



**University of  
Leicester**

**Archaeological Services**

**An Archaeological Evaluation  
on Land at North Lane, Foxton Leicestershire**

**NGR:  
SP 69954 90153**



Gavin Speed

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**An Archaeological Evaluation on  
Land at North Lane, Foxton, Leicestershire**

**(SP 69954 90153)**

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## **An Archaeological Evaluation on Land at North Lane, Foxton, Leicestershire**

**Gavin Speed**

### **Summary**

*University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) carried out an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching on land at North Lane, Foxton, Leicestershire (SP 69954 90153). The work was undertaken as part of an archaeological impact assessment in advance of a proposed bird of prey breeding and rehabilitation centre.*

*The evaluation revealed no significant archaeological deposits or finds.*

*The site archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council under accession no. X.A109.2012.*

### **1. Introduction**

An archaeological evaluation was carried out by ULAS for Leicestershire County Council in November 2012 on land at North Lane, Foxton, Leicestershire (SP 69954 90153, Figs 1-2). This work was undertaken to discharge a pre-commencement planning condition for a proposed bird of prey breeding and rehabilitation centre (Planning application no. 12/00915/FUL).

The development site has been identified as an area of archaeological potential based upon assessment of archaeological data held by the Leicestershire & Rutland Historic Environment Record (HER). In view of the potential impact of the development upon possible archaeological remains, in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework Section 12: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment (DCLG March 2012), the Principal Planning Archaeologist (PPA), Historic & Natural Environment Team (HNET), Leicestershire County Council, recommended archaeological investigation comprising a programme of evaluation trenching. The investigation was required to provide an adequate sample of the development area and assess the likely archaeological impact of the development proposals and was detailed in a brief (LCC 2012).

University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) were commissioned to undertake the work on behalf of the client. The fieldwork specified was intended to provide preliminary indications of character and extent of any heritage assets which might be present in order to determine the potential impact upon them from future development proposals. Fieldwork was carried out in November following the Written Scheme of Investigation (ULAS 2012) agreed with LCC and involved the machine excavation of two trial trenches within the proposed development area.

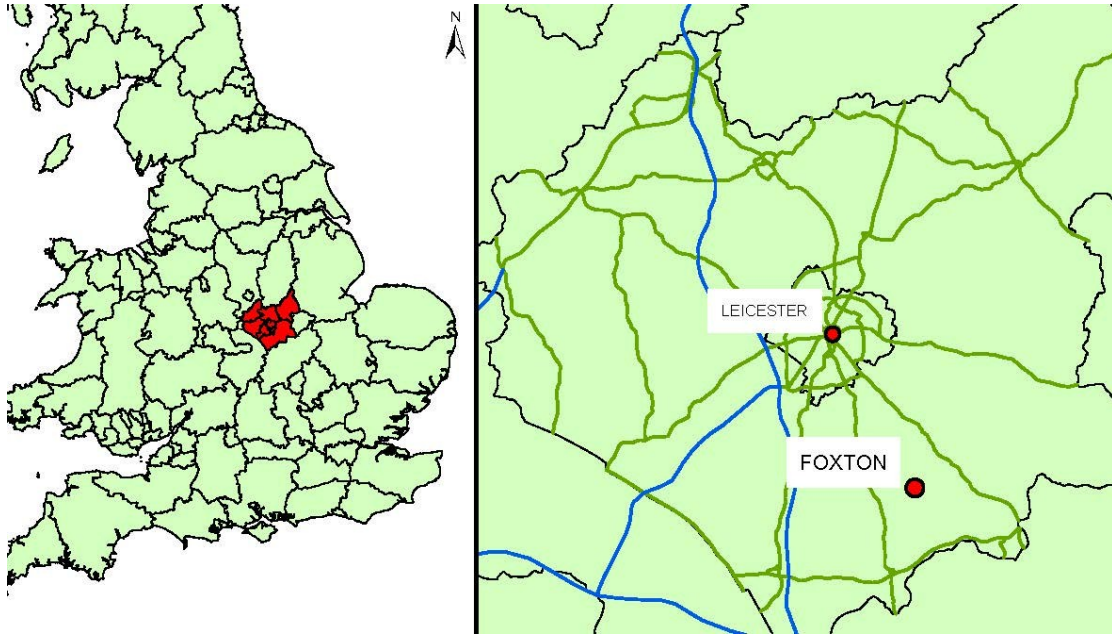


Figure 1: Site location within UK and Leicestershire

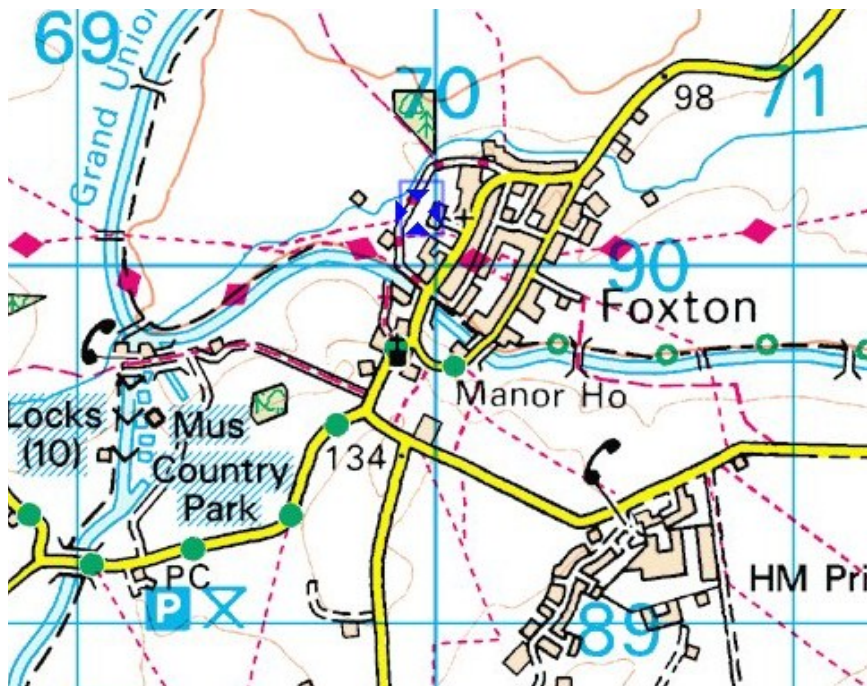


Figure 2: Site location within Foxton

*Reproduced from the Landranger 141 Kettering and Corby area 1:50000 map by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright 1996. All rights reserved. Licence number AL 100029495*

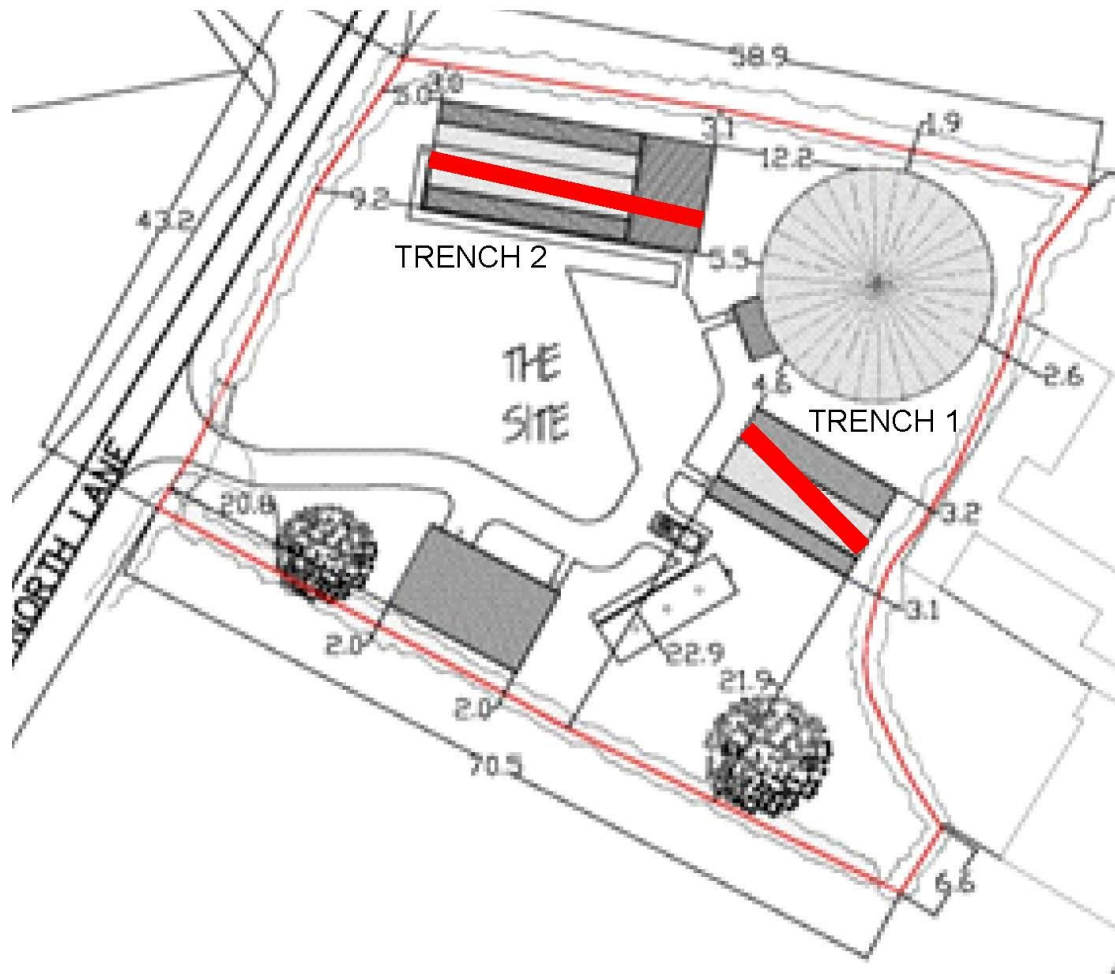


Figure 3: Trench plan (plan provided by client). North to top.

## 2. Site Description, Topography and Geology

The proposed development (SP 69954 90153; Figs 1 - 2) is located off North Lane at the rear of the Shoulder of Mutton public house, Foxton, Leicestershire. It comprises a 0.31 ha field surrounded by hedgerows. The proposal is for a bird of prey breeding and rehabilitation centre with the construction of a number of structures - hack pen, imprint pen, rehabilitation pen, storage building, and temporary accommodation (Fig. 3).

The site lies at *c.* 95m OD on flat ground. The geological mapping records Blue Lias and Mudstone formation.

## 3. Archaeological and Historical Background (from the brief)

The Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record (HER) shows that the application site is located in an area of archaeological interest. It lies within the historic core of Foxton and historic mapping suggests that this area is likely to have been undeveloped in the post-medieval period, signifying that any potential archaeological remains are likely to be medieval or earlier in date. Earthworks can be seen on aerial photographs immediately to the north and south of the development area, and features may continue into this area. The

earthworks may be indicative of medieval closes or fields but, due to their position within the historic core, may also suggest areas of settlement.

There is a significant potential for as yet unidentified heritage assets, predominantly of the medieval and post-medieval periods but possible earlier remains as well, to survive within the development area, however, the location, character and significance of these deposits is unclear at this point. There has been no previous archaeological work in the immediate vicinity.

#### **4. Aims and Objectives**

The principal aims of the archaeological evaluation were:

- To identify possible areas of archaeological potential liable to be threatened by the proposed development.
- To establish the location, extent, date, and significance of any archaeological deposits located.
- To define the quality and state of preservation of these deposits.
- To assess the local, regional and national importance of any deposits.
- To produce an archive and report of any results.

The objective was to gain an indication of the nature, extent, date and significance of any archaeological deposits which may be present in order that an informed planning decision can be taken.

#### **5. Methodology**

Two trial trenches were excavated along the north and east side where the impact was likely to be the greatest.

The area of proposed building to the south of the site was observed during groundworks to move material around the site (Fig. 3, around the grey-shaded building, middle-central). No archaeological finds or deposits were observed. This area was severely truncated by a recently-demolished shed and rodent burrows and had been badly churned up by vehicles. For this reason Trench 1 was moved further to the north-east.

Prior to any machining of trial trenches, general photographs of the site areas were taken. Topsoil and overburden was removed carefully in level spits, under continuous archaeological supervision using a mechanical excavator using a toothless bucket. Trenches were excavated down to the top of archaeological deposits or natural undisturbed ground.

All trenches were examined and recorded. Archaeological deposits were sample-excavated by hand and recorded following the WSI (ULAS 2012). The work followed the approved design specification (ULAS 2012) and adhered to the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Code of Conduct* and adhered to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations* (2008).

## 6. Results

Two trenches were excavated; both targeted proposed new buildings (Fig. 3). The topsoil, was fairly consistent across the site. It comprised a dark -brown loam, and ranged in depth from 0.12m to 0.22m in depth. Below this was a mid grey-brown silt-clay subsoil, ranging in thickness from 0.18m to 0.25m. Natural substratum was reached in both trenches, it consisted of clay, and was reached at 0.0.36-0.45m.

**Trench 1** (Fig 4) was orientated north-east to south-west, and was 13m long and contained no archaeological finds or deposits. The topsoil varied in thickness from 0.12 – 0.22m, and the subsoil 0.18 – 0.24m. The natural substrata consisted of a light-yellow clay and was reached at a depth of 0.36 – 0.45m.

**Trench 2** (Figs 5 - 6) was orientated east to west and was 22m long. The topsoil varied in thickness from 0.15 – 0.18m, and the subsoil 0.2 – 0.25m. The natural substrata consisted of a light-yellow clay and was reached at a depth of 0.37 – 0.5m. A levelling layer was noted at the west-end of the trench (1). This consisted of crushed brick and stones, mixed with the subsoil. Within this were post-medieval pottery sherds (17th or 18th century date). It is likely that this material was bought in from elsewhere to level out and drain the ground (it was a particularly wet area of the field). The trench contained no further archaeological finds or deposits.

## 7. The Pottery by Deborah Sawday

The pottery, 21 sherds, weighing 1020 grams, and a vessel rim equivalent of 0.20, (calculated by adding together the circumference of the surviving rim sherds, where one vessel equals 1.00) was catalogued with reference to the guidelines set out by the Medieval Pottery Research Group, (MPRG 1998), (MPRG, 2001) and the ULAS fabric series (Sawday 1989, Sawday 2009). The results are shown below, (Table 1)

All of the pottery occurred in context 1, a layer of probably imported hard-core (G. Speed, pers. comm.). The finds, with the possible exception of the piece of late medieval or early post medieval Cistercian/Midland Black ware and the fragment of 17th or 18th century English Tin Glazed Earthenware, form a coherent post-medieval assemblage, with several joining sherds and a relatively large average sherd weight of over 50 grams. These coarse wares are not closely dated, but may lie within a 17th or 18th century date range and were widely traded throughout the region. Possible sources include Chilvers Coton in Warwickshire, Staffordshire, and Ticknall in Derbyshire; the latter is thought to be the origin of the Slipware, fabric EA7.



Table 1: The pottery by fabric, sherd numbers and weight (grams) by context and EVE.

Context	Fabric/Ware	Nos	Grams	Comments
1	CW/MB – Cistercian/Midland Blackware	1	28	Thin walled upright vessel, possibly a jug or drinking vessel, externally glazed c.1450/75-1700..
1	EA6 - Blackware	2	160	Reduced, dark purple body, fragments of a flat base with external foot ring, internally & externally glazed, wide bodied vessel, possibly a posset pot, c.1650-1750.
1	EA6	2	190	Red bodied, flat base with external foot ring, internally glazed, upright body, possibly same pot, internally & externally glazed
1	EA1 – Earthenware 1	4	102	3 joining sherds – upright body, & base fragment, possibly a jar, slipped & glazed internally, traces of red slip externally, possibly 2 vessels, c.1500-1700+.
1	EA1/2 – Earthenware 1/2	3	156	Fine red bodied fabric, joining flat base and body, internally slipped & glazed, traces of glaze under base early in the sequence c.1500-1700+.
1	EA1/2	2	59	Upright body sherds, internally slipped & glazed, fabric as above.
1	EA1/2	2	143	Flat bases, 2 pots, brown glaze internally, traces of glaze under base.
1	EA2 – Earthenware 2	2	87	Joining sherds, wide mouthed bowl rim, slipped & glazed internally, c.1600-1750+. External rim diameter 400mm, EVE 0.10.
1	EA2	1	33	Upright body sherd slipped & glazed internally.
1	EA7 - Slipware	1	60	Press moulded dish, pie crust rim, trailed red & cream slip, firing yellow and brown under transparent lead glaze, external rim diameter 330mm, EVE 0.10, and common in Leicester (Woodland 1987, fig.39.63.) Fabric suggests a Ticknall product, (Spavold and Brown 2005, fig.21), c.1680-1750.
1	EA11 – Tin Glazed Earthenware	1	2	Decorated with under glaze blue – 17th-18th C.

## 8. Conclusion

In summary, the evaluation revealed no significant archaeological evidence. The only man-made deposit was a small area of probably imported material used to level out and drain the ground.

## 9. Archive

The site archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council, accession number X.A109.2012.

The archive contains:

- 2 trench recording sheets
- 1 photographic recording sheet
- CD containing digital photographs and report
- Unbound copy of this report
- Thumbnail print of digital photographs
- 33mm black and white contact sheet and negatives

The report will be listed on the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) held by the Archaeological Data Service at the University of York, under ID: universi1-137463. Available at: <http://oasis.ac.uk/>

ID	OASIS entry summary
Project Name	land at North Road, Foxton, Leicestershire
Summary	The evaluation revealed no significant archaeological finds or deposits.
Project Type	Evaluation
Project Manager	Vicki Score
Project Supervisor	Gavin Speed
Previous/Future work	Previous: none / Future: unknown
Current Land Use	Pasture field
Development Type	Other small-scale development
Reason for Investigation	NPPF, Section 12
Position in the Planning Process	Planning condition
Site Co ordinates	SP 69954 90153
Start/end dates of field work	12/11/2012
Archive Recipient	Leicestershire County Council
Study Area	0.31ha
Associated project reference codes	Museum accession ID: X.A109.2012 OASIS form ID: universi1-137463

## **10. Publication**

A summary of the work will be submitted for publication in the local archaeological journal *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* in due course. The report has been added to the Archaeology Data Service's (ADS) Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) database held by the University of York.

## **11. Acknowledgements**

The fieldwork was carried out by Gavin Speed. Vicki Score managed the project. Teresa Hawtin of LCC HNET monitored the work on behalf of the planning authority. We would like to thank D. Robinson for arranging access and supplying the plant.

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13/11/2012



Figure 4: View of Trench 1, looking west, 1m scale



Figure 5: View of Trench 2, looking west, 1m scale



Figure 6: View of layer (1), in Trench 2, looking NW, scale 1m by 0.5m

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