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**Archaeological Services**

**An Archaeological Evaluation on Land  
east of Huncote Road, Stoney Stanton,  
Leicestershire**

**NGR: SP 4911 9565**



Wayne Jarvis

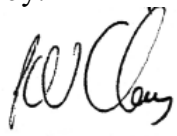
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of Huncote Road, Stoney Stanton, Leicestershire**

**Wayne Jarvis**

**For: Jelson ltd**

**Planning App. No. 09/0692/1/OX  
Appeal: APP/T2405/A/10/2125563**

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# **An Archaeological Evaluation on Land east of Huncote Road, Stoney Stanton, Leicestershire**

**Wayne Jarvis**

## **Summary**

*An Archaeological evaluation was carried out on land east of Huncote Road, Stoney Stanton, Leicestershire. Twenty-three trenches were excavated, each 30m in length, across the area of a proposed residential development and targeting potential archaeological features identified in the previous geophysical survey. No archaeological features were identified, and no artefacts were recovered.*

*The site archive will be held with Leicestershire County Council, accession number XA.8.2013.*

## **1. Introduction**

Planning permission has been granted on appeal by Blaby District Council for the construction of residential dwellings and associated infrastructure on land to the east of Huncote Road, Stoney Stanton, Leicestershire (Planning App. No. 09/0692/1/OX, Appeal: APP/T2405/A/10/2125563). A requirement for this was a stage of archaeological evaluation to ascertain whether heritage assets are present, which is reported on here.

## **2. Site Description, Land use, Topography and Geology**

### ***2.1 Site Description***

The site is located in a turn of the Huncote Road, north of the village of Stoney Stanton (Figure 1, NGR: SP 4911 9565). Stoney Stanton is in the Blaby District of Leicestershire, approximately 10 miles south-west of Leicester and around 6 miles east of Hinckley. The total size of the proposed development area is c.16ha (Hunt 2009). The development proposals by Jelson ltd are for 96 residential dwellings with associated infrastructure.

### ***2.2 Land use and Topography***

The site development area is currently a farm in the centre with surrounding yard, and beyond this the fields targeted for this stage of archaeological work. Fields in the west of the site area are pasture (Area 1) while the field to the east is arable (Area 2). The fields are all surrounded by hedgerows, overgrown to the south edge of the site. Access into the site is from Huncote Road to the north. The overall site area lies between a height of 81.7m aOD (east) and 85.8m aOD (west).

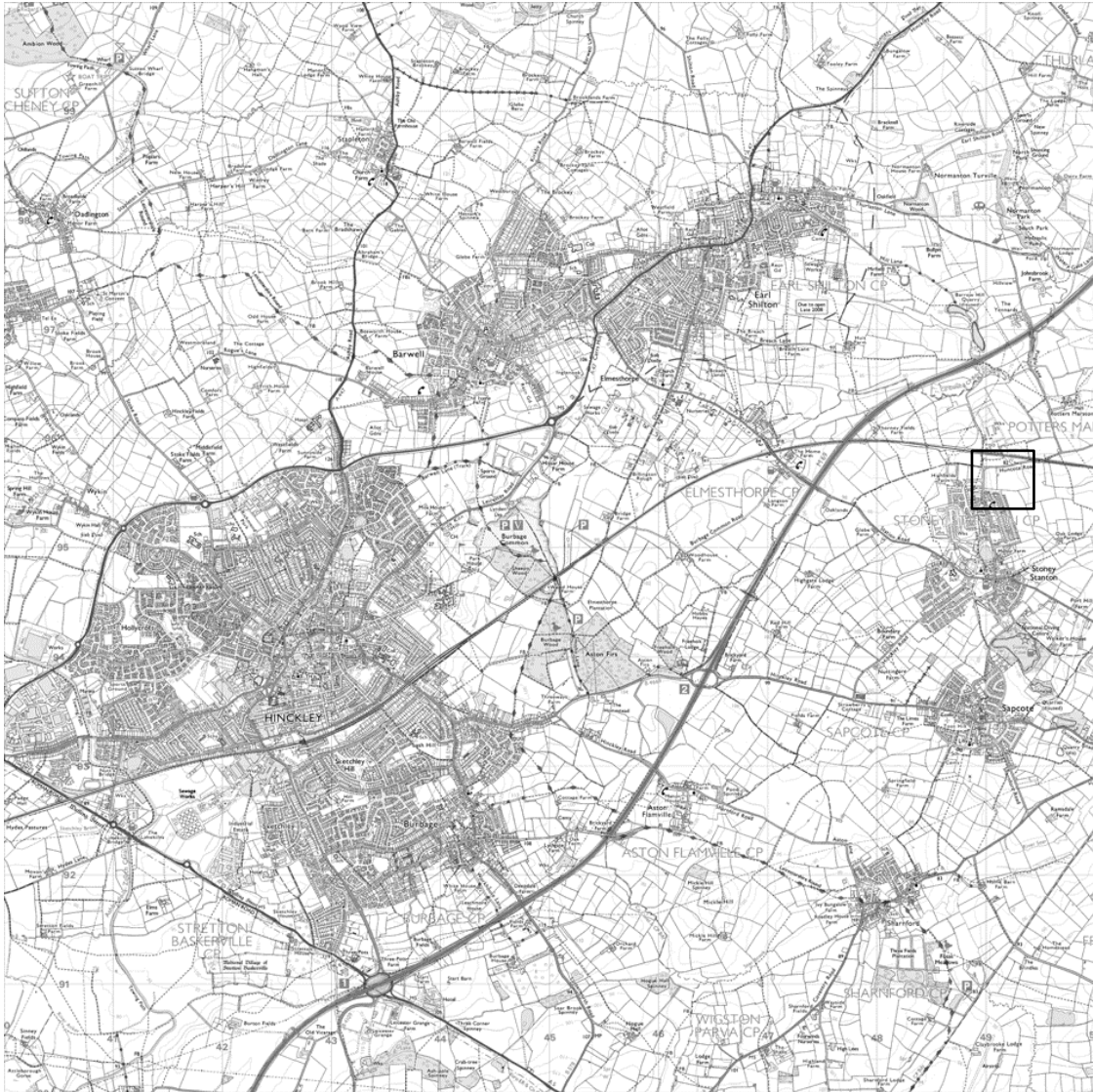


Figure 1: Site location. Scale 1: 50 000

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### 2.3 Geology

The underlying geology comprises Triassic Mudstones (including Keuper Marl, Dolomitic Conglomerate and Rhaetic) (BGS 2001). The drift geology is Boulder clay and Morainic Drift (Geological Survey 1977). The overlying soils are known as Beccles 1 which are typical stagnogley soils. These consist of slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged fine loamy over clayey soils (Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983).

### 3. Historical and Archaeological Background

A desk-based assessment for the proposed development area has been prepared (Hunt 2009). The desk-based assessment concluded that as the site itself lies in an area that has seen little systematic archaeological work carried out the archaeological potential of the site is mainly unattested.



Figure 2: Area 1 looking south.



Figure 3: Area 2 looking south.

The Historic Environment Record (HER) for Leicestershire and Rutland shows that there are no known archaeological sites recorded within the assessment area itself (Hunt 2009). There are a number of archaeological sites in the vicinity, but they are

mainly located within the centre of Stoney Stanton, to the south-west of the proposed development area and in the centre of Potters Marston to the north-east. Stoney Stanton was referred to in the Domesday Survey, and the Anglican church of St. Michael's which was first recorded in 1149 still retains some Norman fabric. Finds from the Mesolithic and Iron Age periods have been discovered in the vicinity of Potters Marston village to the north. Potters Marston was also a centre of medieval pottery production. Granite quarrying was carried out in the area around Stoney Stanton historically, but some of this may date as far back as the Roman period.

### ***3.1 Geophysical Survey***

Stratascan were commissioned to carry out a geophysical survey of 7ha of land at the site during 2009 (Haddrell 2009). A limited amount of possible archaeological features were identified. Four possible cut features and several anomalies interpreted as pits were identified. These features could be modern in origin and further investigations were suggested to be warranted. Both areas contained areas of magnetic disturbance, possibly masking subtle archaeological features and magnetic debris. A large amount of magnetic spikes, caused by near surface ferrous objects, were also identified. Area 1 contained several linear anomalies representing agricultural marks.

## **4. Aims and Objectives**

Following National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Section 12 Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment, Leicestershire County Council, Historic and Natural Environment Team (LCCHNET) as archaeological advisors to the planning authority require that trial trenching is undertaken to ascertain whether heritage assets are present.

### ***Archaeological Objectives***

The archaeological evaluation was identified as having the potential to contribute to the following research aims.

1. The exploitation of stream side locations during the Mesolithic (Myers 2006). Palaeoenvironmental evidence could provide information on land use.
2. The area lies close to the site of Potters Marston medieval pottery kilns and may contribute to the East Midlands Research Strategy 6.7.6.1 (Knight *et al* 2012, 94; Sawday 1991).

The main archaeological objectives of the evaluation were:

- To identify the presence/absence of any archaeological deposits.
- To establish the character, extent and date range for any archaeological deposits to be affected by the proposed ground works.
- To 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 proposed development. Trial trenching is an intrusive form of evaluation that will demonstrate the existence of earth-fast archaeological features that may exist within the area.

## 5. Methodology

The Senior Planning Archaeologist at Leicestershire County Council as advisor to the planning authority, requested the examination of the area by trial trenching. The trenches were excavated using a mechanical excavator (hymac 360) equipped with a wide toothless ditching bucket. The topsoil and other overlying layers were removed under full archaeological supervision until either the top of archaeological deposits or the natural undisturbed substratum was reached. Where archaeological deposits or finds were located these would be examined by hand cleaning. The trenches were tied into the Ordnance Survey National Grid and then after the end of fieldwork the area was backfilled and leveled.

The work followed the approved Written Scheme of Investigation (hereinafter WSI, ULAS 2013) and adhered to the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Code of Conduct* and adhered to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations and Excavations* (2008).

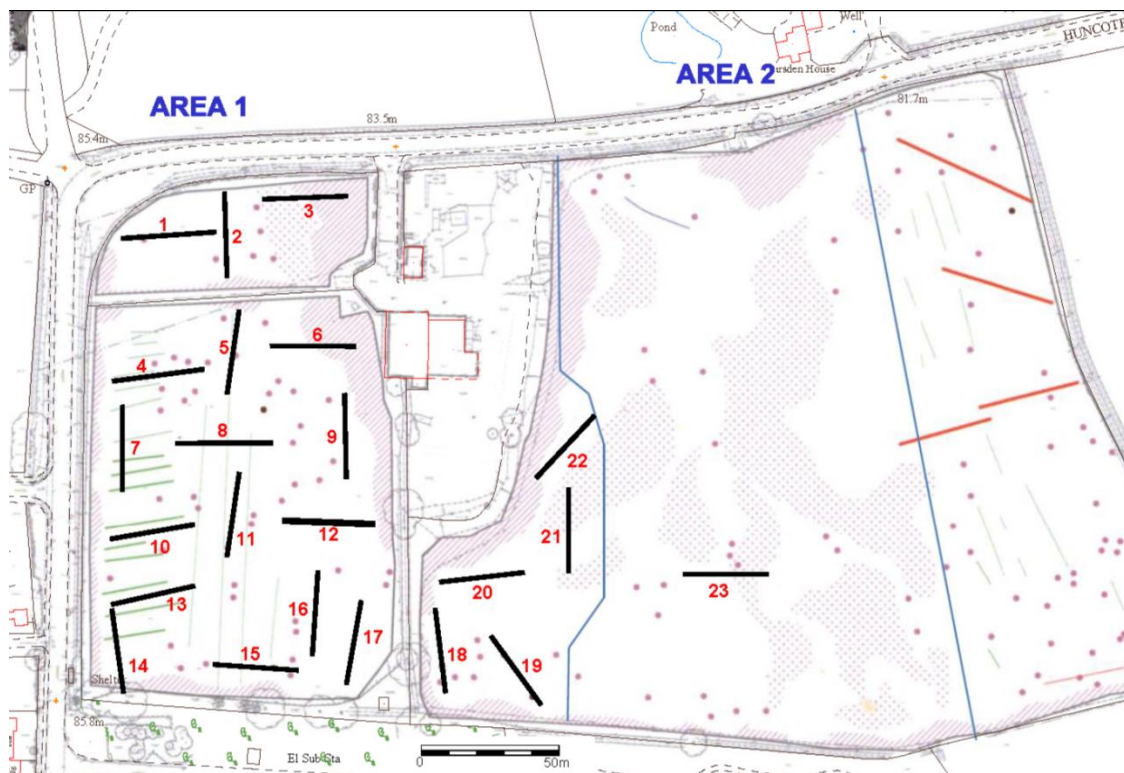


Figure 4: Site area and trench locations (updated).

## 6. Evaluation Results

Evaluative work was carried out between 28/01/13 and 31/01/13. A 16 tonne 360 excavator with 1.8m wide ditching bladed bucket was used for the evaluation. Twenty-three nominally 30m long, 1.9m wide trenches were excavated. These were sited as per the WSI i.e. to fit in with the affected areas in the proposed development area and target potential archaeological features identified during the geophysical survey. The exceptions to this were very minor alterations to the trench locations and lengths to avoid flooded and overgrown hedge boundaries (Trenches 9, 14, 17, 18, 22; see Table 1). Additionally the four trenches originally indicated for the farm and yard area were not excavated as this land was still occupied and in regular use. These revised trench locations are shown in Figure 2. Both Areas 1 and 2 were waterlogged during the fieldwork, partly due to the heavy nature of the clay soils on site.



Area 1 consisted of Trenches 1-17, to the west of the farm. This area was under pasture. Trenches 2, 5 and 11 targeted a north-south linear anomaly identified on the geophysical survey results (Figure 2), a feature that was also visible in the field as a very low earthwork. This is almost certainly a plough ridge or headland, hence the relict ploughing varying in orientation either side of this.

All trenches exposed the same sequence of layers in Area 1, and with no variation in the natural subsoil. Topsoil consisted of a dark grey brown silty loam, plastic with very occasional gravel, and was c.0.25-0.3m deep. Occasional finds of modern glazed pottery were present in the topsoil (discarded). The topsoil overlay a subsoil (B-horizon) consisting of an orangey brown slightly sandy clay, again with very occasional gravel. This was generally 0.1m – 0.2m thick, but occasionally absent where the ground had been truncated (e.g. by ploughing). The natural substratum across this area was a mottled orange sometimes grey clay, and occasionally with patches of sand and gravel. Stone and ceramic land drains were observed in several trenches (1, 6, 7, 9, 10, 14). A live service (water main) was observed crossing this area south-west to north-east (Trenches 9, 14). An east-west feature was examined in Trench 12, this producing modern building materials and being the line of a modern field boundary. No features of archaeological origin were identified in Area 1, and no finds were recovered from the trenching.

Area 2 consisted of Trenches 18-23, to the east of the farm. This area was ploughland. These trenches exposed a similar sequence of layers, with only slight variation in the natural subsoil. Topsoil (the ploughzone) consisted of a dark grey brown silty loam, with very occasional gravel, and was c.0.22-0.3m deep. Occasional finds of modern glazed pottery were present in the topsoil (discarded). This ploughsoil overlay in places a subsoil (B-horizon) consisting of an orangey brown slightly sandy clay, again with very occasional gravel. This was generally 0.1m – 0.15m thick, but occasionally absent where ploughing had cut deeper. Plough scars were clear at the level of the subsoil. The natural substratum across this area was a mottled orange sometimes grey clay, and occasionally with patches of sand and gravel, becoming more sandy in the south trenches. Ceramic land drains were observed in Trenches 20 and 23. No features of archaeological origin were identified in this area and no finds were recovered from the trenching.

Table 1: Trench details

| Trench | Area | Orient. | Length<br>(m., top)<br>* | Width | Depth to<br>Natural |              | Notes                         |
|--------|------|---------|--------------------------|-------|---------------------|--------------|-------------------------------|
|        |      |         |                          |       | min.<br>(m.)        | max.<br>(m.) |                               |
| 1      | 1    | E-W     | 31.1                     | 1.9m  | 0.3                 | 0.39         | Extended slightly, Land drain |
| 2      | 1    | N-S     | 30                       | 1.9m  | 0.33                | 0.52         |                               |
| 3      | 1    | E-W     | 30                       | 1.9m  | 0.23                | 0.6          | Made up ground, E. end        |
| 4      | 1    | E-W     | 32                       | 1.9m  | 0.36                | 0.51         | Extended slightly             |
| 5      | 1    | N-S     | 28.5                     | 1.9m  | 0.4                 | 0.53         |                               |
| 6      | 1    | E-W     | 27                       | 1.9m  | 0.32                | 0.41         | Land drain                    |
| 7      | 1    | N-S     | 31.1                     | 1.9m  | 0.37                | 0.5          | Land drain                    |
| 8      | 1    | E-W     | 30                       | 1.9m  | 0.38                | 0.44         |                               |

|    |   |       |      |      |      |      |   |
|----|---|-------|------|------|------|------|---|
| 9  | 1 | N-S   | 32   | 1.9m | 0.3  | 0.42 | N end rotated 3m to W, Extended slightly, land drain, water service |
| 10 | 1 | E-W   | 30.1 | 1.9m | 0.37 | 0.44 | Land drain  |
| 11 | 1 | N-S   | 30.1 | 1.9m | 0.36 | 0.42 |   |
| 12 | 1 | E-W   | 31.5 | 1.9m | 0.3  | 0.41 | Extended slightly, E-W modern field boundary                        |
| 13 | 1 | E-W   | 27   | 1.9m | 0.34 | 0.57 |   |
| 14 | 1 | N-S   | 21.8 | 1.9m | 0.4  | 0.55 | shortened between boundary and T13. Land drains and water service   |
| 15 | 1 | E-W   | 27   | 1.9m | 0.39 | 0.53 |   |
| 16 | 1 | N-S   | 27   | 1.9m | 0.37 | 0.47 |   |
| 17 | 1 | NE-SW | 21.3 | 1.9m | 0.35 | 0.45 | N end rotated 10m to W, & shortened between boundaries              |
| 18 | 2 | N-S   | 26.5 | 1.9m | 0.37 | 0.43 | shortened between boundary and T20                                  |
| 19 | 2 | NW-SE | 28.3 | 1.9m | 0.23 | 0.4  |   |
| 20 | 2 | E-W   | 29.8 | 1.9m | 0.34 | 0.5  | Land drain  |
| 21 | 2 | N-S   | 29   | 1.9m | 0.32 | 0.42 |   |
| 22 | 2 | NE-SW | 28   | 1.9m | 0.27 | 0.41 | N end rotated 10m to E  |
| 23 | 2 | E-W   | 31.1 | 1.9m | 0.31 | 0.39 | Extended slightly, land drains                                      |

\*Overall average trench length 29.1m



Figure 5: Area 1. Trench 10, looking east, and beyond, Trench 11 being machined.



Figure 6: Area 2. Trench 19, looking north-west, and beyond, Trenches 18 and 20.

## 7. Discussion and Conclusion

The fieldwork at Stoney Stanton did not identify any archaeological features or finds. The site showed some signs of remnant ridge and furrow in Area 1 (the west of site), but Area 2 had been more deeply ploughed in the modern period (the east of site) so ridge and furrow would probably not have survived here. Small quantities of modern glazed pottery (not retained) were observed in the topsoil, and both stone and ceramic land drains were present. The site is far enough from the village core to be of a rural arable nature. The indications on site are that the heavy land was perhaps only exploited in times of land hunger. There are no indications from this evaluation work of any level of rural settlement activity or of industry in the past.

## 8. Archive

The site archive will be held by Leicestershire Museums Archaeology Collections, with the accession no. XA.8.2013. The archive contains:

- 23 trench recording sheets
- 2 site photographic indices recording sheets
- CD containing digital photographs
- Unbound copy of this report 2013-018
- Thumbnail prints of digital photographs
- 35mm black and white contact sheets and negatives (2 part films)
- Index of these photographs

The report is listed on the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) held by the Archaeological Data Service at the University of York. Available at: <http://oasis.ac.uk/>

|                                    | <b>OASIS entry summary</b>   |
|------------------------------------|--|
| OASIS ID                           | universi1-166162   |
| Project Name                       | Huncote Road, Stoney Stanton, Leicestershire   |
| Summary                            | An Archaeological Evaluation was carried out on land to the east of Huncote Road, Stoney Stanton, Leicestershire. No archaeological features or finds were recovered during this work, with only modern material and land drains being identified. XA.8.2013 |
| Project Type                       | Evaluation   |
| Project Manager                    | Patrick Clay   |
| Project Supervisor                 | Wayne Jarvis   |
| Previous/Future work               | Previous: DBA, geophysical survey. Future: none  |
| Current Land Use                   | arable and pasture fields  |
| Development Type                   | Residential  |
| Reason for Investigation           | NPPF Section 12 Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment  |
| Position in the Planning Process   | Condition  |
| Site Co ordinates                  | SP 4911 9565   |
| Start/end dates of field work      | 28/01/13 to 31/01/13   |
| Archive Recipient                  | Leicestershire Museums Archaeology Collections   |
| Study Area                         | 7ha  |
| Associated project reference codes | Museum accession X.A8.2013   |

## 10. Publication

A summary of the work will be submitted for publication in the local archaeological journal *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* and *Rutland Record* in due course. The report has been added to the Archaeology Data Service's (ADS) Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) database held by the University of York.

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ULAS, 2013, *WSI: Written scheme of investigation for archaeological work. Job title: Land west off Huncote Road, Stoney Stanton, Leicestershire.* ULAS Report

## **12. Acknowledgements**

The fieldwork was undertaken on behalf of Jelson ltd and was carried out by Wayne Jarvis, with Stephen Baker of ULAS. Patrick Clay also of ULAS managed the project. Teresa Hawtin of Leicestershire County Council Historic & Natural Environment Team monitored the work on behalf of the planning authority.

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