



**Archaeological observation, investigation,
recording, analysis and publication at
Spratton Hall School, Spratton
Northamptonshire
July 2018**

Report No.18/96

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Chris Jones

Illustrator: Olly Dindol



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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		Oasis No. molanort1-324463	
Project title	Archaeological observation, investigation recording, analysis and publication at Spratton Hall School, Spratton, Northamptonshire, July 2018		
Short description	MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) was commissioned by CgMs Heritage to undertake an archaeological observation, investigation and recording during the ground works for tennis courts, changing room pavilion and test pits at Spratton Hall School. The areas investigated had previously been levelled and terraced by landscaping for the existing playing fields which had destroyed any archaeology that may have existed in the areas. No archaeological features were recorded or archaeological finds recovered.		
Project type	Archaeological observation, investigation recording, analysis and publication		
Previous work	None		
Current land use	Tennis Court and sports field		
Future work	-		
Monument type and period	-		
Significant finds	None		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County	Northamptonshire		
Site address	Spratton Hall School, Spratton		
Post code	NN6 8HP		
OS co-ordinates	SP 71669 70556		
Area (sq m/ha)	-		
Height aOD	c.120m		
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation	MOLA Northampton		
Project brief originator	Northamptonshire County Council		
Project Design originator	MOLA Northampton		
Director/Supervisor	James Fairclough and Chris Jones, MOLA		
Project Managers	Ant Maull, MOLA		
Sponsor or funding body	CgMs Heritage		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date	24.07.2017		
End date	27.07.2018		
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Physical	ENN108815	-	
Paper		Site records	
Digital		Survey data, report, photographs	
BIBLIOGRAPHY	Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (MOLA report)		
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Abstract

MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) was commissioned by CgMs Heritage to undertake an archaeological observation, investigation and recording during the ground works for tennis courts, changing room pavilion and test pits at Spratton Hall School. The areas investigated had previously been levelled and terraced by landscaping for the existing playing fields which had destroyed any archaeology that may have existed in the areas. No archaeological features were recorded or archaeological finds recovered.

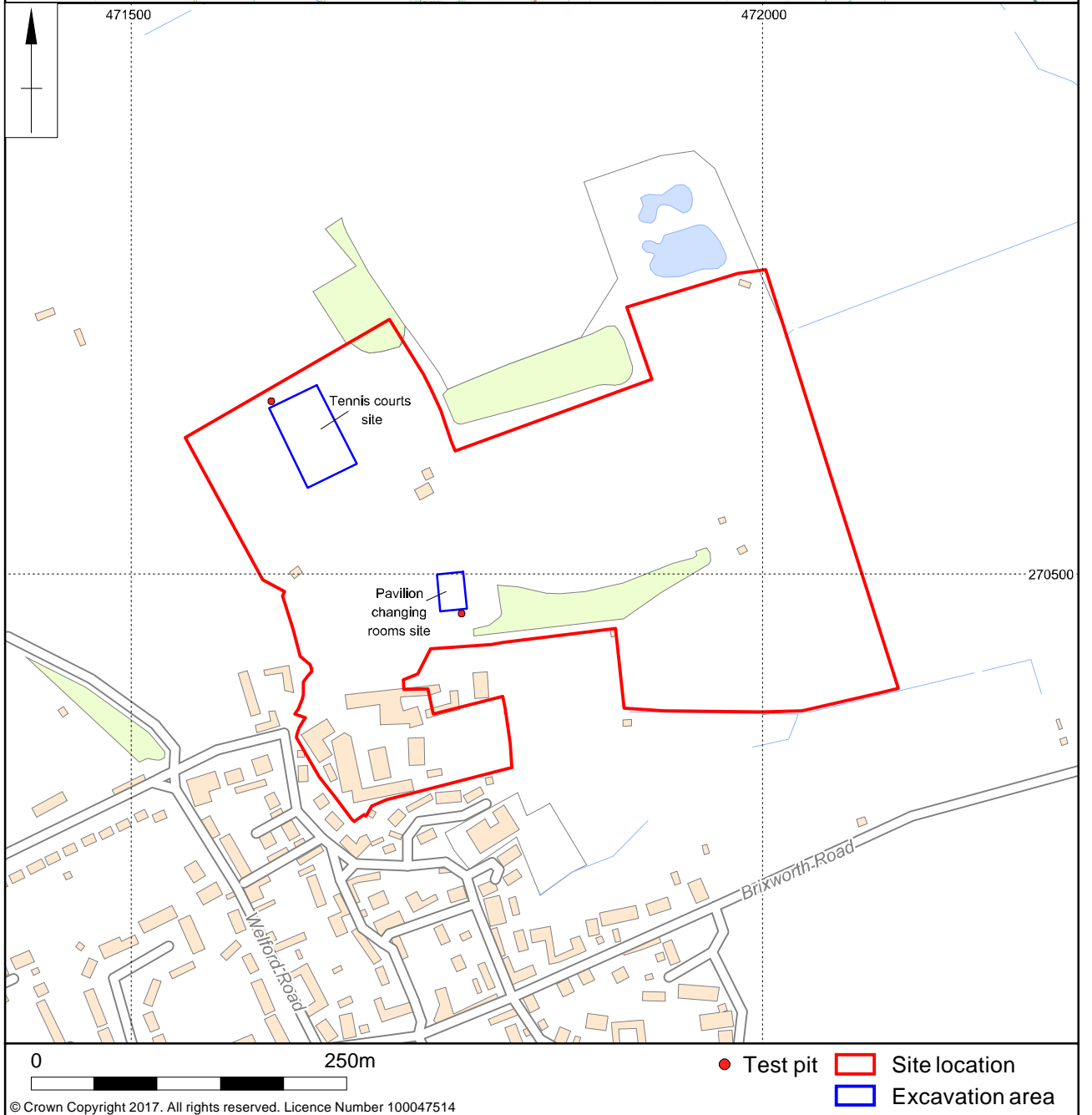
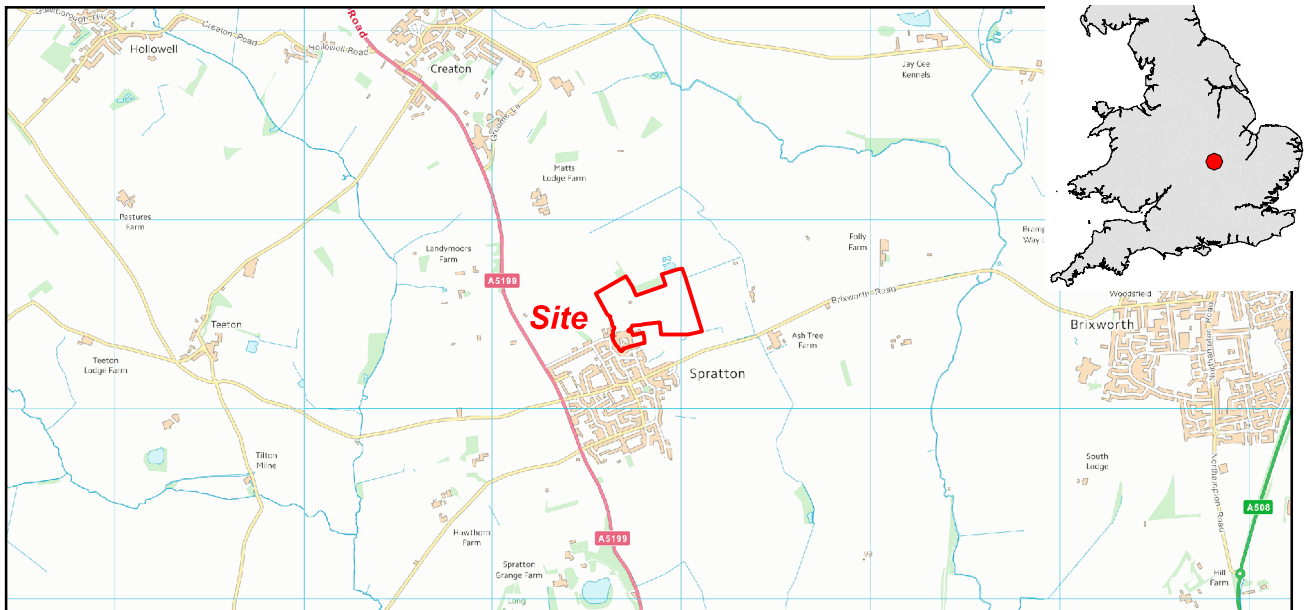
1 INTRODUCTION

MOLA was commissioned by CgMs Heritage to undertake a programme of archaeological observation, investigation, recording, analysis and reporting during the construction of a changing room building and installation of new tennis courts at Spratton Hall School, Spratton, Northamptonshire (Fig 1; NGR SP 71669 70556).

The archaeological monitoring works aimed to ensure that any archaeological remains encountered were appropriately characterised, and recorded. These works were undertaken based on the brief produced by Northamptonshire NCC (Mordue, 2017) and a WSI produced by MOLA (Clements 2017), in accordance with current best archaeological practice as defined by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists Code of Conduct (CIfA 2014a), standards and guidance (CIfA 2014b), the expectations of Historic England (HE 2015), and conforms to the National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG 2012).

2 TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

The site lay on the north-east edge of Spratton, within the current school grounds, located c11.5km to the north of Northampton. The site was generally flat and lay at c120m above Ordnance Datum (aOD), the geology of the site has been mapped as comprising sandstone, limestone, and Ironstone of the Northampton Sand formation (BGS 2017). Soils across the area are described as freely draining slightly acid loam (Landis 2017)



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Scale 1:5000

Site location, excavation areas and test pits Fig 1

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

In order to examine the archaeological resource within the proposed development area the objectives of the investigation were to:

- Establish the level of truncation by earlier terracing of the site and to identify, investigate and record any archaeological features which may have survived.
- Identify, investigate and record all archaeological deposits, exposed during the groundworks;
- Determine and record the date, extent, character, state of preservation and depth of burial of any archaeological deposits;
- Recover any artefacts that may assist in the development of pottery type series within the region;
- Establish the relationship of any archaeological deposits within the wider contemporary landscape;
- Create a permanent archive and record of the archaeological information collected during the course of the fieldwork and analysis.

Specific research objectives will be addressed as detailed in the national and regional research frameworks documents (Knight, Vyner and Allen 2012, updating Cooper 2006) as relevant depending upon the results archaeological works.

4 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Spratton village lies in an area of archaeological interest and the site, Spratton Hall School, lies on the north-east edge of the village, partially within an area defined as the likely extent of the medieval to modern settlement. Surrounding the village there are several noted records of historic and archaeological interest, spanning the prehistoric to modern periods, including Listed buildings.

A search of the Historic Environment Record (HER) for Northampton for records within a 500m radius from the school was undertaken and the results are presented below.

Prehistoric

Five records indicated the presence of prehistoric activity within the vicinity of the site, including HER2937, which coincides with the area north of the school being subject to the archaeological investigations. The remaining records (HER3936, 2935, 2933) indicated activity nearby to the west and east, one of which (HER2934) was a Bronze Age flint working site.

Roman

The putative prehistoric settlement (HER2937) is considered to extend into the Roman period. No other Roman period sites are known, although a Roman coin (ENN6254) was found to the south of the school on Erskine Drive in 1975.

Post-Roman to post-medieval

For this period records were also limited, but the most significant is the proximity of the site to the medieval and later village (HER2940). To the east is an area of ridge and furrow part of a medieval village's open field system. To the immediate east of the site cropmarks identified by aerial photography indicated the location of possible medieval/post medieval tofts & crofts (ENN6258). To the south of the school site is the route of a road with possible medieval origins (HER4499). The present day course is Church Road, which continues southward beyond the village limits, where it turns to a footpath. If projected northward, towards the site, the route would continue along Manor Road in a north-north-westerly direction towards Slattery Barn Farm, through the school grounds. There is also a hollow way (HER2940) continuing northward from the High Street and parallel with the medieval street on Manor/Church Road.

Geophysical survey on land north of Brixworth Road undertaken in 2013 (ENN107864), to the south-east of the site showed limited archaeological potential but did show the presence of more ridge and furrow.

Post-medieval records are slightly more plentiful, but predominantly relate to monuments identified during an *English Heritage Parks Register Enhancement Survey*, carried out in 1995 (ENN104057). To the west is the Chapel Brampton to Welford Turnpike (HER9336/1), now the A5199, a former toll road. There is also small number of Listed Buildings attributed to this period.

The most significant record for this period is Spratton Hall itself (HER2940/2/1), which is now the school. Originally built as a private home in the 1770's, the Hall was converted to a school in the 1950's with the grounds expanding to the north and north-east over the following years to allow the development of sports facilities. This work may already have had a negative impact on any below-ground remains, which are most likely to be prehistoric and medieval.

5 METHODOLOGY

The development areas were subject to archaeological observation and recording through constant monitoring of ground reduction and any other groundworks associated with the development. The works comprised of three separate areas subject to development and some test pits excavated. The areas to be built upon were stripped under archaeological control to the uppermost archaeological horizon or upper surface of the undisturbed horizon. Small interventions, such as test pits or service runs were stripped to formation and observed after excavation due to their restrictive nature.

The archaeological monitoring and recording work accurately record the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains.

Archaeological deposits were recorded using standard MOLA procedures (MOLA 2014). Plans of features were made at an appropriate scale, normally 1:50 or 1:100 or 1:20 depending on the nature of the exposed archaeology. Sections were also drawn to scale, either 1:10 or 1:20 as appropriate. Levels taken were related to Ordnance Datum. A photographic record was maintained by high resolution digital photography exceeding 12 megapixels.

Samples were taken where appropriate within the confines of the excavation area, from secure and sealed deposits. Sampling will follow Campbell et al (2011). Bulk

environmental soil samples were context specific, and were 40 litres or more in order to adequately capture a high quality sample.

All groundwork and associated spoil heaps were scanned with a metal-detector. No uncontrolled metal detecting was permitted. Finds coming under the definition of 'treasure' were reported and dealt with under the procedures of the Treasure Act 1996 code of practice. This includes both precious metals and base metals where they are of prehistoric date. Any finds falling under the provision of the Treasure Act were notified to the Portable Antiquities Scheme within 48 hours of discovery.

Finds were appropriately packed and stored in stable conditions, by context and in accordance with recognised best practise (Watkinson and Neal 2001; Walker 1990).

If any human skeletal remains had been encountered a sample of the bone would have been collected in order to confirm identification, photographed and recorded, and then reburied. Her Majesty's Coroner, NCC Planning and the client would have been informed immediately upon discovery of human remains.

6 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

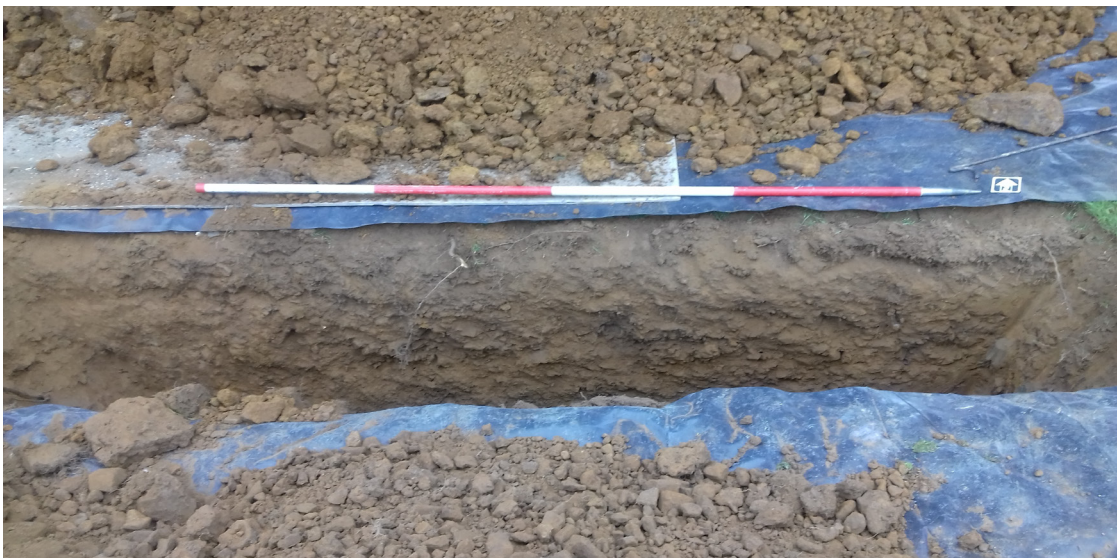
The ground works were investigated and recorded in three phases. The first phase was the test pits followed by the tennis courts and finally the changing room pavilion (Fig 1).

The Test Pits

Two test pits were excavated under archaeological supervision. No archaeological features or finds were found.

Test pit 1

Test pit 1 comprised excavating to the north-west corner of the tennis courts site and was 0.50m deep on to natural yellow sandy sandstone (103). The subsoil (102) was mid-brown silt clay which was overlaid by grey silt clay topsoil (101) (Fig 2).



Test pit 1

Fig 2

Test pit 2

Test pit comprised the excavating to the south-east corner of the changing room pavilion and was 1.40m deep to the natural yellow sandy sandstone (206). Three layers of made up ground sealed the natural, (205) dark brown silt clay, (204) redeposited natural and (203) loose dark grey gravel and black sheeting. The subsoil (202) mid-brown silt clay was overlaid by grey silt clay topsoil (201) (Fig 3).



Test pit 2

Fig 3

Tennis courts

The tennis court area was stripped of grass and topsoil using a 360 excavator with toothless bucket (Fig 1). The topsoil was between 0.20m to 0.30m deep and being light brown loamy sandy clay with frequent ironstone fragments. The topsoil overlaid the natural, a yellow mix of sandstone and sand.

During the original landscaping of the area the original soils had been removed down to the natural deposits and then new topsoil/turf deposited creating the then new football pitch. No archaeological features or finds were seen in the area excavated. The works on the present football pitch would have removed any archaeology that might have been present (Figs 4 and 5).



Stripping area for tennis courts, looking north

Fig 4



Area stripped for tennis courts, looking north-east

Fig 5

Changing room pavilion

The area for the new changing room pavilion was to the south-east of the schools playing field and on an existing tennis court. The works involved the digging of footings for the pavilion under archaeological observation (Fig 6 and 7). The footings were c2.70m to 1.20m deep by c1.20m to 0.70m wide through natural sandstone and yellow sand. Above the natural was a layer of loose shale 0.30m thick which was sealed by the tennis court surface 0.08m thick. On the eastern side a levelling layer of dark grey sandy clay c0.45m thick was noted. No archaeological features or artefacts were seen.



Changing rooms footings

Fig 6



Changing rooms footings

Fig 7

7 CONCLUSION

The programme of archaeological observation, investigation and recording during the ground works for the changing room pavilion and tennis courts, as well as two test pits did not reveal any buried archaeological deposits or artefacts. The principal reason for this was that the Hall was originally built as a private home in the 1770's, and then was converted to a school in the 1950's. After it was converted to a school the grounds were expanded to the north and north-east over the following years to allow the development of sports facilities. The landscaping, terracing and levelling work undertaken has had a negative impact on any below-ground remains, and the chances of any archaeological deposits surviving are very low.

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MOLA
JULY 2018

APPENDIX: CONTEXT INVENTORY

The test pits

TEST PIT 1				
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts /Samples
101	Topsoil/turf	Mid grey clay loom	0.20m thick	-
102	Subsoil	Mid brown silty clay	0.30m thick	-
103	Natural	Light yellow sand stone and sand.	-	-

TEST PIT 2				
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts /Samples
201	Topsoil/turf	Light grey clay loom	0.10m thick	-
202	Subsoil	Mid brown silty clay	0.30m thick	-
203	Layer	Loose dark grey gravel on black sheeting.	0.10m thick	Made up ground
204	Layer	Loose yellow gravel sand	0.10m thick	Made up ground. Redeposited natural
205	Layer	Dark brown silty clay	0.80m thick	-
206	Natural	Light yellow sand stone and sand.	-	-

Tennis courts

Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts /Samples
1	Topsoil/turf	Light brown loom	0.26m to 0.30m deep	-
2	Natural	Light yellow sand stone and sand.	-	-

Changing room pavilion

Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
3	Court surface	Rubber surface	0.08m thick	-
4	Gravel layer	Shale gravel	0.20m thick	-
5	Levelling layer	Mid grey-brown sand	0.30m thick	-

Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
6	Levelling layer	Dark green-grey clayey sand	0.28m thick	-
7	Natural	Mid brown-orange sandy clay, occasional ironstones.		-



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