

Tower Hayes Farm, Stanton Under Bardon Leicestershire

Archaeological Evaluation Report



WA ref: 111500.01 November 2015





Tower Hayes Farm, Stanton Under Bardon Leicestershire

Archaeological Evaluation Report

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November 2015



Quality Assurance

Project Code	111500	Accession Code	X.A121.2015	Client Ref.	
Planning Application Ref.		Ordnance Survey (OS) national grid reference (NGR)	444403, 31030	8	

Version	Status*	Prepared by	Checked and Approved By	Approver's Signature	Date	
v01	I	AKC			19/11/2015	
File:	S:\PROJ	IECTS\111500_Rep	orts\v1			
v02	E	AKC	CS	C. Surl	20/11/2015	
File:	S:\PROJECTS\111500_Reports\v2					
File:						
File:						
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^{*} I = Internal Draft; E = External Draft; F = Final

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Summary

Wessex Archaeology were commissioned by Ecus to carry out a programme of archaeological trial trenching in advance of a proposed solar farm on a single parcel of land at Tower Hayes Farm, Stanton Under Bardon, Leicestershire centred on National Grid Reference 444403, 310308.

The Site had been subject to a Desk-based Assessment and a geophysical survey. The survey had identified geophysical anomalies, although these were considered to be consistent with former 19th century field boundaries and modern agricultural activity. Following discussions between Ecus and the Senior Planning Archaeologist for Leicestershire County Council a programme of archaeological evaluation comprising twenty-five 30 m trenches was agreed in order to test the validity of the geophysical survey by targeting geophysical anomalies and 'blank' areas.

The archaeological evaluation has been successful in identifying the anomalies and verifying the 'blank' areas identified during the geophysical survey. All the features encountered during the evaluation could be matched to field boundaries depicted on late 19th century mapping of the site or were clearly modern in date. No archaeological features or artefacts predating the 19th century were encountered.

It is recommended that the project archive resulting from the excavation be deposited with Leicestershire County Council Museums Service. The Museum has agreed in principle to accept the project archive on completion of the project, under the accession code **X.A121.2015**.



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Acknowledgements

The archaeological evaluation was commissioned by Ecus and the assistance of Paul White is gratefully acknowledged in this regard. Thanks are also extended to Richard Clark, the Senior Planning Archaeologist for Leicestershire County Council, who provided curatorial support and guidance.

Fieldwork was carried out by Ashley Tuck with the assistance of Richard Smith, Deborah Gilkes and Alex Cassels between the 9th and 17th November 2015. The report was written by Alex Cassels, with illustrations by Alix Sperr. The project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Chris Swales.



Tower Hayes Farm, Stanton Under Bardon Leicestershire

Archaeological Evaluation Report

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology were commissioned by Ecus (hereafter 'the Client') to carry out a programme of archaeological trial trenching in advance of a proposed solar farm on a single parcel of land at Tower Hayes Farm, Stanton Under Bardon, Leicestershire centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 444403, 310308 (hereafter 'the Site').
- 1.1.2 The Site had been subject to a Desk-based Assessment (DBA, Ecus 2014) and a geophysical survey (Stratascan 2015). The survey identified geophysical anomalies, although these were considered to be consistent with former 19th century field boundaries and modern agricultural activity (**Figures 1** and **2**). Following discussions between Ecus and the Senior Planning Archaeologist for Leicestershire County Council a programme of archaeological evaluation comprising twenty-five 30 m trenches was agreed in order to test the validity of the geophysical survey by targeting geophysical anomalies and 'blank' areas. The work was carried out in order to satisfy Condition 17 of the granted planning permission (15/00343/FUL).
- 1.1.3 Ecus produced a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI, Ecus 2015) outlining how the requirements of the work would be met. The WSI was approved by the curator prior to work commencing.

1.2 Site location and topography

- 1.2.1 The Site was an irregular parcel of land 16.2 ha in size and comprised three arable fields. The Site was bounded to the north by Victoria Road, to the east by Stanton Lane, to the west by Home Bridge Farm and to the south by further arable farmland.
- 1.2.2 The Site was situated on gently sloping land, falling from approximately 170 m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) in the north of the Site to approximately 160 m aOD in the south. The underlying geology of the Site comprises mudstone of the Edwalton Member with recorded superficial deposits of diamicton of the Oadby Member (BGS 2015).

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The Site had not been the subject of any previous intrusive archaeological works but had been the subject of a DBA (Ecus 2014) and a geophysical survey (Stratascan 2015). The geophysical survey identified geophysical anomalies interpreted as being consistent with 19th century field boundaries and modern agricultural activity, including land drains and ploughing.



2.1.2 The following information is summarised from the DBA (Ecus 2014), which gathered information from the Leicestershire Historic Environment Record (HER) and National Heritage List for England (NHLE) for the Site and a 1 km Study Area extending from the Site boundary.

2.2 Summary

Prehistoric and Romano-British

2.2.1 There was no evidence for prehistoric activity from the Site or the surrounding Study Area. There was also no evidence for Romano-British activity from the Site although the projected route of the 'Via Devana', a Roman road, is recorded as running to the south of the Site. The exact route of the road in the immediate vicinity of the Site has not been tested archaeologically (Ecus 2014).

Anglo-Saxon and Medieval

- 2.2.2 There is limited evidence for medieval activity within the Study Area. The location of Pickering Grange, a former grange of Garendon Abbey, is located approximately 1 km west of the Site. Bagworth Park, a medieval deer park is located to the south-east of the Site.
- 2.2.3 A medieval origin for the place name 'Battle Flat' has been proposed, which is located approximately 400 m north of the Site. This appears on 18th century maps of the local area and it has been suggested that this marks the location of an unrecorded conflict (Ecus 2014).

Post-medieval and modern

2.2.4 During the 19th and 20th centuries the Site was part of the holdings of Tower Hayes Farm. The first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1883 shows the Site as being divided between several fields with Tower Hayes Farm, named as 'Clots Farm', adjacent to the southern boundary of the Site. During the 20th century several field boundaries have been removed from the Site to produce the current open field system (Ecus 2014).

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Aims and objectives

- 3.1.1 The general aims of the project were:
 - to identify and record any archaeological deposits, structures or built fabric within the identified areas of interest;
 - to determine the extent, condition, character, significance and date of any encountered or exposed archaeological remains;
 - to accurately record the location and stratigraphy of areas excavated during groundworks;
 - to recover artefacts disturbed by the site works; and
 - to prepare a comprehensive record and report of archaeological observations during the site work.
- 3.1.2 The specific aims of the project were:



- to 'ground truth' the results of the previous geophysical survey through the placement of trenches to test identified anomalies (and particularly the possible archaeological anomalies) and verifying 'blank' areas across the Site;
- to identify the presence or absence, character, extent, date, integrity, state of preservation and quality of archaeological remains within the Site; and
- to enhance knowledge of the extent and form of activities and environmental conditions of the area especially during the prehistoric period.

3.2 Fieldwork methodology

- 3.2.1 The archaeological works comprised the excavation of twenty-five 30 m x 2 m trenches. The location of the trenches were targeted on the limited geophysical anomalies and spread across the Site to test 'blank areas' without any recognised geophysical anomalies (**Figure 1**).
- 3.2.2 The work was carried out in accordance with the approved WSI (Ecus 2015) and Wessex Archaeology and industry standards and guidelines (ClfA 2014a-d, Historic England 2015).
- 3.2.3 The location of all trenches was scanned using a CAT to check for uncharted services.
- 3.2.4 Topsoil and overburden was removed using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, working under the continuous direct supervision of a suitably experienced archaeologist. Topsoil and subsoil were stockpiled at a safe distance from the trench edge (at least 1 m). Overburden was removed in spits down to the level of the upper archaeological horizon, or the level of the natural geology whichever was encountered first.
- 3.2.5 All spoil was scanned for artefacts, which were recorded and retained unless of clearly modern (i.e. late 20th or early 21st century) origin.
- 3.2.6 Archaeological features were cleaned as necessary to allow inspection and to define the extent of any archaeological features and deposits. Archaeological features were hand excavated, with care taken not to compromise the integrity of archaeological features or deposits, which may have been deemed suitable for preservation by record or preservation *in situ*. However, excavation was sufficient to understand and record the full stratigraphic sequence, down to naturally occurring deposits.

3.3 Sample excavation and recording

- 3.3.1 Where archaeological features and deposits were encountered, excavation was carried out by hand using mattocks, shovels, spades, hoes and trowels. A sufficient sample of each layer/feature type was excavated in order to establish the date, nature, extent and condition of the archaeological remains. Archaeological features and deposits was investigated and stratigraphically excavated by hand.
- 3.3.2 The following sample strategy for archaeological features was followed:
 - a 10% sample of all field boundary ditches (minimum 1m wide slot)



- 3.3.3 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 was cross-referenced to all other assigned records. Context numbers used in the excavation were not repeated.
- 3.3.4 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 35 mm monochrome prints and digital images. The photographic record illustrates both the detail and the general context of the principal features.

3.4 Specialist strategies

Artefact

3.4.1 No artefacts were recovered from the Site.

Environmental

3.4.2 No environmental soil samples were taken due to the modern nature of the archaeological features encountered.

3.5 Monitoring

3.5.1 The Senior Planning Archaeologist for Leicestershire County Council (Richard Clark) made a monitoring visit of the archaeological works on the 12th November 2015.

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 the excavation area contained in **Appendix 1**.

4.2 Typical soil profiles

- 4.2.1 The underlying geology across the Site comprised an orange clay or sandy clay with rounded pebble inclusions (**Plate 1**). The natural geology was recorded at an average depth of 0.2 m to 0.25 m below ground level (bgl).
- 4.2.2 The topsoil consisted of a mid to dark brown silty clay with inclusions of small pebbles with a thickness of between 0.20 m and 0.25 m. The topsoil immediately overlaid the natural substrate in all trenches.

4.3 Trench 1

4.3.1 Trench 1 was targeted on a magnetic spike identified during the geophysical survey. This geophysical anomaly corresponded with a bonfire pit (103) which had a diameter of 1.8 m and was 0.15 m deep. It was filled with a dark grey ashy silt (104) which contained burnt nails and modern pottery. Bonfire 103 was cut into the topsoil and was encountered between 0.10 m and 0.25 m bgl (Plate 2).



4.4 Trench 12

4.4.1 Trench 12 was not targeted on a geophysical anomaly but contained an east-west aligned concave profiled ditch (1203). Ditch 1203 was 0.9 m wide and 0.35 m deep and contained two fills; a mid brown clay (1204) and an angular gravel (1205) which acted as a modern 'French' land drain (Plate 3). Ditch 1203 corresponds with a field boundary shown on the 1883 OS map (Figures 2 and 3), which had been removed during the second half of the 20th century.

4.5 Trenches 15, 16 and 17

4.5.1 A single east-west aligned linear feature was identified within Trench 15 (**Plate 4**), Trench 16 and Trench 17 (**Figures 2** and **3**). These trenches were all targeting the same geophysical anomaly. A single slot was excavated across this feature, within Trench 17, and it was found to be a 0.9 m wide, 0.5 m deep ditch (**1703**). Ditch **1703** was filled with a mixed mid grey silty clay, mid orange clay and dark greyish brown loamy clay (**1704**). A plastic pipe was encountered in the base of ditch **1703** (**Plate 5**). The ditch encountered in all three trenches corresponds with a field boundary shown on the 1883 OS map.

4.6 Trench 23

4.6.1 Trench 23 was targeted on a linear geophysical anomaly and contained two features (Figures 2 and 3). Ditch 2303 was 0.9 m wide and contained a dark brown silt (2304) but was unexcavated. This feature corresponded with the geophysical anomaly and with a field boundary shown on the 1883 OS map. A second linear feature was found to be a 1 m wide, 0.8 m deep ditch (2305) with a 'V'-shaped profile. Ditch 2305 was filled with a mix of greyish brown and red clay (2306) and appears to have been immediately backfilled over a glazed ceramic pipe (2307), which was identified at the base of 2305 (Plate 6).

4.7 Trenches with no archaeological features

4.7.1 The remaining trenches (Trenches 2-11, 13-14, 18-22 and 24-25) were all situated in largely 'blank' areas of the geophysical survey. No archaeological features were identified in any of these trenches although numerous modern land drains were encountered.

5 DISCUSSION

5.1 Summary

- 5.1.1 A total of five archaeological features were identified during the evaluation. A single linear ditch was identified running through Trenches 15-17, which corresponded with both a geophysical anomaly and a field boundary depicted on the 1883 OS map. Two further ditches in Trench 12 and Trench 23 correspond with two field boundaries depicted on the 1883 OS map. All three of these field boundaries had been removed during the second half of the 20th century to create the existing open field system. A fourth linear feature was identified as a modern cut containing a glazed ceramic drain and the final feature in Trench 1 was a modern bonfire pit.
- 5.1.2 Trenches 1, 15-17, and 23 were all targeted on geophysical anomalies which corresponded with identified features within all these trenches. The other two features, which did not correspond with geophysical anomalies, were identified in Trench 12 and Trench 23.

5



5.2 Conclusions

5.2.1 The archaeological evaluation has been successful in identifying the anomalies and verifying the 'blank' areas identified during the geophysical survey. All the features encountered during the evaluation could be matched to features depicted on late 19th century mapping of the Site or were clearly modern in date. No archaeological features or artefacts predating the 19th century were encountered.

6 STORAGE AND CURATION

6.1 Museum

6.1.1 It is recommended that the project archive resulting from the excavation be deposited with Leicestershire County Council Museums Service. The Museum has agreed in principle to accept the project archive on completion of the project, under the accession code **X.A121.2015**.

6.2 Preparation of archive

- 6.2.1 The complete Site archive, which will include paper records, photographic records, graphics, and digital data, will be prepared following the standard conditions for the acceptance of excavated archaeological material by Leicestershire County Council Museums Service, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; ClfA 2014c; Brown 2011; ADS 2013).
- 6.2.2 All archive elements will be marked with the **site/accession code**, and a full index will be prepared. The physical archive comprises the following:
- 6.2.3 The archive consists of: 1 file/document case of paper records & A4 graphics

6.3 Security copy

6.3.1 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.



7 REFERENCES

7.1 Bibliography

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On line resources

British Geological Survey, 2015. (http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html)



8 APPENDICES

8.1 Appendix 1: Context descriptions

Trench 1			
Context	Туре	Description	Depth (m BGL)
101	Topsoil	Mid brown silty clay with gravel	0-0.2
102	Natural	Orange clay with gravel	0.2+
103	Cut	Bonfire, approximately 1.8m in diameter	0.1-0.25
104	Fill of 103	Dark greyish brown ash silt with burnt nails and modern pottery	0.1-0.25

Trench 2			
Context	Туре	Description	Depth (m BGL)
201	Topsoil	Mid brown silty clay with gravel	0-0.2
202	Natural	Orange sandy clay with sparse gravel	0.2+

Trench 3			
Context	Туре	Description	Depth (m BGL)
301	Topsoil	Mid brown silty clay with gravel	0-0.2
302	Natural	Orange clay with gravel	0.2+

Trench 4			
Context	Туре	Description	Depth (m BGL)
401	Topsoil	Mid brown silty clay with gravel	0-0.2
402	Natural	Orange clay with gravel	0.2+

Trench 5			
Context	Туре	Description	Depth (m BGL)
501	Topsoil	Mid brown silty clay with gravel	0-0.2
502	Natural	Orange clay with gravel	0.2+

Trench 6			
Context	Туре	Description	Depth (m BGL)
601	Topsoil	Mid brown silty clay with gravel	0-0.2
602	Natural	Orange sandy clay with patches of red clay	0.2+



Trench 7			
Context	Туре	Description	Depth (m BGL)
701	Topsoil	Mid brown silty clay with gravel	0-0.2
702	Natural	Orange clay with sparse gravel	0.2+

Trench 8			
Context	Туре	Description	Depth (m BGL)
801	Topsoil	Dark brown silty clay with gravel	0-0.2
802	Natural	Mixed red, orange and grey sandy clay with gravel	0.2+

Trench 9			
Context	Туре	Description	Depth (m BGL)
901	Topsoil	Mid brown silty clay with gravel	0-0.2
902	Natural	Orange clay with gravel	0.2+

Trench 10			
Context	Туре	Description	Depth (m BGL)
1001	Topsoil	Mid brown silty clay with gravel	0-0.2
1002	Natural	Orange clay with gravel	0.2+

Trench 11			
Context	Туре	Description	Depth (m BGL)
1101	Topsoil	Mid brown silty clay with gravel	0-0.2
1102	Natural	Orange clay with gravel	0.2+

Trench 12			
Context	Туре	Description	Depth (m BGL)
1201	Topsoil	Mid brown silty clay with gravel	0-0.2
1202	Natural	Orange clay with gravel	0.2+
1203	Cut	E-W linear with concave profile	0.2-0.55
1204	Fill of 1203	Mid brown clay with sparse gravel	0.2-0.55
1205	Fill of 1203	Angular medium gravel	0.2-0.3

Trench 13			
Context	Туре	Description	Depth (m BGL)
1301	Topsoil	Mid brown silty clay with gravel	0-0.2



1302	Natural	Orange clay with gravel	0.2+
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Trench 14			
Context	Туре	Description	Depth (m BGL)
1401	Topsoil	Mid brown silty clay with gravel	0-0.2
1402	Natural	Orange sandy clay with gravel	0.2+

Trench 15			
Context	Туре	Description	Depth (m BGL)
1501	Topsoil	Mid brown silty clay with gravel	0-0.25
1502	Natural	Orange sandy clay with gravel	0.25+
1503	Cut	Unexcavated E-W linear	0.25+
1504	Fill of 1503	Dark brown mixed silt with modern CBM	0.25+

Trench 16			
Context	Туре	Description	Depth (m BGL)
1601	Topsoil	Mid brown silty clay with gravel	0-0.25
1602	Natural	Orange and grey sandy silt	0.25+
1603	Cut	Unexcavated E-W linear	0.25+
1604	Fill of 1603	Dark brown mixed silt	0.25+

Trench 17			
Context	Туре	Description	Depth (m BGL)
1701	Topsoil	Mid brown silty clay with gravel	0-0.2
1702	Natural	Orange sandy clay with gravel	0.2+
1703	Cut	E-W linear with concave profile	0.2-0.7
1704	Fill of 1703	Mid brownish grey sandy clay with patches of orange clay and dark brown loam clay	0.2-0.7

Trench 18			
Context	Туре	Description	Depth (m BGL)
1801	Topsoil	Mid brown silty clay with gravel	0-0.2
1802	Natural	Orange clay with gravel	0.2+

Trench 19			
Context	Туре	Description	Depth (m BGL)
1901	Topsoil	Mid brown silty clay with gravel	0-0.2

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1902	Natural	Orange sandy clay with gravel	0.2+	l
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Trench 20			
Context	Туре	Description	Depth (m BGL)
2001	Topsoil	Mid brown silty clay with gravel	0-0.2
2002	Natural	Orange sandy clay with gravel	0.2+

Trench 21			
Context	Туре	Description	Depth (m BGL)
2101	Topsoil	Mid brown silty clay with gravel	0-0.2
2102	Natural	Orange sandy clay with gravel	0.2+

Trench 22			
Context	Туре	Description	Depth (m BGL)
2201	Topsoil	Mid brown silty clay with gravel	0-0.2
2202	Natural	Orange clay with gravel	0.2+

Trench 23			
Context	Туре	Description	Depth (m BGL)
2301	Topsoil	Mid brown silty clay with gravel	0-0.2
2302	Natural	Orange clay with gravel	0.2+
2303	Cut	Unexcavated E-W linear	0.2+
2304	Fill of 2303	Dark brown mixed silt	0.2+
2305	Cut	N-S V-shaped linear	0.2-1+
2306	Fill of 2305	Mixed grey brown and red clay with modern pottery	0.2-1+
2307	Fill of 2305	Glazed ceramic drain in base of 2305	1+

Trench 24			
Context	Туре	Description	Depth (m BGL)
2401	Topsoil	Mid brown silty clay with gravel	0-0.2
2402	Natural	Orange clay with gravel	0.2+

Trench 25			
Context	Туре	Description	Depth (m BGL)
2501	Topsoil	Mid brown silty clay with gravel	0-0.2
2502	Natural	Orange clay with gravel	0.2+

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8.2 Appendix 2: OASIS form

OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

List of Projects | Manage Projects | Search Projects | New project | Change your details | HER coverage | Change country | Log out

OASIS ID: wessexar1-231109

Project details

Project name Tower Hayes Farm, Stanton Under Bardon, Archaeological Evaluation

Short description of the project

Wessex Archaeology were commissioned by Ecus to carry out a programme of archaeological trial trenching in advance of a proposed solar farm on a single parcel of land at Tower Haves Farm, Stanton Under Bardon, Leicestershire centred on National Grid Reference 444403, 310308. The Site had been subject to a Desk-based Assessment and a geophysical survey. The survey had identified geophysical anomalies, although these were considered to be consistent with former 19th century field boundaries and modern agricultural activity. Following discussions between Ecus and the Senior Planning Archaeologist for Leicestershire County Council a programme of archaeological evaluation comprising twenty-five 30 m trenches was agreed in order to test the validity of the geophysical survey by targeting geophysical anomalies and 'blank' areas. The archaeological evaluation has been successful in identifying the anomalies and verifying the 'blank' areas identified during the geophysical survey. All the features encountered during the evaluation could be matched to field boundaries depicted on late 19th century mapping of the site or were clearly modern in date. No archaeological features or artefacts predating the 19th

century were encountered.

Project dates Start: 09-11-2015 End: 17-11-2015

Previous/future work Yes / No

Any associated project reference codes

111500 - Sitecode

Any associated project reference

codes

Any associated

project reference codes

15/003433/FUL - Planning Application No.

X.A121.2015 - Museum accession ID

Type of project Field evaluation

Site status None

Cultivated Land 4 - Character Undetermined Current Land use

Monument type FIELD BOUNDARIES Post Medieval

NONE None Significant Finds

Methods & techniques "Targeted Trenches"

Solar Farm Development type

Prompt National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF



Position in the planning process Pre-application

Project location

Country England

Site location LEICESTERSHIRE NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE COALVILLE Tower

Hayes, Coalville, Leicestershire

Postcode LE67 1FH

Study area 16.2 Hectares

Site coordinates SK 44249 10086 52.686310163979 -1.345321085104 52 41 10 N 001 20 43 W

Point

Height OD / Depth Min: 157m Max: 175m

Project creators

Name of Organisation Wessex Archaeology

Project brief originator

ECUS Itd

Project design

Ecus

originator

Project

Chris Swales

director/manager

Project supervisor Ashley Tuck

Type of

sponsor/funding

body

Consultant

Name of sponsor/funding

body

Elgar Middleton Environmental Energy Investments Ltd

Project archives

Physical Archive

Exists?

No

Digital Archive recipient

Leicestershire County Council Museums Service

Digital Archive ID

X.A121.2015

Digital Contents

"none"

Digital Media

"Images raster / digital photography", "Text"

available Paper Archive

Leicestershire County Council Museums Service

recipient

Paper Archive ID **Paper Contents**

X.A121.2015

Paper Media

"none"

available

"Diary","Photograph","Report","Unpublished Text"



Project bibliography 1

Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

Publication type

Title Tower Hayes Farm, Stanton Under Bardon, Leicestershire, Archaeological

Evaluation Report

Author(s)/Editor(s) Cassels, A. Author(s)/Editor(s) Swales, C. Other bibliographic

details

111500

2015 Date

Wessex Archaeology Issuer or publisher

Place of issue or publication

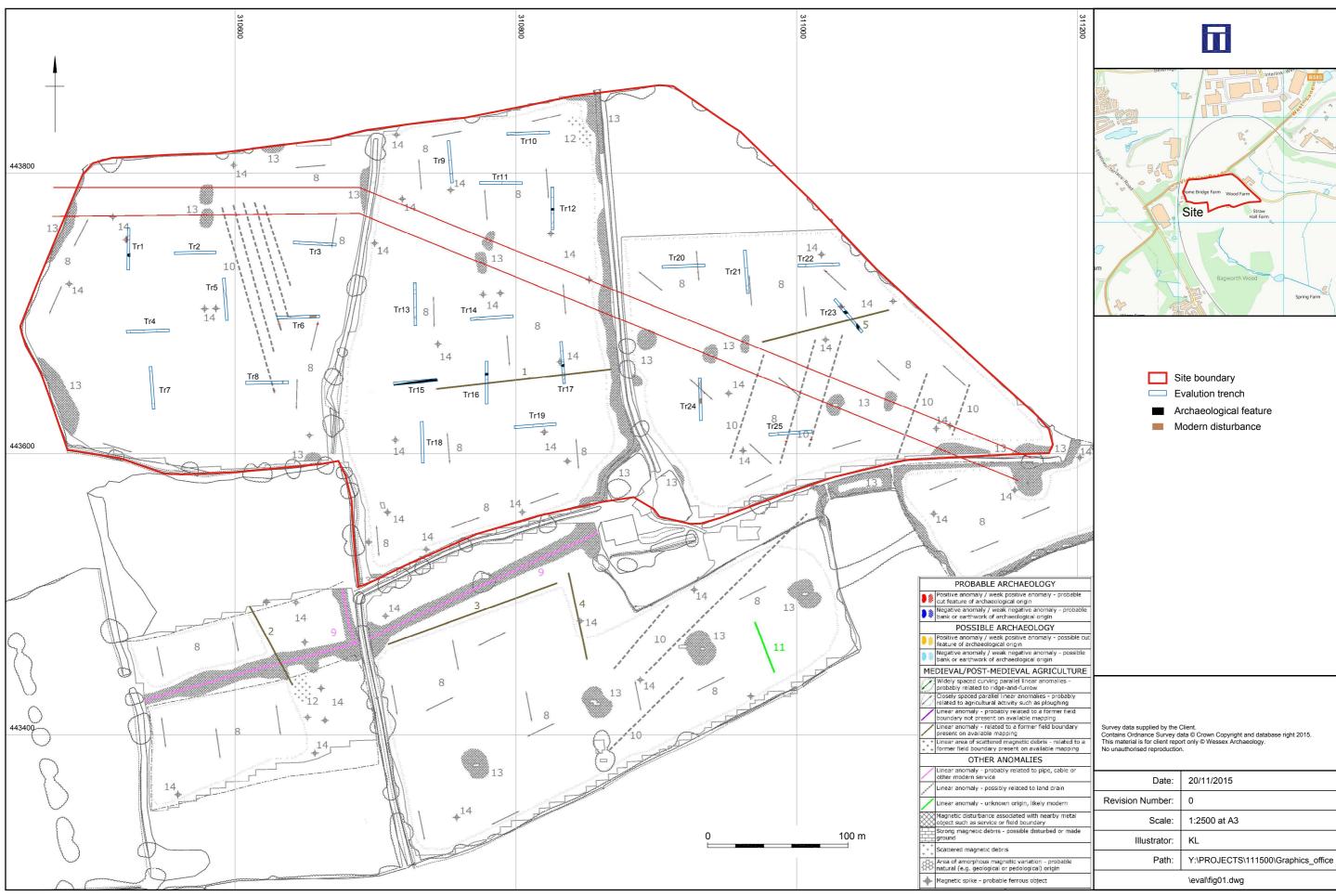
Sheffield

Description A4 Comb bound report

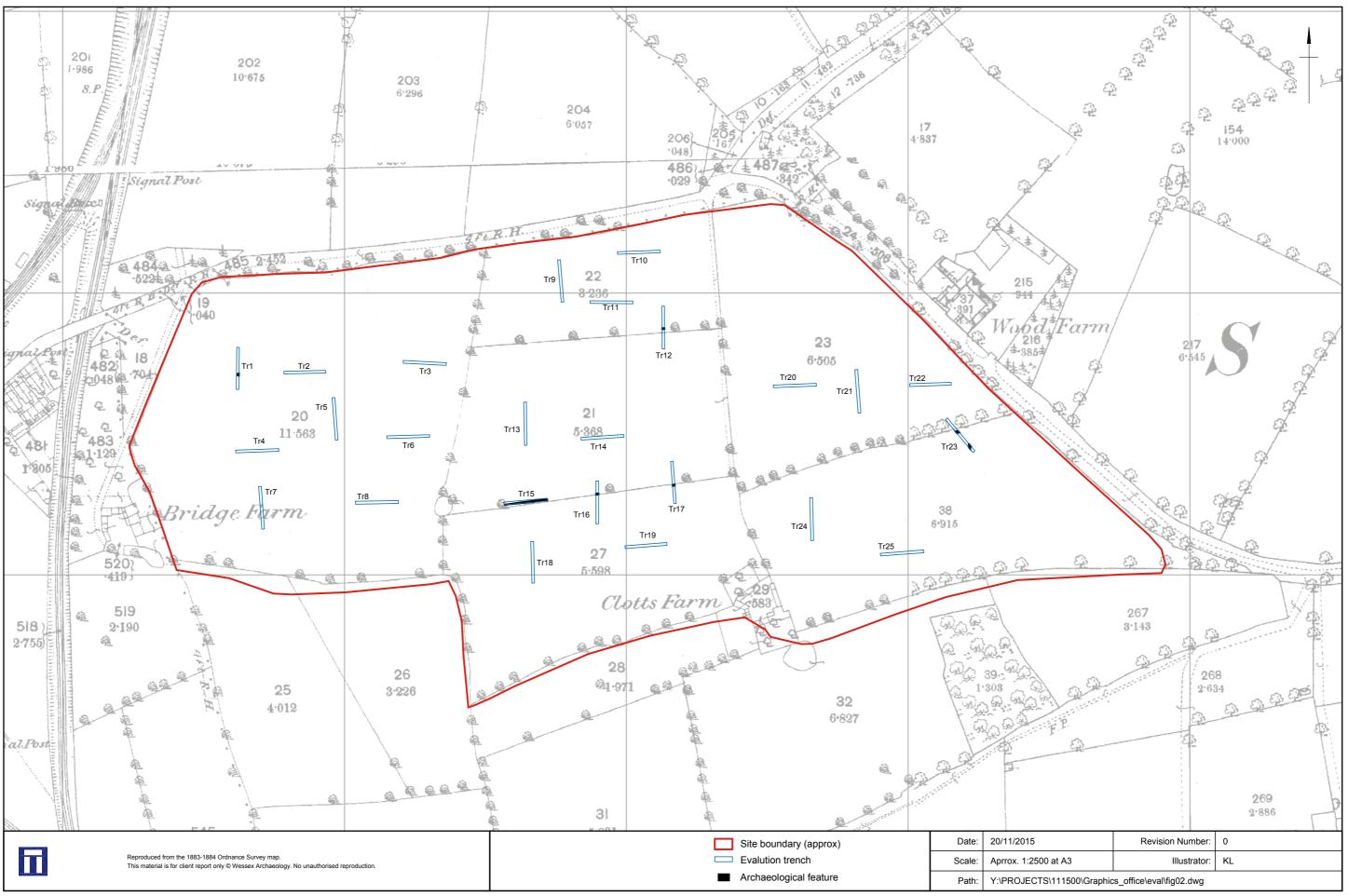
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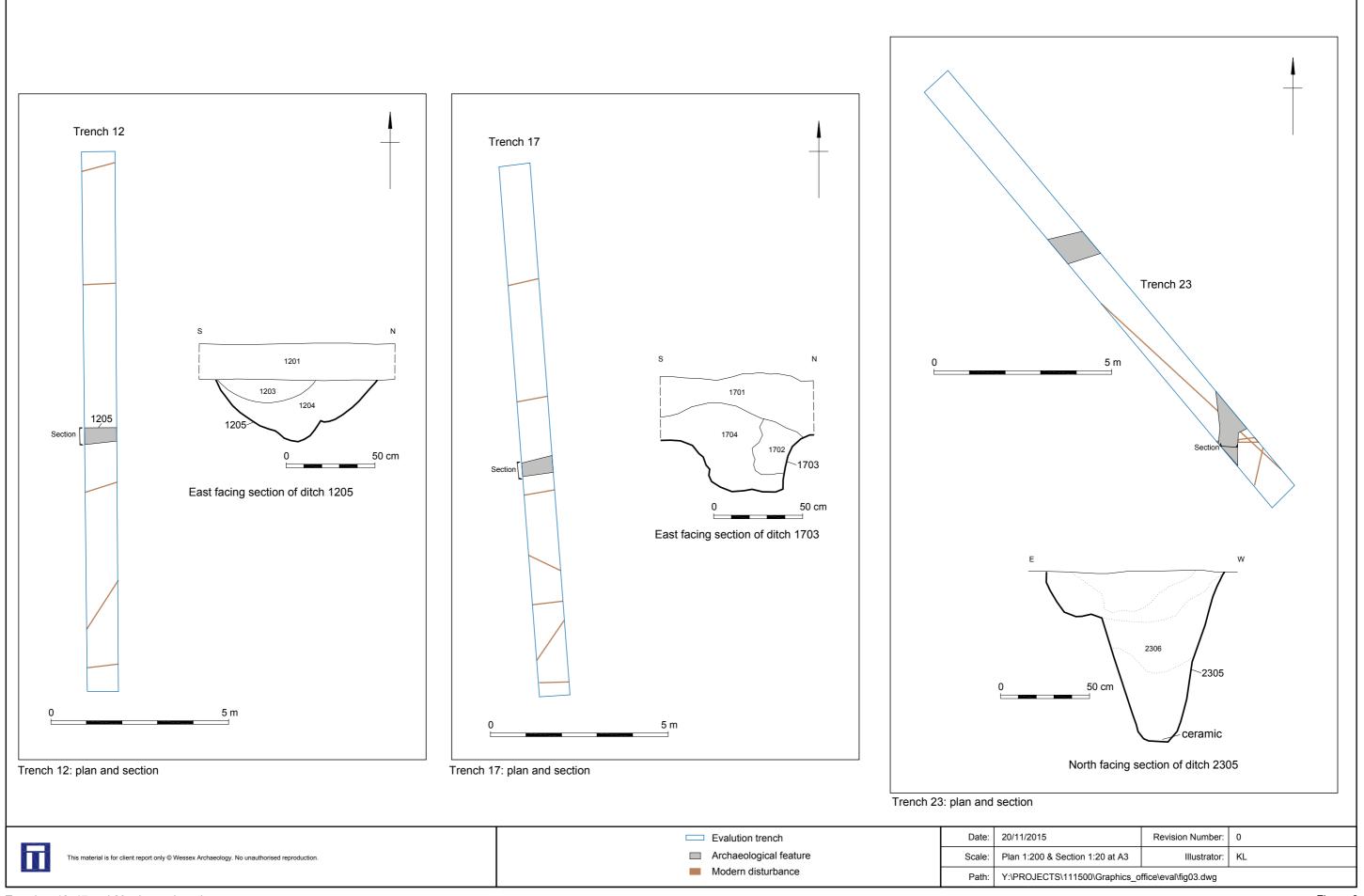
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Site Location overlain on geophysical survey data





Trenches 12, 17 and 23: plan and section



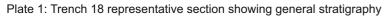




Plate 2: Bonfire 103 in Trench 1



Plate 3: Trench 12, showing ditch 1205



Plate 4: Trench 15 overview



Plate 5: Trench 17 showing ditch 1703



Plate 6: Trench 23 showing ditch 2305



Date:	20/11/2015	Revision Number:	0	
Scale:	n/a	Layout:	KL	
Path:	Y:\PROJECTS\111500\Graphics_office\eval\plates.cdr			





