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**Land to the South of Meeting House Close
East Leake
Nottinghamshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

Report No. Y145/14

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CONTENTS

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| 1. INTRODUCTION | 3 |
| 2. WORKING METHODS..... | 4 |
| 3. RESULTS..... | 5 |
| 4. CONCLUSION | 5 |
| 5. BIBLIOGRAPHY | 6 |

APPENDICES

1. Context Register
2. Drawing Register
3. Photographic Register

Figures

- Fig. 1 Site location
Fig. 2 Plan of features at the former windmill

Plates

- Plate 1 North-facing shot of the central spine road excavation from the south of site
Plate 2 North-facing shot of the central spine road excavation at the west of site
Plate 3 South-west-facing shot of Rectangular pits 004, 006, 008 and 010

Summary

CFA Archaeology undertook an archaeological watching brief on land to the south of Meeting House Close, East Leake, Nottinghamshire. The work took place in February and April 2014 and was commissioned by Phoenix Consulting Archaeology Ltd on behalf of Redrow Homes Ltd. The watching brief was maintained during the excavation of a central road and during groundworks in the south-west of the site which revealed a sequence of four shallow pits on the site of a former 19th-century windmill. Metal-detecting was undertaken during the watching brief leading to the recovery of a post-medieval copper-alloy crotal bell.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken by CFA Archaeology Ltd (CFA) between 17 February and 1 April 2014, on land to the south of Meeting House Close. The CFA code for the project was MEEL/2154.

All work was undertaken in accordance with a written scheme of investigation prepared by Phoenix Consulting Archaeology Ltd on behalf of Redrow Homes Ltd (Richmond 2013).

1.1 Site Location and Description

The village of East Leake is located in the Borough of Rushcliffe towards the South of Nottinghamshire (NGR: SK 455880 325870, Fig. 1). The site comprises three fields covering an area of 2.1ha bounded by mature hedgerows and tress and bordered by residential housing to the north and west, enclosed fields to the east and Mill Lane to the south. The land slopes significantly from Mill Lane at 67m above the Ordnance Datum (AOD) before levelling out towards the Meeting House Close entrance at 56m AOD.

The underlying geology of the area is part of the Branscombe Mudstone Formation with superficial deposits of alluvium, clay, silt, sand and gravel and bedrock deposits of sedimentary Mudstone (BGS 2014). A number of geological test pits had been excavated across the site before the start of the groundworks.

1.2 Historical and Archaeological Background

The following background is a summary of the desk-based assessment (Owen 2012).

Prior to the watching brief, two archaeological features were known on the site; a system of ridge and furrow earthworks and a slight raised earthwork of a former windmill. The ridge and furrow earthworks have been identified as post-medieval and the site of the windmill is also recorded in the HER as post-medieval. The windmill is depicted on the 1st edition OS of 1884 but appears to have been removed by the time of the 2nd edition OS map (1900). The site of the windmill was evident in the field as a faintly raised earthwork.

Excavations at East Leake Quarry 600m to the south of site revealed Neolithic flint artefacts and Bronze-Age Features, including a burnt mound, a ring ditch and three urned-cremation burials as well as Roman ceramics; and Saxon burials.

1.3 Objectives

In accordance with the WSI (Richmond 2013, 9) the objective of the watching brief was to ‘carry out a formal programme of archaeological observation and investigation during site operations that may disturb or destroy archaeological deposits or features of historic interest.’

2. WORKING METHODS

All work was undertaken according to the Institute for Archaeologists’ Code of Conduct, relevant Standards and Guidance documents (IfA 1996) and the WSI.

All on-site recording was carried out according to standard CFA procedures, principally by drawing, photography and by completing standard CFA recording forms.

The watching brief consisted of a phase of archaeological monitoring during the creation of a central spine road which would identify the archaeological character across the whole of the site. A controlled topsoil and overburden strip was also undertaken at the south-west corner of the site on the location of a former windmill. The removal of topsoil and sub-soil was monitored across the footprint of the spine road down to the natural substrate. The work was carried out by a mechanical excavator equipped with a smooth-bladed ditching bucket.

2.1 Standards and Guidance

CFA Archaeology is a registered organisation (RO) with the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA). All work was conducted in accordance with relevant IfA Standards and Guidance documents (IfA 1996, 2001), English Heritage guidance (EH 2008), and CFA’s standard methodology.

2.2 Monitoring

The project was monitored by the archaeological curatorial authority on behalf of the local planning authority, who were informed in advance of the works taking place.

2.3 Archiving

The archive will be ordered, indexed and conform to the requirements of the depositing museum and to all relevant professional guidance (Brown 2011). Appropriate forms for prior notification of the project and for transfer of title will be procured from the relevant museum authority. A summary of the results of the archaeological works will be submitted for inclusion in OASIS (Ref: cfaarcha1-177837).

3. RESULTS

A full list and description of contexts comprises Appendix 1. Tables listing drawn and photographic records form appendices 2 and 3.

A mid greyish-brown topsoil deposit existed across the site (001). It was 0.3m thick and consisted of a friable silty-clay. Pale orange-grey colluvial subsoil was present at the north of site at the base of the northerly slope. The subsoil was between 0.05 and 0.2m thick (002). The natural substrate comprised firm mottled reddish-grey clay that contained occasional limestone cobbles 0.05m diameter.

The remains of ridge and furrow were visible as raised earthworks in the east field and recorded at 4m intervals. The ridge and furrow system appeared to have been ploughed out above the ground in the north and west field, although truncated furrows were evident following excavation.

3.1 Former Windmill

The only archaeological feature identified on the site was the remains of a former windmill represented by four shallow rectangular pits (Fig. 2 and Plate 3; 004, 006, 008 and 010). The series of pits had similar dimensions; typically 1.8 x 1.45m and 0.1m deep with rounded sides and flat bases. Each pit was filled with a loose yellow-grey clayey-sand containing inclusions of building debris; sub-angular limestone fragments, brick fragments, pieces of render, concrete fragments, mortar fragments and corroded iron debris.

3.2 Unstratified Finds

A number unstratified metal finds were encountered during metal detecting on the site; these included a small number of 19th and early 20th-century coins, metal fastenings and buttons. One notable find was a copper-alloy crotal bell. The bell consisted of a one piece cast design that measured 25mm in diameter with a square suspension loop on the upper half and a sunburst pattern on both hemispheres. A horse shoe makers mark is evident on one half of the centre of the lower hemisphere. The artefact most likely dates to the 16th or 17th century. Unstratified pieces of ceramic land drain and clay pipe were also noted during the groundworks.

4. CONCLUSION

Apart from the four small pit-like features recorded at the site of a post medieval windmill and previously documented ridge and furrow, no other archaeological features were recorded. The four shallow pit-like features may have formed the footings for a post-mounted windmill; housing a wooden treadle that supported the upper parts of the windmill structure. The windmill building appears to have been robbed out. The OS Map data suggest that the windmill was demolished between 1884 and 1900.

Metal detecting across the site identified a number of unstratified metal finds; mainly buttons and fastenings. One notable find was a copper-alloy crotal bell. Crotal bells are generally associated with livestock or hawking.

5. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Context Summary

| Context | Fill | Type | Description |
|---------|------|---------|---|
| 000 | | Deposit | Natural substrate; firm reddish-grey silty-clay with very occasional stone cobbles c.0.05m Diam. |
| 001 | | Deposit | Topsoil; friable mid-brownish grey clayey-silt. c.0.3m thick |
| 002 | | Deposit | Subsoil; friable orangish-grey clayey-silt. 0.05-0.2m thick |
| 003 | 004 | Deposit | Fill of Rectangular Pit 004. Loose yellowish-grey clayey-sand. Contains c.50% building debris including bricks, brick fragments, render fragments, concrete fragments, mortar fragments, subangular limestone fragments, occasional iron bolts and nails. |
| 004 | | Cut | Rectangular Pit. Rounded sides. Flat base. 1.7m Length 1.2m Width 0.09m Depth. Truncated widthways by a geological survey hole. |
| 005 | 006 | Deposit | Fill of Rectangular Pit 006. Contains c.50% building debris including brick fragments, render fragments, concrete fragments, mortar fragments, occasional iron bolts and nails. Regular sub-angular limestone fragments c.0.08m Diam. |
| 006 | | Cut | Rectangular Pit. Sudden break of slope, rounding to a flat base. 2m Length 1.6m Width 0.11m Depth |
| 007 | 008 | Deposit | Fill of Rectangular Pit 008. Contains c.50% building debris including brick fragments, render fragments, concrete fragments, mortar fragments, subangular limestone fragments, occasional iron debris |
| 008 | | Cut | Rectangular Pit. Rounded sides. Flat base. 1.6m Length 1.5m Width 0.13m Depth. |
| 009 | 010 | Deposit | Fill of Rectangular Pit 010. Contains c.50% building debris including brick fragments, render fragments, concrete fragments, mortar fragments, subangular limestone fragments, occasional iron debris. Prominent ash lens at the base of the feature. |
| 010 | | Cut | Rectangular Pit. Rounded sides. Flat base. 1.8m Length 1.5m Width 0.12m Depth |

Appendix 2: Drawing Register

| Drawing Number | Scale | Description |
|----------------|-------|--|
| 1 | 1:20 | Scale plan of archaeological features at the location of the former windmill |
| 2 | 1:10 | East-facing section of Rectangular Pit 010 |
| 3 | 1:10 | East-facing section of Rectangular Pit 008 |
| 3 | 1:10 | East-facing section of Rectangular Pit 004 |
| 4 | 1:10 | East-facing section of Rectangular Pit 006 |

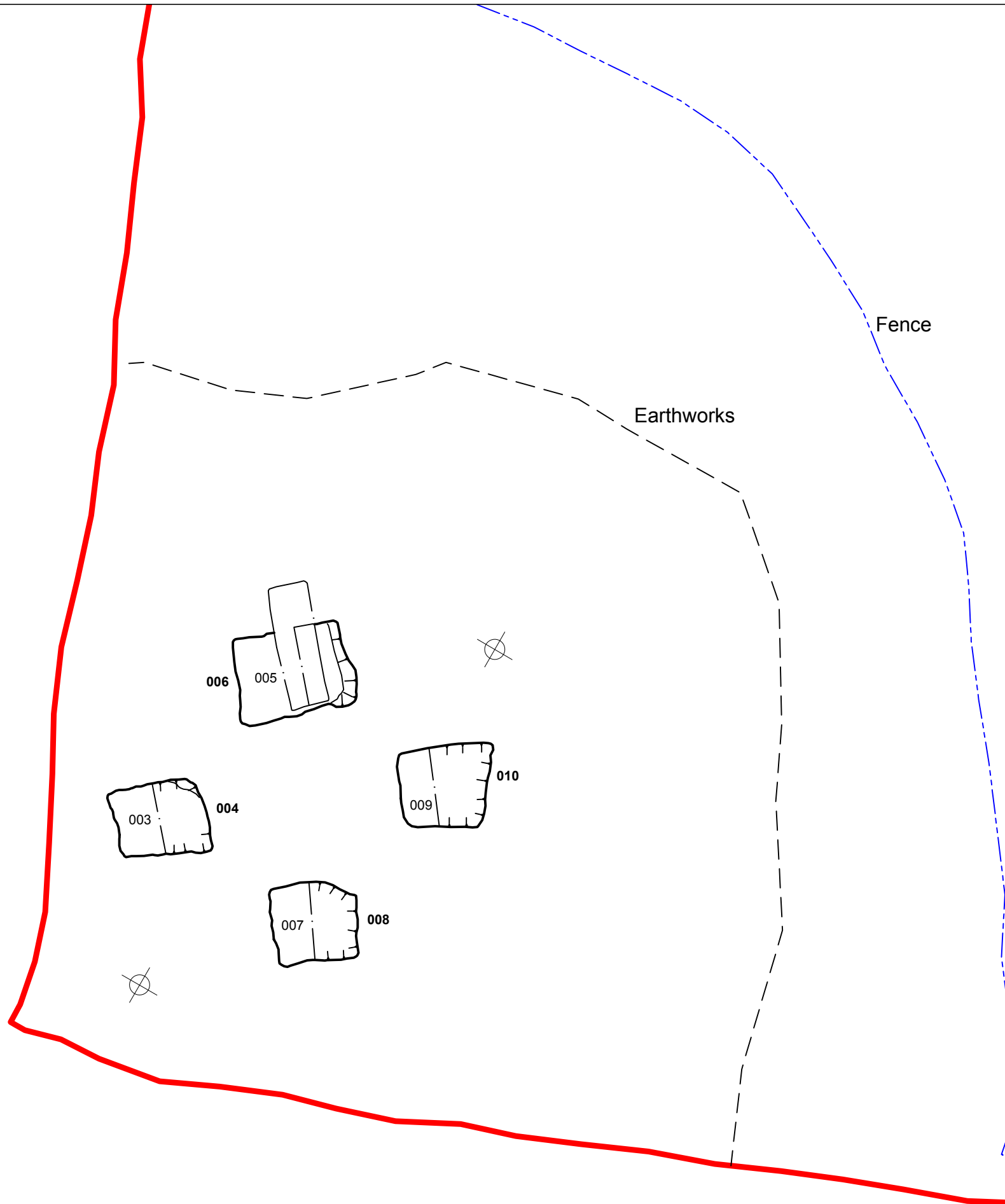
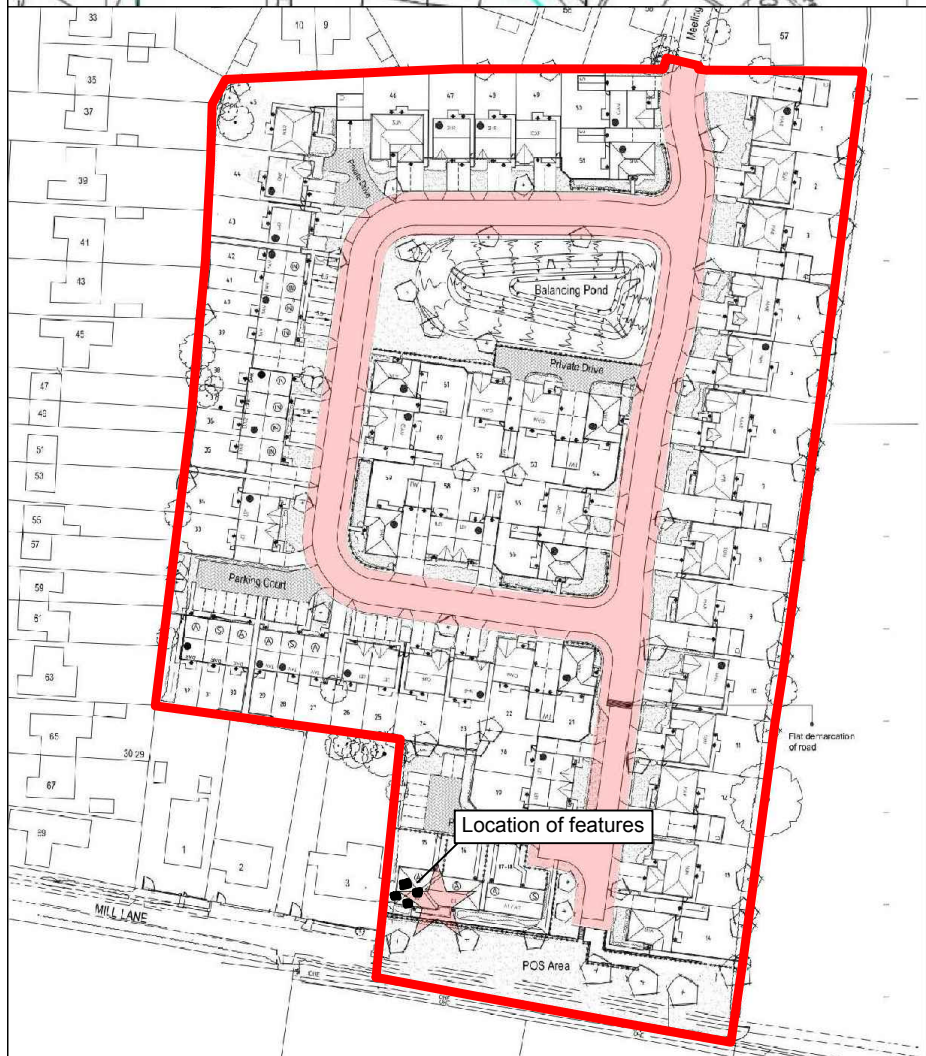
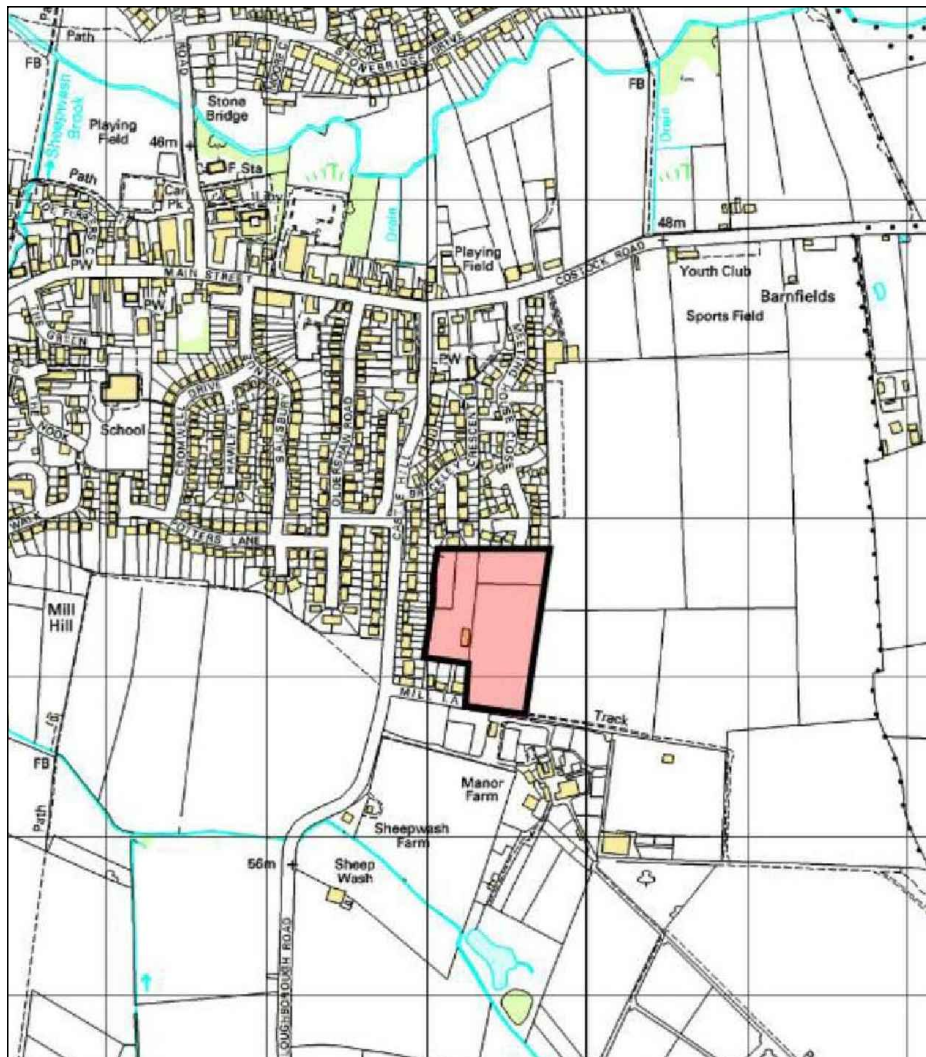
Appendix 3: Photographic Register

| No | Contexts/description | Facing | Conditions |
|----|--|------------|------------|
| 1 | Site Entrance following topsoil removal | South-west | Overcast |
| 2 | Working shot of topsoil removal along the site haul road | South | Overcast |
| 3 | Working shot of topsoil removal along the site haul road facing towards the site entrance | North-east | Overcast |
| 4 | Topsoil removal at the south of site adjacent to the location of the former windmill | East | Overcast |
| 5 | Relict ridge and furrow system from the south of site | North | Overcast |
| 6 | Trial excavation at the site entrance identifying the depth of soil deposits | East | Overcast |
| 7 | Overburden strip of the central spine road at the site entrance | South | Overcast |
| 8 | Overburden strip at the site entrance with a visible cultivation furrow and a stone land drain | North | Overcast |
| 9 | East-facing shot of the spine road following an overburden strip | East | Overcast |
| 10 | General shot of the spine road at the north of site | North-east | Overcast |
| 11 | Topsoil strip over the spine road location at the south of site | South | Overcast |
| 12 | Overburden strip over the spine road location at the south of the site | South | Overcast |
| 13 | Overburden strip over the spine road location at the south of the site | North | Overcast |
| 14 | General shot of the north-to-south orientated spine road from the south of site | North-east | Overcast |
| 15 | East-to-west orientated portion of the spine road at the south of site | East | Overcast |
| 16 | South-facing shot of a relict cultivation furrow at the south of site | South | Bright |
| 17 | East-facing shot of the compound area following topsoil removal | East | Overcast |
| 18 | Topsoil strip of the spine road at the west of site | South-west | Bright |
| 19 | Topsoil strip of the spine road at the west of site | North | Bright |
| 20 | Geotechnical survey works at the location of the former windmill | West | Bright |
| 21 | Spine road at the west of site following overburden strip | North | Bright |
| 22 | Shot of spine road at west of site towards the site compound | North-east | Bright |
| 23 | Pre-excavation shot of the former windmill site | West | Overcast |
| 24 | Working shot of topsoil removal at the former windmill site | North-east | Overcast |
| 25 | Working shot of subsoil removal at the former windmill site | North-east | Overcast |
| 26 | Former windmill site following the overburden strip | West | Overcast |
| 27 | South-west-facing shot of Pits 004, 006, 008 and 010 | South-west | Bright |
| 28 | West-facing shot of Pits 004, 006, 008 and 010 | West | Bright |
| 29 | East-facing section of Pit 010 | West | Bright |
| 30 | East-facing section of Pit 008 | West | Bright |
| 31 | East-facing section of Pit 004 | West | Bright |
| 32 | East-facing section of Pit 006 | West | Bright |
| 33 | Post-excavation shot of Pits 004, 006, 008 and 010 | North-west | Overcast |
| 34 | Post-excavation shot of Pits 004, 006, 008 and 010 | South-west | Overcast |

Figure 1



Key:



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Fig. No: 1 Revision: A

Title:
Site location and plan of features at the former windmill

Project:
Land to the South of Meeting House Close, East Leake, Nottinghamshire

Client:
Redrow Homes Ltd

Scale at A3:
1:100



Plates 1-3





Fig. 3 - North-facing shot of the central spine road from the south of site following excavation



Fig. 4 - North-facing shot of the excavation at the west of site



Fig. 5 - South-west-facing shot of Rectangular pits 004, 006, 008 and 010

| | | | | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|--|---|---|---|
| Fig. No: 3-5 | Revision: A | Project: Land to the South of Meeting House Close, East Leake, Nottinghamshire |  |  | CFA ARCHAEOLOGY LTD The Old Engine House Eskmills Park, Musselburgh East Lothian, Eh21 7PQ T: 0131 273 4380 F: 0131 273 4381 e: info@cfa-archaeology.co.uk w: www.cfa-archaeology.co.uk |
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