

Brantham Hall Farm, The Chase, Brantham, Suffolk

Archaeological Evaluation



for:
Richard Keeble



CA Project: SU0144
CA Report: SU0144_1
OASIS ID: cotswold2-394226
HER Ref: BNT 099

July 2020

Brantham Hall Farm, The Chase, Brantham, Suffolk

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A	03/07/20	J. Meredith	S. Boulter	Internal review	–	SB

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SUMMARY

Project name:	Brantham Hall Farm
Location:	The Chase, Brantham, Suffolk
NGR:	612038 233700
Type:	Evaluation
Date:	27/28th May 2020
Planning reference:	DC/20/00191
OASIS ID:	cotswold2-394226
Location of Archive:	To be deposited with Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service
Site Code:	BNT 099

In May 2020, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological evaluation at the site of a proposed farm reservoir to the south of Brantham Hall Farm. The location of the site suggested high archaeological potential as it was situated close to the River Stour, on a well-drained, south-facing gravel terrace. Cropmarks of trackways and field boundaries had been recorded to the east of the site and Beaker burials, Bronze Age cremations, Iron Age pits, a Roman pottery scatter and a Late Anglo-Saxon coin hoard had all been recorded in the vicinity. Despite this high potential, no features of archaeological significance were recorded and a small assemblage of finds, mainly of post-medieval or modern date show a very meagre utilisation of the site in the past. Deep deposits of stony material across the site, probably dating to the 19th or 20th centuries, were likely to be the result of dumping excess material from the excavation of the nearby railway cutting or from other landscaping activities associated with the adjacent farm.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. On the 27th and 28th May 2020, Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation at the site of a proposed farm reservoir in fields to the south of Brantham Hall Farm and overlooking the River Stour to the south (centred at NGR: 612038 233700; Fig. 1). This evaluation was undertaken for Richard Keeble of Brantham Hall Farm.
- 1.2. Babergh District Council has granted planning permission for a farm reservoir (planning ref: DC/20/00191). A condition of this planning permission required that a programme of archaeological work in accordance with an approved Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI).
- 1.3. The scope of this evaluation was defined by a Brief issued by Matthew Baker, county curator for Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, the archaeological advisor to Babergh District Council. The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a WSI prepared by Stuart Boulter (2020) and approved by Matthew Baker.
- 1.4. The evaluation was also in line with Standard and Guidance: archaeological field evaluation (ClfA 2014), the SCC Requirements for Trenched Archaeological Evaluation (SCCAS 2019), the Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MORPHE): Project Planning Note 3 (English Heritage 2008) and the Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MORPHE): Project Manager's Guide (EH 2006).

The site

- 1.5. The proposed reservoir site is approximately 0.8 hectares. It lies c.250m north of the River Stour. The site lies at an elevation of approximately 15m AOD on the crest of a shallow south/south-west facing slope; as well as sloping southwards towards the River Stour there is also a slight downwards slope to a dry valley to the west, where a track is situated (Hall Lane on the contemporary OS map; Fig. 1).
- 1.6. The majority of the site lies within a fallow field which has not been recently cultivated and has grown high with grasses, nettles and other self-seeded plants. The site area also extends slightly eastwards into an arable field, presently sown with barley.
- 1.7. The underlying bedrock geology of the site is mapped as Thames Group clay, silt and sand, with surface geology of Lowestoft Formation sand and gravels (BGS 2020).

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The site lies in an area of high archaeological potential on the south-facing gravel terraces above the River Stour. To the east of the site cropmark evidence indicates prehistoric trackways and post-medieval field boundaries (sites BNT 014 and 058). Also to the east of the site was a scatter of Roman pottery (BNT 070) and the location of a late Anglo-Saxon coin hoard (Portable Antiquities S ref: SF11006).
- 2.2. Close to the site to the west (the other side of Hall Lane) was an old quarry works where a Palaeolithic handaxe, Beaker burials, Bronze Age cremations and Iron Age features were revealed (site BNT 004).
- 2.3. Brantham Hall lies to the north of the site and is within a moat, suggesting a medieval origin. The associated farmstead complex dates from the 15th century onwards into the post-medieval period. A major railway cutting, of nineteenth century date, passes close to the site to the west.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1. The objective of the evaluation was to provide information on the likely archaeological resource within the site, including its presence/absence, character, extent, date and state of preservation. This information would enable Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service to identify and assess the particular significance of any archaeological heritage assets within the site, consider the impact of the proposed development upon that significance and, if appropriate, develop strategies to avoid or minimise conflict between heritage asset conservation and the development proposals, in line with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2019).

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1. The evaluation fieldwork comprised the excavation of seven trenches of between 30m and 40m in length (Fig. 2) positioned across the footprint of the proposed reservoir.
- 4.2. Overburden was stripped from the trenches by an 8-tonne mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. All machining was conducted under archaeological supervision, while topsoil and subsoil layers were removed to the top of the natural sand, gravel and clay substrate.
- 4.3. The excavated trenches were photographed and recorded, specimen sections at each end of the trenches were cleaned, drawn and photographed, deposits encountered were assessed and described, spoil was checked visually for finds and a metal detector search was conducted of spoil heaps and the base of the trenches.
- 4.4. A GPS survey was conducted to get position and levels of the trenches and to identify locations of sections.
- 4.5. A summary of information from this project, as set out in Appendix 2, has been entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

5. RESULTS

Trench 1 (Figs 2 and 3)

- 5.1. This was a trench of 40m length, orientated approximately east to west, sloping downhill to the west. Ground height at the eastern end was 17.14m AOD and 14.06m AOD to the west.
- 5.2. The mid grey brown, sandy loam ploughsoil (layer 0101) was the top deposit of c.0.4m thickness.
- 5.3. Under the ploughsoil was the undisturbed geological 'natural' (deposit 0102) consisting of mid orange silty sand with patches of gravel.
- 5.4. No features or deposits of archaeological significance were observed or identified.
- 5.5. Unstratified finds (0100) included a cast metal drop pull handle and a small piece of coal/coke; both likely to be of post-medieval or modern origin.

Trench 2 (Figs 2 and 4)

- 5.6. This was a trench of 30m length, orientated approximately north-west to south-east. Positioned on fairly level ground, it was 15.94m AOD at the north-western end and 15.98m AOD at the other end.
- 5.7. Ploughsoil 0201 was of 0.34m depth, lying directly on natural across the south-eastern half.
- 5.8. Despite the level appearance at ground level, there were deeper deposits at the north-western end. Layer 0203 (stony mid grey brown silty sand) was of 0.16m thickness and layer 0204 (stony pale brown sand) was of 0.08m thickness.
- 5.9. A piece of brick was recovered from layer 0204 and this is likely to be of post-medieval date
- 5.10. The natural (deposit 0202) was mid orange brown sand and gravel.
- 5.11. No features of archaeological significance were observed or identified.

Trench 3 (Figs 2 and 5)

- 5.12. This was a trench of 30m length positioned against the east edge of the site within a barley field and orientated approximately north to south on fairly level ground (17.21m AOD at north end and 17.15m AOD at the south).
- 5.13. The mid grey brown, sandy loam ploughsoil (layer 0301) was 0.44m thick and was directly over natural.
- 5.14. The natural was orange gravel sand with clay patches.
- 5.15. No finds, features or deposits of archaeological significance were observed or identified.

Trench 4 (Figs 2 and 6)

- 5.16. This trench was 30m long, orientated approximately east to west, sloping downhill to the west. Ground height at the eastern end was 15.18m AOD and 14.40m AOD to the west.
- 5.17. The mid grey brown, sandy loam ploughsoil (layer 0401) was 0.37m thick. It lay directly over natural in the western half of the trench.
- 5.18. Across the eastern half of the trench, under the ploughsoil, was layer 0403 was encountered, with a thickness of up to 0.4m. It was mid grey silty sand with frequent flint pebbles.
- 5.19. The natural (deposit 0402) was orange sand and gravel.
- 5.20. No finds, features or deposits of archaeological significance were observed or identified.

Trench 5 (Figs 2 and 7)

- 5.21. This was a trench of 30m length, orientated north-west to south east, sloping slightly downhill to the north-west, with ground height at the north-western end at 15.59m AOD and 15.97m AOD to the south-east.
- 5.22. The stony mid grey brown, sandy loam ploughsoil (layer 0501) was up to 0.4m thick and lay directly over the natural.
- 5.23. The natural (deposit 0502) was orange gravel sand.

5.24. No finds, features or deposits of archaeological significance were observed or identified.

Trench 6 (Figs 2 and 8)

5.25. This was a trench of 30m length, orientated approximately north to south, sloping very slightly downhill to the north. Ground height at the northern end was 14.61m AOD and at the south end 14.92m AOD.

5.26. The mid grey brown, sandy loam ploughsoil (layer 0601) was up to 0.6m thick.

5.27. At the northern end only was layer 0603 between topsoil and natural. This was up to 0.33m thick and was mid to dark brown grey silty sand with frequent flint pebbles.

5.28. A piece of bottle glass from layer 0603 was likely to be of post-medieval date

5.29. The natural was yellow orange gravel sand (0602).

5.30. No features of archaeological significance were observed or identified.

Trench 7 (Figs 2 and 9)

5.31. Positioned along the southern edge of the site, this trench was 30m long and orientated approximately east to west, with a gradual slope from the east down to the west. Ground height at the east end was 14.53m AOD and at the west end 13.92m AOD.

5.32. The mid grey brown, sandy loam ploughsoil (layer 0701) was 0.35m thick.

5.33. The natural was orange sandy gravel (deposit 0702).

5.34. No finds, features or deposits of archaeological significance were observed or identified.

6. THE FINDS

Introduction

- 6.1. Only a small number of finds, consisting of pottery, ceramic building material (CBM), bottle glass and heat-altered flint, were recovered during the evaluation. They are listed by find type and context in Table 1 and are described by find type (below).

Ctxt	Pottery		CBM		Glass (bottle)		Other finds	Spotdate
	No.	Wt/g	No.	Wt/g	No.	Wt/g		
0001	1	6	2	12			Heat-altered Flint (1 piece, 7g)	Post-med
0100							Coal/coke (1 piece, 11g)	Post-med
0204			1	35				Post-med
0603					1	17		Post-med
Totals	1	6	3	47	1	17		

Table 1 Types and quantities of bulk finds by context

- 6.2. Most, if not all of the finds are, or are likely to be, of post-medieval or modern date and several of these are unstratified, contexts (0001) and (0101), the others coming from soil layers, contexts (0204) and (0603). In addition there are a small number of unstratified metal objects. Overall the finds form a small assemblage which of itself is of limited or little archaeological significance.

Pottery

- 6.3. A single small sherd of Glazed red earthenware pottery (Fabric GRE) was an unstratified find (0001). The sherd (weight 6g) is from the flat base of a pot with an internal glaze. Glazed red earthenware is broadly current during the period c.16th-18th century.

Ceramic building material (CBM)

- 6.4. A few pieces of ceramic building material (CBM) were recovered as unstratified finds (0001) and from a layer of hill wash (0204).
- 6.5. That from (0204) is a single piece of brick (35g) in a medium sand fabric that also contains black and red ferrous and ferrous sand inclusions (Fabric msfe). While not entirely clear it is possible that the original thickness is preserved in this piece and is c.50mm. This would suggest a late medieval or post-medieval date prior to the late 18th or 19th century after which brick thickness in excess of c.60mm appears generally to be the norm (Ryan 1996, Appendix 1).

-
- 6.6. Of the two unstratified pieces, one (7g) is in a fine sand fabric with red ferrous sand inclusions (Fabric fsfe) and is from a thin, flat tile, almost certainly peg tile. The other (5g) is in a medium sand fabric with some very small ferrous sand inclusions (Fabric msfe) and is also probably a piece from a peg-tile. Both are slightly abraded.
- 6.7. Pieces of peg tile are difficult to date closely. Peg tiles appear from the late 12th century in London (Egan 1998, 28) but seem not to have entered into common use, at least in Essex, prior to the 14th century (Ryan and Andrews 1993, 97). After that, they continue to be a very common roofing material into the early 20th century.

Bottle glass

- 6.8. A sherd from a glass bottle (17g), probably a wine bottle, was recovered from soil layer (0603). This is of very dark green glass and is of late post-medieval or early modern date. The very dark colour, possibly able to be described as 'black' glass, could indicate an 18th century rather than 19th or early 20th century date (Fletcher 1976, plate 1 and 131).

Other bulk finds

- 6.9. There are two other unstratified bulk finds, from contexts (0001) and (0100), which are briefly described below.
- 6.10. *Heat-altered flint*: a single small piece of flint (7g) shattered and crazed by exposure to heat (0001).
- 6.11. *Coal*: piece of vesicular coal/coke (11g) dark-grey/black in colour (0101); almost certainly post-medieval or modern.

Metal finds

- 6.12. A few metal objects and pieces were recovered as unstratified finds from across the site, contexts (0001) and (0101: unstratified Trench 1). All are, or appear likely to be, of post-medieval or modern date and are of little or no archaeological significance.
- 6.13. There are six pieces from (0001) which include the base of a matchbox toy car/vehicle (metal alloy) and a button (copper-alloy) impressed in relief around the edge with the legend BEST RING EDGE. In addition there is a piece of lead window came, a pieced lead disc a small screw with a soldered, relief decorated, sheet metal wing top (copper-alloy) and small piece of lead sheet. The single find from (0101) is cast, copper-alloy and is probably a drop pull handle; the size and weight (slightly less than

58g as there is some internal dirt remaining) suggests it is possibly most suitable for drape or chain pull rather than a light.

7. DISCUSSION

- 7.1.** The site was located in a situation with a high archaeological potential, close to the river, on an elevated gravel terrace and on a south-facing slope. Despite cropmarks indicating concentrated past activity to the east of the site and significant archaeological remains of prehistoric, Roman and Anglo-Saxon origin in the vicinity, no archaeological features of these periods were revealed within the site area.
- 7.2.** Significant build-up of soil witnessed in some of the trenches suggests that landscaping activities operated across the site, probably filling in dips and small dry valleys (east to west running clefts) across the site. This was generally very stony material with a high gravel content and the occasional inclusion of brick and glass fragments suggest that this was likely to have taken place in the 19th or 20th century. Possibly the result of dumping spoil from the nearby railway cutting or other earthmoving activities associated with the farm.

8. CA PROJECT TEAM

- 8.1. Fieldwork and recording was undertaken by Rui Oliveira and Jezz Meredith. The survey data was processed by Marta Perlinska. Ryan Wilson prepared the figures. The project was managed for CA by Stuart Boulter, who commented on and corrected an earlier draft of this report.

9. REFERENCES

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APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench	Context No.	Type	Interpretation	Description	Depth/thickness (m)	Spot-date
	0001	Finds	Unstrat finds	Unstratified finds (whole site)		post-medieval
1	0100	Finds	Unstrat finds	Unstrat finds Tr 1		post-medieval
1	0101	Layer	Topsoil	Loam ploughsoil	0.42m	
1	0102	Deposit	Natural	Orange gravel sand natural with clay		
2	0200	Finds	Unstrat finds	Unstrat finds Tr 2		post-medieval
2	0201	Layer	Topsoil	Loam ploughsoil	0.34m	
2	0202	Deposit	Natural	Mid orange brown gravel sand		
2	0203	Layer	Hillwash/dump?	Mid grey brown silty sand with frequent stones and small cbm fragments	0.16m	
2	0204	Layer	Hillwash/dump?	Pale brown gravel sand	0.08m	post-medieval
3	0300	Finds	Unstrat finds	Unstrat finds Tr 3 (none collected)		
3	0301	Layer	Topsoil	Loam ploughsoil	0.44m	
3	0302	Deposit	Natural	Orange gravel sand & clay		
4	0400	Finds	Unstrat finds	Unstrat finds Tr 4 (none collected)		
4	0401	Layer	Topsoil	Loam ploughsoil	0.37m	
4	0402	Deposit	Natural	Orange gravel sand with clay		
4	0403	Layer	Hillwash/dump?	Mid grey silty sand with freq small/medium flints	0.4m	
5	0500	Finds	Unstrat finds	Unstrat finds Tr 5 (none collected)		
5	0501	Layer	Topsoil	Loam ploughsoil	0.39m	
5	0502	Deposit	Natural	Orange clay gravel and sand		
6	0600	Finds	Unstrat finds	Unstrat finds Tr 6 (none collected)		
6	0601	Layer	Topsoil	Loam ploughsoil	0.6m	
6	0602	Deposit	Natural	Yellow/orange gravel sand and sand		
6	0603	Layer	Hillwash/dump?	Mid to dark brown grey silty sand with freq flints	0.33m	post-medieval
7	0700	Finds	Unstrat finds	Unstrat finds Tr 7 (none collected)		
7	0701	Layer	Topsoil	Loam ploughsoil	0.35m	
7	0702	Deposit	Natural	Orange gravel sand with patches of clay		

APPENDIX 2: OASIS SUMMARY

OASIS ID: [cotswold2-394226](#)

Project details

Project name	Brantham Hall Farm, The Chase, Brantham
Short description of the project	In May 2020, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological evaluation at the site of a proposed farm reservoir to the south of Brantham Hall Farm. The location of the site suggested high archaeological potential as it was situated close to the River Stour, on a well-drained, south-facing gravel terrace. Cropmarks of trackways and field boundaries had been recorded to the east of the site and Beaker burials, Bronze Age cremations, Iron Age pits, a Roman pottery scatter and a Late Anglo-Saxon coin hoard had all been recorded in the vicinity. Despite this high potential, no features of archaeological significance were recorded and a small assemblage of finds, mainly of post-medieval or modern date show a very meagre utilisation of the site in the past. Deep deposits of stony material across the site, probably dating to the 19th or 20th centuries, were likely to be the result of dumping excess material from the excavation of the nearby railway cutting or from other landscaping activities associated with the adjacent farm.
Project dates	Start: 27-05-2020 End: 28-05-2020
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	DC/20/00191 - Planning Application No.
Any associated project reference codes	BNT 099 - HER event no.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Cultivated Land 3 - Operations to a depth more than 0.25m
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Methods & techniques	"Sample Trenches"
Development type	Farm infrastructure (e.g. barns, grain stores, equipment stores, etc.)
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country	England
Site location	SUFFOLK BABERGH BRANTHAM Brantham Hall Farm
Study area	0.8 Hectares
Site coordinates	TM 12038 33700 51.960741167077 1.086623269369 51 57 38 N 001 05 11 E Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Cotswold Archaeology
Project brief originator	Suffolk County Council Archaeological Services
Project design originator	Cotswold Archaeology (Suffolk)
Project director/manager	Stuart Boulter
Project supervisor	Jezz Meredith
Type of sponsor/funding body	Landowner

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	Suffolk County Council Archaeological Services
Physical Contents	"Ceramics", "Metal"
Digital Archive recipient	Suffolk County Council Archaeological Services
Digital Contents	"other"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography", "Survey", "Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Suffolk County Council Archaeological Services
Paper Contents	"other"
Paper Media available	"Miscellaneous Material", "Section"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Brantham Hall Farm, Suffolk: archaeological evaluation
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Meredith, J.
Other bibliographic details	SU0144_1
Date	2020
Issuer or publisher	Cotswold Archaeology (Suffolk)
Place of issue or publication	Needham Market
Description	A little gem

Entered by	Jezz Meredith (jezz.meredith@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk)
Entered on	2 July 2020

OASIS:

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N

Site boundary

0 1km

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Ordnance Survey 0100031673

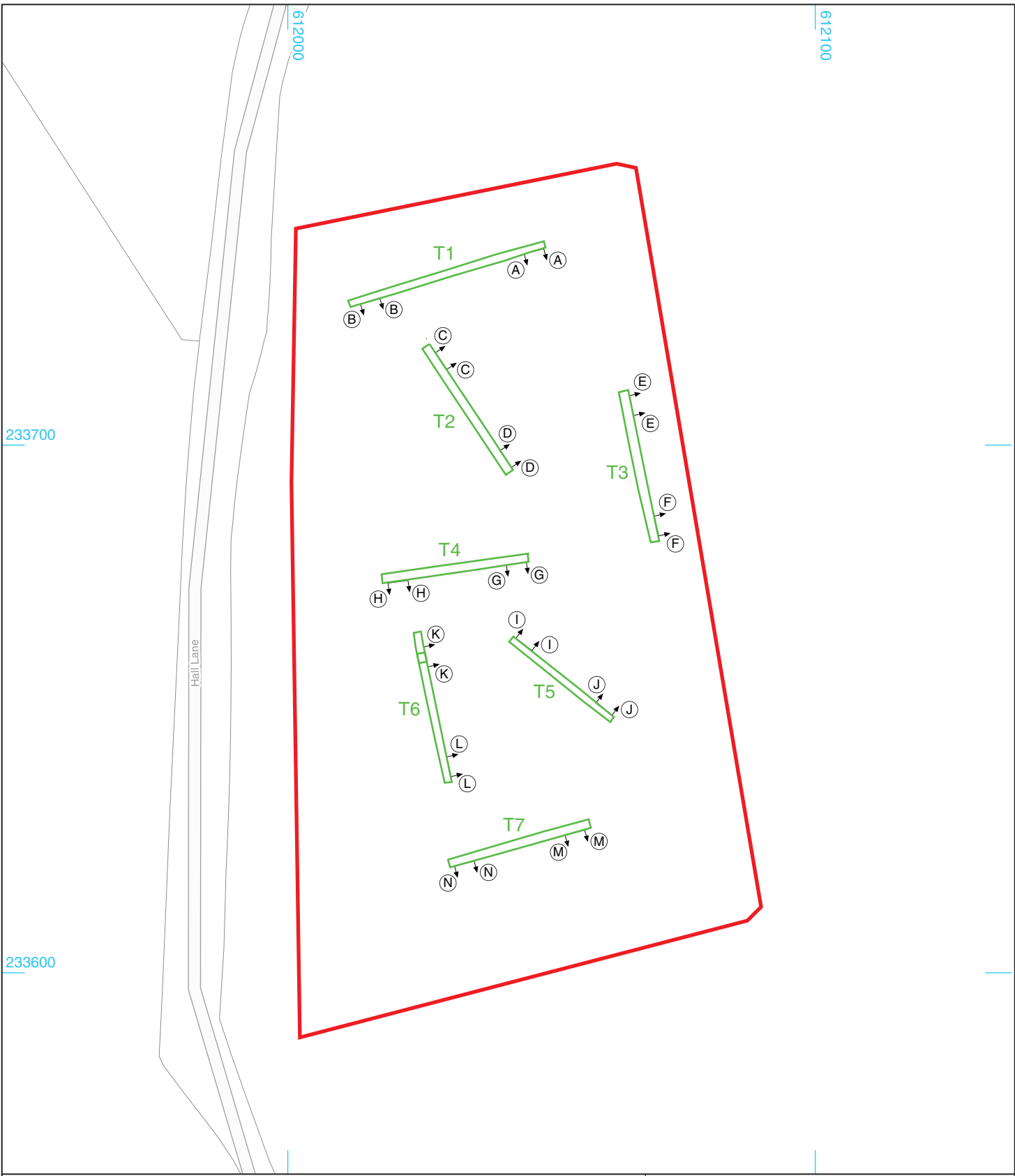
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PROJECT TITLE
Brantham Hall Farm, Brantham, Suffolk

FIGURE TITLE
Site location plan

DRAWN BY RW **PROJECT NO.** SU0144 **FIGURE NO.**
CHECKED BY DJB **DATE** 10/06/2020
APPROVED BY JM **SCALE@A4** 1:25,000 **1**



-  Site boundary
-  Evaluation trench
-  Section location

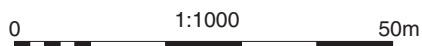


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PROJECT TITLE
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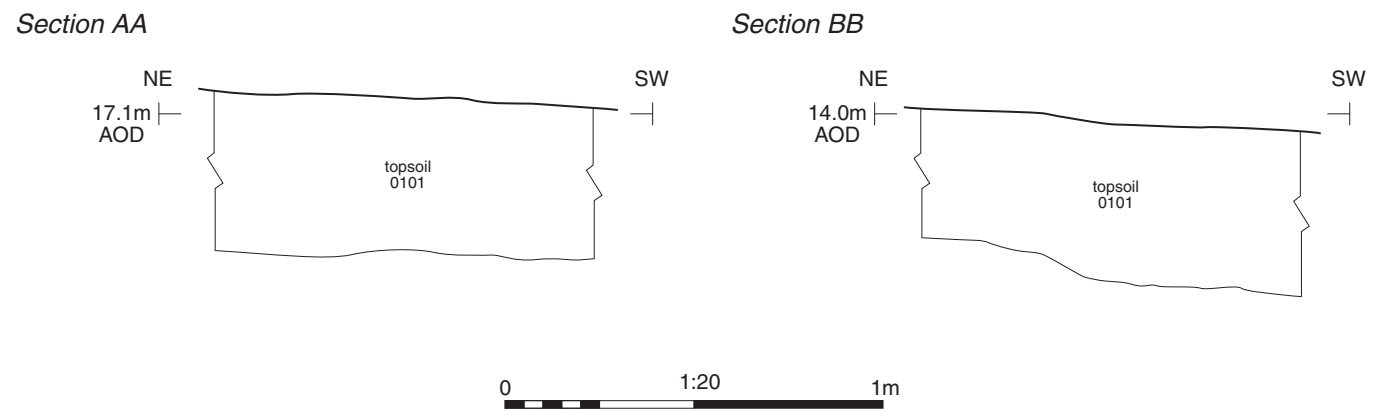
FIGURE TITLE
Trench location plan



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CHECKED BY	DJB	DATE	10/06/2020	2
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Trench 1, looking south-west (1m scale)



Trench 1 representative section, looking south-east (0.4m and 1m scale)


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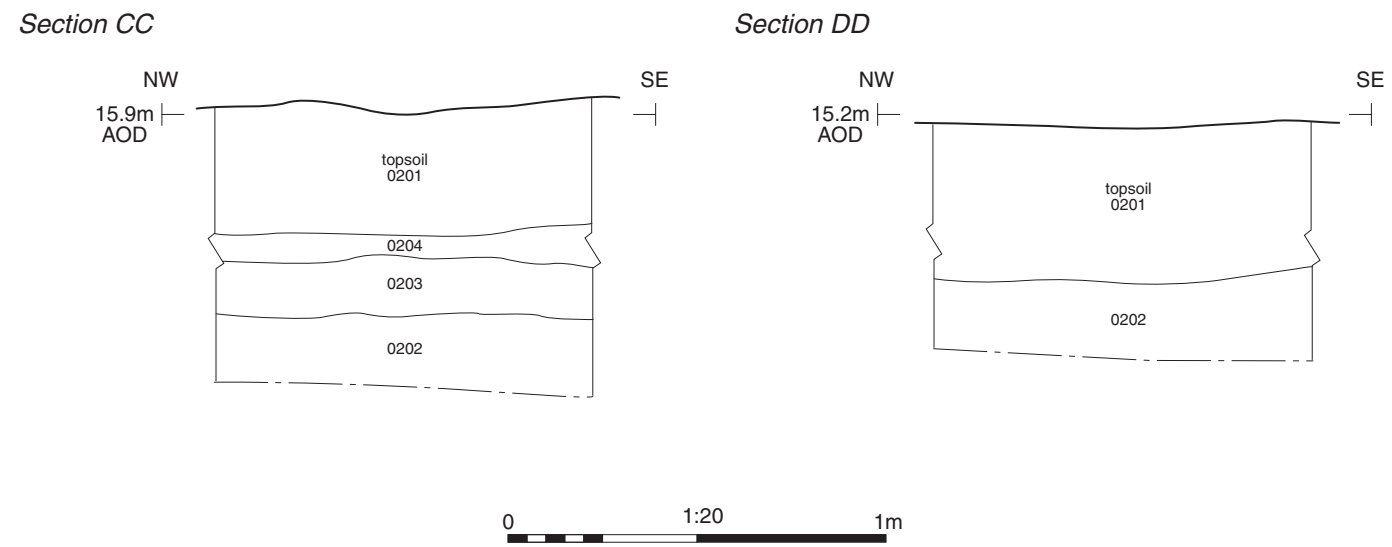
PROJECT TITLE
 Brantham Hall Farm, Brantham, Suffolk

FIGURE TITLE
Trench 1: sections and photographs

DRAWN BY	RW	PROJECT NO.	SU0144	FIGURE NO.
CHECKED BY	DJB	DATE	10/06/2020	3
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Trench 2, looking north-west (1m scale)



Trench 2 representative section, looking north-east (0.5m and 1m scale)


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PROJECT TITLE
 Brantham Hall Farm, Brantham, Suffolk

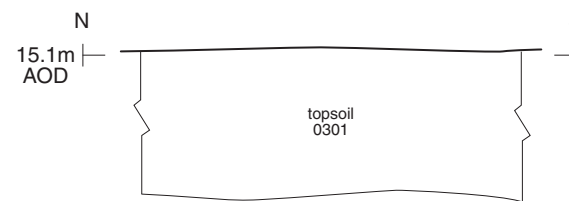
FIGURE TITLE
Trench 2: sections and photographs

DRAWN BY	RW	PROJECT NO.	SU0144	FIGURE NO.
CHECKED BY	DJB	DATE	10/06/2020	4
APPROVED BY	JM	SCALE@A3	1:20	

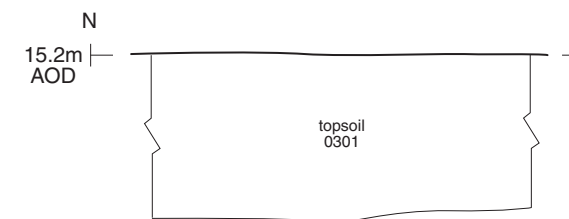


Trench 3, looking south (1m scale)

Section EE



Section FF

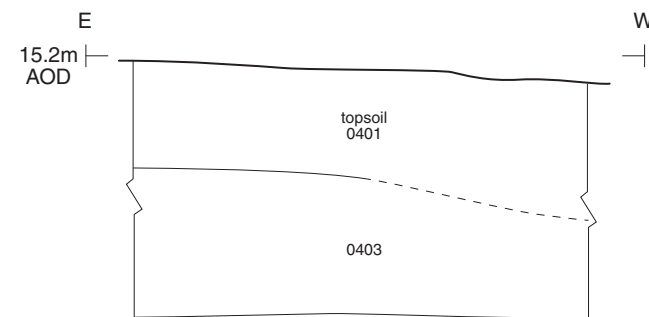


Trench 3 representative section, looking east (0.4m and 1m scale)



Trench 4, looking east (1m scale)

Section GG



Section HH



Trench 4 representative section, looking south (0.5m and 1m scale)

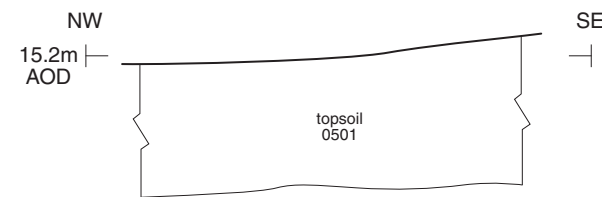
[Andover 01264 347630](tel:01264347630)
[Cirencester 01285 771022](tel:01285771022)
[Exeter 01392 573970](tel:01392573970)
[Milton Keynes 01908 564660](tel:01908564660)
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PROJECT TITLE
 Brantham Hall Farm, Brantham, Suffolk

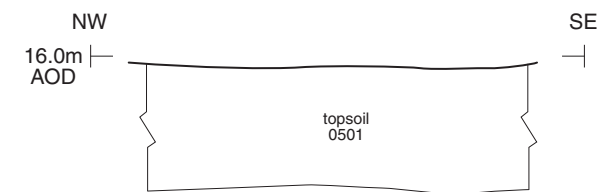
FIGURE TITLE
 Trench 4: sections and photographs

DRAWN BY	RW	PROJECT NO.	SU0144	FIGURE NO.
CHECKED BY	DJB	DATE	10/06/2020	6
APPROVED BY	JM	SCALE@A3	1:20	

Section II



Section JJ



Trench 5, looking south-east (1m scale)



Trench 5 representative section, looking north-east (0.4m and 1m scale)

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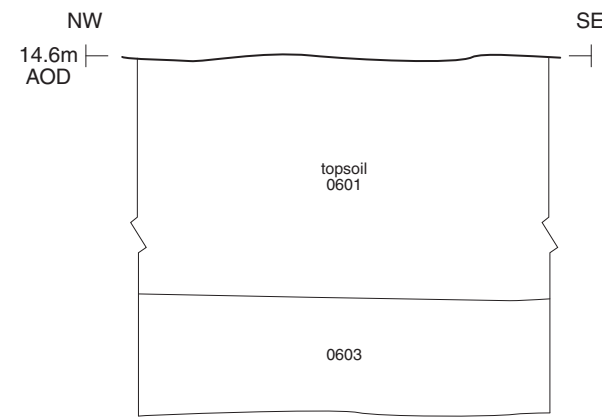
FIGURE TITLE
 Trench 5: sections and photographs

DRAWN BY	RW	PROJECT NO.	SU0144	FIGURE NO.
CHECKED BY	DJB	DATE	10/06/2020	7
APPROVED BY	JM	SCALE@A3	1:20	

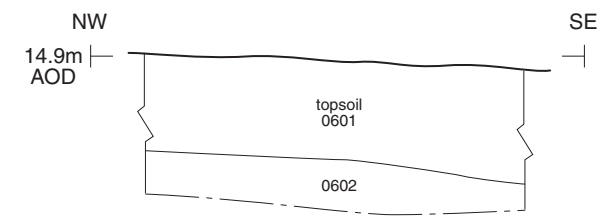


Trench 6, looking south-east (1m scale)

Section KK



Section LL

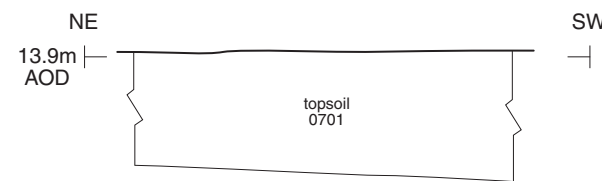


Trench 6 representative section, looking north-east (0.4m and 1m scale)

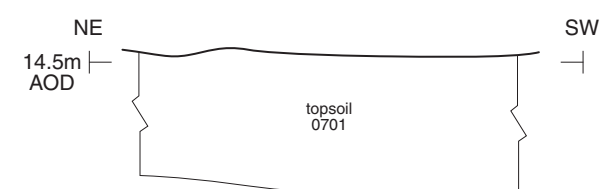


Trench 7, looking south-west (1m scale)

Section MM



Section NN



Trench 7 representative section, looking south-west (0.3m and 1m scale)


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PROJECT TITLE
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FIGURE TITLE
Trench 7: sections and photographs

DRAWN BY	RW	PROJECT NO.	SU0144	FIGURE NO.
CHECKED BY	DJB	DATE	10/06/2020	9
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