

THURVASTON FARM. DERBYSHIRE

Report on an Archaeological Watching Brief in the Scheduled Area of a Shrunken Medieval Village

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Augering in the Scheduled Area of Thurvaston Farm.

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Summary.

- Trent & Peak Archaeology was contracted by Western Power Distribution to conduct a watching brief on intrusive ground works at Thurvaston Farm, Thurvaston, Derbyshire centred on SK24288 37803
- The groundwork comprised the removal of four existing electricity cable posts and the excavation of pits for four new post locations. The operation was intended to move the existing cable an average of 5m to the east of its current position.
- The area of the ground works lay partially within the boundary of a Scheduled Monument (No. 310449) which has been identified as a shrunken medieval village containing a moated enclosure suggesting the site of a manor house.
- To the north of the site runs Long Lane which has been identified as a Roman Road.
- The work was carried out in two distinct phases. Firstly the pits for the new posts were excavated. Secondly the original posts were to be removed.
- The excavation was carried out by an auger 450mm in diameter, mounted on a tracked excavator, which drilled a circular pit to a depth of between 2.5m and 2.4m.
- The spoil that was produced by the augering was searched by hand in order to recover any artefacts that may have been brought to the surface.
- The stratigraphy exposed by the drilling was recorded and within the confines of the contractor's methodology examined for the presence of any features of archaeological interest or significance.
- The original design had called for the removal of the existing poles and the resultant pits filled in with the material extracted from the excavations. This aspect of the design was modified following a discussion between the land owner and the contractors. Three of the original posts sited within hedgerows were cut to the level of the top of the hedge and the stump left insitu.
- A fourth, outside the Scheduled Area was removed and the resultant pit filled in.
- There were no artefacts revealed as a result of the excavations and no features of any archaeological interest or significance were revealed.

CONTENTS

Summary	1.
Contents	2.
List of Figures	2.
List of Plates	2.
1. INTRODUCTION	3.
2. PROJECT BACKGROUND	3.
3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	3.
4. SITE TOPOLOGY AND GEOLOGY	3.
5. METHODOLOGY	3.
6. RESULTS	4.
7. DISCUSSION	5.
8. CONCLUSIONS	5.

Appendix 1. Summary context list.

Appendix 2. Deposition of Archive.

List of Figures

Figure 1. Site Location

Figure 2. Site Plan

Figure 3. Sections of Area 01, Area 02, Area 03.

List of Plates

Plate 1. Augering in Area 01. Looking west.

Plate 2. The auger bringing soils to the surface.

Plate 3. Area 01 on completion of augering. Looking south west.

Plate 4. Augering in Area 02. Looking south east.

Plate 5. Area 02 on completion of augering. Looking south west.

Plate 6. Augering in Area 03.

Plate 7. Area 03 on completion of augering. Looking south west.

Plate 8. Augering in Area 04. Looking south east.

Plate 9. Area 04 on completion of augering. Looking south west.

Plate 10. Removing a redundant cable pole. Looking south west.

Plate 11. Redundant cable pole cut to the level of the hedge and left *in situ*. looking south.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Trent & Peak Archaeology was contracted by Western Power Distribution to conduct a watching brief on intrusive ground works associated with the re-alignment of overhead electricity cables at Thurvaston Farm, Thurvaston, South Derbyshire centred on SK24288 37803 (Figure 1).

2. PROJECT BACKGROUND

2.1 The site lies 106m to the south east of Thurvaston Farm and involved the re-siting of four poles having the effect of moving the cable line some three metres to the south east of the original line.

2.2 Archaeological monitoring was required by English Heritage as a condition of the planning consent as, in part, the intrusive groundwork took place with the boundary of a scheduled monument (Monument No. 310449)

2.3 The objective of the watching brief was to recover any archaeological material that might be brought to the surface and if possible to identify any archaeological features disturbed by the intrusive groundworks.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 The scheduled monument lies to the south of the current farm house and ancillary buildings. It is the site of a shrunken medieval village (SMV) containing a moated enclosure as well as other definable linear features.

3.2 To the north of the site Long Lane has been identified as a Roman Road by Margary and is marked as such on successive editions of the O.S. (Margary p.309).

3.3 The SMV and the Roman Road suggested that any intrusive groundworks in the area may impact on the archaeological resource.

3.4 Thurvaston is recorded in the Domesday Book, 1086, where it is described as having land for five ploughs. Two ploughs in demense (whose produce is devoted to the Lord rather than his tenants). There were six villains and three borders with two ploughs and woodland pasture (Williams and Martin p748).

4. SITE TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

4.1 The site lay 106m to the south east of Thurvaston Farm buildings on land that is permanently pasture. The ground slopes gently to both the north and the south. To the south of the site earthworks in the field indicate the presence of the SMV that lies at the heart of the scheduled area and includes the moated enclosure. The area within which the intrusive groundwork took place is crossed by a number of field boundaries that are present on the 1881 O.S. (Figure 2).

4.2 Geology: **Bedrock:** Mercia Mudstone (BGS 2013).

5. METHODOLOGY

5.1 All intrusive groundwork was carried out under archaeological supervision. Any features and context changes observed were given a unique four figure code e.g.0001. Finds uncovered were given a unique three letter code e.g. AAA.

5.2 Plans were drawn at a scale of 1:50 and section recording at a scale of 1:20. Photographic recording was carried out using digital images and black and white 35mm film.

5.3 The excavation of the pits for the new electricity cable posts was conducted using a circular auger 450mm in diameter attached to the working arm of a 360° tracked machine. The pits were excavated to a depth of between 2.5m and 2.4m.

5.4 The resultant spoil was searched for any finds that may have been brought to the surface and the pits examined to identify observable layers below the topsoil and for the presence of any features.

6. RESULTS

6.1 **Area 01** (Figure 3) located inside the Scheduled Area, was excavated to a depth of 2.5m. The resultant spoil was searched by hand in order to recover any material of archaeological interest or significance that may have been uncovered by the excavation.

6.1.1 The pit was examined and the observed stratigraphy recorded is set out below.

<i>Context</i>	<i>Depth</i>	<i>Description</i>
0001	200mm	mid brown silty loam, topsoil
0002	2.3m observed	red/brown silty clay

6.1.1 No artefacts were recovered as a result of the excavation and no observable features in the excavated pit (Plate 1, Plate 2).

6.2 **Area 02** Figure 3 located outside the Scheduled Area was excavated to a depth of 2.4m. The resultant spoil was searched by hand in order to recover any material of archaeological interest or significance that may have been uncovered by the excavation.

6.2.1 The pit was examined and the observed stratigraphy recorded is set out below.

<i>Context</i>	<i>Depth</i>	<i>Description</i>
0003	200mm	dark brown loam, topsoil
0004	2.2m observed	yellowish red clay with inclusions of limestone fragments

6.2.2 There were no artefacts revealed as a result of the excavation and no observable features uncovered in the pit (Plate, 4 Plate 5).

6.3 **Area 03** Figure 3 located outside the Scheduled Area was excavated to a depth of 2.4m. The resultant spoil was searched by hand in order to recover any material of archaeological interest or significance that may have been uncovered by the excavation.

6.3.1 The pit was examined and the observed stratigraphy recorded is set out below.

<i>Context</i>	<i>Depth</i>	<i>Description</i>
0005	250mm	mid brown loam, topsoil
0006	100mm	yellow silty clay subsoil
0007	2.05m observed	red clay

6.3.2 No artefacts were recovered as a result of the excavation and no observable features uncovered in the pit (Plate 6, Plate 7).

6.4 **Area 04** Figure 3 located within the Scheduled Area was excavated to a depth of 2.4m. The resultant spoil was searched by hand in order to recover any material of archaeological interest or significance that may have been uncovered by the excavation.

6.4.1 The pit was examined and the observed stratigraphy recorded is set out below.

<u>Context</u>	<u>Depth</u>	<u>Description</u>
0008	200mm	dark brown loam, topsoil
0009	2.2m observed	red clay

6.4.2 No artefacts were recovered as a result of the excavation and no observable features uncovered in the pit (Plate 8, Plate 9).

7. DISCUSSION

7.1 There were no features or artefacts of archaeological interest of significance revealed as a result of the intrusive ground work undertaken by Western Power Distribution at Thurvaston Farm.

7.2 The observed stratigraphy was consistent in all the excavated areas with only minor variations. The topsoil in Areas 02 and 04, 0003 and 0008 respectively was darker than in Areas 01 and 03. This may be the result of Area 02 and Area 04 being set in the existing hedgerows and the topsoil affected by the build up of humic material. Areas 01 and 03 are situated in open pasture.

7.3 The examination of the stratigraphy was limited by the nature of the excavations produced by the auger. These were circular with a diameter of 450mm and over 2m in depth impeding visual inspection of the completed excavation.

7.4 Within the limitations of the methodology employed by the contractors it was possible to achieve a record of the stratigraphy. If there had been archaeological features present in the excavations then a differing colour and nature of the material brought to the surface by the auger could possibly have indicated their presence. No such discolourations were present in the spoil from any of the four areas.

7.5 The method of removal of the original and now redundant posts did not result in any ground disturbance (Plate 9, Plate 10). The two in the Scheduled Area, Area 01 and Area 04, were cut to the level of the surrounding hedgerow and the stumps left insitu to be used as additional fence posts. The same procedure was adopted for a third post, Area 02, outside the Scheduled Area. A fourth, Area 03, was removed and the resultant pit backfilled with material excavated from Area 03.

8. CONCLUSIONS

8.1 All intrusive ground work was carried out under archaeological supervision but did not result in the observation of any archaeological features or artefacts.

8.2 The small scale of the groundworks and their nature, the augering of pits 450mm wide and 2.4m to 2.5m in depth, were not conducive to the observation and recovery and characterisation of archaeological remains. The nature of the groundworks limited any impact on the archaeology to a minimum.

8.3 All of the groundworks were away from the observable features relating the shrunken medieval village in the Scheduled Area. There remains the possibility that archaeological deposits exist below ground in the immediate vicinity of the groundworks which are not visible at ground level. If that is the case then the surviving archaeological remains were not disturbed during the course of the development.

References

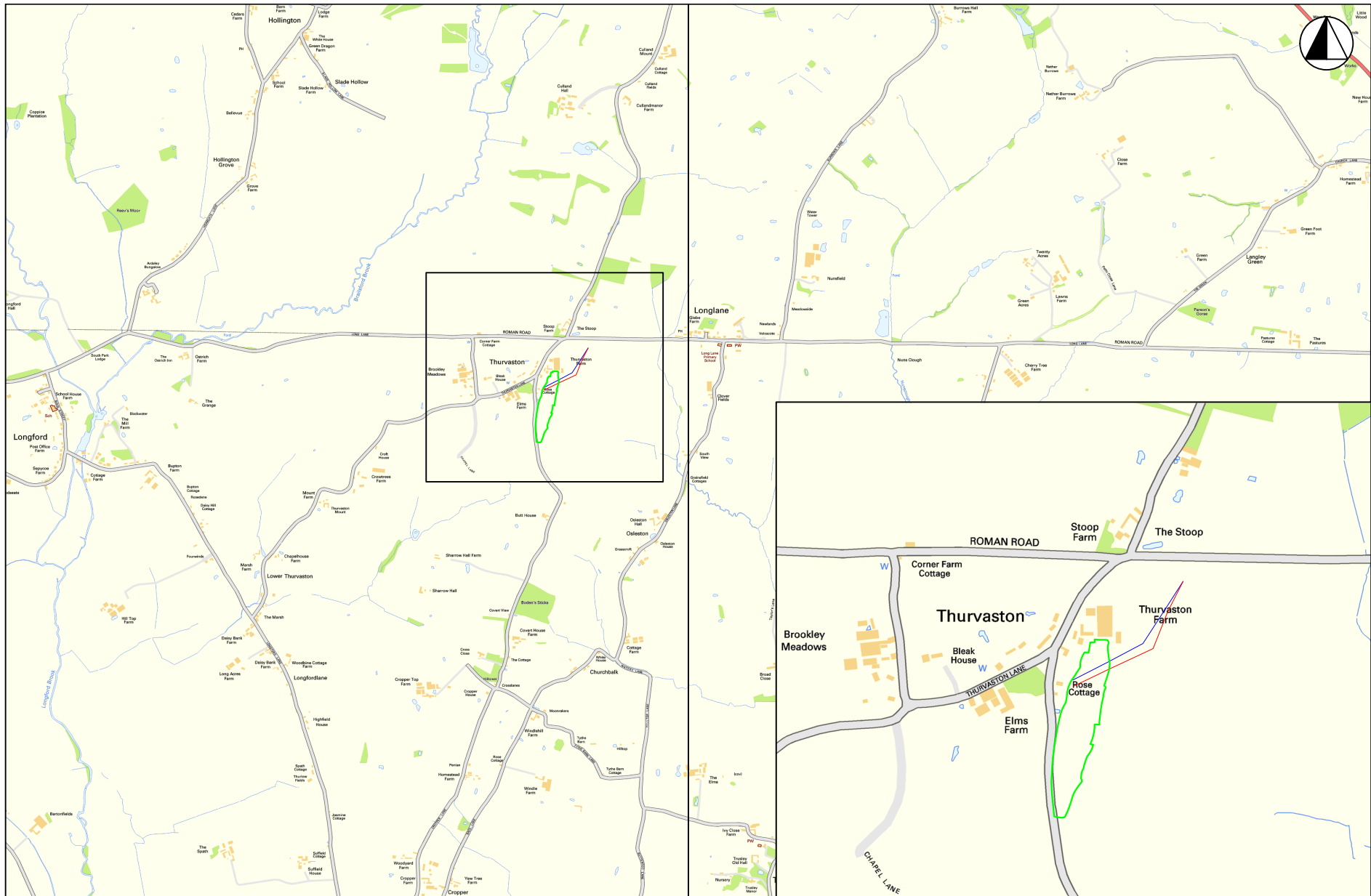
- Margary I.D. *The Roman Roads of Britain* Third Edition John Baker London 1973.
- Williams and Martin, *The Domesday Book* Alecto Historical Editions, Penguin, London 2002).

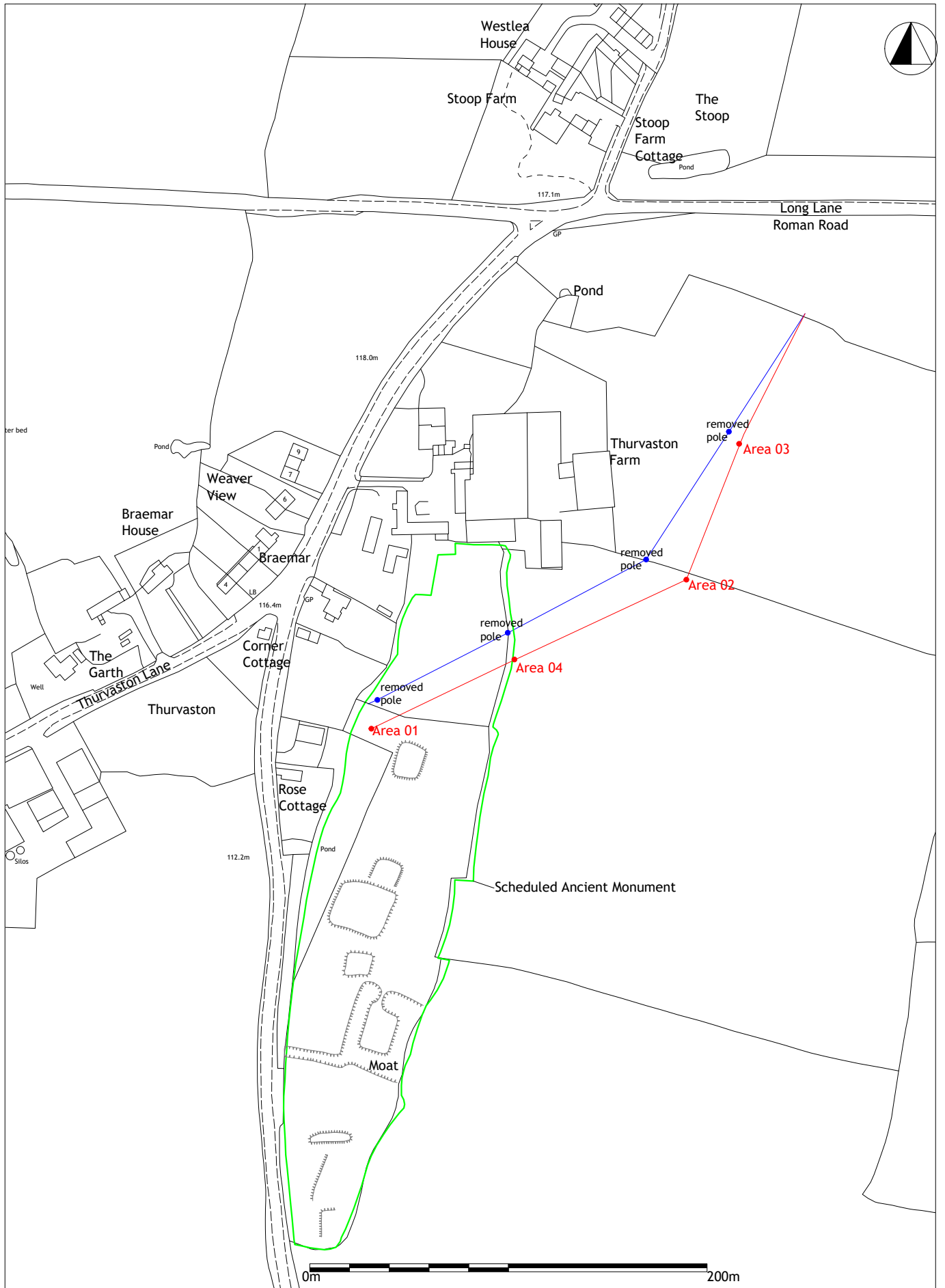
Appendix 1. Summary context list.

Context	Area	Depth	Description
0001	01	200mm	Mid brown silty loam – topsoil
0002	01	2.3m observed	Red/brown silty clay
0003	02	200mm	Dark brown loam – topsoil
0004	02	2.2m observed	Yellowish red clay with limestone fragments
0005	03	250mm	Mid brown loam – topsoil
0006	03	100mm	Yellow silty clay subsoil
0007	03	2.05m observed	Red clay
0008	04	200mm	Dark brown loam – topsoil
0009	04	2.2m observed	Red clay

Appendix 2. Deposition of Archive.

The archive will be deposited with the Derby Museum Service.





tp TFT Thurvaston Farm, Thurvaston
 Trent & Peak ARCH AECOM
 Figure 2. Site plan showing location of removed power line (blue), replacement power line (red) and Scheduled Ancient Monument (green) Scale at A4 1:2500 Mapping supplied by client

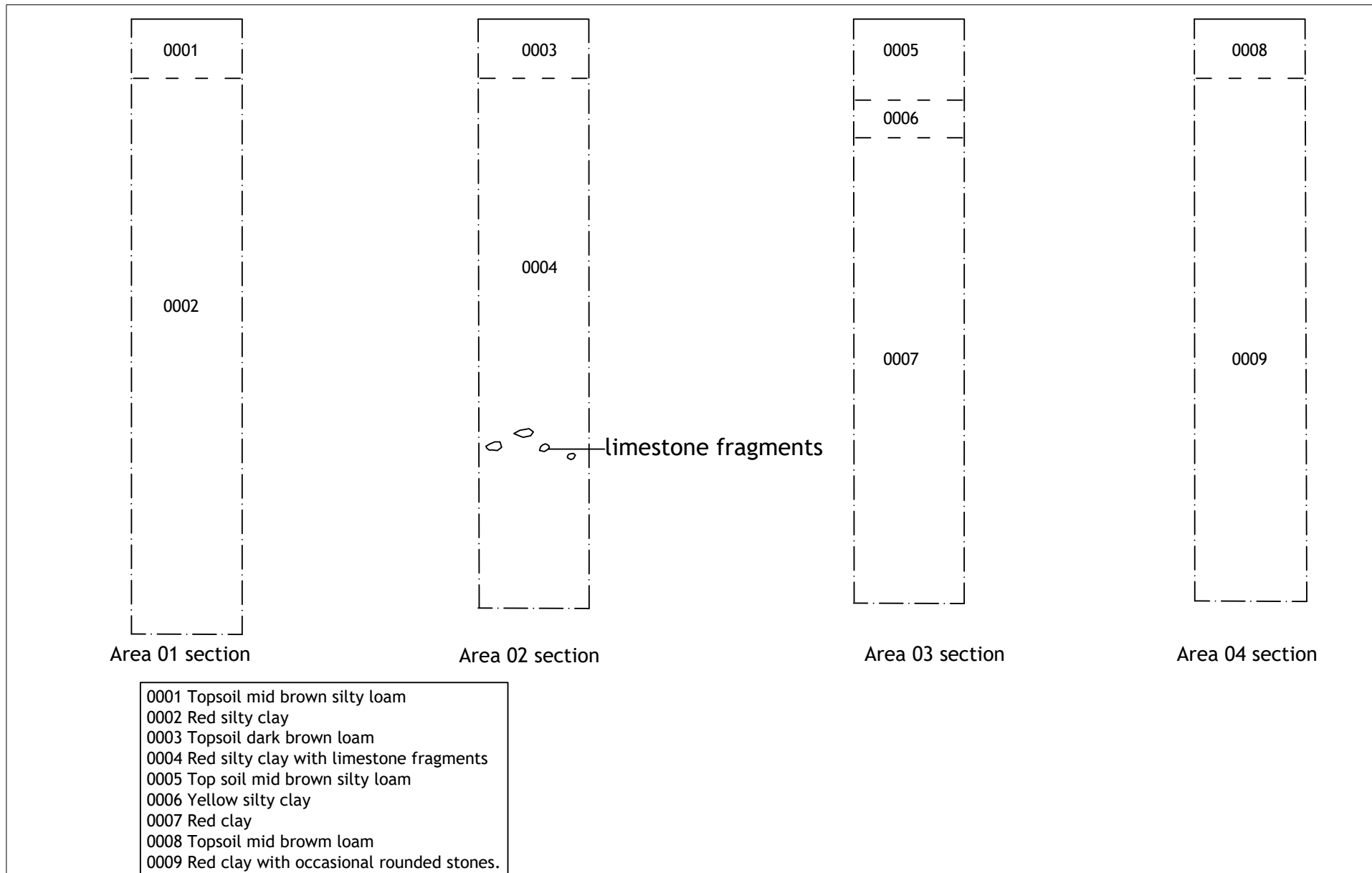




Plate 1. Augering in Area 01. Looking west.



Plate 2. The auger bringing soils to the surface.



Plate 3. Area 01 on completion of augering. Looking south west.



Plate 4. Augering in Area 02. Looking south east.



Plate 5. Area 02 on completion of augering. Looking south west



Plate 6. Augering in Area 03.



Plate 7. Area 03 on completion of augering. Looking south west.



Plate 8. Augering in Area 04. Looking south east.



Plate 9. area 04 on completion of augering. Looking south west.



Plate 10. Removing redundant cable pole. Looking south west.



Plate 11. Redundant cable pole cut to the level of the hedge and left *in situ*. Looking south.