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**An Archaeological Evaluation
on Land at Englands Farm, Croft Road, Thurlaston, Leicestershire**



NGR: SP 50127 98521

Stephen Baker

ULAS Report No. 2015-150


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**An Archaeological Evaluation on
Land at Englands Farm, Croft Road, Thurlaston, Leicestershire**

(SP 50127 98521)

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For: The Graham Harris Partnership Ltd

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An Archaeological Evaluation on Land at Englands Farm, Croft Road, Thurlaston, Leicestershire

Summary

University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) carried out an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching on land at Englands Farm, Croft Road, Thurlaston, Leicestershire (SP50127 98521) on 27th September 2015. The work was undertaken as part of an archaeological impact assessment in advance of a proposed residential development with tree planting to the north.

The evaluation was to involve the initial excavation of seven trenches to sample the proposed development area for the survival of archaeological deposits. This was revised in light of changes to the proposed planting areas resulting in four trenches being excavated. No remains or deposits of archaeological interest were identified.

The archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council Museum Service under accession number XA103.2015.

1. Introduction

An archaeological evaluation was carried out by ULAS for The Graham Harris Partnership Ltd and was undertaken as a pre-planning enquiry in advance of a 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.

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 (Figure 1)

The site lies on the western side of Croft Road, south of the village centre of Thurlaston, South-West Leicestershire. The site is an irregular area of pasture land, incorporating two fields, which rises slightly to the east from around 82m OD to around 86m OD

Figure 1 The assessment area measures c.5.6 hectares and is bordered by hedges/trees to the north; by fences separating it from Croft Road along the eastern edges, and bay hedges and more pasture land to the west and south.

The British Geological Survey website indicates that the underlying geology is likely to be Oadby Member Diamicton overlying Gunthorpe Member Mudstone or Edwalton Member Mudstone.

The proposed development is for a single new dwelling with the planting of associated screening trees to the North-West and a new access from Croft Road to the South-East. The development works (e.g. tree planting and access road) are likely to impact upon any archaeological remains and Leicestershire County Council Historic and Natural Environment Team (LCCHNET), as archaeological advisors to the planning authority, required an evaluation by trial trenching to assess the presence, location, extent, significance and character of surviving archaeological deposits.

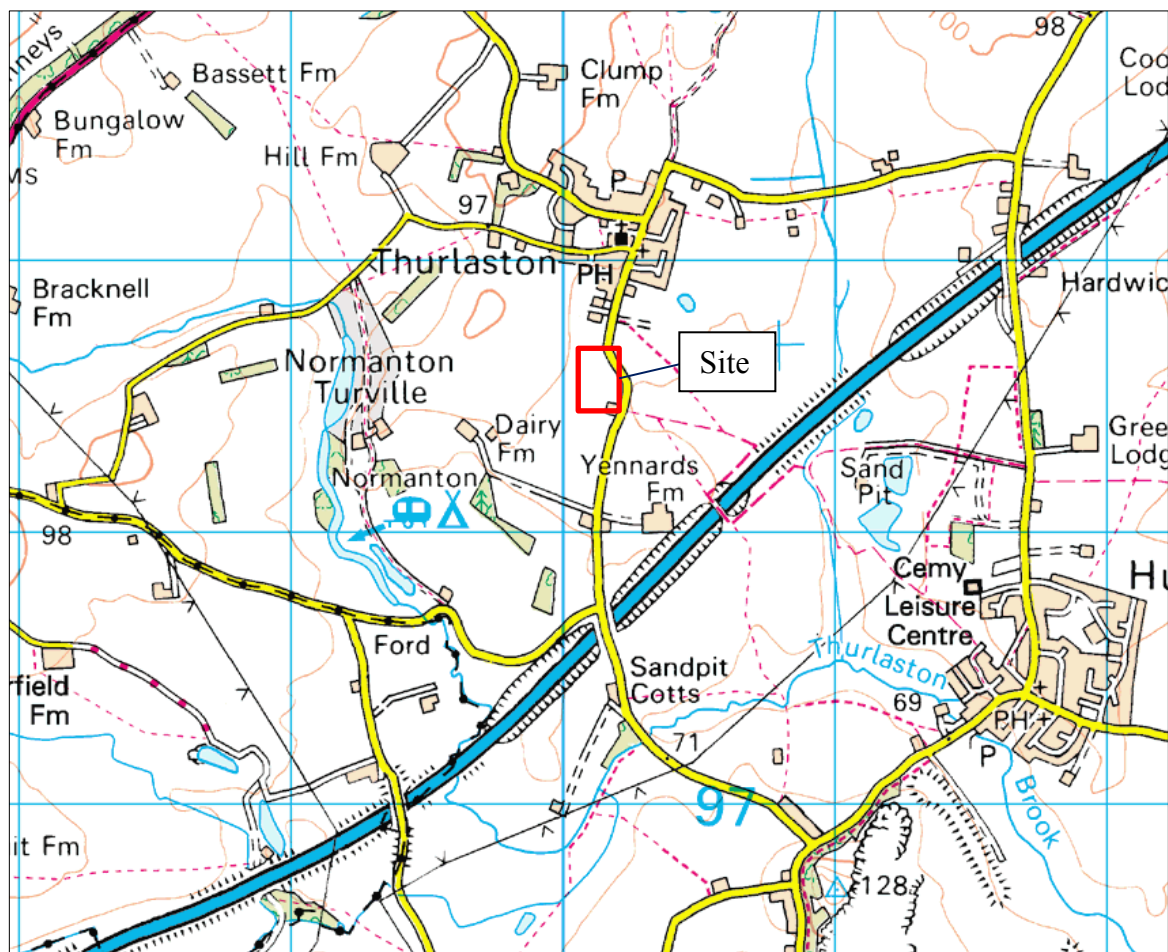


Figure 1: Site Location

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 (from Hunt 2015)

The Historic Environment Record (HER) for Leicestershire and Rutland indicates that there are no known archaeological sites within the assessment area itself. However, there are a large number of known archaeological sites in the vicinity of the site, including a

Bronze Age - Iron Age pit alignment, which lies in the close vicinity of the site (**MLE364**).

The known sites within a 1km radius of the assessment area are summarised below (with the HER reference number in bold in the text) and illustrated on Figure 2.

Prehistoric

A pit alignment cropmark, probably Bronze Age or Iron Age in date has been identified by aerial photographs 100m to the west of the assessment area (**MLE364**) (Figure 3). Another pit alignment and further cropmarks, associated with an enclosure or ring ditch, have been identified 800m to the south-west of the assessment area (**MLE348 & MLE350**).

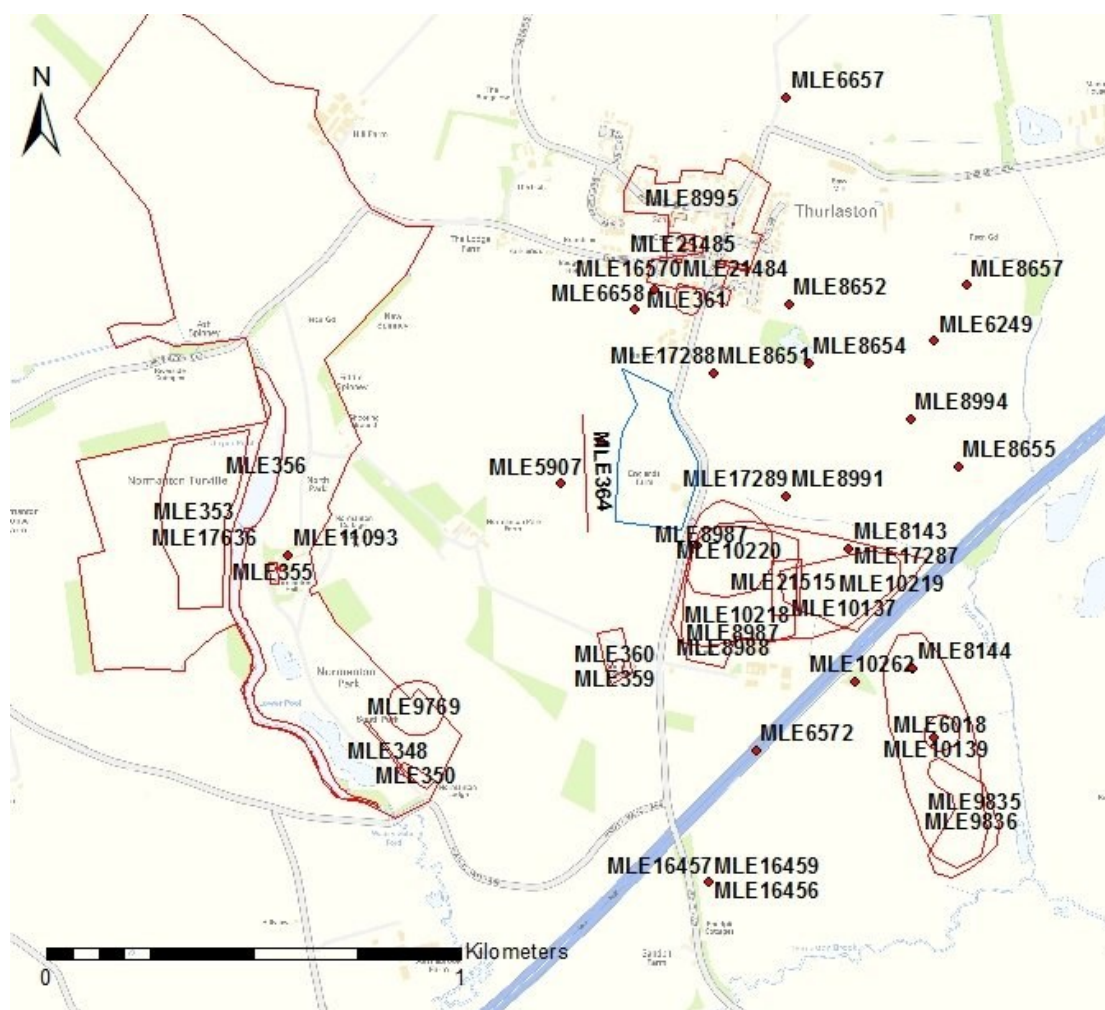


Figure 2: Known sites and monuments in the vicinity of the assessment area listed on the HER for Leicestershire & Rutland.

Data provided by Leicestershire County Council

A Bronze Age spearhead was recovered on land north-east of Yennard's Farm, 650m east of the assessment area (**MLE8655**). A palaeolithic handaxe and a scatter of 37 struck flints were recovered from Huncote Quarry, 1km south-east of the assessment area (**MLE9835 & MLE9836**).

Another scatter of worked flint, dating from the Neolithic-Bronze Age, was discovered on land at Yennard's Farm, 350m south-east of the assessment area (**MLE10218**). Further

prehistoric flints have been found 900m to the south of the site. An Iron Age coin was found to the east of Yennard's Farm (**MLE10262**).

Roman

Various pieces of Roman metalwork and pottery of several different wares were found during metal detecting and field walking at Yennard's Farm 80m east of the assessment area (**MLE8987**) indicating a possible site here. Further Roman finds were found to the east of the farm (**MLE8143** & **MLE10219**). Further evidence of Roman occupation in the area has been recovered from south-east of Manor Farm, 350m north-east of the assessment area (**MLE8651**). Finds include coins, brooches, pottery and a cauldron. Further coins were found nearby in the 1980s (**MLE8652** & **MLE8654**).



Figure 3: Aerial photograph of site (green) and adjacent fields showing crop marks of pit alignment (arrowed), looking south. Photograph supplied by L.C.C

A large number of Roman finds were found on a site west of Feeding Brook, 820m south-east of the assessment area (**MLE6018**). Further finds were discovered to the west (**MLE6572**) and two fragments of Roman brooches were found nearby (**MLE8144**).

Another Roman site lies 700m south-west of the assessment area. There is occupation debris including fragments of a pottery kiln (**MLE9769**).

Roman coins have been found 250m to the east of the site (**MLE8991**) and 500m to the east (**MLE8994**) and pottery has been found 1km to the south at Stoney Bridge Field (**MLE16456**).

Anglo-Saxon-Medieval

There are unconfirmed reports of an Anglo-Saxon site 100m west of the assessment area (**MLE5907**). It is unclear what form the evidence took.

The village of Thurlaston has an Anglo-Scandinavian origin. The medieval settlement core has been derived from landscape maps of the area. The assessment area lies 300m south of the medieval core of the village (**MLE8995**). The 13th century Church of All Saints and the burial ground lie 370m north of the assessment area (**MLE11116 & MLE21485**).

The deserted medieval settlement of Normanton Turville lies 1km west of the assessment area (**MLE353**).

Medieval pottery has been found over several areas in the vicinity of the assessment area. A large quantity was found at Yennard's Farm (**MLE8988, MLE10220 & MLE17287**) and 150m to the north-east of the assessment area (**MLE17288**).

Medieval remains, including a cobbled path and many sherds of pottery have been discovered at Croft Road 230m north of the assessment area (**MLE361**). A coin was found nearby (**MLE6658**).

Medieval pottery has been found in Huncote Quarry, 800m south-east of the assessment area (**MLE10139**), at Stoney Bridge Farm, 850m south of the assessment area (**MLE16457**) and south of New Hall Farm, 750m north-east of the assessment area (**MLE6657**).

Post-Medieval

Metalwork, including a George I halfpenny, has been found on land 250m east of the assessment area (**MLE17289**). Medieval and post-medieval pottery has been found at Yennard's Farm possibly due to manuring (**MLE21515**).

Normanton Park associated with the 16th century Normanton Hall lies 750m west of the assessment area (**MLE17636**). The ornamental lakes are still extant (**MLE356**), as are the former Catholic Chapel (**MLE16154**) and an ice house (**MLE11093**).

Undated

There are as yet undated pits and linear features located by geophysical survey at Yennard's Farm (**MLE10137**) and south of Yennard's Farm (**MLE360**). These may be prehistoric or Roman in origin.

4. Aims and Objectives

The archaeological evaluation was identified as having the potential to contribute to the following research aims.

Neolithic and Early Middle Bronze Age (Clay 2006; Knight et al 2012; English Heritage 2010)

There is evidence of Neolithic-Bronze Age activity from the area and its vicinity. Ring ditches indicating the presence of Neolithic—Bronze Age ploughed out burial mounds. The evaluation may contribute to our understanding of burial practices of these periods.

The Roman Period (Taylor 2006; Knight et al 2012; English Heritage 2012)

The area lies adjacent to a major Roman road. The evaluations may contribute to knowledge on Iron Age – Roman transitions in rural settlement, landscape and society. Artefacts may identify trade links and economy. 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 -4)

It was proposed to excavate seven 30m x 1.6m (624m sq.) trenches across the development area using a JCB with a ditching bucket in order to achieve a representative sample of any archaeological remains. Following changes in the development plans across the north of the site, this was amended to four trenches to target two areas of proposed tree planting in the north-east and the length on the access road to the south-east (see fig)

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) *Code of Conduct* (2014) and *Standard and Guidance for archaeological evaluation* (2014)

All trenches were backfilled after recording.

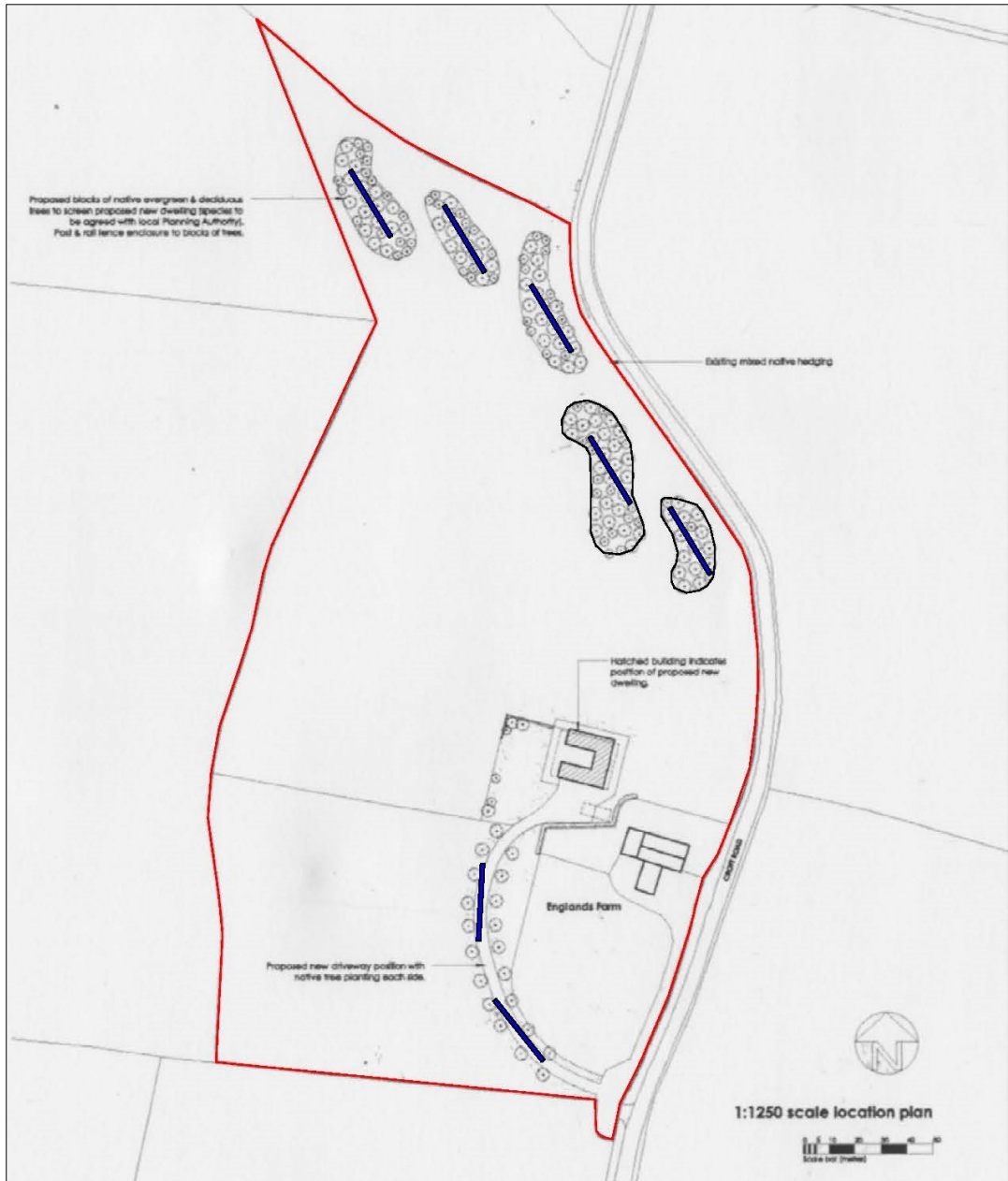


Figure 5: Proposed trench locations



Figure 6: Actual trench locations

6. Results

The topsoil across the site was mid grey brown silty-clay approximately 0.2m - 0.3m deep. A mid-orange/brown subsoil containing frequent small sub-rounded and rounded stones was visible in all of the trenches, albeit intermittently in Trench 3, overlaying the consistent dark red clay containing occasional sub-rounded and rounded peddles and smaller stones.

No archaeological features were identified. An east/west field drain was observed towards the south-east end of Trench 1. The results are shown in the table below and photographs of each trench are shown in Appendix 1.

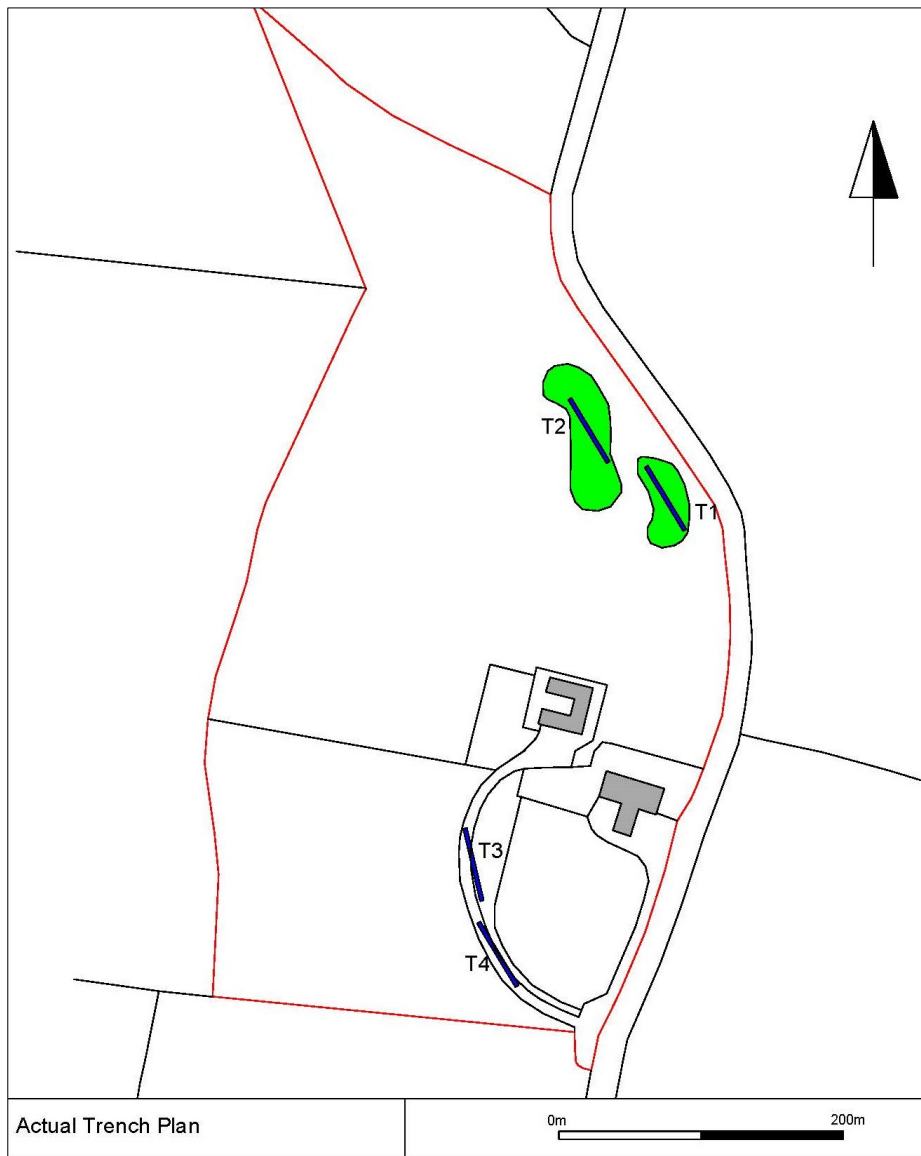


Figure 7: Actual trench locations in relation to proposed access road and planting

TRENCH	ORIENTATION	LENGTH AND WIDTH (metres)	TOPSOIL THICKNESS (metres)	SUBSOIL THICKNESS (metres)	DESCRIPTION	TRENCH DEPTH (MIN-MAX metres)
1	SE - NW	30	0.20 – 0.37	0.06 – 0.20	No archaeological deposits	0.27 – 0.47
2	NW - SE	30	0.16 – 0.30	0.10 – 0.22	No archaeological deposits	0.23 – 0.47
3	NW - SE	30	0.24 – 0.30	0.16	No archaeological deposits	0.28 – 0.40
4	NW - SE	30	0.20 – 0.35	0.05 – 0.14	No archaeological deposits	0.26 – 0.50

7. Conclusion

The evaluation suggests that there are no features or deposits of archaeological origin in the area of the proposed development.

8. Archive

The completed archive will be deposited with Leicestershire County Council under the accession no. XA103.2015 and contains:

- 4 trench recording 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	Englands Farm, Croft Road, Thurlaston, Leicestershire
Summary	<p>University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) carried out an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching on land at Englands Farm, Croft Road, Thurlaston, Leicestershire (SP50127 98521) on 27th September 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 7 trenches to sample the proposed development area for the survival of archaeological deposits. This was revised in light of changes to the proposed development area a total of 4 trenches were excavated. No remains or deposits of archaeological interest were identified.</p> <p>The archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council Museum Service under accession number XA103.2015.</p>
Project Type	Evaluation
Project Manager	Patrick Clay
Project Supervisor	Stephen Baker
Previous/Future work	Previous: none / Future: unknown
Current Land Use	Rough pasture
Development Type	Residential/Tree screen planting
Reason for Investigation	
Position in the Planning Process	Pre-planning
Site Co ordinates	SK 50127 98521
Height OD	82 – 86m OD
Start/end dates of	27 th September 2015

field work	
Archive Recipient	Leicestershire County Council
Study Area	c.5.6 ha
Associated project reference codes	Museum accession ID: XA103.2015 OASIS form ID: universi1-

9. Bibliography

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10. Acknowledgements

The fieldwork was commissioned by the Graham Harris Partnership on behalf of Mr Andrew Norton. Fieldwork was carried out by Stephen Baker and Andrew Mcleish. Patrick Clay managed the project for ULAS.

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29th September 2015

Appendix 1: Trench photographs.



Figure 8 Trench 1 looking north-west



Figure 9 Trench 2 looking north-west



Figure 10 Trench 3 looking south-east



Figure 11 Trench 4 looking south-east



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