

**Land at Desford Lane  
Ratby  
Leicestershire**

*Archaeological Evaluation*



*for:*  
West Hart Partnership

CA Project: MK0455  
CA Report: MK0455\_1  
Planning Ref.: 20/00786/FUL  
Accession No.: X.A41.2021  
OASIS ID - cotswold2-420633  
April 2021



# Land at Desford Lane Ratby Leicestershire

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Fig. 1 Site location plan (1:25,000)

Fig. 2 Trench location plan, showing areas of modern disturbance (1:2000)

Fig. 3-4 Trench photographs



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## SUMMARY

<b>Project name:</b>	Land at Desford Lane
<b>Location:</b>	Ratby, Leicestershire
<b>NGR:</b>	451013 305660
<b>Type:</b>	Evaluation
<b>Date:</b>	26-27 April 2021
<b>Planning reference:</b>	20/00786/FUL
<b>Location of Archive:</b>	To be deposited with Leicestershire Museum Service
<b>Accession Number:</b>	X.A41.2021

In April 2021, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological evaluation of land at Desford Lane, Ratby, Leicestershire. The fieldwork, commissioned by West Hart Partnership, comprised the excavation of five trenches totalling 135 linear metres.

Despite the site's location in the general vicinity of a known Roman road and being situated on the southern edge of a south-facing river gravel terrace, no features or deposits of archaeological interest were encountered. Two of the trenches revealed evidence for modern activity within the site including a thin 'levelling' layer and a dump of debris, both of which produced fragments of modern glass, brick, and chinaware.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. In April 2021, Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation of land at Desford Lane, Ratby, Leicestershire (centred at NGR: 451013 305660; Fig. 1). This evaluation was undertaken for West Hart Partnership.
- 1.2. Hinkley and Bosworth Borough Council (HBBC) has granted planning permission for the construction of a new medical centre and associated car parking and landscaping within the site (planning ref: 20/00786/FUL). Condition 20 of this planning permission requires the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with an approved WSI.
- 1.3. The scope of this evaluation was defined by Sophie Clarke, Senior Planning Archaeologist at Leicestershire County Council, the archaeological advisor to HBBC (LCCAA). The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by CA (2021) and approved by the LCCAA.
- 1.4. The evaluation was carried out in line with the *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (CIfA 2014; updated October 2020), *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) PPN 3: Archaeological Excavation* (Historic England 2015) and *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The MoRPHE Project Managers' Guide* (Historic England 2015).

### The site

- 1.5. The proposed development site is approximately 0.48ha in extent and is located south of Desford Lane, on the western edge of Ratby. The site currently comprises a single pasture field bounded to the north and west by Desford Lane, to the east by a residential property, and to the south by a small water course and sports pitch. The site lies at approximately 84m above Ordnance Datum (aOD), with a very gentle slope rising towards the northern end of the site.
- 1.6. The underlying bedrock geology of the site is mapped as Gunthorpe Member mudstone, a sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 237 to 247 million years ago in the Triassic Period. This is overlain by alluvial deposits of clay, silt, sand, and gravel, and river terrace deposits of sand and gravel, formed between 2-3 million years ago in the Quaternary Period (BGS 2021). These latter are recorded only at the northern extreme of the site.

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## 2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1. There have been very few previous archaeological investigations undertaken in the vicinity of the site. The site was thought to lie partly on gravel, on a gentle south-facing slope adjacent to a water course, all potentially making this a location for past activity. The site therefore had some potential to contain archaeological remains ranging from the prehistoric through to the medieval periods. The line of the Via Devana Roman road runs through the village of Ratby and there are a number of Roman sites recorded in the area.

## 3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1. The general objective of the evaluation was to provide further information on the likely archaeological resource within the site, including its presence/absence, character, extent, date and state of preservation, and significance. This information will enable HBBC, as advised by the LCCAA, 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* (MHCLG 2019).

## 4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1. The evaluation fieldwork comprised the excavation of 5 trenches in the locations shown in Fig. 2, with two trenches measuring 30m long by 1.8m wide, and three trenches measuring 25m long by 1.8m wide.
- 4.2. The trenches were located to provide a representative sample of the site area and to evaluate the main areas of developmental impact. The location of trench 3 was adjusted slightly to the south in order to maintain a safe site access route.
- 4.3. Trenches were set out on OS National Grid co-ordinates using Leica GPS. Overburden was stripped from the trenches by a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless grading bucket. All machining was conducted under archaeological supervision to the top of the natural substrate, as no archaeological features were encountered.

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- 4.4. Records of all trenches were maintained in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 1: Fieldwork Recording Manual*.
- 4.5. Deposits were assessed for their palaeoenvironmental potential and no deposits were identified that required sampling. No artefacts were retained.
- 4.6. CA will make arrangements with Leicestershire Museum Service for the deposition of the project archive. A digital archive will also be prepared and deposited with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS). The archives (museum and digital) will be prepared and deposited in accordance with *Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives* (ClfA 2014; updated October 2020).
- 4.7. A summary of information from this project, as set out in Appendix B, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

## 5. RESULTS

- 5.1. This section provides an overview of the evaluation results. Detailed summaries of the recorded contexts can be found in Appendix A.
- 5.2. The natural substrate was encountered across the site at depths ranging between 0.37m and 0.52m below present ground level (bpgl) and comprised mid grey/orange and red/orange silty clay with very infrequent small pebble inclusions. This was overlain in Trenches 1 and 5 by an alluvial subsoil deposit of mid grey/orange silty clay without inclusions, measuring between 0.20m and 0.24m thick. Across the site, lower deposits were sealed by topsoil comprising mid grey brown silty clay with no inclusions. No features or deposits of any kind were encountered in Trenches 1, 2, and 5.
- 5.3. Evidence for modern activity within the site was encountered in Trenches 3 and 4. In Trench 3 a dark grey silt deposit (302) was seen in the southern half of the trench, measuring approximately 0.49m thick. This contained a number of modern bricks, floor tiles, and blue-and-white china fragments which were noted and photographed on site but not retained. A modern plastic field drain was observed at the base of the deposit.
- 5.4. In trench 4, a thin layer of dark grey silt (402) was observed covering the natural substrate at the western end of the trench. The deposit measured up to 0.14m thick

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and contained a number of modern brick fragments as well as fragments of bottle glass and blue-and-white china. The finds were noted and photographed on site but not retained.

## 6. DISCUSSION

6.1. Despite the site's location in relative proximity to the line of a Roman road and at the edge of a south-facing gravel river terrace, no archaeological features or deposits of any kind were encountered during the fieldwork, and no artefacts were observed except those dated to the modern period. The site has not formed part of any focus of activity at any period, and was not located in the immediate surroundings of any substantial settlement or other types of infrastructure associated with agriculture or the Roman road. The lack of recognisable archaeological activity is likely due to the site lying on the alluvial deposits off the gravel terrace (to the north), within the base of the broader river valley. These soils have provided good, damp pasture land throughout history and prehistory, and still do.

6.2. It is clear from the modern deposits observed in Trenches 3 and 4 that modern activity within the site has taken place on a number of occasions, most likely in the form of waste disposal and ground maintenance/levelling of the field in order to facilitate its use as livestock pasture. An extant but clearly disused small stable located adjacent to the northern site boundary provides additional evidence of this.

## 7. CA PROJECT TEAM

7.1. Fieldwork was undertaken by Anna Wolf, assisted by Oliver Ruffles. This report was written by Anna Wolf. The project archive has been compiled and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neill. The project was managed for CA and the report edited by Richard Mortimer.

## 8. REFERENCES

British Geological Survey 2021 *Geology of Britain Viewer*

<https://www.bgs.ac.uk/map-viewers/geology-of-britain-viewer/>

(Accessed 28 April 2021)

CIfA (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists) 2014/2020. *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation*

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Cotswold Archaeology 2021 *Desford Lane, Ratby, Leicestershire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation*

Historic England 2015a. *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) Planning Policy Note 3: Archaeological Excavation*

Historic England 2015b. *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The MoRPHE Project Managers' Guide*

Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government 2019 *National Planning Policy Framework*



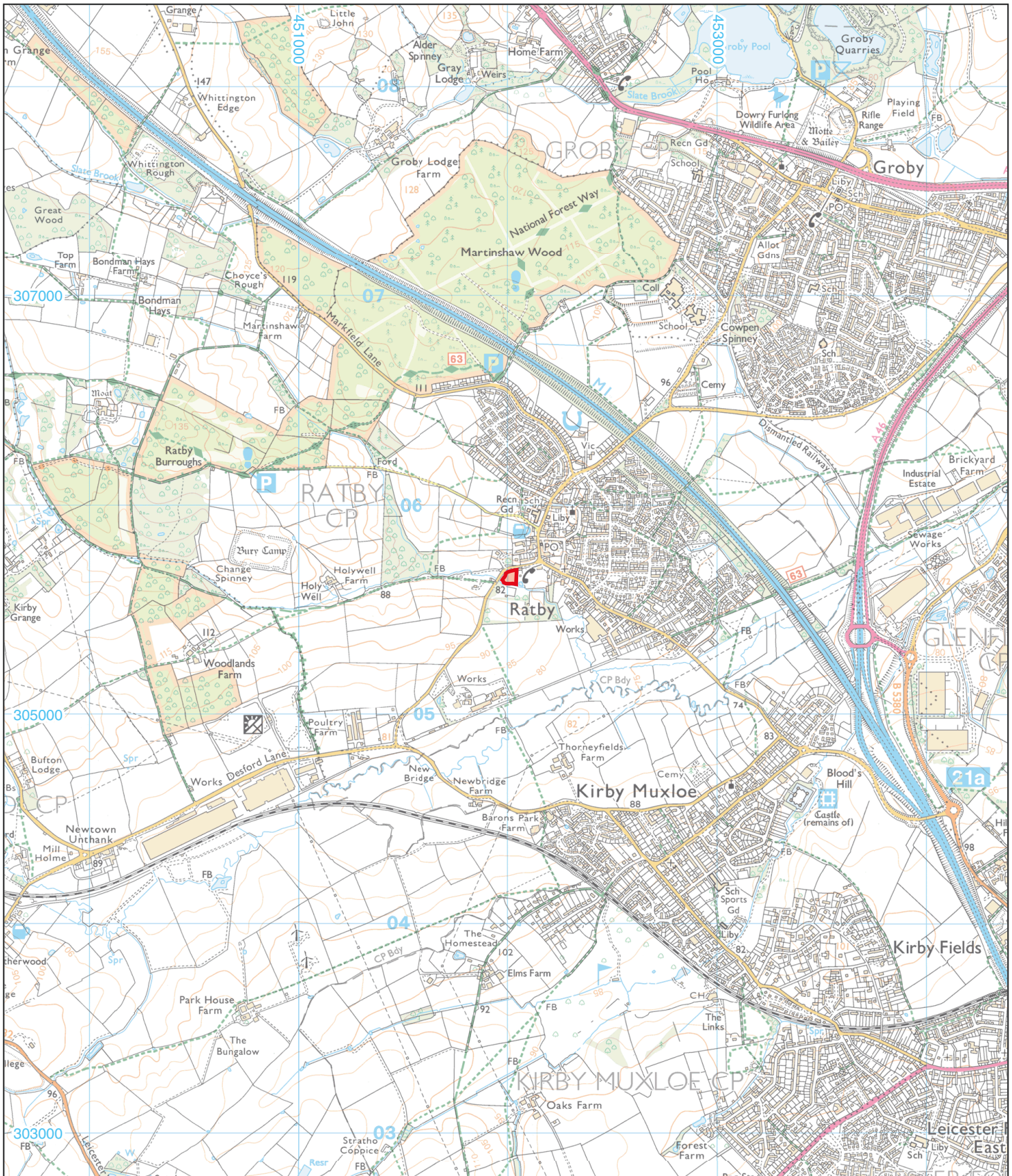
## APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench	Context No.	Type	Fill of	Interpretation	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth/thickness (m)	Spot-date
1	100	Layer		Topsoil	Mid grey brown silty clay, firm, no inclusions	>25	>1.8	0.28	
1	101	Layer		Subsoil	Mid grey orange brown, silty clay, soft, no inclusions	>25	>1.8	0.24	
1	102	Layer		Natural	Light grey orange and red orange, silty clay, firm, no inclusions	>25	>1.8		
2	200	Layer		Topsoil	Mid grey brown silty clay, firm, no inclusions	>25	>1.8	0.38	
2	201	Layer		Natural	Light grey orange and red orange, silty clay, firm, no inclusions	>25	>1.8		
3	300	Layer		Topsoil	Mid grey brown silty clay, firm, no inclusions	>25	>1.8	0.21	
3	301	-		-	VOID	-	-		
3	302	Deposit		Modern	Dark grey, silt, soft, frequent brick/glass/chine fragments	>15	>1.8	0.49	modern
3	303	Layer		Natural	Light grey orange, silty clay, firm, no inclusions	>25	>1.8		
4	400	Layer		Topsoil	Mid grey brown silty clay, firm, no inclusions	>25	>1.8		
4	401	Layer		Natural	Light grey orange, silty clay, firm, no inclusions	>25	>1.8		
4	402	Deposit		Modern	Dark grey, silt, soft, frequent brick/glass/chine fragments	>5	>1.8	0.14	modern
5	500	Layer		Topsoil	Mid grey brown silty clay, firm, no inclusions	>25	>1.8	0.25	
5	501	Layer		Subsoil	Mid grey orange brown, silty clay, soft, no inclusions	>25	>1.8	0.20	
5	502	Layer		Natural	Light grey orange, silty clay, firm, no inclusions	>25	>1.8		

## APPENDIX B: OASIS REPORT FORM

<b>PROJECT DETAILS - OASIS ID - cotswold2-420633</b>		
Project name	Land at Desford Lane, Ratby, Leicestershire	
Short description	In April 2021, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological evaluation of land at Desford Lane, Ratby, Leicestershire. The fieldwork, commissioned by West Hart Partnership, comprised the excavation of a total of five trenches. Despite the site's location in the general vicinity of a known Roman road, and being situated on a south-facing river gravel terrace, no features or deposits of archaeological interest were encountered. Two of the trenches revealed evidence for modern activity within the site including a thin levelling layer and a dump of debris, both of which produced fragments of modern glass, brick, and chinaware.	
Project dates	26-27 April 2021	
Project type	Field evaluation	
Previous work	None	
Future work	Unknown	
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>		
Site location	South of Desford Lane, Ratby, Leicestershire	
Study area (m <sup>2</sup> /ha)	0.48ha	
Site co-ordinates	451013 305660	
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project brief originator	Leicestershire County Council	
Project design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Richard Mortimer	
Project Supervisor	Anna Wolf	
<b>MONUMENT TYPE</b>	None	
<b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS</b>	None	
<b>PROJECT ARCHIVES</b>	<b>Intended final location of archive (museum/Accession no.)</b>	<b>Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone etc)</b>
Physical	n/a	n/a
Paper	Leicestershire Museum Service	Trench sheets, photo register
Digital	Leicestershire Museum Service; ADS	Digital photos, report copy
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>		
Cotswold Archaeology 2021 <i>Land at Desford Lane, Ratby, Leicestershire: Archaeological Evaluation</i> CA typescript report <b>MK0455_1</b>		





 Site boundary



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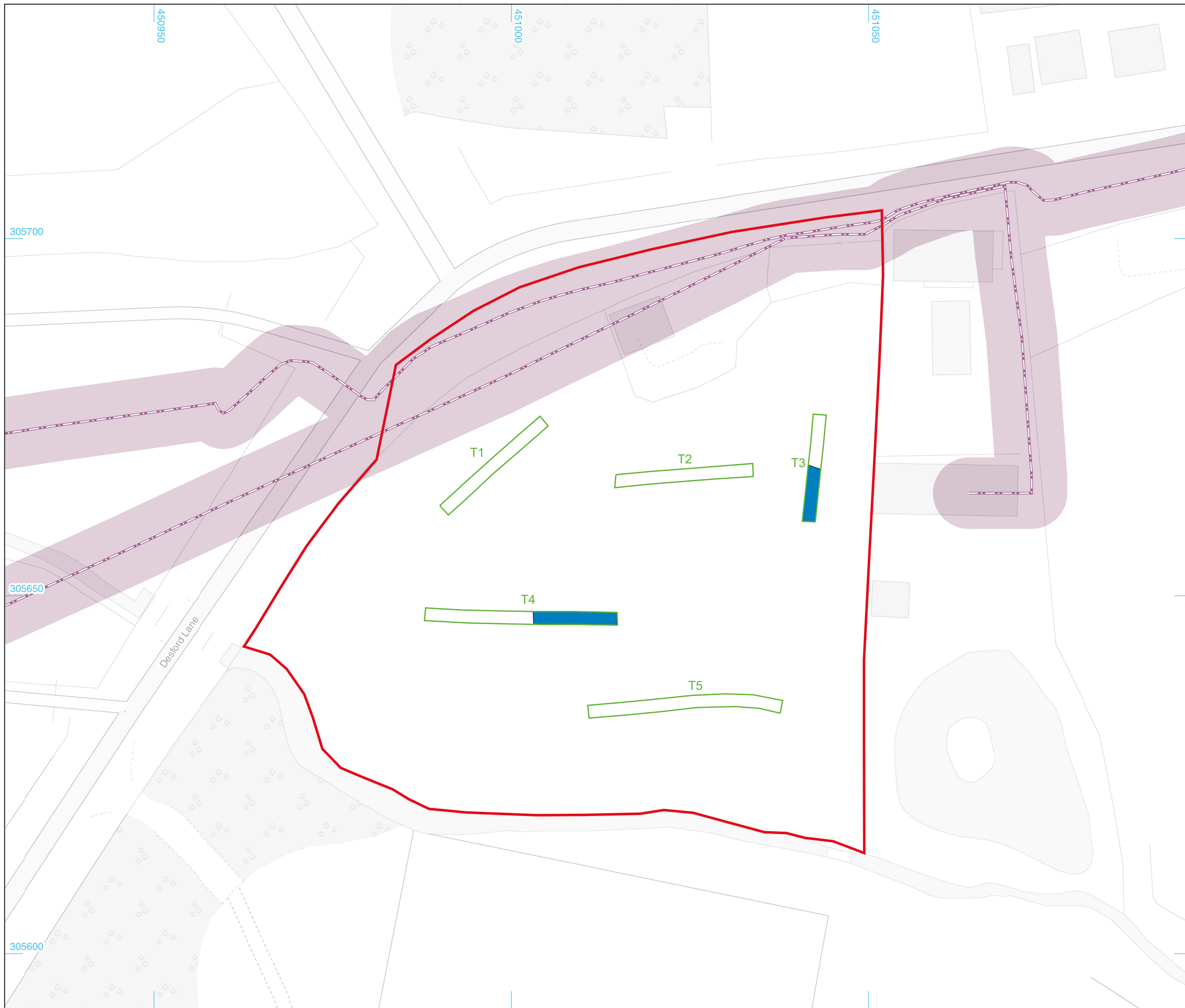
**PROJECT TITLE**  
 Land at Desford Lane, Ratby,  
 Leicestershire

**FIGURE TITLE**  
 Site location plan

DRAWN BY	RW	PROJECT NO.	MK0455	FIGURE NO.
CHECKED BY	DJB	DATE	18/04/2021	1
APPROVED BY	AW	SCALE@A4	1:25,000	

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Ordnance Survey 0100031673





- Site boundary
- Evaluation trench
- Modern feature
- Service (and buffer)



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**PROJECT TITLE**  
 Land at Desford Lane, Ratby,  
 Leicestershire

**FIGURE TITLE**  
 Trench location plan, showing areas of  
 modern disturbance

DRAWN BY CHECKED BY APPROVED BY	RW DJB AW	PROJECT NO. DATE SCALE@A3	MK0455 18/04/2021 1:500	<b>FIGURE NO.</b> <b>2</b>
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Trench 1, looking south-west (1m scales)



Trench 2, looking south-west (1m scales)



Trench 3, looking north-west (1m scales)



Trench 4, looking west (1m scales)



Trench 5, looking west (1m scales)



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