



University of
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Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological Evaluation
on Land west of Workhouse
Lane, Burbage, Leicestershire
(SP 440 919)**



Roger Kipling


ULAS Report No 2014-051

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**An Archaeological Evaluation on
Land west of Workhouse Lane,
Burbage, Leicestershire
(S P 440 919)**

Roger Kipling

For: Bellway Homes East Midlands Ltd.

Approved by:	
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Summary

An archaeological trial trench evaluation was undertaken in March 2014 at Workhouse Lane, Burbage, Leicestershire, by University of Leicester Archaeological Services on behalf of Bellway Homes East Midlands Limited. The fieldwork was undertaken in response to a planning application for the construction of residential dwellings in order to assess the potential impact of the development on any archaeological remains as may have been present.

The archaeological evaluation at Workhouse Lane, Burbage, identified evidence for archaeological remains in the form of several ditches in addition to a pit and post-hole focussed on the central area of the development area. Whilst largely undated, their similarity and proximity to others encountered during recent excavations on adjoining land suggests that they date to the early Roman (1st or 2nd century) period and represent field or stock boundary features. The discovery of a possible roundhouse ditch and a post-hole is suggestive of a settlement on the site during the Iron Age or early Roman period.

The site archive will be deposited with Leicestershire County Council under accession reference number X.A33.2014.

Introduction

In accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Section 12 Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment an archaeological evaluation was undertaken on land west of Workhouse Lane, Burbage, Leicestershire. This was an initial stage of work to address a Planning Condition following planning permission being on appeal for the construction of 35 residential dwellings (Appeal Ref: APP/K2420/A/13/2202989).

The Historic Environment Record (HER) for Leicestershire and Rutland and an Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment of the area (Kipling 2012) record that a

number of archaeological sites have been identified in the vicinity of the development area. In addition to the historic settlement core of Burbage, which contains a number of listed buildings and other post-medieval archaeological remains, there are also significant archaeological remains within the immediate vicinity, west of the proposed development area, including an Anglo Saxon Brooch (HER ref MLE 6181) and twelve Roman coins (HER ref MLE 2846). Archaeological work in 2012 immediately to the west of the application area revealed Roman field systems (Higgins 2012).

In consequence Leicestershire County Council, Senior Planning Archaeologist as advisor to the planning authority recommended the need for an initial 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, consisting of the construction of buildings, access routes and ponds. The agreed scheme was set out in a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI; ULAS 2014).

The fieldwork specified was intended to provide further indications of the presence, 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 March 2014 and involved the machine excavation of eleven trial trenches in order to provide a *c.* 3% sample of the development area.

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.

Site Description, Topography and Geology

The Ordnance Survey Geological Survey of Great Britain Sheet 169 indicates that the underlying geology of the site was likely to consist of Thrussington Till, identified on site as a pale yellow-brown silty-sand natural substratum. The site slopes down from the north-north-west to south-south-east; the surrounding topography is similar suggesting this is largely unaltered since Enclosure and lies at a height of *c.* 120m O.D to the north-west, dropping to *c.* 115m O.D to the south-east.

Archaeological and Historical Background (from Kipling 2012)

The proposed development area is within an area of recorded archaeological data included in the Historic Environment Record (HER) for Leicestershire (Prefix MLE). There are no HER records from the proposed development area itself. HER records from the vicinity are as follows:

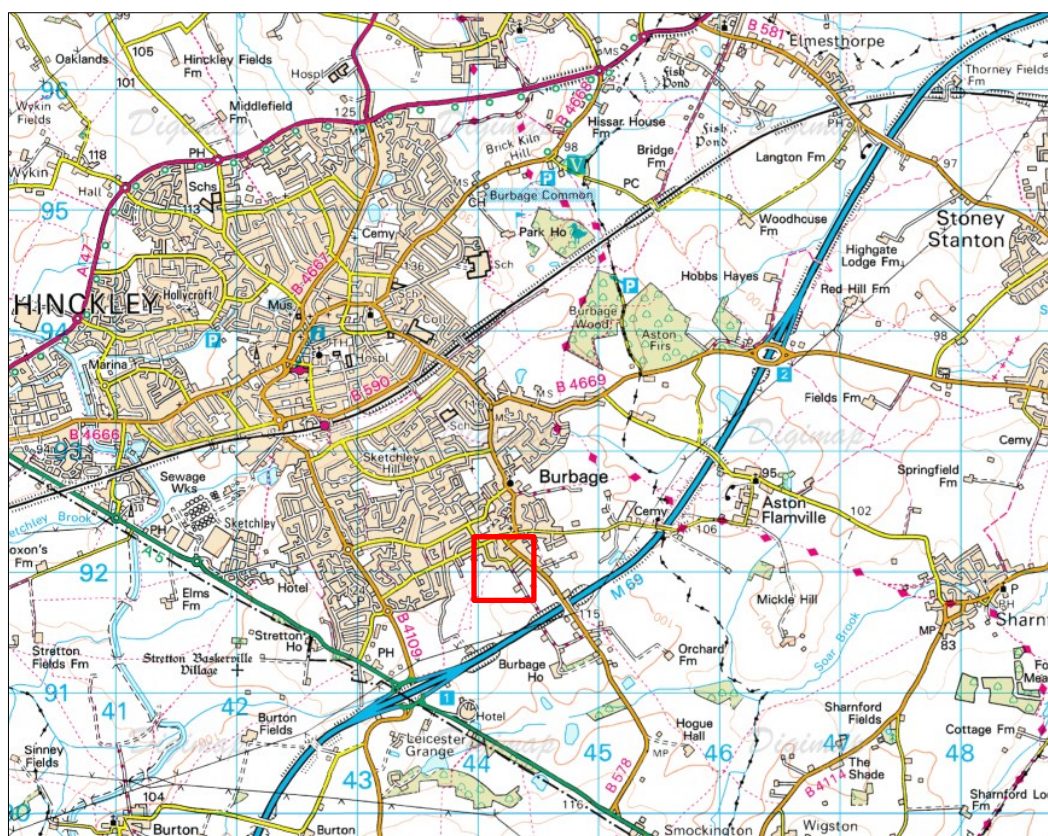


Figure 1: Site Location (Scale 1:50 000)

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Prehistoric/Undated

A small quantity of flint artefacts was recovered during the 2010 evaluation on land directly south-west of the site (**MLE18737**), but there is otherwise a lack of confirmed prehistoric archaeological evidence recorded within the vicinity of the proposed development area; a Neolithic arrowhead (HER ref **MLE 7235**) was recovered approximately 500metres to the south-east. Further to the south, an Iron Age or Romano British beehive quern stone (**MLE 9028**) was recovered at Burbage House Lake. Also visible or more recent aerial photographs ([www Googleearth.com](http://www.Googleearth.com)) is a circular cropmark, approximately 12 metres to 15 metres in diameter, a short distance west of the proposed development area, some 5 metres from the southernmost boundary of Britannia playing fields. There does not appear to be any record of this cropmark on the HER or elsewhere.

Romano-British

Evidence of likely Romano British occupation was recovered from land directly to the south-west in 2010 in the form of ditches, gullies and post-holes (**MLE18736**) and in the 2012 follow-up excavation (Higgins 2012), whilst other archaeological remains are known within the vicinity of the proposed development area. To the north-east, within the village core, a Roman mosaic (**MLE 7936**) was supposedly found in the Horsepool and 'The Croft' area of the village in the 1970s, of which there is no further evidence. Immediately adjacent to the proposed development area, probably within the area used as

playing fields, a scatter of 12 Roman coins, two brooches and pottery (**MLE 2846**) was recovered during the 1990s.

Anglo Saxon

Immediately adjacent to the proposed development area, finds consisting of a square headed brooch (**MLE2846**) and a single pottery sherd (**MLE 6181**) dating from the Anglo Saxon period were recovered in the early 1990s, possibly again from the area now used as playing fields to the west. The Anglo–Saxon brooch is incomplete but identifiable as a Square-headed form dating from *c.* AD 450-650. These are rare discoveries which are often associated with burials.

Medieval and post-medieval

There are a number of known medieval and post-medieval sites within the vicinity of the proposed development area. The village of Burbage has medieval origins (**MLE 2848**) and the Church of St Catherine (**MLE 13031**) to the north-east, although much altered has 13th-century origins. Within the grounds of the Manor House, there is a fishpond (**MLE 2843**) which may be medieval in date and originally belonged to Burbage Hall. Of the post-medieval remains recorded by the historic environment register most are standing buildings, included some Listed buildings within the village core, including The Manor House (**MLE 13029**), which is originally 17th century in date. Burbage Hall (**MLE 13024**) is an early 18th century red brick house, said to incorporate the hunting lodge of the Earls of Gainsborough. Renovation work during the 1980s revealed an extensive timber framed building inside the present brick walls. The Old Grange and Stable (**MLE 13027**) is a late 16th or early 17th century timber framed house, the interior of which, Pevsner described as ‘the best interior known in Leicestershire’ (Pevsner 1960). The Constitutional Club on Church Street (**MLE 13034**) is an early 19th century red brick house which once belonged to Prime Minister, George Canning (1770-1827), who famously fought a duel with his fellow Cabinet Member, Lord Castlereagh in 1809.

A number of post-medieval remains have also been unearthed within the village, these include a brick lined well and post-medieval pit (**MLE 10461**) recorded during an archaeological watching brief at 23 Lutterworth Road. Significant recording of the post-medieval Rectory gardens (**MLE 2832**) have also been carried out.

Within the immediate vicinity of the proposed development area a post-medieval copper alloy cauldron foot (**MLE 6788**) was recovered during metal detecting of the area now used as playing fields to the west.

The Leicestershire Historic Landscape Characterisation area identifies the proposed development area as Piecemeal Enclosure

Aims and Objectives

In view of the proximity to known Iron Age and Roman sites the evaluation was identified as having the potential to contribute to research into settlement and land-use during these periods (Knight et al 2013; English Heritage 2010; 2012; Taylor 2006; Willis 2006).

The general aims of the evaluation were as follows:

- To determine the presence, 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.

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);
- *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (Association of Local Government Officers, 2003);
- *Guidelines and Procedures for Archaeological work in Leicestershire and Rutland* (Leicestershire County Council 1997)

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 LCC Senior Planning Archaeologist, a programme of evaluation trenching was undertaken. A *c.* 3% sample of the 1.5ha. area necessitated the opening of the equivalent of seven 30m by 1.5m trenches, two 15m x 1.5m trenches and one 10 x 1.5m trench (*c.* 375m²). Trench locations were in accordance with plans set out in the WSI in order to provide an even coverage of the development area (Figure 2).

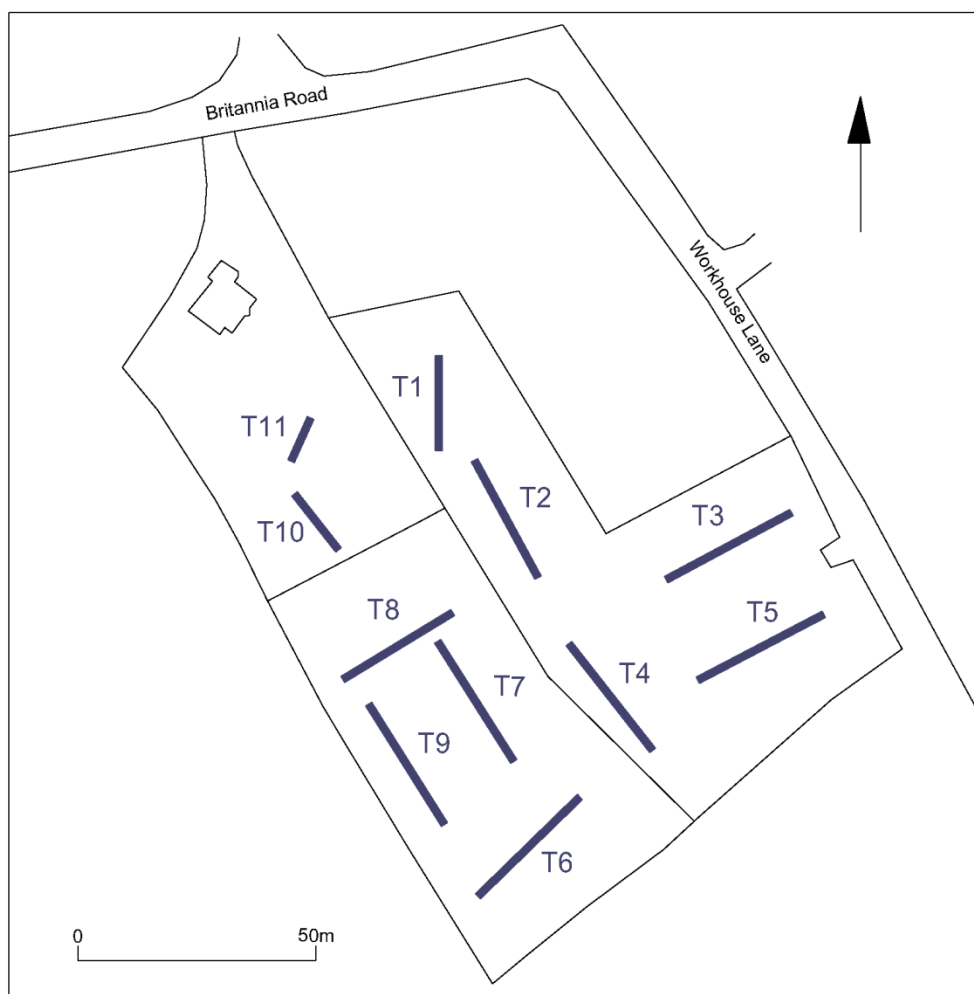


Figure 2: Trench location plan

Topsoil and overburden was removed by a mechanical excavator using a toothless ditching bucket (*c.*1.5m 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 undisturbed natural deposits.

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.

Results

A *c.* 3% sample of the area of development was excavated, comprising seven 30m by 1.5m trenches, two 15m x 1.5m trenches and one 10 x 1.5m trench (*c.* 375m²).

Trenches were positioned in accordance with plans set out in the brief. Trenches 1-5 were located in the eastern paddock fronting Workhouse Lane, Trenches 6-8 in the western paddock and Trenches 10 & 11 in the garden of 44 Britannia Road.

Excavation was undertaken using a JCB mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.5m wide toothless ditching bucket, with topsoil and overburden removed carefully in level spits, under continuous archaeological supervision. Archaeological fills are shown within round brackets e.g (05) whilst cuts are denoted by square brackets e.g [06].

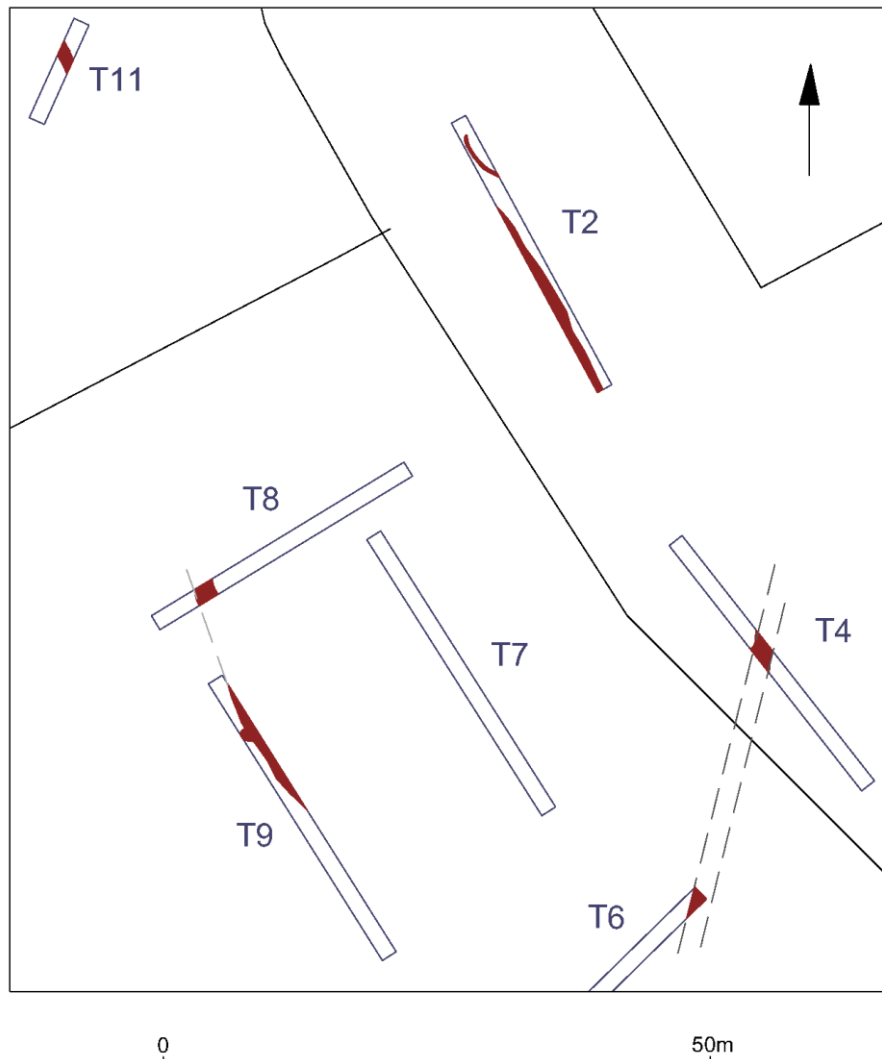


Figure 3: Trenches containing archaeological features

Trench 1

Machine removal of 0.20-0.30m of mid yellow-brown clay-silt topsoil and 0.25-0.70m of underlying pale yellow-brown sandy silt subsoil revealed a pale yellow-brown silty-sand brown silty-sand natural substratum (

Figure 4). There were no archaeological deposits present, with the exception of medieval ridge and furrow, across which the trench cut diagonally, the former visible across the paddock as standing features.



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

Trench 2

Located a short distance to the south of Trench 1, Trench 2 was cut on a north-west to south-east alignment along the line of a medieval plough ridge. Removal of the topsoil and subsoil revealed a shallow, curving linear feature **[03](04)/[06](05)** at the northern end of the trench which entered the trench from its eastern side and ran for *c.*5m before terminating in a butt end. The likely truncated feature measured 0.30-0.33m wide x 0.07-0.16m deep with 30° sides with a central concave base. The single mid grey-brown silty-clay fill **(04/06)** produced no finds. However the feature is likely to represent a roundhouse drip gully of Iron Age or Roman date.

A ditch **[07] (08)** was identified to the south of the gully running along the trench for *c.*20m on a broad north-west to south-east alignment. The partially excavated shallow feature (20m+ x 0.95m x 0.18m+ deep) had 45° sides and a single mid grey-brown sandy clay fill **(07)** which again produced no finds.

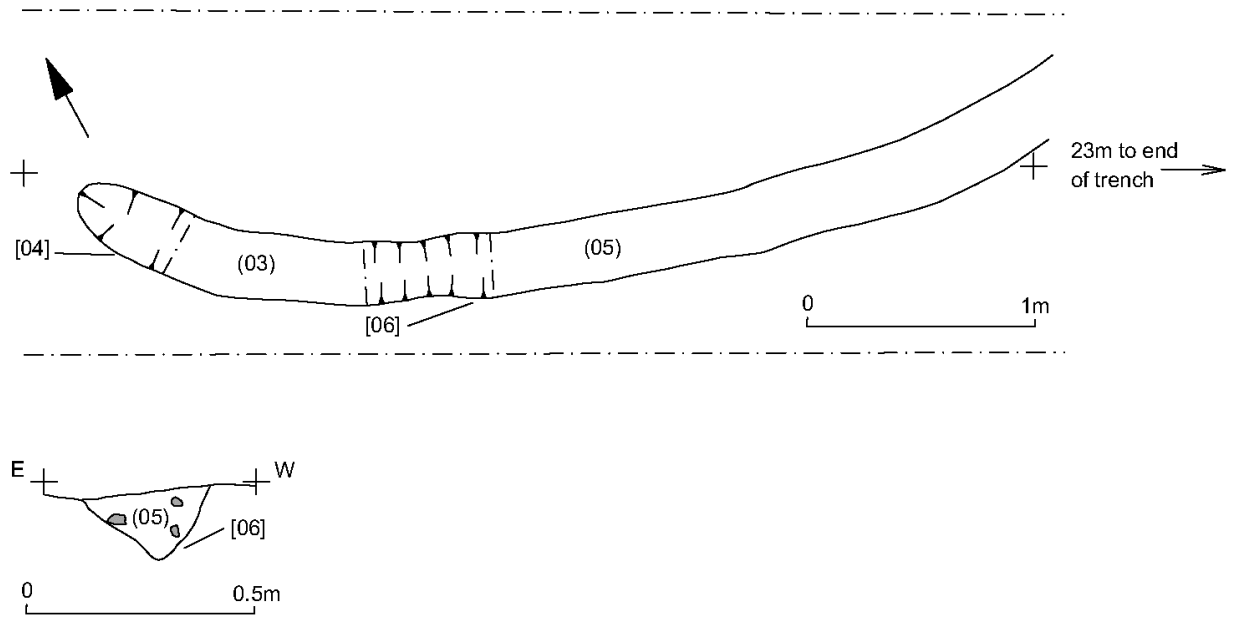


Figure 5: Gully [04/06]: plan and section



Figure 6: Gully terminus [04]; view south (1m scale)



Figure 7: Ditch [08]; view south (1m scale)

Trenches 3 & 5

Both trenches, located on the eastern site boundary flanking Workhouse Lane, were archaeologically negative, with the exception of the up-standing ridge and furrow which the trenches cut across at right angles.

Trench 4

Trench 4, located in the south-east corner of the eastern paddock, revealed a single ditch [02] (01) located midway along its 30m length. The ditch (2m x 1.90m x 0.48m deep) had 45° sides to an uneven, possibly disturbed, base. Its north-south alignment suggests that this was the same feature encountered a short distance to the south in Trench 6. The mid grey-brown slightly clayey sand fill (01) produced a single broken patinated struck flake of Neolithic or Bronze Age date.

Trench 6

Trench 6, situated in the south-east corner of the western paddock, revealed a feature likely to be a westward continuation of the ditch [02] observed in Trench 4 to the north-east at its east end. Flooding of the trench prevented its investigation.

Trench 7

Trench 7 contained a single, heavily truncated post-hole [17] (18) at its northern end, measuring 0.45m x 0.55m x 0.08m deep (

Figure 12). Its pale grey sandy clay-silt fill (18) produced a single grey ware pottery sherd of probable 2nd century date.

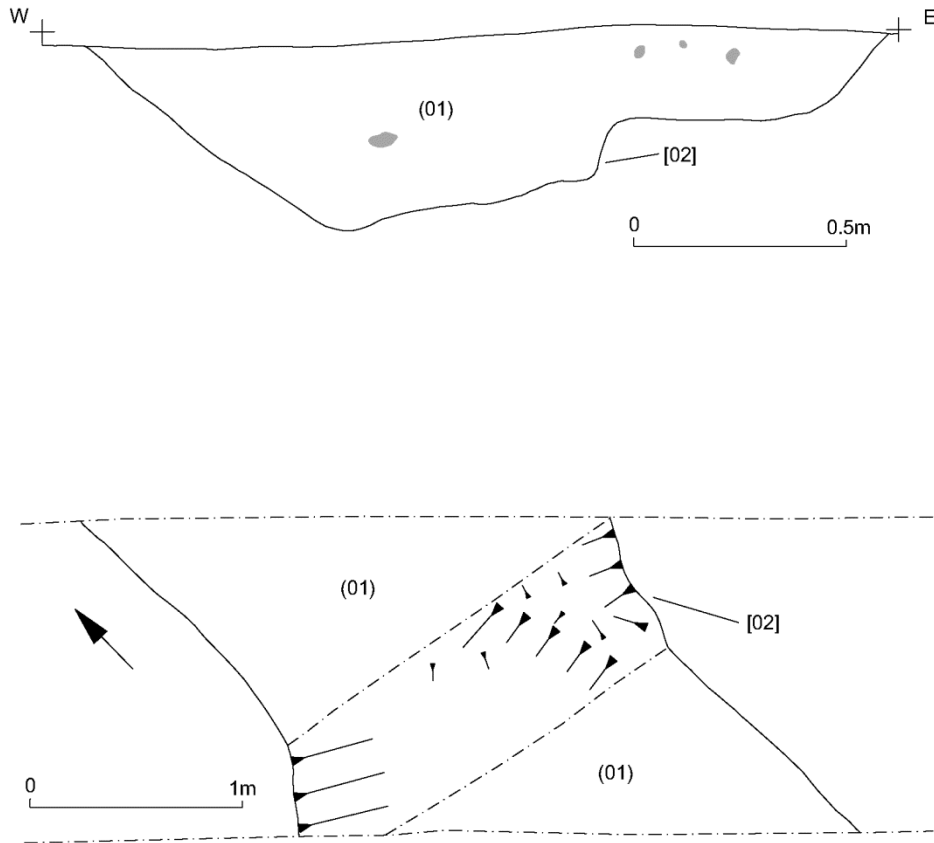


Figure 8: Ditch [02]: plan and section



Figure 9: Trench 4; view looking south with ditch [02] in background (1m scale)



Figure 10: Ditch [02]; south-facing section of Trench 4 (1m scale)



Figure 11: Trench 7; view looking south with post-hole [17] in the middle distance (1m scale)

Trench 8

Trench 8, situated at the north end of the western paddock, produced the most substantial feature of the excavation in the form of a substantial ditch [12] (11) running on a broad north-east to south-west alignment and measuring 2.80m wide and 1.15m deep with 30°- 45° sides to a central concave base. The single mid grey-

brown sandy-clay fill **(11)** produced no finds. The ditch appears to be a continuation of the linear feature observed in Trench 9 to the south (see below).



Figure 12: Post-hole [17] in Trench 7; view looking north-east (0.15m scale)

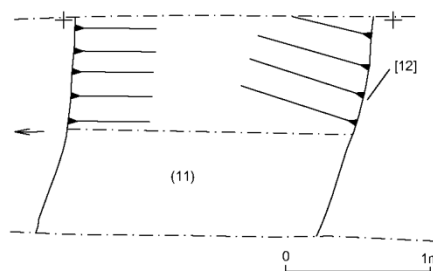
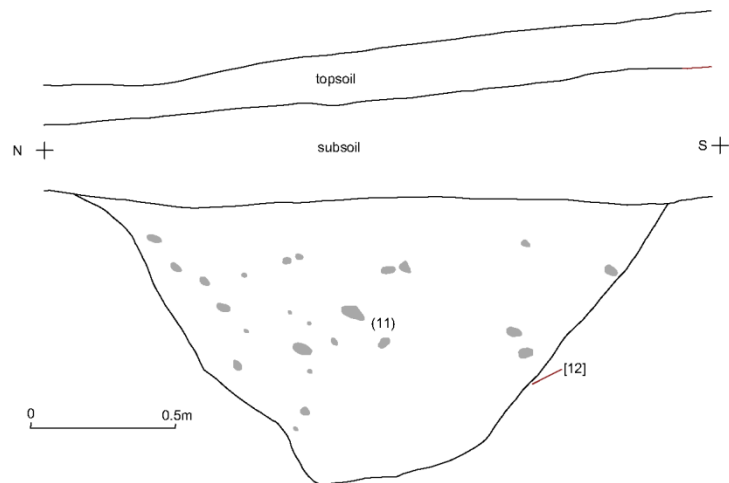


Figure 13: Trench 8 Ditch [12]: plan & section



Figure 14: Trench 8 Ditch [12]; north-east-facing section (1m scale)

Trench 9

The northern end of Trench 9 contained a slightly curving ditch [13] (14), possibly a continuation south continuation south of the ditch observed in Trench 8. The feature appeared to cut an earlier pit [15] earlier pit [15] (16), although the excavation of a trial section across the intersection of the two features of the two features failed to confirm this. Neither feature produced any finds (

Figure 16).

Trenches 10 & 11

Trenches 10 & 11 were located in the garden of 44 Britannia Road. A single, heavily truncated ditch truncated ditch [09] (10) feature, aligned north-south, was identified at the north end of Trench 11 (of Trench 11 (

Figure 17, Figure 19). The single pale greyish-brown sandy clay silt fill (10) produced two joining sherds of post-medieval earthenware pottery.

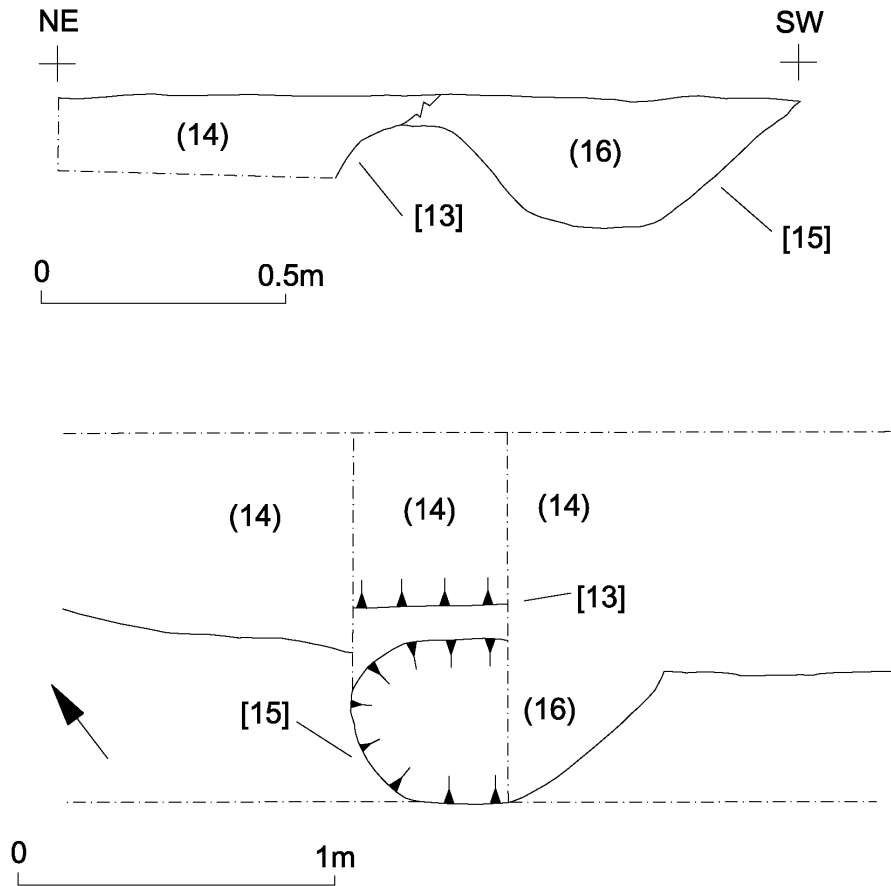


Figure 15: Trench 9 Ditch [13] & pit [15]: plan and section



Figure 16: Trench 9 Ditch [13] & pit [15]; view looking south-east (1m scale)



Figure 17: Trench 11; view looking north-west (1m scale)

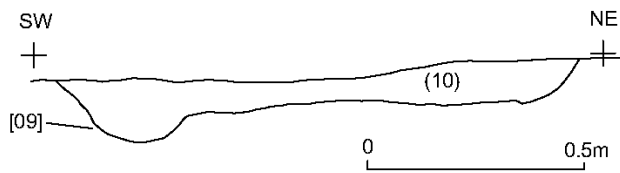
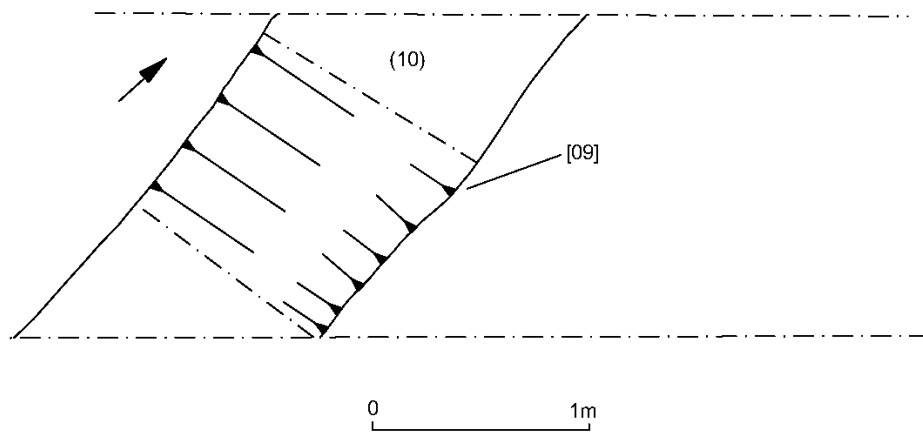


Figure 18: Trench 11. Ditch [09]: plan & section



Figure 19: Trench 11,ditch [09],view looking north-west (1m scale)

Discussion

The archaeological evaluation at Workhouse Lane, Burbage, revealed archaeological deposits in the form of several ditches in addition to a pit and post-hole focussed on the central area of the development area. Whilst largely undated and heavily plough eroded, their similarity and proximity to others encountered during recent excavations on adjoining land suggests that they date to the early Roman (1st or 2nd century) period and represent field or stock boundary features. The discovery of a possible roundhouse ditch and a post-hole, however, is suggestive of settlement evidence on the site perhaps during the Iron Age and early Roman period and is potentially of regional significance.

From the pottery present the archaeological feature located to the north in the garden is of post-medieval date (17th-18th century) and may be related to the north-west to south-east aligned ridge and furrow present as earthworks within the area.

Table 1 Trench Details

TRENCH	ORIENTATION	LENGTH AND WIDTH (metres)	DESCRIPTION	DEPTH (MIN-MAX metres)
1	N-S	20 x 1.60	Topsoil 0.20-0.30m, subsoil 0.20-0.6m. No archaeological finds or deposits.	0.55-0.90
2	NW-SE	30 x 1.60	Topsoil 0.18-0.22m, subsoil 0.40-0.50m. Gully [04]/[06], ditch [08]	0.60-0.72
			Topsoil 0.20-0.30m, subsoil 0.25-0.80m.	0.56-1.10

3	NW-SE	30 x 1.60	No archaeological finds or features.	
4	SE-NW	28 x 1.60	Topsoil 0.18-0.26m, subsoil 0.15-0.34m. Ditch [02]	0.39-0.72
5	NE-SW	30 x 1.60	Topsoil 0.13-0.20m, subsoil 0.22-0.42m. No archaeological finds or deposits.	0.39-0.57
6	NE-SW	28 x 1.60	Topsoil 0.13-0.24m, subsoil 0.20-0.61m. Ditch [01]	0.33-0.81
7	NW-SE	30 x 1.60	Topsoil 0.20-0.28m, subsoil 0.20-0.51m. Post hole [17]	0.42-0.78
8	E-W	26 x 1.60	Topsoil 0.10-0.27m, subsoil 0.08-0.43m. Ditch [12]	0.30-0.62
9	NW-SE	30 x 1.60	Topsoil 0.22-0.30m, subsoil 0.24-0.30m. Ditch [13], pit [15]	0.50-0.72
10	NW-SE	15 x 1.60	Topsoil 0.22-0.32m, subsoil 0.32-0.60m. No archaeology present.	0.60-0.85
11	NE-SW	10 x 1.60	Topsoil 0.20-0.31, subsoil 0.23-0.30m. Ditch [09]	0.55-0.70

Archive and Publications

The site archive, consisting of paper and photographic records, will be deposited with Leicestershire Museums Service under Accession Reference Number X.A16.2014.

The archive consists of:

- 11 trench recording sheets
- Photographic record index
- 16 single context record sheets
- Single context index sheet
- Environmental sample record sheet
- 32 digital photographs
- Monochrome photographic negatives & contact print
- 2 x A1 drawing sheet
- A risk assessment form

Publication

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

Acknowledgements

Steve Baker, Adam Clapton, Roger Kipling and Jamie Patrick of ULAS undertook the archaeological evaluation on behalf of Bellway Home East Midlands Ltd. The project was managed by Patrick Clay.

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Oasis Information

Project Name	Land at Workhouse Lane, Burbage, Leicestershire
Project Type	Archaeological evaluation
Project Manager	Patrick Clay
Project Supervisor	Roger Kipling
Previous/Future work	Development
Current Land Use	Paddock
Development Type	Residential
Reason for Investigation	NPPF
Position in the Planning Process	Post-determination
Site Co ordinates	NGR SK 855 091
Start/end dates of field work	03/03/14-05/03/14
Archive Recipient	Leicestershire Museums Service
Study Area	1.2ha.

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Appendix One: The Finds

Nicholas J. Cooper

Prehistoric Flint

(01)[02] single struck flake, broken, with patina. Neolithic or Bronze Age date

Roman Pottery

Tr.7 (18) [17] Single sherd (1g) of grey ware (Leics. Fabric GW3: Pollard 1994) probably of 2nd century date bearing in mind evidence from earlier evaluations, but could be 3rd or 4th century. Very abraded and resulting from long-distance manuring of fields probably.

Post-medieval Pottery

(10) [9]. Two joining sherds (2g) of post-medieval earthenware of 17th-18th century date (Leics. Fabric EA2: Davies and Sawday 1999, 161)

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Appendix Two: The Environmental Evidence

Rachel Small

Introduction

Excavations were carried out at Workhouse lane, Burbage, by ULAS and were directed by Roger Kipling. Soil samples were taken to assess the potential for them to contain charred plant remains, a useful indicator of activities on the site associated with agriculture and/or human occupation on site and nearby.

Method

Four samples were processed and they were primarily clay based with sandy inclusions. They were wet sieved in a York tank using a 0.5mm mesh and flotation was carried out into a 0.3mm mesh sieve. The flotation fractions (flots) were transferred into plastic boxes and air dried. The residues were also air dried and fractions over 4mm sorted for all finds. The flots were sorted for plant remains using a x10-40 stereo microscope; these were identified by comparison with modern reference material available at ULAS and were counted and tabulated below (table 1). The plant names follow Stace (1991).

Results

The assemblages were very poor and no grains or chaff were identified. Charred seeds were rare and those which were present were fragmented and abraded. Two grass *Poaceae* seeds were identified; these are commonly found as weeds in fields. Also, a seed was identified as sedge (*Carex spp.*) and these plants are commonly associated with damp ground. Charcoal flecks (2mm and under) were rare in the assemblage and pieces over 2mm in size were present in sample 4 but rare. All samples contained rootlets, and these were common to abundant in the samples, and all contained uncharred (modern) seeds - both are suggestive of ground disturbance.

Table 2: Charred plant remains. Key: + present, ++ moderate amount, +++ abundant.

Sample	Context	Litres	Charred grains	Charred chaff	Charred seeds	Fruit stone/nut shell	Uncharred seeds	Charcoal flecks (less than 2mm)	Charcoal (2mm and larger)	Notes
1 (2/2)	11	9	-	-	+	-	+	+		Rootlets abundant. Two charred seeds, - <i>Poaceae</i> .
2 (1/2)	1	9	-	-	+	-	+	+		Rootlets abundant. One charred seed, unidentifiable.
3 (2/2)	3	8	-	-	+	-	+	+		Rootlets common. One charred seed - fragment of sedge (<i>Carex spp.</i>)
4 (1/2)	7	8	-	-	+	-	+	+		Rootlets common. Two charred seeds, unidentifiable.

Conclusion

To conclude the samples were poor, only providing a brief insight into the environment on/near to the site. Seeds/charcoal were quantified during analysis and thus no further work is necessary. Archaeobotanical material has survived in these samples and thus despite the low numbers if future works on site or nearby are carried out sampling of soil is recommended.

Bibliography

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