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Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological Evaluation on the Land west of Uppingham Road,  
Oakham, Rutland, LE15 6HU.**

**NGR: SK 86416 07913.**

**George Issitt.**



**ULAS Report No 2019-114  
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**Site Name:** Land west of Uppingham Road, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 6HU

**Grid Ref:** SK 86416 07913

**Author:** George Issitt

**Client:** Davidsons Developments Ltd

**Planning Ref.** Pre Planning

**ULAS Report Number:** 2019-114

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University of Leicester, Archaeological Services,  
University Rd., Leicester, LE1 7RH  
Tel: (0116) 2522848  
[www.le.ac.uk/ulas](http://www.le.ac.uk/ulas)

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## OASIS RECORD

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>	<b>Oasis No</b>	Universi1- 365318		
	<b>Project Name</b>	Uppingham Road, Oakham, Rutland		
	<b>Start/end dates</b>	14 <sup>th</sup> -20 <sup>th</sup> Aug		
	<b>Previous/Future Work</b>	No/Not known		
	<b>Project Type</b>	Archaeological Evaluation		
	<b>Site Status</b>	None		
	<b>Current Land Use</b>	Farmland		
	<b>Monument Type/Period</b>	Ditch		
	<b>Significant Finds/Period</b>	Undated		
	<b>Reason for Investigation</b>	NPPF		
	<b>Position in the Planning Process</b>	Pre-planning		
<b>Planning Ref.</b>	-			
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>	<b>County</b>	Rutland		
	<b>Site Address/Postcode</b>	Uppingham Road, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 6HU		
	<b>Study Area</b>	4.1ha		
	<b>Site Coordinates</b>	SK 86416 07913		
	<b>Height OD</b>	101-105m aOD		
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	University of Leicester Archaeological Services		
	<b>Project Brief Originator</b>	Leicestershire County Council		
	<b>Project Design Originator</b>	Vicki Score		
	<b>Project Manager</b>	Vicki Score		
	<b>Project Director/Supervisor</b>	Leon Hunt		
	<b>Sponsor/Funding Body</b>	Davidsons Developments Ltd		
<b>PROJECT ARCHIVE</b>		<b>Physical</b>	<b>Digital</b>	<b>Paper</b>
	<b>Recipient</b>	-	Rutland Museum	Rutland Museum
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## **An archaeological field evaluation on land west of Uppingham Road, Oakham, Rutland (SK 86416 07913)**

**George Issitt**

### **Summary**

*This document is a fieldwork report for an archaeological trial trench evaluation, carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on land west of Uppingham Road, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 6HU. A total of 16 trenches, each measuring 30m x 1.6m, (a 2% sample of the site), were excavated to evaluate the proposed development area. The archaeological work was carried out from the 14th-20th August 2019.*

*A significant 1st-2nd century settlement lies on land to the north of the site, including a double pit alignment and enclosure ditches (**MLE19131**).*

*The archaeological evaluation recorded an undated linear ditch feature, with a sterile fill and unclear edges along the eastern edge of the site. There was also evidence of ridge and furrow earthworks and field drains across the site. This suggests the archaeological remains to the north do not appear to continue into the proposed development area.*

### **Introduction**

University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) were commissioned by Donald Sutherland of Pegasus Group on behalf of Davidsons Developments Ltd to carry out an archaeological trial trench evaluation of the land west of Uppingham Road, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 6HU (Fig. 1). The work was undertaken between 14th and 20th August 2019.

The work was carried out as part of a phased programme of archaeological work required by the Planning Authority following advice from the Leicestershire Planning Archaeologist in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, MHCLG 2018). The proposed development comprises a residential development.

The site is located approximately 0.8km south of the county town of Oakham, Rutland, adjacent to the B641 (Uppingham Road). The site centre co-ordinates are at approximately SK 86416 07913. A large Iron Age/Romano-British site to the north-west of the excavation area highlighted the possibility of surviving archaeological remains extending into this area. Further work comprising trial trenching was therefore required to identify the impact of the proposed development on the heritage resource.

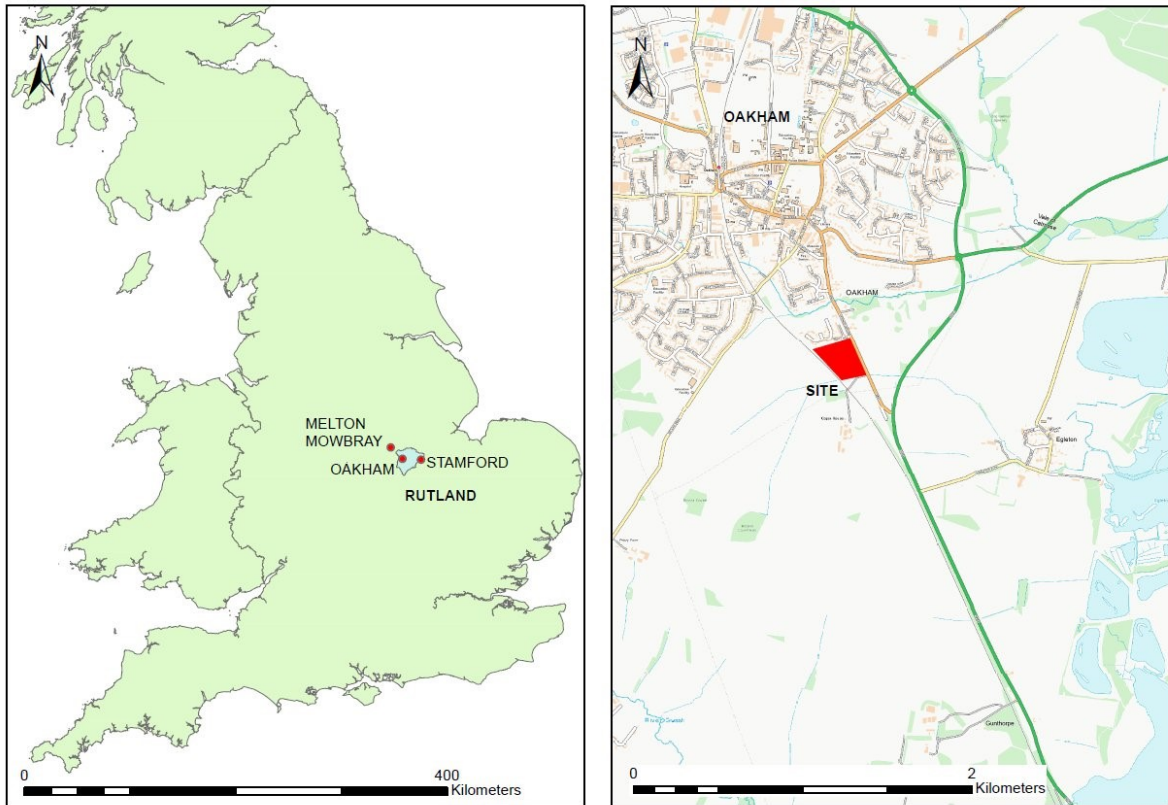


Figure 1: Site Location

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## Location and Geology

The site is located approximately 0.8km south of the county town of Oakham, Rutland, adjacent to the B641 (Uppingham Road). The site centre co-ordinates are at approximately 486414E, 307888N.

The site consists of a sub-rectangular parcel of land of 4.1 hectares lying to the west of Uppingham Road, between the road and the mainline railway, which both run southwards from Oakham (Fig. 2). A new housing estate lies on land to the immediate north. The land is broadly flat and lies at a height of between 101m and 105m aOD. Access was via a gate from a trackway that lies to the south. The site has remained Undeveloped Greenfield land, it is currently used as farmland.

No superficial deposits are recorded beneath the site on geological records. The majority of site is underlain by the Marlstone Rock Formation which generally comprises limestone, interbedded with calcareous Sandstone. The southernmost portion of the site is underlain by the Dyrham Formation which generally comprises silty and sandy mudstone, with interbeds of silt or very fine-grained sand.

## Historical and Archaeological Background

Oakham's rich history is reflected in the archaeological record. There is considerable evidence for human occupation of the area in and around the town from the Mesolithic period through to the medieval period and beyond. The main core of the town is medieval in date and contains the remains of many medieval and post-medieval structures and buildings, including the 11th century castle and 13th century Hall (Ref No. **MLE 5569**: Scheduled Monument 17018).

The manor and castle of Oakham, part of the dowry of the Anglo- Saxon queens of England, came to Edith, wife of Edward the Confessor in the mid-11th century. The manor was held by William the Conqueror in after the Norman Conquest. The Domesday Survey of 1086 records this and also shows that the settlement was served by a priest and church, perhaps a predecessor to the Perpendicular All Saints.

Albert the Clerk held, under the King, the churches of Oakham, Hambleton and Stamford with associated lands. Although the church and some land were granted to Westminster Abbey by William II (1087-1100), the manor, including the castle, remained in royal hands. It was held by Henry Beaumont, first Earl of Warwick, in the early 12th century, probably passing to the Ferrers family about 1119, who later built the Great Hall within the bailey of the Norman castle. The town grew under the patronage of the castle and had a market by 1249. Its 14th and 15th century prosperity was due to the wool trade. Its late 17th and early 18th century buildings may be connected with the wealth of the then lord of the manor, Daniel Finch, Earl of Nottingham (VCH 1935).

The application area itself lies on the southern fringes of the town and outside the medieval core. Most of the known archaeological remains in this area are prehistoric and Roman in date and much of the evidence has been derived from field-walking and through intrusive archaeological work and archaeological monitoring during the construction of the Oakham bypass, which runs around 200m to the east of the site. Recent archaeological work in advance of the new housing development to the immediate north of the site revealed extensive Iron Age/Romano-British settlement remains, which may continue into the present site.

A scatter of Mesolithic flint was discovered during field-walking on land around 300m to the east of the site (**MLE5153**). A ring ditch, likely from a Bronze Age barrow has been identified nearby (**MLE5154**), just to the east of the site. A further ring ditch lies close by (**MLE8511**), around 200m south, with three more located around 400m south of the site (**MLE5580**, **MLE9636** & **MLE9635**). A pit alignment, dated to the Bronze Age has also been discovered in this area (**MLE16235**). Field-walking the area revealed a large amount of Neolithic-Bronze Age flint, scrapers and knives (**MLE5617**). Archaeological work during the construction of the bypass identified in the area Neolithic-Bronze Age pits, ditches, pottery and a crouched burial (**MLE16234**). Later artefacts dating to the Iron Age and Roman periods suggest that activity here continued into the Roman period. Further work during the bypass construction revealed ditches dating from the Mesolithic through to the Bronze Age (**MLE16236**). Field-walking around 600m to the north of the site has recovered more Neolithic and Bronze Age flint tools (**MLE5610** & **MLE7649**). Another pit alignment, which runs for around 40m lies around 400m to the east north-east of the site (**MLE5584**). An arrowhead dating from the Bronze Age has been found in nearby Stamford Road (**MLE6424**). Further scatters of Mesolithic and Neolithic flints are known from sites around 1km to the south of the site (**MLE8515** & **MLE8516**).

A rectilinear enclosure, possibly of Iron Age date, lies around 400m west of the site (**MLE5616**). Around 800m to the north-east of the site is an area that contains an Iron Age settlement site (**MLE8342**). A large amount of unstratified flint dated to the late prehistoric was found nearby (**MLE8344**). Iron Age finds have been found within the fabric of Oakham Castle (**MLE6529**) and a pit alignment dated to the Iron Age has been identified by aerial photographs around 1km north of the site (**MLE5597**). A concentration of Iron Pottery has been found around 900m to the south of the application area (**MLE8513**). An undated square enclosure, which may be contemporary, lies nearby (**MLE5158**).

The most significant archaeological remains in the vicinity are the settlement remains revealed during excavations undertaken between 2011-2016 on the rectangular field to the north of the site. The excavation revealed archaeological settlement evidence dating to the Late Iron Age

(400 BC – 43 AD), transitional Iron Age / Roman period (AD 30 – 70), and the early Roman period (later 1st to early 2nd century AD). The evidence consisted of a complex system of pit alignments, superseded by mid-1st-century AD enclosures, along with a small settlement consisting of roundhouses and pits (**MLE19131**; Speed 2017).

A scatter of Anglo-Saxon pottery (**MLE5155**), and evidence of iron smelting (**MLE5156**), around 400m east of the application area suggests a settlement in this area. Oakham is likely to be Anglo-Saxon in origin (**MLE9904**) and there are several sites in the town that have yielded evidence of Anglo-Saxon occupation, including sunken buildings (**MLE9902**), a large ditch, possibly part of the town defences (**MLE9903**), early medieval pottery (**MLE9405**) and a series of pits and ditches, including waterlogged material (**MLE5604**).

Much of the known archaeological sites within the core of Oakham are medieval. These include the castle (**MLE5569**), the associated fishponds (**MLE5572**), the butter cross and the stocks (**MLE5578**). There are also several other areas showing medieval occupation; mainly pits, ditches and post-holes containing medieval material (**MLE5912**, **MLE6950**, **MLE5606**, **MLE15943** etc).

A windmill mound is shown on early maps just to the north of the site. This is presently covered in trees and has been incorporated into the new housing scheme as a feature (**MLE5582**); another mound lies around 400m to the west on the western side of Uppingham Road (**MLE5581**). A post-medieval brick kiln is known from a documentary source at a site 400m south-west of the application area (**MLE5608**).

Since the earliest available map, dated 1884, the site has remained undeveloped Greenfield land. Notable historical features, in close proximity to the Site, include a railway line which has bounded the Site to the west since 1884 and a brick yard and pit which was located approximately 20m southwest. Between 1884 and 1930. The surrounding land use has generally comprised farmland.

### ***Previous Archaeological Work***

A geophysical survey was carried out on the site in April 2019 by SUMO Geophysics Ltd (Fig. 3-4). No definite archaeological remains were identified, however evidence for ridge and furrow was present across the site. A ditch-type anomaly was visible meandering on roughly the same alignment as the field boundaries, possibly later than the ridge and furrow. This was identified in the report as of uncertain origin although it could have had an archaeological explanation. Possible evidence for fractures within the limestone geology were also visible.



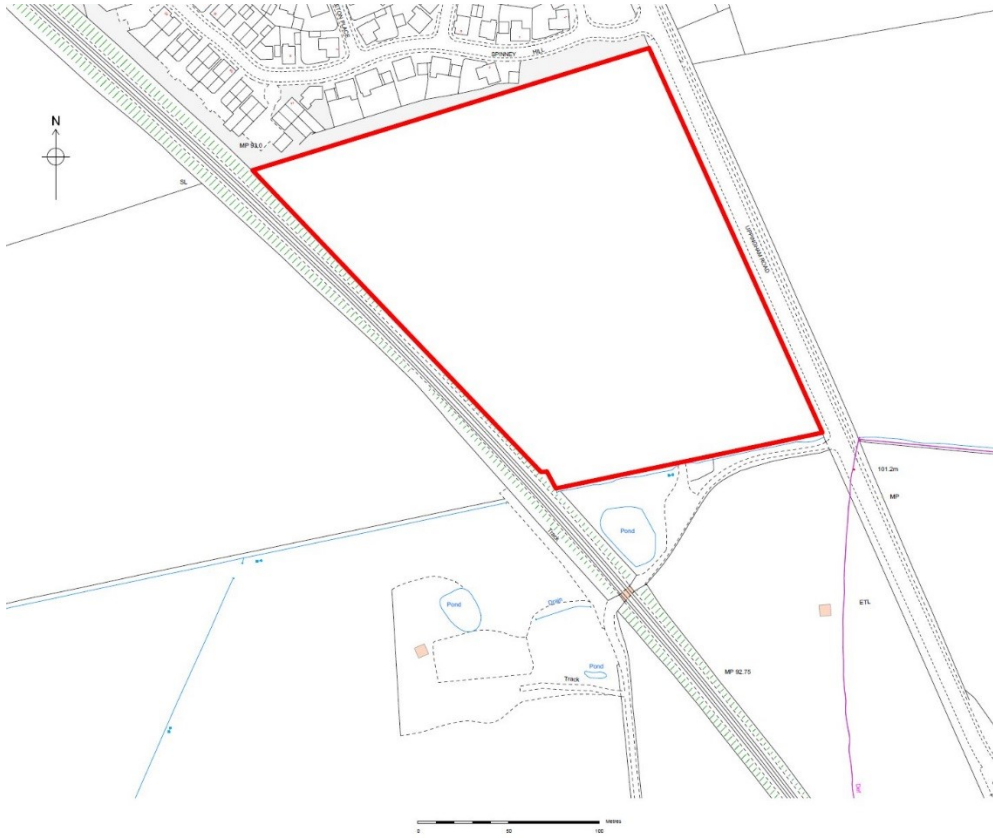


Figure 2: Location of study area (provided by client)

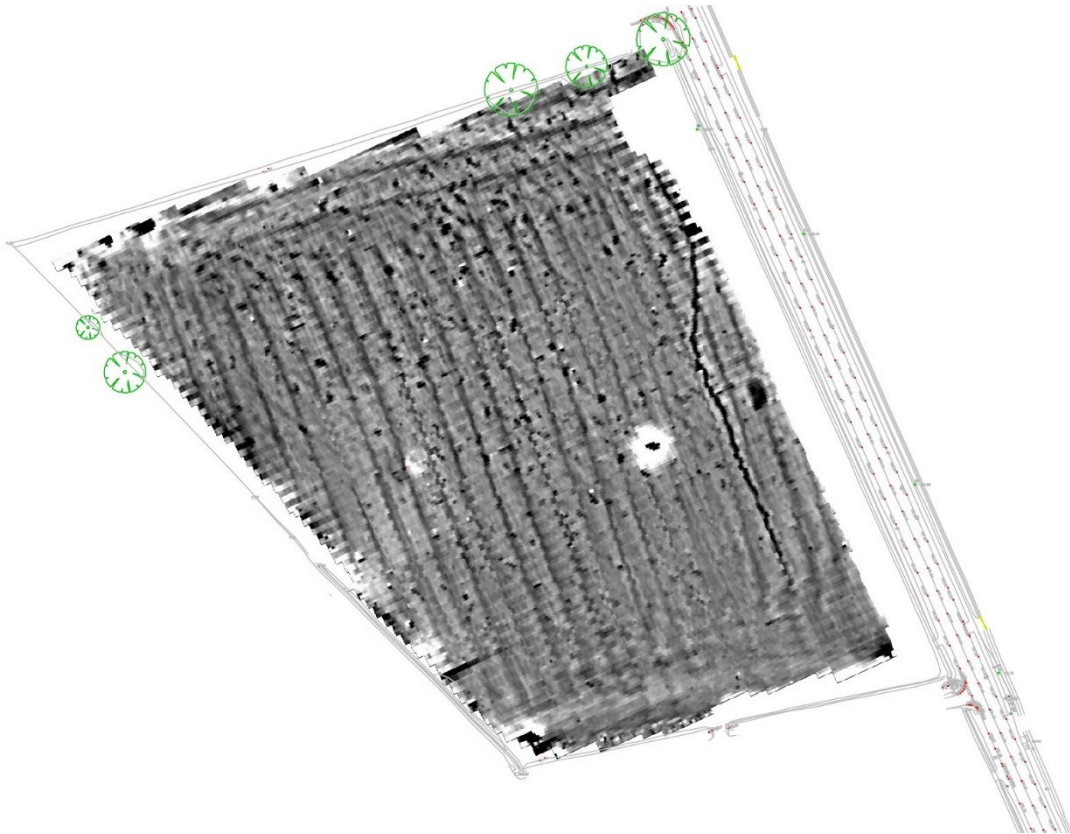


Figure 3: Plan of geophysical survey (greyscale). From Sumo 2019.

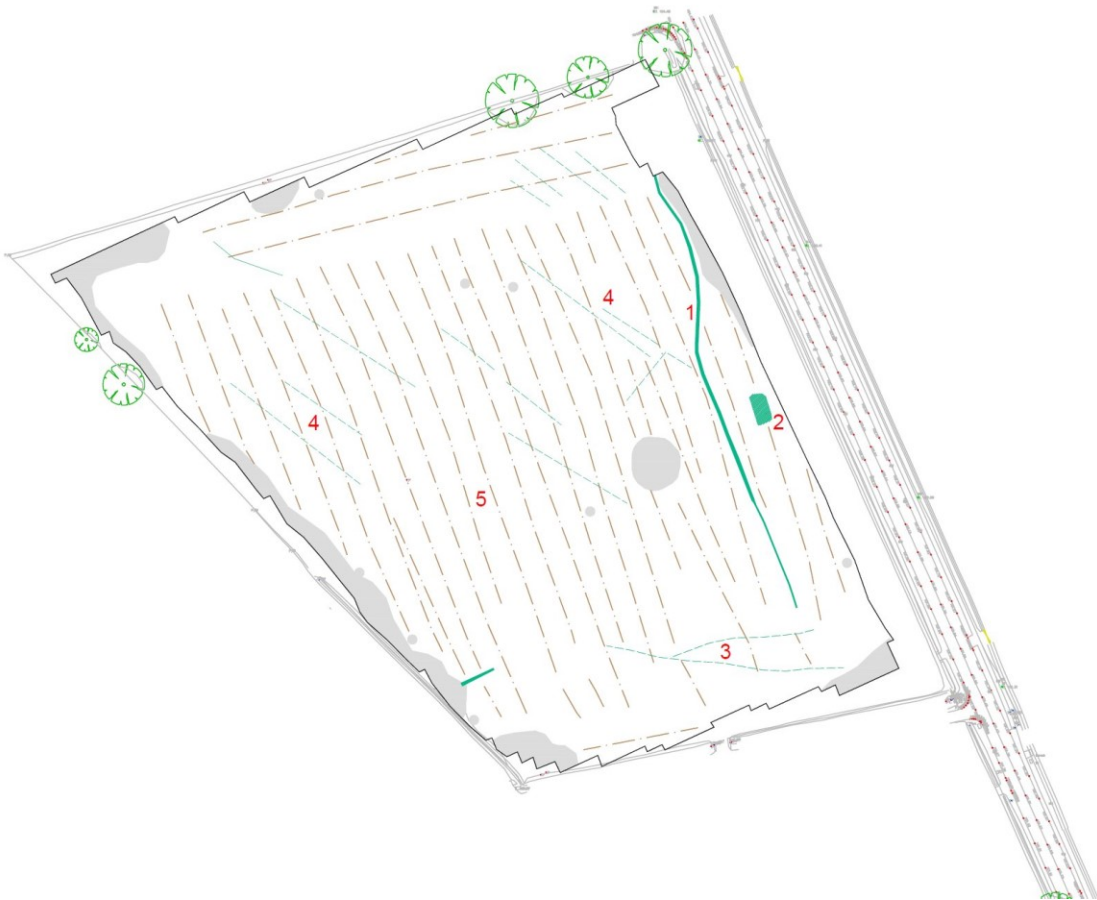


Figure 4: Plan showing results of geophysical survey. From Sumo 2019.

### Aims and Objectives

The main objectives of the archaeological work were:

- To identify the presence/absence of any archaeological deposits.
- To establish the character, extent, date range and significance of any surviving archaeological deposits.
- To establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of any archaeological deposits and features encountered.
- To provide sufficient information on the archaeological potential of the site, to assess the impact of the proposed development on cultural heritage and to help formulate a mitigation strategy.
- To record any archaeological deposits and produce an archive and report of any results.

The results of the evaluation will provide sufficient information to allow the local authority to make an informed decision on the forthcoming application and, if deemed necessary by the results of the evaluative work, develop an appropriate mitigation strategy.

### ***Research Objectives***

Initial Research Objectives were derived from the *East Midlands Heritage* research agenda (Cooper 2006, Knight *et al.* 2012). The known archaeological sites on the HER suggests that there is some potential for archaeological deposits on the site from the prehistoric and Roman periods. The evaluation therefore had the potential to contribute to the following research aims:

#### *Late Iron Age*

- How are the nucleated settlements related to one another and to other settlements of the period? In particular, is there evidence for a developing settlement hierarchy?
- How may nucleated and other settlements have developed in the Roman period?
- Can we shed further light upon the development of field and boundary systems?
- What were the economic, social or political roles of the pit alignments and linear ditch systems that characterised many areas of the East Midlands?

#### *Roman*

- How did rural settlements relate to each other and to towns and military sites, and how may this have varied regionally and over time?
- How did field and boundary systems relate to earlier systems of land allotment, and how did these boundary networks develop over time?

### **Methodology**

All work followed the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) *Code of Conduct* (rev. 2014a) in accordance with their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (rev. 2014b). The archaeological work followed the *Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for exploratory trial trenching* prepared by Leon Hunt and agreed with the Leicestershire County Council Planning Archaeologist. The work was monitored by the client Donald Sutherland (Pegasus Group) and the Leicestershire County Council Planning Archaeologist. Neither the client or the planning archaeologist visited the site.

The accession number (OAKRM 2019.19) was obtained and used to identify all records and artefacts.

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

A total of 16 x 30m trenches were spread across the proposed development area, providing a 2% sample. The trench plan (Fig. 5) shows the location of the trenches. The placement of some trenches differs from the original proposed trench plan due to unforeseen constraints. Trenches 1, 2, 3 to the eastern edge of the site had to be moved slightly west to avoid a recently laid water pipe, which ran along the eastern boundary of the site. Trenches had to be moved due to flooding in the south-western end of the site, which caused the trenches to fill rapidly with water and the JCB to sink. This and the presence of low lying power lines meant that trenches 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, all had to be moved slightly for safety reasons. Excavation was carried out with a JCB 3CX fitted with a flat-bladed ditching 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, whichever was reached first.

Archaeological deposits encountered were recorded in plan and excavated using standard ULAS procedures. All exposed features have been investigated (unless otherwise agreed with the Planning Archaeologist).

All trenches were backfilled after the conclusion of the site, apart from trench 12 which was left open for the farmer to backfill due to concerns with drainage.

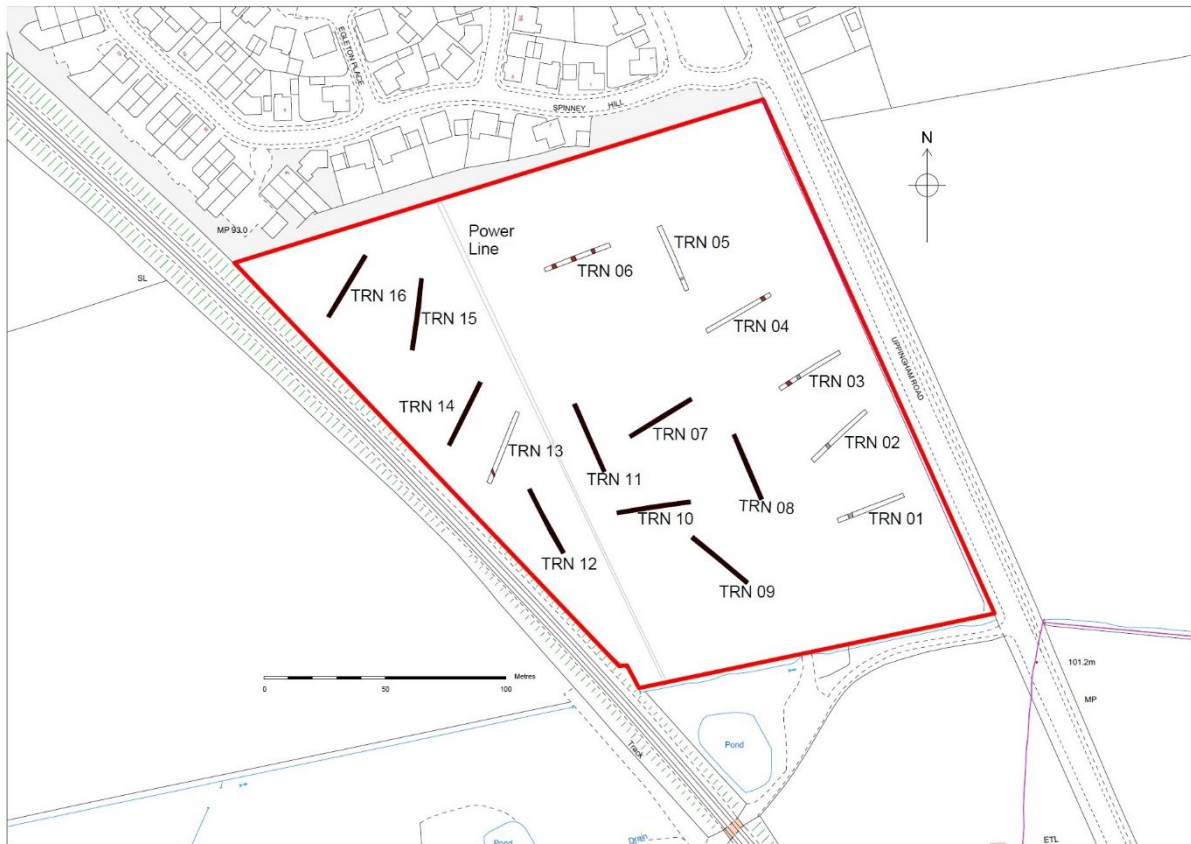


Figure 5: Location of trial trenches

## Results

### Trenches 4-16

Thirteen of the trenches did not contain any features, although some produced evidence for ridge and furrow. Trenches 4, 6 and 13 contained furrows (Fig. 6), and modern animal bone was retrieved from Trench 5 within a natural depression. Trenches 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15 and 16 were all negative for any archaeological remains (Fig. 7).

Table 1: Summary of all trenches

Trench	Orientation	Min. Depth	Max. Depth	Dimensions	Comments
01	W-E	0.56	0.74	29.50 x 1.60	Linear [1] Running north.
02	W-E	0.33	0.52	30.0 x 1.60	Linear [1] Running north
03	W-E	0.33	0.43	30.0 x 1.60	Linear [1] Running north, Furrow at west end
04	W-E	0.32	0.48	30.0 x 1.60	Furrow at east end
05	S-N	0.26	0.46	30.0 x 1.60	Bone deposits in natural depression.
06	W-E	0.49	0.58	30.0 x 1.60	3 Furrows in trench
07	W-E	0.30	0.53	30.0 x 1.60	No Archaeological features
08	E-W	0.36	0.50	30.0 x 1.60	No Archaeological features
09	NW-SE	0.30	0.70	29.0 x 1.60	No Archaeological features
10	E-W	0.24	0.45	31.0 x 1.60	No Archaeological features
11	N-S	0.32	0.42	30.0 x 1.60	No Archaeological features
12	N-S	0.30	0.50	30.0 x 1.60	No Archaeological features
13	NE-SW	0.26	0.42	31.0 x 1.60	Furrow to SW end
14	NE-SW	0.24	0.42	30.0 x 1.60	No Archaeological features
15	NE-SW	0.35	0.61	30.0 x 1.60	No Archaeological features
16	NE-SW	0.38	0.64	30.0 x 1.60	No Archaeological features

The topsoil across these trenches, ranged from 0.10m to 0.34m in depth, and consisted of a soft mid-grey / brown silty soil with <5% small sub-angular stone inclusions. The subsoil, which was discontinuous across the field, was a light – mid orange / brown in colour clayey silt with <10% small sub-angular lime stone inclusions ranging between 0.02m and 0.35m deep. The natural substrata in this area was located at a depth of between 0.23m and 0.66m and consisted of a red clay in the north-west, with lime stone and clay throughout much of the rest of the site and yellow brown clay, with some limestone to the south.



Figure 6: Trench 6, looking west



Figure 7: Trench 16, looking north-east

**Trench 01**

Trench 1 was located at the south-eastern end of the site. It contained a linear feature which ran north-south. The topsoil, ranged from 0.22m to 0.36m in depth, and consisted of a mid-grey silty clay with <5% small sub-angular stone inclusions. The subsoil was an orange brown clayey silt with <10% small sub-angular lime stone inclusions ranging between 0.07m and 0.40m. The natural substrata in this area was located at a depth of between 0.54m and 0.72m and consisted of a red/brown clay with some chunks of limestone (Fig. 8).

The linear feature within this trench was partly submerged underwater making excavation very difficult. As a result the feature was left as more easily accessible portions of the linear were available in Trenches 2 and 3.

Trench 1										
Alignment	E-W									
Length (m)	Width (m)		Area (m <sup>2</sup> )		Min. depth (m)			Max. depth (m)		
29.50m	1.60m		47.2 m <sup>2</sup>		0.56m			0.74m		
Interval from W	0-3m	6m	9m	12m	15m	18m	21m	24m	27m	To E end 30m
Topsoil depth	0.32m	0.30m	0.33m	0.25m	0.27m	0.26m	0.22m	0.25m	0.35m	0.36m
Subsoil depth	0.37m	0.35m	0.39m	0.29m	0.38m	0.40m	0.38m	0.35m	0.33m	0.07m
Top of Natural substratum	0.69m	0.65m	0.72m	0.54m	0.65m	0.66m	0.60m	0.60m	0.68m	0.43+ m
Base of trench	0.74m	0.68m	0.73m	0.56m	0.66m	0.68m	0.61m	0.62m	0.70m	0-NA



Figure 8: Trench 1, looking east

### Trench 02

Trench 2 was located at the south-east end of site just north of Trench 1 and contained the continuation of the linear feature located in Trench 1. The topsoil ranged from 0.23m to 0.38m in depth, and consisted of a mid-grey silty clay with <5% small sub-angular stone inclusions. The subsoil was an orange brown clayey silt with <10% small sub-angular lime stone inclusions ranging between 0.07m and 0.21m. The natural substrata in this area was located at a depth of between 0.30m and 0.50m and consisted of a red/brown clay with larger patches of lime stone brash (Fig. 9).

The linear feature [1] within this trench was excavated however, the height of the water table in this part of the site hindered recording of the feature as it filled rapidly with water (Figs 10-11).

Trench 2										
Alignment	E-W									
Length (m)	Width (m)		Area (m <sup>2</sup> )		Min. depth (m)			Max. depth (m)		
30.00m	1.60m		48m <sup>2</sup>		0.33m			0.52m		
Interval from W	0-3m	6m	9m	12m	15m	18m	21m	24m	27m	To E end 30m
Topsoil depth	0.26m	0.23m	0.35m	0.31m	0.23m	0.26m	0.38m	0.31m	0.34m	0.35m
Subsoil depth	0.21m	0.18m	0.15m	0.15m	0.07m	0.10m	0.11m	0.17m	0.08m	0.07m
Top of Natural substratum	0.47m	0.41m	0.50m	0.46m	0.30m	0.36m	0.49m	0.48m	0.42m	0.42m
Base of trench	0.50m	0.45m	0.52m	0.47m	0.33m	0.39m	0.50m	0.48m	0.43m	0.42m



Figure 9: Trench 2, looking south-west



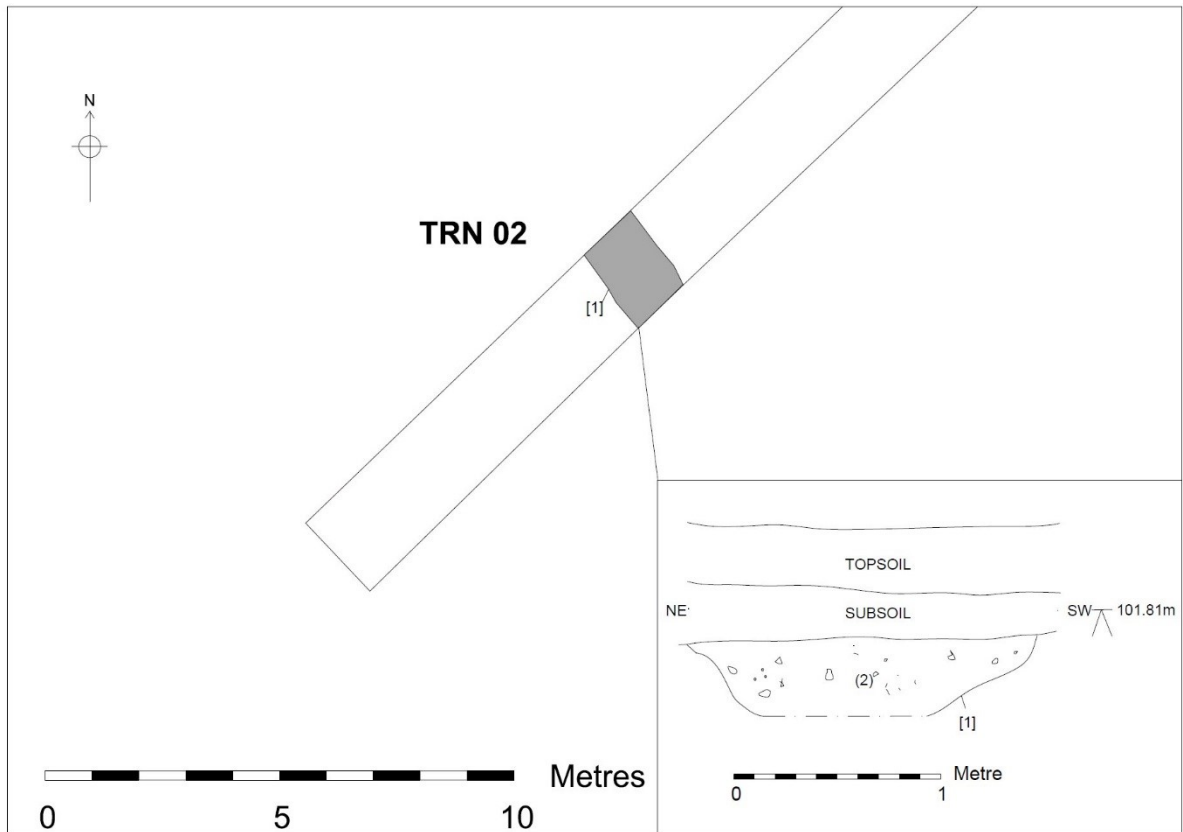


Figure 10: Plan and section of Feature [1] in Trench 2



Figure 11: Feature [1] in Trench 2, looking south-east

### Trench 03

Trench 3 was located along the eastern end of the site just north of Trench 2 and contained the continuation of the linear feature [1], running northwards in Trenches 1 and 2. The topsoil, ranged from 0.24m to 0.31m in depth, and consisted of a mid-grey silty clay with <5% small sub-angular stone inclusions. The subsoil was an orange brown clayey silt with <10% small sub-angular lime stone inclusions ranging between 0.05m and 0.15m. The natural substrata in this area was located at a depth of between 0.33m and 0.43m and consisted of a red/brown clay mixed with a large amount lime stone brash.

The linear feature within this trench [1] was excavated (Fig. 12), however the features edges were not very distinct or clearly cut. The sterile fill and similarity to the natural substrata made it hard to discern whether the linear was archaeological or geological in nature. Although there was a considerable amount of water ingress the feature was fully recorded (Figs 13-14). A furrow, running broadly north-south was also present in the trench at the western end.

Trench 3										
Alignment	E-W									
Length (m)	Width (m)		Area (m <sup>2</sup> )		Min. depth (m)			Max. depth (m)		
30.00m	1.60m		48m <sup>2</sup>		0.33m			0.43m		
Interval from W	0-3m	6m	9m	12m	15m	18m	21m	24m	27m	To E end 30m
Topsoil depth	0.30m	0.27m	0.25m	0.24m	0.29m	0.28m	0.30m	0.31m	0.31m	0.28m
Subsoil depth	0.10m	0.11m	0.15m	0.14m	0.12m	0.08m	0.09m	0.10m	0.09m	0.05m
Top of Natural substratum	0.40m	0.38m	0.40m	0.38m	0.41m	0.36m	0.39m	0.41m	0.40m	0.33m
Base of trench	0.42m	0.41m	0.41m	0.40m	0.43m	0.38m	0.39m	0.42m	0.42m	0.33m



Figure 12: Trench 3, looking west



Figure 13: Feature [1] in Trench 3, looking north-west

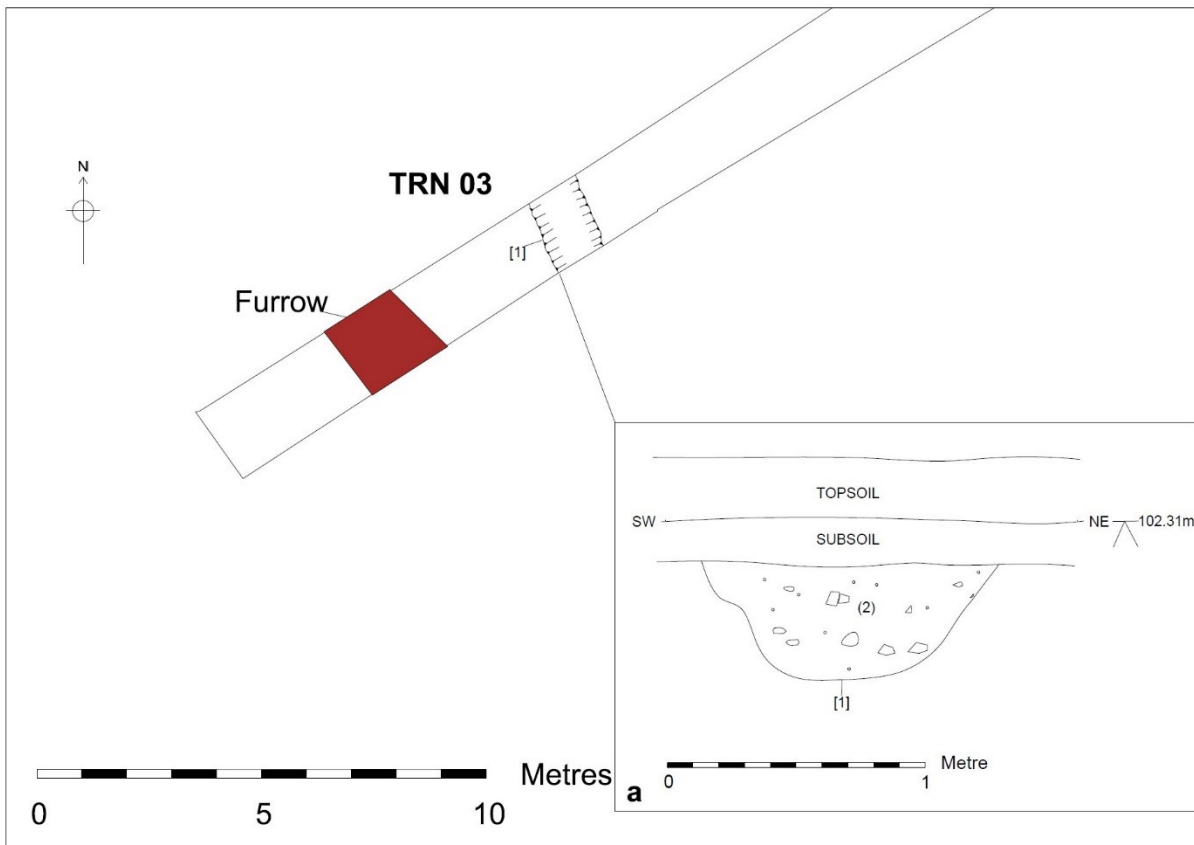


Figure 14: Plan and section of feature [1] in Trench 3

## Discussion and Conclusion

Excavations carried out by ULAS between 2011-2016 on land directly north of the proposed site at Uppingham Road, Oakham revealed archaeological settlement evidence dating to the Late Iron and Roman period. The evidence consisted of a complex system of pit alignments, superseded by mid-1st-century AD enclosures, along with a small settlement consisting of roundhouses and pits (Speed 2017). The alignment of the settlement suggested that the remains continued to the east and linear features appeared to project south, possibly continuing into the proposed development area. Geophysical survey carried out prior to the current trial trenching revealed no obvious archaeological features. There was evidence for ridge and furrow and a possible linear feature on the eastern side of the site.

The 16 trenches covering the 2% sample of the land revealed the linear feature identified by the geophysical survey in Trenches 1-3 along with evidence for ridge and furrow. Excavation of this feature revealed a straight sided but irregular feature with a very sterile silty fill (2). No dating evidence was retrieved from the fill and its function is inconclusive. Given the sinuous nature of the feature and homogenous silty fill and lack of dating, it is possible that it could be geological in nature. It does not appear to be related to the Iron Age/ Romano-British settlement remains to the north.

Therefore, based on the results of the geophysical survey and subsequent trial trench evaluation, there is no evidence to suggest that settlement remains associated with the Iron Age/ Romano-British site to the north extend within the present site.

The lack of datable archaeological features means that there was no opportunity to address any research objectives.

## Archive and publication

The archive for this project will be deposited with Rutland County Museum with accession number OAKRM.2019.19 and consists of the following:

- 1 Unbound copy of this report (ULAS Report No. 2019-114)
- 16 Trench recording sheets
- 1 Photo Record sheet
- 1 Contact sheet of digital photographs
- 1 CD digital photographs
- 2 x Context sheets
- 1 x Drawing index
- 1 x Drawing record sheet

Since 2004 ULAS has reported the results of all archaeological work through the *Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations* (OASIS) database held by the Archaeological Data Service at the University of York.

A summary of the work will also be submitted for publication in a suitable regional archaeological journal in due course.

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George Issitt  
ULAS  
University of Leicester  
University Road  
Leicester LE1 7RH  
Tel: 0116 252 2848  
Fax: 0116 252 2614

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UNIVERSITY OF  
**LEICESTER**

### Archaeological Services

University of Leicester  
University Road  
Leicester LE1 7RH  
UK

Directors

**Dr Richard Buckley** OBE BA PhD FSA MCifA

**e:** [rjb16@le.ac.uk](mailto:rjb16@le.ac.uk)

**t:** +44 (0)116 252 2848

**f:** +44 (0)116 252 2614

**e:** [ulas@le.ac.uk](mailto:ulas@le.ac.uk)

