

Witham Archaeology

A Report to Prowind (UK) Ltd

July 2012



LAND AT WYGGESTON FARM, WELFORD, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Archaeological Test Pit Evaluation

R Trimble

LAND AT WYGGESTON FARM, WELFORD, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Site Code: WEWF12
Museum Accession No.: N/A
Planning Application Ref.: DA/2012/0026
OASIS ID.: withamar1-129624
NGR: SP 64824 78232

Archaeological Test Pit Evaluation

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Fig. 2 Site Location Plan - Scale 1:5000

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LAND AT WYGGESTON FARM, WELFORD, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL TEST PIT EVALUATION

SUMMARY

This report presents the results of a programme of archaeological test pit evaluation carried out by Witham Archaeology in conjunction with Prowind (UK) Ltd, at Wyggeston Farm, Welford, Northamptonshire. The project was intended to provide information in support of an application for planning permission to construct a single wind turbine. Fieldwork was completed during the period 27 to 28th June 2012.

A desk-based assessment compiled in September 2010 by Nexus Heritage established that there were no known finds in the immediate area of the proposed turbine. However, cropmarks indicative of possible prehistoric settlement, prehistoric flint scatters and concentrations of Romano-British pottery had been identified in the wider assessment area.

Test Pit excavations within the footprint of the proposed wind turbine, revealed boulder clay at depths of between 0.26 and 0.28m below existing ground level. Hollows of silty clay in some areas were interpreted as having derived from medieval or, more likely, post medieval/modern arable cultivation. No artefacts were located in material excavated from the test pits.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings of a programme of test pit evaluation carried out by Witham Archaeology in conjunction with Prowind (UK) Ltd, at Wyggeston Farm, Welford, Northamptonshire. The project was intended to provide information in support of an application for planning permission to construct a single wind turbine. Fieldwork was completed during the period 27 – 28th July 2012.

The information in this document is presented with the proviso that further data may yet emerge. Witham Archaeology cannot, therefore, be held responsible for any loss, delay or damage, material or otherwise, arising out of this report. The document has been prepared in accordance with the Code of Conduct of the Institute of Field Archaeologists.

2.0 SITE LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY & GEOLOGY (see Figs. 1 & 2)

Wyggeston Farm, in the parish of Welford and the administrative district of Daventry, Northamptonshire lies approximately 15km east of Rugby.

The site at NGR SP 64824 78232 lies on arable land east of Elkington Road, on a north facing slope, at an approximate elevation of 175m OD. The site is located on solid geology of Jurassic mudstone of the Whitby Formation (Geology of Britain viewer on bgs.ac.uk).

3.0 PROJECT BACKGROUND

Prowind (UK) Ltd have submitted a planning application (Planning Ref. DA/2012/0026) for the construction of a single wind turbine at Wyggeston Farm. Current proposals indicate that the tower will require foundations of c. 13m². Design drawings also indicate a transformer (4 x 2.6m) and substation (5.6 x 4.6m) in the immediate vicinity of the tower. Excavations will also be required for a cable trench, access track and, potentially, areas of hard-standing to facilitate construction.

The archaeological potential of the site has already been considered in a desk-based assessment compiled by Nexus Heritage, in September 2010. The requirements for further assessment - designed to mitigate the impact of the development upon potential archaeological deposits - were set out by the archaeological adviser to Daventry District Council in a brief dated 26th April 2012. A separate brief (also dated 26th April) sets out the requirements for Stage I investigation of the site, to comprise a trial trench evaluation across the footprint of the turbine base. An appraisal of the results of the investigation (Stage II) would determine the requirement for further archaeological investigation (Stage III).

Following consultation with the archaeological adviser to the local authority it was agreed that the requirement for a single evaluation could be modified to a programme of hand-excavated test pitting. The modification was designed to minimise the potential for crop damage.

4.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Prehistoric

Possible prehistoric settlement in the vicinity of the site is indicated by two cropmark sites identified as part of the National Mapping Programme. The first, located *c.* 700m to the northwest (HER Ref. 1067 – MNN564) comprises three enclosures and two ditches, the second, located *c.* 600m to the southwest comprises a single enclosure (HER Ref. 9659 MNN135448). A linear feature (HER Ref. 1067/0/1) interpreted as an Iron Age boundary was also identified, in the area of the first set of cropmarks.

Prehistoric flint scatters have been identified at locations *c.* 400m northwest and 400m southwest of the site. The first, comprising early Neolithic to Early Bronze Age material (HER Ref. 9469 MNN135360), was identified as a result of the Welford Field Survey carried out in 1979-80. The second, comprising an assemblage of unspecified material, was identified during fieldwork carried out along the route of the A14 (HER Ref. 8366 MNN137339 and MNN137340).

Romano-British

Concentrations of Romano-British pottery, indicative of probable settlement, have been identified at locations *c.* 500m northwest and 400m southwest of the site. The first scatter was located during fieldwalking carried in the 1970s (HER Ref. 1063 MNN560), the second as a result of monitoring during construction of the A14 (HER Ref. 8366 MNN137339 and MNN137340).

Anglo-Saxon and Medieval

The presence of late Saxon settlement in Welford is suggested by inclusion of the village in the Domesday Survey of 1086. Settlement earthworks to the west of Welford indicate that the village has contracted in size since the medieval period. The assessment site probably lies within the area occupied by open fields associated with the settlement (Page-Smith 2010, 14).

Deserted medieval settlements have been identified at Elkington, *c.* 600m to the southwest of the site (HER 1072 – MNN569) and at Welford Lodge 900m to the northeast (HER 6529 – MNN2520). The latter was known as Chilcotes (or *Guldecote* at Domesday).

North of Chilcotes lay the Premonstratensian Sulby Abbey. The Abbey, dissolved in AD1538 and subsequently demolished, survives as earthworks (Scheduled Monument No. 30072).

A fragment of late medieval pottery was collected from near the turbine location during a site visit by Nexus Heritage, carried out as part of the desk-based assessment (*ibid*, 15).

Post Medieval

A map regression study carried out by Nexus Heritage as part of the desk-based assessment indicates that during the post-medieval period the site formed part of agricultural land. There are no indications of settlement or structural remains in the immediate vicinity. The Ordnance Survey maps of 1884-5 and 1900-1 show a field boundary immediately north of the assessment area, running approximately northwest to southeast. The fields have since been amalgamated and the boundary removed (*ibid*, 16 – 26).

A concentration of tile located approximately 10m west of the site was identified during a site visit carried out as part of the desk-based assessment. It was suggested that the material could have derived from small-scale brick and tile manufacture in the area (*ibid*, 20).

5.0 AIMS & OBJECTIVES

The principal objectives of the project, as set out in a Witham Archaeology specification of 14th May 2012, were to:

- *provide information on the presence/absence, nature, date and quality of survival of archaeological deposits and remains which might be contained within the site, at the depth of proposed construction disturbance, and to assess the importance of such remains in terms of their local, regional and national context.*
- *assess the possible scale of development impact on any remains and provide information which might influence development design so that impact on any remains can be avoided or minimised.*
- *provide information that will allow the local planning authority to reconcile development proposals with their policy for preserving archaeological remains and make an informed and reasoned decision on a planning application.*
- *provide site specific archaeological information which (if necessary) would allow for the design and integration of timing and funding of any further archaeological work (or other mitigating strategy) which might be required in advance of or during any subsequent development programme.*
- *produce a project archive for deposition with the appropriate museum and from which the potential for further study and academic research could be assessed.*
- *provide information for accession to the Northamptonshire Historic Environment Record (HER).*

6.0 METHODOLOGY

A grid of nine 1m² test pits (see Fig. 3) was excavated, over an area of 15 x 15m. The assessment area, identified by Prowind (UK) Ltd as the proposed site of the turbine, is approximately 25m to the north of the position indicated on design drawings published in previous reports. The test pits represent a sample of 4% of the assessment area.

Topsoil removal in all of the pits was carried out by Prowind (UK) Ltd, operating under the instructions of Witham Archaeology. The removal of residual material and localised investigations of features or deposits of potential archaeological significance was carried out by Witham Archaeology using appropriate hand tools.

The site record comprises plans and sections at a scale of 1: 20 supplemented by monochrome 35mm and digital colour photographs, together with written context descriptions on *pro forma* recording sheets. The position of the assessment area was located by EDM total station, using fixed reference points.

7.0 RESULTS (Fig. 3 & 4)

Stiff, orange-brown boulder clay (003), containing occasional rounded pebbles to 50mm, was revealed in all of the pits, at depths of between 0.26 and 0.28m below existing ground level. Areas of light greyish brown silty clay (002) identified in Pits 5 and 9 may be interpreted as variations within the overall deposit.

Slight hollows in the surface of the boulder clay – contexts [005], [006], [007] and [008] – were identified in Pits 2, 7, 1 and 8. The hollows contained identical deposits of compact mid yellowish brown silty clay (004). The similarity between (004) and material filling a plough score in Pit 6 (see *Plate 4*) indicates comparatively recent origins from processes connected with arable cultivation.

Topsoil across the area (001) varied in depth between 0.26 and 0.28m. It comprised firm but malleable, mid brown silty clay containing occasional rounded stone to 20mm.

No finds were recovered during excavation of the pits or from spoil-heaps inspected by Witham Archaeology.

8.0 DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

The programme of test pitting completed on land at Wyggeston Farm, indicates a low potential for archaeologically significant deposits or features in the area covered by the assessment. In view of the apparent absence of artefactual material, the potential for more archaeologically visible types of settlement remains (for example, Romano-British settlement sites) in adjacent areas might also be considered low. However, the test pits would have been less effective in determining the presence/absence of less visible types of site (earlier prehistoric activity, later prehistoric/Romano-British field systems, Anglo-Saxon occupation etc.) in the wider area.

9.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author of this report would like to thank Liz Mordue, Assistant Archaeological Adviser, Northamptonshire County Council, for assistance provided during initiation of the project. Thanks are also due to staff of Prowind (UK) Ltd for their cooperation and assistance in facilitating recording of the test pits.

10.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Page-Smith, K 2010 *Land at Wyggeston Farm, Welford, Northamptonshire. Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment.* Nexus Heritage Report No. **3052_02.R01a**

11.0 PROJECT/ ARCHIVE DETAILS

11.1 Project Details

WITHAM ARCHAEOLOGY SITE CODE: WEWF12

PLANNING APPLICATION No.: DA/2012/0026

FIELD OFFICER: R Trimble

NGR: SP 64824 78232

CIVIL PARISH: Welford

SMR No.:

DATE OF INTERVENTION: 27 - 28th June 2012

TYPE OF INTERVENTION: Test Pit Evaluation

UNDERTAKEN FOR: Prowind (UK) Ltd

11.2 Archive Details

PRESENT LOCATION: Witham Archaeology, Unit 6, Sleaford Station Business Centre, Station Road, Sleaford, Lincolnshire, NG34 7RG

FINAL LOCATION: To be confirmed

MUSEUM ACCESSION No.: To be confirmed

ACCESSION DATE: - To be confirmed

The Site Archive Comprises:

Context Records	8
Plans at Scale 1:50	4
Section Drawings at Scale 1:20	6
Monochrome 35mm Photographs	27
Digital Photographs	8
Set of Site Notes	1

It is intended that transfer of the archive in accordance with current published requirements will be undertaken following completion of this project.

COLOUR PLATES



Plate 1- Pit 2, looking east; 1m scale



Plate 2 - Pit 4, looking west; 1m scale

COLOUR PLATES (Cont.)



Plate 3 - Pit 5, looking east; 1m scale



Plate 4 - Pit 6, looking west; 1m scale

COLOUR PLATES (Cont.)



Plate 5 - Pit 7, looking east; 1m scale

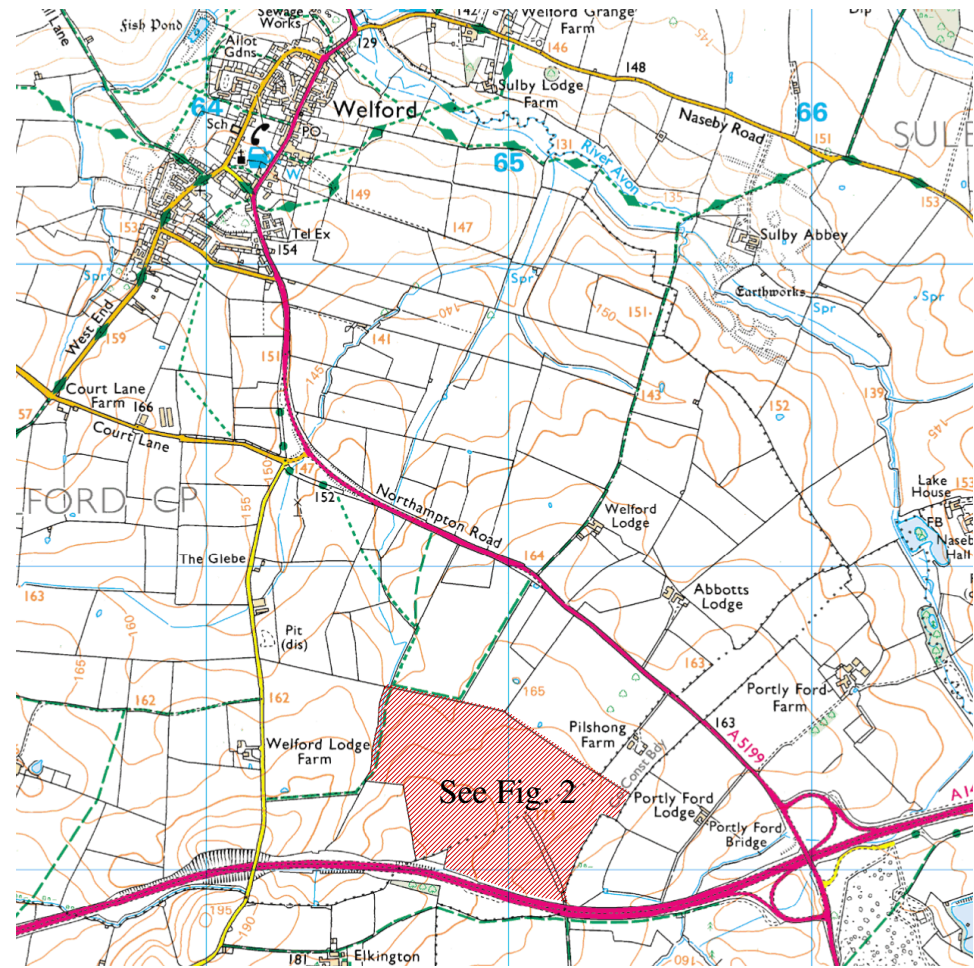


Plate 6 - Pit 8, looking east; 1m scale

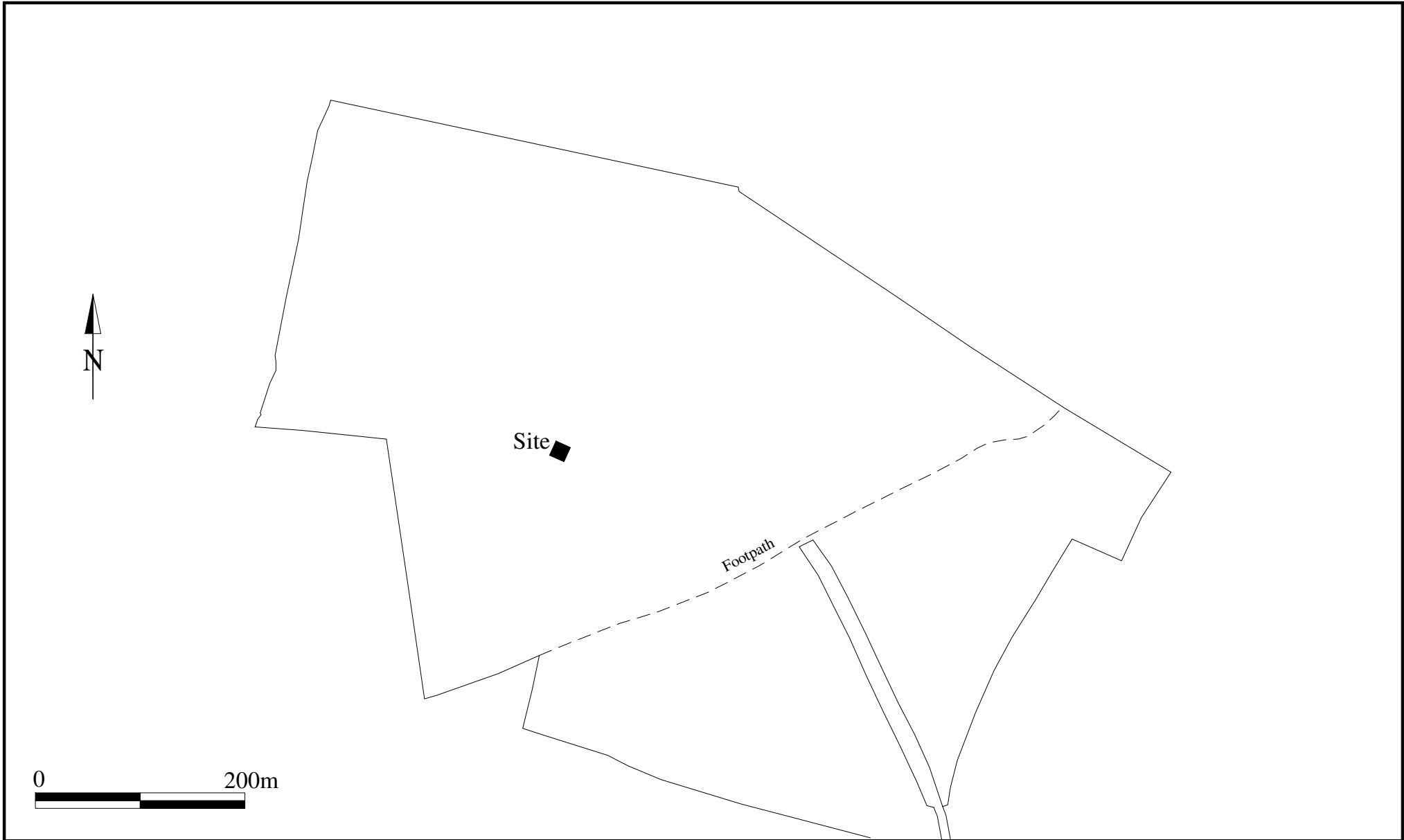
COLOUR PLATES (Cont.)

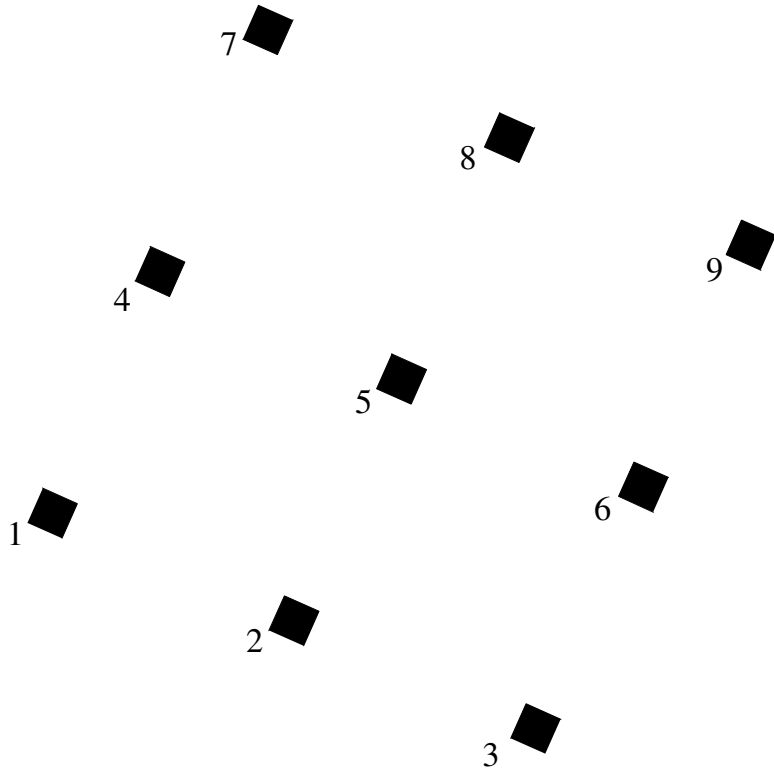


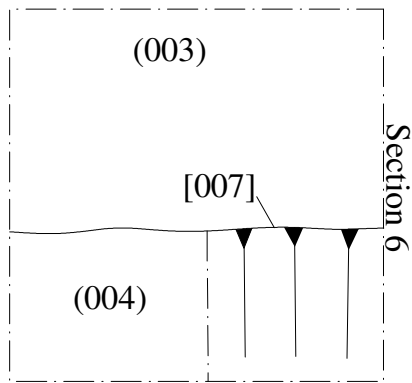
Plate 7 – Pit 9, looking west



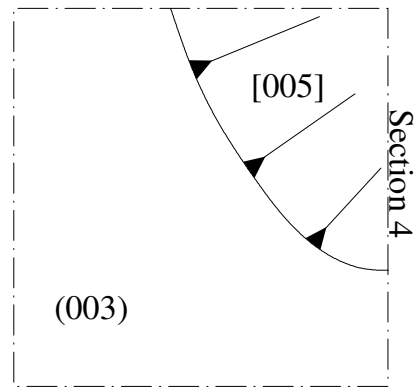
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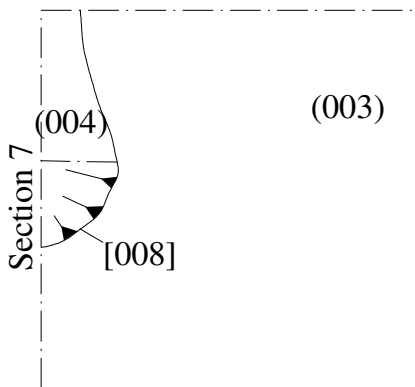




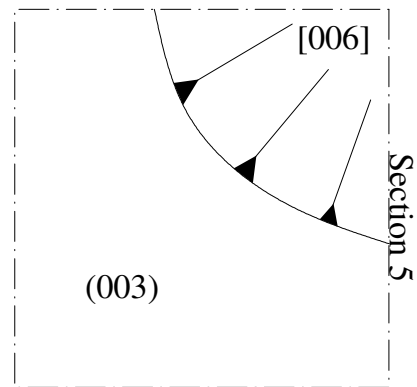
Test Pit 1



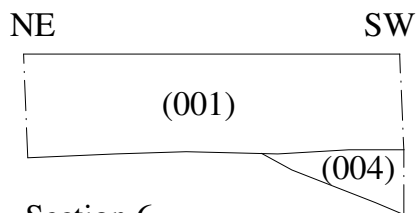
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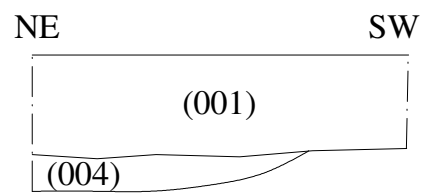
Test Pit 4



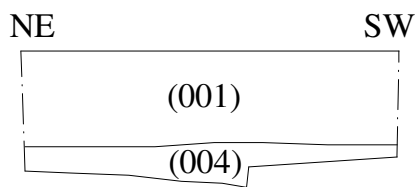
Test Pit 7



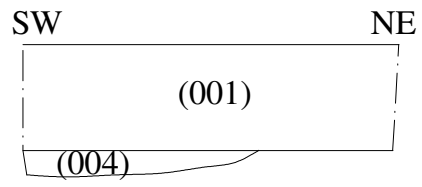
Section 6



Section 4



Section 7



Section 5



Witham Archaeology

Unit 6, Sleaford Station Business Centre, Station Road,
Sleaford, NG34 7RG

Tel/Fax: (01529) 300890

Email: info@withamarchaeology.co.uk

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