

Archaeological Mitigation

On Behalf of
Vistry Homes

Concerning
Land N of Hill Top Farm
Earl Shilton
Leicestershire
LE9 7DP

June 2025

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Compilation

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Report Reference

BA2511HTF/Report

Artwork

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Grid Reference

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100055758

OASIS ID

borderar1-534334

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Museum Accession Number

X.A23.2025

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Version

2

Date

June 2025

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1 Non-Technical Summary

This report details the results of a programme of Archaeological Mitigation undertaken between the 3rd and 20th March 2025 in connection with a proposed residential development for up to 140 dwellings with Public Open Space, a children's play area, landscaping and sustainable drainage system (SuDS) on Land N of Hill Top Farm, Earl Shilton, Leicestershire LE9 7DP (NGR: SP 46636 98417 – approximate centre). The works were carried out on behalf of Vistry Homes in response to Condition 4 of the Planning Decision (Planning Ref.: 21/00135/OUT).

The Site, which was located immediately to the N of Earl Shilton and to the W of Leicester Road, measured c.94,500 sqm and occupied four large arable fields, two of which are subject to the works detailed in this report, with the programme of archaeological mitigation divided into two separate areas, Area A located near the northern boundary, and Area B situated to the S.

In Area A the excavation revealed the presence of a linear ditch and several plough furrows, one of which was excavated. The pottery assemblage recovered from the ditch suggests a possible medieval date based on the possible Potters Marston ware sherds recovered from it, although the fragments were of small size and they lacked form. The sherds recovered from the excavated plough furrow suggest an 18th to 19th century date, which is supported by the presence of clay tobacco pipe bowls and stems.

In Area B the excavation revealed several ditches, gullies and pits, with the recovered pottery and clay tobacco pipe bowls and stems again indicating a date of the 18th to 19th centuries; at least seven fragments of coal or clinker were also recovered, which may suggest that the land had been worked with a steam traction engine.

The charcoal assemblage recovered from the palaeoenvironmental sampling suggests that burning occurred in the local vicinity of the Site during context formation. The small finds assemblages also indicate the presence of human activity nearby, however, the general lack of charred palaeodietary material suggests that the activity was not domestic, with the remaining evidence yielded by sampling being too insufficient for further interpretation. The small faunal assemblage is likely to represent discarded post-medieval waste.

Although the results are somewhat limited, the works carried out within Areas A and B of Land N of Hill Top Farm, Earl Shilton may help in addressing specific research aims identified in East Midlands Heritage: An Updated Research Agenda and Strategy for the Historic Environment of the East Midlands (Knight, Vyner & Allen 2012).

2 Introduction

Border Archaeology (BA) were instructed by Vistry Homes to undertake a programme of Archaeological Mitigation in connection with a residential development for up to 140 dwellings with Public Open Space, a children's play area, landscaping and sustainable drainage system (SuDS) on Land N of Hill Top Farm, Earl Shilton, Leicestershire LE9 7DP (NGR: SP 46636 98417 – approximate centre; Planning Ref.: 21/00135/OUT; *fig. 1*), henceforth referred to as the Site.

This Report concerns solely the results of the Archaeological Mitigation, which comprised the excavation of two rectangular plots, recorded as Areas A and B, located towards the northern and southern boundaries of the Development Area respectively (*fig. 2*); Archaeological Field Evaluation (AFE) works were undertaken concurrently with the Archaeological Mitigation, the results of which were reported on separately.

The Archaeological Mitigation was carried out between the 3rd and 20th March 2025. This Report details the results of the programme of archaeological works and is for submission to William Kelly, Senior Planning Archaeologist (Heritage) of Leicestershire County Council (LCC).

3 Site Description

Earl Shilton is located approximately 16km WSW of Leicester and 8km NE of Hinckley in the Hinckley & Bosworth District in the SW part of Leicestershire.

The Site itself, which measured c.94,500 sqm and was situated at a height of between c.118m (S) and c.99m (NE) above Ordnance Datum (aOD), comprised four large arable fields, three of which were subject to archaeological investigations. It was bordered by mature hedgerows and trees to the N and E (as well as part of the W), by allotments to the SW and by residential properties to the S; the former farmyard of Hill Top Farm also lay immediately to the SSE. To the E, the Site was bounded by Leicester Road.

The programme of Archaeological Mitigation was divided into two separate areas, Area A (2,153 sqm) located near the northern boundary of the Site, and Area B (2,330 sqm) situated to the S (*fig. 2*).

There were no Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs), Registered Parks and Gardens or Listed Buildings within the boundaries of the Site; however, the Grade II listed Top House (List Entry No.: 1180239) was recorded c.100m to the S, while the Earl Shilton Conservation Area was located just under 730m to the SW.

3.1 Soils & Geology

The British Geological Survey (BGS) lists the underlying solid geology of the Site as mudstone of the Gunthorpe Member, sedimentary bedrock that formed between 247.1 and 237 million years ago during the Triassic period.

While no overlying superficial geology has been noted for the majority of the Site, that for the S field (with the exception of the NE corner, for which there is no data) has been recorded as sand and gravel of the Wigston Member, which formed during the Quaternary period between 2.588 million years ago and the present (BGS 2025).

No historic borehole data is recorded for the Site or the immediate vicinity, although one (SP49NE69) located at Huit Farm c.1.7km to the SE (the nearest with accessible depths) records the natural as being encountered at c.4ft (c.1.2m) below ground level (bgl) (*ibid.*).

4 Historical & Archaeological Background

A Heritage Statement was previously produced by Savills Heritage Planning (2021) as part of the planning application and the following summarises the information contained therein.

4.1 Previous Investigations

A geophysical survey was undertaken on the Site in 2021; few features of archaeological interest were identified, although possible traces of linear ditches of indeterminate date as well as medieval or later ridge and furrow were recorded (MOLA 2021).

As a consequence, Trial Trenching was carried out in 2021 to investigate the above features; of the 22 trenches, excavated 11 contained no archaeological features, while another four revealed only ridge and furrow. However, Trench 3 (located at the N of Site) contained a metalled surface, possibly a floor or a trackway, and a large shallow pit, which produced a small ceramic assemblage of prehistoric date; by contrast, Trench 11 (towards the S of Site) contained a “complex series of layers and features”, which may be structural evidence and which was dated provisionally to the medieval period due to the discovery of a single sherd of pottery (Allen Archaeology 2021). Other features identified included a boundary ditch of 18th/19th century date (Trench 9 – towards the central part of Site) as well as a pit and a number of linear features of unknown date (*ibid.*).

4.2 Prehistoric

In addition to the aforementioned pit and (possibly) associated metalled surface, prehistoric activity in the vicinity is limited to a pit alignment (HER No.: MLE17758), located approximately 1km to the N of Site, as well as a small number of lithic artefacts, including a Neolithic mace head (HER No.: MLE15877), located c.690m to the SW.

Approximately 1.3km to the SE of Site (along the Earl Shilton bypass), prehistoric settlement activity was recorded along with two Bronze Age ring-ditches and possible barrows (HER No.: MLE9771); Iron Age activity, comprising a trackway and a trade route known as the ‘Salt Road’, has also been recorded at Shilton Hill, which lies c.0.25km to the SE.

A trial trench evaluation SE of Earl Shilton produced evidence for activity dating to multiple periods, the most common of which were deposits and finds belonging to the Bronze Age, and Early Iron Age finds and deposits.

4.3 Romano-British

There is limited evidence for Romano-British activity in the vicinity; however, a small number of artefacts (principally pottery fragments) were recovered during groundworks at The Poplars, which is located c.700m to the E of Site, and metal-detecting at land adjacent to Shilton Road to the N of Site has found a number of coins.

4.4 Anglo-Saxon

While there is no archaeological evidence for Anglo-Saxon activity within the vicinity, Earl Shilton is mentioned in the Domesday Book, where it is recorded as *Scelftone*, which derives from the compound of the Old English words '*scelf*' meaning a 'shelf' (here, in the geographical sense) and '*tun*' meaning enclosure, farmstead or village; it is recorded as having three ploughs, four sokemen, a priest, 10 villeins and five bordars and as comprising 12 acres of meadow, eight furlongs of woodland and a mill (Williams & Martin 2002).

4.5 Medieval

During the medieval period, the Site was likely agricultural land comprising large open fields, and evidence for ridge and furrow cultivation (HER No.: ELE10486) has been recorded at nearby sites such as that at Westfield Farm, located c.500m to the SW.

Within the wider area, a number of medieval features and buildings have been identified, the most significant of which is Earl Shilton Castle (HER No.: MLE2849; List Entry No.: 1010302), a Scheduled Ancient Monument located c.500m to the SE. To the E of this lies the Grade II* listed Church of St Simon and St Jude with associated burial ground (HER No.: MLE12985; List Entry No.: 1074259), which may have 13th Century roots.

4.6 Post Medieval to Modern

Evidence for post-medieval activity within Earl Shilton is primarily industrial in nature, predominantly relating to the knitting industry due to the introduction of the stocking frame in 1640, one of the first of its type existing outside London; in the 19th/20th centuries, the town contained various shoe, boot, knitwear and hosiery factories.

5 Aims & Objectives

The aim of the programme of archaeological work was to:

- ascertain the extent, depth below ground surface, depth of deposit, character, date, significance and condition of any archaeological remains on Site;
- establish the extent to which previous development and/ or other processes had affected archaeological deposits at the Site; and
- establish the likely impact on archaeological deposits of the proposed development.

In addition, the works aimed to address specific areas of interest as set out in the *East Midlands Heritage: An Updated Research Agenda and Strategy for the Historic Environment of the East Midlands* (Knight, Vyner & Allen 2012).

6 Methodology

6.1 General

The archaeological programme of work was carried out in accordance with BA's *Archaeological Field Recording Manual* (2023), together with accepted professional standards, including *Standard for Archaeological Excavation* (ClfA 2023a), *Universal Guidance for Archaeological Excavation* (ClfA 2023b), *Standard and Guidance for the Collection, Documentation, Conservation and Research of Archaeological Materials* (ClfA 2020a), and *Generic Brief for Archaeological Mitigation (Area Excavation)* (LCC 2024). BA abided by the requirements of the *ClfA Code of Conduct* (2022) and was cognisant of *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The MoRPHE Project Managers' Guide* (Lee 2015).

6.2 Scheme of Works

In accordance with the approved *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI; BA 2025), Areas A and B were excavated by machine using a wide bladed toothless ditching bucket operating under archaeological supervision. Overburden and poorly stratified deposits were removed in successive, level spits of no greater than 100mm in thickness down to the first significant archaeological horizon.

6.3 Recording

The following reference numbers were assigned to this fieldwork project:

- Site code: HTF25
 - OASIS ID: borderar1-534334;
-

- Museum Accession Number: X.A23.2025.

Full written, graphic, and photographic records were made in accordance with BA's *Archaeological Field Recording Manual* (2023), as outlined in the WSI (BA 2025).

The progress of the works was recorded and assessed using the Company's ISO 9001 procedures.

6.4 Recovery & Analysis of Palaeoenvironmental/Palaeoeconomic Data

Sampling methodology followed the *Palaeoenvironmental Department Manual* (BA 2017) for environmental sampling and processing, with reference to Historic England guidance (Campbell *et al.* 2011), and was consistent with procedures set out in the WSI (BA 2025). On site, the samples were collected in sample buckets and identified by context and sample number. Following receipt into the Palaeoenvironmental Department, they were assigned bucket numbers for tracking purposes. The samples were not subject to sub-sampling and their entirety was processed by means of flotation (Appendix 2).

6.5 Recovery, Processing & Curation of Artefactual Data

Procedures for the recovery and processing of artefacts were consistent with the methodology set out in the WSI (BA 2025), with all finds collected and processed. In accordance with *ClfA Standard and guidance* (2020b) and *First Aid for Finds* (Watkinson & Neal 2001), all such materials were labelled with the Site Code and context number before being removed off-site. They were stored in accordance with *First Aid for Finds* (*ibid.*) and with Historic England technical standards and other relevant sources of information, including standards for data-gathering set out by Brown (2011, 18-20). Each retained assemblage was examined according to typological or chronological criteria and conservation needs identified (Appendixes 3-5).

7 Results

See Appendix 1 for full context tabulation.

The programme of Archaeological Mitigation was divided into two separate areas, Area A located near the northern boundary, and Area B situated to the S. The topsoil (1001)/(2001) across these areas had a depth of between 0.3m and 0.5m and comprised a moderately compacted dark grey brown silty sandy clay. The removal of this deposit revealed several features, including ditches, gullies, one pit, plough furrows, and areas of rooting, the majority of which were cut into the natural geology (1002)/(2002); this comprised a firmly compacted light orange red pink clay to a loosely compacted light yellow silty sand with variations consisting of light red sand, orange grey blue sand and orange brown sand.

7.1 Area A

Activity within Area A (*fig. 3*) seems to have commenced during the 13th to 14th century and was represented by a single ditch [1007], with 18th/ 19th century activity represented by plough furrow [1005].

7.1.1 13th to 14th century activity

The earliest activity recorded in Area A was linear ditch [1007], which extended in a NE-SW direction for approximately 44m, continuing beyond the limits of the excavation at either end. It measured up to c.2.58m in width and c.0.84m in depth and had moderately to steeply sloping sides and a concave to near flat base (*fig. 4; plate 1*). Four slots were excavated along its length, revealing a total of eight deposits; it was truncated by plough furrow [1005] (see 7.1.2).

The basal fills within Slots 1, 3 and 4 of ditch [1007] comprised a c.0.23m-0.53m thick moderately to firmly compacted light orange red brown to dark orange red sandy clay (1013)/(1014)/(1016). Palaeoenvironmental sampling of these fills produced poor abundances of charcoal, pottery and CBM (Appendix 2), while twenty fragments of animal bone (Appendix 3) were hand collected, along with two abraded sherds of 13th to 14th century pottery from a possible Potters Marston ware jar; a further two sherds of possible Potters Marston ware that had been burnt were also recovered (Appendix 4). The upper fills within these slots consisted of a c.0.15m-0.25m thick loosely to firmly compacted light grey to light grey brown sandy clay (1008)/(1011)/(1012). The palaeoenvironmental sampling of these deposits revealed poor abundances of charcoal, flake hammerscale, CBM and worked stone, along with occasional abundances of slag (Appendix 2); 11 fragments of animal bone were also hand recovered (Appendix 3).

A single fill of firmly compacted dark red brown silty clay (1009) was also recorded in Slot 2. The palaeoenvironmental sampling of this revealed poor abundances of charcoal and pottery (Appendix 2), while four sherds from a possible Potters Marston ware jar dating to the 13th-14th century were also recovered (Appendix 4).

Context (1015) appeared to represent a naturally formed deposit of stones within ditch [1007]. This had previously been interpreted as a possible metallised surface from a possible floor or trackway during the Archaeological Evaluation (Allen Archaeology 2021); however, further investigation disproved this interpretation, as the stones were clearly the result of natural infilling, possibly after a flooding event (*plate 2*).

7.1.2 18th/ 19th century activity

Plough furrow [1005] was a linear feature that extended in a N-S direction for >15.50m, truncating ditch [1007]. It measured c.1.60m in width and c.0.13m in depth and had gently sloping sides and a near flat base (*fig. 5*). Two fills were encountered along its length, a moderately to firmly compacted dark orange brown silty sand (1006), and a loosely compacted mid orange brown sandy clay (1010). The palaeoenvironmental sampling of fill (1006) revealed poor abundances of charcoal, spheroidal and flake hammerscale, pottery and CBM (Appendix 2); two sherds of 15th-18th century Midlands purple ware, two sherds of 17th-19th century Staffordshire type coarseware, two fragments of CBM (Appendix 4), and two 18th/ 19th century clay tobacco pipe (CTP) stems (Appendix 5) were also recovered. Fill (1010) also produced two fragments of CBM (Appendix 4) and a CTP bowl (Appendix 5).

7.2 Area B

Within Area B (*fig. 6*), further activity of 18th/ 19th century date was identified, including drainage ditches and gullies.

7.2.1 18th/ 19th century activity

Situated in the central northern part of Area B, circular pit [2021] measured 1.20m in diameter and c.0.42m in depth (*fig. 9; plate 3*). It contained a single fill (2022), which comprised a loosely compacted light brown orange sand, the palaeoenvironmental sampling of which revealed poor abundances of charcoal, slag, flake hammerscale, CBM and coal, along with one carbonised indeterminate wild taxa seed (Appendix 2). One sherd of Midlands purple-type pottery, dating to the 15th century or later, was also hand-collected (Appendix 4).

Situated approximately 1.50m to the S of pit [2021] was an area of colluvium (2009), which comprised a loosely compacted light grey blue sand. This had been truncated by the cut of a possible linear ditch [2003] orientated NNW-SSE. This had gently sloping sides and a concave base and measured >3.90m long, c.0.93m wide and c.0.33 deep. Its single fill (2004) comprised a loosely compacted brown orange sand; the palaeoenvironmental analysis of this produced poor abundances of charcoal, flake hammerscale, pottery, CBM, iron (Fe), fuel ash slag, glass and coal (Appendix 2). This fill also contained three sherds of Pearlware, three sherds of Staffordshire type coarseware, and two sherds of Yellow ware, which indicated a date range of the 18th-19th century; fragments of CBM, including an 18th century or later brick, and coal or clinker that suggest the land may have been worked with a steam traction engine were also present (Appendix 4).

A large spread (2005) partially overlay ditch [2003]. This consisted of a loosely compacted light brown orange sand measuring c.10m × 2.70m × 0.37m deep. The palaeoenvironmental sampling of this revealed an occasional abundance of charcoal, and poor abundances of pottery, CBM, fuel ash slag, glass, heat-affected stone and coal; one carbonised bedstraw seed was also recovered (Appendix 2). In addition, this spread produced 15 fragments of animal bone (Appendix 3), one sherd of Midlands Purple ware, two sherds of Staffordshire type coarseware, and one sherd of Pearlware, which suggest an 18th-19th century date (Appendix 4), along with 12 lumps of CBM and a fragment of pantile dating from the 17th century or later (Appendix 4), a single iron nail (Appendix 4), and a partial CTP bowl of probable 18th-19th century date (Appendix 5).

Just over 2.80m to the S of spread (2005) was curvilinear feature [2006], which ran in a SE direction from a rounded terminus in the NW, briefly turning to the E before continuing to the ENE. This was interpreted as a possible drainage ditch/ gully and three slots were excavated along its c.27.40m length; it measured c.0.54m in width and c.0.44m in depth and had near vertical sides and an irregular to near flat base (*figs. 7-8; plate 4*).

At Slot 1, two fills were present. The basal fill comprised a c.0.28m thick loosely compacted very dark grey silty sand (2008), the palaeoenvironmental analysis of which produced occasional abundances of charcoal and poor abundances of CBM and heat-affected stone (Appendix 2); a single sherd of probable mid-19th century Pearlware was also recovered (Appendix 4). The upper fill at Slot 1 consisted of a c.0.18m thick loosely compacted light grey silty sand (2007). The palaeoenvironmental sampling of this revealed poor to occasional abundances of charcoal,

poor abundances of slag, CBM and heat-affected stone, and two indeterminate carbonised cereal caryopses (Appendices 2 and 4).

Slots 2 and 3 within possible drainage ditch/ gully [2006] contained a single loosely compacted light to dark grey brown silty sand (2012)/(2016), with the palaeoenvironmental analysis revealing poor abundances of charcoal, flake hammerscale, CBM and coal (Appendix 2). A CTP stem of probable 18th to 19th century date was also recovered (Appendix 5).

A contemporary linear gully [2013] extended in a SW direction from the eastern end of [2006]. Two slots were excavated along its >10.90m length, revealing near vertical sides and a near flat base, measuring c.0.32m in width and c.0.08m in depth. It contained a single fill, consisting of a loosely compacted dark grey brown silty sand (2014)/(2015). The palaeoenvironmental sampling of this produced poor abundances of charcoal, flake hammerscale, pottery, CBM and coal (Appendix 2).

Following a similar line to the S of possible drainage ditch/ gully [2006] was curvilinear [2010], also interpreted as a possible drainage ditch/ gully. This extended for more than 14.20m, measuring c.0.84m-1.40m in width and c.0.42m-0.80m in depth. Two slots were excavated along its length, revealing a rounded terminus to the NW, concave to near vertical sides and a concave base.

At Slot 1, feature [2010] contained a single fill, loosely compacted light to mid-orange brown mottled with black and orange sand (2011). The palaeoenvironmental analysis of this produced occasional abundances of charcoal and heat-affected stone, along with poor abundances of flake hammerscale, CBM, Fe, glass, bead, coal and burnt mammal bone; two indeterminate carbonised cereal caryopses were also present (Appendices 2 and 3). At Slot 2 two fills were recorded, with the basal fill comprising a c.0.72m thick loosely compacted dark grey sand (2024). This was situated beneath a c.0.80m thick loosely compacted light orange brown sand with white lenses (2023), the palaeoenvironmental analysis of which revealed poor to occasional abundances of charcoal, and poor abundances of slag, spheroidal and flake hammerscale, CBM, Fe, fuel ash slag, glass, heat-affected stone and coal (Appendix 2). This fill also produced a single sherd of pottery from a possible 18th century Creamware plate, along with two fragments of CBM, one of which was identified as roof tile (Appendix 4).

Approximately 3m to the E of linear gully [2013] was sub-oval feature [2019], interpreted as a pit. This had gently to moderately sloping sides and a concave to near flat base measuring c.1.08m in length, c.0.30m in width and c.0.16m in depth. It contained a single fill (2020) that consisted of a loosely compacted dark brown grey sandy silt (*fig. 9; plate 5*). The palaeoenvironmental sampling of this produced poor abundances of charcoal, slag, flake hammerscale, CBM fuel ash slag and coal (Appendix 2). A sherd of 18th century Creamware and a sherd of 18th to 19th century Pearlware were also recovered (Appendix 4).

The final feature excavated in Area B was sub-circular feature [2017], which had gently to moderately sloping sides and a concave to near flat base. It measured c.0.68m in length, c.0.44m in width and c.0.14m in depth and was also interpreted as a pit (*fig. 9; plate 6*). It contained a single loosely compacted dark brown grey sandy silt fill (2018), the palaeoenvironmental analysis of which revealed occasional abundances of charcoal and fuel ash slag,

along with poor abundances of slag, flake hammerscale, pottery, CBM, Fe and metal (Appendix 2); a fragment of clear glass and one of green were also recovered (Appendix 4).

8 Discussion

8.1 Finds

8.1.1 Area A

A small volume of faunal material was recovered by hand from the fills of linear ditch [1007] in Area A, totalling 31 fragments weighing 4.3g. The material consisted of crushed tooth fragments, of possible sheep/goat molar and very small unidentifiable crumbs. No further information could be extrapolated and the assemblage likely represents discarded waste (Appendix 3).

The pottery recovered from ditch [1007] included eight small body sherds of possible Potters Marston ware, two of which had been burnt. Potters Marston lies some 5km from the Site, indicating the probable use of local wares; however, the small sherd size and the lack of form sherds means that attribution is not certain. In addition, two sherds of 15th-18th century Midlands purple ware and two sherds of 17th-19th century Staffordshire type coarseware were recovered from plough furrow [1005]. Two fragments (0.25g) of smoked grey vessel glass from plough furrow [1005] are also thought to be post-medieval in date (Appendix 4).

While a partial CTP bowl and two fragments of CTP stem were recovered from contexts (1006) and (1010), the small number and lack of external features precluded a definitive date range being attained and these finds could only loosely be attributed to the 18th and 19th centuries (Appendix 5).

8.1.2 Area B

A small volume of faunal material was recovered by hand from spread (2005), totalling 15 fragments weighing 46.81g, while a single small crumb (0.06g) of burnt bone was recovered from the palaeoenvironmental sampling of context (2011) from possible drainage ditch/ gully [2010]. This assemblage likely represented discarded waste material (Appendix 3).

The pottery from Area B was of post-medieval date, with the earliest material, Midlands purple ware dating from the 15th to 17th centuries, being recovered from spread (2005) and pit [2021]. However, the majority of the recovered pottery was late post-medieval in date, including: 18th century cream ware from pit [2019] and possible drainage ditch/ gully [2010]; late 18th-19th century transfer printed ware from possible ditch [2003], spread (2005), possible drainage ditch/ gully [2006] and pit [2019]; and 18th-19th century Staffordshire type coarse ware from possible ditch [2003]. A fragment of pantile recovered from spread (2005) is of 17th century or later date, while a brick from possible ditch [2003] was 18th century or later in date. Fragments of post-medieval glass were also recovered from pit [2017], with seven fragments of coal or clinker from possible ditch [2003] possibly suggesting

that the land had been worked with a steam traction engine, and a single iron nail recovered from spread (2005) probably being structural (Appendix 4).

A partial CTP bowl was also recovered from spread (2005), with a piece of CTP stem recovered from possible drainage ditch/ gully [2006]. Unfortunately, due to the small number and lack of external features the CTP could only loosely be attributed to the 18th and 19th centuries (Appendix 5).

8.2 Palaeoenvironmental

The charcoal assemblage recovered from the palaeoenvironmental sampling suggests that burning occurred in the local vicinity at the time of context formation. The small finds assemblages also indicate the presence of human activity nearby, however, the general lack of charred palaeodietary material suggests that the activity was not domestic.

Although present in an overall statistically significant abundance, the Goosefoot/Saltbush seeds were unfortunately of no interpretive value as they could not be confirmed to be of archaeological origin. The remaining evidence yielded by sampling was of insufficient abundance for further palaeoenvironmental interpretation (Appendix 2).

8.3 Interpretation of Features

Area A presented a linear ditch that crossed the Site in a roughly NE-SW direction. The general lack of palaeoenvironmental and faunal evidence indicated that this feature was not domestic, therefore it likely functioned as a drainage feature in use during the 13th to 14th centuries based on the recovered pottery sherds. It was heavily truncated by a series of post-medieval plough furrows, only one of which was excavated, providing a likely 18th to 19th century date for these features.

Area B presented a series of ditches and gullies that mostly ran E-W downhill suggesting a drainage function. This interpretation was again supported by the general lack of palaeoenvironmental and faunal evidence, suggesting that they were located at some distance from domestic activity. They had largely been naturally infilled by hill wash colluvium from which pottery sherds and fragments of CTP were recovered, pointing at a possible date of the 18th to 19th centuries. The small quantities of coal or clinker present also suggest that this area may have been worked with a steam tractor engine or, at least, that the residues from it might have been deposited in Area B.

Taken together, it can be safely assumed that the land encompassing Areas A and B was in agricultural usage from at least the late medieval period if not before (Appendices 2-5).

9 Conclusions

The Archaeological Mitigation works carried out at Land N of Hill Top Farm, Earl Shilton, Leicestershire LE9 7DP revealed evidence for agricultural activity that spanned the late medieval and post-medieval periods, with several drainage ditches, gullies and plough furrows encountered. Three possible rubbish pits were also recorded, along with a spread of 18th to 19th century date, suggesting that Area B in particular may have been used as a dumping ground for household waste at this time.

Although the evidence was limited, these works may help to address specific research aims identified in the *East Midlands Heritage: An Updated Research Agenda and Strategy for the Historic Environment of the East Midlands* (Knight, Vyner & Allen 2012), including:

- 8.3.2 “How did water management and land drainage change the landscape during this period?”.

10 Archive Deposition

In accordance with *Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives* (ClfA 2020b), a digital copy of the report will be uploaded to OASIS (Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations) under the OASIS ID: borderar1-534334, while the digital archive will be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS), in-line with the Leicestershire Museum Service requirements. The physical archive will be offered to Leicestershire County Council Museums (Museum Accession Number: X.A23.2025) together with the archive for the Archaeological Field Evaluation (AFE), which was undertaken concurrently with the programme of Archaeological Mitigation and which was reported on separately.

11 Acknowledgements

Border Archaeology would like to thank the following members of staff for their contributions to this project.

Fieldwork was led by Chris Hodgson BSc MSc PCIfA and Ruben Aaron Cencerrero Alonso BA MA PCIfA, with the assistance of Field Archaeologists Adam Scott, Amber Denton BA MSc PCIfA, Briana Selwell BSc MSc, Oliver Harrison BA and Rebecca Latham MSc. Surveying was overseen by Stuart Forsythe BSc (Hons.) ACIfA, Manager: Surveying/UAV Drone Operator.

Post-excavation management was undertaken by Janice McLeish MA (Hons.) ACIfA, Director: Post-excavation Services. Palaeoenvironmental processing was undertaken under the supervision of Craig Lathwell BSc ACIfA, Palaeoenvironmental Supervisor. Finds processing was undertaken under the supervision of Janice McLeish MA (Hons.) ACIfA.

This report was written by Ruben Aaron Cencerrero Alonso BA MA PCIfA. The illustrations were produced by James Brown BSc MSc, Archaeological Illustrator. It was edited by Lyndsey Clark BSc (Hons.) MCIfA, Director: Archaeological Operations & Reporting and was approved by Amy Bunce BSc MA MCIfA, Director: UK Operations & Palaeoenvironmental Science. The archive has been prepared by Emma Hardy MA, Archivist, along with Kate Smith MA ACIfA, Director: Performance Delivery.

The project was managed by Amy Bunce BSc MA MCIfA, with George Children MA MCIfA, Director: Quality and Compliance providing technical and editorial guidance.

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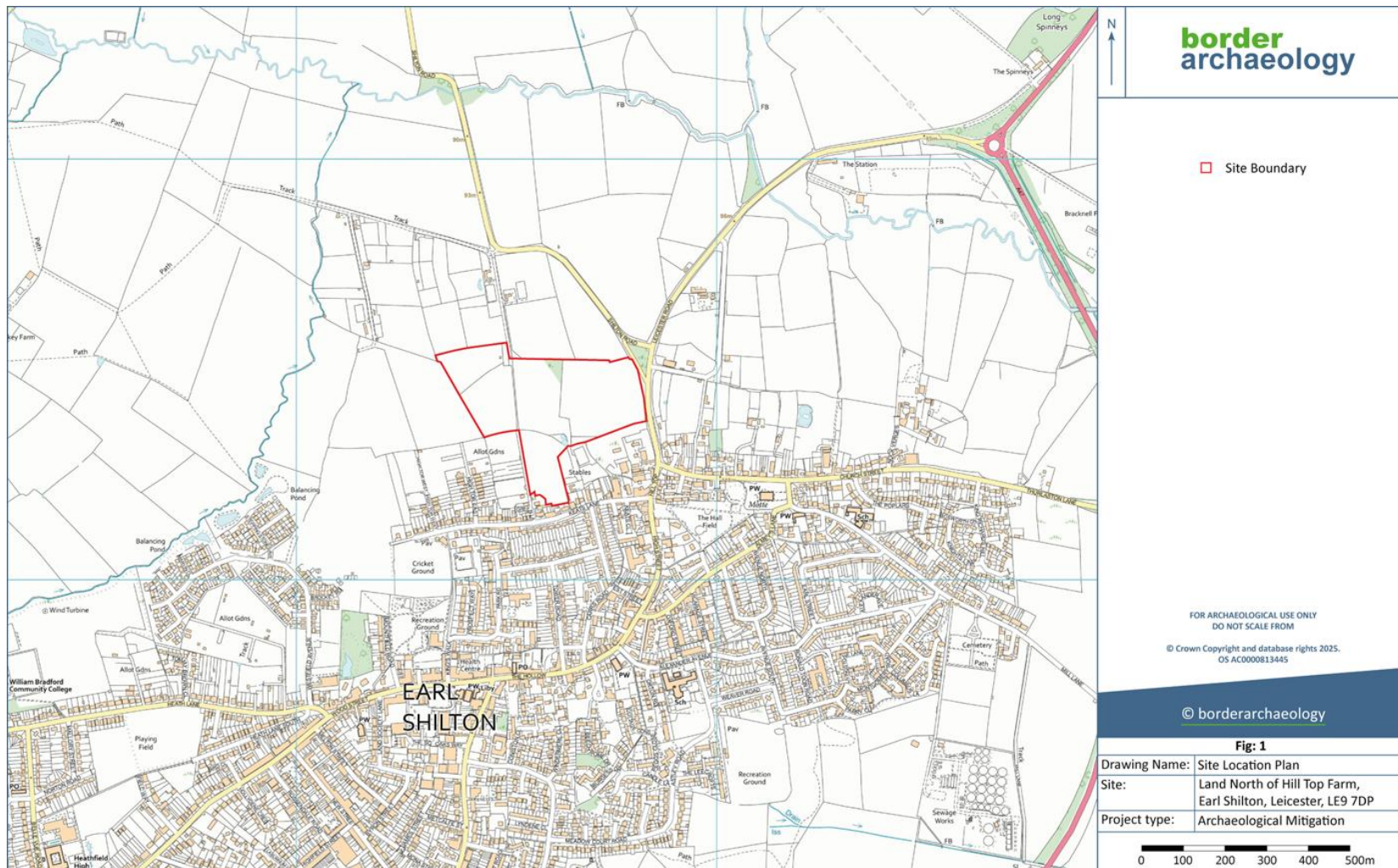
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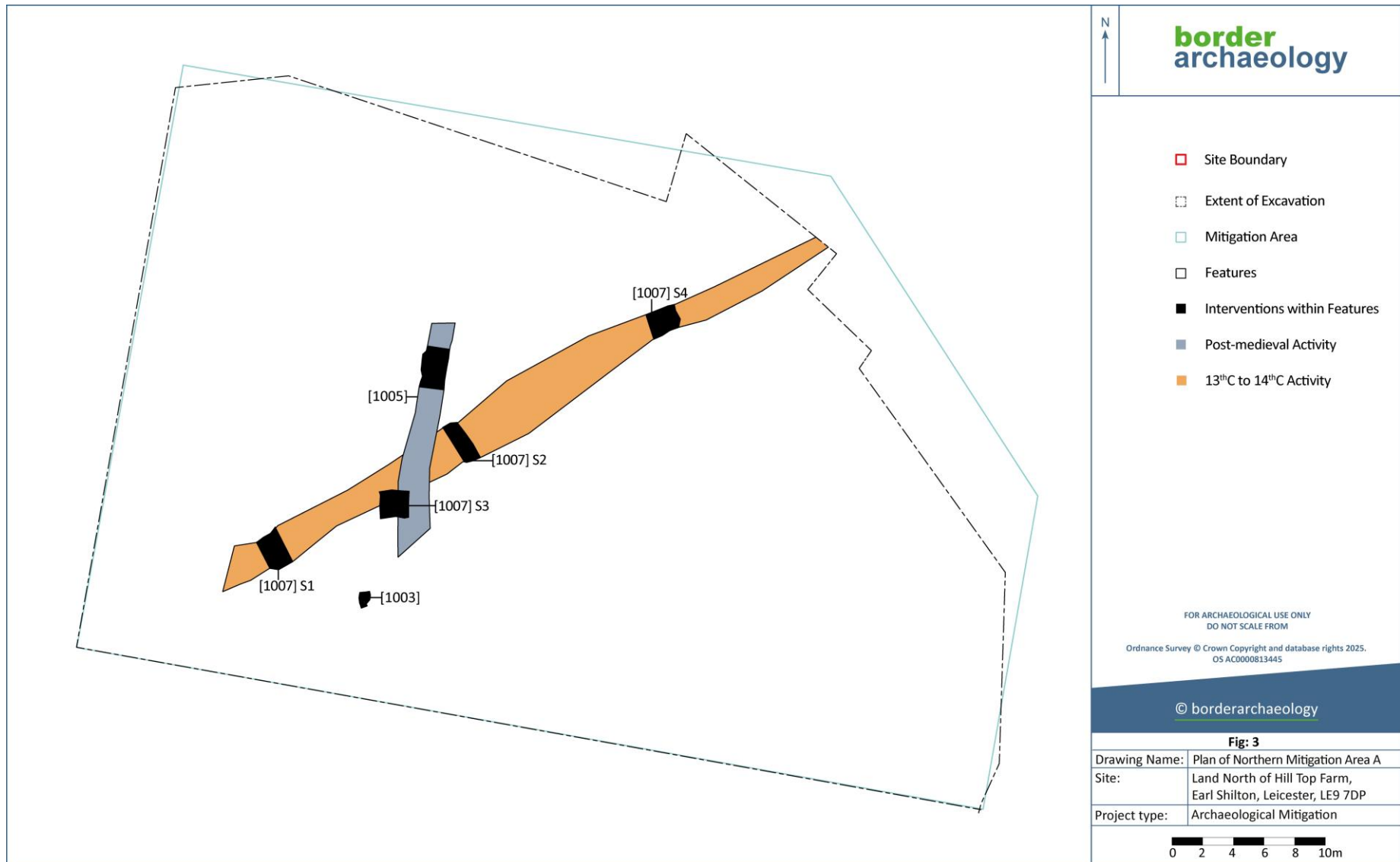
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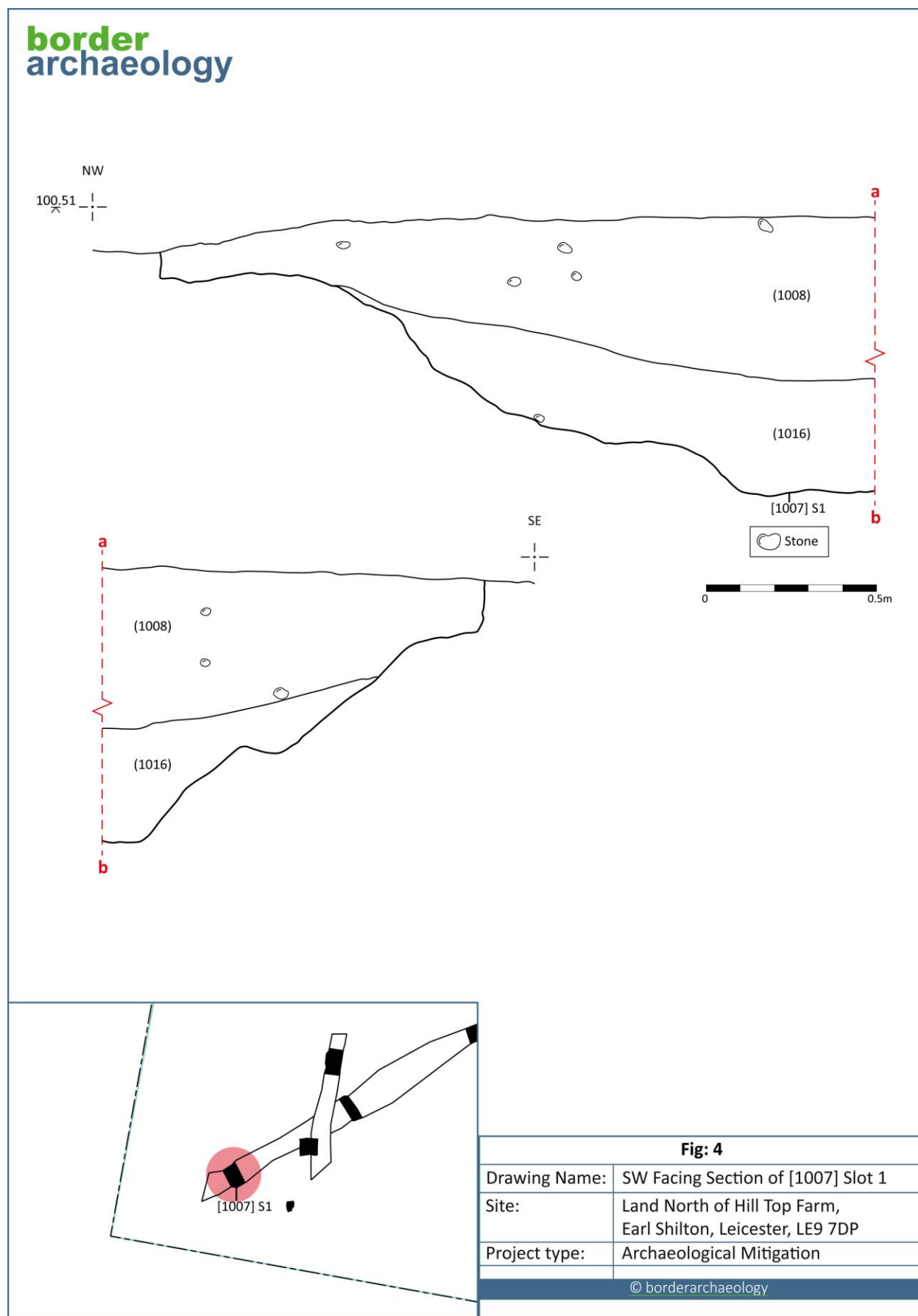
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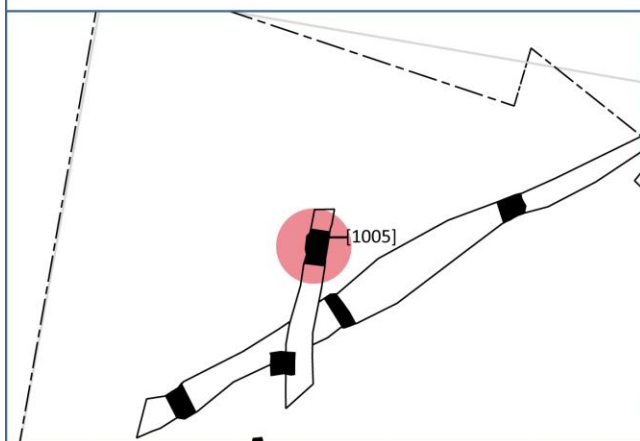
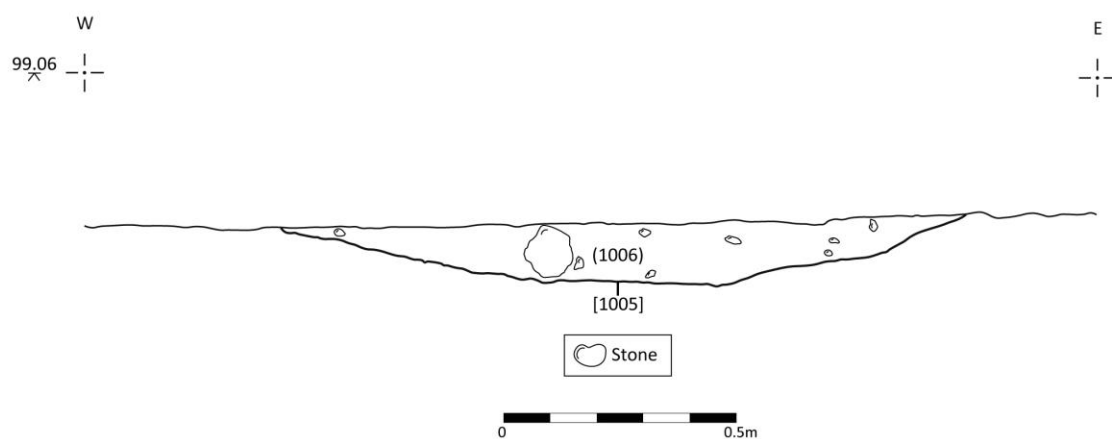
14 Figures & Plates





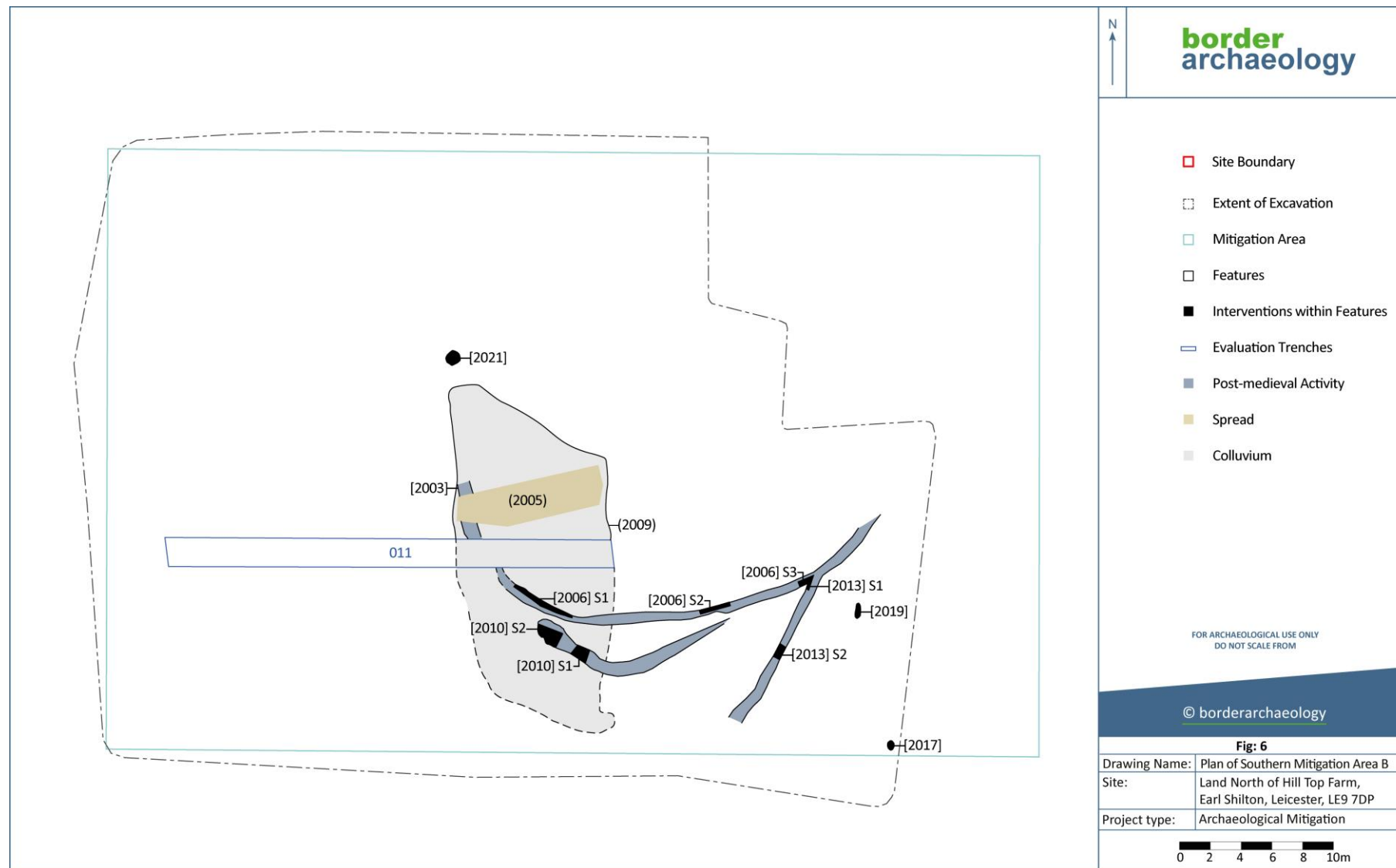


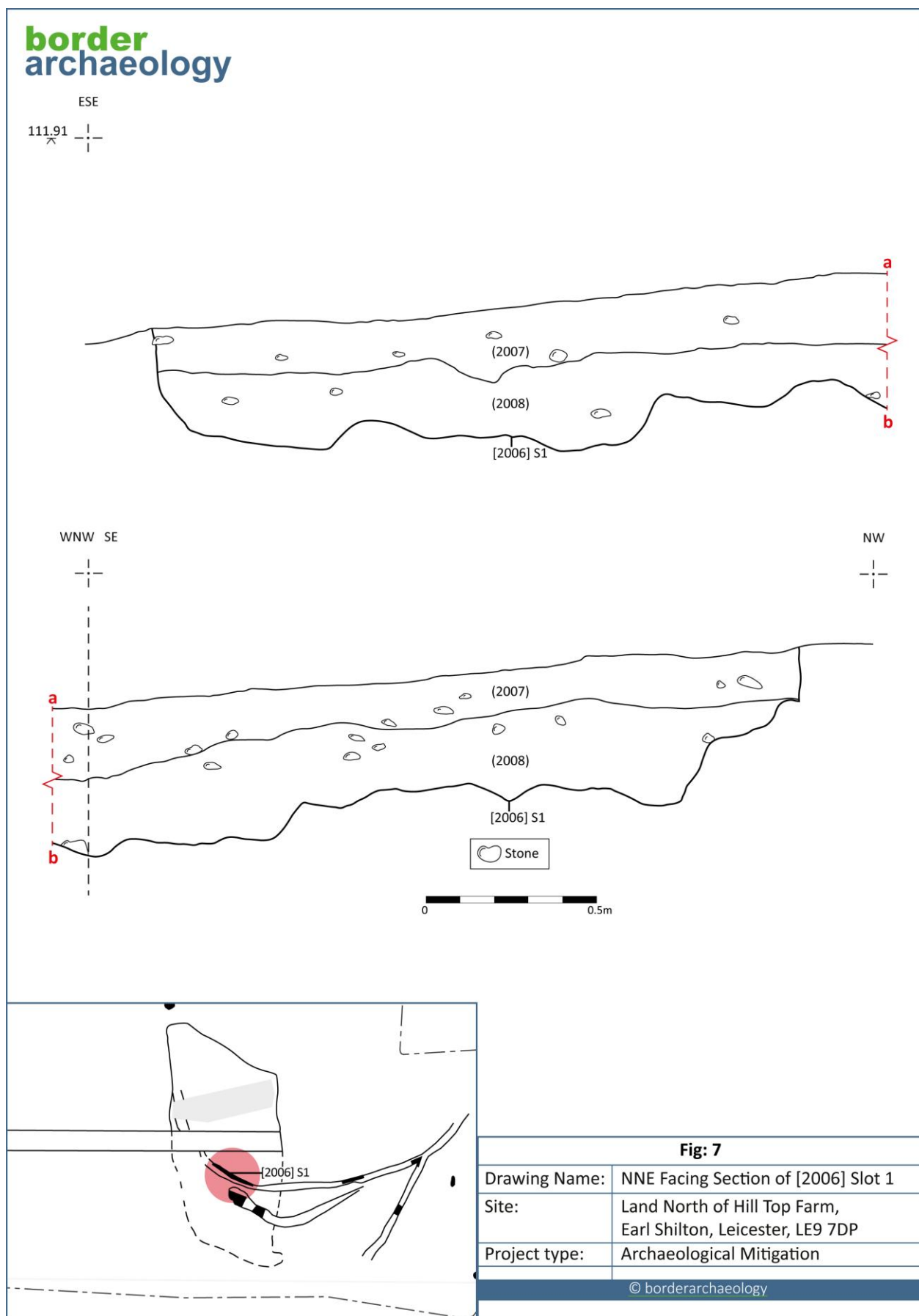


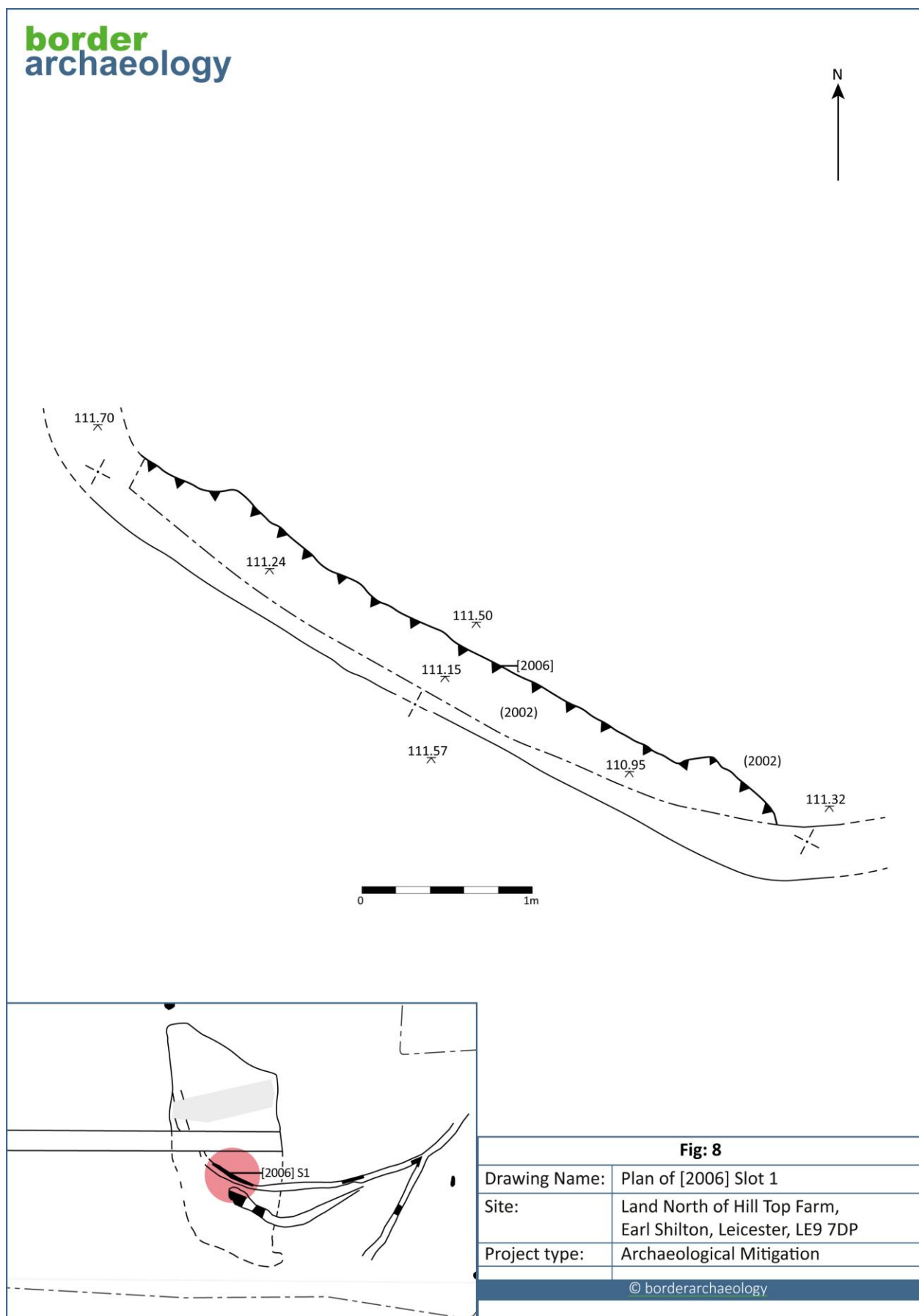
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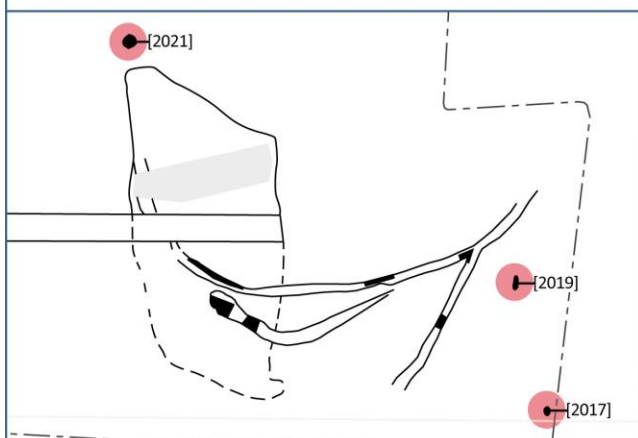
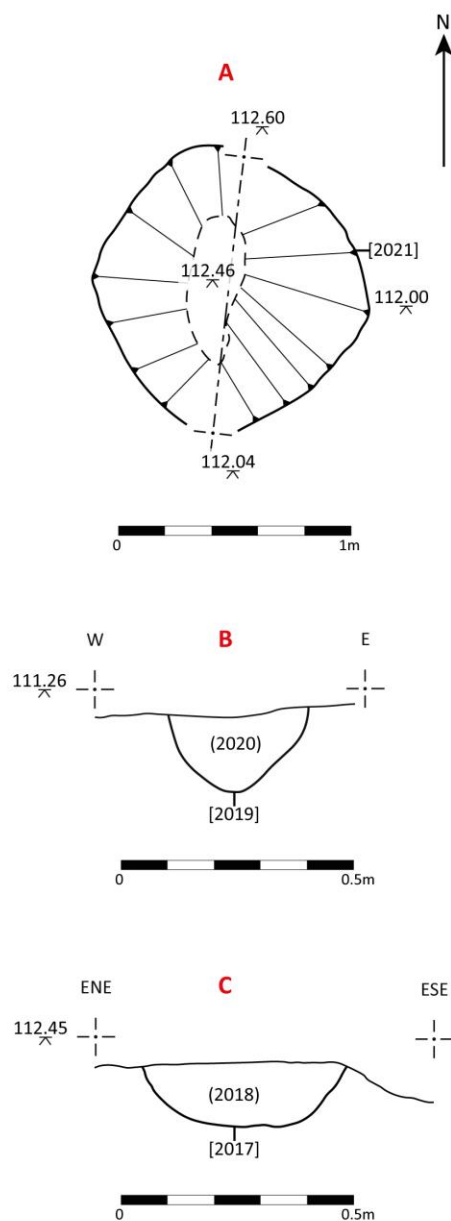
Drawing Name:	S Facing Section of [1005]
Site:	Land North of Hill Top Farm, Earl Shilton, Leicester, LE9 7DP
Project type:	Archaeological Mitigation

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Fig: 9

Drawing Name:	Plan of [2021] (A), S Facing Section of [2019] (B) & NNW Facing Section of [2017] (C)
Site:	Land North of Hill Top Farm, Earl Shilton, Leicester, LE9 7DP
Project type:	Archaeological Mitigation



Plate 1: SW-facing section of possible drainage ditch [1007] S2 in Area A (1 × 2m scale)

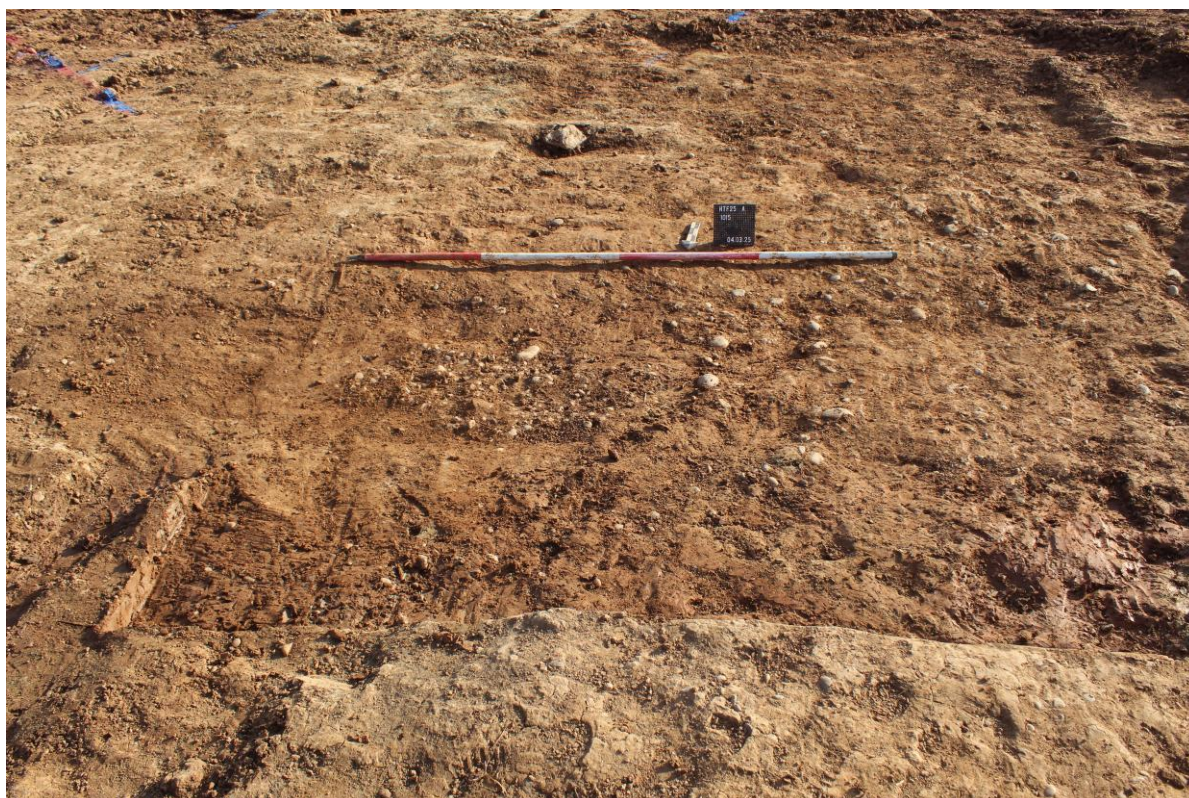


Plate 2: Naturally deposited stones (1015) within possible drainage ditch [1007] in Area A (1 × 2m scale)



Plate 3: E-facing section of pit [2021] in Area B (1 × 1m scale)



Plate 4: NNE-facing section of possible drainage ditch/ gully [2006] S1 in Area B (1 × 2m scale)



Plate 5: S-facing section of pit [2019] in Area B (1 × 0.30m scale)



Plate 6: NNW-facing section of pit [2017] in Area B (1 × 0.30m scale)

15 Appendix 1: Context Tabulation

15.1 Area A

Context No.	Type	Filled by	Fill of	Description	Interpretation	Finds nr=not retained	Sample No.	Provisional date
(1001)	Deposit	-	-	Moderately compacted dark grey brown silty sandy clay; moderate small to large-sized rounded stones; c.0.3-0.5m thick; overlies (1004), (1006), (1008), (1009), (1010), (1012) & (1015).	Topsoil	Pottery (nr) CBM (nr)	-	Modern
(1002)	Deposit	-	-	Firmly compacted light orange red pink clay to loosely compacted light yellow silty sand with variations including light red sand, orange grey blue sand and orange brown sand; cut by [1003] & [1007].	Natural Substratum	-	-	Geological
[1003]	Cut	(1004)	-	Sub-oval feature; moderately sloping concave sides & a concave base; c.1.13m (max.) long; c.0.80m (max.) wide; c.0.21m (max.) deep; cuts (1002).	Area of rooting	-	-	Non-archaeological
(1004)	Fill	-	[1003]	Moderately compacted mid-grey brown sandy clay; frequent small-sized rounded stone & pebbles; c.0.21m (max.) thick; underlies (1001).	Single fill of rooting [1003]	-	001	Non-archaeological
[1005]	Cut	(1006) (1010)	-	Linear feature orientated N-S; two slots excavated; gently sloping sides & a near flat base; >15.50m long; c.1.60m (max.) wide; c.0.13m (max.) deep; cuts (1011).	Cut of a plough furrow	-	-	18 th -19 th century

Context No.	Type	Filled by	Fill of	Description	Interpretation	Finds nr=not retained	Sample No.	Provisional date
(1006)	Fill	-	[1005] S1	Moderate to firmly compacted dark orange brown silty sand; occasional small-sized rounded stones; c.0.13m (max.) thick; underlies (1001).	Naturally infilled single fill of plough furrow [1005] S1	Pottery CTP Glass	002	18 th -19 th century
[1007]	Cut	(1008) (1009) (1011) (1012) (1013) (1014) (1015) (1016)	-	Linear feature orientated NE-SW; four slots excavated; moderately to steeply sloping sides & a concave to near flat base; >44m long ; c.2.58m (max.) wide; c.0.84m (max.) deep; cuts (1002).	Cut of a possible drainage ditch	-	-	13 th to 14 th century
(1008)	Fill	-	[1007] S1	Loosely compacted light grey brown sandy clay; occasional small-sized rounded stones; c.0.25m (max.) thick; overlies (1016); underlies (1001).	Naturally infilled upper fill of possible drainage ditch [1007] S1	-	003	13 th to 14 th century
(1009)	Fill	-	[1007] S2	Firmly compacted dark red brown silty clay; occasional small to medium-sized rounded stones; c.0.65m (max.) thick underlies (1001).	Naturally infilled single fill of possible drainage ditch [1007] S2	Pottery CBM	004	13 th to 14 th century
(1010)	Fill	-	[1005] S2	Loosely compacted mid-orange brown sandy clay; very occasional charcoal flecks; frequent small-sized rounded stones; c.0.16m (max.) thick; underlies (1001).	Naturally infilled single fill of plough furrow [1005] S2	CTP	-	18 th -19 th century
(1011)	Fill	-	[1007] S3	Firmly compacted light grey brown sandy clay; frequent medium to large-sized rounded stones; c.0.15m (max.) thick; overlies (1013); cut by [1005].	Naturally infilled upper fill of possible drainage ditch [1007] S3	Animal Bone Worked stone(?)	005	13 th to 14 th century
(1012)	Fill	-	[1007] S4	Loosely to moderately compacted light grey sandy clay; frequent small to large-sized sub-angular & rounded stones; c.0.2m (max.) thick; overlies (1014); underlies (1001).	Naturally infilled upper fill of possible drainage ditch [1007] S4	-	006	13 th to 14 th century

Context No.	Type	Filled by	Fill of	Description	Interpretation	Finds nr=not retained	Sample No.	Provisional date
(1013)	Fill	-	[1007] S3	Moderately to firmly compacted dark orange red sandy clay; occasional charcoal flecks & medium-sized rounded stones; c.0.31m (max.) thick; underlies (1011).	Naturally infilled basal fill of possible drainage ditch [1007] S3	-	007	13 th to 14 th century
(1014)	Fill	-	[1007] S4	Firmly compacted light orange red brown sandy clay; frequent small to large-sized sub-angular & rounded stones; c.0.23m (max.) thick; underlies (1012).	Naturally infilled basal fill of possible drainage ditch [1007] S4	-	009	13 th to 14 th century
(1015)	Deposit	-	[1007]	Mid to large-sized mostly rounded stones.	Naturally deposited stones within possible drainage ditch [1007]	-	-	13 th to 14 th century
(1016)	Fill	-	[1007] S1	Firmly compacted orange brown sandy clay; occasional small to large-sized rounded stones; c.0.53m (max.) thick; overlies (1008); underlies (1001).	Naturally infilled upper fill of possible drainage ditch [1007]s1	Pottery Animal Bone	008	13 th to 14 th century

15.2 Area B

Context No.	Type	Filled by	Fill of	Description	Interpretation	Finds nr=not retained	Sample No.	Provisional date
(2001)	Deposit	-	-	Moderately compacted dark grey brown silty sandy clay; moderate small to large-sized rounded stones; c.0.3-0.5m thick; overlies (2005), (2007), (2011), (2012), (2014), (2015), (2016), (2018), (2020), (2022) & (2023).	Topsoil	Pottery (nr) CBM (nr)	-	Modern
(2002)	Deposit	-	-	Firmly compacted light orange red pink clay to loosely compacted light yellow silty sand with variations including light red sand, orange grey blue and orange brown sand; cut by [2006], [2010], [2013], [2017], [2019] & [2021].	Natural substratum	-	-	Geological
[2003]	Cut	(2004)	-	Linear feature orientated NNW-SSE; gently sloping sides & a concave base; >3.90m long; c.0.93m (max.) wide; c.0.33 (max.) deep; cuts [2009].	Cut of a possible ditch	-	-	18 th to 19 th century
(2004)	Fill	-	[2003]	Loosely compacted brown orange sand; occasional small to large-sized rounded to sub-angular stones; c.0.33m (max.) thick; underlies (2005).	Naturally infilled single fill of possible ditch [2003]	Pottery CBM Coal/ clinker	012	18 th to 19 th century
(2005)	Deposit	-	-	Loosely compacted light brown orange sand; occasional to moderate medium-sized rounded to sub-angular stones; c.10m (max.) long; c.2.70m (max.) wide; c.0.37m (max.) thick; overlies (2004); underlies (2001).	Spread of material likely from household & industrial waste	Pottery CBM Animal Bone Fe nail	003	18 th to 19 th century
[2006]	Cut	(2007) (2008) (2012) (2016)	-	Curvilinear feature orientated NW-SE to E-W to ENE-WSW; three slots excavated; rounded terminus to the NW, near vertical sides & an irregular to near flat base; >27.40m long; c.0.54m (max.) wide; c.0.44m (max.) deep; cuts [2002].	Cut of possible drainage ditch/ gully	-	-	18 th to 19 th century

Context No.	Type	Filled by	Fill of	Description	Interpretation	Finds nr=not retained	Sample No.	Provisional date
(2007)	Fill	-	[2006] S1	Loosely compacted light grey silty sand; occasional small to medium-sized rounded & sub-angular stones; c.0.18m (max) thick; overlies (2008); underlies (2001).	Naturally infilled upper fill of possibly drainage ditch/ gully [2006] S1 - possibly formed from hill wash	Pottery CBM	001	18 th to 19 th century
(2008)	Fill	-	[2006] S1	Loosely compacted very dark grey silty sand; frequent medium to large-sized sub angular stones; c.0.28m (max.) thick; underlies (2007).	Naturally infilled basal fill of possibly drainage ditch/ gully [2006] S1 - possibly oxygen deprived colluvium formed from hill wash	-	002	18 th to 19 th century
(2009)	Deposit	-	-	Loosely compacted light grey blue sand; occasional small to medium-sized rounded to sub-angular stones; c.0.65 m (max.) thick; overlies (2002); cut by [2003].	Colluvium	-	-	Geological
[2010]	Cut	(2011) (2023) (2024)	-	Curvilinear feature orientated NW-SE to ENE-WSW; two slots excavated; rounded terminus to NW, concave to near vertical sides & a concave base; >14.20m long; c.0.84m-1.40m wide; c.0.42m-0.80m deep; cuts (2002).	Cut of possible drainage ditch/ gully	-	-	19 th to 20 th century
(2011)	Fill	-	[2010] S1	Loosely compacted light to mid-orange brown mottled with black and orange sand; moderate medium-sized rounded to sub-angular stones; c.0.42m (max.) thick; underlies (2001).	Naturally infilled single fill of possible drainage ditch/ gully [2010] S1	-	004	19 th to 20 th century
(2012)	Fill	-	[2006] S2	Loosely compacted light grey brown silty sand with orange lenses; occasional pebbles; c.0.22m (max.) thick; underlies (2001).	Naturally infilled single fill of possible drainage ditch/ gully [2006] S2	CTP	-	18 th to 19 th century

Context No.	Type	Filled by	Fill of	Description	Interpretation	Finds nr=not retained	Sample No.	Provisional date
[2013]	Cut	(2014) (2015)	-	Linear feature orientated NE-SW; two slots excavated; near vertical sides & a near flat base ; >10.90m long; c.0.32m (max.) wide ; c.0.08m (max.) deep; cuts (2002).	Cut of a gully	-	-	19 th to 20 th century
(2014)	Fill	-	[2013] S1	Loosely compacted dark grey brown silty sand; no inclusions; c.0.08m (max.) thick; underlies (2001).	Naturally infilled single fill of gully [2013] S1	-	007	19 th to 20 th century
(2015)	Fill	-	[2013] S2	Loosely compacted dark grey brown silty sand; no inclusions; c.0.19m (max.) thick; underlies (2001).	Naturally infilled single of gully [2013] S2	-	009	19 th to 20 th century
(2016)	Fill	-	[2006] S3	Loosely compacted dark grey brown silty sand; no inclusions; c.0.09 m (max.) thick; underlies (2001).	Naturally infilled single fill of possible drainage ditch/ gully [2006] S3	-	008	18 th to 19 th century
[2017]	Cut	(2018)	-	Sub-circular feature; gently to moderately sloping sides & a concave to near flat base; c.0.68m (max.) long; c.0.44m (max.) wide; c.0.14m (max.) deep; cuts (2002).	Cut of a pit	-	-	19 th to 20 th century
(2018)	Fill	-	[2017]	Loosely compacted dark brown grey sandy silt; no inclusions; c.0.14m (max) thick; underlies (2001).	Single fill of pit [2017]	Pottery	010	19 th to 20 th century
[2019]	Cut	(2020)	-	Sub-oval feature; gently to moderately sloping sides & a concave to near flat base; c.1.08m (max.) long; c.0.30m (max.) wide; c.0.16m (max.) deep; cuts (2002).	Cut of a pit	-	-	19 th to 20 th century
(2020)	Fill	-	[2019]	Loosely compacted dark brown grey sandy silt; no inclusions; c.0.16m (max) thick; underlies (2001).	Naturally infilled single fill of pit [2019]	Pottery	011	19 th to 20 th century
[2021]	Cut	(2022)	-	Circular feature; gently sloping concave sides & a concave base; c.1.20m (max.) diameter; c.0.42m (max.) deep; cuts (2002).	Cut of a pit	-	-	19 th to 20 th century
(2022)	Fill	-	[2021]	Loosely compacted light brown orange sand; occasional small to medium-sized rounded stones; c.0.42m (max.) thick; underlies (2001).	Naturally infilled single fill of pit [2021]	Pottery	006	19 th to 20 th century

Context No.	Type	Filled by	Fill of	Description	Interpretation	Finds nr=not retained	Sample No.	Provisional date
(2023)	Fill	-	[2010] S2	Loosely compacted light orange brown sand with white lenses; occasional small to medium-sized rounded stones; c.0.80m (max.) deep; overlies (2024); underlies (2001).	Naturally infilled upper fill of possible drainage ditch/ gully [2010] S2	Pottery CBM	005	19 th to 20 th century
(2024)	Fill	-	[2010] S2	Loosely compacted dark grey sand; frequent large-sized rounded to sub-angular stones; c.0.72 m (max.) deep; underlies (2023).	Possibly colluvium basal fill of possible drainage ditch/ gully [2010] S2	-	-	19 th to 20 th century

16 Appendix 2: Palaeoenvironmental Report

Peter Rose BA (Hons.), Border Archaeology Ltd

16.1 Introduction

This report details the results derived from an area of rooting, a furrow, a spread, ditches, gullies, ditch/gullies, pits and a gully/ditch terminus investigated during Archaeological Excavation at Land North of Hill Top Farm, Earl Shilton, Leicestershire, LE9 7DP.

The charcoal assemblage suggested that burning in the local vicinity of the Site occurred during context formation. The remaining evidence yielded by sampling was of insufficient abundance for palaeoenvironmental interpretation.

In accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (BA 2025), at least 40% or 100% of the deposits were sampled. This resulted in 21 samples comprising 730% of material being received by the Palaeoenvironmental Department.

The samples were processed by means of flotation with the resultant archaeological and archaeobotanical material, from both the floating element and the heavier residue/retent, sorted and visually identified. The nature and interpretative significance of the recovered remains is detailed in Section 15.4 below.

The 21 samples were retrieved from 21 contexts from 13 features, from which between 10% and 40% were taken dependent on the ability to sample secure contexts. The results are presented by context in Section 15.5 below.

16.2 Site Description

The land comprising the excavation totalled approximately 94,500m² and was bordered by mature hedgerows and trees to the N and E (as well as part of the W), by allotments to the SW and by residential properties to the S.

At the time of excavation, the land consisted of arable fields.

16.2.1 Soils & Geology

The British Geological Survey (BGS) lists the underlying solid geology of the Site as mudstone of the Gunthorpe Member (BGS 2025), which would support the survival of phytoliths, charcoal, pollen/spores, charred plant remains and diatoms (SSEW 1983).

16.3 Methodology

16.3.1 Objectives

The purpose of the palaeoenvironmental sampling strategy implemented during archaeological excavations is the retrieval of non-specific palaeoenvironmental remains and the further characterisation of features. In addition, specific palaeoenvironmental recovery to support the regional research frameworks and site specific palaeoenvironmental potential is capable of being implemented on archaeological excavations. Such additional investigations may be: highlighted prior to commencement of works; identified during the excavation phase; or become apparent during the post-excavation procedures.

16.3.2 Methodology

Sampling methodology followed the *Palaeoenvironmental Department Manual* (BA 2017) with reference to Historic England guidance (Campbell *et al.* 2011). On Site, the samples were collected in 10ℓ sample buckets and identified by context and sample number.

The samples were not subject to sub-sampling and their entirety was processed by means of flotation. Flotation was undertaken in Siraf-style tanks (Williams 1973) with a 500µm retent mesh and 250µm flot sieve. No refloating was required for these samples. Retents were initially scanned by magnet to retrieve any archaeometallurgical debris and a sieve bank was used to facilitate visual sorting with the smaller fractions sorted by means of magnifying lamp and/or illuminated stereo zoom microscopy ($\leq \times 10$). The flots were sorted entirely by means of illuminated stereo zoom microscopy ($\leq \times 10$). The results of this analysis are reported with the flot and retent data recombined due to limited to no variance in the species being reported.

16.3.3 Personnel

Flotation and analysis was undertaken within the Palaeoenvironmental Department under the guidance of Craig Lathwell BSc ACIfA and Amy Bunce BSc MA MCIIfA. External and internal specialists were consulted for archaeological finds, archaeometallurgical material and archaeozoological assemblages.

16.4 Description & Methodology of Materials

Detailed below are the general implications of the discovery of certain materials within the palaeoenvironmental samples and their specialised methodological considerations.

The full account of evidence is expressed in the accompanying tabulation, detailing the abundance results from both the archaeobotanical material and the archaeological finds. Weight and quantity records have been recorded but are not presented due to the variation between materials. Contexts will only be discussed in full where palaeoenvironmental conclusions can be interpreted.

16.4.1 Finds

Archaeological finds within palaeoenvironmental samples are fairly common and help confirm that the sampling of the material was not biased in any manner.

In this case, sampling yielded spheroidal hammer scale, flake hammer scale, slag, pottery, ceramic building material, ferrous metal, fuel ash slag, glass, metal, bead, heat-affected stone, worked stone, coal and burnt mammal bone.

16.4.2 Shell

Terrestrial shell comprises that from snails that may have been present in the area during deposition of the fills. Identification of the species represented highlights any ecological niches preferred by certain species in the environments they inhabited.

Archaeomalacological identification is undertaken in-house on the basis of apical and diagnostic fragments utilising reference texts (Cameron 2008; Evans 1972; Kerney & Cameron 1979; Welter-Schultes 2012). Environmental interpretations follow Davies (2008) with ecological groups for terrestrial and freshwater species as designated by Evans (1972) and Sparks (1961) and ecological preferences inferred by reference to Kerney and Cameron (1979). Taphonomic uncertainty (Lowe & Walker 1997) is recognised and unknown habitat and associations (Bush 1988) accepted.

No shell was yielded by sampling.

16.4.3 Charcoal

Charcoal is ubiquitous in palaeoenvironmental samples as it is used in domestic, funerary and industrial settings or may be present as a result of accidental firings. Identification of the wood species making up the charcoal assemblage can add valuable data as to wood selection and anthracological analysis can indicate the ecology.

While often relied upon for dating, in particular ^{14}C , charcoal is not the best material to use. Charcoal is subject to the 'Old Wood problem', whereby wood is known to be frequently reused and charcoal redeposited. In addition, wood grows over many years and it is not possible to know precisely where within the tree a charcoal fragment has derived.

Anthracological analysis is undertaken in-house, utilising reference keys (Hather 2000; Schweingruber 1990a; Schweingruber 1990b), at $\times 100$ magnification with higher magnifications to $\times 400$ used where necessary. Lighting is by incident lighting with transmitted lighting where necessary. Charcoal is transversally sectioned with tangential or radial sectioning undertaken where required.

Growth ring curvature and diameter size classification is by reference to Ludemann-Nelle (L-N) templates (Ludemann 2002; Nelle 2002) whereby classes I, II, III, IV & V represent diameters $<20\text{mm}$, $20\text{--}30\text{mm}$, $30\text{--}50\text{mm}$, $50\text{--}100\text{mm}$ and $>100\text{mm}$ respectively. Growth ring curvature is additionally classified by reference to Marguerie-Hunot (M-H) test cards (Marguerie & Hunot 2007) whereby weak, moderate and strong curvature are categorised 1, 2 and 3 respectively.

Charcoal was present as indeterminate fragments in all contexts. At the <2mm fraction, 95% of contexts contained charcoal, 70% of which contained a poor abundance, with 25% of contexts containing an occasional abundance. At the 2-4 mm fraction, 90% of contexts contained charcoal, 65% of which contained a poor abundance, with 30% of contexts containing an occasional abundance. At the >4 mm fraction, 60% of contexts contained charcoal, 40% of which contained a poor abundance, with 20% of contexts containing an occasional abundance. This evidence would suggest that burning in the local vicinity of the Site occurred during context formation.

16.4.4 Uncharred archaeobotanical material

In the vast majority of instances of uncharred archaeobotanical material in palaeoenvironmental samples, it must be disregarded as of potentially modern origin. However, waterlogged conditions and some other preservational conditions can allow uncharred archaeobotanical remains to be considered.

The overall uncarbonised wild taxa assemblage consisted of two *Cirsium* sp. (Thistle) seeds, 137 *Chenopodium/Atriplex* sp. (Goosefoot/Saltbush) seeds, 13 *Rubus* sp. (Bramble) seeds, a single *Urtica dioica* (Common Nettle) seed, 20 *Fumaria* sp. (Fumitory) seeds, two *Persicaria lapathifolia* (Pale Smartweed) seeds, a single Polygonaceae (Buckwheats) seed, two Ranunculaceae (Buttercups) seeds, 11 *Sambucus nigra* (Elder) seeds, and a single *Ranunculus* sp. (Buttercup) seed.

The high diversity but low abundance of the majority of the uncarbonised assemblage could be suggestive of intrusion via natural seed dispersal during excavation. This is further supported by the local geology not allowing for the survival of uncarbonised material. Although overall significantly present, *Chenopodium/Atriplex* sp. (Goosefoot/Saltbush) was of no interpretive value as the seeds cannot be confirmed to be of archaeological origin.

16.4.5 Charred archaeobotanical material

Charred archaeobotanical material is generally the most illustrative palaeoeconomic remnant. Charring is generally accepted to be almost solely of anthropogenic origin and the material can therefore be used to directly reconstruct the past agricultural or consumer economy and diet with acceptance of the intrinsic bias of a charred assemblage over unpreserved plant remains.

Archaeobotanical identification is undertaken in-house utilising reference texts that include the most relevant to the British assemblages (Anderburg 1994; Berggren 1969; Berggren 1981; Groningen Institute of Archaeology 2006-present; Jacomet 2006; Martin & Barkley 2000; Renfrew 1973; Schoch *et al.* 1988) with classification following Stace (2010).

The overall carbonised cereal assemblage consisted of two indeterminate caryopses and two indeterminate caryopsis fragments. The overall carbonised wild taxa assemblage consisted of a single cf. *Galium* sp. (Bedstraw) seed and a single indeterminate seed. The very low abundances present were not statistically significant and of no use in palaeoenvironmental interpretation.

16.5 Table of Results

The following table details the abundance results from both the archaeobotanical material and the archaeological finds. Weight and quantity records have been recorded but are not presented here due to the variation between materials.

+ = poor ++ = occasional +++ = common ++++ = abundant

			Context no.	1004	1006	1008	1009	1011	1012	1013	1014	1016	2004	2005	2007	2008	2011	2014	2015	2016	2018	2020	2022	2023
			Sample no.	001	002	003	004	005	006	007	009	008	012	003	001	002	004	007	009	008	010	011	006	005
			Sample part	1-4/4	1-4/4	1-4/4	1-4/4	1-4/4	1-4/4	1-4/4	1-4/4	1-4/4	1-4/4	1-4/4	1-4/4	1-4/4	1-2/2	1-4/4	1-2/2	1/1	1-2/2	1-2/2	1-4/4	
			Bucket no.	32707-10	32711-14	32715-18	32719-22	32723-26	32727-30	32731-34	32739-42	32735-38	32830-33	32805-08	32797-800	32801-04	32809-12	32819-20	32823-26	32821-22	32827	32828-29	32817-18	32813-16
			Sample vol. (mℓ)	1875	4300	1500	1600	1950	4550	1215	2050	1375	4200	2850	7275	11550	4175	1950	6490	1575	1575	2100	2250	7000
			% sample analysed	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
			Waterlogged?	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
			Refloated?	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Latin name	Common name	Plant part																						
Carbonised cereal																								
Cereal indet.	Indeterminate	caryopsis													2									
Cereal indet.	Indeterminate	caryopsis fragment															2							
Carbonised wild taxa																								
cf. <i>Galium</i> sp.	bedstraw	seed												1										
Indeterminate	Indeterminate	seed																				1		
Uncarbonised wild taxa																								
<i>Cirsium</i> sp.	Thistle	seed					2																	
<i>Chenopodium/Atriplex</i> sp.	Goosefoot/Saltbush	seed										10		15		79	2		2		28	1		
<i>Rubus</i> sp.	Bramble	seed										1	1	2	1	4					4			
<i>Urtica dioica</i>	Common Nettle	seed																			1			
<i>Fumaria</i> sp.	Fumitory	seed										1		1		5					13			
<i>Persicaria lapathifolia</i>	Pale Smartweed	seed														1					1			
Polygonaceae	Buckwheats	seed														1								
Ranunculaceae	Buttercups	seed																			2			
<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	Elder	seed										2	2			1	1				4	1		
<i>Ranunculus</i> sp.	Buttercup	seed						1																
Charcoal																								
Indeterminate <2mm	Indeterminate	fragments	+	+	+	+	+		+	+	+	+	++	+	++	++	+	+	+	++	+	+	++	
Indeterminate 2-4mm	Indeterminate	fragments	+	+	+	+		+	+	+		+	++	++	++	++	+	+	+	++	+	+	++	
Indeterminate >4mm	Indeterminate	fragments										+	++	+	++	++	+	+	+	++	+	+	+	
Archaeometallurgical																								
Spheroidal scale	-	-		+																			+	
Flake hammerscale	-	-		+			+					+				+	+		+	+	+	+	+	
Slag	-	-			++									+					+	+	+	+	+	
Artefactual																								
Pottery	-	-		+		+					+	+	+				+			+				
CBM	-	-		+				+	+			+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+	+	+	+	
Fe	-	-										+				+				+			+	
Fuel Ash Slag	-	-										+	+						++	+			+	
Glass	-	-										+	+			+							+	
Metal	-	-																	+					
Bead	-	-														+								
Heat-affected stone	-	-											+	+	+	++							+	
Worked stone	-	-							+															
Coal	-	-											+	+			+		+	+		+	+	
Faunal																								
Mammal (burnt)	Indeterminate	-														+								

16.6 Conclusions & Recommendations

The aims of the non-specific palaeoenvironmental sampling were to aid in the interpretation of the features and how they relate to the palaeoenvironmental landscape found during archaeological excavation.

The overall charcoal assemblage suggested that burning in the local vicinity of the Site occurred during context formation. Although present in an overall statistically significant abundance, *Chenopodium/Atriplex* sp. (Goosefoot/Saltbush) was of no interpretive value as the seeds cannot be confirmed to be of archaeological origin. The remaining evidence yielded by sampling was of insufficient abundance for palaeoenvironmental interpretation.

16.6.1 Recommendations

Due to the nature of the materials recovered and the full analysis undertaken, no further work is recommended.

Retention of the materials detailed in this report as an incorporation of the Site archive for deposition with the museum is not recommended.

16.7 Copyright

Border Archaeology shall retain full copyright of any commissioned reports, tender documents or other project documents, under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, with all rights reserved, excepting that it hereby provides a licence to Vistry Homes and the Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council for the use of the report by Vistry Homes and the Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council in all matters directly relating to the project as described in the Project Specification to use the documentation for their statutory functions and to provide copies of it to third parties as an incidental to such functions.

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17 Appendix 3: Faunal Report

Janice McLeish MA Hons, Border Archaeology Ltd

17.1 Introduction

Border Archaeology carried out a programme of Archaeological Mitigation (AM) and associated Archaeological Field Evaluation (AFE) to inform further mitigation in connection with a residential development on Land N of Hill Top Farm, Earl Shilton, Leicestershire LE9 7DP. During the fieldwork, an assemblage of finds were recovered, of which the animal bone will be discussed below.

17.2 Results

A small volume of faunal material was recovered by hand from Area A and Area B, totalling 46 fragments weighing 51.11g (Table 1). A single small crumb (0.06g) of burnt bone was recovered from palaeoenvironmental sampling from context (2011) sample 004.

Table 1: Hand recovered bone

Context No:	Cut No:	Feature Type	Area	Slot No:	Animal Bone	
					No:	(g)
(1011)	[1007]	Linear	A	Slot 3	11	2.65
(1016)	[1007]	Linear	A	Slot 1	20	1.65
(2005)	-	Spread	B	-	15	46.81
Total					46	51.11

The animal bone was presented in a very fragmented and weathered condition, no evidence of burning or butchery was noted.

17.3 Conclusions & Recommendations

Area A contained animal bone recovered from the fill of linear ditch [1007], this consisted of crushed tooth fragments, of possible sheep/goat molar and very small unidentifiable crumbs, no further information could be extrapolated. A possible post-medieval date is suggested by ceramic finds.

Area B contained a small quantity of medium sized mammal fragments recovered from a possible post-medieval spread deposit, they may represent a single bone but refitting was not possible.

17.3.1 Recommendations

The small faunal assemblage recovered from Land N of Hill Top Farm is likely to represent discarded post-medieval waste. Due to the nature and condition of the assemblage, no further work is warranted and archive retention is not advisable.

18 Appendix 4: Assessment of the Ceramic Finds & Glass

K H Crooks BA, Border Archaeology Ltd

18.1 Introduction

A total of 21 sherds (274g) of medieval and post-medieval pottery, and 28 fragments (763.95g) of ceramic building material (CBM) were recovered from Areas A and B at Hill Top Farm, Earl Shilton, Leicestershire. Four fragments of glass were also present. The pottery and ceramic building material is summarised in Tables 1 and 2 below.

18.2 Discussion

18.2.1 The pottery

The pottery from Area A included small body sherds which may be of Potters Marston ware, some of which from context (1016) had been burnt. The Site lies in the proximity (some 5km) from Potters Marston. However, the small sherd size and the lack of form sherds means that attribution is not certain.

The pottery from Area B was of post-medieval date, with the earliest material from this area the Midlands purple ware dating from the 15th to 17th centuries. The majority of the pottery from Area B dated to the 18th or 19th centuries and included creamware dating to the 18th century, and transfer printed ware. The Staffordshire type coarseware was from large vessels used in the kitchen or for dairying and comprised normal domestic waste.

Table 1: Summary of the pottery

Context	Area	No.	Wt. g	Fabric/Form/Comments
(1006)	A	2	25.66	Midlands purple. Form unknown. 15 th – 18 th century
(1006)	A	2	54.59	Staffordshire type coarseware. Internal brown glaze; 17 th -19 th century
(1009)	A	4	5.58g	?Potters Marston ware. Jar. Recent breaks. 13 th -14 th c
(1013)	A	2	2.96	?Potters Marston ware. Jar. Abraded 13 th – 14 th c
(1016)	A	2	4.5	Probable Potters Marston ware. Has been burnt
(2004)	B	3	9.08	Pearlware. Willow pattern transfer print. 2 probably from plate: 1780 +
(2004)	B	3	111.05	Staffordshire type coarseware with internal black glaze. Rim probably 18 th -19 th century.
(2004)	B	2	23.06	Yellow ware. 18 th century + Small jar or jug
(2005)	B	1	15.32	Midlands Purple. Internal glaze. Probably jar 15 th -18 th century
(2005)	B	2	86.64	Staffordshire type coarseware. Red external slip and internal glaze. 18 th -19 th c.
(2005)	B	1	2.33	Pearlware. Late 18 th – 19 th c.
(2008)	B	1	2.08	Pearlware. Design probably mid-19 th century
(2020)	B	1	2.37	Creamware. Form unknown; 18 th c
(2020)	B	1	3.10	Pearlware. End 18 th – 19 th c
(2022)	B	1	16.98	Midlands purple type but unglazed. 15 th c +

Context	Area	No.	Wt. g	Fabric/Form/Comments
(2023)	B	1	2.62	Creamware. Plate? 18 th c
Total		17	274.63	

18.2.2 Ceramic Building Material

All ceramic building material was oxidised throughout and is likely on technological grounds to be of post-medieval date. The fragment of pantile from (2005) is of 17th century or later date and the brick from (2004) was definitely 18th century or later in date.

Table 2: Summary of the ceramic building material

Context	Area	No.	Wt. g	Fabric/Form/Comments
(1006)	A	1	1.97	Sandy oxidised fabric. Greatly abraded
(1010)	A	2	1.81	Sandy oxidised fabric. Scraps
(2004)	B	1	15.72	Some sand. Low firing temperature. Lump
(2004)	B	8	253.82	Sand and quartz. One fragment is post-medieval brick, others unidentifiable
(2005)	B	13	332.96	Sandy oxidised fabric; occasional quartz. 1 pantile, remainder lumps
(2007)	B	1	36.58	Sandy oxidised fabric, some badly mixed yellow clay. 16mm thick; greatly abraded
(2023)	B	2	121.09	Sandy oxidised fabric; one roof tile 16mm thick. 1x lump
Total		28	763.95	

18.2.3 The glass

From Area A two fragments (0.25g) of smoked grey vessel glass are thought to be post-medieval in date. Also of post-medieval date were a fragment of clear and one of green glass (1.53g total weight) from Area B context (2018).

18.2.4 The coal or clinker

From Area B (2004) came seven fragments of coal or clinker. This may suggest the land had been worked with a steam traction engine.

18.2.5 The iron object

The single iron nail was recovered from a post-medieval spread (2005). It was very large (95.15g) and probably structural.

18.3 Conclusions & Recommendations

The pottery and CBM has been summarised above. The majority is of post-medieval date and comprises normal domestic waste. Depending on the policy of the receiving body retention is not considered necessary.

18.4 Reading

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19 Appendix 5: Clay Tobacco Pipe

Emma Hardy BA (Hons) MA, Border Archaeology

19.1 Introduction

Border Archaeology Ltd (BA) was instructed by Vistry Homes to carry out a programme of Archaeological Mitigation (AM) and associated Archaeological Field Evaluation (AFE) to inform further mitigation in connection with a residential development for up to 140 dwellings with Public Open Space, a children's play area, landscaping and sustainable drainage system (SuDS) on Land N of Hill Top Farm, Earl Shilton, Leicestershire LE9 7DP (NGR: SP 46636 98417).

During the works, which took place between February and March 2025, 2 x partial clay tobacco pipe bowls from contexts (1010) and (2005) and 3 x pieces of clay tobacco pipe (CTP) were recovered from contexts (1006) and (2012), with a combined weight of 8.58g. Due to the small number of stems together with a lack of external features the CTP could only loosely be attributed to the 18th and 19th centuries.

19.2 Method

The CTP was washed, counted, weighed, measured and bagged according to context then examined by eye and under magnification (x10) and classified according to work from Higgins (2017), Oswald (1975) and Atkinson and Oswald (1969).

Closely dating stems with no associated bowls and only partial bowls is difficult, but they can usually be allocated to one of three general date ranges by assessing their form, stem bore, fabric and finish.

Stem bores are historically measured as 64ths of an inch, together with finish and fabric a broad range of dating can be considered. In general, the larger bore equates to earlier periods and the finer fabric and smaller bores relating broadly to the later period of production.

19.3 Material

The small size of the stems and the small number of relatively non-diagnostic fragments mean that fuller analysis is not discussed but summarised in the Clay Tobacco Pipe Recording Sheet in the Results section below.

19.4 Results

Context	Bowl	Stem	Fabric	Stem bore B/64"	Stem Length mm	Stem Diam mm	Bowl Form	Bowl diam mm	Bowl height from stem mm	Bowl thickness mm	Bunishing present	Bunishing quality	Date Range	Comments
1005		1	I	8/64"	36	10					n		C18th to C19th	based on bore and fabric type
1005		1	I	8/64"	17	6					n		C18th to C19th	based on bore and fabric type
2012		1	I	5/64"	33	5					n		C18th to C19th	based on bore and fabric type
1010	1		I				n/a	n/a	n/a	3	y	poor	C18th to C19th	based on bore and fabric type
2005	1		I	7/64"	44	7	n/a	n/a	n/a	2	n		C18th to C19th	based on bore and fabric type
Totals:	2	3												

Table 1: Clay Tobacco Pipe Recording Table

19.5 Conclusions & Recommendations

The presence of 5 x CTP fragments can be used to help confirm a late post-medieval/modern timeframe for these contexts. Tighter dating is difficult due to the small number of dateable features and only partial remains of the pipe bowls. However, given the use of a fine fabric ball clay, possible remains of poor burnished exterior for one bowl and the bore size being between 5 and 8/64" diameter a date range of between the 18th and 19th centuries in contexts (1006), (1010), (2005) and (2012) could be postulated.

19.5.1 Recommendations

No further work is recommended and it is not suggested that the material be retained in the archive.

19.6 References

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19. Appendix 6: OASIS Summary

OASIS ID (UID)	borderar1-534334
Project Name	Archaeological Mitigation on behalf of Vistry Homes concerning Land N of Hill Top Farm, Earl Shilton, Leicestershire LE9 7DP
Sitename	Land N of Hill Top Farm, Earl Shilton, Leicestershire LE9 7DP
Sitecode	HTF25
Project Identifier(s)	BA2511HTF
Activity type	Excavation
Planning Id	21/00135/OUT
Reason For Investigation	Planning: Post determination
Organisation Responsible for work	Border Archaeology Ltd
Project Dates	03-Mar-2025 - 20-Mar-2025
Location	Land N of Hill Top Farm, Earl Shilton, Leicestershire LE9 7DP NGR: SP 46636 98417 LL: 52.5815714985477, -1.31316908828016 12 Fig: 446636,298417
Administrative Areas	Country: England County/Local Authority: Leicestershire Local Authority District: Hinckley and Bosworth Parish: Earl Shilton
Project Methodology	Two areas of c.2400m2 will be subject to AM, centred on and around those features identified during the course of the previous programme of AFE (Allen 2021;) as mentioned above, a third area might be opened dependent upon the results of the AFE detailed within this WSI, which will also inform the dimensions and extent. Where necessary, and with the prior agreement of the Senior Planning Archaeologist (Heritage), these areas may be extended (as necessary) within the development area to allow for the full exposure and/or characterisation of features and deposits. Excavation will proceed using a mechanical excavator equipped with toothless bucket operating under archaeological supervision. The mechanical excavator will work progressively across the Site, with undifferentiated topsoil or recent overburden being removed in successive, level spits no greater than 100mm in thickness down to the first significant archaeological horizon or to natural geology, where no archaeological deposits are found at a higher level. Care will thus be taken not to machine away seemingly homogenous layers that may include the upper parts of archaeological features. Topsoil and subsoil will be stored in separate areas, to be agreed with Vistry Homes and the Senior Planning Archaeologist (Heritage) (where appropriate), with spoil heaps set back at least 1m from the edge of the excavation areas. Machine-excavated deposits and the exposed surface will be regularly monitored for the presence and collection of artefacts. Exposed surfaces and excavated spoil may also be scanned by metal detector, with all such activity being carried out by BA in accordance with its Metal Detecting Policy (2018), which incorporates Historic England and Portable Antiquities Scheme guidance. If archaeological remains are found to be present cutting through soils (e.g. colluvium) which conceal lower archaeological horizons, then the upper levels will be mapped and investigated prior to removal of deposits overlying

	the lower levels. On completion of, or during, machine-stripping, a pre-excavation plan of archaeological features will be produced at an appropriate scale (1:50 or 1:100 dependent upon complexity) using a survey-grade Global Positioning System (GPS) and/or Total Station (TS). Survey data will be available in Autocad or PDF/A format and printed at a suitable scale for on-site use. If, following the machine-stripping, there remain any areas where it is not clear that archaeological features have been adequately exposed or defined, these will be hand cleaned to further define the archaeology; the resultant surface will be accurately planned. The exposing and planning of archaeological features will be undertaken on the same or consecutive days while the uncovered surface is fresh, whether or not those features are exposed by machine or hand-cleaning. Where particularly vulnerable deposits such as graves or cremations occur, these will be accorded special priority. Where necessary (for example, detailed structural features or burials) features will be planned either by photogrammetry or by hand at a scale of 1:20 from the grid before being digitised for inclusion on the overall plan. Use will be made of spray line paint marker to record the unexcavated form of features prior to mapping; however, this will be removed prior to the excavation and recording of features. The exposed surface will be regularly monitored during the course of the investigation to identify any further features that may appear due to weathering, and the plan will be updated to reflect the progress of on-site work. Mechanical excavation will not be used to re-clean areas of excavation that have been obscured through weathering.
Project Results	The Archaeological Mitigation works carried out at Land N of Hill Top Farm, Earl Shilton, Leicestershire LE9 7DP revealed evidence for agricultural activity that spanned the late medieval and post-medieval periods, with several drainage ditches, gullies and plough furrows encountered. Three possible rubbish pits were also recorded, along with a spread of 18th to 19th century date, suggesting that Area B in particular may have been used as a dumping ground for household waste at this time. Although the evidence was limited, these works may help to address specific research aims identified in the East Midlands Heritage: An Updated Research Agenda and Strategy for the Historic Environment of the East Midlands (Knight, Vyner & Allen 2012), including: • 8.3.2 “How did water management and land drainage change the landscape during this period?”.
Keywords	Rubbish Pit - POST MEDIEVAL - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types Drainage Ditch - POST MEDIEVAL - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types Drainage Ditch - MEDIEVAL - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types Ridge And Furrow - POST MEDIEVAL - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types
Funder	Private or public corporation Vistry Homes
HER	Leicestershire HER - unRev - STANDARD
Person Responsible for work	R Cencerrero Alonso
HER Identifiers	
Archives	Physical Archive - to be deposited with Leicestershire County Council Museums; Digital Archive - to be deposited with Archaeology Data Service Archive;



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