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Advice on Archaeology & Planning

Environmental Impact Assessment

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Geophysical Survey

Historic Building Recording

Site & Landscape Survey

Interpretation, Design & Display

**Land Off Main Road
Claybrooke Magna Leicestershire –
Archaeological Evaluation
Report No. MK090/17**

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Land Off Main Road Claybrooke Magna Leicestershire – Archaeological Evaluation Report No. MK090/17

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1. SUMMARY

CFA Archaeology Ltd carried out an archaeological evaluation for Lanpro Services on behalf of William Davis on a proposed development site (the Site), on land off Main Road, Claybrooke Magna, Leicestershire (centred on SP 49109 88482). The Site is located in the southern part of Claybrooke Magna, and consists of pasture, bounded to the south by a field boundary and to the north by an industrial estate. Following a desk-based assessment and a geophysical survey, eight trenches were excavated revealing ridge and furrow cultivation on an E-W alignment. Several archaeological features, mostly linear ditches on various alignments, were found. Only two small sherds of pottery were recovered from the features.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1. General

This document presents the results of an archaeological evaluation undertaken by CFA Archaeology Ltd (CFA) between the 6th and 9th June 2017 on a proposed development site (the Site) on land off Main Road Claybrooke Magna, Leicestershire. The work was commissioned by Lanpro Services on behalf of William Davis.

2.2. Planning Background

The County Archaeologist recommended that a programme of archaeological trial trenching was undertaken in order to make a reasoned and informed recommendation on the application.

The work was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) dated June 2017, covering this programme of works produced by Lanpro and approved by the Leicestershire County Council Planning Archaeologist.

2.3. Background

The town of Claybrooke Magna is located north of Watling Street, now the A5, midway between Lutterworth and Hickley. The proposed development site lies to the south-west of the village and west of Main Road leading to Claybrooke Parva to the south. The Site (Fig. 1) comprises pasture on a ridge above the valley to the west, covering an area of 2.21 ha.

The British Geological Survey (BGS) 1:50,000 records the geology within the study site as mudstone of the Mercia Mudstone Group. Superficial

deposits are recorded as Oadby Member diamicton across the eastern half of the site and Wolston sand and gravel across the west (BGS 2017).

2.4. Archaeological Background

The archaeological background was outlined in the WSI prepared by Lanpro as follows:

The site has been subject to desk based assessment (Lanpro 2017) and a geophysical survey (AOC 2016).

Ridge and furrow earthworks are present, running from east to west across the majority of the study site, although they are generally quite slight and of varying preservation with an area in the central part of the site having been flattened or disturbed. A former field boundary can be seen as an earthwork feature. The north-south running part of this boundary survives as a shallow grassed over ditch whilst the east-west boundary survives as an upstanding bank which would appear to have formed by a combination of differential ploughing and possibly a former trackway running along the northern side of the boundary.

The geophysical survey has identified some features of possible archaeological origin, including a tentatively interpreted enclosure. Currently it is not clear whether this feature is just a product of natural geological conditions or a result of the ridge and furrow cultivation of the site, however, given the archaeological evidence from the surrounding area an Iron Age or Roman origin cannot be ruled out.

Examination of available archaeological and topographic information would suggest that the study site has a generally low potential for significant remains of all periods, albeit with a slightly higher potential for the Iron Age and/or Roman period.

2.5. Objectives

The overall aim of the archaeological evaluation was to obtain sufficient information as to the archaeological significance and potential of the site to allow reasoned and informed recommendations to be made on the application for development of the site. This was to be achieved through the following objectives:

- To determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any archaeological remains within the development site

- To assess the vulnerability/sensitivity of any exposed remains
- To assess the impact of previous land use on the site
- To assess the potential for survival of environmental evidence
- To inform a strategy to avoid or mitigate impacts of the proposed development on surviving archaeological remains
- To produce a site archive for deposition with an appropriate museum and to provide information for accession to the Leicestershire HER.

2.6. Research Framework

The programme of archaeological investigation was conducted within the general research parameters and objectives defined by:

East Midlands Heritage: An Updated Research Agenda and Strategy for the Historic Environment of the East Midlands (Knight et al. 2012)

3. WORKING METHODS

3.1. General

CFA Archaeology Ltd follows the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Code of Conduct, Standards and Guidance.

3.2. Trenching

Eight trenches each measuring 50m long and 1.8m wide were excavated as planned in the WSI.

3.3. Excavation and Recording Strategy

Topsoil and subsoil were removed by a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision, to reveal archaeological remains or, where these were absent, the natural sediments.

Trenches containing archaeological features were planned and sections of the features drawn at appropriate scale. Surveying of features and trenches was carried out with a Trimble Geo7X RTK GPS unit accurate to 8mm horizontally and 12mm vertically. Archaeological features were sample-excavated by hand in order to achieve the objectives listed in Section 2.5 above. Sections excavated through linear features were 1.0m wide. The character, composition and general depositional sequence of the site stratification were recorded on pro-forma sheets, with a unique context

number being allocated to each distinct deposit and feature. A full photographic record comprising black and white photographs and digital images in RAW format was made. General views were taken to place the site in context, as well as of specific features. The excavated area, spoil heaps and features were scanned with a metal detector.

4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

4.1. General

The locations of all trenches are shown in Fig. 1 (a and b) and a summary of all trenches is contained in Appendix 1. Illustrations and photos referred to in the text can be found at the back of the report. An overview of the trenches is presented below, followed by the descriptions of trenches containing features. Archaeological context numbers are shown in brackets.

4.2. Trench Descriptions

Topsoil and subsoil deposits were similar in all of the trenches. Both were composed of fine sand with organic material and the boundary between the two was often blurred. The topsoil (0101-0801) was darker and richer in organic material and was grassed. The subsoil (0102-0802), an old cultivation soil, lay below and was mostly composed of grey fine sand with frequent traces of bioturbation including worm and mole holes. Cultivation of this layer was evident by the plough scars found scratched into the natural geology. A few pieces of non-diagnostic pottery of 19th or 20th century date were found in the topsoil. Across most of the trenches, the natural geology comprised reddish clayey sand or light yellow clay with occasional channels and patches of reddish-brown gravel.

Trench 1 (Fig. 2)

Two linear ditch features were found crossing the trench, cut into natural sand. The most westerly ditch (0106) was 1.4m wide and 0.58m deep, with moderately steep sides ending on an almost flat bottom (Figs. 3 and 18). No dating material was found. Another ditch (0108) was located around 8m to the east. The second ditch crossed the trench on the similar alignment to (0106), but measured 1.55m wide and 0.6m deep, with slightly irregular sides and U-shaped bottom (Fig. 19). No dating evidence was found in the feature.

Trench 2 (Fig. 4)

An intersection of two linear ditch features was found in the trench (Fig. 5). A ditch (0207) running on NW-SE alignment intersected with a SW-NE ditch (0209). Ditch (0207) measured 1.1m wide and 0.7m deep while ditch (0209) measured 1m wide and was much shallower at only 0.45m in depth (Fig. 20). Both features were dug into the natural, slightly orange clay. Fills

of both features were similar in composition and consisted of grey silty clay with occasional stones. A single sherd was recovered from each fill, one dated to the early to middle Anglo-Saxon period from 0205 and one to the Roman period from 209.

Another slot was excavated in the SW-NE feature (0205)/(0209) to expose its entire section (Figs. 6 and 21). The western sides were steeper than the eastern, and the section showed a very wide U-shaped ditch, very similar to that exposed in the intersection with feature (0207).

Trench 3 (Fig. 7)

Trench 3 was located in the area of made ground probably marking a change of field use. The built up ground (0307) consisted of silty sandy, heavily bioturbated layers, containing some stones. Due to the significant depth of the layer its SW-most part was machine-sampled to safe working depth of 1.2 m and recorded in section (Fig. 22). Two features were recognised in the trench, a possible discrete feature (0305) measuring 2m in diameter in the SW end and a 2.2m wide linear feature (0308), 6.5m to the NE. Both features were similarly composed of grey silty sand and both were cut from topsoil or subsoil, truncating older made ground. These features were not excavated due to health and safety concerns with the depth of excavation.

Trench 4 (Fig. 8)

Two plough marks were recorded along the trench, running SW-NE. Around 9m from the NE end of the trench, the plough marks truncated a shallow gully (0405, Fig. 9). The feature was cut from the level of the old cultivation soil, just below the modern topsoil. The fill (0406) was very similar to the subsoil and was composed of loosely compacted silty clay.

Trench 5 (Fig. 10)

Two linear features were found in the NE part of the trench. The NE-most feature was an almost V-shaped ditch (0505) with very narrow flat base, measuring 0.65 m wide and 0.3 m deep (Figs. 11, 23). No finds were recovered from the feature.

Around 3m to the SW from ditch (0505) another linear feature was recorded. The ditch (0507) measured 0.9 m wide and 0.3 m deep (Fig. 24). The sides very gently sloped into a slightly concave base. The ditch was truncated by a furrow (0504) (Fig. 12). No dating material was recovered from the feature.

Trench 6 (Fig. 13)

Two features were found in trench 6. A pit (0608) was encountered in the NE part of the trench. The feature measured 2.8 m and was excavated to a depth of 0.75m deep (Fig. 25), but further excavation of this feature was not

possible due to health and safety concerns over the excavation depth. Three different fills were recognised within the feature. The oldest layer (0607) was composed of clayey silt and was not fully excavated due to reasons mentioned above. The fill (0607) was overlaid to the SW by (0606), a layer of clay rich in charcoal. In the latest fill (0605) of the feature (0608) charcoal was also abundant. The layer (0605) overlaid both older layers directly. Animal bones were found in (0605) (0607) but no datable material was recovered from the feature.

Trench 7 (Fig. 15)

Four furrows (0704) were identified aligned E-W across trench 7. Natural sediments were encountered as shallow as 0.4m in the trench, and what initially appeared to be potential features were shown to be the result of bioturbation. Furrows were the only archaeological features in the trench.

Trench 8 (Fig. 16)

Traces of ridge and furrow cultivation were found in the trench. The furrows (0804) were similarly spaced and on the same E-W alignment as in trench 7. Additionally modern field drains were found crossing the trench.

In the most northerly part of the trench a large, curved, feature (0806) was found. In its northern extremity the ditch crossed Trench 8 diagonally, but to the S it turns and continues parallel to the NE –facing section of the trench for another 4m. The feature had vertical sides and a flat bottom, measuring 1.35m across and 0.35m deep (Fig. 26), however its full dimensions were not revealed within the limits of the trench. Fill (0806) was composed of grey, heavily waterlogged silty sand. Two small fragments of ceramic building material were recovered.

5. FINDS

Pottery from Claybrook Magna, Leics (Site MCML) Saxon pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

A small sherd of Samian or perhaps Oxford ware weighing 5g was recovered from context 209. It is abraded and the slip is partially gone.

A single sherd of pottery weighing 4g occurred in context (0208). It is of early/middle Anglo-Saxon date (5th – 9th century), and is a rimsherd with a simple upright profile. It is in a grano-diorite fabric typical of the region (Vince and Williams 1997).

6. DISCUSSION

Two different land use areas can be distinguished within the Site. The western part was clearly heavily transformed by artificial levelling of the ridge and an old trackway crosses the Site from east to west towards the valley. This western, part of the Site contained most of the archaeological features found within the Site, with ditches containing Anglo-Saxon and Roman material (a single sherd of each date). The eastern part of the Site, closer to the modern Main Road, was mainly used for agriculture – which is suggested by thinner superficial deposits consisting of modern and former cultivations soils and preserved ridge and furrow cultivation. Some undated activity was recorded on the edges of the eastern part of the site, especially in its northern and western extremities.

Although none of the recorded features could be easily connected with any others revealed during this work, almost all the features were identified on the geophysical survey. Ditches (0207) and (0108) constitute the southern and western limits of a possible enclosure respectively. Parallel to (0108), ditch (0105) was also detected by geophysical survey. However ditch (0105) was not part of any larger structure on the Site and it could be associated with enclosure (0108)/(0207). It is possible that ditch (0105) did originally continue towards the south, but its southern extremity was removed in recent times during major levelling works and establishment of the track way.

Both the levelled platform and the trackway are visible in the landscape and were partially recognised in Trench 3 of this evaluation. Although there is no direct stratigraphic evidence of a relationship between the enclosure and the trackway, their relative position seems to suggest that both features respected each other's location.

The probable trackway was partially recognised by the geophysical survey. Part of the route was exposed in the most southerly part of Trench 2, to the south of the ditches (0207) and (0209)/(0205). According to the geophysics the track was branching towards the south 23m to the east of Trench 2. Its southern branch was probably recognised in Trench 5, bounded on both sides by ditches (0505) and (0507) suggesting the trackway was exactly 3m wide.

7. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The evaluation confirmed the presence of archaeological features initially identified by the geophysical survey. The possible enclosure ditches containing single sherds of Roman and Saxon pottery were recognised in the north-western corner of the Site. However their relationship to the trackway and levelling works is uncertain. All of the features identified were organised respecting each other, which would suggest a contemporary origin.

The eastern part of the Site was used as arable in relatively recent times,

although little evidence of such a use was recorded in the western part of the Site.

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APPENDIX 1: Trench Summary

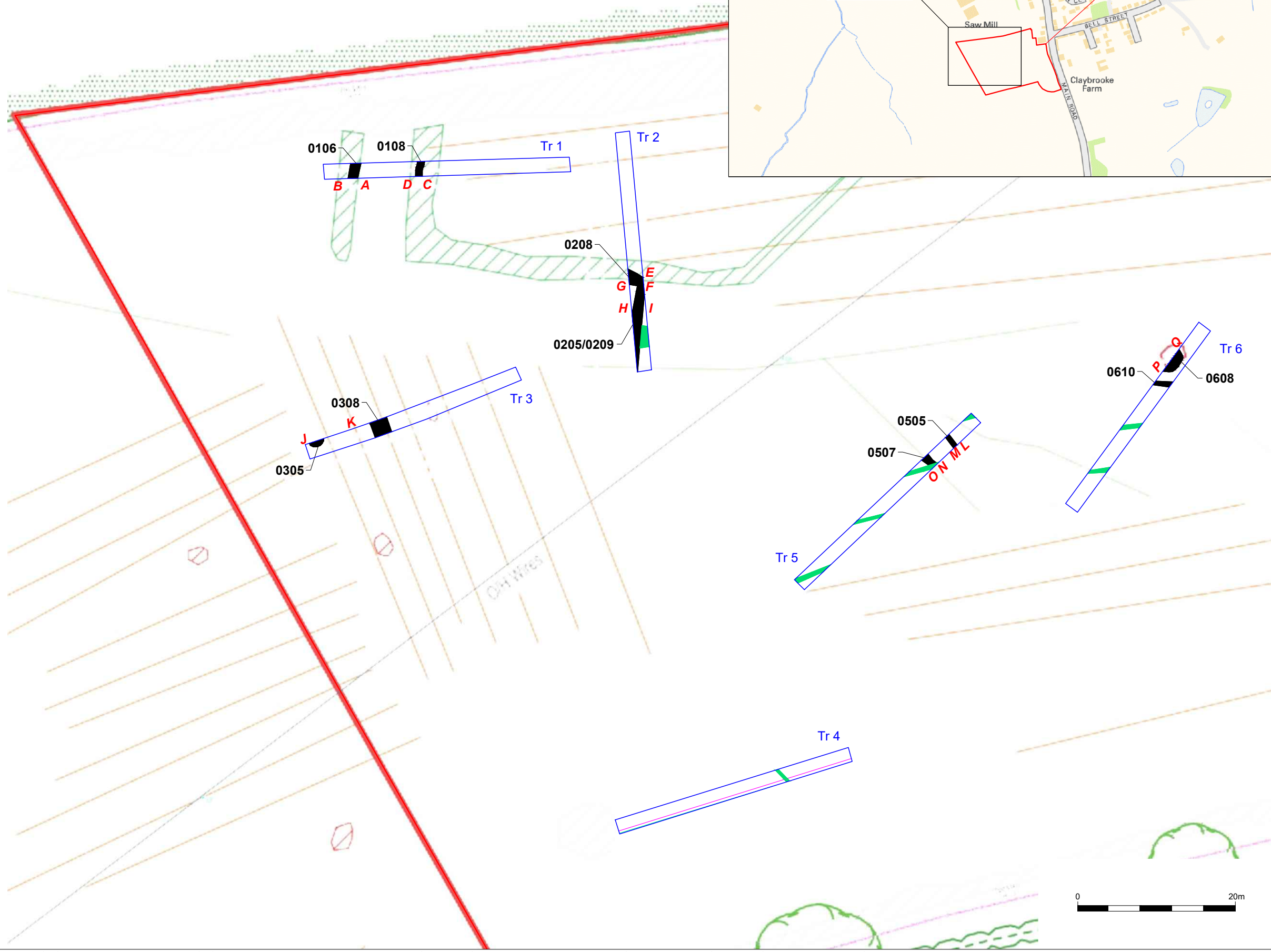
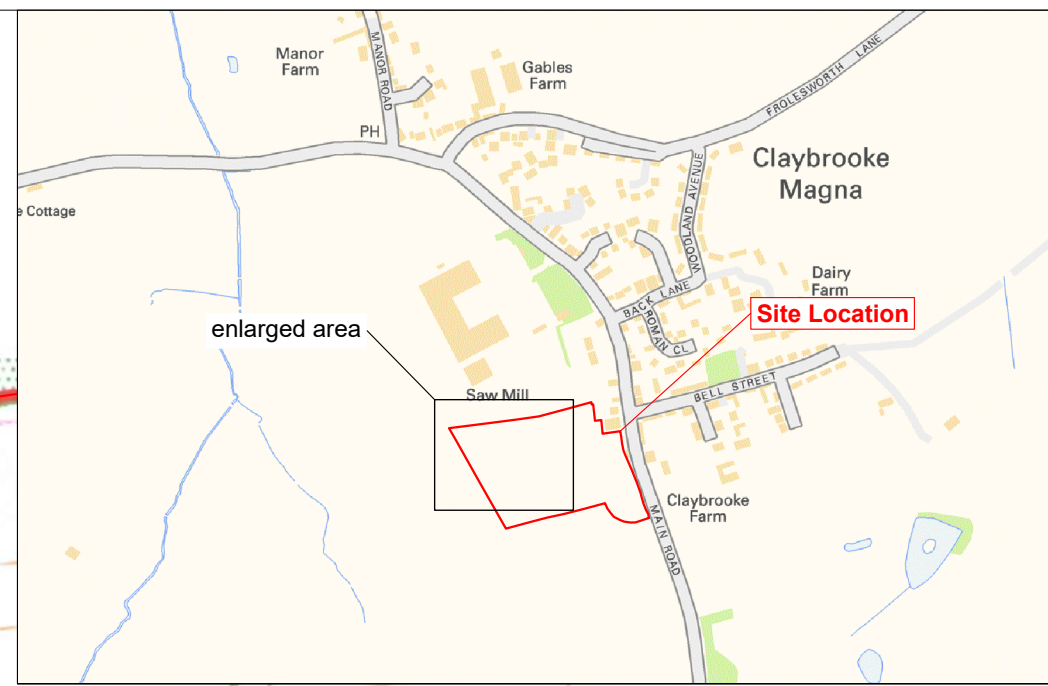
Trench 01		Trench Size 30.2m x 1.8m
Trench depth 0.7-0.82m	Topsoil depth 0.3-0.38m	Subsoil depth 0.26-0.33m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Feature type</i>	<i>Date</i>
0101	Topsoil	
0102	Subsoil	
0103	Natural	
0104	Void	
0105	Fill of linear feature	
0106	Cut of linear feature	
0107	Fill of linear feature	
0108	Cut of linear feature	
Trench 02		Trench Size 30.1m x 1.8m
Trench depth 0.44 – 0.6m	Topsoil depth 0.2m	Subsoil depth 0.2-0.3m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Feature type</i>	<i>Date</i>
0201	Topsoil	
0202	Subsoil	
0203	Natural	
0204	Void	
0205	Cut of linear feature	3th-4th century
0206	Fill of linear feature	3th-4th century
0207	Cut of linear feature	5th-9th century
0208	Fill of linear feature	5th-9th century
0209	Cut of linear feature	Same as 0205
0210	Fill of linear feature	Same as 0206
Trench 03		Trench Size 28.3m x 1.8m
Trench depth 0.9-1.25m	Topsoil depth 0.2-0.3m	Subsoil depth 0.4-0.5m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Feature type</i>	<i>Date</i>
0301	Topsoil	
0302	Subsoil	
0303	Natural	
Trench 04		Trench Size 26m x 1.8m
Trench depth 0.45-0.8m	Topsoil depth 0.2-0.25m	Subsoil depth 0.2-0.25m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Feature type</i>	<i>Date</i>
0301	Topsoil	
0302	Subsoil	
0303	Natural	
0304	Plough marks	Modern
0305	Cut of linear feature	
0306	Fill of linear feature	
Trench 05		Trench Size 30.5m x 1.8m
Trench depth 0.43-0.6m	Topsoil depth 0.2-0.25m	Subsoil depth 0.15-0.3m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Feature type</i>	<i>Date</i>
0501	Topsoil	
0502	Subsoil	
0503	Natural	
0504	Furrow	
0505	Cut of linear feature	
0506	Fill of linear feature	
0507	Cut of linear feature	

0508	Fill of linear feature	
Trench 06		Trench Size 28.26m x 1.8m
Trench depth 0.45-0.5m	Topsoil depth 0.45-0.5m	Subsoil depth 0.30-0.4m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Feature type</i>	<i>Date</i>
0601	Topsoil	
0602	Subsoil	
0603	Natural	
0604	Furrow	
0605	Fill of linear feature	
0606	Fill of linear feature	
0607	Fill of linear feature	
0608	Cut of linear feature	
Trench 07		Trench Size 31m x 1.8m
Trench depth 0.47-0.55m	Topsoil depth 0.15-0.18m	Subsoil depth 0.2-0.25m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Feature type</i>	<i>Date</i>
0701	Topsoil	
0702	Subsoil	
0703	Natural	
0704	Furrows	
Trench 08		Trench Size 32m x 1.8m
Trench depth 0.7-0.5m	Topsoil depth 0.2-0.17m	Subsoil depth 0.3-0.45m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Feature type</i>	<i>Date</i>
0801	Topsoil	
0802	Subsoil	
0803	Natural	
0804	Furrows	
0805	Fill of linear feature	
0806	Cut of linear feature	



Key:

- Site Boundary
- Trench Outline
- Archaeological Feature
- Ridge and Furrow
- Possible plough mark
- Field Drain
- Geophysical survey
- Archaeology?
- Discrete Linear Trend
- Pit
- Ridge and Furrow Ploughing Trend



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Site location and trench plan

Project:
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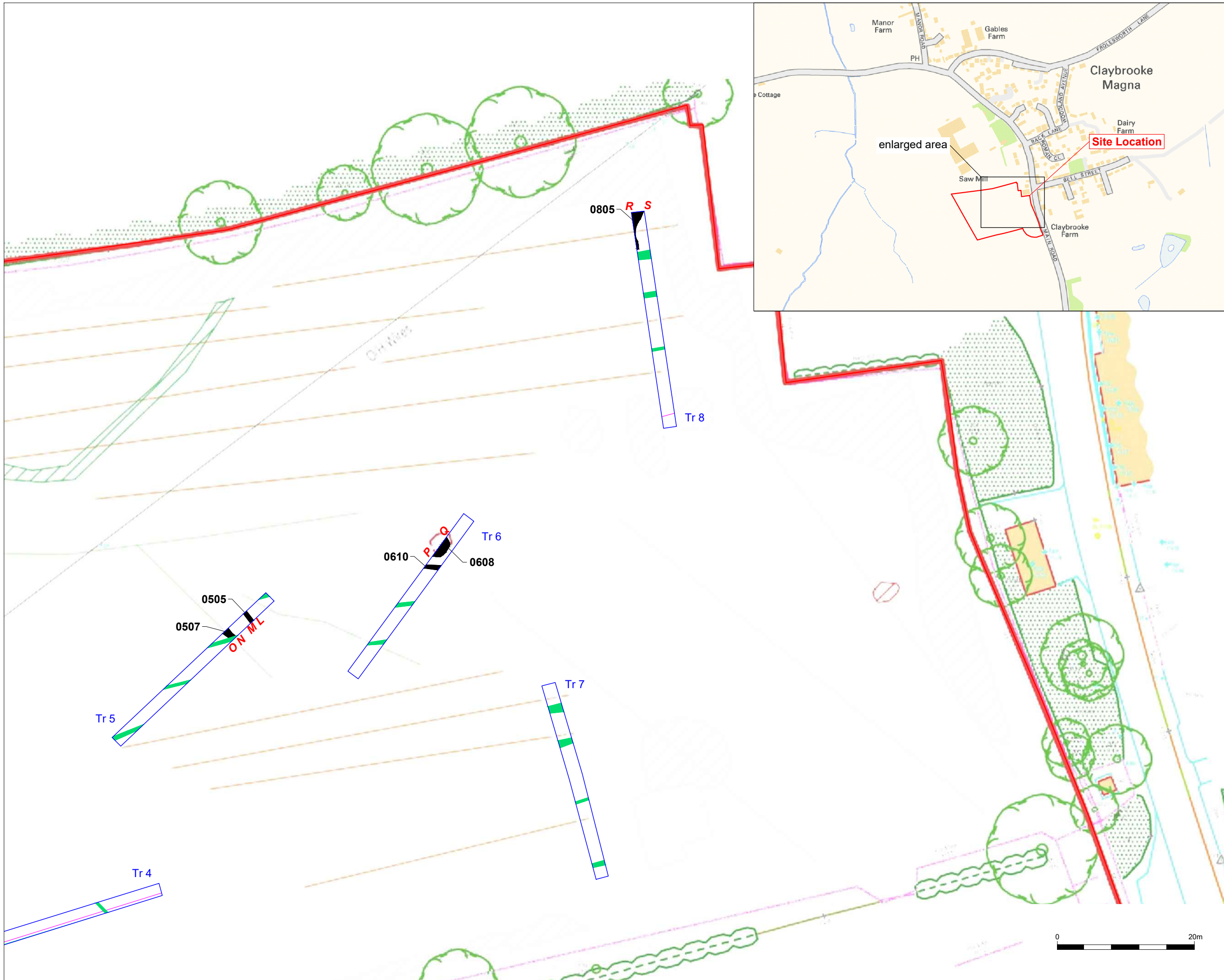
Client:
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Scale at A3:
1:500

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Key:

- Site Boundary
- Trench Outline
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- Ridge and Furrow
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Fig. 2 - General view of trench 1, from W



Fig. 3 - Post-ex shot of (0106), from S

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Fig. 4 - General view of trench 2, from S



Fig. 5 - Overview of (0207) and (0205)/(0219), from W

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Fig. 6 - Post-ex shot of (0205), from S



Fig. 7 - General view of trench 3, from NE

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Fig. 8 - General view of trench 4, from W



Fig. 9 - Post-ex shot of (0405), from NW

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Fig. 10 - General view of trench 5, from SW



Fig. 11 - Post-ex shot of (0505), from NW

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Fig. 12 - Post-ex shot of (0507), from NW



Fig. 13 - General view of trench 6, from SW

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Fig. 14 - Post-ex shot of (0608), from SE



Fig. 15 - General view of trench 7, from S

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Client:
Lanpro Services on behalf of William Davis

Drawn by: MP	Checked: SW	Date: 13/07/17
Report No: MK090/17		Fig. No: 14-15



Fig. 16 - General view of trench 8, from N



Fig. 17 - Post-ex shot of (0805), from S

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Fig. 18 - N-facing section of (0106)

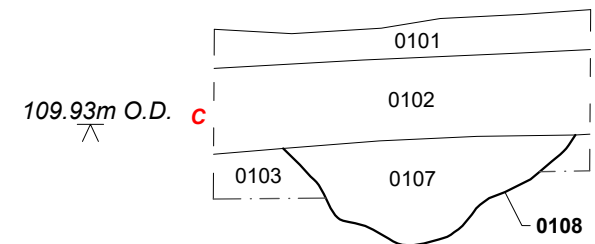


Fig. 19 - N-facing section of (0108)

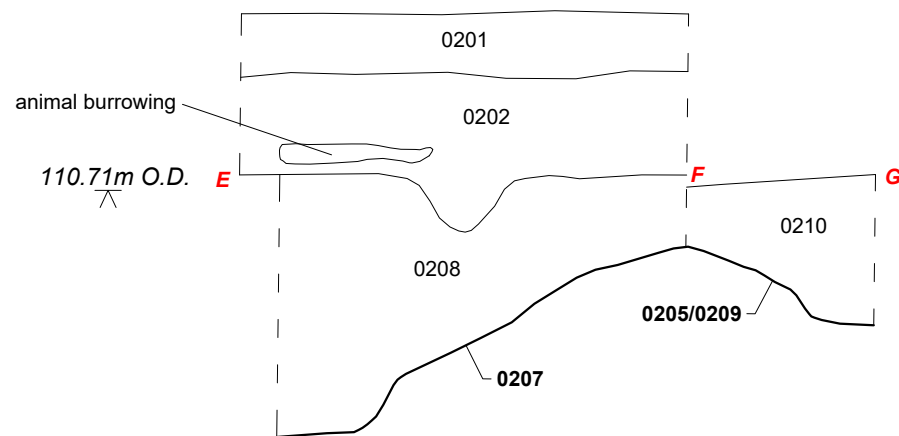


Fig. 20 - E and N-facing sections of (0207) and (0205)/(0209), respectively

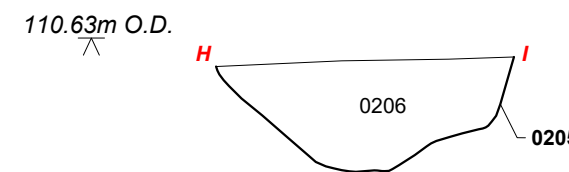


Fig. 21 - S-facing section of (0205)

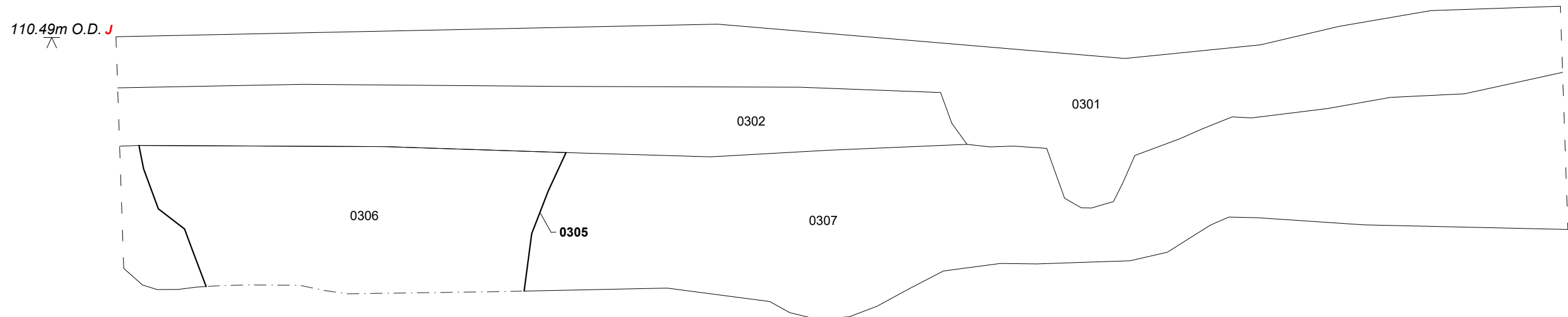


Fig. 22 - S-facing section, W end of trench 3

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Title:
Sections

Project:
Land Off Main Road
Claybrooke Magna,
Leicestershire: Archaeological
Evaluation

Client:
Lanpro Services on behalf
of William Davis

Scale at A3:
1:20

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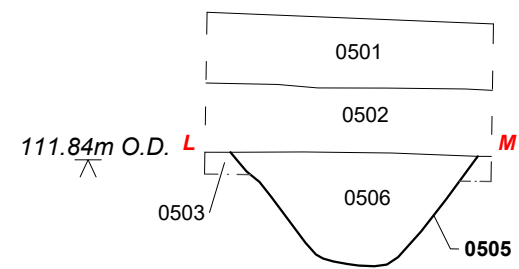


Fig. 23 - N-facing section of (0505)

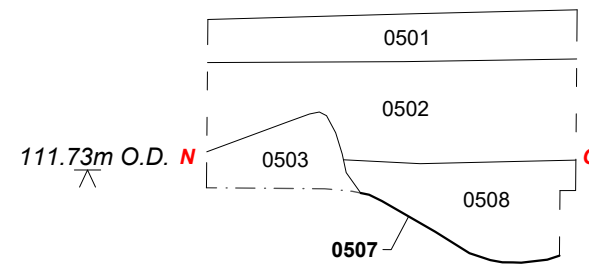


Fig. 24 - N-facing section of (0507)

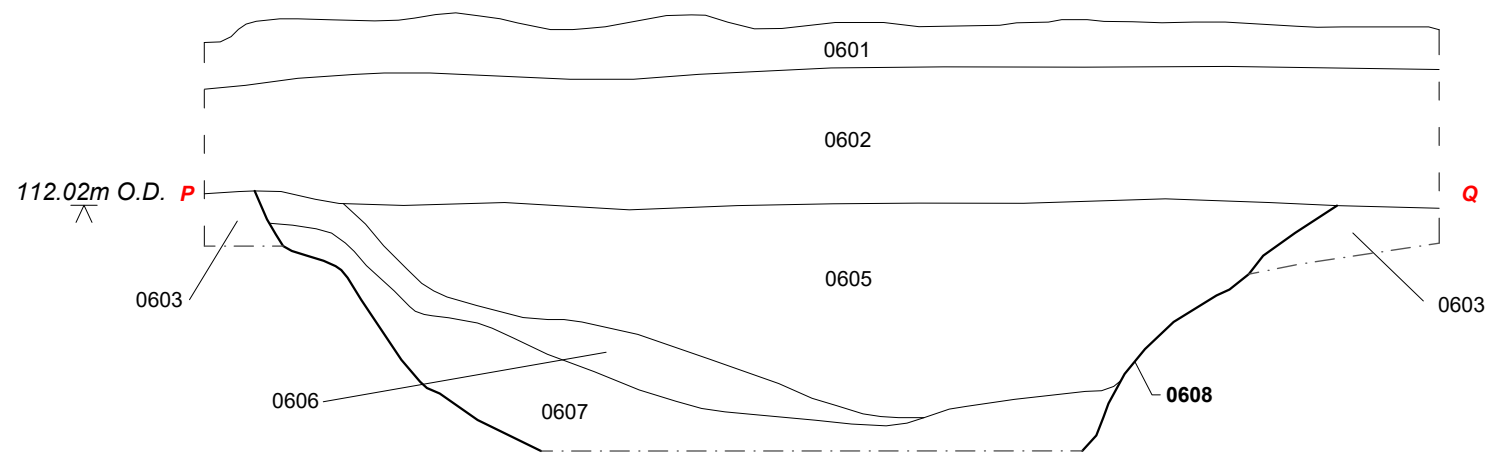


Fig. 25 - SE-facing section of (0608)



Fig. 26 - S-facing section of (0805)



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Scale at A3:
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Report No: MK090/17	Fig. No: 23-26
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