



University of Leicester

Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological Watching Brief
on land at 5 London Road, Hinckley,
Leicestershire.
SP 43102 93952**

Steve Baker and Adam Clapton



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For:

Lighthouse Properties Ltd

Checked by Project Manager

Signed:



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Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by the University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) at 5 London Road Hinckley, Leicestershire. The work took place on the 14th, 15th, 23rd and 24th of April during foundation excavation and groundworks for eleven flats plus single domestic dwelling on the site. The development lays within the historic settlement core of Hinckley, hence the requirement for a programme of archaeological work.

No archaeological features or deposits were observed during the watching brief.

The fieldwork was carried out by Sophie Clarke, Steve Baker and Adam Clapton. The archive will be deposited with Leicestershire Museums Service under Accession Number XA.57.2014

Introduction

In accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Section 12 *Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment* this document forms the report for archaeological attendance for inspection and recording (watching brief) during groundworks at 5 London Road, Hinckley, Leicestershire NGR SP 43102 93952 (centre).

The planning consent is for the erection of a block of eleven flats and a single dwelling at the junction of Gladstone Terrace and London Road (14/00096/FUL; Appeal ref: APP/K2420/A/13/2203402).

Leicestershire County Council as archaeological advisors to the planning authority requested archaeological attendance for inspection and recording (watching brief) to identify and record any structural or archaeological remains of significance.

The Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record (HER) shows that the application site lies in an area of archaeological interest. The site is located within the historic settlement core of Hinckley, a medieval and post-medieval town (HER ref.: MLE2901). The settlement core represents the area within which evidence indicates an enhanced potential for the presence of buried and above ground archaeological remains indicative of the historic settlement and occupation of the town. Consequently, there is likelihood that buried archaeological remains will be affected by the development (ULAS, 2014, hereinafter WSI).

Background

The site lies within the town of Hinckley on the junction of Gladstone Terrace to the west and London Road to the north (Figures 1-3). It was formerly occupied by a clu to the swest of Gladstoen tearrace and terraced houses (Figure 2). The area lies at an approximate height of 136 aOD with a national grid reference centred at SP 43102 93952. The British Geological Survey map, England & Wales Sheet 169 (Solid & Drift Geology) shows that the underlying geology of the site is likely to be Mercia Mudstone, possibly overlain by Dunsmore Gravel.

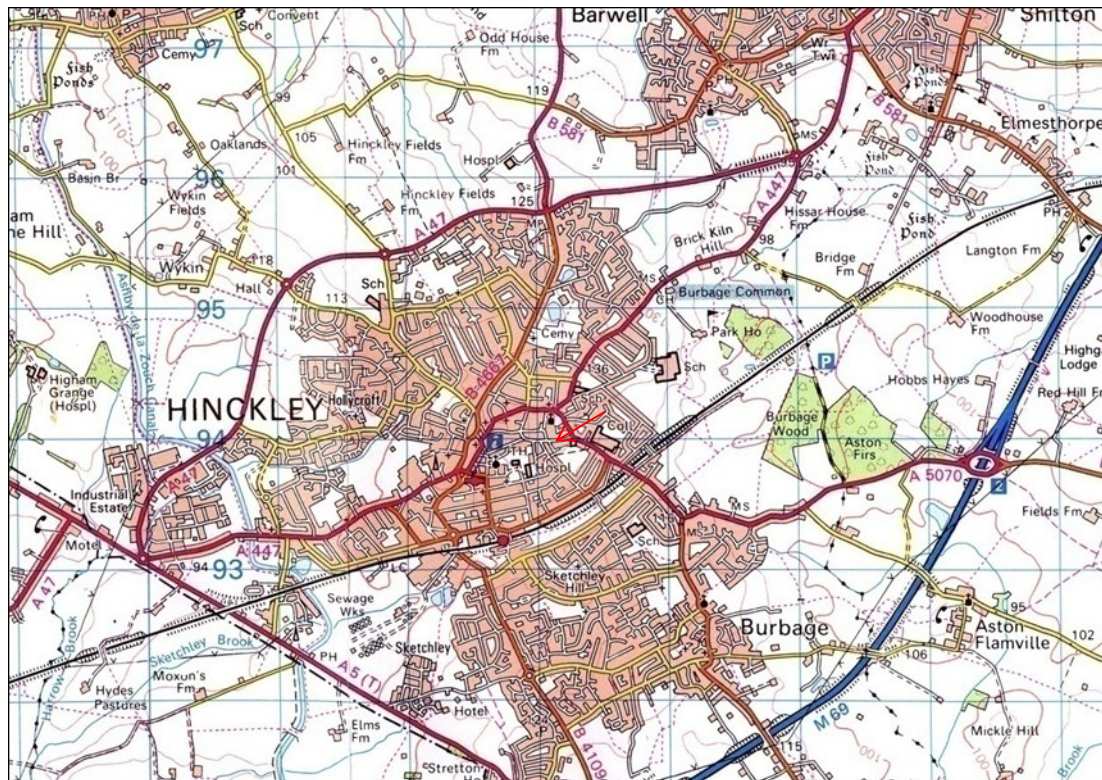


Figure 1. Site location, Hinckley, Leicestershire

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Figure 2: Location of application area at 5, London Road, Hinckley

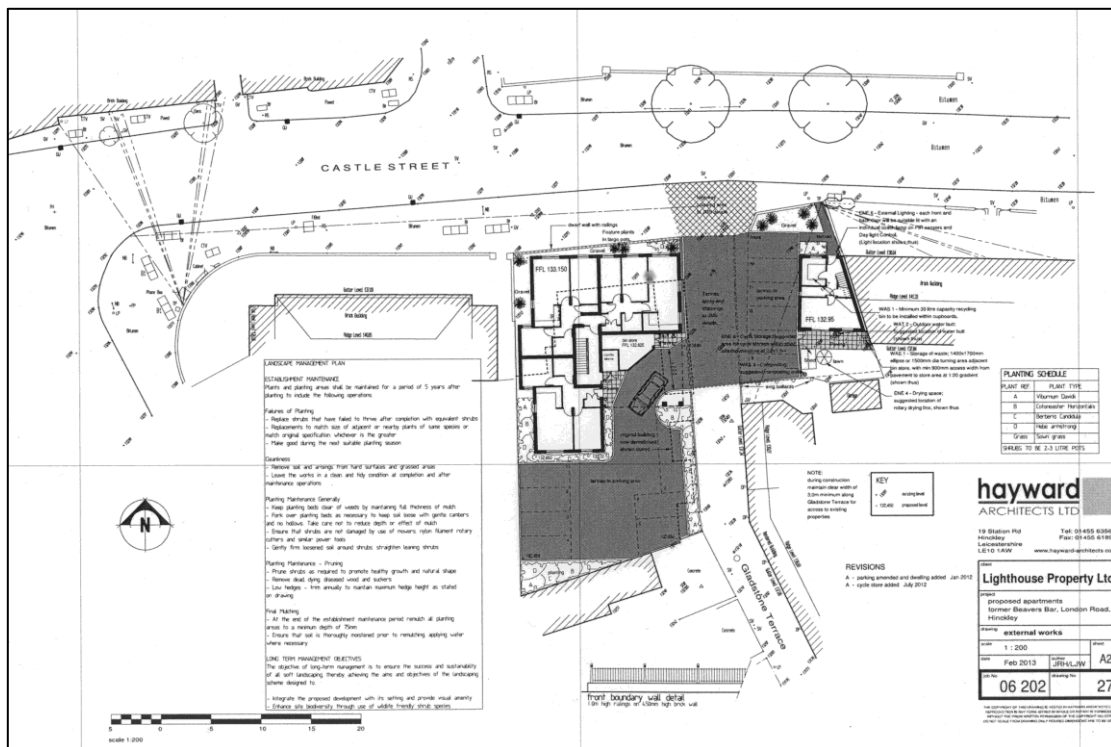


Figure 3: Location plan showing proposed development (provided by client)

The planning consent is for the erection of eleven flats and single dwelling on the site. Prior to the proposed development the site had been wasteland following the demolition of Beavers bar some years ago. On the western edge of the site stands a brick wall forming the boundary with the neighbouring property, whilst the southern boundary is marked by standing garages for the adjacent properties on Gladstone Terrace. Prior to the commencement of archaeological works the site had been cleared of all remaining shrubs and modern debris, with the removal of modern overburden also completed. None of this work appeared to have damaged any potential archaeological deposits.

Objectives

The purpose of the archaeological watching brief may be summarised as follows:

- To identify the presence/absence of any archaeological deposits.
- To describe, record and if possible provide a date range for the stratigraphy.
- To produce an archive and report of any results to inform the need for further work and to provide supplementary data for the Heritage Assessment.

Methodology

A tracked mini-digger with a 0.6m wide toothed bucket and a 0.45 flat bucket were used to excavate the foundations under continuous archaeological supervision, with provision for a programme of excavation and recording using additional personnel, should this be necessary.

All groundworks and deposits were recorded by notes, sketches and digital colour photographs. The recording methodology followed that specified in the ULAS Design Specification for Archaeological Work for land adjacent to *5 London Road, Hinckley, Leicestershire*. All work followed the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Code of Conduct* (2008) and adhered to their *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (2008) and the *Guidelines for Archaeological Work in Leicestershire and Rutland (LMARS)*.

Excavations focused on foundation trenches for the proposed developments of flats and single dwelling on site, where reduced levels could impact on potential archaeological deposits. Location of foundation trenches can be seen on the developers plan (fig 1).

Results

All foundation trenches were excavated at widths between 0.45m and 1m, at depths of 0.75m to 1m, along the line of wall foundations dependant on the developer's requirements.



Figure 4 Machining of overburden

Initial excavations focused on removing modern overburden from across the site, including areas of tarmac to the north and western edges. Topsoil consisted of mixed loam/ sandy clays containing brick and modern pottery. The foundation trench adjacent to London Road on the northern boundary of the site was excavated first as this was highlighted as the area most likely to contain archaeological deposits (fig 2). The sequence consisted on 0.20m of modern overburden overlaying 0.32m of yellow brown silty-sand, which appeared to be made up ground. No archaeological features were present, only evidence of disused services at the base of the modern overburden. The natural substratum consisted of light orange brown clay and sandy clay, with some large rounded stone and flint inclusions. The modern overburden became greater in depth towards the eastern edge of the site adjacent to Gladstone Terrace, probably as a result of greater modern occupation in this area.



Figure 5 Foundation trench looking north-east

As foundation excavations moved south across the site it was noted that the sequences were similar, consisting of modern overburden over laying 0.32m of made up ground onto the natural substratum (fig 5). This appeared to indicate that archaeological layers had most likely been lost through landscaping of the site resulting in this made up level.

The easternmost foundation trench running adjacent to Gladstone terrace revealed evidence of brick built cellaring/ foundation walling up to 1m in depth (fig 4). This had consequently removed any potential archaeology in the area. The soils related to the cellar backfill consisted of brown silty clays, containing modern pottery and construction debris. Overlaying the cellaring was further evidence of modern construction, including concrete pillars and the base of a breeze block wall running east-west probably related to the recently demolished Beaver Bar (fig 5).



Figure 6: Foundation trenches looking south-west



Figure 7: Foundation trench showing brick cellar walling looking north-east



Figure 8: Modern breeze block and concrete footings looking east

Conclusion

Despite the potential of archaeological features or deposits none were observed during the course of this watching brief. As mentioned, it appears that the area of interest had previously seen substantial landscaping resulting in loss of potential archaeology. This is highlighted by the presence of made up soils across the site and modern brick foundations and cellaring along the eastern boundary of the site. It was noted that no further excavations would therefore impact on archaeological deposits or features on the development area.

Archive

The archive consists of:

This report,

4 pro-forma watching brief forms

10 Digital photographs,

Publications

A summary of the work will be submitted for publication in the *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* in due course. 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.

OASIS data entry

Project Name	5 London Road, Hinckley
Project Type	Watching Brief
Project Manager	Patrick Clay
Project Supervisor	Steve Baker
Previous/Future work	None/ not known
Current Land Use	Brownfield site
Development Type	Flats and single dwelling
Reason for Investigation	NPPF
Position in the Planning Process	Approved. Condition
Site Co ordinates	SP 43102 93952
Start/end dates of field work	14-04-2014 – 24-04-2014
Archive Recipient	Leics County Council
Study Area	

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