Meon Vale Estate (Phase 3)

Long Marston, Stratford upon Avon, Warwickshire

one ten archaeology

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Archaeological recording

SP 16376 46746

Site code: LME15

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one ten archaeology

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Front cover; excavation of the site in progress, from the south

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Appendix 1; OASIS

SUMMARY

Archaeological recording was carried out between 10th March and 28th April on land at the Long Marston Estate (Meon Vale), Long Marston, Stratford upon Avon, Warks. The work was undertaken in connection with remediation of ground deposits prior to residential development.

Historic mapping (OS 1884) shows the study site as formally part of a much larger rectangular open field with a track crossing the northern edge, this now aligns closely with the existing main access road (Sharry Lane) into the remaining depot area. A north-south line of trees bounds the west side of the site following a meandering natural watercourse. This has since been altered in connection with various phases of development either side of it.

Natural geology comprising a Lias clay was exposed throughout the excavation. No significant archaeological features or deposits were observed cut into or overlying this layer. Instead the watching brief identified a number of modern features and deposits associated with the post war development of the study site as a storage depot comprising sheds and concrete hard-standing. An absence of any deposits pre-dating those associated with the depot suggests some truncation during its construction.

No residual pre-20th century artefactual material was recovered during the excavation suggesting that there was little or no activity within the study site prior to development as a depot.

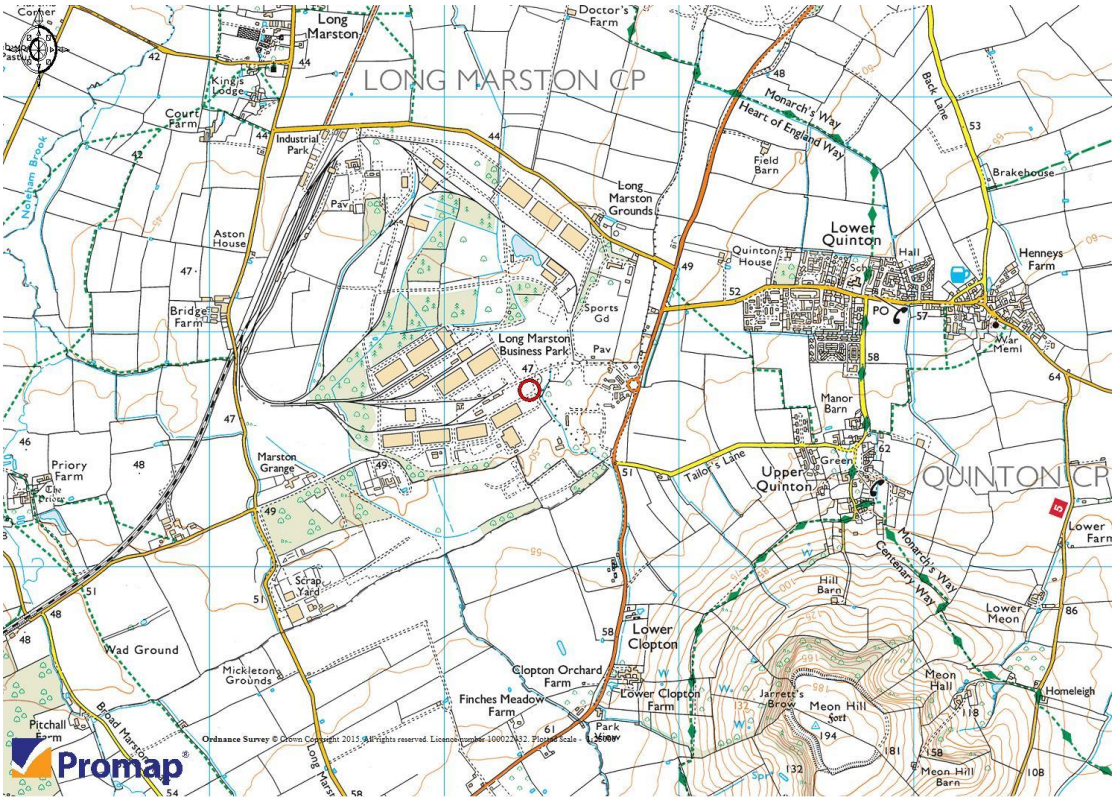

Fig. 1; site location (circled in red)

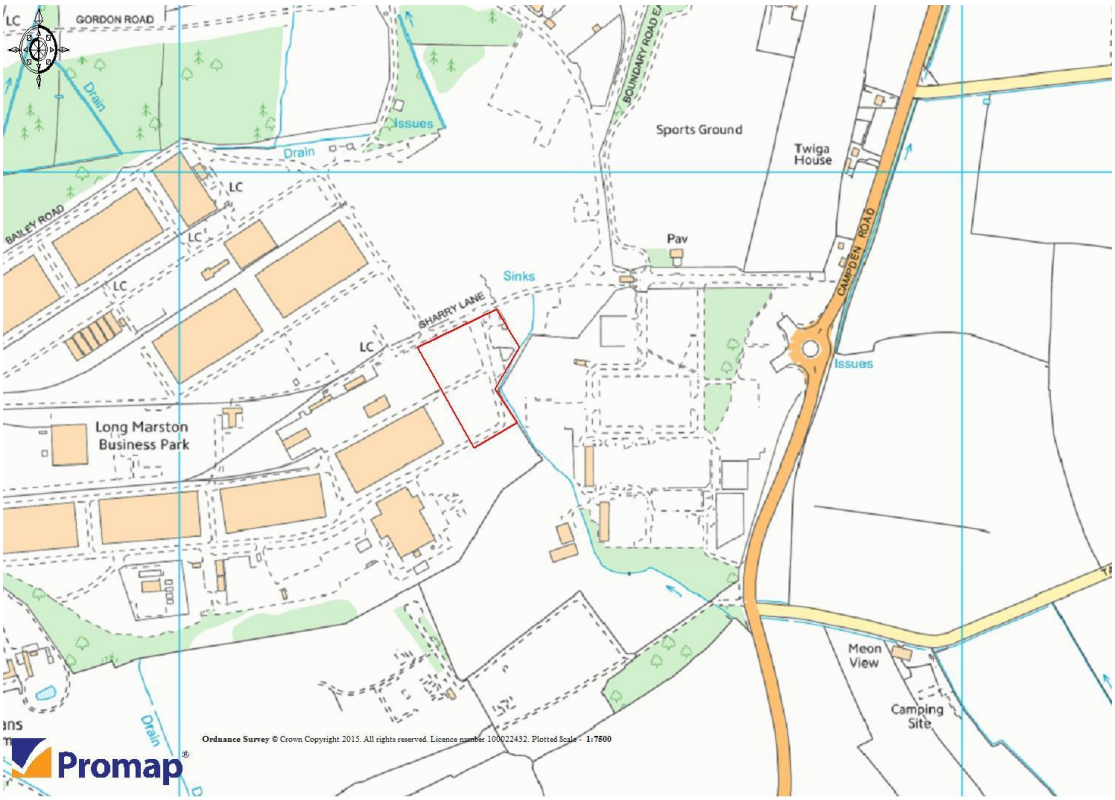

Fig. 2; area of study (site outlined in red)

INTRODUCTION

Location and scope of works (Figs. 1 & 2)

This document sets out the results of archaeological recording ('watching brief') between 10th March and 28th April at The Long Marston Estate (Meon Vale), Long Marston, Stratford upon Avon, Warks. at the request of PM Harris Ltd. The work was required as a condition of planning permission granted in respect of an application (Ref: 09/00835/FUL) to Stratford on Avon District Council for residential development of the site and was undertaken in accordance with a standard generic brief by Warwickshire County Council Historic Environment & Archaeology Service. The area of the approved development has previously been the subject of a desk-based assessment (Waterman, 2009) and a subsequent field evaluation (Reynish, 2011). The watching brief was connected with remediation works associated with phase 3 of the Meon Vale Estate development.

Geology and topography

The proposed site is represented by a roughly rectangular plot of land (approx. 1ha) aligned north to south previously covered in concrete hard standing associated with the former engineers depot buildings with tarmac hardstanding along the northern edge. The site lies at a height of about 48m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) and the underlying geology comprises Lower Lias, mainly clay (BGS, 1974). This was confirmed during excavation.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A desk based assessment was carried out by Waterman Energy, Environment and Design Ltd (Waterman 2009). This showed, based on previous archaeological work carried out north of the site, that there was potential for Roman remains on the site. The assessment also uncovered limited potential for medieval remains relating to the medieval shrunken village at Long Marston to the west of the site. Medieval and post-medieval ridge and furrow ploughing was recorded across the site and its environs by the English Heritage National Mapping Programme (EHNMP). This was likely to have been heavily impacted by later ploughing and activity associated with the Central Engineers Depot across the site.

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology (Reynish, 2011) in February and March 2011 at Areas A1, A4, A8 and A9, Long Marston Estate, Warwickshire. Forty seven trenches were excavated. The evaluation identified a number of modern features consisting of service trenches, manholes and foundations. No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed, and no artefactual material was recovered.

RESULTS (Figs. 3-8)

Method and nature of the excavation

Archaeological recording was undertaken to obtain a record of any archaeological deposits or finds disturbed or exposed during excavation of the site. Machine excavation was only used for the removal of non-archaeologically significant material (modern deposits) and was used to excavate these layers stratigraphically. All machining was conducted under constant and close archaeological supervision at all times using a toothless bucket.

The remediation works (Phase 3) involved excavation of existing ground deposits and the removal of contamination comprising concrete footings, cast iron drain pipes, tarmac and brick, a former brick culvert and fuel storage tanks. This was followed with the re-deposition and consolidation of the graded soil. An existing and 'live' service pipe which bisects the site from east to west was left in situ with the covering soil.

Description of deposits

Contexts 103 & 114 (natural geology)
Natural geology comprising a Lias clay, predominantly blue/grey, but with areas of light to mid brown clay has been exposed throughout the excavation lying at a level height of about 47.50m AOD. This has been generally truncated to a depth varying between 0.10-0.50m over the course of the excavation.

Contexts 100, 101, 102, 104, 105 & 111
Overlying the natural clay (context 103) on the western edge of the study site was a layer of compacted crushed limestone (context 102) which acted as bedding for an overlying layer of concrete (context 101) which was interpreted as a former yard area. Situated on the western edge of the excavation were two areas of concrete footings (Contexts 104 & 105) representing the remains of two

former buildings (see Fig. 3). A thin layer of dark purple clinker (context 111) was observed overlying this concrete slab in the area of these foundations. These deposits were in turn sealed by bund material (context 100 to a depth of about 3m), this was a linear bank of re-deposited soil marking the western boundary of the study site.

Contexts 106, 107, 108

On the southern boundary of the excavation (section 8) the natural clay (103) was overlain by a layer of black crushed clinker. This was in turn sealed by the same crushed limestone (107) and crushed stone/concrete (101) continuing from that recorded along the western edge of the site. This was over lain by undisturbed topsoil (context 106). Slightly further north of this (section 7) where disturbance is more pronounced, the stratigraphic sequence comprises natural clay (103) which is overlain by crushed limestone (102). This was in turn directly overlain by redeposited soil and limestone rubble (context 108) resulting presumably from the recent demolition.

Contexts 109, 110 & 113

Situated along the central area of the excavation area (see sections 10-15 & 17-20) and immediately overlying the natural clay (103) was a thin deposit of black silty-clay (context 109). In some parts this layer was overlain by redeposited blue/grey Lias clay (context 110), but for the most part the upper deposit comprised redeposited material (context 108). In one part of the excavation (section 13) situated in between contexts 103 and 109 was a deposit of redeposited limestone rubble and brown clay (context 113).

Context 112

In the central area of the excavation (sections 21 & 23) the deposit of dark purple clinker (context 111) reappears in addition to a deposit of clinker and brick rubble (context 112).

Contexts 115 & 116

In the south-east corner of the study site (sections 23-25) the natural geology, comprising a brown Lias clay (context 114) was overlain by a thick layer of redeposited blue-grey Lias clay (context 110). Sealing all of these was the loamy topsoil (context 106) which was itself truncated by a modern feature filled with soil and mostly rubble (context 115).

Slightly further to the north-east the natural brown clay is directly overlain by the same dark purple clinker observed previously, this was overlain by loamy topsoil (context 116) which was in turn sealed by a layer of limestone rubble and brown clays (context 113).

Natural brown clay continued along the eastern edge of the excavation (sections 26 & 27) where it continues to be overlain by a thin layer of clinker (111) and loamy topsoil (116).

Contexts 117 & 119; modern culvert & fuel storage tanks

In the north-east corner of the excavation the natural geology returned to the blue-grey Lias clay (context 103). Overlying this deposit were the remains of a recently demolished building comprising in the first instance a deposit of crushed brick (context 117) which was in turn sealed by a concrete slab (context 101) similar to that recorded on the western edge of the excavation. This was overlain by another layer of crushed brick (context 119). A modern concrete culvert (with brick lining), aligned north-south, occupied the area between sections 27 & 28 before demolition and to the north of section 29, a large redundant fuel tank was removed.

Context 118

The sequence of deposits overlying the natural Lias clay (103) along the northern edge of the excavation (sections 30-32) comprised a deposit of black clinker (107); crushed limestone (102) and crushed brick (117), Sealing all of these was an upper layer of grey crushed stone (context 118).

FINDS

No finds were retrieved during the excavation.

Environmental data

No animal bone was recovered and none of the deposits exposed during the excavation proved suitable for palaeo-environmental sampling.

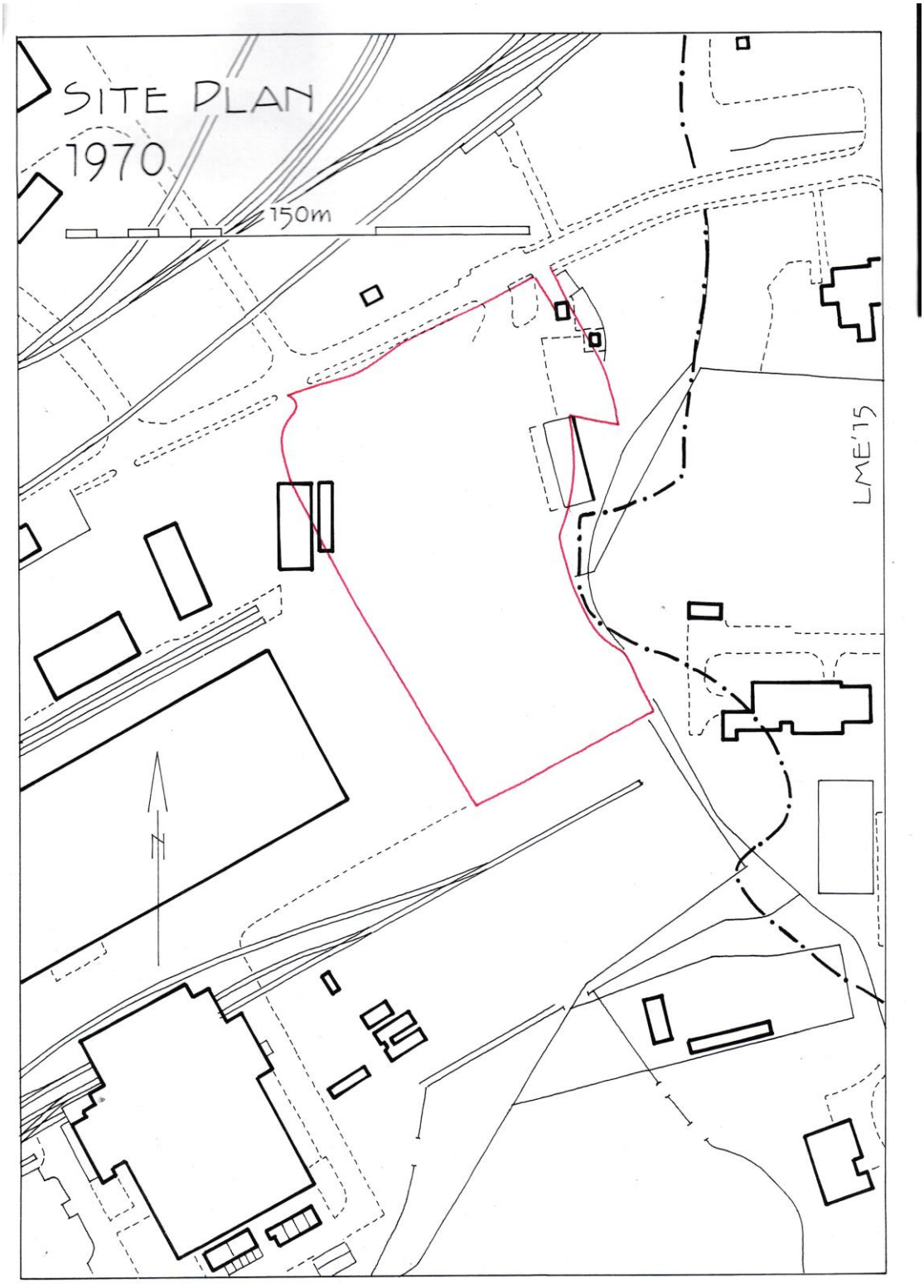

Fig. 3; site plan (based on OS 1970), area of study outlined in red

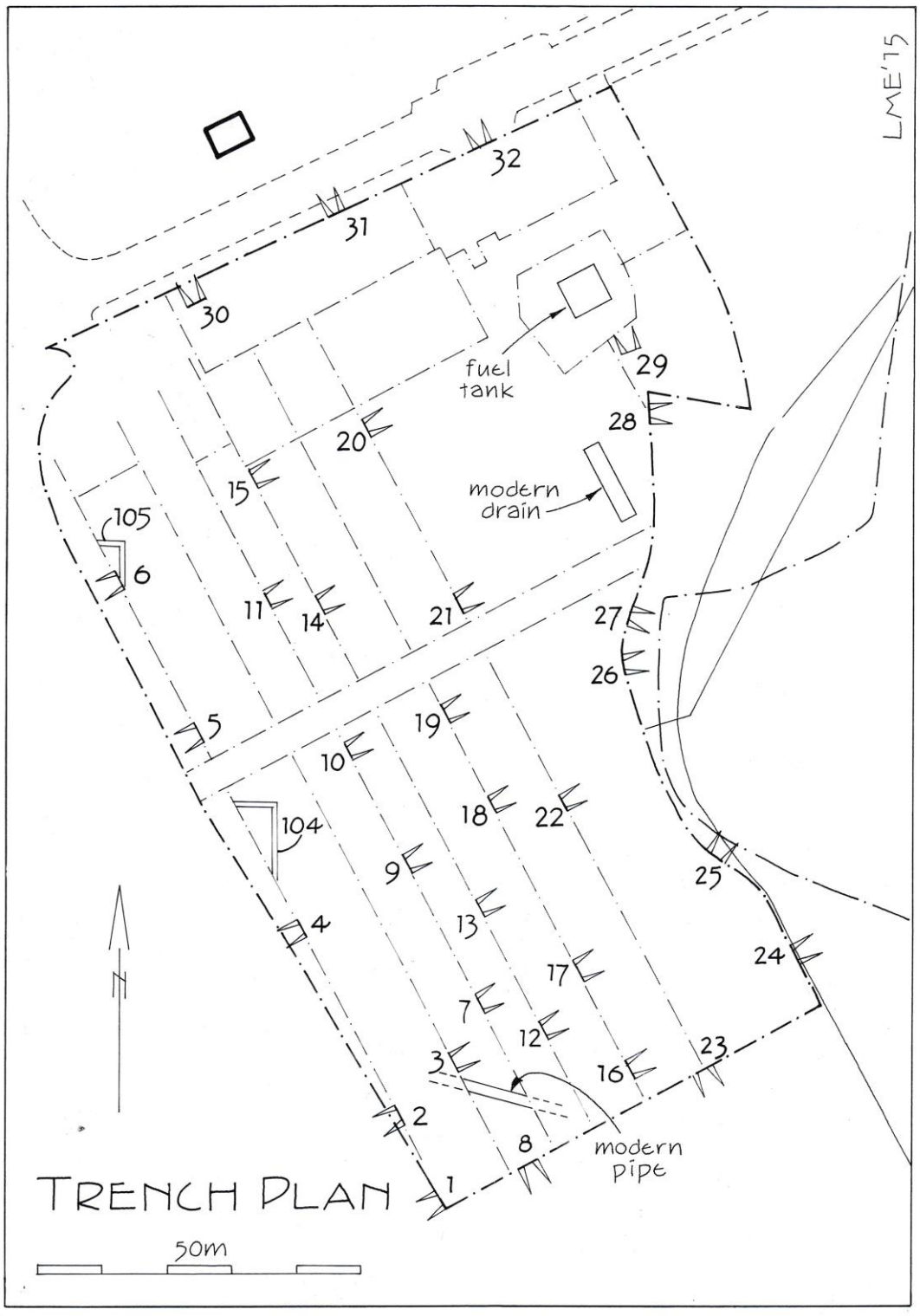

Fig. 4; trench plan & section locations

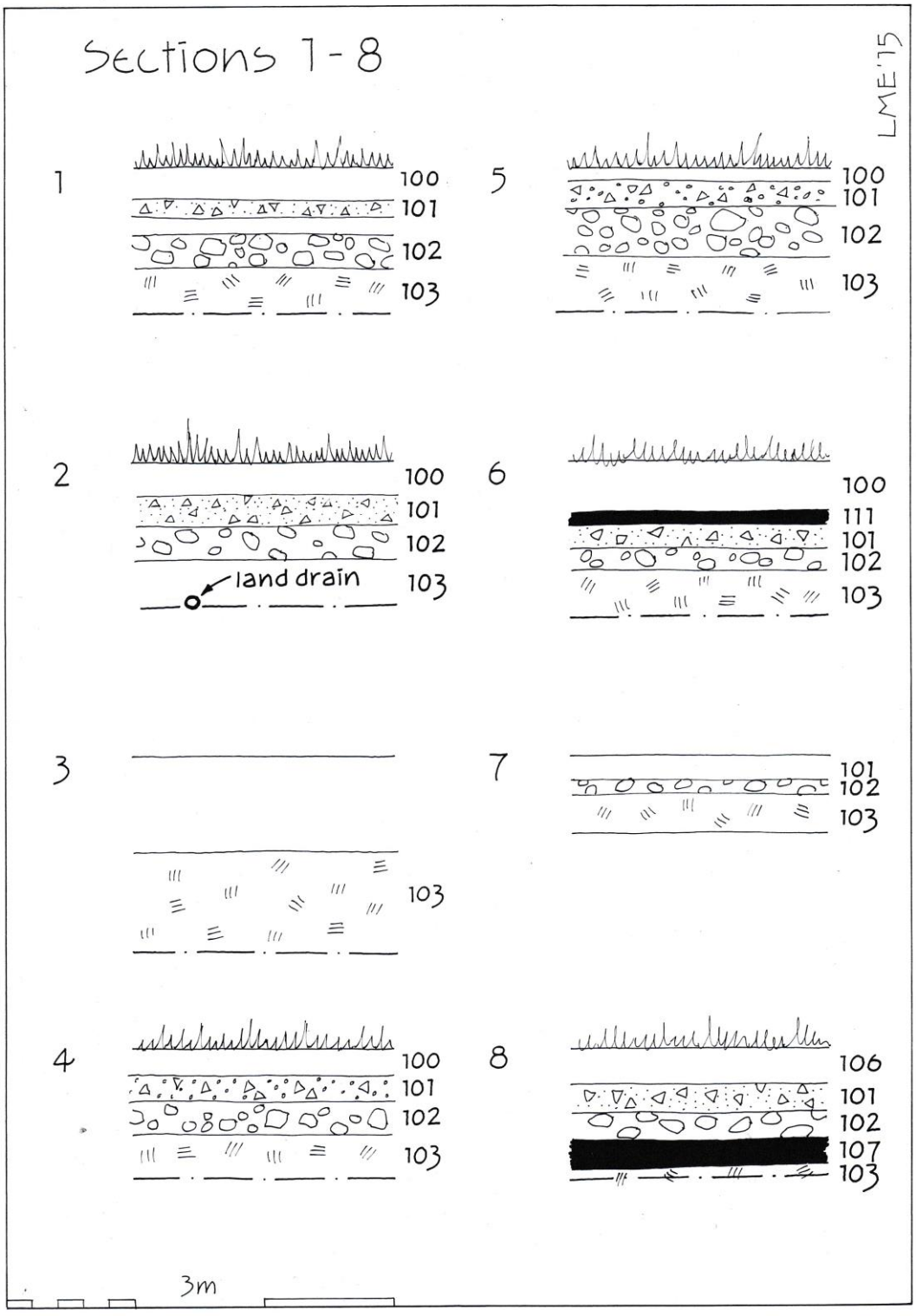

Fig. 5; sections 1-8

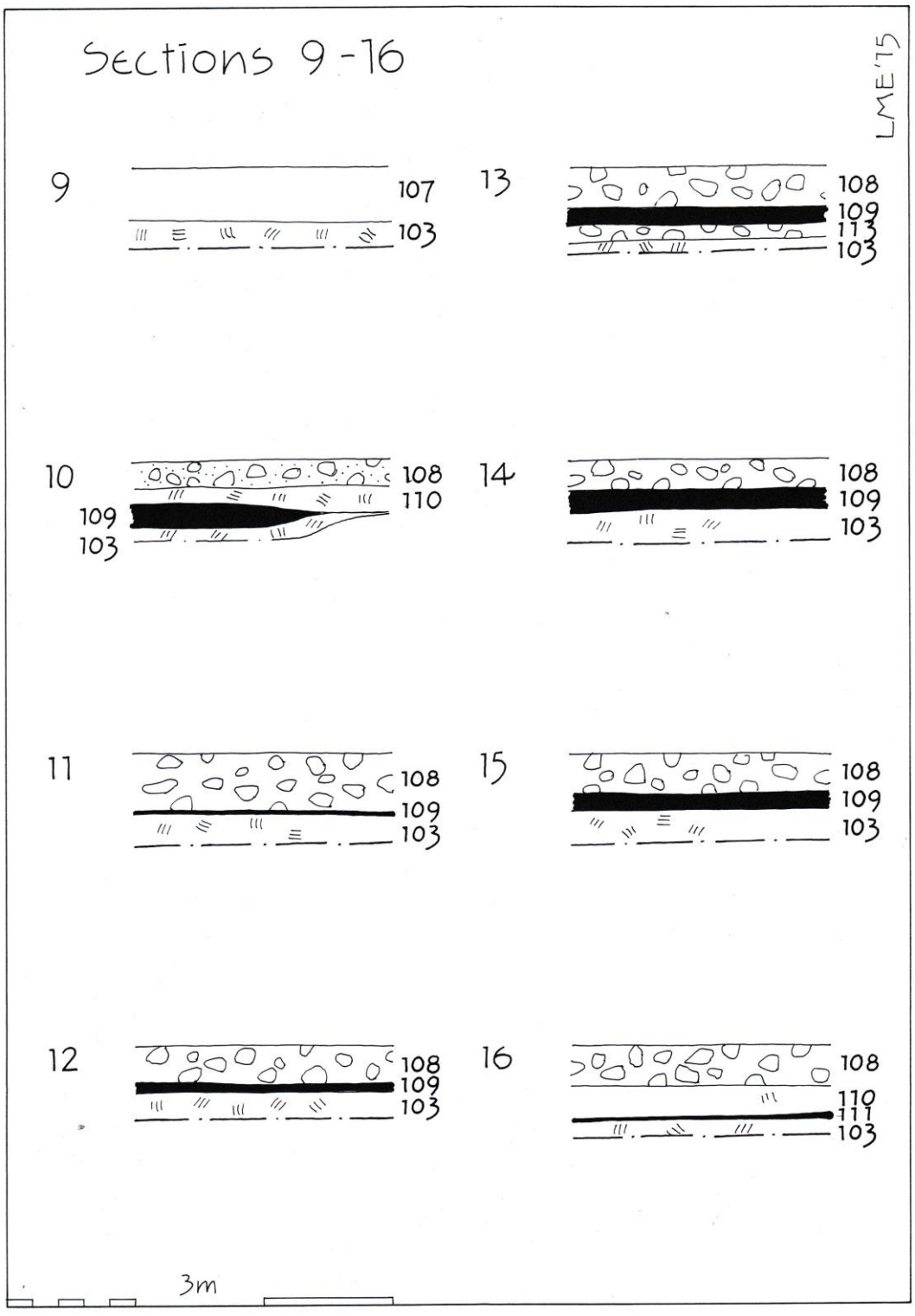

Fig. 6; sections 9-16

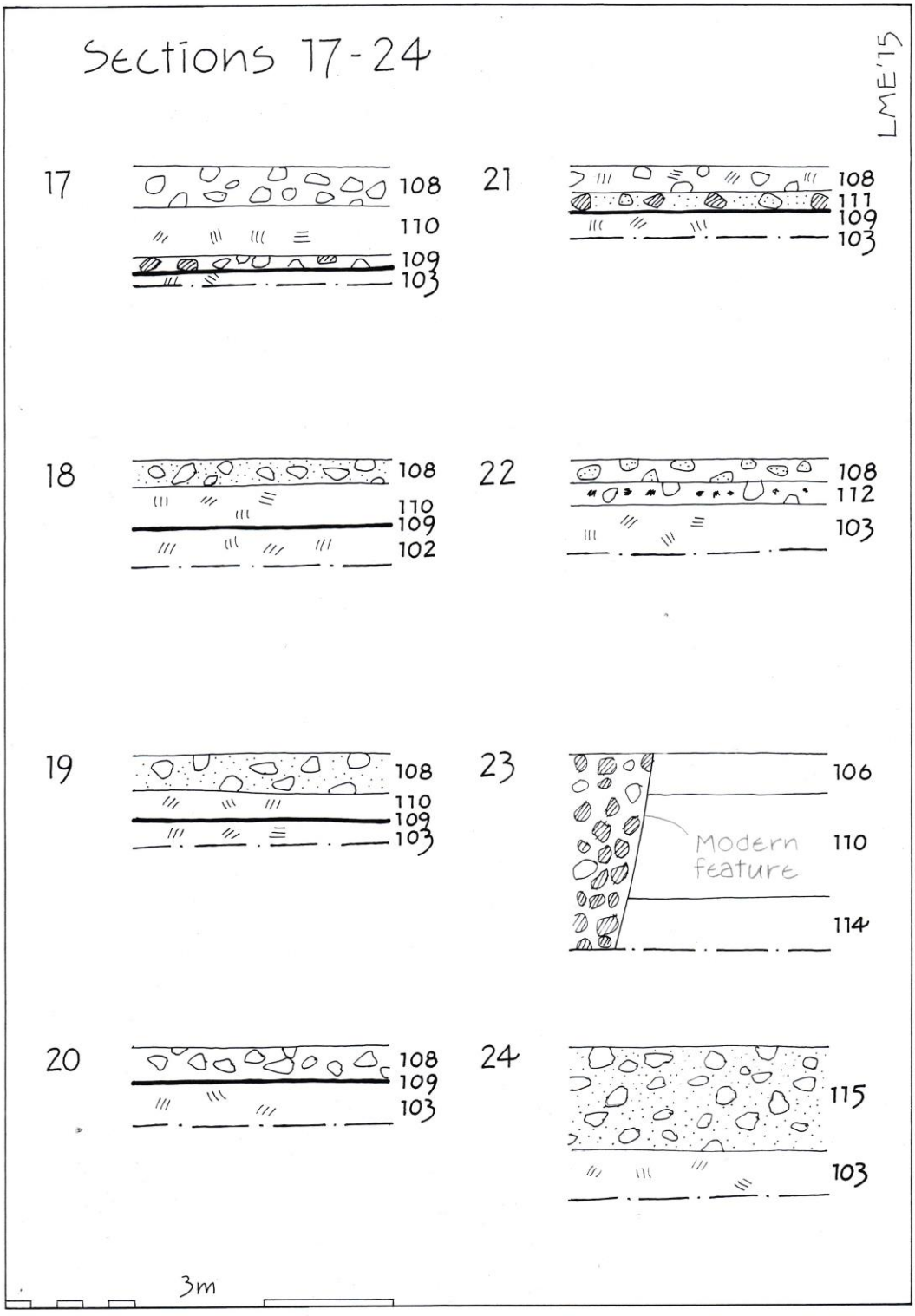

Fig. 7; sections 17-24

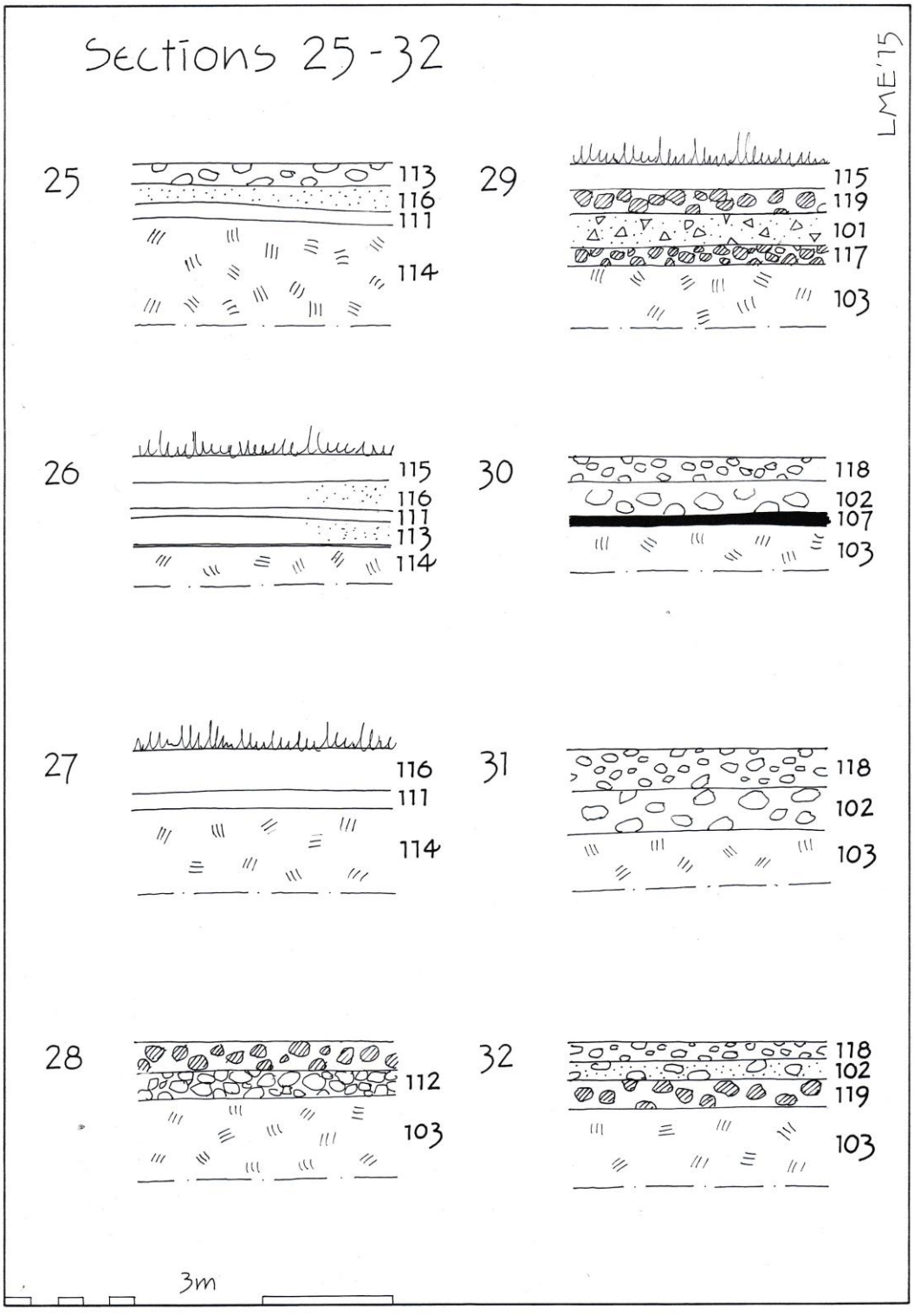

Fig. 8; sections 25-32

Plate 1; section 2

Plate 2; section 5

Plate 3; context 105, from the south-east

Plate 4; section 8

Plate 5; section 9

Plate 6; section 12

Plate 7; section 16

Plate 8; section 18

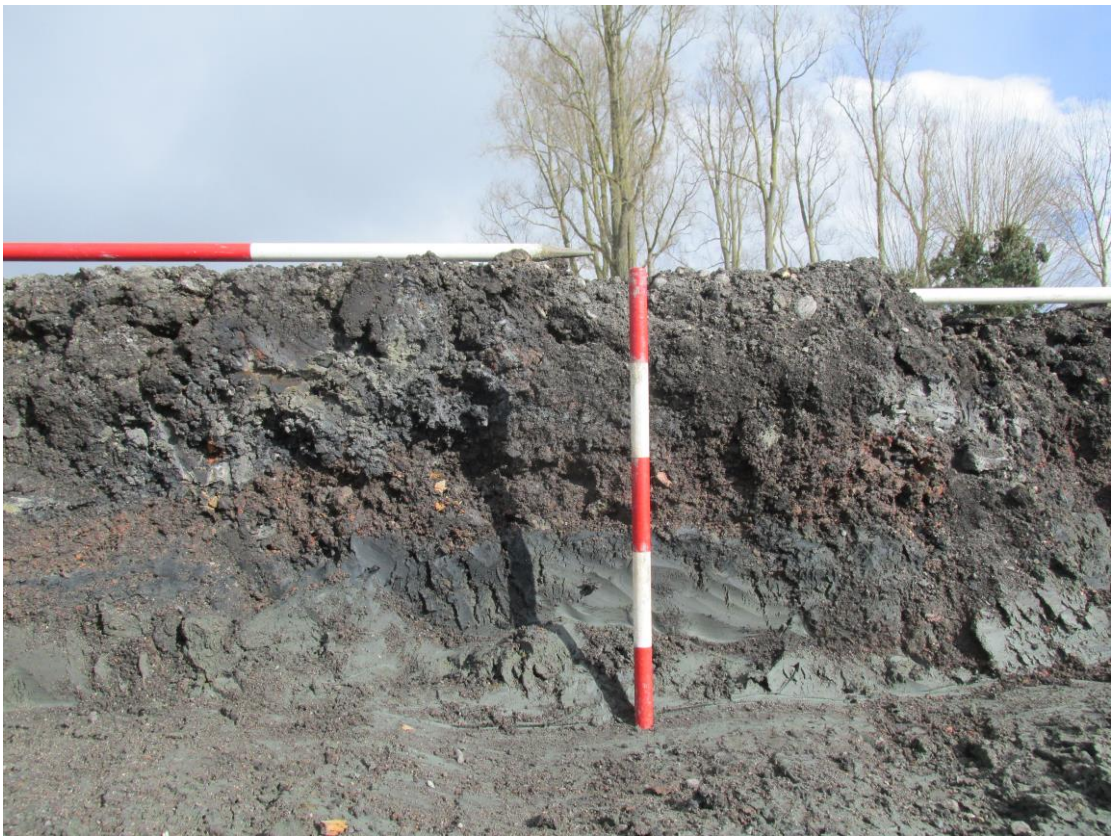

Plate 9; section 21

Plate 10; section 23

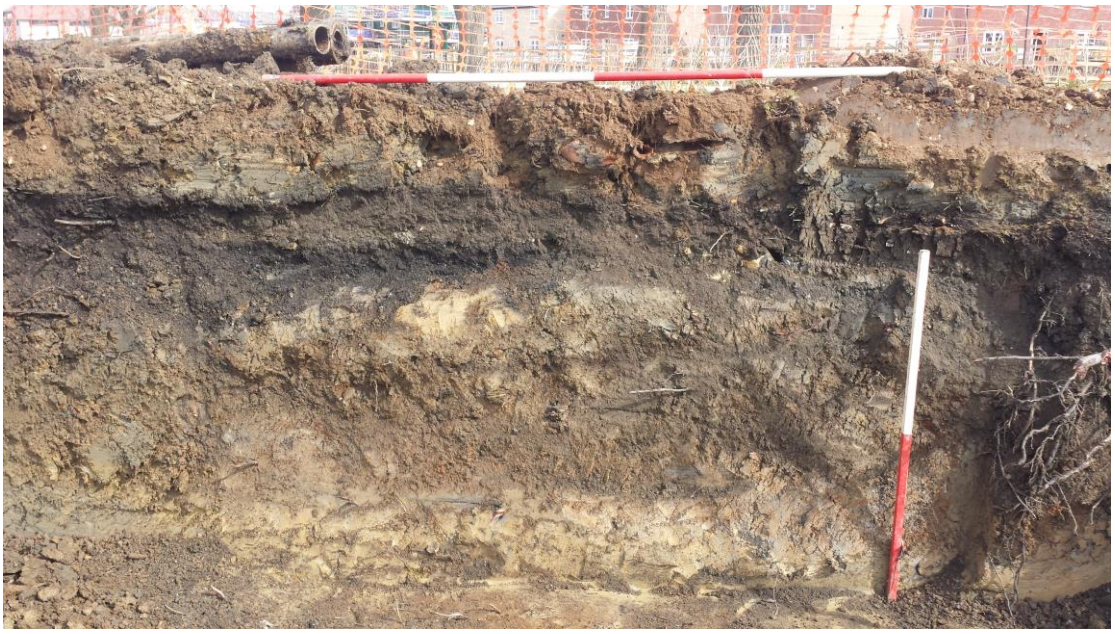

Plate 11;section 25

Plate 12; section 28

Plate 13; section 29

Plate 14; modern drain, from the north

Plate 15; modern drain, from the north-west

Plate 16; fuel storage tank

Plate 17; section 30

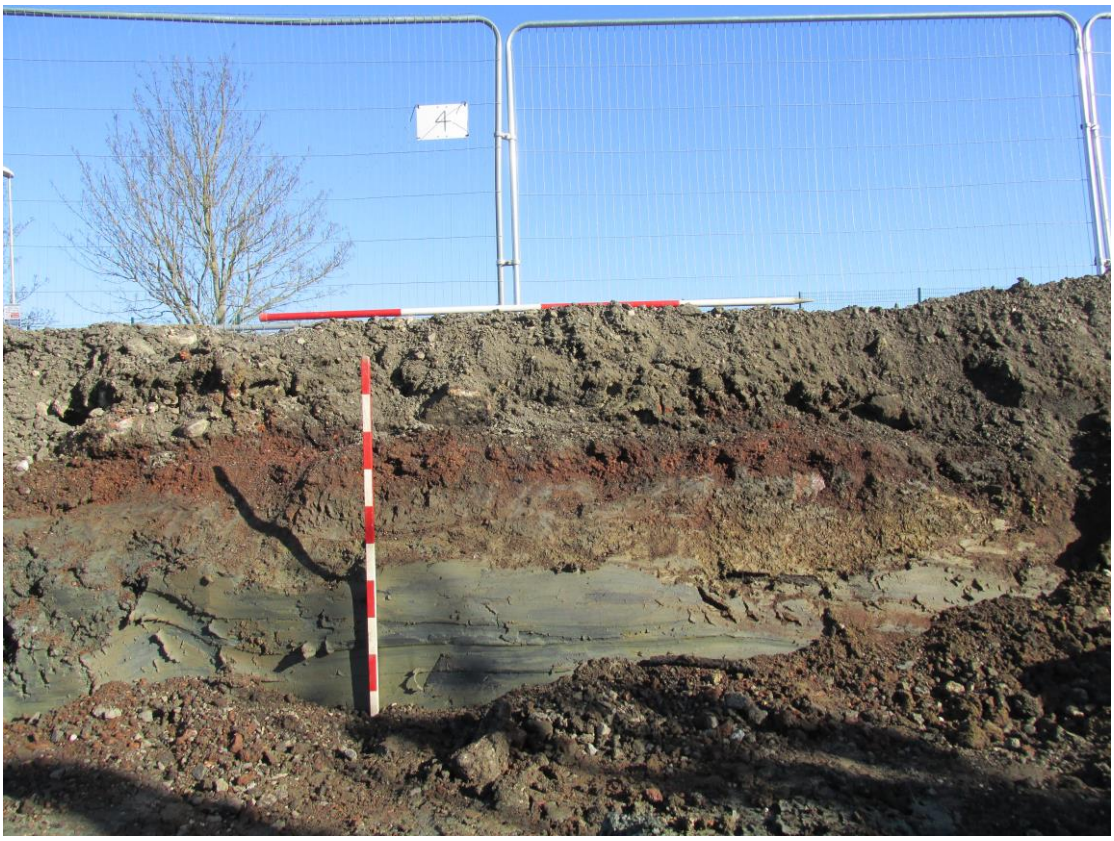

Plate 18; section 32

DISCUSSION (Fig. 9)

Historic mapping (OS 1884) shows the study site as formally part of a much larger rectangular open field with a track crossing the northern edge, this now aligns closely with the existing main access road (Sharry Lane) into the remaining depot area to the west and north-west. A north-south line of trees bounds the west side of the site following a meandering natural watercourse. This has since been altered in connection with various phases of development either side of it.

Natural geology comprising a Lias clay, predominantly blue/grey, but with areas of light to mid brown clay was exposed throughout the excavation. No significant archaeological features or deposits were observed cut into or overlying this layer. Instead the watching brief identified a number of modern features and deposits associated with the post war development of the study site. These various deposits directly overlay the natural clay throughout the site amounting to an overall depth of about 0.60m. An absence of any deposits pre-dating those associated with the depot suggests some truncation during its construction.

On the west side of the excavation were former concrete foundations (contexts 104 & 105) associated with depot buildings recently demolished. To the south-east of these footings was a north-west to south-east aligned linear feature that contained a cast iron (?drainage) pipe.

Further west towards the central area of the site, the natural clay was sealed by a thin layer of plastic greyish-black clayey-silt interpreted as oil and diesel contamination. In some parts this was overlain by concrete, but mostly in limestone rubble (the base construction for the former concrete hardstanding). In places this rubble was sealed by a layer of soil mixed with demolition debris, this is a recent deposit associated with the removal of the former concrete hardstanding. Some service trenches and inspection chamber 'manholes' were also observed during the excavation.

Significant truncation of deposits in the south-east corner of the site (modern feature; section 23) was associated with the construction of a new bridge across the watercourse. Re-deposited soil was also added along the eastern boundary probably during recent works associated with the management of the watercourse and which probably included the modern drain/culvert (Plates 14 & 15) before its demolition.

A former large fuel storage tank (Plate 16) for supplying the depot vehicles was also removed. A number of deposits immediately to the south-east of this (section 13) relate to another former large (?shed) building (OS 1970).

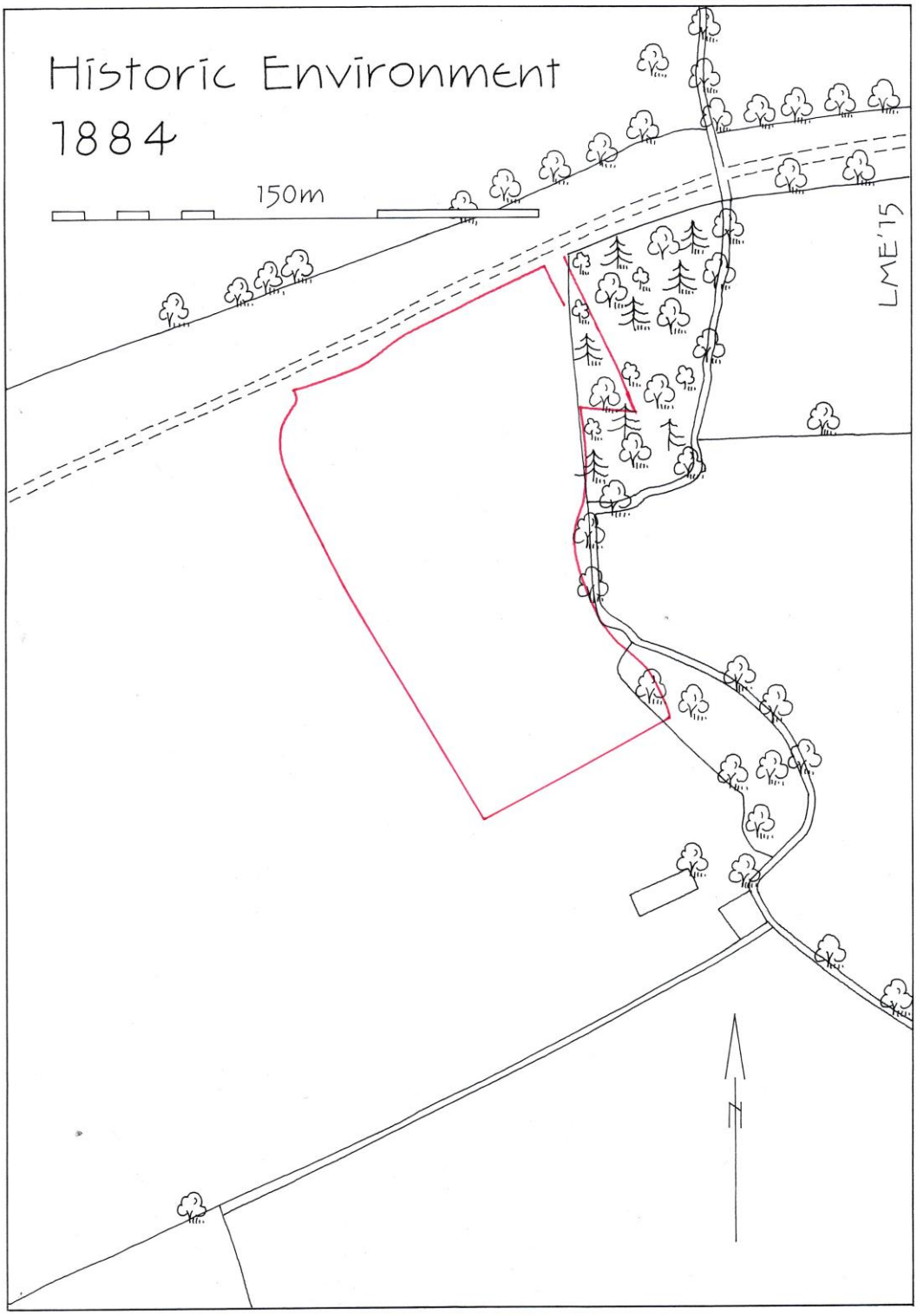

Figure 9; historic environment in 1886, study site outlined in red

Continued from page 24

As excavation continued along the northern edge of the site, the natural clay was overlain by a sequence of deposits again comprising limestone rubble, but with tarmac hardstanding.

No residual pre-20th century artefactual material was recovered during the excavation suggesting that there was little or no activity within the study site until its development into a post-war depot. The Results of the historic mapping and excavation show that the study site comprised large buildings to the east and west with concrete hardstanding in the central area.

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Appendix 1; OASIS

Project name	Meon Vale Estate (Phase 3), Long Marston, Stratford upon Avon, Warwickshire; archaeological recording
Short description of the project	The work was undertaken in connection with remediation of ground deposits prior to residential development.
Project dates	Start: 10-03-2015 End: 28-04-2015
Previous/future work	Yes / No
Any associated project reference codes	LME15 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 4 - Storage and warehousing
Monument type	MOD Modern
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	'''''Watching Brief'''''
Prompt	Planning condition
Country	England
Site location	WARWICKSHIRE STRATFORD ON AVON LONG MARSTON Meon Vale Estate (Phase 3)
Postcode	CV378QR
Study area	0 Square metres
Site coordinates	SP 16376 46746 52.118377662244 -1.760804008552 52 07 06 N 001 45 38 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 47.5m Max: 47.5m
Name of Organisation	one ten archaeology
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	one ten archaeology
Project director/manager	sean cook
Project supervisor	sean cook
Type of sponsor/funding body	Landowner
Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	OASIS
Digital Contents	''none''
Digital Media	''Text''

available	
Paper Archive Exists?	No
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Meon Vale Estate (Phase 3), Long Marston, Stratford upon Avon, Warwickshire; archaeological recording
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Cook, S
Date	2015
Issuer or publisher	one ten archaeology
Place of issue or publication	Warks.
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