



Archaeological Observation, Investigation and Recording on land at the proposed Aldi site Nene Business Park, Irthlingborough Northamptonshire

Report No. 18/11

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Illustrator: Olly Dindol



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Nene Business Park, Irthlingborough
Northamptonshire
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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS OASSIS molanort- 312135		
Project title	Archaeological observation, investigation and recording on land at the proposed Aldi site Nene Business Park, Irthlingborough, Northamptonshire	
Summary	MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) was commissioned by CgMs Heritage, to undertake archaeological observation, investigation and recording on land at Diamond Way, Irthlingborough, Northamptonshire, prior to the proposed development. The area for development was stripped of soils down to the natural ground level under constant archaeological supervision. The south side of the development area was heavily disturbed by a spread of modern rubble including stone, concrete and brick, the only features observed were the continuation of the furrows and ditch seen in the earlier trenching. No finds were recovered.	
Project type	Archaeological observation, investigation and recording	
Previous work	Trial trenching evaluation (Beers 2017)	
Future work	None	
Monument type and period	None	
Significant finds	None	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Northamptonshire	
Site address	Proposed Aldi site, Nene Business Park, Irthlingborough	
OS co-ordinates	SP 95364 71024	
Area hectares	1.35ha	
Height aOD	c40m aOD	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	MOLA	
Project brief originator	Northamptonshire County Council Archaeological Advisor	
Project Design originator	Claire Finn (MOLA)	
Director/Supervisor	Christopher Jones (MOLA)	
Project Manager	Ant Maul (MOLA)	
Sponsor or funding body	Benchmark Property/CgMs Heritage	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	27.02.2018	
End date	06.03.2018	
ARCHIVES	Location	Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc)
Physical	ENN108906	None
Paper		Site documents: photo registers and plans
Digital		Dxf data, digital photographs, client report (word/PDF)
BIBLIOGRAPHY	Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (NA report)	
Title	Archaeological observation, investigation and recording on land at the proposed Aldi site, Nene Business Park, Irthlingborough, Northamptonshire	
Serial title & volume	18/11	
Author(s)	Christopher Jones	
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Archaeological observation, investigation and recording on land at the proposed Aldi site Nene Business Park, Irthlingborough, Northamptonshire March 2018

Abstract

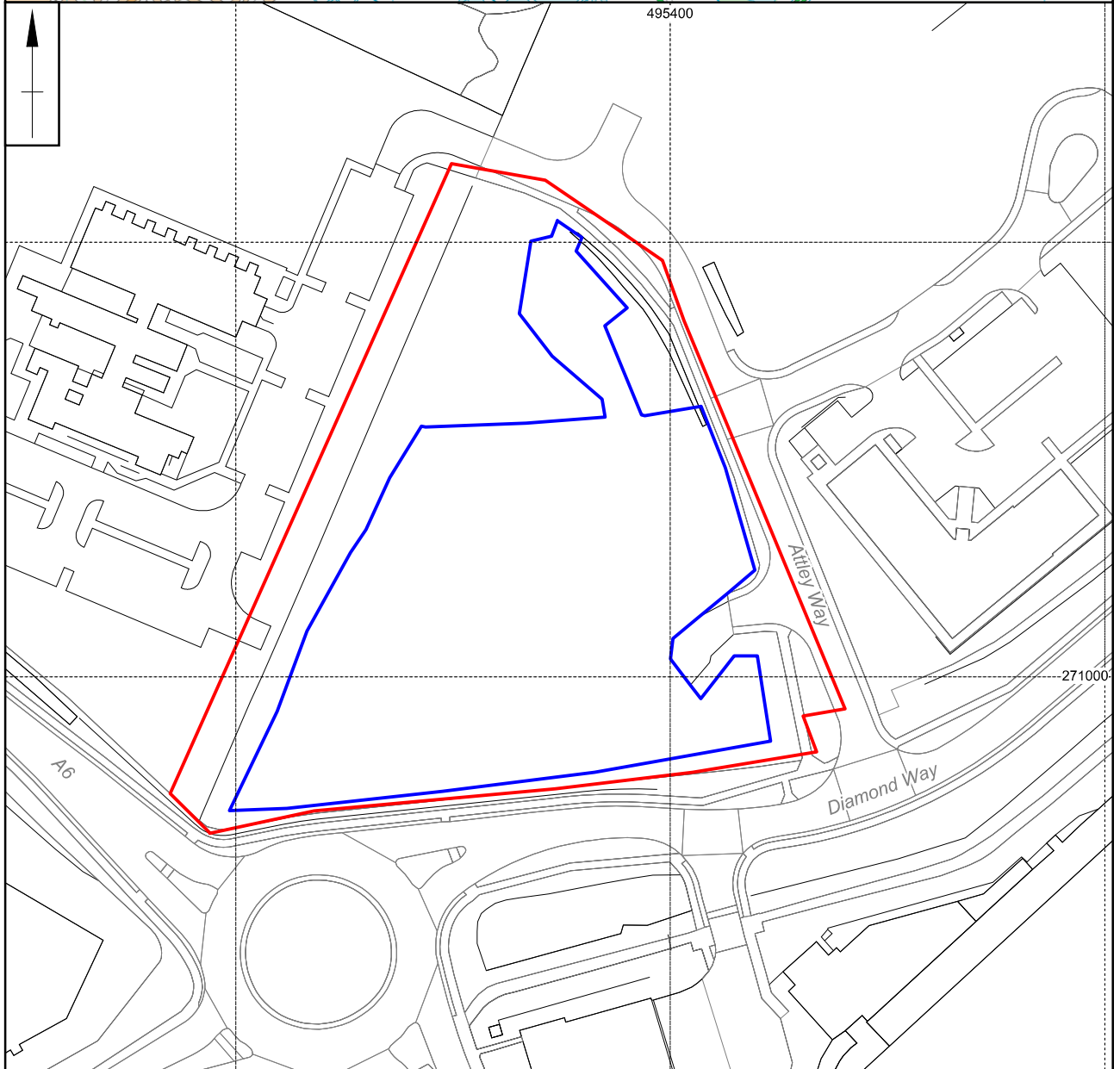
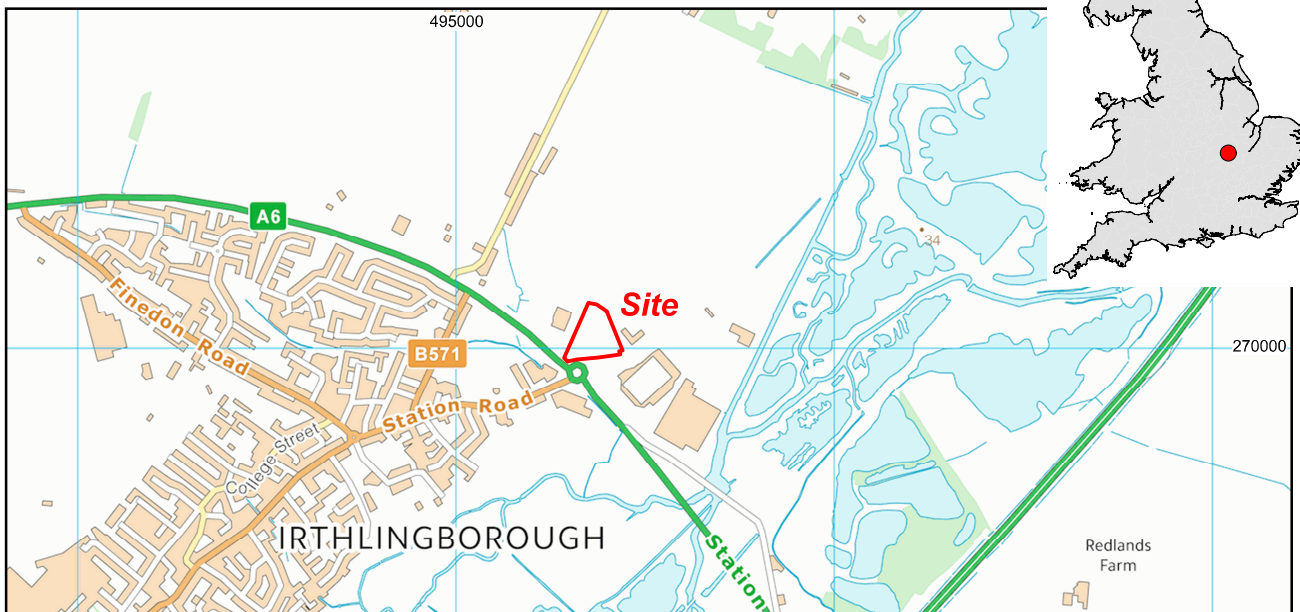
MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) was commissioned by CgMs Heritage, to undertake archaeological observation, investigation and recording on land at Diamond Way, Irthlingborough, Northamptonshire, prior to the proposed development. The area for development was stripped of soils down to the natural ground level under constant archaeological supervision. The south side of the development area was heavily disturbed by a spread of modern rubble including stone, concrete and brick, the only features observed were the continuation of the furrows and ditch seen in the earlier trenching. No finds were recovered.

1 INTRODUCTION

MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) was commissioned by CgMs Heritage, to undertake a programme of archaeological observation, investigation and recording on a proposed development site on land at Diamond Way, Irthlingborough, Northamptonshire (NGR SP 95364 71024, Fig 1). Planning approval had been received for the development of the land as two buildings for an Aldi Food retail store (class A1) and day care centre (Class D1b), new car parking, landscaping, associated servicing and means of access (15/01191/FUL).

The archaeological works followed on from a previous phase of trial trench evaluation (Beers 2017). This phase of mitigation works was undertaken in compliance with instruction and Briefs issued by the Northamptonshire County Council Archaeological Advisor (Mather 2017a, b and c), in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF; DCLG 2012), and to discharge Conditions 5 and 6 of the planning approval.

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).



Scale 1:1500

Site location excavation area Fig 1

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location, topography and geology

The development area lies at the eastern edge of Irthlingborough, in the district of East Northamptonshire. The triangular site is 1.35ha in size and is bounded by a hedge to the west, with the other boundaries consisting of low fences and bordered by Attley Way (east) and Diamond Way (south). It lies on a ridge above the River Nene on ground gently sloping down from north to south and is currently uncultivated and overgrown. At the north extent of the site was at 52m above Ordnance Datum and sloped down to 45m (aOD) at the southern boundary. The underlying geology comprises mudstone and ironstone, overlain by boulder and Oxford clays (BGS 2017).

2.2 Archaeological and historical background

A desk-based assessment for the development area was previously carried out by CgMs Heritage (Dawson 2009). A summary of the historic and archaeological potential of the site assessed therein is reproduced below. Historic Environment Record (HER) numbers are quoted from that document.

Prehistoric

There are no known Palaeolithic remains known from within or near the site, but there are Mesolithic remains known from nearby Crow Hill hillfort (HER 1780). It was considered that the probability of Mesolithic remains within the development site was low.

Neolithic and Bronze Age activity was also identified at Crow Hill, but through scattered lithic artefacts only. Nearby to the south, during work for a new car park at the Rushden and Diamonds football ground, a Bronze Age barrow and an associated inhumation were identified (HER1765/0/03). Studies of the prehistoric use of the Raunds area and the Nene Valley indicate that clearance for settlement was undertaken from the Neolithic period and was widespread. It was considered likely that further Bronze Age remains could be present within the development area.

Iron Age remains were identified at Crow Hill and also at a nearby site, approximately 400m distant to the south (HER5258). Both are Scheduled Monuments. The remains from Crow Hill are thought to extend into the development area as part of the cultivated and enclosed land associated with a settlement; indeed, Iron Age ceramics have already been recovered from within the development area through prior fieldwalking.

Roman

Extensive remains of Roman settlement were located at Crow Hill hillfort and also to the south, leading into the development area. An evaluation to the south in 1994 also identified Roman period occupation (HER6530). The Nene valley is characterised by hill/valley side settlements throughout the Roman period. Additionally, the line of Wellingborough Road, which emerges clearly from the west side of Irthlingborough is likely to reflect the course of a Roman Road leading to nearby Ircchester, a known Roman town (HER1760/1). Two Roman pottery sherds were recovered from the development area during trial trenching (Beers 2017). Undated linear features and a spread also identified within those works may be associated.

Anglo-Saxon/Medieval

Irthlingborough was recorded as a settlement in the Domesday survey and its name at the time suggests the focus of this settlement was at Crow Hill, where 709 sherds of Middle Saxon pottery were recovered (HER178/0/0). Later in the medieval period, the development area appears to have lain within the cultivated hinterland of

Irthlingborough; Ridge and furrow has been recorded east of the Rushden and Diamond football ground (HER1754/0/4) and within the development area (Dawson 2009, fig. 7). Four shallow linear features identified during trial trenching were thought to be the remnants of medieval ridge and furrow ploughing (Beers 2017). Apart from further parts of the furrow field system, it was considered that there was low potential for other medieval remains within the development area.

Post-medieval/modern

During the post-medieval period the land around Irthlingborough was subject to changing agricultural practices as Enclosure was enforced. There were also industrial changes as factories such as a Corset Factory (HER1624/23) and a Shoe Factory (HER1624/22) came and went, with the closest being located at the junction of Marsh Lane and the (now) A6. Little to no post-medieval archaeology was considered likely to be found within the development area.

Previous phase of works

MOLA was commissioned by CgMs Heritage in June 2017 to undertake archaeological trial trenching on the proposed development area (Beers 2017). Five trenches (totalling 270.5m in length) were excavated across the area and these produced eight archaeological features. Four shallow features, all aligned north-west to south-east, are likely to have been furrows. One undated ditch in the southern part of the development area was aligned at a different orientation. The other undated possible features comprised a possible spread, an undated gully at the north extent of the area and a tree bowl. Two Roman pottery sherds were recovered and a small quantity of animal bone was also found.

3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 OBJECTIVES

The main aims of the works were 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;
- assess the significance of any archaeological remains of any period;
- 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.

Where applicable specific research objectives have been 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 observation works.

3.2 METHODOLOGY

The footprint of the new buildings, car parking and any services, landscaping and access were excavated under constant archaeological supervision to the highest archaeological horizon or the trench formation depth, whichever was encountered first. All archaeological deposits encountered were sampled sufficiently to determine their date and character, and recorded using standard MOLA procedures (MOLA 2014).

The areas to be reduced were subject to intensive archaeological observation, which entailed the constant and continuous presence of an archaeologist during mechanical excavation. Topsoil and subsoil were removed until the upper archaeological horizon was encountered.

The Brief states that provision should be made for additional stripping should significant remains be identified which extend out from the areas identified for further investigation. In the event no further stripping was undertaken.

If significant archaeological deposits or structural remains were encountered that require preservation *in situ*, consultation would be held with the client in order to pursue an appropriate methodology. No such remains were found.

If human remains were encountered, these would be left undisturbed and protected until the relevant authorities were informed. Should removal be necessary then this would only be done following the appropriate Home Office and Environmental Health regulations.

No finds coming under the definition of 'treasure' as defined by the Treasure Act 1996 were found.

A toothless grading bucket was used for the removal of topsoil and subsoil down to the top of the natural substratum or identified archaeological deposits.

Archaeological deposits were recorded in numerical sequence and their character and composition were recorded on pro-forma record sheets. The record will be supplemented by direct annotations of the general site plan as required.

The location of archaeological features and areas of investigation were plotted on a general site plan, which was annotated as appropriate. If no archaeological remains are found annotated sketch sections were prepared to illustrate the general stratigraphy. Measured plans at 1:50 or 1:20 and sections were drawn as appropriate. A photographic record was maintained high quality digital format.

All finds were cleaned, catalogued, marked and prepared for storage. Provision was made for specialist analyses if necessary.

4 EXCAVATION RESULTS

4.1 General stratigraphy

The area for development was stripped of soils down to the natural ground level under constant archaeological supervision. The natural substrate was fairly consistent across the site, comprising a loose mid orange-brown ironstone becoming increasingly banded with clayish sands towards the south-east. It occurred between 0.26-0.73m below the present ground surface.

Subsoil sealed the natural and was present across the site, between 0.06m and 0.65m thick. It comprised loose dark yellow-brown to mid orange-brown sandy loam with frequent ironstone inclusions.

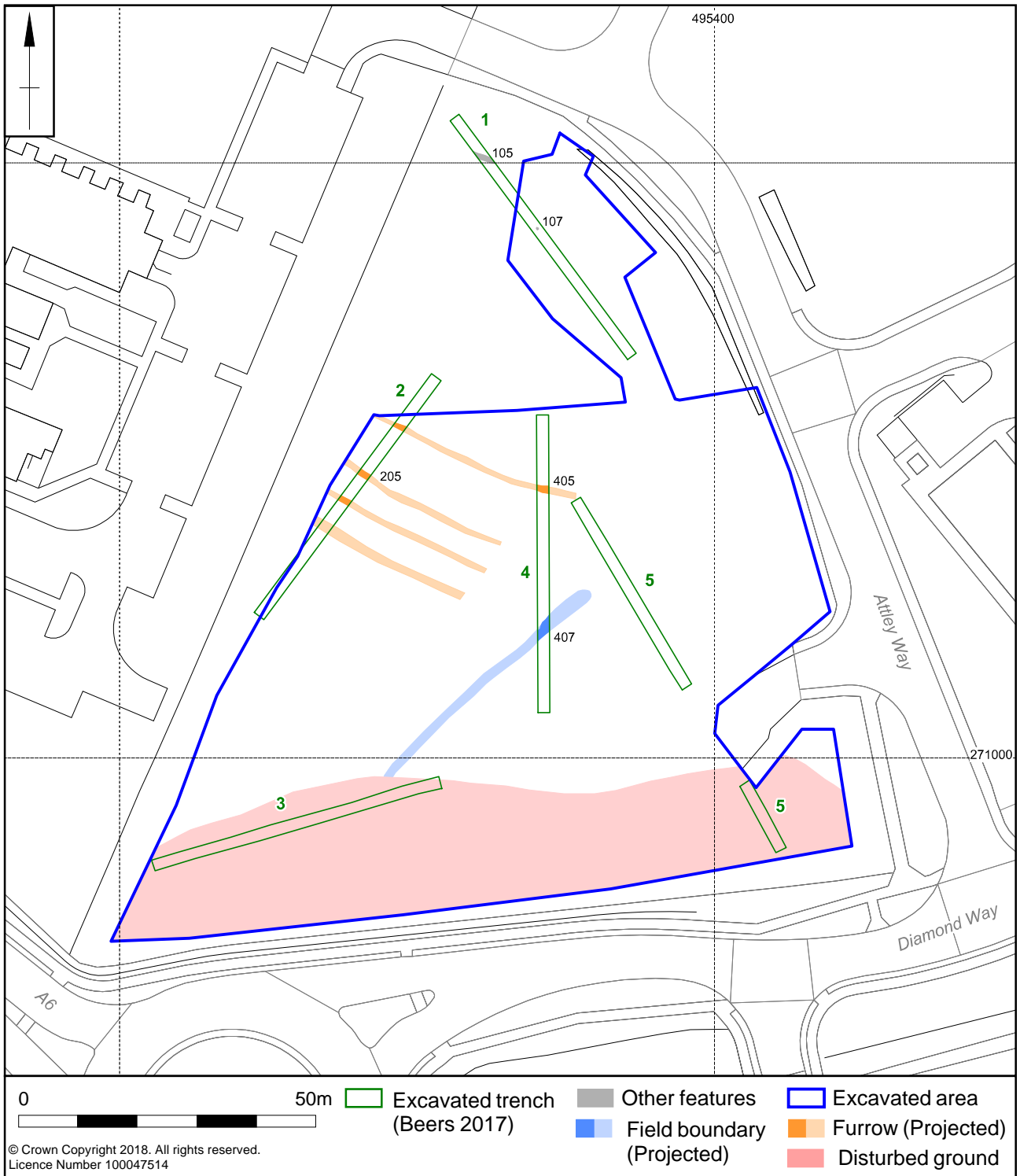
The topsoil comprised a friable to firm, mid to dark grey-brown sandy loam to clayish sands, which was consistently 0.19-0.30m thick, with frequent ironstone and occasional flint inclusions.

The evaluation was conducted in wintery conditions.

4.2 The archaeological remains

All features truncated the natural and were overlain by the subsoil, unless otherwise stated.

The only features identified were furrows and a ditch. The furrows continued from Trench 2 into Trench 4 in a north-west by south-east direction. The ditch [407] was 0.40m deep at the south end of Trench 4, extended to the south-west into the modern disturbed area and to the north-east where it considerably shallowed to 0.04m depth. The ditch continued 5m where it gradually disappeared due to modern ploughing and shallow soil depths on the upward slope. Ditch [407] was not seen in Trench 5. No finds were retrieved from any of the features observed. The whole of the south end of the development area was disturbed by modern rubble including concrete and brick mixed with blue/grey clay (Fig 2).



Scale 1:1000

Excavated area and previously excavated trenches Fig 2

5 DISCUSSION

The archaeological observation, investigation and recording identified the continuation of the features found in the previous trenching. The lack of artefacts suggests that any settlement was not located in the development area.

The furrows were seen continuing from Trench 2 to Trench 4 and were the remains of a field system. The furrows were ephemeral and had been recorded in the evaluation as only being 0.1m deep (Beers 2017, 8). The south feature in Trench 4 seems to be a field boundary ditch which had been ploughed away along with the furrows on the upper slope.

The development area only revealed the remains of a medieval ridge and furrow field system but given the extensive Prehistoric and Roman remains located outside the development area it is possible any associated features were destroyed in the post-medieval period.



Remains of the ephemeral bases of furrows cut the ironstone natural, looking downslope to the east. The furrows were aligned north-west to south-east

Fig 3



General site shot showing natural ironstone substrate, looking south-west

Fig 4



General site shot showing natural ironstone substrate, looking east towards Attley Way

Fig 5

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