



University of **Leicester**

Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological Watching Brief at
12 Church Street Blaby
Leicestershire
NGR: SP 5712 9788**

Roger Kipling and Jennifer Browning



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For: Mr. & Mrs. F. Berry

Approved by:

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Date: 16 January 2013

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[NGR: SP 5712 9788]

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Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken in October 2012 by University of Leicester Archaeological Services on behalf of Mr. & Mrs. F. Berry. The fieldwork was a post-determination requirement on a planning application for a residential development at 12 Church Street, Blaby, Leicestershire, as required by the Planning Authority.

The work did not reveal any archaeological deposits or features. The site archive will be deposited with the Leicestershire County Council under the Accession Number X.A94.2012.

Introduction

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at 12 Church Street, Blaby, Leicestershire (NGR SP 5712 9788). The application site lies within an area of archaeological interest within the historic village core of medieval Blaby (**MLE9336**), east of the late 13th/early 14th century church of All Saints (**MLE12236**). The immediate area includes a number of historic and listed buildings.

In view of the potential impact of the development upon archaeological remains, in accordance with NPPF (Section 12 Enhancing and Conserving the Historic Environment), and following recommendations by the Leicestershire County Council Planning Archaeologist, the planning authority required that archaeological attendance and monitoring of groundworks be undertaken in order that, if any archaeological deposits are seen to be present, the archaeologist will record areas of archaeological interest.

Fieldwork was carried out in October 2012 and involved the monitoring of groundworks associated with construction of a new residential dwelling.

The archaeological watching brief was undertaken in accordance with NPPF (Section 12 Enhancing and Conserving the Historic Environment). All archaeological work was in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (Buckley 2012) and adhered to the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Code of Conduct* (rev. 2010) and adhered to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (rev. 2008).

Site Description, Topography and Geology

The proposed development (SP 5712 9788; centre) is located in the southeast area of the historic village core of medieval Blaby, where a single residential property is being constructed on the site of a recently-demolished bungalow.

The underlying geology of the area is shown by the British Geological Survey of Great Britain to likely be on the boundary between superficial geology of the Wigston Member (WIGS) and Syston Member (SYSG). The site is flanked to the south by a derelict farm and open pasture and to the west by the former rectory of All Saints church.

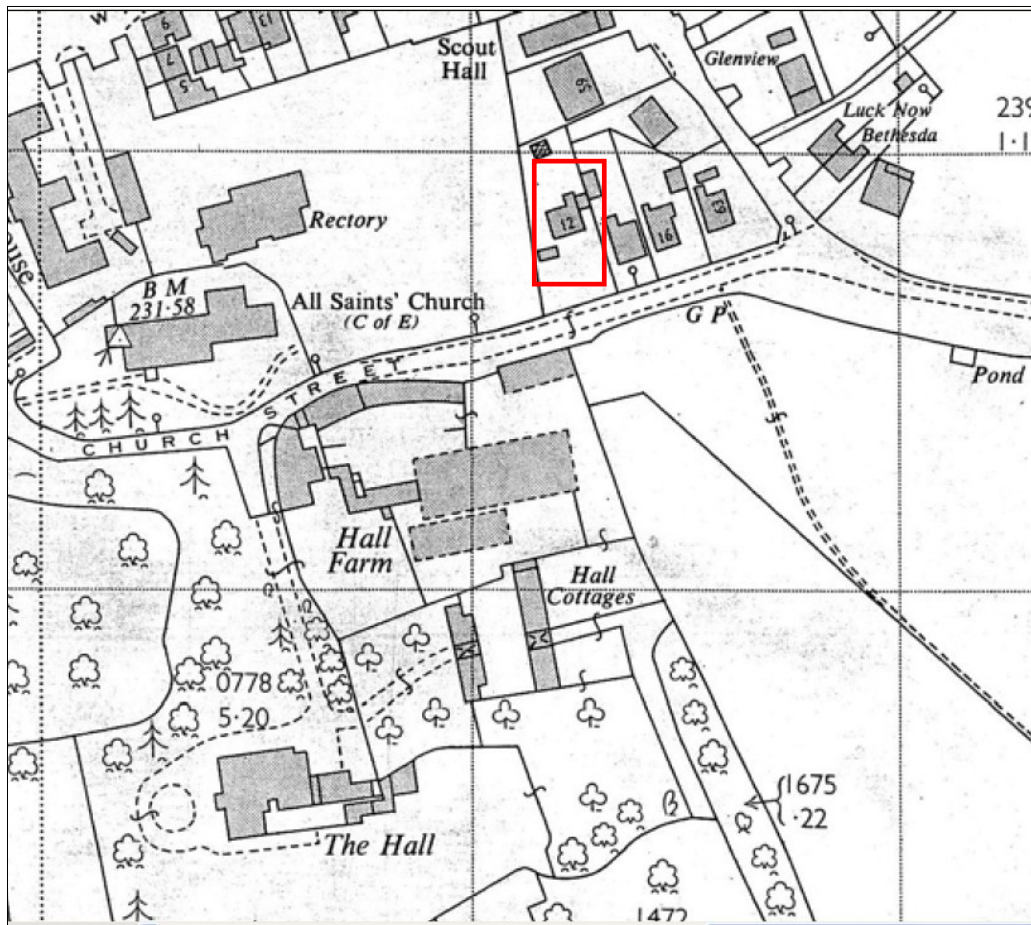


Figure 1: Site Location 1966 OS map SP5697-5797. Scale 1:2500

Archaeological and Historical Background

The Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record (HER) shows that the application site lies within an area of archaeological interest within the historic village core of medieval Blaby (**MLE9336**), east of the late 13th/early 14th century church of All Saints (**MLE12236**). The immediate area includes a number of historic and listed buildings.

There has been very little previous archaeological investigation carried out within Blaby and none has been undertaken within the development area. An archaeological watching brief carried out in 1998, at 63 Wigston Road yielded a small assemblage of late Neolithic/early Bronze Age flint tools (**MLE16145**). Isolated finds have been made in the vicinity and the HER holds records of a medieval bone cross (**MLE6613**), found near the Old Rectory, and of a late Roman coin (**MLE7677**), found adjacent to 2 Wigston Road. To the west, Lutterworth Road has been identified as the route of a Roman road (**MLE1902**), running south from Ratae Corieltavorum (Leicester) to the small town of Tripontium, located south of Lutterworth.

As it was deemed likely that the proposed development would have a damaging effect on any archaeological deposits, if present, within the application area, an archaeological watching brief was required by the planning authority following an approved written scheme of investigation (ULAS 2012). Consequently an archaeological watching brief was undertaken by ULAS in October 2012.

Aims and Methods

The aims of the archaeological work 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 affected by the ground-works.
4. Produce an archive and report of any results.

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 project involved a watching brief undertaken by an experienced professional archaeologist during groundworks, involving machine removal of garden soil by a mechanical excavator using a toothless bucket for stripping in level spits and a narrow bucket for excavating foundation trenches.

Results

The site was visited on two occasions in October 2012. The monitored removal of 0.30m-0.50m of garden soil over the general area of the new building footprint and during construction of the development access road provided an opportunity to establish whether archaeology was present adjacent to the Church Street frontage and along the western site boundary.

Groundworks revealed a fine mid orange-brown sandy clay subsoil, machine removal of a small sample of which, which varied in depth between 0.20m and 0.30m, revealed the underlying natural dull orange sandy gravel. There were, however, no indications of archaeological finds or features. Modern disturbance from the demolished building on the site included brick rubble and disconnected service pipes and cables.

A further visit was made to examine a sample of the foundation trenches for traces of any buried archaeological remains. Trench 1 was excavated on the eastern side of the site to a depth of 1.1m (figure 2). The trench was 0.6m wide and excavated through mixed topsoil and subsoil, 0.5m thick, below which were the natural mid-orange brown sands and gravels. A second trench excavated on the western side of the site was also examined revealing a large dump of brick rubble, directly below the topsoil at the western end. Away from this dump, the topsoil/overburden was 0.4m thick above the natural subsoil. No archaeological finds or features were observed.

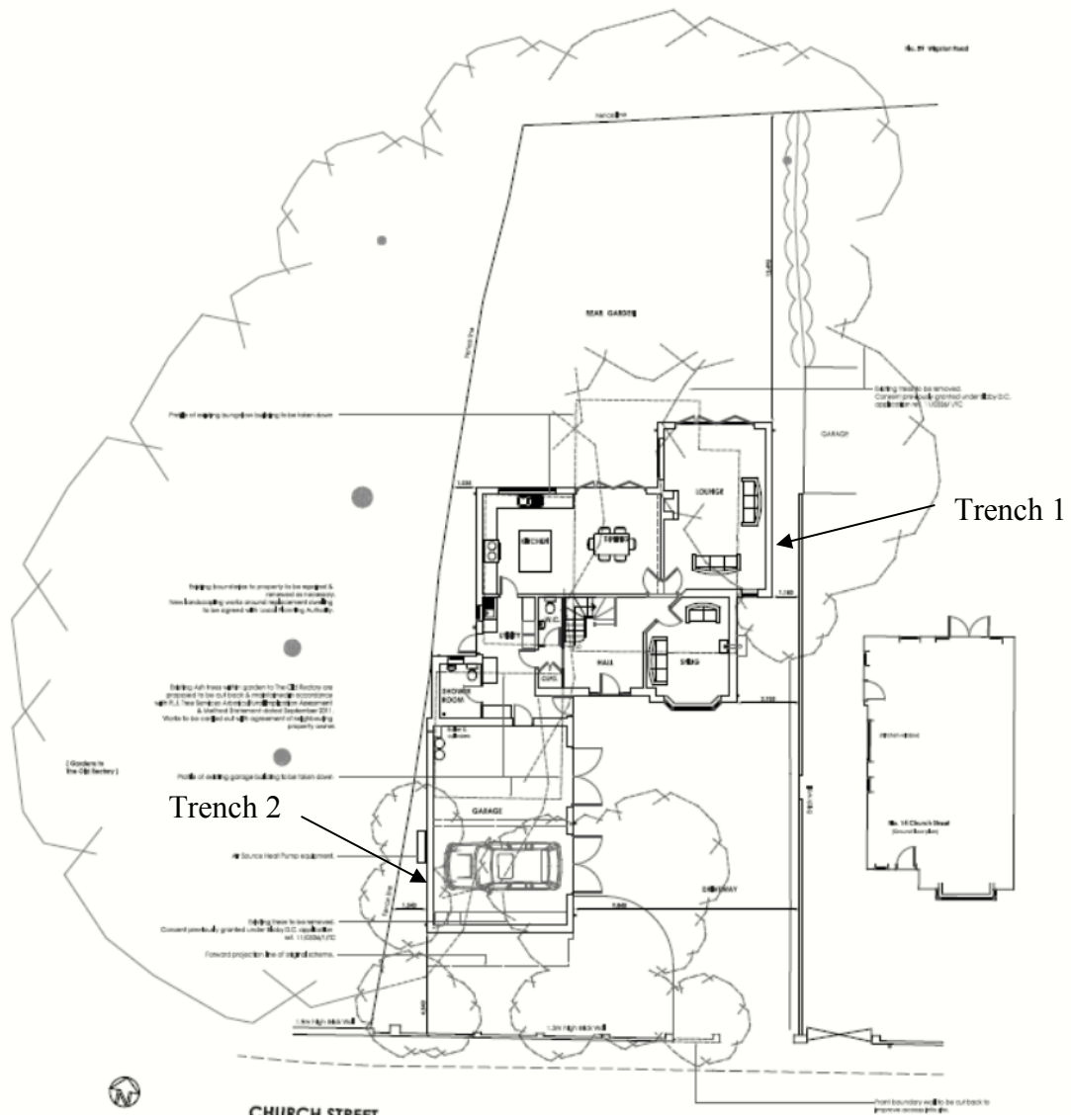


Figure 2: Site Plan (as supplied by client)



Figure 3: Machine removal of garden soil in area of access road; view northwest



Figure 4: Garden soil removal in the northern (garden) area of the development site; view north



Figure 5: Trench 1 section



Figure 6: Trench 2 section

Conclusions

The archaeological watching brief 12 Church Street, Blaby, produced no indications of archaeological finds or features within the development site. The absence of archaeological activity may be explained by the location of the site on the village periphery and/or by disturbance arising from modern garden activity and the demolition of the previous building.

Archive and Publications

The site archive (X.A94.2012), consisting of paper and photographic records, will be housed with Leicestershire County Council.

The archive consists of:

- Watching brief recording sheets
- Digital photographs and index
- A risk assessment form

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

Roger Kipling and Jennifer Browning of ULAS undertook the archaeological work and the project was managed by Richard Buckley. We would like to thank the contractors, Planters, for their help and co-operation during the work.

Bibliography

Buckley, R. 2012 *Written scheme of investigation for archaeological work, at 12 Church Street, Blaby, Leicestershire* Job Number: 12/196

Institute for Archaeologists (IfA), (rev. 2010), *Code of Conduct*

Institute for Archaeologists (IfA), (rev. 2008), *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*

Oasis Information

Project Name	12 Church Street Blaby, Leicestershire
Project Type	Archaeological watching brief
Project Manager	Richard Buckley
Project Supervisor	Roger Kipling
Previous/Future work	Construction
Current Land Use	Residential property
Development Type	Residential
Reason for Investigation	NPPF (Section 12
Position in the Planning Process	Post-determination requirement
Site Co ordinates	NGR SP 5712 9788
Start/end dates of field work	October 2012
Archive Recipient	Leicestershire County Council
Study Area	0.4 hectares

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