



University of  
**Leicester**

**Archaeological Services**

**An Archaeological Evaluation  
On Land at High Street,  
Fleckney  
Leicestershire**

**NGR: SP 6487 9370**



Roger Kipling

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**An Archaeological Evaluation  
On Land at High Street, Leicestershire  
NGR: SP 6487 9370**

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**For: Bellway Homes Ltd**

Approved by:



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## CONTENTS

Summary .....	3
Introduction.....	3
Site Description, Topography and Geology.....	4
Archaeological and Historical Background .....	4
Aims and Methods .....	5
Results.....	6
Conclusions.....	9
Archive and Publications .....	9
Publication .....	10
Acknowledgements.....	10
Bibliography .....	10
Oasis Information.....	10

## FIGURES

Figure 1: Site Location (Scale 1:50 000) .....	4
Figure 2: Evaluation trenches location plan.....	6
Figure 3: Trench 1: view looking north-west (1m & 2m scales).....	7
Figure 4: Trench 3; view looking south-west; 1m & 2m scales .....	7
Figure 5: Trench 5: view north-west (1m & 2m scales .....	8
Figure 6: View west across site from Trench 5 .....	9

## TABLES

Table 1: Trench details.....	9
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## **An Archaeological Evaluation on Land at High Street, Fleckney, Leicestershire**

**[NGR: SP 6487 9370]**

Roger Kipling

### **Summary**

*An archaeological evaluation was undertaken in November 2012 by University of Leicester Archaeological Services on behalf of Bellway Homes East Midlands Ltd. The fieldwork was a pre-determination requirement on a proposed planning application for residential development on land east of High Street and south of Leicester Road, Fleckney, Leicestershire, in order that the potential impact of the development on such remains may be assessed by the Planning Authority and, if necessary, an appropriate mitigation strategy put in place.*

*The archaeological evaluation at High Street, Fleckney, revealed no archaeological evidence, with the exception of ephemeral possible medieval plough furrows.*

*The site archive will be deposited with the Leicestershire County Council under the accession number X.A108.2012.*

### **Introduction**

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken on land to the east of High Street, Fleckney, Leicestershire. A desk-based assessment (Clay 2012) had been undertaken, whilst the Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record (HER) has indicated that the part of the application area lies within the medieval village core (MLE1490). Earthwork remains were known to be present immediately south-east of the area. Therefore there was moderate potential for medieval remains to be present within the application area while the potential for other periods remained unknown.

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

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

Fleckney lies approximately 8 miles south of Leicester and 7 miles north-west of Market Harborough. The application area is located east of High Street and south of Leicester Road (Figure 1).

The assessment area consists of approximately 0.97ha of land. The Ordnance Survey Geological Survey of Great Britain, Sheet 170 (Market Harborough) indicates that the underlying drift geology consists of glacial drift (boulder clay). The site lies at a height of c.106m O.D on relatively flat land.

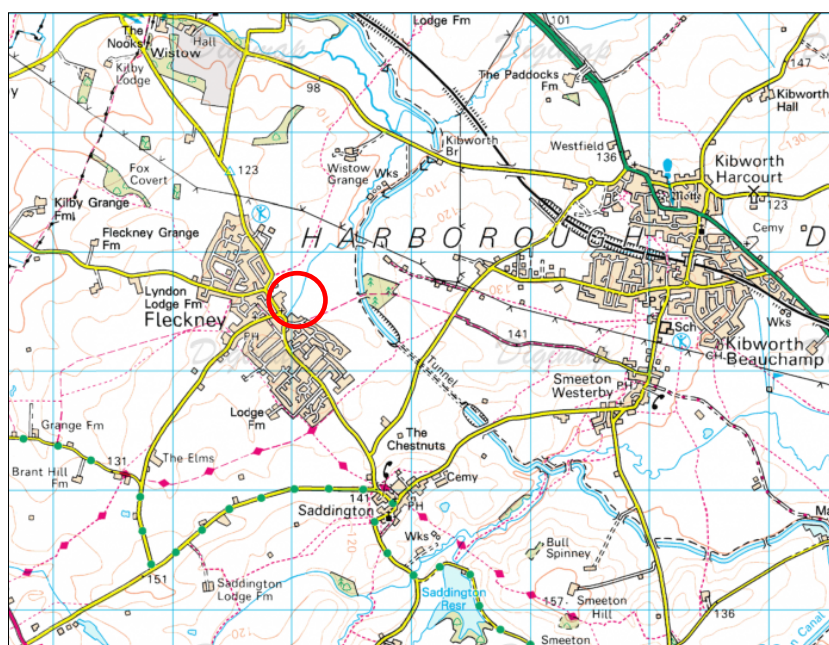


Figure 1: Site Location (Scale 1:50 000)

Reproduced from the Landranger OS map 141 Kettering and Corby 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 10002186.

### Archaeological and Historical Background

A desk-based assessment had previously been undertaken (Clay 2012), whilst the Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record (HER) had indicated that part of the application area lies within the medieval village core (**MLE1490**), with earthwork remains present immediately south-east of the area. Hence there was deemed to be moderate potential for medieval remains to be present within the application area, whilst the potential for other periods remained unknown.

### *Prehistoric*

The Leicestershire Historic Environment Record (HER) includes a reference to a Middle Bronze Age (1500-1000 BC) looped spearhead (**MLE6315**). This is the earliest known find from Fleckney. This is likely to be a stray find but it is not clear whether associated archaeological features may exist.

### *Medieval*

The majority of HER references for Fleckney document the presence of medieval remains. The Church of St. Nicholas on Main Street has Norman features, although much of the present church was rebuilt in 1869-70 (**MLE12834**). Medieval earthworks thought to represent early village settlement are to be found at the Cedars (**MLE1486** and **MLE1490**) immediately south of the application area. Cedar Farm contained typical Midlands farm buildings dating from the 18th-20th century which have now been re-developed (**MLE10552**). The earthworks of a medieval village fishpond are located south-west of the village centre (**MLE1489**). Pottery from medieval cooking pots was discovered west of the village hall (**MLE6713**).

## **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 c. 300m<sup>2</sup> of trenching, the equivalent of four 30m x 1.6m trenches and four 15m x 30 trenches. This was accordingly undertaken, although a lack of access to the triangle of land in the north-west corner of the site necessitated the relocation of one of the trenches (Trench 8) to the southern field.

Excavation was undertaken using a JCB mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.6m wide toothless ditching bucket, with topsoil and overburden removed carefully in level spits, under continuous archaeological supervision.

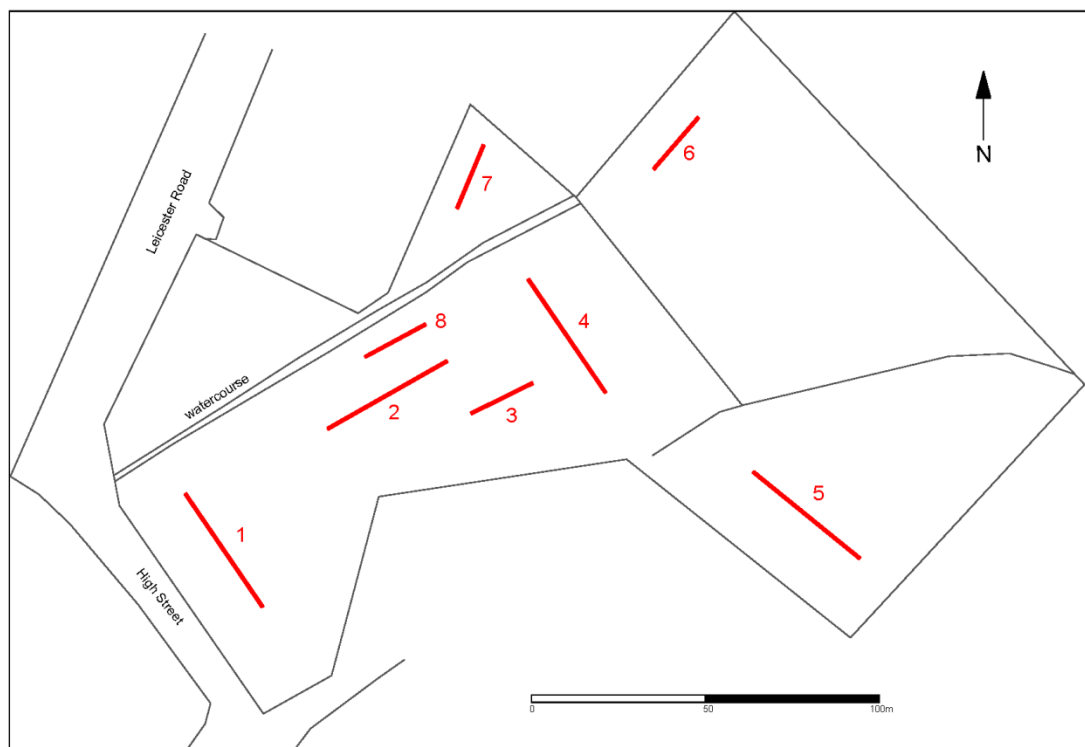


Figure 2: Evaluation trenches location plan

## Results

The eight trial trenches, measuring 15m (Trenches 3, 6, 7 & 8) and 30m (Trenches 1, 2, 4 & 5) x 1.6m, were positioned in order to provide an even, representative coverage of the area of development.

**Trench 1** (Figure 3), positioned at the western end of the site parallel with High Street, measured 29m x 1.60m x 0.70m-1.10m deep; a 0.20m-0.25m depth of dark greyish brown clayey loam topsoil overlay 0.40m-0.70m of light reddish brown clay loam subsoil. An underlying yellow-brown natural clay was revealed at the western end of the trench, with a 3m-wide possible medieval plough furrow identified midway along its length. The remainder of the trench was occupied by modern brick rubble, possibly an attempt at ground stabilisation of a heavily waterlogged area of the site.



Figure 3: Trench 1: view looking north-west (1m & 2m scales)

In the central area, **Trenches 2-4, 7 & 8** (Figure 4), measuring between 0.35m and 0.95m in depth, revealed the same sequence of topsoil, subsoil and pale yellow-brown natural clay. Possible plough furrows were identified in Trenches 2 and 3.



Figure 4: Trench 3; view looking south-west; 1m & 2m scales



A single 15m x 1.60m trench, (**Trench 6**) in the north-east field, targeting the area of the proposed balancing pond, again produced 0.30m-0.35m of topsoil, 0.30m-0.35m of subsoil and an underlying pale grey brown natural clay. There were no indications of archaeological deposits. The bases of all seven trenches coincided with the height of the natural water table. A final trench was opened on marginally higher ground in the south-east field (**Trench 5**); (Figure 5: Trench 5: view north-west (1m & 2m scales) Figure 5, Figure 6). Whilst the same topsoil and subsoil sequence was the same as encountered in the other trenches, natural clay was markedly different, with a greater predominance of grey mottling and chalk inclusions towards the eastern, higher end of the trench.



Figure 5: Trench 5: view north-west (1m & 2m scales)



Figure 6: View west across site from Trench 5

TRENCH	ORIENTATION	LENGTH AND WIDTH (metres)	DESCRIPTION	DEPTH (MIN-MAX metres)
1	NW-SE	30 x 1.60	Topsoil 0.20-0.30m, subsoil 0.40-0.70m. No archaeological finds or deposits.	0.70-1.10
2	NE-SW	30 x 1.80	Topsoil 0.30-0.50m, subsoil 0.10-0.15m. Possible plough furrow.	0.55-0.80
3	NW-SE	15 x 1.80	Topsoil 0.30-0.35m, subsoil 0.30-0.40m. Two possible plough furrows.	0.70-0.80
4	NW-SE	30 x 1.8	Topsoil 0.25-0.40m, subsoil 0.05-0.10m. No archaeological finds or deposits.	0.35-0.60
5	NW-SE	30 x 1.8	Topsoil 0.18-0.25m, subsoil 0.28-0.38m. No archaeological finds or deposits.	0.53-0.65
6	NE-SW	15 x 1.6	Topsoil 0.30-0.35m, subsoil 0.35-0.40m. No archaeological finds or deposits.	0.80-0.85
7	NE-SW	15 x 1.6	Topsoil 0.20-0.30m, subsoil 0.40-0.65. No archaeological finds or deposits.	0.80-0.90
8	NE-SW	15 x 1.6	Topsoil 0.35-0.40m, subsoil 0.25-0.50m. No archaeological finds or deposits.	0.70-0.95

Table 1: Trench details

## Conclusions

The archaeological evaluation at Leicester Roads, Fleckney, revealed no archaeological evidence, with the exception of ephemeral indications of medieval plough furrows. It appears that the area was part of the open fields around Fleckney in the medieval period but there is no evidence of activity in the area during earlier periods.

## Archive and Publications

The site archive (XA.108.2012), consisting of paper and photographic records, will be deposited with Leicestershire County Council.

The archive consists of:

- 8 trench recording sheets
- photographic record indices
- 40 digital photographs
- A risk assessment form

## Publication

A version of the summary (see above) will appear in due course in the *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society*.

## Acknowledgements

Roger Kipling and Anthony Gnanaratnam of ULAS undertook the archaeological evaluation on behalf of Bellway Homes East Midlands Ltd. The project was managed by Patrick Clay.

## Bibliography

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

Clay, P., 2012 *An archaeological desk-based assessment for land east of High Street, Fleckney, Leicestershire* ULAS Report 2012-141

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

## Oasis Information

Project Name	High Street, Fleckney, Leicestershire
Project Type	Archaeological evaluation
Project Manager	Patrick Clay
Project Supervisor	Roger Kipling
Previous/Future work	Development subject to planning permission
Current Land Use	Pasture
Development Type	Residential
Reason for Investigation	PPS5
Position in the Planning Process	Pre-determination
Site Co ordinates	NGR SP 6487 9370
Start/end dates of field work	November 2012
Archive Recipient	Leicestershire County Council
Study Area	unknown

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