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Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological Investigation at
Measham Road,
Appleby Magna,
Leicestershire.**

NGR: SK 3167 1013

Andrew Hyam



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An Archaeological Investigation at

Measham Road,

Appleby Magna,

Leicestershire.

NGR: SK 3167 1013

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An Archaeological Investigation at Measham Road, Appleby Magna, Leicestershire.

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Summary

An archaeological strip plan and sample was undertaken on land at Measham Road, Appleby Magna, Leicestershire by the University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) between the 27th and 29th of August 2014. Planning permission has been granted for a residential development of eight dwellings with associated garages and access road. Due to the location within an area of archaeological potential, and following on from a field evaluation which identified probable medieval plot boundaries with evidence of Roman and Saxon activity nearby, the Senior Planning Archaeologist has requested that a further phase of archaeological work take place.

The strip plan and sample investigation confirmed the evaluation results of plot boundaries but did not discover any occupation activity within the site boundaries.

The archive will be deposited with Leicestershire County Council under Accession Number X.A92.2014

Introduction

In accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Section 12 Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment (DCLG 2012), the Senior Planning Archaeologist for Leicestershire County Council, as archaeological advisor to the planning authority, requested that an archaeological strip plan and sample excavation and watching brief take place in order to provide information on the character and extent of any buried archaeological remains which may exist on the site and, if present, to record to an appropriate level. This document forms the report for the archaeological work on land at Measham Road, Appleby Magna, Leicestershire, NGR: SK 3167 1013. Planning permission has been granted by North West Leicestershire District Council under planning application number 13/00829/OUT to construct eight dwelling with associated garages and access roads.

Background

Appleby Magna lies close to the western edge of Leicestershire and is approximately 2km south-west of Measham (Fig. 1). The site is located to the north-east of the junction of Measham Road and Stoney Lane, Appleby Magna, at NGR SK 3167 1013. The site is demarcated by residential properties to the south-east, with gardens and the Manor to the south (Fig. 2). The western boundary is formed by the Measham Road, from which access to the site is gained. The site lies within the medieval core of Appleby Magna and is adjacent to the Conservation Area. The Geological Survey of England & Wales, Sheet 156 (Leicester) shows that the geology of the site is the Tarporley Siltstone Formation.

An evaluation of the site, consisting of seven trenches, was undertaken in June 2014 by ULAS in advance of the proposed development of the site (Jarvis 2014). Faint

earthworks could be traced during the preliminary walkover prior to trenching which had a clear east to west and north to south pattern. Five trenches were initially excavated, followed by two extra trenches to further examine the frontage where a possible house platform was tentatively identified. Linear features were identified in the five initial trenches across the site area, with comparable orientation to the earthworks (Fig. 3). These consisted of probable plot boundaries running east to west, and more ephemeral features potentially of agricultural origin mainly running north to south. Pottery of Roman, probable Saxon, and medieval date was recovered from the features. The additional frontage trenches identified only a further probable plough furrow, with no evidence of occupation or structural activity. Because the results of this work suggested the presence of property boundaries, and hence occupation, the Principal Planning Archaeologist for Leicestershire County Council required a further phase of archaeological work before any development took place.



Figure 1 Appleby Magna location

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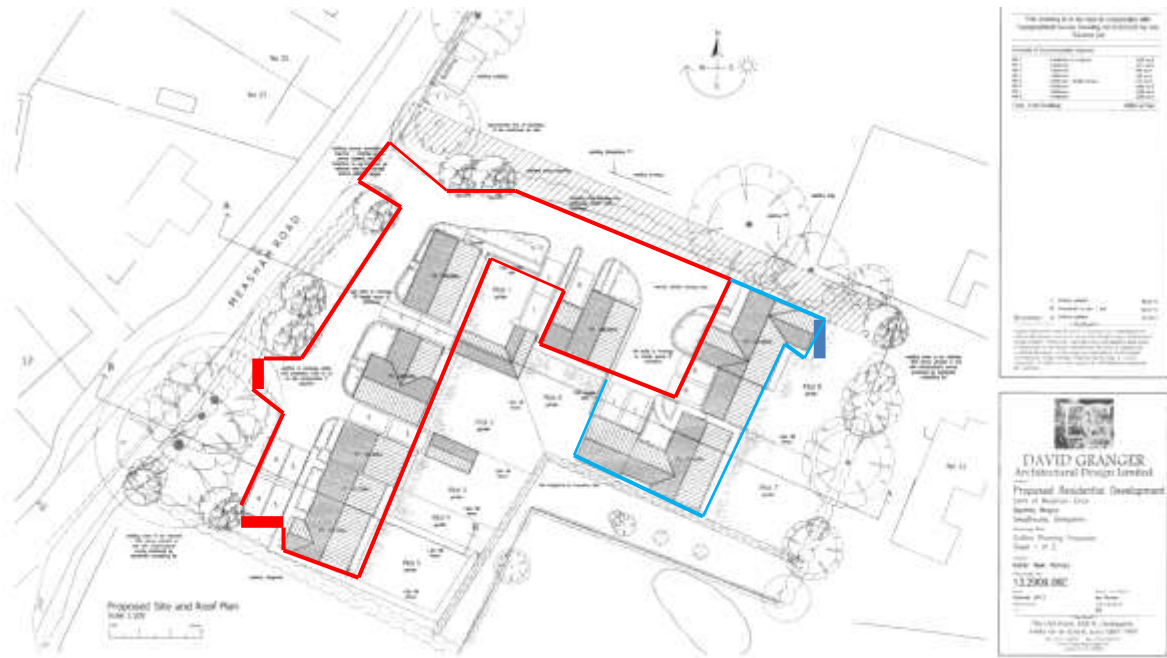


Figure 2 Site location and development proposals
Plan supplied by client

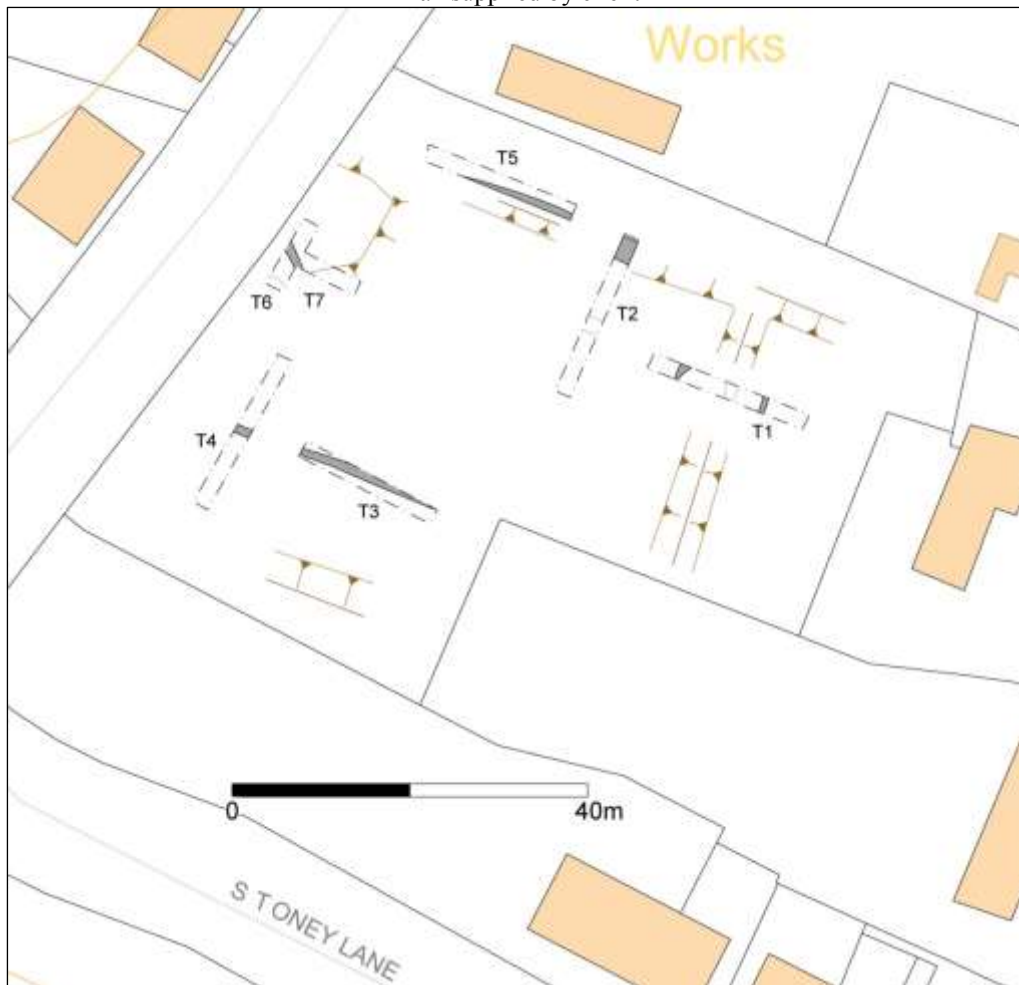


Figure 3 Plan of evaluation trenches showing earthwork and cut features
Trenches excavated in June 2014. From Jarvis 2014

Objectives

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).

The main objectives of the archaeological work were:

To identify the presence/absence of 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 produce an archive and report of any results.

Methodology

All work followed the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) Code of Conduct and adhered to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological excavations* (2008).

The project involved the control and supervision of overburden removal and other groundworks in the footprints of the proposed structures and access by an experienced professional archaeologist to determine the presence/absence of any archaeological remains. Trial trenches could be excavated initially to establish depths of substratum and presence or absence of archaeological deposits

Should significant archaeological remains be identified this would be followed by a programme of excavation and recording, using additional personnel as necessary.

The archaeologist controlled and supervised the topsoil and overburden stripping by the Client's contractors, in order to obtain an adequate record of any archaeological deposits or finds disturbed or exposed by groundworks associated with the development. All top and subsoil stripping was undertaken so as to avoid damaging and obscuring archaeological remains.

Any archaeological deposits encountered were recorded and excavated using standard ULAS procedures. The accession number X.A92.2014, which is the same as the evaluation fieldwork, will be used for this phase of work.

Results

Prior to the start of the archaeological work all of the vegetation and most of the turf had been removed from much of the site to create a large open area with a topsoil bund running along the north-eastern site boundary (Fig. 4). This had resulted in the loss of the earthworks which had been surveyed during the evaluation earlier in the year. Although some of the dark greyish brown silty sandy loam topsoil survived after this clearance, also visible in places was the exposed subsoil which consisted of a mid brownish orange sandy clay loam.



Figure 4 Site prior to archaeological work but after clearance
Looking south

In order to determine the limits of the archaeological deposits found during the evaluation it was initially decided to run long trenches across the footprint of both blocks of the proposed house locations as shown in Figure 5 below. Trench A, which ran from south-west to north-east across the houses fronting onto Measham Road, was 38 metres long by 1.8 metres wide. It cut through approximately 0.15m of truncated topsoil and 0.2m of subsoil to reveal the natural substratum which consisted of a mix of stoney mid red clay with patches and bands of gravelly clay and orange brown sandy clay (Fig. 6). Only a single small ditch was encountered, [20](21), which was 1.1m wide and 0.4m deep ditch with shallow sides and a mid red brown sandy clay fill with frequent rounded and sub-rounded stones (21) (Figs. 7 and 8). The fill across the entire width of the trench was removed but no finds were recovered. This ditch corresponded with that seen in evaluation Trenches 3 and 4 when later 13th – 14th century pottery was found. A possible north to south plough furrow located in evaluation trenches 6 and 7 did not extend as far as Trench A. No further evidence of occupation or any other archaeological features or deposits were present within this trench.

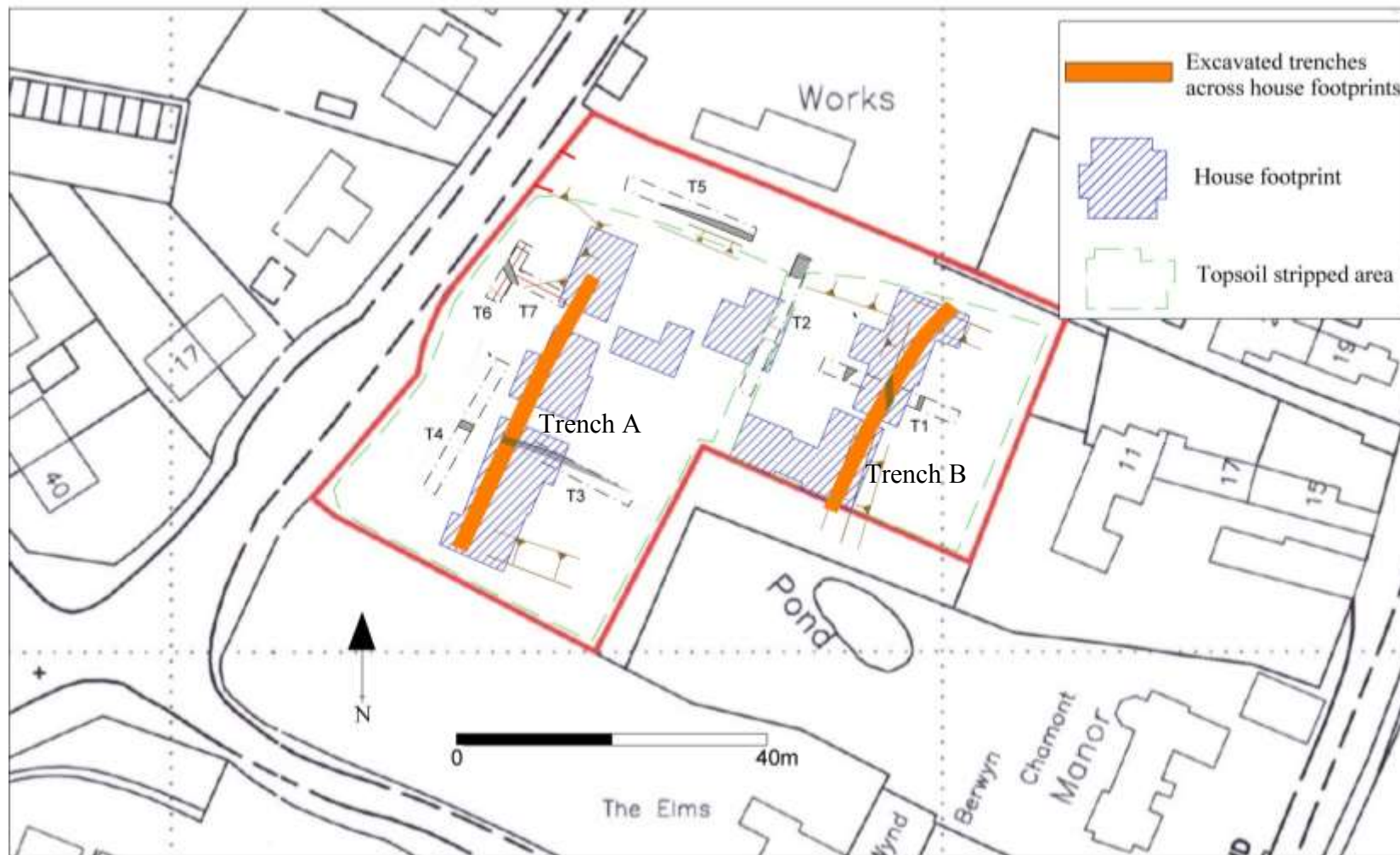


Figure 5 Location of trenches and stripped area



Figure 6 Trench A after excavation
Looking south



Figure 7 Ditch in Trench A
Looking NW. 1m and 0.4m scales

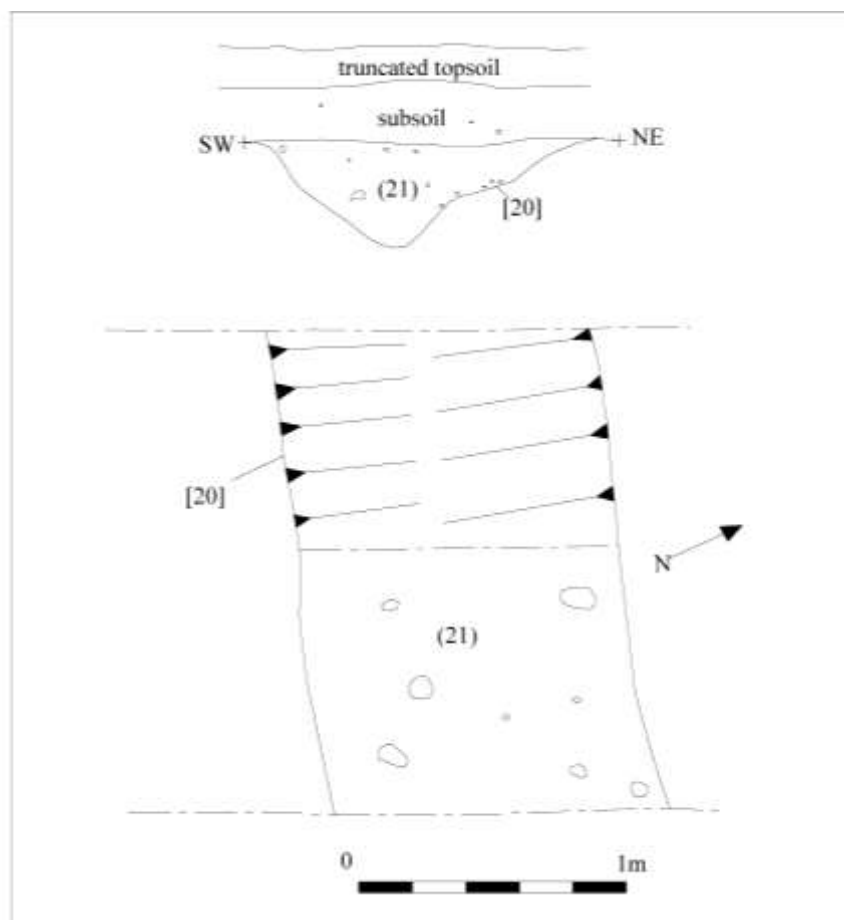


Figure 8 Ditch in Trench A

A second trench, Trench B, was excavated across the footprint of the houses which are to be built towards the south-eastern side of the site. This trench measured 30 metres in length and 1.8 metres wide (Fig. 9). Again this cut through approximately 0.15 to 0.2m of truncated topsoil and between 0.3 and 0.4 metres of subsoil to reveal the natural substratum. This trench cut across evaluation trench 1 at a right angle. No archaeological features or deposits were observed within this trench other than a plough furrow running from north-west to south-east across the middle of the trench. This feature had been located in evaluation trench 1. The furrow was identified as a 2 m wide greyish red sandy clay feature with a very shallow base and ephemeral edges. Although having been investigated at this point during the evaluation it was further excavated to confirm the results of the evaluation. No additional finds were recovered with the exception of a small piece of pancheon type pottery which was located at the interface with the fill and the subsoil and which may have been introduced during the backfilling of trench 1. Evaluation trench 1 had identified a narrow gully running parallel to the furrow which, if projected further north, should have been present in Trench B. However it was not present indicating that it did not extend this far north.



Figure 9 Trench B after excavation
Looking north east

Following the excavation of the two long trenches across the proposed house footprints and the consequent indication that the site did indeed consist of small plot boundaries but with no surviving occupation activity it was decided to strip the site down to formation level. This involved removing all topsoil and between 0.3 and 0.4m of subsoil across much of the site (see Fig. 5). Areas of the natural substratum were exposed but no archaeological features or deposits were observed. No pottery was recovered during this process either suggesting that the plots were of agricultural use rather than occupation (Figs. 10 and 11).



Figure 10 Reducing site down to formation level adjacent to Measham Road
Looking north



Figure 11 Reducing eastern part of site to formation level
Looking north-east

Discussion

The results of the archaeological work appear to confirm the conclusions of the earlier evaluation in that the series of linear features represent plot boundaries and agricultural activity. As before, no evidence was identified of any associated occupation activity which might lead to the conclusion that either later ploughing activity has removed earlier occupation evidence or that the plot has seen little use except for crops and animal grazing. Other than one sherd of post-medieval pancheon ware no further dating evidence was recovered during this phase of work suggesting that the evaluation results indicating a medieval (13th to 14th century) date for the features is likely to be correct. The residual Roman and possible Saxon pottery found during the evaluation again are an indication of nearby occupation during those periods but there was no evidence of activity of this date within the development site.

Archive

The archive consists of:

- This report,
- 2 trench recording sheets,
- 1 photo record sheet,
- 1 contact sheet of digital photos,
- 1 CD of digital photos and this report.

Publication

A summary of the work will be submitted for publication in the *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* in due course. A record of the project will also be submitted to the OASIS project. OASIS is an online index to archaeological grey literature.

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Appendix 1 OASIS Information

Project Name	Measham Rd, Appleby Magna
Project Type	Archaeological strip plan and sample
Project Manager	P Clay
Project Supervisor	A Hyam
Previous/Future work	Evaluation trenching
Current Land Use	Field
Development Type	Housing
Reason for Investigation	As a condition
Position in the Planning Process	Ongoing
Site Co ordinates	SK3167 1013
Start/end dates of field work	27.8.2014 – 29.8.2014
Archive Recipient	LCC
Study Area	0.4 ha

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