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**Archaeological Services**

**An Archaeological Evaluation at  
Hallfield Farm, Hall Gate,  
Diseworth, Leicestershire  
(NGR SK 45499 24499)**



Richard Huxley

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Archaeological Evaluation at  
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Diseworth, Leicestershire  
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**Richard Huxley**

**For: John Sutton Developments  
Planning Ref: 15/00949/FUL**

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## **An Archaeological Evaluation at Hallfield Farm, Hall Gate, Diseworth, Leicestershire**

**NGR SK 45499 24499**

**Richard Huxley**

### **Summary**

*This document provides the results of an evaluation undertaken at Hallfield Farm. In accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Section 12 Enhancing and Conserving the Historic Environment) a programme of archaeological work was undertaken to provide preliminary indications of the character and extent of any heritage assets in order that the potential impact of a development on such remains may be assessed by the Planning Authority and the need for any further archaeological work considered. The results of the evaluation show archaeological remains in 2 out of 4 trenches excavated within the proposed development area, comprising the remains of medieval earthworks consisting of an embanked ditch and fish pond. The archaeology survived to a greater degree in the southern trenches. The northern trenches closest to the earthworks were found to contain the least amount of archaeology due to horizontal truncation.*

### **Introduction**

This report presents the results of an archaeological evaluation undertaken by ULAS in March 2018 at Hallfield Farm, Diseworth, Leicestershire (NGR: SK 45499 24499). The work was commissioned by John Sutton Developments, ahead of the planned housing development.

The site lies within the historic settlement core of the medieval and post-medieval village and its proximity to the manorial earthworks adds significantly to the potential for buried archaeological remains. In view of this, the Senior Planning Archaeologist for Leicestershire County Council (LCC), as archaeological advisor, requested evaluation of the area to determine if there were any archaeological deposits that might be impacted by the proposed scheme, and in particular deposits contemporary with medieval occupation in the area specifically the manorial earthworks to the north and west of the site.

The programme of archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Section 12 Enhancing and Conserving the Historic Environment) and the agreed scheme was set out in a Written Scheme of Investigation (ULAS 2018) agreed beforehand with the Planning Archaeologist. .

### **Site Description, Topography and Geology**

The site lies in north-west Leicestershire in the civil parish of Diseworth and Long Whatton and under the administration of North-west Leicestershire District Council, close to the Derbyshire boarder. The proposed area lies in eastern corner of Diseworth village (Figs 1-2) and is positioned within the medieval historic settlement of Diseworth (MLE5936) and in particular is adjacent to the medieval manorial site of Hall Close (MLE5936).

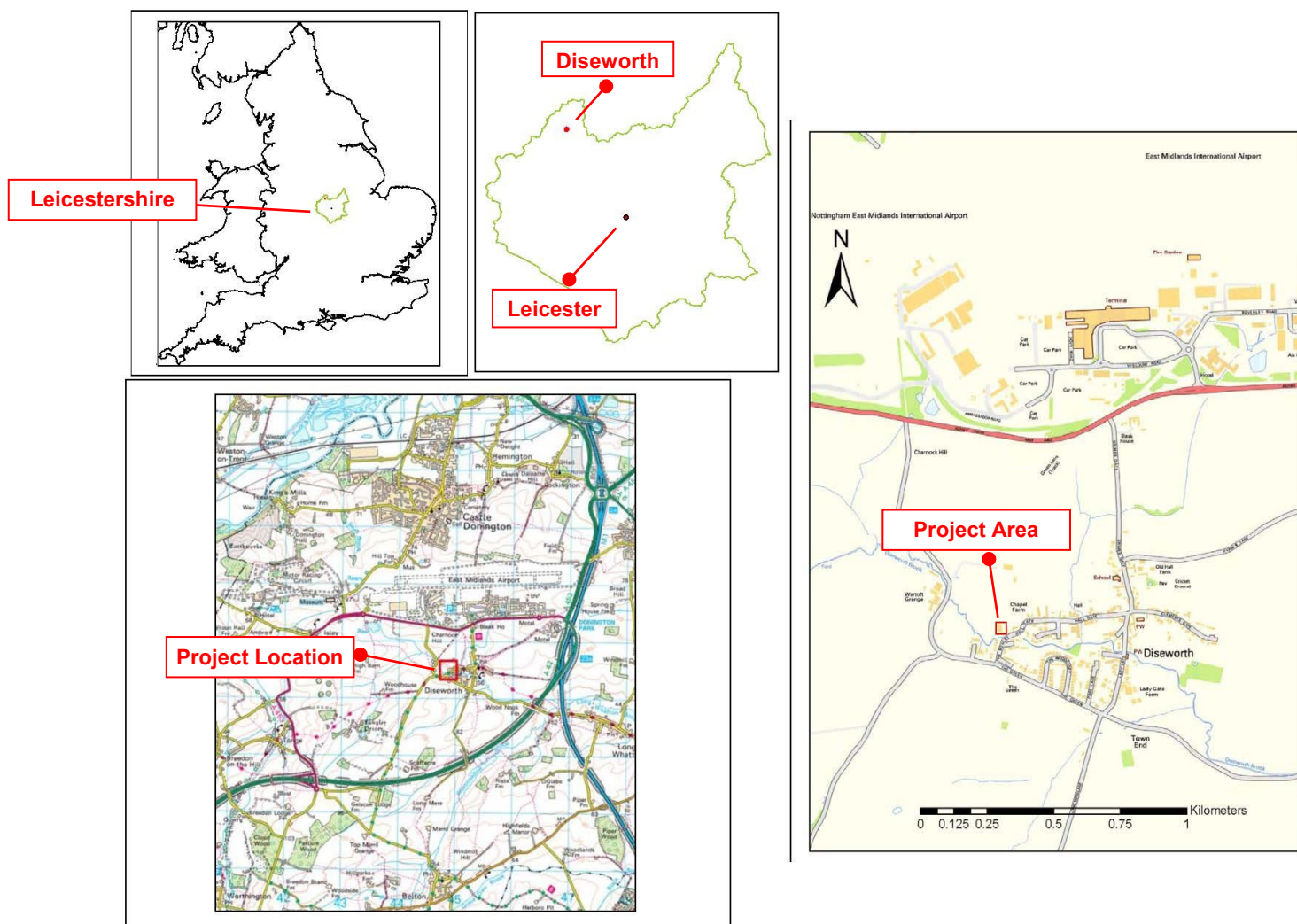


Figure 1: Location of Diseworth and development area reproduced from Landranger® 1:50 000 scale by permission of Ordnance Survey® on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown copyright 2000. All rights reserved. Licence number AL 100029495.

The site consists of a roughly square parcel of land approximately 0.133 hectares situated to the north of Diseworth Brook approximately 59m OD. An agricultural building was previously located on the site, however this had been demolished and the only remaining structure was a small 18<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> century barn on the road frontage which has been recorded and is to be incorporated into the development.

The British Geological Survey of Great Britain indicates that the underlying geology of the area is likely to be bedrock of Gunthorpe Member Mudstone, with north-west to south-east bands of Gunthorpe Member siltstone (McQuarrie 2014).





Figure 2: Location of the development area (provided by client)

## Archaeological and Historical Background

The name Diseworth is thought to be a corruption of the 6th century Saxon name Digtheswyrthe. During its history the village has also been known as Digopsworp, which may refer to the Saxon word for wall ‘worp’ and is possibly relating to ‘a walled settlement belonging to Digop’ (Diseworth Local History Society, 1979). The ending of the village name with ‘worth’ implies the area was an enclosed settlement and the naming of the principal streets (with the suffix Gate) has a Viking origin (<http://www.diseworthcentre.org> accessed 04/04/18). The earliest known reference to Diseworth comes from the Charter of 966, which states “3 cassati at Digeswyrth granted by King Edgar to Bishop Aethelwald and after him to the ecclesia at Breedone in perpetuity”.

The village was owned by William Loveth at the time of the Domesday survey in 1086, although it is believed a second family headed by the self-appointed Benedict de Diseworth ruled the village until 1262 (Nichols, vol III, part 2, 1804) . By the early 12th century the surrounding lands were owned by the Earls of Leicester, Chester and Robert de Ferrers. Disputes over ownership of Diseworth continued into the 15th century when in 1487 it was declared the property of Sir Henry Colet. The manor house known as The Hall (**HER Ref: MLE4759**) is positioned in the north-eastern corner of the village at the junction of Hall Gate and The Bowley. It was believed to have been owned by Margaret Beafort, mother of Henry VII (Clarke. 1999). In 1506 she donated her part of the village to help fund what became known as Christs College Cambridge, who sold the land to the respective tenants in 1920. In

1564 the village is reported as having a population of 33 families, which rose to 124 by 1788 (Nichols, vol III, part 2, 1804).

William Lilly was born in Diseworth in 1602 and became a famous astrologer and occultist in his day. He was once accused of starting The Great Fire of London (1666) since he predicted the event some 14 years earlier, but was found innocent after a trial before Parliament (<http://www.diseworthcentre.org> accessed 04/04/18). He was born in the centre of the village situated at the junction of Lady Gate and Hall Gate. Lilly's cottage (**MLE11270**) still stands at The Cross today. He wrote about Diseworth in his chronicles and recorded the ruins of the manor house (**MLE4759**) "There is one close called Hall Close, wherein the ruins of some ancient buildings appear, and particularly where the dove house stood; and there are also ruins of decayed fish pond and other out-houses" (Nichols, vol III, part 2, 1804).

No documented evidence of what the buildings may have looked like survive, although re-used dressed stone, perhaps taken from Hall Close, which are suggestive of the high status of the original buildings, has been recorded within other buildings around the village. The surviving earthworks have been subject to archaeological survey (Fig. 3; Hartley 1984) which illustrate a large, dry, embanked fishpond to the west of the farm and a number of banks from former enclosures and some building foundations on the south edge of the field. The HER records that many of the deeper hollows were filled in in the 1960s. Several features recorded in the earthwork survey appear to run the site, including substantial south-west to north-east ditches (possibly pond) and the southern return of the square central house platform.

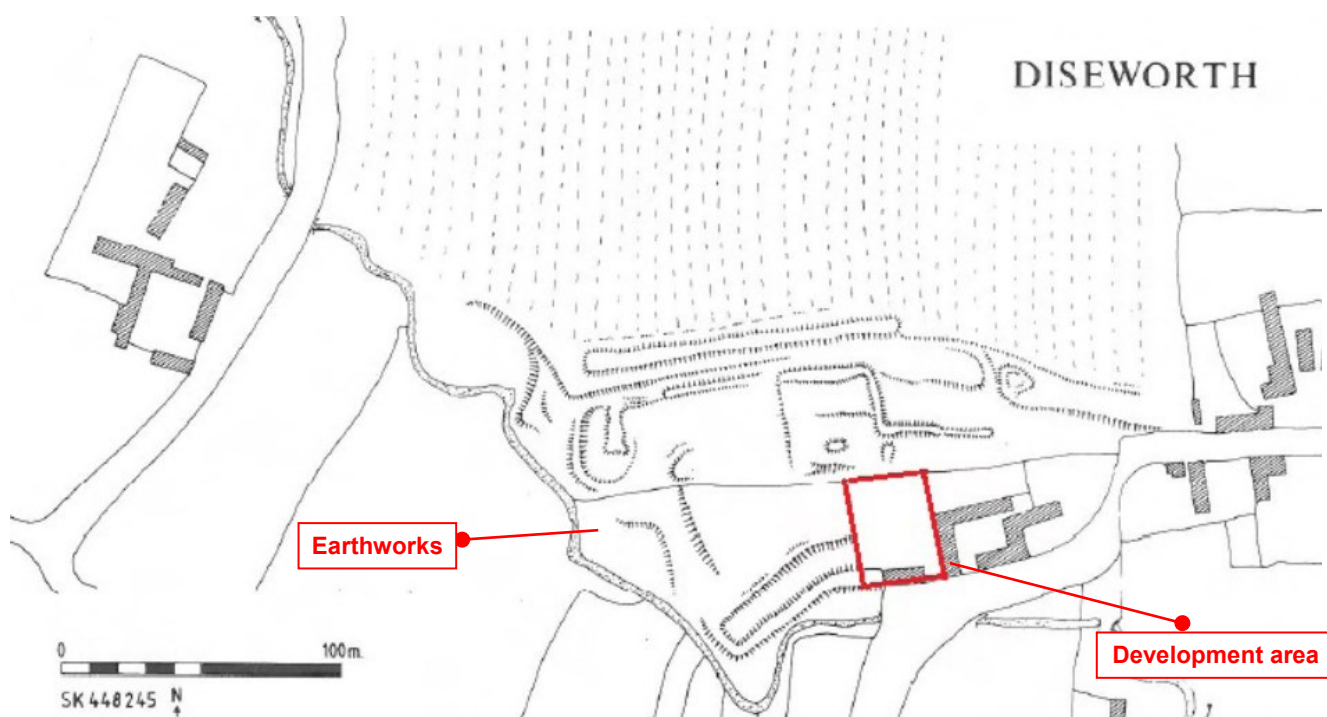


Figure 3: Development area and plan of the earthworks (Hartley. 1984)



The earliest detailed mapping for the development site is the 1884 Ordnance Survey which shows the site is occupied by an east to west orientated farm building within an enclosed agricultural field.

Some evaluation has already been done in the area and this included a single trench (Fig. 4 blue trench) which picked up the very edge of a north to south ditch.

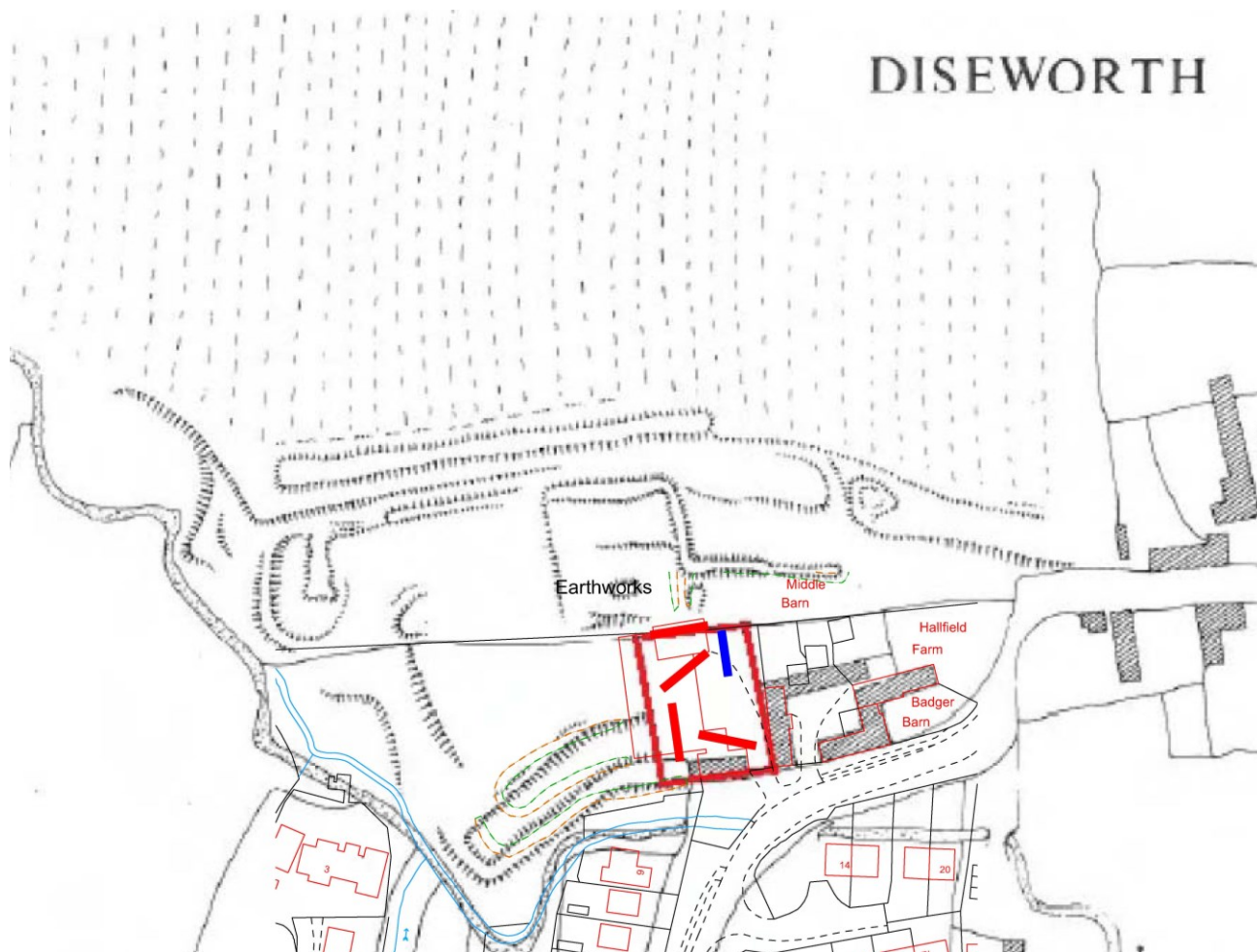


Figure 4: Proposed development (provided by client) and proposed trenches (red) showing the position of the previous trench (blue) and the relation to medieval earthworks (Hartley, 1984).

## Aims and Objectives

The purpose of the archaeological work was:

- 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 recover artefacts and ecofacts to compare with other assemblages and results.
- To advance understanding of the heritage assets.
- To produce an archive and report any results.

Within the stated project aims, the principal objective of the recording was 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. While the nature, extent and quality of archaeological remains within the areas of investigation for the project were unknown until archaeological work was undertaken, some initial objectives were derived from East Midlands Heritage research agenda (Knight et al. 2012) accessible online.

(<http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/researchframeworks/eastmidlands/wiki/MedievalObjectives>)

### *Medieval*

Research Objective 6C - Review the evidence for developing settlement hierarchies;

Research Objective 7E - Investigate the morphology of rural settlements;

Research Objective 7F - Investigate the development, structure and landholdings of manorial estate centres

Research Objective 7I - Investigate the development of the open-field system and medieval woodland management

## Methodology

The work followed the Written Scheme of Investigation (Score, 2018) and the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) Code of Conduct (2014a) and adhered to their Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Excavations (2014b). An accession number/site code was obtained prior to commencement of the project and used to identify all records and artefacts.

Prior to any machining general photographs of the site areas were taken (Fig. 5). The programme of work consisted of the excavation of 4 trenches measuring approximately 15m x1.53m and targeted at possible archaeological deposits indicated by the earthwork plan (Hartley, 1984) and previous trench (Cooke, 2015).

Excavation was carried out with a machine fitted with a flat-bladed bucket to expose the underlying strata. Topsoil and overburden were removed carefully in level spits, under continuous archaeological supervision. The trenches were excavated down to the top of archaeological deposits or natural undisturbed ground.

The ULAS recording manual was used as a guide for all recording. Individual descriptions of all archaeological strata and features excavated or exposed were entered onto pro-forma recording sheets.

A total of four trenches were excavated using a machine with a flat-bladed bucket. The 3 trenches positioned to the west and north of the development were positioned according to the WSI (Score, 2018). The position of the south-eastern trench had to be adjusted from a north-west to south-east alignment due to the storage of building materials in front of the agricultural barn (see Fig. 6) and to allow access into the site.



Figure 5: Photograph of the site (looking north-west) prior to trenching.





Figure 6: Photograph of the site (looking west) with the barn and building materials in the foreground.

## Results

The topsoil was only present in the far north-western corner of the site and was composed of a dark brownish grey coloured friable loamy silty clay that contained small rounded pebbles and grit. No subsoil was visible beneath the topsoil. The majority of the site was excavated through a thick mid brownish-red sludge that was composed of redeposited natural clay with building rubble directly above the natural substratum. This material had accumulated across the development area due to the demolition of the previous buildings and poor weather conditions.

All of the trenches were excavated to the top of the natural substratum or the top of the archaeological horizon depending on whichever was encountered first. The natural substratum was a mid brownish-red silty clay with blueish-grey mottles, occasional lenses of brownish-red sand and inclusions of small pebbles with angular stones <0.3m in size.

The site appeared to have been terraced and levelled during its previous use and the earthworks to the north were considerably higher than the development area (see Fig. 5). This has probably resulted in truncation of the shallower features relating to the earthworks in this area.

The two southern trenches contained archaeological features relating to medieval activity. An unstratified prehistoric flint was also recovered from the development area.

Table 1: Trench descriptions

Trench Number	Ground Height (OD)	Topsoil depth (m)	Modern		Base of Trench (m)	Natural Substratum	Archaeology
			disturbance depth (m)	Top of Natural (m)			
1	58.74	None	0.59-0.82	Not visible	0.59-0.82	Mid brownish red silty clay with blueish grey veins, occasional pebbles and angular stones <0.3m	Large feature occupying the entire trench
2	59.44	None	0.08-0.82	0.18->0.92	0.18->0.92	Mid brownish red silty clay with blueish grey veins, occasional pebbles and angular stones <0.3m	None
3	59.83	0.12	0.22-0.28	0.12-0.28	0.22-0.38	Mid brownish red silty clay with blueish grey veins, occasional pebbles and angular stones <0.3m	None
4	59	None	0.15-0.47	0.15-0.47	0.15-0.47	Mid brownish red silty clay with blueish grey veins, occasional pebbles and angular stones <0.3m	North to south ditch in east of the trench and 2 modern animal burials to the west

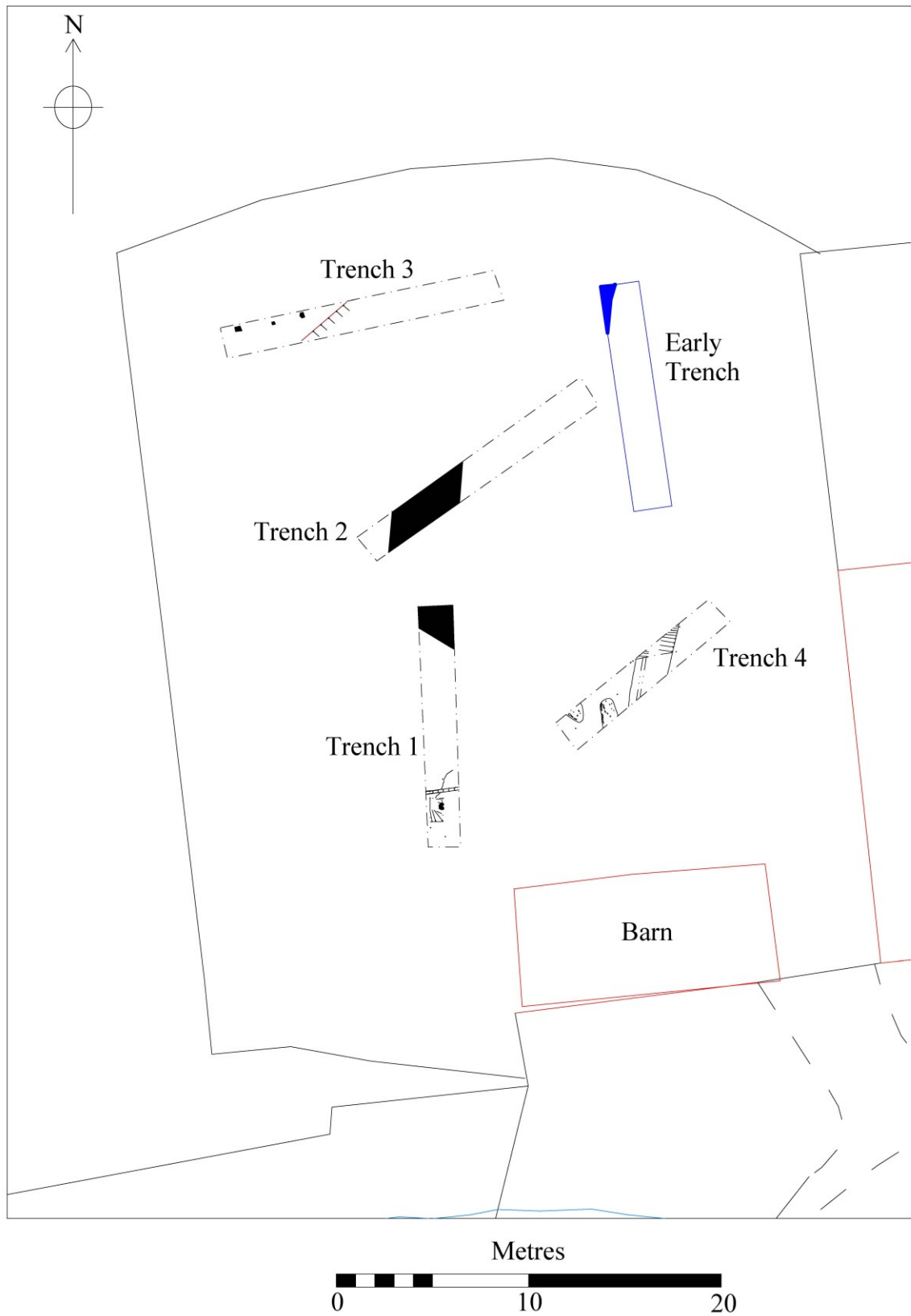


Figure 7: Plan of the excavated trenches with the previous trench highlighted in blue.



### Trench 1

Trench 1 was located in the south-eastern corner of the site and positioned along a north to south orientation (Fig. 7). The trench measured 13m long, had a depth ranging from 0.59-0.82m and was found to contain modern building rubble directly above the archaeological horizon. A large feature was found to occupy the entirety of the trench except the northernmost end where a deep modern truncation was found (Figs 8 -10).

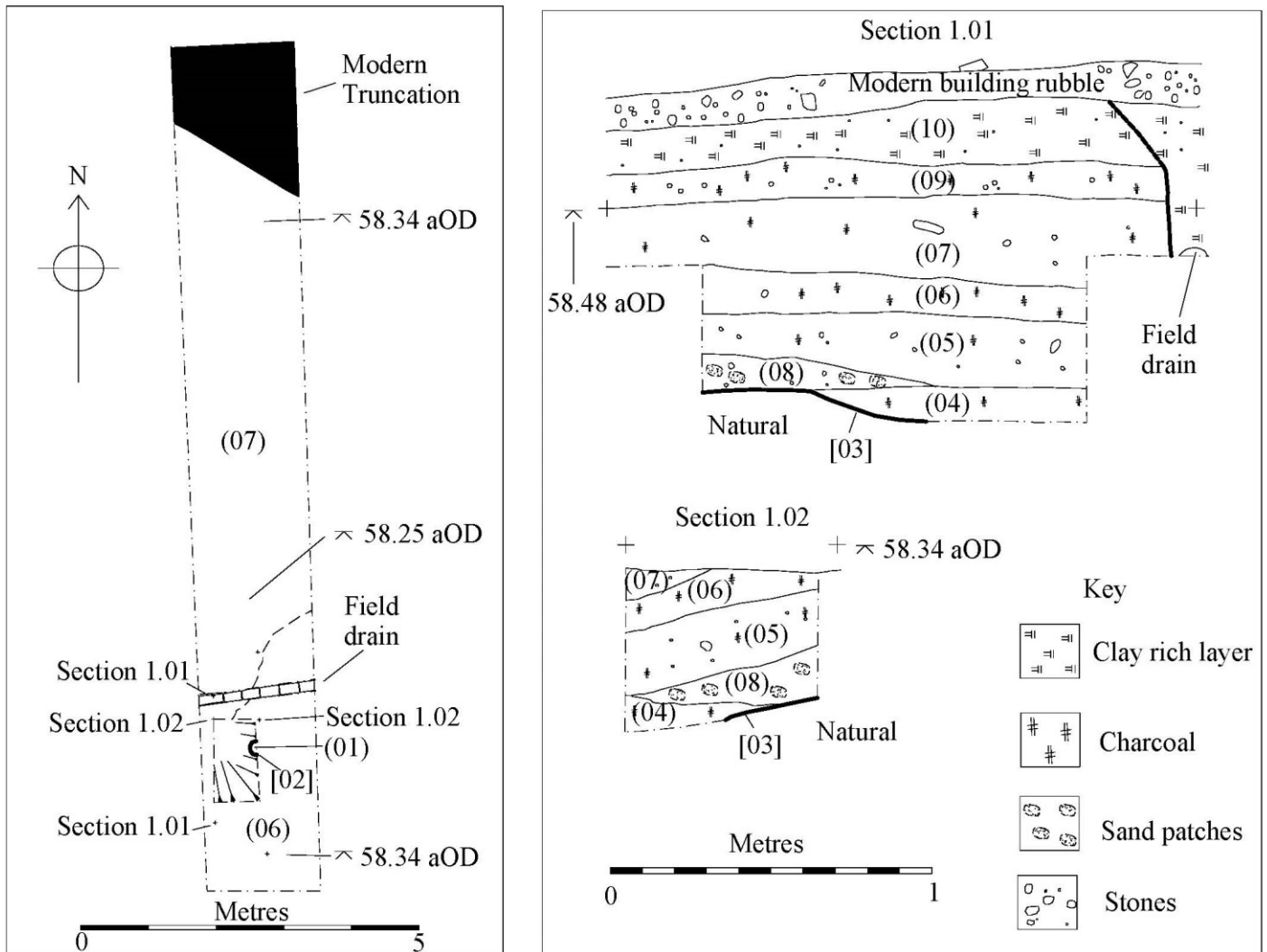


Figure 8: Trench 1 plan and sections.

Feature [03] (07) measured >11.25m long, by >1.53m wide and >1.08m deep and a sondage was dug at the southern end to investigate it. Excavation of the feature was challenging due to the level of the water table which resulted in the lower part of the slot becoming submerged (see Fig. 9). The sides of the feature were not found but the base was found to deepen to the north and west which implies the excavated slot was close to the edge of the feature. The feature was filled with several layers which were also sloping to the north and west.



Figure 9: Sondage through the large feature in Trench 1.



Figure 10: Northern end of trench 1 showing the truncation from modern building rubble.



The earliest fill (04) was >0.1m thick and light bluey-green with a hint of grey. It was composed of firm sandy-silt with inclusions of small stones and occasional charcoal flecks. This deposit was only found in the deepest part of the sondage and was below the level of the water table. Above the primary fill was a mid-yellowish brown silty-sand (08) which was not present in the north-western corner of the slot and appeared to be getting thicker to the south and east where it measured 0.23m deep. This deposit was sealed by (05) which was a soft mid greyish-brown sandy-silt that measured 0.23m thick and contained a few flecks of charcoal and small stones. Above (05) was a 0.16m dark brownish-clay silt that contained a small amount of sand (06). This layer contained regular flecks of charcoal with few small stones and pottery dating from 850/900 to 1100. An environmental sample produced grains of free threshing wheat and barley. Deposit (06) was covered by a mid orangey-brown silty clay (07) that measured 0.27m thick. It contained inclusions of small pebbles and ironstone fragments, with a larger >0.2m fragment of angular ironstone. An unusual sherd of pottery was found within this layer that is potentially a medieval continental import.

Two modern layers were found identified above (07): the first was a firm dark greyish brown silty clay (09) that contained small stones <0.08m in size and regular flecks of charcoal. This layer measured >1.53m long by >5m wide and 0.13m deep. Overlaying (09) was a mid brownish red silty clay (10) that contained grit, small fragments of stone and occasional flecks of charcoal. This layer measured >1.53m long by >5m wide and 0.2m deep. It was mostly composed of redeposited natural clay and was truncated by a modern field drain. Overlaying this layer was modern building rubble consisting of stones, bricks and modern concrete which became deeper to the north.

A post hole was found in the base of the sondage. Post hole [02] measured approximately 0.2m long by 0.15m wide and could not be excavated due to the amount of water within the slot. It was filled with a firm dark brownish-grey silty clay (01) that contained small angular stones.

## ***Trench 2***

Trench 2 was located to the north of Trench 1 and was orientated along a north-west to south-east alignment. This trench measured 14.5m long and had a depth ranging from 0.18-0.92m. Similarly to Trench 1 there was no topsoil or subsoil present. The trench was excavated through a layer of friable mid brownish red silty clay that contained bricks, <0.3m sized stones and modern concrete. In the north-eastern end of the trench this layer measured 0.18m thick and was found to directly overlay the natural substratum.

A deep modern truncation was found in the south-western end which measured 5.70m wide and was machine excavated to a depth of 0.92m. The feature was orientated north to south and was filled with modern building rubble consisting of stones, bricks and modern concrete. No other features were present within the trench (Figs 11-12).



Figure 11: Modern truncation in trench 2.

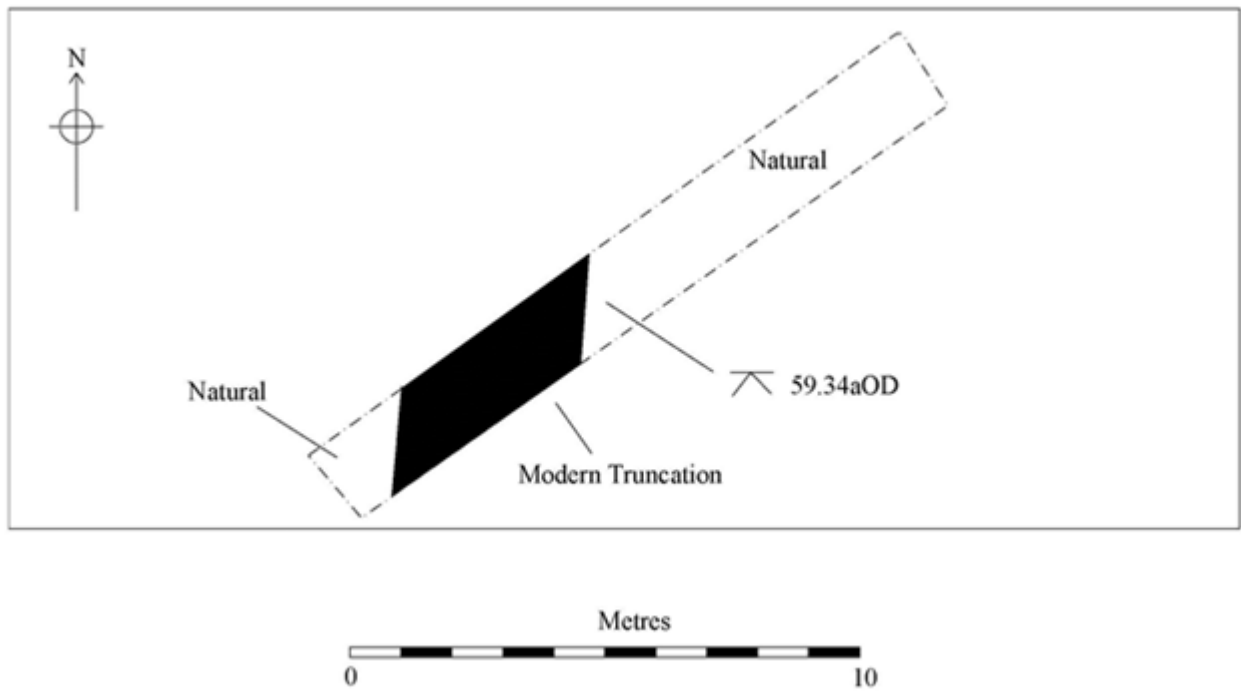


Figure 12: Plan of Trench 2.

### ***Trench 3***

Trench 3 was positioned north of Trench 2 and was orientated on an east north-east to west south-west alignment. The trench measured 14.6m long and had a depth ranging from 0.22-0.38m becoming deeper to the east. No subsoil was found but topsoil was present in the western end of the trench and this consisted of friable, loamy silty clay that measured 0.12m thick. The majority of the trench was machined though a modern layer that deepened to the east and was found to overlay the natural substratum. This layer was composed of soft mid brownish red silty clay which contained bricks and stones (Figs 13-14).

Three post holes were found at the western end of the trench which were aligned east to west. The post holes were rectangular in shape measuring 0.15-0.34m wide by 0.16-0.29m long and were found to be filled by topsoil. The post holes appeared modern and were positioned where a barn once stood. No further excavation was undertaken and no other features were found in this trench except a modern gravel filled drain orientated north-east to south-west.



Figure 13: Trench 3 with earthworks in the field to the north.



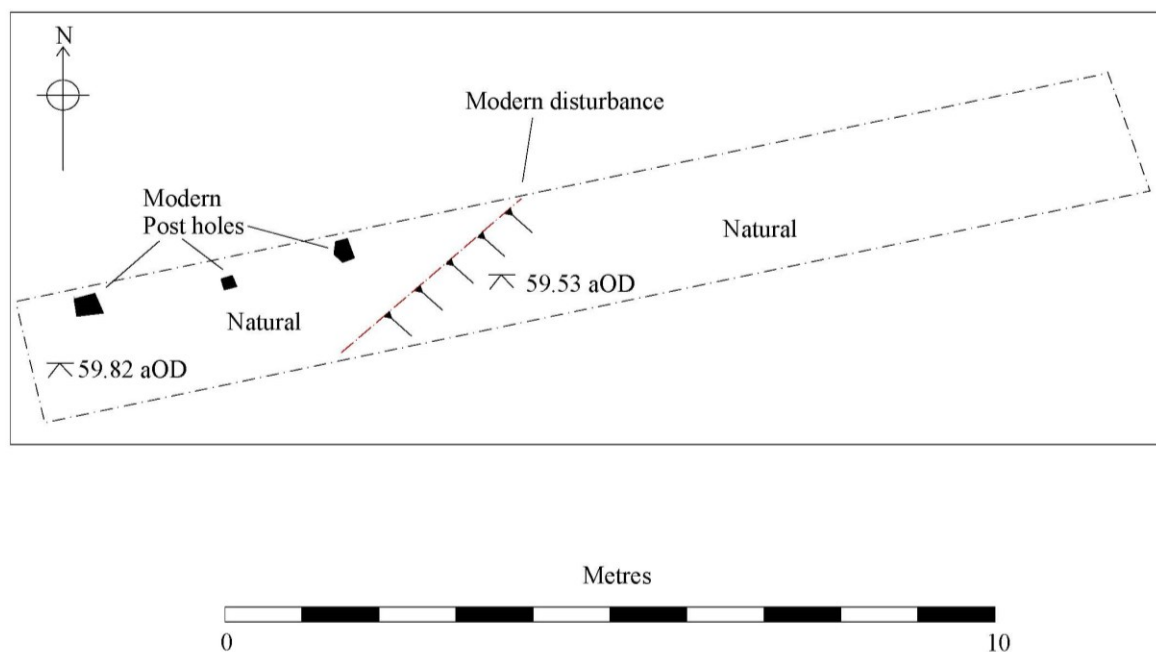


Figure 14: Plan of Trench 3.

#### ***Trench 4***

Trench 4 was located to the east of Trench 1 and was orientated along a north-east to south-west alignment. The trench measured 10.5m long, had a depth ranging from 0.15-0.47m deep and was found to contain modern building rubble directly above the archaeological horizon. The south-western end of the trench was the deepest and deliberately machined in this way to check for continuation of the redeposited natural clay layer (10) found in Trench 1. The trench was found to contain a ditch to the north-east with two animal burials to the south-west.

Ditch [11] measured >2.4m long by 2m wide by 0.73m deep and was orientated north to south. The sides were concave, ranged from moderately to steeply sloping and the base was flat. The primary fill was a firm mid greyish brown silty clay (14) that measured 0.14m thick. It contained regular stones <0.3m in size, patches of redeposited natural clay and pottery dating from 850/900-1200+. Overlaying the primary fill was a soft mid brownish grey clay silt (15) that measured 0.28m thick and contained regular flecks of charcoal, small stones and a fragment of iron smelting residue. Above this deposit was a hard mid brownish red silty clay (16) that was rich in redeposited natural clay and contained regular stones <0.1m in size. This layer was only found along the western side of the ditch and became thicker towards the edge of the cut.



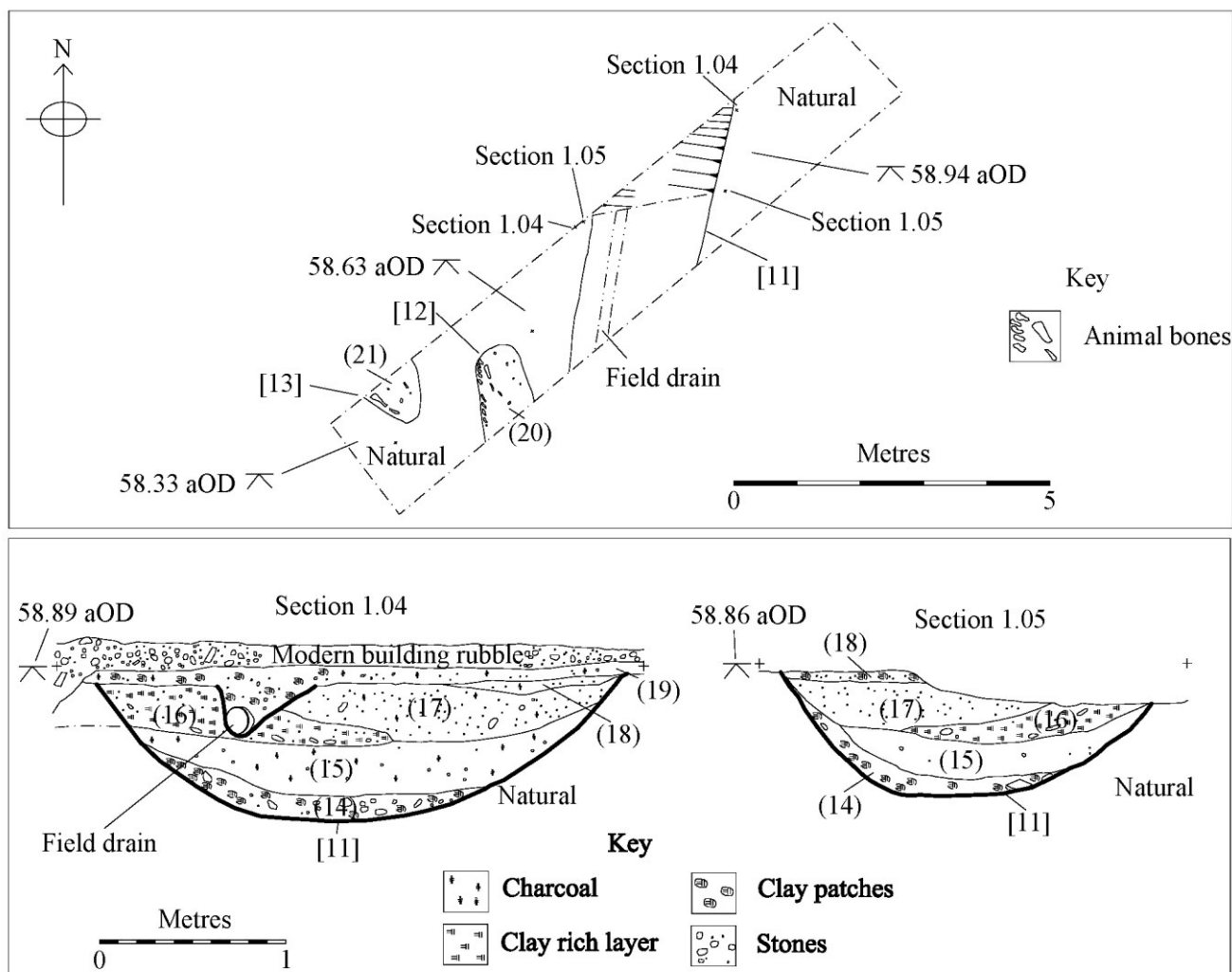


Figure 15: Plan and sections of Trench 4.

Overlying deposit (16) was a hard silty clay deposit that contained a small amount of sand (17). This was coloured mid greyish brown with red and yellow patches and contained inclusions of grit, stones <0.2m in size and regular flecks of charcoal. Pottery dating from 850/900-1100+ and a fragment of iron smelting residue was also found from this deposit. The upper fill of the ditch (18) measured 0.06m thick and was coloured dark greyish brown with red patches. It was composed of hard silty clay with inclusions of grit, small stones and regular charcoal flecks. Within this deposit a fragment of animal tooth and pottery dating from 850/900-1100+ was found. Overlying the ditch was a dark greyish brown hard silty clay layer (19) that contained flecks of charcoal, cobbles and a small amount of building rubble. A field drain truncating the ditch appeared to be cut from this layer. Above (19) was a layer of modern building rubble that was primarily formed of cobbles and bricks (Fig. 16).

The south-western end of the trench was found to contain two animal burials: the eastern cut [12] measured >1.1m long by 0.8m wide and >0.3m deep. It was a sub-oval shape with straight, steep sides and was orientated north to south. It was filled by a dark brownish grey silty clay (20) that contained small stones and articulated animal bones. To the north-west of [12] a second animal burial [13] was found which measured >0.7m long by 0.9m wide and >0.3m deep. This feature was a sub-oval shape, orientated north-west to south-east and also had straight steep sides. It was filled by a dark blackish grey silty clay (21) that contained

small stones and articulated animal bones. Both of these features were cut from directly beneath the modern rubble and were interpreted as modern animal burials. They were not excavated any further.



Figure 16: Ditch [11] in the eastern end of trench 4.



Figure 17: Animal burials in the western end of trench 4.

## The Post-Roman Finds - *Deborah Sawday*

### *The Ceramic Finds*

The pottery assemblage was made up of ten sherds, weighing <44grams, representing ten vessels

### **Condition**

The condition of the pottery was good with relatively little abrasion. However the average sherd weight was relatively low at only <4.4 grams.

### **Methodology**

The material was examined under an x20 binocular microscope and catalogued with reference to current guidelines (MPRG 1998, MPRG 2016) and the ULAS fabric series (Davies and Sawday 1999, Sawday 2009). The results are shown below.

### **The Ceramic Record**

The fabric codes and sources – where known – are shown in the fabric list, table 1 and the medieval pottery totals by fabric, number, weight (grams), and average sherd weight (ASW) in table 2. Table 3 catalogues the pottery and miscellaneous finds by context, fabric/material, number, weight (grams and for the pottery, vessel count. Co-joining sherds are noted, whilst single sherds are generally counted as one vessel

Table 2: The pottery fabrics.

<b>Fabric</b>	<b>Common Name/Kiln &amp; Fabric Equivalent where known</b>	<b>General Approx. Date Range</b>
TH	Thetford type ware (1)	c.850/900-1200
TO	Torksey ware/type (2)	c.850/900-c.1200
RS	Reduced Sandy wares-? Local (3)	c.850/900-c.1100+
MS	Medieval Sandy ware –coarse quartz tempered fabrics - ? Nottingham, Burley Hill/Duffield, Derbyshire (4)	Early/mid 13th C.- c.1400
?XY	?Continental import – ?Northern France White ware (5)	?c.13 <sup>th</sup> - c.15 <sup>th</sup> C.
(1) Rogerson & Dallas,		(3) Davies & Sawday 199, Nailor & Young 2001
(2) Barley 1964, 1981		(4) Coppack 1980
(5) Hurst, Neal, & Van Beuningen, 1986		

### **Discussion**

The pottery was recovered from the backfill of the fish pond [3], contexts (6) and (7), and the backfill of the ditch [11], contexts (14), (17) and (18), in trenches 1 and 4. Both features produced late Saxon/early medieval pottery and single sherds in what is thought to be a continental import, possibly a northern French white ware dating from the 13th to the 15th centuries in context (7), and a Medieval Sandy ware sherd dating the 13th century in [11] (14).

Table 3: The medieval pottery site totals by fabric, sherd number, weight (grams), minimum vessel count and average sherd weight (ASW).

Fabric	No.	Gr	Vessel	ASW
Late Saxon/Earlier Medieval				
TH	1	7	1	
TO	1	3	1	
RS	6	<27	6	
Sub Total	8	<37	8	<4.5
Medieval				
MS	1	3	1	
?XY	1	4	1	
Sub Total	2	7	2	3.5
Site Totals	10	<44	10	<4.4

### Conclusion

The small size of the assemblage and the low average sherd weight and the lack of co-joining sherds indicates that the material had been subject to many episodes of deposition and re-deposition prior to its final disposal in the backfill of the two major features revealed during the evaluation.

The range of fabrics appears typical of the locality, close to the Leicestershire border with Derbyshire. The only exception being the possible continental import which suggests the presence of a building of some status in the vicinity, perhaps the medieval manorial site of Hall Close which lay nearby.

### Miscellaneous

Two fragments of what is thought to be iron smelting residue (H. Addison pers.com.) were recovered from the backfill of the ditch, contexts (15) and (17). Also present on the site was a later pre-historic flint mini core (L. Cooper, pers. com).

Table 4: The pottery by context, fabric/ware, sherd number, weight (grams), and vessel number, and the miscellaneous finds by context.

Context	Fabric/ware	No	Gr	V No	Comments
6 [3] T1 fish pond	RS – Reduced Sandy	2	10	2	Hand-made – buff surfaces, grey core, white quartz, mica, iron and rock inclusions. Possibly a Nottingham product, sooted externally, c.850/900-c.1100+
7 [3] T1	?XY – Northern France white ware.	1	4	1	Fine white wheel thrown body, traces of glaze on exterior surface, c.13 <sup>th</sup> -15 <sup>th</sup> C?
14 [11] T1 Primary fill ditch	TO – Torksey type	1	3	1	Everted, externally thickened wheel thrown jar rim fragment, diameter, EVEs not measurable. 850/900-1200
14	MS - Medieval Sandy ware	1	3	1	Wheel thrown body, sooted externally, ?Derbyshire Pink Sandy ware, c.1200+
17 [11] T4 Mixed fill	RS – Reduced Sandy	2	6	2	Hand-made, sooted externally, similar to the above. c.850/900-1100+
17	TH – Thetford type	1	7	1	Sooted externally, c.850/900-1100
18 [11] T4 Disturbed	RS – Reduced Sandy	1	<1	1	Sooted ext. c.850/900-1100+

upper fill ?= 17					
U/S	RS – Reduced Sandy	1	10	1	Body inscribed wavy line decoration- c.850/900-1100+ -
MISC.	Material	No.	Gr.		Comments
18 [11] T4	Bone	1			Animal bone
15 [11] T4 secondary fill of ditch	Industrial residue	1	12		?iron smelting residue (Heidi Addison pers.com.)
17 [11]	Industrial residue	1	32		?iron smelting residue
U/S	Flint	1			Mini core, later pre-historic (L. Cooper, pers. com.)

## The Environmental Remains - *Adam Santer*

### Introduction

During an archaeological evaluation at Hallfield Farm a bulk soil sample was taken and processed for the analysis of ancient plant remains. The sample was taken from a medieval fish pond. The analysis of the plant remains recovered from the sample is presented here, together with a discussion of what this can potentially tell us about past diet, crop husbandry strategies and environment at the site.

### Methodology

The sample consisted of a dark orange/brown sandy clay and was processed in a York tank using a 0.5mm mesh with flotation into a 0.3mm sieve. The flotation fraction (flot) was sorted for plant remains and other artefacts under an x10-40 stereo microscope. The residue (coarse fraction) was also sorted for finds.

Plant remains were identified by comparison to modern reference material available at ULAS and their names follow Stace (1991). The plant remains were quantified as follows: each whole grain or those representing over 60% of the specimen was counted as one and all seed fragments were counted as one.

### Results

The sample contained a total of 47 charred plant remains at a density of 2.35 items per litre. The preservation of the remains was poor. This hindered to the identification of species. In addition to an abundance of modern rootlets, modern weed seeds and insect remains were found; an indication of modern disturbance to the context. The sample also contained some small charcoal fragments over 2mm (and therefore potentially suitable for carbon 14 analysis), five fragments of medium to large mammal bones and two small fragments of pottery.

Table 5: The charred plant remains found in sample 1.

<b>Sample</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Context</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Cut</b>	<b>3</b>
Charcoal (fragments)	41
Bone (fragments)	5
Pottery (sherds)	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>Sample volume (L)</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>% Analysed</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Items per litre</b>	<b>2.4</b>



Table 6: The charred plant remains found in sample 1.

<b>Sample</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Context</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Cut</b>	<b>3</b>
Charcoal (fragments)	41
Bone (fragments)	5
Pottery (sherds)	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>Sample volume (L)</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>% Analysed</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Items per litre</b>	<b>2.4</b>

### Discussion

Free threshing wheat (*Triticum* sp.) was the predominant identifiable plant remain found amongst the sample. The grains could be the result of an accumulation of food spillage rather than grain processing. This is supported by the presence of barley (*Hordeum vulgare* L.) and a pea (*Pisum sativum* L.). In addition to this no chaff was found which would be indicative of grain processing stages. However, the poorly preserved nature of the majority of the grains indicates that chaff would not have survived even if it had been present. The environmental assemblage at this location is comparable to the evaluation sample from other medieval settlements in the East Midlands such as Grange Farm, Hose (see Santer and Small 2018).

### Conclusion

No further work is needed on the assemblage considered in this report. However, if further excavation is undertaken at the site it is highly recommended that more sampling is undertaken for charred plant remains, following a suitable strategy. In this report, it has been possible to reveal information on diet and crop husbandry; further material would allow for statistical analysis (especially regarding weed ecology) and consideration of spatial distribution which would allow for better insight into these matters. This would help to further understand the site as a whole and help to answer regional research aims such as understanding the introduction and spread of rivet wheat and crop rotation systems.

## Discussion and Conclusions

The results of the evaluation show that archaeologically significant remains were present on the site, with late Saxon/early medieval activity being found in the southern trenches. Trench 1 was found to contain a large feature and Trench 4 had a north to south orientated ditch. The northern trenches were found to contain modern post holes and modern disturbance from previous buildings. The earthworks to the north of the development area are 1.71m higher and it appears the site has been truncated (see Fig. 13). The area has probably been levelled prior to the construction of the post medieval buildings and this activity has resulted in horizontal truncation, with the northern area being the most disturbed.

The ditch in Trench 4 was found to be filled with several deposits which were formed through different processes. The lower fill (14) is consistent with an initial phase of silting in addition with excavated material sliding back into the feature. Pottery recovered from this deposit dates between 850/900-1200+. The secondary fill (15) is possibly consistent with the ditch remaining open for a period. A fragment of iron smelting residue was found within this deposit which might indicated industrial activity in the vicinity.

The upper fill of the ditch (16) was only found in the western half of the feature and was rich in redeposited natural clay. This deposit appears to represent a tip line formed from the excavated material naturally weathering and slumping into the ditch and could suggest the presence of a bank on the west side. The ditch was orientated north to south and could indicate an embanked ditch extending across the development area. Although not on exactly the same alignment as the edge of the ditch found during previous trenching only a tiny fragment was uncovered and it could be part of the same feature running northwards.

There is a large oblong shaped earthwork to the west of the site and the features in Trench 1 would be positioned in its centre if it continued into the development area. The feature could represent a late Saxon/early medieval fish pond. The composition of the fills varied with the lower deposits (04), (08) and (05) all containing a mixture of sand and silt suggesting water sorting and implies the feature originally contained water and then silted up which would be consistent with a fish pond.

The deposits were sloping to the north and west which suggests the sondage was positioned close to the southern and eastern edges of the feature. Pottery recovered from (06) dates between 850/900-1100+ and environmental analysis found grains of free threshing wheat and barley. The pottery from the overlying deposit (07) dates from 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> century and appears to be a continental import.

Directly below the modern building rubble in trench 1 was a layer which was rich in redeposited natural clay (10). This deposit could represent a modern attempt to consolidate the ground prior to building or the levelling of an older feature such as a bank.

The results of the excavation combined with the plan of the earthworks (Fig. 19) indicates late Saxon/early medieval features were present on the site. Trench 1 shows that a large feature is likely to extend into the development area which potentially represents a fish pond. The feature in Trench 4 potentially represents an embanked ditch running north-south. A relatively small pottery assemblage was recovered during the evaluation mostly local wares with the exception of a sherd of pottery imported from the continent which might suggest a building of some status is in the vicinity of the development area.

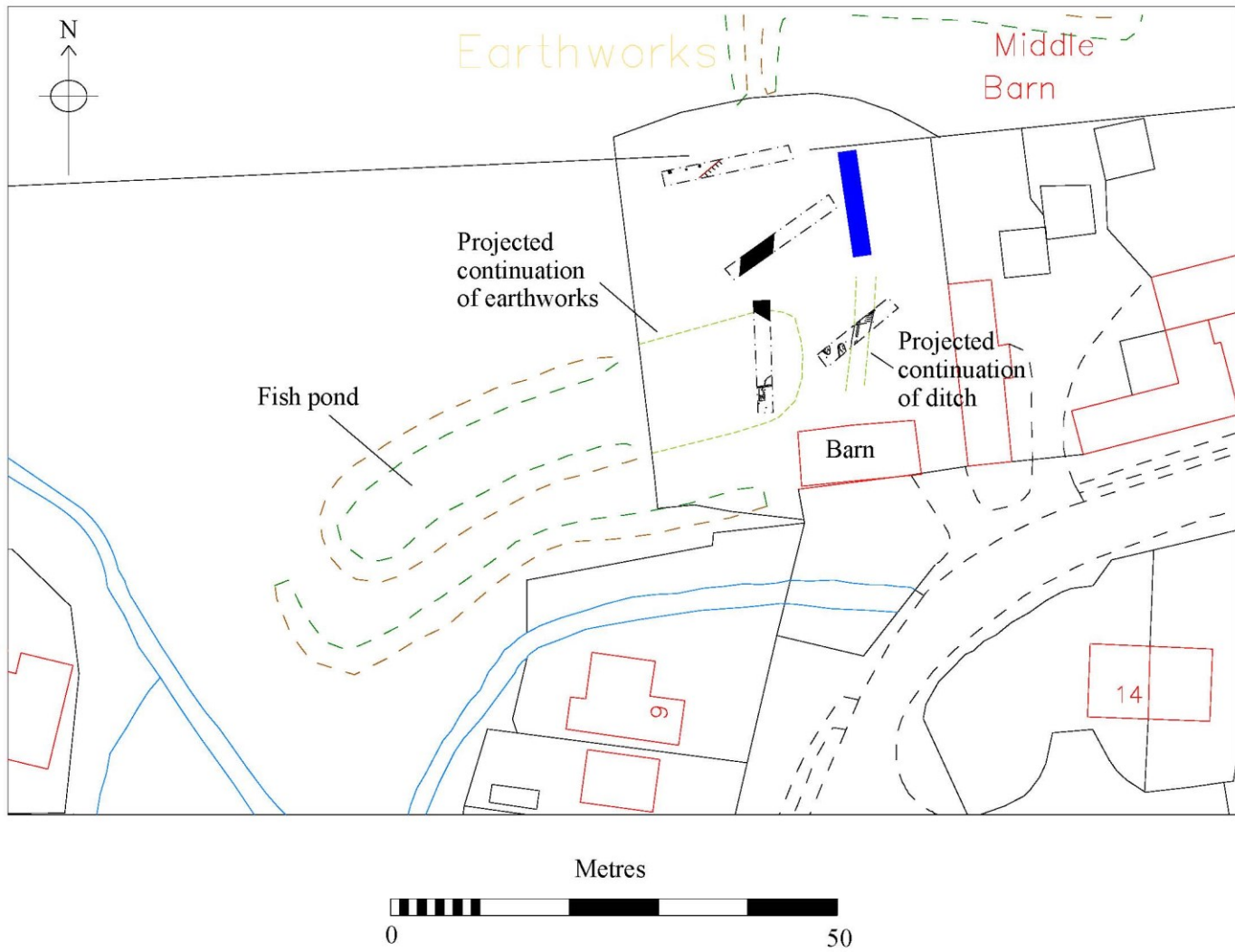


Figure 19: The results of the evaluation with the possible continuation of the earthworks.

## **Archive**

The paper archive consists of:

- 1 x A2 drawing sheets
- 1 x Drawing index
- 1 x Drawing record
- 4 x Evaluation Recording forms
- 1 x Photographic record indices
- 38 digital photographs
- A risk assessment form
- 1 x Sample Register
- 15 x Context recording sheets
- 1 x Context record indices

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Richard Huxley of ULAS undertook the archaeological evaluation on behalf of John Sutton Developments. The project was managed by Vicki Score. The ceramic analysis was carried out by Deborah Sawday, the iron smelting residue analysis was carried out by Heidi Addison and the flint was reported on by Lynden Cooper. The environmental evidence was reported on by Rachel Small and Adam Santer.

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## Oasis Information

Project Name	An Archaeological Evaluation at Hallfield farm, Hall Gate, Diseworth, Leicestershire
Project Type	Evaluation
Project Manager	Vicki Score
Project Supervisor	Richard Huxley
Previous/Future work	Yes
Current Land Use	Vacant Land 1
Development Type	Housing
Reason for Investigation	Planning condition
Position in the Planning Process	Planning condition
Site Co ordinates	SK 45499 24499
Start/end dates of field work	13-03-2018 to 15-03-2018
Archive Recipient	Leicestershire County Council Museums Service
Study Area	0.13 Ha

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