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Archaeological Services

**An archaeological field  
evaluation at Meadhurst  
and The Thring Centre,  
Uppingham School,  
Uppingham,  
Rutland  
(SP 86528 99943 and  
SP 86571 99774)**

Leon Hunt




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Meadhurst and The Thring Centre,  
Uppingham School,  
Uppingham,  
Rutland  
(SP 86528 99943 and SP 86571 99774)**

**Leon Hunt**

*for*

Uppingham School  
Pre-planning enquiry

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University of Leicester, Archaeological Services, University Rd., Leicester, LE1 7RH

Tel: (0116) 2522848  
[www.le.ac.uk/ulas](http://www.le.ac.uk/ulas)

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## CONTENTS

Summary .....	2
Introduction .....	2
Location and Geology .....	2
Historical and Archaeological Background .....	3
Archaeological Objectives .....	4
Methodology .....	5
Results .....	7
Area A (Meadhurst) .....	7
Trench 01 .....	7
Trench 02 .....	9
Area B (The Thring Centre) .....	12
Trench 03 .....	12
Conclusion .....	13
References .....	13
Acknowledgements .....	13
Archive .....	13
Appendix: OASIS data entry .....	15

## FIGURES

Figure 1: Site location .....	3
Figure 2: Plan of proposed development areas .....	4
Figure 3: Plan of trench locations in Area A .....	5
Figure 4: Plan of trench location in Area B .....	6

## PLATES

Plate 1: Area A, car park from north-west, looking south-east .....	7
Plate 2: Post excavation shot of Trench 01, looking south .....	8
Plate 3: Area A playing field, looking west .....	9
Plate 4: Work in progress on Trench 02, looking south .....	10
Plate 5: Post excavation shot of Trench 02, looking south .....	11
Plate 6: Area B, looking north-east .....	11
Plate 7: Post excavation shot of Trench 03, looking east .....	12

## **An archaeological field evaluation at Meadhurst and The Thring Centre, Uppingham School, Uppingham, Rutland (SP 86528 99943 and SP 86571 99774)**

Leon Hunt

### **Summary**

*An archaeological trial trench evaluation was carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on two sites at Uppingham School, Uppingham, Rutland (SP 86528 99943 and SP 86571 99774).*

*The work was in advance of the proposed development of the areas for a car park and an extension to an existing workshop, housed inside a former Grade II listed barn.*

*Area A at Meadhurst lies just outside the historic core of the town and Area B at The Thring Centre lies within it.*

*Previous archaeological investigations in the vicinity of Uppingham have uncovered extensive prehistoric Roman, Anglo-Saxon, medieval and post-medieval remains. The site at Area B contains a Grade II listed barn and boundary wall and early maps of the site show a building within the area to be extended into.*

*Three trenches were placed within the proposed development areas. One within a car park, one in a playing field and another in a garden alongside a large shed.*

*All three trenches were negative for archaeological features.*

*The archive for the work will be deposited with Rutland County Museum with the accession number OAKRM: 2016.18.*

### **Introduction**

An archaeological trial trench evaluation was carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) at Meadhurst, Ayston Road and The Thring Centre, North Street West, Uppingham School, Uppingham, Rutland (NGRs: SP 86528 99943 and SP 86571 99774) in advance of the construction of a new car park at Meadhurst (Area A), and the extension of a motor workshop at The Thring Centre (Area B).

The proposed development area lies immediately to the north (Area A) and within (Area B) the historic medieval core of Uppingham as defined by the Historic Environment Record (**MLE 5861**). Previous archaeological investigations in the vicinity of Uppingham have uncovered extensive prehistoric Roman, Anglo-Saxon, medieval and post-medieval remains. The site at Area B contains a Grade II listed barn and boundary wall.

### **Location and Geology**

Uppingham lies 20 miles east of the city of Leicester and is 6 miles south of Oakham in Rutland (Figure 1). The proposed development site is located in the centre of Uppingham; Area A west of Ayston Road and Area B south of North Street West (Figure 2).

Area A consists of grass playing fields and a car park, of approximately 2000m<sup>2</sup>, to the west of the main building at Meadhurst. Area B consists of a small lawn, of 500m<sup>2</sup>, to the north of The

Manor House and east of the motor workshop at The Thring Centre. The land at both areas is flat and lies at around 140m aOD.

The Ordnance Survey Geological Survey of Great Britain indicates that the underlying geology is likely to be Northampton Sand Formation (Ironstone).

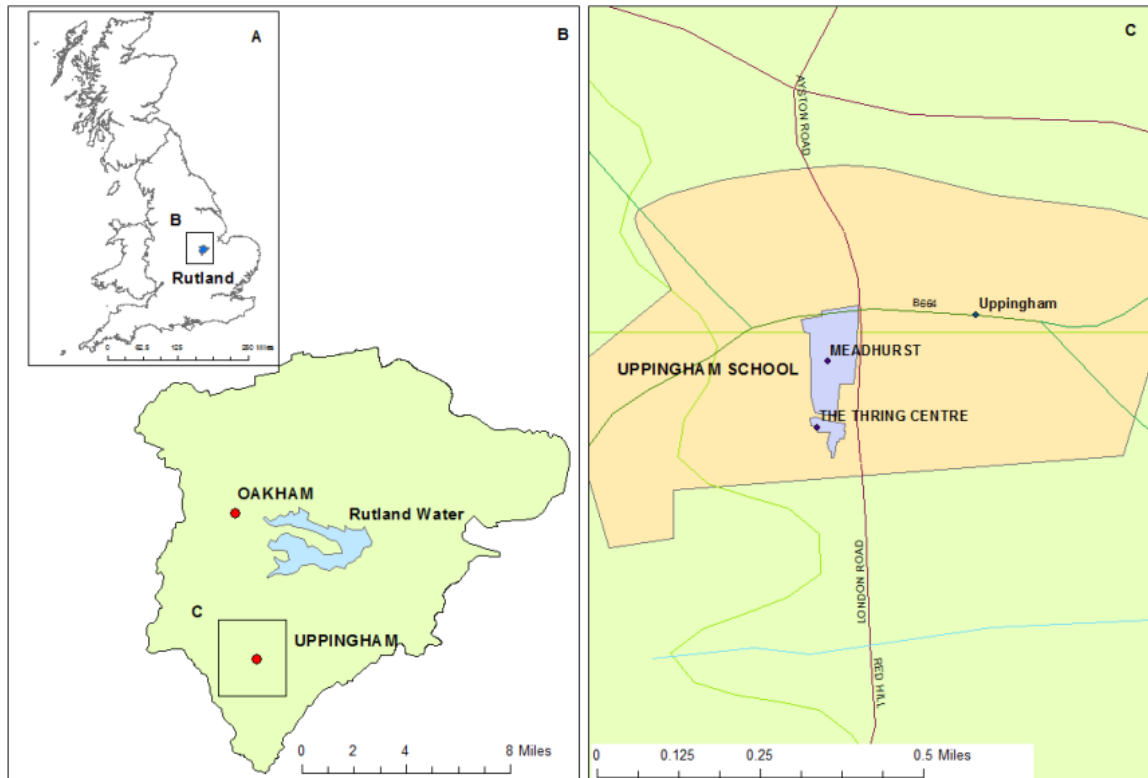


Figure 1: Site location

### Historical and Archaeological Background

A Heritage Statement for the boundary wall within Area B was prepared by Nicola de Quincey architecture and conservation in May 2015.

The town of Uppingham is situated on a ridge running between two valleys and the historic medieval core of the town is situated at the apex of the ridge. The buildings and walls within this core are constructed mainly of limestone with Collyweston roofs.

The town has an Anglo-Saxon origin as a manor, probably of Ridlington, and the town's origins predate the Domesday Book of 1086. It grew as a market town along the High Street with a second route to the north later becoming the road where carts could service the High Street from the rear. The centre of the town was densest, with houses and inns. The lozenge shape of Uppingham core is typical with plots that triangulate from the centre tapering to the edges.

The School was founded together with Oakham School by Archdeacon Johnson in 1584 and was expanded by Rev. Edward Thring in the nineteenth century to become like a college campus integrated into the town. The school purchased the Manor House, barn and gardens (Area B) in 1966.

The proposed development area lies immediately to the north (Area A) and within (Area B) the historic medieval core of Uppingham as defined by the Historic Environment Record (MLE

**5861).** Previous archaeological investigations in the vicinity of Uppingham have uncovered extensive prehistoric Roman, Anglo-Saxon, medieval and post-medieval remains.

The 1839 map of the town shows a building to the immediate east of the old barn at Area B within the proposed development area at The Thring Centre. This building is not shown on the 1885 plan of the Manor House and grounds (now The Thring Centre).

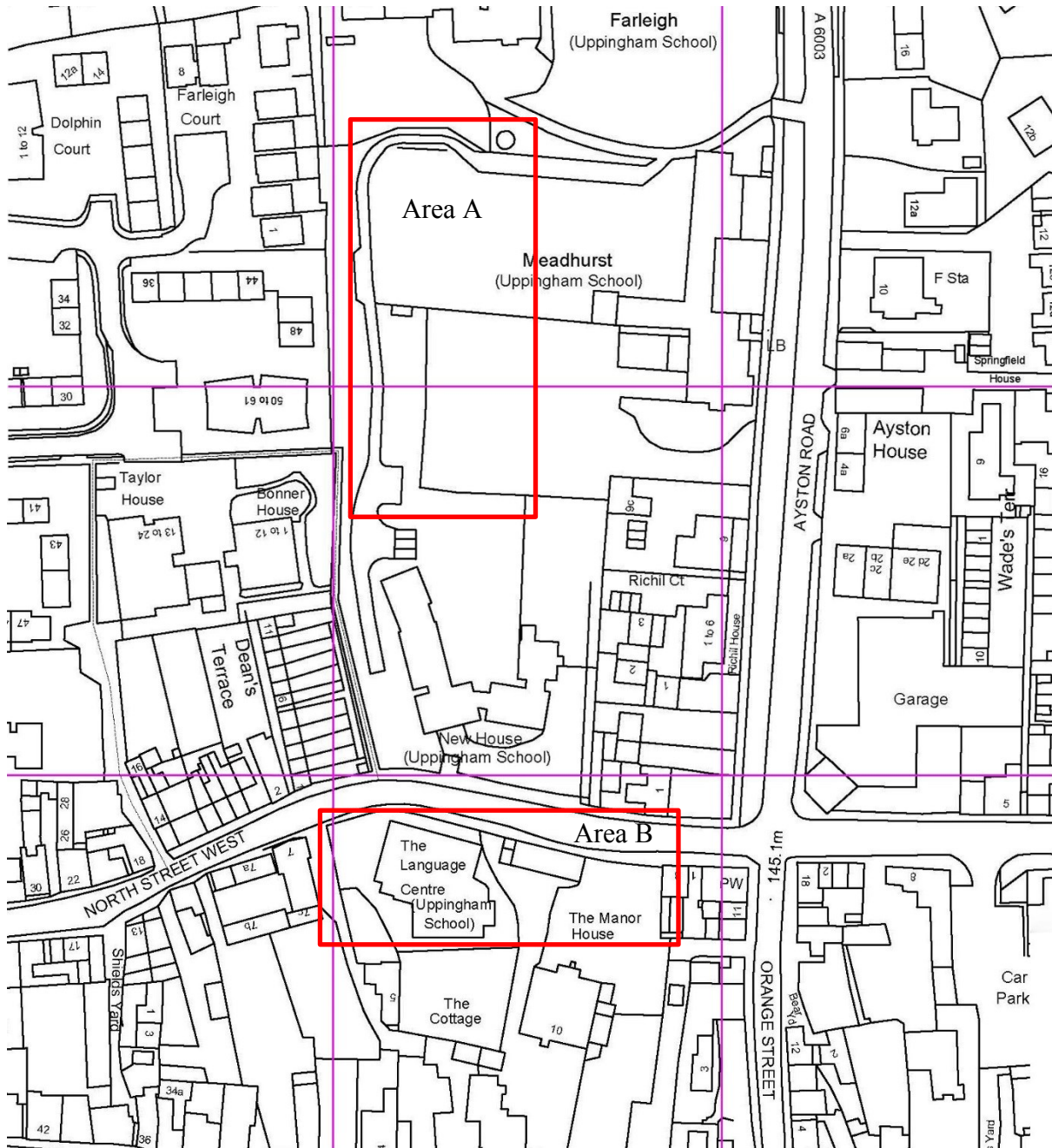


Figure 2: Plan of proposed development areas

### Archaeological Objectives

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 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.

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

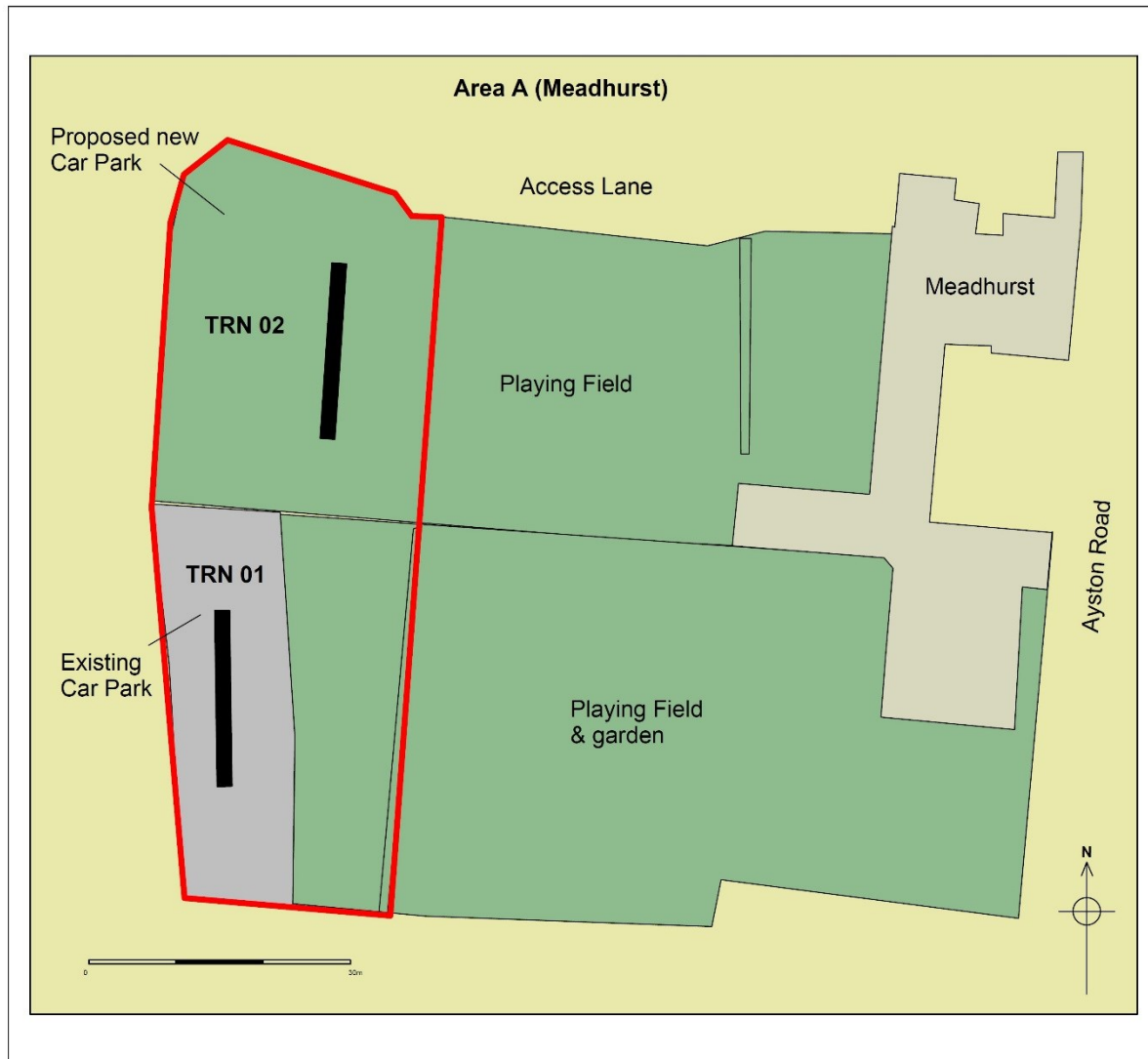


Figure 3: Plan of trench locations in Area A

## Methodology

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

In Area A vegetation restricted the areas to be examined to two lawned areas. The provisional trench plan in the WSI showed the proposed location of two 20m x 1.6m trenches in Area A and one 10m by 1.6m trench in Area B providing a *c.* 3.5% sample of the area although the WSI stated that ‘the size and position indicated on the provisional trench plan may vary due to unforeseen site constraints, such as the location of service pipes, cables and earlier foundations, or the presence of archaeological deposits’.

On inspection of the areas prior to archaeological work being undertaken it was discovered that the southern proposed trench in Area A lay outside the actual development area within a playing field. Therefore this trench (Trench 01) was moved west to be positioned within the existing car park. Trench 02 was to be excavated within the northern playing field of Meadhurst and this remained so. These trenches were excavated using a JCB 3CX excavator fitted with a 1.8m wide ditching bucket (Figure 3).

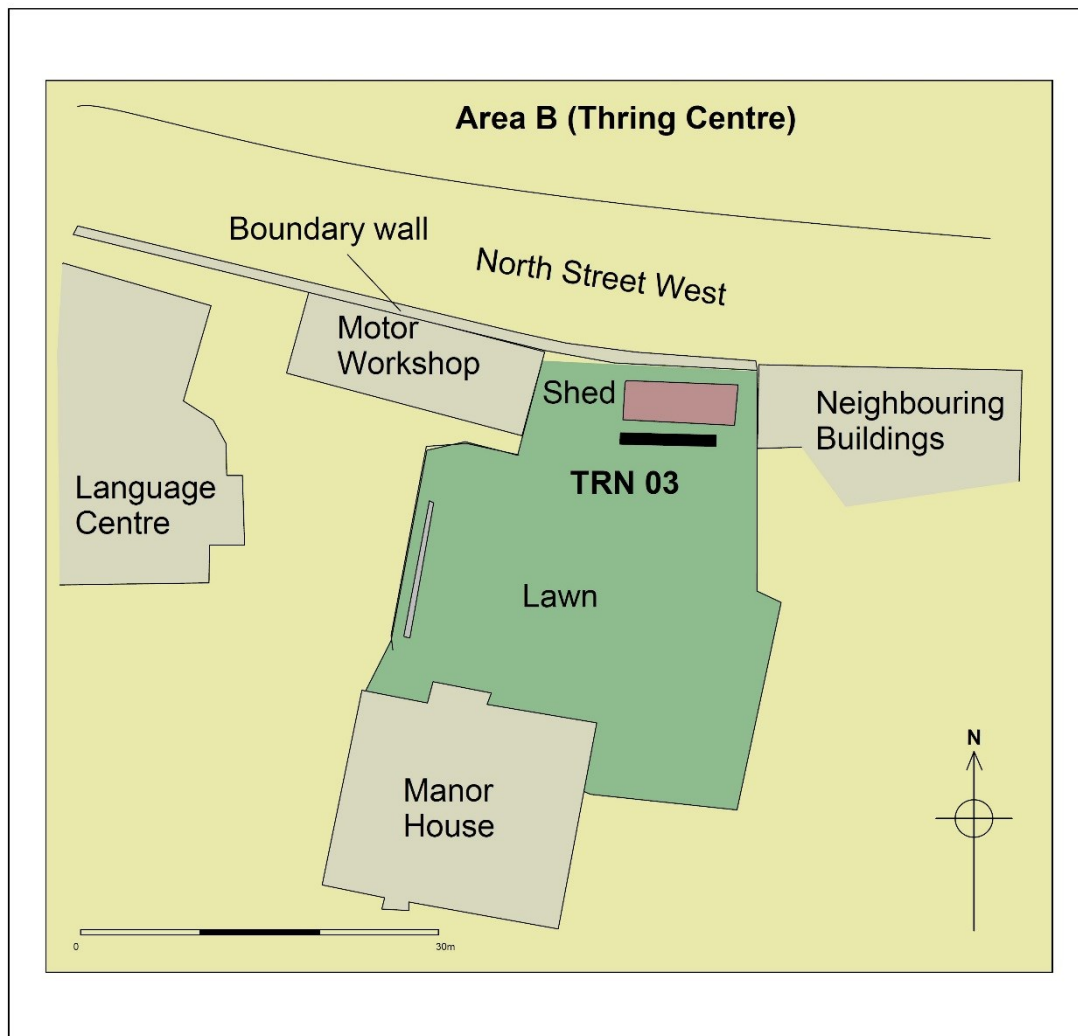


Figure 4: Plan of trench location in Area B

The area available to place a trial trench in Area B was restricted by below ground electricity cables and a large shed. It was possible to excavate a shortened trench to the south of the shed, under a set of interlocking plastic tiles, which had been lain to protect the grassed areas from vehicles. These were removed prior to the trench excavation along with the underlying membrane (Figure 4).



Due to access problems within Area B this trench (Trench 03) was excavated using a small tracked excavator fitted with a 1m wide ditching bucket.

All trenches were to be excavated to the top of the natural sub-stratum or archaeological features, which the higher. The trenches were then inspected and recorded before being back-filled.

The work was carried out on 18th and 19th of August 2016.

## Results



Plate 1: Area A, car park from north-west, looking south-east

### *Area A (Meadhurst)*

#### *Trench 01*

This trench was excavated in the existing car park to the west of the southern lawn area to the rear of Meadhurst boarding house (Figure 3 & Plate 1). Prior to excavation the car park gravel surface was removed exposing a compacted hard core surface beneath.

Orientation: North - South

Length: 19.6m

Width: 1.8m

Topsoil: None Present. Hardcore and made ground beneath loose gravel

Subsoil: Mid greyish brown silty clay with occasional rounded stones and charcoal flecks

Sub-stratum: Mid reddish brown Northampton Sand (Ironstone) brash

Interval	(N) 0m	5m	10m	15m	19m (S)
Hardcore depth	0.29m	0.31m	0.28m	0.34m	0.29m
Subsoil Depth	0.30m	0.27m	0.27m	0.30m	0.29m
Top of Natural	0.59m	0.58m	0.55m	0.64m	0.58m
Base of Trench	0.67m	0.68m	0.59m	0.71m	0.65m

No archaeological features were located within this trench (Plate 2).



Plate 2: Post excavation view of Trench 01, looking south



Plate 3: Area A playing field, looking west

*Trench 02*

This trench was excavated in the northern grass playing field area to the rear of Meadhurst boarding house (Figure 3 & Plate 3).

Orientation: North - South

Length: 18.9m

Width: 1.8m

Topsoil: Dark brownish grey clayey silt with occasional small stones

Subsoil: Mid greyish brown silty clay with occasional rounded stones

Sub-stratum: Mid reddish brown Northampton Sand (Ironstone) brash

<b>Interval</b>	<b>(N) 0m</b>	<b>5m</b>	<b>10m</b>	<b>15m</b>	<b>18m (S)</b>
<b>Topsoil depth</b>	0.19m	0.21m	0.22m	0.21m	0.25m
<b>Subsoil Depth</b>	0.22m	0.31m	0.24m	0.39m	0.35m

<b>Top of Natural</b>	0.41m	0.52m	0.46m	0.60m	0.60m
<b>Base of Trench</b>	0.52m	0.55m	0.52m	0.62m	0.63m

No archaeological features were located within this trench (Plates 4 & 5).



Plate 4: Work in progress on Trench 02, looking south



Plate 5: Post excavation shot of Trench 02, looking south



Plate 6: Area B, looking north-east



Plate 7: Post excavation shot of Trench 03, looking east

***Area B (The Thring Centre)***

***Trench 03***

This trench was excavated in the grounds of The Thring Centre to the south of a large shed (Figure 4 & Plate 6).

Orientation: East - West

Length: 8.1m

Width: 1m

Topsoil: Dark brownish grey clayey silt with occasional small stones

Subsoil: Mid greyish brown silty clay with occasional rounded stones

Sub-stratum: Mid reddish brown (Northampton Sand) Ironstone brash

<b>Interval</b>	<b>(W)0m</b>	<b>3m</b>	<b>5m</b>	<b>8m(E)</b>
<b>Topsoil depth</b>	0.25m	0.21m	0.22m	0.19m
<b>Subsoil Depth</b>	0.20m	0.11m	0.21m	0.22m

<b>Top of Natural</b>	0.45m	0.33m	0.43m	0.41m
<b>Base of Trench</b>	0.46m	0.36m	0.48m	0.47m

No archaeological features were located within this trench (Plate 7)

### **Conclusion**

The proposed new car park areas to the west of the boarding house at Meadhurst, Uppingham School had some potential for archaeological remains as the area lies just outside the historic settlement core of the town. The proposed new building extension at The Thring Centre, Uppingham School had more potential due to it lying within the historic settlement core and close to the Grade II listed buildings of the old barn and the boundary wall located adjacent to the site. The map of the area from 1839 also shows a building alongside the old barn, which had presumably been demolished by the time of the later map of 1885.

All three trenches excavated within Area A (Meadhurst) and Area B (The Thring Centre) were shown to be negative for archaeological features. This is not surprising at Meadhurst as the area appears to have lain outside the core of the town. It is more surprising at The Thring Centre as there appears to have been a building present here in the mid-19th century. However, it is possible that all trace of this building, most probably a barn, has been destroyed.

### **References**

Nicola de Quincey architecture and conservation report: *Thring Centre Boundary Wall North Street West Uppingham Heritage Statement* May 2015

### **Acknowledgements**

ULAS would like to thank Andrew Dighton of Uppingham School for his help and co-operation with this project. The work was carried out by Leon Hunt and James Earley of ULAS. The machines were driven by Mickey Hall of Planters Ltd. The project was managed by Patrick Clay.

### **Archive**

The archive for this project will be deposited with Rutland County Museum with accession number OAKRM: 2016.18 and consists of the following:

- 1 Unbound copy of this report
- 3 Trench recording sheets
- 1 Photo Record sheet
- 1 Contact sheet of digital photographs
- 1 CD digital photographs
- 1 set of B&W photographs
- 1 set of B&W negatives

Leon Hunt  
ULAS  
University of Leicester  
University Road  
Leicester LE1 7RH

Tel: 0116 252 2848

Fax: 0116 252 2614

Email: [lh90@le.ac.uk](mailto:lh90@le.ac.uk)

22-08-2016



## Appendix: OASIS data entry

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.

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>	<b>Oasis No</b>	universi1-260744		
	<b>Project Name</b>	Meadhurst and The Thring Centre, Uppingham School, Uppingham, Rutland		
	<b>Start/end dates of field work</b>	18 <sup>th</sup> -19 <sup>th</sup> August 2016		
	<b>Previous/Future Work</b>	No/ not known		
	<b>Project Type</b>	Evaluation		
	<b>Site Status</b>	Conservation Area		
	<b>Current Land Use</b>	Car Park		
	<b>Monument Type/Period</b>	None		
	<b>Significant Finds/Period</b>	None		
	<b>Reason for Investigation</b>	NPPF		
	<b>Position in the Planning Process</b>	Pre planning		
	<b>Planning Ref.</b>	-		
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>	<b>Site Address/Postcode</b>	Meadhurst, Ayston Road and The Thring Centre, North Street West, Uppingham School, Uppingham, Rutland		
	<b>Study Area</b>	2000m sq & 500 m sq		
	<b>Site Coordinates</b>	SP 86528 99943 and SP 86571 99774		
	<b>Height OD</b>	140m		
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	ULAS		
	<b>Project Brief Originator</b>	Local Planning Authority (LCC)		
	<b>Project Design Originator</b>	ULAS		
	<b>Project Manager</b>	Patrick Clay		
	<b>Project Director/Supervisor</b>	Leon Hunt		
	<b>Sponsor/Funding Body</b>	Uppingham School		
<b>PROJECT ARCHIVE</b>		<b>Physical</b>	<b>Digital</b>	<b>Paper</b>
	<b>Recipient</b>	None	Rutland County Museum	Rutland County Museum
	<b>ID (Acc. No.)</b>	-	OAKRM: 2016.18	OAKRM: 2016.18
	<b>Contents</b>	-	Photographs	Report Field Notes
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## Contact Details

Richard Buckley or Patrick Clay  
University of Leicester Archaeological  
Services (ULAS)  
University of Leicester,  
University Road,  
Leicester LE1 7RH

**T:** +44 (0)116 252 2848

**F:** +44 (0)116 252 2614

**E:** [ulas@le.ac.uk](mailto:ulas@le.ac.uk)

**W:** [www.le.ac.uk/ulas](http://www.le.ac.uk/ulas)



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