

**Dragon Lane
Newbold Verdon
Leicestershire**

Archaeological Evaluation

for

Nexus Heritage

on behalf of

Bloor Homes Ltd (East Midlands Division)

CA Project: 660015

CA Report: 11225

September 2011

Dragon Lane
Newbold Verdon
Leicestershire

Archaeological Evaluation

CA Project: 660015
CA Report: 11225

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date	19 September 2011
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date	22 September 2011
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date	26 September 2011
issue	02

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SUMMARY

Project Name: Dragon Lane, Newbold Verdon
Location: Leicestershire
NGR: SK 4435 0432
Type: Evaluation
Date: 5-8 September 2011
Location of Archive: Leicestershire Museums Service
Accession Number: X.A118.2011
Site Code: DLN11

In September 2011, an archaeological evaluation, comprising the excavation of fourteen trenches, was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology at Dragon Lane, Newbold Verdon, Leicestershire. The work was commissioned by Nexus Heritage, acting on behalf of Bloor Homes Ltd (East Midlands Division).

The evaluation identified the remains of medieval/post-medieval plough furrows in the southern part of the site, and crossing the centre of the site from north-east to south-west was a ditch that corresponded with a field boundary shown on late 19th and early 20th-century Ordnance Survey maps of the area. Several large surface depressions in the central and northern part of the field, which corresponded with irregular anomalies shown on a geophysical survey plot of the area, may be of natural origin or associated with mining subsidence.



1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In September 2011, Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation for Nexus Heritage, acting on behalf of Bloor Homes Ltd (East Midlands Division), at Dragon Lane, Newbold Verdon, Leicestershire (centred on NGR: SK 4435 0432; Fig. 1). The evaluation, which was preceded by a geophysical survey of the entire application area (Stratascan 2011), was undertaken to support the submission of a planning application to Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council for the residential development of the land, in line with the requirements of *Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS5): Planning for the Historic Environment*.
- 1.2 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with the brief issued by Teresa Hawtin, Senior Planning Archaeologist, Leicestershire County Council Historic and Natural Environment Team (LCCHNET), archaeological advisor to Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council, and with a subsequent detailed Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by Nexus Heritage (2011). The fieldwork also followed the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (IfA 2008), the *Management of Archaeological Projects 2* (EH 1991) and the *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE): Project Manager's Guide* (EH 2006).

The site

- 1.3 The site comprises an arable field, c. 7 hectares in extent, situated approximately 200m to the north of the historic core of the village of Newbold Verdon. The site is bounded by Bosworth Lane (B585) to the north-west, Barlestone Road (B582) to the north-east, housing fronting on to Dragon Lane to the east and an arable field to the south-west (Figs. 1 to 3). The ground is generally flat, lying at approximately 133m aOD, although there are depressions near the centre of the field that may be natural in origin, or caused by the subsidence of abandoned mining galleries.
- 1.4 The solid geology comprises Triassic rocks of the Mercian Mudstone and Penarth Groups, overlain by glacial sands and gravel (BGS 2011). The soils within the site belong to the Arrow Soil Association (543), comprising deep, permeable, coarse loamy soils affected by groundwater (SSEW 1983).

Archaeological background

- 1.5 The detailed archaeological and historical background of the site has been presented in the desk-based assessment incorporated into the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by Nexus Heritage (2011). In summary, there are no known archaeological sites or find spots within the proposed development area, although prehistoric, Roman and medieval remains have been identified nearby. The earliest artefacts to have been found in the vicinity are a number of Neolithic and Bronze Age flint tools that were recovered during a fieldwalking survey to the east of the site in the 1980s. Other prehistoric remains have been identified from cropmarks to the south-west, where there is a pit alignment of probable Bronze Age/early Iron Age date, and close to this is a rectilinear enclosure that may date to the Iron Age. Evidence for Roman and Saxon activity is largely confined to the occasional recovery of artefacts, including Roman pottery, a coin of Constantine I and a Saxon stirrup strap mount, in fields to the north of Bosworth Lane. In the medieval period the land to the north of the village of Newbold Verdon, referred to as *Niwebold* (OE 'new building') in the Domesday Book of 1086, was probably agricultural land and formed part of the settlement's open field system. The site of the moated medieval manor house, now within the grounds of the late 17th/early 18th-century residence of Newbold Verdon Hall, lies to the south of the site, at the western end of the medieval village. Fieldname and documentary evidence indicates that there was a deer park to the west of the site in the 14th century. A geophysical (magnetometry) survey of the site, undertaken by Stratascan (2011), identified a number of possible features, including a relict field boundary, plough furrows and a scatter of possible pits.

Archaeological objectives

- 1.6 The aims of the evaluation, as set out in the WSI, were 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 construction works,
 - Establish the nature and extent of existing disturbance and intrusion to sub-surface deposits and, where data allows, assess the degree of archaeological survival of buried deposits of archaeological significance.

The specific objectives were to:

- Explain, insofar as possible within methodological constraints, any temporal, spatial or functional relationships between any structures/remains identified and any relationships between these and the archaeological and historic elements of the wider landscape,
- Enable the client to establish a schedule for archaeological risks,
- Enable the Senior Planning Archaeologist of Leicestershire County Council to advise Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council on archaeological matters during the determination of the planning application.

Methodology

- 1.7 The fieldwork comprised the excavation of 14 trenches (total of 560 linear metres at 1.8m wide) in the locations shown on the attached plan (Fig. 2). The trenches were positioned to investigate anomalies identified by the geophysical survey (Stratascan 2011) and apparently blank areas. With the approval of Nexus Heritage, five of the trenches (Trenches 1, 2, 5, 6 and 7) had to be moved from their approved locations due to the presence of overhead power lines, although it was still possible to investigate the targeted features. Trenches were set out on OS National Grid (NGR) co-ordinates using a Leica 1200 series SmartRover GPS and surveyed in accordance with CA's *Technical Manual 4: Survey Manual* (2009).
- 1.8 All trenches were excavated by a 360° tracked mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless grading bucket. All machine excavation was undertaken under constant archaeological supervision to the top of the first significant archaeological horizon or the natural substrate, whichever was encountered first. Where archaeological deposits were encountered they were excavated by hand in accordance with *Technical Manual 1: Fieldwork Recording Manual* (2007).
- 1.9 Deposits were assessed for their palaeoenvironmental potential in accordance with *Technical Manual 2: The Taking and Processing of Environmental and Other Samples from Archaeological Sites* (2003); no deposits were identified that required sampling. All artefacts recovered were processed in accordance with *Technical Manual 3: Treatment of Finds Immediately after Excavation* (2010).

- 1.10 The archive and artefacts from the evaluation are currently held by CA at their offices in Kemble. Subject to the agreement of the legal landowner the artefacts will be deposited with Leicestershire Museum Services under accession number X.A118.2011, along with the site archive. A summary of information from this project, as set out within Appendix C, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

2. RESULTS

- 2.1 This section provides an overview of the evaluation results; detailed summaries of the recorded contexts and finds are to be found in Appendices A and B respectively.
- 2.2 The archaeological remains encountered in the trial trenches generally corresponded well with the results of the geophysical survey (Stratascan 2011), although the majority of the furrows were heavily truncated and only survived as barely discernible 'ghost' furrows. A number of the geophysical anomalies targeted by the trenching were shown by excavation to be geological in origin, reflecting variations in the natural substrate. This was glacial till, which occurred as mid brownish-orange silty sandy clay with bands and patches of pebbles and clay. There was no subsoil and the ploughsoil, which was on average c. 0.3m thick, lay directly over the glacial till. The only features encountered in the trial trenches were medieval/post-medieval furrows in Trenches 13 and 14 and a post-medieval/modern ditch, investigated in Trenches 1 and 8. Trench 2 targeted a large geophysical anomaly that corresponded with a large depression in the surface of the field; excavation demonstrated that this was either a natural feature or caused by mining subsidence. There were no archaeological features in Trenches 3-7 and 9-12.

Trench 1 (Figs 2 and 3)

- 2.3 At the north-west end of the trench there was a V-shaped ditch, 102, measuring approximately 2m wide and 0.5m deep, on a north-east to south-west alignment. It was filled with brownish-orange clayey silt, 104, overlain by dark grey silt, 103. The fills are consistent with initial weathering of exposed edges followed by consolidation, formation and erosion of topsoil deposits. No finds were recovered from this feature. It was sealed by an average of 0.3m of ploughsoil.

Trench 2 (Fig 2)

- 2.4 Trench 2 was positioned to investigate a large geophysical anomaly that corresponded with a pronounced, irregularly shaped hollow in the field's surface. The natural substrate (glacial till) was orange clay with occasional rounded cobbles and pebbles, 201; this was encountered at a maximum depth of 1.0m bpgl (below present ground level) near the centre of the trench, and 0.28m bpgl at the ends. The hollow in the central part of the trench was filled by a colluvial-type deposit of orangey-brown silt, 202, up to 0.56m thick, which was succeeded by buried topsoil, 201, up to 0.24m thick. The buried topsoil was sealed by the modern ploughsoil, 200; it is likely that intensive mechanised ploughing has caused the hollow to infill relatively rapidly and that the buried soil horizon is of a relatively recent date.

Trench 8 (Figs 2 and 3)

- 2.5 In the centre of the trench, on a north-east to south-west alignment, was a broad, V-shaped ditch, 803, measuring approximately 2.1m wide and 0.65m deep. The basal fill, 805, was mid brownish-orange silty clay, the upper fill, 804, a dark grey silt. The deposits were consistent with weathering of exposed edges followed by later silting and erosion of topsoil deposits. An iron nail, sherds of 18th-century pottery, a fragment of clay pipe stem and a piece of roof tile were recovered from the ditch. On the northern side of the ditch there was a shallow deposit of mid greyish-brown sandy clay, 802, that was probably formed by root disturbance from a hedgerow on this side of the field boundary. The ditch was sealed by c. 0.4m of ploughsoil.

Trench 13 (Fig 2)

- 2.6 A furrow, 1302, crossed the trench on a north-west to south-east alignment. It measured 1.2m wide and was up to 0.12m deep. Its fill, 1303, brownish-orange silty clay, contained a base sherd of Midlands Purple ware, dated to the 15th to mid 17th century, and a piece of worked flint. Several other 'ghost' impressions of parallel furrows were observed at c. 8.0m intervals along the length of the trench, but when investigated these were found to have no appreciable depth.

Trench 14 (Fig 2)

- 2.7 A furrow, 1402, measuring 0.94m wide by 0.20m deep, crossed the trench on a north-west to south-east alignment. Its fill, 1403, was yellowish-brown clay sand. A possible second furrow on the same alignment was identified at the south-west end of the trench.

The Finds

2.8 Artefactual material was recovered from three deposits (see Appendix B).

Worked flint

2.9 A single piece of worked flint was recorded from furrow fill 1303. It consists of a fragment from a hard hammer-struck removal with a small area of semi-abrupt retouch to one edge. The raw material is unpatinated, dark greyish-brown flint. Close dating for this piece is not possible although it is clearly residual.

Pottery and clay tobacco pipe

2.10 A base sherd in Midlands Purple ware (ULAS fabric MP1) was recorded from furrow fill 1303. This proto-stoneware type is common across the east Midlands and was manufactured from the 15th to the mid 17th century.

2.11 Single sherds of pottery from ditch fills 804 and 805 occur in Midlands Blackware, a pale-bodied, black-glazed fabric which is typical of post-medieval earthenwares manufactured in Staffordshire and elsewhere in the Midlands between c. 1700 and 1800.

2.12 A clay pipe stem fragment from deposit 804 is unmarked and otherwise featureless. It is broadly dateable c. 1550–1900.

3. DISCUSSION

3.1 The evaluation uncovered activity dating from the prehistoric to the modern period.

Prehistoric

3.2 The piece of worked flint, recovered as a residual find from a medieval/post-medieval furrow, provides sparse evidence for activity in the wider area in the prehistoric period.

Medieval/post-medieval

3.3 The remains of medieval/post-medieval ploughing, in the form of ploughed-out furrows, are shown on the geophysical survey plot in the southern part of the site, and three of these were investigated in two of the trenches in this area. Although

medieval in origin, the open field system of ridge and furrow, prevalent in much of the Midlands region at this time, could have been maintained into the post-medieval period (Rackham 1986, 167-180). This is suggested here, as a sherd of post-medieval pottery, dating to the 15th to mid 17th century, was recovered from one of the furrows.

Post-medieval/modern

- 3.4 Following the Acts of Enclosure, enacted in the late 18th and 19th centuries, the Midlands landscape of open fields and common land was radically altered by the parcelling up of land into enclosed fields, with ditches and hedgerows. Although some land was enclosed prior to this, the current field boundaries surrounding the site are likely to date to this period. The infilled ditch investigated in two of the trenches formed part of the new, enclosed landscape and it is shown on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of 1886 and the later edition of 1903. However, by 1959 the boundary had been removed, possibly to enlarge the field to make it more suitable for mechanised ploughing.
- 3.5 The depressions in the surface of the field may be of natural origin, or the result of land subsidence associated with mining activities in the area. There was a large mine at Desford Pit, less than 2km from Newbold Verdon, until its closure in 1984.

4. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Jeremy Mordue, assisted by Tom Weavill and Simon Carlyle. The report was written by Simon Carlyle and Jeremy Mordue, assisted by Ed McSloy. The illustrations were prepared by Lorna Gray and Jonathan Bennett. The archive has been compiled by Jeremy Mordue and prepared for deposition by Kathryn Price. The project was managed for CA by Simon Carlyle.

5. REFERENCES

BGS (British Geological Survey) 2011 *Geology of Britain Viewer*
http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geology_viewer_google/googleviewer.html Accessed 12
September 2011

Nexus Heritage 2011 *Land at Dragon Lane, Newbold Verdon, Leicestershire: Written Scheme of Investigation*, Report No. **3084.R01**

Rackham, O, 1986 *The History of the Countryside*, London

SSEW (Soil Survey of England and Wales) 1983 *Eastern England*, Sheet 4, 1:250,000

Stratascan 2011 *Dragon Lane, Newbold Verdon, Leicestershire: Geophysical Survey Report*, Report No. **2833**



APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench 1

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
100	Layer	Ploughsoil	-	-	0.4	
101	Layer	Glacial till	-	-	-	
102	Cut	V-shaped ditch filled by 103/104	2.0+	2.05	0.5	C18th/19th
103	Fill	Upper fill of 102.	-	-	0.32	
104	Fill	Lower fill of 102.	-	-	0.20	

Trench 2

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
200	Layer	Ploughsoil	-	-	0.28	
201	Layer	Buried topsoil	-	-	0.24	
202	Layer	Subsoil	-	-	0.56	
203	Layer	Glacial till (gravel)	-	-	-	
204	Layer	Glacial till	-	-	-	

Trench 3

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
300	Layer	Ploughsoil	-	-	0.30	
301	Layer	Glacial till	-	-	-	

Trench 4

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
400	Layer	Ploughsoil	-	-	0.30	
401	Layer	Glacial till	-	-	-	

Trench 5

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
500	Layer	Ploughsoil	-	-	0.38	
501	Layer	Glacial till	-	-	-	

Trench 6

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
600	Layer	Ploughsoil	-	-	0.41	
601	Layer	Glacial till	-	-	-	

Trench 7

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
700	Layer	Ploughsoil	-	-	0.41	
701	Layer	Glacial till	-	-	-	

Trench 8

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
800	Layer	Ploughsoil	-	-	0.44	
801	Layer	Glacial till	-	-	-	
802	Layer	Spread associated with ditch 803	2.0+	1.16	0.12	
803	Cut	V-shaped ditch filled by 804/805	2.0+	2.12	0.60	C18th/19th
804	Fill	Upper fill of 803, containing Fe nail, clay pipe and 18th-century pottery	-	-	0.44	
805	Fill	Lower fill of 803, containing tile and 18th-century pottery	-	-	0.20	

Trench 9

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
900	Layer	Ploughsoil	-	-	0.32	
901	Layer	Glacial till	-	-	-	

Trench 10

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
1000	Layer	Ploughsoil	-	-	0.35	
1001	Layer	Glacial till	-	-	-	

Trench 11

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
1100	Layer	Ploughsoil	-	-	0.36	
1101	Layer	Glacial till	-	-	-	

Trench 12

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
1200	Layer	Ploughsoil	-	-	0.38	
1201	Layer	Glacial till	-	-	-	

Trench 13

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
1300	Layer	Ploughsoil	-	-	0.30	
1301	Layer	Glacial till	-	-	-	
1302	Cut	Furrow	2.0+	1.2	0.12	Medieval/post-medieval
1303	Fill	Fill of 1302, contains post-medieval pottery	-	-	0.12	
1304	Layer	Glacial till (same as 1301)	-	-	-	

Trench 14

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
1400	Layer	Ploughsoil	-	-	0.40	
1401	Layer	Glacial till	-	-	-	
1402	Cut	Furrow	2.0+	0.94	0.20	Medieval/post-medieval

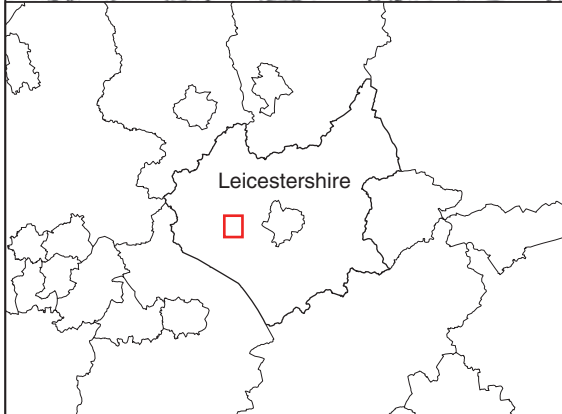
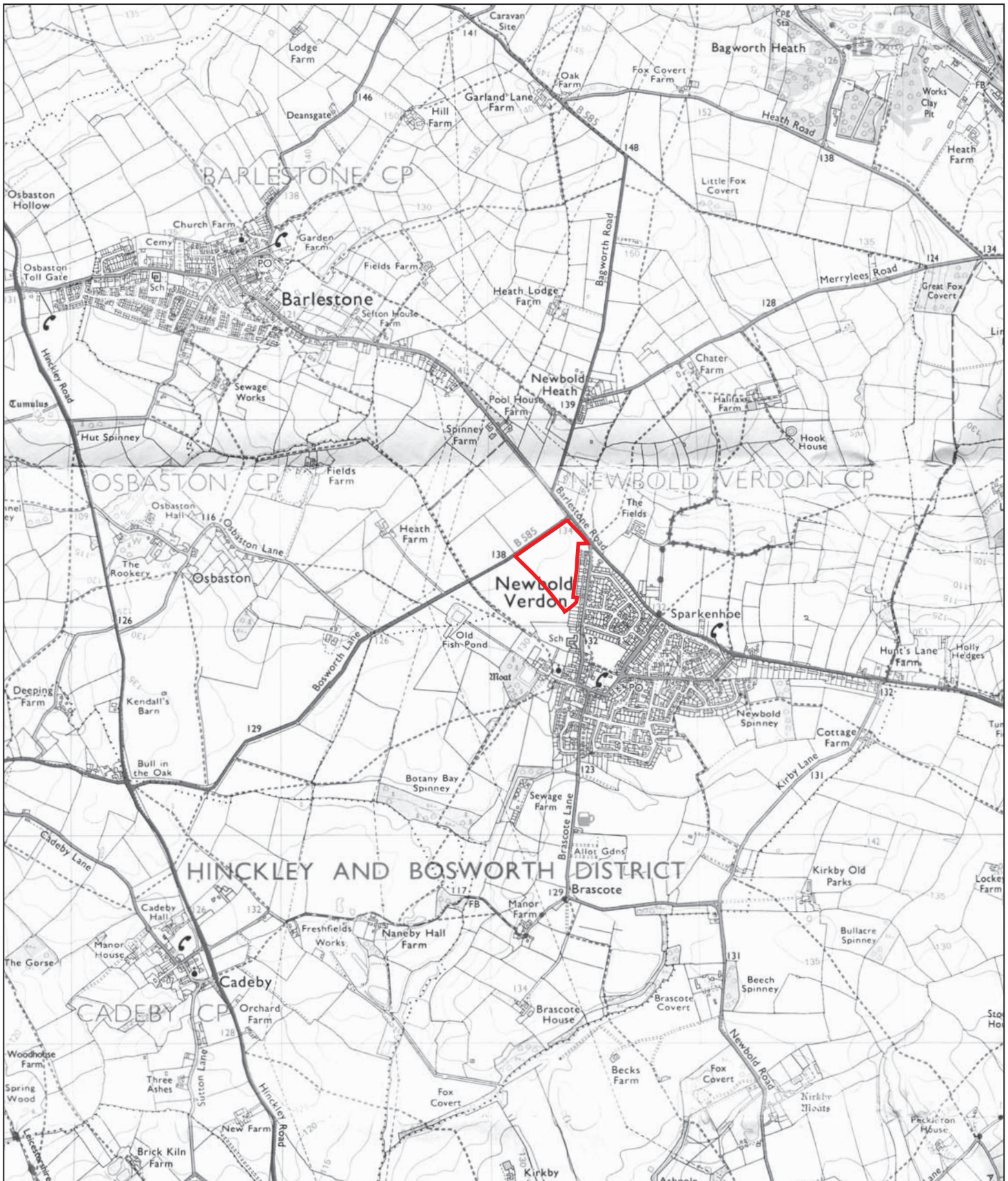
1403	Fill	Fill of 1402	-	-	0.20	
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APPENDIX B: THE FINDS

Context	Description	Count	Weight (g)	Spot-date
804	Post-medieval pottery: black-glazed earthenware	1	5	C18-C19
	Clay tobacco pipe: stem	1	2	
805	Post-medieval pottery: black-glazed earthenware	1	86	C18-C19
1303	Worked flint: retouched flake (broken)	1	1	C15-C17
	Medieval/Early post-med pottery: Midlands Purple	1	58	

APPENDIX C: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project name	Dragon Lane, Newbold Verdon	
Short description (250 words maximum)	The evaluation identified the remains of medieval/post-medieval plough furrows in the southern part of the site, and crossing the centre of the site from north-east to south-west was a ditch that corresponded with a field boundary shown on late 19th and early 20th-century Ordnance Survey maps of the area. Several large surface depressions in the central and northern part of the field, which corresponded with irregular anomalies shown on a geophysical survey plot of the area, may be of natural origin or associated with mining subsidence.	
Project dates	5-8 September 2011	
Project type	Field evaluation	
Previous work	Desk-based assessment (Nexus Heritage 2011); geophysical survey (Stratascan 2011)	
Future work	Unknown	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site location	Land to the west of Dragon Lane, Newbold Verdon	
Study area	7 ha.	
Site co-ordinates	SK 4435 0432	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology (CA)	
Project Brief originator	Leicestershire County Council	
Project Design (WSI) originator	Nexus Heritage	
Project Manager	Simon Carlyle (CA), Anthony Martin (Nexus Heritage)	
Project Supervisor	Jeremy Mordue (CA)	
MONUMENT TYPE	None	
SIGNIFICANT FINDS	None	
PROJECT ARCHIVES		
	Leicestershire Museum Service Accession no. X.A118.2011	Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone etc)
Physical		Flint, post-medieval pottery and tile
Paper		Site records
Digital		Report, digital photos
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2011 <i>Dragon Lane, Newbold Verdon, Leicestershire: Archaeological Evaluation</i> . CA typescript report 11225		



t 01285 771022
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 www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk
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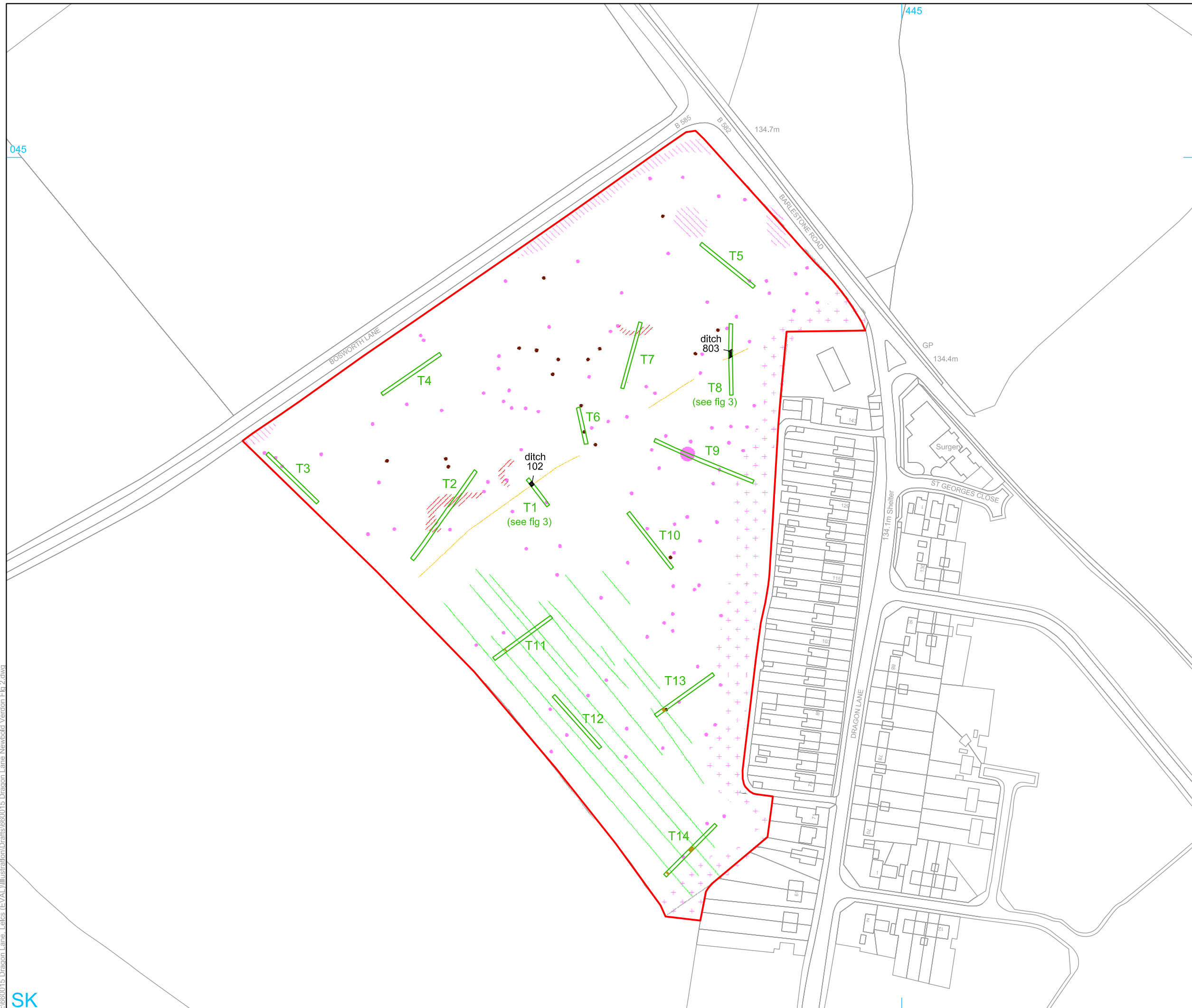
PROJECT TITLE
 Dragon Lane, Newbold Verdon
 Leicestershire

FIGURE TITLE
 Site location plan

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PROJECT NO. 660015 DATE 16-09-2011
 DRAWN BY LG REVISION 00
 APPROVED BY PJM SCALE@A4 1:25,000

FIGURE NO.
1



- site
- evaluation trench
- archaeological feature
- furrow

●	Discrete positive anomaly - possible pit
●	Positive anomaly with associated negative response - ferrous object
—	Positive linear anomaly - agricultural mark
—	Positive linear anomaly - former field boundary as shown in 1903-1904 mapping
—	Weak positive area anomaly - possibly archaeological or geological in origin
+	Magnetic disturbance associated with nearby metallic objects
+	Magnetic debris

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PROJECT TITLE
 Dragon Lane, Newbold Verdon
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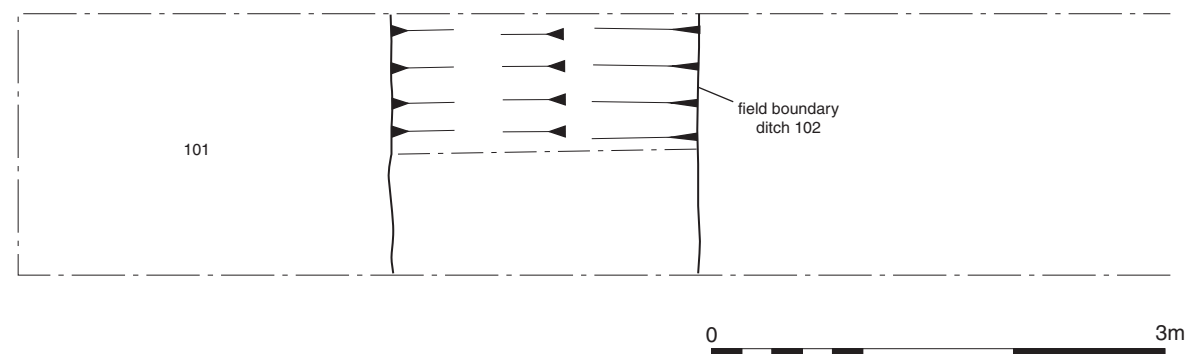
FIGURE TITLE
 Trench location plan, showing
 geophysical survey results and
 archaeological features

PROJECT NO.	660015	DATE	16-09-2011	FIGURE NO.
DRAWN BY	LG	REVISION	00	2
APPROVED BY	PJM	SCALE@A3	1:2000	

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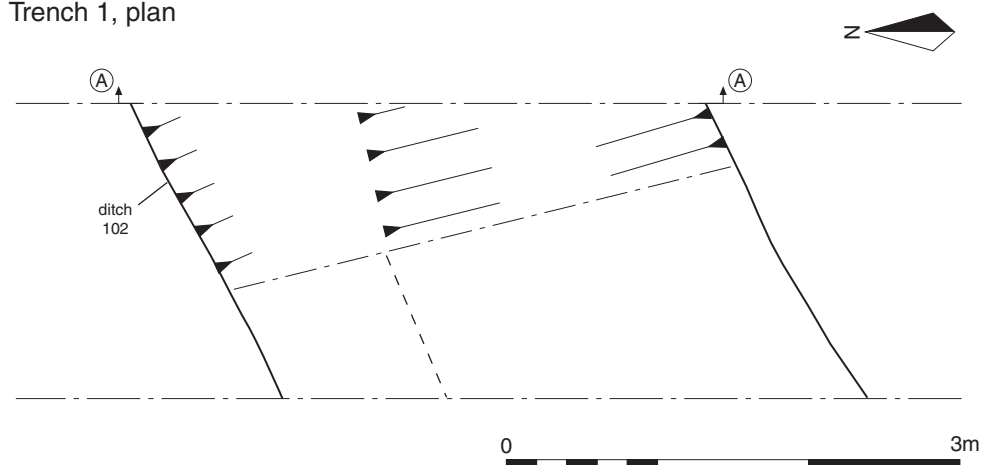


Trench 1, plan



Trench 1, field boundary ditch 102, looking north-east (scale 1m)

Trench 1, plan



Trench 8, ditch 803, looking east (scale 1m)

Trench 8, Section AA

