Montgomery Primary School, Redvers Road, Exeter, Devon

An Archaeological Watching Brief

context one
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES LTD

Montgomery Primary School, Redvers Road, Exeter, Devon

An Archaeological Watching Brief

for

NPS South West Ltd

By

Brickfield Offices, Maperton, Wincanton, Somerset. BA9 8EG.
T: 01963 824696
F: 07092 259858
E: mail@contextone.co.uk
W: www.contextone.co.uk

COAS reference: COAS/SBR/10/MRE
East Devon District Council Planning Reference: DCC/2987/2010
Historic Environment Service ref: Arch/cm/ex/16787
National Grid Reference: centred on SX 91020 92140
OASIS ID: contexto1-147801

COAS Team:
Project Director: Richard McConnell
Fieldwork Manager: Stuart Milby
Fieldwork: Peter Fairclough, Dawn Powell, David Roberts and Stuart Milby
Post-Excavation Coordinator: Fay Pegg
Report: Richard Tabor
Graphics: Tara Fairclough

October 2012

Front cover image: The Site during grading. © Context One Archaeological Services 2012

Contents

Non-technical Summary

Context One Archaeological Services Ltd conducted a programme of archaeological works during development groundworks associated with the replacement of Montgomery Primary School, Redvers Road, Exeter, Devon (centred on NGR SX 91020 92140). The project was commissioned by Ms Claire Walkey of NPS South West Ltd. The watching brief was carried out in two phases between September 2010 and December 2011.

The work was requested by Devon County Council Planning Authority as a condition of consent for the replacement of the existing primary school (Planning Application Reference: DCC/2987/2010), in particular due to the identification of a watercourse crossing the school playing field, considered to have a possible origin as a medieval leat.

The watching brief phase of the archaeological work at the Site identified only modern features. A ditch, re-used as a drain, was probably that identified as the medieval leat, although no evidence was found to support that interpretation. The other feature appeared to be the isolated remains of a metalled surface. Only modern finds were observed and none were retained.

1. Introduction

1.1 Context One Archaeological Services Ltd (COAS) conducted a programme of archaeological works during development groundworks associated with the replacement of Montgomery Primary School, Redvers Road, Exeter, Devon (centred on NGR SX 91020 92140; hereafter referred to as the Site). The project was commissioned by Ms Claire Walkey of NPS South West Ltd. The watching brief was carried out over seven days in two phases, from 20th September to 2nd October 2010 and from 5th to 7th December 2011.

1.2 The archaeological investigation was requested by the County Planning Authority (Devon County Council) on the advice of Ms Helen Rance (Archaeological Officer, Devon County Council) as a condition of planning consent for the replacement of the existing Primary School (Planning Application Reference: DCC/2987/2010). In a brief for an historic building recording and the monitoring and recording of groundworks issued on 22nd July 2010 (paragraph 1.4) Ms Rance stated that:

> *"The Architectural Appraisal of Montgomery Primary School provided in support of the above planning application demonstrates that Montgomery Primary School is of high historical and architectural interest. The Architectural Appraisal also identifies the presence of a northwest-southeast aligned watercourse which crosses the school field and may have originated as an early medieval leat. There is also further potential for the discovery of ancient environmental and archaeological evidence."*

1.3 Given the archaeological and historic significance of these buildings, it was determined that a reasonable archaeological response in mitigation of the development would be to carry out a programme of archaeological works comprising a historic building recording survey and archaeological monitoring and recording (watching brief) during development groundworks. The present report concerns the development phase. That concerned with the historic building recording survey has been produced separately (Tabor 2012). Ms Rance was kept fully informed during the project. It was not deemed necessary to make a monitoring visit to the Site.

1.4 The request for the archaeological work follows advice given by Central Government as set out formerly in *Planning for the Historic Environment* (*PPS 5*) issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government, 2010. It also conforms to Local Plan and County Structure Plan policies.

2. Site Location, Topography and Geology

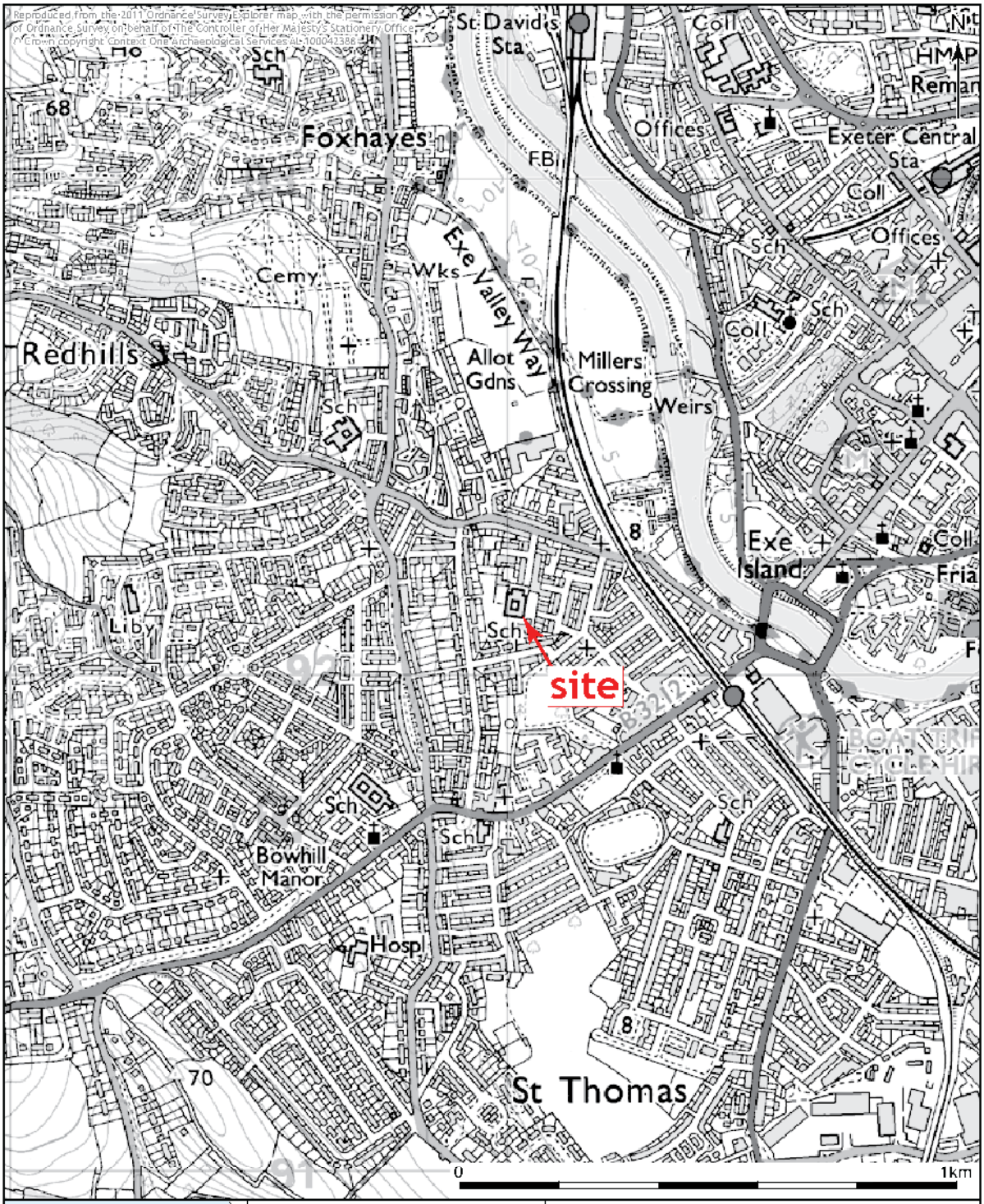
2.1 The Site (centred on NGR SX 91020 92140) is situated *c*.470m west of the River Exe, in the south west of the city of Exeter in the county of Devon (**Figure 1**). It lies *ca*.8m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). The school buildings lie from north to south, along the east side of a trapezoidal plot surrounded on all four sides by the houses of Wardrew and Maple roads, Brunswick Street and Landscore. Two outbuildings (**Figure 2**, B and C) lie to the north of the west and east flanks of the main quadrangular school building (**Figure 2**, A), which has pre-fabricated structures added to its north range. Two adjoining brick buildings **Figure 2**, D and E) are south of the south east corner of the main building.

2.2 The underlying geology consists of Crackington Formation (interbedded mudstone and sandstone) with superficial deposits of alluvial clay (BGS 2012). The soils in this area are characterised as free-draining, slightly acid, loam of low fertility (NSRI 2012).

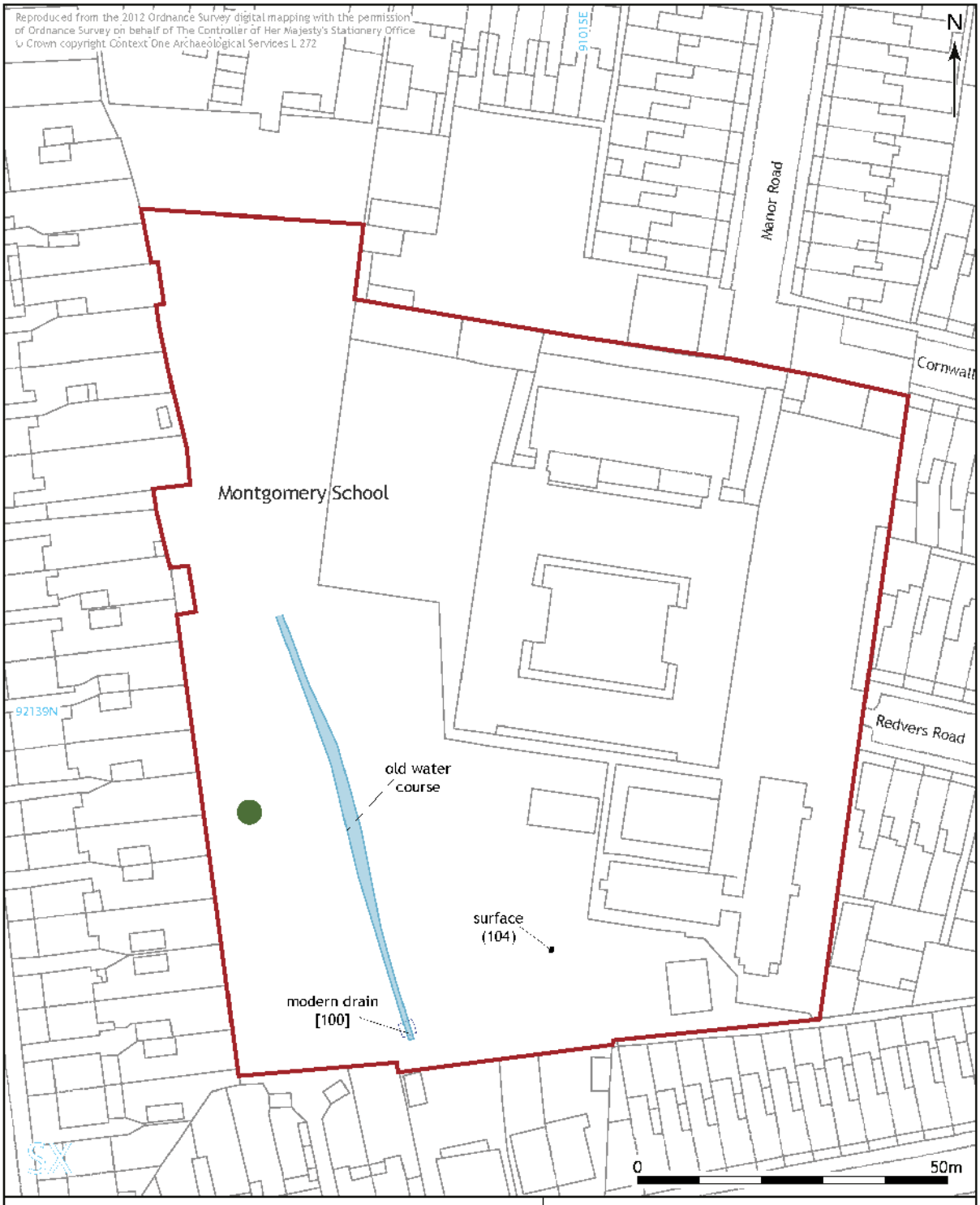
3. Methodology

Construction Methodology

3.1 For stripping of topsoil a 360 degree tracked machine was fitted with a toothless grading bucket, and with a toothed bucket for the excavation of service trenches during the first phase of work on the former school playing field. During the second phase the old school building was demolished prior to grading and levelling.



PROJECT TITLE	Montgomery Primary School, Redvers Road, Exeter, Devon
FIGURE TITLE	Site setting
SCALE	as shown
PROJECT CODE	C1/WBF/10/MRE
FIGURE NO.	1


Reproduced from the 2012 Ordnance Survey digital mapping with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright Context One Archaeological Services L 272
9101SE
N
Manor Road
Cornwall
Montgomery School
92139N
Redvers Road
old water course
surface (104)
modern drain [100]
0
50m
site boundary
location of profile
PROJECT TITLE
Montgomery Primary School, Redvers Road, Exeter, Devon
FIGURE TITLE
Detailed site setting showing locations of profile and features
SCALE
as shown
PROJECT CODE
C1/WBF/10/MRE
FIGURE NO.
2

Archaeological Methodology

3.2 The programme of archaeological work was carried out in accordance with the codes, standards and guidelines set out by the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA 1985, rev. 2010; 1990, rev. 2008; 1994, rev. 2008) and Devon County Council (DCC 2012) at all times during the course of the investigation. Current Health and Safety legislation and guidelines were followed on site.

3.3 Following removal of the topsoil, after grading and the excavation of service trenches a qualified archaeologist inspected the surface for significant features and deposits.

3.4 All archaeological features were sampled by manual excavation and drawn on dimensionally stable media at scales of 1:20 (plan) and 1:10 (section). The features/deposits were recorded using standard COAS *pro forma* context sheets, indicating stratigraphic relationships on a 'Harris-Winchester matrix' diagram. Where appropriate, the information on the context sheets was linked to representative profile sections of the deposit sequence across the Site which were recorded on standard COAS *pro forma* profile sheets. These were also used where archaeological features/deposits were absent. The profile sheets include a graduated graphical representation of a profile section showing the stratigraphical sequence which was annotated to define the depths of each observed deposit. The sheets also include summary context forms in order that the character of each layer is summarised. In addition there are entry fields for the profile location, photographic reference and core details of any artefacts. The frequency with which profile sections were recorded was based entirely on any variation of the deposit sequence.

3.5 A photographic record of the fieldwork comprised digital images in .jpg format showing individual features, views of each profile section, the site setting and development works.

3.6 The location, extent and altitude of the archaeological work, features and deposits were mapped relative to the National Grid and Ordnance Datum using a TopCon GRS-1 Global Positioning System receiving real-time calibrations to produce accuracies of 1-2cm.

4. Results

4.1 The weather was generally sunny and dry.

4.2 The deposits and features encountered during fieldwork are listed and described in **Appendix 1**. In the text, context numbers for cuts appear in square brackets, e.g. [104]; layer, structure and fill numbers appear in standard brackets, e.g. (102). Where a feature is discussed, it is referenced with its cut and associated fill numbers.

Soil Sequence and Geology

4.3 The topsoil (103) of silty clay remained only over the school playing field. Elsewhere it had been removed. The general character of the sequence of deposits was best exposed in a service pipe trench (**Plate 1**) where a *c*. 0.30m layer of modern debris was spread over a *c*. 0.50m deep gravelly silty clay (201), the yellowish brown colour of which suggested that it had been laid down as a consequence of significant human impact upon the local landscape. Thereafter, reddish silty clays, (202) to (205), should be regarded as a sequence of alluvial deposition consistent with the expectations of the local superficial geology.

4.4 Two features were identified. A ceramic land drain (102) had utilised the base of an existing north-north-west to south-south-east linear ditch [100] which appeared to extend beyond the south and north boundaries of the old school grounds (**Figure 2**; **Plate 2**). As the playing-field topsoil (103) sealed its upper fill, the feature seemed to predate the area's use as a playing field. However, the fill (101) was mainly of modern tarmac and rubble, implying that the original ditch had been thoroughly cleaned out prior to the laying of the ceramic drain (102) or it was a modern feature. Fragments of brick, glass and metal were observed but not retained from (101).

Plate 1. Profile 2 (from N; 1m scale)

Plate 2. [100] (from N; 1m scale)

Plate 3. Possible surface (104) (from W; 1m scale)

4.5 The second feature (104) was identified as a metalled surface including modern brick, subrounded cobbles and fragments of faced stone (**Figure 2**; **Plate 3**). It appeared to occur directly below the topsoil (103) and was both disturbed and degraded, its full extent measuring c. 0.80m by 0.60m.

5. Discussion

5.1 The watching brief phase of the archaeological work at the Site has identified only modern features immediately below the topsoil. The ditch [100], re-used as a drain, was probably that previously identified as a possible medieval leat (Parker 2008, 1), although no evidence was found to support that interpretation. Both features were over a layer which probably formed during a phase of more intense human activity in the wider landscape during recent centuries. The latter layer sealed deep Quaternary alluvial stratigraphy. Only modern finds were observed and none have been retained.

6. Archive

6.1 The site archive is currently held at the offices of Context One Archaeological Services Ltd and consists of the written paper record of six daily record sheets, five context sheets, two COAS *pro forma* profile log sheets, 78 digital images in .jpg format, three scaled sections on stable drawing film and their corresponding registers. The archive will be prepared to comply with guidelines set out in *Environmental Standards for the Permanent Storage of Excavated Material from Archaeological Sites* (UKIC 1984, Conservation Guidelines 3)/ *Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-term Storage* (UKIC 1990)/ *Standards in the Museums Care of Archaeological Collections* (Museum and Galleries Commission 1992)/ *Management of Archaeological Projects 2* (English Heritage 1991). Arrangements will be made to deposit the archive with Royal Albert Memorial Museum and Art Gallery within 12 months following the submission of this report.

6.2 Copies of the Watching Brief report will be deposited with:

Claire Walkey
NPS South West Ltd
One Capital Court
Bittern Road
Sowton Industrial Estate
Exeter
Devon
EX2 7FW

Historic Environment Service
Devon County Council
Environment, Economy and Culture
Directorate
Matford Offices
Exeter
Devon
EX2 4QW

7. COAS Acknowledgements

7.1 Context One Archaeological Services Ltd would like to thank Ms Claire Walkey (Project Manager, NPS Ltd) for providing plans of the building and Site and Marrina Neophytou (Archaeologist, Devon Historic Environment Service) and Mr Andrew Pye (Archaeology Officer, Exeter City Council) for information and advice.

8. Bibliography

British Geological Survey (BGS), 2012 — www.bgs.ac.uk (accessed: 11th October 2012)

Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), 2012 — *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment*, London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office

Devon County Council (DCC), 2009 — *The Historic Environment and Development: Practice Note*. Devon County Council

English Heritage, 1991 — *Management of Archaeological Projects (MAP2). English Heritage. London*

Evans, P. and Tabor, R., 2011 — *Montgomery Primary School, Redvers Road, Exeter, Devon*. Context One Archaeological Services Ltd, *unpublished*

Institute for Archaeologists (IfA), June 1985 (rev. April 2010) — *Code of Conduct*. Reading: IfA

Institute for Archaeologists (IfA), September 1990 (rev. October 2008) — *Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology*. Reading: IfA

Institute for Archaeologists (IfA), October 1994 (rev. October 2008) — *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief*. Reading: IfA

Institute for Archaeologists (IfA), October 1994 (rev. October 2008) — *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Excavation*. Reading: IfA

Milby, S., 2010 — *Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Programme of Works: Montgomery Primary School, Redvers Road, Exeter, Devon*. Context One Archaeological Services Ltd, *unpublished*

National Soil Resources Institute (NSRI), 2012 — http://www.landis.org.uk/soilscapes/ Cranfield University (accessed: 11th October 2012)

Parker, R., 2008 — *An Architectural Appraisal of Montgomery Primary School, Manor Road, St Thomas, Exeter*. Exeter Archaeology, *unpublished*

Tabor, R., 2012 — *Montgomery Primary School, Redvers Road, Exeter, Devon: An Historic Building Recording Survey*. COAS, unpublished

Appendix 1. Context Summary

Context no.	Period	Type	Description	Earlier than	Contemp. with	Later than	Length	Width/ Diameter	Thickness/ Depth
100	Modern	Cut	Land drain. Deep grey brown silty clay including <6% gravel (<30mm)	101, 102		105	0.30m exc	2.18	<0.66m
101	Modern	Fill	Drain trench fill [100]. Dark greyish black tarmac (c. 60%) and rubble (40%)	102		102, 100	0.30m exc	2.18	<0.66m
102	Modern	Fill	Drain trench pipe [100]. Orangey red ceramic cylinder	101		100	0.30m exc	0.19m	
103	Modern	Layer	Topsoil. Mid brownish red silty friable clay including sparse small rounded stones			101			<0.10m
104	Modern	Layer	Metalled surface. Mid grey brown stone (50%) and light orangey red brick (50%	103			<0.80	<0.50 m	
105	Modern	Layer	Make-up layer. Very dusky red (2.5YR 2.5/2) including <5% rounded cobbles	101					
200	Modern	Layer	Rubble. Tarmac, brick fragments and matting			201			<0.30m
201		Layer	Yellowish brown silty clay including <20% gravel	200		202			<0.50m
202	Geology	Layer	Deep red silty clay including <20% gravel	201		203			<0.10m
203	Geology	Layer	Reddish blue concreted silty clay	202		204			<1.70m
204	Geology	Layer	Deep reddish brown clay	203		205			<0.10m
205	Geology	Layer	Alluvial gravel and clay	204					>0.10m