



UNIVERSITY OF
LEICESTER

Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological Watching Brief on
Land at Main Street Normanton-Le-
Heath, Coalville, Leicestershire**

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ULAS Report No 2017-170


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**An Archaeological Strip, Map and Sample Excavation on Land at
Main Street Normanton-Le-Heath Coalville Leicestershire LE67 2TB**

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Filename/Version	Checked by	Date
2017-170	R.J. Buckley 	15/12/2017

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ULAS Report Number 2017-170

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Accession Number XA138-2017

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An Archaeological Strip, Map and Sample Excavation on Land at Main Street Normanton-Le-Heath Coalville Leicestershire

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Summary

University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) carried out an archaeological Strip, Map and Sample Excavation on land at Main Street, Normanton Le Heath, Coalville, Leicestershire on 2nd/3rd November 2017, as part of the planning conditions to construct a detached dwelling on the site. A number of undated archaeological features were uncovered together with two shallow pits of the 13th-14th century. A number of modern truncations were also observed.

The site archive will be held by Leicestershire Museums Service, under accession number XA138-2017.

1. Introduction

1.1 An archaeological Strip, Map and Sample Excavation was carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services at land at Land at Main Street, Normanton-Le-Heath, Coalville, Leicestershire, on 2nd-3rd November 2017.

1.2 Planning permission (15/01097/FUL) has been granted for the erection of one detached dwelling on the site with an archaeological condition (Figure 1).|

1.3 In view of the fact that the development proposals were considered likely to have a detrimental effect on any heritage assets present, the Principal Planning Archaeologist, Leicestershire County Council, advised NW Leicestershire that the applicant should provide for a programme of archaeological work prior to the start of the proposed development, comprising ‘an archaeological soil strip of the development area, followed by the investigation and recording of any exposed archaeological remains. In addition, all services and other ground works likely to impact upon archaeological remains should be appropriately investigated and recorded. Provision must be made within the development timetable for archaeologists to be present during these works, to enable the required level of archaeological supervision.’

1.4 The definition of archaeological excavation, taken from the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists *Standards and Guidance: for Archaeological Excavations* (CIFA S&G 2014) is a controlled programme of intrusive fieldwork with defined research objectives which examines, records and interprets archaeological deposits, features, structures, and as appropriate, retrieves artefacts or ecofacts within a specified area or site on land, inter-tidal zone or underwater. The records made and objects gathered during fieldwork are studied and the results of that study published in detail appropriate to the project design.

1.5 The document addresses the requirements from by Leicestershire County Council as historic environment advisors to North-West Leicestershire District Council.



Figure 1: Existing and proposed site layout

2. Site Description, Topography and Geology (Figure 2, Figure 3)

2.1 The proposed development site lies on the west side of Main Street in the village of Normanton le Heath, Leicestershire at an approximate height of 131m aOD.

2.2 The British Geological Survey Geology of Britain Viewer indicates that the site lies on: Head - Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel above Tarporey Siltstone Formation - Siltstone, Mudstone and Sandstone.



Figure 2: Leicestershire location

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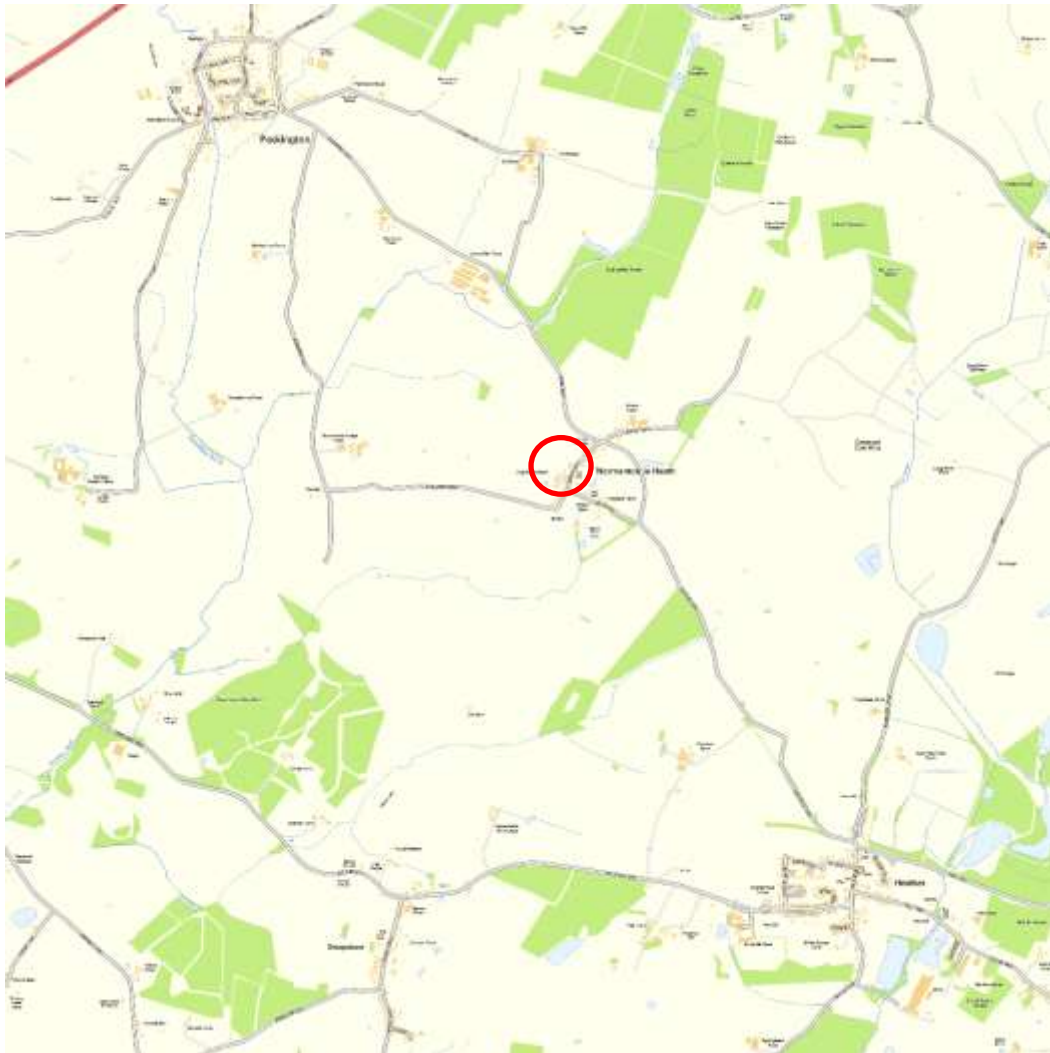


Figure 3: Normanton-Le-Heath location

3. Historical and Archaeological Background

3.1 The Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record (HER) notes that the projected line of a Roman road, the 'Via Devana' (HER ref.: MLE4345), appears to run *c.*200m to the south of the application area. Whilst it is unlikely that the proposed development will, consequently, disturb evidence of the road, its presence in the vicinity raises the potential that there may be as yet unrecorded Roman remains in the area. The proposed development also lies squarely within the historic settlement core of the medieval and post-medieval village (MLE16886); this is the area within which it is anticipated to find evidence of Anglo-Saxon and later settlement and activity. The potential for such remains is enhanced by the location of the site close to Holy Trinity church, first recorded in the 13th century. The place name – Normanton-le-Heath – is suggested to indicate a farmstead and settlement established by Norwegian Viking settlers, however, it is not mentioned in the Domesday Book.

3.2 Looking at the historic mapping and available aerial photographs for the site, it appears there were some earthworks in the area of the proposed development in the 1960s, these appear to have survived, at least in part, until the 1990s but were damaged by ploughing/cultivation in or before 2001.

3.3 The residential development is situated some distance back from the Main Street and it is likely that the main focus of any medieval and post-medieval archaeological remains will be in the vicinity of the proposed village green. However, rear yards, ancillary structural remains, evidence of refuse disposal, domestic and agricultural industry, etc., may all occur on site, whilst the proposed access road (and services?) would affect remains toward the frontage.

4. Aims and Objectives

4.1. The principal objective of the project was to ensure that any archaeological deposits affected by the proposed groundworks were recorded adequately.

4.2. The aims of the archaeological investigation, were:

- To identify the presence/absence of any archaeological deposits/historic fabric.
- To establish the character, extent and date range for any archaeological deposits/historic fabric to be affected by the proposed works.
- To record any archaeological deposits/historic fabric 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.

4.3. 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.

5. Methodology (Figure 4, Figure 5)

5.1 The area to be affected by the development was stripped of topsoil and subsoil using a toothless bucket and a mechanical digger. This included the access road leading northwest from the Main Street frontage, widening out to encompass the proposed building footprint and associated car-parking area. The results were photographed and the archaeological remains recorded as appropriate.

5.2 The work followed the approved design specification (Buckley/Gonzalez, 2016) and adhered to the Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) *Code of Conduct* and adhered to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Excavations* (2014).

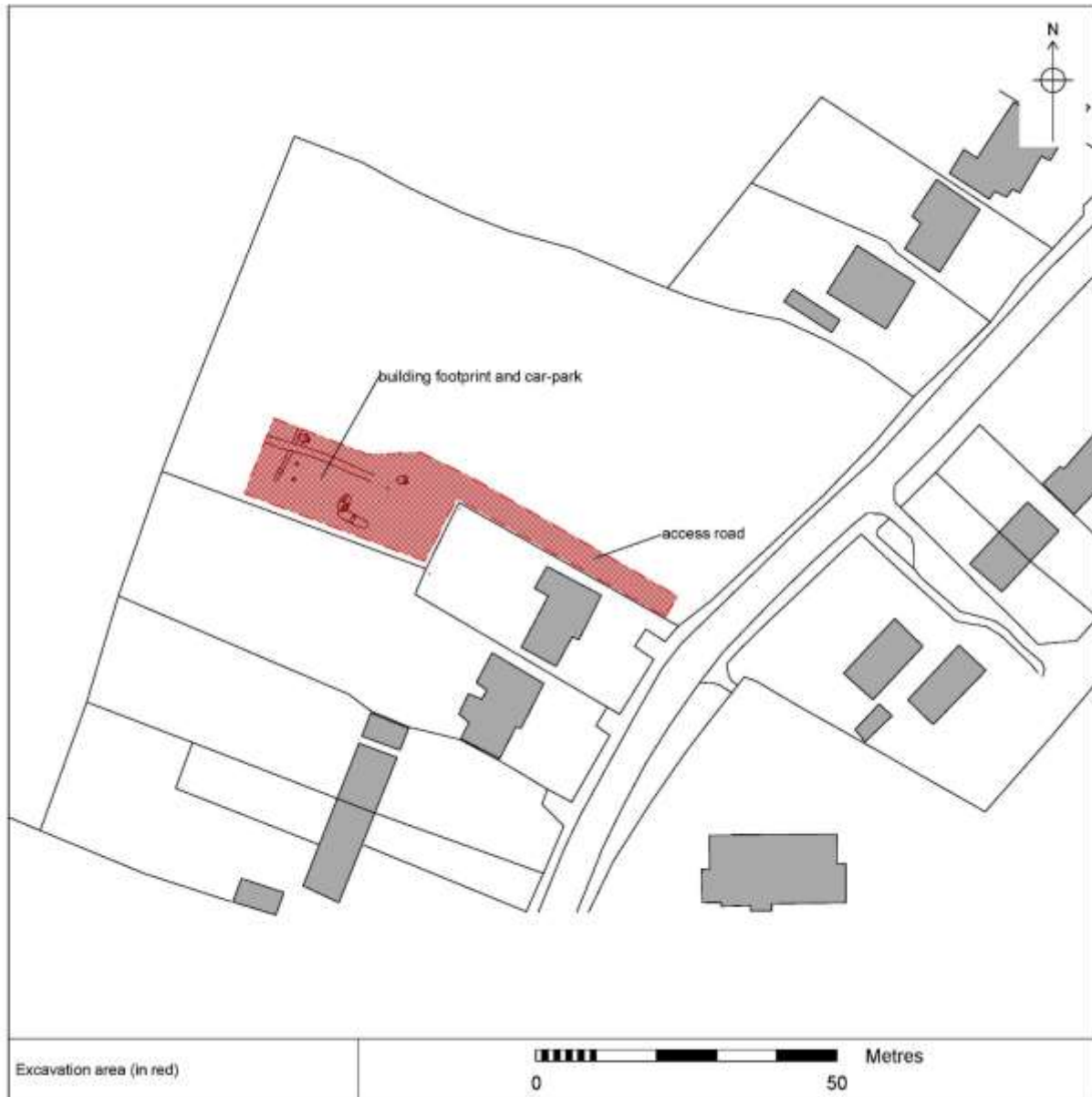


Figure 4: Excavation area (in red)



Figure 5: Machining, looking north

6. Results (Figure 14, Figure 16)

6.1 An area with a maximum length and width of *c.*72m and *c.*16.50m respectively, encompassing a total area of *c.*644m², was stripped of topsoil and subsoil to the level of the light reddish-brown clay sub-stratum, a depth of up to 0.85m below the existing ground surface. The area included the length of the access road (Figure 6) running perpendicular from the east of the existing Main Street, a car parking area and the footprint of the proposed building at the westernmost edge of the site (Figure 7). A number of modern features containing 19th-century pottery and glass and land drainage trenches and pipes were observed, along with archaeological features representing discrete and inter-cutting pits, postholes and a gully. Two of these pits contained pottery dating to the medieval/post-medieval period, the others were undated.



Figure 6: Access road



Figure 7: Building footprint, looking east

6.2 Pits [02] [12] [15] [17]

Four pits were revealed in the west of the development area beneath the footprint of the proposed building and adjacent parking area. These were all subject to sample hand excavation.

Sub-circular discrete pit **[02]** (Figure 8), with a diameter of *c.* 1.40m and merging concave sides was *c.* 0.32m deep. It contained a mid-brown clayey silt fill (**09**), *c.* 0.07m deep and a similar primary darker brown/grey fill (**01**), neither of which had finds.



Figure 8: Pit [02], looking northwest

Similar-sized and shaped pit [12] (Figure 9), contained a mid/light grey silty sand fill (11) and was also without finds. It described concave shallower sides and a concave base.



Figure 9: Pit [12], looking northwest

Inter-cutting pits [15] and [17] were located along the eastern perimeter of the development area. Pit [17] (Figure 11), elongated, albeit irregular in plan, with a flat base was *c.*2.24m in length and *c.*1.36m wide. It contained a mid-brown/grey silty clay fill (16) and medieval Potters Marston pottery dating to the 13th-14th century AD. A later sub-oval pit [15] (Figure 10), *c.*2.70m+ in length and *c.*0.38m deep, post-dated Pit [17] and contained two fills; a tertiary dark grey silty clay (13), *c.*0.14m deep, and a primary light yellow/brown silty clay, *c.*0.36m deep. The former (13) also contained medieval oxidised sandy ware pottery dating from the 12th–14th century.



Figure 10: Pit [15], looking south



Figure 11: Pit [17], looking southeast

6.3 Postholes [04] [06]

Two discrete circular postholes were identified beneath the footprint of the proposed building. Posthole [04] (Figure 12), with a diameter of *c.*0.40m and depth of *c.*0.20m had steep, concave sides merging with a central, flat base. It contained a mid/dark grey silty clay fill (03) and beneath that a red clay deposit (10), possibly representing redeposited natural. Posthole [06] (Figure 13), with similar characteristics, had a diameter of *c.*0.38m and depth of *c.*0.26m. It contained a single mid/dark brown/grey silty clay (05). Both of these features were devoid of finds.



Figure 12: Posthole [04], looking northeast



Figure 13: Posthole [06], looking north

6.4 Gully [08] (Figure 15)

A linear feature running *c.*10m northeast/southwest across the footprint of the building was sample excavated and represented gully [08]. It had shallow straight sides, a central concave base and was *c.*0.16m deep. Single mid-grey silty clay fill (07) was devoid of finds. It was truncated by a linear feature running northwest/southeast across the development area, containing 19th-century pottery, modern brick and glass, possibly representing a post-medieval boundary, although this appeared to peter out before the limit of excavation.

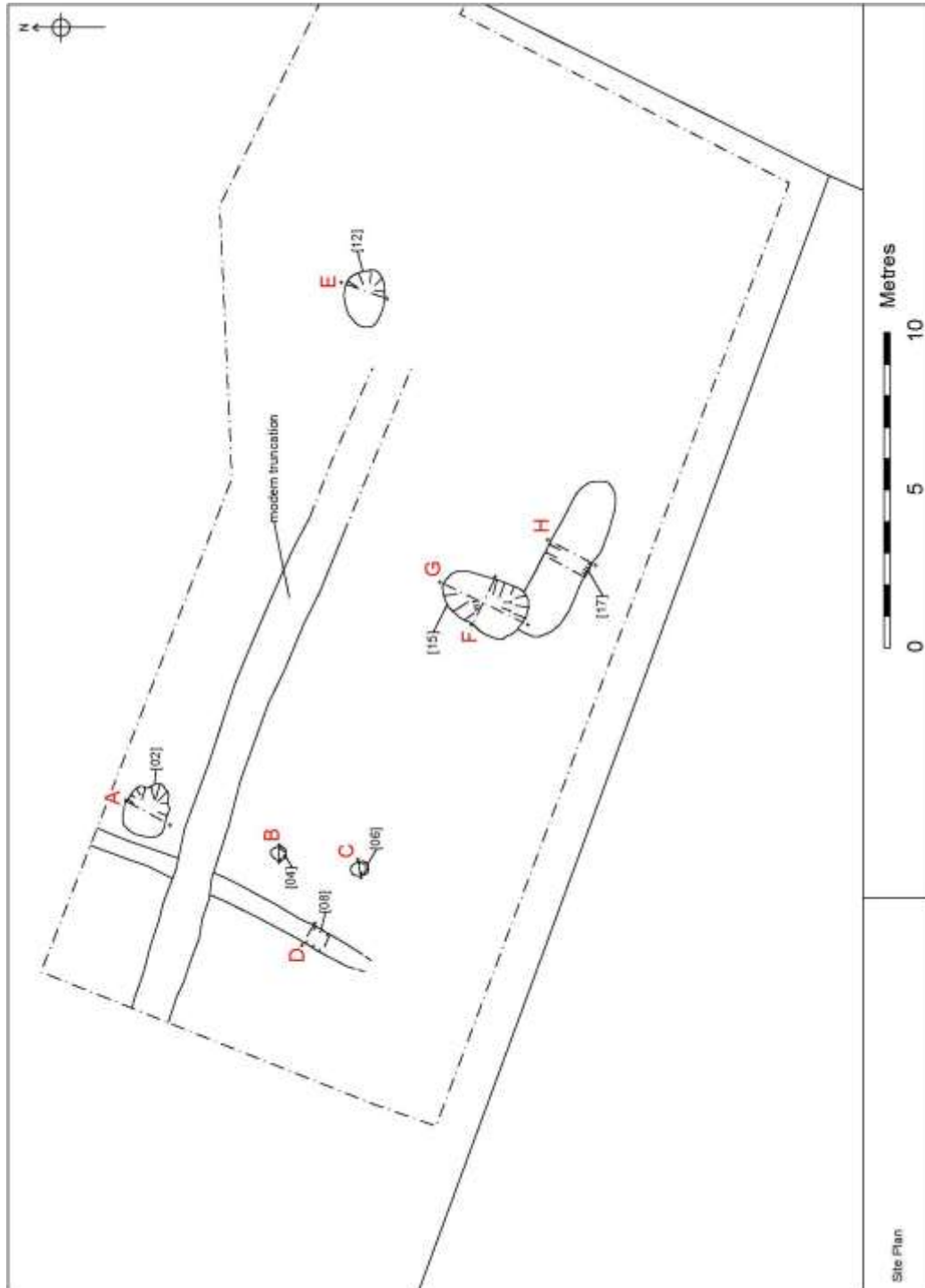


Figure 14: Archaeological features



Figure 15: Gully [08], looking northeast

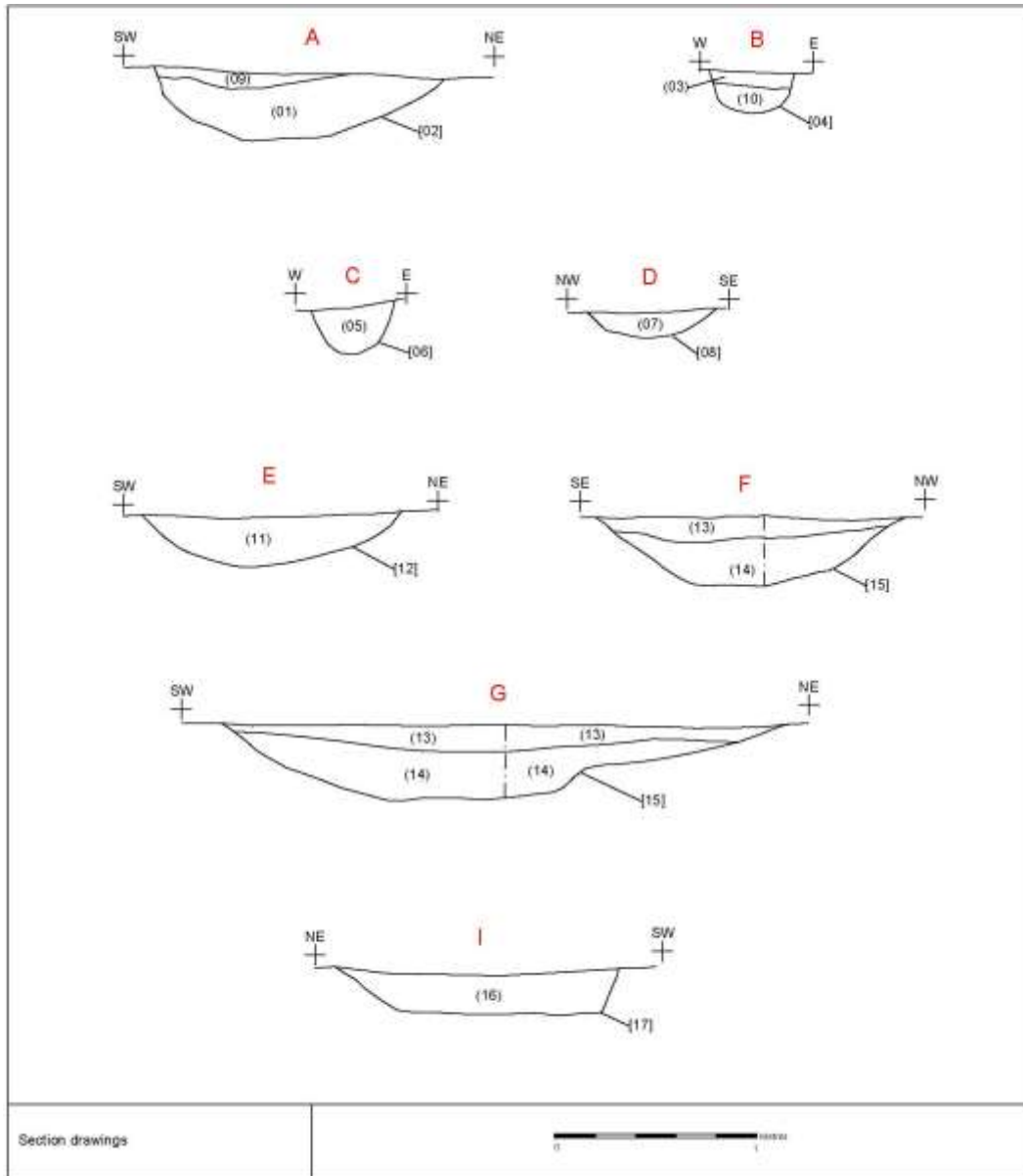


Figure 16: Archaeological sections

7. Discussion

An archaeological strip, map and sample excavation was undertaken in November 2017 by University of Leicester Archaeological Services on behalf of Leicestershire County Council. The development was for the proposed construction of a single residential property with an access road, leading from the Main Street of the village and associated car parking space. Although several land drains and features containing 19th century finds were revealed along the length of the access road, probably related to outhouses of previous recent ancillary farm building, it was devoid of archaeological remains. The area of the proposed building footprint and car-parking revealed several features, of archaeological interest. These included discrete pits, postholes, a gully and two intercutting pits, the latter dating to the medieval period. Whilst it is difficult to say anything tangible about these remains in the relationship to each other, their proximity to the church and the medieval core of Normanton-Le-Heath and the pottery recovered, suggests they could relate to the development of the settlement from the 12th to the 14th century. The area of the footprint of the building had also been subject to more recent 19th century disturbance.

9. Archive

The site archive will be held by *Leicestershire Museums Service, under accession no. XA138-2017.*

The archive contains:

- 1 context summary record, 16 context sheets
- 1 photographic recording sheet
- 1 Drawing Index sheet
- CD containing digital photographs and report
- Unbound copy of this report
- Thumbnail print of digital photographs

OASIS data entry

PROJECT DETAILS	Oasis No	universi1-308393		
	Project Name	An Archaeological Watching Brief on Land at Main Street Normanton Le Heath Coalville Leicestershire		
	Start/end dates of field work	02-11-2017 - 03-11-2017		
	Previous/Future Work	Yes / Not known		
	Project Type	Watching Brief		
	Site Status	None		
	Current Land Use	Cultivated Land		
	Monument Type/Period	13 th /14 th Century shallow pits		
	Significant Finds/Period	Pottery / PM		
	Development Type	Residential		
	Reason for Investigation	NPPF		
	Position in the Planning Process	Planning condition		
	Planning Ref.			
PROJECT LOCATION	Site Address/Postcode	Main Street Normanton Le Heath Coalville Leicestershire LE67 2TB		
	Study Area	664m		
	Site Coordinates	SK 376128		
	Height OD	Unknown		
PROJECT CREATORS	Organisation	ULAS		
	Project Brief Originator	Local Planning Authority (LCC)		
	Project Design Originator	ULAS		
	Project Manager	Dr Richard Buckley		
	Project Director/Supervisor	Dr Richard Buckley		
	Sponsor/Funding Body	Developer / Highbury Design		
PROJECT ARCHIVE		Physical	Digital	Paper
	Recipient	NA	LCC MusService	LCCMusService
	ID (Acc. No.)		XA138.2017	XA138.2017
	Contents		Photos Survey data	Watching brief records Field Notes
PROJECT BIBLIOGRAPHY	Type	Grey Literature (unpublished)		
	Title	An Archaeological watching brief Land at Main Street Normanton Le Heath Coalville Leicestershire LE67 2TB		
	Author	Baker, S		
	Other bibliographic details	ULAS Report No 2017-170		
	Date	2017		
	Publisher/Place	University of Leicester Archaeological Services / University of Leicester		
	Description	Developer Report A4 pdf		

10. Publication

A summary of the work will be submitted for publication in the local archaeological journal *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* in due course. The report has been added to the Archaeology Data Service's (ADS) Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) database held by the University of York.

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11. Acknowledgements

The fieldwork was undertaken for Stephen Bryan, Highbury Design and was carried out by Stephen Baker of ULAS. Richard Buckley managed the project.

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