

**An Archaeological Watching Brief
During ground-works at
Hallaton Hall,
Hallaton, Leicestershire,
(SP 790 066)**

Leon Hunt

for

Hazel Homes/Anthony Rickett Architects Ltd

Checked by Project Manager

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James Meek". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial 'J'.

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An Archaeological Watching Brief During ground-works at Hallaton Hall, Hallaton, Leicestershire, (SP 790 066)

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by the University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) at the site of Hallaton Hall, Hallaton, Leicestershire (SP 790 066). The site lay within the medieval settlement core of Hallaton and had previously been the subject of an archaeological field evaluation that revealed walls relating to ancillary buildings of the Hall and features dated to the Saxon period. The watching brief revealed a 19th century brick water tank, but no finds or features of archaeological significance. The archive will be deposited with Leicestershire County Council, Heritage Services with accession number X.A25.2005.

Introduction

University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) were commissioned by Hazel Homes/Anthony Rickett Architects Ltd to carry out a watching brief during ground-works and contingency excavation at the site of Hallaton Hall, Hallaton, Leicestershire (NGR SP 790 066). Archaeological work was required as part of the planning permission granted by Harborough District Council (Planning Application No. 04/00991/FUL).

A desk-based assessment of the proposed development area was previously commissioned from ULAS by Anthony Rickett Architects Ltd. and Hazel Homes (Report No. 2004-068) and this report concluded that the site lies within the boundaries of the medieval village core of Hallaton and many medieval and post-medieval sites and remains have been found in the vicinity. The site is believed to be originally that of either Bardolf or Engaine's manor house (Lee 1964). There was therefore some potential for finds or deposits of medieval or post-medieval date within the development area. Prehistoric and Roman occupation sites have also been located in the area around Hallaton and finds and features of a similar date may have been found within the development area.

Following this assessment an archaeological evaluation, commissioned by Hallam Contracts was carried out by ULAS in February 2005. Six trial trenches were excavated in order to assess the potential for archaeological remains in the area. Fragments of wall structures were discovered, which most likely represented ancillary structures related to the Hall. A ditch and a pit were also revealed which yielded Saxon and medieval pottery.

These results led the Senior Planning Archaeologist of the Archaeological, Historic and Natural Environment team of Leicestershire County Council, in his capacity as archaeological advisor to the local planning authority to produce a *Brief for Archaeological Attendance For Inspection and Recording (A Watching Brief)* (Appendix 2), which outlined a program of control and supervision of the initial site strip, watching brief during subsequent ground-works and contingency for salvage excavation. A *Design Specification for Control and Supervision of Site Strip*,

Archaeological Watching Brief during Ground-works and Contingency Excavation (Appendix 3) was produced by ULAS.

Site Location and Geology

The development site is located in Hallaton in the northern edge of the village along the western side of North End and the Medbourne Road, at the eastern perimeter of Hallaton Hall, formerly Torch House.

The Ordnance Survey Geological Survey of Great Britain, Sheet 156 indicates that the underlying geology is likely to consist of sand and gravels. The land lies at a height of c.112 OD.

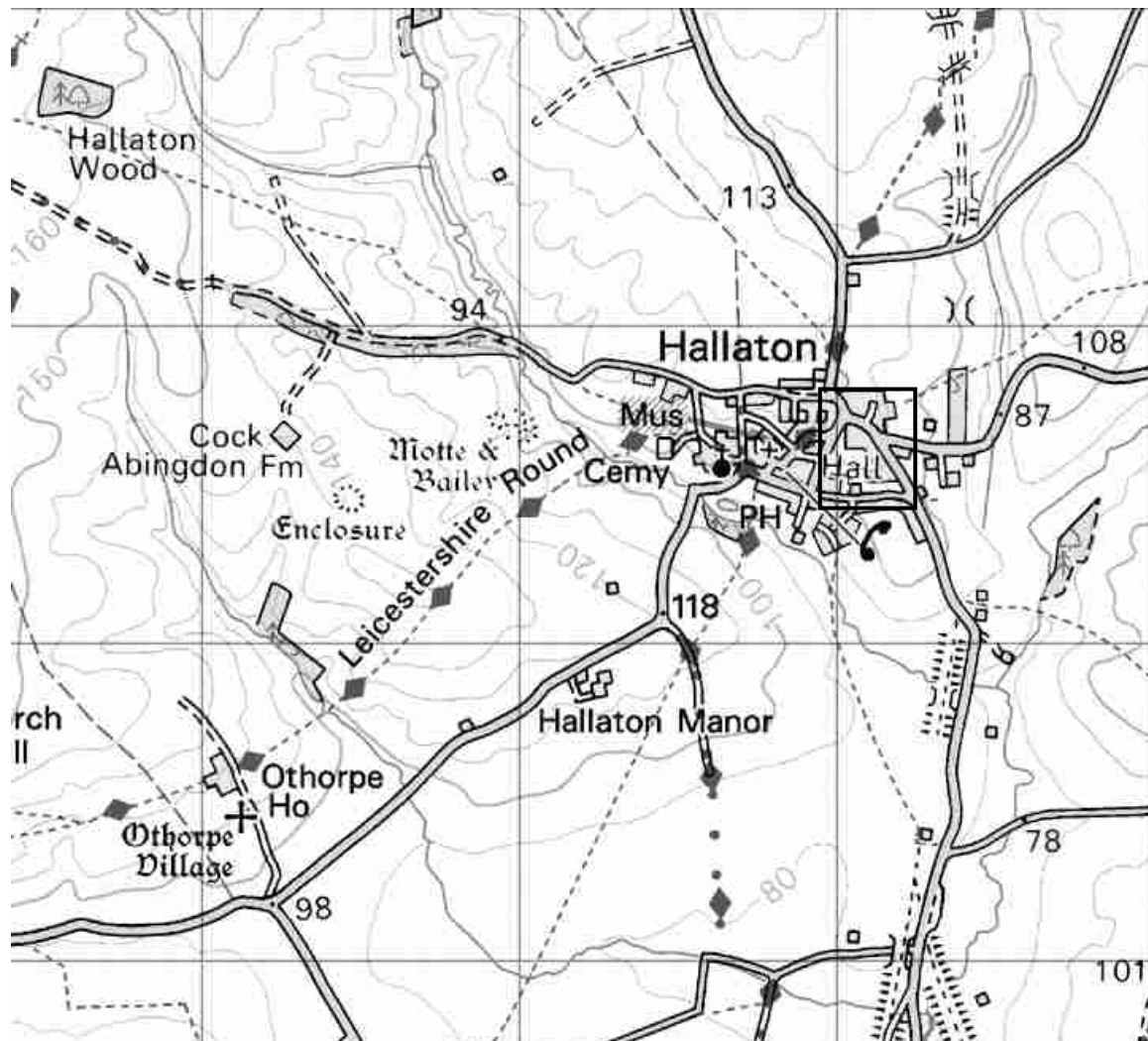


Figure 1: Site Location

Scale 1:50 000 ©Crown Copyright. Licence No. 100021186.

Aims and Methods

The purpose of the watching brief was to ascertain whether archaeological deposits were present. If so, the character, extent and date range of any deposits identified would be established, in order to assess their significance (see Appendix 2, Design Specification). Recording of these deposits would be carried out as

appropriate, and an archive and report produced. The work followed the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*, and adhered to the University's Health and Safety policy.

An archaeologist visited the site on 21st September, 3rd October and 1st November 2005 and ground-works associated with the development were observed (Figure. 3). The spoil heaps were also examined for archaeological finds.

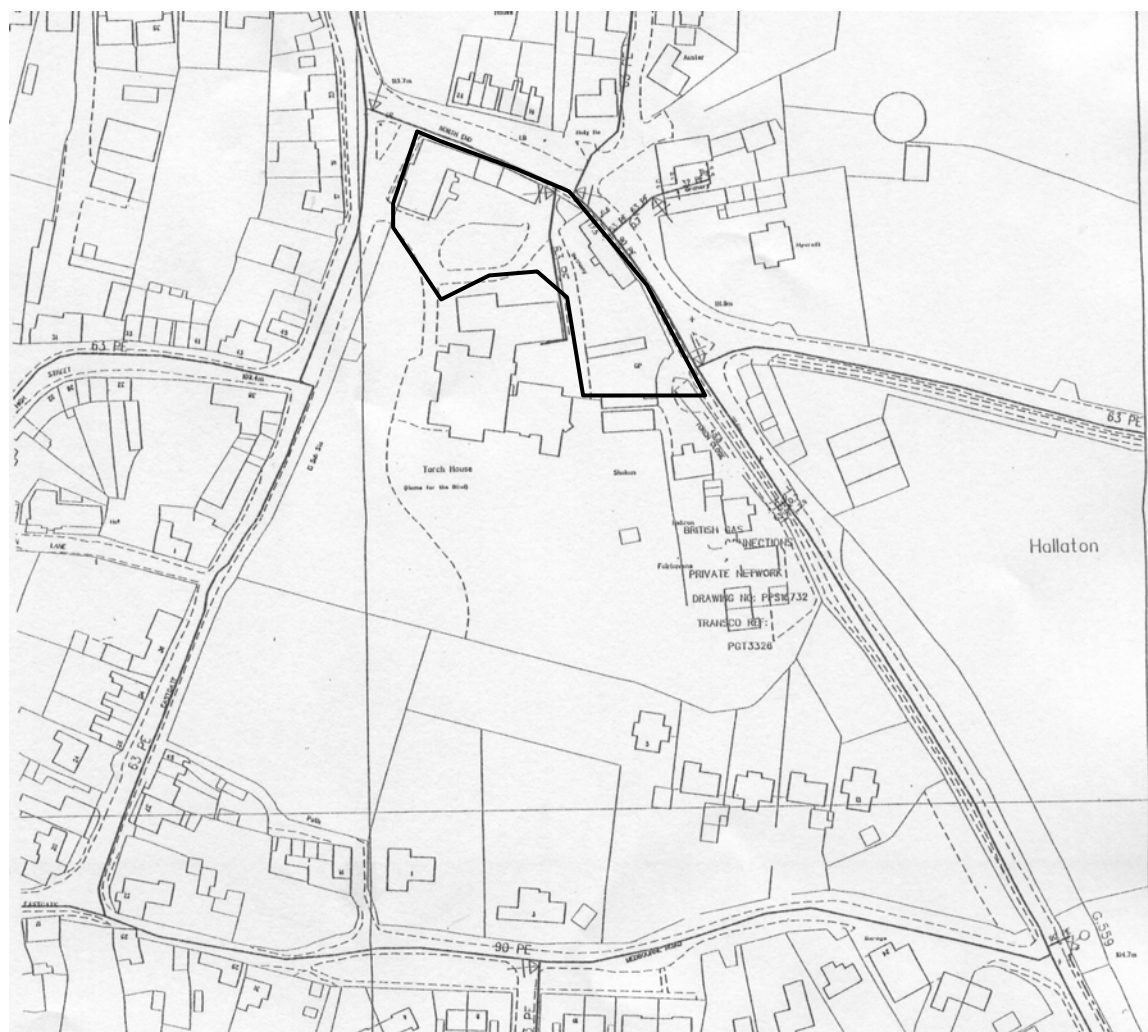


Figure 2: Site location, with development site highlighted. Scale : 1: 2500

Results

An archaeologist visited the site on 21st September 2005 and foundation trenches at the northern end of the site were observed (Figure 3). The topsoil had already been removed over the site revealing a mid-yellowish brown silty clay (Plate 1) with small stone fragments. This was stripped to a depth of 0.5m. The foundation

trenches were excavated to a depth of 1.7m and were 1.6m wide. The excavations revealed a mixed grey brown clay and a considerable amount of brick rubble (Plate 3). The area looked very disturbed by previous construction and demolition rubble. Existing water pipes and other services could be seen within the trench.

A large brick built domed structure was seen in the southern part of the site (Plate 4). The dome had an opening at the top with a diameter of c.1m, and a pipe could be seen entering into the structure from the eastern side. This feature was likely to be a soft water tank.

During the visit of 3rd October 2005 the trenches along the eastern edge were observed (Figure 3). The foundation trenches were 0.6-1.0m wide and 0.5m deep, below the level of the pavement outside the site. A large brick wall that enclosed the site on its eastern edge had been demolished prior to the watching brief and the stone foundations of this wall were observed within these trenches. The asphalt surface of the pavement had been laid over the top of the wide stone wall foundations in places. The sections of the trenches were heavily disturbed in places by roots and previous signs of demolition. No archaeological features or finds relating to archaeological features were discovered during this visit.

A further visit to the site took place on 1st November 2005 and more trenches along the eastern edge were observed (Figure 3). More sections of the exterior wall foundations were observed during this time, some of which extended 0.7m below the asphalt surface of the pavement. The trenches were excavated 1.1m below the pavement level.

The natural mid-yellowish brown clay subsoil was seen to be much deeper along this section of the site and may suggest an amount of alluvial deposit. Pottery was extracted from the blue coloured clay below the wall foundations. The backfilled trench of the earlier archaeological evaluation could be seen during these excavations.

No archaeological features were observed during the visit.

Conclusion

The features discovered in the trenches of the evaluation carried out on the site prior to the development suggested that the site had some further archaeological potential. However, the generally disturbed nature of the site, which had previously been built on, meant that much of the archaeology that may have once been present had been disturbed or destroyed, or was simply not recognisable due to a lack of systematic and careful excavation technique. The water tank discovered on the visit of 21st September 2005 is likely to be 19th century in date and most likely associated with the ancillary buildings of the Hall.

Bibliography

- Browning, J 2005 *An Archaeological Evaluation On Land At Hallaton Hall, Hallaton, Leicestershire (SP 790 966)* ULAS Report No. 2005-024
- George, S 2004 *An Archaeological Desk-based Assessment for Development at Hallaton Hall, Hallaton, Leicestershire (SP 790 966)* ULAS Report No. 2004-068
- Lee, J. M., 1964, 'Hallaton' in *The Victoria County History of the Counties of England: A History of Leicestershire*. Vol. V Ed. J.M. Lee and R.A. McKinley. Oxford University Press.

Acknowledgements

ULAS would like to thank Hazel Homes and Anthony Rickett Architects Ltd for their co-operation. Jennifer Browning carried out the watching brief. The project manager was James Meek.

Archive

The archive will be deposited with Leicester County Council, Heritage Services with accession number X.A25.2005 and consists of the following:

Watching Brief Report

Evaluation Report

3 Watching Brief Recording Sheets

6 Trench Recording Sheets

1 CD of Digital Photos

7 Sheets of Maps or Plans

4 Architect's Plans

3 pottery sherds

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Appendix 1: Pottery

Identified by Deborah Sawday

Three sherds were retrieved during the watching brief visit on 1st November 2005, from the blue clay below the wall foundation. All were of post-medieval date ranging from 15th to 18th century.

Sherd no	Weight	Fabric	Ware
1	11g	EA3	mottled ware
1	3g	EA6	blackware
1	37g	CW/MB	Cistercian/ Midland Black

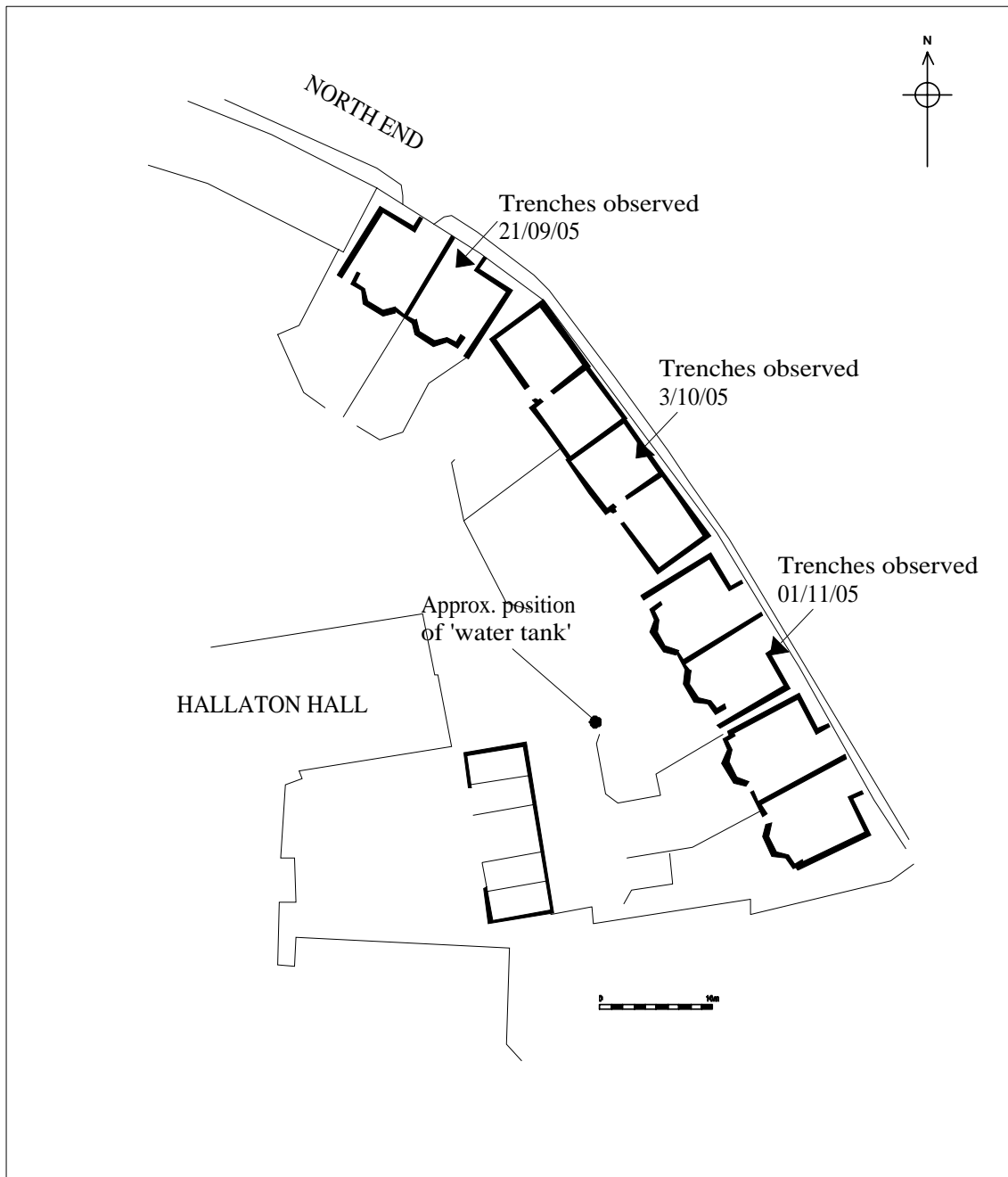


Figure 3: Plan of development site, with features observed



Plate 1: General view of site, looking north



Plate 2: General view of site, looking south



Plate 3: Typical section, trench 1



Plate 4: Brick water tank

APPENDIX 2:

A Brief For Archaeological Attendance For Inspection & Recording (A Watching Brief)

APPENDIX 3:

Design Specification For Control and Supervision of Site Strip, Archaeological watching Brief during Groundworks and Contingency Excavation