



**Archaeological observation,
investigation, recording and analysis
on land at Purple Oaks Academy Special School
Northampton
February 2017**

Report No. 17/12

Author: Chloe Cronogue-Freeman

Illustrator: Olly Dindol



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Site Code: ENN108601
NGR: SP 75629 63820

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Planning reference: N/2016/0790

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Quality control and sign off:

Issue No.	Date approved:	Checked by:	Verified by:	Approved by:	Reason for Issue:
1	13/02/2017	R. Atkins	C. Finn	A. Maull	First issue

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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		Oasis No. Molanort1-276065	
Project title	Archaeological observation, investigation, recording and analysis on land at Purple Oaks Academy Special School, Northampton, February 2017		
Short description	<i>MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) undertook a programme of archaeological observation at Purple Oaks Academy Special School during works for a new school building. Excavations revealed only the footprint of the previous school built on the site in the 20th century.</i>		
Project type	Watching Brief		
Previous work	Desk-based assessment (Cottam 2016)		
Current land use	Derelict		
Future work	Unknown		
Monument type and period	-		
Significant finds	-		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County	Northamptonshire		
Site address	Land at Purple Oaks School, Whiston Road, Northampton		
Post code	NN2 7RR		
OS co-ordinates	SP 75629 63820		
Area (sq m/ha)	c2.1ha		
Height aOD	115m aOD		
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation	MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology)		
Project brief originator	Liz Mordue, NCC		
Project Design originator	Claire Finn, MOLA		
Director/Supervisor	Chloe Cronogue-Freeman, MOLA		
Project Managers	Ant Maull, MOLA		
Sponsor or funding body	GF Tomlinson		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date	7th January 2017		
End date	7th January 2017		
ARCHIVES	Location	Contents	
Physical	MOLA ENN108601	-	
Paper		Site records	
Digital		report, photographs	
BIBLIOGRAPHY	Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (MOLA report)		
Title	Archaeological observation, investigation, recording and analysis on land at Purple Oaks Academy Special School, Northampton, February 2017		
Serial title & volume	MOLA Northampton report 17/12		
Author(s)	Chloe Cronogue-Freeman		
Page numbers	9		
Date	February 2017		

Contents

- 1 INTRODUCTION
- 2 BACKGROUND
 - 2.1 Location, topography and geology
 - 2.2 Historical background
- 3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY
 - 3.1 Methodology
- 4 Archaeological observation
 - 4.1 General stratigraphy
 - 4.2 Excavated evidence
- 5 Conclusion

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Figures

Cover: Site, looking north

Fig 1: Site location

Fig 2: Soil sequence, looking south

Fig 3: Remnants of old school building, looking south

Fig 4: Remains of old school building, looking north

Fig 5: Remains of old school building, looking north-east

Archaeological observation, Investigation, recording and analysis on land at Purple Oaks Academy Special School Northampton February 2017

ABSTRACT

MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) undertook a programme of archaeological observation at Purple Oaks Academy Special School during works for a new school building. Excavations revealed only the footprint of the previous school built on the site in the 20th century.

1 INTRODUCTION

MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) was commissioned by GF Tomlinson, to undertake a programme of archaeological observation, investigation, recording, analysis and publication on a development site on land at Purple Oaks Academy Special School (former Bective Middle School site), Northampton (NGR SP 75629 63820, Fig 1). Planning permission has been received for the construction of a SEN school (Purple Oaks Academy Special School) for 100 pupils from age 3 to 18 years, including associated parking, play spaces and landscaping (Planning Application N/2016/0790). The observation works were undertaken in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF; DCLG 2012), with a Written Scheme of Investigation (MOLA 2017), which was approved by Northamptonshire County Council.

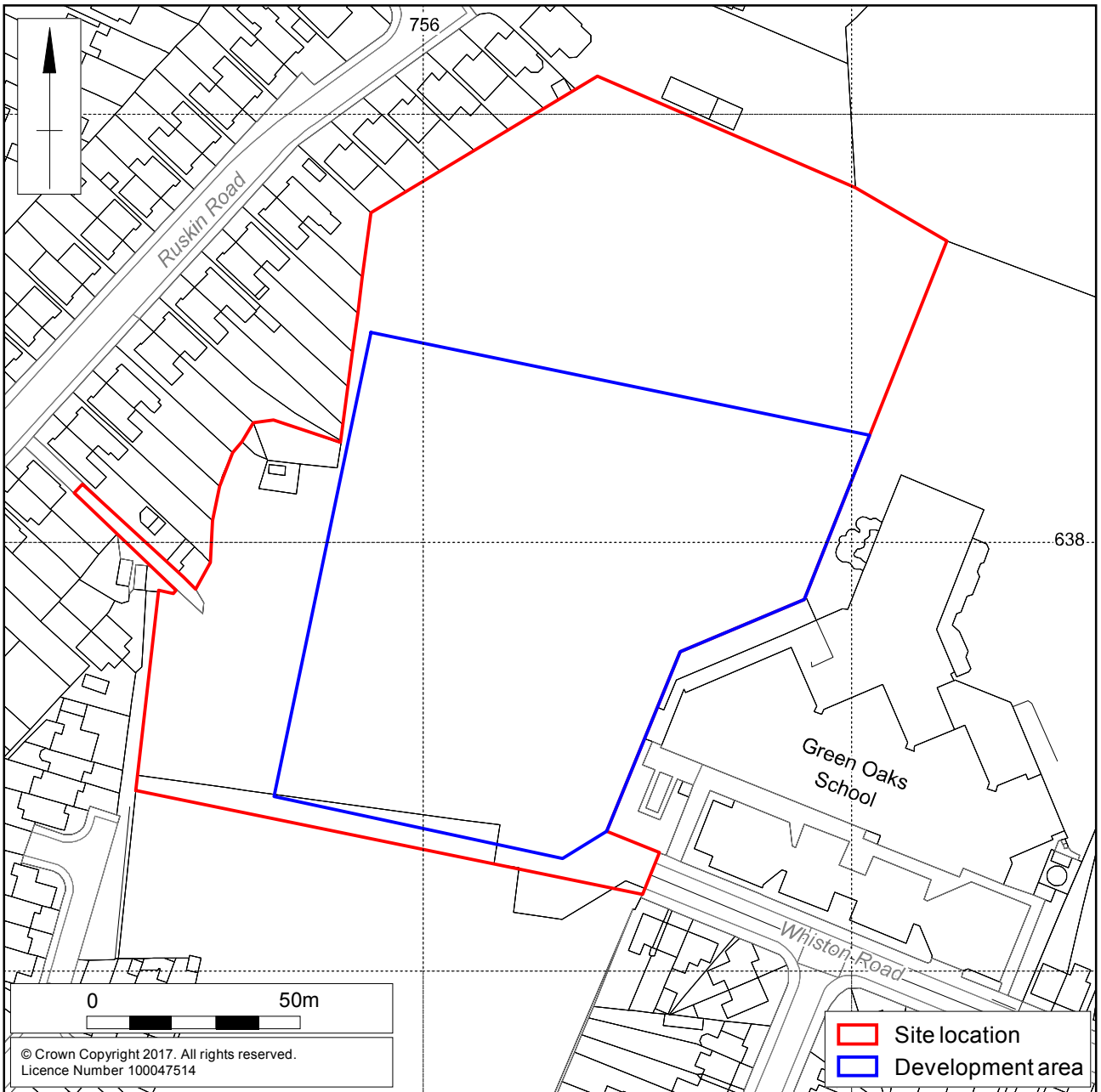
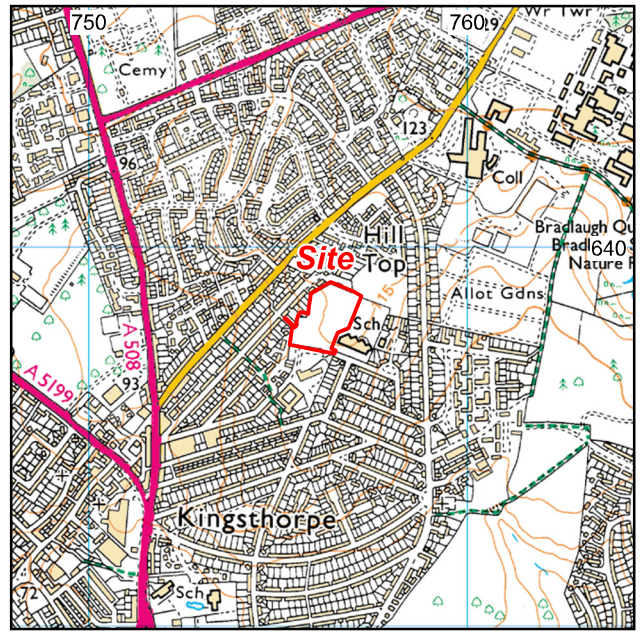
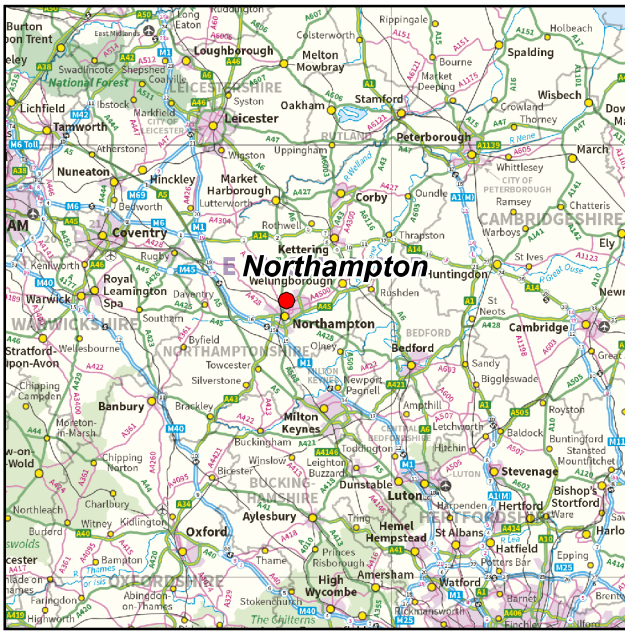
2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location, topography and geology

The WSI stated that the development area comprises c2.1 hectares of derelict ground, lying within a residential area in Kingsthorpe, Northampton. The proposed development area lies adjacent to Green Oaks Primary Academy, and part of the area also formerly housed the site of Bective Middle School.

The site of the new academy is bound to the east by the buildings and playing fields of Green Oaks Primary Academy, and by the western end of Whiston Road. To the south is a rectangular area of derelict ground containing overgrown areas of hard standing representing the remains of the demolished middle school. To the west is a boundary of trees and hedgerow beyond which are the curtilages of properties on Ruskin Road and Bective View. Boughton Green Road lies parallel to Ruskin Road to the west. To the north of the site is the northern end of Ruskin Road and gardens at the end of Windmill Terrace.

The site lies on land which slopes gently down to the south-west. It lies at around 115m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). The land lies on the boundary between Blisworth Limestone Formation and Rutland Formation Mudstone to the west (BGS 2017), overlain by Oadby Member Diamicton (Cottam 2016).



Scale 1:1500

Site location and development area Fig 1

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2.2 Historical background

Prior to the current phase of works, no previous archaeological works are known to have taken place on the site. A desk-based assessment of the adjacent Green Oaks Primary School was undertaken as part of Northampton Schools Assessment in 2003-4. More recently, the current development area was analysed by desk-based assessment undertaken by AC Archaeology (Cottam 2016). The following historical background is summarised from that document. There are no designated heritage assets within the application area, and only one within the broader study area. This Grade II Listed Building is an early 19th-century windmill converted into a domestic residence. There are no Registered Parks, Scheduled Monuments, Registered Battlefields or World Heritage Sites within 1km of the application area. The northern boundary of the Kingsthorpe Conservation Area lies c600m to the south-west of the application area.

There are five non-designated heritage assets currently recorded within the 300m study area, none of which lie within the application area. Silver coins of Severus Alexander (Emperor from AD222 to 235) have been recorded around 250m south of the site on Yelvertoft Road. A single coin of Constantine was also recorded around 250m south-west off Bective Road. The finds were unstratified. The Northamptonshire Historic Environment Record records a middle Saxon to post-medieval roadway around 350m due east of the site, however the route of the road is not known. A terrace of post-medieval houses (Nos. 147-153 Harborough Road) and an area of 1950s allotments are considered to be non-designated heritage assets of limited historic value. Further afield, a small Romano-British settlement, comprising some structural remains and burials, has been recorded on Northampton Sands, c.1km to the west of the development.

Kingsthorpe village historically lay to the west of the road to Northampton, before it became subsumed into urban Northampton. It was recorded in the 1086 Domesday survey, at which time it was a settlement of eleven households and was owned by the king. In 1278, the Friars Minor of Northampton were licenced to cover Froxwelle Spring at Kingsthorpe, followed by Triwell spring. From these locations, the water was carried by subterranean conduit to the main Northampton house. These conduits were probably situated to the south side of the village. Small scale industrial remains are also known from the vicinity, including a number of mills, limestone quarries and lime kilns dating from the later medieval and post-medieval periods.

The Inclosure map of 1767 shows that the development area lies across two undeveloped plots divided by a field boundary. The current boundaries of the site were not in place at this time. The owners of the two plots are noted as John Ford and Thomas Hollis. No buildings are shown within either plot. The land was probably under agricultural use. The road at this time was called Stamford Lane, and it was fronted by three small plots adjacent to the development area. A windmill to the north of the development area is shown on the 1835 Ordnance Surveyor's map.

By the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1886, a number of boundaries on the east side of the former Stamford Lane had been removed to create larger, roughly rectangular fields. The boundary dividing the development area had disappeared and it then lay almost fully within a single field, now part of a large orchard. A spring is now labelled within the development area. The eastern boundary of the development area lies beyond the orchard, across two large fields. The boundaries and properties on the western side of the former Stamford Lane had remained fairly static from the earlier Inclosure map.

The Ordnance Survey map of 1926 shows that the orchard was still in place, and the area around the now disused windmill to the north of the development area had become built up with houses and boundaries.

By 1938, the Ordnance Survey map shows the buildings of the Bective Middle School had been constructed within the southern part of the development area. The buildings comprised three sides of a courtyard with ancillary structures, roads and pathways. Stamford Lane at this time appears to have been renamed as Boughton Road, now edged by residential development. The new Ruskin Road had also been laid out parallel to the east, forming the western boundary to the development area. The eastern boundary still lay within open fields. The northern part of the development area may form part of the school's recreational fields, although it appeared to be separate.

The Ordnance Survey map of 1960 shows that the development area was completely occupied by school buildings, and the school property also extended further north and east, lying beyond the limits of the development area. The school buildings appear to have remained until 1993 and were completely demolished by 2004. The area reverted to rough ground, blocks of hard standing and scrub. The Green Oaks Primary Academy was constructed to the east by 2009.

3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the archaeological investigation as stated in the WSI is to determine and understand the nature, function and character of any archaeology revealed within its cultural and environmental setting. In particular the investigation will aim 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.

Specific research objectives will be drawn from national and regional research frameworks as relevant depending upon the results of the work (Cooper 2006, updated by Knight *et al* 2012).

3.1 Methodology

All works were carried out in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists *Code of Conduct* (CIfA 2014a), and *Standard and guidance for archaeological watching brief* (CIfA 2014b). All works conformed to the Historic England procedural document *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)* (HE 2015). All site recording procedures are detailed in MOLA Northampton's in-house manual (MOLA 2014), which is issued to all staff.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATION

4.1 General stratigraphy

The natural substrate of the site was observed to be friable mid whitish-yellow clayey sand with frequent small to large sandstone stones. This was overlain by the topsoil which was dark greyish brown sandy clay with frequent roots, occasional small to large pebbles, and moderate fragments of brick. The topsoil was up to 0.30m thick.



Soil sequence, looking south

Fig 2

4.2 Excavated evidence

The only evidence found below ground was that of the original school buildings constructed of modern materials such as brick. This included foundations still *in situ* and ditches where the foundations had been removed when the building was demolished. Modern building materials were not retained.



Remnants of old school building, looking south

Fig 3



Remains of old school building, looking north

Fig 4



Remains of old school building, looking north-east

Fig 5

5 CONCLUSION

The developed area only contained evidence of the school buildings from the 20th century and no other archaeological features or finds were present.

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