

Archaeological Evaluation Report



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Archaeological Evaluation Report

Prepared for: CgMs Consulting Ltd.

by Wessex Archaeology Unit R6, Sheaf Bank Business Park Prospect Road Sheffield S2 3EN

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QUALITY ASSURANCE

SITE CODE	85460	ACCESSION CODE	ТВА	CLIENT CODE	N/A
PLANNING APPLICATION REF.	11/00029/OUT	NGR		SK 471 032	

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01	E	ND/GC	RO'N	RICHARD O'NEILL	22/05/12	85460.02 HUNTS LANE, DESFORD, LEICS_EVALUATION REPORT
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I= INTERNAL DRAFT E= EXTERNAL DRAFT F= FINAL

Archaeological Evaluation Report

Contents

	Summary				
1	INTRODUCTION. 1.1 Project Background. 1.2 Planning Background. 1.3 Site Location and Topography	1 1			
2	ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND 2.1 Introduction 2.2 Prehistoric and Roman 2.3 Saxon and Medieval 2.4 Post-Medieval 2.5 Previous Archaeological Work	1 1 2 2			
3	METHODOLOGY 2 3.2 Methodology				
4	RESULTS 4.1 4.1 Introduction 4.2 Natural Deposits 4.3 Trenches 1-15	3 3			
5	FINDS 4 5.1 Finds 5.2 Potential and further recommendations	4			
6	CONCLUSIONS				
7	ARCHIVE AND COPYRIGHT 4 7.1 Archive 7.2 Copyright	5			
8	REFERENCES	6			
APPENDIX 1: ARCHIVE					
APPE	ENDIX 2: TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS	7			
APPE	APPENDIX 3: FINDS				



List of Figures

- Figure 1 Site and trench location
- Figure 2 Site and trench location in relation to geophysical survey

List of Plates

Front Cover

- Plate 1 Trench 7, south facing section 7003
- Plate 2 Trench 7, showing ridge and furrow

Archaeological Evaluation Report

Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by CgMs Consulting Ltd to undertake an archaeological field evaluation at land off Hunts Lane, Desford, Leicestershire ('the Site'). The Site, centred on grid reference SK 471 032, is situated to the west of Desford village on the southern side of the B582 (Hunts Lane). The evaluation was required to inform proposals for residential development, for which outline planning permission (11/00029/OUT) has been granted.

A programme of archaeological trial trenching was undertaken, from 8th-11th May 2012, primarily targeting anomalies identified by previous geophysical survey. No evidence of a cropmark enclosure identified on aerial photographs (CgMs 2010) or a possible enclosure identified by geophysical survey (Northamptonshire Archaeology 2010) was identified during the evaluation. However, two features identified as furrows, in Trenches 6 and 7, roughly correlated with the location of two of the linear geophysical anomalies postulated as forming part of an enclosure. Evidence of ridge and furrow cultivation, not evident at ground level, was observed across the Site. Desford is known to have medieval origins and the ridge and furrow most likely relates to the open field system which would have surrounded the village during this time.

A very small number of finds were recovered during the evaluation. These comprised three sherds of 19th-20th pottery from topsoil, and a single abraded sherd of Romano-British pottery and an abraded fragment of ceramic building material (daub) from furrows. The abraded finds from the furrows are most likely residual in later contexts.

The project archive is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology in Sheffield and will be deposited in due course with the Leicestershire Museum Service under an Accession Number still to be confirmed.

Archaeological Evaluation Report

Acknowledgements

This project was commissioned by CgMs Consulting Ltd and Wessex Archaeology is grateful to Rob Bourn in this regard. Wessex Archaeology would also like to thank Richard Clarke, the Leicestershire County Council Principal Planning Archaeologist, for his contribution to the project.

The report was researched and compiled by Neil Dransfield and Grace Corbett, illustrations were prepared by Chris Swales. The artefacts were assessed by Lorraine Mepham. The project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Richard O'Neill. Fieldwork was directed by Neil Dransfield with the assistance of Mike Keech and Kirsty Squires.

Archaeological Evaluation Report

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by CgMs Consulting Ltd to undertake archaeological trial trenching at Hunts Lane, Desford (hereafter 'the Site' **Figure 1**). The Site comprises an arable field, and is proposed for residential development.
- 1.1.2 A programme of archaeological evaluation was undertaken from May 8th to May 11th 2012 in order to inform the proposed development. The evaluation comprised of the excavation of fifteen trenches, measuring 30m by 1.8m (**Figure 2**).

1.2 Planning Background

1.2.1 Outline planning permission for the construction of 135 dwellings (11/00029/OUT) has been granted. Following an archaeological desk-based assessment (CgMs 2010), geophysical survey (Northamptonshire Archaeology 2010) and discussions with the Leicestershire County Council Principal Planning Archaeologist, it was determined that further information was required on the archaeological potential of the Site. A Specification for an Archaeological Evaluation (CgMs 2011) was produced and approved by the Leicestershire County Council Principal Planning Archaeologist on behalf of the local planning authority, prior to the evaluation taking place.

1.3 Site Location and Topography

- 1.3.1 The Site is located at Hunts Lane, Desford, Leicestershire at grid reference SK 471 032. It is bound by Hunts Lane to the north, properties fronting St. Matrins Drive to the east, properties fronting Oxford Road to the south and fields to the west.
- 1.3.2 The Site is located at approximately 132m aOD and is *c*. 6.5ha in area. The solid geology of the Site is Mid Pleistocene Glaciofluvial sand and gravel deposits.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 An archaeological desk-based assessment (CgMs 2010) concluded the Site had a moderate potential for late prehistoric/Roman remains, some potential for Saxon remains and low potential for all other archaeological periods. The following is summarised from the assessment.

2.2 Prehistoric and Roman

2.2.1 Mesolithic and Neolithic finds have been recovered from the surrounding landscape. Further prehistoric remains, including Bronze Age implements

and a late Iron Age settlement have also been found in the area. Cropmark evidence indicated a possible Iron Age enclosed settlement surviving on the Site.

2.2.2 Roman remains within the surrounding area include a settlement, a kiln, and Roman pottery all found at separate sites in the area.

2.3 Saxon and Medieval

- 2.3.1 The Site lies c.300m to the north east of the Saxon 'moot' site of Sparkenhoe Hundred. This was an open air meeting site and the village of Desford is thought to have Saxon origins.
- 2.3.2 The medieval historic core of Desford is located 500m from the Site and there is documentary evidence of a possible castle to the north.
- 2.3.3 The Site would most likely have been agricultural land during the Saxon and medieval periods.

2.4 Post-Medieval

2.4.1 The Site has been occupied by agricultural land during the post-medieval and modern periods. Few post-medieval remains are known from the area.

2.5 Previous Archaeological Work

2.5.1 Following on from the desk-based assessment (CgMs 2010), geophysical survey (Northamptonshire Archaeology 2010) was undertaken. This failed to identify the postulated Iron Age enclosed settlement (see paragraph 2.2.1 above); however, it did record two sides of a possible rectangular enclosure with a possible detached third side.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Aims

- 3.1.1 The general aims of the work were:
 - To determine or confirm the general nature and significance of any remains present;
 - To determine or confirm the approximate date or date range of any remains, by means of artefactual or other evidence;
 - To determine or confirm the approximate extent of any remains;
 - To determine the condition and state of preservation of any remains;
 - To determine the degree of complexity of the horizontal and/or vertical stratigraphy present;
 - To determine or confirm the likely range, quality and quantity of any artefactual evidence present; and
 - To determine the potential of the site to provide palaeoenvironmental and/or economic evidence and the forms in which such evidence may be present.

3.2 Methodology

General

3.2.1 The methodology for the excavations followed the agreed Specification (CgMs 2011), current national industry guidelines (IfA 2008a) and best practice, and is not repeated here in detail.

Evaluation Trenches

- 3.2.2 Fifteen evaluation trenches, each measuring 30m by 1.8m, were excavated across the Site (**Figure 2**).
- 3.2.3 Machine excavation was supervised by an experienced professional archaeologist and ceased at the level of the first archaeological horizon or the natural geology, whichever was reached first. All revealed deposits were hand cleaned and planned at an appropriate scale. All recording took place in accordance with standard Wessex Archaeology methodologies.
- 3.2.4 Finds were recovered and treated in accordance with current national guidelines (IfA 2008b and UKIC 2001).

4 RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 Fifteen trenches (**Figure 1-2 Trenches 1-15**) were excavated across the Site. A full list of the trench descriptions, context numbers and context descriptions is contained in **Appendix 2**.

4.2 Natural Deposits

4.2.1 The natural geology was moderately compact silty clay, encountered at 0.25-0.65m below ground level (bgl), at which level excavation ceased.

4.3 Trenches 1-15

- 4.3.1 All trenches revealed similar stratigraphy with the natural silty clay geology exposed below 0.25m 0.65m of dark brown slity clay topsoil.
- 4.3.2 Evidence of ridge and furrow was uncovered in several of the trenches (Figure 2; Trenches 5-9, 11 and 15) beneath the topsoil; no sign of these features was evident at ground level prior to excavation. The furrows were cut through the natural geology and all filled with similar silty sand deposits. The furrows were 1.5-2.6m in width, had gradual sloping sides and were approximately 0.4m deep. Where more than one furrow was identified in a trench, they were spaced approximately 6-7m apart. Two furrows, in Trenches 6 and 7 (Plates 1 and 2), appeared to roughly correlate with the linear features identified by geophysical survey (Figure 2) as forming part of an enclosure.
- 4.3.3 The alignment of the furrows varied throughout the trenches. Orientations varied from north-south at the western half of the Site (Trenches 8, 9 and 15), east-west in Trenches 6, and 11 and north-south again in the northernmost Trenches 5 and 7 (**Figure 2**). The erratic pattern, together with the limited excavation areas, does not allow for the reconstruction of the field

system within which these were created but it may be possible to suggest that different field patterns accounted for the differing alignments of the furrows. The Site is divided into four fields on the 1886 OS mapping (CgMs 2010) and it may be that the different patterns of ridge and furrow reflect this earlier division. The only artefacts recovered from the furrows were a single fragment of pottery (**9003**) and a single fragment of ceramic building material (**6004**), both abraded and probably residual in later contexts.

- 4.3.4 A modern pit (**9005**) was identified in **Trench 9.** This circular feature, measuring 1.05m x 0.9m, was filled with a silty clay deposit (**9006**) containing modern finds (not retained). The pit was lined with an alkaline lime deposit indicating the possible burial of a diseased animal.
- 4.3.5 No other archaeological deposits were identified in the trenches.

5 FINDS

5.1 Finds

- 5.1.1 The evaluation produced a small quantity of finds, deriving from contexts 6004, 9003, 11001 and 13001. Quantities by context are given in Appendix 3.
- 5.1.2 Three sherds from topsoil deposits in Trenches 11 (**11001**) and 13 (**13001**) were of 19th to 20th-century origin (refined whitewares and a modern flower pot), however, one large abraded sherd recovered from a furrow in Trench 9 (**9003**) was a piece of miscellaneous Romano-British ware (type/source unknown), probably colour coated, and dating from the 2nd century AD onwards. The abraded nature of the sherd indicates it is most likely residual in a later context. A single abraded fragment of ceramic building material (CBM) from a furrow in Trench 6 (**6004**) is probably daub of uncertain date.

5.2 Potential and further recommendations

5.2.1 The assemblage, largely dating to the late 19th to early 20th century, comes from the topsoil and the fill of ridge and furrow cultivation. The assemblage is clearly residual. For these reasons, retention for long-term curation is not recommended, and the finds may be discarded prior to archive deposition.

6 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Summary

- 6.1.1 No evidence of the cropmark enclosure identified on aerial photographs (CgMs 2010) or the possible enclosure identified in the geophysical survey (Northamptonshire Archaeology 2010) was identified during the evaluation. However, two features identified as furrows, in Trenches 6 and 7, roughly correlated with the location of two of the linear geophysical anomalies postulated as forming part of an enclosure.
- 6.1.2 Evidence of ridge and furrow cultivation, not evident at ground level, was observed across the Site. Desford is known to have medieval origins and the

ridge and furrow most likely relates to the open field system which would have surrounded the village during this time. Given the different alignment of observed furrows in different areas of the Site, it is possible that several individual field systems survive, however no definitive evidence was recovered to date the furrows.

6.1.3 A very small number of finds were recovered: three sherds of 19th-20th pottery from the topsoil, but also a single residual abraded Romano-British pottery sherd and a single abraded fragment of CBM (daub), both from furrows. The abraded finds are most likely residual in later contexts.

7 ARCHIVE AND COPYRIGHT

7.1 Archive

7.1.1 The project archive has been compiled into a stable, fully cross-referenced and indexed archive in accordance with Appendix 6 of *Management of Archaeological Projects* (2nd Edition, English Heritage 1991), and *Archaeological archives – a guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation* (Brown 2007). The archive is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology in Sheffield, under the project code **85460**. The full list of the contents of this archive is detailed in **Appendix 1** of this report. The archive will be deposited with Leicestershire Museum Services in due course under an Accession Number still to be confirmed. An OASIS form will be submitted at the time of deposition.

7.2 Copyright

7.2.1 This report, and the archive generally, may contain material that is non-Wessex Archaeology copyright (e.g. Ordnance Survey, British Geological Survey, Crown Copyright), or the intellectual property of third parties, which we are able to provide for limited reproduction under the terms of our own copyright licences, but for which copyright itself is non-transferrable by Wessex Archaeology. Users remain bound by the conditions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with regard to multiple copying and electronic dissemination of the report.

8 REFERENCES

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APPENDIX 1: ARCHIVE

File No.	NAR Cat.	Details	Format	No. Sheets
1	-	Index to archive	A4	1
1	А	Client report	A4	
1	В	Graphics register	A4	1
1	В	Site drawings	A3	1
1	В	Trench records	A4	15
1	D	Photographic registers	A4	2
Finds		No. OF BOXES	6 (1)	

APPENDIX 2: TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS

Trenches

Trench No. 1	Co-ordinates:E447130.19, N303473.95 E447142.57, N303446.63	Dimensions: 30m x 1.5m Max depth 0.35m
Context	Description	Depth (m)
1001	TOPSOIL - Dark greyish brown silty clay with frequent rounded medium sized pebbles	0 – 0.35
1002	NATURAL - Mid brownish orange silty clay with frequent medium to large well sorted rounded pebbles	0.35+

Trench No. 2	Co-ordinates: E447169.10, N303429.61 E447143.66, N303413.70	Dimensions: 30m x 1.5m Max depth 0.4m
Context	Description	Depth (m)
2001	TOPSOIL - Dark greyish brown silty clay with frequent rounded medium sized pebbles	0-0.4
2002	NATURAL - Mid brownish orange silty clay with frequent medium to large well sorted rounded pebbles	0.4+

Trench No. 3	Co-ordinates: E447211.74, N303405.53 E447241.54, N303402.04	Dimensions: 30m x 1.5m Max depth 0.35m
Context	Description	Depth (m)
3001	TOPSOIL - Dark greyish brown silty clay with frequent rounded and sub-angular medium sized pebbles	0 – 0.35
3002	NATURAL - Mid brownish orange silty clay with frequent medium to large well sorted round and sub- rounded pebbles	0.35+

Trench No. 4	Co-ordinates: E447176.13, N303382.02 E447172.84, N303352.20	Dimensions: 30m x 1.5m Max depth 0.35m
Context	Description	Depth (m)
4001	TOPSOIL - Dark greyish brown silty clay with occasional sub-rounded medium sized pebbles	0 - 0.35
4002	NATURAL - Mid brownish orange silty clay with frequent medium well sorted sub-rounded pebbles	0.35+

Trench No. 5	Co-ordinates: E447138.07, N303341.28 E447167.94, N303338.45	Dimensions: 30m x 1.5m Max depth 0.5m
Context	Description	Depth (m)
5001	TOPSOIL - Dark greyish brown silty clay with rare sub-rounded medium sized pebbles	0-0.3
5002	NATURAL - Mid brownish orange silty clay with frequent medium well sorted sub-rounded pebbles	0.3 – 0.5
5003	FURROW - Gradually sloping sided linear aligned north to south across the trench with shallow rounded base measuring 2.6m wide by 0.2m deep	0.3 – 0.5
5004	FILL OF FURROW – Light orangey brown loose silty sand with frequent medium sized sub-angular pebbles	0.3 - 0.5
5005	FURROW – Same alignment as 5003 with the centre located some 8.2m to the west of 5003	0.3 – 0.5
5006	FILL OF FURROW – Similar to deposit to 5004. A sondage placed in the centre of deposit to confirm depth	0.3 – 0.5
5007	FURROW – Unexcavated but same alignment as 5003 and 5005 with centre of feature some 12m west of 5005	0.3+
5008	FILL OF FURROW – unexcavated but similar to deposit to 5004 and 5006	0.3+

Trench No. 6	Co-ordinates: E447184.91, N303325.16 E447182.42, N303295.26	Dimensions: 30m x 1.5m Max depth 0.8m
Context	Description	Depth (m)
6001	TOPSOIL - Dark greyish brown silty clay with rare sub-rounded medium sized pebbles	0 - 0.3
6002	NATURAL - Mid brownish orange silty clay with frequent medium well sorted sub-rounded pebbles	0.3 - 0.8+
6003	FURROW - Gradually sloping sided linear aligned east to west across the trench with shallow rounded base measuring 2.6m wide by 0.2m deep. Located in the centre of the trench the furrow was located some 11.5m from 5006m and 6007 to the north and south	0.3 – 0.8
6004	FILL OF FURROW – Light orangey brown loose silty sand with frequent medium sized sub-angular pebbles	0.3 – 0.8
6005	FURROW – Unexcavated but same alignment as 6003 and 6007	0.3+
6006	FILL OF FURROW – Unexcavated but similar to deposit to 6004 and 6008.	0.3+
6007	FURROW – Unexcavated but same alignment as 6003 and 6005	0.3+
6008	FILL OF FURROW – Unexcavated but similar to deposits to 6004 and 6006	0.3+

Trench No. 7	Co-ordinates: E447202.13, N303325.52 E447231.57, N303319.77	Dimensions: 30m x 1.5m Max depth 0.7m
Context	Description	Depth (m)
7001	TOPSOIL - Dark greyish brown silty clay with frequent sub-rounded small to medium sized pebbles	0 - 0.3



Trench No. 7	Co-ordinates: E447202.13, N303325.52 E447231.57, N303319.77	Dimensions: 30m x 1.5m Max depth 0.7m
Context	Description	Depth (m)
7002	NATURAL - Mid brownish orange silty clay with very frequent medium and large sub-rounded pebbles	0.3 - 0.7+
7003	FURROW - Machine excavated furrow aligned north to south across the trench measuring 3m wide by 0.4m deep. The feature was located towards the centre of the trench	0.3 – 0.7
7004	FILL OF FURROW – Light orangey brown loose silty sand with occasional medium sized sub-angular pebbles	0.3 – 0.7

Trench No. 8	Co-ordinates: E447127.46, N303307.89 E447107.15, N303285.81	Dimensions: 30m x 1.5m Max depth 0.7m			
Context	Description	Depth (m)			
8001	TOPSOIL - Dark greyish brown silty clay with occasional sub-rounded small to medium sized pebbles	0 – 0.25			
8002	NATURAL - Mid brownish orange silty clay with frequent medium and large sub-rounded pebbles	0.25 – 0.7			
8003	FURROW - hand excavated furrow aligned north to south obliquely across the trench measuring 1.7m wide by 0.45m deep. The feature was located 8.7m from the northeast end of the trench	0.25 – 0.7			
8004	FILL OF FURROW – Light orangey brown loose silty sand with occasional medium sized sub-rounded pebbles	0.25 – 0.7			

Trench No. 9	Co-ordinates E447173.72, N303276.32 E447152.60, N303255.02	Dimensions: 30m x 1.5m Max depth 0.6m			
Context	Description	Depth (m)			
9001	TOPSOIL - Dark greyish brown silty clay with occasional rounded medium sized pebbles	0-0.4			
9002	NATURAL - Mid orangey brown silty sand with frequent small well rounded pebbles and occasional patches of yellowish grey sand bioturbation	0.4 - 0.6			
9003	FURROW – Machine excavated furrow aligned northwest to southeast across the trench measuring 2.6m wide by 0.2m deep. The feature was located 10.7m from the northeast end of the trench	0.4 – 0.6			
9004	FILL OF FURROW – Light orangey brown loose silty sand with rare medium sized sub-rounded pebbles 0.4 – 0.				
9005	MODERN PIT – Circular pit measuring 1.05m by 0.9m. Unexcavated due to modern finds in 9006 and potential for diseased animal burial (see 9006). The pit was located 4.4m from the south-western end of the trench partially in the north eastern trench edge	0.4+			
9006	MODERN PIT FILL – Dark orangey brown silty clay containing modern finds (pot, slate) and lined with a caustic alkaline lime deposit which may indicate the burial of a diseased animal	0.4+			

Trench No. 10	Co-ordinates E447115.60, N303233.70 E447116.28, N303203.71	Dimensions: 30m x 1.5m Max depth 0.4m
Context	Description	Depth (m)
10001	TOPSOIL - Dark brownish grey silty clay with occasional sub-rounded medium sized pebbles	0-0.3
10002	NATURAL - Mid brownish orange silty clay with frequent sub-rounded medium sized pebbles	0.3 - 0.4+

Trench No. 11	Co-ordinates E447213.10, N303239.52 E447213.10, N303239.52	Dimensions: 30m x 1.5m Max depth 0.4m
Context	Description	Depth (m)
11001	TOPSOIL - Greyish brown with mottled yellow brown silty sand with occasional sub-rounded medium sized pebbles	0-0.3
11002	NATURAL – Mid greyish orange silty sand with frequent sub-rounded medium sized pebbles	0.3 - 0.4+
11003	FURROW – Aligned east to west across the trench measuring 2m wide located 5.9m from the northern end of the trench some 6.1m from the centre of 11005 located to the south	0.4
11004	FILL OF FURROW – Light mottled greyish orange silty sand with frequent sub-rounded medium sized pebbles	0.4+
11005	FURROW – Aligned east to west across the trench measuring 2m wide located 12m from the northern end of the trench some 6.1m from the centre of 11003 to the north and 12.8m from 11007 to the south	0.4+
11006	FILL OF FURROW – Light mottled greyish orange silty sand with frequent sub-rounded medium sized pebbles	0.4+
11007	FURROW – Aligned east to west across the trench measuring 2m wide located 24.8m from the northern end of the trench some 12.8m from the centre of 11005 located to the north	0.4+
11008	FILL OF FURROW – Light mottled greyish orange silty sand with frequent sub-rounded medium sized pebbles	0.4+

Trench No. 12	Co-ordinates E447126.97, N303187.31 E447125.67, N303157.34	Dimensions: 30m x 1.5m Max depth 0.45m
Context	ext Description Dep	
12001	TOPSOIL – Dark brownish grey silty sand with occasional sub-rounded medium sized pebbles	0-0.25
12002	NATURAL – Mid brownish orange silty sand with frequent sub-rounded medium and large sized pebbles	0.25 - 0.45+



Trench No. 13	Co-ordinates E447168.48, N303171.61 E447168.48, N303171.61	Dimensions: 30m x 1.5m Max depth 0.55m
Context	Description	Depth (m)
13001	TOPSOIL – Dark brownish grey silty sand with occasional sub-rounded small sized pebbles	0 – 0.35
13002	NATURAL – Mid brownish orange silty sand with patches of iron panning and light greyish yellow silt. Frequent sub-rounded medium sized pebbles	0.35 – 0.55+

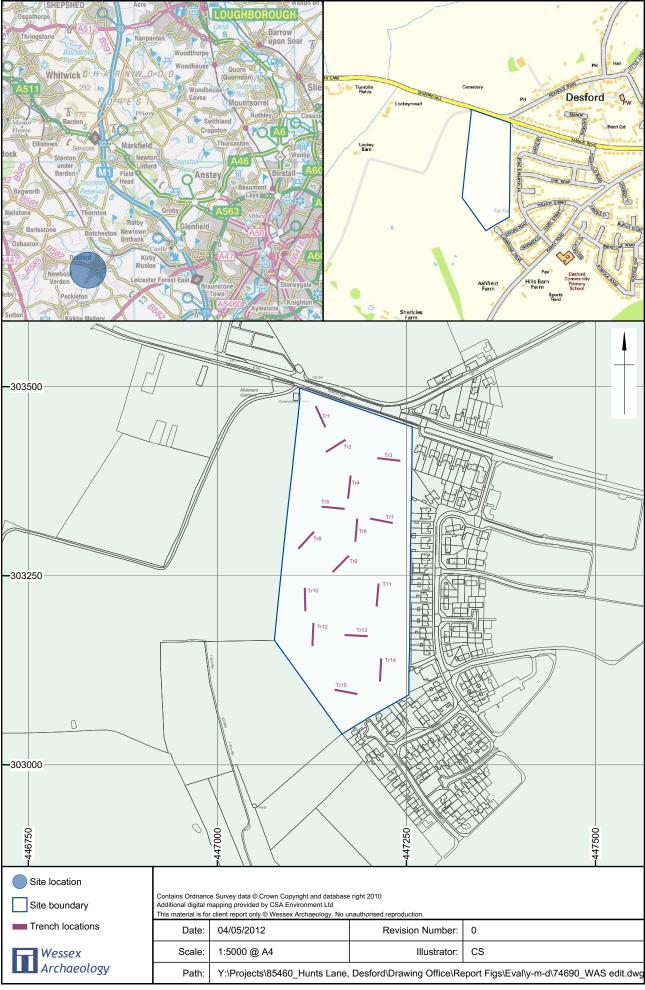
Trench No. 14	Co-ordinates E447216.56, N303140.35 E447215.05, N303110.39	Dimensions: 30m x 1.5m Max depth 0.45m		
Context	Description	Depth (m)		
14001	TOPSOIL – Dark brownish grey sandy silt with occasional sub-rounded medium sized pebbles	0 – 0.35		
14002	NATURAL – Mid brownish orange sandy silt with frequent sub-rounded medium sized pebbles	0.35 - 0.45+		
	Three Land Drains were noted in this low lying trench			

Trench No. 15	Co-ordinates E447155.14, N303099.27 E447184.61, N303093.66	Dimensions: 30m x 1.5m Max depth 0.65m				
Context	Description	Depth (m)				
15001	TOPSOIL – Dark brownish grey sandy silt with occasional sub-rounded small sized pebbles	0-0.3				
15002	NATURAL – Mid brownish orange sandy silt with frequent to dense sub-rounded medium and large 0.3 - sized pebbles					
15003	FURROW – Hand excavated shallow linear aligned roughly north to south across the trench measuring 1.2m wide by 0.35m deep with shallow concave sides and a rounded base. The feature was located 1.5m from the eastern end of the trench	0.3 – 0.65				
15004	0.3 – 0.65					

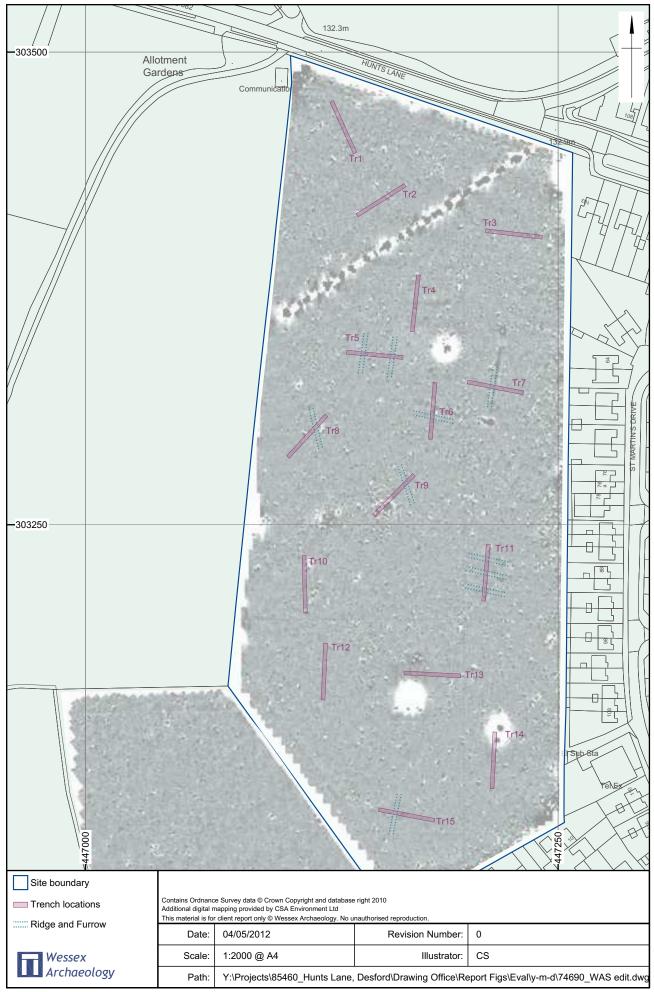
APPENDIX 3: FINDS

Context	СВМ	Pottery
6004	1/8	
9003		1/24
11001		1/10
13001		2/10
TOTAL	1/8	4/44

Note: All finds by context (number / weight in grammes)



Site and trench location



Site and trench location in relation to geophysical survey



Plate 1: Trench 7, south facing section **7003**.



Plate 2: Trench 7, showing ridge and furrow.

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