



University of  
**Leicester**

**Archaeological Services**



**An Archaeological Evaluation  
at Whissendine Cottage,  
Main Street, Rutland**

NGR:  
**SK 82841 14275**

Wayne Jarvis

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**An Archaeological Evaluation at  
Whissendine Cottage, Main Street, Rutland  
(SK 82841 14275)**

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Approved by:

**Signed:**



**Date:** 8/12//2014

**Name:** Richard Buckley

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**An Archaeological Evaluation at  
Whissendine Cottage, Main Street, Whissendine,  
Rutland**

**Wayne Jarvis**

**Summary**

*An Archaeological Field Evaluation was carried out on land at Whissendine Cottage, Main Street, Whissendine, Rutland on behalf of Mr and Mrs C Davies. The investigation consisted of the excavation of seven trial trenches within the area of proposed new houses and associated access. No definite archaeological features were found during the trial trenching. A series of ditches that were identified can be associated with historic map evidence and were constructed for boundary and drainage purposes. A single post-hole of uncertain date was identified together with a modern surface and plough furrows. A very low density of artefacts was recovered during these groundworks, comprising a sherd each of Iron Age and Roman pottery, and a struck flint scraper. The Planning Authority is Rutland County Council (Pre Planning application). The archive will be deposited in due course with Rutland County Council, subject to their confirmation, Accession No. OAKRM2014.61.*

**1. Introduction**

In accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Section 12 (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment) this document is the report of an archaeological field evaluation carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on land at Whissendine Cottage, Main Street, Whissendine, Rutland. The evaluation was commissioned by Mr and Mrs C Davies from ULAS as part of a planning application for the construction of five new dwellings and associated access within the gardens located to the rear of Whissendine Cottage. The proposed development lies within an area of significant archaeological potential. The work was carried out during November 2014.

**2. Site Description, Land use, Topography and Geology**

The site lies on the northern side of Main Street, Whissendine, Rutland, to the east of the historic core (SK 82841 14275; Figs 1 and 2). The assessment area consists of approximately 1.4 hectares of gardens, including an arboretum, tennis court and lawned areas associated with Whissendine Cottage. The site slopes from a height of approximately 109m aOD on the western side, to approximately 105m a OD to the east. The British Geological Survey for England and Wales indicates that the underlying geology is likely to consist of Diamicton, overlying Dyrham Formation Siltstone and Mudstone bedrock.

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



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

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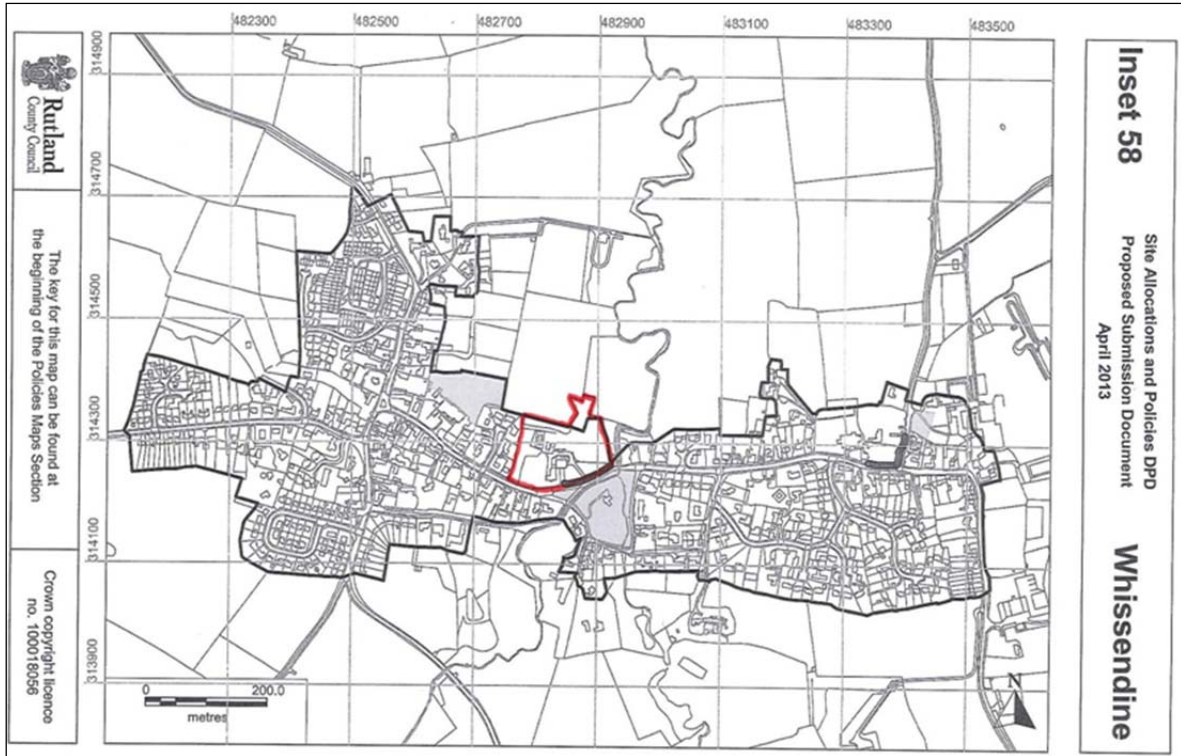


Figure 2. Site Location (developer plan).

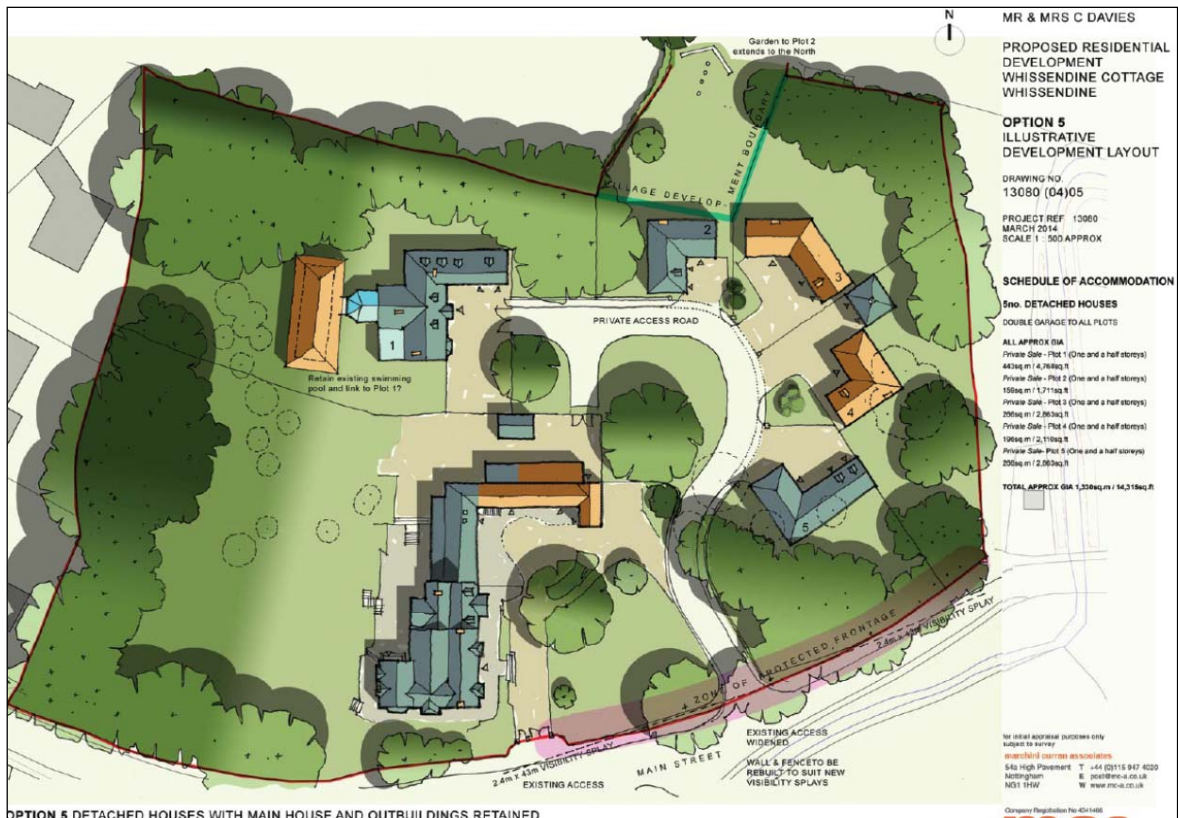


Figure 3. Proposed Development plan (developer).

### 3. Archaeological and Historical Background

An archaeological desk-based assessment by ULAS on behalf of the client (Clarke 2014) showed that Whissendine Cottage is located within the medieval core of Whissendine village, close to the sites of prehistoric, Saxon and medieval remains. There are no recorded archaeological features within the proposed development area itself. However this may be

due to an absence of previous archaeological survey and deposits may remain undetected. It was considered therefore that there was good potential for archaeological remains to be present within the proposed development area. Previous development within the assessment area has been very limited and it was thought that any archaeological deposits that might be present would therefore be likely to be relatively well-preserved and close to the ground surface. In view of this, groundworks associated with the proposed development of the site could potentially have a damaging impact upon any below-ground archaeological deposits that are present.

The Leicestershire HER has identified a number of archaeological sites in the vicinity of the assessment area, ranging from the prehistoric to post-medieval periods.

*Prehistoric* – A crouched inhumation burial of possible Neolithic/Early Bronze Age date and seven pieces of unstratified Mesolithic flint were found during archaeological excavations at Harborough Close (MLE16752; MLE16760), approximately 300m to the north-west of the assessment area. The excavations undertaken here in 2003 also found evidence for a small rural Iron Age farmstead, comprising four round houses and a post-built structure (MLE16753), in addition to two substantial Iron Age ditches (16754).

*Roman* - Sherds of Roman pottery found during the Harborough Close excavations were considered to be evidence of manuring, as no earth-fast Roman features were recorded at this time (MLE16755).

*Anglo Saxon* - The 2003 excavations at Harborough Close also revealed good evidence for Anglo-Saxon occupation, with structural remains as well as boundary ditches and gullies yielding over 500 sherds of late Saxon pottery (MLE16756) Five sherds of a single Anglo-Saxon pottery vessel were recovered during a watching brief on land at West Farm, Stapleford Road, approximately 400m to the west of the assessment area (MLE10028). Anglo Saxon and medieval features were recorded during a watching brief at 5, Melton Road (MLE16170), approximately 300m to the west of the assessment area.

*Medieval* - The historic settlement core of medieval Whissendine has been traced, using early maps (MLE8623). Medieval features recorded during the excavations at Harborough Close indicated domestic occupation focussed along the Stapleford Road street frontage (MLE16757). Earthwork features recorded here through survey before the excavation, revealed the remains of a hollow way (MLE16758). A rectangular cropmark located to the south-west of the church (MLE5880), is thought to represent the remains of a medieval moated site, approximately 700m to the south-west of the assessment area. A series of earthworks noted on aerial photographs taken in 1969, were thought to represent the remains of fishponds and enclosures (MLE5881) formerly associated with the Manor House, approximately 700m to the east of the assessment area. A second earthwork feature nearby is thought to be the remains of a terraced walk (MLE5882). Evidence for medieval occupation was recorded during an archaeological watching brief carried out in 2001, at West Farm, Stapleford Road, approximately 400m to the west of the assessment area (MLE10027). Recorded features included the remains of a possible structure, property boundary ditches and rubbish pits containing Saxo-Norman and later pottery sherds. Ridge and furrow, presumably of medieval date, was observed during November 2014 in a walkover of the field directly to the north of the gardens.

*Post medieval/modern* – The ridge and furrow to the north of the site was seen to be cut by a north-west to south-east hollow way potentially of post-medieval or modern date. A possible malting pit dating to the 17th century was recorded during the excavations at Harborough



Close (MLE16759). A windmill is shown on Armstrong's map of 1780, on the western side of the village, approximately 500m to the west (MLE5884).



Figure 4. North-east of the site area prior to trial trenching, looking north (November 2014).

#### 4. Aims and Objectives

##### *Aims*

The archaeological evaluation had the potential to contribute to the following research aims:

*Neolithic and Early Middle Bronze Age* (Clay 2006; Knight et al 2012; English Heritage 2010)

There is evidence of Neolithic-Bronze Age activity from the vicinity. Palaeoenvironmental evidence may provide information on agricultural practices and land use.

*The Iron Age and Roman Periods* (Taylor 2006; Willis 2006; Knight et al 2012; English Heritage 2012)

There are known Iron Age and Roman sites within the vicinity including enclosures and a Roman road. The evaluations may contribute to knowledge on Iron Age – Roman transitions in rural settlement, landscape and society. Artefacts may identify trade links and economy.

*The Medieval period* (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.

##### *Objectives*



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 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 will demonstrate the existence of earth-fast archaeological features that may exist within the area.

## **5. Methodology**

The fieldwork followed the design specification (WSI, Buckley 2014), approved by Leicestershire County Council Principal Planning Archaeologist as advisor to the planning authority, and adhered to the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Code of Conduct* (2010) and their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (2008). Internal monitoring procedures were undertaken including visits to the site by the project manager where necessary. These ensured that project targets were met and professional standards maintained. Provision was made for external monitoring meetings with the Planning Authority and the Client, where required.

Prior to any machining of trial trenches general photographs of the site areas were taken.

A *c.* 5% sample of the area affected by the proposed new houses and driveway approximates to about 480 sq m, or ten 30m by 1.6m trial trenches. The provisional trench plan showed the proposed location of eight trenches, although the size and position indicated on the provisional trench plan would be varied due to unforeseen site constraints or the presence of archaeological deposits. Two trenches were held in reserve and investigated if necessary to clarify the extents of archaeological deposits present.

## **6. Results**

Fieldwork took place between 18th and 21st November 2014. Initially seven trenches were excavated located where possible as per the WSI, with an additional trench extension (to Trench 7) being excavated afterwards (Fig. 5). The proposed south-east trench in the tennis court was not excavated as the surrounding trenches had proved negative and to avoid damage to the lawned surface. The proposed trench along the driveway was not excavated due to live services being detected. The other trenches were sited across the proposed house plots and access road.

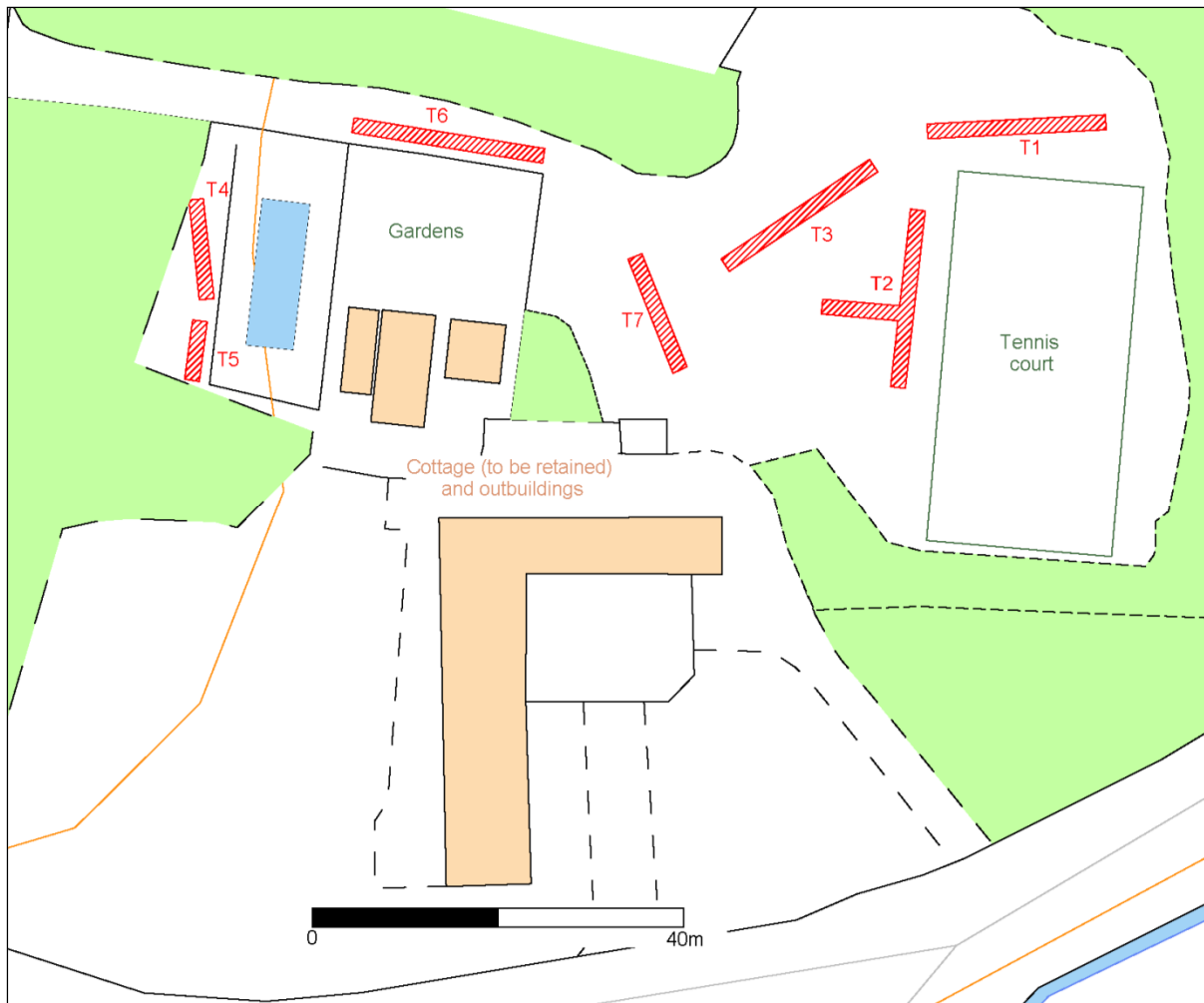


Figure 5. Developer plan and amended trench locations.

Topsoil and overburden was removed carefully in level spits, under continuous archaeological supervision using a mechanical excavator using a toothless bucket. Trenches were excavated down to the top of archaeological deposits or natural undisturbed ground, whichever was reached first. All excavation by machine and hand was undertaken with a view to avoid damage to archaeological deposits or features which appeared worthy of preservation in situ or more detailed investigation than for the purposes of evaluation. Where structures, features or finds appeared to merit preservation in situ, they would be adequately protected from deterioration.

Trenches were examined by hand cleaning and any archaeological deposits located were planned at an appropriate scale. Archaeological deposits were sample-excavated by hand as appropriate to establish the stratigraphic and chronological sequence, recognising and excavating structural evidence and recovering economic, artefactual and environmental evidence. Particular attention was paid to the potential for buried palaeosols and waterlogged deposits in consultation with ULAS's environmental officer.

The topsoil was between 0.18-0.48m in depth, underlain by subsoils that deepened to the east of the site area (c. 0.10-0.58m in thickness) on to the natural substratum, an orangey yellow occasionally stony sandy clay. The topsoil was a dark brownish-grey clay loam. The subsoil was a light grey-brown heavy silty-clay. The fills of the ditch features identified on site could not easily be differentiated from this subsoil, perhaps indicating a similar origin. Natural substratum was exposed below the subsoil, at depths of between 0.35-0.87m from current ground level.

Table 1: Trench Results

Trench No.	Location	Length x Width	Depth to natural (min.)	Notes
1	NE area	19 x 1.6m	0.35	East-west drainage/boundary ditches [1] [3]
2	E area	19.1 + 7.3 (extn) x 1.6m	0.64	N-S Ditch [6] post-hole [8]
3	E area	19 x 1.6m	0.63	Negative, land drain only
4	W area	10.5 x 1.6m	0.38	Negative
5	W area	6.1 x 1.6m	0.38	Negative
6	N of gardens	20.6 x 1.6m	0.36	Negative, land drains only
7	Mid area/Access	11.7 x 1.6m	0.44	Surface (10) furrows [11] [14]

**The Trenches**

Trenches 3-6 exposed only modern services and drainage (see Table 1). Trenches 1, 2 and 7 exposed features of some interest.

**Trench 1**

**Figures 6-8**

Some modern disturbance was identified towards the east end of Trench 1. Also, a series of intercutting linear ditch features was observed running almost parallel to this trench, i.e. east-west. The latest of these ditches was clearly modern with some rubble and a ceramic pipe and draining the open ditch in the field to the west into the pipe. The earlier cuts (ditches [1] and [3]) were on the same alignment but with sterile subsoil-like clay fills, and produced no further dating material. Ditch [1] was over 8m long, 0.5m wide and 0.3m deep and with a U-shaped profile. Ditch [3] was over 6m long, 0.7m wide and 0.25m deep with a wider open profile. The ditch alignment is comparable to a continuation of the east-west boundary drainage ditch seen to the west, and examination of the early maps shows that this boundary formerly continued through the current site. The ditches are thus most likely of Enclosure date, although perhaps being reuse of an earlier alignment.

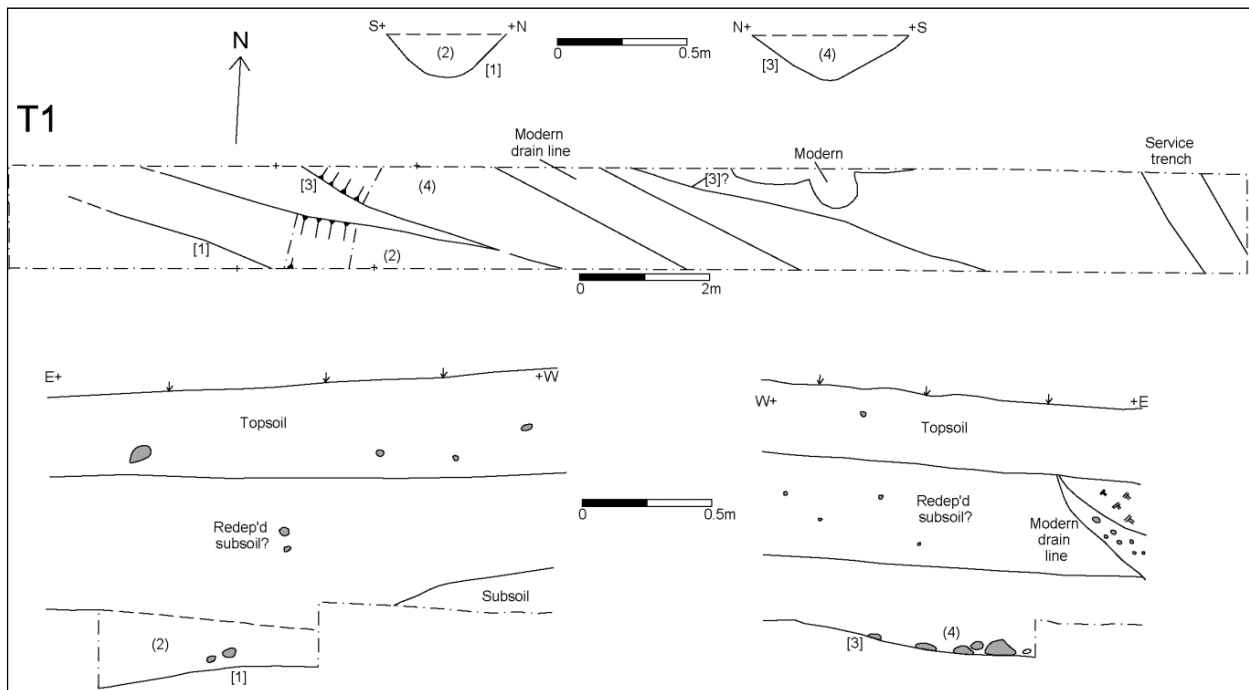


Figure 6. Trench 1.





Figure 7. Trench 1, ditch [1].



Figure 8. Trench 1, ditch [3].

## Trench 2

### Figures 9-11

In the north end of Trench 2 a layer of crushed ironstone fragments was identified. This looked like a levelling layer or perhaps a rudimentary surface. This material was directly below topsoil level and clearly of modern date so the trench was excavated to a greater depth. The eastern edge of a north-south linear feature, ditch [6], was also exposed. An initial sondage indicated that this ditch feature had some depth so a perpendicular trench was machine excavated to expose the west edge of it, and also to extend beyond this feature in order to ascertain if further features were present. Ditch [6] was over 18.3m long, 0.98m wide and 0.58m deep and with a curved profile. The fill, context (7), was a sterile light grey-brown silty-clay that could not be differentiated from the subsoil, and excavation did not produce any dating material. An assessment of the early maps shows that this feature is on the line of a north-south ditch which now stops short at the site boundary but originally continued through here (potentially to the frontage).

A stone-filled feature was identified in the extension to Trench 2, being 2.95m beyond the west edge of ditch [6] (Figs. 9, 11). This feature was circular in plan, 0.45m in diameter with a depth of 0.4m and was a probable post-hole, cut [8]. It contained a single fill (9) which had frequent large stones, mostly of sandstone in an orangey grey clay matrix. Excavation of 100% of this feature produced no dating evidence. The top level of the stones was apparently within the subsoil level, the level at which the boundary ditches were cut from, and thus on balance the level at which the feature was cut from probably also suggests a late date for its construction.

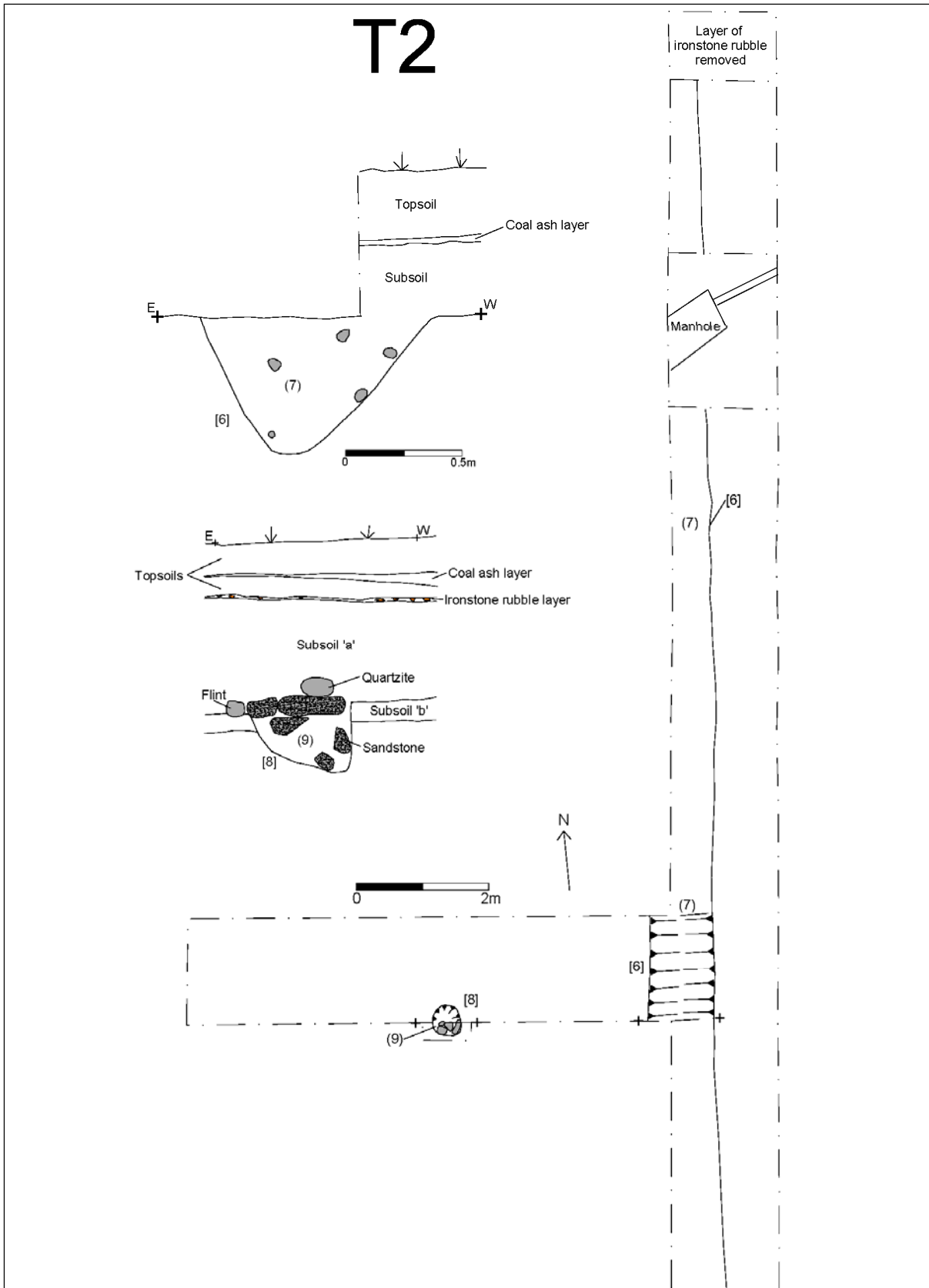


Figure 9. Trench 2.





**Figure 10.** Trench 2, ditch [6].





Figure 11. Trench 2, post-hole [8].

## Trench 7

### Figures 12-14

Directly below the topsoil at the north end of Trench 7 a stone surface was identified. The surface, context (10), was comprised of cobbles up to 0.2m across mostly of quartzite with some ironstone and limestone fragments. The surface was more than two metres across in plan, becoming more ephemeral on the south and east side along its east edge. Excavation of a sondage through the surface showed it was resting on the subsoil which in turn sealed a plough furrow [14] (15), a shallow linear feature, running east-west. Further south in Trench 7 a further furrow [11] (12) was also identified. Excavation of this produced a sherd of Iron Age pottery. No further features were identified. A walkover of the pasture field to the north of the current site identified clear ridge and furrow on the same east-west alignment. The level of the cobbled surface within the soil sequence in Trench 7 confirms that it is of modern



date. It is presumably associated with earlier activity adjacent to the cottage of an agricultural nature.

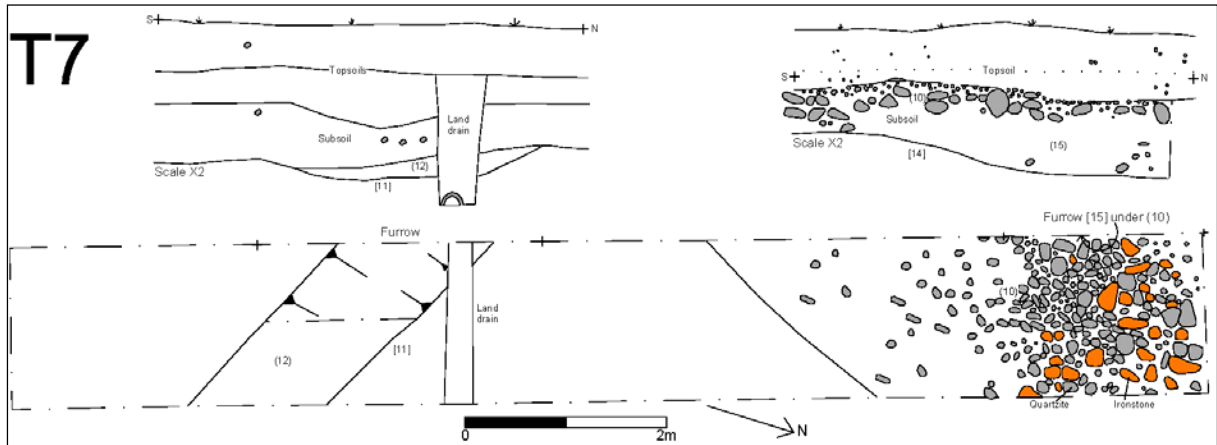


Figure 12. Trench 7.



Figure 13. Trench 7, surface (10).





Figure 14. Trench 7, surface (10) and furrow [14] below.

## 8. Conclusions

The evaluation at Whissendine Cottage, Main Street, Whissendine, consisted of seven trial trenches plus an extension trench, across the area of the proposed development. Despite the proximity of the site to significant activity of the Iron Age, Saxon and Medieval periods no definite archaeological features were found during the trial trenching. A series of ditches that were identified can be associated with historic map evidence and having been constructed for boundary and drainage purposes. A single post-hole of uncertain date was identified, and a modern surface and plough furrows were also recorded. A very low density of artefacts was recovered during these groundworks, comprising a struck flint scraper, and a sherd each of Iron Age and Roman pottery. No medieval material was recovered.

## 9. Archive

The site archive will be held by Rutland Museum, with the accession no. OAKRM2014.61.

The archive contains:

- 7 trench recording sheets
- 15 Context record sheets
- 1 Photo index
- 2 Drawing indices and 3 permatrace drawings
- Thumbnail prints of digital photographs
- CD containing digital photographs
- Black and white negatives and contact sheet
- Unbound copy of this report 2014-202
- Finds: 1 small bag (2 pottery sherds, 1 flint)

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/>

ID	OASIS entry summary
Project Name	Whissendine Cottage, Main Street, Whissendine
Summary	No definite archaeological features were found during the trial trenching. A series of ditches that were identified can be associated with historic map evidence and having been constructed for boundary and drainage purposes. A single posthole of uncertain date was identified, and a modern surface and plough furrows were also recorded. A very low density of artefacts was recovered during these groundworks, comprising a sherd each of Iron Age and Roman pottery, and a struck flint scraper.
Project Type	Evaluation
Project Manager	Richard Buckley
Project Supervisor	Wayne Jarvis
Previous/Future work	DBA, future not determined (Pre planning)
Current Land Use	Gardens
Development Type	Residential
Reason for Investigation	NPPF Section 12 Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment
Position in the Planning Process	Pre Planning
Site Co ordinates	SK 82841 14275
Start/end dates of field work	November 2014
Archive Recipient	Rutland County Council
Study Area	1.4ha
Associated project reference codes	Acc No. RM2014.61

## 10. Publication

A summary of the work will be submitted for publication in a local archaeological journal in due course. The report has been added to the Archaeology Data Service's (ADS) Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) database held by the University of York.

## 11. Bibliography

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- Marsden, P., 2011 'The Prehistoric pottery and briquetage' in J. Thomas, *Two Iron Age Aggregated Settlements in the Environs of Leicester: Excavations at Beaumont Leys and Humberstone*, Leicester Archaeology Monograph **19**, 61-80. Leicester: University of Leicester, School of Archaeology and Ancient History.
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## 12. Acknowledgements

The fieldwork was undertaken on behalf of Mr and Mrs C Davies, and was carried out by Wayne Jarvis of ULAS. Richard Buckley also of ULAS managed the project, and Richard Clark monitored the work on behalf of the planning authority.

## 13. The Finds

### **The Iron Age and Roman Pottery** by *Nicholas J. Cooper*

#### **Iron Age Pottery**

A single upright rim sherd (5g) of mid-late Iron Age pottery of the East Midlands scored ware tradition (Elsdon 1992) was recovered from plough furrow [11] (12) in Trench 7. The vessel was made in a sand-free shell tempered fabric S1 (Marsden 2011, 61) and is typical of pottery of this date found at other sites in Rutland such as those at Empingham (Cooper 2000, 67).

#### **Roman Pottery**

A single body sherd (28g) from a sandy grey ware jar (Fabric GW5 Pollard 1994, 110-114) was recovered unstratified in Trench 1, dating between the 2nd and the 4th century AD.

### **The Lithics** by *Lynden Cooper and Wayne Jarvis*

A single worked flint was recovered from the topsoil of Trench 7. This was a retouched concave scraper on a frost fractured piece, and probably of later Neolithic or Bronze Age date.

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