



# University of **Leicester**

## Archaeological Services



**An Archaeological Evaluation for a  
new electricity sub-station at  
MIRA, Higham on the Hill, Leics.**

NGR:  
**SP 366 952**

Wayne Jarvis

ULAS Report No 2014-104  
©2014

**An Archaeological Evaluation for a new  
electricity sub-station at MIRA,  
Higham on the Hill, Leicestershire**

**Wayne Jarvis**

**For: MIRA Ltd**

Approved by:

**Signed:**



**Date:** 16/06/2014

**Name:** Patrick Clay

**University of Leicester  
Archaeological Services**  
University Rd., Leicester, LE1 7RH  
Tel: (0116) 2522848 Fax: (0116) 2522614  
[www.le.ac.uk/ulas](http://www.le.ac.uk/ulas)

**ULAS Report Number 2014-104**

**©2014**

**Accession Number XA.78 2014**

## CONTENTS

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Summary .....   | 1 |
| 1. Introduction.....  | 1 |
| 2. Site Description, Land use, Topography and Geology ..... | 1 |
| 3. Historical and Archaeological Background .....           | 1 |
| 4. Aims and Objectives .....                                | 2 |
| 5. Methodology .....  | 3 |
| 6. Results.....   | 3 |
| 8. Conclusions.....   | 6 |
| 9. Archive.....   | 6 |
| 10. Publication .....                                       | 6 |
| 11. Bibliography .....                                      | 6 |
| 12. Acknowledgements.....                                   | 7 |

## FIGURES

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Figure 1.</b> Site Location (Scale 1:50 000) .....                 | 2 |
| <b>Figure 2.</b> Developer plan, amended trench locations shown ..... | 4 |
| <b>Figure 3.</b> Trench 1 .....                                       | 5 |
| <b>Figure 4.</b> Trench 2 .....                                       | 5 |

## **An Archaeological Evaluation at MIRA, Higham on the Hill, Leics.**

**Wayne Jarvis**

### **Summary**

*An Archaeological Evaluation was carried out on land at MIRA, Higham on the Hill, Leicestershire, on behalf of MIRA Ltd. The groundworks consisted of two trial trenches within the footprint of a proposed new electricity sub-station, associated access and hard standing. No features were identified, and no artefacts were recovered. The Planning authority is Hinckley and Bosworth District Council (Planning application No: Pre Planning). The archive will be deposited in due course with Leicestershire County Council, subject to their confirmation, Accession No. XA.78 2014.*

### **1. Introduction**

An archaeological evaluation was carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) at MIRA, Higham on the Hill (SP 366 952), on behalf of MIRA Ltd. The fieldwork was carried out on May 29th 2014, in advance of the groundworks for a proposed new electricity substation, associated access and hard standing.

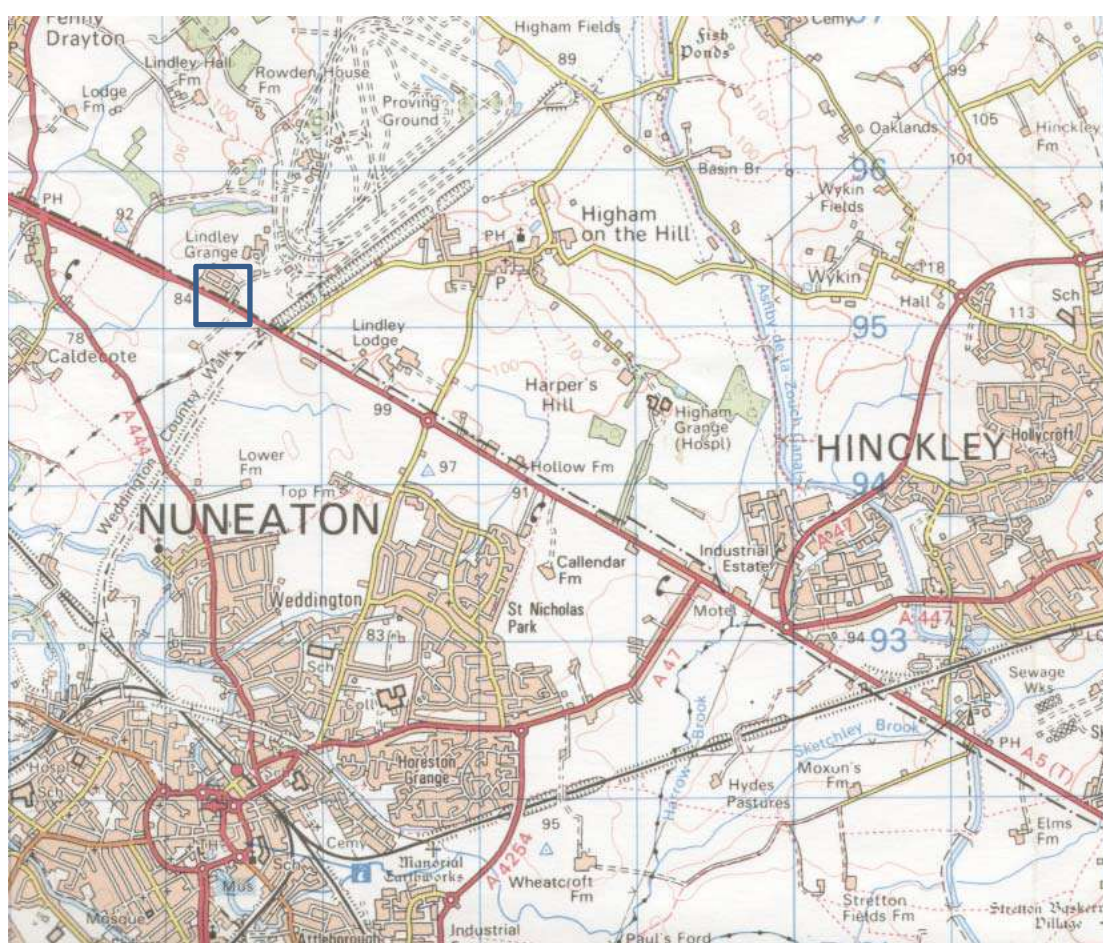
### **2. Site Description, Land use, Topography and Geology**

The site lies within to the south of the MIRA Proving ground area, Higham on the Hill, Leicestershire and adjacent to the A5. A new building is proposed within the area to replace the substation to the west (Figure 1). The site is within the parish of Higham-on-the-Hill, in the District of Hinckley and Bosworth, Leicestershire, around 5 miles north-west of Hinckley and 5 miles south-east of Atherstone (Figure 1). It is bordered by the A5 (Roman Watling Street) to the south; which is the border with Warwickshire. The dismantled Ashby and Nuneaton Joint Railway runs to the south-east of the site and to the northwest and north-east lie fields and local roads. The British Geological Survey of England and Wales, sheet 169 (Coventry) shows that the underlying geology over most of the site is likely to be Thrussington Till overlain by Dunsmore Gravel and Anker Sand and Gravel to the south, with skerries of siltstone. To the north and north-west of the site lie Wolston Clay and alluvial deposits. The site lies at a height of around 90.5m above OD. The total area of the MIRA site is around 310 hectares, the current area being 0.12Ha.

### **3. Historical and Archaeological Background**

A desk-based assessment has been undertaken for the area (Hunt and Speed 2010) and Heritage statements for Buildings 1 and 3 to the north-east (Clay 2013a; 2013b). The Leicestershire & Rutland and Warwickshire Historic Environment Record (HER) for the area shows that there are no known archaeological sites in the assessment area itself. However, there are a few archaeological sites in the vicinity of the assessment area most significantly the Watling Street Roman road. The development site is in fact situated in a wide area of archaeological potential as indicated by the HER. Enclosures possibly dating to the Iron Age are located adjacent to the MIRA site (MLE9578) and other prehistoric sites are located nearby (MLE8245, MLE6080 and Warks HER Nos. 4420 & 4501). The southern part of the site lies on the line of the modern A5, the former Watling Street Roman Road (MLE1388) and the Mancetter Roman Road has been projected to run to the north of the site (MLE3019). Roman pottery has been found within the former Lindley parish at the edge of the assessment

area (**MLE8503**) and a large assemblage has been found further to the south (Warks HER No. **7439**). Roman coins have also been retrieved from two hoards to the south of the site (Warks HER No. **5141**) and near Harper's Hill, around 800m south-east of the site (Warks HER No. **1653**). The development area lies within the deserted parish of Rowden (**MLE2795**) and adjacent to earthworks associated with the abandoned medieval village of Lindley (**MLE2792**). The area was also the site of the old Lindley Airfield (**MLE15973**). Fieldwalking and geophysical surveys have also been undertaken within the MIRA site area (Coward 2011, Austrums 2011). The fieldwalking and geophysical surveys did not locate significant material or anomalies. Two areas that were subject to detailed gradiometry revealed anomalies with possible archaeological origins, while a thin scatter of medieval and post-medieval pottery from the fieldwalking was interpreted as a product of manuring. Recent evaluations adjacent to the line of the Roman road identified Roman activity including structural evidence, and 150m from this further ditches and a pit were identified of probable late Iron Age or Roman date (Thomas 2011). Recent fieldwork just to the south has identified Roman features during an archaeological watching Brief (N. Flavell, pers. comm.)



**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

#### **4. Aims and Objectives**

The archaeological evaluation had the potential to contribute to the following research aims.

*The Roman Period (Taylor 2006; Knight et al 2012; English Heritage 2012)*

There are several Roman sites close to the area including enclosures and a major Roman road. The evaluation may have contributed to knowledge on Iron Age – Roman transitions in rural settlement, landscape and society. Artefacts may identify trade links and economy.

*Medieval (Lewis 2006; Knight et al 2012)*

The area lies close to the medieval village and may have contributed to the study of rural medieval settlement and East Midlands Research Strategy 6.7.7.2 (Knight *et al* 2012, 94; Lewis 2006).

### **Objectives**

The main objectives of the evaluation were:

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

Within the stated project objectives, the principal aim of the evaluation is to establish the nature, extent, date, depth, significance and state of preservation of archaeological deposits on the site in order to determine the potential impact upon them from the proposed development. Trial trenching is an intrusive form of evaluation that will demonstrate the existence of earth-fast archaeological features that may exist within the area.

## **5. Methodology**

The fieldwork followed the approved design specification (WSI, Clay 2014) and adhered to 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) were adhered to. Internal monitoring procedures were undertaken including visits to the site by the project manager where necessary. These ensured that project targets were met and professional standards maintained. Provision was made for external monitoring meetings with the Planning Authority and the Client, if required.

## **6. Results**

Fieldwork took place on May 29th 2014. The southern half of the site area was under a subsoil bund, which was removed prior to trenching works. A CAT scanner indicated a service (high voltage electricity) running below ground across the hard standing area east of the proposed substation. Additionally, overhead cables to the west of the proposed site prevented groundworks from being carried out here. The trench locations were thus moved slightly and situated along the length of the access road closer to the proposed substation (Trench 1), and diagonally across the footprint of the substation (Trench 2; see Fig. 2).

Topsoil was removed (0.2-0.27m in depth), underlain by a subsoil (0.12-0.2m in thickness) on to the natural subsoil, a red and blue clay, only occasionally stony. Natural was exposed at depths of between 0.32-0.42m from current ground level. The topsoil was the arable soil of the field, a mid-grey brown clay-loam with rare gravel. The subsoil was a mid-orangey brown sandy-clay with rare stone fragments. No features were identified, and no artefacts were recovered from the overlying deposits either.



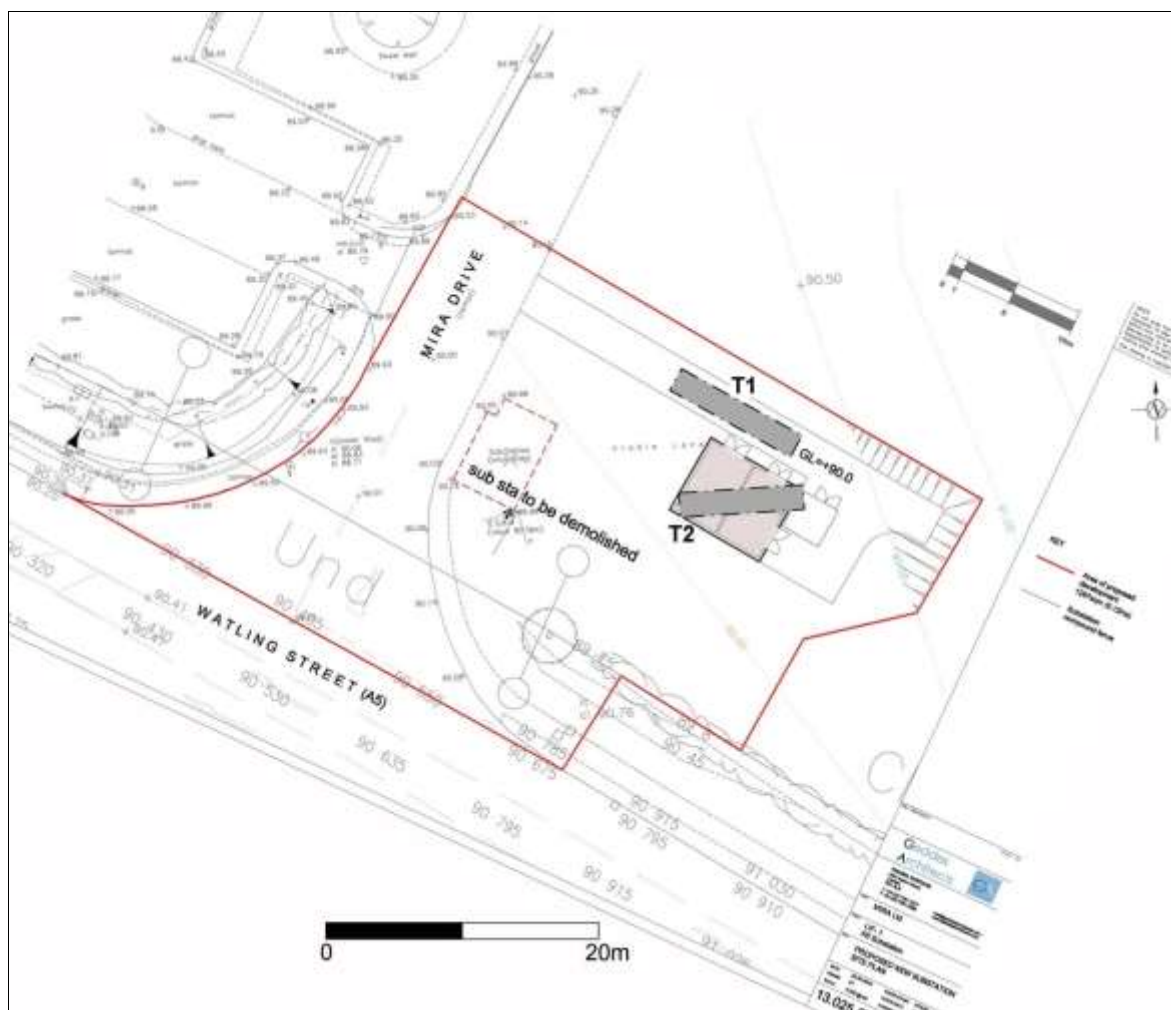


Figure 2. Developer plan, with amended trench locations

| Trench No. | Location    | Length x Width | Depth to natural | Notes                             |
|------------|-------------|----------------|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1          | Access road | 10.1 x 1.8m    | 0.32m (min.)     | Natural substratum: red/blue clay |
| 2          | Sub-station | 9.1 x 1.8m     | 0.39m (min.)     | “                                 |



**Figure 3.** Trench 1



**Figure 4.** Trench 2



## 8. Conclusions

No archaeological features were exposed during the trenching, and no artefacts were recovered. The overlying deposits indicate a history of arable agriculture on the site area, but with no evidence for historic ridge and furrow.

## 9. Archive

The site archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council, with the accession no. XA.78 2014. The archive contains:

- 2 trench recording sheets
- Thumbnail prints of digital photographs
- CD containing digital photographs
- Unbound copy of this report 2014-104

The report is listed on the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) held by the Archaeological Data Service at the University of York. Available at: <http://oasis.ac.uk/>

| ID                                 | OASIS entry summary  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Project Name                       | MIRA Substation  |
| Summary                            | An Archaeological Evaluation was carried out at MIRA, Higham on the Hill, Leics. Two trenches were excavated. No features were identified and no finds were recovered. |
| Project Type                       | Evaluation   |
| Project Manager                    | Patrick Clay   |
| Project Supervisor                 | Wayne Jarvis   |
| Previous/Future work               | None   |
| Current Land Use                   | Arable field   |
| Development Type                   | Services   |
| Reason for Investigation           | NPPF Section 12 Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment  |
| Position in the Planning Process   | Pre Planning   |
| Site Co ordinates                  | SP 366 952   |
| Start/end dates of field work      | 29th May 2014  |
| Archive Recipient                  | Leicestershire County Council  |
| Study Area                         | c.100m2  |
| Associated project reference codes | Museum accession XA.78 2014  |

## 10. Publication

A summary of the work will be submitted for publication in a local archaeological journal in due course. The report has been added to the Archaeology Data Service's (ADS) Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) database held by the University of York.

## 11. Bibliography

- Austrums, R., 2011 *Geophysical Survey report. Higham on the Hill, Leicestershire*. Stratascan Report J4413.
- Brown, D., 2008 Standard and guidance for the preparation of Archaeological Archives (Institute for Archaeologists).
- Clay, P., 2006 'The Neolithic and Early to Middle Bronze Age in N. J. Cooper (ed) 2006 69-89.

- Cooper, N.J., (ed) 2006 *The Archaeology of the East Midlands - An Archaeological Resource Assessment and Research Agenda*. Leicester Archaeology Monograph 13.
- Coward, J., 2011 *An archaeological evaluation by fieldwalking survey on land at MIRA, Higham on the Hill, Leicestershire (SP 368 957 centre)*. ULAS Report No. 2011-47
- English Heritage, 2010, *English Heritage Thematic Research Strategies. Research Strategy for Prehistory*. Consultation Draft June 2010.
- English Heritage, 2012, *Research Strategy for the Roman Period Historic Environment*. Feb 2012.
- Haddrell, S., 2013 , *Geophysical Survey Report- Ravenstone Stratascan Report J3650*.
- Hunt L., and Speed, G., 2010 *An archaeological desk-based assessment for land at the MIRA site, Higham-on-the-Hill, Leicestershire (Centroid SP 368 957)* ULAS Report No. 2010-213.
- IfA, 2010 Codes of Conduct and Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation.
- Thomas, J., 2011 *An Archaeological Field Evaluation on land at MIRA, Higham on the Hill, Leicestershire*. ULAS Report No. 2011-148.
- ULAS, 2014 *Written scheme of investigation for archaeological work - Job title: Land at MIRA Ltd, Higham on the Hill, Leicestershire*

## **12. Acknowledgements**

The fieldwork was undertaken on behalf of MIRA Ltd., and was carried out by Wayne Jarvis of ULAS. I am grateful to the contractors for their cooperation on site. Patrick Clay also of ULAS managed the project, and Teresa Hawtin of LCC HNET monitored the work on behalf of the planning authority.

Wayne Jarvis  
Field Officer  
University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS)  
University Road  
Leicester  
LE1 7RH  
[wj5@le.ac.uk](mailto:wj5@le.ac.uk)  
Tel: 0116 252 2836  
Fax: 0116 252 2614

16/06/2014

## ULAS Contact Details

Richard Buckley or Patrick Clay  
University of Leicester Archaeological  
Services (ULAS)  
University of Leicester,  
University Road,  
Leicester LE1 7RH

**T:** +44 (0)116 252 2848

**F:** +44 (0)116 252 2614

**E:** [ulas@le.ac.uk](mailto:ulas@le.ac.uk)

**W:** [www.le.ac.uk/ulas](http://www.le.ac.uk/ulas)



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



2013  
**THE AWARDS**  
AWARD WINNER  
RESEARCH PROJECT OF THE YEAR