

# **Archaeological Services**

An Archaeological Evaluation for Land at Uppingham Road, Houghton on the Hill, Leicestershire (NGR SK 6787 0398)

**Richard Huxley** 



ULAS Report No 2018-079 Accession No XA47.2018 ©2018

#### An

## Archaeological Evaluation for

## Land at Uppingham Road,

## Houghton on the Hill, Leicestershire

#### NGR SK 6787 0398

**Richard Huxley** 

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#### **University of Leicester**

Archaeological Services University Rd., Leicester, LE1 7RH Tel: (0116) 2522848 Fax: (0116) 2522614

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#### An Archaeological Evaluation for Land at Uppingham Road, Houghton on the Hill, Leicestershire NGR SK 6787 0398

#### **Richard Huxley**

#### **Summary**

This document provides the results of an evaluation for land at Uppingham Road, Houghton on the Hill, Leicestershire undertaken in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Section 12 Enhancing and Conserving the Historic Environment). The results of the evaluation show post-medieval furrows and a modern field boundary were present within the site. The evaluation also found a modern feature and bioturbation caused by collapsed animal burrows.

No other archaeological remains were present within the trenches and there is a low probability for any to be encountered within the development area.

## Introduction

This report presents the results of an archaeological evaluation undertaken by ULAS in April 2018 at land at Uppingham Road, Houghton on the Hill, Leicestershire (NGR: SK 6787 0398). The work was commissioned by CgMs Heritage, ahead of a planned housing development.

Areas of archaeological activity have been identified in the locality of Houghton on the Hill and a Heritage Assessment (Dawson, 2015) and Geophysical Survey (Davies, 2015) had previously been undertaken. The geophysical survey identified several anomalies and in view of this, the Senior Planning Archaeologist for Leicestershire County Council (LCC), as archaeological advisor, requested evaluation of the area by trial trenching to determine if there were any archaeological deposits that might be impacted by the proposed scheme.

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 (CgMs 2017) agreed beforehand with the Planning Archaeologist.

## Site Description, Topography and Geology

Houghton on the Hill is located to the east of Leicester and lies in the district of Harborough. The development area is positioned to the north of the village and lies outside the Historic settlement core and Conservation Area. The site is bounded by to the south by Uppingham road, to the north and west by agricultural land and to the east by a residential area (Clark 2017) (Fig. 1).

The site consists of 2.8 hectares of land which mostly slopes to the north-east except the north-eastern corner which slopes to the south-west. The height of the ground varied from 156 to 160 aOD. The British Geological Survey of Great Britain indicates the underlying geology is composed of Charmouth Mudstone Formation and the overlying soils are known as Ragdale, consisting of clayey and fine loamy over clayey soils (Clark 2017).

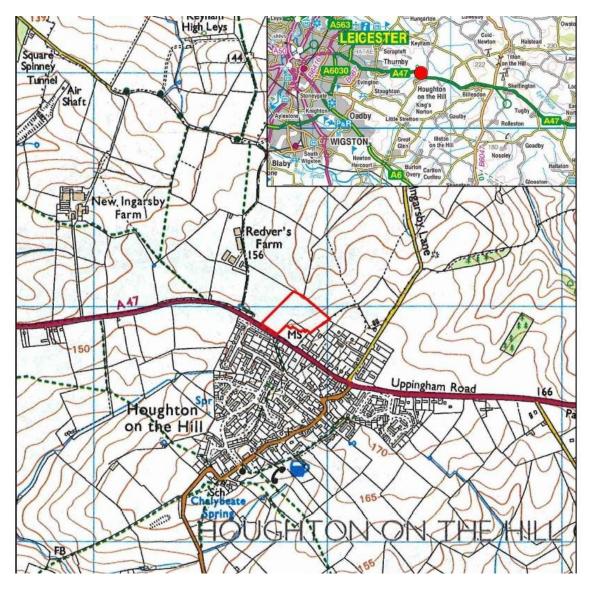


Figure 1: Location of Development area (outlined red) to the east of Leicester.

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## Archaeological and Historical Background

Prehistoric activity in the form of lithics were found at Monk's Gate (LHERR16941) and west of Houghton on the Hill (LHERR16941). Iron Age pottery was also found at Monk's Grave site (LHER6479). Roman activity has been recorded at 'Windy Ridge' on Ingarsby

lane (LHER1665), to the west of Houghton on the Hill on the Stoughton Estate (LHER1660) and the spot find of a coin adjacent to the church (LHER7845) (Dawson 2015).

The village of Houghton on the Hill has Anglo-Saxon origins and is recorded in the Domesday survey in 1086 as Hotone meaning farm or settlement on the spur of the hill (Dawson, 2015). The historic settlement core (LHER16325) is found to the south of the site and there is little evidence for post-medieval and modern activity within the development area.

The geophysical survey responded well to the survey area's environment. Two anomalies of possible archaeological origin were identified, comprising a small positive linear anomaly in the centre of the site, indicative of a cut feature of possible archaeological or agricultural origin, and a weak negative linear anomaly in the north of the site, indicative of a former bank or earthwork feature of archaeological or agricultural origin.

The survey also identified widely spaced parallel linear anomalies across the site, related to ridge and furrow cultivation and a linear anomaly in the north of the site thought likely to be related to a former field boundary.

Areas of amorphous magnetic variation identified in the north and south of the site were considered to be geological in origin, whilst a number of magnetic 'spikes' caused by modern rubbish were also recorded (Clark, 2017).

## **Aims and Objectives**

The aims of the evaluation are as follows:

- To determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any archaeological remains within the development site
- To verify the results of the geophysical survey
- To assess the artefactual and environmental potential of any archaeological deposits encountered
- To assess the impact of previous land use on the site
- To inform formulation of a strategy to mitigate impacts of the proposed development on any surviving archaeological remains
- To produce a site archive for deposition with an appropriate museum and to provide information for accession to the Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record.

The results of the evaluation will enable reasoned and informed recommendations to be made to the local planning authority and a suitable mitigation strategy for the proposed development to be formulated.

The programme of archaeological investigation will be conducted within the general research parameters and objectives defined by 'East Midlands Heritage: A research Agenda and Strategy for the Historic Environment'(compiled on behalf of the region's historic environment community by D. Knight, B. Vyner and C. Allen) and the earlier Archaeological Resource Assessment and Research Agenda for the East Midlands 'The Archaeology of the East Midlands' edited by N. Cooper (2006).

The investigation will also take account of the national research programmes outlined in English Heritage's 'Strategic Framework for historic Environment Activities and Programmes in English Heritage (SHAPE)' first published in 2008 (Clark, 2017).

## Methodology

The work followed the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) (Clark 2017) and the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) Code of Conduct (2014a) and adhered to their Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations (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. The programme of work consisted of the excavation of 14 trenches measuring approximately 30m x1.6m and targeting possible archaeological deposits indicated by the geophysical survey (Davies 2015) as well as seemingly blank areas (Fig. 2).

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 fourteen trenches were excavated using a machine with a flat-bladed bucket. The trenches were positioned according to the WSI (Clark, 2017), however the position of three trenches had to be adjusted and moved slightly due to the presence of overhead electric cables close to the main road (Fig. 3).

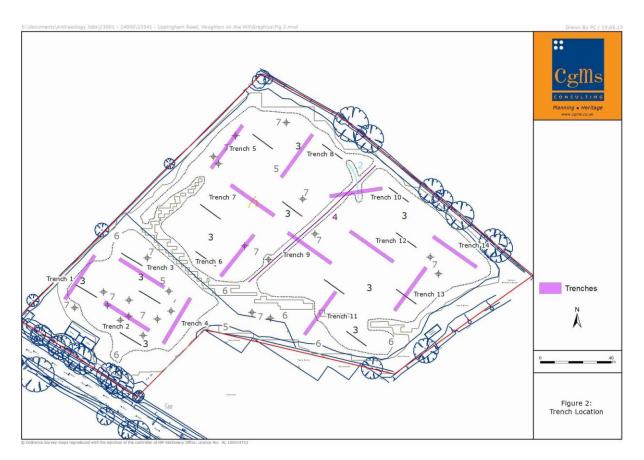


Figure 2: Proposed trench plan overlain on geophysical anomalies (Clark, 2017)



Figure 3: Development area looking south-east showing overhead electric cables.

## Results

The topsoil was consistent across the field and comprised a mid to dark reddish brown coloured soft silty clay that contained occasional small rounded pebbles and shards of modern glass. The subsoil was also consistent across the field and composed of mid yellowy brown soft plastic silty clay with occasional small and medium sized pebbles. This layer regularly contained flecks of charcoal and small fragments of coal.

All of the trenches were excavated to the top of the natural substratum which was consistent across the development area and composed of light to mid yellowy-brown clay containing small pebbles and patches of slightly larger stones <0.2m in size.

The site had visible ridge and furrow in the southern half of the field and this was noted in the geophysical survey (Davies 2015) and confirmed during the evaluation with the majority of trenches found to contain shallow furrows that were orientated along a north-west to south-east alignment. These contained pancheon ware pottery and modern glass which was identified and discarded.

A field boundary orientated north-east to south-west was also identified on the geophysical survey (Davies 2015) and seen in trenches 9 and 10. Another modern feature was also seen in trench 6. No other features were found within the development area.

Trench Number	Ground Height (OD)	Topsoil depth (m)	Subsoil depth (m)	Top of Natural (m)	Base of Trench (m)	Natural Substratum	Archaeology
1	156.73	0.13-0.27	0.1-0.2	0.22-0.37	0.37-0.44	Light to mid yellowy brown silty clay with small pebbles and larger <0.2m stones.	None
2	157.22	0.11-0.16	0.13-0.25	0.28-0.4	0.4-0.54	Light to mid yellowy brown silty clay with small pebbles and larger <0.2m stones.	None
3	157.65	0.1-0.2	0.1- 0.19	0.22-0.36	0.3-0.42	Light to mid yellowy brown silty clay with small pebbles and larger <0.2m stones.	None
4	158.22	0.14-0.29	0.16-0.22	0.34-0.49	0.42-0.52	Light to mid yellowy brown silty clay with small pebbles and larger <0.2m stones.	None
5	156.38	0.1-0.2	0.14-0.28	0.24-0.48	0.32-0.58	Light to mid yellowy brown silty clay with small pebbles and larger <0.2m stones.	None
6	158.07	0.12-0.23	0.14-0.2	0.27-0.4	0.3-0.48	Light to mid yellowy brown silty clay with small pebbles and larger <0.2m stones.	Possible shallow field boundary?
7	156.93	0.16-0.22	0.2- 0.24	0.36- 0.44	0.4-0.5	Light to mid yellowy brown silty clay with small pebbles and	None

Table 1: Trench descriptions

			1			1	1
						larger <0.2m	
						stones.	
8	156.02	0.11-	0.1-	0.21-	0.28-0.49	Light to mid	None
8	150.02	0.11-0.2	0.1-	0.21-	0.28-0.49		None
		0.2	0.23	0.38		yellowy	
						brown silty	
						clay with	
						small	
						pebbles and	
						larger <0.2m	
9	157.4	0.13-	0.2-	0.36-	0.42-0.5	stones. Light to mid	Shallow field
9	137.4	0.13-0.18	0.2-	0.30-	0.42-0.5	yellowy	boundary
		0.16	0.28	0.45		brown silty	boundar y
						clay with	
						small	
						pebbles and	
						larger <0.2m	
						stones.	
10	155.34	0.11-	0.16-	0.31-	0.35-0.47	Light to mid	Shallow field
10	155.54	0.11-	0.10-	0.31-	0.55-0.47	yellowy	boundary
		0.17	0.20	0.12		brown silty	Soundary
						clay with	
						small	
						pebbles and	
						larger <0.2m	
						stones.	
11	159.19	0.1-	0.18-	0.3-0.41	0.35-0.45	Light to mid	None
		0.17	0.28			yellowy	
			-			brown silty	
						clay with	
						small	
						pebbles and	
						larger <0.2m	
						stones.	
12	157.78	0.1-	0.15-	0.32-0.4	0.33-0.47	Light to mid	None
		0.19	0.2			yellowy	
						brown silty	
						clay with	
						small	
						pebbles and	
						larger <0.2m	
						stones.	
13	159.74	0.1-	0.1-	0.27-	0.34-0.38	Light to mid	None
		0.18	0.24	0.38		yellowy	
						brown silty	
						clay with	
						small	
						pebbles and	
						larger <0.2m	
14	160.51	0.12	0.16	0.22	0.26.0.55	stones.	None
14	160.51	0.12-	0.16-	0.32-	0.36-0.55	Light to mid	none
		0.2	0.23	0.43		yellowy	
						brown silty	
						clay with small	
						pebbles and larger $\leq 0.2m$	
						larger <0.2m stones.	
L			1	I		stones.	

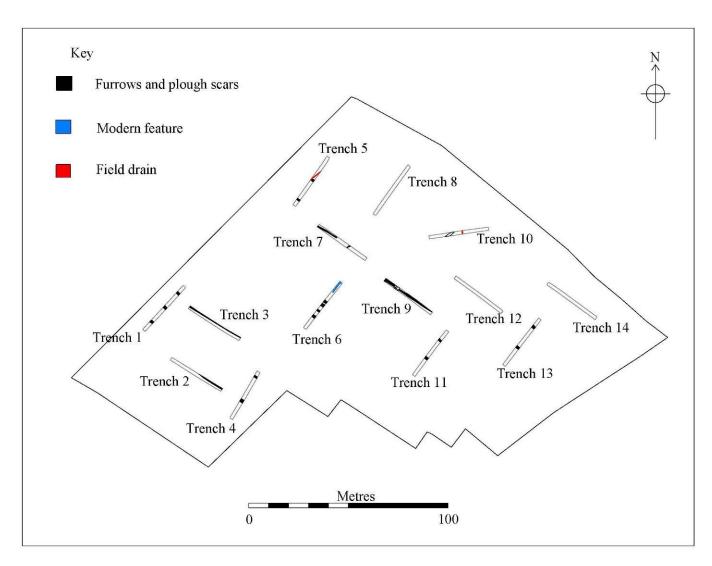


Figure 4: Trench plan.

Trench 1 was located in the south-western corner of the site and positioned along a north-east to south-west orientation. The position of this trench was slightly altered and moved 15m north-east of its planned position due to the presence of overhead electric cables. The trench had a depth ranging from 0.37-0.44m and was found to contain 3 shallow furrows orientated north-west to south-east. The furrows were found to contain pancheon ware pottery and modern glass which was discarded. No other features were present within this trench.

#### Trench 2

Trench 2 was located to the south-east of Trench 1 and was orientated along a north-west to south-east alignment. It had a depth ranging from 0.4-0.54m. A shallow furrow orientated north-west to south-east was found in the eastern half of the trench. No other features were present within this trench.

Trench 3 was positioned to the north of Trench 2 and was orientated on a north-west to southeast alignment. The trench had a depth ranging from 0.3-0.42m and was found to contain a shallow furrow orientated north-west to south-east in the northern half of the trench. No other features were present within this trench.

#### Trench 4

Trench 4 was located to the east of Trench 2 and was orientated along a north-east to southwest alignment. The position of this trench was altered slightly due to the presence of overhead cables and moved 7m to the north-east. It had a depth ranging from 0.42-0.52m deep and was found to contain 2 shallow furrows orientated north-west to south-east. No other features were present within this trench.

#### Trench 5

Trench 5 was located in the north-western corner of site and was orientated on a north-east to south-west alignment. The trench had a depth ranging from 0.32-0.58m and was found to contain 2 furrows orientated on a north-west to south-east alignment. The northern furrow was partly truncated by a field drain orientated north-east to south-west. The northern end of the trench was found to contain disturbance consistent with a collapsed animal burrow.

#### Trench 6

Trench 6 was located north-east of trench 3 and was orientated on a north-east to south-west alignment. The trench had a depth ranging from 0.3-0.45m and was found to contain 4 furrows and a plough scar orientated north-west to south east (Fig. 6). The 2 northern furrows were excavated and found to be approximately 0.05m deep. The northern end of the trench was found to contain a shallow feature orientated along a north-east to south-west alignment (Figure 5, p11). This feature measured >6m long by 0.7m wide and was also approximately 0.05m deep. The feature was filled with a dark brownish grey silty clay that contained a large proportion of modern ceramics, modern glass and iron cables. This was interpreted as a modern feature and was not excavated.



Figure 5: Trench 6 with the modern feature in the foreground.

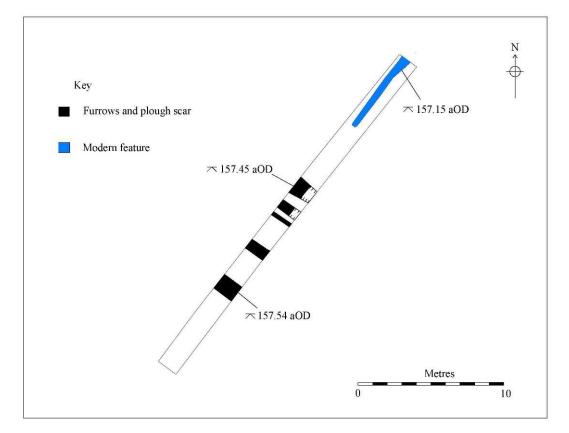


Figure 6: Plan of trench 6.

Trench 7 was located to the north of trench 6 and was orientated on a north-west to south-east alignment. This trench had a depth ranging from 0.4-0.5m and was found to contain a shallow furrow orientated north-west to south-east located in the western half of the trench. Close to the centre of the trench a shallow irregular feature was found which measured >1.6m long by 0.4m wide and approximately 0.1m deep. This feature was orientated on a north-east to south-west alignment and had irregular sides that ranged from steeply sloping to undercutting. The feature had an irregular base and was interpreted as being a plough scar (Fig. 7). No other features were present within this trench.



Figure 7: Plough scar in trench 7.

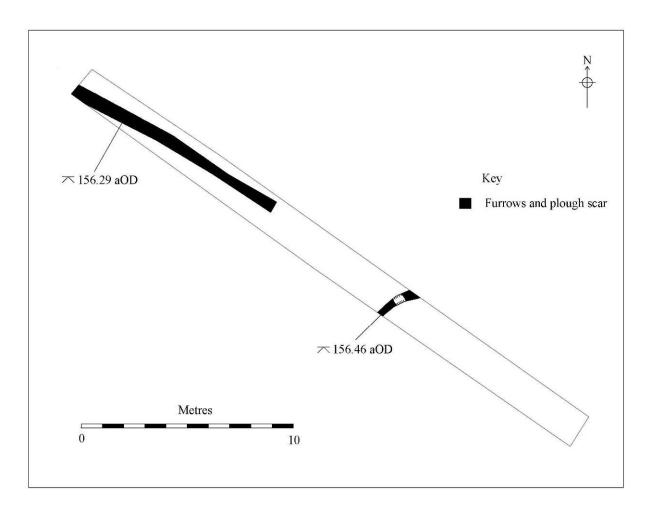


Figure 8: Plan of trench 7.

Trench 8 was located to the east of trench 5 and was orientated north-east to south-west. The trench had a moderate slope to the north-east and was found to have a depth ranging from 0.28-0.54m. The trench was shallower to the south-west and deeper to the north-east. No features were found within this trench.

#### Trench 9

Trench 9 was positioned in the centre of the development area and orientated north-west to south-east. It had a depth ranging from 0.42-0.5m and was found to contain a furrow orientated north-west to south-east. Truncating the furrow were 2 shallow parallel linear features orientated north-east to south-west (Fig. 9). The eastern feature [1] measured >1.6m long by 1.4m wide by 0.07m deep and had moderate to steeply sloping concave sides with a concave base. The feature was filled by a dark greyish brown firm silty clay (2) that contained small rounded pebbles and a large proportion of modern glass and ceramics. To the west of [1] a smaller linear feature was found [3] which measured >1.6m long by 0.8m wide

by 0.07m deep. This feature had shallow concave sides with an irregular concave base and was filled by a firm mid-greyish brown silty clay (4). This deposit contained small rounded pebbles and shards of modern glass.



Figure 9: Shallow features [1] and [3] in trench 9.

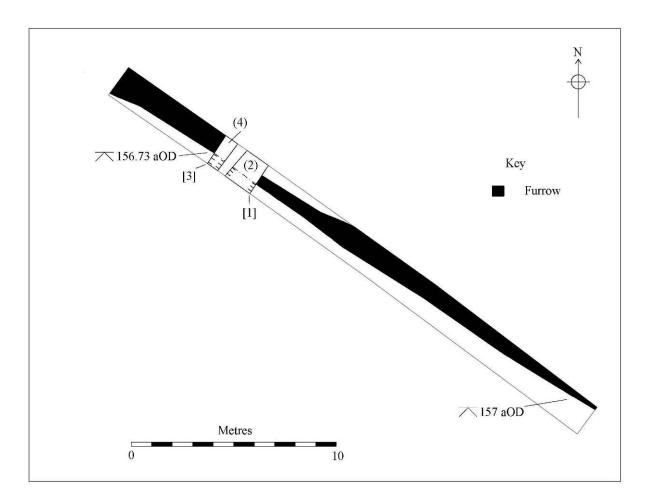


Figure 10: Plan of trench 9.

Trench 10 was located to the north of trench 9 and was orientated on an east north-east to west south-west alignment. This trench had a moderate slope to the south-west and a depth ranging from 0.35-0.47m. It was found to contain a linear feature orientated north-west to south-east which was filled with a dark greyish brown silty clay that contained a modern glass bottle. This feature measured >1.6m long by 1.2m wide and was interpreted as a continuation of [1] in trench 9 and was not excavated. Approximately 5m to the east of this feature a field drain orientated north-west to south-east was found. No other features were found within this trench.

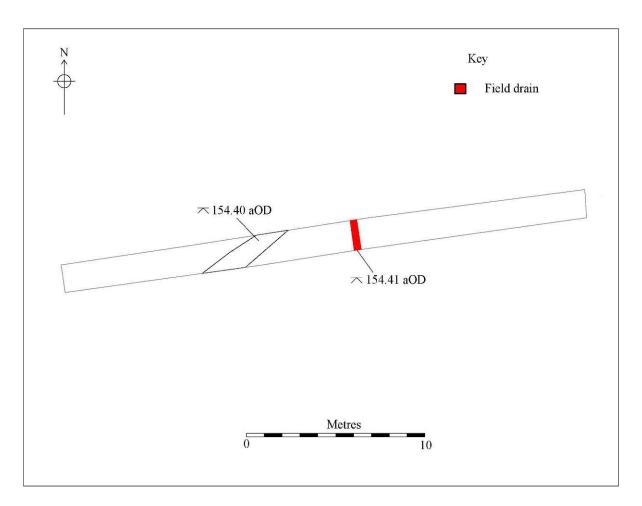


Figure 11: Plan of trench 10.

Trench 11 was located to the south-east of trench 9 and orientated on a north-east to southwest alignment. The position of this trench was altered due to the presence of overhead electric cables and moved 11.8m to the north-east. The trench had a depth ranging from 0.35-0.45m and was found to contain a furrow orientated north-west to south-east located in the southern end of the trench. No other features were present within the trench.

#### Trench 12

Trench 12 was located to the north of trench 11 and orientated on a north-west to south-east alignment. This trench had a depth that measured between 0.33-0.47m. No features were found within this trench.

Trench 13 was located to the east of trench 12 and was orientated on a north-east to south-west alignment. The trench had a depth ranging from 0.34-0.38m and was found to contain 2 furrows orientated north-west to south-east. No other features were found within this trench.

#### Trench 14

Trench 14 was positioned in the north-eastern corner of the development area and orientated along a north-west to south-east alignment. The trench had a depth ranging from 0.36-0.55m. No features were found within this trench.

#### **Discussion and Conclusions**

The results of the evaluation show that no archaeological remains were present within the trenches. In general the trenching confirmed the results of the geophysical survey (Davies 2015). This included north-east to south-west orientated furrows containing pancheon ware pottery dating to the post-medieval period.

The trenching also confirmed the presence of a north-east to south-west field boundary (Davies 2015). It was excavated in trench 9 and found to consist of 2 shallow parallel linear features [1] and [3] that contained modern ceramics and glass which was discarded. These features could either represent a field boundary that has slightly shifted or a boundary that is composed of a hedge and a ditch. These were found to truncate a furrow which indicates the field boundary is a modern division.

The field boundary was found to continue in trench 10. A field drain that was orientated north to south was found 5m to the east of the field boundary and it seems likely this was the source of geophysics anomaly 2 (Davies, 2015).

The trenching found a plough scar 2.5m to the south-east of geophysics anomaly 1 (Davies, 2015) in trench 7. Both the plough scar and the geophysics anomaly are orientated north-east to south-west and it is probable that the geophysics anomaly is related to this activity.

The north-eastern end of trench 6 found a shallow linear feature which wasn't identified in the geophysical survey, however this feature was not excavated due to the large proportion of modern material within it. The only other activity identified from the trenching was bioturbation caused by collapsed animal burrows.

No archaeological remains were found within the trenches and there is a low probability for the development to encounter any during construction.

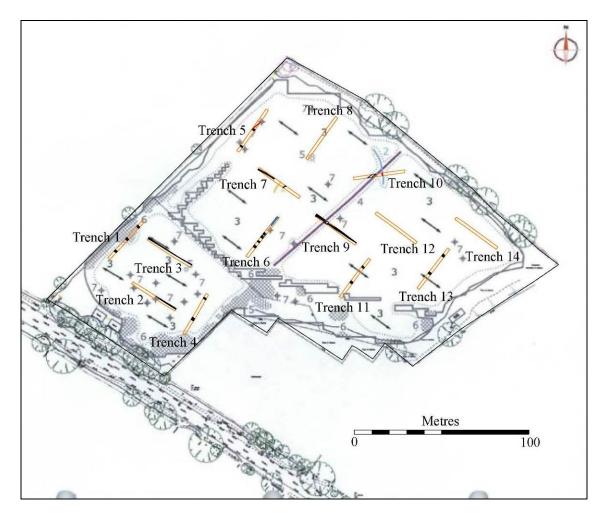


Figure 12: The results of the evaluation overlain on the geophysical survey.

## Archive

The paper archive consists of:

- 14 x Evaluation Recording forms
- 1 x Photographic record indices
- 66 digital photographs
- A risk assessment form
- 4 x Context recording sheets
- 1 x Context record indices

#### Acknowledgements

Richard Huxley of ULAS undertook the archaeological Evaluation on behalf of CgMs Heritage. The project was managed by Vicki Score.

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Richard Huxley ULAS University of Leicester University Road Leicester LE1 7RH Tel:0116 252 2836 Fax: 0116 252 2614 Email: rh329@le.ac.uk

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# **Oasis Information**

	Oasis No	universi1-315923		
	Project Name	An Evaluation for Land at Uppingham Road,		
	I Toject Ivanie	Houghton on the Hill, Leicesterhsire		
		Troughton on the Thin, Dereesternishe		
	Start/end dates of field	24-04-2018 to 27- 04-2018		
	work Previous/Future Work	Yes/Not known		
	Project Type	Evaluation		
	Site Status	None		
PROJECT	Current Land Use	Grassland Heathland 2		
DETAILS	Monument	None/none		
	Type/Period			
	Significant	None		
	Finds/Period			
	Development Type	Housing		
	Reason for	NPPF		
	Investigation			
	Position in the	Planning Condition		
	Planning Process			
	Planning Ref.	15/01975/OUT		
	Site Address/Postcode	Uppingham Road, Houghton on the Hill,		
PROJECT		Leicestershire		
LOCATION	Study Area	2.8 Ha		
	Site Coordinates	SK 6787 0398 156-160m OD		
	Height OD Organisation	ULAS		
	Project Brief	Consultant		
	Originator	Consultant		
	Project Design	CgMs Ltd		
PROJECT	Originator			
CREATORS	Project Manager	Vicki Score		
	Project	Richard Huxley		
	Director/Supervisor	-		
	Sponsor/Funding Body	Developer		
		Physical Digital Paper		
PROJECT	Recipient	NA LCCMS LCCMS		
ARCHIVE	ID (Acc. No.)	XA47.2018 XA47.2018		
	Contents	Photos Notebook-		
		Excavation Spreadsheet Photograph		
		Spreadsheet Photograph Survey Report		
		Geophysics Context sheets		
	Туре	Grey Literature (unpublished)		
	Title	An Archaeological Evaluation for		
		Land at Uppingham Road, Houghton on the		
		Hill, Leicestershire		
PROJECT		NGR SK 6787 0398		
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## **Contact Details**

Richard Buckley or Vicki Score 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 w: www.le.ac.uk/ulas







