

**An Archaeological Evaluation at
Derby Road,
Hilton,
Derbyshire,
DE65 5FP**

NGR: SK 24785 30888

Donald Clark



Site Name: Derby Road, Hilton, Derbyshire

Grid Ref: SK 24785 30888

Author: Donald Clark

Client: Bellway Homes, East Midlands

Planning Ref. 9/2017/1293

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OASIS RECORD

PROJECT DETAILS	Oasis No	universil-362363		
	Project Name	An Archaeological Evaluation at Derby Road, Hilton, Derbyshire.		
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	Previous/Future Work	Not known		
	Project Type	Evaluation trenching		
	Site Status	None		
	Current Land Use	Vacant field		
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	Significant Finds/Period	None / None		
	Development Type	Residential		
	Reason for Investigation	NPPF		
	Position in the Planning Process	As a Condition		
	Planning Ref.	9/2017/1293		
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	Study Area	2.55 hectares		
	Site Coordinates	SK 24785 30888		
	Height OD	62m-65m OD		
PROJECT CREATORS	Organisation	ULAS		
	Project Brief Originator	Bellway Homes, East Midlands		
	Project Design Originator	ULAS		
	Project Manager	Tim Higgins and John Thomas		
	Project Director/Supervisor	Donald Clark		
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Contents

Summary	1
Introduction.....	1
Site location, Topography and Geology	1
Historical and Archaeological Background	2
Archaeological objectives	3
Research Objectives.....	4
Methodology	4
Results.....	5
North Field.....	6
Trenches T2 and T20	7
Trench T3.....	10
Trenches T4 and T21	13
Central Field.....	19
South Field.....	21
Conclusion	22
Publication	22
Acknowledgements.....	22
Bibliography	22

Figures

Figure 1: Location of development area (red outline)	2
Figure 2: Hilton, Derbyshire, development area outlined in red (provided by client)...	2
Figure 3: Geophysical greyscale image, provided by client.	3
Figure 4: Location of trenches across the development area	5
Figure 5: Features were visible in trenches 2, 3, 4 and 20, all in the North Field	6
Figure 6: Trench T2 looking east.....	7
Figure 7: Trench T20 looking west.....	8
Figure 8: Trench T2 with linear feature [1], which was seen continuing into trench T20, and shallow pit [3]	9
Figure 9: Section drawings of linear [1] and shallow pit [3] from trench T2	9
Figure 10: Linear [1] in trench T2, looking south	10
Figure 11: Shallow pit [3] with linear [1] in the background, trench T2, looking east	10
Figure 12: Trench T3 looking east.....	11
Figure 13: Trench T3 with pit features [5], [7], [13] and [15]	12
Figure 14: Section drawings of pit features [5], [7], [13] and [15] in trench T3	13
Figure 15: Pits [5], [7], [13] and [15] in trench T3	13
Figure 16: Trench T4 looking east.....	14
Figure 17: Trench T21 looking east.....	15
Figure 18: Trench T4 with linear feature [9], trench T21 was negative	15
Figure 19: Section drawing of linear [9] in trench T4	16
Figure 20: Linear [9] in trench T4, looking north.....	16
Figure 21: North Field Trenches 1-4	17
Figure 22: North Field Trenches 5-8	18
Figure 23: North Field Trenches 9, 20, 21 and area 22	18

Figure 24: Central Field Trenches 10-13	19
Figure 25: Central Field Trenches 14, 15, 17 and 19	20
Figure 26: South Field Trenches 16 and 18	21

Tables

Table 1: Trench T2.....	7
Table 2 Trench T20.....	8
Table 3: Trench T3.....	12
Table 4: Trench T4.....	14
Table 5: Trench T21.....	14
Table 6: North Field Trenches 1-9 and 20-22.....	17
Table 7: Central Field Trenches 10-15, 17, and 19.....	19
Table 8: South Field Trenches 16 and 18	21

An Archaeological Evaluation at Derby Road, Hilton, Derbyshire (SK 24785 30888)

Donald Clark

Summary

University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) carried out an archaeological evaluation at Derby Road, Hilton, Derbyshire (NGR: SK 24785 30888) in July 2019. A total of 21 trenches, with additional small area strip were excavated to evaluate an area for a proposed new residential development on land north of Derby Road. Four of the trenches contained features, two shallow linear field gullies and five shallow pits, thought to be natural events. No dating evidence was recovered from the two linear gullies but they were thought to be remnants of former field systems.

A record of the archaeological evaluation will be transferred to the Derbyshire HER and digitally uploaded to the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) under the accession code ULAS_DBYRD_HIL_2019.

Introduction

An archaeological evaluation by trial trenching was undertaken between the 8th and 17th of July 2019 by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on behalf of Bellway Homes, East Midlands. Outline planning permission had been granted for the construction of up to 45 dwellings with associated open space and landscaping (Planning Application 9/2017/1293). A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI; Day 2019) had been produced by ULAS for the Senior Planning Archaeologist at Derbyshire County Council as planning advisor to South Derbyshire District Council, the planning authority in this case. It provided details of the aims, objectives and methodologies to be adopted during the course of the work. The fieldwork was intended to provide a record of any archaeological remains which might be present in mitigation of the impact of the proposed development in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Section 12: Enhancing and Conserving the Historic Environment).

All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CifA) Code of Conduct (2014) and adhered to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation* (2014). The *LCC Guidelines and Procedures for Archaeological work Leicestershire and Rutland* (1997) were also adhered to.

Site location, Topography and Geology

The proposed development area is located on land north of Derby Road in Hilton parish, Derbyshire, centred at NGR SK 24785 30888 (Fig.1). The site is bounded to the south by the Derby Road and two cottages, to the west by housing and a nursery, to the east by the Turbot Turf Supplies facility and to the north by hedges and pasture fields. The site is c. 2.55 hectares, divided into three fields of pasture separated by hedges containing mature trees (Figs. 2 & 3). The Ordnance Survey Geological Survey of Great Britain indicates that the underlying geology of the site is likely to consist of Mercia Mudstone, overlain by Egerton Common sand and gravel.

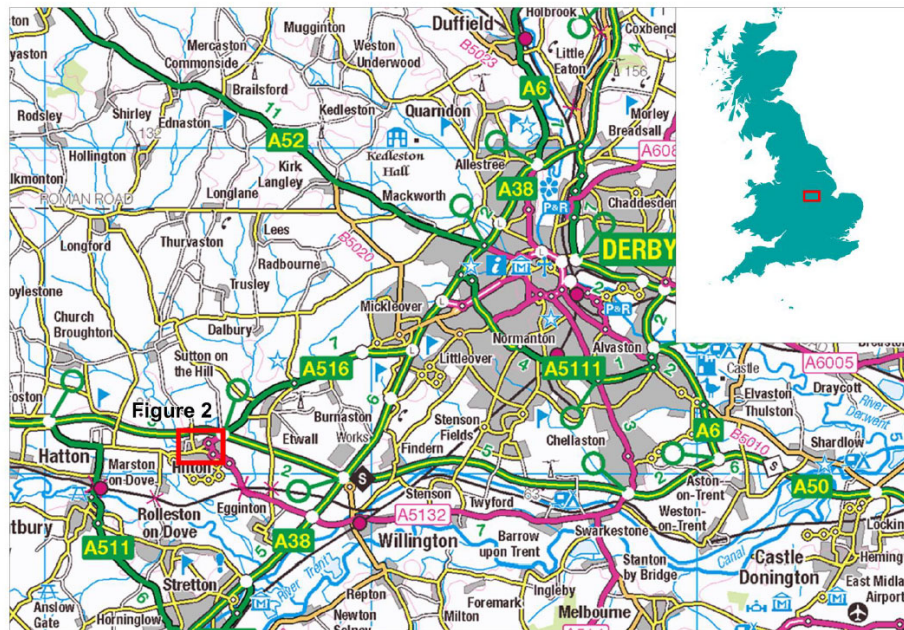


Figure 1: Location of development area (red outline)

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Figure 2: Hilton, Derbyshire, development area outlined in red (provided by client).

Historical and Archaeological Background

The development area contains ephemeral earthwork remains of medieval ridge and furrow in the northern field and possibly a small area in the central field. What remains is of local significance and shows the site lay in agricultural fields outside the medieval core of the village. There are post-enclosure hedge banks of negligible significance, quarry pits, and the old road, also of local significance, which was expected to run along the line of the field boundary between the central and southern fields.

It was possible that the area contained prehistoric finds of earlier prehistoric material, as evidenced by nearby discoveries from gravel deposits in neighbouring fields. For example a Palaeolithic hand axe (HER20604) was found during gravel extraction just to the north. Such remains, despite their displacement, are of regional significance. There is also considerable evidence for activity on the river gravels along the River Dove during the Later Prehistoric and Roman periods, including settlement and ritual activity. There is also the possibility of Anglo-Saxon occupation in the vicinity, as suggested by a possible cemetery (HER20605) situated 500m to the north-east of the area. Medieval ploughing, and then later ploughing that eroded remains of the former, will have caused some damage to any earlier remains, though to what extent is unclear. A desk based assessment of the development area was produced by Prospect Archaeology in March 2017 and a geophysical survey was undertaken by Pre-Construct Geophysics in September 2017 (Fig. 3), which did not identify any obvious archaeological features.



Figure 3: Geophysical greyscale image, provided by client.

Archaeological objectives

The main objectives of the evaluation were:

- To verify the results of the geophysical survey
- To determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any archaeological remains within undisturbed parts of the development area
- To assess the artefactual and environmental potential of any archaeological deposits encountered
- To assess the impact of previous land use on the site
- To produce a site archive for deposition with an appropriate museum and to provide information for accession to the Derbyshire Historic Environment Record.

Trial trenching is an intrusive form of evaluation that will demonstrate the existence of earth-fast archaeological features that may exist within the development area.

Research Objectives

While the nature, extent and quality of archaeological remains within the area of investigation remain somewhat of an unknown quantity until archaeological work was undertaken, it was possible to determine some initial broad objectives derived from *East Midlands Heritage* research agenda (Knight *et al.* 2012). The evaluation therefore had the potential to contribute to the following research aims.

Palaeolithic: 1.4.2. How may studies of artefact typologies and raw materials contribute to our understanding of patterns of hunter-gather mobility? 1.4.4. How were EUP and LUP sites distributed across the landscape, and what contrasts may be observed with earlier and later (Mesolithic) periods?

High medieval: 7.7.1. Can we shed further light upon the origins and development of the open-field system and its impact upon agricultural practices? 7.7.3. What can we deduce about changes in woodland management and animal or crop husbandry (including new crops, crop rotation, field systems, more intensive cultivation of clay soils and larger animals, particularly sheep?

Modern: 9.4.2. What roles have different transport systems played in the development of industry, commerce, agriculture and settlement?

Methodology

- Prior to machining general photographs of the site area were taken. The original trench plan from the WSI had 19 trenches positioned across the site, however, following a site meeting with the County Archaeologist, this plan was revised slightly with two additional trenches and a 10m x 10m area excavated and examined. These 21 trenches and area were positioned within the proposed development area (Fig.4).
- Excavation was carried out with a machine appropriate for the work fitted with a flat-bladed bucket to expose the underlying strata. Topsoil and overburden was removed carefully in level spits, under continuous archaeological supervision.
- The trenches were excavated down to the natural undisturbed ground. All excavation by machine and hand was undertaken with a view to avoid damage to archaeological deposits or features which appear worthy of preservation *in situ* or more detailed investigation than for the purposes of evaluation.
- Features that were hand excavated were recorded by photograph and scale drawing.
- An overall site plan will be tied into the Ordnance Survey National Grid. Trench locations will be recorded by an appropriate method. These will then be tied in to the Ordnance Survey National Grid.
- The trenches were backfilled and levelled at the end of the evaluation.

Results

The development area consisted of three fields, north field, central field and south field, each separated by long established boundary ditches and hedges (Fig. 4). An entrance into the area had been provided by removing part of the hedge on the north side of the Derby Road allowing access into the south field. It was noticeable that the south field was at a lower elevation than the road, dropping by approx. 1m. The central field was then at a higher elevation than the south field, rising by approx. 1m and the north field was at a higher elevation than the central field, again rising by approx. 1m. A total twenty one evaluation trenches (T1 – T21) plus an additional small area strip (T22) were excavated to the natural ground and varied in depth from 0.23m to 1.00m. A natural substratum consisting of orange brown mix of sand and gravel was present within all the trenches. Overlying was a layer of subsoil that comprised dark grey brown silty sand mixed with rounded pebbles common throughout. The topsoil in all the trenches consisted of dark grey brown silty sand mixed with occasional rounded pebble.

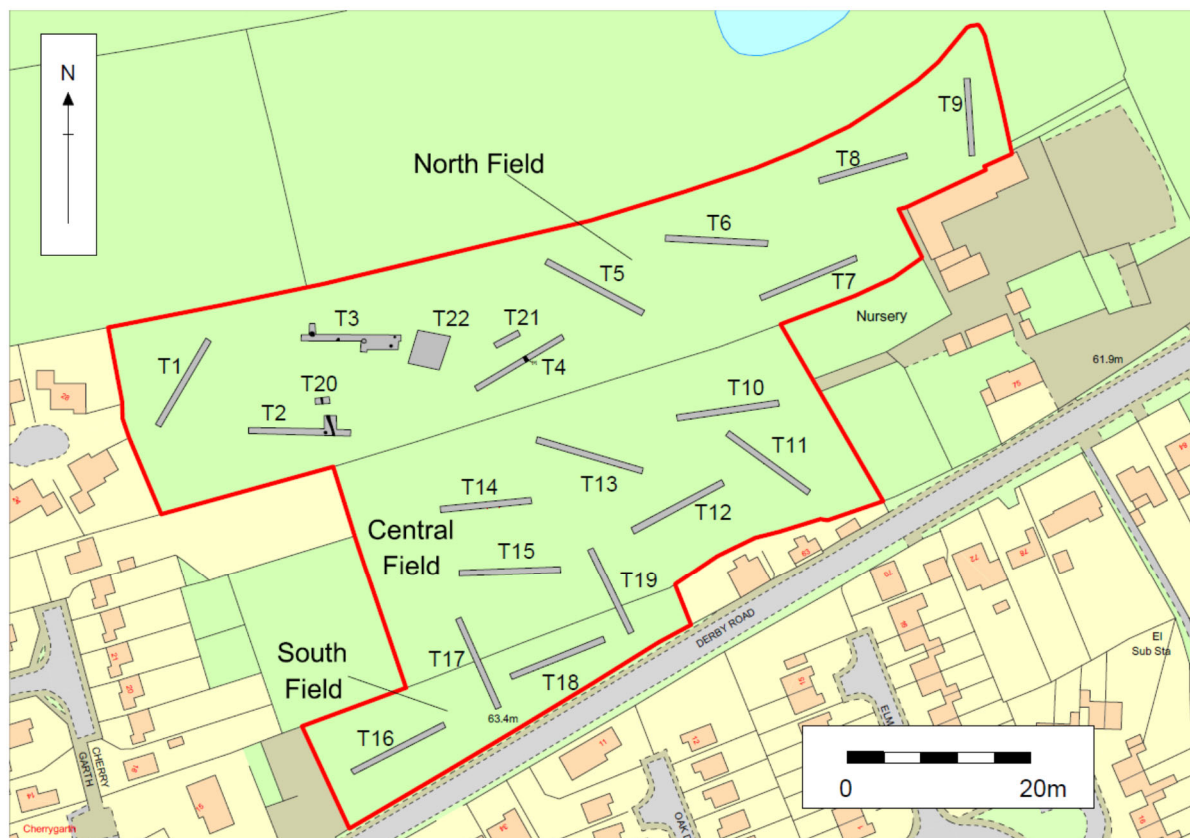


Figure 4: Location of trenches across the development area

North Field

Although generally flat, areas of the north field were uneven and this was thought to be the remnants of medieval ridge and furrow. A total of ten trenches were excavated of which only four (T2, T3, T4 and T20) had contained possible archaeological features (Fig 4.). Both trenches T2 and T3 were widened to help determine the extent of these possible features. Trench T2 contained a narrow, shallow linear gully [1] and a possible shallow pit [3] located approx. 3m to the west of the gully. An additional trench T20 excavated to north of T2 and appeared to be a continuation of the gully [1] (Fig. 5).

Trench T3 had contained a scatter of shallow and irregular pits [5], [7], [13] and [15]. An area strip T22 measuring 10m x 10m was excavated directly to the east of T3 to help determine whether the pits did continued beyond the trench, however no more features were found. Another shallow linear gully feature [9] was found within trench T4 running in a north-south direction. Trench T21 was excavated to north of T4 and the gully [9] but no additional features were found. No dateable material was recovered from any of the investigated features and both the topsoil and subsoil were devoid of any finds.

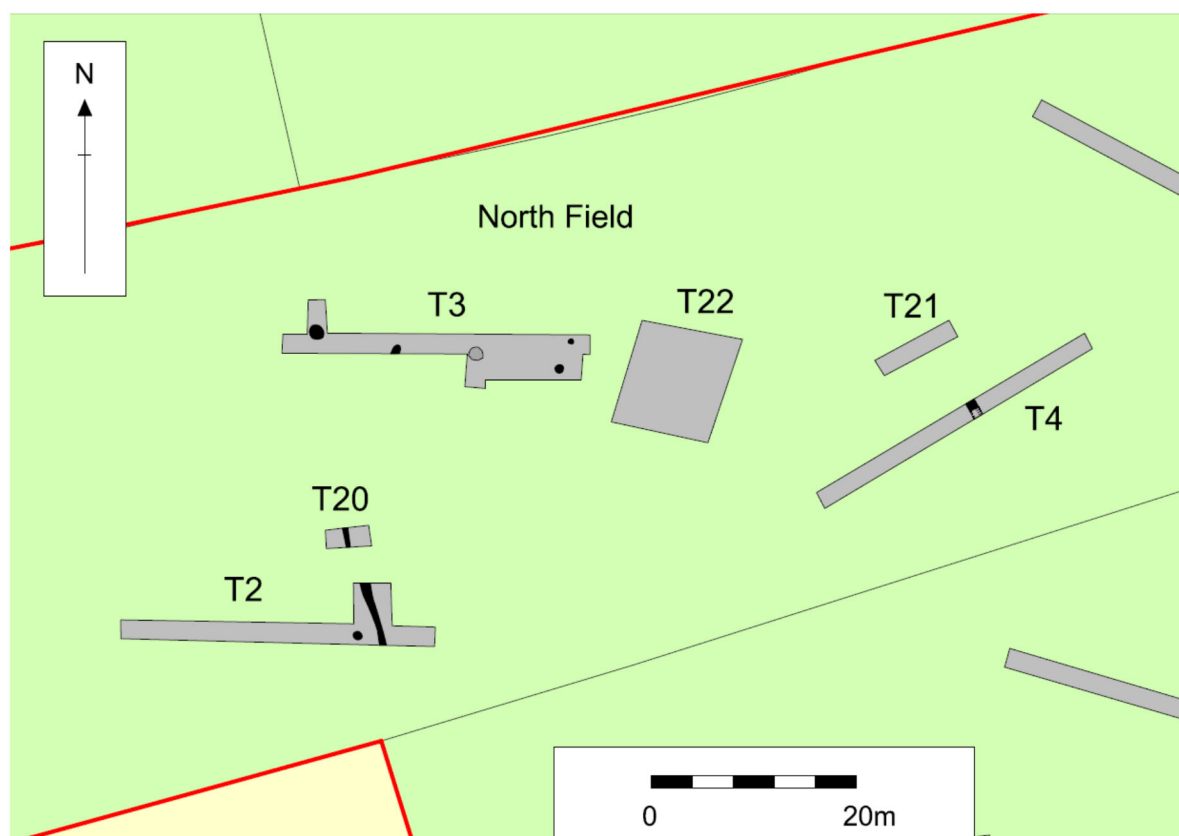


Figure 5: Features were visible in trenches 2, 3, 4 and 20, all in the North Field



Figure 6: Trench T2 looking east

Trenches T2 and T20

A linear or gully feature [1] was visible within trenches T2 and T20 suggesting a total length of 12.35m (Fig. 8). It was orientated north–south and an excavated section across the ditch revealed moderate sloping sides and a flat base, that measured 0.55m wide 0.18m deep (Figs. 9 and 10). The fill (2) comprised a greenish brown silty sand mixed with small pebble inclusions, and was generally sterile, with no datable finds found. It was also noticeable that the feature [1] was more truncated and barely visible within trench T20.

A second feature was found within T2 and comprised a truncated pit [3] located 3m directly to the west of linear gully feature [1] (Fig. 8). This pit was sub-rectangular in plan with moderately sloping sides and a flat base, which measured 0.80m long, 0.60m wide and 0.17m deep (Fig. 9 and 11). The fill (4) consisted of a sterile mid-orange brown silty clay mixed with small and medium size pebble inclusions. This feature contained no datable material.

Interval from W end of trench	0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25m	30m
Topsoil depth	0.40m	0.32m	0.27m	0.28m	0.27m	0.24m	0.26m
Subsoil depth	0.15m	0.20m	0.11m	0.10m	0.12m	0.06m	0.11m
Top of natural substratum	0.55m	0.52m	0.38m	0.38m	0.39m	0.30m	0.37m
Base of trench	0.60m	0.56m	0.42m	0.41m	0.39m	0.33m	0.37m

Table 1: Trench T2



Figure 7: Trench T20 looking west

Interval from W end of trench	0m	4m
Topsoil depth	0.28m	0.25m
Subsoil depth	0.16m	0.14m
Top of natural substratum	0.44m	0.39m
Base of trench	0.44m	0.47m

Table 2 Trench T20

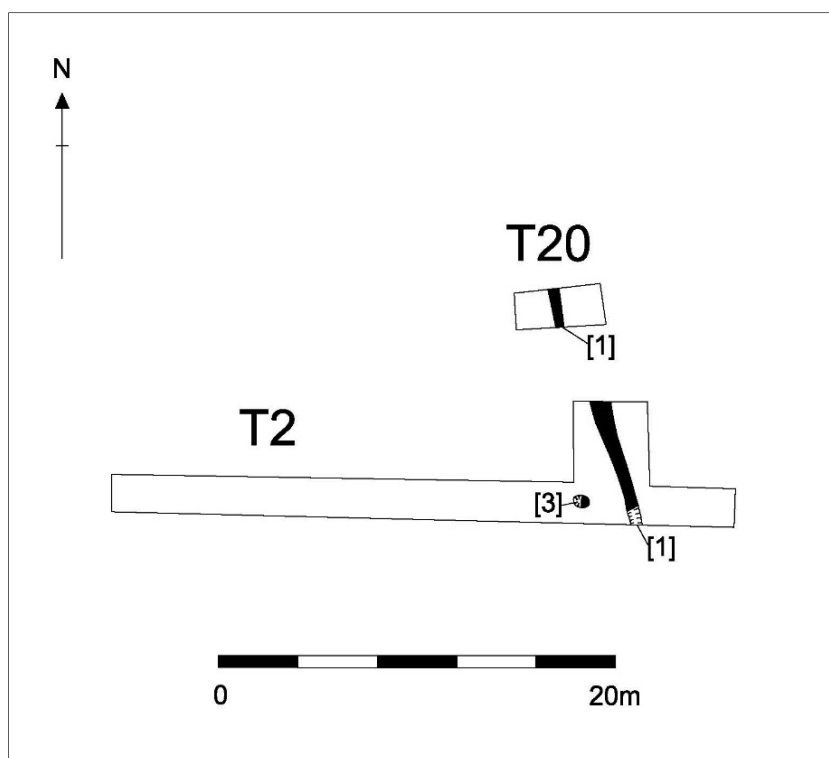


Figure 8: Trench T2 with linear feature [1], which was seen continuing into trench T20, and shallow pit [3]

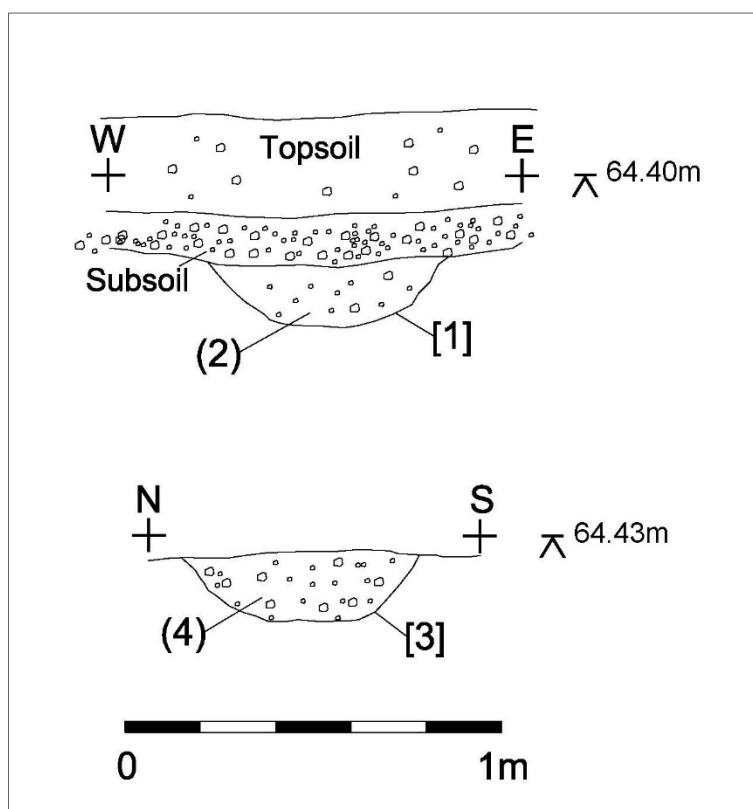


Figure 9: Section drawings of linear [1] and shallow pit [3] from trench T2



Figure 10: Linear [1] in trench T2, looking south



Figure 11: Shallow pit [3] with linear [1] in the background, trench T2, looking east

Trench T3

A group of pit-like features within trench T3 were thought to have been formed naturally or were possible tree bowl features (Fig. 13).

On the west side of the trench excavations of pit [5] revealed an irregular rectangular shape feature which measured 1.40m long, 1.24m wide and 0.33m deep. The sides were irregular and the base a gentle slope [7] (Figs. 13, 14 and 15). It contained a primary fill (12) that consisted

of redeposited natural. A secondary fill (6) that consisted of a mid-orange brown silty clay with small and medium pebble inclusions. Both fills were sterile and contained no dating material.

Towards the centre of the trench another pit [7] which was not seen fully exposed in plan but was likely to be a similar sub-rectangular pit [5] (Figs. 13, 14 and 15). The full extent of the feature is unknown but it had minimum length of 0.90m, and measured 1.20m wide and 0.11m deep. The sides were irregular and the base was reasonably flat. It contained a single sterile fill (8) that consisted of a mid-orange brown silty clay mixed with small and medium pebble inclusions. No finds were retrieved from the fill.

In the south east corner of the trench a third pit [13] was excavated revealing sub-rectangular shaped feature that measured 0.80m long, 0.68m wide and 0.12m deep (Figs. 13, 14 and 15). The sides were irregularly sloping and the base was concave. A single fill (14) consisted of a light grey brown sandy silt mixed with small rounded pebble inclusions. The fill was sterile and contained no dating material.

A final pit [15] was investigated in the north-east corner of the trench and revealed another sub-rectangular pit with irregular sides and base (Fig. 13, 14 and 15). It measured 0.92m long, 0.40m wide and 0.06m deep. Its fill (16) comprised a sterile light grey brown sandy silt mixed with small rounded pebble inclusions. No finds were found within this pit.



Figure 12: Trench T3 looking east

Interval from W end of trench	0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25m	30m
Topsoil depth	0.30m	0.36m	0.35m	0.38m	0.37m	0.34m	0.41m
Subsoil depth	0.14m	0.18m	0.11m	0.14m	0.21m	0.17m	0.20m
Top of natural substratum	0.44m	0.54m	0.46m	0.52m	0.58m	0.51m	0.61m
Base of trench	0.49m	0.60m	0.50m	0.61m	0.62m	0.53m	0.65m

Table 3: Trench T3

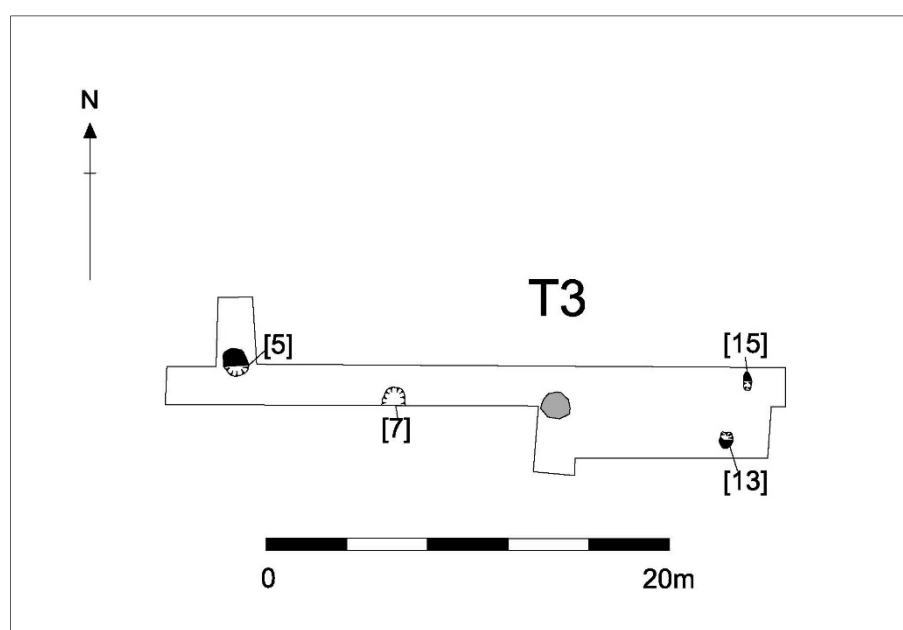


Figure 13: Trench T3 with pit features [5], [7], [13] and [15]

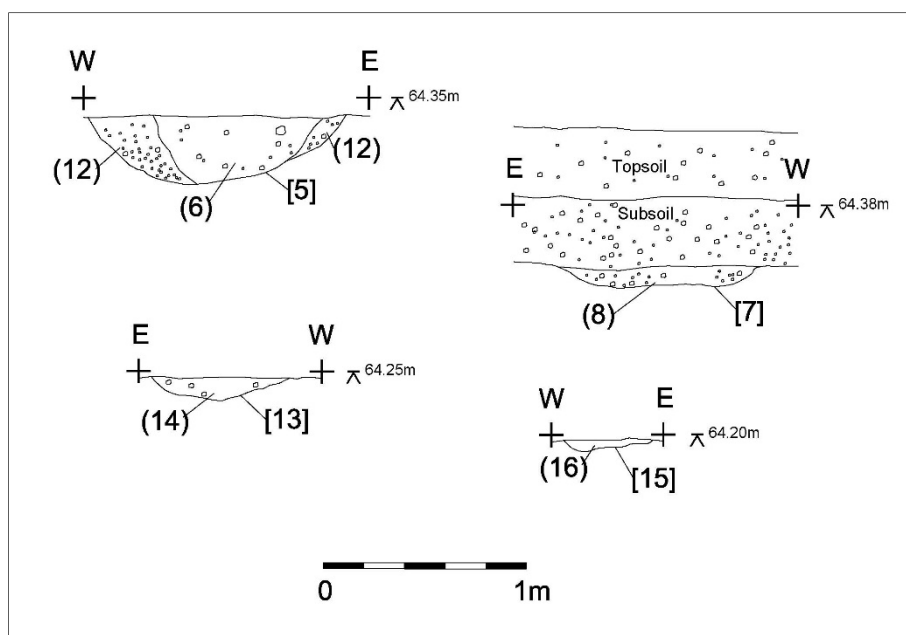


Figure 14: Section drawings of pit features [5], [7], [13] and [15] in trench T3



Figure 15: Pits [5], [7], [13] and [15] in trench T3

Trenches T4 and T21

Trench 4 excavated towards the east side of the north field revealed a shallow linear gully feature [9] running across the width of the trench (Figs 5 and 18). It was generally orientated north-west to south-east, and test a slot excavated across it revealed moderate sloping sides and a flat base (Figs 19 and 20). The width of the excavated section measured 1.02m and the depth was 0.29m. A primary fill (11) consisted of redeposited natural, and secondary fill (10) comprised a light orange brown clayey silt mixed with small pebble inclusions. Both fills were sterile and contained no dating material. Trench 21 was excavated to determine whether the linear feature continued northwards but no features were visible within the trench (Figs.5 and 18).

Interval from W end of trench	0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25m	30m
Topsoil depth	0.31m	0.32m	0.28m	0.28m	0.27m	0.29m	0.26m
Subsoil depth	0.16m	0.22m	0.18m	0.16m	0.15m	0.19m	0.22m
Top of natural substratum	0.47m	0.54m	0.46m	0.44m	0.42m	0.48m	0.48m
Base of trench	0.51m	0.61m	0.54m	0.51m	0.49m	0.59m	0.54m

Table 4: Trench T4

Interval from W end of trench	0m	4m	8m
Topsoil depth	0.36m	0.37m	0.33m
Subsoil depth	0.22m	0.16m	0.18m
Top of natural substratum	0.58m	0.53m	0.51m
Base of trench	0.72m	0.64m	0.60m

Table 5: Trench T21



Figure 16: Trench T4 looking east



Figure 17: Trench T21 looking east

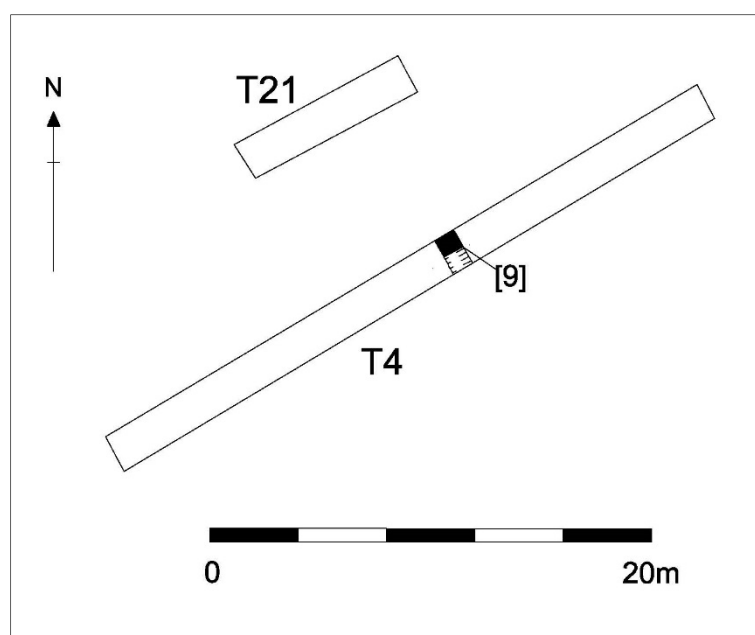


Figure 18: Trench T4 with linear feature [9], trench T21 was negative

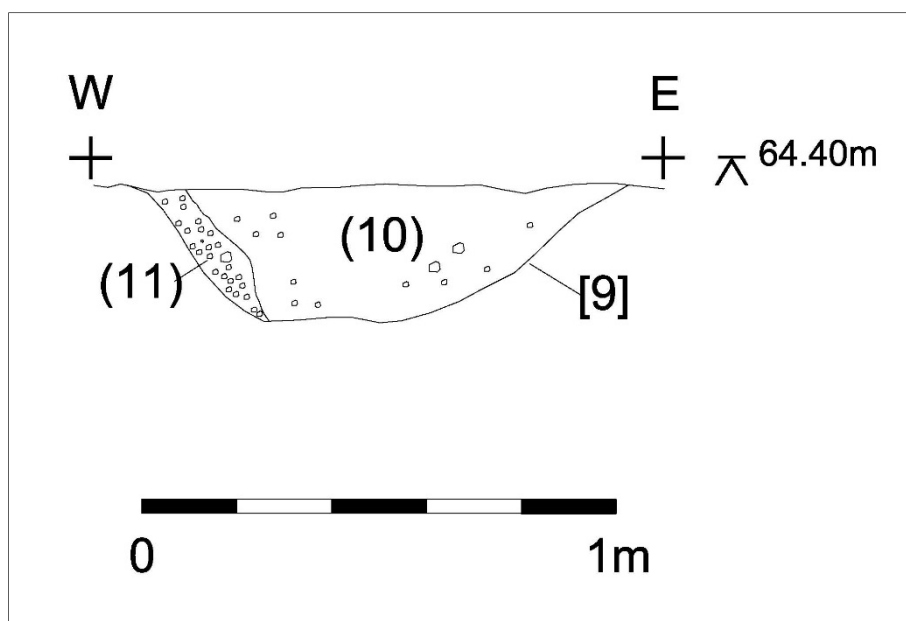


Figure 19: Section drawing of linear [9] in trench T4



Figure 20: Linear [9] in trench T4, looking north

Trench No.	Length	Min. Depth	Max. Depth	Orientation	Comments
1	30.50m	0.37m	0.54m	N-S	2 furrows visible but faint
2	30.45m	0.33m	0.60m	E-W	Linear feature [1] and shallow pit [3] excavated and recorded, trench widened at east end
3	30.25m	0.49m	0.65m	E-W	4 pit type features [5], [7], [13] and [15] excavated and recorded, trench widened at east end
4	31.20m	0.49m	0.61m	E-W	Linear feature [9] investigated and recorded
5	32.20m	0.56m	0.76m	E-W	Possible pit feature investigated but not recorded, likely natural feature
6	30.50m	0.45m	0.57m	E-W	Possible furrow
7	30.70m	0.44m	0.60m	E-W	Negative trench
8	28.90m	0.44m	0.64m	E-W	Land drain
9	24.10m	0.41m	0.68m	N-S	Possible furrow
20	4.60m	0.44m	0.47m	E-W	Continuation of gully [1], much fainter
21	8.50m	0.60m	0.72m	E-W	Negative trench
22	10.80m	0.58m	0.82m	N-S	Negative area

Table 6: North Field Trenches 1-9 and 20-22



Figure 21: North Field Trenches 1-4



Figure 22: North Field Trenches 5-8



Figure 23: North Field Trenches 9, 20, 21 and area 22

Central Field

Six trenches were excavated within the central field and a further two were excavated across a hedge line dividing the central field and south field (T17 and T19) (Fig. 4). Four of the trenches revealed what were thought to be large irregular quarry pit features (Table 7). Test slots excavated across the features suggested that they were all backfilled quarry pits but no dating evidence was recovered. A turnpike road was thought to be following the boundary between the central and south fields and trenches, and T17 and T19 had been placed over the projected route. An area of raised natural was recorded within T17, and an area where soil had been compacted into the natural ground was seen in T19. These two deposits were positioned upon the line of the turnpike road and may represent all that remains physically of the road.

Trench No.	Length	Min. Depth	Max. Depth	Orientation	Comments
10	31.10m	0.54m	0.73m	E-W	Negative trench, topsoil at east end contained 18 th /19 th C. building rubble
11	30.90m	0.36m	0.48m	NW-SE	2 possible furrows and a quarry pit
12	31.20m	0.43m	1.01m	E-W	2 quarry pits, one machined out
13	33.0m	0.45m	0.73m	E-W	Quarry pit
14	28.0m	0.38m	0.48m	E-W	Quarry pit
15	30.90m	0.38m	0.55m	E-W	Negative trench
17	30.15m	0.32m	0.52m	NW-SE	Field boundary ditch, raised area on line of turnpike road and possible quarry pit
19	29.50m	0.23m	0.48m	NE-SW	Field boundary ditch and area of compressed earth on line of turnpike road

Table 7: Central Field Trenches 10-15, 17, and 19



Figure 24: Central Field Trenches 10-13



Figure 25: Central Field Trenches 14, 15, 17 and 19

South Field

Two trenches T16 and T18 were excavated within the south field (Fig. 4). These trenches revealed only two features within them and comprised a possible quarry pit found in T16 and a modern feature located within T18 (Fig. 26)

Trench No.	Length	Min. Depth	Max. Depth	Orientation	Comments
16	31.90m	0.44m	0.90m	NE-SW	Possible quarry pit
18	30.60m	0.35m	0.45m	E-W	Modern feature, investigated but not recorded

Table 8: South Field Trenches 16 and 18



Figure 26: South Field Trenches 16 and 18

Conclusion

Across the development area only four of the evaluation trenches all located within the north field, contained features which may represent archaeological deposits. Two north-south aligned linear features in trenches T2, T4 and T20 were shallow but convincing, whilst the pits within trench T3 were irregular in shape and less convincing. This may be due to heavy truncation, as all the three fields which make up the development area appear to have undergone some form of landscaping in the past. The landscaping may have truncated the linear gully features, which are thought to be remnants of former field systems but they remain undated. There was also evidence of gravel extraction or quarry pits within the south, central and north fields, which may have similarly truncated or removed any potential archaeological features. The evaluation trenching combined with the geophysical survey suggests that there is not a concentration of archaeological features likely to be affected by the proposed development.

Publication

ULAS supports the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) project. The online OASIS form at <http://ads.ac.uk/project/oasis> will be completed detailing the results of the project. Once the report has become a public document following its incorporation into the HER it may be placed on the web-site.

Acknowledgements

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