



UNIVERSITY OF
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Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological Strip, Plan and
Sample excavation at land to the east of
Hall Farm, Ashby Road,
Ravenstone, Leicestershire
NGR: SK 439948 313850**

Donald Clark




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An Archaeological Strip, Plan and Sample excavation at land to the east of Hall Farm, Ashby Road, Ravenstone, Leicestershire

NGR: SK 39962 13878

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For: Keller Construction Ltd.

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Contents

Summary	1
Introduction.....	1
Historical and Archaeological Background	3
Archaeological Objectives	4
Methodology	5
Results.....	6
Conclusion	7
Acknowledgements.....	9
Publication	9
Bibliography	10

Figures

Figure 1: Location of Ravenstone village within Leicestershire, United Kingdom	2
Figure 2: Location of site within Ravenstone village	3
Figure 3: Proposed development with position of evaluation trenches	4
Figure 4: Proposed development with potential area requiring investigation outlined in red	5
Figure 5: Development area with positions of evaluation trenches 1, 2 and 3, excavated area and projected spread of rubble	6
Figure 6: Ravenstone showing position of Hall Farm, prior to demolition, in relation to development site	7
Figure 7: Ravenstone following the demolition of Hall Farm	8
Figure 8: Section of investigated area showing mixed rubble layer, looking south-west	8
Figure 9: Rubble spread embedded into natural substratum, looking south-east	9

An Archaeological Strip, Plan and Sample Excavation at land to the east of Hall Farm, Ashby Road, Ravenstone, Leicestershire

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Summary

An Archaeological strip, plan and sample excavation was carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on land East of Hall Farm, and South of Ashby Road, Ravenstone, Leicestershire (SK 39962 13878) on the 4th and 5th of May 2017.

The work was in advance of a proposed residential development (P.A.16/00020) of eight dwellings with associated access road and services. Previous trial trenching (Patrick 2016), although devoid of archaeological deposits had recorded heavily disturbed and made up ground, chiefly to the north-east of the assessment area with extensive amounts of re-deposited natural substratum in Trench 2. A strip map and sample excavation was requested by the planning authority to verify whether this deposit had a relationship with Ravenstone Hall, to the north, and the associated landscaping works of the 18th century.

This excavation indicated that the disturbance contained 18th century brick and other associated building materials and, on the basis of local knowledge, it was believed to have come from the demolition of an earlier farmhouse, also called Hall Farm, which was demolished in the 1970s, with the debris used to consolidate the entrance to the field.

The archive for this work will be deposited with Leicestershire County Council Museums with Accession Number X.A52.2016.

Introduction

University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) were commissioned by Keller Construction Ltd. to carry out an archaeological strip, plan and sample exaction on land east of Hall Farm, and south of Ashby Road, Ravenstone, Leicestershire (SK 439948 313850). This work was carried out on the 4th and 5th May 2017 and is in accordance with NPPF Section 12: Enhancing and Conserving the Historic Environment and addressed requirements of Leicestershire County Council as archaeological advisors to North-West Leicestershire District Council.

As shown by the Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment record (HER), the application area lies some 330 metres west of the medieval settlement core and conservation area of Ravenstone Village (**MLE 4831**). There are archaeological remains dating from the prehistoric through to the medieval and post-medieval periods in the vicinity (LaCombe, 2016). There was therefore some potential for archaeological remains to be present within the application area.

Site Location, Details and Geology

The village of Ravenstone is east of Ashby-de-la-Zouch and west of Coalville. The development area is directly east of Hall Farm and associated farm buildings, along the south

side of the unclassified Ashby Road immediately to the west of Ravenstone village. The land is currently pasture and used for the grazing of a horse.

The field is bounded on all sides with post and rail fence, hedgerows, an old brick wall, and conifers which separates the land from the recently built houses on Hall Gardens. The site is sub-rectangular in shape covering an area of *c.* 0.6 hectares and lies at an approximate height of *c.* 134m aOD gradually sloping down from the north at Ashby Road before levelling out to the south.



Figure 1: Location of Ravenstone village within Leicestershire, United Kingdom

Reproduced from the Explorer 141 Kettering, Corby & surrounding area 1:20 000 map by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright 2005. All rights reserved. Licence number AL 100029495

The village of Ravenstone is east of Ashby-de-la-Zouch and west of Coalville. The development area is directly east of Hall Farm and associated farm buildings, along the south side of the unclassified Ashby Road immediately to the west of Ravenstone village. The land is currently pasture and used for the grazing of a horse.

The field is bounded on all sides with post and rail fence, hedgerows, an old brick wall, and conifers which separates the land from the recently built houses on Hall Gardens. The site is

sub-rectangular in shape covering an area of *c.* 0.6 hectares and lies at an approximate height of *c.* 134m aOD gradually sloping down from the north at Ashby Road before levelling out to the south.

The Geological Survey of England & Wales, Sheet 155 shows the site to lie on Taporley Siltstone formation, siltstone, mudstone and sandstone. Sand and gravel is generally present to the south of the site (river terrace deposits).



Figure 2: Location of site within Ravenstone village

Historical and Archaeological Background

A desk-based assessment had been undertaken for the assessment area and within its wider location (LaCombe, 2016). The Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record (HER) shows that the application area is located just 330 metres to the west of the historic core of the village of Ravenstone (**MLE4831**). To the south of Ashby Road and pre-dominantly to the north-west of the site, archaeological finds through field walking have been recovered including flint and pottery dating from the Neolithic/Bronze-age (**MLE 10572**), along with flints found just south of Ashby Road (**MLE10576**) and south of Heather Lane (**MLE21468**). Air reconnaissance has revealed a cropmark in the form of a probable Iron-Age enclosure and other crop-marks to the south-east and north-east (**MLE4813**) with two pit alignments aligned south-east to north-east and east to west (**MLE 16881, MIE17259**) to the north of the site. South of Ashby Road to the north-west of the site lies the deserted medieval village of Alton (**MLE 4814**) with large scatters of medieval and post-medieval pottery recorded during field walking at Alton Grange Farm (**MLE 19760**). On the north side of Ashby Road and opposite the development area lies the brick built 18th Ravenstone Hall which was originally built during the 17th century. The ground is noticeably higher on the north-east corner of the assessment area and aerial photography has recorded these linear earthworks to be garden features / landscaping associated with the hall (**MLE 4809**). Traces of ridge and furrow earthworks have also been noted. Open cast coal operations between 1982 and 1996 have taken place along this stretch of the Sence Valley covering 186 hectares (**MLE 20854**).

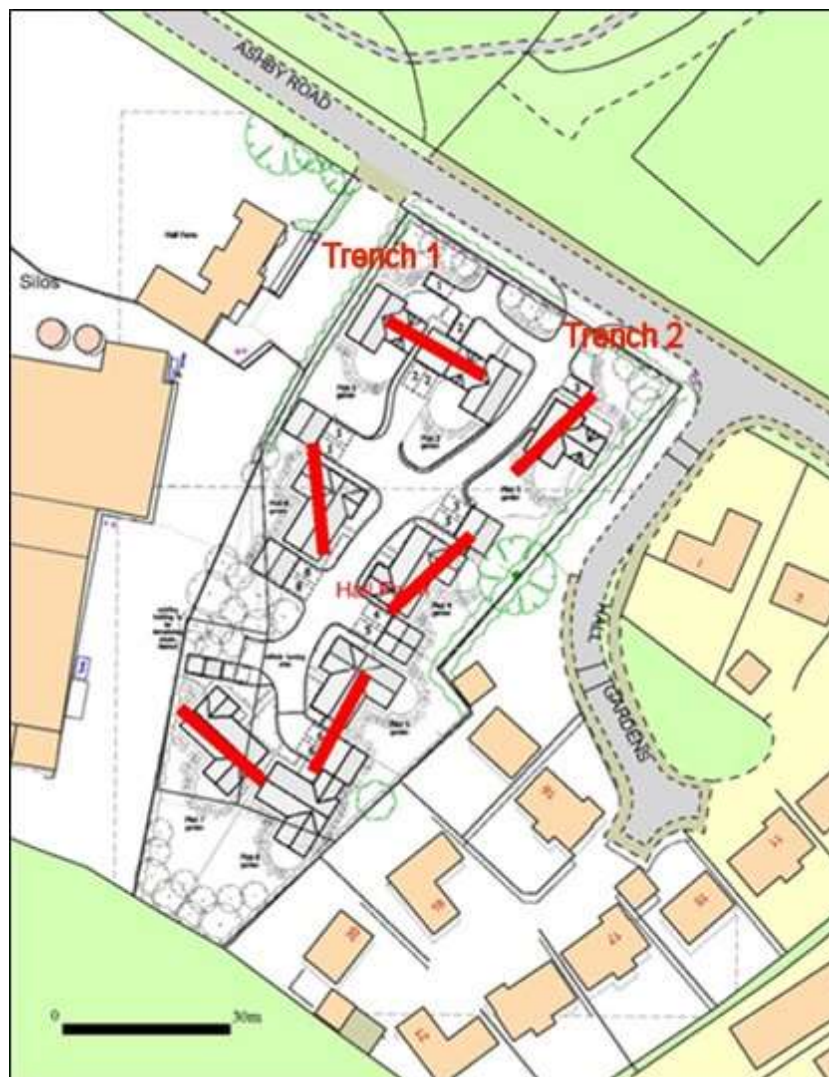


Figure 3: Proposed development with position of evaluation trenches (from Patrick 2016)

Archaeological Objectives

The main objectives of the archaeological work 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 strip, plan and sample is 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.

In particular the archaeological work was identified as having the potential to provide further information about the demolished structure/structures on site, including its date, form and function and the possible relationship with Ravenstone Hall (**MLE 4809**) and associated landscaping works of the 18th century.

Methodology

All work followed the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CifA) *Code of Conduct* (2014a) and *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (2014b). It followed the *Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Work* (hereinafter WSI) prepared by ULAS (ULAS 2017).



Figure 4: Proposed development with potential area requiring investigation outlined in red

The WSI proposed stripping an area (Fig. 4) on the north of the field around trenches 1 and 2 to establish the extent of the rubble spread. The work was carried out under archaeological supervision using a JCB 3CX mechanical digger and a 14ton 360 excavator.

Results

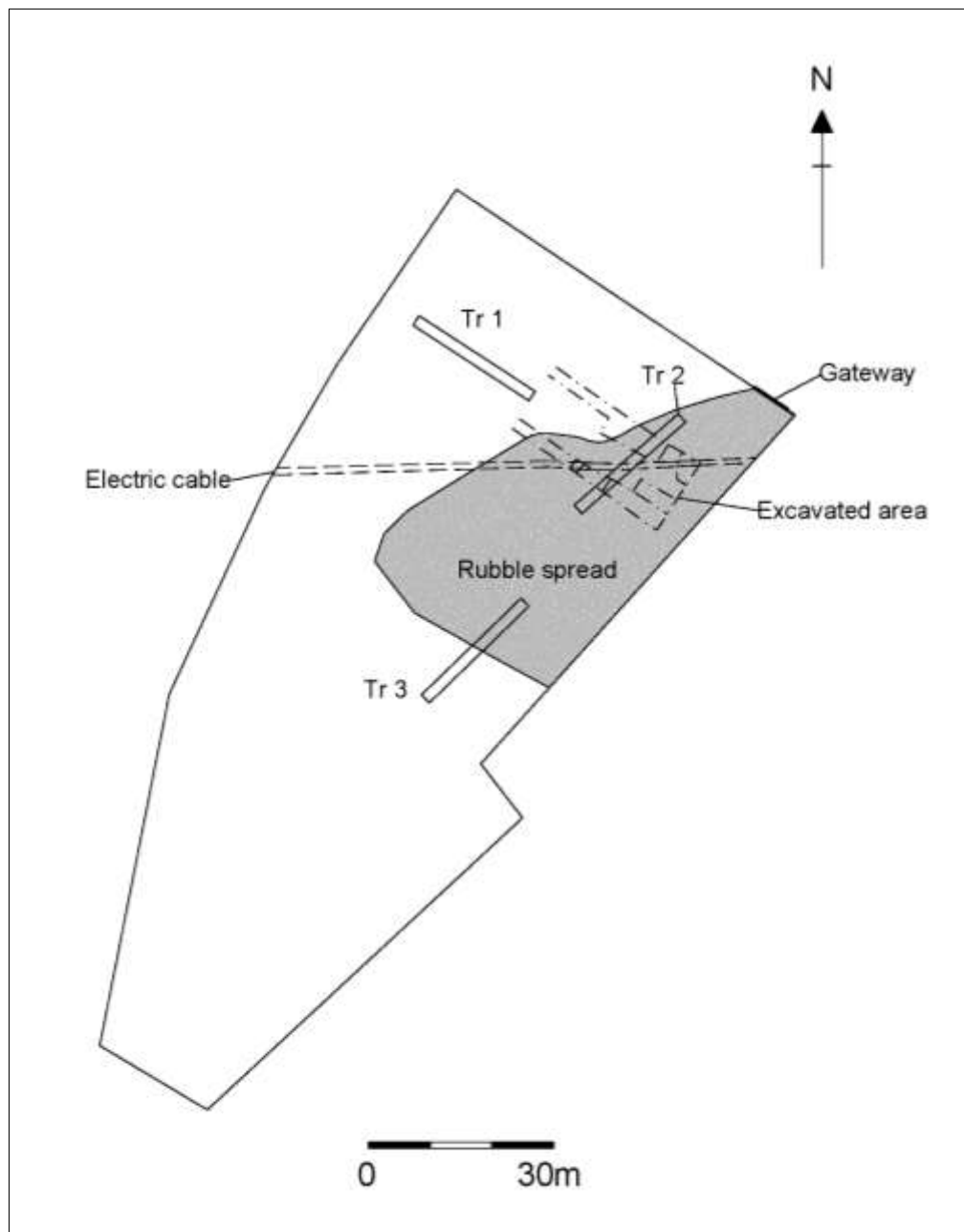


Figure 5: Development area with positions of evaluation trenches 1, 2 and 3, excavated area and projected spread of rubble

The targeted investigation in the north-east of the development area revealed a shallow topsoil (0.20-0.25m) which lay above a deeper layer (between 0.95m and 1.10m deep) of a mixture of redeposited natural substratum, topsoil, subsoil and building rubble. The rubble contained 18th century brick, tile, stone and general building material. On the basis of local knowledge the rubble had been deposited at the entrance to the field in the mid 1970's using material from the then recently demolished Hall Farm (Fig. 6), which had been removed to make way for the housing development of St. Michaels Drive, Ravenstone (Fig. 7). The name, Hall Farm, has been reused by the current farm which adjoins the development area to the west. The

development area had previously been used to store vehicles associated with nearby open cast mining and the field had been badly rutted, hence the need to consolidate the field entrance.

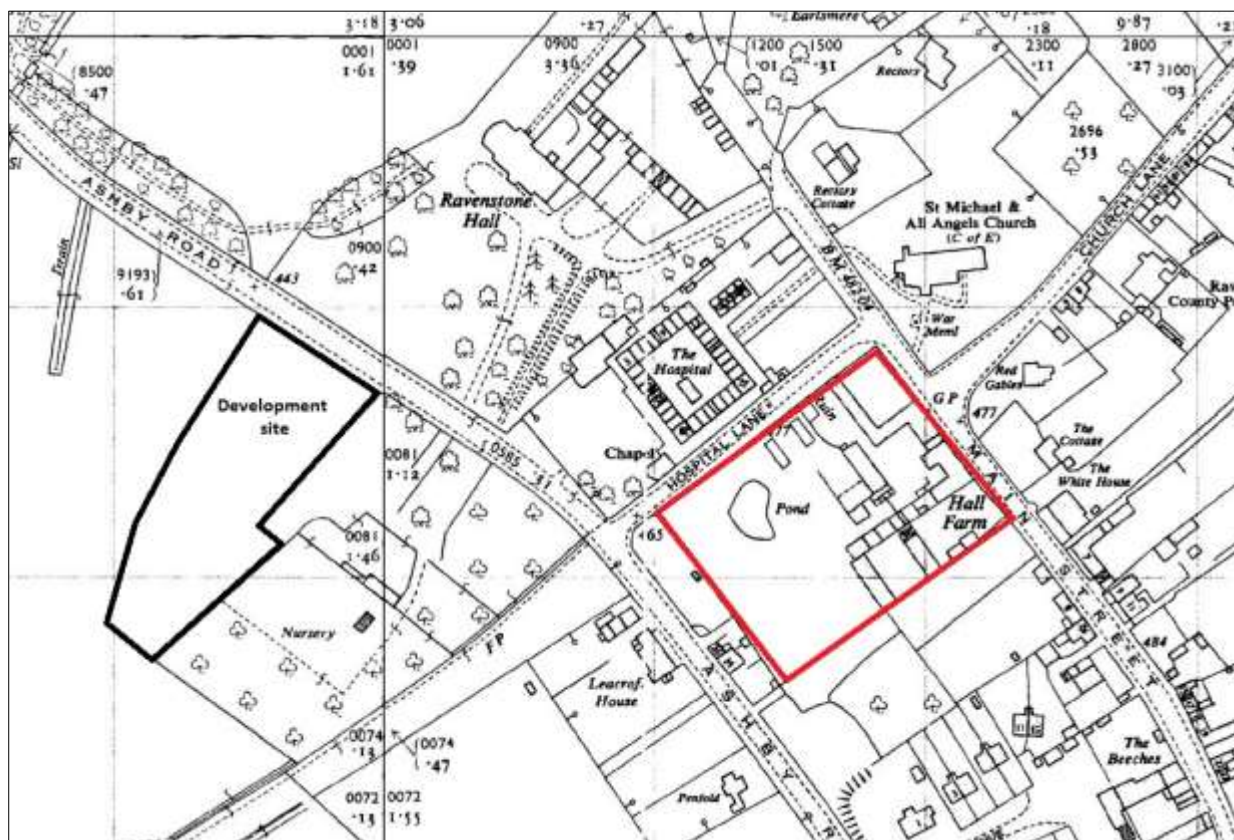


Figure 6: Ravenstone showing position of Hall Farm, prior to demolition, in relation to development site

Conclusion

Following archaeological investigation at the proposed development site, no archaeological features or deposits were detected. A spread of 18th century rubble was established to have been deposited upon the site in the 1970's to consolidate the disturbed field entrance. In view of this following consultation with the Senior Planning archaeologist at Leicestershire County Council it was agreed that further excavation was not necessary.



Figure 7: Ravenstone following the demolition of Hall Farm



Figure 8: Section of investigated area showing mixed rubble layer, looking south-west



Figure 9: Rubble spread embedded into natural substratum, looking south-east

Acknowledgements

ULAS would like to thank Mr David Land for his co-operation for allowing access onto his land. Also thanks due to Keller Construction Ltd for commissioning ULAS to undertake the project. The project was managed by Patrick Clay and the fieldwork was carried out by the author, also of ULAS.

Publication

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.

OASIS Number	Universi1-286708
Project Name	Archaeological Strip, Plan and Sample at Land to the East of Hall Farm, South of Ashby Road, Ravenstone, Leicestershire
Project Type	Strip, Plan and Sample
Project Manager	Patrick Clay
Project Supervisor	Donald Clark
Previous/Future work	DBA, Evaluation trenching
Current Land Use	Pasture
Development Type	Residential Development

Reason for Investigation	NPPF
Position in the Planning Process	As a condition
Site Co ordinates	SK 39962 13878
Start/end dates of field work	4th May to 5th May 2017
Archive Recipient	Leicestershire County Council Museums
Study Area	0.6 hectares

Bibliography

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ULAS 2017 *Written Scheme of Investigation for Strip, plan and sample. Land to the east of Hall Farm, South of Ashby Road, Ravenstone, Leicestershire.* ULAS 17/591

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