UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER
Archaeological Services

An Archaeological Evaluation of Land to the rear of 76 Heath Lane, Earl Shilton, Leicestershire NGR: SP 457 978 centre

Andrew Mcleish

ULAS Report No 2016-007.

An Archaeological Evaluation

of Land to the rear of 76 Heath Lane

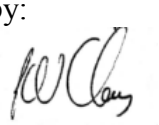
Earl Shilton

NGR: SP 457 978

Andrew Mcleish

For: Tony Morris Builders

Approved by:

Signed: … 

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Summary

An archaeological evaluation was carried out for Tony Morris Builders by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) in advance of planning proposals for the residential development of land to the rear of 76 Heath Lane, Earl Shilton, Leicestershire. In total ten trenches ranging from 20 to 30 metres in length were excavated across the site. No archaeological features were found in any of the trenches. The archive for this project will be deposited with Leicestershire County Council Museums with the accession number X.A2.2016.

Introduction

University of Leicester Archaeological services conducted an archaeological evaluation for the proposed residential development on land to the rear of 76 Heath Lane, Earl Shilton, Leicestershire (NGR SP 457 978 centre) on the 6th and 7th January 2016. The assessment was commissioned by Tony Morris Builders from University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS), in advance of the proposed residential development of the site. Associated works are likely to include roadways, landscaping and buried services.

The archaeological work is in accordance with NPPF section 12: Enhancing and Conserving the Historic Environment.

The application area covers an area of c.0.78 hectares and is currently rough pasture/waste ground. The site is effectively level with a slight slope to the north and appears to be the original topography.

The proposed development area is in proximity to known areas of archaeological interest, including the historic settlement core of Earl Shilton, which contains a number of listed buildings and other post-medieval archaeological remains. There are also archaeological remains within the immediate vicinity of the proposed development area, notably Bronze Age burials and a Romano-British pottery kiln in addition to extensive medieval ridge and furrow.

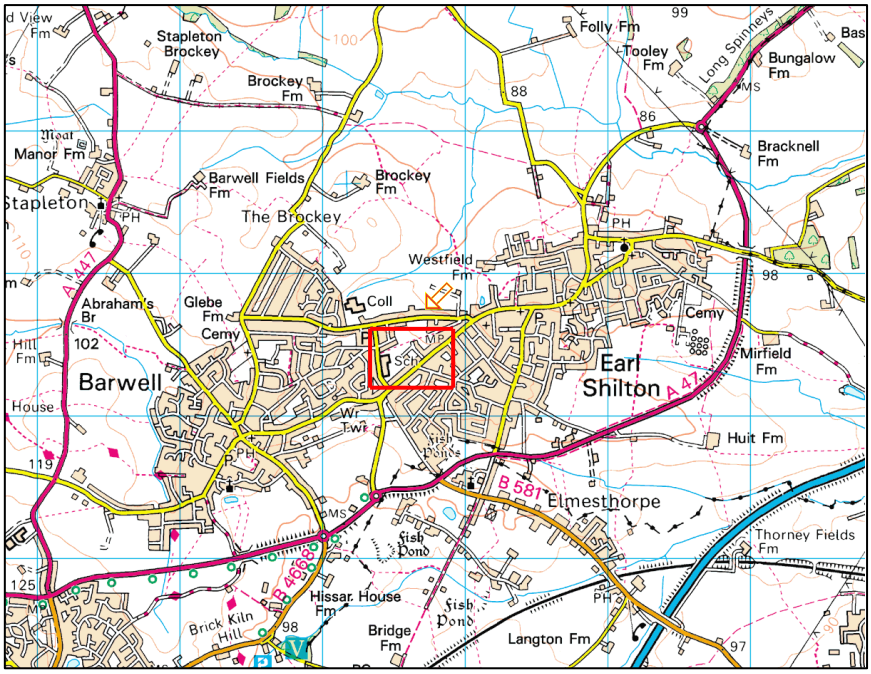

Figure 1: Site Location (Scale 1:50 000)

Figure 2 Proposed development area (original drawing supplied by the client)

Location, Geology and Topography

The evaluation area lies on the north-western edge of Earl Shilton towards its border with Barwell. The proposed development area is located to the rear of 76 Heath Lane on the north side of the lane close to its junction with Gartree Crescent and opposite playing fields. There are allotments to the west and north of the proposed development site and private gardens to properties fronting Heath Lane to the east. There is pasture to the north. The Ordnance Survey Geological Survey of Great Britain Sheet 169 indicates that the underlying geology of the site is likely to consist of mudstone of the Gunthorpe Member with overlying sand and gravel deposits of the Wigston Member. The site slopes very gradually to the north; the surrounding topography is similar suggesting this is largely unaltered since Enclosure and lies at a height of c.110m O.D.

The Archaeological and Historical Background

An archaeological desk-based assessment has been prepared for the site (Kipling 2014). The Historic Environment Record for the area indicates that there was a potential for archaeological remains to be present within the application area. The assessment indicates that the proposed development is in close proximity to known Bronze Age and Romano-British sites and an area with surviving medieval ridge and furrow. A possible Bronze Age ring ditch probably indicating a denuded round barrow has been identified as a parch mark on the fields of Heathfield High School on the opposite side of Heath Lane (**MLE2854**), whilst a Bronze Age collared cremation urn containing burnt human bones was found in 1938 in a small straight-sided pit in Heath Lane Sand Pit on the site of the same playing field (**MLE2857**). The discovery of a Roman pottery kiln on the Heathfield School playing field in 1950 a short distance from the development site represents the third significant archaeological discovery from the vicinity (**MLE2855**). The early 2nd century feature was lined with clay and the stoke hole with coarse tile. The kiln block was of toadstool shape and supported a series of firebars. Consequently there is a possibility of the presence of prehistoric, Romano-British and medieval archaeology or any combination thereof on the development site.

Archaeological Objectives

The general aims of the evaluation were as follows:

- To identify the presence/absence of 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 produce a site archive for deposition with an appropriate museum and to provide information for accession to the Leicestershire HER.

Methodology

The Brief requested a 5% random sample by trial trenching that would be the equivalent of 11 *c.* 20m x 1.8m trenches totaling *c*. 396 sq. m.

During the evaluation the number of the evaluation trenches was reduced from those on the provisional plan due to various site constraints. To maintain the sample size the trenches 7, 8 and 9 were extended beyond 20m to make up the shortfall in required trench area. The trenches were positioned to provide a random sample in order to examine representative cover of the proposed development area.

The topsoil and overlying layers were removed under full archaeological supervision by a 360 excavator fitted with 1.8m wide ditching bucket. The layers of soil were removed until either the top of archaeological deposits or natural undisturbed substratum was reached, or to a maximum safe depth given the specific site conditions.

The bases of the trenches were cleaned in areas where potential archaeology was observed. Archaeological remains were to be recorded and sample excavation undertaken in order to determine the character and date of any remains located. Bulk soil samples would be taken as appropriate in order to evaluate the environmental potential of the site. Archaeological contexts as a cut are indicated by square brackets e.g [09], while those that are fills are indicated by round brackets e.g (07).

The trenches were located using a Topcon Hiper Pro GPS+ RTK System attached to a Topcon FC-100 controller. The data was processed using Topcon Tools GPS+ Post Processing Software and the final plans completed with the aid of TurboCad v.15 design software.

All the work followed the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) *Code of Conduct* (2014) and *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations* (2014).

Results

The topsoil was consistent across the site and was composed of a soft dark grey brown sandy clay-loam with occasional fragments of building rubble. This ranged in thickness from 0.2m to 0.6m. Below this was patchy subsoil which had comprised mid-grey soft sandy-silt with no inclusions and had ranged in thickness from 0.13m to 0.25m.

None of the trenches contained any archaeological finds or deposits. There was evidence of recent disturbance in the form of a sewer trench in trench 10 and modern land drains in several of the trenches.

Table 1: List of trenches and descriptions

Trench	Orientation	Length (metres)	Width (metres)	Topsoil thickness (min –max m)	Subsoil thickness (min – max m)	Description	Trench depth (min-max m)
1	E – W	20m	1.8m	0.2m – 0.3m	0.13 – 0.25m	No archaeological deposits.	0.44-0.7m
2	SW - NE	20m	1.8m	0.3m – 0.4m	-	No archaeological deposits	0.5m – 0.64m
3	E-W	20m	1.8m	0.23m – 0.43m	-	No archaeological deposits	0.4m – 0.6m
4	SW-NE	20m	1.8m	0.35m – 0.4m	-	No archaeological deposits	0.52m – 0.66m
5	NW -SE	20M	1.8m	0.3m – 0.6m	-	No archaeological deposits	0.5m – 0.8m
6	N-S	20m	1.8m	0.26m – 0.35m	-	No archaeological deposits	0.51m – 0.62m
7	E - W	21m	1.8m	0.28m – 0.6m	-	No archaeological deposits.	0.28m – 0.6m
8	N-S	30m	1.8m	0.3m – 0.4m	-	No archaeological deposits	0.5m – 0.65m
9	N-S	25m	1.8m	0.45m – 0.6m	-	No archaeological deposits	0.5m – 0.68m
10	N-S	21m	1.8m	0.48m – 0.5m	-	No archaeological deposits.	0.54m – 0.7m

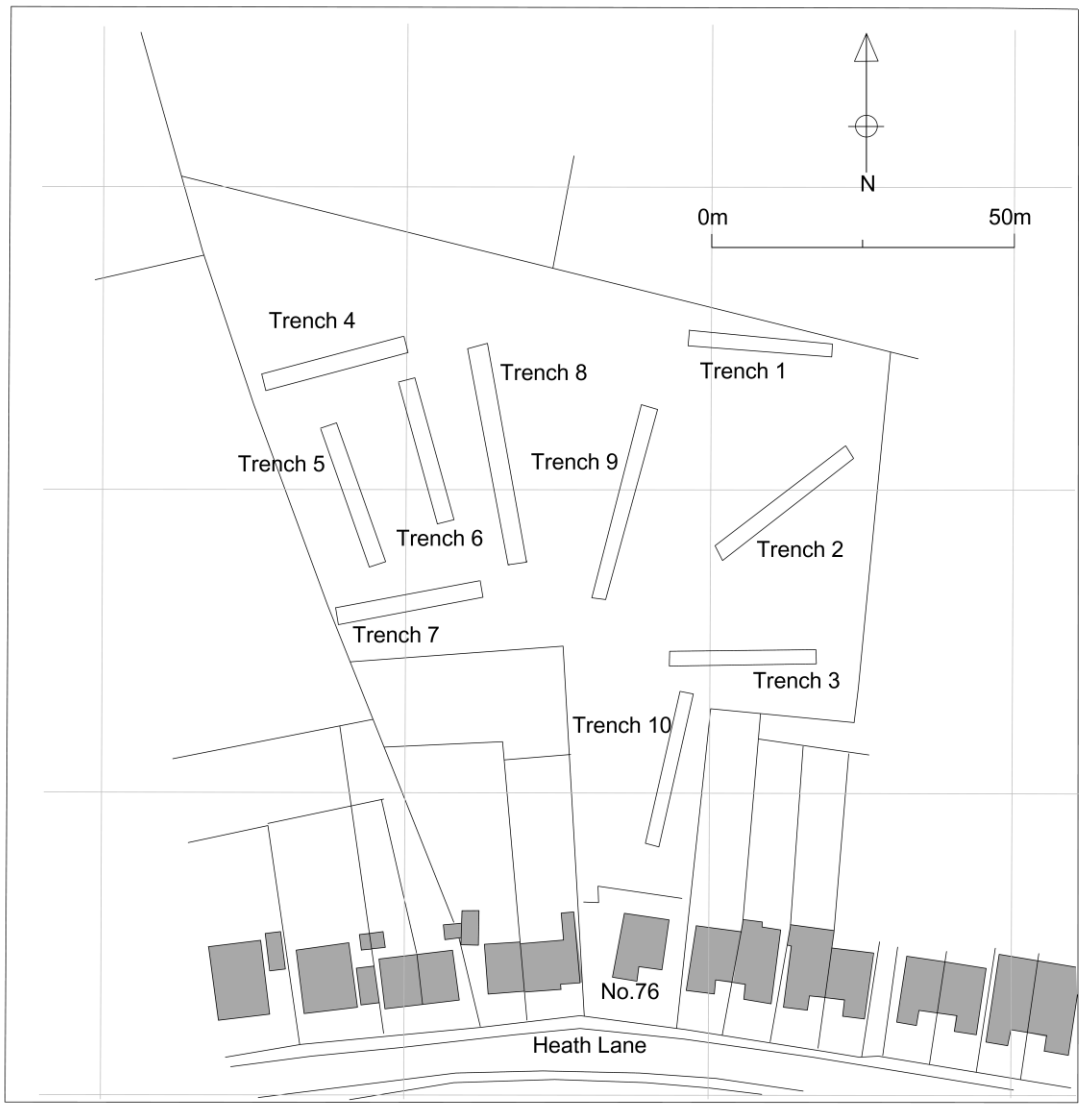

Figure 3: EDM survey of trench locations.

Conclusion

The archaeological evaluation produced no evidence of any archaeological deposits. Five trenches contained evidence of modern disturbance in the form of land drains and cuts for a sewer. The significant amounts of groundwater present served to confirm its old name of 'Far Bog Close' and would lend credence to the theory that the land was unlikely to have been ever suitable for habitation in the past.

Acknowledgments

Tim Higgins and Andrew McLeish of ULAS undertook the archaeological evaluation. We would like to thank Tony Morris Builders for all their help and assistance during the evaluation. The project was managed by Patrick Clay.

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Appendix 1 Oasis

INFORMATION REQUIRED	EXAMPLE
Project Name	An Archaeological Evaluation of Land to the rear of 76 Heath Lane, Earl Shilton, Leicestershire
Project Type	Evaluation
Project Manager	Patrick Clay
Project Supervisor	Tim Higgins
Previous/Future work	DBA/Unknown
Current Land Use	waste land/former allotments/pasture
Development Type	Residential
Reason for Investigation	NPPF section 12: Enhancing and Conserving the Historic Environment.
Position in the Planning Process	In advance of the proposed residential development of the site.
Site Co ordinates	NGR SP 457 978
Start/end dates of field work	06/01/16 - 07/01/16
Archive Recipient	Leicestershire County Council Heritage Services
Study Area	c.0.78 hectares

Appendix 2 Trench Photos

Figure 4: Trench 1 looking east

Figure 5: Trench 2 looking south west

Figure 6: Trench 3 looking west

Figure 7: Trench 4 looking east

Figure 8: Trench 5 looking south

Figure 9: Trench 6 looking south

Figure 10: Trench 7 looking west

Figure 11: Trench 8 looking south
(extensive ground water already flooding the trench)

Figure 12: Trench 9 looking north

Figure 13: Trench 10 looking south

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