

Archaeological Services

An Archaeological Evaluation on Land North of Borrowcup Close, Countesthorpe, Leicestershire NGR: SP 573 960 centre

Dr. Roger Kipling



An Archaeological Evaluation on Land North of Borrowcup Lane, Countesthorpe, Leicestershire

[NGR SP 573 960]

Dr. Roger Kipling

For: Charles Church North Midlands

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ULAS Report Number 2010-023 ©2010 Accession Number X.A9.2010

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An Archaeological Evaluation on Land North of Borrowcup Lane, Countesthorpe, Leicestershire (NGR SP 573 960)

Dr. Roger Kipling

Summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken between 27th January and 1st February 2010 by University of Leicester Archaeological Services in response to a planning application on behalf of Charles Church North Midlands for the construction of residential housing on land to the north of Borrowcup Lane, Countesthorpe, Leicestershire. No archaeological finds or features were encountered. The site archive will be deposited with the Leicestershire County Council Historic and Natural Environment Team under the accession number X.49.2010.

1: Introduction

- 1.1: An archaeological evaluation was undertaken as part of the planning conditions connected with construction of residential housing on land north of Borrowcup Lane, Countesthorpe, Leicestershire (Figure 1). Work was carried out on the recommendation of the Senior Planning Archaeologist of the Leicestershire County Council Historic and Natural Environment Team, as archaeological advisor to the planning authority, and addressed the requirements for an archaeological impact assessment following Planning Policy Guidelines 16 (PPG16, Archaeology and Planning, Paragraph 30).
- 1.2: A desk-based assessment of an adjacent application and a geophysical survey of the development area had been undertaken prior to the evaluation (Hunt 2009; Smalley 2008), the former indicating that there were no known archaeological sites within the application area, although remains are known from the vicinity. The geophysical survey indicated evidence of medieval ridge and furrow but provided no clear evidence of other deposits.
- 1.3: As it was deemed likely that the proposed development would have a damaging effect on any archaeological deposits, if present within the application area, an archaeological evaluation was requested by the Leicesterhsire County Council, Planning archaeologist as archaeological advisor to the planning authority. This is detailed in *The Brief for Archaeological Investigation (Exploratory Trial Trenching) at land North of Borrowcup Close, Countesthorpe, Leicestershire NGR SP 573 960* (LCCHNET 18.12.2009)

1.4: The Ordnance Survey Geological Survey of Great Britain Sheet Sheet 170 indicates that the underlying geology is likely to consist of gravel overlying Mercia Mudstone Group clay, with the possibility of Alluvium at the western edge of the site. The land falls from c.91m OD in the east to c.75m OD in the west.

2: Aims and Methods

- 2.1: The aim of the evaluation was to ascertain whether any archaeological deposits were present within the area of development, via the undertaking of trial trenching, following the approved Design Specification (Appendix). All work was in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists' (IfA) Code of Conduct and adhering to their *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation*.
- 2.2: The archaeological evaluation was undertaken between on the 27th January and 1st February 2010 by Roger Kipling and Andrew Hyam in order to monitor the machine excavation of 16 trial trenches across the development area.
- 2.3: A JCB 3C excavator equipped with a toothless ditching bucket was employed to excavate 16 trial trenches measuring 20m by 1.5m (Trenches 1 to 16), an area totalling $c.450\text{m}^2$ and targeting possible archaeological features identified by the geophysical survey (Figure 2). Trenches were positioned in order to follow the line of medieval ridge and furrow, where this was visible. Full archaeological supervision was undertaken throughout this work in order to monitor for evidence of archaeological deposits or remains.
 - Enderby

 Gee's

 Lock

 Plant

 Centre

 Park

 Ford

 Gey : House

 Blaby

 Ford

 Gey : House

 Blaby

 Ford

 Hill

 Port

 H

2.4: Trench locations were recorded using an electronic distance measurer (EDM).

Figure 1: Site Location (Scale 1:50 000)

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Cosby

RIC7

3: Results

3.1: The evaluation involved the machine excavation of a total of 16 trenches covering three areas of rough pasture north of Borrowcup Close, Countesthorpe, defined by private gardens and hedgerows and defining the area of the proposed residential housing. Trench 1 was located in Area 3, Trenches 2-13 in Area 1 and Trenches 14-16 in Area 3. The presence of a number of recently-excavated geological test pits across the evaluation area necessitated slight modifications to the positioning of certain trenches.

None of the 16 trenches produced evidence of archaeological finds or features, with the exception of Trench 7 in Area 1, which revealed a probable modern field drain. Consequently, only a selection of trenches will be individually described; a summary of results from all 16 trenches is presented in tabular form (Table 1).



Figure 2: General view looking south across the site towards Borrowcup Close



Figure 3: Trench location plan

3.2: **Trench 1**, the southernmost trench, was located in Area 3 close to Borrowcup Lane and was aligned east-west (Figure 4). Machining involved the removal of c.0.30m of turf and clay silt topsoil and 0.10m of underlying clay loam subsoil. Both topsoil and subsoil contained occasional small and medium-sized rounded flint pebble inclusions. A dull orange sandy natural clay with manganese flecking and rounded flint pebble inclusions was revealed at the base of the trench. The depth of the trench measured 0.40m. No archaeological finds or feature were revealed.



Figure 4: Trench 1, Area 3: view looking west; 1.5m scales

3.3: **Trench 3** (Figure 6) was located in the south-east sector of Area 1 and aligned south-west to north-east in accordance with the faintly visible medieval ridge and furrow earthworks. The removal of 0.26m-0.35m of topsoil and 0.10m-0.30m of subsoil revealed natural dull orange sandy clay with occasional sandier patches. The overall trench depth varied between 0.35m and 0.50m. Again, no archaeological features or finds were encountered.



Figure 5: Machining in progress, Area 1: view looking north



Figure 6: Trench 3, Area 1: view looking north; 1.5m scales

3.4: **Trench 7** was located parallel with and close to the line of trees marking the eastern site perimeter (Figures 7-9) and positioned in order to target possible features identified in the geophysical survey. The removal of 0.25m-0.50m of topsoil and 0.25m-0.50m of subsoil revealed a shallow linear cut feature [01] with an open U-shaped profile and 30°-45° sloping sides and a flattish base. The feature was broadly aligned east-west. Its single pale brown clay silt fill [02] produced no finds, and the feature was cut on its northern edge by a 20th century drainage pipe. The form of the feature and absence of finds suggest that [01] represents a modern field drainage feature. The trench measured 0.70m-0.90m deep overall.



Figure 7: Trench 7, Area 1: view looking north; 1.5m scales



Figure 8: Feature [01], Trench 7, Area 1: view looking west; 1.5m scales

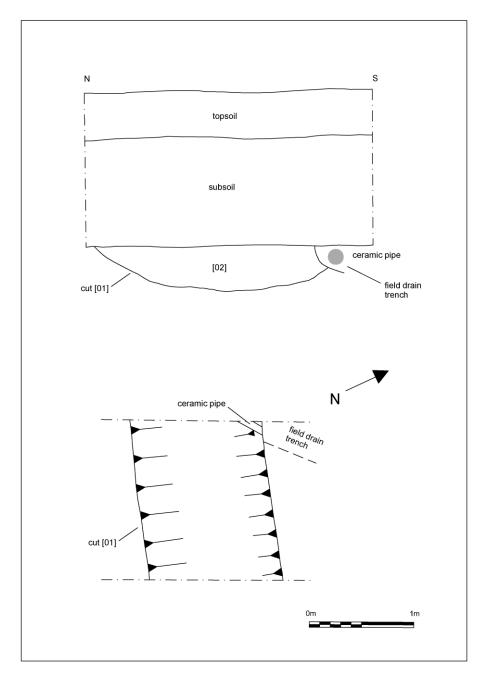


Figure 9: Plan and section of field drain feature [01], Trench 7

3.5: Trench 15 was one of three trenches opened in Area 2, the easternmost of the three zones comprising the development area. A 0.20m-0.32m depth of topsoil and 0.12m-0.25m of subsoil overlay a reddish-brown sandy natural clay. No archaeological finds or features were identified.



Figure 10: Trench 15, Area 2: view looking north-east; 1.5m scales

Trench	Width	Length	Trench	Topsoil	Subsoil	Natural Substratum
No.			depth	depth	depth	
1	1.5m	20m	0.40m-	0.30m-	0.05m-	Dull orange sandy clay
			0.40m	0.35m	0.10m	
2	1.5m	20m	0.35m-	0.25m-	0.08m-	Dull orange sandy clay with occasional
			0.41m	0.29m	0.10m	sandier clay and pure sand patches
3	1.5m	20m	0.35m-	0.23m-	0.10m-	Dull orange sandy clay with occasional
			0.65m	0.35m	0.30m	sandier patches
4	1.5m	20m	0.30m-	0.18m-	0.05m-	Dull orange sandy clay with occasional
			0.35m	0.22m	0.11m	sandier clay and pure sand patches
5	1.5m	20m	0.35m-	0.20m-	0.06m-	Equal mix of pale grey and pale brown
			0.50m	0.32m	0.15m	mottled silty clay
6	1.5m	20m	0.32m-	0.25m-	0.05m-	Medium/pale brown friable sandy clay
			0.55m	0.32m	0.18m	
7	1.5m	20m	0.70m-	0.25m-	0.25m-	Pale brown sandy clay with sparse
			1.05m	0.50m	0.50m	bands of orange-brown clay
8	1.5m	20m	0.45m-	0.19m-	0.20m-	Pale brown sandy clay with sparse
			0.58m	0.30m	0.25m	bands of orange-brown clay
9	1.5m	20m	0.40m-	0.20m-	0.17m-	Pale orange-brown silty sand
			0.55m	0.24m	0.31m	
10	1.5m	20m	0.40m-	0.26m-	0.10m-	Bands of sand and gravel and sandy
			0.62m	0.32m	0.32m	clay at east end
11	1.5m	20m	0.44m-	0.20m-	0.20m-	Sandy clay at west end, orange brown

			0.54m	0.30m	0.25m	silty sand at east end
12	1.5m	20m	0.35m-	0.18m-	0.17m-	Dull orange sandy clay with occasional
			0.50m	0.26m	0.21m	sandier clay and pure sand patches
13	1.5m	20m	0.42m-	0.20m-	0.12m-	Reddish brown sandy clay to west,
			0.60m	0.32m	0.25m	orange brown towards east end
14	1.5m	20m	0.28m-	0.15m-	0.10m-	Mid orange brown sandy clay
			0.46m	0.25m	0.23m	
15	1.5m	20m	0.52m-	0.27m-	0.17m-	Mid orange brown sandy clay
			0.61m	0.38m	0.22m	
16	1.5m	20m	0.52m-	0.18m-	0.15m-	Pinkish brown silty clay with bands of
			0.66m	0.34m	0.30m	pale yellow brown sandy clay

Table 1: Summary of trench details

4: Conclusions

4.1: The archaeological evaluation at Borrowcup Lane, Countesthorpe, failed to identify possible archaeological features as suggested by the earlier geophysical survey. There were, however, limited indications of possible human activity in the form of standing ridge and furrow earthworks in Area 2.

5: Archive

5.1: The site archive (X.A9.2010), consisting of paper and photographic records, will be housed with the County Historic and Natural Environment Team, Leicestershire County Council.

6: Publication

6.1: A version of the excavation summary (see above) will appear in due course in the *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society*.

7: Acknowledgements

7.1: Dr. Roger Kipling and Andrew Hyam of ULAS undertook the archaeological evaluation on behalf of Charles Church (North Midlands). The project was managed by Dr. Patrick Clay.

8: Bibliography

Hunt, L., 2009 An Archaeological Desk-based Assessment of Land to the East of Scalborough Crescent, Countesthorpe, Leicestershire (SP 573 960). ULAS Report 2009-131

Smalley, R., 2008 Countesthorpe, Leics Stratascan Report J2488

9: OASIS Information

Project Name	An Archaeological Evaluation at Borrowcup Lane, Countesthorpe, Leicestershire, NGR SP 573 960
Project Type	Evaluation
Project Manager	Patrick Clay
Project Supervisor	Roger Kipling
Previous/Future work	Construction
Current Land Use	Rough pasture
Development Type	Housing
Reason for Investigation	PPG16
Position in the	Planning consent granted.
Planning Process	
Site Co ordinates	NGR SP 573 960
Start/end dates of field	27th January- 1st February 2010
work	
Archive Recipient	Leicestershire County Council
Study Area	c.3.4ha

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Appendix Design Specification

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

Design Specification for archaeological work

Job title: Land North of Borrowcup Close, Countesthorpe, Leicestershire NGR SP 573 960

Client: Charles Church North Midlands

Planning Authority: Blaby District Council

Planning application No. 09/0492/1/PX

1 Introduction

1.1 Definition and scope of the specification

This document is a design specification for an initial phase of archaeological field evaluation (AFE) at the above site, in accordance with DOE Planning Policy Guidance note 16 (PPG16, Archaeology and Planning, para.30). The fieldwork specified below is intended to provide preliminary indications of character and extent of any buried archaeological remains in order that the potential impact of the development on such remains may be assessed by the Planning Authority.

1.2 The definition of archaeological field evaluation, taken from the Institute of Field Archaeologists Standards and Guidance: for Archaeological Field Evaluation (IFA S&G: AFE) is a limited programme of non-intrusive and/ or intrusive fieldwork which determines the presence or absence of archaeological features, structures, deposits, artefacts or ecofacts within a specified area or site on land, inter-tidal zone or underwater. If such archaeological remains are present field evaluation defines their character, extent, quality and preservation, and enables an assessment of their worth in a local, regional, national or international context as appropriate.

2. Background

2.1 Context of the Project

- 2.1.1 The site is at land North of Borrowcup Close, Countesthorpe, Leicestershire NGR SP 573 960
- 2.1.2 An application has been made for the construction of 110 residential dwellings with associated landscaping and infrastructure (Figures 1-3).
- 2.1.3 Leicestershire County Council, Historic and Natural Environment Team (LCCHNET) as archaeological advisors to the planning authority have agreed that an evaluation by trial trenching is required to identify and locate any archaeological remains of significance and propose suitable treatment to avoid or minimise damage by the development. This is detailed in *The Brief for Archaeological Investigation(Exploratory Trial Trenching) at land North of Borrowcup Close, Countesthorpe, Leicestershire NGR SP 573 960* (LCCHNET 18.12.2009)

2.2 Archaeological and Historical Background

2.2.1 An adjacent application has been subject to a desk-based assessment and the area has been subject to geophysical survey (Hunt 2009; Stratascan 2008). The Historic Environment Record indicated that there were no known sites within the application area although there are known remains from the vicinity. The geophysical survey showed evidence of medieval ridge and furrow but no clear evidence of other deposits.

3. Archaeological Objectives

- 3.1 The main objectives of the evaluation will be:
 - 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 produce an archive and report of any results.
- 3.2 Within the stated project objectives, the principal aim of the evaluation is to establish the nature, extent, date, depth, significance and state of preservation of archaeological deposits on the site in order to determine the potential impact upon them from the proposed development.
- 3.3 Trial trenching is an intrusive form of evaluation that will demonstrate the existence of earthfast archaeological features that may exist within the area.

4. Methodology

4.1 General Methodology and Standards

- 4.1.1 All work will follow the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) Code of Conduct and adhere to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (2008).
- 4.1.2 Staffing, recording systems, health and safety provisions and insurance details are included below.
- 4.1.3 Internal monitoring procedures will be undertaken including visits to the site by the project manager. These will ensure that project targets are met and professional standards are maintained. Provision will be made for external monitoring meetings with the Senior Planning Archaeologist the Planning authority and the Client.

4.2 Trial Trenching Methodology

- 4.2.1 Topsoil/modern overburden will be removed in level spits, under continuous archaeological supervision, down to the uppermost archaeological deposits by JCB 3C or equivalent using a toothless ditching bucket. A CAT Scan will be undertaken prior to the trenching commencing.
- 4.2.2 Trenches will be excavated to a width of 1.5m and down to the top of archaeological deposits. The area of the trenches will be protected by barrier fencing.
- 4.2.3 The trenches will be backfilled and levelled at the end of the evaluation.
- 4.2.4 The area covers c. 3.4 ha, where residential development is. A c. 1.5% sample of the area is the equivalent of c. 16 20m x 1.6m trenches totaling c. 525 sq m. (Fig. 2). The trenches will follow the line of the ridge and furrow and target discrete anomalies where possible. The exact location of the trenches may need to be modified depending on constraints on site.
- 4.2.5 Trenches will be examined by hand cleaning and any archaeological deposits located will be planned at an appropriate scale and sample-excavated by hand as appropriate to establishing the stratigraphic and chronological sequence. All plans will be tied into the Ordnance Survey National Grid. Spot heights will be taken as appropriate.
- 4.2.6 Sections of any excavated archaeological features will be drawn at an appropriate scale. At least one longitudinal face of each trench will be recorded. All sections will be levelled and tied to the Ordnance Survey Datum, or a permanent fixed bench mark.
- 4.2.7 Trench locations will be recorded using an electronic distance measurer. These will then be tied in to the Ordnance Survey National Grid.
- 4.2.8 Any human remains will initially be left *in situ* and will only be removed if necessary for their protection, under Ministry of Justice guidelines and in compliance with relevant environmental health regulations.

4.3 Recording Systems

- 4.3.1 The ULAS recording manual will be used as a guide for all recording.
- 4.3.2 Individual descriptions of all archaeological strata and features excavated or exposed will be entered onto pro-forma recording sheets.

- 4.3.3 A site location plan based on the current Ordnance Survey 1:1250 map (reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO) will be prepared. This will be supplemented by a trench plan at appropriate scale, which will show the location of the areas investigated in relationship to the investigation area and OS grid.
- 4.3.4 A record of the full extent in plan of all archaeological deposits encountered will be made. Sections including the half-sections of individual layers of features will be drawn as necessary, typically at a scale of 1:10. The OD height of all principal strata and features will be recorded.
- 4.3.5 A photographic record of the investigations will be prepared illustrating in both detail and general context the principal features and finds discovered. The photographic record will also include 'working shots' to illustrate more generally the nature of the archaeological operation mounted.
- 4.3.6 This record will be compiled and checked during the course of the excavations.

5. Finds and Samples

- 5.1 The IfA *Guidelines for Finds Work* will be adhered to.
- 5.2 Before commencing work on the site, a Site code/Accession number will be agreed with the Planning Archaeologist that will be used to identify all records and finds from the site.
- 5.3 During the fieldwork, different sampling strategies may be employed according to the perceived importance of the strata under investigation. Close attention will always be given to sampling for date, structure and environment. If significant archaeological features are sample excavated, the environmental sampling strategy is likely to include the following:
 - i. A range of features to represent all feature types, areas and phases will be selected on a judgmental basis. The criteria for selection will be that deposits are datable, well sealed and with little intrusive or residual material.
 - ii. Any buried soils or well sealed deposits with concentrations of carbonised material present will be intensively sampled taking a known proportion of the deposit.
 - iii. Spot samples will be taken where concentrations of environmental remains are located.
 - iv. Waterlogged remains, if present, will be sampled for pollen, plant macrofossils, insect remains and radiocarbon dating provided that they are uncontaminated and datable. Consultation with the specialist will be undertaken.
- 5.4 All identified finds and artefacts are to be retained, although certain classes of building material will, in some circumstances, be discarded after recording with the approval of the Senior Planning Archaeologist. The IfA *Guidelines for Finds Work* will be adhered to.
- 5.5 All finds and samples will be treated in a proper manner. Where appropriate they will be cleaned, marked and receive remedial conservation in accordance with recognised best-practice. This will include the site code number, finds number and context number. Bulk finds will be bagged in clear self sealing plastic bags, again marked with site code, finds and context numbers and boxed by material in standard storage boxes (340mm x 270mm x 195mm). All materials will be fully labelled, catalogued and stored in appropriate containers.

6. Report and Archive

- 6.1 The full report in A4 format will usually follow within eight weeks of the completion of the fieldwork and copies will be dispatched to the Client, Senior Planning Archaeologist; SMR and Local Planning Authority.
- 6.2 The report will include consideration of:-
 - The aims and methods adopted in the course of the evaluation.
 - The nature, location, extent, date, significance and quality of any structural, artefactual and environmental material uncovered.
 - The anticipated degree of survival of archaeological deposits.
 - The anticipated archaeological impact of the current proposals.
 - Appropriate illustrative material including maps, plans, sections, drawings and photographs.
 - Summary.
 - The location and size of the archive.

- A quantitative and qualitative assessment of the potential of the archive for further analysis leading to full publication, following guidelines laid down in *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage).
- A full copy of the archive as defined in Brown (2008) will usually be presented to LCC within six months of the completion of fieldwork. This archive will include all written, drawn and photographic records relating directly to the investigations undertaken.

7 Publication and Dissemination of Results

7.1 A summary of the work will be submitted for publication in the *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society*.

8. Acknowledgement and Publicity

- 8.1 ULAS shall acknowledge the contribution of the Client in any displays, broadcasts or publications relating to the site or in which the report may be included.
- 8.2 ULAS and the Client shall each ensure that a senior employee shall be responsible for dealing with any enquiries received from press, television and any other broadcasting media and members of the public. All enquiries made to ULAS shall be directed to the Client for comment.

9. Copyright

9.1 The copyright of all original finished documents shall remain vested in ULAS and ULAS will be entitled as of right to publish any material in any form produced as a result of its investigations.

10. Timetable

- 10.1 The evaluation start is proposed for w.c 11.01.2010 with two staff. Further staff will be added if archaeological remains are discovered.
- 10.2 The on-site director/supervisor will carry out the post-excavation work, with time allocated within the costing of the project for analysis of any artefacts found on the site by the relevant in-house specialists at ULAS.

11. Health and Safety

- 11.1 ULAS is covered by and adheres to the University of Leicester Archaeological Services Health and Safety Policy and Health and Safety manual with appropriate risks assessments for all archaeological work. A draft Health and Safety statement for this project is attached as Appendix 1. The relevant Health and Safety Executive guidelines will be adhered to as appropriate. The HSE has determined that archaeological investigations are exempt from CDM regulations.
- 11.2 A Risks assessment will be completed prior to work commencing on-site, and updated as necessary during the site works.

12. Insurance

12.1 All ULAS work is covered by the University of Leicester's Public Liability and Professional Indemnity Insurance. The Public Liability Insurance is with St Pauls Travellers Policy No. UCPOP3651237 while the Professional Indemnity Insurance is with Lloyds Underwriters (50%) and Brit Insurances (50%) Policy No. FUNK3605.

13. Monitoring arrangements

13.1 Unlimited access to monitor the project will be available to both the Client and his representatives and Planning Archaeologist subject to the health and safety requirements of the site. At least one weeks notice will be given to the LCCHS Planning Archaeologist before the commencement of the archaeological evaluation in order that monitoring arrangements can be made.

- 13.2 All monitoring shall be carried out in accordance with the IfA *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations*.
- 13.3 Internal monitoring will be carried out by the ULAS project manager.

14. Contingencies and unforeseen circumstances

14.1 In the event that unforeseen archaeological discoveries are made during the project, ULAS shall inform the site agent/project manager, Client and the Planning Archaeologist and Planning Authority and prepare a short written statement with plan detailing the archaeological evidence. Following assessment of the archaeological remains by the Planning Archaeologist, ULAS shall, if required, implement an amended scheme of investigation on behalf of the client as appropriate.

15. Bibliography

Brown, D., Standard and guidance for the preparation of Archaeological Archives (Institute for 2008 Archaeologists)

Hunt, L., 2009 An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment for land to the east of Scalborough

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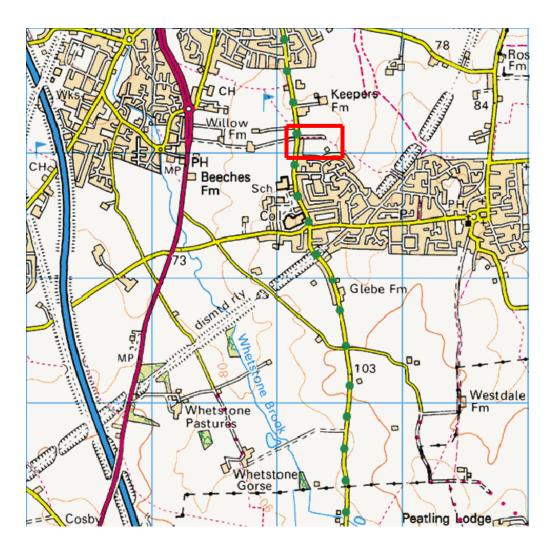


Fig 1 Location of proposed development

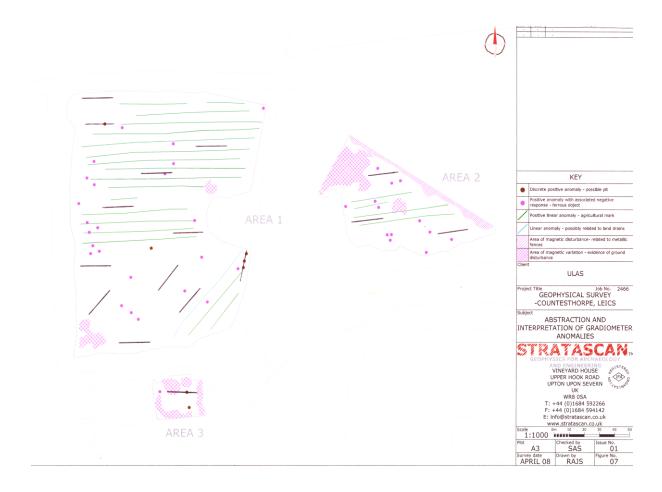


Fig 2 Suggested trench locations in relation to geophysical anomalies.

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