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Leicester**

**Archaeological Services**

**An Archaeological Watching Brief during  
groundworks at 61, Main Street, Cosby  
Leicestershire SP 4547 2948**

Mireya González Rodríguez



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**An Archaeological Watching Brief During  
The Excavation at 61, Main Street, Cosby**

**NGR SP 454721 294852**

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**For:  
Westleigh Developments Ltd.**

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## CONTENTS

1. Introduction.....	1
2. Site Description, Topography and Geology.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3. Historical and Archaeological Background .....	3
4. Previous archaeological work .....	3
5. Aims and Objectives .....	4
6. Methodology.....	4
7. Results.....	5
8. Conclusion .....	6
9. Archive.....	6
10. Publication .....	6
11. Bibliography .....	7
12. Acknowledgements.....	7

## FIGURES

Figure 1. Site Location (Scale 1:50 000) .....	2
Figure 2. Location of the proposed development .....	2
Figure 3. Site Plan showing the location of the evaluation trenches .....	4
Figure 4 Proposed development plan indicating the location of Plot 25 .....	5
Figure 5 View from north-east of area during groundworks for access road and removal of contaminated land .....	8
Figure 6 Trench excavated to remove contaminated land in Area 1 viewed from the west .....	9
Figure 7. Plot 25 trenching after excavation (facing SE).....	9
Figure 8. Plot 25 trenching after excavation (facing NW).....	10
Figure 9. North area of foundation trench in Plot 25 .....	11
Figure 10. Central area of foundation trench in Plot 25 .....	12
Figure 11. Northernmost side of foundation trench in Plot 25 .....	13
Figure 12. Eastern side of the foundation trenches in Plot 25 .....	14
Figure 13. Western side of foundation trench in Plot 25.....	15
Figure 14. South side of foundation trench in Plot 25 .....	16

## **An Archaeological Watching Brief during the Excavation on the land at 61 Main Street, Cosby, Leicestershire.**

*Mireya González Rodríguez*

### **Summary**

*An archaeological watching brief was undertaken on behalf of Westleigh Developments Ltd. during the proposed redevelopment of the site. The work was carried out on the land at 61 Main Street, Cosby, Leicestershire (NGR SP 454721 294852) by the University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on the 1st and 14th of July 2014. The work involved the excavation of contaminated land, ground reduction for access roads and foundation trenches in plot 25 which were monitored by an archaeologist. No archaeological deposits were disturbed by the groundworks. The archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council under the Accession Number A79.2014.*

### **1. Introduction**

This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services during the excavation of foundation trenches. The work took place during groundworks for residential development on the land at 61 Main Street, Cosby, Leicestershire (NGR SP 454721 294852) by Westleigh Developemnts Ltd. The archaeological work was required as a condition of planning permission by Blaby District Council on the advice of the Leicestershire County Council, Senior Planning Archaeologist (P.A 13/0328/1/PX).

### **2. Site Description, Topography and Geology**

The watching brief took place on the land at 61 Main Street, Cosby, Leicestershire. The site lies within the historic core of the village of Cosby, with Park Road to the west, Main Street, to the east and Croft Road to the south with the church of St. Michael and All Angels immediately to the north-west.

The site was previously occupied by the business premises of H.W. Coates, comprising several single storey brick and steel construction warehouses and office buildings, and occupies c.1.041 ha (Kipling 2013: 4).

The Ordnance Survey Geological Survey of Great Britain, Sheet 169, indicates that the underlying geology is likely to consist of superficial deposits of Quaternary clay belonging to the Glen Parva Member overlying bedrock deposits of Triassic mudstone belonging to the Blue Lias formation (BGS 2008). The site lies on flat ground at c. 73.2m above Ordnance Datum (OD).



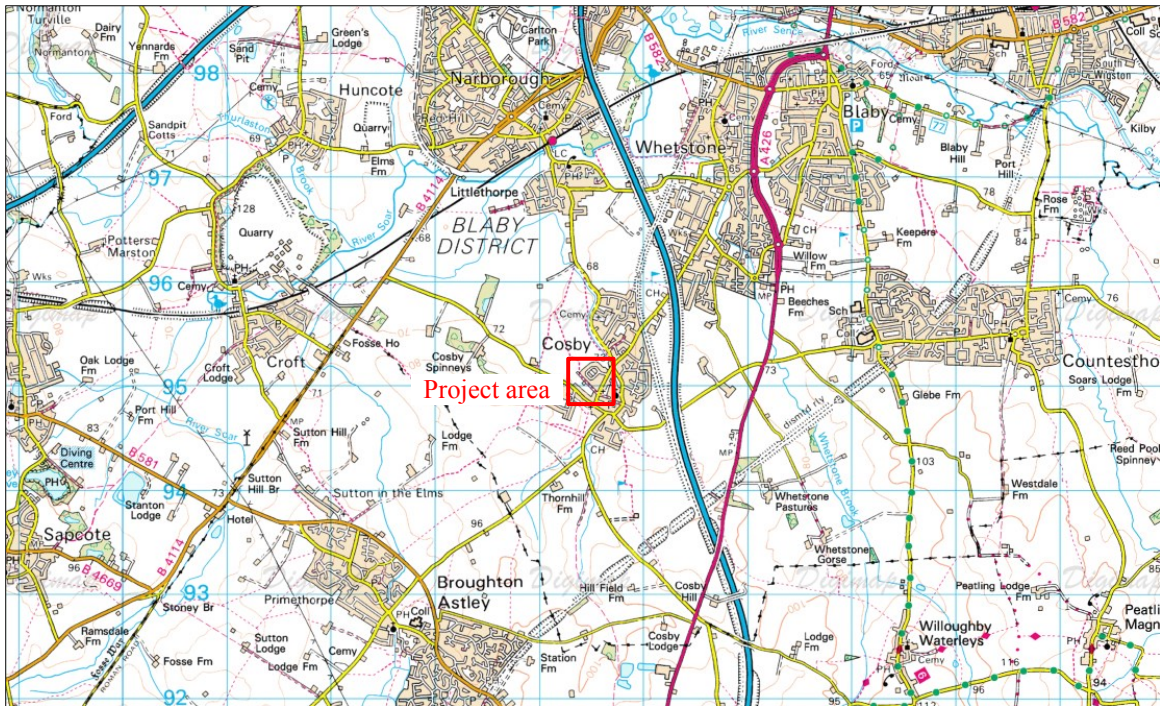
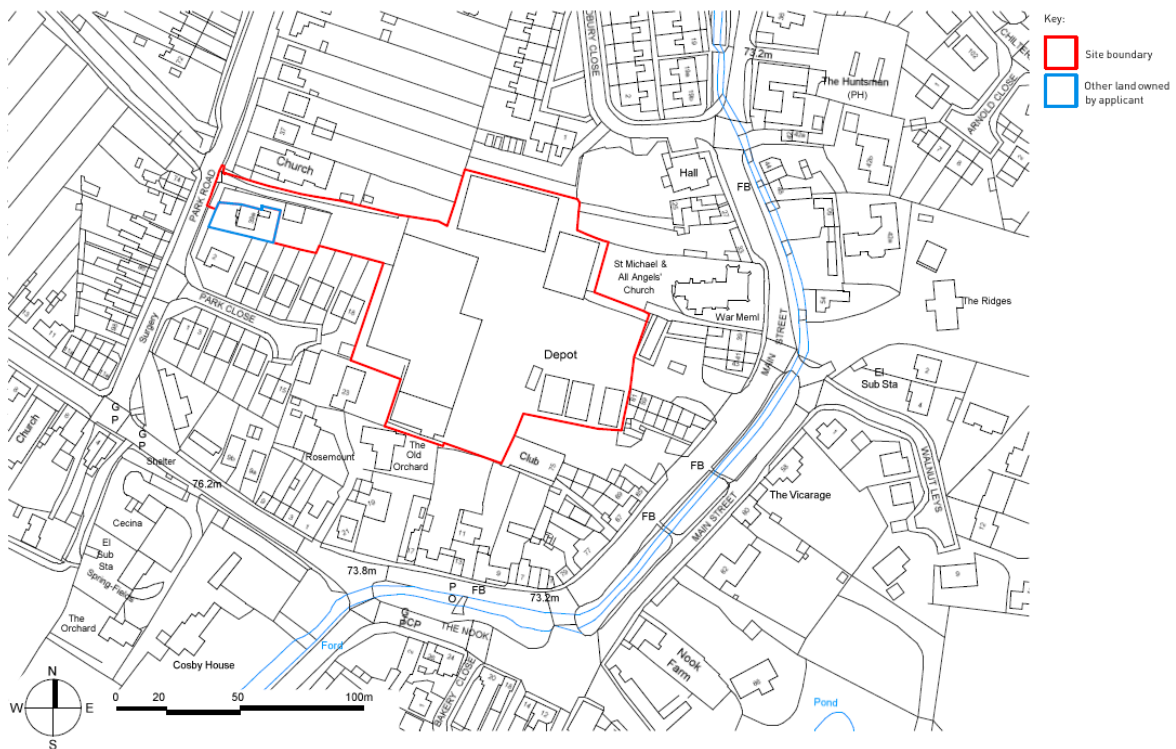


Figure 1. Site Location (Scale 1:50 000)

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Main Street, Cosby, Leicestershire - Location Plan



I T 01509 670806 | F 01509 672247 | www.pegasuspg.co.uk | Team PS/NO | 26th April 2013 | 1:1250 @ A3 | drwg. EMS.2436\_08 -1 B | Client: Westleigh Developments

Figure 2. Location of the proposed development

### 3. Historical and Archaeological Background

The proposed development is close to areas of archaeological interest, including the historic settlement core of Cosby, which contains a number of listed buildings and other post-medieval archaeological remains.

While there are no heritage assets listed on the Historic Environment Record for Leicestershire and Rutland (HER) within the application area, the Grade II Listed post-medieval building, Coates Barn (**MLE11947**), and the church of St. Michael and All Angels (**MLE11945**) lie immediately adjacent to the north-eastern boundary of the application area.

The HER indicates that a number of archaeological sites are recorded in the vicinity of the application area. The following is a summary of archaeological sites and events located in the vicinity of the application area.

#### *Bronze Age*

Many sites from the Bronze Age located close to Cosby village have been recorded. These lie around 1km west from the application area.

#### *Iron Age/Roman*

The upper stone of an Iron Age or Roman pudding quern was found in 1896 at a site close to the railway embankment (**MLE6574**).

#### *Medieval*

The Grade II Listed post-medieval building, Coates Barn (**MLE11947**) lies immediately adjacent to the south-eastern boundary of the application area and next to the church. The building is 17th and 18th century in date, with 20th century alterations, of cruck and box frame construction with brick nogging and a corrugated iron roof.

Cosby village has early medieval origins and the site is located within the historic village core (**MLE10440**) adjacent to the church of St. Michael and All Angels (**MLE11945**). The church has an 11th century origin and contains fabric from the 13th, 14th and 15th centuries. Medieval pottery was recovered from a building site at Portland Street/Cambridge Road in 1962 (**MLE6618**).

#### *Post-Medieval-Modern*

Cosby village contains several post-medieval buildings of interest, including several on Main Street. Notable examples include a late 18<sup>th</sup> century barn and stables at Nook farmhouse (**MLE11943**) and The Thatch, 25 Main Street (**MLE11948**), dated to 1752.

### 4. Previous archaeological work

An archaeological desk based assessment was undertaken by the University of Leicester Archaeological Services (Kipling 2013) followed by an archaeological evaluation of the site by trial trenching (Flavell 2014).

The archaeological evaluation examined c.500m<sup>2</sup> of the site. Eight 30mx1.5m trenches were excavated and inspected for features and finds. Out of these, only two trenches revealed

archaeological deposits, Trenches 3 and 8 (Figure 3 circled). In Trench 3 the remnants of a cobbled surface and a granite stone surface were located (Flavell 2014, 5-6). Trench 8 revealed seven linear features and one pit truncating the natural gravels (Flavell 2014, 9-10).

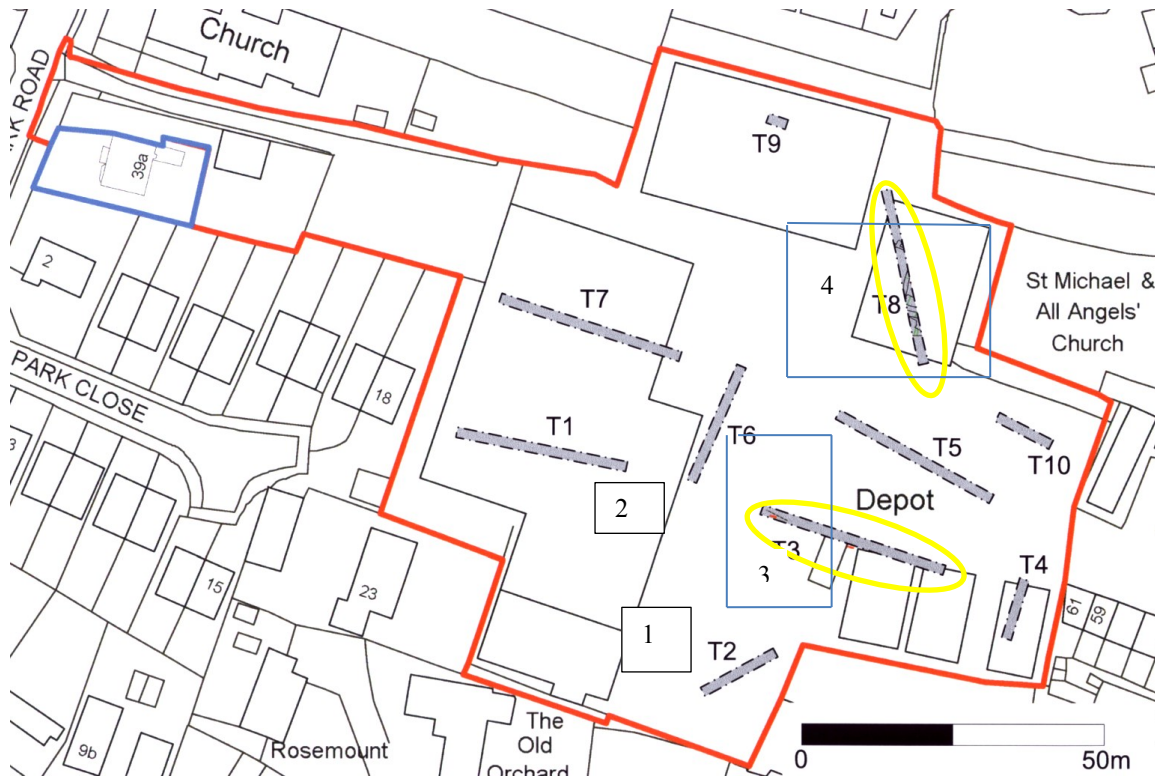


Figure 3. Site Plan showing the location of the evaluation trenches with positive trenches highlighted and areas subject to watching brief outlined. Areas 1-2: excavation of contaminated land. Areas 3 Observation of road construction. Area 4 Observation of Plot 25 (from Flavell 2014, 4).

## 5. Aims and Objectives

The purpose of the current archaeological work was:

- 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 groundworks.
- To produce an archive and report of any results.

## 6. Methodology

The Senior Planning Archaeologist for Leicestershire County Council, as advisor to the planning authority, had requested a strip plan and sample excavation and watching brief as



mitigation against the possible impact of the development. However, as the ground level has been raised, the potential impact on the archaeology had been significantly reduced. By raising the ground level to c.77.5m OD the floor levels of the buildings will be c.3m above the archaeological levels. The foundations were to be a maximum of 1.2m deep, again not reaching the archaeological levels. All work followed the Written Scheme of Investigation (ULAS 03.07.2014).

The programme of work comprised the examination of trenches excavated to remove contaminated, groundworks for access roads and the excavation of foundation trenches in Plot 25 of the proposed development (Figure 4). The trenches were excavated using a JCB 3CX with a c.0.60m wide ditching bucket.

The trenches were visually inspected and the removed soil was described and checked for signs of archaeological activity or potential. Field notes were recorded on pro-forma ULAS recording forms.

The work adhered to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (rev. 2008).

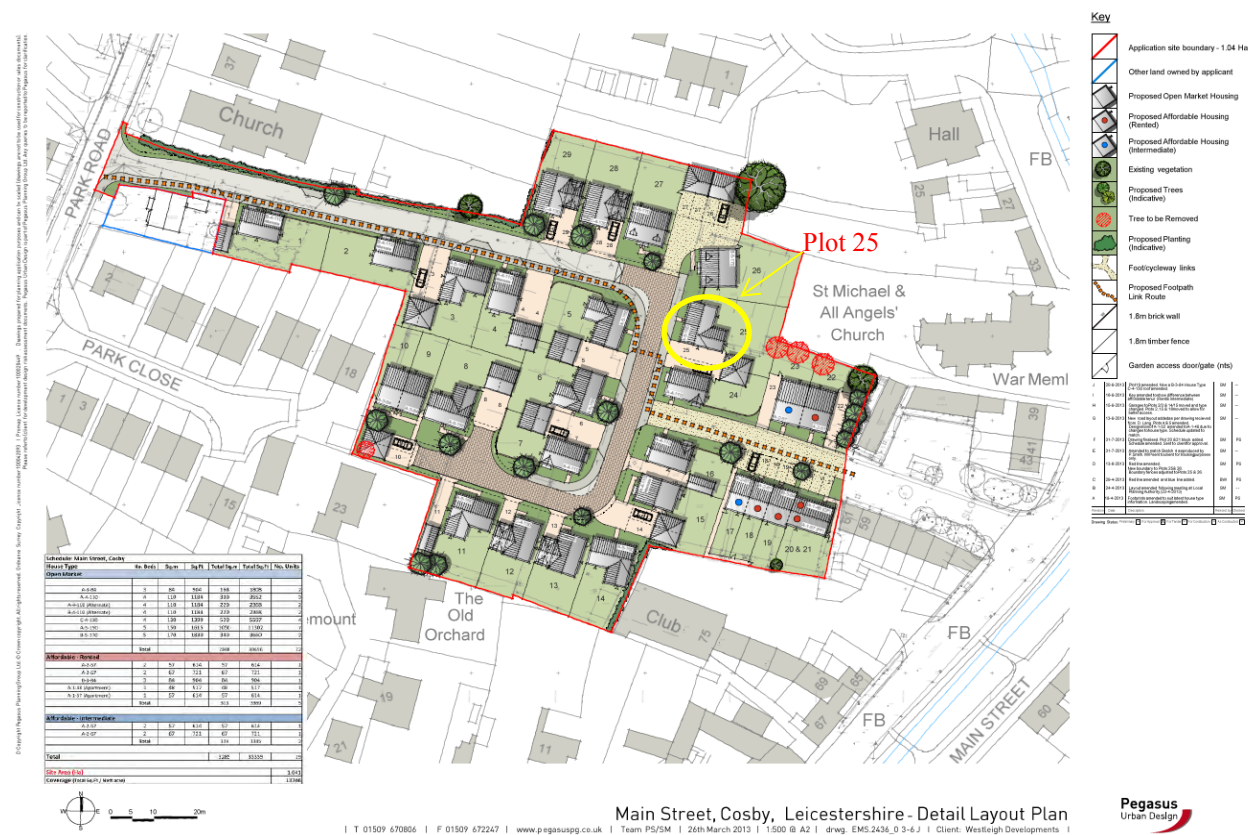


Figure 4. Proposed development plan indicating the location of Plot 25 (circled)

## 7. Results

The site was visited on 1st July during the excavation of contaminated land in Area 1 and during the ground reduction for the new access road (Fig 3 Area 2). The removal of the

contaminated ground revealed c. 2 metre depth of disturbed made ground overlying the natural clay substratum. The groundworks for the a new access road involved the scraping of the surface to a depth of c. 0.2m revealing made ground some of which had been introduced recently to raise the ground surface.

The watching brief was continued on 14th July during the excavation of the foundation trenches for Plot 25 which is located in the Area of trench 6 where archaeological deposits were revealed. The foundation trenches were excavated to a depth of c.0.80m deep through made ground. The natural substratum was not reached and no archaeological deposits were observed.

The made ground was 0.80m deep and consisted of two layers: a 0.50m layer of brown fine to coarse sand and angular fine to coarse gravel with inclusions of, brick, stone, and quartzite (1). The second layer was 0.30m deep and consisted of grey brown slightly sandy clay with gravel of subrounded cobbles (2). An examination of the excavated fill only revealed modern material.

## **8. Conclusion**

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken on the land at 61 Main Street. No deposits of archaeological origin were identified during the work. As the ground level had been raised by the additional of introduced material it was predicted that the archaeological deposits would be at least two metres below the finished foundation trench depth and this was confirmed from the watching brief. The archaeological deposits revealed during the evaluation, therefore, will not be impacted on by the development.

## **9. Archive**

The site archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council, under the Accession No: A79.2014.

The archive contains site notes (watching brief pro-forma recording sheets), digital photographs and photograph index.

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. Available at: <http://oasis.ac.uk/>

## **10. Publication**

A summary of the work will be submitted for publication in the local archaeological journal *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* in due course. The report will be added to the Archaeology Data Service's (ADS) Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) database held by the University of York.



## OASIS Information

<i>Project Name</i>	61 Main Street, Cosby Leicestershire
<i>Project Type</i>	Archaeological Watching Brief
<i>Project Manager</i>	Patrick Clay
<i>Project Supervisor</i>	M González Rodríguez
<i>Previous/Future work</i>	Desk-based assessment, trial trench evaluation
<i>Current Land Use</i>	Brown field site
<i>Development Type</i>	Residential
<i>Reason for Investigation</i>	NPPF
<i>Position in the Planning Process</i>	Condition
<i>Site Co ordinates</i>	NGR SP 454721 294852
<i>Start/end dates of field work</i>	01-14.07.2014
<i>Archive Recipient</i>	Leicestershire County Council
<i>Study Area</i>	c. 0.5 ha.

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## 12. Acknowledgements

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Figure 5 View from north-east of area during groundworks for access road and removal of contaminated land.





Figure 6 Trench excavated to remove contaminated land in Area 1 viewed from the west



Figure 7. Plot 25 trenching after excavation (facing SE)





Figure 8. Plot 25 trenching after excavation (facing NW)





Figure 9. North area of foundation trench in Plot 25





Figure 10. Central area of foundation trench in Plot 25





Figure 11. Northernmost side of foundation trench in Plot 25





Figure 12 Eastern side of the foundation trenches in Plot 25





Figure 5. Western side of foundation trench in Plot 25.





Figure 14 South side of foundation trench in Plot 25



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