



# University of Leicester

## Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological Evaluation on land at  
Moat Street, Wigston, Leicestershire**

**NGR: SP 6069 9855**

Mathew Morris



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Moat Street, Wigston, Leicestershire**

**NGR: SP 6069 9855**

**Mathew Morris**

**For: GS Developments (Leicester) Ltd.  
Planning application no. w/c 29/09/2013**

Checked by

Signed:



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## **An archaeological evaluation on land at Moat Street, Wigston, Leicestershire (SP 6069 9855)**

Mathew Morris

### **Summary**

*An archaeological trial-trench evaluation was carried out on land at Moat Street, Wigston, Leicestershire (SP 6069 9855) by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) between 3-8 October 2013. The work was carried out on behalf of GS Developments (Leicester) Ltd in advance of the proposed redevelopment of the site. Three 40m x 1.6m, one 23m x 1.6m, one 18m x 1.6m and one 9m x 1.6m trenches, totalling 272.8 square metres were excavated across the site. Overall, the result of the trial-trenching was negative for archaeological activity. In all six trenches, groundwork associated with the site's former occupation had caused extensive damage to the underlying terrain. No preserved topsoil or subsoil was noted across the site and it appeared that ground level had been significantly reduced down to the natural substratum, sometime in the past. This presumably coincides with recent occupation of the site as St Georges Houses. The site archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council Museum Services under the accession number X.A156.2013.*

### **Introduction**

This document constitutes the final report for an archaeological trial-trench evaluation carried out on land at Moat Street, Wigston, Leicestershire (SP 6069 9855). The work was carried out on behalf of GS Developments (Leicester) Ltd by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) between 3-8 October 2013.

The proposed redevelopment of the former St Georges Houses site on the south side of Moat Street (planning application ref. w/c 10/00535/FUL) is situated c.500m south of the centre of Wigston and c.6km south-east of Leicester city centre (Figure 1). The site is presently covered with hard standing and expansive areas of reinforced concrete flooring. In all, it covers c.8674 square metres.

The work was requested by the Leicestershire Planning Archaeologist in their capacity as archaeological advisor to Oadby and Wigston Borough Council, in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Section 12: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment. The work followed the approved Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) as laid out in the *Written scheme of investigation for archaeological work* (Clay 2013).

### **Geology and Topography**

The British Geological Survey of Great Britain, Sheet 156 (Leicester), shows that the underlying geology is likely to consist of superficial deposits of Quaternary clay belonging to the Glen Parva Member overlying bedrock deposits of Triassic mudstone belonging to the Blue Lias Formation (BGS 2008). The site lies on flat ground at c.83m above Ordnance Datum (OD).

### **Historical and Archaeological Background**

An archaeological desk-based assessment was undertaken for the site in 2011. This showed that the site is situated in an area of historical and archaeological interest, within the historic settlement core of Wigston. The Leicestershire Historic Environment Record (HER) indicates that the surrounding landscape has produced finds belonging to a variety of periods including prehistoric, Roman, Anglo-Saxon and medieval and it is therefore an area which is recognised as having archaeological potential. A row of cottages and a framework knitter's workshop occupied the western part of the Moat Street frontage from c.1850, while the east and

southern parts of the site appear to have remained undeveloped until the mid-20th century. The construction of factory buildings and warehouses in the mid-20th century and their subsequent extension is likely to have had an impact upon any buried archaeological remains, although it was thought that the possibility remained for the survival of pockets of undisturbed subsoil (Browning 2011).

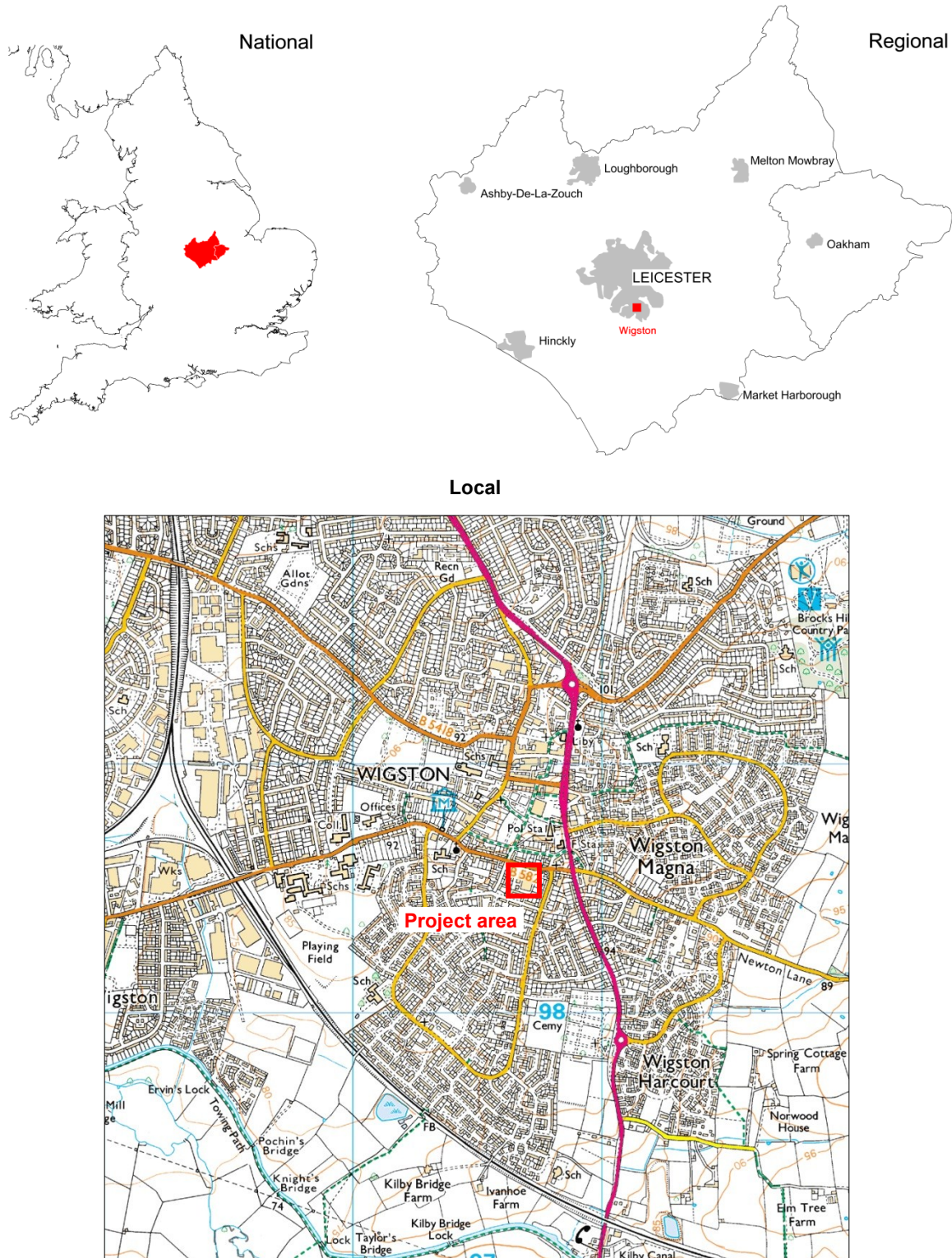


Figure 1: Location maps with development area highlighted

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## Archaeological Objectives

The principal objectives of the archaeological work were:

- To identify the presence or absence of any archaeological deposits.
- To establish the character, extent and date of any archaeological deposits to be effected by the proposed ground works.
- To excavate and record any archaeological deposits to be effected by the proposed ground works.
- To produce a report and archive of any results.

## Methodology

The WSI called for the examination of c.320 square meters of the site, the equivalent of four 40m x 1.6m and two 20m x 1.6m trenches (Clay 2013). However, site constraints, particularly substantial areas of reinforced concrete, soil bunds, rubble heaps and dense vegetation, meant that only three 40m x 1.6m, one 23m x 1.6m, one 18m x 1.6m and one 9m x 1.6m (272.8 square metres) could be excavated (Figure 2).



Figure 2: Site plan showing trench locations.  
*Plan adapted from survey data provided by client.*

The work required a professional archaeologist to supervise all groundwork likely to impact upon any archaeological remains. Service plans, a CAT scanner and a visual inspection of the ground were used to ensure pipes and services were traced and avoided before work commenced.

Trenches were laid out, then affected areas of hard standing and reinforced concrete flooring were broken with a mechanical breaker (3-7 October); subsequently, overburden was removed in level spits under continuous archaeological supervision (8 October). The trenches were excavated using a JCB 3CX with a c.1.6m wide, toothed bucket.

Trenches, other exposed areas, sections and existing spoil heaps were visually inspected for features and finds. Archaeological features, if present, were hand cleaned, planned, photographed and sample excavated as appropriate to addressing the objectives of the evaluation. Field notes were recorded on pro-forma ULAS trench recording forms whilst all stratigraphic units would be given a unique context number and recorded on pro-forma ULAS context sheets if deemed appropriate. Archaeological features if present would be drawn to a scale of 1:20, trench plans to a scale of 1:50 and sections to a scale of 1:10. The trenches were located in relation to prominent features within the property and tied into the Ordnance Survey National Grid.

All work followed the *Institute for Archaeologists' (IFA) Code of Conduct* and adhered to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological field evaluations*.

## Results

### *Trench 1*

Trench 1 was located on the western side of the site, orientated broadly north/south within the footprint of the former St Georges Houses building (Figure 3). Machining initially removed reinforced concrete covering modern brick and concrete rubble; natural yellowish-brown clay was observed directly beneath the modern overburden at c.0.4-0.8m below ground level. No subsoil was observed and ground level appeared to have been reduced prior to construction of St Georges Houses.

East/west aligned modern brick and concrete wall footings were observed cutting the natural substratum c.2m, c.16m, c.20m and c.27m from the southern end of the trench. The natural substratum was not reached between c.20-27m because of a concrete floor which could not be machined out.

Overall, no archaeological features or finds were recorded.

Length (m)	Width (m)		Area (sq. m)	Min. depth (m)			Max. depth (m)			Surface level	Archaeology?
40	1.6		64	0.4			0.8			-	No
Interval (m) from south end	0	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40		
Overburden depth	0.8	0.4	0.4	0.55	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.5		
Subsoil depth	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Top of natural	0.8	0.4	0.4	0.55	-	-	-	0.5	0.5		
Base of trench	0.8	0.4	0.4	0.55	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.7		

### *Trench 2*

Trench 2 was located in the south-western quarter of the site, orientated broadly north-east/south-west crossing the footprint of the former St Georges Houses building and another building to the rear (Figure 4). Machining initially removed reinforced concrete covering modern brick and concrete rubble; natural yellowish-brown clay was observed directly

beneath the modern overburden at c.0.3-0.9m below ground level. No subsoil was observed and ground level appeared to have been reduced prior to construction of St Georges Houses.

An east/west brick wall was observed cutting the natural substratum c.7m from the north-eastern end of the trench. North/south brick and concrete wall footings were also observed at c.9m, c.14m, c.30m and c.33m from the end of the trench, whilst a break sump was recorded at the trenches south-western end.

Overall, no archaeological features or finds were recorded.

Length (m)	Width (m)		Area (sq. m)	Min. depth (m)		Max. depth (m)		Surface level	Archaeology?
40	1.6		64	0.1		0.9		-	No
Interval (m) from north-east end	0	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	
Overburden depth	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.7	0.9	
Subsoil depth	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Top of natural	0.4	0.3	-	-	0.3	-	0.7	0.9	
Base of trench	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.4	0.1	0.7	0.9	



Figure 3: Trench 1, looking south



Figure 4: Trench 2, looking south-west

### Trench 3

Trench 3 was located in the south-eastern quarter of the site, orientated broadly north-west/south-east within the footprint of the former St Georges Houses building (Figure 5). Machining initially removed c.0.3m reinforced concrete covering modern brick and concrete rubble; natural yellowish-brown clay was observed directly beneath the modern overburden at c.0.3-0.45m below ground level. No subsoil was observed and ground level appeared to have been reduced prior to construction of St Georges Houses.

An east/west brick wall footings was observed cutting natural c.17 from the north-western end of the trench, whilst the natural had been disturbed by a modern pit at the south-eastern end of



the trench.

Overall, no archaeological features or finds were recorded.

Length (m)	Width (m)		Area (sq. m)	Min. depth (m)		Max. depth (m)		Surface level	Archaeology?
40	1.6		64	0.3		1		-	No
Interval (m) from north-west end	0	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40
Overburden depth	0.45	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.35	0.4	0.4	1
Subsoil depth	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Top of natural	0.45	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.35	0.4	0.4	-
Base of trench	0.45	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.35	0.5	0.5	1



Figure 5: Trench 3, looking south-east



Figure 6: Trench 4, looking south

#### Trench 4

Trench 4 was located on the eastern side of the site, orientated broadly north/south within the footprint of the former St Georges Houses building (Figure 6). Machining initially removed reinforced concrete covering modern brick and concrete rubble; natural yellowish-brown clay was sporadically observed beneath the modern overburden at c.0.6-1.1m below ground level. No subsoil was observed and ground level appeared to have been reduced prior to construction of St Georges Houses.

Length (m)	Width (m)		Area (sq. m)	Min. depth (m)		Max. depth (m)		Surface level	Archaeology?
23	1.6		36.8	0.5		1.35		-	No
Interval (m) from north end	0	5	10	15	20				
Overburden depth	0.8	0.6	0.5	1.1	0.9				
Subsoil depth	-	-	-	-	-				
Top of natural	-	0.6	-	1.1	-				

<b>Base of trench</b>	0.8	0.6	0.5	1.35	0.9				
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The northern *c.*4m of the trench was disturbed and natural ground level was not seen. At *c.*4m an east/west brick wall crossed the trench. South of this, a wall footing was found to run down the western side of the trench, its foundation trench destroying much of the area within the trench. Machining of the trench was aborted at *c.*23m of its *c.*30m because of this disturbance.

Overall, no archaeological features or finds were recorded, the ground being completely disturbed.



Figure 7: Trench 5, looking west



Figure 8: Trench 6, looking east

### *Trench 5*

Trench 5 was located on the northern side of the site, orientated broadly east/west within the footprint of the former St Georges Houses building (Figure 7). At the eastern end of the trench, machining initially removed reinforced concrete covering modern brick and concrete rubble; natural yellowish-brown clay was observed directly beneath the modern overburden at *c.*0.6-0.7m below ground level. No subsoil was observed and ground level appeared to have been reduced prior to construction of St Georges Houses.

Length (m)	Width (m)		Area (sq. m)	Min. depth (m)		Max. depth (m)		Surface level	Archaeology?
18.5	1.6		29.6	0.2		0.7		-	No
Interval (m) from east end	0	5	10	15	18				
Overburden depth	0.7	0.6	0.2	0.2	0.2				
Subsoil depth	-	-	-	-	-				
Top of natural	0.7	0.6	-	-	-				
Base of trench	0.7	0.6	0.2	0.2	0.2				

A north/south brick wall footing was observed cutting the natural substratum *c.*4.5m from the eastern end of the trench. Approximately *c.*2m west of that, *c.*0.2m below ground level, a second reinforced concrete surface was uncovered, seemingly a floor for an earlier structure on the site. This could not be removed and was left in-situ.

Overall, no archaeological features or finds were recorded.

### *Trench 6*

Trench 6 was located in the north-east corner of the site, orientated broadly east-west outside the footprint of the former St Georges Houses building, close to the Moat Street frontage (Figure 8Figure 3). Machining initially removed reinforced concrete covering modern brick and concrete rubble; natural yellowish-brown clay was observed directly beneath the modern overburden at *c.*0.4-0.5m below ground level. No subsoil was observed and ground level appeared to have been reduced prior to construction of St Georges Houses.

No archaeological features or finds were recorded.

Length (m)	Width (m)		Area (sq. m)	Min. depth (m)	Max. depth (m)	Surface level	Archaeology?
9	1.6		14.4	0.5	0.8	-	No
Interval (m) from east end	0	5	10				
Overburden depth	0.4	0.5	0.5				
Subsoil depth	-	-	-				
Top of natural	0.4	0.5	0.5				
Base of trench	0.5	0.6	0.8				

### **Discussion**

Overall, the results of the evaluation were negative. In all six trenches, groundwork associated with the site's former occupation had caused extensive damage to the underlying terrain. No preserved topsoil or subsoil was noted across the site and it appeared that ground level had been significantly reduced down to the natural substratum, sometime in the past. This presumably coincides with recent occupation of the site with St Georges Houses.

### **Bibliography**

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Browning, J., 2011, *An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment for Proposed Development at Former St Georges Houses, Moat Street, Wigston, Leicestershire*. Leicester, unpublished ULAS Report No. 2011-160

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### **Archive**

The site archive consists of: 6 A4 trench recording form, 1 A4 photo index, digital photographs and monochrome photographs.

The site archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council Museum Services under the accession number X.A156.2013.

### **Publication**

Since 2004 ULAS has reported the results of all archaeological work through the *Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations* (OASIS) database held by the

Archaeological Data Service at the University of York. A summary of the work will also be submitted for publication in a suitable regional archaeological journal in due course.

OASIS no.	universi1-162668
Project Name	Land at Moat Street, Wigston, Leicestershire
Project Type	Evaluation
Project Manager	Patrick Clay
Project Supervisor	Mathew Morris & Tim Higgins
Previous/Future work	Unknown
Current Land Use	Brownfield
Development Type	Mixed residential and commercial
Reason for Investigation	NPPF
Position in the Planning Process	Condition
Site Co ordinates	SP 6069 9855
Start/end dates of field work	3/10/2013 – 8/10/2013
Archive recipient	Leicestershire
Study Area	c. 8674 square meters

### Acknowledgements

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