



Northamptonshire Archaeology

Archaeological evaluation of land at Grange Road,
Bardon, Leicestershire
Accession No: XA205.2010



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Report 11/12

January 2011



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SITE NAME: Grange Road, Bardon, Leicestershire

PLANNING APPLICATION NUMBER: 10/01093/OUTM

NATIONAL GRID REF: NGR SK 437 129

CLIENT: Nexus Heritage on behalf of Bloor Homes Ltd

ACCESSION NUMBER XA.205.2010

CONTRACTOR: Northamptonshire Archaeology
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QUALITY CONTROL

	Print name	Signed	Date
Checked by	Pat Chapman		
Verified by	Ant Maull		
Approved by	Andy Chapman		

(Front cover: General view of site, looking south-west)
(Back cover: Trench 8 backfilled)

OAS/S REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project title	Archaeological evaluation of land at Grange Road, Bardon, Leicestershire January 2011	
Short description	In January 2011, an archaeological trial trench evaluation was carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology, on behalf of Nexus Heritage, on land off Grange Road, Bardon, Leicestershire. An intrusive abraded single sherd of Samian pottery was recovered from a ditch. Three undated ditches were probably former post-medieval field boundaries. The site was traversed by furrows of a former medieval field system.	
Project type	Trial trench evaluation	
Previous work	Geophysical Survey	
Current land use	Arable	
Future work	Unknown	
Monument type and period	Medieval ridge and furrow	
Significant finds	None	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Leicestershire	
Site address	Grange Road, Bardon	
Easting Northing	SK 437 129	
Area (sq m/ha)	40 hectares	
Height aOD	150mAOD	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA)	
Project brief originator	Nexus Heritage	
Project Design originator	Nexus Heritage	
Director/Supervisor	Jason Clarke (NA)	
Project Manager	Anthony Maull(NA)	
Sponsor or funding body	Bloor Homes Ltd	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	5 January 2011	
End date	19 January 2011	
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Contents
Physical	XA205 2010	Pottery
Paper		Site records (1 archive box)
Digital		Client report PDF. Survey Data, Photographs
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
Title	Archaeological evaluation of Land at Grange Road, Bardon, Leicestershire, January 2011	
Serial title & volume	11/12	
Author(s)	Jason Clarke	
Page numbers	7 text, 4 figs	
Date	January 2011	

Contents

Abstract

1	INTRODUCTION	1
2	BACKGROUND	1
2.1	Topography and geology	1
2.2	Historical and archaeological background	1
3	METHODOLOGY	2
4	OBJECTIVES	3
4.1	Objectives	3
4.2	Research Agenda	3
5	THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE	4
5.1	General stratigraphy	4
5.2	The ditches in Trenches 13, 23, 42 and 44	4
5.3	Remnant furrows	5
6	DISCUSSION	5
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	6
	APPENDIX:	

Figures

Fig 1: Site location

Fig 2: General Site plan showing trench locations and furrows from a geophysical survey

Fig 3: Plans of Trenches 13, 23, 42 and 44

Fig 4: Sections of ditches in trenches 13, 23, 42 and 44

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION OF LAND AT
GRANGE ROAD, BARDON
LEICESTERSHIRE
JANUARY 2011**

Abstract

In January 2011, an archaeological trial trench evaluation was carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology, on behalf of Nexus Heritage, on land off Grange Road, Bardon, Leicestershire. An intrusive single abraded sherd of Samian pottery was recovered from a ditch. Three undated ditches were probably former post-medieval field boundaries. The site was traversed by furrows of a former medieval field system.

1 INTRODUCTION

In January 2011, an archaeological trial trench evaluation was carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA) on land at Grange Road, Bardon, Leicestershire (NGR: SK 437 129; Fig 1). The work was commissioned by Nexus Heritage, on behalf of Bloor Homes Ltd (East Midland Division), and was undertaken to inform a forthcoming planning application for the proposed residential development and associated infrastructure (Planning Application Number 10/01093/OUT).

The scope of works was outlined and detailed in the specification prepared by Nexus Heritage (Martin 2010). The objectives of the evaluation were to determine the presence of any archaeological features or deposits within the application area and to date and characterise their extent, depth of burial and state of preservation.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Topography and geology

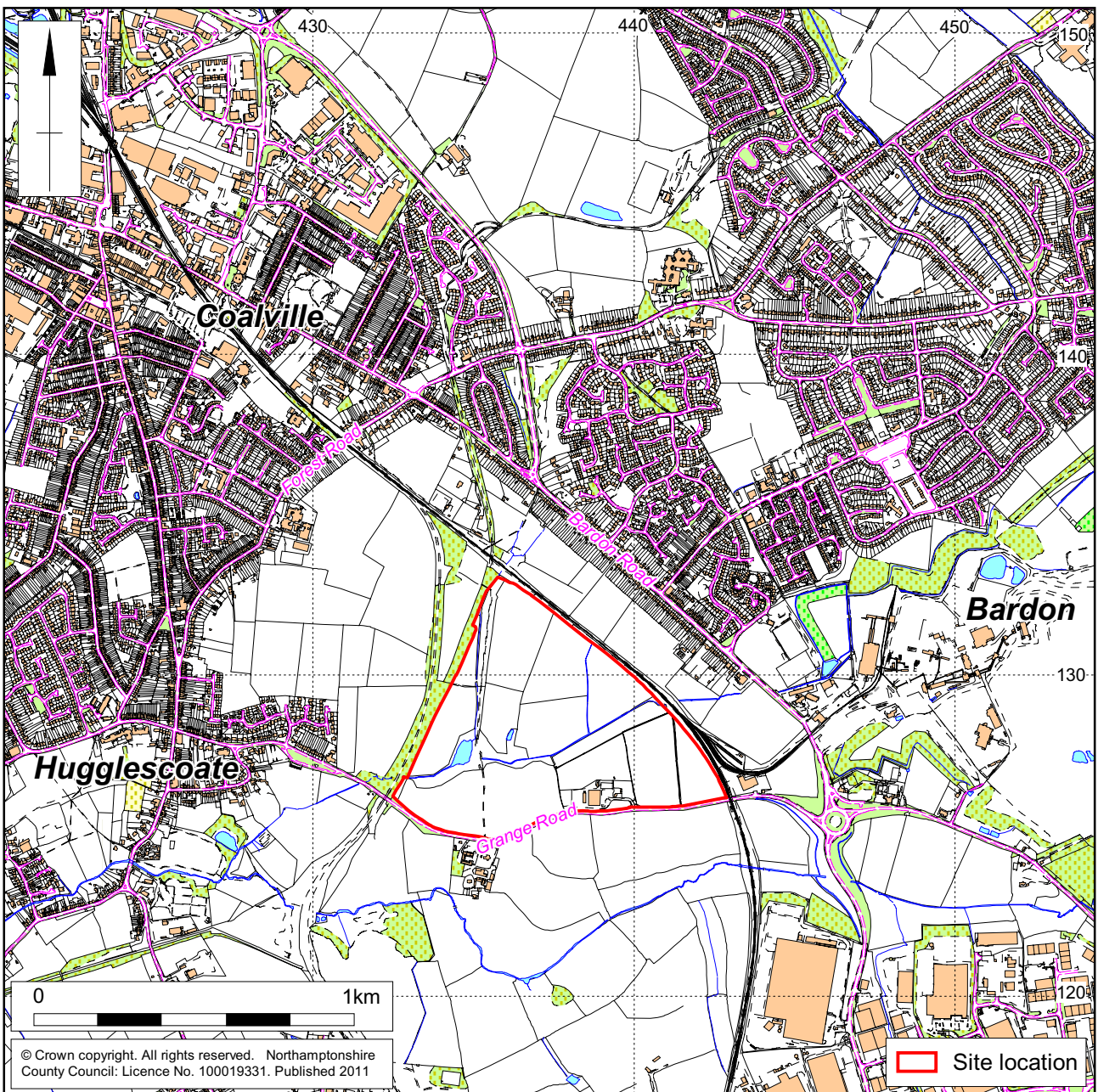
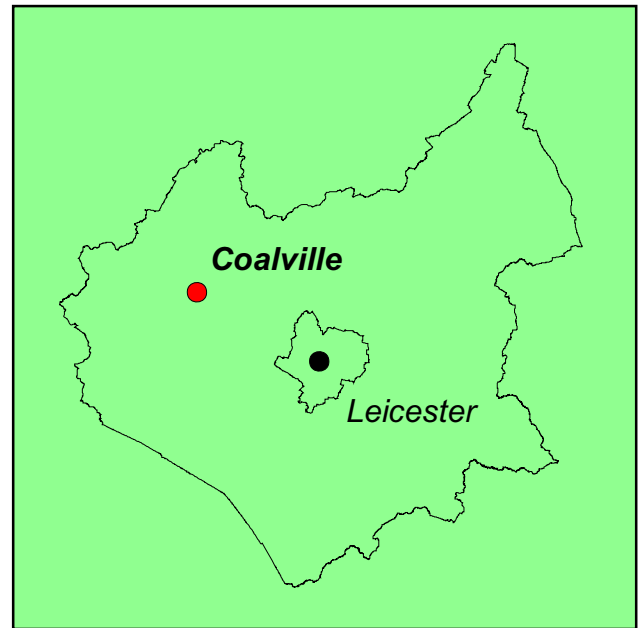
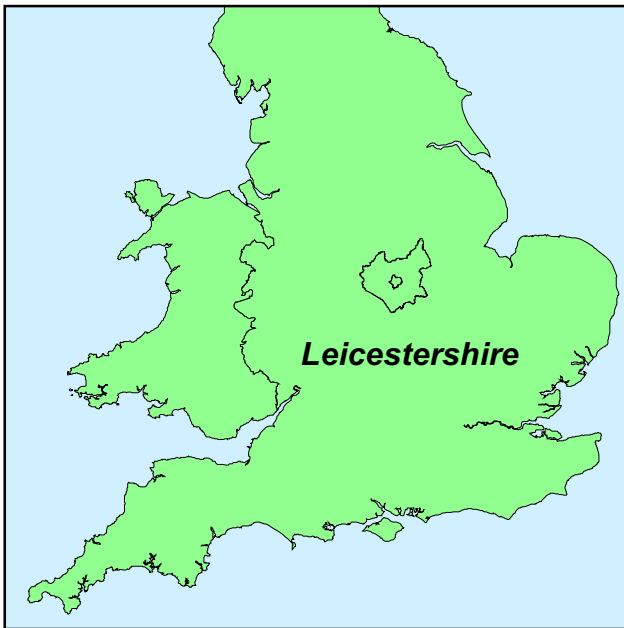
The location of the site, to the west of the village of Bardon (centred at NGR SK 437 129) is shown in Figure 1. The site is characterised as agricultural land.

The site on which development is proposed equates to c. 40ha of pasture land and is currently used by the Louella Stud Farm. The site is divided into 17 paddocks which slope gently from north to south.

The underlying geology is characterised as the Mercian Mudstone group. The drift geology is till with some alluvium in places. The overlying soils are Claverly which are typical stagnogley soils, consisting of slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged reddish coarse and fine loamy soils (Soil Survey of England and Wales, Sheet 03, Midland and Western England).

2.2 Historical and archaeological background

A desk-based assessment and a geophysical survey consisting of a magnetometry scan of 65ha of land and 10% detailed gradiometer survey were undertaken. The site surveyed covered the current proposed development area, in addition to the disused railway line and the fields further to the west. The results were compiled and



Scale 1:20,000

Site location Fig 1

produced in a report in December 2000 (JSAC 2000). The geophysical survey recorded two buried ditches in the northern part of the site, nine dispersed buried pits in the south and south of the site and a single pit in the eastern section. It was concluded that the dispersed nature of the features and the lack of any other context suggested that the ditches and pits were of agricultural origin. The ridge and furrow identified along the western boundary of the current proposed development was concluded to be the most significant archaeological feature present on the site (JSAC 2000).

In 2007 archaeological desk-based assessment of the same site previously investigated in 2000 was prepared. At this time it was considered by the Senior Planning Archaeologist of Leicestershire County Council that the small areas of detailed gradiometer survey were not sufficient to provide an accurate amount of archaeological information. It was concluded that the lack of previous development on the site would have preserved any archaeological deposits but these would have been impacted upon by the medieval and post-medieval arable ploughing on the site. A further detailed gradiometer survey and a programme of targeted archaeological trial trenching was recommended, (WSP 2007).

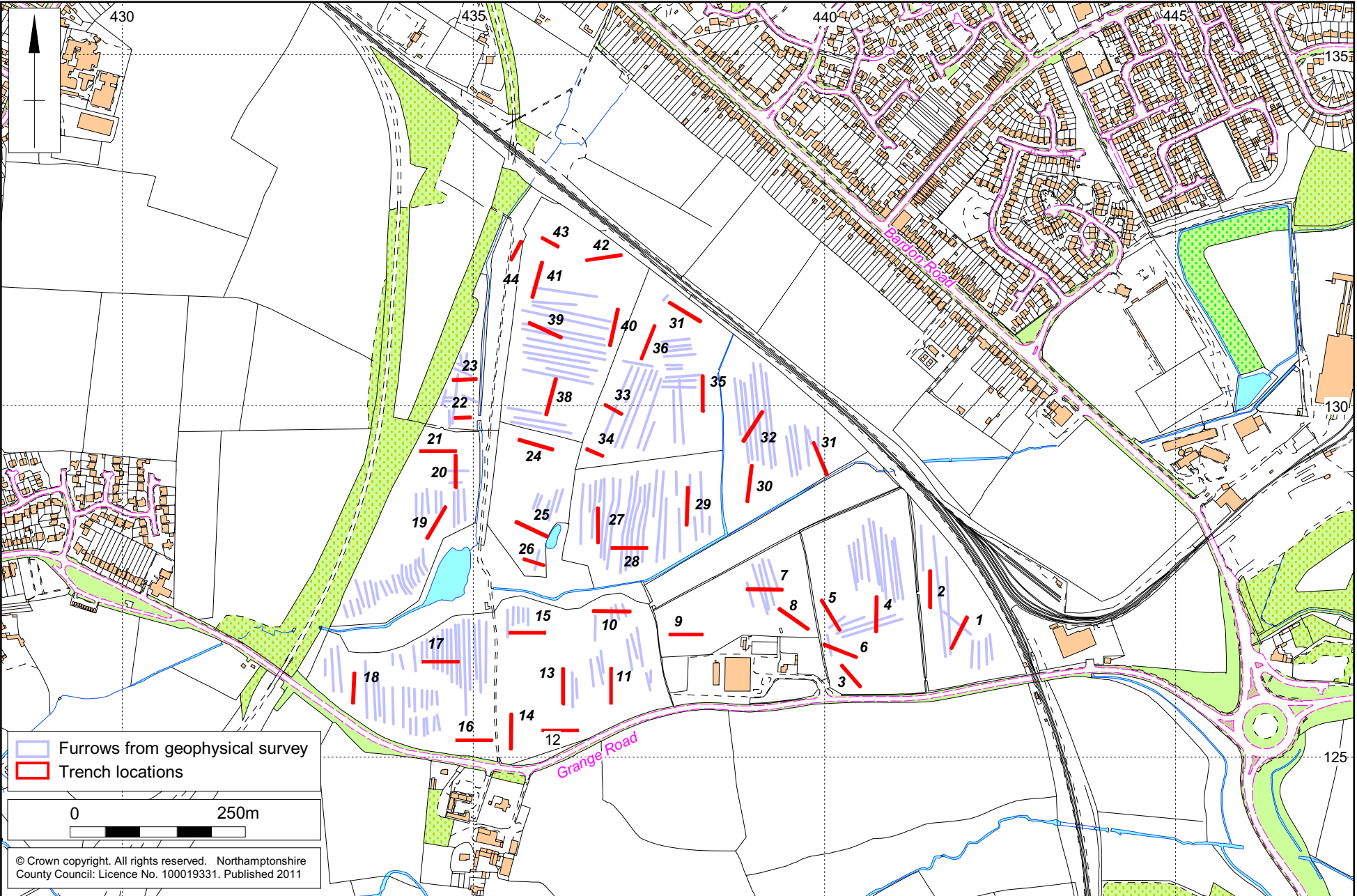
In September 2010, a geophysical survey on the site revealed 97 pits, 28 positive linear anomalies, three negative linear anomalies and one area anomaly (Stratascan 2010). The dates and origin of these features were uncertain. There does not appear to be any alignments or specific concentrations between these features, which are widespread across the site. The survey also identified 107 furrows associated with relict ridge and furrow cultivation. This was most apparent along the western boundary and in the south-west corner of the site. These cultivation remains could date from the medieval period to the post-medieval period.

3 METHODOLOGY

Forty-four trial trenches were excavated in accordance with a trench plan prepared by Nexus Heritage and approved by Richard Clark (Senior Planning Archaeologist, Leicestershire County Council) (Fig 2). Thirty-four of the trenches measured 50m long by 2m wide, five were 25m long by 2m, two were 45m long by 2m, one was 40m long and 2m wide, one was 20m long and 2m wide and Trench 22 was reduced from 35m to 20m due to its proximity to a badgers set. The total area excavated was 3920m².

Trenches were positioned using a Leica system 1200 GPS. A 360° tracked mechanical excavator fitted with a 2m wide ditching bucket was used to remove overburden to archaeological levels or the natural substrate, whichever was encountered first. The trenches were cleaned sufficiently to enable the identification and definition of archaeological features.

A hand-drawn plan of all archaeological features was made at scale 1:50 or 1:100 and was related to the Ordnance Survey National Grid. Archaeological deposits were examined by hand excavation to determine their nature. Recording followed standard NA procedures as described in the *Fieldwork Manual* (NA 2006). Deposits were described on *pro-forma* sheets to include measured and descriptive details of the context, its relationships, interpretation and a checklist of associated finds. Context sheets were cross-referenced to scale plans, section drawings and photographs. Photography was with 35mm black and white film and colour slides, supplemented with digital images. Sections were drawn at scale 1:10 or 1:20, as appropriate and



related to Ordnance Survey datum. Spoil heaps and features were scanned with a metal detector to maximise the recovery of metal objects.

All works were conducted in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (IfA 2010) and *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (IfA 1994, revised 2008).

4 OBJECTIVES

4.1 Objectives

The objectives of the archaeological evaluation were stated in the WSI (NA 2010):

- To determine, as far as is reasonably possible, the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains on the site, the integrity of which may be threatened by the construction works.
- To establish the nature and extent of existing disturbance and intrusion to sub-surface deposits and, where the data allows, assess the degree of archaeological survival of buried deposits of archaeological significance.
- In so far as possible within methodological constraints, to explain any temporal, spatial or functional relationships between the structures/remains identified, and any relationships between these and the archaeological and historic elements of the wider landscape.
- To enable the client to establish a schedule for archaeological risks.

4.2 Research Agenda

The evaluation was carried out within the parameters set by the East Midlands Regional Research Framework, *The Archaeology of the East Midlands: an Archaeological Resource Assessment and Research Agenda* (Cooper 2006)

The results of the geophysical survey suggested that the evaluation would address broad questions relating to the Medieval Agrarian Landscape (Lewis 2006), in particular the open fields, their origin and use.

The evaluation determined the following questions:

- Character of the underlying geology
- The extent of any masking of pre-medieval features due to alluvial or colluvial deposits
- The extent to which medieval ploughing may have impacted upon earlier archaeological features.
- The extent to which ridge and furrow may mask less obvious sub-surface features to detection by non intrusive survey methods, ie Aerial photography, geophysical survey etc.
- Transition from early medieval to later medieval patterns of land organisation, including any evidence of periodic reorganisation.

5 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

5.1 General stratigraphy

The underlying geology was glacial till, which was encountered between 0.2-0.8m below the modern ground surface in all trenches. This occurred as light-mid orange or brownish-yellow sandy clay with occasional angular to sub-angular pebbles and granite fragments. The subsoil was light grey-brown silty clay and the topsoil was mid greyish-brown slightly clayey silt, both soils containing occasional granite fragments and flint pebbles.

No archaeology was encountered in Trenches 2, 3, 5, 10, 11, 14, 16, 18-21, 24, 26, 27, 29-34, 35, 40 and 43. Remnant furrows of medieval ridge and furrow with no other features were present in Trenches 1, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 15, 17, 25, 28, 36-39 and 41. Ridges from the ridge and furrow open field system were visible as earthworks in the field containing Trenches 22 and 23.

A modern pit containing metal objects, bricks, plastic and a few fragments of asbestos was located in the west of Trench 24 and corresponded with a geophysical anomaly. Modern finds were not retained.

The trench locations are shown in Figure 2 and an inventory of contexts from the trenches where archaeology was present is provided in the Appendix.

5.2 The ditches in Trenches 13, 23, 42 and 44

Trench 13 (Figs 2 and 3)

Trench 10, 50m long by 2.0m wide, was aligned north to south and located to target a geophysical anomaly representing a possible ditch. Furrows were present throughout the trench.

Ditch [1304] (Fig 4 section 4)

In the middle of the trench was a ditch [1304], aligned east to west. It measured 1.28m wide and 0.52m deep and had a V-shaped profile. It was filled with dark red-brown silty clay (1305). There were no finds.

Trench 23 (Figs 2 and 3)

Trench 23, measuring 30m long by 2.0m wide, was aligned east to west and located to target a geophysical anomaly representing a possible ditch.

Ditch [2305] (Fig 4, section 3)

In the middle of the trench a ditch [2305], aligned north to south. It measured 1.10m wide and 0.40m deep and had a V-shaped profile. It was filled with mid grey-brown silty clay (2304). It was overlain by a ridge. There were no finds.

Trench 42 (Figs 2 and 3)

Trench 42 measured 50m long by 2.0m wide and was aligned east to west. In the middle of the trench was a north-east to south-west aligned ditch.

Ditch [4203] (Fig 4, section 2)

Located in the middle of the trench a ditch [4203] was aligned north-east to south-west. It measured 0.70m wide and 0.30m deep and had a V-shaped profile. It was filled by dark brown silty clay (4204).

Trench 44 (Figs 2 and 3)***Ditch [4405] (Fig 4, section 1)***

At the north-eastern end of the trench was a ditch [4405], aligned north-east to south-west. The ditch was partially exposed with the northern side of the ditch beyond the limits of the excavation. It measured 0.70m (seen) wide and 0.30m deep, with a U-shaped profile. It was filled with dark grey silty clay (4404), which contained a single sherd of extremely worn and abraded Roman samian pottery, weighing 2.9g. The sherd was from the junction of a foot ring and base of an indeterminate vessel form.

5.3 Remnant furrows

Remnant furrows from a truncated field system were present in trenches 1, 4, 6, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 23, 25, 28, 36, 37, 38, 39 and 41. The furrows were c3m apart and were typically 1m wide. In alignment they corresponded to anomalies in the geophysical survey (Stratascan 2010).

6 DISCUSSION

The methodology, objectives and the research agenda outlined in the Written Scheme of Investigation and Statement of Compliance was adhered to. Some minor changes were made to the initial trenching plan, due to the discovery of Badger setts and the presence of overhead power lines; however their repositioning did not affect the investigation of the targeted geophysical anomalies.

The underlying geology observed throughout the development area was clay with occasional large fragments of granite and small pebbles. The archaeological features cut this geology. Colluvium was only present in Trench 44 where it overlays a possible post-medieval ditch.

Remnant furrows from a truncated field system were present in many of the trenches. The furrows corresponded with the results from the geophysical survey and show the pattern of the open field farming. No dating evidence was recovered for the ridge and furrow cultivation, so this could be of medieval date or later. The site was eventually enclosed and converted to pasture, possibly in the 17th century. The first edition Ordnance Survey map, dated 1883, shows the development site with most of the existing boundaries already in place.

Four ditches were identified within the development area, Trenches 13, 23, 42 and 44.

The ditch in Trench 23 was recorded as an anomaly in the geophysical survey. It was overlain by a ridge from the surviving ridge and furrow earthworks, suggesting it was earlier than the open field system but an exact date is uncertain.

The ditch in Trench 44 contained a single sherd of Roman Samian pottery. The sherd was small and abraded suggesting that it was residual. The ditch was on the same alignment as an existing field boundary to the north, and may have been a continuation of that boundary.

Two more undated ditches were present in Trenches 13 and 42. They are not shown on the 1883 Ordnance Survey map but their alignments within the modern landscape suggest that they were part of the enclosed fields, but had been removed by 1883.

The results from the archaeological evaluation were deemed reliable and confirmed the results of the geophysical survey.

The accuracy of the geophysical survey was demonstrated by the anomaly corresponding to the ditch found in Trench 23. This ditch was also sealed by an upstanding ridge earthwork. This relationship and the absence of features in other trenches suggest elsewhere the ridge and furrow did not mask less obvious sub surface features.

The furrows were moderately well preserved and appeared to be of a single phase of cultivation. There was therefore no evidence for a change in the medieval pattern of land organisation prior to enclosure.

The located ditches, with the exception of the ditch in Trench 23, appear to be disused field boundaries from the post-medieval period.

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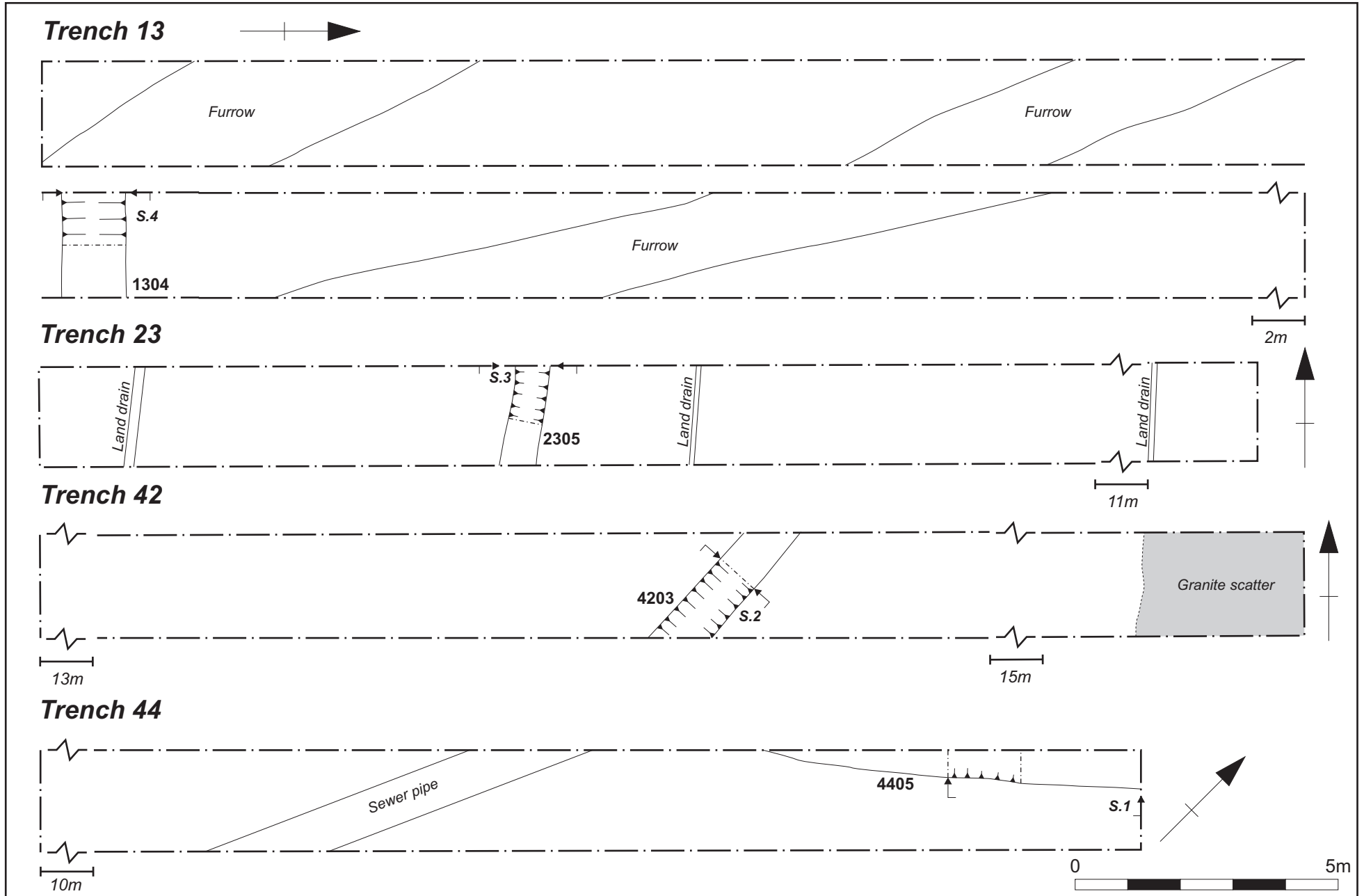
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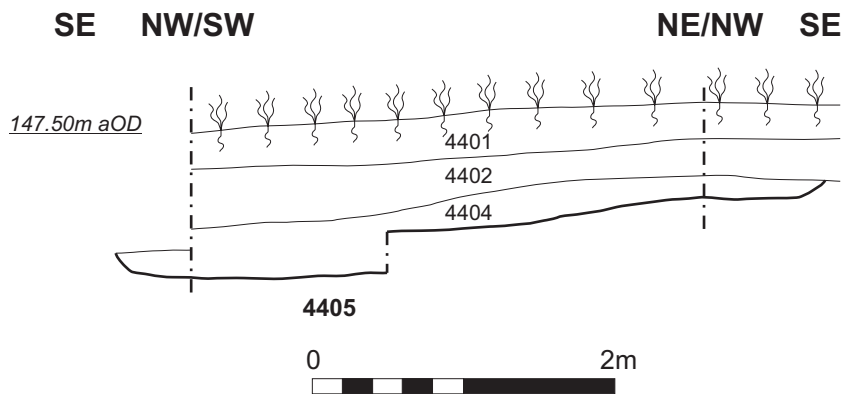
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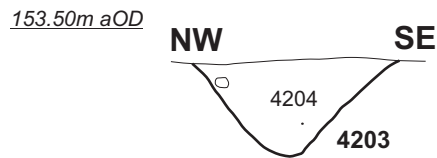
Plans of trenches 13, 23, 42 and 44 Fig 3



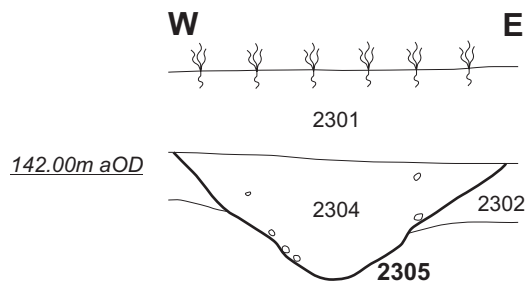
Section 1



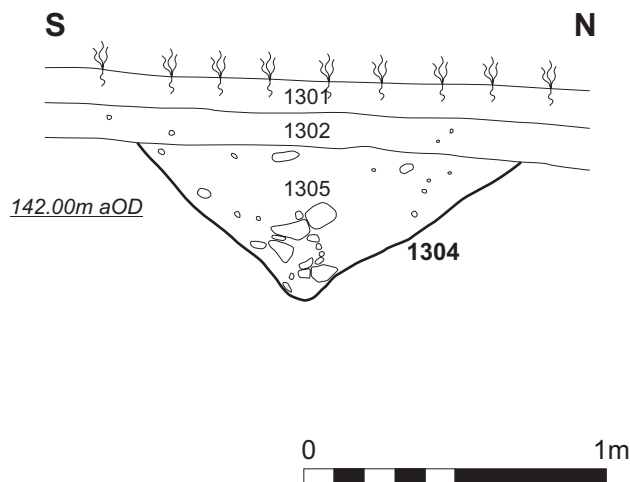
Section 2



Section 3



Section 4



APPENDIX

Context Index

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
13	50m x 2.0m North to South	443628/312625	144.39m aOD	0.37m, 144.02m aOD
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type Feature & type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/ Samples</i>
1301	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown silty clay	0.23m thick	
1302	Subsoil	Dark reddish-brown clay	0.12m thick	
1303	Natural	Light orange-brown clay		
1304	Cut of ditch. Filled by 1305	E-W aligned V-shaped ditch.	1.28m wide and 0.52m deep	
1305	Fill of 1304	Dark red-brown silty clay.		

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
23	30m x 2.0m East to West	443504/313037	142.75m aOD	0.45m, 142.30m aOD
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type Feature & type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/ Samples</i>
2301	Topsoil	Dark brown-grey silty clay	0.30m thick	
2302	Subsoil	Mid brown silty clay	0.15m thick	
2303	Natural	Red-brown clay		
2304	Fill of 2305	Mid brown-grey silty clay		
2305	Cut of ditch	NW-SE aligned V-shaped ditch	1.10m wide and 0.40m deep	

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
42	50m x 2.0m East to West	443660/313206	154.45m aOD	0.40m, 154.05m aOD
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
4201	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown silty clay	0.40m	
4202	Natural	Light orange-brown clay		
4203	Cut of ditch	NE to SW aligned V-shaped ditch	0.70m wide and 0.30m deep	
4204	Fill of 4203	Dark brown silty clay		

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
44	25m x 2.0m N-S	443567/313233	146.54m aOD	0.65mm, 145.89m aOD
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
4401	Topsoil	Dark brown silty clay	0.30m thick	
4402	Subsoil	Mid red-brown silty clay	0.35m thick	
4403	Natural	Mid yellow-orange clay		
4404	Fill of [4405]	Dark grey silty clay		1st to 2nd century AD pottery
4405	Cut of ditch	NE to SW aligned ditch	0.70m wide (seen) and 0.30m deep	



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