

Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork
School of Archaeology and Palaeoecology
Queen's University Belfast



Data Structure Report No. 039

Investigations at Queen's University Belfast, Co. Antrim
New Library Project: PO1 811
AE/05/76





Queen's University Belfast
New Library Project: PO1 811

Brian Sloan

CAF DSR 039
Licence No. AE/05/76

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1 Summary

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Archaeological monitoring of three mechanically excavated test trenches took place in advance of demolition and construction works at the David Bates Building, Queen's University Belfast. The investigation took place in June 2005 and was carried out by members of the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, Queen's University Belfast.

1.1.2 Cartographic evidence shows that the proposed development area remained as a green field site until after Queen's College was established in 1847. By the late nineteenth century, considerable development had occurred in the area (Nelis 2004, 4).

1.1.3 The investigation was carried out under Licence No. AE/05/76

1.2 Aims

1.2.1 The primary objective of the investigation was to assess the presence, survival and stratigraphic sequence of any archaeological deposit that would potentially be disturbed by the proposed development.

1.3 Excavation

1.3.1 The excavation consisted of three trenches each 2m X 2m in dimension. The location of these trenches is shown on the site map (Fig. 2).

1.3.2 Trench A was situated in the car park on the site of the former Bowling Green, to the south-east of the David Bates Building. A deep stratigraphic sequence was encountered which consisted of levelling deposits and nineteenth and twentieth century dumps.

1.3.3 Trench B was situated to the south of the David Bates Building. A relatively simple, shallow stratigraphy was encountered with few archaeologically significant features present.

1.3.4 Trench C was situated to the north-west of the David Bates Building. Again a straight forward stratigraphy was encountered, although a possible post-hole (Context 307) was

observed in the south-western corner of the trench. This could represent the remains of a structure in this area.

1.4 *Discussion and Recommendations*

- 1.4.1 The finds gathered from the excavation of Trench A, although limited in number, show activity at the site from before, during and after the establishment of Queen's College in 1847. It is proposed that a limited finds retrieval exercise could be undertaken upon full monitoring of the site during the initial construction phases of the New Library.
- 1.4.2 Trenches B and C show possible evidence for prehistoric activity in the area. The post-hole encountered in Trench C (Context 307), along with the proximal fragment of a flint flake recovered from Trench B, suggest that full monitoring of the topsoil-stripping in the surrounding area is warranted.
- 1.4.3 It is recommended that publication for this excavation is not merited, other than a summary submitted for publication in *Excavations Bulletin 2005*.

2 Introduction

2.1 General

2.1.1 Archaeological monitoring of three test trenches as part of the Queen's University Belfast's New Library Project (PO1 811), took place on the 13th and 14th June 2005. The monitoring was undertaken by Brian Sloan and Carol Lyons of the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, Queen's University Belfast. The monitoring was conducted on behalf of the Estates Department, Queen's University Belfast.

2.2 Background

2.2.1 The site of the proposed new library is situated within the townland of Malone Lower, and is located to the east of the University's Lanyon Building. Cartographic evidence suggests that the site and its immediate environs were not developed until after the construction of the Lanyon campus in 1847-48. The Ordnance Survey Revised 1st Edition six-inch map sheet for the area in the 1850's shows the development area as still being green fields, although the maps of 1871 show the development of College Park and associated Victorian buildings (Nelis 2004, 3-4)

2.2.2 A number of known archaeological sites are recorded in the vicinity of the development area, with activity from the Mesolithic (find spot of flint artefacts near Ormeau Bridge SMR No. DOW 004:003) up to modern times (UDR observation tower SMR No. ANT 061:021) (*ibid*, 4), being noted. Although the development area and the surrounding environment has witnessed increased construction and landscaping since the mid-nineteenth century, the test trenches were positioned in areas that may have experienced minimal disturbance.

2.3 Objectives

2.3.1 The test trenches (dimensions 2m X 2m) were mechanically excavated and were concentrated around the existing David Bates Building, with three areas being targeted:

- 1) The car park to the south-east of the David Bates Building (Trench A);
- 2) The area of grass to the south of the David Bates Building (Trench B);
- 3) The area of grass to the north-west of the David Bates Building (Trench C).

2.3.2 The aim of the test trenches was to establish the presence and survival of any archaeological deposits in advance of the demolition of the David Bates Building and the construction of the new library.

2.4 The investigation was carried out under Excavation Licence No. AE/05/76. The site code for this investigation was QNL'05.

2.5 *Archiving*

2.5.1 A copy of this report has been deposited with the Environment and Heritage Service: Built Heritage. The records generated during the monitoring and the finds recovered during the course of the excavation of the three test trenches, are temporarily archived with the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork in the School of Archaeology and Palaeoecology, Queen's University Belfast.

2.6 *Credits and Acknowledgements*

2.6.1 The monitoring was undertaken by Brian Sloan and Carol Lyons (Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, Queen's University Belfast). For their assistance during the course of the excavation and the preparation of this report, the author is grateful to: Nicholas Beer (Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, Queen's University Belfast), John Davison (Queen's University Belfast), Dr Colm Donnelly (Queen's University Belfast), Edith Gowdy (Environment and Heritage Service: Built Heritage), Declan Hurl (Environment and Heritage Service: Built Heritage), Dr Philip Macdonald (Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, Queen's University Belfast), Ronan McHugh (Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, Queen's University Belfast), John O'Neill (Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, Queen's University Belfast) and Joe Scullion (Queen's University Belfast, Estates Department)



Figure 1. Location map (inset) and position of proposed library development

4 Excavation

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 The principle objective of the test trenches was to assess the presence, survival and stratigraphic sequence of any archaeological deposits that would be disturbed within the proposed development area. The trenches (A, B and C), each 2m X 2m in dimension, were located as shown on the site map (Fig.2).

4.2 Trench A

4.2.1 Trench A was located in the car park, formerly a bowling green, to the south-east of the David Bates Building (Fig.2). The trench was excavated with the aid of a mini-digger, and extended to a depth of 2.6m. A relatively simple stratigraphic sequence was encountered in this trench with various levelling deposits (Contexts 102, 103 and 109 - associated with the landscaping for the bowling green and for the construction of the car park) and nineteenth and twentieth century 'dump' deposits (Contexts 108, 105, 110 and 112) present.

4.2.2 Context No. 101 was assigned to the concrete fabric of the modern car park's surface, and this extended to a maximum depth of 0.2m. Immediately below this layer, to a depth of 0.26m, was a deposit consisting of various sized angular stones, gravel, and brick, and containing modern glazed pottery (Small Find No. 1) in a mid to dark brown loam (Context No. 102). It is assumed that this represents a hardcore deposit for the car park's concrete surface (Context No. 101). This layer overlay yellowish-brown sandy clay (Context No. 103) which had a maximum depth of 0.76m. It is assumed that these deposits (Contexts 102 and 103) represent the landscaping of the site for the former bowling green and for the car park. A charcoal rich lens (Context No. 106) was observed within the sandy clay (Context No.103), and due to the nature of this layer as a levelling deposit, it is unlikely that this deposit is in situ.

4.2.3 The sandy clay (Context No. 103) overlay two deposits of mid to dark brown gritty loam (Context Nos. 108 and 105). These two deposits, which had a maximum depth of 0.5m, were rich in nineteenth and twentieth century artefacts, and contained numerous sherds of modern glazed pottery (Small Find Nos. 5, 10 – 19), glass (Small Find Nos. 3, 4, 6 and 7), brick (Small Find No. 8) and animal bone (Small Find No. 9). Both deposits consisted

- of mid to dark brown gritty loam and were of a compact nature. Context No. 108, however, was noted to be slightly different in texture to Context No. 105 and was therefore assigned a different context number.
- 4.2.4 The deposits of mid to dark brown gritty loam (Context Nos. 105 and 108) overlay a deposit of yellowish-brown sandy clay (Context No. 109), which had a depth of 0.23m, and was very similar in composition to Context 103. This deposit, however, was found to be 'wetter' than Context 103, presumably due to the proximity of this deposit to the water table. Immediately below the sandy clay (Context No. 109) was a layer of quite compact mid to dark brown gritty loam (Context No. 110), which contained numerous artefacts of nineteenth century date (Small Find Nos. 20 – 37). These deposits (Context Nos. 103 – 111) may represent a single episode or phase of activity at the site.
- 4.2.5 The dark brown gritty loam (Context No. 110) overlay a thin lens of blue-grey estuarine silt (Context No. 111) with a maximum thickness of 0.06m. This layer contained no artefacts, and was probably deposited during a period of flooding (due to the proximity of the site to the River Lagan). Immediately below the silt (Context No. 111) was Context 112 which had a maximum thickness of 0.4m. This deposit consisted of a damp and relatively friable orange-brown gritty loam, which proved to be rich in nineteenth century artefacts. These finds included numerous sherds of modern glazed pottery (Small Find Nos. 43 – 50), glass (Small Find Nos. 39 – 40), a clay pipe (Small Find No. 38) and a leather shoe (Small Find No. 42). The subsoil (Context No. 113) was encountered at an overall depth of 2.5m and consisted of orange-red, damp estuarine sand.
- 4.3 *Trench B*
- 4.3.1 Trench B was located on a grassy area south of the David Bates Building (Fig. 2). This trench was excavated to an overall depth of 0.8m where the subsoil was encountered.
- 4.3.2 Context Nos. 201 and 202 were assigned to the sod and topsoil in this trench. The topsoil deposit (Context No. 202) had a maximum depth of 0.38m and produced artefacts of nineteenth and twentieth century date. The finds included a segment of cast iron piping (Small Find No. 67), corroded iron objects (Small Find No. 61), and glass (Small Find Nos. 54, 57, 58). The presence of tree roots at this level was noted and is probably due to the proximity of the area to Botanic Gardens.

4.3.3 The topsoil deposits (Context Nos. 201 and 202) overlay a compact brown loam (Context No. 203) with a maximum depth of 0.2m. Small fragments of brick (Small Find No. 59), and modern glazed pottery (Small Find Nos. 62 – 66) were present in this deposit. Immediately below the brown loam (Context No. 203) was the natural subsoil (Context No. 204) which was an orange-red sandy loam. The occurrence of tree roots was again noted at this level, and root disturbance in the subsoil was assigned Context No. 205.

4.3.4 A negative feature was observed at this level in the north-west corner of the trench. The cut of the feature was assigned Context No. 207. The fill (Context No. 206) consisted of loose, medium-brown sandy silt with both light glassy slag (Small Find No. 69) and possible struck (Small Find No. 72) and reworked flints (Small Find No. 71) contained within it. However, upon excavation of half of the feature, numerous rodent burrows were noted undercutting the subsoil (Context 204) and it was concluded that the feature (Context No. 207) represented modern animal disturbance.

4.4 *Trench C*

4.4.1 Trench C was located on a grassy area to the north-west of the David Bates Building (Fig. 2). It was excavated to a depth of 0.37m, where the subsoil was encountered.

4.4.2 Context numbers 301 and 302 were assigned to the sod and topsoil deposits. These deposits had a total depth of 0.12m. The sod and topsoil deposits (Contexts 301 and 302) consisted of light to mid-brown friable loam, and various artefacts of modern date were recovered. These included brick (Small Find Nos. 73 and 74), modern bottle glass (Small Find No. 75) and modern glazed pottery (Small Find Nos. 76 and 77). The topsoil (Context No. 302) overlay a thin deposit (0.03m thick) of a quite compact gritty loam (Context No. 303).

4.4.3 Beneath the gritty loam (Context No. 303), a deposit of mid to dark brown loam was exposed (Context No. 304), which had a maximum depth of 0.22m. Towards the base of this deposit, a number of glacially derived, thermally damaged pieces of flint were recovered (Small Find No. 78). It is assumed that these originated in the subsoil (Context No. 305) where further examples were observed. The subsoil in Trench C consisted of an orange-red sandy loam (Context No. 305).

4.4.4 A possible small post-hole (Context No. 307) was observed cutting the subsoil (Context No. 305) in the south-western corner of the trench. This measured approximately 0.2m (east - west) by 0.18m (north - south) and was 0.14m deep. The fill (Context No. 306) consisted of mid to dark brown silty loam. No other features were noted at this level.

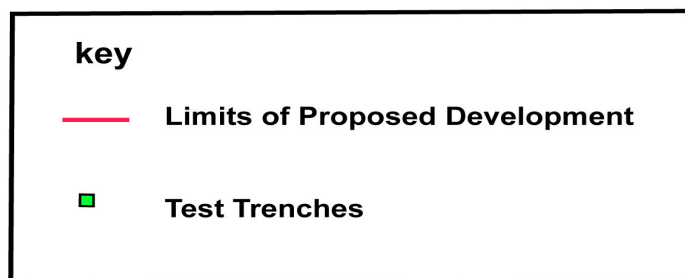
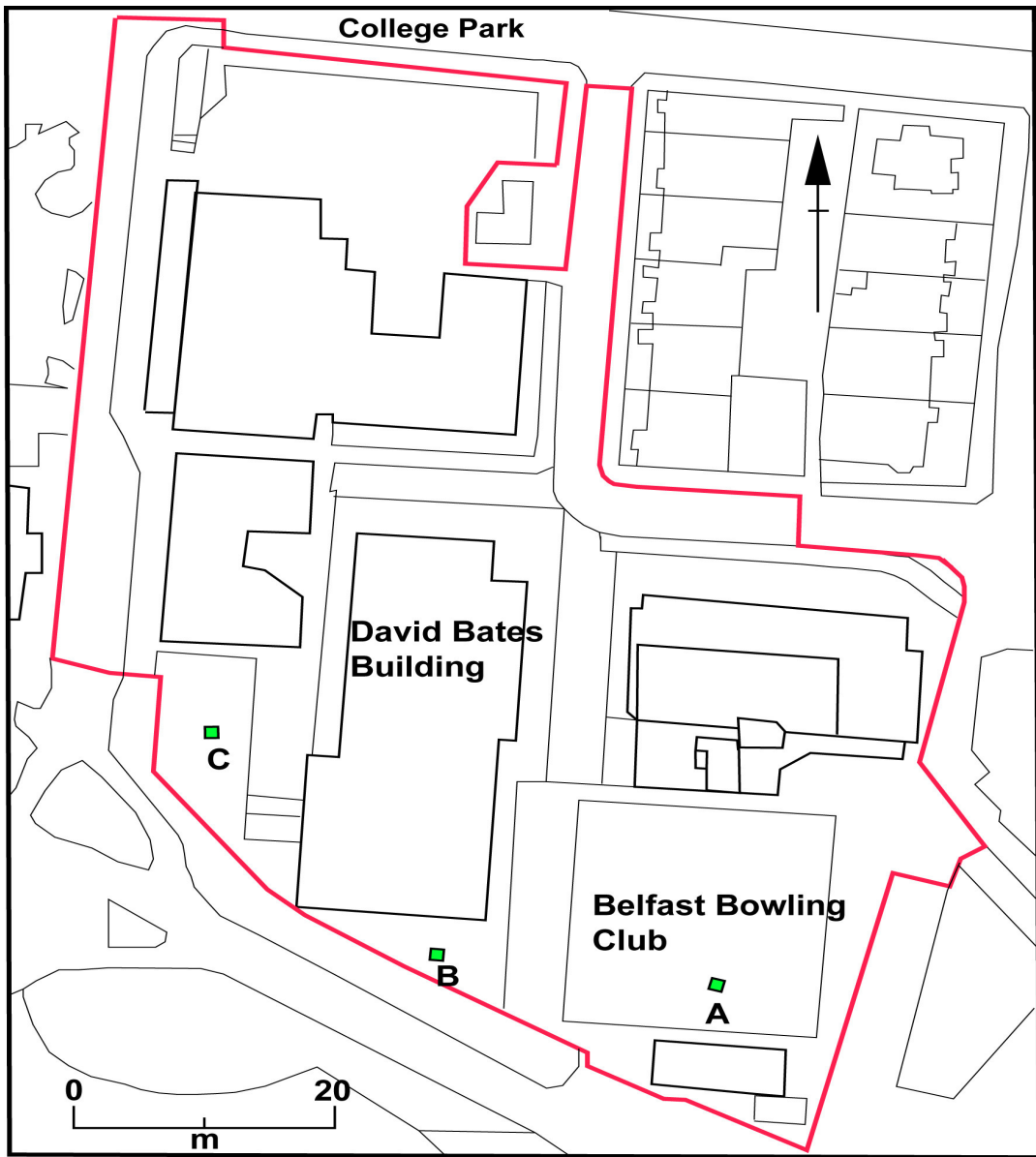


Figure 2. Location of Test Trenches

5 Discussion

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 The deposits encountered in the excavation of the test trenches produced a limited amount of archaeological information; this, however, is not unexpected given the restricted area that was under investigation. The purpose of the exercise was to determine the presence, survival and stratigraphic sequence of any archaeological deposits that would be disturbed through construction work on the site.

5.2 Trench A

5.2.1 The stratigraphical sequence of Trench A shows episodes of dumping and levelling, most likely connected with the landscaping of the site from the nineteenth century onwards. The artefacts support this dating as the lowermost deposit in Trench A (Context 112) produced a clay pipe of nineteenth-century date (C.Donnolly pers. comm.). It is noted that artefact recovery in this area surpassed the other two trenches, with 61% of finds being recovered from Trench A.

5.3 Trench B

5.3.1 Little of archaeological significance was demonstrated in Trench B, with any features present being related to tree roots and animal disturbance. However, the proximal end of a struck flake and a possible retouched fragment of flint (Small Find No.71) were recovered from the fill of the animal burrow (Context No. 206), perhaps suggesting some form of prehistoric activity in the general area.

5.4 Trench C

5.4.1 The results from Trench C also suggest prehistoric activity in the general area. The negative feature (Context No. 307), possibly a post-hole, could represent the remains of a structure, although due to the lack of associated artefacts and features, its date and function can only remain speculative.

5.5 Conclusion

- 5.5.1 It is suggested that further monitoring be carried out upon demolition of the David Bates Building and initial construction phases of the proposed New Library, especially in the area of Trench B and Trench C where artefacts and features of a possible prehistoric nature were encountered.

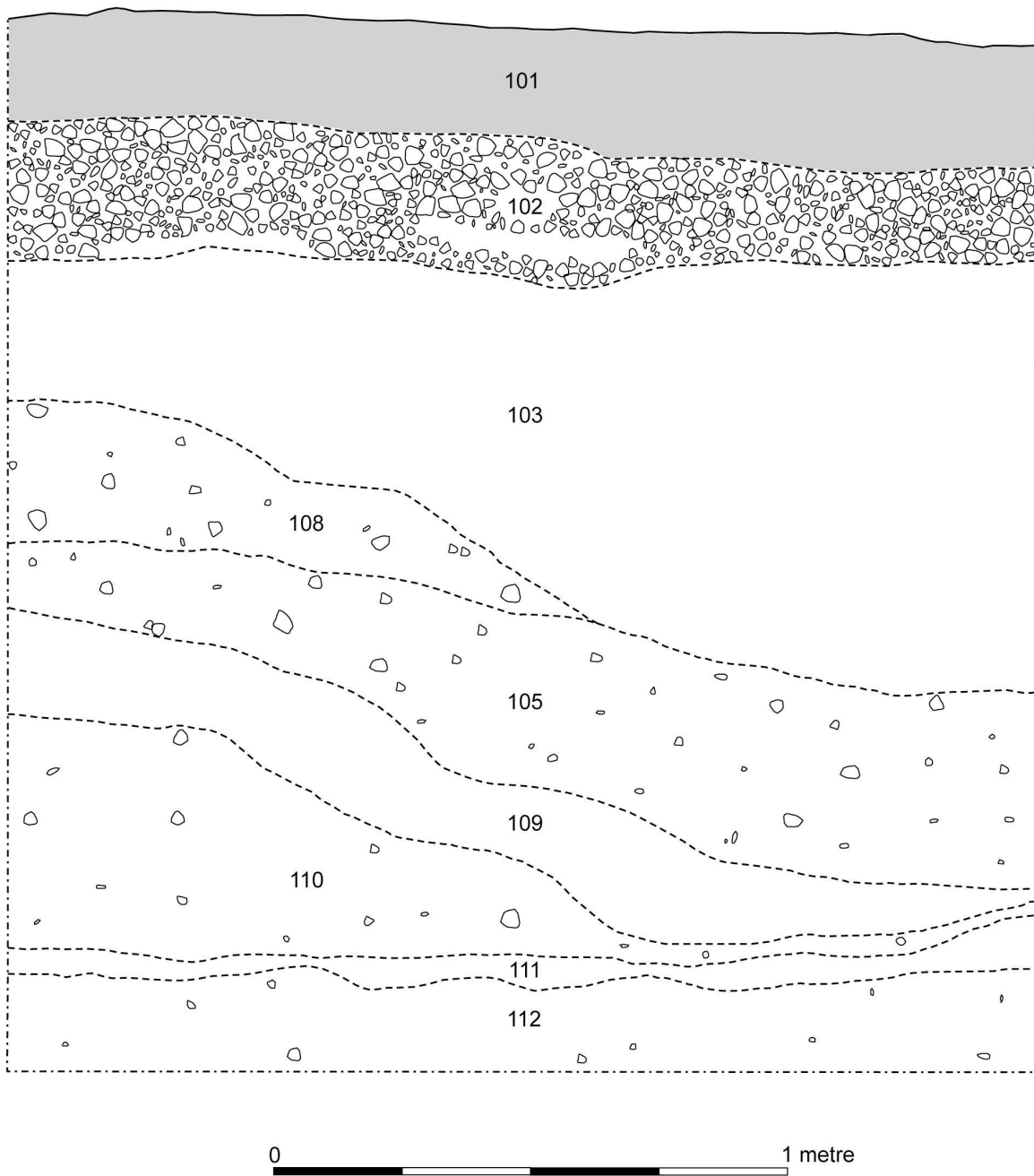


Figure 3. Trench A, south-facing section

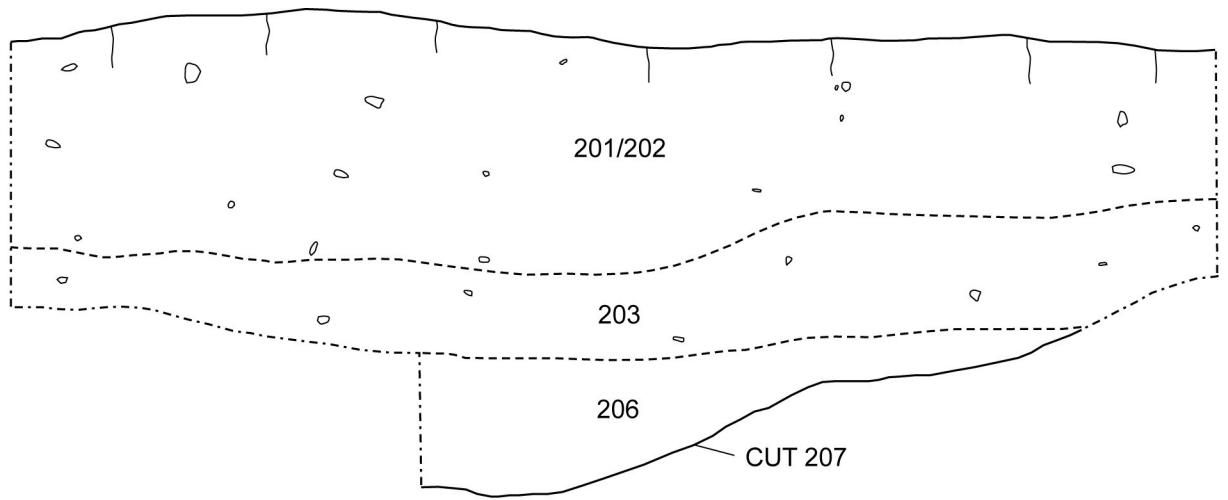


Figure 4. Trench B, south-facing section

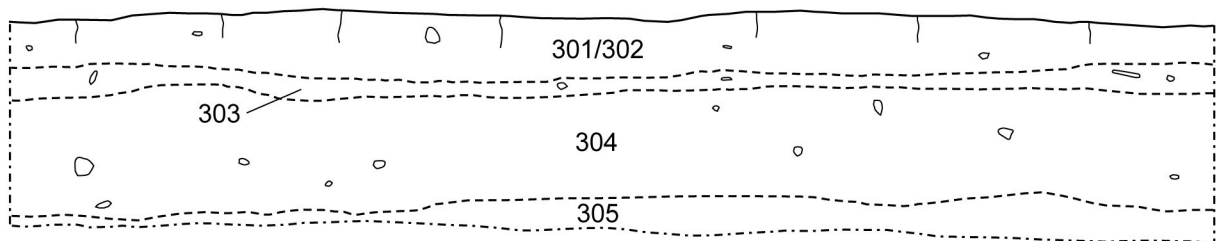


Figure 5. Trench C, east-facing section

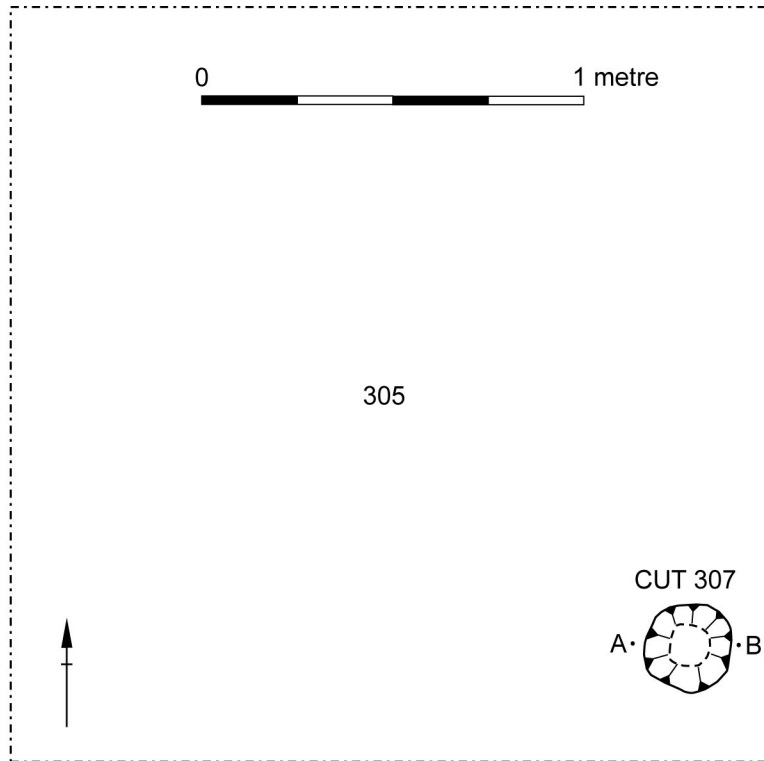


Figure 6. Plan of Trench C

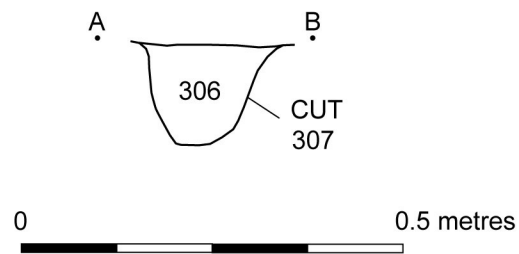


Figure 7. Trench C, south-facing section of post-hole 307

6 Assessment of the impact of construction

6.1 Trench A

6.1.1 The dump deposits, (in particular Context Nos. 110 and 112), produced artefactual material dated to the mid nineteenth century or later. A limited finds retrieval exercise may recover artefactual material reflecting the early history of Queen's College. This may be undertaken as part of a monitoring exercise during the initial construction works at this location.

6.2 Trenches B and C

6.2.1 The presence of evidence of possible prehistoric activity in the areas around Trenches B and C suggest that monitoring of initial soil clearance in these areas may be appropriate. Further materials of archaeological significance are likely to be present and exposed during this clearance.

7 Recommendations

7.1 Further Monitoring

7.1.1 It is recommended that further monitoring takes place upon initial construction phases of the New Library. This would be especially important in the areas of Trenches B and C where possible prehistoric features survive.

7.2 Publication

7.2.1 It is recommended that the results from this excavation do not merit publication apart from a summary in *Excavations Bulletin 2005*. Should further monitoring reveal features and deposits of archaeological significance, then the possibility of publication in the *Ulster Journal of Archaeology* should be considered.

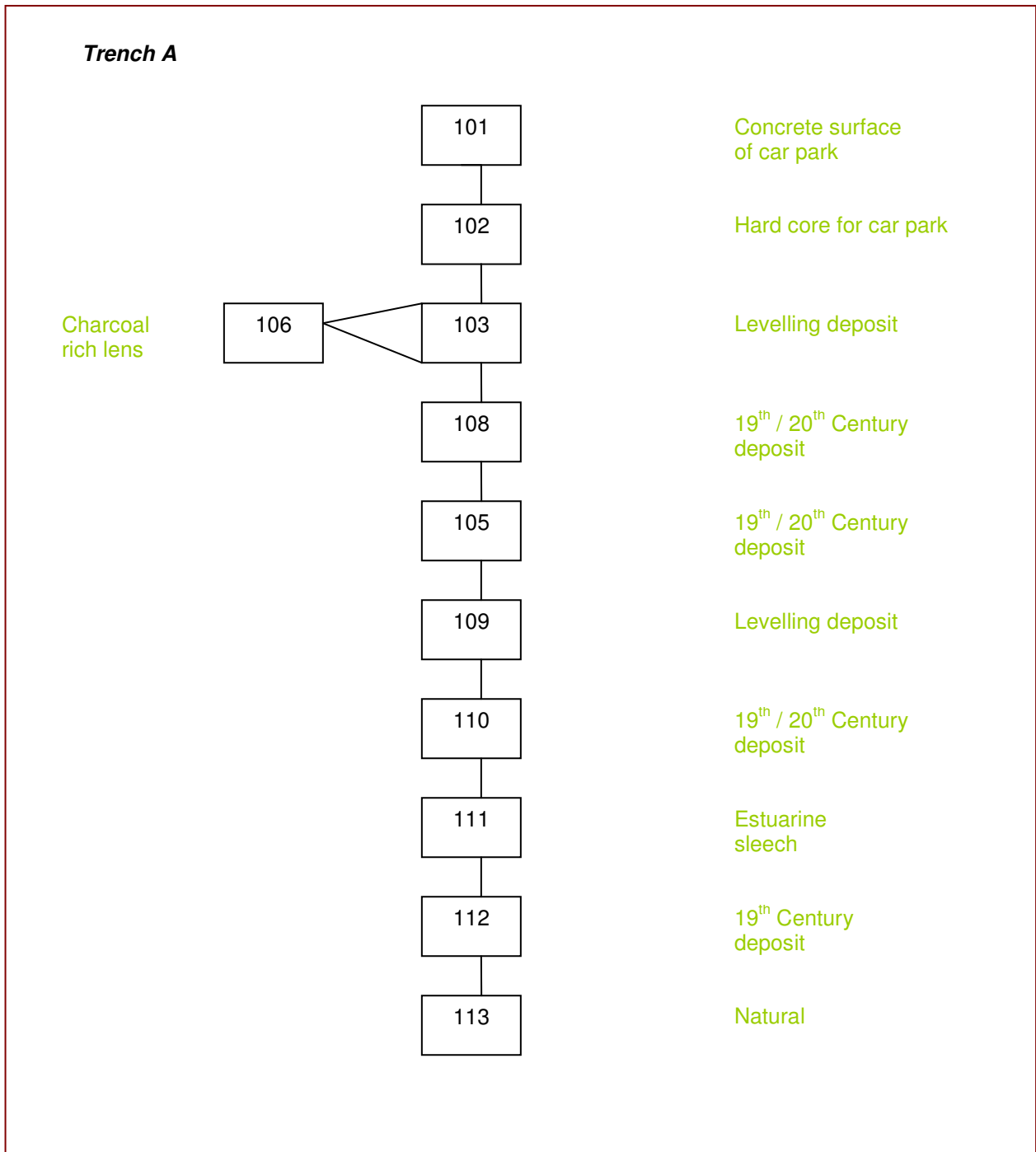
8 **Bibliography**

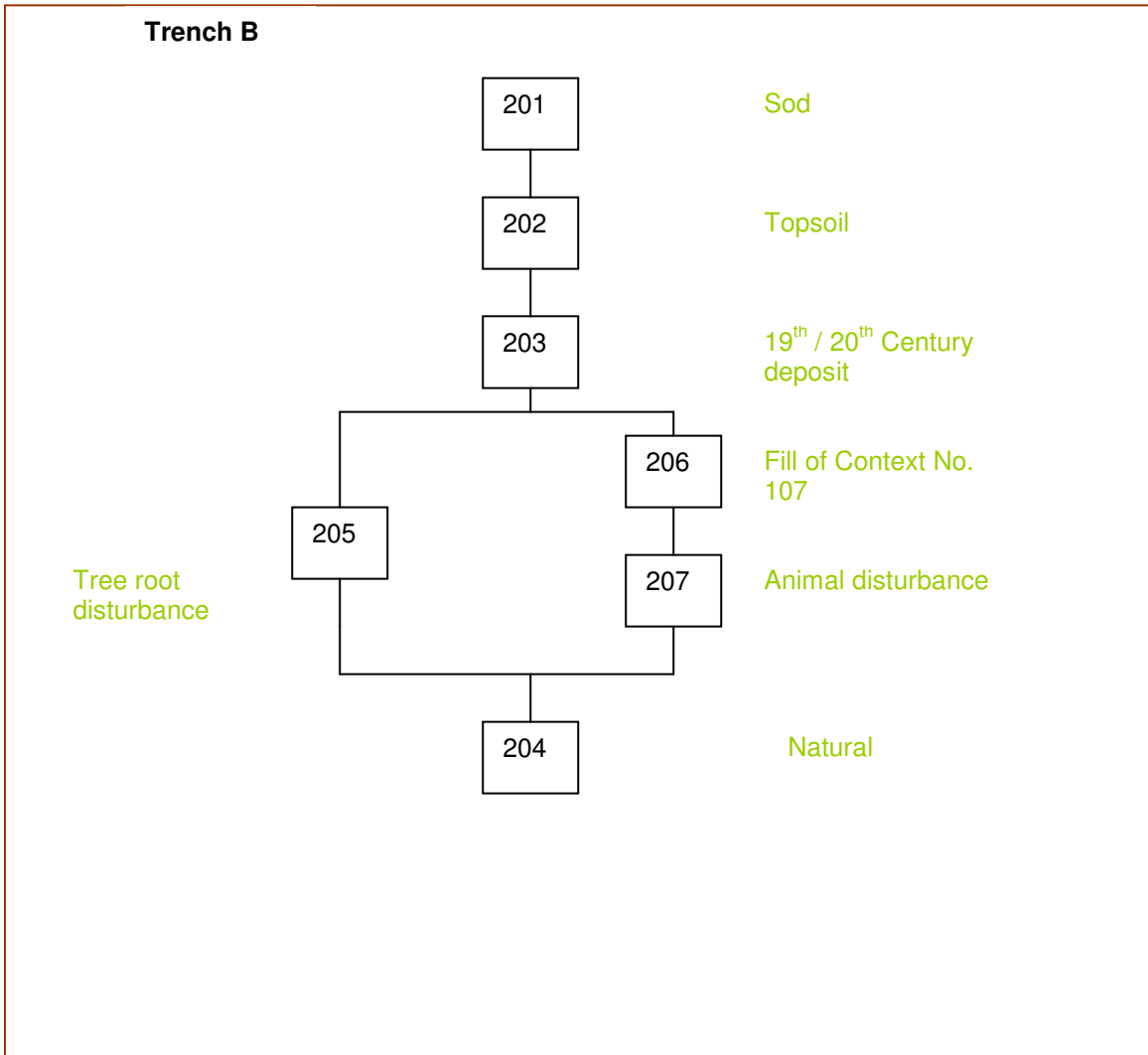
Nelis, E., (2004) *Archaeological Impact Assessment: Queen's University Belfast: PO1 811 – New Library Project*. Unpublished report prepared by the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, School of Archaeology and Palaeoecology, Queen's University Belfast.

Appendix 1 – Context register

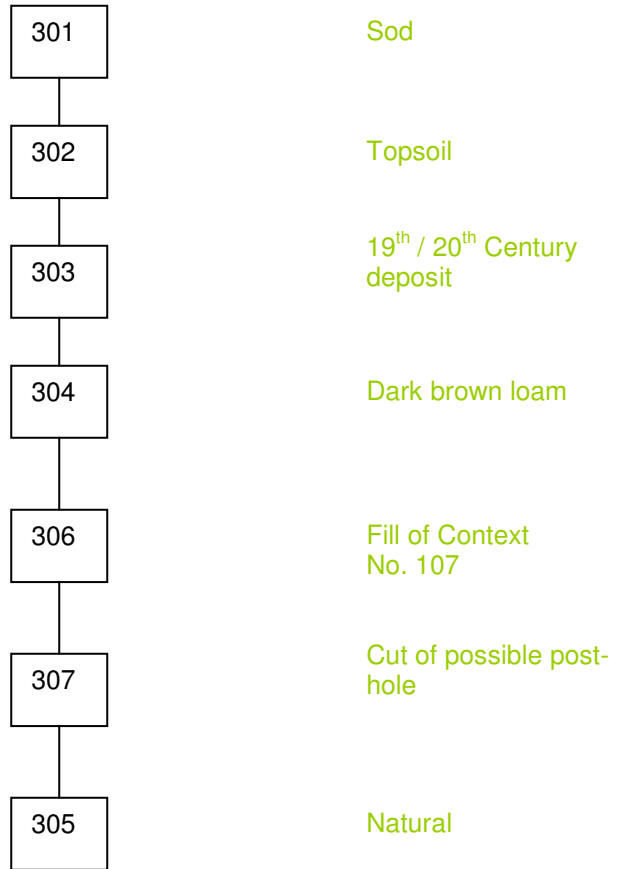
TRENCH	CONTEXT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION
A	101	Concrete surface of car park
A	102	Mid to dark brown loam mixed with rubble
A	103	Yellow-brown sandy clay
A	104	N/A
A	105	Mid to dark brown gritty loam
A	106	Charcoal rich lens within Context No. 103
A	107	N/A
A	108	Mid to dark brown gritty loam
A	109	Yellow brown sandy clay
A	110	Mid to dark brown gritty loam
A	111	Blue grey estuarine silex
A	112	Orange brown gritty loam
A	113	Natural, orange red estuarine sand
B	201	Sod
B	202	Topsoil
B	203	Thin layer of brown loam
B	204	Natural, orange red subsoil
B	205	Tree root disturbance
B	206	Medium brown sandy silt
B	207	Animal disturbance
C	301	Sod
C	302	Topsoil

TRENCH	CONTEXT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION
C	303	Dark brown gritty loam
C	304	Mid to dark brown silty loam
C	305	Natural, orange red subsoil
C	306	Mid brown silty loam fill of Context No. 107
C	307	Circular cut of possible post-hole





Trench C



Appendix 3 – Photographic register

Nikon Coolpix 5200

PHOTO	.J PEG	DATE	TRENCH	DESCRIPTION
1	0502	13/6/05	A	Context No. 103 (Leveling deposit) before excavation, from the west
2	0503	13/6/05	A	Context No. 106 (Burning), from the west
3	0504	13/6/05	A	Excavation in progress
4	0505	13/6/05	A	South-facing section showing Context Nos. 101, 102, 103, 108, 105, 109 and 110, from the south
5	0506	13/6/05	A	South-facing section showing Contexts 101, 102, 103, 108, 105, 109 and 110, from the south
6	0507	13/6/05	A	Context No. 113 (Subsoil), from the south
7	0508	13/6/05	A	Context No. 113 (Subsoil), from the south
8	0509	13/6/05	A	North-facing section showing Context Nos. 109 and 111, from the north
9	0510	13/6/05	A	North-facing section showing Context Nos. 109 and 111, from the north
10	0511	13/6/05	A	North-facing section showing Context Nos. 101, 102, 103, 108, 105, 111, 112, and 113, from the north
11	0512	13/6/05	-	-Excavation in progress
12	0513	13/6/05	-	- Excavation in progress
13	0514	13/6/05	C	Context No. 307 (Post-hole) before excavation, from the north
14	0515	13/6/05	C	Context No. 307 (Post-hole) before excavation, from the north
15	0516	13/6/05	C	Context No. 307 (Post-hole) following excavation, from the north
16	0517	13/6/05	C	Context No. 307 (Post-hole) following excavation, from the north
17	0518	13/6/05	C	Context No. 305 (Subsoil), from the south
18	0519	13/6/05	C	East-facing section showing Contexts Nos. 301, 302, 303, 304 and 305, from the east

PHOTO	.J PEG	DATE	TRENCH	DESCRIPTION
19	0520	14/6/05	B	- Excavation in progress
20	0521	14/6/05	B	Context No. 206 (Animal disturbance) before excavation, from the west
21	0522	14/6/05	B	Context No. 206 (Animal disturbance) before excavation, from the west
22	0523	14/6/05	B	Context No. 206 (Animal disturbance) before excavation, from the west
23	0524	14/6/05	B	Context No. 207 following excavation, from the south
24	0525	14/6/05	B	Context No. 207 following excavation, from the south
25	0526	14/6/05	B	Context No. 207 following excavation, from the west
26	0527	14/6/05	B	South-facing section showing Context Nos. 201, 202, 203, 206 and 207, from the south
27	0528	14/6/05	B	Context No. 204 (Subsoil), from the west

Appendix 4 – Field Drawing Register

DRAWING NO.	TRENCH	SCALE	TYPE	DESCRIPTION
1	A	1:10	Section	South-facing Section
2	C	1:10	Profile	Profile of post- hole (Context No. 307)
3	C	1:10	Section	East-facing Section
4	B	1:10	Section	South-facing Section
5	C	1:20	Plan	Showing Context Nos. 305 and 307

Appendix 5 – Finds Register

TRENCH	CONTEXT NO.	SMALL FIND No.	QUANTITY	DESCRIPTION
A	102	1	1	White pottery handle
A	103	2	1	Modern clear bottle glass
A	105	3	1	Modern clear bottle glass
A	105	4	1	Modern clear bottle glass
A	105	5	1	White glazed pottery
A	108	6	1	Modern clear bottle glass
A	108	7	1	Modern glass bottle
A	108	8	1	Brick
A	108	9	1	Animal bone
A	108	10	1	Pot sherd (Flower pot?)
A	108	11	2	Pot sherd (Flower pot?)
A	108	12	1	Pot sherd (Flower pot?)
A	108	13	1	Pot sherd (Flower pot?)
A	108	14	1	White glazed pottery
A	108	15	1	Blue and white glazed pottery
A	108	16	1	White glazed pottery
A	108	17	1	White glazed pottery

TRENCH	CONTEXT NO.	SMALL FIND No.	QUANTITY	DESCRIPTION
A	108	18	1	White glazed pottery
A	108	19	1	White glazed pottery
A	110	20	1	Modern glass bottle
A	110	21	1	Pot sherd (Flower pot?)
A	110	22	1	Oyster shell
A	110	23	2	Light glassy slag
A	110	24	1	Iron nail
A	110	25	2	Light glassy slag
A	110	26	2	Modern clear bottle glass
A	110	27	1	Blackware
A	110	28	1	White glazed pottery handle
A	110	29	2	Blue and white glazed pottery
A	110	30	1	Cream glazed pottery
A	110	31	3	Ceramic tile?
A	110	32	1	Blue and white glazed pottery
A	110	33	1	Blue and white glazed pottery
A	110	34	1	Base of white glazed bowl
A	110	35	1	Pot sherd (Flower

TRENCH	CONTEXT NO.	SMALL FIND No.	QUANTITY	DESCRIPTION
				pot?
A	110	36	1	Blue glazed pot sherd
A	110	37	2	Cream glazed pottery
A	112	38	1	Complete clay pipe with heart motif
A	112	39	1	Modern clear bottle glass
A	112	40	2	Modern clear bottle glass
A	112	41	2	Light glassy slag
A	112	42	1	Complete Leather shoe
A	112	43	2	Whiskey flagon?
A	112	44	3	Water pipe
A	112	45	1	Cream glazed pottery
A	112	46	1	Pottery jar?
A	112	47	1	Cream glazed pottery
A	112	48	1	Cream glazed pottery
A	112	49	2	Ceramic bowl
A	112	50	1	Cream glazed pottery
B	202	51	1	Slate
B	202	52	1	Natural flint
B	202	53	2	Light glassy slag
B	202	54	1	Modern clear bottle glass

TRENCH	CONTEXT NO.	SMALL FIND No.	QUANTITY	DESCRIPTION
B	202	55	1	Brick
B	202	56	1	Coal
B	202	57	2	Modern clear bottle glass
B	202	58	1	Green bottle glass
B	202	59	1	Brick
B	202	60	1	Cloth / fabric
B	202	61	3	Iron objects
B	203	62	1	Blue and white glazed pottery
B	203	63	1	Cream glazed pottery
B	203	64	1	Brown glazed pottery
B	203	65	1	Cream glazed pottery
B	203	66	1	Blue and white glazed pottery
B	202	67	1	Cast iron piping
B	205	68	3	Natural flint
B	206	69	2	Light glassy slag
B	206	70	3	Natural flint
B	206	71	1	Retouched flint?
B	206	72	1	Proximal fragment of flint flake
C	302	73	1	Brick
C	302	74	1	Brick

TRENCH	CONTEXT NO.	SMALL FIND No.	QUANTITY	DESCRIPTION
C	302	75	1	Modern green bottle glass
C	302	76	1	Cream glazed pottery
C	302	77	1	Cream glazed pottery
C	304	78	11	Natural flint

Appendix 6 – Sample Register

SAMPLE NUMBER	TRENCH	CONTEXT NUMBER	NUMBER OF BAGS
1	A	103	1
2	A	105	1
3	A	106	1
4	A	111	1
5	A	113	1
6	B	206	1
7	C	304	1
8	C	306	1



Plate 1 – Trench A South facing section showing levelling deposits (Context Nos. 102 and 103) and 'dump' deposits (Context Nos. 108, 105 and 110).



Plate 2 - Trench B showing Context No. 207 following excavation of half of the feature. From the west. (0.50 metres scale)



Plate 3 – Trench C showing Context No. 307. From the north.