



University of
Leicester

Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological Field Evaluation on
Land to the rear of
Normanton Grove, Thurlaston,
Leicestershire**

NGR: SP 501287 989556

Andrew Hyam



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For: Pelham Architects

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Signed: 

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Summary

An archaeological field evaluation was undertaken on Land to the Rear of Normanton Grove, Thurlaston, Leicestershire by the University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on the 6th of February 2013. Planning permission has been granted for a small residential development with associated car parking and access. Due to the location within an area of archaeological potential, the Senior Planning Archaeologist at Leicestershire County Council, as advisor to the planning authority, requested that a programme of trial trenching take place to identify and locate any archaeological remains that may be affected by the development.

Three 20m long by 1.8m wide trenches were excavated across the proposed development site, each targeting the proposed location of the new dwellings. No archaeological features or deposits were located during the evaluation.

The archive will be deposited with Leicestershire County Council under Accession Number X.A13.2013

Introduction

In accordance with Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment, Policy HE12.3 (DCLG 2010) this document forms the report for an archaeological field evaluation consisting of three 20m long by 1.8m wide trenches on land to the rear of Normanton Grove, Thurlaston, Leicestershire. NGR: SP 501287 989556. Under planning application number P.A.12/0811/1/PX the development will comprise of 8 dwellings with associated parking provision.

The proposed development lies within an area of archaeological interest therefore when considering the planning application, the Senior Planning Archaeologist, as advisor to the Blaby District Council planning authority, recommended the requirement for a programme of archaeological work in the form of an archaeological field evaluation as a first phase of archaeological fieldwork as a condition of the planning permission P.A. 12/0811/1/PX. This stage of work addressed the requirements detailed in the *Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Work: Land to the rear of Normanton Grove, Thurlaston, Leicestershire* (16.12.2012 ULAS hereinafter WSI).

Background

The village of Thurlaston lies to the west of Leicester and is approximately 3km to the north-east of Earl Shilton and approximately 3km to the west of Enderby and Narborough (Fig. 1). The proposed development site lies on the south-western edge of Thurlaston at the southern end of Normanton Grove which is a small road leading from the southern side of Church Street. At present the proposed development site forms an enclosed rectangular paddock covered in scrub and brambles measuring approximately 100m by 25m and is aligned from east to west across the end of Normanton Grove (Fig. 2). The ground slopes gently down to the south from the edge of the houses built at the end of Normanton Grove. It has an average height above sea level of 90m.



Figure 1 Thurlaston location

Site highlighted in red. North to top of map

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Figure 2 Proposed layout of new dwellings on development site
Plan supplied by client

The Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record (HER) shows that the application site lies within an area of archaeological interest. The site lies to the immediate south of what is currently thought to be the extent of the medieval and post-medieval settlement core of Thurlaston (MLE8995). However, finds recorded in the vicinity including a cobbled pavement and large quantity of medieval pottery sherds (MLE361) directly south of the application site, a large quantity of medieval and post-medieval finds discovered to the south-east (MLE17288) and evidence of Saxon occupation (MLE5906) recorded c.250m to the south of the application site, suggest that the medieval settlement extended further south than previous evidence has indicated. Early Ordnance Survey mapping shows that the application site has remained largely undeveloped and therefore any archaeological remains that might be present from before this date were likely to be preserved *in situ*.

Objectives

As identified in the ULAS WSI for archaeological work the main 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 any 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 can 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).

Three 1.8m wide trenches were proposed and located to target the proposed areas of development across the site (Fig. 3). Because of the proximity of nearby trees and neighbouring properties Trenches 1 and 3 measured 18.5m (T1) and 19.2m (T3) in length. To make up for this loss in length trench 2 was made slightly longer and had a total length of 26m. After removing areas of dense brambles and scrub from around the trench areas, the topsoil and subsoil were removed in level spits, under continuous archaeological supervision, down to the uppermost archaeological deposits or to the natural substratum, whichever was the soonest. A tracked mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket was used after initial problems of access using a wheeled JCB excavator. All spoil heaps were inspected for any unstratified archaeological material. All trenches were excavated down to the top of archaeological deposits or the natural substratum in the absence of any archaeological deposits.

Trenches were examined by hand cleaning and any archaeological deposits located were planned 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 were recorded in this way. Sections of any excavated archaeological features were drawn at an appropriate scale. Any drawn sections of archaeological features would also be levelled and tied to the Ordnance Survey Datum, or a permanent fixed bench mark. 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.

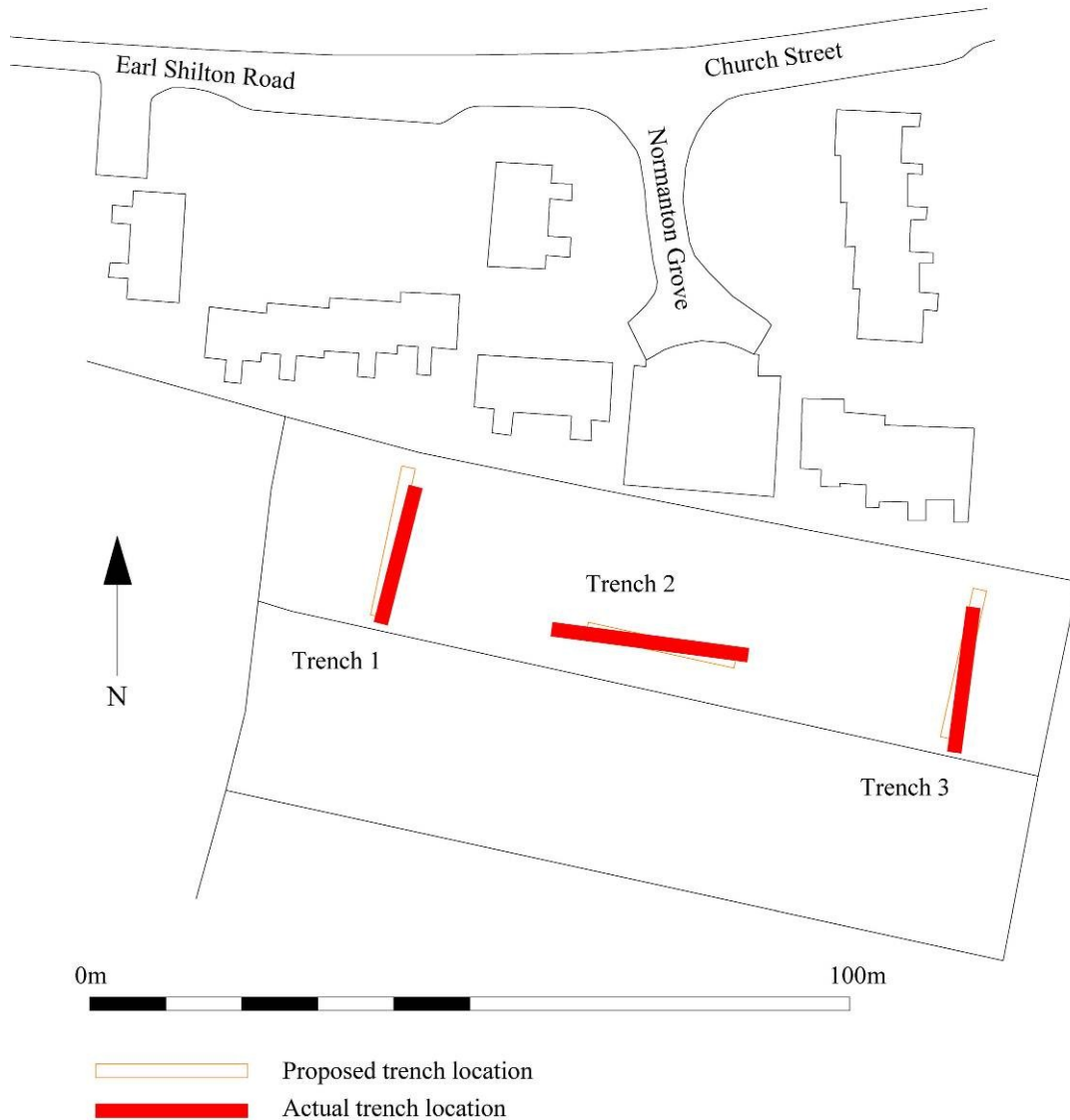


Figure 3 Trench Locations

Results

As noted above, the site was covered in dense undergrowth which had to be removed around the proposed trench areas prior to excavation.

Trench 1

Trench 1 was excavated on a north to south alignment on the western of the site to target the proposed houses being built there (Fig. 3). Because of a number of tall trees at the north end the trench had to be shortened slightly to avoid damaging the roots and potentially destabilising the trees. It also seemed likely that the ground at this point would be badly disturbed by root action.

After removing between 0.14m and .021m of mid reddish brown of friable clayish silt topsoil the mid brownish red silty clay subsoil with rare sub-rounded stones was exposed. The subsoil had a fairly even depth along the trench of between 0.18m and 0.21m and was removed to reveal the undisturbed natural substratum (Figs. 4 and 5). The natural consisted of a brownish red slightly sandy silty clay with streaks of light greenish grey silty clay.

No archaeological features or deposits were observed in this trench.



Figure 4 Trench 1
Looking north. 1m scale



Figure 5 Trench 1

Looking east. Trench 1 in foreground, Trench 2 in middle ground and excavator adjacent to Trench 3

Trench 2

Trench 2 was excavated in the centre of the site on an east to west alignment. Topsoil with the same consistency as in Trench 1 was removed and found to have a thickness of between 0.2m and 0.31m. The subsoil varied in depth between 0.1 and 0.2m and, again, had the same consistency as that seen in Trench 1. Two horseshoe land drains running down the slope of the ground from north to south were seen towards the eastern end of the trench. The drains were laid at the interface between the subsoil and the natural substratum and were approximately 8m apart. The undisturbed natural substratum was the same as in Trench 1 and showed no sign of being affected by ploughing (Fig. 6).

No archaeological features or deposits were observed in this trench.



Figure 6 Trench 2
Looking west. 1m scale

Trench 3

Trench 3 was excavated on a north-to south alignment on the eastern side of the site. The northern end of the trench appeared to have been slightly disturbed or landscaped as the topsoil in this area was only 0.1m deep. This soon increased to 0.20m and reached a maximum depth of 0.63m at the southern end suggesting that the topsoil had been dragged downhill towards the southern boundary of the site. The topsoil was the same as in the other two trenches. The subsoil had a relatively even depth varying from 0.12m to 0.16m in thickness. The undisturbed natural substratum was the same as seen in Trenches 1 and 2 (Fig. 7).



Figure 7 Trench 3
Looking north. 1m scale

Discussion

Despite the potential for archaeological features and deposits on this site none were observed. The land drains running across the site indicate that the area has had some drainage problems due to the clay substratum and may suggest that the field once contained ridge and furrow which has since been ploughed out.

Archive

The archive consists of:

This report,

Three ULAS pro-forma trench recording sheets,

One digital photographic record sheet,

One 35mm black and white photographic record sheet,

One contact sheet of 28 colour digital photographs,

One 35mm black and white contact sheet of 11 photographs,

35mm black and white negatives,

One CD of this report and the digital photographs.

Publication

A summary of the work will be submitted for publication in the *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* in due course. A record of the project will also be submitted to the OASIS project. OASIS is an online index to archaeological grey literature.

Bibliography

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

ULAS, 2011 Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Work. *Land to the Rear of Normanton Grove, Thurlaston, Leicestershire*. 2012

Appendix 1 Trench measurements

Trench No	Length (m)	Width (m)	Min Trench Depth (m)	Max Trench Depth (m)	Av. Topsoil thickness (m)	Av. Subsoil thickness (m)
1	18.50	1.80	0.33	0.45	0.18	0.20
2	26.00	1.80	0.37	0.47	0.27	0.16
3	19.20	1.80	0.24	0.81	0.36	0.15

Appendix 2 OASIS Information

Project Name	Land to the Rear of Normanton Grove, Thurlaston, Leicestershire
Project Type	Field Evaluation
Project Manager	R Buckley
Project Supervisor	A Hyam
Previous/Future work	None
Current Land Use	Paddock
Development Type	Residential
Reason for Investigation	As a condition
Position in the Planning Process	Ongoing
Site Co ordinates	SP 501287 989556.
Start/end dates of field work	6.2.2013
Archive Recipient	LCC
Study Area	Approx 2500m ²

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