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Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological Field  
Evaluation on land to the east of  
No. 2 Newbold Road,  
Desford, Leicestershire  
NGR: SK 47717 03684**

**Andrew Hyam and Claire  
LaCombe**



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On land to the east of No. 2 Newbold Road  
Desford, Leicestershire**

**NGR: SK 47717 03684**

**A Hyam and C LaCombe**

**For: Invicta Universal Ltd.**

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## **An Archaeological Field Evaluation on land to the east of No. 2 Newbold Road, Desford, Leicestershire.**

**NGR: 47717 03684**

**A Hyam and C LaCombe**

### **Summary**

*An archaeological trial trench evaluation was carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on the 19th of December 2016 on land to the east of No. 2 Newbold Road, Desford, Leicestershire (SK47717 03684). The work was commissioned by Invicta Universal Ltd. as part of a pre-determination planning application in advance of the construction of two new dwellings.*

*Three trenches with a total length of 44 metres were excavated within the proposed development area. The presence of a large number of trees, earlier ground disturbance and the sloping nature of the site prevented any further trenching. No archaeological features or deposits were observed during the work.*

*The archive for the work will be deposited with Leicestershire Museums with the accession number X.A145.2016.*

### **Introduction**

In accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Section 12 *Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment* this document forms the report for an archaeological evaluation on land to the east of No 2 Newbold Road, Desford, Leicestershire, NGR: SK47717 03684. Invicta Universal Ltd wish to construct two private dwellings with garages on vacant land on the north side of Little Lane off Newbold Road. This archaeological evaluation forms part of a pre-planning requirement.

The ULAS *Written Scheme of Investigation for Evaluation on land to the east of No 2 Newbold Road, Desford, Leicestershire* (hereafter the WSI) specified four 20m long trenches across the footprint of the proposed house and driveways. However, a number of site constraints, which are discussed below, reduced this number to three trenches with a total length of 44 metres.

### **Background**

#### ***Location and Geology***

The village of Desford lies 11km to the west of the city of Leicester (Fig. 1). The proposed development site is located on the north-east side of the village centre and within the conservation area. The site is on the north-west side of Little Lane which leads eastwards from the corner of Newbold Road and Main Street.

The application area covers an area of c.0.29 hectares and currently comprises of overgrown grassed woodland. The site slopes down to the north with the top of the slope being at approximately 123m above OD (Fig. 2). The site boundary along Little Lane consists of mature hedgerow with some trees, this boundary contains the access

gateway to the site. The north-western boundary of the site has recently had a number of semi-mature trees cut down leaving broken lengths of hedgerow. A tall hedge forms the north-eastern site boundary. Along the south-western end of the site is a wooden fence with tall leylandi hedging separating the main site from a landscaped garden with well-maintained lawns. Within the site are a large number of trees ranging from saplings up to semi-mature trees. Close to the south-west corner the ground has been levelled to create a small terrace leading out from the garden to the west. A large depression up to 0.7m deep covers nearly the entire footprint of one of the proposed houses (Figs 3 and 4). The client has been told that this may have been a pond although he had never seen water in it. There is the stump of a large tree in the base of this possible pond. Another similar but smaller depression can be seen in the northern corner of the site. All of this disturbance appears to have taken place a number of years ago. Fields to the north-west and north-east of the site have well-defined ridge and furrow running from north-west to south-east. No trace of ridge and furrow can be seen on the site.

The Geological Survey of Great Britain indicates the underlying geology is mudstone bedrock (Edwalton Member).



Figure 1 Desford and site location





Figure 2 Existing site layout  
Plan supplied by client. Note: the blue line shows the position of a fence separating the site from a landscaped garden



Figure 3 General view of site  
Looking north-west from entrance gate. Yellow line shows the larger of the two possible ponds

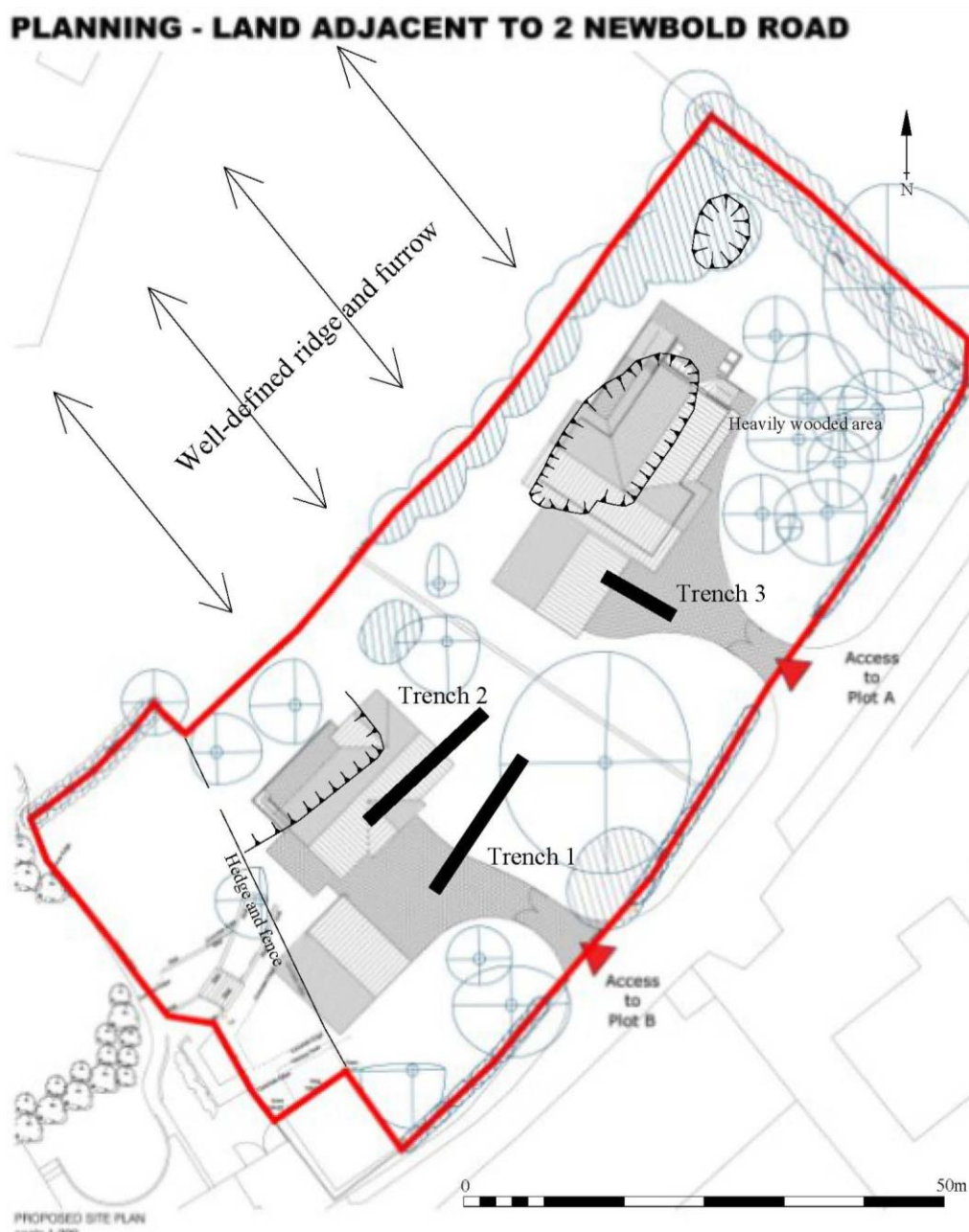


Figure 4 Trench locations and site disturbances  
Layout shown on top of proposed development details

### ***Archaeological and Historical Background***

Examination of data in the Leicestershire Historic Environment Record and various published sources for a 1km radius of the site, indicates that the majority of heritage assets in the general vicinity of the site are in and around the historic core of Desford. There are Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) records of Roman finds nearby and an Iron Age enclosure. There are no archaeological assets recorded within the development site.

The first edition of the Ordnance Survey map for the area, published in 1886, indicates that the majority of the site lies in fields on the outskirts of the village. The 1931 edition shows a small building close to the location of the present gateway to the site (Fig. 5).



Another building is shown near to the western side of the site. It is not clear what these buildings were for or what materials they were constructed from.

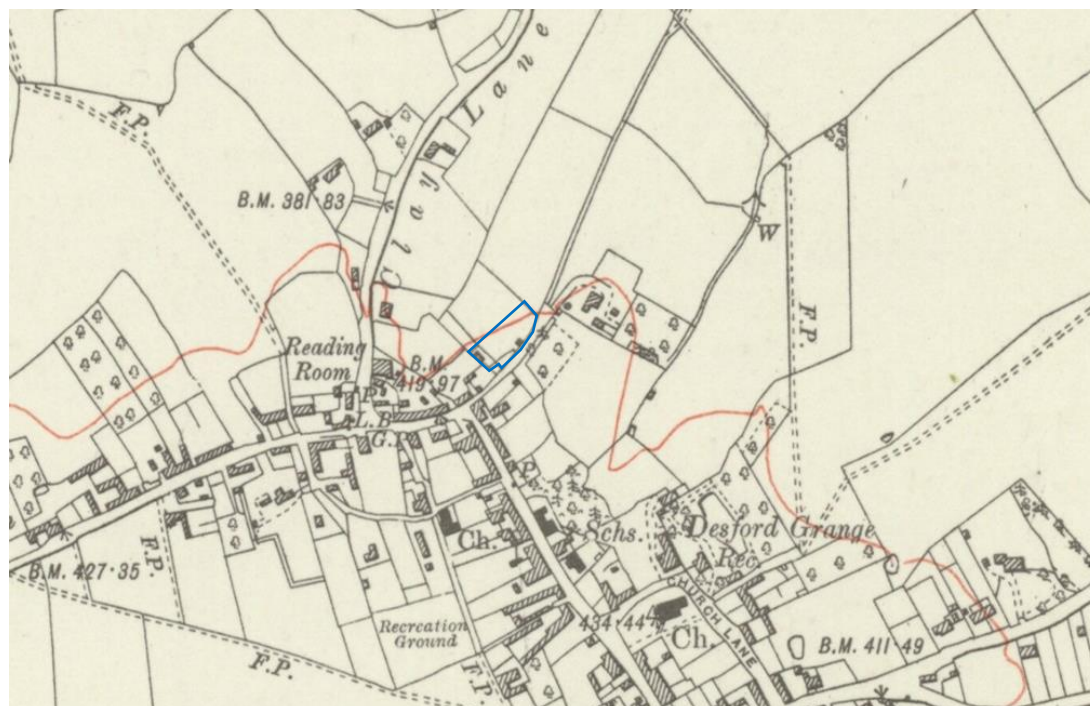


Figure 5 1931 Ordnance Survey map  
Sheet XXX.SW Approximate location of site shown in blue

## Objectives

The objectives are as set out in the ULAS WSI approved by the County Planning Archaeologist. 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 any archaeological deposits on the site in order to determine the potential impact upon them from the proposed development. This includes the characterisation of the site within the broader landscape, any activities identified on the site and changes in land-use over time.

## Methodology

The 1.6m wide evaluation trenches were excavated using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket on the rear actor. The methodology and recording system employed were as stated in the ULAS WSI. All work followed the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (Cifa) *Code of Conduct* (2014). The locations of all trenches had to be moved from that shown in the WSI in order to avoid large trees and other obvious areas of disturbance as discussed above. Only three trenches out of the specified four were excavated due to lack of available space and earlier disturbances.

## Results

### Trench 1

Trench 1 was located towards the southernmost area of the site, running on a SW-NE alignment. The north-eastern end was situated approximately 7m west of the trunk of the largest mature tree on site which is likely to be retained in the proposed development



scheme (Figs 6 and 7). At the south-east end of the trench a layer of redeposited topsoil, sandy clay and modern building rubble was removed to expose the original subsoil below. This redeposited layer contained metal tins and other clearly modern material. Removal of the subsoil, which still contained some brick fragments exposed the natural substratum which consisted of an orangish brown sandy clay. Small areas of the substratum had been disturbed by modern building rubble. Elsewhere the substratum showed signs of tree root disturbance.

No archaeological features or deposits were present.

Trench 1 Length: 15.0m

Interval	NE end 0m	5m	10m	SW end 15m
<b>Topsoil/redeposited Depth</b>	0.26m	0.13m	0.08m	0.23m
<b>Subsoil Depth</b>	0.08m	0.15m	0.20m	0.40m
<b>Top of natural substratum</b>	0.34m	0.28m	0.28m	0.63m

### ***Trench 2***

Trench 2 was placed to the north-west of Trench 1 on a similar alignment and as close as possible to the footprint of the proposed house (Figs 8 and 9). The presence of the terrace and disturbed area shown in Figure 4 above prevented an exact coverage of the house. The trench was excavated on a north-east to south-west alignment. A large amount of modern building rubble, including concrete breeze blocks, was seen cutting into the natural substratum at the south-west end of the trench. A similar layer of redeposited material over the original subsoil layer was observed. This redeposited layer is likely to be upcast from the excavation of the terraced area to the west. As with Trench 1 the natural substratum consisted of a sandy clay material with some evidence of root disturbance.

No archaeological features or deposits were present.

Trench 2 length: 18.5m

Interval	NE end 1m	5m	10m	15m	SW end 18.5m
<b>Topsoil/redeposited Depth</b>	0.13m	0.10m	0.26m	0.21m	0.20m
<b>Subsoil Depth</b>	0.13m	0.12m	0.10m	0.12m	0.20m
<b>Top of natural substratum</b>	0.26m	0.22m	0.36m	0.33m	0.40m

**Trench 3**

Trench 3 was located to the north-west of the site access gateway and placed to be as close as possible to the footprint of one of the proposed house garages. The presence of trees, the possible pond and a recently dug geotechnical pit meant that a trench of only 9.8m could be dug at this location (Fig. 10). The trench was excavated on a north-west to south-east alignment. No upcast or disturbed material was observed above the topsoil and subsoil in this trench. The natural substratum once again consisted of sandy clay.

No archaeological features or deposits were present.

Trench 3 length: 9.8m

Interval	N 1m	5m	9m
Topsoil Depth	0.22m	0.17m	0.16m
Subsoil Depth	0.13m	0.20m	0.20m
Top of natural substratum	0.45m	0.37m	0.36m



Figure 6 Trench 1 location  
Looking south-west. Terrace on right of photograph





Figure 7 Trench 1  
Looking south-west. 1m scale

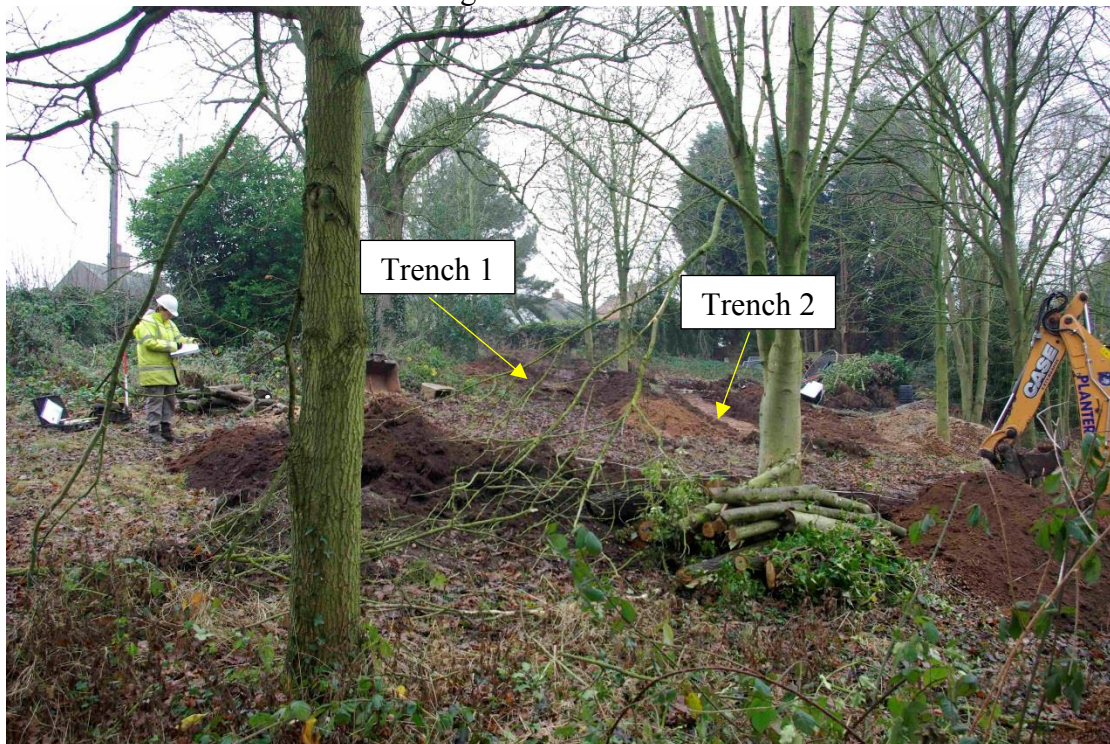


Figure 8 Trench 1 and 2 locations  
Looking south-west





Figure 9 Trench 2

Looking south-west. 1m scale. Rubble disturbance at far end of trench



Figure 10 Trench 3

Looking north-west. 1m scale



## **Discussion**

Despite the potential for the presence of archaeology from the Iron Age and Roman periods no archaeological features were observed within any of the evaluation trenches. The proposed development site was partially inaccessible for the excavator due to the severity of the slope and the large number of trees, especially on the northern part of the site. The two possible pond areas and the terrace in the south-west also reduced the available space for the evaluation trenches.

The area around Trenches 1 and 2 appeared to have been covered with upcast material which seems likely to have originated from the nearby terrace. The apparent lack of spoil heaps around the pond areas may also suggest that the material from them was dumped around these trenches. The presence of so many trees is likely to have disturbed any features which may survive elsewhere on site.

The well-defined ridge and furrow in the fields to the west and north of the site appear to have at one time continued into the site. The fact that no earthworks are now visible suggests that the site has either been heavily ploughed or at least disturbed enough to remove this. No furrows could be seen cutting into the natural substratum. It therefore seems unlikely that any archaeological features will survive on this site.

## **Archive**

The archive consists of:

- This report,
- 3 ULAS pro-forma trench recording sheets,
- 1 A4 photo record sheet,
- 1 CD of 21 digital photographs.

The archive will be held by Leicestershire Museum Service under the accession number X.A145.2016.

## **Publication**

A summary of the work will be submitted for publication in the *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* in due course. A record of the project will also be submitted to the OASIS project. OASIS is an online index to archaeological grey literature.

## **Acknowledgements**

ULAS would like to extend its thanks to Invicta Universal Ltd. for its cooperation during the work and also to Scott of Planters for operating the mechanical excavator under difficult conditions.

The fieldwork was carried out by Andrew Hyam and Claire LaCombe. This report was written by Andrew Hyam and Claire LaCombe. The project was managed for ULAS by Vicki Score.

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ULAS. 2016. *Written Scheme of Investigation for Evaluation on land to the east of No 2 Newbold Road, Desford, Leicestershire*

## Appendix 1 OASIS Information

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>	<b>Oasis No</b>	<b>universi1-272216</b>		
	<b>Project Name</b>	Land East of 2 Newbold Road, Desford, Leicestershire. Evaluation Phase		
	<b>Start/end dates of field work</b>	19/12/2016		
	<b>Previous/Future Work</b>	Yes / Not known		
	<b>Project Type</b>	Evaluation		
	<b>Site Status</b>	None		
	<b>Current Land Use</b>	Enclosed Woodland		
	<b>Monument Type/Period</b>	None		
	<b>Significant Finds/Period</b>	None		
	<b>Development Type</b>	Residential		
	<b>Reason for Investigation</b>	NPPF		
	<b>Position in the Planning Process</b>	Pre-determination		
	<b>Planning Ref.</b>	Pre-determination		
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>	<b>Site Address/Postcode</b>	Desford, LE9 9GP		
	<b>Study Area</b>	0.29 ha		
	<b>Site Coordinates</b>	SK 47717 03684		
	<b>Height OD</b>	123m aOD		
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	ULAS		
	<b>Project Brief Originator</b>	Local Planning Authority (Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council)		
	<b>Project Design Originator</b>	ULAS		
	<b>Project Manager</b>	Vicki Score		
	<b>Project Director/Supervisor</b>	A Hyam		
	<b>Sponsor/Funding Body</b>	Developer / Invicta Universal Ltd.		
<b>PROJECT ARCHIVE</b>		<b>Physical</b>	<b>Digital</b>	<b>Paper</b>
	<b>Recipient</b>	N/A	LCC MusService	LCC MusService
	<b>ID (Acc. No.)</b>		XA145.2016	XA.145.2016
	<b>Contents</b>		Photos Report	Evaluation records Field Notes
<b>PROJECT BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>Type</b>	Grey Literature (unpublished)		
	<b>Title</b>	An archaeological field evaluation for land east of No. 2 Newbold Road, Desford, Leicestershire NGR: SK 47717, 03684		
	<b>Author</b>	A Hyam and Claire LaCombe		
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