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**Archaeological Services**

**An Archaeological Evaluation  
at Farley Way, Quorn,  
Leicestershire (SK 56045 17321)**




Roger Kipling

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**An Archaeological Evaluation at  
Farley Way, Quorn, Leicestershire  
(NGR: SK 56045 17321)**

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**For: Leicestershire County Council**

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[NGR: SK 56045 17321]**

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**Summary**

*An archaeological trial trench evaluation was undertaken in April 2013 by University of Leicester Archaeological Services on behalf Leicestershire County Council. The fieldwork was undertaken in advance of the possible submission of a planning application for the construction of light industrial units at Farley Way, Quorn, Leicestershire in order to assess the potential impact of the development on any archaeological remains as may have been present. Previous work including a desk-based assessment and geophysical survey suggested potential for archaeological features.*

*The archaeological evaluation at Farley Way, Quorn, Coalville, produced little evidence of archaeological activity with the exception of an undated feature and some limited evidence for medieval ridge and furrow cultivation.*

*The site archive will be deposited with the Leicestershire County Council under the accession number X.A41. 2013.*

**Introduction**

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at Farley Way, Quorn, Leicestershire in accordance in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework Section 12: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment (DCLG March 2012).

A desk-based assessment (DBA; Kipling 2013) had established that the site lay to the south-west of the historic settlement core which is known to possess a number of recorded medieval and post-medieval archaeological remains. Whilst there are no known archaeological remains within actual site, it is situated within an area of high archaeological potential; namely, the gravel terraces along the River Soar. Previous archaeological evaluation and excavation a short distance to the north of the proposed development site had revealed Iron Age enclosures as well as a possible Bronze Age round barrow. Coupled with discoveries of worked flint and other finds in the vicinity of the development area, this suggested potential for prehistoric archaeological remains to be present within the application area.

A geophysical survey (Cooper 2013) recorded ridge and furrow in the development area along with several areas of disturbance and a service trench in the south-west corner of the site. They also identified several anomalies that could be geological. However given the potential for prehistoric archaeology in the area it was deemed possible that these anomalies could represent prehistoric features which are often difficult to detect.

In consequence the Principal Planning Archaeologist, Historic & Natural Environment Team, Leicestershire County Council, recommended a programme of evaluation trial trenching. The investigation was required in order to provide an adequate sample of the development area and to assess the likely archaeological impact of the development proposals. The agreed scheme was set out in a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI; ULAS 2013).

### Site Description, Topography and Geology

The proposed development site (SK 56045 17321) is located to the north of Quorn, between the village and the A6, (Fig. 1). The site comprises approximately an area of c.3.24 hectares, currently under pasture.

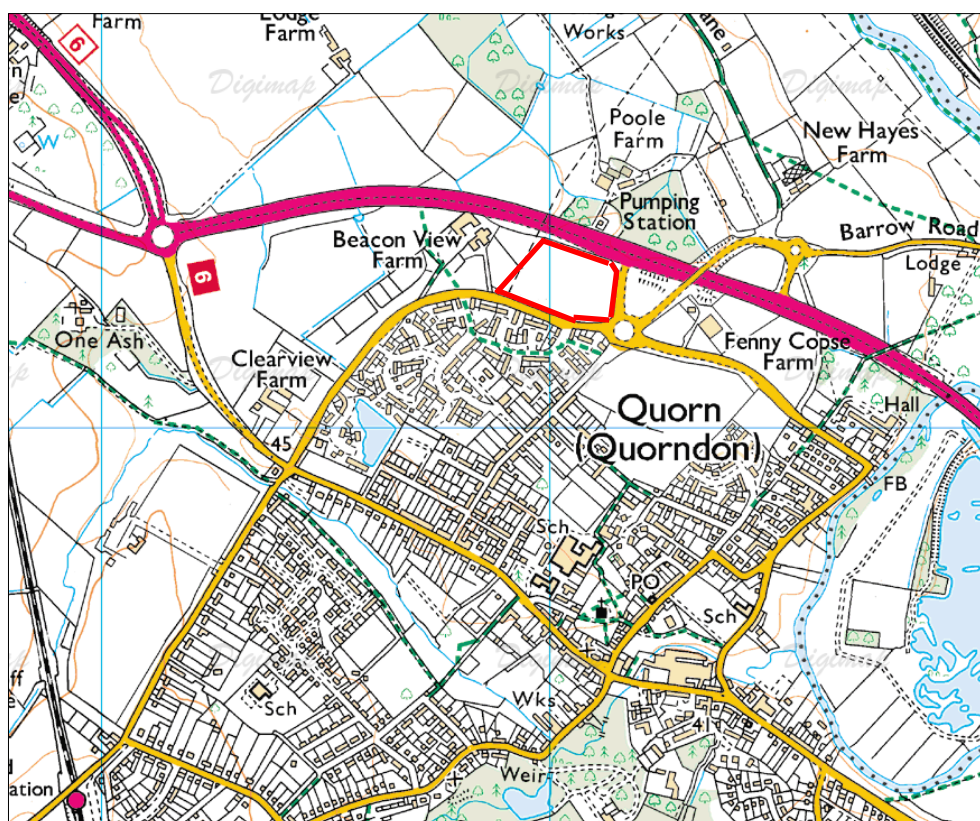


Figure 1: Site Location (Scale 1:50 000)

*Reproduced from the Landranger 1:50000 map by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright 1996. All rights reserved. Licence number AL 100029495*

The Ordnance Survey Geological Survey of Great Britain Sheet 169 indicates that the underlying geology of the site is alluvium overlying Branscombe Mudstone Formation (BCMU). The site is effectively flat, lies at a height of c.41m O.D. and appears to be the original topography.

### **Archaeological and Historical Background (from the DBA)**

An investigation of the Historic Environment Record (HER) for Leicestershire and Rutland for the desk-based assessment (Kipling 2013) indicated that no archaeological sites, finds or discoveries lay within the study site itself. HER records from the vicinity, as defined by a 1km radius of the site, are as follows:

#### *Prehistoric/Undated*

Archaeological interventions in the vicinity of the proposed development area reveal indications of prehistoric activity centred on alluvial deposits associated with the River Soar, which runs close to the development site.

An evaluation to the north of the site in 2002 at Pillings Lock revealed alluvium and gravel terraces which suggest the former course of the River Soar with possible gravel islands (**MLE 9541**). On the west bank of the former water course an Iron Age occupation site was revealed. A series of pits, ditches and a ring ditch were found in association with 42 sherds of pottery, 24 of which were Scored Ware dating to the mid to late Iron Age.

Two Iron Age enclosures were recorded during excavation in 2003, as well as pits, postholes etc. One of the enclosures was probably sub-rectangular and one probably circular. They probably formed a roundhouse in addition to structures such as fences, two-post or four-post structures. A follow-up watching brief undertaken by ULAS in 2004/5 (**MLE 17227**) recorded a curved linear feature thought to be a continuation of the circular enclosure previously recorded. A palaeochannel was also identified running roughly north/south across the site. Palynological analysis recorded deposits dating from two periods, suggesting land clearance in the Mesolithic and pasture in the Bronze Age period. A ring ditch, likely a round barrow, is visible on a 2006 vertical aerial photograph south of Quorn Fields Farm (**MLE 825**), whilst a possible prehistoric enclosure cropmark was identified in the 1970s north of The Hall (**MLE 798**). Further prehistoric activity in the vicinity is suggested by the discovery of three unstratified flint flakes in an evaluation in 2004 at Loughborough Road (**MLE 10531**).

#### *Romano-British*

The HER includes stray finds of Roman date, namely a Colchester derivative bow brooch found to the northwest of Quorn (**MLE 2475**) alongside the A6 and a bronze Roman sestertius, which may be of Augustus, found on the line of the Epinal Way extension in c.2002 (**MLE 9554**).

#### *Anglo-Saxon*

A triangular gusset plate from an Anglo-Saxon wrist clasp found in a ploughed field on the edge of the A6 in Quorn (**MLE 6110**) comprises the sole evidence for the Anglo-Saxon period from the vicinity of the site.

#### *Medieval and Post-Medieval*

There are a number of known medieval and post-medieval sites in the vicinity of the proposed development area. A possible medieval ironstone quarry site, as shown on a 1752 map, is known to the west of the site (**MLE 809**), along with a rabbit warren (**MLE 812**) and trackway, 'Ye Deepway' (**MLE 829**) and slate quarry (**MLE 830**). Faint traces of village earthworks survive on the southeastern edge of the village (**MLE 838**), with evidence of former houses facing School Lane and Station Road. Fieldwork in 2007 recorded the earthworks and below-ground features such as gullies, pits and postholes (though none were dateable).

The parish church of St. Bartholomew and Farnham Chapel (**MLE 13157**), built of Mountsorrel granite, has a Norman S door (reset?) and priest's doorway, and a short Norman string course. The tower is Perpendicular west tower, with a Decorated north aisle, and the rest is early 14th century.

The village of Quorn includes several significant buildings of post-medieval date, including the late 16th/17th century 17 Church Lane (**MLE 13155**), a cruck-framed building with rendered and colourwashed granite rubble stone and brick, and the 17th or 18th century 19 Church Lane (**MLE 13156**) Cottage. The Dower House, Dower House Gardens (**MLE 827**) has a late Georgian front with one wing still timber-framed with close studding. The Ministry Provisional List suggests a late C15th/early C16th date. Ye Olde Butcher's Shop, 2 Station Road (**MLE 13194**), is a late 16th or early 17th century cruck framed cottage.

Quorn Hall (**MLE 13187**) lies to the east of the site. Nether Hall was rebuilt c.1680 by Henry Farnham following a fire. Hugo Meynell ('the father of the English hunt') bought it in 1753. It was then the home of the Quorn Hunt. It is now known as Quorn Hall. Since 1938 it has belonged to Leicestershire County Council.

The Leicestershire Historic Landscape Characterisation area identifies the proposed development area as Piecemeal Enclosure.

### **Aims and Objectives**

The general aims of the evaluation were as follows:

- 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 enable the archaeological implications of the proposed development 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.

Specific evaluation aims were to:-

- Seek to establish the nature of the geophysical anomalies and to determine if they are of archaeological significance

The fieldwork specified was intended to provide further indications of the character and extent of any buried archaeological remains in order that the potential impact of the development on such remains might be assessed.

## **Methodology**

### ***Archaeological Trial Trenches***

Prior to the commencement of works an Accession Code was obtained and the required archive deposition forms completed. An OASIS online record was initiated and the key fields completed on Details, Location and Creator forms.

Fieldwork was carried out in April 2014 and involved the machine excavation of thirteen trial trenches (approximately 30 x 1.8m) long in order to provide the 2% sample of the development area stipulated in the brief.

Trench locations were scanned with a Cable Avoidance Tool (CAT) prior to excavation, service information for the site having been sought from the client. Excavation was undertaken using a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.8m wide toothless ditching bucket, with topsoil and overburden removed carefully in level spits, under continuous archaeological supervision.

The spoil generated during the evaluation was mounded away from the edges of each trench. Topsoil and subsoil was stored separately. Mechanical excavation ceased at undisturbed natural deposits.

The trenches were recorded at an appropriate scale by measured drawing and photography and were located to Ordnance Survey National Grid.

A photographic record, utilising black and white negative film, supplemented by high resolution digital data capture, was maintained during the course of the fieldwork and included:

- the site prior to commencement of fieldwork;
- the site during work, showing specific stages of fieldwork;

Upon completion of the evaluation trenching, the excavated trenches were backfilled and compacted.

All archaeological work was in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Code of Conduct* (2010) and adhered to their *Standard and Guidance for*



*Archaeological Field Evaluation* (2008). The LCC *Guidelines and Procedures for Archaeological work Leicestershire and Rutland* (1997) was also adhered to.

## Results

Thirteen trenches each 30 m in length and *c.*1.8m wide were excavated (Fig. 2). Trenches were located across possible geophysical anomalies and in 'blank' areas to provide a reasonable spread across the area.

All thirteen trenches were characterised by a common sequence of a 0.26m-0.43m accumulation of a mid-grey-brown sandy-silty loam topsoil containing occasional rounded gravel overlying 0.11m-0.60m of mid to light grey-brown sandy-silt subsoil with moderate gravel inclusions. The subsoil in turn overlay patchy pale yellow and brown natural sands and gravels (Figs 3 and 4). Table 1 provides a brief description of each trench.

Table 1: Trench Descriptions

TRENCH	ORIENTATION	LENGTH AND WIDTH (metres)	DESCRIPTION	DEPTH (MIN-MAX metres)
1	SE-NW	30 x 1.80	Topsoil 0.26-0.37m, subsoil 0.22-0.33m. No archaeological finds or features.	0.68-0.81
2	NE-SW	30 x 1.80	Topsoil 0.23-0.31m, subsoil 0.20-0.28m. No archaeological finds or features.	0.61-0.89
3	NW-SE	30 x 1.80	Topsoil 0.28-0.32m, subsoil 0.15-0.28m. No archaeological finds or features.	0.56-0.81
4	NE-SW	30 x 1.80	Topsoil 0.31-0.40m, subsoil 0.25-0.60m. No archaeological finds or deposits.	0.41-1.00
5	NW-SE	30 x 1.80	Topsoil 0.29-0.37m, subsoil 0.11-0.28m. No archaeological finds or deposits.	0.60-0.73
6	NW-SE	30 x 1.80	Topsoil 0.29-0.37m, subsoil 0.31-0.44m. No archaeological finds or deposits.	0.77-0.89
7	NW-SE	30 x 1.80	Topsoil 0.21-0.34m, subsoil 0.13-0.58m. Possible pit.	0.67-1.00
8	E-W	30 x 1.80	Topsoil 0.30-0.41m, subsoil 0.09-0.35m. No archaeological finds or deposits.	0.52-0.84
9	NW-SE	30 x 1.80	Topsoil 0.30-0.38m, subsoil 0.17-0.31m. No archaeological finds or deposits.	0.54-0.78
10	NE-SW	30 x 1.80	Topsoil 0.30-0.36m, subsoil 0.21-0.36m. Single modern pit.	0.59-0.87
11	N-S	30 x 1.80	Topsoil 0.31-0.43m, subsoil 0.19-0.38m. No archaeological finds or deposits.	0.75-1.00
12	NW-SE	30 x 1.80	Topsoil 0.29-0.37m, subsoil 0.15-0.45m. No archaeological finds or deposits.	0.61-0.86
13	E-W	30 x 1.80	Topsoil 0.32-0.38m, subsoil 0.12-0.51m. No archaeological finds or deposits.	0.74-0.91

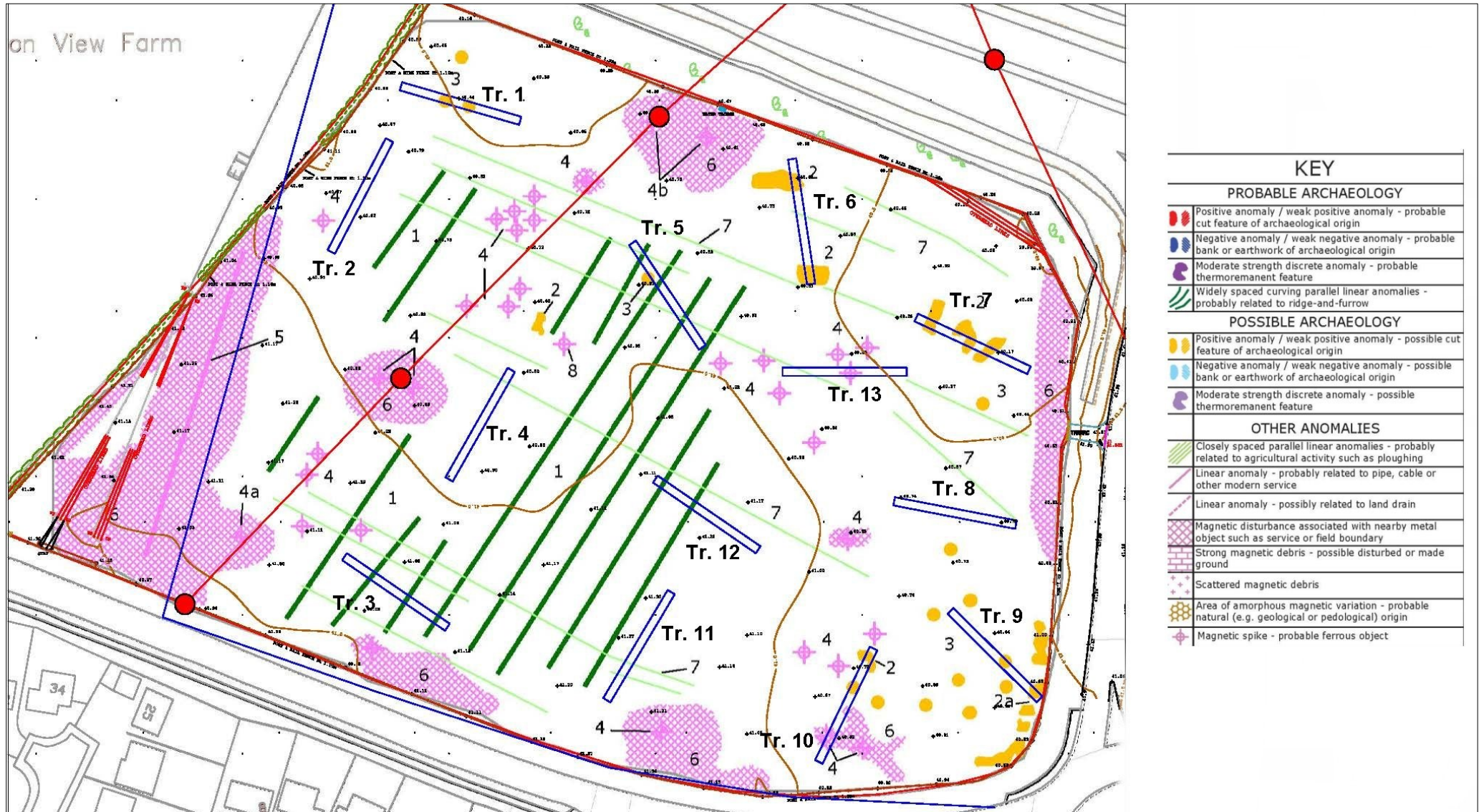


Figure 2: Trench locations overlain on the geophysical survey



Figure 3: Trench 2: view southwest; 2m scale



Figure 4: Trench 9: view northwest; 2m scale

Trenches 12 and 13 both revealed evidence for medieval ploughing in the form of single 2m-wide furrows. There was no visible evidence for ploughing in trenches 5 and 3 despite indication of ridge and furrow from the geophysical survey (Fig. 2).

Only two trenches recorded possible archaeological features. In Trench 10 a sub-circular pit [01] was observed approximately 1.50m in diameter. The pit was 0.60m+ deep and contained modern building material.

In Trench 07 a shallow, sub-circular pit [03] measuring 0.72m x 0.80m x 0.25m deep was recorded at the southern end of the trench (Figs 5-7). The single mid-grey brown sandy-clay silt fill (04) produced no finds and the small pit is undated.



Figure 5: Trench 7: view northwest; 2m scale



Figure 6: Feature 04, Trench 7; view north; 1m scale

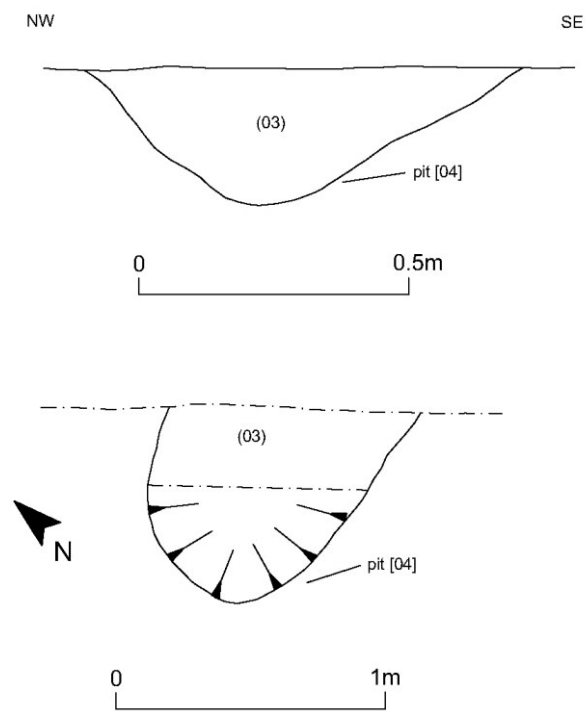


Figure 7: Pit [04] plan & section

## **Conclusions**

The geophysical survey identified a number of anomalies that could be possible cut features of archaeological origin in trenches 1, 5, 6, 7, 9 and 10 (Fig. 2). None of these were identified in the trenches as potential archaeological deposits and given the mixed nature of the natural substrata, it seems likely that these are geological in origin.

The pit in Trench 10 is modern and would be consistent with an area on the geophysical survey identified as disturbance (Fig. 2). Geophysical anomalies were identified in Trench 7; however none of these seem to relate to the small, undated pit recorded during the trial trenching.

Ploughing activity consistent with the geophysical survey was identified in two trenches (Trenches 12 and 13).

The archaeological evaluation at Farley Way, Quorn, produced no artefactual or structural evidence of archaeological activity, with the exception of medieval plough furrows, a modern pit and a small undated pit.

## **Archive and Publications**

The site archive (X.A41.2013), consisting of paper and photographic records, will be deposited with Leicestershire Museums Service.

The archive consists of:

- 13 trench recording sheets
- Photographic record indices
- 33 digital photographs
- A risk assessment form

## **Publication**

A version of the excavation summary (see above) will appear in due course in the *Transactions of the Leicestershire and Rutland Archaeological and Historical Society*.

## **Acknowledgements**

Roger Kipling and Steve Baker of ULAS undertook the archaeological evaluation on behalf of Leicestershire County Council. The project was managed by Patrick Clay.

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LCC *Guidelines and Procedures for Archaeological work Leicestershire and Rutland* (1997)

ULAS, 2013 Written Scheme of Investigation.

## Oasis Information

Project Name	Land at Quorn County Farms Estate, Farley Way, Quorn, Leicestershire
Project Type	Archaeological evaluation
Project Manager	Patrick Clay
Project Supervisor	Roger Kipling
Previous/Future work	Development
Current Land Use	Agricultural
Development Type	Light industrial
Reason for Investigation	NPPF
Position in the Planning Process	Pre-application
Site Co ordinates	NGR SK 560000 173506
Start/end dates of field work	April 2013
Archive Recipient	Leicestershire County Council
Study Area	3.24ha.

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