University of Leicester
Archaeological Services

An Archaeological Evaluation at Land south and east of Money Hill, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicestershire NGR: SK 361 176 centre

James Harvey

ULAS Report No 2013-038

An Archaeological Evaluation at

Land south and east of Money Hill,

Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicestershire

NGR: SK 361 176 centre

James Harvey

For: CgMs Consulting

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An Archaeological Evaluation at land south and east of Money Hill, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicestershire (SK 361 176, centre)

James Harvey

Summary

University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) carried out an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching on land south and east of Money Hill, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicestershire (SK 361 176, centre). The work was undertaken in order to provide baseline data for an Environmental Statement concerning the proposed urban extension of Ashby-de-la-Zouch

*A total of six trenches was excavated in order to target the projected line of three possible pit alignments recorded in cropmarks (Trenches **4** and **6**) and also to ascertain the nature of a number of anomalies recorded by the geophysical survey that suggested possible evidence of industrial activities (Trenches **1-3** and Trench 7).*

*Trenches **4** and **6** confirmed the presence of all three pit alignments, consisting of a single western pit alignment within Trench **4** and a double eastern pit alignment within Trench **6**. Trench **4** also contained a number of other features that are also likely to be associated to the pit alignment. None of the excavated pit alignment features contained artefactual material and the only find from the evaluation consisted of a secondary flint flake from one of the adjacent pits. However comparable evidence of these types of features suggests a broad date between the Late Bronze Age and Middle Iron Age for this activity. The pit alignments appear to be directly related to a promontory located within the adjacent field to the north, perhaps linking into an earlier focus of settlement or funerary activity.*

No evidence of industrial activities previously suggested by the geophysical survey was recorded within Trenches 1-3 and 7. Instead, areas of modern truncation and disturbance were recorded that may relate to recent open cast coal extraction activities.

The archive for this project will be deposited with Leicestershire County Council in due course with accession number X.A22.2013.

1. Introduction

Planning permission is currently being sought for new residential development on land south and east of Money Hill, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicestershire (NGR: SK 361 176, centre; fig. 1).

This report presents the results of a programme of archaeological trial trenching that was undertaken between the 19th and 25th February 2013 by University of Leicester Archaeological Services on behalf CgMs Consulting Ltd. It follows an archaeological desk-based assessment (CgMs PC/SM/14627) and subsequent geophysical survey (GSB 2012/87). This stage of evaluative work was required to provide baseline data for the Environmental Statement concerning the proposed urban extension of Ashby-de-la-Zouch on the site (13/00041/OUTM). A strategy for the work was set out in the

Written Scheme for Investigation, (CgMs SM/14627/02, hereinafter WSI). The trial trenching was undertaken in order to target potential industrial features identified within the previous geophysical survey as well as to evaluate the continuation of cropmarks previously recorded immediately north of the site. The fieldwork was carried out in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework Section 12 Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment (NPPF; Department of Communities and Local Government 22.03.2012).

2. Site Description, Topography and Geology

The site covers c. 68.6 ha. and is located to the north-east of Ashby-de-la-Zouch town centre, Leicestershire (fig 1). It is bounded by properties off Wood Street/Nottingham Road and Woodcock Way to the south, a large warehouse to the south-east and the A511 to the east. The northern boundary is formed largely by existing field boundaries with further fields beyond. The western boundary is irregular, being formed in part by residential properties off Willow Brook Close to the north and existing field boundaries to the south.

The general topography consists of gently undulating farmland that slopes gradually down to the south and west from a height of *c*. 162m aOD at its north-eastern extent to *c*.135m aOD along its southern and western extents.

The solid geology of the study site area is recorded by the British Geological Survey (1:50,000 scale) as predominantly Pennine Lower Coal Measures Formation, comprising mudstone, siltstone and sandstone. There is an outcrop of Wingfield Flags sandstone at the western extent of the site and a further zone of Bromsgrove Sandstone Formation at the north-eastern extent of the site (mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html).

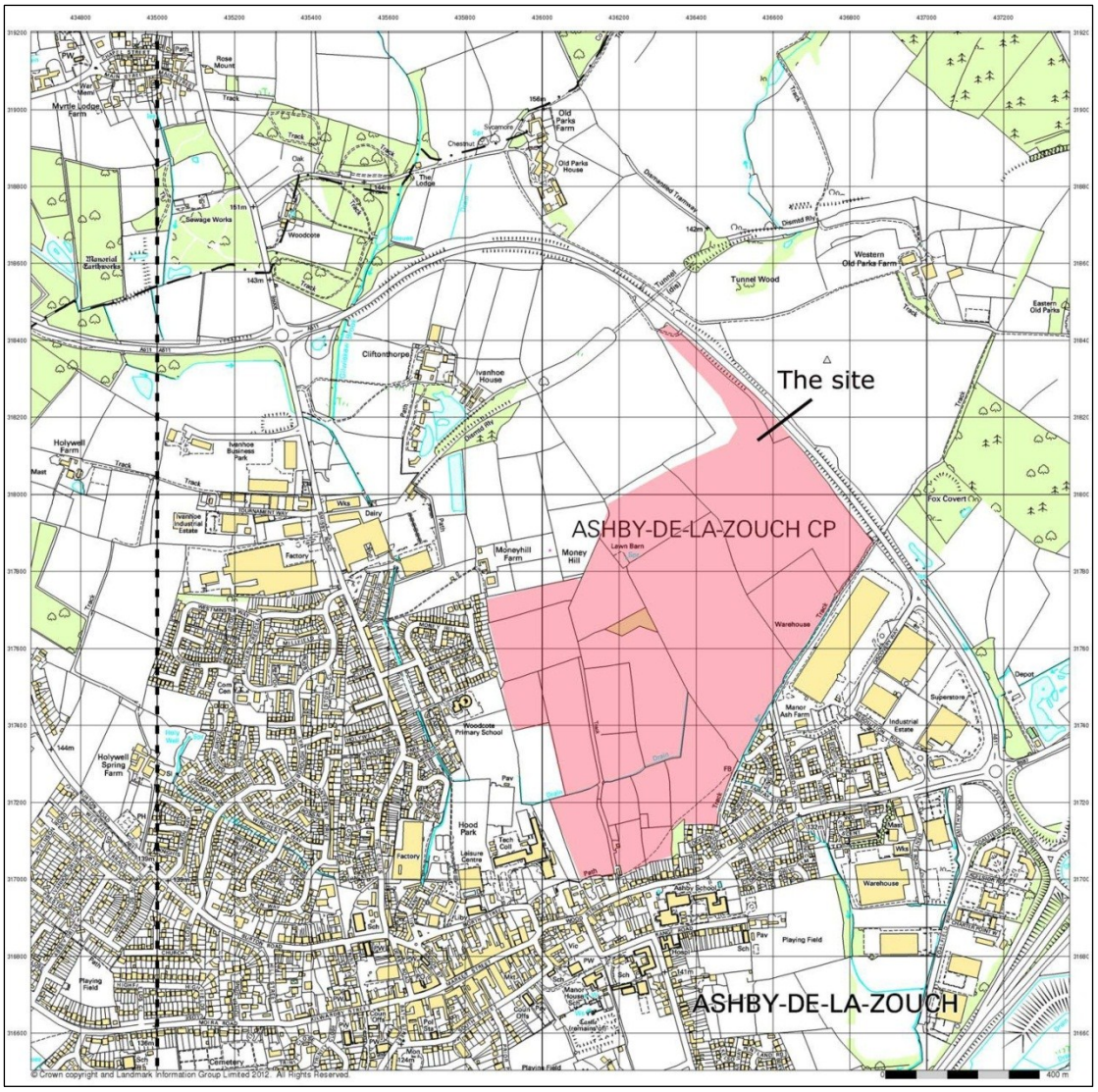

Figure 1 Site Location Plan highlighting application area (provided by CgMs)

3. Archaeological Background (Taken from CgMs PC/SM/14627)

The desk-based assessment (CgMs PC/SM/14627) prepared for planning application (13/00041/OUTM) provides a detailed account of the heritage potential of the site.

The Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record (HER) lists three entries located within the site. These include later prehistoric flint that was recovered along the eastern boundary of the site during fieldwalking for the Ashby Bypass. The finds consisted of two scrapers, a knife and core rejuvenation flake (**MLE 7607** and **7609**). The south-western part of the site is crossed by the projected alignment of Leicester Way/Long Lane Roman Road (**MLE 10361**) although no evidence of the road has been recorded within the vicinity of the site to confirm its existence and accurate alignment.

The HER also contains a number of entries within the vicinity of the site which are summarised below, with the exception of the entries related to the historical development of Ashby-de-la-Zouch.

Prehistoric

The HER records that several pit alignments were visible on modern (*c*.2006) aerial photographs immediately north of the site boundary (**MLE 17533**; fig. 8). Three pit alignments are clearly visibly on Google Earth (2006 images) consisting of a single and double alignment. Both are orientated roughly north-north-west to south-south-east and separated by *c*.100m. The single western pit alignment appears to be reasonably straight whereas the eastern double alignment appeared more sinuous in nature. Both alignments could be traced for *c*.150m but neither could be seen within the site boundary to the south.

Further find spots of flint have been recorded to the west and north-west of the site as a part of the field walking project associated with the Ashby Bypass. That evidence comprises six Mesolithic flints (**MLE 7084**), flint tools dated to between the Early Neolithic and late Bronze Age (**MLE 7607, 7608, 7609, 7610, 7611, 15758**) and possible prehistoric features found during evaluative work in 1998 in association with previous field walking finds *c*.400m north of the site (**MLE 4306**). Further Iron Age settlement activity was recorded *c*.400m north-west of the site (100m west of **MLE4305**) where pottery was recovered during field walking and subsequent evaluation in 2000 recorded ditches postholes and pits (**MLE 4305, 7610 and 8493**)

Roman

Very little Roman evidence has been recorded in the vicinity of the site given that a Roman road is presumed to pass through the area. Two urns filled with 3rd century AD coins (**MLE 8032**) were ploughed-up at Money Hill in 1818. This area is located immediately beyond the western site of the site although the exact location of the coin hoards is not known. A single Roman coin was recovered during excavations of a windmill (**MLE 16650**) to the south-east of the site and Roman material was also during field walking survey for the Ashby Bypass *c*.600m north-west and two sherds of Roman pottery were also found 600m north of the site (**MLE 15759** and **MLE4304**).

Medieval

The HER records the possible site of the medieval settlement of Woodcote (MLE 4294) *c*.400m west of the site. The evidence for Woodcote deserted medieval village comprises fieldnames (eight fields named Woodcote Close) on the 1735 estate map. There are medieval pottery sherds recorded from fieldwalking *c*.600m to north-west (MLE15759), but these were found in a mixed assemblage and are likely to be the result of medieval manuring (**MLE 15759**). A series of fieldnames, 'Lane Potters Close', 'Nether Potters Close' and 'Potters Side Furlong', recorded on the 1735 estate map, *c*. 150 m to the west (**MLE 4281**) suggest that pottery kilns were present that may date to the medieval period.

Geophysical Survey

In addition the site has been subject to detailed geophysical survey (GSB 2012/87). This survey produced a small number of strong magnetic responses which have some archaeological potential but they could equally be modern in origin. It is very difficult in these instances to differentiate between what might be 'industrial activity' in antiquity and modern ferrous-type debris. Apart from this magnetic disturbance, there is little of particular interest in the data. There is evidence of former agricultural regimes, predominantly ridge and furrow cultivation. Modern services, footpaths and an old boundary are also visible. In relation to the size of the site, the number of potentially archaeological responses is remarkably low.

4. Aims and Objectives

The specific aims of the evaluation set out in the WSI were to excavate seven trenches with a provision for two further 50 m by 1. 8 m contingency trenches in order to investigate geophysical anomalies and assess if the pit alignments identified in the field to the north extended into the site, as agreed with Richard Clark, Principal Planning Archaeologist for Leicestershire County Council as warranting further investigation.

The generic aims were:-

- To determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any archaeological remains within the development site

- To assess vulnerability/sensitivity of any exposed remains
- To provide sufficient information on the archaeological potential of the site to identify heritage assets potentially affected by the development and enable the impact of development on their significance to be assessed
- To assess the impact of previous land use on the site
- To inform a strategy to avoid or mitigate impacts of the proposed development on surviving archaeological remains
- To produce a site archive for deposition with an appropriate museum and to provide information for accession to the Leicestershire HER.

5. Methodology

The WSI stated that the trial trench evaluation should comprise the excavation of seven trenches. This consisted of four 50m x 1.8m trenches in order to target the possible industrial features (Trenches **1**-**3** and **7**). Two wider 30m x 4m trenches (Trenches **4** and **5**) and a further 50m x 1.8 trench (Trench **6)** were set out in order to assess if the pit alignments identified in the field to the north extended into the site, with a contingency for a further two trenches if required (50m x 1.8 m).

The topsoil and overlying layers were removed under full archaeological supervision until either the top of archaeology or natural undisturbed ground was reached, or to a maximum safe depth given the specific site conditions.

The bases of the trenches were cleaned in areas where potential archaeology was observed. Archaeological remains were recorded and sample excavation was undertaken in order to determine the character and date of any remains. Bulk soil samples were taken as appropriate in order to evaluate the environmental potential of the site.

Measured drawings of all archaeological features were prepared at a scale of 1:20 and tied into an overall site plan. All plans were tied into the Ordnance Survey National Grid. Relative spot heights were as appropriate. Sections of any excavated archaeological features were drawn at an appropriate scale. At least one longitudinal face of each trench was recorded. All sections were levelled and tied to the Ordnance Survey Datum. The trenches were located using a Topcon Hiper Pro GPS+ RTK System attached to a Topcon FC-100 controller. The data was processed using Topcon Tools GPS+ Post Processing Software in order to which was tie the trenches in to the Ordnance Survey National Grid and the final plans were completed with the aid of TurboCad v.19 design software.

The work followed the approved WSI (CgMs SM/14627/02) and adhered to the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Code of Conduct and adhered to their Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations* (2010).

6. Results

The trenches targeting the potential industrial features (Trenches **1-3** and **7**) closely matched their suggested location set out in the WSI, although their widths were reduced to 1.6m because of the limitation of only being able to use a JCB 3CX on the site. Also Trenches **1** and **2** were slightly shortened because the machine had become bogged down in wet ground. Trench **4** also closely matched its suggested location but on the basis of the positive results gained within this trench it was agreed not to excavate Trench **5.** Instead Trench **6** was widened in order to improve its visibility. Also extensions were made to establish the presence/absence of features associated with the pit alignment (fig. 2).

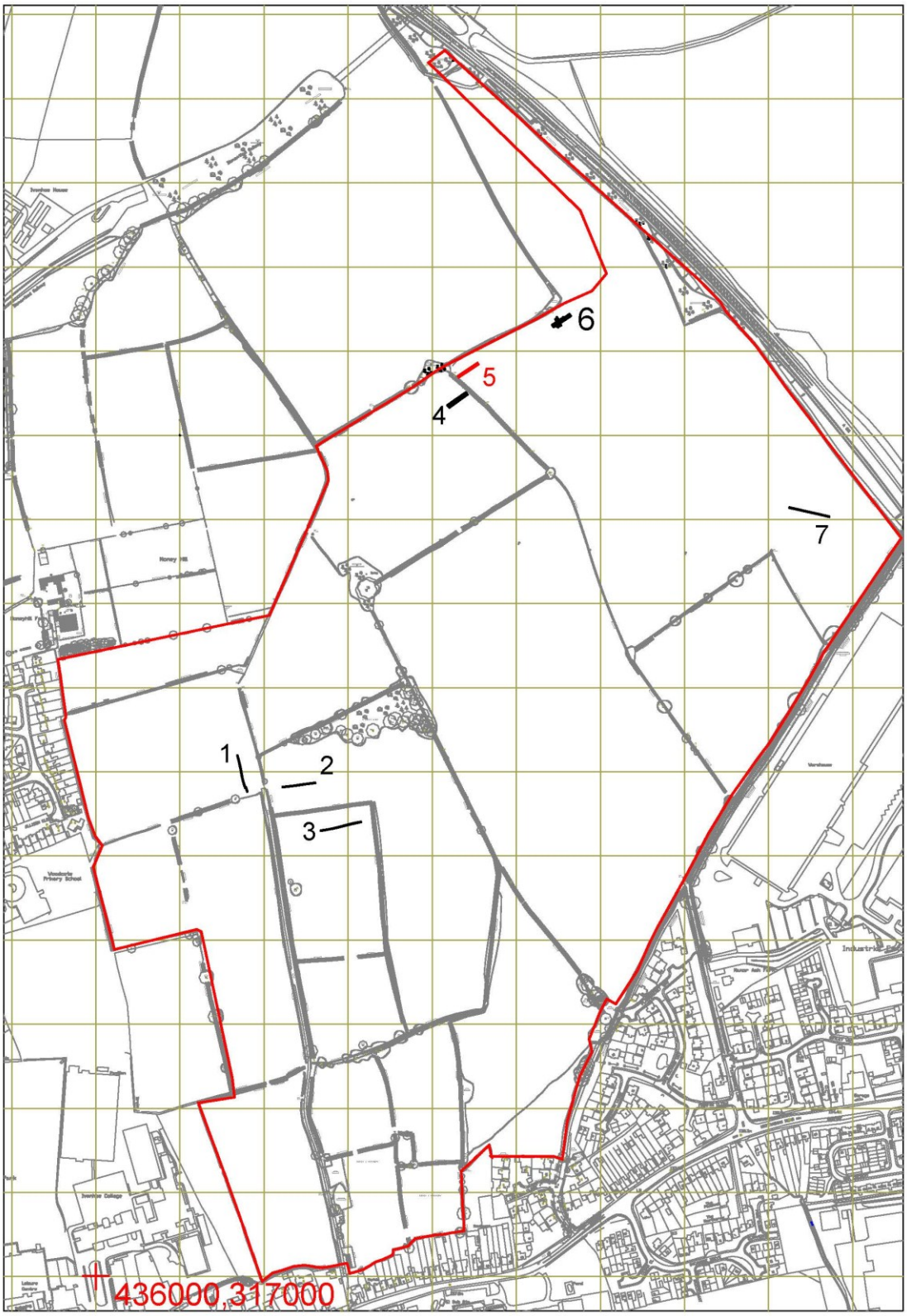

Figure 2 Trench Location Plan (Trench **5** marked in red was not excavated, 100m Grid)

Archaeological contexts as a cut are indicated by square brackets e.g. [09], those that are fills are indicated by round brackets e.g. (07).

The topsoil was consistent across the site, composed of a dark grey brown clayey loam with occasional small rounded pebbles. It ranged in thickness from 0.15-0.48m. No subsoil was present within Trenches **1-3** and Trench **7**. Subsoil was present within Trenches **4** and **6** that consisted of mid greyish brown sandy clay that varied in thickness between 0.05-0.14m. The natural substratum was reached in all trenches although only seen in small areas within Trenches **2-3** and Trench **7**. Within Trenches **1-2** and Trench **4** it consisted of pinkish brown clay. Within Trenches **3** and **7** it consisted of blue grey clay and within Trench **6** it consisted of pinkish brown clay overlain by mixed red/orange/brown gravelly clay.

Table 1 Trench Summaries

TRENCH	ORIENTATION	LENGTH (m)	DEPTH (m aOD)	TOPSOIL THICKNESS (m)	SUBSOIL THICKNESS (m)	DESCRIPTION	TRENCH DEPTH (m)	MINIMUM DEPTH TO ARCHAEOLOGY (m aOD)
1	NNW-SSE	45	140.78-142.75	0.28-0.48	0	Modern disturbance and ?field boundary	0.30-0.60	N/A
2	ENE-WSW	40	137.29-139.90	0.29-0.36	0	Furrows and modern extraction pit	0.29-0.65	N/A
3	ENE-WSW	50	135.36-135.74	0.25-0.40	0	Furrows cutting modern disturbance	0.35-0.65	N/A
4	NE-SW	28	153.04-153.53	0.15-0.20	0.07-0.14	Two pits including excavated pit [104]. Furrows	0.31-0.42	0.30
5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Not Excavated	N/A	N/A
6	NE-SW	25	154.10-155.36	0.25-0.31	0.05-0.08	Eight pits including excavated pits [116], [118], [121], [125] and [127]. Furrows	0.33-0.62	0.31
7	ESE-WNW	50	141.08-142.19	0.30-0.40	0	Furrows cutting modern disturbance	0.29-0.43	N/A

Figure 3 Trenches **1-3** incorporating the geophysical survey, 100m Grid

Trench 1 (fig.3)

Trench **1** was located in order to cross three geophysical anomalies that included large sub-circular responses and a linear response. The trench was re-aligned at its southern extent to avoid the line of an agricultural furrow. The geophysical anomalies were located within the trench and all proved to be modern in origin. The southernmost anomaly consisted of a large metal spike, located *c.*1m from the end of the trench. A large cut was recorded *c.*13.5m from the southern end of the trench. It measured 12m wide and spanned the width of the trench. It was in-filled with modern building rubble including asbestos sheets. Finally a linear feature was recorded *c.*10.5 m from the

northern end of the trench. This measured 1.5m wide, spanning the width of the trench on an east north-east to west south-west orientation. The feature was in-filled with modern bricks and either represents a modern wall line or the continuation of the field boundary located *c.*25m to the east of the trench. No archaeological features or finds were recorded within this trench.

Trench 2 (fig. 3)

Trench **2** was located in order to cross a large irregular shaped response. The northern and western sides of this feature could be clearly seen as a negative earthwork within the field prior to machining. Machining commenced at the western end of the trench where two agricultural furrows were encountered that were north to south orientated and contained horseshoe land drains. A large cut was recorded directly below the topsoil *c.*14.5m from the western end of the trench that continued for the remainder of the trench (pl.1). The upper fill of this cut consisted of a thin layer of crushed sandstone containing occasional brick fragments. Two sumps were excavated thorough this deposit to a depth of 0.65m. Buried topsoil was observed below the sandstone that was below the current water table. No archaeological features or finds were recorded within this trench.

Plate 1 Large backfilled extraction pit located in Trench **2** looking east

Trench 3 (fig. 3)

Trench **3** was located in order to cross a spread of irregular shaped responses. Directly below the topsoil spreads of mixed orange, red and beige clay were exposed with patches of degraded coal. A series of large agricultural furrows were recorded cutting

these deposits that contained horseshoe drains. These were oriented north-north-west to south-south-east. Removal of these furrows revealed larger areas of degraded coal that may have provided the magnetic responses seen within the geophysical survey. Three sumps were excavated through these mixed deposits that revealed a sequence of thin soft clay deposits overlying differential quantities of degraded coal to a maximum depth of 0.8m. These deposits overlaid a solid blue grey mudstone (pl.2). No archaeological features or finds were recorded within this trench.

Plate 2 Sump into Trench **3** through overlying mixed deposits

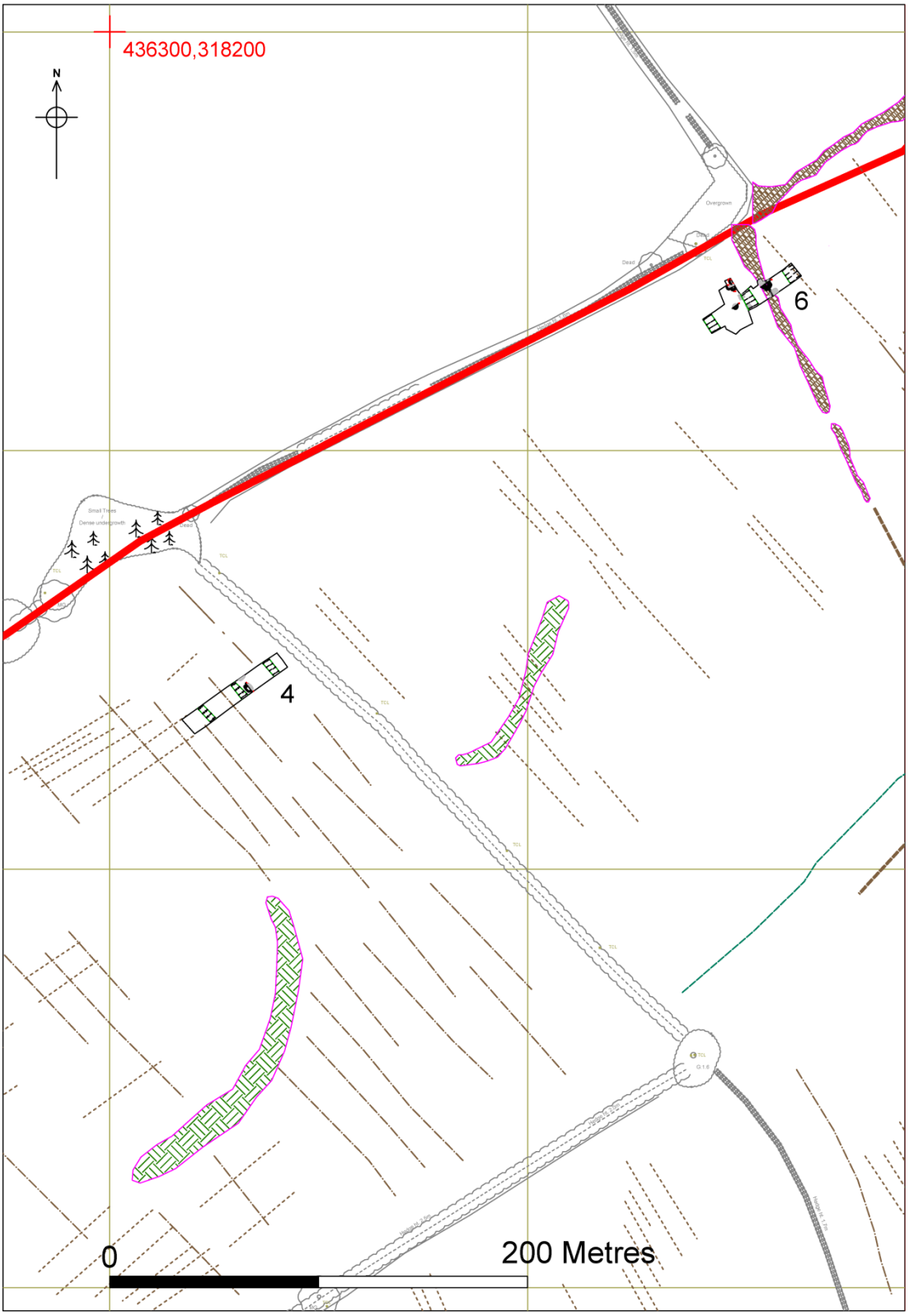

Figure 4 Trenches **4** and **6** incorporating the geophysical survey, 100m Grid

Trench 4 (figs. 4, 5 and 8)

Trench **4** was located in order to cross the projected line of the possible western pit alignment seen as a cropmark in the adjacent field to the north. Two large pits were recorded *c*.9m from the north-east end of the trench that matched the projected line of the pit alignment on a north north-west to south south-east orientation (fig.5).

Only one of the pits was fully exposed within the trench. This pit [104] was sub-rectangular in plan with curving corners. It measured 2.15m long, 1.78m wide and 0.6m deep (pl.3). Its sides were steep and sloping with an incline of *c.* 30-60° and it had a reasonably flat base. It was filled by five separately identifiable deposits. The primary fill consisted of a mid greyish brown clayey silt deposit (111) containing rare small sub-rounded pebbles. This measured a maximum of 0.05m thick and was overlaid on its south-eastern side be a dark orangey brown sandy clay deposit (109) containing occasional small-medium sub-rounded pebbles. This measured a maximum of 0.11m thick and was overlaid by a mid yellowish brown sandy silt deposit (107)/ (108) containing occasional small-medium sub-rounded pebbles and rare large cobbles. This deposit measured a maximum of 0.25m thick and was overlaid by a dark pinkish brown silty clay deposit (106) containing occasional small-large sub-rounded pebbles and rare larger cobbles. This deposit measured a maximum of 0.18m thick and was overlaid by the upper fill that consisted of a dark greyish brown silty sandy clay deposit (105) containing occasional small-large sub-rounded/ sub-angular stoned. The second (unexcavated) pit was partially exposed within the north-western side of the trench and was located *c*.1.3m to the north-west of pit [104]. It measured 1.87m wide that was comparable in width with pit [104].

Plate 3 Pit [104] looking north-east

Three agricultural furrows were also exposed within the trench that were orientated north-west to south-east. These furrows were almost completely removed during machining in order to maximise the visibility of the natural substrata within the trench.

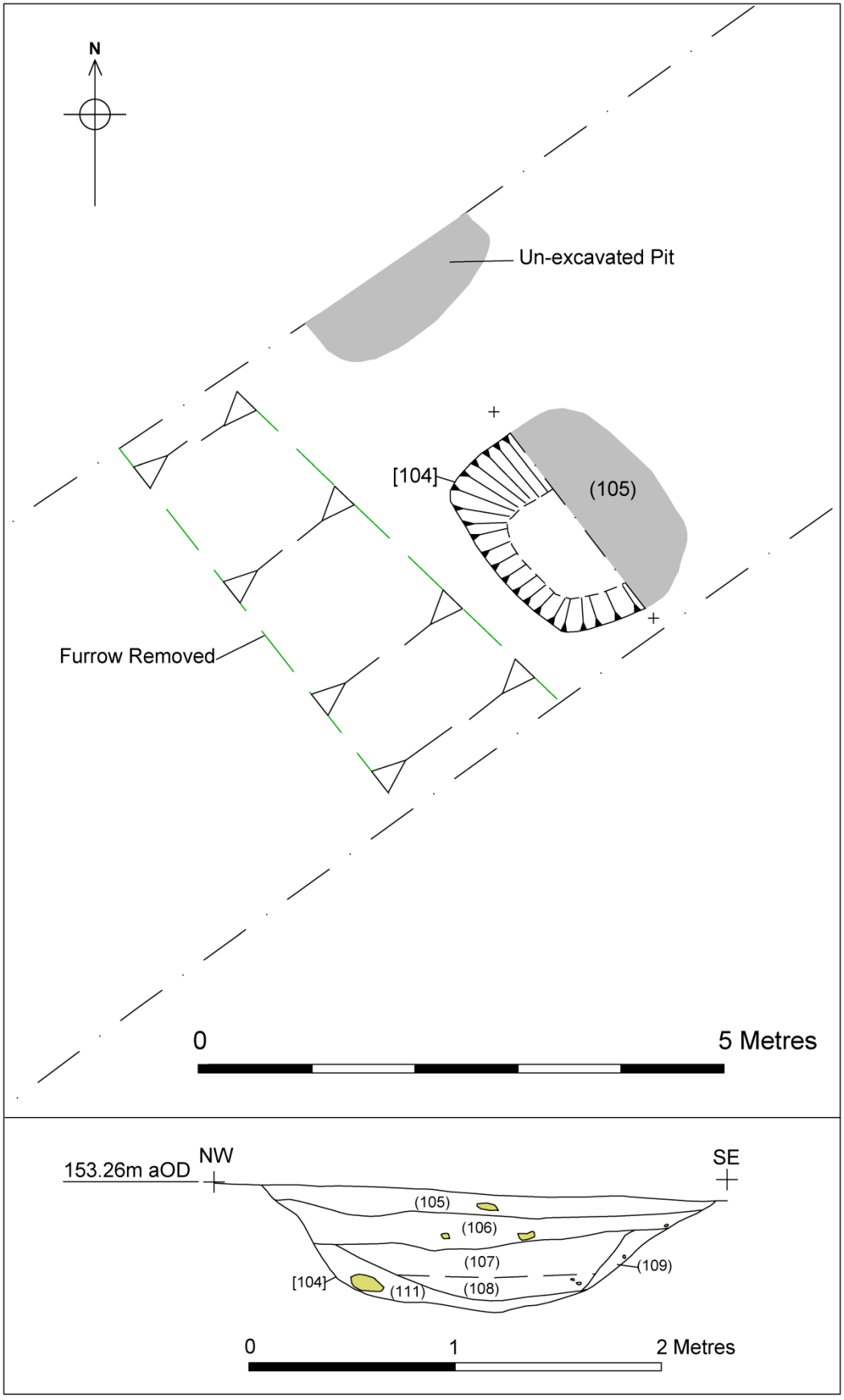

Figure 5 Plan of archaeological features within Trench **4**

Trench 5

Initially this trench was laid out in order to cross the possible line of the western pit alignment. However it was decided not to excavate the trench on the basis of the results from Trench 4.

Trench 6 (figs. 4, 6 and 8)

Trench **6** was located in order to cross the projected line of the possible double eastern pit alignment seen as a cropmark in the adjacent field to the north. A cluster of pit features were recorded towards the centre of the trench, including two lines of pits that matched the projected line of the double pit alignment (fig. 6). The two lines of pits were set *c*.4.5m apart and ran parallel on a north north-west to south south-east alignment. The two pit alignments were considerably different in their magnitudes. The eastern alignment, consisting of two partially exposed pits, measured nearly four times the size in plan than that of the western alignment that consisted of one fully exposed pit and two partially exposed pits.

Plate 4 Pit [112] looking north-east

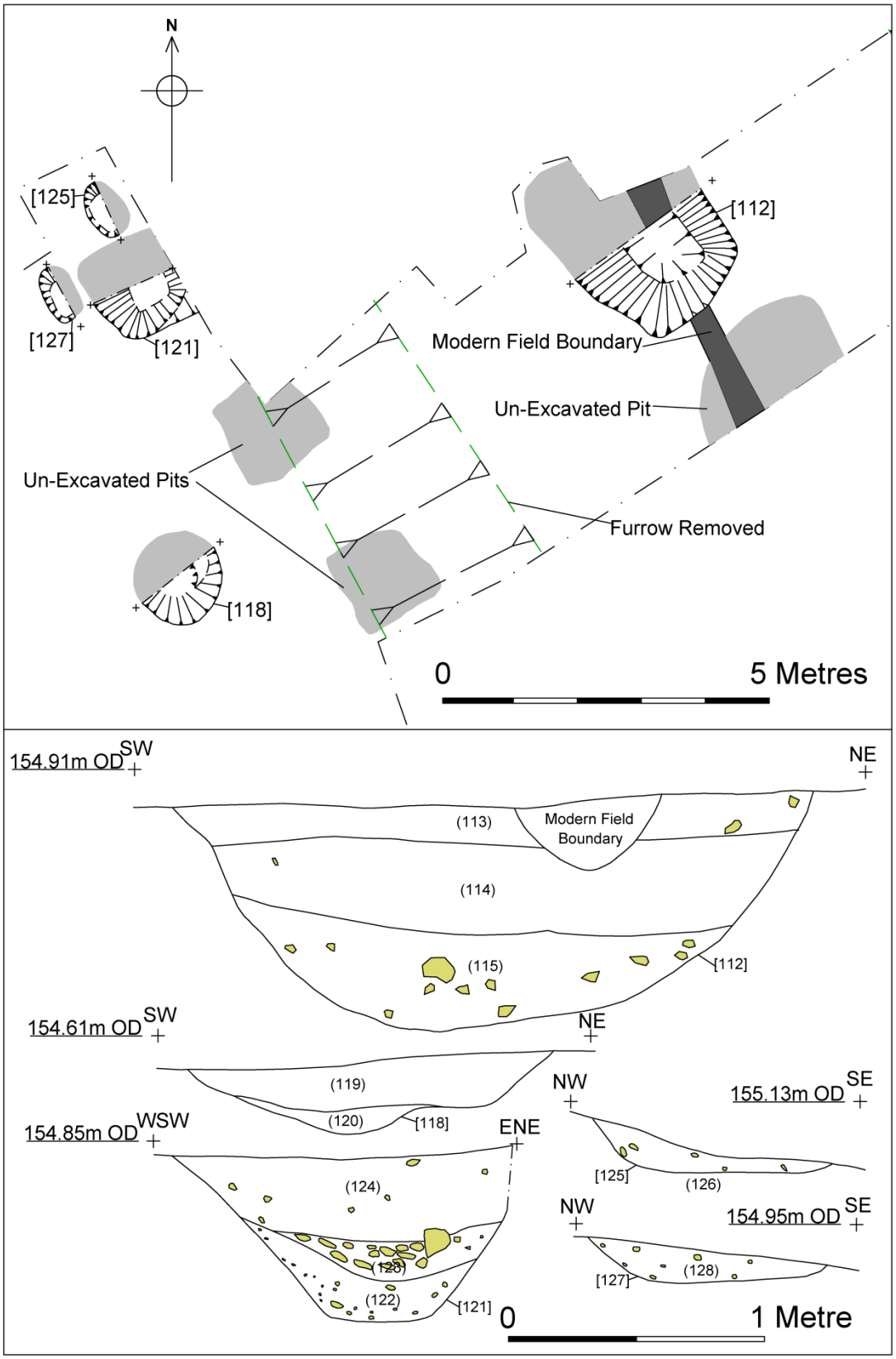

Figure 6 Plan of Archaeological features within Trench **6**

The northernmost pit from each alignment was sample excavated. Pit [112], located on the eastern pit alignment was sub-oval in shape, measured 3.3m long, 2.4m wide and 0.87m deep. Its sides were concave and it had a reasonably flat base (pl.4). It was

filled by three separately identifiable fills. The primary fill consisted of a light reddish brown silty sandy clay deposit (115) containing common small to large sub-rounded/sub-angular pebbles. It measured a maximum of 0.37m thick and was overlaid by a mid brownish orange silty sand deposit (114) containing occasional small-large sub-rounded pebbles and occasional larger cobbles. This deposit measured a maximum of 0.35m and was overlaid an upper fill consisting of a mid orangey brown silty sand deposit (113) that contained common small-large sub-rounded pebbles. The second (unexcavated) pit was partially exposed within the south-eastern side of the trench and was located *c*.0.55m to the south-east of pit [112]. It measured 2.54m wide which was comparable in size with the width of excavated pit. Both the upper deposits of these pits were truncated by the former field boundary marked on the 1980 OS map. Pit [121], located on the western pit alignment was partially exposed within the northern extension of the trench. It appeared sub-square in plan with rounded corners and measured 1.56m in length, >1.38m wide and 0.7m deep. The sides of the feature were generally steep and straight with an incline of *c*.45°-60° and it had a flat base (pl.5). The excavated profile suggested that almost the complete pit was located within the trench. It was filled by three separately identifiable deposits. The primary fill consisted of a light grey brown silty sandy clay deposit (122) containing common small sub-rounded pebbles. It measured a maximum of 0.2m thick and was overlaid by a dark grey brown silty sandy clay deposit (123) that contained a band of large cobbles. This deposit measured a maximum of 0.15m thick and contained a concentration of charcoal fragments that may represent the fragmentary remains of a small piece of burnt timber. The upper fill consisted of a dark greyish brown sandy silt deposit (124) containing occasional small-large sub-rounded pebbles are rare charcoal flecks. The deposit measured a maximum of 0.3m deep. Two large fragments of sandstone were recorded within the top of the fill, one of which was pulled out by the machine bucket. Stones these sizes were not present within the local geology of the trench. The two unexcavated pits within the pit alignment to the south-east were a similar size and shape to pit [121]. Their dimensions measured 1.53m x 1.43m and 1.39m x 1.31m respectively. The three pits were also evenly spaced at 1.41m and 1.46m respectively.

Plate 5 Pit [121] looking north north-west

Three further pits were also recorded in close association with the western pit alignment. Pit [118] was located equidistantly between the two unexcavated pits *c*.1m offset to their south-western side. It was sub circular in plan, measuring 1.4m in diameter and 0.32m deep. Its sides and base were concave and it was filled with two separately identifiable deposits. The primary fill consisted of a dark yellow brown silty sand deposit (120) containing occasional small sub-rounded pebbles. It measured a maximum of 0.1m deep and was overlaid by an upper fill consisting of dark orangey brown silty sand deposit (119) containing occasional sub-rounded pebbles. This measured a maximum of 0.2m deep. The other two pits, [125] and [127], were similar in form and were associated with pit alignment pit [121]. Pit [125] was located directly north-north-west of pit [121] (pl.6). It was sub-oval, measuring 0.88m long, 0.62m wide and 0.15m deep but it had been truncated by the machine. The feature was also orientated north-north-west to south-south-east and its sides were steep and straight with a *c*.50° incline, becoming shallower toward the southern end that had been more severely truncated and it had a flat base. It was filled by a dark grey brown sandy silty clay deposit (126) that contained common small-large sub-rounded pebbles and rare charcoal flecks. A single secondary flint flake was recovered from this deposit (identified by Lynden Cooper). Pit [127] was located adjacent to the north-western corner of Pit [121]. It was also sub-oval in plan, measuring 0.9m long, 0.55m wide and 0.2m deep. Its sides were steep and sloping with an incline of *c*.45° and it had a flat base. It was filled by a similar dark greyish brown sandy silty clay deposit (128) that contained common small-large sub-rounded pebbles and rare charcoal flecks.

Plate 6 Group of pits [121], [125] and [127] looking north

Three agricultural furrows were also exposed within the trench that were orientated north-north-west to south-south-east. These furrows were almost completely removed during machining in order to maximise the visibility of the natural substrata within the trench. The central furrow had partially truncated the two southernmost pits of the western pit alignment that initially made their identification difficult.

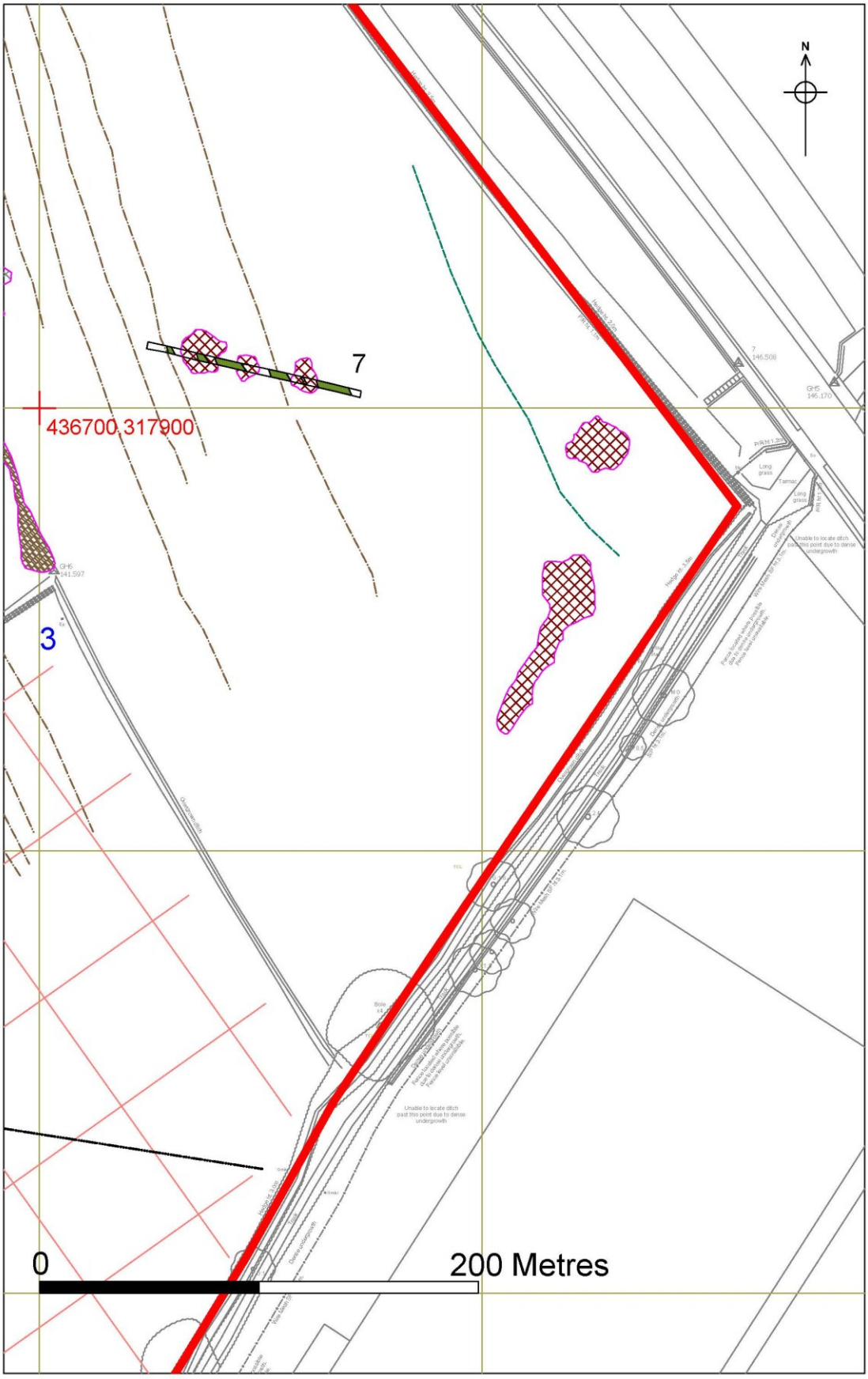

Figure 7 Plan of Trench **7** incorporating the geophysical survey, 100m Grid

Trench 7 (fig. 7)

Trench **7** was located in order to cross three geophysical anomalies that large sub-circular response and smaller sub-circular response. Directly below the topsoil similar spreads of mixed orange, red and beige clay were exposed with patches of degraded coal as seen in Trench **3**. A spread of re-deposited burnt clay was also recorded *c*.35m from the west north-west end of the trench that is likely to have accounted for the easternmost geophysical anomaly. A series of large agricultural furrows were recorded cutting these deposits that contained horseshoe drains. These were oriented north north-west to south south-east. Three sumps were excavated through the mixed deposits, revealing a sequence of thin soft clay deposits overlying differential quantities of degraded coal to a maximum depth of 0.9m. These deposits overlaid a solid blue grey mudstone (pl.7). No archaeological features or finds were recorded within this trench.

Plate 7 Sump into Trench **7** through overlying mixed deposits

7. Conclusion

Trenches **4** and **6** have confirmed the existence of a double and single pit alignment initially identified from cropmarks seen on Google Earth (2006 images), mapping their southern continuation beyond the field boundary. However no evidence of industrial activities previously suggested by the geophysical survey was recorded within Trenches **1-3** and **7**.

Pit Alignments

The confirmation of two large pit alignments in close proximity to one another at Ashby-de-la-Zouch is of some significance. Pit alignment boundaries are widely accepted as some of the earliest landscape features of the first millennium BC and are a familiar, but enigmatic, cropmark feature of central and eastern Britain, particular clustering in the midlands (Thomas 2008, 144). These monuments consist of linear arrangements of fairly uniform, regular shaped and regular placed pits, often recorded as part of a wider network of similar boundaries. They are most commonly identified from cropmark evidence as they are frequently difficult to detect by geophysical survey due to the sterile nature of their fills. These monuments are also notoriously

difficult to date as a result of their landscape position is generally away from most settlement foci. Where finds have been recorded the features have generally dated to the later Bronze Age and early Iron Age in the midlands.

Each of pit alignments recorded during the evaluation conformed to a uniform pattern individually but varied considerably from one another. The pit alignment pit excavated within Trench **4** was sub-rectangular, measured *c*.2.1m long, *c*.1.8m wide and had spacing with the adjacent pit of *c*.1.3m. The two pit alignments within Trench **6** were very different from one another. The western alignment contained sub-squared pits measuring *c*.1.5m in diameter and also spaced at *c*.1.5m. The eastern alignment was much bigger and sub-oval in plan, measuring 3.1m long, 1.8m wide and had spacing with the adjacent pit of just *c*.0.5m. It is likely that this pit alignment in its original would have had no spacing between the pits and acted as a continuous boundary at this point. It is suggested that variations in pit shape may be chronologically significant. It is uncertain what the significance of this variation is but it may suggest that the pit alignments could have been constructed at different times, spread over a prolonged period of time. Hingley (1989, 2-3) suggests that alignments composed of rectangular pits tend to date from the Late Bronze Age to Middle Iron Age, whereas alignments containing oval pits have a broader date range from the Late Neolithic to the Late Iron Age.

Other features with Trench **6** are likely to be related to the pit alignments. A circular pit was located *c.*1.5m off set from the western pit alignment, positioned equidistantly between two of the pits. It is possible this feature represents a 'marker' pit, a phenomena also seen during the excavations of a pit alignment along the Earl Shilton Bypass (Jarvis 2011, 32). Two smaller elongated features were also recorded surrounding the northernmost exposed pit of the western pit alignment but their function is uncertain. The only artefact from the evaluation, consisting of a secondary flint flake of later prehistoric date came from one of these features. Interestingly, the adjacent pit alignment pit [121] contained a large sandstone fragment that was unlikely to have originated from the immediate vicinity of the trench on the basis of the exposed geology and could have functioned as a marker stone (pl.8).

Plate 8 Stone recovered from the top of pit alignment pit [121]

It is possible that both the archaeological and 'natural' factors may have played an important role in the siting of the pit alignments recorded by cropmark evidence and during the evaluation. The potential significance of this can been seen within the contour survey (fig. 8) that clearly shows both pit alignments bisect a steep slope that leads to a prominent ridge within the field to the north of the evaluation. The western single pit alignment cropmark ends at the spur of the promontory and the double pit alignment cropmark also ends at the top of the promontory *c.*100m to the east. It is possible that increased erosion at the top of the slope may explain the cut-off point of cropmark but the fact the continuation of the cropmarks cannot be traced down the northern side of the slope appears to suggest that the alignments do not continue beyond the promontory. It is feasible that the promontory itself may have been a focus for earlier settlement or funerary activity that has become incorporated into later boundary systems. This phenomenon has previously been recorded elsewhere in the county at Earl Shilton and Eye Kettleby (Jarvis 2011, 45; Finn 2011, 84-86). However no clear ditch systems could be seen on top of the promontory within the 2006 Google imagery.

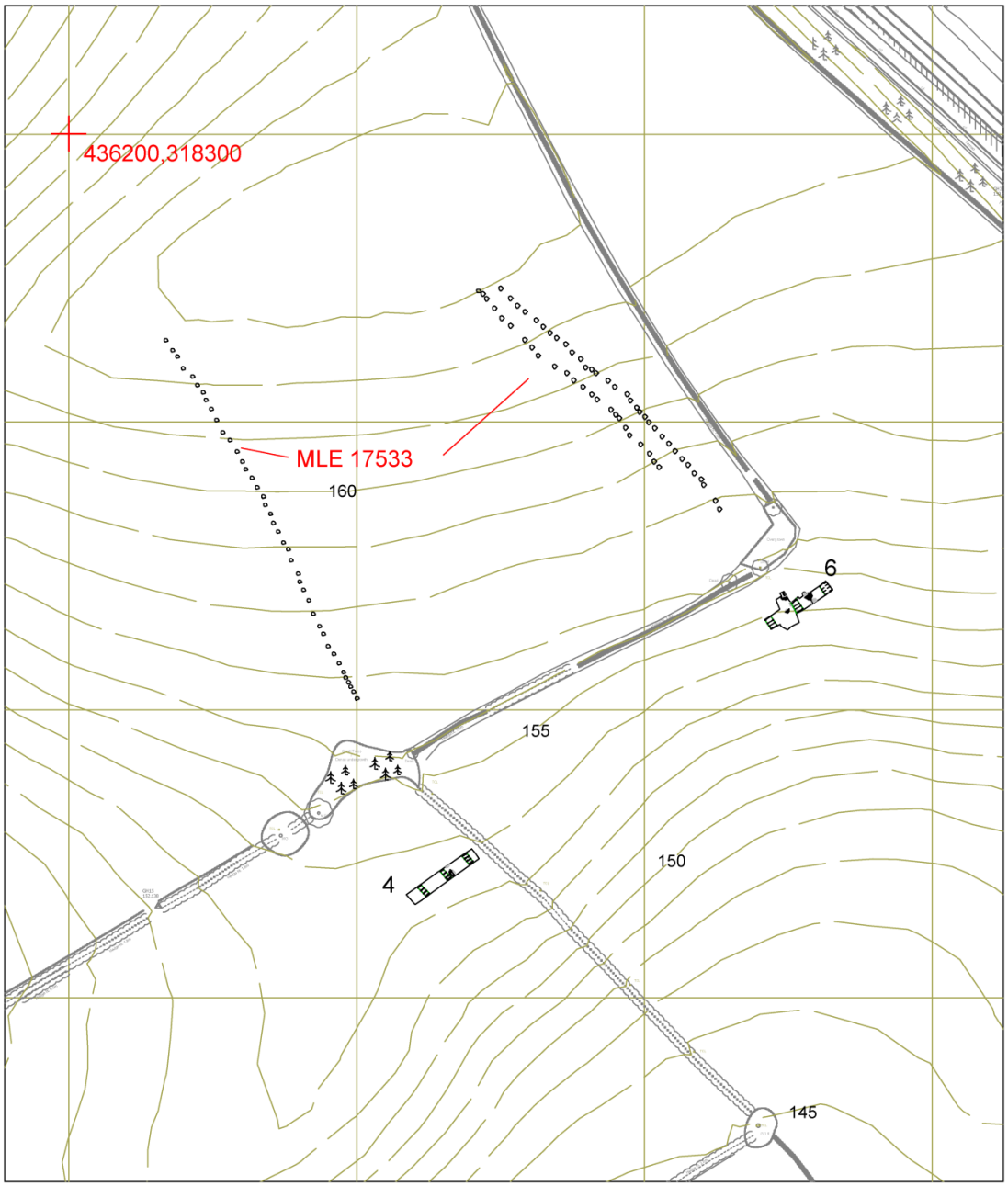

Figure 8 Contour survey showing cropmarks in relation to Trenches **4** and **6**

Magnetic anomalies suggesting industrial activities

Trenches **1-3** and Trench **7** targeted possible industrial features highlighted by the geophysical survey. However none of the trenches revealed any evidence of in-situ industrial activities. Trench **1** revealed evidence of modern dumping as well as a modern linear feature that may either represent the continuation of a field boundary or possibly a removed brick wall. Trench **2** revealed a large modern cut that was clearly visible as an earthwork within the field. It seems likely this was the result of open cast coal extraction which is also visible within the geophysical survey in the fields to the north. Trenches **1** and **7** produced similar results, consisting of spreads of clay that appeared to be re-deposited in nature. Within the clay, patches of coal were visible that may have provided the anomalies seen within the geophysical survey. Trench **7** also contained an area of re-deposited burnt clay that had provided one of the geophysical responses. Sumps were excavated along both trenches that showed the

clays overlaid variable quantities of degraded coal that in turn overlaid solid natural mudstone a maximum depth of 0.9m below the topsoil. It seems likely that these deposits also represent activities associated with open cast coal extraction but it's uncertain whether they represent the basal levels of coal extraction or whether represent the spread of overburden from adjacent working areas. Interestingly both areas had reverted back to agricultural within an open field system afterwards because evidence of agricultural furrows were recorded that truncated these deposits.

8. Archive

The archive for this project will be deposited with Leicester Museums in due course with accession number X.A22.2013. The archive consists of the following:

1 Unbound copy of this report (ULAS Report No. 2013-038)
7 Trench recording sheets
2 Context record
28 Context sheets
3 Contact sheets of digital photographs
1 Drawing index
3 A3 Sheets of permatrace
1 photographic record (2 sheets)
1 CD of digital photographs
1 Set B&W contact sheets
1 Set B&W negatives

9. Publication

A summary of the work will be submitted for publication in the local archaeological journal *Transactions of The Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* in due course. The report will also be added to the Archaeology Data Service's (ADS) Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) database held by the University of York under the reference universi1-144953.

INFORMATION REQUIRED	**EXAMPLE**
Project Name	Money Hill, Ashby-de-la-Zouch
Project Type	Evaluation
Project Manager	Patrick Clay
Project Supervisor	James Harvey
Previous/Future work	Yes/Yes
Current Land Use	Arable land
Development Type	Residential, School, Heath centre
Reason for Investigation	NPPF, Section 12
Position in the Planning Process	Pre-Application
Site Co ordinates	SK 361 176

Start/end dates of field work	19/02/2013-25/02/13
Archive Recipient	LCCHNET
Study Area *	68.6 hectares
Associated project reference codes Museum accession	Accession Number XA22.2013 OASIS form ID: universi1-144953

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