



**Archaeological evaluation at the Olleco Site  
College Road, Aston Clinton, Buckinghamshire  
August 2015**

Report No. 15/144

Author: James Fairclough

Illustrators: Amir Bassir and  
James Ladocha



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Author: James Fairclough

Illustrators: Amir Bassir and  
James Ladocha

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MOLA  
Bolton House  
Wootton Hall Park  
Northampton  
NN4 8BN  
01604 700 493  
[www.mola.org.uk](http://www.mola.org.uk)  
[sparry@mola.org.uk](mailto:sparry@mola.org.uk)

**STAFF**

Project Manager: Anthony Maull Cert Arch

Text: James Fairclough BA MA PCIfA

Fieldwork: James Fairclough

Pioter Kieca MA

Illustrations: Amir Bassir and James Ladocha

**OASIS REPORT FORM**

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>		<b>Oasis No. molanort1-220009</b>	
Project title	Archaeological evaluation at the Olleco Site, College Road, Aston Clinton, Buckinghamshire August 2015		
Short description	MOLA Northampton carried out a trial trench evaluation at the Olleco Site, College Road, Aston Clinton, north of the Arla Dairy. No archaeological deposits or finds were recovered, with modern disturbance being seen in two of the trenches.		
Project type	Trial trench evaluation		
Previous work	Trial trench evaluation (BUFAU 1996), Geotechnical survey (Prospect Archaeology 2015)		
Current land use	Overgrown arable land		
Future work	Unknown		
Monument type and period	Modern disturbance		
Significant finds	-		
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>			
County	Buckinghamshire		
Site address	College Road, Aston Clinton		
Post code	HP22 5EZ		
OS co-ordinates	SP 878 138		
Area (sq m/ha)	2.3ha		
Height aOD	c.85.5m aOD		
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>			
Organisation	MOLA Northampton		
Project brief originator	Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service		
Project Design originator	MOLA Northampton		
Director/Supervisor	James Fairclough, MOLA		
Project Managers	Anthony Maul, MOLA		
Sponsor or funding body	Olleco		
<b>PROJECT DATE</b>			
Start date	5 August 2015		
End date	6 August 2015		
<b>ARCHIVES</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Contents</b>	
Physical	AYBCM:2015.119	-	
Paper		Site records	
Digital		Survey data, report, photographs	
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (MOLA report)		
Title	Archaeological evaluation at the Olleco Site College Road, Aston Clinton, Buckinghamshire, August 2015		
Serial title & volume	MOLA Northampton report 15/144		
Author(s)	James Fairclough		
Page numbers	13		
Date	March 2015		

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# **Archaeological evaluation at the Olleco Site College Road, Aston Clinton, Buckinghamshire August 2015**

## ***Abstract***

*MOLA Northampton carried out a trial trench evaluation at the Olleco Site, College Road, Aston Clinton, north of the Arla Dairy. No archaeological deposits or finds were recovered, with modern disturbance being seen in two of the trenches.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

MOLA was commissioned by Olleco via their consultants Prospect Archaeology to carry out an archaeological evaluation on land at College Road, Aston Clinton, Buckinghamshire (Fig 1, NGR SP 878 138).

Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service as the archaeological advisors to Aylesbury Vale District Council, required that a programme of archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) which was submitted to and approved by the planning authority. These works conformed to the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG 2012).

## **2 TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY**

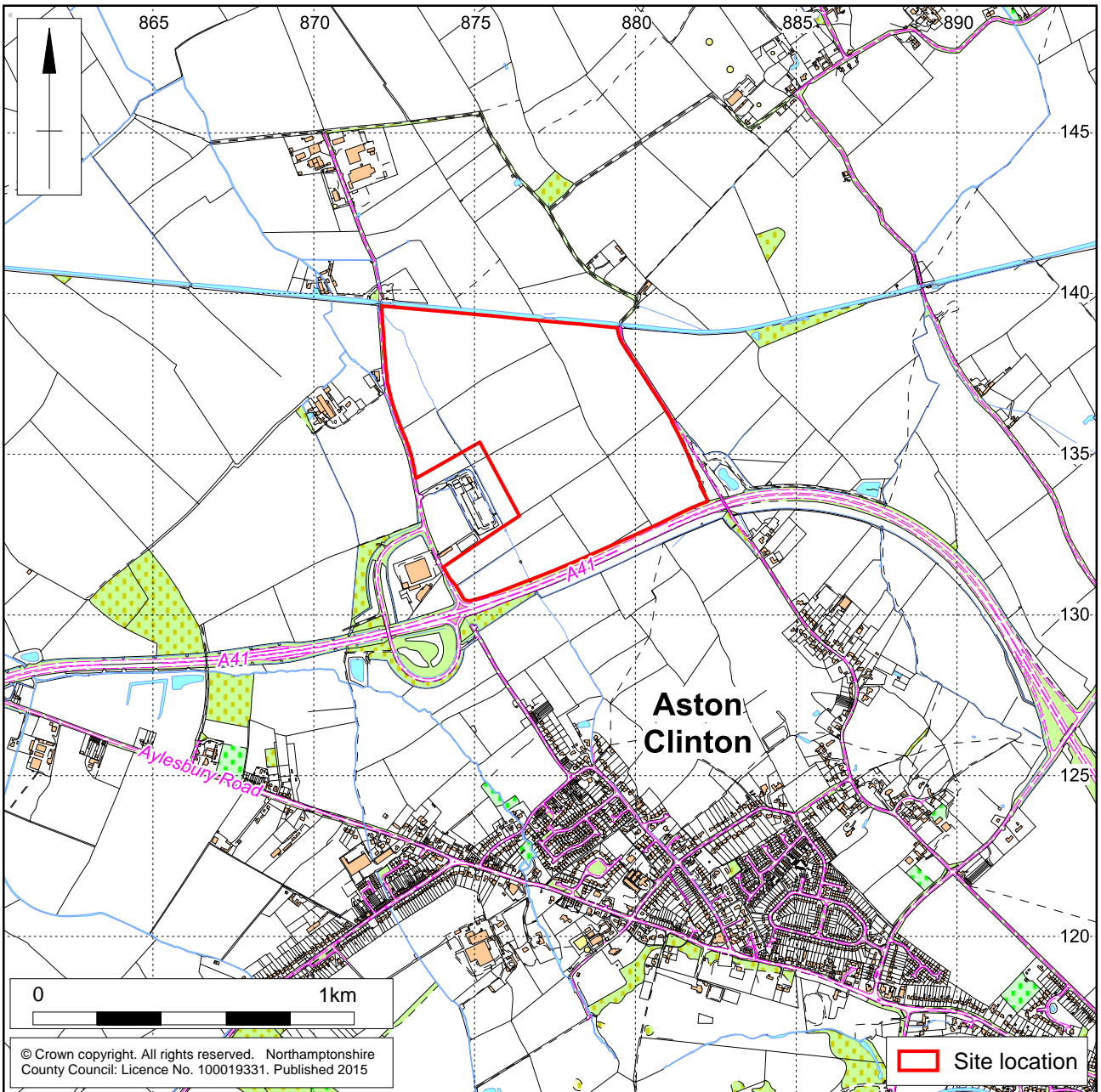
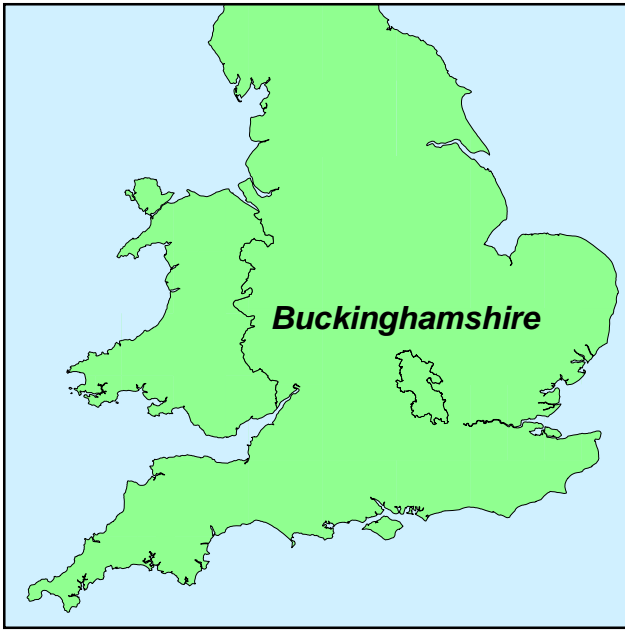
The proposed development area occupied approximately 2.3ha of parts of two arable fields to the east of College Road and to the north of the ARLA Dairy site, bounded to the north by the Grand Union Canal and to the east by the Buckland field road. (Fig 1). The local geology comprised of undifferentiated Cretaceous mudstones, sandstones and limestones of the Gault and Upper Greensand Formations ([www.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex](http://www.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex)).

### 3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

It was the principal aim of the archaeological evaluation to quantify the quality and extent of the archaeological resource and inform further planning decisions regarding the site.

The trial trench 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 the 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 1:20,000

Site Location Fig 1



## 4 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

A Desk-Based Heritage Assessment was undertaken by Prospect Archaeology (2010). Substantial settlements of late prehistoric, Roman and medieval date are known in the vicinity although nothing has been identified within the site to date. Ridge and furrow visible on aerial photographs confirms that the site lay within the medieval open fields and was mainly under arable cultivation. The site has been largely undeveloped with the exception of small field buildings through the post-medieval period. The Aylesbury Arm of the Grand Union Canal was constructed to the north of the site in the early 19th century.

In December 2010 Northamptonshire Archaeology undertook a geophysical survey across the proposed development area (Clements and Smith 2010). The survey identified a small grouping of linear anomalies, which appear to represent enclosures or field system boundaries, and two isolated anomalies which probably represent small pits. None of these features are securely datable. Ridge-and-furrow cultivation systems, of medieval or later date, were detected in two fields. No anomalies of potential archaeological origin were present within the current development area.

Trial trench evaluation was undertaken on the eastern part of the site, including part of the current development area. Within the part of the site designated for the new dairy the trenching identified a series of ditched enclosures dating to the late Iron Age and Roman periods together with the remains of Iron Age activity and a substantial bank related to the medieval parish boundary (Walker and Maull 2011). Two areas were subsequently designated for mitigation through pre-emptive excavation; Area A (Iron Age activity) and Area B (Iron Age and Roman enclosures, medieval parish boundary). This excavation was undertaken in late 2011 and early 2012.

Activity in Area A comprised two adjoining ovoid enclosures and a series of straight, shallow parallel gullies interpreted as cultivation remains. In Area B the late Iron Age and Roman activity comprised a series of superimposed ditched enclosures with internal partitions, clustered around a large natural pond. Occupation commenced in the last part of the Iron Age and continued until the 3rd/4th centuries AD. Within the enclosures evidence was present for the foundations of timber built structures and stock management features including watering holes. Much of the site was covered by a rural dark earth deposit which contained significant quantities of occupation material. Other material had been washed into or deposited within the pond, whose edges appeared to have been straightened and revetted during the period of occupation. It was notable that the activity in Area B was concentrated on a slightly raised area, defined to the east and west by glacial palaeochannels. This seems to have influenced the location of the medieval parish boundary (Simmonds and Walker 2013). Final post-excavation analysis of these sites is currently underway.

## 5 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

Four trenches were excavated (Fig 1), these were numbered following on from previous evaluation phases on site. Trenches 122 and 124 were both 50m long by 1.8m wide but trenches 121 and 123 had to be shortened. Towards the south-west end of trench 121 an overgrown mound of stone and gravel prevented the excavation of the remainder of the trench, and at the south-west end of trench 123 there was a concrete road (see Fig 4). The trenches were positioned evenly across in the areas not previously subject to trial trenching in order to assess the archaeological potential.

The trenches were plotted on the ground using Leica VIVA GPS survey equipment using real time corrections to an accuracy of +/- 0.05m to Ordnance Survey National Grid (OSGB36) and Ordnance Datum. All site levels related to Ordnance Datum.

The topsoil, subsoil and non-structural post-medieval and later deposits were removed by a mechanical excavator, fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, to reveal significant archaeological remains or, where these were absent, the natural substrate. The topsoil was stacked separately from the subsoil and other deposits. This was carried out under archaeological supervision, by a suitably qualified archaeologist.

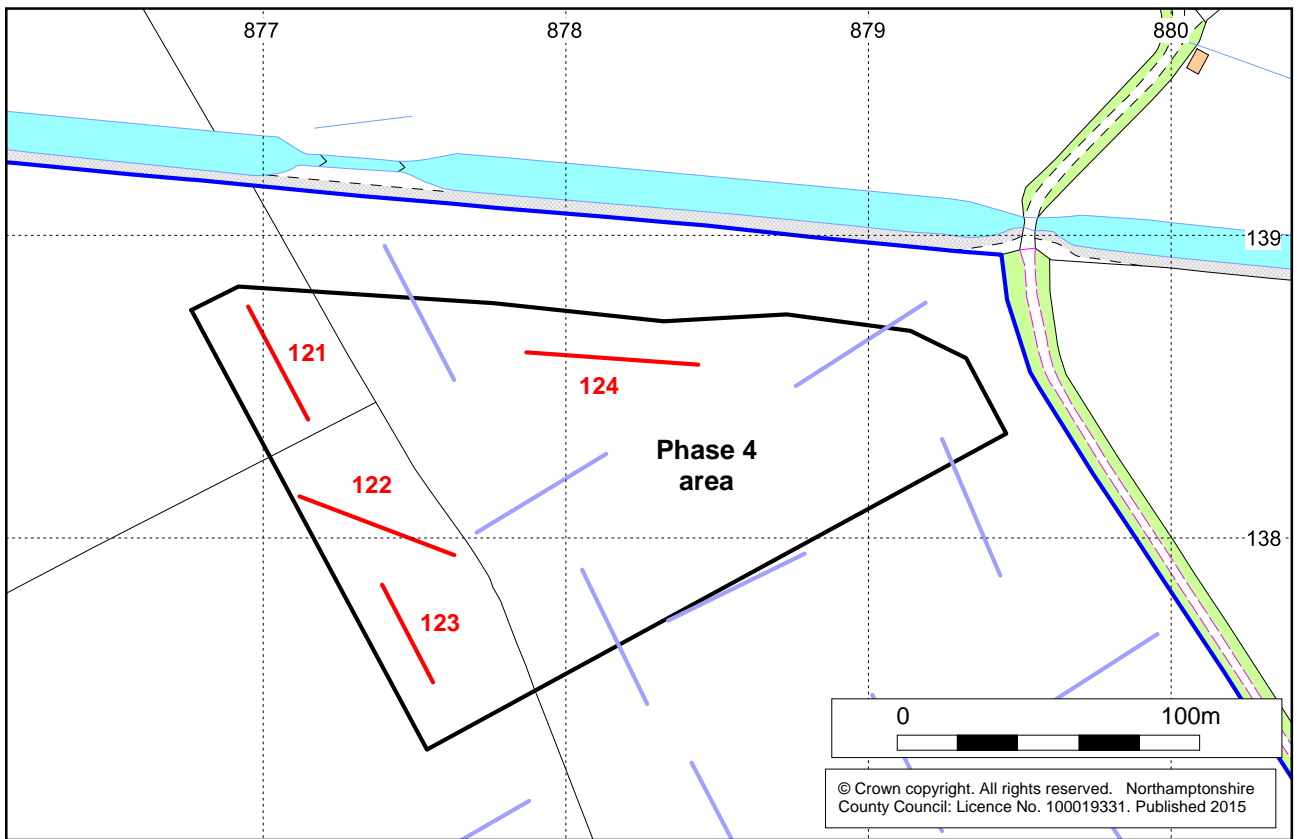
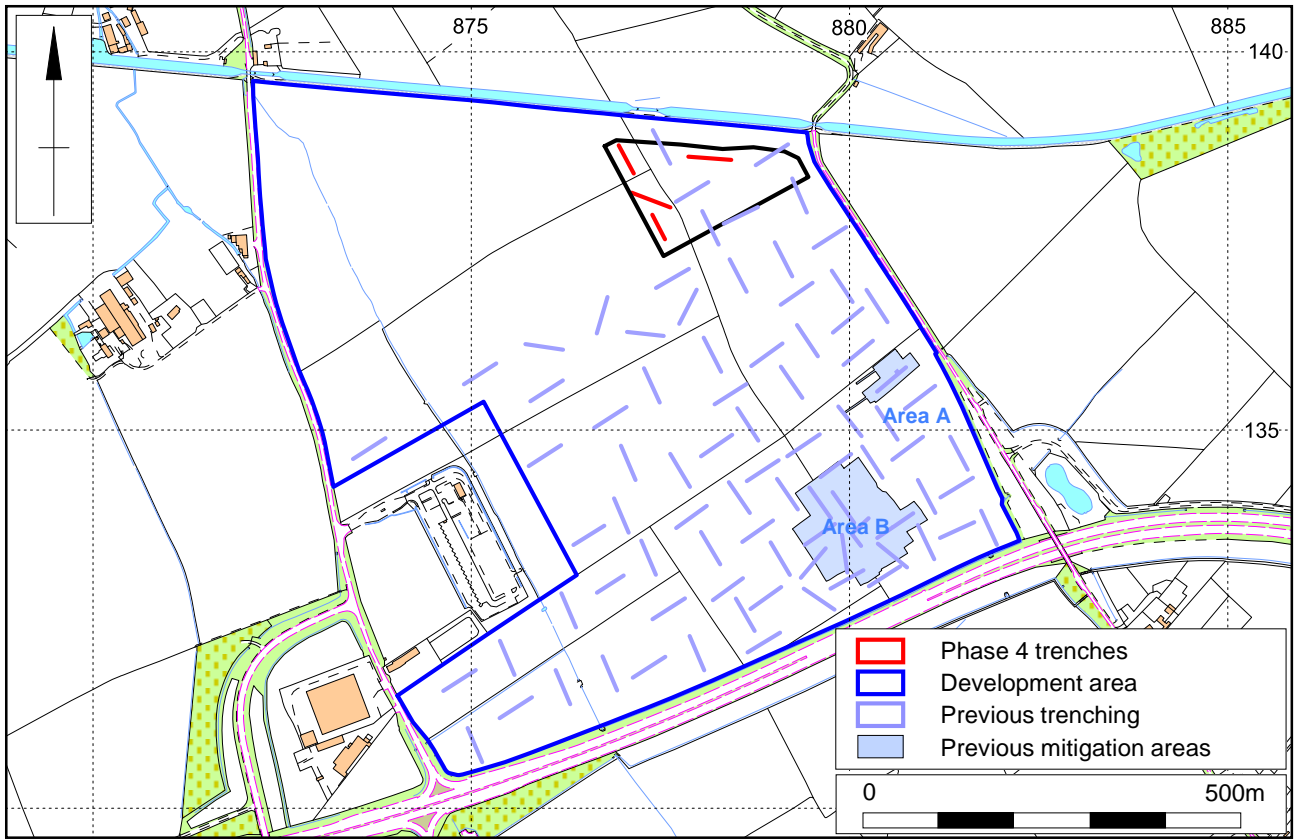
Once the evaluation was completed, the trenches were backfilled, with the topsoil replaced uppermost and lightly compacted.

All archaeological deposits encountered during the course of excavation were recorded following standard MOLA procedures (MOLA 2014). All archaeological deposits would be given individual context numbers and described on *pro-forma* context sheets, to include details of the context, its relationships, interpretation and a checklist of associated finds.

Photographs were taken as 35mm monochrome negatives and high resolution (16 megapixel) digital images. A photographic record of vehicle movements and reinstatement was maintained in the event of a claim for damages.

The excavated area and spoil heaps would be scanned by a suitably experienced metal detector user to ensure maximum finds retrieval.

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



Scales 1:10,000 & 1:2500

The excavated trenches Fig 2

## 6 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

### 6.1 General Stratigraphy

The natural horizon across the site was primarily a mix of light yellow-brown to blue-grey clay. This was overlain by dark brown-grey clay loam topsoil around 0.15m to 0.40m thick. In trench 121 where the ground appeared less disturbed a mottled grey-brown clay subsoil was present measuring around 0.17m thick.

Areas of gravel and stone were seen across the site and appeared to have been dumped on top of the topsoil. This surface disturbance was present in the area west of the field boundary. The most noticeable evidence of this activity was an overgrown mound of stone, gravel and silt measuring around 1m high located at the south-east end of trench 121 (Fig 3), behind this ran a drainage ditch aligned north-east to south-west. A concrete road way had been built along the south-east edge of site intersecting the original location of the south-east end of trench 123 (Fig 4). Perpendicular to this, and running parallel to the hedgerow/field boundary was a gravel/stone track way which cut across the east-south-east end of trench 122.



Overgrown mound of stone, gravel and silt, looking south-west Fig 3



Concrete road way across southern edge of site, looking south-west Fig 4

## 6.2 Modern disturbance

Modern disturbance was seen in all four of the trenches, with trenches 122, 123 and 124 all containing land drains. Trenches 121 and 122 contained more extensive disturbance. In the centre of trench 121 an area of redeposited clay, soil and turf measuring c.10m wide was found, when this had been buried was unclear but it possibly related to the disturbance seen on the surface, or some previous earthworks in the area.

In the centre of trench 122 there was ground disturbance aligned east-west, in some areas appearing linear in plan, following the same alignment as the land drain also found in the trench. This area was a mix of dark-grey brown silty clay and gravel, containing fragments of stone, brick and pipe. In both cases these deposits replaced the topsoil only being covered by a thin layer of clay silt which had formed across their surface.





Fig 5: Ground disturbance (12204) trench 122, looking west-north-west

## 7 CONCLUSION

The results of this evaluation further supports the work carried out previously on this site (Walker and Mall 2011), now north of Arla Dairy, that it contained nothing of archaeological significance, with both Iron Age and Roman activity focused further to the south-east.

The only feature in this area was a single ditch, believed to be an old Parish boundary ditch, aligned north-east to south-west. This was located in trench 3 and likely runs closely to the present day field boundary separating trench 124 from the others, as no further evidence for it was found in trench 122. The subsequent construction of the dairy after this earlier work likely contributed to the modern disturbance currently seen on the surface of the site.

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MOLA  
August 2015

**APPENDIX: CONTEXT INVENTORY**

<b>Trench No</b>	<b>Length, width &amp; alignment</b>	<b>NGR</b>	<b>Surface height (aOD)</b>	<b>Depth &amp; height of natural (aOD)</b>
121	25m x 1.8m NW-SE	487695.01; 213876.46	85.27m aOD	0.35m 84.92m aOD
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
12101	Topsoil	Dark brown-grey clay loam with occasional small stones and chalk fragments.	0.18-0.30m thick	
12102	Subsoil	Mottled grey-brown clay	0.0-0.17m thick	
12103	Natural	Light grey-brown clay with patches of grey clay	-	
12104	Deposit	Redeposited light blue clay mixed with (12105)	-	
12105	Deposit	Redeposited dark grey-brown silty clay and turf, mixed with (12104)	-	

<b>Trench No</b>	<b>Length, width &amp; alignment</b>	<b>NGR</b>	<b>Surface height (aOD)</b>	<b>Depth &amp; height of natural (aOD)</b>
122	50m x 1.8m WNW-ESE	487712.01; 213813.73	85.41m aOD	0.40m, 85.01m aOD
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
12201	Topsoil	Dark brown-grey clay loam with occasional small stones and chalk fragments.	0.38-0.40m thick	
12202	Natural	Mixed, light yellow-brown to blue-grey clay	-	
12203	Gravel layer	Mix of light stone and gravel at ESE end of trench, covering (12201)	0.15m thick	
12204	Modern disturbance	Dark grey-brown silty clay with frequent stone and gravel.	-	Brick, stone and pipe



<b>Trench No</b>	<b>Length, width &amp; alignment</b>	<b>NGR</b>	<b>Surface height (aOD)</b>	<b>Depth &amp; height of natural (aOD)</b>
123	33m x 1.8m NW-SE	487739.29; 213784.55	85.96m aOD	0.39m, 85.57m aOD
<b>Context</b>	<b>Context type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Artefacts/Samples</b>
12301	Topsoil	Dark brown-grey clay loam with occasional small stones and chalk fragments.	0.15-0.28m thick	
12302	Natural	Mixed, light yellow-brown to blue-grey clay	-	
12303	Gravel layer	Layer of gravel and stone that has been spread across area.	0.19-0.25m thick	

<b>Trench No</b>	<b>Length, width &amp; alignment</b>	<b>NGR</b>	<b>Surface height (aOD)</b>	<b>Depth &amp; height of natural (aOD)</b>
124	50m x 1.8m N-S	487786.93; 213861.38	85.21m aOD	0.38m, 84.83m aOD
<b>Context</b>	<b>Context type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Artefacts/Samples</b>
12401	Topsoil	Dark brown-grey clay loam with occasional small stones and chalk fragments.	0.28-0.30m thick	
12402	Natural	Mixed, light yellow-brown to blue-grey clay	-	



MOLA  
Bolton House  
Wootton Hall Park  
Northampton  
NN4 8BN  
01604 700 493  
[www.mola.org.uk](http://www.mola.org.uk)  
[sparry@mola.org.uk](mailto:sparry@mola.org.uk)