



**University of
Leicester**

Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological Evaluation on
Land west of Station Lane, Asfordby, Leicestershire**

(NGR SK 70027 18729)

Jennifer Browning




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Leicestershire
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For Jelson Ltd.

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An Archaeological Evaluation on Land west of Station Lane, Asfordby, Leicestershire (NGR SK 70027 18729)

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Summary

An archaeological trial trench evaluation was undertaken in February and March 2014 on land west of Station Lane, Asfordby by University of Leicester Archaeological Services. The fieldwork was undertaken in order to assess the potential impact on any archaeological remains within the area, prior to a planning application for residential development of the site. The work follows a desk-based assessment, fieldwalking and geophysical surveys, which confirmed the presence of two prehistoric ring ditches, located directly underneath the overhead power lines crossing the site. These are likely to be associated with a significant scatter of Neolithic - Bronze Age worked flints, including tools, which were recovered during fieldwalking and may have derived from ploughed out burial mounds.

The archaeological evaluation comprised the excavation of 20 trenches (30m and 15m in length) spread across the proposed development area. The work did not reveal any significant archaeological deposits. One of the ring ditches, (identified previously as a cropmark and confirmed during geophysical survey) may be slightly impacted upon by a swale connected to a balancing pond, shown on the proposed development plans. The ring ditch is expected to survive as an earthfast feature and may require mitigation before development progresses. However, it was not possible to place a trench over the ring ditch during the current intervention, due to the constraints of working with plant under the overhead powerlines. The negative trial trenches undertaken over the remainder of the area suggest that no further archaeological remains are likely to be affected by the proposed development, as shown by current development plans. No stratified finds were recovered during the work, however, sixteen struck flints, including scrapers and flakes, were recovered from the field surface. The site archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council under the Accession Number X A138 2014.

Introduction

This report presents the results of an archaeological trial trench evaluation carried out on behalf of Jelson Ltd. in February and March 2015. The work was designed to investigate potential archaeological deposits on land west of Station Lane, Asfordby, Leicestershire (SK 70027 18729). It follows recommendations from the Leicestershire County Council, Principal Planning Archaeologist, as advisor to the planning authority for a pre-determination trial trench evaluation. The archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework Section 12: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment (DCLG March 2012). All archaeological work followed the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) Code of Conduct (2014) and adhered to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (2014).

An Archaeological Desk Based Assessment (Hunt 2014), geophysical survey (Davies 2014), and fieldwalking survey (Browning 2014) had already been carried out.

Site Location, Geology, Topography, and Description

The application area itself consists of two fields, one pasture and the other arable, which lie to the south-west of Asfordby village. The pasture field, which has a field entrance from Station Lane, is fairly flat, at around 64m aOD and measures 0.62 hectares. The larger arable field, which is accessed via Hoby Road is of *c.*4 hectares, strongly undulating and falls from north-east to south-west from around 74m aOD to 63m aOD (Figure 1). The area to be evaluated by trial trenching, encompassing the pasture field and approximately half of the arable field, covered *c.*3.625 ha.

The British Geological Survey website indicates that the underlying geology was likely to be Scunthorpe Member Mudstone overlain by Diamicton or sand and gravel on the northern part of the site, Blue Lias Formation Mudstone overlain by Alluvium, Head or Diamicton on the rest of the site.

<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/discoveringGeology/geologyOfBritain/viewer.html>.



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

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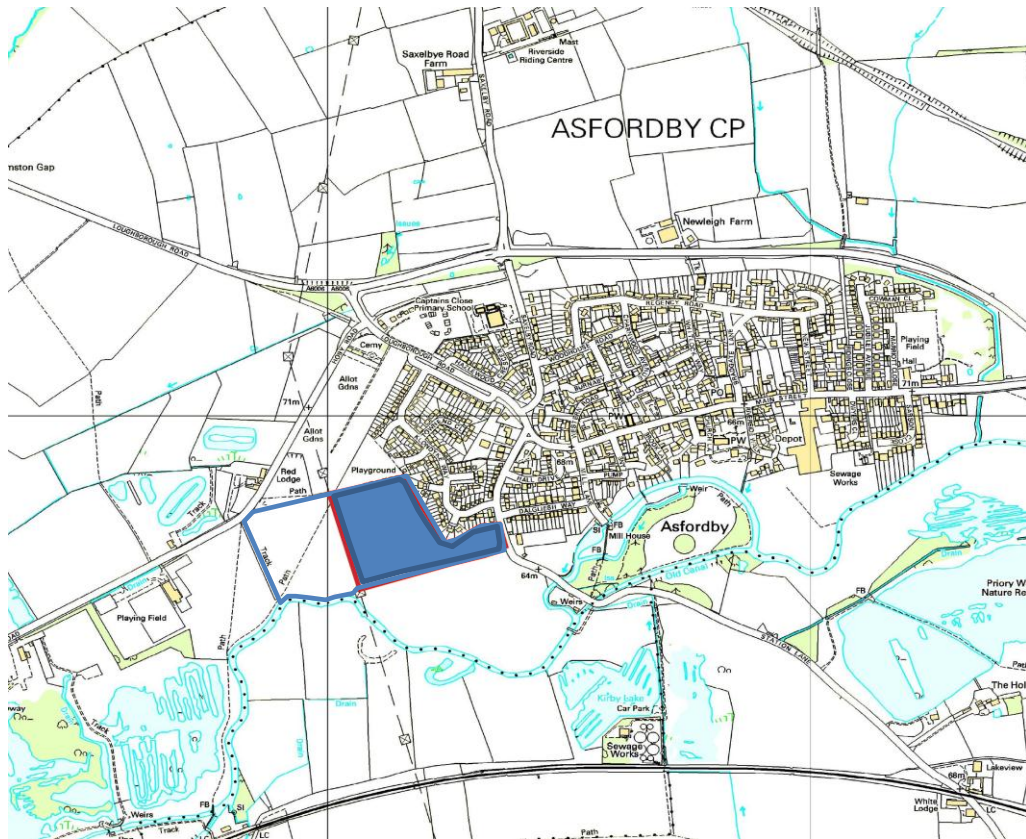


Figure 2: Plan of proposed development area outlined in blue. Area of current archaeological intervention shaded. Provided by Client. Scale unknown.



Figure 3: Plan of proposed development in relation to approximate location of ring ditch. Provided by Jelson Ltd.

Archaeological and Historical Background

The Historic Environment Record (HER) for Leicestershire and Rutland indicates that there are archaeological sites located within the assessment area itself (HER Ref. No. **MLE3329**). These are a pair of prehistoric ring ditches originally identified as cropmarks on aerial photographs. These have been confirmed by the results of a geophysical survey (Davies 2014; Figure 6), while the fieldwalking, conducted as part of the same intervention, recovered flint artefacts of Neolithic - Bronze Age date. These consisted of a significant assemblage of 74 worked flints, which included 40 tools, including an unusual scale-flaked knife, several cores, scrapers and piercers (Figure 5). The remainder of the assemblage was made up of flakes, some of which were retouched. The assemblage is believed to date from the Early Bronze Age but contains a number of re-used pieces from the Mesolithic and Neolithic periods. The location of the finds suggests that they are associated with the two ring ditches. The flint assemblage supports the interpretation of the cropmarks as Neolithic/Bronze Age burial mounds, which were subsequently ploughed-out.

A low density scatter of medieval and early post-medieval pottery was also recovered across the area that was fieldwalked. A slightly higher concentration of late post-medieval and modern pottery was also present, which has been discarded after examination and logging. These finds are likely to be associated with manuring activity, taking place from the medieval period onwards. North-south aligned ridge and furrow is still extant on the pasture field, showing that the land was not developed in subsequent periods.

There are also several other known archaeological sites in the vicinity of the application area. Excavations carried out by ULAS on a site to the north-west of the village (the recently constructed housing area of Flint Close), 450m north of the assessment area, revealed evidence of a rare Mesolithic flint knapping site with a large later Neolithic/ Bronze Age settlement site above (**MLE21134 & MLE21135**).

Two Mesolithic pebble hammers were retrieved from a site at Regency Road, 720m north-east of the site (**MLE7066**). Flint cores and worked flint have been found close to the Church, 700m east of the assessment area (**MLE7568 & MLE8867**).

A pit dated to the Roman period was found during the excavation work at Flint Close (see above) (**MLE21136**). Two 4th century coins were discovered in a garden at Klondyke Way 170m north of the assessment area (**MLE7956**).

The village of Asfordby has Anglo-Saxon/Anglo-Scandinavian origins. The site lies just to the west of the historic medieval core of the village (**MLE8865**). The site of a medieval watermill lies 450m east of the assessment area (**MLE3334**). A Saxon cross is situated at All Saints' Church, 600m east of the assessment area (**MLE3334**). There are medieval remains nearby, including an early medieval house, an oven and pottery (**MLE8866**). Further medieval pottery finds were found at Woodhouse Road, 600m north-east of the site (**MLE16975**).

Aims and Objectives

Trial trenching is an intrusive form of evaluation that will demonstrate the existence of earth-fast archaeological features that may exist within the area and should enable

reasoned and informed recommendations to be made to the local planning authority and, if appropriate, a suitable mitigation strategy for the proposed development to be formulated.

The main objectives of the evaluation will be:

- 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. The archaeological evaluation has the potential to contribute to the following research aims:



Figure 4 Aerial photograph of assessment area (western field), looking north-west, and showing cropmarks (provided by Leicestershire County Council)

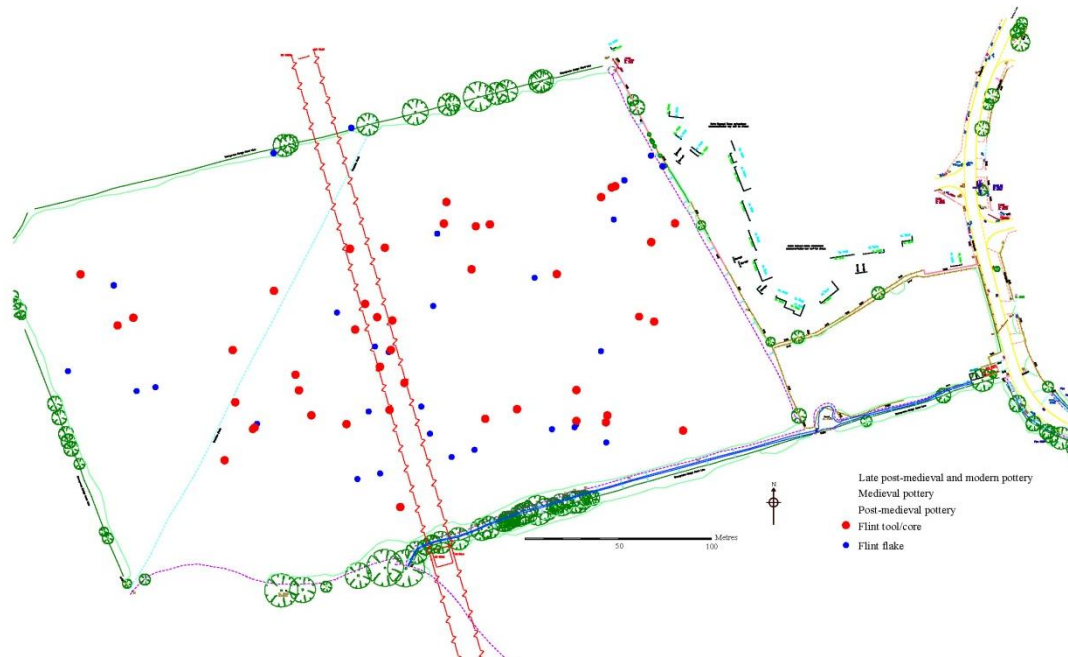


Figure 5: Distribution of struck flints recovered during fieldwalking (Browning 2014)

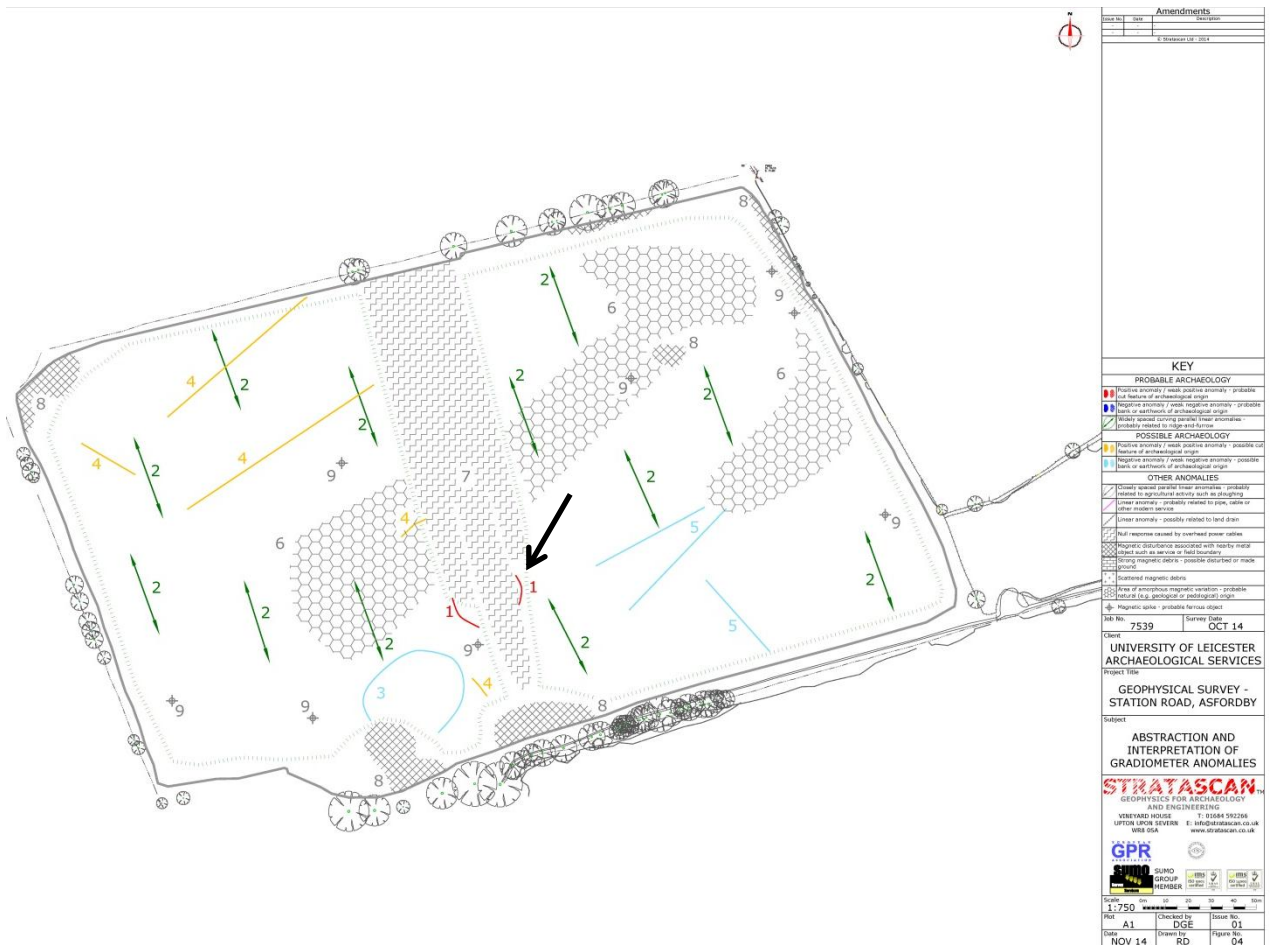


Figure 6: Abstraction and interpretation of geophysical anomalies, ring ditch arrowed (Davies 2014)

Neolithic and Early Middle Bronze Age (Clay 2006; Knight et al 2012; English Heritage 2010)

There is evidence of Neolithic-Bronze Age activity from the area and its vicinity. Ring ditches indicating the presence of Neolithic—Bronze Age ploughed out burial mounds. Flint tools from the eastern field may be associated with these burial areas. The evaluation may contribute to our understanding of burial practices of these periods.

Methodology

All work will follow the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) Code of Conduct (2014) and adhere to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (2014). The *LCC Guidelines and Procedures for Archaeological work Leicestershire and Rutland* (1997) will be adhered to.

A c.3% sample of the application area was evaluated by trial trenching which is the equivalent of 16 30m by 2m trenches and four 15m x 2m trenches (c. 1080 sq. m.). It was not possible to evaluate the ring ditch on the west side of the field during this intervention, due to the presence of the overhead power lines and the constraints for excavating underneath them required by National Grid.

Topsoil and overburden was removed carefully in level spits, under continuous archaeological supervision using a mechanical excavator, equipped with a toothless bucket. Trenches were excavated down to the top of archaeological deposits or natural undisturbed ground, whichever was reached first. All excavation by machine and hand was undertaken with a view to avoiding damage to archaeological deposits or features which appear worthy of preservation *in situ* or more detailed investigation than for the purposes of evaluation. Trenches were examined by hand cleaning, where appropriate and any suspected archaeological deposits sample-excavated by hand to establish the stratigraphic and chronological sequence, recognising and excavating structural evidence and recovering economic, artefactual and environmental evidence. Particular attention was paid to the potential for buried palaeosols and waterlogged deposits in consultation with ULAS's environmental officer. The trenches were recorded by description, sketch drawings and photography. Measured drawing was not produced as no archaeology was identified. A photographic record utilising high resolution digital images was maintained during the course of the fieldwork. The location of the trenches was recorded using a Leica TC Total Station. The methodology for the work was set out more fully in the WSI (ULAS 2014).

Results

Twenty trenches were excavated across the area of proposed development. Trenches 16-19 were located in the pasture field to the east of the development area. All other trenches were excavated on the eastern side of the arable field. Unless otherwise stated, the topsoil consisted of loose, mid grey/brown sandy-silt with 5-10% pebbles, below which mid-orange brown clayey silt subsoil with 5-10% pebbles was present.

The natural subsoil was found to be variable across the site, ranging through clays, sands and gravels and is therefore noted in each trench description. Although no finds were recovered from the trenches, a number of struck flints were observed and collected from the field surface. These were identified by Lynden Cooper as five scrapers, including one thumbnail type of Bronze Age date; three retouched flakes; six secondary flakes and two tertiary flakes, all reflecting later prehistoric lithic technology.

The trenches located in the southern part of the field contained a substantial depth of alluvium and invariably became water-logged. Due to the proximity of a public park to the north of the site and well-used footpaths across the field, deep trenches with no visible archaeology were rapidly backfilled for safety reasons.

Trench 1

Trench 1 was located close to the eastern boundary and had a gentle south-east slope. The natural substrata were mixed, consisting of sandy and silty clays, interspersed with patches of sand and pebbles/gravel. Several north-south aligned plough scars were noted on the base of the trench. At the south-eastern end of the trench a band of soft, brown sandy-silt, with abundant pebbles, crossed the trench at right angles. There were no clear indications that this was of archaeological origin. Although it resembled the base of a furrow it was on a different alignment to the rest of the ridge and furrow on the site. No archaeological features were identified.

Table 1: Soil depths within Trench 1 (measured from the top of the trench)

Trench 1							
Length (m)	Width (m)		Area (sq. m)		Min. depth (m)		Max. depth (m)
30.4	2.0		60.8		0.5		0.68
Interval (m) from NW	0	5	10	15	20	25	to SE end 30
Topsoil depth (from top)	0.35	0.30	0.31	0.32	0.43	0.28	0.41
Subsoil depth	0.60	0.50	0.49	0.48	0.54	0.45	0.57
Top of Natural substratum	0.65	0.50	0.49	0.48	0.54	0.45	0.57
Base of trench	0.68	0.53	0.53	0.52	0.59	0.50	0.65

Trench 2

Trench 2 was located close to the eastern boundary, south of Trench 1 and sloped steeply to the south-east. The natural subsoil consisted of a mixture of yellow-grey/brown clay and orange brown sands and gravel. Plough scars aligned north south were noted on the base of the trench. The trench contained no archaeological features.

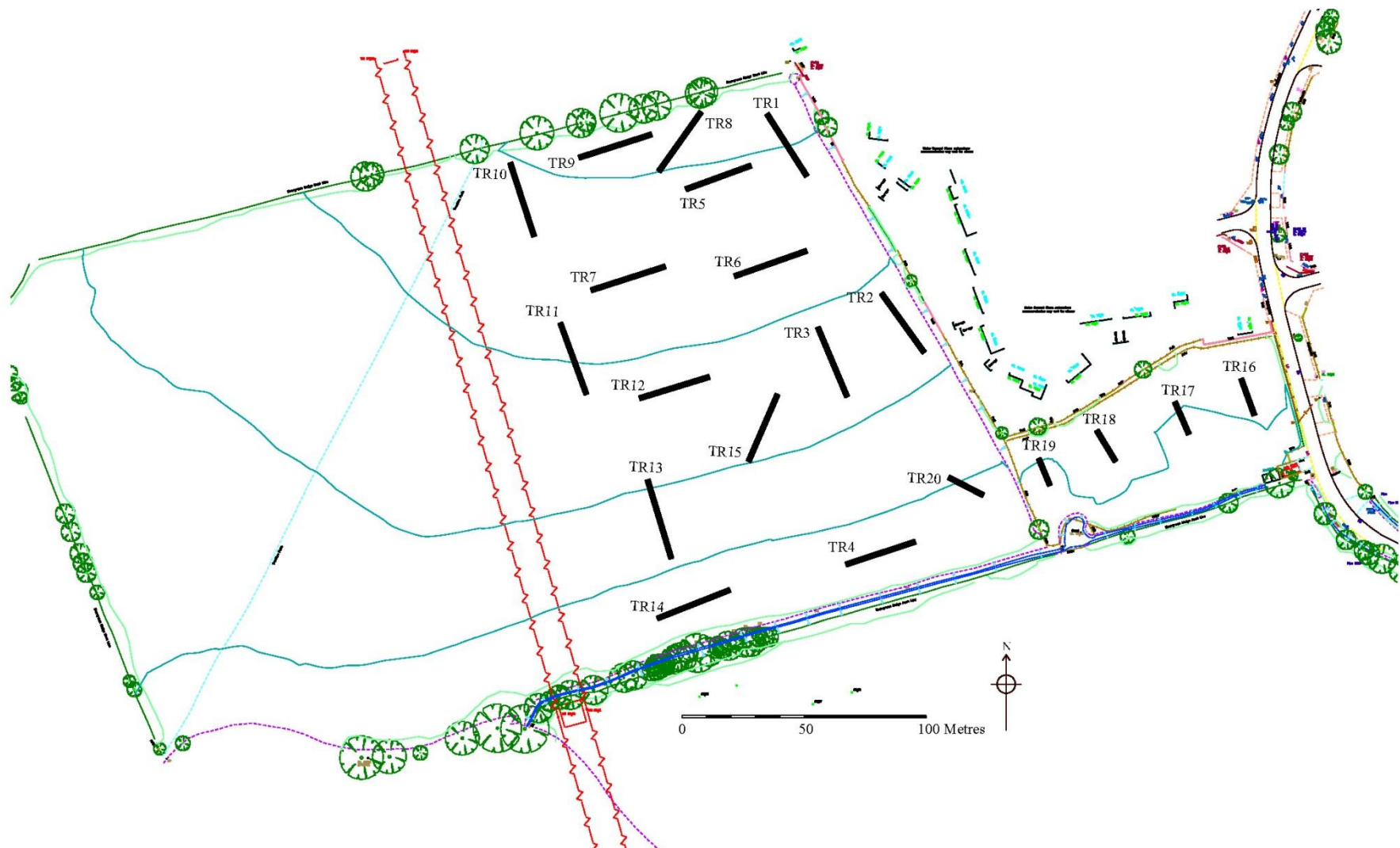


Figure 7: Plan showing location of trenches

Table 2: Soil depths within Trench 2 (measured from the top of the trench)

Trench 2							
Length (m)	Width (m)		Area (sq. m)		Min. depth (m)		Max. depth (m)
30.0	2.0		60.0		0.35		0.66
Interval (m) from NW	0	5	10	15	20	25	to SE end 30
Topsoil depth	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.33	0.30	0.26
Subsoil depth	0.49	0.62	0.53	0.43	0.43	0.41	0.32
Top of Natural substratum	0.49	0.62	0.53	0.43	0.43	0.41	0.32
Base of trench	0.60	0.66	0.59	0.51	0.50	0.48	0.35

Trench 3

Trench 3 was orientated north-south and sloped down to the south, with an increasing depth of subsoil. The natural substratum consisted of a mixture of yellow brown sand with iron staining and yellow orange clay with gravel. Plough scars were observed on the base of the trench. A feature, originally suspected to be archaeological, was seen in the centre of the trench. However, investigation indicated that this had very diffuse edges, an organic fill, no charcoal and no finds and appeared most likely to be a tree bole or other natural feature. No other features were observed. The trench became considerably deeper towards the south end of the trench, as alluvium/colluvium had built up towards the base of the slope.

Table 3: Soil depths within Trench 3 (measured from the top of the trench)

Trench 3							
Length (m)	Width (m)		Area (sq. m)		Min. depth (m)		Max. depth (m)
31.0	2.0		62		0.56		0.98
Interval (m) from N	0	5	10	15	20	25	to S end 30
Topsoil depth	0.25	0.26	0.22	0.22	0.32	0.29	0.30
Subsoil depth	0.45	0.50	0.49	0.51	0.85	0.87	0.47
Top of Natural substratum	0.45	0.50	0.49	0.51	0.85	0.87	0.47
Base of trench	0.56	0.59	0.65	0.64	0.94	0.98	0.62

Trench 4

Trench 4 was aligned east to west and located at the base of the slope, close to the southern field boundary and stream. It had a flattish base, which rapidly became waterlogged following excavation. The topsoil overlay homogenous alluvial subsoil, consisting of firm, mid brown sandy clay, with very occasional stones and pebbles. The natural substratum seen at the base of the alluvium consisted of yellow brown clay, interspersed with lighter yellow clay and gravel.

Table 4: Soil depths within Trench 4 (measured from the top of the trench)

Trench 4							
Length (m)	Width (m)		Area (sq. m)		Min. depth (m)		Max. depth (m)
30.0	2.0		60		1.15		1.30
Interval (m) from E	0	5	10	15	20	25	to W end 30
Topsoil depth	0.30	0.35	0.30	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35
Subsoil depth	1.30	1.30	1.30	1.35	1.35	1.15	1.15
Top of Natural substratum	1.35	1.30	1.30	1.30	1.35	1.15	1.15
Base of trench	1.30	1.30	1.30	1.35	1.35	1.15	1.15

Trench 5

Trench 5 was located at the north of the field, at the top of the slope and was fairly flat. Topsoil was similar to the previous trenches but there was no subsoil. The natural substratum consisted of mixed orange brown sandy clay and gravels. The base of north-south aligned furrows, were seen crossing the trench at regular intervals. No archaeology was observed.

Table 5: Soil depths within Trench 5 (measured from the top of the trench)

Trench 5							
Length (m)	Width (m)		Area (sq. m)		Min. depth (m)		Max. depth (m)
28.5	2.0		57		0.35		0.40
Interval (m) from E	0	5	10	15	20	25	to W end 28.5
Topsoil depth	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.30	0.30	0.35
Subsoil depth	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Top of Natural substratum	0.35	-	0.35	0.35	0.30	0.30	0.35
Base of trench	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.35	0.40	0.40	0.38

Trench 6

Trench 6 was located towards the centre of the development area and orientated east-west. It sloped gently to the south. The remains of north-south aligned furrows and modern plough scars were seen cutting into the natural subsoil, which consisted of yellow orange clay with gravel and orange brown sand and gravel. No archaeology was observed.

Table 6: Soil depths within Trench 6 (measured from the top of the trench)

Trench 6							
Length (m)	Width (m)		Area (sq. m)		Min. depth (m)		Max. depth (m)
31.4	2.0		62.8		0.38		0.62
Interval (m) from W	0	5	10	15	20	25	to E end 30

Topsoil depth	0.28	0.25	0.24	0.28	0.32	0.30	0.33
Subsoil depth	0.48	0.39	0.37	0.52	0.52	0.45	0.38
Top of Natural substratum	0.48	0.39	0.37	0.52	0.52	0.45	-
Base of trench	0.58	0.47	0.42	0.62	0.60	0.50	0.38

Trench 7

This trench was located towards the centre of the field. The natural subsoil was a patchy mix of brown/red clayey sand and gravels with numerous irregular bands of pure sand, almost appearing to resemble burrows. No archaeological features were observed.

Table 7: Soil depths within Trench 7 (measured from the top of the trench)

Trench 7							
Length (m)	Width (m)		Area (sq. m)		Min. depth (m)		Max. depth (m)
32.0	2.0		64		0.55		0.80
Interval (m) from W	0	5	10	15	20	25	to E end 30
Topsoil depth	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.30	0.35	0.35	0.40
Subsoil depth	0.55	0.65	0.65	0.60	0.55	0.65	0.70
Top of Natural substratum	0.55	0.65	0.65	0.60	0.55	0.65	0.70
Base of trench	0.70	0.70	0.72	0.62	0.55	0.74	0.80

Trench 8

Trench 8 was located in the north-eastern corner of the site and orientated north-east to south-west. The natural subsoil consisted of yellow brown sandy clay with gravel and pebbles. A furrow was noted crossing the trench on a north-south alignment. A feature filled with soil of a blackish organic appearance was investigated but was found to be ill-defined, with several 'shoots' extending from it. It resembled a similar feature seen in Trench 3 and again is unlikely to be of archaeological origin.

Table 8: Soil depths within Trench 8 (measured from the top of the trench)

Trench 8							
Length (m)	Width (m)		Area (sq. m)		Min. depth (m)		Max. depth (m)
30.0	2.0		60		0.40		0.48
Interval (m) from NE	0	5	10	15	20	25	to SW end 30
Topsoil depth	0.25	0.30	0.24	0.25	0.32	0.32	0.29
Subsoil depth	-	0.42	0.40	0.36	0.40	0.38	0.38
Top of Natural substratum	0.25	0.42	0.40	0.36	0.40	0.38	0.38
Base of trench	0.40	0.45	0.48	0.40	0.45	0.48	0.47

Trench 9

Trench 9 was orientated east-west and located at the top of the development area, close to the boundary with the park. The trench was fairly shallow and had a very gentle slope to the south. The natural subsoil consisted of yellow grey silty clay with occasional pebbles interspersed with red/orange gravel in clay. Furrows with a distinctive pebbly subsoil-like fill, crossed the trench on a north-south alignment. No other archaeological features were observed.

Table 9: Soil depths within Trench 9 (measured from the top of the trench)

Trench 9							
Length (m)	Width (m)		Area (sq. m)		Min. depth (m)		Max. depth (m)
31.4	2.0		62.8		0.52		0.76
Interval (m) from E	0	5	10	15	20	25	to W end 30
Topsoil depth	0.29	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.28	0.30	0.30
Subsoil depth	0.52	0.52	0.27	0.32	0.26	0.49	0.45
Top of Natural substratum	0.52	0.52	0.27	0.32	0.26	0.49	0.45
Base of trench	0.55	0.64	0.65	0.76	0.59	0.54	0.52

Trench 10

Trench 10 was located in the north-west corner of the development area. It had a very gentle southwards slope and was orientated north-south. The natural subsoil consisted of light yellow brown clay interspersed with orange brown gravels. No archaeological features were observed.

Table 10: Soil depths within Trench 10 (measured from the top of the trench)

Trench 10							
Length (m)	Width (m)		Area (sq. m)		Min. depth (m)		Max. depth (m)
31.8	2.0		63.6		0.43		0.72
Interval (m) from S	0	5	10	15	20	25	to N end 30
Topsoil depth	0.27	0.28	0.26	0.26	0.40	0.28	0.30
Subsoil depth	0.37	0.37	0.33	0.33	0.50	0.57	0.59
Top of Natural substratum	0.37	0.37	0.33	0.33	0.50	0.57	0.59
Base of trench	0.46	0.43	0.44	0.43	0.60	0.72	0.71

Trench 11

Trench 11 was located to the south of Trench 10, on a north-south orientation. The natural subsoil was the same, consisting of mixed clays and gravels. A furrow was observed running down the eastern side of the trench, necessitating slightly deeper excavation on one side. There were no archaeological features.

Table 11: Soil depths within Trench 11 (measured from the top of the trench)

Trench 11							
Length (m)	Width (m)		Area (sq. m)		Min. depth (m)	Max. depth (m)	
30.0	2.0		60		0.48	0.90	
Interval (m) from N	0	5	10	15	20	25	to S end 30
Topsoil depth	0.30	0.26	0.36	0.34	0.30	0.30	0.32
Subsoil depth	0.40	0.45	0.58	0.66	0.35	0.42	0.38
Top of Natural substratum	0.40	0.45	0.58	0.66	0.35	0.42	0.38
Base of trench	0.50	0.60	0.90	0.82	0.58	0.48	0.48

Trench 12

Trench 12 was located in the centre of the development area and aligned east-west. The natural substrata were the same as those seen in Trenches 10 and 11 and there were no archaeological features, with the exception of furrows.

Table 12: Soil depths within Trench 12 (measured from the top of the trench)

Trench 12							
Length (m)	Width (m)		Area (sq. m)		Min. depth (m)	Max. depth (m)	
30.0	2.0		60		0.46	0.65	
Interval (m) from E	0	5	10	15	20	25	to W end 30
Topsoil depth	0.34	0.35	0.34	0.35	0.28	0.35	0.32
Subsoil depth	0.48	-	-	0.47	0.40	0.35	0.40
Top of Natural substratum	0.48	0.35	0.34	0.47	0.40	0.35	0.40
Base of trench	0.60	0.46	0.48	0.65	0.50	0.60	0.52

Trench 13

Trench 13 was excavated on the lower part of the slope and orientated north-south. The thickness of the subsoil increased towards the south of the trench and is likely to represent colluvium or alluvium. However, the topsoil, subsoil and natural subsoil were similar to those seen in the previous trench. There were no archaeological features.

Table 13: Soil depths within Trench 13 (measured from the top of the trench)

Trench 13							
Length (m)	Width (m)		Area (sq. m)		Min. depth (m)	Max. depth (m)	
33.8	2.0		67.6		0.40	1.18	
Interval (m) from S	0	5	10	15	20	25	to N end 30
Topsoil depth	0.28	0.43	0.53	0.30	0.35	0.30	0.34

Subsoil depth	0.38	0.89	0.97	1.10	1.09	1.04	0.87
Top of Natural substratum	0.38	0.89	0.97	1.10	1.09	1.04	0.87
Base of trench	0.40	0.97	1.10	1.15	1.15	1.18	0.95

Trench 14

Trench 14 was orientated east-west and was located at the base of the slope on the west side of the development area, parallel with the stream. The trench was excavated to a minimum depth of 0.92m, due to the thickness of the alluvial cover. The alluvium consisted of grey brown sandy silt, with a soft consistency. Approximately 5m from the west end of the trench, a horse skull was encountered at a depth of about 0.5m below ground level. This was an isolated, disarticulated element and was found within the alluvium rather than in a cut, suggesting that it had been washed into that position at some point during the alluvial build-up. Since there was no way of knowing the date of the skull as it was effectively unstratified, it was not retained. A ceramic land-drain was encountered at 8m from the west end, at approximately 1m below ground level, the breaching of which accelerated the incursion of water into the trench and had to be suppressed with mud. The natural subsoil consisted of bands of light yellow brown clay and yellow brown sand and was below the water table. No archaeological features were observed.

Table 14: Soil depths within Trench 14 (measured from the top of the trench)

Trench 14							
Length (m)	Width (m)		Area (sq. m)		Min. depth (m)		Max. depth (m)
33.0	2.0		66		0.92		1.50
Interval (m) from W	0	5	10	15	20	25	to E end 30
Topsoil depth	0.35	0.32	0.34	0.32	0.35	0.30	0.35
Subsoil depth	1.20	1.50	1.12	1.05	0.95	0.90	0.92
Top of Natural substratum	1.20	1.50	1.12	1.05	0.95	0.90	0.92
Base of trench	1.30	1.50	1.12	1.05	1.00	0.92	0.92

Trench 15

Trench 15 was orientated north-east/south-west and was positioned on the south-west slope in the centre of the proposed development area. North-south aligned furrows crossed the trench. The topsoil, subsoil and natural substratum were the same as seen in previous trenches. There were no archaeological features.

Table 15: Soil depths within Trench 15 (measured from the top of the trench)

Trench 15							
Length (m)	Width (m)		Area (sq. m)		Min. depth (m)		Max. depth (m)
30.0	2.0		60		0.80		1.05
Interval (m) from NE	0	5	10	15	20	25	to SW end 30

Topsoil depth	0.35	0.30	0.32	0.28	0.30	0.32	0.28
Subsoil depth	0.70	0.70	0.68	0.75	1.0	0.85	0.94
Top of Natural substratum	0.70	0.70	0.68	0.75	1.0	0.85	0.94
Base of trench	0.95	0.80	0.80	0.86	1.05	1.00	0.98

Trench 16

Trench 16 was located on the eastern side of the pasture field and positioned on top of a ridge. Two subsoils were noted, the upper consisting of grey mottled slightly sandy clay and the lower was a mottled yellowy orange/brownish beige sandy clay. There was very little distinction between the topsoil and the upper subsoil, which represents the mounded up ploughsoil / 'ridge' material. The lower subsoil was alluvial. The natural subsoil consisted of sandy clay, with gravels and lenses of pure sand. No archaeological features were observed.

Table 16: Soil depths within Trench 16 (measured from the top of the trench)

Trench 16							
Length (m)	Width (m)		Area (sq. m)		Min. depth (m)		Max. depth (m)
16	2.0		32		0.92		1.30
Interval (m) from N	0	5	10	15			to S end
Topsoil depth	0.20	0.25	0.25	0.25			
Subsoil depth	0.80	0.70	0.75	0.75			
Top of Natural substratum	1.20	0.90	0.95	-			
Base of trench	1.30	0.98	1.02	0.92			

Trench 17

Trench 17 was located west of Trench 16 in the pasture field and on the same alignment. The observed sequence of soils was identical to the previous trench and no archaeological features were present. Once excavated, the trench rapidly became waterlogged at the base.

Table 17: Soil depths within Trench 17 (measured from the top of the trench)

Trench 17							
Length (m)	Width (m)		Area (sq. m)		Min. depth (m)		Max. depth (m)
14.5	2.0		29		0.95		1.08
Interval (m) from N	0	5	10	15			to S end
Topsoil depth	0.30	0.25	0.28	0.25			
Subsoil depth	0.60	0.65	0.95	0.75			
Top of Natural substratum	0.85	0.90	1.00	1.05			
Base of trench	0.98	0.95	1.05	1.08			

Trench 18

Trench 18 was located west of and on the same alignment as Trench 17, within the pasture field. Only one subsoil was noted in this trench, consisting of grey-brown silty clay, with a varying consistency and occasional pebbles. Some possible ploughscars were located at the base of the trench, which may pre-date the ridges. The natural substrata were the same as noted in the previous two trenches.

Table 18: Soil depths within Trench 18 (measured from the top of the trench)

Trench 18							
Length (m)	Width (m)		Area (sq. m)		Min. depth (m)		Max. depth (m)
15	2.0		30		1.18		1.35
Interval (m) from N	0	5	10	14			to S end
Topsoil depth	0.30	0.66	0.40	0.37			
Subsoil depth	1.04	1.20	1.18	1.20			
Top of Natural substratum	1.04	1.20	1.18	1.20			
Base of trench	1.18	1.24	1.35	1.35			

Trench 19

Trench 19 was the most westerly of the trenches within the pasture field and, unlike the others, was not excavated on a ridge. The observed soils were the same as in Trench 18. The length of the trench was reduced slightly, due to rapid waterlogging and the depths were measured from the top of the trench, as the trench sides were considered unstable. No archaeological features were observed.

Table 19: Soil depths within Trench 19 (measured from the top of the trench)

Trench 19							
Length (m)	Width (m)		Area (sq. m)		Min. depth (m)		Max. depth (m)
12	2.0		24		1.15		1.48
Interval (m) from N	0	5	10	12			to S end
Topsoil depth	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30			
Subsoil depth	1.05	1.15	1.40	1.40			
Top of Natural substratum	1.05	1.15	1.40	1.40			
Base of trench	1.15	1.25	1.48	1.48			

Trench 20

Trench 20 was located on the slope within the arable field. The soil sequence consisted of topsoil overlying a moderate layer of mid grey brown, slightly sandy-clay alluvium, with a firm consistency and occasional pebbles and flints. The natural substratum was a mixture of orange/yellow clay, blue/grey clay and bands of gravels. No archaeological features were observed.

Table 20: Soil depths within Trench 20 (measured from the top of the trench)

Trench 20						
Length (m)	Width (m)		Area (sq. m)		Min. depth (m)	Max. depth (m)
16	2.0		32		0.75	1.02
Interval (m) from SE	0	5	10	15		to NW end
Topsoil depth	0.26	0.34	0.38	0.36		
Subsoil depth	0.90	0.80	0.76	0.70		
Top of Natural substratum	0.90	0.80	0.76	0.70		
Base of trench	1.02	0.88	0.82	0.75		

Conclusion

An archaeological evaluation was carried out on land west of Station Lane, Asfordby, which will be the subject of a forthcoming planning application for residential development. Twenty trenches, varying in length from 15m to 30m were excavated comprising a total area of 1074 square metres. Many of the trenches contained furrows running north-south, however no further archaeological features were observed. Sixteen struck flints, including scrapers and flakes, were recovered from the surface of the field and date from the later prehistoric period. They are consistent with the flint assemblage previously recovered during fieldwalking (Browning 2014) and probably represent activity associated with the ploughed-out burial mounds.

Swales running into a balancing pond, shown on the proposed development plan (Figure 3), may impact upon the edge of a ring ditch, which was originally identified as a cropmark and confirmed during geophysical survey (Davies 2014). However, the constraints of working with plant under the overhead powerlines prevented the excavation of trenches in this area during the evaluation. The ring ditch is expected to survive as an earthfast feature and therefore further archaeological work may be required in the area of the proposed balancing pond and swales before the development progresses. The trial trenching undertaken over the remainder of the area suggest that no further archaeological remains are likely to be affected by the proposed development, as shown by the current plans.

Archive and Publications

The site archive, consisting of paper and photographic records, will be held by under the Accession Number XA138 2014.

The archive consists of:

- 20 trench recording sheets
- Photographic record indices
- Digital photographs
- Assemblage of struck flints (unstratified)

Acknowledgements

The archaeological evaluation was carried out by Jennifer Browning and Rebecca Hearn. Lynden Cooper identified the flints and Patrick Clay managed the project. We would like to thank Alan, who drove the machine and his colleagues from Jelson Ltd. for their help and co-operation during the work.

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Oasis Information

Project Name	Station Lane, Asfordby
Accession Number	X.A138 2014
Project Type	Archaeological evaluation
Project Manager	Patrick Clay
Project Supervisor	Jennifer Browning
Previous/Future work	Desk-based assessment, geophysical survey, fieldwalking
Current Land Use	arable/pasture
Development Type	Residential development

Reason for Investigation	NPPF
Position in the Planning Process	pre-determination
Site Co ordinates	NGR SK 70027 18729
Start/end dates of field work	25th February 2015 and 4th March 2015
Archive Recipient	Leicestershire County Council
Study Area	36250 square metres (approx half the arable field and the pasture field.

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Figure 8: Thumbnail images from the digital archive showing each trench and some general views

Key to Thumbnails in Figure 8:

- 1+3 General views of the arable field
- 5+7 Trench 1
- 8+10 Trench 2
- 12+14 Trench 4
- 16+18 Trench 5
- 19+21 Trench 3
- 23+25 Trench 10
- 28+29 Trench 11
- 31+33 Trench 7
- 35+37 Trench 8
- 42+43 Trench 9
- 45+47 Trench 6
- 49+51 Trench 3
- 53+55 Trench 14
- 57+59 Trench 5
- 66-67 General shots of pasture field
- 68+70 Trench 16
- 73+74 Trench 17
- 76+78 Trench 18
- 80+84 Trench 19
- 85+87 Trench 20

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