



University of Leicester

Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological Watching Brief at
1/3 Vicarage Lane, Belton
Leicestershire.
NGR: SK 44767 20763**

Andrew Hyam



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Leicestershire.**

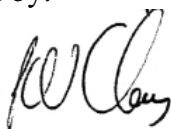
NGR: SK 44767 20763

A R Hyam

For: Mr and Mrs Weldon

Approved by:

Signed:



Date: 16.01.2012

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Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by the University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) at 1/3 Vicarage Lane, Belton, Leicestershire. The work took place on the 11th of January 2012 during foundation excavation and groundwork for a small orangery attached to the rear of the Grade II listed Old Rectory. The site lies at the heart of the village core adjacent to the church, hence the requirement for archaeological work. The foundation trench for the orangery and a soakaway were excavated during the watching brief.

No archaeological features or deposits were observed during the evaluation.

The fieldwork was carried out by A.R.Hyam. The archive will be deposited with Leicestershire Museums Service under Accession Number X.A5 2012

Introduction

In accordance with Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment, Policy HE6 Leicestershire County Council, Historic and Natural Environment Team this document forms the report for an archaeological watching brief at 1/3 Vicarage Lane, Belton, Leicestershire. Under planning application number P11/00574/FUL it is proposed to demolish an existing conservatory and erect an orangery on a slightly larger footprint. The development site lies at the heart of the village to the south of the churchyard.

When considering the planning application the Senior Planning Archaeologist at Leicestershire County Council, as advisor to the planning authority, recommended the requirement for an archaeological watching brief to take place due to the site's location within an area of archaeological interest. The work has been commissioned by J R Willoughby Ltd on behalf of Mr and Mrs Weldon and followed that specified in the ULAS *Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Work at 1/3 Vicarage Lane, Belton, Leicestershire* (ULAS 15.11.2011 – hereinafter WSI).

Background

The village of Belton lies approximately 3 km north-west of Shepshed and 8 km to the west of Loughborough (Fig. 1). The development site is centred on National Grid Reference SK 44767 20763 at a height of approximately 79m OD (Fig. 2). The Leicestershire County Council advice letter states that the Old Rectory (No. 3 Vicarage Lane) is a Grade II listed building dating from the mid-18th century (LB ref. 1286/40/4/131; HER ref. MLE11331) and Listed Building Consent has been granted for the work. The application site lies within an area of archaeological importance. It falls within the medieval and post-medieval historic settlement core of the village of

Belton (HER ref. MLE10494) and also lies close to St. John the Baptist Church (Grade II*) which dates from the 14th century (LB ref. 1286/40/4/10; HER ref. MLE11325). It was therefore considered that there would be potential for the presence of below-ground archaeological remains within the area which may be impacted on by the development.

The new orangery is to be constructed into the south-eastern corner created by the main body of the vicarage and a slightly later, 19th century, single-storey extension built onto the south wall of the house (Fig. 3). Although it had been demolished just prior to the watching brief the remains of the conservatory appeared to date for the mid 1970s at the earliest. This had been constructed on a small concrete plinth around which the ground needed to be reduced and new foundations excavated.

The 1884 first edition Ordnance Survey map of the site shows it much as it remains today but without the conservatory which has recently been demolished. None of the other successive maps up to the 1962 edition show any changes or other development around the site. The rear garden drops down towards the east and south-east of the vicarage and has been partially landscaped to create a retaining wall and a level terrace presently used as a small football pitch (Fig. 4).

The British Geological Survey indicates that the underlying bedrock to be Gunthorpe Member Mudstone (a red-brown mudstone with dolomitic siltstone and fine-grained sandstone) overlain with mid Pleistocene glaciofluvial deposits of sand and gravel.



Figure 1. Belton village location.

1km grid. North to top of map

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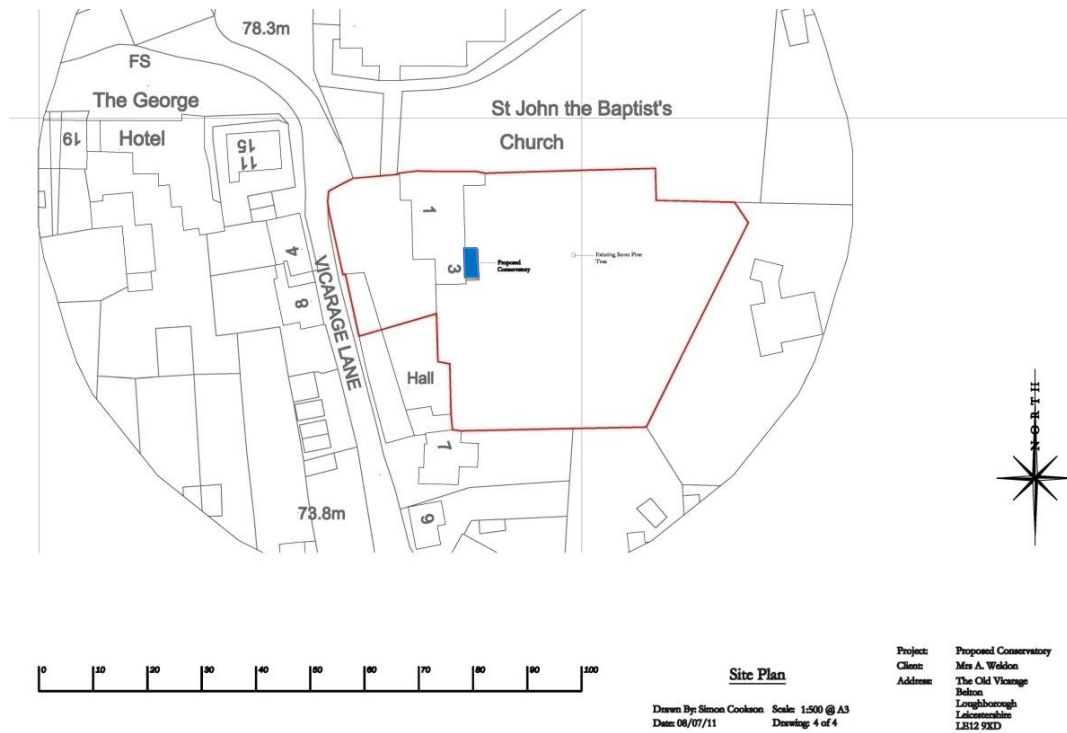


Figure 2. Site location
Orangery highlighted in blue. Plan provided by client. Note outline of house is not quite correct, compare with Figure 3 below.



Figure 3. Development site looking north-west



Figure 4. View of the vicarage and landscaped garden
Looking west.

Objectives

The main objectives of the watching brief as identified in the ULAS WSI can be summarised as:

- To identify the presence/absence of any or 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 advance understanding of the heritage assets.
- To produce an archive and report of any results.

Methodology

A tracked mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket was used to reduce the ground within the footprint of the proposed orangery. Topsoil/modern overburden was removed in level spits, under continuous archaeological supervision, down to the required depth or to top of natural whichever was first. The foundation trench was then excavated using the same toothless ditching bucket. A soakaway located to the east of the foundations was also excavated. All spoil was scanned for finds and other artefacts.

The foundation trench was examined by hand cleaning and any deposits located would be planned at an appropriate scale and sample-excavated by. All plans were tied into the Ordnance Survey National Grid.

Sections of any excavated archaeological features would be drawn at an appropriate scale. The groundworks and foundation trenches were recorded on standard ULAS pro-forma watching brief recording sheets noting soil depths and descriptions. Any drawn sections of archaeological features would be levelled and tied to the Ordnance Survey Datum.

All deposits were recorded by notes, sketches and both digital colour and 35mm black and white photographs. The recording methodology followed that specified in the ULAS WSI. All work followed the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Code of Conduct* (2006) and adhered to their *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological watching briefs* (2008).

Results

Ground reduction

Slabs and a concrete and rubble bedding layer were removed around the base of the old conservatory to reveal a very mixed and disturbed dark reddish brown silty-clay layer. This was further reduced to approximately 300mm below its original depth to expose more dark brown silty clay which had the appearance of redeposited subsoil (Fig. 5).



Figure 5. Ground reduction within footprint of new orangery
Looking west

Foundation trench

A trench was excavated in an elongated U-shape and measured 0.6m in width and 1m in depth. The two east to west arms of the foundation trench cut through approximately 0.5m of fairly disturbed dark reddish brown silty-clay before reaching the natural substratum which consisted of a mid reddish brown clay (Fig. 6). The natural substratum became slightly lighter in hue towards the base of the trench. Along the front, north to south arm, of the trench the natural substratum was encountered at approximately 0.7m below current ground level (Fig.7). In the north-west corner of the foundation the disturbed ground and natural were badly waterlogged due to a leaking rainwater gutter which appeared to have been damaged during the construction of the old conservatory. This has also caused some damage to the corner of the house which has very shallow foundations. No archaeological features or deposits however were observed within the trench.



Figure 6. North arm of foundation trench
Looking west. 1m scale

Soakaway

In addition to the foundations a 1.2m² soakaway was excavation 5m from the south-eastern corner of the trench. This was excavated to a depth of 1.3m through 0.5m of redeposited topsoil with some natural clay onto the original topsoil, subsoil and undisturbed natural at 0.9m below present ground level (Fig. 8). No archaeological features or deposits were observed during the excavation of the soakaway.



Figure 7. Foundation trench
Looking west. 1m scale



Figure 8. Soakaway, south facing section
Looking north. 1m scale

Discussion

Despite the relatively high potential, no archaeological features or deposits were found during the course of the watching brief. The ground around the new development appears to have been quite heavily disturbed probably during the construction of the vicarage and/or the 19th century extension which may have a partial cellar or sunken floor.

The soakaway has an upper fill of redeposited layer of topsoil and some natural clay which is probably the result of the landscaping episode when the retaining wall and level terrace were created.

Archive

The archive consists of:

This report,

1 pro-forma watching brief form,

1 photo record sheet, combined for colour digital and 35mm black and white,

1 contact sheet of 5 35mm black and white photographs,

35mm black and white negatives,

1 contact sheet of 14 digital photographs,

1 cd of this report and the digital photographs.

Publication

A record of the project will be submitted to the OASIS project. OASIS is an online index to archaeological grey literature.

Acknowledgements

The fieldwork was undertaken by A. Hyam. The project was managed by Patrick Clay.

Bibliography

Brown, D. 2008 *Standard and Guidance for the Preparation of Archaeological Archives* (Institute for Archaeologists).

Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Attendance. *1-3 Vicarage Lane, Belton, Leicestershire*. ULAS

IfA, 2008, *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*.

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Appendix 1. OASIS Information

Project Name	1-3 Vicarage Lane, Belton, Leicestershire
Project Type	Watching Brief
Project Manager	Patrick Clay
Project Supervisor	A Hyam
Previous/Future work	No previous work.
Current Land Use	Residential
Development Type	Extension
Reason for Investigation	Archaeological potential
Position in the Planning Process	As a condition
Site Co ordinates	SK 44767 20763
Start/end dates of field work	11.02.2012
Archive Recipient	Leicestershire Museums
Study Area	Approx 50m ²

Appendix 2. Digital photographs



Belton 001.jpg



Belton 002.jpg



Belton 003.jpg



Belton 004.jpg



Belton 005.jpg



Belton 006.jpg



Belton 007.jpg



Belton 008.jpg



Belton 009.jpg



Belton 010.jpg



Belton 011.jpg



Belton 012.jpg



Belton 013.jpg



Belton 014.jpg

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