

LAND OFF MILL ROAD, HERTFORD

Archaeological Evaluation

commissioned by CgMs Consulting

3/14/0590/FP

February 2015





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project info

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CONTENTS

1	INTR	ODUCTION	1					
	1.1	PLANNING BACKGROUND	1					
	1.2	1.2 SITE DESCRIPTION						
	1.3	ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND						
2	METH	IODOLOGY	2					
	2.1	OBJECTIVES	2					
	2.2	METHODOLOGY	2					
	2.3	2.3 RECORDING						
3	RESU	LTS	2					
	3.1	FINDINGS FROM THE TRIAL TRENCHING EVALUATION	2					
	3.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HERITAGE ASSETS							
4	CONC	LUSIONS	б					
5	BIBLI	OGRAPHY	7					
6	APPE	NDICES	8					
	APPE	NDIX 1 SITE REGISTER	8					
		Trench register	8					
		Context register	9					
		Photographic register	10					

6

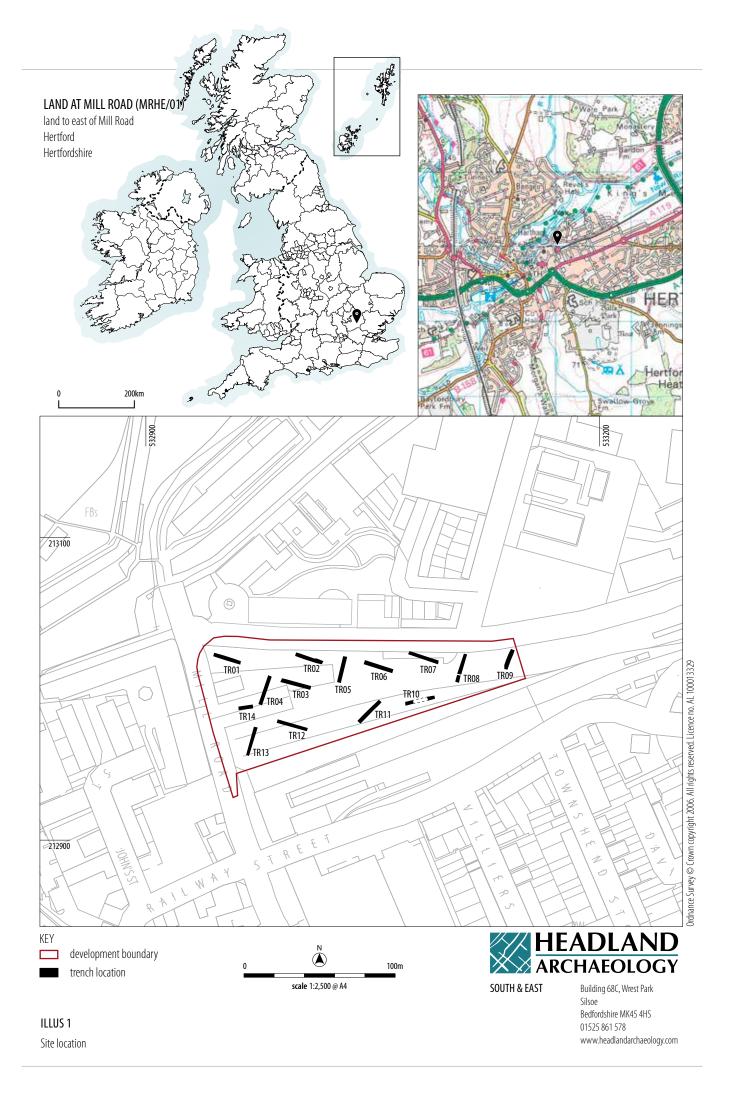
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

ILLUS 1 Site location	VI
ILLUS 2 Trench plan	3
ILLUS 3 1898 Ordnance Survey map with overlay development boundary	5
ILLUS 4 Photographs of the linear earthworks, previous trackbeds, in the southern part of the site	6

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1

Heritage Assets recorded during intrusive evaluation



LAND OFF MILL ROAD, HERTFORD

Archaeological Evaluation

Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd conducted a trial trench archaeological evaluation on land off Mill Road, Hertford, as a condition of planning consent for the residential development of the site. Trial trenching revealed evidence for the postmedieval / modern development of the site, consisting of the late 19th century railway sidings and the later development and levelling of the site. No earlier finds or features of archaeological interest were identified during the evaluation.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PLANNING BACKGROUND

A planning application for the residential development of land off Mill Road, Hertford, NGR TL 3296 1300 (henceforth referred to as the Development Area, DA) has been submitted and approved (Planning Ref: 3/14/0590/FP). A condition was placed on the planning consent that required the developer to undertake a programme of archaeological investigation and trial trenching.

CgMs Consulting, acting on behalf of the developer, commissioned Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd to carry out the trial trenching evaluation and produce a report on the results. This evaluation has been carried out in order to assess the extent, nature and survival of archaeological features within those parts of the site where intrusive development will take place. The results will allow the Hertfordshire County Council's Historic Environment Unit (CHEU) to determine the significance of any archaeological remains within the DA, and the impact of the proposed development on the archaeological resource. Decisions on the type and scope of mitigation measures (if required by the CHEU) will be based on the results of field evaluation.

The remit of the archaeological trial trenching programme was outlined in a Written Scheme of Investigation compiled by Headland Archaeology before the fieldwork started, and was agreed with the CHEU (Headland Archaeology 2014). A systematic array of trenches was designed to effectively evaluate the DA (**Illus 1**). All evaluative works were carried out with the agreement of the CHEU.

1.2 SITE DESCRIPTION

The DA is situated in the north-eastern part of Hertford and is centred at TL 3296 1300. It is broadly triangular in shape and bordered by Mill Road to the west, Mead lane to the north and by trees to the south (with the railway line to the south beyond this). Current land use is industrial.

The DA lies at 40mOD. Its solid geology is Lewes Nodular chalk overlain by Kempton Park gravels (BGS Sheet 239). Made ground deposits were recorded across the PDA between 0.3m and 2.6m in depth (RPS 2011).

1.3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The background of the DA is covered in detail in the desk-based assessment (CgMs 2014). The DA lies adjacent to the Hertford conservation area and within an archaeological alert area.

Recent investigations in the vicinity of the DA revealed no evidence of prehistoric remains. In the wider area, finds of prehistoric flints and a Bronze Age sword fragments and ingot have been found, although the precise locations of these are unknown. Similarly, no evidence of Roman activity is known from within 400m of the DA.

Remains associated with the Saxon burgh and settlement of Hertford have been found c350–400m SW of the DA. This occupation extended closer to the DA in the form of pits at St Mary's Priory, 200m to the west, and the remains of a Grubenhauser at Mill Road, 50m to the west. This suggests that the DA might lie on the edge of the Anglo Saxon occupation.



During the Middle Ages the Priory of St Mary's developed around 200m SW of the DA. It is likely that land within the DA remained in agricultural use during the medieval and post-medieval periods. Indeed, the closest remains to the DA are a group of substantial post-holes located 50m to the west. Although these were associated with small amounts of 11th–12th century pottery, it is possible they were associated with an orchard relating to the post-medieval Priory Farm which occupied that land.

In the modern era, the northern part of the DA was cut by a railway line and in 1888 the Hertford East station was constructed immediately to the south of the DA. Historic plans show two railway sidings running into the DA from the station and a cottage in the NW part of the DA. Other railway infrastructure was present in the DA including a signal box and other small buildings. A gravel pit is also known to have been located outside the eastern side of the DA.

By 2011, the railway infrastructure had been removed from the north of the DA and replaced with a Speedy hire office. The remainder of the DA contains derelict land with disused rail tracks.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 OBJECTIVES

The general aim of the trenching evaluation was to obtain useful information concerning the presence, character, date, status and level of preservation of surviving archaeological remains. It also allows the curatorial authority to determine the impact of the proposed development on the archaeological resource, and to discuss the necessity for the preservation by record and/or the possibilities which may exist to preserve certain areas of archaeological remains in-situ if appropriate and thus determine their significance.

The archaeological investigations were carried out in order to:

- establish the depth and character of archaeologically 'sterile' overburden;
- identify, characterise and date any potential archaeological remains within the site;
- define any constraints encountered during the evaluation and any potential constraints for further archaeological fieldwork (e.g. areas of disturbance, service locations, etc.).

The local and regional research contexts are provided by Research and Archaeology Revisited: a Revised Framework for the East of England, East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 24 (Medlycott, 2011, ed.). Any evidence retrieved during the works will be analysed in light of the objectives contained in this frameworks, and may include the following:

- Anglo-Saxon towns: 'inter-relationships between towns and their hinterlands', 'development and role of towns as defensive centres, changes in their internal layouts and housing densities, their role as centres of supply and demand' (Medlycott 2011, 58).
- Post-medieval and modern industry and infrastructure: 'impact of the primary communication routes on the region's development and character...includes...railways' (Medlycott 2011, 78).

2.2 METHODOLOGY

Trial trenching was carried out between the 13th and 15th January 2015. A total of fourteen trenches were excavated across the DA, measuring between 10m and 2m in length by 1.8m in width (see Appendix I for lengths of each trench). Trench length was varied on site at the discretion of the (on-site) Project Officer, in liaison with the CgMs Consultant and the HET. This was needed in order to avoid damage to sub-surface utilities.

The methodology underlying the archaeological trial trenching programme was outlined in the Written Scheme of Investigation (Headland Archaeology 2014), and agreed with the CHEU. The trench layout was designed to evaluate the DA using a systematic trenching array, with the trenches spread evenly across the DA. Trench 3 could not be entered due to the presence of asbestos; and the central part of Trench 10 could not be excavated because of the presence of a service.

A 360° tracked mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless bucket was used to remove topsoil under direct archaeological control. Excavation continued until clean geological sediments or archaeological deposits were encountered.

Further excavation required to satisfy the objectives of the evaluation was continued by hand. A representative sample, sufficient to meet the objectives of the evaluation, of identified features was investigated by hand and all features were recorded. The stratigraphy of each trench was recorded in full.

2.3 RECORDING

All recording was in accordance with the code of practice of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) and in line with the approved Written Scheme of Investigation (Headland Archaeology 2014). All trenches and contexts were given unique numbers. All recording was undertaken on pro forma record cards that conform to accepted archaeological standards. All stratigraphic relationships were recorded.

An overall site plan at an appropriate scale and relative to the National Grid was recorded by digital survey using a differential GPS.

A full photographic record comprising colour slide and black and white print photographs was taken, supplemented with digital photography. A metric scale was clearly visible in record photographs.

3 RESULTS

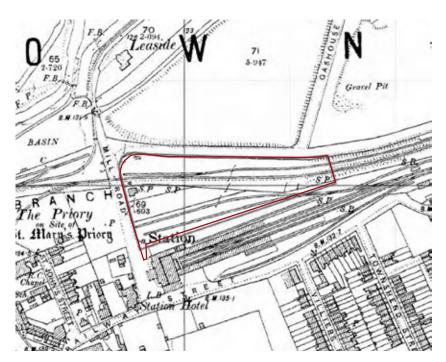
3.1 FINDINGS FROM THE TRIAL TRENCHING EVALUATION

Full trench descriptions, including orientation, length, and depth, are presented in Appendix 1. Technical details of individual contexts are presented in Appendix 1. Contexts are numbered by trench

-2



ILLUS 2 Trench plan



ILLUS 3 1898 Ordnance Survey map with overlay development boundary

number: i.e. Trench 1 (101), Trench 2 (201). Cut features are shown as [101] whilst their fills are expressed as (102), for example.

Undisturbed natural deposits were observed in places in all trenches. This generally comprised a yellow-orange-brown sandygravel, with patches of chalk and clay in places (the Kempton Park Gravels recorded on BGS). The level of the natural deposit varied, from between 0.5m beneath the present ground-surface to 1.2m beneath the present ground-surface. This was because of the differing thickness of made-ground observed across the site. It should also be noted that there were many areas where the natural deposit was not observed, with patches of modern made-ground (representing pits, railway sidings, and other modern intrusions) being cut through the natural deposit.

A modern concrete surface, with underlying make-up layer, was observed in Trenches 2, 3, 4, and 14 – the north-western part of the DA (where the former Speedy Hire office and car-park were located). The concrete surface was between 0.13 and 0.25m thick, with the underlying make-up layer being between 0.05 and 0.25m thick. Trenches 5 and 12 had a demolition spread covering their surfaces, (dark orange-brown silt with concrete slabs in), 0.3–0.55m thick. These trenches were positioned towards the edges of the modern concrete area, and so are presumably associated with this in some way. Trenches were positioned over the locations of previous railway tracks, such as those in the southern part of the site shown on the 1898 OS Map, however these had been removed by the time of the evaluation. They were, however, visible as linear earthworks (see **Illus 4**).

Topsoil deposits were observed in all trenches, beneath the concrete surface / demolition spread in the trenches mentioned above, and as the uppermost deposit (the ground-surface) in the other trenches. This was a loose grey-black sandy-silt deposit with

small stones, chalk flecks, and rooting, and was between 0.25 and 0.7m thick. Modern waste, including plastic and glass, was observed within this deposit. This is thought to be a modern deposit, created alongside the 20th– 21st century development of the site.

No subsoil was observed in any of the trenches across the DA (it has been removed as part of the modern development of the site). Instead, made-ground was found in all trenches directly beneath the topsoil. This comprised a mixture of deposits, mainly sandy-gravels and clay-silts, but with some flecks of chalk. Fragments of CBM and plaster were recorded in places. The depths of these made-ground deposits varied from 0.1 to 0.95m thick, with no apparent patterning in where the thicker deposits of made-ground were found across the DA. It is thought that these made-ground deposits were used for the modern levelling the site (potentially after the removal of the railway).

These made-ground deposits were observed cutting into the natural deposit in the base of all of the trenches. In some cases, this was in

the form of irregularly-shaped pits / pockets (e.g. Trench 1, 4, 5, and 7). In other cases, the majority of the base of the trench consisted of made-ground deposits, with the natural deposit essentially just poking through (Trenches 9–14). In Trench 3 a concrete footing was recorded in the centre of the trench at the level of the natural deposit. This is all associated with the modern landscaping and activity associated with the late 19th–20th century railway.

In some trenches there were obvious cuts, filled with madeground deposits, through the natural. For example, in Trench 2 there was a linear cut at the northern end of the trench; madeground infilled a cut along the northern part of Trench 3; Trench 6 had two parallel bands of made-ground; Trench 7 had a single band infilled with made-ground; and Trench 8 had a cut along the centre of the trench filled with made-ground deposits. It is thought that these may represent the railway sidings shown on the 1898 OS map (CgMs 2014, Figure 7), particularly as the cuts were aligned broadly northeast to southwest. The fact that the two bands in Trench 6 were parallel to each other supports this interpretation further.

3.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HERITAGE ASSETS

The local and regional research contexts are provided by Medlycott's Research and Archaeology Revisited: a Revised Framework for the East of England (2011). In Section 2.1 of this document we identified research aims relating to Anglo-Saxon towns and post-medieval / modern railways. The results of the trial trenching evaluation did not provide any information about Anglo-Saxon towns, however did produce some evidence for the modern railways. The following heritage assets were identified during the fieldwork:





ILLUS 4

Photographs of the linear earthworks, previous trackbeds, in the southern part of the site

Description of HA	Trench	Feature	Significance of HA (low, medium, high) and of local, regional, national, international interest
HA1: Modern railway sidings	2, 3, 6, 7, 8	0202, 0302, 0602, 0702, 0802	Negligible significance
HA2: Disturbance and levelling associated with the modern use of the site	All trenches	0102,0202,0302, 0402,0502,0602, 0702,0802,0902, 1002,1102,1202, 1302,1402	Negligible significance

TABLE 1

6

Heritage Assets recorded during intrusive evaluation

HA1 consists of the remains directly associated with the later 20th century railway which ran across the northern part of the DA. The remains of railway sidings depicted on the 1898 OS Map (CgMs 2014, Figure 7), survived as linear cuts through the natural deposit, infilled with made-ground deposits, in some trenches. This is considered to have negligible archaeological significance.

HA2 consists of the evidence for other modern levelling and disturbance across the DA. This principally comprises of the madeground deposits observed beneath the topsoil in all trenches, with patches of this cut through the natural deposit in places. These deposits are considered to have negligible archaeological significance.

4 CONCLUSIONS

The trial trenching evaluation uncovered no finds or features of archaeological significance. Deposits uncovered in all trenches were associated with the late 19th century railway and subsequent levelling and landscaping of the site. This comprised the remains of railway sidings (linear cuts through the natural deposit infilled by made-ground), along with significant quantities of made-ground associated with the later levelling of the site. More modern topsoil deposits, concrete surfaces, and demolition spreads were observed overlying this and representing the modern usage of the DA. No earlier remains, associated with Saxon activity or similar, were uncovered.

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Ordnance Survey Maps, various dates and scales.

RPS, 2011 Borehole study of land off Mill Road, Hertford.

7-



6 APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 SITE REGISTER

Trench register

Trench	Orientation	Depth	Description	Length	Trench	Orientation	Depth	Description	Length
01	WNW-ESE	0.55m	Topsoil (0101) over made ground (0102) over natural (0103). Pit-shaped features visible cutting through the natural towards the centre of the trench and infilled by (0102).	20m	12	NW-SE	0.8m	Demolition spread (1204), over topsoil (1201) over made ground (1202) over natural (1203). Natural only visible at NW end, with rest of trench consisting of made–ground (1202). Electric cable and metal pipe at SE end.	20m
02	NNE-SSW	0.8m	Concrete surface (0204), over make-up layer for concrete surface (0205), over topsoil (0201) over made ground (0202) over natural (0203). Cut for railway sidings with infill (0202) seen in northern half of trench.	10m	13	NNE-SSW	0.8m	Topsoil (1301) over made ground (1302) over natural (1303). Service in centre of trench and no natural deposit observed at SSW end which consisted of made-ground (1302).	20m
03	NW-SE	0.8m	Concrete surface (0305), over make-up layer for concrete surface (0304), over topsoil (0301) over made ground (0302) over natural (0303). A concrete footing (0306) was recorded in the centre of the trench. Band of made-ground (0302) visible cutting through the natural.	20m	14	NW-SE	0.7m	Concrete surface (1404) over make-up layer for concrete surface (1406) over construction footing for concrete surface (1405), over topsoil (1401) over made ground (1402) over natural (1403).	10m
04	WNW-ESE	0.7m	Concrete surface (0404), over topsoil (0401) over made ground (0402) over natural (0403). Pit-shaped features visible cutting the natural and infilled by (0402).	20m					
05	NNE-SSW	0.8m	Demolition spread (0504), over topsoil (0501) over made ground (0502) over natural (0503). Pit-shaped features visible cutting through the natural and infilled by (0502).	17m					
06	ESE-WNW	0.9m	Topsoil (0601) over made ground (0602) over natural (0603). Bands of made–ground (0602) visible cutting through the natural.	20m					
07	ESE-WNW	0.8m	Topsoil (0701) over made ground (0702) over natural (0703). Band of made–ground and another pit–shaped feature of made–ground (0702) visible cutting through the natural.	20m					
08	NNW-SSW	0.7m	Topsoil (0801) over made ground (0802) over natural (0803). Bands of made-ground (0802) visible cutting through the natural.	20m					
09	NE-SW	0.9m	Topsoil (0901) over made ground (0902) over natural (0903). Areas of made-ground (0902) visible cutting through the natural.	17m					
10	ENE-WSW	0.8m	Topsoil (1001) over made ground (1002) over natural (1003). Electric cable at WSW end. Band of made-ground (1002) cut into natural at ESE end.	20m					
11	NE-SW	1m	Topsoil (1101) over made ground (1102) over natural (1103). Numerous electric cables and areas of made-ground (1102) cutting through the natural.	20m					

Context register

Context	Trench	Description	Dimensions
0101	01	Topsoil: loose dark grey-black sandy-silt with moderate small stones and frequent rooting.	0—0.25m
0102	01	Made ground: mixed make-up layers comprising thin bands of white/yellow chalk, a mid-yellow-brown gravelly-sand deposit, and light yellow-brown clay with chalk lumps. Also visible in pockets towards the centre of the trench cutting through the natural.	0.25–0.6m
0103	01	Natural: loose mid brown-orange sandy-gravel.	0.6m+
0201	02	Topsoil: loose dark grey-black sandy-silt with occasional chalk flecks and small stones.	0.4–0.65m
0202	02	Made ground: make-up layers comprising loose dark orange-brown clay-silt. Seen filling a cut through natural at northern end of trench (probable cut for railway sidings).	0.65— 1.05m+
0203	02	Natural: loose mid brown-orange sandy-gravel. Only exposed in southern half of trench.	0.65m+
0204	02	Concrete surface.	0—0.13m
0205	02	Make-up / footing layer for surface [0204]. Contains moderate CBM blocks. Seals (0201).	0.13–0.4m
0301	03	Topsoil: loose mid grey-black silt with moderate small to medium stones.	0.25–0.7m
0302	03	Made ground: make-up layers comprising a dark grey-black silt with small stones, chalk flecks, and CBM fragments. Also seen filling a band cutting through the natural deposit along northern half of trench.	0.7m+
0303	03	Natural: light yellow-brown-orange sandy-gravel with patches of clay.	0.8m+
0304	03	Make-up / footing layer for surface [0305]. Orange- brown clay-silt overlying brown-orange sandy-gravel. Seals (0301).	0—0.25m
0305	03	Concrete surface.	0—0.25m
0306	03	Concrete footing observed in central part of trench.	2m X 1.8m++. Observed at 0.75m beneath ground— surface.
0401	04	Topsoil: loose dark grey-black sandy-silt.	0.25–0.53m
0402	04	Made ground: make-up layers comprising sandy-gravel and clays. Also seen filling pit-shaped features cutting through the natural deposit.	0.53–0.8m
0403	04	Natural: loose mid yellow-brown-orange sandy-gravel.	0.8m+
0404	04	Concrete surface.	0—0.23m
0501	05	Topsoil: loose dark grey-black sandy-silt with frequent 0–0.7m rooting and occasional small stones.	
0502	05	Made ground: make-up layers. Also seen filling 0.7m+ pit-shaped features cutting through the natural deposit along the length of the trench.	

Context	Trench	Description	Dimensions	
0503	05	Natural: loose light yellow-grey-orange sandy-silt.	0.85m+	
0504	05	Demolition spread. Overlying (0501) in parts of the 0–0.55m trench.		
0601	06	Topsoil: loose dark grey-black sandy-silt with frequent roots, occasional small stones, and post-medieval/ modern waste material (plastics, glass, etc).	0–0.3m	
0602	06	Made ground: make-up layers comprising thin bands of chalk, sandy gravels, and a dark buried topsoil. Seen filling two linear cuts cutting through the natural deposit (thought to be associated with railway sidings).	0.3—1m	
0603	06	Natural: loose mid grey-orange sandy-gravel.	1m+	
0701	07	Topsoil: loose dark grey-black sandy-silt with frequent roots, occasional small stones, and occasional post- medieval/modern plastic, glass, etc.	0—0.6m	
0702	07	Made ground: make-up layers comprising mid brown- orange gravelly-sand; dark orange-brown sandy-silt; all with CBM and stones. Seen filling a linear cut and pit-shaped feature cutting through the natural deposit.	0.6–0.9m	
0703	07	Natural: mid orange-brown sandy-gravel and moderately soft white chalk.	0.9m+	
0801	08	Topsoil: loose dark grey-black sandy-silt with frequent rooting and occasional stones.	0—0.6m	
0802	08	Made ground: make-up layers comprising loose yellow-brown sandy-gravel and sand. Seen filling linear cuts and pit-shaped features cutting through the natural deposit.	0.5m+	
0803	08	Natural: light grey-orange sandy-gravel.	0.7m+	
0901	09	Topsoil: loose dark grey-black sandy-silt.	0–0.5m	
0902	09	Made ground: make-up layers comprising redeposited loose gravels, dark black-brown silty-sand, and orange- brown silty-sand deposits. Seen filling a linear cut and pit-shaped feature cutting through the natural deposit.	0.5—1m	
0903	09	Natural: loose gravel with occasional medium stones. Only seen in a small patch at NE end of trench.	1m+	
1001	10	Topsoil: loose dark grey-black sandy-silt with frequent 0–0.35m roots, occasional small stones, and modern plastic and glass etc.		
1002	10	Made ground: make-up layers comprising light brown- grey and dark grey-black sandy-gravels. Seen filling cuts through the natural deposit.	0.35m+	
1003	10	Natural: loose grey-yellow-orange gravels. Seen at ENE end of trench.	0.5m+	
1101	11	Topsoil: loose dark grey-black sandy-silt with frequent 0–0.6m rooting, occasional small stones, and occasional CBM fragments and glass.		
1102	11	Made ground: make-up layers comprising grey-black 0.6–1m silt with chalk, CBM, and plaster; and a mid grey-orange sand. Seen filling cuts through the natural deposit.		
1103	11	Natural: loose light grey-yellow-orange sandy-gravel. Seen at SW end of trench.	1m+	



Context	Trench	Description	Dimensions
1201	12	Topsoil: loose dark grey-black sandy-silt, with frequent rooting and occasional small stones.	0.3–0.6m
1202	12	Made ground: make-up layers comprising orange- brown sand, brown-orange clay, and grey-orange sandy-gravel. Seen filling cuts through the natural deposit.	0.6m+
1203	12	Natural: loose yellow-orange sandy-gravel. Seen at \ensuremath{W} end of trench.	0.6m+
1204	12	Demolition spread. Overlying (1201). Dark orange- brown silt with concrete slabs and rooting.	0–0.3m
1301	13	Topsoil: dark grey-black sandy-silt.	0—0.25m
1302	13	Made ground: make-up layers. Also seen cutting through the natural deposit at the S end of the trench.	0.25—1.2m
1303	13	Natural: yellow-orange sandy-gravel.	1.2m+
1401	14	Topsoil: loose dark grey-black silt.	0.35-0.65m
1402	14	Made ground: make-up layers comprising a mid blue- orange sandy-gravel.	0.25–0.35m
1403	14	Natural: loose mid brown-orange sandy-gravel.	0.65m+
1404	14	Concrete surface.	0–0.2m
1405	14	Construction footing layer for surface [1404].	0.2–0.25m
1406	14	Made ground sealing (1405) after removal of [1404]. Mid orange-brown sandy-gravel and dark orange-black silt.	-

Photographic register

Photo	Digital	Facing	Description
01	2736	W	Trench 1
02	2737	S	North-facing section in Trench 1
03	2740	W	Trench 3
04	2741	W	Trench 4
05	2743	W	Trench 6
06	2744	S	North-facing section in Trench 6
07	2745	W	Trench 7
08	2746	Ν	Trench 8
09	2747	Ν	Trench 8
10	2748	Ν	Trench 9
11	2750	W	Trench 10
12	2751	E	Trench 10, showing hand-excavation
13	2752	SW	Trench 11
14	2753	S	Services in Trench 11
15	2754	S	Services in Trench 11
16	2755	S	Services in Trench 11
17	2756	SE	Trench 12
18	2757	Ν	Trench 13
19	2758	W	Trench 3
20	2759	Ν	Trench 2
21	2760	E	Trench 14
22	2761	S	Sample section in Trench 14
23	2762	E	Section showing cutting in Trench 9
24	2763	NW	Trench 5
25	2764	Ν	South-facing section in Trench 5
26	2765	E	Sidings cut in Trench 12



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