



Land off Rosliston Road, Drakelow, Derbyshire Archaeological Evaluation Report

July 2017

Client: Lioncourt Homes Ltd

Issue No: 1

OA Reference No: 6737

NGR: SK 25344 20102

oxfordarchaeology



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Client Name: Lioncourt Homes Ltd
Document Title: Land off Rosliston Road, Drakelow, Derbyshire
Document Type: Evaluation Report
Grid Reference: SK 25344 20102
Planning Reference: APP/F1040/W/15/3014387
Site Code: DRRR17
Invoice Code: DRRREV
Receiving Body: Derbyshire Museum and Art Gallery
Accession No.: TBC

OA Document File Location: \\10.0.10.86\Projects\d\Drakelow_Rosliston Road\Report
OA Graphics File Location: \\10.0.10.86\Projects\d\Drakelow_Rosliston Road\010Geomatics

Issue No: 1
Date: July 2017
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Land off Rosliston Road, Drakelow, Derbyshire

Archaeological Evaluation Report

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Summary

Between the 19th and 21st of June Oxford Archaeology carried out a trial trench evaluation in advance of a proposed housing development at Land off Rosliston Road, Drakelow, Derbyshire. The works comprised the excavation of 10 trenches measuring 30m by 1.6m.

No archaeological features or deposits were recorded during the works. A single sherd of 15th-17th century pottery was recovered.

Acknowledgements

Oxford Archaeology would like to thank Lioncourt Homes Ltd for commissioning this project. Thanks are also extended to Steve Baker who monitored the work on behalf of Derbyshire County Council for his advice and guidance.

The project was managed for Oxford Archaeology by John Boothroyd. The fieldwork was directed by Gary Evans, who was supported by Elanor Stanley. Survey and digitizing was carried out by Matt Bradley. Thanks are also extended to the teams of OA staff that cleaned and packaged the finds under the management of Leigh Allen and prepared the archive under the management of Nicola Scott.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by Lioncourt Homes Ltd to undertake a trial trench evaluation in advance of a proposed housing development at Land off Rosliston Road, Drakelow, Derbyshire.
- 1.1.2 The work was undertaken as a condition of Planning Permission (planning ref. APP/F1040/W/15/3014387). In response to discussions with Steve Baker, Planning Archaeologist for Derbyshire, a written scheme of investigation was produced by OA detailing the Local Authority's requirements for work necessary to discharge the first stage of the planning condition (OA 2017)
- 1.1.3 The work was undertaken to help define the scope of any potential further works. This document outlines how OA implemented the specified requirements.

1.2 Location, topography and geology

- 1.2.1 The site lies to the east of the hamlet of Drakelow and is centered on SK 25344 20102 (Fig. 1). The site is bounded to the north and west by houses and Rosliston Road South, and to the east by a railway line. A tree and hedgeline forms the southern boundary, beyond which lie arable fields.
- 1.2.2 The area of the proposed development consists of three fields which are used for pasture. The site is relatively flat with a gentle slope towards the south-west. The site lies between 60m and 65m above Ordnance Datum.
- 1.2.3 The geology of the area is mapped as Tarporley Siltstone Formation siltstone, mudstone and sandstone, a sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 237-250 million years ago in the Triassic Period (BGS).

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological and historical background of the site has been described in detail in the Heritage Statement (CgMs 2014), and is summarized below.

Prehistoric

- 1.3.2 A Neolithic/Bronze Age stone axe hammer was discovered c 900m to the south of the site. This, along with a second Bronze Age palstave axehead found in the vicinity of Drakelow, is the only known evidence of prehistoric activity in the vicinity of the site.

Roman

- 1.3.3 Approximately 1km north of the site is a Roman-British settlement site which was excavated in the 1950s. The excavations revealed evidence for occupation between c 80AD and the mid-4th century. A single Roman lead alloy seal is recorded to the south-east of the site. Several coins, along with other finds, have been recorded as being from the vicinity of Drakelow.

Saxon, medieval and post-medieval periods

- 1.3.4 The site is believed to have been situated beyond the limits of the known settlements within the area and is likely to have been utilized for agriculture. Evidence for ridge and furrow cultivation is present across the site.

Geophysical survey

- 1.3.5 A geophysical survey carried out in 2014 identified limited potential for archaeological remains to be present within the development area (WA 2014). Linear anomalies were recorded across the site and interpreted as probably representing ridge and furrow cultivation (Fig. 2, 4000, 4001, 4003). A modern service, 4002, was also identified crossing the south-western corner of the site. An area with a high level of ferrous responses (4004) was interpreted as representing spreads of modern debris. Several smaller anomalies were interpreted as variations in the geology, although an archaeological origin could not be ruled out.

2 EVALUATION AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 General Aim

2.1.1 The programme of archaeological works was undertaken in line with the regional research objectives as defined in 'East Midlands Heritage: A Research Agenda and Strategy for the Historic Environment' (Knight *et al.* 2012) and 'The Archaeology of the East Midlands' (Cooper 2006)

2.2 Specific aims and objectives

2.2.1 The specific aims and objectives of the evaluation were:

- i. To determine the presence or absence of any archaeological remains which may survive;
- ii. To determine or confirm the approximate extent of any surviving remains;
- iii. To determine the date range of any surviving remains by artefactual or other means;
- iv. To determine the condition and state of preservation of any remains;
- v. To determine the degree of complexity of any surviving horizontal or vertical stratigraphy;
- vi. To assess the associations and implications of any remains encountered with reference to the historic landscape;
- vii. To determine the potential of the site to provide palaeoenvironmental and/or economic evidence, and the forms in which such evidence may survive;
- viii. To determine the implications of any remains with reference to economy, status utility and social activity;
- ix. To determine or confirm the likely range, quality and quantity of the artefactual evidence present;
- x. To ground-truth the results of the geophysical survey.

2.3 Methodology

2.3.1 Site specific methodologies were as follows:

- The trenches were laid out in accordance with the WSI and as shown in Figure 2 using a GPS with sub-25mm accuracy.
- The trenches were excavated using JCB 3CX wheeled excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under the direct supervision of an archaeologist. Spoil was stored adjacent to, but at a safe distance from trench edges.
- Machining continued in level spits down to the top of the undisturbed natural geology or the first archaeological horizon. Further excavation proceeded by hand.
- The exposed surface was sufficiently cleaned to establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains.
- Upon agreement with Steve Baker, Planning Archaeologist for Derbyshire County Council, the trenches will be backfilled.

- 2.3.2 All features and deposits were issued with unique context numbers and context recording was in accordance with established best practice and the OA Field Manual (Wilkinson 1992). Bulk finds were collected by context.
- 2.3.3 Digital photos were taken of archaeological features, deposits, trenches and evaluation work in general and will form part of the project archive.
- 2.3.4 The trenches and sample sections were located using a GPS unit. Co-ordinates relative to Ordnance Survey and Ordnance Datum were obtained for each sampling location.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction and presentation of results

- 3.1.1 The results of the evaluation are presented below. The full details of all trenches with dimensions and depths of all deposits can be found in Appendix A. Finds data and spot dates are tabulated in Appendix B.
- 3.1.2 Context numbers reflect the trench numbers unless otherwise stated e.g. pit 102 is a feature within Trench 1, while ditch 304 is a feature within Trench 3.

3.2 General soils and ground conditions

- 3.2.1 The soil sequence in all trenches was fairly uniform (Plates 1-10). The natural geology, a mid-dark reddish-brown clay and with mixed sandstone and mudstone inclusions, was overlain by a light-mid orange brown sandy clay subsoil, which in turn was overlain by topsoil.
- 3.2.2 Ground conditions throughout the evaluation were generally good, and the trenches remained dry throughout. Archaeological features, if present, should have been easy to identify against the underlying natural geology.

3.3 General distribution of archaeological deposits

- 3.3.1 All trenches were devoid of archaeological features.

3.4 Finds summary

- 3.4.1 A single sherd of 15th-17th century pottery was recovered from the topsoil of Trench 3, context 300. The sherd was from a thin-walled cup or jug of Cistercian-type ware or Midlands black ware.
- 3.4.2 The sherd has not been retained.

4 DISCUSSION

4.1 Reliability of field investigation

4.1.1 The fieldwork was undertaken in dry, bright conditions which can make it difficult to spot subtle contrasts between archaeological deposits and natural geology. The results of the trial trench evaluation corroborate the results of the geophysical survey. Along with the very limited artefactual evidence, the negative results of both surveys can be considered to provide an accurate reflection of the archaeological potential of the site.

4.2 Evaluation objectives and results

4.2.1 The aims and objects of the evaluation are detailed above within Section 2. No archaeological remains were recorded within the trenches.

4.3 Interpretation

4.3.1 The results of the evaluation suggest that no archaeological remains are present within the development area. Several discrete anomalies identified as potential archaeological features in the geophysical survey were demonstrated to be of natural origin. The geophysical survey also identified potential remains of ridge and furrow agriculture, but no corresponding features were identified in any of the trenches.

4.4 Significance

4.4.1 The results of both the trial trench evaluation and the geophysical survey suggest that the site contains no significant archaeological remains.

APPENDIX A TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench 1						
General description					Orientation	E-W
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil and subsoil overlying natural geology of sandy clay.					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	1.60
					Avg. depth (m)	0.50
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
100	Layer	-	0.30	Topsoil: light greyish brown silt	-	-
101	Layer	-	0.25	Subsoil: light orangey brown sandy silt with occasional flecks of charcoal and sub-rounded stones.	-	-
102	Layer	-	-	Natural: variable, mostly reddish orange sandy clay	-	-

Trench 2						
General description					Orientation	N-S
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil and subsoil overlying natural geology of clay.					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	1.60
					Avg. depth (m)	0.50
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
200	Layer	-	0.30	Topsoil: light greyish brown silt	-	-
201	Layer	-	0.20	Subsoil: light orangey brown sandy clay with occasional flecks of charcoal and sub-rounded stones.	-	-
202	Layer	-	-	Natural: variable, mostly brownish grey clay with occasional pebbles.	-	-

Trench 3						
General description					Orientation	SE-NW
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil and subsoil overlying natural geology of clay.					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	1.60
					Avg. depth (m)	0.50
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
300	Layer	-	0.30	Topsoil: light greyish brown silt	Pottery	15th-17th century
301	Layer	-	0.25	Subsoil: mid orangey brown sandy clay with	-	-

				occasional charcoal flecks and sub-rounded stones		
302	Layer	-	-	Natural: variable, mostly mid orangey brown clay with occasional pebbles.	-	-

Trench 4						
General description					Orientation	N-S
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil and subsoil overlying natural geology of clay.					Length (m)	24
					Width (m)	1.60
					Avg. depth (m)	0.55
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
400	Layer	-	0.30	Topsoil: Light greyish brown silt	-	-
401	Layer	-	0.25	Subsoil: Mid orangey brown sandy clay with occasional charcoal flecks and sub-rounded stones	-	-
402	Layer	-	-	Natural: dark orangey brown clay with sub-rounded stones.	-	-

Trench 5						
General description					Orientation	E-W
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil and subsoil overlying natural geology of clay.					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	1.60
					Avg. depth (m)	0.45
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
500	Layer	-	0.30	Topsoil: light greyish brown silt	-	-
501	Layer	-	0.20	Subsoil: light orangey brown sandy clay with occasional charcoal flecks and sub-rounded stones	-	-
502	Layer	-	-	Natural: dark reddish brown clay with high frequency of sub-angular sandstone fragments	-	-

Trench 6						
General description					Orientation	NNE-SSW
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil and subsoil overlying natural geology of clay.					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	1.60
					Avg. depth (m)	0.50
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
600	Layer	-	0.30	Topsoil: light greyish brown silt, charcoal flecks and CBM	-	-
601	Layer	-	0.20	Subsoil: light brown silt with occasional well rounded stones and flecks of charcoal	-	-
602	Layer	-	-	Natural: firm, reddish brown clay with occasional pockets of large well rounded stones	-	-

Trench 7						
General description					Orientation	E-W
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil and subsoil overlying natural geology of clay.					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	1.60
					Avg. depth (m)	0.40
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
700	Layer	-	0.18	Topsoil: greyish brown fine silt with occasional charcoal and CBM flecks	-	-
701	Layer	-	0.18	Subsoil: brown clay with occasional sub-rounded stones.	-	-
702	Layer	-	-	Natural: firm reddish brown clay with frequent light greenish yellow sandstone fragments	-	-

Trench 8						
General description					Orientation	N-S
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil and subsoil overlying natural geology of clay.					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	1.60
					Avg. depth (m)	0.50
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
800	Layer	-	0.25	Topsoil: light greyish brown silt with rare sub-rounded stones and occasional charcoal flecks	-	-
801	Layer	-	0.20	Subsoil: light orangey brown sandy silt with occasional charcoal flecks and well-rounded stones	-	-
802	Layer	-	-	Natural: firm orangey brown clay	-	-

Trench 9						
General description					Orientation	NE-SW
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil and subsoil overlying natural geology of clay.					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	1.60
					Avg. depth (m)	0.45
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
900	Layer	-	0.30	Topsoil: greyish brown silt with occasional charcoal and CBM flecks	-	-
901	Layer	-	0.20	Subsoil: moderately compact light orangey brown silty clay with occasional charcoal flecks	-	-
902	Layer	-	-	Natural: firm orangey brown clay with occasional well rounded stones	-	-

Trench 10						
General description					Orientation	NW-SE
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil and subsoil overlying natural geology of clay.					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	1.60
					Avg. depth (m)	0.50
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
1000	Layer	-	0.30	Topsoil: greyish brown silt with occasional charcoal and CBM flecks	-	-
1001	Layer	-	0.30	Subsoil: moderately compact, light orangey brown silty clay with	-	-

				moderate charcoal and CBM flecks		
1002	Layer	-	-	Natural: firm orangey brown clay with patches of well rounded stones	-	-

APPENDIX B FINDS REPORTS

B.1 Pottery

Identified by John Cotter

Context	Description	Date
300	A single fresh body sherd in Cistercian-type ware or Midlands black ware. Black glazed on both sides, from a thin-walled cup or jug, 4g	15th-17th century

The pottery assemblage is of low potential and requires no further work at this stage.

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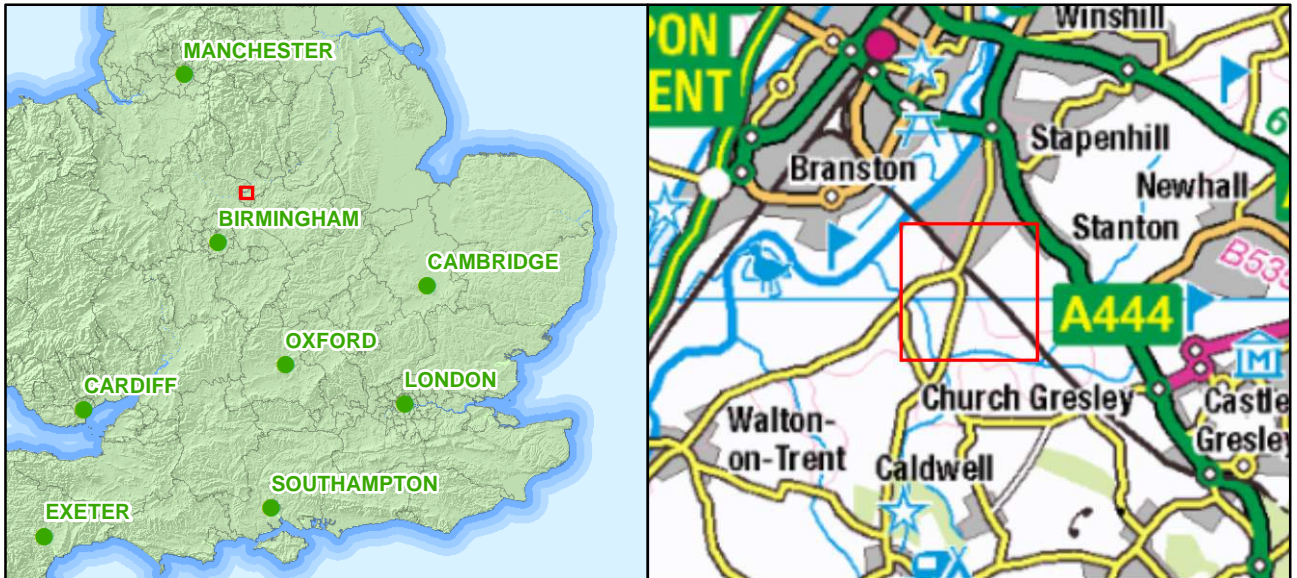
OA 2017, Land off Rosliston Road, Drakelow, Derbyshire, Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation, Oxford Archaeology

WA 2014, Land off Rosliston Road South, Drakelow, Derbyshire, Detailed Gradiometer Survey Report, Wessex Archaeology

APPENDIX D

SITE SUMMARY DETAILS

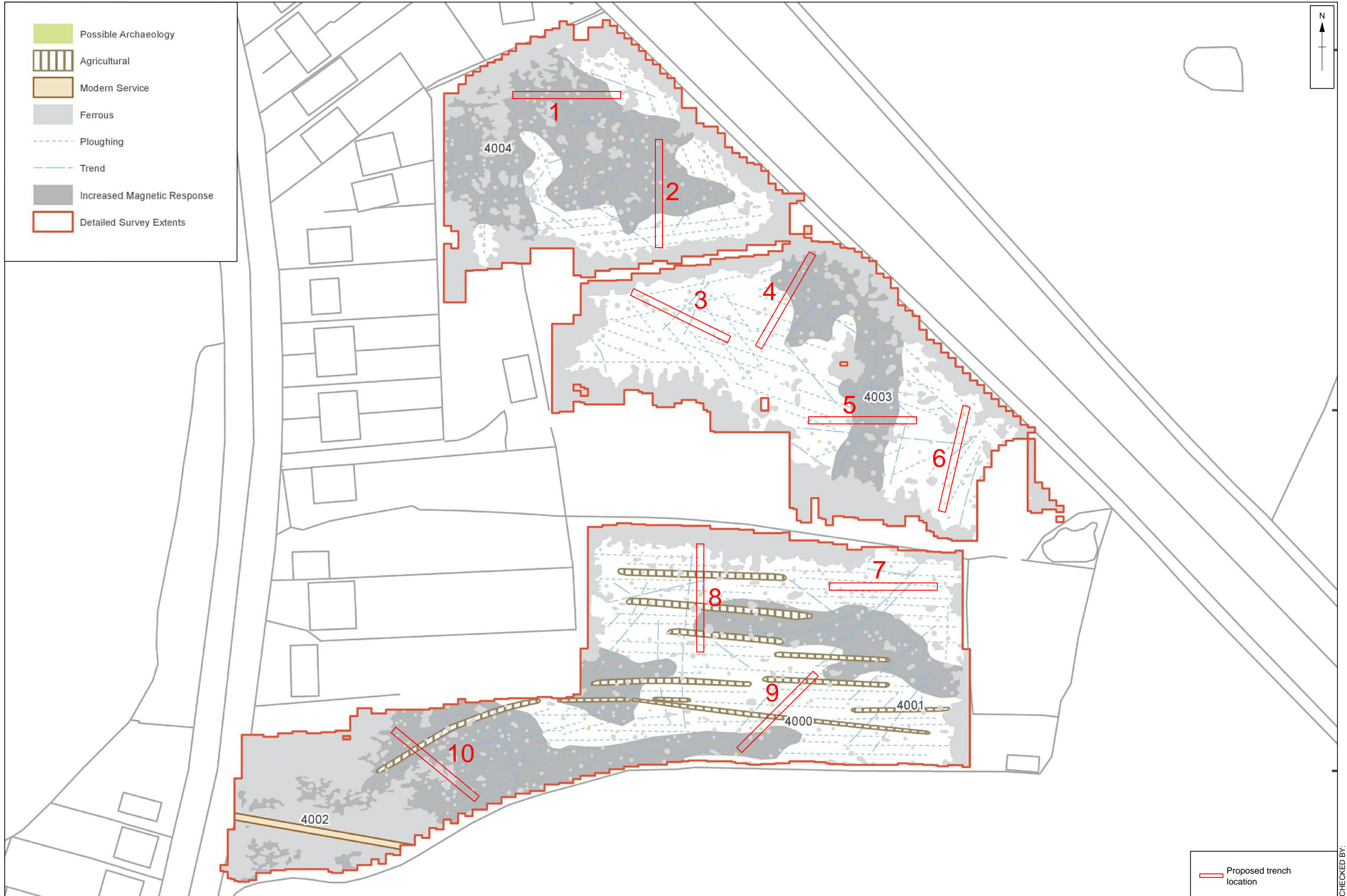
Site name:	Land off Rosliston Road, Drakelow, Derbyshire
Site code:	DRRR17
Grid Reference	SK 25344 20102
Type:	Evaluation
Date and duration:	19th to 21st June 2017 (3 days)
Area of Site	3.1ha
Location of archive:	The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES and will be discarded upon the submission of a single bound copy and a PDF/A version of the report to the Derbyshire HER. An enhanced OASIS record will also be completed. A digital copy of the original archive will be retained by OA. As no further work is required, the single sherd of pottery has been discarded.
Summary of Results:	No archaeological features or deposits were recorded during the works, a single sherd of 15th-17th century pottery was recovered.



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Figure 1: Site location

X:\id\Drake\low_Rosliston Road\010Geomatics\02 CAD\DRREV_Draaklow_trench_plan_2017-06-06.dwg(A3 landscape)***** 18 Jul 2017



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0 50 m
Scale at A3 1:1000

Figure 2: Trench layout and results of geophysical survey



Plate 1: Trench 1, view to west



Plate 2: Trench 1 baulk section, view to south



Plate 3: Trench 3, view to west



Plate 5: Trench 5, view to west



Plate 4: Trench 3 baulk section, view to north



Plate 6: Trench 5 baulk section, view to south



Plate 7: Trench 8, view to north



Plate 9: Trench 10, view to north-west



Plate 8: Trench 8 baulk section, view to east



Plate 10: Trench 10 baulk section, view to south-west



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