



**University of
Leicester**

Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological Evaluation
on Land at Park House, 62 Main Road,
Sheepy Magna, Leicestershire
(SK 32497 01111)**



Wayne Jarvis

ULAS Report No 2015-075
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**An Archaeological Evaluation on
Land at Park House, 62 Main Road,
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(SK 32497 01111)**

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For: Mr and Mrs R. Pocklington

Approved by:

Signed:



Date: 13.05.2015

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ULAS Report Number 2015-075
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Accession Number X.A41.2015

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Summary

An archaeological trial trench evaluation was undertaken in April 2015 by University of Leicester Archaeological Services on behalf of Mr and Mrs R. Pocklington on land at Park House, 62 Main Road, Sheepy Magna, Leicestershire. The fieldwork was undertaken following the submission of a planning application for the construction of five houses in order to assess the potential impact of the development on any archaeological remains that may be present.

The archaeological evaluation identified a series of features. Most of these could be attributed to very recent disturbance, producing modern brick from loose fills. Two east-west boundary or field ditches were also identified which produced material of 16th-17th century date, along with one sherd of probably residual medieval pottery. A sample from the lower fill of one of the ditches indicated that it was waterlogged with evidence for hedgerow species. In addition to these features, a pair of undated linear features was exposed. These were wide and shallow, ran broadly east-west on a slightly different alignment to the late boundary features and are probably unrelated.

The site archive will be deposited with Leicestershire County Council under the accession number X.A41.2015.

Introduction

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at Park House, 62 Main Road, Sheepy Magna, Leicestershire in response to a planning application for residential development. In consequence Leicestershire County Council, acting in its role as advisor to the Local Planning Authority, recommended the need for a preliminary 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 (ULAS 2015).

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 April 2015 and involved the machine excavation of five 10m x 1.6m trenches, totalling 400m² in order to provide a c.6% sample of the area. The trenches were positioned in order to target the locations of the proposed buildings.

The archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Section 12: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment (DCLG March 2012). All archaeological work was in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) *Code of Conduct* (2014) and adhered to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (2014). The LCC *Guidelines and Procedures for Archaeological work Leicestershire and Rutland* (1997) was also adhered to.

Site Description, Topography and Geology

The proposed development site (SK 32497 01111) is located to the south of the village of Sheepy Magna on land west at Park House, 62 Main Road, on the road leading to Atherstone (Figure 1). The site comprises an L-shaped lawned area measuring c.3000 sq. m., to the north-west of which is the Park House property and its gardens (Figure 2).

The site is effectively flat, lies at a height of c.75m O.D. and appears to be the original topography. The Ordnance Survey Geological Survey of Great Britain Sheet 169 indicates that the underlying geology of the site was likely to consist of Bosworth Clay Member (BOSW) overlying Gunthorpe Member (GUN).

Archaeological and Historical Background

The proposed development site lies in the south of the village of Sheepy Magna, which is known to have medieval if not earlier origins (SK 317 016; see figs. 1 & 2). It is mentioned in the Domesday Book as having a separate manor to Sheepy Parva. The site fronts on to the Atherstone Road, historically a turnpike road being associated with the salt trade, and much more recently a trade route linking the east midlands coalfields. To the north of the village are surviving medieval or post-medieval fishponds (HER ref. MLE19379), and a listed tithe barn. To the north of the site in the village core is the church of All Saints which is known to have existed from at least 1220 (MLE12101). Medieval village earthworks are also known to survive in the environs of the south of the village (MLE3185). In July 1998 fieldwork by ULAS at a nearby site in Sheepy Parva identified house plots associated with postholes representing a building, pits and other structures (Sturgess 1998). These features produced pottery of 11th to 14th century (i.e. medieval) date. More recent work on the Twycross Road in the north of the village identified medieval occupation from the early 12th to mid-14th centuries, with stone and timber structures and to the rear pit activity and boundary ditches (Jarvis 2003; Kipling 2013).

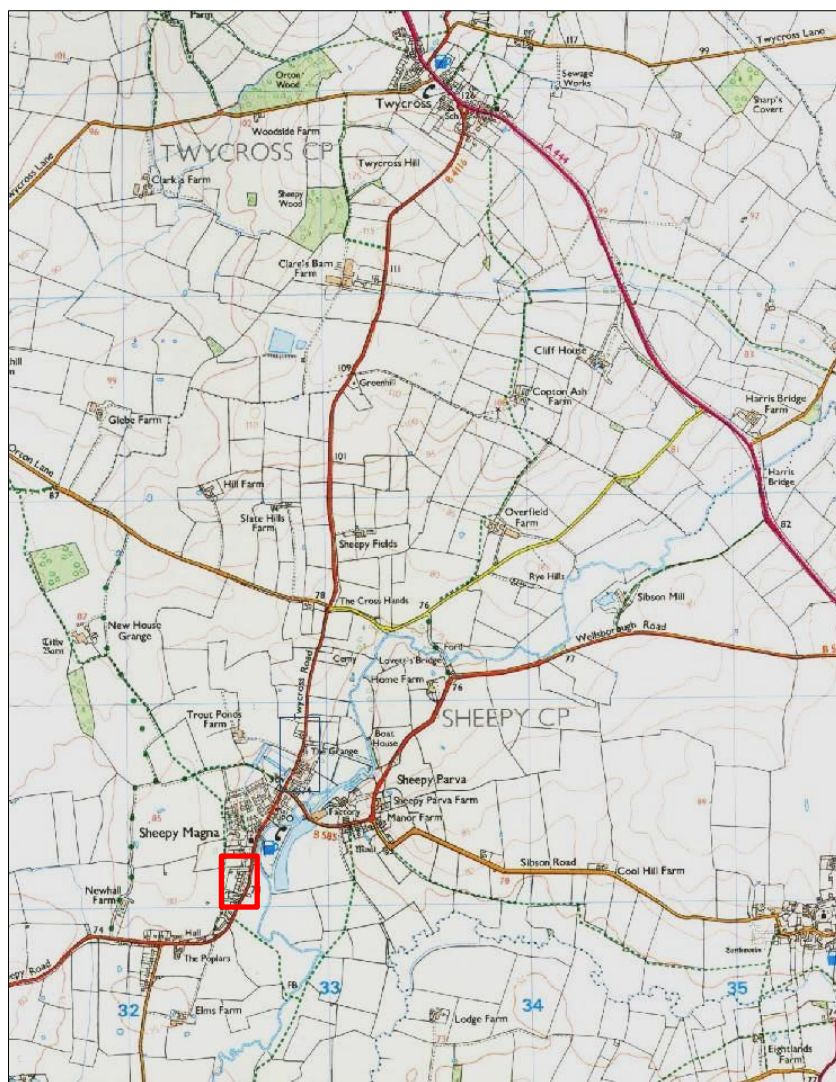


Figure 1: Site Location (Scale 1:50 000)

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Aims and Objectives

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

The Medieval period (Vince 2006; Lewis 2006; Knight et al 2012; English Heritage 2012).

The evaluation may contribute towards research into the origins and development of medieval settlement, landscape and society. Environmental evidence could provide information on local environmental conditions as well as settlement activity, craft, industry and land use. Artefacts can assist in the development of a type series within the region and provide evidence for evidence for craft, industry and exchange across broad landscape areas. The evaluation has the potential to contribute to Research

Agenda topics 7.1.2, 7.1.4, 7.2.1-7.2.4, 7.3.1-7.3.5, 7.5.4, 7.6.1-2, 7.7.1-7.7.5 and Research Objective 7E - *Investigate the morphology of rural settlements.*

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.

The results of the evaluation will 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.

This 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 (X.A.41 2015) 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 Senior Planning Archaeologist of Leicestershire County Council, a programme of evaluation trenching was undertaken.

It was proposed that c.80 sq. m. of trenching, the equivalent of five trial trenches, each measuring 10m x 1.6m, be excavated in order to provide a 6% sample.

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 undisturbed natural substrata or archaeological deposits. The trenches were recorded at an appropriate scale by measured drawing and photography and were GPS-located to Ordnance Survey National Grid.

A photographic record, utilising high quality digital images, 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;
- Specific trench photographs and features

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

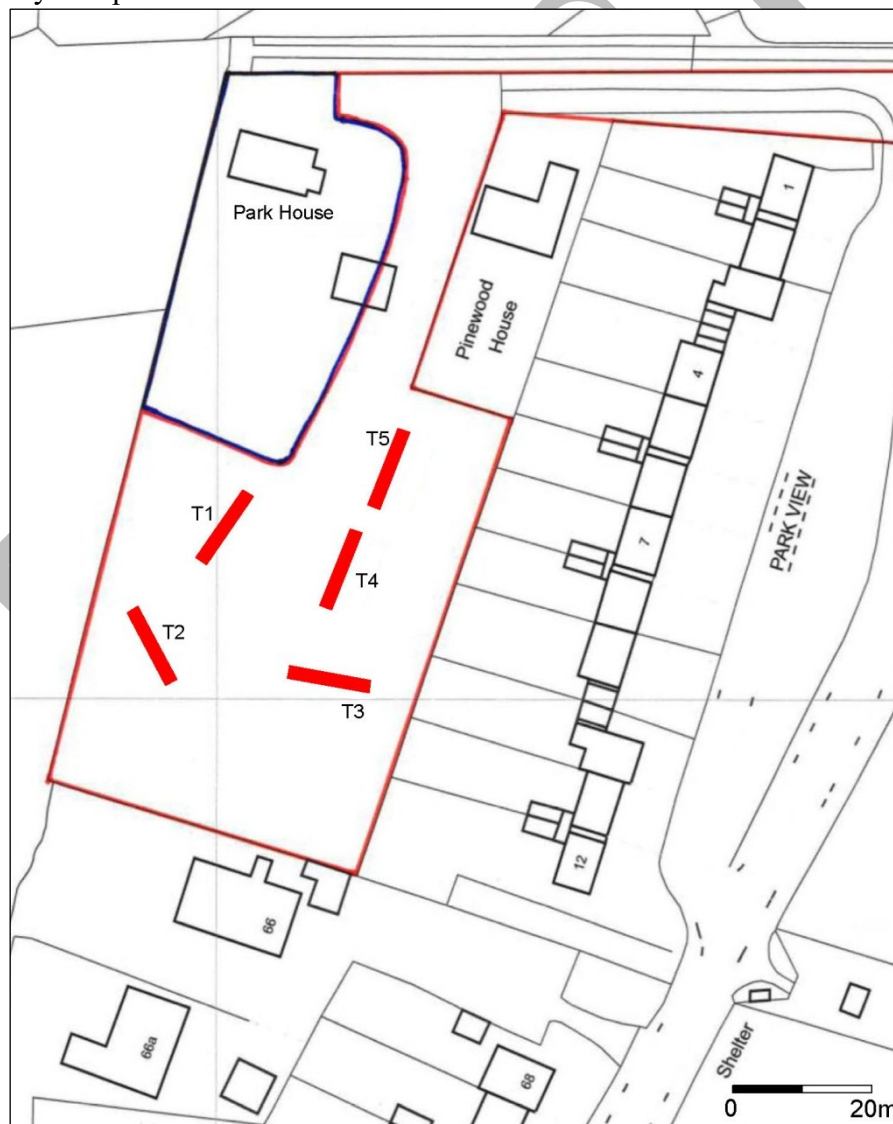


Figure 2: Site area and trench layout shown.

Results

As set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI), 80 sq. m. of archaeological trial trenches, comprising five trenches measuring 10m in length and c.1.6m wide, were excavated. These were sited within the footprints of the proposed five new houses (Figure 2).

Excavation was undertaken using a JCB mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.6m wide toothless ditching bucket on the back-actor, with topsoil and overburden removed carefully in level spits, under continuous archaeological supervision.

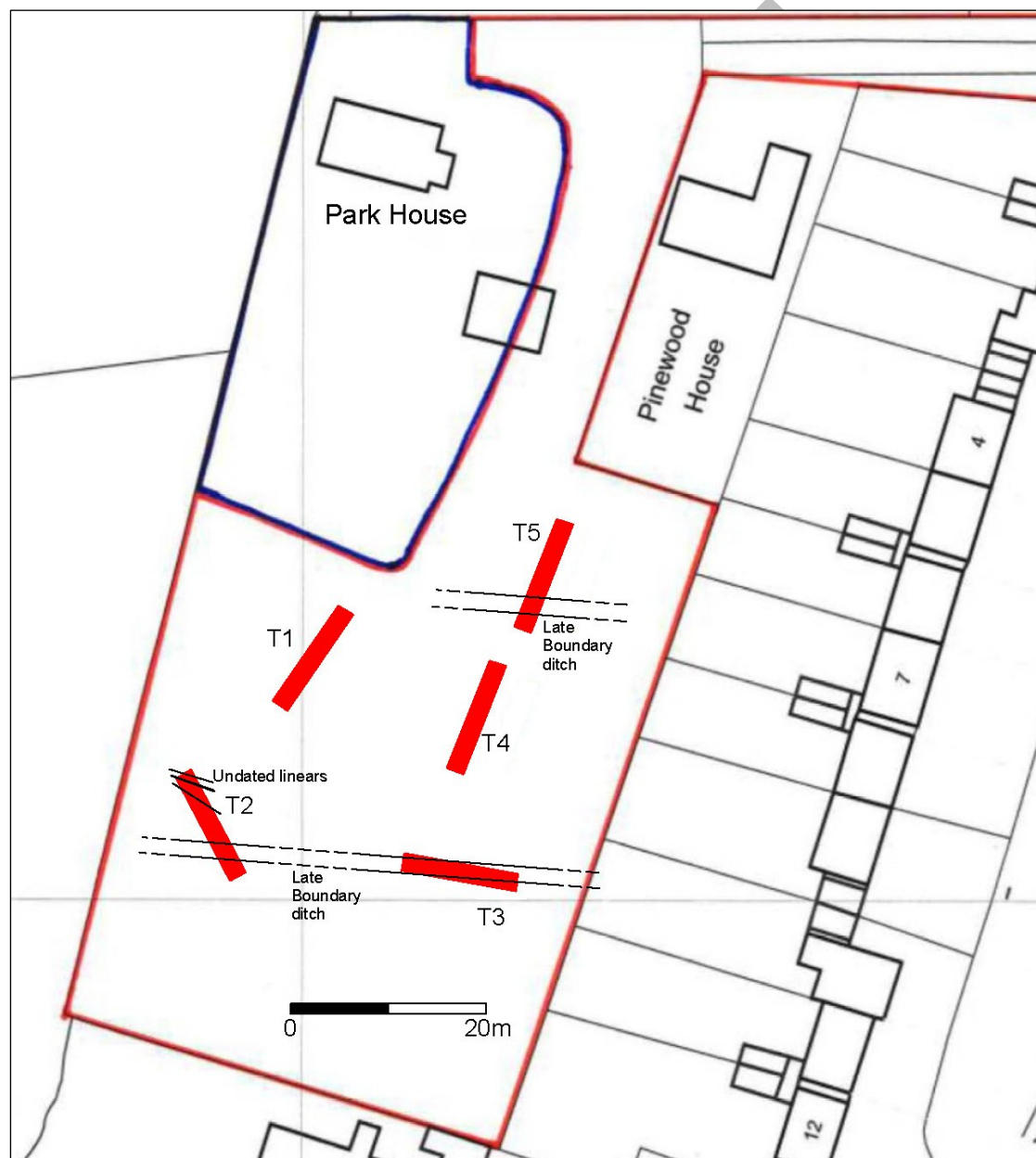


Figure 3: Site area showing trench layout and general results.

Trench Results

The five trenches targeted the footprints of the proposed buildings. Trenches 1 and 4 were negative except for a few loose, modern fills.

Trench 2 exposed three linear features, [1] [3] and [5] (Figure 4-6). Features [1] and [3] were probably related recuts of the same east-west alignment of a shallow wide feature. A 4.2m length was exposed, up to 1.3m wide and with a depth of 0.22m. The fill of both cuts was a very sterile grey silty-clay. No finds were recovered from excavation of the exposed area of these features. Towards the south-east end of Trench 2 [5] was a more substantial ditch, 2.5m exposed across the trench, 1.7m wide and with a depth of 0.5m. The orientation was also slightly south of east-west. This feature had two fills, the lower context (6) was organic and peat-like, and produced sparse animal bone and waterlogged plant remains. The upper fill context (7) was a pale grey clayey-sand with occasional pottery, of a 16th-17th century date. It is likely that the feature is a boundary or drainage ditch of Enclosure date.

Trench 3 to the east exposed a continuation of this feature, with the same sequence of deposits, and further pottery and animal bone. No further features were identified in this trench.

In Trench 5 a series of areas of disturbance were identified, most of which contained modern material. The only feature of note, [8], was a ditch on the same alignment as ditch [5] to the south (

Figure 7-8). It consisted of a short stretch (truncated both to the east and west) 1.3m long, 1.4m wide and with a depth of 0.32m. It had comparable fills to those seen in ditch [5]. The lower fill, (10), was again organic and peat-like, whilst the upper fill was a drier grey clayey fill (9) which produced a sherd of medieval pottery. The sherd is quite abraded, potentially residual, and no further medieval pottery was recovered from the evaluation trenches. It is considered likely that feature [8] is contemporary with the ditch [5] to the south having a *terminus post quem* of the 16th-17th century, and probably being a related further boundary or drainage ditch (see Figure 3 for interpreted plan).

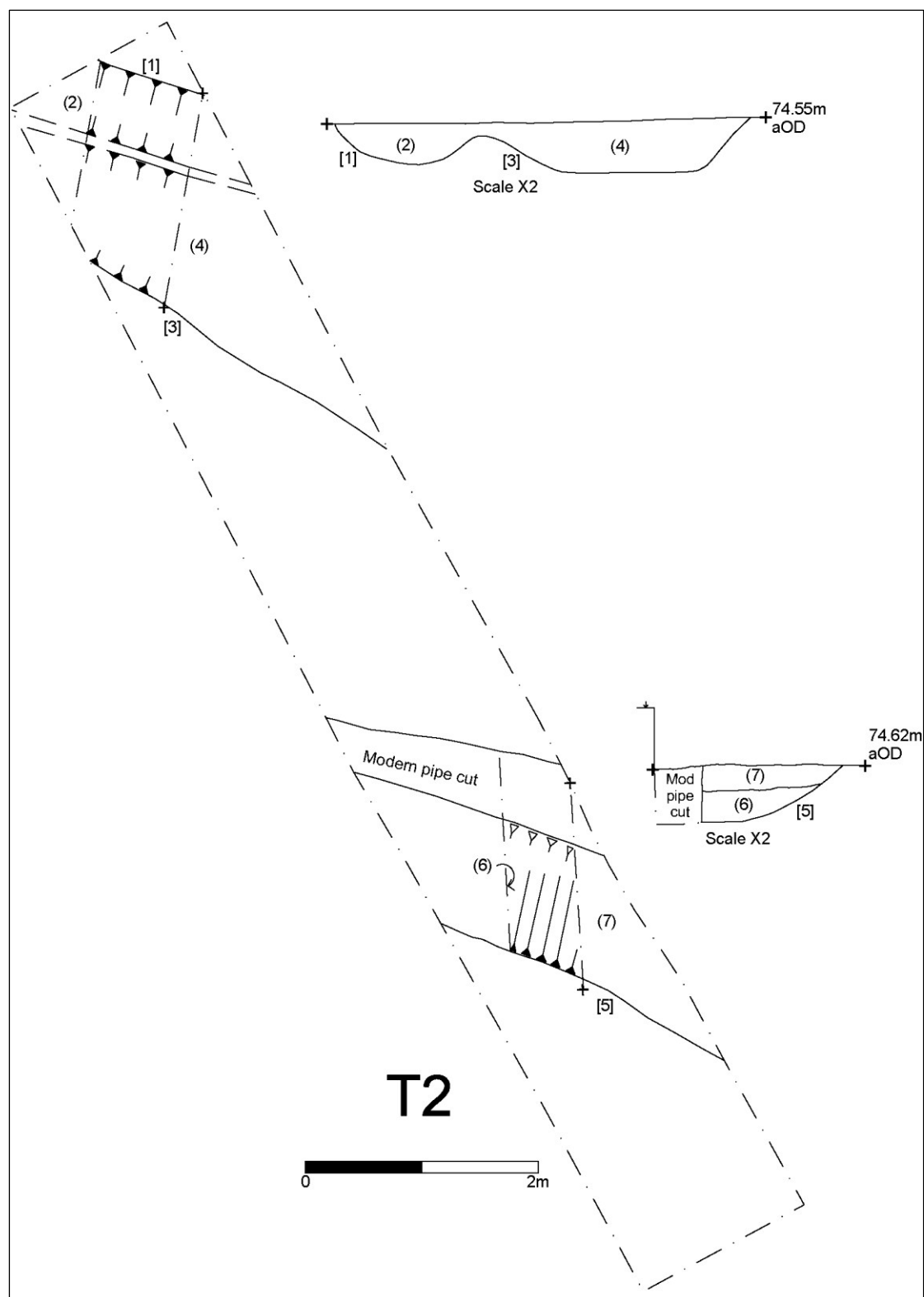


Figure 4: Trench 2, features.



Figure 5: Trench 2, features [1] and [3].



Figure 6: Trench 2, feature [5].

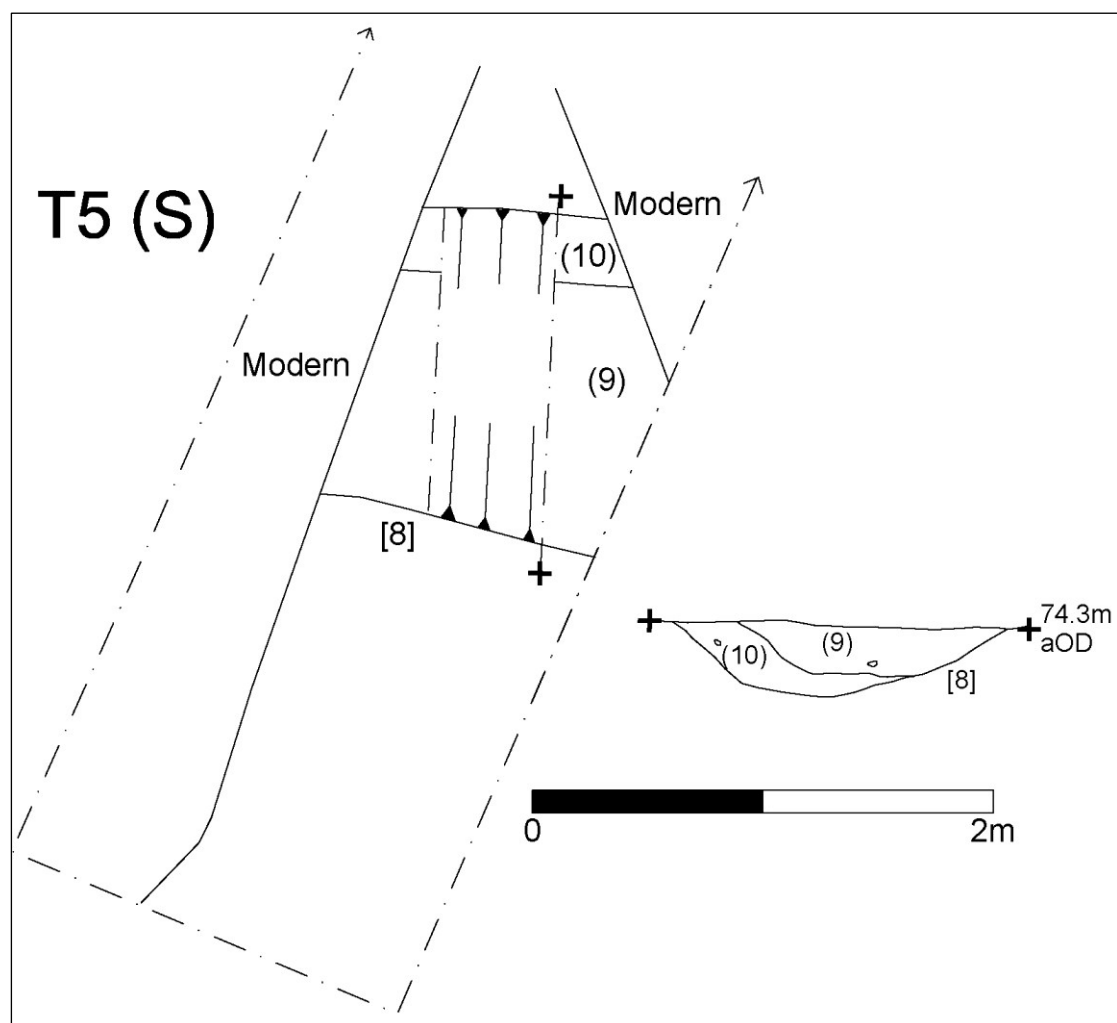


Figure 7: Trench 5 south end, feature [8].



Figure 8: Trench 5, feature [8].

Table 1 Details of trenches

TRENCH	LOCATION & ORIENTATION	LENGTH AND WIDTH (metres)	DESCRIPTION/FINDS	DEPTH TO ARCH/NAT (metres)
1	SK32498 01121 NE-SW	9.9 x 1.6	Negative	0.41
2	SK32489 01115 NW-SE	11.3 x 1.6	Linear features [1] [3] [5]=[11] pottery and animal bone from latter. 1 unstratified flint	0.38
3	SK32516 01106 E-W	10 x 1.6	Linear [11]=[5], pottery & animal bone; and modern service	0.5
4	SK32516 01119 N-S	10 x 1.6	Negative. Root activity and modern service	0.36
5	SK32529 01138 N-S	11.5 x 1.6	Linear [8], 1 medieval sherd; plus much modern disturbance	0.65

The Post-Roman Pottery *Deborah Sawday*

The pottery, eight sherds, weighing 215 grams, was catalogued with reference to the guidelines set out by the Medieval Pottery Research Group, (MPRG 2001) and the ULAS fabric series (Davies and Sawday 1999; Sawday 2009).

The results are shown below (Tables 2 and 3). The earliest material, a sherd of the Chilvers Coton fabric CC5, dating from the mid or later 13th century, was recovered from the back-fill of the ditch [8]. The parallel ditch, [5] produced two sherds of early post-medieval pottery, the Earthenware, EA1 and the Midland Yellow ware, fabric MY, dating from the 16th or 17th centuries. Fragments of post-medieval or modern Earthenware, EA2, were recorded in context (13), together with a tiny piece of Staffordshire Slipware possibly dating from the mid-17th century if not slightly later.

The average sherd weight for the medieval and earlier post-medieval material in contexts [5] and [8] of 45.66grams, suggests the survival of relatively undisturbed archaeological levels in the vicinity.

Table 2: The medieval and later pottery fabrics and approximate date range.

Fabric	Common Name/Kiln & Fabric Equivalent where known	Approx. Date Range
CC5	Chilvers Coton fabric B	c.1250/1300 +
MY	Midland Yellow ware - ?Ticknall, Derbyshire	c.1500-1725
EA1	Earthenware 1 – Coarse Post Medieval Earthenware - Chilvers Coton/Ticknall, Derbyshire	c.1500-1750
EA2	Earthenware 2 – ‘Pancheon ware’, Chilvers Coton/Ticknall, Derbyshire	17th – 19th century +
EA7	Earthenware 7 - Slipware - Staffs	c.1650/70 +

Table 3: The medieval and later pottery by fabric, sherd numbers and weight (grams) by context.

Context	Fabric	No	Gr	Comments
7 [5] ditch	EA1	1	80	Basal angle, jar, dark black/brown glaze on interior,
7 [5] ditch	MY	1	31	Basal angle, hollow ware vessel, glazed ion inner & outer walls.
9 [8] ditch	CC5	1	26	Basal angle, hollow ware vessel, probably a cooking pot/jar , traces of sooting on outer edge of base, abraded.
13 [11] ditch	EA2	4	76	Body sherds, slipped & glazed internally.
13 [11] ditch	EA7	1	2	Wheel thrown body with trailed iron rich & white clay slip decoration over an interior slip firing brown, yellow & orange under glaze.

Site/ Parish: Park House, 62 Main Road, Sheepy Magna, Leics.
 Accession No.: XA41 2015
 Document Ref: sheepy magna4.docx
 Material: pot
 Site Type: village core

Submitter: W. Jarvis
 Identifier: D. Sawday
 Date of Identification: 07.05.2015
 Method of Recovery: evaluation
 Job Number: 15-632

The Worked Flint *Wayne Jarvis*

A single struck flint was identified, from the topsoil in Trench 2. This was a retouched secondary flake, of probable late Neolithic or early Bronze Age date.

The Animal Bone *Jennifer Browning*

Three fragments of animal bone were recovered during an evaluation at Park House, Sheepy Magna. Both contexts are post-medieval lower ditch fills, which were waterlogged (W. Jarvis *pers. comm*). Although the contexts were assigned to ditch fills in different evaluation trenches, the corresponding alignment and sequence of fills, suggest that they belong to the same ditch. The assemblage recovered here is too small to draw any conclusions from but the site clearly has the potential to contain well-preserved environmental evidence, including animal bones.

Table 4: Brief description of animal bones recovered from the site

Context	Cut	Quantity	Description of Bone(s)
7	5	2	Horse metapodial, distal fragment (fused)
12	11	1	Cattle femur, distal articulation and shaft (fused); several cleaver marks, striking the mid-shaft of the bone transversely

The Environmental Material

Wayne Jarvis, Anita Radini and Rachel Small

One 20 litre soil sample was taken from the fill of the ditch running through Trenches 2 and 3 (Contexts [05], (6) = [11] (13)). The sample was taken for the recovery of plant and other remains in order to assess the potential preservation of evidence about past environment, food production and consumption at the site and possible dating evidence. The feature is thought to be of 17th century or later date, a field or boundary ditch, and animal bone was also recovered from this fill. A litre of the sample was processed and present in the waterlogged remains were woods, thorns and seeds of hedgerow species like blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa* L.), hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna* L.), blackberry (*Rubus fruticosus* L.), dog-rose (*Rosa canina* L.) and elder (*Sambucus nigra* L.). This mixture of seeds is typical of field hedges from the past 200 years. Also present in the waterlogged remains were cornfield weeds such as knot grass (*Polygonum aviculare* L.), goosefoots (*Chenopodium* spp.), common knapweed (*Centaurea* spp.) and grass seeds (*Poaceae*). These remains would naturally fill a field boundary ditch. Furthermore the presence of unhatched water flea (*Daphnia ephippia*) eggs suggests the periodic drying of the boundary ditch, which is to be expected. Other insect remains were present including beetles and larva. Micro charcoal and flecks were rare.

It is important to take into account that soil conditions can vary widely across different areas of a site. The sample results do suggest that if any earlier features were found on site or nearby they could also potentially produce surviving waterlogged remains. Despite this assessment being limited, an appropriate sampling strategy is still highly advisable if future archaeological work is undertaken in the area.

Discussion and Conclusions

The archaeological evaluation on land at Park House, Sheepy Magna has identified a few features. Most of these could be attributed to very recent disturbance, producing modern brick fragments from loose fills. Two east-west boundary or field ditches were also identified which produced material of 16th-17th century date, along with one sherd of probably residual medieval pottery. A sample from the lower fill of one of the ditches indicated that it was waterlogged with evidence for hedgerow species. In addition to these features, a pair of undated linear features was exposed. These were wide and shallow, ran broadly east-west on a slightly different alignment to the late boundary features and are perhaps unrelated.

Archive and Publications

The site archive (X.A41.2015), consisting of ceramic finds plus paper and photographic records, will be deposited with Leicestershire Museums Service.

The archive consists of:

- Finds: pottery sherds, animal bone, flint
- 5 trench recording sheets
- 11 context sheets, 1 sample index, 2 A3 permatrace plans
- Photographic record index

- 18 digital photographs on CD and contact prints

Publication

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

Acknowledgements

The fieldwork was carried out by the author with assistance from Jamie Patrick, Andy McLeish and Donald Clark all of ULAS. The project was managed by Patrick Clay. I am also grateful to the clients for their assistance on site.

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Oasis Information

Project Name	Land at Park House, Sheepy Magna, Leicestershire
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Project Type	Archaeological evaluation
Project Manager	Patrick Clay
Project Supervisor	Wayne Jarvis
Previous/Future work	Development
Current Land Use	Garden
Development Type	Residential
Reason for Investigation	NPPF
Position in the Planning Process	Pre-determination
Site Co ordinates	NGR SK 32497 01111
Start/end dates of field work	April 2015
Archive Recipient	Leicestershire County Council
Study Area	3000 sq. m.

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