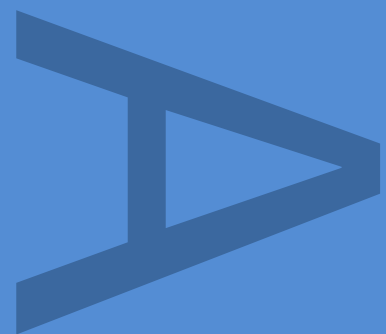


HERNE LODGE,  
ASHTON ROAD,  
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE  
PE8 4HR

A TOPOGRAPHIC EARTHWORK  
SURVEY

October 2014



PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY

DOCUMENT VERIFICATION

HERNE LODGE, ASHTON ROAD,  
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE, PE8 4HR

A TOPOGRAPHIC EARTHWORK SURVEY

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**LAND AT HERNE ROAD, OUNDLE, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE:**  
**A TOPOGRAPHIC EARTHWORK SURVEY**

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**Local Planning Authority:** East Northamptonshire District Council

**Central National Grid Reference:** TL 04505 87963

**Planning Reference:** EN/12/01614/FUL

**Written and researched by:** Nathalie Barrett

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## CONTENTS

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>Abstract.....</b>                               | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>1. INTRODUCTION .....</b>                       | <b>3</b>  |
| 1.1 PLANNING BACKGROUND .....                      | 3         |
| 1.2 TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY .....                   | 3         |
| 1.3 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND ..... | 4         |
| METHODOLOGY.....                                   | 4         |
| <b>3. THE RESULTS .....</b>                        | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>4. CONCLUSIONS .....</b>                        | <b>7</b>  |
| <b>5. BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>                       | <b>8</b>  |
| <b>6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....</b>                   | <b>8</b>  |
| <br>   |           |
| <b>APPENDIX 1. PLATES .....</b>                    | <b>9</b>  |
| <b>APPENDIX 2. OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM.....</b> | <b>11</b> |
| <br>   |           |
| <b>FIGURE 1. SITE LOCATION PLAN.....</b>           | <b>13</b> |
| <b>FIGURE 2. DETAILED LOCATION .....</b>           | <b>14</b> |
| <b>FIGURE 3. TOPOGRAPHIC SURVEY .....</b>          | <b>15</b> |
| <b>FIGURE 4. TOPOGRAPHIC SURVEY .....</b>          | <b>16</b> |

## **Abstract**

*Ridge and furrow earthworks of differential survival were recorded by topographic survey, a small component of a once extensive pattern of earlier open fields that surrounded Oundle in the medieval and post-medieval period. The portion of surviving headland evidences a former furlong boundary. This piecemeal survival of the historic landscape has now been preserved by record through geophysical survey, topographical survey and excavation.*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 PLANNING BACKGROUND**

- 1.1.1 This archaeological work was commissioned by Grace Homes in response to an archaeological planning condition reference EN/12/01614/FUL. An archaeological trial trench evaluation was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd (PCA) on land at Herne Lodge, Ashton Road, Northamptonshire (centred on Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference (NGR) TL 04505 87963) in August 2014. As the application area contains extant earthworks of ridge and furrow, a topographic survey of these was required by Northamptonshire County Council and was undertaken by PCA on the 4th and 5th August 2014. The portion of the site surveyed is centred on TL 04490 87845 and measures 1.8ha
- 1.1.2 Other reports are of relevance to this topographical survey: a geophysical survey conducted on the site by Northampton Archaeology (Fisher 2008) and an evaluation previously conducted on the site by Northampton Archaeology (Flavell 2010). The evaluation trenching has had an impact on the survival of earthworks recorded in this report.

### **1.2 TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY**

- 1.2.1 The site lies on the south-eastern outskirts of Oundle (Figure 1) near the River Nene on a small rise within the river valley. The area surveyed is bounded by the post medieval Herne Lodge and the remainder of the development site to the north and housing along Herne Road to the south (Figure 2). The site is sub-rectangular in shape, of an area of 1.8ha, lying at c 32m aOD. The long-standing land use as pasture has preserved the remains of the former arable landscape. The land drops slightly to the north and the east: the highest point in the south-west field corner lying at 34.48m aOD and the lowest in the north-east field corner at 29.74m aOD.
- 1.2.2 The underlying geology of the southern part of the site is bedrock of Blisworth Limestone Formation which has an interface in the north of the site with Rutland Formation, argillaceous rocks with sandstone and limestone. The superficial deposits are River Terrace Deposits of sand and gravel in view of the site's vicinity to the River Nene (British Geological Survey Viewer).

### **1.3 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

- 1.3.1 The archaeological and historic background has been previously described in a desk-based assessment carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology (Prentice 2008). It describes the area as being within St Scythe's Field on the 1810 Enclosure map and divided into numerous plots. On the 1810 Ordnance Survey preparatory survey the area is divided into three large plots with buildings adjacent to Ashton Road to the north, and near to Herne Road to the south. On the 1885 First Edition Ordnance Survey map a number of buildings are seen along the south-west side of Herne Road. Herne Lodge is present and must have been built between 1810 and 1885; the buildings on Ashton Road are still present. The development area covered is divided into mostly small plots or fields (Prentice 2008).
- 1.3.2 Historic mapping from 1886 to recent mapping confirms what the presence of ridge and furrow would suggest, that there is no change in the area surveyed, while surrounding housing and other development increases, removing the remainder of the adjacent rural landscape.
- 1.3.3 The geophysical survey of the site (Fisher 2008) suggested the presence of archaeological features, including three possible ditches as well as the ridge and furrow cultivation. The ridge and furrow appeared as weak anomalies in the southern and western part of the site, which are interestingly where the extant survival is less evident on the ground. This was followed by evaluation trenching: trenches 8 and 9 were cut across the headland to target an underlying geophysical anomaly which proved to be a boundary ditch.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

- 2.1 The survey was undertaken using a Leica Total Station tied into the National Grid by three stations located using a Leica Smartrover RTK GPS. Data was gathered by surveying the centre of the ridges and furrows where visible, recording the headland and measuring transects across the site at 0.50m intervals in order to record profiles across the site. The data was processed in Leica Geo Office and Survey Control Centre and exported into AutoCAD.

### **3. THE RESULTS**

- 3.1 The characteristic pattern of ridge and furrow was created through clockwise-motion ploughing. By ploughing from the middle of the 'land' and finishing at the outside, flanking furrows were created. An anti-clockwise ploughing motion, adopted during the fallow period, then ensured that soil was brought back into the ridge. The maintenance of the furrows in this fashion had two specific functions. First, the furrows acted as open drains. Second, and more significant, they served as demarcations of individual plots, or units of production' (DEFRA & English Heritage 2001).
- 3.2 Two apparently separate systems of ridge and furrow were surveyed within the sub-rectangular plot which measures a maximum of 205m along the eastern boundary (western - 190m) by 96m along the northern boundary (south- 86m). The area surveyed is too small to be able to reconstruct an open-field furlong pattern although the existence of the section of headland – the bank created by plough-moved soil at the turning point which forms the boundary, is an important component (see the general view of site in Plate 1). Vegetation was an issue along the western edge of the site and the north-eastern corner. The ground surface was partially obscured by piles of cut grass.
- 3.3 Evaluation trenching carried out by Northampton Archaeology 2008 has inevitably left traces across the site and disturbed the earthworks in their surrounding area, although excavated evidence can now be added to the resource. . The general trend of ridges was possible to follow although the furrow hollows have been in filled in places. Earthwork preservation is best in the eastern part of the site generally, particularly in the south-eastern portion of the site (Plate 2).
- 3.4 The field is divided towards the northern end by an east-west earthwork, 80m in length: this is a plough headland, measuring 12 to 17m in width, with a 3.50m wide top which stands at 33.58m aOD (Plate 3). It continues into the east and west field boundaries. The northern scarp stands 0.90m high and appears to overlie the ridge and furrow to the north. The southern scarp stands 0.50m high and appears cut into by furrows from the southern system (although again trenching has removed part of this evidence).
- 3.5 The northern set of furrows were recorded to their maximum length of 67m with vegetation obscuring the very north of the site adjacent to the boundary with Herne Lodge. The ridges are very indistinct (Plate 4) and in the eastern section disturbed by evaluation trench 6. The line of the furrows could be largely traced however and reveals nine ridges measuring between 5.54m



- and 6.19m between centre of furrows. The recorded profiles, illustrated in Figure 4, show the depth between the base of the furrow and the ridge top varies from 0.12 to 0.15m.
- 3.6 South of the headland, four clear ridges survive along the eastern boundary of the site measuring in width -between centres of furrows (from east to west) - 10.81, 9.33, 10.80 and 9.72m. The surviving height of the ridges, measured from the difference between the base of the furrow and the ridge top (again from east to west) is 0.33, 0.25, 0.33 and 0.19m.
- 3.7 The system is mostly straight and it is not possible to ascertain the curve in the ploughing line that is usually evidenced from the short length of system (102m maximum) recorded – a slight curve is caused by trenching disturbance of the easternmost ridge and a slight curve appears at the very southern boundary in the hedge-line.
- 3.8 A flattened area traverses the site north-south evidently used as a pathway between Herne Lodge and the adjacent dwelling and the southern access on Herne Road – slight dips to either side suggest that this was formerly a ridge c 11m wide.
- 3.9 A further four ridges are visible in the south-western portion of the site, although the western most is largely obscured by vegetation and runs into the western hedge-line. The ridges measure 8.11, 6.08 (disturbed by trenching), 7.70 and 8.11m from east to west. They survive to a height varying from 0.14 to 0.18m.
- 3.10 Profiles 1 and 2 show the surviving ridges of the southern section reasonably clearly. Profiles 3 and 4 show how difficult it is to identify the earthworks in the northern section. An impression survives of the undulating ridges in the northern section.
- 3.11 It is suggested that the degraded remains to the north of the headland bank may be earlier in date than those wider ridges to the south. The earlier fields to the north would have been destroyed by the construction of Herne Lodge (as seen in the recent PCA evaluation trenching to the north-west which identified narrow plough furrows). The headland appears to sit over the ridges to the north while the furrows to the south are quite pronounced into the bottom of the bank.

## 4. CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The relatively small surface area of ridge and furrow earthworks that was surveyed and the level of disturbance has not allowed for a great deal of interpretation from a topographical point of view. However the site has benefited from several types of investigation, all of which have shed light on the ridge and furrow. The geophysical survey had more pronounced anomalies in the western part of the site where the extant earthworks are less visible. The evaluation trenching in 2010 and 2014 provided evidence of phasing and dating as described below:

*'The latest activity on the site is defined by two phases of medieval/post-medieval cultivation ploughing, with the early set of furrows observed within trench 6 aligned in a slightly different direction to that of the later surviving set found across the rest of the proposed development area.*

*The earlier furrows are aligned northeast-southwest perpendicular to the two private roads marked on the 1810 Enclosure map (now Ashton and Herne Roads). They probably relate to furlongs within St Scythe's Field, which was one of the three demesne fields for Oundle (recorded in the field book of 1565).*

*The upstanding headland evident in the middle of the pasture field extended over the fill of the large ditch found in trenches 8 and 9 which suggests that the boundary had gone out of use by then. The single fragment of clay pipe found in the upper fill was generally datable to the 18th century. The boundary was not present by the time of the Enclosure (1807)' (Flavell 2010).*

- 4.3 Ridges and furrows, which are the physical remains of the open-field system, have been rapidly disappearing over the last 50 years mainly caused by ploughing and partly due to housing development. In response to the apparent loss of open-field ridge and furrow, a report that highlighted destruction rates found that the amount of ridge and furrow surviving in 1940 in Northamptonshire had been reduced to 12 percent by 1992 (Hall 1993).
- 4.4 The survey would have been preferable prior to the evaluation trenching of 2008 as the resulting ground disturbance has inevitably added to the difficulty of producing a useful record. Nonetheless the existence and layout of this small surviving portion of the Oundle fieldscape has now been preserved by record.

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## 6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## APPENDIX 1. PLATES



Plate 1: General view north across site



Plate 2: View north-east from southern boundary



Plate 3: View west across headland



Plate 4: View north-east towards Herne Lodge

## APPENDIX 2. OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM

### OASIS ID: preconst1-192036

#### Project details

|                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Project name                     | Land at Herne Road, Oundle   |
| Short description of the project | Ridge and furrow earthworks of differential survival were recorded by topographic survey, a small component of a once extensive pattern of earlier open fields that surrounded Oundle in the medieval and post-medieval period. The portion of surviving headland evidences a former furlong boundary. This piecemeal survival of the historic landscape has now been preserved by record through geophysical survey, topographical survey and excavation. |
| Project dates                    | Start: 04-08-2014 End: 05-08-2014  |
| Previous/future work             | Yes / Not known  |
| Type of project                  | Recording project  |
| Current Land use                 | Grassland Heathland 2 - Undisturbed Grassland  |
| Monument type                    | RIDGE AND FURROW Medieval  |
| Investigation type               | "Full survey"  |

#### Project location

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| Country          | England   |
| Site location    | NORTHAMPTONSHIRE EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE OUNDLE Land at Hern Lodge          |
| Study area       | 1.80 Hectares   |
| Site coordinates | TL 04490 87845 52.4781397628 -0.461302330551 52 28 41 N 000 27 40 W Point |

#### Project creators

|                          |                                 |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Name of Organisation     | PCA Midlands                    |
| Project brief originator | Northamptonshire County Council |
| Project director/manager | Kevin Trott                     |
| Project supervisor       | Nathalie Barrett                |

#### Project archives

|                           |                                  |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Physical Archive Exists?  | No                               |
| Digital Archive recipient | Northamptonshire Museums Service |
| Digital Media available   | "Survey" "Text"                  |

Paper Archive recipient Northamptonshire Museums Service

Paper Media available "Map", "Report", "Survey "

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**Project bibliography 1**

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

Title LAND AT HERNE ROAD, OUNDLE, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE:

Author(s)/Editor(s) Barrett N

Other bibliographic details R11880

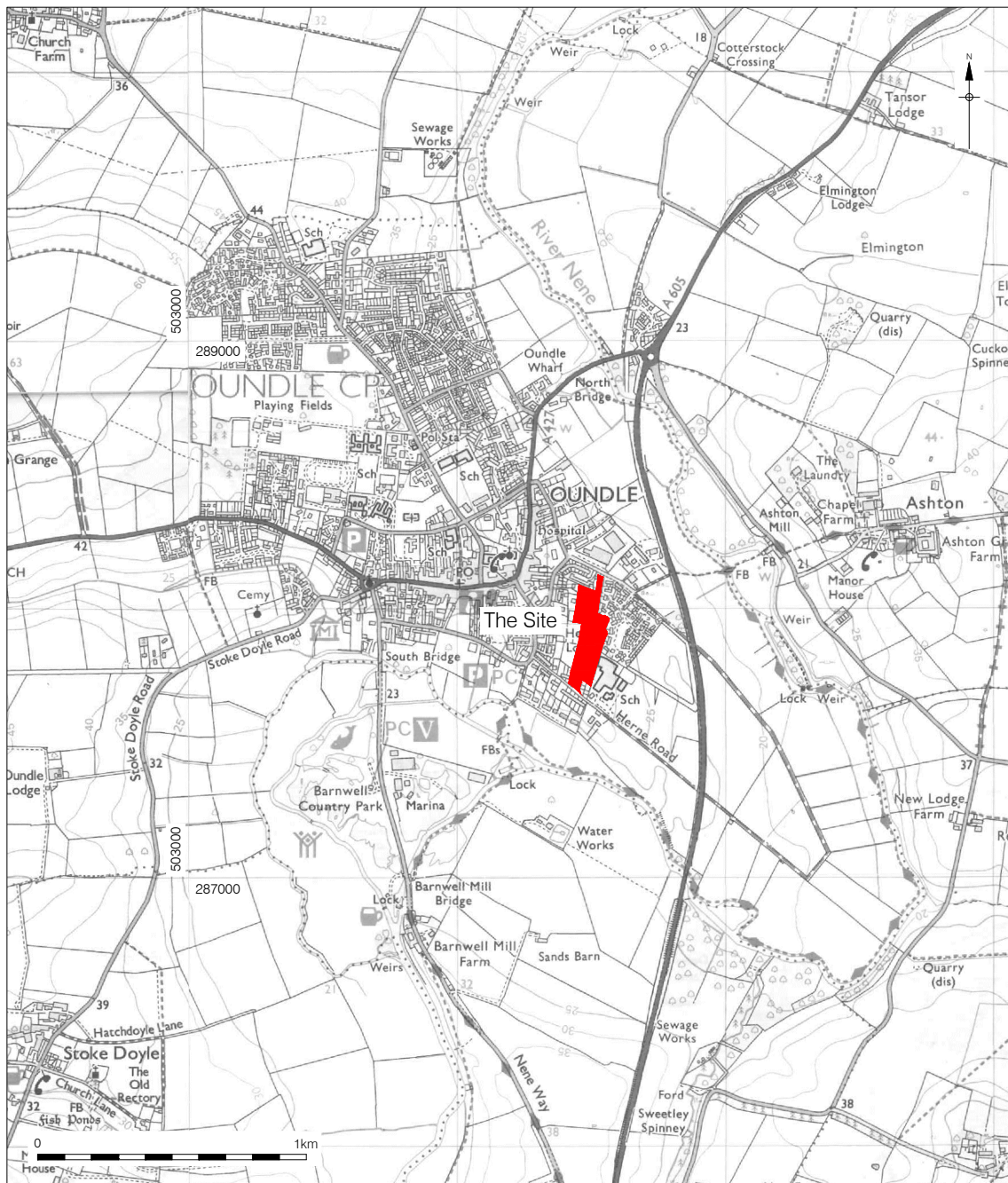
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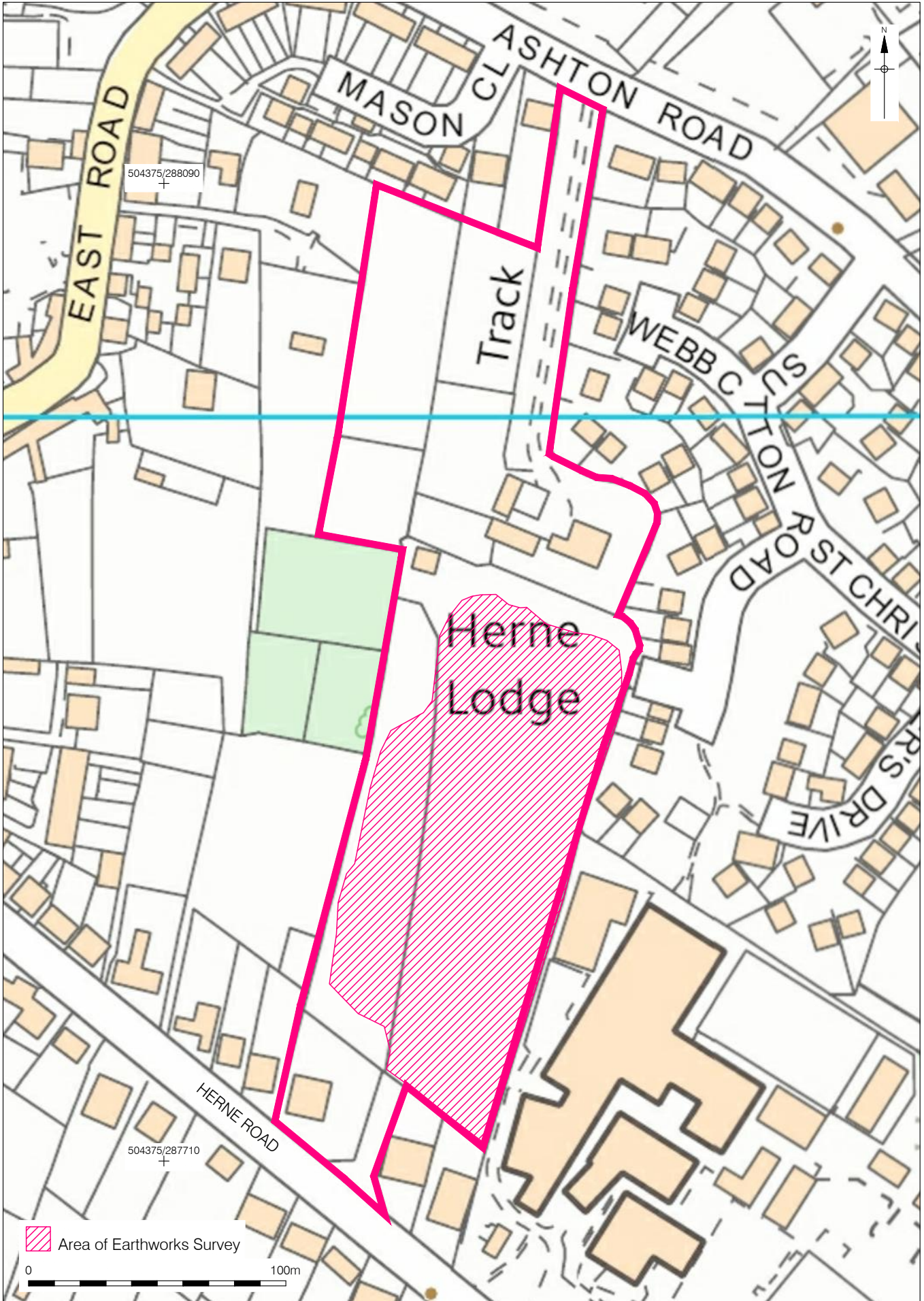
Entered on 8 October 2014



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 08/08/14 JS

Figure 1  
 Trench Location  
 1:2,000,000 & 20,000 at A4





Ordnance Survey © Crown Copyright 2014. All rights reserved. Licence number 100022432  
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08/10/14 HB

Figure 2  
Area of Earthworks Survey  
1:2,000 at A4

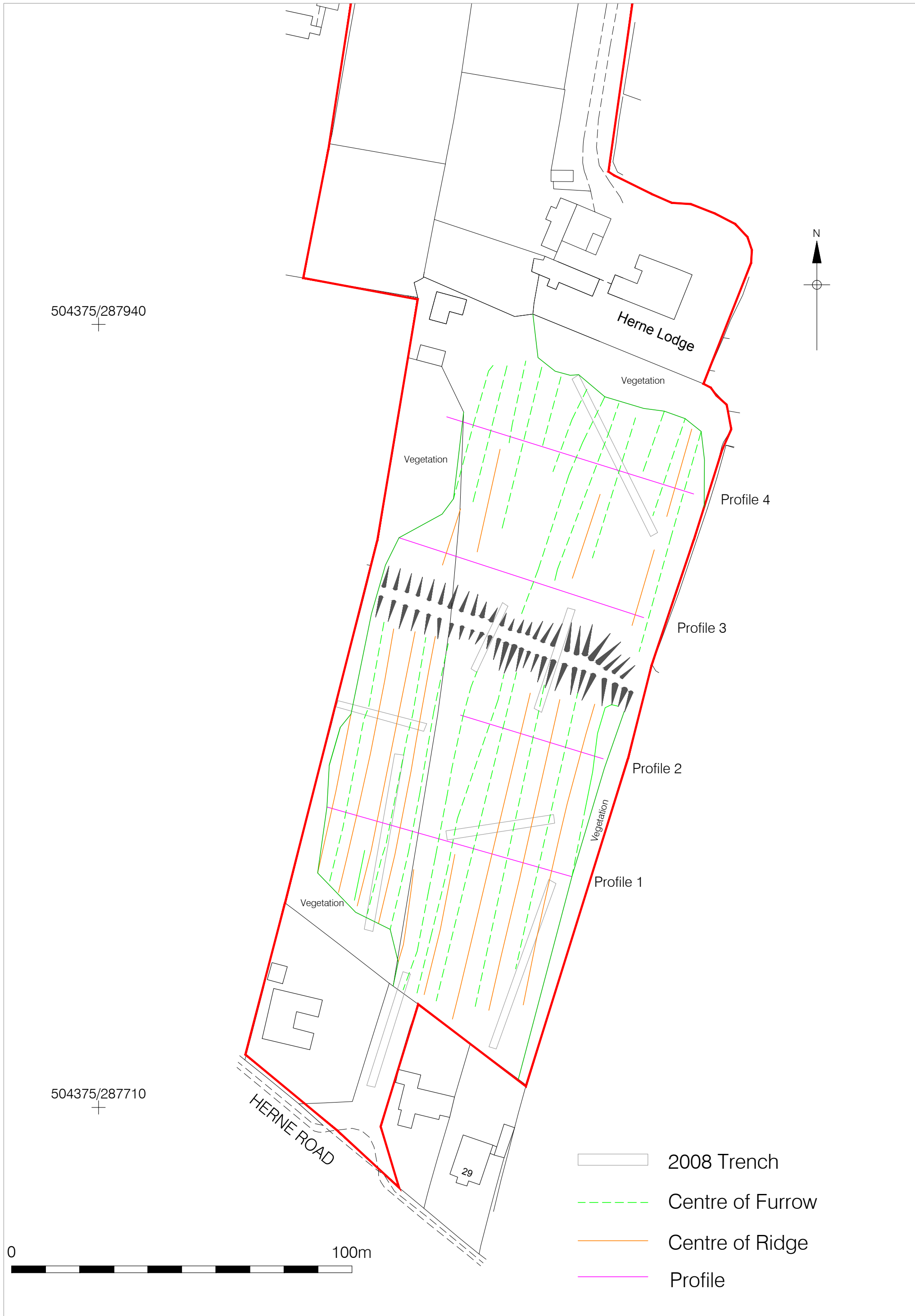
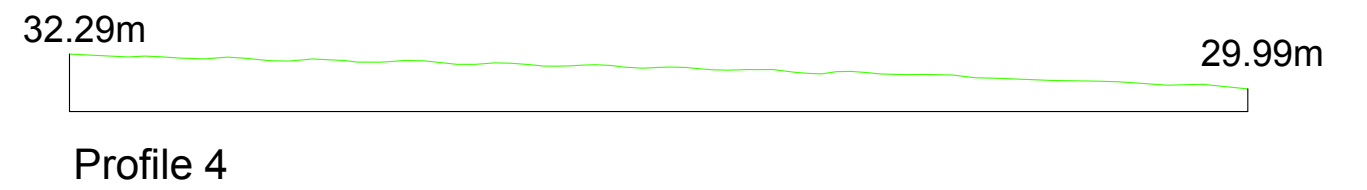
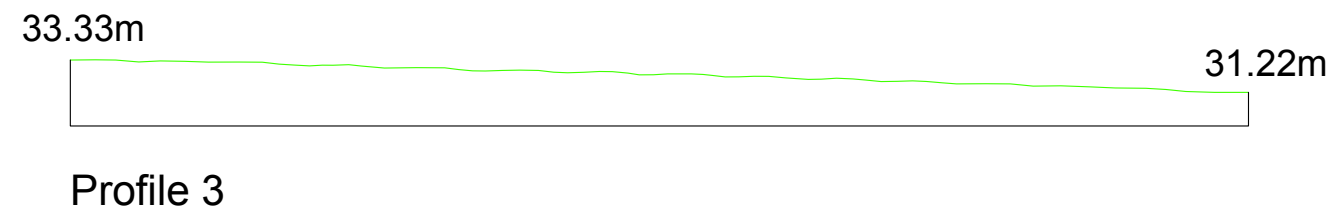
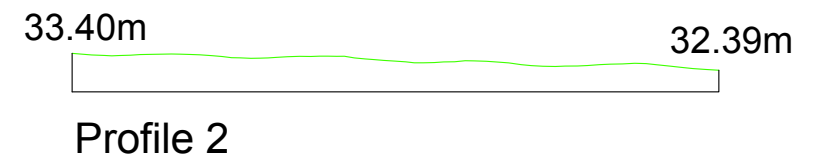
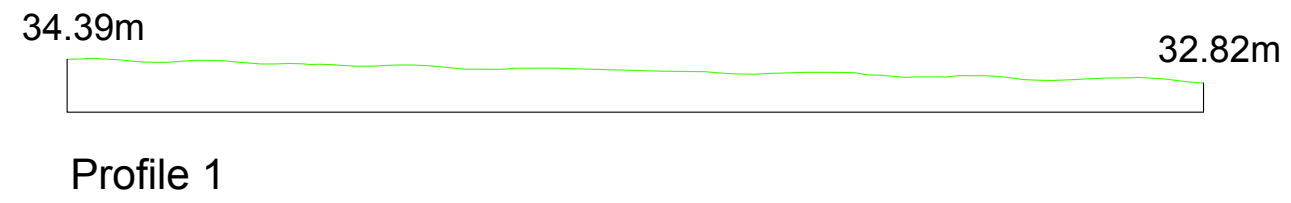


Figure 3  
Topographic Earthwork Survey 1:1,000 at A3



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