



HIGHWAY FARM  
Harefield  
UB9

London Borough of Hillingdon

An archaeological evaluation report

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Archaeology Service

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London Borough of Hillingdon

An archaeological evaluation report

Site Code: HFH04  
National Grid Reference: 506081 188048

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## Summary (non-technical)

*This report presents the results of an archaeological evaluation undertaken by the Museum of London Archaeology Service on the site of Highway Farm, Harefield. The report was commissioned from MoLAS by Forum Architects on behalf of the client, The Dogs Trust.*

*A previous desk based assessment identified two areas of archaeological potential within the proposed new development. As a result five targeted trenches were excavated, in September and October 2004, to assess this potential.*

*The results of the evaluation have revised our understanding of the areas of archaeological potential. Relatively untruncated natural topography was identified in both areas of archaeological potential, but no archaeologically significant finds or features were revealed. In addition, the supposed medieval moat/ditch was shown to be a recent feature, probably formed later than the landfill known to cover much of the site.*

*In the light of the revised understanding of the archaeological potential of the site the report concludes that it is unlikely that further archaeological mitigation will be required in the area covered by the evaluation.*

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Site background

The evaluation took place within the property known as Highway Farm, Harefield, hereafter called 'the site'. The site lies to the east of Harvil Road, to the southwest of Newyears Green Lane and to the northwest of a stream flowing to the west. The centre of the site lies at National Grid reference 506080 188045 (see Fig 1). The ground rises from south to north between *c* 39m OD and *c* 48m OD. The site code is HFH 04.

A *Report on archaeological potential* was previously prepared (Chaddock 2000), which defined two areas of archaeological potential within the footprint of the proposed new car park and proposed new centre (see Fig 2). Subsequently a *Method statement for an archaeological evaluation* was prepared, which covers the whole area of the site (Nielsen 2004). The *Method statement* document should be read in conjunction with this report, and referred to for detailed information on the planning and legislative framework, and the archaeological background.

An archaeological field evaluation was subsequently carried out within five trenches, from the 7th September to the 13th September 2004 and from the 25th October to the 26th October 2004.

## 1.2 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 evaluation (see Nielsen 2004, Section 1.2).

## 1.3 Planning background

The archaeological evaluation and this report were undertaken as required under the archaeological planning condition placed on the development. Highway Farm is a Grade II listed building.

## 1.4 Origin and scope of the report

This report was commissioned by Forum Architects on behalf of the client, The Dogs Trust, 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).

Field evaluation, and the *Evaluation report* which comments on the results of that exercise, are defined in the most recent English Heritage guidelines (English Heritage

1998) as intended to provide information about the archaeological resource in order to contribute to the:

- formulation of a strategy for the preservation or management of those remains; and/or
- formulation of an appropriate response or mitigation strategy to planning applications or other proposals which may adversely affect such archaeological remains, or enhance them; and/or
- formulation of a proposal for further archaeological investigations within a programme of research

### 1.5 Aims and objectives

The following research aims and objectives were established in the *Method Statement* for the evaluation (Section 2.2):

- What is the nature and level of natural topography?
- What are the earliest deposits identified? In particular, is there any evidence of prehistoric activity, particularly from the Mesolithic period given the proximity of the River Colne to the site?
- What is the condition and character of the supposed medieval moat/ditch associated with the farm in light of proposed restoration work?
- What are the latest deposits identified?

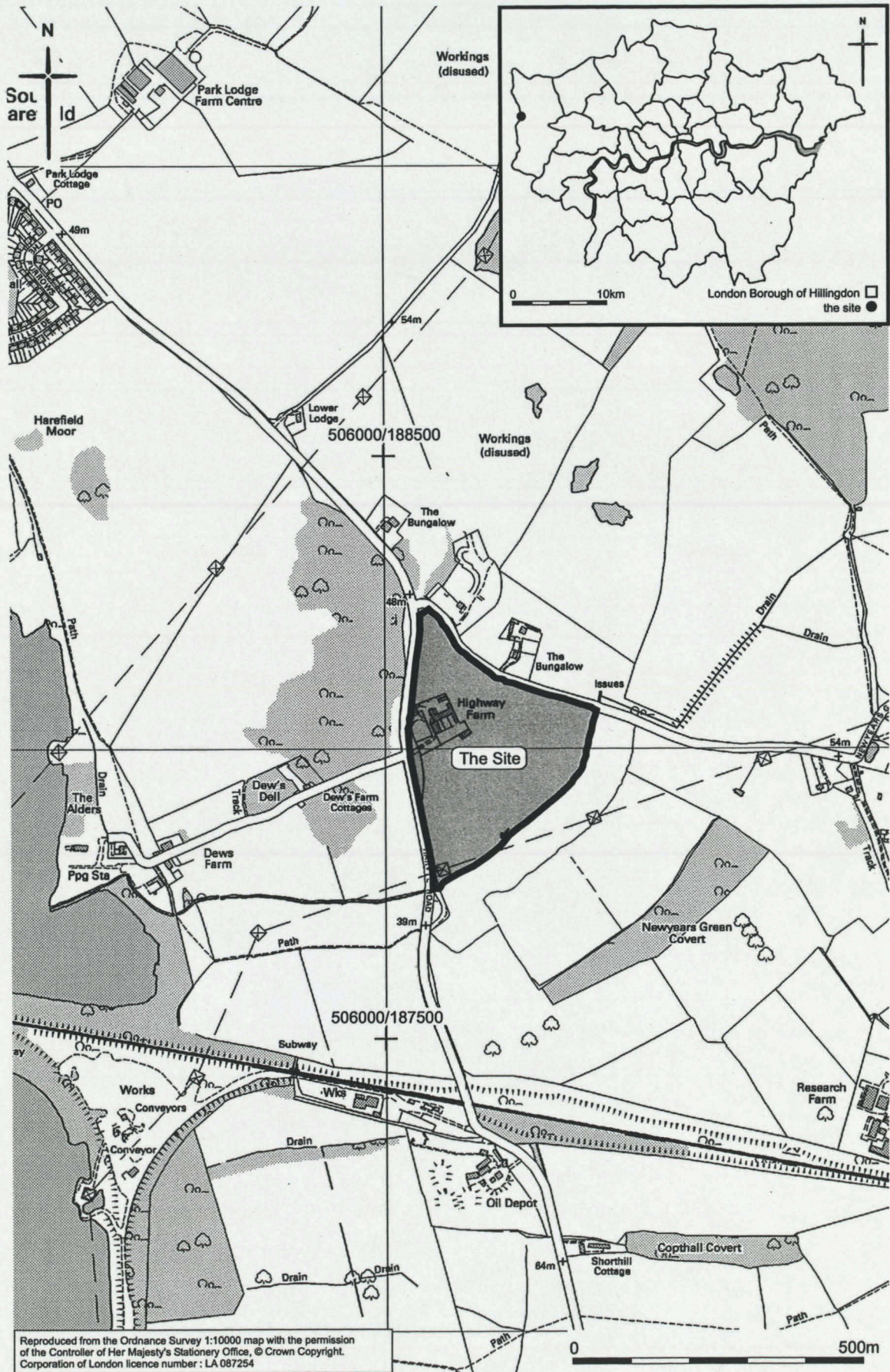


Fig 1 Site location



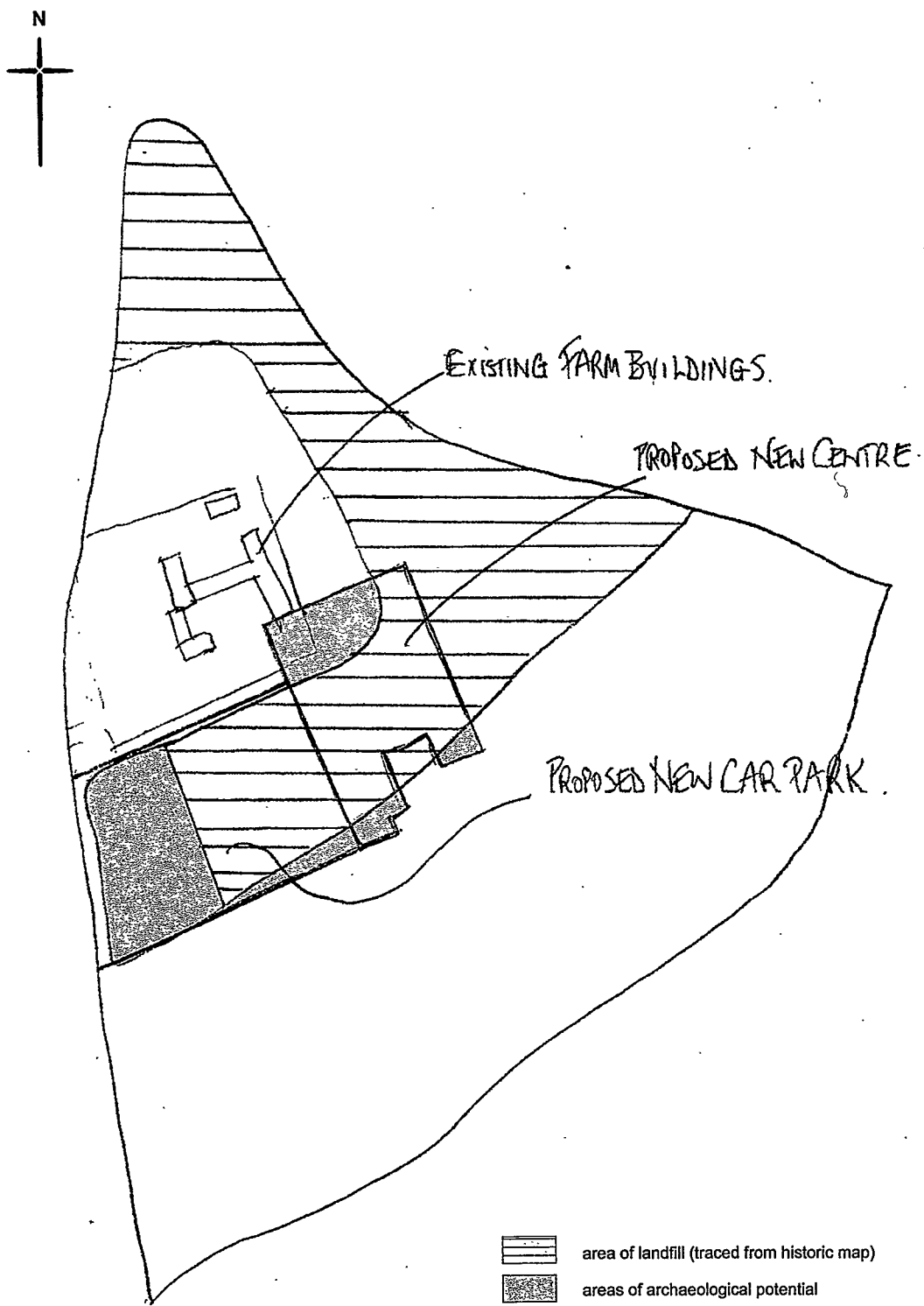


Fig 2 Areas of archaeological potential as defined by Chaddock (2000)

## 2 Topographical and historical background

This section contains information, in summarised form, from readily available sources held by MoLAS.

### 2.1 Topography

The site of the proposed development is located on ground that rises from c 43m OD to c 45m OD; south to north. The underlying geology is Woolwich Beds (BGS, sheet 270, 1981).

### 2.2 Prehistoric

A Mesolithic occupation site has been identified 450m to the southwest and a Bronze Age pottery vessel was found 450m to the northwest of the site.

### 2.3 Roman

There is no evidence for Roman activity in the area.

### 2.4 Saxon

A Saxon spearhead was found 220m to the northwest of the site. The surrounding villages of Harefield, Ruislip, Ickenham and Denham are recorded in the *Domesday Book* but there is no conclusive evidence for Saxon activity on the site.

### 2.5 Medieval

The site lies within the ground and environs of a moated medieval property. This is one of four medieval moated sites in the area.

### 2.6 Post-medieval

The present farm buildings date back, in parts, to the 17th century. Records of this farm go back many centuries. There is a 1699 plan and in 1851 it was owned by George Bate, who had 240 acres and 8 employees. George was a church warden and important member of the Harefield community. He died in 1887. In 1880, H M Staghounds met and hunted from here.

### 3 The evaluation

#### 3.1 Methodology

All archaeological excavation and monitoring during the evaluation were carried out in accordance with the preceding *Method Statement* (Nielsen 2004), and the MoLAS *Archaeological Site Manual* (MoLAS 1994).

Five evaluation trenches were excavated on site (see Fig 3).

The trenches were excavated by machine under MoLAS supervision.

The location of the evaluation trenches were recorded by the staff from MoLAS' Geomatics team and plotted onto the OS grid.

Features found during the evaluation were fully excavated.

A written and drawn record of all archaeological deposits encountered was made in accordance with the principles set out in the MoLAS site recording manual (MoLAS, 1994). Levels were calculated using a Temporary Bench Mark, transferred into the site from an OS Bench Mark on the garden wall, adjacent to the site entrance.

The site has produced 5 trench record sheets.

The site archive can be found under the site code HFH 04, which will be presented to the London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre (LAARC) within 12 months of the completion of fieldwork.

#### 3.2 Results of the evaluation

<i>Evaluation Trench 1</i>	
Location	West of site, across presumed moat
Dimensions	10m x 1.6m x 0.3m max excavated
Modern ground level	44.65m OD–44.71m OD outside of moat 43.25m OD at base of moat
Base of modern deposits	42.76m OD–43.04m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	none
Level of base of deposits observed	42.76m OD–43.04m OD
Natural observed	42.76m OD–43.04m OD

The trench measured 10m by 1.6m and was machine excavated across the profile of the presumed medieval moat. The trench was not opened to the proposed extent as

made ground/land fill deposits were encountered on the south side and the entrance road lay to the north. The maximum depth excavated was 0.30m.

In the base of the trench natural sands were exposed at 42.76m OD–43.04m OD, overlain by an abrupt interface with modern topsoil.

To the north the natural was seen to rise up with hardcore debris from the adjacent road slumping into the ditch. Excavations, to close a badger set adjacent to the trench, confirmed this.

To the south, hand excavation showed that the natural gently sloped to the south overlain by tip layers, probably associated with landfill, that also sloped to the south. This indicates that the presumed moat was excavated later than the landfill.

Ground level to the north and south was recorded at 44.65m OD–44.71m OD.

<i>Evaluation Trench 2</i>	
Location	West of site
Dimensions	14.75m x 1.92m x 0.85m
Modern ground level	44.04m OD–44.10m OD
Base of modern deposits	Not seen
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	none
Level of base of deposits observed	43.20m OD
Natural observed	43.20m OD

The trench measured 14.75m x 1.92m and was machine excavated to the top of a light mottled orange sandy clay deposit, provisionally interpreted as Reading Beds, at 43.20m OD.

The natural was overlain by 0.20m of a light orangish brown sandy clay, interpreted as weathered natural. Overlying the weathered natural was 0.30m of a mid reddish yellow, sandy silt, interpreted as a weathered subsoil. This was capped by 0.20m of a dark greyish brown sandy silt, interpreted as a former topsoil.

Cutting from the level of the former topsoil at *c* 43.90m OD was a rubble filled quarry that extended for *c* 7.5m across the eastern end of the trench.

At the top of the sequence was 0.15m of made ground to the surface at 44.04m OD–44.10m OD.

<i>Evaluation Trench 3</i>	
Location	Southwest of site
Dimensions	14.85m x 1.90m x 0.85m
Modern ground level	43.66m OD–43.37m OD
Base of modern deposit	Not seen
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	none
Level of base of deposits observed	42.80m OD–42.55m OD
Natural observed	42.80m OD

The trench measured 14.85m x 1.90m and was machine excavated to the top of a light mottled orange sandy clay deposit, provisionally interpreted as Reading Beds, at 42.80m OD.

The natural was overlain by 0.20m of a light orangish brown sandy clay, interpreted as weathered natural. Overlying the weathered natural was 0.30m of a mid reddish yellow sandy silt, interpreted as a weathered subsoil. This was capped by 0.20m of a dark greyish brown sandy silt, interpreted as a former topsoil.

Cutting from the level of the former topsoil at c 43.40m OD was a rubble filled quarry that extended for c 4m across the eastern end of the trench.

At the top of the sequence was 0.15m of made ground to the surface at 43.66m OD–43.37m OD.

<i>Evaluation Trench 4</i>	
Location	South of existing farm buildings
Dimensions	14.85m X 2m X 0.45m
Modern ground level	45.16m OD–45.53m OD
Base of modern deposit	44.80m OD–45.05m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	none
Level of base of deposits observed	44.80m OD–45.05m OD
Natural observed	44.80m OD–45.05m OD

The trench measured 14.85m x 2m and was machine excavated to 44.80m OD–45.05m OD where a light mottled orange sandy clay deposit was observed for 10m to the west and a sand and gravel deposit for 5m to the east. Both deposit were interpreted as natural.

Several modern features cut the natural, including a brick soakaway and evidence for wheel rutting.

At the top of the sequence was 0.45m of modern made ground to the ground surface at 45.16m OD–45.53m OD.

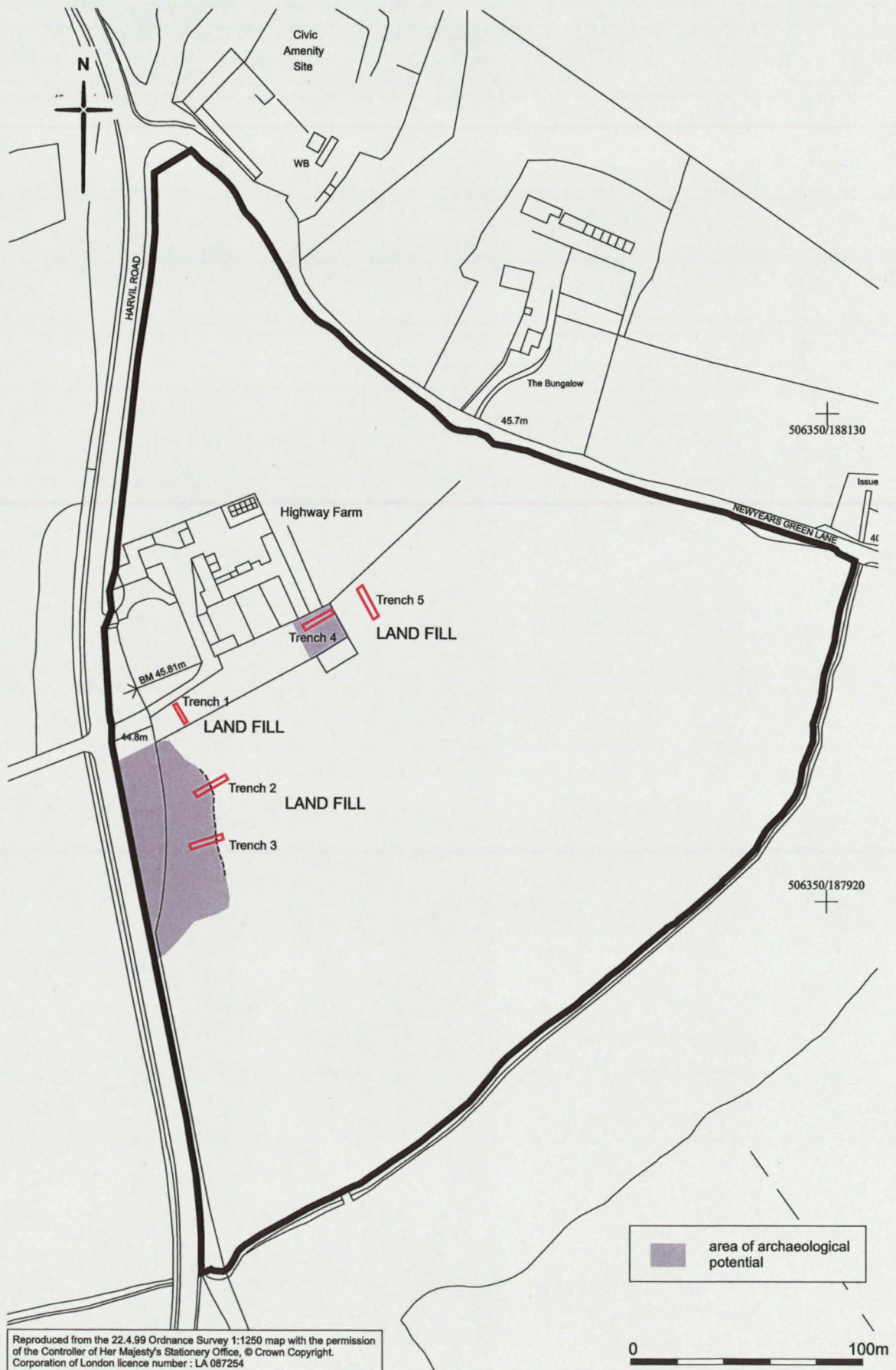
<i>Evaluation Trench 5</i>	
Location	Towards east of site
Dimensions	15m x 2m x 1.2m
Modern ground level	45.89m OD–45.69m OD
Base of modern deposit	Not seen
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	none
Level of base of deposits observed	44.50m OD
Natural observed	Not seen

The trench measured 15m by 2m and was machine excavated to a depth of 1.2m. There was no evidence of archaeological or natural deposit as the sub surface deposits consisted entirely of modern landfill.

At the top of the sequence was 0.20m of modern made ground to the ground surface at 45.89m OD–45.69m OD.

### 3.3 Assessment of the evaluation

GLAAS guidelines (English Heritage 1998) require an assessment of the success of the evaluation 'in order to illustrate what level of confidence can be placed on the information which will provide the basis of the mitigation strategy'. In the case of this evaluation, the five trenches represent an assessment of the areas of archaeological potential as indicated by a previous report (Chaddock 2000, sketch 1, see Fig 2). In this respect a high level of confidence can be placed on the results of the evaluation.



Reproduced from the 22.4.99 Ordnance Survey 1:1250 map with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, © Crown Copyright. Corporation of London licence number : LA 087254

Fig 3 Trench location plan and revised plan of areas of archaeological potential

## 4 Archaeological potential

### 4.1 Realisation of original research aims

- What is the nature and level of natural topography?

*The evaluation exposed relatively untruncated natural topography in both identified areas of archaeological potential. This has allowed a revised plan of areas of archaeological potential (see Fig 3), which compliments a recent environmental assessment of ground contamination (Waterman Environmental 2004). A sandy clay was exposed at 42.55m OD–43.20m OD in the west of Trenches 2 and 3 and a similar sandy clay was found at 44.80m OD–45.05m OD to the south of existing farm building in Trench 4. Trench 5 should have exposed similar deposits but was found to lie within the area of landfill.*

- What are the earliest deposits identified? In particular, is there any evidence of prehistoric activity, particularly from the Mesolithic period given the proximity of the River Colne to the site?

*There was no evidence for prehistoric activity in the areas evaluated.*

- What is the condition and character of the supposed medieval moat/ditch associated with the farm in light of proposed restoration work?

*The supposed medieval moat/ditch is a recent feature, probably formed later than the landfill. Whether the present feature was located over the site of a previous moat cannot be determined.*

- What are the latest deposits identified?

*Other than the supposed medieval moat/ditch and the landfill, a brick soakaway, two postholes and a probable wheel rut, of probable late 19th–20th century data were identified in Trench 4. The subsoil identified in Trenches 2 and 3 may relate to post-medieval farm activity.*

### 4.2 General discussion of potential

The evaluation has shown that there is the potential for the survival of cut features within portions of the previously identified areas of archaeological potential. However as no features or finds of archaeological significance were identified during evaluation the potential is low.



### 4.3 Significance

There is no evidence for remains of archaeological significance surviving on the area of the site investigated.

## **5 Proposed development impact and recommendations**

The proposed redevelopment involves the creation of a new re-homing centre for dogs, based around the old farm buildings. It involves the renovation of the existing buildings and the creation of new car parks and buildings.

Given the revised archaeological potential (see section 4), this report recommends that no further archaeological work is required for the proposed developments associated with the areas evaluated, although further work in the form of a watching brief may be required for groundworks associated with the restoration and renovation of the existing buildings. There may also be a requirement for structural building recording of architectural features exposed during work on the standing buildings, which have not already been recorded in the architectural survey.

The decision on the appropriate archaeological response rests with the Local Planning Authority and their designated archaeological advisor.

## 6 Acknowledgements

MoLAS wishes to thank Ian Bramhill of Forum Architects, Kim Stabler of English Heritage, Steve Chaddock of Chordata, David Cole and Alex Darvill of Forum Project Management for their advice and assistance.

The author would like to thank:

MoLAS Archaeologists Mark Wiggins and Raoul Bull for assisting with the evaluation and Mark Burch, Dave Makie, Joseph Severn and Cordelia Hall from the MoLAS Geomatics team for surveying the site.

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## 8 Appendix: OASIS form

OASIS ID: molas1-4505

### Project details

Project name Highway Farm, Harefield

Short description of the project Five trenches were excavated on the site in September and October 2004. Relatively untruncated natural topography was identified in both areas of archaeological potential, but no archaeologically significant finds or features were revealed, including the supposed medieval moat/ditch, which is a recent feature, probably formed later than the landfill.

Project dates Start: 07-09-2004 End: 26-10-2004

Previous/future work No / Yes

Type of project Field evaluation

Site status Listed Building

Current Land use Vacant Land 1 - Vacant land previously developed

Methods techniques & 'Targeted Trenches'

Development type Extensive green field commercial development (e.g. shopping centre, business park, science park, etc.)

Prompt Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16

Position in the planning process Planning condition

Project location

Country England

Site location GREATER LONDON HILLINGDON HAREFIELD  
Highway Farm

Postcode UB9

Study area 8 Hectares

National reference grid TQ 06064 88237 Polygon

National reference grid TQ 06086 87763 Polygon

National reference grid TQ 06360 88063 Polygon

Height OD Min: 42.55m Max: 45.89m

Project creators

Name of Organisation MoLAS

Project originator brief Contractor (design and execute)

Project originator design MoLAS

Project director/manager Robin Nielsen

Project supervisor Isca Howell

Sponsor or funding body Developer

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient LAARC

Physical Archive ID HFH04

Physical Archive Exists? No

Digital Archive recipient LAARC

Digital Archive ID HFH04

Digital Contents 'Survey'

Digital available Media 'Survey', 'Text'

Digital Archive Exists? Yes

Paper Archive recipient LAARC

Paper Archive ID HFH04

Paper Contents 'Survey'

Paper available Media 'General Notes', 'Plan', 'Report', 'Survey'

Paper Archive Exists? Yes

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