



**University of
Leicester**

Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological
Evaluation at Former
Lisk Controls site
Nottingham Road,
Lount, Leicestershire
NGR: SK 3860 1920**

Tim Higgins



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**An Archaeological Evaluation at
Former Lisk Controls site Nottingham Road, Lount,
Coleorton, Leicestershire**

NGR: SK 3860 1920

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For: Bellway Homes Ltd

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Summary

An archaeological field evaluation by trial trenching was undertaken on land at the Former Lisk Controls site Nottingham Road, Lount, Leicestershire by the University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) 28th June to 1st July 2011. The initial potential of the site was highlighted by an archaeological desk-based assessment (Hunt 2011) which indicated that the development area was located in an area that had potential for buried remains of buildings associated with 19th-20th century pottery manufacture. Six trenches were excavated, one revealing archaeological remains of 19th century brick foundations for circular and possible rectangular kiln structures. The kiln contained pottery industry waste including biscuit fired pottery and kiln furniture all of which was associated with pottery manufacture. The site archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council under accession number X.A90.2011.

1. Introduction

Planning permission is being sought by Bellway Homes Ltd for housing with access and landscaping at the Former Lisk Controls site, Nottingham Road, Lount, Leicestershire (P.A 11/00491/FUL; NGR SK 3860 1920, Figure.1).

This report presents the results of a programme of archaeological trial trenching that was undertaken between 27th June and the 1st of July 2011. It addresses the requirements of the Leicestershire County Council Principal Planning Archaeologist, as advisor to the planning authority, for pre-determination evaluation 1. A strategy for the work was set out in the Written Scheme for Investigation (Clay 2010, hereinafter the 'WSI'; Appendix 2). The trial trenching was undertaken to assess the impact from proposed new housing with access and landscaping (P.A 11/00491/FUL). The fieldwork was carried out in accordance with Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment (PPS5).

The development area lies within the parish of Coleorton on the south side of Nottingham Road, opposite the village of Lount, around 2.5 miles north-east of Ashby-de-la- Zouch in the district of North-west Leicestershire (Figure 1). The site is centred on SK 3860 1920 and covers an area of approximately two hectares with centrally placed factory buildings while to the east lies an overgrown area of brambles and weeds and a pond.

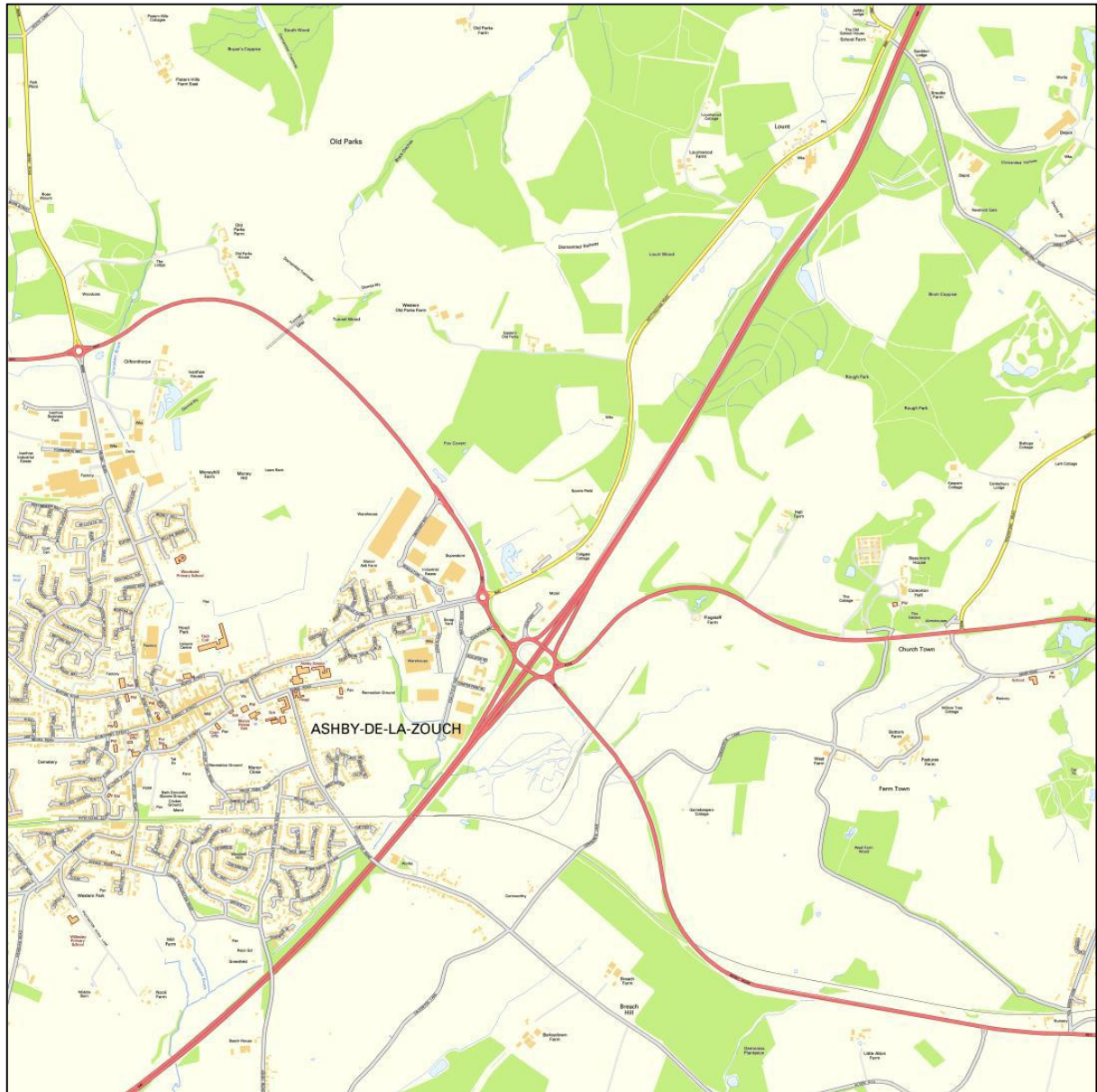


Figure 1: Site location plan
Contains Ordnance Survey data. Scale 1: 10 000

2. Archaeological and Historical background

A detailed archaeological and historical background to the site is presented in a previous desk-based assessment undertaken by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (Hunt 2011). The development site is located to the south the historic core of the medieval village settlement of Lount which is traditionally linked with the parish of Staunton Harold. The site itself, lying on the south-eastern side of Nottingham Road, lies within the parish of Coleorton. A group of medieval earthworks have been located in a field around 250m to the south-west of the site, suggesting that the village has shrunk in size since the medieval period. Further earthworks, relating to a dam and fishponds lie around 300m to the west of the site. There are several sites in the area including The Smoile, Rough Park and Burnt Coppice which contained the remains of medieval coal mines. In the late post-medieval

period the site was occupied by pottery manufacture. The cartographic evidence shows that buildings were located on the site before 1841 and later along the street frontage between the latter part of the 19th century and middle of the 20th century. These structures included six circular buildings that are thought to be kilns associated with Coleorton Pottery production (Richards 2011, Fig 2a).

3. Aims and Objectives

The main aims of the evaluation were:

- To identify the presence/absence of any archaeological deposits. In particular these would target the anomalies highlighted by the geophysical survey.
- To establish the character, extent and date range for any archaeological deposits to be affected by the proposed development
- To produce an archive and report of any results.

Within the stated project objectives, the principal aim of the evaluation was to establish the nature, extent, date, depth, significance and state of preservation of archaeological deposits within the southern area of the site in order to determine the potential impact upon them from the proposed development.

4. Methodology

Following discussion with the Senior Planning Archaeologist at Leicestershire County Council as advisor to the planning authority, c.125sq m was proposed, the equivalent of four 20m x 1.6m trenches. The provisional trench plan (Figure. 2) showed the proposed locations of the trenches which were targeting the location of the former kilns to the north, the proposed balancing pond to the east and areas of the residential development to the south. The number and size trenches was modified, however, in view of the deep overburden encountered in the first trench excavated on the south-east side of the development (Figure.3). Trench 1 was subdivided to become three trenches (Trenches 1, 2 and 3 Figure 3) each measuring approximately 2.00m long and 1.6m wide. Due to site access constraints the trench located towards the south-west corner of the site was also sub-divided and became Trenches 4 and 5 and the orientation was changed (Figure 3) The trench located at the northern end of the development was also altered to help minimise disruption to site access, being shortened in length to 12.00m and widened to 3.80m (Figure 3). A proposed trench located in the eastern half of the site was not excavated as this area proved to be inaccessible as it would have been positioned within an existing large concrete sump and pond. The tarmac or gravel and overlying layers were removed under full archaeological supervision until either the top of archaeological deposits or natural undisturbed substratum was reached, or to a maximum safe depth given the specific site conditions.

The bases of the trenches were cleaned in areas where potential archaeology was observed. Archaeological remains were recorded and sample excavation was undertaken in order to determine the character and date of any remains. Bulk soil samples were taken as appropriate in order to evaluate the environmental potential of the site. Archaeological contexts as a cut

are indicated by square brackets e.g [09], while those that are fills are indicated by round brackets e.g (07).

The trenches were located using a Topcon Hiper Pro GPS+ RTK System attached to a Topcon FC-100 controller. The data was processed using Topcon Tools GPS+ Post Processing Software and the final plans completed with the aid of TurboCad v.15 design software.

All the work followed the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Code of Conduct (2010)* *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations (2008)*.

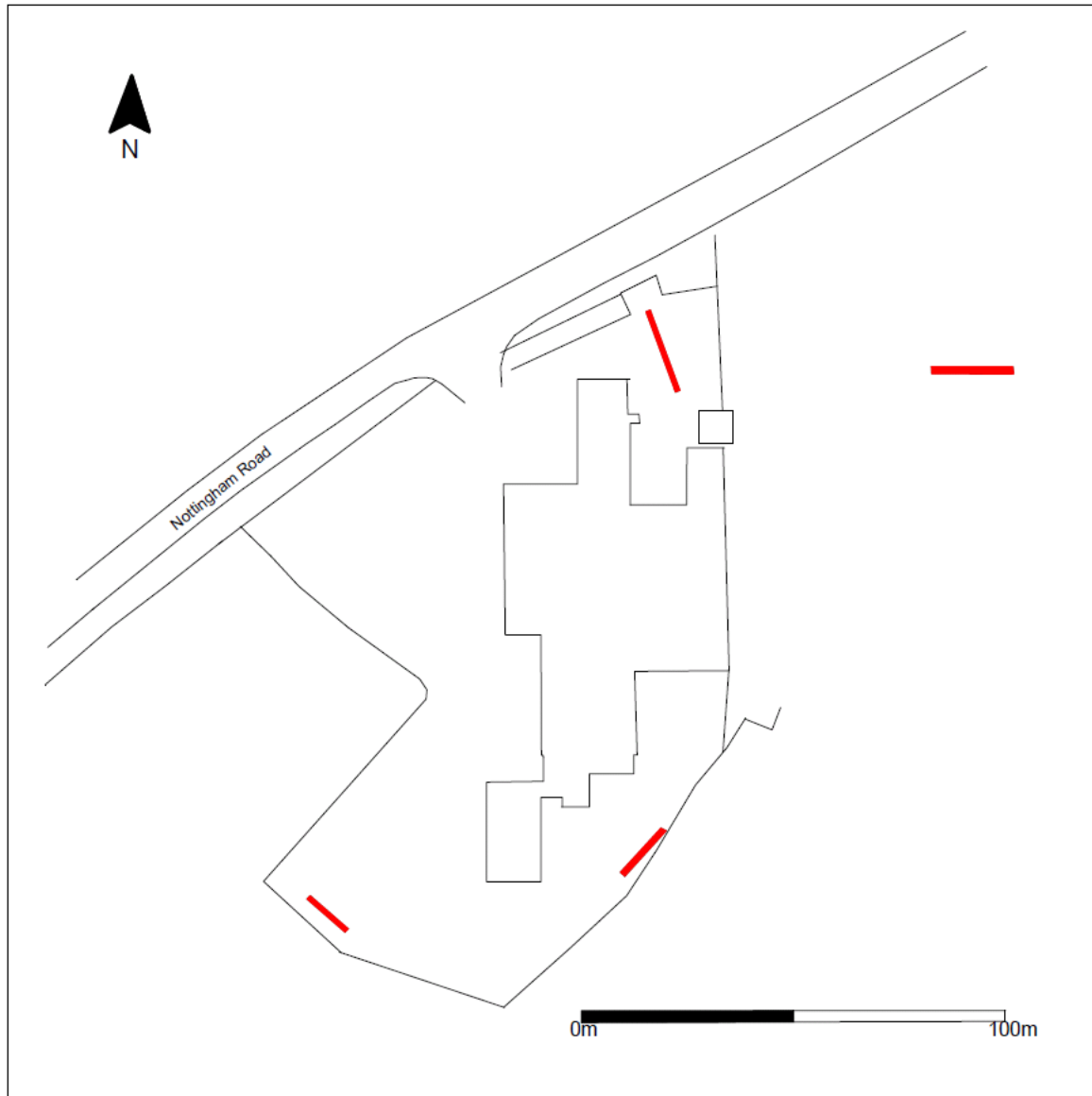


Figure 2: Proposed trench plan

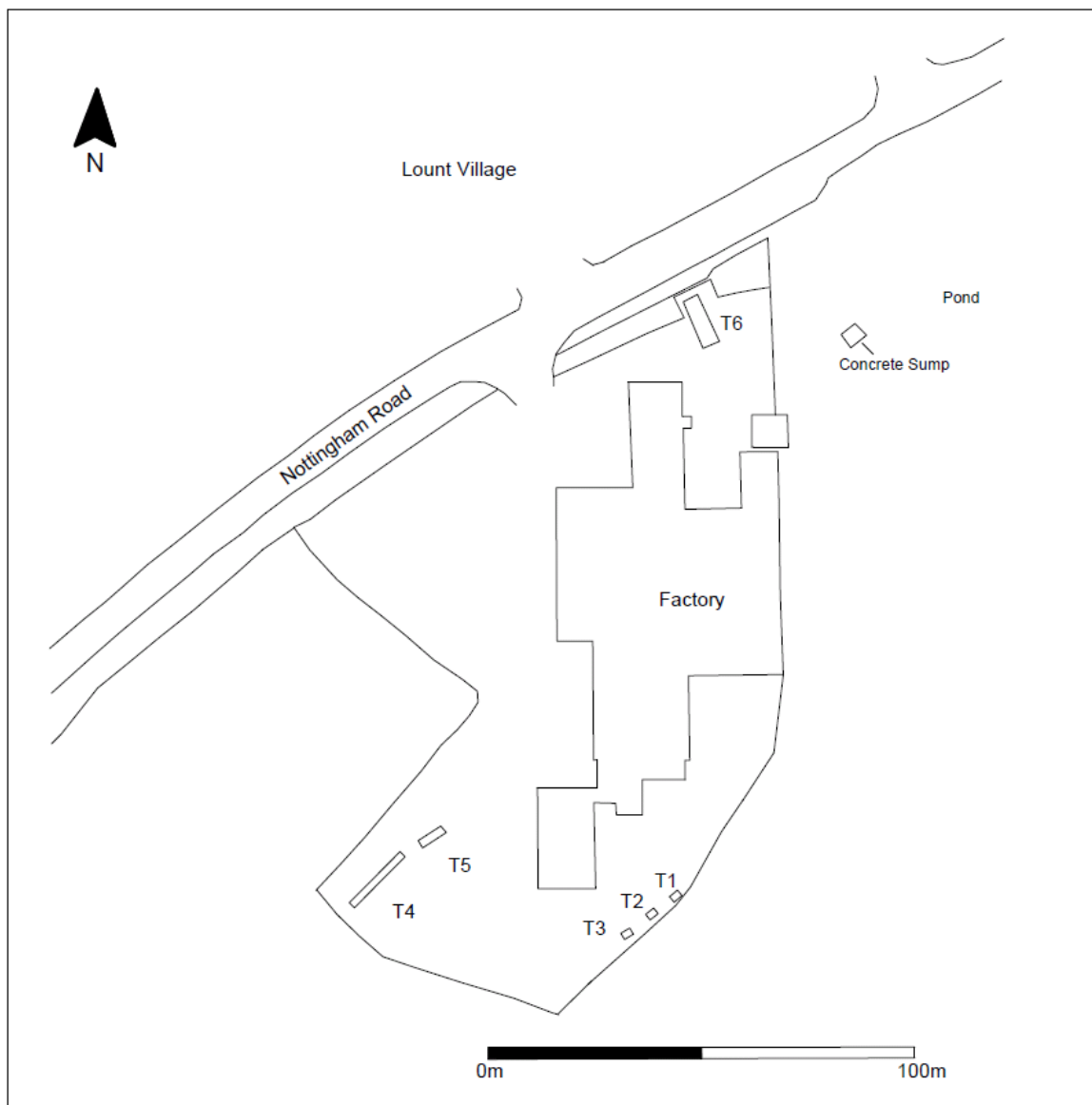


Figure 3: Trench location plan

5. Results

Trench	Orientation	Length(m)	Average depth (m)	Notes feature/context descriptions	Minimum depth to archaeology or natural substratum
1	North-east to South-west	2.30m	1.60m	Deep modern Overburden Ceramic field drain west to east	2.30m to natural substratum
2	North-east to South-west	1.90m	1.60m	Deep modern overburden Ceramic drain west to east	1.70m to natural substratum
3	North-east to South west	2.30m	1.60m	Deep modern overburden Ceramic field drain north to south	1.70m to natural substratum
4	North to south	16.00m	1.60m	Filled with demolition	0.45m to natural substratum
5	North to South	4.00m	1.60m	Filled with demolition	0.50m to natural substratum
6	North to South	12.00m	3.80m	Pottery Kiln structures brick foundations	0.43 to kiln 0.86m to natural substratum

Trench 1

Trench 1 was part of a subdivided group of three smaller trenches (Trenches 1, 2 and 3) measuring approximately 2.00m long and 1.6m wide. This trench targeted the south-eastern extent of the proposed development and was orientated north-east to south-west (Figure 3). The natural substratum was reached at a depth 2.30m (106.24m O.D). at the centre of the trench, and consisted of pale yellowish brown clay. The substratum was cut by land drain which comprised a ceramic pipe running west to east (Plate 1).

Overlying the natural substratum was a layer of made ground (16) which consisted of compacted dark grey clay mixed with charcoal or coal flecks, brick fragments and modern plastic. The layer of made ground measured 0.90m deep and can be interpreted as a possible layer to help raise the ground levels. Sealing (16) was another layer (13), which comprised very compacted greyish yellow clay mixed with brick fragments, metal objects and frequent charcoal flecks. This layer measured 1.20m deep and was thought to have been a second deposit of made ground which raised the ground levels. The made ground deposits were capped by a very compacted surface that comprised of gravel mixed with crushed bricks and mortar (12).

Trench 2

A second trench was excavated on the same alignment as Trench 1 but located 6m further to the west (Figure 3). Trench 2 measured 1.90m long and 1.60m wide and excavated to a depth of 1.80m. The deposits within this trench had the same stratigraphic sequence as that found in Trench 1, but the natural substratum was reached at a slightly shallower depth of 1.70m

(106.84m O.D). A west to east orientated ceramic field drain was observed at the base of the trench cutting the natural substratum. Overlying this was a made ground layer (16), which had a depth of 0.50m. A second layer of made ground (13) sealed (16) below and measured 0.90m deep. The gravel and demolition surface (12) was 0.30m deep within this trench.

Trench 3

Trench 3 was located 5.00m to the south-west and was excavated on the same orientation as trenches 1 and 2 (Figure 3). This trench was 2.30m long by 1.60m wide and had a depth of 1.80m. The natural substratum was reached at depth of 1.70m (106.84m O.D). A ceramic field drain was located cutting the natural substratum orientated north to south. This trench again had the same stratigraphic sequence as trenches 1 and 2. The lower layer of made ground (16) measured 0.70m deep and was sealed by a second similar layer (13), which was up to 0.70m thick. The gravel and demolition surface (12) measured 0.30m deep within Trench 3.

Trench 4

This trench targeted the south-western extent of the proposed development and was orientated north to south (Figure 3). The trench was modified and subdivided into two trenches due to site constraints and measured approximately 16.00m long and 1.60m wide (Figure 3).

The natural substratum was reached at a depth 0.45m (110.55m O.D) at the southern end and 0.60m (110.40m O.D) at the northern end of the trench. The natural substratum consisted of a pale yellowish brown clay mottled with pale greyish clay (Plate 2).

Overlying the natural substratum was a layer of made ground (17), which consisted of a compacted demolition deposit containing bricks, concrete, mortar flecks, metal and wood. The layer of made ground measured 0.40m deep and was thought to be a possible layer dumped to help raise the ground levels. Sealing (17) was a surface layer (12) that comprised of gravel mixed with crushed bricks and mortar and measured 0.20m in thickness.

Trench 5

Trench 5 was excavated on the same alignment as Trench 4 but located 4m further to the north (Figure 3). Trench 5 measured 4.00m long and 1.60m wide and was excavated to a depth of 0.60m. The trench had the same stratigraphic sequence as that found in Trench 4 but the natural substratum was reached at depth 0.60m (110.40m O.D). Overlying the natural was layer of made ground 0.40m deep comprising demolition debris (17). Sealing the demolition was a gravel surface (12) which measured 0.20m thick.

Trench 6

Trench 6 was located in the north-east corner of the former Coleorton Pottery and was positioned over circular feature depicted on the 1923 OS map that was thought to be possible former kiln structure (Figure 3). The trench measured 12.00m long and 3.80m wide. A circular brick foundation (06) was located at the northern end of the trench at a depth 0.30m (107.17m O.D) below the modern ground surface (Figure 4; Plates 3 and 4). Only part of the structure was exposed in the trench and southern edge appeared to be truncated by a service

trench. The structure survived to a height of at least four brick courses and was constructed of common red bricks, measuring 230mm x 110mm x 70mm. The kiln appears to be constructed using a mixture of header and stretcher courses and some of the bricks appeared to have been vitrified by intense heat. Three possible ash pits were exposed of which one (05) was fully excavated. The ash pit measured 1.20m long, 0.50m wide with a surviving maximum depth of 0.26m and an iron fire bar remained in-situ (Plate 5). The ash pits contained dark greyish brown clay-silt mixed with burnt material, charcoal, ash and pottery fragments (04). The ash pits appeared to project beyond the circumference of central circular kiln. A circular brick foundation (23) was observed beyond the circumference of the ash pits and was thought to be a foundation for a possible hovel structure that may have surrounded the central kiln and ashpits.

Immediately to the north of the circular kiln was an adjoining brick structure, possibly representing a foundation for a rectangular kiln (10) found at depth of 0.53m (106.94m O.D) (Figure 4). The structure measured 3.50 long, 2.70m wide and survived to height of at least five brick courses. The wall foundation comprised two bricks in width and was constructed of common red bricks, measuring 230mm x 110mm x 70mm. Some of the bricks appeared to have been exposed to heat and were scorched. A limited test pit excavation towards the north-east corner of the structure suggests that it sits directly on top of the natural substratum found at depth of 0.86m 106.18m O.D. below the modern ground level (Figure 5). A possible floor area was observed within the rectangular structure and measured 2.35m long and 2.20m wide. A possible uneven cut [19] for the floor was observed within the test pit (Figure 5) and was sealed by possible floor layer (18), which comprised compacted stone gravel mixed with a dark greyish clay-silt matrix, 0.22m deep. The gravel was sealed by (07) a layer of dark greyish brown clay-silt mixed with burnt material, charcoal, ash and pottery fragments.

Directly to the north further brick structures were recorded which may be possible flue features (20). A single brick wide wall feature had been constructed creating a possible west to east channel measuring 0.22m wide. The channel contained a fill which comprised burnt or scorched clay-silt residue (22). A brick foundation for a possible stanchion or pillar support (21) was located next to the flue and measured 1.08 long and 0.60m wide.

All the brick structures had elements that suggested they had perhaps had undergone some modification or had been altered. The brick foundations were sealed under modern overburden and concrete surface (2) measuring 0.24m deep. Overlying the concrete was a gravel layer and a tarmac surface with a combined depth of 0.19m.

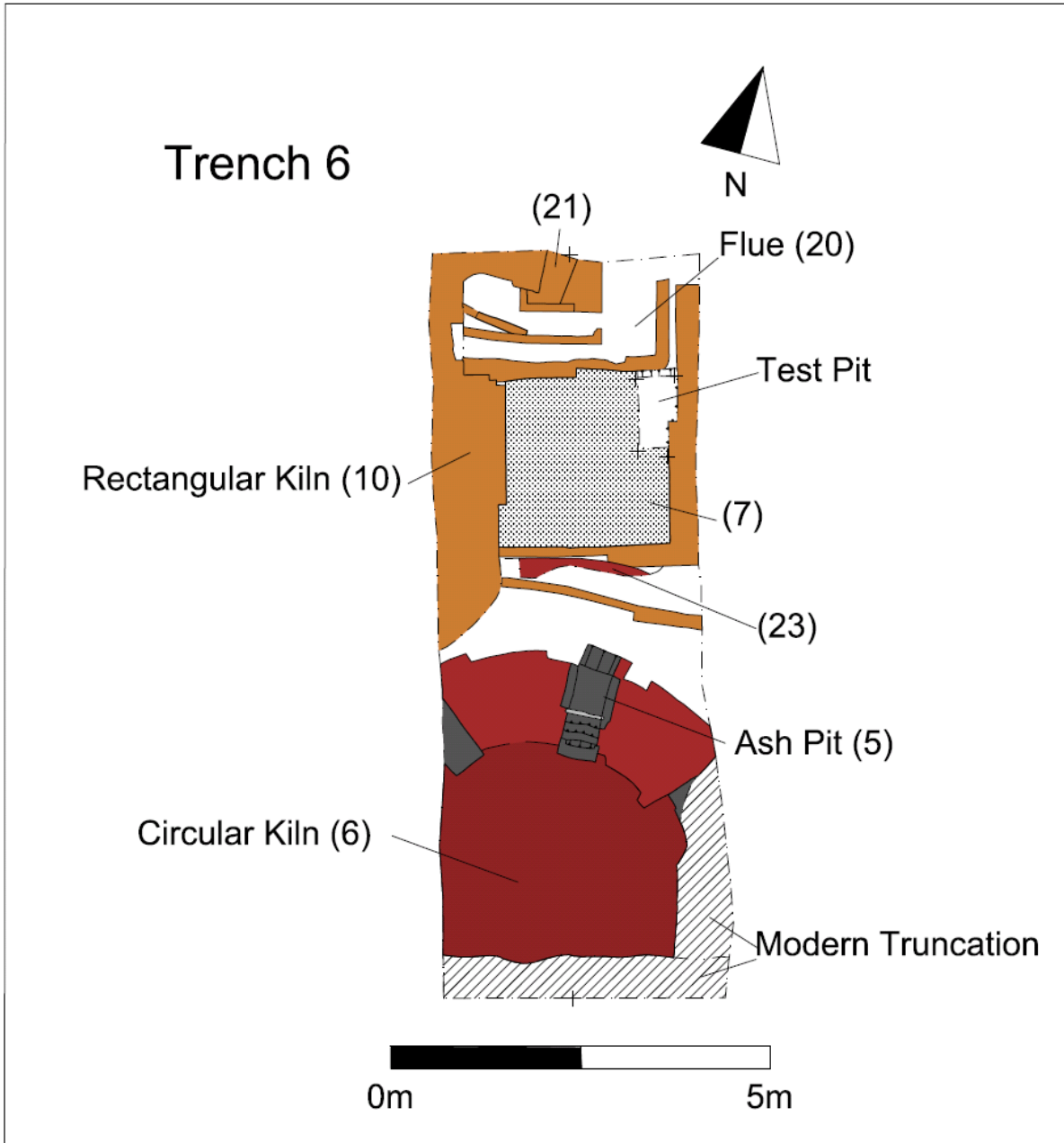


Figure 4 Trench 6 kiln structures

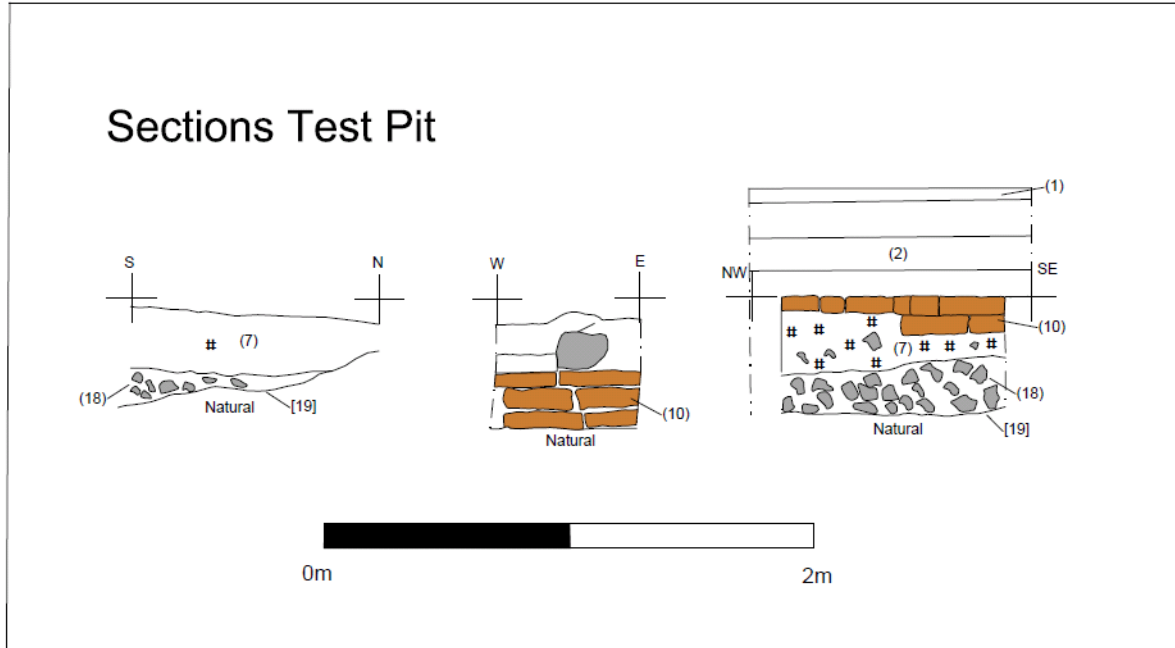


Figure 5 Sections test pit Trench 6



Plate 1: Trench 1 looking north-west



Plate 2: Trench 4 looking north



Plate 3. Trench 6 showing brick circular kiln base looking north



Plate 4. Trench 6 showing brick circular kiln base looking west



Plate 5 Ash pit looking south

6. Discussion

The results of the archaeological evaluation have revealed substantial remains of brick foundations in Trench 6 (Figure 4). These foundations have been provisionally interpreted as kilns and were probably associated with the Coleorton Pottery. The production of pottery at Lount is thought to have started in the 19th century and continued until the early 1930s (Richards 2011). On the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of 1882 a series of buildings are shown occupying the front of the site, with a further L-shaped building close to the centre (Hunt 2011). These included three circular structures thought to be kilns. A 1923 edition of the map depicts further development on the site including additional kilns to the south and building aligned east to west (Hunt 2011). Trench 6 was sited over one of those circular structures which was located in the north-east corner of the site close to the street frontage. A circular kiln structure found within Trench 6 is thought to be the same circular structure depicted on both Ordnance Survey maps. Both maps also depict adjoining rectangular buildings fronting directly on to the street. The possible rectangular kiln structure found within trench 6 is also thought to be part of those buildings identified on both of those maps. The finds found within Trench 6 comprised glazed pottery sherds pottery industry waste - biscuit fired pottery, saggars, and kiln furniture which are all associated with pottery manufacture.

The evaluation trenches 1, 2 and 3 excavated in the south-east corner of the site revealed very deep layers of modern overburden that appear to have been deposited to help raise the ground level and extend the factory yard surface southwards. The natural ground levels in the southern half of the site appear to fall sharply to south-east from 110.55m O.D in Trench 4 to 106.24m O.D in Trench 1.

Evaluation trenches 4 and 5 suggest that the ground levels in this area may have been previously stripped and then buried under a compacted layer of modern demolition. All finds or features found within the evaluation trenches date from 19th century onwards.

7. Conclusion

The archaeology found in trench 6 revealed a substantial level of structural preservation that is thought to be the remains of kilns associated with the former Coleorton Pottery. The trench suggests that it is likely that other well preserved foundations of potential kilns and associated workshops may survive within the street frontage area of the site. It is likely that within the car park areas located towards the centre of the site on both sides of the existing buildings other structural remains could survive. However the southern half of the development appears to have undergone some modern landscaping which may have either removed potential structures or buried them under deep deposits of overburden.

The initial interpretation is that the kilns in trench 6 may have been modified or altered. The early Ordnance Survey maps suggest that various additional builds and kilns are added to the original group from 1882 to 1923. This suggests there is potential for kilns and workshops relating to different phases.

There was a range of ceramics and kiln furniture but it is difficult to draw firm conclusions about the range of production at this site based on such a small sample (below Appendix 1). There was evidence to suggest that in addition to yellow wares there were also coloured

wares produced on site but the assemblage was small. The pottery finds also included redware and blackware vessels but their origin was uncertain. The range of wares would accord with a 19th century production.

Pottery manufacturing sites from the post-medieval period have been elusive in Leicestershire (Hartley 2000). It is thought that much of the locally produced pottery provided for the county from this period was sourced from local pottery manufactures centres outside of the county. The main centres of production were based in Nuneaton Warwickshire, Nottingham and Ticknall in Derbyshire (Hartley 2000). The Ticknall potteries were only located five miles to the north-east of Lount Pottery and produced pottery for over four hundred years although it was in decline by the late 19th century (Spavold and Brown 2005).

8. Archive and Publication

The archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council under accession number X.A90.2011.

The content of the paper archive consists of:

1 Unbound A4 copy of this report

6 A4 Trench recording sheets

1 A4 Context summary sheet

23 A4 Context Sheets

1 A4 Photo record sheet

1 A4 Sample record sheet

1 A4 Drawing Record

2 A2 Plan and section drawing sheets

Black and white contact print black and white picture negatives

A4 Colour digital contact print 1 CD of 96 digital photos

A record of the project will be submitted to the Oasis project under the code universil-105301. Oasis is an online index to grey literature reports.

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

9. Acknowledgements

The fieldwork was carried out by the author, assisted by Steve Baker. Dr. Patrick Clay managed the project. The pottery and miscellaneous finds were identified by Paul Courtney.

10. Bibliography

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Appendix 1 The Ceramics

Paul Courtney

The material presented for analysis comprised 97 sherds/fragments of pottery and kiln furniture weighing 2.23Kg. The finds can be summarised as follows:

1. Kiln Furniture

Extruded Spacers. The most common find was lengths of crudely made extruded ceramic spacers in white to buff-firing clay, mostly with oval, circular or 8-shaped cross-sections, sometimes secondary flattened. One was also found in a red-firing fabric. 25 fragments in total. (See Barker 1998 in general on kiln furniture)



Kiln Furniture: context 11: spacers with 2 shelf fragments (Top right) and 2 glazed stilt fragments (bottom right)

?Shelves. Eight fragments of crudely formed slab-like ceramic in both buff (poorly mixed red and white clays) and red-firing (brick-like) fabrics were recovered. Some slabs had finished edges (like those of ridge tiles). These are probably shelves used with the props for stacking pots.

Stilts. Three pieces of three-armed stilts were found, two of the pieces joining, carefully made from buff-firing clay. This form of furniture was used to separate vessels or lift their bases above the kiln floor.

Cone-like Prop. A single cylindrical kiln prop (110mm in length) was recovered with a protrusion on its underside allowing it be slotted into another prop. It was made in an off-white fabric with buff surfaces, with large off-white (?grog) inclusions up to 4mm and a few plate-like ferruginous inclusions up to 3mm. It would have been used to support stacks of pots inside the firing chamber in conjunction with ceramic shelves.



Kiln Prop: context 11 cleaning

Saggars. A single saggars fragment was found in a coarse off-white fabric with numerous white inclusions up to 2mm and a few black inclusions up to 1mm. The exterior had a brown to dark green glaze. Saggars were used to protect fine wares from damage.

2. Pottery

Yellow Ware. The most common type of ceramic recovered from the site was made in a buff fabric with a yellow glaze, sometimes combined with a white glaze and/or blue bands of slip decoration. Most of the sherds came from bowls but it is also likely that jug-like vessels were present. Biscuit-fired sherds of this ware show it was manufactured on site and that white and blue slips were fired in the first firing to achieve the white and blue glazes. Thirty-seven sherds were recovered of finished wares. A further nine biscuit ware sherds, including a mug base, are also probably yellow wares. This ware was widely produced for kitchen wares from c.1830 to the 1930s and it was a major product of the South Derbyshire potteries being sometimes known as 'Derbyshire Ironstone Cane Ware'. Similar wares were popular in the USA over the same period (Leibowitz 2002).



Yellow Wares: context 4 and bottom right: context 4



Assorted Biscuit wares: context 11

Miscellaneous Biscuit Wares. Two sherds of ?biscuit-fired pink earthenware were recovered with no glaze, and a flattish buff-coloured sherd with red pigment over one surface.



Coloured Wares: context 11

Coloured Wares. Two sherds, a handle and flared base, were in a pink-firing fabric with a bright green glaze. A further flared base had a dark brown metallic glaze over a buff fabric.



Redware: context 11

Redware. Four sherds came from at least two vessels in an unglazed fine red-firing earthenware. The form is uncertain and it is just possible that these were a form of kiln furniture. However, as they are very well made and there is no trace of glaze runs it seems more likely they are a specialised utilitarian product of some kind.

Blackware. Three sherds came from internally black glazed bowls in coarse buff to pink Coal Measure fabrics.

3. Conclusion

It is difficult to draw firm conclusions about the range of production at this site based on such a small sample. The *yellow wares* can be said to have been produced on site with absolute certainty. However, the similarities of fabric suggest the *Coloured wares* were also produced there. Less certain are the origins of the fine *redware* and *blackware* vessels. The range of wares would accord with a 19th century production though *blackwares* were made over a long period.

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Leibowitz, J. 2002, *Yellow Ware: the transitional ceramic*. New York: Schiffer

CATALOGUE

Context 4

One piece 32 g of vitreous bubbled highly-fired clay

One piece of coarse red fabric, probably from slab-like spacer, 16g

Pottery

Type	Sherds	Wt g	
Yellow Ware	30	633	White interiors, buff fabric. Two bowls represented

Context 7

Kiln Furniture and Pottery

Type	Sherds	Wt g	
Shelves	4	296	Buff clay
Shelves	1	64	Red clay
Blackware	2	67	Bowls, internally glazed, one buff and one pink fabric

Context 11 Kiln Furniture

Type	Sherd Nos	Wt g	
Spacers	16	135	White firing clay
Spacers	1	22	Red firing clay, incomplete
Stilt- 3 bars	2 (join)	20	Buff stoneware incomplete
Shelves	2	28	Red firing clay, one has vitrified surfaces

Context 11 Pottery

Type	Sherds	Wt g	
Biscuit ware- buff	6	70	2 sherds with white slip and one with blue lines, one with red coating
Biscuit ware- pink	2	21	
Metallic Brown glazed buffware	1	4	Flanged base
Green glazed pinkware	1		Flanged base
Yellow Ware bowls- buff fabric	6	87	White glazed interiors & Yellow ext
Yellow Ware (bowl or jug)	1	5	Yellow int and Blue, White & Yellow ext

Context 11 cleaning kiln furniture

Kiln Prop cylindrical	1	381	Damaged, white-firing clay
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Kiln spacers	8	91	White to buff clay
Stilt arm	1	8	Buff fabric
Saggar	1	57	Coarse off-white fabric wit external brown/green glaze
Shelf	1	19	Red firin clay

Context 11 cleaning pottery

Biscuitware – buff	4	70	includes bowls and one mug base. One vessel has white and blue slips.
Redware	4	47	Red clay, high fired, thin walled, unglazed. Form & function uncertain
Green glazed pinkware	1	10	Handle, perhaps of mug
Blackware	1	48	Bowl, internally glazed, reduced hgh-fired fabric

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