



University of Leicester

Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological Watching Brief
On Land at Corner Farm, Copt Oak Road,
Copt Oak, Leicestershire
(SK 4810 1297)**

Gerwyn Richards




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On Land at Corner Farm, Copt Oak Road,
Copt Oak, Leicestershire.
(NGR SK 4810 1297)**

Gerwyn Richards

Planning Application: 10/00484/COU

For: Stephney Johnson.

Checked by
Signed: 
Date: 6 May 2011.
Name: ..R J Buckley..

University of Leicester
Archaeological Services
University Rd., Leicester, LE1 7RH
Tel: (0116) 252 2848 Fax: (0116) 252 2614
www.le.ac.uk/ulas

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Road, Copt Oak, Leicestershire (SK 4810 1297)**

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Summary

University of Leicester Archaeological Services was commissioned by Stephney Johnson to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks in advance of the construction of a ménage and field shelter on land at Corner Farm, Copt Oak, Leicestershire.

The proposed development area had been identified as being of archaeological potential, located on the edge of the medieval Bardon Park. No evidence of archaeological deposits or artefacts was encountered during the course of the watching brief. Locals indicated that the field had been land-filled when the nearby M1 was built in the 1960s.

The archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council, under the accession number X.A44. 2011.

1. Introduction

University of Leicester Archaeological Services was commissioned by Stephney Johnson to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks for the construction of a ménage and field shelter on land at Corner Farm, Copt Oak Road, Copt Oak, Leicestershire (SK 4810 1297; *Figure 1*). The proposed development area is located to the south of Corner Farm, adjacent to the Copt Oak Road frontage. The groundworks initially consisted of a topsoil-strip and reduced dig, the upcast then being used to level the proposed development area.

The Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record (HER) indicates that the proposed development area lies in an area of archaeological interest, situated in the area of the recorded edge of Bardon Park which dates from the medieval period. Associated landscaping for the park (comprising the park pale or boundary which also is likely to have served as a parish boundary) was thought likely to be present within the proposed development area.

The Planning Archaeologist, Leicestershire County Council as advisor to Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council advised that the proposed works may have an impact upon buried archaeological remains. In view of this a programme of archaeological attendance was approved. This consisted of a watching brief carried out during the groundworks undertaken by the client's contractors. This work followed Planning Policy Statement 5 (*Planning and the Historic Environment*) (Department for Communities and Local Government March 2010).



Figure 1. Site location

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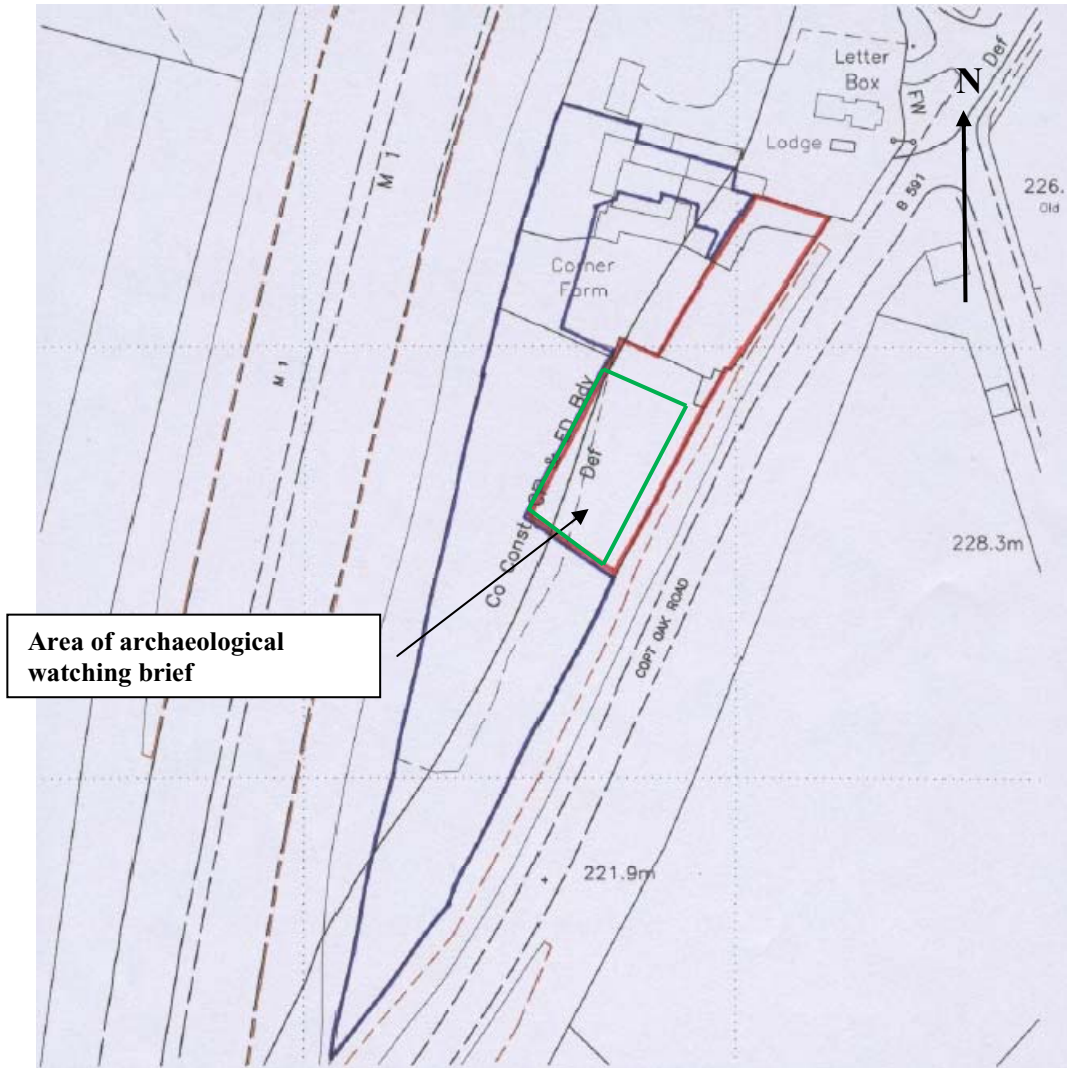
2. Aims and Methodology

The aim of the archaeological work, through archaeological inspection and recording of groundworks by the client's contractors, was to:

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

The work followed the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Code of Conduct* (2006) and *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (2008), the *Guidelines for Archaeological Work in Leicestershire and Rutland* (LMARS) and adhered to the University's Health and Safety policy. The methodology to be followed was detailed in the *Design Specification for Archaeological work* (ULAS 11-106).

All groundworks were carried out by a Terex back hoe loader fitted with a ditching bucket under continuous archaeological supervision. The exposed substratum was observed and the spoil searched for finds. The watching brief took place on April 4th 2011.



Area of archaeological watching brief

Figure 2 Proposed development area (in red) area of archaeological watching brief (in Green).
(Not to Scale)

3. Results

The proposed development area occupied a paddock to the south of Corner Farm. The site was largely level with a slight east to west drop within the footprint of the ménage. The Copt Oak Road boundary (to the south east) consisted of mature hawthorn trees and the cutting for the M1 formed the western boundary. A visual survey of the proposed development area prior to work commencing indicated no standing earthworks.

The topsoil strip commenced in the north eastern corner of the ménage and progressed towards the south west. Approximately 0.3m to 0.45m of topsoil was removed at the eastern end of the strip revealing a horizon of heavily disturbed yellow clay, re-deposited topsoil and 20th-century building rubble. The depth of the reduced dig decreased to approximately 0.05m towards the western end of the strip.

The whole of the exposed surface, from immediately below to the turf on the western side to the deeper excavation on the eastern end consisted entirely of re-deposited material.

No evidence for archaeological finds or features was observed within either the removed topsoil or the exposed substratum.

4. Conclusion

The proposed development area occupied a promising location within an area of archaeological interest, but no evidence of archaeological deposits or artefacts were encountered during the course of this watching brief. There was extensive evidence of substantial and large scale ground disturbance within the proposed development area. The plant operator, whose family originally owned Corner Farm stated that the whole field had been used as landfill during the construction of the M1 during the 1960s and that a number of buildings also stood within the proposed development area. It is almost certain, therefore, that this previous work would have destroyed any original ground levels and archaeology.

5. Archive & Publication

The site archive consists of:

- 9 Black & White negatives and contact prints
- CD containing 9 digital images
- 1 A4 contact sheet
- 1 A4 watching brief sheet
- 1 A4 paper map showing proposed development area
- Unbound copy of this report (ULAS Report Number 2011-050)

The archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council under the Accession Number X.A44. 2011.

A version of the summary (above) will be published in *Transactions of Leicestershire Historical & Archaeological Society* in due course.

6. References

IfA, 2008 *Code of Conduct*

IfA, 2008 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation*

Gerwyn Richards
ULAS
University of Leicester
University Road
Leicester LE1 7RH

Tel:0116 252 2848

www.le.ac.uk/ulas

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Figure 3 Proposed development area, work in progress (looking south-west).

Appendix: Oasis

INFORMATION REQUIRED	EXAMPLE
Project Name	Corner Farm
Project Type	Watching Brief
Project Manager	Richard Buckley
Project Supervisor	Gerwyn Richards
Previous/Future work	Previous: None. Future: None
Current Land Use	Agricultural
Development Type	Equine
Reason for Investigation	PPS5
Position in the Planning Process	As a condition
Site Co ordinates	SK 4810 1297
Start/end dates of field work	April 2011
Archive Recipient	LMARS
Height min/max	220mOD
Study Area	N/A
Finds	None

Contact Details

Richard Buckley or Patrick Clay
University of Leicester Archaeological
Services (ULAS)
University of Leicester,
University Road,
Leicester LE1 7RH

T: +44 (0)116 252 2848

F: +44 (0)116 252 2614

E: ulas@le.ac.uk

w: www.le.ac.uk/ulas

