



# Northamptonshire Archaeology

Archaeological trial excavation on land to the south  
of Medbourne Road, Drayton, Leicestershire



## **Northamptonshire Archaeology**

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**QUALITY CONTROL**

	Print name	Signed	Date
Approved by	<i>Steve Parry</i>		

# **OAS/S REPORT FORM**

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>		
Project title	Archaeological trial excavation on land to the south of Medbourne Road, Drayton, Leicestershire	
Short description	Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA) was commissioned by CgMs Consulting Ltd to conduct trial excavation on land proposed for development at Medbourne Road, Drayton, Leicestershire. An earlier geophysical survey indicated a possible enclosure in the north-eastern corner of the development as well as remnants of medieval open field cultivation. However, excavation did not identify any archaeological features and no finds were recovered. This suggests that the anomalies seen in the geophysical survey may have been due to variations in geology.	
Project type	Evaluation- trial trenching	
Site status	None	
Previous work	None	
Current land use	Arable	
Future work	Unknown	
Monument type and period	No archaeological features	
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>		
County	Leicestershire	
Site address	Medbourne Road, Drayton	
Post code		
OS co-ordinates	482000 291800	
Area	1.35ha	
Height aOD	75m aOD	
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA)	
Project brief originator		
Project Design originator		
Director/Supervisor	Carol Simmonds (NA)	
Project Manager	Anthony Maull (NA), Mike Dawson (CgMs Consulting Ltd)	
Sponsor or funding body	CgMs Consulting Ltd	
<b>PROJECT DATE</b>		
Start date	November 2011	
End date	December 2011	
<b>ARCHIVES</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Contents</b>
Physical	X.A179.2011	-
Paper		Client report, site contexts, registers, colours slides and black and white prints and negatives
Digital		Digital version of report, digital photographs, dxf data
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>		
Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (NA report)		
Title	Archaeological Trial Trenching on land to the south of Medbourne Road, Drayton, Leicestershire	
Serial title & volume	NA report number 11/258	
Author(s)	Carol Simmonds	
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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCHING ON LAND TO THE SOUTH OF  
MEDBOURNE DRIVE, DRAYTON, LEICESTERSHIRE  
DECEMBER 2011**

*Abstract*

*Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA) was commissioned by CgMs Consulting Ltd to conduct trial excavation on land proposed for development at Medbourne Road, Drayton, Leicestershire. An earlier geophysical survey indicated a possible enclosure in the north-eastern corner of the development as well as remnants of medieval open field cultivation. However, excavation did not identify any archaeological features and no finds were recovered. This suggests that the anomalies seen in the geophysical survey may have been due to variations in geology.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA) were commissioned by CgMs Consulting Ltd to conduct archaeological trial excavation in advance of a proposed development scheme on land adjacent to Medbourne Road, Drayton, Leicestershire (NGR 482000 291800; Fig 1). The works follow on from a geophysical survey (Butler 2011).

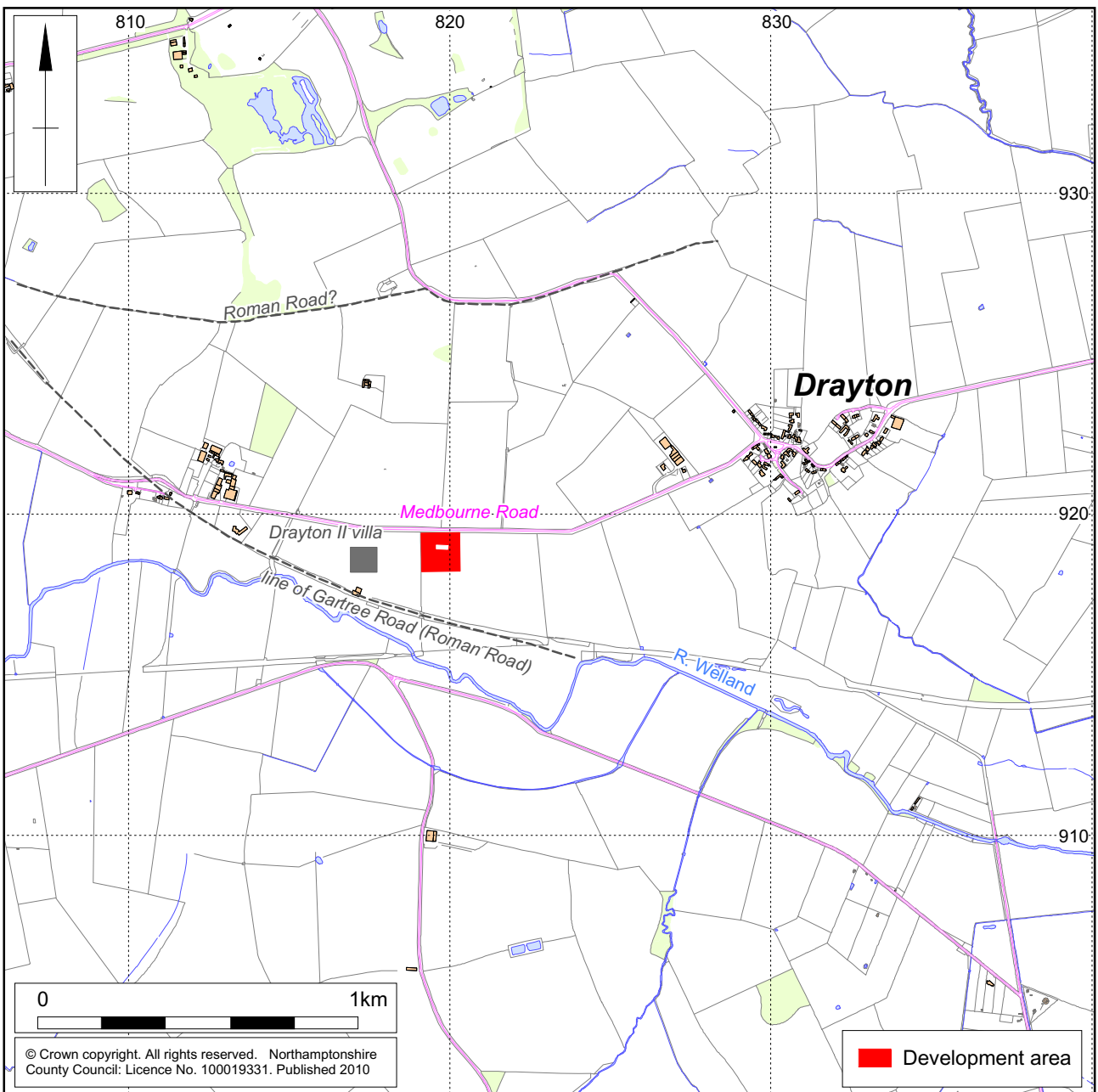
The proposed development area comprised 1.35ha of arable land to the west of the village of Drayton, Leicestershire. Following discussions between the Senior Planning Archaeologist to Leicestershire and CgMs Consulting Ltd, Northamptonshire Archaeology produced a Written Scheme of Investigation for the excavation of five trenches with a total length of 75m, which were targeted on geophysical anomalies (Simmonds 2011).

## **2 BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Topography and geology**

The survey area comprises 1.35ha of land occupying an arable field, which lies approximately 1km to the south-west of Drayton. The proposed development area is bounded to the north by Medbourne Road, but is otherwise surrounded by fields.

The ground slopes down away from the Medbourne Road towards the River Welland 450m to the south. The proposed development area sits on the slope between the 60m and 70m contours. At the top of the slope the underlying geology comprises Dyrham Formation siltstone and mudstone which gives way to Charmouth mudstone on the lower, southern part of the site (BGS Geo Index).



Scale 1:20,000

Site location Fig 1



General view of the western part of the site, looking south Fig 2

## 2.2 Archaeological and historical background

Although no archaeological remains were known from the development area itself, it lies between the historic settlement core of Drayton and Medbourne. Drayton is known to have been occupied since the medieval period and had a small chapel dedicated to St James (ADS) and a manor. Medbourne is known to have Roman origins and lay on the Gartree Road (Fig 1), the Roman road between Leicester and Colchester (Liddle 1994, fig 1). This road crossed the Welland by way of a ford, 250m south of the development area. A second road from Water Newton (*Durobrivae*) joined at Medbourne and is located 750m to the north of the site. Roman settlement at Melbourne included a possible small Roman town (NMR344067) and a villa (Medbourne Roman villa NMR344073). Another Roman villa site (Drayton Roman villa, NMR 964689), 250m west of the development area, was subject to geophysical survey and trial excavation (Cooper et al 1989). This identified part of a dwelling house which was occupied from the 1st to 4th centuries AD.

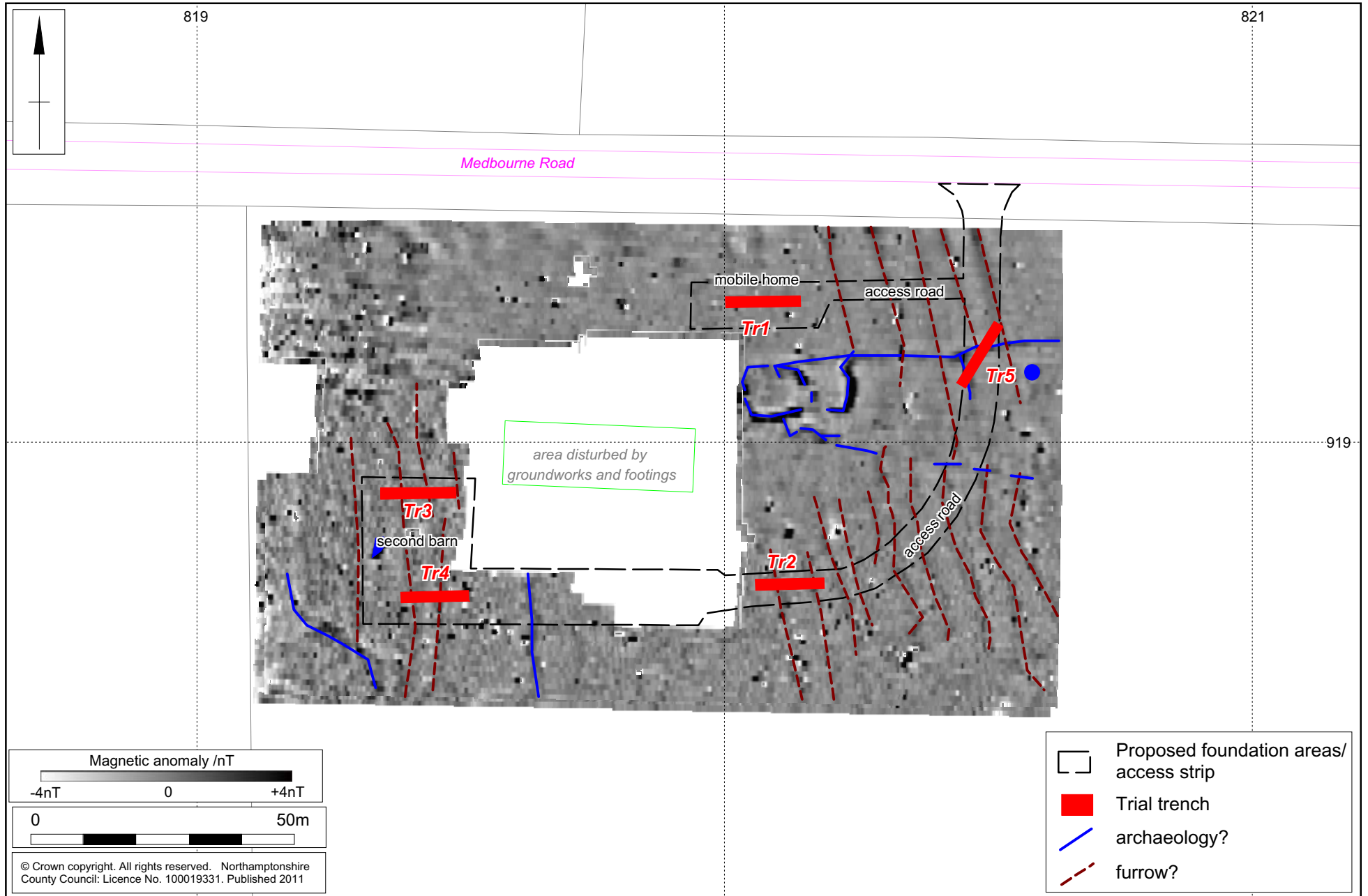
A geophysical survey undertaken on the development area by Northamptonshire Archaeology (Butler 2011) identified penannular and rectangular shaped anomalies in the survey area (Fig 3). Remnants of ploughing on a north-west to south-east axis were also recorded across the survey area.



1:1,000

Detailed magnetometer survey and trial trench locations

Fig 2





### 3 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the work was to determine and understand the nature, function and character of any archaeological remains and place them in their cultural and environmental setting.

The aims of the investigation were to:

- Establish the date, nature and extent of any activity or occupation on the development site
- Recover artefacts to assist in the development of type series within the region
- Recover palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions

The trial trenching comprised the excavation of five trenches each measuring 15m long and 2m wide (Fig 3). The trenches were positioned across geophysical survey anomalies and more specifically in areas where the site infrastructure (roads, mobile home and barns) would be placed.

Table 1: Concordance of trenches

Trench	Proposed infrastructure area	Reason for location	Figure
1	Mobile home	Geophysical survey 'blank area'	Fig 5
2	Access road	Geophysical survey identified possible ploughing	Fig 6
3	Second barn	Geophysical survey identified possible ploughing	Fig 7
4	Second barn	Geophysical survey identified possible ploughing	Fig 4
5	Access road	Geophysical survey identified possible enclosure ditches	Fig 8

The work was carried out in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (IfA 2008) and the English Heritage procedural document *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (2006). The works were monitored by Teresa Hawtin, Senior Planning Archaeologist to Leicestershire County Council.

Topsoil and subsoil were removed separately by machine using a flat-bladed bucket to reveal underlying archaeological remains or, where absent, the natural substrate under the direct supervision and control of an experienced and qualified archaeologist.

All archaeological features have been related to the Ordnance Survey National Grid and Datum. Recording followed standard NA procedures (NA 2006). Deposits were described on NA *pro-forma* sheets to include details of the context, its relationships, interpretation and a check-list of associated finds. A indexed photographic record was kept of the excavation, comprising 35mm black and white negatives and colour slides. Digital images were taken to supplement the photographic archive.

## 4 RESULTS

The underlying geology of most of the site, comprised yellowish-brown clays interspersed with patches of manganese flecking, was encountered between 0.40m to 0.65m below the modern ground surface (Appendix 1). The clays ranged in height from 72m aOD (Trench 4) and 77m aOD (Trench 1) in depth. In Trench 4 (Fig 4) the underlying limestone bedrock and orangey-brown clay was present.



General view of Trench 4, looking west Fig 4

The natural was overlain by a well developed layer of subsoil which was up to 0.20m thick in Trench 3 and averaged 0.10m thick in the other trenches. Typically the subsoil comprised an orangey-brown sandy clay. The topsoil comprised a greyish-brown clay (Trench 4) or sandy loam which was between 0.30m and 0.50m thick.

No archaeological features were identified in the trial trenches.

## 5 CONCLUSION

The trial trenching successfully identified the natural horizon but did not uncover or record the geophysical anomalies. Given the thickness of the over burden (topsoil and subsoil), the natural topography and the extensive ploughing that has taken place it is likely that the anomalies have been variations in geology.

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### Websites

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BGS GeoIndex	<a href="http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/GeoIndex/default.aspx">http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/GeoIndex/default.aspx</a>

## APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
1	15m x 2m W-E	482007/ 291926	77m aOD	0.65m, 76.35m aOD
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
(101)	Topsoil	Very soft, dark grey-brown sandy loam, occasional small angular to sub-rounded stones	0.50m thick	
(102)	Subsoil	Firm, orangey-brown sandy clay	0.15m thick	
(103)	Natural	Yellow-brown clay, manganese flecks	0.60m deep	

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
2	15m x 2m W-E	482012/ 291873	72.30m aOD	0.50m & 71.70m aOD
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
(201)	Topsoil	Very soft, dark greyish-brown sandy loam,	0.40m thick	
(202)	Subsoil	Firm, orangey-brown sandy clay, occasional limestone and angular to rounded stone	0.10m thick	
(203)	Natural	Yellowish-brown clay, limestone	0.50m deep	

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
3	15m x 2m W-E	481941/ 291890	73m aOD	0.50m & 72.50m aOD
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
(301)	Topsoil	Very soft, dark greyish-brown sandy loam, , occasional stones angular to sub rounded (10-15mm)	0.30m thick	
(302)	Subsoil	Firm orangey-brown sandy clay, occasional limestone	0.20m thick	
(303)	Natural	Yellowish-brown clay, limestone	0.50m deep	

<b>Trench No</b>	<b>Length, width &amp; alignment</b>	<b>NGR</b>	<b>Surface height</b>	<b>Depth &amp; height of natural</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>15m x 2m W-E</b>	<b>481948/291870</b>	<b>72m aOD</b>	<b>0.40m &amp; 71.60m aOD</b>
<b>Context</b>	<b>Context type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Artefacts/Samples</b>
(401)	Topsoil	Very soft/loose, dark greyish-brown clay loam, few small angular to sub rounded stones	0.30m thick	
(402)	Subsoil	Firm, orangey-brown sandy clay, occasional limestone	0.10m thick	
(403)	Natural	Yellowish-brown clay, with large limestone slabs	0.40m deep	

<b>Trench No</b>	<b>Length, width &amp; alignment</b>	<b>NGR</b>	<b>Surface height</b>	<b>Depth &amp; height of natural</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>15m x 2m SW-NE</b>	<b>482048/ 291916</b>	<b>76m aOD</b>	<b>0.50m &amp; 75.50m aOD</b>
<b>Context</b>	<b>Context type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Artefacts/Samples</b>
(501)	Topsoil	Very soft/loose, dark greyish-brown sandy loam, occasional angular to sub-rounded stones	0.40m thick	
(502)	Subsoil	Firm, orangey-brown sandy clay,	0.10m thick	
(503)	Natural	Yellowish-brown clay	0.50m deep	



## APPENDIX 2: TRENCH PHOTOGRAPHS



General view of Trench 1, looking west Fig 5



General view of Trench 2, looking west Fig 6





General view of Trench 3, looking west Fig 7



General view of Trench 5, looking south-west Fig 8





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