

GADEBRIDGE PARK, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire

HN1351

Report No. 1093

Site name and address:	Gadebridge Park, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, HP1 1LS		
County:	Hertfordshire	District:	Dacorum
Village/town:	Hemel Hempstead	Parish:	Hemel Hempstead
Planning reference:	N/A	NGR:	TL 05386 07844
Client name and address:	Dacorum Borough Council, The Forum, Marlowes, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, HP1 1DN		
Nature of development:	Splash park	Previous land use:	Putting Green
Site Status:	Area of Archaeological Significance no.38 (AAS39)	Reason for investigation:	Advice of local planning authority (NPPF)
Position in planning process:	N/A	Project brief originator:	Local authority
Size of affected area:	c.9000m ²	Size of area investigated:	c. 200m ²
HN Ref:	HN1351	HER consultation:	-
Organisation:	Heritage Network	Site Director:	David Hillelson
Project type, methods etc.	Monitoring	Archive Recipient:	Dacorum Heritage Trust
Start of work	06/09/17	Finish of work	13/09/17
Related HER Nos:	None	Periods represented:	None
Oasis UID:	heritage1-286185	Significant finds:	None
Monument types:	None		
Physical archive:	None		
Previous summaries/reports:	None		

Introduction:

In response to advice provided to Dacorum Borough Council (DBC) by the Historic Environment Team (HET) of Hertfordshire County Council, acting as archaeological adviser to the Borough, the Heritage Network was commissioned by DBC to undertake a programme of archaeological monitoring of the groundworks for the construction of a Splash Park at Gadebridge Park, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, HP1 1LS. The installation of the Splash Park was not subject to planning consent. A full specification for the work carried out is contained in the Heritage Network's approved *Project Design*, dated September 2017.

Narrative:

The site lies within Gadebridge Park, which lies on the western edge of Hemel Hempstead old town, approximately 70m to the west of the medieval parish church of St Mary. The development site, centred on NGR TL 05386 07844, is located in the south-eastern corner of the park, 140m to the east of the A4146 road, which runs through the centre of the park (Figure 1). The proposed splash park is currently enclosed within a hedged area and occupied by a putting green. It is bordered by bowling greens to the south, by parkland to the north and west and by an existing path to the east. The River Gade runs through the park, approximately 95m to the west. The site is located in the historic core of Hemel Hempstead (HER 1) and within Area of Archaeological Significance no.38, as identified in the District Local Plan.

The proposed development entails the removal of the putting green and its replacement with a children's Splash Park, together with associated services and landscaping.

In accordance with the advice provided to the DBC by the HET, the first stage of work involved the archaeological monitoring of all areas which would be subject to ground reduction or disturbance. This included the excavation of underground storage tanks, ground reduction across the footprint of the splash park, the excavation of foundations, service trenches and landscaping as appropriate, in order to identify archaeological remains that may be damaged, destroyed or otherwise affected.

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Water Tank Trench

The first phase of works involved monitoring the excavation of the water tank trench, immediately to the west of the splash park. This measured 7m in length by 4m in width and was excavated to a depth of c.1.3m (Figure 2). The exposed stratigraphy consisted of dark greyish brown, friable sandy silty clay topsoil, 0.7m in depth, above a layer of friable white sand with gravel, c.0.2m in depth. The natural substrate was reached at a depth of approximately 0.9m below the present ground level and consisted of mid/light orange brown sands and gravels (Plates 1-4).

Feature [102], was observed cutting the natural gravels in the south-western corner of the trench and measured over 2.5m in length, over 2.2m in width and 1m in depth (Figure 3). It was very irregular in shape and in profile. The fill, (101), consisted of dark grey and black sticky silty clay containing frequent rotting wood fragments and pockets of natural gravels. No finds were recovered from the fill to date the feature, which has been interpreted as a possible tree bole.

No other features, deposits or finds were encountered in this area.

Ground reduction

The ground reduction across the footprint of the splash park was monitored. This was an irregular area, with a maximum length of 42m and a maximum width of 29m (Figure 2). The works involved the removal of the turf and upper topsoil to a depth of approximately 0.20m, exposing a similar dark greyish brown, friable sandy silty clay topsoil to that noted in the Water Tank Trench (Plates 5 – 8).

The works did not breach the topsoil and no archaeological features, deposits or finds were encountered during this phase of the project.

Service Trench

An electrical service trench, measuring approximately 273.7m in length, 0.25m in width and 0.60m in depth, was excavated from the southern edge of the park, adjacent to the B487 road, to the site of the splash park plant room (Figure 2). The trench ran alongside the existing footpath through the park, before turning west to run along the southern edge of the present site.

The exposed stratigraphy consisted of dark greyish brown friable sandy silty clay topsoil, c.0.45m in depth, over mid yellowish brown friable sandy silt clay subsoil, over 0.15m in depth, which contained chalk and late post-medieval brick fragments (Plates 10-12). These were noted, but not collected. The natural substrate was not reached at any point during the excavation of the trench.

No archaeological features, deposits or finds were encountered during this phase of the project.

Unmonitored groundworks

Two other phases of groundworks were intended to be monitored but, due to circumstances, the works were not seen. They included the proposed excavation of foundation trenches for a plant room in the south-western corner of the site (Figure 2). During the course of the project the foundation plans for this structure were changed from foundation trenches to piling, removing the need for archaeological monitoring.

A water pipeline ran north from the B487 road to the plant room. This was moled, rather than trenched, and no access pits were excavated. However, given the depth of the overburden observed elsewhere on the site it is unlikely to have affected buried archaeological remains.

Discussion:

The monitoring of the groundworks for the splash park at Gadebridge Park, revealed a slightly varied stratigraphic sequence across the site. In the area of the water storage tank this consisted of a dark greyish brown, friable sandy silty clay topsoil, above a white sand layer. The natural sands and gravels were encountered below the sand layer at a depth of approximately 0.9m. The stratigraphy exposed in the service trench to the east of the site comprised a similar topsoil above a silty clay subsoil. The natural substrate was not reached in this trench. The lack of a subsoil in the water tank trench suggests that the area of the splash park has been previously subject to ground reduction and reinstatement, presumably when the former putting green was constructed.

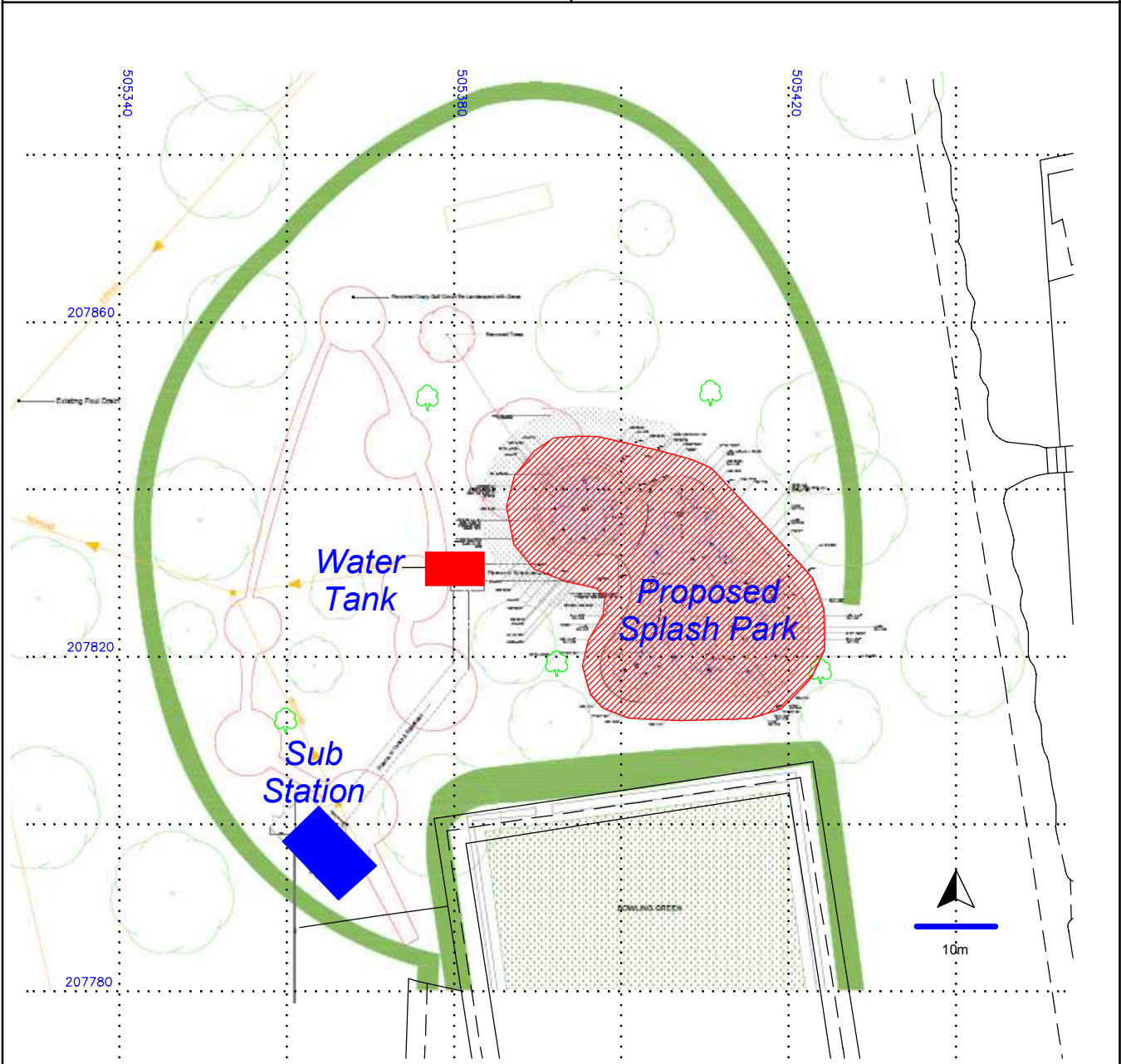
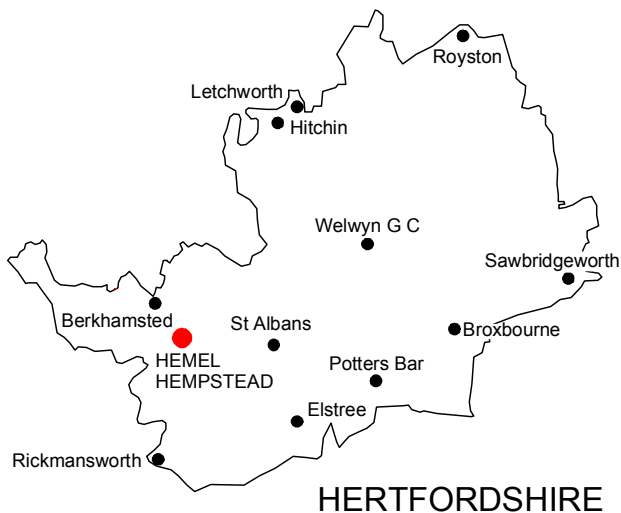
A single feature was revealed in the water storage tank trench. However, the irregularity of the cut and the presence of wood within the fill indicates that it is likely that this feature represents a tree bole.

No archaeological features, deposits or finds were encountered during the course of the present investigation and no direct evidence for activity pre-dating the 20th century was noted. No information was gained that could be considered to contribute positively to the research aims for the project, as defined in the approved Project Design.

Illustrations:

Figure 1	Site location
Figure 2	Site layout
Figure 3	Plan of water tank trench
Figure 4	Section of E facing baulk of water tank trench
Plate 1	Water tank trench, looking SW
Plate 2	Water tank trench, looking W
Plate 3	Possible tree bole [101], looking SW
Plate 4	Working shot showing natural gravels, looking NE
Plate 5	Turf strip on splash park footprint, looking S
Plate 6	Turf strip on splash park footprint, looking E
Plate 7	Turf strip on splash park footprint, looking W
Plate 8	Turf strip on splash park footprint, looking N
Plate 9	Electrical service trench, looking NE
Plate 10	Electrical service trench stratigraphy, looking NW
Plate 11	Electrical service trench stratigraphy, looking NE
Plate 12	Electrical service trench stratigraphy, looking SW

Greg Jones, BA (Hons) MA ACIfA
December 2017



Site location and layout

Scale 1:750



Key

- Monitored areas*
- Unmonitored areas*

Site layout showing electrical service trench

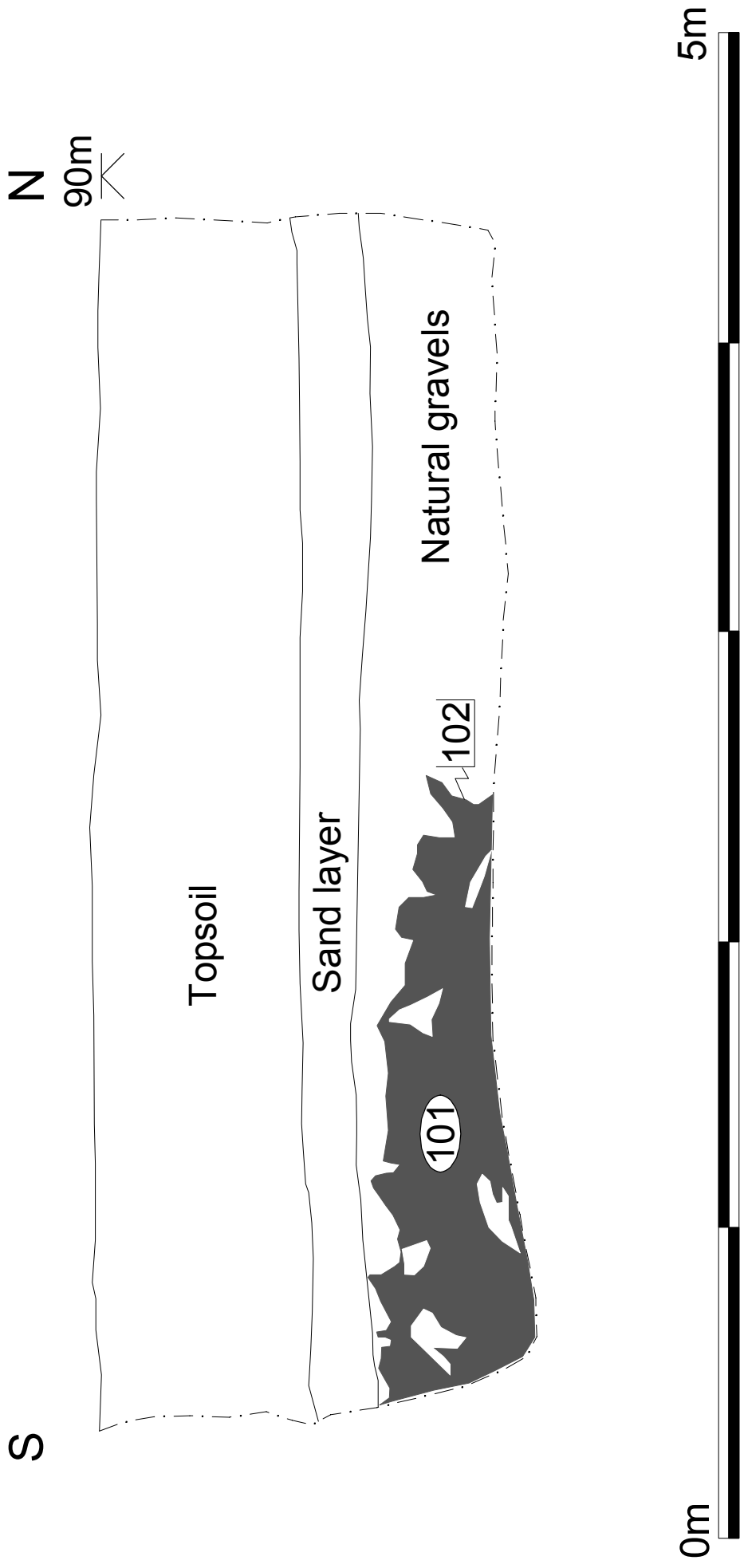
Scale 1:2500



0m

5m

Plan of water tank trench



Section of E facing baulk of water tank trench



Plate 1: Water tank trench, looking SW



Plate 2: Water tank trench, looking W



Plate 3: Possible tree bole [101], looking SW



Plate 4: Working shot showing natural gravels, looking NE



Plate 5: Turf strip on splash park footprint, looking S



Plate 6: Turf strip on splash park footprint, looking E



Plate 7: Turf strip on splash park footprint, looking W



Plate 8: Turf strip on splash park footprint, looking N



Plate 9: Electrical service trench, looking NE



Plate 10: Electrical service trench stratigraphy, looking NW



Plate 11: Electrical service trench stratigraphy, looking NE



Plate 12: Electrical service trench stratigraphy, looking SW

Appendix

Oasis Summary Sheet

OASIS ID: heritage1-286185	
Project details	
Project name	Gadebridge Park Splash Park, Queensway, Hemel Hempstead
Short description of the project	In response to advice provided to Dacorum Borough Council (DBC) by the Historic Environment Team (HET) of Hertfordshire County Council, acting as archaeological adviser to the Borough, the Heritage Network was commissioned by DBC to undertake a programme of archaeological monitoring of the groundworks for the construction of a Splash Park at Gadebridge Park, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, HP1 1LS. The installation of the Splash Park was not subject to planning consent. The site lies within Gadebridge Park, which lies on the western edge of Hemel Hempstead old town, approximately 70m to the west of the medieval parish church of St Mary. The development site, centred on NGR TL 05386 07844, is located in the south-eastern corner of the park, 140m to the east of the A4146 road, which runs through the centre of the park. A probable tree bole was encountered in 1 trench. No archaeological features, deposits or finds were encountered during the course of the present investigation and no direct evidence for activity pre-dating the 20th century was noted. No information was gained that could be considered to contribute positively to the research aims for the project, as defined in the approved Project Design
Project dates	Start: 06-09-2017 End: 13-09-2017
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	HN1351 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area
Current Land use	Community Service 2 - Leisure and recreational buildings
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	""Watching Brief""
Prompt	Advice of Planning Authority
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	HERTFORDSHIRE DACORUM HEMEL HEMPSTEAD Gadebridge Park Splash Park, Queensway
Postcode	HP1 1LS
Study area	9000 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 05386 07844 51.758893860646 -0.472892262667 51 45 32 N 000 28 22 W Point
Lat/Long Datum	Unknown
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	Heritage Network
Project brief originator	Contractor (design and execute)
Project design originator	Helen Ashworth
Project director/manager	David Hillelson
Project supervisor	Greg Jones
Type of sponsor/funding body	District Council
Name of sponsor/funding body	Dacorum Borough Council
Project archives	
Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	OASIS / ADS
Digital Contents	"none"

Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography","Spreadsheets","Text"
Paper Archive Exists?	No
Project bibliography 1	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Gadebridge Park, Hemel Hempstead, Herts. Archaeological Monitoring Report
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Jones, G.
Other bibliographic details	Report no.1093
Date	2017
Issuer or publisher	Heritage Network
Place of issue or publication	Letchworth
Description	A4 pamphlet, 3 text pages, 4 figures, 12 plates

Site Name:	Gadebridge Splash Park, Hemel Hempstead, Herts.	HN ref:	1351
		Site Code:	

Recorder(s):	GAT	Arrive time:	9.45 am	Return travel:	2 W.
Date:	06/09/17	Depart time:	14:00pm	Total hours:	6.25 W

Reported to:	Andy	Position:	Site Foreman
Purpose of visit:	on water tank trench for splash park.		

Photograph film no	-																																
Staff on site:	GAT																																
Observations:	<p>Spoke with Andy about the work programme - Today they will be excavating the water tank trench. This was monitored*. Approx half of the areas to be stripped had been (topsoil strip - no arch impact). These were photographed. Some more to be done but don't need monitoring.</p> <p>Cuy from council was here too (I didn't catch his name, but David knows him) - he said they would be in touch about the monitoring of excavation for the electrical service trench. Site Foreman Andy said that they would try and tie in excavation of footings for control building at same time.</p> <p>All other groundworks do not impact the natural horizon. I told Andy that I would speak to DSH about whether we need to see him. Andy will be on site for the next 2 weeks, so if we need to monitor this we can contact him. This work is due to start next week 11th Monday.</p>																																
	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Sheet</td> <td>1</td> <td>of</td> <td>8</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4">Additional records:</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Text sheet(s)</td> <td colspan="3">5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sketch sheet(s)</td> <td colspan="3">3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Context form(s)</td> <td colspan="3"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>A4 Scale dwng(s)</td> <td colspan="3"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>A3 Scale dwng(s)</td> <td colspan="3"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Photographs</td> <td colspan="3">1</td> </tr> </table>	Sheet	1	of	8	Additional records:				Text sheet(s)	5			Sketch sheet(s)	3			Context form(s)				A4 Scale dwng(s)				A3 Scale dwng(s)				Photographs	1		
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A4 Scale dwng(s)																																	
A3 Scale dwng(s)																																	
Photographs	1																																
Weather:	Sunny																																

Site Name:	Gadebridge Splash Park, Hemel Hempstead, Herts.	HN ref:	1351
		Site Code:	

Recorder(s):	GAS	Arrive time:	8:45	Return travel:	2.5hr
Date:	12/09/17	Depart time:	14:45	Total hours:	8.5hr

Reported to:	/ Marion	Position:	Manager / Site Forum
Purpose of visit:	O/R on electrical cable trench excavation		

Photograph film no	-		
Staff on site:	GAS		
Observations:			
	1hr 15 min morning travel		
	Excavation started yesterday by 'FALCO' on electrical cable trench for splash park. This was by the southern entrance to the park (see map location). The trench was excavated by a 1 tonne tracked mini-digger using a 0.2m wide ditching bucket. The trench measured 0.25m wide and was excavated down to a depth of 0.6m.		
	Soak: Topsoil consists of dark greyish brown friable sandy silty clay c. 0.45m deep over mid yellowish brown friable sandy clay with chalk frags subsoil > 0.6m deep. Natural not reached. No archaeological cut features revealed. No finds - except red brick fragments in topsoil and 1 small clay pipe frag (also from topsoil - not kept).		
		Sheet	1 of
	Additional records:		
		Text sheet(s)	
		Sketch sheet(s)	
		Context form(s)	
		A4 Scale dwng(s)	
		A3 Scale dwng(s)	
Weather:	Sunny	Photographs	

Site Name:	CADEBRIDGE SPLASH PARK	HN ref:	1351
	HEMEL HEMPSTEAD, Herts.	Site Code:	

Recorder(s):	GAD	Arrive time:	2:30pm	Return travel:	2 W1
Date:	13/9/17	Depart time:	3:30pm	Total hours:	3 W1

Reported to:	Marion	Position:	Site Foreman
Purpose of visit:	Monitoring of electrical cable trench excavation.		

Photograph film no	-		
Staff on site:	GAD		
Observations:	<p>Continued monitoring of electrical cable trench excavation. Dimensions the same as yesterday 0.25m wide x 0.5m deep, trench is approx. 20m. No archaeological cut features, finds or artefacts revealed. Stratigraphy the same as yesterday. Natural not seen.</p>		
	Sheet	1	of 1
	Additional records:		
	Text sheet(s)		
	Sketch sheet(s)		
	Context form(s)		
	A4 Scale dwng(s)		
	A3 Scale dwng(s)		
Weather:	Sunny		
	Photographs		

SITE CODE HN1351	Sub-division Water tank	Co-ordinate	Context Type FILL	CONTEXT No (101)
Description				
Fill/Layer	① Silty clay, sticky			Cut
1. Matrix colour	② Dark Grey/Black			1. Shape in plan
2. Matrix composition	④ rotten wood			2. Dimensions/depth
3. Matrix compaction	⑤ > 2.5m x > 2.2m x 1m deep			3. Sides
4. Inclusions (frequency & size)				4. Base
5. Dimensions				5. Orientation
6. Other comments				6. Other comments
Structure				Group
1. Material				1. Type
2. Bonding				2. Contexts
3. Dimensions				
4. Orientation				

Stratigraphic Relationships	Cut by	Cuts	Cut contains
	Below	Above	
	Butted by	Butts	Part of Group
	Fill of (102)	Same as	

Discussion and interpretation

Very organic fill - Clean/devoid of finds. Cut incredibly irregular - Initially interpreted as flood deposit, but further machining revealed evidence of rooting & channels. No finds. TREE BOLE

Checked interpretation _____ Provisional date **UNKNOWN**

Finds (circle):

None Pottery Metal Glass Tile Brick A.Bone Shell Burnt mats. Other: _____

Registered Finds

Find No	Type	Coords & level:
Find No	Type	Coords & level:
Find No	Type	Coords & level:

Samples (circle):

Mollusc Flotation Wet-sieve Dry sieve C14 Other: _____

Sample No. _____

Buckets/Litres _____

Reason for sample _____

Plan no. 1 & 2	Photo (b/w) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Signature GATJ
Section no. 1	Photo (colour) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Date 6/8/17
Weather conditions Sunny	Risk of contamination <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Checked
Excavation methods Machine		Cont.

SITE CODE HN1351	Sub-division Water Tank	Co-ordinate	Context Type Cut	CONTEXT No 102
Description				
Fill/Layer	① Very irregular with natural pockets showing.			Cut
1. Matrix colour	② >2.5m x >2.2m wide x c. 1m deep			1. Shape in plan
2. Matrix composition	③ Very irregular			2. Dimensions/depth
3. Matrix compaction	④ Very irregular			3. Sides
4. Inclusions (frequency & size)	⑤ N/A			4. Base
5. Dimensions				5. Orientation
6. Other comments				6. Other comments
Structure				Group
1. Material				1. Type
2. Bonding				2. Contexts
3. Dimensions				
4. Orientation				

Stratigraphic Relationships	Cut by	Cuts	NATURAL	Cut contains	101
	Below	MADE GROUND.	Above		
	Butted by		Butts	Part of Group	
	Fill of		Same as		

Discussion and interpretation

'cut' for tree hole and roasting. 'cut' contained 101

Checked interpretation _____ Provisional date UNKNOWN

Finds (circle):

None Pottery Metal Glass Tile Brick A.Bone Shell Burnt mats. Other: _____

Registered Finds

Find No	Type	Coords & level:
Find No	Type	Coords & level:
Find No	Type	Coords & level:

Samples (circle):

Mollusc Flotation Wet-sieve Dry sieve C14 Other: _____

Sample No. _____

Buckets/Litres _____

Reason for sample _____

Plan no. 102	Photo (b/w)	Signature GAS
Section no. 1	Photo (colour) ✓	Date 5/8/17
Weather conditions Sunny	Risk of contamination -	Checked
Excavation methods Machine		Cont.

Site Name / Code Hert1. HN1351						
Site	Shot Number	Details	View	Date	Time	Initials
HN1351	1	Working Shot (exc. of water tank trench	CS	6/9/17	-	GAS
	2	↓	LW		-	
	3		CS		-	
	4	↓	CS		-	
	5	Water tank trench at Nat. Monu	LE		-	
	6	↓	LE		-	
	7		LW		-	
	8	↓	LW		-	
	9	↓	LW		-	
	10	'Tree Bole?' (101)	LW		-	
	11	↓	LW		-	
	12	Sondage Through Tree Bole	LW		-	
↓	13	↓	LW	↓	-	↓
	14	Tops!! Strip Splash Park Area	CS		-	
	15		LE		-	
	16		LE		-	
	17		LN		-	
	18		CNE		-	
	19		CSW		-	
	20		LSW		-	
	21	↓	LSE		-	
	22	Striped Area for footpath	LW		-	
	23	↓	CSW		-	
↓	24	Cover Shot	LSE	↓	-	↓
↓	25	Cover Shot Gadebridge Park	-	↓	-	↓
	26	Pipe Trench	NE	12/9/17		GAS
	27	Pipe Trench Stratigraphy	NW		AM	
	28	Pipe trench	N		-	
	29	↓	NE		-	
	30	↓	NE		-	
	31	↓	N		-	
	32	Pipe trench Stratigraphy	NW		-	
	33	↓	NW		-	
	34	↓	NW		-	
	35	↓	NW		-	
	36	Cover Shot pipe trench	N		-	
↓	37	↓	N	↓	-	↓
↓	38	Stratigraphy pipe trench.	SW	13/9/15	-	↓

SITE CODE HW 1351	Site Name	Gadebridge Splash Park	Sub-division	Water Tank	Map/Plan	PLOT No Water Tank	
	Length	7m	Width	4m	Depth		1.2m max
	Machine Type	360 4tone/14tone	Bucket Size	1m / 2m			

Present land use				Visibility (circle)	Poor	Moderate	Good	
Topsoil/ Overburden								
Colour	Dark greyish brown			Composition	Sandy silty clay. Friable occ. small rounded + sub angular stones		Depth	0.7m
Subsoil overburden								
Colour	white light sand			Composition	make up layer, sand with frequent gravel & stones (small, sub angular)		Depth	0.2m
Natural								
Colour	Mid/light orange brown			Composition	River gravels - sand and gravel (Rounded stones)		Depth	0.4m
Observations (circle)	Archaeology	Root activity	Structure	Contamination	Unstable	Mod truncation	Other:
	Bur'd horizon	A. Burrows ?	Services	Flooding	Blank	Plough mark	Land drain

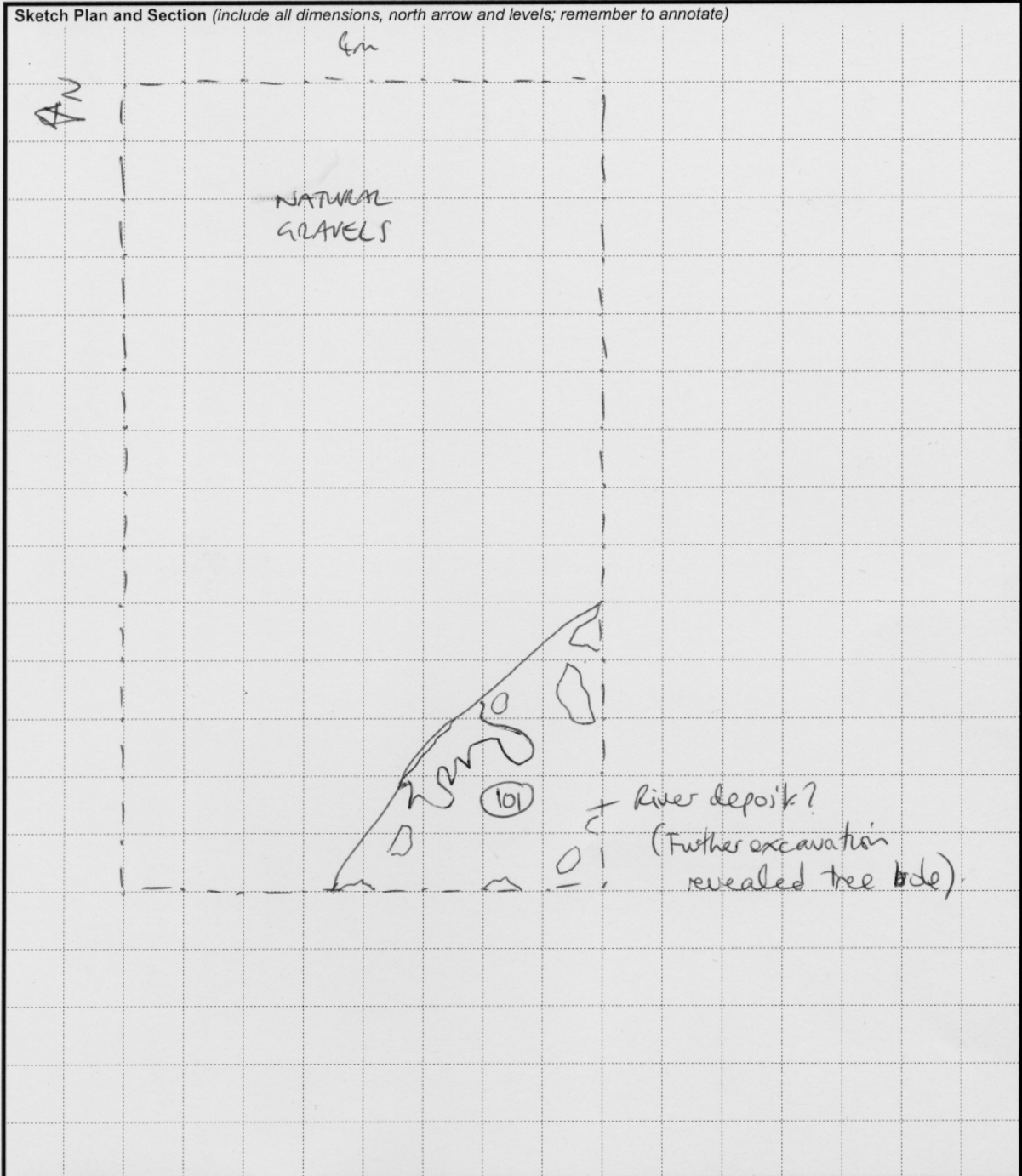
Sketch Plan and Section (include all dimensions, north arrow and levels; remember to annotate)

Discussion and interpretation

Blank trench. Layer (01) was noted in SW corner of trench - this was a dark silty layer & associated with flooding from the nearby river. Layer investigated, no archaeology - Formed naturally - Further machining revealed rooting channels - Indicative of tree root - Suggesting a treehole.

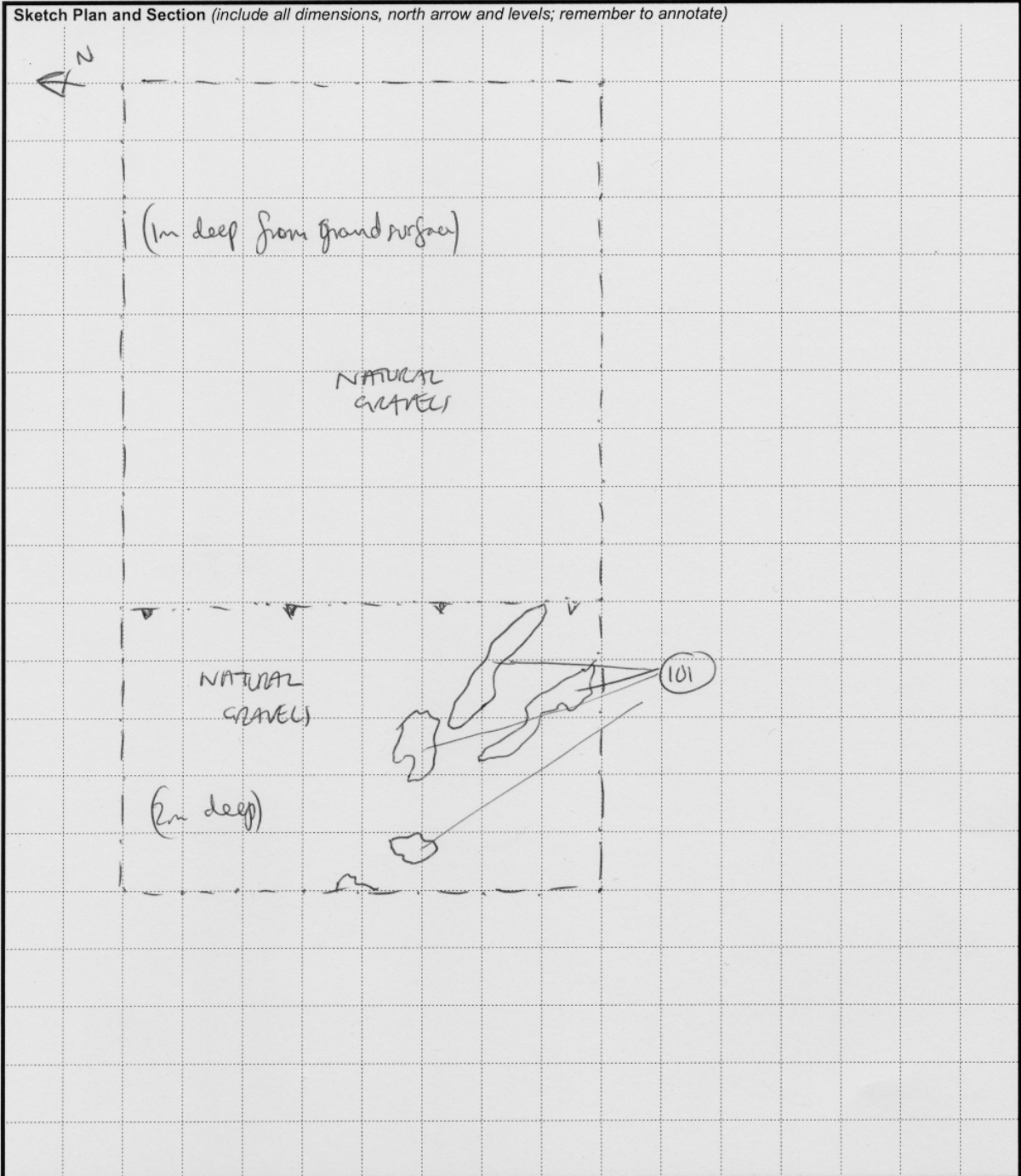
Contexts	(01) (NATURALLY FORMED)		
Finds	NONE		
Plan no.	1 62	Photo (b/w)	Signature CAS
Section no.	1	Photo (colour) ✓	Date 6/9/17
Levelled	Located ✓	Samples N/A	Checked
Weather conditions	Sunny		Cont.

SITE CODE HN 051	Site Name Gadebridge, Splash Park	Sub-division Water Tank Trench	CONTEXT N/A (101)
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Discussion and interpretation					
Blank Trench. Tree bole revealed in SW corner.					
				Scale	1:50
				Signature	GAJ
				Date	6/8/17
	Sheet	1	of		Checked

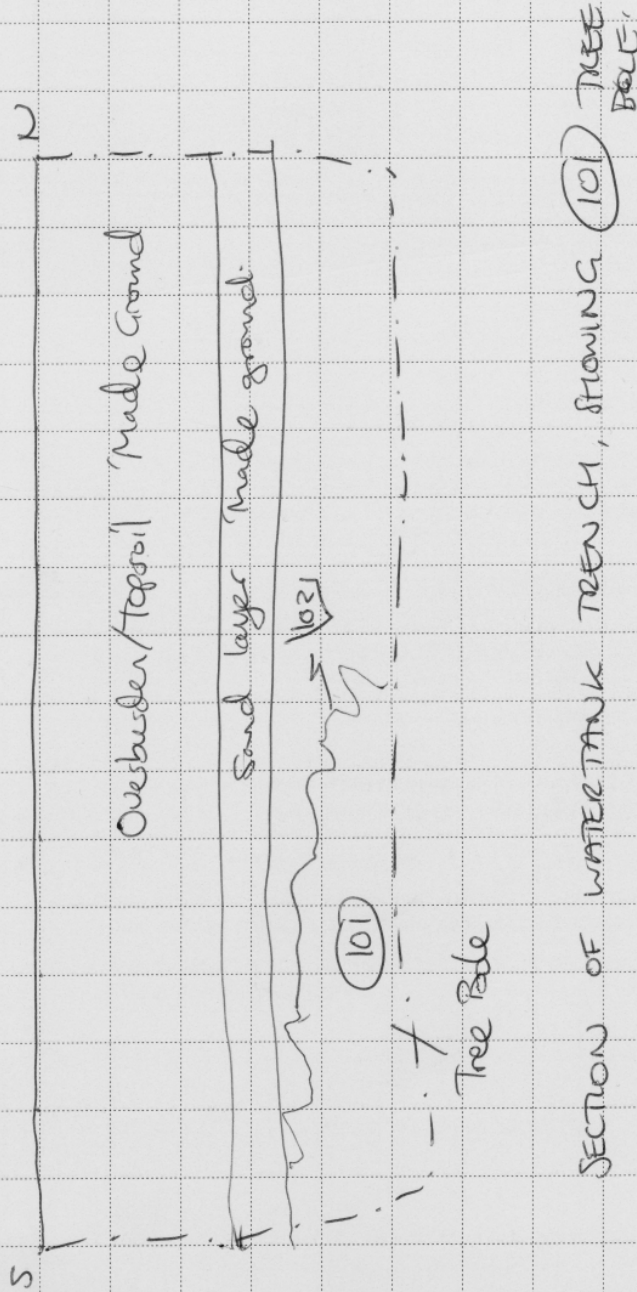
SITE CODE HN 1351	Site Name Gadebridge Splash Park	Sub-division Water Tank Trench	CONTEXT 101
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Discussion and interpretation	
sondage excavated revealing 'river deposit' to be a tree hole - very irregular and lots of rooting stains.	
Scale	1:50
Signature	GAJ
Date	6/8/17
Sheet	of
Checked	

SITE CODE 4N1351	Site Name Godbridge Splash Park	Sub-division Water Tank Trench	CONTEXT 101
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Sketch Plan and Section (include all dimensions, north arrow and levels; remember to annotate)



SECTION OF WATER TANK TRENCH, SHOWING 101 TREE BOLE.

Discussion and interpretation

Section of E facing Bank in Water Tank Trench. Showing naturally derived feature 101, most probably a tree bole.

Scale	1:25
Signature	GA7
Date	6/8/17
Checked	

Sheet of