

**An Archaeological Watching Brief
During Groundworks At Mill Farm,
Thurcaston, Leicestershire
(NGR SK 568 112)**

Jennifer Browning

For Peter Watson

Planning Application Ref: P/04/2106/2

Checked by Project Manager

Signed:**Date:**

Name:

**An Archaeological Watching Brief On Land at Thurcaston, Leicestershire NGR
SK 568 112**

Summary 3

Introduction..... 3

Aims and Methods 4

Results..... 4

Conclusion 5

Archive..... 5

Acknowledgements..... 5

Illustrations

Figure 1: Location Map. Scale 1:50 000.

Figure 2: Site location plan.

Figure 3: Trench location plan.

An Archaeological Watching Brief at Land at Mill Farm, Thurcaston, Leicestershire (NGR SK 568 112)

Summary

University of Leicester Archaeological Services undertook a watching brief during the excavation of foundation trenches for an extension in the medieval core of Thurcaston, Leicestershire (NGR SK 568 112). There were no archaeological finds and the only evidence of previous activity was an area of cobbles located close to the western site boundary. These are thought to be post-medieval or modern in date. The archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council Museums under the Accession number X.A30 2005.

Introduction

This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out during groundworks for garage and extension to an existing dwelling on land at Mill Farm, Mill Lane, Thurcaston, Leicestershire (NGR SK 568 112 (figures 1 & 2) in Charnwood District. Planning permission was granted subject to archaeological conditions (P/04/2106/2). The work follows the *Brief for an Archaeological Watching Brief on land at Thurcaston, Leicestershire (22.12.04)* (hereinafter 'the Brief') set by the Senior Planning Archaeologist, Leicestershire County Council Historic and Natural Environment Team. This document requested the presence of an archaeologist during the groundworks because the site is located within the medieval settlement core of Thurcaston.

The British Geological Survey map 1:50 000 Series, Sheet 156, indicates that the underlying geology consists of Mercia mudstone.

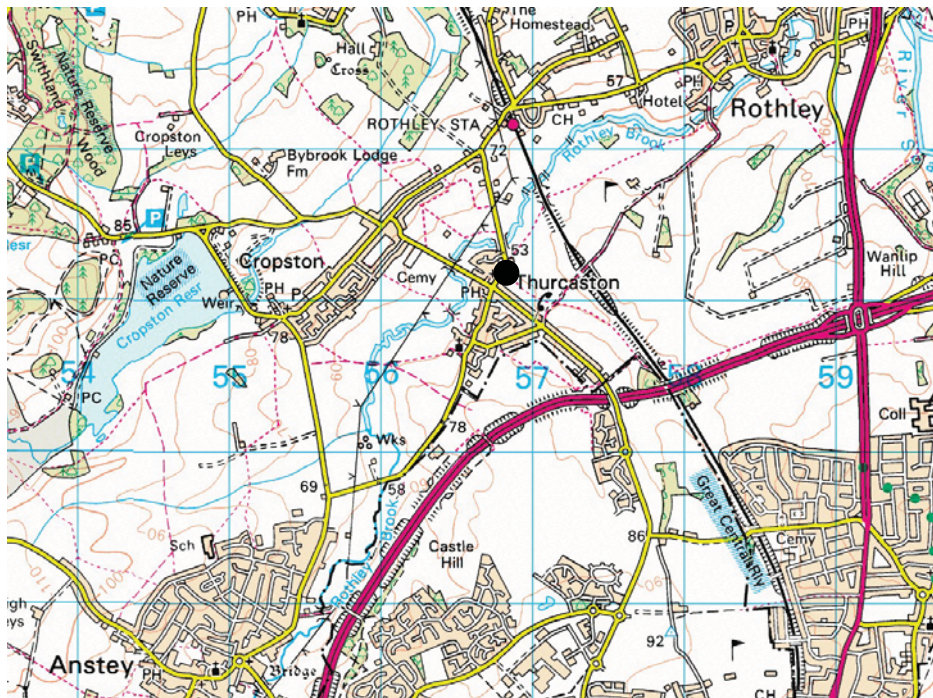


Figure 1: Location Map Scale 1:50000 © Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Licence Number: AL100021186

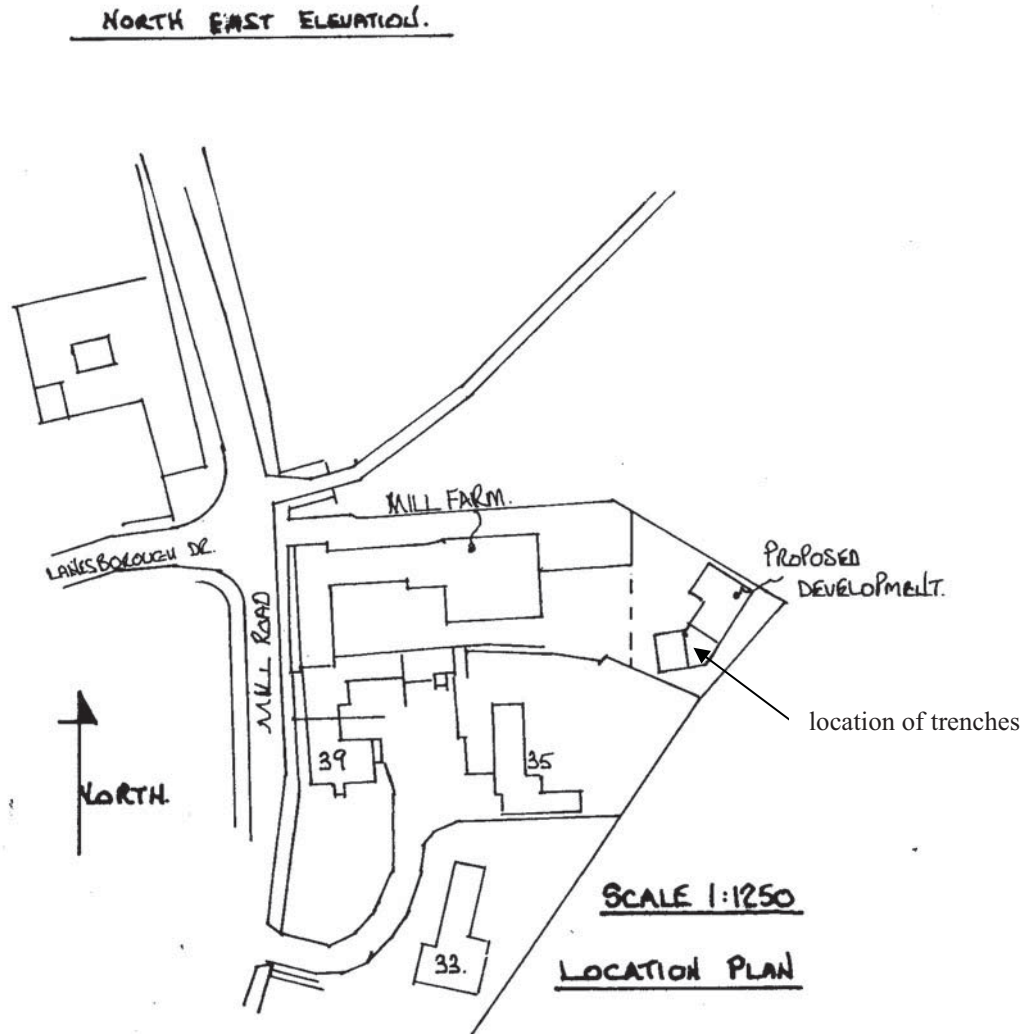


Figure 2: Site location plan. (Supplied by client).

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 *Design Specification (ULAS)* and the *Brief*.

The site was visited on the 22nd February 2005 when the programme of work consisted of the excavation of foundation trenches for an extension, using a Bobcat 320 with a toothed bucket.

Results

The work took place on land to the rear of Mill Farm Retirement Home. Foundation trenches were excavated on land that appeared to have formerly been garden. No topsoil was visible on the surface at the time of the visit; the turf and pathways had been removed and the area covered in building sand. However, topsoil had not been

completely stripped and was clearly visible in the trenches. A trench location plan is shown on figure 3 and the letters A-E in the following text refer to particular stretches of trench. The trenches were 0.7m wide with the exception of E, which measured 0.4m.

Topsoil was generally fairly thin (*c.* 0.20-0.30m thick) and consisted of dark brown clay loam with lots of organic matter. Subsoil was composed of light reddish brown sandy clay with occasional small stones, lying above a natural subsoil of smooth reddish brown clay. A dump of intrusive modern debris was encountered in the corner of trench B and trench C. A large irregular granite fragment was unearthed from the subsoil in trench E. Rounded granite fragments (*c.* 0.20m in length) were observed in the topsoil along the length of trench C and were also visible in D. These may have formed a rough yard surface. The remains of a buried topsoil were also observed in D, directly beneath the present topsoil. It was noted that the subsoil was slightly thicker in the central and western part of the area and was virtually non-existent in trench B. This may be a natural variation or suggest that landscaping was carried out to even up the ground surface prior to the construction of the existing dwelling. Natural subsoil occurred at depths of between 0.60 and 0.90m below ground level.

Conclusion

Differing depths of strata were observed across the area but no archaeological deposits were identified. There were no finds; the soil was surprisingly devoid of pottery, brick and other artefacts. On the western part of the site, cobbles were observed at the interface between topsoil and subsoil. These are probably the remains of a yard surface, which, although undated, is likely to be post medieval or modern. They appeared to be granite fragments rather than river cobbles, perhaps acknowledging the proximity to Charnwood.

Archive

The archive consists of site notes and digital photographs and will be held by Leicestershire County Council Museums under the Accession number X. A30 2005.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Peter Watson and everyone on site for their help and co-operation during this watching brief. Richard Buckley managed the project.

Jennifer Browning
ULAS Report: 2005-022

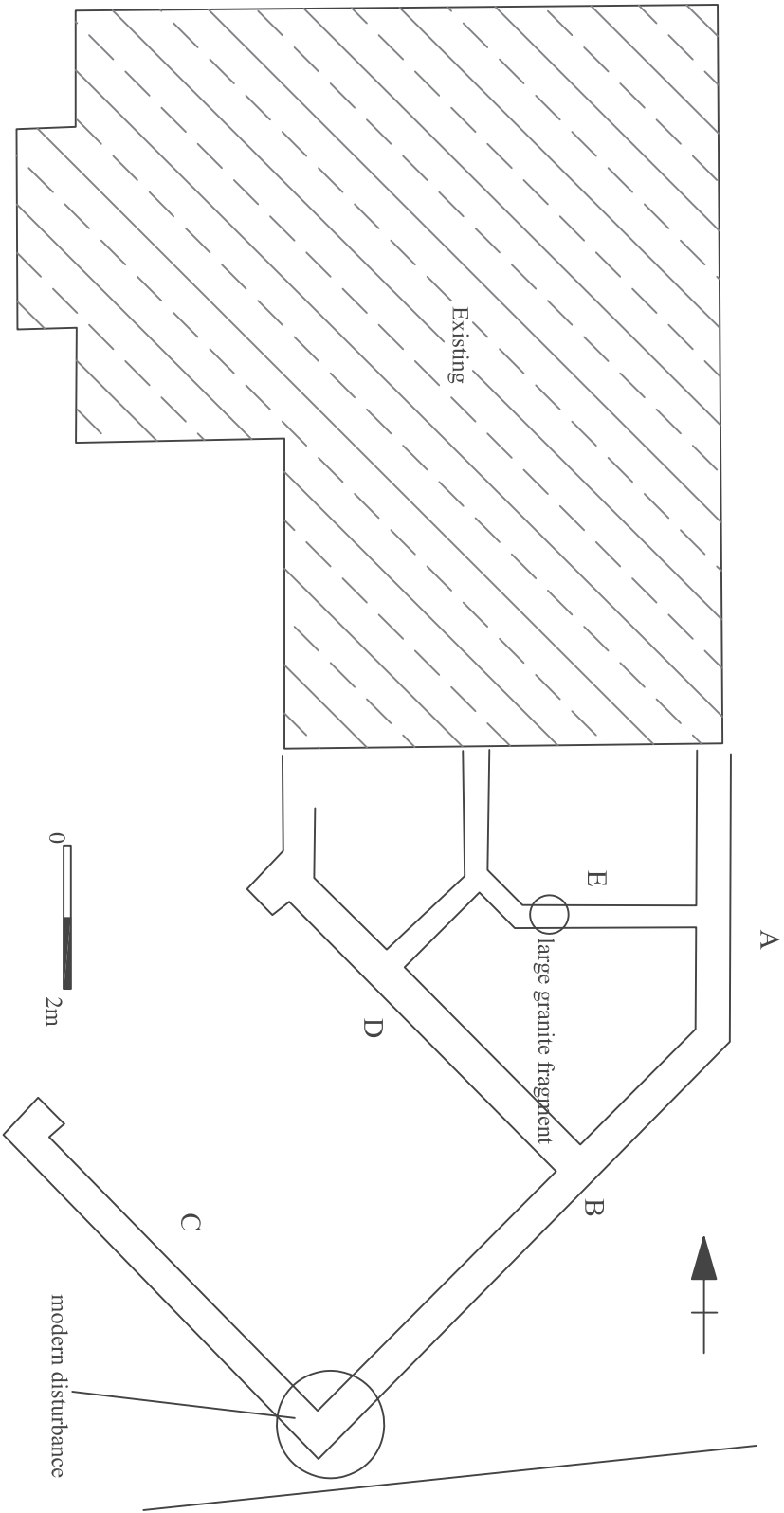


Figure 3: Trench location plan. (Based on plan supplied by client).