

Land off Standard Hill/ Highfield St Hugglescote Leicestershire



Archaeological Evaluation Report

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1.2	Vix Hughes Project Officer	Richard Brown: Senior Project Manager	Richard Brown: Senior Project Manager	

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Janus House

Osney Mead

Oxford OX2 0ES

t: +44 (0) 1865 263800

e: oasouth@thehumanjourney.net

f: +44 (0) 1865 793496

w: oasouth.thehumanjourney.net

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Land off Standard Hill/Highfield St, Hugglescote, Leicestershire

Archaeological Evaluation Report

Written by Vix Hughes

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Summary

Oxford Archaeology South (OAS), was commissioned by CgMs Consulting Ltd, on behalf of Miller Homes (East Midlands) Ltd, to undertake an eleven trench evaluation of land at Hugglescote, Leicestershire, NGR SK 4190 1330. The work was carried out in support of a planning application for residential development (Planning ref: (12/00007/OUTM)). The work was undertaken between 24th - 26th September 2014.

Ditches which are the surviving remains of earlier field boundaries were recorded and probably date to the post-medieval period. These may have been part of the agricultural systems associated with the villages of Hugglescote and Snibston and the manor at Donington le Heath and may have been part of the 19th century Tithe and enclosure landscapes.

No remains pre-dating the post-medieval period were encountered.



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology South (OAS) was commissioned by CgMs Consulting Ltd (CgMs) on behalf of Miller Homes (East Midlands) Ltd, to undertake a trench investigation of land at Hugglescote, Leicestershire (see Fig.1) centred on National Grid Reference SK 4190 1330.
- 1.1.2 The investigation was undertaken in support of a planning application (Planning ref: (12/00007/OUTM)) for the residential development of the site, comprising approximately 400 dwellings and associated infrastructure, together with public open space and ecological buffer zones.
- 1.1.3 Work was carried out in adherence to a specification for the archaeological evaluation of the site produced by CgMs (Mortimer 2012) and agreed with the Principal Planning Archaeologist for Leicestershire County Council.
- 1.1.4 Previous works related to the proposed development include the production of a desk-based assessment (CgMs SM/12271 - Mortimer 2011) incorporating geophysics and fieldwalking investigations of the fields to the north and north-west of the field investigated (OA2011 and see below) in this report. These adjacent fields were then evaluated by trench investigation. The specification produced by CgMs (Mortimer 2012) set out the mitigation strategy for excavation of four (probable Bronze-Age) burnt mounds revealed by the earlier evaluation and the strategy for the evaluation addressed in this report.
- 1.1.5 The specification allowed for the evaluation of 26 trenches measuring 50 x 2m to investigate a field totalling an area of c 5.7 ha. At the time of evaluation only the south eastern half of the field (containing eleven trenches) was accessible for evaluation due to the presence of extensive undergrowth. The north western half of the field remains to be investigated.
- 1.1.6 All work was undertaken in accordance with NPPF, ClfA Standards and Guidance and LPA policies.

1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The area of the site in Hugglescote, lies south of the A511 and east of the A447, some 0.5km to the west of the centre of Coalville, which is approximately 20km from Leicester to the east. The site itself is located to the north east of Standard Hill and north west of Highfield Street in Hugglescote.
- 1.2.2 The overall evaluation area measures approximately 5.7 ha. The north western half of this could not be accessed for evaluation (see Fig 2). The area is bounded to the south east and west by residential areas of Coalville and Hugglescote.
- 1.2.3 The British Geological Survey ([Http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer](http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer)) records the bedrock below the site as mudstone of the Radcliffe member with no record of the superficial deposits. The remainder of the site is underlain by Tarporley siltstone and the interface between this and the mudstone to the east is overlain by superficial alluvial deposits.
- 1.2.4 The site lies between 151-158m aOD (above Ordnance Datum) the (currently inaccessible) lower slopes are covered in small trees and dense undergrowth.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The full archaeological and historical background to the site has been reviewed in a desk-based assessment (Mortimer 2011) and summarised in the specification for this work. This is not reproduced here. The previous work (see below) indicates a local potential for Bronze-Age activity that to-date appears to be focussed on the channel/valley floor to the north west of the current investigation field.

1.4 Previous Work

Geophysics 2011

- 1.4.1 Thirteen hectares that were accessible within the proposed development site were subject to detailed magnetic survey by Northamptonshire Archaeology in February 2011. The southern extent of the site, Field 1, contained a number of polygonal anomalies which were interpreted as either enclosures or the result of natural processes. One of these features appeared to correlate with the findspot of the Roman coin hoard (PAS LEIC-F5A344). There were other possible linear features, thought to be former field boundaries and a trackway. At the northern extent of Field 1 there were anomalies representing areas of burning, the derivation of which was unclear. In the northern field there were no anomalies associated with the findspots of Mesolithic or medieval material. A single undated ditch (d; NA Report 11/41 Fig 10) was identified together with an unusual C-shaped anomaly thought to contain burnt material at the north-eastern extent of the site (f; NA Report 11/41 Fig 10).

Fieldwalking

- 1.4.2 Fieldwalking was undertaken within the northern (ploughed) field. This recovered two small unretouched waste flakes, which although not directly datable are likely to be Neolithic and/or Early Bronze Age in date. The paucity of flint finds recovered and the absence of Mesolithic material confirmed the impression gained during the preparation of the desk-based assessment – that there should be some question as to the record of Mesolithic material from within the site. Other fieldwalking finds comprised 8 medieval pottery sherds, 60 post-medieval pottery sherds together with a brick, tile, slate and modern metal finds. None of this material is significant other than to suggest that the site has been subject to manuring.

Evaluation / Trial Trench 2011

- 1.4.3 The trial trenching, undertaken by Oxford Archaeology, involved the excavation of 2617m² targeting both geophysical anomalies and blank areas within the site. This confirmed that the majority of the anomalies identified within the southern and western extents of the site were natural in origin. There were however two areas shown to contain burnt mounds, one of which was radiocarbon dated to the Early Bronze Age (c.3800+/- 35 years BP). One burnt mound, visible within the geophysical survey data, was recorded at the north-eastern limit of the site (trenches 9a, 9b and 24). Another series of features, all likely to be burnt mounds or associated features are concentrated in the vicinity of Trench 12 in the centre of the site.
- 1.4.4 The evaluation report highlighted two zones, totalling c. 0.89 ha that would require archaeological mitigation in advance of development, should preservation in situ not be achievable. Excavation of these zones recorded four burnt mounds. The results of this work are in preparation.

2 EVALUATION AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

2.1.1 The aims and objectives of the Hugglescote evaluation were:

- To establish the spatial extent within the development area of surviving buried archaeological remains;
- To recover information relating to the nature and function of past human activity represented by the surviving archaeological remains;
- To interpret the nature of human activity at the site and to place the site within its local, regional and national context, as appropriate;
- Assess the site formation processes and the effects that these may have had on the survival and integrity of the archaeological features and deposits;
- To produce a site archive for deposition, together with finds, to Leicestershire County Council's Museums Service. Arrangements will be made for this prior to commencement of fieldwork.

2.2 Methodology

2.2.1 The evaluation strategy proposed 26 x 50m trenches cumulatively covering a 5% sample of the available parts of the development area (5.7 ha). However at the time of evaluation only the south eastern half of the field was accessible for evaluation (3.65ha), and therefore only 11 trenches were excavated.

2.2.2 Trench locations were set out using a Leica GPS.

2.2.3 The procedures for the excavation of the evaluation trenches followed those as given in the specifications (Mortimer 2012) and in accordance with OA guidelines (OA 2002) and IFA standards (IFA 2001).

3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction and presentation of results

3.1.1 The results of the evaluation are presented below, beginning with the objective elements; a summary of the trench results, followed by the discussion of phased activity and a more subjective, overall interpretation (Section 4). A full index of all trenches including dimensions, orientation and strata is presented, in tabular form, in Appendix A.

3.2 General soils and ground conditions

3.2.1 The investigation area lay in a field of long grass and scrub vegetation. The trenches were dug in dry ground conditions.

3.3 General distribution of archaeological deposits

3.3.1 Of the 11 trenches excavated, six contained a total of seven features, and the remaining five contained either no features or solely field drains. The archaeological remains were all stratigraphically below the topsoil and truncated the subsoil unless otherwise specified. The features were all linear features interpreted as ditches. The table below summarises the trench findings.

Trench No.	Archaeology present ?	Number of features	Type of features, deposits etc	Date range of features (where known)
11	No	-	Field drain	
12	Yes	2	Ditches, 2 field drains	(1883/1935 OS map)
13	Yes	1	Ditch	(1883/1935 OS map)
14	Yes	1	Ditch	(1883/1935 OS map)
15	No	-	Field drains	
16	No	-		
17	Yes	1	Ditch	(1883/1935 OS map)
18	No	-		
19	No	-		
20	Yes	1	Ditch, plus field drains	(1883/1935 OS map)
21	Yes	1	Ditch, plus field drain	(1883/1935 OS map)
Total	6	7		

3.4 Trench results

3.4.1 Eleven trenches were positioned within the easternmost field which was not available during the earlier 2011 evaluation. Trenches 12, and 20 contained archaeological remains and are described below. The remaining trenches were either blank, contained only field drains or a single linear feature which is visible as a modern boundary on OS mapping (Trenches 13, 14, 17 and 21). These trenches are presented in table form only at the end of the report.

Trench 12

3.4.2 The earliest deposit was the natural geology 12002 seen at the base of the trench. Overlying this was the subsoil 12001. Truncating this was a linear ditch 12003 aligned NW-SE. The ditch was 1.05m wide, 0.35m deep and contained a single mid brown sandy-silt fill 12004.

3.4.3 This ditch was truncated by a second ditch 12005. Ditch 12005 was aligned NE-SW, perpendicular to the earlier ditch 12003. The ditch was 1.12m wide, 0.35m deep and contained two fills. The lower, earlier fill was 12006 (an orangey-brown sandy-silt) and the upper, later fill was 12007 (a greyish-brown sandy-silt).

3.4.4 None of the deposits or feature fills yielded any artefactual material.

3.4.5 Both of the ditches were cut by, or had later insertions of, field drains. The orange ceramic field drains were of an annular segmented nature and of post-medieval to modern date.

3.4.6 The ditch fills were sealed by topsoil 12000.

Trench 13

3.4.7 The earliest deposit was the natural geology 13000 seen at the base of the trench. Overlying this was the subsoil 13002. Truncating this was a linear ditch 13001 aligned NE-SW. The ditch was filled and sealed by topsoil 13003.

Trench 14

3.4.8 The earliest deposit was the natural geology 14005 seen at the base of the trench. Overlying this was the subsoil 14001. Truncating this was a 0.66m wide linear ditch

14003 aligned NW-SE. The ditch was seen to continue to the SE in Trench 17. The ditch fill (14004 - a grey-brown clay-silt) was sealed by topsoil 14000.

Trench 17

- 3.4.9 The earliest deposit was the natural geology 17004 seen at the base of the trench. Overlying this was the subsoil 17001. Truncating this was a 0.88m wide linear ditch 17002 aligned NW-SE. The ditch was seen to continue to the NW in Trench 14. The ditch fills (17003) was identical to 14004 and contained a metal tea pot (not retained). The fill was sealed by topsoil 17000.

Trench 20

- 3.4.10 The earliest deposit was the natural geology 20000 seen at the base of the trench. Overlying this was the subsoil 20003. Truncating this was a linear ditch 20001 aligned NW-SE. The ditch was 0.75m wide, 0.3m deep and contained a single fill 20002; a grey sandy-silt which contained no artefactual material.

Finds and Environmental

- 3.4.11 No material was encountered during the evaluation.

4 DISCUSSION

4.1 Stratigraphic interpretation

Post-medieval

- 4.1.1 Features of likely post-medieval to modern date were the linear features in Trenches 12, 13, 14, 17 and 20.
- 4.1.2 These linear features are extremely likely to correspond to field boundaries illustrated on the 1883-4 and 1935 OS maps. While direct map overlays are not possible due to the poor nature of the early surveys, the orientation, frequency and location of the boundaries relative to recognisable aspects of the modern topography contribute to a convincing correlation with the revealed features.
- 4.1.3 In addition the lack of visible re-cuts to these linear features also suggest a post-medieval date rather than an earlier origin for these features.



Image 1: 1883 OS Map

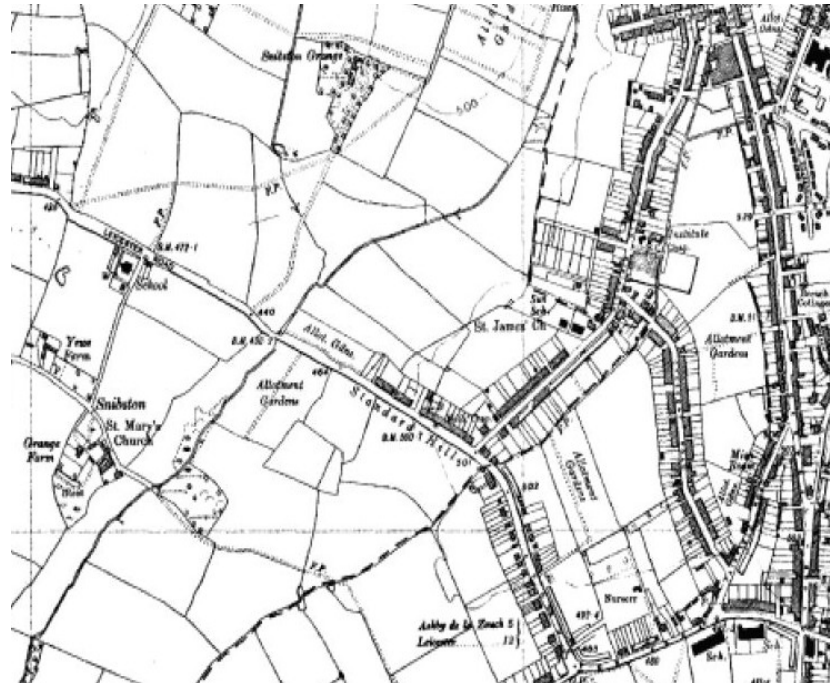


Image 2: 1935 OS Map

4.2 Discussion

- 4.2.1 The results of the evaluation demonstrate the presence of a post-medieval agricultural landscape but no evidence was retrieved for any earlier activity.

**APPENDIX A. TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY**

Trench 11						
General description				Orientation	N-S	
Trench was devoid of archaeological deposits. There was a single field drain aligned NE-SW.				Avg. depth (m)	0.48	
				Width (m)	2.0	
				Length (m)	50.5	
Contexts						
context no.	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
10000	Layer	-	0.2	Topsoil	-	-
10001	Layer	-	0.28	Subsoil: mid brown clay silt	-	-
10002	Layer	-	-	Natural: reddish-brown clay	-	-

Trench 12						
General description				Orientation	E-W	
Trench contains two ditches; one aligned NE-SW and a later ditch which, aligned NW-SE which cuts the earlier ditch. Both were located at the NE end. In addition there were two field drain aligned NW-SE and one aligned NE-SW.				Avg. depth (m)	0.5	
				Width (m)	2	
				Length (m)	50	
Contexts						
context no.	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
12000	Layer	-	0.2	Topsoil	-	-
12001	Layer	-	0.3	Subsoil	-	-
12002	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-
12003	Cut	1.05	0.35	Ditch cut, filled by 12004	-	-
12004	Fill	1.05	0.35	Ditch fill	-	-
12005	Cut	1.12	0.3	Ditch cut, filled by 12006 and 12007	-	-
12006	Fill	1.12	0.15	Ditch fill	-	-
12007	Fill	1.12	0.15	Ditch fill	-	-

Trench 13						
General description				Orientation	N-S	
Trench contained no archaeological deposits and a single post-medieval to modern ditch aligned NE-SW and a field drain on the same alignment.				Avg. depth (m)	0.48	
				Width (m)	2	
				Length (m)	46	
Contexts						
context no.	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
13000	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-



13001	Layer	-	0.15	Deposit: bank material, 45% pebbles and occasional brick	-	-
13002	Layer	-	0.2	Subsoil: mid red brown silty clay	-	-
13003	Layer	-	0.2	Topsoil	-	-

Trench 14						
General description				Orientation		N-S
Trench contained one post-medieval to modern ditch aligned NW-SE and one field drain on the same alignment.				Avg. depth (m)		0.48
				Width (m)		2
				Length (m)		50
Contexts						
context no.	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
14000	Layer	-	0.2	Topsoil	-	-
14001	Layer	-	0.28	Subsoil	-	-
14002	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-
14003	Cut	0.66	0.25	Linear feature: ditch	-	-
14004	Fill	0.66	0.25	Fill of 14003	-	-

Trench 15						
General description				Orientation		N-S
Trench was devoid of archaeology. Contained two NW-SE aligned field drains at southern end.				Avg. depth (m)		0.49
				Width (m)		2
				Length (m)		44.5m
Contexts						
context no.	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
15000	Layer	-	0.29	Topsoil	-	-
15001	Layer	-	0.20	Subsoil	-	-
15002	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 16						
General description				Orientation		ENE-WSW
Trench contained no archaeological deposits. Contained two NW-SE aligned field drains at northern end.				Avg. depth (m)		0.46
				Width (m)		2
				Length (m)		45
Contexts						
context no.	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date



16000	Layer	-	0.25	Topsoil	-	-
16001	Layer	-	0.21	Subsoil	-	-
16002	Layer	-		Natural	-	-

Trench 17						
General description				Orientation		ENE-WSW
This trench contained no archaeological deposits. There was a single post-medieval to modern ditch aligned NW-SE.				Avg. depth (m)		0.44
				Width (m)		1.6
				Length (m)		51.4
Contexts						
context no.	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
17000	Layer	-	0.29	Topsoil	-	-
17001	Layer	-	0.15	Subsoil	-	-
17002	Cut	0.88	unexc	Linear feature: ditch	-	
17003	Fill	0.88	unexc	Fill of 17002	Enamel and metal tea pot - not retained	modern
17004	Deposit	-	-	Natural	-	

Trench 18						
General description				Orientation		ENE-WSW
Trench contained no archaeological features.				Avg. depth (m)		0.59
				Width (m)		2
				Length (m)		44.6
Contexts						
context no.	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
18000	Layer	-	0.32	Topsoil	-	-
18001	Layer	-	0.18	Subsoil	-	-
18002	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 19						
General description				Orientation		N-S
Trench contained no archaeological deposits				Avg. depth (m)		0.40
				Width (m)		2
				Length (m)		47.6
Contexts						
context no.	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date



19000	Layer	-	0.28	Topsoil	-	-
19001	Layer	-	0.12	Subsoil	-	-
19002	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 20						
General description					Orientation	N-S
Trench contained three stone lined post-medieval field drains and a NE-SW aligned post-medieval ditch, forming an old field boundary.					Avg. depth (m)	0.51
					Width (m)	2
					Length (m)	53
Contexts						
context no.	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
20000	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-
20001	Cut	0.75	0.3	Linear feature: ditch	-	-
20002	Fill	0.75	0.3	Fill of 20001	-	-
20003	Layer	-	0.19	Subsoil	-	-
20004	Layer	-	0.32	Topsoil	-	-

Trench 21						
General description					Orientation	N-S
Trench contained no archaeological deposits; there was a single field drain and a modern ditch, both towards the SW end.					Avg. depth (m)	0.40
					Width (m)	2
					Length (m)	47.6
Contexts						
context no.	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
21000	Layer	-	0.3	Topsoil	-	-
21001	Layer	-	0.22	Subsoil	-	-
21002	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-



APPENDIX B. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

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APPENDIX C. SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name:	Hugglescote, Leicestershire
Site code:	X.A.51.2014
Grid reference:	SK 4180 1350
Type:	Evaluation
Date and duration:	24 th - 26 th September 2014
Area of site:	3.65ha

Summary of results: Oxford Archaeology South (OAS), was commissioned by CgMs Consulting Ltd, on behalf of Miller Homes (East Midlands) Ltd, to undertake an evaluation of land at Hugglescote, Leicestershire, NGR SK 4190 1330. The work was carried out in advance of a planning application for residential development. The work was undertaken between 24th - 26th September 2014. Eleven trenches were excavated.

Ditches which are the surviving remains of earlier field boundaries were recorded and probably date to the post-medieval period. These may have been part of the agricultural systems associated with the villages of Hugglescote and Snibston and the manor at Donington le Heath and may have been part of the 19th century Tithe and Enclosure landscapes.

No remains pre-dating the post-medieval period were encountered.

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Leicestershire County Museum in due course, under the following accession number: X.A.51.2014.



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Figure 1: Site location

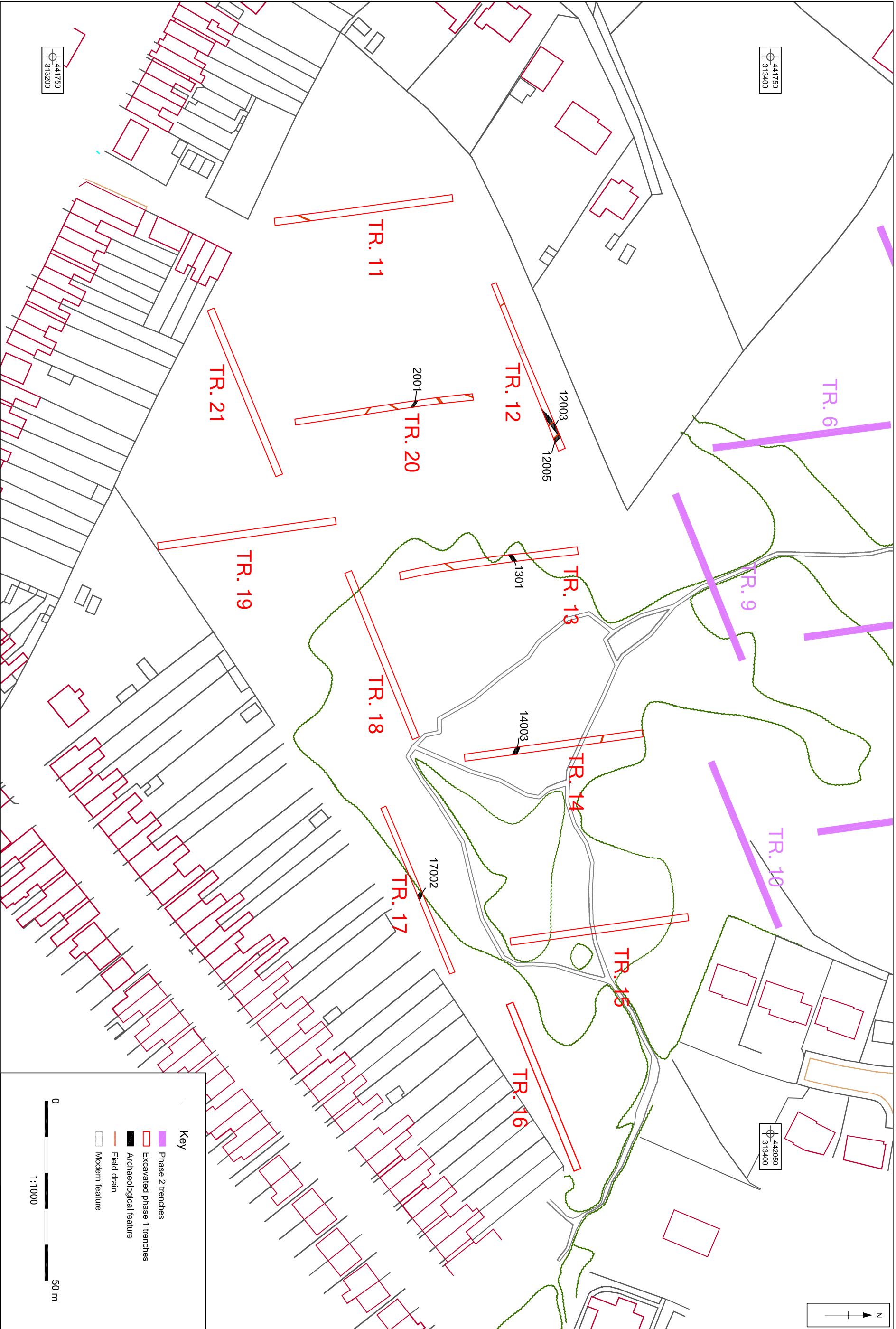
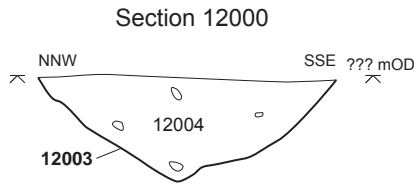
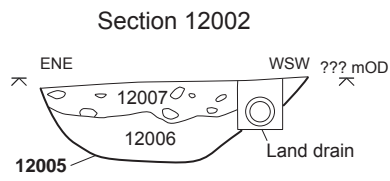


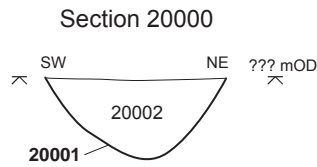
Figure 2: Location plan of evaluation trenches



Trench 12 section of ditch 12003



Trench 12 section of ditch 12005



Trench 20 section of ditch 20001





Plate 1: Trench 12, showing ditches 12003 and 12005, looking south-west



Plate 2: Trench 20, ditch 20001, looking north-east



Plate 3: Trench 21, looking north-east



**Head Office/Registered Office/
OA South**

Janus House
Osney Mead
Oxford OX2 0ES

t: +44 (0) 1865 263 800
f: +44 (0) 1865 793 496
e: info@oxfordarch.co.uk
w: <http://thehumanjourney.net>

OA North

Mill 3
Moor Lane
Lancaster LA1 1GF

t: +44 (0) 1524 541 000
f: +44 (0) 1524 848 606
e: [oanorth@thehumanjourney.net](mailto: oanorth@thehumanjourney.net)
w: <http://thehumanjourney.net>

OA East

15 Trafalgar Way
Bar Hill
Cambridgeshire
CB23 8SQ

t: +44 (0) 1223 850500
f: +44 (0) 1223 850599
e: [oaeast@thehumanjourney.net](mailto: oaeast@thehumanjourney.net)
w: <http://thehumanjourney.net>



Director: David Jennings, BA MIFA FSA

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