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Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological strip, map & sample
excavation on land at Riverside Farm,
Phase 2, Riverside Road, Sysonby,
Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire.**

(SK 738 189)

Jamie Patrick



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An Archaeological Strip Map and Sample Excavation
On land at Riverside Farm Phase2, Riverside Road, Sysonby, Melton
Mowbray,
Leicestershire
(SK 738 189)

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An Archaeological Strip, Map, & sample excavation on land at Riverside Farm Phase 2, Riverside Road, Sysonby Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire (SK738 189)

Jamie Patrick

Summary

On January 25th 2017, ULAS carried out a monitoring visit on land at Riverside Farm Phase 2, Riverside Road, Sysonby, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire. NGR: (SK 738 189). The site is located between Asfordby Hill and Melton Mowbray. The reason for the archaeological work is due to development of further dwellings by Eden Homes Ltd. These are being constructed directly off the East side of a minor road opposite a Golf course. The access is via a minor road which is located right of the A6006 just before entering Melton Mowbray from the West. The application area currently contains areas of hard standing and rough pasture. The site slopes north-west to south-east with the River Eye forming the eastern boundary. Despite the development lying in a landscape rich in multi-period archaeological remains, a trial trench evaluation for the Phase 1 development carried out by ULAS in 2014 proved negative (Jarvis 2014). However, subsequent trial trench evaluation for Phase 2 revealed substantial medieval remains (Jarvis 2015). Consequently Leicestershire County Council, Historic and Natural Environment Team (LCCHNET) as archaeological advisors to the planning authority require that a strip, map and sample excavation is undertaken prior to development to assess the location, extent, significance and character of any buried archaeological remains. Due to the unstable nature of the geology and present ground-surface, it was decided by the client not to penetrate the ground level into the archaeological remains located by the previous evaluation. In order to accomplish this method of construction, it was decided to raise the floor levels above the archaeological horizon by a minimum of 0.50 metres achieved by piling thus raising the floor levels. These levels as explained by the client have more than been achieved.

The monitoring visit was required as a condition to ensure the ground-works were carried out without digging into the archaeological deposits below. Observation by the archaeologist was satisfied this was being fulfilled with only the made ground above the archaeology being worked and no other disturbance carried out with exception to the piling. Around the development area, boards have been positioned with the floor level heights displayed for each plot. A small photographic survey of the site was undertaken. A subsequent visit was not deemed necessary.

Introduction

On January 25th 2017 ULAS, carried out a monitoring visit on land at Riverside Farm Phase 2, Riverside Road, Sysonby, Melton Mowbray, and Leicestershire. NGR: (SK 738 189). The site is located between Asfordby Hill and Melton Mowbray. The reason for the archaeological work is due to development of further dwellings by Eden Homes Ltd. (SK 738 189 Fig. 1)

Eden Homes Limited are to extend the already existing development (Phase 1) for further dwelling construction including garaging and access roads (Phase 2). Melton District Council (P.A 15/00894/FUL Condition 15) require that an archaeological attendance during strip, map, and sample with archaeological investigation (if deemed necessary) would be undertaken during any ground-works related to the demolition and development of the site.

The Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record indicates that the proposed development lies in a rich archaeological landscape, with extensive medieval and post-medieval remains and close to remains from the Neolithic period through to the Romano British period and possible Anglo Saxon funerary activity. The area around the development area is

situated on low lying landscape rich in archaeological remains with the confluence of the River Trent and Soar less than a kilometre to the north- east of the study area.

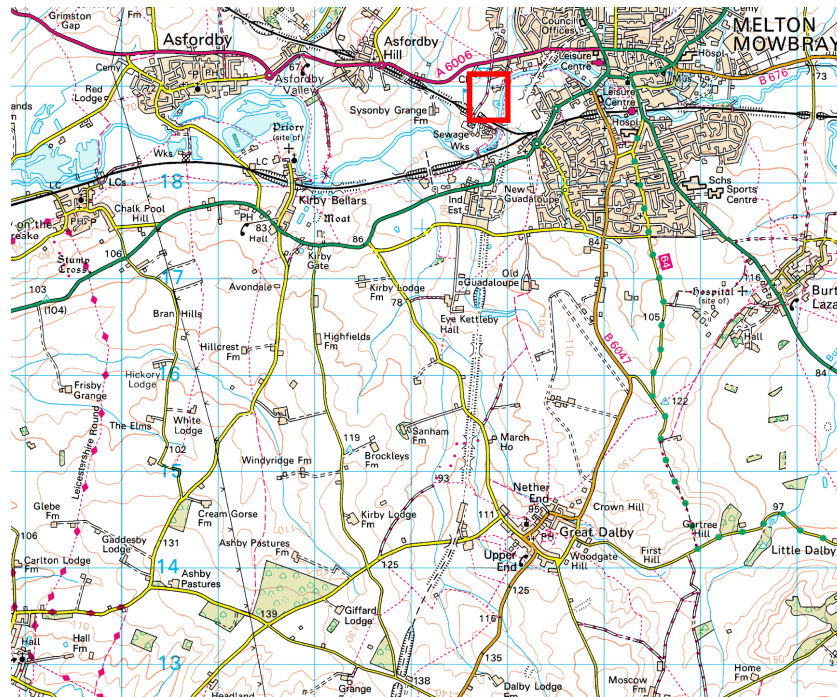


Figure 1: Location Plan with project area highlighted

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Site Location, Geology and Topography

The site lies east of Sysonby Grange Lane, and south of the churchyard of the church of St. Mary and an area recently developed ('Phase 1'). Residential development is proposed on the site, incorporating housing, garaging and access roads (P.A: Pre-planning). The site comprises two areas of land that in the west being rough ground used for materials storage and spoil heaps, that to the east being rough grassland. The site slopes north-west to south-east with the River Eye forming the eastern boundary, and the site covers an area of c.335 sq. m. The site lies at a height of c.70-72m aOD.

The Ordnance Survey Geological Survey of Great Britain indicates that the underlying bedrock geology of the application area is likely to consist of Lias Mudstone. The superficial deposits are river deposited alluvium and Quaternary Head and river gravels (Bytham channel) <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html> (accessed 15th July 2014). Alluvium was identified during this fieldwork, except in the westernmost area of the site. (WSI 2016).

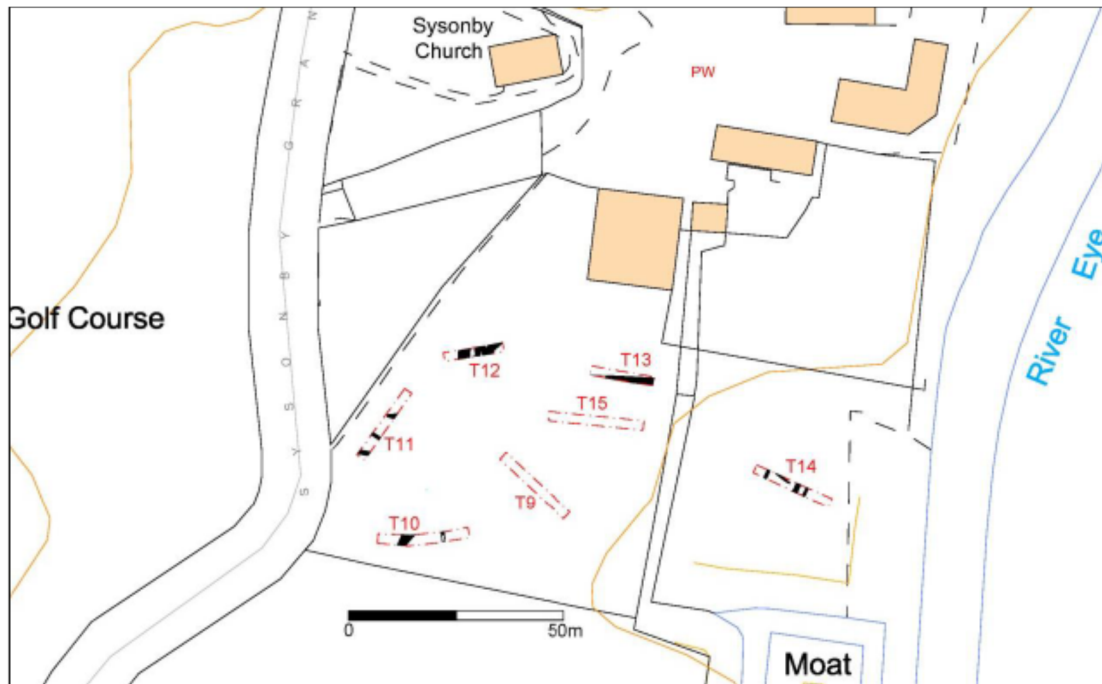


Figure 2: trial trench evaluation (Jarvis, 2015) in relation to construction site

Archaeological and Historical Background

A desk-based assessment and rapid buildings appraisal has been undertaken for the Phase 1 area (Richards 2008). This indicated that there were six surviving agricultural buildings, three of which were of historic significance including a late 18th century threshing barn (Richards 2008, Building 11) which was converted. The Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record indicates that the proposed development lies in a rich archaeological landscape, with extensive medieval and post- medieval remains and close to remains from the Neolithic period through to the Romano British period and possible Anglo Saxon funerary activity. There is therefore moderate to high potential for archaeological remains of all periods to be present within the application area. Trial trench evaluation of the Phase 1 area was negative however (Jarvis 2014). Subsequent trial trench evaluation for Phase 2 revealed medieval remains comprising ditches, gullies, pits, cobbled surfaces and ephemeral ironstone structures. A range of artefacts were recovered including pottery of dating from the 10th or 11th centuries into the 13th or 14th centuries (Jarvis 2015).

Pile construction and a raised ground level is to be used for the construction of the proposed dwellings. This will protect the archaeological deposits with a minimum buffer zone between the ground beams and archaeology of 0.5m (see table) Archaeological attendance is to take place to monitor the ground-works to ensure the minimal impacts are as specified.



Figure 3: Plan of development area for Phase 2 (highlighted in red)

Archaeological Objectives

The principle aims of the archaeological excavation were:

- To identify the presence/absence of 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 ground works.
- To produce an archive and report of any results.

Within the stated project objectives, the principal aim of the recording is to establish the nature, extent, date, depth, and significance of the heritage assets within their local and regional context.

Methodology

The archaeological strip map and sample excavation covers *c.*335 sq metres over two areas of land with Phase 2 known to contain archaeological features, identified by trial trenching undertaken during 2015 (Jarvis). This report was initially intended to focus on the results from Phase 2 where significant archaeological remains were found in the form of medieval remains comprising ditches, gullies, pits, cobbled surfaces together with ephemeral ironstone structures. The extent of these remains together with the unstable geology and made ground prompted

Eden Homes Limited to use pile construction and a raised ground level for the construction of the proposed dwellings. This will protect the archaeological deposits with a minimum buffer zone between the ground beams and archaeology of 0.5m (see table). Therefore archaeological attendance was only required to ensure the specified minimal impacts during the ground-works are adhered to. Recording will be undertaken if found to be necessary.



Figure 4: Views of Phase 2 looking north



Figure 5: Placard for each plot displaying specifications

In the event that any archaeologically sensitive areas were disturbed during monitoring of ground-works archaeological remains would be examined by hand cleaning with all archaeological deposits/features located planned at an appropriate scale and sample-excavated by hand as appropriate to establishing the stratigraphic and chronological sequence of the site. All plans would be tied into the Ordnance Survey National Grid and spot heights were taken as appropriate.

Sections across excavated archaeological features would be drawn at an appropriate scale and tied to the National Grid. Each context would be recorded on a standard ULAS pro-forma context recording sheet. A photographic record of the excavation was prepared, illustrating in both detail and general context the principal features and finds discovered. Colour digital and 35mm black and white photographs were taken throughout the excavation. The photographic record also included 'working shots' to illustrate more generally the nature of the archaeological operation mounted.

In consultation with ULAS's environmental specialist, a limited programme of soil sampling for archaeobotanical analysis may implemented as part of the recording strategy if the archaeological remains were disturbed All work followed the approved written scheme of investigation (Clay 2013) and the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Code of Conduct* and adhered to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Excavation* (2008) and the *Guidelines for Archaeological Work in Leicestershire and Rutland* (LMARS).

Results

Phase 2

The monitoring of the ground-works consisted of extensive made up ground which at the time of the visit had minimal disturbance. The visit entailed a consultation with the client explaining what is being done to avoid penetrating the archaeological deposits below. Each of the eleven plots (7 to 15) with 13 not being used had a minimum 0.55 metres above the archaeological remains for Plot 11. A maximum difference of 1.68 metres between construction and the archaeological remains is being applied to Plot 8. With exception to plot 9 & 10 which have no potential impact onto archaeological remains with zero difference, the other plots (7, 12, 14, & 15 have more than a metres difference between the construction and the archaeology. The client has placed small placards next to each plot showing each specification and the raised floor level above the ground surface. With exception to the piling and footings into the made up ground, no intrusion into the archaeological remains was taking place and the conditions of planning is being adhered to. A walk over of the construction site exhibited construction specifications on a placard for each plot. A number of photographs were taken as records.

<p>PLOT 7</p> <p>DATUM @ MANHOLE 70.58</p> <p>PLOT 7</p> <p>TOP OF ARCHAEOLOGY 69.07</p> <p>FINISHED FLOOR LEVEL 71.08 (500MM ABOVE DATUM)</p> <p>TOP OF RING BEAM 70.58 (500MM BELOW FFL)</p> <p>BASE OF RING BEAM 70.18 (900MM BELOW FFL)</p> <p>DIFFERENCE TO ARCHAEOLOGY 1.11</p>
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<p>PLOT 8</p> <p>DATUM @ MANHOLE 70.58</p> <p>PLOT 8</p> <p>TOP OF ARCHAEOLOGY 68.90</p> <p>FINISHED FLOOR LEVEL 71.48 (900MM ABOVE DATUM)</p> <p>TOP OF RING BEAM 70.98 (500MM BELOW FFL)</p> <p>BASE OF RING BEAM 70.58 (900MM BELOW FFL)</p> <p>DIFFERENCE TO ARCHAEOLOGY 1.68</p>
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<p><u>PLOT 12</u> DATUM @ MANHOLE 70.58 <u>PLOT 12</u> TOP OF ARCHAEOLOGY 71.48 FINISHED FLOOR LEVEL 73.48 (2900MM ABOVE DATUM) TOP OF RING BEAM 72.98 (500MM BELOW FFL) BASE OF RING BEAM 72.58 (900MM BELOW FFL) DIFFERENCE TO ARCHAEOLOGY 1.1</p>	<p><u>PLOT 14 & 15</u> DATUM @ MANHOLE 70.58 <u>PLOT 14 & 15</u> TOP OF ARCHAEOLOGY 70.50 FINISHED FLOOR LEVEL 72.53 (1950MM ABOVE DATUM) TOP OF RING BEAM 72.03 (500MM BELOW FFL) BASE OF RING BEAM 71.63 (900MM BELOW FFL) DIFFERENCE TO ARCHAEOLOGY 1.13</p>
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Figure 6: Specifications located next to each plot with potential disturbance to archaeological remains

Conclusion

The extensive medieval remains recorded during the evaluation, was undisturbed by ground-works. This will continue as long the client continues with the agreed difference of 0.50 metres difference between the ground beams and archaeological horizon. The specifications for each plot were fully displayed for each dwelling construction. The minimum difference of 0.50 metres between the archaeological horizon and the ground beams are more than exceeded enabling the archaeological remains to be preserved *in-situ*.

Archive

The site archive consists of one watching brief form, with one digital photograph contact sheet.

Publication

Since 2004 ULAS has reported the results of all archaeological work to the *Online Access to the Index of archaeological investigations* (OASIS) database held by the Archaeological Data Service (ADS) at the University of York (see Table 1).

Table 1: Summary of OASIS information

Project OASIS no.	universi1-275862
Project Name	Riverside Farm Phase 2, Melton Mowbray
Project Type	Strip, map, and sample/ monitoring visit
Project Manager	Dr Patrick Clay
Project Supervisor	Jamie Patrick
Previous/Future work	2015 trial trench evaluation
Current Land Use	Rough ground/ pasture
Development Type	Residential
Reason for Investigation	NPPF
Position in the Planning Process	Planning condition
Site Co-ordinates	SK 738 189
Start/end dates of field work	25/01/17
Archive Recipient	Leicestershire Museum Service
Study Area	0.75 ha

A summary of the work has also been submitted for publication in the local archaeological journal, the *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* (Morris 2014, 176-178).

Acknowledgements

ULAS would like to extend its thanks to the client Eden Homes Ltd. for their assistance and co-operation through the visit. The site visit was undertaken by Jamie Patrick and the project was managed for ULAS by Patrick Clay.

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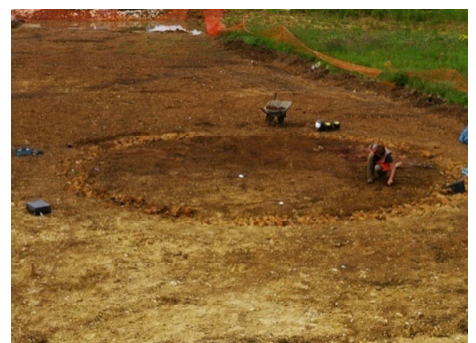
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