



**Archaeological trial trench evaluation at  
Moulton College Food and Drink Innovation Centre  
Moulton  
Northamptonshire  
July 2017**

Report No 17/102

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Illustrator: Joanne Clawley



**Archaeological trial trench evaluation at  
Moulton College Food and Drink Innovation Centre  
Moulton  
Northamptonshire  
July 2017**

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**OASIS REPORT FORM**

| <b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>    |   | <b>OASIS No: molanort1 - 292606</b>                                |  |
|---------------------------|---|--|--|
| Project title             | Archaeological trial trench evaluation at Moulton College Food and Drink Innovation Centre, Moulton, Northamptonshire July 2017   |  |  |
| Short description         | MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) carried out an archaeological evaluation on land at Moulton College Food and Drink Innovation Centre on behalf of CgMs Consulting Ltd. Six trenches was excavated and these contained no archaeological features or artefacts. Only a topsoil and subsoil horizon was observed in the trenches except the most easterly Trench 4, which only displayed topsoil. |  |  |
| Project type              | Trial trench evaluation   |  |  |
| Previous work             | None  |  |  |
| Current land use          | Cut grass area (fallow field)   |  |  |
| Future work               | Not known   |  |  |
| Monument type and period  | None  |  |  |
| Significant finds         | None  |  |  |
| <b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>   |   |  |  |
| County                    | Northamptonshire  |  |  |
| Site address              | Moulton College Food and Drink Innovation Centre, on Moulton College land, Moulton, Northamptonshire  |  |  |
| Easting Northing          | SP 773 675  |  |  |
| Area (sq m/ha)            | c 4ha   |  |  |
| Height aOD                | 106m and 108m (aOD)   |  |  |
| <b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>   |   |  |  |
| Organisation              | MOLA  |  |  |
| Project brief originator  | N/A   |  |  |
| Project Design originator | H. Maisey (Mott MacDonald Ltd)  |  |  |
| Director/Supervisor       | Paul Beers (MOLA)   |  |  |
| Project Manager           | Ant Maull (MOLA)  |  |  |
| Sponsor or funding body   | CgMs Consulting Ltd.  |  |  |
| <b>PROJECT DATE</b>       |   |  |  |
| Start date                | 10/07/2017  |  |  |
| End date                  | 17/07/2017  |  |  |
| <b>ARCHIVES</b>           | <b>Location (Accession no.)</b>   | <b>Contents</b>  |  |
| Physical                  | ENN108792   | None   |  |
| Paper                     |   | Site documents: Trial trench logs, photo registers                 |  |
| Digital                   |   | Dxf data, digital photographs (JPEG/RAW), client report (word/PDF) |  |
| <b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>       |   |  |  |
| Unpublished client report |   |  |  |
| Title                     | Archaeological trial trench evaluation at Moulton College Food and Drink Innovation Centre, Moulton, Northamptonshire July 2017   |  |  |
| Serial title & volume     | 17/102  |  |  |
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| Page numbers              | 13 pages including text and illustrations   |  |  |
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# Archaeological trial trench evaluation at Moulton College Food and Drink Innovation Centre Moulton Northamptonshire July 2017

## Abstract

*MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) carried out an archaeological evaluation on land at Moulton College Food and Drink Innovation Centre on behalf of CgMs Consulting Ltd. Six trenches were excavated and these contained no archaeological features or artefacts. Only a topsoil and subsoil horizon was observed in the trenches except the most easterly Trench 4, which only displayed topsoil.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) was commissioned by CgMs Consulting acting on behalf of their clients, to carry out an archaeological evaluation comprising six trial trenches on c4ha of land on the site of the proposed Moulton College Food and Drink Innovation Centre at Moulton, Northamptonshire. The evaluation area comprised a single arable field situated at the north of the Pitsford Road and immediately west of Lodge Farm (Fig 1). It is centred on national grid reference SP 773 675. The work is intended to inform, in advance of determination, a planning application for development of the land. The works were carried out in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF; DCLG 2012). The fieldworks were undertaken in accordance with an approved Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) (Mott MacDonald 2017).

MOLA is a Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) registered organisation, which works undertook the work according to the Mott MacDonald WSI, supplied by the client and monitored by the Planning Archaeologist for Northamptonshire County Council (NCC).

## 2 BACKGROUND

### 2.1 Topography and geology

The evaluation area occupied land that sloped gently to south-east corner from the north and west, lying between the 106m and 108m contour. The underlying bedrock is mapped as Stamford Member sandstone and siltstone with the western half of the area overlain by superficial deposits of Oadby Member chalky till (BGS 2017).

Overhead power lines run north-east to south-west and north-west to south-east across the development area and a drain also traversed the site, creating areas of exclusion.

### 2.2 Historical and Archaeological background

An approved WSI produced by Mott MacDonald (2017) gave a full historic background for the site, and the following background has been reproduced from that document.

**Prehistoric**

Cropmarks, probably of prehistoric date are known immediately at the north and east of the application area, which include prehistoric linear boundaries, enclosures, pits and ditches.

**Romano-British and Iron Age settlement**

Directly to the south and partially overlying the application area lie further extensive remains of Iron Age and Romano-British settlement, were identified from cropmarks including geophysical survey (Shiel 2005) and archaeological strip and map sample excavation (Foard-Colby 2007). The archaeological features revealed by this work comprised enclosures, linear boundary ditches and pits, indicating a probable rural agricultural settlement, with potential of the features continuing into the proposed development area. A possible Iron Age to Roman settlement has been identified further to the south in Pitsford Quarry from cropmarks identifying enclosures, ring-ditches and earthwork boundaries (Deegan 1999), including the recovery of mainly Iron Age pottery.

**Medieval**

Moulton was medieval settlement recorded in the Domesday Book (1087) as *Moltone*, surrounding an agricultural landscape. The proposed development area lay in a field that was previously part of the Moulton Grange Estate. There are areas of surviving medieval and post-medieval ridge and furrow field systems close to the vicinity of the development site, as well as the evidence of them from the evaluation on the Moulton College athletics ground to the north (Jones and Walford 2014), which included uncertain linear and curvilinear ditches. Further evidence of the field system was identified on the college sports field to the south of the site (Deegan 1999; Foard-Colby 2007).

**3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

The principal aim of the archaeological evaluation was to quantify the quality and extent of the archaeological resource so as to determine and understand the nature, function and character of the archaeological site in its cultural and environmental setting. The aims of the investigation were to:

- Establish the location, date, nature and extent of the activity or occupation on the development site; particularly the Iron Age and Roman settlements that may extend into this area;
- Recover artefacts to assist in the development of type series within the region;
- Establish the integrity and state of preservation of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present and the extent of any modern truncation or disturbance;
- Establish whether medieval to post-medieval ridge and furrow systems into the proposed development area;
- to recover palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions.

Specific research objectives were to be drawn from national and regional research frameworks documents (Knight *et al* 2012) as relevant, depending upon the results of this evaluation. However, the lack of any features within the site (see below) prevented any research agendas being addressed.

## 4 EXCAVATION METHODOLOGY

### Trial trenching methodology

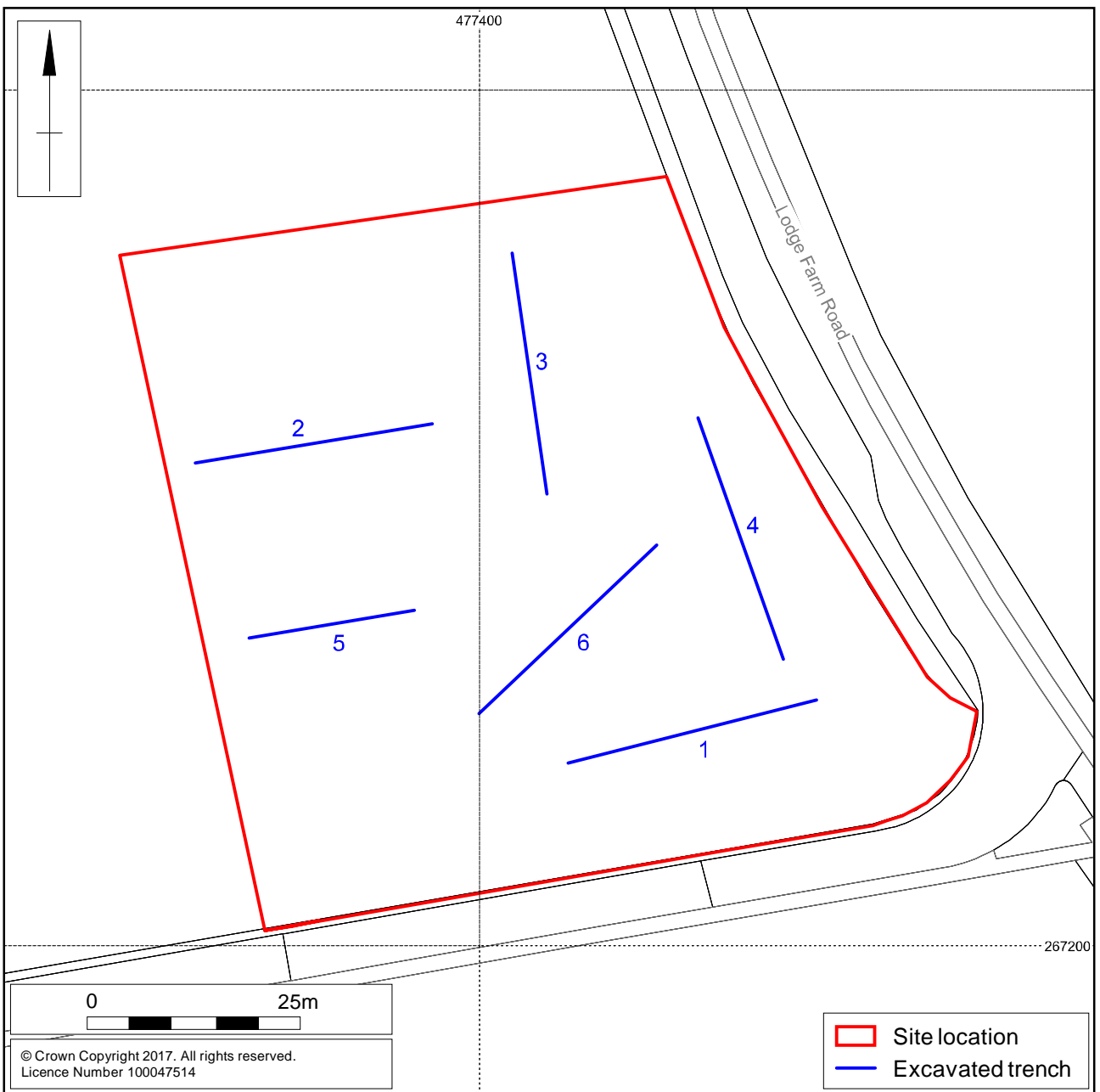
The trial trenching followed the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by Mott MacDonald (2017) and supplied by their clients, and all works complied with current best archaeological practice as defined in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2014a), the *Code of Conduct* (ClfA 2014b). Works were monitored by Lesley Ann Mather Archaeological Advisor to Northamptonshire County Council.

Six trial trenches were located in the south-east corner of a field on the site of the proposed development area. The evaluation targeted an area of 4,115 square metres, approximately five percent of the development area. This equated to 167 linear metres of trenching, realised as five x 30m trenches and one x 20m trenches, all 1.8m wide (Fig 1). The six trenches were positioned to best sample the area of the site for any potential archaeology based on the evidence from the previous survey work and excavations. All trenches were located and plotted on the ground using Leica Viva GPS survey equipment and tied into the Ordnance Survey. All site levels were related to Ordnance Datum.

Topsoil, subsoil and non-structural soils or modern overburden were removed under archaeological supervision by mechanical excavator, fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, to reveal either archaeological remains, had any been present, or the undisturbed natural horizons. The topsoil was stacked separately from the subsoil and other deposits to aid reinstatement of the trenches on completion of the works.

All archaeological deposits and artefacts encountered during the course of evaluation were fully recorded and followed standard fieldwork procedures (MOLA 2014). The photographic archive comprises high resolution digital photography. The excavated area and spoil heaps were scanned by a suitably experienced metal detector user to ensure maximum finds retrieval. A summary of trenches, deposits and features by field are presented in the Appendix 1.





Scale 1:750

Site location and excavated trenches Fig 1

## **5 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE**

### **5.1 General stratigraphy**

The six trenches contained no archaeological features and no artefacts were retrieved from any of the trenches. All of the trenches contained both a topsoil and subsoil horizon except the most easterly Trench 4, which did not seem to contain a subsoil (Figs 2 to 7).

### **5.2 The archaeological remains**

#### **Natural**

The natural level was exposed across the base of each trench. This was observed to be a firm to compact light yellow-brown silty/sandy clay, with occasional ironstone and flecks of manganese. A few of the trenches also exhibited areas of frequent small stones and irregular patches of mixed blue-grey clay. This layer constituted context (3) in each of the trenches. For a full description of the natural and overlying soil layers and Figures 2-7, see Appendix 1.

#### **Subsoil**

This was composed mainly of a friable medium brown clay-sand, with occasional stones. The depth of the subsoil lay between 0.10m at its thinnest at the east end of Trench 2 to the north-west and 0.27 its greatest thickness at the north-east end in Trench 1 to the south-east, which may suggest a slight rising gradient in this direction. Subsoil was entirely absent in Trench 4. The subsoil layer comprised context (2) in Trenches 1-3 and 5-6.

#### **Topsoil**

The topsoil, context (1) in each trench was composed of common friable mid to dark brown silty sand, with occasional stones. It also displayed a variable thickness between 0.04m at its thinnest in middle to the north-east end of Trench 3 to its thickest 0.27m-0.33m in Trench 4.

## **6 DISCUSSION**

No archaeological features or artefacts were found within the site. The Iron Age and Roman settlement and field system examined to the south seems to have stopped before reaching this location (Foard-Colby 2007; Shiel 2005).

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MOLA  
11 August 2017

**APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT INVENTORY**

| Trench No.     | Length, width & alignment |  | Surface height (aOD) | Depth & height of natural (aOD) |
|----------------|---------------------------|--|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1              | 30 x 1.8m<br>NE-SW        |  | 106.12               | 105.71                          |
| <i>Context</i> | <i>Context type</i>       | <i>Description</i>   | <i>Dimensions</i>    | <i>Artefacts/<br/>Samples</i>   |
| 101            | Topsoil                   | Friable medium to dark brown silty sand, occasional stones | 0.12-0.16m thick     | -                               |
| 102            | Subsoil                   | Friable medium brown clayish sand, occasional stones       | 0.15-0.27m thick     | -                               |
| 103            | Natural                   | Firm light yellow-brown sandy clay, frequent stones        | 0.06-0.11m+ thick    | -                               |



Trench 1, looking north-east (scale 1m)

Fig 2



| Trench No.     | Length, width & alignment |  | Surface height (aOD) | Depth & height of natural (aOD) |
|----------------|---------------------------|--|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| 2              | 28 x 1.8m<br>NE-SW        |  | 106.95               | 106.49                          |
| <i>Context</i> | <i>Context type</i>       | <i>Description</i>   | <i>Dimensions</i>    | <i>Artefacts/Samples</i>        |
| 201            | Topsoil                   | Friable dark brown silty sand, occasional small stones   | 0.17-0.22m thick     | -                               |
| 202            | Subsoil                   | Friable medium brown clayish sand, occasional small stones   | 0.10-0.15m thick     | -                               |
| 203            | Natural                   | Compact light yellow-brown sandy clays with frequent small stones, occasional ironstone, and occasional flecks of manganese. Mixed with blue-grey clay irregularities. | 0.15m+ thick         | -                               |



Trench 2, looking west (scale 1m)

Fig 3

| Trench No.     | Length, width & alignment |   | Surface height (aOD) | Depth & height of natural (aOD) |
|----------------|---------------------------|---|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| 3              | 30 x 1.8m<br>NE-SW        |   | 107.72               | 107.37                          |
| <i>Context</i> | <i>Context type</i>       | <i>Description</i>  | <i>Dimensions</i>    | <i>Artefacts/<br/>Samples</i>   |
| 301            | Topsoil                   | Friable dark brown silty sand, occasional small stones                        | 0.04-0.14m thick     | -                               |
| 302            | Subsoil                   | Friable medium brown clayish sand   | 0.20m thick          | -                               |
| 303            | Natural                   | Firm light yellow-brown silty clay, occasional stones and flecks of manganese | 0.05m+ thick         | -                               |



Trench 3, looking south-west (scale 1m)

Fig 4



| Trench No.     | Length, width & alignment |   | Surface height (aOD) | Depth & height of natural (aOD) |
|----------------|---------------------------|---|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| 4              | 30 x 1.8m<br>NE-SW        |   | 106.11               | 105.74                          |
| <i>Context</i> | <i>Context type</i>       | <i>Description</i>  | <i>Dimensions</i>    | <i>Artefacts/<br/>Samples</i>   |
| 401            | Topsoil                   | Friable mid brown clayish sand, occasional small stones     | 0.27-0.33m thick     | -                               |
| 403            | Natural                   | Firm light yellow-brown silty/sandy clay, occasional stones | 0.08m+ thick         | -                               |



Trench 4, looking north-west (scale 1m)

Fig 5

| Trench No.     | Length, width & alignment |  | Surface height (aOD) | Depth & height of natural (aOD) |
|----------------|---------------------------|--|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| 5              | 20 x 1.8m E-W             |  | 107.44               | 107.06                          |
| <i>Context</i> | <i>Context type</i>       | <i>Description</i>   | <i>Dimensions</i>    | <i>Artefacts/Samples</i>        |
| 501            | Topsoil                   | Friable dark brown silty sand, occasional small stones   | 0.08-0.12m thick     | -                               |
| 502            | Subsoil                   | Friable medium brown clayish sand, occasional small stones   | 0.18-0.20m thick     | -                               |
| 503            | Natural                   | Compact light yellow-brown sandy clays with frequent small stones, occasional ironstone, and occasional flecks of manganese. Mixed with blue-grey clay irregularities. | 0.08m+ thick         | -                               |



Trench 5, looking west (scale 1m)

Fig 6



| Trench No.     | Length, width & alignment |   | Surface height (aOD) | Depth & height of natural (aOD) |
|----------------|---------------------------|---|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| 6              | 29 x 1.8m<br>NW-SE        |   | 106.46               | 105.97                          |
| <i>Context</i> | <i>Context type</i>       | <i>Description</i>  | <i>Dimensions</i>    | <i>Artefacts/<br/>Samples</i>   |
| 601            | Topsoil                   | Friable medium brown silty sand, rare small stones                  | 0.12-0.23m thick     | -                               |
| 602            | Subsoil                   | Friable light to medium brown clayish sand, occasional small stones | 0.18-0.20m thick     | -                               |
| 603            | Natural                   | Firm light brown sandy clay, occasional stones                      | 0.11m+ thick         | -                               |



Trench 6, looking south-east (scale 1m)

Fig 7



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