



University of Leicester

Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological Watching Brief
at The Old Rectory,
Sibson,
Leicestershire
(SK 35437 00845)**

Gerwyn Richards



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at The Old Rectory,
Sibson, Leicestershire.
(NGR SK 35437 00845)**

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Planning Application: 09/00324/FUL

For: Stoneacre Properties Ltd.

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Summary

University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) was commissioned by Stoneacre Properties Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks in advance of the construction of a new office to the east of the Old Rectory, Sheepy Road, Sibson, Leicestershire.

The proposed development area had been identified as being of archaeological potential, located within the historic settlement core of the village, adjacent to the medieval church of St. Botolph and within the grounds of the Old Rectory, which is may have 16th or 17th Century origins, as well as other sites of known archaeological significance. No evidence of archaeological deposits was encountered during the course of the watching brief.

The archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council, under the accession number X.A144. 2011.

1. Introduction

University of Leicester Archaeological Services was commissioned by Stoneacre Properties Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks for the construction of a new office within the grounds of the Old Rectory, Sheepy Road, Sibson, Leicestershire (SK 35437 00845; *Figures 1 & 2*). The proposed development area was located to the east of the house which fronts Sheep Road to the south. The groundworks consisted of ground reduction and the excavation of foundation trenches.

The Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record (HER) indicates that the proposed development area lies in an area of archaeological interest, located within the medieval and post-medieval historic settlement core of the village of Sibson (HER Ref MLE3179). Other sites of archaeological significance nearby include the medieval village earthworks to the west of the village (HER Ref MLE3169), in addition a possible Anglo Saxon cemetery has also been recorded to the east of the village (HER Ref MLE8957). More immediate to the proposed development area is the Church of Saint Botolph (HER Ref MLE12115), which is 13th century in origin. The Old Rectory itself is thought to have 16th or 17th origins and the sales particulars from 1810 list a “coach house, stables, replete with attached and detached offices” within the grounds, the exact location of which are unknown. There are also a number of historically significant buildings within the village.

Leicestershire County Council Senior Planning Archaeologist, as adviser 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 (1:50,000)

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2. Aims and Methodology

The aims of the archaeological work, through archaeological inspection and recording of groundworks by the client's contractors, were:

- 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 groundworks.
- To record any archaeological deposits to be affected by the groundworks.
- To produce an archive and report of any results

The work followed the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Code of Conduct* (2010) and *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (2008), the *Guidelines for Archaeological Work in Leicestershire and Rutland* (LMARS). The archaeological work addressed the requirements detailed in *Design Specification for archaeological work* (ULAS 12-125) and adhered to the University's Health and Safety policy.

All groundworks were carried out by a 1.5 tonne mini digger fitted with a ditching bucket and a toothed bucket under continuous archaeological supervision. The exposed substratum was observed and the spoil searched for finds. The watching brief took place on November 30th 2011.



Figure 2
Sibson village core showing proposed development area.
(1:25000).

3. Results

The proposed development area is located abutting the east facing elevation of the Old Rectory, (*Figures 3 & 4*). A 17th century wing (recorded previously Richards 2011) had been demolished prior to the site visit leaving only the floor slab. Below the modern concrete slab there was a red brick floor, the bricks dimensions, 9 inch x 2 ³/₄ inch x 4 inch suggest an early to mid 19th century date for this floor and related to the recently demolished wing. The exposed footings on three sides of the demolished wing consist of mixed granite and limestone with lime mortar and varied in depth to between 0.25m and 0.4m.

After the removal of the brick floor, the underlying stratum was cleaned using a ditching bucket. Within the south westernmost corner of the building an L shaped footing was exposed abutting the southern and western most walls, within the alcove (*Figure 4*); hand cleaning revealed the footing to be granite and limestone, with lime mortar, identical to the building footings. The size and location of these footings

suggest they are the remains of a bread oven located to the south of the surviving chimney breast. No dating evidence was recovered from in, or under the bread oven, but is likely to be contemporary with the demolished building.

The remainder of the exposed surface below the floor consisted of discoloured and weathered mudstone bedrock, to approximately 0.2m below the existing ground level, some of which was clearly re-deposited.

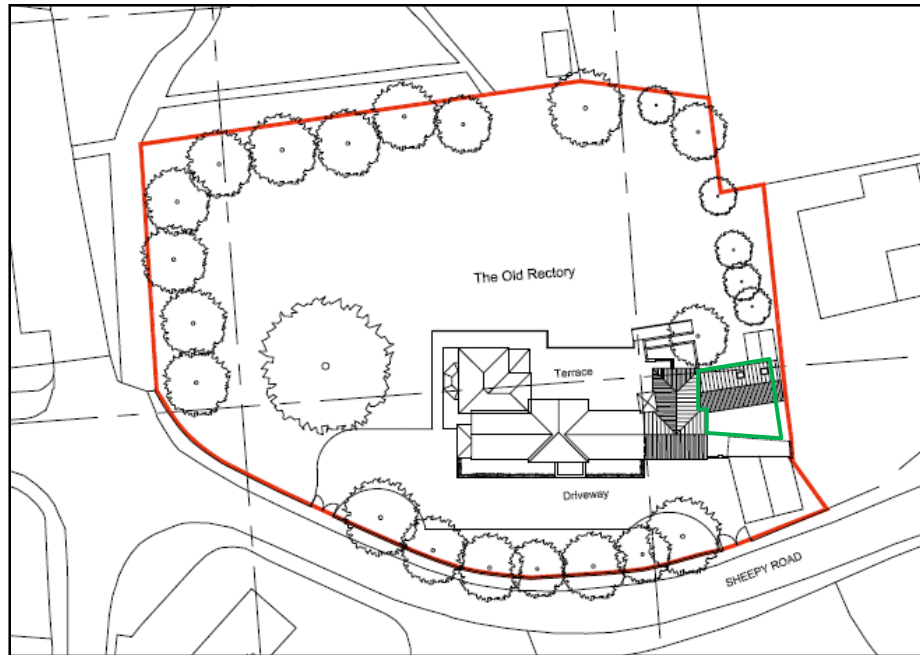


Figure 3

Outline plan of proposed development area (in red), area of watching brief, in green.

A number of complete Swithland slates, including a small tear drop type slate were recovered from this layer. The different sizes, ranging from 90mm by 180mm to 220mm by 280mm indicates that the building from which these slates came was roofed in slate laid in diminishing courses, a style common to local Charnwood slate. It is likely that these slates came from one of the buildings within the grounds of the Old Rectory. A single fragment of clay pipe stem was also recovered, which included a fragmentary stem border. The border appears to be a Midlands style stem border which has been dated from between c. 1760-90.

A further 0.4m of undisturbed bedrock was excavated to formation level and no further archaeologically significant artefacts or deposits were recorded.

4. Conclusion

The proposed development area occupied a promising location within a rich archaeological landscape within the medieval village of Sibson and within the grounds of the Old Rectory, a building of known historical significance. No evidence of archaeological deposits was encountered during the course of this watching brief. A number of local Charnwood slates were recovered from below the floor surface, such slates were in common use prior to the 19th century and are likely to relate to one of the earlier phases of the Rectory buildings.

5. Archive & Publication

The site archive consists of:

2 A2 permagraph sheet containing plans & site notes
DVD containing 68 digital images
3 A4 contact sheets
68 Black & White negatives and contact prints
3 A4 photo record sheets
1 A4 watching brief sheet
7 A3 paper drawings showing existing plans, elevations & proposed plans, elevations
1 Box of finds
Unbound copy of this report (ULAS Report Number 2011-193)
An Archaeological Standing Building Survey of the Of Rooms and an Outbuilding at
The Old Rectory, Sheepy Road, Sibson, Leicestershire, NGR SK 35437 00845.
ULAS Report 2011-167).

The archive will be held at Leicestershire County Council Museums under the
Accession Number X.A144.2011.

A version of the summary (above) will be submitted to the editor of the local journal
Transactions of Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society for inclusion in
the next edition.

6. References

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Figure 4 Exposed strata below floor slab.

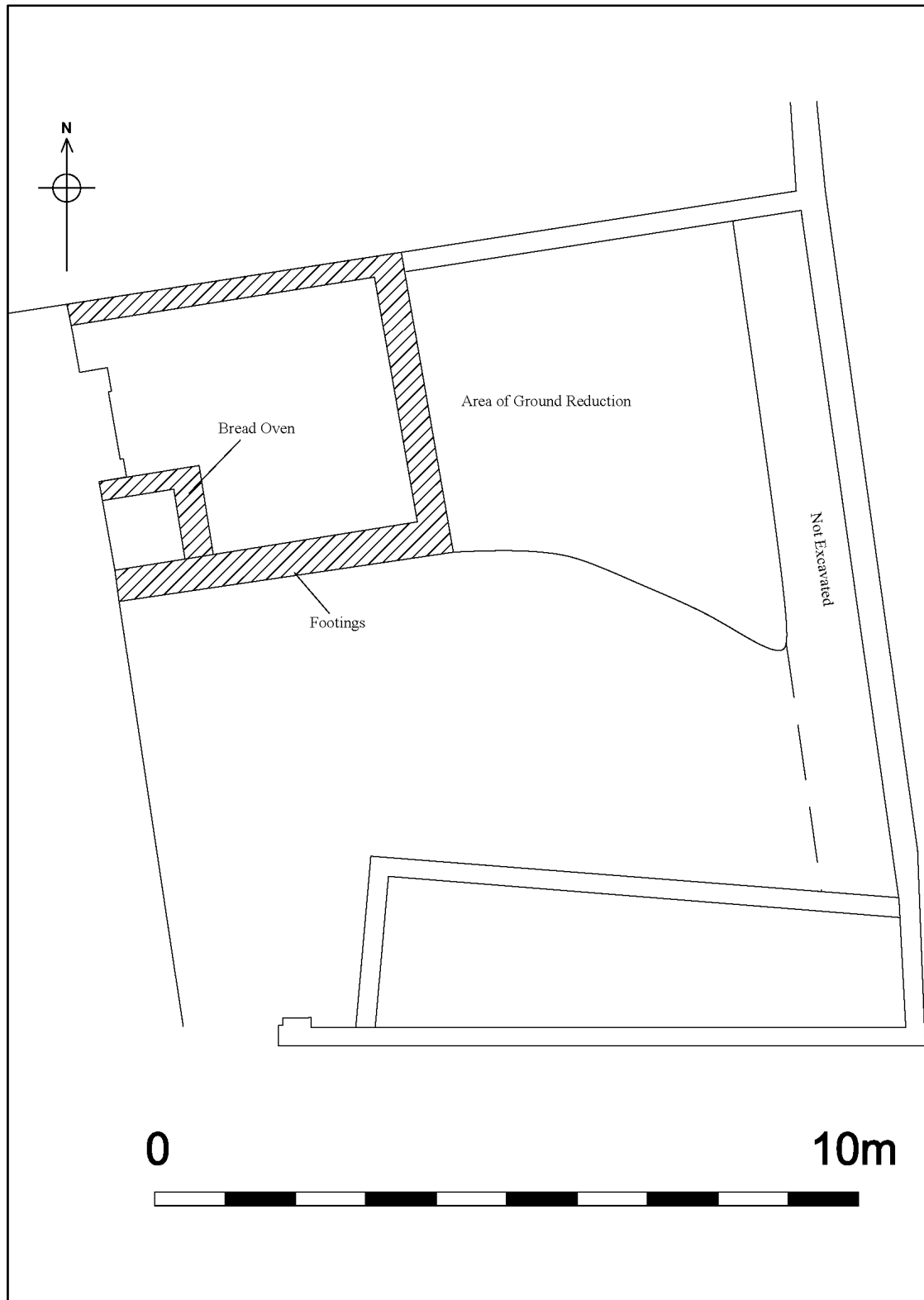


Figure 5
Area of archaeological watching brief, showing remaining footings and bread oven.

Appendix: Oasis Record

INFORMATION REQUIRED	EXAMPLE
Project Name	The Old Rectory
Project Type	Watching Brief
Project Manager	Richard Buckley
Project Supervisor	Gerwyn Richards
Previous/Future work	Previous: Building Recording. Future: None
Current Land Use	Garden
Development Type	Residential
Reason for Investigation	PPS5
Position in the Planning Process	As a condition
Site Co ordinates	SK 35437 00845
Start/end dates of field work	Nov 2011
Archive Recipient	LMARS
Height min/max	Not Known
Study Area	N/A
Finds	Yes

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