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Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological Evaluation
Land at Heather Lane, Ravenstone,
Leicestershire.**

NGR: SK 40203 13332

By Tim Higgins



ULAS Report No 2017-016


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Tim Higgins

For: Wrenbury Properties

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An Archaeological Evaluation Land at Heather Lane, Ravenstone, Leicestershire.

Tim Higgins

Summary

University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) carried out an archaeological evaluation on land west of Heather Lane, Ravenstone, Leicestershire, (SK 40203 13332) from the 10 to 13 January 2017. Trenches were excavated to evaluate an area for a proposed construction of 50 new dwellings in former arable fields. None of the trenches contained any archaeological features and apart from field drains they were generally clean and sterile. The site archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council under accession number X.A6.2017.

1. Introduction

An archaeological evaluation was carried out on land at land west of Heather Lane, Ravenstone Leicestershire (SK 40303 13332) by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS). This was undertaken in order to ensure that any archaeological items are investigated and recorded.

This archaeological evaluation was part of a condition within the planning permission that had been granted for residential development of up to 50 dwellings at land west of Heather Lane, Ravenstone, Leicestershire, subject to planning conditions (see Figures 1 and 2). Planning condition 12 requires a programme of archaeological work. This document forms the WSI for an initial phase of trial trenching which will be submitted to for approval by the Local Planning Authority. Subject to the results there may be a need for further work to ensure satisfactory archaeological investigation and recording of any possible remains.

In accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Section 12 *Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment* this document forms the report for an archaeological evaluation, with an assessment of the potential impact on buried archaeological remains from groundworks associated with future development.

This report presents the results of a programme of archaeological trial trenching, which took place between the 10th and 13th January. It follows a strategy for the work devised by ULAS, which was set out in the Design Specification for archaeological evaluation Land at Heather Lane, Ravenstone, Leicestershire (SK 40203 13332) (ULAS 2016, hereinafter ‘Specification’. The trial trenching was undertaken to provide a c. 3% sample of the 2.5ha area.

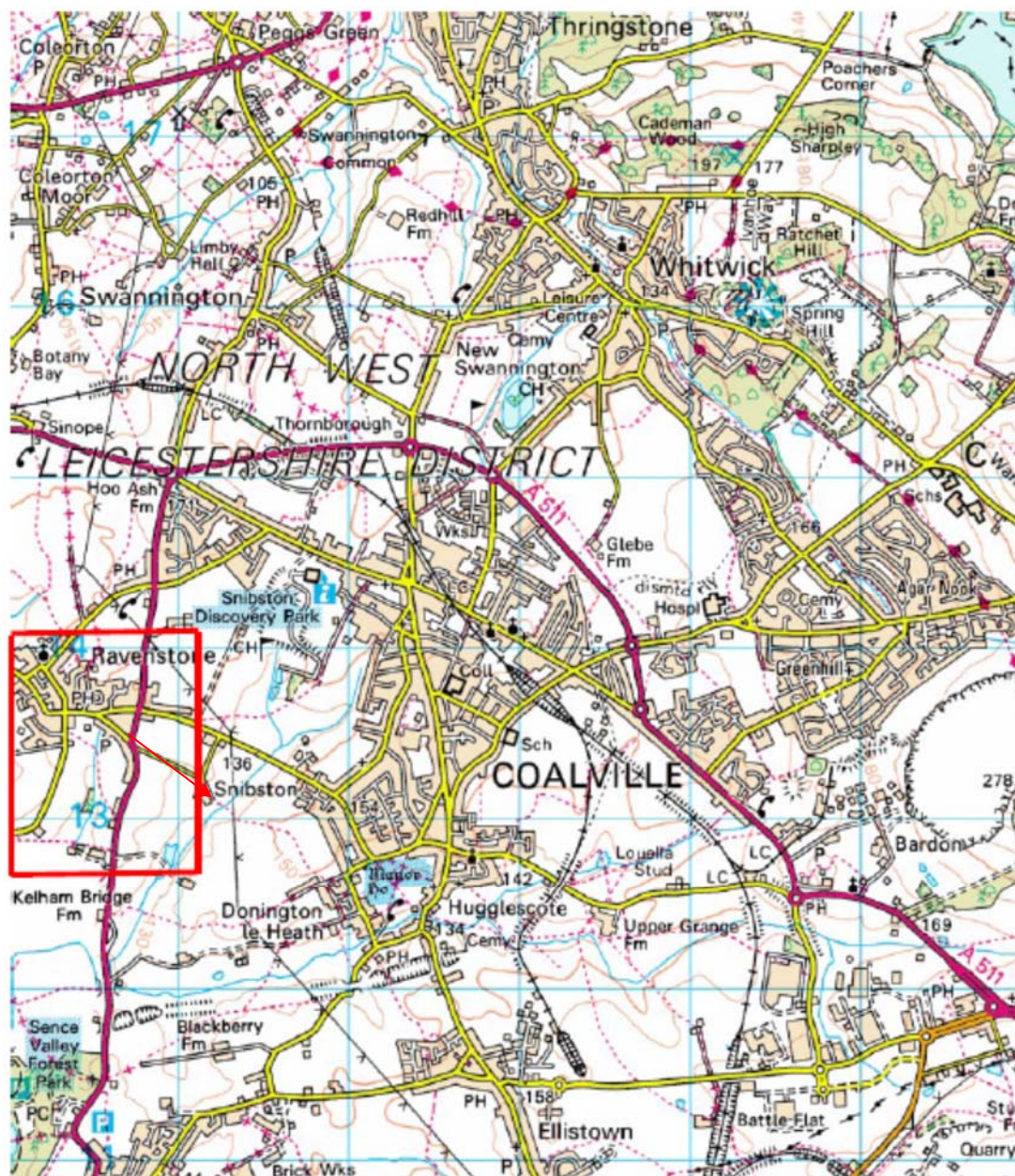


Figure 1: Site location plan within the UK and county of Leicestershire

Reproduced from the Explorer 141 Kettering, Corby & surrounding area 1:20 000 map by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright 2005. All rights reserved. Licence number AL 100029495

2. Site Description, Topography and Geology

The proposed development area lies on the western side of Heather Lane, approximately 500m to the south of the settlement core of Ravenstone village which is situated in North West Leicestershire. The site is roughly level with the road on the eastern boundary, which lies at a height of approximately 145m aOD, and comprises c.2.39 hectares of land, which slopes down towards the south-west.

The British Geological Survey for England and Wales indicates that the underlying geology is likely to consist of Tarporey Siltstone Formation – Siltstone and Mudstone sedimentary bedrock, overlain by alluvium.

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

3. Historical and Archaeological Background

A desk-based assessment has been prepared (Clarke 2013) and the assessment area is located outside the historic settlement core of Ravenstone and beyond the boundaries of the village Conservation Area. Traces of ridge and furrow earthworks across the site indicate that the area formed part of the open field system during the medieval and post-medieval period. Scatters of Mesolithic and Bronze Age flint tools have been recorded through extensive fieldwalking undertaken in the surrounding area, and there is also good evidence for Iron Age and Roman occupation nearby, in the form of cropmarks and pottery scatters. There is therefore good potential for prehistoric and Roman deposits to be present below-ground, with less potential for the presence of deposits of a medieval date.

A fieldwalking survey did not locate any significant concentrations of surface finds (Coward 2013) while geophysical survey only detected anomalies related to land drains (Haddrell 2013).

4. Aims and Objectives

The broad aims of the archaeological evaluation trenches were:

- To determine, as far as is reasonably possible, the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains on the site as indicated by the geophysical survey
- To establish the nature and extent of any existing disturbance and intrusion to subsurface deposits and, where the data allows, assess the degree of archaeological survival of buried deposits of archaeological significance
- To enable the clients to establish a schedule for archaeological risks

The detailed objectives of the archaeological evaluation trenches are:

- Insofar as possible within methodological constraints, to explain any temporal, spatial or functional relationships between the structures/remains identified, and any relationships between these and the archaeological and historic elements of the wider landscape.
- Where the data allows, identify the research implications of the site with reference to the regional research agenda and recent work in Leicestershire.



Figure 2 Development Area and proposed Trench locations

4.1 Research Aims

While the nature, extent and quality of archaeological remains within the areas of investigation for the project remain unknown until archaeological work was undertaken, it was possible to determine some initial objectives derived from *East Midlands Heritage: An Updated Research Agenda and Strategy for the Historic Environment of the East Midlands* (Knight et al. 2012) and *The Archaeology of the East Midlands: An Archaeological Resource Assessment and Research Agenda* (Cooper 2006).

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

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

There is evidence of Mesolithic, Neolithic-Bronze Age activity from the area and its vicinity. The evaluation had the potential to contribute to our understanding of how the land was exploited during these periods.

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

There are Iron Age - Roman sites within the study area including enclosures and evidence of pottery manufacture. The evaluation had the potential to contribute to knowledge on Iron Age – Roman transitions in rural settlement, industrial activity, landscape and society. Artefacts may identify trade links and economy.

5. Methodology

Prior to any machining of trial trenches, general photographs of the site areas were taken.

The trenches were excavated using a mechanical excavator equipped with a 1.6m wide toothless ditching bucket. The topsoil and overlying layers were removed under full archaeological supervision until either the top of archaeological deposits or the natural undisturbed substratum was reached. Trenches were examined for archaeological deposits or finds by hand cleaning. The trenches were tied into the Ordnance Survey National Grid and then were backfilled and leveled at the end of the evaluation.

The work followed the approved design specification (ULAS 2016) and adhered to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) *Code of Conduct* and adhered to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations* (2014).

6. Results

The results of all excavated trenches are presented below in Table 1. For easier cross-referencing the results of the trenches will be presented below according to each specific area of the site that was evaluated.

Table 1 Trench Summaries

Trench	Length (m)	Height of Trench base (m OD)	Natural Substratum	Notes	Min. depth to archaeology/natural (m)
1	c.28	139.70	Light orange yellow silty fine sand mixed with pebbles	Negative trench	0.30
2	c.30	139.70	Light reddish brown sandy clay/ Light yellow brown silty sand mixed with pebbles	Negative trench. Single modern land drain	0.30
3	c.29	137.70	Light reddish brown clay	Negative empty trench. Modern land drain. Shallow topsoil and no subsoil	0.30
4	c.29	135.78	Light reddish brown clay	Negative empty trench. Scatter modern building material. Shallow topsoil	0.22
5	c.30	135.74	Light reddish brown clay	Negative empty trench. Modern field drain. Shallow top soil and mixed with modern building	0.26

6	c.27	136.72m	Light reddish brown clay	Negative empty trench Modern field drain. Shallow top soil and mixed with modern building	0.28
7	c.29	139.68	Light greenish grey clay/Reddish brown silty clay	Negative empty trench Modern field drains.	0.32
8	c.30	142.65	Light orange yellow silty fine sand mixed with pebbles	Negative trench	0.35
9	c.30	139.68	Light reddish brown clay	Negative trench	0.32
10	c.27	139.68	Light orange brown sandy gravel/ Mixed light reddish grey clay	Negative trench. Shallow topsoil no subsoil	0.32
11	c.28	138.50m	Light Orange brown sandy silt and gravel/ Reddish brown silty clay	Negative trench. A natural hollow was seen at the southern end of the trench. Backfilled with redeposited and topsoil.	0.50
12	c.29	137.72	Light orange brown silt and gravel/ Light red brown silty clay	Negative trench. no subsoil	0.28
13	c.30	139.45	Light reddish brown silt clay	Negative trench. Natural hollow back filled redeposited topsoil. Field drain found at northern end	0.55
14	c.29	136.74	Light reddish brown silt clay	Negative trench. No subsoil	0.32
15	c.29	137.66	Light reddish brown silt clay	Negative trench. No subsoil. Field drain	0.34
16	c.29	137.66	Light reddish brown silt clay mixed with orange brown sandy silt and clay	Negative trench. No subsoil. Field Drain	0.34
17	c.29	135.68	Light reddish brown silty clay mixed with light green sand	Negative trench. No subsoil.	0.32m
18	c.31	136.72	Light reddish orange brown mixed silty clay	Negative trench	0.28m

Trenches

A total of 18 trenches was excavated in the north and south fields of the development area.

North Field

This area was located within the southern half of the development area where 14 trenches, numbered 1 to 14, were opened (see Figure 3). No archaeological finds or deposits were located within any of the trenches. The natural substratum was generally reached after around 0.20m-0.50m of topsoil and subsoil had been removed. The only features revealed were field drains observed within six trenches (2, 3 5, 6, 7 and 13). The field drains typically orientated north to south and comprised of gravel and a plastic pipe.

Two areas that contained natural hollow or depression were observed within two trenches, 11 and 13 (see Plate 3 below). These hollows were typically filled with modern material, which comprised dark brown silt-clay redeposited topsoil measuring 0.40m and 0.50m deep. This deposit lay below the topsoil and subsoil which had a combined depth of between 0.40m to 0.50m (see Plate 4 below). Fragments of brick were found within the hollows suggesting that it was a modern event. Some of the trenches had shallow depths of topsoil and no subsoil (Trenches 3, 6, 10, 12 and 14), which could possibly indicate that extensive deep modern ploughing had taken place within this field.

A scatter modern building material found within trenches 4, 5 and 6 which suggests that topsoil may have been previously stripped and then placed back within these areas (see Plate 2 below). A modern sewer was observed running east to west down the centre of the field. The construction of the sewer may account for the modern disturbance observed within trenches 4, 5 and 6.

South Field

This area was located within the southern half of the development area where four trenches, numbered 15 to 18, were opened (see Figure 3). No archaeological finds or deposits were located within any of the trenches. The natural substratum was generally reached after around 0.20m-0.50m of topsoil and subsoil had been removed. As with the north field the only features revealed were field drains observed in trenches 15 and 16. The field drains were as those found in north field and typically orientated north to south and comprised of gravel and plastic pipes.

Three of the trenches had shallow depths of topsoil and subsoil (Trenches 15, 16 and 17), which could possibly indicate that extensive deep modern ploughing has taken place within this field.

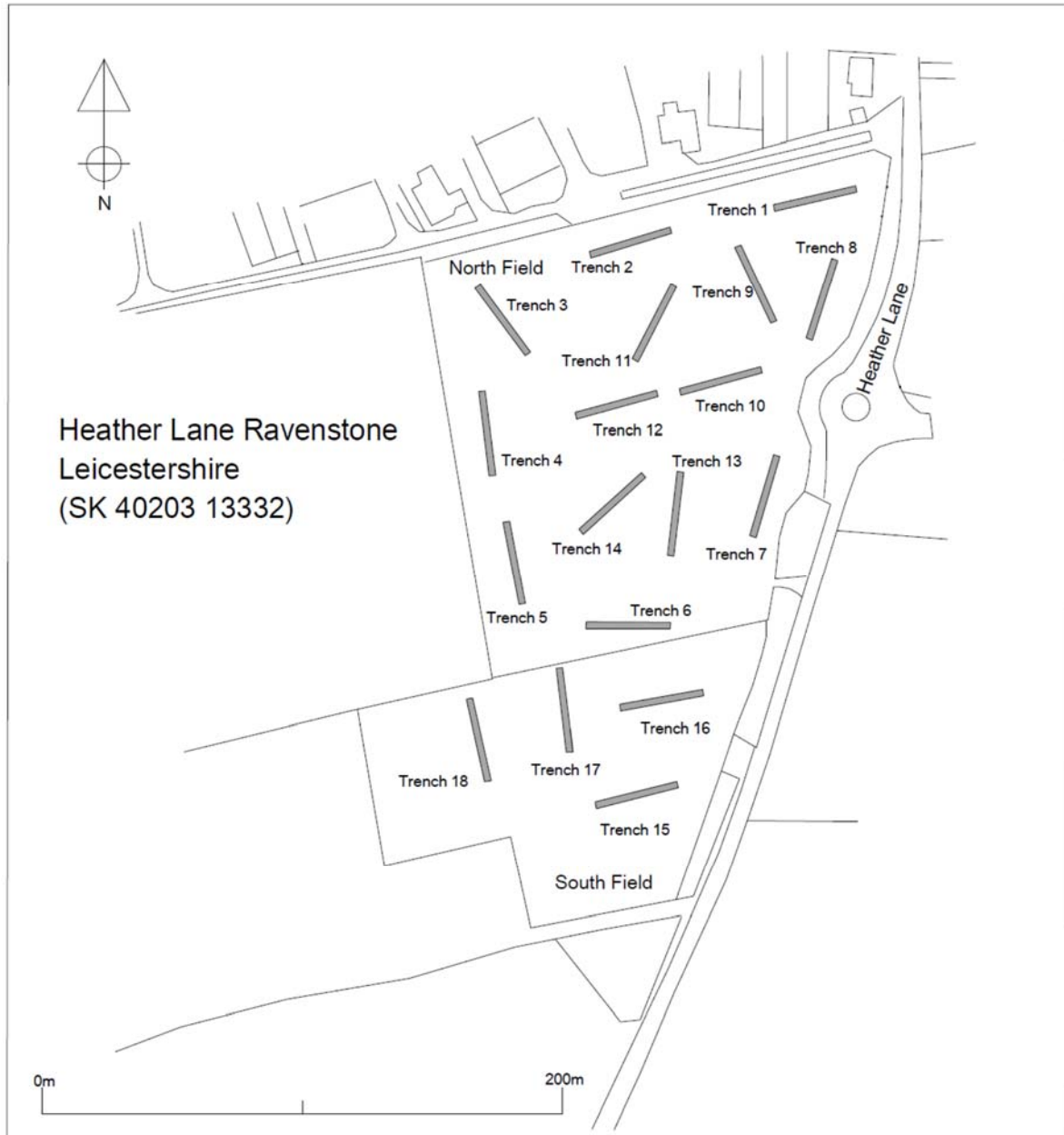


Figure 3 Trench Location Plan

7 Discussion

The archaeological evaluation by trial trenching revealed no evidence for archaeological features or finds within any of the trenches, apart from a scatter of modern building material found within trenches 4, 5 and 6, which suggested that topsoil may have been previously stripped and removed and then placed back within these areas. There is a modern sewer running east to west down the centre of the field and its construction may account for the modern disturbance observed with these trenches. Trenches 11 and 13 appeared to have been placed within natural hollows which had been back filled and levelled with modern material. Some of the remaining trenches displayed shallow depths of topsoil and no subsoil, which could possibly indicate that extensive deep modern ploughing has taken place within these fields.

8. Conclusion

The trial trenching at land west of Heather Lane, Ravenstone indicates that there are unlikely to be any archaeological deposits present within the proposed development area for the 50 dwellings and new access roads.

9. Archive

The site archive will be held by Leicestershire Museums Service, under accession no. X.A6.2017.

The site archive consists of:

- 1 Unbound A4 copy of this report
- 18 A4 Trench recording sheets
- 1 A4 Photo record sheet
- A4 Colour digital contact print 1 CD of digital photos

The archive will be held by Leicestershire Museum Service under the accession number X.A6.2017.

10. Publication

Since 2004 ULAS has reported the results of all archaeological work to the *Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations* (OASIS) database held by the Archaeological Data Service at the University of York (Appendix 1). A summary of the work will also be submitted for publication in the local archaeological journal, the *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society*, in due course

OASIS data entry

PROJECT DETAILS	Oasis No	universi1-275509		
	Project Name	An Archaeological Evaluation Land at Heather Lane, Ravenstone, Leicestershire.		
	Start/end dates of field work	10-01-2017 - 13-01-2017		
	Previous/Future Work	Fieldwalking Geophysical Survey		
	Project Type	Evaluation		
	Site Status	None		
	Current Land Use	Arable		
	Monument Type/Period	None		
	Significant Finds/Period	None		
	Development Type	Residential		
	Reason for Investigation	NPPF		
	Position in the Planning Process	Planning Condition		
	Planning Ref.	Planning Ref: 13/00780/OUTM		
PROJECT LOCATION	Site Address/Postcode	Heather Lane, Ravenstone, Leicestershire		
	Study Area	2.39 ha		
	Site Coordinates	SK 40203 13332		
	Height OD	145m AOD		
PROJECT CREATORS	Organisation	ULAS		
	Project Brief Originator	Local Planning Authority (LCC) North West Leicestershire District Council		
	Project Design Originator	ULAS		
	Project Manager	Patrick Clay		
	Project Director/Supervisor	Tim Higgins		
	Sponsor/Funding Body	Williams Homes		
PROJECT ARCHIVE		Physical	Digital	Paper
	Recipient	LCC Mus Service	LCC Mus Service	LCC Mus Service
	ID (Acc. No.)	X.A6.2017	X.A6.2017	X.A6.2017
	Contents	None	Photos	Evaluation records Field Notes
PROJECT BIBLIOGRAPHY	Type	Grey Literature (unpublished)		
	Title	An Archaeological Evaluation		
	Author	Higgins, T.		
	Other bibliographic details	ULAS Report No 2016-016		
	Date	10/01/2017 to 13/01/2017		
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	Description	Developer Report A4 pdf		

10. Publication

A summary of the work will be submitted for publication in the local archaeological journal *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* 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.

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12. Acknowledgements

The fieldwork was carried out by the author Tim Higgins and Jamie Patrick both of ULAS. Dr Patrick Clay managed the project. Sophie Clarke of LCC HNET monitored the work on behalf of the planning authority.

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07/02/2017

Trench Photos



Plate 1 Trench 1 North Field



Plate 2 Trench 4 North Field



Plate 3 Trench 13 North Field



Plate 4 Trench 13 Made Ground North Field



Plate 5 Trench 15 South Field

Trench Measurements

Trench No	Orient		Length		Width		
1	E - W		28m		1.60m		
Interval	0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25m	28m
Topsoil	0.36m	0.38m	0.30m	0.40m	0.40m	0.35m	0.30m
Subsoil	0.10m	-	-	0.10m	0.18m	0.20m	0.16m
Top Natural	0.46m	0.38m	0.30m	0.50m	0.58m	0.55m	0.46m
Base of Trench	0.46m	0.43m	0.40m	0.50m	0.58m	0.58m	0.50m

Trench No	Orient		Length		Width		
2	E - W		30m		1.60m		
Interval	0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25m	30m
Topsoil	0.35m	0.50m	0.40m	0.36m	0.30m	0.40m	0.36m
Subsoil	-	-	0.16m	-	-	0.14m	0.08m
Top of Natural	0.35m	0.50m	0.56m	0.36m	0.30m	0.59m	0.44m
Base of Trench	0.40m	0.60m	0.60m	0.43m	0.35m	0.54m	0.49m

Trench No	Orient		Length		Width		
3	NW-SE		28m		1.60m		
Interval	0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25m	28
Topsoil	0.30m	0.30m	0.33m	0.30m	0.30m	0.28m	0.22m
Subsoil	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Top of Natural	0.30m	0.30m	0.33m	0.30m	0.30m	0.28m	0.22m
Base of Trench	0.38m	0.40m	0.43m	0.34m	0.38m	0.34m	0.28m

Trench No	Orient		Length		Width		
4	S-N		29m		1.60m		
Interval	0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25m	29m
Topsoil	0.26m	0.22m	0.25m	0.34m	0.34m	0.26m	0.37m
Subsoil	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Top of Natural	0.26m	0.22m	0.25m	0.34m	0.34m	0.26m	0.37m
Base of Trench	0.36m	0.40m	0.42m	0.42m	0.40m	0.36m	0.37m

Trench No	Orient		Length		Width		
5	NW-SE		30m		1.80m		
Interval	0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25m	30m
Topsoil	0.37m	0.30m	0.36m	0.33m	0.40m	0.26m	0.30m
Subsoil	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Top of Natural	0.37m	0.30m	0.36m	0.33m	0.40m	0.26m	0.30m
Base of Trench	0.45m	0.45m	0.50m	0.40m	0.40m	0.31m	0.30m

Trench No	Orient		Length		Width		
6	E-W		27m		1.60m		
Interval	0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	27m	
Topsoil	0.29m	0.34m	0.36m	0.28m	0.44m	0.30m	
Subsoil	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Top of Natural	0.29m	0.34m	0.36m	0.28m	0.44m	0.30m	
Base of Trench	0.34m	0.42m	0.40m	0.34m	0.47m	0.36m	

Trench No	Orient		Length		Width		
7	NE-SW		29m		1.60m		
Interval	0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25m	30m
Topsoil	0.30m	0.33m	0.29m	0.36m	0.26m	0.33m	0.30m
Subsoil	0.06m	-	0.08m	-	0.13m	0.12m	0.18m
Top of Natural	0.36m	0.33m	0.32m	0.36m	0.39m	0.45m	0.48m
Base of Trench	0.36m	0.40m	0.37m	0.42m	0.49m	0.45m	0.54m

Trench No	Orient		Length		Width		
8	NE-SW		30m		1.60m		
Interval	0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25m	30m
Topsoil	0.25m	0.26m	0.28m	0.25m	0.30m	0.30m	0.24m
Subsoil	0.10m	0.12m	0.08m	0.14m	0.19m	0.18m	0.15m
Top of Natural	0.35m	0.38m	0.36m	0.39m	0.49m	0.48m	0.39m
Base of Trench	0.42m	0.49m	0.43m	0.43m	0.58m	0.50m	0.47m

Trench No	Orient		Length		Width		
9	NW-SE		30m		1.60m		
Interval	0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25m	30m
Topsoil	0.32m	0.31m	0.43m	0.28m	0.30m	0.26m	0.35m
Subsoil	-	0.10m	-	0.18m	0.10m	0.05m	-
Top of Natural	0.32m	0.41m	0.43m	0.46m	0.40m	0.31m	0.35m
Base of Trench	0.40m	0.41m	0.55m	0.47m	0.40m	0.50m	0.45m

Trench No	Orient		Length		Width		
10	E-W		27m		1.60m		
Interval	0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	27m	
Topsoil	0.59m	0.45m	0.39m	0.32m	0.55m	0.46m	
Subsoil	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Top of Natural	0.59m	0.45m	0.39m	0.32m	0.55m	0.46m	
Base of Trench	0.59m	0.45m	0.46m	0.42m	0.55m	0.46m	

Trench No	Orient		Length		Width		
11	SW-NE		29m		1.60m		
Interval	0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25m	28m
Topsoil	0.30m	0.36m	0.40m	0.50m	0.50m	0.50m	0.50m
Subsoil	0.20m	0.14m	0.20m	0.10m	0.45m	0.30m	0.30m
Top of Natural	0.50m	0.50m	0.60m	0.60m	0.95m	0.80m	0.80m
Base of Trench	0.50m	0.50m	0.60m	0.60m	0.95m	0.80m	0.80m

Trench No	Orient		Length		Width		
12	E-W		29m		1.60m		
Interval	0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25m	29m
Topsoil	0.50m	0.48m	0.45m	0.50m	0.28m	0.28m	0.33m
Subsoil	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Top of Natural	0.50m	0.48m	0.45m	0.50m	0.28m	0.28m	0.33m
Base of Trench	0.50m	0.48m	0.45m	0.50m	0.28m	0.28m	0.33m

Trench No	Orient		Length		Width		
13	S-N		30m		1.60m		
Interval	0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25m	30m
Topsoil	0.60m	0.75m	0.90m	0.70m	0.80m	0.55m	0.60m
Subsoil	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Top of Natural	0.60m	0.75m	0.90m	0.70m	0.80m	0.55m	0.60m
Base of Trench	0.60m	0.75m	0.90m	0.70m	0.80m	0.55m	0.60m

Trench No	Orient		Length		Width		
14	NE-SW		29m		1.60m		
Interval	0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25m	29m
Topsoil	0.32m	0.32m	0.26m	0.32m	0.26m	0.35m	0.28m
Subsoil	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Top of Natural	0.32m	0.32m	0.26m	0.32m	0.26m	0.35m	0.28m
Base of Trench	0.36m	0.38m	0.36m	0.32m	0.30m	0.40m	0.28m

Trench No	Orient		Length		Width		
15	E-W		29m		1.60m		
Interval	0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25m	29m
Topsoil	0.36m	0.39m	0.40m	0.42m	0.50m	0.50m	0.50m
Subsoil	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Top of Natural	0.36m	0.39m	0.40m	0.42m	0.50m	0.50m	0.50m
Base of Trench	0.36m	0.39m	0.40m	0.42m	0.50m	0.50m	0.50m

Trench No	Orient		Length		Width		
16	E-W		29m		1.60m		
Interval	0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25m	29m
Topsoil	0.36m	0.36m	0.45m	0.45m	0.50m	0.45m	0.50m
Subsoil	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Top of Natural	0.36m	0.36m	0.45m	0.45m	0.50m	0.45m	0.50m
Base of Trench	0.36m	0.43m	0.50m	0.60m	0.50m	0.50m	0.50m

Trench No	Orient		Length		Width		
17	S-N		29m		1.60m		
Interval	0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25m	29m
Topsoil	0.34m	0.37m	0.32m	0.32m	0.40m	0.35m	0.45m
Subsoil	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Top of Natural	0.34m	0.37m	0.32m	0.32m	0.40m	0.35m	0.45m
Base of Trench	0.34m	0.37m	0.38m	0.34m	0.46m	0.40m	0.45m

Trench No	Orient		Length		Width		
18	S-N		31m		1.60m		
Interval	0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25m	31m
Topsoil	0.40m	0.45m	0.48m	0.50m	0.28m	0.30m	0.30m
Subsoil	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Top of Natural	0.40m	0.45m	0.48m	0.50m	0.28m	0.30m	0.30m
Base of Trench	0.47m	0.45m	0.48m	0.50m	0.35m	0.40m	0.40m

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