



Northamptonshire Archaeology

Archaeological evaluation on land off
Frearson Road, Hugglescote, Leicestershire
X.A129.2011



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QUALITY CONTROL

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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project name	Hugglescote, Leicestershire	
Short description	In September 2011, an archaeological evaluation, comprising 16 trenches, was undertaken on 9.5ha of land off Frearson Road, Hugglescote. Thirteen trenches contained no earlier archaeological remains, while the remaining three located the ditch of a rectangular enclosure ditch and an internal ring ditch, both previously recorded by geophysical survey. The only dating evidence recovered was a few small sherds of possible Iron Age pottery. All trenches contained modern plough scars indicating that the subsoil has been truncated.	
Project type	Evaluation	
Site status	None	
Previous work	Geophysical Survey (Stratascan 2010)	
Current Land use	Arable	
Future work	unknown	
Monument type/ period	Iron Age	
Significant finds	None	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Leicestershire	
Site address	Frearson Road, Hugglescote	
Study area	9.5ha	
OS Easting & Northing	SK 417 128	
Height OD	150m	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project brief originator	Nexus Heritage (Martin 2011)	
Project Design originator	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Director/Supervisor	Christopher Jones	
Project Manager	Steve Parry	
Sponsor or funding body	Bloor Homes Ltd	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	12/09/2011	
End date	21/09/2011	
ARCHIVES	Location	Content
Physical	-	Pottery, Flint
Paper	X.A129.2011	Evaluation pro forma sheets, context sheets, colour slides, black and white contact prints, plans and section drawing
Digital		Report text and figures. Photographs
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (NA report)		
Title	Archaeological Evaluation on land off Frearson Road, Hugglescote, Leicestershire, September 2011	
Serial title & VOL.	11/196	
Author(s)	Christopher Jones	
Page numbers	20	
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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION ON LAND OFF
FREARSON ROAD, HUGGLESCOTE, LEICESTERSHIRE
SEPTEMBER 2011**

Abstract

In September 2011, an archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology on behalf of Bloor Homes Ltd on 9.5ha of land off Frearson Road, Hugglescote, Leicestershire, where geophysical survey had located a rectangular enclosure containing a ring ditch. Sixteen trenches were excavated. Thirteen trenches contained no earlier archaeological remains, while the remaining three located the ditch of the rectangular enclosure and the internal ring ditch, both previously recorded by geophysical survey. The only dating evidence recovered was a few small sherds of possible Iron Age pottery. The enclosure ditch was no more than 0.55m deep, and the southern arm was even shallower. All trenches contained modern plough scars indicating that the subsoil has been truncated.

1 INTRODUCTION

Bloor Homes Ltd is preparing an outline application for the construction of residential homes on land off Frearson Road, Hugglescote, Leicestershire (SK 417 128; Fig 1). The programme of archaeological investigation, as outlined in the Specification issued by Nexus Heritage (2011), involved the excavation of sixteen trenches across the development area. Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA) was commissioned by Nexus Heritage, acting on behalf of Bloor Homes Ltd, to undertake the archaeological trial excavation, the results of which are presented in this report.

This tranche of works follows a geophysical magnetometer survey (Stratascan Ltd 2010), which identified areas of archaeological potential within the development area (Fig 2).

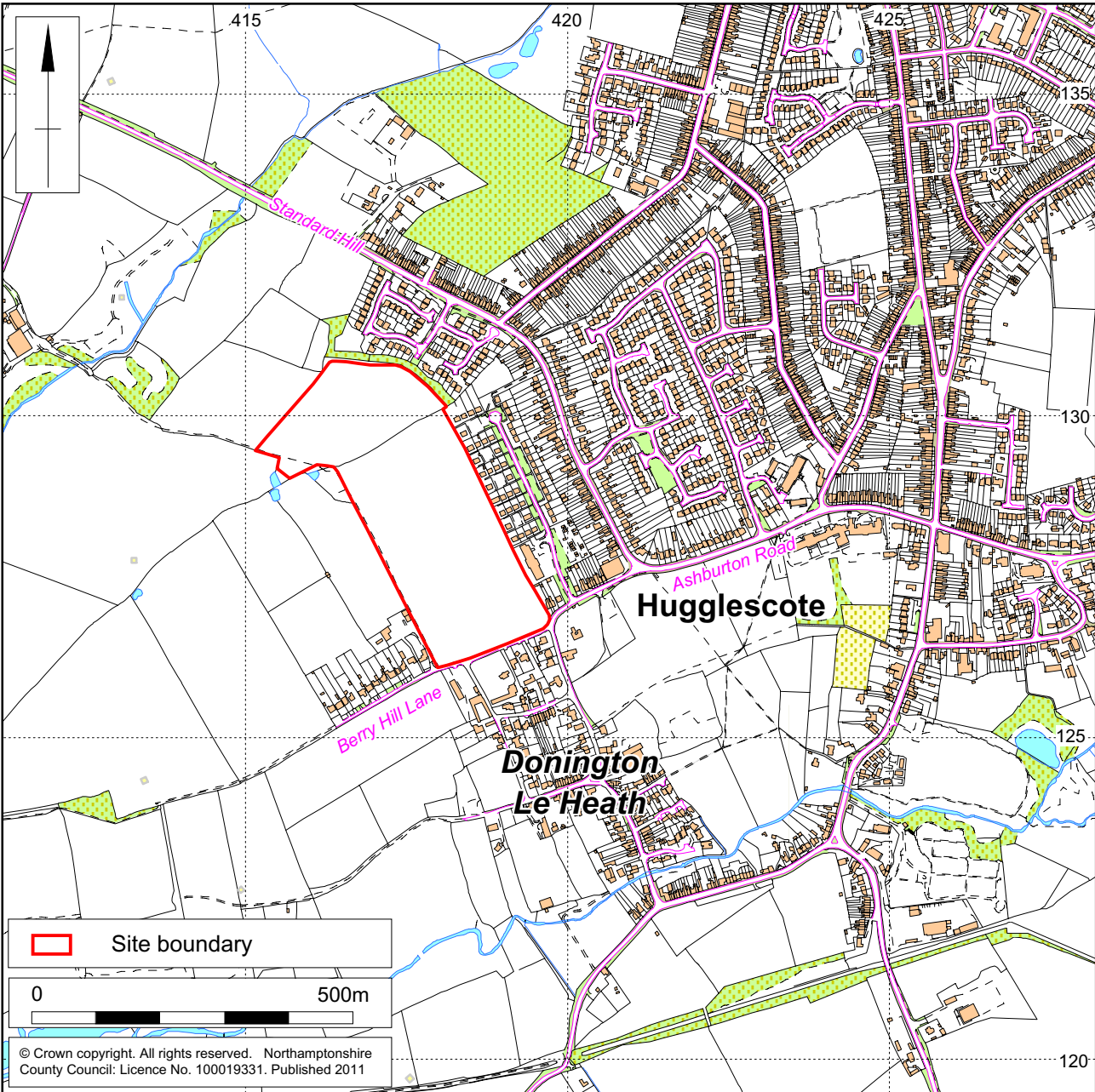
2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location, topography and geology

The proposed development site lies on the western edge of Hugglescote and north of Donington-le-Heath. It is bounded by Berry Hill Lane to the south, a public footpath and fields to the west, residential premises off St Mary's Avenue to the east and Frearson Road to the north-east, and open fields to the north-west.

The northern parcel of land is currently pasture used for grazing, with the remainder under an arable regime. Topographically, the two fields which make up the proposed development are flat at c150m AoD.

The underlying geology is mapped as the Triassic mudstone, siltstone and sandstone, with the drift geology mapped as Diamicton (<http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/Geoindex/default.aspx> BGS 2011, accessed 13/05/11).



Scale 1:10,000

Site Location Fig 1

2.2 Archaeological background

In December 2010 a geophysical survey of the entire site, by magnetometry, was undertaken by Stratascan Ltd (Stratascan 2010). On the eastern margins of the southern field, there was a rectangular enclosure, at least 60m long by 54m wide, enclosing an area in excess of 0.3ha (Fig 2). Within the enclosure there was a single ring ditch, 13m in diameter, suggesting the presence of an Iron Age roundhouse. The northern and western arms of the enclosure were clearly defined, but the southern particularly to the east was indistinct. Numerous closely-spaced linear agricultural marks were recorded across both fields, along with areas of magnetic disturbance and land drains within the western portion of the northern field (Fig 2).

Recent archaeological work within the area by Northamptonshire Archaeology allied to searches of the Leicestershire Historic Environment Record (HER) shows the site to be within an area of archaeological interest. A Palaeolithic hand-axe and Mesolithic flint have been recovered from fields to the north. There is some evidence for occupation of the surrounding area during the Iron Age and Roman period with the recovery of artefacts from previous field walking to the east of Snibston Grange in 1997 and 1999, and more recently field walking was undertaken at Hugglescote north-east of the site (Simmonds *et al* 2011).

Coalville is likely to have had a Roman road passing through it. Of note was the discovery of a Roman coin hoard in 2003. Its discovery is not necessarily related to any occupation, and it may be an isolated deposition. There are three foci of settlement in the medieval period, including the manorial sites of Donington le Heath (MLE 14488), around the historic core of Hugglescote (MLE 4577) and the deserted medieval village at Snibston (MLE 4553). Surviving ridge and furrow in the area is likely to be medieval in date. Settlement after the medieval period shifted towards Coalville, probably as a result of the coal industry.

Within the historic core of Donington le Heath (MLE 4576) a chapel is recorded in the Matriculus of 1220. Earthworks have been recorded from aerial photographs to the west of the village (MLE 4565) and also a possible house platform to the west of Townsend Lane (MLE 8329). A number of other possible features are recorded in association with Donington le Heath Manor House (MLE 14488), dated to c. 1280 (Grade II* listed), including an enclosing bank and ditch (MLE 8333) and the buried remains of a possible gatehouse (MLE 10017). The barn adjoining the Manor House (MLE 14489) is thought to be medieval in date and is Grade II listed.

3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Objectives

The aims of the archaeological evaluation are specified in the Written Scheme of Investigation.

General aims comprised the following:

- To determine, as far as reasonably practicable, the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains;
- To establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of archaeological deposits and features encountered.

Site specific aims included the following:

- To clarify the impact of medieval, post-medieval and modern ploughing and hence assess the degree of archaeological survival of buried deposits;
- To clarify the extent, date, character, condition and significance of the linear anomalies identified during the geophysical survey;
- To determine the presence or absence of prehistoric flint within topsoil and subsoil horizons;
- To determine the presence or absence of late prehistoric, Iron Age and Roman settlement remains;
- To establish the potential for significant environmental deposits;
- To establish the potential for archaeological remains.

Specific research objectives were to be based on the research frameworks set out in Cooper (2006).

3.2 Methodology

The works were conducted in accordance with the specification (Martin 2011), *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (IfA 1994, revised 2008) and the *Code of Conduct* of the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA 1985, revised). The work was monitored by the County Archaeological Advisor to Leicestershire County Council

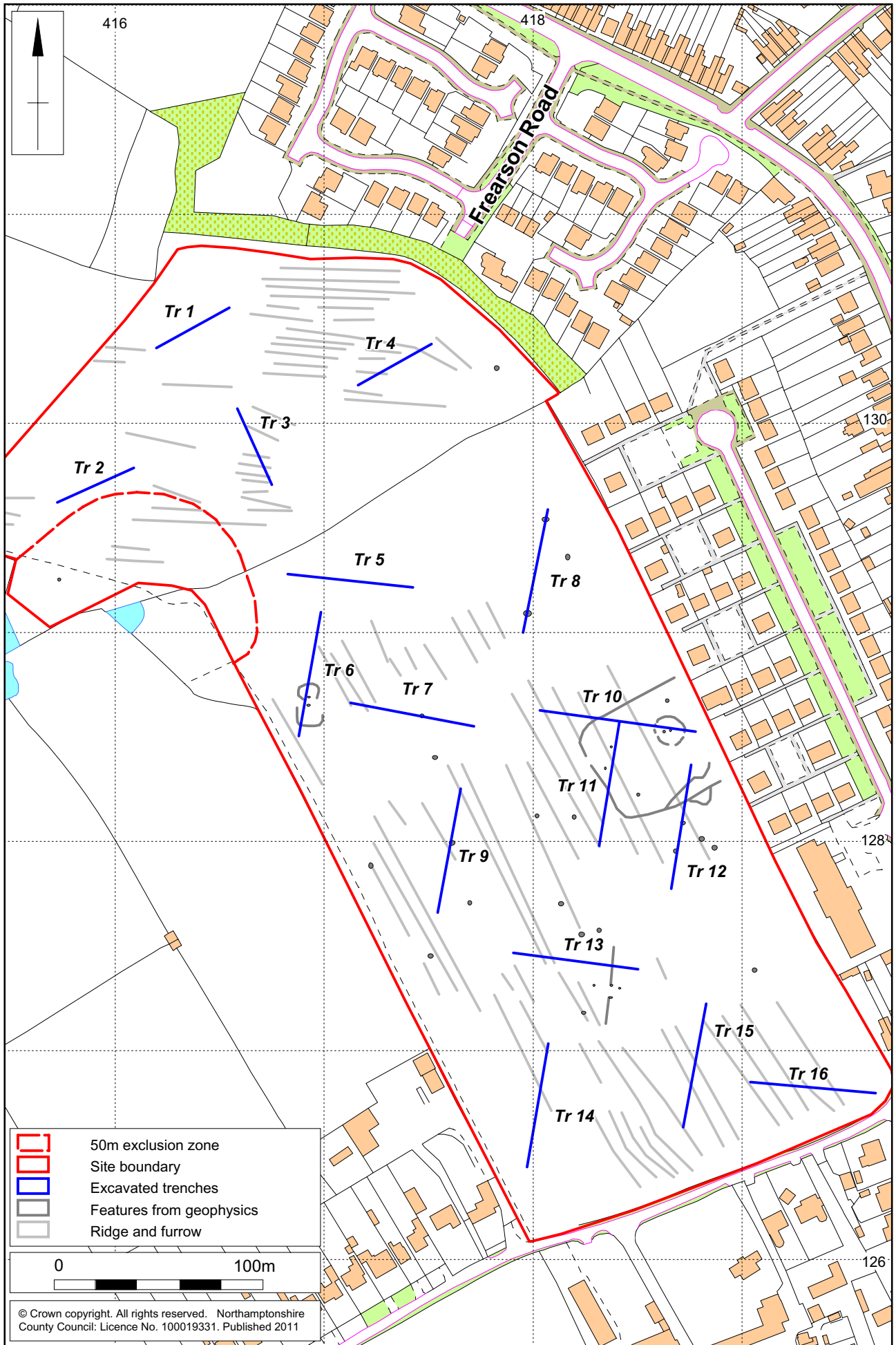
Of the sixteen trenches, 11 were 60m long by 2m wide, four were 40m by 2m and one was 75m by 2m. They were machine-excavated using a toothless ditching bucket. The trenches were positioned in accordance with the trench location plan and have been related to Ordnance Survey National Grid (Fig 2). On completion of archaeological recording the trenches were backfilled. There was no requirement for specialist re-instatement.

The topsoil, subsoil and non-structural post-medieval and later deposits were removed to reveal archaeological remains or where absent to the natural. The topsoil was stacked separately from the subsoil and other deposits. The trenches were cleaned sufficiently to enable the identification of any features.

All deposits encountered during the course of the excavation were given a separate context number and fully recorded. Recording followed standard Northamptonshire Archaeology procedures. Deposits were described on pro-forma context sheets to include details of the context, its relationships, interpretation and a checklist of associated finds.

The trenches were planned at a scale of 1:100. Sections of the sequence of deposits in each trench were drawn at a scale of 1:10 and related to Ordnance Datum. The excavated area and spoil heaps were scanned visually and with a metal detector to ensure maximum finds retrieval.

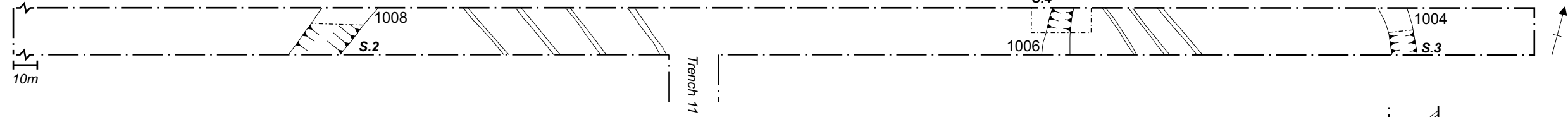
A full photographic record comprising both 35mm black and white negatives and colour transparencies was maintained, supplemented with digital images. The field data was compiled into a site archive with appropriate cross-referencing.



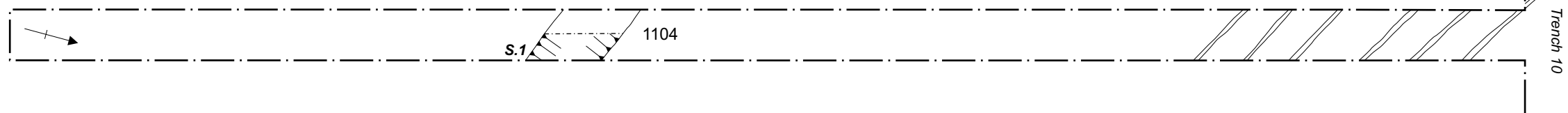
Scale 1:2500

Trench locations and geophysical survey results Fig 2

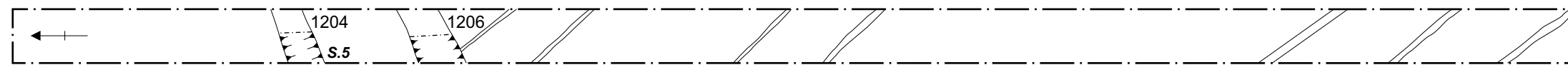
Trench 10



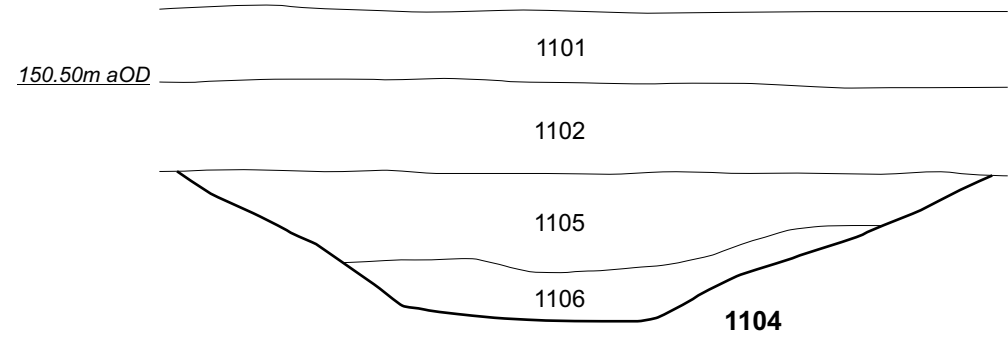
Trench 11



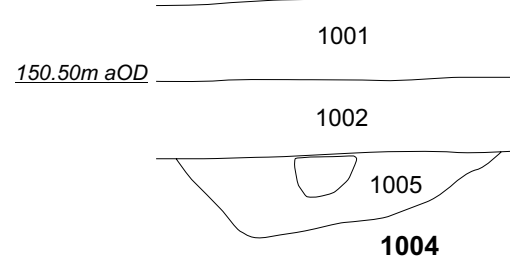
Trench 12



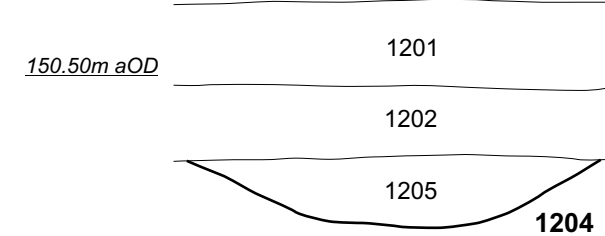
Section 1
SW NE



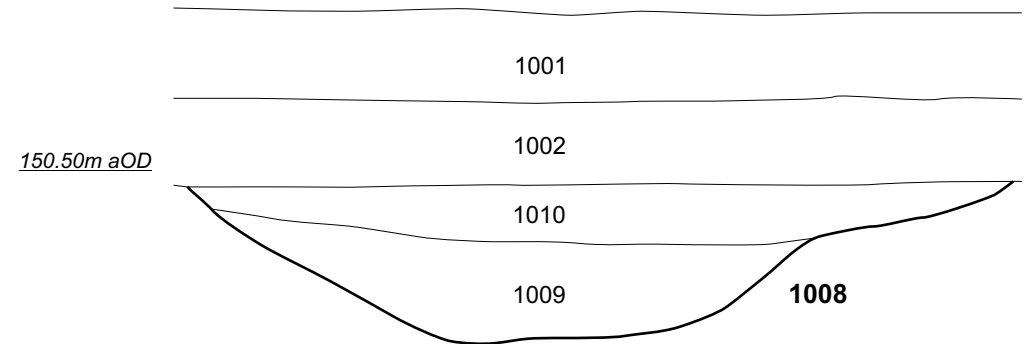
Section 3
SE NW



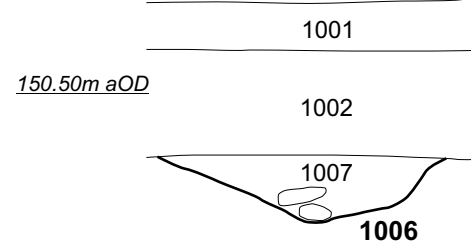
Section 5
SW NE



Section 2
SE NW



Section 4
NW SE



4 THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

4.1 General comments

The sixteen trenches were aligned either near north to south or near east to west. They were positioned to provide a full coverage of the development area, with more detailed coverage where the geophysical survey had identified possible archaeological features (Fig 2).

All trenches contained numerous closely-spaced plough scars, and isolated linear stone field drains were recorded in some trenches. The subsoil surface is evidently being truncated by the current agricultural regime. Trenches 1-9 and trenches 13-16 contained no earlier archaeological features.

4.2 Trenches containing archaeology

Trenches 10, 11 and 12, on the east side of the evaluation area, were the only trenches containing archaeological features (Fig 3).

The three arms of the ditch defining the sub-rectangular enclosure identified in the geophysical survey, were recorded in trenches 10, 11 and 12 (Figs 2 and 3). In trench 10, the northern arm, ditch [1008], was 1.8m wide by 0.5m deep, with a broad flat bottom and heavily eroded sides, indicating that it had been allowed to silt slowly over a prolonged period. The fills (1009) and (1010), were compact light brown sandy clay mixed with stone and flint fragments (Fig 3, Section 2 and Fig 4).



Enclosure ditch [1008], northern arm, looking south Fig 4

In trench 11 the western arm, ditch [1104], was 2.3m wide by 0.55m deep, again with a broad base and heavily eroded sides (Fig 3, Section 1 and Fig 5). The fills (1105) and (1106), were compact light brown to orange sandy clay mixed with stone. The upper fill (1105) produced a residual flint flake.



Enclosure ditch [1104], western arm looking east

Fig 5

Trench 12 lay across the southern arm of the enclosure, which was indistinct on the geophysical survey. The interpretation of the geophysical survey also suggested the possible presence of other ditches in this area.

In trench 12, two ditches were located, running parallel and 3.5m apart, but both were shallow and heavily truncated. Ditch [1206], probably the enclosure ditch, was 1.6m wide, with a broad flat bottom, but was no more than 0.1m deep, with a fill (1207) of compact light brown sandy clay. Ditch [1204], perhaps part of an internal ditch system, was narrower but slightly deeper, at 1.2m wide by 0.20m deep, with a fill (1205) of compact light brown sandy clay mixed with stone fragments (Fig 3, Section 5 and Fig 6). No pottery was retrieved from the fills of these ditches



Ditch [1204], looking west

Fig 6

In trench 10 the western and eastern arms of a ring ditch, 13.4m in diameter, were excavated. Ditch [1004], to the east, was 1.0m wide by 0.20m deep (Fig 3, Section 3 and Fig 7). The fill (1005), was compact light brown sand mixed with small stones and flint, which produced a few small sherds of possible Iron Age pottery. Ditch [1006], to the west, was 1.02m wide by 0.23m deep. The fill (1007), was compact light brown sand mixed with small stones and flint (Fig 3, Section 4, Fig 8). After recording, the fills were excavated to the limits of the trench, but no further datable finds were recovered.



Ring ditch [1004], eastern side, looking south Fig 7



Ring ditch [1006], western side, looking north Fig 8

5 THE FINDS

5.1 Worked flint by Andy Chapman

From the fill (1105) of ditch [1104] there is a single flint flake. It is in a light grey vitreous flint and is hard-hammer struck, with one edge broken and the other showing irregular edge damage. It can be only broadly dated to the Neolithic/early Bronze Age.

5.2 Prehistoric pottery by Andy Chapman

From the fill (1005) of ring ditch [1004] there are three small sherds, weighing 6g, of hand-built pottery. All three sherds are in a slightly sandy fabric, containing very fine quartz inclusions (Leicestershire Fabric Q1: Quartz Sand Temper (local)). The sherds have a grey core and inner surface and a brown outer surface. The fabric and general appearance is consistent with middle Iron Age pottery, but no diagnostic features survive.

6 DISCUSSION

The veracity of the geophysical survey has been proved by the trenching. The ditched enclosure and the internal ring ditch, probably a roundhouse, which are likely to date to the Iron Age, are the only substantial archaeological features present.

Preservation is poor, with the subsoil heavily truncated, particularly along the southern arm of the enclosure where only the very base of the enclosure ditch survives. The enclosure also continues to the east, so its full extent is unknown, and the focus of occupation may have lain further to the east, an area already under housing. Given the poor preservation, with the major features heavily truncated, it is likely that any shallower features, such as gullies and postholes have been lost, leaving little or no definition of the use of the internal space. The recovery of only a few small sherds of pottery from the excavation of part of the internal ring ditch on its eastern side, which would have lain quite near the expected easterly entrance for a typical roundhouse, might also suggest that the material culture of the site will be similarly poorly preserved.

While the site probably provides another example of a typical small middle Iron Age farmstead, containing a single major roundhouse, even this is uncertain, as there is no prospect of recovering the full plan. Without any shallower features, there also seems little prospect of determining other aspects of enclosure usage and organisation. This site therefore has very limited potential to contribute to any of the regional research objectives for the Iron Age (Willis 2006).

The possible features targeted by trenches 3 and 6 turned out to be a field drain, plough furrows and changes in the character of the natural.

The lack of residual artefacts from across the evaluation area would indicate that no major occupation has accrued on the area. However, with the evidence for occupation of the surrounding area during the Iron Age and Roman period, and the recovery of artefacts from previous fieldwalking on the site, the possibility of archaeological features outside of the evaluation area must remain.

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APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT LIST

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
1	40m x 2m NE-SW	441637/313045	147m aOD	0.30m, 146.70m aOD
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
101	Topsoil	Mid red-brown sandy loam	0.22-0.27m thick	---
102	Subsoil	Orange-brown silty sand clay, pebble inclusions	0.04-0.09m thick	---
103	Natural	Orange sand, sandstone, pebbles		N/A

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
2	40m x 2m NE-SW	441599/312970	149m aOD	0.30m, 148.70m aOD
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
201	Topsoil	Mid red-brown sandy loam	0.19-0.24m thick	---
202	Subsoil	Orange-brown sand clay	0.05-0.14m thick	---
203	Natural	Orange sand, pebbles, flint inclusions	---	N/A

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
3	40m x 2m NW-SE	441665/312991	148m aOD	0.34m, 147.66m aOD
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
301	Topsoil	Mid red-brown sandy loam	0.20-0.25m thick	---
302	Subsoil	Orange-brown sand clay	0.04-0.11m thick	---
303	Natural	Orange sand, pebbles	---	N/A

HUGGLESCOTE, LEICESTERSHIRE

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
4	40m x 2m NE-SW	441735/313029	148m aOD	0.40m, 147.60m aOD
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
401	Topsoil	Mid brown sandy loam	0.25-0.28m thick	---
402	Subsoil	Orange-brown sand clay	0.05-0.13m thick	---
403	Natural	Orange sand, pebbles	---	N/A

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
5	60m x 2m NW-SE	441714/312924	150m aOD	0.43m, 149.57m aOD
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
501	Topsoil	Mid-brown sandy loam	0.23-0.30m thick	---
502	Subsoil	Orange brown sand clay	0.13-0.18m thick	---
503	Natural	Orange sand pebbles	---	N/A

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
6	60m x 2m NE-SW	441693/312880	149m aOD	0.41m, 148.59m aOD
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
601	Topsoil	Mid brown sandy loam	0.23-0.29m thick	---
602	Subsoil	Orange-brown sand clay	0.10-0.19m thick	---
603	Natural	Orange sand, stone inclusions	---	N/A

HUGGLESCOTE, LEICESTERSHIRE

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
7	60m x 2m NW-SE	441742/312860	150m aOD	0.40m, 149.60m aOD
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
701	Topsoil	Mid brown sandy loam	0.16-0.30m thick	---
702	Subsoil	Orange brown sand clay	0.12-0.22m thick	---
703	Natural	Orange sand, stone inclusions	---	N/A

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
8	60m x 2m NE-SW	441800/312926	150m aOD	0.48m, 149.52m aOD
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
801	Topsoil	Mid-brown sandy loam	0.21-0.25m thick	---
802	Subsoil	Orange-brown sand clay	0.12-0.18m thick	---
803	Natural	Orange sand with stone inclusions	---	N/A

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
9	60m x 2m NE-SW	441758/312792	150m aOD	0.40m, 149.60m aOD
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
901	Topsoil	Mid brown sandy loam	0.16-0.29m thick	---
902	Subsoil	Orange brown sandy clay	0.09-0.18m thick	---
903	Natural	Orange sand with stone inclusions	---	N/A

HUGGLESCOTE, LEICESTERSHIRE

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
10	75m x 2m NW-SE	441835/312858	150m aOD	0.44m, 149.56m aOD
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
1001	Topsoil	Mid-brown sandy loam	0.25-0.28m thick	---
1002	Subsoil	Orang- brown sandy clay	0.11-0.18m thick	---
1003	Natural	Orange sand with stone inclusions	---	N/A
1004	Cut of ring ditch	North to south aligned, moderate sloping sides, narrow flat base	1.0m wide and 0.20m deep	N/A
1005	Fill of Ditch [1004]	Compact light brown sand, small stones and flint	0.20m deep	IA pottery. Sample 2
1006	Cut of ring ditch	North-East to South-West Moderate steep sloping sides, narrow flat base	1.1m wide 0.23m deep	N/A
1007	Fill of ditch [1006]	Compact light brown sand, small stones and flint	0.23m deep	---
1008	Cut of enclosure ditch	North to South Steep sloping sides, flat base	1.8m wide 0.52m deep	N/A
1009	Fill of ditch [1008]	Compact light brown sandy clay, stone and flint fragments	0.52m deep	---
1010	Fill of ditch [1008]	Compact orange sand and stone	0.15m deep	---

HUGGLESCOTE, LEICESTERSHIRE

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
11	60m x 2m NE-SW	441836/312825	150m aOD	0.40m, 149.60m aOD
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
1101	Topsoil	Mid-brown sandy loam	0.19-0.28m thick	---
1102	Subsoil	Orange-brown sandy clay	0.12-0.19m thick	---
1103	Natural	Orange sand with stone inclusions	---	N/A
1104	Cut of enclosure ditch	North-West to South-East Steep sloping sides, narrow flat base	2.3m wide 0.55m deep	N/A
1105	Fill of ditch [1104]	Compact light brown sandy clay, stone and flint fragments	0.32m deep	Sample 1. Flint flake
1106	Fill of ditch [1104]	Compact orange sand and stone	0.16m deep	---

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
12	60m x 2m NE-SW	441870/312801	150m aOD	0.37m, 149.63m aOD
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
1201	Topsoil	Mid-brown sandy loam	0.12-0.24m thick	---
1202	Subsoil	Orange-brown sandy clay	0.13-0.19m thick	---
1203	Natural	Orange sand with stone inclusions	---	---
1204	Ditch	East to West, gradually sloping sides, flat base	1.2m wide 0.20m deep	N/A
1205	Fill of Ditch [1204]	Compact light brown sandy clay, stone fragments	0.20m deep	---
1206	Ditch	East to West Flat base	1.6m wide 0.1m deep	N/A
1207	Fill of Ditch [1206]	Compact light brown sandy clay, stone fragments	0.10m deep	---

HUGGLESCOTE, LEICESTERSHIRE

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
13	60m x 2m SE-NW	441817/312742	150m aOD	0.45m, 149.55m aOD
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
1301	Topsoil	Mid-brown sandy loam	0.20-0.35m thick	---
1302	Subsoil	Orange brown sandy clay	0.04m-0.20m thick	---
1303	Natural	Orange sand with stone inclusions	---	N/A

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
14	60m x 2m NE-SW	441802/312674	149m aOD	0.50m, 148.50m aOD
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
1401	Topsoil	Mid-brown sandy loam	0.30-0.41m thick	---
1402	Subsoil	Orange brown sandy clay	0.08-0.20m thick	---
1403	Natural	Orange sand with stone inclusions	---	N/A

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
15	60m x 2m N-S	441876/312691	149m aOD	0.42m, 148.58m aOD
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
1501	Topsoil	Mid-brown sandy loam	0.25-0.30m thick	---
1502	Subsoil	Orange brown sandy clay	0.06-0.15m thick	---
1503	Natural	Orange sand with stone inclusions	---	N/A

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
16	60m x 2m NW-SE	441926/312683	148m aOD	0.43m, 147.57m aOD
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
1601	Topsoil	Mid-brown sandy loam	0.23-0.32m thick	---
1602	Subsoil	Orange brown sandy clay	0.07-0.13m	---
1603	Natural	Orange sand with stone inclusions	---	N/A



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