UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER
Archaeological Services

An Archaeological Evaluation
On Land at Croft Road, Cosby, Leicestershire
SP 54336 95285

Steve Baker

ULAS Report No 2016-068

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(SP 54336 95285)

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For: Jelson Homes

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ULAS Report Number 2016-068

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CONTENTS

FIGURES

An Archaeological Evaluation
On Land at Croft Road, Cosby, Leicestershire

Summary

University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) carried out an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching on land off Croft Road, Cosby, Leicestershire, from the 9th – 24th March 2016. The work was undertaken for Jelsons as part of an archaeological impact assessment in advance of a residential development.

Following a desk-based assessment identifying cropmarks, and a geophysical survey, the evaluation involved the excavation of 34 trenches in total to sample the proposed development area and target potential anomalies. Evidence of pits, ditches and a possible track way were uncovered ranging from prehistoric to Roman date along with a putative sunken-featured building of probably early-Saxon date along with undated agricultural field drains and traces of medieval ridge and furrow.

The archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council Museum Service under accession number XA36-2016.

1. Introduction

An archaeological evaluation was carried out by ULAS for Jelsons in advance of a proposed residential development

The fieldwork is intended to provide preliminary indications of character and extent of any heritage assets by sample and targeted trenches in order that the potential impact of the development on such remains may be assessed by the Planning Authority.

The definition of archaeological field evaluation, taken from the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (2014) is a limited programme of non-intrusive and/ or intrusive fieldwork which determines the presence or absence of archaeological features, structures, deposits, artefacts or ecofacts within a specified area or site on land, inter-tidal zone or underwater. If such archaeological remains are present field evaluation defines their character, extent, quality and preservation, and enables an assessment of their worth in a local, regional, national or international context as appropriate.

2. Site Description, Topography and Geology

The 14.2 ha application area lies north of Croft Road on the eastern edge of the village Cosby, in Cosby Parish, to the south of the city of Leicester (Fig. 1). The site lies at a height of *c.* 72-79m OD, on land sloping slightly downwards to the north. The eastern side is predominantly arable land and the western side of the development area mainly comprises paddocks on Foxlands Farm and one small arable field off Croft Road (Fig. 2).

The British Geological Survey shows that the site is located upon Mercia mudstone and boulder clay beneath superficial deposits of river sands and gravels.

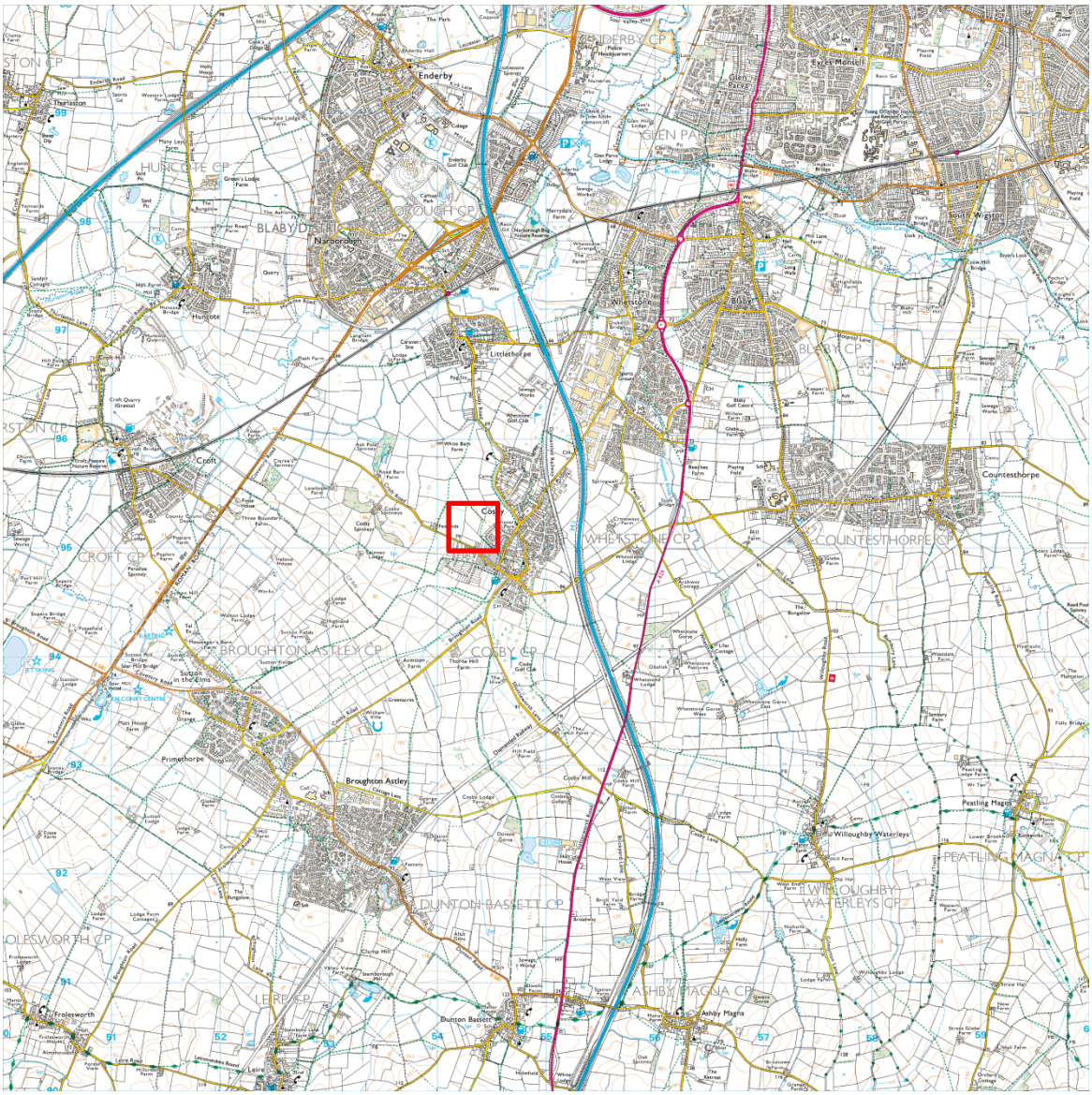

Figure 1: Site Location

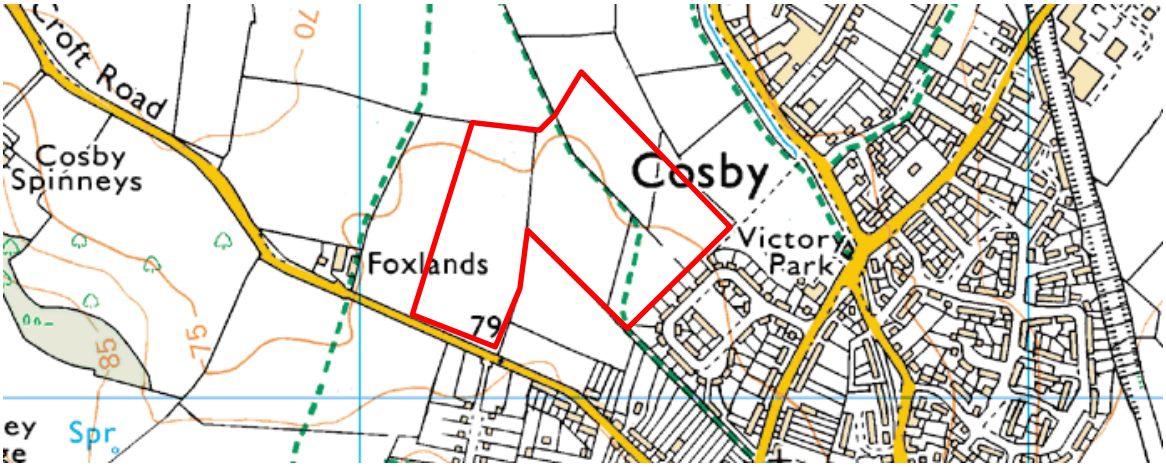

Figure 2: Proposed development area (approximate). Plan provided by client.

3. Archaeological and Historical Background

Historical Background

An archaeological desk based assessment has been completed for the site (La Combe, 2016) and the following background is taken from it.

The name Cosby means 'Farmstead or village of a man called Cossa' (Mills 2003) derived from the Old English personal name and the Scandinavian 'by'.

The village is mentioned in the Domesday Book as 'Cossebi' (Morris 1975). It is recorded that land in Cosby was held by several people, including Judith, Robert under Robert de Buci, Earl Walles and Sbern, a freeman and there were 26 'socmen' in the village at the time of the Domesday survey. This reveals the village's Scandinavian origins, as socmen were free tenants who owned and tilled their own land. It would have been unusual at this time, 200 years after the occupation of much of this area by Viking settlers for there to still exist such a large number of freemen of Danish origin in the village.

Cosby achieved market status in 1338 and the land was enclosed in 1767. The parish was transferred to Narborough in 1935 after a large fall in population from 1,560 (in 1911) to 392. It lies in the ancient deanery of Guthlaxton. Crop returns from 1801 suggest that at this time around three quarters of the available land was under pasture.

The village gradually grew throughout the post-medieval period but the main development in the village's fortunes came with the knitting industry in the 19th century, which caused the population to increase dramatically. Problems in the trade in the middle of the century brought about a move back to agriculture, but the town moved into new industrial territory towards the end of the 19th century with the arrival of the boot and shoe trade (La Combe, 2016).

Archaeological Background

The Historic Environment Record (HER) for Leicestershire and Rutland indicates that there are a number of archaeological sites located around the proposed development area.

Prehistoric

There are several sites of Bronze Age date located to the west of the village, largely ring ditch cropmarks identified from aerial photographs of the area (Fig.3). These include a possible barrow cemetery, immediately west and encroaching into the western part of the

proposed development site which also contains a number of previously unidentified cropmarks *c*.20m in diameter suggestive of ring ditches. One lies immediately west of Foxlands Farm and another (*c.* 24m in diameter) lies in the north-west corner of the proposed development site. Other cropmarks to the north close to White Barn Farm include ring ditched, linear features and an enclosure cropmark. Geophysical Survey to the north-east, south of Cambridge Road identified a potential ditched enclosure and other features suggesting that prehistoric activity was widespread across the area.

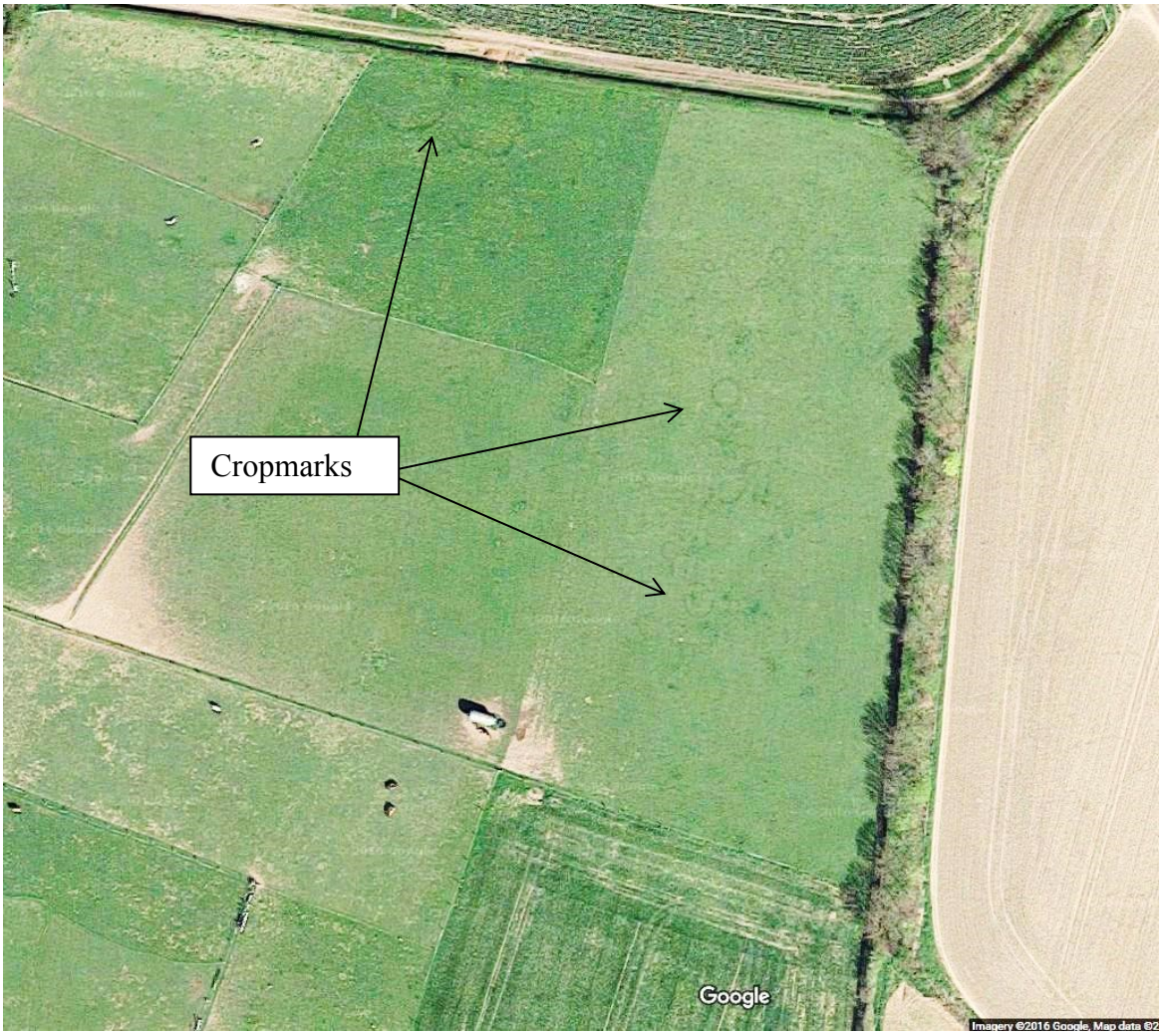

Figure 3: Cropmarks (Google Earth)

Roman

The upper stone of an Iron Age or Roman pudding quern was found in 1896 at a site close to the railway embankment. Roman pottery was also found to the north of the site near White Barn Farm. Roman coins and two brooches have been found in the Parish to the south and east.

Medieval

Cosby village has early medieval origins (see above) and the site is located within the historic village core adjacent to the church of St. Michael and All Angels; which is Grade II* Listed. The church has 11th century origins and contains fabric from the 13th, 14th and 15th centuries. There was a market in the village in medieval times and medieval remains have been found close to the church. Medieval pottery was recovered from a building site

at Portland Street/Cambridge Road in 1962 and a number of medieval metal objects have been found by metal detecting in the area.

4. Aims and Objectives

The main objectives of the evaluation were to:

- to target and investigate anomalies identified through geomagnetometry survey
- to target and investigate anomalies identified through aerial photography
- identify the presence/absence of any archaeological deposits.
- establish the character, extent and date range for any archaeological deposits to be affected by the proposed quarry extension.
- produce an archive and report of any results.

Within the stated project objectives, the principal aim of the evaluation was 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.

5. Magnetometry Survey (Fig. 4)

A geophysical survey of the whole site was undertaken in 2016. A number of linear anomalies were interpreted as representing possible archaeological ditches associated with an enclosure and a double ditched feature, potentially a track way both on the northern part of the development area. This interpretation was consistent with other double ditched features identified from cropmarks to the west and the 2008 geophysical survey to the east (Stratascan 2008). No evidence for the circular cropmark ring ditches were recorded in the survey.

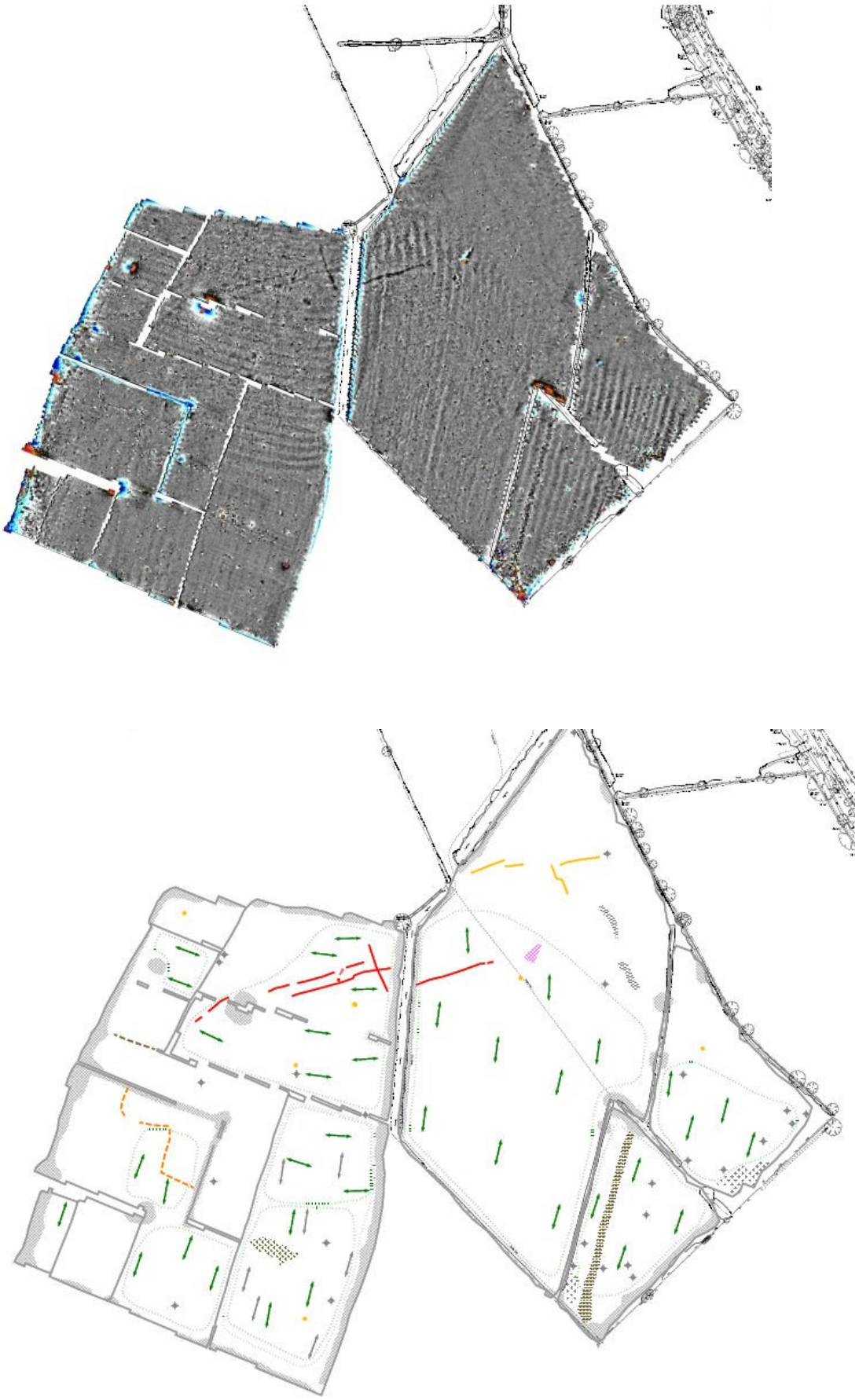

Figure 4: Geophysical Survey greyscale and interpretation (Green = Ridge and furrow, Red = potential archaeological features, Yellow = possible archaeological features)

6. Methodology

A total of 34 trenches were excavated across the development area. Thirty-three, 30m x 1.8m trenches were positioned according to the trench plan agreed in the written scheme of investigation (WSI; ULAS 2016) and were laid out by DGPS. Eight of these were located to target geophysical or cropmark identified in the magnetometry survey and aerial photography respectively and the remaining 25 positioned to achieve a representative sample across the remainder of the site. One of the trenches was relocated from the eastern area to the extreme north-west corner of the site to target a possible curvilinear cropmark extending outside the development perimeter (Fig. 5).

The two most north-western trenches of Area 4 were subsequently precluded from excavation by the discovery of a live badger sett on the northern perimeter which required a 50m radial exclusion zone. The northern precluded trench occupied proposed rear gardens of the development area (Fig. 27), the other targeting the same geophysical anomalies as Trench 24 to the east and it was agreed with the Planning Archaeologist for Leicestershire to leave these unexcavated.

Two other trenches (13 and 3) were relocated to avoid a busy public footpath traversing the eastern arable fields north-west/south-east. The relocation of the former positioned it across the same geophysical anomaly targeted by Trench 12 to the west. Trench 17 was rotated *c.*90° in the hope of detecting the possible continuation and orientation of a linear feature observed in Trenches 15 and 16. In the western area, Trenches 22 and 16 were extended following consultation with the Planning Archaeologist to evaluate further the archaeological deposits revealed within its initial scope and contingency trenches 32, 33 and 34, excavated in the vicinity of Trench 26 with the same intent. Trench 24 was extended by *c.*2m southwards to ensure coverage the area identified as a circular cropmark.

Topsoil and overburden were carefully removed in level spits, under continuous archaeological supervision using a mechanical excavator with a toothless bucket (Fig. 6). 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 avoid damage to archaeological deposits or features which appeared worthy of preservation in situ or more detailed investigation than for the purposes of evaluation.

Trenches were examined by hand cleaning and any archaeological deposits were recorded using standard procedures as per the ULAS recording manual and outlined in the agreed Written Scheme of Investigation (ULAS 2016). Spoil heaps were investigated using a metal detector.

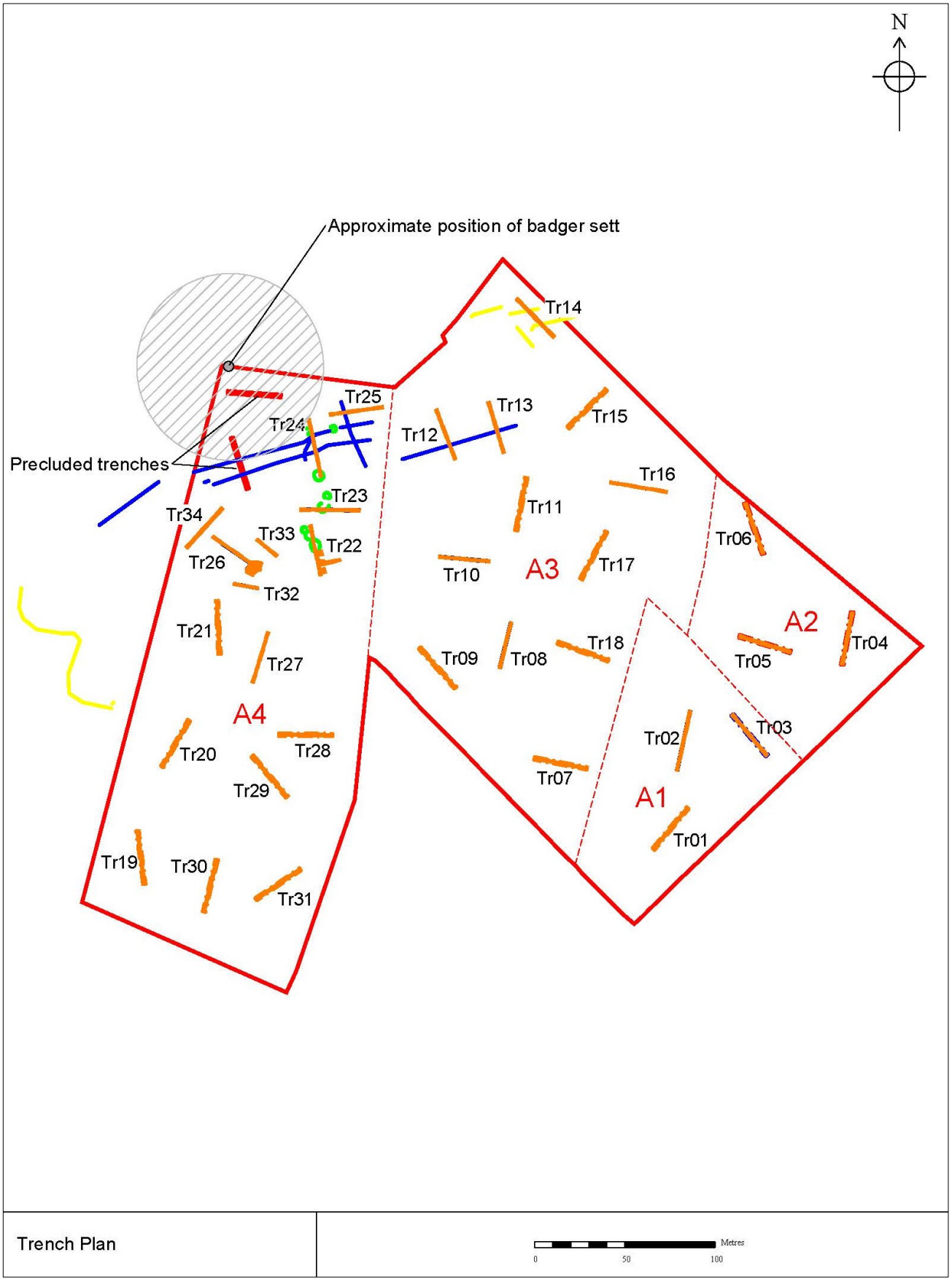

Figure 5: Trench location plan overlain on the geophysical survey

Constraints

A badger sett was discovered on the northern perimeter of Area 4, its location precluded the excavation of two trenches within a 50m radius. Water was initially a challenge on site with several of the excavated trenches becoming waterlogged and/or collapsing following heavy rainfall and flooding of the area. Trench 4, particularly deep, subject to flooding and subsequent collapse, near to a children's play area, was backfilled shortly after excavation for health and safety reasons. Trench 14 was subject to rapid flooding from exposed land drains and was also immediately backfilled.

Figure 6: Machining Area 4

7. Results

Consistently dark-brown sandy clay loam topsoil was removed from all of the trenches. Where present, dark-orange/brown sandy clay subsoil was also removed to reveal a variable substratum. This was predominantly mid/light yellowish brown fine/medium sand with some gravel patches and occasional light yellow/brown sandy clay patches.

TRENCH	ORIENTATION	LENGTH AND WIDTH (metres)	TOPSOIL THICKNESS (metres)	SUBSOIL THICKNESS (metres)	DESCRIPTION	TRENCH DEPTH (MIN-MAX metres)
1	NE-SW	30	0.05-0.13	0.11-0.24	No archaeological deposits	0.36-0.52
2	N-S	30	0.08-0.17	0.12-0.22	Gully [53]	0.38-0.60
3	NW-SE	30	0.08-0.20	0.18-0.30	No archaeological deposits	0.34-0.70
4	N-S	30	0.24-0.33	0.40-0.60	No archaeological deposits	0.80-1.03
5	NE-SW	30	0.10-0.26	0.15-0.42	No archaeological deposits	0.51-0.88
6	N-S	30	0.04-0.32	0.18-0.32	No archaeological deposits	0.39-0.81
7	NE-SW	30	0.14-0.30	0.09-0.34	No archaeological deposits	0.47-0.81
8	N-S	30	0.29-0.35	0.12-0.51	Pit [01]	0.77-0.90
9	NW-SE	30	0.26-0.33	0.50-0.76	No archaeological deposits	1.07-1.18
10	E-W	30	0.19-0.32	0.14-0.40	Pit [04]	0.50-0.75
11	N-S	30	0.30-0.38	0.22-0.34	No archaeological deposits	0.55-0.65
12	NW-SE	30	0.30-0.41	0.25-0.35	Ditch [10]	0.60-0.74
13	N-S	30	0.17-0.30	0.20-0.41	Ditch (unexcavated)	0.48-0.80
14	NW-Se	30	N/A	N/A	No archaeological deposits, flooded	0.63-0.80
15	NW-SE	30	0.21-0.34	0.14-0.43	Ditches [09] [15], land drains	0.54-0.85
16	NE-SE	30	0.30-0.28	0.20-0.40	Pit [16], ditch (unexcavated)furrow	0.50-0.80
17	NW-SE	30	0.28-0.32	0.18-0.37	No archaeological deposits	0.53-0.72
18	NW-SE	30	0.27-0.31	0.22-0.31	No archaeological deposits	0.55-0.63
19	N-S	30	0.09-0.18	0.12-0.26	No archaeological deposits	0.29-0.46

20	NE-SW	30	0.16-0.31	0.11-0.61	Pit [21], furrow	0.33-0.84
21	N-S	30	0.34-0.48	0.20-0.50	No archaeological deposits, furrow	0.92-1.15
22	NE-SE	30	0.32-0.60	0.22-0.48	Pits [42] [45] [47], pits (unexcavated), extended	0.47-0.87
23	E-W	30	0.36-0.40	0.30-0.46	Gully [18]	0.83-0.92
24	N-S	32	0.30-0.50	0.30-0.40	Ditches [32] [34], layer (55), extended	0.60-0.90
25	E-W	30	0.32-0.35	0.24-0.75	Ditch [43]	0.70-1.10
26	NW-SE	35	0.30-0.39	0.22-0.30	Pit [24], feature [31], extended	0.55-0.72
27	N-S	30	0.25-0.35	0.12-0.38	Hearth [25], Gully [29], Posthole [26]	0.47-0.87
28	E-W	30	0.29-0.35	0.34-0.60	No archaeological deposits, land drain	0.76-1.02
29	NW-SE	30	0.25-0.34	0.10-0.45	No archaeological deposits, land drains, furrows	0.40-0.50
30	N-S	30	0.20-0.32	N/A	No archaeological deposits	0.21-0.35
31	NE-SW	30	0.24-0.35	0.08-0.11	No archaeological deposits, furrows	0.25-0.44
32	E-W	10	0.23-0.34	0.30-0.36	No archaeological deposits	0.78-0.95
33	E=W	15	0.26-0.40	0.15-0.23	Layer(55)	0.62-0.80
34	NE-SW	30	0.30-0.35	0.14-0.39	No archaeological deposits	0.58-0.77

Areas 1 and 2 (Fig. 5 A1 and A2)

Trenches 1, 3-6

Trenches 1 and 3-6 were located in the east of the proposed development area. They did not contain any archaeological deposits. Trench 3, retaining its planned orientation, was moved *c*.3m to the south-west away from a public footpath and Trench 4, on lower lying land and deeper than typical became waterlogged rapidly upon excavation, its sides subsequently collapsing, and was backfilled shortly after recording.

Trench 2 (Fig. 7)

Trench 2, orientated north-south and initially waterlogged, contained an irregular gully **[53],** *c.*9.80m long and *c.*0.65m wide and of unclear function, towards its northern end. Fill **(52),** light greyish sands, 0.33m deep, was devoid of any finds.

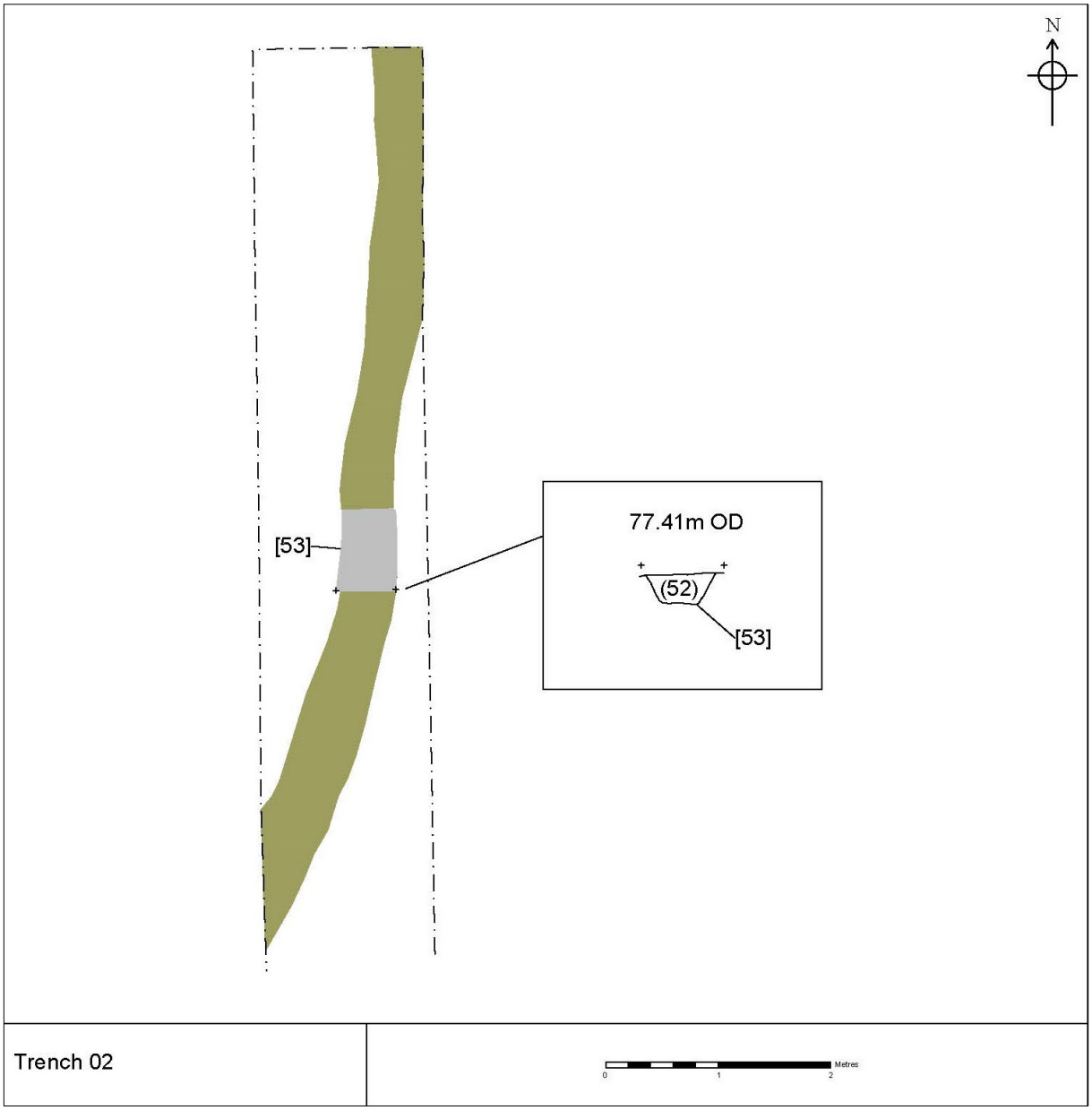

Figure 7: Trench 02

Area 3 (Fig. 5, A3)

Trenches 7, 9, 11, 17-18

These trenches were located to sample the central area of the proposed development site and contained no archaeological deposits or remains of the agricultural earthworks (ridge and furrow). Trench 17 was rotated *c.*90° in an attempt to determine the continuation of a feature from the north-east.

Trench 8 (Figure 8 8)

Trench 8 contained a small oval pit feature **[01]** located approximately 10m from its southern end with concave, moderately sloping sides. It was *c.*0.96 long with a width of *c.*0.74m. The single fill **(02)** was a mid-reddish grey sandy silt and was devoid of finds.

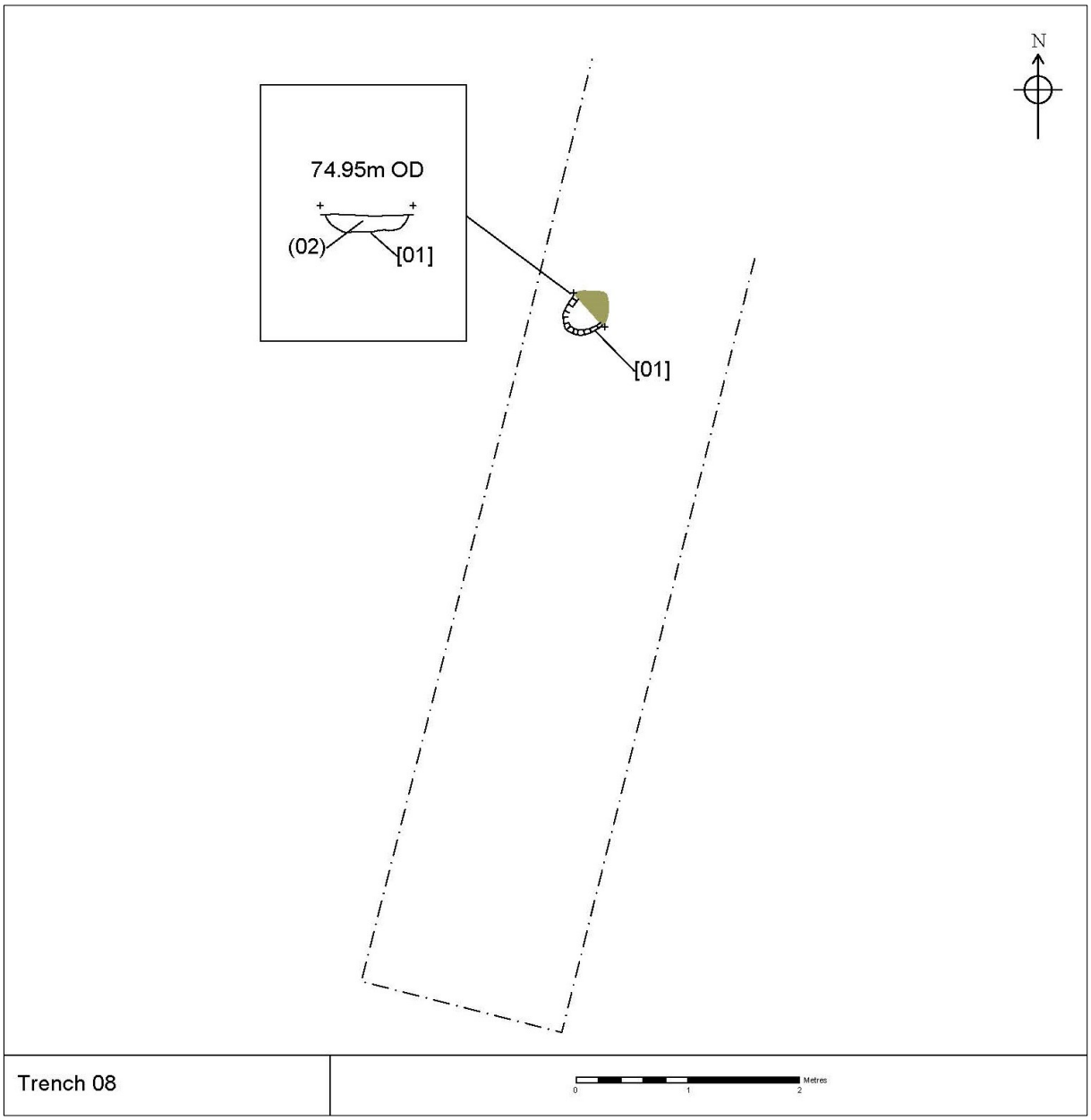

Figure 8: Trench 08

Trench 10 (Fig. 9)

Orientated east-west, this trench also contained an isolated, heavily truncated, oval pit **[04],** *c.*0.64m long and *c.*0.72m wide. The pit contained a single fill **(03),** just *c.*0.04m deep; a dark brownish-grey and mid-brown orange mixed sand, contained mid-Iron Age pottery (See Section 8).

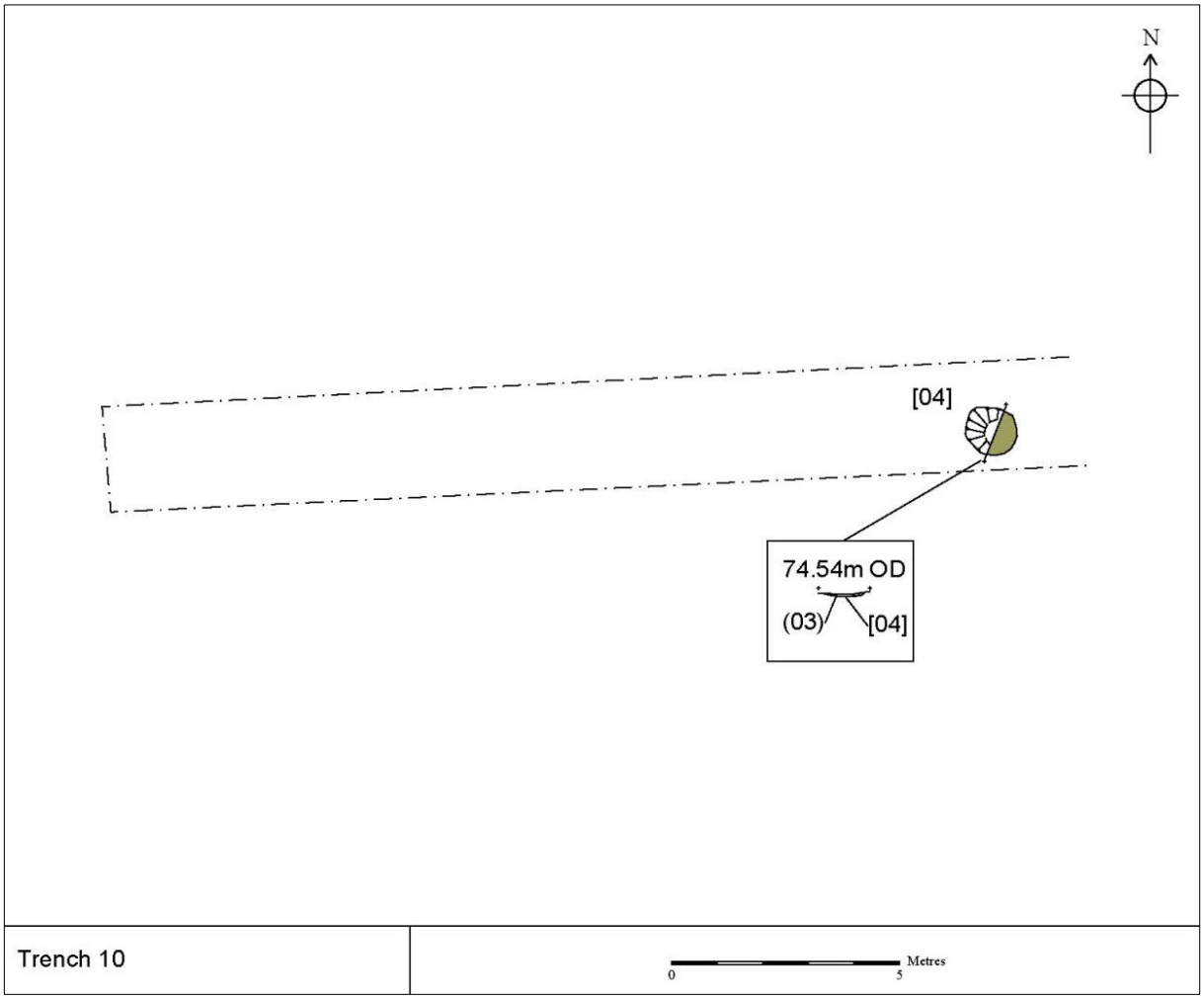

Figure 9: Trench 10

Trench 12 (Figs 10-11)

Located to target an east/west linear anomaly identified through geophysical survey the result confirmed the existence of this feature. Approximately 7m from the southern end of the north/south trench, ditch **[10]** was *c.*0.68m deep and *c.*2m wide, and had irregular sides with a U-shaped base. The primary fill **(11),** *c.*0.52m deep, was a mid-brown grey sandy silt and was devoid of finds. Above this was a mid-grey brown sandy-silt **(12),** *c.*0.56m deep. This and the upper silting fill **(13)** both contained pottery of mid-Iron Age date (See Section 8).

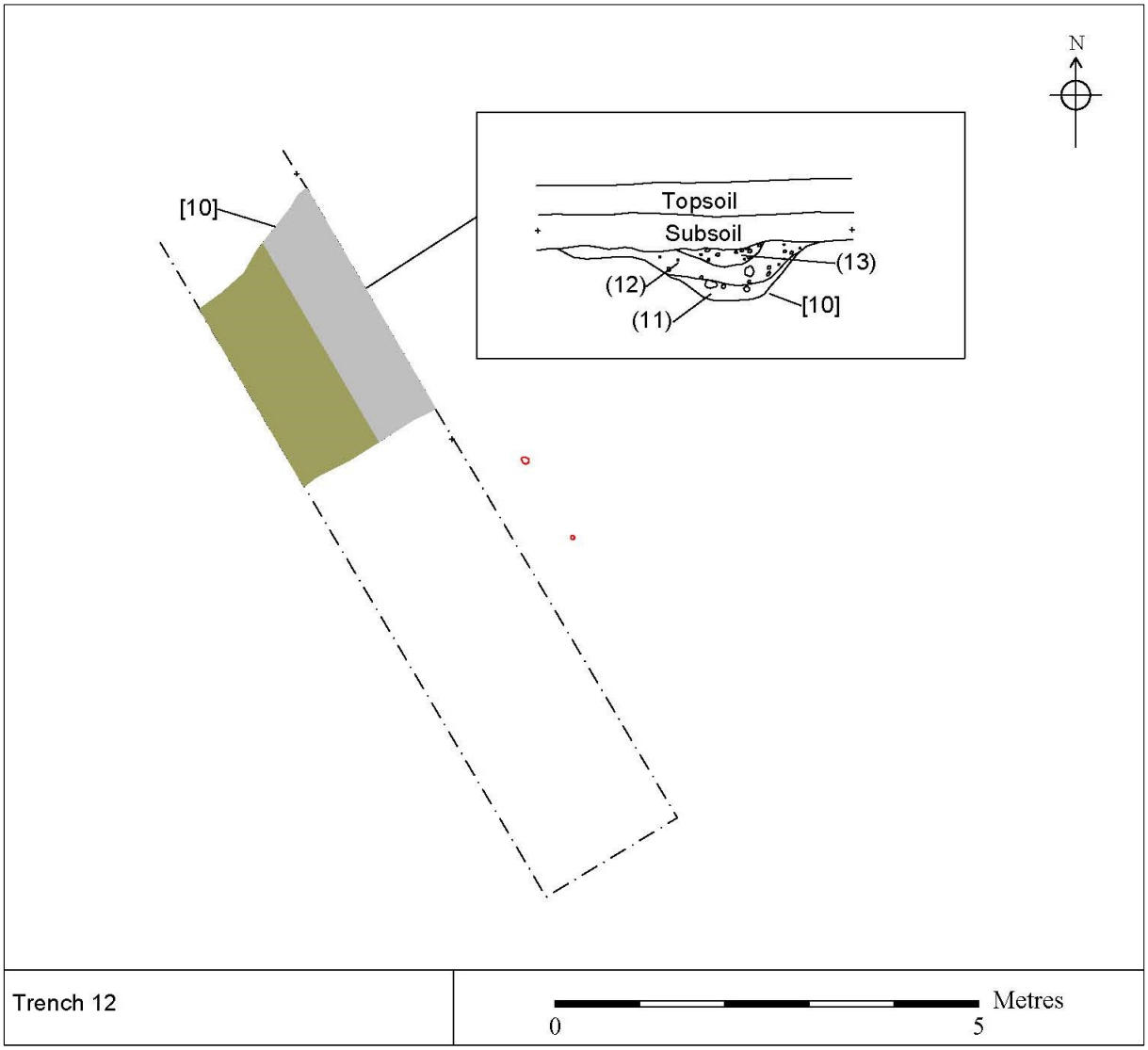

Figure 10: Trench 12

Trench 13 (Fig. 11)

Trench 13 was relocated approximately 31m further south on the same alignment in order to avoid the public footpath, placing it on the linear anomaly confirmed through excavation of Trench 12. The continuation of this feature was observed approximately 10m from the northern end, running on the same orientation. The feature was not excavated here and no other archaeological deposits were identified.

Trench 14

Trench 14 was targeted to investigate some geophysical linear anomalies tentatively interpreted as archaeology in the north-east corner of Area 3. The trench contained a number of active land drains but no archaeological deposits were observed during machining. It seems likely that the geophysical anomalies represent the drainage system.

Trench 15 (Figs 11 - 13)

Trench 15 orientated north-west/south-east contained field drains and two linear features. Ditch **[15],** with shallow concave sides and flat base was probably the same feature as **[10]**

in Trenches 12 and 13. Its single fill **(14)** comprised light grey silty-sand, *c.*0.60m deep, and contained an undated worked flint flake (Section 8). To the immediate north-east of this, linear feature **[09],** *c.*1.24m wide and *c.*0.80m deep, had steep sides with a flat base. This feature was not observed in any other trenches. The primary fill **(08),** *c.*0.59m thick comprised mid-grey sands with orange mottling. Both this and the mid-grey sandy upper fill **(08),** *c.*0.21m deep were devoid of finds.

Trench 16 (Figs 11 and 14)

A linear feature on the same orientation and same projected alignment as [**15**] in Trench 15 was observed running across the middle of this sample trench. An oval pit **[16],** *c.*1.9m long and *c.*1.2m wide with a depth of *c.*0.2m and of uncertain function was located and excavated to the immediate east of this ditch. It had an irregular base and sides and may have been a natural feature. The fill **(17),** a mid-grey sandy deposit, was devoid of any finds.

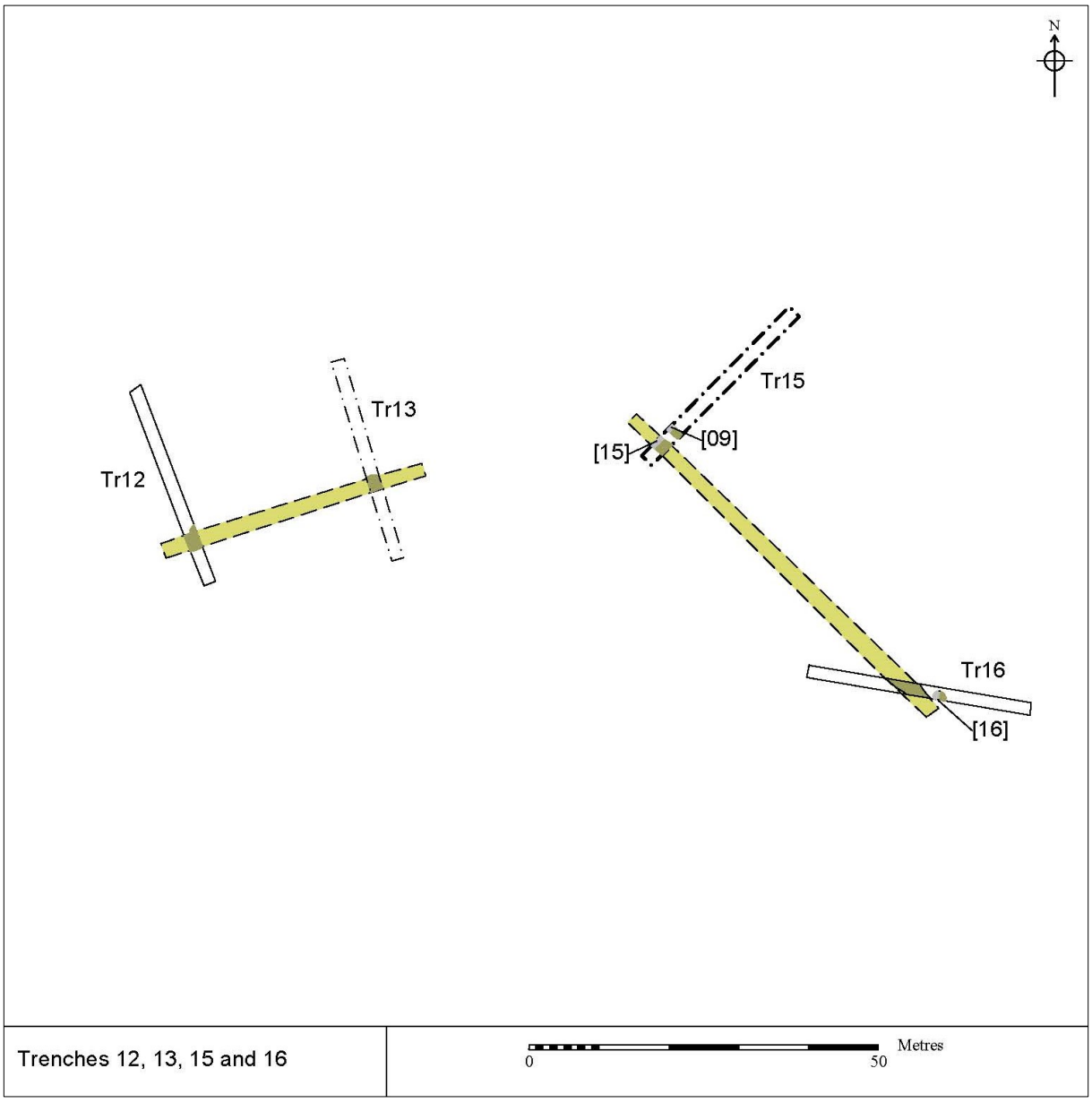

Figure 11: Trenches 12, 13, 15 and 16

Figure 12: Ditch [15], Trench 15, looking north-west

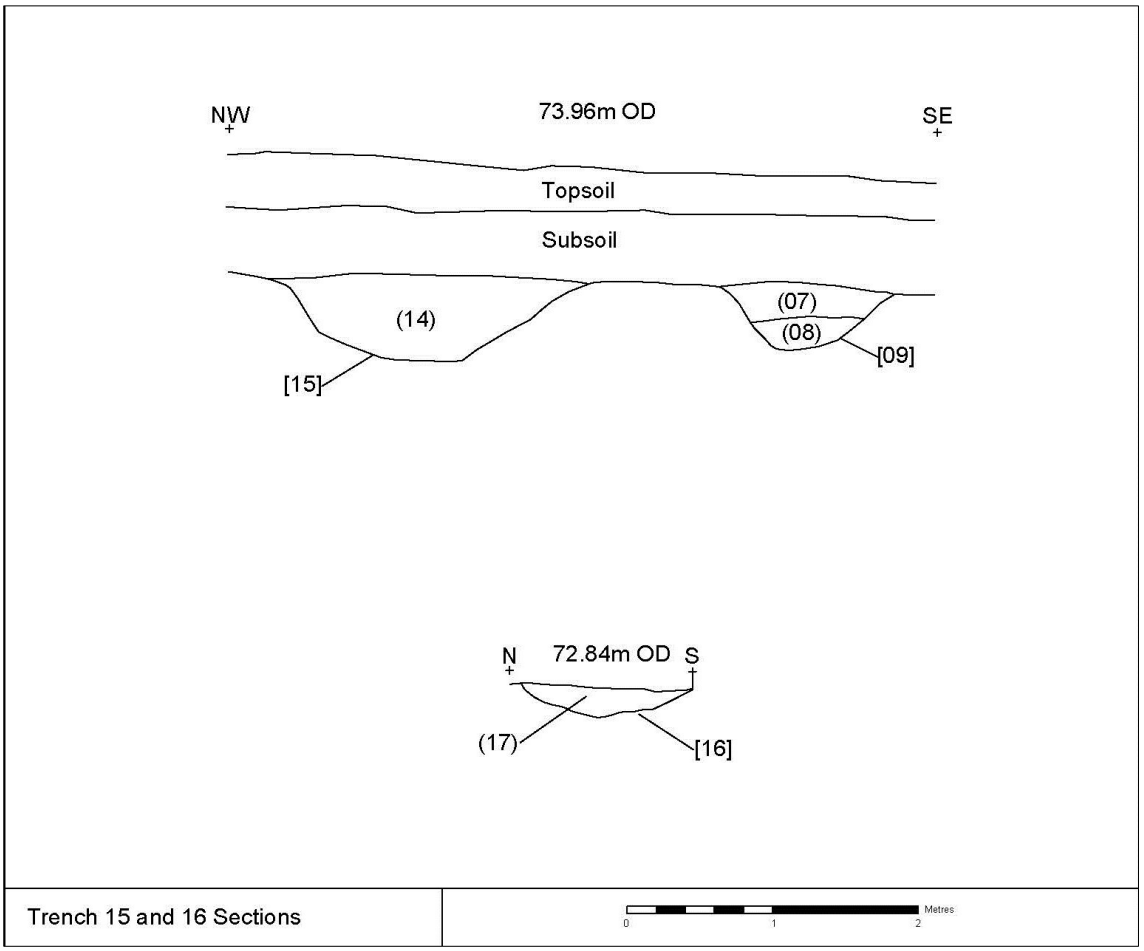

Figure 13: Trench 15 and 16 - Sections

Area 4 (Fig. 5, A4)

Trenches 19, 21 and 28-31

Trenches 19 and 21 were located in the paddocked area on the west of the development site. There was some evidence for heavily truncated remains of ridge and furrow and the presence of land drains but no archaeological deposits were observed.

Trench 20 (Fig. 14)

A solitary sub-circular pit **[21]** was located approximately 15m from the north-east end of the trench running beneath the baulk. It was *c.*1.20m wide and *c.*0.71m deep. The south-east side was steeper than the north-west and the base was flat. The fill **(20)** comprised mid-brownish grey sand and contained occasional charcoal and worked flint.

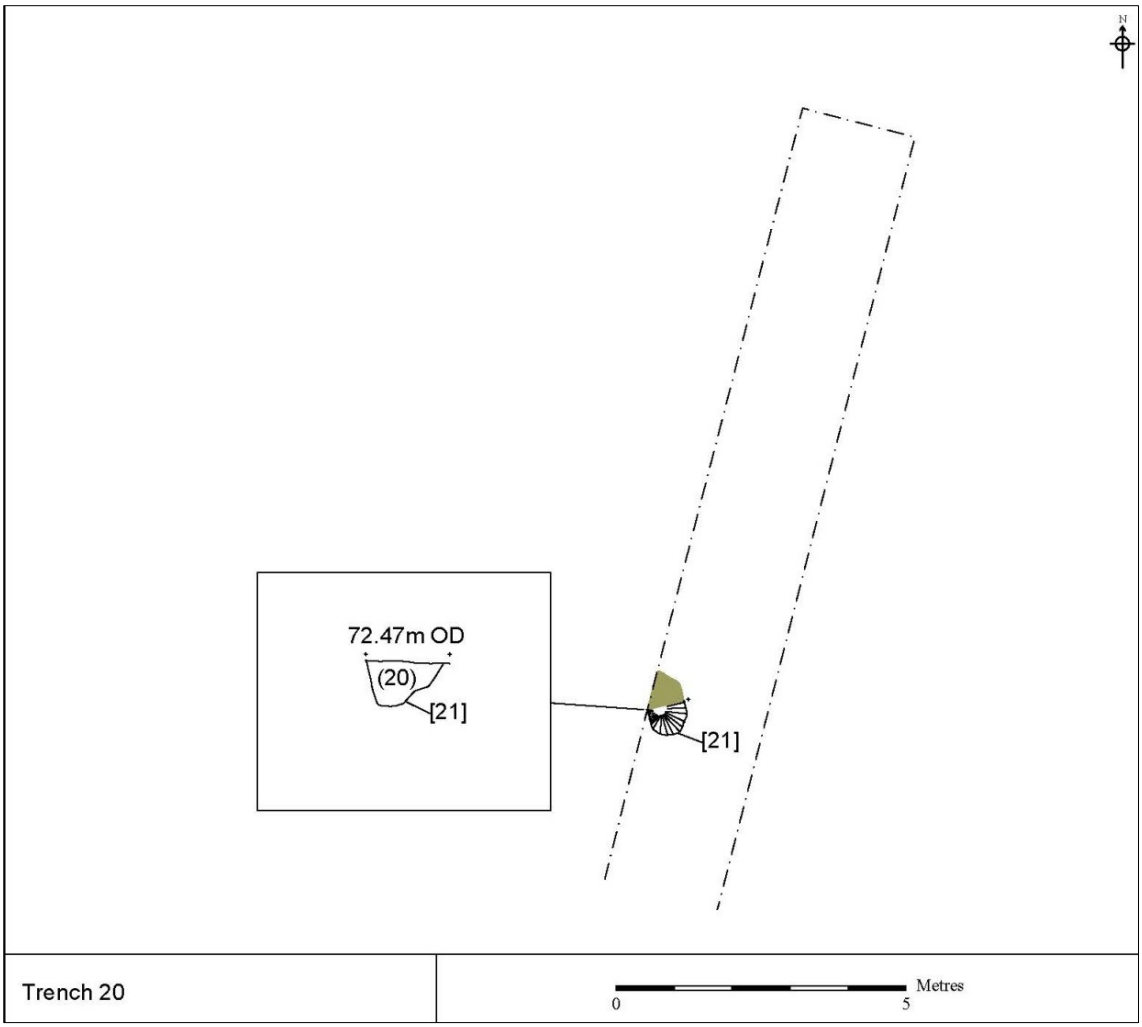

Figure 14: Trench 20

Trench 22 (Figs 15-17)

Trench 22 was originally located to target circular cropmark anomalies. It was extended eastwards to enhance the understanding of three large pit features, initially appearing to be aligned, and extending beneath the eastern baulk. The expanded trench contained two additional large pits.

Three of the pits were sample excavated. Circular pit **[42],** with straight steep sides and flat base was *c.*0.20m in diameter and *c.*0.78m deep (Fig. 17). It contained several mid/light grey brown silty sand fills. The primary fill **(41)** contained a possible windswept primary deposit. Above this fills **(40),** *c.*0.70m deep, **(38),** *c.*0.12 deep, **(37),** *c.*0.46m deep and **(39),** *c.*0.71m deep, were all very similar in composition and colour. The upper mid/dark grey brown silty sand fill **(36),** *c.*0.28m deep, contained some very fragmentary possible Iron Age pottery.

Pit **[45]** located *c.*3.5m to the south was smaller with a diameter of *c.*1.34m and depth of *c.*0.46m. It had shallower sides and a flat base. The fill **(44)** comprised a mid-brown silty sand and contained both Iron Age pottery and a crude flint core.

The extended area of Trench 22 revealed two further pits. Pit **[47],** *c.*1.62m in diameter and up to *c.*0.46m deep was located at a similar distance but to the east of Pit **[42].** It also had gently sloping slight concave sides and a flat base. The primary fill **(48)** was a mid-brown orange silty-sand, *c.*0.04m deep. A darker brown upper fill **(46),** *c.*0.42m deep, contained occasional flecks of charcoal and some worked flint.

Figure 15: Trench 22 extension

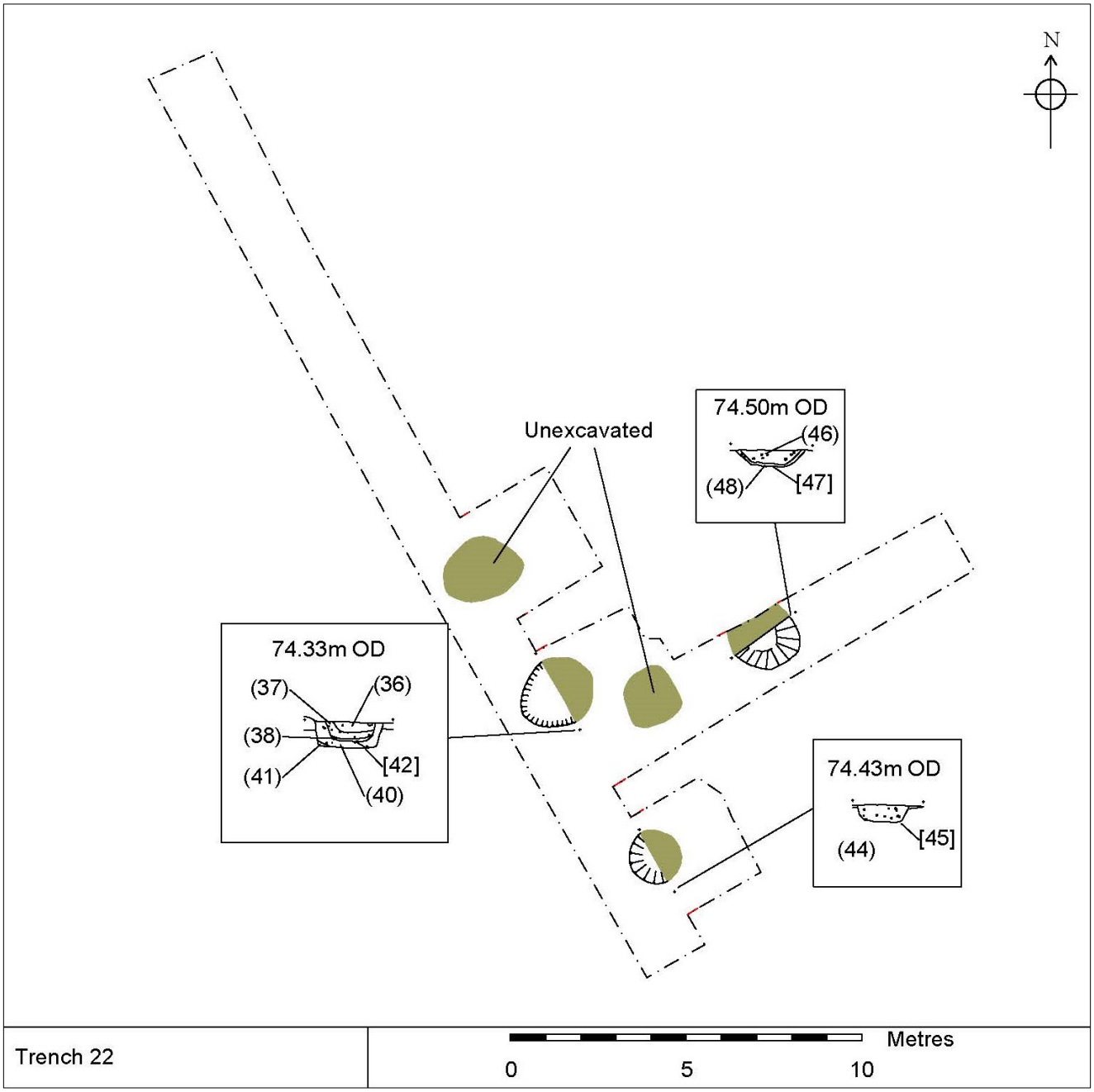

Figure 16: Trench 22

Figure 17: Pit [42], Trench 22, looking east

Trench 23 (

Figure 18 18))

Targeted to investigate circular cropmarks identified through aerial photography, Trench 23 contained a single linear feature **[18]** of archaeological interest. Orientated north-south, with U-shaped sides and base, a width of *c.*0.48m and depth of *c.*0.26m it contained a single fill **(19),** dark red soft silty-sand devoid of finds.

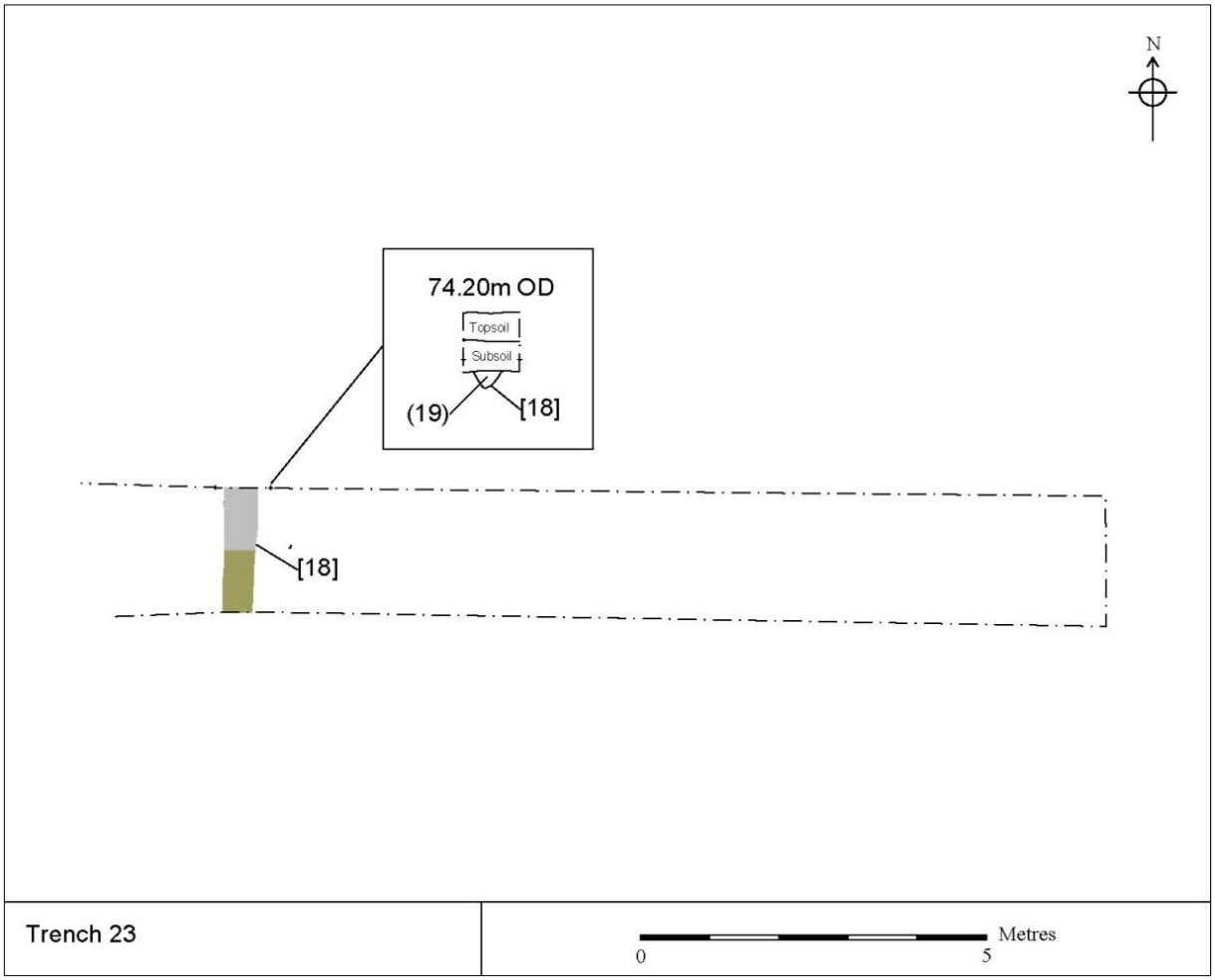

Figure 18: Trench 23

Trench 24 (Fig. 19)

Trench 24 was located to investigate parallel approximately east-west orientated linear features identified through geophysical survey. Two linear features matching the geophysical anomalies were uncovered and sample excavated. The evidence from them suggest that they may represent the outer ditches demarcating a possible trackway. Although the trench was extended by *c.*2m to the south to ensure the full area of the cropmark was investigated, no further evidence was observed. Un-stratified pottery of Iron Age date was recovered from this trench.

The northern most of these, ditch **[32]** had a width of *c.*2.00m and depth of *c.*0.40m, with steep sides and flat base. It contained a dark orange-brown silty-sand fill **(33),** with a trace of charcoal and no finds. Approximately 8.30m to the south, ditch **[34],** *c.*1.5m wide and *c.*0.30m deep, contained a similar fill **(35)**. A layer **(54),** *c.*2m across and heavily truncated, was identified in between the two linear features. This comprised of common medium – large pebbles within a mid-yellow brown sand matrix and could be the remnants of a surface.

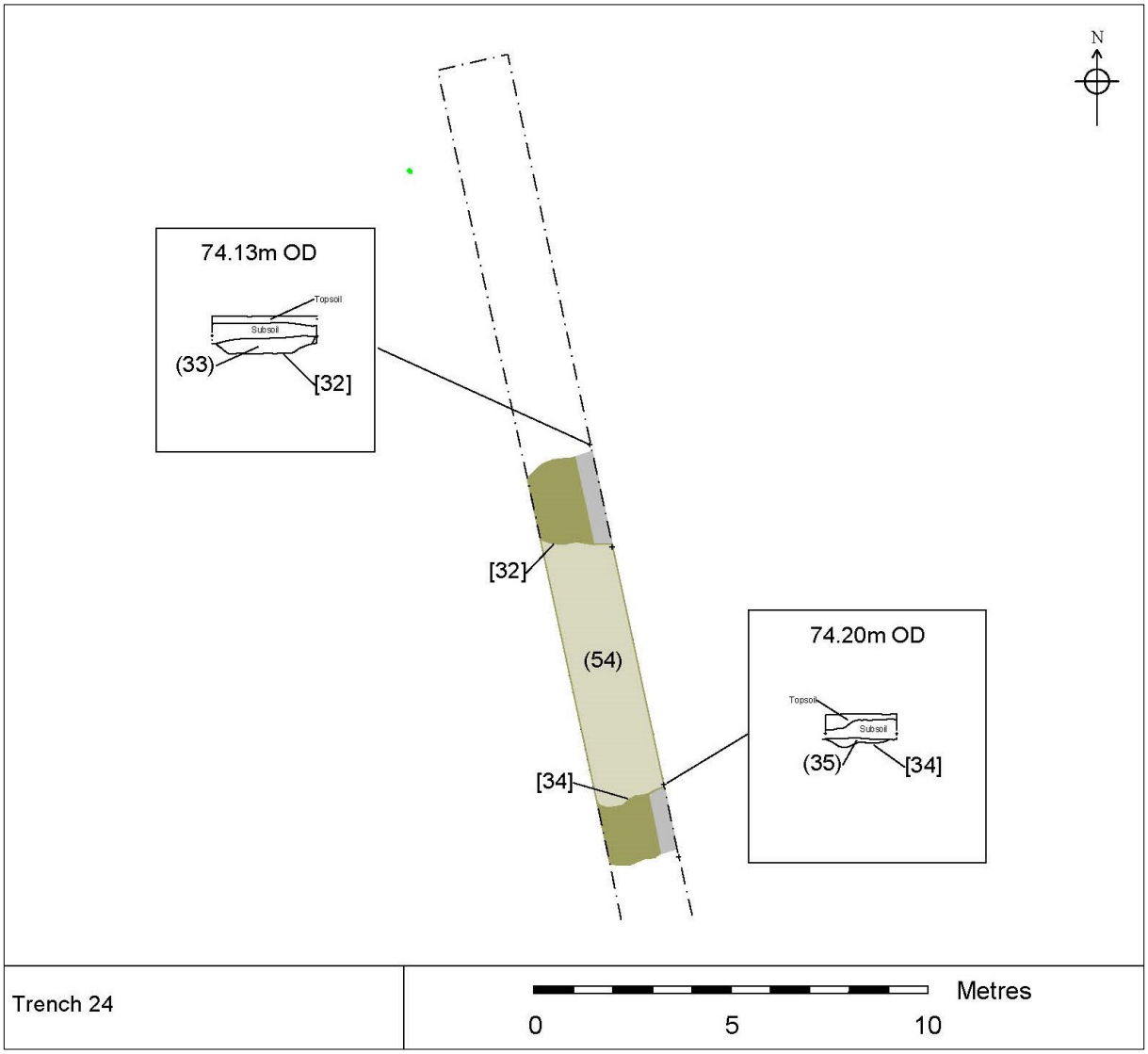

Figure 19: Trench 24

Trench 25 (Figure 20 20)

Trench 25 was located towards the northern perimeter of the site and targeted to investigate a north-west/south-east linear, a possible continuation of the linear on a perpendicular alignment observed in Trenches 12 and 13, Area 3. The geophysical results were confirmed by the excavation of a ditch **[43],** *c.*6m from the west end of the trench. With a depth of *c.*0.90m and width of *c.*2.40m, it had an irregular U-shape. The primary fill **(49),** *c.*0.80m deep, contained a pale orange-brown silty-sand with small/medium rounded stones and contained a single struck flint. Pale grey sandy-silt fill **(50),** *c.*0.25m deep, with fewer stones was devoid of finds, as was the upper fill **(51),** a mid-orange brown silty sand, *c.*0.45m deep.

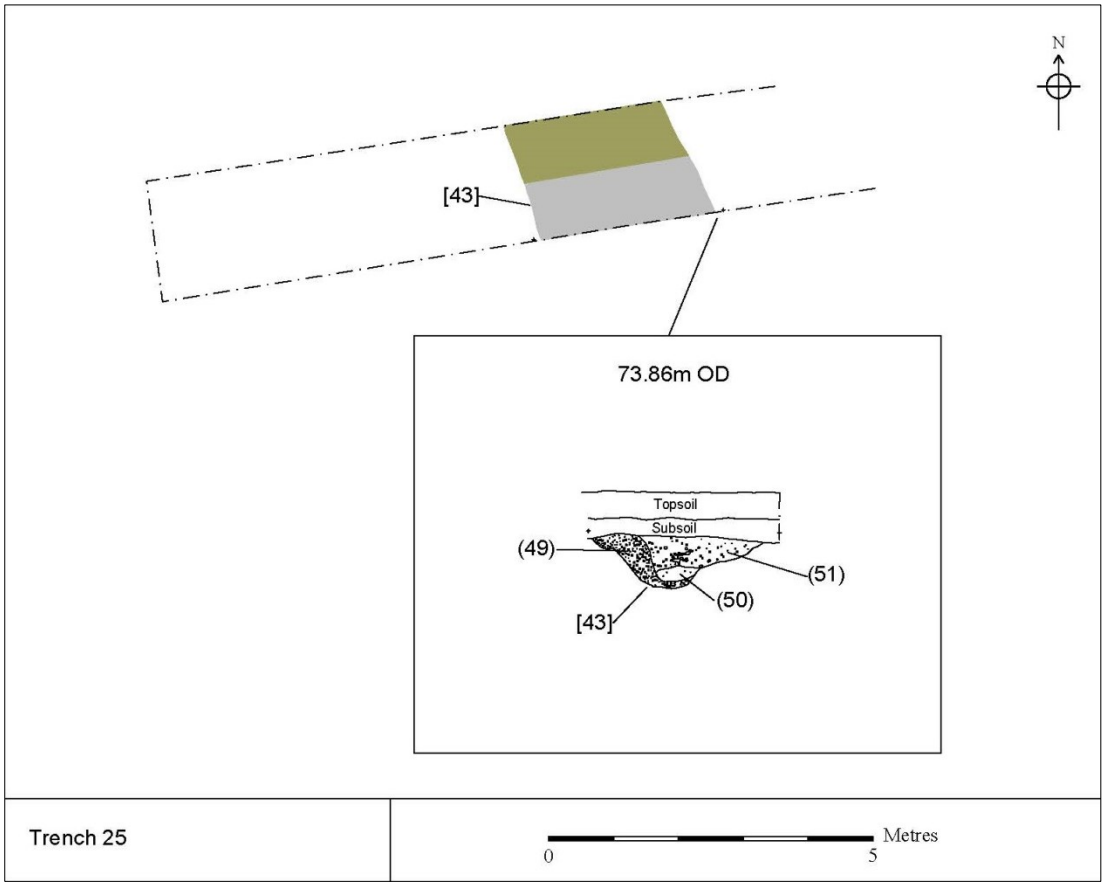

Figure 20: Trench 25

Trench 26 (Figs 21-22))

Oval pit **[22],** *c.*1.04m by *c.*0.74m with irregular sides and base, was located *c.*5m from the western end of the trench. It contained a single dark grey brown silty sand fill **(23),** *c.*0.17m deep with charcoal fragments. An abundance (78 pieces) of worked flint assigned a late-prehistoric date, some burnt, along with pottery from the Late Bronze Age (see Section 8), was recovered from the deposit although its function remained unclear. It was sampled for environmental analysis which identified the presence of a hazelnut shell.

Approximately 4m from the eastern end of the trench a substantial spread **[31]** was identified over a 5m wide area. The trench was extended around it to identify the extents and a sub-rectangular feature was revealed with dimensions over 5m by 5m. Diffused by ploughing from just below the topsoil it could only be clearly defined in plan at a lower level. A sample slot was excavated to reveal gently sloping sides and a flattish base at a depth of *c.*0.61m and a single mid-grey brown silty sand fill **(30)**. Recovered finds include fragments of mid-yellow clay containing struck flint and possible Anglo-Saxon pottery, including a rim with burnished surfaces, and well preserved animal bone as well as large rounded and sub-rounded stones possibly focused upon the centre of the remains with smaller stones present sporadically within the fill.

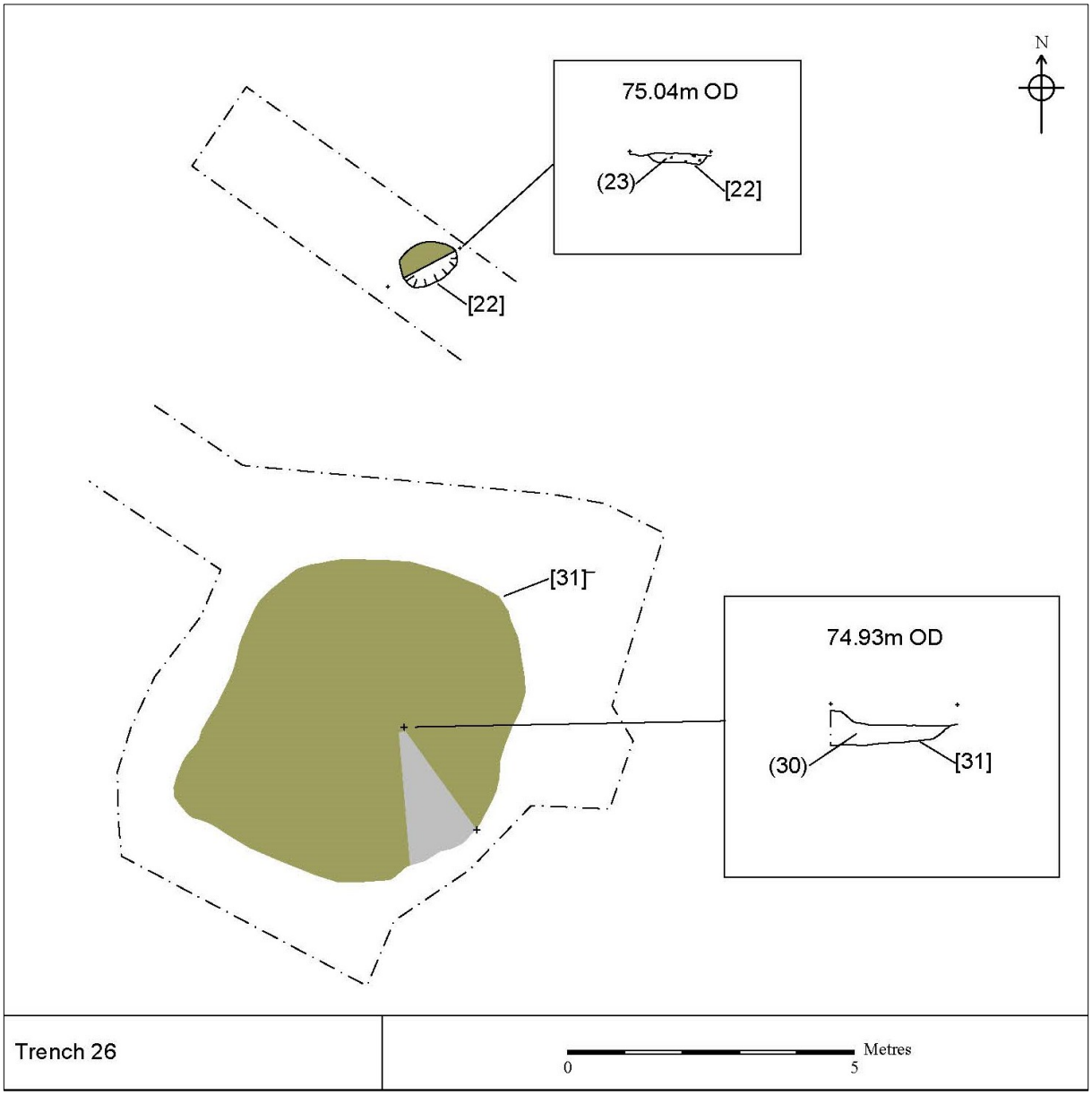

Figure 21: Trench 26

Figure 22: Trench 26, feature [31], looking north-east

Trench 27 (Fig. 23)

This trench revealed the remains of three heavily truncated features. A small burnt feature possibly a hearth **[25],** *c.*0.80m in diameter located at the southern extent located at the southern extent had concave sides and a flat base. The single dark brown sandy fill **(24),** *c.*0.21m deep, contained charcoal fragments and heat cracked stones with occasional burnt flint and was sampled for environmental analysis that proved unfruitful. It contained no datable finds.

Curvilinear gully **[29]** of unclear function, extended from the eastern baulk to a length of nearly 2m. With gently concave sides and flat base it contained a single dark brown sandy fill **(28),** *c.*0.09m deep, without finds.

Located *c.*4.5m north of the gully was circular posthole **[27]** with a diameter of *c.*0.39m and depth of *c.*0.05m. The sides were concave, the base flat. The single mid-brown sandy fill **(26)** was devoid of finds.

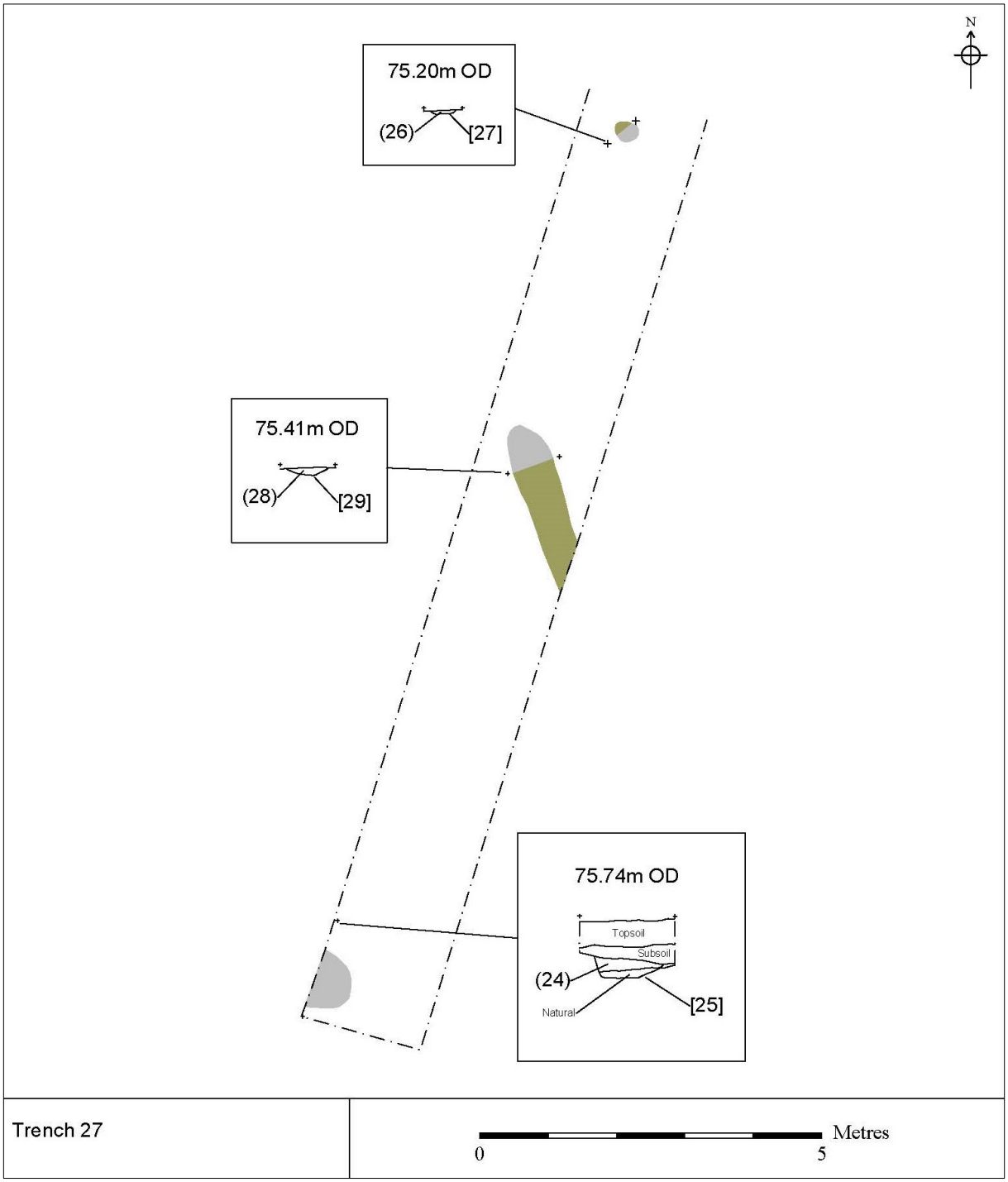

Figure 23: Trench 27

Trenches 32 and 33 (Fig. 24)

On request of the County Archaeologist, these trenches were excavated as a contingency either side of Trench 26 to evaluate the wider vicinity of the rectangular feature **[31]** revealed within.

In Trench 33, a stony layer **(55)** over 5m wide, truncated by machine to the east and running beneath the western baulk to the west, contained pottery, albeit abraded, of Roman date, and was investigated and recorded to be *c.*0.30m deep. It consisted of mid-yellow brown silty-sand.

Un-stratified Iron Age pottery was recovered from Trench 32 but no archaeological deposits identified.

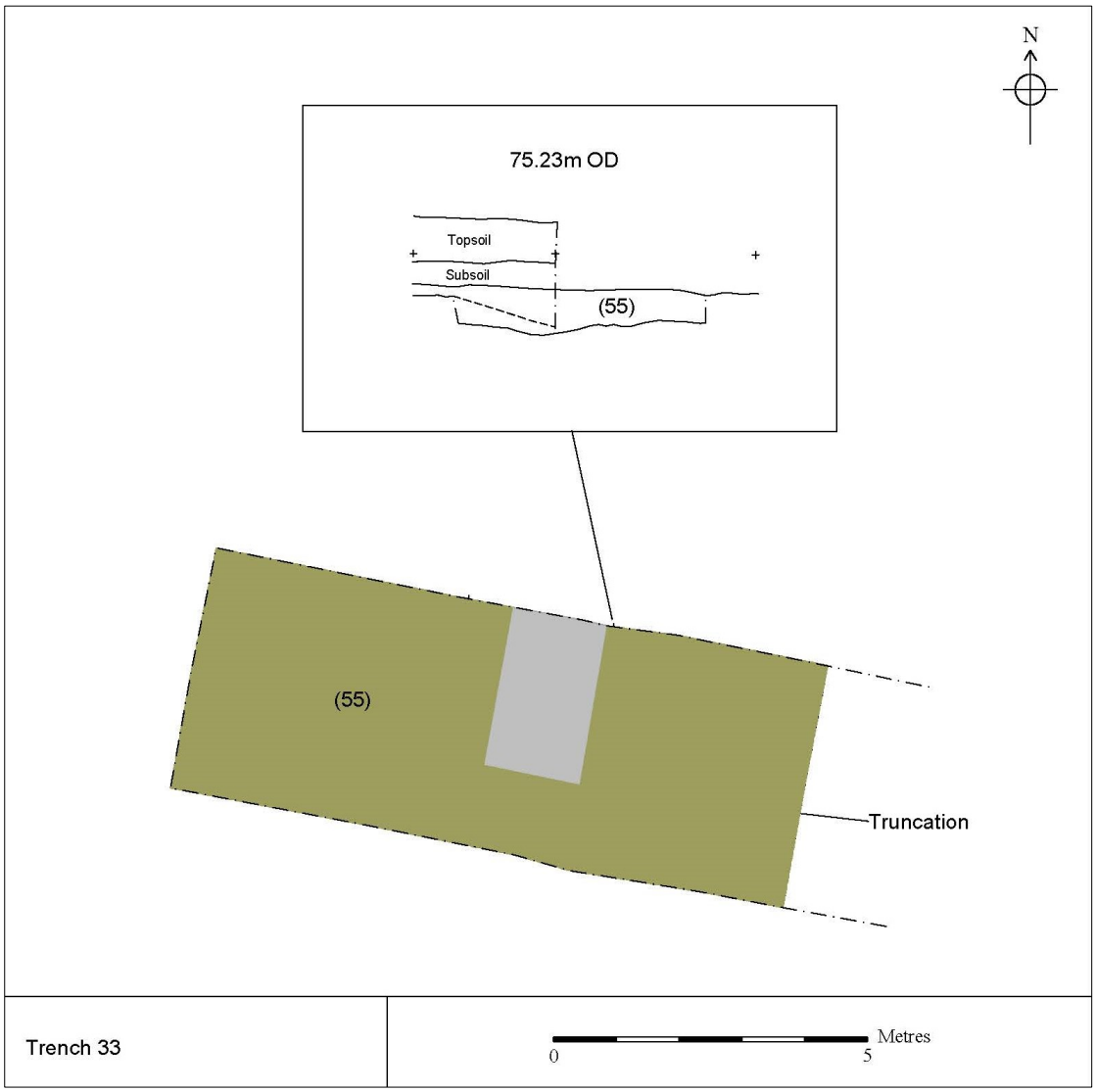

Figure 24: Trench 33

Trench 34

A contingency trench located to evaluate the area to the west of Trench 26 was devoid of any archaeological deposits.

8. The Finds

Bronze Age, Iron Age, Roman and Early Anglo-Saxon Pottery - Nicholas J. Cooper

Introduction
A total of 40 sherds of handmade pottery, and one wheel-thrown sherd of Roman date, were recovered from stratified contexts with three more handmade sherds found unstratified. The material has been analysed with reference to the Leicestershire Prehistoric, Roman and Anglo-Saxon pottery fabric series (Marsden 2011; Pollard 1994; Blinkhorn 1999).

Bronze Age pottery
Joining body sherds of two vessels are represented from small pit fill (23) in Trench 26. The first comprises two sherds (6g) from the shoulder of a small, undecorated, thin-bodied vessel manufactured in a fabric opened with white granitic rock, possibly syenite, from the Croft outcrop (Fabric R1 Sy). The second comprises five sherds (70g) from a larger, undecorated globular vessel, manufactured in the same syenite-tempered fabric (R1 Sy). Based on the associated flint working evidence from the pit (which also contained charred hazelnut shells) the pottery probably dates to the Late Bronze Age.

Iron Age pottery
A total of 16 small joining sherds (75g) belonging to an East Midlands scored ware jar of mid-late Iron Age date was recovered from fill (12) of a ditch in Trench 12. The vessel is manufactured in fabric opened with granodiorite (Fabric R1) from the Mountsorrel outcrop. A single abraded and undecorated sherd from a second vessel (40g) also came from this context. It is also tempered with granitic rock (Fabric R1) but the fabric also contains mudstone which may be naturally occurring in the clay. The date of this sherd is less precise but an Iron Age attribution is likely.

Three sherds (20g) from the base of an Iron Age jar in grog-tempered Fabric G2 came from the same ditch, context (13) with another (4g) in Q1 from the same context.

Sherds in fabric R1 came from (3) (1 sherd 6g), (13) (3 sherds 8g), (44) (1 sherd 10g) and (36) (2 sherds 4g).

Two sherds (30g) of Iron Age date in Fabric R1 came unstratified from Trench 24. A further sherd (6g) in Fabric R1 alongside a fragment of fired clay (19g) was found unstratified from Trench 32 and an Iron Age date is again most likely for this.

Roman pottery
A single abraded sherd (2g) from a fine oxidised ware vessel (Fabric OW2) was recovered from (55).

Early Anglo-Saxon pottery
Four sherds from four different vessels dating to the Early Anglo-Saxon period were recovered from the fill of putative sunken–featured building (30). The first vessel is represented by an upright rounded rim (24g) with burnished surfaces with a diameter of 200mm, manufactured is dense quartz-sand tempered fabric SX1Q as is one other body sherd (6g). The two other body sherds (45g) are from globular vessels manufactured in granite- tempered fabric SX4Gr. Another body sherd (6g) is in an angular white quartz fabric (Q5) which is more typically an earlier Prehistoric fabric type and may be residual in this context.

Overview

The assemblage shows potential for the preservation of pottery from a range of dated contexts and demonstrates the survival of securely stratified deposits ranging from the Bronze Age to the Early Anglo-Saxon period.

Prehistoric Flint - Lynden Cooper

The fill of a small pit (23) produced 78 pieces of flint, all débitage with the exception of a single bifacially worked fragment. The latter is of uncertain form. The group includes a high proportion of shatter fragments a result of the poor quality till-derived flint that was used. Later Bronze Age pottery and charred hazelnut shell was found in the same context.

There were two crude cores from both contexts 30 and 44.

The technology was simple hard hammer percussion aimed at producing flakes. A late prehistoric date is suggested.

The charred plant remains - Rachel Small

Introduction
This report presents an assessment of the charred plant remains recovered from environmental samples taken during an evaluation at Cosby, Leicestershire. Seven samples were taken from pits, hearths and enclosure ditches dating from the Late Bronze Age to Anglo-Saxon periods. Plant remains, including cereal grains, chaff, and weed seeds are useful indicators of past diet, agricultural practice and environment.

Method
One part of each sample was processed in a York tank using a 0.5mm mesh with flotation into a 0.3mm mesh sieve. The flotation fractions (flots) were transferred into plastic boxes, left to air dry and then were sorted for plant remains using an x10-40 stereo microscope. The residues were also air dried and the fractions over 4mm (coarse) sorted for all finds. The fractions under 4mm (fine) were scanned for remains but proved negative. Plant remains were identified by comparison to modern reference material available at ULAS and names follow Stace (1991).

Results
Modern rootlets and seeds such as clover (*Trifolium* spp.) were present in all samples, along with worm egg shells and insect remains suggesting bioturbation had occurred. All deposits contained plant remains except for sample 8 (14)[15], a ditch fill (Table 1). The results will be discussed by period.

Late Bronze Age
Sample 1 (23)[22] (Trench 26) contained Late Bronze Age pottery and was dominated by hazelnut shell (*Corylus avellana* L.); over fifty fragments were present. Cereal remains were also found including a glume wheat base (*Triticum* sp.) and barley (*Hordeum vulgare*

L.) grain. Ivy-leaved speedwell (*Veronica hederifolia* L.) was identified which colonises arable/disturbed lands. The seeds could possibly be modern, not charred, as their natural colour is yellow-brown to black.

Iron Age
Four samples were thought to date to the Iron Age and contained a small number of plant remains. Cereal fragments identified included two glume wheat bases, one identified as spelt wheat (*Triticum spelta* L.), and a wheat grain. A fragment of hazelnut shell was found in sample 5 (44)[45] (Trench 22). 'Weed' seeds were present and included ivy-leaved speedwell and goosefoot (*Chenopodium* spp.), another species typical of arable/disturbed lands.

Anglo-Saxon

Sample 4 (30)[31] (Trench 26) dated to this period. Cereal grains were present and it was possible to identify barley (no chaff was recovered). Again seeds of ivy-leaved speedwell and goosefoot were identified. A large grass (Poaceae) and dock/sedge (*Rumex/Carex* sp.) seed were also identified.

Undated
Sample 2 (24)[25] (Trench 27) was taken from a hearth of unknown date. Little remains were found; ivy-leaved speedwell and goosefoot seeds (possibly intrusive as suggested earlier).

Table 1:*assessment of samples. Key: + is rare (0 – 10 items); ++ is common (10 – 50 items), +++ is abundant (50+ items).*

Sample No.	Context	Cut	Description	Date	Flot vol. (ml)	Sample vol. (l)	Grains	Chaff	Seeds	Nutshell	Charcoal	Comments
1	23	22	Pit	Late Bronze Age	50	10	+	+	+	+++	++	Ivy-leaved speedwell x 2, wheat glume base x 1, barley grain x 1, hazelnut shell > 50 fragments.
2	24	25	Hearth	Undated	30	10			+		++	Ivy-leaved speedwell x 1, goosefoot x 1.
4	30	31	Pit	Anglo-Saxon	30	10	+		+		++	Barley grain x 4, cereal grain x 4, goosefoot x 4, ivy-leaved speedwell x 2, large grass seed x 1, rumex/ sedge x 1.
5	44	45	Pit	Iron Age	5	10		+	+	+	+	Wheat glume base x 1, ivy-leaved speedwell x 1, indeterminate seed x 1, hazelnut shell x 1.
6	36	42	Pit	Iron Age	5	10		+	+		+	Goosefoot x 1, spelt wheat glume base x 1.
7	49	43	Enclosure ditch	Iron Age	5	10	+		+		+	Goosefoot x 1, glume wheat grain x 1, ivy-leaved speedwell x 1.
8	14	15	Ditch	Iron Age	7	10					+	No charred plant remains.

Discussion and recommendations for further work

The make-up of the deposits (scatters of cereal grain with chaff and weed seeds) most probably represent domestic waste from food processing which accumulated on a day to day basis. Sample 1, late Bronze Age in date, had a large quantity of nutshell and compared to other sites in the region, such as Eye Kettleby, it can be classed as a 'medium' to 'high' density deposit (Monckton 2011, 134).

If further excavation is undertaken at the site or in the vicinity the implementation of a suitable sampling strategy is highly recommended. The evaluation suggests there is the possibility of recovering further high density samples suitable for detailed analysis. This

would provide further insight into specific crop processing activities that were undertaken at the site, their spatial distribution and changes over time.

The Animal bone - Rachel Small

Fragments from part of an adult cattle mandible were recovered from the putative sunken-featured building fill (30). The bone preservation was good and there is potential for further information on diet, animal husbandry and butchery to be generated if further work is undertaken on the site.

9. Discussion

General

The interpretation of the geophysical survey identified some linear feature accurately but did not detect other quite substantial discrete features, notably the deposits within Trenches 22 and 26. This would suggest that there are further undetected archaeological remains associated with those found during this evaluation across the development area, particularly focused upon the north-west of the site. The excavations suggest that any material the features contained could be well-preserved.

The remains in trenches intended to target the ring ditch cropmarks was not entirely consistent with what had been expected before excavation. The ring ditches identified (Trenches 22-24) and presumably existent through differentiate water retention were not observed in plan and or in the trench sections. It is unascertained whether the gully revealed within Trench 23 represents the feature seen as a cropmark.

Late Bronze Age

Late prehistoric pottery and flint was identified from the small pit in the north-west end of Trench 26 in Area 4 and it seems likely, due to the nature of the deposit and the material recovered from within that there are other remains of a similar date nearby. Cropmarks suggest that the area has potential for intensive activity and the discovery of the large pits in Trench 22 adds to this potential. A similar date for them, although not ascertained, cannot be ruled out and they certainly look prehistoric, although only further excavation would determine what form they take, their relationship with each other and in the wider context and what their function could be. Environmental analysis did not suggest the pits were used for storage or rubbish which leaves open the possibility of them being landscape features. The more ephemeral archaeological remains to the south, concentrated around Trench 27 may also be prehistoric of date.

Iron Age

The archaeological evidence confirmed the geophysical interpretation for the parallel ditch feature traversing the northern extent of Area 4 for *c.*100m on an approximately north-east/south-west alignment. From the material recovered f it appears to represent a crude 'track way' of mid-Iron Age date delineated by ditches. The stones between the ditches are likely to be the remnants of the trackway surface. A similar date has been ascribed to another geophysical linear anomaly perpendicular to it on an approximate north-west/south-east alignment towards its eastern length and interpreted as representing an enclosure ditch. The assumption is that this feature turns *c.*90° eastwards south of the 'track way' and continues on into Area 3; the investigative slot excavated in Trench 12 also dates it to the mid-Iron Age. Further east, the pair of ditches aligned north-west/south-east, absent from the geophysical survey but identified and sample excavated within Trench 15 and possibly observed continuing in Trench 16, although undated, maybe of the same period although only further work would determine this and any relationship of them to the former. An isolated discrete feature within Trench 10 was also dated to the mid-Iron Age.

Roman

A single somewhat abraded sherd of pottery recovered from a diffuse stoney deposit in Trench 32 points tentatively to activity in the area in this period although at this stage it cannot be expanded upon.

Early Anglo-Saxon

The substantial remains identified in the south-east of Trench 26 and dated to the Early Anglo-Saxon period is interpreted as representing a putative sunken-featured building (SFB). Consequently it was only subject to a small percentage of sample excavation, but the well-preserved bone and ceramic material recovered, and the stones observed towards the centre suggest a structural element that only further work can clarify. If the interpretation of it as an SFB stands, as potential occupational archaeology, it would suggest that other similar features could exist in the vicinity along with evidence of associated occupational activity for this period.

Medieval

The proposed development area is part of a landscape with ridge and furrow earthworks, seen clearly from Lidar data (Fig. 25) in Area 1 and 2 with some evidence for the remains of this also identified in a number of the trenches elsewhere The East Midlands was a classic common field landscape in the Middle Ages and has particularly good survival of ridge and furrow. This reflects the move to sheep farming in the century after the Black Death followed by a concentration on livestock production in many parishes, particularly on poorer soils, which continued to the present day.

Most of the previous archaeological work carried out in the area has been focused upon the village and its immediate vicinity itself. Several watching briefs (Higgins and Buckley 1995, Flavell 2014, Gonzalez 2014) have been undertaken and test pits in the village core, revealing some 14th century floor layers around the church dating to the construction of the tower (Celovsky 2014), but predominantly with negative results. It would seem, with the medieval origins of Cosby, the site could yield some evidence of this date reflecting the evolution of the settlement.

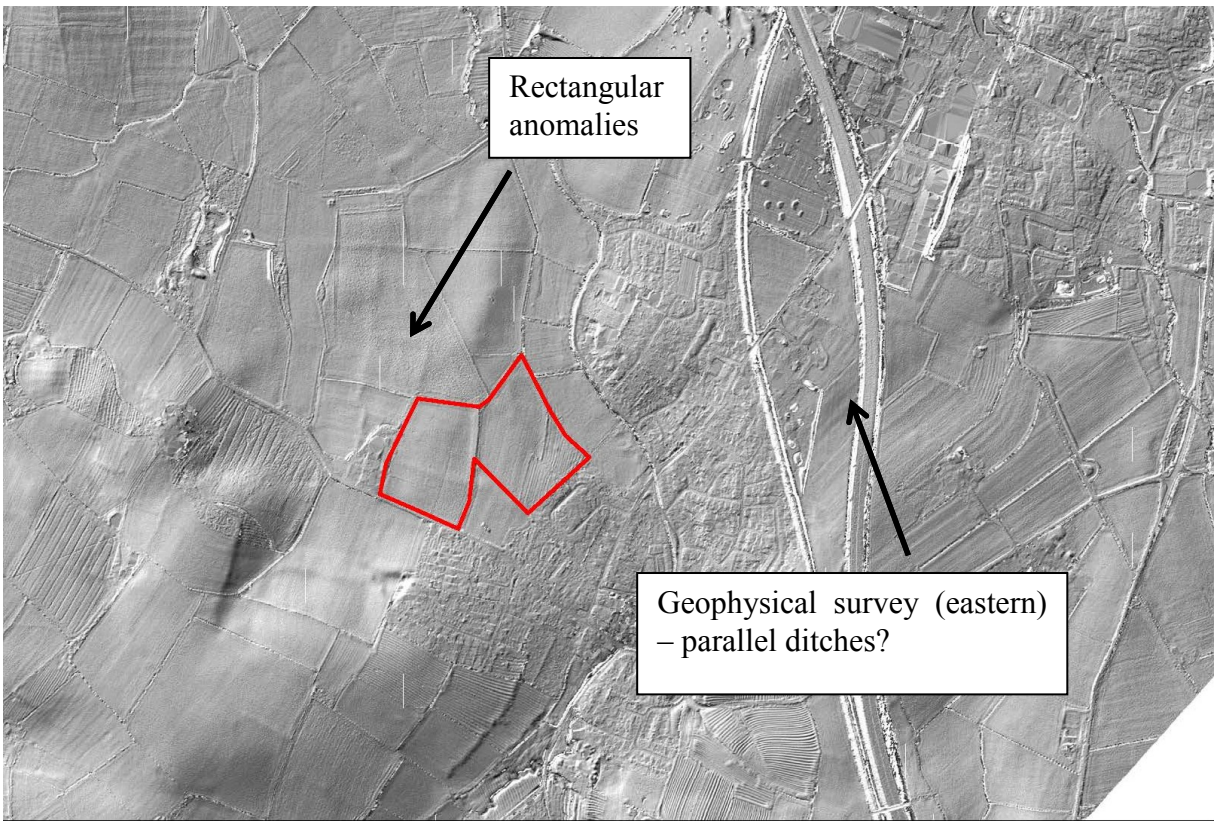

Figure 25: Lidar image (wider area, approximate development area in red)

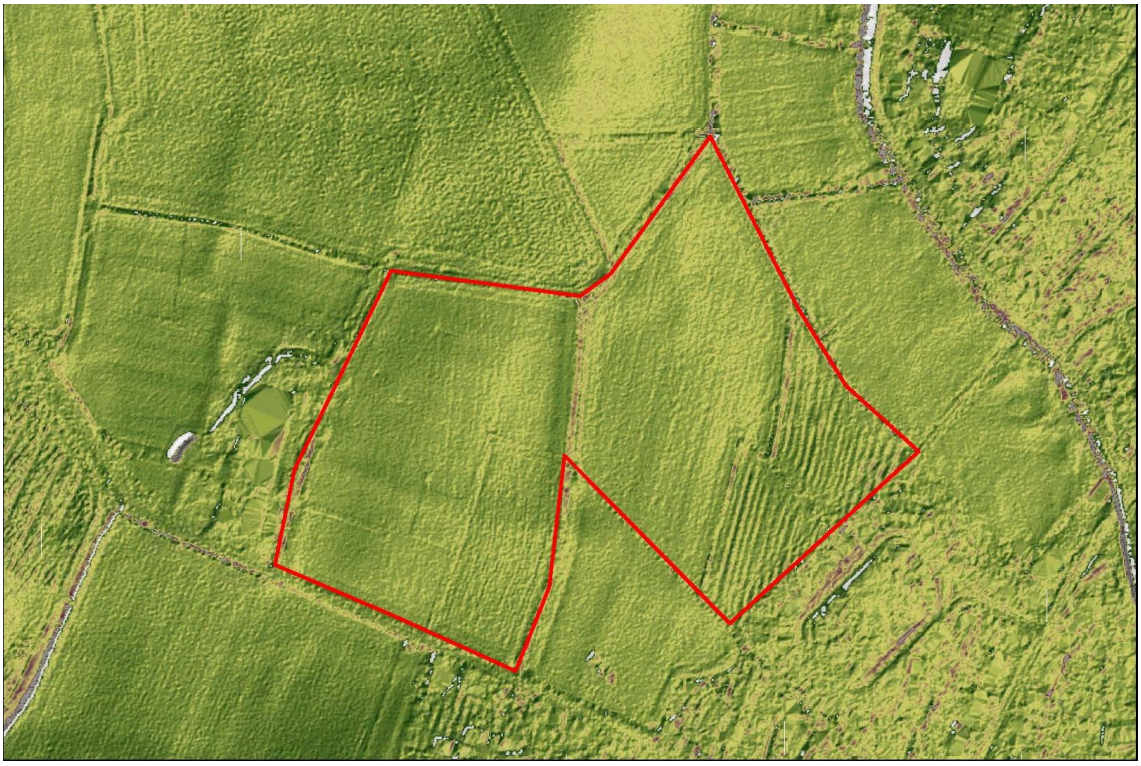

Figure 26: Lidar image (1m data). Data from the Env. Agency

10. Conclusion

The archaeological evaluation by trial trenching on land at Croft Road, Cosby, Leicestershire, has revealed significant archaeological remains of substantial prehistoric pit features probably Bronze Age in date, and other Iron Age, possibly Roman and notably early Anglo-Saxon remains, including evidence for occupation. The understanding of these could be important in understanding the surrounding landscape and putting the remains in some local and perhaps wider context. The work has confirmed the evidence identified through geophysical survey on the proposed development area and has expanded that provided by aerial photography. It appears that due to truncation and agriculture, some of the anomalies indicated by cropmarks may be a challenge to locate on the ground but only further intrusive archaeological work would be able to determine this. It seems highly likely that other archaeological features with datable materials would survive on the site.

The proposed development masterplan (Fig. 27) shows that much of the site would be built on with a corridor of landscaping along the western edge. There is therefore unlikely to be much scope for avoidance of the archaeological remains.

Figure 27: Proposed development plan (from developer)

11. Archive

The completed archive will be deposited with ~Leicestershire County Council under the accession no. XA36-2016 and contains:

- 34 trench recording sheets
- 46 Context Recording Sheets
- 2 context record sheets
- 1 sample sheet
- 3 photographic recording sheets
- 12 drawings
- CD containing digital photographs and report
- Thumbnail print of digital photographs

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, under ID: universi1-249407. Available at: http://oasis.ac.uk/

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ULAS 2016, Written Scheme of Investigation: Trial Trench Evaluation at Croft Road, Cosby.

13. Acknowledgements

The fieldwork was undertaken on behalf of Jelsons and was directed by Stephen Baker with Cathryn Sheen, Andrew Mcleish, Luis Huscroft, Kim Sidwell and Gavin Speed. Vicki Score managed the project. The archaeological work was monitored by Richard Clark on behalf of the Leicestershire County Council Planning authority.

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18/04/2016

Appendix 1 – Trench photographs

Trench 01

Trench 02

Trench 03

Trench 04

Trench 05

Trench 06

Trench 07

Trench 08

Trench 09

Trench 10

Trench 11

Trench 12

Trench 13

Trench 14

Trench 15

Trench 16

Trench 17

Trench 18

Trench 19

Trench 20

Trench 21

Trench 22

Trench 23

Trench 25

Trench 26

Trench 27

Trench 28

Trench 29

Trench 30

Trench 31

Trench 32

Trench 33

	
Trench 34	

Appendix 2: OASIS RECORD

PROJECT DETAILS	**Oasis No**	universi1-249407		
	Project Name	An Archaeological Evaluation On Land at Croft Road, Cosby, Leicestershire		
	Start/end dates of field work	9th – 24th March 2016		
	Previous/Future Work	Geophysical Survey		
	Project Type	Evaluation		
	Site Status	None		
	Current Land Use	Arable/Paddock		
	Monument Type/Period	None/none		
	Significant Finds/Period	Late Bronze Age/Iron Age/Early Medieval		
	Development Type	Residential		
	Reason for Investigation	NPPF		
	Position in the Planning Process	Planning condition		
	Planning Ref.	P.A. 20140961		
PROJECT LOCATION	**Site Address/Postcode**	Croft Road, Cosby, Leicestershire		
	Study Area	14.2 ha		
	Site Coordinates	SK 54336 95285		
	Height OD	72-79m OD		
PROJECT CREATORS	**Organisation**	ULAS		
	Project Brief Originator	Local Planning Authority		
	Project Design Originator	ULAS		
	Project Manager	Vicki Score		
	Project Director/Supervisor	Stephen Baker		
	Sponsor/Funding Body	Developer : Jelsons		
PROJECT ARCHIVE		**Physical**	**Digital**	**Paper**
	Recipient	LCC	LCC	LCC
	ID (Acc. No.)	XA36-2016	XA36-2016	XA36-2016
	Contents	Pottery (Prehistore/IA/Med Flint (Prehistoric) Bone (Med)	Photos Survey data	Fieldwork records Field Notes
PROJECT BIBLIOGRAPHY	**Type**	Grey Literature (unpublished)		
	Title	An Archaeological Evaluation On Land at Croft Road, Cosby, Leicestershire		
	Author	Stephen Baker		
	Other bibliographic details	ULAS Report No 2016-068		
	Date	2016		
	Publisher/Place	University of Leicester Archaeological Services / University of Leicester		
	Description	Developer Report A4 pdf		

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