

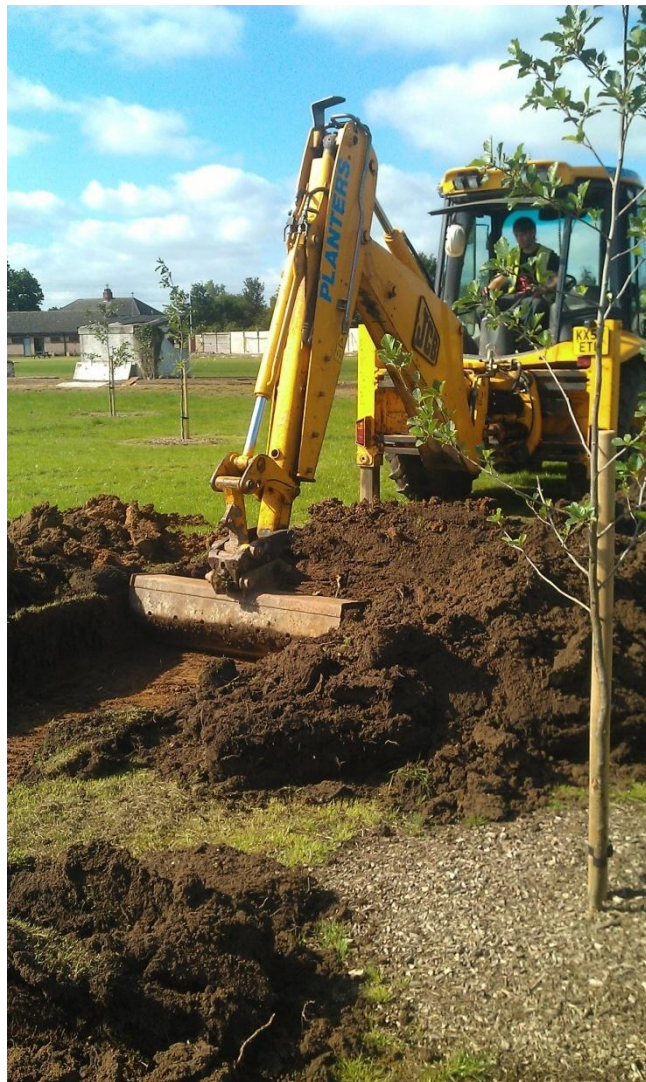


University of  
**Leicester**

**Archaeological Services**

**An Archaeological Evaluation  
At Winchester Road, Blaby,  
Leicestershire**

**NGR: SP 571 566**




Roger Kipling

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**An Archaeological Evaluation  
at Winchester Road Blaby Leicestershire  
NGR: SP 571 566**

**Roger Kipling**

**For: Westleigh Homes Limited**

Approved by:	
<b>Signed:</b>	
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## **An Archaeological Evaluation at Winchester Road, Blaby, Leicestershire**

**[NGR: SP 571 566]**

Roger Kipling

### **Summary**

*An archaeological trial trench evaluation was undertaken in September 2012 by University of Leicester Archaeological Services on behalf of Westleigh Homes Limited. The fieldwork was a pre-determination requirement on a proposed planning application for residential development on land east of Winchester Road, Blaby, 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 Winchester Road, Blaby, revealed no evidence of archaeological finds or features, with the exception of remnants of medieval plough furrows.*

*The site archive will be deposited with the Leicestershire County Council under the accession number X.A83.2012.*

### **Introduction**

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken on land to the east of Winchester Road, Blaby, Leicestershire. A desk-based assessment (Clarke 2012) indicated that the site lies outside the Conservation Area of Blaby and outside the medieval village core. It lies adjacent to the site of Blaby Hall, a post-medieval mansion, the grounds of which contain medieval earthworks and other medieval and post-medieval features. The site is also close to the findspot of Neolithic flint artefacts and to a series of linear features believed to be Iron Age in date but had not previously been subject to archaeological investigation.

In view of the potential impact of the development upon possible 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 August 2012 and involved the machine excavation of 19 trial trenches in order to assess the archaeological potential of the development area.

The archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance 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.

### Site Description, Topography and Geology

The site of the proposed development (SP 571 566; centre) is located approximately 7km to the south-west of Leicester, bound to the north by the River Sence and the Grand Union Canal, and to the west by the main Lutterworth Road (Figure 1). The assessment area, consists of approximately 1.9 hectares of land located to the south of Blaby village, on the western side of Winchester Road. The site is bound to the north by a housing estate, with open fields located to the south and east.

The Ordnance Survey Geological Survey of Great Britain, Sheet 156 indicates that the underlying geology of the site is likely to consist of mudstone. The land is level and lies at a height of approximately 80m OD.

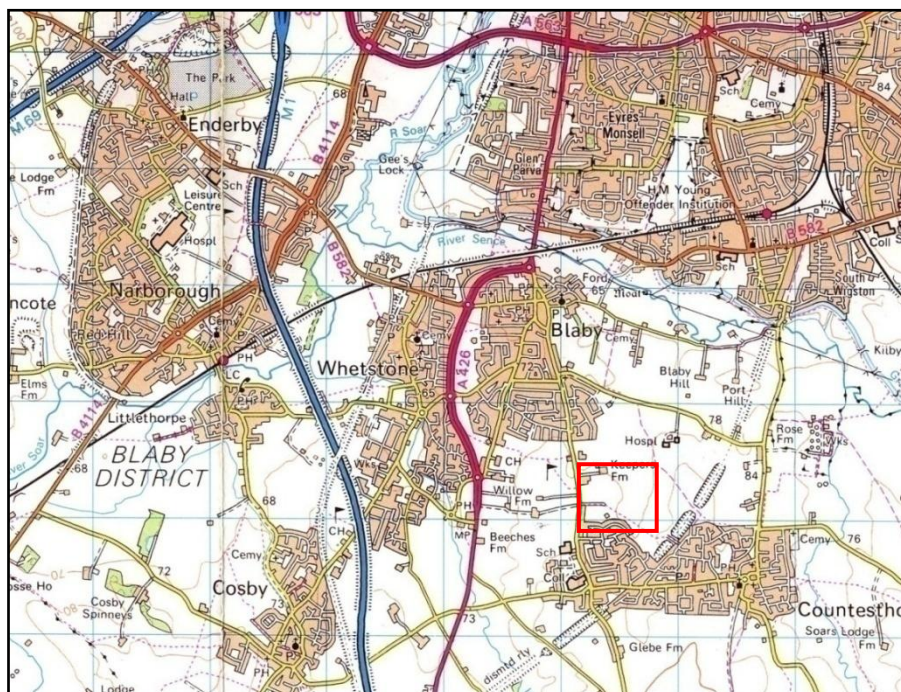


Figure 1: Site Location (Scale 1:50 000)

*Reproduced from the Landranger 140 Leicester area 1:50000 map by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright 1996. All rights reserved. Licence number AL 100029495*

## **Archaeological and Historical Background**

The Historic Environment Record for Leicestershire and Rutland, as indicated by an earlier desk-based assessment (Clarke 2012) indicated that there are no known archaeological sites within the assessment area itself, although a number are indicated in the vicinity, which are summarised below. The application area lies adjacent to the site of Blaby Hall, a post-medieval mansion, the grounds of which contain medieval earthworks and other medieval and post-medieval features.

### *Undated*

In 2008, geophysical survey of land located approximately 500m to the west of the assessment area revealed evidence of a linear, ditch type feature in association with several pits (**MLE17023**), likely to be of archaeological significance.

### *Prehistoric*

A Bronze Age spear-head (**MLE6254**) and palstave (**MLE6255**) have been recovered by metal-detector from fields to the west and to the south of Blaby Hospital, approximately 500m to the east of the assessment area.

A cropmark located approximately 600m to the south of the site (**MLE29**) is undated but thought to represent later prehistoric remains. Other cropmarks located 900m to the north-east of the assessment area (**MLE24**) are thought to represent the remains of an Iron Age rectilinear enclosure and trackway.

### *Roman*

The site lies around 700m to the east of the Roman Tripontium road that runs from Leicester south and follows the present line of the Lutterworth Road (**MLE1902**).

### *Medieval*

The assessment area lies approximately 900m to the south of the medieval settlement core of Blaby village, which has been deduced from early maps (**MLE9336**); the proposed development site lies outside this core and also lies outside the Conservation Area. The frame of a medieval purse was found approximately 300m to the north (**MLE6614**), in the garden of number 4, Chester Road and medieval coins have been found approximately 500m to the east of the assessment area (**MLE6615, 6616**).

### *Post-medieval*

A number of sites dating to the post-medieval period are also located in the vicinity of the assessment area and are listed on the HER. These are all located more than 1km away from the assessment area and do not appear to have any direct bearing on the site itself. Details of these can be found within the Appendix.

### *Ridge and Furrow*

A survey of the preserved medieval ridge and furrow of Leicestershire undertaken by R F Hartley in the 1980s and derived from earlier aerial photographs, shows ridge and furrow aligned east to west across the site. This has not survived to the present day, having been levelled off during the formation of the football pitch.

## **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 a 2.27% sample by trial trenching of the 1.9 ha area comprising c. 432 sq metres, the equivalent of eight 30m by 1.8m trenches. Site constraints required slight alterations to the original size and location of trenches as recommended in the WSI.

Excavation was undertaken using a mechanical excavator fitted with a 2.2m (Trenches 1 & 2) and 1.5m (Trenches 3-8) wide toothless ditching bucket, with topsoil and overburden removed carefully in level spits, under continuous archaeological supervision.



Figure 2: Machining in progress; view southwest

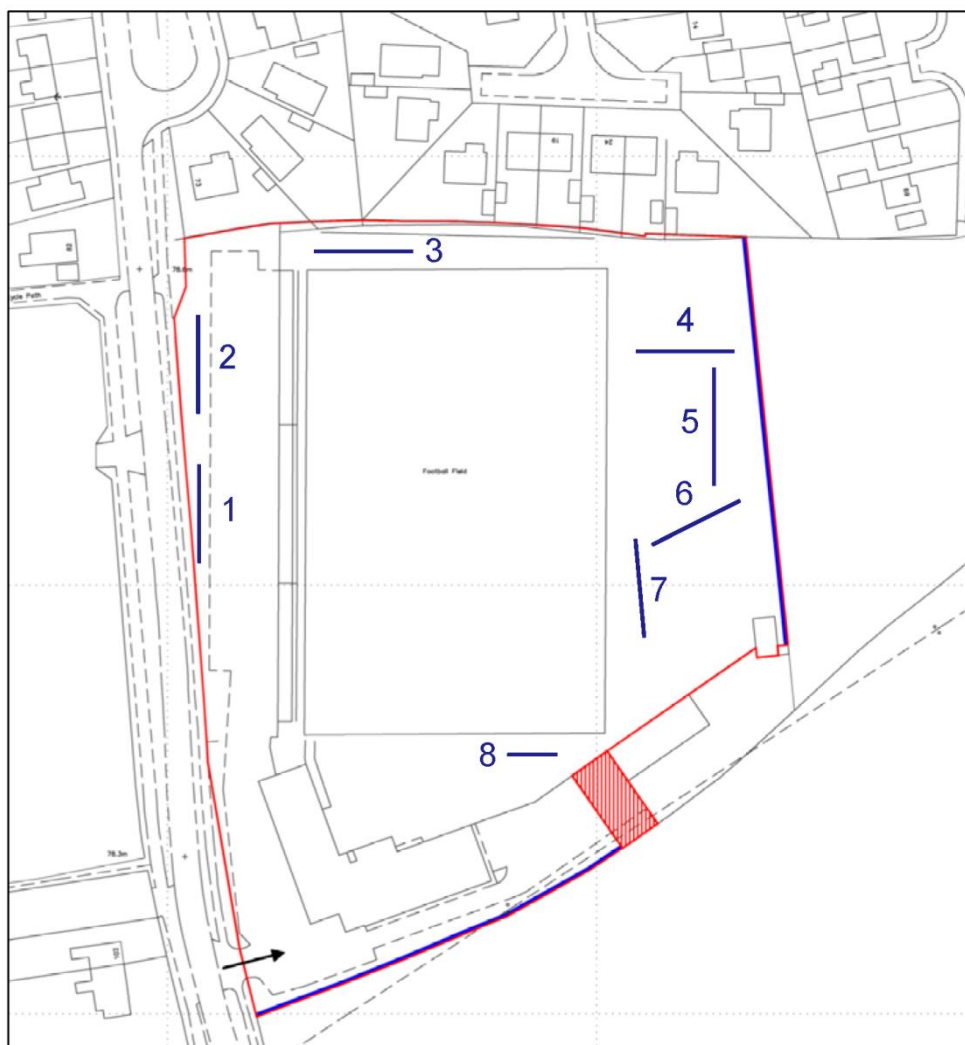


Figure 3: Location of the proposed development site (not to scale) showing trench locations; plan supplied by client

## Results

### *Trenches 1 & 2*

Trenches 1 & 2 measured 2.1m wide and 30m in length, marginally wider than the remainder of the trenches due to the need to use a more substantial (16 tonne) machine on the harder ground conditions on this, the western area of the site. Both were located adjacent to the car park close to the western site boundary.

Depths of trench varied between 0.40m and 0.65m, and both consisted of a 0.20m-0.30m accumulation of mid brownish grey sandy silt subsoil beneath the tarmac and roadstone car park surface overlying a silty grey natural clay with sandy patches. Neither trench produced any indications of archaeological finds or features.





Figure 4: Trench 1, view south; 2m scale

### *Trenches 3-8*

The remaining six trenches all produced similar results; namely a truncated 0.10m-0.30m depth of mid brown sandy silt topsoil and 0.20m-0.40m of mid grey brown sandy silt subsoil stemming from construction of the football pitch. The compact orange/reddish grey natural clay was consistent across all trenches. Trenches 6 and 7, located southeast of the football pitch, produced the sole indications of archaeology in the form of 1m-2m wide plough furrows, likely medieval in date, which traversed the trenches on a northwest-southeast alignment.



Figure 5: Trench 4: view west; scale 2m



Figure 6: Trench 6; view north; 2m scale

## Conclusions

The archaeological evaluation at Winchester Road, Blaby, revealed no archaeological evidence, with the exception of traces of furrows associated with medieval cultivation. Landscaping for the sports pitches had truncated the ground surface resulting in a thin topsoil overlaying the natural substratum.

## Archive and Publications

The site archive (X.A83.2012), consisting of paper and photographic records, will be deposited with Leicestershire County Council.

The archive consists of:

- 8 trench recording sheets
- 1 single context record sheet
- Context and photographic record indices
- 45 digital photographs
- 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 Tom Howell of ULAS undertook the archaeological evaluation on behalf of Charles Church (North Midlands). The project was managed by Patrick Clay.

## Bibliography

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

Clarke, S.J., 2012 *An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment for for land at Winchester Road, Blaby, Leicestershire (SP 571 966)*. ULAS Report 2012-047

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

## Oasis Information

Project Name	Winchester Road Blaby
Project Type	Archaeological evaluation
Project Manager	Patrick Clay
Project Supervisor	Roger Kipling
Previous/Future work	Development subject to planning permission
Current Land Use	Recreational
Development Type	Residential
Reason for Investigation	PPS5
Position in the Planning Process	Pre-determination
Site Co ordinates	NGR SP 571 966
Start/end dates of field work	September 2012
Archive Recipient	Leicestershire County Council
Study Area	c.1.9 ha.

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