



# University of Leicester

## Archaeological Services

Archaeological Attendance conducted during groundworks at Manor Farm, Main Street, Little Stretton, Leicestershire.

NGR: SK 66907 00133

Susan Henderson



**Archaeological Attendance conducted during groundworks at Manor Farmhouse, Little Stretton, Leicestershire.**

**NGR: SK66907 00133**

**Susan Henderson  
August 2016**

**Client: Mr Jonathan Voce**

**Planning application no. 16/00237/LBC**

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**An Archaeological Watching Brief conducted during groundworks at Manor Farm, Main Street, Little Stretton, Leicestershire.**

**NGR: SK 66907 00133**

Susan Henderson.

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**Archaeological Attendance conducted during groundworks at Manor Farm, Main Street, Little Stretton, Leicestershire.**

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*Summary*

*Archaeological attendance was carried out by the University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) during groundworks at Manor Farm, Main Street, Little Stretton, Leicestershire (SK66907 00133) in association with the construction of a one and a half storey rear extension. The work was carried out on behalf of Mr Jonathan Voce and involved archaeological attendance for inspection and recording during these groundworks. This work involved, firstly, the supervision of topsoil removal and ground reduction by mechanical excavator for any indication of archaeological features and secondly, the monitoring of the excavation of trenches to accommodate wall foundations. Landscaping of the site, possibly at the time of the construction of Manor Farm at the outset of the 18th century, was identified. A wall foundation, probably a boundary wall and likely to be contemporary with the early farmhouse was also located.*

*The archive will be deposited with Leicestershire Museums under the accession number X.A98.2016.*

**1. Introduction.**

This document constitutes the final report of archaeological attendance conducted during groundworks at Manor Farm, Main Street, Little Stretton, Leicestershire (NGR: SK66907 00133) (Figure 1). The work was carried out on behalf Mr Jonathon Voce by the University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) during week commencing 8th August 2016.

Planning permission has been granted for an extension to Manor Farm (Planning Application No. 16/00237/LBC). The Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record (HER) and a desk-based assessment for an adjacent site (George 2004) show that this proposed development lies in an area of archaeological interest. Manor Farm has a frontage on Main Street and is within the medieval and post-medieval settlement core of Little Stretton village (HER Ref: MLE9063; Figure 2). The proposals include the ‘erection of a one and a half storey rear extension and internal alterations at ground and first floor to create door openings’ at Manor Farmhouse, a Grade II listed building dating to the 18th century (LB 1061722; Appendix A). Archaeological investigations undertaken to the north-west of the farmhouse (Richards 2011) have revealed evidence of late medieval and early post-medieval activity and there was potential for below-ground remains of similar date to be present within the application area.

In accordance with the NPPF (Section 12, paragraph 141), the Senior Planning Archaeologist for Leicestershire County Council, has advised Harborough District Council that the applicant should provide professional Archaeological Attendance for inspection and recording during the groundworks for the proposed development.

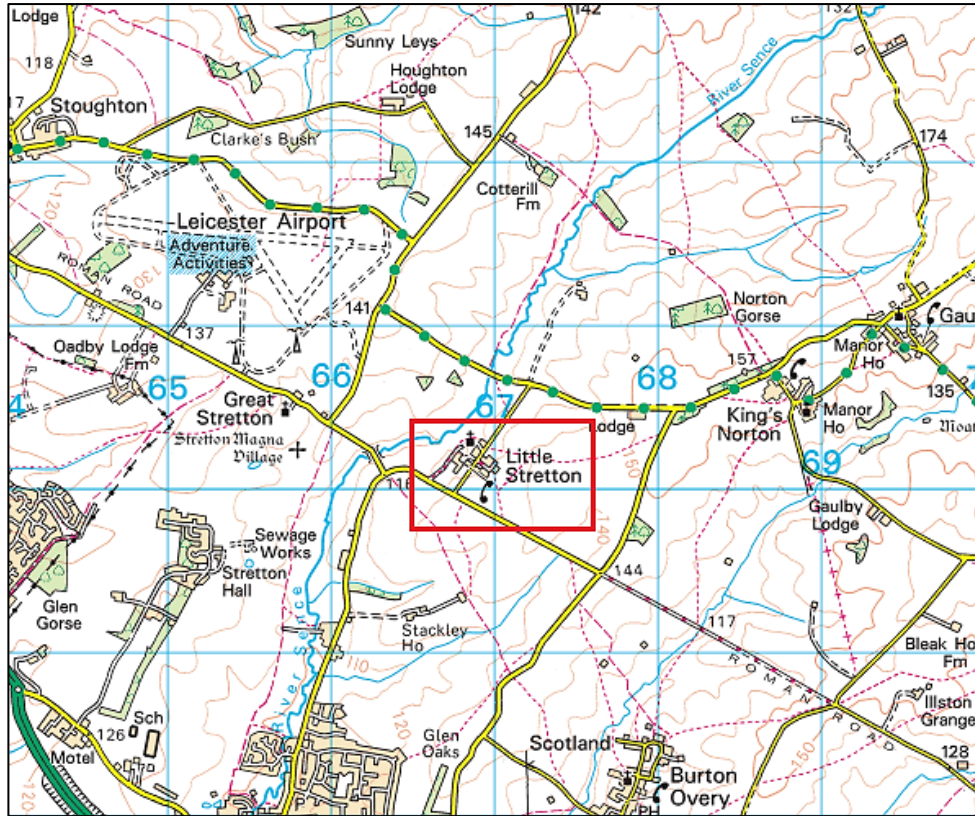


Figure 1. Site location

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## 2. Geology and Topography

The British Geological Survey of Great Britain, Sheet 156 (BGS 2007) indicates that the underlying geology is likely to consist of Charmouth Mudstone formation with superficial glaciofluvial deposits of sand and gravel, with clayey silt colluvial sand. The building lies at approximately 130m above Ordnance Datum (OD). The surrounding land rises from west to east, the plot on which the house stands, however, appears to be a levelled platform (Figure 3). Some levelling of the west of the plot occurred when a boundary was inserted in 2012 (J. Voce pers comm.).



**Figure 2. The location of Manor Farm within the village of Little Stretton (map provided by Historic England)**



**Figure 3. The rear of Manor Farm looking north and showing the relatively level plot compared with the fall of land to the west.**

### 3. Background.

Little Stretton is referred to in the Domesday book of 1086 as 'Stratone' meaning in Old English 'The settlement on the road' (Bourne 2003). The 'road' is most probably the Gartree road, a Roman road which ran from Chester to Colchester. Places with the name Stretton are usually sited on or very near to Roman roads. Little and Great Stretton were once part of the same land unit with the Great and Little being added much later to distinguish one from the other when they became separate parishes in the 13th Century. The population of Little Stretton has remained fairly constant with 53 payers of the poll tax in 1381; 32 households in 1670 (Nichols 1815); 128 in the census of 1921 and recent estimates (2010) give the population as 89.

A three field rotational system existed until the open fields were enclosed in 1771. Much of this land had been held by several substantial freeholders and continued to be worked by a small number of farmers and graziers in the 19th and 20th centuries. By 1919, however, *Kelly's Directory of Leicestershire and Rutland* (1932) showed that a substantial amount of land in the village had been bought by the Manchester Co-operative Wholesale Society, including Manor Farm.

Many of the houses and farms in the village date from the 18th century of which Manor Farm provides a good example (Figure 4). A full listing description can be found in Appendix A. In summary, however, the house is L-shaped in plan, built of red brick and Welsh slate and rises to two and a half storeys. There is a difference in style between the two wings and a corner projection contains the original staircase. These features suggest progressive changes to the existing building and an earlier building on the site is possible.



**Figure 4. The main wing of Manor Farm, showing the symmetrical frontage and brick key blocks to the windows, features of this 18th century building.**

There are no available maps of Main Street which pre-date the 1886 Ordnance Survey map (Figure 5). This shows Manor Farm with the current layout of buildings and barns, with one exception, a small square building in the corner of the southern boundary. A boundary line joins this and the eastern wall of the house. The plot is larger than the



present size, not having been subdivided for the recent development and this western area is marked as wooded.

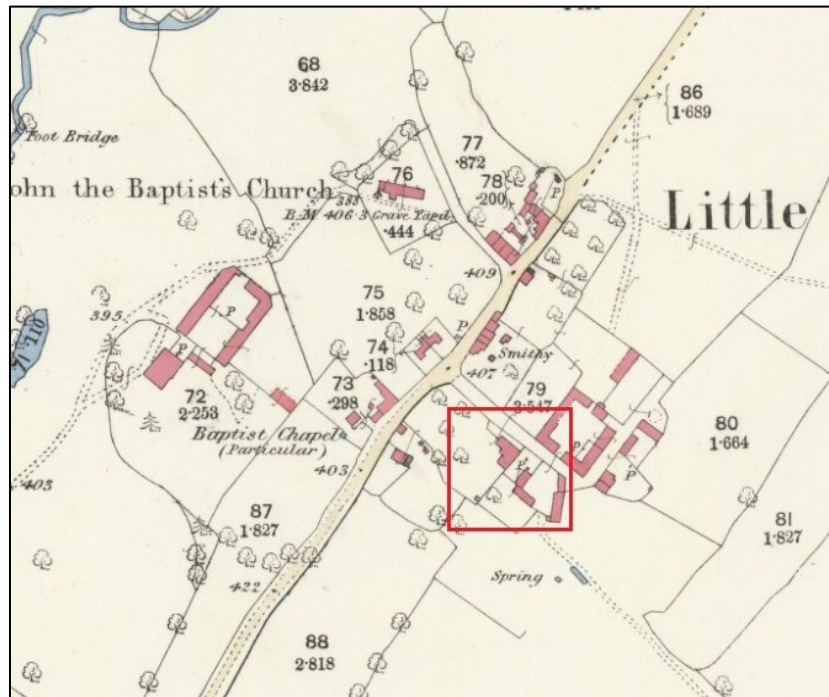


Figure 5. 1886 Ordnance Survey Map - LEICS sheet XXX V111.6.

The Ordnance Survey Map of 1929 (Figure 6) shows few changes, with the exception of the disappearance of the small outbuilding in the corner of the southern boundary.

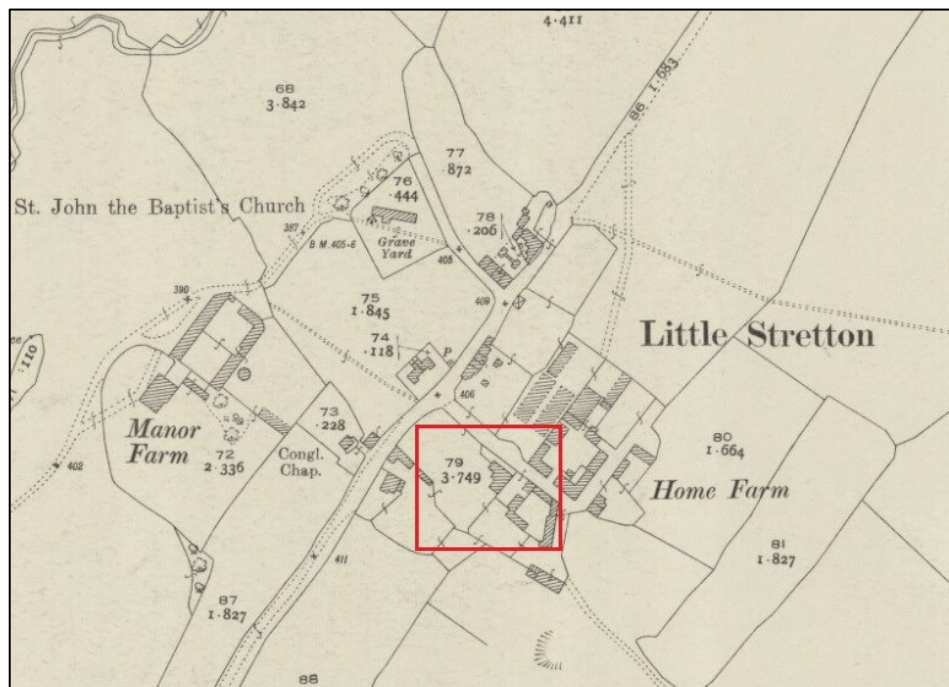


Figure 6. The 1929 Ordnance Survey Map - LEICS sheet XXX V111.6.

The 1952 Map (Figure 7) shows no changes from the 1929 map. Today a boundary runs between the L shaped barns and creates a linear piece of land to the top field (Figure 2).



Figure 7. The 1952 Ordnance Survey Map - LEICS sheet XXX V111.NW. Scale 1:2500

#### 4. Archaeological Objectives

The main objectives through the archaeological supervision of groundworks were to:

- To identify the presence/absence of any archaeological deposits.
- To establish the character, extent and date range for any archaeological deposits to be affected by the proposed groundworks.
- To record any archaeological deposits to be affected by the groundworks.
- To advance understanding of the heritage assets
- To produce an archive and report of any results.

The archaeological attendance was be considered in the light of the updated research agenda and strategy for the Historic Environment of the East Midlands (Knight et al. 2012). The site has the potential to contribute to the following research questions:

- *Medieval (Lewis 2006; Knight et al 2012)*
- *Rural medieval settlement and East Midlands Research Strategy 6.7 7.2 (Lewis 2006; Knight et al 2012)*

#### 5. Methodology

The groundworks to be monitored included the removal of overburden from the footprint of the proposed building to formation levels and trenching of the ground to accommodate wall foundations (Figure 8). The work was to be completed using a JCB

8050 mini digger fitted with both toothed and toothless ditching buckets of 1.2 and 0.60m in width. All exposed areas, sections and spoil heaps were to be visually inspected for features and finds. Any archaeological deposits seen to be present were to be excavated and recorded as appropriate. The work was undertaken as outlined in the Written Schem of Investigation (Clay 2016). All work was to adhere to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologist's (CIfA) *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (2014) and the *Guidelines for Archaeological work in Leicestershire and Rutland* (LMARS 1997).

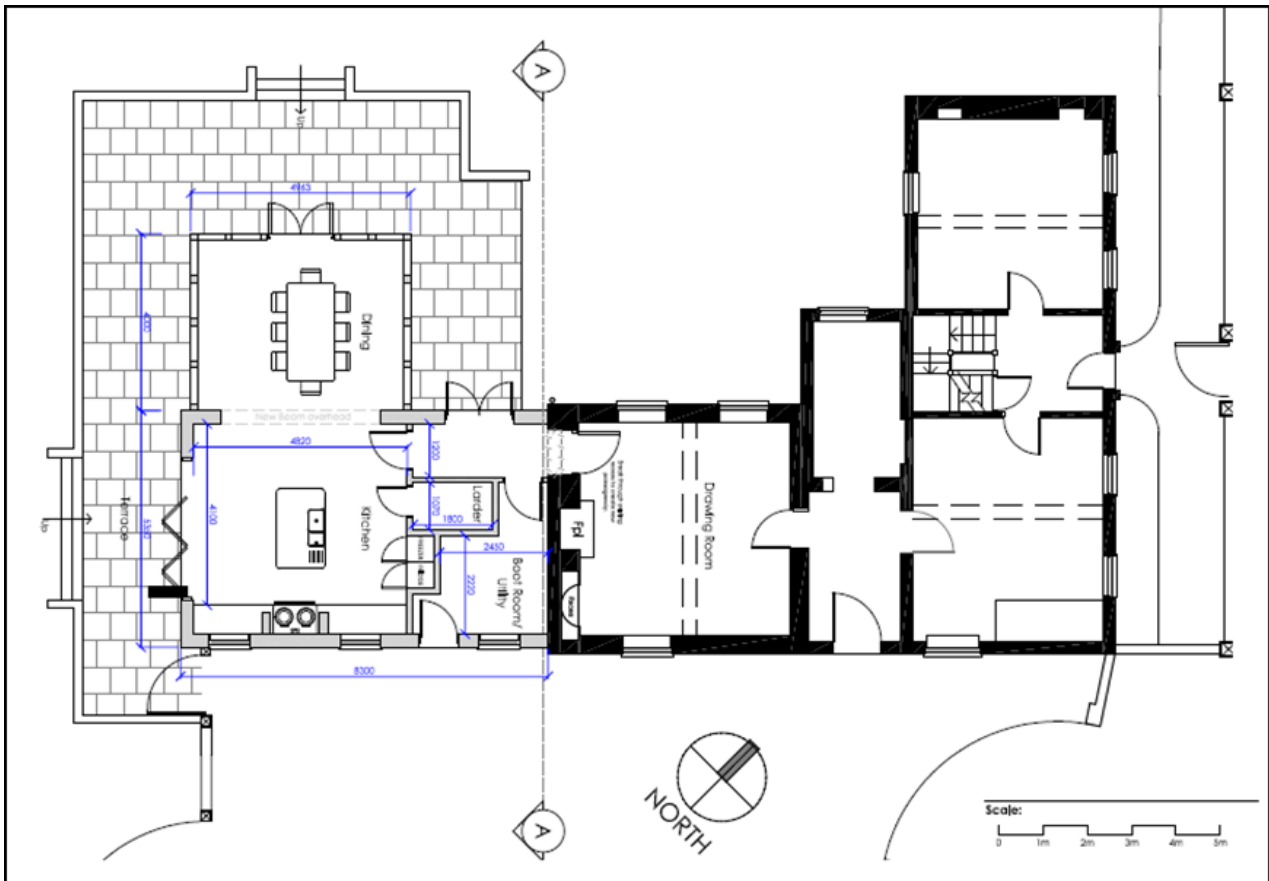


Figure 8. Plan of proposed works (supplied by the client).

## 6. Results

As a result of the complexity of manoeuvring the machinery within the plot, the trenches to the west were excavated before the remainder was stripped. Trenches were excavated to a depth of 1.00m and to the width of the ditching bucket at 0.60m. Excavation close to the house foundations revealed brick footings to a depth of approximately 0.80m cutting into natural greenish brown clay with occasional pebbles and flint fragments. There was no evidence of an earlier foundation and the subsoil appeared to butt up against the wall foundation rather than being cut by it (Figure 9).



**Figure 9 (left).** View of the wall foundation of the southern wing of the present building, looking north-east



**Figure 10 (right).** View of the wall foundation of the southern wing of the present building, looking south-east.

Further trenching to the west revealed a modern drain cutting through a fairly consistent stratigraphy. This comprised a mid greyish brown mixed topsoil to an average depth of 0.20m. Below this was a mid reddish brown subsoil with frequent small pebbles, flint fragments and occasional charcoal to an average depth of 0.50m. This layer had the appearance of a garden soil. Below these two layers were a mid to light orange brown natural sandy clay and finally a mid greenish brown natural clay.



**Figure 11.** View of the stratigraphy evident to the west of the plot.

A concrete plinth, which was part of the driveway and a brick wall remnant running north-east to south-west were removed to the south-east of the site before the central area was stripped. The brick wall bordered the driveway and may be the boundary seen on the early maps (Figures 5-7). Stripping revealed a substantial drain running north-south across the site and a further small drain running parallel to the brick wall (Figures 11 and 12).



Figure 12-13. Views looking north-east showing brick wall remnant and drains running across the plot (See Fig 14).

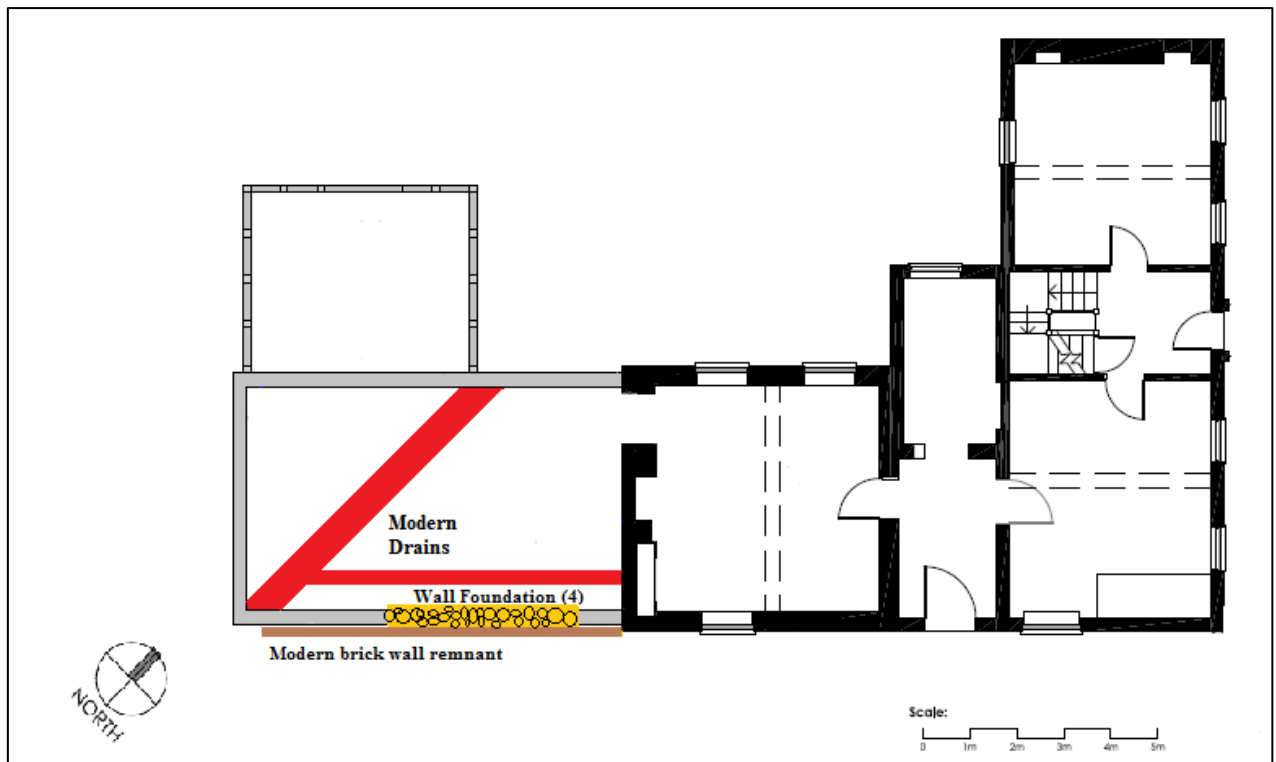


Figure 14. Plans showing wall and drain features revealed.

Also exposed, parallel to the brick wall, was a limestone and ironstone wall foundation (4) (Figure 15-16). This too appeared to be a remnant of a probably insubstantial wall. At this point, it was largely only two stones deep, the largest of the stones being 0.45m wide by 0.38m long by 0.35m deep. At one end the stones were overlying handmade brick of a similar size and fabric to those of the southern wing of the house (Figure 12). The wall was cutting the garden soil (2) visible elsewhere on the site and finds from this layer include fragments of clay pipe and pottery of Midland Purple ware (Cooper Appendix B).



**Figure 15 (left).** Wall foundation revealed parallel to the brick boundary and in line with the east wall of the present house looking north-east.

**Figure 16 (right).** Section across the wall foundation looking east.

The wall had been truncated to the north, by an outbuilding and to the south by the drain identified earlier. As the foundations were just below the topsoil, it was possible to trace their outline as an earthwork further south-west and this appeared to turn south-east after approximately 15m. Stones beyond the excavations were also recorded, as landscaping around the building could potentially disturb these.

## 7. Finds

Close examination of the topsoil of all areas revealed many modern finds, but also fragments of stoneware and other post-medieval pottery. There were fewer finds in the garden soil (2), but these did include, from directly beneath the wall foundation a fragment of Midland Purple ware. This was a single body sherd, with an internal purple

glaze, probably from a cistern and the nature of the fabric would suggest this was probably of 16th century date (Cooper Appendix B).

## 8. Conclusion

Monitoring of groundworks at Manor Farm suggested that while there was no evidence of an earlier building, there had been landscaping and boundary changes to accompany the changing use of the site. The depth of the garden soil containing the 16th century pottery, suggests perhaps a landscaping of the area when the brick farmhouse was built in the early 18th century. The north-east to south-west aligned wall foundation (4) appears too insubstantial to have carried a building and the visible length of this suggests it was more likely to have been a boundary wall, which was possibly later replaced by a parallel brick wall. The wall foundation post-dates the garden soil and the fact that handmade brick was present within the core, suggests that it was most probably contemporary with, or later than, the brick farmhouse.

## 9. Archive

This archive consists of 1 watching brief form, 1 sheet of drawings with notes, 4 context sheets 39 digital photographs, 3 sheets of thumbnail prints and a single sherd of pottery. The archive will be held by Leicestershire Museum Service under the accession number X.A98.2016.

## 10. Publication

Since 2004 ULAS has reported the results of all archaeological work to the *Online Access to the Index of archaeological investigations* (OASIS) database held by the Archaeological Data Service (ADS) at the University of York.

A summary of the work will also be submitted for publication in the local archaeological journal, the *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society*, in due course.

OASIS data entry

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>	<b>Oasis No</b>	universi1-292461
	<b>Project Name</b>	Manor Farm, Main Street, Little Stretton
	<b>Start/end dates of field work</b>	8 <sup>th</sup> August 2016
	<b>Previous/Future Work</b>	Yes / Not known
	<b>Project Type</b>	Watching Brief
	<b>Site Status</b>	None
	<b>Current Land Use</b>	Residential
	<b>Monument Type/Period</b>	Wall foundation
	<b>Significant Finds/Period</b>	Post Medieval
	<b>Development Type</b>	Residential
	<b>Reason for Investigation</b>	NPPF

	<b>Position in the Planning Process</b>	Planning condition		
	<b>Planning Ref.</b>	16/00237/LBC		
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>	<b>Site Address/Postcode</b>	Manor farm, Main Street, Little Stretton		
	<b>Study Area</b>	c.12m <sup>2</sup>		
	<b>Site Coordinates</b>	SK 66907 00133		
	<b>Height OD</b>	130m O.D		
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	ULAS		
	<b>Project Brief Originator</b>	Local Planning Authority (LCC)		
	<b>Project Design Originator</b>	ULAS		
	<b>Project Manager</b>	Dr Patrick Clay		
	<b>Project Director/Supervisor</b>	Sue Henderson		
	<b>Sponsor/Funding Body</b>	Mr Jonathan Voce		
<b>PROJECT ARCHIVE</b>		<b>Physical</b>	<b>Digital</b>	<b>Paper</b>
	<b>Recipient</b>	LCC MusService	LCC MusService	LCCMusService
	<b>ID (Acc. No.)</b>	XA98.2016		
	<b>Contents</b>	Pottery	Photos	Watching brief records Field Notes
<b>PROJECT BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>Type</b>	Grey Literature (unpublished)		
	<b>Title</b>	Archaeological Attendance conducted during groundworks at Manor Farm, Main Street, Little Stretton, Leicestershire.		
	<b>Author</b>	Sue Henderson		
	<b>Other bibliographic details</b>	ULAS Report No 2016-133		
	<b>Date</b>	2016		
	<b>Publisher/Place</b>	University of Leicester Archaeological Services / University of Leicester		
	<b>Description</b>	Developer Report A4 pdf		

## 11. Acknowledgements

Thanks are extended to the client Mr Jonathan Voce for his assistance and interest throughout the project

Fieldwork was undertaken by the author Susan Henderson and the project was managed for ULAS by Patrick Clay.

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29.08.2016

## Appendix 1 Listing Description

### List Entry Summary

**This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.**

**Name: MANOR FARMHOUSE ABOUT 20 METRES WEST OF TOP FARM**

**List Entry Number: 1061722**

### Location

**County:** Leicestershire

**District:** Harborough

**District Type:** District Authority

**Parish:** Little Stretton

**National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.**

**Grade: II**

**Date first listed: 29-Dec-1966**

**Date of most recent amendment: 21-Dec-1984**

### Details

LITTLE STRETTON

SK 60 SE 5/73 29.12.66. Manor Farmhouse c 20m W of Top Farm (Previously listed as Manor House)

II

House. C18. Red brick and Welsh slate and C20 tile roof with brick end stacks. Brick band, moulded brick cornice and moulded brick coped and shouldered gables. L plan, wing projecting to rear on left. 2½ storeys of 5 2/2 sash windows. 4 similar bwlow. Cambered lintels with projecting brick keystones. Central shouldered wooden doorcase and 6-panelled door with glazed top panels. Flat canopy, half with lean-to roof. On left end further sashes, door with overlight, and casements. On right end a 2-light attic casement.

Listing NGR: SK6692300141

## **Appendix 2 The Late medieval or early post-medieval pottery**

*Nicholas J. Cooper*

A single body sherd, with an internal purple glaze (30g), from a vessel (probably a cistern) manufactured in Midland Purple ware (Leics. County Fabric MP2; Davies and Sawday 1999, 166), was recovered from wall foundation trench (2). Midland Purple was manufactured at Ticknall in south Derbyshire between 1375 and 1550, but the fineness of the fabric with irregular off-white grog inclusions in a very hard (almost stoneware) grey fabric would suggest this was late product, probably of 16th century date.

### **Reference**

Davies, S. and Sawday, D., 1999, 'The post-Roman pottery and tile' in A. Connor and R. Buckley *Roman and Medieval Occupation at Causeway Lane, Leicester*. Leicester Archaeology Monograph 5, 165-213. Leicester: University of Leicester School of Archaeological Studies.

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