



UNIVERSITY OF
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Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological Field Evaluation on
land at Fore Business Park, Solihull,
West Midlands**

(SP 414769 276312)

James Patrick



ULAS Report No 2017- 184
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**An Archaeological Field Evaluation on Land at Fore Business Park,
Solihull, West Midlands
(SP 414769 276312)**

James Patrick

for

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CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| Summary | 2 |
| Introduction..... | 2 |
| Site Location, Details and Geology | 3 |
| Historical and Archaeological Background | 4 |
| Archaeological Objectives | 5 |
| Methodology | 5 |
| Results..... | 8 |
| Conclusion | 24 |
| Archive..... | 24 |
| Publication | 24 |
| Acknowledgements..... | 24 |
| Bibliography | 26 |

FIGURES

| | |
|--|----|
| Figure 1: Site Location..... | 3 |
| Figure 2: Proposed site showing location of fields 1-4. Supplied by the client..... | 4 |
| Figure 3: Trench locations in surrounding locality | 6 |
| Figure 4: Application area (field 1) prior to evaluation, looking south-west to present buildings..... | 7 |
| Figure 5: Actual trench plan of Field 1 with Trenches 14 and 15 in Field 2. | 7 |
| Figure 6: Trench excavation in progress..... | 8 |
| Figure 7: Trench 1 looking North-east..... | 9 |
| Figure 8: Trench 2 looking south-east | 10 |
| Figure 9: Trench 3 looking north-east | 11 |
| Figure 10: Trench 4 looking north-west | 12 |
| Figure 11: Trench 5 looking north-west | 13 |
| Figure 12: Trench 6 looking north-west | 14 |
| Figure 13: Trench 7 looking north-east | 15 |
| Figure 14: Trench 8 looking north-east | 16 |
| Figure 15: Trench 9 looking south-east with faint furrows across trench width. | 17 |
| Figure 16: Trench 10 looking south-west | 18 |
| Figure 17: Trench 11, looking south..... | 19 |
| Figure 18: Trench 12, looking east | 20 |
| Figure 19: Trench 13, looking north..... | 21 |
| Figure 20: Trench 14, looking north-east | 22 |
| Figure 21: Trench 15, looking south- east | 23 |

An Archaeological Field Evaluation on land at Fore Business Park, Solihull, West Midlands

(SP 414769 276312)

James Patrick

Summary

An archaeological field evaluation by trial trenching was carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on grassland at Fore Business Park on the South-east edge of Solihull, West Midlands (SP 14574 76165). The evaluation took place over two fields, both of which are located up to 350 metres north –east of the recently constructed offices on Fore Business Park on the South-east edge of Solihull, West Midlands (SP 14574 76165). The work was undertaken in advance of the extension to the present Business Park.

Fifteen trenches were excavated; 13 within a long rectangular field (Field 1), with 2 further trenches located within the Country Park area (field 2).

The evaluation proved negative for any archaeological remains. No artefacts were recovered with the exception of a few sherds of modern pottery found in Trench 14. The ground was generally well drained onto gravel although field drains were identified in the north-west end of the site where the natural geology became more clayey. Faint evidence of furrows were located in a few trenches.

The archive will be deposited at the Heritage & Local Studies Service, Core Library under the Accession No. 00218.

Introduction

University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) were commissioned by IM Properties to carry out an archaeological field evaluation on land at Fore Business Park, Solihull, West Midlands (SP 414769/ 276312).

Planning permission is being sought for the erection of office buildings, with associated car parking, access roads, and services and an initial phase of trial trenching was required by the Warwickshire Planning Archaeologist to assess the potential impact on buried archaeological remains from groundworks associated with the future development to help determine an archaeological mitigation strategy for the project. The work was undertaken in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Section 12 Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment and followed the agreed Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI; ULAS 2017).

Site Location, Details and Geology

Solihull lies to the south of Birmingham within the West Midlands region formerly within the neighbouring county of Warwickshire. The application area is situated west of the A34, Stratford Road and bounded by the M42 motorway directly to the south-east (Fig. 1).

The two fields for trial trenching lie to the north-east of the Existing Business Park and are accessed via Huskisson Way. A previous desk based assessment (Score 2017) had identified that two of the fields within the application area had previously been disturbed (Fields 3 and 4) and these were therefore excluded from the trial trenching. Access to field 1 was via a gate from the car park at the south-west corner with access to field 2 at the north-east corner (Fig. 2).

Field 1 is the larger of the two fields and is of a long rectangular shape. Hedgerows and trees bound the site with a wooden fence to the south and the boundary with Fields 2 and 3 and Monkspath Housing estate lies directly to the north-west. Field 2 lies in the Country Park directly to the north-east end of Field 1, bounded by the M42 Motorway on the east side.

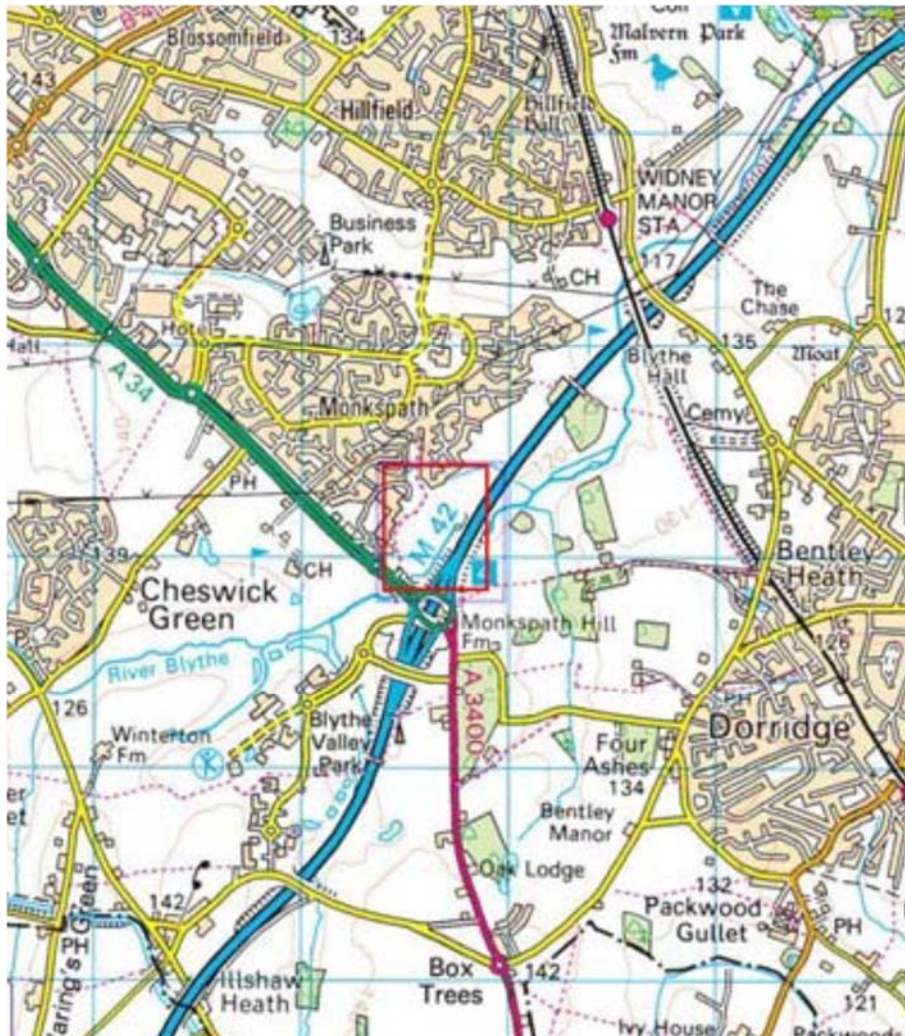


Figure 1: Site Location

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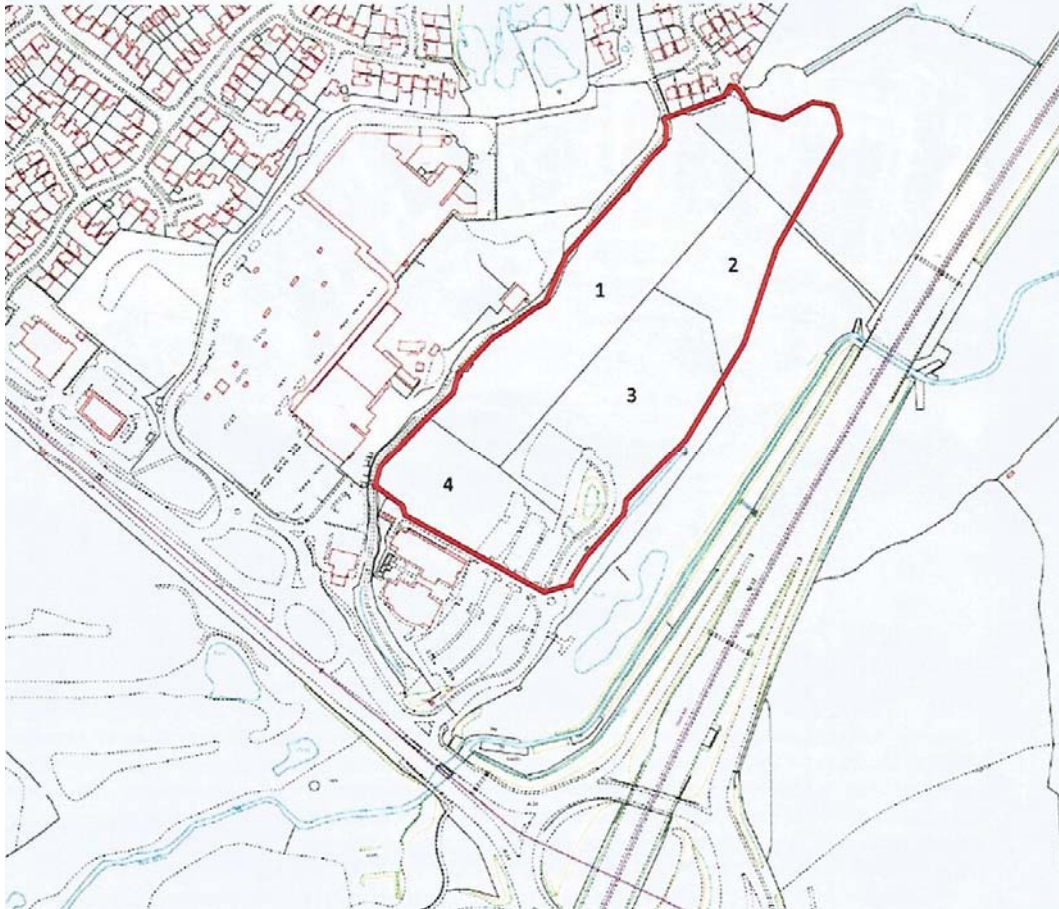


Figure 2: Proposed site showing location of fields 1-4. Supplied by the client

Field 1 is currently overgrown with grass and other vegetation. It covers a total area of c.1.3 hectares. The site is fairly level with a slight rise to the north at a height of c.118m. Field 2 covers an area of c.0.6 Hectares with almost half of this occupied by a bund associated with the initial Business Park development. The British Geological Survey indicates that the underlying geology consists of Mercia Mudstone formed in the Triassic Period overlain with mid Pleistocene Glaciofluvial deposits of sand and gravel.

Historical and Archaeological Background

A Desk Based Assessment has been undertaken (Score 2017). There is no known archaeology within the site and there is little evidence for prehistoric/Roman archaeology within the immediate area. The site probably lay within fields during the medieval period and although there are numerous farmhouses and moated sites within the area there is unlikely to be much potential for settlement archaeology. It is also obvious that much of the area particularly the southern edge has been truncated by the construction of the M42 and the current buildings within Fore Business Park.

Archaeological Objectives

The main objectives of the evaluation 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.

Within the stated project objectives, the principal aim of the evaluation was 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.

Methodology

Archaeological trial trenching, took place between the 20th – 24th November 2017. It followed the strategy for the work agreed with the Planning Archaeologist, set out in the WSI (ULAS 2017).

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

A total of fifteen 30m long trenches were excavated (Figs 3-4) The trenches were located to give a good spread of the site although a gap had to be left to avoid overhead power lines and an area containing rabbit warrens. Two extra trenches were later positioned in Field 2 following on-site discussion with the Planning Archaeologist (Fig. 5).

The trenches were excavated by a JCB excavator with a ditching bucket under archaeological supervision. Topsoil and subsoil was removed separately. Each trench was sloped at the end to enable any trapped wildlife to escape the trench. After excavation and recording, the trenches were backfilled.

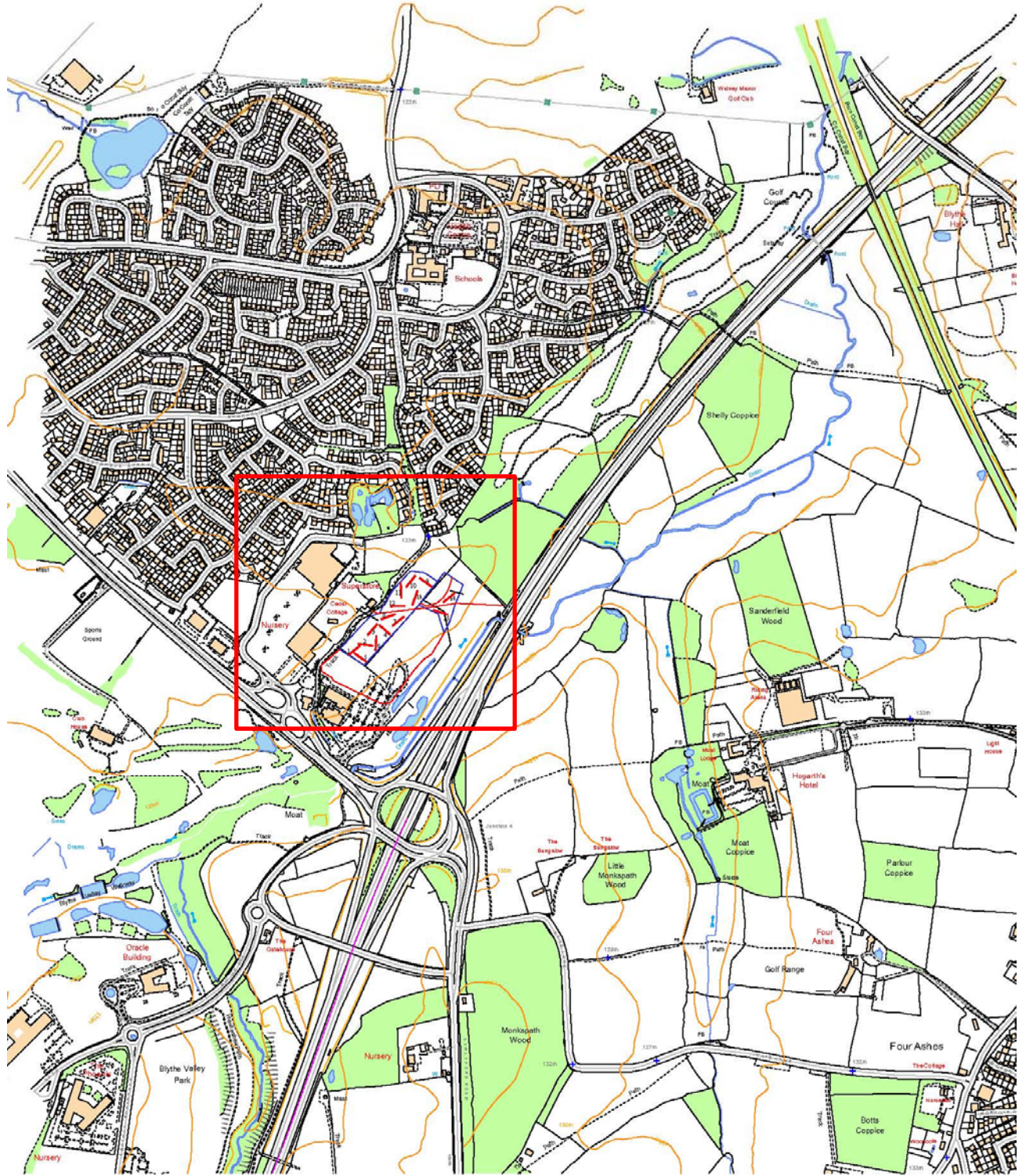


Figure 3: Trench locations in surrounding locality



Figure 4: Application area (field 1) prior to evaluation, looking south-west to present buildings

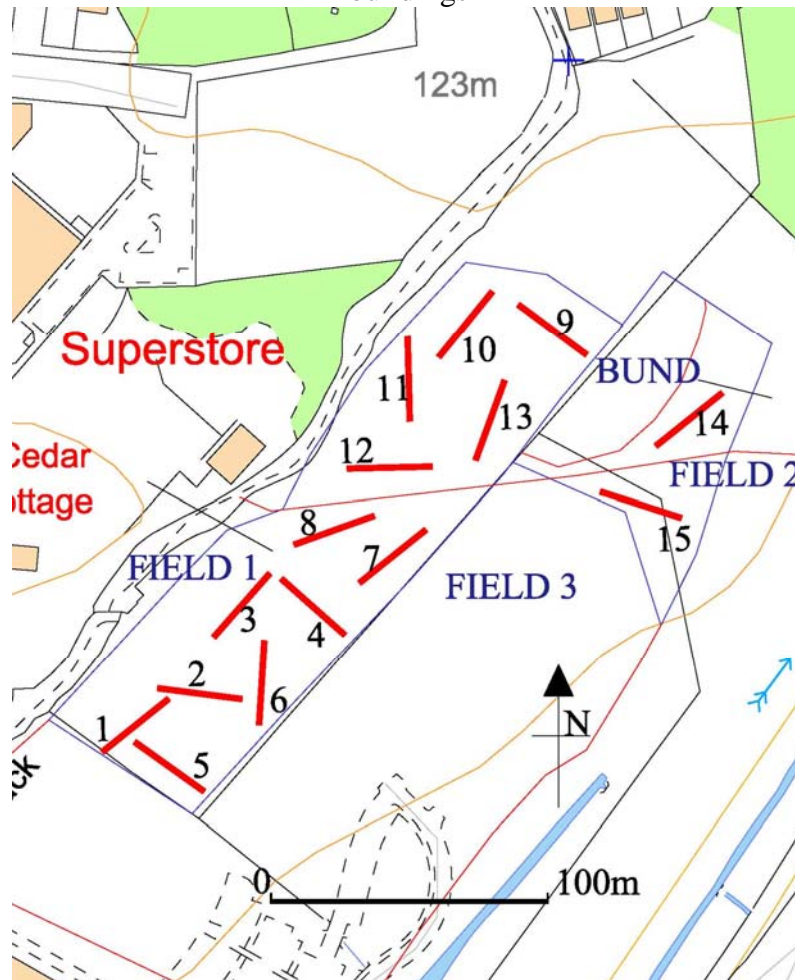


Figure 5: Actual trench plan of Field 1 with Trenches 14 and 15 in Field 2.

Results

Trenches averaged 0.45m deep with varying depths of subsoil.

Trenches 14, and 9 to the far north-east of the area were considerably shallower with an average depth of just 0.30m and no subsoil. Generally the topsoil consisted of a mid yellowish- grey silty-clay above a light orange-brown subsoil. The natural geology consisted of a light reddish-brown sand with patches of gravel and lighter patches of pale sand and gravel. The natural geology changed to the north-west with patches of light reddish-brown silty clay. The poorer drainage of the soils in this area was confirmed by the presence of field drains.

The evaluation proved negative for any archaeological remains. Within field 1, only a few faint furrows were located appearing to orientate north-west to south-east across the field and clearly seen in Trench 9 (Fig. 14).

Trenches 14 and 15 in field 2 also proved negative with redeposited soil and disturbance noted within Trench 15 which is probably associated with the construction of the M42 motorway (Fig. 21). Trench 14 contained no subsoils and may have been truncated during landscaping. Three narrow linear features were observed in this trench. Investigation showed them to be modern field drains with 19th century pottery found in them (Fig. 20).



Figure 6: Trench excavation in progress

Trench 01

Orientation: South-west to north-east.

Length: 29m Width: 1.80m

No Archaeological remains identified

| Interval | SW 0m | 5m | 10m | 15m | 20m | 25m | 29m |
|---------------------------|------------------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Topsoil Depth | 0.30 | 0.28 | 0.30 | 0.30 | 0.36 | 0.35 | 0.30 |
| Subsoil Depth | 0.10 | 0.16 | 0.10 | 0.15 | 0.14 | - | 0.15 |
| Top of natural | 0.40 | 0.44 | 0.40 | 0.45 | 0.50 | 0.35 | 0.45 |
| Base of Trench | 0.50 | 0.44 | 0.46 | 0.45 | 0.50 | 0.40 | 0.40 |



Figure 7: Trench 1 looking North-east

Trench 02

Orientation: west to east

Length: 30m Width: 1.80m

No Archaeological remains identified

| Interval | W 0m | 5m | 10m | 15m | 20m | 25m | 30m |
|-------------------|---------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Topsoil Depth | 0.34 | 0.30 | 0.32 | 0.30 | 0.25 | 0.30 | 0.23 |
| Subsoil Depth | 0.12 | 0.16 | 0.12 | 0.08 | 0.08 | - | 0.14 |
| Top of natural | 0.46 | 0.46 | 0.44 | 0.36 | 0.33 | 0.30 | 0.37 |
| Base of Trench | 0.46 | 0.50 | 0.50 | 0.40 | 0.40 | 0.40 | 0.48 |



Figure 8: Trench 2 looking south-east

Trench 03

Orientation: North-east to South-west

Length: 30m Width: 1.80m

No Archaeological remains identified

| Interval | SW 0m | 5m | 10m | 15m | 20m | 25m | 30m |
|---------------------------|------------------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Topsoil Depth | 0.30 | 0.30 | 0.30 | 0.30 | 0.30 | 0.25 | 0.26 |
| Subsoil Depth | 0.15 | 0.10 | 0.15 | 0.16 | 0.10 | 0.20 | 0.14 |
| Top of natural | 0.45 | 0.40 | 0.45 | 0.46 | 0.40 | 0.45 | 0.40 |
| Base of Trench | 0.47 | 0.40 | 0.45 | 0.46 | 0.50 | 0.50 | 0.40 |



Figure 9: Trench 3 looking north-east

Trench 04

Orientation: North-west to south-east

Length: 30m Width: 1.80m

No Archaeological remains identified

| Interval | NW 0m | 5m | 10m | 15m | 20m | 25m | 30m |
|---------------------------|------------------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Topsoil Depth | 0.26 | 0.30 | 0.30 | 0.32 | 0.30 | 0.25 | 0.30 |
| Subsoil Depth | - | 0.12 | 0.15 | 0.12 | 0.10 | 0.14 | 0.06 |
| Top of natural | 0.26 | 0.42 | 0.45 | 0.44 | 0.40 | 0.39 | 0.36 |
| Base of Trench | 0.35 | 0.45 | 0.50 | 0.50 | 0.44 | 0.40 | 0.30 |



Figure 10: Trench 4 looking north-west

Trench 05

Orientation: North-west to south-east

Length: 30m Width: 1.80m

No Archaeological remains identified

| Interval | NW 0m | 5m | 10m | 15m | 20m | 25m | 30m |
|---------------------------|------------------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Topsoil Depth | 0.23 | 0.26 | 0.33 | 0.40 | 0.26 | 0.28 | 0.35 |
| Subsoil Depth | 0.10 | 0.10 | 0.08 | - | 0.12 | 0.10 | - |
| Top of natural | 0.33 | 0.36 | 0.41 | 0.40 | 0.38 | 0.38 | 0.35 |
| Base of Trench | 0.33 | 0.36 | 0.41 | 0.40 | 0.38 | 0.38 | 0.30 |



Figure 11: Trench 5 looking north-west

Trench 06

Orientation: North to South

Length: 30m Width: 1.80m

No Archaeological remains identified

| Interval | N 0m | 5m | 10m | 15m | 20m | 25m | 30m |
|---------------------------|-----------------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Topsoil Depth | 0.35 | 0.25 | 0.30 | 0.30 | 0.38 | 0.30 | 0.25 |
| Subsoil Depth | 0.18 | 0.15 | 0.16 | 0.10 | - | 0.10 | 0.05 |
| Top of natural | 0.53 | 0.40 | 0.46 | 0.40 | 0.38 | 0.40 | 0.30 |
| Base of Trench | 0.53 | 0.45 | 0.46 | 0.40 | 0.50 | 0.50 | 0.32 |



Figure 12: Trench 6 looking north-west

Trench 07

Orientation: north-east to south-west

Length: 30m Width: 1.80m

No Archaeological remains identified

| Interval | SW 0m | 5m | 10m | 15m | 20m | 25m | 30m |
|---------------------------|------------------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Topsoil Depth | 0.25 | 0.30 | 0.30 | 0.30 | 0.35 | 0.30 | 0.30 |
| Subsoil Depth | 0.10 | 0.20 | 0.12 | 0.10 | 0.13 | 0.15 | 0.10 |
| Top of natural | 0.35 | 0.40 | 0.42 | 0.40 | 0.48 | 0.45 | 0.40 |
| Base of Trench | 0.38 | 0.48 | 0.50 | 0.40 | 0.48 | 0.48 | 0.45 |



Figure 13: Trench 7 looking north-east

Trench 08

Orientation: south-west to north- east

Length: 30m Width: 1.80m

No Archaeological remains identified

| Interval | SW 0m | 5m | 10m | 15m | 20m | 25m | 30m |
|-------------------|----------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Topsoil Depth | 0.35 | 0.30 | 0.32 | 0.30 | 0.30 | 0.40 | 0.30 |
| Subsoil Depth | 0.10 | 0.10 | 0.10 | 0.10 | 0.10 | - | 0.10 |
| Top of natural | 0.45 | 0.40 | 0.42 | 0.40 | 0.40 | 0.40 | 0.40 |
| Base of Trench | 0.40 | 0.40 | 0.43 | 0.40 | 0.40 | 0.48 | 0.50 |



Figure 14: Trench 8 looking north-east

Trench 09

Orientation: north-west to south-east

Length: 30m Width: 1.80m

No Archaeological remains identified. Furrows identified

| Interval | SW 0m | 5m | 10m | 15m | 20m | 25m | 30m |
|---------------------------|------------------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Topsoil Depth | 0.40 | 0.30 | 0.30 | 0.28 | 0.30 | 0.35 | 0.30 |
| Subsoil Depth | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Top of natural | 0.40 | 0.30 | - | 0.28 | 0.30 | 0.35 | 0.30 |
| Base of Trench | 0.40 | 0.30 | 0.31 | 0.34 | 0.30 | 0.30 | 0.30 |



Figure 15: Trench 9 looking south-east with faint furrows across trench width.

Trench 10

Orientation: north-east to south-west

Length: 30m Width: 1.80m

No Archaeological remains identified

| Interval | SW 0m | 5m | 10m | 15m | 20m | 25m | 30m |
|---------------------------|------------------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Topsoil Depth | 0.36 | 0.28 | 0.30 | 0.36 | 0.30 | 0.30 | 0.40 |
| Subsoil Depth | 0.14 | 0.12 | 0.10 | - | 0.20 | 0.10 | - |
| Top of natural | 0.40 | 0.40 | 0.40 | 0.46 | 0.50 | 0.40 | 0.40 |
| Base of Trench | 0.40 | 0.40 | 0.40 | 0.50 | 0.50 | 0.40 | 0.40 |



Figure 16: Trench 10 looking south-west

Trench 11

Orientation: north to south

Length: 30m Width: 1.80m

No Archaeological remains identified

| Interval | S 0m | 5m | 10m | 15m | 20m | 25m | 30m |
|---------------------------|-----------------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Topsoil Depth | 0.30 | 0.30 | 0.30 | 0.30 | 0.28 | 0.30 | 0.34 |
| Subsoil Depth | 0.12 | 0.20 | 0.14 | 0.20 | 0.10 | - | - |
| Top of natural | 0.42 | 0.50 | 0.44 | 0.50 | 0.38 | 0.30 | 0.34 |
| Base of Trench | 0.42 | 0.60 | 0.44 | 0.60 | 0.38 | 0.30 | 0.34 |



Figure 17: Trench 11, looking south

Trench 12

Orientation: east to west

Length: 30m Width: 1.80m

No Archaeological remains identified

| Interval | E 0m | 5m | 10m | 15m | 20m | 25m | 30m |
|---------------------------|-----------------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Topsoil Depth | 0.30 | 0.30 | 0.26 | 0.30 | 0.30 | 0.30 | 0.40 |
| Subsoil Depth | 0.16 | 0.10 | 0.15 | 0.20 | 0.20 | 0.20 | 0.20 |
| Top of natural | 0.46 | 0.40 | 0.41 | 0.50 | 0.50 | 0.50 | 0.60 |
| Base of Trench | 0.46 | 0.50 | 0.46 | 0.55 | 0.55 | 0.60 | 0.60 |



Figure 18: Trench 12, looking east

Trench 13

Orientation: south-east to north- west

Length: 30m Width: 1.80m

No Archaeological remains identified

| Interval | SE 0m | 5m | 10m | 15m | 20m | 25m | 30m |
|-------------------|----------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Topsoil Depth | 0.30 | 0.30 | 0.28 | 0.30 | 0.30 | 0.25 | 0.20 |
| Subsoil Depth | 0.20 | 0.20 | 0.17 | 0.20 | 0.10 | 0.15 | 0.08 |
| Top of natural | 0.50 | 0.50 | 0.45 | 0.50 | 0.40 | 0.40 | 0.38 |
| Base of Trench | 0.50 | 0.50 | 0.40 | 0.45 | 0.50 | 0.50 | 0.38 |



Figure 19: Trench 13, looking north

Trench 14

Orientation: north-east to south-west

Length: 28m Width: 1.80m

No Archaeological remains identified

| Interval | SW 0m | 5m | 10m | 15m | 20m | 25m | 28m |
|---------------------------|------------------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Topsoil Depth | 0.30 | 0.30 | 0.25 | 0.30 | 0.34 | 0.40 | 0.45 |
| Subsoil Depth | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Top of natural | 0.30 | 0.30 | 0.25 | 0.30 | 0.34 | 0.40 | 0.45 |
| Base of Trench | 0.30 | 0.30 | 0.25 | 0.30 | 0.34 | 0.40 | 0.45 |



Figure 20: Trench 14, looking north-east

Trench 15

Orientation: north-west to south-east

Length: 30m Width: 1.80m

No Archaeological remains identified

| Interval | NE 0m | 5m | 10m | 15m | 20m | 25m | 30m |
|---------------------------|------------------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Topsoil Depth | 0.30 | 0.30 | 0.50 | 0.60 | 0.60 | 0.60 | 0.80 |
| Subsoil Depth | 0.20 | 0.10 | - | - | - | - | - |
| Top of natural | 0.50 | 0.40 | 0.50 | 0.60 | 0.60 | 0.60 | 0.80 |
| Base of Trench | 0.50 | 0.40 | 0.50 | 0.60 | 0.60 | 0.80 | 0.80 |



Figure 21: Trench 15, looking south- east

Conclusion

The evaluation proved negative for archaeological remains with a number of regular linear anomalies identified in Trenches 1 and 9 interpreted as furrows orientated south-west to north-east across the field.

The ground is generally well drained with sand and gravel forming the natural geology for much of the site except the north-west area where sand and gravel gave way to a more clayey geology with evidence for field drainage. Previous trial trenching at the Blythe Valley Business Park on the other side of junction 4 of the M42 also proved negative (Speed, 2007) and the evaluation results confirm the information gathered by the desk-based assessment (Score 2017) which suggested that the application area probably lay in area of agricultural land outside the settlement areas during the medieval period.

Archive

The archive will be deposited at the Heritage & Local Studies Service, Core Library under the Accession No. 00218 and consists of the following:

- 15 Trench recording sheets
- 1 Index 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

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23-11-2017

OASIS data entry

| | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---|--|----------------|----------------------------------|
| PROJECT DETAILS | Oasis No | universi1- 302101 | | |
| | Project Name | An archaeological field evaluation on land at Fore Business Park, Solihull(SP 414769/276312) | | |
| | Start/end dates of field work | 20-11-2017 to 22- 11-2017 | | |
| | Previous/Future Work | Desk Based assessment | | |
| | Project Type | Evaluation | | |
| | Site Status | None | | |
| | Current Land Use | Former pastoral land | | |
| | Monument Type/Period | None/none | | |
| | Significant Finds/Period | None | | |
| | Development Type | Commerce | | |
| | Reason for Investigation | NPPF | | |
| | Position in the Planning Process | Outline Planning Permission | | |
| | Planning Ref. | | | |
| PROJECT LOCATION | Site Address/Postcode | Fore Business Park, Solihull(SP 414769/276312) | | |
| | Study Area | 1.9 ha | | |
| | Site Coordinates | SP 414769/ 276312 | | |
| | Height OD | c 118m OD | | |
| PROJECT CREATORS | Organisation | ULAS | | |
| | Project Brief Originator | Local Planning Authority | | |
| | Project Design Originator | ULAS | | |
| | Project Manager | Vicki Score | | |
| | Project Director/Supervisor | James Patrick | | |
| | Sponsor/Funding Body | Developer :Avant Homes | | |
| PROJECT ARCHIVE | | Physical | Digital | Paper |
| | Recipient | NA | SMBC | SMBC |
| | ID (Acc. No.) | | Acc. No. 00218 | Acc. No. 00218 |
| | Contents | | Photos | Fieldwork records Field Notes |
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| | Description | Developer Report A4 pdf | | |

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