



**University of
Leicester**

Archaeological Services

**Archaeological Work
On land to the rear of Tower House,
32, Rushes Lane, Lubenham,
Leicestershire
NGR SP 7057 8711**

Jennifer Browning



ULAS Report No 2013-132
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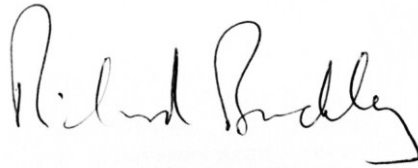
**Archaeological Work
On land to the rear of Tower House,
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Jennifer Browning

For: Nigel Salt

Approved by:

Signed:



Date: 10-10-2013

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**Archaeological Work on Land to the Rear of Tower House, 32, Rushes Lane,
Lubenham, Leicestershire (NGR SP 7057 8711)**

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Summary

Archaeological investigation was undertaken on land to the rear of Tower House, 32, Rushes Lane, Lubenham, Leicestershire (NGR SP 7057 8711). The work involved the examination of a stripped surface and foundation trenches within the development area. The work revealed a substantial build-up of overburden across the site however no archaeological deposits were identified. The archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council under the Accession Number X. A97. 2013.

1. Introduction

This report presents the results of archaeological work carried out in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), (DCLG 2012) on land adjacent to Tower House, Rushes Lane, Lubenham, Leicestershire (NGR SP 7057 8711) . The work took place in July 2013 and was undertaken by University of Leicester Archaeological Services on behalf of Mr. Nigel Salt. The work comprised stripping of the ground surface and the excavation of footing trenches for a boundary wall and a new dwelling (P.A. 11/01625/FUL).

The application site lies within an area of archaeological potential, as indicated by its location immediately north of the church and within the historic medieval and post-medieval settlement core of Lubenham. The Senior Planning Archaeologist for Leicestershire County Council therefore recommended that archaeological work (strip, plan and sample) should be undertaken to determine if any buried heritage assets were likely to be affected by the proposed development. A strategy for a programme of archaeological work was set out in the Written Scheme for Investigation (Kipling 2013), hereinafter WSI.

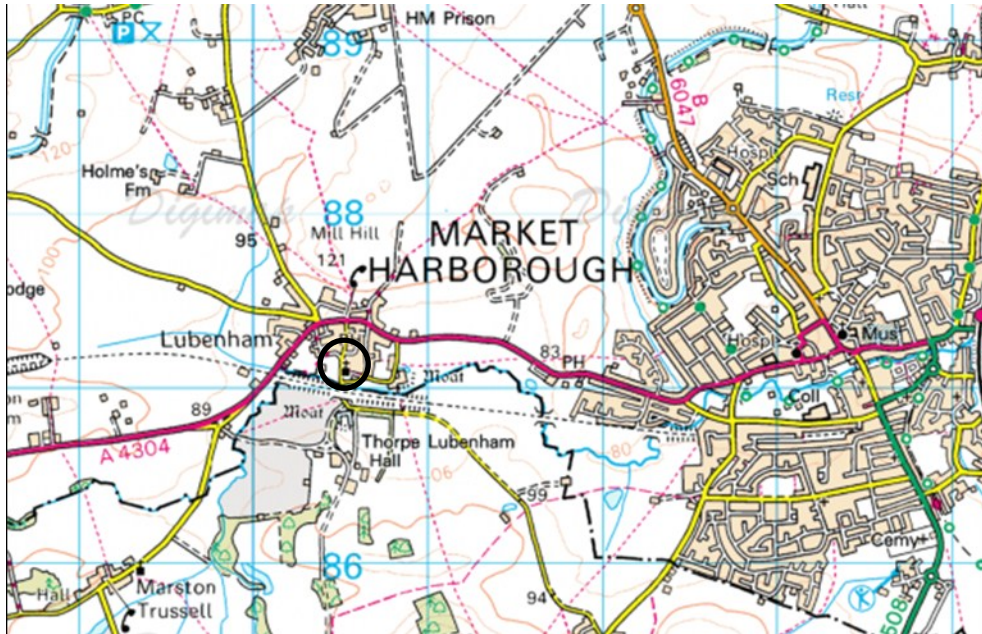


Figure 1: Location plan Scale 1:50000

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2. Site Description, Topography and Geology

Lubenham lies in the Market Harborough district of Leicestershire, approximately 12 miles (20km) south-east of Leicester (Figure 1). The development area is located towards the southern side of the village off Rushes Lane on land previously belonging to the adjacent Tower House. The site consists of a rectangular area, c.463m² or c.0.46 hectares in size and is reached via a driveway from Rushes Lane, between the converted coach houses and 30 Rushes Lane.

The British Geological Survey of Great Britain indicates that the underlying geology is likely to consist of deposits of alluvium (ALV) overlying bedrock of the Blue Lias Formation and Charmouth Mudstone Formation (BLCR). The land is flat and lies at a height of around 85m OD.

<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html> Accessed on 9th August 2013.

3. Historical and Archaeological Background

The site is located within the medieval settlement core of (HER ref. MLE9316), therefore has the potential to contain medieval and post-medieval remains. The site is located c.30m north of the medieval All Saints Church (MLE11529). Medieval churches were often important foci for medieval and post-medieval settlement activity and finds of Roman, medieval, post-medieval artefacts have been recorded in the vicinity. Consequently, as there is likelihood that buried archaeological remains could be affected by the development, archaeological work was required by the planning authority following an approved written scheme of investigation (WSI ULAS 2013).

Tower House is an 18th century former farmhouse formerly called Lubenham Cottage, which has been substantially altered. It was enlarged in the 19th Century and a tower was added by J. B. Angell in 1862. The alterations were associated with its use as a hunting box, and the racing and stabling of horses. At one time, it would have been a grand property, with an elevated social status, surrounded by large working stables and set in a large plot. Today, it is still a large house, but is separated from the former stables and surrounding land. The development site adjoins the churchyard of the Grade 1 listed, All Saints Church, and the rear garden of Tower House and the 1737 Grade II listed Verger's Cottage.

An archaeological investigation was undertaken in 2011 prior to the construction of two new dwellings immediately to the north of the current site (Speed 2011). This revealed a very large brick structure thought originally to represent a large soft water tank but later identified as part of a private gas supply system. Tower House was lit by gas manufactured on the premises and an Estate Map of 1879 shows structures labelled as gas. There was a retort house, a purifying house and two gasometers and it is thought that the structure noted during the 2011 work was the base of one of the gasometers (HER reference: MLE19392).

4. Aims and Objectives

The purpose of the current archaeological work was:

- 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 record any archaeological deposits to be affected by the ground works.
- To advance understanding of the heritage assets
- To produce an archive and report of any results.

5. Methodology

The work adhered to the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Code of Conduct* (rev. 2010) and adhered to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (rev. 2008).

The programme of work consisted of a topsoil strip and excavation of foundation trenches for the new dwelling and a garden wall. The stripped surface and trenches were visually inspected, hand-cleaned where appropriate and recorded following standard ULAS methods.

6. Results

The site was visited on two occasions. The first visit was made when ULAS was asked to inspect the footings for the garden wall on 23rd July 2013. A trench had been excavated on a north-south alignment within c.1m of a boundary formed by yew trees. The trench measured 1m wide and was excavated to a depth of 0.8m-1m. Consequently, the topsoil and part of the subsoil were heavily disturbed by roots. Topsoil, a light sandy silt loam with lots of humic matter, was 0.3m thick, below which was a layer of subsoil or overburden which extended to approximately 0.7-0.8m below ground level. This consisted of mid grey brown sandy clay.

The natural subsoil consisted of blue/grey clay with tiny pebbles and stone and occasional orange sandy mottle. Areas of disturbance and signs of previous activity were apparent within areas of the trench. At the north end there was evidence for disused pipes and services relating to the outhouses, as well as evidence for previous (modern) surfaces. At the south end a former surface was suggested by a sandy layer (0.15m thick) seen at a depth of 0.3m below ground level. No evidence for archaeological activity was observed within the trench.

The turf layer and vegetation had been stripped from the site in the area where the dwelling was to be constructed. The stripping had not exposed the subsoil and therefore no potential archaeological deposits were likely to have been disturbed during this procedure (Figure 4).

A further visit was made during the excavation of foundation trenches. The footings for the garage, at the north-east of the plot, were excavated on the 30th July 2013. This work took place subsequent to several days of severe rain; therefore the bases of the trenches were flooded and the trench sides were unstable and subject to collapse (Figure 5; Figure 6). For these reasons, close examination of the exposed strata was not possible and on the day of the visit conditions meant that further trenches could not be excavated until the first were concreted for safety. However, the following observations were made. The foundation trenches were 0.85m wide and excavated to a depth of 1.4-1.5m below the stripped level. The section indicated that the remaining topsoil was approximately 0.2m thick and the boundary between overburden/subsoil and the natural clay subsoil was reached at 0.6-0.8m below the surface; therefore exhibiting a substantial layer of overburden as noted in the footing for the boundary wall. No archaeological deposits were obviously visible in the sections.

Taking into account the depth of overburden, the fact that no positive evidence for archaeological features had been identified and, the difficult ground conditions, the Project Manager concluded that further visits to the site were not necessary.

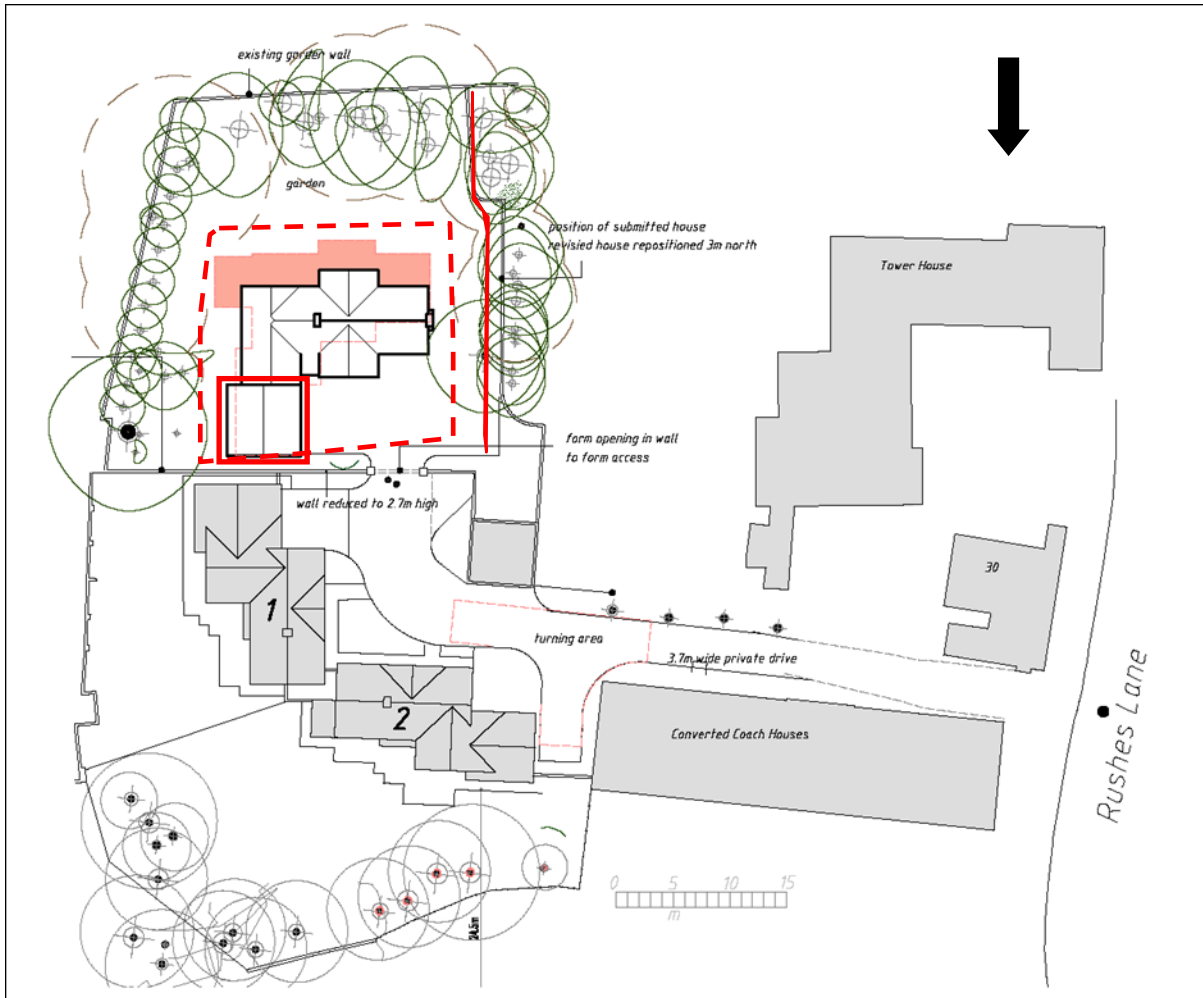


Figure 2: Plan of the development. Areas where trenches were recorded are coloured in solid red. The dotted line shows approximate position of site strip.



Figure 3: The northern end of the boundary wall trench, showing remains of surfaces associated with the former outbuildings



Figure 4: Looking northeast over the ground surface after the site strip



Figure 5: Looking west during the excavation of the foundation trenches



Figure 6: Looking west over one of the waterlogged trenches following a partial collapse

7. Conclusion

Archaeological investigation undertaken on land at the rear of the Tower House, 32 Rushes Lane indicated that there was a substantial depth of overburden across the site. However, no archaeological deposits or finds were identified during the course of the work, which was inhibited by poor ground conditions.

8. Archive

The site archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council HNET, with the Accession No. X.A97 2013

The archive contains site notes (watching brief pro forma sheets), digital photographs and photo index.

The report is listed on the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) held by the Archaeological Data Service at the University of York. Available at: <http://oasis.ac.uk/>

9. Publication

A summary of the work will be submitted for publication in the local archaeological journal *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* and *Rutland Record* in due course. The report will be added to the Archaeology Data Service's (ADS) Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) database held by the University of York.

OASIS Information

Project Name	Land behind Tower House, 32 Rushes Lane, Lubenham
Project Type	Archaeological strip, plan and sample and watching brief
Project Manager	R. Buckley
Project Supervisor	J. Browning
Previous/Future work	-
Current Land Use	Paddock
Development Type	New dwelling
Reason for Investigation	As a condition
Position in the Planning Process	Full determination
Site Co ordinates	NGR SP 705 871
Start/end dates of field work	23.07.2013- 30.07.2013
Archive Recipient	LCC
Study Area	c.0.46 hectares

10. Bibliography

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

Kipling, R. 2013 *Written scheme of investigation for archaeological work at Land at to the rear of Tower House, 32, Rushes Lane, Lubenham, Leicestershire*

Institute for Archaeologists (IfA), (rev. 2012), *Code of Conduct*

Institute for Archaeologists (IfA), (rev. 2008), *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*

Speed, G. 2011 *An Archaeological Investigation (Strip, Plan and Sample) on Land to the Rear of Tower House, Rushes Lane, Lubenham, Leicestershire*. ULAS Report No 2011-022

11. Acknowledgements

The fieldwork was carried out by Jennifer Browning and Richard Buckley managed the project. I would like to thank Nigel Salt and his team for their co-operation during the work.

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