



**Archaeological observation, investigation
and recording of land at the former
Goldings Middle School, Northampton
September 2014 – August 2015**

Report No 15/175

Author: Tim Sharman

Illustrator: James Ladocha



**Archaeological observation, investigation
and recording of land at the former
Goldings Middle School, Northampton
September 2014 – August 2015**

Report No 15/175

Quality control and sign off:

Issue No.	Date approved:	Checked by:	Verified by:	Approved by:	Reason for Issue:
1	06/10/15	P Chapman	E Muldowney	A chapman	Draft for client review

Author: Tim Sharman

Illustrator: James Ladocha

© MOLA Northampton 2015

MOLA
Bolton House
Wootton Hall Park
Northampton
NN4 8BN
01604 809 800
www.mola.org.uk
sparry@mola.org.uk

STAFF

Project Manager: Liz Muldowney MA

Text: Tim Sharman BA

Fieldwork: Gemma Hewitt BA
Tim Sharman

Illustrations: James Ladocha BA

OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		OASIS No: molanort1-225029	
Project title	Archaeological observation, investigation analysis and recording of land at the site of the former Goldings Middle School, Northampton September 2014 - August 2015		
Short description	An archaeological observation, investigation and recording was carried out by MOLA Northampton, during construction work at the site of the former Goldings Middle School, Northampton. The one possible archaeological feature present was a small ditch of unknown date.		
Project type	Watching Brief		
Previous work	Trial Trench evaluation (Wolfram-Murray 2014)		
Current land use	Former school site		
Future work	Unknown		
Monument type and period	Unknown		
Significant finds	None		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County	Northamptonshire		
Site address	Former Goldings Middle School, Crestwood Road, Northampton.		
Easting Northing	SP7992 6411		
Area (sq m/ha)	1.43 ha		
Height aOD	90m aOD		
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation	MOLA Northampton		
Project brief originator	Assistant Archaeological Advisor, NCC		
Project Design originator	MOLA Northampton		
Director/Supervisor	Tim Sharman (MOLA Northampton)		
Project Manager	Liz Muldowney (MOLA Northampton)		
Sponsor or funding body	Bellway Homes		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date	01/09/2014		
End date	05/08/2015		
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Contents	
Physical		Watching brief forms, permatrace plans	
Paper			
Digital		Client report PDF	
BIBLIOGRAPHY			
Unpublished client report			
Title	Archaeological observation, investigation and recording of land at the former Goldings Middle School, Northampton September 2014 - August 2015		
Serial title & volume	15/175		
Author(s)	Tim Sharman		
Page numbers	5 text, 4 figs		
Date	06 October 2015		

Contents

1	INTRODUCTION
2	BACKGROUND
2.1	Location and geology
2.2	Historical and archaeological background
3	OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY
3.1	Objectives
3.2	Methodology
4	THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE
4.1	The ditch
4.2	The possible backfilled pond
5	DISCUSSION
	BIBLIOGRAPHY

Figures

Front Cover: Western area, plots 4, 5 and alleviation trench, looking north east

Fig 1: Site location

Fig 2: Areas of observation

Fig 3: Eastern area showing reduction of ground, looking north

Fig 4: Western area, alleviation trench, looking north-east

Fig 5: Plot 1, possible ditch [105], looking east

Fig 6: Plot 1 garage, possible former backfilled pond in section, looking north-east

Rear Cover: Plots 44 and 45 showing possible glacial frost crack, looking south

Archaeological observation, investigation and recording of land at the former Goldings Middle School, Northampton

September 2014 – August 2015

Abstract

An archaeological observation, investigation, recording and analysis was carried out by MOLA Northampton, during construction work at the site of the former Goldings Middle School, Northampton. The one possible archaeological feature present was a small ditch of unknown date.

1 INTRODUCTION

Bellway Homes commissioned MOLA to carry out archaeological observation, investigation, recording during groundworks for the construction of a new housing development on part of the site of the former Goldings Middle School, Crestwood Road, Northampton (NGR SP7992 6411 (Fig 1).

This report has been prepared in accordance with current best archaeological practice as defined in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014a) and the *Code of Conduct* (ClfA 2014b).

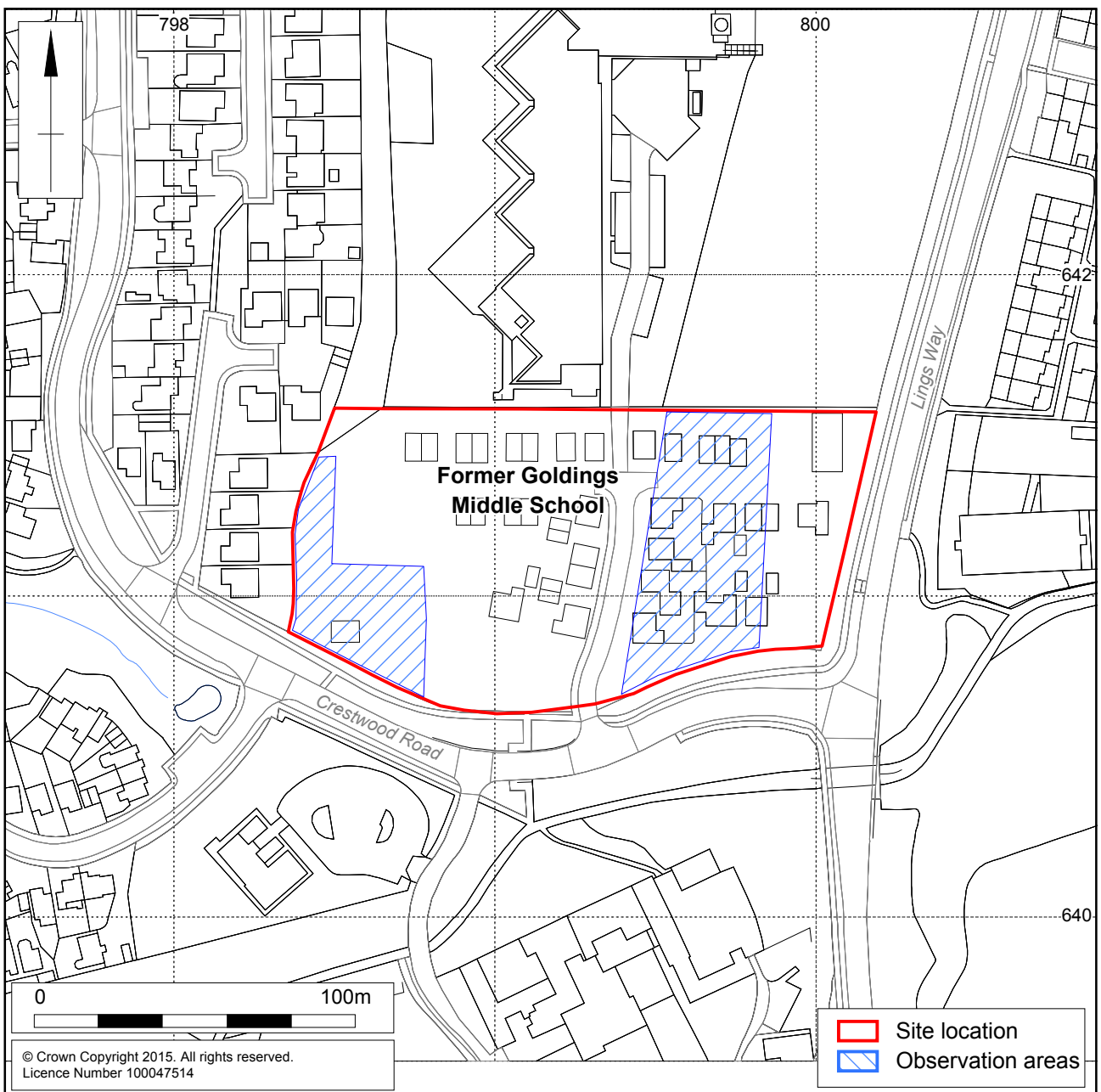
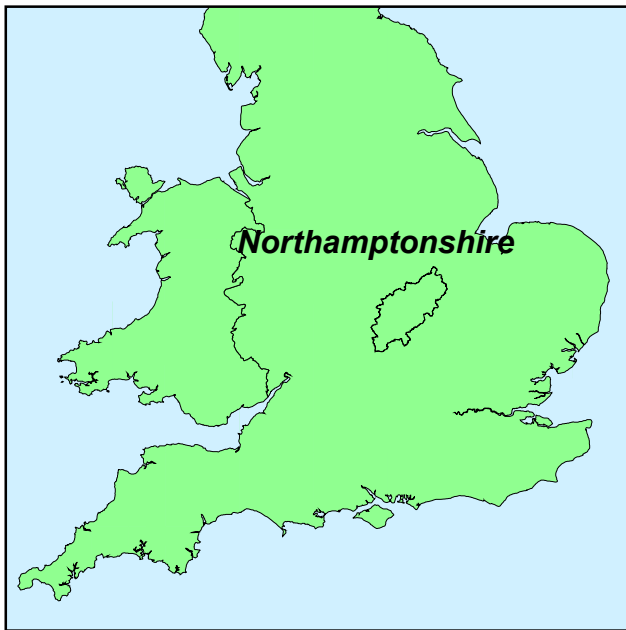
MOLA is a Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (ClfA) registered organisation. This report has been prepared in accordance with the current best archaeological practice as defined in the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance: archaeological watching briefs* (ClfA 2014a) and the Historic England (HE) procedural document *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)* (HE 2015).

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location and geology

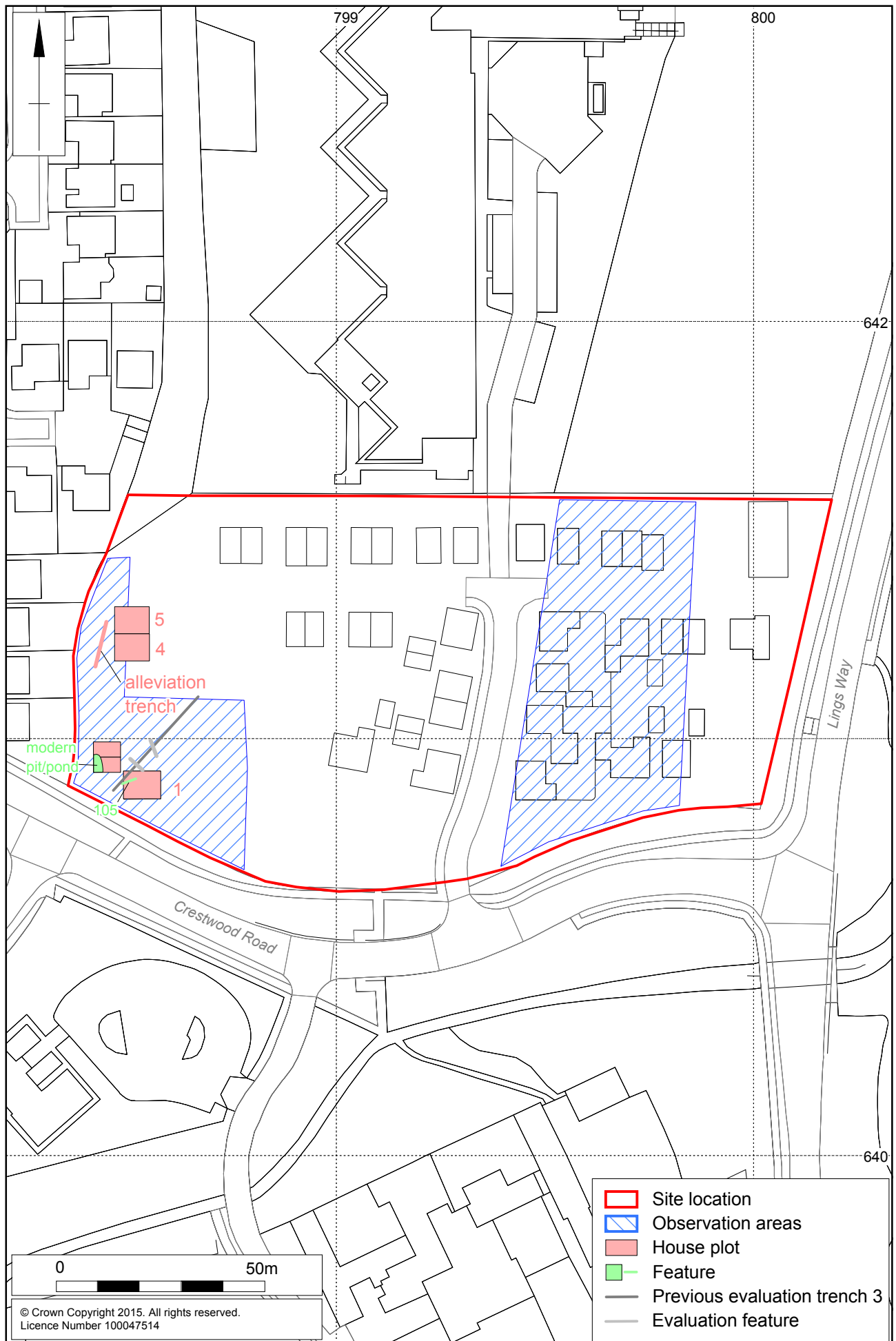
The site is located close to the northern edge of Northampton and is part of the former Goldings Middle School; the school buildings have been demolished. The site is bounded by Crestwood Avenue to the south, Lings Way to the east, residential development to the west and the Woodvale Primary School to the north.

The site is situated on high ground at c 90m aOD above Billing Brook to the west. The bedrock geology comprises Northampton Sand and Ironstone, no superficial geology has been recorded (<http://www.bgs.ac.uk> accessed 5/02/14).



Scale 1:2,000

Site location Fig 1



Scale 1: 1,250

Areas of archaeological observation Fig 2

2.2. Historical and archaeological background

There are no records of archaeological remains within the Historic Environment Record (HER) for the development area and its immediate environment other than for Billing Lodge Farm immediately to the south. However, this is likely to reflect the lack of directed archaeological investigation that was undertaken when this area was developed in the later 20th century. A barbed and tanged arrowhead has been found 180m to the south-east of the site (1706/0/0), although this is more likely to be as a result of casual loss.

An area of Iron Age and Roman settlement has been identified to the east, largely from aerial photographs taken prior to development. A double-ditched rectangular enclosure with evidence for a single internal round house was excavated in 1972-3. Pottery suggests that the site was in use during the 2nd-1st centuries BC and the lack of other structural evidence suggests that the site was probably only in use for a short time (Williams 1974 HER 2094/2/1). Further enclosures are visible on old aerial photographs and the extent of the site has not yet been fully defined.

During the medieval period the site lay within the open fields of Great Billing. The site lay within an area of ancient enclosure known in 1629 as *Caswell* and *Caswell Head* (Hall 1978). The remainder of the parish was enclosed in 1778.

MOLA carried out an archaeological trial trench evaluation on the site in March 2014, the majority of the areas investigated had been disturbed during the construction of the school with areas of landscaping present across the site. However, two ditches (one undated and one modern) were recorded in the south-western part of the site (Trench 3) where the original ground levels remained intact. Surviving ground levels were also recorded in the area of the former playground (Trenches 4 to 6) although no features were identified in these trenches (Wolfram-Murray 2014).

3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Objectives

In order to examine the archaeological resource within the proposed development area the main objectives of the investigation were to determine and understand the nature, function, and character of an archaeological site in its cultural and environmental setting. Specific objectives were to:

- Identify, investigate and record all archaeological deposits exposed during the excavation of the house footings;
- Determine and record the date, extent, character, state of preservation and depth of burial of any archaeological deposits;
- Create a permanent archive and record of the archaeological information collected during the course of the fieldwork and analysis.

3.2 Methodology

All works were conducted in accordance with the procedural documents *The Management of Archaeological Projects* issued by Historic England's (1991), *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)* (HE 2015), the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance: Archaeological Watching Brief* (ClfA 2014a) and *Code of Conduct* (ClfA 2014b). Where appropriate the research frameworks were borne in mind (Knight *et al* 2012).

The previous evaluation (Wolfram-Murray 2014) established that much of the development area had been significantly altered by the construction of the school and associated landscaping. The area disturbed by the school was not included in the area of archaeological monitoring. Observations took place only within the two areas not previously disturbed, these included the area at the western limits of the site and the western half of the raised area at the east side of the site (Fig 2).

Within the site, observation work took place in generally good weather conditions on various dates between September 2014 and August 2015.

Within the raised area on the eastern side of the site, groundwork areas had not been cleaned sufficiently to enable the identification and definition of archaeological features if present. Most of the topsoil, subsoil and part of the underlying natural strata had already been removed during landscaping and levelling work for the construction of the house footings (plots 30-33 and 43-48) prior to the commencement of the observations (Fig 3). Consequently, the footings trenches were excavated mostly in the natural substrate thereby limiting the survival of any archaeological features had they been present. A small area of undisturbed ground survived in the extreme eastern part of this area (plots 42 and 49).

Within the area at the western limits of the site (plots 1-5 and 22-23), deep piling, the excavation of footings trenches and the reduction of the plot interiors had taken place without archaeological monitoring. Consequently, the archaeological observations took place retrospectively of most of the excavation work in this area.

Recording followed standard MOLA Northampton 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. The photographic record comprised 35mm black and white film and digital images.

All records were compiled during fieldwork into a comprehensive and fully cross-referenced site archive. All records and materials will be compiled in a structured archive in accordance with the guidelines of Appendix 3 in the English Heritage procedural document, *Management of Archaeological Projects 2* (1991)

4 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

Within the eastern area, the footings trenches were mostly excavated to formation level between 0.8m and 1.1m below the previously reduced ground level (Fig 3). There were considerable variations in the natural substrate which consisted of alternating pockets of white, grey or yellow sand within bands of rubble limestone. Towards the northern part of this area some pockets of grey clay were also noted. No archaeology was noted in the eastern area of the site, though a linear natural feature, possibly a glacial frost crack, filled mostly with a whitish-grey sand was observed (Rear cover).

Within the western area the deep excavation work for the construction of plots 1-5 took place without archaeological observation. However, the excavation work for an alleviation trench measuring 11m long by 1.2m wide by 2m deep was observed (Fig 4). Prior to the excavation of this trench the topsoil and most of the subsoil had been removed. The natural substrate, visible throughout the trench section, consisted generally of alternating bands of broken, rubble limestone with a few pockets of yellow sand. No archaeological features were noted.

4.1 The ditch

In Plot 1, a feature, possibly a linear ditch, was noted within the reduced floor level (Fig 5). The ditch [105] appeared to be at least 6m long by approximately 0.5m wide and at least 0.2m deep with a V-shaped profile. It appears to have been aligned east to west. The lowermost fill appeared to consist of a yellowish-brown sandy loam with few inclusions. The upper fill of the ditch appeared to have already been removed by machining. Due to the unsafe nature of the surrounding footing trenches it was not possible to fully record this feature.

4.2 The possible backfilled pond.

In the south-western corner of Plot 1, a large feature, possibly a backfilled former pond was noted. The feature was approximately 1m deep and was filled with modern material including building aggregates (Fig 6).



Eastern area showing reduction of ground, looking north Fig 3



Western area, alleviation trench, looking north-east Fig 4



Plot 1, possible ditch, looking east Fig 5



Plot 1 garage, possible former backfilled pond in section, looking north-east Fig 6

5 DISCUSSION

The reduction of the land surface in the eastern area of the site, prior to the commencement of the archaeological monitoring appears to have destroyed any archaeological features which may have been present in this area.

Within the western area of the site, Ditch [105] may be one of the two ditches identified in this area during previous trial trenching work (Wolframm-Murray 2014).

The large, deep feature in Plot 1 may have been a backfilled former pond known to have existed in the south west corner of the site (Wolframm-Murray 2014).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Campbell, G, Moffett, L, and Straker, V, 2015 *Environmental Archaeology: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Methods, from Sampling and Recovery to Post-excavation* (2nd edition), Historic England
- CIfA 2014a *Standards and Guidance: Archaeological Watching Briefs*, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
- CIfA 2014b *Standards and Guidance for the Collection, Documentation, Conservation and Research of Archaeological Materials*, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
- Cooper, N, 2006 *The Archaeology of the East Midlands An Archaeological Resource Assessment and Research Agenda*, Leicester Archaeology Monograph, **13**
- DCLG 2012 *National Planning Policy Framework*, Department of Communities and Local Government
- EH 1991 *Management of Archaeological Projects*, English Heritage
- HE 2015 *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)* Historic England
- Knight, D, Vyner, B, and Allen, C, 2012 *East Midlands Heritage An Updated Research Agenda and Strategy for the Historic Environment of the East Midlands*, Nottingham Archaeological Monograph, **6**, York Archaeological Trust
- MGC 1992 *Standards in the Museum, Care of Archaeological Collections*, Museums and Galleries Commission
- MOLA 2014 *Archaeological Fieldwork Manual*, MOLA Northampton
- MOLA 2014 *Written Scheme of Investigation for an archaeological trial trench evaluation at the former Goldings Middle School, Crestwood Avenue, Northampton*, MOLA Northampton
- MOLA 2014 *Written scheme of investigation for a programme of archaeological investigation, recording, analysis and publication at the former Goldings Middle School, Northampton*. MOLA Northampton
- NARC 2014 *Northamptonshire Archaeological Archives Standard*, Northamptonshire Archaeological Resource Centre
- RCHME 1982 *County of Northampton, Archaeological sites and churches in Northampton*, Royal Commission on Historical Monuments England, **5**
- UKIC 1983 *Guidelines for the Presentation of Excavation Archives for Long Term Storage*, Guidelines, **2**
- Williams, J H, 1974 *Two Iron Age Sites in Northampton*, Northampton Development Corporation monograph, **1**
- Wolfram-Murray, Y, 2014 *Archaeological trial trench evaluation at the former Goldings Middle School, Northampton March 2014*, MOLA Northampton report, **14/80**

Websites

BGS 2015 www.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex British Geological Survey, accessed 07/07/2015

MOLA Northampton
29 September 2015

