



**University of
Leicester**

Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological Watching Brief
at Church Farm, Church Lane,
Laughton, Leicestershire**

NGR: SP 659 892

Nathan Flavell



ULAS Report No. 2015-180

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**An archaeological watching brief at Church Farm, Church Lane,
Laughton, Leicestershire**

NGR: SP 659 892

Nathan Flavell

For: Mr R. Whitehead

Planning application no. 14/00248/FUL

Checked by:
Signed: 
Date: 30.11.2015
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An archaeological watching brief at Church Farm, Church Lane, Laughton, Leicestershire (SP 659 892)

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Summary

An archaeological watching brief was carried out at Church Farm, Church Lane, Laughton, Leicestershire (SP 659 892) by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on 16 November 2015. The work was carried out on behalf of Mr R Whitehead in advance of the proposed extension and alteration of existing farm buildings. The site archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council Museum Services under the accession number X.A133.2015.

Introduction

This document constitutes the report for an archaeological investigation carried out at Church Farm, Church Lane, Laughton, Leicestershire (SP 659 892). The work was carried out on behalf of Mr R Whitehead by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on 16 November 2015.

Church Farm lies at the north-west side of Laughton village, approximately 5 miles west of Market Harborough and 13 miles south-south-east of Leicester (Fig. 1) in the hills along the Northamptonshire border. The site lies at a height of circa 159 metres aOD.

Planning consent has been granted for the conversion and extension of existing brick dairy buildings to form a residential dwelling, the alteration and extension of an existing agricultural shed to form stables and a workshop, the conversion of a dairy building to form an office, and the creation of a manège. Mitigation in the form of archaeological attendance and recording was requested by the Senior Planning Archaeologist at Leicestershire County Council as advisor to Harborough District Council in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Section 12: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment. The work followed the approved Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) as laid out in the *Written Scheme of Investigation for archaeological attendance* (Gonzalez-Rodriguez 2015).

Geology and Topography

The proposed development site comprises an area of *circa* 2 hectares (6 acres), roughly rectangular in shape. The site lies within the Conservation Area for Laughton village. The land consists of rough, overgrown and uneven pasture with long grass and weeds, which slope gently to the north.

The Ordnance Survey Geological Survey of Great Britain Sheet 170 indicates that the underlying geology of the site is likely to consist of Boulder Clay with patches of sand and gravel.

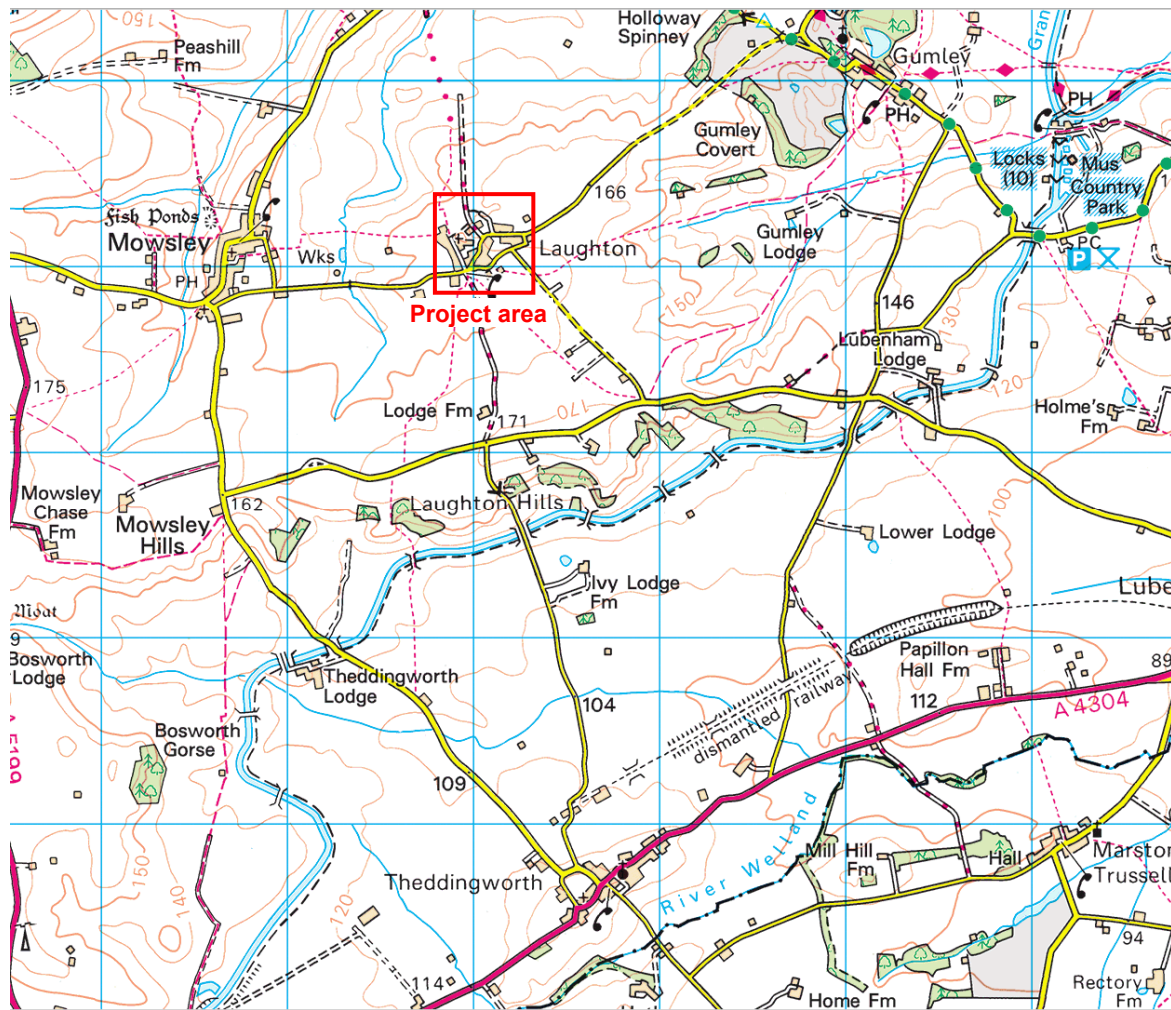


Figure 1: Site Location (Scale 1:50 000)

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Historical and Archaeological Background

The village of Laughton is listed in the Domesday Book with an individual known as Walter holding two carucates of land of Robert de Tosny in the village. The land originally belonged to the Earls of Leicester and after the partition of their lands it became the possession of Saer de Quincy, during the reign of Henry II (1216-72). The history of the holdings of lands in Laughton from the early medieval period to the 19th century is fairly detailed in the Victoria County History and in Nichols. However, no specific mention is made of the ownership of Church Farm until the Inland Revenue Map of 1904, according to which the western field and the farmhouse belonged to W.H. Blount, with Frank Hart as the tenant. This land passed to a Mr Stacey around 1960.

Little archaeological work has been carried out in the direct vicinity of the proposed development. The Historic Environment Record data reflects the medieval character of Laughton. The medieval village core (MLE8711) has been identified along with 13th century St. Luke's Church, Grade II Listed (MLE1827). Medieval ponds have been identified to the south-west of the village (MLE1828), albeit their chronological use is still unknown. Two mills have also been recorded (MLE1829 and MLE1931). The medieval manor house is believed to have been situated at the place known as 'Hall Close' and marked on the Tithe map of 1840 (MLE1830).

The only features recorded by the Sites and Monuments Record that may pre-date the medieval origins of Laughton are two linear cropmark features situated to the west of the village.

An archaeological watching brief was carried out by the University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) during the repairs to the rood structure of the timber-framed range of Home Farm, Main Street, in June 2001 (Finn 2002).

Archaeological Objectives

The main objectives of the archaeological work were:

- To identify the presence/absence of any 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 establish the relationship of any remains found to the surrounding contemporary landscape.
- To recover artefacts and ecofacts to compare with other assemblages and results
- To produce an archive and report of any results.

Methodology

Most of the new buildings to the north will utilise the existing concrete slab so no archaeological attendance was required in that area (Fig. 2). A series of foundation trenches for the new buildings were excavated (Fig. 3), generally 0.7m wide and 1m deep. A further trench measuring 11m by 1.8m was excavated to the north-east of the site in the area of the proposed manège to give an initial indication of the archaeological potential. This differed from the WSI as the manège is unlikely to be developed. If this is to go ahead the additional trenches will be excavated at this stage.

The sections and existing spoil heaps were visually inspected for features and finds. If present archaeological features were to be hand cleaned, planned, photographed and sample excavated as detailed in the approved Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI).

All work followed the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (CIfA) *Code of Conduct* (2014) and adhered to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological field evaluations* (2014).

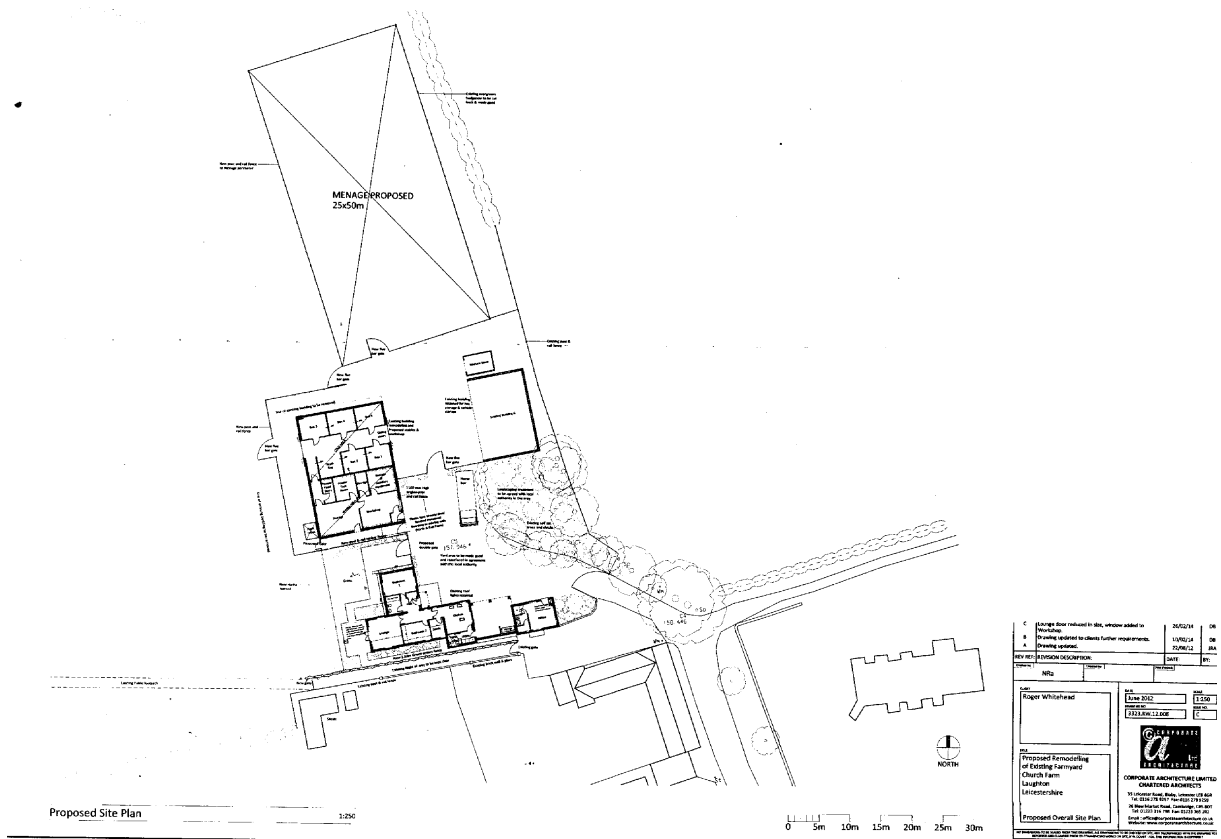


Figure 2: Plan of the proposed development. The northern buildings will utilise existing concrete slabs with no proposed groundworks

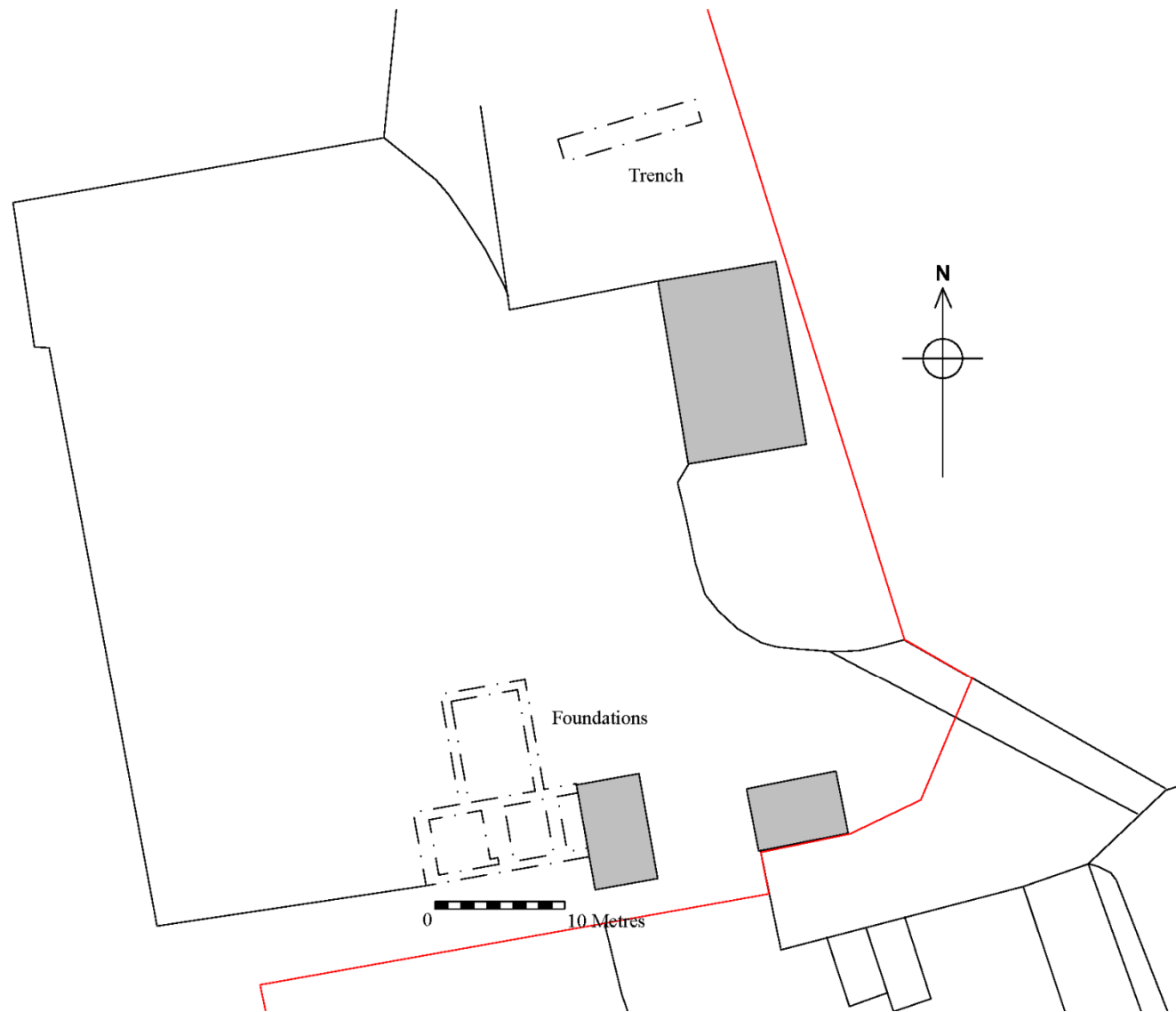


Figure 3: Site plan showing location of archaeological attendance to the south and initial trial trench to the north-east.

Results

The natural substratum of orange sandy gravelly clay was encountered at a depth of 0.6m (Fig. 4). This was overlain by mixed brown-grey sandy clay with modern ceramic building material present. Subsoil consisting of orange sandy clay, 0.5m thick was noted in the north-west area.

The same natural geology was evident within the trench to the north-east (Fig. 6) at 0.6m deep, covered by a similar subsoil as in the foundation trenches, 0.3m thick. This was covered by topsoil consisting of brown sandy loam, also 0.3m thick. Modern brick was present in the deposits in the northern part of the trench.



Figure 4: Eastern foundation trench section looking south-west



Figure 5: Foundation trenches looking north



Figure 6: Trial trench, looking south-west

Discussion

There were no archaeological features encountered within the excavated areas. The foundation trenches showed some evidence of demolished farm buildings and truncation of the subsoil by said buildings. No pre-modern finds were present other than three flint tools attesting to activity in the vicinity during the Mesolithic and Neolithic-Bronze Age periods. The burnt daub could not be dated. While the site is close to the Church, there was no evidence of medieval occupation. Bearing in mind the very small area examined it may be that the core of the village was further to the east where much of the present settlement is located.

Bibliography

B.G.S. website, <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>

Brown, D., 2008 *Standard and guidance for the preparation of Archaeological Archives (Institute for Archaeologists)*

Rodriguez, M. G., 2015, *Written scheme of Investigation for archaeological attendance during groundworks: Church Farm, Church lane, Laughton, Leicestershire*. ULAS WSI ref. 15-537

Archive

The site archive consists of: 1 A4 watching brief sheet, 1 A4 photo index sheet, and 16 digital photographs.

The site archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council Museum Services under the accession number X.A133.2015.

Publication

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. A summary of the work will also be submitted for publication in a suitable regional archaeological journal in due course.

OASIS no.	
Project Name	Church Farm, Church Lane, Laughton, Leicestershire
Project Type	Watching Brief
Project Manager	Patrick Clay
Project Supervisor	Nathan Flavell
Previous/Future work	
Current Land Use	Agricultural
Development Type	Agricultural
Reason for Investigation	NPPF
Position in the Planning Process	Condition
Site Co ordinates	SP 659 892
Start/end dates of field work	16/11/15
Archive recipient	Leicestershire
Study Area	2 hectares

Acknowledgements

Thanks are extended to the client and contractors for their co-operation and assistance on site. Fieldwork was undertaken by Nathan Flavell; the report was written by Nathan Flavell and the project was managed for ULAS by Patrick Clay.

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30/11/2015

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