



making sense of heritage

Land Off Bill Crane Way Lutterworth, Leicestershire

Archaeological Evaluation



Ref: 100110.01
June 2013



Land Off Bill Crane Way Lutterworth, Leicestershire

Archaeological Evaluation

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Land Off Bill Crane Way Lutterworth, Leicestershire

Archaeological Evaluation

Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by CgMs Consulting on behalf of William Davis Ltd to undertake an archaeological evaluation of land off Bill Crane Way, Lutterworth, Leicestershire (hereafter 'the Site').

Planning permission has been granted for the residential development of the Site (Harborough District Council planning ref. 11/00117/OUT). The planning application was supported by an archaeological desk-based assessment, a geophysical survey and a trial trenching evaluation. Condition 15 of the consent required further archaeological works, including a second phase of trial trenching, to inform any mitigation requirements.

The evaluation revealed the remains of east to west aligned 'ridge and furrow' agriculture in eight of the ten trenches, but no other archaeological deposits or features. The two empty trenches perhaps lay too close to a stream to be suitable for ploughing; one contained a possible alluvial deposit indicative of flooding.

The majority of the trenches contained east to west aligned furrows but of slightly differing character. It is suggested that the wider spaced furrows in the western half of the Site are earlier in origin than the narrower ones in the eastern half.

No other archaeological features or deposits were identified in any of the trenches. Potential features identified as geophysical anomalies were caused by changes in the character of the natural substrate.

The artefactual assemblage comprised one sherd of Roman-British pottery and one post-medieval pottery sherd.

Although the previous phase of evaluation identified that prehistoric artefacts and features survived within the Site, these seem to be confined to a small area centred on Trench 4. Based on this evaluation there is low potential for the survival of archaeological features or deposits which pre-date the medieval to post-medieval agricultural features.

The archive is currently held at Wessex Archaeology's Sheffield Offices under project number **100110**. It will be deposited with Leicestershire Heritage Services under accession number **X.A69.2013** in due course. An OASIS form will be submitted at the time of deposition.



Land Off Bill Crane Way Lutterworth, Leicestershire

Archaeological Evaluation

Acknowledgements

Fieldwork was undertaken by Neil Parker and Sam Fairhead. The report was compiled by Neil Parker and illustrations were prepared by Chris Swales. The pottery was analysed by Lorraine Mephram and the project was managed by Andrew Norton.



Land Off Bill Crane Way Lutterworth, Leicestershire

Archaeological Evaluation

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by CgMs Consulting on behalf of William Davis Ltd to undertake an archaeological evaluation of land off Bill Crane Way, Lutterworth, Leicestershire (hereafter 'the Site').
- 1.1.2 Planning permission has been granted for the residential development of the Site (Harborough District Council planning ref. 11/00117/OUT). The planning application was supported by an archaeological desk-based assessment, a geophysical survey and an initial evaluation.
- 1.1.3 The Assistant Planning Archaeologist for Leicestershire County Council (LCC; archaeological advisor to Harborough District Council Planning Authority) requested a second phase of evaluation by trial trenching in order to inform a subsequent mitigation strategy. A Specification for the work was prepared by CgMS (Gajos 2013) and approved by LCC .

1.2 The Site

- 1.2.1 The Site is located on the northern edge of Lutterworth at National Grid Reference 45430 28606 (**Figure 1**). The Site is bounded by Bill Crane Way to the south, the A426 Leicester Road to the east, a small stream to the west and arable land to the north. The 7.5 hectare area is currently divided into three separate fields.
- 1.2.2 The underlying geology of the Site comprises superficial deposits of Diamicton Till above interbedded limestone and mudstone of the Blue Lias Formation and Charmouth Mudstone Formation (British Geological Survey online viewer). The soils are mapped as slowly permeable, seasonally wet loams and clays (National Soil Resources Institute online viewer).

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 The development Site has been the subject of a desk-based assessment (Gajos 2010), a geophysical survey (Archaeological Research Services 2010) and an archaeological evaluation (Northamptonshire Archaeology 2011). The following is a summary drawn from those reports.

2.2 Prehistoric

- 2.2.1 There are no records of archaeological sites or finds within the development area but several surface finds, including Mesolithic and early Bronze Age flints, a Neolithic axe head and a sherd of Iron Age pottery, have been found within 250m of the Site.

2.3 Romano-British

- 2.3.1 The A426 Leicester Road lies immediately to the east of the Site and is believed to correspond with the line of a Roman road from *Ratae Corieltavorum* (Leicester) to the small town of *Tripontium* to the south of Lutterworth. In 1979 a short length of cobbled road, thought to be Roman, was recorded c.10m to the west of the modern road.
- 2.3.2 Romano-British pottery has been recovered during fieldwalking surveys within 250m to the north and south of the development area.

2.4 Saxon to medieval

- 2.4.1 The nearby settlements of Bitteswell and Lutterworth are both recorded in the Domesday Survey of AD 1086 and the Site is likely to have been used as agricultural land at this time. There are some surviving remnants of medieval or post-medieval 'ridge and furrow' agriculture in the vicinity and within the Site itself.

2.5 Post-medieval to modern

- 2.5.1 The Site appears to have remained in use as agricultural land throughout the subsequent periods. By 1886, and the publication of the first edition Ordnance Survey map, the Site was divided into five fields; one containing a small barn, enclosure and a possible rubbish dump. It remained largely unchanged until the latter half of the 20th century when the barn and some field boundaries were removed.

2.6 Previous archaeological works at the Site

- 2.6.1 A walkover survey for the desk-based assessment identified ridge and furrow earthworks in the western part of the Site and a shallow depression close to the location of the small barn depicted on the 1886 map (Gajos 2010).
- 2.6.2 A geophysical survey of the Site identified furrows, a former field boundary, a probably modern service, three amorphous features that had the potential to be archaeological in origin and several discrete ferrous responses (Archaeological Research Services 2010; **Figure 1**).
- 2.6.3 The first phase of evaluation by trial trenching comprised eight trenches. This identified a small area of possible Bronze Age occupation next to the watercourse at the western edge of the Site (in Trench 4), plus an undated ditch, a furrow, vegetation disturbance and a modern gully (Northamptonshire Archaeology 2011; **Figure 1**).

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Aims and objectives

3.1.1 The general aims of the project were:

- To determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any archaeological remains within the development Site;
- To assess the artefactual and environmental potential of the archaeological deposits encountered;
- To assess the impact of previous land use on the Site;
- To inform formulation of a strategy to mitigate impacts of the proposed development on surviving archaeological remains and,
- To produce a Site archive for deposition with an appropriate museum and to provide information for accession to the Leicestershire Historic Environment Record.

3.1.2 It is intended that the results of the evaluation will determine whether further mitigation works are required in advance of, or during, the development of the Site.

3.2 Fieldwork

3.2.1 Details of the methodology employed can be found in a Specification prepared by CgMS (Gajos 2013). The evaluation was carried out in accordance with this document and with industry best practice as outlined in guidelines issued by the Institute for Archaeologists (2008a, 2008b and 2010).

3.2.2 Ten evaluation trenches were set out in accordance with the agreed Site plan to an accuracy of within 0.1m using a survey grade GPS. Where Site conditions required, the position of trenches were adjusted and the actual trench locations were surveyed in relation to the Ordnance Survey grid (**Figure 1**).

3.2.3 Topsoil was removed using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, working under the direct supervision of an archaeologist. Overburden was removed in a series of level spits down to the upper archaeological horizon or the level of the natural geology, whichever was reached first.

3.2.4 Any revealed deposits were hand cleaned where necessary. All archaeological features and deposits encountered were recorded using Wessex Archaeology *pro forma* recording sheets and a continuous unique numbering system. The features were planned using a GPS and each excavated intervention was hand planned and located with respect to the Ordnance Survey Grid and Datum. A photographic record was made using digital images.

3.3 Finds

3.3.1 The Site produced little in the way of artefacts. Those finds that were recovered have been treated in accordance with the relevant guidance (Museums and Galleries Commission 1992; IfA 2008b) and the Specification (Gajos 2013).

3.4 Environmental samples

3.4.1 An environmental sampling strategy was included in the Specification (Gajos 2013) but, due to the absence of archaeological deposits and features, no samples were taken.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 The following is a summary of the information held in the Site archive. The ten excavated trenches were recorded as Trenches 9-15 in order to avoid duplicating numbers used in the first phase of evaluation.
- 4.1.2 Trench locations are shown on **Figure 1** and the recorded contexts are summarised in **Appendix 1**.

4.2 General Site stratigraphy

- 4.2.1 Typically the stratigraphy comprised mid brownish-yellow sandy clay natural deposits containing rounded pebble and flint inclusions underlying (where present) mid brown sandy silt subsoil and topsoil.

4.3 Trenches 9 and 10

- 4.3.1 Trenches 9 and 10 both contained a 0.4m thick layer of colluvial or alluvial deposits below the topsoil and subsoil. In Trench 9 this sealed a thin layer of buried soil of uncertain date.
- 4.3.2 No archaeological finds or deposits were present in these trenches.

4.4 Trenches 11-15 and 18

- 4.4.1 Several furrows were identified in each of these trenches, spaced at a distance of approximately 3m apart (**Table 1**). These were recorded in plan and not excavated.

Trench No	No of furrows	Orientation
Trench 11	2	north-west to south-east
Trench 12	8	east to west
Trench 13	1	east to west
Trench 14	2	east to west
Trench 15	1	north-east to south-west
Trench 18	2	east to west

Table 1 Summary of furrows in Trenches 11-15 and 18

- 4.4.2 No further archaeological features or finds were present. No features were identified to correspond with the geophysical anomalies recorded in these areas; these are likely to have been caused by changes in the natural substrate.

4.5 Trenches 16 and 17

- 4.5.1 These trenches were located in an area of the Site where ridges and furrows were visible as earthworks prior to excavation (**Plate 1**). To the south of Trench 17 was a slight earthwork ditch that appeared to be the remnant of a boundary, possibly a former hedge line or hollow-way. Trench 17 contained two furrows orientated east to west. Three of the ten east to west aligned furrows in Trench 16 were excavated as a sample of this feature type at the Site (**Figure 2; Plate 2**).
- 4.5.2 Furrows **1603**, **1605** and **1607** were, on average, 4m apart, with the gap between **1603** and **1605** being more pronounced. Generally the furrow fills were only distinguishable from the subsoil by the flecks of charcoal present. A sherd of Roman greyware pottery and a post-medieval potsherd were recovered from deposit **1606** (fill of furrow **1605**).

5 ARTEFACTUAL EVIDENCE

5.1 Pottery

- 5.1.1 Two sherds of pottery were recovered from the fill of a furrow (**1606**). One is a coarse greyware of Romano-British date, while the second is a post-medieval (17th/early 18th century) Staffordshire-type manganese mottled ware.
- 5.1.2 The small artefact assemblage does not require any further recording and has no intrinsic significance. It is recommended that the pottery can be discarded following consultation with the recipient museum.

6 DISCUSSION

6.1 Summary

- 6.1.1 The desk-based assessment identified that the Site was probably used as agricultural land in the medieval and post-medieval periods and extant 'ridge and furrow' earthworks were recorded in the western half of the development area. Subsequent geophysical survey also plotted anomalies consistent with the furrows.
- 6.1.2 The evaluation revealed the remains of furrows but no other archaeological deposits. Of the ten excavated trenches, only Trenches 9 and 10 did not contain any furrows. Both of these lay to the west of the extant earthworks and were perhaps too close to the stream to be suitable for ploughing. Notably Trench 9 contained a buried soil that was not present elsewhere at the Site. The proximity of the stream suggests that this was an alluvial deposit, perhaps a flood episode with later colluvial build-up.
- 6.1.3 The majority of the trenches contained east to west aligned furrows but of slightly differing character. In Trenches 16 and 17, where the ridge and furrow was still visible above ground, the furrows were spaced approximately 4m apart. This suggests ploughing with a small two-oxen team and a medieval origin. The post-medieval pottery recovered from the furrow fill does not necessary contradict this and could indicate duration of use.
- 6.1.4 The furrows in the other trenches were 3m apart on average. This is suggestive of a system that had been ploughed by horse, enabling closer ridges as horses require a much smaller turning circle than oxen. This may indicate a later medieval, or post-medieval, date when horse ploughing became more prevalent.
- 6.1.5 This interpretation of the dating of the furrows means that the earliest evidence of arable farming lies in the western part of the Site, closest to the stream, with later furrows present in the eastern half of the Site. The boundary between the two may well correspond with the present hedge between the arable and pasture fields. It is likely that most of the Site was put under plough in the medieval period, apart from the area closest to the stream (Trenches 9 and 10). However, the field closest to the stream (and containing Trenches 16 and 17) probably tended to become waterlogged and may have been turned over to pasture, which preserved the medieval earthworks. The continued ploughing of the eastern field (Trenches 11-18) probably denuded any earlier ridge and furrow and gradually replaced it with the later, closer, form.

- 6.1.6 The artefactual evidence from one of the furrows cannot be used to provide a date for the establishment of the ridge and furrow, only an indication of the duration of this type of ploughing. The Romano-British pottery sherd is residual and there was no evidence of other features or finds of a similar date. The finds assemblage from the Site is consistent with the range of finds recovered from fieldwalking surveys in the vicinity.

6.2 Conclusions

- 6.2.1 Few of the features identified in the trenches corresponded with geophysical anomalies and the only additional features were furrows. The evaluation evidence is consistent with the Site having been used only for arable farming from the medieval period onwards, and split into a pasture nearest the stream and an arable field to the east during the post-medieval period, possibly at the time of Enclosure.
- 6.2.2 It is considered that the aims and objectives of the evaluation have been achieved and that the results are representative of the nature of the archaeology across the Site.
- 6.2.3 Based on this evaluation there is low potential for the survival of archaeological features or deposits which pre-date the medieval to post-medieval agricultural features recorded during the evaluation. The previous phase of evaluation demonstrated that prehistoric artefacts and features do survive, but these seem to be confined to a small area centred on Trench 4.
- 6.2.4 In summary, previous disturbance within the development Site appears to be limited to damage caused by ploughing from the medieval period onwards. This is likely to be greater in the eastern half of the Site and lesser in the western part of the Site close to the stream.

7 STORAGE AND CURATION

7.1 Museum

- 7.1.1 The archive from the fieldwork will be deposited with Leicestershire Heritage Services under accession number **X.A69.2013** in due course. An OASIS form will be submitted at the time of deposition.

7.2 Archive

- 7.2.1 The project archive has been compiled into a stable, fully cross-referenced and indexed archive in accordance with current guidelines (Museum and Galleries Commission 1992, UKIC 2001 and Brown 2007). The archive is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology in Sheffield, under the project code **100110**.

7.3 Copyright

- 7.3.1 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.



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8.2 Online sources

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- National Soil Resources Institute online viewer, accessed 10/06/13, <<http://landis.org.uk/soilscapes>>



9 APPENDIX 1

Trench No.9		Dimensions: 23m x 1.8m Max depth 0.92m
Context	Description	Depth (m)
901	Topsoil: Friable, mid grey brown sandy silt	0-0.2m
902	Subsoil: Friable, mid brown sandy silt. Rare small rounded pebbles	0.2-0.42m
903	Colluvium: Friable, mid brown clayey silt. Occasional rounded pebbles	0.42-0.8m
904	Buried soil: Mid grey brown clayey silt.	0.8-0.92m
905	Natural: Mid orangey brown sand clay with frequent rounded pebbles.	0.92m +

Trench No.10		Dimensions: 23m x 1.8m Max depth 1.1m
Context	Description	Depth (m)
1001	Topsoil: Friable, mid grey brown sandy silt. Rare small rounded pebbles	0-0.32m
1002	Subsoil: Friable, mid brown sandy silt. Rare small rounded cobbles	0.32-0.6m
1003	Colluvium: Friable, mid brown clayey silt. Occasional rounded pebbles	0.6-0.1m
1004	Natural: Mid orangey brown sand clay with frequent rounded pebbles.	0.1m+

Trench No.11		Dimensions: 23m x 1.8m Max depth 1.1m
Context	Description	Depth (m)
1101	Topsoil: Friable, mid grey brown sandy silt. Rare small rounded pebbles	Varies 0-0.15 > 0.25m
1102	Natural: Mid brownish yellow sandy, silty clay. Rounded pebble and flint inclusions.	0.25m +

Trench No.12		Dimensions: 50m x 1.8m Max depth 0.26m
Context	Description	Depth (m)
1201	Topsoil: Friable, mid grey brown sandy silt. Rare small rounded pebbles	0-0.26m
1202	Natural: Mid brownish yellow sandy, silty clay. Rounded pebble and flint inclusions.	0.26m +
1203	Cut of furrow: Unexcavated linear furrow just over 1m wide	0.26m
1204	Fill of furrow: Mid grey sandy silt fill of 1203	0.26m
Trench No.13		Dimensions: 50m x 1.8m Max depth 0.26m



Context	Description	Depth (m)
1301	Topsoil: Friable, mid grey brown sandy silt. Rare small rounded pebbles	0-0.3m
1302	Natural: Mid brownish yellow sandy, silty clay. Rounded pebble and flint inclusions.	0.3m +

Trench No.14		Dimensions: 50m x 1.8m Max depth 0.26m
Context	Description	Depth (m)
1401	Topsoil: Friable, mid grey brown sandy silt. Rare small rounded pebbles	0-0.35m
1402	Natural: Mid brownish yellow sandy, silty clay. Rounded pebble and flint inclusions.	0.35m +

Trench No.15		Dimensions: 50m x 1.8m Max depth 0.26m
Context	Description	Depth (m)
1501	Topsoil: Friable, mid grey brown sandy silt. Rare small rounded pebbles	0-0.3m
1502	Natural: Mid brownish yellow sandy, silty clay. Rounded pebble and flint inclusions.	0.3m +

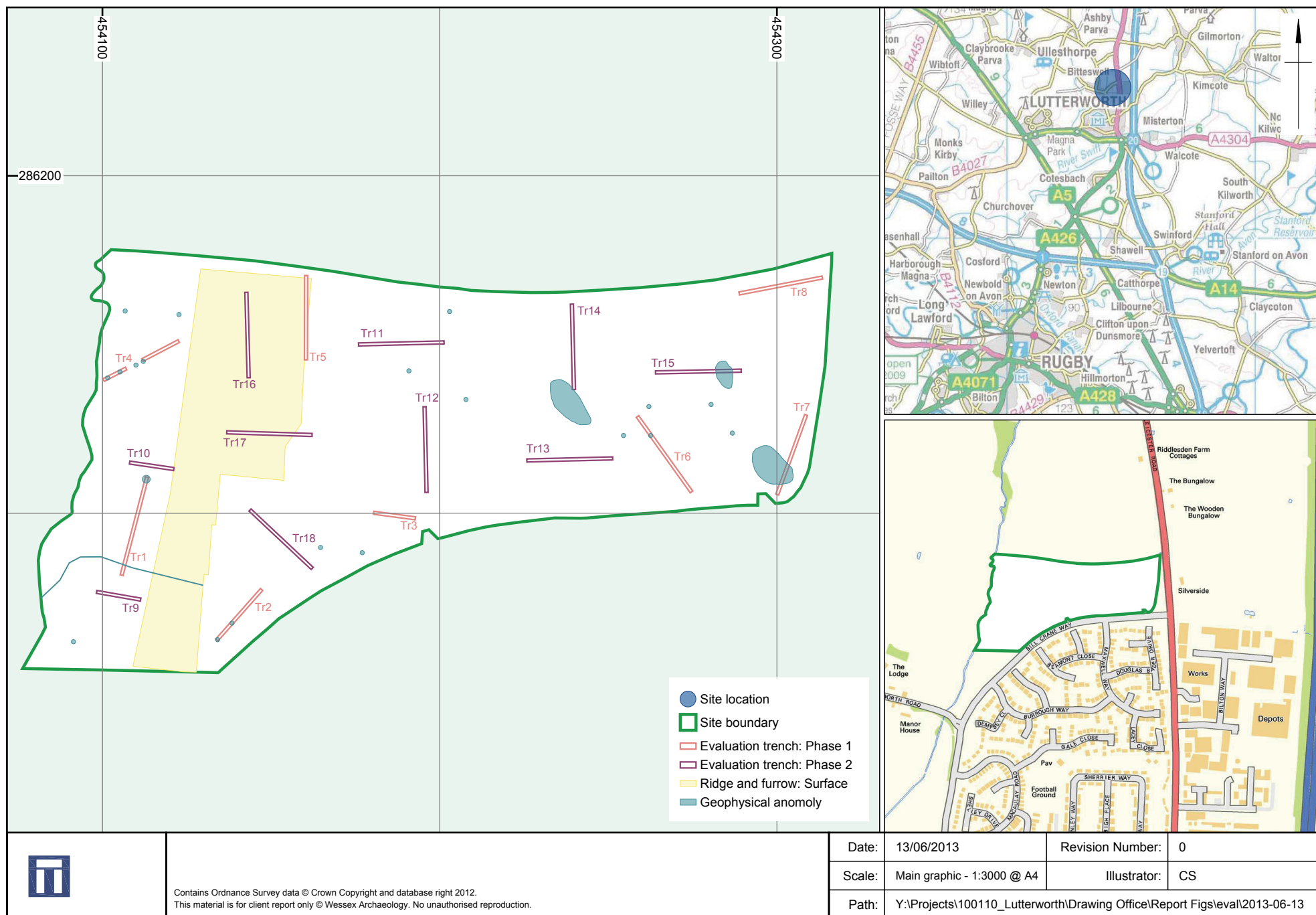
Trench No.16		Dimensions: 50m x 1.8m Max depth 0.26m
Context	Description	Depth (m)
1601	Topsoil: Friable, mid grey brown sandy silt. Rare small rounded pebbles	Variable 0-0.25>0.5m
1602	Subsoil: Friable mid brown sandy silt. Rounded pebble inclusions	0.5m -0.75m
1603	Cut of furrow: Uneven linear furrow, approx 1m wide	0.75-0.8m
1604	Fill of furrow: Friable mid brown sandy silt. Rounded pebble inclusions and charcoal/organic matter.	0.75-0.8m
1605	Cut of furrow: Uneven linear furrow, approx 1m wide	0.75-0.8m
1606	Fill of furrow: Friable mid brown sandy silt. Rounded pebble inclusions and charcoal/organic matter.	0.75-0.8m
1607	Cut of furrow: Uneven linear furrow, approx 1m wide	0.75-0.8m
1608	Fill of furrow: Friable mid brown sandy silt. Rounded pebble inclusions and charcoal/organic matter.	0.75-0.8m
1609	Natural: Mid brownish yellow sandy, silty clay. Rounded pebble and flint inclusions.	0.8m +

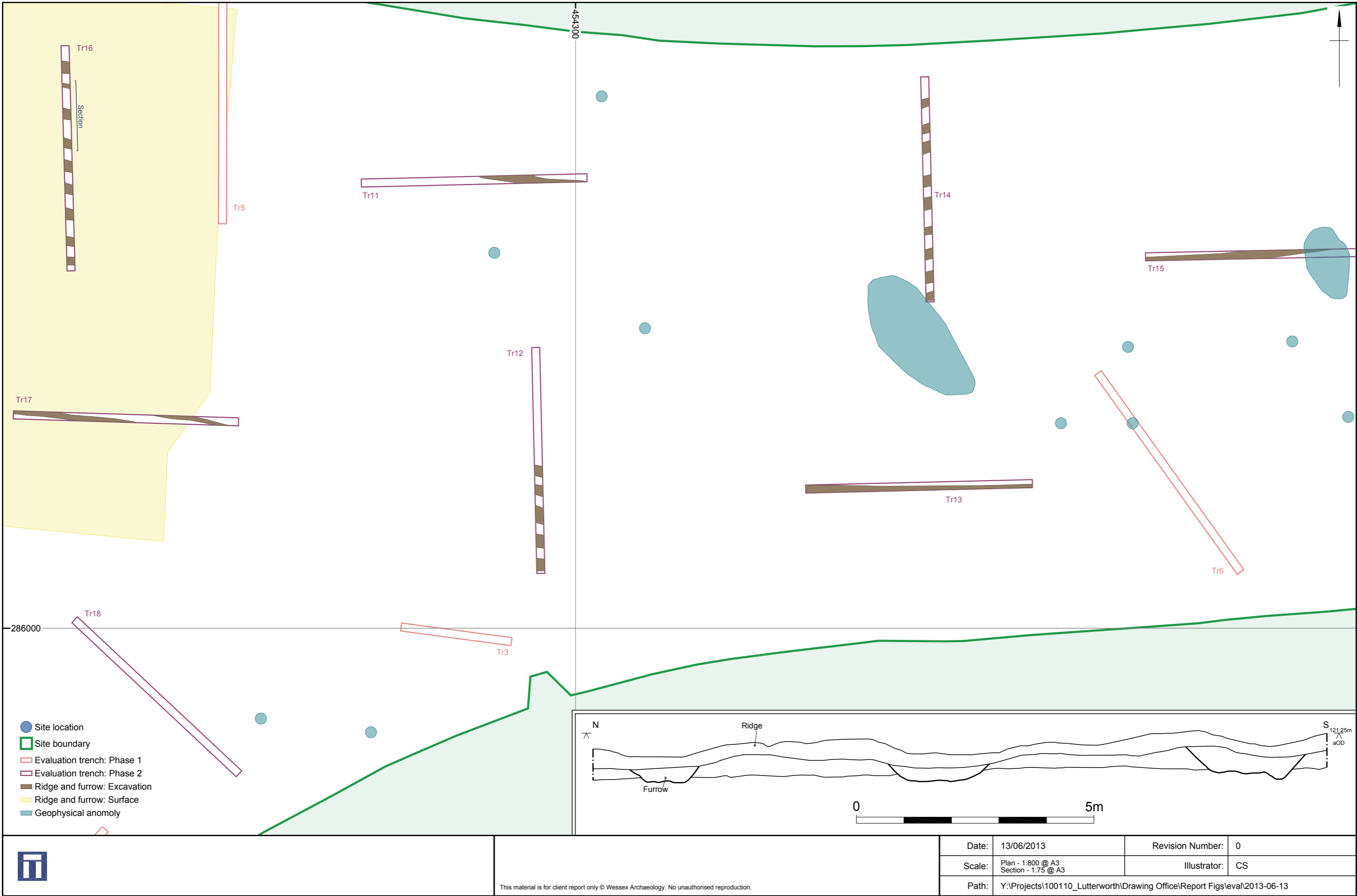
Trench No.17		Dimensions: 23m x 1.8m Max depth 1.1m
Context	Description	Depth (m)



1701	Topsoil: Friable, mid grey brown sandy silt. Rare small rounded pebbles	0-0.26m
1702	Subsoil: Friable, mid brown sandy silt. Rare small rounded cobbles	0.26-0.4m
1703	Natural: Mid orangey brown sand clay with frequent rounded pebbles.	0.1m+

Trench No.18		Dimensions: 50m x 1.8m Max depth 0.26m
Context	Description	Depth (m)
1801	Topsoil: Friable, mid grey brown sandy silt. Rare small rounded pebbles	Various 0-0.3>0.5m
1802	Natural: Mid brownish yellow sandy, silty clay. Rounded pebble and flint inclusions.	0.5m +





Site plan showing Trenches with ridge and furrow


Figure 2



Plate 1: Earthworks in western part of Site



Plate 2: Trench 16 pre-excavation

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