



University of
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Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological Evaluation
On Land south of Coventry Road,
Hinckley, Leicestershire
NGR: SP 404 930**

Roger Kipling




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**An Archaeological Evaluation
On Land south of Coventry Road,
Hinckley, Leicestershire
NGR: SP 404 930**

Roger Kipling

For: Paynes Garages Ltd.

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An Archaeological Evaluation on Land to the south of Coventry Road, Hinckley, Leicestershire

[NGR: SP 404 930]

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Summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken in April 2012 by University of Leicester Archaeological Services on behalf of Paynes Garages Limited. The fieldwork was a pre-determination requirement on a proposed planning application for residential development with associated landscaping and access road on land south of Coventry Road, Hinckley, Leicestershire, in order that the potential impact of the development on such remains may be assessed by the Planning Authority and an appropriate mitigation strategy put in place.

The archaeological evaluation at Coventry Road, Hinckley, revealed minimal evidence of possible late prehistoric activity, consisting of a possible shallow linear feature and a single Iron Age pottery sherd, despite the close proximity of the site to a known Iron Age settlement. It is therefore likely that the present site lies on the peripheries of the known site a short distance to the south.

The site archive will be deposited with the Leicestershire County Council under the accession number X.A47.2012.

Introduction

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken on land to the south of Coventry Road, Hinckley, Leicestershire. The Historic Environment Record (HER) shows that the site lies within an area of known archaeology. An Archaeological desk-based Assessment carried out by ULAS indicated that the site lies adjacent to an area of significant prehistoric and Roman activity (HER Ref. Nos. **MLE8919** & **MLE8920**) and there are several known archaeological sites in the close vicinity (Hunt 2012). A programme of archaeological work including geophysical survey, and an evaluation was carried out by ULAS in 1999 (Thomas 1999) at a site immediately to the south of the assessment area. This was followed by an excavation by Northamptonshire Archaeology in 2001 and a watching brief in 2003/2004, which revealed an Iron Age settlement site consisting of an enclosure containing three roundhouses and an unenclosed area with a further four houses (Figure 3; **MLE8919**; Chapman 2004; Leigh & Stacey 2004).

In view of the potential impact of the development upon archaeological remains, in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework Section 12: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment (DCLG March 2012), and following recommendations by the Leicestershire County Council (LCC) Senior Planning Archaeologist, the planning authority required that evaluation by trial trenching be

undertaken. The fieldwork specified was intended to provide further indications of character and extent of any buried archaeological remains in order that the potential impact of the development on such remains might be assessed. Fieldwork was carried out in April 2012 and involved the machine excavation of seven trial trenches in order to assess the archaeological potential of the development area.

The archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework Section 12: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment (DCLG March 2012). All archaeological work was in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) Code of Conduct (2010) and adhered to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (2008). The LCC *Guidelines and Procedures for Archaeological work Leicestershire and Rutland* (1997) was also adhered to.



Figure 1: Site prior to excavation; view looking east

Site Description, Topography and Geology

The site is located at Hinckley, to the rear (south) of housing along Coventry Road and to the north of housing at Paddock Way and Merry Hurst Place at the very western edge of Hinckley, Leicestershire. The site is centred on National Grid Reference SP 404 930 and consists of a rectangular parcel of land, orientated east to west, measuring *c.*0.589 hectares and lying on flat ground at around 94m OD. The British Geological Survey website indicates that the geology of the site is likely to comprise Mercian mudstone Group clays possibly overlain by Wolston Clay (clay and silt). The site is currently waste ground of rough grass and mature trees.



Figure 2: Site Location (Scale 1:50 000)

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Archaeological and Historical Background

An earlier archaeological desk-based assessment and geophysical survey of the area (Hunt 2011) indicated that the application area lies within an area of some archaeological significance, as listed on the Historic Environment Record (HER). This shows that there are visible cropmarks within the field itself (HER refs: **MLE16568** & **MLE16569**) which are most likely prehistoric or possibly Roman in date. One appears to be a double ditch.

The Historic Environment Record (HER) shows that the site lies within an area of known archaeology. An Archaeological desk-based Assessment carried out by ULAS indicated that the site lies adjacent to an area of significant prehistoric and Roman activity (HER Ref. Nos. **MLE8919** & **MLE8920**) and there are several known archaeological sites in the close vicinity (Hunt 2012). A programme of archaeological work including geophysical survey, and an evaluation was carried out by ULAS in 1999 (Thomas 1999) at a site immediately to the south of the assessment area. This was followed by an excavation by Northamptonshire Archaeology in 2001 and a watching brief in 2003/2004, which revealed an Iron Age settlement site consisting of an enclosure containing three roundhouses and an unenclosed area with a further four houses (Figure 3). Various finds were recovered including 217 sherds of Iron Age pottery (**MLE8919**; Chapman 2004; Leigh & Stacey 2004).

Aims and Methods

The aims of the archaeological evaluation were to:

1. Identify the presence/absence of any earlier building phases or archaeological deposits.
2. Establish the character, extent and date range for any archaeological deposits to be affected by proposed ground-works.
3. Record any archaeological deposits to affected by the ground-works.
4. 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 on the site in order to determine the potential impact upon them from the development. All work was recorded in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*, the standard policy and practice of ULAS. The University of Leicester's Health and Safety policy was adhered to.

The Written Scheme of Investigation (ULAS 2012) approved by the LCC Senior Planning Archaeologist, on behalf of the planning authority, recommended a programme of archaeological evaluation consisting of c. 256 sq m. of trenching, the equivalent of five 20m x 1.6m trenches and two 30m by 1.6m trenches. In the event, the use of a slightly larger machine bucket resulted in the opening of five trenches each measuring 1.8m, rather than 1.6m, in width, resulting in a total of 288 sq m. of trenching.

Excavation was undertaken using a JCB mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.8m wide toothless ditching bucket, with topsoil and overburden removed carefully in level spits, under continuous archaeological supervision.

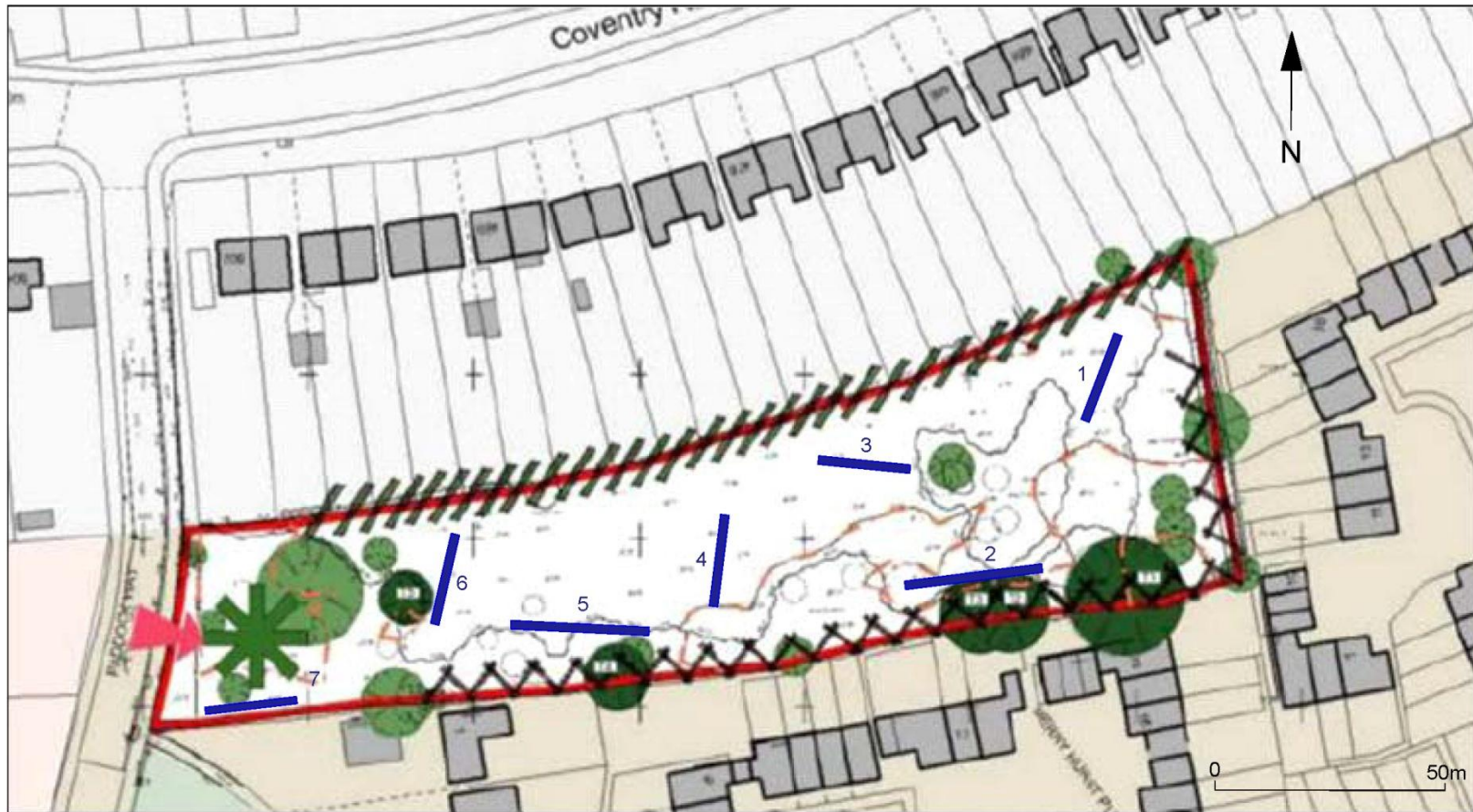


Figure 3: Site location plan with trench locations (in blue)

Results

Trenches 1 & 3-7

Trench 2 and 5 measured 1.8m wide and 30m in length, whilst Trenches 1 and 3, 4, 6 and 7 were slightly shorter at 20m in length. All were positioned as set out in the design specification document, with the exception of Trench 7, which was repositioned due to tree cover. Depths of trench varied between 0.30m and 0.70m. All revealed mottled orange/yellow natural clay beneath a thin 0.25m-0.30m deep spread of pale brown sandy loam topsoil and an underlying 0.20m-0.30m spread of mottled yellow-grey clay silt subsoil.

The subsoil in Trench 3 produced a single sherd of Middle Iron Age pottery (see Appendix 1).

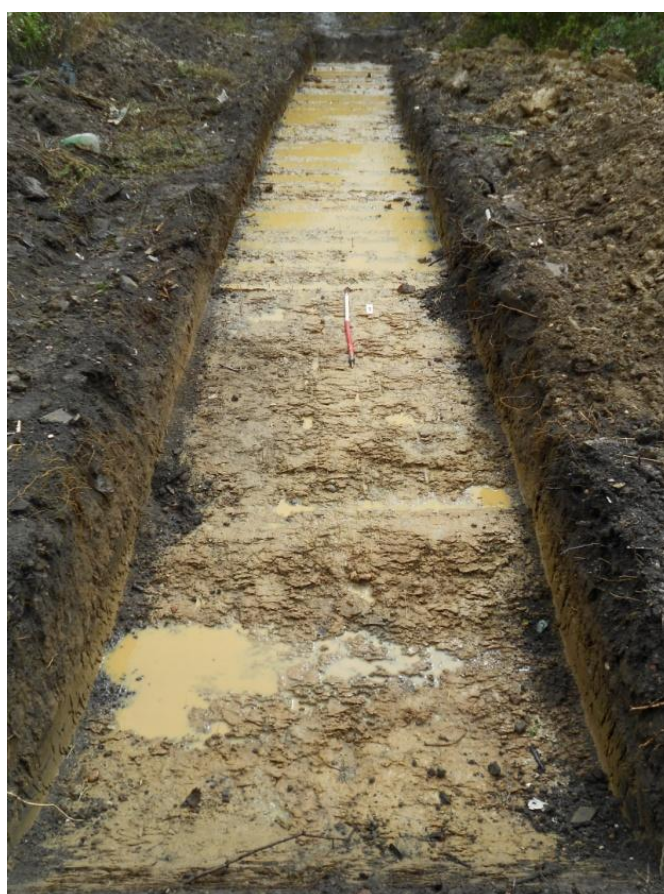


Figure 4: Trench 1; view northeast; 1m scale

Trench 2 produced the only indication of an archaeological feature in the form of a possible gully feature, [01], cutting the natural clay. The very shallow and likely heavily truncated feature measured *c.*0.08m wide and 0.05m deep and traversed the east end of the trench on a north-south alignment. Due to its ephemeral nature it was unclear as to whether this represented an archaeological feature or rather a remnant of subsoil. The feature produced no finds.



Figure 5: Trench 7; view west; scale 1m

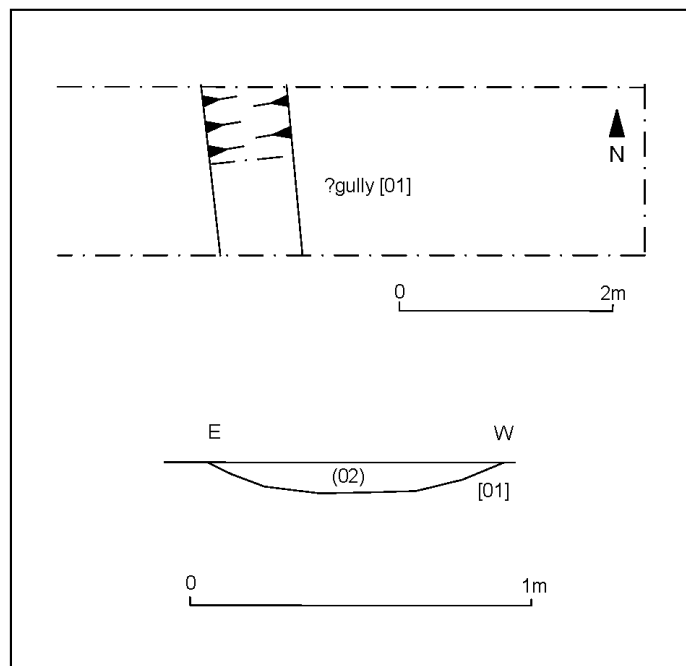


Figure 6: Trench 2: possible gully [01] plan & section



Figure 7: Trench 2; possible linear feature [01]; view south; scale 1m



Figure 8: Machining in progress; view looking south-east

Conclusions

The archaeological evaluation at Coventry Road, Hinckley, revealed minimal evidence of possible late prehistoric activity, despite the close proximity of the site to a known Iron Age settlement. It is therefore likely that the present site lies on the peripheries of the known site a short distance to the south.

Archive and Publications

The site archive (X.A47.2012), consisting of a single pottery sherd, paper and photographic records, will be deposited with Leicestershire County Council.

The archive consists of:

- 7 trench recording sheets
- 2 single context record sheets
- Context, drawing and photographic record indices
- 14 digital photographs
- 7 x monochrome (film) photographs
- A risk assessment form
- 1 pottery sherd

Publication

A version of the excavation summary (see above) will appear in due course in the *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society*.

Acknowledgements

Jon Coward and Roger Kipling of ULAS undertook the archaeological evaluation on behalf of Paynes Garages Limited. The project was managed by Dr. Patrick Clay.

Bibliography

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

Hunt, L., 2012 *An archaeological desk-based assessment for land at Paddock Way, Hinckley, Leicestershire (SP 404 930)*. ULAS Report 2012-028.

IfA, 2008 *Codes of Conduct and Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation*.

Leigh, David & Stacey, David. 2004. *An archaeological watching brief on land at Coventry Road, Hinckley, Leicestershire*

Thomas, J. 1999. *An Archaeological evaluation of land off Coventry Road, Hinckley, Leicestershire (ULAS Report No. 1999-115)*

Oasis Information

Project Name	Coventry Road, Hinckley
Project Type	Archaeological evaluation
Project Manager	Patrick Clay
Project Supervisor	Roger Kipling
Previous/Future work	Development subject to planning permission
Current Land Use	Waste ground
Development Type	Residential
Reason for Investigation	PPS5
Position in the Planning Process	Pre-application
Site Co ordinates	NGR SP 404 930
Start/end dates of field work	April 2012
Archive Recipient	Leicestershire County Council
Study Area	c.0.589 ha.

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Appendix 1: Roman Pottery

Nicholas J. Cooper

A single sherd of Iron Age pottery (6g) was recovered from the subsoil in Trench 3. It is handmade, manufactured in a reduced dark grey fabric with angular rock inclusions which appear to be quartzite, comprising tight clusters of quartz crystals with no biotite mica apparent. Although the inclusions are not granodiorite (granite) they are likely to have a volcanic origin and derive from the Charnwood District to the north and the fabric is best placed within the R1 category according to the Leicestershire Prehistoric Pottery Fabric Series (Marsden 2011, 62). The external surface is smooth and with no scored decoration and so the dating may be more likely to be Middle Iron Age than later.

Reference

Marsden, P., 2011 The Prehistoric pottery and briquetage in J. Thomas, *Two Iron Age Aggregated Settlements in the Environs of Leicester: Excavations at Beaumont Leys and Humberstone*, Leicester Archaeology Monograph 19, 61-80. Leicester: University of Leicester, School of Archaeology and Ancient History.

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