



UNIVERSITY OF
LEICESTER

Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological Evaluation
Land at Farndon Road, Market
Harborough, Leicestershire.**

NGR: SP 71976 86507

By Tim Higgins, Donald Clark and Claire
LaCombe



ULAS Report No 2017-113


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An Archaeological Evaluation
Land at Farndon Road, Market Harborough,
Leicestershire

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Summary

University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) carried out an archaeological evaluation on land west of Farndon Road, Market Harborough, Leicestershire, (SP 71976 86507) from the 7th to 13th June 2017 on the southern field, and from 17th to 28th July on the northern field. Trenches were excavated to evaluate an area for the proposed construction of new dwellings in former arable fields. None of the trenches contained any archaeological features and apart from field drains they were generally clean and sterile. The site archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council under accession number X.A57.2017.

Introduction

An archaeological evaluation was carried out on land at land west of Farndon Road, Market Harborough, Leicestershire (SP 71976 86507) by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS).

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.

Outline planning permission has been granted for Residential development of up to 230 dwellings and associated works (15/00746/OUT) on land at Farndon Fields, east of Farndon Road, Market Harborough, subject to planning conditions (Figs 1 and 2). This report presents the results of two separate phases of trial trenching across the site. It follows a strategy for the work devised by ULAS, which was set out in two separate Written Schemes of Investigation (WSI) Score 2017a and 2017b.

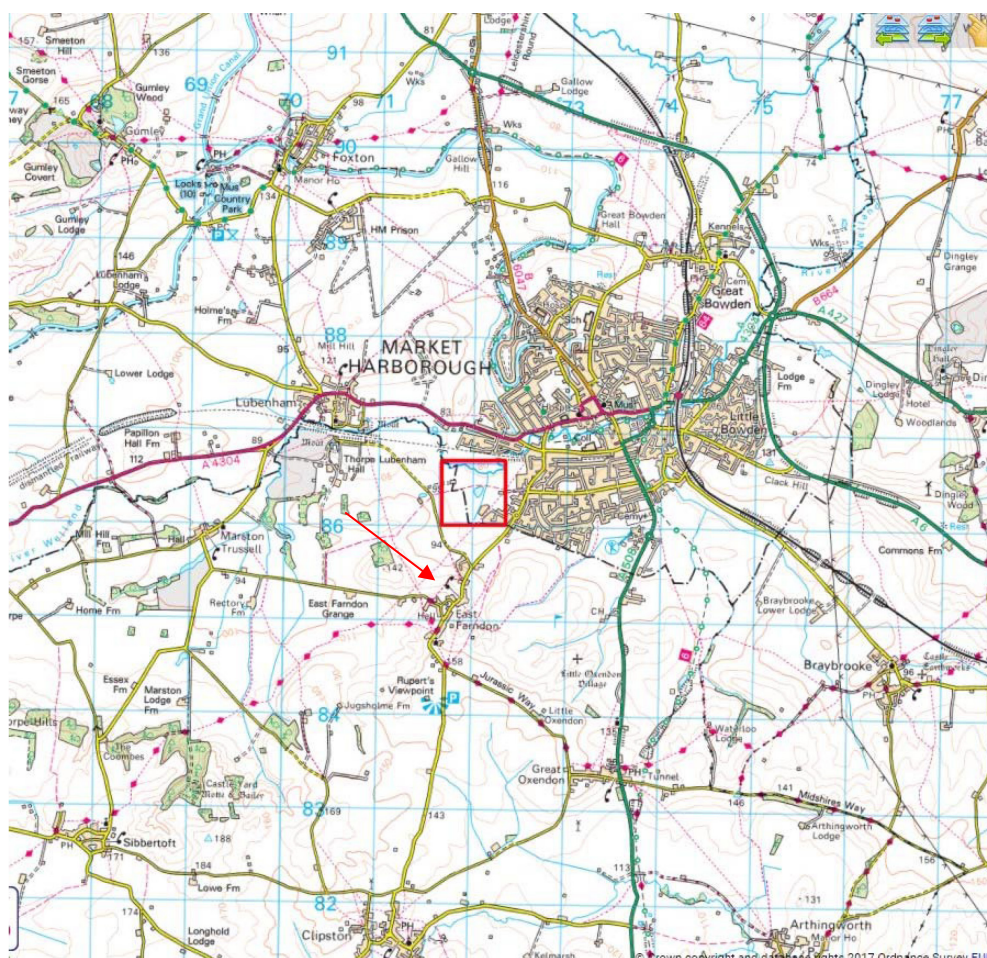


Figure 1: Location of the proposed site

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Site Description, Topography and Geology

The proposed development area lies on the western side of Market Harborough in the Welland Valley on flat ground bounded to the north by the river and is currently abandoned agricultural land.

The British Geological Survey website indicates that the underlying geology is likely to be Blue Lias and Charmouth mudstone overlain with sand and gravel river terrace deposits. There is likely to be overlying alluvium in the northern area close to the river.

Historical and Archaeological Background

A desk-based assessment has been undertaken for the site (Dawson 2016). Although there is prehistoric activity in the vicinity at Lubenham Hill and Welland Caravan Park and Roman activity within Market Harborough, the assessment suggested that the low lying level of the site indicates that there is low potential for prehistoric and Roman activity.

At the time of Domesday Market Harborough does not appear and the site lay on agricultural land west of an early settlement. The town was probably established in the 12th century around

the river. There is no evidence for ridge and furrow on the site suggesting it may have been pasture and any potential archaeology is likely to be associated with cultivation and grazing. Early OS maps show the area as fields from the 19th century onwards and the wider area has seen considerable development during the 20th and 21st centuries.



Figure 2: Google plan showing current land use.

Aims and Objectives

The main objectives of the archaeological work are:

- 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.

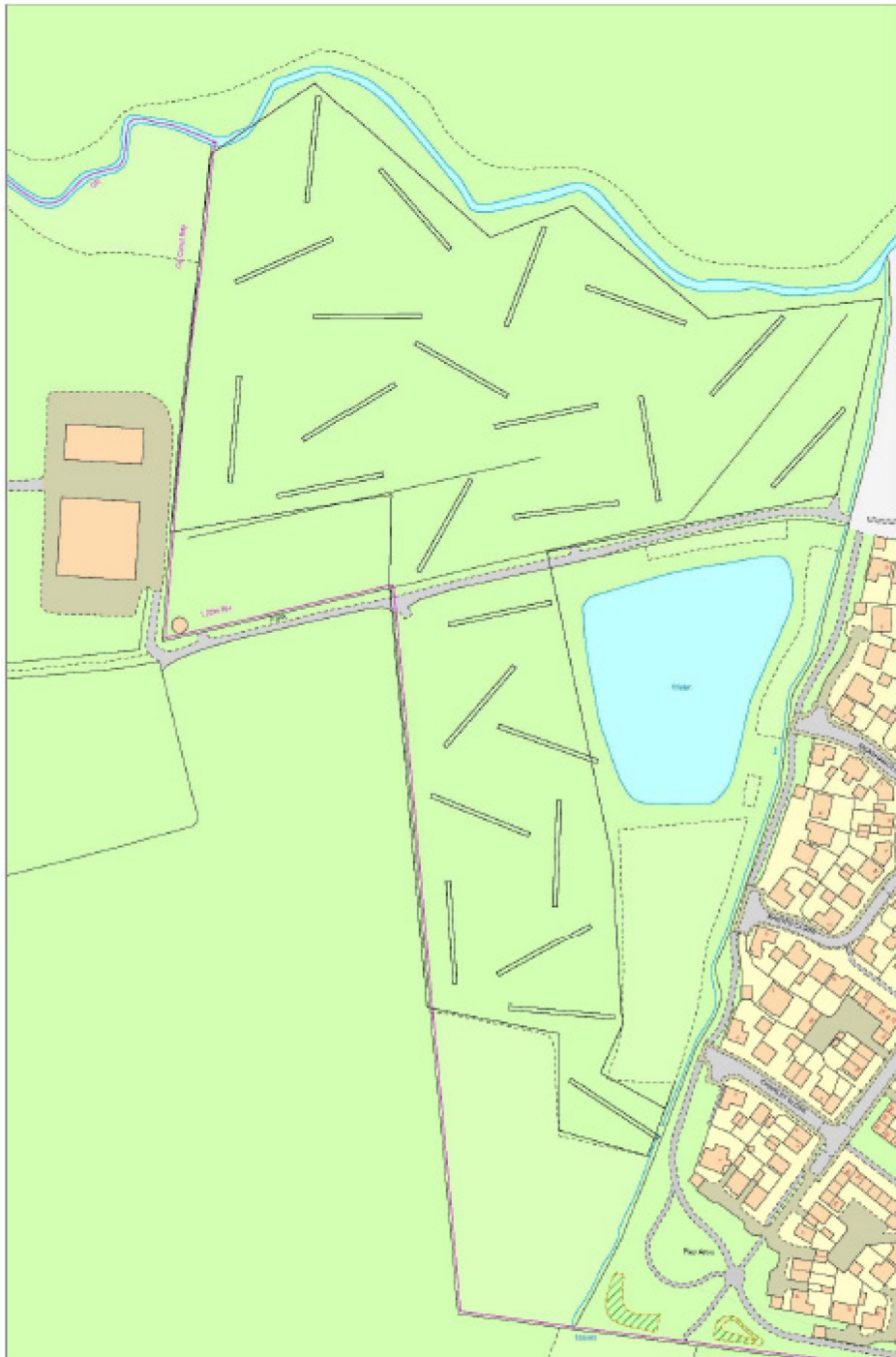


Figure 3: Proposed trench plan

Draft Research Themes

While the nature, extent and quality of archaeological remains within the areas of investigation for the project remain unknown until archaeological work is undertaken, it is possible to determine some initial objectives derived from East Midlands Heritage research agenda (Knight et al. 2012).

Although there is the low potential for the site the following specific research topics have been identified:

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).

Research aims will be reviewed and updated as the work progresses and new information comes to light.

Methodology

Prior to any machining of trial trenches, general photographs of the site areas were taken.

A total of 25, 50m long trenches had been proposed located where constraints allow. This represented just under a 4% sample of the available area. The provisional trench plan (Fig. 3) shows the proposed location of the trenches. A contingency of up to 150m of trenching was to be added following approval of the Planning Archaeologist (Richard Clark Leicestershire County Council) if needed to test areas of archaeology.

Following discussions with ecologists parts of the northern and southern fields were determined to be ecological sensitive area with the potential for badgers, newts, otters and grass snakes were on the site. Following further discussions new trench plans were produced for both the northern and southern field with some of the trenches removed, moved to a new location or reduced down in size to avoid the sensitive areas including areas around the edges shown as hatched areas on the trench plans. It was also agreed that the ecologists would be present on site for the first few days to agree the final location of the trenches before works start and to do fingertip searches and supervise the clearance. Within the northern field, the south-west corner contained redundant Farm structures and was not available for trenching.

The trenches were excavated using a mechanical excavator equipped with a 1.8 – 2.0m 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.

The work followed the approved WSI (Score 2017 a and 2017b) and adhered to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) *Code of Conduct* and adhered to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations* (2014).

Results

Southern Field

This area was located within the southern half of the development area where eight trenches, numbered 1 to 8, were opened (see Fig. 4). No archaeological finds or deposits were located within any of the trenches. The natural substratum was generally reached after around 0.35m-0.50m of topsoil and subsoil had been removed. The only features revealed were modern field drains observed within five trenches (1, 3, 4, 7 and 8). The field drains typically orientated north to south and east to west and comprised of either older ceramic pipe drains or more modern gravel and a plastic pipe.

Most of the trenches had deep subsoil that comprised a yellowish brown clay silt between 0.30m and 0.45m deep. The subsoil deposit was thought to be an alluvial deposit, which suggests that field was subjected to regular flooding from the nearby River Welland located 200m to the north.

The results of all excavated trenches for the southern field are presented below in Table 1 and images of each trench are available in Appendix 1.

Trench	Length (m)	Height of Trench base (m OD)	Natural Substratum	Notes	Min. depth to archaeology/natural (m)
1	c.28	79.55	Yellowish Brown plastic clay alluvium	Negative trench. Ceramic pipe land drain	0.50
2	c.28	79.20	Yellowish Brown plastic clay alluvium	Negative trench empty	0.35
3	c.29	79.05	Yellowish Brown plastic clay alluvium	Negative trench. Ceramic pipe land drains	0.60
4	c.28	78.80	Yellowish Brown plastic clay alluvium	Negative trench. Ceramic pipe land drains	0.60
5	c.29	78.70	Yellowish Brown plastic clay alluvium	Negative trench empty	0.50
6	c.20	78.40	Yellowish Brown plastic clay alluvium	Negative trench empty	0.70
7	c.24	77.90	Yellowish Brown plastic clay alluvium	Negative trench. Ceramic pipe land drains	0.50
8	c.30	77.60	Yellowish Brown plastic clay alluvium	Negative trench. Modern Plastic pipe land drain	0.60

Table 1: Trench Summaries southern field.

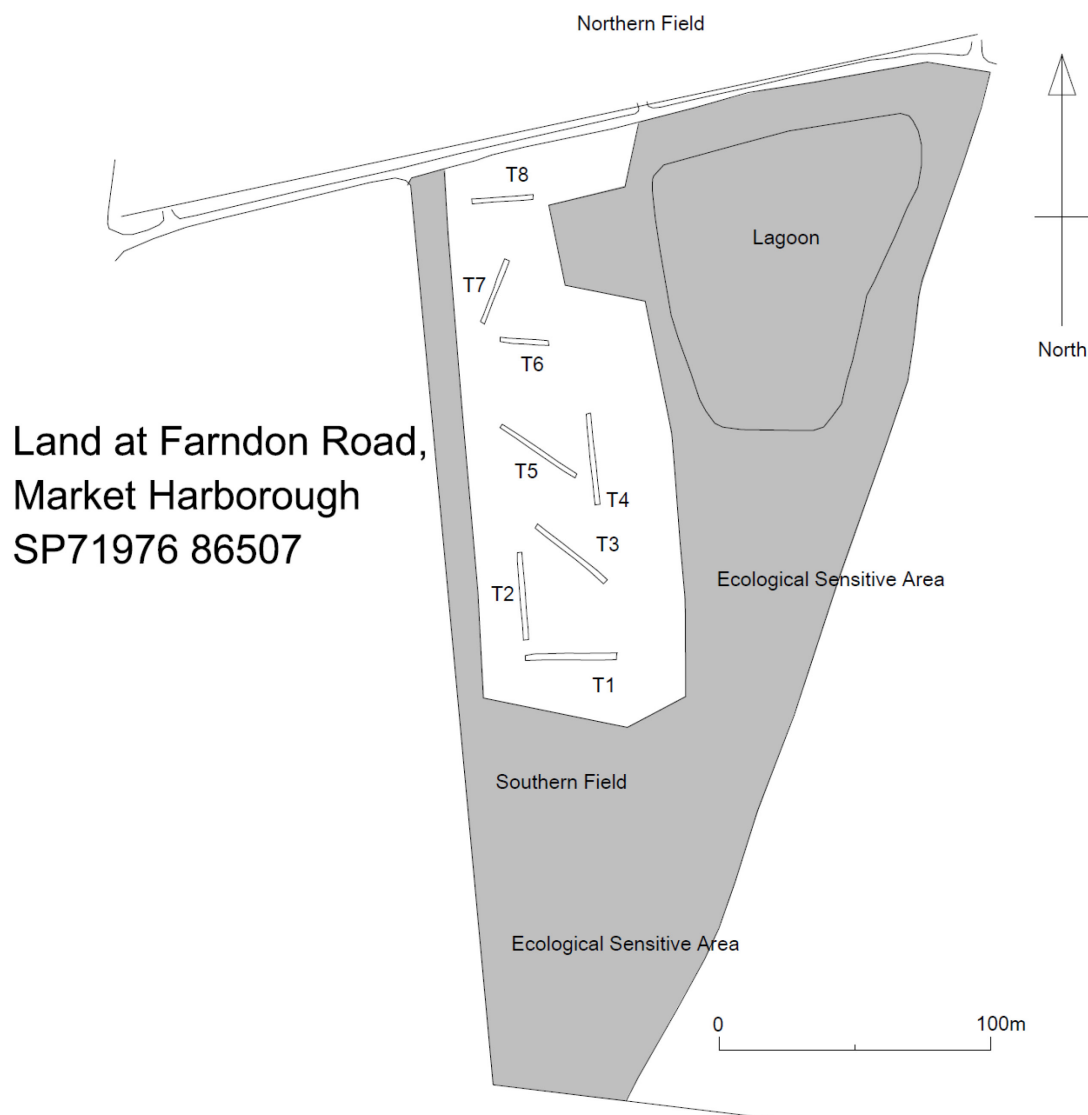


Figure 4: Location of excavated trenches southern field

Northern Field

This area was located within the northern half of the development area where fourteen trenches, numbered 1 to 14, were opened (Fig. 5). No archaeological finds or deposits were located within any of the trenches. The natural substratum was generally reached after around 0.35m-0.56m of topsoil and subsoil had been removed. The only features revealed were modern field drains observed within all fourteen trenches. The field drains typically orientated north-west to south-east and north-east to south-west and comprised of either older ceramic pipe drains or more modern gravel and a plastic pipe.

Most of the trenches had deep subsoil that comprised a yellowish brown clay silt between 0.10m and 0.56m deep. The subsoil deposit was thought to be an alluvial deposit, which suggests that field was subjected to regular flooding from the nearby River Welland located to the northern boundary of the field.

The results of all excavated trenches for the northern field are presented below in Table 2 and images of each trench are available in Appendix 1.

Trench	Length (m)	Height of Trench base (m OD)	Natural Substratum	Notes	Min. depth to archaeology/natural (m)
1	<i>c.50</i>	79.55	Yellowish Brown plastic clay alluvium	Negative trench. Plastic pipe land drain	0.62
2	<i>c.50</i>	79.20	Yellowish Brown plastic clay and Yellowish Brown gravel	Negative trench. Ceramic and plastic land drains	0.48
3	<i>c.50</i>	79.05	Yellowish Brown plastic clay alluvium	Negative trench. Ceramic pipe land drain	0.43
4	<i>c.50</i>	79.80	Yellowish Brown plastic clay alluvium	Negative trench. Ceramic pipe land drains	0.40
5	<i>c.50</i>	79.70	Yellowish Brown plastic clay alluvium	Negative trench empty	0.55
6	<i>c.50</i>	80.40	Yellowish Brown plastic clay alluvium	Negative trench empty	0.54
7	<i>c.50</i>	79.90	Yellowish Brown plastic clay alluvium	Negative trench. Ceramic pipe land drains	0.46
8	<i>c.50</i>	80.60	Yellowish Brown plastic clay alluvium, patches of gravel	Negative trench. Modern Plastic pipe land drain	0.37
9	<i>c.50</i>	80.35	Yellowish Brown plastic clay alluvium, patches of gravel	Negative trench. Modern plastic land drains	0.40
10	<i>c.50</i>	80.45	Yellowish Brown plastic clay alluvium, patches of gravel	Negative trench. Modern plastic land drains	0.38
11	<i>c.50</i>	80.70	Yellowish Brown plastic clay alluvium, patches of gravel	Negative trench. Modern plastic and ceramic land drains	0.40
12	<i>c.50</i>	79.90	Yellowish Brown plastic clay alluvium, patches of gravel	Negative trench. Modern plastic and ceramic land drains	0.40
13	<i>c.50</i>	79.65	Yellowish Brown plastic clay alluvium	Negative trench. Modern plastic land drains	0.41
14	<i>c.50</i>	79.40	Yellowish Brown plastic clay alluvium	Negative trench. Modern plastic and ceramic land drains	0.35

Table 2: Trench summaries northern field

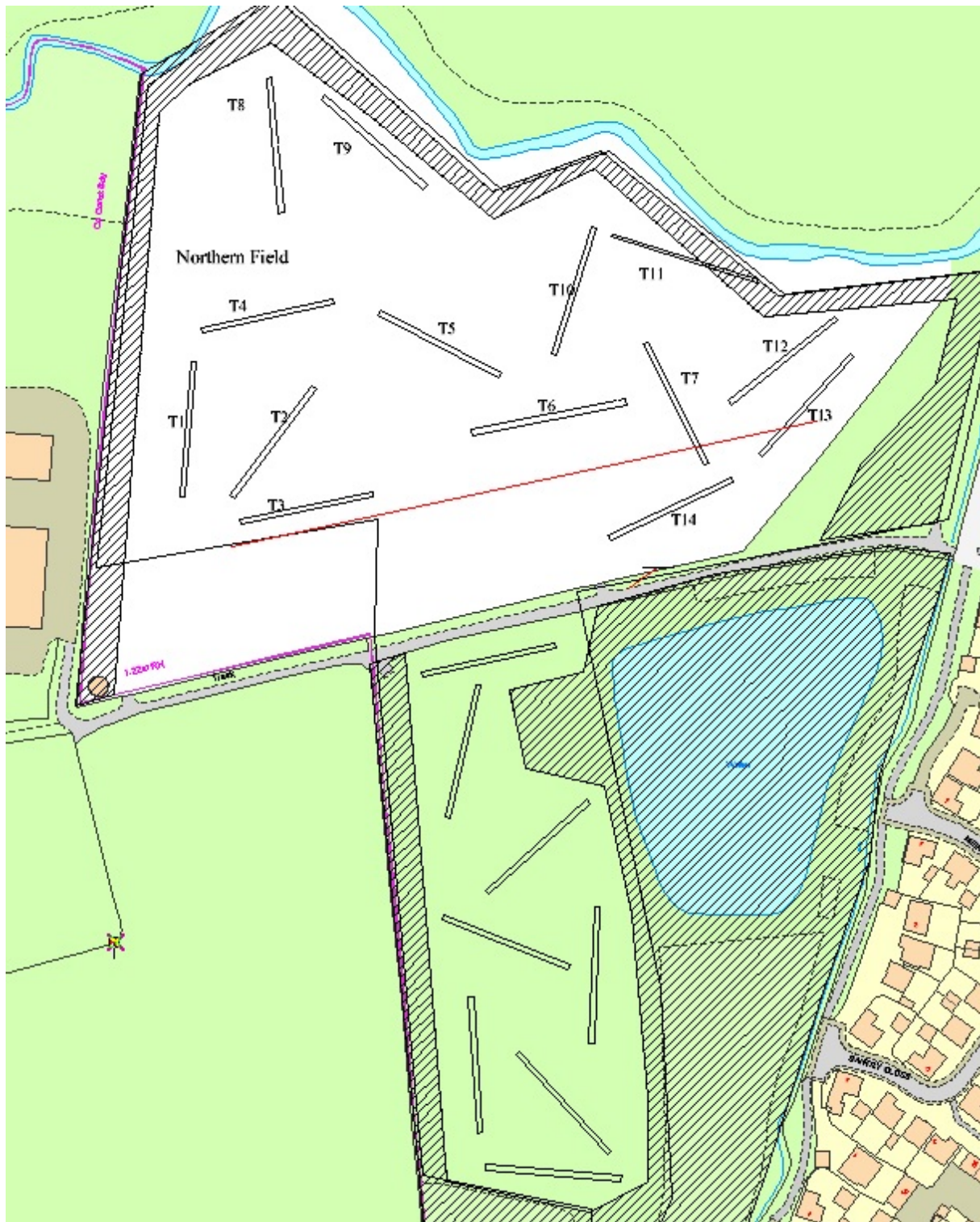


Figure 5: Location of the excavated trenches in the northern field.

Discussion

The archaeological evaluation by trial trenching revealed no evidence for archaeological features or finds within any of the trenches, apart from modern field drains. The majority of the trenches displayed deep depths of topsoil and alluvial subsoil with combined depths between 0.50m - 0.80m deep, which indicated that this field was subjected to regular flooding.

Archive

The site archive will be held by *Leicestershire Museums Service, under accession no. X.A57.2017.*

The site archive consists of:

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

The archive will be held by Leicestershire Museum Service under the accession number X.A57.2017.

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

Acknowledgements

The fieldwork was carried out by the authors Tim Higgins, Donald Clark and Claire LaCombe of ULAS. Vicki Score managed the project. Richard Clark of LCC HNET monitored the work on behalf of the planning authority. We would also like to thank ecologists Jude Dorward and Peter Koryl both of FPCR Environment and Design Limited for their advice and assistance on this project.

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OASIS data entry

PROJECT DETAILS	Oasis No	universi1- 323121		
	Project Name	An Archaeological Evaluation Land at Farndon Road, Market Harborough, Leicestershire.		
	Start/end dates of field work	07/06/2017 – 28/07/2017		
	Previous/Future Work	None		
	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: 15/00746/OUT		
PROJECT LOCATION	Site Address/Postcode	Farndon Road, Market Harborough, Leicestershire LE16 9HH		
	Study Area	2.5 ha		
	Site Coordinates	SP 71976 86507		
	Height OD	79m AOD		
PROJECT CREATORS	Organisation	ULAS		
	Project Brief Originator	Local Planning Authority (LCC) Harborough District Council		
	Project Design Originator	ULAS		
	Project Manager	Vicki Score		
	Project Director/Supervisor	Tim Higgins		
	Sponsor/Funding Body	Avant Homes		
PROJECT ARCHIVE		Physical	Digital	Paper
	Recipient	LCC Mus Service	LCC Mus Service	LCC Mus Service
	ID (Acc. No.)	X.A57.2017	X.A57.2017	X.A57.2017
	Contents	None	Photos	Evaluation records Field Notes
PROJECT BIBLIOGRAPHY	Type	Grey Literature (unpublished)		
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Appendix 1: Trench Photos



Trench 1 southern field



Trench 2 southern field



Trench 3 southern field



Trench 4 southern field



Trench 5 southern field



Trench 6 southern field



Trench 7 southern field



Trench 8 southern field



Trench 1 northern field



Trench 2 northern field



Trench 3 northern field



Trench 4 northern field



Trench 5 northern field



Trench 6 northern field



Trench 7 northern field



Trench 8 northern field



Trench 9 northern field



Trench 10 northern field



Trench 11 northern field



Trench 12 northern field



Trench 13 northern field



Trench 14 northern field



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