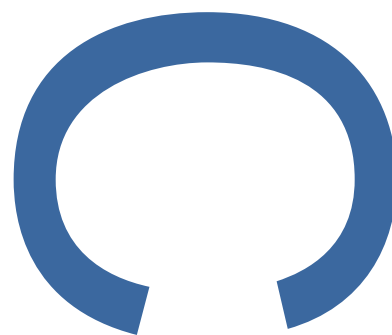


MANOR FARM,
BLASTON,
LEICESTERSHIRE



REPORT ON AN
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
EVALUATION

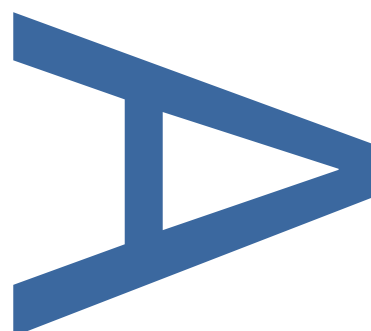


Planning Reference: 18/00932/FUL

Museum Accession No: X.A90.2018

PCA Report Number: R13387

September 2018



DOCUMENT VERIFICATION

**MANOR FARM,
BLASTON, LEICESTERSHIRE:**

**REPORT ON AN
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

Quality Control

Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd	
Project Number	K5721
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**Manor Farm, Blaston, Leicestershire:
Report on an Archaeological Evaluation**

Local Planning Authority: Harborough District Council

Central National Grid Reference: SP 8065 9580

Planning Reference: 18/00932/FUL

Site Code: MFBL18

Museum Accession No: X.A90.2018

Written and Researched by Margaret Leman

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September 2018

PCA Report Number: R13387

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CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	3
1 Introduction.....	4
2 Geology and Topography.....	5
3 Archaeological and Historical Background.....	5
4 Project Aims and Research Objectives.....	6
5 Methodology.....	7
6 The Results	8
7 Discussion – The Archaeological Sequence.....	10
8 Conclusions.....	11
9 Acknowledgements	11
10 Bibliography.....	12

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Context Index.....	18
Appendix 2: Site Photographs	21
Appendix 3: OASIS Report	25

FIGURES

Figure 1: Site Location	13
Figure 2: Detailed Site Location.....	14
Figure 3: Trench Locations	15
Figure 4: Representative Sections of Trenches 1-7	16
Figure 5: Sections of furrow [202].....	17

ABSTRACT

This report describes the results of an archaeological evaluation carried out by Pre-Construct Archaeology on land at Manor Farm, Blaston, Leicestershire (NGR SP 8065 9580). The evaluation took place from 3rd – 5th September 2018. The archaeological work was commissioned by The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd, and took place in anticipation of the development of the land. The aim of the work was to identify, investigate and record any archaeological features or finds within the proposed development area. Quantities of Roman artefacts have been recovered close by during previous fieldwalking. Medieval and post-medieval artefacts have also been found.

The archaeological evaluation identified three furrows; these probably date to the post-medieval period and reflect the agricultural usage of the land. Other than the furrows, no other archaeological finds or features were observed within the proposed development area.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd (PCA) on land at Manor Farm, Blaston, Leicestershire (centred on Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference (NGR) SP 8065 9580). The evaluation took place from 3rd – 5th September 2018 (Figures 1 and 2).
- 1.2 The archaeological work was commissioned by The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd (EDP). The investigation was in response to a Planning Application (18/00932/FUL) for the erection of new agricultural buildings, a silage clamp and cattle yard submitted to Harborough District Council.
- 1.3 The archaeological works were carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by Pre-Construct Archaeology (PCA 2018) following consultation between EDP and the Principal Planning Archaeologist of Leicestershire County Council.
- 1.4 The planned archaeological works involved the excavation of six 30m trenches and one 15m trench (Figure 2).
- 1.5 The aim of the trial trenching evaluation was to identify and record any surviving archaeological remains and/or deposits that may be disturbed during the proposed development.
- 1.6 The archaeological works sought to determine the location, date, extent, character, condition, and quality of any archaeological remains on the site, to assess the significance of any such remains in a local, regional, or national context, as appropriate, and to assess the potential impact of the development proposals on the site's archaeology.
- 1.7 This report describes the results of the archaeological works. The site archive will be deposited with Leicestershire County Council Museums Services under archive number **X.A90.2018**.

2 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

2.1 Geology

2.1.1 The solid geology of the site is Whitby Mudstone Formation Mudstone of the Jurassic period. This is overlain by superficial deposits of Oadby Member Diamicton, formed up to 2 million years ago in the Quaternary period when the local environment was dominated by ice age conditions (British Geological Survey Viewer, www.bgs.ac.uk 2018).

2.2 Topography

2.3 The site is an arable field on a gentle slope down to the south, lying at c.110m OD.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.1.1 The Leicestershire Historic Environment Record (HER) shows that the application site lies within an area of archaeological potential.

3.1.2 In the western part of the field encompassing the greater part of the site, moderate quantities of Neolithic-Bronze Age flints have been found. These include struck fragments, flakes, scrapers, an awl, a burnt core and a discoid implement (MLE1270). Further flints have also been found at the northern edge of the field (MLE7176).

3.1.3 At the northern edge of the field, and further north, a scatter of Roman material has been identified. Fairly large quantities of Roman artefacts, particularly pottery and coins, have been found, together with occasional other metal items, including brooches, and small amounts of building material, about 250m north of the site (MLE1269). Small quantities of Iron Age pottery were found in the same area and nearby (MLE6468). Further small amounts of Roman pottery have been found to the southwest (MLE1271).

3.1.4 Fieldwalking of the field encompassing the greater part of the site has identified scatters of pottery dating from the Saxo-Norman, medieval and post-medieval periods (MLE6706 and 10328).

3.1.5 Blaston is recorded in the Domesday Book of c.1086, indicating it was in existence in the Late Saxon period. On the southern edge of the village, c. 350m south of the main part of the site, is the ruined medieval church of St. Michael, considered to have been founded in the late 12th century.

4 PROJECT AIMS AND RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

4.1 Project Aims

4.1.1 The project is 'threat-led' with potential to disturb or destroy important sub-surface archaeological remains, if present. Therefore, the broad aim of the archaeological project was to inform the Local Planning Authority and the Client regarding the character, date, extent and degree of survival of archaeological remains at the site.

4.1.2 Archaeological trial trenching was selected as the most appropriate investigative tool to test the archaeological potential of the site.

4.1.3 Additional aims of the project were:

- To compile a site archive consisting of all site and project documentary and photographic records, as well as all artefactual and palaeoenvironmental material recovered;
- To compile a report that contains an assessment of the nature and significance of all data categories, stratigraphic, artefactual, etc.

4.2 Research Objectives

The regional research agenda *The Archaeology of the East Midlands, An Archaeological Resource Assessment and Research Agenda*, Leicester Archaeology Monograph **13**, ed. N Cooper (2006), along with the *East Midlands Heritage: An Updated Research Agenda and Strategy for the Historic Environment of the East Midlands*, ed. D. Knight, B. Vyner & C. Allen (2012) have been referred to for specific research criteria, where appropriate.

The archaeological evaluation addressed the following objectives:

To record the nature, extent, date, character, quality, significance and state of preservation of any archaeological remains affected by the investigation;

To assess where appropriate any ecofactual and palaeo-environmental potential of archaeological layers and features from within the site.

In addition, the evaluation sought to address the following research questions:

To set the site and its potential archaeological remains into the context of the wider landscape;

To confirm the presence or absence of any prehistoric activity;

To confirm the presence or absence of any Romano-British activity;

To confirm the presence or absence of any Saxon activity;

To confirm the presence or absence of any medieval activity;

To confirm the presence or absence of post-medieval activity relating to the wider settlement of Blaston.

5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 Fieldwork Methodology

5.1.1 The Evaluation took place from 3rd – 5th September 2018 in compliance with the relevant guidance document of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (ClfA 2014a); PCA is a Registered Organisation (number 23) with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists and will operate within the Institute's 'Code of Conduct'.

5.1.2 The evaluation trenches were laid out in accordance with a generic brief, prepared by Leicestershire County Council Historic and Natural Environment Team, and the Written Scheme of Investigation for the evaluation, as accepted by the Principal Planning Archaeologist (**Figure 2**).

5.1.3 All trial trenches were excavated under archaeological supervision using a JCB 3CX excavator. Deposits were removed in spits to the top of the first significant archaeological horizon, or the clearly defined top of the natural sub-stratum, whichever was reached first. All potential archaeological features were identified and marked at the time of machine clearance of overburden.

5.1.4 All exposed deposits/layers were cleaned using hand tools and recorded as set out in the PCA fieldwork manual (Taylor and Brown 2009). Contexts were recorded in accordance with PCA's fieldwork manual approved for use in Leicestershire, including written, photographic and drawn records.

5.2 Recording Methodology

5.2.1 The trench locations were established by GPS.

5.2.2 Manual plans and section drawings of archaeological features and deposits were drawn at an appropriate scale (1:20, 1:50 or 1:100).

5.2.3 Deposits or the removal of deposits judged by the excavating archaeologist to constitute individual events were each assigned a unique record number (often referred to within British archaeology as 'context numbers') and recorded utilising PCAs printed *pro forma*.

5.2.4 High-resolution digital photographs were taken at all stages of the evaluation process.

5.3 Post-Fieldwork Methodology

5.3.1 Historic England's Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The MoRPHE Project Managers Guide (HE 2015) was used as the framework for post-excavation work.

5.3.2 The stratigraphic data for the project comprises written, drawn and photographic records. A total of twenty archaeological contexts were defined within the seven trenches. Post-excavation work involved checking and collating site records, and phasing the stratigraphic data (**Appendix 1**).

5.3.3 No artefactual or ecofactual material was discovered during the evaluation.

5.3.4 The complete site archive will be packaged for long-term curation. The site archive will be prepared for deposition following the guidelines specified in the Archaeological Archives Forum guidelines document (Brown 2007), the United Kingdom Institute for Conservation (UKIC) document (Walker 1990) and the relevant ClfA publication (ClfA 2014b). The depositional requirements of the body to which the Site Archive will be ultimately transferred will be met in full.

6 THE RESULTS

During the archaeological evaluation, separate stratigraphic entities were assigned unique and individual 'context' numbers, which are indicated in the following text as, for example (123).

6.1 Natural deposits

6.1.1 Natural deposits across the site consisted of very compact light brown/yellow silty clay with frequent limestone inclusions. There was variation in the natural deposits across the site, with patches of mid orange/brown compact sandy clay and mid grey/brown compact sandy clay with very frequent gravel inclusions occurring in some areas (**102, 201, 301, 402, 501, 601, 701**).

6.2 Additional deposits

6.2.1 Topsoil across the site consisted of a moderately compact mid grey-brown fine silty clay with occasional limestone inclusions (**100, 200, 300, 400, 500, 600, 700**).

6.2.2 Above the natural deposits, and underlying the topsoil in trenches **1, 3** and **4**, was a thin layer of subsoil consisting of firm light yellowish brown silty clay (**101, 301, 401**). The subsoil was deeper in trench 1 than the other trenches, probably reflecting its location near the bottom of the slope.

6.3 Trench 1

6.3.1 Sealing the natural, which was at least 0.1m thick (**102**), was a colluvium layer with a thickness of 0.14m (**103**). Overlying this was the subsoil; this was between 0.2m and 0.4m thick (**101**). The boundaries between the natural deposits and the colluvium layer, and between the colluvium and the subsoil, were diffuse. Sealing the subsoil was a topsoil layer approximately 0.3m deep which formed the uppermost deposit in Trench 1 (**100**).

6.4 Trench 2

6.4.1 Overlying the natural deposits **(201)** was the topsoil; this was 0.34m deep **(200)**. Truncating the natural deposits near the south-eastern end of Trench 2 was a furrow with a north-south alignment **[202]**. This furrow was approximately 1.6m wide and 0.3m deep **(Plate 5 & 6)**. It was filled with homogenous, very firm mid brown/grey silty clay **(203)**. The furrow was sealed by the topsoil. To the northeast of this furrow were the remnants of two further furrows parallel to furrow **[202]** that were investigated but not recorded as they were insubstantial. All three furrows in Trench 2 are visible on the surface of the field **(Plate 7)**.

6.4.2 Other than the furrows and two land drains, no archaeological features were observed in Trench 2.

6.5 Trench 3

6.5.1 Sealing the natural, which was at least 0.2m thick **(302)**, was a subsoil layer of 0.12m thickness **(301)**. Overlying the subsoil was topsoil with a depth of 0.3m that formed the uppermost layer in Trench 3 **(300) (Plate 3)**.

6.5.2 One land drain was observed in trench 3 but no archaeological features were identified.

6.6 Trench 4

6.6.1 Sealing the natural, which was at least 0.16m thick **(402)**, was a layer of subsoil approximately 0.1m thick **(401)**. Overlying the subsoil was a topsoil layer with a depth of 0.26m **(400)**.

6.6.2 Two land drains were observed in trench 4 but no archaeological features were identified.

6.7 Trench 5

6.7.1 Sealing the natural, which was at least 0.2m thick **(501)**, was the topsoil with a depth of 0.36m **(500) (Plate 4)**.

6.7.2 Two land drains were observed in trench 5 but no archaeological features were identified

6.8 Trench 6

6.8.1 Sealing the natural which was at least 0.1m thick **(601)**, was the topsoil, with a depth of 0.36m **(600)**.

6.8.2 One land drain was observed in trench 6 but no archaeological features were identified.

6.9 Trench 7

6.10 Sealing the natural which was at least 0.1m thick **(701)** was the topsoil of approximately 0.18m depth **(700) (Plate 2)**.

- 6.11 One natural feature was noted and investigated in trench 7, but not recorded. A land drain was observed near the western end of the trench but no archaeological features were identified.

7 DISCUSSION – THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

- 7.1 The archaeological sequence is described by placing stratigraphic sequences within broad phases, assigned on a site-wide basis in this case. An attempt has been made to add interpretation to the data, and correlate these phases with recognised historical and geological periods.

7.2 Summary

- 7.2.1 The archaeological evaluation uncovered a very limited sequence of archaeology, the furrows being the only archaeological features present on the site. No artefacts were recovered during the evaluation.

7.3 Phase 1: Natural sub-stratum

- 7.3.1 Phase 1 represents natural geological material exposed within all seven trenches. This consisted of a light brown silty clay with frequent limestone, recognisable as clay deposits of Oadby Member Diamicton, deposited in the Quaternary period. Variations in the natural, typical of these glacial deposits, were also noted.

- 7.3.2 The boundary between the topsoil and the underlying subsoil or natural was diffuse; this is probably a result of ploughing.

7.4 Phase 2: Post-Medieval

- 7.4.1 Three furrows or furrow remnants were identified in trench 2. No dating evidence was recovered from the furrows, but narrowly-spaced furrows such as these typically date to the post-medieval period. The furrows observed in this trench are aligned with those visible on the field surface (**Plate 7**), suggesting a relatively recent date.

7.5 Phase 3: Modern

- 7.5.1 Topsoil provided the modern ground surface. Subsoil was mainly absent; where present it was observed as a thin layer only. This reflects the agricultural usage of the site, the subsoil having been mostly removed by ploughing.

8 CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1.1 The observation fulfilled the aims of the archaeological evaluation and identified three furrows.
- 8.1.2 Natural layers on the site generally consisted of grey/brown silty clay glacial deposits.
- 8.1.3 Given the lack of archaeological finds or features on the site it is unlikely that any further archaeological work will be required; any requirement for further work is at the discretion of the Senior Planning Archaeologist.

9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd would like to thank The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd. for commissioning the work. The investigation was supervised by Margi Leman. Surveying and assistance was by Rebecca Dickinson, Andrew Failes, Iain Pringle and Jordan Wright. Gary Taylor of PCA Newark managed the project & edited this report. Figures accompanying this report were prepared by PCA's CAD department.

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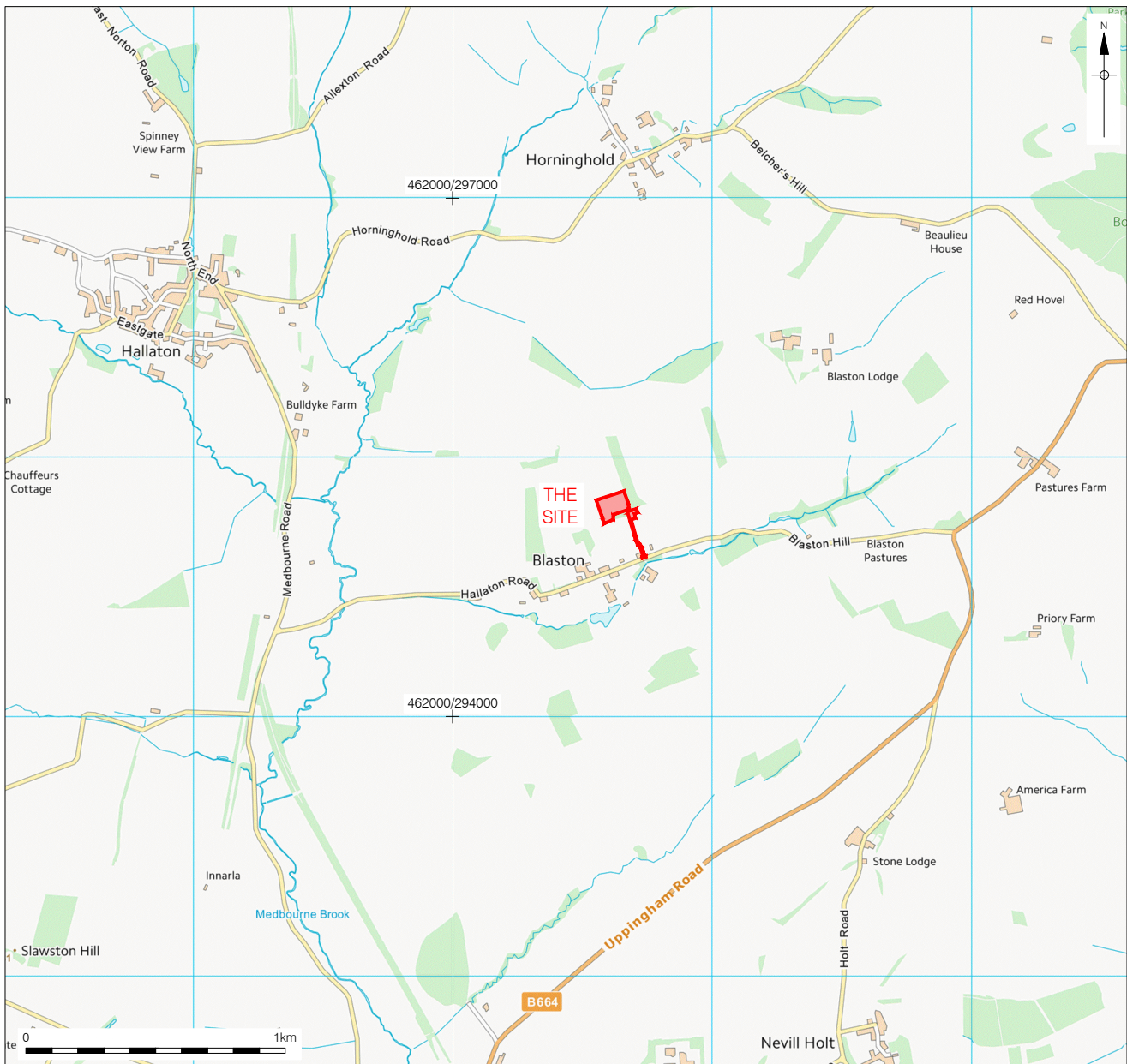
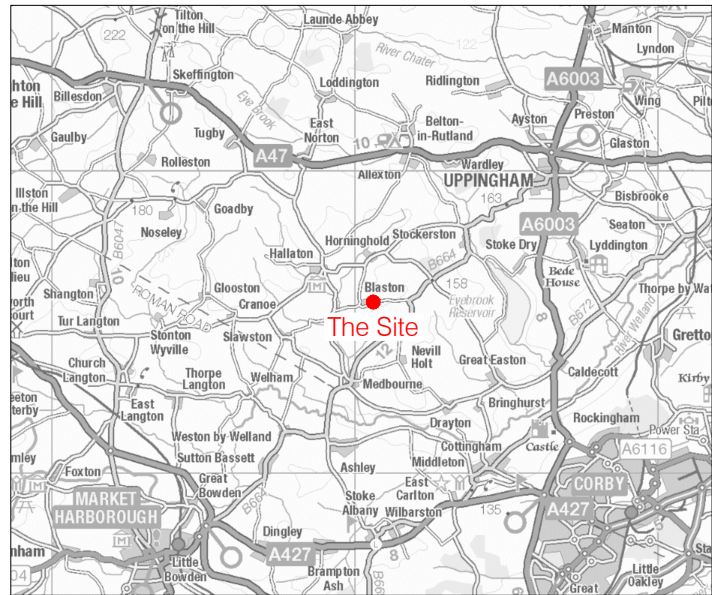
10.2 Websites

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<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>

Accessed on 06/09/2018

Old Maps - <https://www.old-maps.co.uk/#/Map/523560/309670/12/100670>

Accessed on 06/09/2018



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 12/09/18 MS

Figure 1
 Site Location
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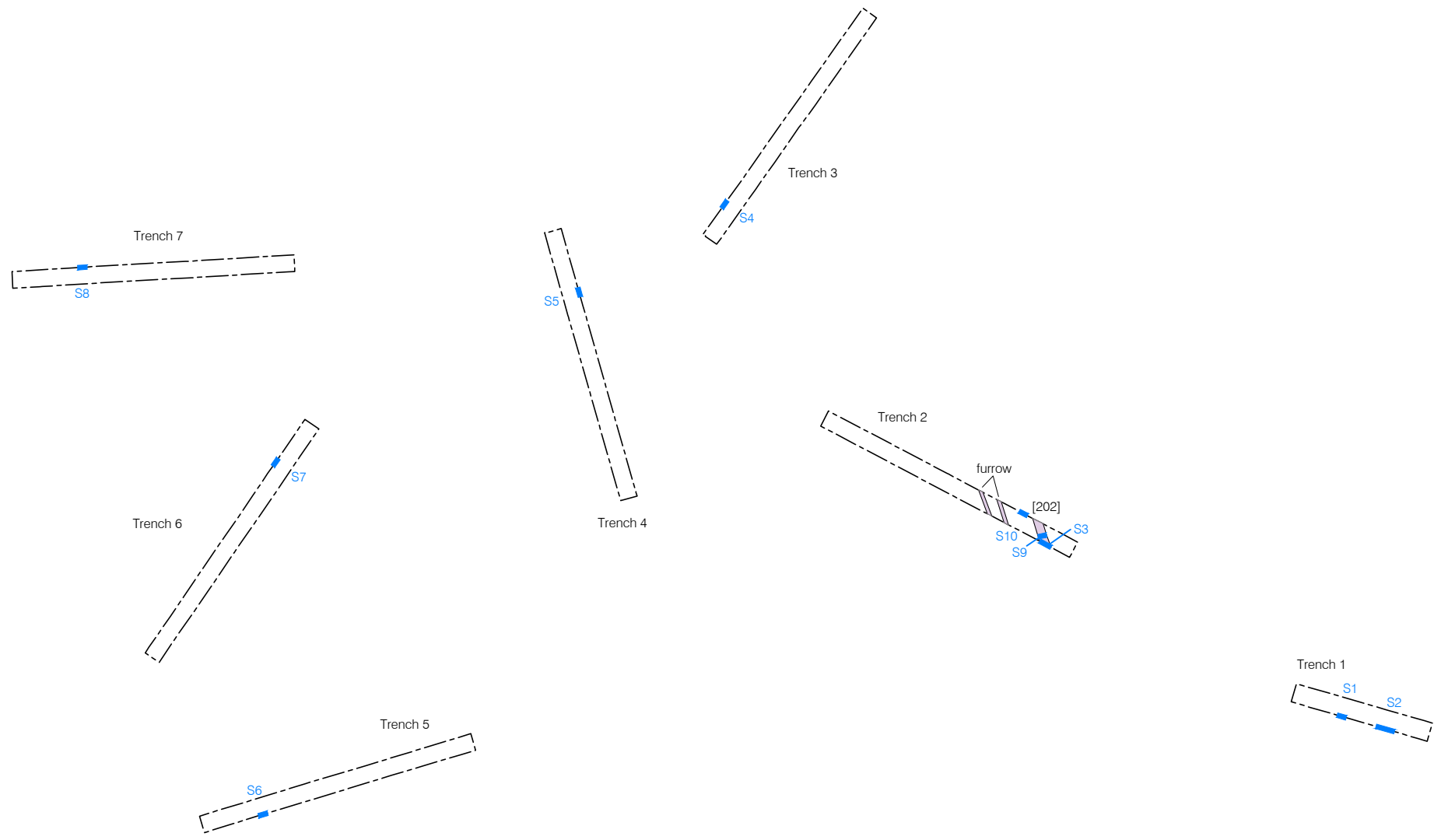


Background mapping from a drawing provided by Fisher German LLP, May 2018

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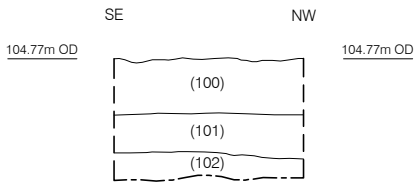
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Detailed Site Location
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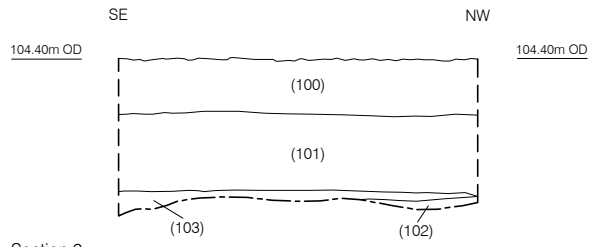
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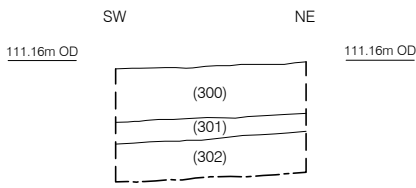
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Trench Plans
1:625 at A4



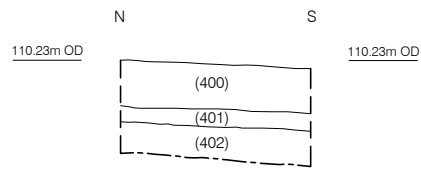
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Trench 1



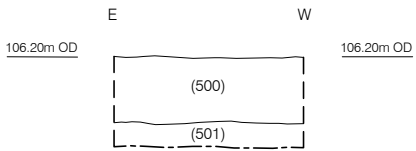
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Trench 1



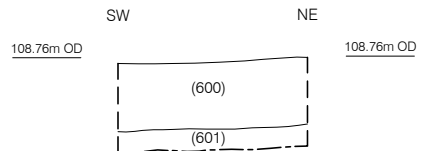
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Trench 3



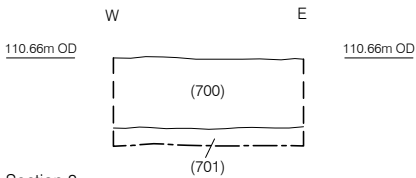
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Trench 4



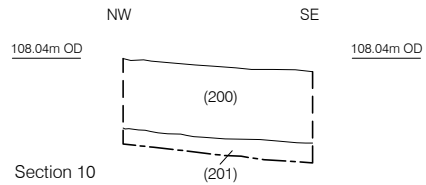
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North Facing
Trench 5



Section 7
Southeast Facing
Trench 6

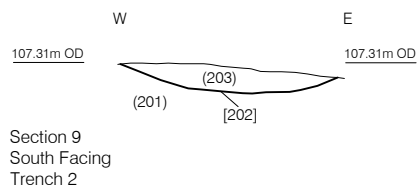
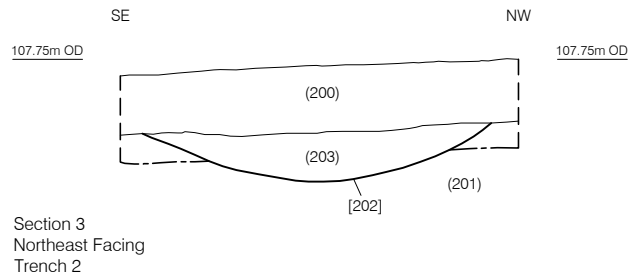


Section 8
South Facing
Trench 7



Section 10
Southwest Facing
Trench 2





Appendix 1: Context Index

Abbreviations: UE means 'unexcavated'; N/A means 'not applicable'; > means 'greater than'; < means 'up to'; Context numbers are followed by a brief description and interpretation; their dimensions in metres (in the order length x width x depth; or diameter x depth); and their critical stratigraphic relationships.

Context	Trench	Category	Description			Interpretation	Dimensions (m)	Above	Below
			Colour	Texture	Inclusions				
(100)	1	Layer	Mid brown/grey	Firm silty clay	Occasional limestone	Topsoil	0.3m deep	(101)	-
(101)	1	Layer	Light yellowish brown	Firm silty clay	Occasional limestone	Subsoil	0.2-0.4m thick	(102) (103)	(100)
(102)	1	Deposit	Light grey/brown	Firm silty clay	Frequent limestone, occasional flint	Natural	>0.1m thick	-	(101) (103)
(103)	1	Layer	Mid yellow/grey	Very firm silty clay	Occasional limestone	Colluvium layer	0.14m thick	(102)	(101)
(200)	2	Layer	Mid brown/grey	Firm silty clay	Occasional limestone	Topsoil	0.36m deep	(201)	-
(201)	2	Deposit	Light grey/brown with orange/brown patches	Firm silty clay	Frequent limestone, occasional flint	Natural	>0.1m thick	-	(200)

[202]	2	Cut	N-S aligned, linear in plan with shallow concave sides and a concave base.			Furrow	>2.3 x 1.8 x 0.26	(201)	(203)
(203)	2	Fill	Mid brown/grey	Homogenous, very firm silty clay	Occasional limestone and flint	Fill of furrow [202]	>2.3 x 1.8 x 0.26	[202]	(200)
(300)	3	Layer	Mid brown/grey	Firm silty clay	Occasional limestone	Topsoil	0.28m deep	(301)	-
(301)	3	Layer	Light yellowish brown	Firm silty clay	Occasional limestone	Subsoil	0.1m thick	(302)	(300)
(302)	3	Deposit	Light grey/brown	Firm silty clay	Frequent limestone, occasional flint	Natural	>0.2m thick	-	(301)
(400)	4	Layer	Mid brown/grey	Firm silty clay	Occasional limestone	Topsoil	0.24m deep	(401)	-
(401)	4	Layer	Light yellowish brown	Firm silty clay	Occasional limestone	Subsoil	0.08m thick	(402)	(400)
(402)	4	Deposit	Light grey/brown	Firm silty clay	Frequent limestone, occasional flint	Natural	>0.15m thick	-	(401)
(500)	5	Layer	Mid brown/grey	Firm silty clay	Occasional limestone	Topsoil	0.36m deep	(501)	-
(501)	5	Deposit	Light grey/brown with orange/brown patches	Firm silty clay	Frequent limestone, occasional flint	Natural	>0.12m thick	-	(500)

(600)	6	Layer	Mid brown/grey	Firm silty clay	Occasional limestone	Topsoil	0.36m deep	(601)	-
(601)	6	Deposit	Light grey/brown with orange/brown patches	Firm silty clay	Frequent limestone, occasional flint	Natural	>0.1m thick	-	(600)
(700)	7	Layer	Mid brown/grey	Firm silty clay	Occasional limestone	Topsoil	0.35m deep	(701)	-
(701)	7	Deposit	Light grey/brown with orange/brown patches	Firm silty clay	Frequent limestone, occasional flint	Natural	>0.1m thick	-	(700)

Appendix 2: Site Photographs



Plate 1: View of the site, looking northeast.



Plate 2: View of trench 7 looking west, demonstrating the variation in the natural deposits on the site.



Plate 3: Representative section of trench 3 in the northeast of the site, looking northwest.



Plate 4: Representative section of trench 5 in the southwest of the site, looking south-southeast.



Plate 5: View of trench 2 looking northwest, showing the three north-south aligned furrow remnants.



Plate 6: View of furrow [202] in trench 2, looking north.



Plate 7: Furrow remnants in trench 2, showing their alignment with cultivation marks on the field surface. View looking north.

Appendix 3: OASIS Report

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: preconst1-327825

Project details

Project name	Land at Manor Farm, Blaston, Leicestershire
Short description of the project	An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at the edge of the village close to an area where Roman artefacts had been recovered during previous fieldwalking. Medieval and post-medieval artefacts had also been found. The investigation identified three furrows; these probably date to the post-medieval period and reflect the agricultural usage of the land. Other than the furrows, no other archaeological finds or features were observed within the proposed development area.
Project dates	Start: 03-09-2018 End: 05-09-2018
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	MFBL18 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	18/00932/FUL - Planning Application No.
Any associated project reference codes	X.A90.2018 - Museum accession ID
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Cultivated Land 4 - Character Undetermined
Monument type	FURROW Post Medieval
Significant Finds	NONE None
Methods & techniques	""Sample Trenches""
Development type	Farm infrastructure (e.g. barns, grain stores, equipment stores, etc.)
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF

Position in the planning process Between deposition of an application and determination

Project location

Country England
Site location LEICESTERSHIRE HARBOROUGH BLASTON Manor Farm, Main Street
Postcode LE16 8DE
Study area 0.7 Hectares
Site coordinates SP 8065 9580 52.553696258085 -0.810341028388 52 33 13 N 000 48 37 W Point
Height OD / Depth Min: 110m Max: 115m

Project creators

Name of Organisation PCA Newark
Project brief originator Leicestershire County Archaeology Office
Project design originator Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd
Project director/manager Gary Taylor
Project supervisor Margaret Leman
Type of sponsor/funding body Developer

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists? No
Digital Archive recipient Leicestershire Museums Service
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Digital Contents "Stratigraphic","Survey"
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Project bibliography 1

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