

Lower Grounds

Main Street, Middle Tysoe, Warwickshire

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Archaeological evaluation

NGR: SP 34182 44570

Site code: LGT16

OASIS ID: 110archa1-259014

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SUMMARY

An archaeological evaluation was carried out during July 2016 at Lower Grounds, main Street, Middle Tysoe, Warks.238 High Street, Welford on Avon, Warks. In advance of a proposal for the erection of five detached dwellings on the site.

The results showed that there is unlikely to be significant archaeological deposits surviving within the site. A sequence of three stratified deposits were recorded throughout the trenches comprising a natural Lias clay overlain by a relict subsoil. This was interpreted as associated with former medieval or post-medieval cultivation as evidence by the existing agricultural earthworks (ridge and furrow). This is supported by an assessment (Cook, 2016b) of land adjacent to the north side of Lower Grounds which was erected in 1965. The analysis of the historic mapping, aerial photographic evidence and the results of previous archaeological work showed the possible limit an earlier Roman agricultural landscape to the south of Lower Grounds. This appears to be defined by an east-west field boundary ditch which may be connected with an earlier settlement at Church Farm to the south.

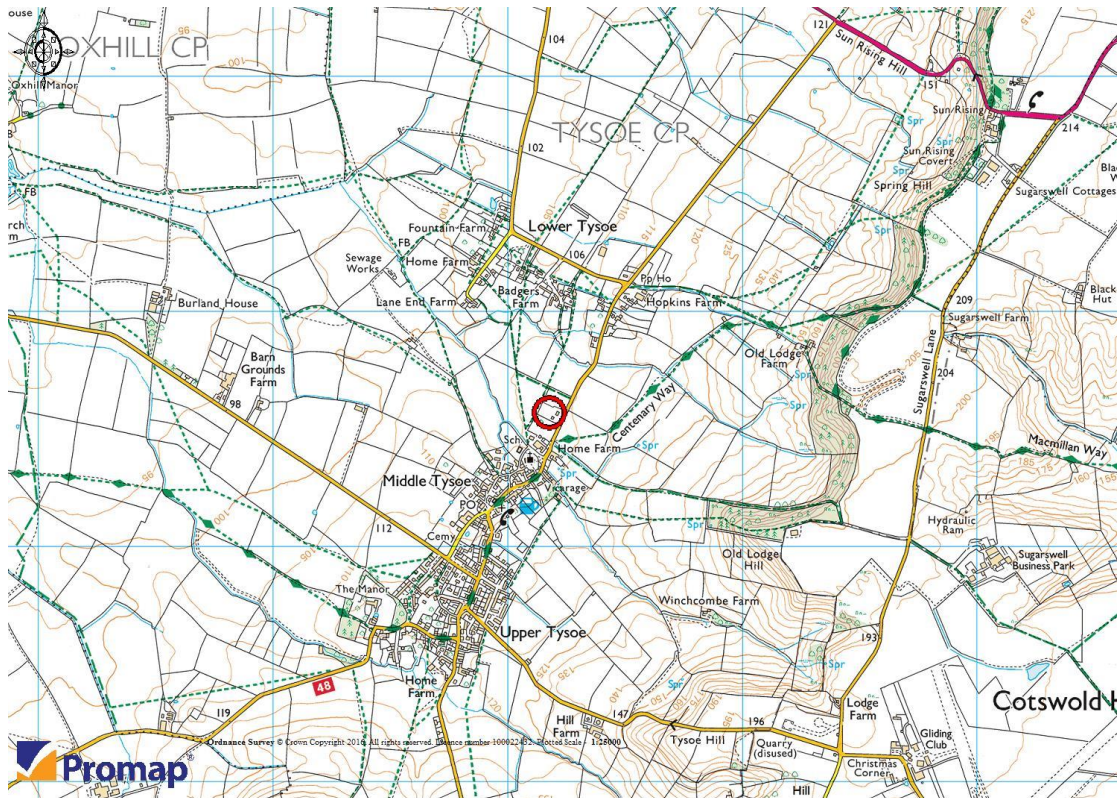


Fig. 1; site location (circled in red)

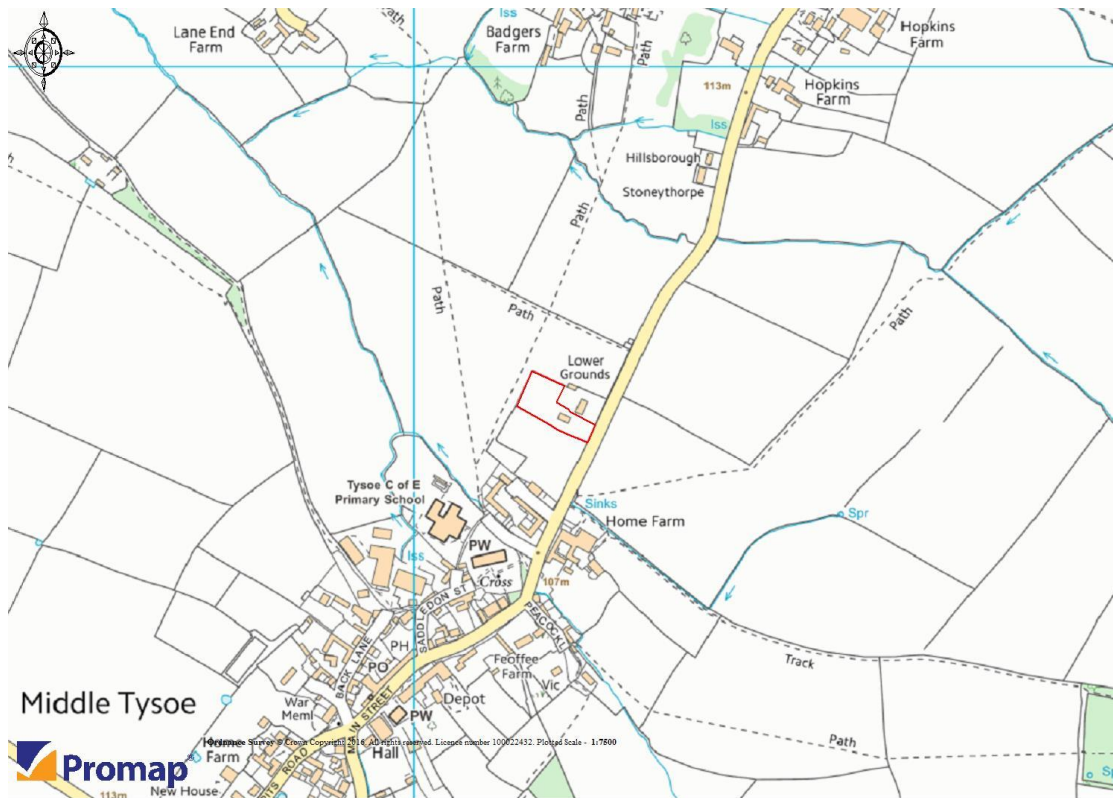


Fig. 2; study site (outlined in red)

INTRODUCTION

Location and scope of work (Figs. 1 & 2)

This document details the results of an archaeological evaluation during 5th to 7th July 2016 at Lower Grounds, Main Street, Middle Tysoe, Warks. CV35 0SE at the request of Wellan Ltd acting on behalf of the owner Mr John Scott. Planning permission was granted (planning Ref: 15/01174) for the erection of five detached dwelling on the site conditional on a programme of archaeological work comprising initially of an evaluation.

The proposed development lies within an area of archaeological potential, trial trenching was carried out recently on the adjacent site to the south (Webster, 2014) and recorded Romano-British remains comprising a probable field boundary and other undated, but possibly contemporary features. The paucity of finds suggested that these features were associated with an agricultural field system rather than a settlement with associated occupation deposits. The evidence from this site and the surrounding area suggests a landscape of dispersed enclosed settlement areas and field systems. There was therefore potential for further associated Romano-British deposits to exist within the study site. Deposits of post-medieval date were also found.

The results of the evaluation would be used to determine the likely nature, extent, preservation and importance of any archaeological remains, and how these may be affected by development of the site so that appropriate mitigation strategies could be devised. The evaluation represented an initial investigation and in the event that archaeological deposits were encountered during the trial trenching then an approved programme of archaeological work would be required in order to record the deposits prior to development.

Geology and topography

The study site (approx. 3,600m²) lies on the northern periphery of the village at approximately 105m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD). It currently consists of a field with some trees and shrubs occupying parts of the site. Preliminary investigations show that the underlying geology comprises a solid geology of Lower Lias (BGS, 1982) and this was confirmed during the excavation.

Archaeological and historical background

A total of 24 monument records and six event records are identified from the HER within the 500m search area centred on the site. A summary of the significant information is outlined below.

Prehistoric

Evidence of prehistoric activity within the search area is characterized by two find-spots. Field walking by the Edgehill Project Group revealed a flint scatter and from initial study the collection consists of 10 waste flakes and five implements (MWA8168). A light scatter of Romano-British and Medieval pottery sherds was also produced. Another flint scatter (MWA8169) was also found in the field during the same project comprising 25 waste flakes and 5 implements.

Roman

Roman occupation within the search area surrounding the study site is confirmed by a number of recent discoveries. Fragments of Roman pottery and tile and a single Roman coin were found during a field walking exercise, 500m north east of Middle Tysoe at Lingcroft (MWA8163).

A silver coin of Honorius and two sherds of Romano British pottery were also found during a field walking exercise in Tysoe parish, 600m north-east of the church (MWA9750) and field-walking by the Edgehill Project Group revealed in addition to prehistoric flints, a light scatter of Romano-British and Medieval pottery (MWA10249).

A magnetometer survey (EWA9476) at Lingcroft (MWA12487) has recorded a settlement of some size (Sabin & Donaldson, 2010). Ditches, enclosures and pits have been recorded across an area and finds recovered from field-walking suggest that this area is a likely Romano-British site.

An archaeological evaluation carried out on land to the south of Lower Grounds in 2014 revealed archaeological remains of Romano-British and post-medieval date (Webster, 2014). A large single ditch feature, confidently attributed to the Romano-British period was at least 1m wide. This was interpreted as boundary associated with a relict field system, a smaller gully-like feature was undated, but the similarity of the fill deposit suggests it is contemporary.

Saxon/early medieval

There is at present no historical or archaeological evidence for deposits associated with either the Saxon or early Medieval periods although the evidence of Roman and medieval occupation suggests that there is likely to have been some continuation between these periods.

Medieval

Middle Tysoe is a medieval settlement (MWA8955) the possible extent of which is suggested by a number of sources including Domesday, the first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1886, aerial photographs and the buildings themselves. The Church of St Mary (MWA2055) was originally built during the Medieval period. It dates from the end of the 11th century or beginning of the 12th century, when the nave was shorter and probably narrower.

Medieval activity within the search area is evidenced by a series of recorded find-spots, designated monuments and information derived from archaeological activities. Stray finds include a medieval coin found in Tysoe (MWA10031) and fragments of Medieval pottery (MWA2084) were found 100m north of the church at Middle Tysoe. A medieval seal matrix (MWA10079) was also found 500m northeast of the church. An archaeological watching brief (EWA7676) was carried out at St Mary's Church during below-floor works, external groundworks at the west end of the nave and excavation of the associated service trenches. A foundation was uncovered, possibly of an early west tower, and evidence relating to the location of the original north wall (Greig, 2006).

Various medieval and later finds were made as a result of a field walking exercise to the northeast of Middle Tysoe, as part of the Edge Hill Project (MWA9586). A systematic field walking exercise identified pottery dating from the Romano British period (10249) and from the medieval and post medieval periods. The thin scattering indicated that the finds were probably only associated with agricultural activity. Fragments of building material were observed near the gate in the southwestern corner.

Medieval and post-medieval agricultural earthworks (ridge and furrow) identified from national mapping data and aerial photographs are well documented within the parish and around the study site. Twenty-one fields of ridge and furrow are recorded immediately east of Upper and Middle Tysoe (MWA19722). Twenty-six fields of ridge and furrow (MWA19724) lie to the north

and north-west of Old Lodge Farm and forty-two fields of ridge and furrow surrounding Barn Grounds Farm (MWA19731).

A previous desk based assessment identified that although the area of investigation contained signs of ridge and furrow, they were poorly defined in comparison to other examples around the settlement of Tysoe. A geophysical survey was carried out in 2013 which provided a broad record of the of the location and extent of the ridge furrow.

Post-medieval

A negative watching brief (EWA9831) was carried out at Badgers Farm (MWA12959). Work consisted of photographs of the barn before conversion and archaeological observation and recording of below ground works. No finds were recovered and no features were recorded (Coutts C. 2010).

Situated 100m north east of the church at Middle Tysoe was the site of Manor Windmill (MWA2087). This was a post mill, of Medieval or Post Medieval date.

In 2012 an updated assessment (EWA10041) of the Turning the Plough project was undertaken (Catchpole & Priest, 2012). The original projects in the 1990s investigated the survival and loss of medieval and post-medieval agricultural earthworks, resulting in combined results being published covering 40 parishes in the Midlands. The aim of the update assessment was to assess the survival and loss of ridge and furrow in the project area, using new oblique aerial images taken in 2011 and 2012, providing a review and record of these earthworks.

EXCAVATION METHODOLOGY

Aims of the work

The objective of the trial trenching was to determine the date, character, quality, survival and extent of the archaeological deposits within the application area likely to be threatened by the proposed development. Should significant finds or features had been identified then an appropriate excavation strategy would be implemented as a final stage of mitigation.

Sample size and scope of fieldwork

The evaluation comprised five trenches at various lengths amounting to 100m of linear trenching at 1.50m wide, each trench located within or close proximity to the main areas of impact (house plots).

Fieldwork methods and recording

The archaeological field work and post-excavation was carried out in accordance with standards and guidance for archaeological field evaluations produced by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA, 2014). All deposits were excavated removing the overburden under close archaeological supervision and investigated for archaeological features. A plans and sample sections of the trenches were made and recorded during excavation.

RESULTS: GENERAL

Soil and ground conditions

Conditions were generally dry during excavation, the deposits showing some moisture retention. Excavation was relatively smooth being made through alternate layers of topsoil and underlying subsoil leaving a clean and visible surface on the natural substrate.

Reliability of field investigation

Little evidence was found showing previous truncation of the underlying deposits apart from that associated with the effects of medieval or post-medieval ploughing, identified as ridge and furrow. In trench 2 there was also some evidence for the earlier insertion of land drains and a single modern service trench was also noted.

Distribution of archaeological deposits

Archaeological deposits comprised undated agricultural earthworks (ridge and furrow) identified in some of the trenches and clearly visible on aerial photographs. These are probably associated with medieval or post-medieval cultivation.

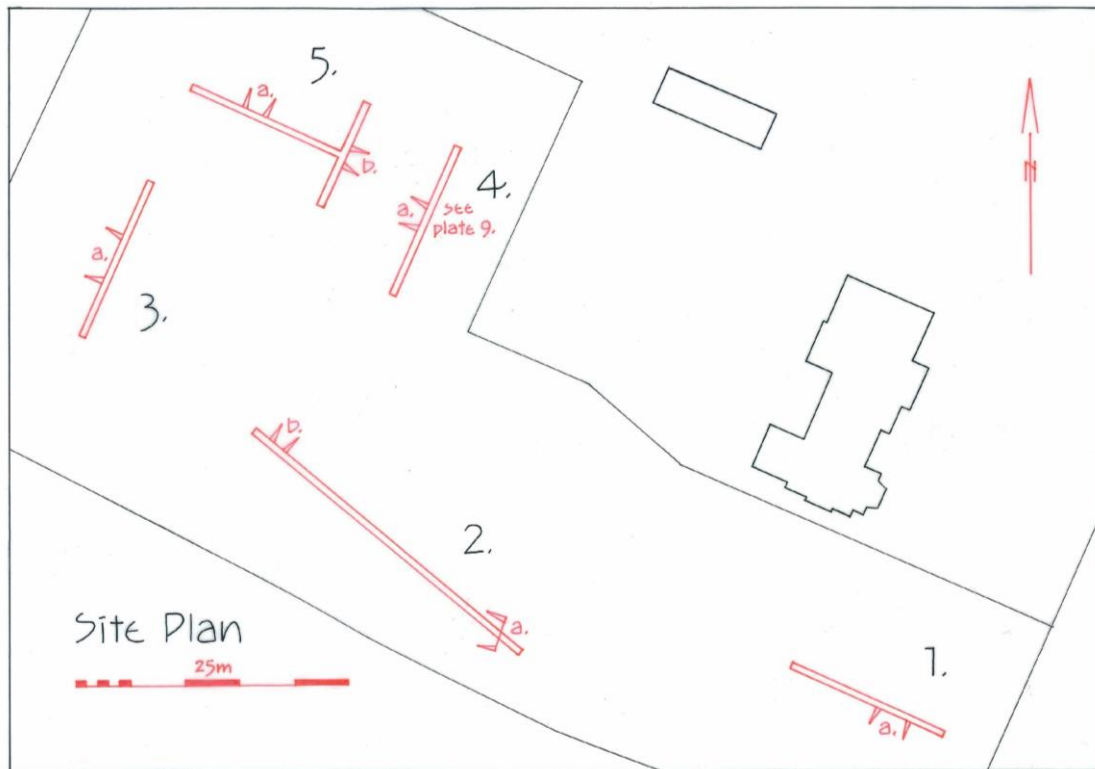


Fig. 3; Trench plan with section locations

Presentation of results

The results of the excavation (below) are described from the earliest to the latest deposits. The trench was attributed context numbers with a numerical value equivalent to the number of the trench.

RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS (Figs. 3 & 4)

TRENCHES 1-5

Contexts 102, 202, 302, 402 & 502 (natural substrate)

The natural substrate comprised two geological deposits, varying between a blue Lias clay and a light yellowish-brown sandy-clayey within all five trenches. This was situated at approx. 107m AOD at the north-west end of the site rising to about 107.90m at the south-east. No significant archaeological deposits were revealed cut into or overlying these deposits. Instead they were truncated by a series of north-west and south-east aligned, medieval or post-medieval agricultural earthworks (ridge & furrow). Trench 2 also revealed evidence for the previous insertion of land drains.

Contexts 204 & 304 (furrows) filled by contexts 203 & 303

Two furrows (204 & 204) were partially sampled by hand excavation revealing shallow cut features varying between 0.25-30m deep with gradually sloping sides. They were filled by furrow deposits (203 & 303), comprising a soil similar to the overlying subsoil (see below) were and both of these were undated.

Contexts 101, 201, 301, 401 & 501 (relict subsoil)

Overlying the natural clay in all four trenches was a homogenous deposit of a mid. yellowish-brown, clayey-sandy-silt. This was 0.15m thick throughout trench 1, 0.20m thick in trench 2, 0.30m thick in trench 3 and 0.25m thick in trenches 4 and 5. A single sherd of 18th/19th century glazed earthenware was recovered from layer 401, but this was not retained.

Contexts 100, 200, 300, 400 & 500 (topsoil)

Overlying the relict subsoil layer to a depth of about 0.20m throughout all five trenches was the existing garden topsoil comprising a dark greyish-brown, sandy-silt.

FINDS

Pottery

A single sherd of residual red glazed earthenware (19th/20th century) was recovered from the context 401 (relict subsoil layer). The was not retained.

Environmental data

Palaeo-environmental evidence

none of the deposits exposed during the excavation proved suitable for palaeo-environmental sampling.

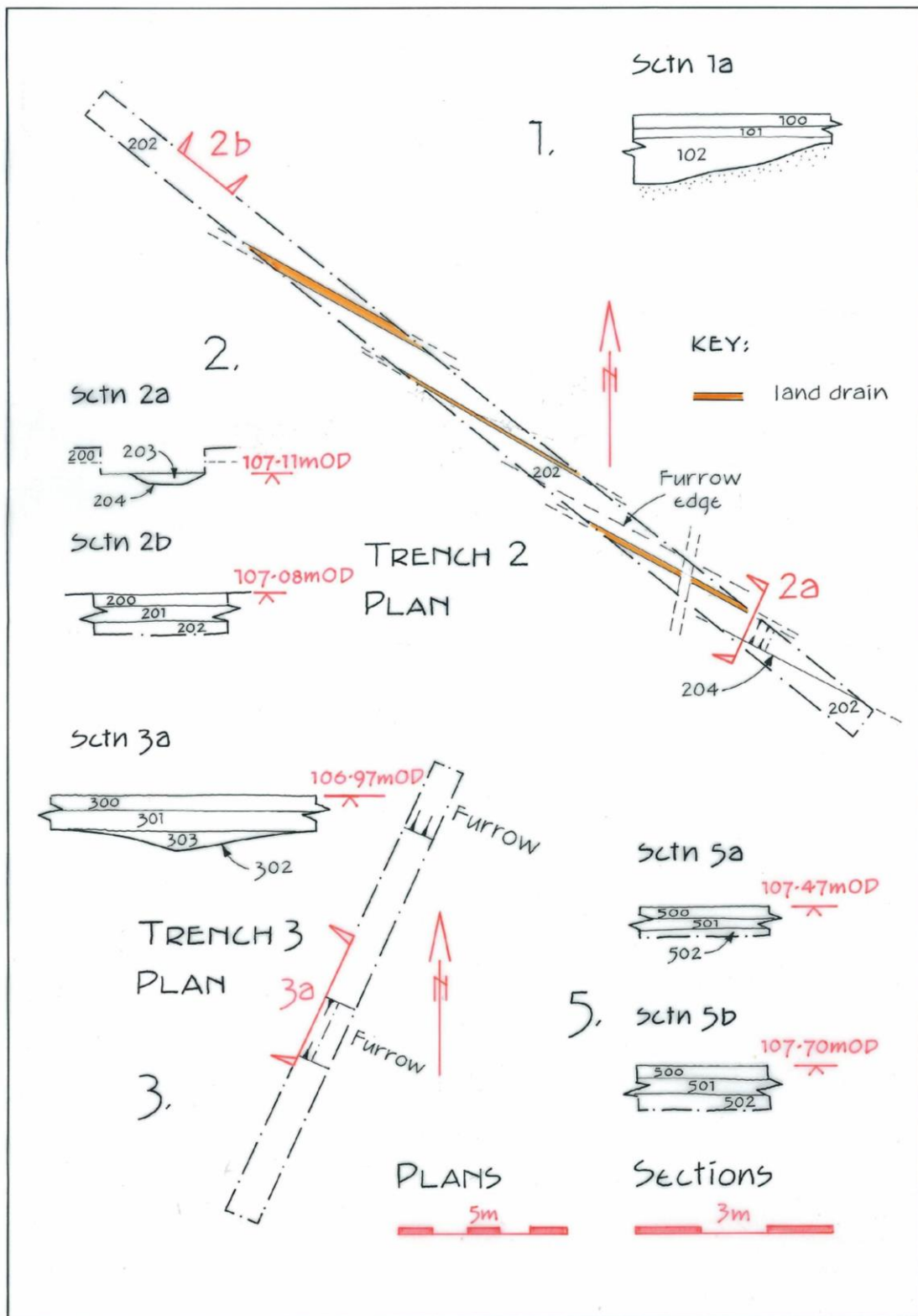


Fig. 4; plans of trenches 2-3 and trench sections



Plate 1; trench 1, from the north-west



Plate 2; section 1b



Plate 3; trench 2 from the north-west



Plate 4; section 2a and showing furrow (context) 204



Plate 5; section 2b



Plate 6; trench 3, from the north-east



Plate 7; section 3a



Plate 8; trench 4, from the south-west



Plate 9; section 4a



Plate 10; trench 5, from the north-west

DISCUSSION (Fig. 5)

The evaluation at Lower Grounds revealed no activity earlier than that associated with medieval or post-medieval cultivation as evidenced by a series of agricultural earthworks (ridge & furrow) crossing the study site from north-west to south-east.

An historic environment desk based assessment of the adjacent site, north of Lower Grounds (Cook, 2016) shows that a probable Roman settlement lies about 200m to the east of the study site across Main Street in the form of features identified from geophysics (Sabin & Donaldson, 2010) supported by pottery finds made during field-walking. Further evidence of Roman activity was also found closer to the study site during an archaeological evaluation (trial trenching) carried out to the south of Lower Grounds (Webster, 2014). This revealed two segments of a large ditch interpreted as part of a field boundary with one of the ditches clearly dated to the Roman period, each of the ditches had been re-cut two or three times indicating a level of continuity. Their location corresponded with parts of a segmented anomaly identified during a geophysical survey carried out in 2013. The disruption in the survey plot data leading to the segmentation of the anomaly appears to reflect the effects of the medieval/post-medieval ploughing. This has resulted in the truncated remains of the ditch being recognised by the survey in the furrow, at the lowest point, whilst that part of the ditch surviving below the ridge is undetectable due to the accumulation of soil forming the ridge. It was suggested that the smaller undated gully-like features found within other areas of the site were perhaps linked to some further subdivision of the land.

The evaluation at Lower Grounds found only agricultural earthworks (ridge and furrow) and no evidence for a continuation north of the Roman field system identified within the site to the south. This appears to indicate the extent of the Roman agricultural landscape. The ridge and furrow at Lower Grounds and in the fields to the north and west is probably associated with the later medieval/post-medieval environment.

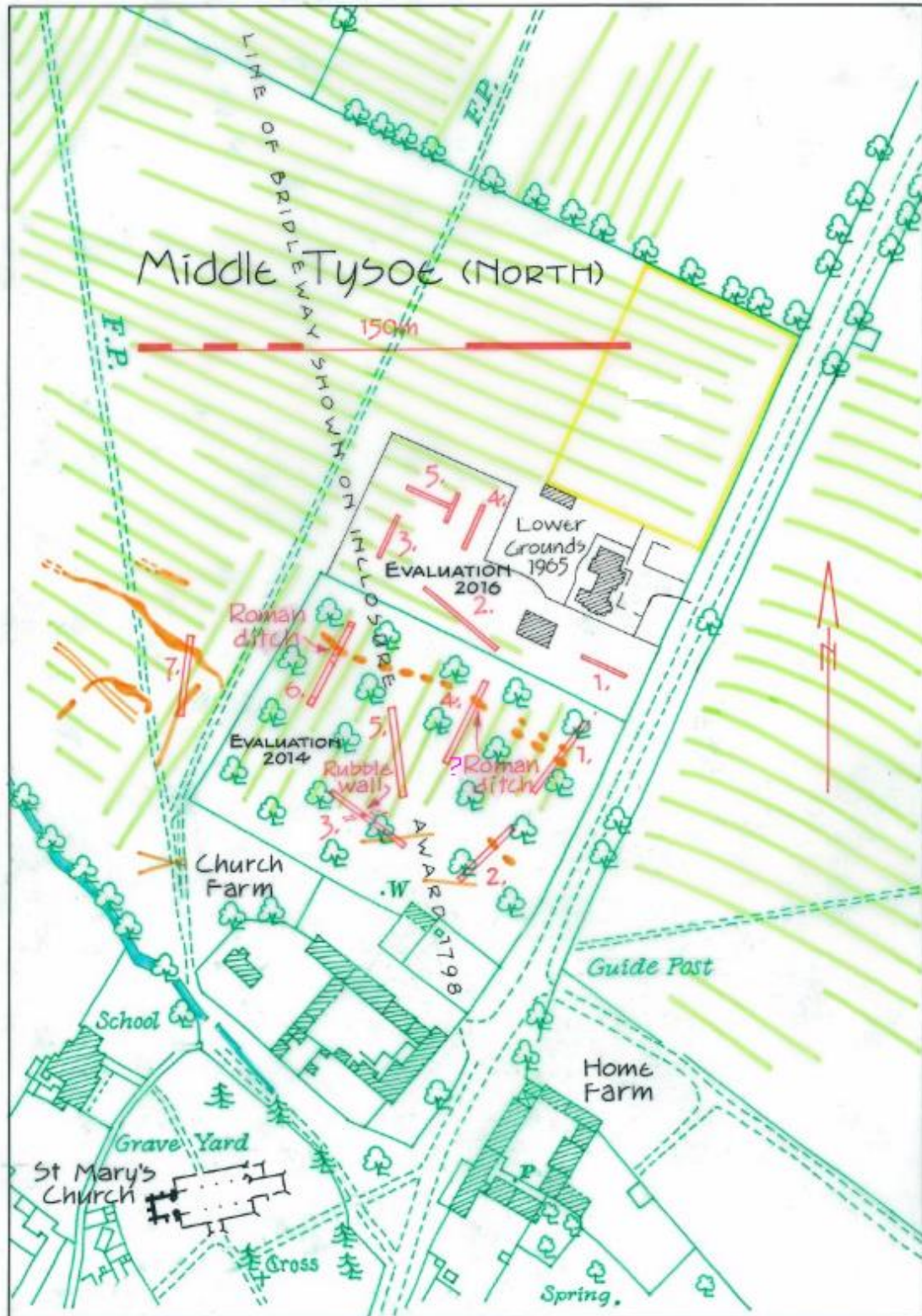


Fig. 4; historic environment plan ('best fit'); Middle Tysoe-north. Light green; medieval/post-medieval agricultural earthworks (ridge & furrow) plotted from aerial photographs. Dark green; 1886-7 (OS First Edition). Orange; geophysical anomalies, 2013. Red; archaeological information 2014 & 2016. Yellow; outline of desk based assessment 2016.

Summary of results

The results of the evaluation have shown that there is unlikely to be significant archaeological deposits surviving within the site. A sequence of three stratified deposits were recorded throughout the site comprising a natural Lias clay overlain by a relict subsoil associated with former medieval or post-medieval cultivation as evidence by the existing agricultural earthworks (ridge and furrow). This is supported by an assessment (Cook, 2016b) of land adjacent to the north side of Lower Grounds which was erected in 1965. The analysis of the historic mapping, aerial photographic evidence and the results of previous archaeological work showed the possible limit an earlier Roman agricultural landscape to the south of Lower Grounds. This appears to be defined by an east-west field boundary ditch which may be connected with an earlier settlement at Church Farm to the south.

Significance

The results of the evaluation suggest that there has been little activity within the study site before the medieval or post-medieval period and that this is associated with cultivation.

Impact of development

The results of the trial trenching suggest that no significant archaeological deposits are present within the areas of proposed development and that further excavation will have no impact.

Recommendation

The results of the evaluation indicate that early human activity within the study is associated with medieval or post-medieval cultivation as evidence by the identification of agricultural earthworks (ridge and furrow). These were recorded during the evaluation and also in an assessment of land adjacent Lower Grounds. In view of this no further work is recommended.

Archive Location

The digital archive arising from the work will be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS)

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APPENDIX 1; OASIS

Project name	Lower Grounds, Main Street, Middle Tysoe, Warwickshire
Project dates	Start: 05-07-2016 End: 07-07-2016
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	LGT16 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Monument type	RIDGE AND FURROW Uncertain
Significant Finds	POTTERY Post Medieval
Methods & techniques	"Targeted Trenches"
Development type	Landowner pre-sale planning application (outline)
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF
Country	England
Site location	WARWICKSHIRE STRATFORD ON AVON TYSOE Lower Grounds, Main Street
Postcode	CV35 0SE
Study area	3840 Square metres
Site coordinates	SP 34182 44570 52.097998323413 - 1.500947091136 52 05 52 N 001 30 03 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 106.42m Max: 107.88m
Name of Organisation	one ten archaeology
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	one ten archaeology
Project director/manager	sean cook
Project supervisor	sean cook
Type of sponsor/funding body	Landowner
Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	OASIS
Digital Contents	"none"
Paper Archive Exists?	No
Paper Contents	"none"
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Lower Grounds, Main Street, Middle Tysoe, Warwickshire; archaeological evaluation

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