



UNIVERSITY OF
LEICESTER

Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological Evaluation
Keepers Farm, Winchester Road, Blaby,
Leicestershire.**

NGR: SP 5727 9663

By Tim Higgins



ULAS Report No 2018-075


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An Archaeological Evaluation
Keepers Farm, Winchester Road, Blaby,
Leicestershire

NGR: SP 5727 9663

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2018-075 Draft	 John Thomas	24/04/2018
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An Archaeological Evaluation Keepers Farm, Winchester Road, Blaby Leicestershire.

Tim Higgins

Summary

University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) carried out an archaeological evaluation on land at Keepers Farm, Winchester Road, Blaby, Leicestershire, (SP 5727 9663) from the 17 to 18 April 2018. Trenches were excavated to evaluate an area for a proposed construction of 24 new dwellings in a former arable field. None of the trenches contained any archaeological features and apart from field drains and they were generally clean and sterile.

The site archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council under accession number X.A42.2018.

1. Introduction

An archaeological evaluation was carried out on land at Keepers Farm, Winchester Road, Blaby, Leicestershire (SP 5727 9663) by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) to determine the impact of the proposed development on any archaeological deposits.

Outline planning permission has been granted for the construction of 24 dwellings with associated garages, parking and infrastructure served by a new access off Saville Road at Keepers Farm, Winchester Road, Blaby, Leicestershire, subject to planning conditions (17/0302/FUL; Figs 1 and 2). Trial trenching was therefore requested by the planning archaeologist to determine the impact of the proposed scheme on any buried archaeology for residential development.

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 17th and 18th April. It follows a strategy for the work devised by ULAS, which was set out in the Design Specification for archaeological evaluation Keepers Farm, Winchester Road, Blaby, Leicestershire (SP 5727 9663) (ULAS 2018, hereinafter 'Specification'. The trial trenching was undertaken to provide a c. 5% sample of the 0.6ha area.

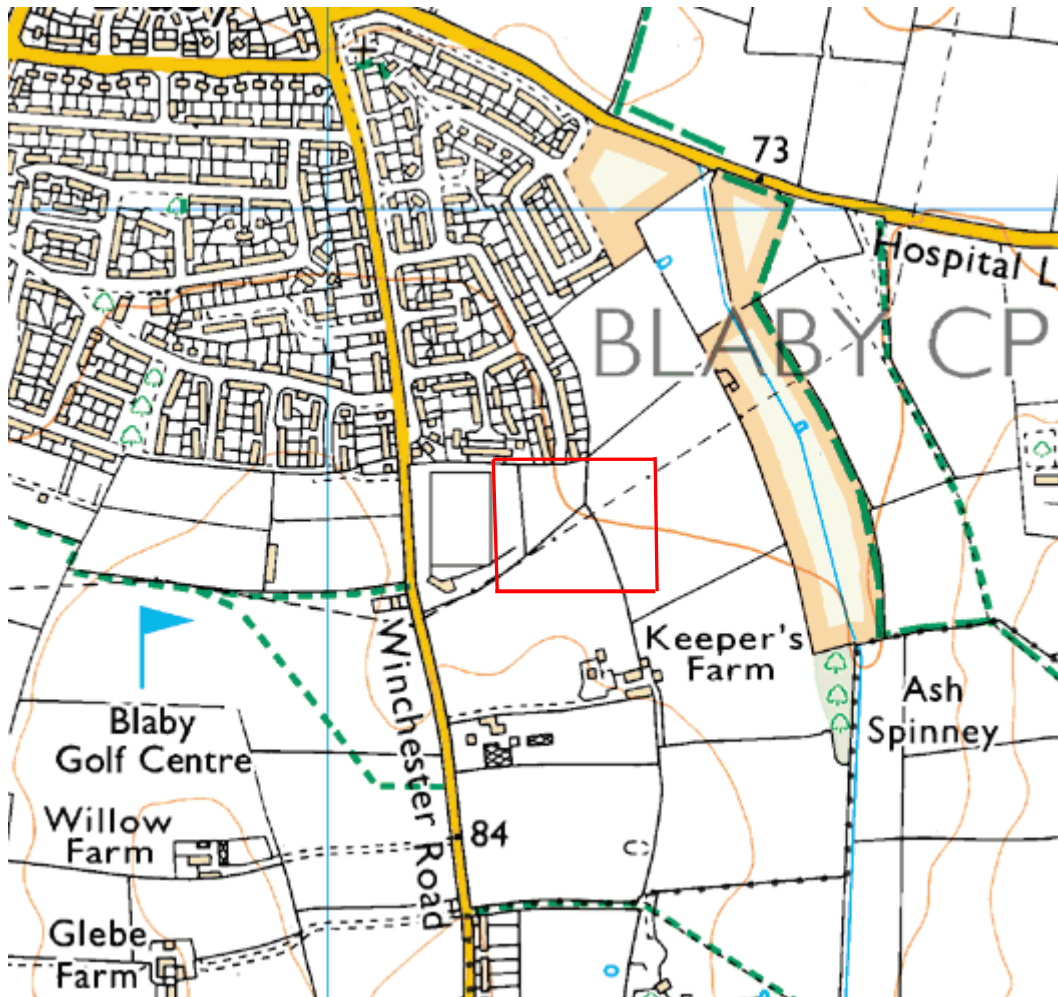


Figure 1: Site location plan within Leicestershire

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Figure 2: Site location plan (provided by client)

2. Site Description, Topography and Geology

The site is located south of the village of Blaby which is approximately 7km to the south-west of Leicester, bounded to the north by the River Sence and the Grand Union Canal, and to the west by the main Lutterworth Road (Fig. 1).

The site consists of an irregular parcel of land area measuring around 0.6ha at a height of around 77m aOD. The site is currently arable farm land joined to the north, and west by housing and to the east and south by more arable farm land (Fig. 2).

The British Geological Survey website indicates that the underlying geology is likely to be Diamicton overlying Mercia Mudstone.

3. Historical and Archaeological Background

A desk-based assessment has been undertaken for the site (Carroll 2017). There are a few known archaeological sites in the vicinity. These include prehistoric cropmarks (**MLE29**) and the discovery of a Bronze Age spear head (**MLE6254**) and palstave (**MLE6255**). The site lies around 700m to the east of the Roman Tripointum road that runs from Leicester south and follows the present line of the Lutterworth Road (**MLE1902**). The site lies approximately 900m to the south of the medieval settlement core of Blaby village (**MLE9336**). The frame of a

medieval purse was found approximately 300m to the north (**MLE6614**), in the garden of number 4, Chester Road and medieval coins have been found approximately 500m to the east of the assessment area (**MLE6615, MLE6616**).

A number of sites dating to the post-medieval period are also located in the vicinity of the assessment area and are listed on the HER including the Post-medieval fishponds and further remains at Blaby Hall (**MLE17, MLE19**) and Blaby Cemetery (**MLE22177**) opened in 1863.

There are a number of Listed Buildings within Blaby to the north and Countesthorpe to the south. The HER identifies some historic buildings including Leysland High School on Winchester Road to the south (**MLE17564**) and the site of Blaby Infectious Diseases Hospital to the east (**MLE16504**).

4. Aims and 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 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.

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.

Prehistoric

Characterise the prehistoric settlement resource and investigate intra-regional variability (4C).
Investigate intra-regional variations in development of fields and linear boundaries (4F)

Romano-British

Investigate landscape context of rural settlements (5H)

Early Medieval – High Medieval

Review the evidence for developing settlement hierarchies (6C)

Investigate the morphology of rural settlements (7E)

Investigate development of the open field system and woodland management (7I)

Post-medieval

Research the development of industry and its impact upon landscape and settlement morphology (8F).

5. Methodology

Archaeological trial trenching, took place between 17th and 19th April 2018. It followed a strategy for the work devised by ULAS, which was set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for archaeological evaluation (ULAS 2018), for an initial phase of trial trenching which was submitted to for approval by the Local Planning Authority.

The work adhered to the Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) *Code of Conduct* (2014) and adhered to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations* (2014).

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.

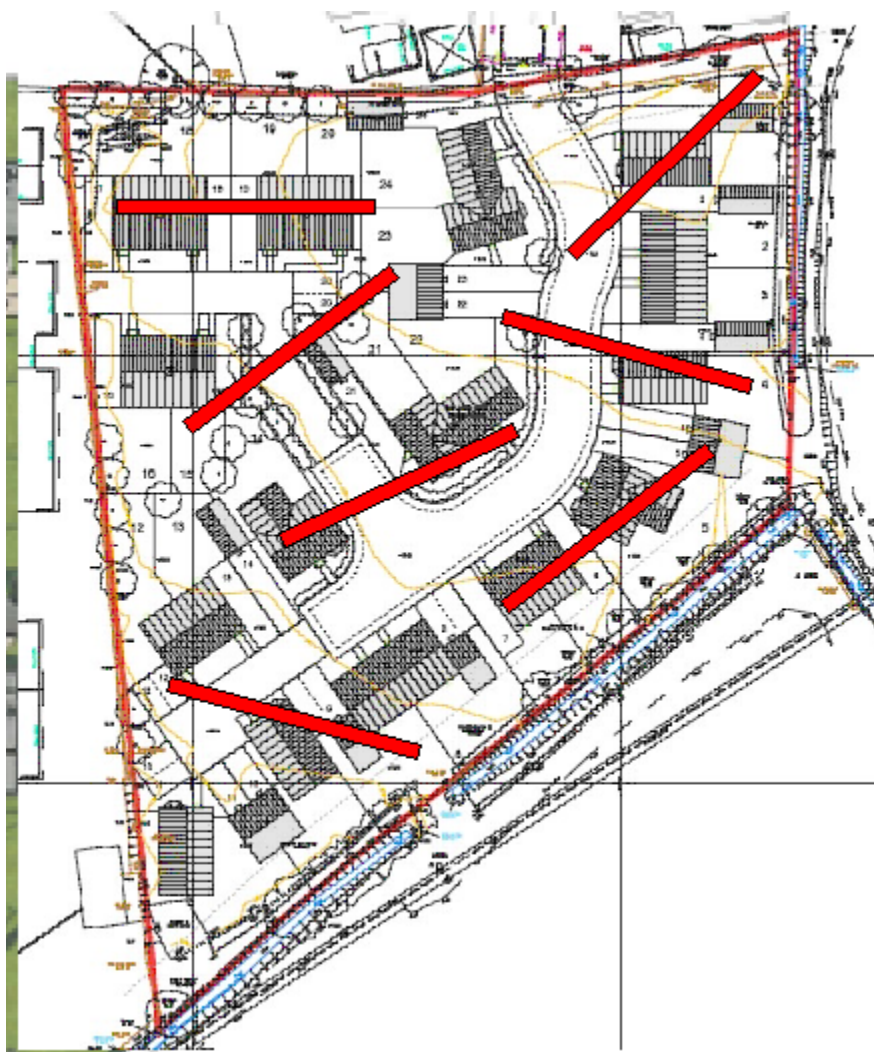


Figure 3: Development area and proposed trench locations (map provided by the client)

6. Results

A total of seven trenches were excavated within the development area. The results of all excavated trenches are presented below in Table 1 and shown on Fig. 4.

No archaeological finds or deposits were located within any of the trenches. The natural substratum was generally reached after around 0.25m-0.50m of topsoil and subsoil had been removed. The only features revealed were field drains observed within four trenches (2, 3 4 and 6). The field drains were typically orientated east to west and comprised of ceramic pipes or bricks and granite rubble.

No modern material was found within any of the trenches and the topsoil was generally clean which suggests little modern disturbance apart from agricultural activity. Three of the trenches had shallow depths of topsoil and subsoil (Trenches 1, 2 and 3), all located towards the north west corner of the field, which could possibly indicate that extensive deep modern ploughing has taken place within this part of the field.

Table 1: Trench Summaries

Trench	Length (m)	Height of Trench base (m OD)	Natural Substratum	Notes	Min. depth to archaeology/natural (m)
1	c.30	74.23	Pale reddish brown silt clay mixed with patches of yellowish brown silty clay and sand mixed with gravel	Negative trench. Shallow topsoil and no subsoil	0.25
2	c.28	74.25	Pale reddish brown silt clay mixed with patches of grey brown silty clay and sand mixed with gravel	Negative trench. Single modern land drain. Shallow topsoil and no subsoil	0.30
3	c.28	74.32	Pale reddish brown silt clay mixed with patches of grey brown silty clay and sand mixed with gravel	Negative trench. Two modern ceramic land drains. A subsoil found towards the western end of the trench	0.30
4	c.28	74.54	Pale reddish brown silt clay mixed with patches of grey brown silty clay and sand mixed with gravel	Negative empty trench. Two modern ceramic land drains. A deep subsoil found in this trench	0.22
5	c.28	73.94	Pale reddish brown silt clay mixed with patches of grey brown silty clay and sand mixed with gravel	Negative empty trench	0.40
6	c.30	73.60m	Pale reddish brown silt clay mixed with patches of yellowish brown silty clay and sand mixed with gravel	Negative trench. Two modern field drains with one containing brick and granite rubble. The second contained ceramic pipe.	0.28
7	c.25	73.91	Pale reddish brown silt clay mixed with patches of yellowish brown silty clay and sand mixed with gravel	Negative empty trench	0.40

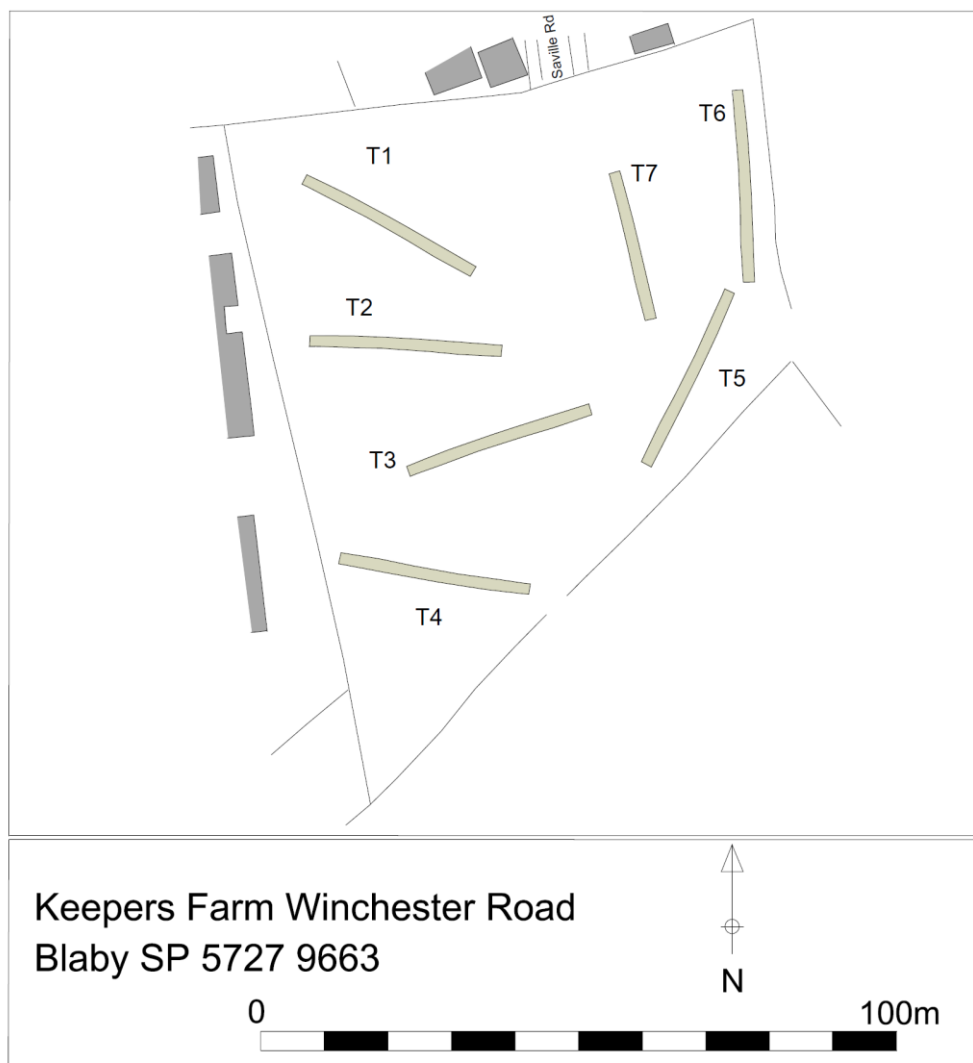


Figure 4: Trench Location Plan

7. Discussion

The archaeological evaluation by trial trenching revealed no evidence for archaeological features or finds within any of the trenches. Some of the trenches displayed shallow depths of topsoil and no subsoil, which could possibly indicate that extensive deep modern ploughing has taken place within this part of the field.

8. Conclusion

The trial trenching at on land at Keepers Farm, Blaby indicates that there are unlikely to be any archaeological deposits present within the proposed development area for the 24 dwellings and new access roads.

9. Archive

The site archive will be held by Leicestershire Museums Service, under accession no. X.A42.2018.

The site archive consists of:

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

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	universi1-315136
	Project Name	An Archaeological Evaluation Keepers Farm, Winchester Road, Blaby, Leicestershire.
	Start/end dates of field work	17-04-2018 - 18-04-2018
	Previous/Future Work	DBA
	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: 17/0302/FUL
PROJECT LOCATION	Site Address/Postcode	Winchester Road, Blaby, Leicestershire
	Study Area	0.6ha
	Site Coordinates	SP 5727 9663
	Height OD	77m AOD
PROJECT CREATORS	Organisation	ULAS
	Project Brief Originator	Local Planning Authority (LCC) Leicestershire County Council
	Project Design Originator	ULAS
	Project Manager	Vicki Score, John Thomas
	Project	Tim Higgins

	Director/Supervisor			
	Sponsor/Funding Body	John Hill		
PROJECT ARCHIVE		Physical	Digital	Paper
	Recipient	LCC Mus Service	LCC Mus Service	LCC Mus Service
	ID (Acc. No.)	X.A42.2018	X.A42.2018	X.A42.2018
	Contents	None	Photos	Evaluation records Field Notes
PROJECT BIBLIOGRAPHY	Type	Grey Literature (unpublished)		
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	Author	Higgins, T.		
	Other bibliographic details	ULAS Report No 2018-075		
	Date	17/04/2018 to 18/04/2018		
	Publisher/Place	University of Leicester Archaeological Services / University of Leicester		
	Description	Developer Report A4 pdf		

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12. Acknowledgements

The fieldwork was carried out by the author Tim Higgins of ULAS. John Thomas and Vicki Score managed the project. Richard Clarke of LCC HNET monitored the work on behalf of the planning authority.

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20/04/2018

Appendix 1: Trench Photos



Plate 1 Trench 1



Plate 2 Trench 2



Plate 3 Trench 3



Plate 4 Trench 4



Plate 5 Trench 5



Plate 6 Trench 6



Plate 7 Trench 7

Appendix 2: Trench Measurements

Trench No	Orient		Length		Width		
1	NW - SE		30m		1.60m		
Interval	0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25m	28m
Topsoil	0.25m	0.30m	0.30m	0.30m	0.30m	0.30m	0.30m
Subsoil	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Top Natural	0.25m	0.30m	0.30m	0.30m	0.30m	0.30m	0.30m
Base of Trench	0.30m	0.40m	0.40m	0.40m	0.45m	0.40	0.40m

Trench No	Orient		Length		Width		
2	E - W		28m		1.60m		
Interval	0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25m	30m
Topsoil	0.30m	0.30m	0.30m	0.30m	0.30m	0.30m	0.30m
Subsoil	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Top of Natural	0.30m	0.30m	0.30m	0.30m	0.30m	0.30m	0.30m
Base of Trench	0.40m	0.40m	0.50m	0.50m	0.50m	0.50m	0.40m

Trench No	Orient		Length		Width		
3	E-W		28m		1.60m		
Interval	0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25m	28
Topsoil	0.30m	0.30m	0.20m	0.30m	0.30m	0.30m	0.30m
Subsoil	0.20m	0.20m	0.20m	0.15m	0.10m	-	-
Top of Natural	0.50m	0.50m	0.40m	0.45m	0.40m	0.30m	0.30m
Base of Trench	0.50m	0.50m	0.40m	0.50m	0.40m	0.40m	0.50m

Trench No	Orient		Length		Width		
4	NW-SE		28m		1.60m		
Interval	0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25m	28m
Topsoil	0.30m	0.20m	0.20m	0.30m	0.30m	0.30m	0.30m
Subsoil	0.20m	0.20m	0.20m	0.20m	0.10m	0.10m	0.10m
Top of Natural	0.50m	0.40m	0.40m	0.50m	0.40m	0.40m	0.40m
Base of Trench	0.50m	0.40m	0.50m	0.50m	0.70m	0.70m	0.70m

Trench No	Orient		Length		Width		
5	NE-SW		28m		1.80m		
Interval	0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25m	30m
Topsoil	0.30m	0.30m	0.30m	0.30m	0.30m	0.20m	0.30m
Subsoil	0.30m	0.30m	0.30m	0.20m	0.20m	0.20m	0.10m
Top of Natural	0.60m	0.60m	0.60m	0.50m	0.50m	0.40m	0.40m
Base of Trench	0.65m	0.60m	0.60m	0.50m	0.55m	0.40m	0.40m

Trench No	Orient		Length		Width		
6	N-S		30m		1.60m		
Interval	0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25m	30m
Topsoil	0.30m	0.30m	0.30m	0.30m	0.30m	0.30m	0.30m
Subsoil	0.30m	0.20m	0.30m	0.25m	0.15m	0.10m	0.15m
Top of Natural	0.30m	0.50m	0.60m	0.55m	0.45m	0.40m	0.45m
Base of Trench	0.60m	0.50m	0.60m	0.55m	0.45m	0.40m	0.45m

Trench No	Orient		Length		Width		
7	N-S		25m		1.60m		
Interval	0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25m	30m
Topsoil	0.30m	0.30m	0.30m	0.30m	0.30m	0.30m	-
Subsoil	0.20m	0.15m	0.10m	0.10m	0.10m	0.10m	-
Top of Natural	0.50m	0.45m	0.40m	0.40m	0.40m	0.40m	-
Base of Trench	0.50m	0.45m	0.40m	0.50m	0.40m	0.40m	-

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