BSCW17

BRANDON STADIUM, RUGBY ROAD, COVENTRY, WARWICKSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

commissioned by Archaeology Collective
on behalf of Brandon Estates Limited

December 2017

HEADLAND ARCHAEOLOGY

REGISTERED ORGANISATION CIfA

BRANDON STADIUM, RUGBY ROAD, COVENTRY, WARWICKSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

commissioned by Archaeology Collective
on behalf of Brandon Estates Limited

December 2017

This report adheres to the quality standard of ISO 9001:2008

PROJECT INFO:

HA Project Code **BSCW17** / HAS No. **1271** / NGR **SP 40699 77339** / Parish **Brandon and Bretford** / Local Authority **Rugby District Council** / OASIS Ref. **headland3-301357** / Archive Repository **Warwickshire Museum**

PROJECT TEAM:

Project Manager **Kate Bain** / Author **Harriet Bryant-Buck** / Fieldwork **Harriet Bryant-Buck, Ildiko Egry, Tom Cochrane** / Graphics **Beata Wieczorek-Oleksy, Caroline Norrman**

Approved by **Kate Bain** .....

Headland Archaeology Midlands & West
Unit 1 | Clearview Court | Twyford Rd | Hereford HR2 6JR
t 01432 364 901
e midlandsandwest@headlandarchaeology.com
w www.headlandarchaeology.com

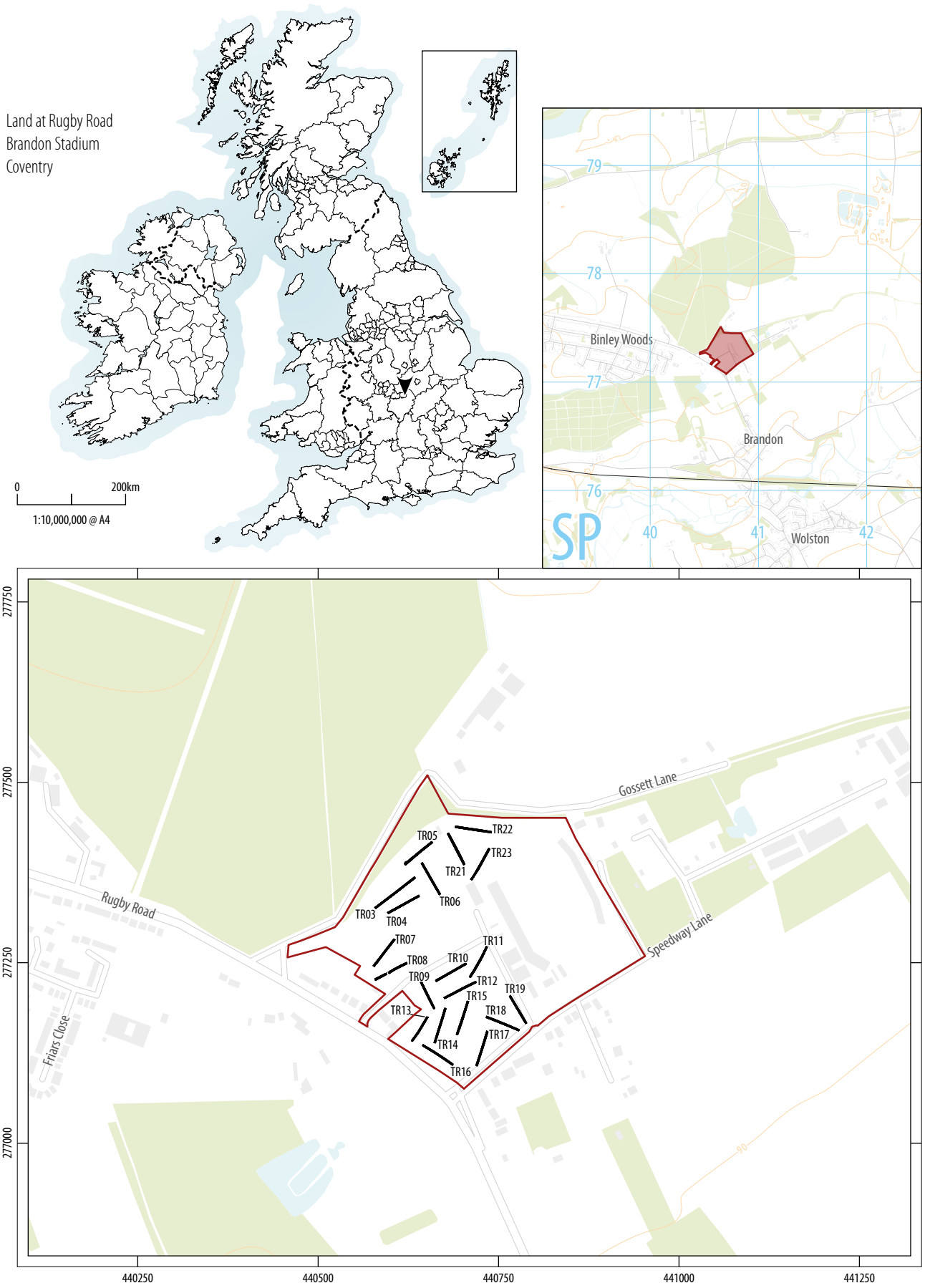
HEADLAND ARCHAEOLOGY

PROJECT SUMMARY

Headland Archaeology undertook a trial trench evaluation at Brandon Stadium, Coventry, Warwickshire, in order to inform a planning application relating to the residential development of the site. Evidence for land drainage was extensive across the site and a deep area of made ground was found to the north, along with modern features containing rubble to the south. A single linear feature of probable post-medieval origin was identified in two trenches. Otherwise, no deposits, features of archaeological significance were identified during the course of the evaluation.

CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS



HEADLAND ARCHAEOLOGY
Headland Archaeology Midlands & West
Unit 1 | Clearview Court | Twyford Rd | Hereford HR2 6JR
t 01432 364 901
e midlandsandwest@headlandarchaeology.com
w www.headlandarchaeology.com

ILLUS 1 Site location

BRANDON STADIUM, RUGBY ROAD, COVENTRY, WARWICKSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PLANNING BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

This report presents the results of an archaeological field evaluation on land at Brandon Stadium, Coventry. The archaeological works were commissioned by Archaeology Collective and were undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (Bain 2017) agreed in advance with the local authority archaeological advisor. The purpose of the work was to provide sufficient information to determine the archaeological potential of the site.

1.2 SITE LOCATION, DESCRIPTION AND SETTING

The proposed development site (Illus 1) comprises a 4.75ha parcel of brownfield land to the north of Brandon, and east of Binley Woods (NGR SP 40699 77339). The land belongs to the plot of the disused Brandon Stadium, with the evaluation taking place across the car park area, and a small area of land to the southwest of the stadium structure. The site was bounded by the A428 to the west, Speedway Lane to the south and woods to the north. The eastern boundary was formed by the stadium buildings.

The bedrock geology of the site consists of Mercia Mudstone formed in the Triassic period. Superficial deposits are recorded as part of the Dunsmore Gravel, comprising quaternary sand and gravel (NERC 2017). The overlying soils are described as loamy (Cranfield University 2017).

1.3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The proposed development site is in an area of rich agricultural activity, with evidence of later prehistoric, medieval and post-medieval remains of an agricultural nature. Unstratified finds of early prehistoric, Roman and Saxon artefacts have also been made within 1km of the site. Additionally, the redevelopment of the site into a speedway stadium in the 1920s is worthy of note.

A Desk-Based Assessment of the Brandon stadium site was conducted in 2016 (Jones 2016). This included a map regression exercise and a detailed search of local historic environment records. The maps demonstrated the agricultural history of the site, with the land divided into arable fields, with gradual residential development adjacent to Rugby Road to the south-west. A pond, first mapped in 1848, is visible towards the centre of the site – an area currently covered by an access road (Jones 2016).

2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

In general, the purpose of the programme of archaeological work was to provide sufficient evidence for a confident prediction of the impact of the proposal by establishing the extent, nature and significance of any buried heritage assets within the affected area (following the National Planning Policy Framework).

The local and regional research contexts are provided by The West Midlands Regional Research Framework.

The results of the evaluation will be used to describe the significance of heritage assets potentially affected by the development, allowing the planning authority to make an informed assessment of any

potential impacts on the historic environment in line with Paragraph 128 of the NPPF.

The resulting archive (finds and records) will be organised and deposited with the local museum to facilitate access for future research and interpretation for public benefit.

3 METHOD

The fieldwork was conducted in accordance with the WSI and Method Statement and with the following documents:

- Chartered Institute for Archaeologists Code of Conduct (CIfA 2014a)
- Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations (CIfA 2014b)

The original evaluation trench plan was adjusted due to placement restrictions on site, including woodland, services and access roads. Trenches 1 and 2 were unsuitable for excavation due to dense woodland; upon agreement with the local archaeological curator, Trench 3 was re-aligned to run parallel to Trench 4, and extended to 70m to provide greater sample coverage of this area. Trench 9 was shortened to 41m to avoid the access road, and Trenches 22 and 23 were rotated to avoid boundary fencing. The final evaluation comprised the excavation of 20 trenches, each measuring between 40–70m long x 2.1m wide.

The evaluation trenches were excavated under archaeological supervision, with the topsoil and subsoil being removed by machine and excavation terminating at the uppermost significant archaeological horizon or when geological deposits were encountered.

The stratigraphic sequence was recorded in full in each of the trenches, even where no archaeological deposits were identified.

All recording followed standard archaeological guidelines as set out by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA). The recorded contexts were assigned unique numbers and recording was undertaken on Headland Archaeology pro forma trench and context record sheets. Digital photographic images and black and white 35mm film photographs were taken of all trenches with a graduated metric scale clearly visible. Digital surveying was undertaken using a Trimble dGPS system.

Fieldwork was undertaken between the 30th October and 9th November 2017.

4 RESULTS

A full trench and context register is included in Appendix 1. A plan of the excavated trenches can be found on Illus 2.

4.1 GENERAL SITE STRATIGRAPHY (ILLUS 2, 4 AND 5)

Geological deposits of light orange sandy clay were generally present at a depth between 0.35m below ground level (BGL) to the south of the site and 1.25m BGL to the north of the site. Trench 5 was excavated at the western end to a depth of 2.5m with no sign of natural geology.

The trenches contained no subsoil, with a mid-greyish-brown, sandy-silt topsoil overlying the geological deposits, often with a diffuse boundary, suggesting a degree of disturbance. Occasional small-medium sub-rounded stones were present within the deposit.

4.2 TRENCHES CONTAINING POSSIBLE ARCHAEOLOGICAL FEATURES

A single linear feature was present, traversing the site from north-west to south-east, encountered in Trenches 3, 4 and 12 (Illus 2). A sample slot was excavated across the feature in Trenches 4 [0403] and 12 [01204] (Illus 3), revealing a v-shaped profile and a concave base; no excavation was attempted in Trench 3 due to the depth of the trench and the instability of the surrounding made ground. No archaeological finds were recovered from within the ditch.

A single pit [0904] (c. 2.2m long x c. 0.90m wide x 0.32m deep), was identified at the northern end of Trench 9. This pit contained a regular concave base and moderately sloping sides. No finds were recovered from this feature, and it remains undated.

4.3 TRENCHES CONTAINING MODERN FEATURES

Trenches 3, 5, 6, 21, 22 and 23

Trenches to the north of the site demonstrated a large amount of made-ground (Illus 4, 5). This was particularly prevalent in Trenches 3, 5, 6 and 21, which contained modern made up ground extending a minimum of 1.10m below ground level (BGL). This made-ground contained modern brick, plastic, metal, tree stumps and tyres, likely associate with the development and use of the stadium.

A sondage excavated in Trench 3 demonstrated natural geology appearing at 1.25m BGL, whilst a sondage in Trench 5 was excavated to 2.5m, revealing a continuation of made ground and no sign of natural geology. For health and safety reasons, areas extending beyond 1.00m BGL were not accessed for hand excavation.

Trenches 7 and 8

A modern ditch, with a moderate amount of brick rubble and refuse, was visible in Trenches 7 and 8. These trenches also contained two electricity cables between two floodlights at the western edge of the site, which resulted in a break in excavation in at the centre of Trench 8 to avoid the cables. Trench 7 was shortened by c. 2m at the south-western end to avoid further cable disturbance.

ILLUS 2 Site plan

ILLUS 3 Linear feature in Trench 12, looking south-east **ILLUS 4** Trench 5, looking east **ILLUS 5** Modern brick refuse in Trench 16, looking south-east **ILLUS 6** Trench 14, looking south-west, showing multiple modern drains

Trenches 13 and 16

The trenches along the south-western edge of the site revealed seven evenly spaced, rectangular cuts filled with modern rubble (Illus 5). The material appeared purposefully placed and graded; the purpose of these features is unknown.

Land drains (Illus 6)

The remaining trenches were void of archaeological features, but the large amount of land drains across the site are worth noting. Seventeen of the trenches contained multiple forms of modern land drain, often intersecting at several points. These drains were either in ditches c. 1.00m wide, or gravel filled trenches between 0.15m and 0.50m wide, and were represented by a mix of 19th century terracotta land drains, or modern plastic ducting. Trench 15 contained the most drainage features, with 14 land drains along its length.

5 DISCUSSION

A single undated linear feature, aligned north-west to south-east was identified across three trenches; despite there being no artefacts recovered from the ditch, it was deemed likely post-medieval in date. A single possible pit feature was excavated in Trench 9, but this also contained no dating evidence. No other deposits, finds or features of archaeological significance were identified during the field evaluation.

A multitude of modern features were identified across the site, with a clear majority relating to land drainage within the development area.

The trial trench evaluation confirmed that the proposed development area has a low archaeological potential.

6 REFERENCES

Bain K 2017 ***Brandon Stadium, Coventry, Warwickshire. Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological trial trench evaluation*** [unpublished client report] Headland Archaeology (Ref: BSCW17)

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) 2014a ***Code of Conduct*** (Reading) http://http.www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/CodesofConduct.pdf accessed 16 November 2017

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) 2014b ***Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation*** (Reading) http://www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/CIfAS&GFieldevaluation_1.pdf accessed 16 November 2017

Cranfield University 2017 ***Cranfield Soil and Agrifood Institute Soilscapes*** http://www.landis.org.uk/soilscapes/ accessed 14 November 2017

Jones S 2017 ***Brandon Stadium, Coventry: Archaeological desk based assessment*** [unpublished client report] Heritage Collective

Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) 2017 ***British Geological Survey*** http://www.bgs.ac.uk/ accessed 14 November 2017

7 APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 TRENCH AND CONTEXT REGISTER

DBGL = Depth below ground level

TR03			
L (m)	W (m)	Min. D (m)	Max. D (m)
67	2.10	0.85	1.20
Context	Description		DBGL (m)
0301	Topsoil: Dark reddish brown, black silty clay. Contains domestic waste and frequent demolition rubble.		0 – 1.00
0302	Natural: Orangish yellow sandy silty clay, alluvial		1.00+
0303	Cut of ditch, unexcavated		–
0304	Fill of [0303], unexcavated		–
Summary			
Brownfield site, north-west part of site. One possible ditch located below safe working depth.			

TR04			
L (m)	W (m)	Min. D (m)	Max. D (m)
48	2.10	0.40	1.10
Context	Description		DBGL (m)
0401	Topsoil: Dark brown silty clay, mixed with sub-angular stones		0 – 0.40
0402	Natural: Light orangish yellow sandy silty clay with stones		0.40+
0403	Cut of ditch		0.40 – 1.10
0404	Fill of ditch [0403]		0.40 – 1.10
0405	Possible ditch cut (heavy root disturbance		0.30
0406	Fill of [0406]		0.30
Summary			
Brownfield site, north-west part of site			

TR05			
L (m)	W (m)	Min. D (m)	Max. D (m)
46	2.10	1.00	2.30
Context	Description		DBGL (m)
0501	Topsoil: 1m+ depth of domestic waste and building debris		2.30+
Summary			
Brownfield site, north-west part of site. Excavated to 2.30m depth in sondage at western end – natural not reached.			

TR06			
L (m)	W (m)	Min. D (m)	Max. D (m)
48	2.10	0.55	1.00
Context	Description		DBGL (m)
0601	Topsoil: Dark brown stoney silty clay. Possible modern made ground.		0 – 0.40
0602	Subsoil: Mid orangish brown sandy silty clay		0.40 – 0.55
0603	Natural: Light orangish yellow sandy clay		0.55+
0604	Modern disturbance at northern end of trench		1.00+
Summary			
Brownfield site, north-west part of site			

TR07			
L (m)	W (m)	Min. D (m)	Max. D (m)
46.5	2.10	0.55	0.60
Context	Description		DBGL (m)
0701	Topsoil: Dark brownish clay		0 – 0.55
0702	Natural: Mid orangish/greyish yellow stoney sandy clay		0.55+
0703	Modern ditch, not excavated		0.55+
0704	Fill of [0703]		0.55+
0705	Modern ditch, not excavated		0.55+
0706	Fill of [0705]		0.55+
Summary			
Brownfield site, west part of site			

TR08			
L (m)	W (m)	Min. D (m)	Max. D (m)
48	2.10	0.50	1.00
Context	Description		DBGL (m)
0801	Topsoil: Dark, brown silty clay. Tarmac on top.		0 – 0.60
0802	Natural: Mid orangish yellow alluvial stoney sandy clay		0.60+
0803	Modern ditch, not excavated		0.80+
0804	Fill of [0803]		0.80+
0805	Modern ditch, not excavated		1.00+
0806	Fill of [0805]		1.00+
0807	Modern ditch, not excavated		0.70+
0808	Fill of [0807]		0.70+
Summary			
Brownfield site, west part of site			

TR09			
L (m)	W (m)	Min. D (m)	Max. D (m)
38	2.10	0.50	0.50
Context	Description		DBGL (m)
0901	Topsoil: Grey gravels, tarmac, modern made ground		0 – 0.20

0902	Subsoil: Mid-dark greyish brown sandy silty clay, contains occasional stones	0.20 – 0.50
0903	Natural: Light orangish yellow sandy silty clay, stoney alluvium	0.50+
0904	Cut of undated pit	–
0905	Fill of [0904]	–

Summary

Brownfield site/car park, east part of site

TR10			
L (m)	W (m)	Min. D (m)	Max. D (m)
46.50	2.10	0.60	0.60
Context	Description		DBGL (m)
1001	Topsoil: Grey gravels, tarmac, modern made ground		0 – 0.30
1002	Subsoil: Mid to dark greyish brown sandy silty clay, contains stones		0.30 – 0.50
1003	Natural: Light orangish yellow sandy silty clay, stoney alluvial		0.50+

Summary

Brownfield site/car park, east part of site

TR11			
L (m)	W (m)	Min. D (m)	Max. D (m)
46	2.10	0.65	0.85
Context	Description		DBGL (m)
1101	Topsoil: Grey gravels, tarmac, modern made ground		0 – 0.25
1102	Subsoil: Mid-dark greyish brown sandy silty clay, contains stones		0.25 – 0.50
1103	Natural: Light orangish yellow sandy silty clay, stoney alluvial		0.50+

Summary

Brownfield site, east part of car park

TR12			
L (m)	W (m)	Min. D (m)	Max. D (m)
49	2.10	0.55	0.70
Context	Description		DBGL (m)
1201	Topsoil: Grey gravels, tarmac, modern made ground		0 – 0.20
1202	Subsoil: Mid-dark greyish brown sandy silty clay contains sub-angular stones		0.20 – 0.50
1203	Natural: Light orangish yellow sandy silty clay, stoney alluvial		0.50+
1204	Cut of N-S ditch		1.10+
1205	Fill of [1204]		1.10+

Summary

Brownfield site, east of car park area

TR13			
L (m)	W (m)	Min. D (m)	Max. D (m)
40	2.10	0.30	
Context	Description		DBGL (m)
1301	Topsoil: Mid-dark brown sandy silty clay; contains modern debris		0 – 0.30
1302	Natural: Light orangish/brownish yellow silty sandy clay with gravels		0.30 +

Summary

Brownfield site, south-west part of car park

TR14			
L (m)	W (m)	Min. D (m)	Max. D (m)
50	2.10	0.60	0.65
Context	Description		DBGL (m)
1401	Topsoil: grey sub-angular gravels, modern made ground		0 – 0.10
1402	Subsoil: Mid yellowish brown sandy silty clay, contains gravels		0.10 – 0.30
1403	Natural: Light orangish brownish yellow sandy silty clay with occasional gravels, stoney alluvium		0.30+

Summary

Brownfield site, south part of car park

TR15			
L (m)	W (m)	Min. D (m)	Max. D (m)
50	2.10	0.55	0.60
Context	Description		DBGL (m)
1501	Topsoil: grey gravels, stoney silty sandy clay, modern build up		0 – 0.15
1502	Subsoil: Mid – dark silty sandy clay contains occasional gravels		0.15 – 0.40
1503	Natural: light orangish yellow alluvial sandy clay, contains occasional rounded and sub-angular gravels		0.40+

Summary

Brownfield site, south part of car park

TR16			
L (m)	W (m)	Min. D (m)	Max. D (m)
50	2.10	0.45	0.50
Context	Description		DBGL (m)
1601	Topsoil: Mid grey silty clay		0 – 0.30
1602	Natural: Light orangish yellow stoney sandy clay		0.30+

Summary

Brownfield site, south part of the site

TR17			
L (m)	W (m)	Min. D (m)	Max. D (m)

50	2.10	0.50	–
Context	Description		DBGL (m)
1701	Topsoil: Grey gravels, stoney silty sandy clay, modern made ground		0 – 0.20
1702	Subsoil: Mid – dark silty sandy caly, contains small occasional gravels		0.20 – 0.50
1703	Natural: Light orangish, brownish, yellow sandy clay, contains occasional rounded, sub-rounded and angular gravels		0.50+
Summary			
Brownfield site, south part of the car park			
TR18			
L (m)	W (m)	Min. D (m)	Max. D (m)
50	2.10	0.30	–
Context	Description		DBGL (m)
1801	Topsoil: grey gravels and modern build up, Dark brownish silty sandy clay		0 – 0.25
1802	Subsoil: Mid-dark sandy silty clay, contains occasional gravels		0.25 – 0.30
1803	Natural: Light orangish yellow sandy silty clay; occasional gravels		0.30+
Summary			
Brownfield site, S part of car park			
TR19			
L (m)	W (m)	Min. D (m)	Max. D (m)
43	2.10	0.55	0.60
Context	Description		DBGL (m)
1901	Topsoil: Grey gravels, modern build up		0 – 0.20
1902	Subsoil: Mid-dark greyish brown sandy silty clay, contains occasional gravels		0.20 – 0.50
1903	Natural: Light orangish yellow silty sandy clay with angular and sub-angular stones		0.50+
Summary			
Brownfield site, south part of the car park			
TR21			
L (m)	W (m)	Min. D (m)	Max. D (m)
50	2.10	1.00	1.25
Context	Description		DBGL (m)
2101	Topsoil: Modern debris mixed with brown silty clay; Made ground		0 – 0.90
2102	Subsoil: Mid-dark brown sandy silty clay, disturbed		0.90 – 1.10
2103	Natural: Light orangish yellow alluvial sandy silty clay. Stoney material		1.10 +
Summary			
Brownfield site, north part of site			
TR22			
L (m)	W (m)	Min. D (m)	Max. D (m)
50	2.10	0.80	1.00
Context	Description		DBGL (m)
2201	Topsoil: Modern debris mixed with brown silty clay		0 – 0.60
2202	Subsoil: Mid-dark brown sandy silty clay, frequent modern disturbance		0.60 – 0.80
2203	Natural: Light orangish yellow alluvial sandy silty clay, stoney material		0.80+
Summary			
Brownfield site, north part of site			
TR23			
L (m)	W (m)	Min. D (m)	Max. D (m)
50	2.10	0.80	1.00
Context	Description		DBGL (m)
2301	Topsoil: Modern debris mixed with brown silty clay		0 – 0.60
2302	Subsoil: Mid-dark brown sandy silty clay, frequent modern disturbance		0.60 – 0.80
2303	Natural: Light orangish yellow alluvial sandy silty clay; stoney material		0.80+
Summary			
Brownfield site, north part of site			

Headland Archaeology South & East
Building 68C | Wrest Park | Silsoe | Bedfordshire MK45 4HS
t 01525 861 578
e southandeast@headlandarchaeology.com

Headland Archaeology Midlands & West
Unit 1 | Clearview Court | Twyford Rd | Hereford HR2 6JR
t 01432 364 901
e midlandsandwest@headlandarchaeology.com

Headland Archaeology North
Unit 16 | Hillside | Beeston Rd | Leeds LS11 8ND
t 0113 387 6430
e north@headlandarchaeology.com

Headland Archaeology Scotland
13 Jane Street | Edinburgh EH6 5HE
t 0131 467 7705
e scotland@headlandarchaeology.com

www.headlandarchaeology.com