



Finham Park 2 School Leigh Court, Torrington Avenue Coventry

Archaeological Evaluation



for Bam Construction Ltd

CA Project: 660675 CA Report: 16179

March 2016



Finham Park 2 School Leigh Court, Torrington Avenue Coventry

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SUMMARY

Project Name: Finham Park 2 School

Location: Leigh Court, Torrington Avenue, Coventry

NGR: SP 290 777

Type: Evaluation

Date: 21-24 March 2016

Planning Reference: FUL/2016/0073

Location of Archive: Herbert Art Gallery and Museum

Site Code: TA16

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in March 2016 for BAM Construction Ltd at Finham Park 2 School, Leigh Court, Torrington Avenue, Coventry. Four trenches were excavated.

Trench 3 revealed a small concentration of archaeology, predominately in the form of ditches, dating from the late 17th century into the 18th century. No evidence of archaeological remains was identified in the other trenches which principally comprised significant deposits of modern demolition material over 1.6m thick. The natural geology was exposed in trenches 1 and 4 and exhibited extensive modern disturbance.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In March 2016 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation for BAM Construction Ltd at Leigh Court, Torrington Avenue, Coventry (centred on NGR: NGR: SP 290 777; Fig. 1). The evaluation was undertaken to inform the decision-making process associated with planning application (FUL/2016/0073; Coventry City Council), in advance of the development of a sports hall and two multi-user games areas (MUGAs).
- 1.2 The scope of the evaluation and the trenching strategy were agreed following discussions between Cotswold Archaeology and Chris Patrick, Conservation and Archaeology Officer (CAO) for Coventry City Council. The discussions were in part informed by the results of a *Geotechnical and Land Contamination Assessment* of the site (LBS Wembley, December 2015), data derived from Coventry City Council's Historic Environment Record (via Heritage Gateway) and discussion with Mr Patrick. Subsequently a detailed *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) produced by CA (2016) and approved by the CAO. The fieldwork followed *Standard and guidance: Archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2014), and was monitored by Chris Patrick on the 22nd and 24th March 2016.

The site

- 1.3 The proposed development area is *c*.1.3ha, and comprises formal car-parking and soft landscaping associated with the former Land Registry Office (east of the site) and a nursery school immediately adjacent to the site on its western side. The site is bounded on its northern side by Torrington Avenue, which runs east west, with a large area of wooded soft landscaping separating the western half of the site from the road. The southern site boundary is similarly wooded, with a boundary fence separating the site from a railway embankment beyond. The remainder of the western boundary is formed by Wolfe Road, which runs in a southerly direction from Torrington Avenue to pass under a railway bridge. The site lies at approximately *c*.100m above Ordnance datum (aOD) on the northern boundary to *c*.95m aOD on the southern boundary, a distance of approximately 120m.
- 1.4 The solid geology underlying the site comprises sandstone and mudstone of the Tile Hill Mudstone Formation. No superficial deposits are recorded, though the stream

that passes to the south of the site will have associated alluvial deposits which may extend into the south-west corner of the site (BGS viewer March 2016). The geology recorded on site predominantly comprised silty sand.

1.5 The recently undertaken geotechnical and land contamination assessment (December 2015, LBH Wembley), identified made ground deposits across the whole site which vary in depth from c.1.0m in the north of the site (Borehole 1) to c.2.1m in the south (Borehole 7). This comprised predominantly a mix of brick and tile rubble with broken concrete, some rebar, crushed rock and sand.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The archaeological background has been informed by accessible historical records and from *Coventry*, *The hidden History* (Soden 2005).
- 2.2 The site is known to have encompassed in large part, the remains of a Knights Templar Camera, Fletchampsted (MCT2479). This was a residence used by the Templars during visits to their properties or when managing the running of their estates. It had originally been founded as an estate in the 12th century.
- 2.3 The earliest pictorial record of the site is on the 1597 'Plot of the Several Grounds Lying in Hurste, Fletchamstead and Candley' and whilst the principal medieval hall cannot be identified on this map a number of buildings are shown. It is thought on that basis that these may include the early manor and farm buildings associated with the Templar occupation of the site, though it may be the case that the buildings depicted are of a later, Jacobean period mansion and associated buildings.
- 2.4 More recently the site is likely to have been in use as agricultural land associated with the nearby Fletchamstead Hall when the London and Birmingham Railway was constructed on an embankment to the south of the site in the 1830s. This later became the London and North Western Railway in 1846. A stream ran through the area immediately adjacent to the south-western corner of the site before then running under the railway embankment. It also fed a pond, formerly located in the south-west corner of the site. This may have served as a watering hole for livestock and had been removed or infilled by the latter half of the 1930s.

- 2.5 Few evident changes occurred within the site until the 1940s when a Ministry of Labour government training centre (later, the Coventry Skills Centre) was constructed on the site, and Torrington Avenue and Wolfe Road were built. The centre comprised a number of large buildings that covered much of the site, including a long building on the western side of the western car-park area (with smaller ancillary buildings covering the eastern half). The area beneath the proposed MUGAs remained largely undeveloped, though some small buildings were located in that area. At the time of the training centre development the land was partially levelled to facilitate construction, as evidenced by steep slopes immediately south of Torrington Avenue where the land has been cut level.
- 2.6 Post-Second World War the area surrounding the site and its wider environs was subject to widespread industrial, commercial and institutional expansion.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 The objectives of the evaluation were to provide information about the surviving archaeological resource within the site, including its presence/absence, character, extent, date, integrity, state of preservation and quality. In accordance with guidance set out in *Standard and guidance: Archaeological field evaluation* (CIfA 2014), the evaluation was designed to be minimally intrusive and minimally destructive to known and potential archaeological remains. The information gathered will enable Coventry City Council, as advised by its CAO, to identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset within the site, consider the impact of the proposed development upon that significance, and to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the development proposal, in line with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012).

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The fieldwork comprised the excavation of four trenches (1.8 2m wide, 46 linear metres in total); in the locations shown on the attached plan (Fig. 2). The location of each of the trenches was changed from the original plan as depicted in the approved WSI due to the presence of modern services. The revised locations were approved following discussion with Chris Patrick. The trenches were surveyed using Leica GPS in accordance with CA Technical Manual 4 Survey Manual.
- 4.2 All trenches were excavated by mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless grading bucket and with a toothed bucket where required. All machine excavation was undertaken under constant archaeological supervision to the top of the first significant archaeological horizon or the natural substrate, whichever was encountered first. Where archaeological deposits were encountered they were excavated by hand in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: Fieldwork Recording Manual.
- 4.3 Deposits were assessed for their palaeoenvironmental potential in accordance with CA Technical Manual 2: The Taking and Processing of Environmental and Other Samples from Archaeological Sites No deposits were identified that required sampling. All artefacts recovered were processed in accordance with Technical Manual 3 Treatment of Finds Immediately after Excavation.
- 4.4 The archive and artefacts from the evaluation are currently held by CA at its offices in Milton Keynes. Subject to the agreement of the legal landowner the artefacts will be deposited with the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum along with the site archive. A summary of information from this project, set out within Appendix D, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

5. RESULTS (FIGS 2-8)

Trench 1 (Figs 2 & 3)

5.1 The natural geology, mid brown silty clay, was exposed 2.2m below the current ground level (BGL) 97.1m aOD at the eastern end of the trench. No archaeological features were observed in the natural substrate, which was sealed by an organic silt sand layer (103), most likely formed in partial waterlogged conditions. A pit (104) of

substantial size truncated both deposits and contained modern backfill material. Glass bottles were also recovered from this pit dating to the 1950s (W. Lant & Sons, Coventry). This supports the historical and cartographic evidence which records the infilling of the former watering hole feature from at least the 1930s. In addition, compact made ground brick demolition rubble, 0.9m thick was present along the length on the trench which in turn was sealed by the current modern tarmac car park.

Trench 2 (Figs 2 & 8)

5.2 Excavation of trench 2 ceased at *c*.2.2m beneath the modern ground level (97.47m aOD) due to the prevailing water table. The natural geology was not exposed below a brick rubble demolition levelling deposit of over 1.8m thickness which was sealed by the current tarmac car park. The location of trench 2 correlates directly with a former building of the government training centre (Fig. 8) built in the 1940s. The brick demolition rubble likely relates to this former building which was demolished then levelled in the 1990s; evidence of the raising of ground levels subsequent to the 1940s.

Trench 3 (Figs 2, 5, 6 & 7)

- A shallow truncated pit (322) was located centrally within the trench and was the earliest feature identified. No artefacts were recovered from within its fill (321; Fig. 7). A rectilinear ditch (320) truncated this pit. It had a 'U'-shaped profile, with right angled corners with a potential posthole recorded at its north-western terminal end. The shape, profile and potential posthole in this undated ditch may infer the former presence of a beam slot constructed building, though of unknown function. Directly to the west, a shallow ditch (318) terminated within the trench on a north-west to south-east alignment. One sherd of 17th to 18th century pottery, dating this ditch, was recovered from its fill (317).
- A layer (315) survived in the western half of the trench, sealing the features discussed above. This layer thinned out toward its eastern end and was truncated at either extent respectively by a modern pit (304) and a ditch (314) (fig. 6). The layer appeared to be a deposit of buried topsoil and could well represent a deposition event rather than evidence of *in situ* former topsoil since it was locally present only within trench 3. A second layer (316) was recorded directly to its east sealing the

natural geology and likely representing another localised levelling event of redeposited natural material. Both deposits were located only in this trench. Although no dating material was recovered from either of these layers they can be dated to the late 17th to 18th centuries on the basis of their stratigraphic relationship. Layer 315 sealed ditch 318 and ditch 312 truncated layer 316; both features contained secure dating material from this period.

- 5.5 Two intercutting ditches were recorded centrally within the trench which truncated both layers discussed above (315 and 316). A north-west to south-east aligned ditch (310) was heavily disturbed by made ground (302) which had been compacted into the soft fill (309). This ditch (310) truncates another (314) on its eastern edge. The latter, north-south orientated and terminating toward the centre of the trench, may represent the remains of a possible boundary ditch, though produced no dating material. At the western end of the trench a potential north-south orientated ditch (308) was heavily disturbed by a later pit (304). No artefacts were recovered from (307) which was filled with a deposit very similar to the natural geology. A further ditch (312), not fully exposed, lay at the eastern end of the trench and truncated layer (316). The final ditch fill (323) was contaminated by modern intrusions compacted in to it as a result of demolition levelling event (302). The Primary ditch fill (311), a backfill, contained pottery dating again to the late 17th to 18th centuries.
- A further ditch (306) which had vertical sides and was filled with redeposited natural material exhibited the characteristics of a modern service pipe trench, although no service was found. A pit (304), at the western limit of the trench, contained quantities of brick rubble and metalwork of modern origin.
- 5.7 Brick demolition rubble levelling layer (302) sealed the entire length of the trench and was up to 0.75m in depth toward its eastern end; it was in turn sealed by the current tarmac car park.

Trench 4

5.8 The natural geology, light yellow brown sand, was exposed at 1.55m below the current ground level (97.97 aOD); no archaeological features were visible. This was cut by a man hole and associated sewer pipes associated with the former buildings on site. Demolition rubble and tarmac sealed the natural substrate.

6. THE FINDS BY KATIE MARSDEN

6.1 Artefactual material recovered from the evaluation is listed in Appendix B and discussed further below.

Pottery

6.2 Only four sherds of pottery (38g), all dating to the post-medieval period, were recorded in two deposits (Appendix B). The majority, material recorded from ditches 312 (fill 311) and 318 (fill 317), consists of sherds in black glazed earthenware, a type common from the Midlands and dateable to the late 17th to 18th centuries. One sherd of unglazed earthenware, probably of similar date, was also recorded from ditch 312 (fill 311).

Other finds

- 6.3 Eight fragments of ceramic building material (CBM) were recorded from two deposits. These were dateable to the post-medieval period. Three brick fragments (3593g) were recorded in ditch 312 (fills 311 and 323). Ditch 312 (fill 311) also produced two undiagnostic fragments (94g), as well as two fragments (101g) of probable flat roof tile.
- Two pieces of iron were recorded in ditch 207 (fill 210), both of uncertain function. Both pieces are circular-sectioned, the larger of the two with thickened terminals.

7. DISCUSSION

- 7.1 The only archaeological features revealed on site were identified in trench 3 at the northern limits of the development area; at the highest point this lay at *c*.96.55 aOD (See Appendix C). The concentration of features, in three phases was largely undated. The artefacts recovered date this activity to the late 17th to 18th centuries. This is principally on the basis of stratigraphically dateable evidence recovered from both the earliest and latest features. No clear function can be identified for the majority of the features although ditch 320 tentatively suggests the presence of a former building of beam slot construction. Topsoil layer 315 may represent the only surviving original topsoil pre-dating the construction of the 1940s buildings, indicating extensive truncation across the site. Alternatively, however, the nature of the deposit may also suggest its origin as a depositional event.
- 7.2 The archaeological remains recorded, predominantly in trench 3, could relate to land associated with Fletchamstead Hall, formerly located to the north of the site. The concentration of generally small and shallow features do not have an obvious agricultural function, though this is a likely supposition, perhaps associated with land management at the hall. Post-war development of the area is likely to have significantly truncated evidence of former land-use to the extent that its original purpose may no longer be discernible. Existing evidence does not, however, appear to relate to any putative formal garden layout that might have been associated with Fletchamstead Hall.
- 7.3 The water related deposit identified in trench 1 in the south-west corner of the site can likely be associated with the former stream or associated pond / waterhole recorded on historical mapping. Mapping evidence demonstrates that this was infilled in the 1930s and artefacts visible at its surface support this interpretation.
- 7.4 A substantial layer of brick-based demolition rubble was identified across the entirety of the site according with data provided by the earlier borehole survey (December 2015, LBH Wembley). The made ground was very compacted, around 1m thick to the north of the development area and up to 2m thick to the south (trench 2) indicating a levelling of the site, which formerly would have sloped down from north to south. The brick rubble relates to the demolition of government buildings constructed between the 1940s and 1970s, and subsequent landscaping associated with the development of the existing buildings in the 1990s. The construction of

these buildings and services, along with their subsequent demolition also cut into natural geological deposits, as seen in trench 4. It is likely therefore that these construction and demolition processes will have significantly affected the potential for the presence of surviving buried archaeological remains elsewhere on site, although the extent to which this may be so is unclear.

8. CA PROJECT TEAM

8.1 Fieldwork was undertaken by Julian Newman, assisted by Alice Amabilino, Jon Whitmore and Mark Woodley. The report was written by Julian Newman. The finds report was written by Katie Marsden. The illustrations were prepared by Sam O'Leary. The archive has been compiled by Emily Evans, and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neill. The project was managed for CA by Mark Hewson.

9. REFERENCES

- BGS (British Geological Survey) 2015 *Geology of Britain Viewer*http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geology-viewer-google/googleviewer.html Accessed March 2016.
- CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2016 Finham Park 2 School, Leigh Court, Torrington Avenue, Coventry: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation.
- DCLG (Department of Communities and Local Government) 2012 *National Planning Policy Framework.*
- LBH Wembley Geotechnical and Environmental 2015 *Geotechnical and Land Contamination*Assessment of Leigh Court, Torrington Avenue, Coventry. For BAM Construction

 Ltd. LBH 4375 Version 2.1.

Soden, I 2005 Coventry, the hidden history. Tempus.

APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench No.	Context No.	Туре	Fill of	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	D (m)
1	100	Layer		Made ground	Tarmac surface			0.1
1	101	Layer		Made ground	Gravel base for tarmac car park			0.5
1	102	Layer		Made ground	Brick and concrete based building demolition rubble			0.9
1	103	Layer		Alluvial deposit	Mid brown grey, silty sand, loose organic deposit	>9	>1.8	0.4
1	104	Cut		Modern pit	Mot fully revealed in plan, not bottomed	>7	>1.8	
1	105	Fill		Pit fill	Dark brown grey, silt sand, loose backfill with modern glass and white china	>7	>1.8	
1	106	Layer		Natural	Mid green brown silty clay			
2	200	Layer		Made ground	Tarmac car park surface			0.1
2	201	Layer		Made ground	Gravel foundation base for tarmac car park			0.3
2	202	Layer		Made ground	Brick and concrete based demolition rubble, very compacted			>1.8
3	300	Layer		Made ground	Tarmac car park surface			0.1
3	301	Layer		Made ground	Gravel foundation base for tarmac car park			0.3
3	302	Layer		Made ground	Brick and concrete based demolition rubble, very compacted			0.75
3	303	Fill	304	Pit fill	Mid brown grey, silty sand, loose with occasional brick rubble.	>3.5	>2	>0.7
3	304	Cut		Pit	Sub-circular, not fully exposed in plan, sloping sides, not bottomed	>3.5	>2	>0.7
3	305	Fill	306	Ditch fill	Light yellow brown, silty sand, loose	>2	0.35	>0.3
3	306	Cut		Ditch	NE-SW orientated, vertical sides, not bottomed	>2	0.35	>0.3
3	307	Fill	308	Ditch fill	Mid brown grey, silty sand, loose	>2	0.53	0.14
3	308	Cut		Ditch	N-S orientated, shallow concave profile	>2	0.53	0.14
3	309	Fill	310	Ditch fill	Mid grey brown, silty sand, moderate compaction	>3.5	0.86	0.1
3	310	Cut		Ditch	NW-SE orientated, shallow concave profile	>3.5	0.86	0.1
3	311	Fill	312	Ditch fill	Mid red brown, silty sand, firm compaction	>2	>1	0.5
3	312	Cut		Ditch	N-S orientated, steep curving side with shallow curved base	>2	>1	0.5
3	313	Fill	314	Ditch fill	Light brown grey, silty sand, loose	>1.2	1.05	0.18
3	314	Cut		Ditch	N-S orientated, steep curving sides, gently undulating base	>1.2	1.05	0.18
3	315	Layer		Garden soil?	Mid grey brown, silty sand, loose	4.75	>2	0.3
3	316	Layer		Disturbed natural?	Light brown grey, silty sand, loose	1.7	>2	0.12
3	317	Fill	318	Ditch fill	Mid grey brown, silty sand, loose	>2	0.28	0.11
3	318	Cut		Ditch	NW-SE orientated, sharp concave profile	>2	0.28	0.11
3	319	Fill	320	Ditch fill	Light brown grey, silty sand, loose	2.45	1.45	0.3
3	320	Cut		Ditch	Recti-linear, steep sides, flat base with posthole at terminus	2.45	1.45	0.3
3	321	Fill	322	Pit fill	Mid grey brown, silty sand, loose	>0.7	>1.4	0.05
3	322	Cut		Pit	Sub-circular, gently curving sides and base.	>0.7	>1.4	0.05
3	323	Fill	312	Ditch fill	Dark grey yellow, compacted sand	>2	0.7	0.16
4	400	Layer		Made ground	Tarmac car park surface			0.1
4	401	Layer		Made ground	Gravel foundation base for tarmac car park			0.5

4	402	Layer		Made ground	Brick and concrete based demolition rubble, very compacted			0.95
4	403	Struct ure		Man hole	Brick inspection chamber	2	1.5	
4	404	Fill	405	Ditch fill	Mid grey brown silty sand, loose	>6	0.2	
4	405	Cut		Ditch	Modern sewer pipe trench	>6	0.2	
4	406	Fill	407	Ditch fill	Mid grey brown silty sand, loose	>2.2	0.5	
4	407	Cut		Ditch	Modern sewer pipe trench	>2.2	0.5	

APPENDIX B: THE FINDS

Context	Class	Description	Ct.	Wt.(g)	Spot-date
317	post-medieval pottery	black glazed earthenware	2	19	LC17-C18
	coal		1	9	
311	post-medieval pottery	black glazed earthenware	1	13	LC17-C18
	post-medieval pottery	unglazed earthenware	1	6	
	iron	object	2	13	
	cbm		6	2164	
323	cbm		2	1624	

APPENDIX C: LEVELS OF PRINCIPAL DEPOSITS AND STRUCTURES

Levels are expressed as metres below current ground level and as metres above Ordnance Datum (aOD).

	Trench 1	Trench 2	Trench 3	Trench 4
Current ground level	97.7 (west)	97.4 (west)	97.5 (west)	98 (north)
	97.1 (east)	97.5 (east)	97.9 (east)	97.9
				(south)
Limit of excavation	94.5 (avg)	95.2 (avg)	96.2 (west)	96.25
			96.6 (east)	(avg)
Top of archaeology			96.55	
Top of natural	94.9 (avg)		96.55	96.4 (avg)

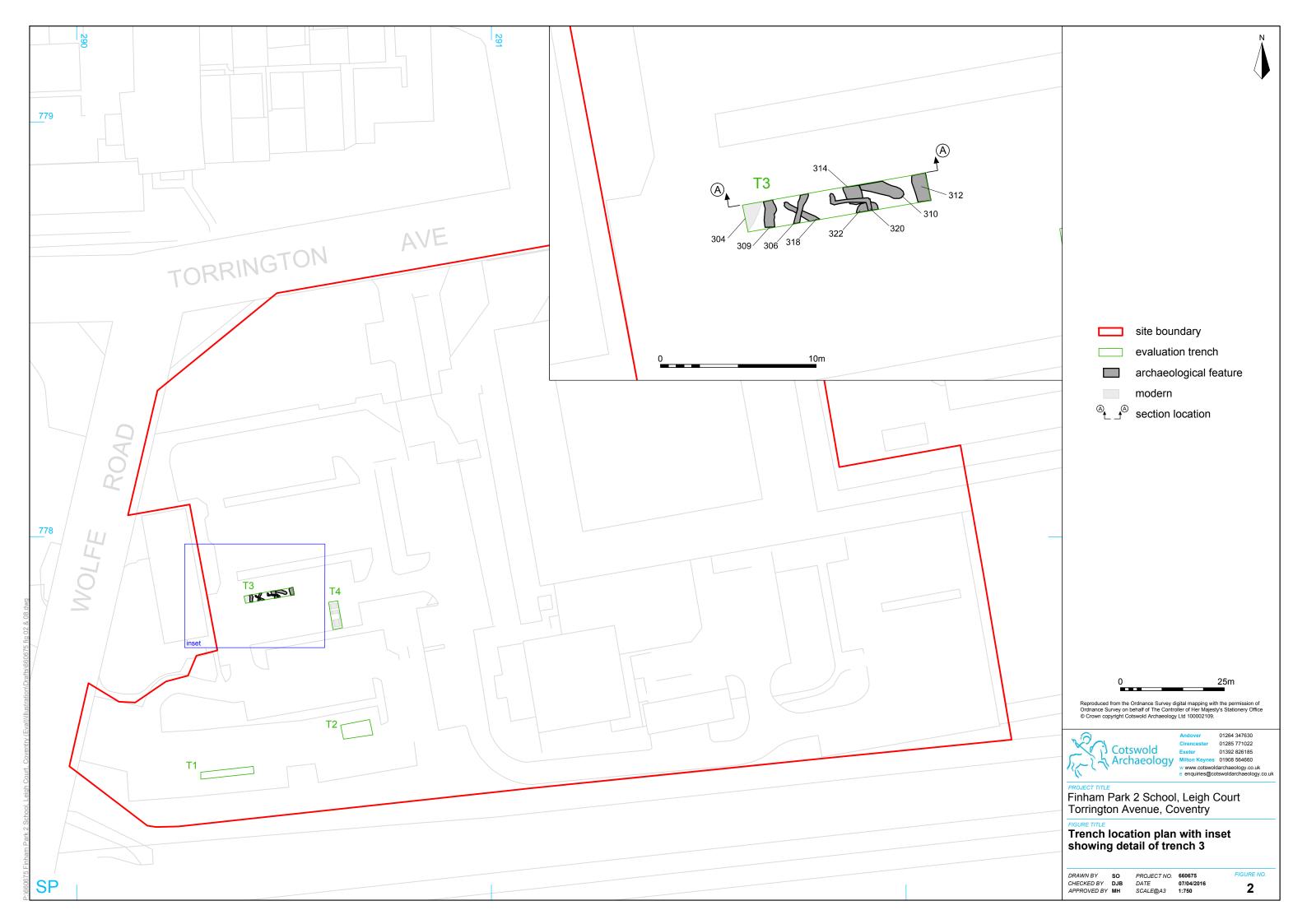
(avg) average

APPENDIX D: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS					
Project Name	Finham Park 2 School				
Short description	Four evaluation trenches were excavated. A small dense area was identified in one trench showing three phases of activity dating to the late 17th century – 18th centuries, with a likely agricultural origin and function. The remaining three trenches were archaeological sterile.				
Project dates	21-24 March 2016				
Project type	Evaluation				
Previous work	None				
Future work	To be decided				
PROJECT LOCATION					
Site Location	Leigh Court, Torrington Avenue, Coventr	y			
Study area (M²/ha)	1.3 ha				
Site co-ordinates	co-ordinates SP 290 777				
PROJECT CREATORS					
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology				
Project Brief originator	Chris Patrick				
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology				
Project Manager	Mark Hewson				
Project Supervisor	Julian Newman				
MONUMENT TYPE	None				
SIGNIFICANT FINDS	None				
PROJECT ARCHIVES	Intended final location of archive (museum/Accession no.)	Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone etc)			
Physical	Herbert Art Gallery and Museum	Pottery and CBM			
Paper	Herbert Art Gallery and Museum	Context and trench sheets, permatrace			
Digital	Herbert Art Gallery and Museum	Database, digital photos			
BIBLIOGRAPHY		<u>. </u>			
CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2016 Finh	nam Park 2 School, Leigh Court, Torrii	ngton Avenue, Coventry:			
Archaeological Evaluation,					

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS











- 3 Trench 1 looking west (scale 1m)
- 4 Trench 4 looking south (scale 1m)



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Finham Park 2 School, Leigh Court Torrington Avenue, Coventry

FIGURE TITLE

Trenches 1 and 4, photographs

DRAWN BY SO
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APPROVED BY MH

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DATE 07/04/2016

SCALE@A4 N/A

FIGURE NO.

3 & 4



Trench 3 looking east (scale 1m) 5



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Finham Park 2 School, Leigh Court Torrington Avenue, Coventry

FIGURE TITLE Photograph

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SCALE@A4 N/A FIGURE NO.

5

Section AA W natural natural Andover 01264 347630 Cirencester 01285 771022 Andover 01264 347630
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w www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk
e enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk Finham Park 2 School, Leigh Court Torrington Avenue, Coventry FIGURE TITLE Trench 3 section, south facing DRAWN BY SO
CHECKED BY DJB
APPROVED BY MH PROJECT NO. 660675 DATE 07/04/2016 SCALE@A3 1:20 FIGURE NO.



7 Trench 3 general shot of 310, 314, 320 and 322 looking north-east (scale 1m)



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Finham Park 2 School, Leigh Court Torrington Avenue, Coventry

FIGURE TITLE

Trench 3 general shot of 310, 314, 320 and 322 looking north-east

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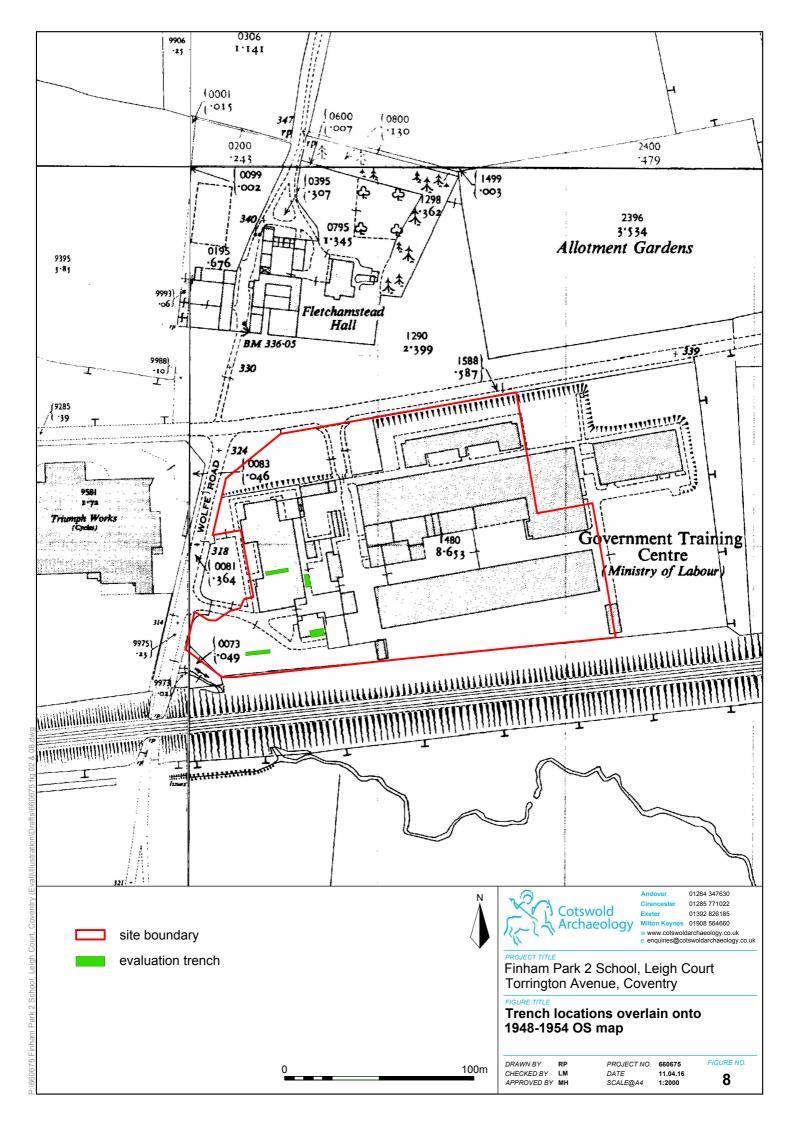
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FIGURE NO.

7





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