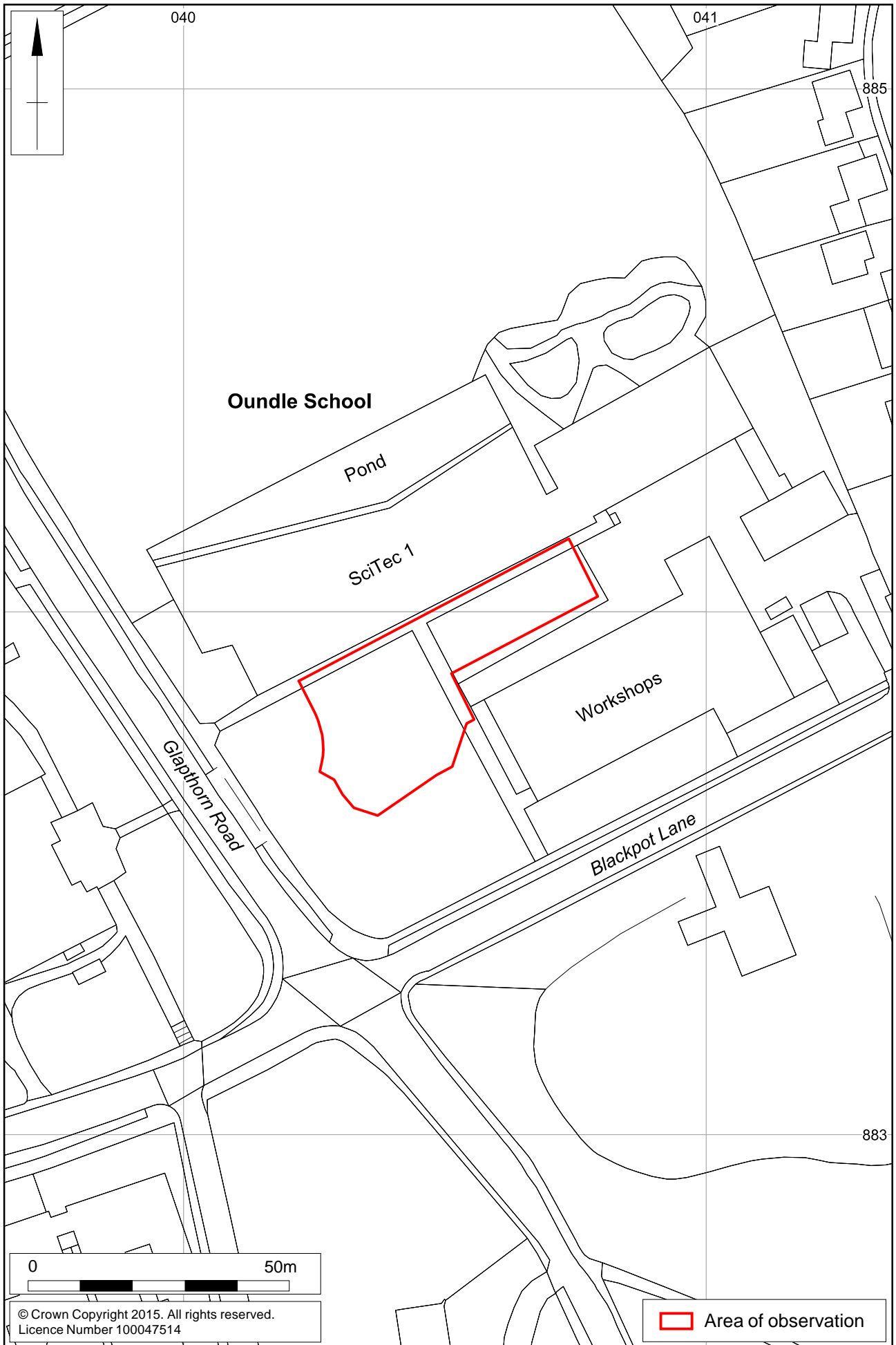
2.1 Location and geology

Oundle is a historic market town located c18km south-west of Peterborough in East Northamptonshire District. The watching brief was located on the northern side of Blackpot Lane, on the campus of Oundle School, north of the historic core of the town. The site is bounded to the south by Blackpot Lane and to the west by Glaphorn Road. The north and east sides are encompassed by the school Science and Technology Building, to the north, and associated buildings to the east. The site sits on a gentle east facing slope at an approximate elevation of 36m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). The underlying geology has been mapped by the British Geological Survey as Jurassic Blisworth Limestone Formation (BGS Geotitles <http://www.bgs.ac.uk/geotitles>).



Scale 1:20,000

Site location Fig 1



Scale 1: 1000

Area of observation Fig 2

2.2. Historical and archaeological background

The market town of Oundle is located by a major crossing point of the River Nene, used since the Roman occupation. In the Saxon period the town became associated with the nearby monastery and is mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086 as *Undel(e)*, a market town within the estate of the abbots of Peterborough.

The site is positioned just north of the historic core of the town. The Saxon settlement area and medieval manor, Burystede Manor (HER2416/6; SM200) are located south of Blackpot Lane. This area contains Saxon metalworking, ovens, evidence of earthworks and the probable locations of a medieval malthouse, orchard, stables, kiln and dovecote. The 13th-century Church of St Peter (HER835/1/34) is located 200m south-east of the development site.

The ground was originally farmland, cleared for playing fields after the 1938 Ordinance Survey County Series map, alongside the development of the school. The current development site was previously occupied by the Palmer Building, built in 1969. This was demolished in the early 2000's to make space for the existing Science and Technology (SciTec) Building.

Previous work in the area includes a number of excavations located south-east of the development site around East Road (Morris and Parry 1996; Soden and Parry 1997; Atkins 1999, Masters and Carlyle 2002). These excavations determined that East Road was on the eastern edge of the medieval settlement of Oundle, but found no evidence of earlier occupation, concluding that this was positioned further westwards.

Two other excavations have been carried out much closer to the site. This includes a desk-top study and trial trench evaluation to the east of the current SciTech Building (Holmes and Hylton 1997). The evaluation discovered evidence of post-medieval quarrying (HER2416/0/210). A trial trench evaluation for the extant SciTech building was undertaken in 2005 that found a pit containing a single late Saxon pottery sherd (Burrow 2005).

3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Objectives

The main objective of the fieldwork was to:

- Mitigate the impact of the development through preservation by record;
- establish the date, nature and extent of activity or occupation in the development site;
- establish the relationship of any remains found to the surrounding contemporary landscapes;
- recover artefacts to assist in the development of type series within the region;
- and recover palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions as an intrinsic part of the investigation.

3.2 Methodology

Recording followed standard MOLA procedures as described in the *Fieldwork Manual* (MOLA 2014). Deposits were described on *pro-forma* sheets to include measured and descriptive details of the context, its relationships, interpretation and a checklist of associated finds. Photography was with high resolution digital images. All works were conducted in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (CIfA 2014b) and *Guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (CIfA 2014a).

An area c60m long by 30m wide was mechanically excavated to the archaeological horizon under the supervision of an archaeologist. The excavation area was then cleaned sufficiently to enable the identification and definition of any potential archaeological features (Fig 2).

4 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

The general stratigraphic sequence observed in the excavated area comprised a natural substrate of firm limestone bedrock that was overlain by a 0.32m thick layer of demolition debris containing modern brick, concrete and plastic. Subsoil was absent. The surface horizon comprised 0.2m of greyish-brown silty clay topsoil (Figs 3-4), heavily bioturbated with inclusions of modern detritus.

The rubble layer consisted of mortared bricks, concrete, plastics and wiring originating from the demolished Palmer Building. During the topsoil strip the cuttings of the Palmer Building foundations were visible; these were removed by the current works. The only notable find from this layer of rubble was a glass bottle from the north-eastern portion of the site. It is a clear soft drink bottle labelled as Smith & Co. The Brewery Oundle. The base of the bottle has the letters R B B over a date of 1930 and the serial number 3693. This layer also contained disused services, including plastic cylinders and ceramic pipes. Some of the ceramic pipes were concrete capped and aligned across the southern area of the site. These may have been for drainage, or built for a specific purpose in relation to the Palmer Building.

5 DISCUSSION

The town of Oundle has a long history dating back to the Roman occupation of Britain. The archaeological works in this development site, although close to the known Saxon settlement, did not identify any pre-modern archaeological remains, with the only deposits comprising modern services and building rubble.



Section of the wall cutting for the Palmer building, looking south-west Fig 3



Concrete capped ceramic pipes, looking south-west Fig 4

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Atkins, R, 1999 *Archaeological Evaluation at East Road, Oundle*, Northamptonshire Archaeology Report

Burrow, A, 2005 *Archaeological Trial Excavation at Oundle School, Oundle, Northamptonshire, May/June 2005*, Northamptonshire Archaeology report, **05/91**

ClfA 2014a *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief*, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists

ClfA 2014b *Code of Conduct*, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists

DCLG 2012 *National Planning Policy Framework*, Department of Communities and Local Government

Finn, C, 2015, *Written Scheme of Investigation for a programme of Archaeological observation, investigation, recording, analysis and publication at Oundle School, Blackpot Lane, Oundle, Northamptonshire*, MOLA Northampton

HE 2015 *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)*, Historic England Procedural Document

Holmes, M, and Hylton, T, 1997 *New Technology Block, Oundle School, Oundle, Northamptonshire, Archaeological Evaluation* Northamptonshire Archaeology report

Masters, P, and Carlyle, S, 2002 *Archaeological Evaluation at Parson Latham's Hospital, Oundle*, Northamptonshire Archaeology Report

MOLA 2014 *Archaeological Fieldwork Manual*, MOLA Northampton

Morris, S, and Parry, S, 1996, *East Road, Oundle*, Northamptonshire Archaeology Report

NCC 2015 *Brief for a programme of archaeological observation, investigation, recording, analysis and publication of works at Oundle School, Blackpot Lane, Oundle, Northamptonshire*, Northamptonshire County Council

RCHME 1975 *An inventory of the historical monuments in the County of Northampton, 1: North-East*, Royal Commission on Historical Monuments England

Soden, I, and Parry, S, 1997 *Nene Valley Business Park: Archaeological evaluation*, Northamptonshire Archaeology report

Websites

BGS 2013 www.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex British Geological Survey, accessed 05/06/2015

MOLA
24 June 2015



MOLA
Bolton House
Wootton Hall Park
Northampton
NN4 8BN
01604 700 493
www.mola.org.uk
sparry@mola.org.uk