



## The Former Avenue School Site Northumberland Avenue, Reading, Berkshire (Phase 2)

Archaeological Trial Trenching Evaluation Report





**THE FORMER AVENUE SCHOOL SITE, NORTHUMBERLAND  
AVENUE, READING, BERKSHIRE  
(PHASE 2)**

**Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation Report**

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**Reading Borough Council Planning Application: 12/00206/REM**

**July 2012**



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\* I= INTERNAL DRAFT E= EXTERNAL DRAFT F= FINAL

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**Summary**

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Bellway Homes Ltd (Wessex) to carry out an archaeological evaluation at the Former Avenue School Site, Northumberland Avenue, Reading, Berkshire, which has been proposed for residential redevelopment, centred on National Grid Reference 472118 171858.

An archaeological desk-based assessment carried out in 2007 had identified a number of significant archaeological sites and findspots within the immediate area of the school site. Although the Site had been the subject of significant disturbance from the construction and subsequent development of the school, which included extensive landscaping, the assessment concluded that there was some potential for the survival of archaeological features and deposits within the site. Accordingly, archaeological conditions for the assessment and subsequent mitigation, if required, were attached to the outline and subsequent reserved matter planning consents.

An initial assessment of the southern half of the site (Phase 1, Extra Care Home) was carried out in 2010. The Phase 1 archaeological works confirmed that significant disturbance and landscaping had taken place. Although no pre-modern archaeological features or finds were recorded during the course of the fieldwork, traces of an original buried ground surface associated with modern pottery was identified, sealed below up to 1.20m of made ground deposits.

The evaluation of the northern half of the former school site (Phase 2) consisted of the machine excavation of 21 trial trenches measuring approximately 15m by 1.8m and was carried out between the 25<sup>th</sup> and the 29<sup>th</sup> of June 2012.

No significant evidence was found for archaeological features or deposits, although a possible post-medieval/19<sup>th</sup> century boundary ditch **803** and the brick footings of two discrete structures (a soak-away **2404** and a possible toilet block **1806**) were noted together with footings and disturbance relating to the former school buildings.

As with the evaluation within the southern Phase 1 area, the Phase 2 evaluation within the northern half of the site has established that significant landscaping, levelling and terracing was present, which together with the construction of the former school buildings is likely to have heavily impacted any archaeological features or deposits which may have been present.

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**Acknowledgements**

This project was commissioned by Bellway Homes Ltd (Wessex) and Wessex Archaeology is grateful for the assistance of Rachel Sampson and Bob Menham in this regard. The project was monitored on behalf of Reading Borough Council by Mary Neale (Archaeology Officer, Berkshire Archaeology) and Wessex Archaeology would like to thank her for her help and advice during the course of the project.

The project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Andy Manning. The evaluation was undertaken by John Powell, Tom Wells and Darryl Freer. The report was written and compiled by John Powell, Tom Wells and Andy Manning with the finds report by Lorraine Mephram and the illustrations were prepared by Karen Nichols.



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**Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation Report**

**1 INTRODUCTION**

**1.1 Project Background**

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Bellway Homes Ltd (Wessex) to undertake an archaeological trial trench evaluation located within the Phase 2 development area, within the grounds of the former Avenue School, Northumberland Avenue, Reading, Berkshire, which dates to 1909. The area is centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 472118 171858 and hereafter referred to as 'the Site'. (**Figure 1**).

1.1.2 A reserved matters application (12/00206/REM) was submitted in February 2012 (pursuant to outline consent 09/01396/REG3) for the redevelopment of the Site to provide for approximately 100 residential units with associated landscaping and car parking.

1.1.3 The entire development is effectively divided into two phases;

- **Phase 1**- 40 unit extra care housing with associated landscaping and car parking, which is focused on the southern most school building and occupies the southern half of the former Avenue School Site (approximately 0.9ha), and
- **Phase 2**- 60-70 residential units with associated landscaping and car parking, which occupies the northern half of the Site (approximately 1.3ha).

1.1.4 A detailed cultural heritage assessment was prepared for the development in support of an outline planning application (Entec 2007). The report noted that no evidence of archaeological activity had been reported from within the development area itself, although a number of significant archaeological finds and sites were located in close proximity to the development area (see Section 2).

1.1.5 Although initial geotechnical works indicated that some areas of the development had been heavily affected by the previous construction of the school, it was the opinion of the Local Planning Authority archaeological advisor (Berkshire Archaeology) that there was potential for the survival of archaeological features within the Site.

1.1.6 Accordingly, an archaeological condition was attached to the outline approval notice for the Phase 1 and 2 development;

Condition 10

*No development shall take place on the Extra Care Housing scheme site or on any of that part of the land on which residential housing units not*

*included within the Extra Care Housing Scheme are to be provided as part of this Permission in such phases as may be approved by the local planning authority in writing in accordance with condition 4 until the applicant, or their agents or their successors in title, has secured a programme of archaeological work (which may comprise more than one stage of work) in accordance with a written scheme of investigation and timetable, which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in respect of the relevant site(s). The agreed programme of works to be implemented in accordance with the agreed timetable and the development shall only take place in accordance with the detailed scheme approved pursuant to this condition.*

*Reason: To ensure that any archaeological remains within the site are adequately investigated and recorded or preserved in situ in the interest of protecting the archaeological heritage of the borough.*

1.1.7 The Phase 1 area (**Figure 1**) was the subject of an archaeological evaluation and subsequent watching brief in 2010 (Wessex Archaeology 2010).

1.1.8 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared for the Phase 2 evaluation by Wessex Archaeology and submitted to, and subsequently approved by, Berkshire Archaeology before the commencement of the fieldwork (Wessex Archaeology 2012). The fieldwork took place between the 25<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> of June 2012.

## **1.2 The Site, Location and Geology**

1.2.1 The former Avenue School (Phases 1 and 2) occupies a series of artificial terraces bordered by Basingstoke Road to the west and Northumberland Avenue to the east. To the north are a number of domestic properties on Avenue Heights and a telephone exchange and to the south the Site is bordered by a recent development at the back of properties fronting on to Surrey Road.

1.2.2 The Site (Phase 2) is broadly divided into two main areas, with a raised terrace occupying the northern half of the Site at a height of approximately 65m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) with the southern half lying at a height of approximately 62m aOD.

1.2.3 A recent ground investigation excavated 10 test pits and boreholes within the Phase 2 area (Ashdown Site Investigation Limited 2009) (**Figure 1**). The ground investigation indicated that the underlying geology was Boyn Hill Gravel, which forms part of the River Terrace Deposits associated with the Thames which overlies the London Clay Formation. The Boyn Hill Gravel deposit was present over almost all of the Phase 2 area, overlying London Clay. One exception is a central borehole, which indicated at least 1.6m in depth of made ground deposits overlying the London Clay, indicating deep localised disturbance.

### 1.3 Archaeological and Historical Background

- 1.3.1 A detailed cultural heritage assessment was prepared as part of the outline planning application for the Site (Entec 2007) and this information is summarised below.
- 1.3.2 The report found no evidence of known archaeological find spots or sites within the Phase 1 and Phase 2 development area. The majority of the recorded sites related to isolated finds (13 in all), which span a wide range of periods, including a small number of Palaeolithic and Mesolithic hand axes and flint tools, Iron Age, Romano-British and medieval pottery and a single Romano-British coin. All the finds were found to the west and north of the Site during gravel extraction and residential development.
- 1.3.3 Of particular significance was the discovery of the remains of a Bronze Age/Iron Age cremation cemetery noted during gravel extraction, approximately 200m to the north of the Site. In addition, archaeological evaluation in 1988 within Elgar Road, approximately 200m to the west of the Site, noted three groups of post-medieval gullies, ditches and post-holes (Entec 2007, 10).
- 1.3.4 The cultural heritage assessment also noted that there was evidence for substantial disturbance to the original ground levels, particularly to the north and south of the Site and this disturbance was predicted to have continued into the Site itself.

#### ***Previous Fieldwork***

- 1.3.5 In 2010, Wessex Archaeology carried out archaeological fieldwork within the southern half of the development (**Figure 1**, Phase 1) (Wessex Archaeology 2010). The fieldwork comprised:
- Five evaluation trenches located within areas close to the former southern building to assess the potential for the survival of archaeological features
  - Subsequent watching briefs carried out during the hand excavation and subsequent machine excavations by sub-contractors to investigate the extent of the root systems of trees flanking the north-western entrance to the development and at the rear of the main building and three short test trenches within the footprint of the new building.
- 1.3.6 The Phase 1 archaeological works confirmed that significant landscaping, had taken place within the area. Although no pre-modern archaeological features or finds were recorded during the course of the watching brief or evaluation, modern brick footings from a previous building and cellar were found immediately adjacent within the northern edge of the footprint of the former school building. To the south of the same building, traces of an original buried ground surface associated with modern pottery was identified, sealed below up to 1.20m of made ground deposits.
- 1.3.7 Previous archaeological work was been undertaken in close proximity to the development. In particular, three small scale evaluations by Thames Valley Archaeological Services (TVAS) were undertaken in 2000, 2005 and 2007. These included two evaluation trenches at 2 Northumberland Avenue (TVAS



2000), six trenches within the former George Palmer School (TVAS 2005) and six trenches at 58-64 Northumberland Avenue (TVAS 2007) which found no evidence for archaeological features or finds.

## **2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

### **2.1 Aims and Objectives**

2.1.1 The objectives of the trial trench evaluation, in line with the Institute for Archaeologists Standards and Guidance for Field Evaluation (IfA 2008), were to;

- Locate, identify and to investigate and record the presence/absence of archaeological features or deposits.
- Establish, where possible, the extent, date, character, relationship, condition and significance of archaeological features, artefacts and deposits within the area impacted.
- Inform the scope and nature of any requirements for potential future mitigation.

## **3 METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Fieldwork**

3.1.1 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (Wessex Archaeology 2012). The evaluation comprised the excavation of 21 evaluation trenches within the Site, each approximately 15m by 1.8m (**Figure 1**). An additional trench was originally proposed to the south of Trench 26, although there was no access to this location and Trench 26 was subsequently lengthened to compensate.

3.1.2 Trench numbers were continued from those used in the Phase 1 fieldwork (Trenches 1-5) and therefore commenced from Trench 6.

3.1.3 The trenches were excavated using a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a wide toothless bucket, under constant archaeological supervision. Mechanical excavation continued in spits through topsoil and subsoil down to either the uppermost archaeological features or natural deposits, whichever was encountered first. Topsoil was stored separately from subsoil and any other arisings. Excavated spoil from each trench and excavated feature was scanned visually and by metal detector.

3.1.4 Where any archaeological features were encountered they were investigated by hand, with a sufficient sample of each layer/feature type excavated in order to establish, their date, nature, character, extent and condition.

3.1.5 As a minimum 50% of each discrete feature (i.e. pits, post-holes); 75%-100% structural features (beam slots, ring-ditches etc.); 15-25% of each linear feature's exposed area and all terminals and intersections were investigated.

## 3.2 Recording

- 3.2.1 Archaeological deposits and features were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's *pro forma* recording system with a unique numbering system for individual contexts. Archaeological features and deposits were hand-drawn at either 1:10 or 1:20, including both plans and sections, these were referred to the Ordnance Survey National Grid. The Ordnance Datum (OD) height of all principal features and levels were calculated and this information is included on both plans and sections. A representative section of each trench was recorded showing the depth of the overburden deposits.
- 3.2.2 A photographic record was kept and illustrates both the detail and the general context of the principal features, finds excavated, and the Site as a whole.
- 3.2.3 The survey was carried out with a Leica Viva series GNSS unit using the OS National GPS Network through an RTK network with a 3D accuracy of 30mm or below. All survey data was recorded using the OSGB36 British National Grid coordinate system.
- 3.2.4 A unique site code **73581** was allocated to the Site, and was used on all records and finds.

## 3.3 Monitoring

- 3.3.1 Berkshire Archaeology were informed prior to the commencement of the fieldwork and provision was made for an on site monitoring meeting, which was attended by Mary Neal (Archaeology Officer, Berkshire Archaeology), Andy Manning (Wessex Archaeology Project Manager) and Rachel Sampson and Bob Menham (Bellway Homes). The trenches were monitored by the Berkshire Archaeology Officer. No area was back-filled, until Archaeology Officer had inspected it and the works were completed to their satisfaction.

## 3.4 Finds

- 3.4.1 Finds were treated in accordance with the relevant guidance given in the Institute of Field Archaeologist's *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (revised 1999), the UK Institute of Conservators Guidelines "*Conservation Guideline No 2*" and the Museums and Galleries Commissions "*Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections* (1991)" excepting where superseded by statements made below.
- 3.4.2 All artefacts from excavated contexts were retained, except those from features or deposits of obviously modern date. All retained artefacts will, as a minimum, washed, weighed, counted and identified.

## 4 RESULTS

### 4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 Details of individual excavated contexts and features are retained in the project archive. Summaries of the excavated sequences can be found in **Appendix 1**.

4.1.2 In total, 21 trial trenches were excavated and recorded during the course of the field evaluation (**Figure 1**). The majority of the trench locations were as proposed in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2012). However, three trenches were moved or rotated from their proposed locations, Trenches 6, 10 and 18. Trench 6 was rotated 45° to the south in order to cover the area of a proposed site compound, Trench 10 was rotated 45° to the north due to the location of overhanging trees and Trench 18 was rotated 45° to the south to avoid the Site entrance.

### 4.2 Archaeological Results

4.2.1 No significant archaeological features were identified during the course of the evaluation, although a possible post-medieval/19<sup>th</sup> century boundary ditch **803** and the brick footings of two discrete structures (a soak-away **2404** and a possible toilet block **1806**) were noted towards the eastern and western edges of the Site, together with footings and disturbance relating to the former school buildings.

4.2.2 The evaluation has provided evidence for the extent of truncation and depth of made ground deposits within the Site. The deepest made ground deposits were located towards the eastern half of the Site, and were present up to a maximum of 2.00m below ground level (BGL), at approximately 64m aOD.

4.2.3 The trenches have been grouped into three broad areas, the playing field trenches, the eastern trenches and the south-western trenches, for ease of reporting. The results of the trenches are summarised below.

#### ***Playing Field Trenches***

4.2.4 Trenches 6, 7, 8, 9 and 12 were located within the area of the playground and playing fields of the former Avenue School towards the northern edge of the Site (**Figure 1**).

4.2.5 The soil sequence recorded within this area was fairly uniform and relatively undisturbed. A dark grey-brown silty-sand topsoil (up to 0.4m deep) was present in all the trenches above a mid grey-brown silty-sand subsoil (up to 0.30m deep). The underlying natural was a light yellow brown sandy gravel with yellowish-grey clay and was present at 63.5m aOD.

4.2.6 A single ditch (**803**) was recorded in Trench 8 (**Figure 1 and 2**), sealed by low subsoil and cut into the top of the natural. The ditch was aligned east to west and had steep straight sides and a flat base; it measured 0.64m wide and was up to 0.19m depth. The ditch contained a single, loose grey-brown sandy clay secondary fill from which medieval roof tile and post-medieval brick were recovered. The ditch continued in to Trench 7 and was visible for a total length of approximately 23m.



- 4.2.7 A deposit of made ground (**902**) was recorded in Trench 9 below the subsoil and may represent an isolated levelling/dumped deposit. The deposit was very mixed, but, was predominantly mid grey-brown silty-clay-sand and contained abundant fragments of modern Ceramic Building Material (CBM), including brick and tile.

#### ***Eastern Evaluation Trenches***

- 4.2.8 Trenches 10, 11, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18 and 19 were located on a raised terrace towards the eastern half of the Site within the area of the former early 20<sup>th</sup> century school buildings (**Figure 1**). The ground surface had been artificially levelled in this area to create a terrace on which the school buildings were located, the ground level in this area of the Site being 65.9m aOD. A brick structure of probable 20<sup>th</sup> century date was recorded in Trench 18.
- 4.2.9 The soil sequence in this area comprised deposits of made ground and demolition rubble above the natural sand and gravels. The made ground/demolition rubble was a fairly mixed deposit but was predominantly a mid to dark grey-brown sandy clay with common modern CBM, concrete and stone inclusions and was present up to 0.75m BGL (65.2m aOD). The underlying natural was mid to light yellow-brown sandy gravels and was recorded from between 0.5m and 0.75m BGL. Areas of modern disturbance were cut through the natural and were probably related to the construction and demolition of the school buildings.
- 4.2.10 Trenches 10 and 14 were located on the western edge of the raised terrace (**Figure 1**). Within both trenches deep deposits of made ground were recorded (up to 2m BGL, 64m aOD). Test pits were excavated through the made ground to the underlying natural geology. The deposits of made ground probably related to the construction of the raised artificial terrace. Natural geology was observed to slope significantly downwards from east to west. In Trench 14, natural sand and gravel was present at 0.65m BGL in the eastern baulk and sloped sharply down to 1.75m BGL in the western baulk.
- 4.2.11 Within Trenches 18 and 19, a buried soil horizon (comprising topsoil and subsoil **1803/4** and **1903/4**) was recorded below the made ground (**Figure 1** and **2, Plate 3**). The mid to dark grey-brown silty-sand topsoil was present from a depth of 0.54m BGL (c. 64.85m aOD) and was up to 0.3m deep. Below the buried soil was a mid grey-brown silty sand subsoil (up to 0.18m deep) was present above the underlying natural sand and gravels. The buried soil contained modern material.
- 4.2.12 Within Trench 18, brick structure **1806** was recorded (**Figure 1** and **2, Plate 7**). Structure **1806** comprised an east to west aligned brick wall and a section of north-south brick wall both were constructed on concrete strip foundations. The walls were visible on the ground surface and were up to 0.70m in height. Several ceramic drains were present within the area of the structure and it may represent a toilet block related to the former school.

#### ***South-western Trenches***

- 4.2.13 Trenches 13, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25 and 26 were located within the southern half and central area of the Phase 2 area, partially within the area of

demolished school buildings (**Figure 1**). No archaeological features were recorded within the trenches; a probable 20<sup>th</sup> century brick soak-away was recorded in Trench 24.

- 4.2.14 Within Trenches 13, 20, 21, 22, 23 and 26, heavy truncation of the natural soil sequence was evident, no topsoil or subsoil was present across the six trenches. A mixed light to mid yellow-brown, sandy gravel made ground, which contained brick, concrete and plastic was present to a depth of 0.65m BGL (62.8m aOD) above the underlying natural sand and gravel. Isolated deeper truncation was recorded in Trench 20, where the natural London Clay was recorded at 1.5m BGL (62m aOD). Areas of modern disturbance were present cut into the natural and were probably related to the construction and demolition of former school buildings.
- 4.2.15 Trenches 24 and 25 towards the western edge of the Site (**Figure 1 and 2, Plate 4 and 8**) were located outside the area of demolished school buildings within former gardens and consequently were less truncated. A dark grey brown silty clay topsoil (up to 0.3m deep) was present in both trenches, below which was a firm mid reddish-brown clayey-silty-sand subsoil (up to 0.4m deep). The underlying natural geology was a light to mid yellow-brown sandy gravel. A thin layer of modern made ground capped the topsoil in Trench 24 and this is probably related to recent construction activity associated with Phase 1.
- 4.2.16 A probable 20<sup>th</sup> century brick lined soak-away was cut through the subsoil at the western end of Trench 24 (**Plate 8**). The circular soak-away (**2404**) was constructed from a single course of un-frogged red brick and had a diameter of 2.7m.

## 5 FINDS

### 5.1 Finds

- 5.1.1 The only finds recovered during the evaluation comprised three fragments of ceramic building material (weighing 164g), which came from the secondary fill (804) of ditch **803**. Two of the fragments are from flat roof tiles of probable medieval date, while the third is a completely undiagnostic piece from a post-medieval brick. These finds have not been retained.

## 6 PALAEOENVIRONMENTAL REMAINS

### 6.1 Environmental Samples

- 6.1.1 No deposits or features that were suitable for palaeoenvironmental sampling were identified during the course of the evaluation.

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## 7 CONCLUSIONS

### 7.1 Archaeological Conclusions

- 7.1.1 The evaluation within the Phase 2 area within the former Avenue School area found no evidence of significant archaeological features or deposits. The ditch identified in Trenches 7 and 8 matches the location and orientation of a former boundary ditch shown on the 25" Ordnance Survey 1<sup>st</sup> edition map of 1879, which predates the school development. A small quantity of medieval tile was recovered from this feature, although together with the small quantity of medieval pottery previously recovered around the Site. This material is likely to have been brought onto the Site through agricultural practices. The remaining noted brick built structures in Trenches 18 and 24 clearly relate to modern structures related to the former school.
- 7.1.2 The evaluation also confirmed that significant disturbance from the school construction and associated terracing and levelling has occurred on the Site. The eastern half of the Site was located on a flat raised terrace that was previously occupied by the early school buildings. This area had been significantly truncated during the construction and demolition of the Victorian school buildings. Significant depths of made ground was present immediately above the natural sand and gravel and it is probable that any archaeological features would have been truncated during the levelling and construction of the school.
- 7.1.3 The south-western area of the Site was also significantly truncated. The area was probably levelled during construction of later school buildings and any surviving archaeological features were probably truncated during this phase of construction.
- 7.1.4 The former playing field within the north-west area of the Site was, as might be expected, was relatively undisturbed and it is in this area that the boundary ditch 803 was observed. However, no earlier archaeological features, deposits or find were found suggesting that there is a low archaeological potential for any surviving features within the Site.

## 8 ARCHIVE

### 8.1 Preparation of Archive

- 8.1.1 The project archive was prepared in accordance with the relevant standards set out in 'Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment' (MoRPHE), English Heritage (2006), and in accordance with the *Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long term storage* (Walker 1990). The project archive is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology in Salisbury under the project code **73581**. In due course the complete archive will be deposited with The Museum of Reading, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 1QH.

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**9 REFERENCES**

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## APPENDIX 1: TRENCH SUMMARIES

**NB** Depths are recorded below ground level (**bgf**) unless otherwise stated. Trench numbers were continued from Phase 1 fieldwork and therefore started from Trench 6.

TRENCH 6		Type: Evaluation	Machine excavated
Dimensions: 14.96m x 1.9m		Max. depth: 0.85m	Ground level: 64.06m aOD
Co-ordinates: E472099.53 N171896.33			
Context	Description		Depth (m)
600	Layer	<b>Topsoil:</b> Dark grey brown silty sand. Frequent sub-angular and sub-rounded flints less than 40mm.	0-0.4
601	Layer	<b>Dump Deposit:</b> Black silty sand. Frequent charcoal and coal. Occasional glass, asbestos sheet and ceramic. Thin layer of burnt waste below topsoil, present at South-West end of trench only.	0.2-0.4
602	Layer	<b>Subsoil:</b> Mid grey brown silty sand. Abundant sub-angular and sub-rounded flints less than 40mm.	0.4-0.58
604	Layer	<b>Natural:</b> Light yellow brown sandy gravel. Moderately well sorted sub-angular and sub-rounded, less than 40mm. Occasional light yellow brown clay patches.	0.58+

TRENCH 7		Type: Evaluation	Machine excavated
Dimensions: 16.57m x 2.00,		Max. depth: 0.77m	Ground level: 64.10m aOD
Co-ordinates: E472107.55 N171898.90			
Context	Description		Depth (m)
700	Layer	<b>Topsoil:</b> Dark grey brown silty sand. Frequent sub-angular and sub-rounded flints less than 40mm.	0-0.38
701	Layer	<b>Subsoil:</b> Mid grey brown silty sand. Abundant sub-angular and sub-rounded flints less than 40mm.	0.38-0.6
702	Layer	<b>Natural:</b> Light yellow brown sandy gravel. Moderately well sorted sub-angular and sub-rounded, less than 40mm.	0.6+

TRENCH 8		Type: Evaluation	Machine excavated
Dimensions: 15.58m x 1.97m		Max. depth: 0.82m	Ground level: 64.31m aOD
Co-ordinates: E472133.72 N171890.94			
Context	Description		Depth (m)
800	Layer	<b>Topsoil:</b> Dark grey brown silty sand. Frequent sub-angular and sub-rounded flints less than 50mm. Occasional CBM, becoming frequent to South.	0-0.22
801	Layer	<b>Subsoil:</b> Mid grey brown silty sand. Abundant sub-angular and sub-rounded flints less than 50mm. Occasional CBM.	0.22-0.52
802	Layer	<b>Natural:</b> Light-mid yellow brown sandy gravel. Moderately poorly sorted sub-angular and sub-rounded flints, less than 50mm. Occasional patches of modern disturbance, with rare CBM pressed into surface.	0.52+
803	Cut	<b>Ditch:</b> East to West orientated shallow ditch with steep concave sides. Also present in trench 7.	0.52-0.74
804	Fill	<b>Secondary Fill:</b> Fill of 803. Mid grey brown sandy silty clay. Common sub-angular and sub-rounded, less than 50mm. Rare CBM.	0.52-0.74

TRENCH 9		Type: Evaluation	Machine excavated
Dimensions: 16.14m x 1.86m		Max. depth: 0.62m	Ground level: 64.22m aOD
Co-ordinates: E472128.08 N171880.58			
Context	Description		Depth (m)
900	Layer	<b>Topsoil:</b> Dark grey brown silty sand. Frequent sub-angular and sub-rounded flints less than 40mm. Occasional CBM, occasional to rare coal and charcoal less than 10mm.	0-0.34
901	Layer	<b>Subsoil:</b> Mid grey brown silty sand. Abundant sub-angular and sub-rounded flints less than 40mm. Occasional CBM.	0.34-0.43
902	Layer	<b>Made Ground:</b> Very mixed deposit. Predominantly mid grey brown silty clay sand. Abundant moderately poorly sorted sub-angular and sub-rounded flints, less than 50mm. Frequent CBM, concrete, ceramic drain.	0.43-0.62+
903	Layer	<b>Natural:</b> Light yellow brown sandy gravel. Moderately poorly sorted sub-angular and sub-rounded flints, less than 50mm. Occasional grey yellow clay patches.	0.55+

TRENCH 10		Type: Evaluation	Machine excavated
Dimensions: 15.48m x 1.94m		Max. depth: 2m	Ground level: 65.96m aOD
Co-ordinates: E472150.47 N171877.16			
Context	Description		Depth (m)
1000	Layer	<b>Demolition Layer:</b> Very mixed deposit. Predominantly light yellow and grey brown sandy gravel with common light grey brown clay patches. Frequent CBM, concrete.	0-0.5
1001	Layer	<b>Demolition Layer:</b> Very mixed deposit. Predominantly dark grey brown silty clay sand with abundant sub-angular and sub-rounded flints less than 40mm. Common CBM, ceramic drain, concrete and tarmac. Occasional coal and charcoal less than 10mm.	0-1.05
1002	Layer	<b>Made Ground:</b> Composed of re-deposited natural gravel. Light yellow brown sandy gravel, moderately poorly sorted sub-angular and sub-rounded, less than 50mm. With occasional grey brown patches.	1.05-2
1003	Layer	<b>Natural:</b> Light yellow brown sandy gravel. Moderately well sorted sub-angular and sub-rounded, less than 50mm. Only exposed in sondage at North-West end of trench.	2+

TRENCH 11		Type: Evaluation	Machine excavated
Dimensions: 15.86m x 1.85m		Max. depth: 1.1m	Ground level: 65.96m aOD
Co-ordinates: E472157.59 N171874.71			
Context	Description		Depth (m)
1100	Layer	<b>Demolition Layer:</b> Very mixed deposit. Predominantly dark grey brown silty clay sand with abundant sub-angular and sub-rounded flints less than 40mm. Frequent CBM, ceramic drain, concrete and tarmac.	0-0.75
1101	Layer	<b>Natural:</b> Mid brown yellow sandy gravel, moderately well sorted sub-angular and sub-rounded, less than 40mm. Frequent patches of modern disturbance in Southern two-thirds of trench base.	0.75+



TRENCH 12		Type: Evaluation	Machine excavated
Dimensions: 15.23m x 2.0m		Max. depth: 0.57m	Ground level: 63.82m aOD
Co-ordinates: E472106.30 N171867.11			
Context	Description		Depth (m)
1200	Layer	<b>Topsoil:</b> Mid-dark grey brown silty sand. Frequent moderately poorly sorted sub-angular and sub-rounded flints less than 50mm.	0-0.18
1201	Layer	<b>Made ground:</b> Mixed appearance. Composed of re-deposited natural gravel. Light yellow brown sandy gravel, moderately poorly sorted sub-angular and sub-rounded, less than 50mm. Occasional CBM.	0.18-0.57
1202	Layer	<b>Natural:</b> Light yellow brown to yellow sandy gravel. Moderately poorly sorted, sub-rounded less than 60mm.	0.57+

TRENCH 13		Type: Evaluation	Machine excavated
Dimensions: 14.67m x 1.94m		Max. depth: 0.98m	Ground level: 63.76m aOD
Co-ordinates: E472128.22 N171854.04			
Context	Description		Depth (m)
1300	Layer	<b>Made Ground:</b> Very mixed deposit composed of numerous dumps of re-deposited natural clay and gravel mixed with demolition rubble. Predominantly light-mid yellow brown sandy gravel with common clay patches. Occasional CBM, tarmac, concrete and chalk.	0-0.98+
1301	Layer	<b>Natural:</b> Light-mid brown yellow sandy gravel, moderately well sorted sub-angular and sub-rounded, less than 40mm. Occasional clay patches.	0.65+

TRENCH 14		Type: Evaluation	Machine excavated
Dimensions: 15.77m x 2.32m		Max. depth: 1.75m	Ground level: 65.81m aOD
Co-ordinates: E472140.89 N171861.50			
Context	Description		Depth (m)
1400	Layer	<b>Topsoil:</b> Mid-dark grey brown silty sand. Frequent moderately well sorted sub-angular and sub-rounded flints less than 40mm. Occasional CBM.	0-0.37
1401	Layer	<b>Made Ground:</b> Very mixed deposit composed of numerous dumps of material infilling a large cut derived from modern landscaping. Predominantly mid grey brown silty clay sandy gravel. Includes occasional large patches of re-deposited natural yellow sandy gravel. Occasional CBM and coal.	0.37-1.75
1402	Layer	<b>Natural:</b> Light-mid brown yellow sandy gravel. Moderately poorly sorted, sub-rounded less than 40mm.	0.65-1.5
1403	Layer	<b>Natural:</b> Light grey yellow clay. London Clay underlying gravel.	1.5+

TRENCH 15		Type: Evaluation	Machine excavated
Dimensions: 15.71m x 2.08m		Max. depth: 1.2	Ground level: 65.96m aOD
Co-ordinates: E472167.73 N171859.49			
Context	Description		Depth (m)
1500	Layer	<b>Made Ground:</b> Very mixed deposit. Predominantly dark grey brown silty sand with occasional patches of re-deposited yellow brown sandy gravel. Abundant sub-angular and sub-rounded flints less than 60mm. Occasional CBM, ceramic drain, concrete and tarmac.	0-0.52
1501	Layer	<b>Natural:</b> Mid yellow sandy gravel, moderately poorly sorted less than 60mm. Occasional light-mid yellow sandy patches. Frequent patches of modern disturbance.	0.52+

TRENCH 16		Type: Evaluation	Machine excavated
Dimensions: 15.67m x 2.18m		Max. depth: 1.1m	Ground level: 65.97m aOD
Co-ordinates: E472179.33 N171871.91			
Context	Description		Depth (m)
1600	Layer	<b>Made Ground:</b> Very mixed deposit. Predominantly dark grey brown silty sand with. Abundant sub-angular and sub-rounded flints less than 40mm. Common to frequent CBM, ceramic drain, concrete and tarmac.	0-0.5
1601	Layer	<b>Natural:</b> Mid yellow sandy gravel, moderately poorly sorted, sub-rounded, less than 60mm. Occasional light grey yellow clay patches.	0.5+

TRENCH 17		Type: Evaluation	Machine excavated
Dimensions: 15.15m x 2.07m		Max. depth: 0.86m	Ground level: 65.87m aOD
Co-ordinates: E472182.27 N171862.74			
Context	Description		Depth (m)
1700	Layer	<b>Made Ground:</b> Very mixed deposit. Predominantly dark grey brown silty sand with. Abundant sub-angular and sub-rounded flints less than 60mm. Common to frequent CBM, ceramic drain, concrete and tarmac.	0-0.68
1701	Layer	<b>Natural:</b> Light-mid yellow sandy gravel, moderately poorly sorted, sub-rounded, less than 60mm. Frequent patches of modern disturbance.	0.68+

TRENCH 18		Type: Evaluation	Machine excavated
Dimensions: 14.49m x 2.35m		Max. depth: 1m	Ground level: 65.15m aOD
Co-ordinates: E472192.52 N171834.86			
Context	Description		Depth (m)
1800	Layer	<b>Topsoil:</b> Mixed with demolition rubble. Dark grey brown silty sand. Frequent sub-angular and sub-rounded flints less than 40mm. Common to frequent CBM and coal.	0-0.14
1801	Layer	<b>Made Ground:</b> Mid grey brown silty sand. Frequent sub-angular and sub-rounded flints less than 40mm. Occasional CBM and coal.	0.14-0.37
1802	Layer	<b>Made Ground:</b> Light yellow to orange brown silty sand. Common sub-angular and sub-rounded flints less than 40mm. Common grey brown clay patches. Composed of mixed re-deposited natural.	0.37-0.54
1803	Layer	<b>Buried Topsoil:</b> Mid-dark grey brown silty sand. Frequent sub-angular and sub-rounded flints less than 40mm. Occasional coal less than 10mm.	0.54-0.84
1804	Layer	<b>Buried Subsoil:</b> Mid grey brown silty sand. Frequent sub-angular and sub-rounded flints less than 40mm.	0.84-1.02
1805	Layer	<b>Natural:</b> Mid grey brown sandy gravel. Moderately poorly sorted sub-angular and sub-rounded, less than 40mm.	1.02+
1806	Structure	<b>Brick Walls:</b> Modern brick structure likely associated with school formerly occupying site. Constructed of modern unfrogged red brick, mortared with cement. Not possible to discern bond pattern. Built on top of concrete foundation cut through (1803) and probably butted by (1802).	0-0.7

TRENCH 19		Type: Evaluation	Machine excavated
Dimensions: 15.98m x 1.86m		Max. depth: 0.84m	Ground level: 65.28m aOD (east end) 64.14m aOD (west end)
Co-ordinates: E472157.10 N171843.74			
Context	Description		Depth (m)
1900	Layer	<b>Demolition Layer:</b> Very mixed deposit. Predominantly mid grey brown silty sandy gravel. Moderately poorly sorted sub-angular and sub-rounded, less than 40mm. Frequent CBM, wood, concrete, tarmac and plastic.	0-0.15
1901	Layer	<b>Topsoil:</b> Mixed with demolition rubble. Dark grey brown silty sand. Abundant moderately poorly sorted sub-angular and sub-rounded flints, less than 40mm.	0.15-0.35
1902	Layer	<b>Made Ground:</b> Mixed deposit largely composed of re-deposited clay and gravel natural. Predominantly mid yellow brown silty sandy gravel. Moderately poorly sorted sub-angular and sub-rounded, less than 40mm.	0.26-0.61
1903	Layer	<b>Buried Topsoil:</b> Mid-dark grey brown silty sand. Frequent sub-angular and sub-rounded flints less than 40mm. Occasional coal less than 10mm.	0.4-0.76
1904	Layer	<b>Buried Subsoil:</b> Mid grey brown silty sand. Frequent sub-angular and sub-rounded flints less than 40mm.	0.76-0.84
1905	Layer	<b>Natural:</b> Light grey brown sandy gravel. Moderately poorly sorted sub-angular and sub-rounded, less than 50mm.	0.84+
1906	Layer	<b>Natural:</b> Light grey brown clay. London Clay underlying natural gravel exposed in base of Western end of trench.	0.42+

TRENCH 20		Type: Evaluation	Machine excavated
Dimensions: 14.78m x 2.09m		Max. depth: 1.6m	Ground level: 63.53m aOD
Co-ordinates: E472140.47 N171833.23			
Context	Description		Depth (m)
2000	Layer	<b>Made Ground:</b> Mixed deposit composed of numerous dumps of re-deposited natural. Predominantly yellow to yellow brown sandy gravel. Moderately well sorted sub-angular and sub-rounded, less than 40mm. Common grey brown patches.	0-1.5
2001	Layer	<b>Natural:</b> Light-mid grey brown clay. London Clay, exposed in sondage at Southern end of trench.	1.5+

TRENCH 21		Type: Evaluation	Machine excavated
Dimensions: 15.27m x 1.78m		Max. depth: 0.8m	Ground level: 63.49m aOD
Co-ordinates: E472116.45 N171841.38			
Context	Description		Depth (m)
2100	Layer	<b>Demolition Layer:</b> Very Mixed deposit. Predominantly mid grey brown sandy gravel. Moderately well sorted sub-angular and sub-rounded, less than 40mm. Frequent CBM, wood, and plastic.	0-0.2
2101	Layer	<b>Made Ground:</b> Largely composed of re-deposited natural. Mid yellow brown silty sandy gravel. Moderately well sorted sub-angular and sub-rounded, less than 40mm. Occasional patches of mid grey brown clay. Occasional CBM and coal.	0.2-0.8+
2102	Layer	<b>Natural:</b> Light yellow brown sandy gravel. Moderately well sorted sub-angular and sub-rounded, less than 30mm.	0.62+

TRENCH 22		Type: Evaluation	Machine excavated
Dimensions: 14.68m x 1.95m		Max. depth: 0.55m	Ground level: 63.86m aOD
Co-ordinates: E472103.76 N171852.09			
Context	Description		Depth (m)
2200	Layer	<b>Made Ground:</b> Largely composed of re-deposited natural. Mid yellow brown sandy gravel. Moderately well sorted sub-angular and sub-rounded, less than 40mm. Rare CBM, wood and tarmac.	0-0.55
2201	Layer	<b>Subsoil:</b> Light yellow brown sandy gravel. Moderately well sorted sub-angular and sub-rounded, less than 40mm.	0.55+

TRENCH 23		Type: Evaluation	Machine excavated
Dimensions: 14.38m x 1.92m		Max. depth: 0.85m	Ground level: 63.31m aOD
Co-ordinates: E472096.51 N171832.56			
Context	Description		Depth (m)
2300	Layer	<b>Demolition Layer:</b> Light grey brown silty sandy clay gravel. Frequent CBM, tarmac, plastic and wood. Derived from recent groundworks.	0-0.5
2301	Layer	<b>Natural:</b> Light-mid yellow sandy gravel. Moderately well sorted sub-angular and sub-rounded, less than 40mm. Occasional CBM pressed into surface, particularly at North-West end of trench.	0.5+

TRENCH 24		Type: Evaluation	Machine excavated
Dimensions: 14.63m x 1.85m		Max. depth: 1m	Ground level: 63.29m aOD
Co-ordinates: E472054.17 N171839.81			
Context	Description		Depth (m)
2400	Layer	<b>Demolition Layer:</b> Light grey brown silty sandy clay gravel. Common CBM, tarmac, plastic and wood. Derived from recent groundworks.	0-0.2
2401	Layer	<b>Topsoil:</b> Mixed with demolition rubble. Dark grey brown clay silt sand. Common moderately well sorted sub-angular and sub-rounded, less than 40mm. Common to frequent CBM and coal.	0.2-0.6
2402	Layer	<b>Made Ground:</b> Mid red brown firm clay silt sand. Frequent sub-angular and sub-rounded flints less than 40mm. Occasional CBM and coal.	0.6-1
2403	Layer	<b>Natural:</b> Light grey to yellow brown sandy gravel. Moderately well sorted sub-angular and sub-rounded, less than 40mm. Occasional light grey brown clay patches.	1+
2404	Structure	<b>Brick Soakaway:</b> Circular brick structure constructed of one course of modern red unfrosted brick mortared with modern cement. Rendered on inside with modern cement. Diameter 2.7m. Possible construction cut on exterior.	0.7-1
2405	Fill	<b>Deliberate Backfill:</b> Mixed demolition rubble infilling soakaway [2404]. Mid grey brown sandy gravel. Frequent to abundant cbm. Occasional coal and chalk less than 10mm.	0.7-1

TRENCH 25		Type: Evaluation	Machine excavated
Dimensions: 15.55m x 1.98m		Max. depth: 0.78m	Ground level: 62.31m aOD
Co-ordinates: E N			
Context	Description		Depth (m)
2500	Layer	<b>Topsoil:</b> Dark grey brown slightly clayey silty sand. Common moderately well sorted sub-angular and sub-rounded, less than 40mm. Common coal, CBM, plastic and wood.	0-0.3
2501	Layer	<b>Made Ground/Subsoil:</b> Mid red brown firm clay silt sand. Frequent sub-angular and sub-rounded flints less than 40mm. Occasional CBM and coal.	0.3-0.6
2502	Layer	<b>Natural:</b> Light yellow brown sandy gravel. Moderately poorly sorted sub-angular and sub-rounded, less than 40mm.	0.6+

TRENCH 26		Type: Evaluation	Machine excavated
Dimensions: 24.76m x 1.89m		Max. depth: 0.6m	Ground level: 62.61m aOD
Co-ordinates: E472114.63 N171800.84			
Context	Description		Depth (m)
2600	Layer	<b>Demolition Layer:</b> Light grey brown clay. Frequent CBM, tarmac, plastic and wood. Occasional sub-angular and sub-rounded flints less than 40mm. Derived from recent groundworks.	0-0.27
2601	Layer	<b>Demolition Layer:</b> Very mixed deposit. Predominantly dark grey sandy gravel. Abundant CBM, coal, tarmac and wood.	0.27-0.5
2602	Layer	<b>Natural:</b> Light grey to brown yellow clay. Abundant moderately well sorted sub-angular and sub-rounded, less than 40mm. Frequent sandy gravel patches.	0.5+

## APPENDIX 2: ARCHIVE SUMMARY

### Archive Index

**Site Name:** The Former Avenue School Site, Northumberland Avenue, Reading, Berkshire (Phase 2).

**Wessex Archaeology Project Number:** 73581

File no.	Details	Format	No. sheets
1	Report	A4 and A3	26
1	Written Scheme of Investigation	A4 and A3	18
1	Daybook	A4	4
1	Trench Records and Context Sheets	A4	30
1	Survey data	A4 and A3	10
1	Drawing Register	A4	2
1	A4 Drawing film	A4	9
1	Photographic records	A4	3
1	Miscellaneous (Risk Assessment and Site Notes)	A4 and A3	14

## APPENDIX 3: OASIS FORM

**OASIS ID: wessexar1-129556**

### Project details

Project name	Former Avenue School (Phase 2), Northumberland Avenue, Reading
Short description of the project	Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Bellway Homes Ltd (Wessex) to carry out an archaeological evaluation at the Former Avenue School Site, Northumberland Avenue, Reading, Berkshire, which has been proposed for residential redevelopment, centred on National Grid Reference 472118 171858. An initial assessment of the southern half of the site (Phase 1, Extra Care Home) was carried out in 2010. The Phase 1 archaeological works confirmed that significant disturbance and landscaping had taken place. The evaluation of the northern half of the former school site (Phase 2) consisted of the machine excavation of 21 trial trenches measuring approximately 15m by 1.8m and was carried out between the 25th and the 29th of June 2012. No significant evidence was found for archaeological features or deposits, although a possible post-medieval/19th century boundary ditch 803 and the brick footings of two discrete structures (a soak-away 2404 and a possible toilet block 1806) were noted together with footings and disturbance relating to the former school buildings.
Project dates	Start: 25-06-2012 End: 29-06-2012
Previous/future work	Yes / No
Any project codes associated with reference	73580 - Contracting Unit No.
Any project codes associated with reference	73581 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 2 - In use as a building
Monument type	DITCH Post Medieval
Significant Finds	TILE Medieval
Significant Finds	BRICK Post Medieval
Methods & techniques	"Targeted Trenches"
Development type	Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.)
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	BERKSHIRE READING Former Avenue School



Postcode                   RG2 0EP  
 Study area                 2.00 Hectares  
 Site coordinates         SU 720 718 51 0 51 26 24 N 000 57 50 W Point  
 Height OD / Depth      Min: 62.00m Max: 66.00m

### Project creators

Name                      of Wessex Archaeology  
 Organisation

Project                 brief Local Planning Authority (with/without advice from County/District  
 originator                 Archaeologist)

Project                 design Wessex Archaeology  
 originator

Project                 A Manning  
 director/manager

Project supervisor      John Powell

Type                     of Developer  
 sponsor/funding  
 body

Name                     of Bellway Homes  
 sponsor/funding  
 body

### Project archives

Physical                 Archive Reading Museum  
 recipient

Physical Contents      "Ceramics"

Digital                 Archive Reading Museum  
 recipient

Digital                 Media "Images raster / digital photography","Spreadsheets","Survey","Text"  
 available

Paper                    Archive Reading Museum  
 recipient

Paper                    Media "Context sheet","Notebook - Excavation',' Research',' General  
 available                 Notes","Plan","Section"

### Project bibliography 1

Publication type        Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

Title                    THE FORMER AVENUE SCHOOL SITE, NORTHUMBERLAND AVENUE,  
 READING, BERKSHIRE

Author(s)/Editor(s)   Powell, J. and Manning, A.

Other bibliographic   73581.03  
 details

Date                     2012

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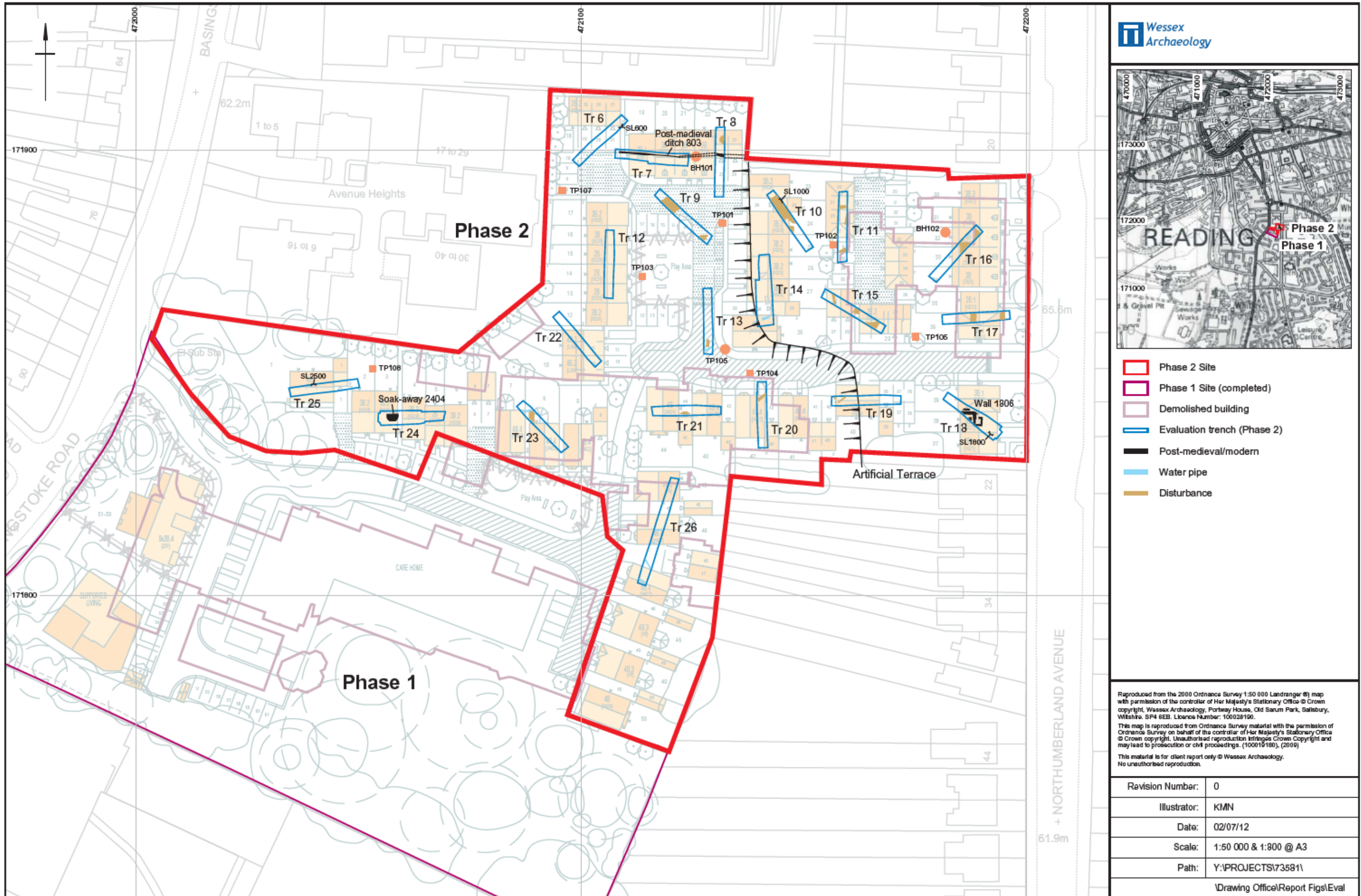
Issuer or publisher    Wessex Archaeology

Place of issue or Salisbury  
publication

Description            Standard A4 soft back illustrated evaluation client report

Entered by              Andrew Manning (a.manning@wessexarch.co.uk)

Entered on              3 July 2012



Site location showing evaluation trenches

Figure 1



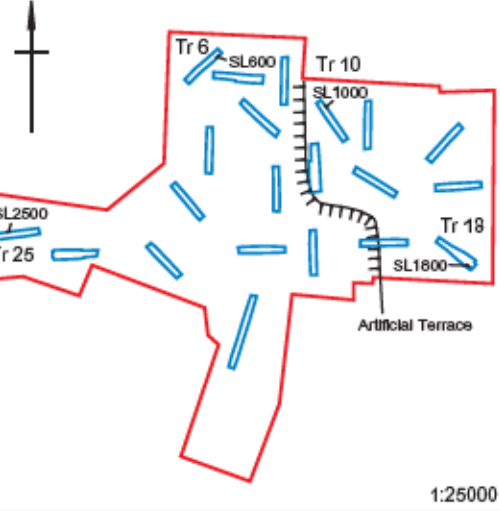
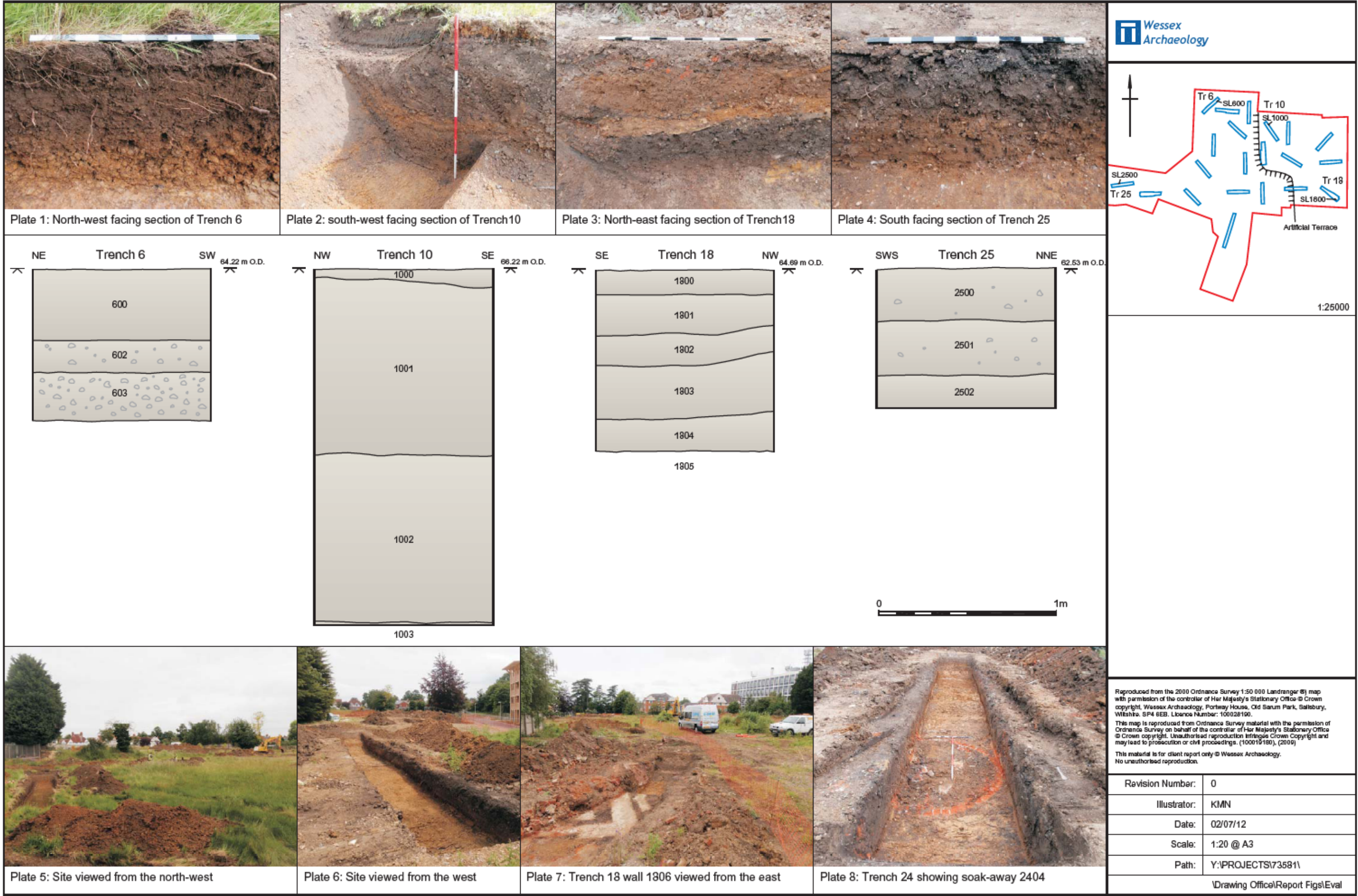


Plate 1: North-west facing section of Trench 6

Plate 2: south-west facing section of Trench10

Plate 3: North-east facing section of Trench18

Plate 4: South facing section of Trench 25

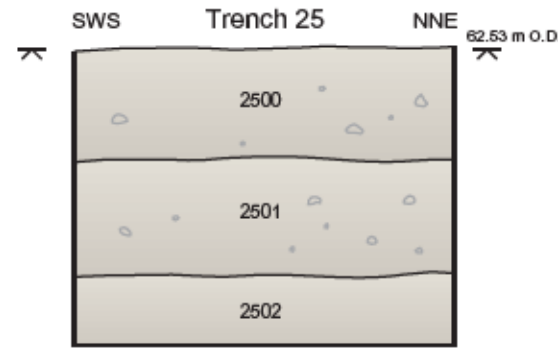
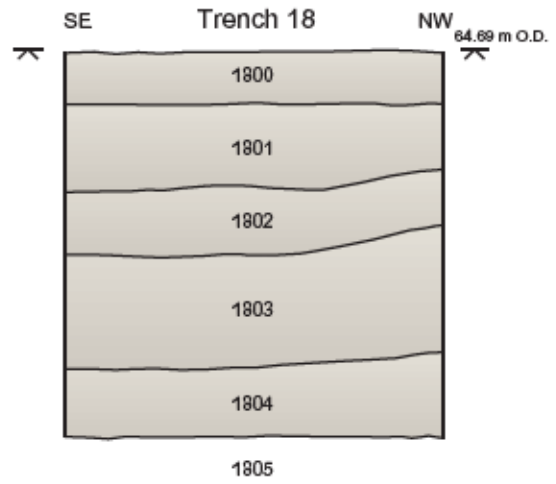
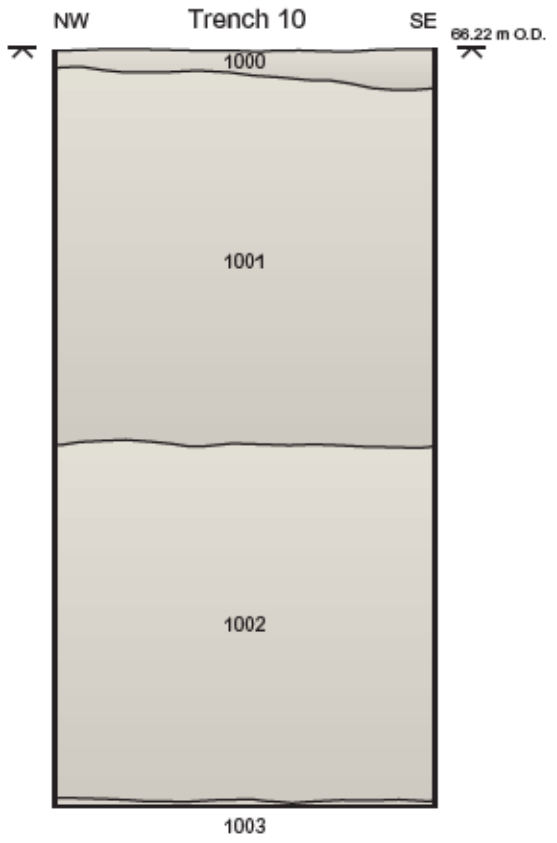
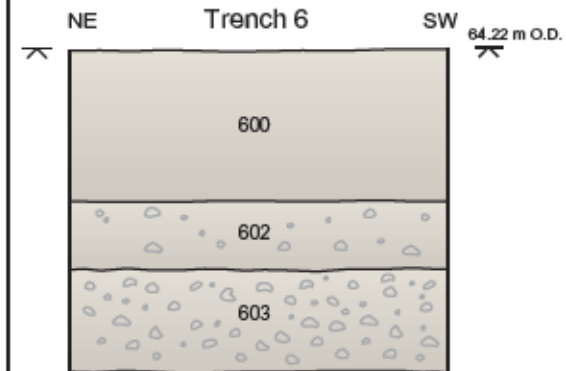


Plate 5: Site viewed from the north-west



Plate 6: Site viewed from the west



Plate 7: Trench 18 wall 1806 viewed from the east



Plate 8: Trench 24 showing soak-away 2404

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Revision Number:	0
Illustrator:	KMN
Date:	02/07/12
Scale:	1:20 @ A3
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Selected photographs and section drawings of Trenches 6 10, 18 and 25

Figure 2





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