



UNIVERSITY OF
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Archaeological Services

**Archaeological Observation,
Investigation and Recording on land to
the west of Rushden Lakes,
Northampton Road, Rushden,
Northamptonshire**

NGR: SP 9362 6785 (centre)

Andrew Hyam



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For: LXB RP (Rushden) Limited

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Summary

Archaeological Observation, Investigation and Recording was undertaken by the University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on land to the west of Rushden Lakes, Northampton Road, Rushden, Northamptonshire on the 6th of April 2016. The fieldwork was intended to provide a record of any archaeological remains that may be impacted on from geotechnical test pits undertaken to inform any future potential development of the area.

Six geotechnical pits were excavated as part of the initial ground investigation work. Undisturbed natural substratum was observed in all trenches and no archaeological features or deposits were present.

The report will be archived under temporary accession number NH_RUSHLK2014 which includes earlier archaeological evaluation work associated with other areas of the Rushden Lakes development site.

Introduction

In accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Section 12 *Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment* this document forms the report for a programme of archaeological observation, investigation and recording on land to the west of Rushden Lakes, Northampton Road, Northamptonshire. The work was undertaken during groundworks related to six geotechnical investigation test pits on land to the west of the main Rushden Lakes development site. Ground investigation works comprising boreholes and test pits were undertaken on the land which is owned by LXB RP (Rushden) Ltd to inform them of any potential future development which may take place to the west of the main Rushden Lakes development site.

The work has been commissioned by LXB RP (Rushden) Ltd and followed that specified in the University of Leicester Archaeological Services *Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Observation, Investigation, Recording, Analysis and Publication at Rushden Lakes, Northampton Road, Rushden, Northamptonshire* (hereinafter the WSI).

Background

The town of Rushden lies to the east of Northampton on the southern side of the main A45 road (Fig. 1). The site lies to the north west of Skew Bridge roundabout and is on the northern side of the A45 to the north west of Rushden. The Ordnance Survey (OS) Grid Reference for the approximate centre of the site is where this phase of

geotechnical work is taking place is SP 9362 6785. A large area to the east and west of the Rushden Lakes development site has been quarried for sand and gravel resulting in a number of lakes and ponds which form a series of nature reserves (Fig. 2). The site of the present geotechnical works is a small rectangular-shaped grassed area immediately to the west of the main development site. The site measures approximately 140m by 140m. Most of the site is covered in grass and scrub with the south-west corner being dominated by the derelict remains of an industrial structure. A disused railway embankment runs along the southern boundary of the site and a large lake forming part of Ditchford Lakes and Meadows Nature reserve forms the northern boundary of the site (Figs. 3 and 4). It is generally flat and at a height of approximately 40m OD. Six geotechnical pits were excavated during this programme of work (Fig. 5).

Nine 30m long evaluation trenches were excavated by ULAS in September 2014 in the western area of the main development site (Hyam, 2014). No archaeological features or deposits were present within any of the trenches. Five geotechnical pits were excavated in September 2015 to the south of the railway embankment and adjacent to the service area. The excavation of the pits was observed by ULAS but did not identify any archaeological features or deposits (Gonzalez, 2015).



Figure 1 Rushden location

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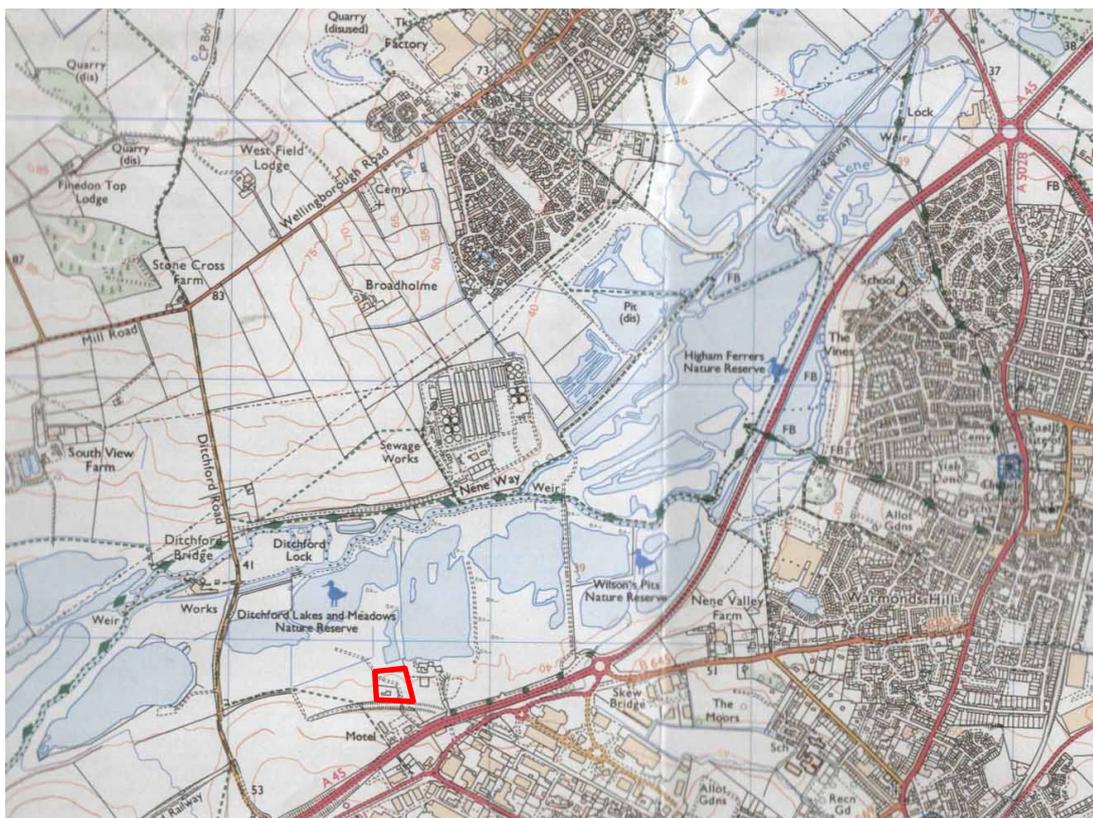


Figure 2 Site location

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Figure 3 General view of site

Looking south-east. The railway embankment can be seen as the line of trees at the back of the picture. Derelict structure to right of excavator



Figure 4 General view of site
Looking west. Nature reserve on right of picture

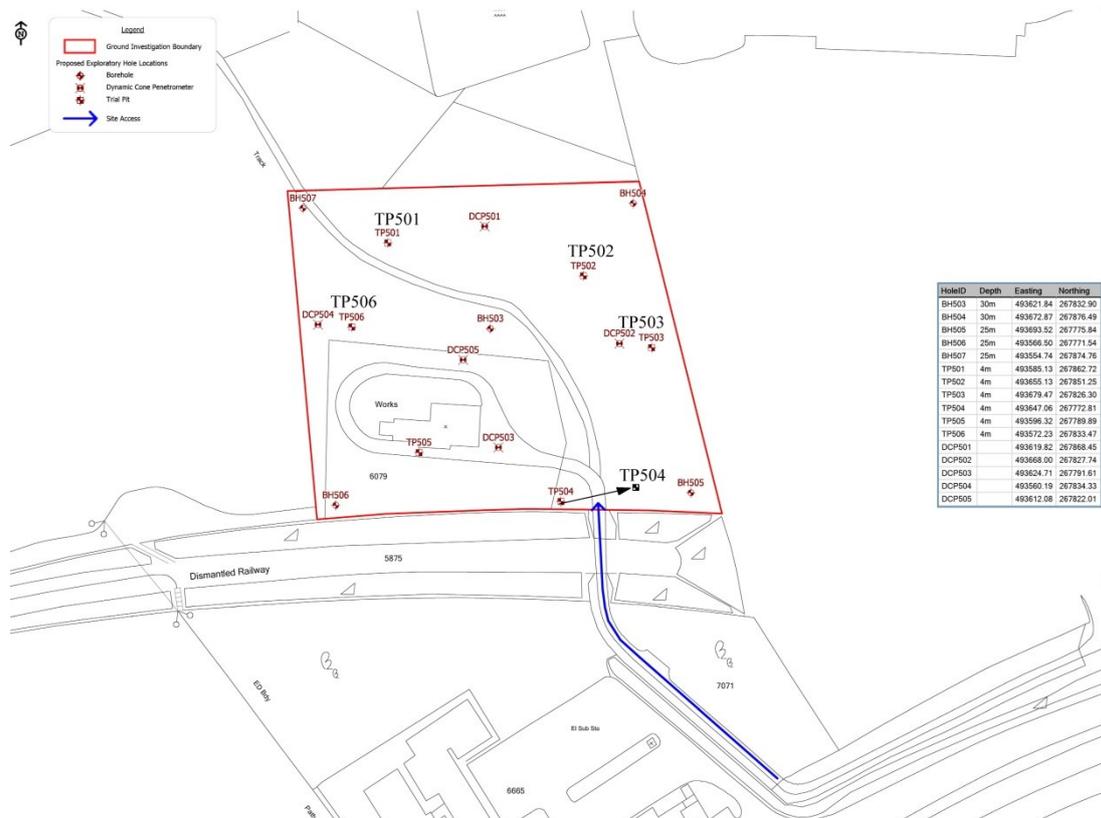


Figure 5 Test pit locations
Plan supplied by client. Note adjusted location of TP504

Objectives

As identified in the ULAS WSI for archaeological work 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.

As identified in the WSI the works were considered in light of the East Midlands Research Framework (Cooper 2006) and Strategy (Knight *et al.* 2012) along with targeting national research aims highlighted by English Heritage (EH 2010; EH 2012).

Methodology

The programme of work comprised the excavation of six geotechnical pits with a 360^o tracked mechanical excavator fitted with a narrow ditching bucket.

The machine stripping of the pits was visually inspected and the removed soil was described and checked for signs of archaeological activity. All spoil was inspected for any archaeological finds and objects. Field notes were recorded on pro-forma ULAS recording forms. Once the archaeological inspection had been completed the pits were then excavated down to a maximum of 4m below current ground level through the natural substratum to assess the geological ground conditions.

The work adhered to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) *Code of Conduct* (2014) and their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (2014).

Results

Six geotechnical pits were excavated across the site as shown in Figure 5 above. The pits were given the reference codes TP501 to TP506. Due to the presence of a buried electrical cable pit number Four (TP504) had to be moved eastwards to a new location. The pits measured 3m long by 0.6m wide. In almost all cases the topsoil and subsoil were loose and uncompact causing the sides of the trenches to collapse quite rapidly after the initial inspection and cleaning.

TP501

TP501 was located in the north-western corner of the site on an area of fairly open grass. Prior to excavation the area contained a number of irregular low humps and shallow depressions consistent with disturbance caused by the tracking of heavy vehicles.

An average of 0.15m of loose topsoil of mid red brown silty clay with occasional small stones was removed to expose the subsoil consisting of mid orange brown sandy clay with some gravelly patches and frequent angular stones. The subsoil had

an average thickness of 0.15m and was removed to reveal the top of the natural substratum of mid orange brown sandy gravel and clay (Fig. 6).

No archaeological features or deposits were observed in this pit or within the spoil.

TP502

TP502 was located towards the north-eastern corner of the site in a similar area of grass as seen around TP501. The 1938 Ordnance Survey map of the area indicates that there was a small building located on or close to the location of TP502. The topsoil in this pit consisted of 0.15m of mid greyish brown silty clay with a high proportion of sandy gravel. This material appeared to be redeposited material rather than naturally formed topsoil. The 0.1m thick layer of subsoil was the same as in TP501. An undisturbed natural substratum of mid red brown sandy clay was revealed beneath the subsoil (Fig. 7).

No archaeological features or deposits were observed in this pit or within the spoil.

TP503

TP503 was located close to the eastern boundary of the site close to the present area of redevelopment. The topsoil appeared to be quite disturbed and consisted of approximately 0.3m of dark grey brown sandy silty clay with frequent small angular stones. Below this was another apparently disturbed layer of subsoil-like material consisting of a mid-orange brown silty clay with occasional patches of gravel and sand. This layer was also 0.3m in thickness. The thickness of these two layers and their relatively mixed nature suggests that they have been imported to, or around, the site. The undisturbed natural substratum in this part of the site consisted of mid orange brown clayish sand with areas of fine gravel (Fig. 8).

No archaeological features or deposits were observed in this pit or within the spoil.

TP504

The initial suggested location for TP504 was close to the railway embankment to the west of an archway giving access to the site. A buried electrical cable running towards and through the railway arch necessitated a relocation of the pit to a point to the north-east of the arch (see Fig. 5). The very loose and disturbed dark grey sandy silt topsoil with a thickness of 0.13m was removed to reveal the dark reddish brown sandy clay and gravel subsoil which was also quite loose and probably disturbed. This layer had a thickness of 0.14m and was removed to reveal the undisturbed mid orange brown sandy clay and gravel natural substratum (Fig. 9).

No archaeological features or deposits were observed in this pit or within the spoil.

TP505

Test pit TP505 was located to the south of the derelict structure in the south-western corner of the site and close to the line of vegetation extending northwards from the railway embankment. An approximately 0.3m thick layer of mid grey brown clay silt was removed to expose a mid-orange clayish sand layer with a friable texture. This layer was approximately 0.37m thick suggesting that both layers, which were quite mixed, were likely to have been redeposited layers. The undisturbed natural substrata consisted of two types: most of the pit contained mid orange brown clayish sand but there was also a patch of pale yellowish clay near to the eastern end of the test pit (Fig. 10).

No archaeological features or deposits were observed in this pit or within the spoil.

TP506

TP506 was located near to the western boundary of the site and to the north-west of the derelict building. A low terrace extends around the building in a semi-circle with TP506 being located just on the edge of it. The topsoil appeared to have been disturbed and consisted of a mix of dark and mid red brown clayish sand with patches of clean and imported pea gravel. This layer was approximately 0.39m thick and probably represents the material used to create the terrace around the building. Beneath this layer was a friable layer of mid orange brown sandy clay which was 0.15m thick. The undisturbed natural substratum below this consisted of a mid orange brown sandy clay (Fig. 11).

No archaeological features or deposits were observed in this pit or within the spoil.



Figure 6 TP501 excavated to top of natural substratum
Looking south-east. 1m scale



Figure 7 TP502 excavated to top of natural substratum
Looking south-east. 1m scale



Figure 8 TP503 excavated to top of natural substratum
Looking west. 1m scale



Figure 9 TP504 excavated to top of natural substratum
Looking west. 1m scale



Figure 10 TP505 excavated to top of natural substratum
Looking east. 1m scale



Figure 11 TP506 excavated to top of natural substratum
Looking east. 1m scale

<i>Pit Number</i>	<i>Av. Topsoil depth</i>	<i>Av. Subsoil depth</i>	<i>Top of natural</i>	<i>Presence/absence of archaeology</i>
TP501	0.15m	0.15m	0.30m	No archaeology
TP502	0.15m (redeposited)	0.10m	0.25m	No archaeology
TP503	0.30m (made ground)	0.30m (made ground)	0.60m	No archaeology
TP504	0.13m (redeposited)	0.14m	0.27m	No archaeology
TP505	0.30m	0.37m	0.67m	No archaeology
TP506	0.39m (made ground)	0.15m	0.54m	No archaeology

Table 1 Test pit soil depths

Discussion

No archaeological features or deposits were observed in any of the geotechnical test pits or within any of the spoil generated during the works. Much of the topsoil and subsoil or overburden layers appeared to have been disturbed or imported. This action may have occurred as a result of the construction and use of the now derelict building. Similarly the small structure seen on the 1938 OS map may have caused some disturbance. It can therefore be reasonably concluded that this site is likely to contain few, if any, archaeological deposits.

Archive

The archive for this programme of work consists of:

This report,
17 digital photographs,
1 ULAS pro-forma photo record sheet,
3 ULAS pro-forma test pit recording sheets.
1 DVD of the digital photographs

Publication

A summary of the work will be submitted for publication in the local archaeological journal: *Northamptonshire Archaeology* 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.

Bibliography

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Appendix 1 OASIS Information

PROJECT DETAILS	Oasis No	universi1-274607		
	Project Name	An Archaeological Observation, Investigation and Recording on land west of Rushden Lakes, Northampton Road, Rushden, Northamptonshire		
	Start/end dates of field work	06-04-2016		
	Previous/Future Work	Yes / Not known		
	Project Type	Watching Brief		
	Site Status	None		
	Current Land Use	Cultivated Land		
	Monument Type/Period	None/none		
	Significant Finds/Period	None/none		
	Development Type	Commercial		
	Reason for Investigation	NPPF		
	Position in the Planning Process	Pre planning		
	Planning Ref.			
PROJECT LOCATION	Site Address/Postcode	Rushden Lakes, Northampton Road, Rushden, Northamptonshire NN10 6AP		
	Study Area	1.9 ha		
	Site Coordinates	SP 9362 6785		
	Height OD	40m OD		
PROJECT CREATORS	Organisation	ULAS		
	Project Brief Originator	Local Planning Authority		
	Project Design Originator	ULAS		
	Project Manager	Dr Patrick Clay		
	Project Director/Supervisor	A Hyam		
	Sponsor/Funding Body	Developer / LXB RP (Rushden) Ltd		
PROJECT ARCHIVE		Physical	Digital	Paper
	Recipient	NA	Northampton Museums Service	Northampton Museums Service
	ID (Acc. No.)		NH_RUSHSK2014	NH_RUSHSK2014
	Contents		Photos Survey data	Watching brief records Field Notes
PROJECT BIBLIOGRAPHY	Type	Grey Literature (unpublished)		
	Title	An Archaeological Observation, Investigation and Recording on land west of Rushden Lakes, Northampton Road, Rushden, Northamptonshire		
	Author	A Hyam		
	Other bibliographic details	ULAS Report No 2016-066		
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