



**A programme of archaeological observation, investigation  
Recording and analysis of works  
on land south of Elkington Lane  
Barby, Northamptonshire  
October 2015**

Planning reference: DA/2014/0695

Report No. 15/207

Project Manager: Anthony Maull

Author: Susan Porter

Illustrator: Claire Finn



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## OASIS REPORT FORM

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>		<b>OASIS No: molarnort1 -231839</b>	
Project name	A programme of archaeological observation, investigation, recording and analysis of works on land south of Elkington Lane, Barby, Northamptonshire		
Short description	MOLA Northampton was commissioned by Mrs Owen to carry out an archaeological watching brief on land south of Elkington Lane, Barby, Northamptonshire, prior to the proposed development of the site. During the works eight geotechnical test pits were excavated. The majority of the stratigraphy was observed to have been previously disturbed or truncated, with no deposits of archaeological interest present.		
Project type	Watching Brief		
Site status	None		
Previous work	None known		
Current Land use	Former farmyard and barn		
Future work	Unknown		
Monument type/ period	None		
Significant finds (artefact type and period)	None		
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>			
County	Northamptonshire		
Site address (including postcode)	Land south of Elkington Road, Barby		
Study area (sq.m or ha)	c. 0.24ha		
OS Easting & Northing	SP 54129 70304		
Height OD	150-152m aOD		
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>			
Organisation	MOLA Northampton		
Project brief originator	Liz Mordue, Assistant Archaeological Advisor (Northamptonshire County Council)		
Project Design originator	MOLA Northampton		
Director/Supervisor	Paul Clements (MOLA)		
Project Manager	Anthony Maull (MOLA)		
Sponsor or funding body	Mrs A. Owen		
<b>PROJECT DATE</b>			
Start date/End date	21/10/2015		
<b>ARCHIVES</b>	<b>Location (Accession no.)</b>	<b>Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc)</b>	
Physical	MOLA Northampton archive store ENN108180	None	
Paper		Site records,	
Digital	MOLA Northampton Offices: ENN108180	Mapinfo plans, Word report	
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>			
Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (MOLA report)			
Title	A programme of archaeological observation, investigation recording and analysis of works on land south of Elkington Lane, Barby, Northamptonshire, October 2015		
Serial title & volume	MOLA Northampton Reports 15/207		
Author(s)	Susan Porter		
Page numbers	13		
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# **A programme of archaeological observation investigation, recording and analysis, of works on land south of Elkington Lane, Barby, Northamptonshire October 2015**

## **Abstract**

*MOLA Northampton was commissioned by Mrs Owen to carry out an archaeological watching brief on land south of Elkington Lane, Barby, Northamptonshire, prior to the proposed development of the site. During the works eight geotechnical test pits were excavated. The majority of the stratigraphy was observed to have been previously disturbed or truncated, with no deposits of archaeological interest present.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

MOLA Northampton was commissioned by Mrs Owen of Classic Range Cookers to carry out a programme of observation, investigation, recording and analysis on groundworks in advance of proposed development on an area of land to the south of Elkington Lane (NGR SP 54129 70304) (Fig 1).

A planning application has been submitted for development of three dwellings with ancillary buildings on land previously used as farmyard (DA/2014/0695). Outline consent for the application has been provisionally granted with a condition attached for a programme of archaeological investigation.

The archaeological investigation was to be undertaken to comply with the condition, and to fulfil the requirements outlined in a brief for the programme of works, supplied by Northamptonshire County Council and dated 13 October 2015 (NCC 2015) and in an approved Written Scheme of Investigation (MOLA 2015). These archaeological monitoring works are intended to ensure that any archaeological remains encountered within the area of proposed groundworks were appropriately located, defined, characterised, and recorded. Works were undertaken in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and guidance: Archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014a), and to the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG 2012).

## **2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

The main objectives of the Archaeological Watching Brief were 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;
- recover palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions as an intrinsic part of the investigation.
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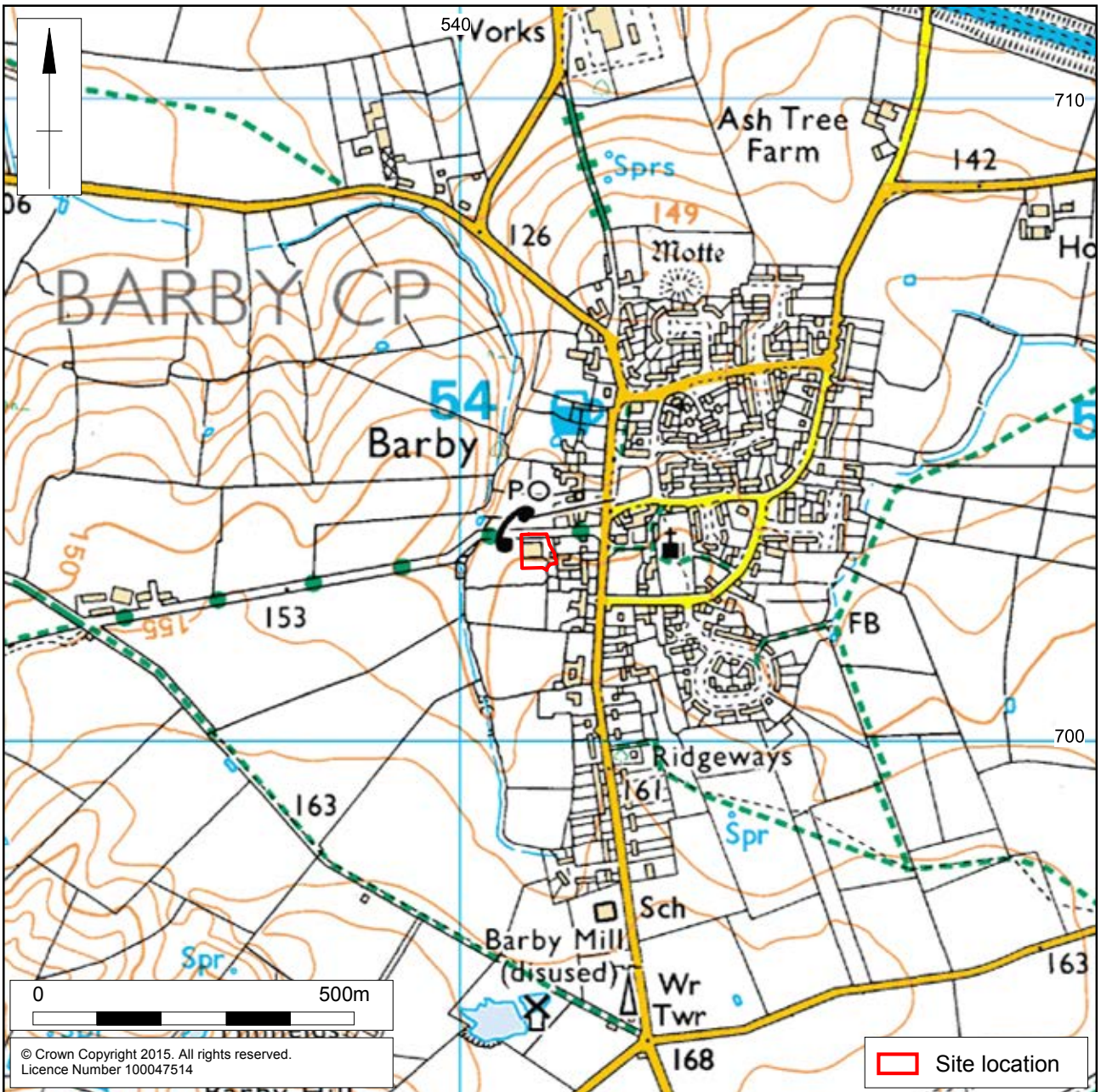
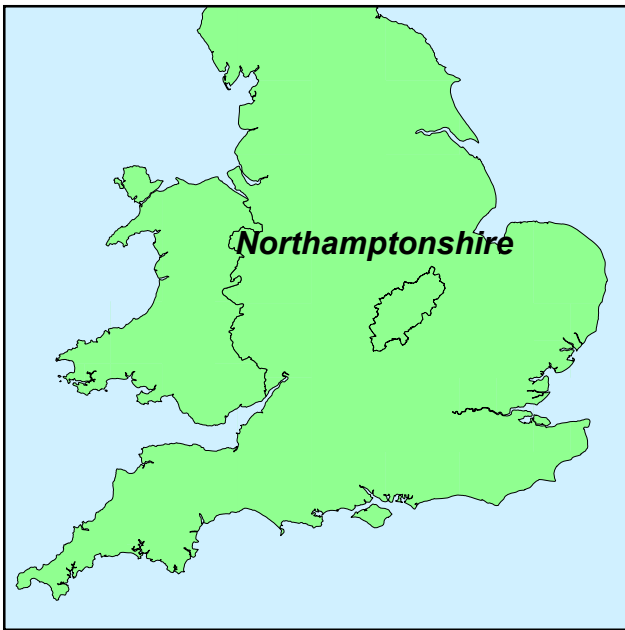
### **3 BACKGROUND**

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

The village of Barby is a civil parish that lies in north-west Northamptonshire, 6.4km south-east of Rugby and approximately 8km north of Daventry. Arable farmland surrounds the village, with Rains Brook, a tributary of the River Leam, forming the parish and county boundary with Warwickshire running to the north. The proposed development area lies to the south of Elkington Lane, on the central western edge of the village and just outside the historic village area (HER403) (Fig 1).

The site itself was previously a farmyard and, until recently, was dominated by a large agricultural barn structure, small sheds, and curtain of hardstanding (Fig 2). The barn and several of the sheds have now been demolished. The development area is bounded to the north by a small hedgerow beyond which lies Elkington Lane. To the east are the curtilages of Ashgrove House and The Orchard. A cluster of sheds and outbuildings were also grouped on the eastern edge of the site, and a small trackway leads east from the south-east corner of the site to The Orchard and Daventry Road. The south and western edges of the development area are abutted by an arable field.

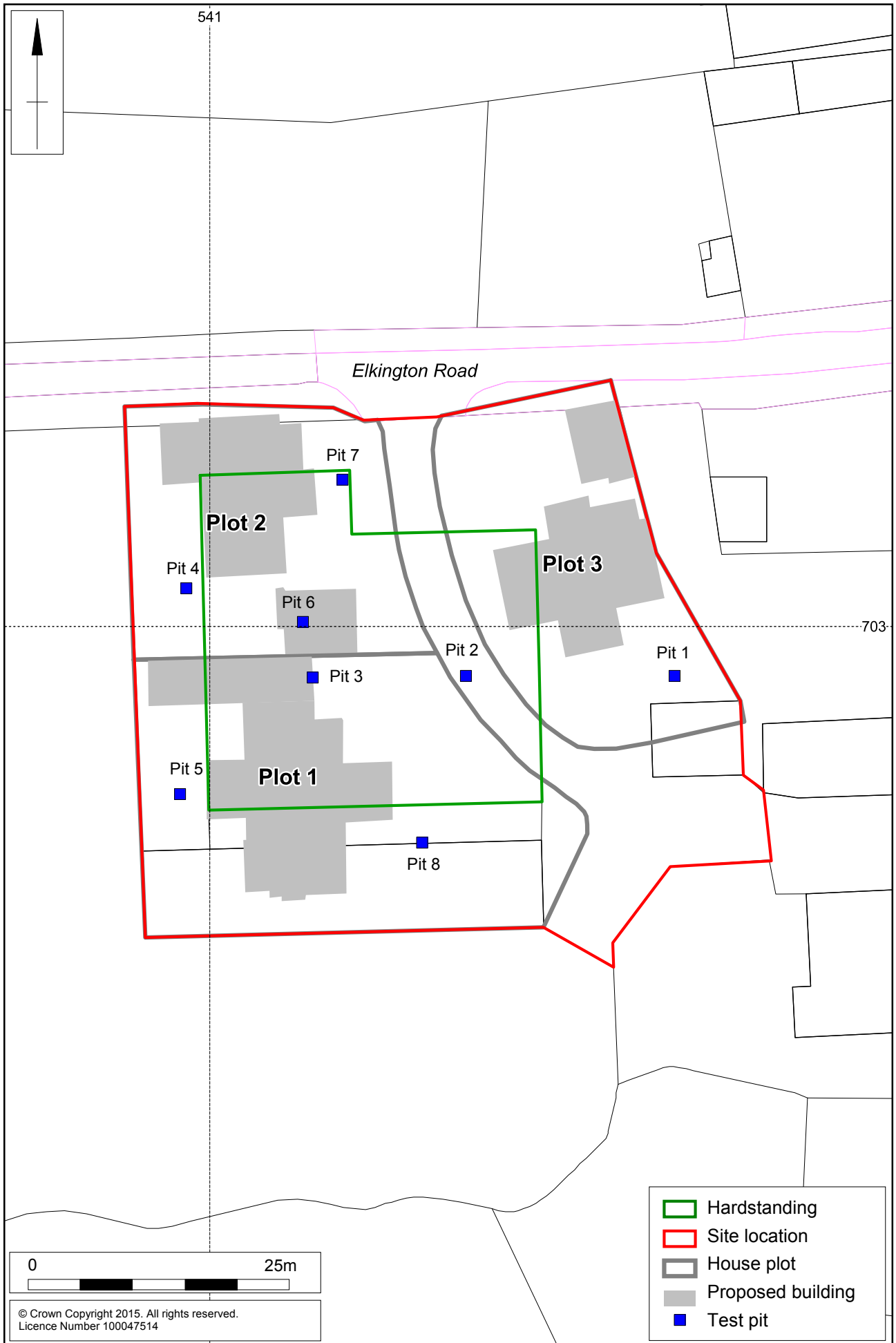
The area of land proposed for the new building developments is a roughly square parcel of land around 0.24ha in size. It lies on sloping ground which rises from around 150m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) in the north to c152m aOD in the south. The underlying geology is mapped as Dyrham Formation siltstone and mudstone (BGS 2015). Superficial deposits are not recorded. The site lies on the boundary between two types of slowly permeable waterlogged clayey and loamy soils, with Wickham drift to the south and Denchworth association to the north (LAT 1983). This change in soil type was observed in the geological test pits.



Scale 1:10,000

Site location Fig 1





Scale 1: 500

House plots with excavated test pits Fig 2

### 3.2 Historical and archaeological background

Evidence for the archaeological background of the village has been drawn from a search of the Historic Environment Record for Northamptonshire (HER), the Royal Commission inventory of archaeological sites, and Historic England's PastScape resource.

Roman activity is known from Barby, with a possible Romano-British settlement lying around c. 0.5km to the north-east on the northern edge of the village (HER 5553), and a possible Romano-British roadway c. 500m to the south-west of the site, aligned north-west by south-east (HER 406/1). The spot find of a Roman coin further to the east (HER 7269/0/0) has also indicated another area of possible activity (HER 7269).

The Grade II Listed parish church of St Mary is primarily 13th-century in date and contains Saxon elements including a window (Pevsner and Cherry) (HER 403/1). Possible Late Saxon graves have also been noted from the churchyard (HER 403/1/2). Barby Castle lies to the north of the village and comprises, a mound structure 145m aOD, previously thought to be a Norman motte without a bailey (Pevsner and Cherry, Scheduled Monument Number 13659). It is now thought that this structure probably represents an early fortified manor house (RCHME 1981) (HER 403/2/1). A number of possible medieval ditches and linear earthworks representing a hollow-way in the area of the fortified manor have been identified from aerial photographs (HER 403/0/20). An undated section of metalled roadway in the area (HER 403/0/5) and the spot find of a medieval coin (HER 403/0/0) might also relate to this settlement. A post-medieval farmhouse, The Old Manor, which might also have originated as a medieval manor, lies c 200m to the south-east of the site (HER 403/3). The village itself contains two areas of possible medieval and post-medieval closes to the north and south (HER 403/0/1, 403/0/4). A possible late medieval farm was situated on the opposite side of Elkington Road from the development area (HER 403/8).

An Act of Parliament in 1778 enclosed the common fields of Barby. Prior to the Act three large open fields surrounded the village, Wood Field to the west, Brackleydale Field to the east, and Nether Field to the north (RCHME 1981). Areas of surviving ridge and furrow earthworks are noted from around the village, particularly to the west (HER 9808/0/3-4, /8, /10-13, /18-19, /22). Further afield, around 2.7km due west of the site, is the deserted medieval village of Onley, which is particularly unusual as it was ploughed over after its abandonment (HER 402, Scheduled Monument Number 110) (RCHME 1981).

Post-medieval features include a possible farmstead c 800m north-west of the site (HER 405), and a possible 18th-century farm, which lies just to the north across Elkington Lane (HER 403/7). Due south lies an early 19th-century windmill, which is still extant having previously been converted into a private residence (HER 2938/1).

A number of Listed Buildings are to be found in the village of Barby, with the closest to the site being Fairholme (Grade II) on Daventry Road to the south, and Number 7 and barn on Rugby Road (also Grade II). In the north of the village is Ashleigh House, an 18th-century or earlier brick-built house.

Around 700m to the north of the site on the outskirts of Barby village is an area of Second World War 'Starfish' and 'QL' bombing decoy arrays constructed for the protection of Rugby (HER 8104).

Historic mapping indicates that the site lay within an unchanging area of enclosed field from at least 1884. Between 1967 and 1971, the large agricultural barn within its newly bounded area was constructed.

## 4 EXCAVATION METHODOLOGY

It was initially proposed that the archaeological mitigation of this site take place in several phases of archaeological observation. The first phase, detailed in this report, comprised the observation of excavation of eight geotechnical test pits (Fig 2). A second future phase was intended to observe groundworks within the footprints of the proposed buildings. It has since been decided, through consultation with the Assistant Archaeological Advisor, that this phase will not be required.

The geotechnical test pits were excavated by the contractor using a small Kubota-type mechanical excavator, equipped with a 0.50m wide toothless ditching bucket. This was used to expose the archaeological or geological horizon, under constant archaeological supervision, with spoil heaps monitored for finds.

Any archaeological deposits that were encountered during the course of the excavation were to be fully recorded, following standard MOLA procedures (MOLA 2014). Should significant archaeological deposits or structural remains have been encountered that required preservation *in situ*, consultation would have been held with both the client and the Northamptonshire County Council Assistant Archaeological Advisor in order to pursue an appropriate methodology.

All test pit locations were recorded using Leica Viva Global Positioning System (GPS) survey equipment using SMARTNET real-time corrections, operating to a 3D tolerance of  $\pm 0.05\text{m}$ . A full digital photographic record was maintained. The field data from the evaluation has been compiled into a site archive with appropriate cross-referencing.

The observation works were carried out in accordance with an approved Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) (MOLA 2015), and conforming to the standards of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (ClfA 2014a), and *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Brief* (ClfA 2014b). All stages of the project were undertaken in accordance with Historic England *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (MoRPHE) (HE 2015).

## 5 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

Eight geological test pits were excavated by Soil Technics; they were positioned across the area of the development in the soft ground outside the existing area of concrete hard standing; the footing of the former building (Fig 2). Test Pit 6 was excavated through a broken area of the concrete footing. All of the test pits within the footprint of the proposed buildings demonstrated evidence for truncation/modern build up, whilst those outside of the building footprint demonstrated undisturbed stratigraphy with topsoil and subsoil overlaying the natural substrate. Test pits were generally 0.50m wide and varied in length between 1.5-2.5m. Mid yellow-brown natural clays were encountered in each pit at a depth between 0.20-1.5m.

### 5.1 Pit 1

This pit was located on the eastern edge of the site, immediately south-east of Plot 3, as shown in Figure 2. Whilst not within the area of hard standing, the stratigraphic sequence comprised modern made-ground up to 1.5m thick and directly overlaying the natural clay (Fig 3). The area investigated by the pit was previously occupied by a number of sheds, small buildings and driveways, and it is likely that the disturbance recorded is related to this previous activity.



Geotechnical pit no.1 Fig 3

## 5.2 Pits 2 and 3

Pits 2 and 3 were located in soft ground within the footprint of the old barn, in the central part of the proposed development area (Fig 2). Natural clays were encountered approximately 0.50m below the present ground surface, and were overlain by a dark grey-brown silty clay, which was in turn overlain by a brown-red silty clay (Fig 4). Both soils appear to be modern deposits, and the upper fill is likely to have been associated with activity related to the barn use, i.e. animal trample.



Geotechnical pit no.2 (left) and pit no.3 (right) Fig 4

## 5.3 Pits 4 and 5

Pits 4 and 5 were located at the western edge of the development area and were cut through undisturbed pasture (Figs 2 and 5). The stratigraphic sequence in both pits appeared undisturbed. The natural comprised mid red-brown silty clay approximately 0.40-0.50m below the present ground surface. The subsoil was 0.25-0.30m thick and comprised mid grey-brown clay-loam. The topsoil was 0.15-0.20m thick and was described as dark grey-brown clay-loam.



Geotechnical pit no.4 (left) and pit no.5 (right) Fig 5

#### 5.4 Pit 6

Test pit 6 was located in the central part of the area and was excavated through a broken concrete base and was 0.60m deep (Figs 2 and 6). Modern disturbance and made ground was observed throughout the depth of the pit.



Geotechnical pit no.6 Fig 6

#### 5.5 Pit 7

Pit 7 was excavated in the northern part of the development area (Fig 2). This area appears to have been significantly truncated; approximately 0.15-0.20m of hardcore directly overlay the natural clays (Fig 7).



Geotechnical pit no.7 Fig 7

**5.6 Pit 8**

This pit was located on a higher area of ground at the southern edge of the area (Fig 2). The stratigraphic sequence comprised 0.70m of dark grey-brown topsoil which directly overlay the natural clays (Fig 8). Immediately to the south of the pit the ground had been terraced to accommodate the area of hard standing in the centre of the site.



Geotechnical pit no.8 Fig 8

## **6 DISCUSSION**

The observation of the excavation of the geotechnical test pits has demonstrated that the majority of the ground in the proposed development area has been disturbed and/or significantly truncated, especially within the areas of Plot 3, previously occupied by the now demolished barn and the concrete slab. The western edge of the development area, investigated by geotechnical pits 4 and 5 remained undisturbed, though no archaeological remains were present. Terracing along the southern edge of the area, investigated by geotechnical pit 8 is likely to have significantly damaged or removed any archaeological remains that may have existed.

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26 November 2015





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