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Archaeological Services

A Topographic Earthwork Survey and Trial Trench Evaluation at Daventry Road, Staverton, Northamptonshire.

NGR: SP 54172 61063

Roger Kipling & Gavin Speed

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A Topographic Earthwork Survey and Trial Trench Evaluation at Daventry Road, Staverton, Northamptonshire. NGR: SP 5417261063

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For: C.A. Baker

Planning Ref: DA/2013/0402

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Summary

A topographic survey and archaeological evaluation were undertaken in October 2013 by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on behalf of C.A. Baker. The fieldwork was a requirement for a proposed planning application for residential development on land at Daventry Road, Staverton, Northamptonshire in order to determine the potential impact of the development on any archaeological remains.

The survey of the ridge and furrow within the proposed development demonstrated that the system was spaced at around 4.9m, and is probably medieval in origin. The excavation did not reveal any archaeological deposits or features with the exception of an undated gully and post hole and the stone foundation of a wall. The site archive will be held by ULAS under the accession number NH_STAV 2013 until a recipient organisation for Northamptonshire has been established.

Introduction

An archaeological investigation was undertaken at Daventry Road, Staverton, Northamptonshire. The application site lies within an area of archaeological interest, as indicated by its location on the eastern edge of the area of historic settlement. To the north, cropmarks and earthworks of probable medieval house platforms and enclosures are recorded. A late medieval coin weight is also recorded from this field.

In consequence the Principal Planning Archaeologist (PPA), Historic & Natural Environment Team (HNET), Northamptonshire County Council, recommended the need for archaeological investigation comprising a topographic survey of the standing earthworks followed by an evaluation by trial trenching. The investigation was required in order to provide a record of the earthworks and to provide preliminary indications of the significance and extent of any heritage assets in order that the potential impact of the development on such remains may be assessed by the Planning Authority. The agreed scheme was set out in a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI; Score, V. 2013).

The earthwork survey took place on 22nd October 2013 and the trial trench evaluation was undertaken on 23rd October 2013. The fieldwork followed the Written Scheme of Investigation, as detailed in Score 2013.

The archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework Section 12: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

(DCLG March 2012). All archaeological work followed the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) Code of Conduct (2012) 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

The proposed development area lies north and west of Daventry Road, the A425, at the roundabout with Badby Lane. The development area is bounded to the west by residential properties, to the northwest by the churchyard and to the north by an open field (Figs 1 and 2). The site is currently a paddock.

Topographically the site is reasonably level at an approximate height of 170m OD, with a dip at the south end, centred on grid ref. SP 54172 61063. The geology maps indicate that the site contains Marlstone Rock Formation.

Figure 1: Site Location (Scale 1:50 000)
contains Ordnance Survey® data.

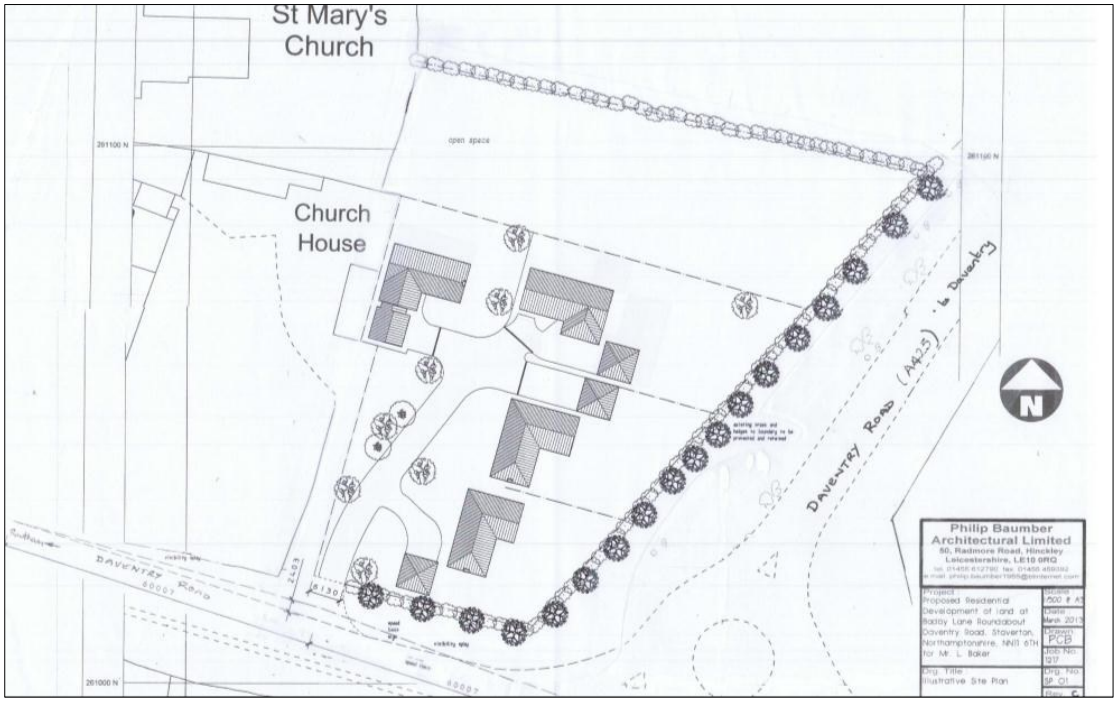

Figure 2: Plan of site with proposed development (supplied by client)

Archaeological and Historical Background

The site lies on the eastern edge of the area of historic settlement. To the north, cropmarks and earthworks of probable medieval house platforms and enclosures are recorded. A late medieval coin weight is also recorded from this field. The map evidence suggests that the field has been pasture on the edge of the village since at least the 19th century (Fig. 3).

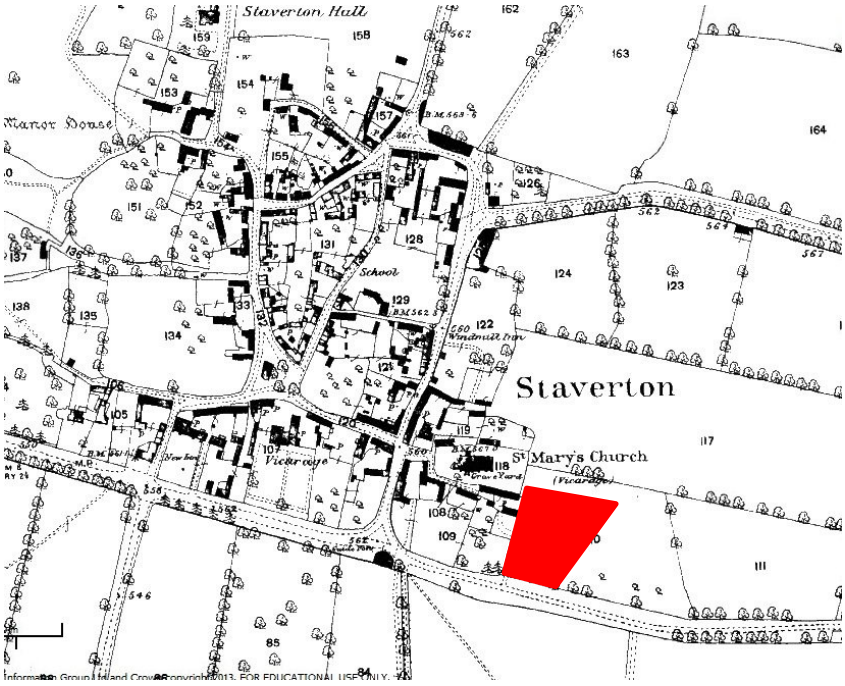

Figure 3: 1st edition 1885 Ordnance Survey map of the area.

The site contains well-preserved ridge and furrow earthworks, remains of the pre-Inclosure open field system. The presence of ridge and furrow does not preclude survival of remains of earlier periods. The site's location close to the church also means that outlying medieval burials might be expected. The land is currently under pasture although livestock have been recently relocated. The grass was reasonably short allowing good visibility of the existing earthworks.

Aims and Objectives

The aims of the archaeological investigation were to:

- To determine and understand nature and extent of surviving archaeological remains on the site in their cultural and environmental setting
- To characterise more fully the date range and significance of any archaeological deposits to be affected by the development proposals
- To excavate and record significant archaeological deposits which will be destroyed or damaged by groundworks associated with the development.
- To excavate and record significant archaeological deposits whose future integrity may be compromised by groundworks associated with the construction of the development.
- To consider the effectiveness of the evaluation phase
- To produce an archive, report and publication of the 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 Field Evaluation*, the standard policy and practice of ULAS. The University of Leicester's Health and Safety policy was adhered to.

Methodology

Earthwork Survey Methodology

A Topcon Hiper V d GPS base station was established centrally within the survey area. The base station recorded available satellites for 3hrs+. A Topcon Hiper V Rover receiver with FC 100 data recorded was used to log points.

The following Data Sets were recorded:

- Data was recorded at regular intervals along the apexes of ridges and the bases of the furrows.
- Data was recorded at 0.2m intervals along a single profile which transected the line of the ridge and furrow.

- Sufficient field boundaries were recorded were also recorded to facilitate tying of the survey to the National Grid in the event of errors in coordinate reduction.

Processing*:*

- Base station data was processed using Magnet Tools and the survey processed and adjusted using Magnet Tools.
- Coordinate points and codes were loaded into n4ce (2.00) and further exported as points and/or dxf files for further interpretation and presentation in TurboCad19.
- The recorded profiles are reproduced without further processing.

Archaeological Evaluation Methodology

The programme of archaeological evaluation comprised five trenches covering each of the building plots and the access road, each 15-20m long by 1.6m wide. 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 (Fig. 6).

Results

Earthwork Survey Results (Figs 4-5)

A single set of ridge and furrow were surveyed within the study area. These consisted of ten ridges and nine furrows. On the west side the ground was broadly level, the southern end of the field sloped down from the ridge and furrow into a flat and level area.

The northern set of furrows were spaced at intervals between 7.5 and 8.5m. The average distance between the recorded furrows was 8.2m. The system is mostly straight, with a slight curve at the west-end. From the recorded profile (Fig. 5), the depth between furrow base and ridge top was 0.33m.

The plough earthworks terminate on the west-side naturally to a flattish area. A large ditch was observed in the far north-west corner of the field, adjacent to the church graveyard. The earthworks on the east-side have been truncated by the recent construction of the A425 road to Daventry, the field was once part of a much larger field (Fig. 3).

Figure 4: Plan showing earthworks

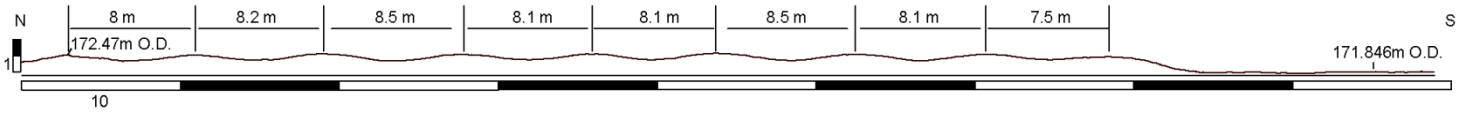

Figure 5: Profile across the ridge and furrow earthworks.

Archaeological Evaluation Results

Of the five trenches excavated, archaeological remains were encountered in just two.

TRENCH	ORIENTATION	LENGTH AND WIDTH (metres)	DESCRIPTION	DEPTH (MIN-MAX metres)
1	NW-SE	20m x 1.60m	Topsoil 0.13-0.20m, subsoil 0.15-0.20m. Gully [01]	0.37-0.43m
2	NE-SW	20m x 1.60m	Topsoil 0.16-0.28m, subsoil 0.24-0.33m. No archaeological features	0.18-0.62m
3	N-S	20m x 1.60m	Topsoil 0.18-0.26m, subsoil 0.18-0.38m. No archaeological features	0.38-0.67m
4	NW-SE	16m x 1.60m	Topsoil 0.20-0.23m, subsoil 0.17-0.28m. No archaeological features	0.26-0.64m
5	NW-SE	20m x 1.60m	Topsoil 0.14-0.22m, subsoil 0.12-0.24m. Post hole [04]	0.43-0.50m

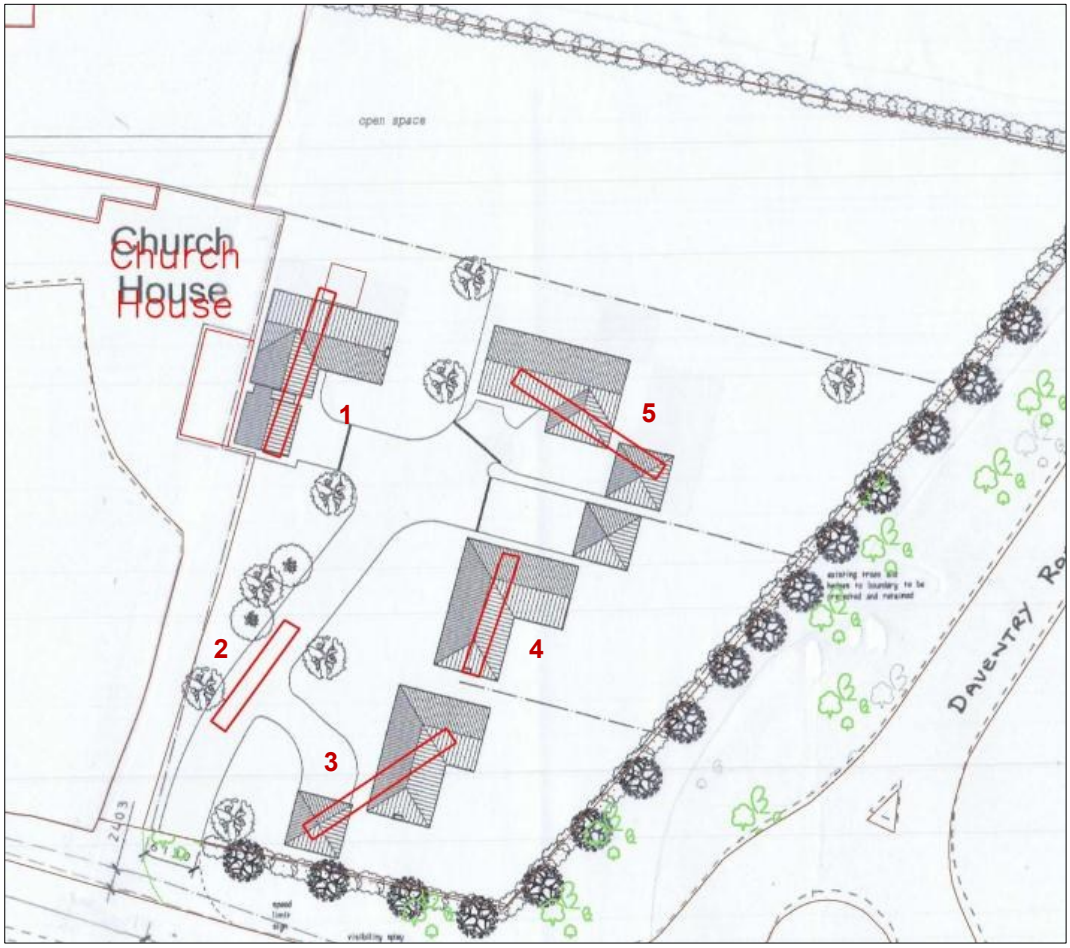

Figure 6: Trench locations

Trench 1 measured 20m x 1.60m, 0.37m-0.43m in depth and was orientated northeast-southwest (Fig. 6). The removal of 0.13m-0.20m of mid grey-brown silty clay topsoil and 0.15m-0.20m of mid grey-brown silty clay subsoil revealed the footings of a limestone and brick wall *c.*2.50m from the southern end of the trench (Figs. 7-8). The wall measured 0.40m wide and crossed the trench on a northwest-southeast alignment. A shallow undated gully [01] was located *c.*16m from the north end of the trench (Figs 9 & 11). The heavily truncated feature measured 0.40m wide and 0.06m deep with an open v-shaped profile and crossed the trench on a northwest-southeast alignment.

Figure 7: Trench 1: general view north (2m scale)

Figure 8: Trench 1: modern wall; view northwest (1m scale)

Figure 9: Trench 1: gully [01]; view northwest (1m scale)

Trench 5, located in the northwest area of the site, revealed a single undated shallow circular post hole or scoop feature [03] measuring 0.42m in diameter and 0.10m deep *c.*3m from the southern end of the trench (Figs 10-11). The reddish-brown silty clay fill (04) produced no finds.

Figure 10: Trench 5: scoop/ post hole [03]; view north (0.5m scale)

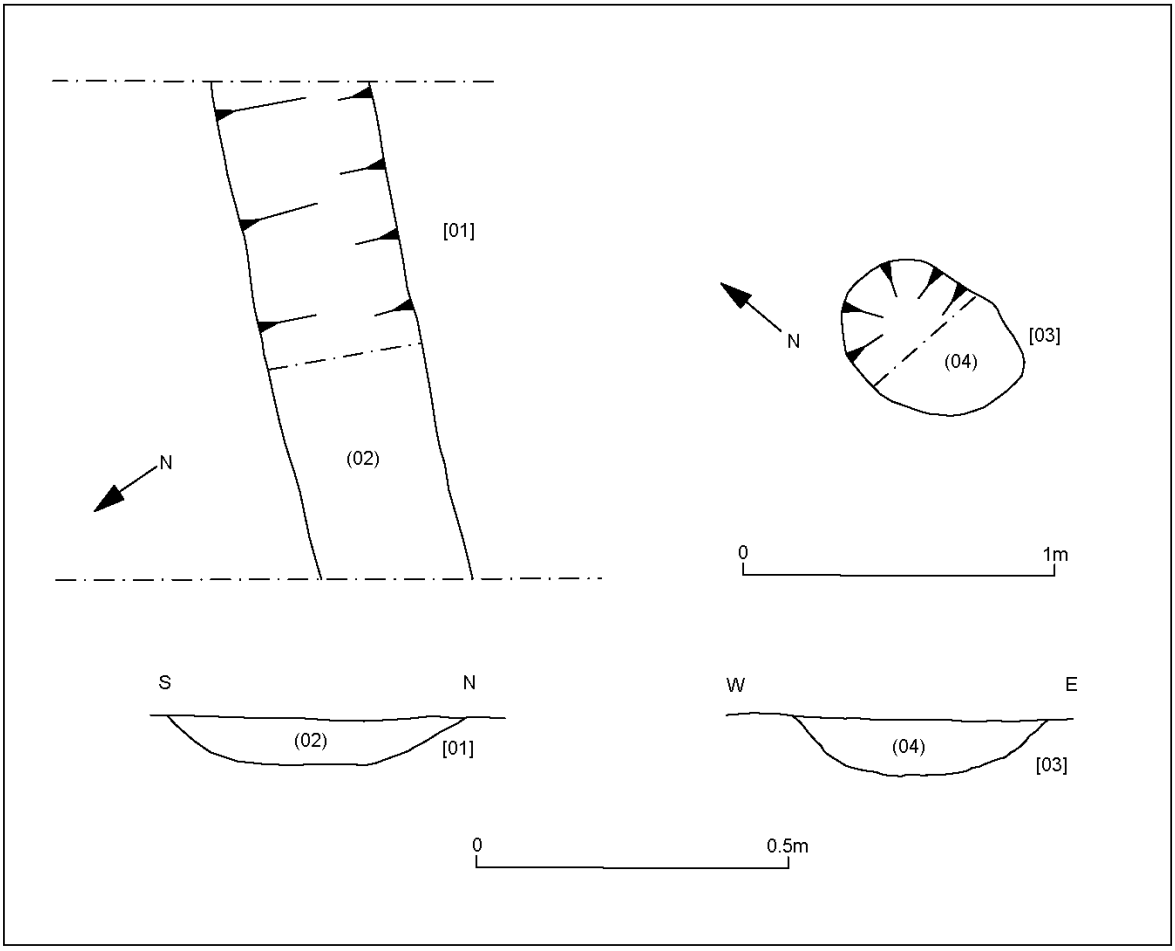

Figure 11: Gully [01] & post hole [03]: plans & sections

The three remaining trenches (**Trenches 2-4**) were archaeologically blank with the exception of furrow bases.

Figure 12: Trench 4: general view northeast (2m scale)

Discussion

Ridge & Furrow Earthworks

The ridge and furrow earthworks are a partly eroded example of medieval and post-medieval strip cultivation. The vertical difference between furrow and ridge may have been up to 1m in height (Hall 1982, 6) when at their maximum. The set is still relatively clear.

Ridge and furrow was formed within the cultivation strips of medieval Open Fields, and several studies have been made (Hall 1982, 1998, Astill 1988). Medieval villages or townships within the Open Field system were surrounded by two or three substantial fields of cultivated land which could be several kilometres across. The ridges, interpreted as intentionally created free-draining seed beds, with the furrows acting as open drains (Hall 1998), were created by ploughing in a clockwise spiral with a plough constantly throwing soil to the right, over many years. Later medieval ploughs were reversible and threw soil in both directions. The fields of a system were usually cultivated on a three year rotation comprising cereals, legumes, and a fallow

year. In the fallow year, the ridges were slightly lowered by ploughing in an anticlockwise direction, to prevent infertile subsoil being ploughed up from the furrows the following year (Hall 1998, 1).

The width of the recorded system on this site was around 8.2m. The average width of medieval ridge and furrow is about 7m (Hall 1982, 5). The length of the system is unclear as the field originally extended further east – prior to the construction of the A425 Daventry road.

The ridge and furrow stops short of the southern boundary where there is a dip in height (Figs 4-5). This may suggest some disturbance in the southern part of the site – perhaps related to the construction of the modern A425 Daventry road.

Archaeological Evaluation

The fieldwork evaluation revealed an undated post-hole and gully and the foundations of a stone wall. There are no indications of any outbuildings on the early OS maps and the wall lies at a different angle to the existing buildings to the west. The presence of brick within the foundations suggests that it is post-medieval in date.

There were no indications that the standing ridge and furrow earthworks were sealing earlier archaeology, which would be consistent with the location of the site on the periphery of the historic village core.

Conclusions

The remains of surviving earthwork ridge and furrow at Daventry Road, Staverton have been recorded by GPS Survey. The archaeological evaluation recorded a stone and brick wall and two undated features.

Archive and Publications

The site archive will be held by ULAS under accession number NH_STAV 2013 until an appropriate recipient organisation is established for Northamptonshire.

The archive consists of:

- 5 trench recording sheets
- 1 A3 drawing sheet
- 27 digital photographs
- 17 monochrome (film) photographs
- A risk assessment form

Acknowledgements

Roger Kipling and Gavin Speed of ULAS undertook the archaeological earthwork survey and trial trench evaluation on behalf of C.A. Baker. The project was managed by Vicki Score.

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Oasis Information

Project Name	Daventry Road, Staverton, Northamptonshire
Project Type	Archaeological earthwork survey and field evaluation
Project Manager	Vicki Score
Project Supervisor	Roger Kipling & Gavin Speed
Previous/Future work	Construction
Current Land Use	Paddock
Development Type	Residential
Reason for Investigation	PPS5
Position in the Planning Process	Post-determination requirement
Site Co ordinates	NGR SP 7373 8825
Start/end dates of field work	22nd & 23rd October 2013
Archive Recipient	Northamptonshire County Council
Study Area	

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