



University of Leicester

Archaeological Services



**An archaeological field evaluation at
Measham Road, Appleby Magna,
Leicestershire
(SK 3167 1013)**

Wayne Jarvis

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Measham Road, Appleby Magna, Leicestershire
(SK 3167 1013)**

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for

Keller Homes Ltd.

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Summary

An archaeological field evaluation by trial trenching was carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on land at Measham Road, Appleby Magna, Leicestershire (SK 3167 1013).

The work was in advance of the proposed development of the site for new housing. Faint earthworks could be traced during the walkover, and these were surveyed. These had a clear east-west and north-south pattern. Five trenches were initially excavated, followed by two extra trenches to further examine the frontage where a possible house platform was identified. Linear features were identified in the five initial trenches across the site area, with comparable orientation to the earthworks. These consisted of probable plot boundaries running east-west, and more ephemeral features potentially of agricultural origin mainly running north-south. Pottery of Roman, probable Saxon, and medieval date was recovered from the features. The extra frontage trenches identified only a further probable plough furrow, with no evidence of occupation or structural activity.

The archive for this work will be deposited with Leicestershire Museums with accession number X.A92.2014.

Introduction

University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) were commissioned by Keller Homes Ltd. to carry out an archaeological field evaluation land at Measham Road, Appleby Magna, Leicestershire (SK 3167 1013). This archaeological work is in accordance with NPPF Section 12: Enhancing and Conserving the Historic Environment and addressed the *Brief for archaeological exploratory trial trenching. Land at Measham Road, Appleby Magna, Leicestershire* (Leicestershire County Council, Historical and Natural Environment Team (LCCHNET) 02.05.2014 hereinafter the 'Brief').

The site lies within the medieval core of Appleby Magna and adjacent to the Conservation Area. There was therefore potential for medieval archaeological remains to be present on the site.

Site Location, Details and Geology

The plot of land is on the east frontage of Measham Road, north of the main village core of Appleby Magna. The site is currently overgrown pasture meadow. Faint earthworks were visible during a walkover. The site comprises an 'L'-shaped block of

land, c. 0.40 hectares in area, within which will be constructed eight dwellings with associated garaging and access road (P.A 13/00829/OUT). The site lies at a height of c.90m aOD.

The Geological Survey of England & Wales, Sheet 156 (Leicester) shows that the geology of the site is the Tarporely Siltstone Formation.

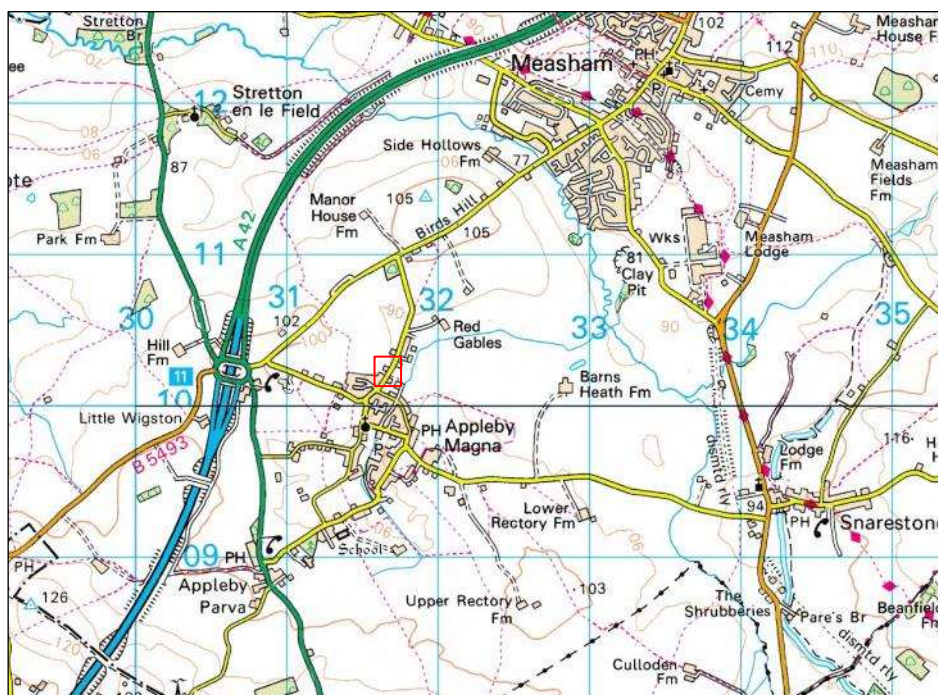


Figure 1: Site Location

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Historical and Archaeological Background

A desk-based assessment for adjacent areas have been undertaken for an adjacent area to the north and east (Bourn 2012). The Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record (HER) shows that the application area is located within the historic core of the medieval village of Appleby Magna (MLE5992) and adjacent to the Conservation Area. Appleby Magna lies to the south-east of the approximate route of a postulated Roman road linking Watling Street, at Tamworth, to a crossing of the Trent at Sawley and the adjacent Roman small town at Redhill (MLE20490). An evaluation and subsequent excavation of the site of a hotel on the east side of the nearby M42 junction, *c.* 600m to the west, has recorded a small 4th century Roman farmstead with a simple corn drier, possible threshing floors and a number of possible structures including a sunken featured building (MLE8596; Clarke 2010).

Archaeological 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 is 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.



Figure 2 Location of application area on Measham Road, Appleby Magna.

Methodology

All work followed the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Code of Conduct* (2010) in accordance with their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (2010). The archaeological work followed the *Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for archaeological work* (WSI) prepared by ULAS.

The WSI asked for a. c. 5% sample of the c. 0.5ha. area which would be the equivalent of five 20m by 1.6m trenches (c. 160 sq. m.). After initial trenching and a

site visit by the Planning Archaeologist two extra trenches were to be added towards the frontage.



Plate 1: Site area, looking south-east from entrance gate.

Results

The initial trench plan in the WSI was varied slightly (Fig. 2). The trench parallel to the frontage at the south of site was moved back to avoid a set of mature ash trees. The north-west trench was moved north slightly to maintain access into site and avoid recently excavated ground (geotechnical test pitting). The trenches were excavated by a JCB type machine with a back actor and ditching bucket under archaeological supervision. After excavation and recording the trenches were backfilled.

The topsoil consisted of a dark greyish brown silty sand loam with rare rounded gravels and was mostly 0.16m or slightly more in depth (Table 1). The subsoil cover varied somewhat, due partly to the presence of earthworks (made up ground) of uncertain date in Trench 1. Here the 'subsoil' was between 0.42m and 0.52m deep and consisted of one or more layers including some re-deposited material (see Fig. 3, Plates 2-4). Most clear was a thickening of a re-deposited layer (possibly topsoil) towards the east end of the trench and up to 0.48m thick. The general subsoil across site, which sealed the majority of archaeological features, was a brownny orange slightly sandy clay loam with occasional to common rounded gravels. Under this lay the natural sub-stratum, which was a stony red clay, with occasional patches of very gravelly clay.

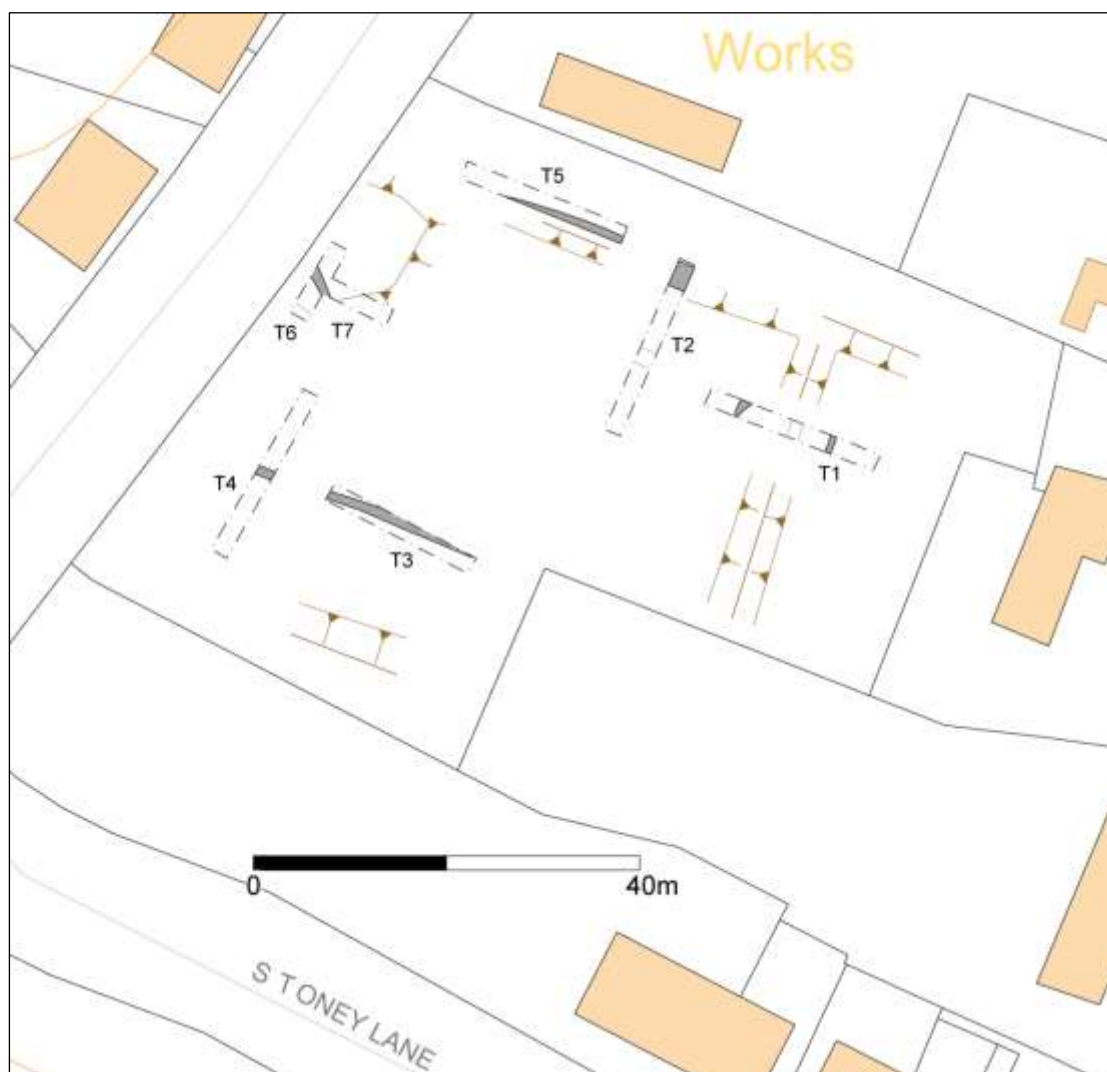


Figure 3: Plan showing trench location, and surveyed earthworks

Table 1: Trench Results

Trench No.	Length m (x1.8m width)*	Depth to archaeology (min, m)	Depth to natural (min, m)	Depth of topsoil (min, m)	Orientation (approx.)	Notes
1	17.5	0.5	0.64	0.16	E-W	Earthworks - made up ground. Features [6] (1) [8] (7) [9] (2)
2	19.2	0.27?	0.57	0.25	N-S	Features [11] (10) [14] (3)
3	16.5	0.4	0.4	0.22	E-W	Features = [5] (4)
4	19.2	0.5	0.5	0.24	N-S	Features [5] (4)
5	18.5	0.36	0.36	0.23	E-W	Features. [13] (12)
6	8.0	0.5	0.5	0.16	N-S	Features [16] (15)
7	7.5	--	0.37	0.16	E-W	--

*Area of Trenches 1-5 163.6sq m.

Trench 1

(Fig. 3, Plates 2-4, Contexts [6] (1) [8] (7) [9] (2))

The earthworks on which this trench was sited consisted of a north-south depression resembling a hollow way midway along the trench (see Fig. 2). In the trench base, this was on the line of shallow linear cut, [8] (7) that looked very much like a furrow, crossing the trench perpendicularly (minimum length 1.8m). Either side of this was made up ground, but this thickened considerably to the east. Feature [8] was shallow at 0.34m depth, 1.9m wide, and with a flattish slightly uneven base. The fill (7) was a mixed greyey red sandy clay with frequent small stones and charcoal, which produced a single abraded sherd of ?Saxon ware pottery.

To the east feature [6] (1) was a parallel linear with a more convincing ditch-like profile measuring a minimum length of 1.8m, 0.8m wide and 0.32m deep. This was sealed by the earthwork make ups. The profile had a concave slightly uneven base. A single fill (1) consisted of a brownly grey sandy clay with moderate stones and charcoal, which produced seven sherds of 13th-14th century pottery.

In the west of the trench a further linear was identified, [9] (2), and broadly parallel to the others in this trench. This linear feature was over 1.8m long, 0.9m wide and with a depth of only 0.23m, again sealed by the earthwork make ups. The east edge of this feature was curving, perhaps indicating the feature curved. The profile was steeper on the west (*c.* 45°), than the east (*c.* 30°). The single fill (2) was a reddy grey sandy clay with moderate small stones, and six sherds of Roman pottery of two fabric types was recovered. These were abraded and very small fragmentary sherds, and are likely to be residual.

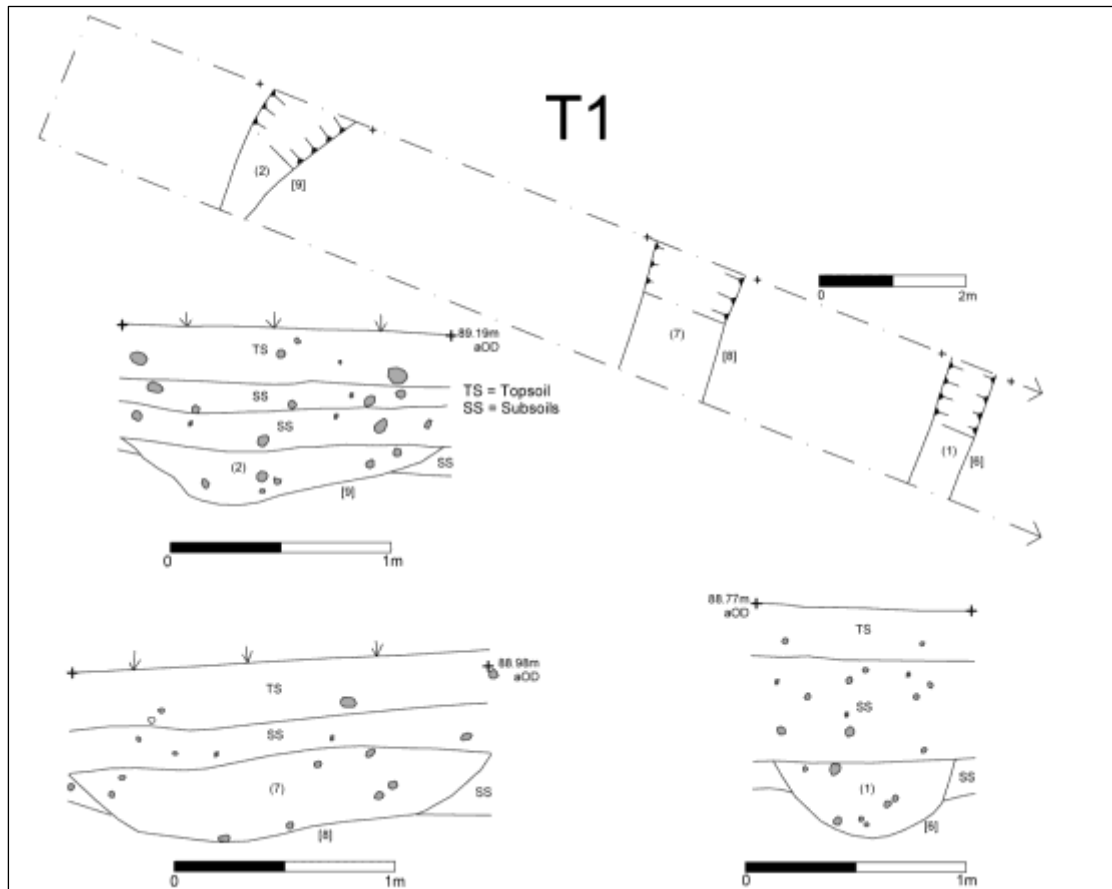


Figure 4: Trench 1 features [6] [8] [9]



Plate 2: Trench 1, ditch [6]



Plate 3: Trench 1, probable furrow [8]



Plate 4: Trench 1, linear feature [9]

Trench 2

(Figs. 2, 4, Plates 5, 6, Contexts [11] (10) [14] (3))

This trench was to the west of Trench 1 and perpendicular to it. In the middle of the trench feature [11] (10) was identified, an east-west linear over 1.8m long, 1.7m wide and with a very shallow profile and stony clay fill; the feature was probably a plough furrow. Three sherds of pottery were recovered, two of Roman grey ware, one of

13th-14th century Chilvers Coton ware. The latter sherd was abraded, and therefore all the pottery could potentially be residual.

At the north of the trench a large ditch [14] (3) was excavated. Initial work produced brick from the fill, but further excavation failed to produce any further material or identify separate fills. The feature is potentially modern although the fill (3) certainly looked archaeological. The brick was probably later 18th century (or a little later) in date. The feature consisted of a large linear running broadly east-west, with a steep north side, slightly shallower south side, and a curved to flat base. The ditch measured 2.7m wide and at least 0.8m deep, being filled with a material not discernible from the subsoil. The fill consisted of a mid orangey brown fine sandy clay with occasional rounded gravels. The ditch is on the same line as another linear in Trench 5 (see below).



Plate 5: Trench 2, furrow [11]

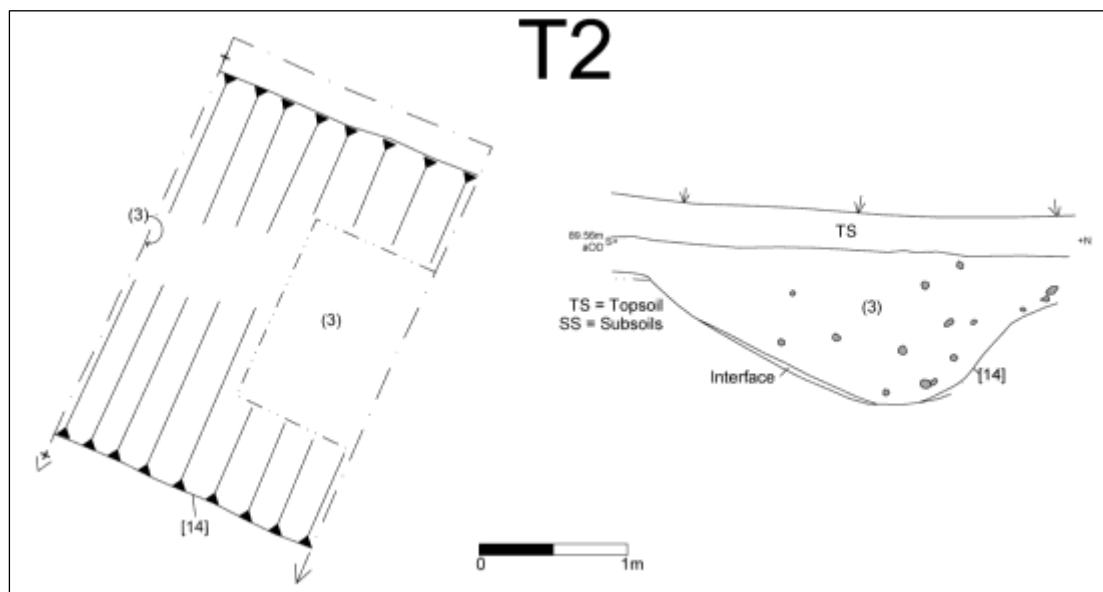


Figure 5: Trench 2 feature [14]



Plate 6: Trench 2, ditch [14]

Trench 3

(Fig. 2, Plate 7, Contexts = [5] (4))

Trench 3 was at the south of the site area. Faint earthworks were visible to the south, taking the form of an east-west linear of higher ground with a parallel hollow to the south. Broadly parallel to the earthworks, a single feature was identified in the trench, an east-west linear [5] (4) more than 16.5m long, and 1.1m wide. In agreement with the planning archaeologist, the feature was excavated in Trench 4 just to the west through which it clearly continued (see below), and from which it produced 10 sherds of pottery with a TPQ of the later 13th-14th century date.



Plate 7: Trench 3, ditch [5]

Trench 4

(Fig. 5, Plate 8, Contexts [5] (4))

Trench 4 exposed ditch [5] (4) running perpendicular (east-west) across it. The ditch was 1.04m wide here, 0.52m deep and with a steep profile and slightly curved base. The single fill (4) was a reddy brown sandy clay, and the pottery consisted of two fabric types, one sherd of 12th-14th century Coventry ware, and nine very fresh sherds from the base of an overfired Chilvers Coton baluster jug, being of a later 13th-14th century date.

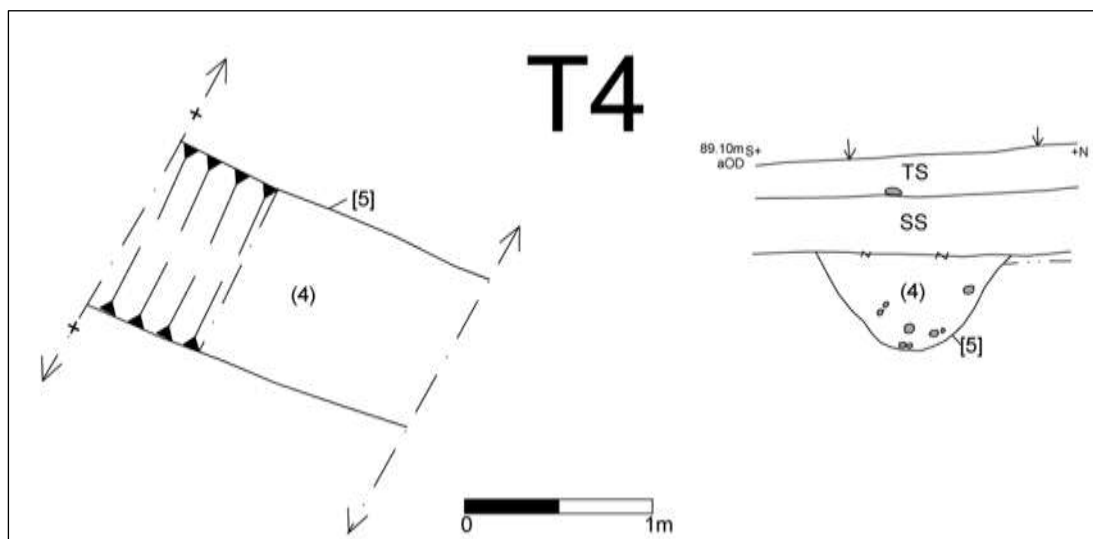


Figure 6: Trench 4 feature [5]



Plate 8: Trench 4, ditch [5]

Trench 5

(Fig. 6, Plate 9 Contexts [13] (12))

This exposed a further east-west ditch (12) [13], running for most of the length of the trench (13m), with a width of more than 0.8m (full profile not seen), and a depth of 0.43m. The profile was moderately steep with a curved base, and a single fill (12) consisting of a reddy brown sandy clay with occasional pebbles. Although on a closely similar alignment to ditch [14] (3) in Trench 2, it was clearly a different

feature, but perhaps these represent the respecting and reuse of a boundary line recut over some period of time. To the west of Measham Road a property boundary on a very similar alignment can be observed (see Fig. 2).

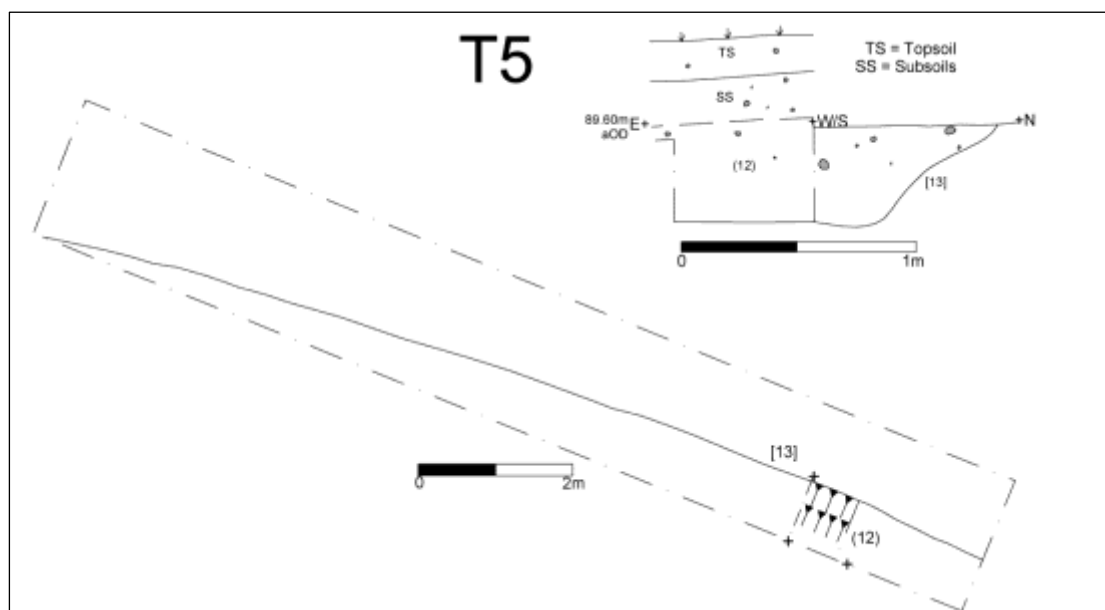


Figure 7: Trench 5 feature [13]



Plate 9: Trench 5, ditch [13], part profile

Trenches 6-7

(Fig. 2, Plate 9, Contexts [16] (15))

After consultation with the Planning Archaeologist these trenches were added to explore an area, potentially a house platform, demarcated by the ditch system

observed in other trenches on site, and close to the Measham Road frontage. Trenches 6 and 7 were set out to both run parallel to and close to this frontage and perpendicular to it respectively. Observations in these trenches identified only a further linear feature ([16] (15), a probable plough furrow), and no occupation material or structural activity.



Plate 10: Trenches 6 and 7, furrow [16] crossing centre of trenches

The Pottery*Deborah Sawday*

Table 2: The pottery by fabric, sherd numbers and context.

Context	Fabric/ware	Sherd no.	Approximate Date range	Comments
POT				
1	CC1 – Chilvers Coton A ware	7	1250-1300+	Apple green glaze, abraded
2	GW5 - Grey ware 5	2	Roman	Abraded
2	CG1 – Calcite Gritted 1	4	Roman	Tiny chips
4	CO2 - Coventry A ware	1	12 th – 14 th C.	Basal angle
4	CC– Chilvers Coton ware	9	Later 13 th – 14 th C	Base, baluster jug, over-fired/second, coarse fabric.
7	?SX – Saxon ware	1	?Saxon	Abraded, vessel shoulder, hard fired
10	GW5 - Grey ware 5	2	Roman	
10	CC1 – Chilvers Coton A ware	1	1250-1300+	Abraded
T3 U/S	EA3 – Mottled ware	1	c.1680-1780	Mug body
BRICK				
3	EA - Earthenware	1	?later 18 th C	

Site/ Parish: Appleby Magna, Leics
 Accession No.: XA92 2014
 Document Ref: appleby magna4.docx
 Material: pot
 Site Type: Edge of village

Submitter: W. Jarvis
 Identifier: D. Sawday
 Date of Identification: 26.06.2014
 Method of Recovery: excavation
 Job Number: 14-720

Conclusion

A series of linear features were identified during the evaluation, and stratified pottery and building materials from several periods was also recovered. This evidence is not straightforward to interpret, as no associated occupation activity was identified. The linear features are somewhat variable in form, and the ceramic dating is of such a broad time span, including material from the Roman, perhaps Saxon, medieval and modern periods. The broad picture is best summarised as a series of more substantial east-west ditches, perpendicular to the frontage, and probably representing property 'plot' boundaries that were reused over a considerable time. Additionally, and mainly running north-south, were more ephemeral features most likely agricultural in origin. The dating evidence most likely indicates a medieval (13th-14th century) date, with the presence of most probably residual material of Roman and ?Saxon dates also indicating nearby activity from those periods.

Bibliography

- Bourn, R., 2013 *Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment Land to the West of Church Street & Measham Road, Appleby Magna Leicestershire* CgMs Report RB/14752 January 2013
- Clarke, S., 2010 'Sunken-featured buildings on a late Romano-British Farmstead, Rectory Lane, Appleby Magna, Leicestershire'. *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* **84** 213-222.

Acknowledgements

ULAS would like to thank Andrew Keller of Keller Homes Ltd. for his co-operation with this project. The project was monitored on behalf of the Planning Authority by Richard Clark. The project was managed by Patrick Clay and the fieldwork was carried out by the author with assistance from Nathan Flavell also of ULAS.

Publication

Since 2004 ULAS has reported the results of all archaeological work through the *Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations* (OASIS) database held by the Archaeological Data Service at the University of York.

A summary of the work will also be submitted for publication in a suitable regional archaeological journal in due course.

OASIS data entry

Project Name	Measham Road, Appleby Magna
Project Type	Evaluation
Project Manager	P. Clay
Project Supervisor	W Jarvis
Previous/Future work	Evaluation
Current Land Use	Pasture meadow
Development Type	New Housing
Reason for Investigation	NPPF
Position in the Planning Process	Requirement (PA 13/00829/OUT)
Site Co ordinates	SK 3167 1013
Start/end dates of field work	19-24/06/2014
Archive Recipient	Leicestershire Museums
Study Area	0.5ha

Archive

The archive for this project will be deposited with Leicestershire Museums with accession number X.A92.2014

The archive consists of the following:

7 Trench recording sheets

1 Photo Record sheet

Other site indices (1 context index sheet, 7 context sheets, 1 drawing index sheet, 1 survey sheet, 3 A3 permagraph drawing sheets)

1 Unbound copy of this report

1 Contact sheet of digital photographs

1 CD digital photographs

1 Set B&W contact sheets

1 Set B&W negatives

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