# An Archaeological Evaluation at Ashton Green, (Residential Parcel 4), Leicester, LE4 2SB

**NGR: SK 574 100**

**Claire LaCombe**

**ULAS Report No 2018-187**

**Accession Number: Y.A20.2018**

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**Claire LaCombe**

**For: Kier Living Ltd.**

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# An Archaeological Evaluation at Ashton Green, Residential Parcel 4, Leicester, LE4 2SB

**Claire LaCombe**

## Summary

*University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) carried out an archaeological evaluation on land at Ashton Green, Residential Parcel 4, Leicester, LE4 2SB on behalf of Kier Living Ltd. Eighty-two trenches, totalling 4549m² were excavated to evaluate pasture land and an arable farming field. The archaeological work was carried out from the 23rd October - 8th of November 2018, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, Section 16: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment.*

*The archaeological evaluation recorded features in four of the trenches, and also some unstratified finds. Iron Age pottery was recovered from a large pit, and mid to late 1st century through to 2nd century Roman pottery was recovered from two gullies. Neolithic and Bronze Age flints, mostly unstratified, were also recovered from the site. This evidence suggests human activity within the site, and / or within close proximity of the site.*

*The site archive will be held with Leicester Museum Service, under the accession code: Y.A20.2018.*

## Introduction

University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) were commissioned by Kier Living Ltd. to carry out an archaeological field evaluation on land at Ashton Green, Residential Parcel 4, Leicester, LE4 2SB. Planning Permission has been sought for a residential development and associated infrastructure (20181813).

This report presents the results of a programme of archaeological trial trenching, which took place in October and November 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 at Ashton Green, Residential Parcel 4, Leicester, LE4 2SB SK 574 100 (ULAS 2018).

All work followed the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) Code of Conduct and adhered to their Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation (2014). In accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Section 16 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.

## Site Description, Topography and Geology

Ashton Green is a *c.*100ha greenfield site comprising an irregular block of land made up of approximately 13 arable and pasture fields located between Beaumont Leys and Thurcaston (Fig. 1). The area has been earmarked for a large housing development to provide sustainable homes over the next 20 years. The current work is to evaluate the area designated Parcel 4 (14.86ha), for the presence of archaeological remains.

The site (Parcel 4) is located to the immediate south of the Leicester Western Bypass (A46) to the north of Leicester. The site is bordered by residential housing to the east and agricultural land to the south and west (Fig. 2). The land is generally flat at a height of *c.*90m OD.

The proposed area for development lies mostly over three arable fields where the crop had been sown in part.

The British Geological Survey website indicates that the underlying geology consists of Lacustrian deposits.

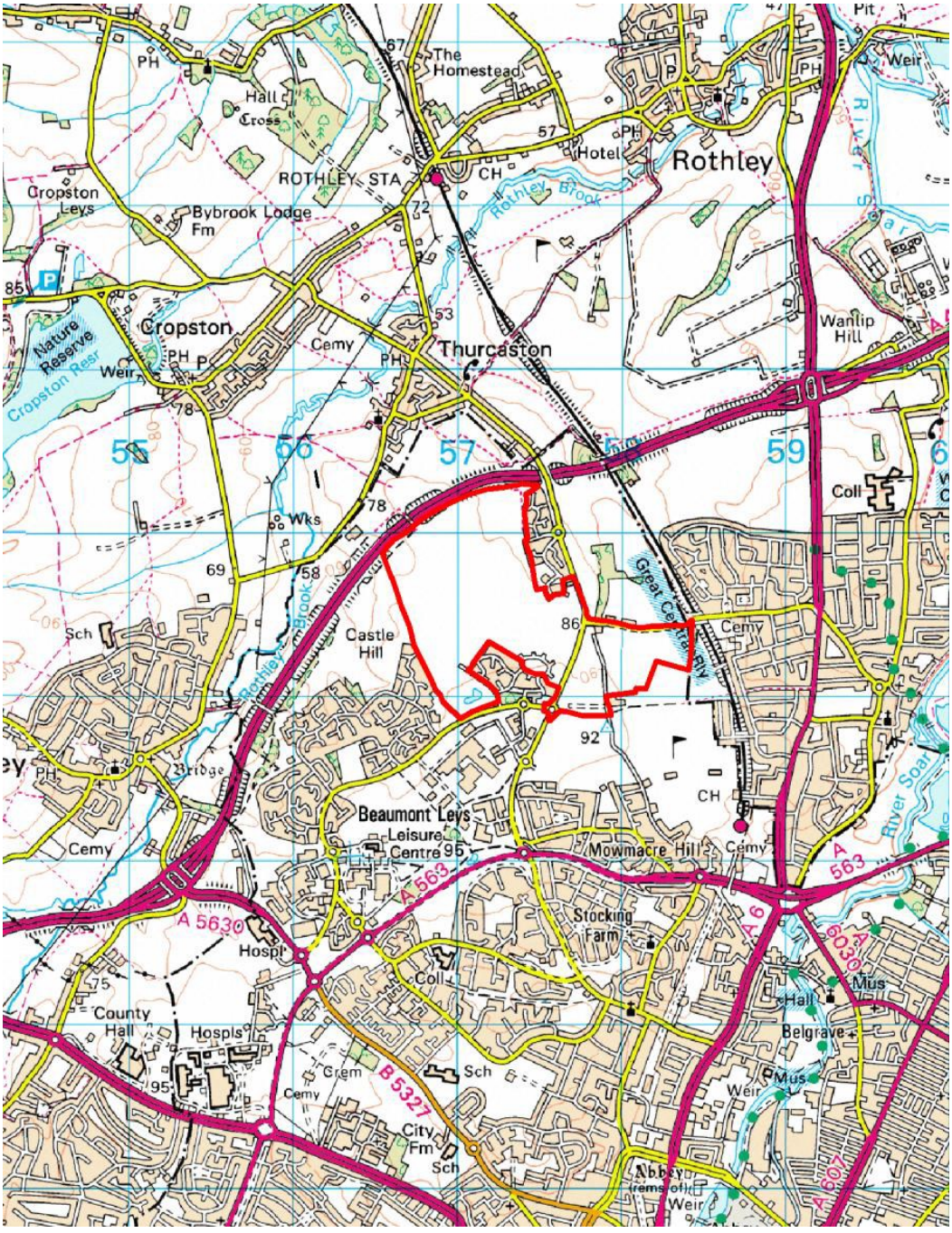


Figure 1: Location of whole site

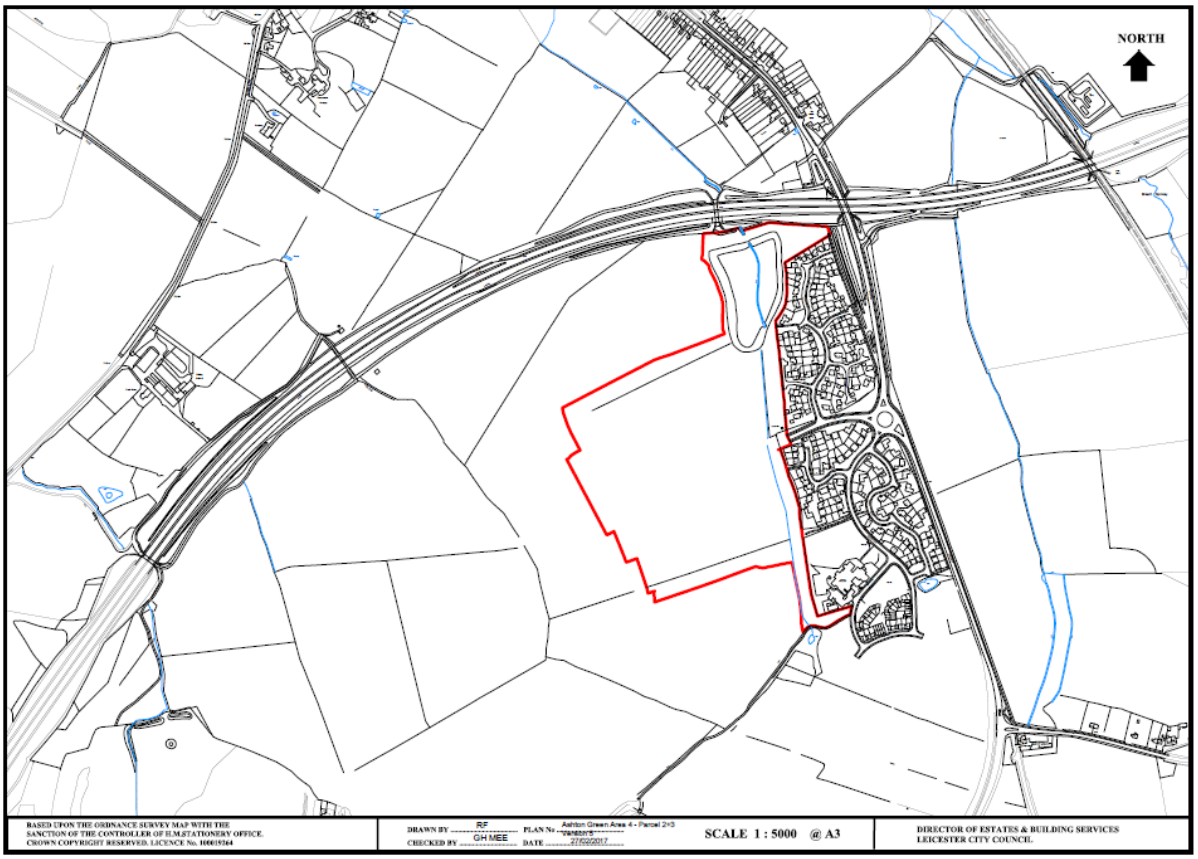


Figure 2: Location of Parcel 4 (red line) (plan from client).

## Historical and Archaeological Background

An archaeological desk-based assessment undertaken for a previous application by John Samuels Archaeological Consultants in 2002 (JSAC 2002) concluded that there was evidence for archaeological activity in the vicinity. The assessment included an examination of the Historic Environment Record (HER) for Leicester and Leicestershire and Rutland which showed that field walking in areas to the north, west and east of the site had revealed lithic scatters indicating early activity from the Mesolithic through to the Late Bronze Age (Leicester HER: MLC212 and MLC457 MLC636). Evidence for Roman occupation and industrial activity has been found north-west of the proposed development site (Leicester HER: MLC212) and small quantities of Roman pottery have been found west of Castle Hill earthworks (HER: LC213). The JSAC desk-assessment concluded that the potential for significant medieval remains other than those relating to agricultural activities was low as the core of the medieval settlements were some distance from the proposed development site (JSAC 2002). The site had evidence of ridge and furrow cultivation and was probably under pasture until the late 19th century. Sewage sludge is believed to have been spread on parts of the site associated with the neighbouring Beaumont Leys sewage farm.

A search was made of aerial photographs held by Leicestershire County Council, the National Monuments Record and Cambridge University Aerial Photograph Collection. Medieval strip field systems were visible within the application area but no cropmarks or earthworks.

Northamptonshire Archaeology carried out an initial geophysical survey at Ashton Green (Butler 2009). Topsoil magnetic susceptibility survey mapped broad changes in the subsurface probably stemming from geological variation. Detailed magnetometer survey detected a

possible sub-circular ditched enclosure and pits coincident with finds of Iron Age pottery and flint tools on the eastern side of the development area. Other anomalies located former field boundaries and possible pits or geological features.

An archaeological evaluation by trial trenching was undertaken in 2010 by ULAS for development phases (1 and 2), located approximately 400m to the east of Parcel 4 (Higgins 2010). Forty eight trial trenches were excavated over four fields. In one of the fields the trial trenching revealed a potential extensive Iron Age settlement of Middle Iron Age or later date, on the east side of the development along with some evidence of preceding occupation in the Late Bronze Age.

Since the JSAC report was produced a substantial Iron Age occupation site has been located during excavations 500m to the south of the development site (Thomas 2008 and 2011). The Iron Age site revealed boundary ditches, several fence lines, 'four- post' structures and several roundhouses. The finds included pottery, fired clay, quern stones and metal working slag. In addition residual sherds of Neolithic and Bronze Age pottery hinted at earlier activities on the site.

The earliest ordnance survey map of the area is the 1884 OS edition sheet XXV.SW (Fig. 3). This shows that the area has largely remained unchanged until the construction of the new road and housing estate to the east.

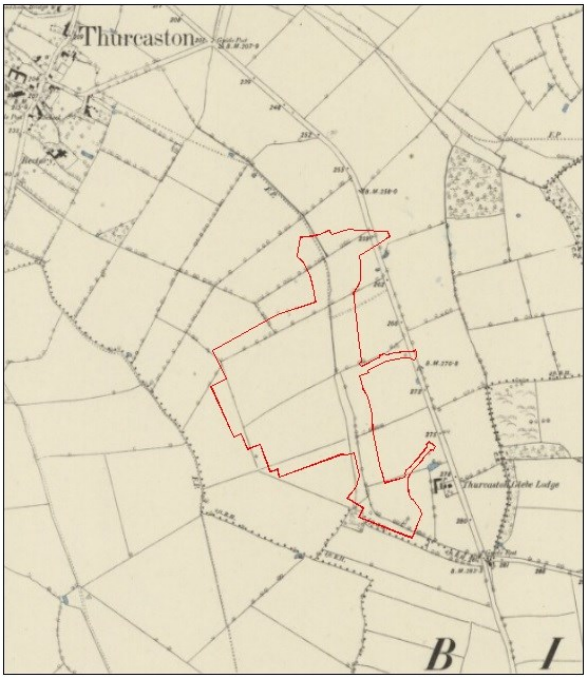


Figure 3: Detail of the 1884 Ordnance Survey map, sheet Leicestershire XXV.SW, with assessment area highlighted. Scale 6 inch to 1 mile.

A detailed magnetometer survey was conducted by SUMO Geophysics Ltd. in March 2018 over approximately 19ha of arable farmland at Ashton Green (incorporating Parcel 4 and the Green Infrastructure Area – SUMO 2018). No definite archaeological anomalies were identified. Responses of uncertain origin were visible in the data, though they are likely to be a result of agricultural activity. Ridge and furrow was present, along with several natural responses and disturbance from ferrous objects (Fig. 4).


Figure 4: Detail of geophysical survey (Sumo 2018).

**Aims and Objectives**

Trial trenching is an intrusive form of evaluation involving the excavation of exploratory trenches to ascertain the presence, condition and date of any archaeological remains which may be present.

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 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.

***Research Objectives***

While the nature, extent and quality of archaeological remains within the area of investigation for the project remain somewhat of an unknown quantity until archaeological work is undertaken, it is possible to determine some initial broad objectives derived from

*East Midlands Heritage* research agenda (Knight *et al*. 2012). The evaluation therefore has the potential to contribute to the following research aims.

The fieldwalking survey (Higgins 2009) identified a scatter of Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age worked flint in the north-western part of Parcel 4 which may be associated with below-ground archaeology. Should archaeological remains of this date be present on the site there is potential to contribute towards the following research objectives:

**Neolithic and Early to Middle Bronze Age:** 3.4 Exploitation of different landscape zones; 3.5 – Settlement patterns, 3.8 – Neolithic and Bronze Age societies, 3.9 – Raw material resources and exchange networks (Knight et al 2012, 46-47).

The known archaeology from previous work within the development area and nearby has revealed later prehistoric settlement, mostly from the Iron Age and there may be potential for further such remains within Parcel 4:

**Late Bronze Age & Iron Age Research Agenda**: 4.2 – Site visibility, prospection and landscape exploration, 4.8 – The agricultural economy and landscape (Knight *et al* 2012).

In particular:

1. *Settlement and land use on the East Midlands claylands* (Clay 2002). Comparison with sites on different geologies may show differences in agriculture or economy. The agricultural economy of the region in the prehistoric period is poorly understood and this is only likely to be improved by consideration of a larger number of sites to study the area as a whole. Evidence from the extensive Iron Age settlement at Beaumont Lays Lane (Thomas 2008 & 2011) indicates that the survival of biological data (bone and charred plant remains) is good in this area.

2. *The study of settlement patterns in the hinterland around Leicester*. Leicester was an important tribal centre during the late Iron Age (Clay 1985; Clay and Pollard 1994) and the relationship between Leicester and the surrounding Iron Age settlements is an ongoing research theme. The site has the potential to provide important comparative information in relation to trading patterns, contact, land use and economy during this period and compliment the work at other similar sites.

## Methodology

The WSI (ULAS 2018) originally proposed the examination of 80 *c.*30m by 1.8m trenches (Fig. 5). Following a site visit by the Planning Archaeologist for Leicester City Council, this was increased to 82 trenches to cover a specific gap in the area of investigation (Fig. 6).

The topsoil and overlying layer were removed in level spits under continuous archaeological supervision to the uppermost level of significant archaeological deposits, the natural substratum, or to a maximum safe working depth, depending on which was reached first. Trenches were excavated using a tracked 14.5 tonne 360º mechanical digger using a 1.8m wide ditching bucket. The trenches were recorded and then backfilled at the end of the evaluation. The location of the trenches and features were recorded using DGPS.

All trenches, exposed sections and spoil heaps were visually inspected for features and finds. The topsoil/subsoil was scanned with a metal-detector as part of the trench recording process, in order to locate any metal finds that might exist in the plough-soil. Archaeological features were hand cleaned, photographed and where appropriate sample excavated as appropriate to address the objectives of the evaluation. Field notes were recorded on pro-forma ULAS trench recording forms whilst all excavated stratigraphic units were given a unique context number and recorded on pro-forma ULAS context sheets. Measured drawings of all archaeological features were drawn at a scale of 1:20 or 1:10 and were attached to the overall site plan, which will be tied to the Ordnance Survey National Grid.

A photographic record of the excavation was prepared, illustrating in both detail and general context the principal features and finds discovered. Colour digital photographs were taken throughout the evaluation. The photographic record also included 'working shots' to illustrate more generally the nature of the archaeological operation mounted.

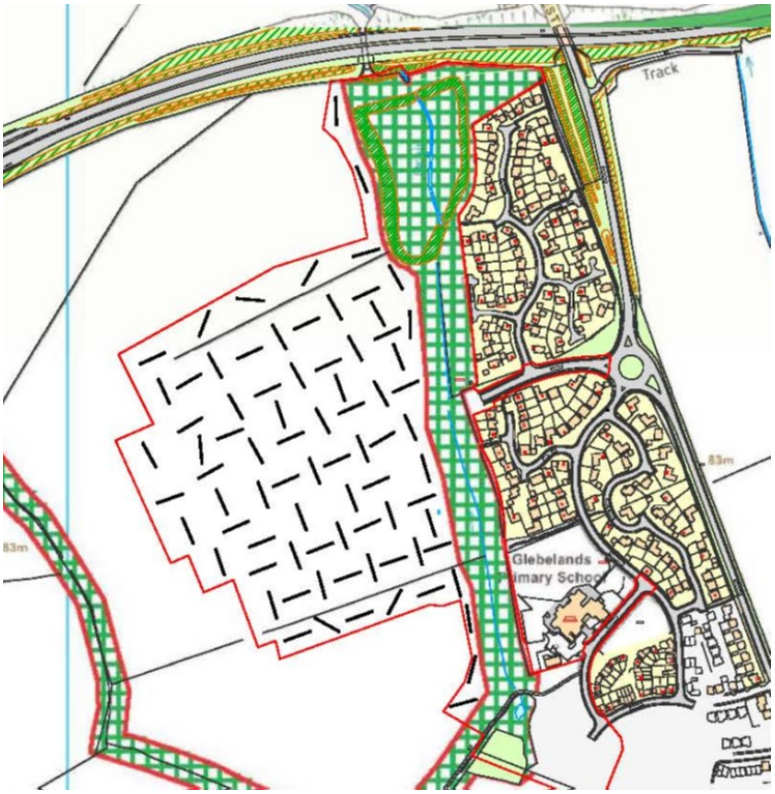


Figure 5: Proposed trench location plan (protected areas in green).

**Results**

The trenches were mostly negative with the exception of four (T14, T22, T55 and T65), which contained archaeological features. All of the trenches were located as proposed in the WSI, however, three of the trenches (T14, T22 and T55) which proved to contain archaeology were extended slightly to better understand the character of the remains. The results of the evaluation are presented below, followed by specialist reports. Photographs of all negative trenches are in Appendix II.

The trenches were mostly quite shallow, probably having been plough eroded, with a variable or discontinuous subsoil across the area. The natural substratum was observed at an average depth of 0.3-0.5m.

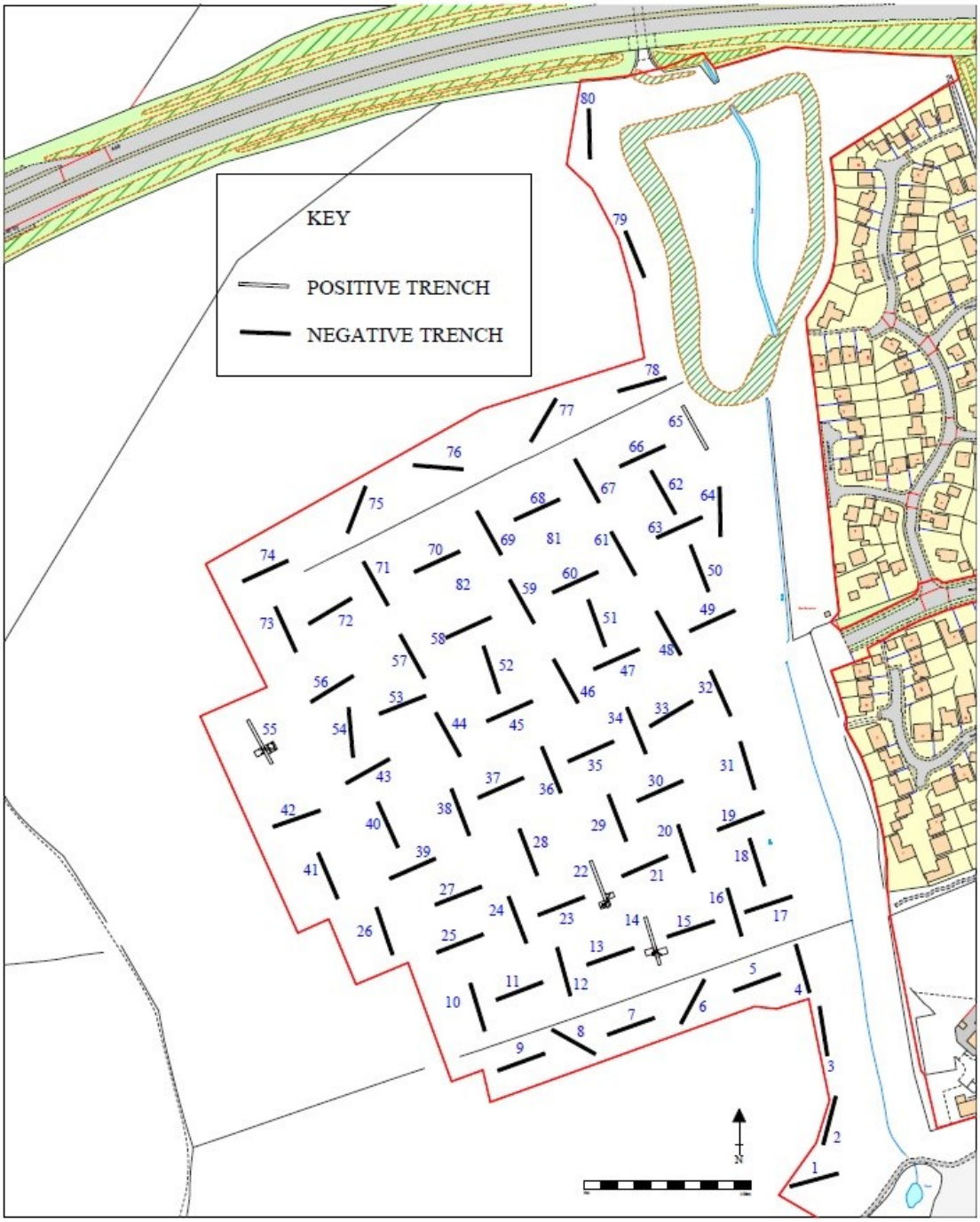


Figure 6: Plan of actual location of the trenches using GPS

***Trenches 1-9***

Trenches 1-9 were located at the southernmost part of the site, south of an existing field boundary and west along an access trackway. The majority of the field had been ploughed, harrowed and seeded, but the area where the trenches were to be placed had been marked out and left (Figs 7-8). All of these trenches were negative for archaeology.

The topsoil, ranged from 0.11m to 0.40m in depth, and consisted of a very dry mid-grey friable soil, with clay / silt inclusions and small sub-angular stone inclusions. The subsoil was a dark grey-brown loam containing clay-silt and small sub-angular stone inclusions. The subsoil was

discontinuous ranging between 0.00m and 0.20m. The natural substrata in this area was located at a depth of between 0.20m and 0.43m and consisted of a brown sandy clay.

Figure 7: Looking south along the western field boundary across the area for trenches 1-9. Trenches were positioned to the right of the track

Figure 8: Looking west along the southernmost field boundary. Area for Trenches 1-9 pre-evaluation.

***Trenches 10-73 and 81-82***

Trenches 10–73 and 81-82 were located in the central and largest area of the site, between two parallel field boundaries, running South-West – North-East, bounded to the east by a trackway and a residential area. It comprised an arable area to the west which had been freshly ploughed, harrowed and seeded, but to the East the field had been left fallow. The area for evaluation had been marked out (Figs 9-10). Four trenches within this area were positive for archaeology.

Sixty six trenches were excavated in this field. Most of the trenches revealed modern field drainage systems and evidence of a medieval ridge and furrow field system. Four trenches (Trench 14, Trench 22, Trench 55 and Trench 65) contained archaeology.

The topsoil, ranged from 0.02m to 0.47m in depth, and consisted of a dry and firm mid-grey sandy clay with small sub-angular pebbles. The subsoil was discontinuous and, was a light grey / brown sandy clay with small sub-angular stone inclusions ranging between 0.00m and 0.28m deep. The natural substrata in this area was located at a depth of between 0.08m and 0.51m and consisted of a patchy orange / light brown clay with <10% chalk and flint inclusions.

Figure 9: Central area looking west along the southernmost field boundary on the north side prior to excavation.

Figure 10: Central area looking south-west from north-eastern corner prior to excavation.

***Trench 14***

Trench 14 was located along the southernmost part of the central area next to, and north of, an existing field boundary, somewhat towards the centre. In addition to revealing furrows and plough scars running in an east-west direction, there was a linear feature (Fig. 13) running NW-SE [3] (4) which contained 6 sherds of mid-late 1st century Roman pottery and degraded animal bone fragments. This feature was shallow, measuring 0.20m at its deepest point and was 0.60m wide. This linear feature was cut by a small pit [1] (Fig. 12) which contained no finds. Unfortunately this pit was in turn truncated by a slate land drain.

The trench was extended to the East and to the West to further characterise the linear feature (Figs. 14 & 15). The additional work revealed that it continued straight in a south-west direction, but became quite truncated as it extended to the north-east. Further investigation may be required to establish the purpose of the linear and to see if it is connected to the similar linear feature located in Trench 22 (see below).

| **Trench 14** | **Alignment** N-S | **Total length** 30.0m | **Width** 1.8m | **Area** 54.00m² | **Min depth** 0.38m | **Max depth** 0.55m | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | From **N** end **0m** | **5m** | **10m** | **15m** | **20m** | **25m** | To **S** end **30m** |
| **Topsoil depth** | 0.29 | 0.24 | - | 0.13 | 0.10 | 0.15 | 0.20 |
| **Subsoil depth** | 0.08 | 0.09 | - | 0.10 | 0.14 | 0.14 | |
| **Top of natural substratum** | 0.37 | 0.33 | - | 0.23 | 0.24 | 0.29 | 0.20 |
| **Base of trench** | 0.43 | 0.55 | 0.50 | 0.40 | 0.41 | 0.48 | 0.38 |

Figure 11: Trench 14 looking north. (Scale: 1.00m)


Figure 12: Photograph showing excavated pit [1] (2) in trench 14. Scale 0.3m


Figure 13:Photograph showing excavated linear [3](4) in trench 14. Scale 0.3m

Figure 14: Trench 14 extended to establish the direction of the linear. Looking west.

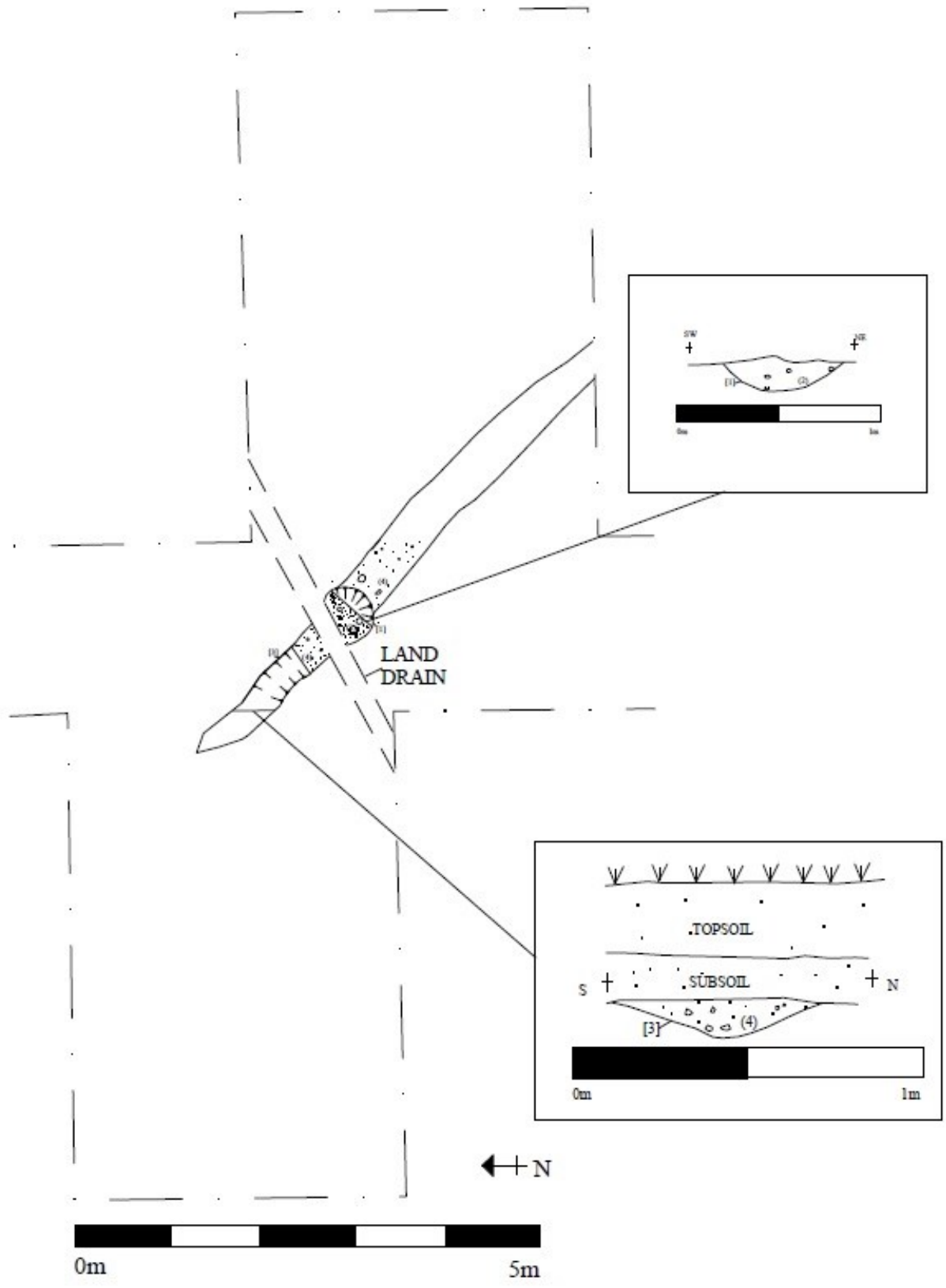


Figure 15: Plan of features within Trench 14. Scale 5m.

### *Trench 22*

Trench 22 was located just north of Trench 14. In addition to revealing furrows and plough scars running in an east-west direction, there was a linear feature [7], (Figs 17-18) which ran North-East – South-West and contained 129 sherds of Roman pottery dating from mid to late 1st century through to 2nd century. 9 fragments of degraded animal bone were also recovered from this context. This feature was shallow, measuring 0.12m at its deepest point and 0.30m wide.

The trench was extended to the East and to the West to further characterise the feature, and the extension showed that it continued straight on a similar orientation (Figs 18 & 19). Further investigation may be required to establish the purpose of the linear and to see if it is connected to the linear feature located in Trench 14.

| **Trench 22** | **Alignment** N-S | **Total length** 30.0m | **Width** 1.8m | **Area** 54.00m² | **Min depth** 0.30m | **Max depth** 0.37m | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | From **N** end **0m** | **5m** | **10m** | **15m** | **20m** | **25m** | To **S** end **30m** |
| **Topsoil depth** | 0.29 | 0.09 | 0.07 | 0.07 | 0.05 | 0.08 | 0.08 |
| **Subsoil depth** | 0.19 | 0.13 | 0.17 | 0.15 | 0.19 | 0.16 | 0.15 |
| **Top of natural substratum** | 0.31 | 0.22 | 0.24 | 0.22 | 0.24 | 0.24 | 0.23 |
| **Base of trench** | 0.37 | 0.37 | 0.35 | 0.35 | 0.30 | 0.39 | 0.37 |

Figure 16: Trench 22 looking north. (Scale: 1.00m)


Figure 17: Photograph showing excavated linear feature [7](8) in Trench 22. Scale 1.0m

Figure 18: Trench 22 extended to establish the direction of linear feature [7]. Scale 1.0m

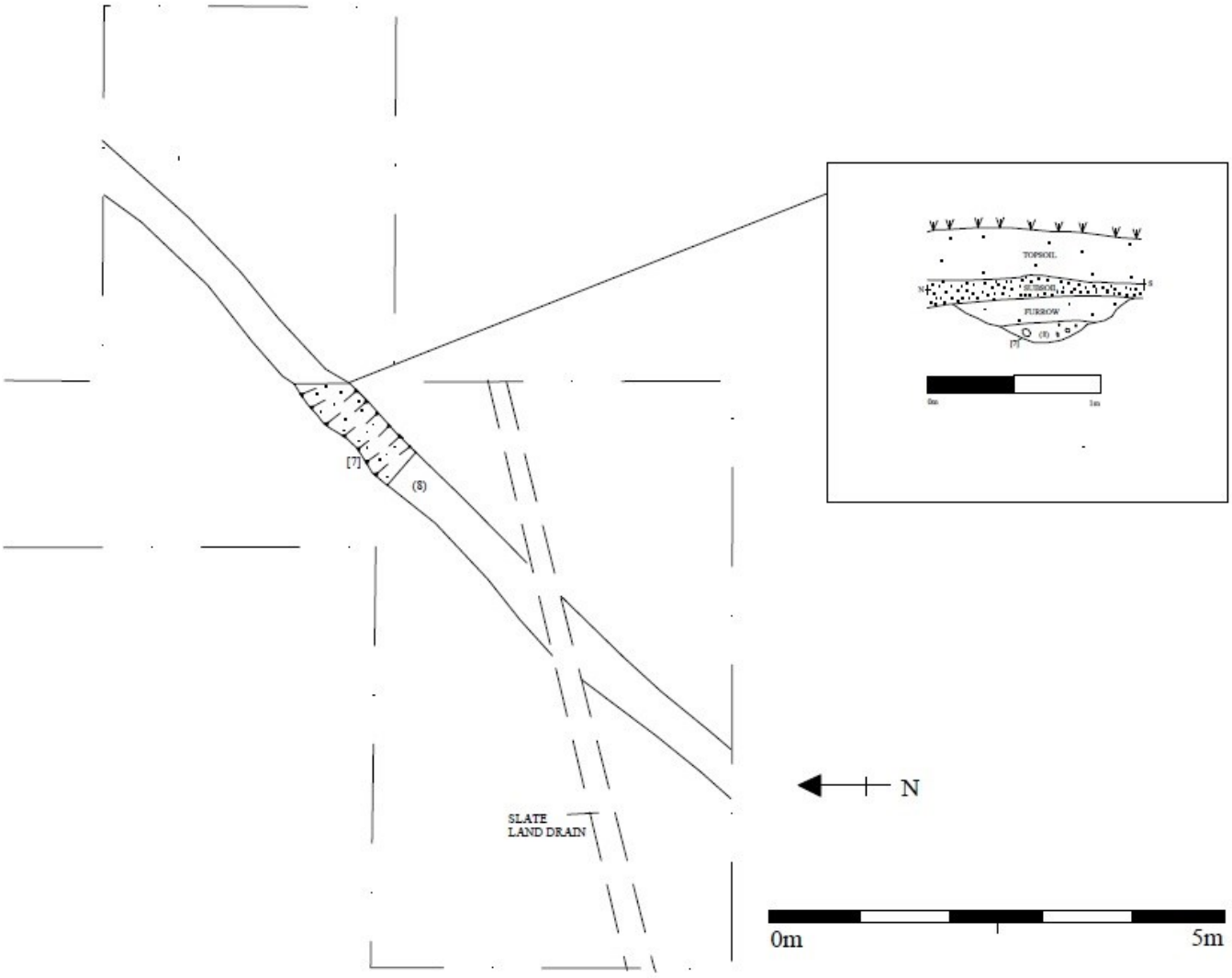


Figure 19: Plan of features within Trench 22.

### *Trench 55*

Trench 55 was located along the westernmost boundary of the site. What appeared to be a large linear feature crossed the trench. A section was excavated to reveal what looked like a large ditch with a slight curvature [9] (Fig 21). The trench was extended either side to try to establish the nature and the direction of the feature. It became apparent following this extension that the feature was not a ditch, but a series of large elongated pits forming a line of four in total (Figs 22 & 23). The indication is that these features form part of a pit alignment boundary. Further investigation may be required to establish if the pit alignment continues and if there are any related features close by.

| **Trench 55** | **Alignment** NW-SE | **Total length** 30.0m | **Width** 1.8m | **Area** 54.00m² | **Min depth** 0.43m | **Max depth** 0.51m | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | From **NW** end **0m** | **5m** | **10m** | **15m** | **20m** | **25m** | To **SE** end **30m** |
| **Topsoil depth** | 0.12 | 0.07 | 0.06 | 0.10 | 0.08 | 0.08 | 0.07 |
| **Subsoil depth** | 0.14 | 0.23 | 0.20 | 0.17 | 0.20 | 0.20 | 0.19 |
| **Top of natural substratum** | 0.26 | 0.30 | 0.24 | 0.27 | 0.28 | 0.28 | 0.26 |
| **Base of trench** | 0.50 | 0.51 | 0.46 | 0.43 | 0.48 | 0.46 | 0.44 |


Figure 20: Trench 55 looking north. (Scale: 2x 1.00m)


Figure 21: Photograph showing excavated pit [9] in Trench 55. Scale 1.0m

Figure 22: Trench 55 extended to establish nature and direction of feature. Photograph shows pit alignment. Scale 2x 1.0m

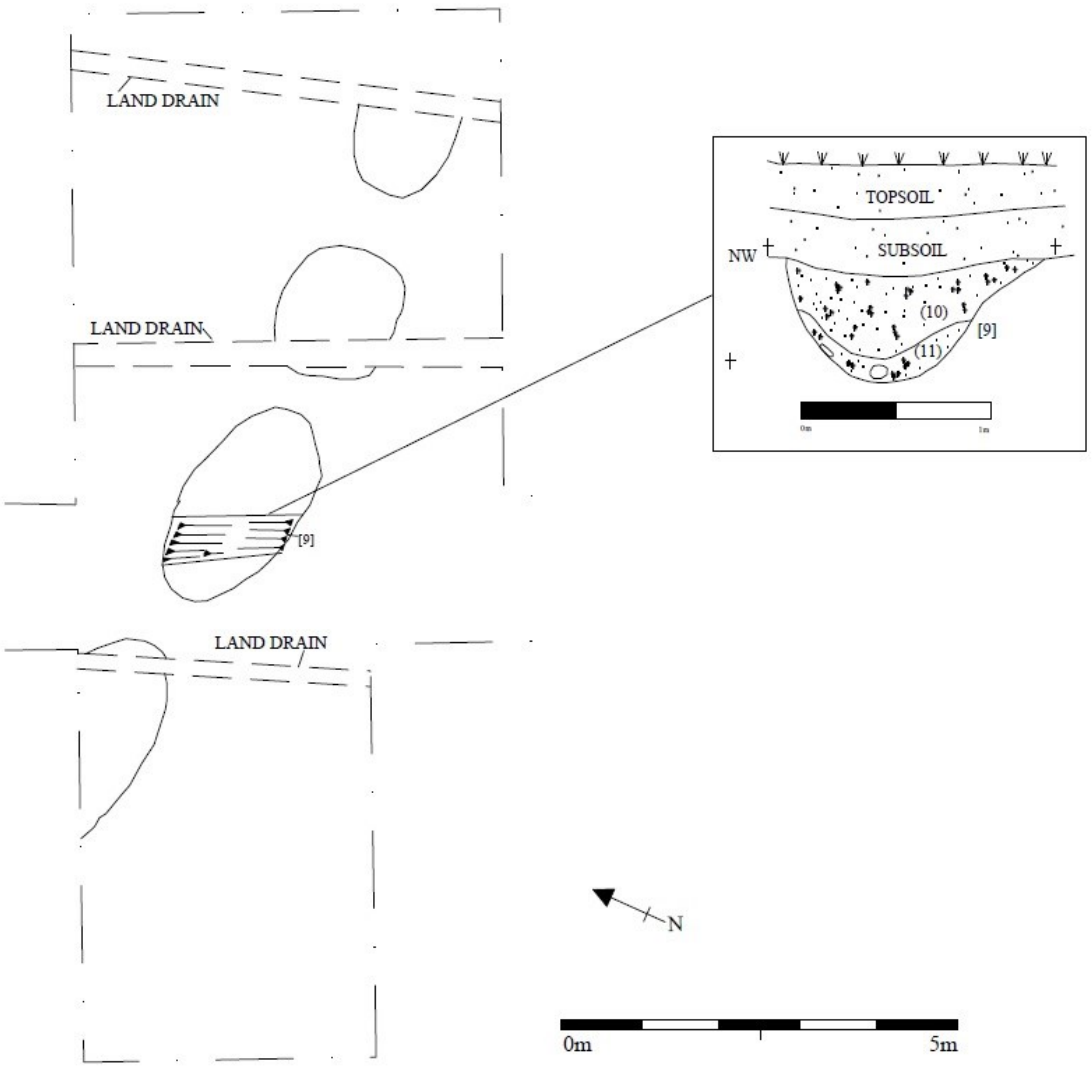


Figure 23: Plan of Trench 55 showing location of features. Scale 5m.

**Trench 65** was located at the eastern edge of the site, just south of the pond next to the trackway. It contained a small stake hole [5] which was undated and possibly a modern feature.

| **Trench 65** | **Alignment**<br>NW-SE | **Total length**<br>30.0m | **Width**<br>1.8m | **Area**<br>54.00m² | **Min depth**<br>0.43m | **Max depth**<br>0.51m | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | From **NW** end<br>**0m** | **5m** | **10m** | **15m** | **20m** | **25m** | To **SE** end<br>**30m** |
| **Topsoil depth** | 0.12 | 0.07 | 0.06 | 0.10 | 0.08 | 0.08 | 0.07 |
| **Subsoil depth** | 0.14 | 0.23 | 0.20 | 0.17 | 0.20 | 0.20 | 0.19 |
| **Top of natural substratum** | 0.26 | 0.30 | 0.24 | 0.27 | 0.28 | 0.28 | 0.26 |
| **Base of trench** | 0.50 | 0.51 | 0.46 | 0.43 | 0.48 | 0.46 | 0.44 |

Figure 24: Trench 65 looking south-east. (Scale: 1.00m)

***Trenches 74-80***

Trenches 74-80 were located at the northernmost part of the site, north of an existing field boundary and east alongside a pond stretching up to the A46. The majority of the field had been ploughed, harrowed and seeded, but the area where the trenches were to be placed had been marked out and left (Fig 26). All of these trenches were negative for archaeology.

The topsoil, ranged from 0.11m to 0.32m in depth, and consisted of a dry and firm mid-grey sandy clay with small sub-angular pebbles. The subsoil was discontinuous and, was a light grey / brown sandy clay with small sub-angular stone inclusions ranging between 0.00m and 0.18m deep. The natural substrata in this area was located at a depth of between 0.16m and 0.45m and consisted of a patchy orange / light brown clay with <10% chalk and flint inclusions.

Figure 25: Looking east along the northern field boundary across the area for trenches 74-80.

**Demolished Structural Remains**

Towards the western periphery of the site was a concentration of building debris including brick work (Bricks measured 22cm x 7.5cm x 10.5cm), small fragments of broken concrete slab (16cm thick), some 'granite sets' which were set into concrete and many fragments of broken glazed drainpipe, indicating a collapsed structure.

Initial assessment suggested that it may be a war-time pill box with the recovery of a metal spigot, however after some research and conversation with the local farmers, an alternative function may have been that it was a sewage outlet, which could be opened in order to spread the sewage and fertilise the field.

Figure 26 illustrates the location of the remains (highlighted in red) and the direction and location of possibly associated pipework (Figs. 27 and 28).

In the adjacent field, s sewage outlets remains complete and *in situ* which is also illustrated in Figure 26, highlighted in blue. The structure measures 1.50m x 1.32m wide (concrete top), and stands approximately 1.m high (Fig. 29).

Figure 26: Google Earth image from 2006 showing the drain outlet and the location of the attached pipeline marked with red outline, and similar outlet / pipe location in adjacent field outlined in blue.

Figure 27: Photograph showing demolished structure, looking west.

Figure 28: Photograph showing demolished structure, looking north.

Figure 29: Complete sewage outlet *in situ* in adjacent field.

## The Finds

### *The Mid-Late Iron Age and Early Roman pottery – Nicholas J. Cooper*

#### *Introduction*

A stratified assemblage of 65 sherds (613g) of Mid-late Iron Age and 135 sherds (1198g) of Early Roman pottery was recovered predominantly from pit contexts (10) [9] and (8) [7] respectively with a small group of Early Roman date from (4) [3]. Additionally, three sherds (25g) of Iron Age pottery were recovered unstratified from Trench 25. The pottery has been analysed by form and fabric using the Leicestershire County Museums prehistoric and Roman fabric series (Marsden 2011, 62, Table 1; Pollard 1994, 113), in accordance with *The Standard for Pottery Studies in Archaeology* (Barclay *et al*. 2016), and quantified by sherd count and weight.

#### *Mid-Late Iron Age pottery*

| Context | Fabric | Form | Part | Rim Type | Dec | Sherds | Weight | EVEs | Diam |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10 | R1 | jar | rim | Upright flat | scored | 1 | 14 | 0.05 | 220 |
| 10 | R1 | jar | rim | Upright flat | scored | 1 | 5 | 0.06 | 160 |
| 10 | Q1 | jar | rim | upright tapered | | 1 | 4 | 0.05 | 100 |
| 10 | R1 | jar | body | | scored | 48 | 420 | | |
| 10 | Q1 | jar | body | | | 14 | 170 | | |
| **Total** | | | | | | **65** | **613** | **0.16** | |

The partial remains of three separate jars in East Midlands Scored ware (Elsdon 1992a) were recovered from the same context, two of which have scored decoration. The two scored jars have upright flat rims with diameters of 220mm and 160mm (Elsdon 1992b, 39, fig.24.2), whilst the undecorated vessel has an upright tapered rim with a diameter of only 100mm (Elsdon 1992b, 39, fig.24.1). The vessels have been manufactured in clays opened with locally available inclusions such as Mountsorrel granodiorite (Fabric R1) and quartz sand (Fabric Q1)

typical of other assemblages of this date in this part of Leicestershire and Beaumont Leys specifically (Marsden 2011, 61). The pottery dates between the 4th or 3rd century BC and the mid-1st century AD. Given the proximity of Early Roman settlement of later 1st century AD, the Iron Age pottery could well date to the latter part of that timespan.

***Early Roman pottery***

The quantified record of the assemblage is presented in the table below.

| Cont | Cut | Fabric | Form | Type | Part | Rim | Dec | Sherds | Weight | EVEs | Diam | Date |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 3 | CG1A | Jar | Storage | Body | | | 6 | 50 | | | M-L 1st |
| 8 | 7 | SW2 | jar | necked | Profile | bead | sooted | 92 | 795 | 0.75 | 180 | M-L 1st |
| 8 | 7 | SW3 | jar | lid-seat | Profile | channel | rilling | 29 | 310 | 0.18 | 160 | M-L 1st |
| 8 | 7 | SW2 | jar | misc | body | | | 5 | 30 | | | M-L 1st |
| 8 | 7 | OW2 | misc | misc | body | | | 2 | 10 | | | L1st-2nd |
| 8 | 7 | GW5 | misc | misc | body | | | 1 | 3 | | | L1st-2nd |

The assemblage derives from context (4) [3] and (8) [7], the former containing four sherds from a shell-tempered (Fabric CG1A) storage jar dating to the middle or later 1st century. Context (8) contained the substantially complete remains of two jars in transitional early Roman sandy ware fabrics (SW2 and 3) and body sherds from three other vessels in early Roman oxidised and grey ware fabrics (Fabrics OW2 and GW5). The necked jar in SW2 is in a poorly-prepared light grey wheel-thrown fabric with sooting on the external surface, whilst that in SW3 is the more typical lid-seated or channel rimmed jar with external rilling, both dating to the middle or later 1st century and possibly into the early 2nd. The level of completeness of the vessels would suggest primary disposal of rubbish close to the focus of settlement.

***Discussion of potential***

Analysis of the Late Iron Age and Roman pottery from the evaluation has demonstrated the good preservation of primary rubbish deposits from securely stratified deposits and further field work is highly likely to generate and assemblage with good research potential.

## *The Animal Bones - William Johnson*

***Introduction***

A very small animal bone assemblage was recovered by hand during excavations at Ashton Green, Leicester. Animal bone was recovered from three contexts one of which was dated to the late Iron Age and the other two to the early Roman period.

***Methodology***

The bones were identified by comparison to reference material held at the University of Leicester and recorded in a catalogue. Condition was scored using Harland *et al.*'s (2003) scale.

***Results***

The bone was very poorly preserved with all fragments across all contexts being described as poorly persevered, defined as having a flaky surface on over 50% of the specimen. Fragmentation was also high, evidenced by the high numbers of small unidentifiable fragments,

many of which are highly likely to be associated. The majority of the fragmentation appeared to be modern with the broken surfaces being distinctly lighter in colour.

Iron Age context (10) [9] contained the only bones that could be identified to any level with the majority comprising an associated group deriving from a single equid mandible. The group comprised all four incisors, two premolars and multiple joining fragments. Other fragments were also likely associated. The only other identified bones included a proximal radius fragments and lumbar vertebrae spine from large mammals and a fragmentary cattle molar. The radius fragments was burned and an unidentifiable fragment was calcined.

***Discussion***

Across all contexts from both time periods the poor preservation and high fragmentation had severely limited the information that could be gained from the assemblage with none of the Roman period bones able to be identified and very few from the Iron Age assemblage. The presence of elements of horse are likely the remains of a working animal, its presence indicates that the assemblage is likely to be general refuse.

***Statement of Potential***

No further work is required on the assemblage under study. Should further excavation work be carried out analysis of the bone is only recommended should a significant assemblage be recovered. The poor preservation conditions and fragmentation severely limit the potential to interpret diet and animal husbandry strategies and to draw meaningful conclusions.

***Catalogue of hand collected animal bone presented by specimen***

| Context | Cut | Feature | Date | Element | Taxon | Fragments | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 3 | | Roman | Indet | Indet | 21 | |
| 8 | 7 | | Roman | Indet | Indet | 9 | |
| 10 | | | Iron Age | Mandible | Equid | 8 | End of mandible with both left and right sides fused |
| 10 | | | Iron Age | P1 | Equid | 1 | Associated with mandible |
| 10 | | | Iron Age | P2 | Equid | 1 | Associated with mandible |
| 10 | | | Iron Age | Incisors | Equid | 5 | Associated with mandible, 4 incisors |
| 10 | | | Iron Age | M1/M2 | Cattle | 2 | |
| 10 | | | Iron Age | Lumbar vertebra | Large mammal | 1 | Fragment |
| 10 | | | Iron Age | Radius | Large mammal | 1 | Fragment from proximal end, burned |
| 10 | | | Iron Age | Indet teeth | Indet | 4 | Fragments |
| 10 | | | Iron Age | Indet | Indet | 47 | 1 calcined, majority probably associated with mandible |

***The Prehistoric Flint – Lynden Cooper***

A small group of five pieces were recovered, two of which were stratified. A secondary flake with signs of burning was recovered, residually, in the later Iron Age pit (10) [9], whilst a scraper with inverse retouch came residually from Early Roman pit (8) [7]. A secondary flake was recovered unstratified from Trench 47 and another flake fragment from Trench 55. Lastly a secondary flake was found unstratified from an unspecified trench. Overall the assemblage points to activity in the vicinity during the Neolithic and Bronze Ages. Further field work is likely to produce a more diagnostic assemblage.

## *The Environmental Remains - Adam Santer*

### *Introduction*

During an archaeological evaluation at Ashton Green, Leicester a bulk soil sample was taken for the analysis of charred plant remains. The sample came from the fill (10) of Mid-Late Iron Age ditch [9]. The analysis of the charred plant remains are presented here, together with a discussion of what potential evidence can be obtained regarding past diet, crop husbandry strategies and environment at the site.

### *Methodology*

The sample consisted of a mid-orangey grey 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 fine and course residues were not sorted. Plant remains were identified by comparison to modern reference material available at ULAS and their names follow Stace (1991).

### *Results*

The sample contained a low density of plant remains (0.22 items per litre). A single grain of barley (*Hordeum vulgare* L.) and an indeterminate cereal fragment was found. The sample contained a large quantity of modern rootlets and some modern weed seeds. This is indicative of heavy disturbance to the contexts from bioturbation.

*The charred plant remains found in the sample*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Sample** | **1** | | |
| **Context** | **10** | | |
| **Cut** | **9** | | |
| **Feature type** | **Ditch** | | |
| Grain | | | |
| *Hordeum vulgare* L. | 1 | | Cf. Barley |
| Indeterminate cereal grain | 1 | | Indeterminate cereal grain |
| **Total** | **2** | | |
| **Soil volume (L)** | **9** | | |
| **% Analysed** | **100%** | | |
| **Items per litre** | **0.22** | | |

### *Conclusion and statement of potential*

The specimens that were present likely represent residual scatter from food waste spillage which had become burnt on a hearth. The ashes from the hearth would have formed a general scatter on the site and collected in open features (such as the ditch). Due to the small sample size and lack of plant remains found in the sample it was not possible to learn anything about diet, crop husbandry strategies or environment at the site. However, if further work is to be carried out then a suitable sampling strategy should be implemented.

## Conclusion

Although the geophysical survey did not give any indications as to the presence of any archaeological features within the site, the evaluation has revealed archaeology in two areas.

A small assemblage of unstratified flint finds from the site proved to be Neolithic to Bronze Age in date, adding to the finds of similar age recovered during earlier field walking of the site.

On the western side of the site, Trench 55 revealed a series of pits, one of which contained Iron Age pottery. The linear arrangement of the pits suggests that they are part of a pit alignment boundary, characteristic of the later Bronze Age to early Iron Age, and representing some of the earliest land allotment introduced on the later prehistoric period.

The area occupied by Trenches 14 and 22 in the south of the site revealed evidence for later occupation in the form of gullies containing large amounts of Roman pottery. The size and quality of the assemblage suggests that it represents a primary refuse deposit and very likely associated with nearby habitation.

This evidence combined suggests human activity on the site from at least the Neolithic, to the end of the 2nd century AD. Further investigation of these two areas is therefore recommended to establish the full extent and the nature of these features.

## Archive

The site archive will be deposited with ULAS under accession number Y.A20.2018

The archive contains:

- 1 x A4 report
- 82 x Trench sheets
- 1 x Context summary index sheet
- 10 x Context sheets
- 3 x Digital photo index
- 8 x Digital photo sheets
- 1 x Drawing index
- 1 x Drawing record sheet
- 3 x Permatrace drawing sheets
- 1 x Sample record

## Publication

University of Leicester Archaeological Services supports the *Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations* (OASIS) database held by the Archaeological Data Service at the University of York. The online OASIS form (Appendix 1) shall be completed detailing the results of the evaluation and once the report has become a public document following is incorporation into the Historic Environment Record it shall be placed on the website.

## Acknowledgements

The project was managed by John Thomas, the fieldwork was directed by Claire LaCombe with the assistance of Andrew McLeish and Ian Reeds. Pottery finds were identified by Nicholas Cooper, Flint finds were identified by Lyndon Cooper and the environmental sample was assessed by Adam Santer. Thanks goes to Euan Kerry of Planters (Leicester) Ltd, for operating the machinery.

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23.11.2018

## Appendix 1: OASIS data entry

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **PROJECT DETAILS** | **Oasis No** | **universi1-334759** | | |
| | **Project Name** | Ashton Green, Residential Parcel 4, Leicester, LE4 2SB. | | |
| | **Start/end dates of field work** | 23-10-2018 to 08-11-2018 | | |
| | **Previous/Future Work** | Yes | | |
| | **Project Type** | Field Evaluation | | |
| | **Site Status** | None | | |
| | **Current Land Use** | Farming and pasture | | |
| | **Monument Type/Period** | Ditch | | |
| | **Significant Finds/Period** | Flint: Neolithic – Bronze Age<br>Bone: Animal, Iron Age and Roman<br>Ceramics: Mid-Late Iron Age. Roman 1st 2nd Century | | |
| | **Development Type** | Residential development | | |
| | **Reason for Investigation** | National Planning Policy Framework | | |
| | **Position in the Planning Process** | Unknown | | |
| | **Planning Ref.** | 20181813 | | |
| **PROJECT LOCATION** | **Site Address/Postcode** | LE4 2SB. | | |
| | **Study Area** | 14.86ha. | | |
| | **Site Coordinates** | SK 574 100 | | |
| | **Height OD** | Min: 90m - Max: 90m | | |
| **PROJECT CREATORS** | **Organisation** | University of Leicester Archaeological Services | | |
| | **Project Brief Originator** | Local Authority Archaeologist | | |
| | **Project Design Originator** | John Thomas | | |
| | **Project Manager** | John Thomas | | |
| | **Project Director/Supervisor** | Claire LaCombe | | |
| | **Sponsor/Funding Body** | Developer: Kier Living Ltd. | | |
| **PROJECT ARCHIVE** | | **Physical** | **Digital** | **Paper** |
| | **Recipient** | ULAS | ULAS | ULAS |
| | **ID (Acc. No.)** | Y.A20.2018 | Y.A20.2018 | Y.A20.2018 |
| | **Contents** | Pottery | Digital photography<br>Miscellaneous Report | Context sheets<br>Drawings<br>Miscellaneous Report |
| **PROJECT BIBLIOGRAPHY** | **Type** | Grey Literature | | |
| | **Title** | An Archaeological Evaluation at Ashton Green, Residential Parcel 4, Leicester, LE4 2SB. | | |
| | **Author** | Claire LaCombe | | |
| | **Other bibliographic details** | Report number 2018-187 | | |
| | **Date** | 2018 | | |
| | **Publisher/Place** | University of Leicester, Leicester | | |
| | **Description** | Pdf_A | | |

## Appendix II: Detail of negative trenches

Trench Summaries:

| Trench | Orientation | Min. Depth (m) | Max. Depth (m) | Dimensions | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 01 | W-E | 0.28 | 0.38 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 02 | NW-SE | 0.20 | 0.32 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 03 | N-S | 0.26 | 0.40 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 04 | N-S | 0.24 | 0.40 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 05 | E-W | 0.27 | 0.35 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 06 | N-S | 0.27 | 0.36 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 07 | SW-NE | 0.28 | 0.38 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 08 | NW-SE | 0.30 | 0.43 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 09 | E-W | 0.26 | 0.40 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 10 | N-S | 0.30 | 0.49 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 11 | E-W | 0.42 | 0.47 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 12 | NE-SW | 0.29 | 0.50 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 13 | E-W | 0.32 | 0.48 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 15 | E-W | 0.38 | 0.60 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 16 | N-S | 0.42 | 0.50 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 17 | E-W | 0.34 | 0.46 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 18 | N-S | 0.38 | 0.55 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 19 | E-W | 0.28 | 0.42 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 20 | N-S | 0.30 | 0.39 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 21 | E-W | 0.24 | 0.34 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 23 | E-W | 0.28 | 0.36 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 24 | N-S | 0.27 | 0.40 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 25 | E-W | 0.27 | 0.35 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 26 | N-S | 0.20 | 0.53 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 27 | E-W | 0.35 | 0.46 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 28 | N-S | 0.26 | 0.40 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 29 | N-S | 0.30 | 0.48 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 30 | E-W | 0.22 | 0.30 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 31 | NW-SE | 0.36 | 0.56 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 32 | N-S | 0.39 | 0.55 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 33 | E-W | 0.30 | 0.39 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 34 | N-S | 0.30 | 0.48 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 35 | E-W | 0.27 | 0.36 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 36 | N-S | 0.26 | 0.34 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 37 | E-W | 0.24 | 0.30 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 38 | N-S | 0.36 | 0.53 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 39 | E-W | 0.36 | 0.49 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 40 | N-S | 0.20 | 0.37 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 41 | N-S | 0.26 | 0.40 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 42 | E-W | 0.30 | 0.51 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 43 | E-W | 0.32 | 0.45 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 44 | N-S | 0.34 | 0.43 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 45 | E-W | 0.30 | 0.44 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 46 | N-S | 0.30 | 0.40 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 47 | E-W | 0.25 | 0.34 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 48 | N-S | 0.30 | 0.40 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 49 | E-W | 0.28 | 0.47 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 50 | N-S | 0.39 | 0.51 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 51 | N-S | 0.31 | 0.40 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 52 | N-S | 0.31 | 0.37 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 53 | E-W | 0.34 | 0.47 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 54 | N-S | 0.23 | 0.46 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 56 | E-W | 0.28 | 0.45 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 57 | N-S | 0.32 | 0.44 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 58 | E-W | 0.30 | 0.40 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 59 | N-S | 0.28 | 0.42 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 60 | E-W | 0.28 | 0.37 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 61 | N-S | 0.29 | 0.37 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 62 | N-S | 0.21 | 0.38 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 63 | E-W | 0.22 | 0.40 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 64 | N-S | 0.25 | 0.35 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 66 | E-W | 0.26 | 0.36 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 67 | N-S | 0.20 | 0.40 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 68 | NW-SE | 0.24 | 0.36 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 69 | N-S | 0.26 | 0.46 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 70 | E-W | 0.26 | 0.40 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 71 | N-S | 0.26 | 0.38 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 72 | E-W | 0.26 | 0.35 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 73 | N-S | 0.26 | 0.40 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 74 | E-W | 0.16 | 0.35 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 75 | SW-NE | 0.23 | 0.30 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 76 | NW-SE | 0.24 | 0.36 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 77 | NE-SW | 0.26 | 0.42 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 78 | NW-SE | 0.27 | 0.45 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 79 | N-S | 0.22 | 0.33 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 80 | N-S | 0.19 | 0.40 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 81 | NE-SW | 0.21 | 0.34 | 30.0 x 1.8 = 54.0m² | No Archaeological features |
| 82 | NE-SW | 0.21 | 0.34 | 35.0 x 1.8 = 63.0m² | No Archaeological features |

**Photographs of Negative Trenches**

Figure 30: Trench 1

Figure 31: Trench 2

Figure 32: Trench 3

Figure 33: Trench 4

Figure 34: Trench 5

Figure 35: Trench 6

Figure 36: Trench 7

Figure 37: Trench 8

Figure 38: Trench 9

Figure 39: Trench 10

Figure 40: Trench 11

Figure 41: Trench 12

Figure 42: Trench 13

Figure 43: Trench 15

Figure 44: Trench 16

Figure 45: Trench 17

Figure 46: Trench 18

Figure 47: Trench 19

Figure 48: Trench 20

Figure 49: Trench 21

Figure 50: Trench 23

Figure 51: Trench 24

Figure 52: Trench 25

Figure 53: Trench 26

Figure 54: Trench 27

Figure 55: Trench 28

Figure 56: Trench 29

Figure 57: Trench 30

Figure 58: Trench 31

Figure 59: Trench 32

Figure 60: Trench 33

Figure 61: Trench 34

Figure 62: Trench 35

Figure 63: Trench 36

Figure 64: Trench 37

Figure 65: Trench 38

Figure 66: Trench 39

Figure 67: Trench 40

Figure 68: Trench 41

Figure 69: Trench 42

Figure 70: Trench 43

Figure 71: Trench 44

Figure 72: Trench 45

Figure 73: Trench 46

Figure 74: Trench 47

Figure 75: Trench 48

Figure 76: Trench 49

Figure 77: Trench 50

Figure 78: Trench 51

Figure 79: Trench 52

Figure 80: Trench 53

Figure 81: Trench 54


Figure 82: Trench 56

Figure 83: Trench 57

Figure 84: Trench 58

Figure 85: Trench 59

Figure 86: Trench 60

Figure 87: Trench 61

Figure 88: Trench 62

Figure 89: Trench 63

Figure 90: Trench 64

Figure 91: Trench 66

Figure 92: Trench 67

Figure 93: Trench 68

Figure 94: Trench 69

Figure 95: Trench 70

Figure 96: Trench 71

Figure 97: Trench 72

Figure 98: Trench 73

Figure 99: Trench 74

Figure 100: Trench 75

Figure 101: Trench 76

Figure 102: Trench 77

Figure 103: Trench 78

Figure 104: Trench 79

Figure 105: Trench 80

Figure 106: Trench 81

Figure 107: Trench 82

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