



Northamptonshire Archaeology

Archaeological trial trench evaluation at Oundle and
King's Cliffe Middle School Oundle
Northamptonshire December 2011



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Northamptonshire
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Report 12/1

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SITE NAME: Oundle and Kings Cliffe Middle School, Oundle,
Northamptonshire
NATIONAL GRID REF: TL 0346 8933
CLIENT: Project Management and Construction, Lend Lease
CONTRACTOR: Northamptonshire Archaeology
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QUALITY CONTROL

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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS	
Project title	Archaeological trial trench evaluation at Oundle and King's Cliffe Middle School, Oundle, Northamptonshire
Short description	Northamptonshire Archaeology excavated three trial trenches within the proposed footprint of a new building at Oundle and Kings Cliffe Middle School, Oundle, Northamptonshire. No archaeological features were present in the excavated trenches.
Project type	Evaluation
Previous work	1970s salvage excavation
Future work	unknown
Monument type and period	No archaeology present
PROJECT LOCATION	
County	Northamptonshire
Site address	Oundle and King's Cliffe Middle School
Easting	50346
Northing	28933
Area ha	0.051ha
PROJECT CREATORS	
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology
Project brief originator	Lesley-Ann Mather, Northamptonshire County Council
Project Design originator	Northamptonshire Archaeology
Director/Supervisor	Tim Upson-Smith
Project Manager	Ant Maull
Sponsor or funding body	Project Management and Construction, Lend Lease
PROJECT DATE	
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End date	December 2011
BIBLIOGRAPHY	
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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION AT
OUNDLE AND KINGS CLIFFE MIDDLE SCHOOL
OUNDLE, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**

Abstract

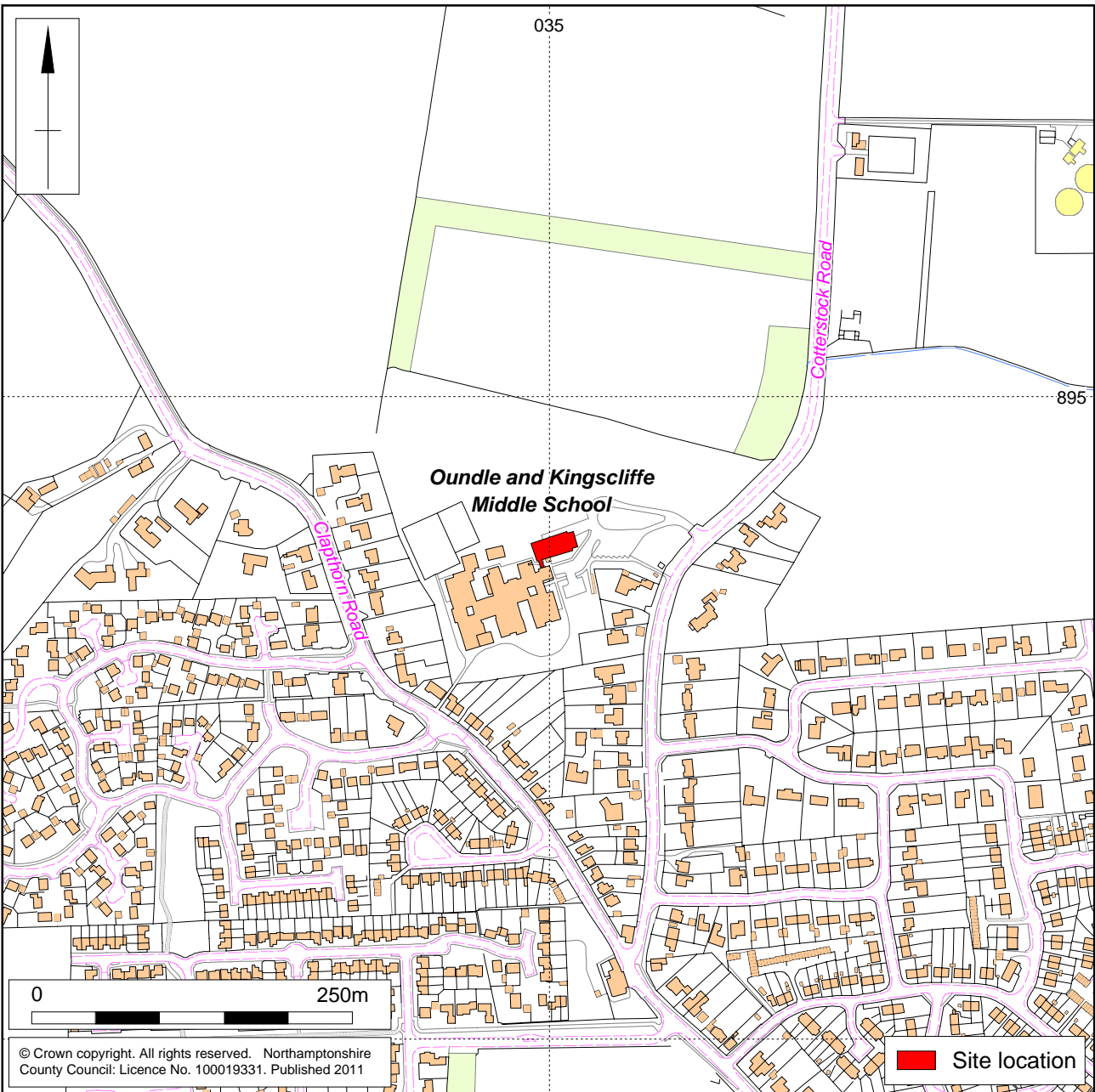
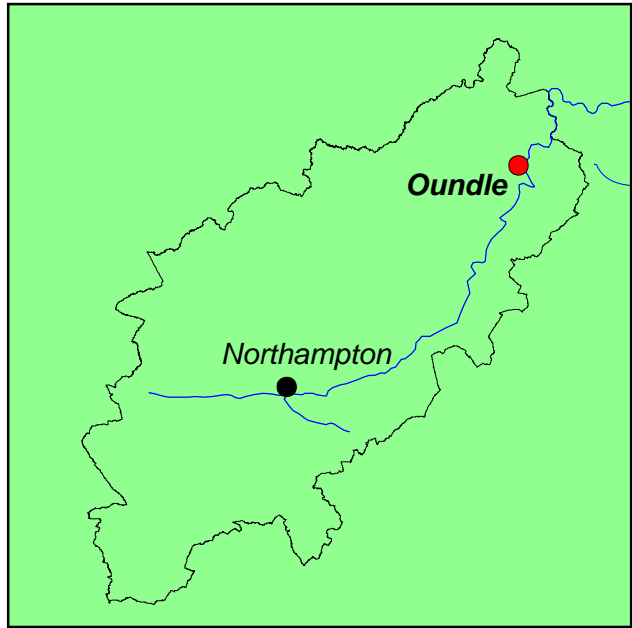
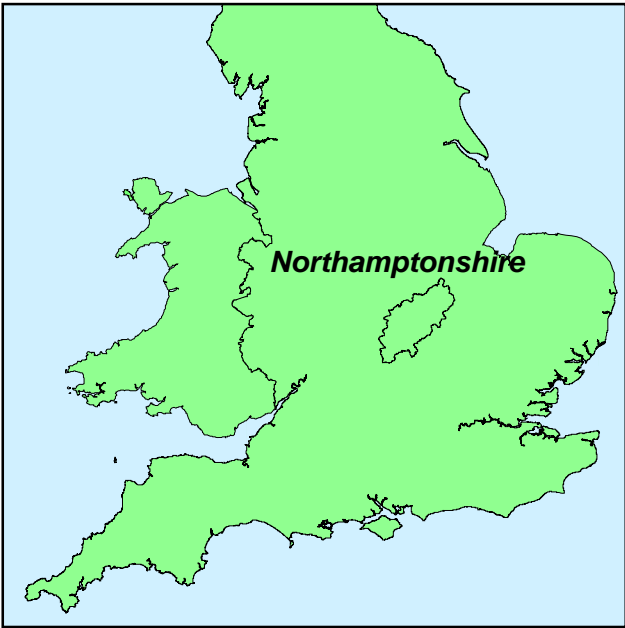
Northamptonshire Archaeology excavated three trial trenches within the proposed footprint of a new building at Oundle and Kings Cliffe Middle School, Oundle, Northamptonshire. No archaeological features were present in the excavated trenches.

1 INTRODUCTION

Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA) was commissioned by Project Management and Construction, Lend Lease to undertake an archaeological trial trench evaluation within the grounds of Oundle and Kings Cliffe Middle School, Oundle, Northamptonshire. (NGR TL 0346 8933, Fig 1). The work was required in response to planning permission granted by Northamptonshire County Council (10/00082/CCD) for an extension to the school comprising the construction of a new Dining Hall in line with PPS5 *Planning for the Historic Environment*.

The work was undertaken in compliance with the brief issued by the Northamptonshire County Council Archaeological Advisor (NCC 2011 a and b) and the subsequent WSI prepared by Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA 2011).

Northamptonshire Archaeology is an Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) registered organisation (RAO No.48). All works were conducted in accordance with the procedural documents of English Heritage (1991; 1997; 2006) and the appropriate standards and guidance for archaeological field evaluation (IfA 2008).



Scale 1:5000

Site location Fig 1

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location, geology and topography

The proposed new dining hall is situated immediately adjacent to the north-east corner of the current school buildings, with the proposed extension to be sited within the southern side of the current sports field and areas of hardstanding. Topographically, the study area lies at the northern fringes of the town in a triangular parcel of land at the junction of the roads leading to the nearby villages of Glapthorn and Cotterstock. It is situated on a broad plateau at an altitude of approximately 45m aOD and lies at the junction of two geological areas, Cornbrash and Blisworth formation (<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex/>).

2.2 Archaeological background

The application area sits within a rich archaeological landscape, with two sites of national importance in the immediate vicinity, Ashton Roman town, 1.5km to the east and Oundle Saxon settlement 1.4km to the south-east. A search of the Northamptonshire County Council Historic Environment Record (HER) also located a number of sites dating from the prehistoric to post-medieval periods, but only those sites and finds with direct significance are considered here.

The school site contained an Iron Age enclosure, possibly forming a settlement (HER 2377/0/1) which may extend into the development area. This was first identified during aerial photography as a cropmark and was partially investigated during salvage excavation during the construction of the school in the 1970s.

The earliest evidence for prehistoric activity in the surrounding area lies to the east of the school and is represented by an un-stratified Bronze Age barbed and tanged arrowhead (HER 2374) dated to c2350-701 BC. Another possible prehistoric site discovered through aerial photography is known to the north-east of the school (HER 5274/0/0), defined by two sides of a possible enclosure.

Extensive evidence of Iron Age and Roman activity is known c800m to the south-west of the application site at Glapthorn Road, (HER 7072/1). Here excavation undertaken during 1999 in advance of housing development (Maul and Masters 2005) investigated late Iron Age/1st century AD activity defined by three possible roundhouses and a few pits superseded by a Roman farmstead of the 2nd-4th centuries AD. The farmstead was defined by a series of conjoined enclosures and a walled rectilinear enclosure holding structural remains including the remains of structures, including the remains of a substantial post built timber building, T-shaped corn dryer and other ovens/hearths. Other evidence for Roman activity has been found to the east of the application site (HER 2375), with the recovery of a coin of Constantine.

Evidence for the Saxon period is represented by a small Anglo-Saxon cemetery, which was investigated as part of the excavation at Glapthorn Road to the south of the current site. Ten inhumation burials were found interred within one of the Roman enclosures, although no contemporary settlement was recovered.

The post-medieval to modern periods are represented by a series of cropmarks to the east of Cotterstock Road (HER 2376), which probably reflect field systems and removed former field boundaries.

3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Objectives

The purpose of the work was to determine and understand the nature, function and character of the archaeological site in its cultural and environmental setting.

The aims of the investigation were to:

- Establish the date, nature and extent of the 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 past local environmental conditions.

3.2 Methodology

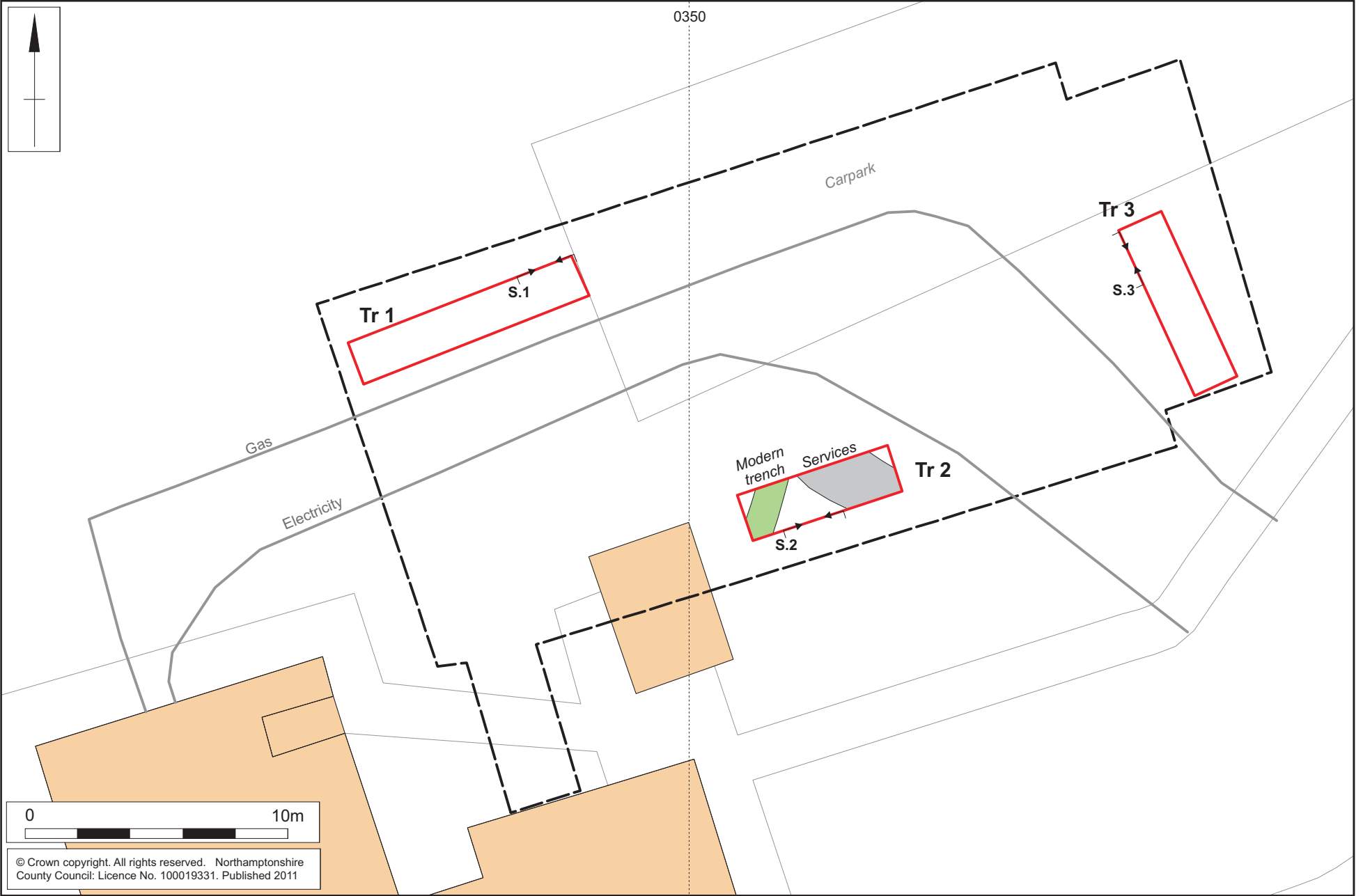
The brief (NCC 2011a 3.7.1) specified 30m of trenching comprising two 15m long trial trenches within the footprint of the proposed dining hall, however, due to the presence of hardstanding, tree canopies and standing structures, three smaller trenches, 1 x 9m and 1 x 7m and 1 x 6m were excavated giving a total length of 22m (Fig 2).

The trenches were located by taped offsets from fixed points. The trenches were machine-excavated using a 1.8m wide flat toothless bucket under continuous archaeological supervision. Topsoil and subsoil were stored separately on either side of the trench.

Deposits were described on pro-forma context sheets (NA 2006). The heights of each trench were established relative to Ordnance Datum.

A photographic record was kept of the excavation, comprising black and white negatives and related prints, and colour slides with supporting digital photographs. The field data will be compiled into a site archive with appropriate cross-referencing.

After consultation with the Northamptonshire County Council Archaeological Advisor on the 20th December 2011 the trenches were backfilled with their up-cast, and lightly compacted by the mechanical digger.



4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

4.1 Trench 1

Trench 1, 9m long by 1.8m wide, was located in the north-western part of the proposed building footprint; it was aligned east-north-east by west-south-west (Figs 2, 3 and 6). Natural yellow-orange silty clay (103) was exposed at 0.40m below present ground surface. The natural was overlain by c0.25m of yellow-brown sandy clay subsoil (102), which was overlain by c0.15m of mid brown sandy loam topsoil (101) at 41.62m aOD. No archaeological features were observed in the trench.



Trench 1, looking west

Fig 3

4.1 Trench 2

Trench 2, 6m long by 1.8m wide, was located in the southern part of the proposed building footprint; it was aligned east-north-east by west-south-west (Figs 2, 4 and 6). Natural yellow-orange silty clay (205) was exposed at 0.40m below present ground surface. The natural was overlain by c0.12m of yellow-brown sandy clay subsoil (204), which was overlain by c0.10m of dark grey sandy loam buried soil (203), which was overlain by c0.04m of sand (202), this was overlain by mid brown sandy loam topsoil (201) 0.14m thick at 41.75m aOD.

Cutting the subsoil and natural were a modern trench containing brick fragments matching those the school is constructed from, and a service trench. The ground level had been raised in this area as evidenced by the buried soil, (203) below a band of clean sand (202). No archaeological features were observed in the trench.



Trench 2, looking west

Fig 4

4.1 Trench 3

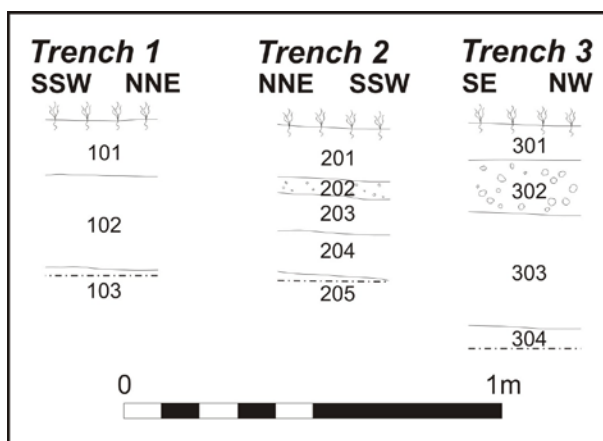
Trench 3, 7m long by 1.8m wide, was located in the eastern part of the proposed building footprint; it was aligned north-north-west by south-south-east (Figs 2, 5 and 6). Natural yellow-orange sandy clay (304) was exposed at c0.60m below present ground surface. The natural was overlain by c0.30m of orange-brown sandy clay subsoil (303), which was overlain by c0.14m of limestone hardcore in a sandy matrix (302). The hardcore layer was overlain by c0.10m of mid brown sandy loam topsoil (301) at 41.53m aOD.

The hardcore layer was only present in the northern 3m of the trench and likely formed the base of a now removed modern path. No archaeological features were observed in the trench.



Trench 3, looking south

Fig 5



Representative trench sections Fig 6

5 CONCLUSION

No archaeological features were observed in the excavated trenches and no artefacts were recovered. The area of Trench 2 had been previously disturbed by unmarked service runs and a further trench containing modern brick fragments. No evidence was observed of the known Iron Age enclosure (HER 2377/0/1).

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APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
1	9m x 1.8m NNE-SSW	TL0346 8933	41.62m aOD	0.40m, 41.12m aOD
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
101	Topsoil	Mid brown sandy loam	0.15m thick	-
102	Subsoil	Yellow-brown sandy clay	c0.25m thick	-
103	Natural	Yellow-orange silty clay	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
2	6m x 1.8m NNE-SSW	TL0346 8933	41.75m aOD	0.40m, 41.35m aOD
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
201	Topsoil	Mid brown sandy loam	0.14m thick	-
202	Layer	Yellow sand	0.04m	-
203	Buried soil	Dark grey sandy loam	0.10m	-
204	Subsoil	Yellow-brown sandy clay	0.12m thick	-
205	Natural	Yellow-orange silty clay	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
3	7m x 1.8m NNW-SSE	TL0346 8933	41.53m aOD	0.54m, 40.99m aOD
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
301	Topsoil	Mid brown sandy loam	0.10m thick	-
302	Layer	Limestone hardcore in a sandy matrix	0.14m thick	-
303	Subsoil	Orange-brown sandy clay	0.30m	-
304	Natural	Yellow-orange sandy clay	-	-