



UNIVERSITY OF
LEICESTER

Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological
Watching Brief at
Packhorse Bridge,
Leicester Road,
Anstey,
Leicestershire
NGR: SK 5563
0895**



Roger Kipling

ULAS Report No 2017-047

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at Packhorse Bridge, Leicester Road,
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Roger Kipling

For: Alliance Consulting Solutions Limited

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Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken in December 2016 by University of Leicester Archaeological Services on behalf of Alliance Consulting Solutions Limited following dredging operations of the Rothley Brook at Packhorse Bridge, Leicester Road, Leicestershire, a scheduled monument (SM). Two vertical timbers were observed adjacent to the stonework of Pier 1 of the bridge and may relate to the bridge's original construction. No other archaeological deposits were observed or artefacts recovered during the dredging operations.

The site archive will be deposited with Leicestershire County Council under the accession number X.A137.2017.

Introduction

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken in December 2016 by University of Leicester Archaeological Services on behalf of Alliance Consulting Solutions Limited at Packhorse Bridge, Leicester Road, Anstey, Leicestershire, a scheduled monument (SM), in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Section 12 Enhancing and Conserving the Historic Environment). The fieldwork specified below was intended to provide a record of the archaeological remains in mitigation of the impact of the proposed development.

The fieldwork arose as a requirement by Historic England for a scheme of work comprising archaeological observation, investigation, recording, analysis and publication (a 'Watching Brief'). The work comprised the supervision and recording of work in proximity to the bridge including where the contractors proposed to desilt by hand close to cut waters to ensure no damage to the Scheduled Monument or associated fabric to recover and/or record anything of interest off the removed silts following dredging.

The archaeological watching brief was undertaken in accordance with Following National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF): Section 12 Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment. All work was undertaken in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) Code of Conduct (2014) and adhered to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation and Archaeological excavations* (2014).

Site Description, Topography and Geology

The archaeological investigation took place during the groundworks associated with the de-silting of Rothley Brook in the vicinity of Packhorse Bridge, Leicester Road, Anstey, Leicestershire (Figures 1 & 2). Packhorse Bridge is a Scheduled Monument which lies on the boundary of Leicester (Beaumont Leys ward) and Anstey.

Mitigation in the form of archaeological attendance and recording was requested by Historic England to ensure that the Scheduled Monument was not damaged and that any archaeological items be investigated and recorded.

Packhorse Bridge spans Rothley Brook and lies at a height of approximately 42m aOD. The Ordnance Survey Geological Survey of Great Britain Sheet indicates that the underlying geology of the site is likely to be Alluvium - Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel.

Archaeological and Historical Background

The Packhorse Bridge is a post-medieval bridge located on the south side of London Road, the route of the original road from Leicester. The Scheduled Monument (LE35; NHLE1005078) dates to the 16th or 17th century and is of slate and rubble build with red brick coping to the parapet. The bridge has five rounded niches in parapet.

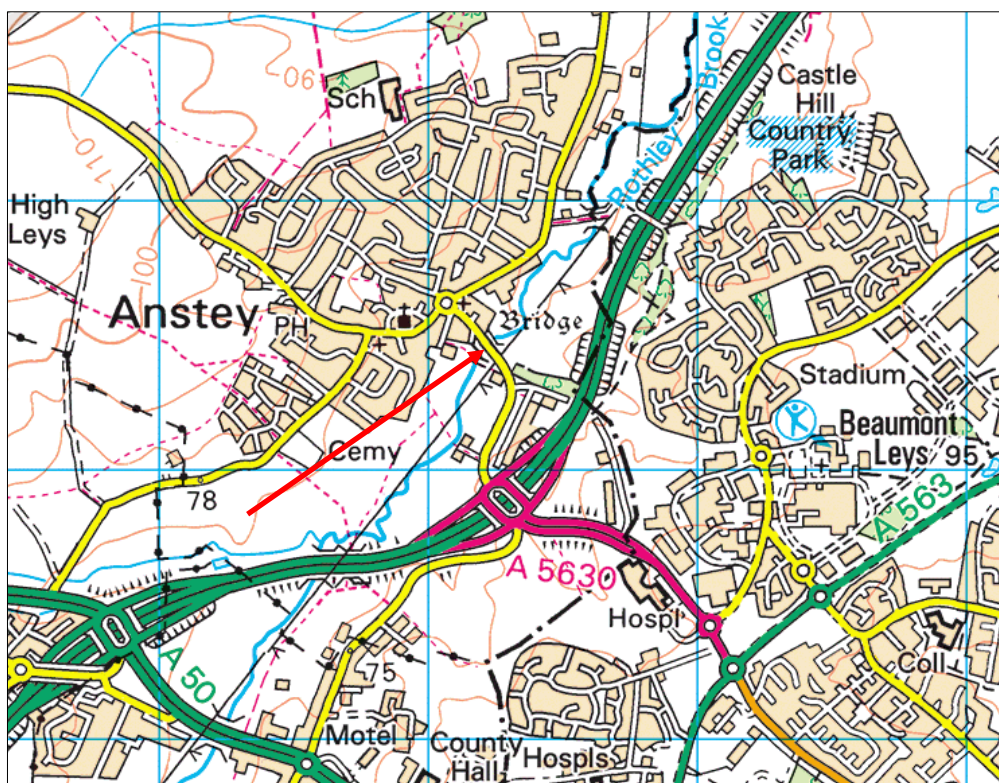


Figure 1: Site location

Archaeologists (CIfA) Code of Conduct (2014), and adhered to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological watching briefs* (2014).

The Written Scheme of Investigation (ULAS 2017) approved by Historic England was for a programme of archaeological observation, investigation, recording, analysis and publication (a ‘Watching Brief’). This would comprise the supervision and recording of work in proximity to the bridge including where the contractors propose to desilt by hand close to cut waters to ensure no damage to SM or associated fabric and recover/record anything of archaeological interest from the removed silts following dredging.

Results

The programme of archaeological observation, investigation and recording (a ‘Watching brief’) consisted of the observation of desilting work in the environs of the bridge via a combination of mechanical excavator and hand work. A mechanical excavator equipped with a 1.6m toothless bucket excavated river silt from the river bed upstream and downstream of the bridge (Figure 3), whilst hand excavation was employed to remove debris in close proximity to the bridge piers (Figure 4).

Following the provisions of an S42 Licence a metal detector was employed in order to scan the river silts prior to excavation and following removal to the site compound (Figure 5). No archaeological evidence was forthcoming from this process.



Figure 3: Dredging in progress; view southeast



Figure 4: Hand clearance of river silts; view looking south-west



Figure 5: Metal detector scanning of river silts

Hand excavation of 0.3-0.5m thick riverine silt accumulations against bridge Pier 1, located between the first and second arches on the upstream (southern) side of the bridge, exposed two eroded vertical timber posts positioned in close proximity to the apex point of the pier stonework (Figures 6-8). Both posts were heavily eroded but appeared to be of square profile, measuring 10cm x 10cm and with around 0.35m

visible above the waterline. Functionally, the proximity of the timbers to the bridge would suggest their having formed part of the original bridge construction or repair work, possibly representing shuttering associated with construction of the bridge pier.

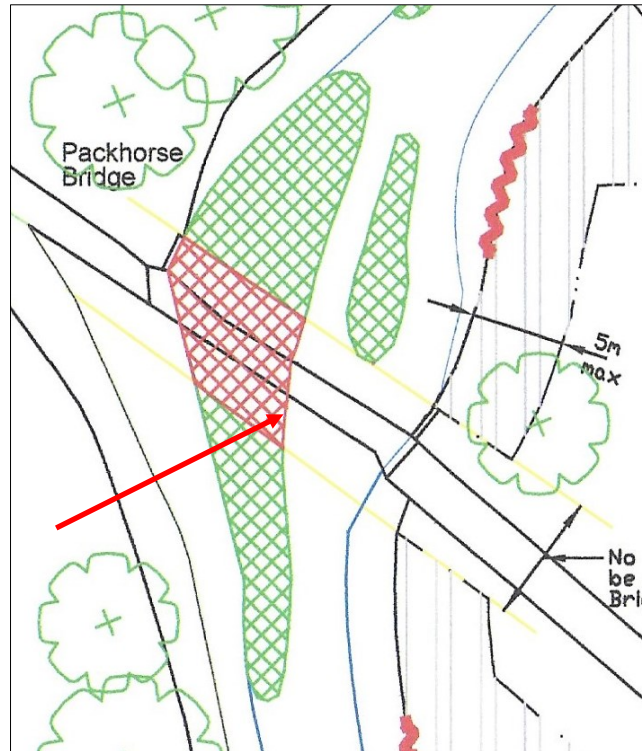


Figure 6: Location of timbers (arrowed)



Figure 7: Hand clearance of river silt around Pier 1 with timber visible; view looking south-east



Figure 8: Pier 1 with timbers visible; view looking south-west

Discussion and Conclusions

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken in December 2016 by University of Leicester Archaeological Services on behalf of Alliance Consulting Solutions Limited following dredging operations of the Rothley Brook at Packhorse Bridge, Leicester Road, Leicestershire, a scheduled monument (SM). Two vertical timbers were observed adjacent to the stonework of Pier 1 of the bridge and may relate to the bridge's original construction. No other archaeological deposits or artefacts were observed during the silt dredging operations.

Archive and Publications

The site archive (X.A137 2017), consisting of paper and photographic records, will be housed with Leicestershire County Council.

The archive consists of:

- 3 watching brief record sheets
- photographic record indices
- 25 digital photographs
- Risk assessment form

Publication

A version of the summary (see above) will appear in due course in the *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society*.

Acknowledgements

Roger Kipling of ULAS undertook the archaeological evaluation on behalf of Alliance Consulting Solutions Ltd. The project was managed by Patrick Clay.

Bibliography

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04/04/2017

OASIS Data Entry

PROJECT DETAILS	OASIS Number	universi1-284464		
	Project Name	Packhorse Bridge, Leicester Road, Anstey, Leicestershire		
	Start/end dates of field work	08-12-2016 - 10-12-2016		
	Previous/Future Work	No		
	Project Type	Watching brief		
	Site Status	Scheduled Monument		
	Current Land Use	recreational		
	Monument Type/Period	medieval bridge		
	Significant Finds/Period	post medieval timbers		
	Development Type	Desilting of river		
	Reason for Investigation	NPPF		
	Position in the Planning Process	Planning condition		
	Planning Ref.	unknown		
PROJECT LOCATION	Site Address/Postcode	Packhorse Bridge, Leicester Road, Anstey, Leicestershire LE7 7AT		
	Study Area	0.5ha		
	Site Coordinates	SK5521608486		
	Height OD	42m OD		
PROJECT CREATORS	Organisation	ULAS		
	Project Brief Originator	Local Planning Authority (NCC)		
	Project Design Originator	ULAS		
	Project Manager	Patrick Clay		
	Project Director/Supervisor	Roger Kipling		
	Sponsor/Funding Body	Alliance Consulting Solutions Limited		
PROJECT ARCHIVE		Physical	Digital	Paper
	Recipient	ULAS	ULAS	ULAS
	ID (Acc. No.)	X.A137 2017	X.A137 2017	X.A137 2017
	Contents	nonme	Photos	Field notes
PROJECT BIBLIOGRAPHY	Type	Grey Literature (unpublished)		
	Title	<i>An Archaeological Watching Brief at Packhorse Bridge, Anstey, Leicestershire</i>		
	Author	Kipling, R.		
	Other bibliographic details	Richards, G., 2007 <i>Standing Building Survey and watching brief at King William Bridge, Anstey, Leicestershire</i> ULAS Report No 2007-160		
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