

making sense of heritage

Yardley Grange, Church Road, Yardley Birmingham, West Midlands

Strip, Map and Record



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archaeology



Archaeological Strip, Map and Sample

Prepared for: CgMs Consulting Ltd

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Archaeological Strip, Map and Sample

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Archaeological Strip, Map and Sample

Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by CgMs Consulting Ltd to undertake an archaeological investigation in advance of a residential development by Kendrick Construction Ltd at Yardley Grange, Church Road, Yardley.

The development area is centred on grid reference 413431 286206 and lies approximately 6.5km to the east of Birmingham city centre. The 2ha area is located off Church Road, south of the centre of Yardley. The site was previously occupied by the Yardley Grange nursing home.

The archaeological excavation follows a previous desk-based assessment which identified that the development area was situated close to the medieval core of Yardley.

The investigations revealed the two post-medieval boundary ditches, a feature of unknown purpose, and footings of the late 20th century nursing home.

The only features and artefacts identified during the investigations were of post-medieval or modern date. No residual medieval finds were recovered and there was no evidence that the development area lay within the medieval settlement of Yardley. However, ground disturbance during the construction and demolition of the former Yardley Grange nursing home was clearly extensive and it is possible that these works could have destroyed any remains of earlier periods.

It is considered that the aims and objectives of the excavation has been achieved and that the results are representative of the nature of the archaeology across the development area. No further work is warranted on the stratigraphic record or the artefact assemblage.

The archive is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology in Sheffield, under the project code **89420**.

The project archive will be deposited with the Birmingham Museums and Art Galley in due course under an accession number to be confirmed. An OASIS form will be completed at the time of deposition.



Archaeological Strip, Map and Sample

Acknowledgements

The project was commissioned by CgMs Consulting Ltd and Wessex Archaeology is grateful to William Bedford in this regard. Wessex Archaeology is also grateful to Mike Hodder, Birmingham City Council's Planning Archaeologist, who monitored the works.

The fieldwork was directed by Neil Dransfield, assisted by Kirsty Squires and the report was produced by Kirsty Squires. Illustrations were produced by Chris Swales and finds were assessed by Lorraine Mepham. Andrew Norton managed the work on behalf of Wessex Archaeology.



Archaeological Strip, Map and Sample

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by CgMs Consulting Ltd to undertake an archaeological investigation in advance of a proposed residential development by Kendrick Construction Ltd at Yardley Grange, Church Road, Yardley, Birmingham (hereafter 'the Site').
- 1.1.2 A desk-based assessment identified potential for the survival of medieval remains at the Site (CgMs 2012a) and planning permission was granted with an archaeological condition requiring further investigation and recording prior to development (planning ref. 2012/03605/PA).
- 1.1.3 The scheme of archaeological work was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (CgMs 2012b) approved by the Birmingham City Council Planning Archaeologist.

1.2 The Site

- 1.2.1 The development Site is centred on grid reference 413431 286206 and lies approximately 6.5km to the east of Birmingham City Centre (**Figure 1**). The 2ha area is located off Church Road, south of the centre of Yardley. Yardley Grange nursing home previously occupied the Site but is now demolished.
- 1.2.2 The Site is largely comprised of made ground, which can be attributed to the construction of the former nursing home on the development area, and is relatively flat at a height of 125m above sea-level.
- 1.2.3 The geology of the Site is of the Mercia Mudstone Group, with superficial deposits of Mid Pleistocene Till (British Geological Survey online geology viewer). The soil types at the Site and surrounding area are a mix of slowly permeable, seasonally wet, acidic loamy and clayey soils as well as naturally wet, very acidic sandy and loamy soils (Soilscapes online viewer).

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The Site has been the subject of a desk-based assessment (CgMs 2012a). The following summary is drawn from that assessment.



2.2 Prehistoric and Roman periods

2.2.1 The desk-based assessment identified no known prehistoric or Romano-British sites or findspots within Site or the study area.

2.3 Early medieval and medieval periods

- 2.3.1 The earliest documentary reference to a settlement at Yardley is in a 10th century charter. Yardley is mentioned in the Domesday Book in 1086 as comprising eight villagers, ten smallholders and one rider. Ploughland and woodland were the primary natural resources; the agricultural land was worth £5 to the lord in 1086 and £8 in 1066 (Open Domesday online.).
- 2.3.2 There are no known sites within the development area but the historic core of Yardley dates from this period: The 13th century church of St Edburgha lies 110m northeast of the Site (grade 1 listed, ref. 1343385), 13th century pottery and a cobbled surface were found during excavations at Blakesley Hall 365m to the west, and the site of a 15th century school lies 90m to the northeast (grade 2^{*} listed, ref. 1343388). In addition, ridge and furrow and the site of a medieval brick kiln are recorded within 500m of the Site.
- 2.3.3 The Site is thought to lie at the southern edge of the medieval core of Yardley; possibly within the settlement and possibly on agricultural land.

2.4 Post-medieval and modern periods

- 2.4.1 The area first appears on a Tithe Map in 1843 when the Site was occupied by an open field and a building fronting onto Church Road. The structure is not depicted on the 1888 Ordnance Survey map when the Site is shown as two fields, south of the core of Yardley.
- 2.4.2 The Site remains as fields, despite the continuing development of Yardley and the adjoining plots, until the late 20th century when the Yardley Grange nursing home was built.

2.5 Recent investigations in the area

2.5.1 No previous archaeological investigation has been carried out within the immediate vicinity of the Site.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Aims and objectives

- 3.1.1 The general aims of the project were to preserve by record any archaeological remains that may be disturbed by the development and to make available the results of the investigation.
- 3.1.2 The specific aims of this archaeological investigation were to:
 - Clarify, if possible, the southern extent of the medieval core of Yardley.
 - Contribute to the understanding of the extent, layout and development of the medieval core of Yardley.



• Examine any available evidence for economic activity, environmental conditions and industrial or craft activity provided by plant and insect remains and industrial residues.

3.2 Fieldwork

- 3.2.1 Details of the methodology employed can be found in a Method Statement prepared by Wessex Archaeology (2013) and a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by CgMs Consulting Ltd (2012b). The strip, map and sample investigation was carried out in accordance with these documents and with industry best practice, as outlined in guidelines issued by the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA 2008a, 2008b), the United Kingdom Institute of Conservation (UKIC 2001) and the relevant local and regional frameworks.
- 3.2.2 Three investigation areas were proposed over the footprint of the development area and set out in accordance with the agreed Site plan to an accuracy of within +or- 100mm using a survey grade GPS.
- 3.2.3 However, once excavations commenced Site conditions dictated that the investigation areas be adjusted and the scope of works altered. In particular, the depth of made ground and lack of space for spoil storage precluded excavation of the larger areas initially proposed adjacent to Church Road. The proposed and actual trenching areas are illustrated on **Figure 1**, and all changes in methodology were first agreed with Mike Hodder (BCC).
- 3.2.4 Topsoil was removed using a mechanical excavator (16ton) fitted with a flat bladed ditching bucket, working under the direct supervision of an archaeologist. Overburden was removed in a series of level spits down to the upper archaeological horizon or the level of the natural geology, whichever was reached first. Stripped material was visually examined for archaeological remains.
- 3.2.5 As the Site was stripped and cleaned, all archaeological features were mapped and tied to the national grid using a survey grade GPS.

Any revealed deposits were hand cleaned, excavated and recorded in accordance with Wessex Archaeology's standard guidelines.

3.3 Monitoring

3.3.1 Birmingham City Council's Planning Archaeologist (Mike Hodder) monitored the excavations on two occasions to assess progress and to discuss any changes to the methodology.

3.4 Recording

3.4.1 All archaeological features and deposits encountered were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's *pro forma* recording sheets and a continuous unique numbering system. A stratigraphic matrix was compiled to record the relationships between features and deposits. Plans were prepared at appropriate scales showing the areas investigated and their relation to more permanent topographical features. The plans show the location of contexts observed and recorded in the course of the investigation. Other plans and sections of archaeological features and deposits were drawn as necessary at 1:10, 1:20 and 1:50 as appropriate. All drawings were made in pencil on permanent drafting film.



- 3.4.2 The spot height of all principal features and levels was calculated in metres relative to Ordnance Datum, correct to two decimal places. Plans and sections were annotated with spot heights as appropriate.
- 3.4.3 Photographs were taken as necessary to produce a photographic record consisting of 35mm monochrome prints and colour transparencies. Digital images were also taken.

3.5 Specialist strategies

Artefacts

3.5.1 Finds were treated in accordance with the relevant guidance (UKIC 2001; MGC 1992; English Heritage 2005; IfA 2008c).

Environmental

3.5.2 All sealed and stratified archaeological contexts were considered for standard environmental sampling. Bulk soil samples for plant macro-fossils, small animal and fish bones and other small artefacts were taken from appropriate well-sealed and dated/datable archaeological deposits. The collection and processing of environmental samples were undertaken in accordance with English Heritage guidelines (2011).

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

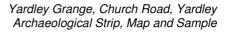
4.1.1 The following is a summary of the information held in the Site archive. The proposed and actual excavation areas are shown in **Figure 1** (Trenches 1-4) and the complete stratigraphic sequence for each trench is summarised in **Appendix 1**. Context numbers are referenced in bold throughout the text..

4.2 Trench 1

- 4.2.1 Trench 1 measured 552m² (Figure 1; Plate 1).
- 4.2.2 Natural clay was revealed at an average depth of 1.45m below ground level (**104**) and was overlain by a redeposited clay layer (**103**), made ground (**102**) and a demolition layer (**101**; Figure 2 and Plate 2). Deposits **101** and **102** derived from the construction and demolition of the late 20th century nursing home, and the clay band (**103**) comprised mixed made ground and natural deposits. Excavation ceased at a maximum depth of 1.82m. The western and southern areas of this trench were subject to flooding.
- 4.2.3 A possible archaeological feature was identified cut into natural deposits in the centre of the trench (Figures 1 and 2; Plate 3). Feature 105 was rectangular in plan, aligned east to west, and had been disturbed by a south to north aligned modern wall foundation to the west. Its original function could not be determined, but may have formed a pit. Feature 105 was 1.52m long, 0.74m wide and 0.16m deep. The fill (106) was dark bluish grey, silty clay with very common small and medium subrounded and rounded stone inclusions. A sherd of post-medieval redware pottery was recovered from the fill.

4.3 Trench 2

- 4.3.1 Trench 2 measured 60.5m² (Figure 1; Plate 4).
- 4.3.2 Natural mid brownish red clay (**202**) was revealed at a depth of 0.85m and excavation ceased at a maximum depth of 1.18m. Natural clay was overlain by a former topsoil (**205**),



a made ground deposit (**201**) and a 0.06m layer of tarmac (**Figure 3**; **Plate 5**). The tarmac and made ground deposit (**201**) derived from construction work in the late 20th century. Occasional fragments of modern brick fragments were noted in deposit **204** but not retained; a cattle bone and three sherds of bone china were recovered.

4.3.3 A drainage gully (**203**) had been cut into the natural clay in the southern half of the trench (**Figures 1** and **3**; **Plate 6**). The gully was aligned east to west and continued into the edge of the trench. It was 2.4m long, 0.92m wide and 0.33m deep. The fill (**204**) was a very dark brownish grey silty clay with small and medium angular, subrounded and rounded stone inclusions. Six fragments of post-medieval tile and four sherds of modern pottery were recovered from fill **204**.

4.4 Trench 3

- 4.4.1 Trench 3 measured only 23m² due to the presence of trees and modern wall foundations in this part of the Site (**Figure 1**; **Plate 7**).
- 4.4.2 The natural deposits (302) comprised mid-orangey red clay containing common small, medium and large subrounded stone inclusions. Natural clay was revealed at a depth of 0.84m below ground level and was overlain by made ground 301 in the northern part of the trench (Figure 4; Plate 8). The made ground was dark brownish grey, silty clay with common small and medium subrounded stone inclusions and rare occurrences of modern brick/tile fragments (not retained).
- 4.4.3 A linear ditch/gully (**304**) was identified in the northeastern half of Trench 3, cut into natural deposits (**Figures 1** and **4**; **Plate 8**). It was orientated west to east but the eastern end was obscured by wall **306** and layer **303** (see below). Gully **304** was 1.35m in length, 0.69m in width and 0.52m in depth. The fill (**305**) was a dark greyish brown, silty clay with sparse small and medium subrounded and rounded stone inclusions and rare flecks of charcoal. Fill **305** contained a fragment of post-medieval tile and a sheep bone.
- 4.4.4 The gully fill was overlain by made ground layer **303** that comprised a dark reddish brown, silty clay with common medium rounded stone inclusions, and relates to probable construction works. Two brick walls (**306** and **307**) and two concrete floors (**308** and **309**) of the nursing home were cut through the layer in the southern part of Trench 3 at a depth of 0.84m, and lay on a northeast to southwest orientation (not illustrated).

4.5 Trench 4

- 4.5.1 Trench 4 was also located in an area of below-ground obstructions and consequently measured only 25m² (Figure 1; Plate 9).
- 4.5.2 Natural deposits were encountered at a depth of 0.9m and comprised a light greyish yellow clay deposit with occasional rounded stone inclusions (402), and dark red clayey sand with occasional rounded pebbles (403; Figure 5; Plate 10). A former topsoil (406 not illustrated) overlay the deposits and contained one sherd of modern pottery. A modern landscaping cut (404) truncated the topsoil and was filled with made ground (401) consisting of blackish sandy silt and containing discrete dumps of bricks (405).
- 4.5.3 No archaeological features or artefacts were observed in Trench 4.



5 ARTEFACTUAL EVIDENCE

5.1 Results

5.1.1 A very small quantity of finds was recovered from the Site, comprising pottery, animal bone and ceramic building material; these finds are quantified by material type and by context in **Table 1**. All datable material (pottery, ceramic building material) is of post-medieval date. The pottery includes coarse redware, refined whitewares and bone china, while the ceramic building material includes roof tile (one nibbed fragment), floor tile (plain, unglazed) and brick.

Context	Animal Bone	СВМ	Pottery
106			1/2
204		6/1350	4/12
205	1/564		3/14
305	1/12	1/106	
406			1/2
TOTAL	2/576	7/1456	9/30

Table 1: All finds by context (number / weight in grammes)

5.2 Potential and recommendations

5.2.1 This is a very small assemblage of finds, all of relatively recent date and in very commonly occurring types. The finds have been recorded to an appropriate archive level, and no further analysis or publication is necessary. Given the size and nature of this assemblage, retention for long-term curation is not considered to be warranted, and the finds could be discarded prior to archive deposition.

6 ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

6.1 Summary

- 6.1.1 A 40 litre bulk soil sample was taken from fill (**305**) for environmental analysis. However, post-excavation specialist analysis of a fragment of roof tile from this deposit confirmed a post-medieval date and therefore the sample was not processed or assessed.
- 6.1.2 It is recommended that the sample is discarded prior to archiving.

7 DISCUSSION

7.1 Conclusions

- 7.1.1 The investigations permitted preservation by record of all surviving archaeological remains that may be disturbed by the proposed development. In addition to the remains of the late 20th century building, the recorded features comprise a truncated post-medieval feature in Trench 1, and post-medieval boundary ditches/drainage gullies in Trench 2 and in Trench 3. Modern pottery in the ditch in Trench 3 is lilkely to be intrusive.
- 7.1.2 The only features and artefacts identified during the investigations were of post-medieval or modern date. No residual medieval finds were recovered and there is no evidence that



this area lay within the medieval settlement of Yardley. However, ground disturbance during the construction and demolition of the former Yardley Grange nursing home was clearly extensive and it is possible that these works could have destroyed any remains of earlier periods.

- 7.1.3 Consequently, it was not possible to identify the southern extent of the medieval core of Yardley and no additional evidence was discovered that would contribute to our understanding of medieval Yardley.
- 7.1.4 It is considered that the aims and objectives of the excavation has been achieved and that the results are representative of the nature of the archaeology across the development area.

7.2 Recommendations

- 7.2.1 No further work is warranted on the stratigraphic record or the artefact assemblage from this Site. One environmental sample was taken but was not processed once the post-medieval date of the feature was confirmed.
- 7.2.2 It is recommeded that the approval of the Birmingham City Planning Archaeologists's approval is sought for the discard of the artefact assemblage and soil sample prior to archiving.

8 STORAGE AND CURATION

8.1 Archive and curation

- 8.1.1 The complete Site archive will be prepared following the standard procedures for the transfer of archaeological archives to Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (UKIC 1990; Richards and Robinson 2000; Brown 2007). The archive is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology in Sheffield, under the project code **89420**.
- 8.1.2 The project archive will be deposited with the Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery in due course under an accession number to be confirmed. An OASIS form will be completed at the time of deposition.

8.2 Copyright

- 8.2.1 This report, and the archive generally, may contain material that is non-Wessex Archaeology copyright (e.g. Ordnance Survey, British Geological Survey, Crown Copyright), or the intellectual property of third parties, which we are able to provide for limited reproduction under the terms of our own copyright licences, but for which copyright itself is non-transferrable by Wessex Archaeology. Users remain bound by the conditions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with regard to multiple copying and electronic dissemination of the report.
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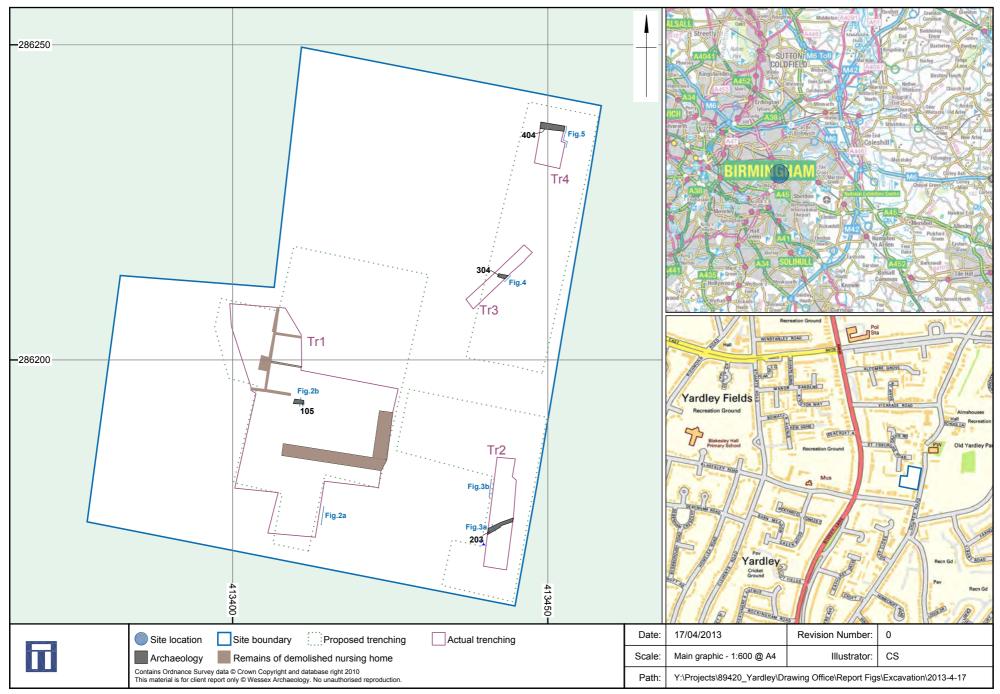
APPENDIX 1

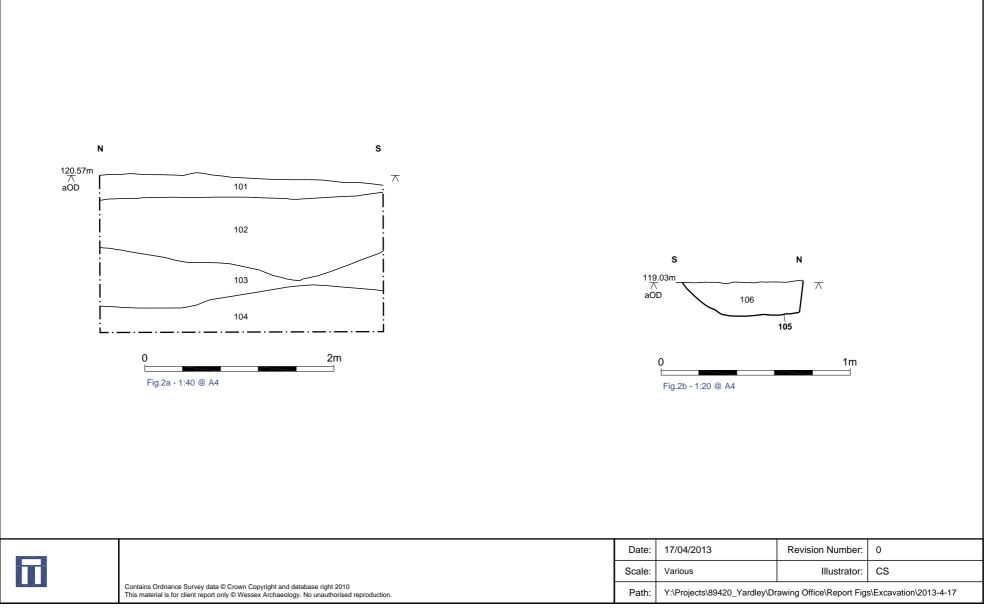
Context data

Context	Description	Depth BGL (m)
	Trench No.1	Max Depth: 1.99m
101	Demolition layer: Dark reddish brown, silty clay (40:60) with sparse (3%) small and medium rounded stone inclusions. This layer varied in depth from 0.10- 0.35m.	0- 0.35m
102	Made ground: Dark brownish grey, silty clay (30:70) with sparse (3%) small and large rounged stone inclusions and rare (1%) patches of natural clay (104). This layer varied in depth from 0.52- 0.84m.	0.35- 1.19m
103	Clay band: Light yellowish grey, silty clay (10:90) with common (20-25%) charcoal. This deposit varied in depth from 0.10- 0.63m.	1.19- 1.82m
104	Natural: Light yellowish grey, clay with very common (30%) small, medium and large subrounded and rounded stone inclusions. This shallowest point of this context was recorded at 1.08m.	1.82m+
105	Cut: Cut of a truncated rectangular feature. As a result of severe truncation (attributable to the construction of the former nursing home), the original purpose and function of this feature are unknown.	1.82- 1.98m
106	Fill: Secondary fill of cut (105). Dark bluish grey, silty clay (40:60) with very common (30%) small and medium subrounded and rounded stone inclusions. Pottery sherd found at the base of (105).	1.82- 1.98m
	Trench No. 2	Max Depth: 1.18m
201	Made ground: Mid reddish brown and light pinkish cream (directly underneath the tarmac), sandy gravel with abundant (>90%) very small through to medium angular stone inclusions.	0- 0.49m
202	Natural: Mid brownish red, clay with common (20%) medium and large subrounded and rounded stone inclusions.	0.85m+
203	Cut: Cut of modern drainage gully.	0.85- 1.18m
204	Fill: Secondary fill of cut (203). Very dark brownish grey, silty clay (10:90) with very common (30%) small and medium angular, subrounded and rounded stone inclusions. CBM and modern pottery found in this fill.	0.85- 1.18m
205	'Meadow soil': Black, (humic) silty clay (20:80) with common (20-25%) very small angular stone inclusions and rare (1%) fragments of modern CBM. This deposit is thought to be the original 'soil' in meadow that was previously located here. White glazed pottery also found in this layer.	0.49- 0.85m
	Trench No. 3	Max Depth: 1.18m
301	Made ground: Dark brownish grey, silty clay (40:60) with common (20%) small and medium subrounded stone inclusions and rare (3%) CBM.	0- 0.84m
302	Natural: Mid orangey red, clay with common (20-30%) small through to large subrounded stone inclusions.	>0.84m
303	Disturbance layer: Dark reddish brown, silty clay (40:60) with common (20%) medium rounded stone inclusions. The formation of this layer can be attributable to the construction of the former nursing home.	0.84m
304	Cut: Cut of gully, date unknown	0.66-1.18m
305	Fill: Secondary fill of gully (304). Dark greyish brown,silty clay (20:80) with sparse (5-10%) small and medium subrounded and rounded stone inclusions. Rare (3%) charcoal inclusions noted. Animal bone and CBM identified from this fill.	0.66-1.18m
306	Modern brickwall: Brickwall from the former nursing home.	0.84m
307	Modern brickwall: Brickwall from the former nursing home.	0.84m
308	Concrete floor: Concrete floor from the former nursing home.	0.84m
309	Concrete floor: Concrete floor from the former nursing home.	0.84m

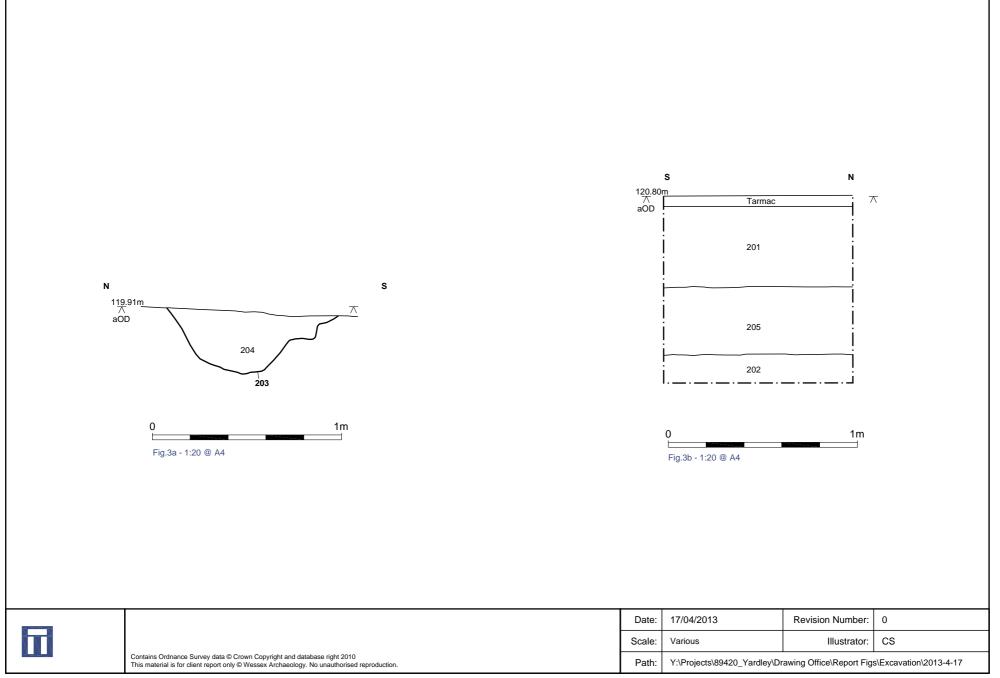


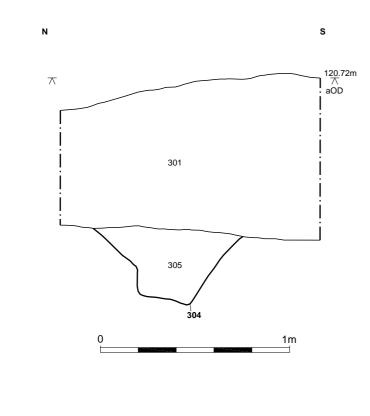
Context	Description	Depth BGL (m)		
	Trench No. 4			
401	Made ground: Consisting, predominantly, of blackish sandy silt with dumps and layers of brick and gravel under the road surface.	0.0- 1.40m		
402	Natural: Light greyish yellow, clay with occasional rounded stones. This layer is 0.32m thick and overlays a sandy cut (403) below	0.90- >1.20m		
403	Natural: Dark red, clayey sand with occasional rounded pebbles below thin natural clay band (402)	>1.20m		
404	Truncation: Modern linear cut extending across the trench E-W. Maximum depth below ground surface is 1.40m to the north of the former nursing home building, beneath the road. This is likely to be associated with landscaping with the nursing home.	0.90- >1.40m		
405	Modern brick dump: Located at the base of (401)	>1.20m		
406	Remnant soil patch: Yellowish grey, silty sand at the base of (404) truncation. This deposit contained one sherd of 19 th century white ware pottery	1.20m		





Trench 1 representative section and section of rectangular feature 105







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	Scale:	1:20 @ A4	Illustrator:	CS
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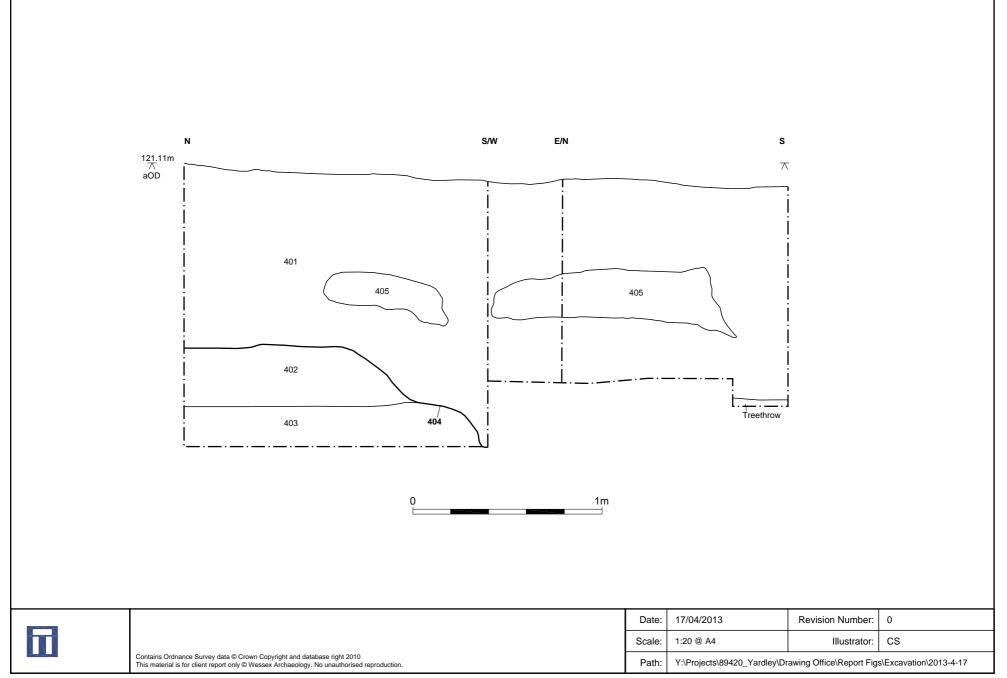




Plate 1: General shot of the southern area of Trench 1



Plate 2: Representative section of Trench 1

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Plate 3: Shot of feature 105



Plate 4: General shot of Trench 2

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Plate 5: Representative section of Trench 2



Plate 6: Shot of Gully 203

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Plate 7: General shot of Trench 3



Plate 8: Representative section of Trench 3 and gully **304**

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Plate 9: General shot of Trench 4



Plate 10: Representative section of Trench 4

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