



Northamptonshire Archaeology

An archaeological trial trench evaluation
at Briar Hill Primary School,
Thorn Hill, Northampton
February 2012



Northamptonshire Archaeology

2 Bolton House
Wootton Hall Park
Northampton NN4 8BE
t. 01604 700493 f. 01604 702822
e. sparry@northamptonshire.gov.uk
w. www.northantsarchaeology.co.uk



Northamptonshire
County Council

David J Leigh

Report 12/140

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STAFF

Project Manager: Stephen Parry MA FSA MIfA

Text: David J Leigh BA Hons

Fieldwork: David J Leigh

Illustrations: Andy Chapman BSc FSA MIfA

Amir Bassir BSc PlfA

Project archive: Theodora Anastasiadou-Leigh BA MA (Bham)
MA (York)

QUALITY CONTROL

	Print name	Signed	Date
Checked by	Pat Chapman		
Verified by	Andy Chapman		
Approved by	Stephen Parry		

OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		OASIS No: 131040	
Project name	Briar Hill Primary School, Thorn Hill, Northampton		
Short description	An archaeological trial trench evaluation was undertaken in advance of redevelopment work at Briar Hill Primary School, Thorn Hill, Northampton. Disturbed soils were recorded throughout the investigation area. No archaeological deposits or artefacts were encountered.		
Project type	Trial trench evaluation		
Site status	None		
Previous work	None		
Current land use	Educational		
Future work	None		
Monument type/ period	None		
Significant finds	None		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County	Northamptonshire		
Site address	Briar Hill primary School, Thorn Hill, Northampton		
Study area (m sq)	30m ²		
OS Grid Ref	SP 7387 5922		
Height OD	c75m aOD		
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology		
Project brief originator	The County Archaeological Advisor, Northamptonshire County Council		
Project Design originator	Northamptonshire Archaeology		
Director/Supervisor	David J Leigh		
Project Manager	Stephen Parry		
Sponsor or funding body	Galliford Try		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date	February 2012		
End date	February 2012		
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc)	
Physical		None	
Paper	Northamptonshire Archaeology	Trial trench log forms (2) Colour slides (10) black and white contact prints (10) Digital photographs (43)	
Digital	NA	Report text and figures	
BIBLIOGRAPHY			
Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (NA report)			
Title	An archaeological trial trench evaluation at Briar Hill Primary School, Thorn Hill, Northampton		
Serial title & volume	12/140		
Author(s)	David J Leigh		
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**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALAUTION AT
BRIAR HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL, THORN HILL, NORTHAMPTON
FEBRUARY 2012**

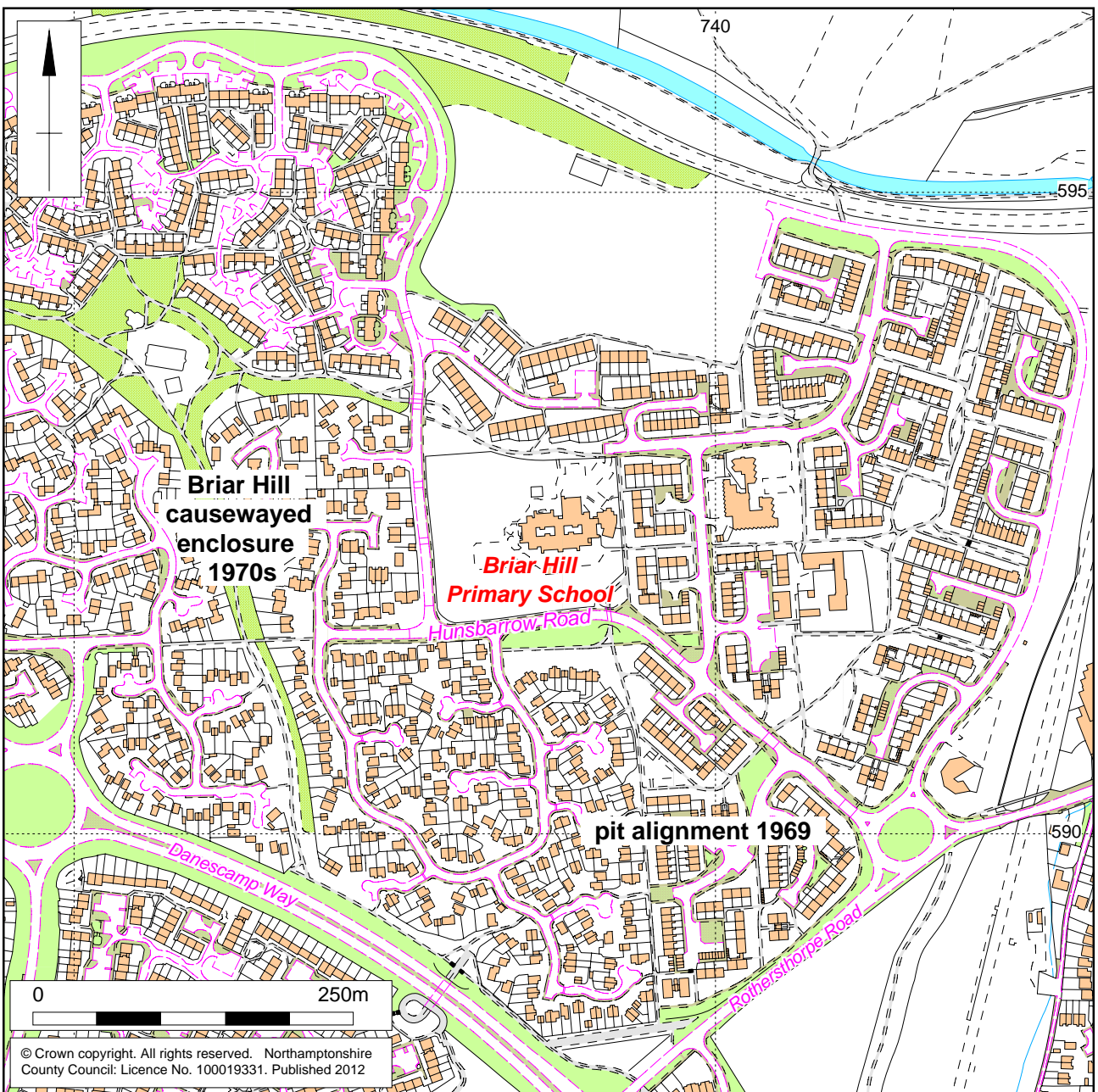
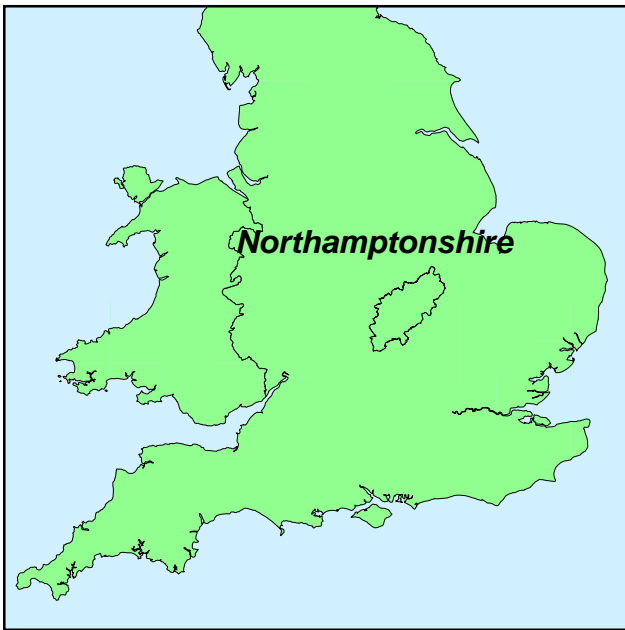
Abstract

In February 2012 an archaeological trial trench evaluation was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology in advance of redevelopment work at Briar Hill Primary School, Thorn Hill, Northampton. Disturbed soils were recorded throughout the investigation area. No archaeological deposits or artefacts were present.

1 INTRODUCTION

In February 2012 an archaeological trial trench evaluation was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology in advance of redevelopment work at Briar Hill Primary School, Thorn Hill, Northampton (NGR SP: 7387 5922; Figs 1 and 3). The work was carried out on behalf of Galliford Try and followed an approved Written Scheme of Investigation produced by Northamptonshire Archaeology (Leigh 2012) prepared in accordance with a two-part brief for archaeological investigation issued by the County Archaeological Advisor, Northamptonshire County Council on 8 December 2011 (Mather 2011 a *and* b). It adhered to the English Heritage procedural documents *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (EH 2006) and *Management of Archaeological Projects 2* (EH 1991) and the appropriate national standards and guidelines, as recommended by the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA, 2008, 2010).

The evaluation comprised the excavation of two trial trenches within the area of proposed redevelopment works. The work was carried out in order to investigate and quantify the archaeological potential within the investigation area and provide information for further targeted investigation if required.



Scale 1:5000

Site location Fig 1

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location and topography

The investigation area is located within the grounds of Briar Hill Primary School on the southern side of Northampton within the Briar Hill conurbation. It lies on ground rising to the south at an approximate height of c75m aOD.

The underlying geology has been mapped by the British Geological Survey of Great Britain as comprising Northampton Sand and Ironstone (<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex>).

2.2 Historical background

The site lies within an area of archaeological interest. To the immediate south-east of the study area Iron Age features were found in house foundations to the west of Ashbrow Road (Jackson 1974, Fig 3). A further 150m to the south and continuing to the south-east a 200m length of a pit alignment was investigated (Jackson 1974, Fig 3). To the west of Hunsbury Road is the site of the Briar Hill Neolithic causewayed enclosure (MNN 129426) which was excavated in the 1970s (Bamford 1985). Further to the west lies a large Iron Age double ditched enclosure which was identified by aerial photography with subsequent trial trenching (MNN 129421).

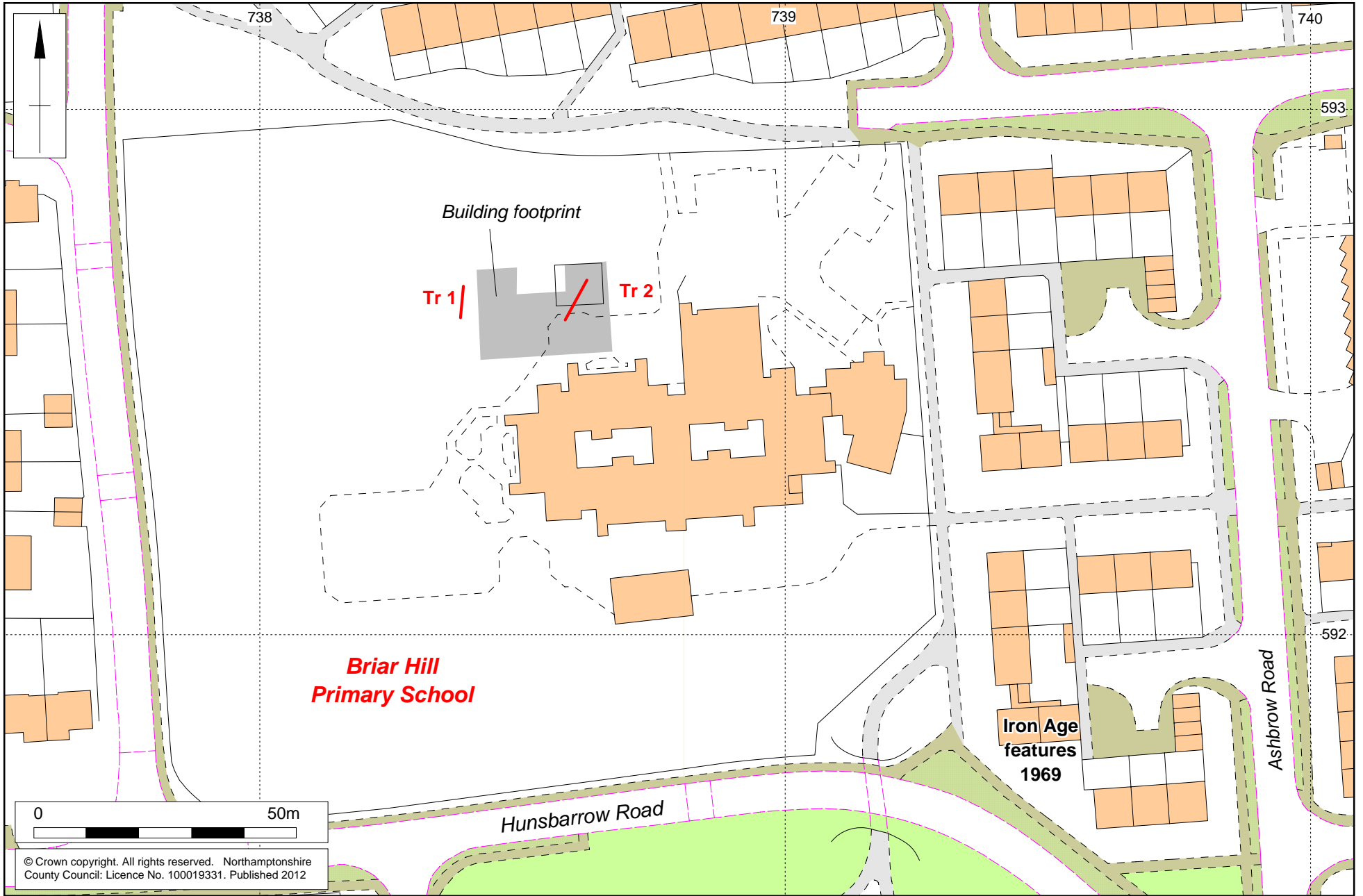
Romano-British activity is recorded close-by during quarrying in the late 19th century where remains including a kiln and a stone-lined well were identified (MNN 25046).

No previous archaeological investigations are recorded as having been carried within the investigation area, up to the present application the area subject to trial trenching has contained planting beds for flowering plants and shrubs.

Scale 1:1000

Location of the trial trenches

Fig 2



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3 OBJECTIVES

The aims of the trial trench evaluation, as set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation (NA 2012), were to:

- ◆ Identify, investigate and record all archaeological deposits exposed during the trial trench evaluation;
- ◆ Determine and record the date, character, state of preservation and depth of any archaeological deposits and to retrieve all datable artefacts;
- ◆ Provide information as to the archaeological potential within the site, and to provide for further effective archaeological investigation either in advance of, or during early construction phases;
- ◆ Create a permanent archive and record of the archaeological information collected during the course of the fieldwork and analysis.



General view of the site during the evaluation, looking north-east Fig 3

4 THE TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION

4.1 Methodology

The fieldwork comprised the excavation of two trial trenches, measuring 8.6m and 3m in length, and positioned in accordance with the trench plan approved by the County Archaeological Advisor, Northamptonshire County Council (Fig 2). The trenches were located in relation to the Ordnance Survey mapping using a Leica GPS survey instrument.

The trenches were excavated using a JCB 3CX excavator fitted with a toothless grading bucket (Fig 4). Topsoil and subsoil were removed to expose the upper strata of the natural substratum and stored separately. Once opened, each trench was recorded in accordance with standard NA procedures (NA 2011).



General view of the excavation of the trial trenches Fig 4

A photographic record in both black and white negative and colour slide was kept, with supplementary photographs in digital format. The written record used Northamptonshire Archaeology *pro-forma* sheets. The trial trench evaluation was carried out in accordance with the IfA's *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (IfA 2008) and *Code of Conduct* (IfA 2010).



Trench 1 after excavation, looking north-east Fig 5



Trench 2, looking south Fig 6

Two trenches were excavated within an area of planting beds on the northern side of the school buildings (Fig 2). Trench 1 measured approximately 8.60m in length by 1.7m wide (Fig 5), trench 2 measured approximately 3m in length by 1.7m wide.

4.2 Trench 1

Trench 1 was aligned approximately north-east to south-west and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.30m below present ground level. The natural substratum comprised orange-brown sand and ironstone. In the north-east half of the trench this was directly overlain by grey-brown silt loam topsoil (101), up to 0.13m thick, containing occasional irregular stones. In the south-western half of the trench the natural substratum was overlain by, up to 0.30m of modern sub-base material (103) and tarmac surfacing (102). A single modern electrical cable was noted crossing the trench.

4.3 Trench 2

Trench 2 was aligned approximately north-south and was positioned on the edge of the grassed playing field adjacent to the planting area. The trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.5m deep at its northern end. The stratigraphic sequence comprised grey-brown silt loam (203), containing numerous fragments of modern ceramic building material and bitumastic piping and electrical wire and plastic sheeting (Fig 6).

This was overlain by pale to mid brown silt loam (202), up to 1.42m thick and containing numerous fragments of modern ceramic building material and plastic electrical fittings. Sealing this was grey-brown silt loam topsoil (201), up to 0.08m thick containing occasional irregular stones.

5 THE SITE ARCHIVE

The project has generated a small archive comprising:

RECORD	NUMBER
Trial trench log forms	2
Colour slides	10
Black and white contacts and negatives	10
Digital photographs	43

The project archive will be held at Northamptonshire Archaeology until such time as a suitable depository has been appointed.

6 CONCLUSIONS

The trial trench evaluation revealed modern disturbance throughout the investigation area. A significant depth of modern material was recorded within trench 2 which may have been deposited during landscaping works within the school grounds.

No archaeological deposits or artefacts were encountered within the investigation area.

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APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT INDEX BY TRENCH

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR 473838 259263	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
1	8.60m x 1.7 NE-SW		73.7m aOD	0.30m (max), 73.4m aOD
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
101	Topsoil	Grey-brown silt loam with occasional irregular stones	0.13m thick	-
102	Tarmac	Grey-black surfacing	0.05m thick	-
103	Sub-base material	Pale grey-brown type 1 sub-base	0.25m thick	-
104	Natural	Orange-brown sand and ironstone		

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR 473860 259264	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
2	3m x 1.7m N-S		75.1m aOD	+1.5m, +73.6m aOD
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
201	Topsoil	Grey-brown silt loam with occasional irregular stones	0.08m thick	-
202	Overburden	Pale-mid brown silt loam containing numerous fragments of modern ceramic building material, plastic sheeting and electrical cable	1.42m thick	-
2003	Overburden	Grey-brown silt loam, containing numerous fragments of modern ceramic building material	Extends below base of trench	-



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