

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT:**  
**TRIAL TRENCHING ON LAND OFF BURTON STREET,**  
**MELTON MOWBRAY, LEICESTERSHIRE**

Planning Reference: 09/00860/FUL  
NGR: SK 7531 1887  
AAL Site Code: MEMO 10  
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Report prepared for EC Harris LLP  
On behalf of Melton Borough Council

By  
Allen Archaeology Limited  
Report Number 2010038

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The  
Authority on  
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Services

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## Document Control

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## Summary

- Allen Archaeology Limited was commissioned to undertake an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching on land off Burton Street, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire.
- The site is situated to the south of the historic core of the medieval town. Previous evaluations in the area have exposed evidence for Late Saxon to medieval buildings, pits and agricultural enclosures. The Melton Canal was excavated through the development area in 1797 and backfilled in 1877.
- Three trenches were excavated in the development area, two of which were 20m long and one was 15m long.
- Trench 1 towards the west side of the site exposed a single undated linear boundary feature and a very large probable quarry pit of late 18<sup>th</sup> century date, possibly associated with the construction of the nearby Melton Canal.
- Trenches 2 and 3 exposed a sequence of ditches running north – south parallel to Burton Street, turning westwards at the south end of Trench 3 to continue along the line of Trench 2. Two sherds of 13<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> century pottery represent the only dating evidence from the ditches, which were sealed by a probable flood deposit, and a build up of soil interpreted as upcast from the excavation of the adjacent Melton Canal.

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 Allen Archaeology Limited (hereafter AAL) were commissioned by EC Harris LLP, on behalf of Melton Borough Council to carry out an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching on land off Burton Street in Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire, in advance of the construction of new council offices.
- 1.2 The excavating, recording and reporting conforms to current national guidelines, as set out in the Institute for Archaeologists '*Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluations*' (IfA 1994, revised 2001 and 2008), and the English Heritage documents '*Management of Archaeological Projects*' (English Heritage 1991) and '*Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment*' (English Heritage 2006). All appropriate English Heritage guidance on archaeological practice was also followed ([www.helm.org/server/show/nav.7740](http://www.helm.org/server/show/nav.7740)), along with a specification for the works prepared by this company (AAL 2010).
- 1.3 The documentary and physical archive will be submitted to Leicestershire County Council Museums Service within twelve months of the completion of this report, and stored under the accession number X.A92.2010.

## **2.0 Site Location and Description**

- 2.1 Melton Mowbray is located in the administrative district of Melton Borough Council, approximately 22km north-east of central Leicester, The proposed development is situated in the core of the settlement, immediately to the west of Burton Road, and centres on NGR SK 7531 1887.
- 2.2 The local geology comprises a superficial geology of alluvial clay, silt, sand and gravel, overlying a solid geology of Blue Lias Formation mudstone.  
(<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/opengeoscience/home.html?Accordion1=1#maps>)

## **3.0 Planning Background**

- 3.0 A planning application was submitted in December 2009 for the erection of new council offices and Civic Hall on land off Burton Road, and alterations to the Station approach road and Mucky Lane (Planning Application Reference 09/00860/FUL). The application was granted in March 2010, subject to conditions, including a programme of archaeological trial trenching and reporting to characterise the nature of the archaeological resource in the proposed development area, as it was recognised that the site may include archaeological remains (heritage assets) of significance.
- 3.1 The approach is consistent with Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS5). This planning policy supersedes PPG16 (Planning Policy Guidance Note 16), which was in place when the planning condition was attached.

## **4.0 Archaeological and Historical Background**

- 4.1 An archaeological desk-based assessment was carried out in advance of the submission of the current planning application (Francis 2008), which assessed all the current available evidence concerning the archaeological potential of the site. The information presented below is a summary of this data.
- 4.2 Prehistoric activity in the vicinity of the site is limited, although recent investigations have identified Bronze Age and Iron Age settlement evidence c.400m to the west of the site, and a single sherd of Bronze Age pottery was recovered during trial trenching of the proposed development area in 2005 (Clay 2005).
- 4.3 Romano-British activity is similarly sparse, although possible settlement evidence has been recorded c.350m to the north of the site.
- 4.4 Melton Mowbray appeared to have developed as a regionally important settlement in the Anglo-Saxon period, with a mint and a market place known to have existed prior to the Domesday Survey of 1086. The place name is Old English in origin, meaning 'the middle farmstead/settlement'. Over 70 Anglo-Saxon burials were exposed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century near Beck Mill, c.500m to the north. A ditch containing 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> century material was recorded during the 2005 evaluation of the site (Clay 2005), while further evidence of Saxo-Norman activity has been recorded c.400m to the west.
- 4.5 At the time of the Domesday Survey, Melton was a holding of Geoffrey de la Guerche, and included two priests, a market and two mills. From the 12<sup>th</sup> century onwards it was in the ownership of the Mowbray family, and the suffix became common from the 13<sup>th</sup> century onwards, during which time the town prospered as a market centre and as a centre for the wool trade. Previous evaluations of the proposed development area, in 1989 and 2005, exposed significant evidence for medieval settlement and agriculture. Historic map evidence suggests that the area was open land on the fringes of settlement throughout the medieval period, and into the post-medieval periods.
- 4.6 In 1797, a stretch of the River Eye was canalized to form the Melton Mowbray Navigation, which passed through the southern portion of the proposed development area, running from a canal basin on the opposite side of Burton Street towards Syston. The canal was closed and infilled in 1877, following stiff competition from the railway. The town expanded rapidly in this period, and in 1904 Burton Street was shifted eastwards slightly from its medieval course.

## **5.0 Methodology**

- 5.1 The fieldwork was carried out by a team of experienced field archaeologists over a period of three days; Wednesday June 2<sup>nd</sup> to Friday June 4<sup>th</sup> 2010. Three trenches were excavated in the proposed development area, two of which measured 20m in length and one of which was 15m in length. The locations of the trenches are shown in Figure 2.
- 5.2 The machine excavation of the trenches was carried out using a 13 ton tracked excavator fitted with a 1.25m wide toothless ditching bucket, and was monitored under close archaeological supervision. The topsoil was removed in spits not exceeding 0.1m in depth until natural clay was identified, revealing several cut features. All further excavation was then carried out by hand.

- 5.3 Each deposit, layer or cut was allocated a unique identifier (context number), and accorded a written description, a summary of these are included in Appendix 5. Three digit numbers within square brackets reflect cut features (e.g. ditch [205]), and a full written record of all deposits encountered was made on standard Allen Archaeology Limited context recording sheets. Archaeological deposits were drawn to scale, in plan and section at appropriate scales, with Ordnance Datum heights being displayed on each class of drawing. Photography formed an integral part of the recording strategy. All photographs incorporated scales, an identification board and directional arrow, and a selection of these images has been included in Appendix 1.
- 5.4 Following machine excavation of the trenches, a site visit was carried out by Mr James Rackham, of the Environmental Archaeology Consultancy, to provide specialist advice on the deposits identified, and advice on soil sampling strategies.

## 6.0 Results (Figures 3 – 5)

### 6.1 Trench 1 (Figure 3)

- 6.1.1 The uppermost deposit was a 0.1m thick demolition deposit of crushed brick, concrete and stone rubble, 110, overlying a 0.4m thick brown sandy clay topsoil, 100. In the northern half of the trench, this sealed a brown clayey sand, 111, which was 0.55m thick at the north end of the trench, becoming progressively shallower to the south.
- 6.1.2 At the north end of the trench, layer 111 sealed an east – west aligned linear feature, [107]. The south side of the feature was moderately shallow, and the north side was beyond the limit of excavation. The feature contained a single undated fill of very dark grey sandy clay, 108, and was cut into the natural river terrace gravels, 109.
- 6.1.3 The majority of the trench was occupied by a single very large cut feature, [112]. A machine excavated slot exposed a sequence of deposits infilling the feature to a depth of approximately 2.3m below the existing ground surface. The interpretation of the feature was not clear so a site visit by palaeoenvironmental specialist Mr James Rackham was arranged, to advise on an appropriate method to evaluate the feature. His recommendations were to carry out a number of auger samples to determine the profile of the feature, and further machining of the slot northwards in an attempt to expose its edge. It was considered that the feature was unlikely to have any significant palaeoenvironmental potential, although a soil sample was taken to test this hypothesis nevertheless.
- 6.1.4 The machine excavation of the feature exposed a near vertical western edge, aligned broadly west-north-west to east-south-east, while the augering suggested that it was approximately 1.96m deep with a wide flat base, and contained a sequence of fills. At the base of the sequence was a 0.05m thick lens of black organic silt, 113, which sealed a very dark grey slightly humic silt, 106, measuring 0.5m to 0.6m thick. A palaeoenvironmental sample from this deposit contained a range of poorly preserved de-watered seeds of grassland herbs and weeds, as well as occasional charcoal, coal and indeterminate charred cereal grains, indicative of a periodically wet environment at the base of the feature. Two sherds of pottery were recovered from the soil samples and submitted for specialist analysis. The sherds included one very small abraded fragment of medieval Stanion/Lyveden Ware, and a sherd of Staffordshire Salt-Glazed Ware, dating to the mid to late 18<sup>th</sup> century. This deposit was sealed by a sequence of dark grey and dark brown silts, 103, 104 and 105.



- 6.1.5 Layer 103 was sealed by 102, a 0.7m thick mixed deposit of grey/brown and yellow/brown silty clay with lenses of black organic silt, possibly representing a dumped deposit infilling the feature. A single small fragment of 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> century bottle glass was recovered from this layer. This in turn was sealed by 101, a c.0.45m thick layer of redeposited natural gravels, partially sealed by layer 111 towards the north edge of feature [112].

## **6.2 Trench 2 (Figure 4)**

- 6.2.1 The uppermost deposit was a c.0.5m thick layer of crushed brick, concrete stone and clinker demolition material, 200, which in turn sealed a brown sandy clay layer with frequent sub-angular and sub-rounded stone, 201.
- 6.2.2 Layer 201 sealed a steep sided linear cut, [205], running east – west along the length of the trench, with the south side of the feature beyond the limit of excavation. A section excavated through the feature at the west end of the trench exposed a primary fill of grey silt, 206, containing fragments of large mammal size, horse and dog bones. This was sealed by a brownish grey sandy clay, 207, containing two large mammal size rib bone fragments. A soil sample from 207 contained very occasional charred cereal grains and charcoal and coal fragments. A slot through the feature further to the west exposed only a brownish grey sandy clay fill, 208. A soil sample from this deposit was devoid of charred seeds, producing only charcoal, coal and very small quantities of hammerscale.
- 6.2.3 At the east end of the trench, ditch [205] was abutted by a curvilinear feature, [203], turning from an east – west to a north – south alignment and continue along the line of Trench 3 to the north (see section 6.3 below). The excavated section was approximately 0.2m deep and 0.6m wide with moderately steep sides and a flat base. It contained a single fill of brownish grey sandy clay, containing two sherds of Stanion/Lyveden Ware of 13<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> century date. The relationship between ditches [203] and [205] could not be determined due to the similarity of the fills.
- 6.2.4 Both ditches were cut through the natural river terrace gravels; an orange/brown clayey sand with frequent poorly sorted sub-rounded and sub-angular stones, 202.

## **6.3 Trench 3 (Figure 5)**

- 6.3.1 The most recent layer in Trench 3 was a modern demolition horizon of crushed brick, stone, concrete and clinker, 300, approximately 0.4m thick. It sealed 301, a c.0.5m thick brown silty clay, with moderate sub-rounded and sub-angular stones, below which was a probable flood horizon of greyish brown silty clay, 305.
- 6.3.2 A series of linear features were recorded running broadly north – south along the length of the trench, with a hand-excavated slot at the north end of the trench identifying three cuts. The earliest of these, [308], was exposed at the west side of the trench, and only part of the moderately steep east edge of the feature was exposed. It contained a single undated fill of brownish grey silty clay, 309, and was cut to the west by ditch [306]. The west edge of the feature was steep sided, and it had a concave base. It contained a single natural silting deposit of brown silty clay, 307, and was in turn cut to the east by ditch [303]. The feature was steep sided with a flat base, and its east edge was beyond the limit of excavation. It survived to a maximum



depth of approximately 0.65m and also contained a single undated natural silting deposit, 304, a grey/brown silty clay with occasional small stones. A soil sample from this deposit contained charred oat and other indeterminate cereal grains and legume seeds. A hand-excavated slot through the feature further to the south exposed the full width of the ditch at 0.68m, with a more shallow profile than in the slot to the north.

- 6.3.3 Towards the south end of the trench, ditch [303] turned from a north – south to an east – west alignment in Trench 2, where it is represented by ditch cut [203].
- 6.3.4 All the features exposed were cut through the natural river terrace gravels, 302, comprising an orange/brown clayey sand with frequent poorly sorted sub-rounded and sub-angular stones.

## 7.0 Discussion and Conclusion

- 7.1 The trial trenching has identified a number of archaeological features and deposits of local significance. In Trench 1, a very large steep sided feature was recorded. As it extended beyond the limit of excavation, the exact form and function of the feature was not clear, so AAL commissioned a site visit by palaeoenvironmental specialist Mr James Rackham to assist in its interpretation. Mr Rackham's inspection of the deposits suggested three possibilities for a feature of this size; a medieval town ditch, a natural palaeochannel, or a quarry pit for gravel extraction.
- 7.2 Augering of the base of the feature suggested that it had a wide flat base that extended beyond the south end of the trench. This profile was not appropriate for a town ditch, which would be expected to have a U-shaped or V-shaped profile. There is also no documentary or cartographic evidence for a defensive ditch around Melton. A palaeochannel also seemed unlikely as the deposits examined by Mr Rackham were not suggestive of a natural feature. A palaeochannel would be expected to have a wide, shallow profile rather than a very steep edge, and should contain a primary silting deposit of mixed organic silts and gravels disturbed from the natural geology by the action of water flow, with clean river muds being deposited along the sides of the channel (James Rackham *pers. comm.*), none of which were identified in the current feature.
- 7.3 The most likely option therefore is that the feature represents a quarry pit excavated to extract gravel and the large river cobbles that are common in the local geology. Key dating evidence for the feature was recovered from layer 106, which contained a small residual medieval sherd, as well as a fragment of Staffordshire Salt-Glazed pottery. The decoration on this sherd was of a type dating to c.1765 to 1775, and the wear on the sherd suggested it was not primary discard within the feature. The dating suggests that the feature could be associated with the construction of the nearby Melton Canal, built between 1791 and 1795, and perhaps excavated to provide additional sand, gravel, or cobbles for the construction works.
- 7.4 The feature was sealed by a dump of redeposited natural, possibly representing the levelling of the area in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as the urban area of the town expanded.
- 7.5 At the north end of the trench part of an undated linear feature was exposed. The interpretive potential of this feature is very limited, although it may represent a boundary feature shown on the 1843 Tithe Map of Melton Mowbray (Francis 2008, Figure 9). Trench 2 of the 2005 evaluation (Clay 2005), to the west of the current Trench 1, exposed a sequence of intercutting ditches and a Victorian culvert also broadly following this line, reflecting a boundary that appears to have been maintained over a considerable period of time.

- 7.6 A complex of linear features was exposed in Trenches 2 and 3, running north – south along Trench 3 and then turning westwards along the line of Trench 2. A sequence of three intercutting ditches was recorded at the north end of Trench 3, likely to reflect a gradually migrating sequence of roadside ditches running parallel to Burton Street to the east. Towards the south end of the trench, only the latest phase of this boundary was evident, with the two earlier cuts continuing beyond the northern limit of excavation. At the south end of the trench, ditch [303] turned westwards into Trench 2 (cut [203]), where it abutted another ditch running east – west, [205]. The only dating evidence from these ditches comprised two small sherds of 13<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> century pottery from [203].
- 7.7 Trench 4 of the 2005 evaluation (Clay 2005), located at the north end of the existing car park also exposed a sequence of three intercutting ditches running parallel to Burton Street. The dating evidence recovered from these features comprised pottery of 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> century date, and had been cut by later Saxo-Norman and medieval features, evidencing the gradual southwards encroachment of the town and migration or loss of the boundary. It appears however that in the area of the current site, the ditches still formed a viable boundary, and small quantities of cultural material of medieval date were being incorporated into the fills.
- 7.8 The scarcity of finds from these features seems to suggest that the site was beyond the settled area of the town during this period however. It is notable that the area is approximately 2.6m lower than the ground at St. Mary's Church to the north, and lies within the floodplain of the River Eye, which follows a meandering course through the town to the west and south of the site. This location is likely to have been marshy ground subject to periodic flooding (James Rackham *pers. comm.*), and would have been suitable for little more than seasonal pasture.
- 7.9 In support of this theory, a possible flood deposit was identified sealing the ditches in Trench 3, with similar layers identified in the adjacent 1989 and 2005 trial trenching. It was noted during machine excavation of Trench 2 that the ground surface rose steadily to the west, and therefore the alluvial layer was restricted to the lower ground close to the Burton Street frontage. The previous evaluations in 1989 and 2005 had identified possible agricultural boundary features and agricultural buildings of medieval date in the existing car parking areas to the west and north-west of the current site, indicating that the flooding was more manageable in this area.
- 7.10 The flood deposit and ditches exposed in Trenches 2 and 3 were sealed by a deep deposit of stony soil, represented by layers 201 and 301. The formation processes behind this deposit are not clear, although it seems likely that it represents upcast from the digging of the Melton Canal in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, which ran across the proposed development area approximately 40m to the south of Trench 2.
- 7.11 The evaluation has demonstrated the presence of archaeological features in all three trenches; with the depth of deposits sealing these features varying between 0.65m in Trench 1, to c.0.8m in Trench 2 and 1.2m of deposits in Trench 3.

## **8.0 Effectiveness of Methodology**

- 8.1 The archaeological evaluation methodology was appropriate to the development, and has identified an archaeological potential of moderate local significance, as well as illustrating the depth of the deposits sealing features of archaeological interest across the proposed development area.

## **9.0 Acknowledgements**

- 9.1 Allen Archaeology Limited would like to EC Harris LLP, on behalf of Melton Borough Council for this commission. Thanks also go to the site contractors, CMEC Demolition, for their co-operation during the fieldwork.

## **10.0 References**

Clay, C., 2005, *Archaeological Evaluation and Building Survey Report: land off Burton Street, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire*, Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln), unpublished client report

EH, 1991, *Management of Archaeological Projects*. English Heritage. Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England. London

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Francis, K., 2008, *Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment: Land at Burton Street, Melton Mowbray*, Cgms Consulting, unpublished planning document

IfA., 1994 (revised 2001 and 2008), *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations*, Institute for Archaeologists, Reading

## Appendix 1: Colour Plates



**Plate 1:** General view of the site, looking north-east



**Plate 2:** Trench 2 pre-excitation, looking west



**Plate 3:** Section through possible quarry pit [112], looking west





**Plate 4:** Section through ditches [203] and [205], west end of Trench 2, looking south-west



**Plate 5:** Section through roadside ditch [303], Trench 3, looking south



**Plate 6:** Section through roadside ditches [303], [306] and [308], north end of Trench 3, looking south

## Appendix 2: Post-Roman Pottery Assessment

By Jane Young

### Introduction

In total, four sherds of pottery representing three vessels were submitted for examination. The pottery recovered ranges in date from the medieval to early modern periods. The assemblage was quantified by three measures: number of sherds, weight and vessel count within each context. Fabric identification of some of the pottery was undertaken by x20 binocular microscope. Reference has been made to the Leicestershire Pottery Type Series held at Leicester University. The ceramic data was entered on an Access database using Lincolnshire (Young *et al.*) fabric codenames with a concordance with Leicestershire codenames (see Table 1). Recording of the assemblage was in accordance with the guidelines laid out in Slowikowski, *et al.* (2001).

### Condition

The pottery is mostly in a slightly abraded to abraded condition with sherd size mainly falling into the small size range (between 1 and 12 grams). The single shell-tempered sherd has leached surfaces. Only one vessel is represented by more than one sherd and there were no cross-context joining vessels.

### Overall Chronology and Source

A range of three different, identifiable post-Roman pottery types were identified, the type and general date range for these fabrics are shown in Table 1. The pottery ranges in date from the medieval to early modern periods.

**Table 1:** Pottery codenames and date ranges with total quantities by sherd and vessel count

| Lincolnshire Codename | Leicestershire Fabric | Full name                                    | Earliest date | Latest date | Total sherds | Total vessels | Weight In grams |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|--|---------------|-------------|--------------|---------------|-----------------|
| SWSG                  | SW4                   | Staffordshire White Salt-glazed stoneware    | 1765          | 1775        | 1            | 1             | 10              |
| STANLY                | LY1                   | Stanion/Lyveden ware – oolitic fabric        | 1180          | 1400        | 2            | 1             | 21              |
| STANLY                | LY2                   | Stanion/Lyveden ware – shell & quartz fabric | 1100          | 1400        | 1            | 1             | 1               |

### Medieval

Two sherds from a single Oolitic-tempered Stanion/Lyveden-type jug were recovered from the fill of a ditch (context 204). This vessel can only be dated to between the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries. The jug is glazed with a thin reduced light green glaze. A very small sherd extracted from the samples, has tentatively been identified as a Stanion/Lyveden shelly-sandy fabric. The sherd, which was recovered from the primary fill of a large pit (context 106) has leached surfaces and probably dates to between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries.

### Early modern

A single vessel found in context 106 is of early modern date. The sherd is from a small Staffordshire White Salt-glazed ware jug, or mug and has poorly infilled scratch-blue decoration. This debased decoration usually dates to between 1765 and 1775.

## Summary and Recommendations

This is a very small group of medieval to early modern pottery, whose interpretation is somewhat limited by its size. None of the medieval sherds are in a condition suggestive of primary deposition and they could have been deposited at any time after the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The Staffordshire White Salt-glazed ware sherd is also in a worn condition and is unlikely to represent primary discard.

No vessels are suitable for drawing or reconstruction. The assemblage should be kept for future study.

## References

Blinkhorn, P. 1996, *Northamptonshire Anglo-Saxon and Medieval County Ceramic Type Series*, unpublished report

Slowikowski, A. Nenck, B. and Pearce, J. 2001, *Minimum Standards for the Processing, Recording, Analysis and Publication of Post-Roman Ceramics*. Medieval Pottery Research Group, Occasional Paper 2

Young, J, Vince A G and Nailor V 2005 *A Corpus of Anglo-Saxon and Medieval Pottery from Lincoln*, Lincoln Archaeology Studies 7, Oxbow, Oxford

## Pottery Archive

| context | cname  | full name                                 | Leics. code | form type | sherds | vessels | weight | part     | description   | date         |
|---------|--------|---|-------------|-----------|--------|---------|--------|----------|---|--------------|
| 106     | STANLY | Stanion/<br>Lyveden ware                  | LY2         | ?         | 1      | 1       | 1      | base     | leached surfaces; abundant fine quartz & common shell; ? ID | 12th to 14th |
| 106     | SWSG   | Staffordshire White Salt-glazed stoneware | SW4         | small jug | 1      | 1       | 10     | BS       |   | mid 18th     |
| 204     | STANLY | Stanion/<br>Lyveden ware                  | LY1         | jug       | 2      | 1       | 21     | rim & BS | glazed; slightly inturned rim; oolitic fabric               | 13th to 14th |



### Appendix 3: Glass Assessment

*By Rachael Hall*

#### Summary

A single fragment of bottle glass, weighing 3g, was recovered from context 102, and is of probable 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> century date. The fragment does not merit further study and should be discarded.

#### The Catalogue

| Context | Description                          | No. | Weight (g) | Date  |
|---------|--------------------------------------|-----|------------|---|
| 101     | Bottle glass, dark brown, body sherd | 1   | 3          | 18 <sup>th</sup> /19 <sup>th</sup> century? |

## Appendix 4: Animal Bone Assessment

*By Jennifer Wood*

### Introduction

A total of 5 (111g) fragments of animal bone were recovered during archaeological works undertaken by Allen Archaeology Limited. The remains were recovered from a possible medieval ditch [205].

### Results

The remains were generally of a moderate overall condition, averaging grade 3 on the Lyman criteria (1996).

No evidence of butchery, gnawing, pathology or burning was noted on any of the remains.

*Table 1, Summary of Identified Bone*

| Cut | Context | Taxon                         | Element    | Side | Number | Weight | Comments                               |
|-----|---------|-------------------------------|------------|------|--------|--------|--|
| 205 | 206     | Equid ( <i>Horse Family</i> ) | Metapodial | L    | 1      | 39     | Distal condyle. Broken into two pieces |
|     |         | Large Mammal Size             | Rib        | X    | 2      | 54     | Head and neck                          |
|     |         | Dog                           | Mandible   | L    | 1      | 11     | Mainly tooth row                       |
|     | 207     | Large Mammal Size             | Rib        | X    | 2      | 7      | Blade fragments                        |

As can be seen from Table 1, single fragments of Equid and Dog were identified within the assemblage, with fragments only identifiable as large mammal size also present.

The assemblage is too small to provide meaningful information on animal husbandry and utilisation on site.

### References

Lyman, R L, 1996 *Vertebrate Taphonomy*, Cambridge Manuals in Archaeology, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge

## Appendix 5: Palaeoenvironmental Assessment

By Val Fryer

### Introduction and method statement

Excavations at Burton Road, Melton Mowbray, undertaken by Allen Archaeology Limited, recorded a small number of undated and medieval features. Samples for the retrieval of the plant macrofossil assemblages were taken from three ditch/gully fills and from the organic silt fill of a possible quarry pit. Four samples were submitted for assessment.

The samples were processed by manual water flotation/washover and the flots were collected in a 300 micron mesh sieve. The dried flots were scanned under a binocular microscope at magnifications up to x 16 and the plant macrofossils and other remains noted are listed in Table 1. Nomenclature within the table follows Stace (1997). Both charred and de-watered macrofossils were recorded. Modern contaminants including fibrous and woody roots were present throughout.

The non-floating residues were collected in a 1mm mesh sieve and will be sorted when dry. Any artefacts/ecofacts will be retained for further specialist analysis.

### Results

Although all four assemblages were very small (considerably less than 0.1 litres in volume) and sparse, plant macrofossils were present throughout. However, preservation was generally quite poor, with many of the charred grains and seeds being puffed and distorted, probably as a result of combustion at very high temperatures.

Oat (*Avena* sp.) and wheat (*Triticum* sp.) grains were recorded along with a number of other cereals, which were too poorly preserved for close identification. Charred seeds of indeterminate small legumes (Fabaceae) were noted within samples 1 and 3 (ditches [303] and [205] respectively). The assemblage from sample 5, which was taken from possible quarry pit [112], contained de-watered seeds of a limited range of grassland herbs and weeds including dead-nettle (*Lamium* sp.), buttercups (*Ranunculus* sp.), dock (*Rumex* sp.) and stinging nettles (*Urtica dioica*). As most of these specimens were poorly preserved, it was considered most likely that all were contemporary with the feature, and not modern contaminants. A single small fragment of charred hazel (*Corylus avellana*) nutshell was recovered from the assemblage from sample 1. Occasional charcoal/charred wood fragments were present throughout.

Other remains were relatively scarce, although small pieces of coal were present or common within samples 3, 4 (ditch [205]) and 5. The black porous and tarry residues, which were noted within all four assemblages, were almost certainly derived from either the combustion of organic remains at very high temperatures, or the burning of coal. Bone fragments, including some burnt pieces, were present within the assemblage from sample 4.

## Conclusions and recommendations for further work

In summary, the few remains recorded are almost certainly derived from scattered refuse, possibly of domestic origin, much of which was probably accidentally included within the feature fills. The de-watered assemblage from sample 5 appears to be indicative of a marginal grassland habitat, which was possibly poorly maintained.

As none of the assemblages contain a sufficient density of material for quantification (i.e. 100+ specimens), no further analysis is recommended.

## Reference

Stace, C., 1997                      *New Flora of the British Isles*. Second edition. Cambridge University Press

## Key to Table

x = 1 – 10 specimens    xx = 11 – 50 specimens    xxx = 51 – 100 specimens    cf = compare    b = burnt  
w = de-watered

Table 1: Environmental sample results

| Sample No.                      | 1              | 3              | 4              | 5              |
|---------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Context No.                     | 304            | 207            | 208            | 106            |
| Feature No.                     | 303            | 205            | 205            | 112            |
| Feature type                    | Ditch          | Ditch          | Ditch          | Pit            |
| Trench                          | 3              | 2              | 2              | 1              |
| <b>Cereals</b>                  |                |                |                |                |
| <i>Avena</i> sp. (grains)       | xcf            |                |                |                |
| <i>Triticum</i> sp. (grains)    |                |                |                | xcf            |
| Cereal indet. (grains)          | x              | x              |                | x              |
| <b>Herbs</b>                    |                |                |                |                |
| Fabaceae indet.                 | x              | x              |                | xcf            |
| <i>Lamium</i> sp.               |                |                |                | xw             |
| <i>Polygonum aviculare</i> L.   |                |                |                | xw             |
| <i>Ranunculus</i> sp.           |                |                |                | xxw            |
| <i>R. acris/repens/bulbosus</i> |                |                |                | xxw            |
| <i>Rumex</i> sp.                |                |                |                | xw             |
| <i>Urtica dioica</i> L.         |                |                |                | xw             |
| <b>Tree/shrub macrofossils</b>  |                |                |                |                |
| <i>Corylus avellana</i> L.      | xcf            |                |                |                |
| <b>Other plant macrofossils</b> |                |                |                |                |
| Charcoal <2mm                   | x              | x              | x              | x              |
| Charcoal >2mm                   |                | x              |                | x              |
| De-watered root/stem            |                |                |                | xxx            |
| Indet,buds                      |                |                |                | xw             |
| Indet.moss                      |                |                |                | xw             |
| <b>Other remains</b>            |                |                |                |                |
| Black porous 'cokey' material   | x              | x              | xx             | x              |
| Black tarry material            |                |                | x              |                |
| Bone                            |                |                | x xb           |                |
| Hammer scale                    |                |                | x              |                |
| Small coal frags.               |                | xx             | xxx            | x              |
| Vitrified material              |                |                | x              |                |
| De-watered arthropod remains    |                |                |                | x              |
| <b>Sample volume (litres)</b>   | <b>16</b>      | <b>16</b>      | <b>14</b>      | <b>10</b>      |
| <b>Volume of flot (litres)</b>  | <b>&lt;0.1</b> | <b>&lt;0.1</b> | <b>&lt;0.1</b> | <b>&lt;0.1</b> |
| <b>% flot sorted</b>            | <b>100%</b>    | <b>100%</b>    | <b>100%</b>    | <b>100%</b>    |

## Appendix 6: Context Summary List

### Trench 1

| Context No. | Type  | Description   | Interpretation                   |
|-------------|-------|---|----------------------------------|
| 100         | Layer | Dark brown sandy clay, occasional small sub-angular stone and brick fragments. Sealed by 110, seals 101 and 111 | Former topsoil                   |
| 101         | Layer | Orange/brown clayey sand, frequent poorly sorted sub-angular and sub-rounded stone. Sealed by 111, seals 102    | Dump of redeposited natural      |
| 102         | Fill  | Mottled grey/brown and yellow/brown silty clay, lenses of black organic silt. Sealed by 101, seals 103          | Upper fill of quarry pit [112]   |
| 103         | Fill  | Brown silty clay, occasional sub-angular stones. Sealed by 102, seals 104                                       | Natural silting of pit [112]     |
| 104         | Fill  | Dark grey slightly organic silty clay. Sealed by 103, seals 105   | Natural silting of pit [112]     |
| 105         | Fill  | Mid brown silty clay. Sealed by 104, seals 106  | Natural silting of pit [112]     |
| 106         | Fill  | Very dark grey humic clayey silt  | Natural silting of pit [112]     |
| 107         | Cut   | One side of E-W aligned linear cut, shallow edge, flat base. Contains 108, cuts 109                             | Undated ditch cut                |
| 108         | Fill  | Very dark grey sandy clay, frequent poorly sorted sub-rounded and sub-angular stones                            | Fill of ditch [107]              |
| 109         | Layer | Orange/brown clayey sand, frequent poorly sorted sub-angular and sub-rounded stone                              | Natural river terrace gravels    |
| 110         | Layer | Compact layer of crushed brick and stone rubble. Seals 100  | Modern demolition deposit        |
| 111         | Layer | Brown clayey sand, occasional small sub-rounded stones. Sealed by 100, seals 101 and 108                        | Former subsoil below topsoil 100 |
| 112         | Cut   | Steep sided WNW – ESE aligned cut. South side extends beyond LOE. Contains 102 – 106 and 113                    | Possible former quarry pit       |
| 113         | Layer | Black humic clayey silt. Sealed by 106  | Primary natural silting of [112] |

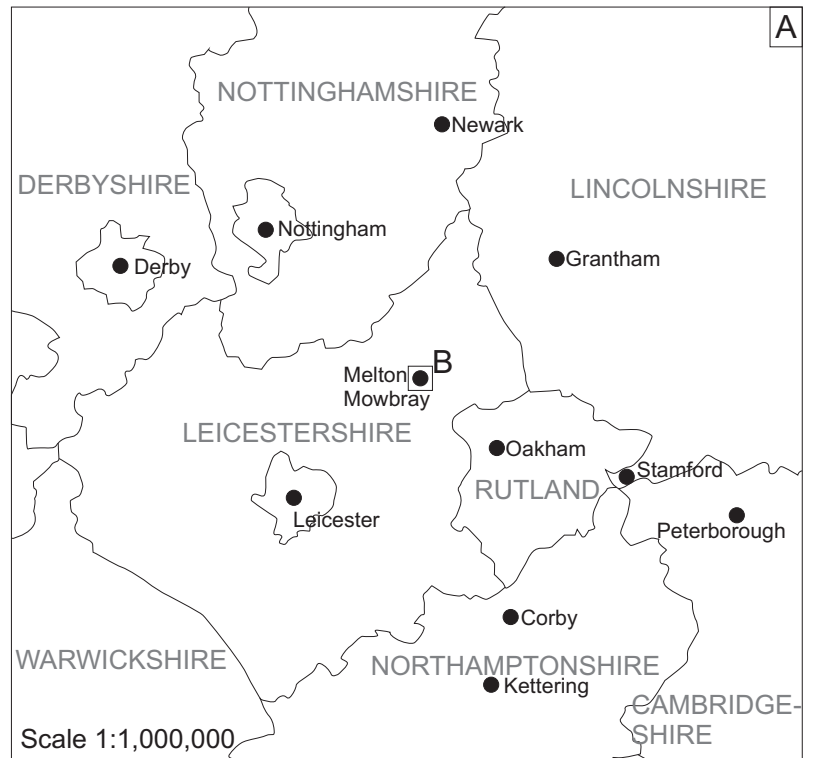
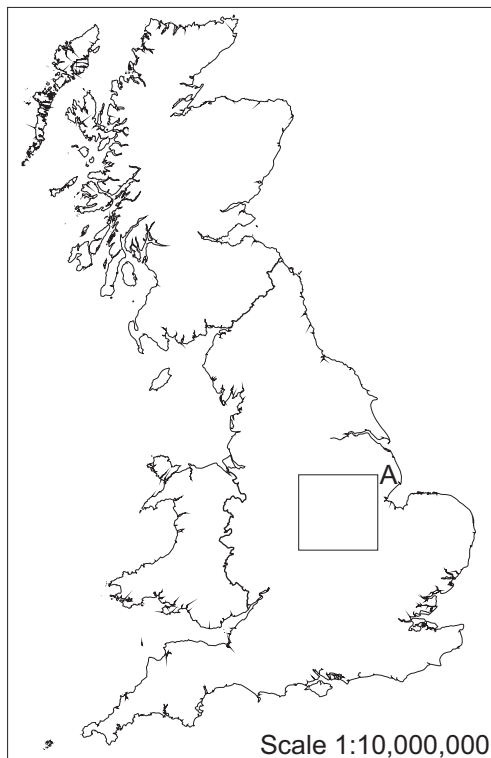
### Trench 2

| Context No. | Type  | Description  | Interpretation   |
|-------------|-------|--|--|
| 200         | Layer | Mixed demolition layer of crushed brick and stone rubble, clinker and coarse grey sand. Seals 201                      | Modern demolition material                                     |
| 201         | Layer | Compact mid to dark brown sandy clay, frequent poorly sorted sub-angular and sub-rounded stone. Seals 204, 207 and 208 | Former soil horizon, sealing ditches                           |
| 202         | Layer | Orange/brown clayey sand, frequent poorly sorted sub-angular and sub-rounded stone                                     | Natural river terrace gravels                                  |
| 203         | Cut   | NE – SW aligned linear with steep sides and flat base. Contains 204. Same as [303]                                     | Curvilinear ditch cut  |
| 204         | Fill  | Mid brownish grey sandy clay, frequent poorly sorted sub-angular and sub-rounded stone                                 | Natural silting of ditch [203]                                 |
| 205         | Cut   | E – W aligned linear feature, moderately steep sides and slightly concave base. Contains 206 and 207                   | Linear ditch cut   |
| 206         | Fill  | Mid grey silt, frequent rounded stones   | Primary silting of ditch [205], eastern section                |
| 207         | Fill  | Brownish grey sandy clay, frequent rounded and sub-angular stones. Seals 206   | Secondary silting of ditch [205], eastern section. Same as 208 |
| 208         | Fill  | Brownish grey sandy clay, frequent rounded and sub-angular stones  | Fill of ditch [205], western section. Same as 207              |

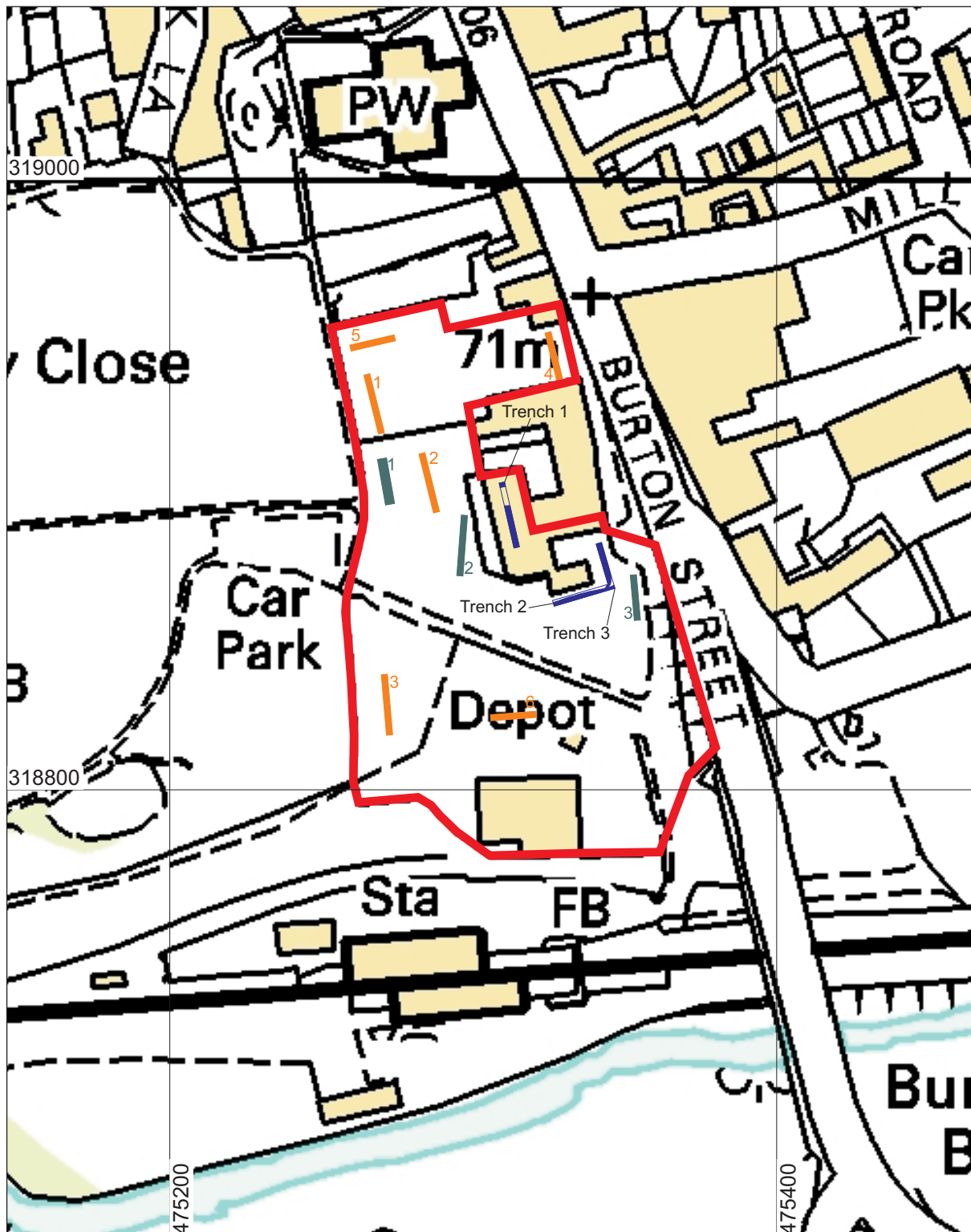
### Trench 3

| Context No. | Type  | Description   | Interpretation   |
|-------------|-------|---|--|
| 300         | Layer | Mixed demolition layer of crushed brick and stone rubble, clinker and coarse grey sand. Seals 301 | Modern demolition material                                 |
| 301         | Layer | Mid to dark brown silty clay, moderately poorly sorted sub-angular and sub-rounded stone          | Former soil horizon below demolition horizon               |
| 302         | Layer | Orange/brown clayey sand, frequent poorly sorted sub-angular and sub-rounded stone                | Natural river terrace gravels                              |
| 303         | Cut   | N – S aligned linear, steep sides and slightly concave base. Contains 304, cuts 307               | Third phase of roadside ditch parallel to Burton Street    |
| 304         | Fill  | Brownish grey silty clay, frequent small stones. Sealed by 305                                    | Natural silting of 304                                     |
| 305         | Layer | Greyish brown silty clay, occasional small stones   | Possible flood deposit sealing ditches                     |
| 306         | Cut   | N – S aligned cut, steep sides and concave base. Contains 307, cuts 309                           | Second phase of roadside ditch parallel with Burton Street |
| 307         | Fill  | Brownish grey silty clay, frequent small stones. Cut by [303]                                     | Natural silting of [306]                                   |
| 308         | Cut   | N – S aligned cut, moderately shallow sides. Extends beyond LOE. Contains 309                     | First phase of roadside ditch parallel with Burton Street  |
| 309         | Fill  | Brownish grey silty clay, frequent small stones. Cut by [306]                                     | Natural silting of [308]                                   |

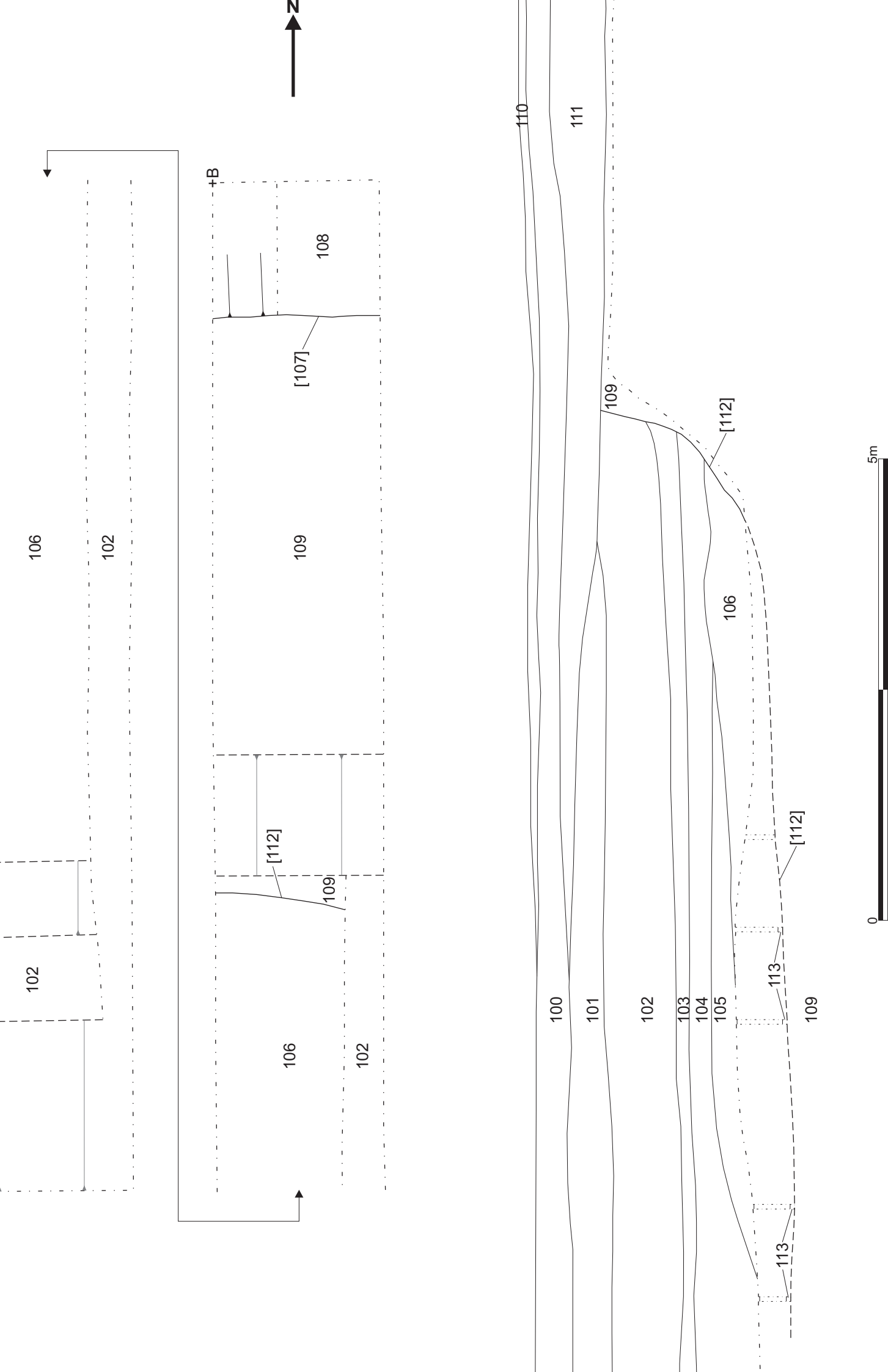




**Figure 1:** Site location at scale 1:25,000, with the site outlined in red.  
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**Figure 2:** Trench location plan at scale 1:2000, with the development area outlined in red. Trenches and archaeological features in blue. 1989 trenches in green, 2005 trenches in orange



Scale 1:50

