

**An Archaeological Watching Brief
During Groundworks At Main Street,
Asfordby, Leicestershire
(NGR SK 710 191)**

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Summary

University of Leicester Archaeological Services undertook a watching brief during topsoil stripping prior to the construction of new dwellings at Main Street, Asfordby, Leicestershire (NGR SK 710 191). No archaeological deposits were identified during the work. The archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council, Museums Service, under the Accession number X.A21 2005.

Introduction

This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out during groundworks for new dwellings at Main Street, Asfordby, Leicestershire (NGR SK 710 191) (figures 1 & 2). Melton Borough Council granted planning permission subject to archaeological conditions. An archaeological desk-based assessment for the development site indicated that the site is located just outside the medieval village core and therefore the potential for the occurrence of medieval deposits is low however the potential for prehistoric remains is unknown (Meek 2003).

The Ordnance Survey Geological Survey of Great Britain Sheet 142 (Melton Mowbray) indicates that the underlying geology consists of Boulder Clay. The site lies at a height of c. 70m OD.

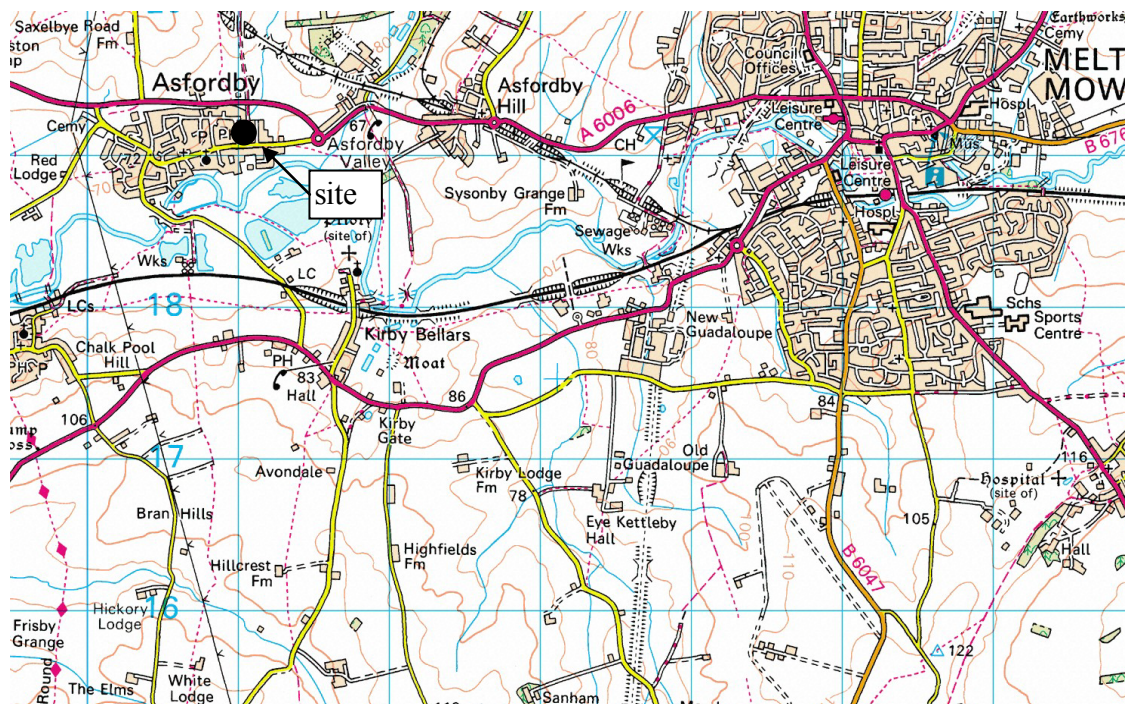


Figure 1: Location Map Scale 1:50000 © Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Licence Number: AL100021186

Aims and Methods

The aim of the archaeological work was to observe the groundworks and to record, as appropriate, any archaeological deposits or features encountered. The work followed the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*. The work follows the desk-based assessment, previously prepared by ULAS (Meek 2003).

The site was visited on the 2nd and 3rd February 2005 when the programme of work consisted of topsoil stripping, using a 360° mechanical digger with a ditching bucket.

Results

There was a general slope from the east to the west, down into the ditch that defined the western boundary. The ground surface was stripped to a depth of approximately 0.4 - 0.5m. This process removed most of the topsoil but did not fully expose the subsoil in the southern part of the area, which made it difficult to check for archaeological features. The land had previously been used as allotments and there was a lot of overgrown vegetation on the ground. The eastern side of the area was particularly disturbed by fresh root growth. Topsoil was generally very dark brown, with a high organic content and a heavy, silty clay texture. It was approximately 0.4m deep. A large quantity of modern artefacts were observed in the topsoil, including sherds of glass and pottery, slate, brick, charcoal/coal fragments and organic material. There was a dog skeleton just beneath the topsoil at the west of the site (close to the ditch) and another animal, probably a cat, was buried in the centre of the site. Small brick and slate fragments incorporated into the fill of these features suggested that they were modern and they have been interpreted as the remains of pets, buried during the period that the ground was used as allotments. The subsoil consisted of light yellow brown clay with sandy patches.

The ditch was excavated during the second visit. This was found to be quite shallow and a section was excavated through 0.4m of topsoil and a brown clayey interface (0.3m thick) into natural yellow/blue clay.

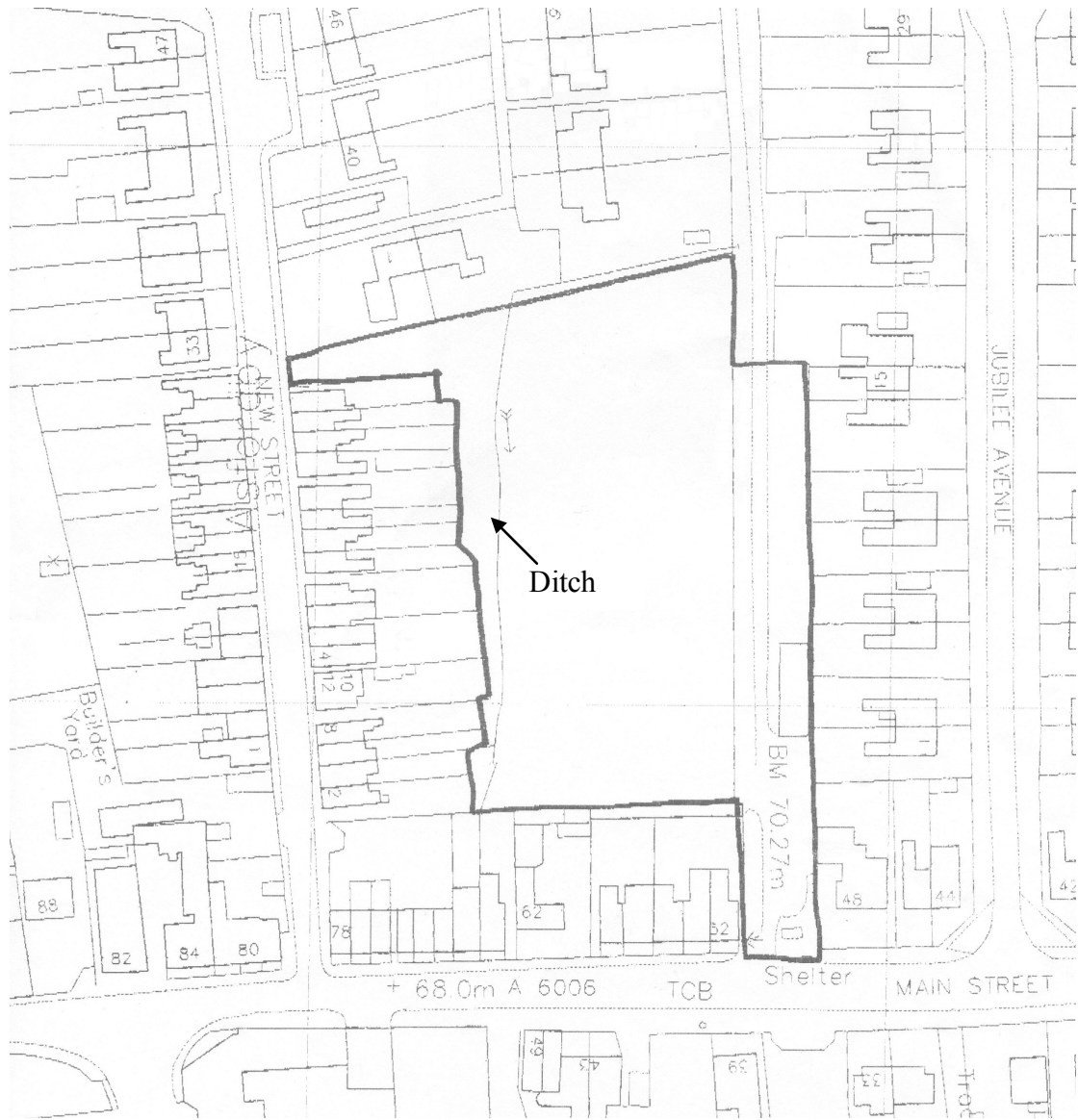


Figure 2: Plan of the site area. Plan supplied by client. Not to scale.



Figure 3: Plan of development (Anthony Rickett Architects). Not to scale.

Conclusion

No archaeological deposits were identified during this work. However, this has helped to confirm the extent of the medieval village core.

Archive

The archive consists of site notes, digital photographs and will be held by Leicestershire County Council. Leicestershire County Council Museums Services will hold the archive, under the Accession number X. A21 2005.

References

Meek, J., 2003 *An Archaeological Desk-based Assessment for Proposed Housing at Main Street, Asfordby, Leicestershire*. Unpublished ULAS Report 2003/172

Acknowledgements

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