



**Archaeological trial trench evaluation
on land off Normandy Way,
Hinckley, Leicestershire
October 2024**

Report No. 025/003

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Illustrator: Carla Ardis



Archaeological trial trench evaluation on land off Normandy Way, Hinckley, Leicestershire October 2024

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OASIS REPORT FORM

Project: Normandy Way, Hinckley		OASIS No: molanort1-531282	
ACTIVITY TYPE			
Project/ Activity type	Trial trench evaluation		
Reason for investigation	Planning requirement		
Development type	Residential development		
Planning reference ID	-	Planning stage	-
PROJECT LOCATION			
National grid ref	SP 42931 95780		
Site name	Land off Normandy Way, Hinckley, Leicestershire		
REVIEWERS/ ADMIN			
HER for project	Leicestershire HER		
National organisation	Historic England		
WORK UNDERTAKEN			
Methodological summary	A total of 12 trenches were excavated, these were 30m long by 1.8m wide. These were excavated under archaeological supervision to the natural substrate or the first archaeological horizon. Trench 4 was extended at the request of the consultant. All features were surveyed and identified features were excavated in line with the methodology outlined in the method statement.		
Previous works?	Yes	Future works?	Unknown
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KEYWORDS			
Monuments found/ date	Medieval/Post-medieval furrows		
Finds types found/ date	Pottery, animal bone		
RESULTS			
Description of outcomes/ summary of research framework contribution	The evaluation uncovered a large number of medieval/post-medieval furrows and a small amount of post-medieval or modern features. Dating evidence was recovered from a large pit, which contained post-medieval pottery. Other material was observed from post-medieval or modern contexts and this was discarded in line with procedures.		
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Archaeological trial trench evaluation on land off Normandy Way, Hinckley, Leicestershire October 2024

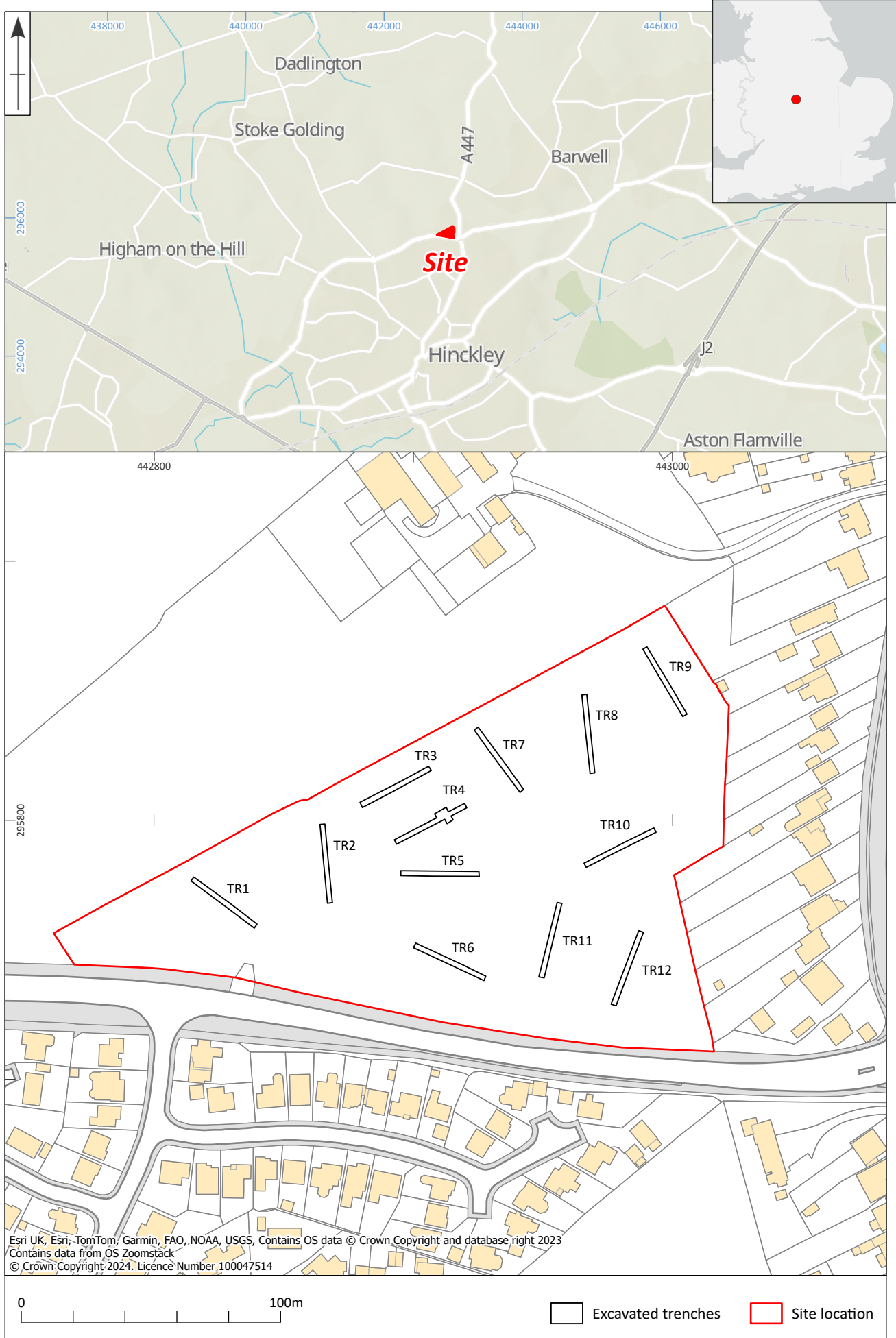
ABSTRACT

A total of 12 trenches were excavated measuring 30m long by 1.8m wide that targeted anomalies identified during the prior geophysical survey. The evaluation uncovered medieval/post-medieval furrows and a small amount of post-medieval or modern features. Dating evidence was recovered from a single large pit, which contained post-medieval pottery.

1 INTRODUCTION

MOLA was commissioned by RPS Consulting on behalf of Miller Homes to carry out an archaeological trial trench evaluation at land off Normandy Way, Hinckley, Leicestershire (SP 42931 95780), hereby referred to as 'the site' or 'site'. The site comprised a single field, bounded by the A47 to the south, the A447 and residential buildings to the east and arable land to the north and east (Fig 1). The trenches targeted anomalies that were identified during the geophysical survey (Russel 2024).

All works were conducted in accordance with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF) (DLUHC 2023) and followed the specification set out by the approved *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI). MOLA is a Chartered Institute for Archaeologist (CIfA) registered organisation and all works were conducted in accordance with the current best archaeological practice as specified in the *Code of Conduct* (2022) and relevant *Standard for archaeological field evaluation* (CIfA 2023a) and *Universal guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (CIfA 2023b), as well as the Historic England procedural document *Management of Research Products in the Historic Environment* (MoRPHE) (Historic England 2015).



2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location, geology and topography

The site comprised a single agricultural field to the north of Normandy Way (A47) on the northern edge of Hinkley, Leicestershire. The site is bounded by Sunnyside Farm and open fields to the north, a residential property and Ashby Road to the east, and open fields to the west (Fig 1).

The British Geological Survey indicated that the underlying geology of the site is comprised of Mercia Mudstone, overlain by Bosworth Clay Member clay and silt, Wolston sand and gravel, Oadby Member diamicton and Dunsmore gravel sand and gravel (BGS 2024). The overlying soils of the site were a slightly acid loams and clays with impeded drainage (LandIS 2024).

The site is largely flat but rose slightly toward the western fields and laid between 115m and 123m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).

2.2 Historical and archaeological background

The full site archaeological background is available within the Heritage Statement by RPS (2024), which covered a 1km radius of the site. The other previous work carried out on this development area comprised a geophysical survey (Russell 2024).

No prehistoric archaeological remains were identified within 1km of the site within the heritage statement. Likewise, Iron Age and Roman activity is also sparse. A trial trench evaluation conducted c.350m to the north of the site by MOLA, one month prior to the commencement of the evaluation recorded in this report uncovered the remains of a small early-mid Roman field system/settlement (Tamblyn 2025). Pottery dating to the 1st-2nd century AD, including imported wares such as Spanish amphorae) were recovered from this small site as well as a single sherd of late Iron Age pottery.

Further north, just beyond the 1km search radius of the heritage statement, further Roman settlement (MLE2822) along with an associated field system (MLE 20615) was identified during evaluation works in 2012 (OA 2012). This too identified imported Spanish amphorae along with other indicators of a high-status structure, potentially a villa, in the area.

Hinckley is recorded in the Domesday Book as being a settlement in the hundred of Guthlaxton, within the county of Leicestershire, having “had a recorded population of 69 households in 1086, putting it in the largest 20% of settlements recorded in Domesday” (OpenDomesday 2024).

A watching brief (ELE6274) and a strip, map and sample excavation (ELE11887) were carried out within 150m–500m of the site. The watching brief revealed no archaeology but the strip, map and sample area uncovered remains of a potential medieval enclosure (MLE27123).

Approximately c.300m to the west of the site an archaeological evaluation was carried out (ELE11990) which encountered remains of a medieval post mill (MLE27223) and the ploughed out remains of medieval ridge and furrow. No significant archaeological features were identified continuing east into this development area (Roberts 2023).

The hospital to the north was built in 1904 (MLE20659) and the area was unchanged throughout the 20th century.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Project aims

The purpose of the work was to provide the Leicestershire County Council Planning Archaeologist (LCCPA) with sufficient information to inform any potential future mitigation strategies:

The main objectives of the evaluation were to:

- Determine the nature, character, extent and significance of any archaeological remains present;
- To relate any remains recovered to the geophysical survey carried out on site;
- Recover any artefacts that may assist in the development of type series within the region;
- Recover any palaeo-environmental remains that may assist in determining the local environmental conditions;
- Produce a report describing the findings in their archaeological context, and;
- Create a permanent archive and record of the archaeological information collected during the course of the fieldwork and analysis.

3.2 Research framework

The results of the evaluation were considered against the *East Midlands Historic Environment Research Framework* (EMHERF 2024) and other national research frameworks; these are discussed in Section 7.

4 METHODOLOGY

The evaluation comprised of 12 trenches that measured 30m long by 1.80m wide. The placement of the trenches was designed to provide a 2.5% sample of the evaluation area. The trenches were planned to investigate anomalies from the geophysical survey, and no trenches were realigned or descoped. Trench 4 was extended to the north and south to further investigate a feature in this area. No further archaeology was encountered.

The trenches were located using a Leica Survey Grade RTK GPS operating to an accuracy of +/-0.05m to Ordnance Survey National Grid and Datum.

The trenches were machine excavated using a toothless ditching bucket under continuous archaeological supervision to the level of the first archaeological horizon or, in the absence of archaeological remains, the upper geological interface. Topsoil was stored separately, at least 1.00m from the trench edge. Excavation did not proceed beyond safe working depths. The trenches were sufficiently cleaned to enhance the definition of encountered features and deposits. Encountered features were excavated by hand or where necessary by machine.

All archaeological deposits and features were investigated and recorded to establish the stratigraphic sequence of the site. Linear features were excavated at 10%, with the exclusion of medieval ridge and furrow trends, and discrete features were half-sectioned.

Digitally recorded contexts were created using an iPad Pro tablet, using pro-forma templates created in APEX that are based on the normal MOLA Fieldwork Recording Manual used for the physical records, and which directly populates the MOLA Oracle

database. All archaeological records displayed the relevant accession number for the site and were given unique context/ID numbers as necessary. The digital context sheets include details of the context, its relationships, interpretation and a checklist of associated finds or samples taken.

All contexts digitally recorded were done so using Leica Capture Survey Grade RTK GPS using SMARTNET real-time corrections, operating to a 3D tolerance of $\pm 0.05\text{m}$ to Ordnance Survey National Grid and Datum. Sections or profiles through features were measured by hand and drawn digitally in a virtual 1:1 environment using a stylus. These were created using the Arrette Sketch app, to be imported into APEX context sheets. All levels were related to Ordnance Datum.

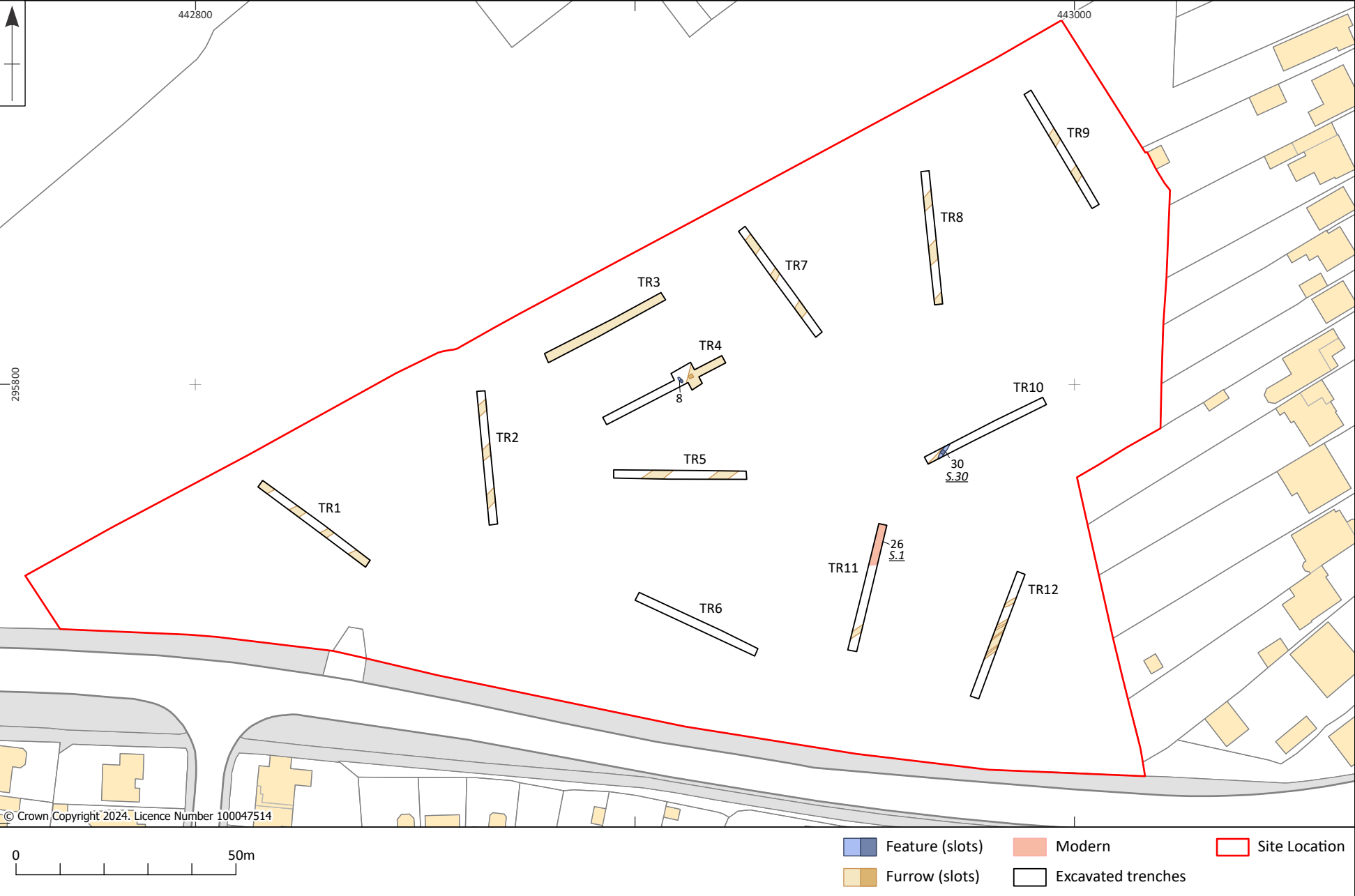
A photographic record was maintained using a photographic register and high-resolution digital colour photographs exceeding 12 megapixels. Overall shots of site were taken prior to the opening of trenches and again after backfilling was concluded. Detailed shots were taken of individual features. All photographs, except general site shots or specific shots for publication included appropriate scales, a north arrow and an identification board displaying the site code or accession number and principal context number. Digital photographs were used to augment the drawn record. All photographs were taken in suitable light conditions, where possible.

Following the approval of the LCCPA the trenches were backfilled with the upcast and lightly compacted by the mechanical excavator. Topsoil was backfilled separately.

Archiving

Following completion of the fieldwork and reporting, born-digital data, such as this report, digital photographs, database and GIS data, with appropriate metadata, will be deposited with a CoreTrustSeal Repository, currently the Archaeology Data Service (ADS), making the archive publicly accessible. Each report, once approved, is subsequently made available for inclusion and publication by digital means through the Archaeological Data Service (ADS) via OASIS V. Digital archiving will follow the and guidelines outlined in MOLA's *Digital Data Management Policy and Procedures* (MOLA forthcoming).

The physical site archive will be available for deposition within twelve months of completion of the fieldwork, under the Accession Number **X.A148.2024**. MOLA will consult the intended physical archive depository (Leicestershire Museum Services) before the archive is prepared regarding the specific requirements for the archive deposition and curation (including the digital archive) and regarding any specific cost implications of deposition.



Scale 1:1,200

All features plan Fig 2

5 EVALUATION RESULTS

5.1 General stratigraphy

A consistent natural geology was observed across the site and this comprised firm mid orange-brown sandy clay with stone inclusions. Topsoil was also present across the area and it comprised loose mid brown silty clay. No subsoil was present.

5.2 General chronology

Eight trenches (Trenches 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9 and 12) contained only remnant furrows, and Trench 6 contained no features. A furrow spanned the entirety of Trench 3 and thus this was recorded then machined out to check for earlier archaeological remains however none were present.

The remaining trenches (Trenches 4, 10 and 11) contained modern or undated features, which have been described below. Unless indicated otherwise, no archaeological materials were recovered within individually specified features. A full inventory of the trenches and associated contexts can be found in Appendix 1.

Within the topsoil in Trench 7 a large quantity of charcoal and burnt material was present and this was not observed within any other trench. This corresponded to a geophysical anomaly in this area.

Medieval/post-medieval furrows

The site contained remnant furrows from a medieval/post-medieval ridge and furrow system, which were identified across multiple trenches (Trenches 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9 and 12). The furrows were orientated north-east to south-west and had an average width of 2.50m. No archaeological features were found that pre-dated this system.

Trench 4

Trench 4 contained a furrow and a modern tree throw [8] (Figs 2 and 3). The tree throw measured 0.50m wide by 1.50m long and 0.22m deep. It had an irregular profile, with concave sides and a rounded base. The fill (7) consisted of a deposit of loose mid grey-brown silty clay. Modern brick was recovered from this feature but not retained.



Tree throw [8], Trench 4, facing north-west, 0.4m scale Fig 3

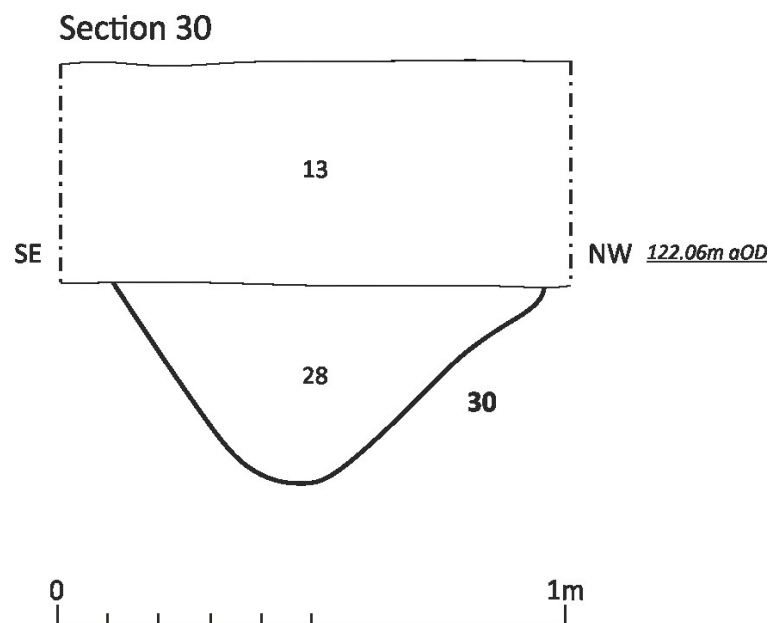
Trench 10

Trench 10 contained a northeast to southwest aligned ditch [30] which cut through a remnant furrow but contained no datable finds (Figs 2, 4 and 5). The ditch measured 0.85m wide and 0.40m deep and it had straight sides and a rounded base. The single fill (28) comprised compact mid blue-grey silty clay.



Ditch [30], Trench 10, facing south-west, 0.5m scale

Fig 4.



Section drawing of ditch [30]

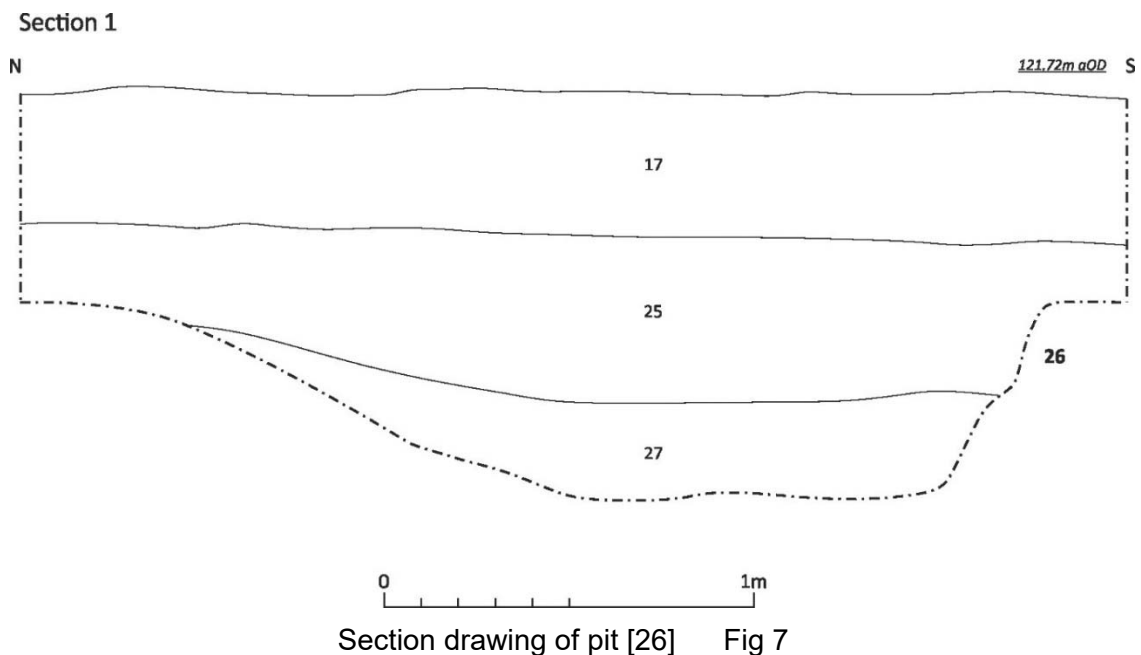
Fig 5

Trenches 11

Trench 11 contained a large pit [26] located at the northern end of the trench (Figs 2, 6 and 7). The full extent of the feature remains unknown, but it extended roughly 10m south into the trench and it continued beyond the full width of the trench. The profile was not fully exposed within the trench, but it had a flat base and it measured 0.70m in depth. Two sherds of post-medieval pottery and a single animal bone fragment were recovered from the basal fill (27), which comprised compact mid orange-brown clay. The upper fill (25) consisted of a deposit of compact mid orange-brown silty clay. The feature was not present in any other trenches.



Sondage through pit [26], facing east, 2m scale Fig 6



6 THE FINDS

6.1 The post-medieval pottery by Jennifer R. McNulty

The assemblage comprised of two sherds of post-medieval pottery weighing a total of 10g (Table 1). The pottery was recorded according to the current guidelines (MPRG 1998, MPRG 2016) and the University of Leicester Archaeological Services fabric series (Davies and Sawday 1999, Sawday 2009). Both sherds were recovered from fill (27) within large pit [26] in Trench 11.

Table 1: Quantification of post-medieval pottery

Context	Fabric Code	Fabric Name	Count	Weight (g)	Date
27	MB	Midland Blackware	1	6	1550–1750
27	SW7	Black Basalt	1	4	1770–2000
TOTAL			2	10	

Although fragmented, the sherds are in good condition with low levels of abrasion. The Midland Blackware sherd is a plain upright rim typical of a cup or mug. The Black Basalt ware sherd is a fragment from the lid of a teapot or coffee pot with a pre-firing hole drilled through the central knob.

Both fabrics and forms identified are commonly found at sites of this period across Leicestershire and the Midlands. This assemblage indicates limited domestic activity at the site during the post-medieval period. The absence of any medieval material is also indicative of a lack of activity (other than agricultural activity) at the site during the medieval period.

No further work is required on this material and discard is recommended.

6.2 Animal bone by Chris Faine

A single large mammal humerus fragment (weight: 55g) was recovered from fill (27) of large pit [26] in Trench 11. No further work is required.

7 DISCUSSION

There were no significant archaeological features discovered during the evaluation of Normandy Way. A medieval/post-medieval ridge and furrow system covered the entire area, and a single ditch post-dated this system in Trench 10.

All of the other identified features within the site were dated as post-medieval or later, as the large pit [26] in Trench 11 contained two small sherds of post-medieval pottery, and the tree throw [8] in Trench 4 had evidence of brick fragments within the fill.

Trenches were targeted on the geophysical anomalies assessed as most likely to be of archaeological interest. Despite close investigation of the relevant areas within those trenches – no evidence was found in most for anything that had obviously caused the anomalies in the absence of archaeological features. It is likely that material within the topsoil accounts for many of the geophysical anomalies. The large potential feature expected in Trench 7 corresponded to a spread of burnt material within the topsoil and expected features in Trenches 3 and 4 were not present. Anomalies identified within Trench 11 were expected to be ditches but they actually corresponded to a large pit [26]. The geophysical survey did identify the furrows and their north-east to south-west alignment, though the two additional perpendicular anomalies identified as furrows in the preceding survey interpretation were not identified in the evaluation.

The archaeology present did not produce enough evidence to address any research objectives. The lack of any features of archaeological interest is broadly consistent with the results from recent local fieldwork – with the exception of the discovery of a small, isolated area of Roman activity to the north. This site and much of the wider landscape has seen little or settlement or non-agricultural activity.

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MOLA

January 2025

APPENDIX 1: TRENCH INVENTORY

Trench No	Length, width & alignment		Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural
1	30m x 1.8m NW-SE		123.05m	0.34–0.42m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
1	Topsoil	Loose dark brown silty clay	D:0.34–0.42m	-
2	Natural	Firm light orange-grey sandy clay.	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment		Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural
2	30m x 1.8m N-S		123.71m	0.34–0.38m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
3	Topsoil	Friable dark brown silty clay	D:0.34–0.38m	-
4	Natural	Mid brown-orange silty/sandy clay with stone inclusions	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment		Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural
3	30m x 1.8m SW-NE		124.50m	0.34–0.39m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
31	Topsoil	Friable dark brown silty clay	D:0.34–0.39m	-
32	Natural	Compact mid yellow-brown silty clay	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment		Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural
4	30m x 1.8m NE-SW		123.71m	0.37m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
11	Topsoil	Friable dark brown silty clay	D:0.37m	-
12	Natural	Firm light orange-grey sandy clay.	-	-
7	Fill of tree throw [8]	Loose mid grey-brown silty clay with moderately sorted 5mm–20mm stone inclusions.	L: 1.50m W: 0.50m D: 0.22m	-
8	Cut of tree throw	Sub-circular with sharp top and base break of slope with an irregular profile, concave sides and rounded base	L: 1.50m W: 0.50m D: 0.22m	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment		Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural
5	30m x 1.8m E-W		122.98m	0.34–0.44m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
5	Topsoil	Loose dark brown silty clay	D:0.34–0.44m	-
6	Natural	Light orange-brown sandy clay	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment		Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural
6	30m x 1.8m NW-SE		121.35m	0.36–0.43m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
21	Topsoil	Loose dark brown silty clay	D:0.36–0.43m	-
22	Natural	Compact mid orange-brown clay	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment		Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural
7	30m x 1.8m NW-SE		124.42m	0.31–0.47m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
23	Topsoil	Loose dark brown silty clay	D:0.31–0.47m	-
24	Natural	Compact mid yellow-brown clay	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment		Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural
8	30m x 1.8m N-S		124.81m	0.36–0.40m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
33	Topsoil	Loose dark brown silty clay	D:0.36–0.40m	-
34	Natural	Compact mid orange-brown clay	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment		Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural
9	30m x 1.8m NW-SE		125.03m	0.39–0.42m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
19	Topsoil	Loose dark brown silty clay	D:0.39–0.42m	-

20	Natural	Compact mid yellow-brown clay	-	-
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Trench No	Length, width & alignment		Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural
10	30m x 1.8m SW-NE		122.42m	0.40-0.41m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
13	Topsoil	Loose dark brown silty clay	D:0.40–0.41m	-
14	Natural	Compact mid orange-brown clay	-	-
28	Fill of ditch [30]	Compact mid blue-grey silty clay	W: 0.85m D: 0.40m	-
30	Cut of ditch	Straight linear with sharp top and base breaks of slope, U-shaped profile, straight sides and a rounded base.	W: 0.85m D: 0.40m	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment		Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural
11	30m x 1.8m NE-SW		121.72m	0.37–0.53m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
17	Topsoil	Loose dark brown silty clay	D:0.37–0.53m	-
18	Natural	Compact mid orange-brown clay	-	-
25	Upper fill of pit [26]	Compact mid orange-brown silty clay with moderately sorted 20-60mm stone inclusions	D: 0.40m	-
26	Cut of pit	No information present except flat base	D: 0.70m	-
27	Basal fill of pit [26]	Mid orange-brown compact clay	D: 0.30m	Post-medieval pottery, animal bone

Trench No	Length, width & alignment		Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural
12	30m x 1.8m NE-SW		123.33m	0.37–0.44m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
15	Topsoil	Loose dark brown silty clay	D:0.37–0.44m	-
16	Natural	Compact mid orange-brown clay	-	-



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