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Archaeological Services

**Archaeological Attendance and  
Recording during Groundworks on  
Land South of Ryknield House,  
Ryknield Street, Alrewas, Staffordshire.  
DE13 7AB  
(SK 17125 14134)**

James Patrick



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**Archaeological Attendance and Recording during Groundworks on  
land to the South of Ryknield House, Ryknield Street, Alrewas  
Staffordshire. DE13 7AB  
(SK 17125 14134)**

**James Patrick**

*for*

**J T Leavesley Ltd**

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## **Archaeological Attendance and Recording during groundworks on land to the South of Ryknield House, Ryknield Street, Alrewas, Staffordshire (NGR SK 17125 14134)**

James Patrick

### **Summary**

*Archaeological Attendance and Recording during groundworks was carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) south of Ryknield House, Ryknield Street, Alrewas, Staffordshire (SK 17125 14134). The work was undertaken in advance of the construction hard standing material (planning ref 16/00762/FUL). The site is located directly to the south of Alrewas village and 500 metres south-west of the National Memorial Arboretum. It is bounded on the north-west side by the A38 dual carriageway, originally the course of Ryknield Street Roman Road and is also close to other heritage assets recorded on the Historic Environment Record for Staffordshire. These include the medieval settlement core of Alrewas village (MST1331) medieval enclosures (MST14546) and the findspot of a Neolithic/ Bronze-Age axe (MST 1344.)*

*Due to the nature of the hard standing material construction, the surface of the natural geology was not to be penetrated by any part of the development; rather the ground was to be built up on a permeable membrane over the undisturbed natural sand and gravel surface. Therefore there was no significant threat to any potential archaeological remains. The main object of the exercise was to ensure the methodology of the non-disturbance of natural sub-strata was adhered to. Observation of the groundworks showed no archaeological features and no artefactual evidence was recovered from the top soil. The archive for this work will be deposited with Stoke-on-Trent Museum & Art Gallery.*

### **Introduction**

University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) were commissioned by J T Leavesley Ltd to carry out archaeological attendance and recording during ground-works on land to the south of Ryknield House, Ryknield Street, Alrewas, Staffordshire (SK 17125 14134).

Planning permission has been granted for the construction of hard standing material subject to planning conditions which included the requirement for archaeological attendance and recording (Planning Ref: 16/00762/FUL). The work was undertaken in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Section 12 Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment and followed the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI; LaCombe 2017) submitted and approved by the local planning authority.

### **Site Location, Details and Geology**

The site is located directly south of Alrewas Village separated by the A38 dual carriageway (the course Ryknield Street Roman Road) from the site which bounds the north-west side. The application area is also bounded the Burton-on-Trent to Lichfield Railway line along the south-

eastern side with the south bounded by a ditch and fields (Fig. 1). Access to the site is off the A513 Kings Bromley to Tamworth Road and located south of Ryknield House and associated warehouses (Leavesley Ltd). Current hard standing forms the northern limit of the site which is to be extended southwards.

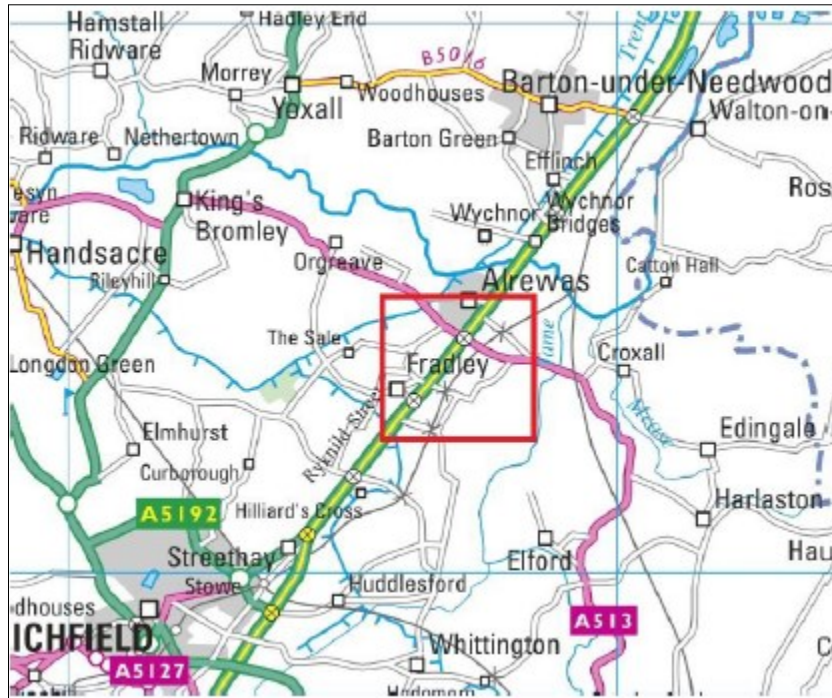


Figure 1: Site Location

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The site is currently on un-maintained pastoral farmland. It is roughly rectangular in shape covering a total area of *c.*2.6 ha. (Figs 2). The ground level is flat, lying at a height of *c.*60m aOD. The underlying geology consists of sand and gravel.

## Historical and Archaeological Background

The site lies close to several archaeological sites, and only 750m south of the medieval core of the village (MST1331) which was recorded in the Domesday Book. There is a reference to it as a medieval borough dating from 1328. The site itself lies between parcels of land identified as medieval enclosures (MST1340, MST1341, MST1342, and MST1349), due to the presence of field boundary systems, pits, linear features and also Ridge and furrow. Directly south of the site is Roddidge farm (MST14546), an isolated farmstead originally laid out around a series of dispersed yards. The farmstead appears to have been established in the late 18th century and although some of the outbuilding ranges have now gone, there are some surviving in a cluster around the listed late 18th century farmhouse. Also, south of the site, a stone axe head of Neolithic or Bronze Age date was discovered (MST1344). The former Roman Road of Ryknield Street which linked *Letocetvm* Roman Town (Wall, near Lichfield) to the south and Littlechester (Derby) to the North runs directly along the North-west side of the site. This is now occupied by the present A38 Dual carriageway.





Figure 2: View looking north to present buildings

### **Archaeological Objectives**

The project was identified as having some potential to contribute to research themes for the West Midlands for the medieval and post-medieval periods (Hunt 2011; Belford 2011)

The main objectives of the Archaeological Attendance & Recording (watching brief) 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 to compare with other assemblages and results.
- To produce an archive and report of any results.

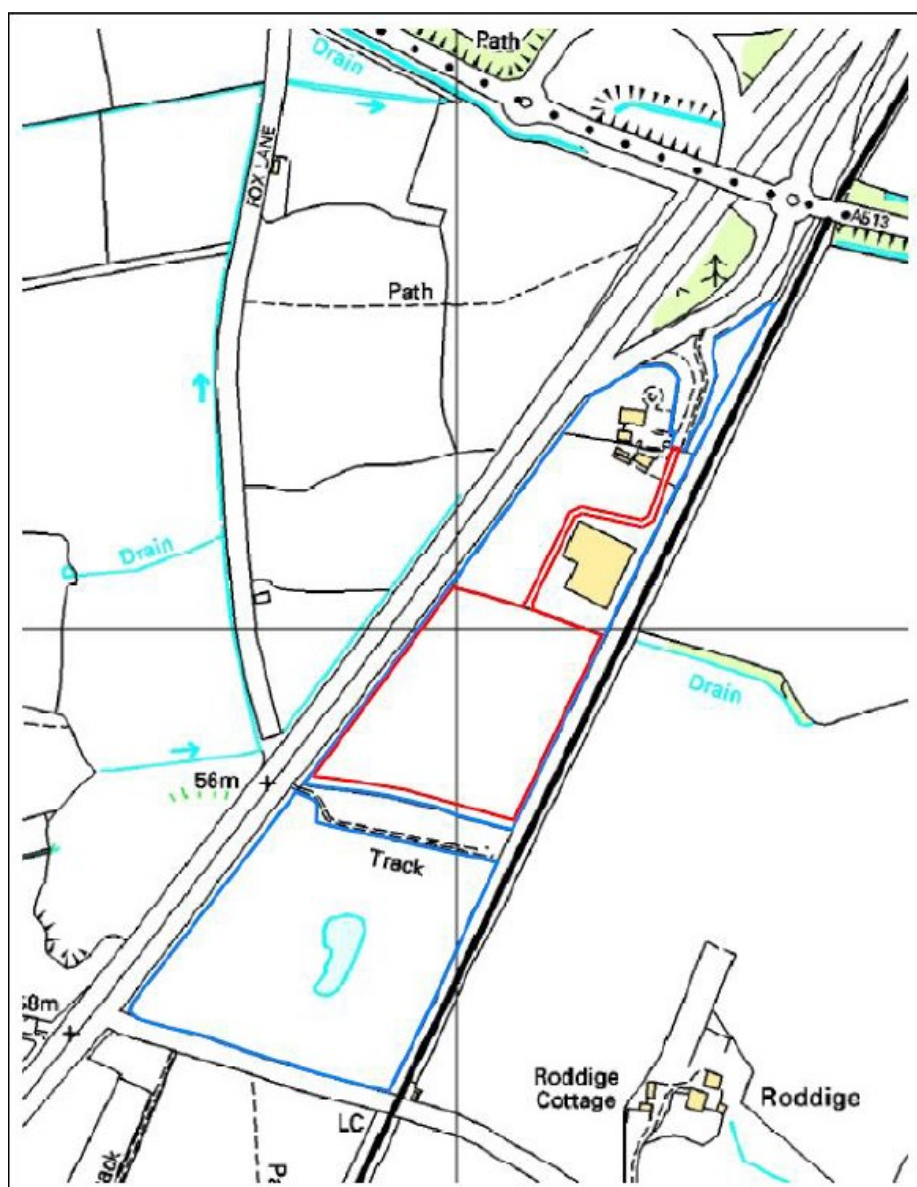


Figure 3: Plan and location of extension of new hard standing. Provided by the developer.  
Area outlined in red (obtained from developer)

Within the stated project objectives, the principal aim of the watching brief 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.

Trial trenching is an intrusive form of evaluation that will demonstrate the existence of earth-fast archaeological features that may exist within the area.



Figure 4: Area parallel to the A38 looking north

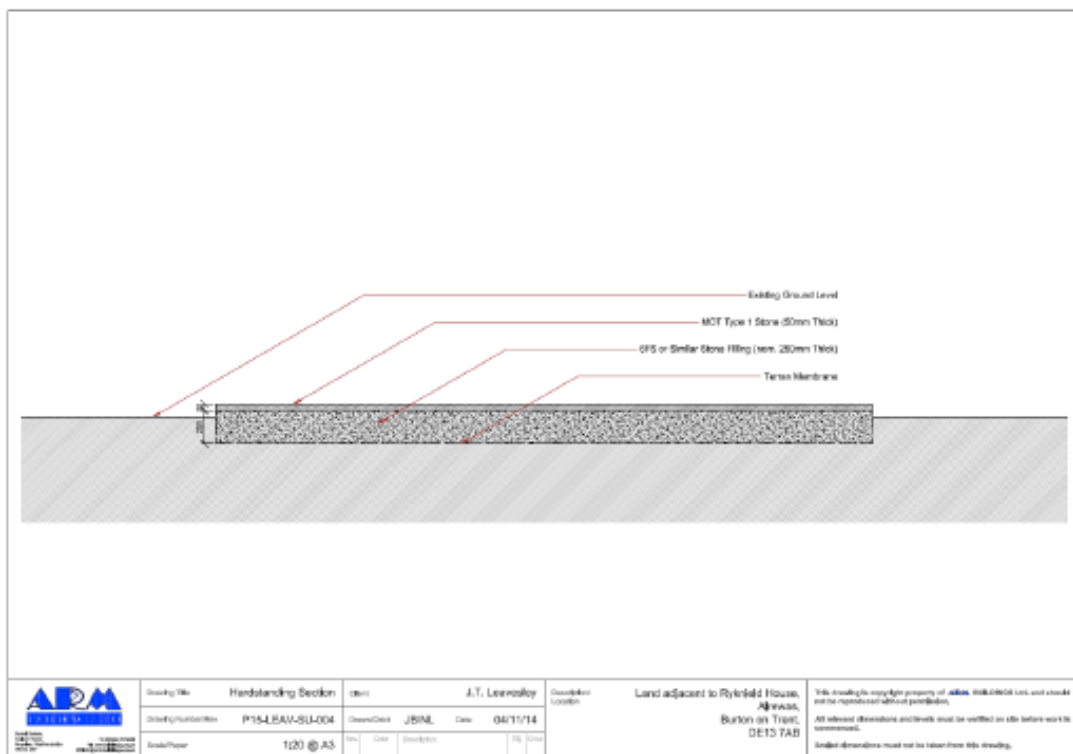


Figure 5: Cross-section of ground-works. (provided by the Developer)



## **Methodology**

This report presents the results of a programme of Archaeological Attendance and Recording during groundworks, which took place on the 7th of September 2017. It follows a strategy for the work devised by ULAS, which was set out in the WSI (ULAS 2017).

All work followed the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Code of Conduct* (2014) in accordance with their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (2014).

An area covering approximately 2.65 hectares was observed in advance of the construction of hard standing material for storage purposes.

The site was excavated using a single Bulldozer under archaeological supervision. After inspection and recording, the site was tracked over. Constraints included a single east to west high powered gas main which was fenced off.

## **Results**

The site was stripped in an east to west direction by a single bulldozer which just stayed on top of the natural sand and gravel pushing the top-soil into four north to south bunds together with a single east to west bund. All had coverage of approximately 15 metres in width. Five excavated strips approximately 25 metre wide between the bunds were observed. Despite the use of a bulldozer, the groundworks were sufficiently clean enough to observe any archaeological features present before being tracked over onto the next strip. The remaining top-soil bunds were to be removed later by excavator and dumper trucks. This resulted in approximately 70 % of the field being observed.

The topsoil consisted of a dark mid orange-grey soft sandy silt which contained few small rounded pebbles. The depth averaged 0.30m with no sub-soil directly onto a light orange brown sand and gravel natural substratum. The site showed evidence of extensive modern disturbance between the present hard standing and just south of the main gas line. A strip closest to and parallel to the A38 showed some disturbance probably due to construction of the present dual carriageway.

Due to the nature of the groundworks it was believed no significant threat would have been presented to any archaeological features because the natural sand and gravel was not being penetrated. A permeable membrane was to be placed over the surface of the natural before being built up to a maximum of 450mm above ground for the hard standing (see fig. 5)

## **Conclusion**

The archaeological attendance proved negative for any archaeological remains. The visibility was adequate enough to define any potential archaeology despite the chosen method of plant. As was planned by the developer, the natural substratum was not penetrated during groundworks.

## **Bibliography**

Belford, P., 2011 'The archaeology of everything –grappling with post-medieval, industrial and contemporary archaeology' in S .Watt (ed) 2011

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LaCombe, C., 2017, *Written scheme of investigation for archaeological attendance and recording during groundworks on land south of Ryknield House, Ryknield Street, Alrewas, Staffordshire DE13 7AB*, University of Leicester Archaeological Services

## **Archive**

The archive consists of the following:

- 1 Watching brief record sheets
- 1 Indice photographic record sheets
- 1 Unbound copy of this report
- 1 CD digital report
- 1 Contact sheet of digital photographs
- 1 CD digital photographs

## **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.

## **Acknowledgements**

ULAS would like to thank Tony Warner of Tomlinson and also to JT Leavesley Ltd their co-operation with this project. The project was managed by Patrick Clay and the fieldwork was carried out by James Patrick, also of ULAS.

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08-09-2017

*OASIS data entry*

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>	<b>Oasis No</b>	universi1- 295376		
	<b>Project Name</b>	Archaeological Attendance and recording during groundworks on Land to South of Ryknield House, Ryknield Street, Alrewas, Staffordshire		
	<b>Start/end dates of field work</b>	07- 08-2017		
	<b>Previous/Future Work</b>	None		
	<b>Project Type</b>	Attendance and Recording during Groundworks		
	<b>Site Status</b>	None		
	<b>Current Land Use</b>	Former pastoral land		
	<b>Monument Type/Period</b>	None/none		
	<b>Significant Finds/Period</b>	None		
	<b>Development Type</b>	Hard standing		
	<b>Reason for Investigation</b>	NPPF		
	<b>Position in the Planning Process</b>	Planning Condition		
	<b>Planning Ref.</b>	16/00762/FUL		
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>	<b>Site Address/Postcode</b>	Land to South of Ryknield House, Ryknield Street, Alrewas, Staffordshire. DE13 7AB		
	<b>Study Area</b>	2.6 ha		
	<b>Site Coordinates</b>	SK 17125 14134		
	<b>Height OD</b>	c 60m OD		
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	ULAS		
	<b>Project Brief Originator</b>	Local Planning Authority		
	<b>Project Design Originator</b>	ULAS		
	<b>Project Manager</b>	Patrick Clay		
	<b>Project Director/Supervisor</b>	James Patrick		
	<b>Sponsor/Funding Body</b>	Developer : J T Leavesley Ltd		
<b>PROJECT ARCHIVE</b>		<b>Physical</b>	<b>Digital</b>	<b>Paper</b>
	<b>Recipient</b>	NA	SCC	SCC
	<b>ID (Acc. No.)</b>		2017	2017
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<b>PROJECT BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>Type</b>	Grey Literature (unpublished)		
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