



UNIVERSITY OF
LEICESTER

Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological Watching Brief
conducted during groundworks at 54,
Main Street, Houghton on the Hill
Leicestershire.**

NGR: SK 67872 03420

Sue Henderson



ULAS Report No. 2016 -140

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54, Main Street, Houghton on the Hill Leicestershire.**

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Sue Henderson

October 2016

Client: Mr Patric Phelan

Planning application no. 16/00395/FUL

Filename/Version	Checked by	Date
2016-140	Patrick Clay	15/08/2016

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ULAS Report Number 2016-140

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Accession No. :- X.A97.2016

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Archaeological Attendance conducted during groundworks at 54, Main Street, Houghton on the Hill, Leicestershire.

Sue Henderson.

Summary

Archaeological Attendance was carried out by the University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) during groundworks associated with the erection of a double garage with habitable first floor accommodation and a ground floor link to the dwelling at 54, Main Street, Houghton on the Hill, Leicestershire (SK 779 189).

The work was carried out on behalf of Mr Patric Phelan and involved archaeological attendance for inspection and recording during these groundworks. Four archaeological features were identified following ground reduction and trenching. A heavily truncated gully, running roughly north to south and central to the site, was recorded and included an assemblage of early post-medieval pottery. An adjacent post hole was undated. A truncated metalled surface was identified in section only and to the south-east of the site, potentially of medieval date. A pit, also heavily truncated, but more securely of medieval date was located to the north east of the site.

The archive will be deposited with the Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record under the accession number X.A97.2016

1. Introduction.

This document constitutes the final report of archaeological attendance carried out at 54, Main Street, Houghton on the Hill, Leicestershire (SK 67872 03420). The work was carried out on behalf of Mr Patric Phelan by the University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on the 9th of August 2016.

Planning permission has been granted for erection of a double garage with habitable accommodation at first floor level and a ground floor link to the dwelling at 54, Main Street, Houghton on the Hill (Planning Application No. 16/00395/FUL). Houghton on the Hill lies approximately seven miles from the centre of Leicester, the old core of the village lying to the south of the A47, Leicester to Uppingham road (Figure 1). Following National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Section 12 Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment (DCLG 2012), the Senior Planning Archaeologist at Leicestershire County Council, as advisor to the planning authority, has requested that archaeological attendance and recording be undertaken before and during groundworks.

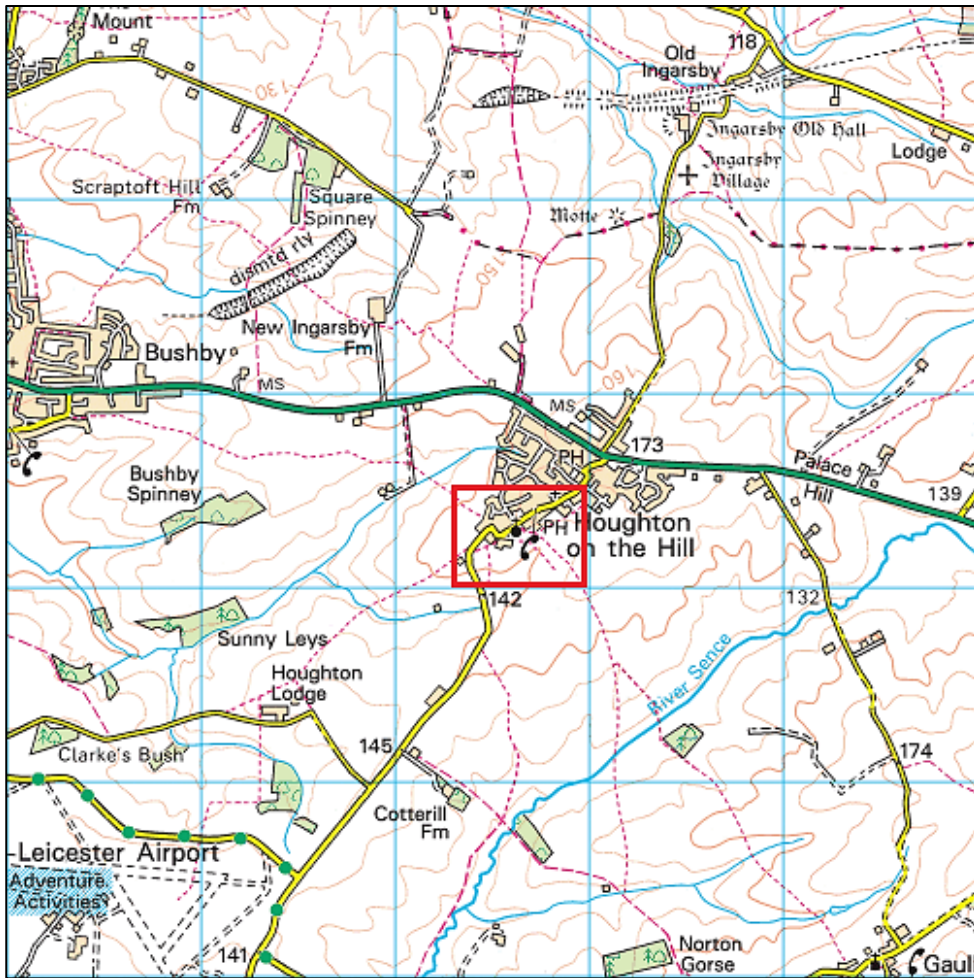


Figure 1. Site location

Reproduced from Explorer® 233 Leicester and Hinckley 1:25,000 OS map by permission of Ordnance Survey® on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright 2010. All rights reserved. Licence number AL 100029495

2. Geology and Topography

Main Street follows a kilometre long, indirect course through the village of Houghton on the Hill. The site, located in the south-western part of the village in close proximity to St. Catharine's church (Figure 2), is bounded to the south-east by pasture land. The proposed development area lies on the southern side of the house and covers approximately 140m² (Figure 3). The site lies at a height of c.525m O.D.

The Ordnance Survey Geological Survey of Great Britain, Sheet 156 (Leicester) indicates that the underlying geology of Houghton-on-the-Hill forms part of an island of sand and gravel in the clay belt east of Leicester (B.G.S OpenGeoscience).

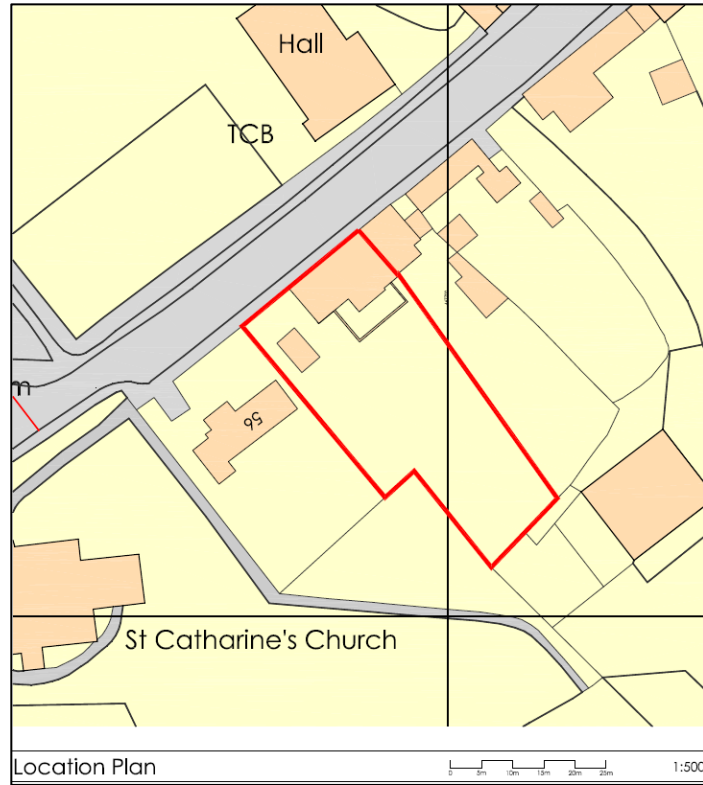


Figure 2. Site location within Houghton on the Hill (provided by the client)

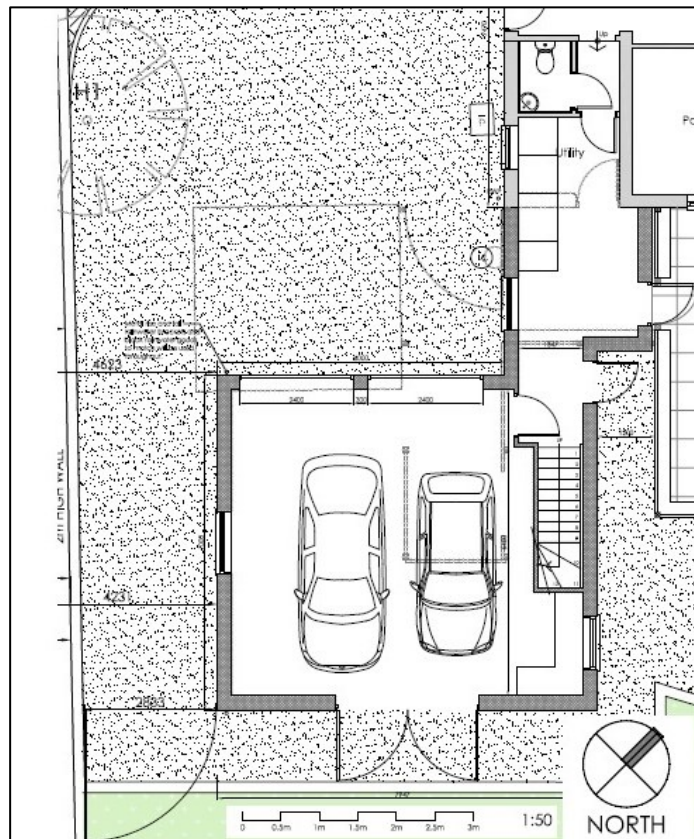


Figure 3. Development plans (provided by the client)

3. Background.

Houghton on the Hill was recorded as Hohtone in 1086 (Domesday Book) from the Old English meaning 'The settlement on the spur of the hill' (Bourne 2003). The village has a well recorded medieval history. The recorded population was 10 in 1086 and this had risen to 67 households by 1670 (Nichols 1815). The medieval historic settlement core of the village (**MLE16325**) is marked in the north-east by the presence of two mills. The 13th century church adjacent to the development site is an indication of medieval activity at this south-eastern part of the village. By the time of the 1841 census the population had risen to 451 and the borough records show that a well-developed and extensive suburb existed along Main Street in the post-medieval period. Most of the buildings in Main Street date from the early 19th Century and many are listed. An early post-medieval listed building, 41 Main Street lies to the east of the application area (**MLE13609**). Church House (**MLE16315**), located opposite the application area, is a three-bay house of the 16th century or earlier. The post-medieval Rectory (**MLE1361**) is located on Main Street, dating to 1856.

No archaeological sites have been recorded within the proposed application area. However, excavations in the vicinity have uncovered significant archaeological deposits producing Roman, Anglo-Saxon, medieval and post-medieval remains. Very few prehistoric remains have been unearthed in the village. Worked flint (**MLE16941**) was recovered from the west side of the village during the Stoughton Estate Fieldwalking Survey in the 1990s. A number of Roman finds located on the margins of the village, particularly to the south-west, indicate the presence of Roman occupation. There is some limited evidence of Anglo-Saxon activity to the south-west of the proposed development site (**MLE6152**).

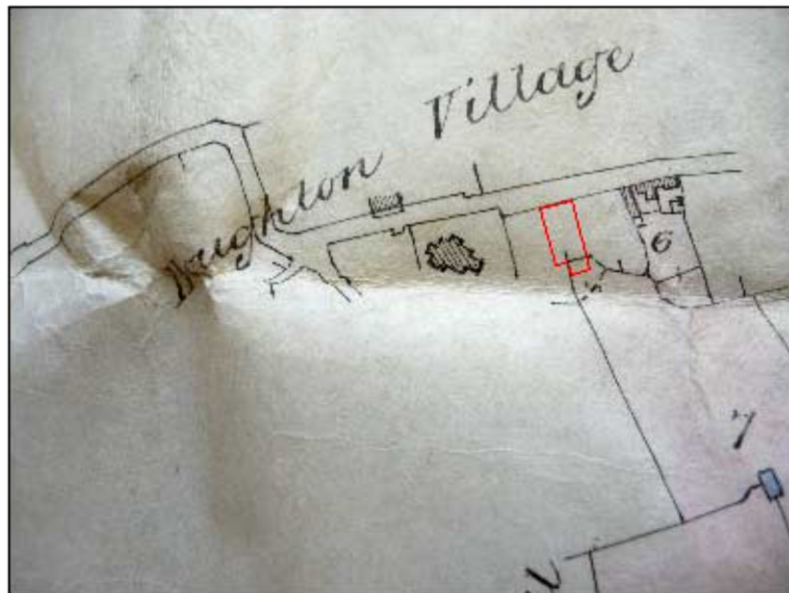


Figure 4. Map of 1871 showing Partition of Lands and Premises with approximate location of the development area outlined in red

An early map dating to 1871 (Figure 4), depicting tenancies of land in the village, shows the development area falling within open land. The area was listed as being under the ownership or tenancy of the rector of Houghton on the Hill.

The map of 1903 (Figure 5) shows the present building on a plot with an angled boundary and an area of sub divided land to the rear. The adjoining land to the south west is shown as wooded, possibly orchard and not part of the current plot

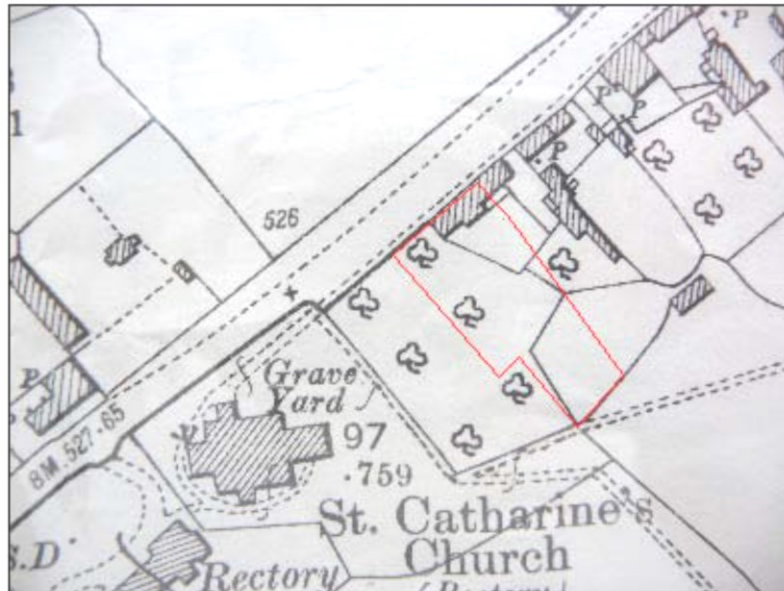


Figure 5. The 1903 Ordnance Survey XXXI.14 map. Scale 1:2500

By 1939 (Figure 6), the house had acquired a portion of extra land to the south-west, but not to the extent of the current boundaries. Field boundaries to the south and west still remained. Changes to the rear of the building had occurred.

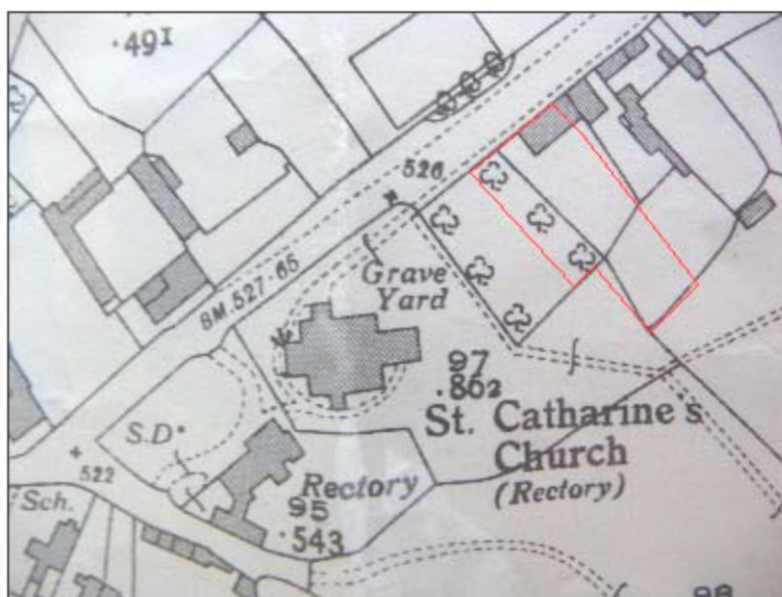


Figure 6. 1939 edition Ordnance Survey map (1:2500 scale); detail

By 1959 (Figure 7), the wooded plot to the south west had been developed and the present boundaries established. There was also a detached building, presumably a garage on the south western side of 54 Main Street.

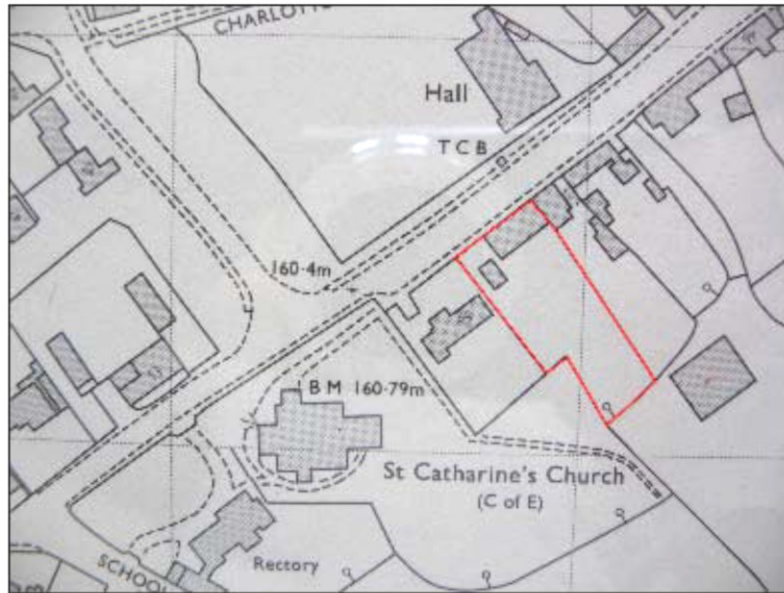


Figure 7. 1959 edition Ordnance Survey map (1:2500 scale); detail

None of these more recent maps show either the lean-to or the rear extension which clearly pre-date the 1959 map. These features can be seen in two photographs taken in 2011 (Figure 8) and show the site before conversion of the lean-to extension and garage, as well as landscaping and partial removal of the boundary wall. Figure 9 shows the present layout of the development site and after these changes had been made.



Figure 8. Photographs of the development site taken in 2011



Figure 9. The current layout of the development site

4. Archaeological Objectives

The aims of the archaeological observation, attendance and, as appropriate, investigation, 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 record any archaeological deposits to be affected by the ground works.
- To establish the relationship of any remains found to the surrounding contemporary landscape.
- To recover artefacts and ecofacts for comparison with other assemblages and results
- To produce an archive and report of any results.

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

While the nature, extent and quality of archaeological remains within the areas of investigation for the project remained unknown until archaeological work was undertaken, it was possible to determine some initial objectives derived from *East Midlands Heritage: An updated research agenda and strategy for the Historic Environment of the East Midlands* (Knight et al. 2012) and *The Archaeology of the East Midlands: An Archaeological Resource Assessment and Research Agenda* (Cooper 2006).

The archaeological work was identified as having the potential to contribute towards the questions in sections 5, 6, 7, and 8 of the Updated Research Agenda and in particular could contribute to Research Objectives:

5H to investigate the landscape context of rural settlements

6C to review the evidence for developing settlement hierarchies

7E to investigate the morphology of rural settlements

7I to investigate the development of the open-field system and medieval woodland management.

8E to identify agricultural improvements of the 16th to 18th centuries.

5. Methodology

The initial work of the removal of the garage structure and the underlying concrete slab, and the peripheral paving and other overburden was not observed. The stripping of the remainder of topsoil and the digging of foundation trenches was, however, observed and was completed using an 88MR 360 midi mechanical excavator fitted with both 1.2m and 0.45m toothless ditching buckets. All exposed areas, sections and spoil heaps were visually inspected for features and finds. Any archaeological deposits seen to be present were excavated and recorded as appropriate. All work adhered to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologist's (CifA) *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* and the *Guidelines for Archaeological work in Leicestershire and Rutland* (LMARS 1997).

6. Results

Notwithstanding the removal of the concrete garage plinth, stripping of overburden for the footprint of the new building revealed a previously well disturbed area. Drainage pipes and manholes had been inserted in the area close to the house in the recent conversion of the lean-to extension. A large soakaway had also been inserted running from the conservatory to the southern corner of the new building plot (Figures 10 and 11).



Figure 10. Footprint of the new building after removal of overburden, looking west.



Figure 11. Detail of the soakaway in the south-eastern corner

The topsoil was generally a dark greyish brown mixed deposit with frequent limestone, flint and sandstone fragments. The subsoil, a mid-greenish brown silty clay with frequent pebbles and limestone fragments, varied in depth across the site. Removal of these soil layers revealed a mixed natural geology, there being bands of a reddish brown sandy clay, a greenish brown clay with chalk and ironstone components and a yellowish brown clayey sand with frequent occurrence of limestone, chalk and flint (Figure 12).



Figure 12. The western edge of site showing topsoil and subsoil layers.

Stripping in the central area revealed a very truncated post-hole [1] (2) and a gully [3] and (4) (Figures 13; 14 and 18).

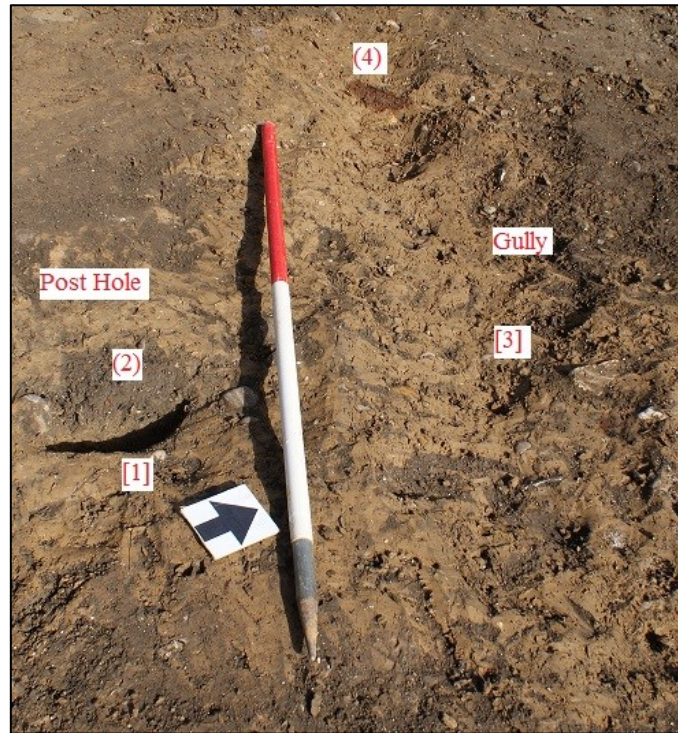


Figure 13. The remnant of a gully [3] and adjacent post-hole [1] looking north-west.

The post-hole was half sectioned, but no finds were recovered from the fill. A one metre length of the gully was excavated and some early post-medieval pottery sherds were recovered from the fill at the northern end. The gully narrowed beyond this point (Figure 14).

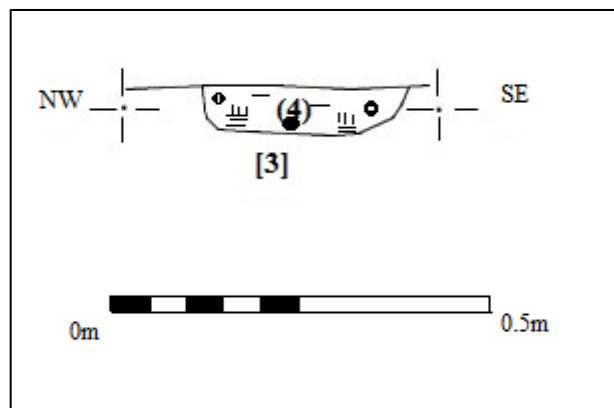


Figure 14. North-west to south-east Section (1.05) across gully [3]

Trenching for the foundations of the new building was executed to an average depth of 0.85m. Trenching revealed, on the boundaries of the site, two further features that had been truncated by the modern drainage works. On the south-eastern boundary truncated by the soakaway, a metallised surface was visible in section (Figure 15).



Figure 15. Section (1.06) across metalled surface (5) looking south-east

The surface was absent on the eastern boundary and continued visible for 2m, dipping to the south-west. The deposit comprised a mid-greenish brown silty-clay with frequent rounded pebbles and limestone chunks to an average depth of 0.20m. A single sherd of pottery was found within the silty-clay matrix.

In the north-eastern corner of the plot, at the junction of the house and extension, trenching revealed a pit [6] truncated by a manhole and drainage pipe. This feature had not been visible in plan as removal of all overburden had not been possible close to these drains (Figure 16).



Figure 16. Pit [6] visible in the east facing trench section close to the house.

The visible dimensions of the pit were a maximum width of 1.10m and depth of 0.78m (Figure 17). Only one fill was evident within the pit, a mid-greenish brown clayey-silt, with occasional pebbles, limestone fragments and charcoal flecking (7). Two sherds of medieval pottery (Stamford Ware and Potters Marsden Ware) were recovered the fill.

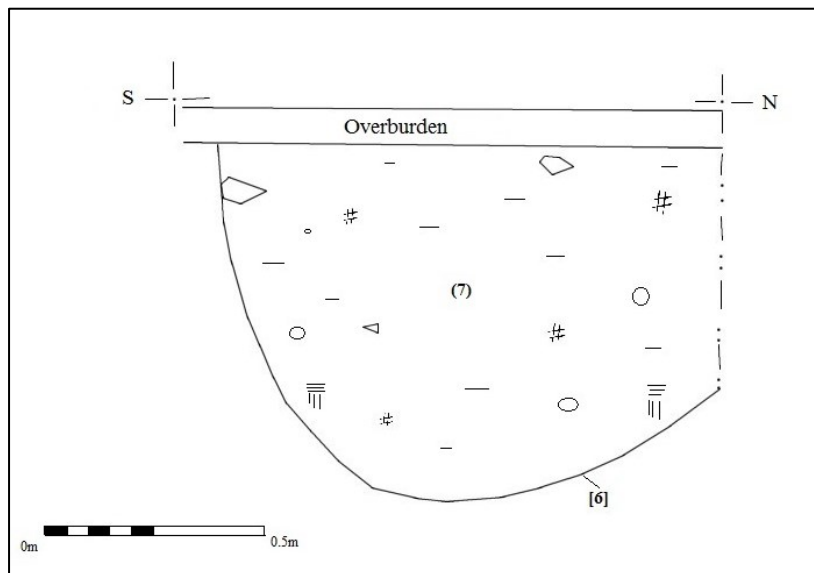


Figure 17. East facing section S.1.07, showing pit [6]

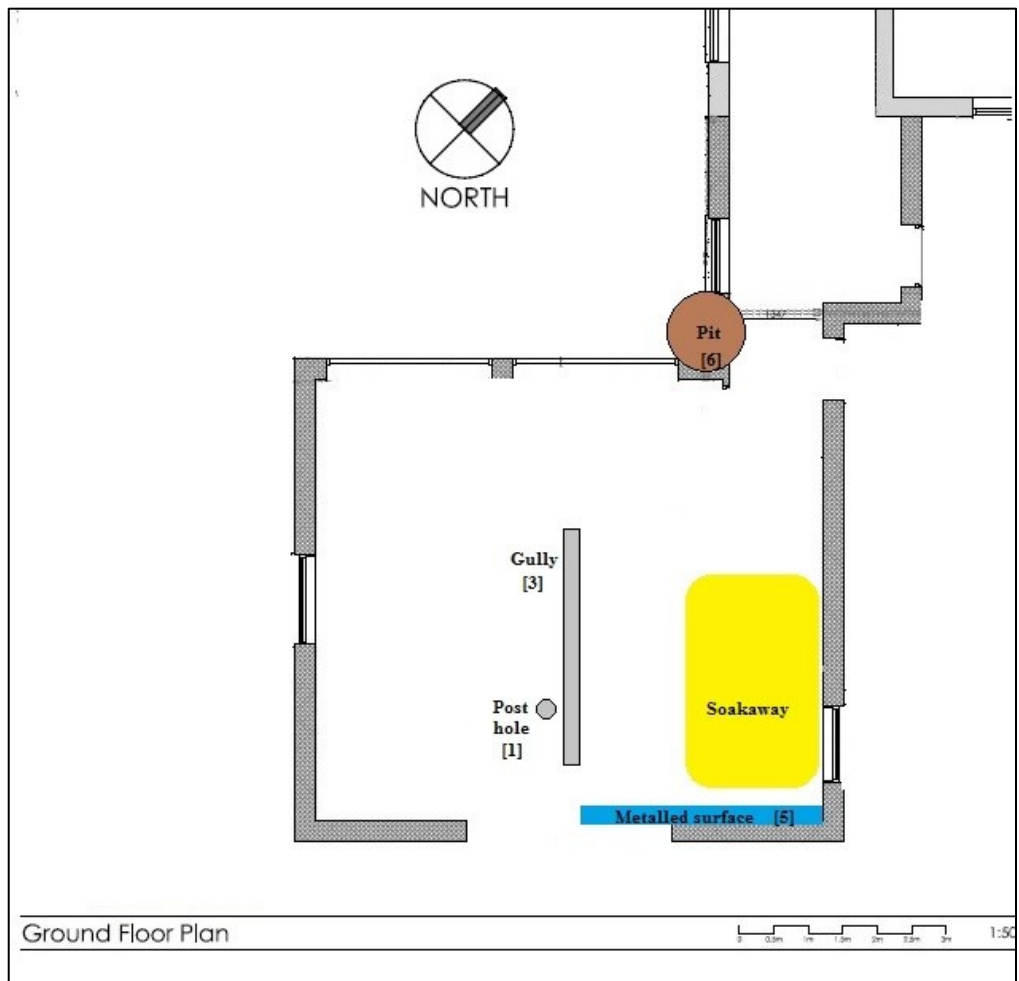


Figure 18. Features identified in the text, represented on a 1:50 plan of development, plans provided by the developer

7. The Post-medieval pottery *Deborah Sawday*

Methodology

The pottery, 23 sherds, weighing 719 grams; a maximum vessel count of eight pots and a vessel rim equivalent of 0.084, (calculated by adding together the circumference of the surviving rim sherds, where one vessel equals 1.00) was examined under a x20 binocular microscope and catalogued with reference to current guidelines (MPRG 1998, MPRG 2016) and the ULAS fabric series (Sawday 1989; Sawday 2009).

Discussion

The results are shown below (tables 1 and 2). The pottery is in good condition, with little evidence of wear or abrasion, and an average sherd weight of 31.2 grams.

The range of fabrics and vessel classes, jars, a cistern and possibly a jug are all present, is typical of that found in the region (Sawday 2009).

It is noteworthy that the five sherds from contexts 5 and 7, which date from the 12th or possibly the early 13th century, have an average weight of only 2.8 grams, suggesting that they may have been the product of several episodes of deposition and re-deposition; indeed the co-joining sherds in context 7 suggest only recent fragmentation. The eighteen sherds from context 5, which includes hard fired Midland Purples, apparently all date from the 16th century. The group represents a maximum of five vessels with an average weight of 39.16 grams; this and the fact that the 12 sherds in EA1 are all thought to be from the same vessel suggests the presence of relatively intact archaeological levels elsewhere in the vicinity.

Table 1: The medieval and early post-medieval pottery fabrics.

Fabric	Common Name/Kiln & Fabric Equivalent where known	Approx. Date Range
ST2	Stamford - fine, fabrics G B/(A)	c.1050-12th C.
PM	Potters Marston ware - Potters Marston, Leicestershire	c.1100- c.1300/50+
MP2	Midland Purple ware 2 -? Ticknall, Derbyshire	c.1375-1550
CW2	Cistercian ware 2 -? Ticknall, Derbyshire	c.1450/1475- 1550
MB	Midland Black ware - ?Ticknall, Derbyshire	c.1550-1750
EA1	Earthenware 1 – Coarse Post Medieval Earthenware - Chilvers Coton/Ticknall, Derbyshire	c.1500-1750

Conclusion

The pottery assemblage, although small, has provided evidence for medieval activity indicating occupation in the vicinity of Main Street. This is of interest as whilst the site was known to lie within the medieval core of the village, cartographic surveys have failed to provide any trace of properties or associated back-yard structures along the frontage prior to the late 19th century (Kipling 2011).

Table 2: The pottery by context, fabric/ware, number, weight (grams) and EVEs.

Context	Fabric/ware	no	Gr	EVEs	Comments
POTTERY					
4	MP2 – Midland Purple	1	47	0.01	Cistern rim with cut out and handle scar, residue on interior surface, estimated EVE. Similar rim at the Austin Friars Leicester (Woodland 1981, fig37.158) and cut outs (<i>ibid</i> 1981 fig,37.159).
4	MP2	3	131		Strap handle fragment

					and body sherd from a jug or jar, glazed externally some residue internally – all the same vessel.
4	MP2	1	109		Thick walled body, residue internally.
4	EA1 – Earthenware 1	12	387		Internally glazed hollow ware vessel with internal residue, probably a jar. Representing one vessel, at least two joining sherds.
4	CW/MB – Cistercian/Midland Black	1	31		Hollow ware vessel with a handle scar and glazed internally and externally.
5	PM – Potters Marston	1	8	0.074	Jar rim fragment, externally burnt/sooted, external diameter c.170mm
7	ST2 – Fine Stamford	2	3		Join, externally sooted
7	PM	2	3		Join, thin walled externally sooted body sherds.
MISC.					
4	Animal bone	1			

8. Conclusion

From the features excavated the finds suggest that there are indications of medieval and post-medieval activity in the development area. The pottery identified from the gully feature [3] (4) was largely of 16th century date. Whilst presently shallow, the feature is clearly truncated. That the gully runs roughly at right angles to the main street could suggest that this was a property boundary, with some refuse pottery and bone having been dumped here. Interestingly, the gully is roughly in line with the potential extension of a north to south field boundary on the earliest map of 1871.

The pottery from the matrix of the metallised surface (5) was of early medieval date. As a small isolated sherd from section only, it is difficult to draw any meaningful conclusions from this. The surface does appear, however, to be outside the yard boundaries of the early cottage as identified on the 1902 map and so may relate to occupation earlier than this building.

The medieval pottery recovered from the pit [6] (7) was from a secure context and suggests medieval activity within 10 metres of the present Main Street. The pit lay on

a geological boundary, where large limestone pieces were available. As the pit was relatively deep and not significantly filled with refuse, it may be that material was being quarried here.

The pottery assemblage, although small, has provided evidence for medieval activity in the vicinity of Main Street. This is of interest as whilst the site was known to lie within the medieval core of the village, cartographic surveys have failed to provide any trace of properties or associated back-yard structures along the frontage prior to the late nineteenth century (Kipling 2011). Whilst the watching brief has not necessarily provided evidence for properties, there are indications of the area being utilised in both medieval and early post-medieval periods.

9. Archive

This archive consists of 1 watching brief form, 7 context sheets, 1 sheet of drawings with notes, 32 digital photographs, 3 sheets of thumbnail prints and 23 sherds of pottery weighing 719 grams. The archive will be held by Leicestershire Museum Service under the accession number X.A97.016

OASIS data entry

PROJECT DETAILS	Oasis No	universi1-292461
	Project Name	54, Main Street, Houghton on the Hill
	Start/end dates of field work	9 th August 2016
	Previous/Future Work	Yes / Not known
	Project Type	Watching Brief
	Site Status	None
	Current Land Use	Residential
	Monument Type/Period	Post hole / undated Gully / PM Surface / Medieval? Pit / Medieval
	Significant Finds/Period	Pottery / Medieval Pottery / PM
	Development Type	Residential
	Reason for Investigation	NPPF
	Position in the Planning Process	Planning condition
	Planning Ref.	16/00395/FUL
PROJECT LOCATION	Site Address/Postcode	54, Main Street, Houghton on the Hill, LE7 9GD, Leicestershire
	Study Area	c.140m ²
	Site Coordinates	SK 67872 03420
	Height OD	56m OD
PROJECT CREATORS	Organisation	ULAS
	Project Brief Originator	Local Planning Authority (LCC)
	Project Design Originator	ULAS
	Project Manager	Dr Patrick Clay
	Project Director/Supervisor	Sue Henderson

	Sponsor/Funding Body	Mr Patric Phelan		
PROJECT ARCHIVE		Physical	Digital	Paper
	Recipient	LCC MusService	LCC MusService	LCCMusService
	ID (Acc. No.)	X.A97.2016	X.A97.2016	X.A97.2016
	Contents	Pottery Bone	Photos Report	Watching brief records Field Notes
PROJECT BIBLIOGRAPHY	Type	Grey Literature (unpublished)		
	Title	An Archaeological watching brief conducted during groundworks at 54, Main Street, Houghton on the Hill, Leicestershire.		
	Author	Henderson, S.		
	Other bibliographic details	ULAS Report No. 2016-140		
	Date	2016		
	Publisher/Place	University of Leicester Archaeological Services / University of Leicester		
	Description	Developer Report A4 pdf		

10. 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.

A summary of the work will also be submitted for publication in the local archaeological journal, the *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society*, in due course.

11. Acknowledgements

Thanks are extended to the client, Mr Patric Phelan, for his assistance and interest throughout the project.

Fieldwork was undertaken by the author Sue Henderson and the project was managed for ULAS by Patrick Clay.

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