



**Archaeological trial trench evaluation  
on land at the former Kingswood School  
Corby, Northamptonshire  
October 2016**

Report No. 16/182

Author: Paul Clements

Illustrator: Joanne Clawley



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Project Manager: Mo Muldowney  
Event Number: ENN108465  
Site Code: CBYFKS 16  
NGR: SP 861 874

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Illustrations: Joanne Clawley BA MSc

**OASIS REPORT FORM**

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>		<b>OASIS molanort1-266089</b>	
Project title	Archaeological trial trench evaluation on land at the former Kingswood School, Corby, Northamptonshire, October 2016		
Short description	In October 2016 an initial phase of archaeological trial trench evaluation was carried out by MOLA on behalf of Keepmoat Housing. The works identified an Iron Age ditch with associated pottery and animal bone. A modern ditch was also present.		
Project type	Trial trench evaluation		
Previous work	Desk-based assessment.		
Current land use	Former school grounds		
Future work	Unknown		
Monument type and period	Iron Age ditch		
Significant finds	Pottery and animal bone		
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>			
County	Northamptonshire		
Site address	Kingswood School, Corby		
Easting Northing	SP 861 874		
Area (sq m/ha)	0.25 ha		
Height aOD	c 125m AOD		
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>			
Organisation	MOLA Northampton		
Project brief originator	Northamptonshire County Council		
Project Design originator	Keepmoat Homes		
Director/Supervisor	Paul Clements (MOLA)		
Project Managers	Mo Muldowney (MOLA)		
Sponsor or funding body	Keepmoat Homes		
<b>PROJECT DATE</b>			
Start date	04/10/2016		
End date	05/10/2016		
<b>ARCHIVES</b>	<b>Location (Accession no.)</b>	<b>Contents</b>	
Physical	ENN108465	Pottery and animal bone	
Paper		Site records (1 archive box)	
Digital		Client report PDF. Survey Data, Photographs	
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>			
Title	Archaeological trial trench evaluation on land at the former Kingswood School, Corby, Northamptonshire, October 2016		
Serial title & volume	MOLA Northampton Report 16/182		
Author(s)	Paul Clements		
Page numbers	7 pages of text and figures		
Date	October 2016		

# Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>BACKGROUND</b>	<b>1</b>
	2.1 Location and geology	1
	2.2 Historical and archaeological background	3
<b>3</b>	<b>METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE</b>	<b>5</b>
	5.1 General stratigraphy	5
	4.2 The Iron Age ditch	6
<b>5</b>	<b>THE FINDS</b>	<b>7</b>
	5.1 The Iron Age Pottery by Andy Chapman	7
	5.2 The animal bone by Adam Reid	7
<b>6</b>	<b>DISCUSSION</b>	<b>7</b>
	<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>8</b>
	<b>APPENDIX: CONTEXT INDEX</b>	

## Figures

Front cover: General view facing south.

Fig 1: Site location and excavated trenches 1:2,000

Fig 2: Modern ditch [105], looking south

Fig 3: Iron Age ditch in trench 3

# Archaeological trial trench evaluation on land at the former Kingswood School Corby, Northamptonshire October 2016

## **Abstract**

*In October 2016 an initial phase of archaeological trial trench evaluation was carried out by MOLA on behalf of Keepmoat Housing. The works identified an Iron Age ditch with associated pottery and animal bone. A modern ditch was also present.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

An archaeological trial trench evaluation was carried out in October 2016 by MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) on land at the former Kingswood School, Corby, Northamptonshire (NGR: SP 86102 87405; Fig 1). The work was commissioned by Keepmoat Housing and was undertaken to inform decisions regarding the potential impact upon archaeological features.

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

The objectives of the evaluation were to establish:

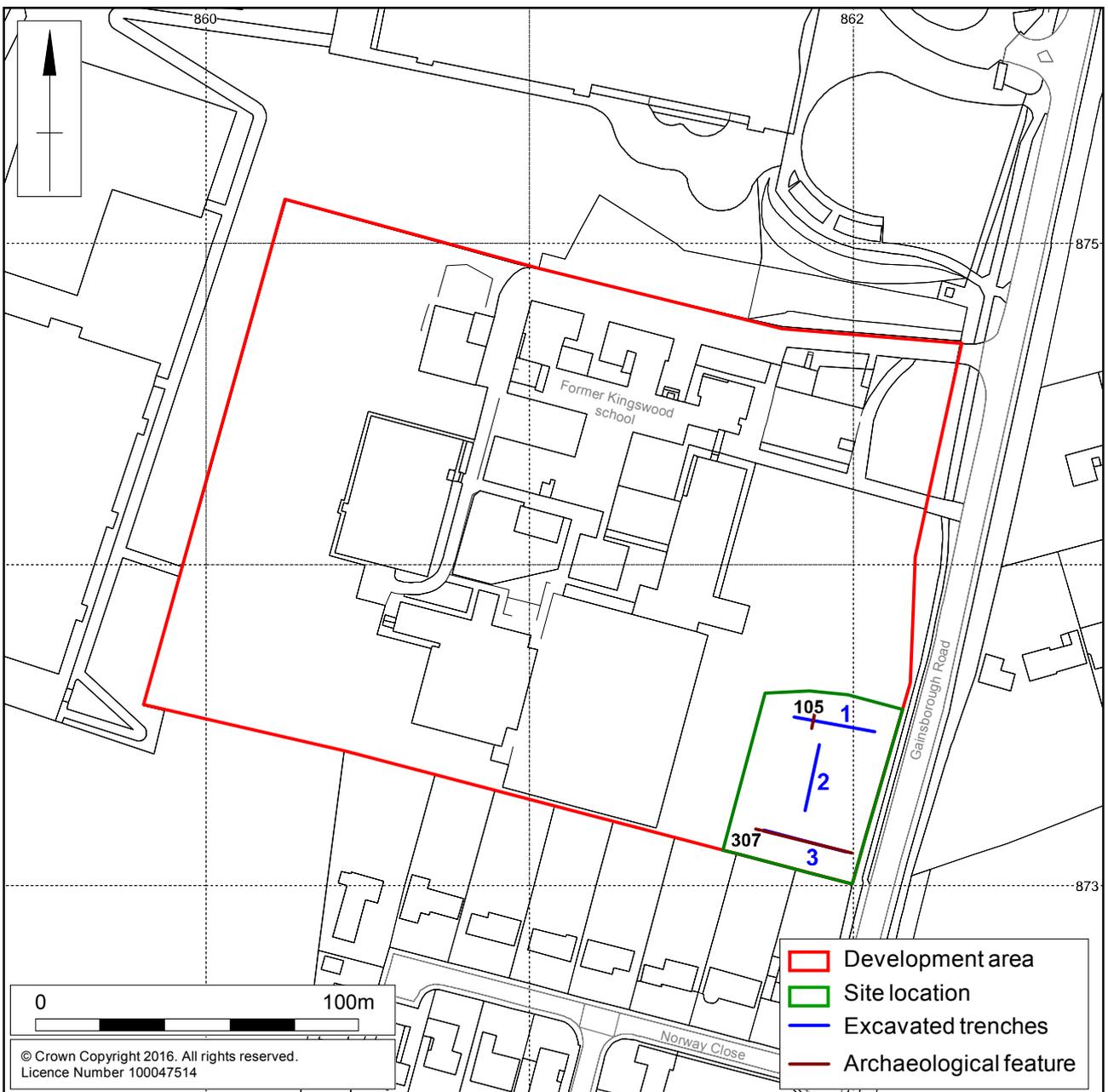
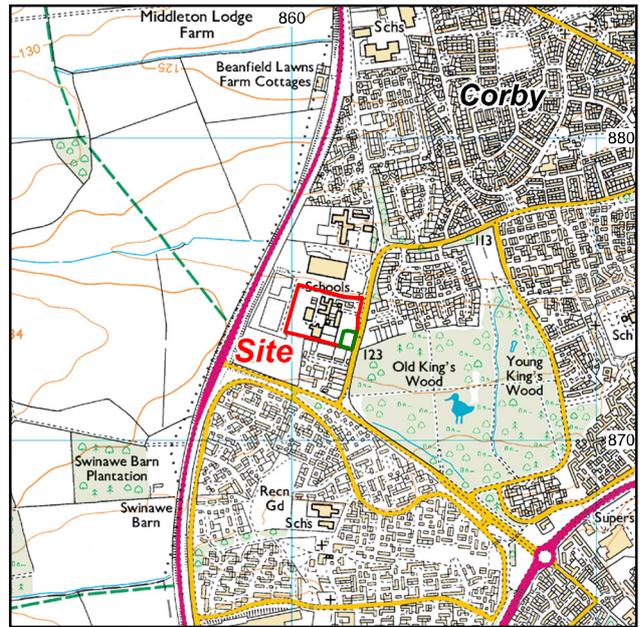
- Establish the date, nature and extent of the activity or occupation on the development site;
- Recover artefacts to assist in the development of type series within the region;
- Recover palaeo-environmental remains to determine past local environmental conditions;
- Produce a report which will present the results of the evaluation in sufficient detail to inform a decision to be made concerning the site's archaeological potential.

## **2 BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Location and geology**

The development area is located on the western edge of Corby. It comprises an area of land, 3.7ha extant, occupied by the dismantled remains of the former Kingswood School. The site is bounded by the new Kingswood School and grounds to the north and west, by residential housing to the south, and Gainsborough Road to the east. The initial phase of trial trench evaluation is limited to the south-eastern corner of the development area.

The site is underlain by Lower Lincolnshire Limestone with superficial deposits of Oadby Member diamicton (BGS 2016). Soils across the site are recorded as loamy and clayey soils (Landis 2016).



Scale 1:2000

Site location and excavated trenches Fig 1

## 2.2 Historical and archaeological background

A summary of the historic and archaeological background was included in the Written Scheme of Investigation (MOLA 2016) and has been reproduced below.

The Empington to Hannington Pipeline is situated on the western side of the Uppingham Road and an archaeological watching brief and several small excavations were carried out along its course in 2011 (Carlyle, Clarke and Chapman 2011). However, no archaeological finds or features were identified close to the current site. A desk-based assessment for the site was previously carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology (Walker 2013).

### ***Prehistoric***

Immediately to the south of the development site, middle and late Iron Age activity has been found (HER 4038/0/1). This comprises an extensive area of Iron Age pits, gullies and ditches revealed during construction works for the housing estate. No other information is available in order to ascertain whether the area continues north into the school site. Early to middle Iron Age ditches and pits dating to between the 4th and 7th centuries BC were found c300m to the south (HER 4037). A possible Iron Age furnace, D-shaped stock enclosure and other Iron Age and Roman ditches have been found just less than 500m to the southwest of the site (HER 4043). The enclosure measured c19m by c17m and the ditch was 1.40m deep. Pottery from the ditch appeared to date to around the 2nd century BC. It is considered that there is a medium/high possibility of Iron Age remains being present on site, especially along the southern boundary.

### ***Roman***

Extensive remains of Roman settlement have been found around Corby, although much was probably destroyed during the large-scale ironstone mining in the area over the course of the 20th century. An important 1st-century Roman road from Godmanchester to Leicester, known as the Gartree Road, passes c1km to the north of the site. A further Roman road from Irchester Roman town may pass c200m to the east of the site (HER 3141/1). The fragmentary remains of a large settlement covering over 50ha were found during the development of the Beanfield Estate in the 1960s and 1970s, although too little was found to understand its form or function (HER 4134). Finds associated with the settlement dated from the 2nd to 4th centuries AD and include a fragment of flue tile, roof tile, slag and substantial quantities of pottery. Further Roman activity, including pits and ditches dated to the 2nd to 3rd centuries, was recorded to the west of the site on the opposite side of the Uppingham Road (HER 4041). It is considered that there is a medium possibility of Roman remains being present on site.

### ***Anglo-Saxon/medieval***

The site lay within one of the three main Saxon forests within the county, which was designated as a royal hunting ground for William the Conqueror and became known as Rockingham Forest after Domesday. It was divided into three administrative areas, which were known as bailiwicks; this area lay within the Rockingham Bailiwick. It lay within an area that was known as Beanfield Lawn, which was considered to be a detached portion of the parish of Benefield, and was an open area within the forest (HER 4039). The lawns were intended to be non-commonable enclosures to provide pasture and hay for the deer, but were often exploited by the keepers and the local economy as a whole. The custody and surplus herbage and pannage of Beanfield Lawn was granted to Sir Christopher Hatton in 1583. Subsequent heirs derived significant profit from this area of land (Pettit 1968). A moated site (HER 4039/1/2) within Beanfield Lawn seems to have been a moated lodge belonging to one of the forest officers of Rockingham. It is considered that there is a low probability of medieval

remains being present on site, although there may be some evidence of the former boundary of the lawn.

### ***Post-medieval/modern***

The open fields were enclosed in 1829 by Act of Parliament, but the areas of woodland were enclosed separately in 1833-5 under the Rockingham Bailiwick Enclosure. There were no areas of ancient enclosure outside the main area of settlement. During the post-medieval period Beanfield Lawn was still important to the economy of local villages, including Cottingham and Middleton, and during the 17th century cattle were still kept there, which were fed and cared by local people for payment. The Lawn was divided into furlongs which were then sub-divided into smaller parcels, generally between one and three acres in size (Pettit 1968). The Lawn was so profitable that, although permission was granted in 1720 to disafforest it and convert it into tillage, it was retained. The Lawns were still planned as a separate entity in the 1834 Tithe Map. Beanfield Lawns, once extra-parochial, were formed into a separate parish in 1858. There were only two houses within the parish and the whole was owned by the Watsons of Rockingham Castle. The area was developed as part of the extensive urban development of Corby New Town during the mid 20th century.

The Kingswood area is described in some detail by Pevsner (1973), who was generally very complementary of the architectural design of the estates. The design of the Lincoln Sector of the estate was considered so successful that it was recognised by the Royal Institute of British Architects, winning an award in 1969. The former Kingswood Grammar School was designed by the County Architects Department (A N Harris), and built in 1964-6. It is constructed in red brick and glass. Pevsner notes that it is a “*well-balanced group: two long two-storey ranges, one four storey cube, lower buildings in front. The arrangement of the windows adds individuality. The technical block was added by John Goff, 1969-70.*” It is considered that there is a low probability of post-medieval/modern remains predating the school buildings being present on site.

## **3 METHODOLOGY**

Three trial trenches were excavated in accordance with a trench plan prepared by MOLA and approved by Lesley-Ann Mather (Northamptonshire Archaeological Advisor) The trench plan was designed to provide a general coverage of the initial area of trial trench evaluation in the south-eastern corner of the proposed development area (Fig 1). A total area of 126 square metres was excavated comprising two trenches 25m long by 1.80m wide and one trench 20m long by 1.80m wide. All trenches were positioned using a Leica Viva RTK GPS. A second phase of trenching will be conducted in the development area in November 2016 and will be reported on in due course.

A 6 ton tracked mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.80m wide toothless ditching bucket was used to remove overburden to archaeological levels or the natural substrate, whichever was encountered first. The trenches were 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 2014) and *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (CIfA 2014).

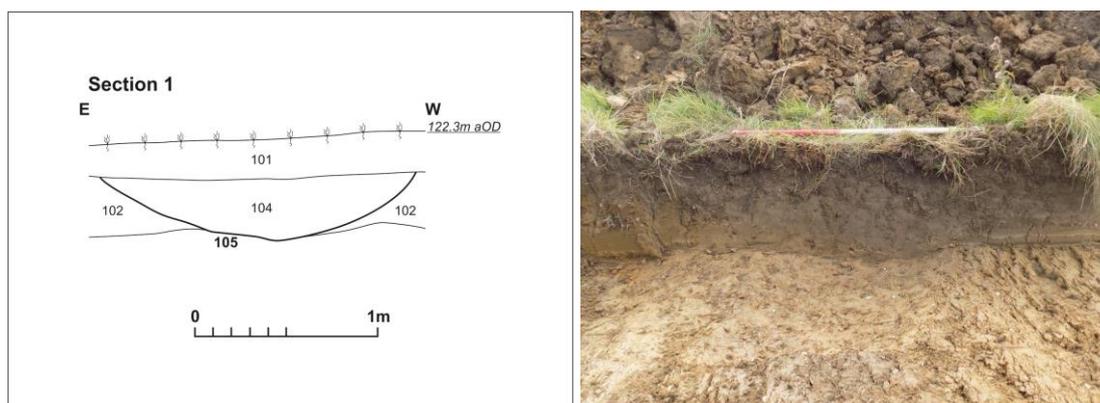
## 4 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

### 4.1 General stratigraphy

The trench locations are shown in Figure 1 and an inventory of contexts is provided in the Appendix. Features were identified in Trenches 1 and 3, but no features were identified in Trench 2.

The underlying geology was light brown-grey silty clay, containing flecks and small pieces of chalk, with patches of light orange-brown silty clay. It was encountered at 0.40-0.50m below the modern ground surface. The subsoil, 0.15-0.25m thick, was mid grey-brown loamy-clay containing occasional mixed-sized gravel. The topsoil was 0.10-0.20m thick, dark grey-brown loamy-clay.

A post-medieval or modern ditch was identified in Trench 1. It was 1.8m wide and 0.40m deep with a bowl shaped profile and cut through the subsoil (Fig 2).



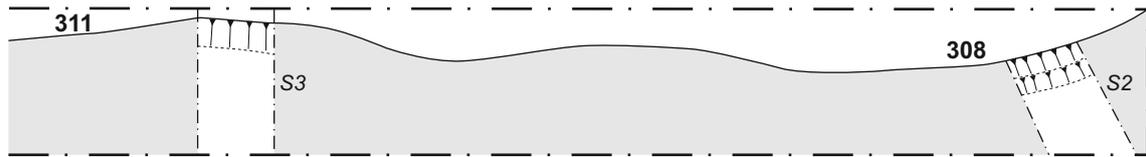
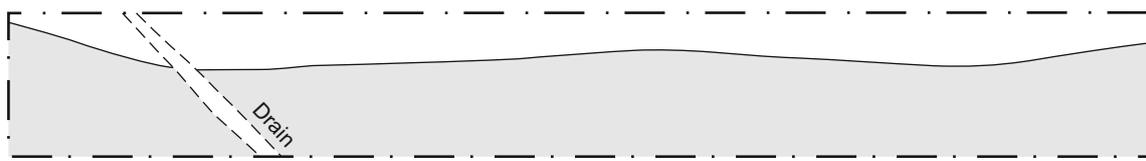
Post-medieval or modern ditch [105], looking south Fig 2

### 4.2 The Iron Age ditch

An Iron Age ditch was identified in Trench 3. It was aligned west-north-west to east-south-east, following the alignment of the trench. As a result only the northern edge was visible. It had a steep cut northern edge and a wide flat base. The ditch is at least 1.80m wide and 0.90m deep. It was not possible to ascertain the full width due to the extant boundary.

Soon after the ditch was opened a mix of eroded natural material from the edges and water borne silts comprising mottled orange-brown and blue-grey silty clay (306 and 310; Figs 4 and 5 ) accumulated in the base of the ditch. The ditch continued to silt up with two distinct fills of mixed natural silting present containing dumps of pottery and animal bone. Fill (305/309) comprised mottled mid orange-brown and blue-grey silty clay, and (304/308) mottled light orange and grey silty clay. The ditch was then purposely in filled with very dark grey-brown silty clay containing small charcoal flecks and occasional animal bone fragments (303).

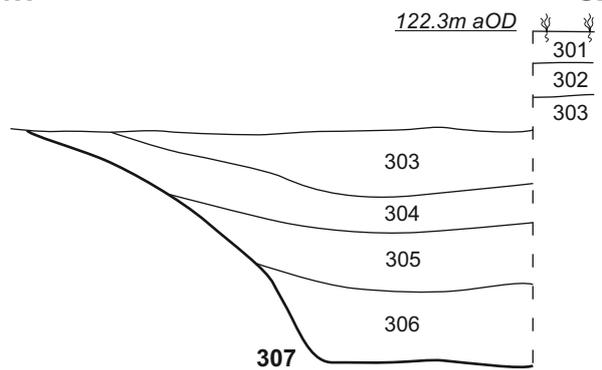
**Trench 3**



**Section 2**

NW

SE



Ditch 307, looking north-east

**Section 3**

N

S



Ditch 311, looking east



## 5 THE FINDS

### 5.1 The Iron Age Pottery by Andy Chapman

Fills of ditch [307/310] produced small groups of body sherds in fabrics containing dense large shell. These can be broadly dated to the middle to late Iron Age.

From the fill (305) of ditch [307] there are 23 small sherds weighing 60g comprising plain body sherds from a single vessel in a fabric containing dense large shell, with a grey/black core and inner surface and a dark brown external surface.

From the fill (308) of ditch [310] there are 9 small sherds weighing 35g comprising plain body sherds from perhaps three vessels, all in fabrics containing dense large shell, with grey/black cores and inner surfaces and light brown, orange brown and grey external surfaces.

### 5.2 The animal bone by Adam Reid

Six fragments of animal bone were recovered from fill (303), a fill of Iron Age ditch [307]. The fragments comprised one adult cattle molar, two fragments of adult cattle femur and three fragments of indeterminate mammal bone. One of the indeterminate fragments had been calcined, indicating high temperature burning.

The fragments currently hold limited interpretative value, but the recovery of identifiable bone fragments may indicate the possibility for further analysis, should any mitigation work take place at the site in the future.

## 6 DISCUSSION

The evaluation has identified a mid to late Iron Age ditch aligned east to west. Previous excavations to the immediate south of the development area, prior to the construction of new residential housing, revealed numerous Iron Age pits, ditches, and enclosures. The ditch identified by the evaluation is contemporary with and probably part of that Iron Age settlement. The size and width of the ditch suggests that it is part of a substantial ditched enclosure or boundary. The dark final levelling layer (303) would indicate some form of dwelling close by. As no evidence of further Iron Age features were identified further north than Trench 3 it may be postulated that this ditch may form part of the main enclosure ditch encompassing the settlement to the south.

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MOLA Northampton  
October 2016

**APPENDIX: CONTEXT INDEX**

<b>Trench No</b>	<b>Length, width &amp; alignment</b>	<b>NGR</b>	<b>Surface height</b>	<b>Depth &amp; height of natural</b>
1	25m x 1.80m E-W	SP 86181 87352	122.29m aOD	121.79m aOD
<b>Context</b>	<b>Context type Feature &amp; type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Artefacts/ Samples</b>
101	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown loamy clay.	0.20m thick	-
102	Subsoil	mid grey-brown loamy clay and contained occasional mixed-sized gravel.	0.30m thick	-
103	Natural	light brown-grey silty clay containing flecks and small pieces chalk, and patches of light orange-brown silty clay		-
104	Fill	Ark grey-brown clay loam.	1.80m wide 0.40m thick	-
105	Ditch	Modern ditch, wide bowl shaped profile	1.80m wide 0.40m deep	-

<b>Trench No</b>	<b>Length, width &amp; alignment</b>	<b>NGR</b>	<b>Surface height</b>	<b>Depth &amp; height of natural</b>
2	20m x 1.80m E-W	SP 86189 87344	122.27m aOD	122.02m aOD
<b>Context</b>	<b>Context type Feature &amp; type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Artefacts/ Samples</b>
201	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown loamy clay.	0.10m thick	-
202	Subsoil	mid grey-brown loamy clay and contained occasional mixed-sized gravel	0.15m thick	-
203	Natural	light brown-grey silty clay containing flecks and small pieces chalk, and patches of light orange-brown silty clay		-

<b>Trench No</b>	<b>Length, width &amp; alignment</b>	<b>NGR</b>	<b>Surface height</b>	<b>Depth &amp; height of natural</b>
3	25m x 1.80m E-W	SP 86172 87317	122.30m aOD	122.00m aOD
<b>Context</b>	<b>Context type Feature &amp; type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Artefacts/ Samples</b>
301	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown loamy clay.	0.15m thick	-
302	Subsoil	mid grey-brown loamy clay containing occasional mixed-sized gravel.	0.15m thick	-
303	Fill	Very dark grey-brown silty clay.	Over 1.80m wide 0.30m thick	Animal bone
304	Fill	Mottled light orange and grey silty clay.	Over 1.80m wide 0.10m thick	
305	Fill	Mottled mid orange-brown and grey silty clay.	Over 1.20m wide 0.20m thick	Iron Age Pottery
306	Fill	Mottled mid orange-brown and blue-grey silty clay.	Over 0.90m wide 0.25m thick	
307	Ditch	E-W aligned ditch, steep sides, flat base.	Over 1.80m wide 0.90m deep	
308	Fill	Mottled light orange and grey silty clay.	Over 1.80m wide 0.10m thick	Iron Age pottery
309	Fill	Mottled mid orange-brown and grey silty clay.	Over 1.80m wide 0.30m thick	
310	Fill	Mottled mid orange-brown and blue-grey silty clay.	Over 1.80m wide 0.25m thick	
311	Ditch	E-W aligned ditch, steep sides, flat base.	Over 1.80m wide 0.90m deep	
312	Natural	light brown-grey silty-clay containing flecks and small pieces chalk, and patches of light orange-brown silty clay		-



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