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Leicester**

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**An Archaeological Evaluation
on Land off Barleythorpe Road,
Oakham, Rutland
(SK 8557 0936)**



Roger Kipling

ULAS Report No 2014-022
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Oakham, Rutland
(SK 8557 0936)**

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For: Sainsbury's Supermarkets Ltd.

Checked by Project Manager

Signed:



Date: 05.02.2014

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ULAS Report Number 2014-022
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CONTENTS

Summary	1
Introduction.....	1
Site Description, Topography and Geology.....	2
Archaeological and Historical Background	2
Aims and Objectives	3
Methodology.....	5
Archaeological Trial Trenches.....	5
Results.....	6
Conclusion	10
Archive and Publications	10
Publication	10
Acknowledgements.....	10
Bibliography	11
Oasis Information.....	12

FIGURES

Figure 1: Site Location (Scale 1:50 000)	2
Figure 2: Trench locations in relation to existing buildings; scale 1:500	6
Figure 3: Trench 1; view looking west (1m scale)	7
Figure 4: Trench 2; view looking north (1m scale)	8
Figure 5: Trench 3; view looking south-east (1m scale).....	8
Figure 6: Trench 4; view looking north (1m scale)	9

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Summary

An archaeological trial trench evaluation was undertaken in January 2014 at Barleythorpe Road, Oakham, Rutland, by University of Leicester Archaeological Services on behalf of Sainsbury's Supermarkets Ltd. The fieldwork was undertaken in response to a planning application for a retail development and following a desk-based assessment in order to assess the potential impact of the development on any archaeological remains as may have been present.

The archaeological evaluation at Barleythorpe Road, Oakham, showed considerable evidence of levelling and disturbance and produced no evidence of archaeological activity.

The site archive will be deposited with Rutland County Museum, Oakham.

1. Introduction

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken on the site of the former Oakham High School off Barleythorpe Road, Oakham, Rutland. A desk-based archaeological assessment had confirmed that, although the site is located to the north-west of the medieval core of Oakham, it possessed some potential for the presence of archaeological remains (Clarke and Clay 2012). A number of prehistoric and Roman sites have been located in the immediate vicinity, including Iron Age and Roman settlements, and no archaeological work had previously been undertaken within the application area.

In consequence the planning authority recommended the need for a further phase of archaeological investigation comprising a programme of evaluation trenching. The investigation was required in order to provide an adequate sample of the development area and to assess the likely archaeological impact of the development proposals. The agreed scheme was set out in a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI; ULAS 2013).

The fieldwork specified was intended to provide further indications of the 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 January 2014 and involved the machine excavation of four trial trenches in order to provide the 2% sample of the development area stipulated in the brief.

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 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.

2. Site Description, Topography and Geology

The proposed development comprises the former Oakham High School which is situated to the north-west of the historic core of Oakham, within Oakham parish, in the County of Rutland (SK 8557 0936, Figs. 1 & 2). The Ordnance Survey Geological Survey of Great Britain Sheet 157 indicates that the underlying geology is likely to consist of Marlstone, a mid-yellow brown, ferruginous limestone brash. The site lies at a height of c.106 O.D.

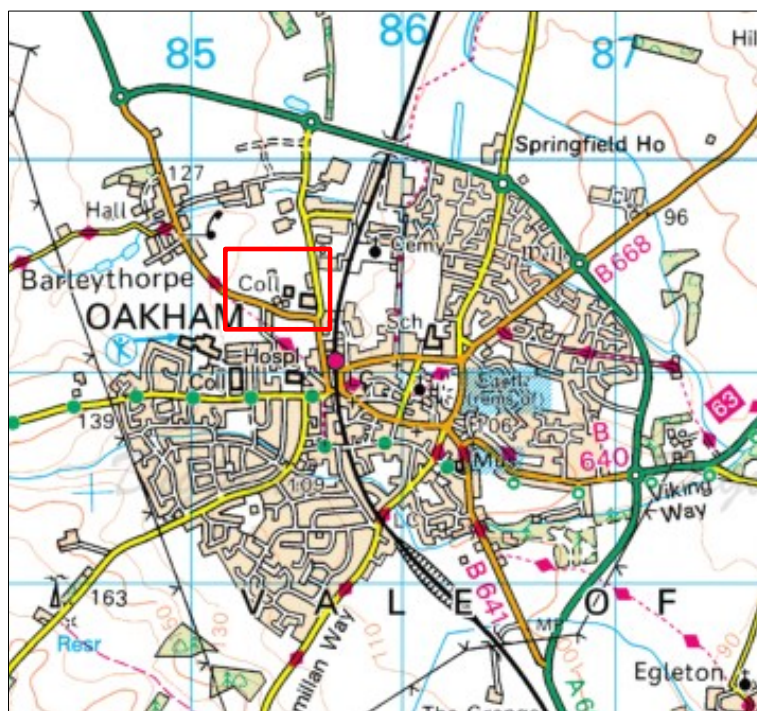


Figure 1: Site Location (Scale 1:50 000)

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3. Archaeological and Historical Background

The application area was the subject of an archaeological desk-based assessment in 2013, which indicated the presence of several known archaeological sites and find spots in the vicinity.

Prehistoric

A number of prehistoric findspots are located in the immediate vicinity of the application area, including a Neolithic flint axe (**MLE7312**), 0.5km to the south-west. Bronze Age ring ditches are recorded north-west of Lonsdale House (**MLE5020-1**) and south of Barleythorpe Stud (**MLE16640**). Two Iron Age settlements have been investigated by geophysical survey and excavation by Northamptonshire Archaeology *c.* 200m to the south-west of the area (**MLE16973-4**). Metal detecting has located an Iron Age horse fitting and assorted medieval coins from the playing fields *c.* 100m to the south-west of the site (**MLE6530**). A beehive quern of Iron Age or Roman date was found close to the railway station in 1900 (**MLE6595**). A rectilinear field system of probable Iron Age date has been recorded by geophysical survey and trial trenching 0.5km to the north (**MLE16642**).

Roman

Circa 200m to the west of the site, a Roman settlement was investigated by Northamptonshire Archaeology in 2008-9 (**MLE18637**). A Roman coin, Roman pottery and early medieval pottery was discovered *c.* 100m to the south during an extension to the hospital in 1993 (**MLE5622**; **MLE6953**; **MLE8113**), although the methods employed during the groundworks meant that no features could be recorded. A Roman rubbish pit was excavated 0.2km to the south of the application area (**MLE5568**), during a watching brief carried out in 1966. Trial trench evaluation by ULAS in 2012 immediately to the south located archaeological deposits comprising ditches, post-holes and pits associated with Late Iron Age-Early Roman pottery, slag, burnt daub and animal bone (Higgins 2012)

Medieval

The application area is located immediately to the west of the historic core of medieval Oakham (**MLE9904**). Early Saxon occupation of the town is represented by the remains of an extremely rare Saxon sunken featured building (grübenhaus), located 0.6m south-east of the application area and excavated during a 1994 watching brief (**MLE9902**; Jones 1996). The medieval road surface of Barelythorpe Road was identified 0.4km to the north-west during a watching brief (**MLE18638**). Recent work (2012) by Archaeological Project Services at Barleythorpe to the north-west has located early Anglo Saxon structures including a hall, sunken-featured buildings, post holes and pits (LCC 2012). Trial trench evaluation by ULAS in 2012 immediately to the south located ditches, post-holes and pits with 13th century pottery in one feature (Higgins 2012).

4. Aims and Objectives

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

Neolithic and Early Middle Bronze Age (Clay 2006; Knight et al 2012; English Heritage 2010)

- The development of ceremonial monuments and their environs – the e contains several prehistoric ceremonial landscapes and the scheme may

uncover archaeological assets associated with these. Palaeoenvironmental evidence may provide information on agricultural practices and land use.

Late Iron Age (Willis 2006; Knight et al 2012; English Heritage 2010)

- There are Iron Age settlements in the vicinity of the scheme. Information on the sequence and chronology of settlements may be recovered and palaeoenvironmental evidence could provide information on agricultural practices and land use. Artefacts can provide evidence for evidence for craft industry and exchange across broad landscape areas.

The Roman Period (Taylor 2006; Knight et al 2012; English Heritage 2012)

- There are several Roman sites within the study area including enclosures and a Roman road. The evaluations may contribute to knowledge on Iron Age – Roman transitions in rural settlement, landscape and society. Artefacts may identify trade links and economy.

The general aims of the evaluation were as follows:

- To determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any archaeological remains within the development site
- To assess vulnerability/sensitivity of any exposed remains
- To provide sufficient information on the archaeological potential of the site to enable the archaeological implications of the proposed development to be assessed
- To assess the impact of previous land use on the site
- To inform a strategy to avoid or mitigate impacts of the proposed development on surviving archaeological remains
- To produce a site archive for deposition with an appropriate museum and to provide information for accession to the Leicestershire HER.

Specific evaluation aims were to:-

- Seek to establish the nature of the geophysical anomalies and to determine if they are of archaeological significance

The evaluation was undertaken in order to enable reasoned and informed recommendations to be made to the local planning authority and, if appropriate, a suitable mitigation strategy for the proposed development to be formulated.

The design specification conforms to the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012). It has been designed in accordance with current best archaeological practice and the appropriate national standards and guidelines including:

- *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage, 1991);
- *Model Briefs and Specifications for Archaeological Assessments and Field Evaluations* (Association of County Archaeological Officers, 1994);
- *Code of Conduct* (Institute for Archaeologists, 2010);
- *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations* (Institute for Archaeologists, 2010);
- *Guidelines and Procedures for Archaeological work in Leicestershire and Rutland* (Leicestershire County Council 1997)

5. Methodology

Archaeological Trial Trenches

Prior to the commencement of works an Accession Code was obtained and the required archive deposition forms completed. An OASIS online record was initiated and the key fields completed on Details, Location and Creator forms.

Following recommendations from the Planning Archaeologist, a programme of evaluation trenching was undertaken.

A 2% sample of the available areas of development was evaluated, comprising 315m² of four trenching measuring between 15m-30m x 1.60m. The presence of below-ground services prevented the excavation of a fifth trench on the open lawns towards the central southern part of the site, which would have produced a total trench area of c.380m², as proposed in the specification document. Trench locations were in accordance with plans set out in the brief.

Topsoil and overburden was removed by a mechanical excavator using a toothless ditching bucket (c.1.6m wide), under archaeological supervision. The spoil generated during the evaluation was mounded away from the edges of each trench. Topsoil and subsoil was stored separately. Mechanical excavation ceased at when the undisturbed natural substratum was reached.

The trenches were recorded at an appropriate scale by measured drawing and photography and were located to Ordnance Survey National Grid. A photographic record, utilising black and white negative film, supplemented by high resolution digital data capture, was maintained during the course of the fieldwork and included:

- the site prior to commencement of fieldwork;
- the site during work, showing specific stages of fieldwork;

Upon completion of the evaluation trenching, the excavated trenches were backfilled and loosely compacted.

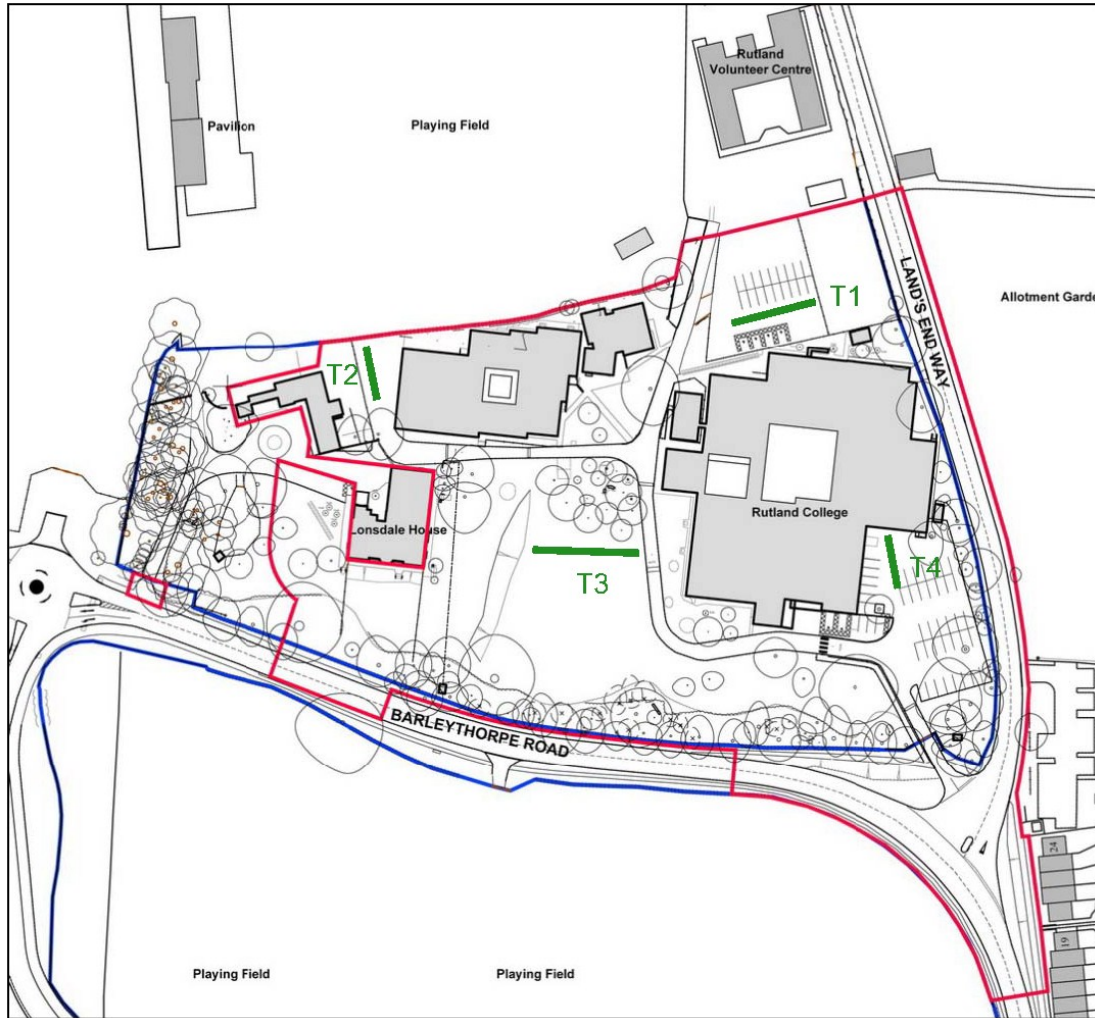


Figure 2: Trench locations in relation to existing buildings; scale 1:500

6. Results

A 2% sample of the available areas of development was excavated, comprising 315m² of four trenching measuring between 15m-30m x 1.60m. Trenches were positioned in order to provide representative coverage across the development area between existing buildings.

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.

Trench 1

Trench 1 (Figure 3), located in the car park to the north of the main college building, measured 23m x 1.6m and 0.82m-0.91m in depth and was broadly aligned east-west. The removal of 0.18m of asphalt and 0.20m of crushed sandstone foundation revealed 0.30m-0.44m of compressed dark greenish grey silty clay topsoil/subsoil mix overlying a firm mottled orange-brown natural clay substratum. There were no archaeological deposits present.



Figure 3: Trench 1; view looking west (1m scale)

Trench 2

Trench 2 (Figure 4), positioned in the north-west corner of the site in a second car park and aligned north to south, measured 15m x 1.60m x 0.50m-0.63m deep. The trench presented the same broad sequence as observed in Trench 1, with tarmac overlying 0.30m of crushed sandstone and concrete hardcore. Removal of a thin (0.02m-0.10m) underlying greenish grey silty-clay subsoil deposit revealed a firm pinkish brown natural clay substratum. The trench, which revealed no archaeological deposits, was badly disturbed by modern service pipes.

Trench 3

Trench 3, the largest of the four, was situated in the central lawned area (Figure 5). Aligned north-west to south-east, the trench measured 30m x 1.60m x 0.38m-0.80m deep. Machine removal of 0.20m-0.52m of mid reddish brown clay-silt-loam topsoil and 0.18m-0.50m of pale reddish brown clay exposed the pale reddish-brown ferruginous limestone brash natural substratum. Again, no archaeological deposits were present.



Figure 4: Trench 2; view looking north (1m scale)



Figure 5: Trench 3; view looking south-east (1m scale)

Trench 4

Trench 4 was positioned in the main college car park at the eastern end of the site adjacent to Land's End Way (Figure 6) was aligned north-south and measured 16m x 1.60m x 0.50m-1.40m. 0.20m of tarmacadam and 0.28m of crushed sandstone foundation overlay 0.43+ of a dark grey clay-silt with brick rubble and limestone fragments contamination and heavy 'organic' content with twig fragments, likely representing a pond or marshy area.



Figure 6: Trench 4; view looking north (1m scale)

7. Conclusion

The archaeological evaluation at Barleythorpe Road, Oakham, indicated an absence of archaeological evidence within the assessment area. The area had been disturbed by the construction of the present building and associated services and landscaping.

Table 1 Details of the trenches

TRENCH	ORIENTATION	LENGTH AND WIDTH (metres)	DESCRIPTION	DEPTH (MIN-MAX metres)
1	E-W	23 x 1.60	Topsoil 0.35-0.52m, subsoil 0.30-0.44m. No archaeological finds or features.	0.82-0.91
2	N-S	15 x 1.60	Topsoil 0.44-0.48m, subsoil 0.02-0.10m. No archaeological finds or features.	0.50-0.63
3	NW-SE	30 x 1.60	Topsoil 0.20-0.52m, subsoil 0.18-0.50m. No archaeological finds or features.	0.38-0.80
4	N-S	16 x 1.60	Topsoil 0.32-0.52m, subsoil 0.18-0.90m. No archaeological finds or deposits.	0.50-1.40

8. Archive and Publications

The site archive, consisting of paper and photographic records, will be deposited with Rutland County Museum.

The archive consists of:

- 4 trench recording sheets
- Photographic record indices
- 11 digital photographs
- A risk assessment form
- An unbound copy of this report

9. Publication

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

10. Acknowledgements

Roger Kipling and Mathew Morris of ULAS undertook the archaeological evaluation on behalf of Sainsbury PLC. Access was arranged by David Janney of Riley Consultancy. The project was managed by Patrick Clay.

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Oasis Information

Project Name	Land at Barleythorpe Roads, Oakham, Rutland
Project Type	Archaeological evaluation
Project Manager	Patrick Clay
Project Supervisor	Roger Kipling
Previous/Future work	Development
Current Land Use	Educational
Development Type	Retail
Reason for Investigation	NPPF
Position in the Planning Process	Pre-determination
Site Co ordinates	NGR SK 8557 0936
Start/end dates of field work	January 2014
Archive Recipient	Oakham County Museum
Study Area	3.2ha.

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