



**University of  
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**Archaeological Services**

**An Archaeological Evaluation  
on Land at Twycross Road, Sibson, Sheepy, Leicestershire**

**NGR: SK 35574 00768**




Stephen Baker

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**An Archaeological Evaluation on  
Land at Twycross Road, Sibson, Sheepy, Leicestershire  
(SK 35574 00768)**

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**For: Mr. Brian May**

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# An Archaeological Evaluation on Land at Twycross Road, Sibson, Sheepy, Leicestershire

## Summary

*University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) carried out an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching on land at Twycross Road, Sibson, Sheepy, Leicestershire (SK 35574 00768) The work was undertaken as part of an archaeological impact assessment in advance of a proposed residential development.*

*The evaluation evidence for past field systems with a series of furrows running north – south across the proposed development area. One archaeological feature, a possible medieval ditch beneath a furrow was identified.*

*The site archive will be held Leicester Museums Service under accession number XA64.2015.*

## 1. Introduction

An archaeological evaluation was carried out by ULAS for Mr. Brian May in June 2015 on land at Twycross Road, Sibson, Sheepy, Leicestershire (SK 35574 00768) This was undertaken in advance of an application for proposed residential development.

The fieldwork undertaken 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 can be assessed by the Planning Authority.

The definition of archaeological field evaluation, taken from the Institute for Archaeologists Standards and Guidance: for Archaeological Field Evaluation (2010) 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

The site lies in the centre of the village of Sibson, around 3 miles south-west of Market Bosworth (SK 35574 00768; Fig. 1). It sits at the junction of Twycross Road (A444) and Glebe Road and consists of a parcel of land of 2532 square metres. The site comprises an area of slightly undulating improved grassland, which falls slightly to the south and lies around 2m above the Twycross Road to the west. The land is surrounded by grown out hedges and wooden fencing but is open as part of the wider garden area of Mayfield to the south and south-west.

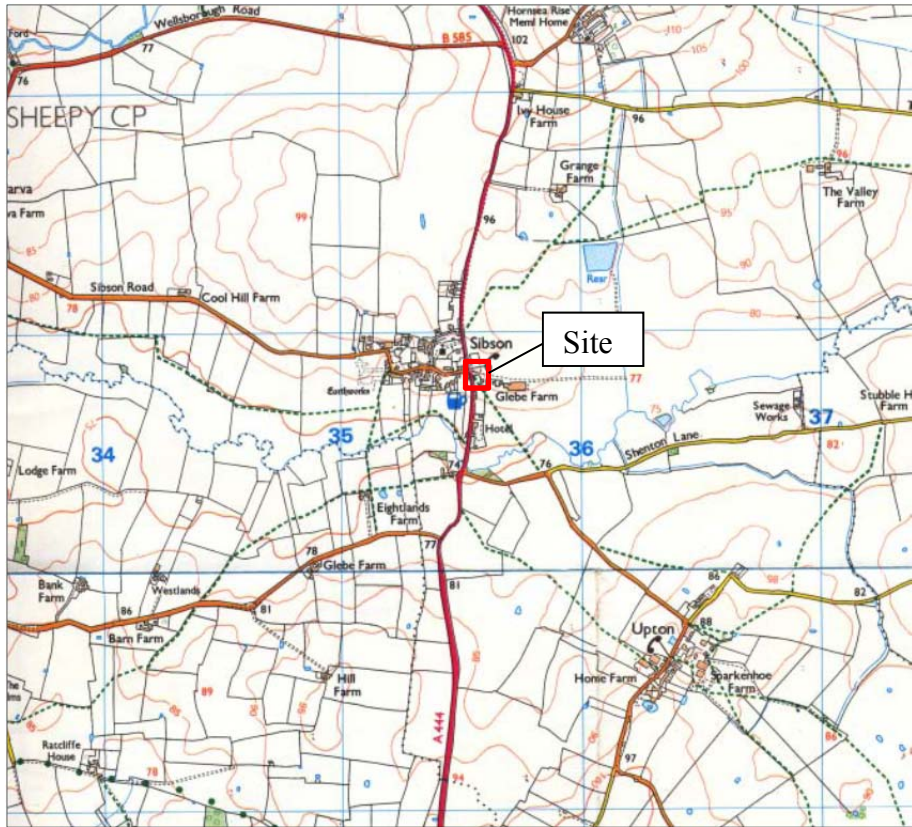


Figure 1: Site Location

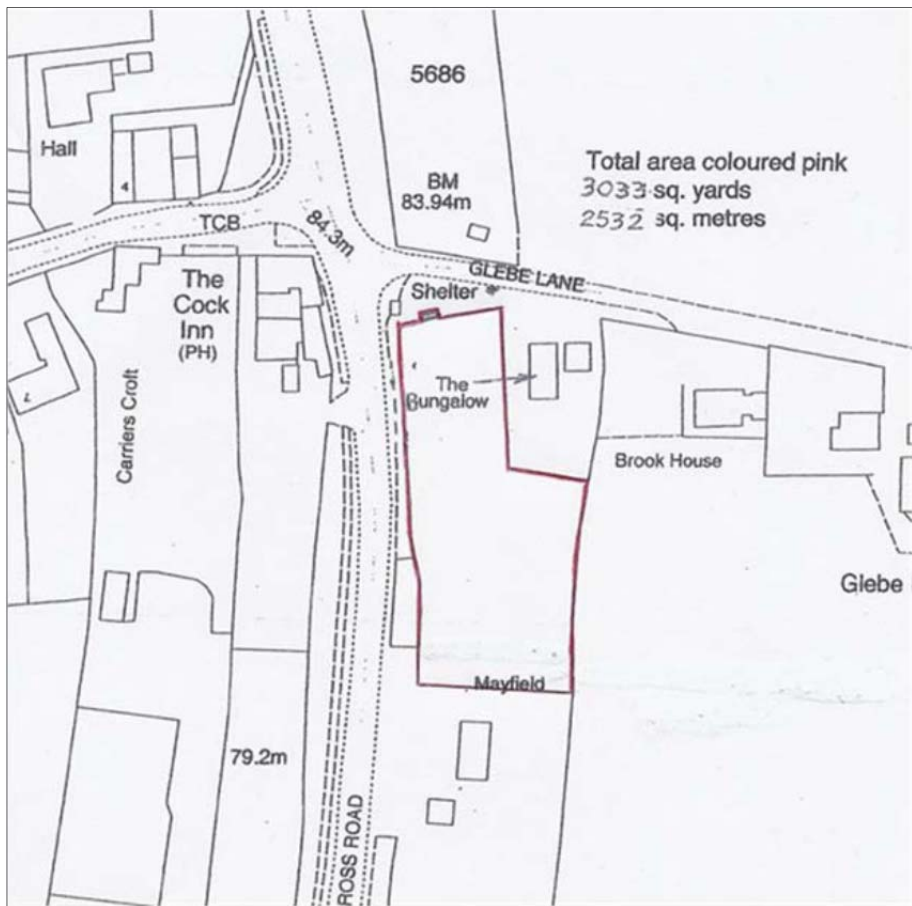


Figure 2: Proposed development area

The land lies at a height of around 84m OD and the British Geological Survey website indicates that the underlying geology is Gunthorpe Member Mudstone.

The proposed development is for five new dwellings with associated garages, with a new access from Glebe Lane to the north. The development proposals include works (e.g. foundations, services and landscaping) likely to impact upon those remains and Leicestershire County Council (LCC) as archaeological advisors to the planning authority planning authority required that an evaluation by trial trenching was undertaken prior to development to assess the location, extent, significance and character of any buried archaeological remains.

### **3. Archaeological and Historical Background**

A desk-based assessment has been undertaken for the site (Hunt 2014) and a full account of the historical and archaeological potential is detailed there. The site lies mainly within the medieval settlement core of the village (**MLE3179**), which has shrunk in size since the medieval period. There are several groups of medieval earthworks in the area, mainly enclosures and house platforms associated with the shrunken nature of the village.

Field-walking in and around the village has resulted in the discovery of a considerable amount of prehistoric artefacts suggesting human occupation around the village since Palaeolithic times, into the Mesolithic, Neolithic and beyond. Roman and Anglo-Saxon finds have also been recovered including evidence for an Anglo-Saxon cemetery somewhere in the vicinity.

### **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**

#### ***General Methodology and Standards***

All work followed 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) were adhered to.

Internal monitoring procedures were undertaken including provision for external monitoring meetings with the Project Manager, the Planning Authority and the Client, if required.

Unlimited access to monitor the project was be available to the Client and his representatives, the planning authority, the Senior Planning Archaeologist, Leicestershire County Council subject to the health and safety requirements of the site. At least one week's notice was given prior to commencement of the recording work in order that monitoring arrangements can be made. All monitoring was carried out in accordance with the CIfA Standards.

### ***Constraints***

The site comprises a grassed garden area containing mature trees and shrubs and care was taken to avoid the roots. There are overhead cables running across the centre of the site. No excavations took place within 10m of these cables.

### ***Trial Trenching Methodology***

Prior to any machining of trial trenches general photographs of the site areas were taken. A trial trenching sample of the area will be undertaken. Due to the constraints two 20m trenches (Trenches 2 and 3) and one 15m trench (Trench 1) were excavated (Fig. 3). The location of all three trenches was altered to avoid a public footpath, running north – south across the proposed development area and mature vegetation in the south of the area, whilst still covering the footprints of the building plans.

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; Score 2015).

## **6. Results**

Archaeological deposits were uncovered and recorded in one of the three trenches excavated. Trenches 2 and 3 contained no archaeological finds or deposits, although there was some evidence for furrows, orientated north-west to south-east, in both.

The topsoil was consistent across the site and was composed of a mid-dark brown sandy-clay loam with occasional small rounded pebbles. This ranged in thickness from 0.14 - 0.30m. Below this was mid-grey-brown silty-clay subsoil, ranging in thickness from 0.10 - 0.50m. Natural substratum was reached in all trenches and consisted of gravels and clay, at a depth of 0.36 - 0.8m (Table 1).

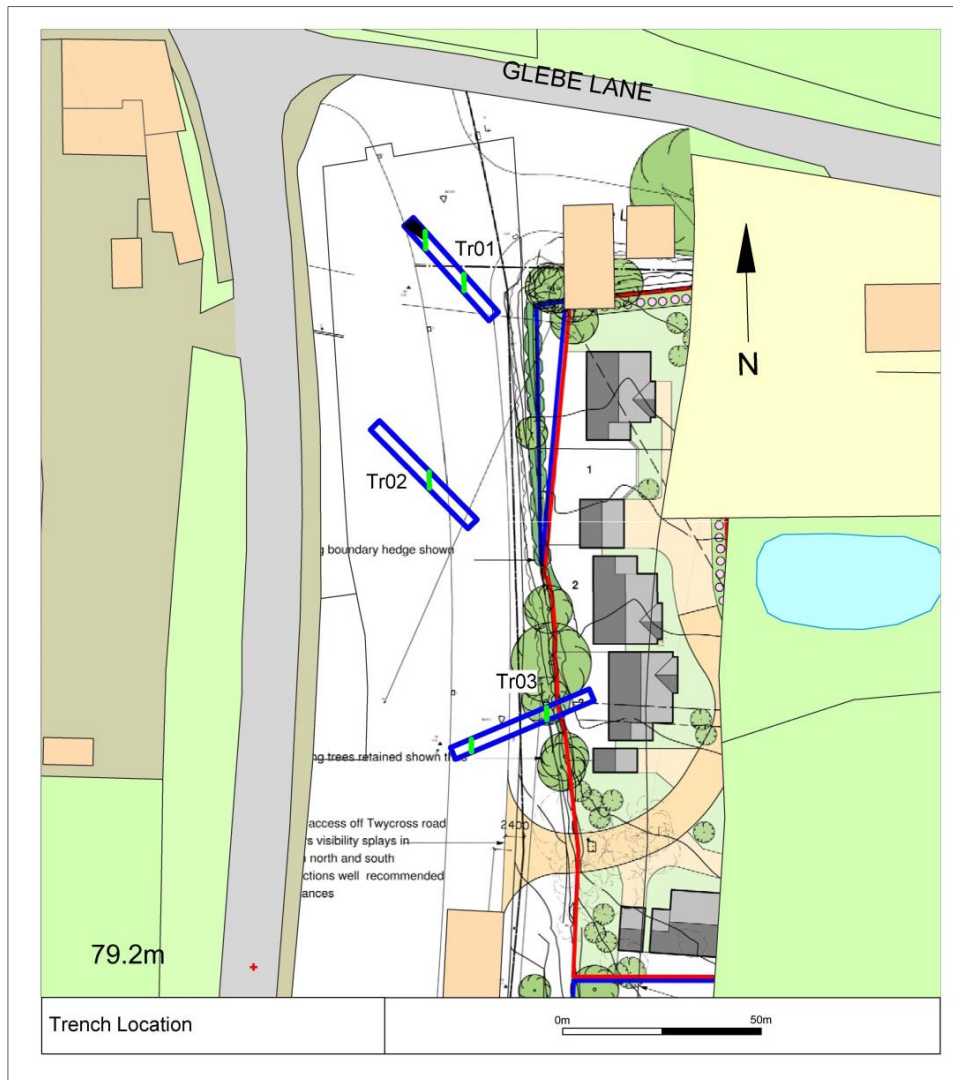


Figure 3: Trench Locations showing approximate locations of furrows (green) and ditch in Tr01. Plan provided by the client.

Table 1: List of trenches and descriptions.

TRENCH	ORIENTATION	LENGTH AND WIDTH (metres)	TOPSOIL THICKNESS (metres)	SUBSOIL THICKNESS (metres)	DESCRIPTION	TRENCH DEPTH (MIN-MAX metres)
1	NW-SE	1.6 x 16	0.14 – 0.23	0.14 – 0.26	Ditch [02]	0.46 – 0.67
2	NW-SE	1.6 x 19	0.19 – 0.20	0.26 – 0.58	Furrows: No archaeological features	0.48 – 0.80
3	NE-SW	1.6 x 17.5	0.14 – 0.21	0.20 – 0.30	Furrows: No archaeological features	0.36 – 0.65



**Trench 01** (Figs 4 -7)

Trench 1 was located in the north of the proposed development area. This was excavated down to red clay natural substrata. Furrows, orientated north to south were observed to traverse the trench.

At its north-west end was an east/west linear feature. On excavation this was found to represent a ditch [02], 1.10m in width and 0.34m deep with a flat and slightly south-east sloping base. The single mid-grey-brown silty-clay fill (01), contained medieval pottery with a date range of c.1250 – 1500 AD (see below) and animal bone.

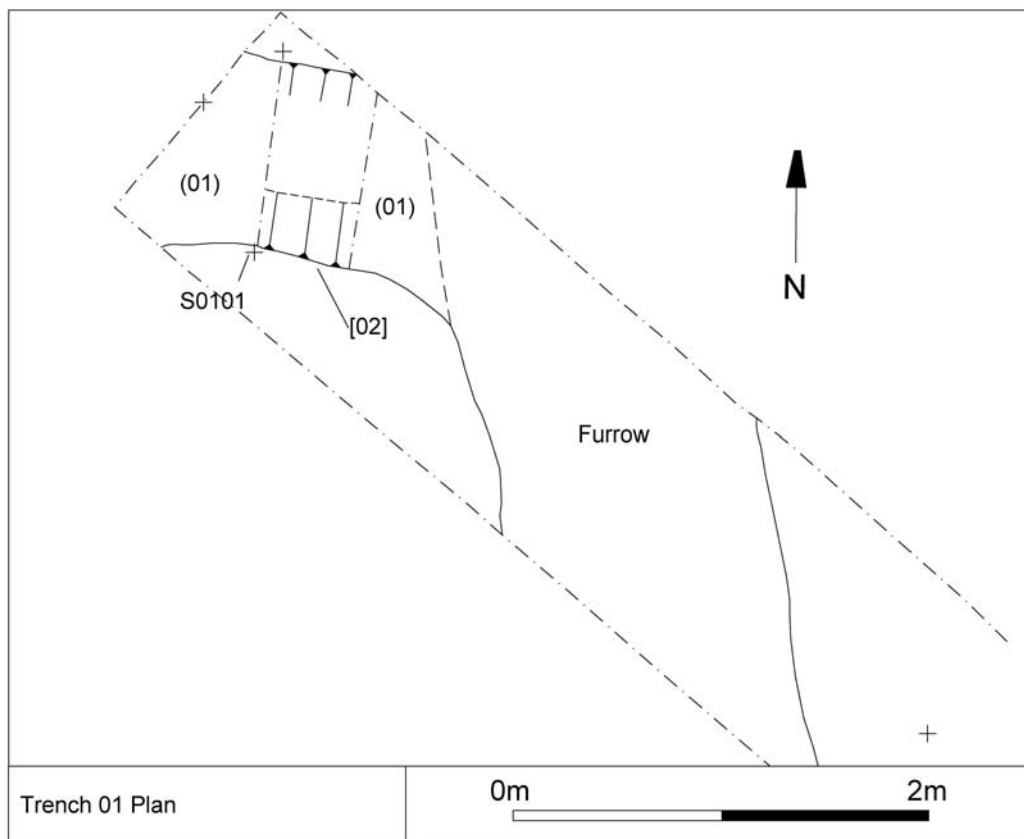


Figure 4: Trench 01

**Trench 02**

Trench 02 was located in the centre of the proposed development area. It contained evidence for furrows, orientated north to south, but was devoid of archaeological deposits.

**Trench 03**

Located in the south of the development area, Trench 03 also had evidence for north to south orientated furrows with no archaeological deposits.

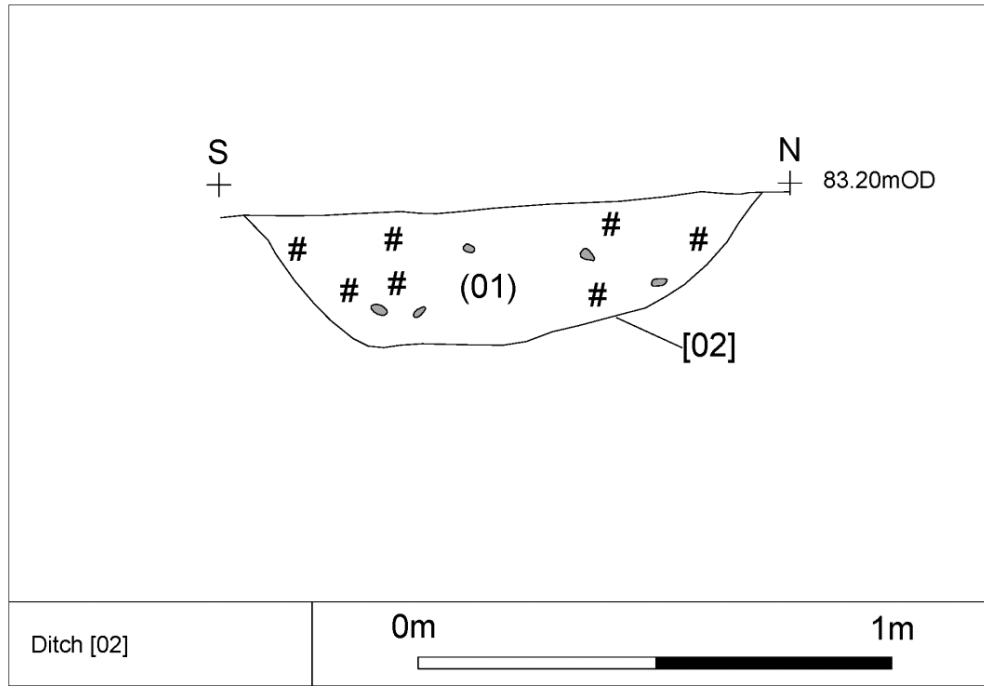


Figure 5: Ditch [02] Section, Trench 1



Figure 6: Trench 1, looking south-east



Figure 7: Ditch [02], Trench 1

## 7. The Ceramic Finds by Debbie Sawday

### *Methodology*

The medieval pottery, twelve sherds, weighing 463 grams, was examined under a x20 binocular microscope and catalogued with reference to the guidelines set out by the Medieval Pottery Research Group, (MPRG 1998; MPRG, 2001) and the ULAS fabric series (Sawday 2009). A piece of flat roof tile, weighing c.158 grams was also present. The results are shown below (Tables 2 and 3).

### *Discussion*

Several joins were noted amongst the eight sherds, weighing 416 grams, of stratified medieval pottery, which comprised a range of typically local fabrics (table 1). Chilvers Coton, a suburb of Nuneaton, approximately 10 km to the south, was the site of a major pottery and tile production centre in the medieval period. The source of the flat roof tile may include either Chilvers Coton or Polesworth; the latter lies approximately 9 km to the west of the village.

### *Conclusion*

The pottery had an average sherd weight of 52 grams; both this, the lack of abrasion, and the number of conjoining sherds, suggest the survival of relatively undisturbed archaeological levels in the vicinity. The presence also of a piece of flat roof tile may also indicate the presence nearby of a later medieval or post medieval structure.

Table 2: The pottery and tile fabrics.

Fabric	Common Name/Kiln & Fabric Equivalent where known	Approx. Date Range
CC1	Chilvers Coton A/Ai (14), Warwick CTS WW01,?WW012, ?SQ51, (1)	c.1250-1400
CC2	Chilvers Coton fabric C (14), Warwick CTS SQ30 (1)	c.1250/1300-1500
CC5	Chilvers Coton B- Warwick CTS STR20 (1)	c.1250-1300
EA	Unclassified Earthenware (1) (2)	later medieval/post medieval

(1) Mayes & Scott 1984, Soden and Ratkai 1998
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(2) Melton and Scott 1999
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### Miscellaneous

Four small fragments of unidentifiable animal bone were also recovered from context (1) [2].

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

context	fabric/ware	no	gr	comments
<b>POT</b>				
1 [2]	CC5 – Chilvers Coton B ware	1	7	body
1 [2]	CC1 – Chilvers Coton A ware	1	4	
1 [2]	CC2 – Chilvers Coton C ware	2	47	join
1 [2]	CC2 – Chilvers Coton C ware	1	32	Thick walled body
1 [2]	MP3 – Midland Purple	3	326	Jar base/body glazed internally, join
U/S ? furrow	CC1	1	18	Basal angle, green glazed internally
U/S ? furrow	CC1	1	13	Slashed & glazed strap handle fragment – probably a jug
U/S ? furrow	CC2	1	11	
U/S ? furrow	CC5	1	5	
<b>TILE</b>				
U/S	EA - Earthenware	1	158	Flat roof tile, c.16mm thick; the smearing on the upper surface suggests that this is a nib tile.
<b>Misc.</b>				
1 [2]	Animal bone	4		

## 7. Conclusion

The evaluation by trial trenches indicated that the land had been previously been used for agriculture with evidence in all three trenches for the presence of furrows. Only Trench 1 uncovered deposits of an archaeological nature in the form of a ditch of probable medieval date. The desk based assessment (Hunt 2014) showed that the site has been part of agricultural fields on the edge of the village for some time although none of the maps show any possible boundary ditches in this area. The ditch was in the trench closest to the road and the village and the presence of pottery suggests possible proximity to medieval settlement.

## 8. Archive

The archive contains:

- 3 trench recording sheets
- Context summary records
- 2 context sheets
- 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	An Archaeological Evaluation on Land at Twycross Road, Sibson, Sheepy, Leicestershire
Summary	<p>University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) carried out an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching on land at Twycross Road, Sibson, Sheepy, Leicestershire (SK 35574 00768) The work was undertaken as part of an archaeological impact assessment in advance of a proposed residential development.</p> <p>The evaluation revealed one archaeological feature, a probable post-medieval ditch and evidence for a series of furrows running north – south across the proposed development area.</p> <p>The site archive will be held Leicester Museums Service under accession number XA64.2015</p>
Project Type	Evaluation
Project Manager	Vicki Score
Project Supervisor	Stephen Baker
Previous/Future work	Previous: none / Future: unknown
Current Land Use	Pasture/garden
Development Type	Residential
Reason for Investigation	NPPF, Section 12
Position in the Planning Process	Planning condition
Site Co ordinates	SP 35574 00768
Height OD	84m OD
Start/end dates of field work	10/06/15 – 11/06/15
Archive Recipient	LMARS
Study Area	0.25ha
Associated project reference codes	Museum accession ID: XA64.2015 OASIS form ID: universi1-242174

## 9. Publication

A summary of the work will be submitted for publication in the local archaeological journal *Northamptonshire Archaeology* 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.

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## 11. Acknowledgements

The fieldwork was undertaken on behalf of Mr. Brian May, and was carried out by Stephen Baker. Vicki Score managed the project. Teresa Hawtin (Planning Archaeologist, Leicestershire County Council) monitored the work on behalf of the planning authority.

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