



**Archaeological trial trench evaluation
on land at Scaford Road
Melton Mowbray
Leicestershire
April 2016**

Report No. 16/78

Author: Chris Jones

Illustrator: Olly Dindol



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on land at Salford Road
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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		OASIS molanort1- 250309	
Project title	Archaeological trial trench evaluation on land at Scalford Road, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire, April 2016		
Short description	MOLA Northampton was commissioned by CgMs Consulting to carry out an archaeological trial trench evaluation on land at Scalford Road, Melton Mowbray Leicestershire prior to the proposed development of the site. Nine trenches were excavated. No archaeological features were encountered. Evidence for medieval cultivation in the form of remnant furrows of ridge and furrow cultivation was present across the site.		
Project type	Trial trench evaluation		
Previous work	Geophysical survey		
Current land use	Arable		
Future work	None		
Monument type and period	None		
Significant finds	None		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County	Leicestershire		
Site address	Scalford Road, Melton Mowbray		
Easting Northing	SK 752 211		
Area (sq m/ha)	c 2.2 ha		
Height aOD	c 112m aOD to c.107m aOD		
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation	MOLA Northampton		
Project brief originator	CgMs Consulting		
Project Design originator	MOLA Northampton		
Director/Supervisor	Adam Reid		
Project Managers	Ant Maull (MOLA Northampton)		
Sponsor or funding body	CgMs Consulting		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date	27/04/2016		
End date	27/04/2016		
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Contents	
Physical	X.A58.2016	None	
Paper		Site records (1 archive box)	
Digital		Client report PDF. Survey Data, Photographs	
BIBLIOGRAPHY			
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Archaeological trial trench evaluation on land at Scalford Road Melton Mowbray Leicestershire April 2016

Abstract

MOLA Northampton was commissioned by CgMs Consulting to carry out an archaeological trial trench evaluation on land at Scalford Road, Melton Mowbray Leicestershire prior to the proposed development of the site. Nine trenches were excavated. No archaeological features were encountered. Evidence for medieval cultivation in the form of remnant furrows of ridge and furrow cultivation was present across the site.

1 INTRODUCTION

MOLA Northampton has been commissioned by CgMs Consulting to conduct a programme of archaeological trial trench evaluation on land off Scalford Road, Melton Mowbray (NGR: SK752 211, Fig 1), in advance of proposed residential development (Planning Ref: 15/00178/FUL). Approval had been received for the construction of 77 residential units and associated infrastructure works. After consultation with the Planning Archaeologist for Leicestershire County Council, a programme of trial trench evaluation was proposed to determine the archaeological potential of the site.

2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

In order to examine the archaeological resource within the proposed development area the objectives of the archaeological work were to establish:

- the date, nature, significance and extent of activity or occupation on the site;
- the relationship of any remains found to the surrounding contemporary landscapes;
- the potential for the recovery of artefacts to assist in the development of type series within the region;
- the potential for palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions;
- the impact of the proposed works upon any surviving archaeological remains, and to;
- inform any future excavation and/or preservation *in-situ* strategy.



Scale 1:25,000

Site Location Fig 1

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 Location, topography and geology

The development area lies on the northern side of Melton Mowbray on an east facing slope overlooking Scalford Brook. The site is bounded to the west by Scalford Road, by the modern extent of Melton Mowbray and fields to the south and open fields to the east and north. The total site area encompasses c.2.2ha including 0.7ha of ground considered unsuitable for archaeological survey and excavation owing to standing buildings and roads. The area of trial trenching lies immediately west of Scalford Road Lodge and comprises c.1.5ha of grassland (Figs 1 and 2).

The land falls from west to east, from c.112m aOD to c.107m aOD. The underlying bedrock geology comprises Charmouth Mudstone Formation overlain by Oadby Member diamicton glacial tills (Slater 2014).

3.2 Historical and archaeological background

An archaeological desk-based assessment was carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) in 2010 (Hunt 2010). At the time of the production of the DBA there were no known heritage assets within the proposed development area. The following historical and archaeological background is summarised from that study.

A polished stone axe head was discovered during excavation close to Melton Country Park.

Prehistoric and Roman settlement evidence was recorded during excavations by Leicestershire Archaeological Unit in 1989 at Melton Country Park, along the Scalford Brook. The excavations lie 100m to the south-east of the site. Finds included a triple bank and ditch earthwork dated to the Bronze Age; a ditch, postholes and pits dated to the Iron Age, animal remains and pottery (Beamish 1990). Continuity of the settlement into the Roman period was suggested by finds of occupation debris and remains dating from the late 2nd to early 4th century AD. This includes remains of timber structures surrounded by an enclosure ditch, as well as pits and postholes. Finds included a knife, a coin and a brooch, and two burials dated to the late Roman period.

Other finds in the area of Iron Age-Roman date include a late Iron Age (or early Roman) quern. A Roman furniture knob and a bow brooch have been identified by metal detecting in the Country Park area.

Medieval finds in the area mainly comprise spot finds. A small silver buckle was found 600m west of the site, south-east of Sysonby Lodge. A medieval lead cloth seal was found south of Framland Hospital, c.250m south of the development site. Aerial photographs indicate that ridge and furrow earthworks of medieval cultivation are still extant on the site, on sinuous east-west alignment.

Previous archaeological works

A desk-based assessment was carried out for John Ferneley School, across Scalford Road, in advance of expansion (Hunt 2007). The results of subsequent trial trenching evaluation are not known.

Forty-four trial trenches were excavated on land at Sysonby Farm and off Scalford Road by the University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) in 2014. The results of the work were largely negative, but two trenches contained Iron Age

occupation features consisting of two linear features and a small pit, along with a scatter of worked flint dating to the Neolithic-Bronze Age (Thomas 2014).

A geophysical survey was undertaken on the area of the development site in 2014 by Stratascan (Slater 2014). This survey comprised a detailed gradiometric survey. No features of probable archaeological origin have been identified. Evidence of ridge and furrow cultivation indicates that the site has an agricultural history. The remaining features included areas of natural magnetic variation, a former pond, scattered magnetic debris, and magnetic disturbance from nearby ferrous objects.

In 2014, University of Leicester Archaeological Services undertook trial trench evaluation in the field immediately to the south of the current area of interest (Hunt 2014). The works consisted of 13 trenches placed across the western field, and three smaller trenches in the field to the east. No archaeological features were identified, with the exception of ridge and furrow earthworks, field drains and an area of disturbance close to a field entrance. This supported the results of a previous geophysical survey of the site.

4 EXCAVATION METHODOLOGY

Only the area under grass, comprising 1.5ha of the c.2.2ha site, was trenched as the remainder of the site comprises standing buildings. The trenches were positioned to target the anomalies and potential 'blank areas' identified through the geophysical survey on the eastern edge of the site (Slater 2014). The excavation comprised nine trenches, each 30m long by 1.8m wide (Fig 2). Trench 1 was moved 10m to the east to avoid a water pipe, trenches 3, 4 and 7 were repositioned to the north because the original position had been stripped of soils and was being used as a haul road.

The trenches were positioned using Leica Viva Global Positioning System (GPS) survey equipment using SMARTNET real-time corrections, operating to a 3D tolerance of $\pm 0.05\text{m}$ to Ordnance Survey National Grid and Datum.

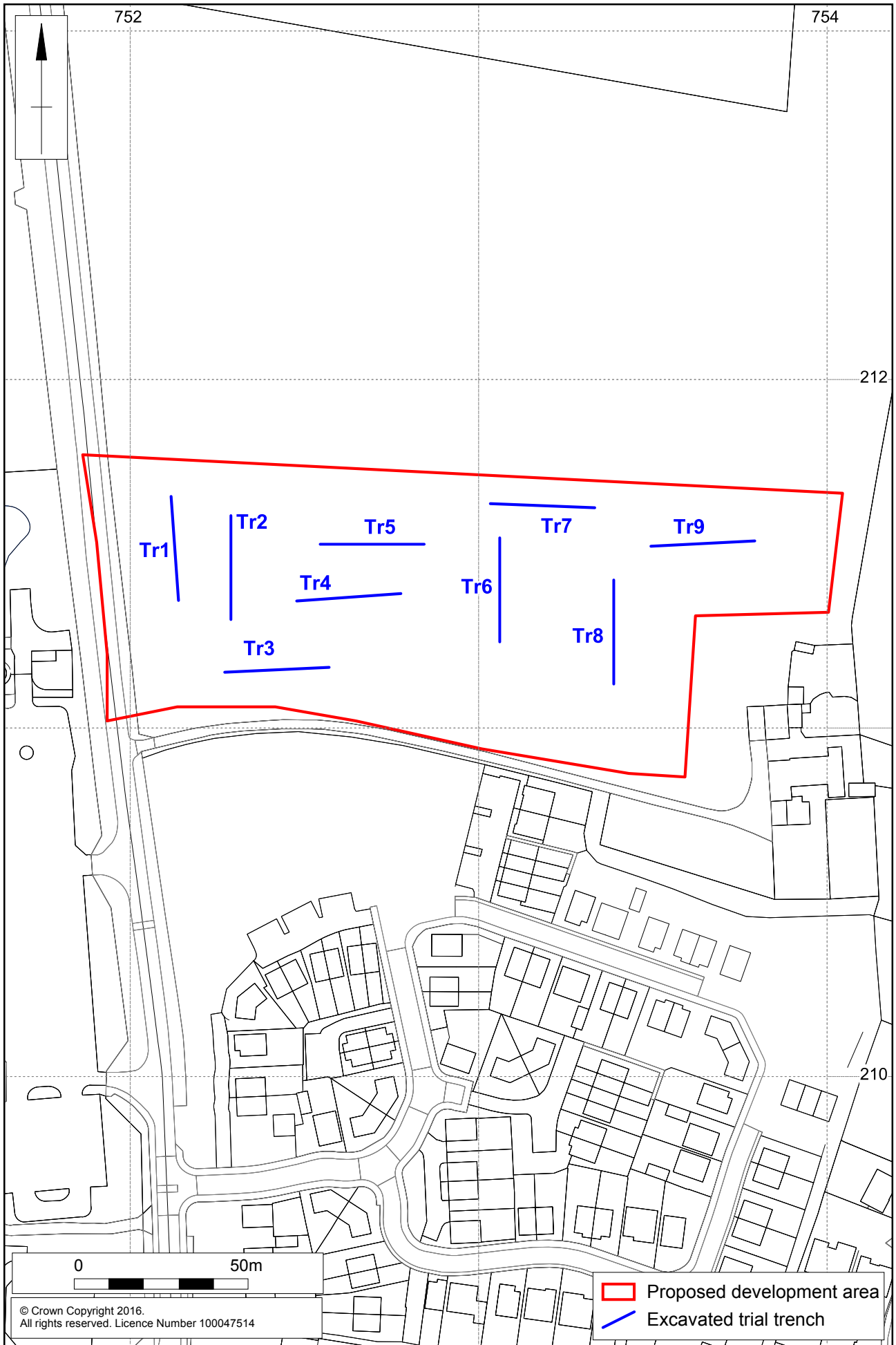
Machine excavation was undertaken under the direction of a suitably experienced archaeologist. Trenches were excavated by a tracked 360⁰ excavator using a toothless bucket to reveal archaeological remains or, where these were absent, undisturbed natural horizons. Topsoil and subsoil were stacked separately either side of each trench. Excavation did not proceed beyond safe working depths (approx. 1.2m). Following completion of archaeological works the trenches were backfilled with the material extracted and lightly compacted by machine. Material was replaced in the order extracted (i.e. subsoil first followed by topsoil).

All archaeological deposits encountered during the course of the evaluation were fully recorded. Recording followed standard fieldwork procedures (MOLA 2014). All archaeological features were given a separate context number. Deposits were described on pro-forma context sheets to include details of the context, its relationships and interpretation. No finds were recovered.

5 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

The natural horizon across the site generally comprised light orange-brown silt clay mixed with yellow clay (Figs 3-6). This was overlain by subsoil which was mid- brown grey silt clay between 0.22m and 0.02m thick. The topsoil was dark grey brown sandy clay between 0.28m and 0.12m thick. Full context information is included in Appendix 1.

No archaeological features, other than remnant furrows of ridge and furrow cultivation, were recorded in any of the nine trenches. The furrows were aligned north-south and east-west, and were c.2m wide and spaced 10m apart.



Scale 1:1,500

Excavated trial trench locations Fig 2

6 DISCUSSION

The trenching revealed no significant archaeological features and generally confirmed the results of the geophysical survey, with only furrows of a former field system identified in excavated trenches.

The lack of finds identified by the evaluation suggests that this area has primarily remained uninhabited and only used for agricultural purposes.

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May 2016



Trench 1, looking south

Fig 3



Trench 3, looking west

Fig 4



Trench 4, looking west

Fig 5



Trench 6, looking south

Fig 6

APPENDIX: CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench No	Length, width & alignment			
1	N-S 30m x 1.80m			
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
101	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown sandy clay	0.23m thick	-
102	Subsoil	Mid brown-grey silt clay	0.21m thick	-
103	Natural	Light orange-brown silt clay	-	

Trench No	Length, width & alignment			
2	N-S 30m x 1.80m			
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
201	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown sandy clay	0.24m thick	-
202	Subsoil	Mid brown-grey silt clay	0.18m thick	-
203	Natural	Light orange-brown silt clay	-	

Trench No	Length, width & alignment			
3	E-W 30m x 1.80m			
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
301	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown sandy clay	0.19m thick	-
302	Subsoil	Mid brown-grey silt clay	0.02m thick	-
303	Natural	Light orange-brown silt clay	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment			
4	E-W 30m x 1.80m			
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
401	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown sandy clay	0.20m thick	-
402	Subsoil	Mid brown-grey silt clay	0.12m thick	-
403	Natural	Light orange-brown silt clay	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment			
5	E-W 30m x 1.80m			
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
501	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown sandy clay	0.19m thick	-
502	Subsoil	Mid brown-grey silt clay	0.10m thick	-
503	Natural	Light orange-brown silt clay	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment			
6	N-S 30m x 1.80m			
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
601	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown sandy clay	0.20m thick	-
602	Subsoil	Mid brown-grey silt clay	0.05m thick	-
603	Natural	Light orange-brown silt clay	-	-
604	Fill of 606	Dark brown-grey clay	0.20m thick 0.60m wide	-
605	Fill of 606	Mid grey silt clay	0.30m thick 1.20m wide	-
606	Furrow	E-W furrow, U-shaped profile	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment			
7	E-W 30m x 1.80m			
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
701	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown sandy clay	0.25m thick	-
702	Subsoil	Mid brown-grey silt clay	0.17m thick	-
703	Natural	Light orange-brown silt clay	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment			
8	N-S 30m x 1.80m			
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
801	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown sandy clay	0.15m thick	-
802	Subsoil	Mid brown-grey silt clay	0.12m thick	-
803	Natural	Light orange-brown silt clay	-	-
804	Fill of 805	Mid brown-grey silt clay	0.40m thick 1.30m wide	-
805	Furrow	E-W furrow, U-shaped profile	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment			
9	E-W 30m x 1.80m			
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
901	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown sandy clay	0.28m thick	-
902	Subsoil	Mid brown-grey silt clay	0.07m thick	-
903	Natural	Light orange-brown silt clay	-	



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