

HIGHAM FERRERS, KINGS MEADOW, WATCHING BRIEF

The Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) undertook a watching brief at Higham Ferrers, Kings Meadow development site on behalf of Maynard and Partners. The watching brief began and was completed on the 10th October 1994. The area is to be developed into a housing estate.

The watching brief was carried out on trial pit excavations, which were part of a geotech ground investigations, to obtain information of archaeological remains which may be present at the site. A total of 8 pits were excavated. The precise location of the pits was not recorded, although their estimated positions are shown in figure 00.

A JCB with a toothed bucket (0.80m wide) was used to excavate the Trial pits, which were approximately 3.40m in length and continued to a depth of 4m. After the removal of the initial 1.2 m of overburden excavation stopped to allow trial pit profiles to be cleaned and recorded.

No variation in topsoil was identified in the monitored trial pits, which comprised 0.30m - 0.40m of modern ploughsoil. In trial pits 1, 3, 4 and 6 this layer directly impinged upon the undisturbed geology. The modern plough overlay a reddy brown sandy silt of 0.35m - 0.40m in trial pits 3, 5, 7 and 8; interpreted as an previous ploughsoil horizon.

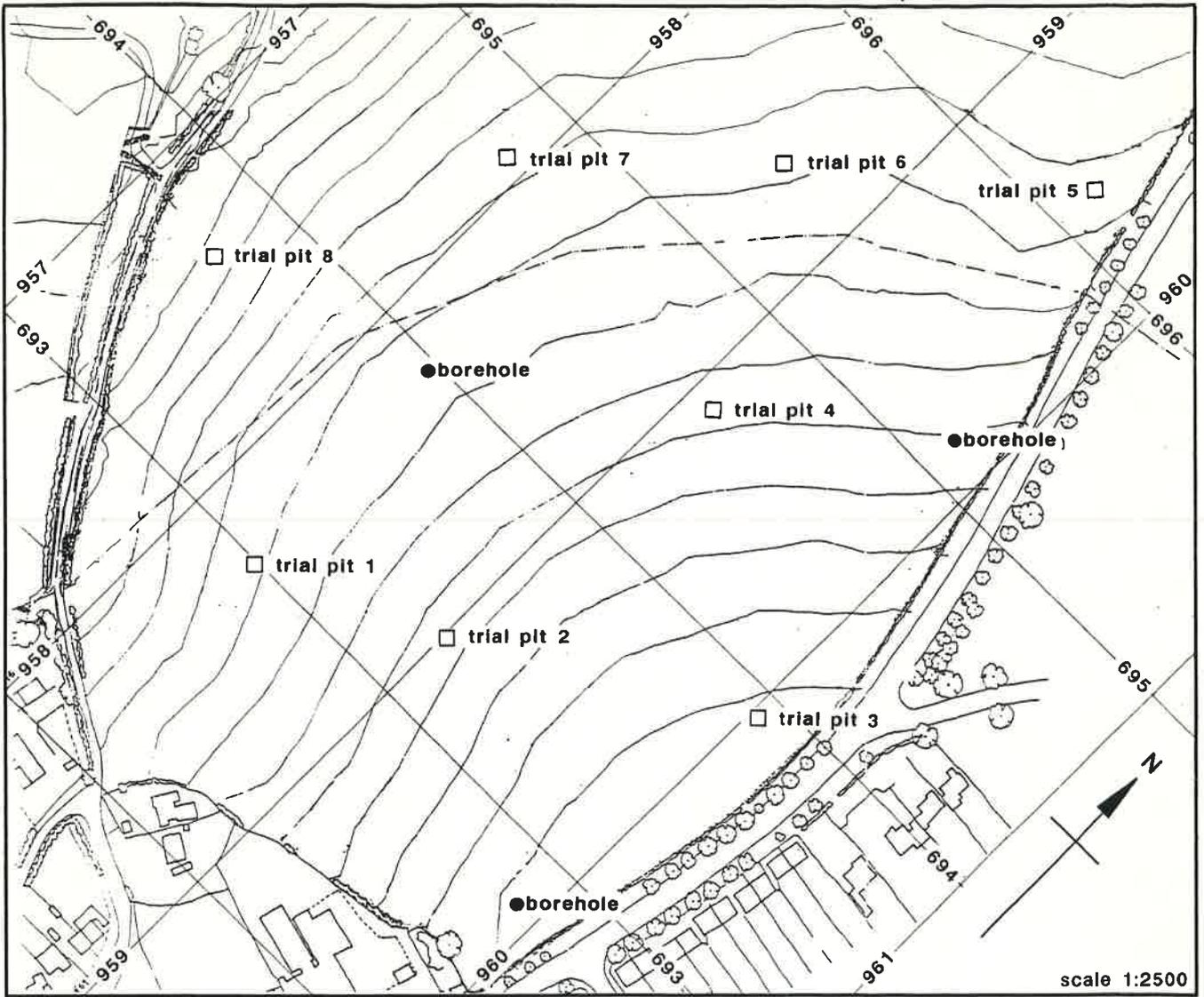
The geology varied from Northampton Sand with Ironstone in trial pits 1, 5, 6, 7 and 8, to Glacier Till (clay) in trial pits 2 and 4. The underlying geology observed in trial pit 3, varied from other monitored trial pits. The old ploughsoil (3/2) was a reddy brown silty loam with pockets of limestone (c. 50%), and a disturbed layer composed of Oolitic limestone was observed as an interface (3/3) between the old ploughsoil and the Oolitic limestone natural (3/4).

Trial pit 6 was the only trial pit to contain archaeological remains, where a N/S-aligned shallow ditch (6/5) and a possible ditch terminus/pit were observed. The ditch was 1.60m wide x 0.60m deep with a flat base, and contained two fills; a dark grey brown sandy silt (6/2) and a loose light brown sand with odd flecks of charcoal (6/4). One sherd of pottery was recovered from (6/2), ?? fabric report pending??

The ditch terminus/pit (6/7) had a width of 1.10m and was 0.35m deep, and was filled by a mid-grey brown sandy silt. No finds were recovered.

All trial pits were successfully monitored.

Olivia Pierpoint
OAU
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HFKM WB 94

Figure 1 trial pit and borehole location