



**Historic building recording and topographic survey
at land off Sketchley Lane
Burbage, Hinckley
Leicestershire
Level 2
November 2023**

Report No. 23/112

Author: Lauren Wilson and Magda Rybska

Illustrator: Hugh Gatt



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Project Manager: Lauren Wilson

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OASIS REPORT FORM

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ACTIVITY TYPE			
Project/ Activity type	Descriptive Buildings Record (Level 2)		
Reason for investigation	Planning requirement		
Development type	Housing		
Planning reference ID	APP/K2420/W/22/3301735		
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National grid ref	SP 42296 91925		
Site name	Sketchley Lane, Burbage		
REVIEWERS/ ADMIN			
HER for project	Leicestershire HER		
National organisation	Historic England		
WORK UNDERTAKEN			
Methodological summary	MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) was commissioned by Charles Church, to undertake a programme of historic building recording and topographic survey at land off Sketchley Lane, Burbage, Hinckley, Leicestershire (NGR SP 42296 91925, Fig 1). This was required prior to the development of the site as a residential development to comprise 150 dwellings (Planning Ref. APP/K2420/W/22/3301735), as a condition on outline planning consent.		
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Description of outcomes/ summary of research framework contribution	The surviving earthworks likely represent medieval ridge and furrow within the open field system. The results show the ridge and furrow in the north of site as broad, S-shaped lines, which are indicative of a medieval date. The northern and south-eastern field systems are thought to be contemporary with each other. Unfortunately, the poorly preserved southwestern field system is difficult to define. The variable condition of some of the upstanding earthworks may have been affected by later, but limited ploughing. The historic building recording recorded a brick and timber agricultural building, likely originally utilised for the shelter of livestock, constructed on the cusp of the 19th century. There is some finesse in its construction but these details are minimal and clearly the building formed a utilitarian purpose. The roof is of interest, utilising reused timber of oak or most likely elm, to form a series of roof trusses. Carpentry marks have been recorded suggesting a system of erection from east to west.		

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ABSTRACT

MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) was commissioned by Charles Church, to undertake a programme of historic building recording and topographic survey at land off Sketchley Lane, Burbage, Hinckley, Leicestershire (NGR SP 42296 91925, Fig 1). This was required prior to the development of the site as a residential development to comprise 150 dwellings (Planning Ref. APP/K2420/W/22/3301735), as a condition on outline planning consent.

The surviving earthworks likely represent medieval ridge and furrow within the open field system. The results show the ridge and furrow in the north of site as broad, S-shaped lines, which are indicative of a medieval date. The northern and south-eastern field systems are thought to be contemporary with each other. Unfortunately, the poorly preserved southwestern field system is difficult to define. The variable condition of some of the upstanding earthworks may have been affected by later, but limited ploughing.

The historic building recording recorded a brick and timber agricultural building, likely originally utilised for the shelter of livestock, constructed on the cusp of the 19th century. There is some finesse in its construction but these details are minimal and clearly the building formed a utilitarian purpose. The roof is of interest, utilising reused timber of oak or most likely elm, to form a series of roof trusses. Carpentry marks have been recorded suggesting a system of erection from east to west.

1 INTRODUCTION

MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) was commissioned by Charles Church, to undertake a programme of historic building recording and topographic survey at land off Sketchley Lane, Burbage, Hinckley, Leicestershire (NGR SP 42296 91925, Fig 1). This was required prior to the development of the site as a residential development to comprise 150 dwellings (Planning Ref. APP/K2420/W/22/3301735), as a condition on outline planning consent.

MOLA would like to thank Esther Wiles of Charles Church for commissioning the project. In addition, MOLA acknowledges the input of William Kelly, Senior Planning Archaeologist (Heritage) at Leicestershire County Council.

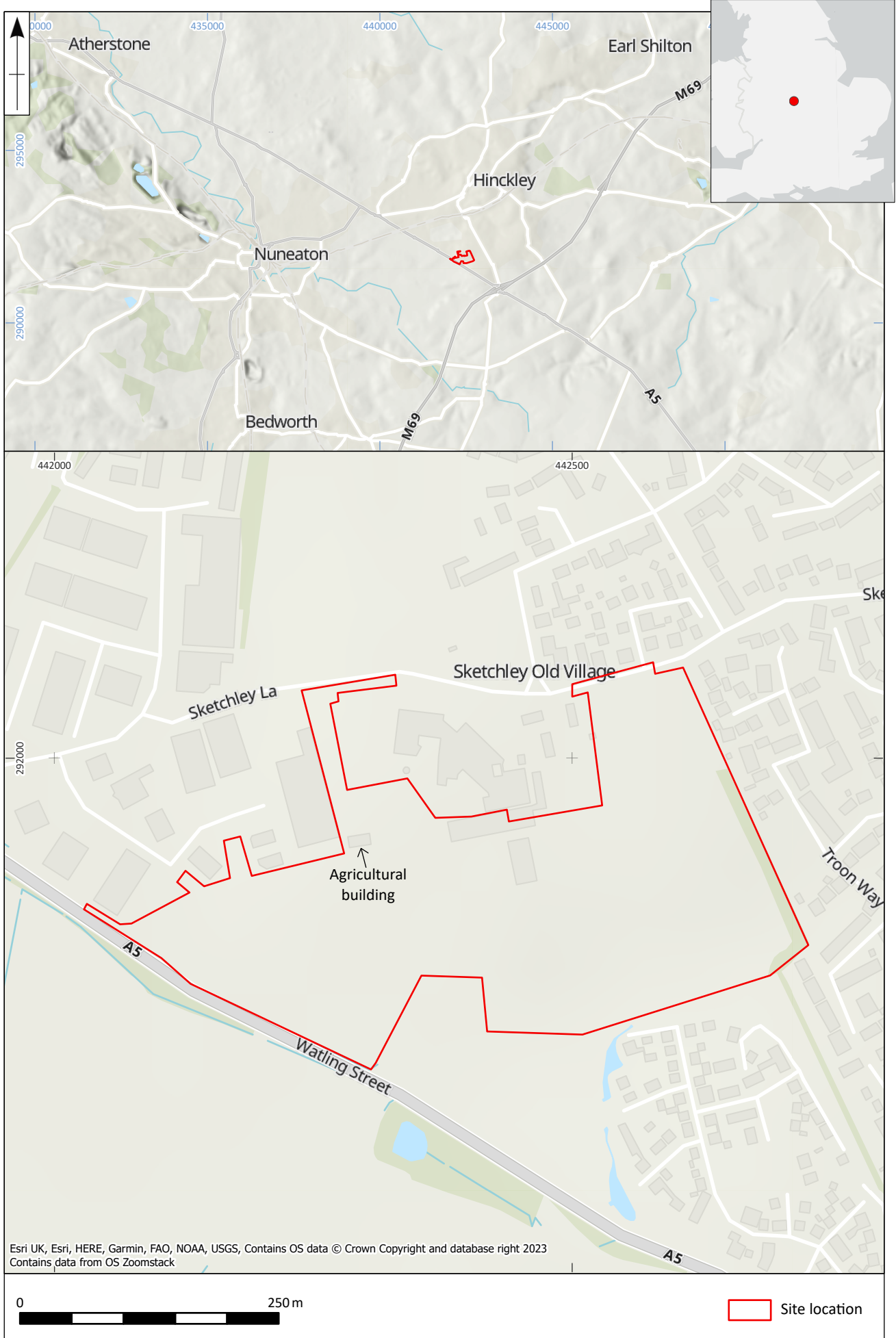
2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location, geology and topography

The site is located on the outskirts of Hinckley in the county of Leicestershire, within the suburb of Sketchley and Burbage (Fig 1). The site comprises a series of agricultural fields with modern farm complex to the north, and a brick agricultural building to the west which is the subject of the building recording element of this project. There is an industrial estate complex to the west, housing developments to the east, the A5 stretches along the southwestern boundary and to the north is Sketchley Lane. The border with the county of Warwickshire lies along the south-western edge of the site, in line with the A5.

The British Geological Survey (BGS) indicates that the local bedrock geology comprises Mercia Mudstone formation overlain in part by superficial deposits of sand and gravel in the higher parts of the site, and clay and silt on the lower parts to the south-west (BGS 2023).

The present topography mirrors the changes in underlying geology, with the north-eastern corner of the site standing at 115m above Ordnance Datum (aOD), sloping down to 105m aOD to the south-west.



Scale 1:5,000

Site location Fig 1

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Historic Building Recording

The objective of the Historic Building Survey was to fulfil the need for a recording of the built heritage assets within the site to a Level 2 standard, as described in the Historic England guidance document *Understanding Historic Buildings* (Historic England 2016). This was set to address the buildings' structural and architectural detail and archaeological evidence, to produce a complete record of the building building before the commencement of the proposed work with the aim of elucidating its use and structural history. The specific objectives and research aims of the historic building recording were defined fully in the WSI (MOLA 2023).

Thus the historic building recording had the following main components:

- Undertake a photographic record of the building. The photographic record to include detailed and general shots of the interior and exterior fabric, where this could be safely done;
- Investigate, analyse and describe the fabric of the building before the commencement of the proposed work with the aim of elucidating its use and structural history, and record and analyse the resulting evidence for this history using applicable archaeological methods;
- Study readily available documentary sources for the history of the building and the site. The level of historic documentary research was limited to keeping the depth of the recording as a Level 2 survey, and;
- Report the results in a suitable form, publish a summary and register the report through the Archaeology Data Service's OASIS data collection form, with the Historic Environment Record and with the LPA.

4 METHODOLOGY (HISTORIC BUILDING RECORDING)

In addition to the Historic England and ClfA guidance referred to above, the historic building recording was carried out in accordance with the site-specific WSI (MOLA 2023). All work was carried out in accordance with Historic England specifications in *Understanding historic buildings: a guide to good recording practice* (Historic England 2016a) and the Chartered Institutes for Archaeologist's *Standard and guidance for archaeological investigation of standing buildings or structures* (ClfA 2020).

4.1 Physical investigation

The buildings were inspected on the 30th November 2023. Physical investigation of the building was carried out on site before the proposed intervention to the original fabric of the building. This aspect of the investigation aimed at elucidating significant details regarding fabric, function, or the elements, methods/order of construction and development.

4.2 Written records

Handwritten descriptive notes were produced on-site to record the findings of the physical investigation. The notes recorded details such as the fabric, form and function of the structure, along with evidence of any alterations and development over time. The written account comprises the building's construction, present and former use and where appropriate, the building's past and present relationship to its setting in the wider landscape.

4.3 Documentary research

Formal detailed historical research was not within the remit of this report. Provision was made for sufficient initial documentary research in order to enable the overall research aims to be realised. This will be limited to online resources, and the existing Heritage Statement prepared by The Environmental Dimension Partnership (EDP 2021). These were consulted to the extent necessary to furnish information as to dates of construction and modification of the buildings, and on the social, economic and cultural context in which the buildings were constructed and used, and later modified in form and use (Figs 2-9).

4.5 Photographic records

A comprehensive photographic record of the buildings was made during the investigation. Photographs were taken using a Nikon D7200 (24 megapixels) with an 18-105mm and wide angle 10-20mm lens. This survey has generated an archive of approximately 63 digital photographs of which a selection is used in this report for illustrative purposes (Figs 10-27) and their locations recorded on plans.

4.6 Drawn records

No measured drawings were supplied to MOLA and so sketch plans were made on site broadly to conform to the Historic England's guidance for the illustration of historic buildings (Historic England 2016b). These are reproduced as part of this report (Fig 28).

4.7 Organisation of the report and conventions

The building is orientated slightly south-west to north-east, but for simplicity referred to in this report as orientated east to west in the text. All maps and plans in the report show true north, and directions given in the figures and on accompanying illustrations are correct. Measurements may be given in both metric and imperial measurements where appropriate.

5 METHODOLOGY (TOPOGRAPHIC SURVEY)

The UAV survey was undertaken on 30th November 2023 with a DJI Mavic 3 Multispectral UAV during good conditions. Situational photographs of the site and surroundings were collected through oblique and vertical images during an ad-hoc, pilot-controlled flightpath, at heights 70m above ground level.

The required DEM (Digital Elevation Model) was created by capturing a set of massively overlapping vertical images on a pre-planned flight path of strict parallel lines over the area at a constant height of 70m above ground level (Kokalj and Hesse 2017). A 50m separation was maintained from the neighbouring road. These images were then subjected to processing using digital photogrammetric software.

This processing ingested coordinates from the GNSS RTK module aboard the UAV, which results in a hovering accuracy in both planes of $\pm 0.1\text{m}$, and allows for centimetre-level survey accuracy by accurately geolocating the imagery without requiring ground control points. The UAV camera lens has a focal length of 24mm and a sensor of 20 megapixels (4/3 CMOS) and captured imagery in jpeg and RAW format.

The processing also ingests coordinates from temporary ground control points (GCPs) that are identified within the images, to scale, geo-locate and provide independent accuracy checks of the resultant 3D model. These are 0.8m tough vinyl squares, 6 of which were well distributed over the area, depending on terrain and obstacles, and pegged to the ground. The GCPs were measured using survey grade differential GPS providing an absolute accuracy of 2-3cm X and 4-5cm in Z.

The data processing took place at MOLA Northampton, using photogrammetric software Agisoft Metashape. A raster DEM was generated and imported into the Geographic Information System (GIS) software package 'ArcGIS Pro' and processed following the guidance outlined by Historic England (HE 2017).

The Relief Visualization Toolbox (RVT) (Kokalj and Hesse 2017) was used for the visualisation of the DEM raster data. This software gave various types of visualisations to better assess the earthworks.

The survey results were compared with freely available LIDAR from The Environment Agency National LIDAR Programme and historic maps available from National Library of Scotland.

6 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

6.1 Introduction

The existing Heritage Statement prepared by The Environmental Dimension Partnership (EDP 2021) covers a brief assessment of some of the archaeological and historical background of the area. In combination with the geophysical survey and trial trench evaluation undertaken in 2019 (SUMO 2019 and Oxford Archaeology 2019) it makes it possible to review the survival of archaeological remains and present a narrative to the historical context in which the site has developed. In addition, a closer study has been made of cartographic sources in order to put the results of both surveys in context.

6.2 Prehistoric

Prehistoric survival has low potential within the site itself, and what is present in the wider area is focused on higher ground, on geological conditions focused to the north-east. The previous archaeological surveys of the site identified no surviving archaeological remains of this period (SUMO 2019 and Oxford Archaeology 2019), and so focus during this time period was likely elsewhere in the surrounding area. Evidence within the historic record includes two possible Neolithic or Bronze Age round barrows c120m to the south-west (MWA2761) but these features have not undergone any intrusive survey; remaining a theoretical interpretation (EDP 2021). Various findspots are recorded including worked flints (MLE21173) c530m to the east, a Neolithic hand axe c890m to the north-west (MLE7236) and a single sherd of Iron Age pottery (MLE6498) c340m to the east of the site, possibly indicating buried deposits in this area (EDP 2021).

As well as previous archaeological events on the site, two evaluation projects immediately to the east and south-east of the site revealed no prehistoric archaeological remains.

6.3 Roman

The site lies directly adjacent to the Roman road of Watling Street (MLE1388; current A5), although the current alignment may not accurately represent the true Roman alignment (EDP 2021). Despite this the evaluation only recovered a single sherd of Roman pottery, redeposited in a later feature (Oxford Archaeology 2019). Other nearby archaeology activity, also focused or in close proximity to Watling Street, have also not recorded archaeological records for this period (EDP 2021).

6.4 Medieval

Ridge and furrow earthworks have been previously identified on the site, and this is the reason for the current topographic survey which forms part of this project. Beyond this however there are no recorded archaeological remains within the site boundary within the HER (EDP 2021). The ridge and furrow is discussed in more detail below, but was detected to the eastern, central and western areas of the site, during the magnetometer survey by SUMO (2019). This was not picked up in the northern spur of the site boundary, and a small area known as Area 7 to the immediate south-west of the agricultural building.

Within the wider area other areas of ridge and furrow have been identified and a single findspot of a late medieval or early post-medieval bridle fitting is recorded c60m to the west of the site (MWA2762). The medieval historic core of Sketchley lies to the immediate north of the site, and the deserted settlement of Stretton Baskerville is

location 370m to the south-west. The site therefore likely formed part of the rural landscape between nearby settlements during this period.

The deserted village of Stretton Baskerville (HE IUD: 1005732) was held by Eadric the Wild before the Conquest, but in 1086 Domesday records a village named Stratone rated at three hides, held by Roger of Ralph de Mortemer. By 1166 the village was held by the Baskerville family that would give the settlement its full name, but by 1220 it was in the possession of the steward of the Earl of Ferrers (Hinckley Past & Present 2023a). Under the ownership of Twyford family 160 open fields were enclosed and seven houses deliberately destroyed. In 1494 it was described as having 12 houses, each with a garden. Later owners enclosed more land to keep sheep and further decline is recorded. No further documentary references are made after 1577 until 1730 when its current state is noted. Limited excavations in the 1940s located the church, a cobbled main street, and found at least one dwelling was constructed of timber and clay (HE 2023).

Sketchley does not feature in Domesday, instead forming part of the settlement of Burbage to the east. However, the earliest record of Sketchley predates this with Leofric, Earl of Mercia, granting the villages of Burbage, Aston and Sketchley to Coventry Abbey (Hinckley Past & Present 2023b). In 1100 it was part of the Manors granted to Robert de Flamville. By 1564 there were six families within the settlement and later cartographic sources (see below) also indicate this was a small settlement of few houses and farmsteads.

6.5 Post-medieval

The area remained little changed during the post-medieval period up to the turn of the 20th century, with the site forming rural agricultural land on the periphery of the village of Sketchley. One of the most significant developments in the wider area was the building of the Ashby Canal (MLE8916) c900m to the north-west. In 1798 a section of canal further to the north had been completed and in 1804 this was linked to the Coventry Canal heading south-west, away from Hinckley (Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council). A section of the canal to the north of the site is now a Conservation Area.

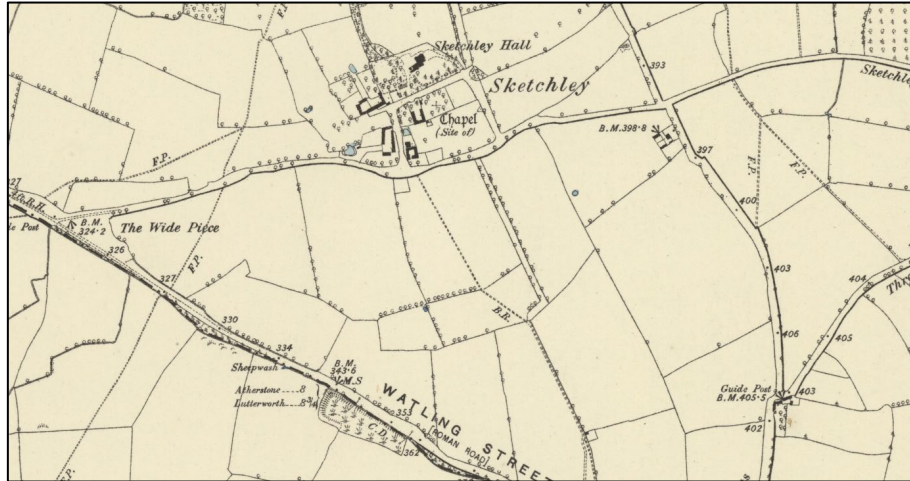
One of the earliest cartographic sources available is the 1841 tithe map (Fig 2). This illustrates the site forming six agricultural fields comprising a mixture of arable and pasture, with a track along the north-east edge. The agricultural building is now illustrated on this source.



Burbage Tithe map, 1841 from the Heritage Statement (EDP 2021)

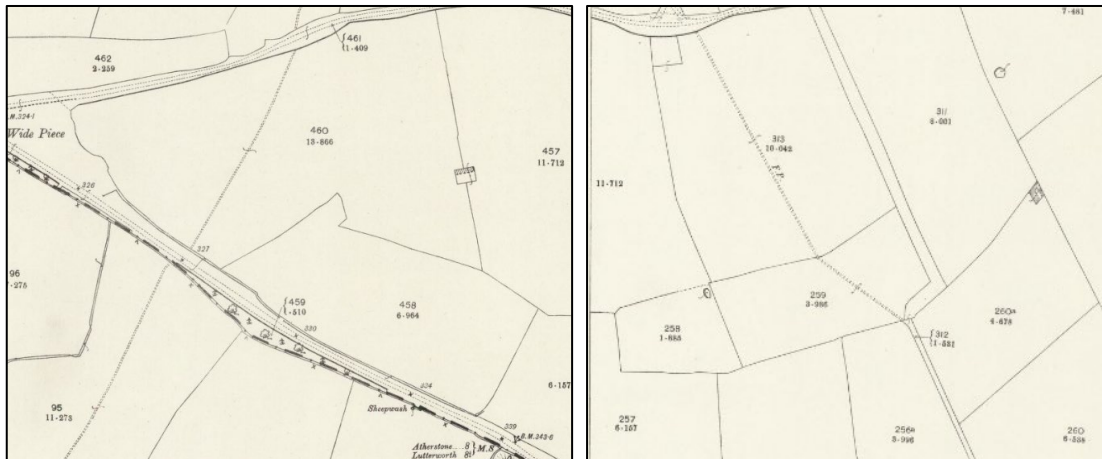
Fig 2

More detail however is shown on subsequent Ordnance Survey maps from 1887 onwards (Fig 3). Sketchley to the north is a small settlement comprising only a few farmsteads and Sketchley Hall with landscaped gardens. The site to the south forms a series of fields, field boundaries and trackways. The geophysical survey (SUMO 2019) confirmed the presence of former field boundaries in line with these sources, as well as possible land drains within the site.



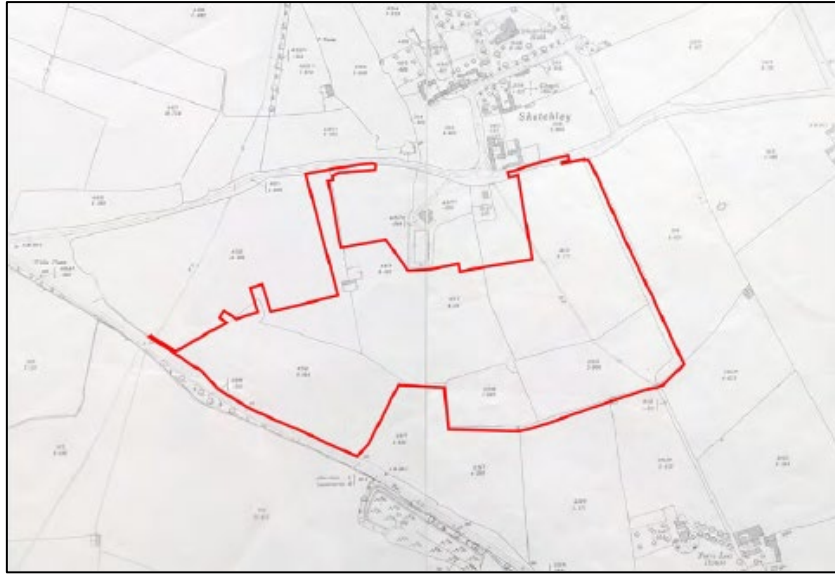
Ordnance Survey map 6inch Leicestershire XI.SE, 1887 from National Library of Scotland Fig 3

The next source from 1903 is the first indication of the agricultural building subject of the building recording element of this project. It is illustrated as a linear building, with small yard to the south (Fig 4).

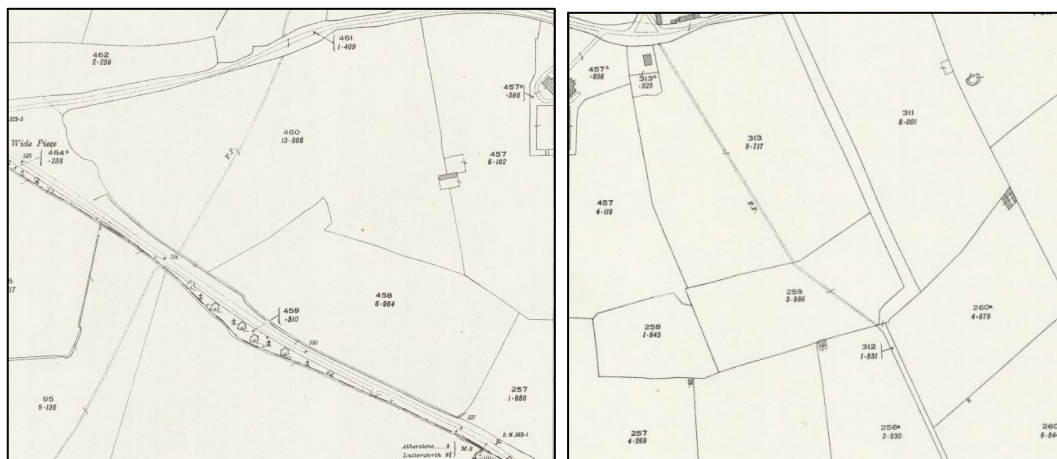


Ordnance Survey map 25inch Leicestershire XLII.11 (left), and XLII.12 (right), published 1903 from National Library of Scotland Fig 4

Remaining as agricultural land the site indicates little change in subsequent sources. Minimal development is also recorded in Sketchley to the north, but some small additions are noted in the 1920s (Fig 5). Still outside the site boundary but within the vicinity a small house with rear yard appears in the location of the current Sketchley Grange Hotel.



Ordnance Survey map, 1924/5 from the Heritage Statement (EDP 2021) Fig 5



Ordnance Survey map 25inch Leicestershire XLII.11 (left) and XLII.12 (right), published 1924 from National Library of Scotland Fig 6

As well as the study of aerial photographs in the Heritage Statement, a separate search was undertaken for this project. This revealed the below image (Fig 7) from the 1950s showing the agricultural building, and ridge and furrow within the site. The agricultural building appears to be accessed from the west, with a trackway apparent turning north towards Sketchley Lane. The ridge and furrow is also visible within field boundaries which remain little changed from previous, and subsequent sources (Fig 8). In comparison to the site today, significant development has taken place in the latter half of the 20th century to the immediate surroundings of the site with the exception of the area to the south-west where this remains agricultural rural land (Fig 9).



Air Photo Mosaic Sheet 42/49 SW / SP 49 SW, May 1950 from National Library of Scotland
Fig 7



Ordnance Survey map 6inch SP49SW – A, 1955 from National Library of Scotland
Fig 8



Google Earth image from 16-06-2021

Fig 9

7 RESULTS (HISTORIC BUILDING RECORDING)

7.1 Introduction

The site comprises a long linear single-storey brick structure which remains partly open-sided to the south. The building comprises stabling for horses currently, and likely formed a similar purpose historically. The timber roof trusses are supported by brick piers to the north and south. Over this the roof is covered in clay tiles, with hog back ridge tiles, which have been replaced to the west.

7.2 Exterior

North elevation

To the north this elevation retains no fenestration and little features of note (Fig 10). The brickwork is a red/purple fabric and is laid in Flemish Garden Wall bond. To the north-east corner the brickwork has failed. To the eaves the fascia boards retain an ovolo moulded soffit which runs the length of the building (Fig 11). This is interrupted to the west by two large anchor plates associated with roof trusses seen internally (Fig 12).



North elevation of the building, looking south

Fig 10



Moulded fascia board to the north elevation, looking south Fig 11



Anchor tie-plate to the north elevation, looking south Fig 12

South elevation

The south elevation faces a small yard area which is laid in cobbled with fieldstone but is heavily overlaid with mud and grass and barely visible (Fig 13). The elevation is divided by a series of brick piers which create the open portals to the interior. To the east however this is not continued and the Flemish Garden Wall bond continues. Each pier supports a roof truss internally in brick with rounded corners rising to a chamfered capital (Fig 14). To the west end two portals are now enclosed with metal corrugated sheeting and modern materials.

The fascia board along this elevation is much degraded and repaired in places. However, to the east end this obscures an early timber wall-plate, whereas to the west this comprises a machine-cut timber. There are also metal anchor plates along this elevation supporting the internal trusses.



Open-sided south elevation of the building, looking north-west Fig 13



Brick piers to the south elevation showing brick detailing,
looking south-east Fig 14

East elevation

The east elevation is plain with exception of an off-centre dilapidated door (Fig 15). The brick façade retains queen closers to the outer edges and rises to no fascia board and shows the tiles embedded in mortar. The door has an engineering or blue brick threshold and a slender timber lintel. The door itself is comprised of planks.



East elevation of the building, looking west Fig 15

West elevation

Similarly, to its eastern counterpart this elevation is plain with no fenestration (Fig 16). The north-western corner shows some degradation to its upper section and there are areas of brick repair with homogenous modern red brick below the gable.



West gable end of the building, looking south-east Fig 16

7.3 Interior

Internally the building comprises a large space to the west with five bays, and a smaller room to the east with brick wall dividing it from the main space.

The far eastern room comprises plain brick walls rising to a timber roof (Fig 17). The door to the east gable end is ledged to the rear with metal catch. That to the west is double-leafed but its upper leaf lies *ex situ* beside the aperture. Above the roof comprises a single purlin to each pitch with softwood rafters riding over in two lengths, from a wall-plate resting atop the brick walls, to a ridgeboard at the apex.

The wall dividing the eastern room from the main space is of interest (Fig 18). The lower section comprises regular brick with queen closers to the doorway aperture.

Above the height of the doorway lintel the wall steps back slightly and comprises irregular looking brick, likely handmade, which appear flatter in section. This is mixed with more regular brickwork.

The main space is simple with brick walls and a timber roof above. The brick piers seen externally each support a truss, mirrored on the north wall without the chamfered capitals (Fig 19). Each of the piers retains empty mortises to their side, perhaps suggesting there was formerly some kind of partition attached here. The southern pier to Truss 2 also retains these to its north face. In addition, each of the northern piers has a notch c1m from ground height for something formerly running along this rear back wall, perhaps a support or frame for a trough system.

The west gable end is plain comprising brickwork rising to the gable apex.

The truss arrangement over this space comprises a tie-beam, resting atop the brick piers, and two principal rafters bridled at the apex. There is a purlin in each pitch riding over the principal rafters with chocks. Over the backs of the purlins rise the common rafters, some in two lengths, rising to a ridgeboard at the apex.

The timber used for the tie-beams, principal rafters, purlins, and some of the wall-plate to the south is of some age. This has been reused from another building or arrangement, as multiple peg holes and empty notches for lap joints are present. It is all of robust scantling and appears to be oak or elm. Otherwise, the rest of the timber is softwood, cleanly-cut, and regular. This comprises the common rafters, ridgeboard, and some other replaced elements.

Truss 1 differs in that its principal rafters simply abut each other at their apex, rather than being bridled as the other examples (Fig 20). To the west side of the tie-beam there is a chiselled Roman numeral II with tag, and a gouged Roman numeral I (Fig 21).

Truss 2 differs in that its principal rafters simply abut each other at their apex, rather than being bridled as the other examples (Fig 22). To the west side of the tie-beam there is a gouged Roman numeral III to the south end (Fig 23), however this could represent a II which has been altered.

To the west side of Truss 3 the tie-beam retains two gouged Roman numerals III (Figs 24-25).

To Truss 4 the tie-beam retains diminished haunch mortises for floor joists, formerly comprising a wall-plate or floor joist in its previous location (Fig 26). Below there is also a metal tie-rod embedded in the brickwork. To the west side of the tie-beam at the south end there is a gouged Roman numeral IIII (Fig 27).



Far eastern room showing brick interior and some of the roof structure, looking east
Fig 17



Dividing wall between the main space and the eastern room, looking east Fig 18



General view of the main space showing brick piers and their mortises, looking east
Fig 19



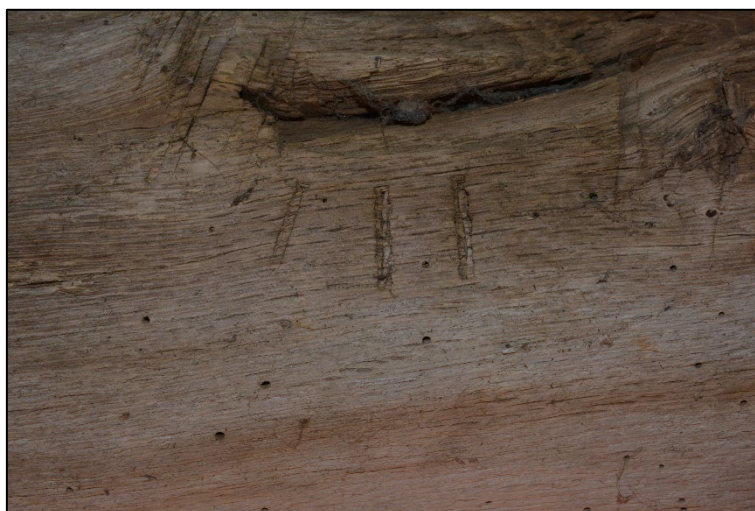
West side of Truss 1, looking east Fig 20



Chiselled carpentry marks on Truss 1, looking east Fig 21



West side of Truss 2, looking east Fig 22



Carpentry marks on Truss 2, looking east Fig 23



West side of Truss 3, looking east Fig 24



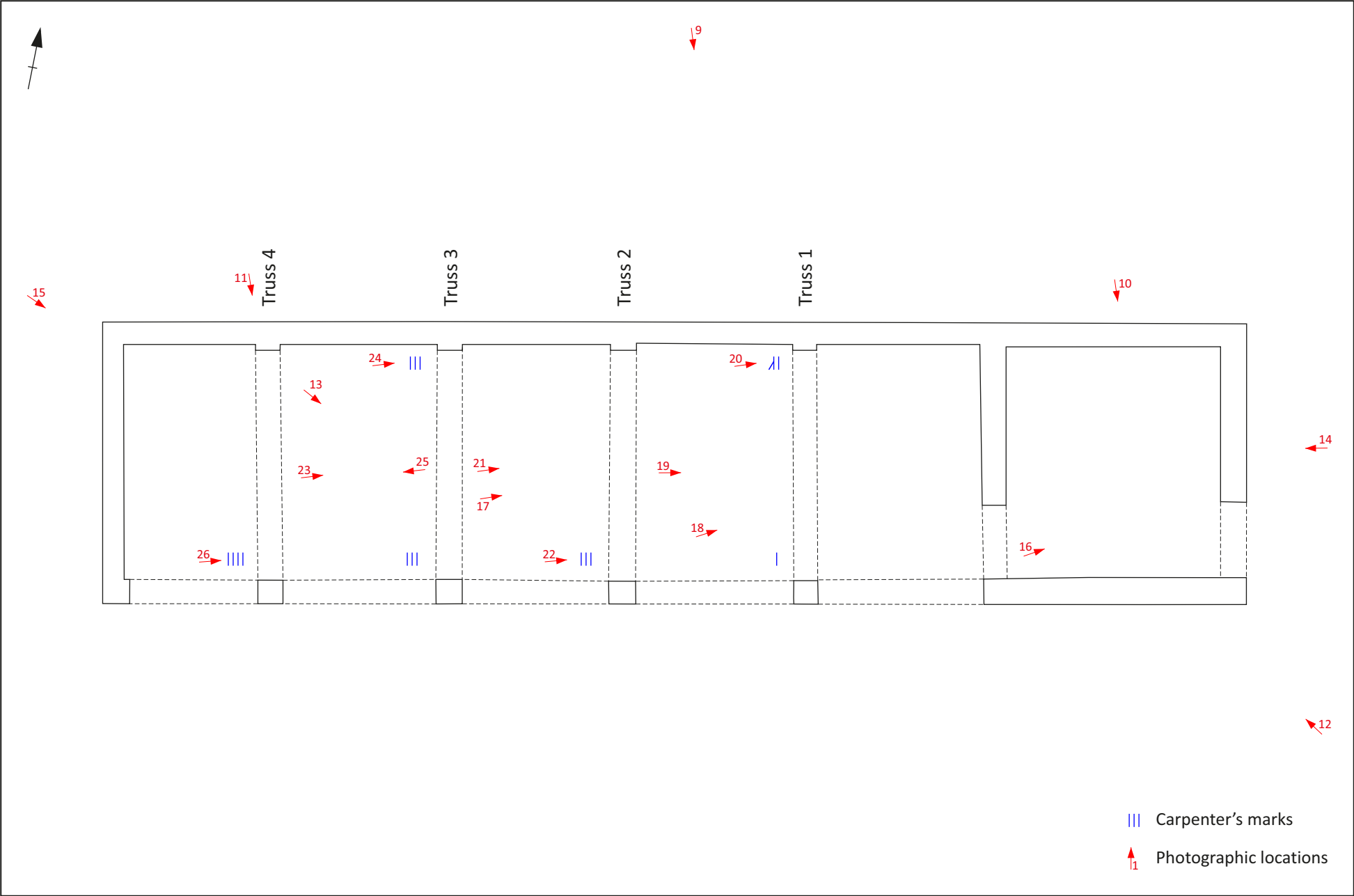
Carpentry marks on Truss 3, looking east Fig 25



East side of Truss 4, looking east Fig 26



Carpentry marks indicated on Truss 4, looking east Fig 27



Not to scale

Sketch floor plan with photographic locations Fig 28

8 RESULTS (TOPOGRAPHIC SURVEY)

8.1 Introduction

Burbage lies within the study area of Turning of the Plough (Hall 2001), an investigation into the survival and loss of medieval and post-medieval earthworks in the Midlands region but is not listed as a 'Priority Township'.

The topography of the site gently slopes downwards from 119m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) at the north-east edge to 100m aOD at the south-west edge.

The earthworks are spread over six modern fields (Fig 31), which used to be a part of three or possibly four much larger medieval fields or furlongs (Fig 31). The furlongs would have comprised blocks of individual cultivated 'lands' (also known as strips or selions), which appear as earthwork ridges. Across the site these were defined by linear or S-shaped raised earthworks with the furrows derived from the resulting hollows in between. The surveyed features correlated well with the features recorded in the geophysical survey and evaluation work (AO 2019), although some of the earthworks in Field 3, 5 and 6 were less well preserved and visible.

The northern field system (Fields 1, 4 and 5) contained NNW to SSW aligned ridge and furrow. The southeastern field system (Field 2) contained the remains of southwest-to-north-east-aligned ridge and furrow. The southwestern field system (Field 6) contained poorly preserved southwest to north-east aligned ridge and furrow.

8.2 Northern Field system (Fields 1, 4 and 5)

In the northern field system all ridges and furrows are aligned NNW to SSW (Fig 29, 30), however there might be a slight alignment difference between Fields 1 and 4, which may indicate that these were actually two separate field systems. However, the possible boundary between these two fields does not survive due to modern development.

In Fields 1 and 4, the ridge and furrow in this furlong was aligned NNW to SSW and measured at least 100m in length. The earthworks in Fields 1 and 4 were characterised by well-defined deep furrows and high ridges. Profile 1 (Fig 32, 33) was measured across Field 1 and aligned SW-NE. The ridges in Field 1 are on average c5m apart, were c4.5m wide and c0.3m high with moderate slopes.

Similarly, in Field 4, Profile 2 (Fig 32, 33), aligned NW-SE, shows that the ridges are c6m apart, c6m wide and c0.3m high with moderate slope.

By contrast, the ridge and furrow in Field 5 was less well preserved and defined than in Fields 1 and 4. However Profiles 4 (Fig 32, 33) taken in the northern part of Field 5 and Profile 3 (Fig 32, 33), taken in the southern part of this field, both aligned WS-EN, shows the subtle remains of possible ridges and furrows.

Possible remains of the historic field boundary / hedges are visible between the northern field system and southeastern field system (Fig 31).



Aerial Photography taken from drone, looking north Fig 29



Aerial Photography taken from drone, looking north-west Fig 30

8.3 The Southeastern field system (Fields 2 and 3)

This area of ridge and furrow was aligned SW to NE and measured at least 200m long. There were at least seven 'lands' within this furlong, represented by seven surviving ridges and eight furrows. Those in Field 2 were defined by surviving shallow hollows and ridges (Fig 31). Profile 6 (Fig 32, 34) was measured across Field 2 and was aligned NW to SE. The ridges in Profile 6 are on average c7m apart, were c6m wide and 0.15m high with gradual slopes.

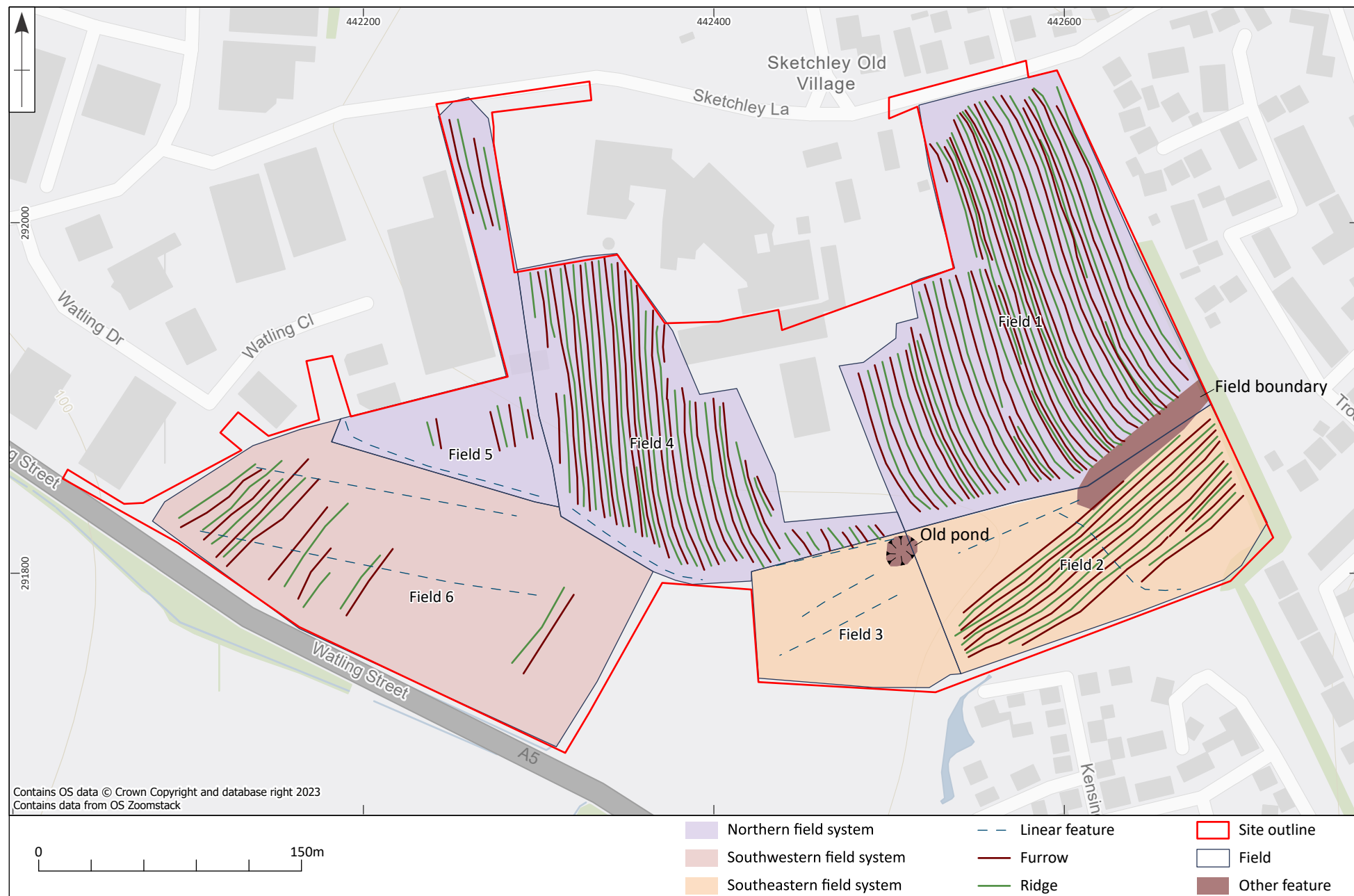
No trace of ridge and furrow was identified within Field 3. However, a depression located between Fields 2 and 3 could be remains of a possible pond (Fig 32). The feature is about 19m long, about 16m wide and approximately 0.5m deep. This possible pond is better visible on LIDAR data (Fig 36), and it is represented on the historic maps such as First Edition OS six-inch map published in 1887, as well as on Second Edition OS Six-inch map published in 1904.

8.4 The Southwestern field system (Field 6)

This area of ridge and furrow was aligned south-west to north-east and measured at least 50m long. The earthworks were less well preserved and ill-defined than other fields. Eight 'lands', represented by 8 surviving ridges and 8 furrows, were identified within this furlong.

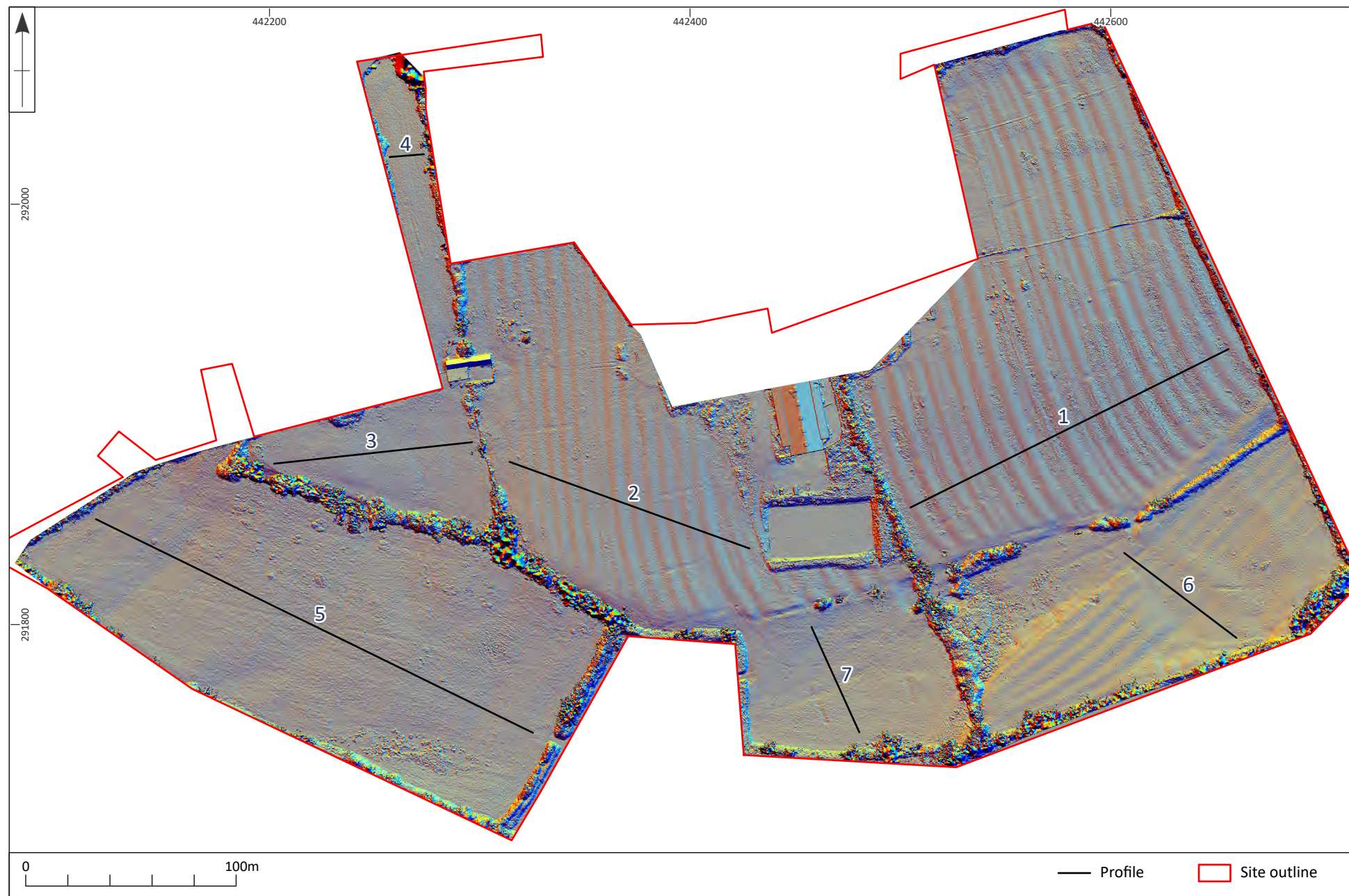
Profile 5 (Fig 32, 34) was measured across Field 6 and was aligned east to west.

The ridges in Profile 6 averaged c9m apart, were c7m wide and 0.10m high with shallow slopes.



Scale 1:3,000

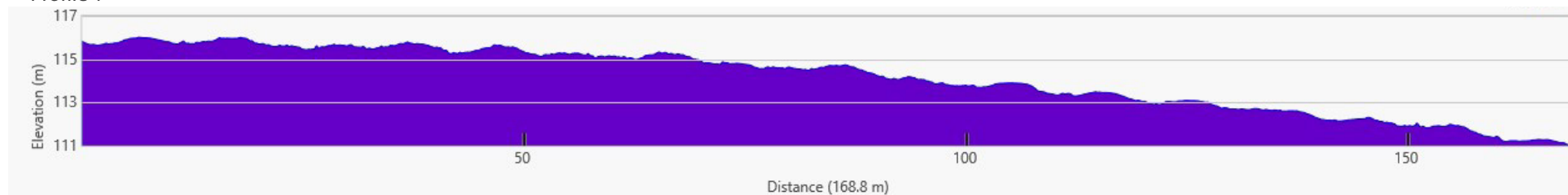
Topographical survey results Fig 31



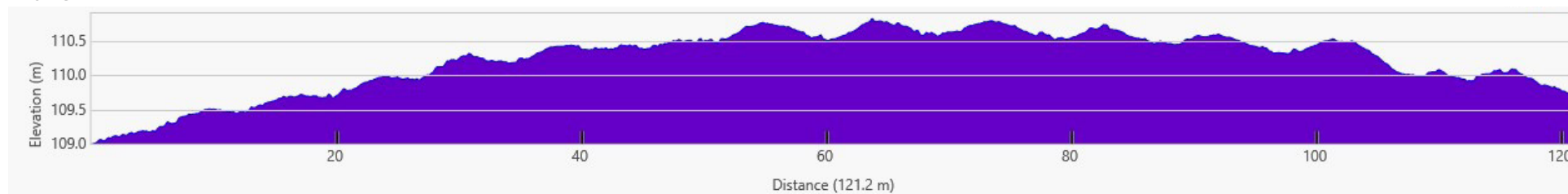
Scale 1:2,500

Profile locations with DEM Fig 32

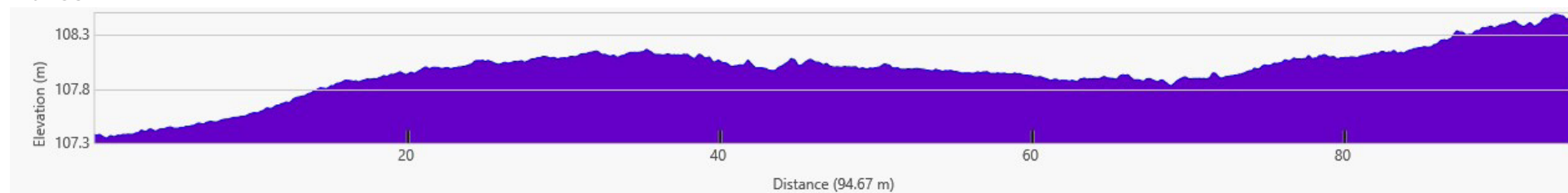
Profile 1



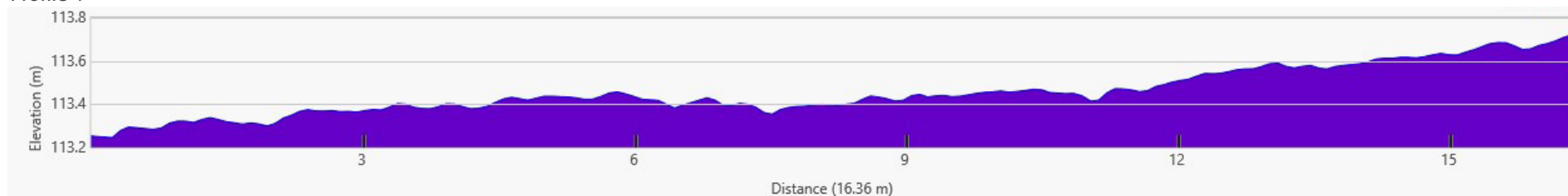
Profile 2



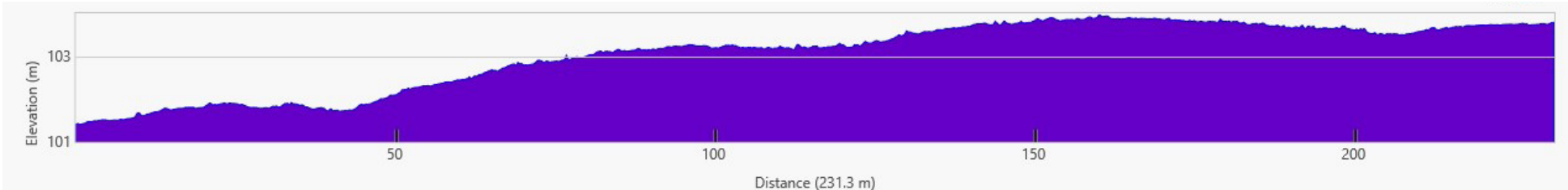
Profile 3



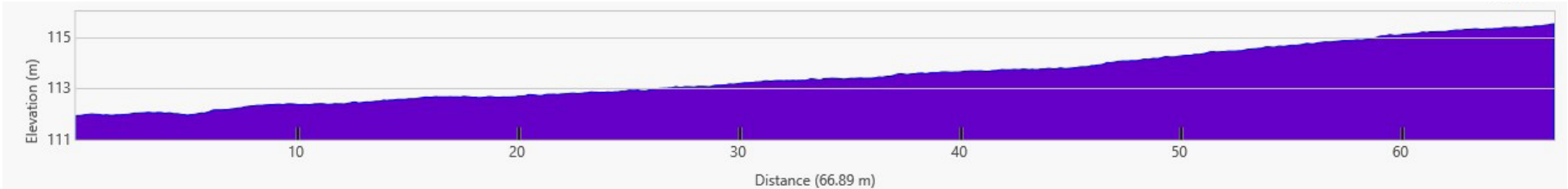
Profile 4



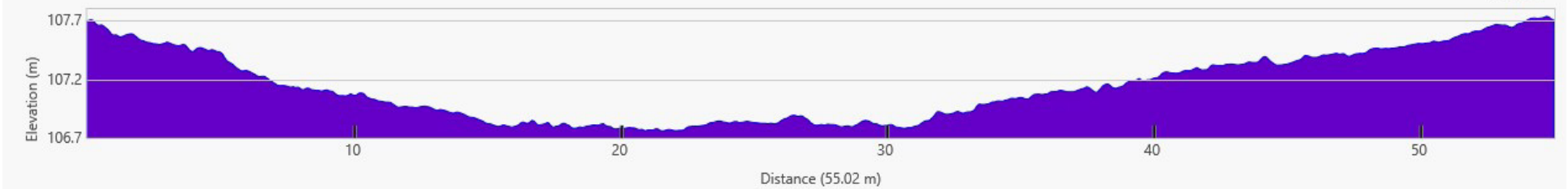
Profile 5

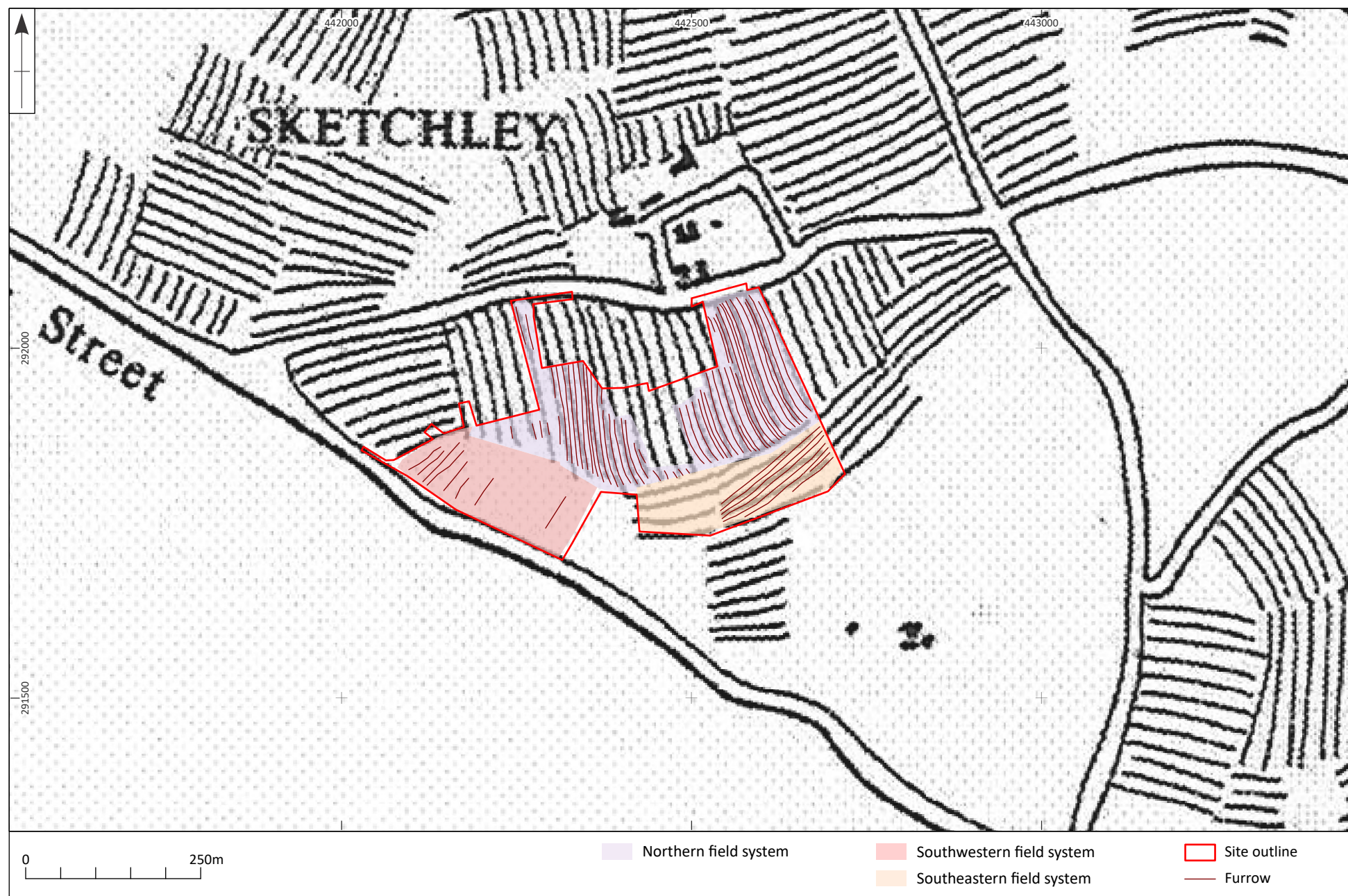


Profile 6



Profile 7





Scale 1:7,500

Topographical survey results with previously recorded field systems (after Hartley 2008) Fig 35



Scale 1:2,500

Topographical survey results with LiDAR Fig 36

9 DISCUSSION

9.1 Topographic Survey

The surviving earthworks likely represent medieval ridge and furrow within the open field system. The survey interpretation was guided by the LiDAR and the results of the UAV survey. Generally, the LiDAR (Fig 36) has proven to be accurate, and the UAV survey has clarified the form of the remains and suggests conditions as being well preserved. The results show the ridge and furrow in the north of site as broad, S-shaped lines, which are indicative of a medieval date. The northern and south-eastern field systems are thought to be contemporary with each other. Unfortunately, the poorly preserved southwestern field system is difficult to define. Previous studies about earthworks of south-west Leicestershire (Hartley 2008) have shown similar results of existence to the northern and southeastern field system (Fig 35). The medieval open field system was enclosed into a pattern of small rectangular fields prior to the mid-19th century. Beresford (1948) suggests that enclosure in the parish of Burbage was by gradual stages with documented enclosure taking place by 1625 (ibid p120). This suggests that ridge and furrow had ceased to be regularly created by the early 17th century. The variable condition of some of the upstanding earthworks may have been affected by later, but limited ploughing.

9.2 Building recording

The agricultural building on site appears on cartographic sources from the early 20th century onwards and likely formerly comprised shelter for grazing livestock. The building has been constructed in economy of materials, and yet still shows some architectural flamboyance in its chamfered capitals and moulded fascia boards. Internally some remnants of former partitions are suggested, but not much else can be determined. If this was to follow a typical trend this may have comprised ephemeral partitions, troughs, hay racks and other fixtures and fittings. The building in its current iteration likely dates from the turn of the century, or within the last few decades of the 19th century.

It is clear the roof has been constructed partly from reused timber, comprising the tie-beams and principal rafters, and in some places the wall-plate. These members are oak or elm and have clearly come from a different arrangement as notches, mortises and peg holes cannot be justified in their current position. Whatever building these elements originated from, it was clearly a robust structure, likely 18th century or earlier given the scantling of the timber and the carpentry used. Although it is impossible to now trace the origins of this timber, it can be noted that cartographic sources indicate several ranges and buildings in the vicinity of Sketchley Hall to the north that differ or disappear between the 1887 and 1903 Ordnance Survey maps when the building appears for the first time.

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