



**Archaeological evaluation on land
at Overstone Primary School
Overstone
Northamptonshire
May 2016**

Report No. 16/84

Author: Chris Jones

Illustrator: Olly Dindol



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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		OASIS molanort1- 251618	
Project title	Archaeological evaluation on land at Overstone Primary School, Overstone, Northamptonshire, May 2016		
Short description	MOLA Northampton was commissioned by LGSS Property Operations and Delivery to carry out an archaeological evaluation on land at Overstone Primary School, Overstone Northamptonshire prior to the proposed development of the site. Three trenches were excavated. No archaeological features were encountered.		
Project type	Trial trench evaluation		
Previous work	None		
Current land use	Grass sports/playing field		
Future work	None		
Monument type and period	None		
Significant finds	None		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County	Northamptonshire		
Site address	Overstone Primary School, Overstone		
Easting Northing	SP 8042 6638		
Area (sq m/ha)	c 1.1 ha		
Height aOD	c 100m aOD to c.105m aOD		
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation	MOLA Northampton		
Project brief originator	Archaeological Advisor Northamptonshire County Council		
Project Design originator	MOLA Northampton		
Director/Supervisor	Chris Jones		
Project Managers	Mo Muldowney (MOLA Northampton)		
Sponsor or funding body	LGSS Property Operations and Delivery		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date	10/05/2016		
End date	10/05/2016		
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Physical	ENN108312	None	
Paper		Site records (1 archive box)	
Digital		Client report PDF. Survey Data, Photographs	
BIBLIOGRAPHY			
Title	Archaeological evaluation on land at Overstone Primary School, Overstone Northamptonshire, May 2016		
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Archaeological evaluation on land at Overstone Primary School Overstone Northamptonshire May 2016

Abstract

MOLA Northampton was commissioned by LGSS Property Operations and Delivery to carry out an archaeological evaluation on land at Overstone Primary School, Overstone Northamptonshire prior to the proposed development of the site. Three trenches were excavated. No archaeological features were encountered.

1 INTRODUCTION

MOLA Northampton has been commissioned by LGSS Property Operations and Delivery to conduct a programme of archaeological trial trench evaluation on land at Overstone Primary School, Overstone (NGR: SP 8042 6638, Fig 1), in advance of proposed development. The works have been required by the Archaeological Advisor for Northamptonshire County Council (NCCAA) in response to a planning application for expansion to the school, in line with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012). The development comprises a two-storey extension to an existing building to provide a teaching block, extensions and associated alterations to classrooms, enlarged car parking area and the provision of a multi-use games area (MUGA) (Planning application number: 15/00094/CCDFUL). The archaeological intervention concerns the MUGA only.

A written scheme of investigation was prepared by MOLA (MOLA 2016). It described the proposed methodology to be undertaken for the fieldwork, to comply with the Brief issued by the NCCAA (Mather 2016).

After consultation with the Archaeological Advisor for Northamptonshire County Council, a programme of trial trench evaluation was proposed to determine the archaeological potential of the site.

2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the work was to determine and understand the nature, function and character of the archaeological site in its cultural and environmental setting, and provide information that will allow the effective targeting of further investigation of the site prior to or during the early phases of its development.

The investigation aims to:

- Establish the location, extent, nature, and date of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present;

- Determine the integrity and state of preservation of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present;
- Recover artefacts to assist in the development of type series within the region;
- Recover palaeo-environmental remains to determine past local environmental conditions.

Specific research objectives were drawn from national and regional research frameworks documents (Cooper 2006, updated by Knight, Vyner and Allen 2012) as relevant depending upon the results of the evaluation.

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 Location, topography and geology

The development site (henceforth: site) comprises c1.1ha area of land including the school buildings, and was most recently in use as a grass sports/playing field. The MUGA is to be located at the west end of the field at the rear of the school and covers 0.07ha. The land is enclosed on all sides by a hedge-and-tree boundary and surrounded to west, north and east by an arable field. To the south are the school buildings and residential properties, all fronting onto Sywell Road.

The site rises from west to east from 100m to 105m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). The bedrock geology is recorded as Northampton Sand Formation – Ironstone, Ooidal sedimentary bedrock; overlying superficial deposits have not yet been recorded (BGS 2016).

3.2 Historical and archaeological background

A search of the Northampton Historic Environment Record (HER) was undertaken to establish the presence of the known historical and archaeological assets in the area. There were a small number of entries within the HER relating to known archaeological and historic points of interest within 1km of the site. These include:

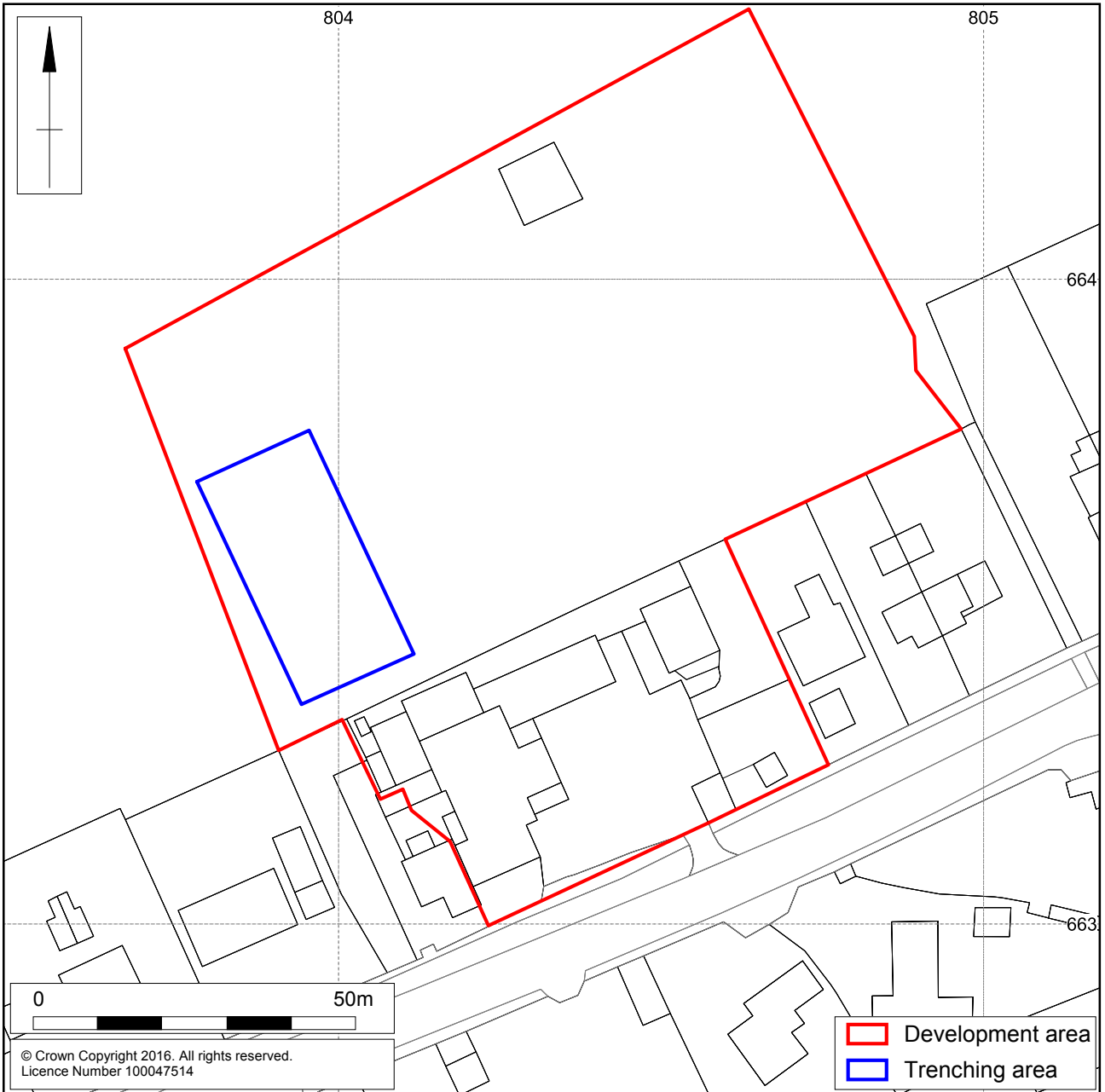
Table 1: Selected HER entries

HER Number	Description	Distance from site
MNN873	Possible prehistoric funerary site	600m north-west
MNN874	Possible prehistoric/Romano-British settlement	600m north-west
MNN119529	Possible prehistoric activity	400m south-east
MNN6064	Romano-British settlement and farmstead	900m south-west
MNN4456	?Late Saxon shifted village	330m south
MNN133666	Area of ridge and furrow, medieval to post-medieval	70m south-east
MNN869	Medieval deer park, within Overstone Park	900m east
MNN136022	Post-medieval to modern estate village	390m north-east
MNN870	Post-medieval to modern parkland of Overstone Park	100m min to south
MNN103801	WWII searchlight battery	900m south-west
MNN104203	WWII training site?	610m south-west

There were also four listed buildings within 400m of the site, including the Church of St Nicholas within Overstone Park to the south. It was constructed in the early 19th century.

Wide scale archaeological work was carried out approximately 1km to the west of the site between 2009 and 2011 on land east of Kettering Road and both north and south of The Avenue, leading to Sywell Road. It comprised geophysical survey and trial trench evaluation and identified extensive funerary and settlement-related archaeological remains dating from the prehistoric to medieval period (Butler 2009, Dicks and Chadwick 2009, Jones 2010, Williams 1976 and Simmonds 2010).

Rapid assessment of available historic mapping indicated that the land on which the site now stands had been part of agricultural land since the late 19th century and presumably also for some considerable time before that. Prior to WWII, the four small fields immediately to the east of a brook, were merged with an extra northern field to form the large field recognisable today. Open Source aerial photography revealed extensive crop marks in this large field, characteristic of late Iron Age to Romano-British settlement forming an arc from west to north. Ridge and furrow crop marks were also clearly visible within the east half of this field, following an approximate south-east to north-west trend.



Scale 1:1000

Site location Fig 1

4 EXCAVATION METHODOLOGY

The excavation comprised three trenches, each 10m long by 1.5m wide (Fig 2). The trenches were positioned to sample as much of the area as possible while allowing for on-site constraints, such as mature trees, and underground and overhead services.

The trenches were positioned using Leica Viva Global Positioning System (GPS) survey equipment using SMARTNET real-time corrections, operating to a 3D tolerance of $\pm 0.05\text{m}$ to Ordnance Survey National Grid and Datum.

Machine excavation was undertaken under the direction of a suitably experienced archaeologist. Trenches were excavated by a JCB excavator using a toothless bucket to reveal archaeological remains or, where these were absent, undisturbed natural horizons. Topsoil and subsoil were stacked separately either side of each trench. Excavation did not proceed beyond safe working depths (approx. 1.2m). Following completion of archaeological works the trenches were backfilled with the material extracted and lightly compacted by machine. Material was replaced in the order extracted (i.e. subsoil first followed by topsoil).

Any archaeological deposits encountered during the course of the evaluation were to be fully recorded. Recording followed standard fieldwork procedures (MOLA 2014).

A photographic record was maintained by high resolution digital photography exceeding 12 megapixels, and monochrome negatives. Overall shots of the site were taken prior to excavation and after backfilling.

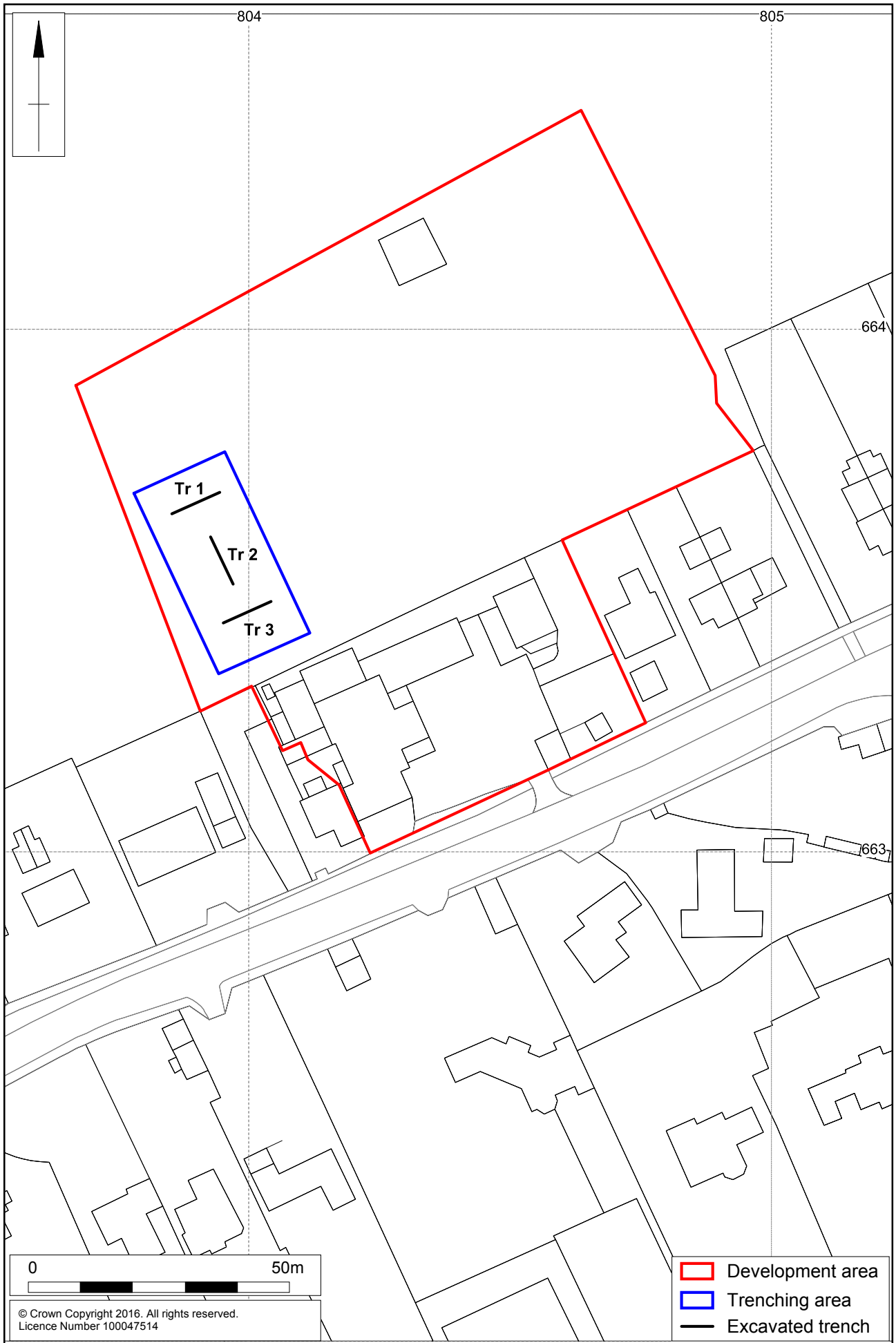
5 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

The natural horizon across the site generally comprised light orange-brown sand and sandstone (Figs 3-6). This was overlain by subsoil which was mid- brown sand clay between 0.10m and 0.35m thick. The topsoil was dark brown sandy clay between 0.20m and 0.40m thick. Full context information is included in Appendix 1.

No archaeological features were recorded in any of the three trenches.

6 DISCUSSION

The trenching revealed no archaeological features. The lack of remains suggests that this area has primarily remained uninhabited or been stripped of the original soils when undergoing landscaping for the present playing fields. This negative result is particularly interesting when compared with the density of archaeological remains to the north and west of the development area, where extensive funerary and settlement-related archaeological remains were excavated, probably dating from the Neolithic, Bronze Age, Romano-British and Saxon periods (Butler 2009, Dicks and Chadwick 2009, Jones 2010, Williams 1976 and Simmonds 2010); and also to the immediate north, where cropmarks of possible late prehistoric to Roman date and extensive medieval to post-medieval ridge and furrow can be seen via satellite images. This current investigation, although sampling only a small area, may suggest that the multi-period settlement activity was focused on the south-facing slope of the valley above the Cowpasture Spinney stream, and grew more dispersed or absent on the north-facing slope up towards Sywell Road.



Scale 1:1000

Excavated trenches Fig 2

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MOLA
16 May 2016

APPENDIX: CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench No	Length, width & alignment			
1	E-W 10m x 1.50m			
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
101	Topsoil	Dark brown sandy clay	0.40m thick	-
102	Subsoil	Mid brown sand clay	0.35m thick	-
103	Natural	Light orange-brown sand mixed with sandstone	-	



Trench 1, looking west Fig 3

Trench No	Length, width & alignment			
2	N-S 10m x 1.50m			
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
201	Topsoil	Dark brown sandy clay	0.30m thick	-
202	Subsoil	Mid brown sand clay	0.20m thick	-
203	Natural	Light orange-brown sand mixed with sandstone	-	



Trench 2, looking south Fig 4

Trench No	Length, width & alignment			
3	E-W 10m x 1.50m			
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
301	Topsoil	Dark brown sandy clay	0.30m thick	-
302	Subsoil	Mid brown sand clay	0.30m thick	-
303	Natural	Light orange-brown sand mixed with sandstone	-	-



Trench 3, looking east Fig 5



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