



**Archaeological trial trench evaluation
and observation of groundworks on
land at Ibstock Road, Ravenstone**

Leicestershire

July 2016

Report No. 16/135

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Illustrator: Olly Dindol



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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		Oasis No. molanort1-259419	
Project title	Archaeological trial trench evaluation and observation of groundworks on land at Ibstock Road, Ravenstone, Leicestershire July 2016		
Short description	MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) was commissioned to carry out an evaluation and observation of groundworks on land at Ibstock Road, Ravenstone, Leicestershire. Two undated shallow ditches were the only archaeological features present.		
Project type	Trial trench evaluation and watching brief		
Site Status	None		
Previous work	Field walking, geophysical survey and trial trenching		
Current land use	Development site		
Future work	no		
Monument type and period	Ditches, Modern		
Significant finds	Tile, Modern		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County	Leicestershire		
Site address	Ibstock Road, Ravenstone		
Post code	-		
OS co-ordinates	NGR SK 405 132		
Area (sq m/ha)	1ha		
Height aOD	c.140-146m aOD		
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation	MOLA Northampton		
Project brief originator	Richard Clark, Leicestershire County Council		
Project Design originator	CgMs Consulting		
Director/Supervisor	Gemma Hewitt		
Project Managers	Mo Muldowney MOLA, Myk Flitcroft CgMs Consulting		
Sponsor or funding body	Davidsons Group		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date	20/7/2016		
End date	26/7/2016		
ARCHIVES	Location	Contents	
Physical	Leicester Museums X.A89. 2016	N/A	
Paper		Site records	
Digital		Survey data, report, photographs	
BIBLIOGRAPHY	Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (MOLA report)		
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Abstract

MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) was commissioned to carry out an evaluation and observation of groundworks on land at Ibstock Road, Ravenstone, Leicestershire. Two undated shallow ditches were the only archaeological features present.

1 INTRODUCTION

MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) was commissioned by CgMs Consulting, on behalf of Davidsons Group, to carry out archaeological trial trenching and a watching brief on land at Ibstock Road, Ravenstone (NGR SK 405 132, Fig 1).

The Leicestershire County Council's Principal Planning Archaeologist has advised that a programme of archaeological evaluation should be undertaken to determine the nature and extent of any archaeological remains within the development area. The requirements were outlined in a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by CgMs Consulting (Flitcroft 2016).

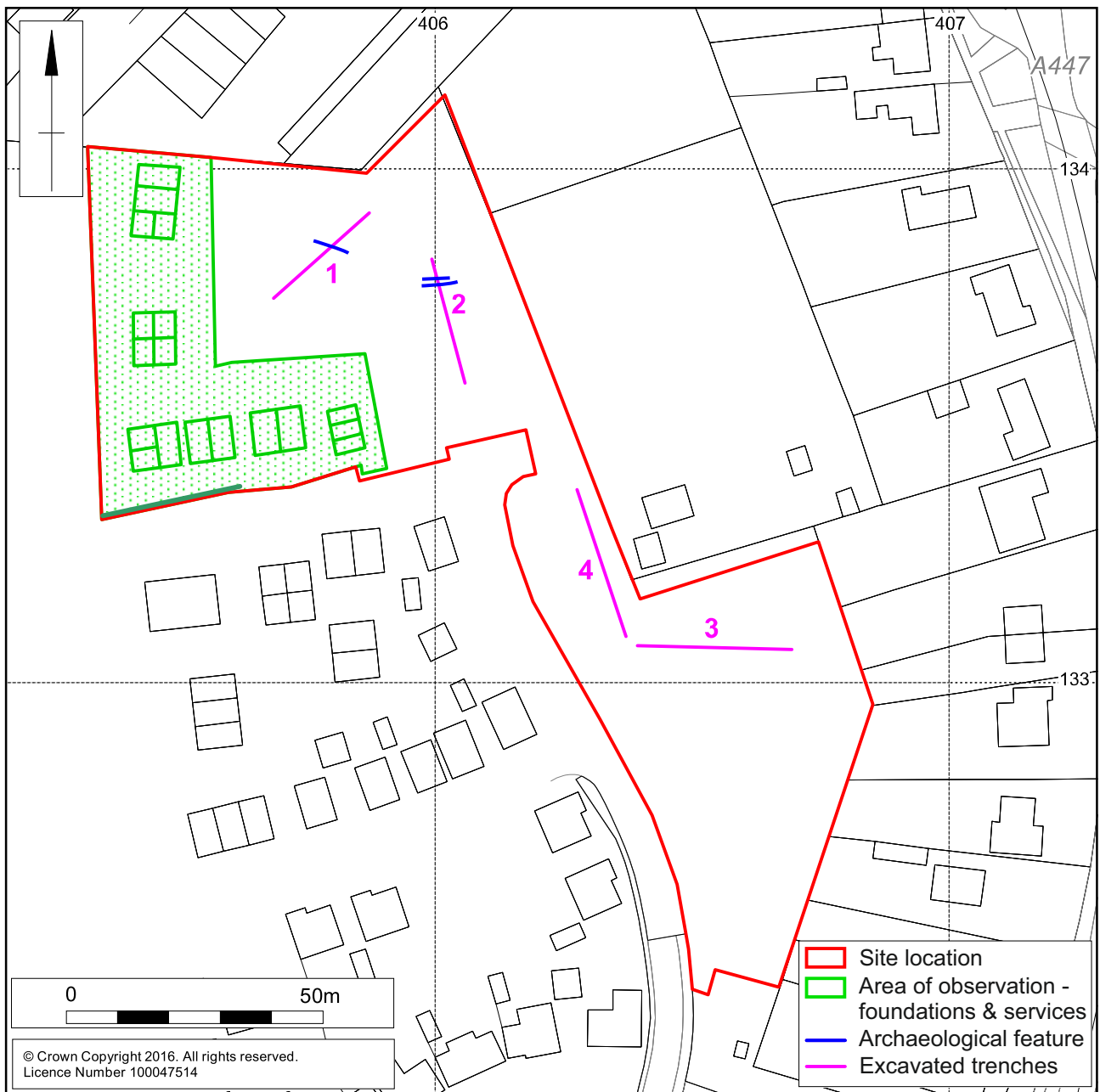
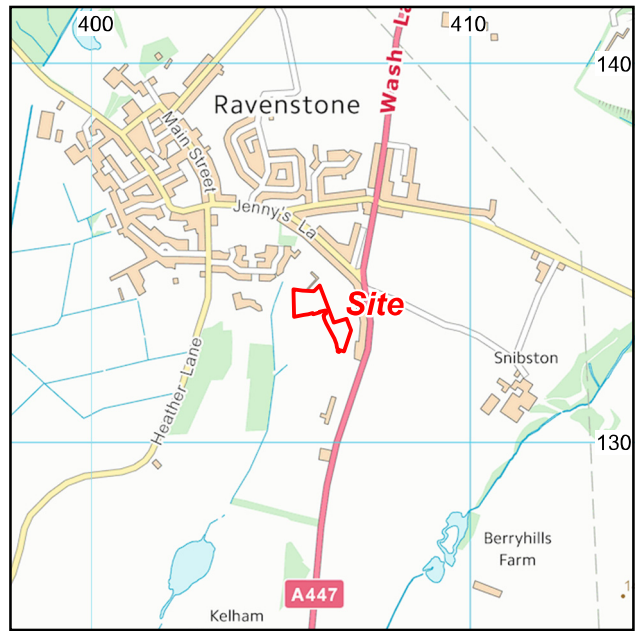
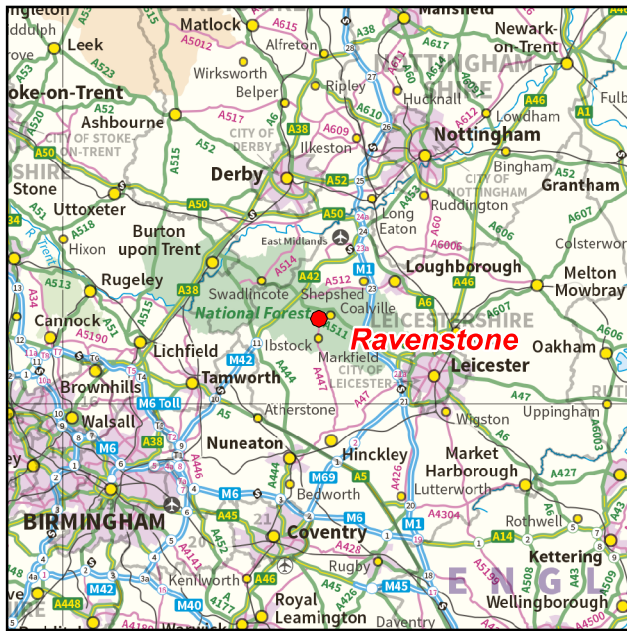
The archaeological works were undertaken in order to satisfy a condition placed on planning consent for Phase 2 of residential development on the site.

2 TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

The development area comprises a 1ha parcel of land to the south of the village of Ravenstone (Fig 1). The site is bounded by gardens and open space on three sides and lies to the north-east of the consented development site. The north-eastern part of the site is currently under development.

The site slopes very slightly from east to west, falling from a height of 146m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) to 140m aOD to the west.

The underlying geology is mapped as Taporley siltstone, overlain by superficial deposits of glaciofluvial sand and gravel (BGS 2016).



Scale 1:1250

Site location, excavated trenches and area of observation Fig 1

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the work was to determine and understand the nature, function and character of the archaeological site in its cultural and environmental setting. The aims of the investigation were to:

- Establish the date, nature and extent of the activity or occupation on the development site;
- Recover artefacts to assist in the development of type series within the region;
- Recover palaeo-environmental remains to determine past local environmental conditions;
- Produce a report which will present the results of the evaluation in sufficient detail to inform a decision to be made concerning the site's archaeological potential;
- To inform formulation of a further measures to mitigate impacts of the proposed development on surviving archaeological remains; and
- To produce a site archive for deposition with an appropriate museum and to provide information for accession to the Leicestershire HER.

The programme of archaeological investigation was conducted within the general research parameters and objectives defined by '*East Midlands Heritage: A research Agenda and Strategy for the Historic Environment* (Knight, Vyner and Allen 2012) and the earlier archaeological resource assessment and research agenda for the region *The Archaeology of the East Midlands* by Cooper (2006).

Where applicable, reference has been made to the national framework for research, as set out by English Heritage (now Historic England) (EH 1997).

4 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The following background information has been taken from the WSI produced by CgMs Consulting (Flitcroft 2016).

The archaeological potential for the current development site has been previously considered through a desk-based assessment, geophysical survey and field walking in 2012 (Harvey 2012; Whittingham 2012), as well as trial trenching in 2015 within Phase 1 of the consented development (WA 2015).

The desk-based assessment had reviewed the archaeological information for the site and surrounding area. A number of sites ranging from the Mesolithic to the medieval period were identified in the Historic Environment Record (HER) for Leicestershire and Rutland, and are located in close proximity to the site.

Fieldwalking close to the site has located a number of prehistoric flint scatters. Two Mesolithic scatters have been identified 500-700m to the south of the site (MLE4830 and MLE4826). Aerial photographs to the north of the village have recorded a pit alignment, probably dating to the early Iron Age (MLE17259). There is little evidence of Iron Age settlements within the vicinity and only a few sherds of Iron Age pottery have been recovered during fieldwalking, 300m to the north-east of the site, along with a larger collection of Roman pottery (MLE9455). More Roman pottery was recorded c.250m south-east of the site at land east of Melbourne Road (MLE9456) and 100m east of the site (MLE81885, MLE19814).

The medieval village core of Ravenstone (MLE4831) lies 300m to the north-west of the site, and the development area is thought to have been open agricultural land throughout the medieval and post-medieval periods.

A geophysical survey was undertaken at the site during 2012 (Whittingham 2012). No anomalies of archaeological interest were identified in the survey. The majority of anomalies that were identified were interpreted as modern material/features, recent ploughing or geological /pedological variations.

Trial trenching was undertaken to the south and west of the current development site in 2015 (WA 2015) and consisted of eleven trenches. A small number of ditches and gullies were recorded within the centre of the site which were believed to have been boundary or drainage ditches. No dating evidence had been recovered from any of the features, so the date is unknown. However remains to the south of the site are known to be of Iron Age and Romano-British date, and it is likely that the ditches and pits represent activity of a similar date.

5 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

5.1 Trial trenching

Four trial trenches were excavated within the development area. Trenches 1 and 2 were 25m long by 1.8m wide; Trenches 3 and 4 were 30m long by 1.8m wide (Fig 1).

All the topsoil and most of the subsoil had been removed from the area before MOLA carried out work on site. The ground had been further disturbed by vehicle movements. The remaining subsoil was removed by mechanical excavator, fitted with a toothless bucket, to reveal a clear natural substrate into which archaeological remains had been cut. The machining of the trenches was supervised by a suitably qualified archaeologist.

The trenches were surveyed using a differential GPS (Leica Viva) operating to an accuracy of +/- 0.05m and features were drawn in plan at scale 1:50 and in section at 1:20.

The excavation and recording were carried out in accordance with MOLA guidelines and all records were created using MOLA Northampton *pro-forma* sheets (MOLA 2014). Photographs were taken of all trenches and all relevant deposits on 35mm monochrome print film and high resolution digital images. Work was carried out in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standards and guidance: archaeological field evaluation* (CIfA 2014).

Levels in metres above Ordnance Datum were established for all trenches and excavated features using a dumpy level and related to temporary benchmarks established using Leica Viva Global Positioning System (GPS). Where present, artefacts were recovered from individual contexts and stored and packed according to type. All excavated areas and spoil heaps were scanned with a metal detector to ensure maximum finds retrieval.

All records and materials will be compiled in a structured archive in accordance with the guidelines of Appendix 3 in the English Heritage procedural document, *Management of Archaeological Projects 2* (EH 1991).

5.2 Monitoring of groundworks (Plots 84-95)

Within the north-western part of the development site, at Development Plots 84-95 (shown in Fig 2), the archaeological monitoring was undertaken during a series of site visits by a suitably qualified and experienced archaeologist. The work comprised:

- archaeological monitoring of development excavations for new foundations, services, etc;
- recording of any exposed archaeological features in plan; and
- excavation of features to determine their date and character.

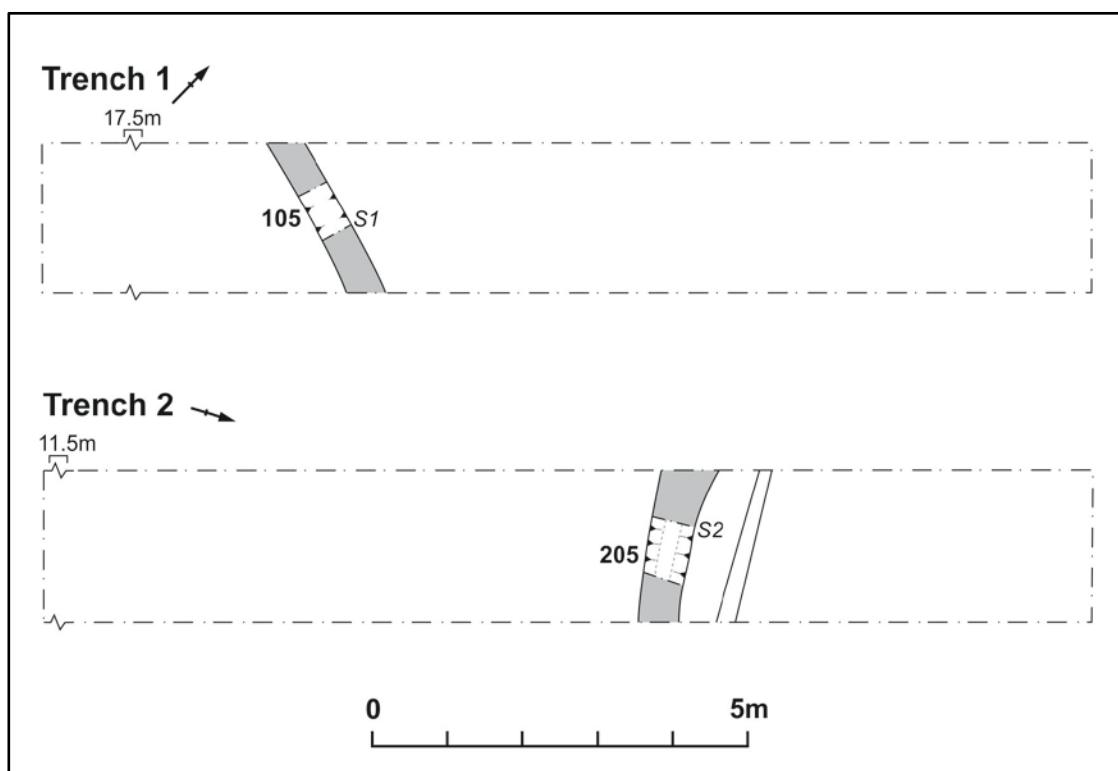
The archaeological monitoring did not require full-time attendance by the archaeologist, however liaison with the developer was maintained to ensure that all excavations were monitored by the archaeologist before foundations and service trenches were backfilled.

Adequate facilities were provided by the developer for archaeological staff to observe groundwork operations in progress and to facilitate the recording of any archaeological features.

Recording of archaeological features was undertaken using the same methodology as the trial trenching.

6 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

The natural horizon across the majority of the site comprised orange sand and gravels. Archaeological features were only observed within the northern half of the area. All recorded features cut the natural horizon.



Scale 1:100

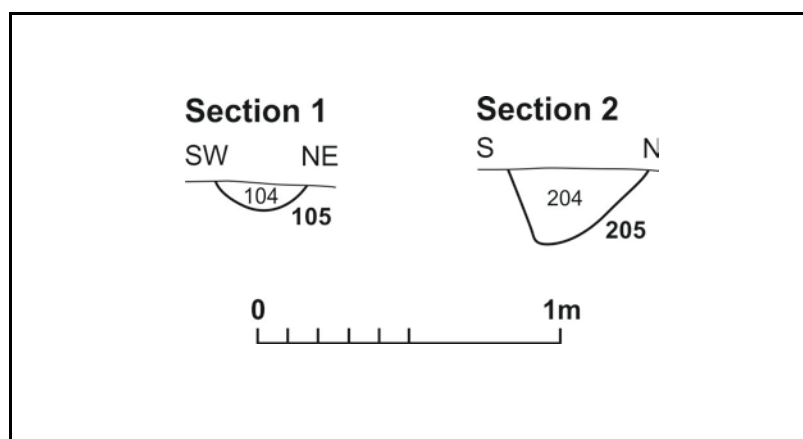
Trenches 1 and 2, plan of features Fig 2

6.1 Trench 1

Trench 1 was aligned north-east by south-west and lay to the north of the development area (Fig 1). One ditch was identified. Ditch [105] was 0.30m wide and 0.10m deep. It had shallow, gently-sloping sides with a concave base (Figs 2, 3 and 4, section 1). It was filled with loose, mid-orange-brown silty sand (104). The ditch continued to the east and can be seen within the northern end of Trench 2.



Trench 1 ditch [105], looking north-west Fig 3



Scale 1:25 Trenches 1 and 2, Sections 1 and 2 Fig 4

6.2 Trench 2

Trench 2 was aligned north to south and lay at the north-eastern side of the development area (Figs 1 and 2). Two small ditches were recorded in the northern end of the trench, one of which was a continuation of [105] from Trench 1. In Trench 2, this ditch was 0.23m wide and was aligned east-west. It was not excavated.

Ditch [205] was aligned north-west to south-east (Figs 4, section 2, and 5). It was up to 0.50m wide and 0.25m deep, with a V-shaped profile and slightly rounded base. The fill (204) was light grey-brown, silty sand and contained one sherd of modern roof tile.



Trench 2, ditch [205], looking west Fig 5

6.3 Trench 3 and 4

Both trenches were relocated due to due house plots already being set out within the southern end of the site.

Trench 3 was aligned east-west and was at the south-eastern side of the site. The trench had been slightly realigned from the original proposed location due to on-site constraints. No features were recorded within the trench.

Trench 4 was also repositioned due to on-site constraints. The trench was moved to a space within the middle of the development area between Trenches 2 and 3. It was aligned north-south. No features of archaeological interest were encountered.

6.4 Observation of groundworks (plots 84-95)

The observation area comprised an L-shaped parcel of land c.72m long by c.58m wide, located in the north-west of the site (Figs 1, 6). The topsoil and most of the subsoil had been stripped previously from the observation area. One service trench and 35 foundation trenches within 12 house plots were observed during a five day period in generally good weather. The house plot foundation trenches were excavated using a 360° excavator fitted with a 0.6m wide bladed bucket. The service trench was excavated using a 360° excavator fitted with a 0.4m wide bladed bucket. The groundwork areas were cleaned sufficiently enough to enable identification and definition of any archaeological features that might be present.

The foundation trenches were excavated to a minimum of 0.4m and maximum depth of 1.4m (Fig 7). Throughout the area of observation, the natural substrate occurred at a depth of c.0.1m below the stripped surface and consisted of orange-brown sand with frequent bands of gravel and large rounded cobbles (003). In places, a natural substrate of mid-brown sand with rare rounded flint pebbles (004) was observed.

Overlying the natural substrate in a few locations was layer of subsoil with a depth varying between 0.01m and 0.1m. The subsoil (002) consisted of light-brown sand with frequent small to medium sized rounded pebbles. The topsoil (001) had been removed from the observation area, but was extant within the baulk along the northern side of the observation area. A small vestige of topsoil survived in the north-eastern corner of the northernmost plot (95) (Fig 8). Here, the topsoil was shown to be light grey-brown silty sand to a depth of c.0.3m.



The area of archaeological observation, looking north Fig 6



Plots 91-92, showing stepped foundations, looking north-east Fig 7



Foundation trench, Plot 95 section, looking north Fig 8



Service trench, looking east Fig 9

No archaeological features were observed within the foundation trenches.

A service trench for the installation of an electricity cable was excavated along part of the southern side of the observation area (Fig 1 and 9). The natural substrate was identical to that noted in the adjacent house plots (87-90). No archaeological features were noted within the service trench.

7 CONCLUSION

Two undated ditches were recorded during the trenching. Both were heavily truncated and disturbed by recent building workings, leaving no more than 0.25m depth surviving. One sherd of modern roof tile was recovered from fill (204), but its abraded state indicates it may be residual or intrusive. These features reflect those recorded in the trial trenches from the south of the site (WA 2015). The previous trial trenching in the north-west of the site revealed no archaeological features and similarly no evidence of surviving archaeology was revealed within the area of observation.

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MOLA

8 August 2016, revised 10th August

APPENDIX 1: TRENCHING CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench No	Length, width & alignment			
1	SW-NE 25mx2m			
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
101	Topsoil*	Mid-light grey brown silty sand	-	-
102	Subsoil*	Mid-light grey brown silty sand, with 5% gravels	-	-
103	Natural	Light brown-red sand with gravel bands and 30% cobbles	-	-
104	Fill of [105]	Loose, mid-orange-brown, silty sand with 1% small rounded pebbles	W:0.30m D:0.10m	
105	Ditch	Shallow, gently sloping side with a concave base	W:0.30 D:0.10m	-



Trench 1 overview Fig 10

Ibstock Road, Ravenstone

Trench No	Length, width & alignment			
2	N-S 25mx2m			
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
201	Topsoil*	Mid-light grey brown silty sand	-	-
202	Subsoil*	Mid-light grey brown silty sand, with 5% gravels	-	-
203	Natural	Light brown-red sand with gravel bands and 30% cobbles	-	-
204	Fill of [105]	Firm, light grey-brown silty sand with 5% pebbles and 1% charcoal	W:0.50m D:0.25m	tile
205	Ditch	V-shaped with a slightly rounded base	W:0.50m D:0.25m	-



Trench 2 overview Fig 11

Ibstock Road, Ravenstone

Trench No	Length, width & alignment			
3	NW-SE 30mx2m			
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
301	Topsoil*	Mid-light grey brown silty sand	-	-
302	Subsoil*	Mid-light grey brown silty sand, with 5% gravels	-	-
303	Natural	Light brown-red sand with gravel bands and 30% cobbles	-	-



Trench 3 overview Fig 12

Ibstock Road, Ravenstone

Trench No	Length, width & alignment			
4	W-S 50mx2m			
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type Feature & type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/ Samples</i>
401	Topsoil*	Mid-light grey brown silty sand	-	-
402	Subsoil*	Mid-light grey brown silty sand, with 5% gravels	-	-
403	Natural	Light brown-red sand with gravel bands and 30% cobbles	-	-



Trench 4 overview Fig 13

APPENDIX 2: OBSERVATION AREA CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench No	Length, width & alignment		Surface height	height of natural
Obs Area	N-S 72mx58m			
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type Feature & type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/ Samples</i>
001	Topsoil*	Light grey brown silty sand	c. 0.10-0.30m deep	-
002	Subsoil	Yellow-brown silty sand, with small pebbles	c. 0.01-0.10m deep	-
003	Natural	Orange-brown sand with gravel bands and 30% cobbles	At least 1m deep	-
004	Natural	Orange-brown sand with occasional small pebbles	-	-

KEY * removed prior to trenching.



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