



**Archaeological trial trench evaluation
on land for Hardingstone Academy extension
Hardingstone, Northamptonshire
April 2016**

Report No. 16/73

Author: Paul Clements

Illustrator: James Ladocha



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Event Number: ENN108265

Report No. 16/73

Quality control and sign off:

Issue No.	Date approved:	Checked by:	Verified by:	Approved by:	Reason for Issue:
1	22.04.16	P Chapman	S Parry	A Chapman	Draft for client review

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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		OASIS molanort1-249363	
Project title	Archaeological trial trench evaluation on land for the Hardingstone Academy extension, Hardingstone, Northamptonshire, April 2016		
Short description	In April 2016 an archaeological trial trench evaluation was carried out by MOLA Northampton, for LGSS Property Operations and Delivery, on behalf of their clients. The works identified a single modern pit associated with the construction of the school. No other archaeological remains were found.		
Project type	Trial trench evaluation		
Previous work	Excavation (Woods 1969)		
Current land use	School playing field		
Future work	Unknown		
Monument type and period	Modern pit		
Significant finds			
PROJECT LOCATION			
County	Northamptonshire		
Site address	Hardingstone Academy, Hardingstone , NN4 6DJ		
Easting Northing	SP 24579 40565		
Area (sq m/ha)	774sq m ha		
Height aOD	c 110m aOD		
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation	MOLA Northampton		
Project brief originator	Northamptonshire County Council		
Project Design originator	MOLA Northampton		
Director/Supervisor	Paul Clements		
Project Managers	Steve Parry (MOLA Northampton)		
Sponsor or funding body	LGSS Property Operations and Delivery		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date	10/04/2016		
End date	10/04/2016		
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Contents	
Physical	MOLA Northampton ENN108265		
Paper		Site records (1 archive box)	
Digital		Client report PDF. Survey Data, Photographs	
BIBLIOGRAPHY			
Title	Archaeological trial trench evaluation on land for the Hardingstone Academy extension, Hardingstone, Northamptonshire, April 2016		
Serial title & volume	MOLA Northampton Report 16/73		
Author(s)	Paul Clements		
Page numbers	9 pages of text and figures		
Date	22 April 2016		

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Archaeological trial trench evaluation on land for the Hardingstone Academy extension Hardingstone, Northamptonshire April 2016

Abstract

In April 2016 an archaeological trial trench evaluation was carried out by MOLA Northampton, for LGSS Property Operations and Delivery, on behalf of their Northamptonshire County Council. The works identified a single modern pit associated with the construction of the school. No other archaeological remains were found.

1 INTRODUCTION

In April 2016 MOLA Northampton was commissioned by LGSS Property Operations and Delivery, on behalf of their clients to undertake an archaeological trial trench evaluation on land at Hardingstone Academy, Hardingstone, Northamptonshire (NGR: SP 76432 57487; Fig 1). The work was undertaken in advance of the proposed extension of the school and associated car park (Planning Ref: 15/00078/CCDFUL), in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG 2012).

The scope of works was outlined and detailed in a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by MOLA Northampton (MOLA 2016).

The general aims of the archaeological evaluation were to determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains liable to be threatened by the proposed development.

Specifically, the work's aims were to:

- establish the date, nature and extent of activity or occupation on the development site;
- recover artefacts to assist in the development of type series within the region;
- recover palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location and geology

Hardingstone is a village forming a suburb on the south-eastern edge of Northampton. The site is situated on the southern edge of Hardingstone, off Martin's Lane. The site is level at a height of c110m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).

The development comprises two areas. Area A, totalling 286m², lies to the north of the school. It is bounded by the school buildings to the south and by Martin's Lane to the north. Area B, totalling 488m², is bordered to the west by the school building, and mature trees to the east.

The underlying geology is recorded as with Blisworth Limestone Formation to the west, and Rutland Formation mudstone to the east (BGS 2016). Soils across the site recorded as lime-rich loamy soils (Landis 2016).

2.2 Historical and archaeological background

The historical background was assessed as part of the the Written Scheme of Investigation (MOLA 2016) and is reproduced here.

Iron Age and Romano-British

A number of probable Iron Age or Romano-British sites have been identified within the 500m radius of the site. Enclosure ditches and pottery kilns were identified on the site of the Academy in excavations of 1967-8, suggesting possible settlement of this date: late Iron Age/early Romano-British pottery kilns were located to the south of the Academy's playing fields, around 95m south-west of the site (MNN32687; ENN7698), and a possible Iron Age boundary ditch was located to the east of the playing fields (MNN26185; ENN7701) (Woods 1969).

To the west of the school, at the top of Garden's View on the site of former allotments, and the front of the High School, were a number of further possible settlement and industrial sites (Upson-Smith 2013). This included a probable Iron Age/Romano-British settlement (MNN1870), Iron Age enclosure and possible boundary ditches (MNN24992; ENN7699), a late Iron Age settlement enclosure (MNN169944), linear ditch features and possible enclosure ((MNN169944, MNN170087) and a pottery manufacturing site (MNN32688).

Features and findspots for this period have been identified around the area of the school. A probable Romano-British settlement was identified from geophysical survey over 500m to the north-east of the site, beyond the edge of Hardingstone village (MNN1872; ENN103859). Another possible Roman site lay around 250m from the development site in the same direction. Two unstratified Roman coins were uncovered in the same area (MNN25001, MNN25002), and 140m to the north an unstratified late Roman coin of Valentinian II (AD375-92) was found in the 1980s (MNN102333; ENN100367).

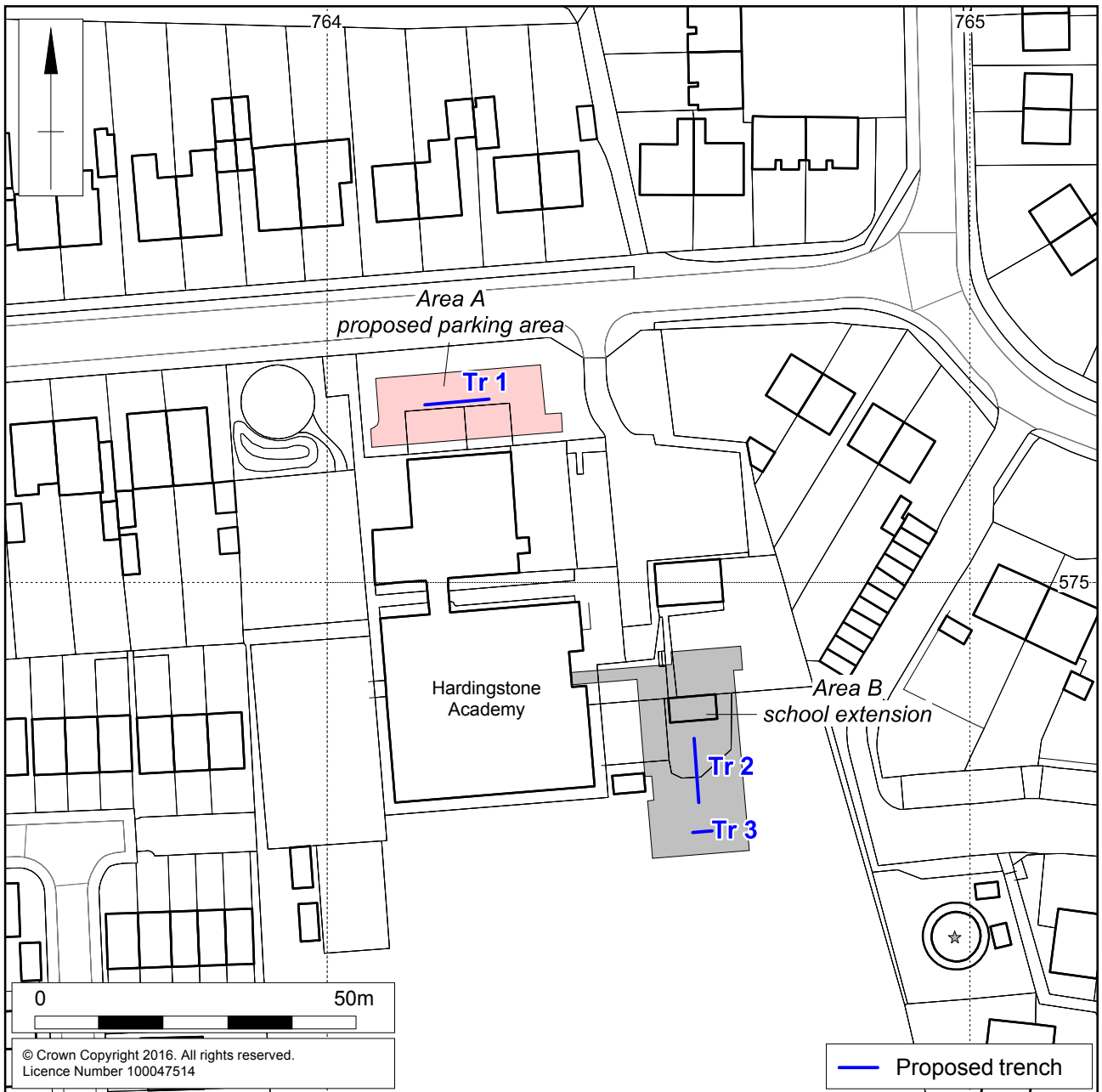
Around 270m north-west of the school, an area of late 1st-century Romano-British pottery kilns was excavated in 1965-7 at 47 Martins Lane (Woods 1969; MNN24991). An unstratified Roman coin, a third brass of Constans, was recovered in the area (MNN28279), and c.250m further off to the north, unstratified Roman pottery was found in 1951 (MNN32689).

Due east of the Academy in the grounds of the High School, possible Romano-British ditch (MNN24993; ENN7700) was uncovered in the same area as unstratified Roman pottery found in 1957 (MNN24990). Further finds of Roman pottery were made on the other side of the school in 1973, further to the east (MNN24989; ENN7681, 7).

Saxon and early medieval

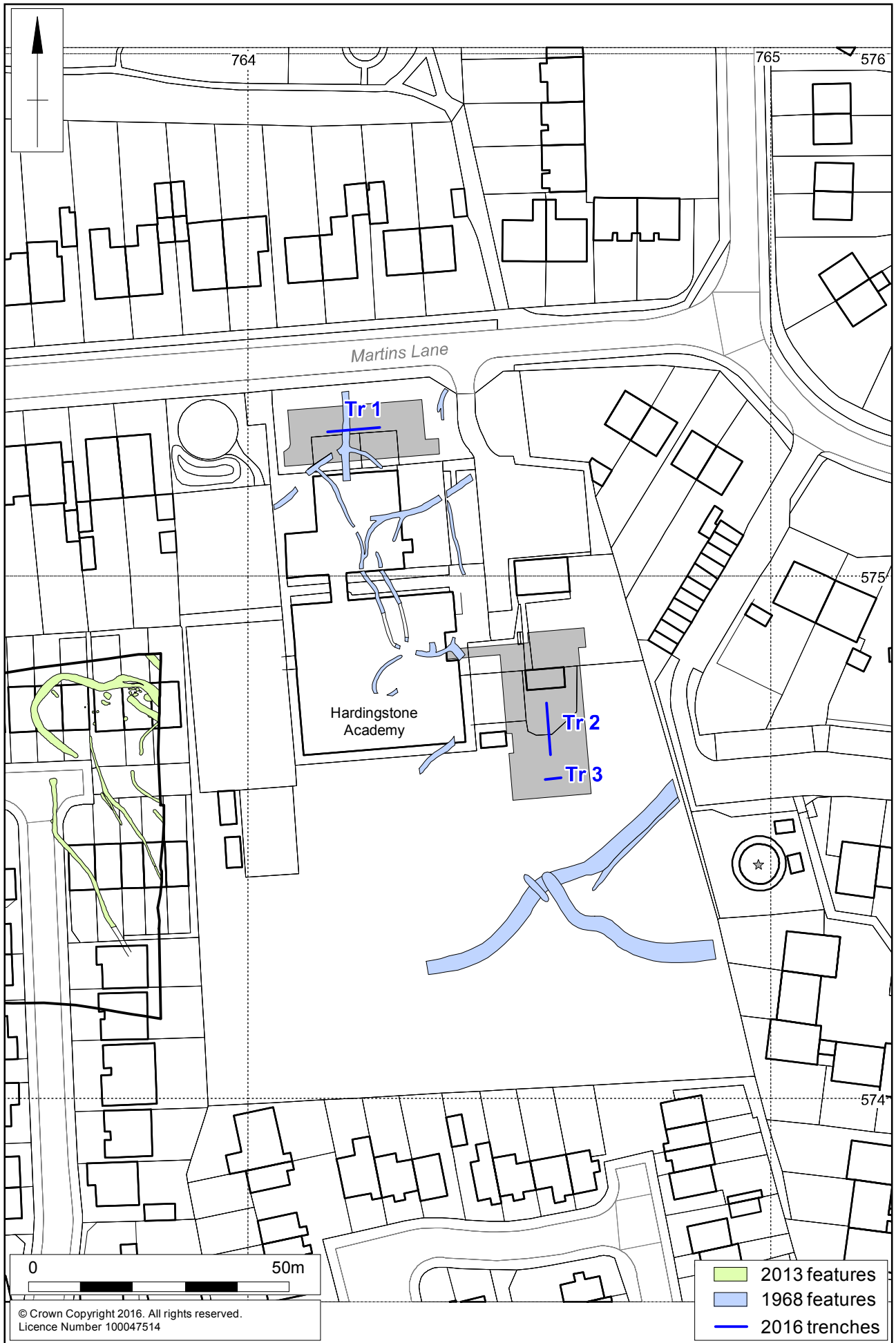
There are three records relating to the 7th-century Saxon cemetery which was excavated by in 1967-8 in the south playing field of the Academy, around 30m south of Area B (MNN6342, MNN15520; ENN7682; Woods 1969). Three Saxon inhumations were uncovered, two of which were accompanied by grave goods including iron knives, an iron buckle, a necklace and a silver pendant (MNN25036).

An unstratified Anglo-Saxon socketed iron spearhead was found on Windrush Road in 1956 (MNN102323; RCHME 1985, 284).



Scale 1:1000

Site location and excavated trenches Fig 1



Scale 1:1000

Previous archaeological works Fig 2

Medieval

The medieval village of Hardingstone is recorded under monument number MNN6335. It contains the 13th-century Grade II* Listed Building of the Church of St Edmund (MNN10761, MNN106827). A single medieval findspot is known for a carved stone head which was found in the back garden of 35 Ansell Way in 1980 (MNN25267). Medieval ridge and furrow cultivation earthworks are preserved in a number places in the former open fields of Cotton and Hardingstone (MNN7125, MNN7127).

Post-medieval and modern

The majority of the records dating from the post-medieval and modern periods relate to industrial features: quarries and ironstone workings (MNN7761, MNN7672 MNN36229 MNN17345 MNN129265 MNN17231); an ironstone tramway (MNN136335); and military sites ranging in date from the Second World War to recent times (MNN7436, MNN36824, MNN7916). A large number of records relating to buildings of the former Quebec/Simpson Barracks were not reproduced.

Previous archaeological work

The proposed school extension lies within an area of potentially high archaeological significance.

Excavation works were undertaken in 1967-8 in advance of the construction of the original school buildings, Hardingstone County Primary School, on the current Academy site (Woods 1969; ENN7682). These works located an area of probable Iron Age/Romano-British settlement, comprising an extensive complex of curvilinear ditches and gullies dating to the late Iron Age, with the pottery assemblage comprising both hand-built vessels and wheel-turned 'Belgic'-style pottery (Fig 2). The site seemed to demonstrate continuity into the early Roman period, and on the northern part of the site four pottery kilns were excavated and traces of a further three recorded, along with a series of clay extraction pits, dating to the mid to late 1st century AD. A substantial enclosure ditch was located in the south-east of the site in the playing fields. Three 7th-century pagan Saxon burials were also excavated to the south of the site (Woods 1979; RCHME 1985, 290); and another small pagan Saxon cemetery is recorded as being discovered elsewhere in the village during the 19th century.

Geophysical and trial trench surveys were undertaken in 2005 by Northamptonshire Archaeology on the former allotments immediately adjacent to the site to the west (Mason and Butler 2006), followed in 2013 by a mitigation excavation (Upson-Smith 2013). The works recorded two irregular linear archaeological features, which were shown to be Iron Age in date (Fig 2; ENN107817). They appear to be a continuation of ditches previously recorded during Woods excavations on the Academy land to the east. The ditches contained a small pottery assemblage tightly dated to the late Iron Age, 1st century BC, animal bone, charred remains and a rotary quern, suggesting a focus of settlement nearby, although no structural remains were found. This phase of work also did not find any evidence for Roman pottery kilns or early Saxon burials as previously recorded in the area. During the medieval period the site was under cultivation, and truncated furrows of a field system overlay the earlier archaeological deposits.

3 METHODOLOGY

Three trial trenches were excavated in accordance with a trench plan prepared by MOLA Northampton and approved by Lesley-Anne Mather (Northamptonshire Archaeological Advisor). The trench plan was designed to provide a general coverage of the footprint of the proposed buildings and carpark area, while avoiding the position of a small 20th century building known to have formerly stood to the east of the school (Fig 1). A total area of 42m² was excavated comprising two trenches 10m long by 1.80m wide and one trench 3m long by 2m wide. All trenches were positioned using a Leica Viva RTK GPS.

A two ton tracked mechanical excavator fitted with a 0.90m wide toothless ditching bucket was used to remove overburden to archaeological levels or the natural substrate, whichever was encountered first. The trenches were hand cleaned sufficiently to enable the identification and definition of archaeological features. Archaeological deposits were examined by hand excavation to determine their nature. 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. Photography was with 35mm black and white film and digital images.

All works were conducted in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (CIfA 2014a) and *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (CIfA 2014b), as well as the procedural advice given by Historic England in *MoRPHE* (HE 2015).

4 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

General stratigraphy

The trench locations are shown in Figure 1 and an inventory of contexts is provided in the Appendix.

The underlying geology was encountered at an average depth of 0.65m below the modern ground surface. It comprised light brown and light brown-yellow silty clay. The subsoil, 0.35m thick, was dark brown silty clay. The topsoil, 0.30m thick, comprised dark grey-brown loamy clay.

Despite a ditch being recorded north-west through the area of Trench 1 in the 1987-8 excavations, no trace of any archaeological feature was found in the trench (Fig 5). It is possible that later landscaping during the school construction may have removed any archaeology in this location.

Within the southern half of Trench 2 and in Trench 3 a makeup layer of mid grey silty-clay, 0.10m thick, lay above the subsoil (Fig 3). This was likely to have been laid down as part of the terracing and levelling of the school playing field. A large modern pit backfilled with building debris and modern rubbish was located in the northern half of Trench 2 (Fig 4).



Trench 3, looking west Fig 3



Modern pit in Trench 2, looking south Fig 4

6 DISCUSSION

Despite the potential for multi-period archaeological features to be uncovered in the area of the school, the evaluation did not identify any pre-modern archaeological finds or features. No evidence was found for the Iron Age ditch which was thought to be aligned north-south in the location of Trench 1. A modern pit containing plastic, brick, and tile was identified in Trench 2, probably associated with the construction of the school, or with the small residential cottage which formerly stood to the east.

No residual finds were recovered from the topsoil or subsoils in any of the trenches. It is likely that the topsoil across much of the development area, and subsoil to a lesser degree, were removed during the construction of the school and landscaping of playing field immediately adjoining the current school building. A makeup layer associated with the terracing of the playing field was identified in Trenches 2 and 3.

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MOLA Northampton
22 April 2016

APPENDIX: CONTEXT INDEX

Trench No	Length, width & alignment		Surface height	Depth & height of natural
1	10m x 1.80m E-W		m aOD	m aOD
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
101	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown loamy-clay.	0.35m thick	-
102	Subsoil	Dark brown silty clay.	0.30m thick	-
103	Natural	light brown and light brown-yellow silty clay		-



Trench 1, looking east Fig 5

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
2	10m x 1.80m E-W	SP	m aOD	m aOD
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
201	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown loamy-clay.	0.35m thick	-
202	Makeup layer	Mid brown silty clay containing infrequent chalk flecks	0.10m thick	
203	Subsoil	Dark brown silty clay.	0.30m thick	-
204	Natural	light brown and light brown-yellow silty clay		-
205	Pit fills	Light and dark brown silty-clay	1m thick 6m long	Plastic, brick, wood
206	Modern pit		1m deep 6m long	



Trench 1, looking north Fig 6

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
3	10m x 1.80m E-W	SP	m aOD	m aOD
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
301	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown loamy-clay.	0.35m thick	-
302	Makeup layer	Mid brown silty clay containing infrequent chalk flecks	0.10m thick	
303	Subsoil	Dark brown silty clay.	0.30m thick	-
304	Natural	light brown and light brown-yellow silty clay		-



Trench 1, looking east Fig 7



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