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# Land off Old Holly Lane, Atherstone, Warwickshire

Archaeological Evaluation Report



Ref: 108600.01  
April 2015



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**Land off Old Holly Lane,  
Atherstone, Warwickshire**

**Archaeological Evaluation Report**

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**April 2015**

**108600.01**



## Quality Assurance

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<b>Planning Application Ref.</b>		<b>Ordnance Survey (OS) national grid reference (NGR)</b>	430300,298968		

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v02	E	MNC	CS		14/04/2015
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\* I= Internal Draft; E= External Draft; F= Final

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# Land off Old Holly Lane, Atherstone, Warwickshire

## Archaeological Evaluation Report

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# Land off Old Holly Lane, Atherstone, Warwickshire

## Archaeological Evaluation Report

### Summary

Wessex Archaeology has been commissioned by CgMs Consulting to carry out a programme of evaluation trenching on land off Old Holly Lane, Atherstone (NGR 430300,298968) to determine an outline planning application for residential development.

The proposed development was situated to the northwest of known Anglo Saxon features, identified during excavations in 2013. Following the production of a Desk-Based Assessment (CgMs 2014), geophysical survey (Stratascan 2014) and discussions between Cathy Patrick (CgMs) and Anna Stocks (the Planning Archaeologist for Warwickshire County Council) it was agreed that a programme of targeted archaeological evaluation would be required to inform an outline planning application. Two trenches of 20m in length and four trenches of 30m were excavated across the site.

The trenching showed evidence of post medieval agriculture represented by furrows, along with a large field boundary running north to south which contained post-medieval ceramic building material (CBM). No evidence of Anglo Saxon occupation was discovered.

It is recommended that the project archive resulting from the excavation be deposited with Warwickshire Museum. The Museum has agreed in principle to accept the project archive on completion of the project under **accession code T/1427**. Deposition of any finds with the Museum will only be carried out with the full agreement of the landowner.



# **Land off Old Holly Lane, Atherstone, Warwickshire**

## **Archaeological Evaluation Report**

### **Acknowledgements**

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by CgMs Consulting and is grateful to Cathy Patrick in this regard. Wessex Archaeology would also like to thank Anna Stocks, the Planning Archaeologist for Warwickshire County Council.

The fieldwork was directed by Martyn Cooper with the assistance of Emma Carter, Hannah Holbrook, Jonathon Landless and Michael Keech. Fieldwork was undertaken between the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> March 2015. The report was compiled by Martyn Cooper. The illustrations were prepared by Alix Sperr. The project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Chris Swales.





# Land off Old Holly Lane, Atherstone, Warwickshire

## Archaeological Evaluation Report

### 1 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Project background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by CgMs Consulting (hereafter 'the Client') to carry out a programme of evaluation trenching on two parcels of land at the junction between Whittington Lane and Old Holly Lane, to the northwest of Atherstone, Warwickshire (hereafter the 'Site', centred on NGR 430300,298968) to determine an outline planning application for residential development (**Figure 1**).
- 1.1.2 The proposed development was situated to the northwest of known Anglo Saxon features, identified during excavations in 2013 (Archaeological Solutions 2013). A Desk-Based Assessment (DBA) was also produced for the Site (CgMs 2014). This DBA includes historical background relevant to the Site. A geophysical survey of the Site was also commissioned (Stratscan 2014). Both the DBA and geophysical survey indicated a low potential for undiscovered heritage assets within the proposed development area.
- 1.1.3 Following discussions between Cathy Patrick (CgMs) and Anna Stocks (the Planning Archaeologist for Warwickshire County Council) it was agreed that a programme of targeted archaeological evaluation was required to inform an outline planning application. Two trenches of 20m in length and four trenches of 30m were excavated across the Site, totalling 160m of trenching (**Figure 1**).
- 1.1.4 Wessex Archaeology produced a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) outlining how the requirements of the work would be met. The WSI was approved by the curator prior to work commencing (Wessex Archaeology 2015). All works undertaken conformed to current best practice and to the guidance outlined in Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment ('MoRPHE') (English Heritage 2006), the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA2014a and 2014b) and in accordance with CIfA Codes of Conduct (2014c).

#### 1.2 Site location and topography

- 1.2.1 The Site comprised two parcels of land on either side of Whittington Lane, Atherstone, Warwickshire, near the junction with Old Holly Lane. The Site is bounded by an Aldi distribution centre to the southwest, by Old Holly Lane, rural housing and a nursery to the east, and by arable farmland to the north (**Figure 1**).
- 1.2.2 Levels within the Site decrease from the south to the north, from c.85m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) to c.75m aOD in the north. To the east of Old Holly Lane, the Innage Brook flows north into the River Anker c.500m to the north.
- 1.2.3 The solid geology is recorded as mudstone of the gunthorpe member. No superficial deposits are recorded in the north of the Site, but alluvial sands and gravels are present in the southwest (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>).



## **2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Introduction**

2.1.1 The following section summarises the Site's historical and archaeological background as presented in the Desk-Based Assessment (CgMs 2014) and considers evidence in the Warwickshire Historic Environment Record (HER), the National Monuments Record (NMR) and the National Heritage List (NHL). Evidence was gathered for the Site and a wider study site extending 1km from the proposed residential development. The DBA also consulted Warwickshire Record Office to examine historic maps.

### **2.2 Prehistoric and Roman**

2.2.1 Flint implements dating to the Upper Palaeolithic to Early Bronze Age have been recorded at Mythe Farm, and a possible find spot of Iron Age staters has been recorded to the northeast. An isolated findspot of Early Neolithic to Early Iron Age flint implements has been recorded within Atherstone village.

2.2.2 The Roman Watling Street is located c.750m to the south of the study site. The scheduled remains of Mancetter Roman Settlement are c.2.5km distant.

### **2.3 Saxon and medieval**

2.3.1 Atherstone is recorded in the Domesday Survey. The historic core of settlement during this period is likely to have been focussed to the southeast of the study site, within the bounds of the later medieval settlement. It is noted that Saxon remains (pits with artefactual evidence) have been recorded on land immediately to the southeast of the Site during recent archaeological excavation (Archaeological Solutions 2013). Remains are thought to have originally continued to the west, towards land now developed as a depot facility. In the light of these findings, a moderate potential for Saxon activity is identified for the study site.

2.3.2 Settlement during the medieval period was located c.740m to the southeast of the study site, with a market place and Augustinian Friary. A scheduled Cistercian monastery of Merevale Abbey is located c.1.1km to the southwest of the Site.

2.3.3 The Site appears to have formed part of a large undeveloped agricultural landscape, with settlement clusters to the west at Whittington Farm and further to the east at The Mythe. This landscape was crossed by a network of roads: repairs to Fieldon Bridge, c.484m to the north of the Site, are recorded in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century and it is likely that Old Holly Lane and Sheepy Road formed part of this network. Tolls collected from Fieldon Bridge were awarded to the monks of Merevale Abbey.

### **2.4 Post-medieval and modern**

2.4.1 Two windmills are recorded nearby, along with the Coventry Canal, associated basin and North Western Railway. There are a cluster of HER entries within the built-up area of Atherstone.

2.4.2 Maps of 1716 and 1763 show the Innage Brook and windmill to the northeast of the study site and demonstrate the Site lies within one of three large fields which extend from that Atherstone.

2.4.3 The Grendon Tithe map of 1850 gives more detail, showing that the Site as one of a series of enclosed fields to the east of Old Holly Lane. A cluster of buildings,



corresponding with Whittington Farm, lies to the west and Coventry Canal and Innage Brook are shown along with a pond.

- 2.4.4 The 1885-1888 Ordnance Survey shows no change to the Site. Alder Mill is shown to the northeast with its associated ponds, weir and sluice. The North Western railway has appeared.
- 2.4.5 By 1925 a track extends east from Old Holly Lane, leading to a newly constructed house. Additional structures have appeared here by 1955 which becomes a nursery by 1965-1967. Residential development is beginning to extend north along Sheepy Road.
- 2.4.6 By 1990-1992 there is now extensive residential development along Sheepy Road and industrial development to the west of this, which extends further west by 2006.

### **3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

#### **3.1 General**

3.1.1 The general aims of the project are:

- *to record, as far as is reasonably possible, the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains observed;*
- *to provide sufficient information to enable an informed decision to be made about the need for additional archaeological mitigation; and,*
- *to make available the results of the work.*

#### **3.2 Specific**

3.2.1 A specific aim of the project is:

- *to determine if Saxon remains identified in excavation to the southeast extend into the proposed development area.*

### **4 FIELDWORK METHODOLOGY**

#### ***General***

4.1.1 The evaluation comprised the excavation of six trenches (**Figure 1**). Two trenches were 20m in length, and the remaining four were 30m in length.

#### ***Machine excavation***

4.1.2 The location of all trenches was scanned using a CAT to check for uncharted services prior to excavation.

4.1.3 Topsoil or overburden was removed using a mechanical excavator (JCB 3XC) fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, working under the continuous direct supervision of a suitably experienced archaeologist. Topsoil was removed in a series of level spits down to the level of the upper archaeological horizon, or the level of the natural geology, whichever was reached first. Topsoil and subsoil was stored separately at a safe distance from the edge of the trench (1m minimum).



## 4.2 Monitoring

- 4.2.1 Monitoring was carried out by Cathy Patrick (CgMs), with input from Anna Stocks (the Planning Archaeologist for Warwickshire County Council).

## 4.3 Recording

- 4.3.1 All archaeological deposits were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's pro forma recording system. This written record is hierarchically based and centred on the context record. Each context record fully describes the location, extent, composition and relationship of the subject and is be cross-referenced to all other assigned records. Context numbers used in the evaluation will not be repeated.
- 4.3.2 Each excavated context appears on at least one detailed plan at 1:50 or 1:20 scale and one section at 1:10 and co-ordinated on to the overall Site plan. A full photographic record was maintained consisting of 35mm monochrome prints and digital images. The photographic record illustrates both the detail and the general context of the principal features.
- 4.3.3 Records included overall Site plans. All archaeological features were related to the Ordnance Survey datum and to the National Grid. Survey was undertaken using a GPS system accurate to a 3-Dimensional positional accuracy of 20mm.

## 4.4 Specialist strategies

### *Artefact*

- 4.4.1 All finds were treated in accordance with relevant industry guidance (UKIC 2001; MGC 1992; English Heritage 2005, 2006b), and the requirements of Warwickshire County Council.
- 4.4.2 All artefacts from excavated contexts were retained (except unstratified modern material) and taken to Wessex Archaeology offices in Sheffield for further work. No finds from excavated contexts will be discarded without the express approval of the LPA archaeologist.
- 4.4.3 All artefacts were (as a minimum) washed, weighed, counted and identified. All artefacts were treated, in line with First Aid for Finds (Watkinson and Neal 1998).
- 4.4.4 All artefacts were recorded by context, with summary listing of artefacts by category to provide simple quantification. Artefacts were analysed and reported by specialists.

## 5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

### 5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 Six trenches were excavated across the Site, Trenches 1 and 2 were excavated (**Figure 1**) to the south of Whittington Lane with Trenches 3 to 6 located north of the road. A geophysical survey (Stratascan 2015) of the area had revealed a series of furrows running north to south.

### 5.2 Summary

- 5.2.1 Trenches 1 and 2 (**Plates 1 and 2**) revealed no archaeology. Trenches 3 to 6 revealed agricultural features likely to be post-medieval in date. No significant archaeology was discovered.



### **5.3 Post-medieval**

- 5.3.1 Furrows and plough scars matching geophysical anomalies were seen in Trenches 3 to 6. Shallow field boundary 406 (**Figure 2, Plate 3**) was discovered running north to south within Trench 4 and measured approximately 8 metres in width. The boundary was excavated by machine and produced a single piece of post medieval CBM in an otherwise redeposited natural fill (**Figure 2**).

### **5.4 Undated Features**

- 5.4.1 Trench 4 also revealed two small north to south aligned gullies, 402 (**Plate 4**) and 404, which are likely to form part of a post-medieval field boundary running parallel to field boundary 406 (**Figure 2**). The gullies were excavated but no dating material was recovered.

### **5.5 Modern**

- 5.5.1 A discrete area of modern disturbance was visible within Trench 2 (measuring 1.5m by 1.5m) and probably related to the field's current use as farmland/paddock.

## **6 ARTEFACTUAL EVIDENCE**

- 6.1.1 One piece of ceramic building material (CBM) was found in feature 406; this is a fragment of post-medieval roof tile. This is not recommended for archiving.

## **7 ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE**

### **7.1 Introduction**

- 7.1.1 No environmental samples were taken due to the lack of dating evidence and significant archaeology on Site.

## **8 DISCUSSION**

### **8.1 Summary**

- 8.1.1 The Site showed evidence of post-medieval agriculture but no evidence for the continuation of Anglo Saxon features identified in excavations to the southeast were discovered.

### **8.2 Conclusions**

- 8.2.1 The results demonstrate a post-medieval agricultural landscape but with no significant archaeology present within the trenches excavated.



## **9 STORAGE AND CURATION**

### **9.1 Museum**

9.1.1 It is recommended that the project archive resulting from the excavation be deposited with Warwickshire Museum. The Museum has agreed in principle to accept the project archive on completion of the project [under the **accession code T/1427**]. Deposition of any finds with the Museum will only be carried out with the full agreement of the landowner.

### **9.2 Preparation of archive**

9.2.1 The complete site archive, which will include paper records, photographic records, graphics, artefacts, ecofacts and digital data, will be prepared following the standard conditions for the acceptance of excavated archaeological material by Warwickshire Museum, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; ClfA 2014d; Brown 2011; ADS 2013, UKIC 2001).

9.2.2 All archive elements will be marked with the site/accession code, and a full index will be prepared. The physical archive comprises the following:

- *01 files/document cases of paper records & A3/A4 graphics*

### **9.3 Discard policy**

9.3.1 Wessex Archaeology follows the guidelines set out in Selection, Retention and Dispersal (Society of Museum Archaeologists 1993), which allows for the discard of selected artefact and ecofact categories which are not considered to warrant any future analysis. Any discard of artefacts will be fully documented in the project archive.

9.3.2 The discard of environmental remains and samples follows nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1993; 1995; English Heritage 2011).

### **9.4 Security copy**

9.4.1 In line with current best practice (e.g. Brown 2011), on completion of the project a security copy of the written records will be prepared, in the form of a digital PDF/A file. PDF/A is an ISO-standardised version of the Portable Document Format (PDF) designed for the digital preservation of electronic documents through omission of features ill-suited to long-term archiving.



## 10 REFERENCES

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## 11 APPENDICES

### 11.1 Appendix 1:Context Index

	Grid	Dimensions: Max depth:
Context	Description	Depth (m)
100	Top soil – Dark brown - black clay loam. > 5% sub rounded stones, some rooting.	0 - 0.2/0.35
101	Natural - Mid pink – brown silty clay. Patches of 70% sub-rounded stones. Some rooting.	0.2/0.35 +

	Grid	Dimensions: Max depth:
Context	Description	Depth (m)
200	Top soil – Dark brown - black clay loam. > 5% sub rounded stones, some rooting.	0 – 0.32
201	Natural - Mid pink – brown silty clay. Patches of 70% sub-rounded stones. Modern disturbance.	0.32 +

	Grid	Dimensions: Max depth:
Context	Description	Depth (m)
300	Top soil – Dark brown - black clay loam. > 5% sub rounded stones, some rooting.	0 – 0.26
301	Natural - Mid orangeish red sandy clay. 10% sub-rounded stones. Evidence of furrows.	0.26 +

	Grid	Dimensions: Max depth:
Context	Description	Depth (m)
400	Top soil – Dark brown - black clay loam. > 5% sub rounded stones, some rooting.	0 – 0.23
401	Natural - Mid orangeish red sandy clay. 10% sub-rounded stones.	0.23 +
402	Cut of small gully running parallel to 404 with irregular sides and base.	0.23 – 0.39
403	Fill, dark reddish brown sandy clay, secondary alluvial deposit.	0.23 – 0.39
404	Cut of small gully running parallel to 402 with irregular sides and base.	0.23 – 0.38
405	Fill, dark reddish brown sandy clay, secondary alluvial deposit.	0.23 – 0.38
406	Cut of large, shallow field boundary with concave base and straight stepped sides	0.33 – 0.9
407	Lower fill of 406. Mid reddish orange sandy clay 10% rounded gravel. Secondary alluvial fill	0.33 – 0.66
408	Upper fill of 406. Dark greyish brown silty clay. Secondary alluvial fill.	0.66 – 0.9

	Grid	Dimensions: Max depth:
Context	Description	Depth (m)
501	Top soil – Dark brown - black clay loam. > 10% sub rounded stones, some rooting.	0 – 0.33
502	Natural - Mid pink – brown silty clay. Light brown clay	0.33 +



	<b>Grid</b>	<b>Dimensions: Max depth:</b>
<b>Context</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Depth (m)</b>
	sand areas with 10% sub-rounded stones.	

	<b>Grid</b>	<b>Dimensions: Max depth:</b>
<b>Context</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Depth (m)</b>
601	Top soil – Dark brown - black clay loam. > 5% sub rounded stones, some rooting.	0 – 0.41
602	Natural - Mid orangeish red sandy clay. 10% sub-rounded stones.	0.41 +



## 11.2 Appendix 2: OASIS form

### OASIS ID: wessexar1-208059

#### Project details

Project name	Land off Old Holly Lane
Short description of the project	Wessex Archaeology were commissioned by CgMs Consulting to carry out a programme of evaluation trenching on land off Old Holly lane, Atherstone to determine an outline planning application. The proposed development was situated to the northwest of known Anglo Saxon features, identified during excavations in 2013. Following the production of a Desk-Based Assessment, geophysical survey and discussions between Cathy Patrick (CgMs) and Anna Stocks (Warwickshire County Council) it was agreed that a programme of targeted archaeological evaluation would be required to inform an outline planning application. Two trenches of 20m in length and four trenches of 30m were excavated across the site. The trenching showed evidence of post-medieval agriculture represented by furrows, along with a large field boundary running north to south which contained post-medieval ceramic building material.
Project dates	Start: 23-03-2015 End: 27-03-2015
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	108600 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Current Land use	Cultivated Land 4 - Character Undetermined
Monument type	FIELD BOUNDARY Post Medieval
Monument type	FURROW Post Medieval
Significant Finds	CBM Post Medieval
Methods & techniques	""Sample Trenches""
Development type	Housing estate
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF
Position in the planning process	Pre-application

#### Project location

Country	England
Site location	WARWICKSHIRE NORTH WARWICKSHIRE ATHERSTONE Land off Old Holly Lane
Study area	3.60 Hectares
Site coordinates	SP 30494 98921 52.5868806824 -1.54985407022 52 35 12 N 001 32 59 W Point

#### Project creators

Name of Organisation	Wessex Archaeology
Project brief	CgMs Consulting Ltd.



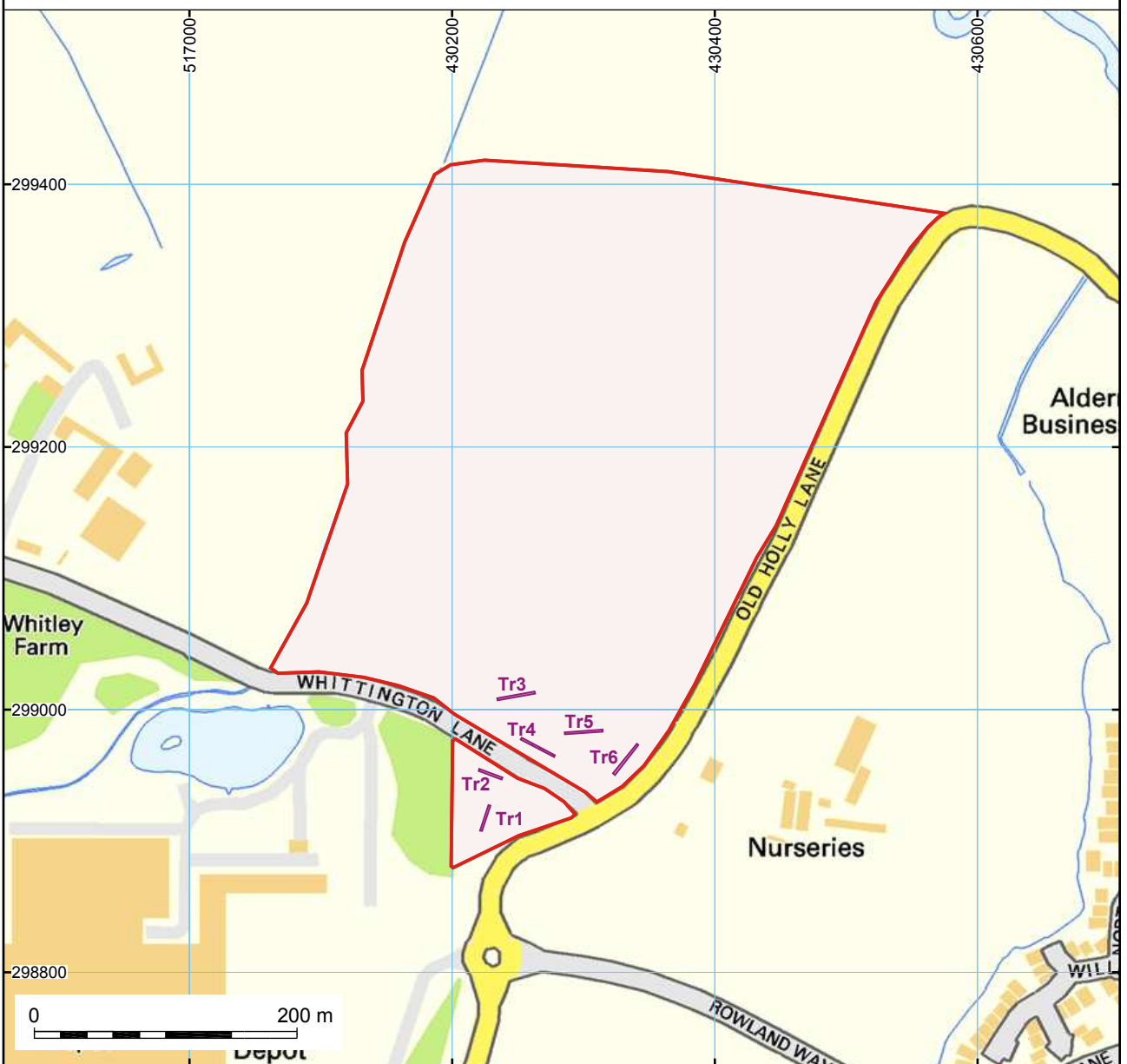
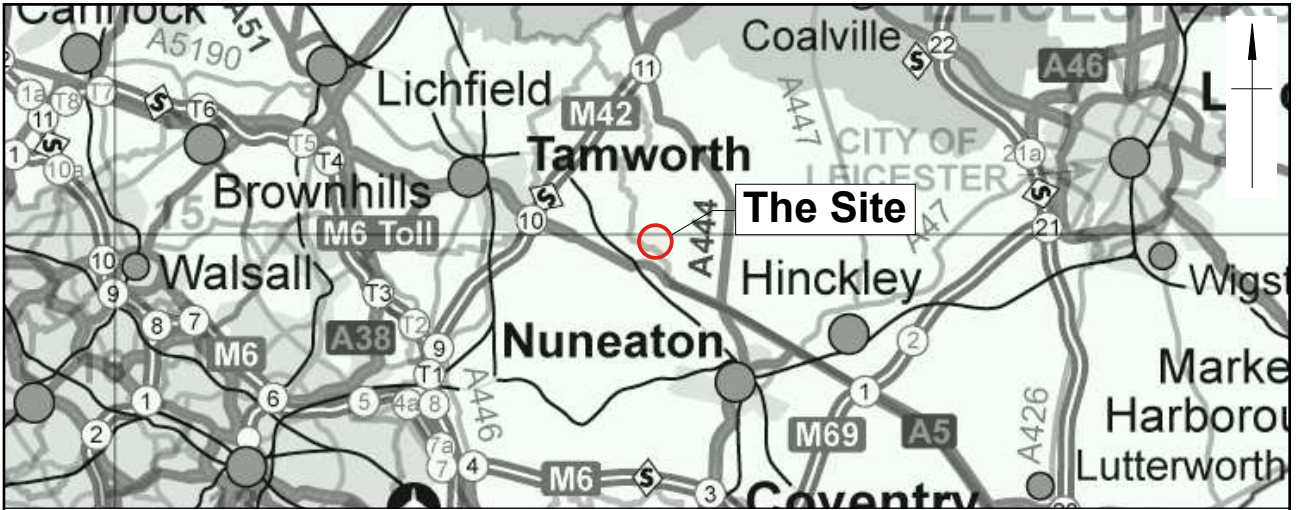
originator  
Project design originator Wessex Archaeology  
Project director/manager Chris Swales  
Project supervisor Martyn Cooper




#### Project archives

Physical Archive Exists? No  
Digital Archive recipient Warwickshire Museum  
Digital Archive ID T/1427  
Digital Contents "none"  
Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography","Text"  
Paper Archive recipient Warwickshire Museum  
Paper Archive ID T/1427  
Paper Contents "none"  
Paper Media available "Context sheet","Diary","Photograph","Plan","Report","Section","Unpublished Text"

#### Project bibliography 1

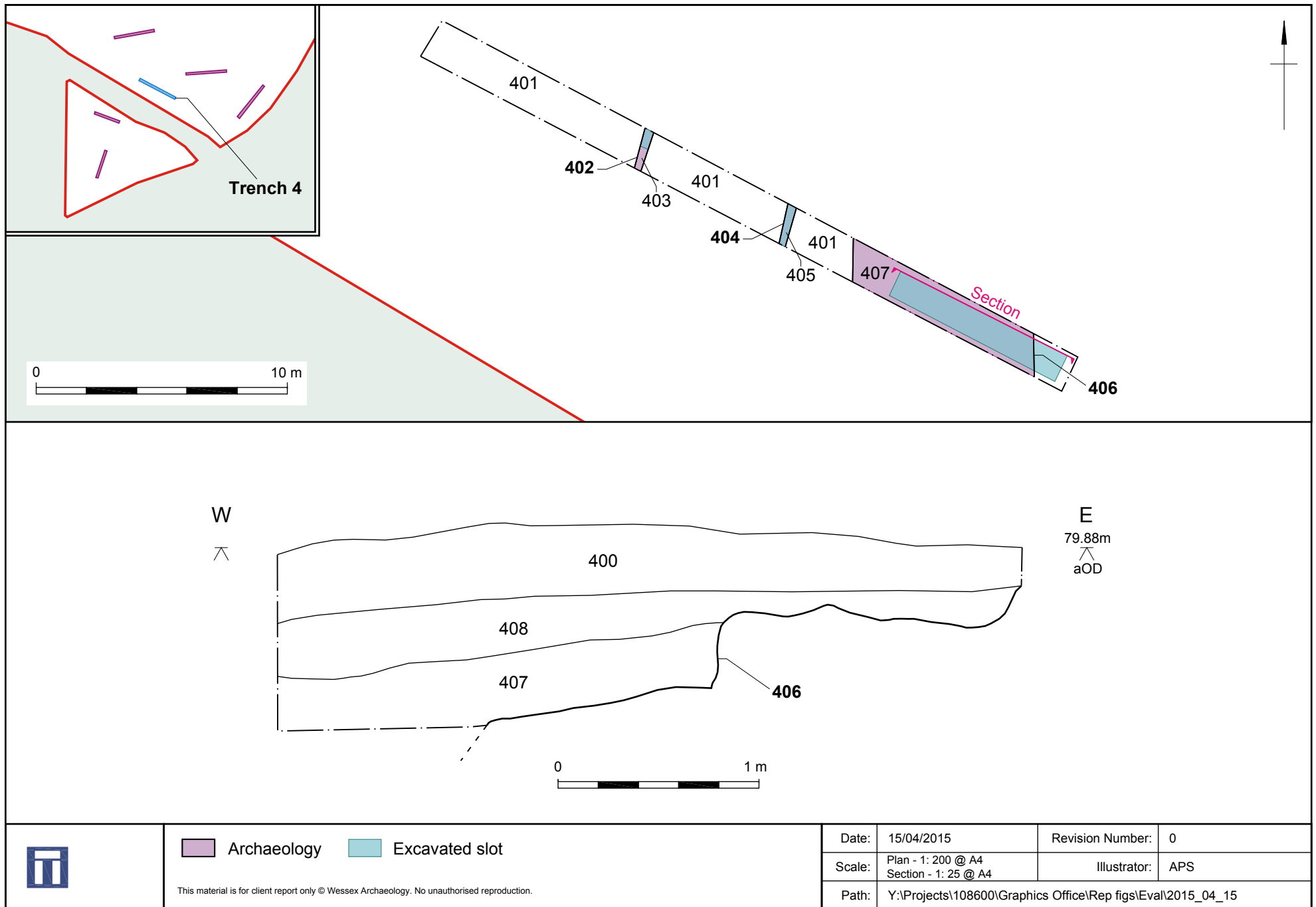
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Site and trench location

Figure 1



Plan of **Trench 4**, and section of field boundary **406**

Figure 2





Plate 1: General shot of **Trench 1**



Plate 2: General shot of **Trench 2**


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Plate 3: Detailed shot of field boundary **406**



Plate 4: Detailed shot of gully **402**

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