



UNIVERSITY OF  
**LEICESTER**

Archaeological Services

**Archaeological Strip, Map &  
Sample at MIRA Training Centre,  
Higham on the Hill, Leicestershire**

**NGR: SP 36660 95226**

Nathan Flavell



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**An Archaeological Strip, Map & Sample  
At MIRA Training Centre,  
Higham on the Hill  
Leicestershire  
(SP 36660 95226)**

**Nathan Flavell  
For: MIRA Technology Ltd  
Planning Application: 16/01049/FUL**

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University of Leicester, Archaeological Services, University Rd., Leicester, LE1 7RH

Tel: (0116) 2522848

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

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## **Archaeological Strip, Map & Sample at MIRA Training Centre, Higham on the Hill, Leicestershire (SP 36660 95226)**

*Nathan Flavell*

### **Summary**

*Archaeological strip, map and sample was carried out at MIRA, Higham on the Hill, Leicestershire (SP 36660 95226) by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on 18-29 September 2017. The work was undertaken on behalf of MIRA Technology Ltd in advance of the proposed new training centre. The site archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council Museum Services under the accession number X.A104.2017. Two Roman gullies with pottery were encountered.*

### **Introduction**

This document constitutes the report for an archaeological strip, map and sample carried out at MIRA, Higham on the Hill, Leicestershire (SP 36660 95226). The work was undertaken on behalf of MIRA Technology Ltd by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on 18-29 September 2017.

The site lies within the parish of Higham-on-the-Hill, in the District of Hinckley and Bosworth, Leicestershire, around 5 miles north-west of Hinckley and 5 miles south-east of Atherstone (Figure 1). It is demarcated by the A5 (Roman Watling Street) to the south; which is the border with Warwickshire. The dismantled Ashby and Nuneaton Joint Railway runs to the south-east of the site and to the north-west and north-east lie fields and local roads. The total area of the MIRA site is around 310 hectares. The overall development site consists of two areas currently occupied by various MIRA buildings, which are surrounded by two large arable fields to the north, east, and west (Fig. 1).

As the trial trench evaluation of Phase 1 Areas 1-3 revealed some evidence of archaeological deposits in the area of the proposed Training Centre (Higgins 2014), Leicestershire County Council Senior Planning Archaeologist as advisor to Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council has requested a strip, map and sample excavation of this area to record any archaeological deposits which would be impacted on by the groundworks connected with the outline planning permission P.A 11/00360/OUT.

The work followed the approved Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) as laid out in the *Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Work* (Clay 2017).

### **Geology and Topography**

The British Geological Survey of England and Wales, sheet 169 (Coventry) shows that the underlying geology over most of the site is likely to be Thrussington Till overlain by Dunsmore Gravel and Anker Sand and Gravel to the south, with skerries (beds) of siltstone. To the north and north-west of the site lie Wolston Clay and alluvial deposits. The site lies at a height of around 100m above OD, with the high point of the site lying at 104m above OD close to the southern edge.

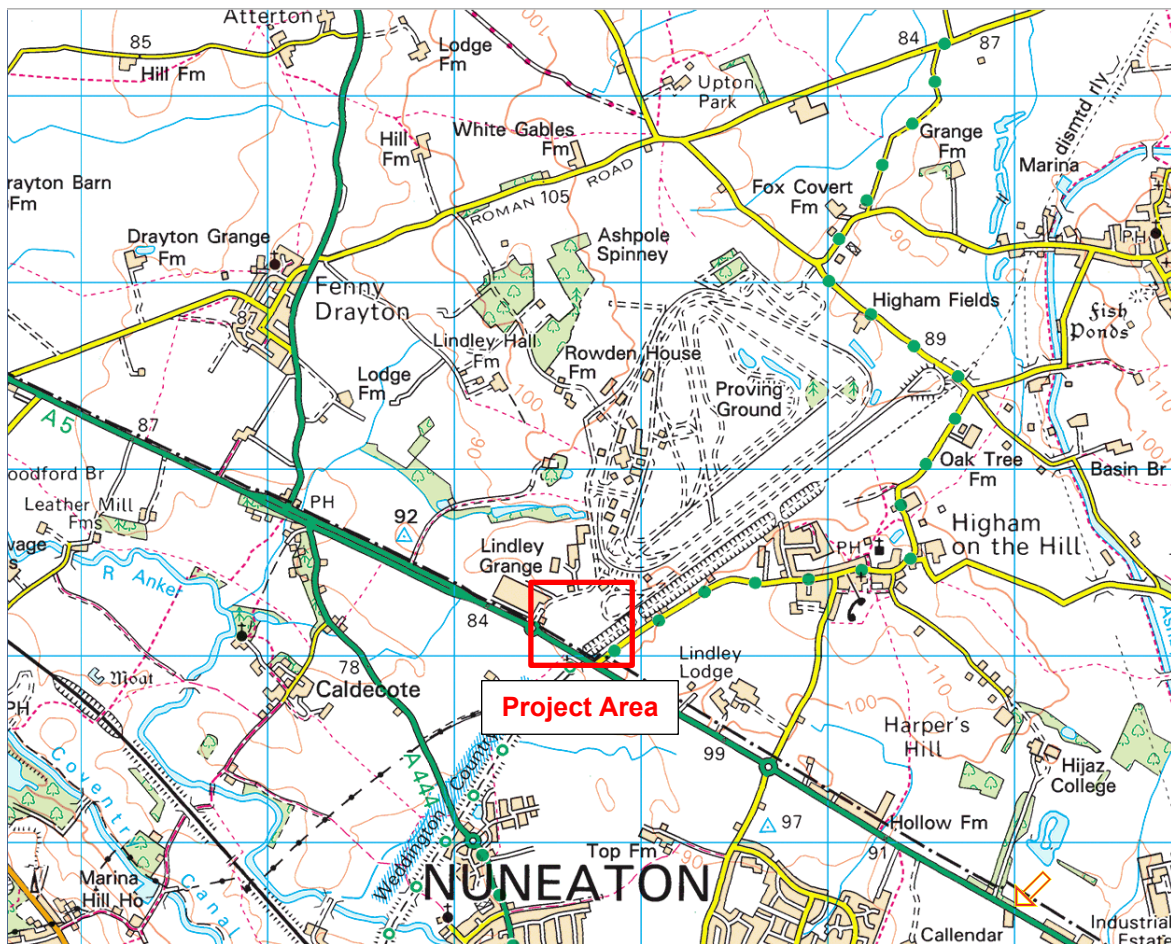


Figure 1: Site Location (Scale 1:50 000)

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## Historical and Archaeological Background

The Historic Environment Record (HER) for Leicestershire and Rutland shows that the assessment area lies on the site of the old Lindley Airfield (HER Ref. **MLE15973**). The site also lies on the site of the deserted parish of Rowden (**MLE2795**) and adjacent to earthworks associated with the abandoned village of Lindley (**MLE2792**). There are also enclosures dating from the Iron Age adjacent to the site (**MLE9578**) and other prehistoric sites are located nearby (**MLE8245**, **MLE6080** and Warks HER No. **4420 & 4501**). The southern part of the site lies adjacent to the A5 Watling Street, a former Roman Road (**MLE1388**) and the Mancetter Roman Road has been projected to run to the north of the site (**MLE3019**). Roman pottery has been found within the former Lindley parish at the edge of the assessment area (**MLE8503**) and a large amount has been found further to the south (Warks HER No. **7439**). Roman coins have also been retrieved from two hoards to the south (Warks HER No. **5141**) of the site and near Harper's Hill, around 800m south-east of the site (Warks HER No. **1653**).

The fieldwalking, metal detecting and geophysical surveys did not locate significant material or anomalies. Two areas where detailed gradiometry was undertaken revealed anomalies with possible archaeological origins while some medieval and post-medieval pottery from the fieldwalking is interpreted as manuring scatters. The trial trench evaluation to the west located evidence of Roman occupation (Thomas 2011). Trial trench evaluation of Phase 1 Areas 1-3 revealed some evidence of archaeological deposits in the eastern section of Area 3 including the area of the proposed Training Centre (Higgins 2014).

## Archaeological Objectives

The main objectives of the archaeological work were:

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

## Methodology

The strip comprised an area divided into three sections comprising the building footprint, service yard and car park (Fig. 2).

The sections and existing spoil heaps were visually inspected for features and finds. If present archaeological features were to be hand cleaned, planned, photographed and sample excavated as detailed in the approved Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI).

All work followed the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (CIfA) *Code of Conduct* (2014) and adhered to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological field evaluations* (2014).

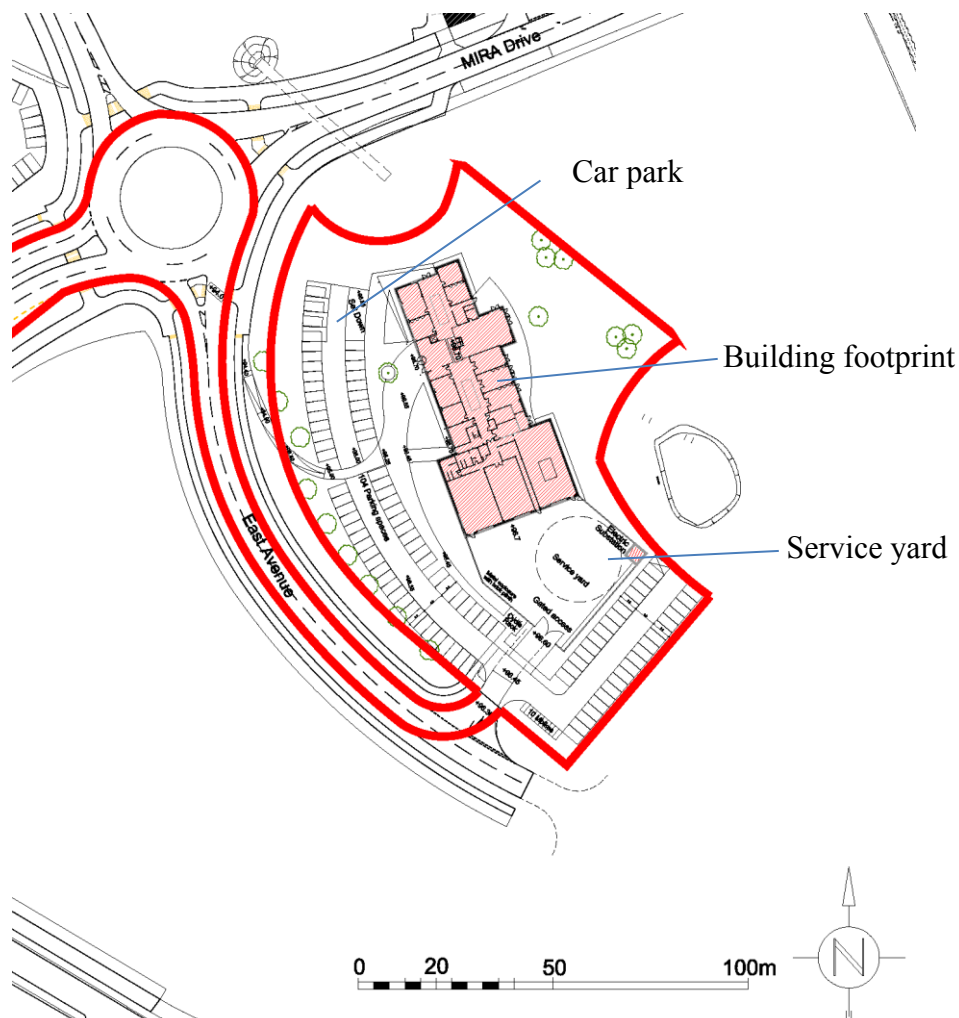


Figure 2: Plan of development area



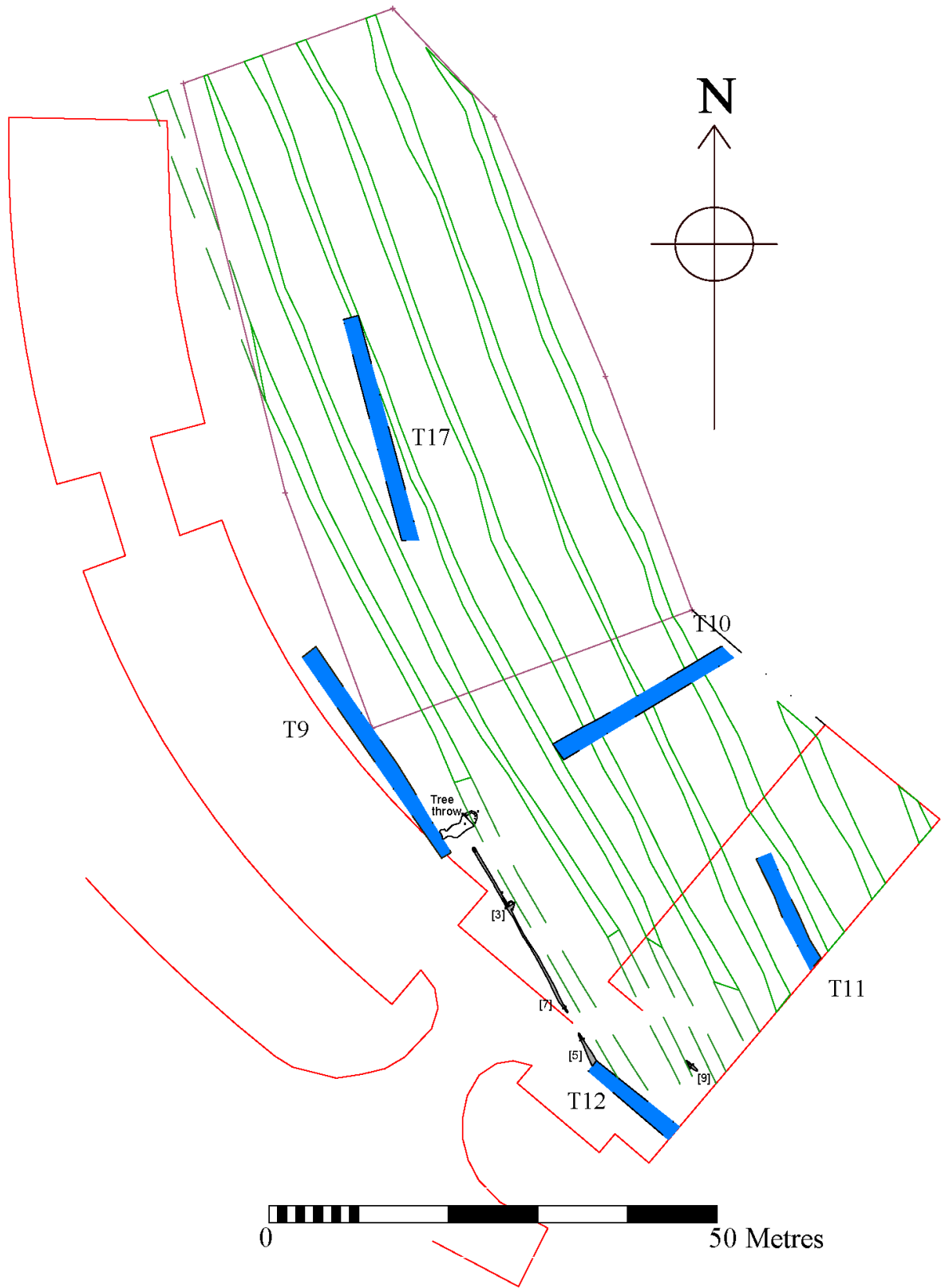


Figure 3: Site plan

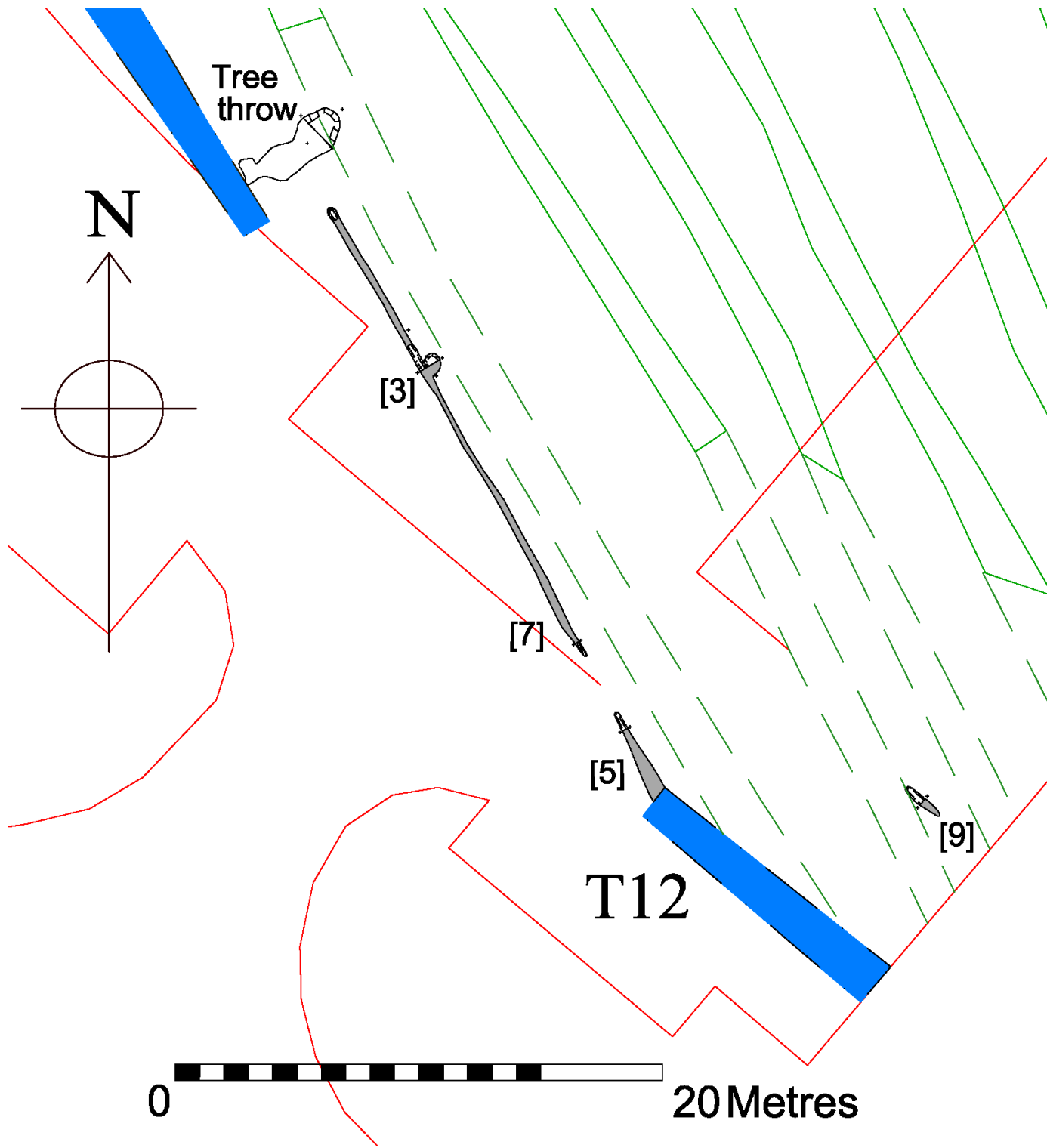


Figure 4: Detail of features



## Results

Natural substrata was pink clay with odd areas of beige pebbly sand, generally encountered at 0.3m below the ground surface. A subsoil of mid brown silty clay was observed at the western extremities of the site and was approx. 0.1m thick. This was overlain by topsoil consisting of mid brown clay loam, 0.28m thick.

A number of furrows were clearly cut into the natural, aligned northwest-southeast, generally 1.5-2m wide, approximately 4m apart.

The archaeological features consisted of two small gullies in the southeast area of the site. The larger [3]/[5]/[7] (Fig. 5) was 27m long, and aligned northwest-southeast, and was discontinuous with terminals recorded each side of a 2.6m wide gap at its southern end (Figs. 6 & 7). This feature was between 0.25m and 0.35m wide, with a single fill, (4)/(6)/(8), light grey silty sand with occasional pebbles, between 0.1m and 0.17m thick. At its northern end, the feature terminated 2m to the south of a treethrow pit. There was no evidence of the gully any further to the north.

The gully had previously been recorded within trench 12 of the evaluation (Higgins 2014).

Gully [9] (Fig. 8) was located approximately 5.7m northeast of trench 12, near the eastern boundary of the area, also aligned northwest-southeast. It was 1.78m long, and 0.35m wide with a single fill (10), light brown-grey silty sand, 0.08m thick. Stratified Roman pottery was recovered from this deposit



Figure 5: Gully [3] looking southeast





Figure 6: Gully [5] looking southeast



Figure 7: Gully [7] looking northwest





Figure 8: Gully [9] looking southeast

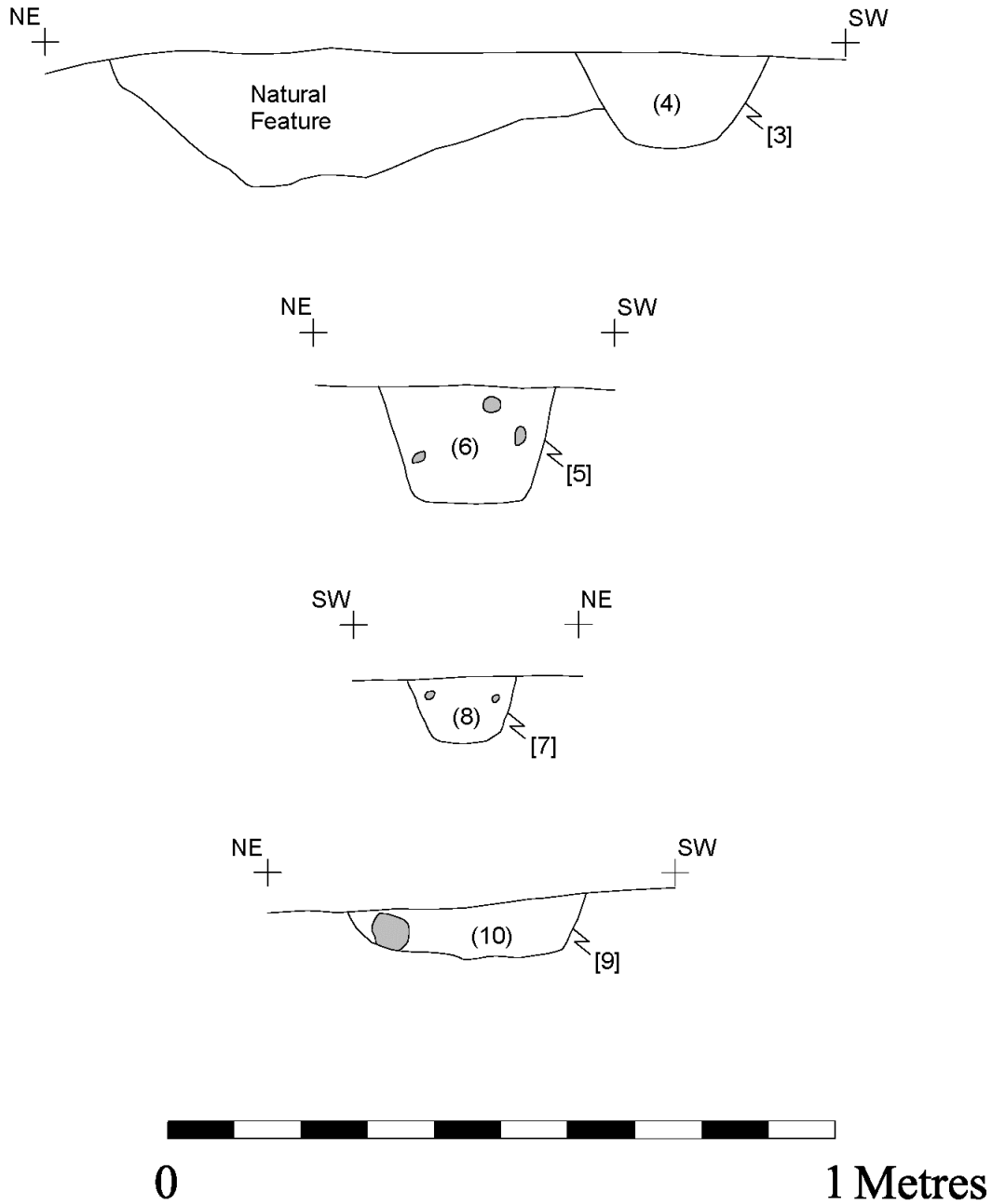


Figure 9: Section drawings

### Discussion

While the excavation showed little archaeology within the whole area stripped, it is consistent with other archaeological interventions in the immediate area. Excavation of the bell-junction to the northwest uncovered similar features of 3-4th Century AD date (Flavell 2014). The trenching to the southeast on the other side of the dismantled Nuneaton-Ashby line also revealed similar features (Jarvis 2014). These features could be land partitions belonging to a Romano British farmstead fronting Watling Street to the south.

## The Finds

### Roman Pottery

*Nicholas J. Cooper*

A total of five sherds, weighing 33g, were recovered, including two unstratified. The material was classified using the Leicestershire Roman pottery form and fabric series (Pollard 1994, 110-114) and quantified by sherd count and weight. The three stratified sherds (15g) were joining, but abraded, and came from the base of a bowl or dish in South-east Dorset BB1 (black burnished ware) were recovered from context [9] (10) (Holbrook and Bidwell 1991, 97-99). In addition, two joining sherds (18g) from a grey ware jar (Fabric GW5) were recovered unstratified. The occurrence of the BB1 would indicate a date after c. AD 120 for the filling of (10) but which is most likely to fall within the period AD 150-350. The grey ware jar will date between the 2nd and the 4th century.

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### Archive

The site archive consists of: 1 A4 context index, 10 A5 context sheets, 1 A4 drawing index, 1

A4 drawing record sheet, 1 A4 photo index sheet, 34 digital photographs and 1 A2 permatrace sheet. It will be held by Leicestershire County Council Museum Services under the accession number X.A104.2017.

## Publication

Since 2004 ULAS has reported the results of all archaeological work through the *Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations* (OASIS) database held by the Archaeological Data Service at the University of York. A summary of the work will also be submitted for publication in a suitable regional archaeological journal in due course.

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>	<b>Oasis No</b>	universi1-300435		
	<b>Project Name</b>	MIRA Training Centre		
	<b>Start/end dates of field work</b>	18-09-17 – 29-09-17		
	<b>Previous/Future Work</b>	Evaluation 2014-178		
	<b>Project Type</b>	Strip, plan and sample		
	<b>Site Status</b>	None		
	<b>Current Land Use</b>	Grassland		
	<b>Monument Type/Period</b>	Roman		
	<b>Significant Finds/Period</b>	Roman		
	<b>Development Type</b>	Commercial		
	<b>Reason for Investigation</b>	NPPF		
	<b>Position in the Planning Process</b>	Planning condition		
	<b>Planning Ref.</b>	16/01049/FUL		
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>	<b>Site Address/Postcode</b>	Watling Street, Nuneaton, Warwickshire. CV10 0TU		
	<b>Study Area</b>			
	<b>Site Coordinates</b>	SP 36660 95226		
	<b>Height OD</b>			
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	ULAS		
	<b>Project Originator Brief</b>	Local Planning Authority (CCC)		
	<b>Project Originator Design</b>	ULAS		
	<b>Project Manager</b>	Patrick Clay		
	<b>Project Director/Supervisor</b>	Nathan Flavell		
	<b>Sponsor/Funding Body</b>	Developer – Mr S. Chawla		
<b>PROJECT ARCHIVE</b>		<b>Physical</b>	<b>Digital</b>	<b>Paper</b>
	<b>Recipient</b>	Leics MusService	Leics MusService	Leics MusService
	<b>ID (Acc. No.)</b>	X.A104.2017	X.A104.2017	X.A104.2017



	<b>Contents</b>	Pottery	Photos	Watching brief records Contact sheet
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Nathan Flavell BA (Hons) PG Dip  
 Archaeological Services (ULAS)  
 University of Leicester  
 University Road  
 Leicester LE1 7RH

Tel: 0116 252 2848  
 Fax: 0116 252 2614  
 Email: nf70@le.ac.uk

08/11/2017

## Contact Details

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

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

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

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

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



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