



**University of
Leicester**

Archaeological Services

**Archaeological Strip, Plan and Sample
Excavation on Land at Little Croft,
Main Street,
Theddingworth
Leicestershire
NGR SP 66702 85755**

Jennifer Browning



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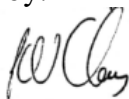
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Signed:



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An Archaeological Strip, Plan and Sample Excavation on Land at Little Croft, Main Street, Theddingworth, Leicestershire NGR SP 66702 85755

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Summary

Archaeological work was undertaken prior to groundworks for alterations and extensions to Little Croft, Main Street, Theddingworth Leicestershire (NGR SP 66702 85755). The area of the proposed extension was stripped of topsoil and subsoil in order to identify and record any archaeological deposits which may be disturbed by the development. Investigation revealed a single large archaeological feature within the affected area, which appeared to represent an in-filled ditch or pond. Finds from the feature included both medieval pottery and post-medieval tile fragments, suggesting that it was backfilled in the post-medieval period. It was not possible to expose the full extent of the feature, as this was outside the area which would be disturbed. No further archaeological features were encountered. The archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council under the Accession Number X. A95. 2014.

1. Introduction

This report presents the results of archaeological work carried out in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), (DCLG 2012) at Little Croft, Main Street, Theddingworth, Leicestershire (NGR SP 66702 85755) within Harborough District. Planning permission has been granted for the alterations and extensions to the existing dwelling to form a replacement dwelling and annexe (revised scheme of 12/01485/FUL).

The application site lies within an area of archaeological potential, as indicated by its location within the historic medieval and post-medieval settlement core. Following National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Section 12 Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment (DCLG 2012). Leicestershire County Council, Historic and Natural Environment Team (LCCHNET), as archaeological advisors to the planning authority, required that an archaeological strip map and sample excavation be carried out to assess the potential for archaeological deposits to be affected by the proposed development. A strategy for a programme of archaeological work was set out in the Written Scheme for Investigation (Clay 2014), hereinafter WSI. The archaeological work comprised topsoil and subsoil stripping within the footprint of the proposed new extension. It was carried out on 26th June 2014 by University of Leicester Archaeological Services on behalf of Mr. and Mrs. Jones.

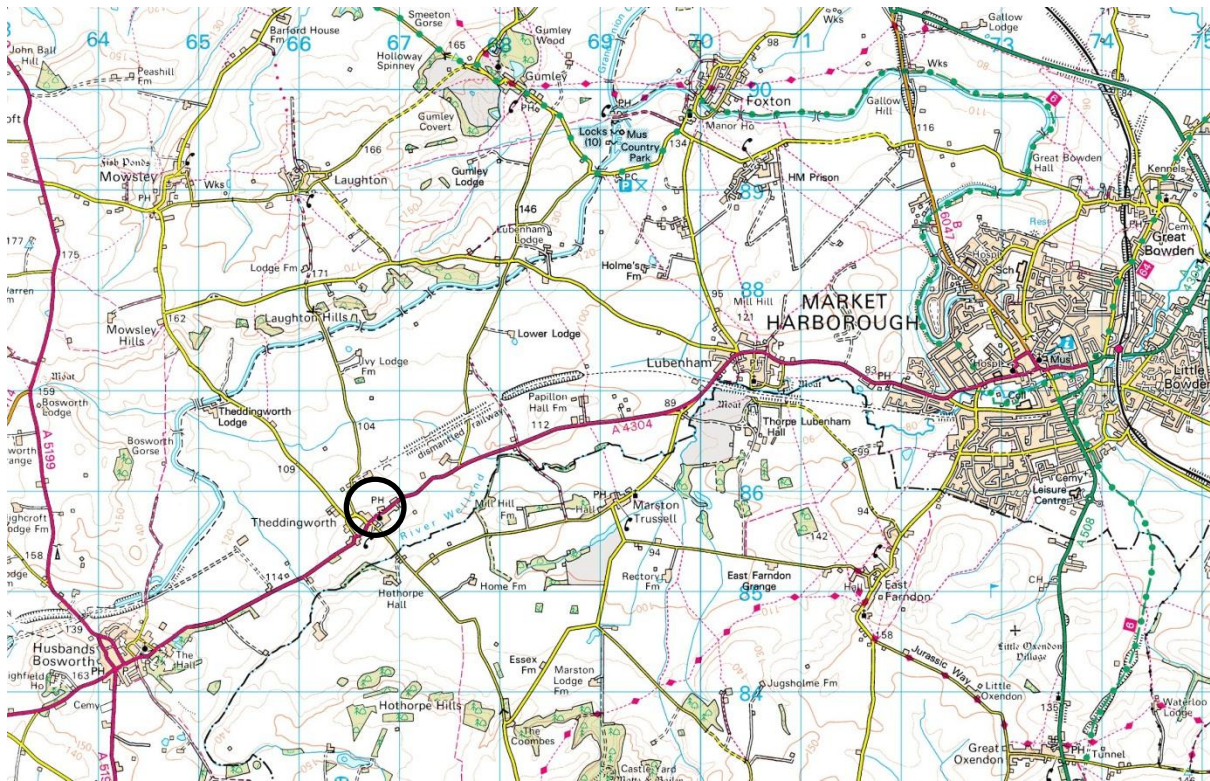


Figure 1: Location plan Scale 1:50000. Site location ringed.

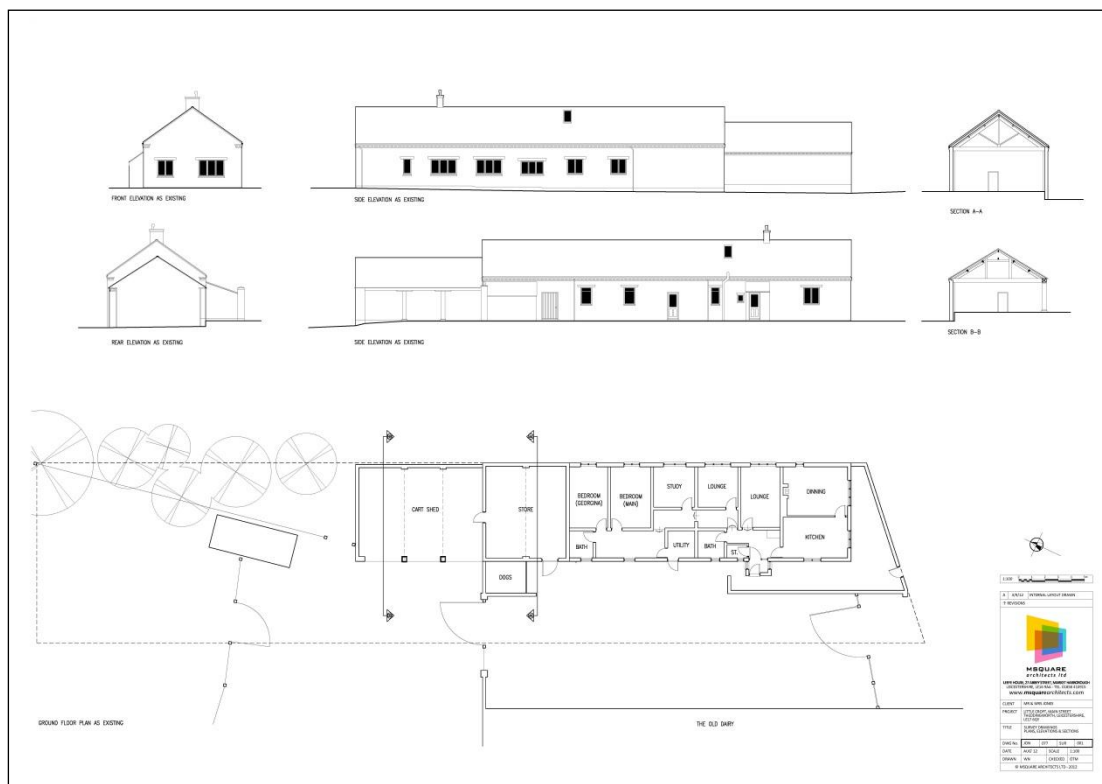
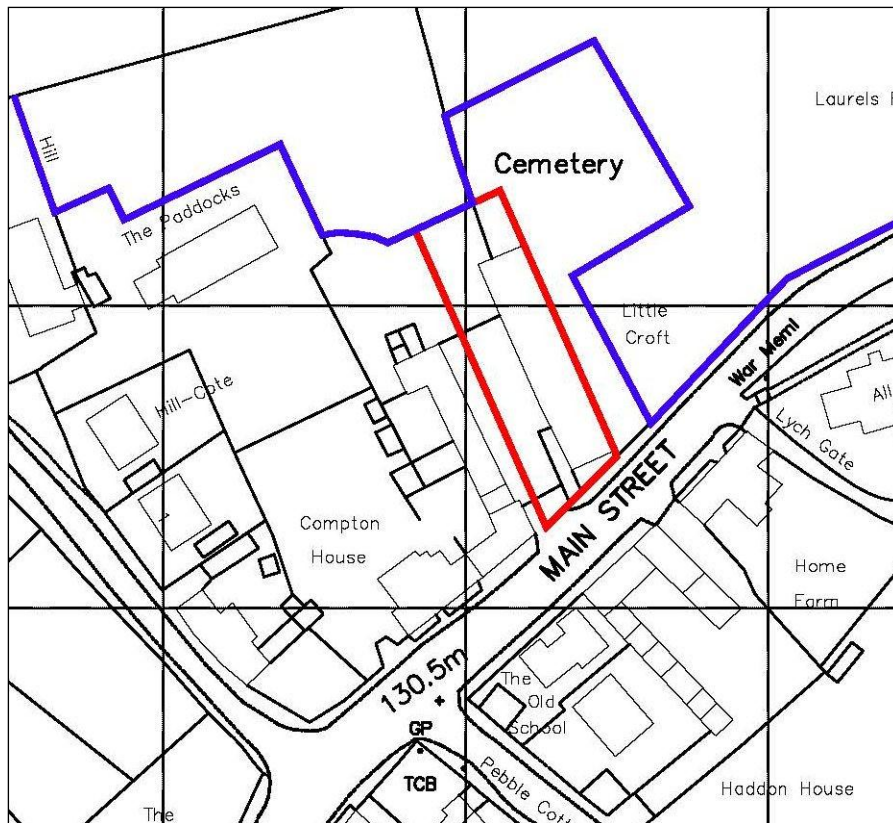
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2. Site Description, Topography and Geology

The development area is located within the historic core of Theddingworth, north-west of the church (Figure 1 and Figure 2). The land consists of pasture and slopes up south-east from the entrance and the extant farm buildings.

The British Geological Survey for England and Wales indicates that the underlying geology is likely to consist of Jurassic Dyrham Formation Siltstone and Mudstone.

<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/discoveringGeology/geologyOfBritain/viewer.html>



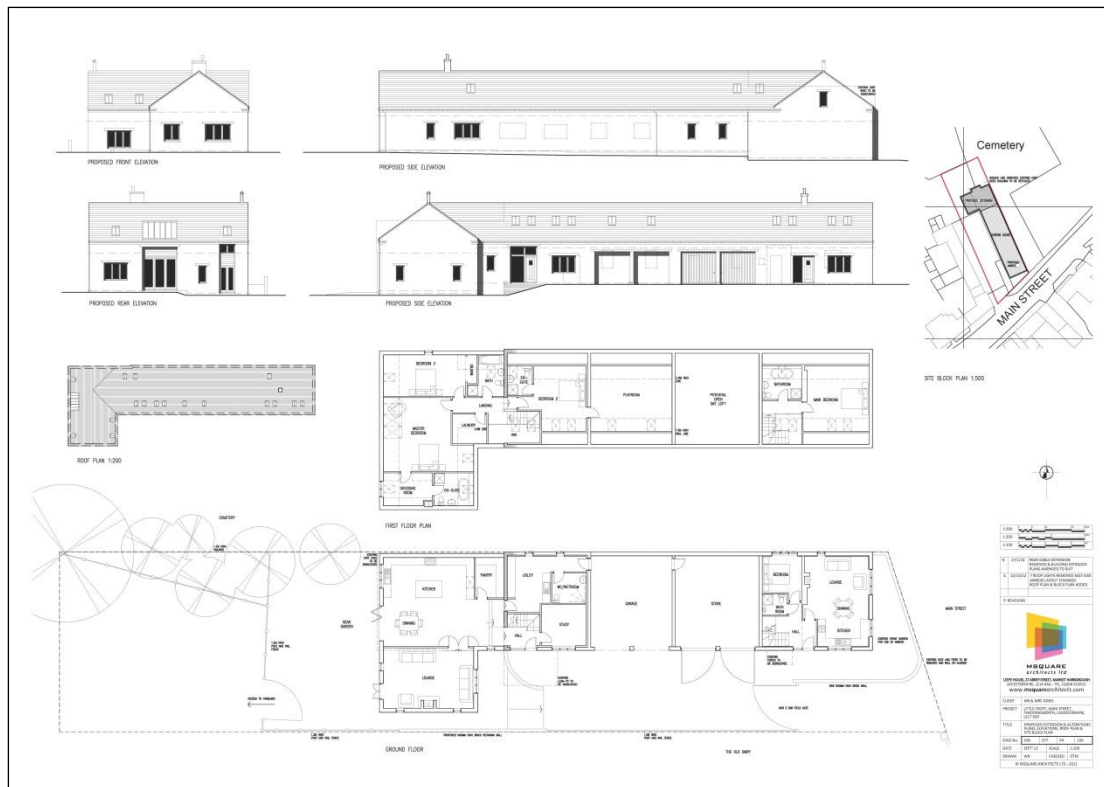


Figure 4: Plan of proposed development (supplied by client)

3. Historical and Archaeological Background

Previous work at the site includes a desk-based assessment (Clarke 2013), which indicated that the house itself appears to have been constructed as a linear range of stables, probably between 1825 and 1850, and was part of a small farmstead associated with Compton House. The cart-shed is a later addition, constructed between 1886 and 1900. The stables were converted to form a single dwelling, probably *c.*1950, with the northern-most bay and the cart-shed retained in their original form for use as storage.

The assessment area is adjacent to Scheduled Monument No. 30252, the well-preserved earthwork remains of the shrunken medieval village of Theddingworth. The site is also located within the Theddingworth Village Conservation Area and there are a number of Grade II listed buildings nearby.

Although the footprint of the proposed new extension is relatively small, the potential for the presence of medieval archaeological deposits was high due to its proximity known medieval remains, and its location within the medieval village core. Few archaeological sites pre-dating the medieval period are known in the vicinity, but this may be due to the paucity of previous archaeological investigations in this area. The potential for the presence of prehistoric or Roman remains was therefore unknown.

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.

The archaeological strip, map and sample excavation had the potential to contribute to the following research aims:

Medieval (Lewis 2006; Knight et al 2012)

The area lies close to the medieval village core and may contribute to the study of rural medieval settlement and East Midlands Research Strategy 6.7.7.2 (Knight *et al* 2012, 94; Lewis 2006).

5. Methodology

The work followed the WSI (Clay 2014) and 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 client supplied the machine, which was a Volvo EC 55 with a 1.5m ditching bucket. The topsoil and subsoil were removed in spits down to the undisturbed natural substratum or archaeological level if higher. Care was taken when excavating the area to avoid an existing drain, which crossed the area. The stripped area was visually inspected, hand-cleaned where appropriate and recorded following standard ULAS methods (see WSI).

6. Results

An area measuring 8.5m x 3m (maximum width) was stripped within the footprint of the proposed new extension. This was located in front of the existing cart shed, which is due to be demolished.

The topsoil was c.0.35-0.40m thick across the area and contained frequent pockets of hardcore, pebbles, brick, stone and slate rubble, indicating former surfaces on the ground in front of the cart shed. The subsoil consisted of mid grey brown sandy clay with frequent stones and pebbles, frequent charcoal flecks and occasional rubble similar to that seen in the topsoil. The undisturbed natural substratum consisted of light yellow brown clayey sand.

A large feature was observed on the northern side of the stripped area, but was not fully exposed within the development footprint (), continuing beyond the excavation

limits on the south and west. A modern drain/water pipe cut through the feature. As far as could be determined, the feature was broadly linear and orientated north-east/south-west. It was c.4m wide and had a minimum length of 4m. It had a clear vertical edge excavated into undisturbed natural substratum on the north-west side (Figure 6). The southern edge appeared to be bounded by a stone land drain, which was parallel to the northern edge. A minimum of two fills were observed within the feature. The main fill consisted of mid grey brown silty clay, with occasional irregular stones and natural flints, decayed bone, charcoal and manganese flecks and decayed roots (context 1). It had a loose consistency and appeared to have been waterlogged, continuing to be very wet near the base. Several finds were recovered and are described in the section below. A second fill was seen on the southern side of the feature, adjacent to the land-drain, consisting of mid brown sandy clay with frequent small stone/gravel and occasional decayed shell (context 3). A sondage excavated in the centre of the feature suggested that it continued to a depth of 1.55m below ground level, below which natural undisturbed substratum was encountered, consisting of sand.

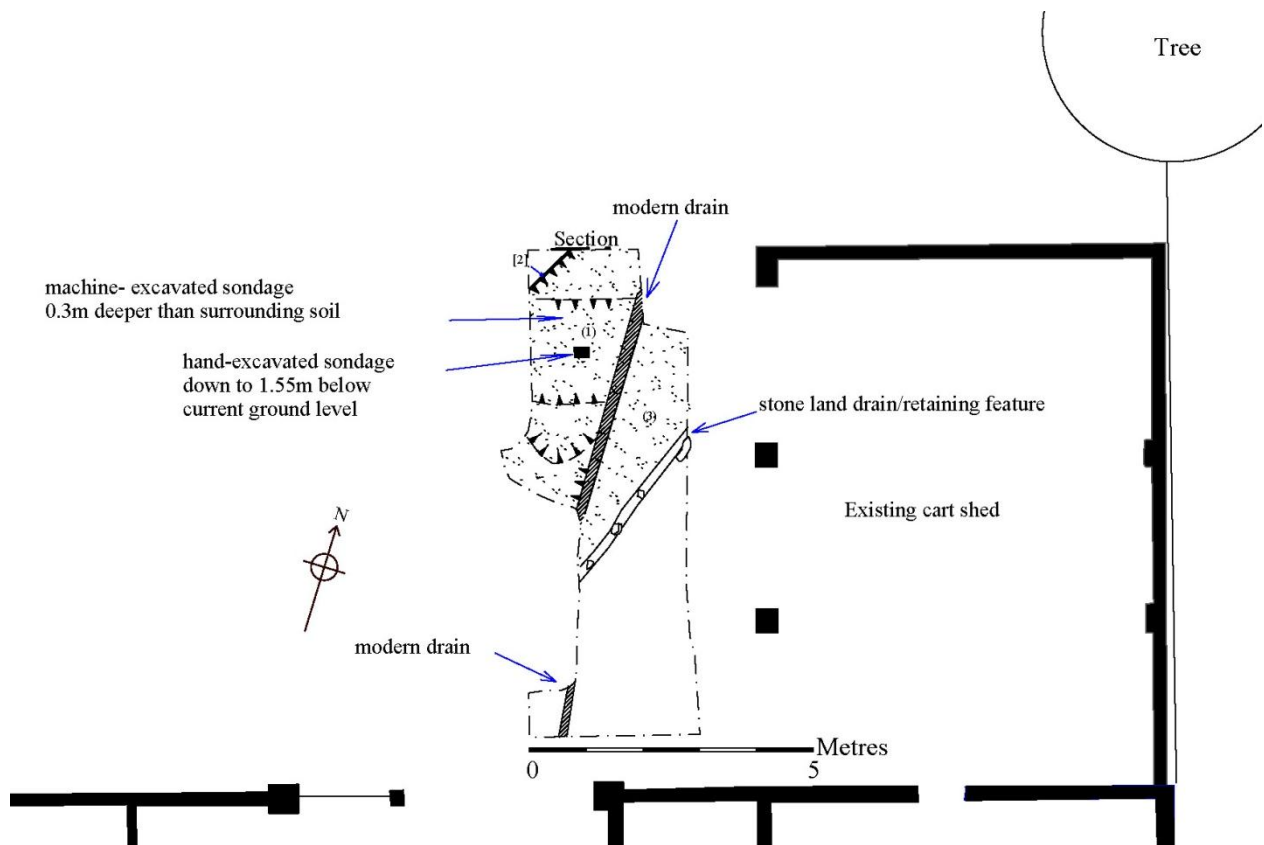


Figure 5: Plan of excavated area, showing features located during the excavation

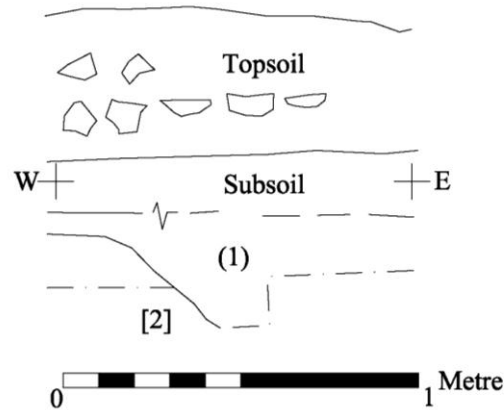


Figure 6: South-facing section showing cut of feature (1), [2]

7. The Finds *Deborah Sawday*

The pottery, two sherds, weighing 21 grams and the ceramic building material, two fragments, weighing 183 grams, were examined under a binocular microscope and catalogued with reference to the guidelines set out by the Medieval Pottery Research Group, (MPRG 1998; MPRG, 2001) and the ULAS fabric series (Sawday 2009). The results are shown below (table 1). Single fragments of animal bone (dog tibia) and flint (flake) were also present.

All the finds were from context (1), the backfill of a possible pond or ditch. The medieval pottery, which is typically local in origin, and the ceramic building material provide evidence of activity in the vicinity from the 12th or 13th centuries and again from the later medieval or early post medieval and modern periods.

Table 1: The medieval and later pottery and miscellaneous finds by fabric/material, number and weight (grams) by context

Context	Fabric/ware	No.	Weight (g)	Comments
POT				
1	CS – Coarse Shelly	1	15	Body, c.1100- 1400
1	PM – Potters Marston	1	6	Basal angle, externally sooted, 12th or possibly early 13th century.
CBM				
1	EA –Earthenware	1	12	Brick/Tile – post medieval/modern
1	EA –Earthenware	1	171	Brick/Tile – later medieval/post medieval
MISC	Material			
1	Animal Bone	1		Dog tibia
1	Flint	1		flake

8. Conclusion

The area affected by the proposed new extension was stripped of topsoil and subsoil, under archaeological supervision. A single large feature was identified within the affected area, which appeared to represent an in-filled ditch or pond. It was not possible to expose the full extent of the feature, as this was outside the area which would be disturbed by development, however it was 4m wide and was over 1m deep. No further archaeological features were present. Finds from the feature included medieval pottery and post-medieval tile fragments. These indicate activity in the area from the 12th or 13th centuries; however the tile suggests that the feature is unlikely to have been backfilled prior to the post-medieval period. The feature does not obviously align with any of the modern structures on the site, suggesting that it belongs to an earlier phase of activity. It is not shown on 19th and early 20th century Ordnance Survey maps, suggesting that it was no longer visible by this time.

9. Archive

The site archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council HNET, under the Accession No. X. A95 2014.

The paper archive contains site notes and *pro forma* trench sheets, a plan and section on permatrace and a photo index. The digital archive consists of photographs and the physical archive contains medieval and post-medieval ceramics as detailed in the catalogue pottery and single fragments of bone and flint.

If appropriate, 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 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/>

OASIS Information

Project Name	Little Croft, Main Street, Theddingworth, Leicestershire
Project Type	Archaeological strip, plan and sample
Project Manager	P. Clay
Project Supervisor	J. Browning
Previous/Future work	-
Current Land Use	Farmyard
Development Type	Alterations and extension to form a single dwelling
Reason for Investigation	As a condition
Position in the Planning Process	Full determination
Site Co ordinates	NGR SP 6670 8575
Start/end dates of field work	26.06.2014
Archive Recipient	Leicestershire County Council
Study Area	c. 44 square metres

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11. Acknowledgements

The fieldwork was carried out by Jennifer Browning for ULAS. Deborah Sawday identified the pottery and Patrick Clay managed the project. I would like to thank Mr. and Mrs. Jones and Bez for their help and co-operation during this watching brief. Particular thanks to Mrs Jones for her very kind hospitality in providing refreshments.

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