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Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological Evaluation on Land
off Greenhill Road,**

**Coalville,
Leicestershire**

NGR: SK 460 141

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For: Avant Homes (Midlands)

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Contents

Summary	1
Introduction	1
Site Description, Topography and Geology	2
Archaeological and Historical background	4
Archaeological Aims and Objectives	5
Methodology.....	6
Results.....	8
Conclusion.....	12
Archive	12
Publication	12
Bibliography	12
Acknowledgements.....	13
Oasis Data	13

Figures

Figure 1: Location of site.....	2
Figure 2: Area of assessment	3
Figure 3: Site looking south from north edge of field 1.....	3
Figure 4: Site looking north-west from the south-east corner of field 3.....	4
Figure 5: Plan of assessment area with geophysical data	5
Figure 6: Trench numbers and locations.....	7
Figure 7: Large natural limestone boulders (left) and evidence of field drains (right).....	9
Figure 8: Drystone structure looking east (1m scale)	9
Figure 9: Drystone structure looking north-west (1m scale)	10
Figure 10: Site Plan.....	11

An Archaeological Evaluation on Land off Greenhill Road, Coalville, Leicestershire (SK 460 141)

Summary

University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) carried out archaeological evaluation at Land off Greenhill Road, Coalville from the 20th November to 24th November 2017. A total of 27 trenches were excavated across the site in advance of a new development of up to 180 dwellings including retail unit, access and associated infrastructure.

Evidence of field drains, plough scars and a single tree bowl were observed. No archaeological deposits or finds were recorded during the investigation.

The report and archive will be deposited at Leicestershire Museums Service under the accession number X.A140.2017.

Introduction

Outline planning permission has been granted for a new housing development of up to 180 dwellings, including retail unit, access and associated infrastructure (Planning application No. 14/00614/OUTM). The conditions require a programme of archaeological work comprising trial trenching to determine the impact of the proposed scheme on any buried archaeology and produce a mitigation strategy for the site.

This report represents the programme of archaeological trial trenching that was undertaken in November 2017. It follows a Desk-Based Assessment (Thornton 2013), geophysical survey (Davies 2017) and a strategy of work set out in the Written Scheme for Investigation for Evaluation (Hunt 2017).

The work involved the machine excavation of 27, 30m long trial trenches located across 4 fields where constraints allow throughout the development. Trenches were focused on areas containing anomalies possibly associated with archaeological remains identified during the geophysical survey.

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 was in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) Code of Conduct (2014) and adhered to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (2014).

Site Description, Topography and Geology

The site lies to the south of Greenhill Road around two miles east of Coalville in North-West Leicestershire (Figs 1 and 2). The site comprises approximately 7.22 hectares lies on the eastern edge of Coalville and at the northern foot of Bardon Hill and consists of four arable fields (Figs 3 and 4). The site is bounded by Greenhill Road to the north, by field boundaries to the east and south, and by property boundaries to the west.

From the southern boundary of the study site levels rise in locally steep gradients to the top of Bardon Hill at 278m aOD. The ground within the study site rises from c.195m aOD at the western boundary of the site to c.220m aOD along the eastern boundary.

The British Geological Survey website indicates that the underlying geology is Mudstone belonging to the Gunthorpe Member. The superficial geology in the north-west of the site is recorded as Diamicton (formerly known as Boulder Clay) and as clay, silt, sand and gravel in the north-east of the site. Superficial geology is not recorded across the remaining areas of the site.

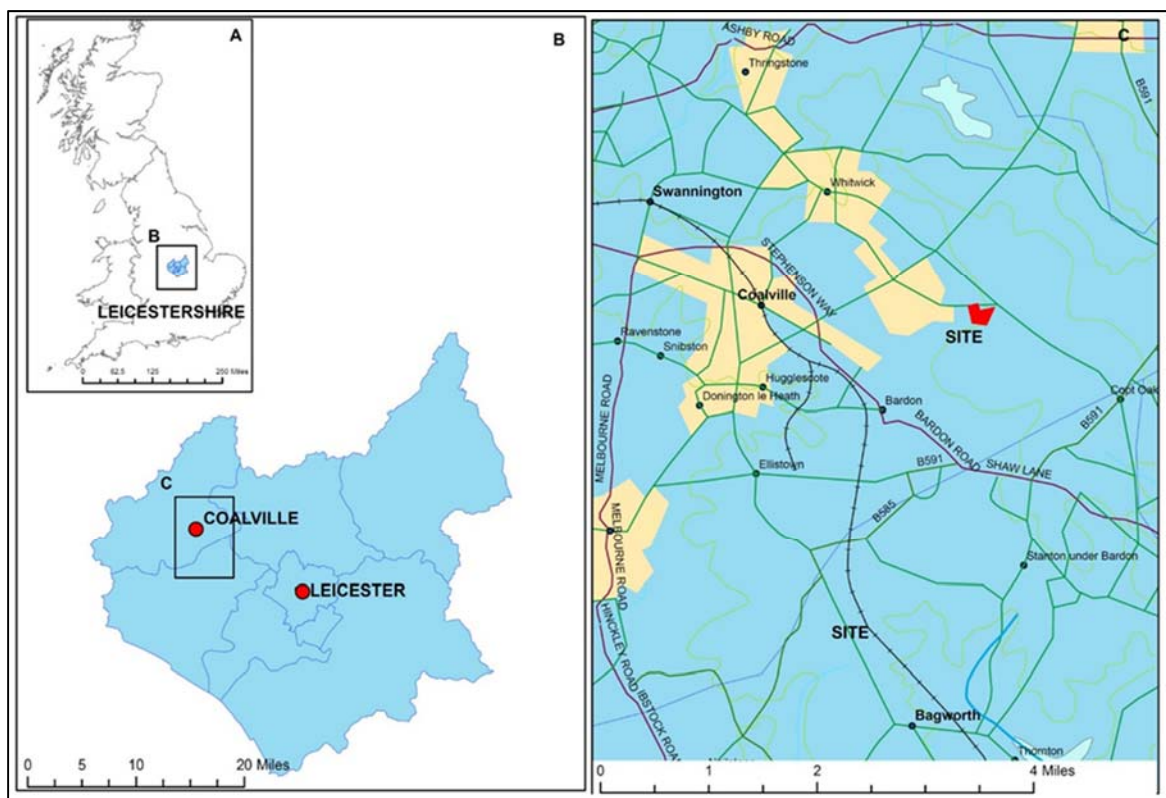


Figure 1: Location of site

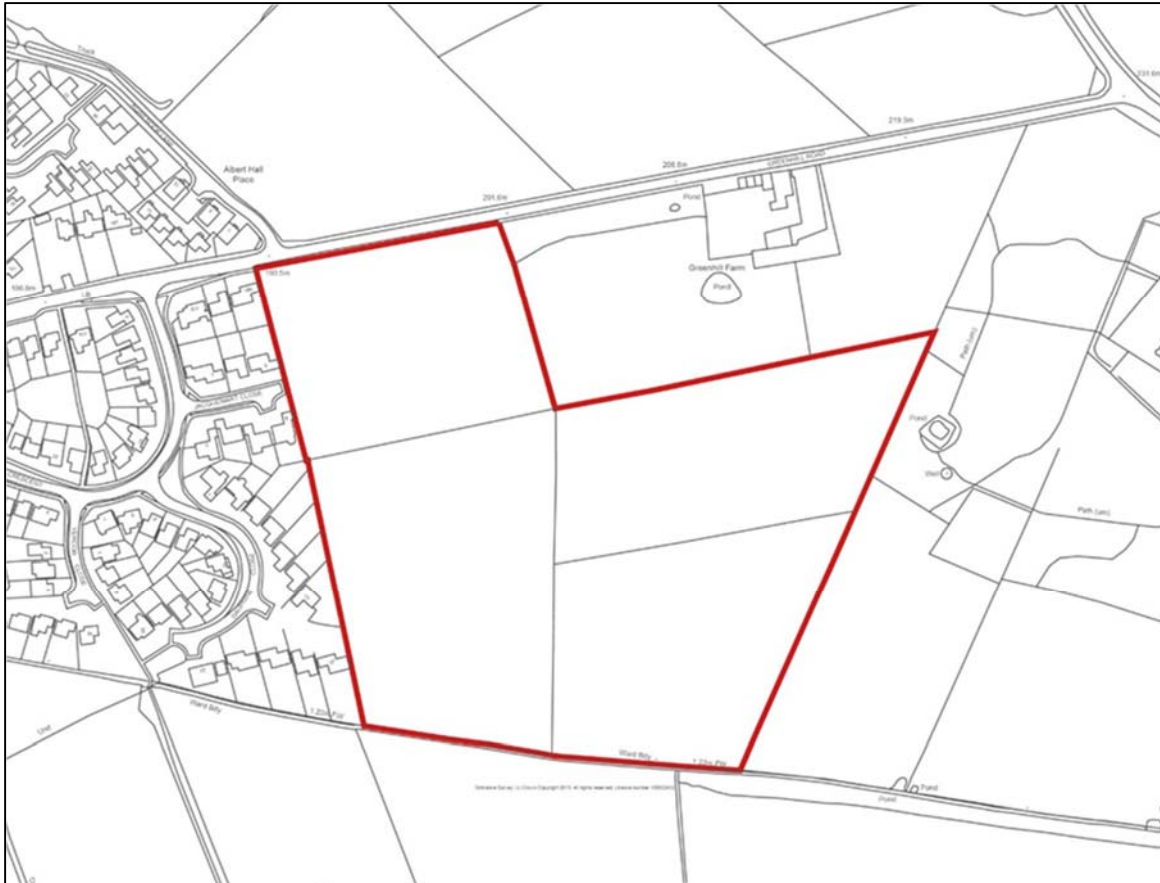


Figure 2: Area of assessment



Figure 3: Site looking south from north edge of field 1



Figure 4: Site looking north-west from the south-east corner of field 3

Archaeological and Historical background

A desk-based assessment has been prepared for the site (Thornton 2013). The Historic Environment Record (HER) shows that there are a number of findspots for prehistoric flints in the local area. The HER also shows that the medieval deer park at Bardon Park borders the southern boundary of the site (HER No. **MLE4354**). No physical evidence for the boundary is visible on the ground.

The desk-based assessment also recorded a low mound on the site, believed to be a post-medieval or modern well or modern air shaft. This has since been recorded on the HER (HER No. **MLE2188**).

A geophysical survey was carried out by SUMO Survey in August 2017 (Davies 2017). No magnetic responses were recorded that could be interpreted as being of archaeological interest. The survey revealed a number of linear features related to modern ploughing and other small anomalies that are likely to be natural in origin (Fig. 5). The possible air shaft was shown as a large magnetic response and is likely to be a result of ferrous debris/rubbish, possibly used as infill or capping.

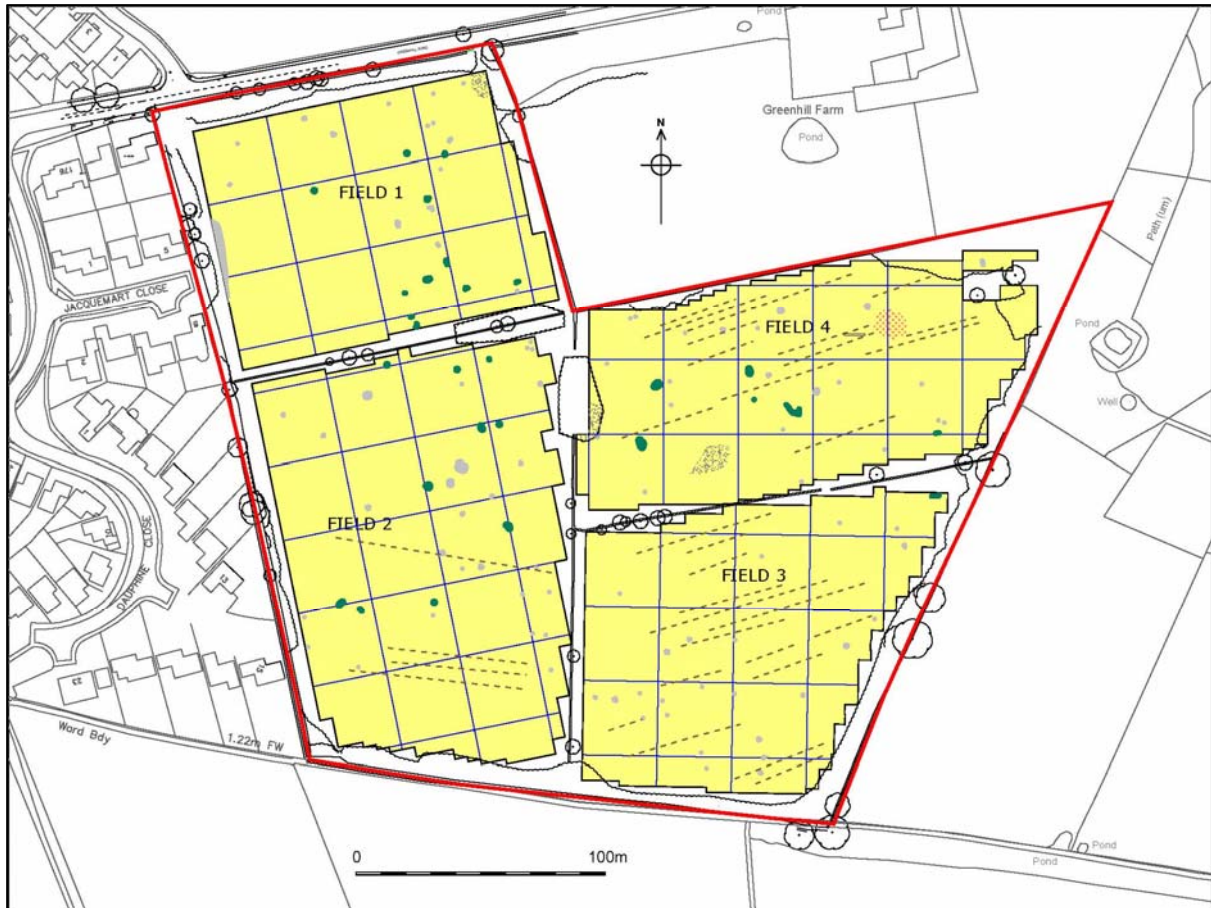


Figure 5: Plan of assessment area with geophysical data

Archaeological Aims and Objectives

The main objectives of the archaeological work were as follows:

- 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 establish the relationship of any remains found to the surrounding contemporary landscape.
- To recover artefacts and ecofacts to compare with other assemblages and results
- To produce an archive and report of any results.

Within the stated project aims, the principal objective of the recording is to establish the nature, extent, date, depth, and significance of the heritage assets within their local and regional context in order to formulate a mitigation strategy to address the impacts of the proposed development on cultural heritage.

All work conforms to the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012). It has been designed in accordance with current best archaeological practice and the appropriate national standards and guidelines including:

- *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage, 1991);
- *Model Briefs and Specifications for Archaeological Assessments and Field Evaluations* (Association of County Archaeological Officers, 1994);
- *Code of Conduct* (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014);
- *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations* (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014);
- *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (Association of Local Government Officers, 2003);

Methodology

A total of 27, 30m long and 1.8m wide trenches were excavated across the development area. The trenches were spread across the development area and focused on anomalies highlighted on the geophysical survey. Trench locations are shown on Fig. 6.

A 13 ton 360° mechanical excavator was used to excavate the trenches using a 1.8m wide toothless ditching bucket. Topsoil and subsoil was stored separately and excavation ceased at undisturbed natural deposits.

The trenches were recorded at an appropriate scale by measured drawing and photography and were GPS-located to Ordnance Survey National Grid.

A photographic record, utilising high resolution digital data capture, was maintained during the course of the fieldwork and included:

- the site prior to commencement of fieldwork;
- the site during work, showing specific stages of fieldwork;

Upon completion of the evaluation trenching, the excavated trenches were backfilled and well compacted.

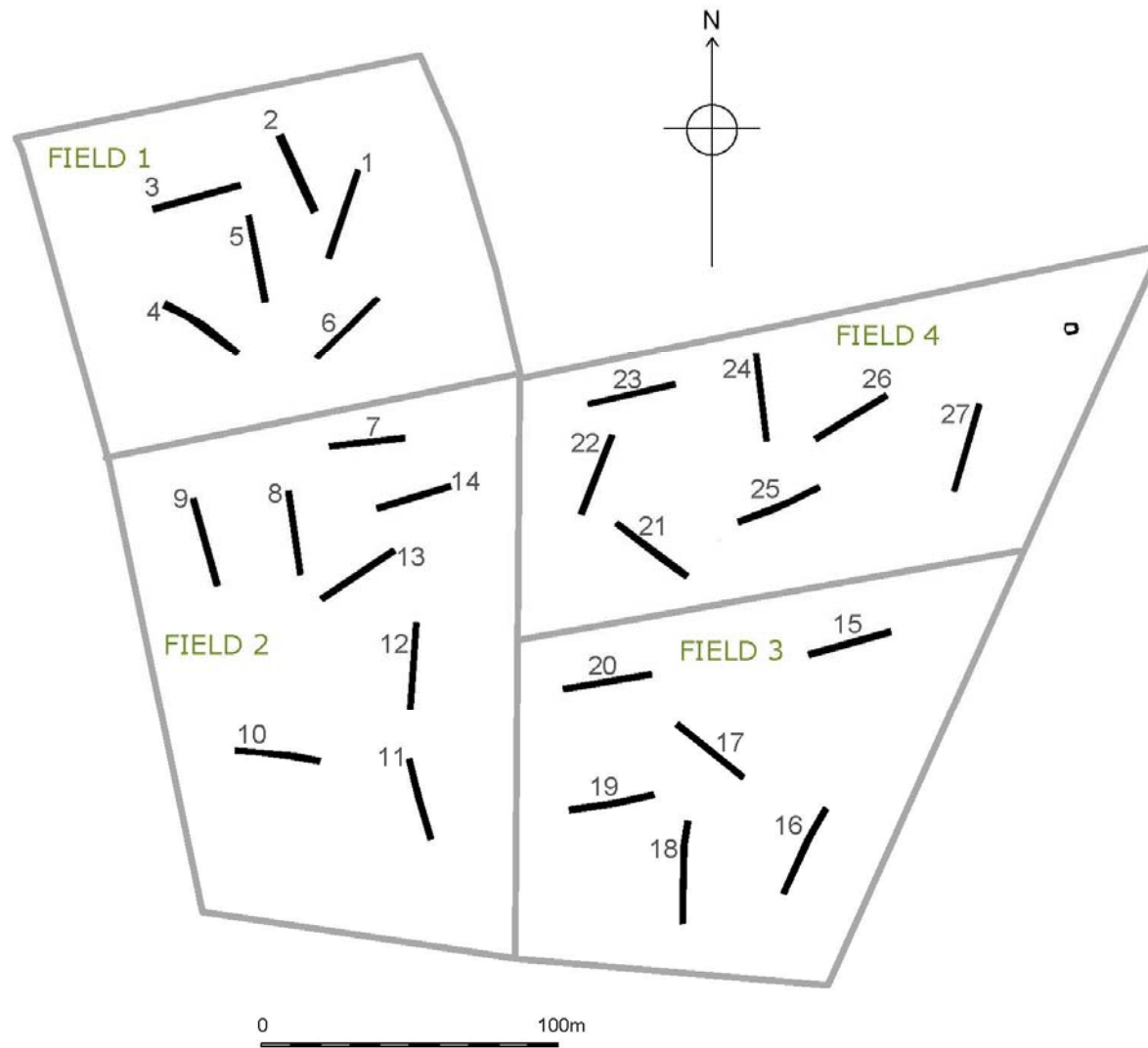


Figure 6: Trench numbers and locations

Results

Twenty seven trenches were excavated across the area of proposed development (Fig. 10). The topsoil consisted of a dark brown clay loam of friable consistence, with occasional limestone inclusions and some modern debris. Subsoil where present consisted of a mid-orangey-grey sandy clay of friable consistence with occasional natural limestone fragments. The natural substrata consisted of orange and grey clays with limestone inclusions. No archaeological features were observed during the investigation.

All trenches measured 1.8m in width and 30m in length and all measurements were taken from the top of the trench.

Trench No.	Orientation	Min. Depth	Max. Depth	Description
1	NE-SW	0.28m	0.45m	Negative trench, evidence of plough scars
2	NW-SE	0.28m	0.35m	Negative trench, evidence of field drains
3	E-W	0.30m	0.44m	Negative trench
4	SE-NW	0.26m	0.48m	Negative trench, evidence of field drain
5	N-S	0.36m	0.40m	Negative trench, evidence of field drain
6	NE-SW	0.32m	0.46m	Negative trench, evidence of field drain
7	E-W	0.32m	0.41m	Negative trench
8	N-S	0.40m	0.46m	Negative trench
9	N-S	0.28m	0.50m	Negative trench, evidence of field drain
10	E-W	0.34m	0.48m	Negative trench, evidence of tree bowl
11	N-S	0.38m	0.50m	Negative trench, evidence of field drain
12	N-S	0.40m	0.48m	Negative trench, evidence of field drain
13	NE-SW	0.36m	0.45m	Negative trench, evidence of field drain
14	E-W	0.42m	0.50m	Negative trench, evidence of field drain
15	E-W	0.35m	0.56m	Negative trench, evidence of field drains
16	NE-SW	0.38m	0.55m	Negative trench, evidence of field drain
17	NW-SE	0.38m	0.56m	Negative trench
18	N-S	0.32m	0.45m	Negative trench, evidence of field drain and plough scars
19	E-W	0.40m	0.60m	Negative trench
20	E-W	0.34m	0.51m	Negative trench
21	NW-SE	0.35m	0.48m	Negative trench, evidence of field drains
22	N-S	0.41m	0.51m	Negative trench, evidence of field drains
23	E-W	0.40m	0.50m	Negative trench, evidence of field drains
24	N-S	0.41m	0.61m	Negative trench, evidence of field drain
25	E-W	0.42m	0.59m	Negative trench, evidence of field drains
26	NE-SW	0.38m	0.48m	Negative trench, evidence of field drain
27	N-S	0.31m	0.52m	Negative trench

Field drains were observed in the majority of trenches, with plough scaring also observed in trenches 1 and 18. This appeared to confirm the interpreted agricultural linear features shown on the geophysical survey. A single tree bowl was also observed in trench 10. Large natural

limestone boulders were encountered in the natural substratum, these were especially prevalent in field 4 and could perhaps be attributed to some of the isolated anomalies highlighted on the geophysical survey (Fig. 7).



Figure 7: Large natural limestone boulders (left) and evidence of field drains (right)

Despite the suggestion for the presence of an air shaft/well in field 4 as highlighted in the desk based assessment, no such feature was found. Trench 26 was located over the potential location but proved negative. However a ‘horse shoe’ shaped drystone structure was observed in the north-east corner of field 4, some 60m to the east of Trench 26 and could be the feature referred to in the desk based assessment (Figs 8 and 9).



Figure 8: Drystone structure looking east (1m scale)



Figure 9: Drystone structure looking north-west (1m scale)

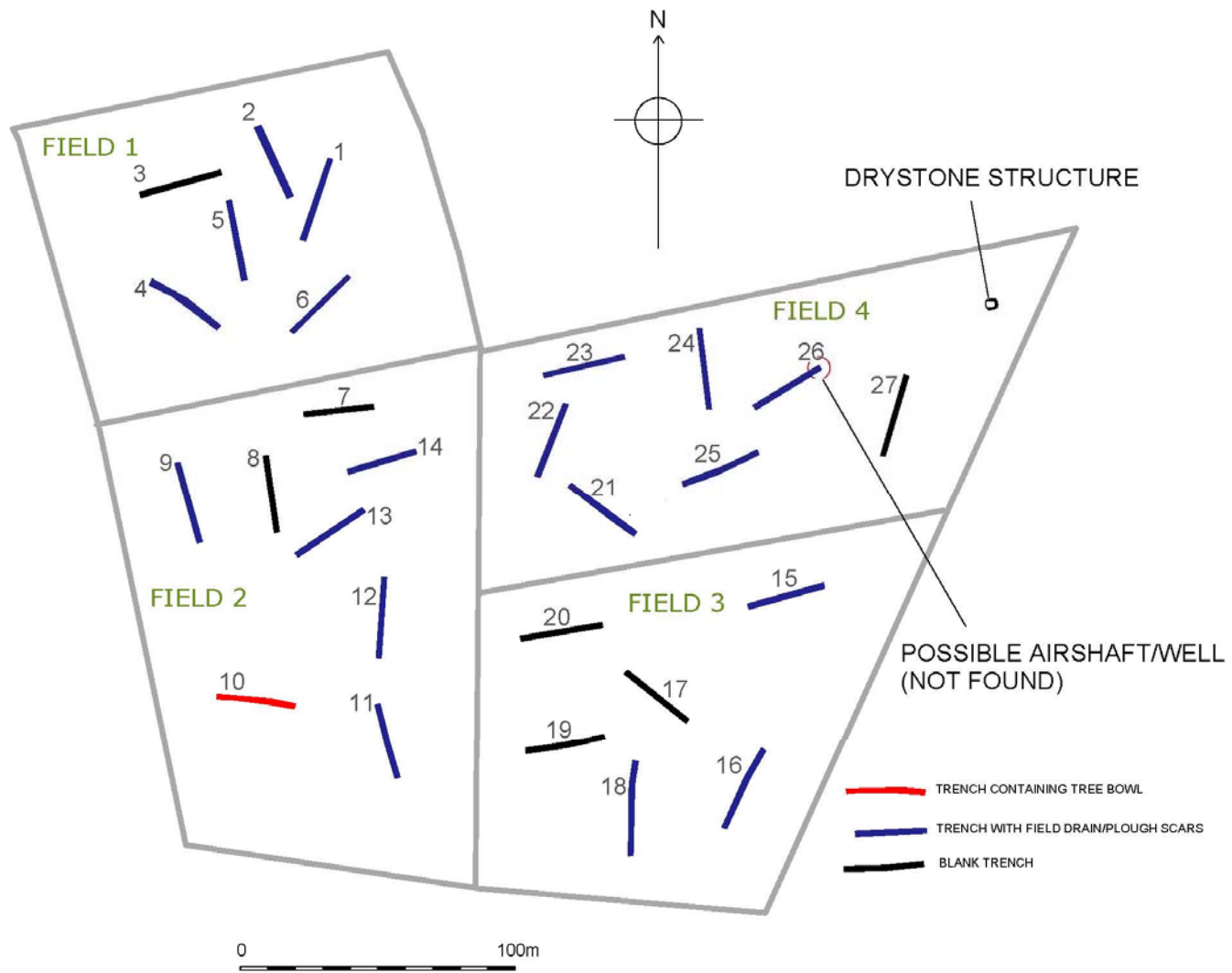


Figure 10: Site Plan

Conclusion

A total of 27 trenches were excavated across four separate fields. Despite the potential for undisturbed archaeology no archaeological deposits or finds were recorded during the investigation. Evidence of post medieval - modern land management was observed in the form of field drains, confirming linear features seen on the geophysical survey and a single tree bowl was also recorded in the south-west corner of field 2. A drystone structure was observed in the north-east corner of field 4 and could perhaps be the airshaft/well referred to in the desk based assessment.

Archive

The site archive will be held by *Leicestershire Museums Service, under accession no. X.140.2017.*

The site archive consists of:

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

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.

Bibliography

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- Davies, Rebecca 2017 *Greenhill Road, Coalville, Leicestershire: Geophysical Survey Report.* SUMO Survey Report No. 11527

Hunt, L, 2017, *Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Evaluation Land off Greenhill Road, Coalville, Leicestershire* ULAS WSI ref. **17-257**

Thornton A 2014 *Desk based assessment. Land South of Greenhill Road, Coalville, Leicestershire*. CgMs Report No. PC/AT/15862/01

Acknowledgements

The fieldwork was carried out by Adam Clapton and Lucy Brown of ULAS. Vicki Score managed the project. Sophie Clarke of LCC HNET monitored the work on behalf of the planning authority. We would also like to thank Mark of Planters and ecologists of FPCR Environment and Design Limited for their advice and assistance on this project.

Oasis Data

PROJECT DETAILS	Oasis No	universi1-302345
	Project Name	Land off Greenhill Road, Coalville
	Start/end dates of field work	20-11-17 – 24-11-17
	Previous/Future Work	None
	Project Type	Evaluation
	Site Status	None
	Current Land Use	Pasture
	Monument Type/Period	None
	Significant Finds/Period	None
	Development Type	Residential
	Reason for Investigation	NPPF
	Position in the Planning Process	Planning condition
	Planning Ref.	14/00614/OUTM
PROJECT LOCATION	Site Address/Postcode	Greenhill Road, Coalville, Leicestershire
	Study Area	7.2 hectares
	Site Coordinates	SK 460 141
	Height OD	195aOD-278aOD
PROJECT CREATORS	Organisation	ULAS
	Project Originator Brief	Local Planning Authority (CCC)
	Project Originator Design	ULAS
	Project Manager	Vicki Score

	Project Director/Supervisor	Adam Clapton		
	Sponsor/Funding Body	Developer – Avant Homes		
PROJECT ARCHIVE		Physical	Digital	Paper
	Recipient	Leics MusService	Leics MusService	Leics MusService
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	Contents	None	Photos	Trench sheets, photo records
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