



THE KINGSBURY DAIRY
Branch Road
St Albans
AL3

County of Hertfordshire

Archaeological watching brief report



MUSEUM OF LONDON

Archaeology Service

**The Kingsbury Dairy
Branch Road
St Albans
AL3 4SX**

A report on the watching brief
Site code: HE-KDS06
Author: PortiaAskew

Summary (non-technical)

This report has been commissioned by Lancsville Construction Ltd on behalf of the client Henry Developments Ltd in order to record and assess the results of a watching brief carried out at the Kingsbury Dairy, Branch Road, St Albans AL3 4SX.

Work was monitored between 15th and 18th January 2007. The proposed redevelopment of the site involves the conversion of the existing former dairy buildings to the north of the site and the construction of a new building to provide residential units with an associated car parking, landscaping and re-sited access. The work involved monitoring a number of piles followed by ground reduction on the western side of the site. On the northeast side of the site ground reduction within the North barn was also monitored

No tangible archaeological deposits were observed during the piling. A single fragment of Roman pottery dated c 200 - 300 AD emerged with the risings in Pile 10.

Modern and late post-medieval make-up dumps above an alluvial layer were recorded within the footprint of the proposed new residential units on the western side of the site (West Terrace), down to a maximum depth of 1 metre below ground level. Natural gravel was not recorded. Natural silty clay was recorded below the alluvial deposit in the northeast corner at a height of 81.00m OD. A single fragment of Roman Samian pot dated AD 120-200 was found between the natural clay silt and alluvial layer.

No archaeological deposits were found to survive on the site of the North Barn, the area having undergone terracing prior to its construction into the underlying natural chalk.

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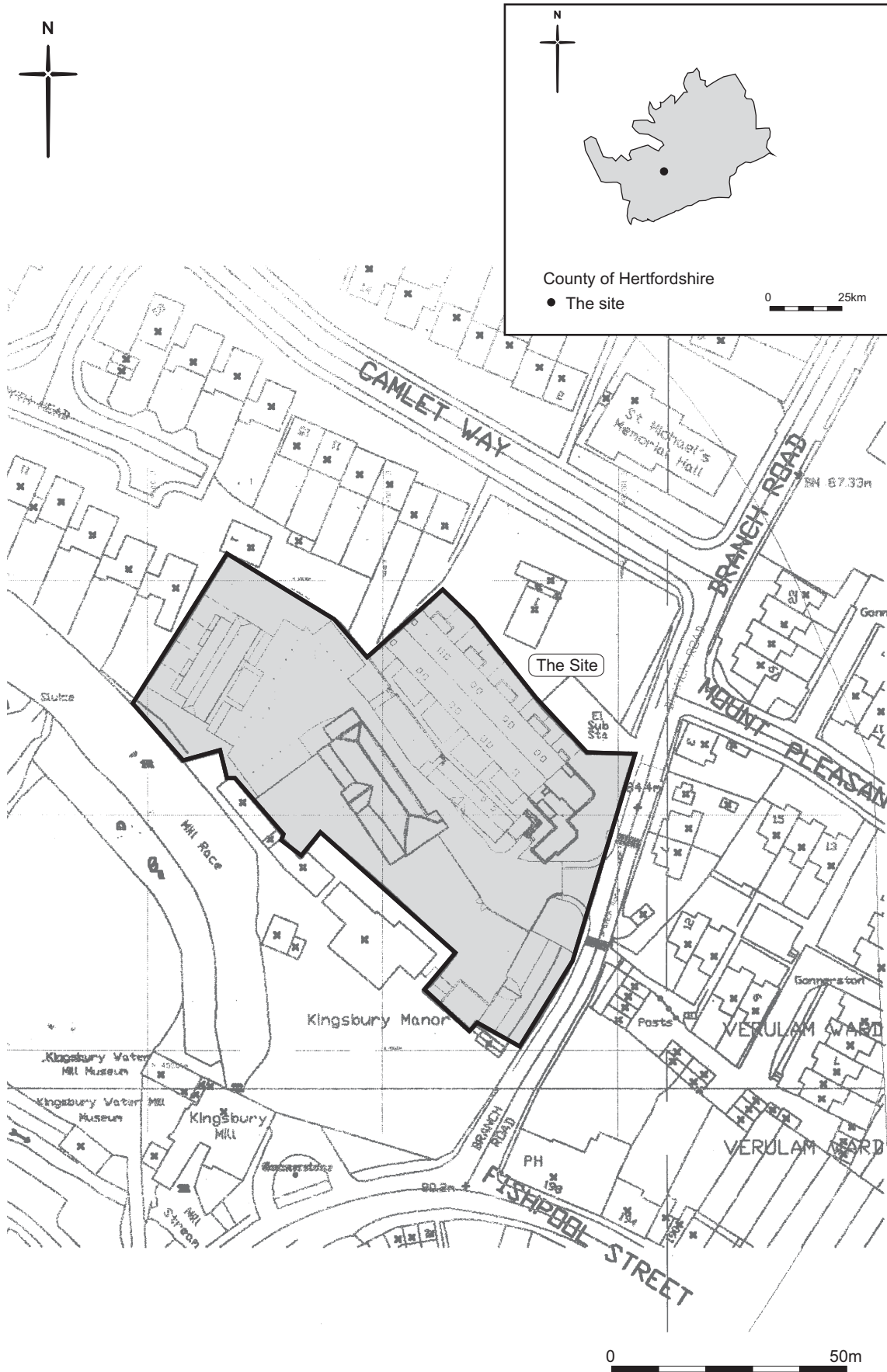


Fig 1 Site location

1 Introduction

1.1 Site background

The watching brief took place at The Kingsbury Dairy, Branch Road, St Albans, hereafter called 'the site' (Fig 1). The site is bounded by Branch Road to the east, residential properties to the north, and Kingsbury Manor and a mill stream, (Mill Race) to the south and southwest. The centre of the site is at OS National Grid Reference 513860 207570. Current ground level on the site ranged from c 84.40m OD at the northeast end of the site sloping down to 81.28m OD in the southwest corner of the site. Modern ground level immediately adjacent to the site at Branch Road lies is 84.40m OD. The site code is HE-KDS06.

A desk top *Archaeological (impact) assessment* was previously prepared by CgMs, which covers the whole area of the site (CgMs 2003). This document should be referred to for information on the natural geology, archaeological and historical background of the site, and the initial assessment of its archaeological potential.

The recommendations of the Archaeological impact assessment led to on site field evaluation and subsequent archaeological evaluation report (Foundations Archaeology 2003). A Design Brief for an Archaeological Evaluation and Watching Brief was subsequently prepared by the District Archaeology Officer (West 2006). These documents, informed the design (*Method Statement*) for an archaeological evaluation and watching brief on groundworks (MoLAS, 2006). Of the proposals in this latter document, to date, only the watching brief was undertaken by MoLAS.

The watching brief was carried out between 10th and 16th of January 2007.

1.2 The planning and legislative framework

The legislative and planning framework in which the archaeological exercise took place was summarised in the *Method Statement* which formed the project design for the watching brief (see Section 1.2, MoLAS, 2006)

1.3 Planning background

The archaeological watching brief was carried out as a condition of the planning consent, planning application number 5/2006/1168, specifically:

Condition 13

An intensive archaeological watching brief should also be arranged on ground works on the remaining areas of the site.

Reason: To ensure that adequate opportunity is provided for archaeological research on this historically important site. To comply with Policy 111 of the St Albans District Local Plan Review 1994.

1.4 Origin and scope of the report

This report was commissioned by xx and produced by the Museum of London Archaeology Service (MoLAS). The report has been prepared within the terms of the relevant Standard specified by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA, 2001).

The purpose of the watching brief was to determine whether archaeological remains or features were present on the site and, if so, to record the nature and extent of such remains. A number of more site-specific research aims and objectives were established in the preceding *Method Statement* (MoLAS 2006), and are outlined in the following section.

The purpose of the present report is to analyse the results of the excavation against the original research aims, and to suggest what further work, including analysis or publication (if any), should now take place.

1.5 Aims and objectives

The following research aims and objectives were established in the *Method Statement* (MoLAS 2006) (Section 2.2.):

The following archaeological research objectives have been compiled after taking into account the *Brief* given to MoLAS, and with consideration of the results of previous archaeological investigation on the site. The research objectives have been developed in relation to the *East Anglian Archaeology Research Agenda* (Brown and Glazebrook (eds), 2000).

1.5.1 Natural Topography

What is the nature and level of natural topography?

1.5.2 Prehistoric environment

No Prehistoric material was recovered from the evaluation; however Verulamium is thought to have pre-Roman roots. Can any evidence of prehistoric occupation be identified during the evaluation?

What are the earliest deposits identified?

1.5.3 Roman

Is there any evidence of Roman Waterfront activity on the site? If so what is the character and nature of this activity?

Is there any evidence for the Roman road to Braughing/Colchester crossing through the site?

What is the extent and character and function of the Roman building known to be located on the site to the north of the Monastic Barn?

Is there any evidence for a second building towards the River Ver? How are these two buildings related?

Is there any evidence for the presence of Romano-British/Roman burials on the site?

How do the archaeological remains on the site fit into wider context of Verulamium?

1.5.4 Early Medieval

Is there any evidence for water management, in particular, structures associated with Kingsbury Mill during the Early Medieval period?

Is there any evidence of burials dating to this period on the site? Are they similar in date to those recorded beneath the Batchwood roundabout to the north of the site (4th to 5th Century)?

1.5.5 Later Medieval Period

Are there any remains associated with Kingsbury Manor remaining on the site, if so what is the nature and extent of the remains?

1.5.6 Post Medieval-Modern

What is the extent and nature of modern truncation on the site?

All research is undertaken within the priorities established after taking into account the *Brief* given to MoLAS, and with consideration of the previous archaeological investigation on the site. The research objectives have been developed in relation to the *East Anglian research Agenda* (Brown and Glazebrook (eds) 2000).

2 Topographical and historical background

A detailed description of the geology, archaeology and history of the site was provided in the earlier Archaeological (impact) assessment (CgMs 2003). A brief resume is provided here:

2.1 Geology and Topography

The underlying solid geology of the site is the Upper Chalk hills which form part of the range which fills the western and northern part of the county of Hertfordshire. The site, in the flood plain and on the first terrace of the River Ver a tributary of the River Colne which itself flows into the Thames. The site lies on the alluvium of the river over gravel¹ in the proximity of the River.

2.2 Prehistoric

Much of the area surrounding the River Ver would have been wet and marshy with reeds during the Prehistoric periods. Areas such as this would have been exploited by prehistoric people for food, such as wild plants, fish and waterfowl, as well as for building materials such as reeds and willow. The areas of alluvium and gravel along the river system would have also formed a significant economic resource for early agriculture: for water meadows and cultivation respectively. However there is no evidence to suggest that any prehistoric remains are present on site. No prehistoric remains were revealed during the evaluation work already undertaken on the site (Foundations Archaeology, 2003).

2.3 Roman

Late in the 1st Century AD a Roman settlement, *Verulamium*, was formed on the edge of the River Ver. The site is adjacent to the River Ver and the remains of an early 1st century; timber trackway was discovered on land adjacent to the site in 1968. A Roman river revetment and agricultural features were also recorded in 1958 on the north side of the nearby Kingsbury ditch (West 2006).

The site lies 170m north of the Roman town of Verulamium. A major, 1st Century Roman road, linking Verulamium with Braughing and (ultimately) Colchester ran west of the site. A 2nd century replacement to this road is thought to cross through the site.

The site has high potential for remains associated with the Roman buildings that fronted on to the Roman Road such workshops fronting onto it (as found at 1 Camlet Road to the north of the site). A Roman house was recorded on air photographs 1976 on the southwest side of Batchwood roundabout and a Roman cellared building was

¹ British Geological Survey map sheet 239

excavated on the south side of Batchwood Roundabout. The recent evaluation (Foundations Archaeology, 2003) confirmed the presence of a high status Roman building on the site, to the north of the existing Kingsbury Barn.

Roman law required the dead to be buried outside the town perimeter. Late Roman burials have been found south east of the site, beneath the modern lake in Verulamium Park, suggesting that cemeteries stretched along much of the north side of the Roman town; consequently, burials may well have taken place on the present site. The recent evaluation on the site showed no evidence for burials or a cemetery alongside the section of the road that crosses the study area.

2.4 Early Medieval

The Roman road continued in use at least until the early Saxon period (c.600AD). Remains associated with the road, including timber buildings dating from the 5-7th centuries, may remain on the site.

The present site borders the river Ver at a point where it forms the millrace for the Kingsbury mill. This stretch of the river's course is artificial, if evidence for the growing use of waterpower in Saxon and Medieval times is present on the site it is likely to be of national, rather than just local, significance (West, 2006).

Kingsbury Mill is mentioned in the Domesday Book (AD1080), indicating that there was a mill on or close to the site of the present building in the later Saxon period (West 2006).

Possible early Christian burials, dating to the 4th and 5th Century, were excavated beneath Batchwood roundabout to the north east. Burials from this period add to the evidence for development of Christianity from the late Roman Empire through the early medieval period.

2.5 Later Medieval

The site was part of the Monastic Manor of Kingsbury and there is potential for associated remains (outbuildings etc) to survive on the site. One such building still remains; Kingsbury Barn in the centre of the site dates from 1390.

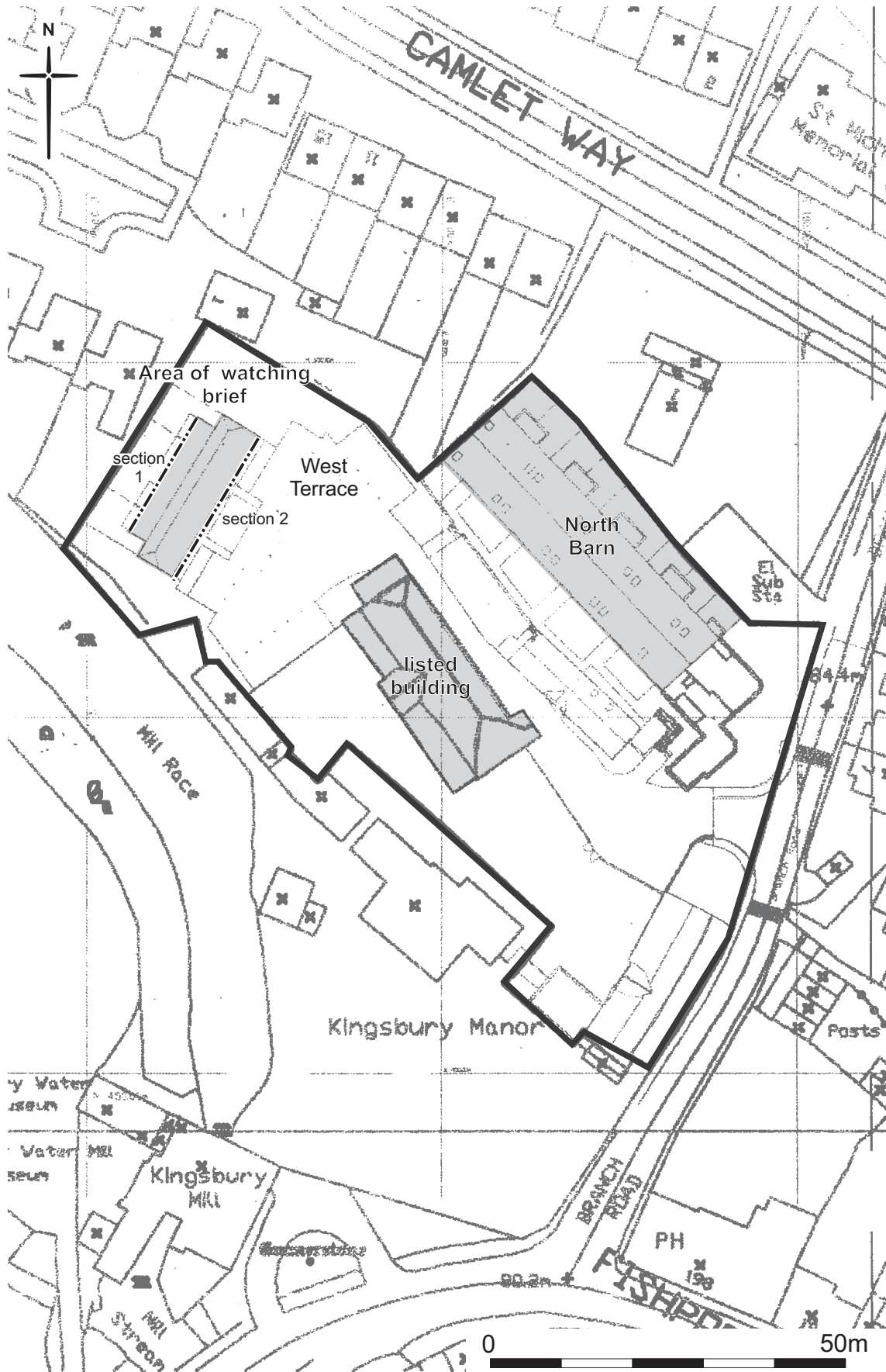
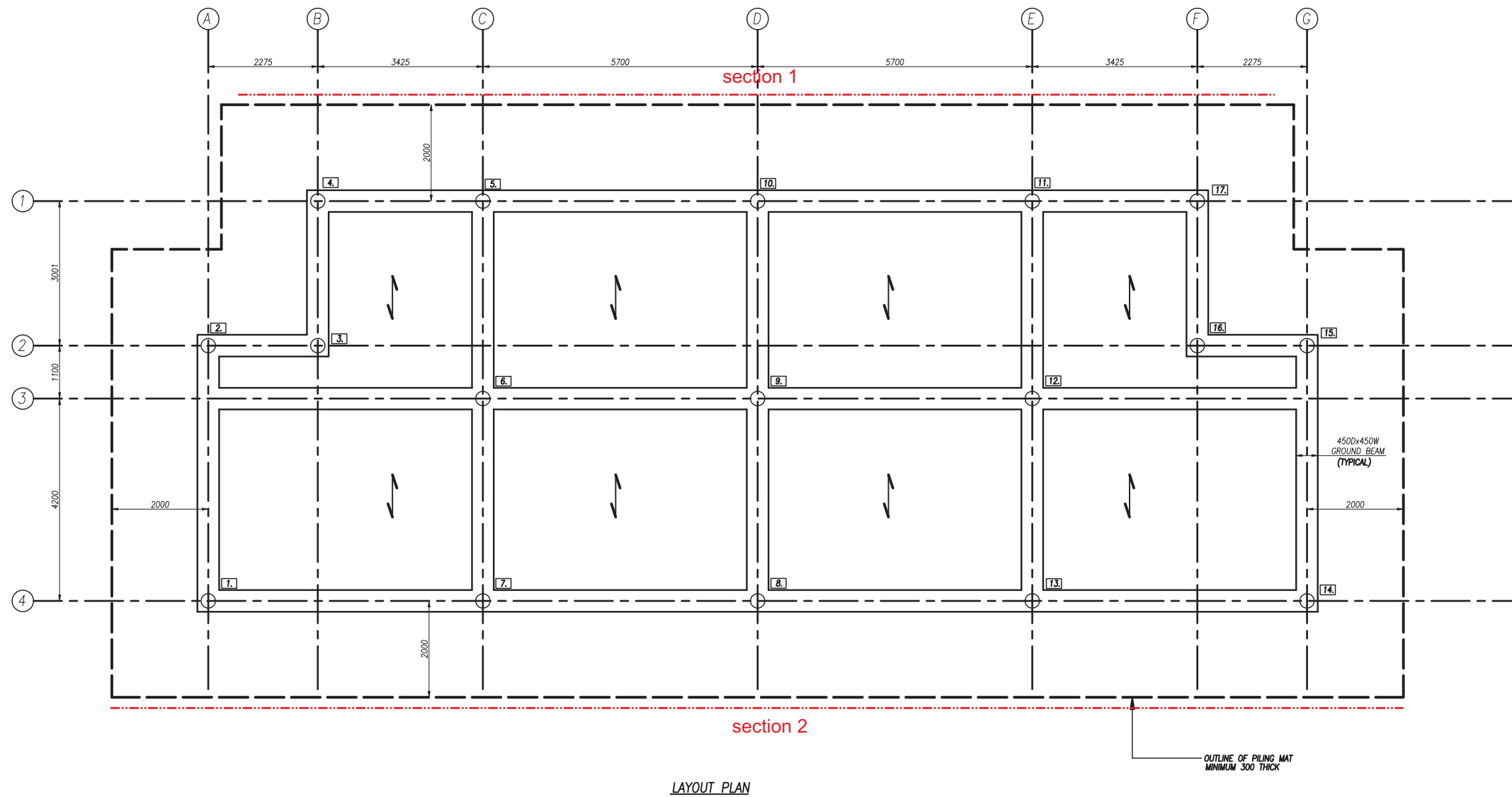
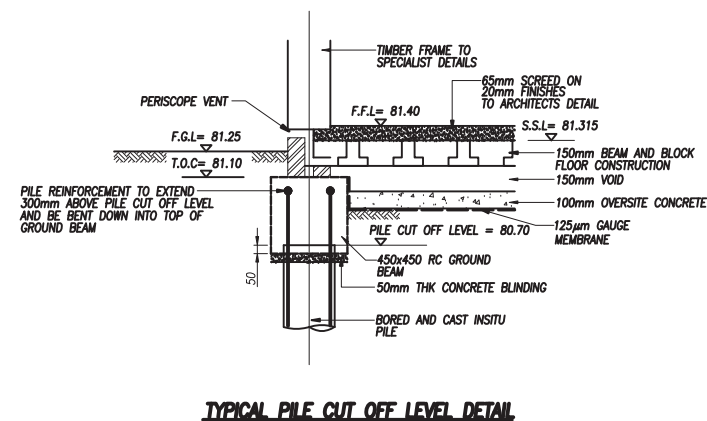


Fig 2 Location plan of the watching brief areas: West Terrace and North barn)



LAYOUT PLAN

PILE SCHEDULE		
PILE LOADS ARE IN kN (UNFACTORED)		
PILE No	PILE LOAD kN	PILE CUT OFF LEVEL
1	120	80.70
2	60	80.70
3	130	80.70
4	60	80.70
5	150	80.70
6	280	80.70
7	180	80.70
8	180	80.70
9	300	80.70
10	180	80.70
11	150	80.70
12	280	80.70
13	180	80.70
14	120	80.70
15	60	80.70
16	130	80.70
17	60	80.70



TYPICAL PILE CUT OFF LEVEL DETAIL

- Notes
1. THIS DRAWING IS TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH ALL RELEVANT R J WITT ASSOCIATES, ARCHITECTS, SERVICES ENGINEERS AND SPECIALIST SUBCONTRACTORS DRAWINGS AND SPECIFICATION, IN PARTICULAR R J WITT ASSOCIATES DRAWING NUMBERS 61626-001.
 2. ALL PILES TO SPECIALIST CONTRACTOR DESIGN.
 3. ALL WORKS TO BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LATEST I.C.E "SPECIFICATION FOR PILING".
 4. FOUNDATION DESIGN IS BASED ON PILES 300mm DIA.
 5. PILE TESTING TO BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SPECIFICATION.
 6. [T.] INDICATES PILE NUMBER AS SHOWN ON THE PLAN.
 7. EXTENT AND THICKNESS OF PILE MAT TO SPECIALIST CONTRACTOR DESIGN.
 8. CONCRETE IN PILES TO BE DESIGNATED MIX RC30. CONCRETE IN GROUND BEAMS TO BE DESIGNATED MIX RC35.

rev	date	by	description
A	8.12.06	TS	SECTION UPDATED
PRELIMINARY			
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job title KINGSBURY DAIRY ST ALBANS			
drg title			



Fig 3 Location plan of the piles and ground beams for the West Terrace

3 The watching brief

3.1 Methodology

All archaeological excavation and recording during the watching brief was done in accordance with the *Method Statement* (MoLAS 2006) and the MoLAS Archaeological Site Manual (MoLAS 1994).

The piling and ground reduction was carried out by contractors and monitored by a member of staff from MoLAS.

The location of the excavation areas of the West Terrace and North Barn had been established on an existing survey plan. In addition, a location plan showing the layout of the piles and ground beams for the West Terrace (Drg. No. 003 rev D titled Pile and ground beam layout to West Terrace, R J Witt Associates) and the Foundations layout for the North Barn, (Drg. No.004 titled Foundations Layout and Sections, R J Witt Associates), was submitted for use during the groundworks.

The heights of observations and archaeological remains were recorded relative to Ordnance Datum heights established by the construction team.

Where relevant, sections were drawn at a scale of 1:20 and numbered contexts were allocated where appropriate.

The site has produced: 1 plan showing the areas of the archaeological monitoring; 17 context records; 1 1:20 section drawings; 8 photographs. In addition I fragment of pot was recovered from the site.

The site finds and records can be found under the site code HE-KDS06 in the MoL archive.

3.2 Results of the watching brief

For all trench locations see (Fig 2)

3.2.1 *West Terrace*

The footprint of the redevelopment for the new residential units measured 25m by 12m (Fig 3). Prior to the ground reduction for groundbeams, the risings from 17 CFA (Continuous Flight Augering) piles were monitored. Whilst no tangible archaeological deposits were recorded, a single fragment of Roman pottery emerged date to *c* AD 200-300 (pers com Simon West, District Archaeology Officer) emerged from pile 10. Ground reduction to 80.58m OD (formation level for the ground beams) was monitored, but no archaeological deposits were recorded, the sequence consisting of

natural clay/silt [16] overlain by a wet alluvial deposit [13] and sealed by a humic sandy silt [5], which probably represents the pre-modern/post-medieval ground surface. A slight slope down to the southwest was evident from 81.10m OD at its highest, in the northeast corner of the trench (Fig 4 Section 2) and 80.88m OD, lowest point, in the southwest (Fig 4 Section 1). A single fragment of Roman Samian (red fineware) pot, dated AD 120-200, was retrieved from the just above the natural clay silt (see Fig 4 Section 2).

Towards the southwestern edge of the trench tree boles [6], [8/9], and [17] were evident. It is likely that they were removed from the margins of the mill stream in the modern period in conjunction with ground raising activity, possibly as flood prevention and to facilitate good drainage, as evidenced by the overlying deposits consisting of gravel and chalk with brick [4] and mixed gravel and sand [3]. Above this, a compacted crushed chalk layer or 'blinding' was laid [2]. The uppermost deposits consisted of gravel and bricks [10], onto which was laid the modern hard standing, which consisted of asphalt at a height of 81.58m OD.

On the eastern side of the trench two large modern cuts [11] and [14] were evidence with their respective fills [12] and [15] and represent evaluation trenches 2 and 3, excavated by Foundations Archaeology in 2003.

3.2.2 The North Barn

Adjacent to the northeastern boundary of the site, work was monitored during the excavation of new footings for a redevelopment within a barn. No archaeological deposits were found to survive on the site of the North Barn, the area having undergone terracing prior to its construction into the underlying natural chalk

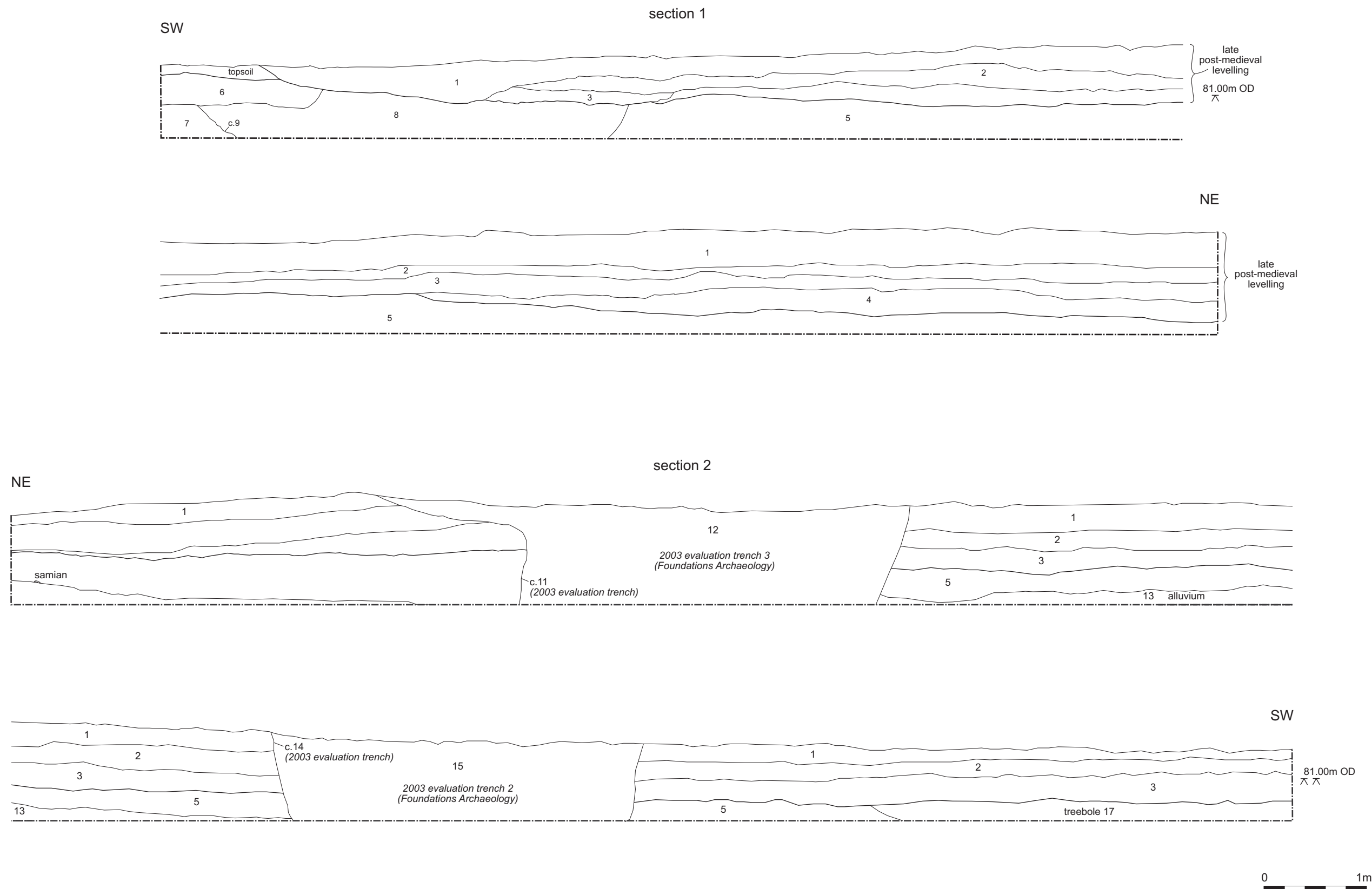


Fig 4 Sectional detail of the Southeast (Section 1) and Northwest facing sections in the West Terrace



Fig 5 Photograph of the North barn (from the south)

4 Conclusions

The absence of archaeological deposits in the area of the West Terrace is a reflection of the relatively shallow depth of formation level for the redevelopment. Only the pre-post medieval ground level was exposed, beneath the post-medieval makeup layers. The sequence recorded emulates that found during the 2003 evaluation, (Foundations Archaeology 2003).

5 Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Henry Developments Ltd for funding the watching brief and Lancsville Construction Ltd for commissioning this report.

6 Bibliography

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7 NMR OASIS archaeological report form

7.1 OASIS ID: molas1-34878

Project details

Project name The Kingsbury Dairy, Branch Road, St Albans, AL3 4SX

Short description of the project Work was monitored between 15th and 18th January 2007. The proposed redevelopment of the site involves the conversion of the existing former dairy buildings to the north of the site and the construction of a new building to provide residential units with an associated car parking, landscaping and re-sited access. The work involved monitoring a number of piles followed by ground reduction on the western side of the site. On the northeast side of the site ground reduction within the North Barn was also monitored. No tangible archaeological deposits were observed during the piling. A single fragment of Roman pottery dated c 200-300 AD emerged with the risings in Pile 10. Modern and late post-medieval make-up dumps above an alluvial layer were recorded within the footprint of the proposed new residential units on the western side of the site, down to a maximum depth of 1 metre below ground level. Natural gravel was not recorded. Natural silty clay was recorded below the alluvial deposit in the northeast corner at a height of 81.00m OD. A single fragment of Roman samian pot dated AD 120-200 was found between the natural clay silt and alluvial layer. No archaeological deposits were found to survive on the site of the North Barn, the area having undergone terracing prior to its construction into the underlying natural chalk.

Project dates Start: 10-01-2007 End: 16-01-2007

Previous/future work Yes / Not known

Any associated project reference codes HE-KDS03 - Sitecode

Type of project Field evaluation

Site status Area of Archaeological Importance (AAI)

Current Land use Industry and Commerce 3 - Retailing

Significant Finds POT Roman

Methods & 'Targeted Trenches'
techniques

Development type Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.)

Prompt Planning condition

Position in the After full determination (eg. As a condition)
planning process

Project location

Country England

Site location HERTFORDSHIRE ST ALBANS ST ALBANS Kingsbury Dairy

Postcode AL3 4SX

Study area 3000.00 Square metres

Site coordinates TL 1386 0757 51.7547696840 -0.350241388888 51 45 17 N 000 21
00 W Point

Height OD Min: 80.58m Max: 80.82m

Project creators

Name of MoLAS
Organisation

Project originator brief Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory
body

Project design District Archaeology Office
originator

Project director/manager Ros Aitken

Project supervisor Portia Askew

Type of Developer
sponsor/funding
body

Name of Henry Developments Ltd
sponsor/funding
body

Project archives

Physical Archive St Albans Museum Service
recipient

Physical Archive HE-KDS06
ID

Physical Contents 'Ceramics'

Physical Archive 1 fragment of Roman samian ware from a designated context
notes

Digital Archive St Albans Museum Service
recipient

Digital Archive ID HE-KDS06

Digital Contents 'Stratigraphic'

Digital Media 'Text'
available

Paper Archive St Albans Museum Service
recipient

Paper Archive ID HE-KDS06

Paper Contents 'Stratigraphic'

Paper Media 'Context
available sheet', 'Drawing', 'Matrices', 'Photograph', 'Report', 'Unpublished Text'

Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
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Entered on 27 November 2007

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