University of Leicester

Archaeological Services

An Archaeological Evaluation of Land East of Forest Road, Huncote, Leicestershire (SP 5193 9784)

Gerwyn Richards

ULAS Report No 2011-181

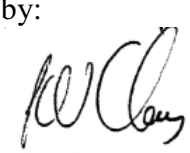
An Archaeological Evaluation
Of Land East of Forest Road,
Huncote, Leicestershire.
(NGR SP 5193 9784)

Gerwyn Richards

Planning Application: Pre-Planning Enquiry

For: Westleigh Homes.

Checked by:

Signed: 

Date: 21.11.2011

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Summary

University of Leicester Archaeological Services was commissioned by Westleigh Homes Ltd to undertake an archaeological evaluation in advance of proposed residential development on land east of Forest Road, Huncote, Leicestershire.

The proposed development area had been identified as being of archaeological potential, located within an archaeologically diverse landscape with sites of known archaeological significance nearby and within a field containing substantial standing ridge and furrow earthworks. The archaeological evaluation revealed no deposits or finds of archaeological significance. The linear anomalies identified by geophysical survey were identified as modern services and therefore, non-archaeological.

The archive for the archaeological work will be held by Leicestershire County Council, under the museums accession number X.A169.2011.

1. Introduction

University of Leicester Archaeological Services was commissioned by Westleigh Homes Ltd to undertake an archaeological evaluation in advance of proposed residential development on land to the east of Forest Road, Huncote, Leicestershire (SP 5193 9784; *Figures 1 & 2*). The proposed development area was located on the northern outskirts of the village. Forest Road forms the westernmost boundary of the application area, while to the south are the rear gardens of Denman Lane and Langley Close, with agricultural fields to the north and east. The archaeological works are intended to provide preliminary indications of the character and extent of any buried archaeological remains in order that the potential impact of the development on such remains may be assessed by the Planning Authority.

Following Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS5), Leicestershire County Council, Historic and Natural Environment Team (LCCHNET) as archaeological advisors to the planning authority required an evaluation by trial trenching to be undertaken, to follow up the results of a desk-based assessment (Browning 2011) and geophysical survey (Stratascan 2011). This document presents the results of that evaluation.

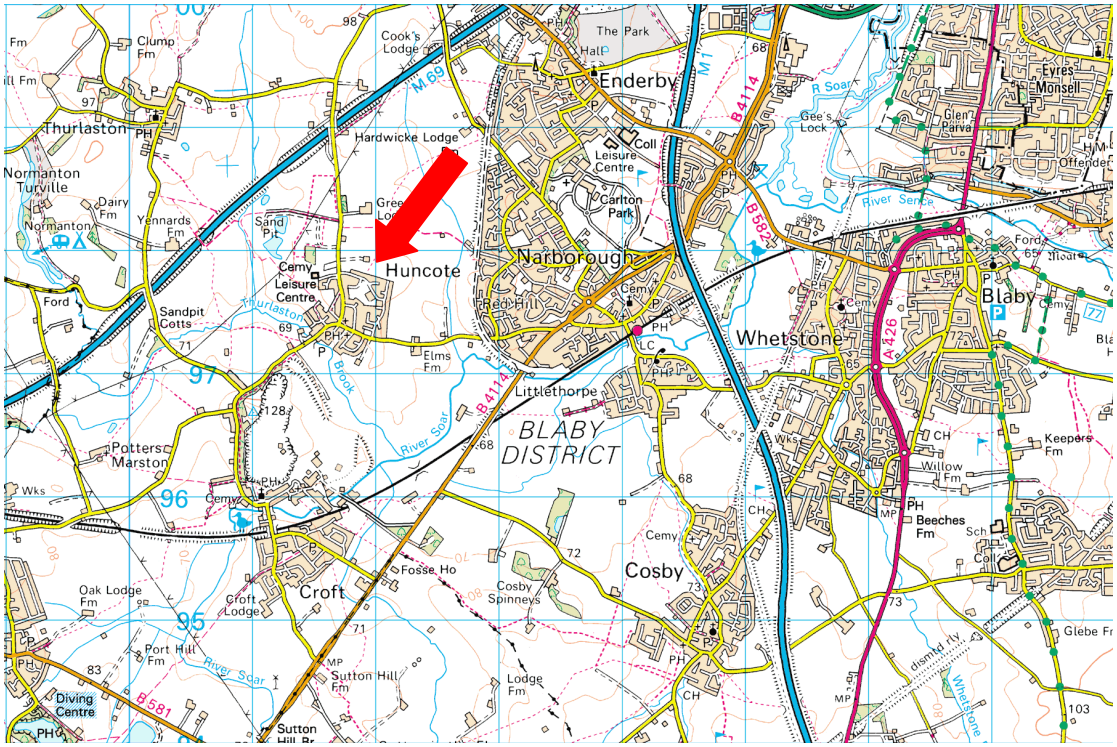

Figure 1. Site location
(1:50, 000)

2. Background

The proposed development area lies within a rich and varied archaeological landscape, north of the historic settlement of Huncote. An archaeological desk-based assessment (Browning 2011) indicated that there are no known archaeological sites within the proposed development area, although well preserved ridge and furrow strip field systems were present (see below). The Historic Environment Record for Leicestershire & Rutland (HER) indicates a number of known archaeological sites within the vicinity of the proposed development area, including the medieval and post-medieval village core of Huncote (HER Ref MLE9986), which is likely to have Anglo Saxon origins and is referred to in the Domesday Book (Morris 1979). A number of standing earthworks, most likely medieval and post medieval in date are also recorded. Medieval remains include a substantial stone foundations located during housing development (Clay 1991). Medieval finds including tile, window glass and plaster have also been recovered from the location believed to be the manor (HER Ref MLE155) within the village core to the south. Further medieval remains include a silver coin of Michael Steneo, Doge of Venice *c.*1400 (HER Ref MLE9570) recovered close to a groat of Edward III (HER Ref MLE6637), four medieval coins (Edward I, Henry III x 2 and a short cross penny), a coin of Elizabeth I as well as a seal matrix recovered through metal-detecting approximately 550m from the development site, close to Elms Farm (HER Ref MLE6639).

The proposed development area is under ridge and furrow which suggests that the land was used for agriculture in the medieval period. Ridge and furrow is particularly characteristic of the Midlands counties, such as Northamptonshire and Leicestershire.

During the medieval period land was farmed in strips. Ridges were created through the action of the medieval plough with a coulter and mouldboard, moving the soil forwards and sideways (Astill 1988, 70). At the end of the strip the turning of the plough often created a heap of soil, known as a head (Hall 1982, 6). Ridge and furrow became preserved in the landscape after agricultural land was turned over to permanent pasture and, in most cases, pre-dates the enclosure of the land. The ridge and furrow is also shown on a landscape map held by the HER, which also shows the pattern of ridge and furrow in the surrounding area recorded from aerial photographs, showing that the site was previously part of a large open agricultural landscape.

There is extensive evidence of prehistoric and Roman activity within the vicinity of the proposed development area, including a lower Palaeolithic ovate hand axe found *c*. 1 km to the north-west (HER Ref MLE9037). Neolithic flints and a possible hammerstone (HER Ref MLE 7662) have been found to the south-west. A number of Iron Age finds have been located, the most significant of which is the enamelled iron and copper alloy chariot lynch pin (HER Ref MLE6532) dating from *c.*100BC, discovered in 1996 through metal detecting followed by a fragment of a circular copper alloy fitting the following year. These finds are located approximately 800m north-west of the proposed development area within an area now quarried and excavation on the site revealed a circular enclosure of Iron Age date (Clay and Shore 2004).

In addition, various other archaeological sites and finds have been recorded within the vicinity of the proposed development area. (http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk):

The Ordnance Survey Geological Survey of Great Britain, Sheet indicates that the underlying geology is likely to consist of glacial drift (boulder clay) with under- and overlying sands and gravels. The site lies at a height of *c*.87m O.D.

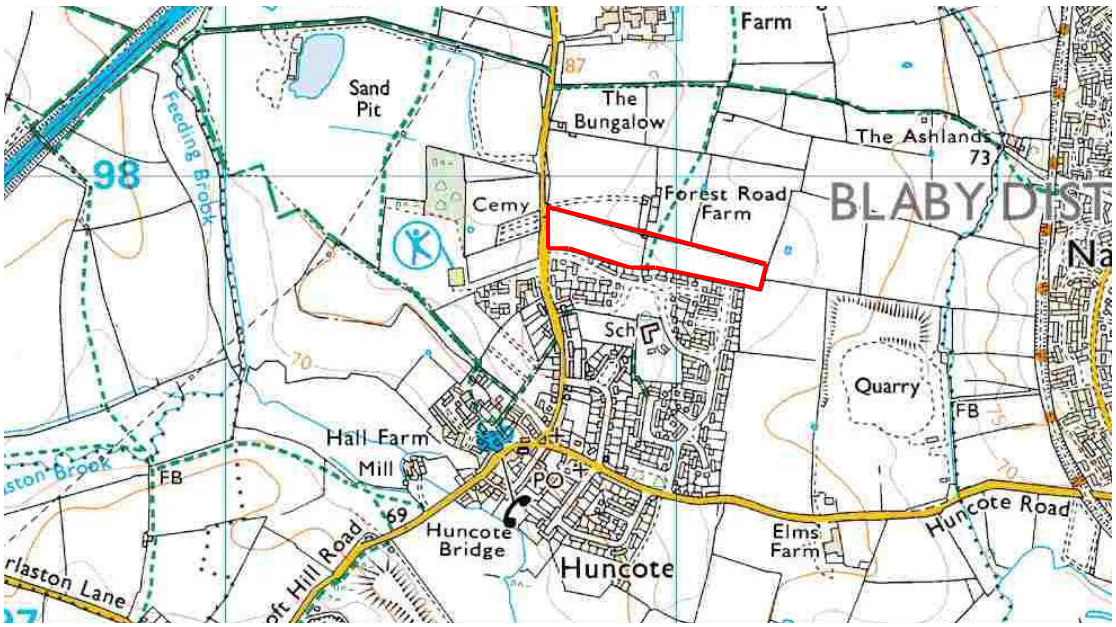

Figure 2 Detailed site plan.
(Original Scale 1:25,000)

An archaeological geophysical survey has also been carried out within the proposed development area (Stratascan 2011). The results included two positive linear anomalies as well as ridge and furrow lines, remnants of medieval or early post medieval ploughing which are clearly visible as standing earthworks.

3. Aims and Methodology

The aims of the archaeological evaluation were to:

- To identify the presence/absence of archaeological deposits.
- To establish the character, extent and date range for any archaeological deposits to be affected by the proposed ground works.
- To excavate and record any archaeological deposits to be affected by the ground works.
- To produce an archive and report of any results

The work followed the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Code of Conduct* (2010) and *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (2008) and adhered to the University's Health and Safety policy. The methodology to be followed was detailed in the *Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Work* (ULAS 2011).

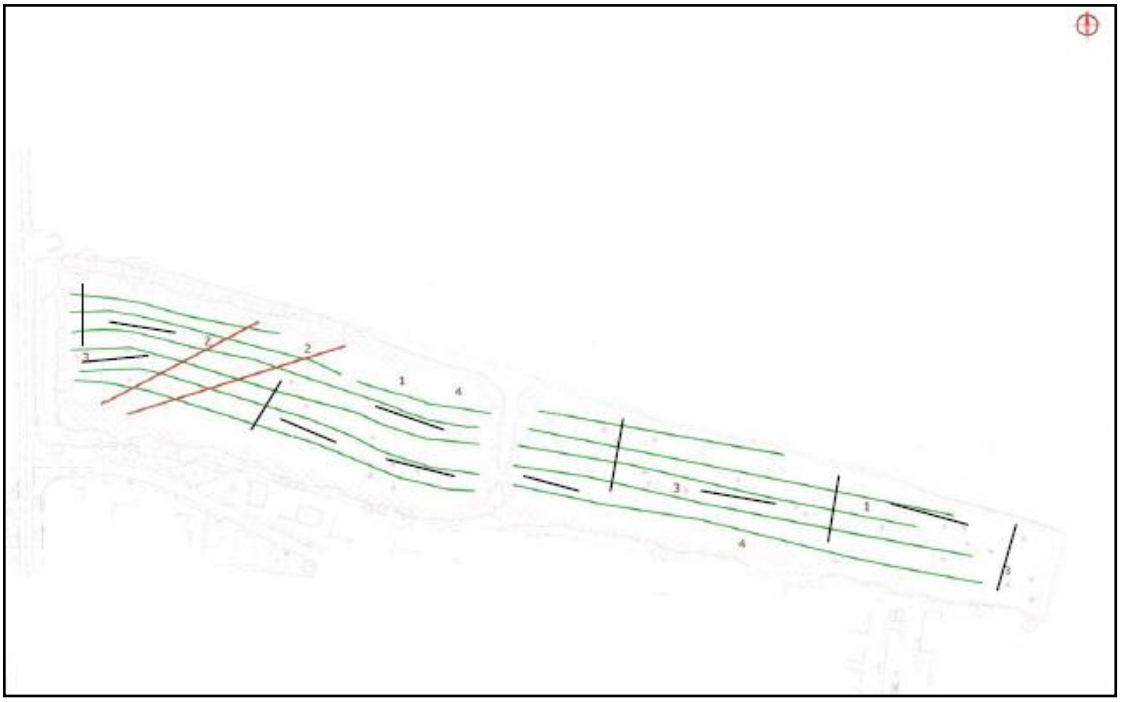

Figure 3
Proposed trench location plan overlaid on interpretative results of geophysical survey.

A 2% sample of the 3.2 ha. proposed development area was examined, totalling *c*. 640 sq m, the equivalent of 13 30m x 1.8m trenches. The excavations were carried out by a Case back hoe loader fitted with a ditching bucket under continuous archaeological

supervision. The exposed substratum was observed and the spoil searched for finds. The archaeological work took place between November 9th and 11th 2011. The two linear anomalies identified by the geophysical survey were identified as being live services prior to the commencement of the evaluation.

4. Results

4.1 Trench 1

Interval	0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25m	30m
Topsoil Depth in mm	150	130	180	150	200	150	150
Subsoil Depth/Top of Natural	300	220	270	480	550	450	470
Base of Trench	450	350	550	480	550	450	470

Trench 1 was located adjacent to the westernmost boundary of the proposed development area (*Figure 4*). The trench was aligned north to south, perpendicular to the ridge and furrow earthworks. Approximately 0.15m to 0.2m of topsoil was excavated revealing a layer of sandy clay silt subsoil, below which was a yellow-brown silty clay substratum. Excavation ceased at this level, approximately 0.35m to 0.55m below the current ground level. Four east-west aligned furrows were exposed and the fills machine excavated.

The trench contained nothing of archaeological significance and was recorded and released for backfilling.

4.2 Trench 2

Interval	0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25m	30m
Topsoil Depth in mm	150	150	150	150	150	150	150
Subsoil Depth/Top of Natural	200	300	300	360	350	400	450
Base of Trench	350	350	380	360	360	460	450

Trench 2 was again located towards the western end of the of the proposed development area, approximately 4.5 metres south of trench 1 (*Figure 4*). The trench was aligned south-west to north-east, within a furrow. Approximately 0.15m of topsoil was excavated revealing the same sandy clay subsoil layer seen in trench 1, below which was the same silty clay substrata. Excavation ceased at this level, approximately 0.35m to 0.46m below the current ground level.

The trench contained nothing of archaeological significance and was recorded and released for backfilling.

4.3 Trench 3

Interval	0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25m	30m
Topsoil Depth in mm	130	120	110	120	130	130	130
Subsoil Depth/Top of Natural	200	180	300	200	170	180	270
Base of Trench	330	300	350	340	320	380	420

Trench 3 was located towards the northernmost boundary of the proposed development area, approximately 20 metres east of trench 1 (*Figure 4*). The trench was aligned east-south-east to west-north-west, atop a ridge. Approximately 0.11m to 0.13m of topsoil was excavated revealing the same sandy clay subsoil layer seen in previous trenches, below which was the same silty clay substratum. Excavation ceased at this level, approximately 0.3m to 0.42m below the current ground level.

The trench contained nothing of archaeological significance and was recorded and released for backfilling.

4.4 Trench 4

Interval	0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25m	30m
Topsoil Depth in mm	150	150	150	150	150	150	150
Subsoil Depth/Top of Natural	250	250	200	250	170	200	270
Base of Trench	420	400	400	440	350	400	440

Trench 4 was located adjacent to the southernmost boundary of the proposed development area, approximately 38 metres south-east of trench 1 (*Figure 4*). The trench was aligned north-east to south-west crossing the ridge and furrow earthworks at a sharp angle. Approximately 0.15m of topsoil was excavated revealing the same sandy clay subsoil layer seen in previous trenches, below which was the same silty clay substratum. Excavation ceased at this level, approximately 0.35m to 0.44m below the current ground level. Three east-west aligned furrows were exposed and the fills machine excavated.

The trench contained nothing of archaeological significance and was recorded and released for backfilling.

4.5 Trench 5

Interval	0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25m	30m
Topsoil Depth in mm	150	150	140	150	150	150	150
Subsoil Depth/Top of Natural	190	200	230	190	220	190	250
Base of Trench	380	450	400	390	400	400	400

Trench 5 was located approximately 26 metres east of trench 4, again adjacent to the southernmost boundary of the proposed development area (*Figure 4*). The trench was aligned east-south-east to west-north-west within a furrow. Approximately 0.15m of topsoil was excavated revealing the same sandy clay subsoil layer seen in previous trenches, below which was the same silty clay substratum. Excavation ceased at this level, approximately 0.38m to 0.4m below the current ground level.

The trench contained nothing of archaeological significance and was recorded and released for backfilling.

4.6 Trench 6

Interval	0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25m	30m
Topsoil Depth in mm	150	150	150	150	150	150	150
Subsoil Depth/Top of Natural	200	250	230	280	250	280	330
Base of Trench	300	400	450	480	430	450	500

Trench 6 was located towards the centre of the proposed development area, adjacent to the southernmost boundary, approximately 20 metres east of trench 5 (*Figure 4*). The trench was aligned east-south-east to west-north-west within a furrow. Approximately 0.15m of topsoil was excavated revealing a layer of yellowish-brown clay silt subsoil, below which was the same silty clay substratum seen in previous trenches. Excavation ceased at this level, approximately 0.3m to 0.5m below the current ground level.

The trench contained nothing of archaeological significance and was recorded and released for backfilling.

4.7 Trench 7

Interval	0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25m	30m
Topsoil Depth in mm	150	150	150	150	150	150	150
Subsoil Depth/Top of Natural	320	300	250	300	300	300	350
Base of Trench	470	470	440	460	470	480	500

Trench 7 was again located towards the centre of the proposed development area, approximately 37 metres north of trench 6, adjacent to the northernmost boundary (*Figure 4*). The trench was aligned east-south-east to west-north-west within a furrow. Approximately 0.15m of topsoil was excavated revealing the same subsoil layer observed in trench 6, below which was the same silty clay substratum seen in previous trenches. Excavation ceased at this level, approximately 0.44m to 0.5m below the current ground level.

The trench contained nothing of archaeological significance and was recorded and released for backfilling.

4.8 Trench 8

Interval	0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25m	30m
Topsoil Depth in mm	150	150	150	150	160	150	150
Subsoil Depth/Top of Natural	200	250	300	250	250	250	250
Base of Trench	350	460	480	440	400	400	410

Trench 8 was the first trench excavated within the easternmost field. The trench was located adjacent to the southernmost boundary of the proposed development area, approximately 48 metres east of trench 6 (*Figure 4*). The trench was aligned east-south-east to west-north-west, within an area with no clear evidence of standing earthworks. Approximately 0.15m of topsoil was excavated revealing the same subsoil layer observed in trench 6, below which was the same silty clay substratum seen in previous trenches. Excavation ceased at this level, approximately 0.35m to 0.48m below the current ground level.

The trench contained nothing of archaeological significance and was recorded and released for backfilling.

4.9 Trench 9

Interval	0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25m	30m
Topsoil Depth in mm	100	150	150	150	150	150	150
Subsoil Depth/Top of Natural	280	290	200	250	220	170	170
Base of Trench	380	440	320	400	370	420	400

Trench 9 was located towards the centre of the proposed development area, approximately 28 metres north-east of trench 8 (*Figure 4*). The trench was aligned north-north-east to south-south-west perpendicular to the ridge and furrow earthworks. Approximately 0.1m to 0.15m of topsoil was excavated revealing the same subsoil layer observed in trench 8, below which was the same silty clay substratum seen in previous trenches, but including lenses of weathered Mercia Mudstone Group. Excavation ceased at this level, approximately 0.32m to 0.44m below the current ground level. Three east-west aligned furrows were exposed and the fills machine excavated.

The trench contained nothing of archaeological significance and was recorded and released for backfilling.

4.10 Trench 10

Interval	0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25m	30m
Topsoil Depth in mm	200	150	200	150	180	150	150
Subsoil Depth/Top of Natural	300	250	270	190	270	250	250
Base of Trench	500	400	400	380	450	400	400

Trench 10 was located approximately 34 metres east of trench 9. The trench was aligned east-south-east to west-north-west within a furrow (*Figure 4*). Approximately 0.15m to 0.2m of topsoil was excavated revealing the same subsoil layer observed in trench 8, below which was the same silty clay substratum seen in previous trenches. Excavation ceased at this level, approximately 0.38m to 0.5m below the current ground level.

The trench contained nothing of archaeological significance and was recorded and released for backfilling.

4.11 Trench 11

Interval	0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25m	30m
Topsoil Depth in mm	200	150	200	150	150	150	150
Subsoil Depth/Top of Natural	400	250	320	250	280	220	200
Base of Trench	600	400	550	400	420	380	350

Trench 11 was located approximately 19 metres east of trench 10. The trench was aligned north-north-east to south-south-west perpendicular to the ridge and furrow earthworks (*Figure 4*). Approximately 0.15m to 0.2m of topsoil was excavated revealing the same subsoil layer observed in trench 8, below which was the same silty clay substratum seen in previous trenches. Excavation ceased at this level, approximately 0.35m to 0.6m below the current ground level. Three east-west aligned furrows were exposed and the fills machine excavated.

The trench contained nothing of archaeological significance and was recorded and released for backfilling.

4.12 Trench 12

Interval	0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25m	30m
Topsoil Depth in mm	200	200	200	150	170	200	200
Subsoil Depth/Top of Natural							
Base of Trench	340	340	330	420	340	360	420

Trench 12 was located approximately 23 metres east of trench 11, adjacent to the northernmost boundary of the proposed development area. The trench was aligned east-south-east to west-north-west atop a ridge (*Figure 4*). Approximately 0.15m to 0.2m of topsoil was excavated without revealing any significant subsoil layer, the base of the trench was the same silty clay substratum seen in previous trenches. Excavation ceased at this level, approximately 0.34m to 0.42m below the current ground level.

The trench contained nothing of archaeological significance and was recorded and released for backfilling.

4.13 Trench 13

Interval	0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25m	30m
Topsoil Depth in mm	180	180	180	180	180	180	180
Subsoil Depth/Top of Natural							
Base of Trench	450	420	400	380	400	400	300

Trench 13 was located approximately 29 metres east of trench 12, adjacent to the easternmost boundary of the proposed development area. The trench was aligned north-north-east to south-south-west within an area with no clear evidence of standing earthworks (*Figure 4*). Approximately 0.18m of topsoil was excavated, again without revealing any significant subsoil layer. Unlike previous trenches, the base of the trench consisted of reddish brown weathered Mercia Mudstone Group substratum. Excavation ceased at this level, approximately 0.38m to 0.45m below the current ground level. Three east-west aligned furrows were exposed at this level and the fills machine excavated.

The trench contained nothing of archaeological significance and was recorded and released for backfilling.

5. Conclusion

The proposed development area occupied a promising location within a rich archaeological landscape. The archaeological evaluation, however did not encounter any archaeologically significant deposits or artefacts. The anomalies recorded by the geophysical survey were identified as live services before the commencement of the evaluation, and were non-archaeological in origin.

The lack of any significant archaeological deposits is not un-expected, the extensive ridge and furrow earthworks surviving within the proposed development area indicate that the site was under cultivation, as part of the open field system during the medieval period and therefore is unlikely to have any significant medieval occupation. The size and extent of the ridge and furrow plough may also have severely truncated any pre-medieval archaeological deposits.

6. Archive & Publication

The site archive consists of:

1 A3 paper plan showing trench ID
39 Black & White negatives and contact prints
CD containing 39 digital images
2 A4 contact sheets
1 A4 photo index sheet
13 A4 trench recording sheets
Unbound copy of this report (ULAS Report Number 2011-181)
Unbound copy of the geophysical survey report
The archive will be held at Leicestershire County Council Museums under the Accession Number X.A169.2011

A version of the summary (above) will be submitted to the editor of the local journal *Transactions of Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* for inclusion in the next edition.

7. References

Browning, J. 2011 *An archaeological desk-based assessment for land to the east of Forest Road, Huncote, Leicestershire (SP 5193 9784).* ULAS Report No 2011-049

Clay, P., and Shore, M., 2004 'Huncote', *in* J. E Meek, M. Shore and P. Clay Iron Age Enclosures at Enderby and Huncote, Leicestershire, *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* **78**, 1–34.

IfA, 2010 *Code of Conduct*

IfA, 2008 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation*

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Figure 4 Trench location plan.

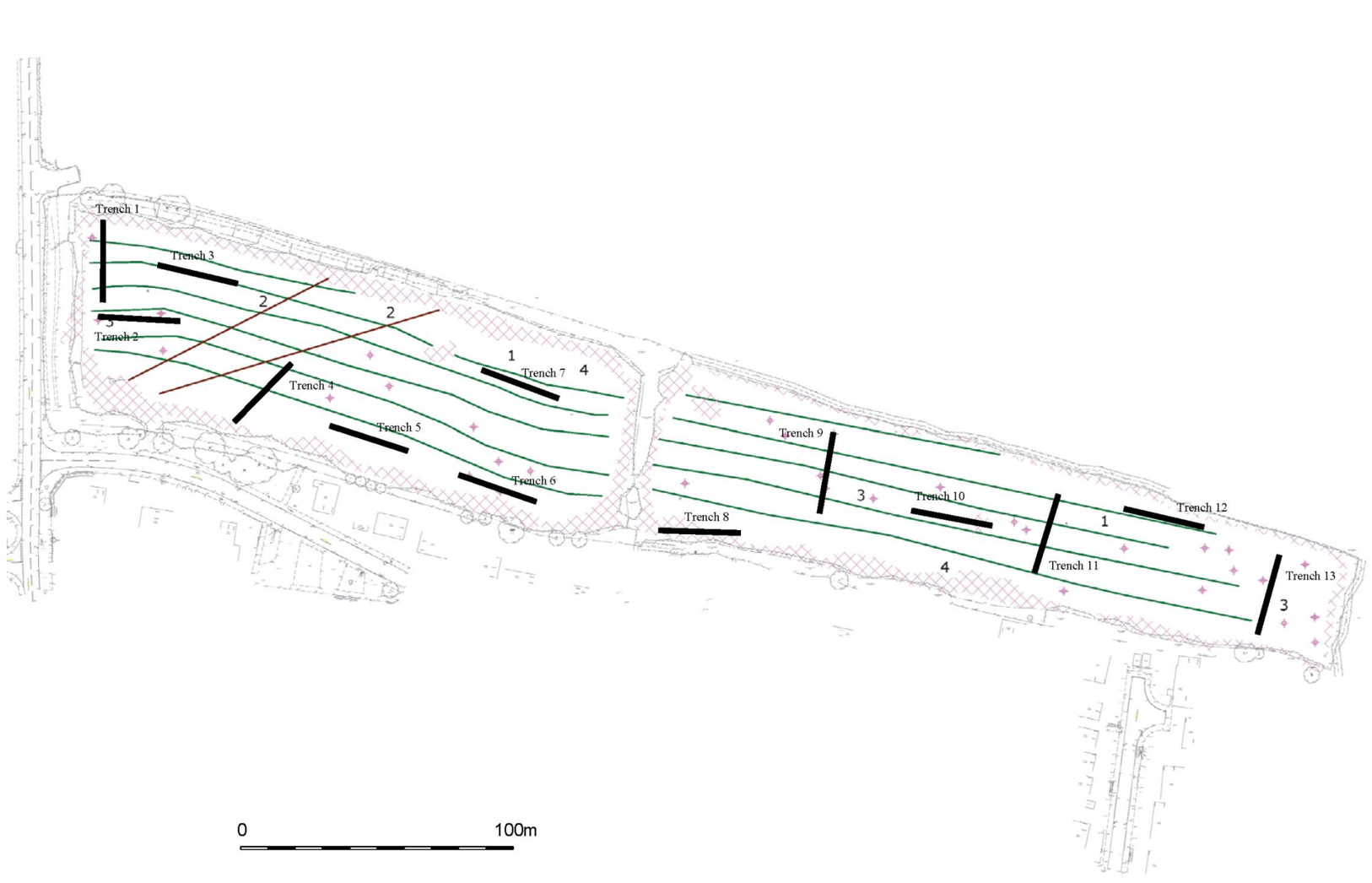

Figure 5 Trench 1 (looking north).

Figure 6 Trench 2 (looking south west).

Figure 7 Trench 3 (looking east).

Figure 8 Trench 4 (looking south west).

Figure 9 Trench 5 (looking west).

Figure 10 Trench 6 (looking west).

Figure 11 Trench 7 (looking west).

Figure 12 Trench 8 (looking west).

Figure 13 Trench 9 (looking north).

Figure 14 Trench 10 (looking west).

Figure 15 Trench 11 (looking south).

Figure 16 Trench 12 (looking west).

Figure 17 Trench 13 (looking south).

Appendix OASIS

INFORMATION REQUIRED	**EXAMPLE**
Project Name	Forest Road, Huncote, Leicestershire
Project Type	Evaluation
Project Manager	Patrick Clay
Project Supervisor	Gerwyn Richards
Previous/Future work	Previous: Desk-based assessment; Geophysical survey. Future: Unknown
Current Land Use	Agriculture
Development Type	Residential
Reason for Investigation	PPS5
Position in the Planning Process	Pre Planning
Site Co ordinates	SP 5193 9784
Start/end dates of field work	Nov 2011
Archive Recipient	LMARS
Height min/max	87mOD
Study Area	3.2 ha
Finds	No

Contact Details

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