



Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION AT
LAND ADJACENT TO THE WHITE HART
GUN LANE
SHERINGTON
MILTON KEYNES**

*on behalf of
Mr K. Shepherd*



Alastair Hancock BSc PgDip

February 2005

ASC: 651/SGL/02

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Site Data

<i>ASC site code:</i>	SGL	<i>Project no:</i>	651
<i>County:</i>	Milton Keynes Unitary Authority		
<i>District:</i>	Milton Keynes		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Sherington		
<i>Parish:</i>	Sherington		
<i>NGR:</i>	SP 8912 4679		
<i>Extent of Site:</i>	c. 0.1ha		
<i>Present land use:</i>	Pub Garden		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	House		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	04/01500/FUL		
<i>MK Event No:</i>	961		
<i>Museum Accession Number:</i>	Pending		
<i>Date of Fieldwork:</i>	15 th February 2005		
<i>Client:</i>	Mr. K. Shepherd, The White Hart, Sherington c/o DLA Architects Practice Ltd 50 North Thirteenth Street Central Milton Keynes MK9 3BP		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Mr. K. Shepherd		
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Internal Quality Check

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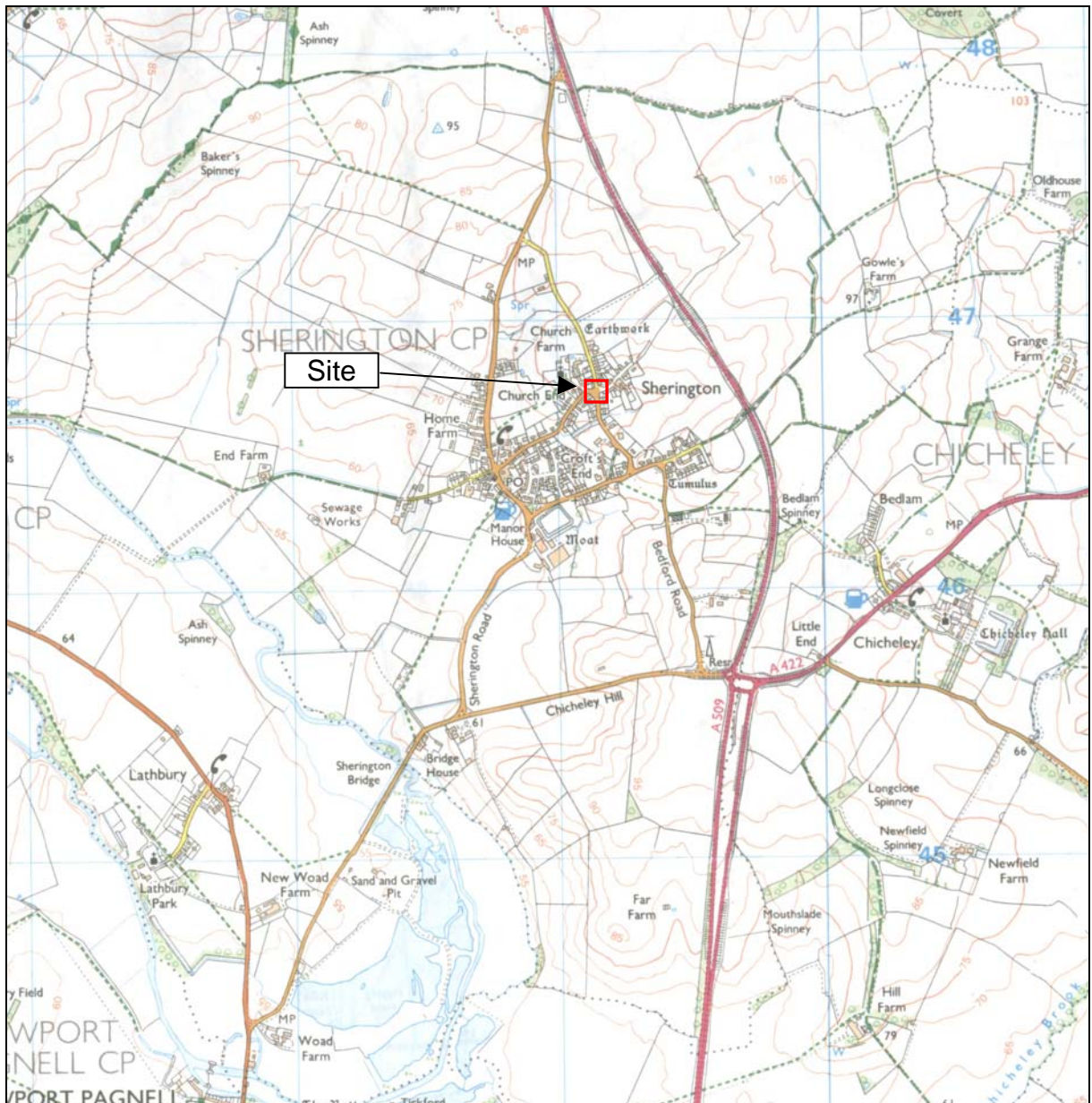


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

Summary

Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd (ASC) undertook an evaluation in February 2005 at land adjacent to The White Hart, Gun Lane, Sherington. A single L shaped trench was machine excavated to examine the site for archaeological features or deposits. No archaeological finds, features or deposits were discovered.

1 Introduction

1.1 During February 2005 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd (ASC)* carried out an archaeological evaluation at land adjacent to The White Hart Public House, Sherington, Milton Keynes. The evaluation comprised excavation of a single L shaped evaluation trench (Fig. 4). The project was commissioned by Mr K. Shepherd in advance of proposed residential development, and was carried out according to a brief (PS/537/2/A/C1421; Giggins, 2004), prepared by the Archaeological Officer of *Milton Keynes Council (AO)*, and a written scheme of investigation prepared by ASC (651/SGL/01, Rouse, 2005)

1.2 Reason for Work

Outline planning permission for residential development (Fig. 3), was granted in 2004 (Application No: 04/01500/FUL). The archaeological work was undertaken to fulfil a condition imposed on the development by the AO, which specified evaluation of the site “*in order to establish the areas of archaeological significance*” (Giggins, 2004). The condition was designed to satisfy the material consideration of the disturbance of archaeological deposits prior to development and their preservation by record where disturbance or destruction is unavoidable (DOE, 1990).

1.3 Setting

1.3.1 Location

The evaluation site is located in the village of Sherington, in the unitary authority of Milton Keynes, at NGR SP 8912 4679 (Fig. 1). It is on the western side of Gun Lane in the historic core of the village, c.80m to the west of the medieval parish church of St Laud (Fig. 2). It is a sub-rectangular area of land, c.0.1ha in area located immediately to the north of the White Hart Inn.

1.3.2 Geology and Topography

The natural soils of the area comprise the *Hanslope Association*, namely slowly permeable calcareous clayey soils over chalky till (Soil Survey, 1983, 411d). The site is essentially flat and lies at an elevation of c.76m. It was bounded to the east by wooden fencing and a hedge facing Gun Lane, to the north and south by wooden property boundary fencing, and metal link fencing at the west.

1.3.3 Site Conditions and Constraints

The site was in use as a lawn area. A tree, located at the centre of the western boundary, was subject to a Tree Protection Order (TPO). Works in its vicinity were therefore carried out in accordance with paragraph 10 of the site arboricultural assessment (Salcey Arborcare & Forestry).

2 Aims & Methods

2.1 Aims

As described in the brief (Section 5), the aims of the evaluation were:

- To obtain information on the extent and character of any archaeological remains that may be present
- To obtain information on the state of preservation and relative quality of any archaeological remains present

2.2 Methods

The work was carried out according to the Brief (Section 5), which required:

- Machine excavation of a minimum of 28 square metres of evaluation trench under close archaeological supervision.

The detailed methods are described in the project design (Rouse, 2005).

2.6 Standards

The work conforms to the requirements of the *Brief*, to the relevant sections of the Institute of Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance Notes* (IFA 2001) and *Code of Conduct* (IFA 2000a), to English Heritage's *The Management of Archaeological Projects* (EH 1991), the *Arboricultural Assessment* (Salcey Arborcare and Forestry), and to the relevant sections of ASC's own *Operations Manual*.

3 Archaeological and Historical Background

3.1 *Introduction*

The Milton Keynes Sites and Monuments Record contains no evidence of archaeological finds or features at the site. However, there is a 15m x 14m bowl barrow recorded 193m to the north west of the site, and 175m north of the site are the remains of ploughed-up linear earthworks which are said to be either Civil War defences (OS record card) or the northern defences of an Iron Age hill fort (Wolverton Arch. Soc. Newsletter (1957) 3).

3.2 *Prehistoric* (before 600BC)

The site of a tumulus is located in Sherington at the corner of Crofts End and Bedford Road c.500m southeast of the site.

3.3 *Iron Age* (600BC-AD43)

Iron Age and Belgic potsherds have been found near the churchyard, and a complete Belgic pottery vessel was unearthed at SP 8897 4676.

3.3 *Romano-British* (AD43-c.450)

Romano-British potsherds have been found near the churchyard suggesting continuity of activity from the Iron Age.

3.4 *Medieval* (c. AD450-1500)

Sherington is mentioned in the Domesday Survey, although the name probably has its origins in the Anglo Saxon period. It was held by the Bishop of Coutances, and as answering for ten hides, at a value of £10. Edwin, son of Burgred held six hides as one manor; his man, Alwin, held one hide as one manor; and Oswulf, King Edward's man, held the other three hides. Alwin and Oswulf are listed as being able to grant and sell their land (Morris, 1978, 5,20). The parish church of St. Laud is noted as having been acquired by Tickford Priory soon after the Priory's inception around 1140 (Markham, 1973, 108).

3.5 *Post-Medieval* (AD1500-1900)

The economy of the village remained largely rural throughout this period and the census of 1851 records the occupation of the majority of males in the village as *farm labourer*. The Manor House and a significant number of vernacular buildings date from the 17th through to the 19th centuries and the centre of the village forms a conservation area.

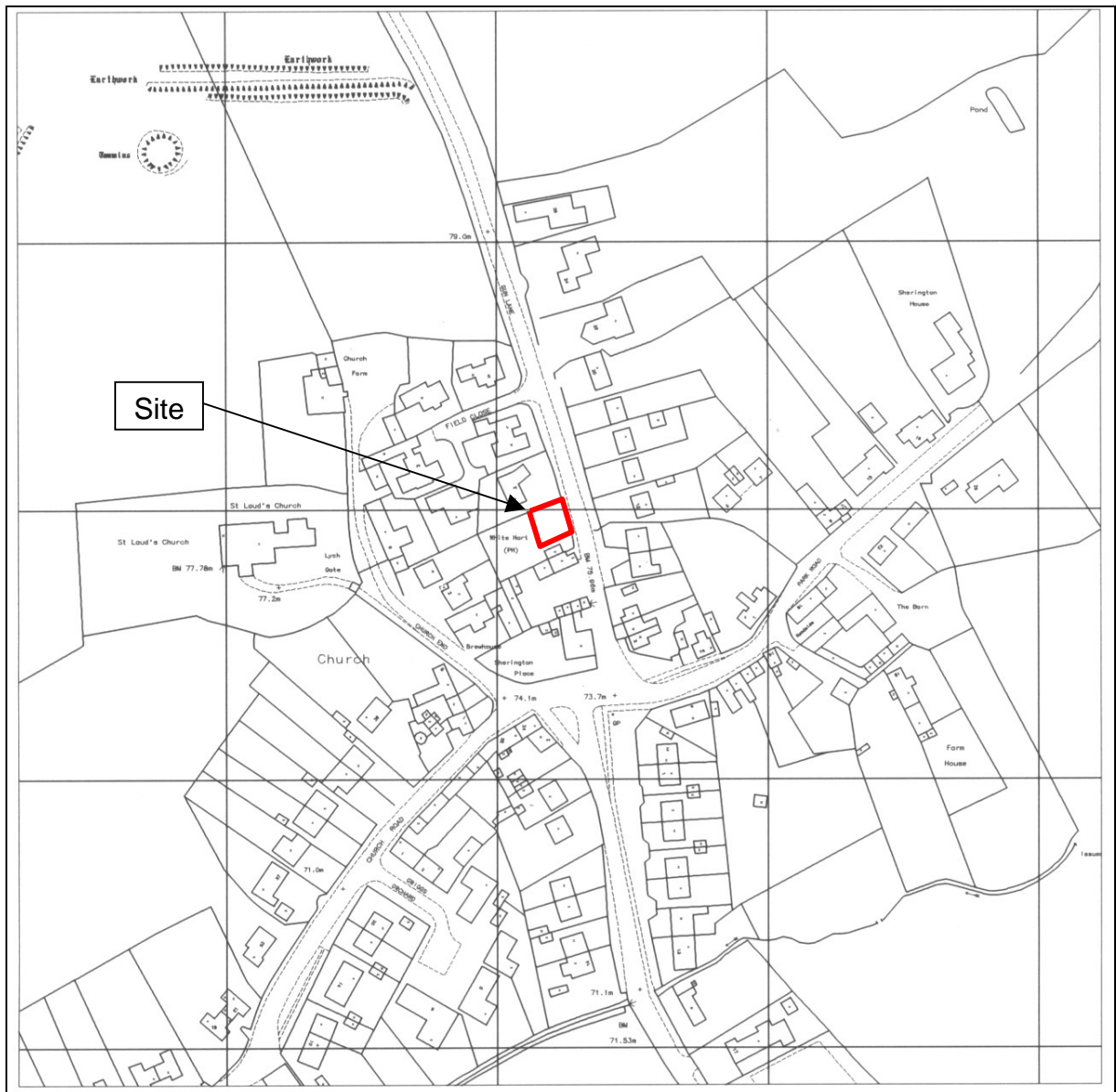


Figure 2: Site plan (scale 1:2500)



Figure 3: Proposed Development (*not to scale*)

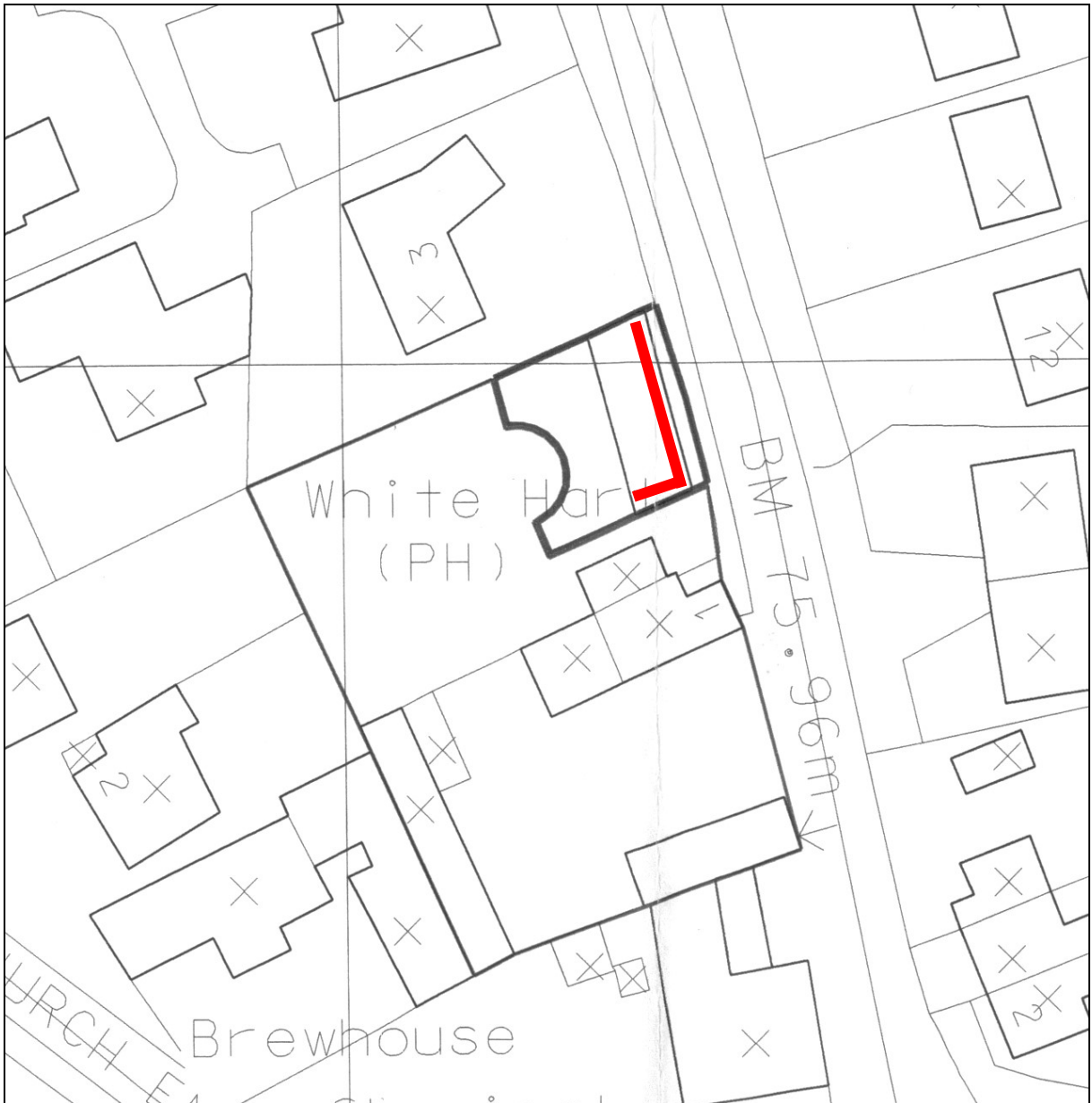


Figure 4: Trench Location (*not to scale*)

4 Results

- 1.1** An L shaped trench was excavated under close archaeological supervision. Its longer northnorthwest-southsoutheast aligned arm measured 11m x 1.6m and the shorter southwest-northeast aligned arm measured 5m x 1.6m.

- 1.2** A dark brown humic topsoil and a mid brown sandy silt subsoil extended to a depth of *c.* 0.5m. Underlying these soil horizons was a mid brown gravelly calcareous sand which contained lenses of clay and infrequent flecks of charcoal. The gravel inclusions were lithologically varied and unsorted, although the majority were small (<3cm) sub rounded limestone clasts. It was suspected that this deposit had a natural origin: however, the flecks of charcoal made this attribution uncertain. Further excavation confirmed that the gravelly sand was the most recent natural deposit which covered an earlier mid yellowish brown natural calcareous sand.

- 1.3** Although a few small fragments of modern brick were noted in the topsoil no other archaeological finds or features were discovered.



Plate 1. Plan of Trench, looking northnorthwest



Plate 2. Plan of Trench, looking northeast



Plate 3. Section through soil profile, looking southsoutheast

5. Conclusions

3.1 *Confidence Rating*

The confidence rating for the recognition of archaeological deposits and features on this site was good. The weather was moderate during fieldwork and the differing strata were easily distinguished.

5.2 *Conclusions*

5.2.1 The absence of archaeological finds or features indicates that this area may have been located in the agricultural hinterland of the Iron Age and Romano-British activity that is suggested by the potsherds discovered in the vicinity of the Church, and may have remained at the periphery of Medieval and subsequent activity.

5.2.2 The unsorted gravelly sand is a natural deposit deriving from localised geomorphological processes that may have operated, given the presence of small amounts of charcoal, during the early Holocene.

6. Acknowledgements

The author is grateful to Mr K. Shepherd for commissioning this work. Thanks are also due to Brian Giggins the Archaeological Officer of Milton Keynes Council and the JCB operator. Cordial thanks are also offered to Bob Zeevat for editing this document. The site team consisted of the author and Calli Rouse BA.

7. Archive

7.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Brief
2. Project Design
3. Initial Report
4. Clients site plans
5. 4 Trench record sheets
6. List of photographs
7. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

7.2 The archive will be deposited with *Buckinghamshire County Museum*. The Accession Number for the site is 2005.24.

7.3 Details of the excavation will be entered in the on-line “OASIS” database maintained by ADS at <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis>

8. Bibliography

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EH 1991 *The Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd edition. English Heritage (London).

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Markham, F. 1973 *A History of Milton Keynes and District*. White Crescent Press Limited, Luton.

Morris, J.(ed). 1978 *The Domesday Book*. History from the Sources. Phillimore, Chichester.


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Salcey Arborcare & Forestry *Arboricultural Assessment*

Soil Survey 1983 *1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend* (Harpenden).

Wolverton Archaeological Society Newsletter 1957, 3

Appendix 1: Trench Summary Tables

Trench 1						
	Max Dimensions					
	Total Length	16m	Width	1.60m	Depth	1.00m
	Levels					
	Trench base north			m OD		
	Trench top north			m OD		
	Trench base south			m OD		
	Trench top south			m OD		
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	NNW	SP 89130 46780		SSW	89120 246764	
	Orientation			NNW to SSE		
Reason for Trench			General Evaluation			
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)	
100	Layer	Dark brown humic silt. Topsoil	-	200	-	
101	Layer	Mid brown sandy silt. Subsoil	-	300	200	
102	Layer	Mid brown gravelly sand. Natural	-	400	500	
103	Layer	Mid yellowish brown sand. Natural	-	900+	900	