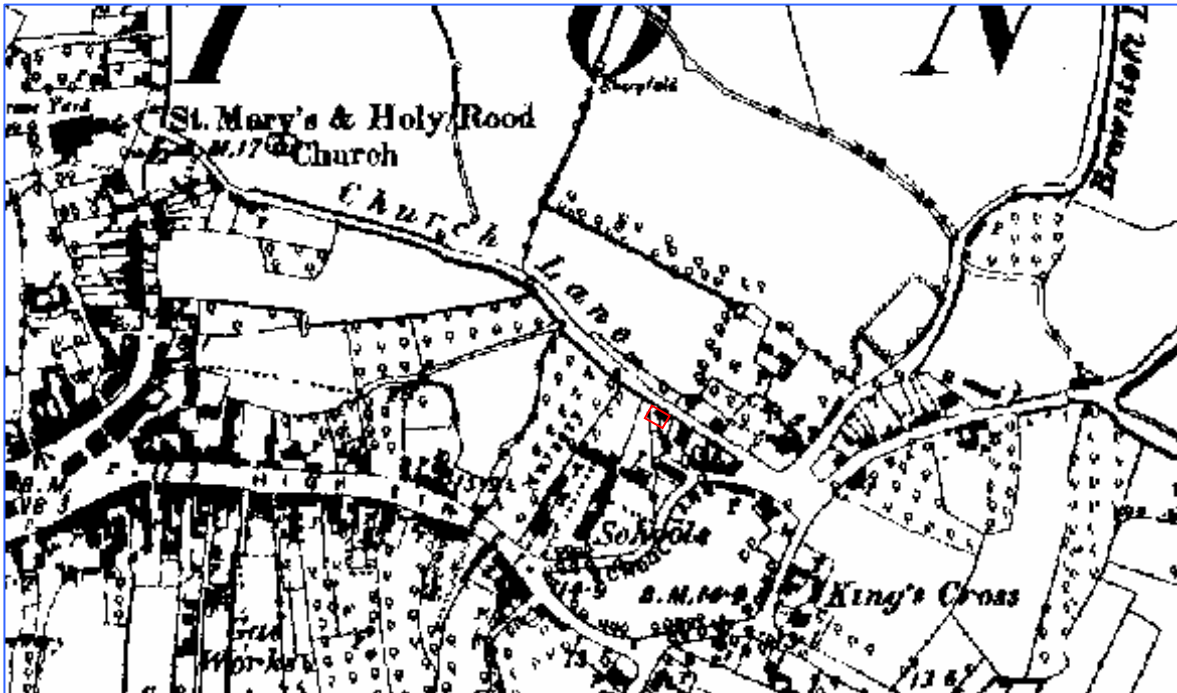


**REPORT ON AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SCHEME OF WORKS:  
THOMAS COWLEY SCHOOL, DONINGTON, LINCOLNSHIRE**

Planning Reference: H04/1402/07  
NGR: TF 2123 3574  
AAA Site Code: DTCS 08  
LCCM Accession Number: 2008.18  
OASIS reference: allenarc1-43288



Report prepared for Mouchel Business Services  
On behalf of Thomas Cowley School

by

Allen Archaeological Associates  
Report Number 2008/034

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## Document Control

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## Summary

- Allen Archaeological Associates was commissioned by Mouchel Business Services to carry out an archaeological scheme of works during ground works for the construction of a new extension to Thomas Cowley School, Donington, Lincolnshire
- The site is situated in an area of archaeological potential for the Romano-British period, as well as lying on the eastern edge of the historic core of the village.
- Monitoring of the groundworks exposed a post-medieval brick drainage culvert and two subsequent phases of brick walls defining structures of post-medieval to early modern date that formerly occupied the site.



**Figure 1:** Site location map, at scale 1:25,000  
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## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Allen Archaeological Associates was commissioned by Mouchel Business Services to carry out an archaeological scheme of works to monitor ground works associated with the construction of a new extension at Thomas Cowley School, Donington, Lincolnshire. This work was undertaken was to satisfy a planning requirement issued by Lincolnshire County Council.
- 1.2 The site works and reporting conform to current national guidelines, as set out in the Institute for Field Archaeologists 'Standards and guidance for archaeological watching briefs' (IFA 2001) and a specification prepared by Allen Archaeological Associates (Clay 2008).
- 1.3 The archive will be submitted to The Collection, Lincoln and archived under the accession number 2008.18.

## 2.0 Site location and description

- 2.1 Donington is situated approximately 42km south-south-east of Lincoln and 30km east of Grantham, in the administrative district of South Holland. The school is towards the east side of the historic core of the village, to the north of School Lane and to the south of Church Lane. The proposed extension is at the north end of the school grounds, and centres on NGR TF 2123 3574.
- 2.2 The geology of the area comprises drift deposits of the Terrington Beds; salt marsh, tidal creek and river deposits, which have accumulated since the Romano-British period. This seals a solid geology of Ancholme Group Clay (British Geological Survey 1995).

## 3.0 Planning background

- 3.1 Full planning permission has been granted (Planning Application H04/1402/07) for the construction of a new single storey classroom extension with associated office and store.
- 3.2 Permission was granted subject to conditions, including the undertaking of an archaeological scheme of works by a suitably competent archaeologist. The scheme of works comprises the monitoring of all groundworks for the development, and the recording of any archaeological remains exposed, effectively 'preserving the archaeology by record'. This approach is consistent with the guidelines that are set out in *Archaeology and Planning: Planning Policy Guidance Note 16* (1990), and the *Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook: A Manual of archaeological practice* (LCC 1998).

## 4.0 Archaeological and historical background

- 4.1 There is substantial evidence for Romano-British activity in the area. The Lincolnshire Historic Environment Record and the Archaeology Data Service list several scatters of pottery, numerous cropmarks and field systems, as well as a cremation and inhumation cemetery, recorded as being within the 1km grid square TF 21 35 (ADS reference NMR\_NATINV-352492). The grid reference is somewhat vague, but the possibility cannot be discounted that it falls within the vicinity of the site. Stukeley also mentions an undated cist burial containing a possible cremation urn exposed during the digging of foundations for the school, at NGR TF 2117 3566 (HER ref. 22492).
- 4.2 The A52, which extends east-west through the village, is on the course of Bridge End Causeway, an extension of the Roman Salter's Way, which may follow the line of a prehistoric routeway. The Roman road connects with the Fosse Way north of Leicester and runs through Saltersford

(south of Grantham), through to Donington, and eastwards, where its route is lost beneath post-Roman accumulations of alluvial silt. Whitwell suggests that the road served to connect the cantonal capital at Leicester with the sea (Whitwell 1992).

- 4.3 Donington appears in the Domesday Book as *Duninctune*, from the Old English for ‘village/farmstead of Dunn’ (Cameron, 1998). The land was in the ownership of St. Peter’s of Peterborough and Count Alan. The Domesday Book mentions 27 ‘salt houses’ in the parish (Morgan & Thorne 1986), suggesting a major salt making industry, and the local geology map shows medieval saltern mounds to the east and north-east of the village (British Geological Survey 1995).
- 4.4 The school itself was founded by Thomas Cowley in 1719, and rebuilt after a fire in 1812 (Pevsner & Harris 2002). It has since been added to in a piecemeal fashion from the 1960’s with new wings and additional facilities being constructed until the present day.
- 4.5 A number of previous archaeological investigations have taken place at the school, which exposed largely post-medieval or modern deposits, although fieldwork in 2000 identified a cut feature interpreted as a possible grave cut or well of medieval or earlier date (Allen 2000, Clay 2001).

## 5.0 Methodology

- 5.1 The monitoring of ground works was carried out by Phil Chavasse and the author between the 25<sup>th</sup> of February and the 6<sup>th</sup> of March 2008, to determine the presence/absence of archaeological features as the work progressed.
- 5.2 During excavation, all exposed plan and section surfaces were examined and periodically cleaned, in order to determine the stratigraphic sequence. A full written record of the work was completed with plans and sections drawn at appropriate scales (1:20 and 1:50) and pro-forma context recording sheets were used to record each individual archaeological context.
- 5.3 A photographic record was maintained throughout the watching brief, including general site shots and photographs of the sequence of deposits with appropriate scales and a north arrow. A sample of these are included as an appendix (Appendix 1).

## 6.0 Results (Figures 3 and 4)

- 6.1 At the north-west side of the site, the uppermost deposit was a 0.2m deep dark brown clay silt topsoil 113, which sealed a 0.40m deep deposit of grey brown clay/silt 114, representing a probable subsoil horizon. The underlying natural geological deposit on the site consisted of mid brown clay silt 115, which extended below the limit of excavation.
- 6.2 On the south-eastern side of the site the uppermost layer comprised a limestone aggregate 100, laid down to support the tarmac car park surface that was removed before excavation commenced. This sealed a dark brown silty clay 101, interspersed with frequent inclusions of modern rubble, interpreted as a demolition deposit associated with the construction of the car park and the nearby school buildings. Below this was layer 102, a grey brown clay/silt, which was similar in character to layer 114 but included occasional fragments of brick and small stones within its matrix. This deposit extended beyond the limit of excavation.
- 6.3 The foundation trench aligned along the Church Lane frontage revealed a sequence of stratified deposits indicative of deliberate levelling and infilling, associated with three phases of structural

remains. This part of the site was sealed by limestone hardcore deposit 100, with a thin underlying lens of demolition layer 101.

- 6.4 The dumped deposits exposed in this section of the foundation trenches comprised deposits 102, 110, 111 and 112, all consisting of dark brown clay silts with frequent inclusions of ceramic building material, stone and charcoal. None of the deposits produced any dating evidence.
- 6.5 The dumped deposits were cut by two parallel walls of a brick structure, running on a north-north-east to south-south-west alignment. Both walls comprised a construction cut, [107], which was filled by a 0.18m thick deposit of lime based cement with frequent inclusions of fragmented brick. The wall constructed onto this base, 109, was of roughly coursed hard faced wire cut 3 x 9 x 4 ½ inch red bricks bonded with a lime based mortar, which were dated to the mid 19<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> century. The walls did not continue into the service trench to the north, and a collapsed section of the north face of the foundation trench exposed part of the west-north-west to east-south-east aligned component of the structure (see Figures 3 and 4, Plate 2).
- 6.6 Another wall, in a construction cut [106] was recorded to the north-west of [107]. At the base of the cut was a two course width brick foundation, 104, constructed in 2 ½ x 8 ⅝ x 4 ¼ inch soft faced mould-formed bricks of 18<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> century date. Overlying 104 was a more irregular foundation, 105, comprising randomly coursed full and part bricks bonded with a lime based mortar that extended to within 0.08m of the current ground surface. There was no evidence for a return in the wall which extended into and beyond the service trench to the north. To the north-west of the wall was a large modern tree bole, [116], which obscured the stratigraphic relationship between construction cut [106] and the dumped deposits 110 and 111. However, as cut [106] contained only the foundation courses, with no evidence for a superstructure, it seems likely that [106] is cut through the dumped deposits.
- 6.7 Abutting [106] to the south-east, and sealed by dumped deposit 111, was a brick built vaulted drainage culvert [103], constructed in late 17<sup>th</sup> to mid 18<sup>th</sup> century hand made red soft faced 2 ¾ x 8 ½ x 4 ½ inch bricks bonded with a lime based mortar. The culvert followed a north-north-east to south-south-west orientation extending beyond the limits of excavation in both directions. It was not possible to establish the full construction depth of the culvert during the groundworks.

## 7.0 Discussion and conclusion

- 7.1 The sequence of deposits and structural evidence encountered during this scheme of works has demonstrated that this part of the school grounds had been redeveloped on more than one occasion.
- 7.2 The earliest structure recorded on the site was the culvert [103], a brick from which was of late 17<sup>th</sup> to mid 19<sup>th</sup> century date and it may therefore predate the construction of the school, in 1719, although the very broad date for the brick sample from the structure is far from certain. It was sealed by a sequence of dumped deposits, probably deposited to raise and/or level the ground surface, possibly in preparation for the construction of the structure defined by [106]. A small building may be discerned in the approximate location of the site on the 1893 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map of the area (see cover), which may be related to structure [106], a brick from which was dated to the 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century. The field boundaries shown on the 1893 map however, suggest that this building was at this time not within the grounds of the school.
- 7.3 A subsequent phase of development is represented by structure [107], two sides of which were exposed running across the foundation trenches, while a third wall was partially exposed by the collapsing section of the foundation trench. A brick from this structure was dated to the mid 19<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century.

- 7.4 The remainder of the foundation trenches and the drainage trenches were of limited archaeological significance, exposing a largely natural sequence towards the north-west side of the development area, and modern demolition deposits to the south-east.

## **8.0 Effectiveness of methodology**

- 8.1 The methodology chosen was appropriate to the scale and nature of the development. It has identified deposits of limited archaeological significance within the development area, comprising structural components of post-medieval to early modern date.

## **9.0 Acknowledgements**

- 9.1 Allen Archaeological Associates would like to thank Mouchel Business Services, and their client, Thomas Cowley School for commissioning this work.



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## 11.0 Site archive

- 11.1 The documentary and physical archive is currently in the possession of Allen Archaeological Associates. It will be submitted to The Collection within six months, and can be accessed using the LCCM Accession Number 2008.18.

**Appendix 1: Colour Plates**



**Plate 1:** General working shot of the development area looking north-west.



**Plate 2:** South-south-west facing section, showing tree bole [116], culvert [103] and walls [106] and [107]. To the right of the scale can be seen the collapsed section exposing the face of wall [107]. Looking north-north-east.





**Plate 3:** Stratigraphic sequence at south-east side of development area, looking west-north-west.



**Plate 4:** Stratigraphic sequence at north-west side of development area, looking west-north-west.

**Appendix 2: Ceramic building material assessment***By Jane Young*

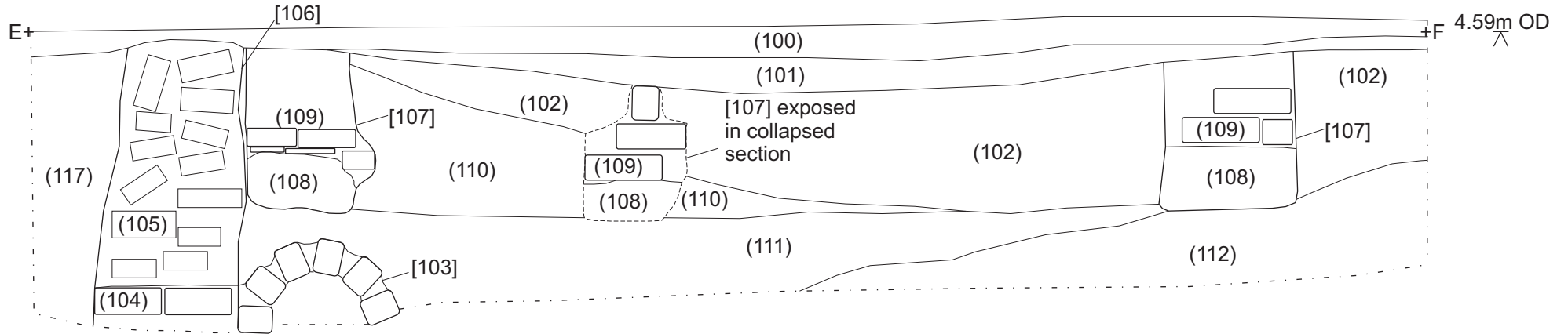
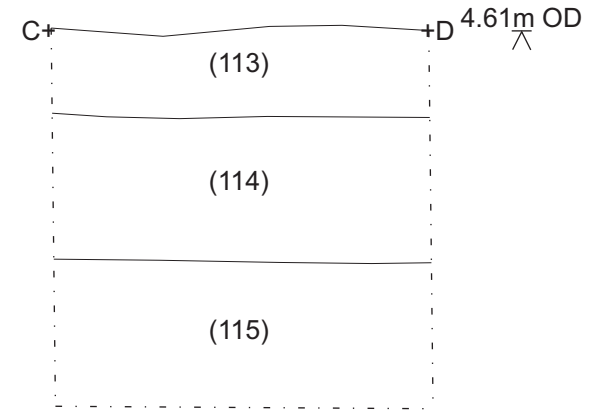
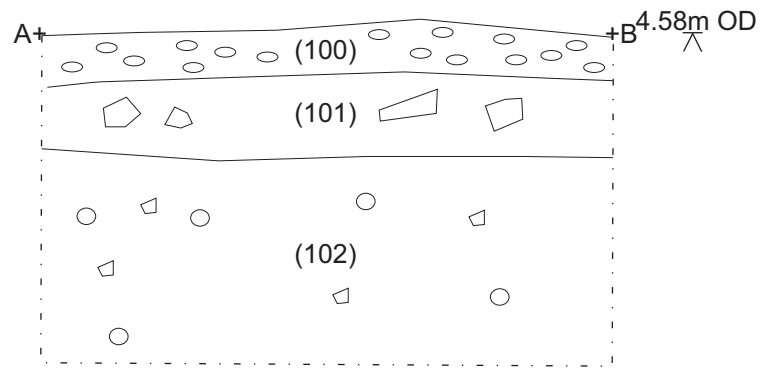
context	cname	full name	fabric	frags	weight	action	description	date
103	BRK	Brick	near vitrified fine red-purple fabric + some ca	1	2799	discarded	complete;handmade;roughly struck upper;partly sunken margins;staking and mould marks on stretchers & ends;bedded on fine sand & straw; 220x106x68mm; mortar	late 17th to mid 19th
104	BRK	Brick	fine orange-red fabric with mod fine fe	1	2400	discarded	complete;roughly struck upper;rough ends & stretchers;slop moulded?;215x100x55mm;slightly distorted;mortar	18th to 19th
109	BRK	Brick	fine orange-red fabric	1	3050	discarded	near complete;handmade or early machine made;heavy strike marks on upper surface;1 stretcher & surviving end completely smooth;1 stretcher heavily struck ? Wire marks; 223+x110x74mm; mortar including over broken end	mid 19th to mid 20th

**Appendix 3: Context summary list**

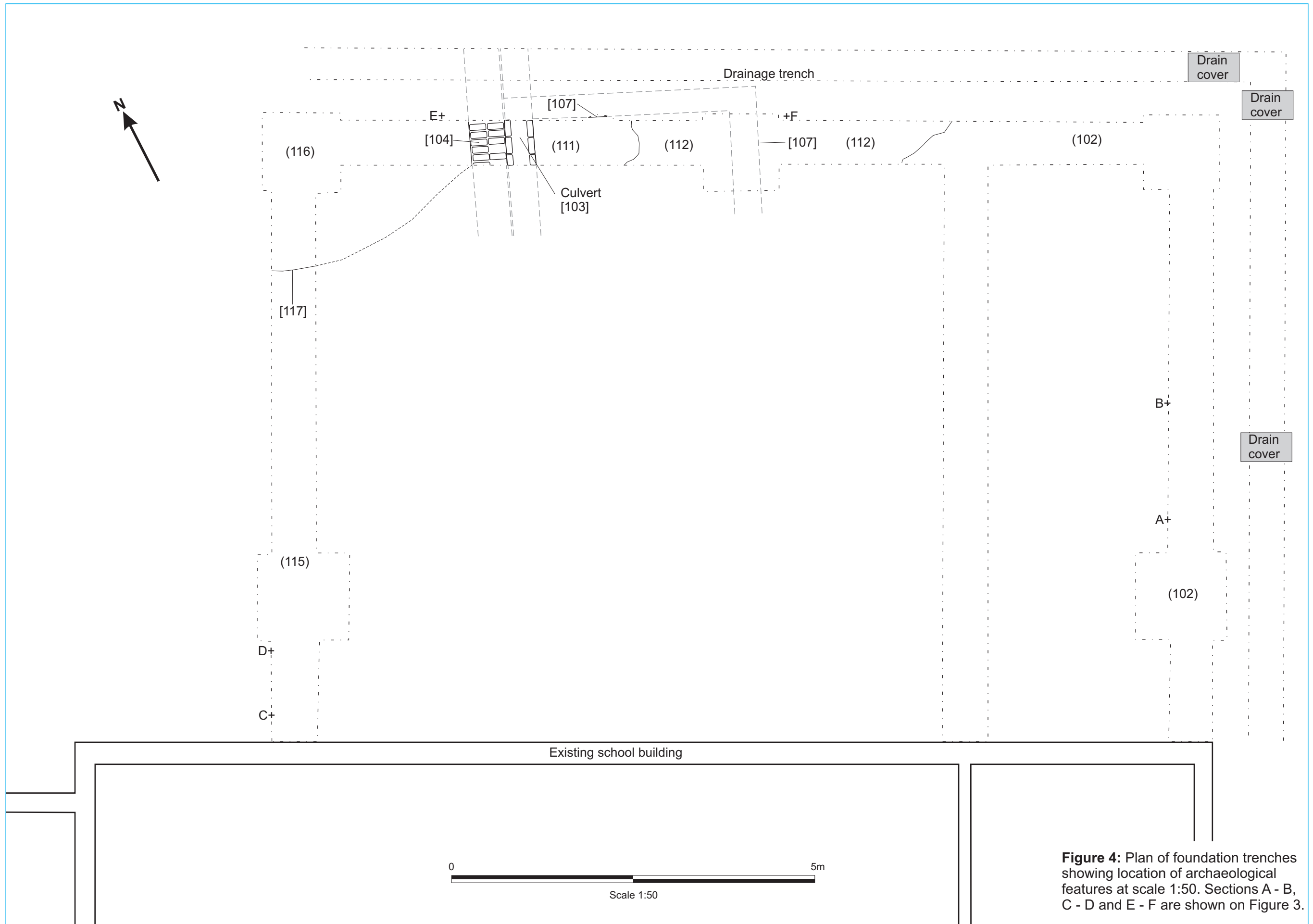
Context	Type	Description	Interpretation
100	Layer	Crushed limestone	Modern aggregate
101	Layer	Black/brown silty clay with frequent rubble	Re-deposited materials probably associated with the construction of adjacent school buildings.
102	Layer	Dark grey brown clay silt with occasional CBM and stones	Ground raising/levelling deposit
103	Structure	Arch of lime mortar bonded bricks, aligned NNE - SSW	Drainage culvert
104	Structure	Two course wide brick foundation, sealed by 105, contained by [106]	Primary wall foundation in [106]
105	Structure	Part bricks irregularly bonded with lime mortar, seals 104, contained by [106].	Secondary wall foundation in [106]
106	Cut	NNE – SSW aligned construction cut, contains 104, 105. Probably cuts 110, 111	Foundation cut for wall [104]/[105]
107	Cut	NNE – SSW aligned construction cut, contains 108, 109. Cuts 102, 110, 111.	Foundation cut for wall (109)
108	Structure	Lime based mortar	Primary foundation for wall (109)
109	Structure	Roughly coursed bricks, seals 108, contained by [107]	Brick structure within [107]
110	Deposit	Dark brown silty clay	Ground raising/levelling deposit
111	Deposit	Mid brown silty clay with frequent CBM and charcoal fragments	Ground raising/levelling deposit
112	Deposit	Dark grey brown clay silt with frequent stones and charcoal pieces	Ground raising/levelling deposit
113	Layer	Dark brown clay silt	Topsoil
114	Layer	Grey brown clay silt	Subsoil
115	Layer	Mid brown clay silt	Natural alluvial deposit



**Figure 2:** Site location plan, with the site outlined in red at scale 1:1000



**Figure 3:** Section drawings A - B, C - D and E - F at scale 1:20. Located on Figure 4



**Figure 4:** Plan of foundation trenches showing location of archaeological features at scale 1:50. Sections A - B, C - D and E - F are shown on Figure 3.