



University of Leicester

Archaeological Services

An Archaeological Field
Evaluation at Derbyshire County
Cricket Club, Derby
Derbyshire
NGR: SK 36330 36880

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**An Archaeological Field Evaluation
At Derbyshire County Cricket Club
Derby,
Derbyshire
(SK 36330 36880)**

James Patrick
for
Derbyshire County Cricket Club.

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An Archaeological Field Evaluation At Derbyshire County Cricket Club, Derby, Derbyshire (SK 36330 36880)

James Patrick

Summary

An archaeological field evaluation was carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) in advance of a proposed Media Centre at Derbyshire County Cricket Club, Derby, Derbyshire (NGR: SK 36330 36880).

The work was undertaken on the 18th - 19th May 2015 on managed grass land used by spectators at Cricket matches. The study area comprised the 30m x 9m footprint for the proposed Media Centre. The area is situated on the north side of the Cricket ground between the Falcons Stand and a Marquee. It is possible that the area has been previously landscaped and it is crossed by a number of services running east to west. It was therefore decided to position the trench immediately north of the proposed building where no services were detected.

This area of Derby is very rich in Roman Archaeology. A fort at Strutts Park was constructed in around AD 50 on the west side of the Derwent. Another Fort was then constructed on the east side of the River Derwent around AD 75 to 80 at Little Chester. The study area lies 600m to the south-east of Little Chester Fort. A third settlement (vicus) founded around AD 90 at Derby Racecourse has also provided evidence of Roman and Iron age archaeology. This lies approximately 370m to the north of the proposed building, now a Scheduled Monument. The nearest archaeological evidence to the site is an Iron-Age Pit alignment revealed by evaluation trenching just 70m away.

The evaluation consisted of a 24m long trench running east to west. This revealed a series of ditches running north to south and containing Romano-British pottery and part of a Roman ceramic roof tile (tegula). Two narrow gullies or possibly beam slots running north-east to south-west containing a small amount of abraded pottery were also identified. No evidence was found for ploughing, and the truncated nature of the features could be attributed to landscaping associated with the Cricket Club.

*The archive for the work will be deposited with Derby Museums with accession number **DBYMU[TBC]**.*

Introduction

In accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Section 12 (conserving and enhancing the historic environment) this document is an evaluation report assessment for land at Derbyshire Cricket Ground, Derby, Derbyshire (NGR: SK 36330 36880).

University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) was commissioned by Derbyshire County Cricket Club to carry out an archaeological field evaluation in advance of a proposed new Media Centre.

Location and Geology

The Cricket Ground is bounded by the Frank Whittle Way (A61) along the western side. The southern side of the ground is bounded by Pentagon Island with St Marks Road forming the eastern side. The racecourse forms the northern side (Fig. 1).

The development area covers approximately 270 square metres and lies on flat ground at a height of approximately 46m OD. The British Geological Survey website indicates that bedrock geology consists of Taporley Siltstone, comprising siltstone, mudstone, and sandstone, overlain by alluvial.

Aims and Methods

The main objectives of the evaluation 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 produce an archive and report of any results.

Within the stated project objectives, the principal aim of the evaluation is 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.

Trial trenching is an intrusive form of evaluation that will demonstrate the existence of earth-fast archaeological features that may exist within the area.

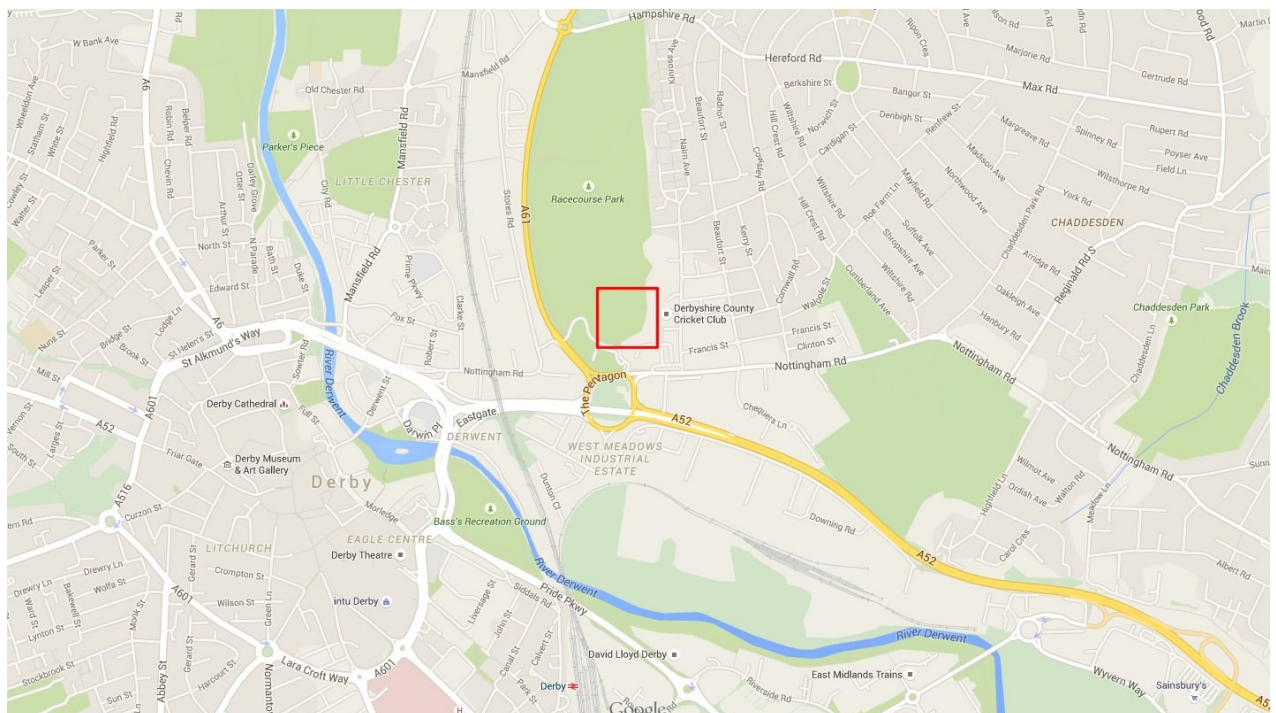


Figure 1: Location plan of site

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Historical and Archaeological Background

The Derbyshire Historic Environment Record (HER) indicates that the development area lies within an area of archaeological potential well known for its Roman and Iron-age archaeology. This area of Britain was occupied in the pre-Roman period by the Cornovi. The Roman Governor Aulus Plautius led the Roman Army onto lands South of the River Trent in AD 46-47. With the conquered territories under the rule of Governor Aulus Gallus, the first Fort was constructed at Strutts Park on the West side of the Derwent from AD 50.

Subsequent phases from AD 80 followed at Little Chester just on the opposite bank of the Derwent. This was decommissioned after 40 years then re-occupied for another 25 years. An associated *Vicus* (settlement) was founded around AD 90 developed and expanded next to the fort (now beneath Derby Racecourse) (*Burnham, Barry C; Wacher, John. 1990*) This is now a Scheduled Monument. The *vicus* and cemetery lie just 370 m north of the development area.

An Iron Age pit alignment was found during evaluation trenching on the Racecourse just 70m to the north of the proposed development area suggesting possible Iron-age settlement.

Methodology

All work followed the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) *Code of Conduct* (2014) in accordance with their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (2014). The archaeological work followed the *Written Scheme of Investigation for archaeological work* (WSI).prepared by ULAS And approved prior to work starting.

Due to the constraints of the site (services within the footprint of the proposed building and scaffolding for BBC TV), a single trench was positioned. This was orientated east to west, parallel with, and immediately behind the proposed new building. The length of the trench was 24 metres long and it was placed between the hard standing area and a Marquee and the Falcons Stand (Figs 2-3).

The trench was excavated using a JCB wheeled excavator with a 1.50 metre ditching bucket under archaeological supervision. After recording, the trench was immediately backfilled and compacted prior to the cricket match the following day.

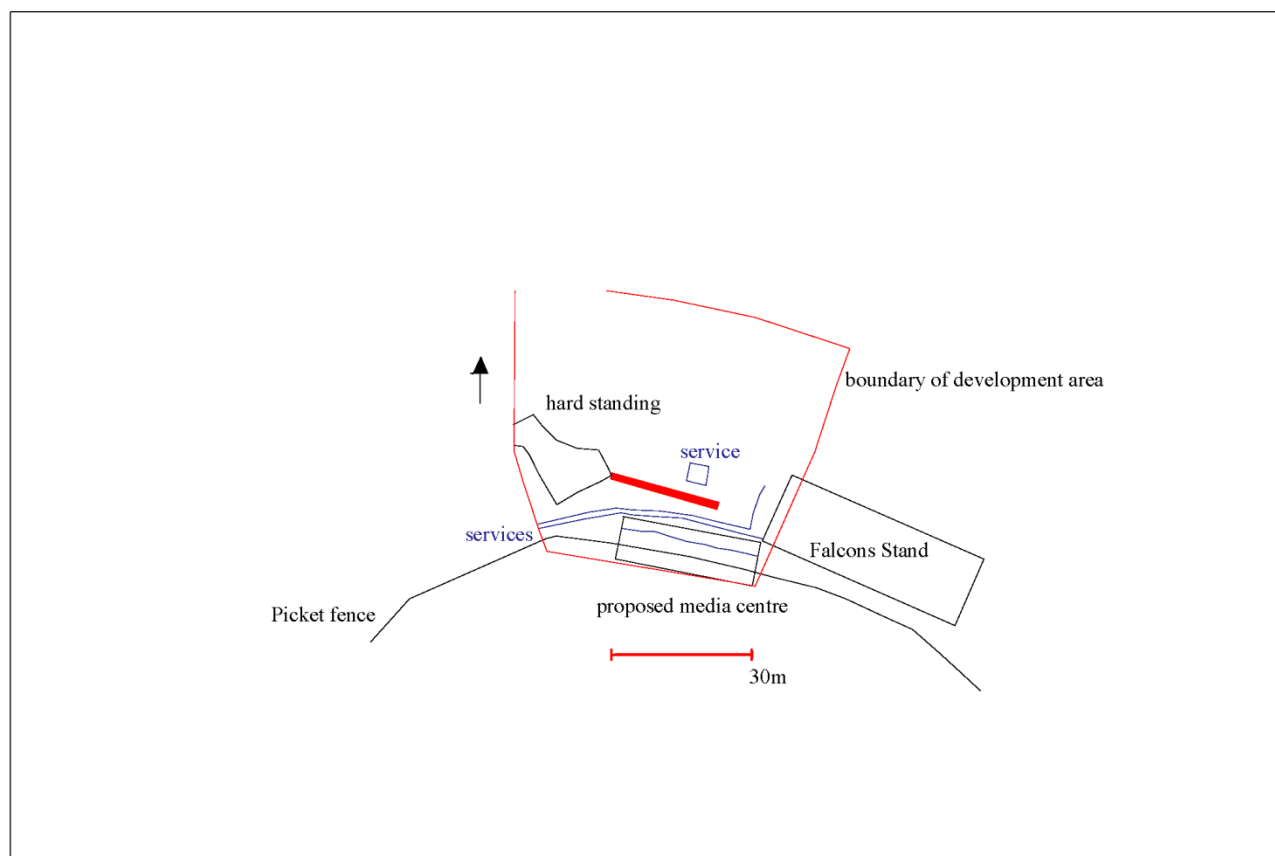


Figure 2: Trench Location Plan



Figure 3: Excavation beginning on the trench

Results

Trench 01

Orientation: West- East

Length: 24m

Width: 1.5m

Topsoil: Dark Yellowish Grey, Friable loam with sparse small rounded pebbles

Subsoil: Mid Orange Brown, Friable Clayey silt with sparse small rounded pebbles and frequent Manganese flecks

Natural Substratum: Light orange brown Silty Clay. Overlies Loose sand and gravel with silty-sand patches

Interval	W 0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	24m
Topsoil Depth	0.20m	0.18m	0.18m	0.24m	0.20m	0.22m
Subsoil Depth	0.25m	0.30m	0.25m	0.30m	0.30m	0.25m
Top of natural	0.45m	0.48m	0.43m	0.50m	0.50m	0.47m
Base of Trench	0.45m	0.51m	0.43m	0.50m	0.50m	0.47m

The dark-brown topsoil was generally shallow (approximately 0.2m) and overlay an orange-brown subsoil which averaged *c.* 0.30m deep (Figs 4-7).

Two ditches running north to south were identified along the east side of the trench (Fig. 4, contexts (001) and (005)). The larger of the ditches was (005). This was 1.90m wide with a depth of approximately 0.40m and a moderate gradient breaking gradually onto a flat base. A possible recut was identified within the excavated section (007) along the western edge. This was 0.20m deep and 1.0m wide with shallow sides and a concaved base (Fig. 5, Fig. 7).

Parallel with ditch 005 was a second ditch (001) to the west, approximately 1.30m wide. This was shallower at a depth of 0.28m. A possible recut Along the western edge was also identified within this ditch (003), just 0.10m deep and 0.82m wide (Fig. 6, Fig. 7).

The possible recuts of both ditches lay on the western sides of the features with no clear relationship and both ditches contained well abraded Roman pottery and (001) contained a fragment of Roman tegula. The fills of both ditches were similar mid to dark orange grey silty clay.

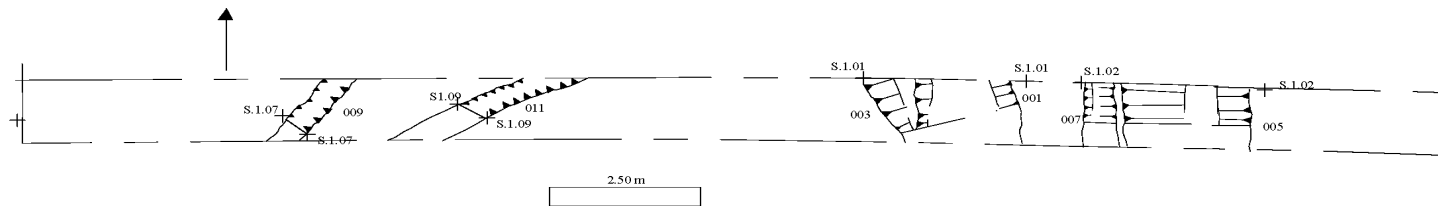


Figure 4: Plan of the excavated trench and photos showing the trench looking west (left) and east (right)



Figure 5: Ditch 005 with recut (007) looking north.



Figure 6: Ditch 001 with recut (003) looking north.

Two further gullies lay at the western end of the trench (009) and (011). The gullies were up to 2.50 metres apart and although both ran roughly north-east to south-west across the trench, gully (011) was appeared to curve to the east. Gully (009) was 0.29m deep and 0.40m wide with moderate to steep sides and a narrow, slightly concaved base. Gully (011) was 0.26m deep and 0.52m wide with steep northern edge. The fills of both gullies comprised a mid to dark orange-brown silty-clay with manganese throughout. A few abraded sherds of Roman pottery were found in both features.

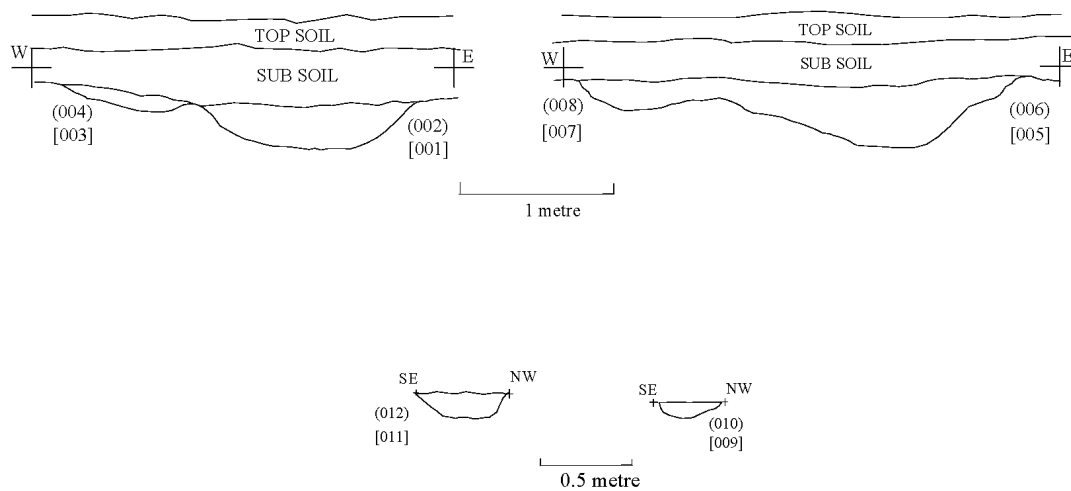


Figure 7: Sections through the excavated ditches and gullies

The Roman Pottery and Roof tile - Nicholas J. Cooper

Introduction and methodology

A heavily abraded assemblage of 30 sherds of Roman pottery (180g) was recovered from four contexts, together with a single abraded corner fragment of tegula roof tile. They have been analysed under low power microscopy and identified in accordance with the Derbyshire Roman pottery fabric series (Leary 2001).

Analysis

The pottery assemblage is a mix of undiagnostic oxidised (Fabric OAB1) and grey ware fabrics (Fabric GRB1) which are not precisely datable within the Roman period but, in the absence of other regional wares, a second century is probably most likely.

The material came from [001] (002), [005] (006), [009] (010) and [011] (012). The abraded nature of the sherd indicates that they have been re-deposited after a period on the ground surface, perhaps due to manuring practices on the fields and therefore are not likely to give a very accurate date for the context from which they come.

The tegula fragment, in a sandy oxidised fabric (410g) came from [001] (002).

Conclusion

Although only a single trench was excavated due to the constraints posed by the services, Roman archaeology was identified running into the area of the proposed building. Two ditches were identified each with associated re-cuts as well as two north-east to south-west gullies. Small well abraded Roman pottery sherds probably 2nd century in date were found within all of the features.

Given the abraded nature of the pottery, the ditches probably represent phases of a Romano-British field system. The pottery and tegula could have been deposited through manuring of the fields using rubbish from the *Vicus* 370m to the north. This could suggest that the proposed development area lay on agricultural land associated with the settlement and might indicate a continuation of the agricultural activity from the iron-age identified by the previously excavated pit alignment to the north. The gullies lie on a slightly different alignment but with such a small sample it is difficult to identify their function, although they could be small drainage gullies perhaps draining into the ditches. Their fills do not appear to indicate any remains associated with the decay of timbers. A viable alternative is association with the field systems such as field drainage gullies.

Acknowledgements

ULAS would like to thank Derbyshire County Cricket Club and Ian Cooper at Armisons for their co-operation during the evaluation. The evaluation was undertaken by Jamie Patrick and managed by Vicki Score.

Archive

The archive for this project will be deposited with Derby Museum with accession number DBYMU [TBC].

The archive consists of the following:

- 1 Unbound copy of this report (2015-292)
- 1 Trench recording sheet
- 6 Context recording Sheets
- 1 Context Index
- 1 Drawing Index
- 2 Sheets of A3 Plan and Section Drawing Film
- 1 Contact sheet of digital photographs
- 1 Contact Sheet of Black and White Contact Prints
- 1 Photograph Index

Bibliography

Burnham, Barry C; Wachter, John (1990), *The Small Towns Of Roman Britain*. London: BT Batsford.

Leary, R. S., 2001: Romano-British Pottery. Pp95-121 in Palfreyman, A., Report on the Excavation of a Romano-British Aisled Building at Little Hay Grange Farm, Ockbrook, Derbyshire 1994-97. *Derbyshire Archaeological Journal* **121**: 70-161

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