



UNIVERSITY OF
LEICESTER

Archaeological Services

**Archaeological Attendance and
Recording during groundworks at
Ashby School House, Leicester
Road Ashby de la Zouch LE65 1DH**

NGR: SK 36206 16791

Mireya González Rodríguez

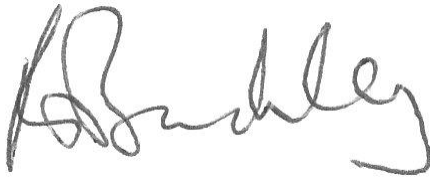


ULAS Report No 2017-093
©2017

**Archaeological Attendance and Recording during Groundworks at
Ashby School House, Leicester Road, Ashby de la Zouch LE65 1DH
(SK 36206 16791)**

Mireya González Rodríguez

for
Ashby School

Filename/Version	Checked by	Date
2017-093		12/2/2018

University of Leicester, Archaeological Services, University Rd., Leicester, LE1 7RH

Tel: (0116) 2522848
www.le.ac.uk/ulas

ULAS Report Number 2017-093
©2017

Accession Number X.A72.2017

CONTENTS

Summary	1
Introduction	1
Location and Geology	1
Historical and Archaeological Background.....	3
Archaeological Objectives.....	5
Methodology	6
Results	6
Acknowledgements	8
Archive	9
Publication.....	9
Bibliography.....	9
Appendix: OASIS data entry.....	10

FIGURES

Figure 1. Site Location	2
Figure 2. Location of proposed development.....	2
Figure 3. Known archaeological remains close to the assessment area	4
Figure 4. School House west and south facing elevation elevations. Looking north-east	5
Figure 5. Proposed ground floor plan (provided by Client)	6
Figure 6. Assessment area prior commencement of works	7
Figure 7. Working shots of excavations.....	7
Figure 8. Undated features in assessment area	8

Archaeological Attendance and Recording during Groundworks at Ashby School House, Leicester Road, Ashby de la Zouch, Leicestershire LE65 1DH

Mireya González Rodríguez

Summary

A programme of Archaeological Attendance and Recording was undertaken by the University of Leicester Archaeological Services on behalf of the client at Ashby School House, Leicester Road, Ashby de la Zouch, Leicestershire between the 30th of May and 2nd of June 2017. Planning permission has been granted for the development of the site for a new school prayer and quiet room building at Ashby School. The archaeological programme was intended to provide preliminary indications of the character and extent of any heritage assets in order to assess the impact of the proposed development on such remains and to inform a further phase of mitigation if required.

The archaeological programme revealed a tile-lined drain as well as a possible sandstone wall of uncertain age. However, the damage caused by the trees and their removal did not allow the chronology, alignment or relationships to be established.

The archive will be deposited with the Historic and Natural Environment Team at Leicestershire County Council under Accession Number X.A72.2017.

Introduction

A programme of Archaeological Attendance and Recording (Watching Brief) was undertaken at Ashby School House in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework Section 12: Enhancing and Conserving the Historic Environment. The proposed application (PA: 16/00817/FUL) relates to the development of a small building to provide a new school prayer and quiet room for the boarding house of Ashby School known as School House.

Location and Geology

Ashby de la Zouch is located in North West Leicestershire approximately 18 miles north-west of Leicester. School house lies at the north-western edge of the Leicester Road Campus of Ashby School, on the eastern side of Ashby de la Zouch, within the conservation area (Fig. 1).

The assessment site is accessed through a driveway off the corner of Upper Church Street and Leicester Road and is located to the west of the 18th-century boarding house. The site contained two garages and a gravelled area with a lawn and flower beds. St Helen's Church and graveyard is located immediately west and the remains of Ashby Castle further to the south.

The development area covers around 150 square metres and lies at a height of 136m aOD on relatively flat land. The Ordnance Geological Survey of Great Britain indicates that the underlying geology is likely to be sandstone.



Figure 1. Site Location

Reproduced from *Landranger*® 1:50 000 scale, Sheet 128 (Derby) by permission of Ordnance Survey® on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown copyright 2001
 All rights reserved. Licence number AL 100029495.

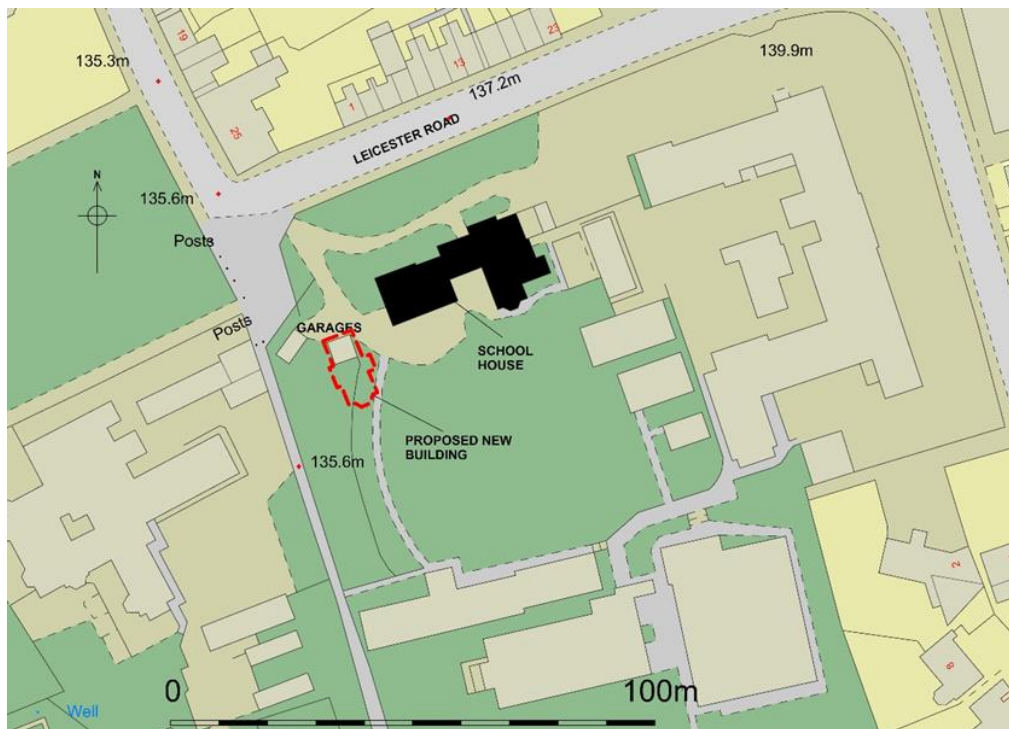


Figure 2. Location of proposed development

Historical and Archaeological Background

‘Ashby’ is a place-name of Anglo-Danish origin, meaning "Ash-tree farm" or "Ashtree settlement" (Mills 2003). The Norman French suffix of ‘de la Zouch’ dates from the years after the Norman conquest of England, when the town became a possession of the La Zouche family during the reign of Henry III. Ashby is mentioned in the Domesday as ‘Ascebi’ and was held by Ivo from Norman noble Hugh de Grandmesnil (Morris 1979). The La Zouche family received a market grant as early as 1219 but there is no evidence of burgess tenure or that it aspired to borough status.

The foundation of Ashby Grammar School dates from 1567 when a deed was signed by a group of trustees to find a suitable schoolmaster to teach local children, although it is assumed that a school house probably already existed. There are few early records of the school although there is written definition from 1575 of the person specification for the role of schoolmaster which states that ‘he should be no adulterer, fornicator, drunkard, game player, swearer or blasphemer’ nor ‘Papist or Heretic’ (Hillier 1984). The first schoolroom was probably built on the site of St. Helen’s Vicarage, but this was demolished in 1643 by the royalists clearing the area to secure the defence of the castle and church during the Civil War.

After a period of good reputation and expansion around the middle of 17th century, the school declined. In 1807, a new two-storey schoolhouse was built in South Street, equipped with more modern materials such as maps, globes and mathematical apparatus. The disputes regarding the type of education pupils should receive, with attempts to modernise and move away from classical teaching and into more modern approach, caused the partition and formation of two schools: the Classical School and the English School.

In 1880 the Classical School (the Grammar School) moved to new premises on the corner of Leicester Road, later expanded in 1898. The empty old school in South Street was later purchased and the school expanded further. In 1955 the control of the school passed from the traditional governors to the Local Education Authority and the Ministry of Education and in 1963 it was accepted that the school should merge with the Girls’ Grammar School on Nottingham Road to becoming the town’s Upper School. This eventually took place in 1972 when the long serving school mistress Miss. N. Lockton died (Hillier 1984). The current boarding school at School House is descended from the original boys’ school at Ashby.

The Historic Environment Record (HER) for Leicestershire and Rutland indicates that there are a large number of listed and other historic buildings in the vicinity alongside a small number of known archaeological sites.

The whole site lies within Ashby de la Zouch Conservation Area and the medieval historic settlement core of the town (**MLE4295**). The castle and its associated formal garden area 'The Wilderness' to the south are designated a Scheduled Monument. Located approximately 100m to the south-west of the assessment area, the original manor house here was probably constructed of wood and was replaced by a stone building around the middle of the 12th century. This was converted into what can be described as a castle in the 1470s. This building was partially destroyed during the Civil War and was only part occupied until 1724, when it was replaced by Ashby Place (**MLE15050**). The castle as a fortified house is a rare monument type, of which fewer than two hundred examples have been identified in England and all of which are considered to be of national importance (English Heritage 1993a, 5). The 'Wilderness' incorporates sunken garden elements of the 16th century surrounded by levelled walkways from which gardens would have been viewed (English Heritage 1993a, 3).

Standing building archaeology of a medieval date has gone largely unrecorded, although the potential for such archaeology is high in view of the level of rebuilding that occurred along the principal streets of the town in the Georgian and early Victorian periods. Where they remain, the modified buildings alongside the courts behind Market Street show evidence of medieval origins as well as post-medieval development features. Post-medieval standing building archaeology is plentiful in view of the large

number of eighteenth and nineteenth century domestic and retail properties constructed throughout the Area. The closest historic building to the assessment area is the unlisted School House (**MLE15167**), a brick-built two and three storey building with numerous extensions and phases. The south facing elevation appears to be formed from an early 19th century house built for a wealthy yeoman farmer or similar affluent tradesman. To the back (north side) of this a two storey brick-built structure has been added. This appears to have been constructed in the mid to later 19th century and seems to have been added over at least two phases. A short range connects these buildings to the main body of School House to the east. Most of the main body of School House seems to date from the later 19th century.

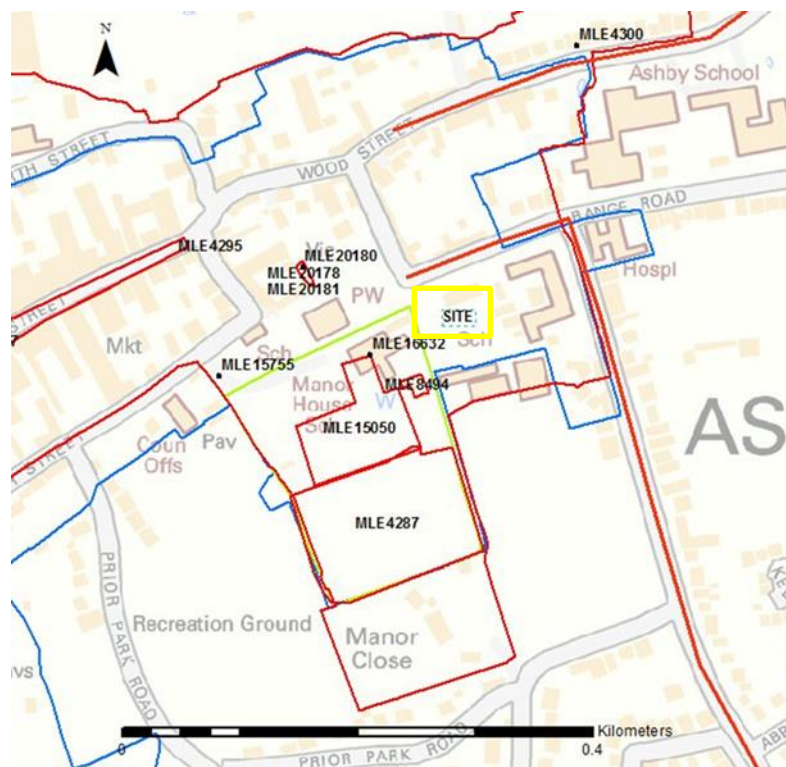


Figure 3. Known archaeological remains close to the assessment area
(Site in yellow; Conservation Area in blue; Scheduled Monument in green)

The potential for the survival of below-ground medieval archaeology in the Conservation Area is considered to be significant, especially around the castle site and in the vicinity of St. Helen's Church (English Heritage 1993a, p5). Although little excavation work has taken place, an archaeological evaluation at the Church Hall revealed evidence of a demolished post-medieval building, possibly constructed in the 16th century and demolished in the 17th century and likely to be the remains of the earliest phase of Ashby Grammar School founded in 1567 and demolished during the Civil War. The finds included pottery and musket balls (**MLE20179**). The evaluation also revealed post-medieval finds including a wall (**MLE20181**). Medieval remains, including a wall and a cess pit, were discovered at the Church Hall, 130m west of the assessment area, during trial trenching in 2011 (**MLE20178**). The evaluation also unearthed human remains at the site (**MLE20180**).

The University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) carried out two separate archaeological watching briefs during construction work within the Ashby School grounds. In 2006, the groundworks associated with the construction of a new classroom revealed a garden path of modern origin, which can be identified on the early OS maps of the area (Hunt 2006). The second programme of attendance related to the construction of an extension of the school building was negative for archaeological features (Kipling 2010). In advance of the groundworks associated with the new prayer and quiet room ULAS has prepared a desk-based assessment (Hunt and Hyam 2016) to present information on the extent, state of preservation and significance of cultural heritage assets within the study area. Drawing

from cartographic and historical data, the desk-based assessment concludes there is low potential for earthfast archaeological remains within the assessment area from prehistoric and Roman periods, but moderate potential for medieval remains.



Figure 4. School House west and south facing elevation elevations. Looking north-east

Archaeological Objectives

The main objectives of the archaeological programme of attendance and recording 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 the results.

Within the stated project aims, the principal objective of the recording is to establish the nature, extent, date, depth, and significance of the heritage assets within their local and regional context. All exploratory and mitigation work was considered in light of *The Archaeology of the East Midlands: An Archaeological Resource Assessment and Research Agenda* (Cooper 2006) and *East Midlands Heritage: An Updated Research Agenda and Strategy for the Historic Environment of the East Midlands* (Knight et al. 2012), along with targeting national research aims, highlighted as English Heritage's critical research priorities for the medieval period (EH 2012). The archaeological programme could contribute towards research into the origins and development of the medieval settlement of Ashby de la Zouch, its landscape and society.

Methodology

The programme of attendance and recording followed the guidelines established by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA). The project involved the supervision of the groundworks associated with the clearance of the tree roots and excavation of foundations for the new building in order to monitor for evidence of archaeological deposits or remains.

A photographic record of the assessment area was made prior and during machining following the *Standard Brief for Archaeological Attendance* from Leicestershire County Council. This includes 'working shots' to illustrate the nature of the archaeological operation mounted.

Following the initial clearing of the trees, the removal of the roots and the excavation of the foundation trenches were dug using a 360° Bobcat E80 equipped with a 0.50m toothed ditching bucket.

Deposits encountered were recorded using pro-forma record sheets and standard procedures outlined in the University of Leicester Archaeological Services recording manual.

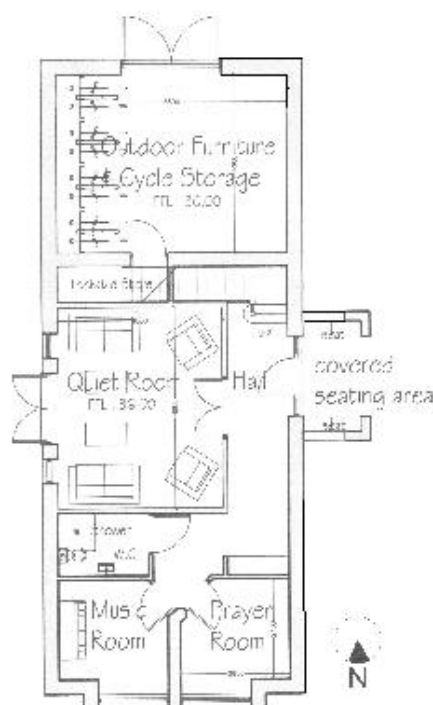


Figure 5. Proposed ground floor plan (provided by Client)

Results

The site is located between the Georgian School House to the west and Mount Walk, to the east with a line of mature trees forming a visual barrier between the public footpath, and the school. Within the assessment area extensive additional tree planting took place in the 1990s. Thus, the site was substantially affected by bioturbation (i.e. Fig. 7d). The removal of the roots of the mature ash trees caused significant disturbance, damaging possible sandstone footings. A considerable amount of reused sandstone was unearthed during the excavation of the roots. The stone was inspected for tool marks but none were identified.

Further damaged was caused by the removal of the garage buildings concrete bases and the stripping of the hardcore made-up ground consisting of broken bricks and mortar. Additional made-up ground was excavated during the removal of the gravel paths leading to the classroom building to the south of the site (Fig. 7a).



Figure 6. Assessment area prior commencement of works

The trenches were excavated to a maximum depth of 1.90m. The topsoil (0.40m-0.55m) consisted of a mid-dark brown grey clayey sand with medium sub-angular sandstone and brick inclusions. The subsoil (0.40m-0.80m) was a mid light yellow-brown clayey sand with fragments of sandstone.



a. Made up ground beneath gravel path (0.5m scale)



b. Removal of tree roots



c. Foundations to be excavated for new building (facing South)



d. Site under excavation showing bioturbation

Figure 7. Working shots of excavations

Two features of uncertain date were revealed in the central-east area (the hall and covered seating area on the proposed ground floor plan). A 0.30m wide tile lined and capped drain on a NE-SW alignment was seen (Fig. 7a) at 1.40m below ground level. To the north of the drain the damaged footings of a

possible sandstone wall, measuring approximately 0.55m were exposed at circa 0.80m below ground surface (Figs. 7 b-c). The projected line of these footings correspond with the disturbed stone observed during the removal of the roots, although no evidence was seen on the parallel trench to the west. Cartographic records of the area, dating from the earliest map of William Gardiner in 1735 to the most recent Ordnance Survey map of 1992, do not show any indication a building in this location, apart from the aforementioned garages. It is likely that this may represent the remnants of an earlier boundary wall.



a. Tile lined drain



b. West facing section showing possible wall (1m and 0.50m scale)



c. East facing section showing possible wall (1m and 0.50m scale)

Figure 8. Undated features in assessment area

Acknowledgements

The project was managed by Dr Richard Buckley and the fieldwork supervised by Dr Mireya González Rodríguez. Thanks are extended to the school staff and contractors for their cooperation and interest.

Archive

Following the guidelines established by Leicestershire Museums Services, the site archive will be deposited with Leicestershire Museums Service under Accession Code X.A72.2017.

The archive consists of

- PAPER** 3 x ULAS pro forma Watching Brief sheets
1x unbound copy of this report
- DIGITAL** 1 CD-R with 88 digital photographs; one Excel file with copies of the site indices;
a PDF_A copy of this report

Publication

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

The University of Leicester Archaeological Services supports the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) project. An OASIS record (see Appendix) will also be produced and this report will be uploaded onto the Archaeology Data Service website.

Bibliography

Brown, D. 2008. *Standard and Guidance for the Preparation of Archaeological Archives* (Institute for Archaeologists).

Cooper, N.J. 2006. *The Archaeology of the East Midlands*. Leicester Archaeology Monograph **13**.

English Heritage 1997. *Draft Research Agenda*.

Hunt, L 2009. *An Archaeological Watching Brief During ground-works at Ashby School, Nottingham Road, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicestershire*. University of Leicester Archaeological Services Report No. **2006-099**

Kipling, R 2010. *An Archaeological Watching Brief at Ashby School, Nottingham Road, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicestershire*. University of Leicester Archaeological Services Report No. **2010-071**.

Knight, D., Blaise, V. and Allen C. 2012. *East Midlands Heritage. An Updated Research Agenda and Strategy for the Historic Environment of the East Midlands*.

Lewis, C. 2006. The Medieval Period. In N.J. Cooper (Ed) 2006: 185 -21.

Mills, A.D. (2003). *A Dictionary of English Place-names*. Second Edition. Oxford University Press, Oxford

Morris, J 1979 *Domesday Book Leicestershire*. Phillimore

Dr Mireya González Rodríguez

University of Leicester Archaeological Services
School of Archaeology and Ancient History
University of Leicester
University Road
Leicester LE1 7RH

Tel: 0116 252 5665

Fax: 0116 252 2614

Email: mgr8@le.ac.uk

Appendix: OASIS data entry

PROJECT DETAILS	Oasis No	universi1-301978		
	Project Name	Archaeological Attendance and Recording at Ashby School House		
	Start/end dates of field work	30-05-2017/02-06-2017		
	Previous/Future Work	No/No		
	Project Type	Recording Project – Watching Brief		
	Site Status	Conservation Area		
	Current Land Use	Other 5 - Garden		
	Monument Type/Period	None		
	Significant Finds/Period	None		
	Reason for Investigation	NPPF		
	Position in the Planning Process	Planning condition		
	Planning Ref.	16/00817/FUL		
	PROJECT LOCATION	Site Address/Postcode	Ashby School House, Leicester Road, Ashby de la Zouch LE65 1DH	
Study Area		150m ²		
Site Coordinates		SK 3621 3167		
Height OD		136m aOD		
PROJECT CREATORS	Organisation	University of Leicester Archaeological Services		
	Project Brief Originator	North West Leicestershire District Council		
	Project Design Originator	Dr Patrick Clay		
	Project Manager	Dr Richard Buckley		
	Project Director/Supervisor	Dr Mireya González Rodríguez		
	Sponsor/Funding Body	Ashby School		
PROJECT ARCHIVE		Physical	Digital	Paper
	Recipient		LCC Museum service	LCC Museum service
	ID (Acc. No.)		X.A72.2017	X.A72.2017
	Contents		Digital Photographs Spreadsheet Text	Report, Context sheets
PROJECT BIBLIOGRAPHY	Type	Grey Literature		
	Title	Archaeological Attendance and Recording at Ashby School House, Leicester Road, Ashby de la Zouch LE65 1DH		
	Author	González Rodríguez, M.		
	Other bibliographic details	ULAS Report No. 2017-093		
	Date	2017		
	Publisher/Place	University of Leicester Archaeological Services University of Leicester		
	Description	Developer Report A4 pdf		

Contact Details

Richard Buckley
University of Leicester Archaeological
Services (ULAS)
University of Leicester,
University Road,
Leicester LE1 7RH

T: +44 (0)116 252 2848

F: +44 (0)116 252 2614

E: ulas@le.ac.uk

W: www.le.ac.uk/ulas



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



THE QUEEN'S
ANNIVERSARY PRIZES
FOR HIGHER AND FURTHER EDUCATION
2013



2013
THE AWARDS
AWARD WINNER
RESEARCH PROJECT OF THE YEAR