

Welcome Break M69, Stretton Court, Hinckley, Leicestershire

Geophysical Survey & Archaeological Evaluation Written Scheme of Investigation

National Grid Reference Number: SP 4316 9105

AOC Project No: 80232

Site Code: TBC

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Date: August 2025



ARCHAEOLOGY

| HERITAGE

| CONSERVATION

Welcome Break M69, Stretton Court, Hinckley, Leicestershire Geophysical Survey & Archaeological Evaluation Written Scheme of Investigation

On Behalf of: **Welcome Break**
2 Vantage Court
Tickford Street
Newport Pagnell
MK16 9EZ

National Grid References (NGR): **SP 4316 9105**

AOC Project No: **80232**

OASIS ID: **aocarcha1-534739**

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This document has been prepared in accordance with AOC standard operating procedures.

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Figure 1: Site Location Plan

Figure 2: Proposed Trench Location Plan

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) has been prepared by AOC Archaeology Group on behalf of Welcome Break ('the client'). It details the methodology for undertaking a geophysical survey and an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching at the proposed site of Welcome Break M69, Stretton Court, Hinckley, Leicestershire (hereafter the site – Figure 1). The site lies partially within the local administrative area of Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Councils which advised on archaeological matter by the Leicestershire County Council (LCC) archaeologist, and also within Rugby Borough Council which is advised on archaeological matter by the Warwickshire County Council (WCC) archaeologist.
- 1.2 The geophysical survey and the archaeological evaluation are being undertaken in order to satisfy the condition connected to planning application 23/01023/HYB. The results of the geophysical survey and the trial trenching will be available to assist in the determination of whether further mitigation works will be required on the site.
- 1.3 The archaeological work will be undertaken in accordance with this WSI and the requirements of nationally recognised archaeological guidance, including the professional standards issued by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) (specifically the *Standard and Universal Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (CIfA 2023a and 2023b).
- 1.4 The archaeological works will be managed in accordance with the Historic England publications *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE): Project Managers Guide* (2006), and the *MoRPHE Project Planning Note 3: Archaeological Excavation (PPN3)* (2008). It will also meet the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF; Chapter 16: 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment'; MHCLG 2025).

2 Site Description

- 2.1 The site is located immediately to the southeast of the village of Hinckley, located in Leicestershire. The site comprises approximately 5ha of agricultural land flanked to the north and the east by the A5/Watling Street, to the south by the M69, and to the west by Wolvey Road. The site is adjacent to houses at Stretton Croft, which is a road off Wolvey Road. High voltage overhead cables are carried across the site by pylons. Soar Brook crosses the southernmost part of the site. The wider landscape entails further agricultural fields, roads, a motorway, and Hinckley to the northwest.
- 2.2 The land is slightly sloping dropping from a high point of 121.9m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) in the northwest corner of the site to 117m aOD in the southeast corner.
- 2.3 The British Geological Survey (BGS 2025) indicates that the underlying bedrock geology within the site is Mercia Mudstone Group clay, a sedimentary bedrock comprising mudstone formed between 252.2 and 201.3 million years ago during the Triassic period. The superficial deposits within the majority of the site are recorded as Wolston Sand and Gravel, a sedimentary superficial deposit formed between 2.588 million years ago and the present during the Quaternary period. The northernmost and southernmost parts of the site comprise of Oadby Member, a sedimentary superficial deposit comprising Diamicton formed between 480 and 423 thousand years ago during the Quaternary period. The easternmost part of the site is overlain by Bosworth Clay Member, a sedimentary superficial deposit comprising clay and silt formed between 480 and 423 thousand years ago during the Quaternary period.

3 Archaeological and Historical Background

- 3.1 A full Archaeological Desk Based Assessment (DBA) has been prepared by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (UoLAS 2020). The Archaeological and Historical background is summarised below. The figures and the event numbers referenced below can be found in the DBA (UoLAS 2020). Regarding the HER references below, the prefix MLE is for Leicestershire and the MWA prefix is for Warwickshire.
- 3.2 The DBA recorded no World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Registered Parks and Gardens, Battlefields, Conservation Areas or Listed Buildings within 1km of the site. The LiDAR used for the DBA was not conclusive and not clear archaeological anomalies were identified.
- 3.3 The HER records a prehistoric ring ditch (MWA4856) close to the eastern edge of the site, an Iron Age coin (MWA4856) in the southern part of the site close to Soar Brook. Prehistoric activity recorded by the HER within 1km of the site includes a Palaeolithic pit alignment visible on aerial photography (MWA2766), a group of Palaeolithic Ash-Pole Spinney (MWA9968 and MWA12808), a Palaeolithic handaxe (MWA12837), Neolithic/Bronze Age flints (MLE21173), Iron Age enclosures (MLE23421) and Iron Age pottery (MLE6498).
- 3.4 The site is situated adjacent to the A5, which lies along the route of the former Roman Watling Street (MLE1388 AND MWA420). Material cultural recovered from an Iron Age enclosure (MLE23421) north of Hinkley Island Hotel suggested that the enclosure was used into the Roman period. Pottery dating to the Roman period (MLE23422) has also been recorded within 1km of the site. Several undated cropmarks within 1km of the site may be Iron Age or Roman in date (MWA2773, MWA3711, MWA4854 and MWA4855).
- 3.5 The HER identifies medieval Leicester Grange (MWA3706) approximately 400m to the southeast of the site, and a large area of extant ridge and furrow (MWA3706) between 600m and 900m to the southwest of the site. The Scheduled Monument of Stretton Baskerville medieval village (MWA2762) is recorded just over 1km to the west of the site.
- 3.6 The northern part of the site was historically located within the parish of Burbage in Leicestershire. Burbage placename derives from Old English, and it refers to a fortified place near a brook. Burbage is referenced as early as 1043, and it was a settlement in the Domesday survey of 1086. For most of its history, Burbage has been a small farming community. The southern part of the site lies in Warwickshire within the parish of Stretton Baskerville, which derives its name from the word “*stret*”, meaning a Roman Road (due to its proximity to Watling Street), and “*turn*” the Old English for settlement. Baskerville refers to a family of medieval Lords. The land at “*Stratone*” was held by the Anglo-saxons prior to the Norman Conquest, and after the Conquest the land was given to Norman Lord Ralph De Mortimer. By the 12th century the lands were held in part by William de Baskerville under Robert, the Earl of Ferrers. The lands have changed ownership throughout the history of Stretton Baskerville. In the 17th century none of its historic buildings were extended.
- 3.7 The HER records the post-medieval woodland, parkland and ponds of Leicester Grange (MWA12659) a post-medieval brickwork (MWA3585) approximately 200m to the southeast of the site.
- 3.8 Historic maps dating from 1888 to 1964 and modern satellite imagery show that the site has remained agricultural from at least the late-19th century until the present day. The OS maps from the early-20th century show buildings which are no longer standing in the northern edge of the site. By the time of the 1964 OS map the current buildings at Stretton Croft adjacent to the site boundary had been erected (UoLAS 2020.17).

- 3.9 A watching brief (ELE5063) carried out in the northeastern edge of the site in 2007 revealed a linear feature, an area of dark natural clay and a possible old fence line (MWA16819). Modern pottery recovered from the feature suggested a modern date.
- 3.10 In summary, the DBA records three non-designated assets within the site, which has remained agricultural until the present day; a prehistoric ditch, a findspot comprising an Iron Age coin, and a linear feature, possibly a modern fence line.

4 Scope of Works

- 4.1 Initially, vegetation clearance will take place on the site ahead of the geophysical survey. The vegetation clearance will take place across the entire site other than in the north-west corner of the site, where trees will be retained as part of the development. The vegetation clearance will include a surface scrape up to a maximum depth of 150mm to allow for the geophysical survey to be carried out as effectively as possible. This will not be required to be monitored by an archaeologist. Depending on conditions post-clearance, a geophysical survey will be undertaken across the site using Bartington Grad601-2 fluxgate gradiometers. All geophysical work will be carried out in accordance with the Historic England guidelines, *EAC Guidelines for the Use of Geophysics in Archaeology* (2016), the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) *Standard and Guidance for archaeological geophysical survey* (2014), the CIfA Technical Paper No.6, *The use of geophysical techniques in archaeological evaluations* (2002), and the *Archaeology Data Service Guide to Good Practice: Geophysical Data in Archaeology* (2011).
- 4.2 On completion of the geophysical survey, the results will be reviewed by the LCC and WCC archaeologist to determine the sample percentage required for trial trenching of the site and an updated trench plan will be issued. Should the geophysical survey results not be successful in determining the potential of the archaeology present, the sample percentage for trenching will be 5% unless otherwise deemed necessary by LCC and WCC.
- 4.3 At most, 22 evaluation trenches will be excavated at the site, the dimensions being 1.8m x 30m, which equates to a 5% sample of the site (Figure 2), although, as stated above, these may change once the results of the geophysical survey are reviewed.
- 4.4 The archaeological works and subsequent post-excavation work will conform to current best archaeological practice and local and national standards and guidelines:
- ALGAO – Advice Note for Post-excavation Assessment (2015)
 - Chartered Institute for Archaeologists – Universal guidance for archaeological field evaluation (2023)
 - Chartered Institute for Archaeologists – Standard for archaeological field evaluation (2023b)
 - Chartered Institute for Archaeologists – Standard and Guidance for the Collection, Documentation, Conservation and Research of Archaeological Materials (2020a)
 - Chartered Institute for Archaeologists – Standard and Guidance for the Creation, Compilation, Transfer and Deposition of Archaeological Archives (2020b)
 - Chartered Institute for Archaeologists – Code of Conduct: professional ethics in archaeology (2022)
 - English Heritage – Environmental Archaeology: A guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation (2011)
 - Historic England – Waterlogged Wood: Guidelines on the Recovery, Sampling, Conservation and Curation of Waterlogged Wood (HE 2010).

- Historic England – Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The MoRPHE Project Manages' Guide (2015a)
- Historic England – The Role of the Human Osteologist in an Archaeological Fieldwork Project (2018a)
- Historic England – Waterlogged Organic Artefacts: Guidelines on their Recovery, Analysis and Conservation (2018b)
- Historic England – Animal Bones and Archaeology: Recovery to archive (2019)
- Museum of London – Archaeological Site Manual (1994)
- Portable Antiquities Scheme. Code of Practice for Responsible Metal Detecting in England and Wales
- RESCUE & ICON – First Aid for Finds (2001)
- Rugby Art Gallery and Museum – Guidelines for the Deposition of Archaeological Archives (2023)
- United Kingdom Institute for Conservation – Conservation Guidelines No.2 (1983)
- United Kingdom Institute for Conservation – Guidance for Archaeological Conservation Practice (1990)

- 4.5 A unique site code (TBC) has been requested and will be assigned by Rugby Art Gallery and Museum (RAGM) for the project and will be used as the site identifier for all records produced. Despite the site being across two county borders, the full archive will be deposited as one. This has also been agreed with Leicestershire County Council Museums.
- 4.6 A copy of the approved WSI will be held on site along with a detailed site risk assessment/method statement (RAMS). Site staff will be made aware of and will have reviewed all documents.
- 4.7 The Lead Planning Archaeologist(s) for the Local Planning Authority(s) will be advised in writing two weeks in advance of the proposed start date of the works and will be invited to monitor the works.

Unexpectedly significant or complex discoveries

- 4.8 Should there be, in the professional judgement of the AOC Senior archaeologists, unexpectedly significant or complex discoveries during the geophysical survey or evaluation which warrant more detailed recording, AOC Archaeology will contact the client immediately with the relevant information and work will cease within the area of the discovery until a suitable additional mitigation strategy is agreed. This strategy will be agreed between the Lead Planning Archaeologist(s) for the Local Planning Authority(s), the client and AOC Archaeology.

Further archaeological mitigation

- 4.9 The results of the geophysical survey and the evaluation will be used to formulate an appropriate archaeological mitigation strategy for the proposed development site, if one is required. This might involve additional excavation at the site following the production of an updated archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation. The mitigation strategy would need to be discussed with and approved by the Lead Planning Archaeologist(s) for the Local Planning Authority(s). Following any additional excavation, further stages of assessment, analysis and publication may be required.

5 Aims

- 5.1 The aim of the geophysical survey and archaeological evaluation is to gather sufficient information to establish the presence/absence, character, extent, state of preservation, date and significance of

any archaeological remains within the proposed development area, and to inform further archaeological mitigation strategies should they be necessary.

5.2 The specific aims are to:

- Locate, record, characterise, and determine the extent of any surviving sub-surface archaeological remains;
- Excavate and record identified archaeological features and deposits to a level appropriate to their extent and significance;
- Report the results of the fieldwork and place them within their local and national context; and
- Produce a comprehensive site archive and a descriptive and interpretive report.

5.3 The specific research objectives of the archaeological evaluation are to:

- investigate, characterise and date the potential archaeological features identified through geophysical survey in the site;
- determine the presence of, and assess the state of preservation and potential significance of, activity on the site from the prehistoric period onwards; in particular the presence of potential prehistoric activity associated with the enclosure ring ditch (MWA4856) close to the eastern edge of the site; Iron Age activity associated with the coin found on the southern part of the site; Romano-British activity relating to the Roman Road immediately to the north of the site; and medieval and post-medieval agricultural activity such as ridge and furrow, which is recorded within 1km of the site.
- assess the impact of the proposed development on any surviving archaeological remains at the site.

5.4 The results of the geophysical survey and the evaluation may also inform broader research initiatives outlined in *East Midlands Historic Environment Research Framework including the Regional Overview (2006)* and *An Updated Research Agenda and Strategy for the Historic Environment of the East Midlands (2012)*.

6 Methodology

Vegetation clearance

- 6.1 Vegetation clearance on the site is required. This can be undertaken **without** archaeological monitoring. As detailed in Section 4 the vegetation clearance will include a surface scrape up to a maximum depth of 150mm to allow for the geophysical survey to be carried out as effectively as possible. This will not be required to be monitored by an archaeologist.
- 6.2 Once the clearance of the vegetation has taken place, the site will be assessed for feasibility of geophysical survey and whether the ground conditions will be receptive to the survey. If the site is found not to be feasible for geophysical survey, archaeological evaluation at a 5% will proceed (see below).

Geophysical Survey

- 6.3 The gradiometer survey will be carried out using Bartington Grad601-2 fluxgate gradiometers. The survey will be conducted within a grid system, across grids measuring 30m by 30m which will be marked out using temporary markers at each grid node.

- 6.4 Grid nodes will be set out and recorded using a Trimble R8 / R10 dGPS with an error no greater than +/- 0.05m. The GPS system uses the Trimble "VRS Now" service to provide instant access to real-time kinematic (RTK) corrections enabling an accuracy of < 2cm. It will be connected via a SIM card run on the Vodafone network with good cellular signal in the survey areas, meaning a repeater will not be required.
- 6.5 Data will be collected in the field on an east-west alignment using zig-zag traverses, with a sample interval of 0.25m and a traverse interval of 1m. A total area of approximately 5ha will be surveyed.
- 6.6 Before each session of use, each gradiometer will be balanced around a single set up point within the survey area specifically chosen for use by all instruments used in the survey. This point is magnetically quiet and balancing the machine around this point, produces a more uniform dataset throughout and allows all data to be plotted with ease within a standard range as appropriate to the survey environment. Striping of the data may occur due to instrument drift; it is decided in the field if this is within a sensible and acceptable limit; if it is not, the grid(s) in question are re-collected.
- 6.7 Care will also be taken to attempt to avoid metal obstacles present within the survey area, such as metal objects within and adjacent to the survey area as gradiometer survey is affected by 'above-ground ferrous disturbance' and avoiding these improves the overall data quality and results obtained.
- 6.8 The gradiometer data will be downloaded using Bartington Grad601 PC Software v313 and processed using Geoscan Geoplot v4.0, the details of which can be found in Appendices 2 and 3. Data processing, storage and documentation will be carried out in accordance with the good practice specifications detailed in the guidelines issued by the Archaeology Data Service (Schmidt and Ernenwein 2009).
- 6.9 Interpretations of the data will be created as layers in AutoCAD LT 2019 / ArcGIS Pro. The results will be shared with the client and Local Planning Authority archaeologist to determine the final scope for the archaeological evaluation.

Archaeological evaluation

- 6.10 A Site Lead will manage the on-site day-to-day operations and will update the Project Manager on a daily basis regarding results and programme. This information will be fed back to the client. Field staff will be suitably trained and experienced archaeologists. Site inductions and tool box talks will be provided to all staff working on the site.
- 6.11 Prior to commencing fieldwork, the client will provide AOC with up-to-date service and utilities information for the area of investigation. AOC will then arrange GS6 applications (where required), liaise with utilities and service providers and undertake any relevant site visits.
- 6.12 A detailed Risk Assessment Method Statement (RAMS) will then be prepared and approved by our external Health and Safety consultant. The RAMS will be submitted to the client for review before the commencement of the site works. A qualified First Aider will be present on site at all times.
- 6.13 It is assumed that the client will have addressed all significant programme constraints prior to the start of fieldwork, including ecological and environmental constraints and landowner access issues. Once on site, AOC staff will visually inspect the site prior to the commencement of any machine excavation, including the examination of any available exposures. A photographic record will be made of the evaluation area prior to its excavation as a record of existing ground conditions. All areas of excavation will be scanned with a Cable Avoidance Tool (CAT) before excavation; this work will be undertaken by a qualified and competent person.

- 6.14 Static welfare facilities will be provided for the duration of the evaluation which will include canteens, toilets, fresh water supplies, drying facilities, and anti-bacterial hand sanitiser. These facilities will be available for all staff, subcontractors, consultants and visitors.
- 6.15 The evaluation trenches will be accurately located using survey-grade GPS (Trimble R8) equipment. All surveys will be accurately tied into the Ordnance Survey National Grid and Ordnance Datum Newlyn heights.
- 6.16 The evaluation trenches will target geophysical anomalies as well as 'blank' areas and areas not covered by geophysical survey; the purpose of these is to test the reality of the geophysical anomalies and to determine the presence or absence of archaeological features across the site.
- 6.17 The evaluation trenches will initially be excavated using a tracked mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.8m wide toothless ditching bucket down to the first archaeological horizon or to the natural substrate, whichever is encountered first. All machining will be conducted under the direct supervision of an appropriately qualified and experienced archaeologist.
- 6.18 Topsoil and subsoil will be kept separate and will be stored in separate spoil heaps either side of the trenches.
- 6.19 The maximum safe working depth of all trenches will be determined by the on-site Site Lead in consultation with the relevant AOC Project Manager and will be based on the nature of the deposits encountered and an assessment of the stability of the sides of the trenches and any hand excavated sondages. Where appropriate and practicable, trench edges will be stepped to ensure safe access and egress.
- 6.20 Following completion of the initial machine excavation, further excavation will be undertaken by hand, although mechanical equipment may be used to remove some deposits or structural elements if required and with the agreement of the Lead Planning Archaeologist(s) for the Local Planning Authority(s).
- 6.21 Exposed surfaces will be cleaned in order to assist the identification of any features. Exposed archaeological deposits and features will then be excavated in an archaeologically controlled manner.
- 6.22 The excavation sampling policy will be as follows, unless otherwise agreed with the Lead Planning Archaeologist(s) for the Local Planning Authority(s):
- a 100% sample will be taken of all stake-holes;
 - a 50% sample will be taken of all post-holes;
 - a 50% sample will be taken of all pits with a diameter of up to 1m;
 - a minimum 25% sample will be taken of pits with a diameter of over 1.5m; this should include a complete section across the pit to recover its full profile;
 - a minimum 20% sample will be taken of all linear and curvilinear features less than 5m in length, each excavated section to be 1m in length;
 - a minimum 10% sample will be taken of all linear and curvilinear features greater than 5m in length, each excavated section to be 1m in length;
 - Deposits at junctions (and interruptions) in linear features **will not** be excavated during the evaluation;
 - Linear terminal ends **will not** be excavated, unless they are the only option for investigating a linear feature (in this case they will be excavated longitudinally);

- Any in situ building remains will be fully recorded for the extent that they are exposed; brick and stone samples may be taken if potentially diagnostic of date or function; and
- Significant features such as ovens, kilns, burials and wells will be excavated as per the requirement of the Lead Planning Archaeologist(s) for the Local Planning Authority(s), however, the majority of such features **will not** be excavated, and will be planned and left in-situ for preservation or future excavation.

- 6.23 A full written, drawn and photographic record will be made of all features revealed during the course of the archaeological evaluation, including representative sample sections at an appropriate scale. A record of the full sequence of all archaeological deposits as revealed in the trenches will be produced. Plans will be completed at a scale of 1:50 or 1:20 (as appropriate), with section drawings at a scale of 1:10 or 1:20 (as appropriate). All recording will be undertaken to meet the standards and requirements of the Archaeological Field Manual (MOLAS 1994). Records will be produced using pro-forma context sheets compatible with those published by the Museum of London (MOLAS 1994). Written descriptions, comprising both factual and interpretive elements, will be recorded.
- 6.24 All site drawings will be accurately tied into the Ordnance Survey National Grid and Ordnance Datum Newlyn heights using survey-grade GPS surveying equipment.
- 6.25 A full photographic record will be maintained using a digital SLR camera capturing data in RAW and JPEG formats. This will illustrate archaeological features, deposits and finds in detail and in a broader context. In addition, appropriate record photographs will be taken to illustrate work in progress.
- 6.26 All identified finds and artefacts will be collected and retained. A discard policy will be agreed with the Lead Planning Archaeologist(s) for the Local Planning Authority(s) following the post-excavation assessment stage of the project. Where required, suitable specialists will be employed during fieldwork to advise, date or excavate significant finds or features.
- 6.27 All finds will be bagged according to their context, and significant finds will be allocated a recorded finds number and their positions surveyed individually. Finds requiring further analysis, excavation or conservation will be lifted and packed using suitable archival standard storage materials and assessed in a relevant conservation laboratory.
- 6.28 Finds will be exposed, lifted, cleaned, conserved, marked, bagged and stored in accordance with the guidelines set out in United Kingdom Institute for Conservation's *Conservation Guidelines No. 2*, the ClfA guidelines *Standard and Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (2020a).
- 6.29 If required, conservation will be undertaken by approved conservators in line with the *First Aid for Finds* guidelines (Watkinson and Neal 1998). In accordance with the procedures outlined in Historic England's *MoRPHE PPN3* (2008), all iron objects, a selection of non-ferrous artefacts (including all coins), and a sample of any industrial debris relating to metallurgy will be X-radiographed before assessment.
- 6.30 All finds of gold and silver will be moved to a safe place. Where removal cannot be effected on the same working day as the discovery, suitable security measures will be taken to protect the artefacts from theft or damage. All finds of gold and silver, and associated objects, will be reported to the coroner according to the procedures relating to the Treasure Act 1996, and the Treasure (Designation) (Amendment) Order 2023, after discussion with the client and the Lead Planning Archaeologist(s) for the Local Planning Authority(s).

- 6.31 The client, the coroner and the Lead Planning Archaeologist(s) for the Local Planning Authority(s) will be informed if human remains are found. Disturbance of human skeletal remains will be kept to a minimum. Any human remains encountered will be accurately recorded in plan and, where appropriate, will be examined in situ by a palaeopathologist, but no further investigation will occur and the remains will be covered and protected.
- 6.32 Removal of human remains will only take place under appropriate government and environmental health regulations, in compliance with the Burial Act 1857 and after obtaining a Section 25 exhumation licence from the Ministry of Justice.
- 6.33 The palaeoenvironmental sampling strategy will comprise the removal of bulk samples from securely sealed and hand-excavated contexts, excepting those with excessive levels of residuality or those with minimal 'soil' content (such as building rubble). Bulk samples will comprise a representative 40 litre sample. However, where a context does not yield 40 litres of material, smaller samples will be taken (generally the maximum amount of material that it is practicable to collect). Bulk samples will be used to recover a sub-sample of charred macroplant material, faunal remains and artefacts. Suitable deposits will also be sampled for industrial residues. If buried soils or other deposits are encountered, column samples may be taken for micromorphological and pollen analysis. Environmental material will be stored in controlled environments and environmental and soil specialists will be consulted during the course of the work if necessary. All environmental materials will be dealt with in line with Historic England's guidance documents *A guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation* (2011)
- 6.34 Waterlogged organic materials will be dealt with in line with Historic England's guidance documents *Waterlogged Organic Artefacts: Guidelines on their Recovery, Analysis and Conservation* (2018) and *Waterlogged Wood: Guidelines on the recording, sampling, conservation and curation of waterlogged wood* (2010).
- 6.35 On completion of all archaeological excavation and recording and following approval from the Lead Planning Archaeologist(s) for the Local Planning Authority(s) and the client, the trenches will be backfilled. Topsoil and subsoil will be reinstated separately but no engineered re-instatement will be undertaken. A photographic record of the backfilled trenches will be made.

Reporting

- 6.36 A report outlining the full results of the archaeological evaluation will be produced. The report will assess the stratigraphic sequence and the significance and extent of any archaeological features identified. The potential of any retrieved artefacts and soil samples for further analysis will also be considered.
- 6.37 The report will be prepared in accordance with the 2015 ALGAO guidance for post-excavation assessment (ALGAO 2015), and will contain the following:
- A concise non-technical summary of the results of the work, and its aims and objectives;
 - A frontispiece including the site code/project number, planning reference number, dates when the fieldwork took place and a full National Grid Reference;
 - An introduction, including a site description, background on the development, details of the local topography and geology, and the reasons for the archaeological work;
 - An account of the aims and objectives of the work;
 - An account of the methodology and equipment used;

- A clear exposition of the results of the work, the structural sequence and the dates, forms and functions of the features identified; specialist assessment reports will be reproduced as Appendices to the report and the results of the assessments will be considered and incorporated into the main body of the results;
- A discussion which places the results of the work into the broader historical, regional and national context, and which assesses site phasing and the quality and significance of the remains encountered;
- Specialist assessments of the artefacts recovered including an assessment of their potential for further analysis and study, and recommendations for retention / discard and illustration (where appropriate), in line with national guidelines;
- Specialist assessments of the environmental and industrial samples taken, with a view to their potential for subsequent study;
- Recommendations for further analysis;
- An integrated concordance table that details every context and correlates them to group, number, finds, samples taken and the potential for palaeoenvironmental analysis and radiocarbon dating;
- All text will be cross-referenced with plans, photographs and other illustrative material;
- Illustrations will include: a site location plan; an overall site plan accurately identifying the location of the trenches; individual trench plans at a suitable scale, as excavated, indicating the location of all archaeological features; plans and sections at an appropriate scale showing features, deposits and the extent of the identified archaeology;
- Photographic records of selected archaeological features and finds;
- A description of the site archive and the name of the institution with which it will be deposited;
- References and bibliography of all sources used;
- Archiving arrangements.

6.38 A draft copy of the final report will be provided to the client and Lead Planning Archaeologist(s) for the Local Planning Authority(s) for comment within a timescale provisional on the extent and character of the finds and samples recovered. The final version of the report will be provided to the client and Lead Planning Archaeologist(s) for the Local Planning Authority(s) within three weeks of receiving any comments.

6.39 Digital copies of the final report will be submitted to OASIS to allow the results of the work to be accessible on-line to the wider archaeological community and general public. The OASIS form will be appended to the post-excavation assessment report. A digital copy of the report will also be submitted to the HER in pdf/A-1a (archival pdf) format.

6.40 AOC Archaeology will use the following specialists to assess archaeological finds and ecofacts. The relevant Warwickshire Type Series should be referenced for pottery.

Macroscopic plant remains	Jackaline Robertson	AOC
Soils and sediments analysis	Virgil Yendell	AOC
Palaeo-environmental archaeology	Virgil Yendell	AOC
Human remains	Alexandra Johnson	AOC

Conservation	Gretel Evans	AOC
Ceramic Building material	Andrew Peachey	Wardell Armstrong
Lithics	Jon Cotton	Freelance
Mammal and bird bone	Dr Matilda Holmes	Freelance
Prehistoric pottery	Jon Cotton	Freelance
Roman pottery	Andrew Peachey	Wardell Armstrong
Medieval pottery	Peter Thompson	Archaeology Solutions
Post-medieval pottery	Kylie McDermott	AOC
Metal	Dawn McLaren	AOC
Glass	Kylie McDermott	AOC
Geo-archaeology	Virgil Yendell	AOC

Archiving

- 6.41 AOC Archaeology will contact the receiving archive repository in advance of commencing any fieldwork to determine the preparation, ownership and deposition of the archive and finds. A site code has been requested from RAGM (TBC).
- 6.42 The Chartered Institute of Archaeologists (CIfA 2020) and the Society of Museum Archaeologists (SMA 1993) recommend that finds are publicly accessible and that landowners donate archaeological finds to a local museum. The landowner will be encouraged to transfer ownership of the finds to the receiving museum. A Deed of Transfer will be drawn up by the recipient museum which the landowner will be asked to sign.
- 6.43 In keeping with the above recommendations, should the landowner not wish to donate the finds to the appropriate recipient museum, AOC will ensure all artefacts and ecofacts are recorded, safely packaged and conserved where appropriate before transfer to the owner, and that their location and ownership are stated in the site archive and public record. It should be noted that the landowner's explicit (written) permission will be required before entering any personal information in the public record. If this approach was being taken RAGM would be contacted to ensure that they were agreeable to the provisions outlined regarding the possible retention of site finds by the landowner. An ordered and stable archive, which can be accessed by the public will be produced. Any objects retained by the landowner would be photographed and fully described in the archive.
- 6.44 The archive will contain all the data collected during the archaeological evaluation, including all digital and paper records, finds and environmental samples. It will be quantified, ordered, indexed and internally consistent. Adequate resources will be provided during fieldwork to ensure that all records are checked and internally consistent. Irrespective of a post-excavation assessment recommendation to proceed to analysis and publication, the evaluation will require the compilation of a site archive report (as required by ALGAO 2015). As a minimum this will comprise copies of the WSI, the relevant section of the post-excavation assessment report and any specialist reports for the site, as well as quantifications of all records and materials for the site and a site specific post-excavation concordance table.
- 6.45 Archive consolidation will be undertaken immediately following the conclusion of fieldwork and will include the following work:

- the site record will be checked, cross-referenced and indexed as necessary;
 - all retained finds will be cleaned, conserved, marked and packaged in accordance with the requirements of the recipient museum;
 - all retained finds will be assessed and recorded using pro-forma recording sheets, by suitably qualified and experienced staff. Initial artefact dating will be integrated within the site matrix;
 - all retained environmental samples will be processed by suitably experienced and qualified staff.
- 6.46 The ClfA Archive Selection Toolkit, or similar process, will be used in the compilation of the archive and explicitly documented.
- 6.47 The archive will be assembled and prepared in line with the recommendations provided in *Guidelines for the Deposition of Archaeological Archives* (Rugby Art Gallery and Museum (2023)), Historic England's *MoRPHE Project Planning Note 3: Archaeological Excavation* (PPN3) (2008), ALGAO's *Advice Note for Post-excavation Assessment* (2015) and in accordance with the *Guidelines for the preparation of Excavation Archives for long-term storage* (United Kingdom Institute for Conservation, 1990), the *Standards in the museum care of archaeological collections* (Museums and Galleries Commission 1994) and *Archaeological Archives: A guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation* (Brown, 2011). Provision will be made for the stable storage of paper records and their long-term storage.
- 6.48 Digital archive material will be deposited with a CoreTrustSeal repository, eg ADS. Only the final version of all born digital documents (reports, databases, images, survey files) will be selected for inclusion in the Digital Archive.
- 6.49 The results of the project, even if negative will be submitted for publication in the appropriate academic journals. As a minimum a summary of the findings will be submitted to either the 'Transactions of the Birmingham & Warwickshire Archaeological Society' or the 'Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society' in agreement with the Lead Planning Archaeologist(s) for the Local Planning Authority(s).

7 Capability Statement

- 7.1 AOC Archaeology was established in 1991 and is a Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (ClfA) Registered Organisation offering a full range of archaeological expertise, advice and services, from a network of offices across the UK, including Edinburgh, Inverness, London, Milton Keynes, Leeds and York.
- 7.2 We offer an exceptional portfolio of services that makes the most effective use of the company's skills, specialised knowledge and experience and is based on key expert services including archaeological survey and excavation, consultancy and heritage management, buildings recording, geophysical survey and geomatics, laser scanning, post-excavation analysis and conservation, and community archaeological services.
- 7.3 Our in-house expertise also includes sedimentology, soil micromorphology, soil chemistry, dendrochronology, palaeobotany, palynology, faunal analysis, osteoarchaeology, artefact conservation and analysis, building materials and lithics.
- 7.4 AOC have a strong association with other highly regarded organisations and individuals and we can cover the entire spectrum of artefact and ecofactual analysis. AOC Archaeology has a well-equipped conservation laboratory that offers practical conservation and artefact care for archaeological material.

8 Quality Assurance and Standards

- 8.1 AOC Archaeology is an accredited **ISO 9001:2015** and **ISO 45001:2018** organisation and a **Registered Archaeological Organisation** with the ClfA, operating to nationally agreed guidelines, processes and procedures. These are set within a framework that endeavours to carry out the required work and submit the final report in a manner that meets the client's specific needs, providing quality assurance throughout the project and for the end product.
- 8.2 AOC Archaeology conforms to the standards of professional conduct outlined in the ClfA *Code of Conduct*, the ClfA *Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology*, the ClfA *Standard and Guidance for Desk Based Assessments, Field Evaluations* etc., as well as the British Archaeologists and Developers Liaison Group *Code of Practice*.

9 Health and Safety

- 9.1 AOC Archaeology maintains the highest standards of health and safety, both on-site and in our premises, and a copy of our Health and Safety Policy can be supplied on request. The project outlined in this WSI will be carried out in accordance with safe working practices and under the defined Health and Safety Policy. A site specific Risk Assessment Method Statement (RAMS) will be prepared prior to the commencement of the fieldwork.
- 9.2 Health and Safety will take priority over all other requirements. A conditional aspect of all archaeological work is both safe access to the area of work and a safe working environment.
- 9.3 Public Rights of Way (PRoW) pass through various parcels of the site. A 25m buffer will be put in place around the PRoWs with trenches located outside of this buffer. Trenches within 50 meters of the PRoWs will be fenced off at the end of the trench closest to the PRoW with netlon fencing.
- 9.4 If a member of the public gains access to the site, all work will cease, and AOC staff will inform the client. Works will not resume until the person(s) have been escorted from the site. When interfacing with members of the public, AOC staff will always:
- be polite
 - will not discuss the works
 - will not engage in confrontation
 - leave the work area as soon as possible if arguments or aggressive behaviour becomes intimidating or threatening.
 - report any issues to the AOC Site Lead who will inform the client.
- 9.5 The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 (CDM) may apply to the archaeological work depending on whether contractors other than the archaeological team are present on the site.
- 9.6 Where archaeological work is carried out at the same time as the work of other contractors, regard will be taken of any reasonable additional constraints that these contractors may impose.
- 9.7 The client will provide any available service plans for the site prior to the commencement of fieldwork. AOC Archaeology will use Cable Avoidance Tools to identify any services in the specific locations being excavated.
- 9.8 Staff present on site will be required to wear the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), which will be issued as necessary. Farming activities may be undertaken during AOC's work; the client will coordinate with the landowner on any such activities.

- 9.9 Where previous works have identified the presence of contaminated ground, AOC Archaeology must be notified of the nature and extent of the contamination in advance of the fieldwork and given guidance as to the appropriate Health and Safety precautions required.

10 Insurance

- 10.1 AOC Archaeology holds Employers Liability Insurance, Public Liability Insurance and Professional Indemnity Insurance to the following amounts. Copies of certificates for the following insurance can be provided on request.

• Public Liability	£20,000,000
• Employer's Liability	£20,000,000
• Professional indemnity (for any single claim)	£5,000,000

- 10.2 Full details of AOC Archaeology's insurance policies can be provided on request.

11 Copyright and Confidentiality

- 11.1 AOC Archaeology will 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 will provide an exclusive licence to the client and to the Lead Archaeologist for the Local Planning Authority in all matters directly relating to the project as described in the WSI.
- 11.2 AOC Archaeology will assign copyright to the client upon written request but retains the right to be identified as the author of all project documentation and reports as defined in the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.
- 11.3 AOC Archaeology will advise the client of any such materials supplied in the course of projects which are not AOC Archaeology's copyright.
- 11.4 AOC Archaeology will respect all requirements for confidentiality regarding the client's proposals, provided that these are clearly stated. In addition AOC Archaeology undertakes to keep confidential any conclusions about the likely implications of such proposals for the historic environment. It is expected that the client respects AOC Archaeology's and the ClfA's general ethical obligations not to suppress significant archaeological data for an unreasonable period.

12 Archaeological Risk Register

- 12.1 The methodology outlined in this method statement will be met in full where reasonably practicable.
- 12.2 Any significant variations to the proposed methodology will be discussed with, and approved by, the Lead Planning Archaeologist for the Local Planning Authority.
- 12.3 The methodology has been designed to meet the aims of the project in a professional and cost-effective manner. AOC Archaeology attempts to foresee all possible site-specific problems and to make allowances for these. However, there may on occasion be unusual circumstances which have the potential to affect the programme. These can include:
- unavoidable delays due to extreme bad weather, vandalism etc.;
 - extensions to trenches or revised methodologies requested by the Lead Planning Archaeologist for the Local Planning Authority;

- complex structures or objects, including those in waterlogged conditions, requiring specialist removal;
- unforeseen Health and Safety issues.

13 Bibliography

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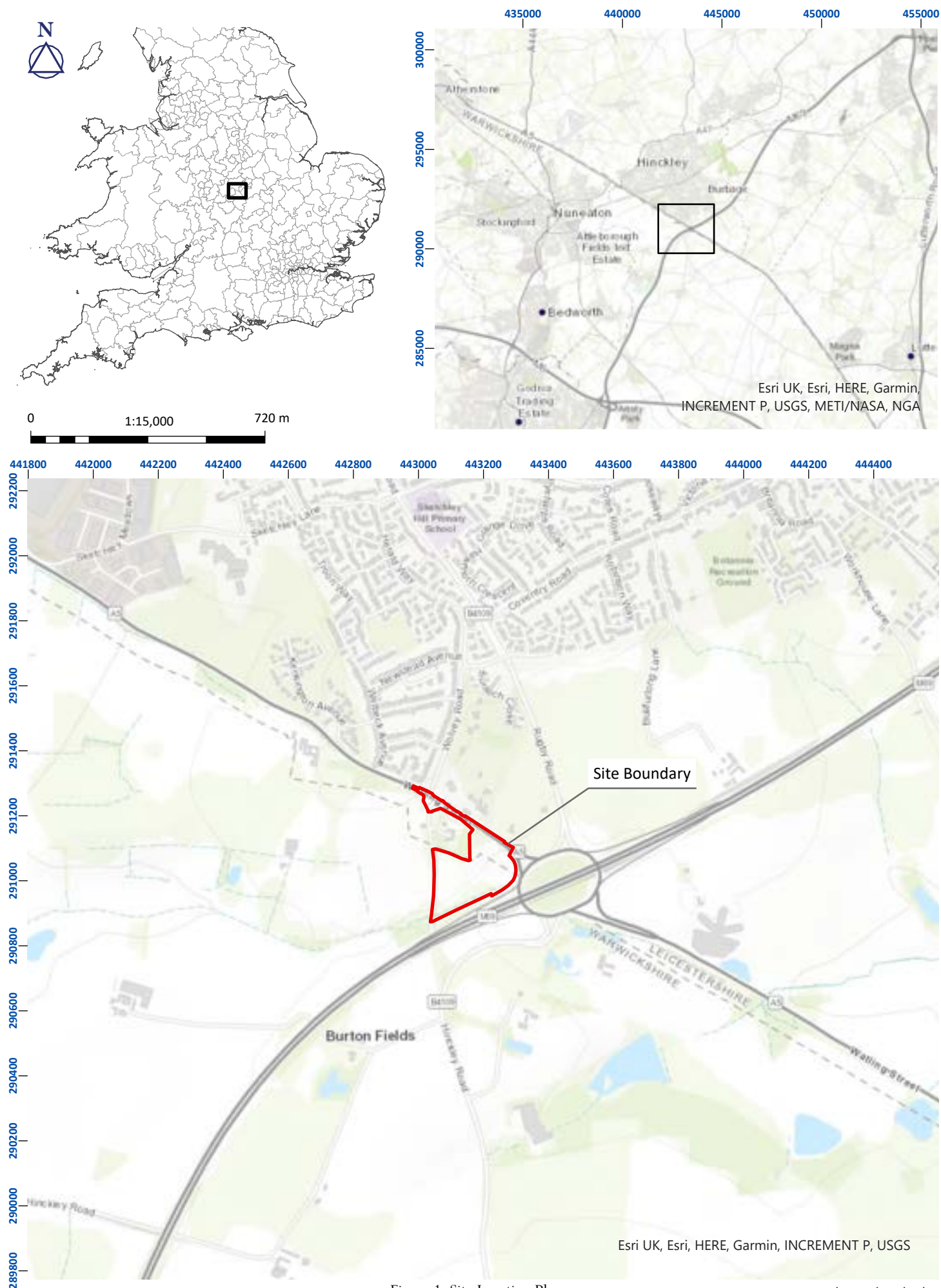


Figure 1: Site Location Plan

01/80232/WSI/01/01



Figure 2: Proposed Trench Location Plan

APPENDIX A: Data Management Plan

1. Project

Site Code:	TBC
Site Name:	Welcome Break M69, Stretton Court, Hinckley, Leicestershire
Project Type:	FW Evaluation
OASIS ID:	aocarcha-534739
Local authority:	Warwickshire County Council and Leicestershire County Council
Data Repository:	the Archaeology Data Service (ADS)

2. Data Collection and Standards

Data Standards & Methods of Collection

Methods of collection will conform to AOC recording practices and relevant ClfA Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Excavation (ClfA 2014). Digital data acquisition standards are defined from *ADS Guides to Good Practice* (Niven 2021):

<https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/help-guidance/guides-to-good-practice/the-project-lifecycle/planning-for-the-creation-of-digital-data/>

Data collection will adhere to [FAIR Principles](#) and will be in line with ClfA *Dig Digital* Guidance:

https://www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/downloads/selection-toolkit/digdigital_full_guidance.pdf

The intended repository for digital data is the Archaeology Data Service (ADS)

The intended repository for physical site records is the designated repository for the local authority: Warwickshire County Council (in agreement with Leicestershire County Council).

Site Records

Records for this project will be:

- Created on pro-forma record cards and data entered into spreadsheets/scanned to PDF on completion of fieldwork.

Photographic Record

The photographic record will comprise digital images taken using an SLR camera of at least 12 megapixels. The photography format to be used is:

JPG

Survey

Archaeological features will be surveyed using a Trimble GNSS GPS tied to OSGB with corrections provided by Trimble VRS Network. Tolerance will be to a horizontal and vertical accuracy of +/- 0.05m. Where tree cover or site obstructions prevent a clear GPS signal, survey will be carried out either by Total Station positioned over a known point or tied to a predefined grid or by hand planning. Where hand plans are required, these will be georeferenced in GIS and shapefiles exported for final plans and archiving purposes.

Data Standards

Data collected will include standard formats which maximise use and reuse in the future. The table below conforms to ADS Instructions for Depositors (2021)

<https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/help-guidance/instructions-for-depositors/files-and-metadata/>.

The table below provides a summary of the data types and formats for data collected and created. In cases where the project progresses or becomes more complex, additional types will be added to this section where required.

Data Type Collected	Format for Storage and Archive
Spreadsheets ➤ Context Register ➤ Finds Registers ➤ Sample Registers ➤ Photographic Register ➤ Drawing Register ➤ Specialist Data Tables ➤ Harris Matrices ➤ Metadata Tables	Registers and Data Tables Microsoft Excel (.csv) Metadata as .csv files
Text / Documents ➤ WSI ➤ Daybook/watching brief logs ➤ Final Report ➤ Individual Specialist Reports	All reports as PDF (.pdf/a)
Photography & Raster Images Photography will be undertaken using: 1. Digital SLR 2. Colour print 3. B/W print 4. Colour side 5. B/W slide ➤ Final Archive Images	Site photographs will be provided in: Joint Photographic Experts Group JPG (.jpg)

GIS ➤ Site Plans ➤ Survey Data	ESRI Shapefile (.shp,.shx & .dbf, plus associated files) deposited as .zip file
Additional Survey Types (if applicable):	
•	
3. Data Storage and Backup	
Field Data	
Site Records	
• ‘Born digital’ data from AOC’s Field Data Manager app data is uploaded to a live SharePoint list on creation and backed up daily. • Paper records are kept in site folders and removed from site at close of work each day	
Photographic Backup Strategy	
• Site cameras are removed from site at close of work each day	
Digital photographs are recorded onto SD cards and backed up as follows:	
• SD cards are downloaded to server storage weekly/on completion of job (whichever is first)	
Survey Data	
• Survey data is synced daily to cloud storage and downloaded as a Trimble .job file to the specific project folder on AOCs servers.	
Project Data	
• The primary data storage location for this project is AOC’s on-premises servers • Sufficient data storage space is available via AOC’s servers and via SharePoint backup. The server is accessible by staff on and off-site through a secure log-in, including 2-factor authentication. • The on-premises server is backed up daily to maintain an up-to-date security copy of the organisation wide data. A working copy is kept in cloud storage. • Off-site access to the project files on AOC’s servers is provided to support back-up of raw data while fieldwork is ongoing. • Where internet access for data backup is not possible, the raw data will be backed up to a separate media device (such as laptop and portable external hard drive) and transferred to the server at the earliest possible opportunity. • Project files will be shared with external specialists and contractors directly using the same system, with the wider project team gaining access to only the files needed using permissions-based access.	

- Project folders and files will be named following established AOC procedures. *ProjectNumber_name_date* (yyyymmdd) and conform to ADS best practice and version control guidance.
- On completion of the project, cloud data will be moved to AOC on-premises servers for long term storage.
- Data intended for digital archive will be structured in the server directory as follows:
 - **Archive**
 - **3D**
 - **Graphics**
 - **GIS**
 - **Photos**
 - **Spreadsheets**
 - **Reports**

4. Metadata

- Metadata tables for each data type will be populated as the project progresses and will use the standard format for each data type as recommended by:

ADS Guides to Good Practice (Niven 2021).

<https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/help-guidance/guides-to-good-practice/the-project-lifecycle/project-metadata/>

- Data documentation will meet the requirement of the Project, Museum Deposition Guidelines, Digital Repository Guidelines and the methodology described in the WSI.

5. Ethics and Legal Compliance

- Personally Identifiable Information (PII) will be removed from the archaeological project archive and permission to include individual's names in any reporting will be gained prior to use.
- Copyright for all data collected by the project team belongs to AOC Archaeology Group (AOC Holdings Ltd), and formal permission to include data from external specialists and contractors is secured on the engagement of the specialist or contractor.
- Where formal permissions and/or license agreements are linked to data sharing, details of these will be included in the project documentation folders and will accompany the archaeological project archive.

6. Archive

Digital archive material will be deposited with a trusted digital repository, where data migration and backup procedures are in place, and the integrity of the digital archive is maintained (see Section 1). Where a trusted repository is not specified, digital archive material will be deposited with the county museum on Archival Gold CD.

- Version control will be applied throughout the project in line with AOC standard operating procedures and ADS (2021) ClfA (2019) and HE (2015) guidelines.
- Only the final version of 'born digital' documents (reports, databases, images, survey files) will be selected for inclusion in the Digital Archive. The material de-selected from inclusion in the preserved archive will be duplicates or re-productions created during the lifespan of the project.
- Digital photographs will be assessed during post-excavation and selection based on the principles set out in the ADS (2011) & HE guidelines (2015).
- **Raw data (all formats) will only be preserved if specifically requested by the Client or specified by local authority requirements, e.g. unprocessed survey, raw photogrammetric data. Where an archive of raw data with an accepted repository (e.g. ADS) is required, a subsequent costing for storage and archiving will be provided.**
- Selection will be defined against the research aims, regional and national research frameworks, specialist advice and the significance of the project results. Selection will be carried out based on the following guidelines:

ADS (2021) Guidelines for Depositors

<http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/advice/guidelinesForDepositors>

ADS (2018) Guidance for the selection of material for deposit and archive

<https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/advice/selectionGuidance.xhtml>

ClfA (2019) Selection Toolkit for Archaeological Archives

<https://www.archaeologists.net/selection-toolkit>

Historic England (2015) Digital Image Capture and File Storage – Guidelines for Best Practice

<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/digital-image-capture-and-file-storage>

7. Data Sharing and Accessibility

Data specific requirements, ethical issues or embargos which are linked to particular data formats will be documented within the relevant metadata tables accompanying the project archive.

- A summary of the project will be included on the OASIS Index of Archaeological Investigation (see Section 1).
- A final version of the project report will be supplied to the Historic Environment Record via OASIS, and any data which they request can also be provided directly.
- The location(s) of the final Archaeological Archive will be added to OASIS when appropriate.
- The Repository in Section 1 will disseminate the digital elements of the Archaeological Archive online under a creative commons licence and the dataset will receive a unique identifier (DOI).

8. Responsibilities

- The Project Manager will be responsible for implementing the DMP, and ensuring it is reviewed and revised at each stage of the project.

The Project Manager is Nuala Marshall.

- Data capture, metadata production and data quality are the responsibility of the Project Team, assured by the Project Manager with support from the Geomatics Manager and Archives Officer.
- Storage and backup of data in the field is the responsibility of the field team. Data management on site will be supervised by the site lead.

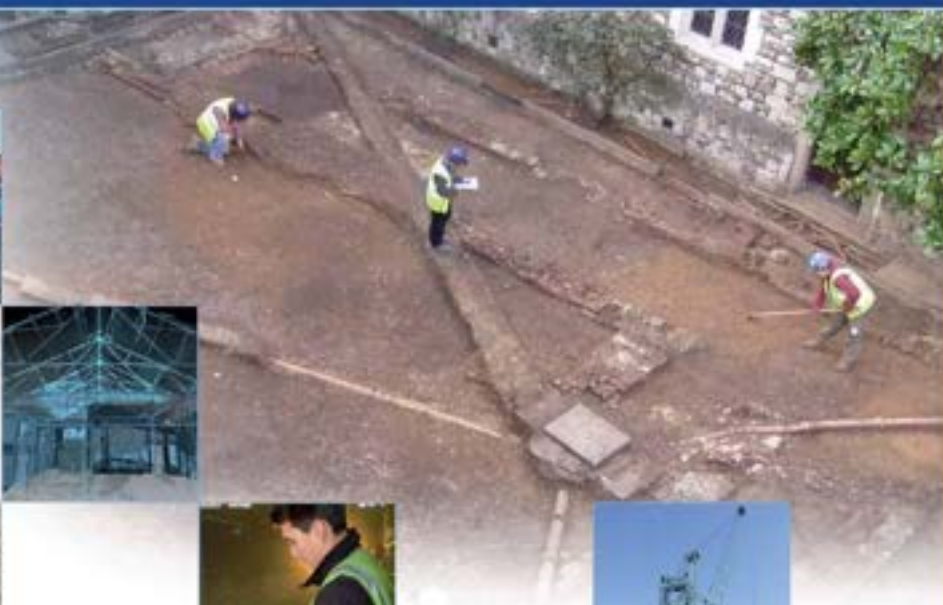
The site lead responsible for field data management is Jay Wood.

- Once data is incorporated into the organisations project server, storage and backup is managed by AOC's IT Support Team.
- Data archiving is undertaken by the project team under the guidance of the Archives Officer with the support of the Geomatics Manager.
- The Archives Officer is responsible for the transfer of the Archaeological Project Archive to the agreed repository.
- Details of the core project team can be provided on request.

9. Additional References

Brown, D.H., 2011. Archaeological Archives: A guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation, Archaeological Archives Forum (2nd ed).
https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archiveDS/archiveDownload?t=arch-799-1/dissemination/pdf/AArchives_v2.pdf

ClfA Dig Digital Online Resource, <https://www.archaeologists.net/digdigital>



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