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# LAND OFF RAVENSTONE ROAD/COALVILLE LANE COALVILLE, LEICESTERSHIRE

Archaeological Evaluation and Watching Brief Report



Ref: 79003.04  
February 2013



**LAND OFF RAVENSTONE ROAD/COALVILLE LANE  
COALVILLE, LEICESTERSHIRE**

**Archaeological Evaluation and Watching Brief Report**

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**Report Ref: 79003.04**



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# Land off Ravenstone Road/Coalville Lane Coalville, Leicestershire

## Archaeological Evaluation and Watching Brief Report

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## **Land off Ravenstone Road/Coalville Lane Coalville, Leicestershire**

### **Archaeological Evaluation and Watching Brief Report**

#### **Summary**

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by St Modwen Properties PLC to undertake a scheme of archaeological works on land off Ravenstone Road/Coalville Lane, Coalville, Leicestershire ('the Site', NGR 441265 314388). The work comprised monitoring the excavation of twenty-five geotechnical test pits, followed by the excavation of sixteen evaluation trenches. The work was carried out in line with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) approved by Richard Clark of Leicestershire County Council.

The Site comprises three fields, which have previously been subject to geophysical survey and fieldwalking; the southern field was evaluated in February 2012 and no significant archaeological remains or results were identified from either of the previous phases of work. The 2013 work targeted a small mound in the north-west corner of the Site, which proved to contain modern waste such as concrete posts, bricks, tyres, metal and building rubble. An undated pit containing burnt stone was found in Trench 12 in the centre of the Site, no associated features or archaeological finds were found and it is likely that the pit represented medieval or post-medieval activity. Plough furrows and land drains were also present in the trenches

In line with the earlier results, the watching brief and evaluation revealed no significant settlement activity. It seems probable that the Site was unsuitable for settlement due to the marshy nature of the ground. The results of the work also indicate that the Site was not used as part of the adjacent Snibston Colliery.

The archive is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology in Sheffield, under the project code 79003. The archive will be deposited with the Leicestershire Archives under Accession Number x.A161.2011 in due course. An OASIS form will be submitted at the time of deposition.



## **Land off Ravenstone Road/Coalville Lane Coalville, Leicestershire**

### **Archaeological Evaluation and Watching Brief Report**

#### **Acknowledgements**

This project was commissioned by St Modwen Properties PLC and Wessex Archaeology would like to thank Neal Haywood and Richard Hickman in this regard. Wessex Archaeology would also like to thank Richard Clark, the Principal Archaeological Officer for Leicestershire County Council for his assistance throughout the works.

The watching brief was undertaken by Jessica Tibber, the evaluation fieldwork was carried out by Neil Dransfield, Jessica Tibber and Dane Wright. The report was compiled by Jessica Tibber and the illustrations produced by Chris Swales. The project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Andrew Norton.



# Land off Ravenstone Road/Coalville Lane Coalville, Leicestershire

## Archaeological Evaluation and Watching Brief Report

### 1 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Project Background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by St Modwen Properties PLC to undertake a scheme of Archaeological works on land off Ravenstone Road/Coalville Lane, Coalville, Leicestershire ('The Site', NGR 441265 314388, **Figure 1**). The works comprised monitoring 25 geotechnical test pits, and excavating 16 evaluation trenches.

#### 1.2 Planning Background

1.2.1 Outline planning permission for residential development at the Site was granted by North West Leicestershire District Council in July 2012 (Ref. 12/00325/OUTM). The work followed earlier phases of geophysics and fieldwalking and a trenched evaluation in the southern part of the Site (Wessex Archaeology 2011b and 2012a).

1.2.2 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for archaeological evaluation was prepared by Wessex Archaeology (Wessex Archaeology 2012b) and approved by the Principal Planning Archaeologist for Leicestershire County Council, on behalf of the Local Planning Authority.

#### 1.3 The Site: Location, Topography and Geology.

1.3.1 The Site is located south of Ravenstone Road/Coalville Lane, Coalville, between the A447 Swannington Road and Ashby Road. The Site comprises an area of scrub land west of the town centre, covering an area of approximately 6.9ha, divided into three fields by hedgerows containing mature trees. The two northern fields have recently been under arable cultivation. The Site is traversed by two overhead power cables.

1.3.2 The Site is located at approximately 157m aOD. The solid geology of the Site is Tarporley siltstone formation with superficial deposits of diamicton (BGS Sheet 155 - Coalville).

### 2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

#### 2.1 Summary

2.1.1 An archaeological desk-based assessment of the Site was prepared (Wessex Archaeology 2011a) to comply with the requirements of Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS5): Planning for the Historic Environment (2010). The results are summarised below.

2.1.2 Designated heritage assets close to the Site comprise the Scheduled Monument of Snibstone Colliery and the Ravenstone Conservation Area, and ten Listed Buildings within it; these will not be affected by development of the Site. There are no known





archaeological remains of national importance that would be affected by the proposed development.

- 2.1.3 Findspots dating from the Palaeolithic to the Iron-Age have been found in close proximity to the Site. Nearby Bronze Age remains include a possible barrow site, a pit alignment and a ring ditch.
- 2.1.4 The Site is located in close proximity to the postulated route of a Roman Road and several Roman findspots, including one hoard; pottery has been found directly south of the Site. Although the presence of a hoard does not necessarily imply the presence of a Roman settlement, the subsequent stripping of an area to the north of the findspot located a scatter of Roman pottery. The occurrence of Roman artefacts and the proximity of the Roman road reflect the intensity of Romano-British occupation and land use in the area. There are several known and postulated Roman Roads within Leicestershire, many of which led to and from Leicester (*Ratae Corieltauorum*), which was the civitas capital of the Corieltaui (Tomlin and Hassall 2003, 382). The Roman material discovered within the Site during field walking included fragments of ceramic building material and tesserae.
- 2.1.5 There is little physical evidence for Anglo-Saxon and medieval occupation and land use close to the Site, although some extant field boundaries may have medieval origins. Post-medieval to modern remains largely relate to the industrial and residential developments associated with the establishment and expansion of Coalville.

## 2.2 Previous Archaeological Investigations

- 2.2.1 A programme of fieldwalking and geophysical survey across the Site (Wessex Archaeology 2011b) indicated a low potential for the survival of significant archaeological remains. The presence of Romano-British building material and a prehistoric flint flake hint at the Site lying within a wider archaeological landscape. The southernmost field could not be fieldwalked due to the presence of grass and scrub, and the geophysics results were obscured by a probable spread of modern material.
- 2.2.2 To clarify the nature of the archaeological remains in the southern part of the Site, nine evaluation trenches (equivalent to a 1% sample of the 2.7ha field) were excavated across the southern field (Wessex Archaeology 2012a). No significant archaeological remains were present within the trenches. The results of the work revealed that the part of the Site had been prepared and levelled for possible development.

## 3 METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Aims and Objectives

- 3.1.1 The principal aim was to establish whether any archaeological deposits survive within the areas highlighted for watching brief and trial trenching, and to ensure their preservation by record.
- 3.1.2 In order to address the main aim, the general objectives were to:
- Ensure the recording of archaeological assets discovered during the archaeological works;



- Ensure that any below-ground archaeological deposits exposed were promptly identified; and
- Ensure the recording of archaeological remains, to place this record in its local context and to make this record available.

### 3.2 Fieldwork Methodology

3.2.1 As highlighted above, the outline archaeological programme of works comprised the following:

- Watching brief during the excavation of 25 (2.5m x 0.5m) geotechnical test pits;
- The excavation of 16 (30m x 2m) trenches totalling 4.8ha (2% sample) – 10 trenches in the north-eastern field (Area A) and 6 trenches in the south-western field (Area B; **Figure 1**);
- Production of an illustrated report.

3.2.2 The watching brief was undertaken between 13<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> December 2012. Evaluation fieldwork was carried out from 28<sup>th</sup> January 2013 for one week. Excavation of the Site was undertaken by a mechanical excavator under constant archaeological supervision. A full photographic record was maintained during the course of the works.

### 3.3 Recording

3.3.1 Trenches were recorded according to the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2012b), standard Wessex guidelines and accepted national professional standards (IfA 2008a and b). The Site grid was accurately tied into the National Grid, using a GNSS GPS system and located onto the 1:2500 map of the area. A full written and photographic record was maintained.

## 4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

### 4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 The following section provides a summary of the information held in the Site archive, with a full list of context numbers and context descriptions within each trench contained in **Appendix 1**.

### 4.2 Watching Brief Summary

4.2.1 No deposits, features or artefacts of archaeological interest were observed in the twenty-five geotechnical test pits (**Figure 1**). Typical stratigraphy within fields A and B comprised a mottled reddish clay containing patches of degraded/weathered mudstone extending beyond 3m below current ground level. The mudstone was overlain by 0.1 – 0.2m of sterile yellowish orange clay natural with occasional gravel inclusions, below 0.3m of dark greyish brown silty clay topsoil. A 0.1 – 0.15m layer of subsoil was also recorded during the work, which comprised a natural interface where ground water had leached through the topsoil (**Plate 1**).

4.2.2 North-south and east-west aligned ceramic land drains were observed in **Test Pits 11, 12** and **102**. **Test Pit 101** was located over a small mound in the north-west corner of the



field, which comprised 0.7m of made ground – consisting of bricks, fence posts, tyres and reinforced concrete (**Plate 2**).

- 4.2.3 Test pits in the southern field were not monitored as this area was shown to be largely comprised of made ground during the evaluation in 2012 (Wessex Archaeology 2012b) and comprised modern made ground.

### 4.3 Evaluation Summary

- 4.3.1 The soil sequence across Site was consistent, with 0.3m of silty clay topsoil overlying natural clay with gravel inclusions (**Plate 3**).
- 4.3.2 **Trenches 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 12, 14 and 15** contained plough furrows which correlated with the geophysics results (**Figure 1** and **Plate 4**). Between 0.5m - 1.2m wide and 0.10m deep the furrows were aligned south-west to north-east in Area A and north-west to south-east in Area B (see **Trench 12**, furrow **1206**, fill **1207**; **Figure 2**).
- 4.3.3 Ceramic land drains were noted in almost all of the trenches, which criss-crossed the Site on varying alignments and at varying levels (i.e. see **Trench 3**; **Plate 5**).
- 4.3.4 An undated pit (**1203**) was also recorded in **Trench 12** (**Figure 2** and **Plate 6**). Approximately 1.2m in diameter with moderately sloping concave sides and a flattish base, it's primary fill was a compact mid-yellowish brown silty clay (**1204**) with occasional small to medium heat shattered limestone fragments and charcoal flecks. Fill **1204** was overlain by a mid greyish brown silty clay (**1205**) with frequent medium to large, sub-angular heat shattered limestone fragments and occasional flecks of charcoal (**Plate 7**). The natural geology had not been affected by heat, and the stones were not burnt in situ. Following recording in section the whole of the pit was excavated to recover artefactual evidence, although none was found.

## 5 ARTEFACTUAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

### 5.1 Summary

- 5.1.1 No artefacts were recovered during the watching brief or evaluation although 20<sup>th</sup> century ceramics were noted and discarded. Two bulk samples were taken from the pit fills (**1204** and **1205**) in **Trench 12**.
- 5.1.2 Due to the lack of dating evidence in pit **1203** (and its likely modern date), the bulk samples were not processed but have been retained for flotation should it be required at a later date.

## 6 DISCUSSION

### 6.1 Summary

- 6.1.1 The evaluation revealed furrows corresponding with geophysical anomalies and an undated pit in **Trench 12**. Although the pit contained burnt stone, which may be indicative of a prehistoric date, the lack of associated features and any residual material other than one flint flake recovered from fieldwalking, makes a medieval or post-medieval date more



likely. The lack of clearly modern finds from the pit also supports a medieval or post-medieval date.

- 6.1.2 The Site does not appear to have been utilised prior to the medieval or post-medieval periods, from which time ridge and furrow was utilised in agriculture. The Site is prone to waterlogging and the use of ridge and furrow in the medieval or post-medieval periods would have improved drainage across the Site.

## 6.2 Conclusions

- 6.2.1 Very little evidence for archaeological activity was uncovered during all phases of archaeological fieldwork (see also Wessex Archaeology 2011b and 2012a). The sampling strategy employed has proven the potential for the presence of discrete features beyond the limits of the trenches. However, the lack of finds or features identified across the two fields suggests that any remains are likely to survive in isolation and are most likely associated with the ridge and furrow. The results of the work also indicate that the Site was not used as part of the adjacent Snibston Colliery.

## 7 STORAGE AND CURATION

### 7.1 Archive

- 7.1.1 The archive is currently stored in the Wessex Archaeology Sheffield office. It is proposed that, subject to the agreement of the landowner, the Site archive will be deposited on completion of the project with Leicestershire Museums, Arts and Record Service (LMARS), under the following accession no **x.A161.2011**.
- 7.1.2 All work has been carried out under the Wessex Site code **79003**. The complete project archive will be prepared in accordance with Wessex Archaeology's Guidelines for Archive Preparation, *Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long-term storage* (UKIC 2001) and *The Transfer of Archaeological Archives to Leicestershire Museums* (LMARS 2001).

### 7.2 Copyright

- 7.2.1 Wessex Archaeology retains full copyright of any report under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with all rights reserved; excepting that it hereby provides an exclusive licence to the Client for the use of the report by the Client in all matters directly relating to the project as described in the specification. Any document produced to meet planning requirements can be copied for planning purposes by the Local Planning Authority.
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## 8 REFERENCES

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- Wessex Archaeology, 2012a. Land off Ravenstone Road/Coalville Lane, Coalville, Leicestershire, Archaeological Trial Trenching (Sheffield; unpublished client report ref. 79002.02).
- Wessex Archaeology, 2012b. Land off Ravenstone Road/Coalville Lane, Coalville, Leicestershire, Written Scheme of Investigation for a Programme of Archaeological Work (unpublished client report ref. 79003.03).



## 9 APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Context Descriptions

Trench No. 01		Max depth: 0.3
Context	Description	Depth (m)
101	<b>Topsoil:</b> Dark greyish brown silty clay with occasional roots and small-medium rounded pebbles/flints.	0 – 0.2
102	<b>Natural:</b> Mottled orange/yellow clay with frequent rounded pebbles (small – medium)	0.2 +
103	<b>Cut of Furrow:</b> Shallow sloping sides, concave base. Slightly irregular linear in plan running NE-SW. Approx 0.5m wide x 0.1m deep.	0.2 – 0.3
104	<b>Fill of Furrow:</b> Yellowish brown silty clay with occasional charcoal flecks and small – medium rounded pebbles. Occasional manganese from standing water.	0.2 – 0.3

Trench No. 02		Max depth: 0.35
Context	Description	Depth (m)
201	<b>Topsoil:</b> Dark greyish brown silty clay with occasional roots and small-medium rounded pebbles.	0 – 0.3
202	<b>Natural:</b> Light brown interface layer below topsoil, most likely leaching of water through the topsoil.	0.3 – 0.35
203	<b>Natural:</b> Bands of yellowish orange mottled clay and gravel, consists of irregular sorted small – medium rounded pebbles and sub angular flints.	0.35 +

Trench No. 03		Max depth: 0.3
Context	Description	Depth (m)
301	<b>Topsoil:</b> Dark greyish brown silty clay with occasional roots and small-medium rounded pebbles.	0 - 0.3
302	<b>Natural:</b> Orangish clay with frequent small – medium gravel inclusions.	0.3 +

Trench No. 04		Max depth: 0.35
Context	Description	Depth (m)
401	<b>Topsoil:</b> Dark greyish brown silty clay with occasional roots and small-medium rounded pebbles.	0 - 0.35
402	<b>Natural:</b> Orangish clay with frequent small – medium gravel inclusions.	0.35 +

Trench No. 05		Max depth: 0.35
Context	Description	Depth (m)
501	<b>Topsoil:</b> Dark greyish brown silty clay with occasional roots and small-medium rounded pebbles.	0 – 0.3
502	<b>Subsoil:</b> Very thin interface of light brown silty clay.	0.30 – 0.35
503	<b>Natural:</b> Reddish orange clay with occasional gravel inclusions.	0.35 +



Trench No. 06		Max depth: 0.3
Context	Description	Depth (m)
601	<b>Topsoil:</b> Dark greyish brown silty clay with occasional roots and small-medium rounded pebbles.	0 – 0.3
602	<b>Natural:</b> Yellowish orange clay with occasional gravel inclusions.	0.3 +
603	<b>Cut of Furrow:</b> Aligned NE-SW approx 1.2m wide with shallow sides and a flattish base. Truncated by a NE-SW ceramic land drain.	0.3 – 0.4
604	<b>Fill of Furrow:</b> Yellowish brown clay with occasional small rounded pebbles.	0.3 – 0.4
605	<b>Cut of Furrow:</b> Same type/dimensions as 603	0.3 – 0.4
606	<b>Fill of Furrow:</b> Same as 604	0.3 – 0.4

Trench No. 07		Max depth: 0.29
Context	Description	Depth (m)
701	<b>Topsoil:</b> Dark grey silty clay with small-medium well rounded moderately well sorted stone. Some flint inclusions and stubble left from crops. Waterlogged due to weather conditions.	0 – 0.29
702	<b>Natural:</b> Light reddish yellow firm sandy clay with small – medium well rounded gravel inclusions	0.29 +

Trench No. 08		Max depth: 0.3
Context	Description	Depth (m)
801	<b>Topsoil:</b> Dark greyish brown silty clay with occasional rooting and small-medium rounded pebbles.	0 – 0.3
802	<b>Natural:</b> Yellowish orange clay with patches of gravel inclusions. One or two patches of reddish clay natural visible in bands across the trench.	0.3 +

Trench No. 09		Max depth: 0.3
Context	Description	Depth (m)
901	<b>Topsoil:</b> Dark greyish brown silty clay with occasional rooting and small-medium rounded pebbles. Large ruts caused by farm vehicles/plant containing standing water.	0 – 0.3
902	<b>Natural:</b> Reddish orange clay with occasional gravel inclusions.	0.3 +

Trench No. 10		Max depth: 0.3
Context	Description	Depth (m)
1001	<b>Topsoil:</b> Dark greyish brown silty clay with occasional rooting and small-medium rounded pebbles.	0 – 0.3
1002	<b>Natural:</b> Yellowish orange clay with occasional gravel inclusions.	0.3 +

Trench No. 11		Max depth: 0.3
Context	Description	Depth (m)
1101	<b>Topsoil:</b> Dark greyish brown silty clay with occasional rooting and small-medium rounded pebbles.	0 – 0.3
1102	<b>Natural:</b> Yellowish orange clay with occasional gravel inclusions.	0.3 +



Trench No. 12		Max depth: 0.55
Context	Description	Depth (m)
1201	<b>Topsoil:</b> Dark greyish brown silty clay with occasional rooting and small-medium rounded pebbles.	0 – 0.3
1202	<b>Natural:</b> Yellowish orange clay with occasional gravel inclusions.	0.3 +
1203	<b>Cut of Pit:</b> Circular pit with moderately sloping concave sides and a flattish base. Approx Diameter: 1.2m Depth: 0.25m	0.3 – 0.55
1204	<b>Lower Fill of Pit 1203:</b> Yellowish brown compact sandy clay with frequent small-medium sub angular fire shattered stones and occasional flecks of charcoal.	0.47 – 0.55
1205	<b>Upper Fill of Pit:</b> Mid greyish brown silty clay with frequent medium-large sub angular fire shattered stones and occasional flecks of charcoal.	0.3 – 0.47
1206	<b>Cut of Plough Furrow:</b> Very shallow with slightly concave sides and base. Approx 1.2m wide x 0.10m deep. Aligned approximately NW-SE.	0.3 – 0.4
1207	<b>Fill of Plough Furrow:</b> Light brown silty clay with infrequent small rounded pebbles.	0.3 – 0.4

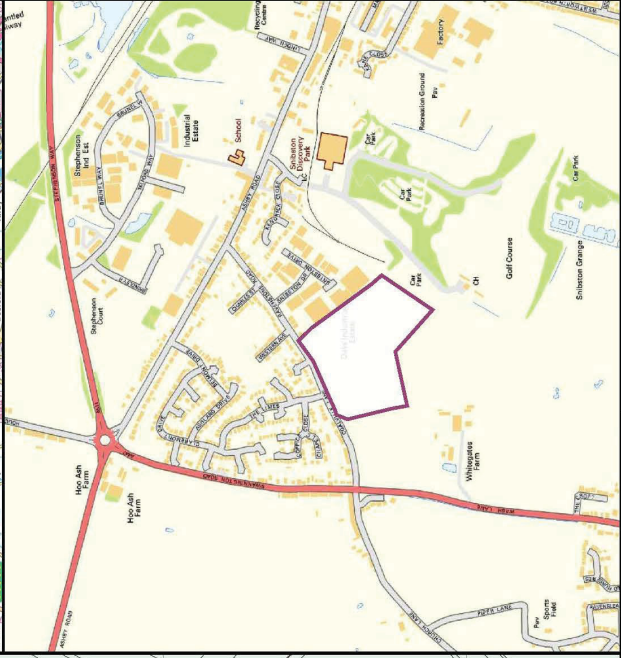
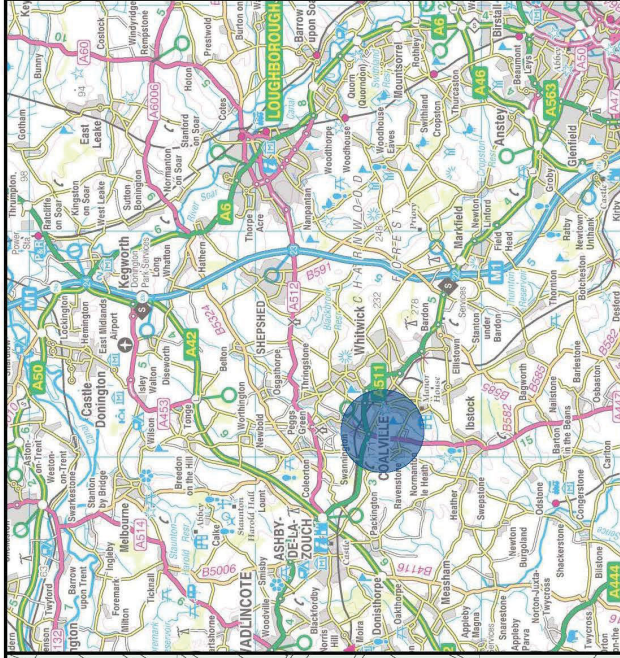
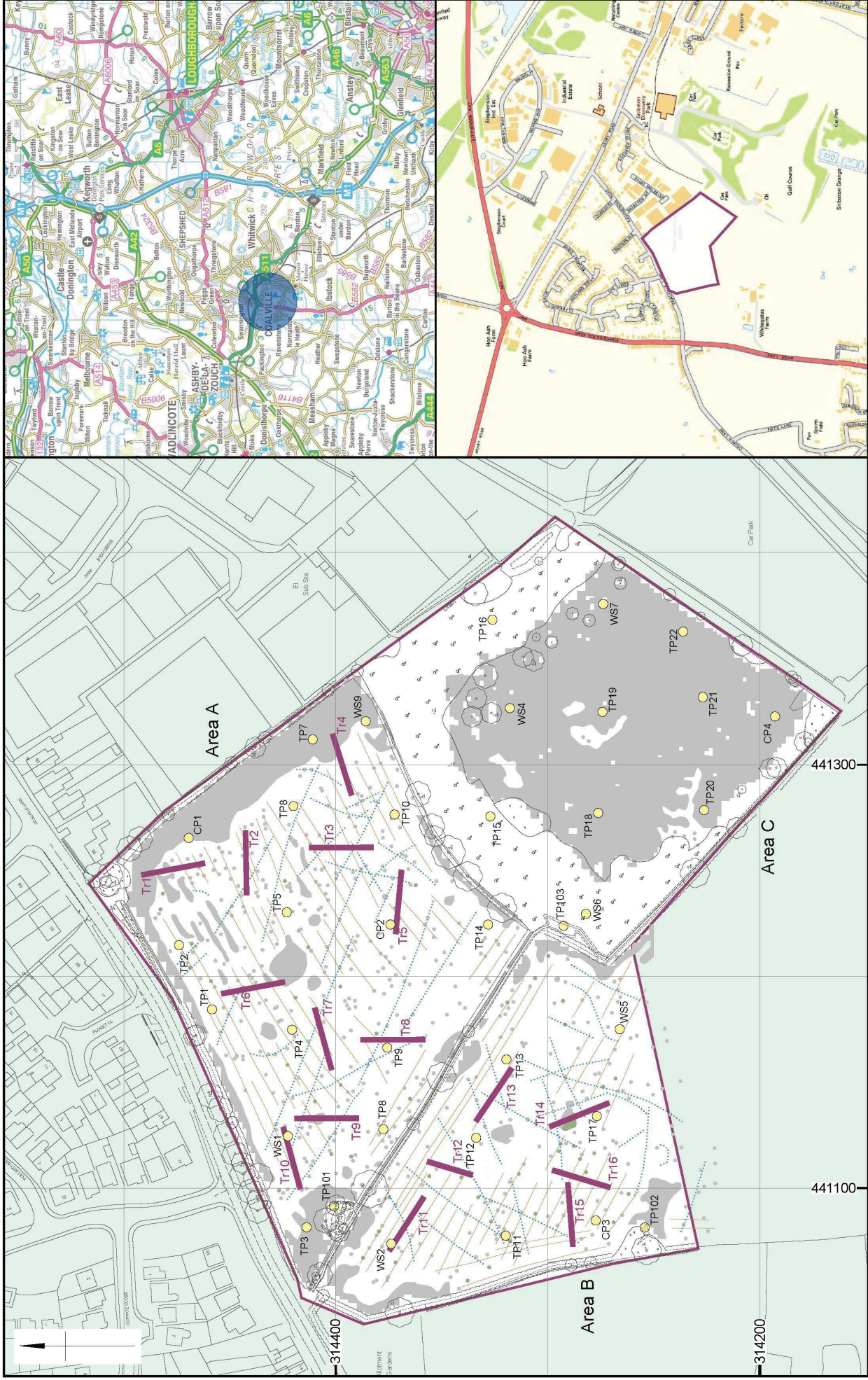
Trench No. 13		Max depth: 0.35
Context	Description	Depth (m)
1301	<b>Topsoil:</b> Dark grey silty clay with small to medium well-rounded pebbles, well-sorted. Heavily waterlogged due to weather conditions.	0 – 0.32
1302	<b>Natural:</b> Light orange sandy clay with small to medium well-rounded gravel inclusions.	0.32 +

Trench No. 14		Max depth: 0.3
Context	Description	Depth (m)
1401	<b>Topsoil:</b> Dark grey silty clay with small to medium well-rounded pebbles, well-sorted. Heavily waterlogged due to weather conditions.	0 – 0.3
1402	<b>Natural:</b> Light yellowish sandy clay with small to medium well-rounded gravel inclusions.	0.3 +

Trench No. 15		Max depth: 0.27
Context	Description	Depth (m)
1501	<b>Topsoil:</b> Dark greyish brown silty clay with occasional rooting and small-medium rounded pebbles.	0 - 0.27
1502	<b>Natural:</b> Yellowish orange clay with occasional gravel inclusions.	0.27 +

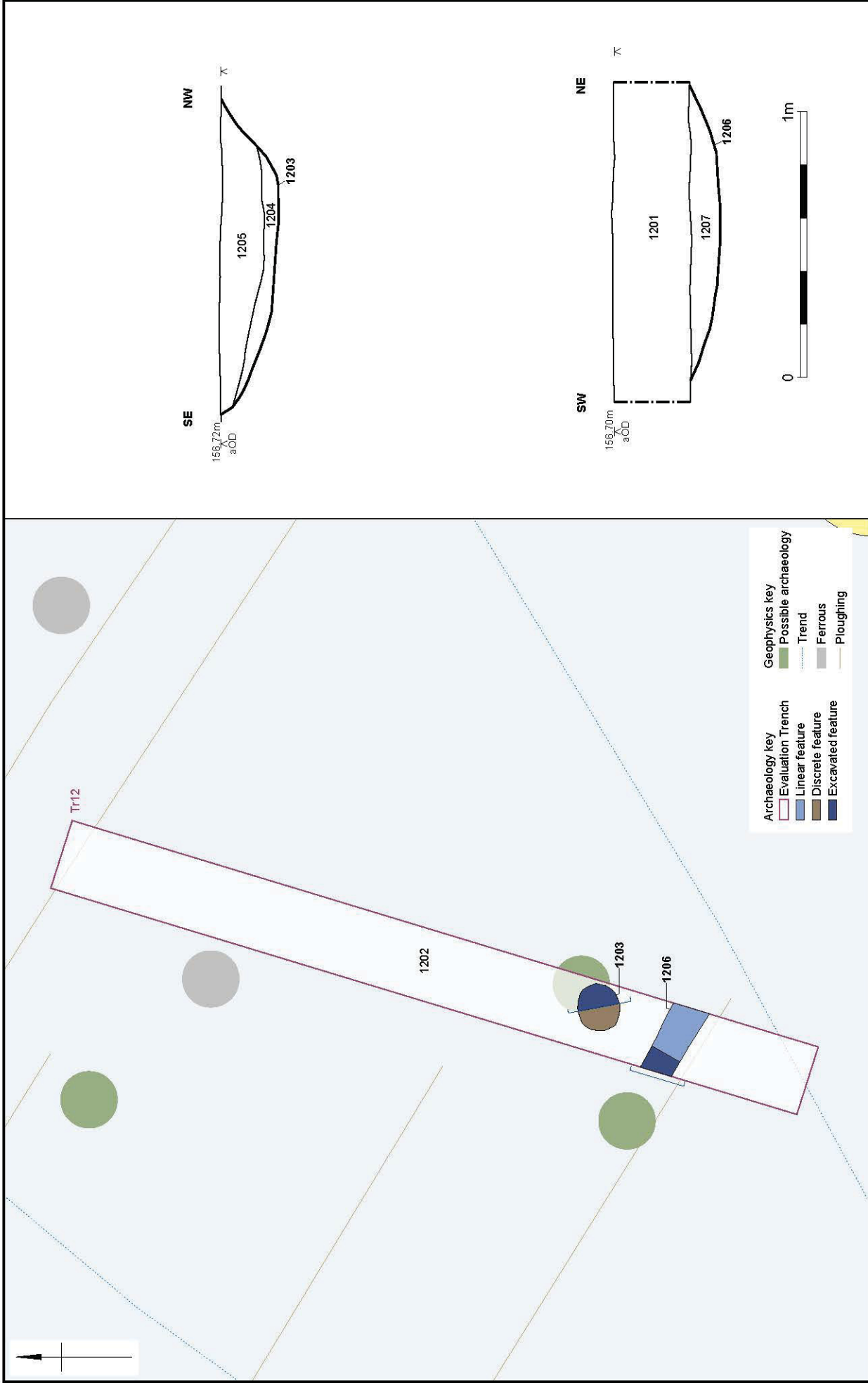
Trench No. 16		Max depth: 0.3
Context	Description	Depth (m)
1601	<b>Topsoil:</b> Dark greyish brown silty clay with occasional rooting and small-medium rounded pebbles.	0 – 0.3
1602	<b>Natural:</b> Yellowish orange clay with occasional gravel inclusions.	0.3 +






	<b>Geophysics key</b> Possible archaeology Trend Ferrous Ploughing		Date:	04/09/2012	Revision Number:	0
	Site location  Site boundary  Evaluation Trench  Geotechnical pit		Scale:	Main graphic - 1:2500 @ A4	Illustrator:	CS
Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown Copyright and database right 2010. Additional digital mapping provided by client. This material is for client report only © Wessex Archaeology. No unauthorised reproduction.		Path:	Y:\Projects\79002_Ravenstone Road_Trenching\Drawing Office\Report\Figs\Evaly-m-d79002_figs.dwg			

Site location and trench plan Figure 1



	Date: 04/02/2013		Revision Number: 0
	Scale: 1:150 @ A4 Section - 1:20 @ A4		Illustrator: CS
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Plan and sections of Trench 12 Figure 2

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Plate 1: Test Pit 11, representative section showing soil leaching



Plate 2: Test Pit 101, showing made ground


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Plate 3: Representative section of Trench 7



Plate 4: Representative section in Trench 6 showing furrow, land drain and coal outcropping


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Plate 5: Trench 3



Plate 6: Trench 12




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Plate 7: Pit 1203

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