Witham Archaeology

A Report to Mr Lance Beckett

January 2017



LAND OFF TOP PASTURE LANE, NORTH WHEATLEY, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Trial Trench Evaluation

R. Trimble

LAND OFF TOP PASTURE LANE, NORTH WHEATLEY, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Site Code: NTWP16 LCCM Accession No.: TBC

Planning Application No.: 15/00227/OUT

NGR: SK 76467 85854

Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation

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LAND OFF TOP PASTURE LANE, NORTH WHEATLEY, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION

SUMMARY

An archaeological trial trench evaluation was undertaken on land off Top Pasture Lane, North Wheatley, Nottinghamshire. The project was commissioned by Mr Lance Beckett in response to a condition of planning permission imposed by Bassetlaw District Council. Fieldwork was carried out on 5th and 6th January 2017.

North Wheatley is situated on the line of the Roman road (now Tillbridge Lane) running between Lincoln and Doncaster and previous archaeological investigations in the area have identified evidence for settlement north and west of the village. A settlement was in existence at North Wheatley when the Domesday Survey was compiled in 1086, while documentary sources indicate the presence of a church from at least the 12th century.

Two trial trenches were excavated as part of the current investigations, centred on the proposed footprints of two houses on the north side of Top Pasture Lane. No significant remains were revealed in the easternmost (Trench 1) of the two trenches, but two sherds of Roman pottery were recovered from Trench 2, apparently associated with a group of shallow features interpreted as the remains of plough truncated pits. A third Roman potsherd was recovered during cleaning elsewhere in the trench. Two probable furrows (probably the bases of furrows forming part of a ridge and furrow field system) were identified, aligned at right angles to the trench.

The presence of Roman pottery, potentially associated with a pit containing domestic waste in the form of animal bone, suggests proximity to a farmstead of the period. The recorded remains indicate a low density of features in the area of the westernmost houseplot.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

An archaeological trial trench evaluation was undertaken on the site of a proposed residential development on land off Top Pasture Lane, North Wheatley, Nottinghamshire. The project was commissioned by Mr Lance Beckett in response to a condition of planning permission imposed by Bassetlaw District Council. Fieldwork was carried out on 5th and 6th January 2017.

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 Chartered Institute of Field Archaeologists.

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

The village of North Wheatley, in the parish of North and South Wheatley lies in the administrative district of Bassetlaw at distances of approximately 7km northeast of Retford and 6.5km southwest of Gainsborough.

The site of round 2000 square metres lies at the eastern edge of the settlement, immediately north of Top Pasture Lane, at site centre SK 76467 85854. The site is currently covered by grass but appears to have been under arable cultivation at some time in the recent past.

Topographically, the area is generally level, lying at an elevation of around 23.6m OD. The geology is Mercia Mudstone formed in the Triassic Period, overlain by superficial deposits of alluvium – clay, silt,

sand and gravel – formed up to two million years ago, in the Quaternary Period (http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html).

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Roman road between Lincoln and Doncaster, now known as Tillbridge Lane, passes through North Wheatley. It has been suggested that the route branched off from Ermine Street to meet an alternative crossing point over the Humber (Kaye 1987). The Nottinghamshire Historic Environment Record (hereafter, the NHER) refers to a metalled surface interpreted as a Roman road being revealed during a watching brief in the western part of the village (NHER L12290). Part of a Roman tombstone was found under the tower of the parish church in 1928 and Roman finds have been reported from Haughgate Hill (NHER L4982) and another site (NHER L5764) on the western edge of the village. Finds from the period have also been recovered from a site to the north of the village (L4988).

The Domesday Book compiled in c. 1086 records a settlement at North Wheatley held from the king by Roger de Bully. The place-name, recorded as 'Watelaie' is believed to have derived from the Old English for 'wheat clearing' or 'wheat wood' (kepn.nottingham.ac.uk/map/county/Nottinghamshire). There is no mention of a church in the Domesday records, but early medieval documentary sources indicate the presence of a church from at least the twelfth century, while the tower of the parish church of St Peter and St Paul (NHER M5012), located around 250m east of the current site, contains windows of early 14th century date.

The ruined church of St Helen (NHER M4944) in South Wheatley, lies approximately 370m south of the Site. Its west tower survives and is Norman in style. Earthworks remains of deserted medieval settlement are visible on aerial photographs on land to the west of the church (NHER M5167).

4.0 AIMS & OBJECTIVES

The principal objectives of the project, as set out in a Witham Archaeology specification of 22nd December 2016, 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 Nottinghamshire Historic Environment Record.

5.0 METHODOLOGY

Two trenches were excavated (Fig. 3), both 1.5m wide and measuring 18.5 (Trench 1) and 14.5m (Trench 2) long. Provisional trench locations agreed with Nottinghamshire County Archaeologist in advance of the commencement of fieldwork were slightly adapted in accordance with conditions on the site.

Topsoil and other recent deposits were removed by mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. Trench bases and representative samples of the trench sides were subsequently cleaned by hand, prior to the part-excavation of features and deposits of potential archaeological origin, to ascertain character, extent and date.

Excavated features were recorded through drawn plans and sections at scale 1:10 or 1:20 as appropriate. This record was augmented by colour photographs and written context records on *pro forma* recording sheets. Trenches and reference points used for recording were located by survey grade GPS.

6.0 RESULTS (Figs. 4 and 5)

Full context descriptions are set out in Appendix A.

6.1 Trench 1

In Trench 1, geological deposits were revealed at depths of around 0.25 - 0.30m below existing ground level (see *Plates 1* and 2; Fig. 5, Section 6), comprising moderately compact (crumbling under pressure) light greenish grey silt (c. 50%) and clay (c. 40%), with c. 10% greenish grey stone fragments up to 50mm across in size (101), interspersed with irregular patches of moderately compact mid reddish brown silty clay (102).

The overlying topsoil, (100), was a moderately compact/slightly malleable dark greyish brown sandy silt containing occasional roots, varying between 0.25m and 0.30m in thickness.

6.2 Trench 2

In Trench 2, natural deposits of firm, reddish brown clay, (211), and light greenish grey silt, clay and stone, (212), were encountered at around 0.25 - 0.30m below existing ground level. The former deposit occupied the majority of the area, with the latter confined to the eastern end (see *Plate 3*; Fig. 4).

Three shallow cuts interpreted as the possible remnants of pits were uncovered in the central part of the trench (see Fig.4). The westernmost, [208], was sub-oval in plan measuring 1.22 (max.) long by 0.52 (max.) wide by 0.18m (max.) deep where excavated (see Fig. 5, Section 1 and *Plate 4*). It was filled by mid yellowish brown silty clay, (203). Immediately to the east, Cut [205] was also sub-oval in plan, with maximum plan dimensions of 1.0m long by 0.57m wide and a maximum depth of only 80mm where excavated (see Fig. 5, Section 2 and *Plate 5*). Its fill of mid greyish brown clayey, sandy silt contained frequent charcoal flecks, together with a small quantity of animal bone identified as from a horse and sheep or goat (Appendix C). Two sherds of pottery identified as Roman greyware were recovered from above this pit during cleaning (Appendix B).

The third probable pit, [207], located yet further to the east, was sub-oval with plan dimensions of 0.65m long x 0.40m wide (see Fig 5, Section 3 and *Plate 6*). It was around 60mm deep where excavated and was filled by mid greyish brown sandy silty clay, (206).

Two features identified as probable furrows were identified in Trench 2. They were aligned southeast-northwest, approximately 8m apart from centre to centre. The more clearly defined of the two, [210], was around 1.25m wide and around 70mm deep with very gradually sloping sides and a broad, flattish base. It was filled by mid greyish brown clayey, sandy silt, (209). One of two bricks dated as 19th century (the other noted in overlying topsoil) was apparently displaced from the feature during machine excavation. The second furrow, [202], was around 0.65m wide by 50mm deep, surviving only on the southern side of the trench. It was filled by mid yellowish brown silty clay, (201), c. 0.15m thick including the extent above the level of the probable furrow base.

Topsoil in Trench 2 was identical in composition to (100) as recorded in Trench 1. The deposit varied between 0.25m and 0.30m thick.

7.0 DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

Trial trench investigations on land off Top Pasture Lane revealed a group of shallow cut features interpreted as the bases of probable pits, mostly truncated through later arable cultivation. The recovery of animal bone from the fill of Pit 5, associated with frequent charcoal flecks suggests use for the disposal of rubbish, potentially during the Roman period, given the likely association with two sherds of greyware pottery. The remains were concentrated in the central part of Trench 2, suggesting a low density of features in the area of the westernmost of the proposed house-plots. No remains of archaeological significance were identified in the easternmost trench, which suggests a lower potential for deposits in that area. The remains identified in Trench 2 indicate proximity to a Roman farmstead.

The furrows located in Trench 2 indicate arable cultivation within a ridge and furrow system characteristic of the medieval period, although the probable presence of a nineteenth century brick within material filling or overlying one of the features would appear to suggest that the pattern of cultivation persisted until a relatively late date. The presence of evidence of medieval cultivation would place the site in the open fields of the village, away from the occupied core of the settlement.

8.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author of this report would like to thank Mr and Mrs Beckett for their assistance in facilitating the successful completion of fieldwork. Thanks are also due to the Nottinghamshire County Archaeologist, Ursilla Spence, for information and guidance provided during initiation of the project and during subsequent fieldwork.

9.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Kaye, D., 1987 A History of Nottinghamshire. Phillimore

10.0 PROJECT/ ARCHIVE DETAILS

10.1 Project Information

SITE CODE: NWTP16

PLANNING APPLICATION No.: 15/00227/OUT

FIELD OFFICER: R Trimble

NGR: SK 76467 85854

CIVIL PARISH: North and South Wheatley

SMR No.: TBC

DATE OF INTERVENTION: 5th and 6th January 2017

TYPE OF INTERVENTION: Trial Trench Evaluation

UNDERTAKEN FOR: Mr L Beckett

10.2 Archive Details

PRESENT LOCATION: Witham Archaeology Ltd, 2 High Street, Ruskington, Sleaford, Lincolnshire,

NG34 9DT

FINAL LOCATION: TBC

MUSEUM ACCESSION No.: TBC

ACCESSION DATE: TBC

The Site Archive Comprises:

Context Records 18
Plans at Scale 1:20 (GPS) 1
Section Drawings at Scale 1:10 6

Black and White photographs 28 frames
Digital Photographs 36
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.

PLATES



Plate 1: General view of Trench 1, looking northwest; 2m and 1m scale



Plate 2: Southwest facing edge of Trench 1 including Section 6, looking northeast



Plate 3: General view of Trench 2, looking northeast; 2m and 1m scales



Plate 4: Possible pit [208], looking northeast; 1m scale



Plate 5: Possible pit [205], Section 2, looking northeast; 1m scale



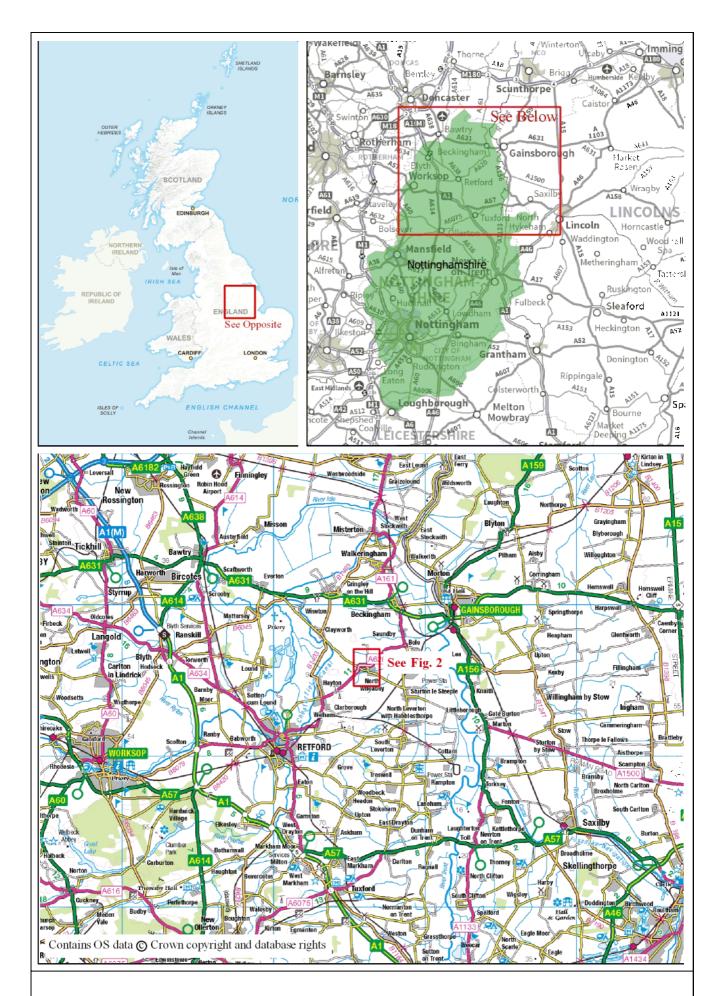
Plate 6: Possible pit [207], looking northwest; 1m scale

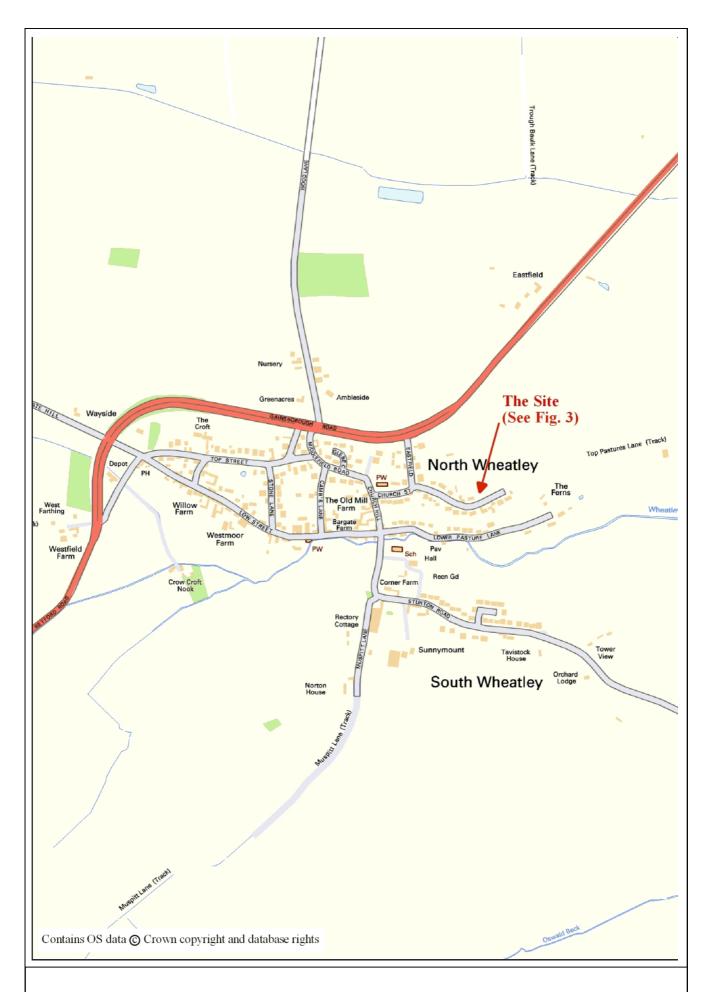


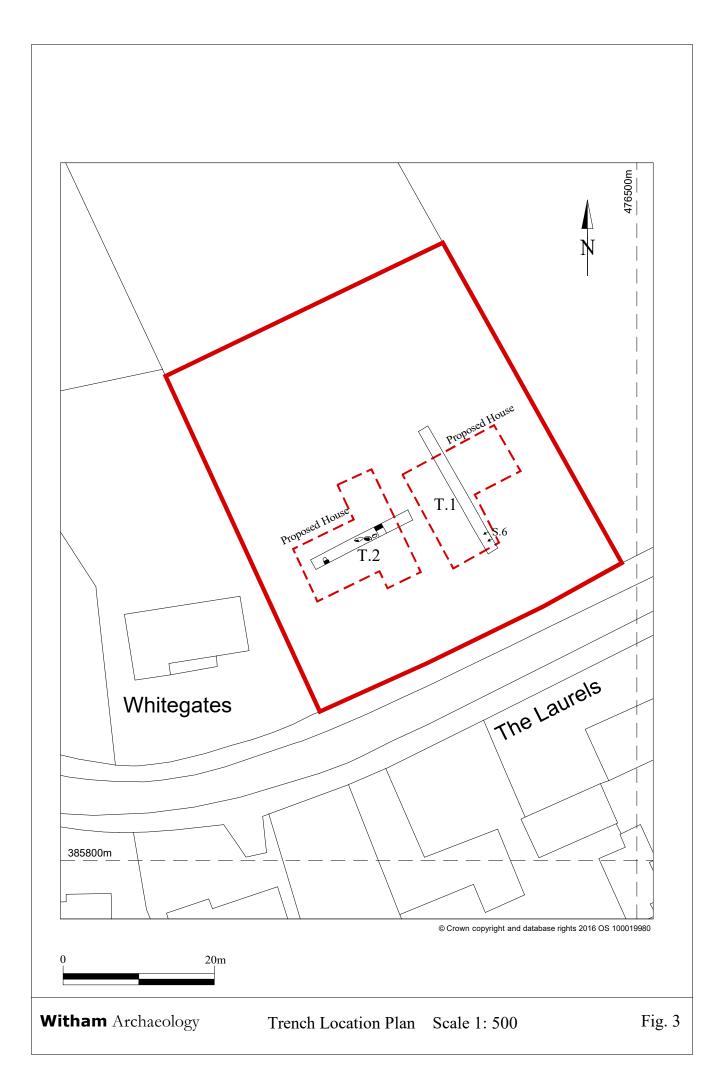
Plate 7: 'Furrow' [210], Section 4, looking northwest; Im scale

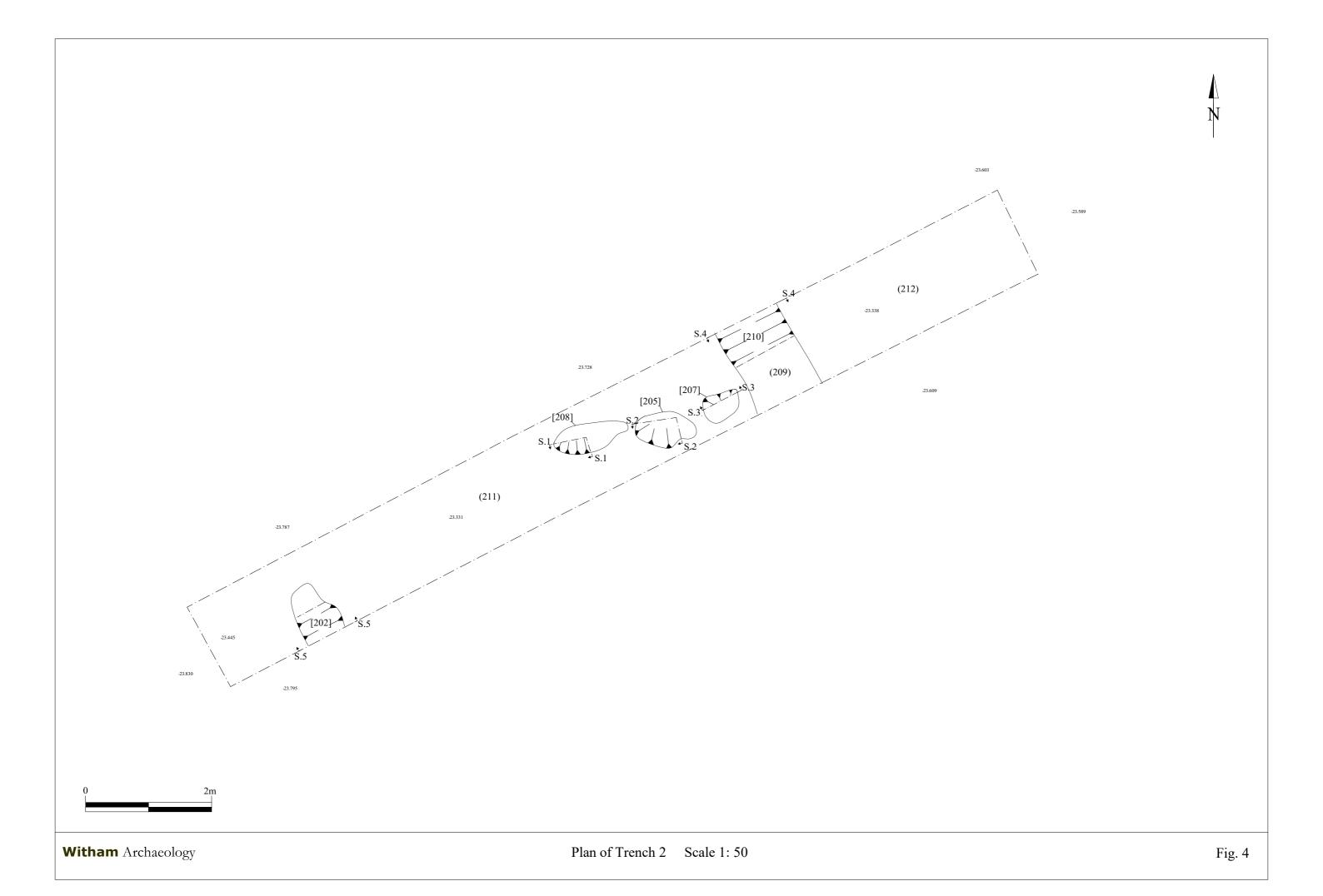


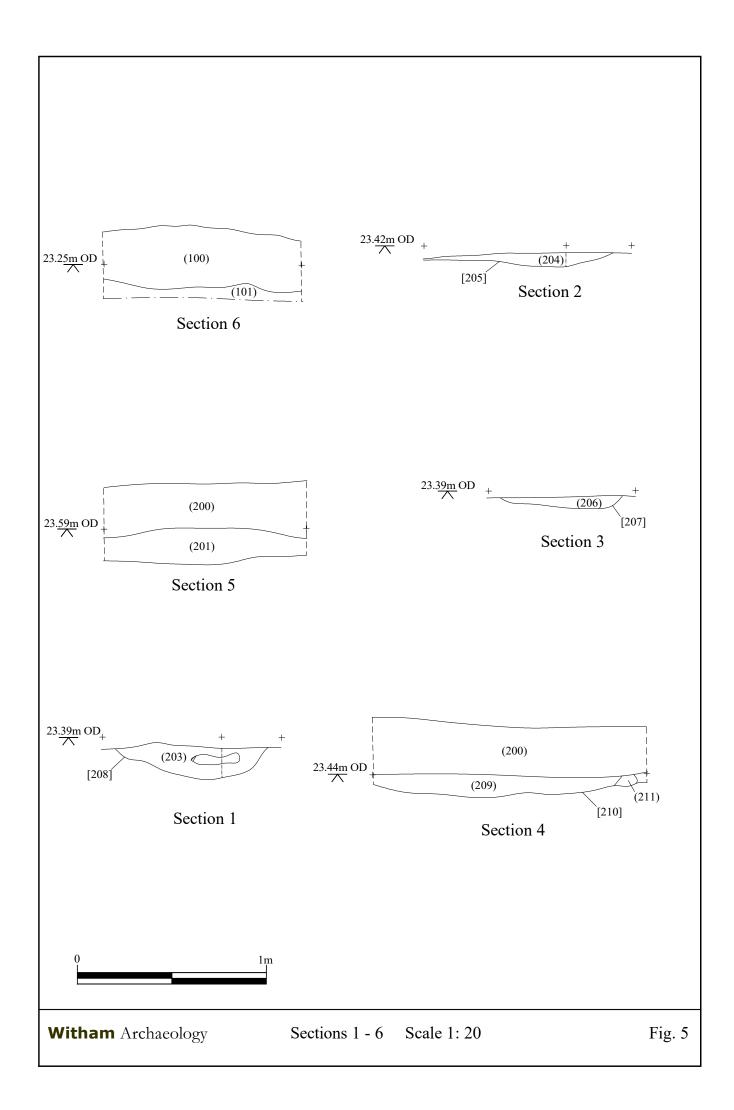
Plate 8: 'Furrow' [202], Section 5, looking southeast; 1m scale











APPENDIX A - CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Context	Interpretation	Description	
	I	Y	
100	Topsoil	Moderately compact/slightly malleable, dark greyish brown, sandy silt containing occasional roots; 250 – 300mm thick	
101	Natural	Moderately compact (crumbles under pressure), light greenish grey silt (50%), clay (40%) and greenish grey stone fragments to 50mm (10%)	
102	Natural	Moderately compact to firm mid reddish brown silty clay containing occasional pebbles to 0.1m across; in irregular patches	
200	Topsoil	As (100) in composition; 250 – 300mm deep	
201	Fill of [202]	Firm/compact (malleable but crumbles under pressure), mid yellowish brown silty clay containing occasional charcoal and stone flecks; at least 0.65m in extent SW-NE (extending beyond limits of probable furrow) x 0.15m thick (max.)	
202	Furrow?	Linear, aligned SE-NW and terminating to NW; around 0.65m x 50mm deep (max.) with very gradual profile	
203	Fill of [204]	Firm (crumbles under pressure), mid yellowish brown silty clay containing occasional charcoal flecks and pebbles to 40mm, also a single stone 0.1m across	
204	Pit?	Sub-oval in plan measuring 1.22m (max.) NE-SW x 0.52m (max.) NW-SE; sides sloping at around 45° and breaking gradually to the base on the side excavated.	
205	Fill of [206]	Moderately compact to firm, mid greyish brown clayey, sandy silt containing frequent charcoal fragments and flecks to 10mm across, frequent stone fragments to 50mm across and occasional animal bone	
206	Pit?	Sub-oval, measuring 1.0m (max.) SW-NE x 0.57m (max.) NW-SE; gradually sloping sides breaking to a flattish base; aligned SW-NE	
207	Fill of [208]	Firm, malleable (crumbles under pressure) mid greyish brown, sandy, silty clay containing occasional charcoal flecks to 5mm and occasional stone fragments to 15mm	
208	Pit?	Sub-oval, measuring 0.65m (max.) SW-NE x 0.4m (max.) SE-NW; gradual sides breaking gradually to the base which was only partially revealed; aligned SW-NE	
209	Fill of [210]	Moderately compact (friable under pressure), mid greyish brown clayey, sandy silt containing occasional pebbles to 20mm, frequent stone flecks to 5mm, very occasional angular stone (gravel) to 20mm and occasional charcoal to 5mm	
210	Furrow?	Linear, measuring 1.25m wide; gradual sides breaking gradual to a broad, flattish base	
211	Natural	Firm, reddish brown silty clay	
212	Natural	As (101) in composition; extends throughout eastern end of the trench	
213	Finds No	Finds recovered during cleaning over (203)	
214	U/S Finds (T.2)	Unstratified finds from Trench 2	

APPENDIX B – POTTERY REPORT

By Alex Beeby

Introduction

All the material was recorded at archive level in accordance with the guidelines laid out by Darling (2004). The pottery was recorded using the codes and system developed for the City of Lincoln Archaeological Unit (Darling and Precious, 2014). A total of three sherds from three vessels, weighing 93 grams was recovered from the site.

Methodology

The material was laid out and viewed in context order. Sherds were counted and weighed by individual vessel within each context. The pottery was examined visually and using x20 magnification. This information was then added to an Access database. An archive list of the pottery is included in Table 1 below.

Condition

The pottery is in a relatively fragmented state, but the pieces are not overly abraded.

Results

Table 1. Roman Pottery Archive

Trench	Context	Cname	Full Name	Sub Fabric	Form	Comments	Vessel	Sherds	W(g)
2	213	GREY	Greyware	TV	JLH	HANDLE; COMPLETE ROUNDED LUG HANDLE; COUNTERSUNK	1	1	66
2	213	GREY	Greyware	TV	J	BS	1	1	15
2	213	ZDATE				ROMAN			
2	214	GREY	Greyware	TV	J	BS	1	1	12
2	214	ZDATE				ROMAN			
Total						3	3	93	

Provenance

All of the Roman pottery came from Trench 2. Fragments were recovered whilst cleaning the surfaces of the top fills within hollows [205], [207] and [208], with these items labelled with context number (213). An additional unstratified piece from Trench 2 was labelled with number (214).

Range

There are three fragments of Roman greyware (GREY), including a complete lug handle from a narrow necked, lug handled jar. The vessels are formed in blue-grey fabrics of a type fairly typical of the Trent Valley kilns, such as those at Torksey and Knaith. The pieces cannot be closely dated.

Potential

The material should be retained as part of the site archive. The pottery is in a stable condition and should pose no problems for long term storage.

ABBREVIATIONS

Body sherd BS CXT Context J Jar

JLH Jar with Lug Handles NoF Number of Fragments NoS Number of sherds Number of vessels NoV

TR Trench **Trent Valley** TV W (g) Weight (grams)

REFERENCES

Darling, M. J., 2004, 'Guidelines for the Archiving of Roman Pottery', Journal of Roman Pottery Studies 11, 67-74

Darling, M.J, & Precious, B.J., 2014, A Corpus of Roman pottery from Lincoln (Oxford)

APPENDIX C – ANIMAL BONE

A small quantity of animal bone was retrieved from the fill, (204), of probable pit [205]. The bone was identified by James Rackham, Environmental Archaeology Consultancy as set out in the table below.

Context	Species	Bone	Number	Comments
204	Horse	Sacrum (fragmented)	11	Ant epiphysis fused; fairly small adult
204	Sheep/goat	lumbar vertebra (spine only)	1	
204	Sheep/goat	Metatarsus (midshift fragments)	2	

APPENDIX D OASIS DETAILS FORM

OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

List of Projects | Manage Projects | Search Projects | New project | Change your details | HER coverage | Change country | Log out

Printable version

OASIS ID: withamar1-274003

Project details

Project name Trial Trench Evaluation on Land off Top Pasture Lane, North Wheatley, Nottinghamshire

Short description of the project

A trial trench evaluation was carried out on land off North Wheatley, Nottinghamshire, on the site of a proposed small scale residential development. Two trenches were excavated. one proving negative, the other revealing a group of three shallow (through plough truncation) features interpreted as pits. A small assemblage of animal bone was recovered from one of the pits, which had a charcoal rich fill and a probable association with two sherds of Roman greyware pottery recovered during cleaning across the top. Two furrows identified in the same trench may have formed part of ridge and furrow

arable cultivation.

Project dates

Start: 05-01-2017 End: 06-01-2017

Previous/future

work

No / Not known

Any associated

project reference codes

NWTP16 - Sitecode

Type of project Field evaluation

Site status

None

Current Land use

Cultivated Land 3 - Operations to a depth more than 0.25m

Monument type

PIT Uncertain

Monument type

FURROW Post Medieval

Significant Finds

POT Roman

Methods & techniques "Sample Trenches"

Development type Rural residential

Prompt

National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF

Position in the

planning process

After outline determination (eg. As a reserved matter)

Project location

Country England

Site location NOTTINGHAMSHIRE BASSETLAW NORTH WHEATLEY Land off Top Pasture Lane,

North Wheatley, Nottinghamshire

Postcode **DN22 9BY**

Study area 2000 Square metres

SK 76467 85854 53.363751096971 -0.850764572912 53 21 49 N 000 51 02 W Point Site coordinates

Height OD /

Min: 23.05m Max: 23.45m

Depth

https://oasis.ac.uk/form/print.cfm 1/3

Project creators

Name of

Witham Archaeology

Organisation

Project brief originator

Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body

Project design originator

Dale Trimble

Project Dale Trimble

director/manager

Russell Trimble Project supervisor

Type of

sponsor/funding

body

Developer

Name of sponsor/funding

body

Mr L Beckett

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient

TBC

Physical Archive

ID

TBC

Physical Contents "Animal Bones", "Ceramics"

Digital Archive

recipient

TBC

"Animal Bones", "Ceramics", "Stratigraphic", "Survey" **Digital Contents**

Digital Media available

"Images raster / digital photography", "Survey", "Text"

Paper Archive

recipient

TBC

"Animal Bones", "Ceramics", "Stratigraphic", "Survey" **Paper Contents**

Paper Media available

"Context sheet", "Correspondence", "Drawing", "Map", "Matrices", "Notebook - Excavation', '

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