

Land at Manor House Farm, Mansfield Road, Hasland, Derbyshire

Results of an archaeological evaluation

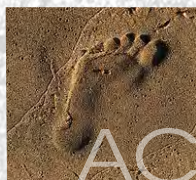
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AC archaeology

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NGR 441275, 368575

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The views and recommendations expressed in this report are those of AC archaeology and are presented in good faith on the basis of professional judgement and on information currently available.

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SUMMARY

An archaeological evaluation, consisting of 17 machine-excavated trenches, was undertaken by Allen archaeology Ltd, for AC archaeology, on land at Manor House Farm, Mansfield Road, Hasland, Derbyshire (SK 41275, 68575), during August 2021. A previous desk-based historic environment assessment identified that much of the application area has been subject to opencast mining in the later 20th century. A subsequent geophysical survey on the site did identify some evidence for potential archaeological interest, much of it considered to represent agricultural activity or former boundaries, although a number of discrete anomalies was also recorded. However, none of this activity was revealed in any of the trenches, with almost the entirety of the area appearing to have been the subject of former opencast mining and the area later infilled and levelled. With the exception of a single undated linear feature revealed in Tr 14, the evaluation has proved wholly negative. The absence of subsoil features corresponding with geophysical anomalies may be explained by variations in the nature and compaction of the mine backfill. No pre-modern artefacts were recovered or retained.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document sets out the results of an archaeological trench evaluation on land at Manor House Farm, Mansfield Road, Hasland, Derbyshire (SK 41275 68575). It has been prepared by AC archaeology Ltd on behalf of Kronos Solar Projects GmbH. The locations of the trenches are shown on Fig. 1.
- 1.2 The area of the proposed investigation is located approximately 1.25 km southeast of Hasland, immediately north of the A617 trunk road, and comprises generally level arable land (Fig. 1) at around 95m OD. The bedrock geology is recorded as Pennine Middle Coal Measures, which comprise mudstone, siltstone and sandstone, formed 310-318 million years ago in the Carboniferous Period.
- 1.3 The evaluation area is part of an overall application site for the construction of a solar farm, but was undertaken in an area where former opencast coal mining appears, from historic mapping, to have not been undertaken.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 A desk-based historic environment assessment has been prepared for the site (Robinson 2020) which concluded:

An assessment of heritage issues relating to the proposed use of land for a solar energy park at Manor House Farm, Mansfield Road, Hasland, Derbyshire was undertaken during July and August 2020. The application area comprises 17 plots of arable land adjacent to the east side of the A617 Chesterfield to Mansfield Road. Baseline historic environment data has been assessed up to 1km from the application area. There are no designated archaeological heritage assets within the application area. There are four designated heritage assets within the broader study area, which are all Grade II Listed Buildings. There are no non-designated assets within the application area and 17 within the broader study area. It is considered that there could be no effect on the settings or significance of these assets. The assessment has identified that much of the application area has been subject of opencast mining in the later 20th century. This would have removed any archaeological deposits present, although there may be local vestiges of former land surfaces surviving in places.

2.2 A subsequent geophysical survey (Edwards & Trick 2021) by gradiometer, of areas of the site considered to be devoid of opencast identified a number of anomalies considered to be of archaeological origin. These are generally linear or curvilinear anomalies, considered to represent agricultural activity or former boundaries, although a number of discrete anomalies were also recorded. An interpretation plan is included here and forms the basis of the trenching array (see Fig. 1). It is possible that the area was subject to near-surface mining in the medieval and post-medieval periods and the geophysical survey was thought to have detected anomalies related to this activity.

3. OBJECTIVES

3.1 The principal aims of the programme of works were:

- to test for the presence, and assess the significance, of any archaeological deposits exposed in the trenches;
- to investigate the principal anomalies located during the geophysical survey;
- to enable an assessment of the impact of the proposed development on any archaeological deposits;
- to record the overburden deposits on the site which may provide protection from future development;
- to enable a mitigation strategy to be produced as part of any further archaeological investigation that may be required. This would include developing research objectives that will make reference to 'East Midlands Heritage' (Knight et al 2012), particularly Research Objective 8F: *Research the development of East Midlands industry and its impact upon landscape and settlement morphology*;
- NB Provision was made for updating the East Midlands Historic Environment Research Framework (EMHERF) where the results of a fieldwork project contribute towards agenda topics. This will be done using the interactive digital resource at <https://researchframeworks.org/emherf/> and noted explicitly in the conclusions of the relevant report.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 The investigations were undertaken in accordance with a Project Design for archaeological trial trenching (Cox 2021) and approved by the Derbyshire County Council Development Control Archaeologist (DCCDCA) prior to commencement on site.

- 4.2 The investigations comprised the machine-excavation of 17 trenches (Fig. 1), totalling 520m in length, each 1.6m wide. Trenches were laid out using GPS coordinates.
- 4.3 All soil removal was undertaken under the control and direction of the Site Archaeologist. Topsoil was removed by tracked mechanical excavator, using a wide toothless bucket, and stored alongside each trench, separated from any subsoil, as necessary. Stripping by mechanical excavator ceased at the level at which archaeological deposits or natural subsoil was exposed.
- 4.4 Each trench was recorded using the full range of the standard Allen Archaeology *pro forma* recording system. The archive has been prepared using the Allen Archaeology Site Code HAMR21. As no artefacts were recovered the archive will be deposited with Derbyshire Record Office (Accession no. awaited). The project OASIS reference is 430698.

5. RESULTS

Introduction

- 5.1 All 17 trenches were excavated in the positions proposed in the Project Design. Only one trench revealed evidence for pre-modern subsoil features, the remaining trenches revealed no evidence of subsoil archaeological deposits of archaeological significance. The soil sequence across the site comprised topsoil directly overlying infilling from modern quarrying, which was present in all of the trenches; these infill deposits are considered to be associated with later 20th century reinstatement of former opencast works. Where this redeposited material was identified only limited excavation of it was undertaken, by agreement with the Derbyshire Development Control Archaeologist. The natural sub-strata was only revealed in two of the trenches. One trench (no. 14) contained a single archaeological feature and is described in text below. Trenches devoid of pre-modern subsoil features ('negative' trenches) are described in Table 1.

Trench 14 (Plan Fig. 2a; sections Fig. 2b-c; Plates 1 & 2)

- 5.2 This trench was aligned north-west to south-east and situated towards the north-east extent of the survey area in Field 4. It was positioned to target linear anomalies revealed by the geophysical survey. A depth of 0.3m of plough soil, composed of grey-brown, clayey, silt (14000) was removed. This overlay layers of redeposited natural subsoil comprising mixed silty clay with a thickness of at least 1.1m (14001/14002/14004) and partly contained within a cut evident towards the south-east extent of the trench (F14003). This material represents extensive evidence of relatively modern infilling / levelling associated with former mining in the area. Part of a single linear feature was revealed below this deposit. Feature F14006 had plan dimensions of 2.3m in length and 0.8m in width, with excavation revealing a shallow gentle sloping profile and uneven base at a maximum depth of 0.1m. It contained a single fill (14007), composed of yellowish-brown, clayey, sand. No dating evidence was present. Although this feature appears to correlate with one of a number of linear anomalies identified on the geophysical survey in this area, its function is unknown. A single modern land drain was also present towards the north-west extent of the trench. Natural sub-strata (1405) was revealed at 0.9m below the present ground surface and was composed of stiff yellow/grey clay.

Negative Trenches (plates 3 – 5)

5.3 A summary of results from trenches without significant archaeological deposits is set out in Table 1 below. A selection of photographs is included as Plates 3-5.

Trench	Depth below ground	Contexts	Description
1	0 - 400mm 400 – 800mm+	Topsoil - context 1000 Deposit - context 1001	This trench was L shaped in plan NW/SE – NE/SW and situated towards the northern extent of the site in Field 1. Topsoil composed of mid- brown silty sand loam. Deposit representing infilling / made ground in nature composed of mottled yellowish brown silty clay. The natural sub-strata was not revealed. A single modern land drain was present.
2	0 - 400mm 400mm – 1m+	Topsoil - context 2000 Deposit - context 2001	NE- SW aligned trench and situated at the north-east extent of the site in Field 1. Topsoil composed of mid- brown silty sand loam. Deposit representing infilling / made ground in nature composed of mottled yellowish brown silty clay. The natural sub-strata was not revealed. A single modern land drain was present.
3	0 - 300mm 300 – 500mm+	Topsoil - context 3000 Deposit - context 3001	Approximately NE- SW aligned trench and situated at the north-east extent of the site in Field 1. Topsoil composed of mid- brown silty sand loam. Deposit representing infilling / made ground in nature composed of mottled yellowish brown silty clay. The natural sub-strata was not revealed. A single modern land drain was present.
4	0 - 300mm 300 – 500mm+	Topsoil - context 4000 Deposit - context 4001	NE- SW aligned trench and situated in the central portion of the site in Field 1. Topsoil composed of mid- brown silty sand loam. Deposit representing infilling / made ground in nature composed of mottled yellowish brown silty clay. The natural sub-strata was not revealed.
5	0 - 400mm 400 – 800mm+	Topsoil - context 5000 Deposit - context 5001	NE- SW aligned trench and situated at the eastern extent of the site in Field 1. Topsoil composed of mid- brown silty sand loam. Deposit representing infilling / made ground in nature composed of mottled yellowish brown silty clay. The natural sub-strata was not revealed.
6	0 - 400mm 400 – 600mm+	Topsoil - context 6000 Deposit - context 6001	NE- SW aligned trench and situated at the north-east extent of the site in Field 1. Topsoil composed of grey- brown clayey silt loam. Deposit representing infilling / made ground in nature composed of mottled yellowish brown silty clay. The natural sub-strata was not revealed. A single modern land drain was present.
7	0 - 400mm 400 – 800mm+	Topsoil - context 7000 Deposit - context 7001	Approximately N - S aligned trench and situated towards the south-eastern extent of the site in Field 1. Topsoil composed of grey-brown clayey silt loam. Deposit representing infilling / made ground in nature composed of mottled yellowish brown silty clay. The natural sub-strata was not revealed.
8	0 - 300mm 300 – 600mm+	Topsoil - context 8000 Deposit - context 8001	Approximately NW - SE aligned trench and situated at the south-eastern extent of the site in Field 1. Topsoil composed of grey-brown clayey silt loam. Deposit representing infilling / made ground in nature composed of mottled yellowish brown silty clay. The natural sub-strata was not revealed. Two modern land drains were revealed.
9	0 - 300mm 300 – 700mm+	Topsoil - context 9000 Deposit - context 9001	Approximately NE - SW aligned trench and situated towards the south extent of the site in Field 2. Topsoil composed of grey-brown clayey silt loam. Deposit representing infilling / made ground in nature composed of mottled yellowish brown silty clay. The natural sub-strata was not revealed. A single modern land drain was revealed.

Trench	Depth below ground	Contexts	Description
10	0 - 400mm 400 – 700mm+	Topsoil - context 10000 Deposit - context 10001	Approximately NW - SE aligned trench and situated towards the south extent of the site in Field 2. Topsoil composed of grey-brown clayey silt loam. Deposit representing infilling / made ground in nature composed of mottled yellowish brown silty clay. The natural sub-strata was not revealed.
11	0 - 300mm 300 – 500mm+	Topsoil - context 11000 Deposit - context 11001	N - S aligned trench and situated towards the southwest extent of the site in Field 3. Topsoil composed of grey-brown clayey silt loam. Deposit representing infilling / made ground in nature composed of mottled yellowish brown silty clay. The natural sub-strata was not revealed. A single modern land drain was revealed.
12	0 - 300mm 300 – 700mm+	Topsoil - context 12000 Deposit - context 12001	Approximately NE - SW aligned trench and situated in the west extent of the site in Field 3. Topsoil composed of grey-brown clayey silt loam. Deposit representing infilling / made ground in nature composed of mottled yellowish brown silty clay. The natural sub-strata was not revealed. A single modern land drain was revealed.
13	0 - 300mm 300 – 700mm+	Topsoil - context 13000 Deposit - context 13001	Approximately NW - SE aligned trench and situated in the west extent of the site in Field 4. Topsoil composed of grey-brown clayey silt loam. Deposit representing infilling / made ground in nature composed of mottled yellowish brown silty clay. The natural sub-strata was not revealed. A single modern land drain was revealed.
15	0 - 400mm 400mm – 1m+	Topsoil - context 15000 Deposit - context 15001	Approximately NW - SE aligned trench and situated towards the south extent of the site in field 4. Topsoil composed of grey-brown clayey silt loam. Deposit representing infilling / made ground in nature composed of mottled yellowish brown silty clay. The natural sub-strata was not revealed.
16	0 - 300mm 300 – 500m+	Topsoil - context 16000 Deposit - context 16001	Approximately N - S aligned trench and situated towards the northwest extent of the site in Field 5. Topsoil composed of grey-brown clayey silt loam. Deposit representing infilling / made ground in nature composed of mottled yellowish brown silty clay. The natural sub-strata was not revealed.
17	0 - 400mm 400 – 800mm 800mm+	Topsoil - context 17000 Deposit - context 17001 Natural – context 17002	N - S aligned trench and situated towards the far west extent of the site in Field 6. Topsoil composed of grey-brown clayey silt loam. Deposit representing infilling / made ground in nature composed of mottled yellowish brown silty clay. Natural sub-strata was composed of stiff bluish-grey clay.

6. COMMENT

6.1 The trench evaluation has demonstrated that almost the entire area of the investigations has been subject to excavation, dumping and disturbance resulting from extensive opencast mining conducted in the later 20th century. The evidence of which was presented in all of the trenches and relates to extensive infilling and levelling after the mining works had ceased. The 1967-68 Ordnance Survey map of the area suggested that the area investigated had not been affected by mining, but it now appears that this was not the case, and this activity had taken place some time after the late 1960s. The absence of the geophysical anomalies is unclear, although it is possible that some of this activity relates to disturbance caused by the infilling / levelling of the site such as wheel rutting from machine plant movement during levelling works. With the exception of a single insubstantial linear feature of unknown date or function, the

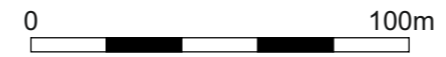
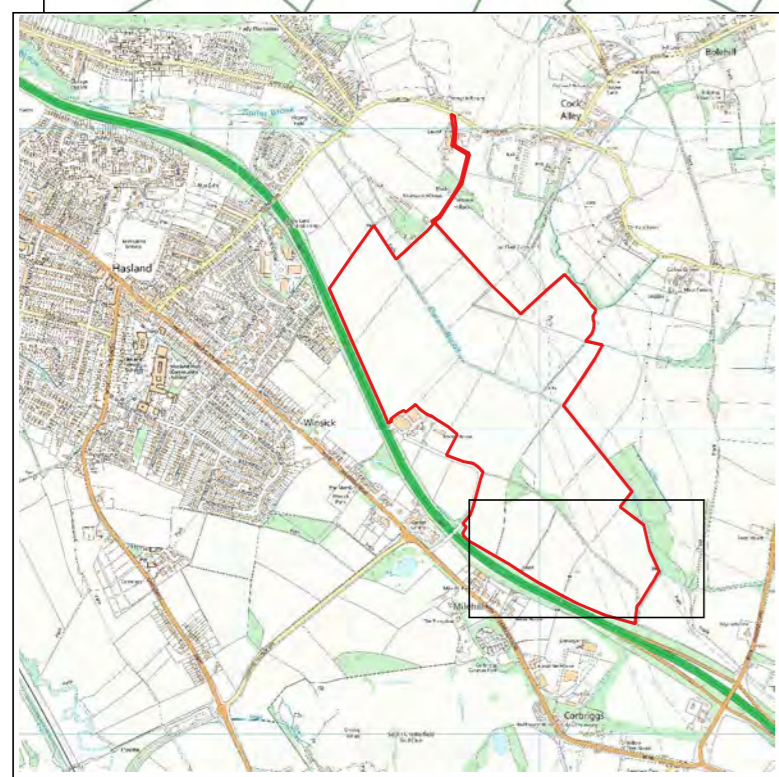
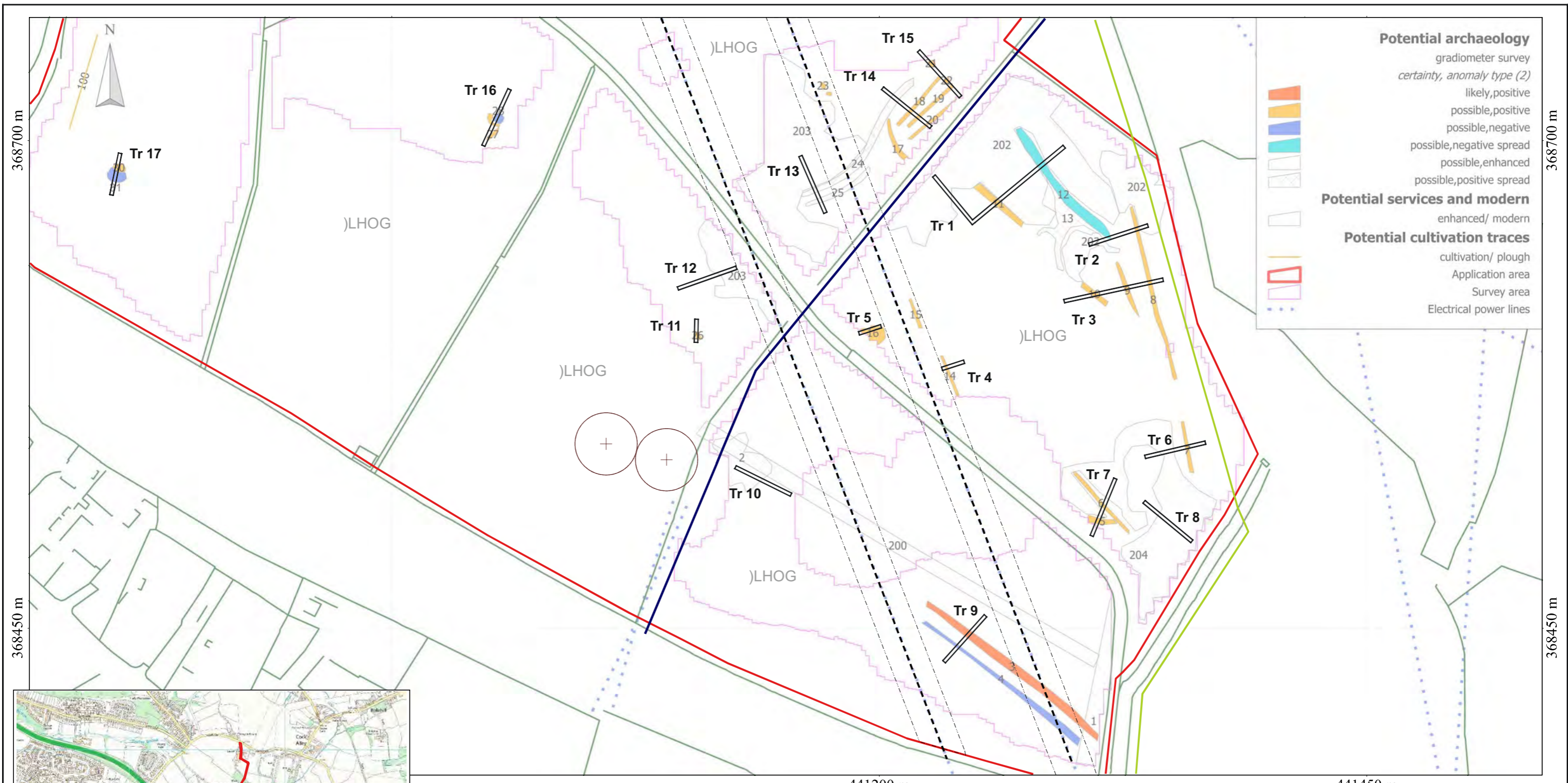
evaluation has provided no evidence for significant archaeological interest anywhere on the site.

- 6.2** It is not possible to map the boundaries of the extended opencast working from the results of this evaluation.

7. REFERENCES

British Geological Survey online
www.bgs.ac.uk/open_geoscience

Cox, W. P., 2021. *'Land at Manor Farm House, Mansfield Road, Hasland, Derbyshire; Project design for archaeological trial trenching'*. Unpublished AC archaeology Ltd report No: ACW1283/2/0 June 2021.

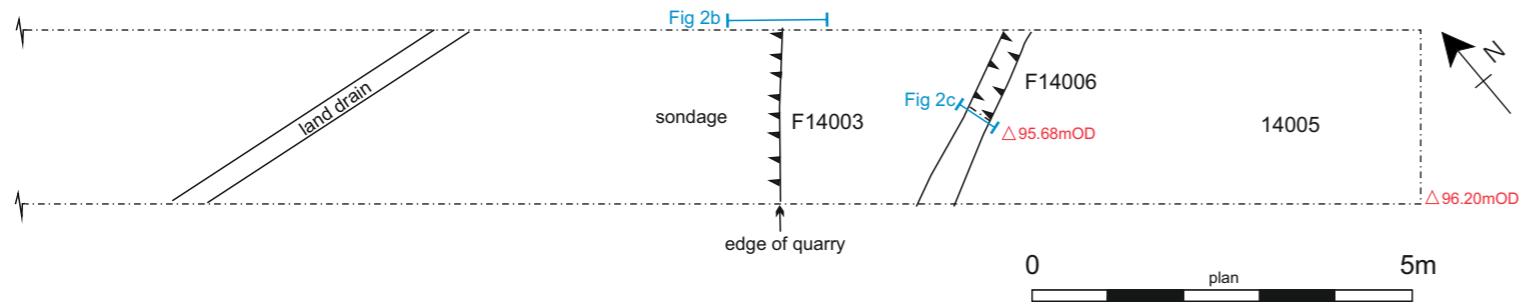


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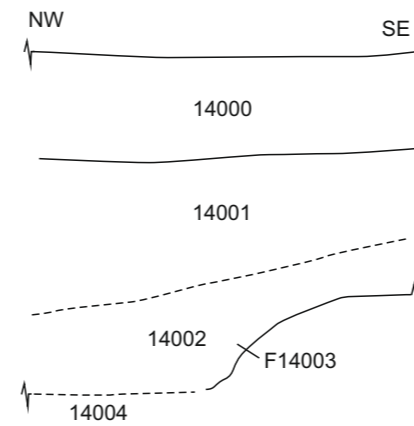
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 Fig. 1: Site and trench location

Trench 14

a) Plan



b) Section, F14003



c) Section, F14006

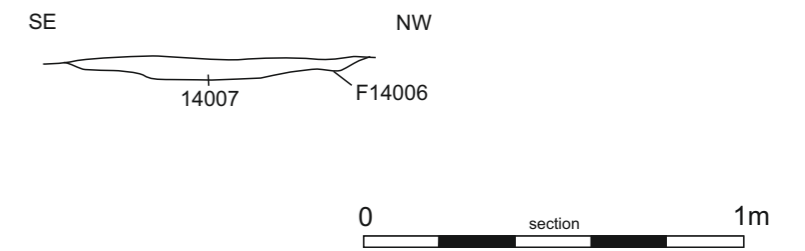


Plate 1:
Trench 14, viewed from the SE (scales 2m and 1m)



Plate 2:
Trench 14, east facing section/plan of F14006 (scale 0.5m)



Plate 3:
Trench 8, viewed from the SE (scales 2m and 1m)



Plate 4:
Trench 12, viewed from the NE (scales 2m and 1m)



Plate 5:
Trench 17, viewed from the N (scales 2m and 1m)

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