

Land West of Ratby Hinckley Leicestershire

Archaeological Evaluation



for:
Lagan Homes

CA Project: MK0912
CA Site Code: RAT23
CA Report: MK0912_1
Accession Number: X.A47.2023

December 2023



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1	03/11/23	Ralph Brown	Anna Wolf Daniele Pirisino	Draft	-	Adrian Scruby

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Cirencester Building 11 Cotswold Business Park Cirencester Gloucestershire GL7 6BQ t. 01285 771 022	Milton Keynes Unit 8, The IO Centre Fingle Drive, Stonebridge Milton Keynes Buckinghamshire MK13 0AT t. 01908 564 660	Andover Stanley House Walworth Road Andover Hampshire SP10 5LH t. 01264 347 630	Suffolk Unit 5, Plot 11 Maitland Road Lion Barn Industrial Estate Needham Market Suffolk IP6 8NZ t. 01449 900 120
e. enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk			

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SUMMARY

Project name:	Land West of Ratby
Location:	Hinckley, Leicestershire
NGR:	450526 306406
Type:	Evaluation
Date:	26–30 June 2023, 16-17 October 2023
Planning reference:	22/00648/OUT
Location of Archive:	To be deposited with Leicestershire County Museum Service and the Archaeology Data Service (ADS)
Accession Number:	X.A47.2023
Site Code:	RAT23

In June and October 2023, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological evaluation of land west of Ratby, Leicestershire. A total of 24no. 30m long by 1.8m wide trenches were excavated in two phases, following on from a preceding geophysical survey.

During Phase 1, a small, undated ditch was encountered in Trench 14, while the Phase 2 trenching identified a Late Iron Age ditch terminus and one Late Iron Age/Early Roman ditch in the south-east part of the Site, in Trench 23. None of the recorded features were identified by the geophysical survey.

A very small assemblage of pottery was recovered from the two features, representing the only finds encountered during both phases of fieldwork, with the ditches themselves probably forming part of a field system.

North-east/south-west aligned furrows of possible medieval or post-medieval date were encountered across the central and southern parts of the Site, matching the approximate orientation of weak, broadly parallel trends identified by the geophysical survey.

Evidence for extensive modern disturbance was also encountered in the form of made ground deposits in the northern and central areas of the Site.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. In June and October 2023, Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation of land west of Ratby, Hinckley, Leicestershire (the Site, centred at NGR: 450526 306406; Fig. 1). This evaluation was undertaken for Lagan Homes.
- 1.2. Hinkley and Bosworth Borough Council (HBBC) has granted outline planning permission for *residential development of up to 75 dwellings alongside associated site infrastructure and open space (All matters reserved except for access)*, planning ref: 22/00648/OUT). Condition 14 of this planning permission requires the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with an approved WSI.
- 1.3. The scope of this evaluation was defined in consultation with William Kelly, Senior Planning Archaeologist at Leicestershire County Council (SPALCC), the archaeological advisor to Hinkley and Bosworth Borough Council. Due to the presence of extensive spoil heaps in the south-eastern portion of the Site the evaluation was undertaken in two phases with an initial 21 trenches excavated in the first phase, followed by three further trenches excavated as a separate phase of fieldwork (see Section 4, *Methodology*). The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by CA (2023) and approved by the SPALCC.
- 1.4. The evaluation was also in line with *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (CIfA 2014a; updated October 2020), *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) PPN 3: Archaeological Excavation* (HE 2015a) and *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The MoRPHE Project Managers' Guide* (HE 2015b).

The site

- 1.5. The Site is approximately 5.47ha in extent and is located on the north-western outskirts of Ratby (Figs. 1 -3). An additional 0.39ha field, adjacent to the north-eastern edge of the main development Site was also included in the evaluation for the construction of a footpath link and planting/landscaping work.
- 1.6. The Site currently comprises arable fields and is bounded by Markfield Road to the north, residential properties to the east, further fields to the south, and woodland to the west. The ground levels within the central and eastern parts of the Site undulate

gently between 105m and 110m above Ordnance Datum (aOD), whereas a sudden slope dropping 9m is present along the western edge of the Site.

- 1.7. The underlying bedrock geology across the majority of the Site is mapped as mudstone of the Edwalton Member, a sedimentary bedrock formed between 237 and 228.4 million years ago during the Triassic Period. This is overlain by superficial diamicton deposits of the Thussington Member, a sedimentary deposit formed between 480 and 423 thousand years ago during the Quaternary Period (BGS 2023). Deposits of sandstone of the Cotgrave Sandstone Member, formed 237-228.4m years ago, and Gunthorpe Member mudstone, formed 247.1-237 million years ago, are mapped along the western edge of the Site (BGS 2023).
- 1.8. Modern made ground deposits measuring up to 1.1m deep are present in the north-west, north-east and, to a lesser extent, the central portions of the Site, having been built up with soil and construction debris from the adjacent development to the east. Spoil heaps resulting from recent groundworks activities are present in the southeastern part of the Site.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The archaeological background of the Site has been previously presented in detail as part of a Heritage Impact Assessment (CA 2022). A number of investigations have also been carried out within the Site and in the adjacent area to the east. The following text represents a summary of these sources.

Previous Investigations

- 2.2. The adjacent area to the east of the Site, currently under development (planning ref: 20/00462/FUL) has been subject to several archaeological investigations. This includes a desk-based assessment (ULAS 2005), which also covered the eastern half of the current Site, geophysical surveys (AS 2005 and Stratascan 2014) and fieldwalking (Browning 2014), which again included a small part of the current Site. The 2005 geophysical survey identified evidence of ridge and furrow cultivation, as well as a possible field boundary; the geophysical survey undertaken in 2014 identified two linear anomalies of possible archaeological or modern agricultural origin in the north-eastern part of the Site; the field walking identified two medieval pottery sherds and a scatter of post-medieval pottery. A trial trench evaluation was subsequently undertaken in 2021 (ARS 2021) that identified plough furrows and a single undated ditch.

2.3. A LiDAR analysis survey undertaken as part of the widening of the M1 junctions 21-30 also covers the Site (BA 2007). Any features identified as part of this investigation are discussed in the sections below.

2.4. A further geophysical survey has recently been carried out within the Site itself (Phase Site Investigations 2023). The majority of the anomalies identified during the survey were interpreted as result of modern material, agricultural activity or possible natural variations. Some trends of uncertain origin were also identified but none of them could be interpreted as archaeological.

Early Prehistoric

2.5. A number of Mesolithic artefacts has been identified in the area, indicating evidence of seasonal occupation. These include a Mesolithic flint scatter and pebble hammer c.540m north of the Site, and two flint microliths c.900m west of the Site.

2.6. Neolithic and Bronze Age artefacts have also been recorded within the area, including a Neolithic axe c.700m south-west of the Site and two Neolithic or Bronze Age flints c.920m north of the Site. A flint knife and Bronze Age pottery from Bury Camp were recorded c.800m west and c.600m south-west of the Site respectively.

Iron Age

2.7. A univallate hillfort known as Bury Camp is located c.600m south-west of the Site. Bury Camp hillfort is rectangular in plan with banks and ditches with four entrances, one of which is the original entrance.

2.8. A possible enclosure of probable Iron Age date is located c.540m north of the Site. This enclosure was identified through cropmarks on aerial photography and assigned a rough Iron Age date by the HER due to its morphology; the date, however, has not been confirmed and Historic England identify this as a medieval enclosure. Additional remains include the findspot of an Iron Age bridle bit 500m to the west of the Site.

Roman

2.9. Locally, the most important focal point during the Roman period is *Ratae* (Roman Leicester), c.7.5km to the east of the Site. The HER records the putative route of a potential Roman road, the Via Devana, extending across the northern edge of the Site on a northwest to southeast alignment leading from Markfield Road towards Leicester. Excavation in 1954/5 identified earthworks of a road from Whittington Grange Farm to Markfield Lane, north of the Site, with an evaluation dating the road

to the Roman period (HER ref: ML4345). No evidence of the Roman road was identified within the Site or the adjacent field to the east during the recent geophysical surveys and trial trenching. The exact alignment of the road remains unknown, and the alignment through the Site is not supported by archaeological evidence to date.

- 2.10. Remains of Roman date have been identified within the wider area. These include a settlement identified c.1.1km east of the Site during a watching brief (Coward 2010), as well as evidence of pottery and a tessellated floor identified c.800m south-west of Site, suggesting further evidence for settlement.
- 2.11. Additional known remains of Roman date include pottery sherds recovered c.600m south of the Site within Bury Camp. Numerous findspots are also recorded within the surrounding area by the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS), including coins, pottery, and brooches.

Early medieval and medieval

- 2.12. The Domesday survey of 1086 records an established settlement at Ratby comprising 17 households, six ploughlands and a mill, likely originating during the early medieval period. The settlement of Ratby fell within the land of Lord Hugh de Grandsmenil.
- 2.13. Evidence for surviving medieval remains within the present village is scarce, however, a timber framed building of possible medieval date and the Church of St Phillip and St James, which has 13th, 14th and 15th century elements, are known to survive. During the 12th century the lands passed to the ownership of the Earl of Leicester.
- 2.14. The Site fell within the agricultural land of medieval Ratby. An area of possible ridge and furrow cultivation has been identified through geophysical survey in the southern part of the Site, but the nature these anomalies is uncertain.
- 2.15. A moated house is recorded by the HER immediately south of the Site. This feature has been identified through cropmarks, however, there is little evidence to support the initial identification. Lidar analysis does not show any traces of a possible moated enclosure to the south of the Site; historic aerial images viewed at the Historic England Archive did not show any features to the south resembling a moat; fieldwalking undertaken in the 1990s within the Site to the north of this purported feature, and the current evaluation fieldwork found no medieval remains.

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- 2.16. A medieval deer park, known as Burgh Park, is located 300m to the west of the Site. Burgh Park was first mentioned in 1270 and is mentioned up until 1512 (Ball 1982). The full extent of the park is unknown as it was incorporated into a later post-medieval park known as The Burroughs. A second post-medieval park known as Groby Park is located to the immediate north of the Site. This park is also thought to have originated as an earlier medieval park which was smaller in size.
- 2.17. Additional medieval findspots within the wider area include coins, pottery, a horse pendant, and a papal bull.

Post-medieval and modern

- 2.18. During the post-medieval period the Site and surrounding area were subject to enclosure, both in the form of agricultural field enclosure and post-medieval parks. The parks themselves were later converted to agricultural land, with the exception of a small part of Groby Park which became Martinshaw Wood. A Hunting Lodge was constructed on the southern edge of Groby Park in c. 1880 for the Earl of Stamford and Warrington, indicating the continued use of the park at that point in time. The land within the Site and much of the wider area was enclosed into small irregular shaped fields. The Enclosure map of Ratby, produced in 1773, shows the Site under agricultural use.
- 2.19. During the 18th and 19th centuries Ratby became a major centre for the hosiery industry. The construction of the Leicester to Swannington Railway in 1846 encouraged more hosiers into the village and by 1852 there were seven hosiers in Ratby (HBC 2013). As a result of this profitable industry, the village expanded through the 19th and 20th centuries.
- 2.20. The field boundaries within the Site were altered by the end of the 19th century, as the 1885 Ordnance Survey Map shows that the fields were amalgamated to create larger fields. The 1930s Ordnance Survey Map depicts the land in the north of the Site as being used for allotments.
- 2.21. By the turn of the 21st century, the textile factories and the rail line had closed, and Ratby became a commuter village, largely serving people employed in Leicester.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1. The general objective of the evaluation is to provide further information on the likely archaeological resource within the Site, including its presence/absence, character, extent, date and state of preservation. This information will enable HBBC, as advised by the SPALCC, to identify and assess the particular significance of any archaeological heritage assets within the Site, consider the impact of the development upon that significance and, if appropriate, develop strategies to avoid or minimise conflict between heritage asset conservation and the development proposals. This process is in line with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DLUHC 2023). A further objective of the project was to compile a stable, ordered, accessible project archive.
- 3.2. The specific objective of the evaluation was to clarify the nature of the geophysical anomalies within the Site and record any evidence for the presence or absence of the potential Roman road (Via Devana) which is assumed to cross the northern portion of the Site.
- 3.3. Based on the results of the evaluation, no meaningful contributions can be made to any research objectives set out in the online *East Midlands Historic Environment Research Framework* (RFN 2023 <https://researchframeworks.org/emherf/>) or previous versions of the research framework (Cooper 2006; Knight et al. 2012).

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1. The evaluation fieldwork comprised the excavation of a total of 24 trenches, each measuring 30m long by 1.8m wide (see Fig. 2). Owing to the presence of spoil heaps in the south-east part of the Site, it was necessary to split the fieldwork into two phases, with an initial 21 trenches excavated during Phase 1, followed by a further three trenches during Phase 2. This approach was agreed with the SPALCC.
- 4.2. The trenches were located to test geophysical anomalies, to target the postulated route of the Via Devana, and to provide a representative sample of the remainder of the Site. With the approval of the SPALCC, Trenches 23 and 24 were rotated by roughly 90 degrees, in order to fit in between spoil heaps that were still present on Site.

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- 4.3. Trenches were set out on OS National Grid co-ordinates using Leica GPS. Overburden was stripped from the trenches by a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless grading bucket. All machining was conducted under archaeological supervision to the top of the natural substrate, which was the level at which archaeological features were first encountered. Trenches 1, 2, 4 and 5 could not be fully excavated down to the natural substrate, owing to the depth of the modern made ground in the northern part of the Site. A sondage was excavated in two of the trenches affected by the presence of made ground, to determine the depth of the natural substrate.
- 4.4. Archaeological features/deposits were investigated, planned and recorded in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 1: Fieldwork Recording Manual*. Records were maintained in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 1: Fieldwork Recording Manual*.
- 4.5. Deposits were assessed for their palaeoenvironmental potential in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 2: The Taking and Processing of Environmental and Other Samples from Archaeological Sites*. No deposits were identified that required sampling.
- 4.6. Artefacts were processed in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 3: Treatment of Finds Immediately after Excavation* (please see Section 6).
- 4.7. CA has made arrangements with Leicestershire County Museum Service for the deposition of the project archive (accession number X.A47.2023) and, subject to agreement with the legal landowner(s), the artefact collection. A digital archive will also be prepared and deposited with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS). The archives (museum and digital) will be prepared and deposited in accordance with *Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives* (ClfA 2014b; updated October 2020), the ADS Guidelines for Depositors (ADS 2021), and the Leicestershire County Museums Service guidelines (LCC 2015).
- 4.8. A summary of information from this project, as set out in Appendix C, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

5. RESULTS

- 5.1. This section provides an overview of the evaluation results. Detailed summaries of the recorded contexts are given in Appendix A (Table 1), and details of the artefactual material recovered from the Site can be found in Section 6 and Appendix B (Table 2).

Phase 1 and Phase 2

- 5.2. The natural geological substrate was broadly consistent across the Site and was recorded during Phase 1 and 2 as a mid reddish-brown sandy clay with patches of light yellowish-grey clay and frequent sub-angular limestone inclusions. This was encountered at depths between 0.25m and 1.5m below present ground level.
- 5.3. In Trenches 1-6, 12, 17 and 18, in the northern and, to a lesser degree, the central areas of the Site, the natural substrate was directly overlain by a made ground layer, comprising a mix of mid reddish-brown, yellowish-brown, and dark grey sandy clay and silt, with modern waste such as plastic, concrete and wiring (see Fig. 5). As mentioned above in Section 1.8, this layer resulted from construction activity during a previous stage of development in the field adjacent to the east of the Site. This layer was thicker in the north of the Site, where it measured up to 1.1m thick, thinning out towards the central area, where it averaged 0.18m thick. Due to the thickness of the made ground, the natural substrate was not fully exposed within Trenches 1, 2, 4 and 5 and was only observed in machine-excavated sondages (Fig. 5).
- 5.4. A colluvial layer, comprising mid greyish-brown silty clay and measuring 0.5m thick, was identified above the natural substrate in Trench 8, located at the base of the slope along the western edge of the Site.
- 5.5. Subsoil was recorded overlying the natural within Trench 16 only, in the centre of the Site. This measured 0.1m thick and consisted of light orangish-brown sandy clay.
- 5.6. The natural substrate was directly overlain by a topsoil layer in all remaining trenches and completed the stratigraphic sequence in all trenches excavated. It was generally recorded across the Site as a mid brownish-grey loam measuring 0.30m thick on average.

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- 5.7. Trenches 1-5, 9, 12, and 20 contained no archaeological features or archaeological deposits of any kind and will not be discussed in any further detail as part of this report (see Fig. 2, 4-5).
- 5.8. A system of north-east/south-west aligned furrows was recorded during Phases 1 and 2 in Trenches 7-8, 10-11, 13, 15-19, 21, and 22-23. These corresponded to the orientation of weak, broadly parallel positive linear trends identified by the geophysical survey. A possible north/south orientated furrow was identified in Trench 6. A total of 20 furrows were hand excavated, measuring between 0.42m and 3m wide and 0.04m and 0.28m deep, generally with shallow concave sides and concave bases (see Figs. 2, 6, 8, 9 and 10). No finds were recorded from any of the furrows investigated.
- 5.9. One undated ditch was identified in Trench 14, one Late Iron Age ditch terminus and one Late Iron Age/Early Roman ditch were recorded in Trench 23.
- 5.10. Potential features were tested in Trenches 14 and 16 but these were interpreted as geological variations and bioturbation respectively.

Trench 14 (Fig. 2 & 7)

- 5.11. Ditch 1402 crossed the western half of Trench 14 on a north-east/south-west alignment, and did not correspond to any geophysical anomaly. The feature measured 0.73m wide and 0.33m deep, with straight, moderately steep sides and a concave base. The lower fill, 1403, comprised mid orangish-grey silty clay and contained no finds. This was covered by a light orangish-grey sandy silt fill, 1404, with no finds.
- 5.12. A second possible feature, 1405, was tested within this trench; however, this was determined to be geological in origin.

Trench 23 (Fig. 2-10-11)

- 5.13. East/west aligned ditch terminus 2302 was recorded at the northern end of Trench 23 and was not identified by the geophysical survey. It measured 0.6m wide and 0.2m deep, with moderately steep, straight sides and a concave base. It contained a single fill, 2303, comprising mid brownish-grey silty clay. A total of seven sherds of Late Iron Age pottery were recovered from this fill.

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- 5.14. Ditch 2306 was identified at the southern end of Trench 23 on a north-west/south-east alignment. It did not correspond to any geophysical anomaly. It measured 0.7m wide and 0.27m deep, with moderately steep, straight sides and a concave base. It contained two fills. Lower fill 2305 was a mid greyish-yellow clayey sand and contained a single sherd of Late Iron Age/Early Roman pottery. This was overlain by a mid yellowish-brown clayey silt fill, 2304, with no finds. The feature's southern end was truncated by furrow 2307.

6. THE FINDS

- 6.1. The artefactual material was recorded from two deposits: the fills of ditches 2202 and 2306 (Appendix B). The material was recovered by hand and was recorded in accordance with the ClfA finds *Toolkit* (ClfA 2023).

Pottery by Laura Pearson

- 6.2. The pottery from the evaluation has been recorded direct to an Excel spreadsheet from which Appendix B (Table 2) is derived. This forms part of the project archive. The assemblage was examined by context, using a x10 stereo microscope and quantified according to sherd count and weight per fabric type. The fabrics are described in summary (Appendix B, Table 2) in accordance with national guidelines (Barclay et al. 2016). A concordance with the Leicestershire Late Iron Age/Roman fabric series has been provided where appropriate (Pollard 1994).
- 6.3. The condition of the assemblage is poor; the fractures and surfaces are heavily abraded. The mean sherd weight of the assemblage is 3g.

Late prehistoric

- 6.4. Seven sherds (19g) of pottery, handmade in sandy grog-tempered fabric QGR, were recovered from ditch 2302. These include a simple upright rim which cannot be assigned a particular vessel form. The sherds most likely date to the Late Iron Age period.

Late Iron Age/Early Roman

- 6.5. A single unfeatured body sherd (5g) of shelly grog-tempered ware (UNS SHGR) was recovered from ditch 2306. This fabric is likely of local production and Late Iron Age/Early Roman in date.

Summary

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- 6.6. Based on the limited evidence available, it is reasonable to conclude that there was activity in the vicinity of the Site during the Late Iron Age and Late Iron Age/Early Roman periods. Due to the small size of the assemblage and absence of diagnostic sherds, it is not possible to provide further meaningful commentary.

Further work and selection strategy

- 6.7. The finds have been recorded in sufficient detail at this stage and no further work is required. The artefactual material has the potential for further analysis, as part of a larger assemblage resulting from any additional archaeological works at this location. The pottery is recommended for long-term curation.

7. DISCUSSION

- 7.1. The geophysical survey did not prove effective as a means of archaeological prospection, as none of the archaeological features recorded in the trenches corresponded to any geophysical anomalies. However, the features identified were generally narrow, and their absence in the geophysical survey may be a reflection of their small size.
- 7.2. No evidence was recorded for the presence of the potential Roman road (Via Devana) which was assumed to cross the northern portion of the Site (see above, Section 2.10)
- 7.3. During Phase 1, a single undated ditch was encountered in Trench 14 in the southern portion of the Site. The feature did not correspond with any specific geophysical anomaly, although a cluster of linear and curvilinear anomalies had been identified in this area by the geophysical survey. These anomalies were of probable geological nature.
- 7.4. During Phase 2, a Late Iron Age ditch terminus and a Late Iron Age/Early Roman ditch were recorded in the south-eastern part of the Site, in Trench 23. It is likely that these ditches formed part of a field system pertaining the agricultural hinterland of a minor settlement, possibly a small farmstead or similar domestic focal point. A small assemblage (totalling eight sherds) of pottery was recovered from the two features, representing the only finds encountered during both phases of fieldwork.
- 7.5. The relatively poorly preserved remains of north-east/south-west aligned ridge and furrow, of medieval or post-medieval date, was encountered across the central and

southern parts of the Site, matching the approximate orientation of weak, broadly parallel trends identified by the geophysical survey. With the exception of one large furrow in Trench 19, the surviving furrows encountered within the trenches were relatively poorly preserved, suggesting deep plough truncation due to modern agricultural use of the Site.

- 7.6. Evidence for extensive and significant recent activity was encountered in the form of deep modern made ground in the northern and central areas of the Site. These areas were probably stripped of topsoil prior to the deposition of the soils/ unwanted materials, likely during groundworks related to the residential development immediately to the east.
- 7.7. Due to the limited results of the fieldwork, no meaningful contributions can be made to any research objectives identified in the *East Midlands Historic Environment Research Framework* (RFN 2023) or previous version of the regional research agendas (Cooper 2006; Knight et al. 2012).

8. CA PROJECT TEAM

- 8.1. Phase 1 fieldwork was undertaken by Daniel Riley, assisted by Dominic Allen, Nick Botschin, Kris Chadwick, Cassie Bradshaw and Gareth Bickley. Phase 2 fieldwork was undertaken by Richard Knight, assisted by Guilherme Sarmento. This report was written by Ralph Brown, and edited by Anna Wolf and Daniele Pirisino. The finds report was produced by Laura Pearson. The report illustrations were prepared by Krissy Moore. The project archive has been compiled and prepared for deposition by Molly Agnew-Henshaw. The project was managed for CA by Daniele Pirisino.

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APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Table 1: Context Descriptions

Trench	Context	Type	Fill of	Interpretation	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)
1	100	layer		Topsoil	Friable mid grey brown clay loam with 3% sub-angular stone inclusions 10-50mm	>30	>1.8	0.16
1	101	layer		Made ground	Compact mixed mid red brown and yellow brown sandy silt with 10% sub-angular stone inclusions 10-70mm and chalk lumps	>30	>1.8	1.05
1	102	layer		Natural	Compact mid red brown sandy clay with 15% sub angular limestone 10-150mm	>30	>1.8	-
2	200	layer		Topsoil	Friable mid grey brown clay loam with 3% sub-angular stone inclusions 10-50mm	>30	>1.8	0.22
2	201	layer		Made ground	Compact mixed mid red brown and yellow brown sandy silt with 10% sub-angular stone inclusions 10-70mm and chalk lumps	>30	>1.8	1.1
2	202	layer		Natural	Compact mid red brown and light yellow grey sandy clay with 15% sub angular limestone 10-150mm	>30	>1.8	-
3	300	layer		Topsoil	Friable mid grey brown clay loam with 3% sub-angular stone inclusions 10-50mm	>30	>1.8	0.15
3	301	layer		Made ground	Compact mixed mid red brown and yellow brown sandy silt with 10% sub-angular stone inclusions 10-70mm and chalk lumps	>30	>1.8	0.2
3	302	layer		Natural	Compact mid red brown and light yellow grey sandy clay with 15% sub angular limestone 10-150mm	>30	>1.8	-
4	400	layer		Topsoil	Friable mid grey brown clay loam with 3% sub-angular stone inclusions 10-50mm	>30	>1.8	0.46
4	401	layer		Made ground	Compact mixed mid red brown and yellow grey with dark grey patches, sandy clay and silt, with 10% sub-angular stone inclusions 10-70mm and chalk lumps	>30	>1.8	1.05
4	402	layer		Natural	Compact mid red brown and light yellow grey sandy clay with 15% sub angular limestone 10-150mm	>30	>1.8	-
5	500	layer		Topsoil	Friable mid grey brown clay loam with 3% sub-angular stone inclusions 10-50mm	>30	>1.8	0.35
5	501	layer		Made ground	Compact mixed mid red brown and yellow grey with dark grey patches, sandy clay and silt, with 10% sub-angular stone inclusions 10-70mm and chalk lumps	>30	>1.8	0.43
5	502	layer		Natural	Compact mid red brown and light yellow grey sandy clay with 15% sub angular limestone 10-150mm	>30	>1.8	-
6	600	layer		Topsoil	Friable mid grey brown clay loam with 3% sub-angular stone inclusions 10-50mm	>30	>1.8	0.32
6	601	layer		Made ground	Compact mixed mid red brown and yellow brown sandy silt with 10% sub-	>30	>1.8	0.2

					angular stone inclusions 10-70mm and chalk lumps			
6	602	layer		Natural	Compact mid red brown and light yellow grey sandy clay with 15% sub angular limestone 10-150mm	>30	>1.8	-
7	700	layer		Topsoil	Friable mid grey brown clay loam with 3% sub-angular stone inclusions 10-50mm	>30	>1.8	0.3
7	701	layer		Natural	Compact mid red brown and light yellow grey sandy clay with 15% sub angular limestone 10-150mm	>30	>1.8	-
7	702	cut		Plough Furrow	NE-SW linear with shallow concave sides and concave base	>20	0.63	0.09
7	703	fill	702	Fill	Compact mid yellow brown sandy clay with 10% sub-angular stones inclusions 10-70mm	>1	0.63	0.09
8	800	layer		Topsoil	Friable mid grey brown clay loam with 3% sub-angular stone inclusions 10-50mm	>30	>1.8	0.3
8	801	layer		Colluvial Layer	Compact silty clay mid grey brown 1% sub-rounded stone	>30	>1.8	0.5
8	802	layer		Natural	Compact mid red brown and light yellow grey sandy clay with 15% sub angular limestone 10-150mm	>30	>1.8	-
8	803	cut		Plough Furrow	NE-SW linear with shallow concave sides and concave base	>1.8	0.75	0.08
8	804	fill	803	Fill	Compact mid yellow brown sandy clay with 10% sub-angular stones inclusions 10-70mm	>1	0.75	0.08
9	900	layer		Topsoil	Friable mid grey brown clay loam with 3% sub-angular stone inclusions 10-50mm	>30	>1.8	0.25
9	901	layer		Natural	Compact mid red brown and light yellow grey sandy clay with 15% sub angular limestone 10-150mm	>30	>1.8	-
10	1000	layer		Topsoil	Friable mid grey brown clay loam with 3% sub-angular stone inclusions 10-50mm	>30	>1.8	0.26
10	1001	layer		Natural	Compact mid red brown and light yellow grey sandy clay with 15% sub angular limestone 10-150mm	>30	>1.8	-
10	1002	cut		Plough Furrow	NE-SW linear with shallow concave sides and concave base	>1.8	0.64	0.04
10	1003	fill	1002	Fill	Compact mid yellow brown sandy clay with 10% sub-angular stones inclusions 10-70mm	>1	0.64	0.04
10	1004	cut		Plough Furrow	NE-SW linear with straight shallow sides and concave base	>1.8	0.71	0.11
10	1005	fill	1004	Fill	Compact mid yellow brown sandy clay with 10% sub-angular stones inclusions 10-70mm	>1	0.71	0.11
11	1100	layer		Topsoil	Friable mid grey brown clay loam with 3% sub-angular stone inclusions 10-50mm	>30	>1.8	0.4
11	1101	layer		Natural	Compact mid red brown and light yellow grey sandy clay with 15% sub angular limestone 10-150mm	>30	>1.8	-
11	1102	cut		Plough Furrow	NE-SW linear with shallow concave sides and concave base	>8	0.9	0.1
11	1103	fill	1102	Fill	Compact mid yellow brown sandy clay with 10% sub-angular stones inclusions 10-70mm	>1	0.9	0.1

12	1200	layer		Topsoil	Friable mid grey brown clay loam with 3% sub-angular stone inclusions 10-50mm	>30	>1.8	0.18
12	1201	layer		Made ground	Compact mixed mid red brown and yellow brown sandy silt with 10% sub-angular stone inclusions 10-70mm and chalk lumps	>30	>1.8	0.15
12	1202	layer		Natural	Compact mid red brown and light yellow grey sandy clay with 15% sub angular limestone 10-150mm	>30	>1.8	-
13	1300	layer		Topsoil	Friable mid grey brown clay loam with 3% sub-angular stone inclusions 10-50mm	>30	>1.8	0.32
13	1301	layer		Natural	Compact mid red brown and light yellow grey sandy clay with 15% sub angular limestone 10-150mm	>30	>1.8	-
13	1302	cut		Plough Furrow	NE-SW linear with shallow concave sides and flat base	>4.5	0.59	0.04
13	1303	fill	1302	Fill	Compact mid yellow brown sandy clay with 10% sub-angular stones inclusions 10-70mm	>1	0.59	0.04
14	1400	layer		Topsoil	Friable mid grey brown clay loam with 3% sub-angular stone inclusions 10-50mm	>30	1.8	0.3
14	1401	layer		Natural	Compact mid red brown and light yellow grey sandy clay with 15% sub angular limestone 10-150mm	>30	1.8	-
14	1402	cut		Ditch	NE-SW linear with straight moderate sides and concave base	>1	0.73	0.33
14	1403	fill	1402	Fill	Firm mid orange grey silty clay with 10% sub-angular stone inclusions 10-50mm	>1	0.67	0.15
14	1404	fill	1402	Fill	Firm light orange grey sandy silt with 20% 10-150mm sub-angular stone inclusions	>1	0.63	0.18
14	1405	cut		Natural Feature	Irregular in plan with irregular sides and base not seen	>1.8	2.3	0.75
14	1406	fill	1405	Fill	Friable light grey white sandy clay with 10% 10-50mm sub-angular and sub rounded stone inclusions	>1	2.1	0.58
14	1407	fill	1405	Fill	Compact mid yellow brown sandy clay with 10% sub-rounded stone inclusions 10-50mm	>1	2.3	0.11
14	1408	fill	1405	Fill	Friable light grey brown sandy clay with 5% sub-rounded stone inclusions 10-50mm	>1	2.5	0.11
15	1500	layer		Topsoil	Friable mid grey brown clay loam with 3% sub-angular stone inclusions 10-50mm	>30	>1.8	0.25
15	1501	layer		Natural	Compact mid red brown and light yellow grey sandy clay with 15% sub angular limestone 10-150mm	>30	>1.8	-
15	1502	cut		Plough Furrow	NE-SW linear with shallow concave sides and concave base	>3	1.09	0.1
15	1503	fill	1502	Fill	Compact mid yellow brown sandy clay with 10% sub-angular stones inclusions 10-70mm	>1	1.09	0.1
15	1504	cut		Plough Furrow	NE-SW linear with shallow concave sides and concave base	>3	1.04	0.13
15	1505	fill	1504	Fill	Compact mid yellow brown sandy clay with 10% sub-angular stones inclusions 10-70mm	>1	1.04	0.13

15	1506	cut		Plough Furrow	NE-SW linear with shallow concave sides and concave base	>3	0.42	0.03
15	1507	fill	1506	Fill	Compact mid yellow brown sandy clay with 10% sub-angular stones inclusions 10-70mm	>1	0.42	0.03
15	1508	cut		Plough Furrow	NE-SW linear with shallow concave sides and concave base	>3	0.37	0.02
15	1509	fill	1508	Fill	Compact mid yellow brown sandy clay with 10% sub-angular stones inclusions 10-70mm	>1	0.37	0.02
16	1600	layer		Topsoil	Friable mid grey silty clay 5% sub-rounded stones,	>30	>1.8	0.3
16	1601	layer		Subsoil	Friable light orange brown silty clay subsoil underlying topsoil and overlaying the natural	>30	>1.8	0.1
16	1602	layer		Natural	Compact mid red brown and light yellow grey sandy clay with 15% sub angular limestone 10-150mm	>30	>1.8	-
16	1603	cut		Tree Throw	Sub-oval with moderate concave sides and undulating base	1	1.69	0.15
16	1604	fill	1603	Fill	Compact mid grey brown silty clay with rounded to angular stone inclusions 5-10mm	1	>0.54	0.15
16	1605	cut		Plough Furrow	NE-SW linear with shallow concave sides and concave base	>3	1.82	0.11
16	1606	fill	1605	Fill	Compact mid yellow brown sandy clay with 10% sub-angular stones inclusions 10-70mm	>1	1.82	0.11
17	1700	layer		Topsoil	Friable mid grey brown clay loam with 3% sub-angular stone inclusions 10-50mm	>30	>1.8	0.4
17	1701	layer		Made ground	Compact mixed mid red brown and yellow brown sandy silt with 10% sub-angular stone inclusions 10-70mm and chalk lumps	>30	>1.8	0.2
17	1702	layer		Natural	Compact mid red brown and light yellow grey sandy clay with 15% sub angular limestone 10-150mm	>30	>1.8	-
17	1703	cut		Plough Furrow	NE-SW linear with shallow concave sides and concave base	>3	1.4	0.1
17	1704	fill	1703	Fill	Compact mid yellow brown sandy clay with 10% sub-angular stones inclusions 10-70mm	>1	1.4	0.1
18	1800	layer		Topsoil	Friable mid grey brown clay loam with 3% sub-angular stone inclusions 10-50mm	>30	>1.8	0.34
18	1801	layer		Made ground	Compact mixed mid red brown and yellow brown sandy silt with 10% sub-angular stone inclusions 10-70mm and chalk lumps	>30	>1.8	0.18
18	1802	layer		Natural	Compact mid red brown and light yellow grey sandy clay with 15% sub angular limestone 10-150mm	>30	>1.8	-
18	1803	cut		Plough Furrow	NE-SW linear with shallow concave sides and concave base	>3	0.56	0.03
18	1804	fill	1803	Fill	Compact mid yellow brown sandy clay with 10% sub-angular stones inclusions 10-70mm	>1	0.56	0.03
19	1900	layer		Topsoil	Friable mid grey brown clay loam with 3% sub-angular stone inclusions 10-50mm	>30	>1.8	0.25

19	1901	layer		Natural	Compact mid red brown and light yellow grey sandy clay with 15% sub angular limestone 10-150mm	>30	>1.8	-
19	1902	cut		Plough Furrow	NE-SW linear with shallow concave sides and concave base	>2	3.2	0.28
19	1903	fill	1902	Fill	Compact mid yellow brown sandy clay with 10% sub-angular stones inclusions 10-70mm	>1	3.2	0.28
19	1904	fill	1902	Fill	Friable dark brown grey with 1% sub-rounded stone inclusions 10-30mm good horizon clarity, medium contamination risk, modern debris/fill that covers the furrow	>1	2.32	0.13
20	2000	layer		Topsoil	Friable mid grey brown clay loam with 3% sub-angular stone inclusions 10-50mm	>30	>1.8	0.3
20	2001	layer		Natural	Compact mid red brown and light yellow grey sandy clay with 15% sub angular limestone 10-150mm	>30	>1.8	-
21	2100	layer		Topsoil	Friable mid grey brown clay loam with 3% sub-angular stone inclusions 10-50mm	>30	>1.8	0.3
21	2101	layer		Natural	Compact mid red brown and light yellow grey sandy clay with 15% sub angular limestone 10-150mm	>30	>1.8	-
21	2102	cut		Plough Furrow	NE-SW linear with shallow concave sides and concave base	>2.2	1.11	0.09
21	2103	fill	2102	Fill	Compact mid yellow brown sandy clay with 10% sub-angular stones inclusions 10-70mm	>1	1.11	0.09
22	2200	layer		Topsoil	Friable mid grey brown clay loam with 3% sub-angular stone inclusions 10-50mm	>30	>1.8	0.33
22	2201	layer		Natural	Compact mid red brown and light yellow grey sandy clay with 15% sub angular limestone 10-150mm	>30	>1.8	-
22	2202	fill	2203	Fill	Soft, mid yellow brown sandy silt with occasional gravel inclusions 10-30mm sole fill of furrow [2203], natural infill with no dating material.	>1	1.6	0.17
22	2203	cut		Plough Furrow	NE-SW linear with shallow concave sides and concave base	>5	1.6	0.17
23	2300	layer		Topsoil	Friable mid grey brown clay loam with 5% 10-50mm sub-rounded stones inclusions	>30	>1.8	0.39
23	2301	layer		Natural	Compact mid red brown and light yellow grey sandy clay with 15% sub angular limestone 10-150mm	>30	>1.8	-
23	2302	cut		Ditch	E-W linear with rounded end with moderate straight sides and concave base	>2.8	0.6	0.2
23	2303	fill	2302	Fill	Friable mid brown grey silty clay with 5% 10-50mm sub angular stone inclusions and charcoal flecks	>1	0.6	0.2
23	2304	fill	2306	Fill	Firm mid yellow brown clay silt with lenses of redeposited natural and occasional gravel	>1	0.7	0.18
23	2305	fill	2306	Fill	Firm mid grey yellow clay sand with gravel 10-30mm	>1	0.3	0.09
23	2306	cut		Ditch	NW-SE linear with straight moderate sides and concave base	>2.7	0.7	0.27
23	2307	cut		Plough Furrow	NE-SW linear with straight shallow sides and concave base	>10	0.5	0.06

23	2308	fill	2307	Fill	Friable mid yellow brown sandy clay with 5% 10-50mm sub-rounded stones	>1	0.5	0.06
24	2400	layer		Topsoil	Friable mid grey brown clay loam with 3% sub-angular stone inclusions 10-50mm	>30	>1.8	0.34
24	2401	layer		Natural	Compact mid red brown and light yellow grey sandy clay with 15% sub angular limestone 10-150mm	>30	>1.8	-
24	2402	fill	2403	Fill	Firm mid brown yellow sandy silt with occasional gravel 10-30mm	>2.4	0.5	0.06
24	2403	cut		Plough Furrow	NE-SW linear with shallow concave sides and concave base	>2.4	0.5	0.06

APPENDIX B: THE FINDS

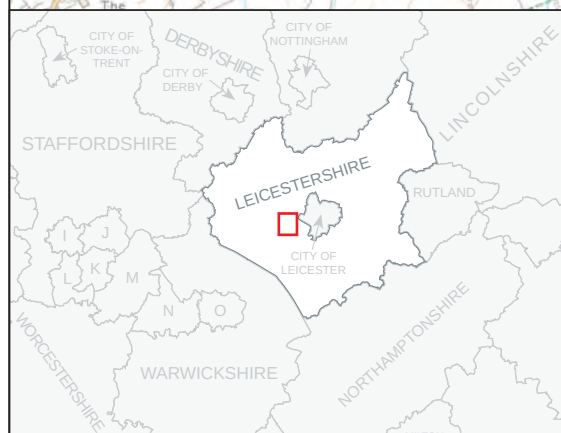
Table 2: Finds Concordance.

Context	Class	Description	Fabric Codes	Leics Fabrics*	Count	Weight (g)	Spot-date
2303	Late prehistoric pottery	Sandy grog-tempered fabric	QGR	GT7	7	19	LIA
2305	Late Iron Age/Roman pottery	Unsourced shelly grog-tempered ware	UNS SHGR	GT7	1	5	LIA/ERB

* Leicestershire fabric series (Pollard 1994)

APPENDIX C: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project name	Land West of Ratby, Hinckley, Leicestershire	
Short description	In June and October 2023, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological evaluation of land west of Ratby, Leicestershire. A total of 24no. 30m long by 1.8m wide trenches were excavated in two phases, following on from a preceding geophysical survey. During Phase 1, a small, undated ditch was encountered in Trench 14, while the Phase 2 trenching identified a Late Iron Age ditch terminus and one Late Iron Age/Early Roman ditch in the south-east part of the Site, in Trench 23. None of the recorded features were identified by the geophysical survey. A very small assemblage of pottery was recovered from the two features, representing the only finds encountered during both phases of fieldwork, with the ditches themselves probably forming part of a field system. North-east/south-west aligned furrows of possible medieval or post-medieval date were encountered across the central and southern parts of the Site, matching the approximate orientation of weak, broadly parallel trends identified by the geophysical survey. Evidence for extensive modern disturbance was also encountered in the form of made ground deposits in the northern and central areas of the Site.	
Project dates	26–30 June 2023, 16-17 October 2023	
Project type	Field evaluation	
Previous work	Geophysical survey (Phase Site Investigations 2023)	
Future work	Unknown	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site location	Land off Markfield Road, Ratby, Leics	
Study area (m ² /ha)	5.47ha	
Site co-ordinates	NGR: 450526 306406	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project brief originator	Leicestershire County Council	
Project design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Daniele Pirisino	
Project Supervisor	Daniel Riley; Richard Knight	
MONUMENT TYPE	Ditches (undated; Late iron Age/Early Roman)	
SIGNIFICANT FINDS	Late Iron Age/Early Roman Pottery	
PROJECT ARCHIVES	Intended final location of archive (museum/Accession no.)	Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone etc)
Physical	Leicestershire County Museum Service	Pottery
Paper	Leicestershire County Museum Service	Section drawings, site plans, WSI, Report, registers
Digital	ADS	Digital photographs, digital archive, survey data
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
Cotswold Archaeology 2023 <i>Land West of Ratby, Hinckley, Leicestershire: Archaeological Evaluation</i> CA typescript report MK0912_1		



 Site boundary

0 1km

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Ordnance Survey 0100031673



Andover 01264 347630
Cirencester 01285 771022
Milton Keynes 01908 564660
Suffolk 01449 900120
www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk
enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

PROJECT TITLE

Land west of Ratby, Leicestershire

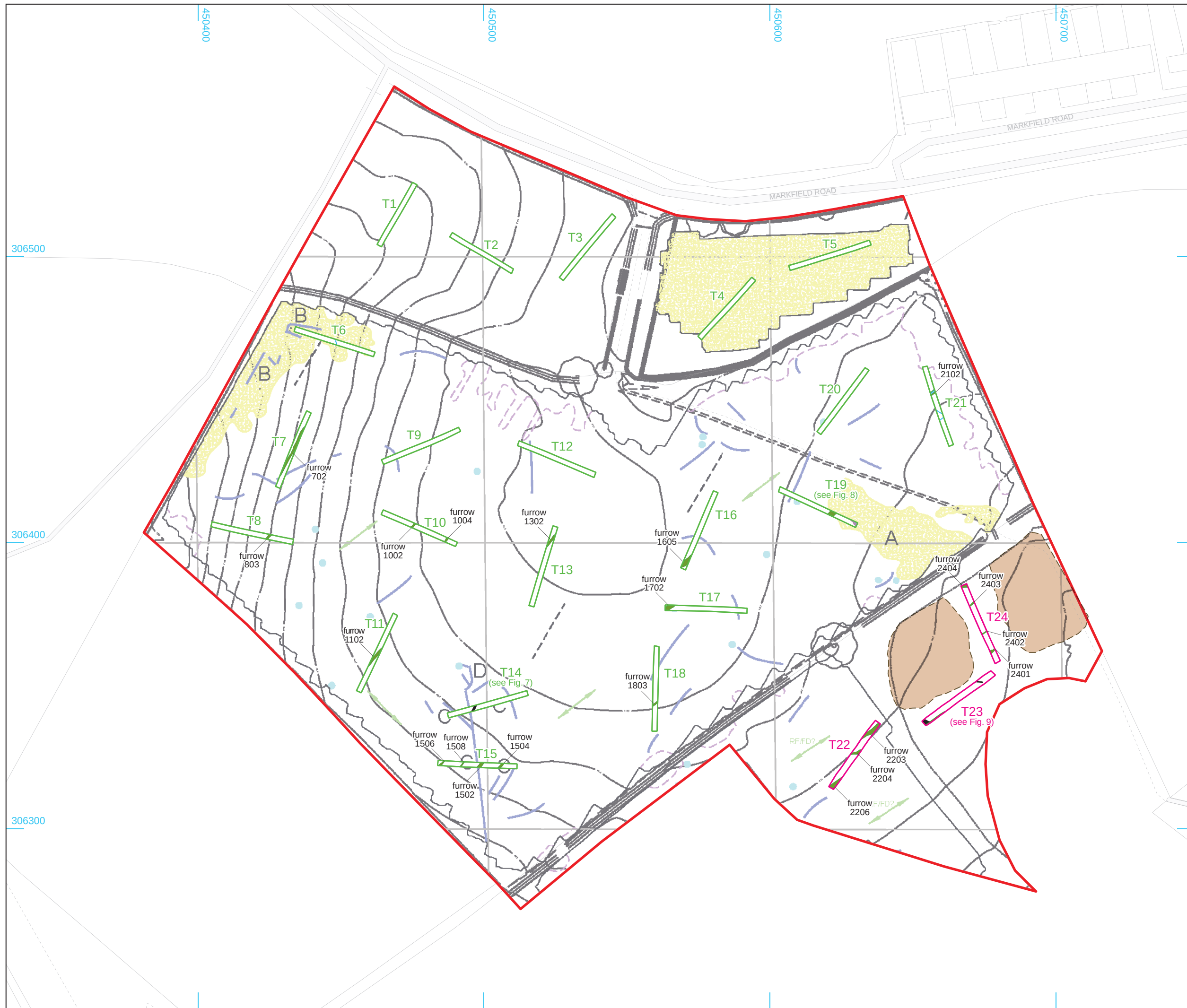
FIGURE TITLE

Site location plan

DRAWN BY KM
CHECKED BY LZS
APPROVED BY PR
PROJECT NO. MK0912
DATE 28/11/2023
SCALE@A4 1:25,000

FIGURE NO.

1



- Site boundary
- Phase 1 evaluation trench
- Phase 2 evaluation trench
- Archaeological feature
- Modern
- Field drain
- Furrow
- Spoil heap

Geophysical survey interpretation
(Phase Site Investigations 2022)

ANOMALY TYPE	INTERPRETATION
Area of strong dipolar/bipolar responses (magnetic disturbance)	Surface / near-surface ferrous or fired material (probable modern)
Limit of very strong response	Interference caused by modern magnetic feature (feature may be located beyond the survey area)
Strong linear response	Artificial anomaly caused by isolated sensor movement. This has not affected the reliability of the survey or the interpretation.
Approximate orientation of weak, broadly parallel positive linear features	Agricultural features. Probable modern ploughing regime.
Approximate orientation of broadly parallel positive linear features	Agricultural features. Possible ridge and furrow but could also be a regime of field drains.
Linear/curvi-linear trend (weak or diffuse response)	Uncertain origin. Possible drainage, agricultural or other modern but could be natural or remnant of other infilled sub-surface feature.
Isolated positive response	Probable buried modern ferrous/fired material or natural variation but some could be related to sub-surface features

0 1:1250 50m

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Cotswold Archaeology
Andover 01264 347630
Cirencester 01285 771022
Milton Keynes 01908 564660
Suffolk 01449 900120
www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk
enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

PROJECT TITLE
Land west of Ratby, Leicestershire

FIGURE TITLE
Site plan showing trenches, archaeological features and geophysical survey results



Site, looking south-east



Site, looking north



Site (northern field), looking south-west



Site (southern field), looking north



Trench 1, looking north-east (1m scales)



Trench 3, looking north-east (1m scales)



Trench 9, looking north-east (1m scales)



Trench 20, looking north-east (1m scales)



Sondage in Trench 2, looking north-east (1m scale)



Trench 4, looking north-east (1m scales)



Sondage in Trench 4, looking north-west (1m scale)



Sondage in Trench 5, looking south-east (1m scale)



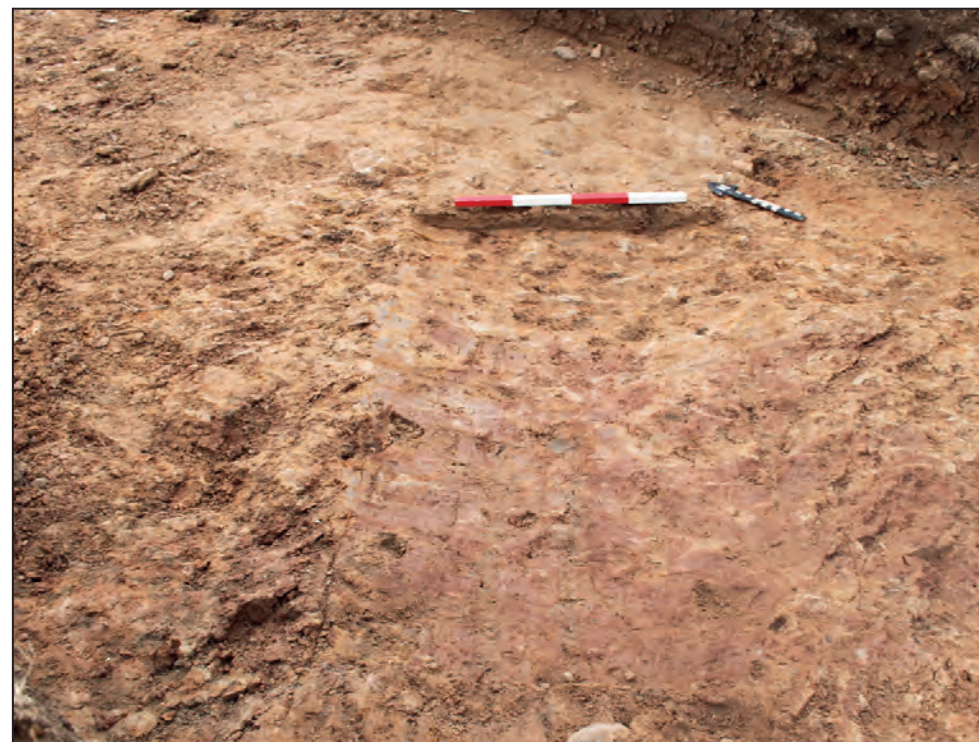
Furrow 803 in Trench 8, looking north-east (0.4m scale)



Trench 10, looking south-east (1m scales)



Trench 16, looking north-east (1m scales)

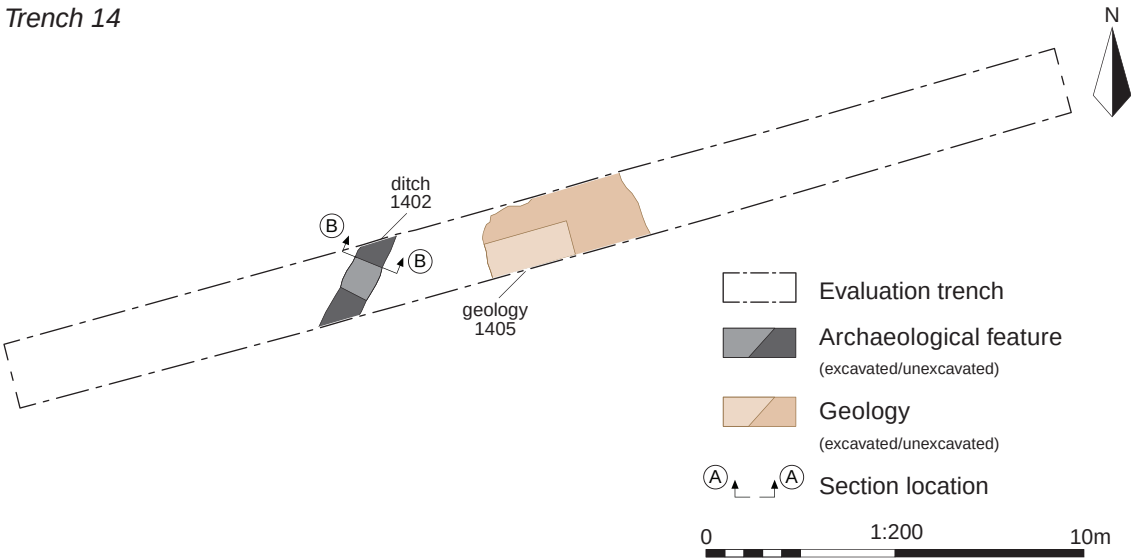


Furrow 1803 in Trench 18, looking north-east (0.4m scale)



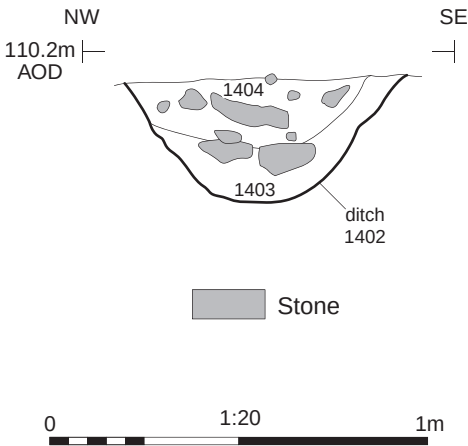
Trench 14, looking north-east (1m scales)

Trench 14



Ditch 1402, looking north-east (0.4m scale)

Section BB

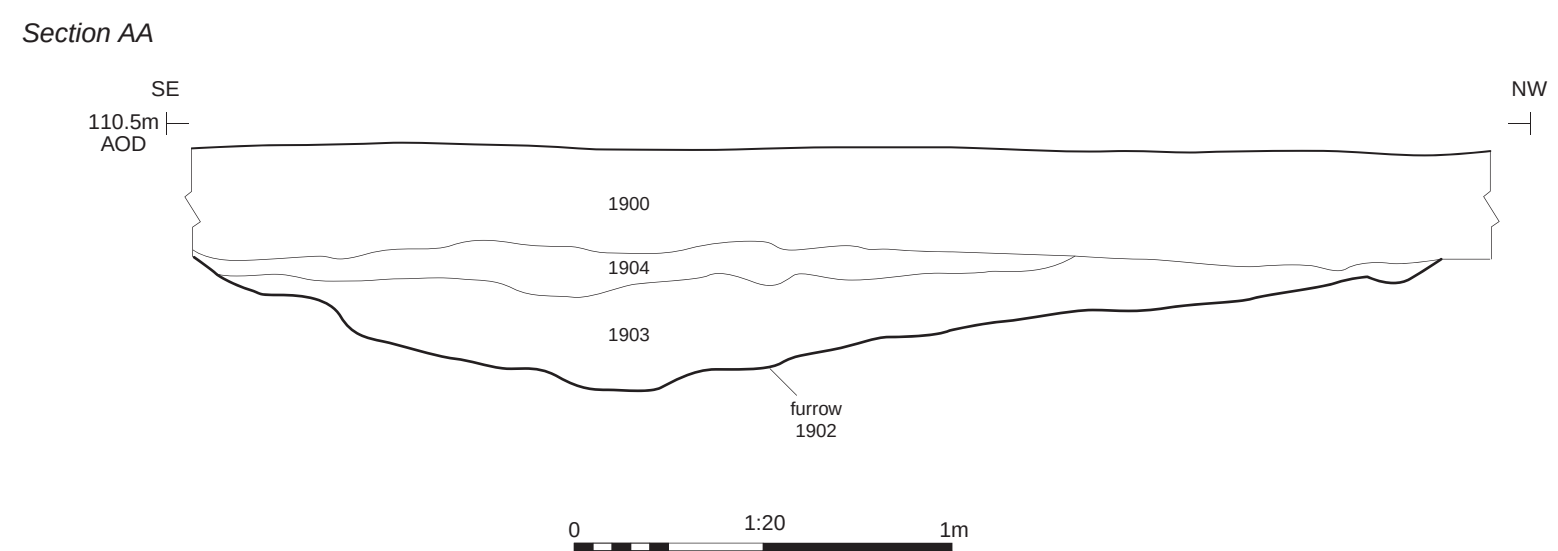
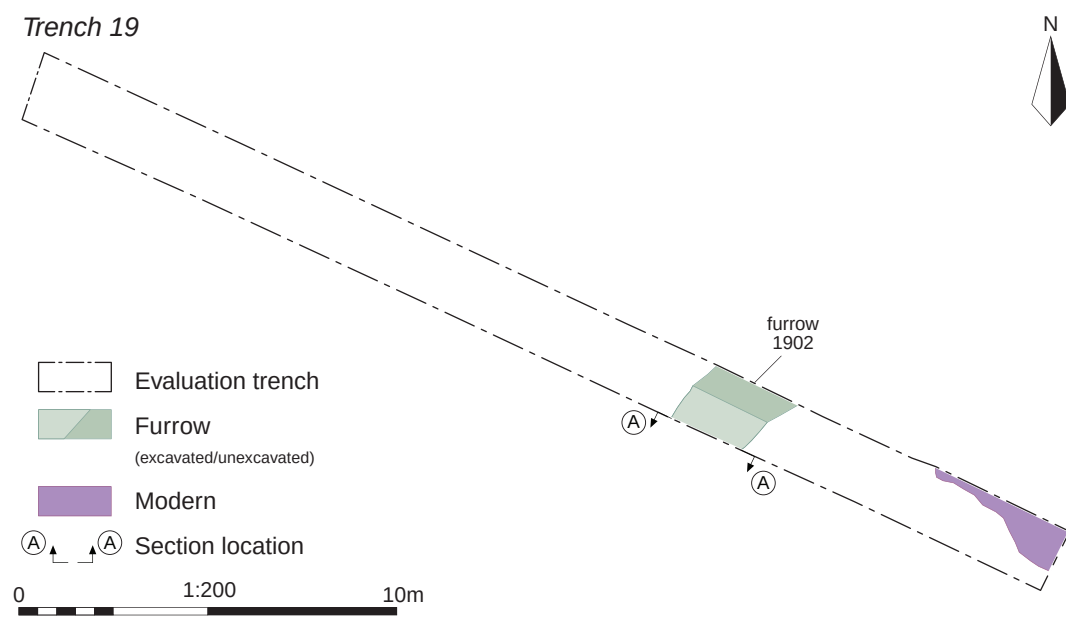


Andover 01264 347630
 Cirencester 01285 771022
 Milton Keynes 01908 564660
 Suffolk 01449 900120
www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk
enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

PROJECT TITLE
 Land west of Ratby, Leicestershire

FIGURE TITLE
 Phase 1 - Trench 14: plan, section and photographs

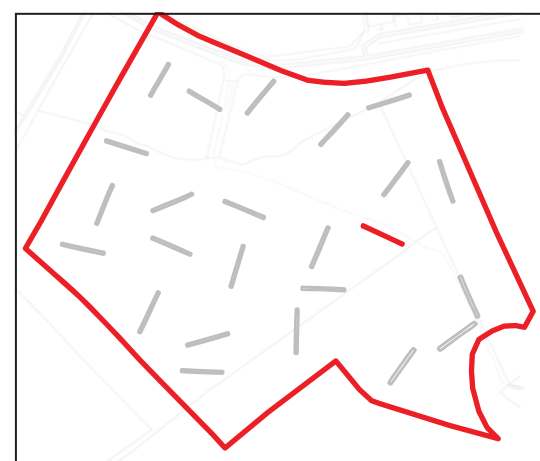
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CHECKED BY	LZS	DATE	28/11/2023	7
APPROVED BY	PR	SCALE @A3	1:20 & 1:200	



Trench 19, looking north-east (1m scales)



Furrow 1902 in Trench 19, looking south-west (1m scale)



Cotswold Archaeology

Andover 01264 347630
 Cirencester 01285 771022
 Milton Keynes 01908 564660
 Suffolk 01449 900120
 www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk
 enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

PROJECT TITLE
 Land west of Ratby, Leicestershire

FIGURE TITLE
 Phase 1 - Trench 19: plan, section and photographs

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CHECKED BY	LZS	DATE	28/11/2023	8
APPROVED BY	PR	SCALE@A3	1:20 & 1:200	



Trench 22, looking south-west (1m scales)

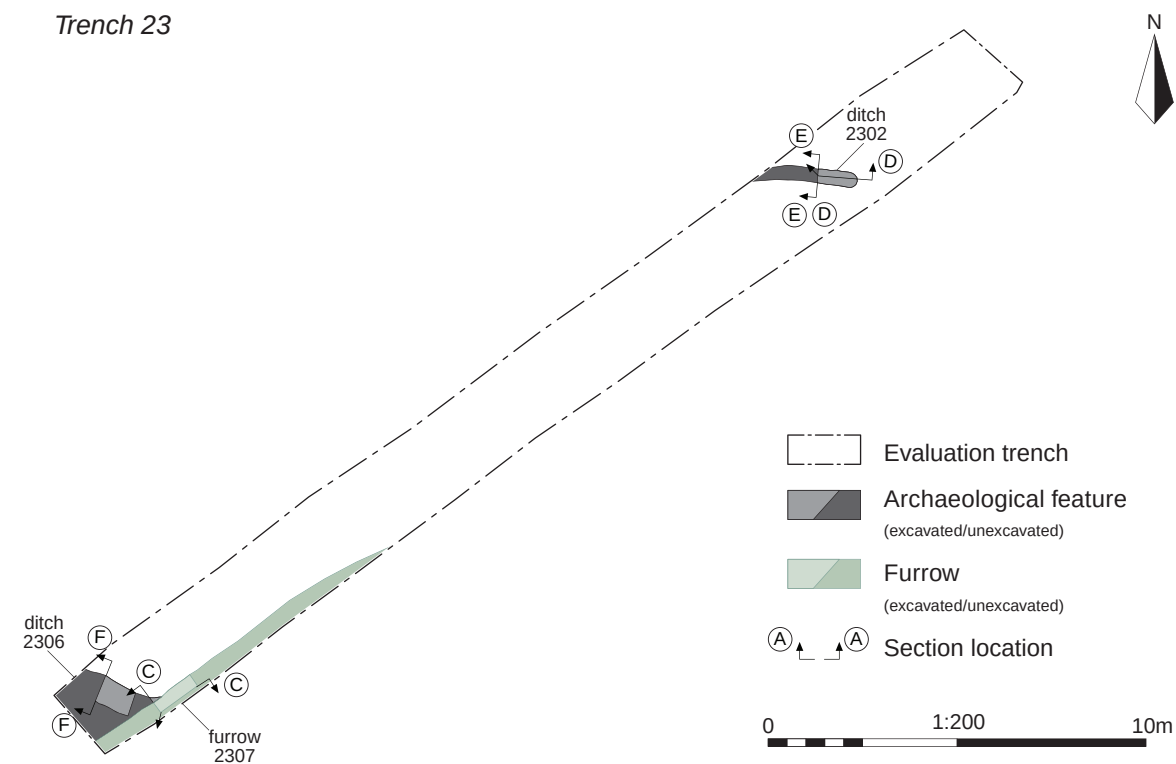


Trench 24, looking north-west (1m scales)



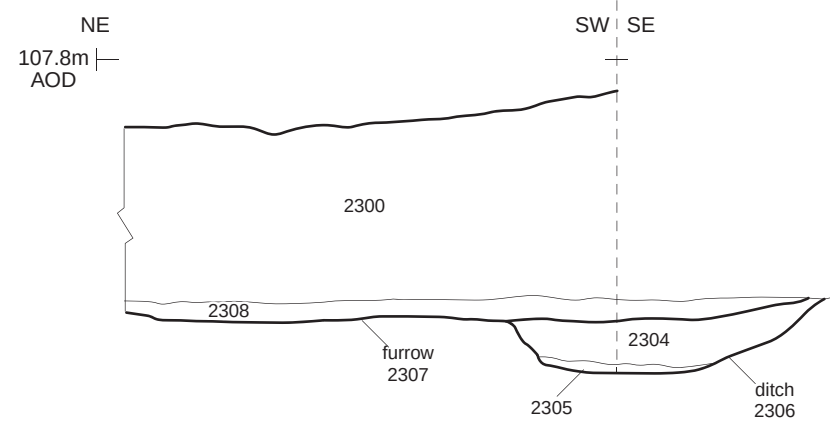
Furrow 2203, looking north-east (1m scale)

Trench 23

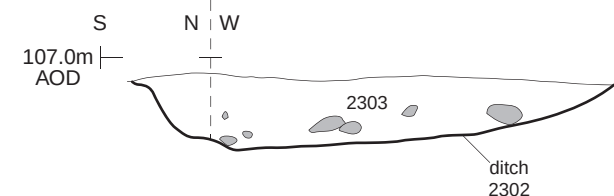


Trench 23, looking north-east (1m scales)

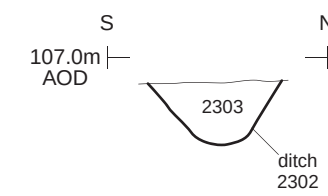
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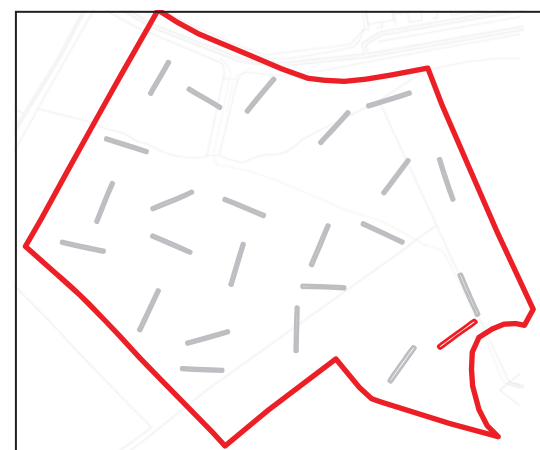
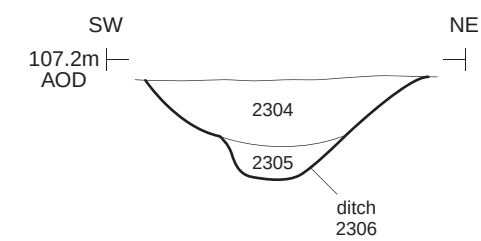
Section DD



Section EE



Section FF



Cotswold Archaeology
 Andover 01264 347630
 Cirencester 01285 771022
 Milton Keynes 01908 564660
 Suffolk 01449 900120
 www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk
 enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

PROJECT TITLE
 Land west of Ratby, Leicestershire

FIGURE TITLE
 Trench 23: plan, sections and photograph

DRAWN BY KM PROJECT NO. MK0912
 CHECKED BY LZS DATE 28/11/2023
 APPROVED BY PR SCALE @ A3 1:20 & 1:200

FIGURE NO.
 10



Ditch 2303, looking west (0.3m scale)



Ditch 2306, looking north-west (1m scale)



**Cotswold
Archaeology**

Andover 01264 347630
Cirencester 01285 771022
Milton Keynes 01908 564660
Suffolk 01449 900120
w www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk
e enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

PROJECT TITLE

Land west of Ratby, Leicestershire

FIGURE TITLE

Trench 23: photographs

DRAWN BY	KM	PROJECT NO.	MK0912
CHECKED BY	LZS	DATE	12/11/2023
APPROVED BY	PR	SCALE@A4	NA

FIGURE NO.

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Andover Office

Stanley House
Walworth Road
Andover
Hampshire
SP10 5LH

t: 01264 347630

Cirencester Office

Building 11
Cotswold Business Park
Cirencester
Gloucestershire
GL7 6BQ

t: 01285 771022

Milton Keynes Office

Unit 8 - The IO Centre
Fingle Drive, Stonebridge
Milton Keynes
Buckinghamshire
MK13 0AT

t: 01908 564660

Suffolk Office

Unit 5, Plot 11, Maitland Road
Lion Barn Industrial Estate
Needham Market
Suffolk
IP6 8NZ

t: 01449 900120

e: enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

