

Northamptonshire Archaeology

An archaeological trial trench
on land off Stanbridge Road
Tilsworth
Bedfordshire
July 2006



Pat Chapman

July 2006

Report 06/106

Northamptonshire Archaeology

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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project name	An archaeological trial trench on land off Stanbridge Road, Tilsworth, Bedfordshire	
Short description (250 words maximum)	Northamptonshire Archaeology were commissioned by Kirkby and Diamond, on behalf of the Stanbridge and Tilsworth Community Association, to carry out an evaluation on land off Stanbridge Road, Tilsworth in Bedfordshire. The single trench, 12m in length, was located within the footprint for the proposed new Community Hall on the recreation ground. No archaeological features or artefacts were present.	
Project type (eg DBA, evaluation etc)	evaluation	
Site status (none, NT, SAM etc)	none	
Previous work (SMR numbers etc)	none	
Current Land use	Recreation ground	
Future work (yes, no, unknown)	No	
Monument type/ period	None	
Significant finds (artefact type and period)	None	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Bedfordshire	
Site address (including postcode)	Stanbridge Road, Tilsworth	
Study area (sq.m or ha)	22 sq m	
OS Easting & Northing (use grid sq. numbers)	SP 9734 2431	
Height OD	c 105m	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project brief originator	Heritage and Environment, Bedfordshire County Council	
Project Design originator	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Director/Supervisor	Pat Chapman	
Project Manager	Anthony Maull	
Sponsor or funding body	Stanbridge and Tilsworth Community Association	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date		
End date		
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc)
Physical		
Paper		
Digital		
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (NA report)		
Title		
Serial title & volume		
Author(s)		
Page numbers		
Date		

STAFF

Project Manager	Anthony Maull Cert Archaeol
Fieldwork	Pat Chapman BA CMS PIFA, Peter Haynes
Text	Pat Chapman
Illustrations	Jacqueline Harding BA HND Andy Chapman BSc MIFA

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks are due to Robert Venn of the Stanbridge and Tilsworth Community Association for having the area of the building marked out and fenced off in advance of the excavation.

QUALITY CONTROL

	Print name	Signed	Date
Verified by	Anthony Maull		
Checked & Approved by	Andy Chapman		

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**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH
ON LAND OFF STANBRIDGE ROAD
TILSWORTH
BEDFORDSHIRE
JULY 2006**

Abstract

Northamptonshire Archaeology were commissioned by Kirkby and Diamond, on behalf of the Stanbridge and Tilsworth Community Association, to carry out an evaluation on land off Stanbridge Road, Tilsworth in Bedfordshire. The single trench, 12m in length, was located within the footprint for the proposed new Community Hall on the recreation ground. No archaeological features or artefacts were present.

1 INTRODUCTION

Northamptonshire Archaeology were commissioned by Kirkby and Diamond, on behalf of the Stanbridge and Tilsworth Community Association, to carry out an evaluation on land off Stanbridge Road, Tilsworth (NGR SP 9734 2431, Fig 1). The Association has been granted planning permission for the construction of a new Community Hall (Planning Application No: 05/1139), so an archaeological investigation was requested by the County Archaeological Officer, Bedfordshire County Council, brief issued 16th June 2006 (BCC 2006).

2 BACKGROUND

Historical background

The development is situated between the historic cores of the villages of Tilsworth (HER 16887) and Stanbridge (HER 16886).

The Historic and Environment Record (HER) lists several specific sites in the immediate area, see Table 1 below, but none within the field containing the development.

Finds from the prehistoric periods include areas of Mesolithic flints along the valley of the Ouzel Brook to the south of Tilsworth, as well as Neolithic and Bronze Age flints in the valley and to the east of the village. Iron Age pottery has been found in the fields north of Tilsworth and Stanbridge, perhaps from settlement along the sides of the valley (Fig 1, 3932).

Finds of Roman of pottery, coins and the lower stone from a quern are indications of some activity in this area.

However, the main historical element is medieval, with each village developing around a church and manor with their associated tenements and plots. The medieval motte of Warren Knoll (SAM 24408, HER 536) is on the north-west edge of Tilsworth (Fig 1). It appears to

have been constructed during the late 11th century as part of a series of defensive sites controlling the valleys west of Watling Street. It was probably abandoned by the early 15th century for a large moated site, Tilsworth Manor, established to the south. The motte was recorded as a warren in 1732 and last used as such in 1920.

Tilsworth Manor Farm (HER 14685) is a 15th century foundation under a 17th century building extensively altered in the 19th and 20th centuries. It is situated within the earthwork of the 15th century moat (HER 14685) with the gatehouse, partly 15th century, a grade 2 listed building (HER 529) in the western entrance.

To the east of the development area is All Saints Church (HER 959), a grade 2 listed building dating to the 13th century with additions made in the 14th and 15th centuries.

Table 1: Historic and Environmental Record (HER) list of relevant sites

HER No	NGR, SP	Description
3932	9770 2460	Early Iron Age pottery fragments
1761	9765 2492	Iron Age pottery sherds
2804	977 249 978 249	Iron Age and Roman pottery find spots over irregular cropmarks on plan
3442	979 248	Iron Age and Roman pottery
2887	9805 2420	Quern stone (lower) of Puddingstone, from Wood Farm
536	9748 2435	Warren Knoll motte, Scheduled Monument No: 24408 In use as a defensive site from the 11th to the early 15th centuries. Then used as a warren until 1920
959	9752 2428	All Saints Church, Tilsworth, 13th century origin
8981	9754 2427	Survey of All Saints churchyard
8494	9745 2435	Tilsworth House, former vicarage built 1840
14685	9762 2417	The 15th century moat at Tilsworth Manor Farm
529	9702 2417	Tilsworth Manor Farm Gatehouse, partly 15th century
16887	978 244	Tilsworth, historic core
1348	980 243 (centre)	Earthworks southern edge of Tilsworth, many ploughed out, but possible hollow-ways and headlands surviving
10887	9723 2423	Former Red Lion public house, 19th century, now private residence
96		Represents the medieval ridge and furrow field system around the two villages
16886	968 243	Stanbridge, historic core
956	9657 2422	St John's Church, Stanbridge, formerly Chapel of Ease to Leighton Buzzard, c 13th – 17th century
16277	981 241	Medieval pottery
10951	965 240	Green, Stanbridge, south-west of church as well as areas to north-west and south-east of village
10958	9683 2380	Manor of Morrells in Stanbridge, origins in the 15th century
10959	966 244	Manor of Stanbridge, first mentioned 1166
10963	966 241	Earthworks north-east edge of Stanbridge, including a hollow-way
10964	9685 2400	East to west earthwork, hollow-way

Topography and geology

The site is a recreation ground on the west side of the village of Tilsworth. The ground slopes down from the north to Stanbridge Road. To the west is the former *The Red Lion*, a 19th century public house, now a private residence. To the east a footpath flanked by a hedge separates the recreation ground from All Saints Church, the former vicarage and Warren Knoll on the east side.

The road to the south of the development area descends from 105m OD to the east to 102m OD to the west. The development area lies uphill from the road at a level of about 105-106m OD. Exact levels could not be obtained as the indicated bench mark on the church could not be located, and was probably lost during the evident extensive replacement of the lower levels of the wall facings.

Along the 12m length of the trench the ground surface sloped down to the south by 0.38m.

The underlying geology has been mapped as calcareous gley soil of the Wicken Association by the British Geological Survey of Great Britain.

3 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this evaluation were to examine the archaeological resource within the development area by:

- ❖ determining and recording the presence, date, character, integrity, state of preservation and depth of burial of any archaeological deposits
- ❖ to seek to understand the archaeology of the development area in terms of the likely impact of the development in order to inform any future mitigation that might be required by the Planning Archaeologist.

The work was carried out in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists Code of Conduct, *Standards and Guidelines for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (1999 revision).

4 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

The evaluation comprised a single trench on a north-west to south-east alignment along the centre of the proposed building, which had already been pegged out by the client. It was excavated using a small 360 degree excavator with a 1.0m wide toothless ditching bucket, operating under constant archaeological supervision.

The natural was, on average, 0.58m below the ground surface and comprised a stiff brown boulder clay with occasional small flints and patches of shattered chalk. No archaeological features or deposits were present at this level.

It was overlain by a subsoil of mid brown loamy clay, c 0.25m thick, with some small flint and chalk fragments and occasional larger lumps of flint.

The topsoil comprised a dark brown loam between 0.25 and 0.30m thick with only very occasional fragments of flint.

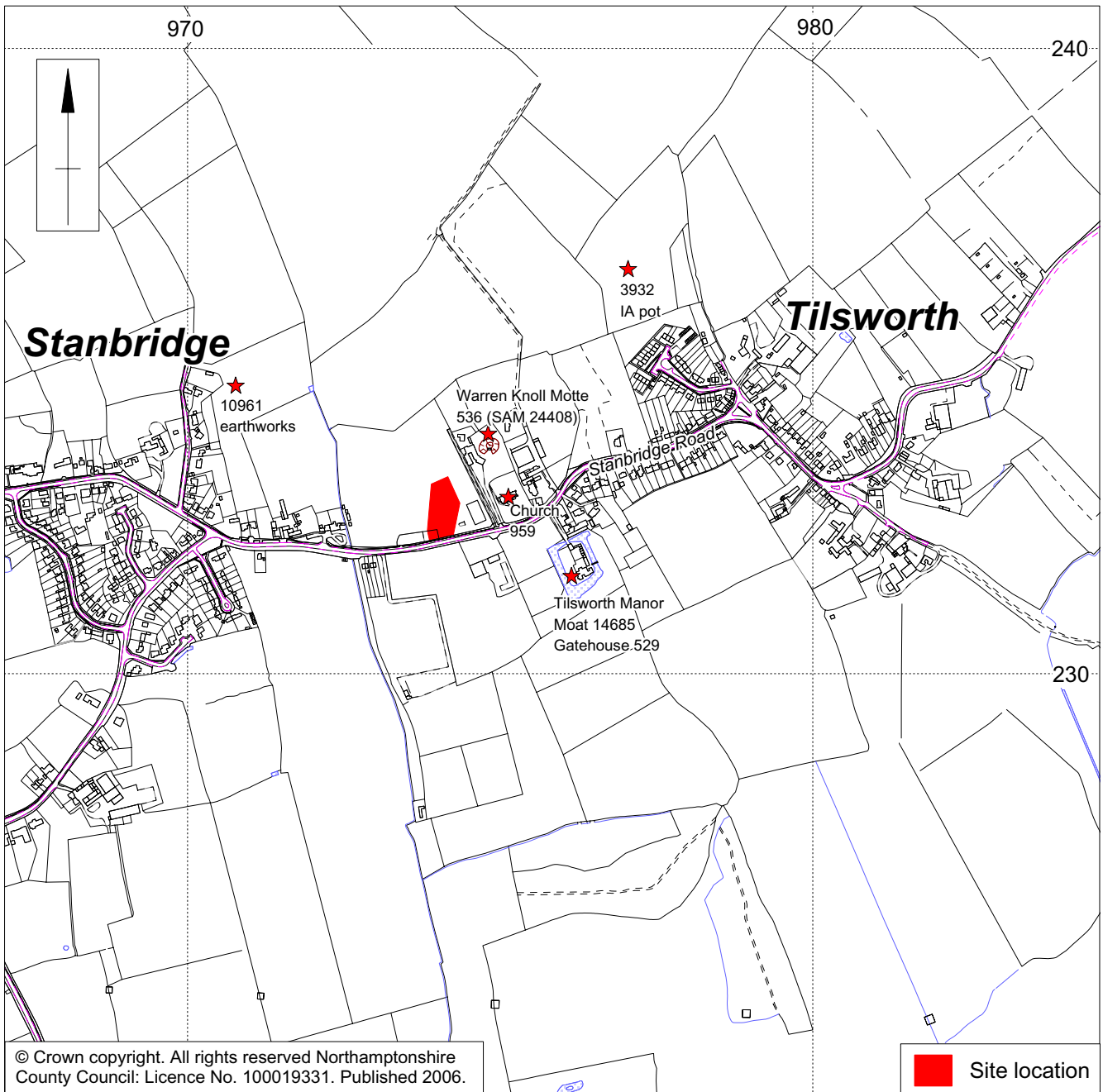
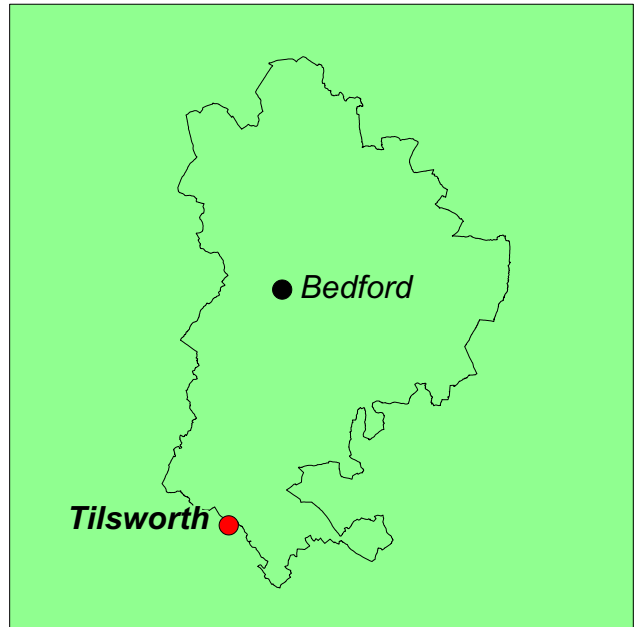
The upcast spoil was scanned with a metal detector, but no finds were recovered.

5 CONCLUSION

The single trial trench exposed undisturbed clay natural at a depth of 0.58m. No deposits or features of archaeological significance were present, and no artefacts were recovered.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

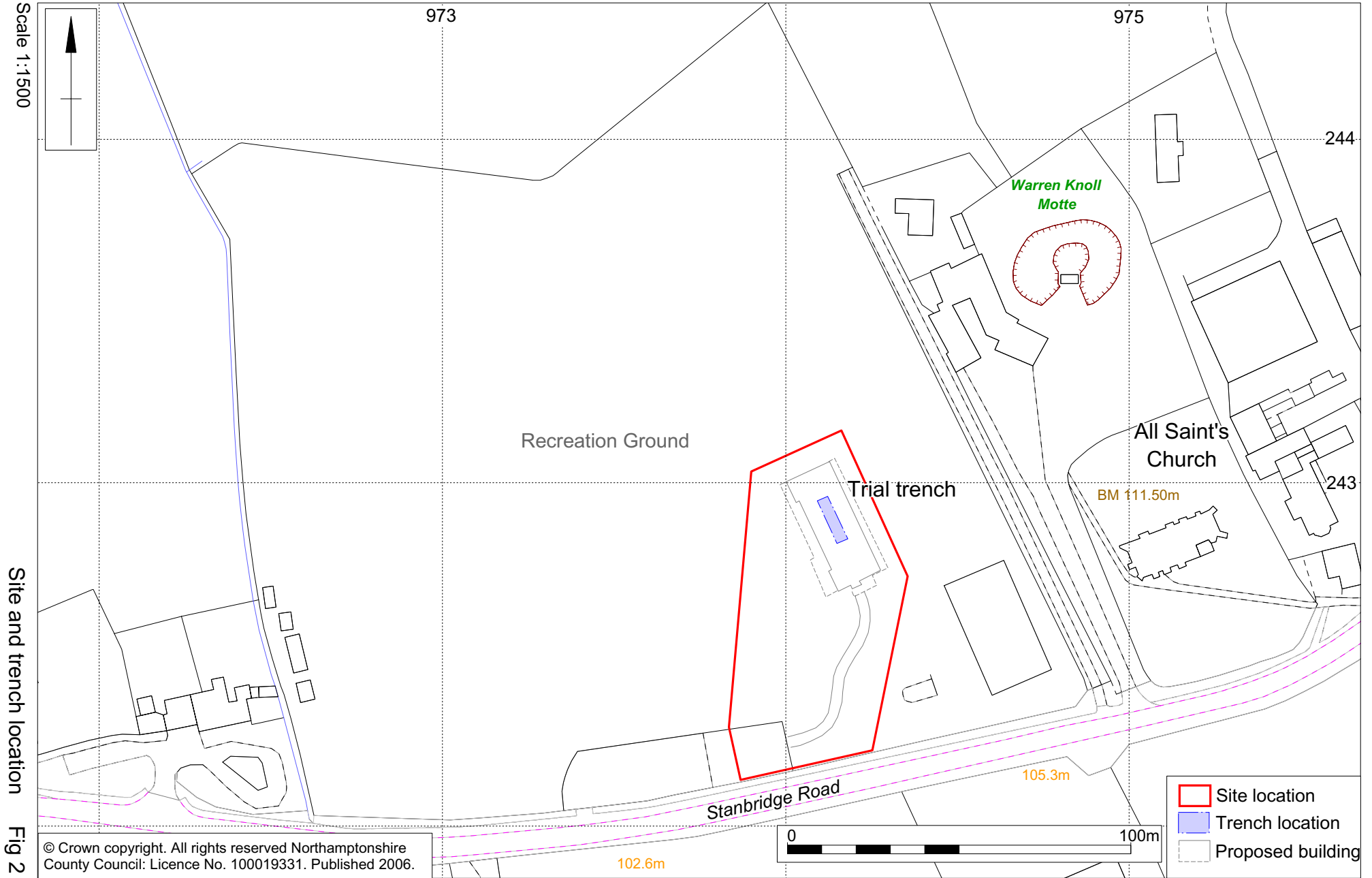
BCC 2006 *Brief for an Archaeological Field Evaluation of land off Stanbridge Road, Tilsworth, Bedfordshire*, Heritage and Environment Section, Culture and Environment Group, Bedfordshire County Council



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Scale 1:10,000

Site location Fig 1



Site and trench location Fig 2



Plate 1: Excavation of trench



Plate 2: The excavated trench showing the clay natural



Plate 3: Section of west side of trench



Plate 4: Backfilling of trench