



A5S/10043 ASHFIELD DRIVE ANSTEY FLOOD ALLEVIATION SCHEME LEICESTERSHIRE

Archaeological Watching Brief Report





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ANSTEY FLOOD ALLEVIATION SCHEME
LEICESTERSHIRE**

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Prepared for:
NMC Nomenca
Nunn Close
The County Estate
Huthwaite
Sutton-in-Ashfield
Nottinghamshire
NG17 2HW

by
Wessex Archaeology
Unit R6, Riverside Block
Sheaf Bank Business Park
Sheffield
S2 3EN

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Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by NMC Nomenca to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with flood alleviation works adjacent to Ashfield Drive, Anstey, Leicestershire (NGR 454850, 308000), hereafter known as 'the Site'. The work involved the supervision of excavations associated with the construction of a 450mm diameter water sewer within a playing field.

The programme of archaeological works was undertaken in line with a Written Scheme of Investigation produced by Wessex Archaeology, and approved by Richard Clark, Principal Planning Archaeologist for Leicestershire County Council (LCC). This report presents a brief description of the methodology followed, a description of the results and an interpretation of the findings.

The archaeological monitoring identified no significant archaeological remains. Remnants of medieval or post-medieval ridge and furrow were identified adjacent to Peartree Close at the entrance to the playing field. Sherds of post-medieval and modern pottery and other modern finds were found within the topsoil, and were indicative of manuring.

The archive is currently held at Wessex Archaeology's Sheffield office and will be deposited with Leicestershire Museums under accession number **X.A102.2012**.

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Archaeological Watching Brief

Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology is grateful to Emma Price and Thomas Geeson of NMC Nomenca for commissioning the work, which was monitored by Richard Clark of Leicestershire County Council.

Fieldwork was undertaken by Philip Roberts and Matt Weightman. The report was compiled by Philip Roberts and figures produced by Chris Breeden; finds were assessed by Lorraine Mepham. The project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Andrew Norton.

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Archaeological Watching Brief Report

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology were commissioned by NMC Nomenca (hereafter 'the Client') to undertake an archaeological watching brief on works adjacent to Ashfield Drive and Peartree Close, Anstey, Leicestershire ('the Site'; **Figure 1**). The work was required in order to mitigate the potential loss of archaeological remains during groundworks associated with the construction of a new 450mm diameter water sewer.

1.1.2 The Site lies within an area of archaeological potential and following discussions between NMC Nomenca and Richard Clark, Principal Planning Archaeologist for Leicestershire County Council (LCC), a watching brief was proposed during excavation of c. 150m of the pipe trench within a playing field at the east of the scheme - an area of previously undisturbed ground.

1.1.3 The archaeological monitoring was undertaken in line with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by Wessex Archaeology (2012) and approved by LCC.

1.2 The Site, Location and Geology

1.2.1 The Site is situated c. 5km to the north-west of Leicester City Centre, and from east to west the route of the sewer runs north-east to south-west through a playing field to the south of Millfield Close, north-west and north-east along Peartree Close, before turning north-west along Ashfield Drive (centred at NGR 454850, 308000; **Figure 1**).

1.2.2 The Site is located at 65m AOD. The geology comprises Mudstone (Edwalton Member) below river terrace deposits, Head deposits (clay, silt, sand and gravel) and Thrussington Member Diamicton (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>).

1.2.3 The watching brief was undertaken on works occurring on the playing field located east of Peartree close and parallel to it. Monitored excavations did not continue on to the public highway but were contained within the extent of the playing fields.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 General

2.1.1 An adjacent site was subject to a desk-based assessment (DBA), the results of which were used to inform a heritage statement for the Site (memo from Julia Smith of Atkins to Mark Deakin 25th January 2012). This in turn was

used as the basis for the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) written by Wessex Archaeology and approved by Leicestershire County Council (LCC).

2.2 Prehistoric and Roman

2.2.1 The Site is located on a gravel terrace at the edge of the Rothley Brook, which lies to the south-east of the Site and would have formed a fertile area for settlement. Although no settlement activity is recorded in the area, a Romano-British brooch and coin were found during metal detecting on the north-east side of Anstey Lane.

2.3 Medieval and Post-Medieval

2.3.1 Ridge and furrow earthworks are visible within the playing field, and it is likely that the Site formed agricultural land during the medieval and post-medieval periods.

3 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Aims

3.1.1 The principal aim of the archaeological monitoring was to mitigate the impact of the proposed development through the identification, recording and assessment of archaeological remains; thus achieving 'preservation by record'.

3.1.2 The specific aims of the project were:

- to identify any archaeological deposits within the Site;
- to determine the extent, condition, character, significance and date of any archaeological deposits encountered;
- to accurately record the location and stratigraphy of areas excavated during groundworks;
- to recover artefacts disturbed by the Site works;
- to prepare a comprehensive record and report of any archaeological deposits disturbed by the Site works;
- to provide accurate information that will enable the archaeological remains to be placed with their local, regional and national contexts.

3.2 Objectives

3.2.1 The specific objectives of the project were:

- to preserve through record any archaeological deposits impacted by the proposed development.

3.3 Methodology

- 3.3.1 Fieldwork was undertaken between 10/10/12 and 30/10/12. All works were conducted in compliance with the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2012) and Institute for Archaeologists' *Standards and Guidance* (2008).
- 3.3.2 All groundworks were carried out under supervision by appropriately qualified and experienced staff. Where practicable, all archaeological deposits observed during the watching brief were cleaned manually to an archaeologically acceptable standard and located on a Site plan and tied into the Ordnance Survey national grid.
- 3.3.3 All archaeological deposits were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's pro forma recording system. Each context record fully describes the location, extent, composition and relationship of the subject and is cross-referenced to all other assigned records. Context numbers used in the watching brief are unique and will not be repeated. A photographic record has been created to illustrate both the detail and the general context of the principal features.
- 3.3.4 A small assemblage of finds was recovered during the watching brief; quantities by context are given in **Appendix 2**.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 The following section provides a summary of the information held in the Site archive with observed features and contexts tabulated in **Appendix 1**. The Site was divided into two areas for ease of recording. Trench 1 comprised the southern part of the field that was stripped prior to the construction of the contactors' compound. Trench 2 comprised the pipe trench and was aligned north to south within the playing field, running through the compound (Trench 1) and on to Peartree Close (**Figure 1**).

4.2 General Stratigraphy

- 4.2.1 Natural deposits were found to be approximately 1m deep and consisted of a mid-yellow to orange clay in the north of the Site and a red clay in the south. The overlying stratigraphy comprised made ground deposits including the fills of ridge and furrow and buried soils. These deposits were overlaid by the modern turf and topsoil to a depth of between 0.18 and 0.38m.

4.3 Trench 1

- 4.3.1 Trench 1 was located adjacent to Peartree Close at the entrance to the playing field (**Plate 1**). A pinkish grey clay deposit (**101**) was revealed 0.45m below ground level, overlying the natural geology. The soil may have been alluvial in origin and was cut by six east to west aligned furrows (**Figure 1**) that were 3.25m wide and 5m apart. Furrows **105** and **107** were 0.08m deep and were filled by sandy silts (**106** and **108**), of which **106** contained 19th or 20th century pottery fragments. A buried topsoil (**102**) overlay the deposits and may have resulted from the ploughed out ridge and

furrow. A sherd of post-medieval pottery and a modern bottle were recovered from the topsoil (**100**).

4.4 Trench 2

4.4.1 The pipe trench (**Plate 2**) was 1.15m deep in the north and approximately 2.05m deep at the southern end (Trench 2). A yellow/orange natural clay (**204**) was revealed at a depth of 0.98-1.15m. At the northern end of the trench the deposit was overlain by a 0.14m thick alluvial band of blue grey clay (**203**), below a 0.45m thick brown to yellow silty clay buried soil (**202**; **Plate 3**). A 0.38m thick mid-brown silty clay turf layer/topsoil (**201**) overlay **202**. No archaeological features were revealed, although topsoil **201** contained a small number of 19th - 20th century pottery fragments.

4.4.2 In the south of the trench, towards Trench 1, the stratigraphy changed with a firm red clay natural deposit with occasional well rounded pebbles (**205**) revealed. This was overlain by a layer of well rounded pebbles (**206**), approximately 0.2m in width, below pinkish clay **208** - assumed to be the same as deposit **101** in Trench 1. The shape and smoothness of the pebbles was indicative of deposition via river action, possibly by flooding of the nearby stream. The stratigraphic sequence (**Plate 4**) above **208** mirrored that in Trench 1.

The relationship between the natural deposits at the northern and southern ends of the trench was unknown. It is possible that fluvial or alluvial action may account for any colour changes within the natural clays.

5 FINDS

5.1 Summary

5.1.1 A very small quantity of finds was recovered from five contexts, and comprised pottery sherds, a fragment of brick, a complete glass bottle and an iron nail; quantities per context are given in **Table 1 (Appendix 2)**.

5.1.2 All datable finds are post-medieval. The complete glass bottle is a 19th/20th century hexagonal ribbed pharmaceutical bottle in blue glass, marked 'Not To Be Taken'. The pottery wares represented comprise coarse redware (broadly dated to the post-medieval period); Staffordshire-type trailed slipware (17th/18th century); stonewares, including Nottingham/Derby type, and dating to the late 17th century or later; and industrial wares from the late 18th and 19th centuries (creamware, pearlware). The finds are likely to be a result of manuring.

5.1.3 Given the small quantities of finds recovered, their nature and their date range, retention for long-term curation is not recommended, and the finds will be discarded prior to archive deposition.

6 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Summary

6.1.1 The archaeological monitoring identified below ground evidence for the extant ridge and furrow system. The furrows were seen to be only 0.08m deep in the south of the field and absent in the north. It is likely that any furrows had been ploughed out in the north of the Site.

6.1.2 The Site had been subject to flooding with alluvial and fluvial deposits revealed. No other deposits of significance were noted.

7 ARCHIVE

7.1 Preparation

7.1.1 The project archive, consisting of all primary written documents, plans, sections, photographs, and electronic data, will be prepared by Wessex Archaeology staff in accordance with the requirements of the repository museum and in line with national guidelines (Brown 2007).

7.2 Deposition

7.2.1 It is anticipated that the physical Site archive (**Appendix 1**) will be deposited with Leicestershire Museums in due course, under accession number **X.A102.2012**.

7.2.2 A digital copy of the report will be prepared for the client and physical copies will be submitted to Leicestershire County Council and, along with the Site archive, to the repository museum.

7.2.3 An OASIS form will be completed at <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/> for inclusion in the ADS database. This will include an electronic copy of the report in PDF format.

8 REFERENCES

Brown, D. 2007. *Archaeological Archives – A Guide to Best Practice in Creation, Compilation, Transfer and Curation*.

Institute for Archaeologists (IfA). 2008. *Standards and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief*. Available: www.archaeologists.net.

Wessex Archaeology. 2012. A5S/10043 Ashfield Drive, Anstey Flood Alleviation Scheme, Leicestershire, Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Watching Brief, unpublished client report T15903.01.

APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

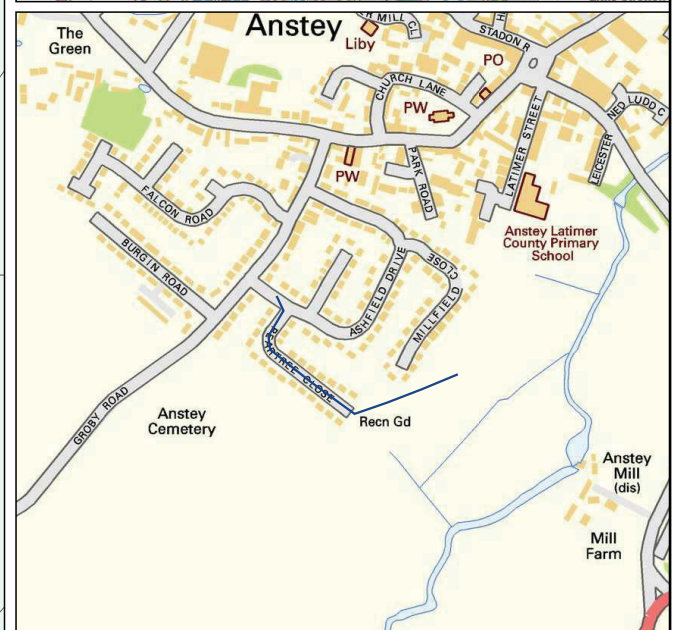
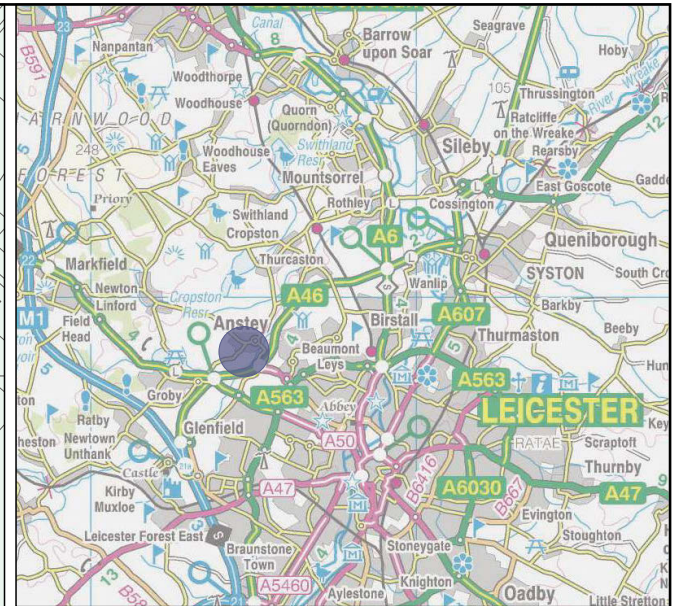
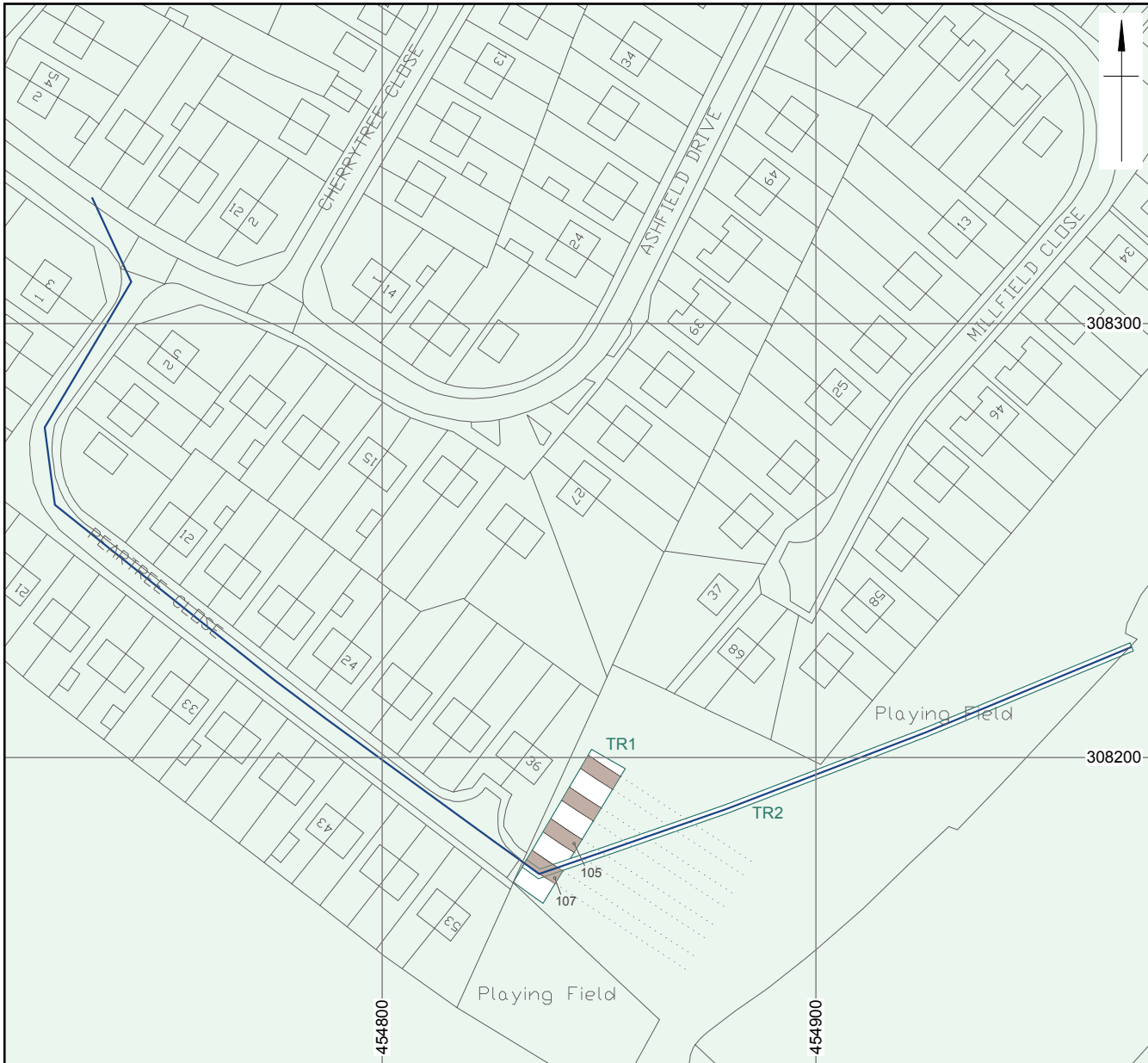
Area	Context	Category	Description
Trench 1	100	Deposit	Topsoil: Mid brownish – grey silty sand.
Trench 1	101	Deposit	Alluvial layer: Mid pinkish grey clay with 30% sub-rounded stones.
Trench 1	102	Deposit	Buried soil: Dark grey, fine sandy silt. Charcoal fleck inclusions.
Trench 1	103	Deposit	Natural: Mid brownish yellow clay. C. 15% stones.
Trench 1	104	Deposit	Charcoal spread under 101 and on top of 102 . Within confines of an indistinct possible cut.
Trench 1	105	Cut	Cut for furrow, shallow slope. Filled with 106 .
Trench 1	106	Fill	Fine sandy silt fill of 105 . Frequent charcoal flecks.
Trench 1	107	Cut	Truncated cut of furrow. Filled with 108 .
Trench 1	108	Fill	Fill of 107 , similar to 106 .
Trench 2	201	Deposit	Topsoil: Mid brown silty clay. Same as 100 .
Trench 2	201	Deposit	Probable subsoil: Brown – yellow silty clay.
Trench 2	203	Deposit	Pale blue - grey clay band under 201 . Doesn't continue along the whole of trench 2.
Trench 2	204	Deposit	Natural: Yellow – orange clay. Located mainly at the north end of trench 2.
Trench 2	205	Deposit	Natural: Reddish clay with occasional pebble inclusions. Located at the south end of trench 2.
Trench 2	206	Deposit	Layer of well rounded pebbles below 202 and above 205 .
Trench 2	207	Deposit	Buried soil: Greyish sandy silt below 208 , located at the south end of trench 2. Same as 102 .
Trench 2	208	Deposit	Alluvial layer: Pinkish clay, same as 101 .

APPENDIX 2: ARTEFACTS BY CONTEXT

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

Context	CBM	Glass	Iron	Pottery	Date
100		1/86		1/128	Modern
102				3/10	Modern
106				5/32	Modern
108	1/6		1/6		Post-med
201				3/126	Modern
TOTAL	1/6	1/86	1/6	12/298	

CBM = ceramic building material



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● Site location
 — Pipeline route
 □ WB area
 □ Trench number
 ▨ Ridge and Furrow

Date:	22/11/2012	Revision Number:	0
Scale:	Main graphic - 1:1500 @ A4	Illustrator:	CS
Path:	Y:\Projects\87290_Anstey\Drawing Office\Report Figs\WB\2012-11-22\87290_WB figs.dwg		

Site location

Figure 1



Plate 1: Topsoil strip to south of Peartree Close, facing south-west.



Plate 2: Excavation of pipe trench, facing north-east.

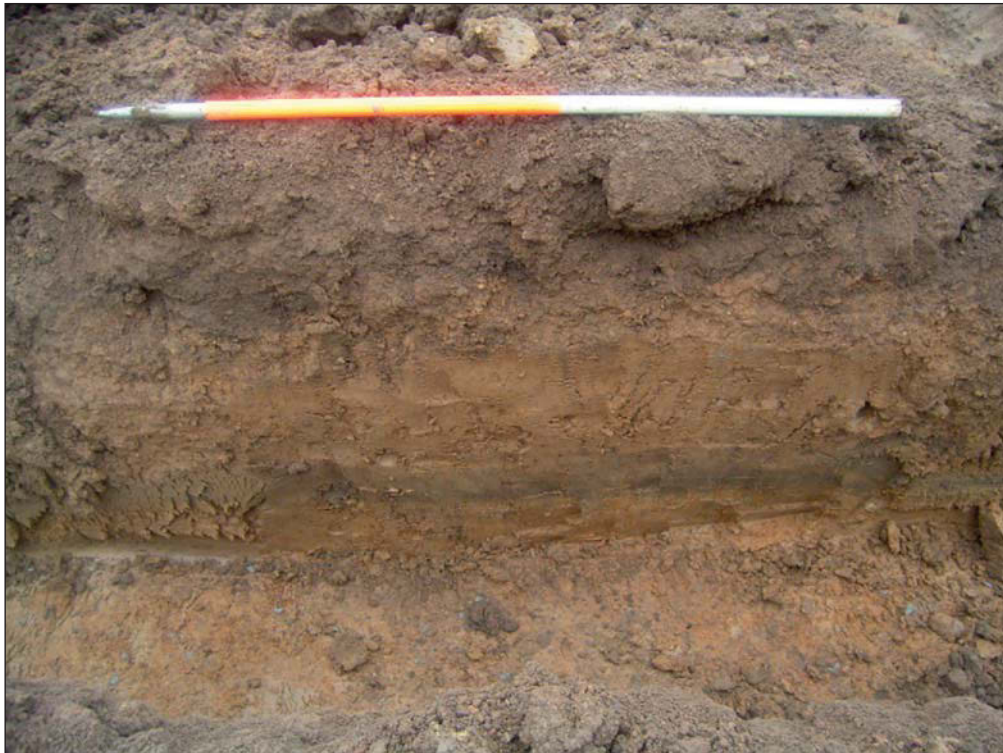


Plate 3: Sample section along pipeline trench.



Plate 4: Sample section through ground exposed during manhole excavation, south of Peartree Close.

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WESSEX ARCHAEOLOGY LIMITED.

Registered Head Office: Portway House, Old Sarum Park, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP4 6EB.

Tel: 01722 326867 Fax: 01722 337562 info@wessexarch.co.uk

Regional offices in **Edinburgh, Rochester and Sheffield**

For more information visit www.wessexarch.co.uk



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