

Barn Lodge Farm, Saltby Road, Croxton Kerrial, Leicestershire

(Planning Ref: 12/00676/FUL)



Archaeological Watching Brief Report

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Barn Lodge Farm, Saltby Road, Croxton Kerrial, Leicestershire

(Planning Ref: 12/00676/FUL)

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

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On the request of

**Neville Hall on behalf of the
Belvoir Estate**

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Non-technical summary

PRO Archaeology Services were commissioned by the Belvoir Estate to undertake a post-planning determination archaeological watching brief at Barn Lodge Farm, Saltby Road, Croxton Kerrial, Leicestershire in advance of the proposed construction of four new broiler poultry units (incorporating eight feed silos). A tracked excavator with wide ditching bucket stripped a wide area around a suspected Romano-British ditch. The fieldwork took place from the 8th -12th December 2014 and established that the ditch is an isolated field boundary connected to a Romano-British settlement to the west. Richard Clarke (LCC Senior Planning Archaeologist) monitored the work and a confidence rating is high that the best possible results were achieved.

1. Introduction

PRO Archaeology Services were commissioned by the Belvoir Estate to undertake a post-planning determination archaeological watching brief at Barn Lodge Farm, Saltby Road, Croxton Kerrial, Leicestershire. This was the final phase of archaeological work within the development site which was required by Mr Richard Clark, Senior Planning Archaeologist of Leicestershire County Council to allow discharge of condition 10 of Melton Borough Council planning determination 12/00676/FUL.

2. Site location and description

The development site is situated on an undulating upland area of the Jurassic limestone escarpment that traverses England from Dorset through to Yorkshire, at a height of approximately 154m AOD. Barn Lodge Farm is situated approximately 1.5km to the south-east of the village of Croxton Kerrial and about the same distance to the north of the village of Saltby within the civil parish of Croxton Kerrial, administrative district of Melton Borough, county of Leicestershire.

The development site currently comprises an area of arable agricultural land to the immediate east of the existing Barn Lodge Farm complex (Central National Grid reference: SK 8470 2806). Mature hedgerows comprise the northern and southern boundaries, whilst the western boundary is marked by a timber post and wire fence. Two existing poultry units are situated to the west (Fig. 1).

The area of the development site is situated on shallow well drained brashy calcareous fine loamy soils of the Elmton 1 Series which have developed on Oolitic limestones of the Middle Jurassic (Soil Survey, 1983; BGS, 1996).

3. Planning background

In 2012, an initial archaeological desk based assessment study of the archaeological potential of the development site and that of its environs was undertaken. This study was prepared to accompany and inform an application for planning consent for the proposed development on this site. This report concluded the development site had low potential for prehistoric, Romano-British and Saxon periods, and uncertain to nil potential for medieval and post-medieval remains (Hall 2012).

Following this initial archaeological desk based assessment study, Northamptonshire Archaeology was commissioned by Neville Hall Archaeological Services, on behalf of the Belvoir Estate, to conduct a pre-planning application archaeological site evaluation comprising trial trenching. The evaluation was designed to gain a better understanding of the archaeological potential of the site. Seven trenches were excavated and two were extended to further investigate a large east-west orientated ditch observed in three trenches in the northern area of the proposed new build footprint. Two very small fragments of Romano-British pottery were recovered near the surface of the ditch (Chinnock 2013).

In 2013, an application for a proposed new development at Barn Lodge Farm, Croxton Kerrial, Leicestershire to comprise the construction of four new broiler poultry units (incorporating eight feed silos); associated new service road to connect these units to the Croxton Road (within the corridor of the existing access road) and the upgrading of the existing access to Barn Lodge Farm at its intersection with the Croxton Road, was submitted to Melton Borough Council (the local planning authority) and duly approved (Planning Ref: 12/00676/FUL). The archaeological desk based assessment study report and a report detailing the results of the archaeological field evaluation accompanied this planning application.

Following the planning approval for this proposed development, a condition was placed on the planning consent requiring a further staged programme of archaeological work before the commencement of the development. PRO Archaeology Services prepared a *Written Scheme of Investigation* (PAS 2013) which outlined a methodology for the further evaluation trenches and was submitted by the applicant and duly approved by Richard Clark, the Senior Planning Archaeologist of Leicestershire County Council on behalf of the Local Planning Authority in April 2013. This document set out the requirements for the further archaeological trial trenching at the site.

The purpose of the second evaluation was to establish if there were any further archaeological remains in the areas not covered by the prior pre-planning application determination evaluation.

The results of the PRO Archaeology evaluation were negative, but the anomaly of the isolated Romano-British ditch remained unresolved and it was felt that appropriate to ensure no further archaeological remains are subject to loss through the implementation of archaeological watching brief, focused around the ditch. A further *Written Scheme of Investigation* for an archaeological watching brief was prepared by PRO Archaeology (PAS 2014) and duly

approved by Mr Richard Clark before the commencement of any ground work at the development site.

4. The Archaeological Background

The Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record (HER) makes reference to several nearby areas of archaeological significance. Bronze Age pit alignments can be seen as cropmarks 400m to the south-east of the Barn Lodge Farm (HERMLE17670). King Lud's entrenchments (HER MLE3552) are situated to the east and south-east of the assessment site; the line of which may possibly be continued further to the west by the line of the boundary between the parishes of Croxton Kerrial and Sproxton. The origin of the 'entrenchments' is unclear but they may represent a late Bronze Age or Iron Age bank and ditch system. Fieldwalking between 1963 and 1978 in the field immediately to the west of the site yielded 32 sherds of Romano-British pottery, two 4th century AD coins and roof tile fragments (HER MLE8647). It has been suggested that this represents a nearby Romano-British settlement. A Romano-British quern stone was recovered south-east of Croxton Kerrial during World War II (HER MLE6603). An earlier evaluation (Chinnock 2013) established a Romano-British ditch on the development area.

Croxton is mentioned in the Domesday survey of AD1086 as *Crohtone* or *Crochstone*. White's 1877 Leicester and Rutland Directory notes that King Stephen (reigned AD1135-1154) gave Croxton to his natural son, William, Earl of Montaigne. William is said to be one of the founders of Croxton Abbey in the mid 11th century. The feudal affix *Kerial*, which distinguished this settlement from the nearby settlement of South Croxton, was derived from the family name of Bertramus de Cryall, who was granted the manor of Croxton in AD1239 (Hall 2012). White goes on to state that in the 13th and 14th centuries 'It [Croxton] was held, mostly under the abbey, by the Criol, Curiel or Kyriel family'. In the 1887 Gazetteer of the British Isles, John Bartholomew makes reference to Croxton Keyrial. This progression is presumably the root of the modern Croxton Kerrial.

Ordnance Survey maps show that the current layout of the field boundaries has not changed since at least 1885. The boundary to the south of the site is the parish boundary which again, has not moved since 1885.

A full archaeological and historical background can be obtained from the desk based *Heritage Assessment* (Hall 2012).

5. Objectives

The objectives of the archaeological investigation, set out in the *Written Scheme of Investigation* (PAS 2014), were to contribute to heritage knowledge of the area through the recording of the archaeological remains exposed as a result of topsoil stripping. The general aim of the archaeological work is to contribute to the heritage knowledge of the area.

Specific aims were:

- to determine the type, extent, condition, nature, character, quality, function, and date, of any archaeological remains encountered;
- to try and establish with more certainty the date of the known Romano-British ditch discovered by Northamptonshire Archaeology; and
- to clarify and establish any further Romano-British archaeology associated with the ditch.

6. The Methodology

The modern overburden was carefully removed by a mechanical excavator (14 tonne) fitted with a wide (1.8m) toothless ditching bucket.

All mechanical excavation fieldwork was carried out under archaeological supervision and care was taken not to damage the archaeological deposits through excessive use of mechanical excavation. The machines or dumper trucks did not track over any revealed surfaces until the area was agreed as satisfactory blank or cleared of archaeology by the on-site archaeologist and Mr Richard Clark.

All surfaces revealed were inspected and archaeological features revealed were recorded in plan and section as appropriate.

All recording was undertaken to the standards detailed in the Museum of London Archaeology Service Archaeological Site Manual Third Edition 1994.

All recording points were accurately tied into the National Grid and located on to the 1:1250 map of the area.

Plans were drawn at an appropriate scale (in relation to the National Grid) and sections were located on the site plan and levelled with respect to OD and accurately tied in to the site grid. All plans and sections were drawn on polyester based drafting film and clearly labelled and will form part of the site archive.

All archaeological contexts were recorded individually on context record sheets.

A photographic record of the work was maintained.

All stages of the project were undertaken in accordance with English Heritage, Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) (EH 2006). The watching brief was carried out in accordance with the *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) prepared by PRO Archaeology (PAS 2014), *Guidelines and Procedures for Archaeological Work in Leicestershire and Rutland* (LCC 1997) and the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists *Standard and Guidance for archaeological watching brief* (CIfA 2014a).

7. The Results

The general stratigraphy recorded across the area consisted of the following layers (earliest to latest). The natural substrate was the earliest deposit encountered composed of yellow orange-brown clay silt with a very high density of angular limestone fragments (Cornbrash) throughout (103). Overlying the natural was thin layer subsoil of mid yellow-brown colour and clay silt texture with occasional limestone fragments (102) (not present everywhere). The latest deposit was a c. 0.30m thick mid brown clay silt topsoil with occasional limestone fragments (101). Limestone fragments were present throughout the topsoil, presumably brought up from the natural substrate as a result of ploughing.

Ditch feature - cut into natural (103), sealed by (101).

The Romano-British ditch which was discovered during first phase of trial trenching was uncovered within the watching brief area orientated on an approximate east-west direction (Fig. 1). A section [104] placed across the ditch, proved it was 2.2m wide and 0.37m deep with concave sides which had a sharp break of slope at the top and gradual at the base. The ditch had three distinct fills (Fig. 1: Section 1). The earliest fill was 0.20m thick firm mid brown silty clay with frequent limestone inclusions (105). This was overlain by 0.10-0.20m thick mid orange brown loose clay with occasional limestone fragments (106). The latest fill was 0.13m thick friable mid brown silty clay with frequent limestone fragments (107), which may be interpreted as a re-cut of the ditch.

Other Discrete Features

Some ephemeral features suspected as tree holes were investigated during the course of the site stripping but all of these features proved non-archaeological.

8. The Finds

There were no finds recovered from this watching brief.

9. Discussion

This archaeological watching brief opened an area covering five thousand square metres under archaeological supervision. Within this zone was the east-west ditch of suspected Romano-British date, first discovered during the Northamptonshire Archaeology (Chinnock 2013) evaluation of the development area.

During the watching brief this ditch was successfully located and a further section was placed across the feature providing an additional record of its three distinct fills.

The ditch was of a shallow depth and was presumably a former field boundary ditch, probably with a bank on one side and inserted hedgerow, rather than having a potential drainage

function. There was no evidence for banks adjacent to the ditch, as any bank would have been ploughed away.

The nearby Romano-British finds in the adjacent field to the west (HER MLE8647) hint at Romano-British settlement activity in this area, and this ditch was probably associated with that settlement, located within the outlying fields as a peripheral settlement feature.

The lack of archaeological features and finds identified by this further work strongly indicates that this area was peripheral to any possible Romano-British settlement site to the west. The presence of the field boundary ditch here indicates that the site has been in agricultural use since at least the Romano-British period.

The watching brief has established that the ditch had a kink close to the centre of the development area where it was perhaps avoiding an obstacle, possibly a tree, although no clear trace of a tree hole was seen at this location. From this point onward the ditch was aligned on a NNW-SSE direction rather than following true west- east.

The latest fill of the ditch (107) indicates a possible re-cut, which is also consistent with the section recorded within the earlier evaluation (Chinnock 2013; Section 1). It would seem that the ditch has been re-cut roughly from the centre of the site towards the east. This would mean that the boundary may have been re-established on at least one occasion, indicating a certain longevity to the field boundary.

No further dating evidence was recovered from the ditch during the course of the watching brief. It therefore remains tentatively dated to the 1st -2nd century based on the two sherds of pottery found close to the surface of the ditch during the Northamptonshire Archaeology trial trench.

Given that soil samples failed to provide any dating evidence or environmental potential during the evaluation it was not thought necessary to further sample the ditch for palaeoenvironmental remains during the watching brief.

Richard Clark (Principal Archaeologist at Leicestershire County Council) made a site visit during the topsoil stripping to monitor the work and was happy with the results. A confidence rating is high that the best possible results have been achieved.

9. Archive

9.1 Museum

The site records will be archived at the Leicestershire Museums Archaeology Collection under the accession code: X.A1.2013.

9.2 Preparation of Archive

The complete site archive, which will include paper records, photographic records, graphics and digital data, will be prepared following the standard conditions for the acceptance of excavated archaeological material by Leicestershire Museums Archaeology Collection, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; ClfA 2014b; Brown 2011; ADS 2013).

9.3 OASIS

An OASIS online record <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/projects/oasis/> has been initiated for the work and key fields in regard of the watching brief has been entered under OASIS ID proarcha1-198725. All appropriate parts of the OASIS online form will be completed for submission to the Leicestershire Historic Environment Record. This will include an uploaded .pdf version of the entire report (a paper copy will also be included with the archive).

9.4 Copyright

The full copyright of the written/illustrative archive relating to the Site will be retained by PRO Archaeology Services under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with all rights reserved. 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 shall be non-profit making, and conforms to the Copyright and Related Rights regulations 2003.

10. References

British Geological Survey 1995 *Horncastle Solid & Drift, Sheet 115*, Scale 1:50,000.

Brown, D H, 2011, *Archaeological archives; a guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation*, Archaeological Archives Forum (revised edition).

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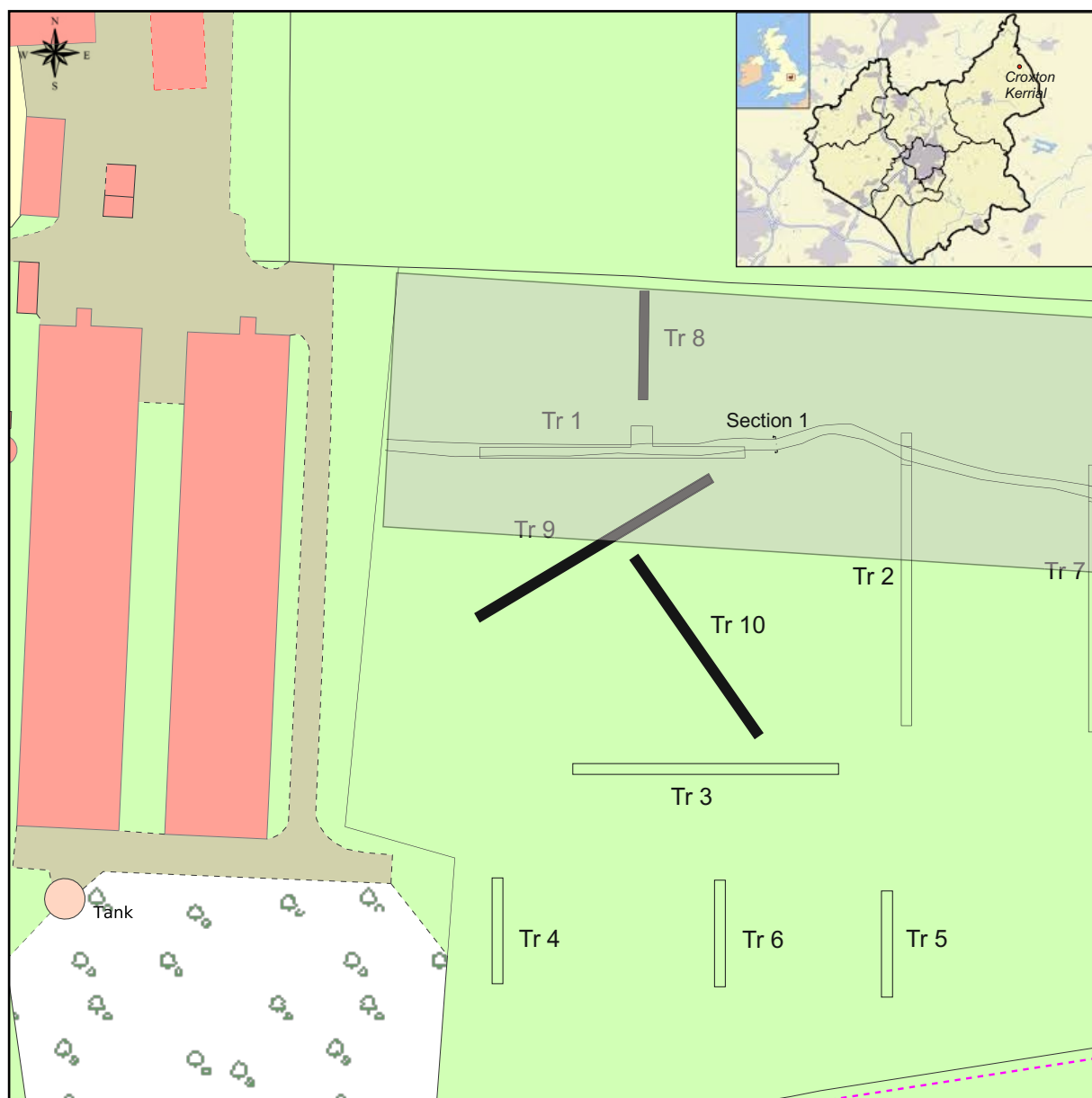
LCC 2012 *Brief for the archaeological field evaluation at Barn Lodge Farm, Croxton Kerrial, Leicestershire*, Leicestershire County Council

PRO Archaeology 2014 *Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Watching Brief of land Barn Lodge Farm, Croxton Kerrial, Leicestershire*

Society of Museum Archaeologists [SMA], 1993, *Selection, Retention and Dispersal of Archaeological Collections*, Society of Museum Archaeologists

Soil Survey of England & Wales, (1983), *Soils of Eastern England*, map sheet no. 4, 1:250,000 scale.

Figure 1: Barn Lodge Farm, Croxton Kerrial



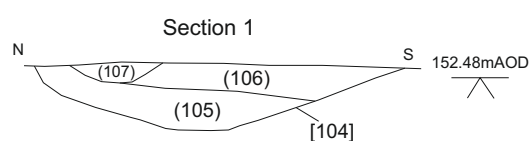
This Plan includes the following Licensed Data: OS MasterMap Colour PDF Site Plan by the Ordnance Survey National Geographic Database and incorporating surveyed revision available at the date of production. Reproduction in whole or in part is prohibited without the prior permission of Ordnance Survey. The representation of a road, track or path is no evidence of a right of way. The representation of features as lines is no evidence of a property boundary. © Crown copyright, All rights reserved 2013. Licence number 0100031673

Scale: 1:1250, paper size: A4

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Site location and Plan of Ditch

- PAS 2014 Evaluation Trenches
- Northamptonshire Trenches
- Ditch



Appendix A: Selected Photos



Photo 1; General working shot showing ditch 104 in centre of image (looking north-east)



Photo 2: West facing section of ditch 104 (looking east) Scale 1m.



Photo 3; Topsoil stripping in progress showing the dense nature of the underlying natural Cornbrash.



Photo 4: Ditch 104 looking west showing the distinctive kink.

Appendix B: Context Inventory

Context No	Type/deposit/cut/masonry	Description	Depth (m)	Interpretation	Height (m) AOD
101	Deposit	Dark greyish brown silty clay occasional limestone	0.25	Ploughsoil	Top 153.21-70 (N) Top 153.44 (S)
102	Deposit	Mid orange brown clay silt with occasional limestone	0.10	Subsoil	153.00-60
103	Deposit	Light yellowish orange clay silt with high density limestone (natural corn brash)	/	Natural (Jurassic)	152.63- 153.26 (N) 153.14 (S)
104	Cut	Ditch (e-w)	0.37	Romano-British ditch	152.48
105	Fill	Primary fill	0.20	Fill of 104	152.28
106	Fill	Secondary fill	0.10-0.20	Fill of 104	152.38
107	Fill	Latest fill	0.13	Fill of 104	152.48

Appendix C: OASIS Summary record

Barn Lodge Farm, Saltby Road, Croxton Kerrial, Leicestershire - PRO Archaeology Services

OASIS ID - proarcha1-198725

Versions				
View	Version	Completed by	Email	Date
View 1	1	Paul Riccoboni	info@archaeologypro.com	28 December 2014
Completed sections in current version				
Details	Location	Creators	Archive	Publications
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	1/1
Validated sections in current version				
Details	Location	Creators	Archive	Publications
No	No	No	No	0/1
File submission and form progress				
Grey literature report submitted?		No	Grey literature report filename/s	
Boundary file submitted?		No	Boundary filename	
HER signed off?			NMR signed off?	