Archaeological trial trench evaluation at 51 Finedon Road, Burton Latimer Northamptonshire

October 2017

Report No 17/130

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Illustrator: Olly Dindol

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NGR: SP 899 740
Site code: BLT FRD 17

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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS	**OASIS No: MOLANORT1 - 300148**	
Project title	Archaeological trial trench evaluation at 51 Finedon Road, Burton Latimer, October 2017	
Short description	MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) was commissioned by Chrome Services Ltd, to undertake archaeological trial trenching on a proposed development site on land at 51 Finedon Road, Burton Latimer, Northamptonshire, prior to proposed residential development. Three trenches were excavated across the site. Remains of an undated field drainage ditch and limestone post-medieval field drains were encountered. No other archaeological remains were present.	
Project type	Trial trench evaluation	
Previous work	Desk based assessment and geophysical survey (Walker *et al* 2009)	
Current land use	Cleared scrubland	
Future work	Not known	
Monument type and period	None	
Significant finds	None	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Northamptonshire	
Site address	Land at 51 Finedon Road, Burton Latimer, Northamptonshire, NN15 5QB	
Easting Northing	SP 899 740	
Area (sq m/ha)	0.7ha	
Height aOD	*c* 63m	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	MOLA	
Project brief originator	Northamptonshire County Council Assistant Archaeological Advisor	
Project Design originator	Adam Yates (MOLA Northampton)	
Director/Supervisor	Paul Beers (MOLA Northampton)	
Project Manager	Liz Muldowney (MOLA Northampton)	
Sponsor or funding body	Chrome (Services) Ltd	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	17/10/2017	
End date	19/10/2017	
ARCHIVES	**Location (Accession no.)**	**Contents**
Physical	ENN108843	None
Paper		Site documents: Trial trench logs, levels register, and photo register.
Digital		Dxf data, digital photographs (JPEG), client report (word/PDF)
BIBLIOGRAPHY	Unpublished client report	
Title	Archaeological trial trench evaluation at 51 Finedon Road, Burton Latimer, October 2017	
Serial title & volume	17/130	
Author(s)	Paul Beers	
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Abstract
MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) was commissioned by Chrome Services Ltd, to undertake archaeological trial trenching on a proposed development site on land at 51 Finedon Road, Burton Latimer, Northamptonshire, prior to proposed residential development. Three trenches were excavated across the site. Remains of an undated field drainage ditch and limestone post-medieval field drains were encountered. No other archaeological remains were present.

1 INTRODUCTION

MOLA Northampton was commissioned by Chrome Services Ltd via their agents Ken Parke to carry out an archaeological evaluation comprising three trenches on land at 51, Finedon Road, Burton Latimer, Northamptonshire (NGR SP 899 740). The works were carried out in accordance with requirements from the Northamptonshire County Council Assistant Archaeological Advisor (NCCAAA) as a condition on planning consent for residential development for 21 dwellings (KET/2012/0511).

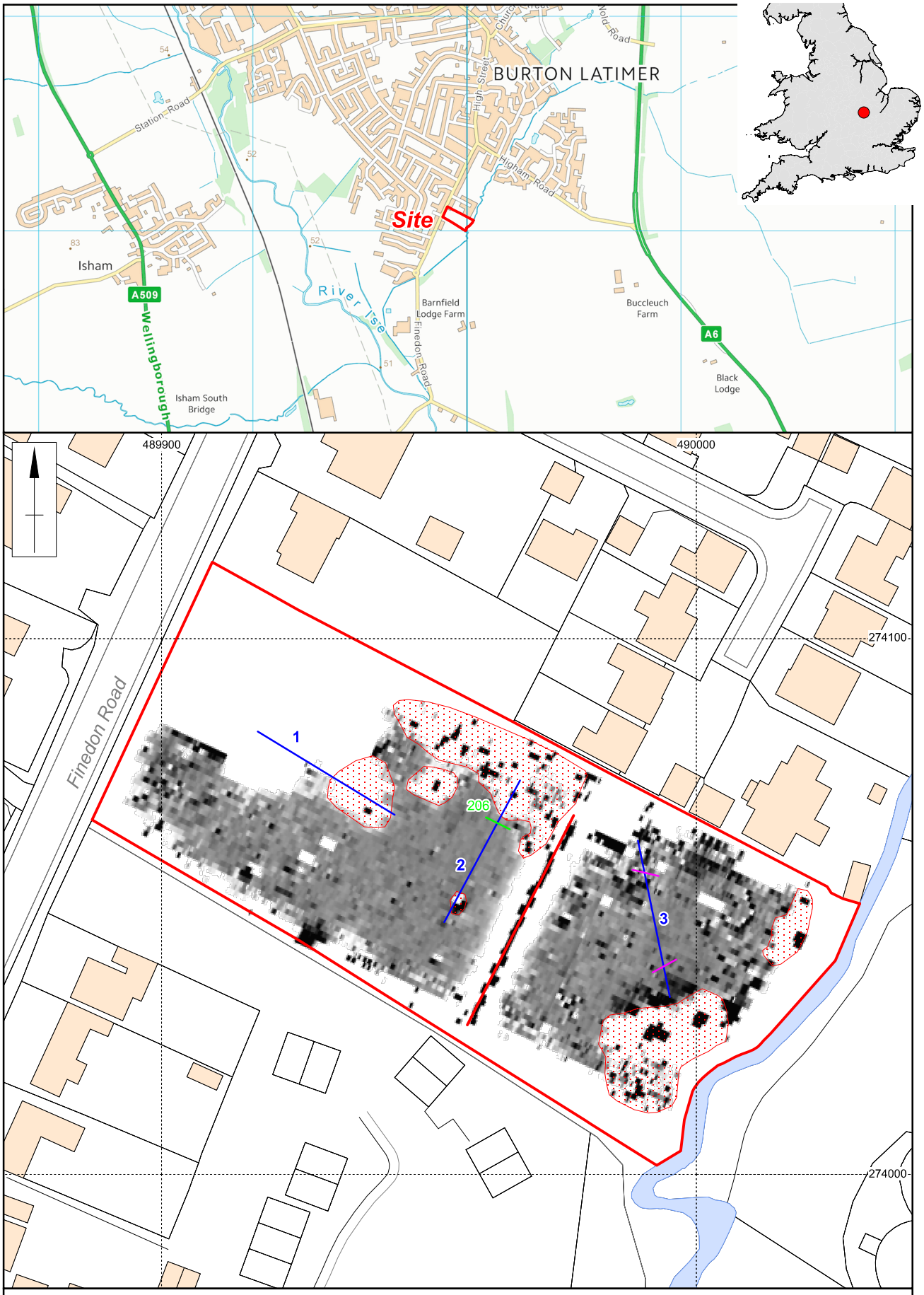
The archaeological evaluation follows desk based assessment (DBA) and geophysical survey of the site (Walker *et al* 2009). The fieldwork was undertaken in accordance with an approved Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI; Yates 2017) and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF; DCLG 2012).

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. The aims of the investigation were to:

- Establish the location, 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;
- Establish the integrity and state of preservation of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present;
- 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.

Specific research objectives were to be drawn from national and regional research frameworks documents (Cooper 2006, updated by Knight *et al* 2012) as relevant depending upon the results of the evaluation. However, the small number of features and the lack of any dating evidence prevented any research agendas being addressed.



Scale 1:1000

Site location and excavated trenches Fig 1

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 Location, topography and geology

The old parish of Burton Latimer is now part of Kettering and lies to the south of the town. The site lies to the south of Burton Latimer centre. It is bounded to the north-west by Finedon Road, to the north-east by housing, to the south-east by a stream and to the south-west by pasture.

The site lies at *c* 63m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) at the front of the site. The ground slopes to the south-east *c* 54m aOD to the stream at the rear. It is occupied by a bungalow and associated gardens. The bedrock geology of the area comprises deposits of Northampton Sand with Ironstone and Middle Lias Clays to the rear of the site.

3.2 Historical and archaeological background

The settlement was known as Burtone at Domesday and prior to the Norman Conquest Earl Ralph, probably the earl of Hereford, held 8 ½ hides of land here (VCH 1930).

The manor was divided into two in the 13th century. Two thirds were assigned to the successor of Alan de Dinant and became known as the manor of Burton by Thingden or Burton Plessy. The remaining third was assigned to the heir of Wischard Ledet and was known as Aylesford's Manor or Burton Latimer (*ibid*).

Burton Latimer was an agricultural village until the 19th century. The Militia List of 1777 lists only 61 men between the ages of 18 and 45 living in the village and the occupations given are predominantly related to agriculture, although nine weavers indicate the presence of a small weaving industry, the development of which was probably linked with a much larger industry in nearby Kettering (Ballinger 2000). By the beginning of the 19th century the weaving industry in Burton Latimer and in the surrounding settlements was rapidly declining and many people were unemployed.

Although the population of the village grew steadily during the first half of the 19th century, rapid industrialisation in the late 19th and early 20th centuries saw a more rapid increase in population into a substantial settlement. This was no doubt facilitated by the opening of the Midland Railway with a station at Burton Latimer in 1857. Industry associated with the town included large-scale ironstone quarrying to the north-east of the town on either side of the Cranford Road as well as a large carpet mill, which employed over 400 people. The boot and shoe and clothing industries also employed a significant number of people by the end of the 19th century.

The Finedon Road area was not developed until the 20th century; prior to this it was agricultural land.

3.3 Previous archaeological work

A series of Mesolithic worked flint tools have been found close to, or even on the site, although the exact grid reference is not known (*Walker et al 2009*, 5507/0/0). The tools included cores and flakes. No other prehistoric sites or finds are known in the vicinity.

A Roman road route is thought to pass near or through the site (*ibid*, 3141/1), although its course is not certain and based only on isolated stretches found to the north of Irchester Roman town to the south and through the medieval settlement remains at Barton Seagrave to the north.

Further Roman remains were found *c* 550m to the north-east during the excavation of a silage pit in 1954 (*ibid*, 1921/0/1). Finds included pottery of the 3rd and 4th centuries, two tesserae, brick, roofing tile, slag and animal bone as well as a hoard of about 120 coins dating to the late 3rd century. Excavations carried out in 2011 on a site to the north of Higham Road identified a Romano-British rectilinear farmstead, indicative of similar complex linear settlements recorded across the region (Duhig *et al,* 2012). This farmstead was in use throughout the Romano-British period and was associated with an unusually large and diverse cemetery area for a farmstead of this type in this region.

The 'Old Stone Pit' (*ibid*, 1966/0/30) is shown on the Ordnance Survey map of 1885 and had clearly gone out of use by this point.

3.4 Geophysical survey

The detailed magnetometer survey revealed nothing of archaeological significance. The results were dominated by intense dipolar magnetic anomalies, characteristic of ferrous debris. This finding is unsurprising, as a previous landowner is reported to have buried substantial amounts of rubbish across the site (Yates 2017).

One linear ferrous anomaly runs across the centre of the site. Such anomalies most usually represent pipes or electric cables, but in this case the anomaly is thought to relate to the footings of a recently removed iron fence. There are some small gaps in the data, representing places where the survey was obstructed by trees (*ibid*).

4 EXCAVATION METHODOLOGY

Three 30m long trenches were excavated within the proposed development area (Fig 1). These trenches were distributed evenly across the development area while taking in to account a number of on-site constraints. These constraints include the development compound set up in the west corner, and the recent grading of the land, built up with scrub filled deposits, on the flood plain to the east. The result of which Trenches 1 and 3 had to be relocated slightly from those proposed in the WSI.

Approximately 0.3m of topsoil had already been removed during scrub removal and stored in linear bunds along the north and south site limits prior to arrival. The trenches were excavated using a JCB mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.8m wide toothless ditching bucket. The subsoil and remaining topsoil was removed but difficult to separate, although attempts were made to store them separately. This work took place under archaeological direction to reveal the archaeological horizon or, where this was absent, the upper interface of natural geological deposits. An irregular area of about 2m of subsoil could not be removed at the south-east-south end of Trench 3 due to constraints from the flood plain and likely sharp drop in level.

The location of the trenches was surveyed and related to the Ordnance Survey National Grid using Leica GPS survey equipment using SMARTNET real-time corrections, operating to a 3D tolerance of +/-0.05m.

The trenches were cleaned sufficiently to enhance the definition of features, unless it was certain that there are no archaeological remains present. Features were sampled by hand to determine their date and character.

All archaeological deposits and artefacts encountered during the course of excavation were fully recorded, following standard MOLA procedures (MOLA 2014). All archaeological features were given a separate context number. They were described on pro-forma context sheets to include details of the context, its relationships, interpretation and a checklist of associated finds. A full photographic record comprising 16 megapixel digital images was maintained. No artefacts were recovered during the course of excavation.

On completion of the evaluation and following appropriate monitoring, all trenches were backfilled with their up-cast by soil type and then lightly compacted by the mechanical excavator.

The field data from the evaluation has been compiled into a site archive with appropriate cross-referencing under accession code ENN108843 and site code BLT FRD 17, in accordance with the specific Northamptonshire archiving standard (Mather 2014), as well as with national guidelines by Walker (1990), Brown (2011), CIfA (2014c) and the MGC (1992).

MOLA is a Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) registered organisation. All works were prepared in accordance with current best archaeological practice as defined in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Code of Conduct (CIfA 2014a), and Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation (CIfA 2014b), as well as the Historic England procedural document Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE; HE 2015).

5 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

5.1 General stratigraphy

The natural substrate was encountered at approximately 61m aOD to the north-west, sloping to the south-east down to the stream at *c* 54m aOD. It was of variable composition across the site and has been described below, but it did however occur consistently between 0.3-0.7m below the present ground surface exclusive of the *c* 0.3m topsoil strip. The only exception being Trench 3 where the natural substrate was reached at a depth of 0.88m due to a build-up of interdigitating colluvium and alluvium. This indicates this area was part of an active flood plain for the stream.

The substrate comprised light brown clayey silt with frequent ironstones in Trench 1. In Trench 2 it comprised sandy clay with frequent ironstones (203), with a distinct variation occurring across the north-east quarter where it consisted of compact light bluish grey clay (204). Trench 3 varied again with compact mid yellowish brown clay, mottled in places with bluish grey clay and occasional ironstone in concentrated clusters.

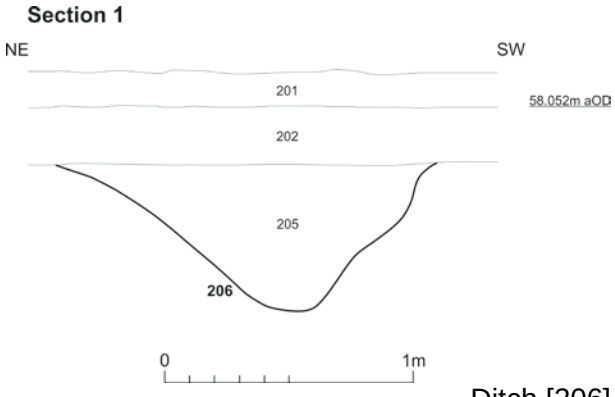
Subsoil sealed the natural substrate and was 0.2-0.45m thick and present across the site, it comprised friable mid light brown clayey silt with occasional stones. In Trench 3 this varied slightly, where it consisted of mid orangish brown silty sands with darker and lighter lenses observed, indicative of interdigitating deposits. In Trench 3 the subsoil also contained modern fragments of glass (not recovered) near to the location of the modern disturbance described below.

The topsoil across the site consisted of dark brown silty clay with occasional charcoal flecks and frequent root disturbance from the cleared scrub and was 0.38-0.5m thick (inclusive of *c* 0.3m topsoil strip).

Modern linear disturbances were observed truncating the subsoil with a very compact bluish grey clay backfill, along the south-east-south end Trench 3, and the south-east corner Trench 1. Trench 2 had the corner of a square modern pit encountered in the centre truncating both the topsoil and subsoil, *c* 2m wide, and is most likely a backfilled geotechnical pit.

5.2 The archaeological remains

A single undated ditch [206] was aligned north-west to south-east across Trench 2 truncating the transition in the natural substrate (203) and (204) (Fig 1). It was 1.55m wide by 0.59m deep with sharp top breaks of slope onto steep sides, and moderate bottom breaks of slope on to a flat base (Fig 2). The fill (205) was soft and homogenous, indicative of gradual silting. No samples were retrieved as any subsequent findings would be unsupported due to the lack of dating evidence.



Ditch [206] Fig 2

Attempts were made to locate ditch [206] along its projected path to Trench 3 but it was not identified. Trench 3 did however contain two post-medieval limestone land drains *c* 0.35m wide at opposite ends across the trench perpendicular to each other at *c* 53.8m and 56.08m aOD (Fig 1).

7 DISCUSSION

One undated ditch in Trench 2 was identified but no (other) features dating before the post-medieval period was found. The lack of features and artefacts recovered from the evaluation broadly suggests that settlement was not close to the development area. The trial trench sample shows no evidence for any prehistoric or Roman activity predating this agricultural use, and indicates the Roman road identified in the DBA had not been within the area, and may have been some distance this location. This correlates closely with the results of the previous geophysical survey (Walker *et al* 2009).

The ditch in Trench 2 is indicative of a drainage ditch in the heaviest clay part of the site, heading towards the stream at the back of the site but not identified in Trench 3. This however, was not identifiable on the geophysics plot perhaps due to the high levels of ferrous scatter close to this area. Within the development area, the preservation potential for below ground archaeology was high due to the lack of previous development.

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MOLA
November 2017

APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench No.	**Length, width & alignment**		**Surface height (aOD)**	**Depth & height of natural (aOD)**
1	**30 x 1.8m SE-NW**		**59.843-61.894m**	**59.663-61.393m**
Context	***Context type***	***Description***	***Dimensions***	***Artefacts/ Samples***
101	Topsoil	Dark brown silty clay with occasional charcoal flecks and frequent root disturbance	0.1-0.15m deep	-
102	Subsoil	Friable light brown clayey silt with occasional stones (20-30mm)	0.2-0.45m deep	-
103	Natural	Compact light brown clayey silt with frequent iron stones	-	-

Trench 1, looking north-west (scale 2x1m) Fig 3

Trench No.	**Length, width & alignment**		**Surface height (aOD)**	**Depth & height of natural (aOD)**
2	**30 x 1.8m NE-SW**		**58.117-58.556m**	**57.793-58.033m**
Context	***Context type***	***Description***	***Dimensions***	***Artefacts/ Samples***
201	Topsoil	Dark brown silty clay with occasional charcoal flecks	0.08-0.15m deep	-
202	Subsoil	Friable light brown clayey silt with occasional stones (20-30mm)	0.2-0.45m deep	-
203	Natural	Compact light brown sandy clay with frequent ironstone (up to 100mm)	-	-
204	Natural	Compact light bluish grey clay	-	-
205	Fill of [206]	Soft mid orangish brown silty sand	1.55m wide 0.59m deep	-
206	Cut of ditch	NW-SE aligned linear with sharp top breaks of slope onto steep sides, and moderate bottom break of slope onto a flat base	1.55m wide 0.59m deep	-

Trench 2, looking south-west (scale 2x1m) Fig 4

Key: NR = Modern/Not recovered

Trench No.	**Length, width & alignment**		**Surface height (aOD)**	**Depth & height of natural (aOD)**
3	**30 x 1.8m NNW-SSE**		**54.452-56.792m**	**53.802-56.083m**
Context	***Context type***	***Description***	***Dimensions***	***Artefacts/ Samples***
201	Topsoil	Friable dark brown silty clay with occasional charcoal flecks and frequent rooting disturbance	0.1-0.15m deep	-
202	Subsoil	Friable light to mid lenses of orangish brown silty sands with occasional rooting disturbance	0.2-0.45m deep	Glass (NR)
203	Natural	Compact mid yellowish brown clay mottled in places with bluish grey clay, and occasional ironstone in concentrated clusters.	-	-

Trench 3, looking north-west-north (scale 2x1m) Fig 5

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