



University of Leicester

Archaeological Services

An Archaeological Evaluation of land at
Leicester Lions RFC, Lutterworth Road,
Blaby, Leicestershire (Phases I & II)

(SP 563 966)

Mathew Morris & Andrew McLeish



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**An Archaeological Evaluation
of land at Leicester Lions RFC, Lutterworth Road
Blaby, Leicestershire (Phases I &II)
(SP 563 966)**

Mathew Morris & Andrew McLeish

With contributions from Sophie Clarke

For: *Haydn Evans*

Planning Application: 13/0941/1/OX

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An Archaeological Evaluation of land at Leicester Lions RFC, Lutterworth Road, Blaby, Leicestershire, Phases I & II (SP 563 966)

Mathew Morris and Andrew McLeish

Summary

An archaeological field evaluation by trial trenching was carried out on land at Leicester Lions RFC, Lutterworth Road, Blaby, Leicestershire (SP 563 966) by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on 29 January, 2015 (Phase I) and between 6-11 May, 2015 (Phase II). Work was undertaken for Haydn Evans in order to establish the nature, extent, date and significance of any archaeological deposits which may be present, in order to assess the impact of any proposed development on buried remains. Eighteen trenches were excavated across the site achieving a c.4.4% sample of the c.1.81 ha development area.

Overall, the result of the trial-trenching was predominately negative for archaeological activity. Topsoil subsoil appears to have survived along the southern edge of the site with minimal disturbance, but the eastern side had suffered extensive modern ground disturbance down to the natural substratum, whilst the northern half of the site (Phase II) had been artificially flattened for use as a sports ground. Faint medieval ridge and furrow could be seen at ground level along the southern side of the site and in Trench 2 on the eastern side, whilst subsurface evidence for furrows also survived across most of the Phase II trenches. Trench 3 uncovered a possible palaeochannel; Trench 5a contained evidence of a possible eaves-drip gully for an Iron Age roundhouse, whilst a solitary post-hole and gully were recorded in Trenches 11a and 13a. The archive will be held by Leicestershire Museum Service under the accession number X.A12.2015.

Introduction

In January, 2015 University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) carried out the first phase of an archaeological evaluation of land at Leicester Lions RFC, Lutterworth Road, Blaby, Leicestershire (SP 563 966 - Figure 1). The work was undertaken for Haydn Evans in order to establish the nature, extent, date and significance of any archaeological deposits which might be present, in order that an assessment may be made of the impact of any proposed development on the buried remains. A second phase of work was carried out in May, 2015.

In December 2013, a planning application was submitted to Blaby District Council for 'demolition of existing clubhouse and proposed residential development (maximum 46 dwellings), construction of new clubhouse with associated car and coach parking and formation of new vehicular access to Lutterworth Road' (app. no. 13/0941/1/OX). Outline planning permission was granted in October 2014, with Conditions 16-18 requiring a programme of archaeological work to be carried out prior to any demolition or development in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (Buckley 2015) approved by the local planning authority, commencing with an initial phase of trial trenching. This was in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Section 12: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment (DCLG 2012); The Senior Planning Archaeologist for Leicestershire, as archaeological advisor to the local planning authority requiring the investigation to be undertaken in order that the potential impact of the development on any archaeology could be assessed and an appropriate mitigation strategy implemented.

Archaeological fieldwork took place on 29 January, 2015 (Phase I) and between 6-11 May, 2015 (Phase II). This report presents the final results of the archaeological investigation.

Site Location, Geology and Topography

The application area lies on the southern side of Blaby, on land west of Lutterworth Road (SP 563 966 - Figure 1), c.8km south-south-west of Leicester. Leicester Lions RFC comprises a broadly rectangular plot of sports ground, covering c.3.2 ha, situated between Lutterworth Road to the east, Blaby Bypass (A426) to the west, properties extending off Ridley Close to the north and a nursery to the south. The application area covers c.1.8 ha of the sports ground.

Phase I of the investigation comprises a narrow L-shaped piece of land, covering c.0.4 ha, situated around the south-eastern edge of the sports ground. Phase II (forthcoming) comprises a broadly rectangular piece of land, covering c.1.4ha, covering the northern half of the sports ground (Figure 2).

The British Geological Survey of Great Britain shows that the underlying geology is likely to consist of superficial deposits of Pleistocene diamicton of the Thrussington Member overlying bedrock deposits of early Triassic mudstone belonging to the Mercian Mudstone Group (BGS OpenGeoscience). The site lies on relatively flat ground at c.76m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).

Archaeological and Historical Background

An archaeological desk-based assessment has previously been undertaken by ULAS for the client (Clarke 2012). The following background is adapted from that report.

Historical Background

Sophie Clarke

The earliest reference to the present spelling of the place-name ‘Blaby’ dates to a Charter Roll of 1175, and is thought to have been taken from the Old Swedish or Old Norse for ‘by (or settlement) in a cold, cheerless, exposed place’ (Wilshere 1986), although another interpretation is ‘farmstead or village of a man called Blár’ (Mills 2003).

At the time of the Domesday Survey of 1086, the village of ‘Bladi’ is recorded to have been held by a man called William, one of the Count of Meulan’s men. Bricmar and Ulf held it before the Norman Conquest (1066). The Domesday Survey entry for Blaby (Morris 1979) has been translated as follows:

‘From the Count, William holds ½ hide and 1 ½ c. of land in BLABY. There were 9 ploughs. Now in lordship 1 plough, with 1 slave. 28 freemen and 4 villagers with 4 smallholders have 6 ploughs. A mill at 2s; meadow, 30 acres. The value was 30s. Now 50s. Bricmar and Ulf held it.

During the reign of Henry II, the manor of Blaby was held by the Lodbroke family, of Lodbroke in Warwickshire. The Lodbrokes, later becoming known also as the de Blaby family held the manor until 1638, when it passed through marriage to the Savilles. George Saville, son of Thomas Saville and Catherine de Blaby, sold the manor to Euseby Ashby who, upon his death, passed it to his nephew, Shukbrugh Ashby.

In 1760, the second Shukbrugh Ashby sold the manor of Blaby to Thomas Major, of Little Glen. The manor was enclosed in 1776, where it is recorded to have consisted of 1200 acres. In 1807, at the time of John Nichols survey of the villages of Leicestershire and Rutland, the lord of the manor was recorded as Capt. Edmund Major, of the Northamptonshire militia (Nichols 1810).

William White, writing in 1846, describes Blaby as ‘a considerable village’, with a growing population of 1150 inhabitants, many employed as framework knitters. John Clarke esq. is listed as lord of the manor, ‘residing at the Hall, a handsome mansion in the Elizabethan style, erected in 1838 and having beautiful pleasure grounds recently laid out.’ The Major family

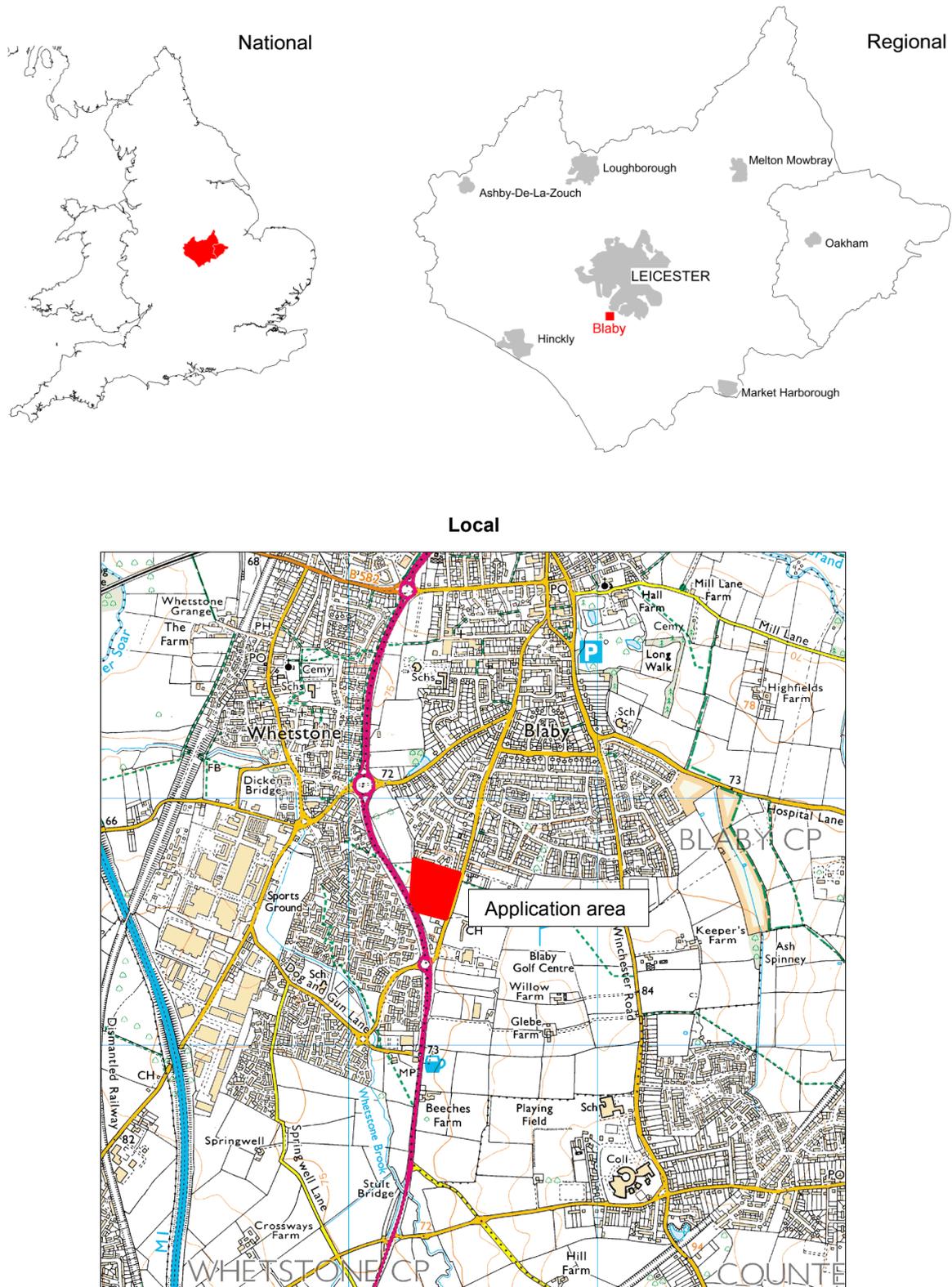


Figure 1: Location Plans with project area highlighted.

Reproduced from Explorer® 233 Leicester & Hinckley 1:25,000 OS map by permission of Ordnance Survey® on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown copyright 2010. All rights reserved. Licence number AL 100029495.

held the manor ‘til a few years ago and resided at the old Hall, which was taken down in 1837.’

Archaeological Background

Sophie Clarke

The application area is located on the western side of Lutterworth Road, which is believed to follow the line of the Roman road leading from Leicester to the small Roman town of *Tripontium*, located to the south of Lutterworth. The Historic Environment Record (HER) for Leicestershire and Rutland indicates that the line of the Roman road (HER ref. **MLE1902**) follows the eastern boundary of the application area.

No archaeological sites have been recorded within the application area, although no archaeological investigation has previously been undertaken. There are a number of known sites in the vicinity, which are summarised below.

Undated

In 2008, geophysical survey of land located *c.*400m to the east of the application area revealed evidence of a linear, ditch type feature in association with several pits (**MLE17023**), likely to be of archaeological significance.

Prehistoric

A sub-circular shaped cropmark located *c.*900m to the south of the site (**MLE29**) is undated but thought to represent later prehistoric remains.

Roman

The site lies adjacent to the Roman *Tripontium* road that runs from Leicester south and follows the present line of the Lutterworth Road (**MLE1902**).

Medieval

The application area lies *c.*500m to the south-east of the medieval settlement core of Whetstone village, which has been deduced from early maps (**MLE15731**). The remains of a medieval post-mill were excavated and recorded to the east of Whetstone Church, approximately 700m to the north-west of the assessment area, prior to the construction of the Blaby by-pass (**MLE369**). The frame of a medieval purse was *c.*800m to the north-east (**MLE6614**), in the garden of number 4, Chester Road.

A survey of the preserved medieval ridge and furrow of Leicestershire undertaken by R.F. Hartley in the 1980s and derived from earlier aerial photographs, shows ridge and furrow aligned east to west across the site. This appears to have been levelled off, probably during the formation of the sports grounds, but there is good survival of pronounced ridge and furrow in the area of scrub located to the west of the application area.

Post-medieval

A pond located at Grove Road (**MLE16566**), *c.*400m north of the application area, is recorded as a fishpond on the 1st edition OS map. There is an early 19th century cast-iron milepost, listed Grade II, located *c.*800m to the north on Lutterworth Road (**MLE12262**).

The assessment area is located *c.*400m to the east of the former Power Jets Factory (**MLE17415**), located on Cambridge Road, Whetstone. The company was set up by Frank Whittle in 1936 for the production of jet engines.



Figure 2: Plan of project area showing trench locations.

Archaeological Objectives

The principle aims of the archaeological excavation were:

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

The results of the investigation will be considered in light of the East Midlands Research Agenda (Cooper 2006) and updated Agenda and Strategy (Knight *et. al* 2012).

The Iron Age and Roman periods (Taylor 2006; Willis 2006; Knight et. al 2012)

- There are known Iron Age and Roman sites within the vicinity including a sub-circular cropmark and a Roman road. This investigation has the potential to contribute

to knowledge on Iron Age/Roman transitions in rural settlement, landscape and society. Artefacts may identify trade links and economy.

The medieval period (Lewis 2006; Knight et. al 2012)

- This investigation has the potential to contribute towards research into the origins and development of medieval settlement, landscape and society. Environmental evidence could provide information on local environmental conditions as well as settlement activity, craft, industry and land use. Artefacts can assist in the development of a type series within the region and provide evidence for craft, industry and exchange across broad landscape areas.



Figure 3: Phase I before work commenced, looking south across the location of Trenches 2 and 3.

Methodology

During the evaluation, modern overburden and soil was removed in level spits under continuous archaeological supervision down to the uppermost archaeological deposits or the natural substratum, depending on which was reached first. This was carried out with a mini-360° mechanical digger using a 1.6m wide, toothless ditching bucket.

All trenches, open areas, exposed sections and spoil heaps were visually inspected for features and finds. Features would be hand cleaned, planned, photographed and sample excavated as appropriate. Field notes were recorded on pro-forma ULAS urban trench recording forms whilst stratigraphic units were to be given a unique context number and recorded on pro-forma ULAS context sheets.

Trench and feature plans/sections were drawn at appropriate scales and tied into the National Grid using appropriate methods. A photographic record of the excavation was prepared, illustrating in both detail and general context the principal features and finds discovered. Colour digital photographs were taken throughout the excavation. The photographic record also included 'working shots' to illustrate more generally the nature of the archaeological operation mounted.

All work followed the approved written scheme of investigation (Clay 2014) and the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) *Code of Conduct* and adhered to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (2014).

Results

The written scheme of investigation (Buckley 2015) provided for the investigation of nineteen 30m by 1.6m trial trenches (912 sq m) to achieve a c.5% sample of the c.1.81 ha development area as requested by Leicestershire County Council. At the request of the client, the work was to be divided into two phases: Phase I, comprising four trenches, to be followed at a later date by Phase II, the remaining fifteen trenches.

Phase I

During the Phase I fieldwork, it was found that the location of one trench in the south-easterly corner of the site was inaccessible for the mechanical digger due to a combination of overhead power-lines and mature vegetation. Instead, in consultation with the Senior Planning Archaeologist for Leicestershire, only three trenches were opened in Phase I, equating to 144 sq m (Figure 2).



Figure 4: Trench 1, looking east.

Trench 1

| Length (m) | Width (m) | | Area (sq. m) | | Min. depth (m) | | Max. depth (m) |
|----------------------------------|-----------|------|--------------|------|----------------|------|----------------|
| 31.2 | 1.6 | | 49.92 | | 0.26 | | 0.39 |
| Interval (m) from NW | 0 | 5 | 10 | 15 | 20 | 25 | 30 to SE end |
| Topsoil depth | 0.26 | 0.33 | 0.32 | 0.32 | 0.33 | 0.33 | 0.28 |
| Subsoil depth | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Top of Natural substratum | 0.26 | 0.33 | 0.32 | 0.32 | 0.33 | 0.33 | 0.28 |
| Base of trench | 0.26 | 0.33 | 0.39 | 0.39 | 0.36 | 0.38 | 0.31 |

Trench 1 (Figure 4) was located on flat ground at the southern end of the site, broadly orientated east to west. This is presently grassland along the edge of the sports ground and is the proposed site of the new clubhouse. The mechanical digger removed turf and dark reddish-brown silty-clay topsoil, revealing natural substratum c.0.26-0.33m below ground level. The natural was orange-yellow sandy-clay with occasional gravel inclusions.

No archaeological substrata or features were identified in the trench but at ground level faint east to west orientated ridge and furrow could be seen running across the area.



Figure 5: Trench 2, looking north-east.



Figure 6: Trench 3, looking north.

Trench 2

| Length (m) | Width (m) | | Area (sq. m) | | Min. depth (m) | | Max. depth (m) | |
|---------------------------|-----------|------|--------------|-----|----------------|------|----------------|--|
| 30 | 1.6 | | 48 | | 0.3 | | 0.67 | |
| Interval (m) from NW | 0 | 5 | 10 | 15 | 20 | 25 | 30 to SE end | |
| Overburden depth | 0.3 | 0.54 | 0.6 | 0.5 | 0.6 | 0.57 | 0.6 | |
| Subsoil depth | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | |
| Top of Natural substratum | 0.3 | 0.54 | 0.6 | 0.5 | 0.6 | 0.57 | 0.6 | |
| Base of trench | 0.3 | 0.54 | 0.6 | 0.5 | 0.67 | 0.57 | 0.6 | |

Trench 2 (Figure 5) was located on flat ground along the eastern edge of the site, broadly orientated north-east to south-west, to the south of Trench 3. This is presently car parking for the sports ground and will remain as such in the new development. The mechanical digger removed asphalt, quarry waste and modern hardcore, revealing natural substratum c.0.3-0.6m below ground level. The natural was orange-yellow clay with occasional gravel inclusions but its surface was badly contaminated and discoloured from the overlying modern debris.

Faint ridge and furrow could be observed crossing the trench on an east to west orientation. The furrows were typically c.2.3-2.8m wide and spaced c.5m apart. No other archaeological substrata or features were identified.

Trench 3

| Length (m) | Width (m) | | Area (sq. m) | | Min. depth (m) | | Max. depth (m) |
|----------------------------------|-----------|------|--------------|------|----------------|------|----------------|
| 30 | 1.6 | | 48 | | 0.4 | | 0.6 |
| Interval (m) from NW | 0 | 5 | 10 | 15 | 20 | 25 | 30 to SE end |
| Overburden depth | 0.4 | 0.48 | 0.4 | 0.4 | 0.4 | 0.48 | 0.38 |
| Subsoil depth | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Top of Natural substratum | 0.4 | 0.48 | 0.4 | 0.4 | 0.4 | 0.48 | 0.38 |
| Base of trench | 0.4 | 0.48 | 0.6 | 0.58 | 0.5 | 0.6 | 0.5 |

Trench 3 (Figure 6) was located on flat ground along the eastern edge of the site, broadly orientated north to south, to the north of Trench 2. This is presently car parking for the sports ground and will remain as such in the new development. The mechanical digger removed asphalt and mill waste, revealing natural substratum *c.*0.4-0.6 below ground level. The natural was orange-blue/grey silty-clay overlying greyish-orange/yellow clay with occasional gravel inclusions.

The orange-blue/grey silty-clay appeared to be alluvial in nature and may be evidence of a palaeochannel crossing the trench from east to west. The material concentrated as a *c.*5.6m wide, *c.*0.3m deep concave ‘channel’ in the middle of the trench (*c.*10m from its northern end) and spread along the rest of the trench to the north and south as a *c.*0.1m thick layer. This was mottled as if the surface of the material had dried and cracked, the cracks subsequently filling in with orange-yellow sandy-clay.

No organic material was seen in the clay, although it did have a musty smell suggestive of waterlogged conditions and no archaeological substrata or features were identified in the trench. It was on a similar alignment as the ridge and furrow.

Phase II*Andrew McLeish*

During Phase II, Trenches 11 and 14 were shortened due to buried electrical services and Trench 15 was relocated entirely to avoid still-active buried services. To avoid duplication, Phase II trenches are referred to as Trench 1a, 2a etc. In total, 15 trenches were opened in Phase II, equating to 649.85 sq m (Figure 2).

Trench 1a

| Length (m) | Width (m) | | Area (sq. m) | | Min. depth (m) | | Max. depth (m) |
|----------------------------------|-----------|-----|--------------|-----|----------------|------|----------------|
| 31 | 1.5 | | 46.5 | | 0.2 | | 0.42 |
| Interval (m) from SE | 0 | 5 | 10 | 15 | 20 | 25 | 30 to NW end |
| Overburden depth | 0.2 | 0.3 | 0.34 | 0.3 | 0.33 | 0.42 | 0.42 |
| Subsoil depth | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Top of Natural substratum | 0.2 | 0.3 | 0.34 | 0.3 | 0.33 | 0.42 | 0.42 |
| Base of trench | 0.2 | 0.3 | 0.34 | 0.3 | 0.33 | 0.42 | 0.42 |

Trench 1a was located on flat ground along the southern edge of the Phase II area, orientated south-east to north-west to the south of Trenches 2a and 4a. The mechanical digger removed a shallow topsoil of orangey brown silty clay revealing natural substratum at 0.2m – 0.4m. The natural was a mid to light orange brown clay (Figure 7).



Figure 7: Trench 1a, looking west.



Figure 8: Trench 2a, looking north

Trench 2a

| Length (m) | Width (m) | | Area (sq. m) | | Min. depth (m) | | Max. depth (m) |
|---------------------------|-----------|------|--------------|------|----------------|------|----------------|
| 30 | 1.5 | | 45 | | 0.25 | | 0.6 |
| Interval (m) from N | 0 | 5 | 10 | 15 | 20 | 25 | 30 to S end |
| Overburden depth | 0.22 | 0.3 | 0.35 | 0.37 | 0.35 | 0.38 | 0.32 |
| Subsoil depth | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Top of Natural substratum | 0.22 | 0.3 | 0.35 | 0.37 | 0.35 | 0.38 | 0.32 |
| Base of trench | 0.25 | 0.41 | 0.5 | 0.45 | 0.4 | 0.6 | 0.32 |

Trench 2a was located on flat ground along the western edge of the Phase II area, orientated north-south. The mechanical digger removed a shallow topsoil of dark yellow brown silty clay revealing natural substratum at 0.25m – 0.6m. The natural was a light yellow brown clay with gravel patches. The trench contained the remains of three medieval furrows on a rough east –west alignment (Figure 8).

Trench 3a

Trench 3a was located on flat ground in the north western corner of the phase II area, orientated north-east to south-west. The mechanical digger removed a shallow topsoil of dark orange brown silty clay revealing natural substratum at 0.3m – 0.6m. The natural was a light orange brown clay with gravel patches (Figure 9).

| Length (m) | Width (m) | | Area (sq. m) | | Min. depth (m) | | Max. depth (m) |
|----------------------------------|-----------|-----|--------------|-----|----------------|-----|----------------|
| 28.2 | 1.5 | | 42.3 | | 0.3 | | 0.6 |
| Interval (m) from NW | 0 | 5 | 10 | 15 | 20 | 25 | 30 to SE end |
| Overburden depth | 0.4 | 0.3 | 0.42 | 0.3 | 0.44 | 0.3 | 0.3 |
| Subsoil depth | - | - | 0.18 | - | - | - | - |
| Top of Natural substratum | 0.4 | 0.3 | 0.6 | 0.3 | 0.44 | 0.3 | 0.3 |
| Base of trench | 0.4 | 0.3 | 0.6 | 0.3 | 0.44 | 0.3 | 0.3 |



Figure 9: Trench 3a, looking east.



Figure 10: Trench 4a, looking north east.

Trench 4a

| Length (m) | Width (m) | | Area (sq. m) | | Min. depth (m) | | Max. depth (m) |
|----------------------------------|-----------|------|--------------|-----|----------------|------|----------------|
| 29.2 | 1.6 | | 46.72 | | 0.3 | | 0.5 |
| Interval (m) from NE | 0 | 5 | 10 | 15 | 20 | 25 | 30 to SW end |
| Overburden depth | 0.27 | 0.34 | 0.33 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.38 | 0.3 |
| Subsoil depth | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Top of Natural substratum | 0.27 | 0.34 | 0.33 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.38 | 0.3 |
| Base of trench | 0.3 | 0.43 | 0.5 | 0.3 | 0.45 | 0.4 | 0.37 |

Trench 4a was located on flat ground in the east between Trenches 2a and 5a of the Phase II area, orientated north east – south west. The mechanical digger removed a shallow topsoil of dark orange brown silty clay revealing natural substratum at 0.3m – 0.5m. The natural was a mid-yellow - orange clay with gravel and red clay patches. The remains of two roughly east – west aligned medieval furrows were observed (Figure 10).

Trench 5a

| Length (m) | Width (m) | | Area (sq. m) | | Min. depth (m) | | Max. depth (m) |
|---------------------------|-----------|------|--------------|------|----------------|------|----------------|
| 29.3 | 1.6 | | 46.88 | | 0.3 | | 0.55 |
| Interval (m) from N | 0 | 5 | 10 | 15 | 20 | 25 | 30 to S end |
| Overburden depth | 0.3 | 0.34 | 0.4 | 0.33 | 0.38 | 0.43 | 0.37 |
| Subsoil depth | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Top of Natural substratum | 0.3 | 0.34 | 0.4 | 0.33 | 0.38 | 0.43 | 0.37 |
| Base of trench | 0.3 | 0.4 | 0.45 | 0.38 | 0.55 | 0.45 | 0.47 |

Trench 5a was located on flat ground in the east between Trenches 1a and 6a of the Phase II area, orientated north – south. The mechanical digger removed a shallow topsoil of dark yellow brown silty clay revealing natural substratum at 0.3m – 0.55m. The natural was a light yellow - orange clay (Figure 11). Trench 5a contained the remains of three medieval furrows running east - west as well two shallow curvilinear gullies [3] and [6] and one posthole [4] which were investigated and recorded but yielded no dating evidence (Figure 12-Figure 14).

Gullies [3] and [6] were *c.*0.5-0.58m wide and *c.*0.28m deep with steep sides and concave bases, filled with brown grey silty clay. Post-hole [4] was *c.*0.5m in diameter and *c.*0.1m deep with concave sides and base, similarly filled. It was located ‘inside’ the arc of the two gullies *c.*0.6m to the south of gully [3] (Figure 15).



Figure 11: Trench 5a pre-ex, looking south.



Figure 12: Section through gully [3], looking north west.



Figure 13: Section through posthole [4], looking north.



Figure 14: Section through gully [6], looking south east.

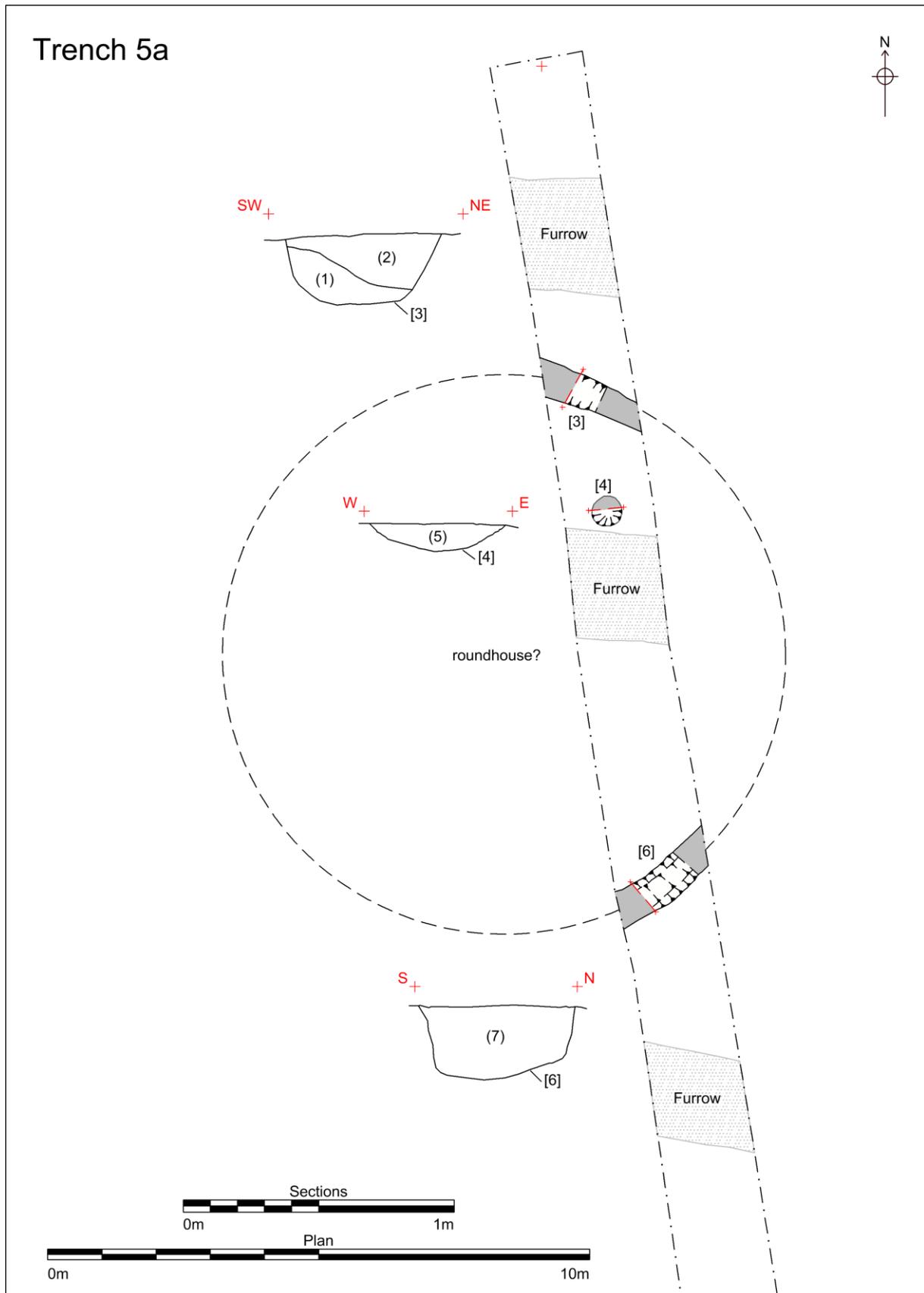


Figure 15: Plan and sections of features in Trench 5a

Trench 6a

| Length (m) | Width (m) | | Area (sq. m) | | Min. depth (m) | | Max. depth (m) |
|----------------------------------|-----------|------|--------------|------|----------------|------|----------------|
| 30 | 1.5 | | 45 | | 0.48 | | 0.58 |
| Interval (m) from SE | 0 | 5 | 10 | 15 | 20 | 25 | 30 to NW end |
| Overburden depth | 0.3 | 0.24 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.16 | 0.2 | 0.2 |
| Subsoil depth | 0.24 | 0.24 | 0.2 | 0.26 | 0.2 | 0.28 | 0.28 |
| Top of Natural substratum | 0.54 | 0.48 | 0.5 | 0.36 | 0.48 | 0.48 | 0.48 |
| Base of trench | 0.54 | 0.48 | 0.58 | 0.56 | 0.46 | 0.48 | 0.58 |

Trench 6a was located on flat ground in the centre between Trenches 5a and 15a of the Phase II area, orientated north west – south east. The mechanical digger removed a shallow topsoil of light grey brown sandy silt revealing natural substratum at 0.48m – 0.58m. The natural was a reddish brown with patches of yellow sandy clay. Trench 6a contained the remains of three medieval furrows running east – west (Figure 16).



Figure 16: Trench 6a, looking north west.



Figure 17: Trench 7a, looking north west.

Trench 7a

| Length (m) | Width (m) | | Area (sq. m) | | Min. depth (m) | | Max. depth (m) |
|----------------------------------|-----------|------|--------------|-----|----------------|-----|----------------|
| 30 | 1.5 | | 45 | | 0.45 | | 0.7 |
| Interval (m) from SE | 0 | 5 | 10 | 15 | 20 | 25 | 30 to NW end |
| Overburden depth | 0.2 | 0.22 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.2 |
| Subsoil depth | 0.13 | 0.24 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.14 | 0.2 | 0.18 |
| Top of Natural substratum | 0.33 | 0.46 | 0.4 | 0.4 | 0.34 | 0.4 | 0.38 |
| Base of trench | 0.45 | 0.61 | 0.52 | 0.5 | 0.54 | 0.7 | 0.48 |

Trench 7a was located on flat ground towards the east between trenches 4a and 8a of the phase II area, orientated north west – south east. The mechanical digger removed a shallow topsoil of light grey brown sandy silt revealing natural substratum at 0.45m – 0.7m. The natural was a reddish brown with patches of yellow sandy clay. Trench 7a contained the remains of two medieval furrows running roughly east – west (Figure 17).

Trench 8a

| Length (m) | Width (m) | | Area (sq. m) | | Min. depth (m) | | Max. depth (m) |
|---------------------------|-----------|------|--------------|------|----------------|------|----------------|
| 30 | 1.5 | | 45 | | 0.34 | | 0.76 |
| Interval (m) from SW | 0 | 5 | 10 | 15 | 20 | 25 | 30 to NE end |
| Overburden depth | 0.13 | 0.2 | 0.22 | 0.2 | 0.25 | 0.25 | 0.25 |
| Subsoil depth | 0.12 | 0.18 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.21 | 0.18 |
| Top of Natural substratum | 0.25 | 0.38 | 0.44 | 0.4 | 0.45 | 0.46 | 0.43 |
| Base of trench | 0.34 | 0.48 | 0.55 | 0.52 | 0.57 | 0.76 | 0.59 |

Trench 8a was located on flat ground towards the centre east of Trench 7a and north of Trench 15a of the Phase II area, orientated north east – south west. The mechanical digger removed a shallow topsoil of light grey brown sandy silt revealing natural substratum at 0.34m – 0.76m. The natural was a reddish brown with patches of yellow sandy clay. Trench 7a contained the remains of two medieval furrows running roughly east – west (Figure 18).



Figure 18: Trench 8a, looking north east.



Figure 19: Trench 9a, looking north east.

Trench 9a

Trench 9a was located on flat ground on the southern edge of the Phase II area, east of Trench 6a and west of Trench 13a. It was orientated north east – south west. The mechanical digger removed a shallow topsoil of light grey brown sandy silt revealing natural substratum at 0.46m – 0.55m. The natural was a reddish brown sandy clay with patches of yellow clay. Trench 9a contained the remains of three medieval furrows running roughly east – west (Figure 19).

| Length (m) | Width (m) | | Area (sq. m) | | Min. depth (m) | | Max. depth (m) |
|---------------------------|-----------|------|--------------|------|----------------|------|----------------|
| 30 | 1.5 | | 45 | | 0.46 | | 0.55 |
| Interval (m) from SW | 0 | 5 | 10 | 15 | 20 | 25 | 30 to NE end |
| Overburden depth | 0.24 | 0.3 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.25 | 0.2 | 0.1 |
| Subsoil depth | 0.2 | 0.15 | 0.25 | 0.24 | 0.15 | 0.16 | 0.18 |
| Top of Natural substratum | 0.44 | 0.45 | 0.45 | 0.44 | 0.4 | 0.36 | 0.28 |
| Base of trench | 0.53 | 0.55 | 0.55 | 0.54 | 0.5 | 0.46 | 0.48 |

Trench 10a

Trench 10a was located on flat ground in the centre of the Phase II area, north of Trench 9a and south of Trench 11a. It was orientated north west – south east. The mechanical digger removed a shallow topsoil of light grey brown sandy silt revealing natural substratum at 0.29m – 0.52m. The natural was a reddish brown sandy clay with patches of yellow clay. Trench 10a contained the remains of five modern plough scars (Figure 20).

| Length (m) | Width (m) | | Area (sq. m) | | Min. depth (m) | | Max. depth (m) |
|---------------------------|-----------|------|--------------|------|----------------|------|----------------|
| 30 | 1.5 | | 45 | | 0.29 | | 0.52 |
| Interval (m) from NW | 0 | 5 | 10 | 15 | 20 | 25 | 30 to SE end |
| Overburden depth | 0.14 | 0.2 | 0.25 | 0.25 | 0.3 | 0.26 | 0.19 |
| Subsoil depth | 0.1 | 0.13 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.15 |
| Top of Natural substratum | 0.24 | 0.33 | 0.35 | 0.35 | 0.4 | 0.36 | 0.34 |
| Base of trench | 0.29 | 0.4 | 0.43 | 0.43 | 0.52 | 0.46 | 0.44 |



Figure 20: Trench 10a, looking east.



Figure 21: Trench 11a, looking south east.

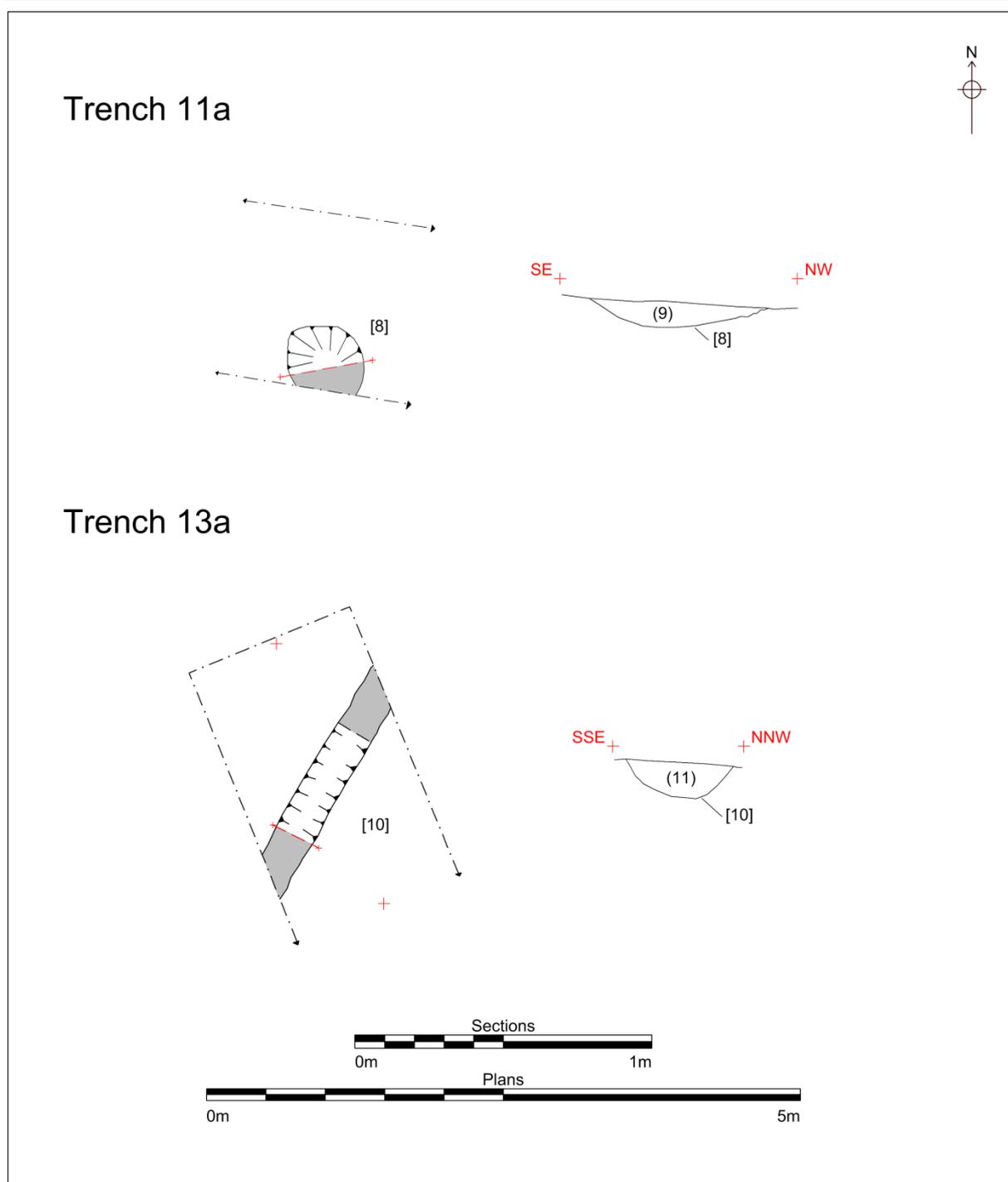


Figure 22: Plans and sections of features in Trenches 11a and 13a.

Trench 11a

| Length (m) | Width (m) | | Area (sq. m) | | Min. depth (m) | | Max. depth (m) |
|----------------------------------|-----------|------|--------------|------|----------------|-----------|----------------|
| 20 | 1.5 | | 30 | | 0.4 | | 0.45 |
| Interval (m) from NW | 0 | 5 | 10 | 15 | 20 | to SE end | |
| Overburden depth | 0.26 | 0.25 | 0.26 | 0.29 | 0.28 | | |
| Subsoil depth | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.13 | 0.1 | | |
| Top of Natural substratum | 0.36 | 0.35 | 0.36 | 0.42 | 0.38 | | |
| Base of trench | 0.4 | 0.4 | 0.42 | 0.45 | 0.44 | | |

Trench 11a was located on flat ground on the northern edge of the Phase II area, north of Trench 10a. It was orientated south east – north west. The trench had to be reduced in size due to the presence of live electrical service cables. The mechanical digger removed a shallow topsoil of light grey brown sandy silt revealing natural substratum at 0.4m – 0.45m. The natural was an orangey brown mottled clay with patches of pebbles and gravel. Trench 11a contained small area of root activity at the north western end as well as a small shallow circular undated feature [8], possibly a post-hole; *c.*0.6m in diameter and *c.*0.1m deep, filled with brown grey silty clay (Figure 21 and Figure 22).

Trench 12a

| Length (m) | Width (m) | | Area (sq. m) | | Min. depth (m) | | Max. depth (m) |
|---------------------------|-----------|------|--------------|------|----------------|------|----------------|
| 29 | 1.5 | | 43.5 | | 0.39 | | 0.48 |
| Interval (m) from NW | 0 | 5 | 10 | 15 | 20 | 25 | 30 to SE end |
| Overburden depth | 0.3 | 0.35 | 0.23 | 0.33 | 0.29 | 0.25 | 0.3 |
| Subsoil depth | 0.08 | 0.08 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.13 | 0.09 | 0.12 |
| Top of Natural substratum | 0.38 | 0.43 | 0.33 | 0.43 | 0.42 | 0.34 | 0.42 |
| Base of trench | 0.47 | 0.48 | 0.39 | 0.48 | 0.46 | 0.41 | 0.47 |

Trench 12a was located on flat ground on the eastern edge of the Phase II area, east of Trench 10a. It was orientated north – south. The mechanical digger removed a shallow topsoil of light grey brown sandy silt revealing natural substratum at 0.39m – 0.48m. The natural was an orangey brown mottled clay with patches of pebbles and gravel. Trench 12a contained the remains of three medieval furrows on an east - west alignment (Figure 23).

Trench 13a

| Length (m) | Width (m) | | Area (sq. m) | | Min. depth (m) | | Max. depth (m) |
|---------------------------|-----------|------|--------------|------|----------------|------|----------------|
| 29 | 1.6 | | 46.4 | | 0.4 | | 0.53 |
| Interval (m) from NW | 0 | 5 | 10 | 15 | 20 | 25 | 30 to SE end |
| Overburden depth | 0.25 | 0.3 | 0.36 | 0.29 | 0.32 | 0.26 | 0.24 |
| Subsoil depth | 0.09 | 0.08 | 0.12 | 0.08 | 0.13 | 0.1 | 0.1 |
| Top of Natural substratum | 0.34 | 0.38 | 0.48 | 0.37 | 0.45 | 0.36 | 0.34 |
| Base of trench | 0.4 | 0.44 | 0.53 | 0.45 | 0.45 | 0.5 | 0.4 |

Trench 13a was located on flat ground on the southern edge of the Phase II area, south of Trenches 12a and 14a. It was orientated north west – south east. The mechanical digger removed a shallow topsoil of light grey brown sandy silt revealing natural substratum at 0.4m – 0.53m. The natural was an orangey brown mottled clay with patches of pebbles and gravel. Trench 13a contained the remains of two medieval furrows on an north east - south west alignment as well an undated shallow linear feature [10] at the northern end on a north – south alignment. This was *c.*0.35m wide and *c.*0.15m deep with concave sides and base, filled with brown grey silty clay (Figure 22 and Figure 24).



Figure 23: Trench 12a, looking south.



Figure 24: Trench 13a, looking south, with linear [10] in the foreground.

Trench 14a

| Length (m) | Width (m) | | Area (sq. m) | | Min. depth (m) | | Max. depth (m) | |
|----------------------------------|-----------|------|--------------|------|----------------|-----------|----------------|--|
| 21.7 | 1.5 | | 32.55 | | 0.42 | | 0.55 | |
| Interval (m) from SW | 0 | 5 | 10 | 15 | 20 | to NE end | | |
| Overburden depth | 0.27 | 0.25 | 0.25 | 0.25 | 0.27 | | | |
| Subsoil depth | 0.09 | 0.1 | 0.14 | 0.13 | 0.2 | | | |
| Top of Natural substratum | 0.36 | 0.35 | 0.39 | 0.38 | 0.47 | | | |
| Base of trench | 0.42 | 0.45 | 0.46 | 0.48 | 0.55 | | | |

Trench 14a was located on flat ground on the eastern edge of the Phase II area, east of Trenches 12a and 13a. It was orientated north east – south west. The trench has to be shortened in order to avoid live buried electrical cables at its northern end. The mechanical digger removed a shallow topsoil of light grey brown sandy silt revealing natural substratum at 0.42m – 0.55m. The natural was a red brown mottled clay with patches of yellowish white sand. Trench 14a contained the remains of one medieval furrow on an east - west alignment as well as a single plough scar (Figure 25).

Trench 15a

| Length (m) | Width (m) | | Area (sq. m) | | Min. depth (m) | | Max. depth (m) | |
|----------------------------------|-----------|------|--------------|------|----------------|------|----------------|--|
| 30 | 1.5 | | 45 | | 0.35 | | 0.67 | |
| Interval (m) from SE | 0 | 5 | 10 | 15 | 20 | 25 | 30 to NW end | |
| Overburden depth | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.18 | 0.13 | 0.18 | |
| Subsoil depth | 0.15 | 0.2 | 0.1 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.16 | 0.1 | |
| Top of Natural substratum | 0.35 | 0.4 | 0.3 | 0.4 | 0.38 | 0.29 | 0.28 | |
| Base of trench | 0.52 | 0.67 | 0.47 | 0.54 | 0.51 | 0.35 | 0.41 | |

Trench 15a was relocated to the flat ground in the centre of the Phase II area from its original location to the east of the clubhouse (moved to avoid several live services), between Trenches 6a, 7a, 8a and 10a. It was orientated north west – south east. The mechanical digger removed a shallow topsoil of light grey brown sandy silt revealing natural substratum at 0.35m – 0.67m. The natural was a red brown sandy clay with patches of yellow clay. Trench 15a contained the remains of one medieval furrow on an east - west alignment as well as a single modern land drain (Figure 26).



Figure 25: Trench 14a, looking east.



Figure 26: Trench 15a, looking north west.

Discussion

Overall, the project has investigated eighteen trial trenches (793.85 sq m) to achieve a *c.*4.4% sample of the *c.*1.81 ha development area.

Phase I

The results of Phase I of the archaeological investigation were negative. Topsoil and subsoil in Trench 1 were indistinguishable, and appears to have survived with minimal disturbance, although faint traces of east to west orientated ridge and furrow could still be seen crossing this area of the site.

Ground disturbance was greater along the eastern edge of the site, closer to the postulated line of the Roman *Tripontium* road (today Lutterworth Road). Previous groundwork, creating car parking for the sports ground, had removed all topsoil and subsoil down to natural substratum. Faint traces of ridge and furrow were recorded in Trench 2 and the possible remains of a similarly-aligned palaeochannel in Trench 3 but no other archaeological substrata or features were present (Figure 27).

Phase II

Andrew McLeish

The results of Phase II were also predominately negative. Trenches 2a, 4a, 5a, 6a, 7a, 8a, 9a, 12a, 13a, fourteen and 15a all contained east to west aligned furrows – the remains of a medieval field system - under a thin subsoil. No remains of these furrows could be seen above ground as the Phase II area had been artificially flattened for use as a sports ground.

Only three trenches contained potential archaeological features; Trench 5a contained two curvilinear gullies which, whilst undated, have a geometry which would be suggestive of the eaves-drip gully surrounding an Iron Age roundhouse approximately 10.5m in diameter; as well as an ‘internal’ feature which could be a small posthole. Trench 11a contained one small circular feature less than 0.1m deep which was also undated. This might be the remains of a post-hole but equally could have been caused by root action. An adjacent area of discoloured natural ground was also attributed to root action. Trench 13a contained one narrow, shallow, undated linear gully at its northern end. This was orientated north-east to south-west, running diagonal to the east/west orientated ridge and furrow in the vicinity which suggests that it is unlikely to be related to the medieval field system. Its leached fill suggests it is probably much older perhaps contemporary with the gullies seen in Trench 5a.



Figure 27: Plan of project area showing archaeological discoveries.

Archive

The site archive consists of 18 trench record sheets, 10 A5 context record sheets, 59 digital photographs and 1 A3 sheet of drawing film containing site drawings. The archive will be held by Leicestershire Museum Service under the accession number X.A12.2015.

Publication

Since 2004 ULAS has reported the results of all archaeological work to the *Online Access to the Index of archaeological investigations* (OASIS) database held by the Archaeological Data Service (ADS) at the University of York (see Table 1).

Table 1: Summary of OASIS information

| | |
|---|--|
| Project OASIS no. | universi1-202266 |
| Project Name | Leicester Lions RFC, Lutterworth Road, Blaby, Leicestershire |
| Project Type | Evaluation |
| Project Manager | Richard Buckley |
| Project Supervisor | Mathew Morris and Andrew McLeish |
| Previous/Future work | None/Unknown |
| Current Land Use | Sports ground |
| Development Type | Mixed – residential and recreational |
| Reason for Investigation | NPPF |
| Position in the Planning Process | As a condition |
| Site Co-ordinates | SP 563 966 |
| Start/end dates of field work | 29/01/2015 – 11/05/2015 |
| Archive Recipient | Leicestershire Museum Service |
| Study Area | c.1.8 ha |

A summary of the work will also be submitted for publication in an appropriate local archaeological journal in due course.

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