



**Archaeological excavation at land
south and east of 62A and 64 Cosby Road
Littlethorpe, Leicestershire
February 2014**

Report No. 14/64

Author: Charlotte Walker

Illustrators: Amir Bassir and Charlotte Walker



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OASIS REPORT FORM

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|---------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|--|
| PROJECT DETAILS | | Oasis No: molanort1-174887 | |
| Project title | Archaeological excavation at land south and east of 62A and 64 Cosby Road, Littlethorpe, Leicestershire | | |
| Short description | In February 2014, archaeological mitigation works were carried out by MOLA, commissioned by CgMs Consulting, on land south and east of 62A and 64 Cosby Road, Littlethorpe, Leicestershire. The excavation identified three furrows of a former field system. The pit excavated during the earlier trial trench excavation was located, but there were no other remains, indicating that it was an isolated feature. | | |
| Project type | Mitigation | | |
| Previous work | DBA (George 2004); Geophysical survey (Hancock 2010); Trial trench evaluation (Thomas 2011) | | |
| Current land use | Pasture field and gardens | | |
| Future work | Unknown | | |
| Monument type and period | Post-medieval/modern | | |
| Significant finds | None | | |
| PROJECT LOCATION | | | |
| County | Leicestershire | | |
| Site address | 62A and 64 Cosby Road, Littlethorpe | | |
| Easting Northing | SP 544 966 | | |
| Area (sq m/ha) | 0.04ha | | |
| Height aOD | c 68m aOD | | |
| PROJECT CREATORS | | | |
| Organisation | MOLA | | |
| Project brief originator | Senior Planning Archaeologist, Leicestershire County Council | | |
| Project Design originator | CgMs Consulting | | |
| Director/Supervisor | Chris Jones (MOLA) | | |
| Project Manager | Adam Yates (MOLA) | | |
| Sponsor or funding body | Morris Homes (Midlands) | | |
| PROJECT DATE | | | |
| Start date | 17/2/2014 | | |
| End date | 19/2/2014 | | |
| ARCHIVES | Location (Accession no.) | Contents | |
| Physical | X.A42.2014 | 1 small box | |
| Paper | | Site records (1 archive box) | |
| Digital | | Client report PDF. Survey Data, Photographs | |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | | | |
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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION AT LAND SOUTH AND EAST OF 62A AND 64
COSBY ROAD, LITTLETHORPE, LEICESTERSHIRE
FEBRUARY 2014**

Abstract

In February 2014, archaeological mitigation works were carried out by MOLA, commissioned by CgMs Consulting, on land south and east of 62A and 64 Cosby Road, Littlethorpe, Leicestershire. The excavation identified three furrows of a former field system. The pit excavated during the earlier trial trench excavation was located, but there were no other remains, indicating that it was an isolated feature.

1 INTRODUCTION

MOLA was commissioned by CgMs Consulting, on behalf of their client Morris Homes (Midlands), to undertake archaeological mitigation works on land south and east of 62A and 64 Cosby Road, Littlethorpe, Leicestershire (NGR: SP 544 966, Fig 1). The work was undertaken as a planning condition to the development of housing on the site (Planning ref: 11/0009/1/OX). The archaeological potential of the site has previously been assessed through trial trench evaluation (Thomas 2011).

The scope of works was outlined and detailed in the Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by CgMs Consulting (Thornton 2014) which was approved by the Senior Planning Archaeologist for Leicestershire County Council (LCC). MOLA is an Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) Registered Organisation and all works were conducted in accordance with the procedural documents of English Heritage (EH 2006; 2008) and the appropriate standards and guidance for archaeological field evaluation (IfA 2008a-b).

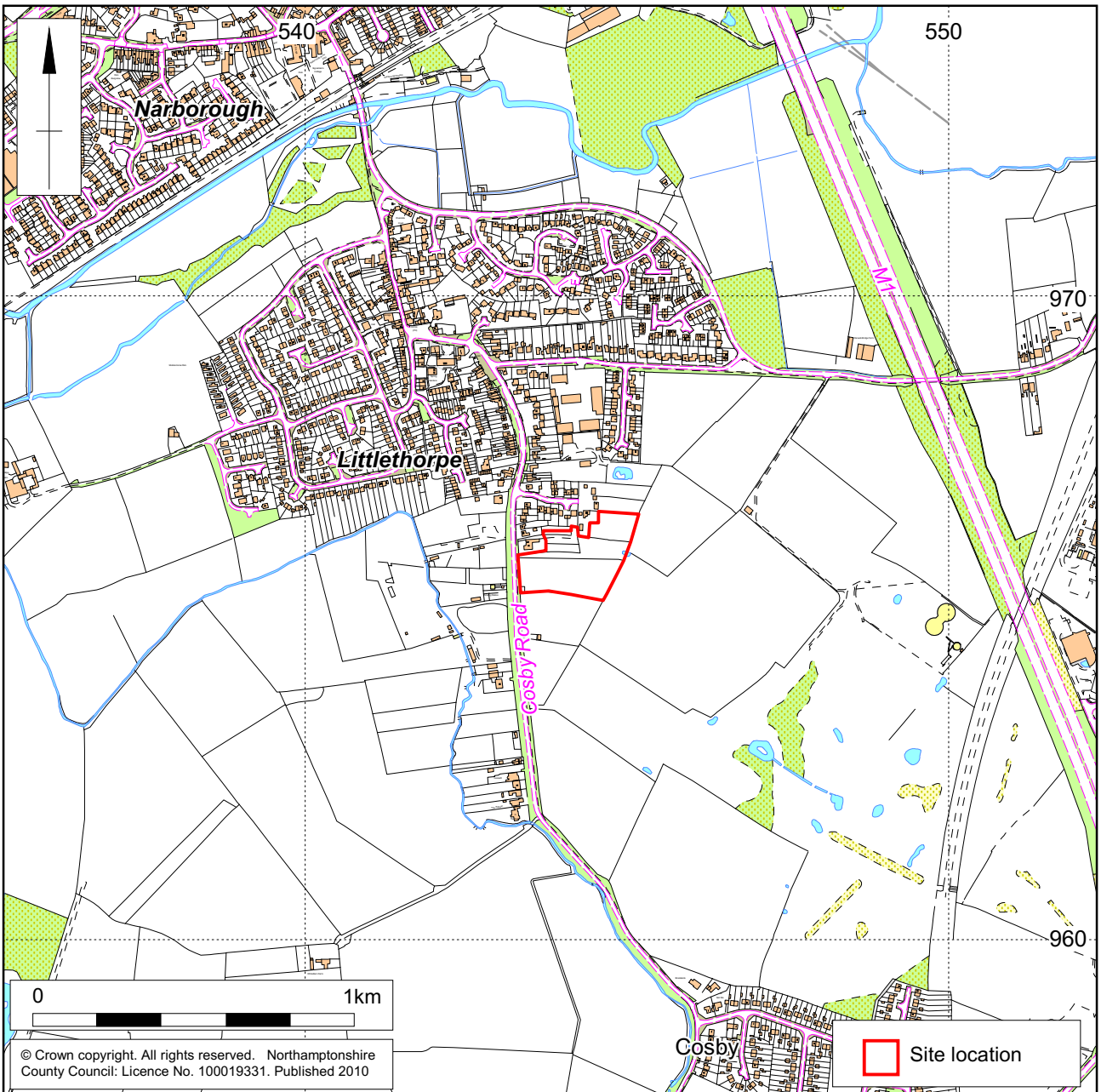
The scope of works was varied on site at the request of LCCs Senior Planning Archaeologist, in agreement with CgMs Consulting, to include an additional trial trench in an area not previously available for evaluation. The accession number for this project is X.A42.2014.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location and geology

The site is located on the southern side of Littlethorpe and is bounded by Cosby Road to the west, houses to the north and fields to the east and south. It comprises a pasture field and residential gardens amounting to c 1.6ha. The site lies on fairly flat ground, at around 68m aOD, with a slight fall to the east.

The bedrock geology of the site is part of the Mercia Mudstone Group. The surface geology of the site is recorded as Till to the east of the site and sand and gravel of the Wanlip Member to the west.



1:10,000

Site Location Fig 1

2.2 Historical and archaeological background

The archaeological background of the site was summarised in a desk-based assessment (George 2004). The archaeological potential of the site was subsequently evaluated through geophysical survey (Hancock 2010) and trial trench excavation (Thomas 2011).

The site is situated within an area of archaeological interest, with recorded finds and sites indicating Iron Age and medieval activity in the vicinity. The application area lies on the southern area of the historic core of Littlethorpe (Leicestershire Historic Environment Record (LHER) no: MLE9565). The initial assessment also highlighted the potential for prehistoric, Roman, Anglo-Saxon, medieval and post-medieval remains in and around the village.

The geophysical survey identified few archaeological features of potential significance. Discrete areas of increased magnetic response were thought to have a recent agricultural or modern intrusive origin, although it was noted that they could also be infilled pits of greater antiquity.

The trial trench evaluation, which involved the excavation of nine trenches across the site, found little evidence of archaeological activity apart from a single pit, which, though undated, contained fired clay, burnt stones, bone and two flint tools. The presence of the flint tools were taken to suggest that the pit may have been prehistoric. Since the cut of the pit was not burnt, it was suspected that the fill had been dumped from a nearby feature.

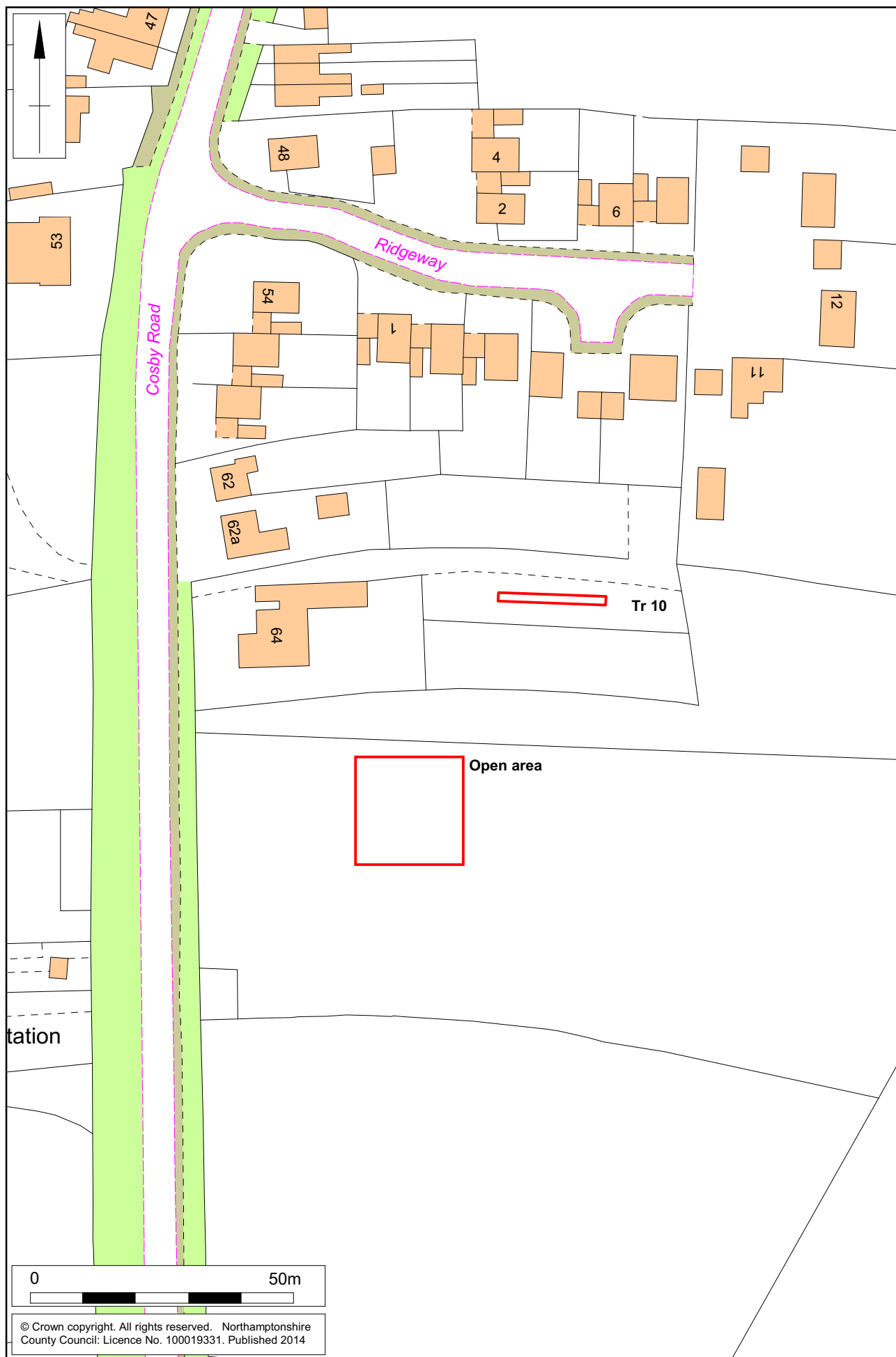
3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Objectives

The general aim of the investigation was to mitigate the potential impacts from the proposed development of the site through archaeological recording, analysis and dissemination. The specific objectives, as stated in the Written Scheme of Investigation, to achieve this aim were (Thornton 2014):

- To ascertain whether any associated archaeological features or monuments survive in the immediate vicinity of the pit identified in the trial trenching;
- To determine the date, character, function and significance of any such features;
- To confirm the interpretation of the pit revealed in Trench 4 and establish the date of construction and use, as far as is feasible;
- To produce a site archive for deposition with an appropriate museum and to provide information for accession to the Leicestershire HER;
- To undertake a programme of post-excavation analysis assessing the potential of the remains to contribute to wider research agendas and the scope for dissemination of the project results to a wider audience.

The excavation was carried out within the parameters suggested by the published research priorities set out for the East Midlands (EH 1997; Cooper 2006; Knight *et al* 2012).



Scale 1:1000 @ A4

Location of the open area and Trench 10 Fig 2

3.2 Methodology

An area measuring 20 x 20m (0.04ha) was identified for excavation, focussed on the pit [405] found within Trial Trench 4 (Thomas 2011). The excavation area was accurately measured in and marked out using Leica System 1200 Global Positioning System (GPS) survey equipment, operating to an accuracy of +/- 0.1m to Ordnance Survey National Grid (Fig 2). An additional trench, 20m long and 1.60m wide, was also excavated to the rear of 64 Cosby Road in an area not previously accessible for archaeological investigation.

A tracked mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.8m-wide ditching bucket was used to remove overburden to archaeological levels or the natural substrate, whichever was encountered first. Areas were cleaned sufficiently to enable the identification and definition of possible archaeological features. Deposits were examined by hand excavation to determine their nature. Recording followed standard MOLA procedures as described in the *Fieldwork Manual* (MOLA (Northampton) 2014). Deposits were described on *pro-forma* sheets to include measured and descriptive details of the context, its relationships and interpretation. A base plan of all deposits was produced using Leica System 1200 GPS operating to an accuracy of +/- 0.05m. A photographic record was compiled using 35mm black and white film, and colour digital images.

The recent heavy and prolonged period of rain had saturated the ground and water began to seep into the open area as soon as it was excavated (Fig 4).



The excavation of Trench 10, looking west Fig 3

4 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

The natural substrate was mid yellow-orange sandy gravels, which became increasingly more clayey to the north. The depth at which it was encountered was on average 0.50m below current ground level. A subsoil layer, 0.30m thick and comprising mid grey-orange sandy silt, overlay the natural. This was in turn overlaid by the topsoil, 0.20m thick, comprising friable grey-brown sandy silt.

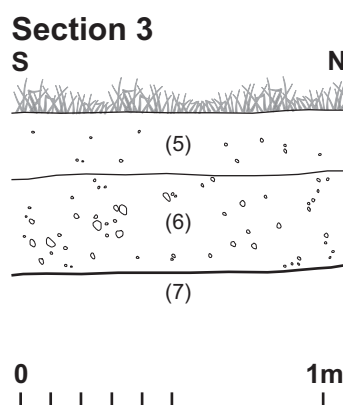
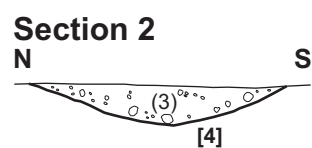
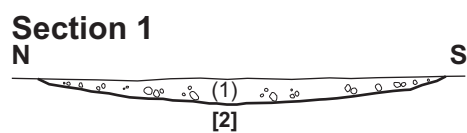
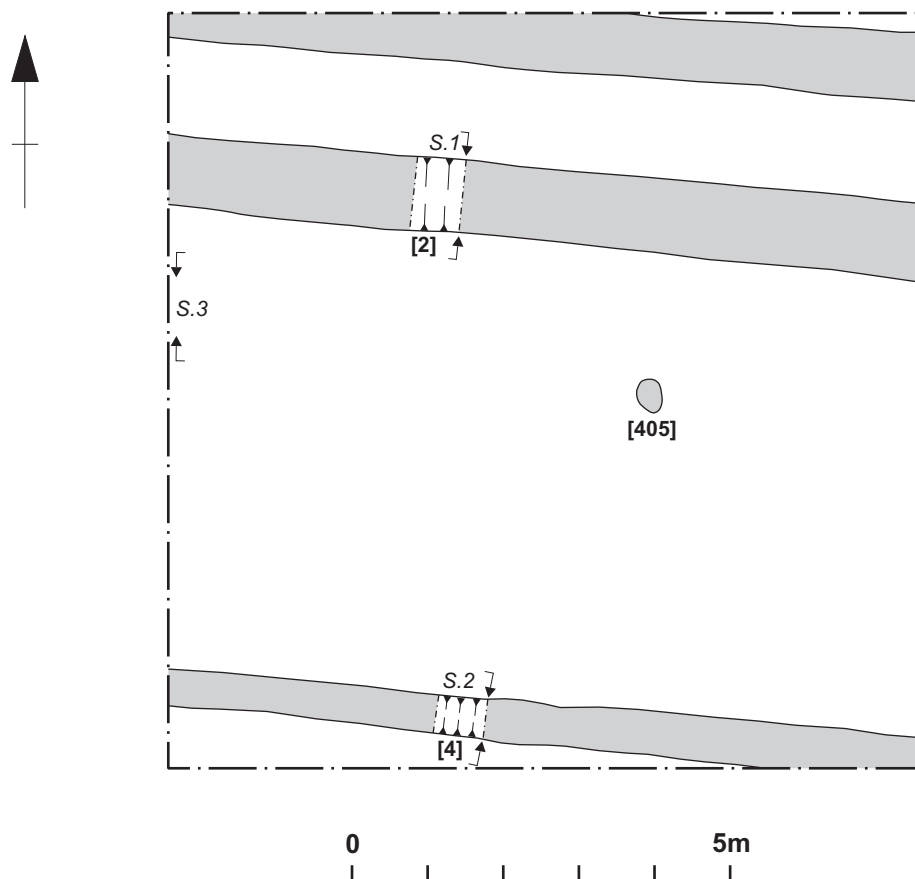
The location of trial trench 4 was evident aligned east to west across the centre of the area and the previously excavated pit was located (Fig 5).

There were three furrows aligned roughly east to west, positioned 2.5m and 12m apart from each other (Fig 5). They were between 1.0m and 2.0m wide and 0.10 and 0.13m deep with broad, concave profiles and similar fills comprising dark red-grey silty clay with frequent stones. No other features were features.

A further trench was excavated in the garden to the rear of 64 Cosby Road, since this area was not previously accessible (Figs 2 and 3). The trench was 20m long and 1.8m wide. The sequence of deposits was similar to that observed in the open area excavation to the south. No features or finds were observed.



The open area, looking south-west Fig 4



6 DISCUSSION

A controlled strip and record excavation at 62A and 64 Cosby Road was undertaken in order to investigate the area surrounding a probable prehistoric pit discovered during evaluation of the site.

No archaeological finds or features were observed in the open area, indicating that the pit was an isolated feature. The possible hearth from which the burnt material in the pit was thought to have been derived was not present.

The presence of three furrows aligned east to west across the open area show that it was cultivated as part of the open fields of Littlethorpe during the medieval/post-medieval period.

There were also no archaeological finds or features in the trench excavated in the garden to the rear of 64 Cosby Road.

It is considered that the results of the mitigation are reliable, despite the ground water present within the open area.

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