

**Land south of Abbey Lane, Aslockton, Rushcliffe,  
Nottinghamshire, NG13**

**Archaeological Strip, Map & Record**

NGR: SK 73550 40074  
Planning Ref: 14/00480/OUT  
PCAS Site code: ALAE 16  
PCAS Job No.: 1811  
OASIS ref: preconst3-280472

Prepared for

Hallam Land Management Ltd

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## Contents

	Non-technical Summary	
<b>1.0</b>	Introduction	2
<b>2.0</b>	Site location and description	2
<b>3.0</b>	Geology and topography	3
<b>4.0</b>	Planning background	3
<b>5.0</b>	Archaeological and historical background	3
<b>6.0</b>	Methodology	4
<b>7.0</b>	Results	5
<b>8.0</b>	Discussion & Conclusion	9
<b>9.0</b>	Effectiveness of Methodology	8
<b>10.0</b>	Project Archive	9
<b>11.0</b>	Acknowledgements	9
<b>12.0</b>	References	10

## Figures

**Fig. 1:** Site location map at scale 1:25,000. Site location outlined in red. OS Explorer map sheet 293. (OS mapping © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. PCAS licence no. 100049278).

**Fig. 2:** Current Area of Strip Map and Record with Trenching plan for 2016 evaluation. Based on greyscale/interpretive geophysics results (Bunn, 2016).

**Fig. 3:** Plan of Stripped Area; extent of lower subsoil horizon (1002) and excavated treethrows.

## Appendices

**Appendix 1:** Context Summary

**Appendix 2:** OASIS summary

## Non-Technical Summary

This document presents the results of an archaeological strip, map and recording exercise on land south of Abbey Lane, Aslockton. Outline planning permission for residential development has been granted for the site, and the current phase of investigation follows an archaeological evaluation, geophysical survey and desk-based assessment to mitigate archaeological requirements associated with the proposals.

The site lies to the west of the historic core of the village, close to Aslockton Abbey, now Abbey Farm, a private dwelling and farmhouse first constructed in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. To the north is a complex of Iron Age and Roman dated cropmarks and earthworks, while the core of the medieval village lay to the east, where the earthworks and buried remains of Cranmer's Mound and other settlement features are protected as a scheduled monument.

Geophysical survey of the site identified only slight magnetic variation; anomalies that were targeted via a preceding evaluation. The evaluation exposed an undated possible pit and frequent disturbance and bioturbation with 17<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> century ceramics. Following completion of the evaluation it was deemed necessary to examine the wider area surrounding these possible features. An open area 35m by 20m was stripped around the identified features, revealing a high degree of undated tree-rooting and a buried lower subsoil horizon localised in a shallow hollow.

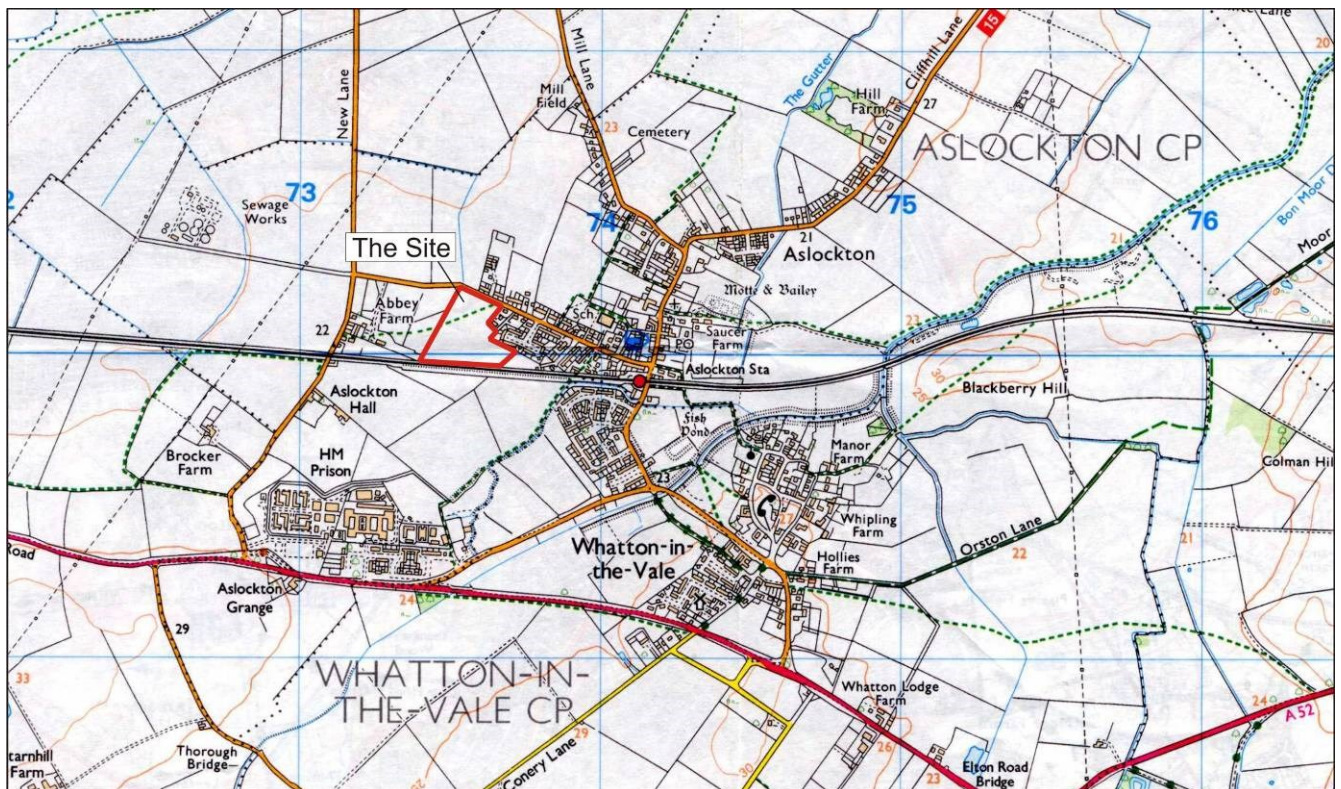


Figure 1: Site location at scale 1:25,000. Site indicated in red. (OS mapping © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. PCAS licence no. 100049278).

## 1.0 Introduction

Pre-Construct Archaeological Services Ltd (PCAS) was commissioned by Hallam Land Management Ltd. to undertake an archaeological Strip, Map and Record on land to the south of Abbey Lane, Aslockton, Nottinghamshire. This was to inform a planning application for residential development. An archaeological desk-based assessment and geophysical survey had indicated an archaeological potential which was investigated by an archaeological trenched evaluation in October 2016. The results of the evaluation were used to inform an archaeological mitigation strategy of investigation around one of the evaluation trenches.

This document follows current best practice and national guidance, including:

- NPPF, National Planning Policy Framework, 2012;
- ClfA Code of Conduct (2014 as revised);
- ClfA Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations (2014);
- Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE v1.1, English Heritage 2009)

## 2.0 Site Location and Description (Fig. 1)

Aslockton is a village and civil parish in the Rushcliffe district of Nottinghamshire. It lies on the north side of the A52 around 4km east of Bingham and the A46. It primarily centres on Main Street and Mill Lane / Cliffhill Lane, which give access from the A52 to the rural villages to the north. The East Midlands Train line between Nottingham and Skegness runs east-west through the settlement.

The c.4.2ha site lies to the immediate west of Aslockton, to the south of Abbey Lane. It comprises an irregularly-shaped arable field that is bounded to the south by a railway line; to the north-east and east by residential developments; to the south-east by allotments and to the east by open land. The area of the current Strip, Map and Recording exercise was located in the west of the site and was under rough vegetation, mixed natural species and the remains of a previous season's crop.

The approximate central National Grid Reference of the site is SK 73550 40074.

## 3.0 Topography and Geology

The solid geology of the area is mudstone (Branscombe Mudstone Formation) - sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 200 to 217 million years ago in the Triassic period<sup>1</sup>. This is overlain by undifferentiated sand and gravel River Terrace Deposits in the western and south-western region, with alluvium to the north and south-east; these were formed (respectively) up to 3 and 2 million years ago in the Quaternary Period.

The predominant soil type identified in the vicinity of the proposed development comprises of slowly permeable seasonally wet slightly acid but base rich loamy and clayey soils (Magic.co.uk).

The site is generally level and lies a height of c.20m AOD. The 2016 Trenching recorded modern topsoil and subsoil layers, with topsoil between 0.18m-0.48m thick, and subsoils varying in depth.

## 4.0 Planning Background

A planning application (Ref. 14/00480/OUT) for the construction of 75 residential dwellings, incorporating open space, access and landscaping on land at Abbey Lane, Aslockton, was

submitted on 28 February 2014, and was refused by notice on 12 September 2014. An appeal was made under Section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant outline planning permission in October 2015. The appeal decision granted outline planning permission for up to 75 residential dwellings incorporating open space, access and landscaping in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref. 14/00480/OUT, dated 28 February 2014, subject to several conditions.

*Condition 15:*

*No development shall take place until details of a scheme for the implementation of an archaeological field evaluation to be carried out during construction and/or excavation work on the site, by a professional archaeologist or archaeological organisation, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme.*

A desk-based assessment was completed and submitted with the planning application (CGMS, 2013), identifying the potential for Iron Age and Roman remains to be present within the redline site boundary, although low potential for remains of other periods. A geophysical survey of the site was undertaken (Bunn, 2016), which revealed very little magnetic variation across the site and no anomalies with a potential archaeological origin.

An archaeological evaluation of six trenches, each 30mx2m, took place to investigate the results of the survey and assessment, and to identify, characterise and date any archaeological remains encountered to inform any required archaeological mitigation strategy: One trench contained potentially significant archaeological features and after submission of the evaluation report (Lane 2016), the Senior Archaeologist for Nottinghamshire County Council requested further investigation to characterise the nature of the features in a wider context.

## **5.0 Archaeological and Historical Background**

An archaeological desk-based assessment collating the known archaeological monuments around the site was produced by CMGS (CGMS, 2013) and submitted with the outline planning application. This document has been consulted during the course of the evaluation and resulting Strip Map and Record exercise.

There is no record of Palaeolithic or Mesolithic finds or features within the area of the proposed development or the wider study area. A Neolithic stone axe has been recorded as being found in an unprovenanced location within the study area (L1547) and a Neolithic/Bronze Age flaked sickle blade has been recorded c. 850m to the north of the study site (L8143).

There are a number of cropmarks of enclosures, linear features and areas of possible Iron Age/Romano British occupation c. 800m to the north (L1513) and c. 900m to the north east of the proposed development area (L1492, L1514, L1516 & L1517). Late Iron Age and Roman pottery has been found associated with both cropmark complexes (L8140, L8142 & 8144). A cropmark complex of enclosures, 5 ring ditches and linear ditches have been recorded c. 800m to the north west of the proposed development area (L1481 & 1484). Although these cropmarks are undated, a scatter of unspecified Roman artefacts has been recorded in the same area (L8113) implying that these cropmarks are Roman in date. The cropmark of three contiguous enclosures have been recorded c. 300m to the north east of the site (L1493). Although undated, given the dating of the nearby cropmarks to the north, it is considered likely that these enclosures are also Roman in date.

There are no medieval finds or features recorded within the study site. Fieldwalking of the land to the north, north east and north-west of the site has recorded a number of sherds of

medieval pottery which have derived from the manuring of the fields (L8114, L8145 & L8151). A scheduled moated site is located c. 700m to the south east of the study site (M1201). A former motte and bailey castle known as Cranmer's Mound later converted into a prospect mound (M1591) along with Cranmer's House (1592) is located within Cranmer's Park (17827) c. 800m to the east of the study site. Cranmer's Mound and the associated moated fishponds, enclosure, hollow way and ridge and furrow are all a single scheduled monument.

There are no Post-medieval remains recorded within the proposed development area. There are a number of Post-medieval records within the study area which have no bearing on the study site itself. In summary, these records are: Whatton Bridge (M1344); Cocker Bridge (M1345); Aslockton pumping station (M1346); a quarry (M1347); site of two windmills (M1616 & M1716) and a former malthouse (L1543).

The assessment established that the proposed development area contains no known archaeological remains but it was considered to have moderate potential for Iron Age and Roman remains. The site was considered to have low potential for remains of all other archaeological periods.

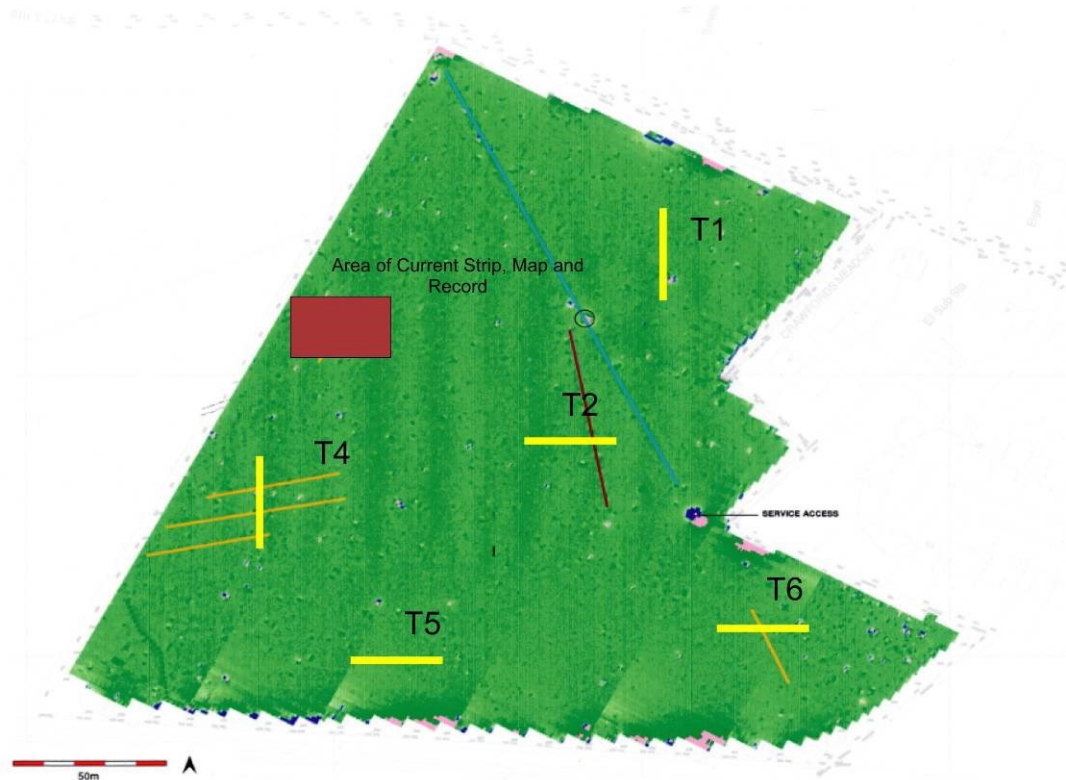
A geophysical survey of the site (Bunn, 2016) identified only minimal magnetic variation, with a handful of potential archaeological anomalies.

The 2016 Evaluation comprised of six trenches, each 30mx2m, positioned around the site to investigate the archaeological potential. All but one Trench were devoid of significant archaeological material; whilst Trench 3, located centrally within the site contained a lower, undated subsoil deposit appearing to seal several irregular 'features', possibly representing tree rooting bioturbation.

## **6.0 Methodology**

The Strip, Map and Record exercise was undertaken following a request by the Senior Archaeologist for Nottinghamshire County Council. The request required that an undetermined area surrounding evaluation Trench 3 be opened and expanded until the full nature of the archaeology identified during the evaluation could be characterised.





**Figure 2;** Location showing area of Strip, Map and Record and preceding evaluation trenches.

Soil stripping was undertaken using a 15 ton tracked mechanical excavator fitted with a wide, smooth bladed bucket under archaeological supervision. Mechanical excavation ceased at the first archaeologically significant layer or when the natural geology was reached.

Where identified, archaeological features were examined to determine their date, character and survival condition and then recorded by measured plan (1:100) and section drawings (1:10), incorporating Ordnance Survey datum heights surveyed in using GPS.

A written record of each significant stratigraphic horizon and excavated archaeological feature was made on standard PCAS context recording forms. These were supplemented by a narrative account in the form of a site diary. A digital photographic record was maintained during the course of the archaeological intervention.

Archaeological fieldwork was undertaken by A. Slater on the 13<sup>th</sup> January 2017.

## 7.0 Results

The stripping began with the re-opening of evaluation Trench 3. A further 9m was then stripped along either side of the trench resulting in a fully stripped area measuring 30mx20m (Plate 1, Figure 2,). Exposed natural geology was mid yellowy-brown sandy gravelly clay with a notable gradual downwards slope from the east, south and north forming a natural bowl in the western end of the excavated area, 17m x 23m in diameter to a maximum of 0.70m below current ground surface. This depression delineated the extent of a lower subsoil horizon (1002), a grey clay-silt a maximum of 0.2m in thickness.

Across the excavated area a total of twenty-seven irregular, sub-oval and curvilinear 'features' consistent with tree-rooting were identified. The largest of these were located within the natural hollow within the western end of the excavated area and appeared to be



**Plate 1:** Area of Strip, Map and Record (Looking west, Evaluation Trench 3 located centrally).

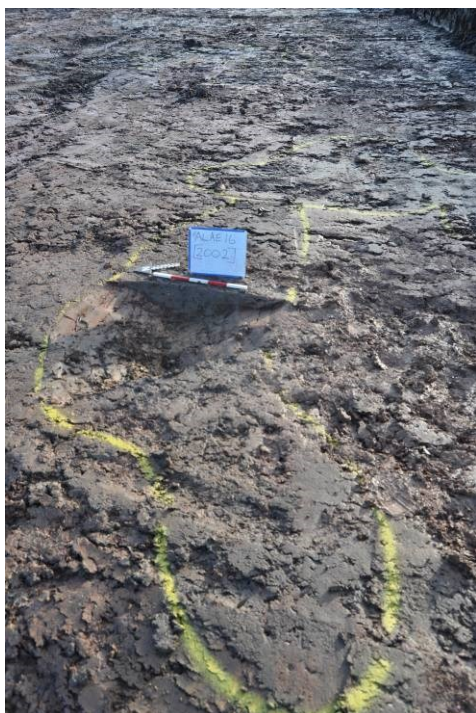
stratigraphically contemporary with the lower subsoil horizon (1002). Three of the tree throws [2000], [2002] & [2004] (Plates 2-4, Figure 3) were excavated but could not be dated.

Sealing tree throws as well as lower subsoil (1002) was an archaeologically sterile subsoil deposit (1001), a maximum of 0.22m in thickness. This was itself covered by topsoil (1000), a maximum of 0.28m in thickness and containing small quantities of 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century ceramics and glass (not retained).



**Plate 2:** Tree throw [2000]

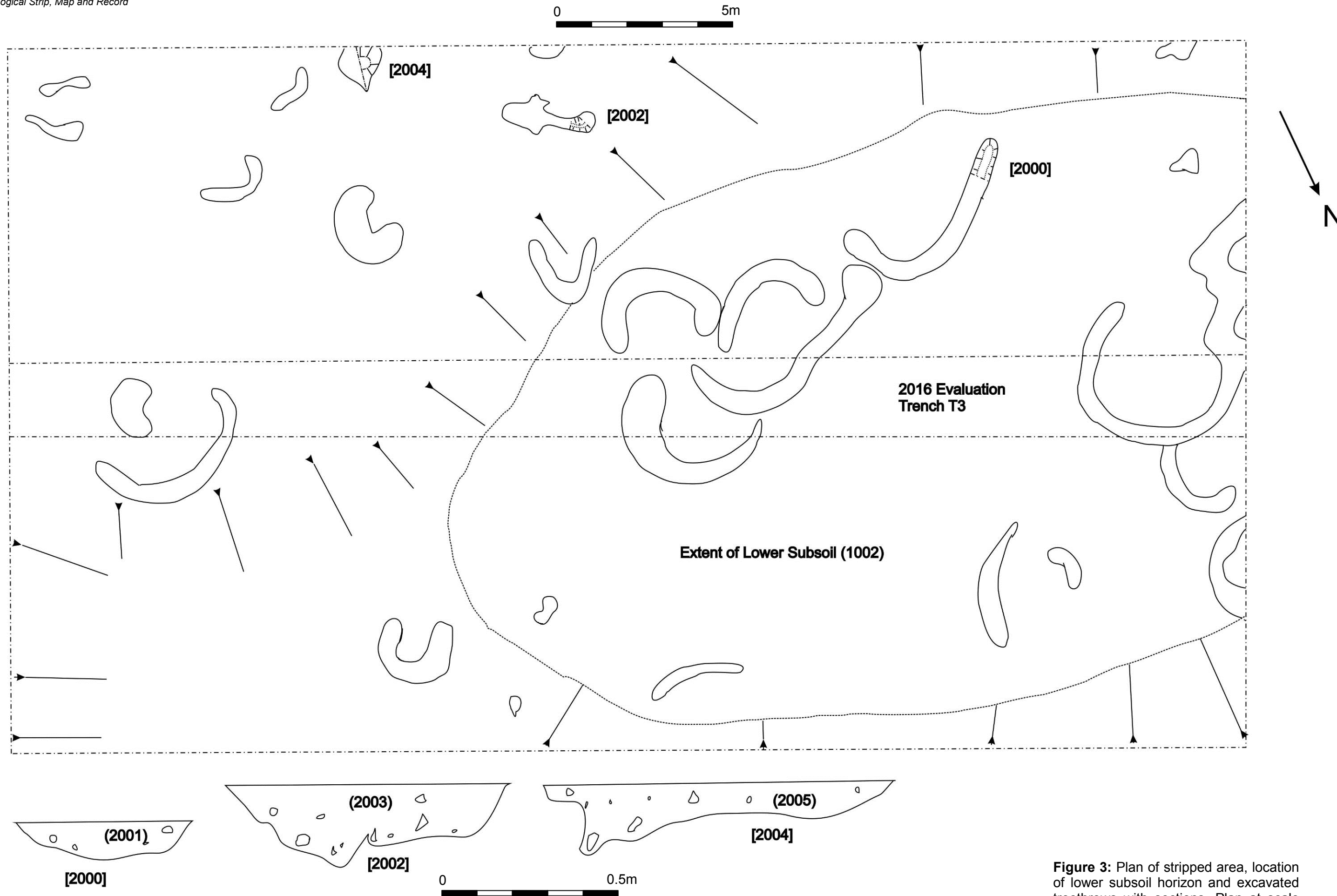




**Plate 3:** *Tree throw [2002]*



**Plate 4:** *Tree throw [2004]*



**Figure 3:** Plan of stripped area, location of lower subsoil horizon and excavated treethrows with sections. Plan at scale 1:100; sections at scale 1:10.

## **8.0 Discussion and Conclusion**

The area Strip, Map and Record exercise followed a largely negative geophysical survey (Bunn 2016) and targeted a possible buried soil horizon as well as a group of largely amorphous and undated features, identified during subsequent archaeological trenching (Lane 2016).

The expansion of Trench 3 from the previous phase of investigation exposed and demonstrated the localised extent of a Lower Subsoil (1002). This deposit was restricted to the base of a natural hollow located within the western area of the excavated area. Tree throws/ bioturbation would appear to be more concentrated within the hollow than elsewhere, and it would be logical to assume that the subsoil horizon was a result of the increased moisture within the hollow as well as the effects a larger number of tree-roots would have on subsoil (1001). Evidence for the prevalence of trees in the current stripped area is in contrast to the 'blank' trenches excavated elsewhere in the preceding evaluation phase, suggesting a degree of localisation with woodland or forest within the development area. The archaeological interventions into tree throws [2000], [2002] & [2004] did not produce any datable material and as such these features cannot be dated.

## **9.0 Effectiveness of Methodology**

The expansion of Trench 3 from the previous phase of archaeological evaluation (Lane 2016) was intended to characterise any archaeological features present within and close to the trench. This was achieved with the confirmation that those features identified within the trench were tree throws that would appear to be part of a cluster centred on a natural hollow in the geological natural. The body of data produced by this evaluation is considered sufficient to mitigate the archaeological requirement of the planning and development process.

## **10.0 Project Archive**

Following completion of the full report, a project archive (documentary and material), will be prepared at the offices of PCAS in accordance with the guidelines contained in *Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long Term Storage* (UKIC 1990), *Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections* (Museums and Galleries Commission 1992). At present there is no receiving archive for Rushcliffe, therefore the prepared archive shall be stored at the PCAS offices until a suitable repository can be found. A digital copy of this report will be uploaded to OASIS, where it will be accessible via the ADS website.

## **11.0 Acknowledgements**

Pre-Construct Archaeological Services would like to thank Hallam Land Management Ltd. for this commission.

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## Appendix 1: ALAE 17, Strip Map and Record Context Summary

Context	Type	Description	Finds
1000	Layer	Topsoil. Mid to light grey moderate compaction silty clay with frequent charcoal inclusions. Max depth 0.28m	Post-medieval pottery (discarded on site)
1001	Layer	Subsoil. Mid to light brown firmly compacted silty clay with infrequent charcoal inclusions. Max depth 0.22m	None
1002	Layer	Dark to mid grey firmly compacted peaty clay silt with occasional charcoal inclusions. Max depth 0.23m.	None
2000	Cut	Cut of narrow, irregular curvilinear feature in plan. Irregular steep-moderately steeply sloping concaved sides to concaved base. Approx 4.5m exposed length, max 0.50m wide, 0.10m deep. Likely disturbance/tree throw.	
2001	Fill	Mid to dark grey grey-brown, firmly compacted silty clay with occasional sandy gravels. Single fill of [2000].	None
2002	Cut	Cut of very irregular curvilinear feature. Moderate to steeply sloping sides, irregular and occasionally undercutting sides to irregular concaved base. 2.5m length, 0.76m wide, 0.22m maximum depth. Likely disturbance/tree throw.	
2003	Fill	Mid to dark grey grey-brown, firmly compacted silty clay with occasional sandy gravels. Single fill of [2002].	None
2004	Cut	Sub circular periform in plan. Moderate to steeply sloping concaved, occasionally undercutting sides to concaved base 1m length, 0.86m wide, 0.18m maximum depth.	
2005	Fill	Mid to dark grey grey-brown, firmly compacted silty clay with occasional sandy gravels. Single fill of [2004].	None

**Appendix 2: Oasis Record**