



Burton Lazars Leicestershire

Archaeological Evaluation



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wessexarchaeology



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Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Severn Trent Water to undertake an archaeological evaluation at Lag Lane, Burton Lazars, Leicestershire (NGR SK 77135 17661) in advance of the construction of a wastewater pipe. The evaluation comprised the excavation of three trenches. Archaeological features were encountered in two.

The environmental samples contained little environmental evidence, although the presence of coal in samples from both post-medieval pond 103 and ditch 204 suggested a post-medieval date for the ditch.

A small finds assemblage was retrieved, comprising a single sherd of medieval pottery and fragments of post-medieval ceramic land drains.

The evaluation revealed no remains pre-dating the medieval period and the results broadly corresponded with the earlier geophysical survey. The pond located in trench 1 matched an identified anomaly and also corresponded with a feature recorded on historical Ordnance Survey mapping. Trench 2 contained a ditch which was not identified by the geophysical survey. It was most likely related to a nearby field boundary, also present on historic mapping. The linear anomalies identified in trench 3 were shown to be bands of natural geological substrate lying within an alluvial deposit.

No evidence of the Roman road thought to be nearby, or medieval ridge and furrow was found.

The objectives of the evaluation have been met as far as is possible.

The archive resulting from the evaluation is currently held in the offices of Wessex Archaeology in Sheffield. Leicestershire Museums has agreed in principle to accept the archive on completion of the project. An OASIS form, wessexar1-522304, has been provisionally completed and will be finalised at the time of deposition.

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Burton Lazars, Leicestershire

Archaeological Evaluation

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project and planning background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Severn Trent Water to undertake an archaeological evaluation of three parcels of land located east and west of Lag Lane, LE14 2XL. The evaluation area is centred on NGR 477135, 317661 (Fig. 1).
- 1.1.2 The proposed development comprises the insertion of a wastewater pipeline, approximately 2.2 km in length, connecting the existing Burton Lazars sewage treatment works (STW) to a receiving manhole at the south-eastern edge of Melton Mowbray. The pipeline is expected to involve the excavation of a 1 m wide pipe-trench along the entirety of the route. The pipe trench will involve excavation below topsoil and subsoil deposits into the natural substrate below.
- 1.1.3 All works were undertaken in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (WSI) which detailed the aims, methodologies and standards to be employed in order to undertake the evaluation (Wessex Archaeology 2024) and was approved by the Principal Planning Archaeologist at Leicestershire County Council (LCC), acting as the archaeological advisor to the Local Planning Authority (LPA). The works are not directly subject to the 2021 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), as with applications for planning permission, the requirements set out within the Water Industry Act (1991) are also informed by the NPPF.
- 1.1.4 Three trial trenches each measuring 50 m by 2 m were excavated from 15–17 January 2024; Trench 1 was located in Land Parcel (LP) 004; Trench 2 was located in LP 005; and Trench 3 was in LP 006.
- 1.1.5 The evaluation was part of a staged approach in determining the archaeological potential of the site, and follows a desk-based assessment (Wessex Archaeology 2023a) and a gradiometer survey (Wessex Archaeology 2023b).

1.2 Scope of the report

- 1.2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a detailed description of the results of the evaluation, to interpret the results within a local, regional or wider archaeological context and assess whether the aims of the evaluation have been met.
- 1.2.2 The presented results will provide further information on the archaeological resource that may be impacted by the proposed development and facilitate an informed decision with regard to the requirement for, and methods of, any further archaeological mitigation.

1.3 Location, topography and geology

- 1.3.1 The development runs along the southern edge of the valley of the River Eye/Wreake, between the Leicestershire Wolds to the north and High Leicestershire to the South. Burton Lazars and the southern end of Melton Mowbray both lie on a large spur of land projecting

into the river valley and are partially divided by a slight dip towards the north-western end of the site, containing the western arm of Burton Brook.

- 1.3.2 The proposed evaluation area is located in three parcels of land, either side of Lag Lane. Trench 1 is located to the west of Lag Lane, in Land Parcel (LP) 004, while trenches 2 and 3 are located to the east of Lag Lane. Trench 2 is located in LP 005; and Trench 3 is in LP 006.
- 1.3.3 Existing ground levels lie at 90 m above Ordnance Datum (OD) on the western side of Lag Lane (trench 1), with the ground levels dropping to 85 m OD to the east of Lag Lane (trenches 2 and 3).
- 1.3.4 The site and the surrounding area are underlain by bedrock deposits of Blue Lias Formation Mudstone (British Geological Society 2024). Excluding the area immediately surrounding Burton Lazars STW, the route crosses multiple mapped deposits of superficial geology. This primarily consists of alluvium, head deposits and Oadby Member diamicton at the eastern end of evaluation area and colluvium along the route of Burton Brook.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 The archaeological and historical background was assessed in a prior desk-based assessment (Wessex Archaeology 2023a), which considered the recorded historic environment resource within a 1 km study area of the development. The results are presented below, with relevant entry numbers from the Leicestershire Historic Environment Record (HER) and the National Heritage List for England (NHLE) included. Additional sources of information are referenced, as appropriate.

2.2 Previous investigations related to the proposed development

Gradiometer survey (2023)

- 2.2.1 The geophysical survey has identified several features that may be associated with archaeological remains (Wessex Archaeology 2023b). These are possible ditches and remnants of ridge and furrow. A historic landscape feature has been identified on the western side of Lag Lane (trench 1) and covers an area of 27 x 9 m. It is in the same location as a pond recorded on the 1884 and 1904 Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping. It is no longer recorded by the 1955 (SK71) OS mapping. It is considered likely this anomaly is the remains of the backfilled pond.

2.3 Archaeology background

Designated heritage assets

- 2.3.1 There are no designated heritage assets within or in the immediate proximity of the development area, although there are four within a 1 km radius of the site:
 - The St Mary and St Lazarus Hospital moated site and two fishponds lie 460 m south of the development at Burton Lazars (NHLE 1012242). This scheduled monument comprises the earthworks and buried archaeological remains of the principal hospital of the monastic order of St Lazarus of Jerusalem in England and a contemporary moated site in the north-east corner. The leper hospital was founded in the 12th century and operated through to its dissolution in 1546, showing evidence of ridge and furrow cultivation in some areas following its abandonment.

- The Grade I Listed Church of St James (NHLE1360836) is located 660 m south of the development. This is the parish church and was constructed in the late 12th century, but with multiple additions and alterations through the medieval period and into the 19th century.
- Listed Building: Squires Monument (NHLE 1307784), is Grade II listed and located 5 m north-west of the Church of St James, approximately 655 m south of the development. It is a late 18th-century chest tomb in the parish churchyard.
- Chestnut Farmhouse (NHLE 1061287) is located 870 m south of the development. It is a late 18th-century farmhouse on the south-western outskirts of the village and is Grade II listed.

Mesolithic (8,500–4,000 BC)

- 2.3.2 There are no Mesolithic findspots recorded within the 4 km radius of the evaluation area. However, the superficial deposits surrounding the area (in particular the alluvium) have not been subject to substantial investigation and significant Mesolithic material is known from elsewhere along the River Eye/Wreake (Wessex Archaeology 2023a). There is still a distinct possibility for Mesolithic material to be present within the footprint of the area.

Later prehistoric (4,000 BC-AD 43)

- 2.3.3 Multiple sources of archaeological information indicate that the surrounding area was well occupied by the Late Iron Age. Neolithic material has been identified in the vicinity of Burton Lazars, through both Portable Antiquity Scheme (PAS) records and during a small evaluation (LHER ELE11730), and multiple Bronze Age PAS finds have been recorded around the southern edge of Melton Mowbray.
- 2.3.4 These assemblages are supplemented by the regular occurrence of undiagnostic later prehistoric lithics, regularly recorded during archaeological investigations around the south-eastern edges of Melton Mowbray (ELE10601, ELE10619, ELE1237, ELE7550). However, the earliest excavated features confirming later prehistoric settlement in the Study Area date to the Middle Iron Age.
- 2.3.5 Evaluation trenching along the southern edge of Melton Mowbray (ELE10622) has identified multiple areas of Iron Age settlement (MLE23807, MLE3928, MLE22564, MLE23805, MLE23806), with additional areas identified through geophysical survey (MLE22562, MLE22563, MLE8003). The evaluation (ELE10622) identified enclosures and settlement areas with artefactual and ecofactual evidence suggesting mixed-agricultural communities, although there appeared to be a particular concentration on cattle rearing in the Late Iron Age. Notably, the two main zones of occupation were located on the higher ground, either side of a shallow dry valley, with Middle to Late Iron Age occupation sites on the west and a Late Iron Age to Romano-British site on the east.
- 2.3.6 The Melton Mowbray Distributor Road evaluation (ELE10622) indicated that settlement did not extend down the slope (Allen Archaeology 2019). However aerial photography and LiDAR imagery indicate the presence of further activity in the lower part of the Eye valley, running from the centre to the north-east of the Study Area. Multiple cropmarks appear to show possible later prehistoric field systems, an enclosure and a double-ditched trackway in this area (MLE3473, MLE3920, MSE3483). In addition, LiDAR imagery shows a number of further linear features in this area which appear to represent field boundaries and/or trackways predating the tithe map, potentially prehistoric in origin.

2.3.7 In particular, there are three earthworks identifiable crossing the western end of the route. From east to west:

- A) Running south-west/north-east to the immediate north-west of the western arm of Burton Brook, in the westernmost arable field;
- B) Running north/south, just north-west of the Burton Road (A606)/Sawgate Road junction;
- C) Along the treeline partially sub-dividing the college grounds.

Romano-British (AD 43–410)

2.3.8 Roman-British dating is absent from only two of the five known Iron Age settlements in the Study Area given above (MLE22564, MLE23807). At the other three locations (MLE23805, MLE23806, MLE3928) artefactual evidence, including the pottery assemblages, indicated that the sites continued to be occupied into the later 1st and 2nd centuries (Simmonds and Morris 2017, 83-4). Excavated evidence, PAS data and other findspots indicate that settlement may have spread out further across the surrounding area than during the Iron Age. This included north, into modern Melton Mowbray (MLE16604, MLE21097), to the south-east of Burton Lazars (MLE3486, MLE7964), but also across the area around and to the north between Melton Mowbray and the River Eye.

2.3.9 It should be noted that the increase in PAS data for the Romano-British period in this area is largely driven by an increase in coin finds. This is likely at least in part due to an increase in the quantity of coinage in circulation, as much as potential population growth and change in settlement patterns. It could be that the increase in PAS finds represents areas which were already settled by the end of the Iron Age, but which were less archaeologically visible.

2.3.10 It is of particular importance to the development area that the projected route of an unnamed Roman Road (MLE5508) runs alongside Sawgate Road, with the intended route crossing over it at its eastern end, outside of the Burton Lazars STW. The existence and mapped route of the road appear to be largely derived from the identification of a roughly linear collection of trackways and field boundaries in the later 19th century and its presence as an archaeological feature within the site cannot be taken for granted. Intrusive investigations undertaken through and immediately alongside its projected route, at the western end of the Study Area (ELE11004, ELE10622, ELE3884, ELE5297, ELE10622), have all failed to identify any archaeological evidence for it.

2.3.11 However, a watching brief undertaken 455 m east of the Burton Lazars STW (ELE5534) may have identified potential evidence for the road. The watching brief included the excavation of a small area at the point where the proposed route of the Roman road crosses Burton Brook. It identified cobbled surfaces on both sides of the brook and recovered two sherds of Romano-British pottery and a single coin (MLE20549). These cobbled surfaces lay beneath three later phases of bridge building, interpreted as medieval and post-medieval in date (MLE20550). However, the Romano-British finds could not be confidently attributed to any single context and could have been residual.

2.3.12 The dating of the river crossing (potentially forming part of either a bridge or a ford) is uncertain, however, it is clear that a route did cross at this point, likely pre-dating the 14th century (to which the second phase was attributed). Whilst investigations to the west did not identify any below-ground trace of any such road, these findings raise the possibility of other remains being present along this route, particularly where the area crosses the western arm of Burton Brook.

Anglo-Saxon (AD 410–1066)

- 2.3.13 Excavated features indicating Anglo-Saxon settlement in the evaluation area are lacking, however, a substantial amount of findspots indicate activity within the area throughout the period.
- 2.3.14 In particular, there has been a concentration of surface finds across the southern edge of modern Melton Mowbray, 500 m south-west of the western end of the area. These date between the 5th and 9th centuries (MLE6221, MLE6212, ELE7550) and have been interpreted as evidence of a long-lasting cemetery (or cemeteries) somewhere in the vicinity. This interpretation is strengthened by the predominance of dress ornaments in the assemblages and the lack of domestic or agricultural features identified during intrusive investigation (ELE8979, ELE8980).
- 2.3.15 This area of activity, in addition to the scatter of finds running across the centre of the Study Area, recorded in the PAS and during works in Burton Lazars (ELE2056), indicate that the area was well settled through most if not all of the period. Both Burton Lazars and Melton Mowbray are identifiable in *Domesday*, but their individual sizes and resource bases are difficult to estimate, as they are listed as part of a larger group of holdings (Open Domesday 2023). Although the exact location and nature of Anglo-Saxon settlement in the Study Area is not known, it appears likely that at least by the end of the period, it occupied the same areas of settlement and cultivation seen in the medieval period.

Medieval (AD 1066–1500)

- 2.3.16 The intended route runs 225 m east of and 250 m north of the village of Burton Lazars, which has yielded extensive evidence of medieval settlement, including the standing and excavated remains of the leper hospital. The route lies outside of the historic core of the village (MLE8797), and likely crosses its agricultural hinterland with associated archaeological features most likely including trackways, field drainage and boundaries.
- 2.3.17 The PAS and LHER both record an increase in the amount of archaeological material found and reported within the Study Area dating to the medieval period, relative to the preceding periods. The distribution of finds again concentrates on the higher ground running from the centre to the west of the Study Area, particularly on the farmland around the perimeter of modern Melton Mowbray.
- 2.3.18 Leicestershire is notable for having large-scale regulated open field systems from a relatively early period and the Study Area sits at one end of a large area of the some of the most extensive remains of ridge and furrow in the county. The intended route runs across an area of highly fertile soil, with only slightly impeded drainage towards the north-western end close to the areas of known settlement, on the slightly higher ground overlooking the floodplain of the River Eye. Although drainage becomes more of an issue from the centre to the eastern end of the route, the natural gradient would likely have meant that the issue could be alleviated with drainage ditches and ridge and furrow.
- 2.3.19 The evaluation area more than likely sat within a zone of arable cultivation under the control of either the leper hospital, or one of the townships of Melton Mowbray or Burton Lazars. Aerial photography and LiDAR imagery do not indicate the clear presence of above-ground remains of ridge and furrow cultivation within the site, and the chances of below-ground elements surviving are also somewhat limited by the extent of modern cultivation.
- 2.3.20 However, there are potential medieval drainage systems in parts of the route, in particular, along the western arm of Burton Brook. This lies in a slight dip in the landscape, as shown by the mapped areas of colluvium and is fed by springs within and surrounding Burton

Lazars, including those used to form the ponds and moats of the Leper Hospital. This increases the likelihood of both deeply cut cultivation furrows and boundaries between fields and furlongs requiring drainage ditches. In addition to the likelihood of trackways leading between Burton Lazars and the surrounding fields, there is also a potential for droveways leading towards pasture and water closer to the river. It is possible that the north–south routes of Lag Lane, the continuation of Hollow Lane and the former Long Lane follow medieval routes.

Post-medieval to modern (AD 1500–present)

- 2.3.21 The pattern of settlement established in the medieval period appears to have continued without major alteration through the post-medieval to the modern period, with the addition of gradual expansion to the south and east of Melton Mowbray. The distribution of PAS and LHER findspots continues to be concentrated on the centre and west of the Study Area, likely representative of both proximity to settlement and areas of manuring.
- 2.3.22 The 1816 Melton Mowbray OS drawing the 1848 Burton Lazars tithe map and later 19th and 20th-century mapping indicate considerable continuity of features across the intended route from at least 1816 to the present. At the north-western end of the area, Burton Road (A606) appears in its current location and is known to have been turnpiked in the later 18th century (MSE20656). Burton Road likely follows the line of an earlier route between Burton Lazars and Melton Mowbray and it is possible that elements of earlier iterations of it could be present below ground level.
- 2.3.23 Additionally, Sawgate Road can be seen along its current route in these three maps, with an equal potential for below ground iterations predating the modern tarmacked road. Further to this, in the 1816 Melton Mowbray OS drawing three lanes are visible extending north from Sawgate Road, crossing the evaluation area. These are identifiable in both 19th and 20th-century mapping and can be seen in the modern landscape. Lag Lane is the only one still forming a fully fledged road, with the lanes either Side (Long Lane to the west and Hollow Lane to the east) still in use as footpaths.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 General aims

- 3.1.1 The general aims of the evaluation, as stated in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2024) and in compliance with the ClfA *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2014a), were to:
- provide information about the archaeological potential of the site; and
 - inform either the scope and nature of any further archaeological work that may be required; or the formation of a mitigation strategy (to offset the impact of the development on the archaeological resource); or a management strategy.

3.2 General objectives

- 3.2.1 In order to achieve the above aims, the general objectives of the evaluation were to:
- determine the presence or absence of archaeological features, deposits, structures, artefacts or ecofacts within the specified area;
 - establish, within the constraints of the evaluation, the extent, character, date, condition and quality of any surviving archaeological remains;

- place any identified archaeological remains within a wider historical and archaeological context in order to assess their significance; and
- make available information about the archaeological resource within the site by reporting on the results of the evaluation.

3.3 Site-specific objectives

3.3.1 Following consideration of the archaeological potential of the site, the site-specific objectives of the evaluation were to:

- test the results of the geophysical survey (Wessex Archaeology 2023b);
- examine evidence for remains associated with an unnamed Roman road (MLE5508) that which runs alongside Sawgate Road (to the south);
- examine evidence for remains of medieval/post-medieval ridge and furrow and assess if this has impacted on any earlier remains;

4 METHODS

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 All works were undertaken in accordance with the detailed methods set out within the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2024) and in general compliance with the standards outlined in ClfA guidance (ClfA 2014a). The methods employed are summarised below.

4.2 Fieldwork methods

General

- 4.2.1 All trenches were set out using a Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) in the approximate positions shown in Figure 1. The trench locations were tied into the Ordnance Survey (OS) National Grid and Ordnance Datum (OD) (Newlyn), as defined by OSTN15 and OSGM15.
- 4.2.2 Three trial trenches, each measuring 50 x 2 m, were excavated in level spits using a 360° excavator equipped with a toothless bucket, under the constant supervision and instruction of the monitoring archaeologist. Machine excavation proceeded until either the archaeological horizon or the natural geology was exposed.
- 4.2.3 Where necessary, the base of the trench/surface of archaeological deposits were cleaned by hand. A sample of archaeological features and deposits was hand-excavated, sufficient to address the aims of the evaluation.
- 4.2.4 Spoil from machine stripping and hand-excavated archaeological deposits was visually scanned for the purposes of finds retrieval. Artefacts were collected and bagged by context. All artefacts from excavated contexts were retained.
- 4.2.5 Trenches were completed to the satisfaction of the client and the Principal Planning Archaeologist at Leicestershire County Council (LCC) and were backfilled using excavated materials in the order in which they were excavated, and left level on completion. No other reinstatement or surface treatment was undertaken.

Recording

- 4.2.6 All exposed archaeological deposits and features were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's pro forma recording system. A complete record of excavated features and

deposits was made, including plans and sections drawn to appropriate scales (generally 1:20 or 1:50 for plans and 1:10 for sections) and tied to the Ordnance Survey (OS) National Grid.

- 4.2.7 A Leica GNSS connected to Leica's SmartNet service surveyed the location of archaeological features. All survey data is recorded in OS National Grid coordinates and heights above OD (Newlyn), as defined by OSTN15 and OSGM15, with a three-dimensional accuracy of at least 50 mm.
- 4.2.8 A full photographic record was made using digital cameras equipped with an image sensor of not less than 16 megapixels. Digital images have been subject to managed quality control and curation processes, which has embedded appropriate metadata within the image and will ensure long term accessibility of the image set.

4.3 Finds and environmental strategies

- 4.3.1 Strategies for the recovery, processing and assessment of finds and environmental samples were in line with those detailed in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2024). The treatment of artefacts and environmental remains was in general accordance with: *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (ClfA 2014b), *Environmental Archaeology. A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Methods, from Sampling and Recovery to Post-excavation* (English Heritage 2011), and ClfA's *Toolkit for Specialist Reporting* (Type 2: Appraisal) (ClfA 2022a).

4.4 Monitoring

- 4.4.1 The Principal Planning Archaeologist at LCC monitored the evaluation on behalf of the LPA.

5 STRATIGRAPHIC EVIDENCE

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 Archaeological features and deposits were found in two of the three trenches. Plans of these features are shown with the results of the geophysical survey in Figure 2 and with the 1884 OS mapping in Figure 3. Sections of features are reproduced in Figures 4 and 5, while photographs of trenches and features are represented in Figures 6 to 10.
- 5.1.2 The evaluation revealed post-medieval activity comprising a pond and a ditch. The pond had been identified by the geophysical survey (Wessex Archaeology 2023b) and recorded on historical OS maps.
- 5.1.3 Possible linear features identified by the geophysical survey at the location of trench 3 were found to be bands of natural geological substrate lying within alluvium, while the ditch located in trench 2 was previously unidentified.
- 5.1.4 Trench 3 (Figs 9 and 10) was found to be sterile of archaeological features and deposits.
- 5.1.5 The following section presents the results of the evaluation with detailed descriptions of individual contexts provided in the trench summary tables (Appendix 1).

5.2 Soil sequence and natural deposits

- 5.2.1 All three trenches had topsoil deposits consisting of the same mid-brown grey silty clay which was found to vary in depth from 0.19 m (301; trench 3) to 0.25 m (201; trench 2). Trench 2 was the only trench to contain a subsoil deposit, 202, which comprised a mid-

yellowish grey silty clay measuring 0.18 m thick. Trench 3 (Fig. 10) contained an alluvial deposit, 302, consisting of a mid-yellow grey silty clay. A sondage revealed that the deposit measured 1.21 m thick. The natural geological substrate across the site consisted of a mid-greyish yellow silty clay which was reached in every trench, at depths of 0.24–0.58 m below ground level.

5.3 Post-medieval

Trench 1

5.3.1 Trench 1 (Figs 3, 4 and 6) contained an infilled pond (103) identified by the geophysical survey and recorded on both the 1884 and 1904 OS mapping.

5.3.2 Due to its size the pond was machine excavated. It measured 19.35 m in length and 0.88 m deep with shallow concave sides and an undulating base. The basal fill (105) consisted of a mid-grey sandy clay. Above this lay a mid-grey yellow silty clay (104) which may have been used as a 'capping' layer to seal the pond after backfilling. The presence of coal within the environmental samples suggests a post-medieval date for the pond, supported by the retrieval of ceramic land drain fragments from the feature. The pond is not recorded on the 1955 OS map and it can be assumed that it had fallen out of use and was backfilled prior to this date.

Trench 2

5.3.3 Trench 2 (Figs 5, 7 and 8) contained a single north-east to south-west aligned ditch (204) that was not identified by the geophysical survey. It was located approximately 8 m north of a field boundary recorded on the historic OS mapping and possibly represented a drainage ditch related to this boundary (Fig. 3).

5.3.4 Ditch 204 was not fully exposed within trench 2 and extended beyond the north side of the trench as well as continuing to the east. It measured 0.6 m wide and 0.4 m deep with concave sides and base. It was filled with a mid-grey silty clay. A single sherd of abraded medieval pottery was retrieved, and the presence of coal within environmental evidence (conforming to that observed in pond 103) suggested a post-medieval date.

6 FINDS EVIDENCE

6.1 General

6.1.1 Very few finds were recovered from the three evaluation trenches. A single sherd of medieval pottery (10 g) was found in ditch 204. It comes from the body of an externally glazed closed form, probably a jug, of 12th to 13th-century date and from the Potters Marston kilns (Sawday 1991; Leicestershire medieval pottery fabric series Fabric PM). However, the slightly battered condition of this sherd, coupled with its occurrence as a single, isolated find in this feature, means that it cannot be relied upon to provide a date for the filling of the ditch as it may have spent a considerable amount of time in the ploughsoil before becoming incorporated into the ditch fills.

6.1.2 The only other finds, 11 fragments (1094 g) from ceramic land drain pipes of 18th or 19th-century date, came from pond 103. All occur in hard fired, fully oxidised, sandy fabrics with rare iron oxide inclusions. Three of the pieces derive from at least two separate pipes with open, 'horseshoe' shaped profiles, but none of the others are in anyway diagnostic.

7 ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

7.1 Introduction

- 7.1.1 Two bulk sediment samples were taken from pond 103 and a ditch 204 and were processed for the recovery and assessment of environmental evidence. Charcoal and charred plant remains recovered from the samples have been assessed.

7.2 Aims and methods

- 7.2.1 The aim of this assessment is to determine the nature and significance of the environmental remains preserved at the site. This assessment has been undertaken in accordance with Historic England's guidelines *Environmental Archaeology: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Methods, from Sampling and Recovery to Post-excavation* (English Heritage 2011).

Bulk samples

- 7.2.2 The size of the bulk sediment samples varied between 31 and 40 litres, with an average volume of approximately 35.5 litres. One of the samples was pre-soaked in a solution of water and hydrogen peroxide to help break up the clay-rich sediment. The samples were processed by standard flotation methods on a Siraf-type flotation tank. The flot was retained on a 0.25 mm mesh. The residues were retained on a 1 mm mesh and were split into coarse (>4 mm) and fine (1–4 mm) residue fractions. The coarse residue fractions (>4 mm) were sorted by eye for artefactual and environmental remains. The environmental material extracted from the residues was added to the flots.
- 7.2.3 The fine residue fractions and the flots were scanned and sorted using a stereomicroscope at up to 40x magnification for uncharred and charred botanical remains, wood charcoal and wood remains, as well as other environmental and artefactual material (e.g., insects/invertebrates, molluscs, etc.). The presence of recent and/or intrusive material was noted in the samples, including modern roots, modern seeds, mycorrhizal fungi sclerotia, earthworm eggs and shells of burrowing blind snails (*Cecilioides acicula*).
- 7.2.4 Plant macroremains were identified through comparison with modern reference material held by Wessex Archaeology and relevant literature (Cappers et al. 2006). Nomenclature follows Stace (1997) for wild taxa and Zohary et al. (2012) for cereal remains and other cultivated crops (using traditional names). Additional habitat information has been taken from Stroh et al. (2023). For simplicity, the term 'seed' is used to refer to different types of plant macroremain (e.g., achene, fruit etc.).
- 7.2.5 Remains were recorded semi-quantitatively on an abundance scale: C = <5 ('Trace'), B = 5–10 ('Rare'), A = 10–30 ('Occasional'), A* = 30–100 ('Frequent'), A** = 100–500 ('Common'), A*** = >500 ('Abundant').
- ### 7.3 Results
- 7.3.1 The results are presented in Appendix 2.
- 7.3.2 The flots from the bulk sediment samples were of variable volumes. Potential indicators of bioturbation are abundant, indicating high possibility of contamination from later intrusive material (e.g., abundant modern roots, modern/uncharred seeds, *Cenococcum geophilum*).
- 7.3.3 Charred plant remains are scarce and comprise only poorly preserved Chenopodiaceae (goosefoots) and Polygonaceae (knotgrasses) seeds from pond 103. Modern seeds are particularly abundant. Ditch 204 produced only very low quantities of wood charcoal. Coal

is also present in both samples. No other environmental evidence was preserved in the bulk sediment samples.

8 CONCLUSIONS

8.1 Environmental

8.1.1 The samples contained little environmental evidence.

8.1.2 While ditch 204 is not securely dated, the presence of coal in both samples correlates with the post-medieval phasing of pond 103, as coal became a more prominent fuel source from the medieval and post-medieval periods (Claughton *et al.* 2016).

8.2 Summary

8.2.1 The evaluation revealed nothing pre-dating the medieval period. Due to its position at the bottom of a slope it is possible that the site would not have been an area particularly suited to development and appears to have been mainly used for agriculture.

8.2.2 A pond identified in trench 1 corresponded to a recorded feature on both the 1884 and 1904 OS maps (Fig. 3). The pond is not depicted on the 1955 OS map, suggesting it was infilled sometime between 1904 and 1955. Fragments of post-medieval ceramic land drains were retrieved from fills of the pond supporting the timeline provided by the historic OS mapping.

8.2.3 Trench 2 contained a ditch which was not identified by the geophysical survey. It was most likely a drainage or agricultural ditch related to a nearby field boundary present on the 1884 OS map. A single sherd of medieval pottery was retrieved from the ditch, although its condition suggested it was redeposited and prevented secure dating.

8.2.4 The presence of coal within the environmental samples of both the pond and the ditch suggested a post-medieval date.

8.2.5 The results of the evaluation broadly corresponded with the geophysical survey. The pond located in trench 1 matched an identified anomaly, while the linear anomalies identified in trench 3 were shown to be bands of natural lying within an alluvial deposit. This deposit was only located in trench 3 which sat considerably lower in the landscape when compared to trenches 1 and 2. A sondage was excavated to investigate the deposit and showed that the alluvium continued to a depth of 1.4 m below ground level.

8.2.6 The objectives of the evaluation have been met as far as is possible given the low amount of archaeological remains present:

- the results of the geophysical survey have been tested,
- the extent, character and date of archaeological features has been determined,
- and no evidence of either the Roman road (MLE5508), running along Sawgate Road, or medieval ridge and furrow, were found.

9 ARCHIVE STORAGE AND CURATION

9.1 Museum

9.1.1 The archive resulting from the evaluation is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology in Sheffield. Leicestershire Museums have agreed in principle to accept the

archive on completion of the project, under the accession code X.A142.2023. Deposition of any finds with the museum will only be carried out with the full written agreement of the landowner to transfer title of all finds to the museum.

9.2 Preparation of the archive

Physical archive

9.2.1 The archive, which includes paper records, graphics, artefacts and ecofacts, will be prepared following the standard conditions for the acceptance of excavated archaeological material by Leicestershire Museums, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (Brown 2011; ClfA 2014c; SMA 1995).

9.2.2 All archive elements are marked with the accession code, and a full index will be prepared. The physical archive currently comprises the following:

- 1 cardboard box of artefacts and ecofacts, ordered by material type
- 1 file of paper records

Digital archive

9.2.3 The digital archive generated by the project, which comprises born-digital data (e.g., site records, survey data, databases and spreadsheets, photographs and reports), will be deposited with a Trusted Digital Repository, in this instance the Archaeology Data Service (ADS), to ensure its long-term curation. Digital data will be prepared following ADS guidelines (ADS 2013 and online guidance) and accompanied by metadata.

9.3 Selection strategy

9.3.1 It is widely accepted that not all the records and materials (artefacts and ecofacts) collected or created during the course of an archaeological project require preservation in perpetuity. These records and materials will be subject to selection in order to establish what will be retained for long-term curation, with the aim of ensuring that all elements selected to be retained are appropriate to establish the significance of the project and support future research, outreach, engagement, display and learning activities, i.e., the retained archive should fulfil the requirements of both future researchers and the receiving museum.

9.3.2 The selection strategy, which details the project-specific selection process, is underpinned by national guidelines on selection and retention (Brown 2011, section 4) and generic selection policies (SMA 1993; Wessex Archaeology's internal selection policy) and follows ClfA's *Toolkit for Selecting Archaeological Archives* (ClfA 2022b). It should be agreed by all stakeholders (Wessex Archaeology's internal specialists, external specialists, local authority, museum) and fully documented in the project archive.

9.3.3 Project-specific proposals for selection are presented below. These proposals are based on recommendations by Wessex Archaeology's internal specialists and external specialists and will be updated in line with any further comment by other stakeholders (museum, local authority). The selection strategy will be fully documented in the project archive.

9.3.4 Any material not selected for retention may be used for teaching or reference collections by Wessex Archaeology.

Finds

9.3.5 Ceramic building material (11 pieces): highly fragmented land drain pipes of relatively recent date. No further research potential; do not retain

- 9.3.6 Pottery (1 sherd): of medieval date but a common type in the area and occurs as isolated find in a ditch fill.

Palaeoenvironmental material

- 9.3.7 The samples should be retained in the site archive until the fieldwork stage of the project is completed, when recommendations for dispersal or retention in the site archive will be made.

- 9.3.8 The residues were discarded after sorting.

Documentary records

- 9.3.9 Paper records comprise two photographic registers (other pro-forma site records are digital), three permatrace drawings and reports (written scheme of investigation, client report). All will be retained and deposited with the project archive.

Digital data

- 9.3.10 The digital data comprise site records (tablet-recorded on site) in spreadsheet format; finds records in spreadsheet format; survey data; photographs; reports. All will be deposited, although site photographs will be subject to selection to eliminate poor quality and duplicated images, and any others not considered directly relevant to the archaeology of the site.

9.4 Security copy

- 9.4.1 In line with current best practice (e.g., Brown 2011), on completion of the project a security copy of the written records will be prepared, in the form of a digital PDF/A file. PDF/A is an ISO-standardised version of the Portable Document Format (PDF) designed for the digital preservation of electronic documents through omission of features ill-suited to long-term archiving.

9.5 OASIS

- 9.5.1 An OASIS (online access to the index of archaeological investigations) record (<http://oasis.ac.uk>) has been initiated, with key fields completed (Appendix 3). A .pdf version of the final report will be submitted following approval by the Principal Planning Archaeologist at LCC on behalf of the LPA. Subject to any contractual requirements on confidentiality, copies of the OASIS record will be integrated into the relevant local and national records and published through the Archaeology Data Service (ADS) ArchSearch catalogue.

10 COPYRIGHT

10.1 Archive and report copyright

- 10.1.1 The full copyright of the written/illustrative/digital archive relating to the project will be retained by Wessex Archaeology under the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* with all rights reserved. The client will be licenced to use each report for the purposes that it was produced in relation to the project as described in the specification. The museum, however, will be granted an exclusive licence for the use of the archive for educational purposes, including academic research, providing that such use conforms to the *Copyright and Related Rights Regulations 2003*.



10.2 Third party data copyright

- 10.2.1 This document and the project archive may contain material that is non-Wessex Archaeology copyright (e.g., Ordnance Survey, British Geological Survey, Crown Copyright), or the intellectual property of third parties, which Wessex Archaeology are able to provide for limited reproduction under the terms of our own copyright licences, but for which copyright itself is non-transferable by Wessex Archaeology. Users remain bound by the conditions of the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* with regard to multiple copying and electronic dissemination of such material.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Trench summaries

depth bgl = below ground level

Trench No 1		Length 50 m	Width 2 m	Depth 1.08 m
Context Number	Fill Of/Filled With	Interpretative Category	Description	Depth BGL
101		Topsoil	Mid brown grey silty clay. Firm, sticky and plastic. Occasional small to medium sub-angular flint and chalk frags. Frequent rooting (crop).	0 – 0.24
102		Natural	Light to mid brownish yellow clay. Firm, sticky and plastic. Frequent medium to large sub-angular flint and chalk fragments.	0.24 – 0.31+
103	104, 105	Pond	Sub-circular pond with moderate, concave sides and an irregular / undulating base. Length: 19.35 m. Width: >2.00 m. Depth: 1.16 m.	0.24 – 1.08
104	103	Deliberate backfill	Mid greyish yellow silty clay with 10-15% sub-angular large stones and coarse gravel	0.24 – 0.56
105	103	Deliberate backfill	Mid grey sandy clay with 10-15% fine chalk gravel. frequent rooting,	0.56 – 1.08

Trench No 2		Length 50 m	Width 2 m	Depth 0.56 m
Context Number	Fill Of/Filled With	Interpretative Category	Description	Depth BGL
201		Topsoil	Mid greyish brown silty clay. Loosely compacted. 5-10% sub-rounded fine-medium gravel. Rooting from ground surface throughout.	0 – 0.25
202		Subsoil	Mid yellowish grey silty clay. Moderately compacted. 10-15% sub-angular / sub-rounded coarse gravel. 5% charcoal flecks.	0.25 – 0.43
203		Natural	Mid greyish yellow silty clay. Smooth, moderately compacted. 10-15% sub-angular / sub-rounded coarse gravel. 5-10% sub-angular large stones, ≤10 / 6cm. Decayed plant remains.	0.43 – 0.56+
204	205	Ditch	Linear ditch aligned NE-SW with moderate, concave sides and a concave base. Length: >5.00 m. Width: >0.60 m. Depth: 0.40 m.	0.43 – 0.83
205	204	Secondary fill	Mid grey silty clay with 5% charcoal, 3% sub-angular medium gravel, 1% sub-rounded stones	0.43 – 0.83



Trench No 3		Length 50 m	Width 2 m	Depth 1.40 m
Context Number	Fill Of/Filled With	Interpretative Category	Description	Depth BGL
301		Topsoil	Mid brown silty clay. 1-3% sub-rounded medium gravel. Rooting from ground surface throughout.	0 – 0.19
302		Alluvium	Mid yellowish grey silty clay. Moderately compacted. 5% sparse sub-angular fine / medium gravel. 3-5% charcoal flecks.	0.19 – 1.4
303		Natural	Mid brownish yellow silty clay. Firmly compacted, gritty. Intermittent patches of light yellowish grey clay. 10-15% sub-angular / sub-rounded stones and coarse gravel. 3-5% sub-angular / sub-rounded medium gravel. Manganese flecks throughout.	0.58+



Appendix 2 Environmental evidence

Scale of abundance: C = <5, B = 5–10, A = 10–30, A* = 30–100, A** = 100–500, A*** = >500; Bioturbation proxies: Roots (%), Uncharred seeds (scale of abundance), F = mycorrhizal fungi sclerotia.

Phase	Feature Type	Feature	Context	Sample Code	Sample vol. (l)	Flot vol. (ml)	Bioturbation proxies	Grain	Chaff	Cereal Notes	Charred Other	Charred Other Notes	Charcoal >2 mm (ml)	Other
Post-med	Pond	103	105	277333_1	40	1	85% modern roots and vegetation, modern seeds A***, F	-	-	-	C	Chenopodiaceae, Polygonaceae	-	Coal A
Uncertain date	Ditch	204	205	277333_2	31	50	80% modern roots, modern seeds A**, F	-	-	-	-	-	2	Coal A

Appendix 3 OASIS summary

OASIS ID (UID): wessexar1-522304

Project Name: Evaluation at Burton Lazars, Leicestershire

Activity type: Evaluation

Sitecode(s): 277333

Project Identifier(s): 277333

Reason for Investigation: Planning requirement

Organisation Responsible for work: Wessex Archaeology

Project Dates: 15-Jan-2024 - 17-Jan-2024

HER: Leicestershire HER

Project Methodology: An archaeological trial trench evaluation comprising of 3 50 m x 2 m trenches targeted over geophysical anomalies in advance of the construction of a wastewater pipe by Severn Trent Water.

Project Results: Three 50 m x 2m trenches were excavated across the development area. A large infilled pond, recorded on both the 1884 and 1904 OS mapping was located in Trench 1. Fragments of ceramic land drain was also retrieved from the fills. Trench 2 contained a probable agricultural ditch from which a single sherd of abraded medieval pottery was retrieved. A gradiometer survey identified a number of possible linears in Trench 3. Excavation showed that these were in fact the result of bands of natural within an alluvial deposit.

Keywords:

Subject/Period: Pond: POST MEDIEVAL

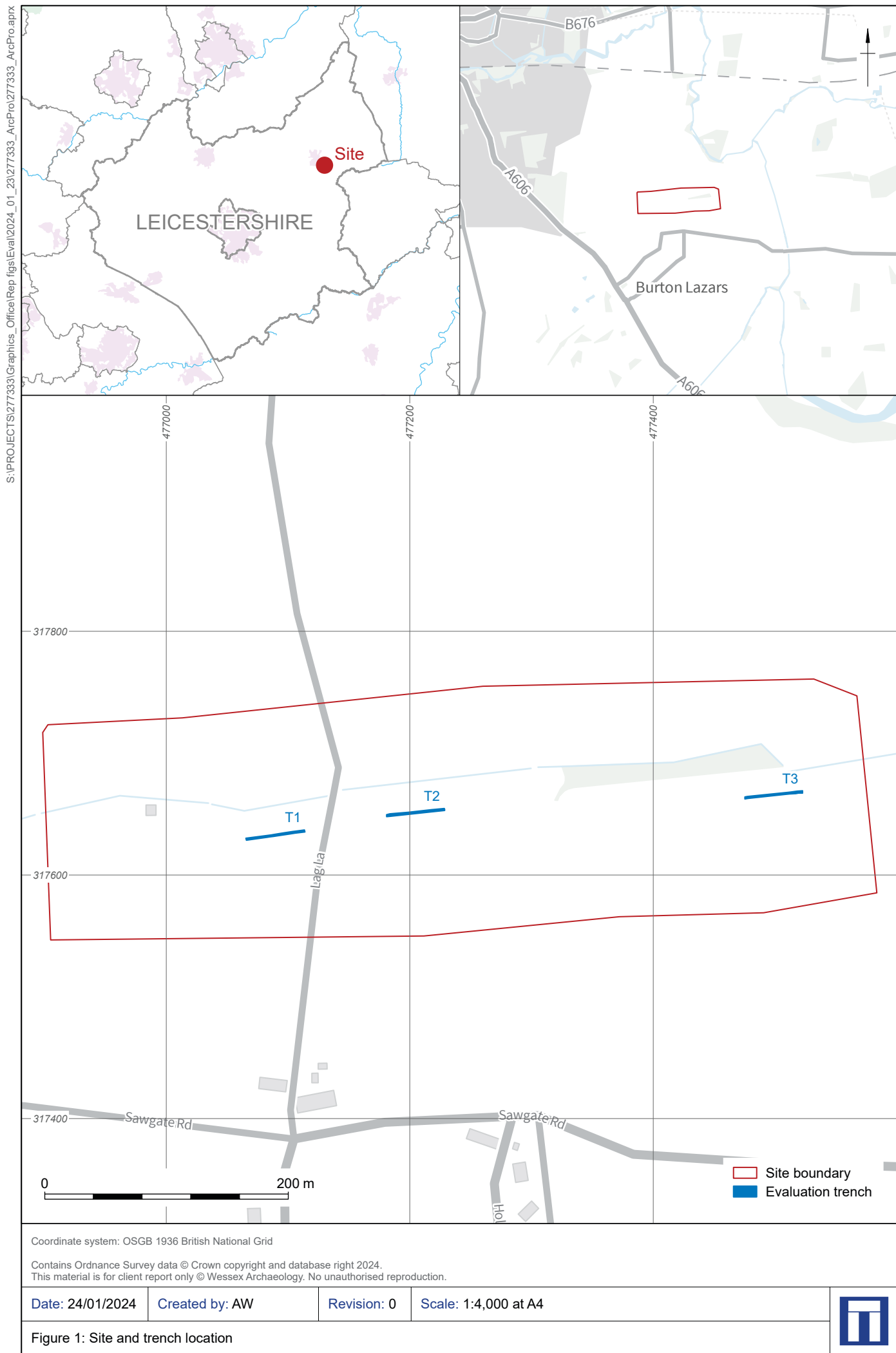
FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types

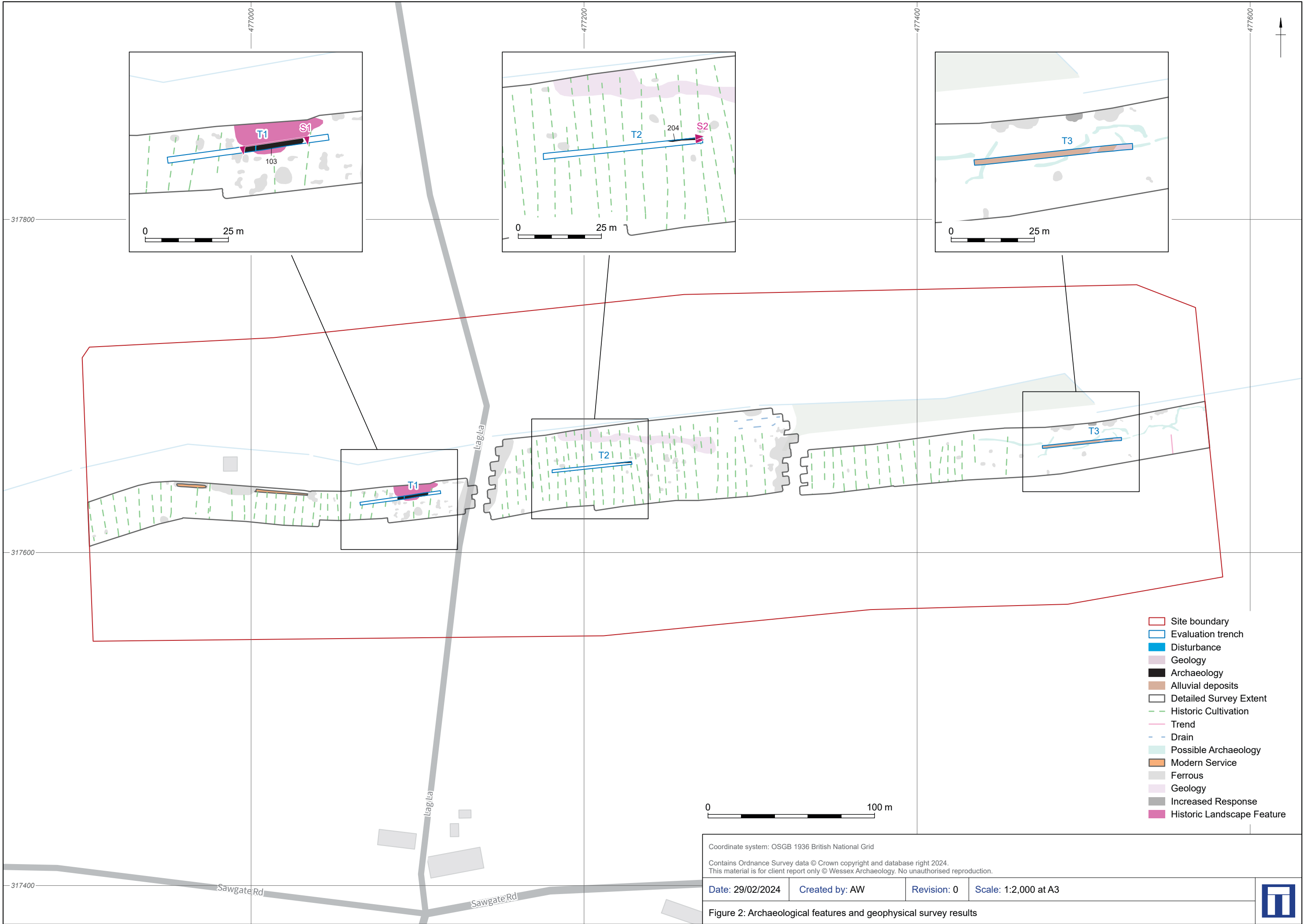
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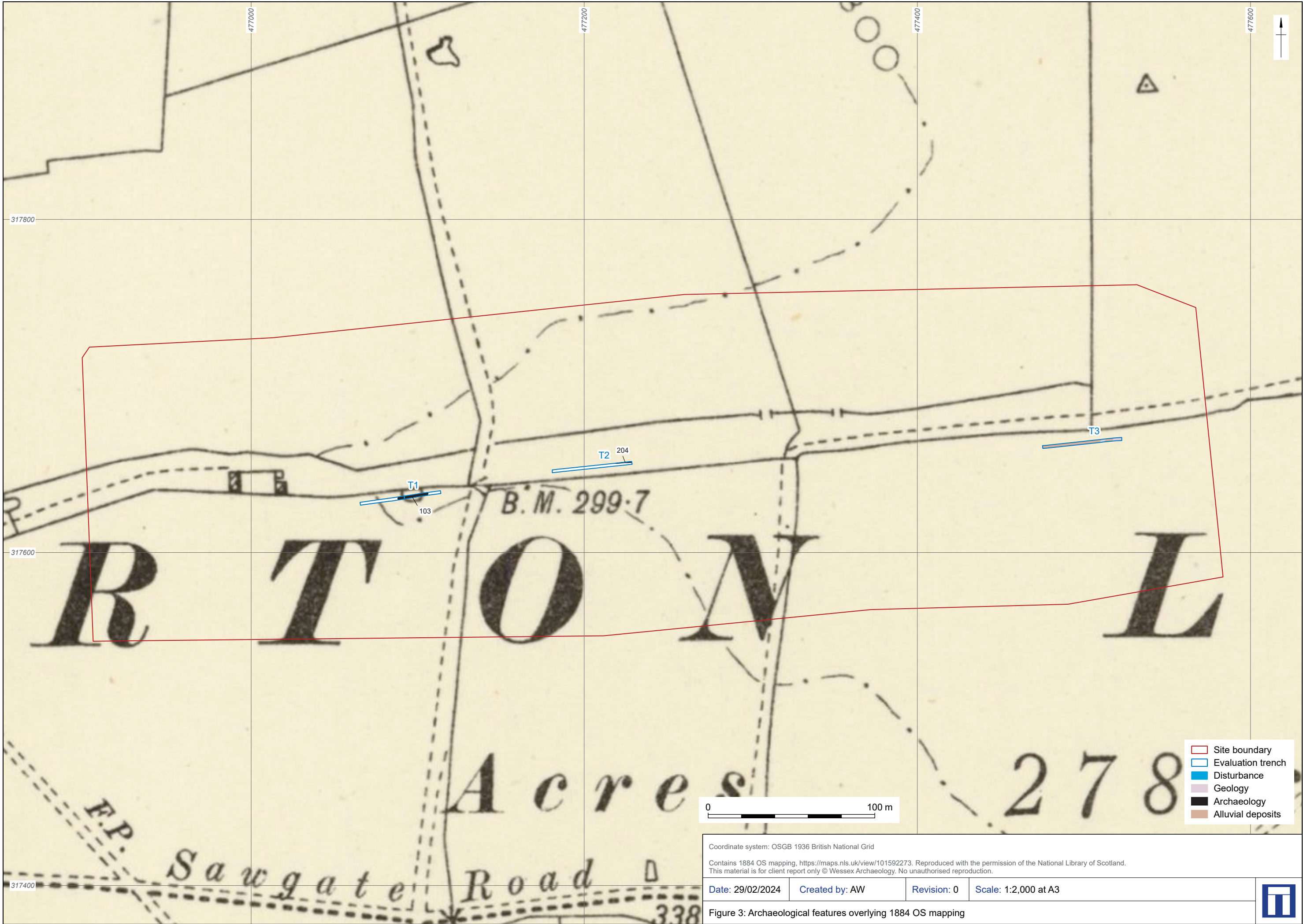
Documentary Archive - to be deposited with Leicestershire County Council Museums;

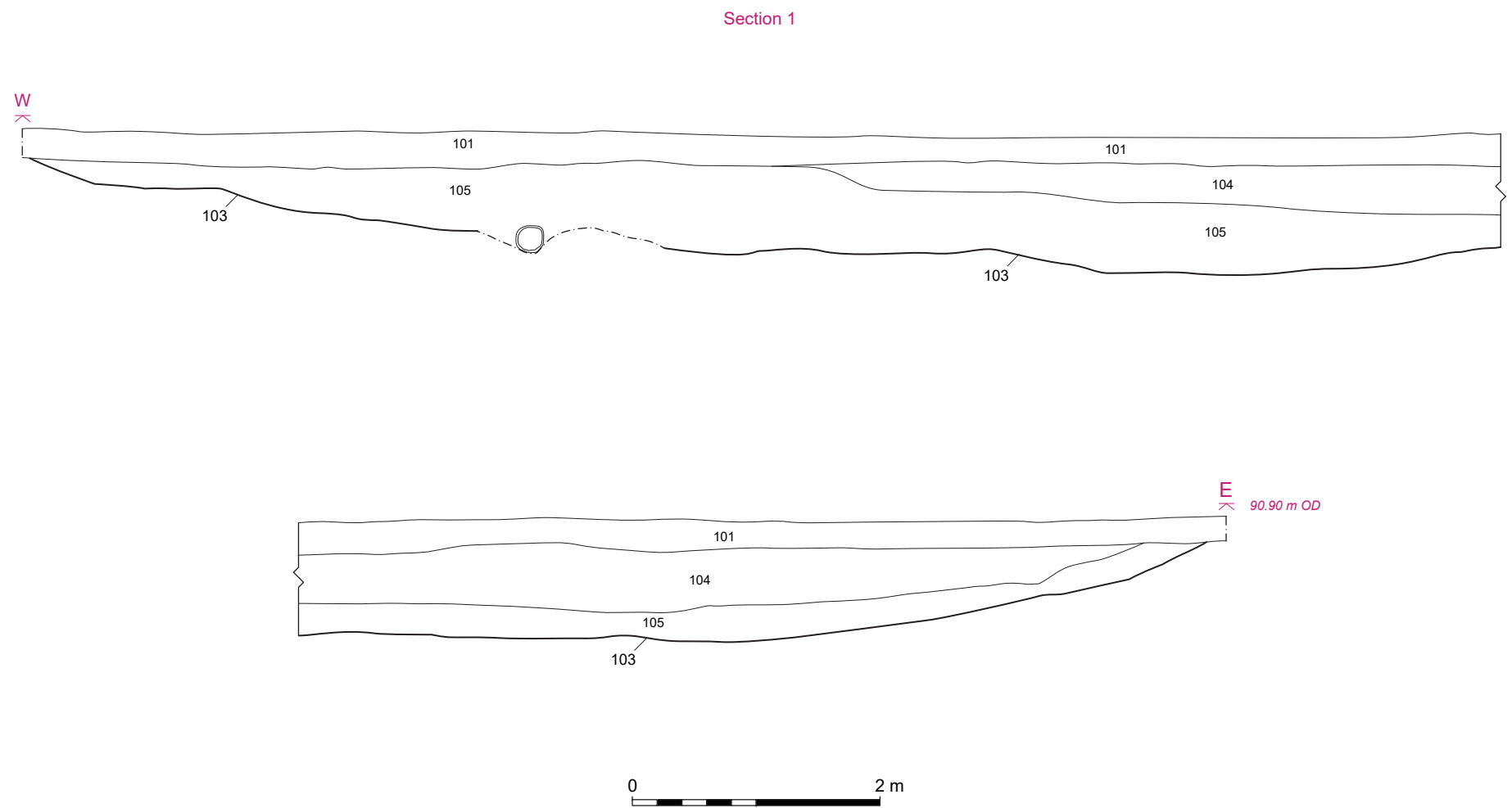
Reports in OASIS:

Roberts, P., (2024). *Burton Lazars, Leicestershire Archaeological Evaluation*. Sheffield: Wessex Archaeology. 277333.03









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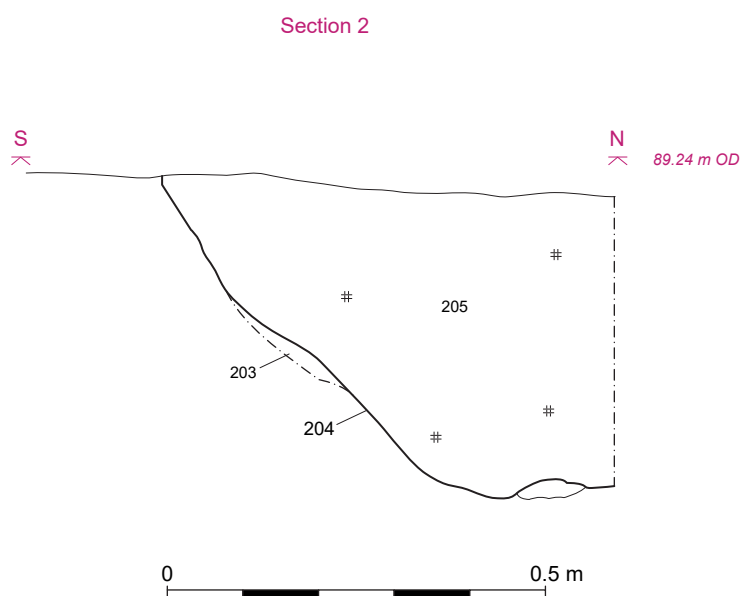
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Revision: 0

Scale: 1:50 at A3

Figure 4: South facing section of pond 103



Charcoal

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Figure 5: East facing section of ditch 204



Figure 6: Trench 1 from the west (2 x 1 m scales)



Figure 7: Trench 2 from the east (2 x 1 m scales)



Figure 8: Ditch 204 from the east (1 x 1 m scale)



Figure 9: Trench 3 from the west (2 x 1 m scales)



Figure 10: North facing section of sondage in trench 3 (1 x 1 m scale)



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