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Leicester**

Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological Evaluation
on Land south of Gillam Butts, Countesthorpe, Leicestershire**



NGR: SP 5823 9515

Andrew McLeish
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Land south of Gillam Butts, Countesthorpe, Leicestershire**

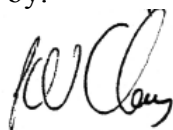
(SP 5823 9515))

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For: Westleigh Partnerships Ltd

Approved by:

Signed



Date: 08/10/2015

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An Archaeological Evaluation on Land south of Gillam Butts, Countesthorpe, Leicestershire

Summary

University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) carried out an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching on land at Gillam Butts, Countesthorpe, Leicestershire (SP 5823 9515) on 30th September - 2nd October 2015. The work was undertaken as part of an archaeological impact assessment in advance of a proposed residential development.

The evaluation involved the initial excavation of nine trenches to sample the proposed development area for the survival of archaeological deposits. No remains or deposits of archaeological origin were identified.

The archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council Museum Service under accession number XA104.2015.

1. Introduction

An archaeological evaluation was carried out by ULAS for Westleigh Partnerships Ltd and was undertaken in response to a planning condition (8) from Blaby District Council in advance of proposed residential development.

The fieldwork was intended to provide preliminary indications of character and extent of any heritage assets in order that the potential impact of the development on such remains may be assessed by the Planning Authority, and as appropriate a mitigation strategy formulated.

The definition of archaeological field evaluation, taken from the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (2014) is a limited programme of non-intrusive and/or intrusive fieldwork which determines the presence or absence of archaeological features, structures, deposits, artefacts or ecofacts within a specified area or site on land, inter-tidal zone or underwater. If such archaeological remains are present field evaluation defines their character, extent, quality and preservation, and enables an assessment of their worth in a local, regional, national or international context as appropriate.

2. Site Description, Topography and Geology (Figure 1)

The site lies at the south of Gillam Butts, Countesthorpe, Leicestershire (SP 5823 9515) and consists of one field, covering c. 1.4 hectares (Figure 2). Planning Permission is being sought for residential development totalling 40 dwellings (P.A 14/0232/1/OX). Condition 8 states: *No development shall commence until a programme of archaeological work, commencing with an initial phase of geophysical survey and/or trial trenching has been*

detailed within a Written Scheme of Investigation, submitted and approved by the District Council in writing.

The land lies at c. 95m aOD. The British Geological Survey for England and Wales indicates that the underlying geology is likely to consist of Mercia Mudstone, overlain by Diamicton Till

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



Figure 1: Site Location

Reproduced from Explorer® 1:25,000 OS map by permission of Ordnance Survey® on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown copyright 2010. All rights reserved. Licence number AL 100029495.

3. Archaeological and Historical Background

The Historic Environment Record for the area indicates that there is a potential for the site to contain archaeological remains dating to the prehistoric and Roman periods. Geophysical survey representing several enclosures have been identified 500m to the west of probable Iron Age or Roman date (MLE19061).

The cartographic evidence indicates that the land has remained in agricultural use for several centuries and there is little evidence for any previous development. Therefore if archaeological remains should exist, they would be more likely to belong to the pre-medieval periods and are unlikely to have been adversely affected by later land use. Geophysical survey of the area has been undertaken but with inconclusive results (Davies 2015).

4. Aims and Objectives

The main objectives of the evaluation were to:

- identify the presence/absence of any archaeological deposits.
- establish the character, extent and date range for any archaeological deposits to be affected by the proposed ground works.
- 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.

5. Methodology (Figure 2)

It was proposed to evaluate the area for the presence of archaeological remains through the excavation of nine 30m x 1.6m (432m sq.) trenches across the development area using a JCB with a ditching bucket in order to achieve a representative sample (3.5%) of the area.

Topsoil and overburden were 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.

Trenches were examined by hand cleaning and any archaeological deposits were recorded using standard procedures as per the ULAS recording manual and outlined in the agreed Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI; ULAS 2015). All work was undertaken in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Archaeologists (CIfA) Codes of Conduct (2014) and Standards and Guidance (2014)

All negative trenches identified were backfilled after recording.

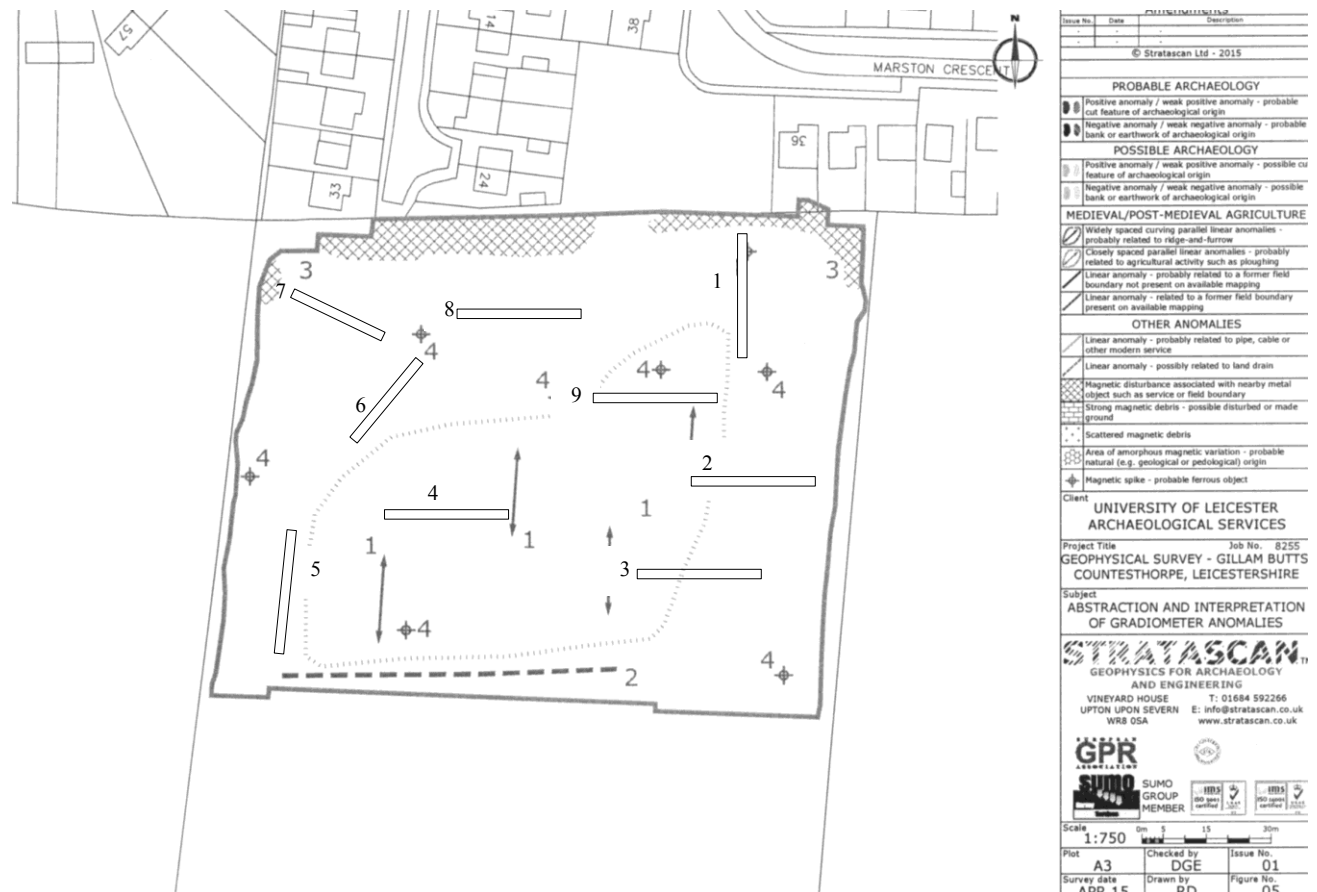


Figure 2 Trench locations in relation to geophysical survey results

6. Results

The topsoil across the site was mid grey brown firm to plastic silty-clay approx. 0.2m – 0.43m deep, overlaying the consistent light yellow brown silt/sand-clay containing sparse sub-rounded and rounded peddles and smaller stones. No subsoil was observed.

One small undated gully running for 2.1m in a north-west to south-east direction was identified in Trench 1. The gully was 0.46m wide and 0.13m deep and no dating material was recovered from the fill.

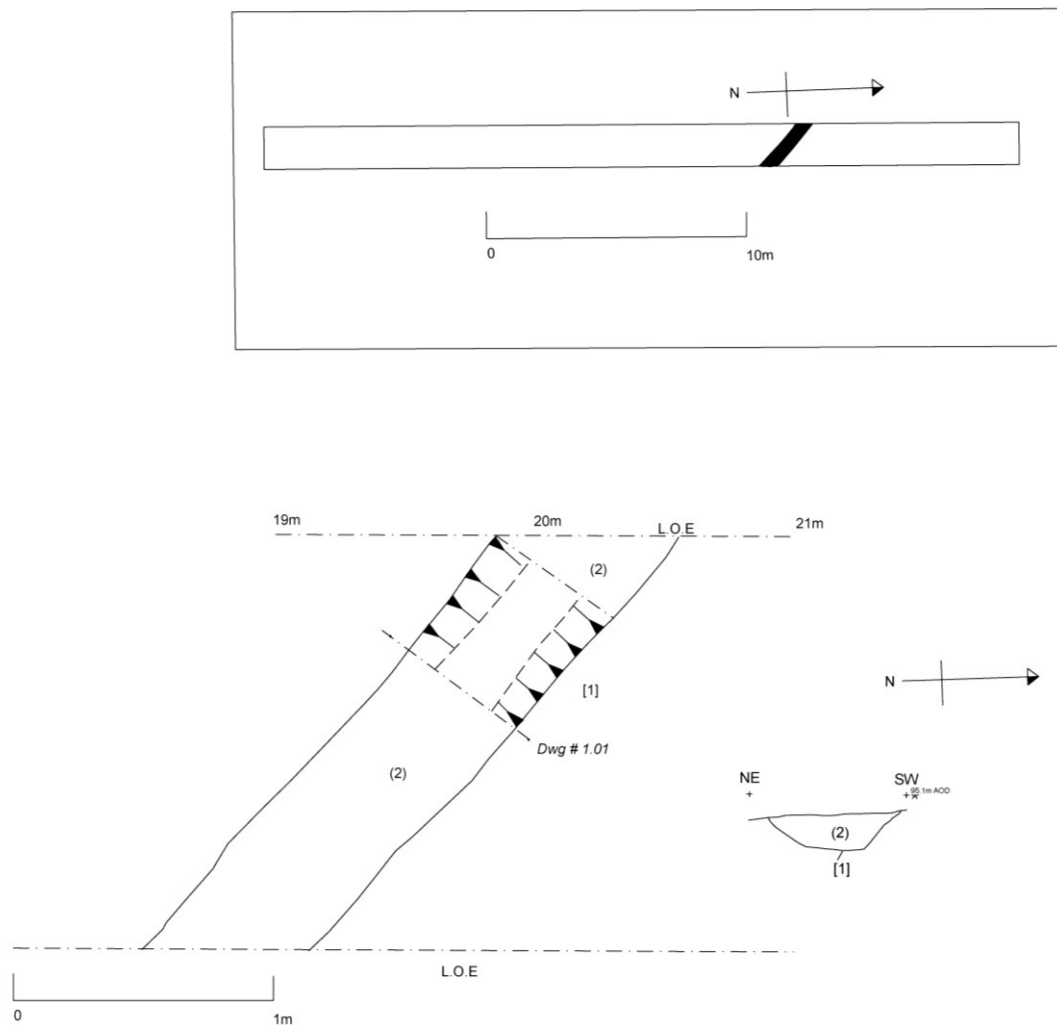


Figure 3. North-west to south-east aligned gully [1] in Trench 1

An east - west aligned field drain was observed across Trench 9.

Trenches 2, 3, 4, 5, 7 all contained shallow medieval furrows.

The results are shown in the table below and photographs of each trench are shown in Appendix 1.

| TRENCH | ORIENTATION | LENGTH AND WIDTH (metres) | TOPSOIL THICKNESS (metres) | SUBSOIL THICKNESS (metres) | DESCRIPTION | TRENCH DEPTH (MIN-MAX metres) |
|--------|---------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| 1 | North - South | 30 | 0.25 – 0.4 | - | One small undated gully. Contexts [1] & (2) | 0.38 – 0.53 |
| 2 | East - West | 30 | 0.3 – 0.4 | - | One Furrow running East - West | 0.4 – 0.6 |
| 3 | East - West | 30 | 0.25 - 0.43 | - | One Furrow running East - West | 0.25 – 0.46 |
| 4 | East - West | 30 | 0.28 – 0.4 | - | One furrow running East – West | 0.34 – 0.48 |
| 5 | North - South | 30 | 0.26 – 0.33 | - | Three furrows | 0.3 – 0.4 |

| | | | | | running East – West | |
|----------|-------------------------|----|-------------|---|--------------------------------|-------------|
| 6 | South West – North East | 30 | 0.2 – 0.4 | - | No archaeological features | 0.23 – 0.47 |
| 7 | North West – South East | 30 | 0.24 - 0.35 | - | One furrow running East - West | 0.24 – 0.35 |
| 8 | East - West | 30 | 0.23 – 0.35 | - | No archaeological features | 0.24 – 0.35 |
| 9 | East - West | 30 | 0.25 – 0.36 | - | No archaeological features | 0.28 – 0.4m |



Figure 4. Small undated gully [1] in trench 1 looking north-west.

7. Conclusion

The results from the evaluation suggest that there is very limited potential for features or deposits of archaeological origin to be present within the area of the proposed development.

8. Archive

The completed archive will be deposited with Leicestershire County Council under the accession no. XA104.2015 and contains:

- 9 trench recording sheets
- 1 context index sheet

- 2 context recording sheets
- 1 sheet of A3 permatrace
- 1 photographic recording sheet
- CD containing digital photographs and report
- Unbound copy of this report
- Thumbnail print of digital photographs

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, under ID: universi1-144988. Available at: <http://oasis.ac.uk/>

| ID | OASIS entry summary |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Project Name | Gillam Butts, Countesthorpe, Leicestershire |
| Summary | <p>University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) carried out an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching on land south of Gillam Butts, Countesthorpe, Leicestershire (SP 5823 9515) on 30th September – 2nd October 2015. The work was undertaken as part of an archaeological impact assessment in advance of a proposed residential development.</p> <p>The evaluation involved the initial excavation of 9 trenches to sample the proposed development area for the survival of archaeological deposits. Only one minor feature of archaeological interest was identified.</p> <p>The archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council Museum Service under accession number XA104.2015.</p> |
| Project Type | Evaluation |
| Project Manager | Patrick Clay |
| Project Supervisor | Stephen Baker |
| Previous/Future work | Previous: none / Future: unknown |
| Current Land Use | Rough pasture/out of use |
| Development Type | Residential/Tree screen planting |
| Reason for Investigation | |
| Position in the Planning Process | Planning Condition |
| Site Co ordinates | SP 5823 9515 |
| Height OD | c. 95m OD |
| Start/end dates of field work | 30th September – 2nd October 2015 |
| Archive Recipient | Leicestershire County Council |
| Study Area | c.1.4 ha |
| Associated project reference codes | Leicestershire Museums accession ID: XA104.2015 OASIS form ID: universi1- |

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10. Acknowledgements

The fieldwork was commissioned by Westleigh Partnerships Ltd. Fieldwork was carried out by Stephen Baker and Andrew McLeish. Patrick Clay managed the project for ULAS.

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5th October 2015

APPENDIX 1: Trench photographs



Figure 5 Trench 1 looking south.



Figure 6 Trench 2 looking east.



Figure 7 Trench 3, looking east.



Figure 8 Trench 4 looking west



Figure 9 Trench 5, looking north.



Figure 10 Trench 6, looking north-east.



Figure 11 Trench 7 looking west.



Figure 12 Trench 8 looking east.



Figure 13. Trench 9 looking west.

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