



Northamptonshire Archaeology

An archaeological trial trench evaluation at
18 Bakehouse Lane, Mears Ashby
Northamptonshire
December 2013



Northamptonshire Archaeology

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QUALITY CONTROL

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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		Oasis No. 167129	
Project title	An archaeological trial trench evaluation at 18 Bakehouse Lane, Mears Ashby, Northamptonshire December 2013		
An archaeological trial trench evaluation was carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology on land adjacent to 18 Bakehouse Lane, Mears Ashby, Northamptonshire during December 2013. The work was undertaken in advance of the construction of new residential dwellings. No pre-modern deposits or artefacts were encountered during the course of the evaluation.			
Project type	Trial Trench Evaluation		
Site Status	None		
Previous work	None		
Current land use	Garages		
Future work	None		
Monument type and period	None		
Significant finds	None		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County	Northamptonshire		
Site address	18 Bakehouse Lane, Mears Ashby, Northamptonshire		
Post code	NN6 0ED		
OS co-ordinates	NGR SP 66762		
Area (sq m/ha)	192 sq m		
Height aOD	104m		
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA)		
Project brief originator	Northamptonshire County Council		
Project Design originator	Northamptonshire Archaeology		
Project Supervisor	Ed Taylor		
Project Manager	Ed Taylor		
Sponsor or funding body	Mr and Mrs K Smith		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date	17/12/13		
End date	17/12/13		
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Contents	
Physical	Northamptonshire Archaeology	None	
Paper		Site records (1 small archive box)	
Digital		Client report PDF; digital images	
BIBLIOGRAPHY	Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (NA report)		
Title	An archaeological trial trench evaluation at 18 Bakehouse Lane, Mears Ashby, Northamptonshire December 2013		
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Author(s)	Ed Taylor		
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**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION AT
18 BAKEHOUSE LANE, MEARS ASHBY
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
DECEMBER 2013**

Abstract

An archaeological trial trench evaluation was carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology on land adjacent to 18 Bakehouse Lane, Mears Ashby, Northamptonshire during December 2013. The work was undertaken in advance of the construction of new residential dwellings. No pre-modern deposits or artefacts were encountered during the course of the evaluation.

1 INTRODUCTION

An archaeological trial trench evaluation was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology in December 2013 prior to the construction of new residential dwellings on land adjacent to 18 Bakehouse Lane, Mears Ashby, Northamptonshire (NGR SP 83891 66762; Figs 1 and 2). The work was commissioned by Mr and Mrs K Smith in response to briefs for archaeological evaluation issued by Northamptonshire County Council's Assistant Archaeological Advisor (Mordue 2013a and b). The investigation followed an approved Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA 2013) and adhered to the procedural document MoRPHE issued by English Heritage (EH 2006) and the appropriate national standards and guidelines, as recommended by the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA 2008).

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location and topography

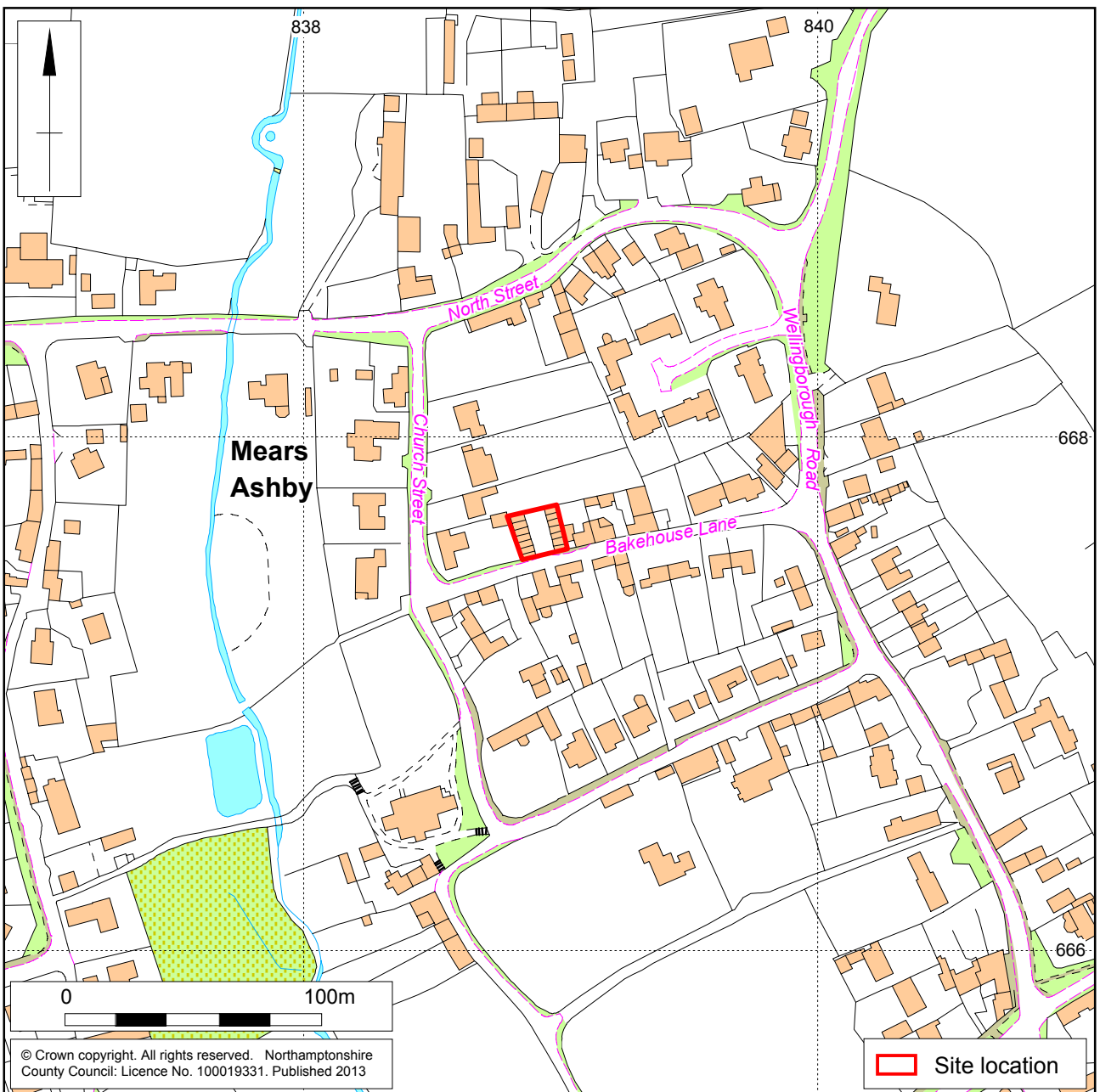
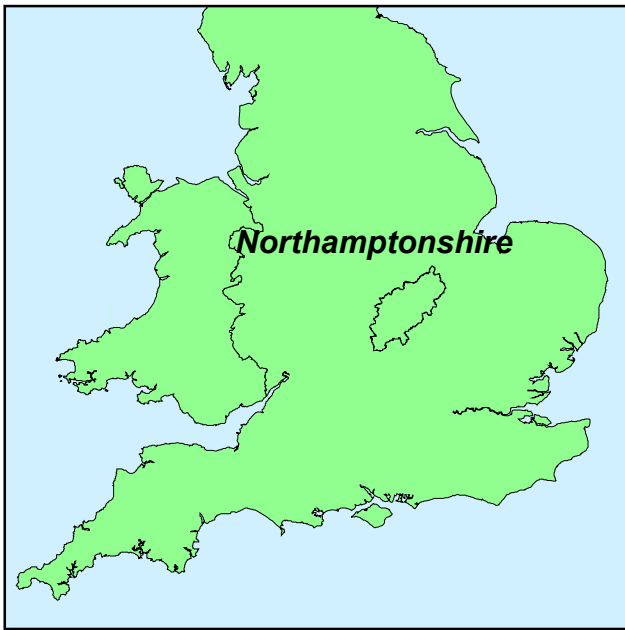
The village of Mears Ashby lies approximately 6km west of Wellingborough in the County of Northamptonshire. The development area (hereon referred to as the site) lies on the north side of Bakehouse Lane on level ground at a height of approximately 104m aOD.

The underlying geology has been mapped by the British Geological Survey as comprising Northampton Sand and Ironstone (www.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex)

2.2 Historical background

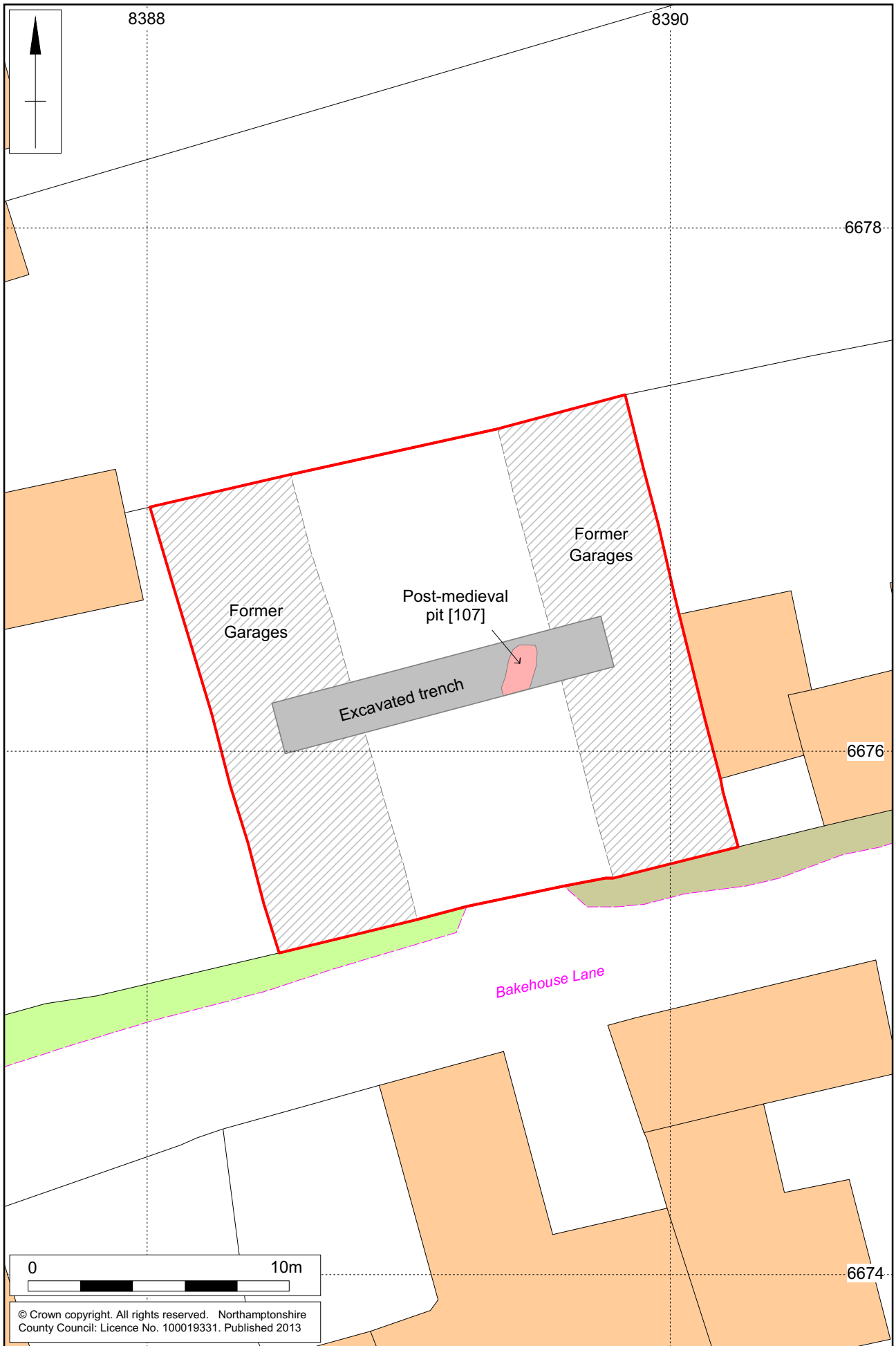
The site lies within the present village of Mears Ashby and within an area of archaeological interest.

The Royal Commission on Historical Monuments for the County of Northampton (RCHME 1979) records two or more rectangular enclosures immediately west of the village. Evidence of Iron Age and Romano-British settlement has been identified in the east of the parish, with further Roman settlement also recorded in the south of the parish. Within the village, settlement remains and a kiln have been recorded, with 3rd-century AD Roman pottery and kiln furniture recorded in 1899 to the north of Bakehouse Lane.



Scale 1:2500

Site location Fig 1



Scale 1:200

Trench location Fig 2

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The village is mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086AD, where it is recorded as Asbi. Immediately to the south-west of the site lies All Saints Church, which is a Grade II Listed Building, the earliest parts of which date from the 12th-century, the church subsequently undergoing partial restoration in 1859. The site lies within the boundaries of the medieval settlement which extend to the west of the church, where possible former house plots have been identified.

The 1885 Ordnance Survey map shows an L-shaped building occupying the site which was demolished and replaced with smaller buildings by 1925. By 1968 the site had been cleared and 14 garages arranged in two rows, seven along each side of the site, had been constructed. These were demolished immediately prior to the current evaluation.



The evaluation trench, looking north-east

Fig 3

3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

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 location, extent, nature and date of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present on the development site;
- establish the integrity and state of preservation of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present;
- recover artefacts to assist in the development of type series within the region;
- recover paleoenvironmental remains to determine local environmental conditions.

The evaluation comprised a single 13m long trench aligned north-east to south-west within the footprint of the two proposed new dwellings.

The trench was positioned using fixed points in the landscape and was excavated, under continuous archaeological supervision, using a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a flat toothless bucket. Mechanical excavation proceeded to the top of the archaeological deposits or to the natural substrate where no archaeology was encountered.

Archaeological excavation and recording followed the guidelines outlined in NA's *Archaeological Fieldwork Manual* (2011). The trench was cleaned by hand, sufficient to define the features. Each feature or deposit was given a unique number consisting of the trench number and an individual context number (eg 102, Trench 1, context 2). The details of each context were recorded on pro-forma sheets. Levels, which were related to Ordnance Datum, were taken on the trench at appropriate points and on all major features. The trench location was related to the Ordnance Survey National Grid. A photographic record was made of the excavation, using 35mm black and white negative and digital images.

The spoil heaps and features were scanned with a metal detector to ensure maximum finds retrieval. The archive will be prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Museums and Galleries Commission (MGC 1992).

All works were carried out in accordance with the WSI prepared by NA (2013), the Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (IfA 1985, revised 2010) and *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (IfA 1994, revised 2008).

All procedures complied with Northamptonshire County Council Health and Safety

4 THE RECORDED EVIDENCE

The natural substrate comprised pale yellow-brown sand with occasional patches of loose orange-brown mudstone fragments. This was overlain by a mid grey-brown sandy loam soil (108), 0.20m-0.30m thick, which contained sherds of 19th-century pottery, glass, tile and brick (not retained).

Towards the north-eastern end of the trench there was a sub oval pit [107] which cut the subsoil and was at least 2m long by 1m wide. It was filled with a dark grey/black silty loam (106) which contained 19th and 20th-century pottery, tile, brick and glass (not retained). Given its evident post-medieval date, this feature was not investigated by hand excavation.

The pit was overlain by a layer of loosely compacted mid grey-brown sandy loam with occasional patches of blue-grey clay and abundant stone and brick fragments (105) which was 0.20m-0.30m thick. Overlying this was a layer of dark brown-grey silty clay loam which in turn was overlain by modern gravel which made up the current ground surface.

At the south-western end of the trench, layer (105) was overlain by a red brick surface (103), which extended 1.90m to the north-east. This comprised a single course of red bricks, laid flat on a thin base of sand and mortar bonded. They were mostly unfrogged although two frogged examples were present. The bricks were directly overlain by the concrete bases of the recently demolished garages.



Post-medieval pit [107], looking north east

Fig 4



The stratigraphic sequence at the south-west end of the trench.....Fig 5

5 CONCLUSIONS

No pre-modern deposits or artefacts were encountered during the course of the evaluation.

The ground appeared to have been disturbed by a series of building and clearance episodes although the natural substrate did not appear to have been truncated other than by pit [107].

The area investigated by the trench would have been to the rear of the building shown on the 1885 Ordnance survey map. Layer (108), which contained 19th-century pottery and glass may have been a garden soil associated with this building. A refuse or midden pit, [107] was dug to the rear of the building before its demolition after which the site was levelled with loose stone and brick fragments, (105). The brick surface, possibly constructed from reused bricks from the earlier building, was likely to have been a floor or yard surface associated with the small buildings erected on the site after 1885.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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NA 2006 *Archaeological fieldwork manual*, Northamptonshire Archaeology

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Websites

www.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex

APPENDIX: INDEX OF CONTEXTS BY TRENCH

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth of natural
1	13m x 1.5m NE-SW	483891/266762	104m aOD	0.80m-1.0m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
101	Concrete	Base for modern garages	0.12m thick	-
102	Gravel	Current ground surface	0.10m-0.20m thick	-
103	Brick surface	Mortar bonded bricks, 0.23mx0.11mx0.08m. Laid on a thin bed of sand. Unfrogged with occasional frogged examples. Extended beyond the limits of the trench.	0.08m thick	-
104	Levelling layer	Dark grey-brown sandy clay loam, ash and crushed mortar	0.10-0.20m thick	-
105	Demolition layer	Mid grey-brown sandy loam with abundant stone and brick fragments	0.30m-0.40m thick	-
106	Fill of [107]	Dark grey-black sandy loam, occasional stone inclusions	>0.20m thick	19th and 20th-century pottery, tile, brick, glass (not retained)
107	Cut of pit	Sub oval, N-S	>2m long, 1m wide	
108	?Garden Soil	Mid grey-brown sandy loam. Occasional brick inclusions	0.20m	19th-century pottery, tile, brick, glass (not retained)
109	Natural	Light orange yellow sand with occasional mudstone patches	-	



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