



University of Leicester

Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological evaluation by trial
trenching at Stoughton Road Playing
Fields, Oadby, Leicestershire.
NGR: SK 629 015.**



John Thomas

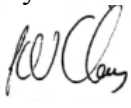
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John Thomas

For: University of Leicester.

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An Archaeological evaluation by trial trenching at Stoughton Road Playing Fields, Oadby, Leicestershire. NGR: SK 629 015.

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Summary

An archaeological field evaluation was undertaken on land at Stoughton Road Playing Fields, Oadby, Leicestershire by the University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on the 28th & 30th of January 2013. Six trial trenches were excavated in response to proposals for a new football pitch, as proposed under Planning Application number 11/00473/FUL.

The results of the work were negative, with all six trenches containing only topsoil and subsoil layers overlying natural clays. No archaeological artefacts, layers or cut features were revealed.

The archive will be deposited with Leicestershire County Council under Accession Number XA21.2013.

Introduction

In accordance with PPS5 (Planning and the Historic Environment, 2010), this document presents the results of an archaeological field evaluation (AFE) on land at Stoughton Road Playing Fields, Oadby, Leicestershire (Figure 1). The evaluation was undertaken by University of Leicester Archaeological Services in response to development proposals for a new football pitch (Planning Application No. 11/00473/FUL).

Following Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS5) Policy HE6, Leicestershire County Council, Historic and Natural Environment Team (LCCHNET), as archaeological advisors to the planning authority, required an evaluation by trial trenching.

The proposed development (SK 629 015) is located approximately 6.4km east of Leicester city centre, in the Parish of Oadby (Figure 1). The site lies adjacent to the B582 Stoughton Road, south of an existing complex of playing fields, and comprises an area of *c.*4 hectares, within which will be constructed a new football pitch, measuring *c.*100m x 60m with a 3m margin on all sides, with associated drainage facilities (Figure 2).

The site lies at *c.*110m OD on ground falling gently to the north-east. The geological mapping indicates that the underlying geology is boulder clay.

The site has been highlighted as having potential for the presence of buried archaeological remains based upon an assessment of the Leicestershire & Rutland Historic Environment Record (HER). As a consequence the Planning Archaeologist (PA) for Leicestershire County Council recommended the need for a phase of archaeological investigation to mitigate the impact of the development. Subsequent discussions between LCC and ULAS, acting for the developers, agreed a variation to the mitigation scheme, comprising a programme of trial trenching.

The site was evaluated with six 30m long trial trenches that were located across the footprint of the new football pitch to provide a *c.*5% sample of the affected area.

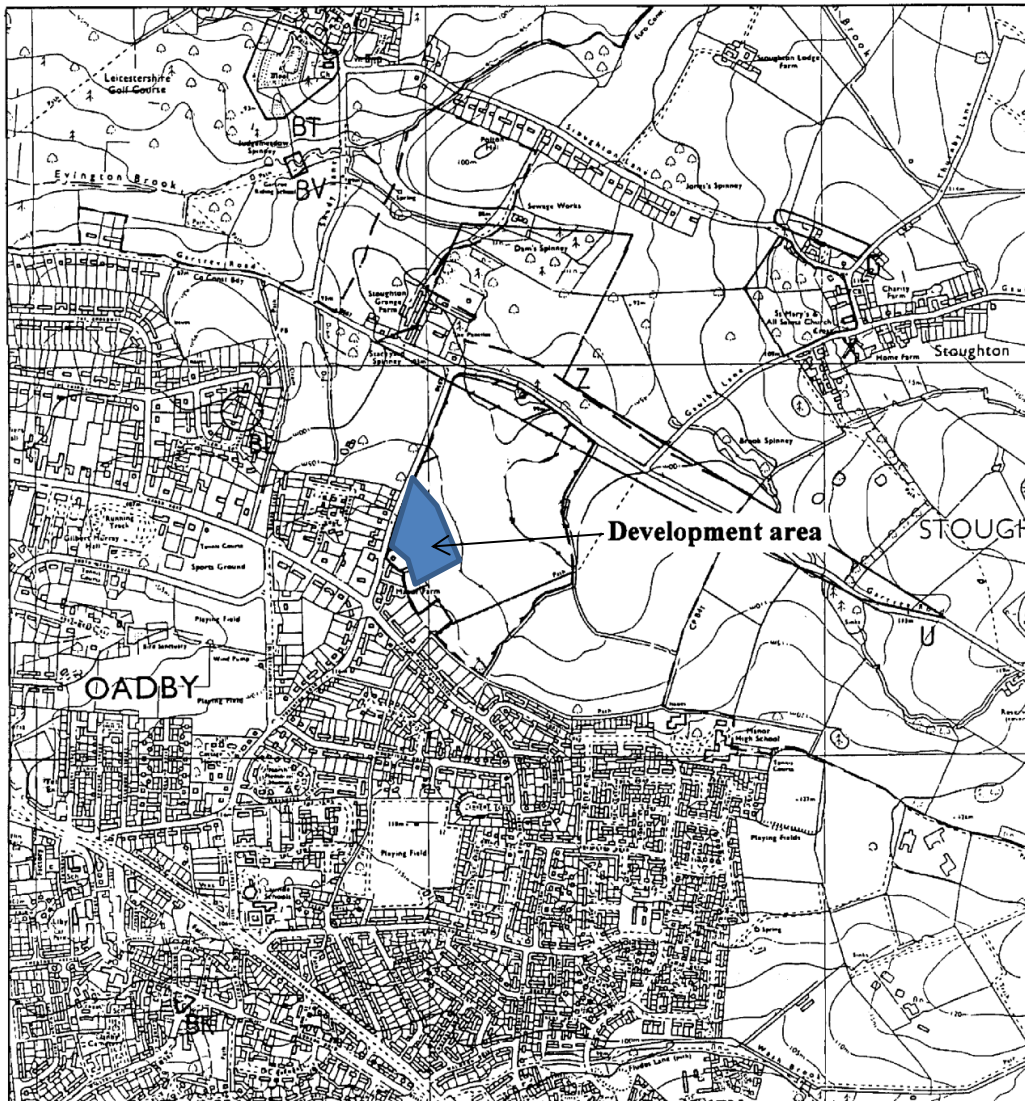


Figure 1 Location of site (in box)
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Figure 2 Location of proposed new football pitch

Background

The Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record (HER) shows that the site is situated within an area of archaeological interest, with recorded finds and sites indicating a considerable length of human occupation in the vicinity.

The site lies close to the Roman Via Devana (Gartree) Road, the modern course of which marks the northern boundary of the current playing fields complex.

In the early 1980s metal detecting on the site of the University Playing Fields Development (immediately north of the current development) recovered a number of artefacts including fourteen coins of 1st to 4th century AD date, three brooches, a bronze votive axe and a bracelet close to a pond along the northern boundary of the field.

In 1993 Leicestershire Museums Archaeological Survey Team completed a programme of fieldwalking of an area around and including the current development site (Liddle 1994). The archaeological material recovered from this work represented a range of periods and included prehistoric flints and Roman, Anglo Saxon & medieval pottery. In terms of the current development area concentrations of prehistoric flint were recovered from the area itself and the field immediately east. Concentrations of Roman and medieval pottery were also collected from the fields immediately east of the development site.

In 1996 part of an important Roman site was revealed and excavated during construction of the University Playing Fields Development. The site was situated close to the Gartree Road approximately 340m NE of the proposed development area, and comprised a circular cobbled structure, a large enclosure and associated post holes and ditches to either side. Further stone foundations indicated the presence of another

large Roman building but this was not excavated due to wet conditions at the time (Ripper 1996). Material recovered included Roman pottery, building material, metal finds and an inhumation burial associated with one of the ditches.

Archaeological Objectives

The main objectives of the evaluation, as set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological work (WSI) (ULAS 2013) were:

- To identify the presence/absence of any archaeological deposits identified by the geophysical survey.
- To identify the presence or absence of any archaeological deposits and remains not previously identified by geophysical survey.
- 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. From this an appropriate method of dealing with any archaeological deposits can be formulated or an appropriate mitigation strategy developed.

Trial trenching is an intrusive form of evaluation that will demonstrate the existence of earth-fast archaeological features that may exist within the area.

Methodology

All work followed the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) Code of Conduct in accordance with their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (2008).

Topsoil and subsoil was removed in level spits, under continuous archaeological supervision, down to the uppermost archaeological deposits by a JCB mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. All spoil heaps were inspected for unstratified archaeological material. All trenches were excavated to a width of 1.6m and down to the top of archaeological deposits or the natural substratum in the absence of any archaeological deposits. After recording, the trenches were backfilled and levelled during the course of the evaluation.

Trenches were examined by hand cleaning and any archaeological deposits located were planned at an appropriate scale and sample-excavated by hand as appropriate to establishing the stratigraphic and chronological sequence. All plans were tied into the Ordnance Survey National Grid. Spot heights were taken as appropriate.

Each trench was recorded on a standard ULAS pro-forma trench recording sheet noting soil depths and descriptions. One longitudinal face and the base of each trench was recorded in this way. Trench locations were recorded and tied in to the Ordnance Survey National Grid.

A photographic record of the investigations was prepared illustrating in both detail and general context the principal features and finds discovered. Colour digital and black and white 35mm photographs were taken throughout the evaluation. The

photographic record also included 'working shots' to illustrate more generally the nature of the archaeological operation mounted.

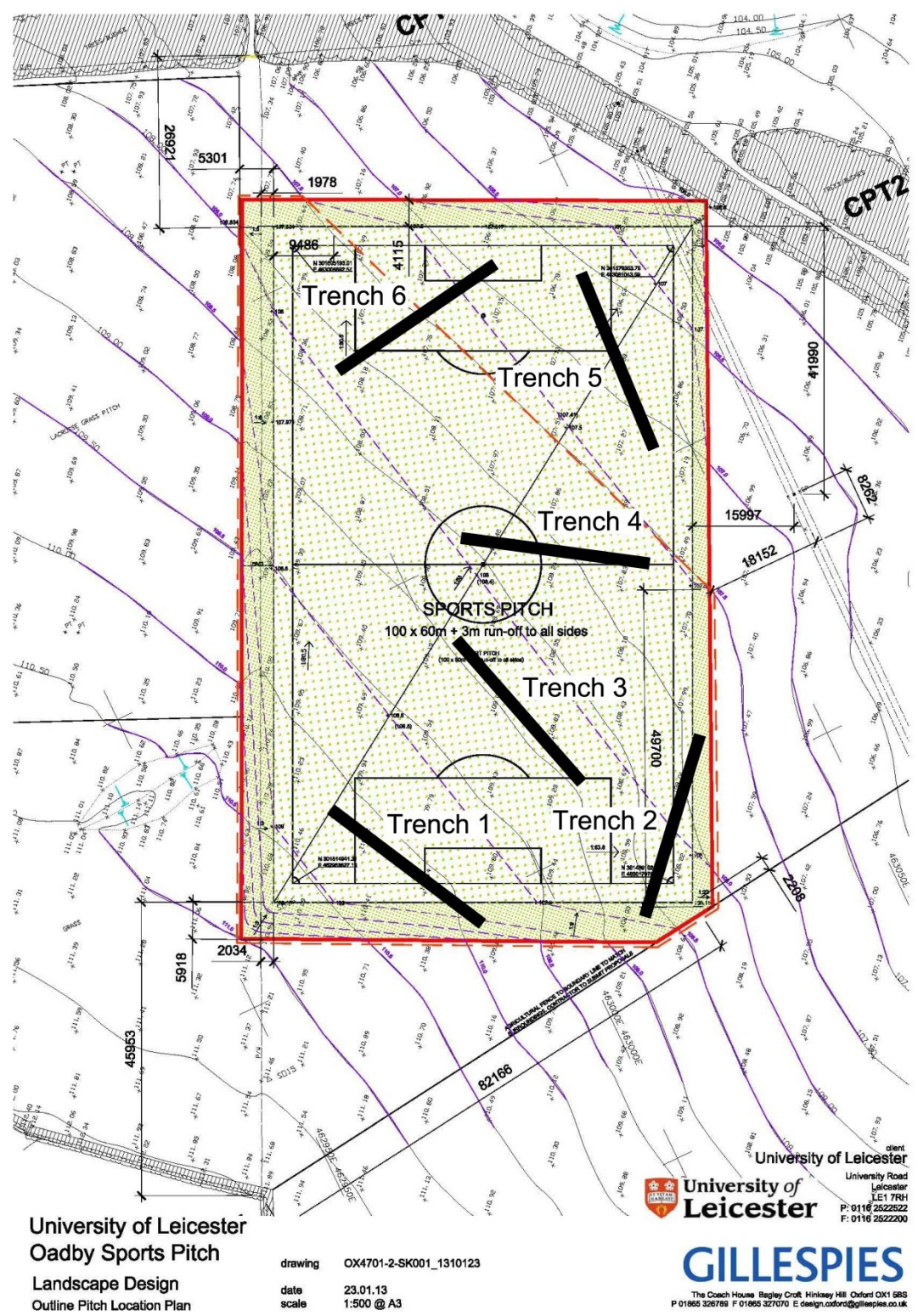


Figure 3 Trench Location plan (North to top, not to scale - adapted from mapping supplied by University of Leicester & Gillespies Ltd.).

Results

The six trenches were laid out to provide the best possible coverage of the development site (Figure 3). A slight restriction on available space was caused by an overhead electrical cable which crossed the NE corner of the proposed pitch, but this did not hinder the overall spread of trenches and coverage of the evaluation greatly. All trenches measured *c.*30m in length x 1.6m wide.

Trench 1 (Figure 4)

Trench 1 was located towards the south-western corner of the application area on a NW to SE alignment. Natural subsoil, consisting mainly of yellow/brown clay *c.*0.40m below the present ground level (*c.*108mOD). Above this was a layer of dark yellowish brown silty clay topsoil that varied in thickness between *c.*0.27m and 0.36m. No subsoil was present in this trench. No archaeological features or finds were revealed in this trench.



Figure 4 Trench 1 viewed from the south.

Trench 2 (Figure 5)

The second trench was located in the south-east corner of the site on a NNE - SSW alignment. Natural subsoil was revealed *c.*0.50m below the present ground level (*c.*108mOD) and consisted of yellowish brown clay, as in Trench 1. Above this was topsoil layer consisting of dark yellowish brown silty clay measuring between *c.*0.20 – 0.30m in thickness. As with Trench 1 there was no subsoil or archaeological remains present in Trench 2.



Figure 5 Trench 2 viewed from the west – the limestone ‘rafts’ can be seen in the foreground and the lighter sands in the middle distance.

Trench 3 (Figure 6)

Trench 3 was situated to the north of Trench 2 and lay on a NW-SE alignment. This trench had an average depth of *c.*0.45m beneath the present ground level (*c.*108m OD). A layer of topsoil (*c.*0.30m thick) and a thin layer of yellowish brown subsoil (*c.*0.03 thick) overlay the natural substrata which consisted of yellowish brown silty clay with chalky/limestone inclusions. No archaeological features or finds were revealed.



Figure 6 Trench 3 viewed from the south.

Trench 4 (Figure 7)

Trench 4 located on an east-west alignment near the centre of the development area. Natural subsoil in this trench lay at a depth of *c.*0.38m beneath ground level (*c.*107m OD) and consisted of yellowish brown clay. As with Trench 3, this was covered by a thin layer of subsoil (between 0.05m and 0.07m thick) and a topsoil layer with an average depth of 0.30m. No finds or archaeological features were revealed in the trench.



Figure 7 Trench 4 viewed from the west.

Trench 5 (Figure 8)

Trench 5 lay on a NNW-SSE alignment in the northeast corner of the development area at the bottom of a shallow slope. Natural subsoil in this trench was revealed at a depth of up to 0.54m below the modern ground level (c.107m OD) and consisted of yellowish brown clay with chalky/limestone patches. A layer of orange brown silty clay (c.0.20m thick) overlay the natural clay, representing either a subsoil layer or a thin deposit of colluvium. Above this was a layer of dark yellowish brown topsoil measuring c.0.30m thick. No archaeological finds or features were revealed in this trench.



Figure 8 Trench 5 viewed from the south

Trench 6 (Figure 9)

Trench 6 was located in the northwestern corner of the development area and lay on a NE-SW alignment. A similar sequence of yellowish brown natural clay, overlain by a thin, orange brown subsoil/colluvial layer (c.0.05m thick) and a dark yellowish brown topsoil (c.0.30m thick) was encountered in this trench. No archaeological finds or features were revealed.



Figure 9 Trench 6 viewed from the west

Discussion

The investigation trenches were located across the application area in order to provide a reasonable coverage of the site and assess the potential for archaeological survival.

No archaeological features were revealed in any of the trenches and there was also no evidence for human activity in the form of stray artefacts. A number of the trenches revealed topsoil and natural clay but no sub/ploughsoil which might be expected on an agricultural field of this type, suggesting that more recent deep ploughing may have removed the lower soil horizon. Inspection of gardens backing on to the development area, south of the trenching, revealed well-preserved upstanding remains of ridge and furrow which stopped abruptly at the boundary with the development area. This suggests that similar earthworks may have been ploughed flat over time, possibly removing any archaeological evidence that may have survived.

This investigation has revealed no indication that significant archaeological remains survive on the site.

Acknowledgements

The fieldwork was carried out by John Thomas and Leon Hunt. ULAS would like to thank Ian Wakeling of Bidwells Ltd. and David Vernon of University of Leicester for their co-operation and assistance during the work. The project was managed by Richard Buckley.

Site Archive and Results

The archive consists of:

This report,

6 pro-forma trench recording sheets,

1x 35mm black and white negative film and corresponding contact sheet,

13 colour digital photographs,

Photographic record sheets,

1 compact disc of this report and the digital photographs.

The site archive will be deposited with Leicestershire County Council Archaeology Store under the archaeological accession number XA21.2013. A summary of the work will be submitted for publication in the *Transactions of The Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* in due course. An OASIS record will also be produced and this report will be uploaded on to the Archaeology Data Service website.

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12.02.2013

Appendix I OASIS Information

OASIS INFORMATION	
Project Name	Stoughton Road Playing Fields, Oadby
Project Type	Evaluation
Project Manager	R Buckley
Project Supervisor	J Thomas
Previous/Future work	none, unknown future work
Current Land Use	Arable Field
Development Type	Recreational
Reason for Investigation	Planning Condition
Position in the Planning Process	Preliminary
Site Co ordinates	SK 629 015
Start/end dates of field work	28 & 30.02.12
Archive Recipient	LCCHNET
Study Area	0.6ha

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