



UNIVERSITY OF
LEICESTER

Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological Watching Brief
on Land at High Hopes Nursery,
Sandhills Avenue, North
Hamilton, Leicester LE5 1LU**

Mireya González Rodríguez



ULAS Report No 2018-027

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Leicester LE5 1LU**

NGR:

Mireya González Rodríguez

For: Jag's Childcare

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University of Leicester
Archaeological Services
University Rd., Leicester, LE1 7RH
Tel: (0116) 2522848 Fax: (0116) 2522614

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An Archaeological Watching Brief on Land at Hope Primary School, Sandhills Avenue, North Hamilton, Leicester LE5 1LU

Mireya González Rodríguez

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was carried out on 28th and 29th of November 2017 by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on behalf of Jag's Childcare on land at Sandhills Avenue, North Hamilton, Leicester LE5 1LU (SK 62994 07309). The fieldwork was undertaken as required by Leicester City Council to fulfil Planning Condition 7 of Planning Application 20170452 related to groundworks associated with the erection of a modular nursery school. The scheme of archaeological attendance and recording during groundworks was established in order to mitigate the potential impact of the development on any such archaeological remains as might be present.

The archaeological watching brief revealed two possible archaeological features, a ditch and a pit, which will not be affected by the proposed development. Therefore, these features were noted but not investigated.

The site archive will be deposited with Leicester City Museums Services under Accession Number A11.2017.

1. Introduction

This document forms the report for an archaeological watching brief on land at Sandhills Avenue, North Hamilton LE5 1LU (Fig.1), in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework Section 12 *Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment*. Under Planning Application 20170452 permission has been granted for the erection of a modular nursery school on grounds at Hope Primary School (Fig. 3).

The development scheme is located to the north-east of an area of archaeological interest (see Fig.4). The Planning Archaeologist for Leicester City Council as advisor to the planning authority specified the need for a scheme of work comprising archaeological observation, investigation, recording, analysis and publication before any groundworks commence in order to mitigate the potential impact of the development on any such archaeological remains as might be present.



Figure 1. Location of North Hamilton

2. Site Description, Topography and Geology

The assessment area lies at north of Humberstone Village approximately 5.6km northeast of Leicester City Centre (Fig. 1). The primary school site is located within the residential area of Hamilton, to the northern side of Sandhills Avenue (Fig.2). The site covers approximately 155 square metres and lies at a height of c.89m aOD. The British Geological Survey website indicates that the underlying geology consists of Wilmcote Limestone Member - Mudstone and Limestone.

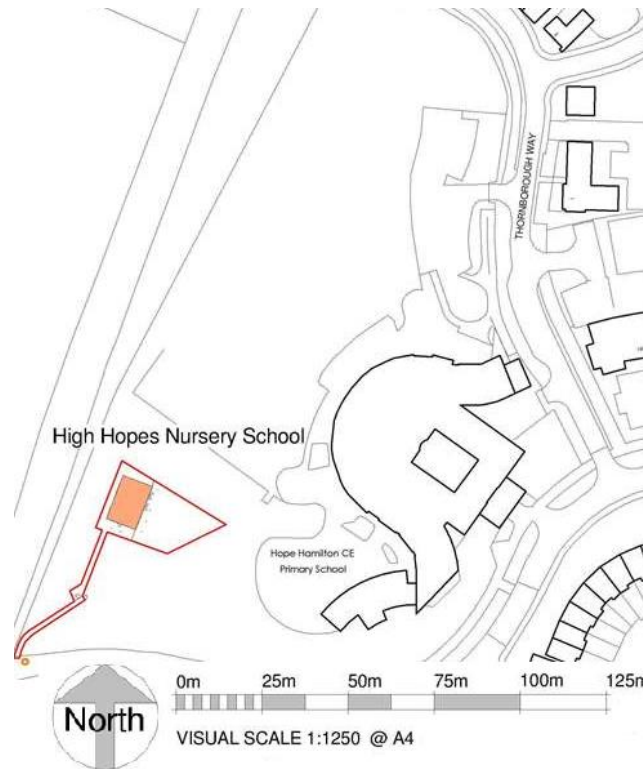


Figure 2. Location of proposed development (provided by Client)



Figure 3. Proposed development (provided by Client)

3. Archaeological and Historical Background

The area has a known archaeological potential, specifically comprising evidence of a later Iron Age settlement, apparently succeeded by a Roman farmstead that appears to continue in use until the end of the Roman period. The site has been extensively investigated, both within and to the south and west of the development area (Fig.4).

The Leicester City HER records the presence of several archaeological sites in the area dating from prehistoric period onwards, including the deserted medieval village of Hamilton, one kilometre to the east. Previous evaluation work on the site includes fieldwalking and geophysical surveys along with evaluation by trial trenching. Fieldwalking by LMARS (Liddle 1994) produced a dense scatter of flint and prehistoric, Roman and medieval pottery with for possible concentrations of artefacts. The fieldwalking survey was followed by an evaluation by Leicester Archaeological Unit (Lucas and Higgins 1994) producing evidence of a probably prehistoric settlement comprising a series of ditches and gullies with artefact evidence suggesting a later Iron Age date. A second smaller area of possible Iron Age features was uncovered nearby. Other fields that were surveyed by fieldwalking uncovered Anglo-Saxon pottery and further flint scatters though to be Late Bronze Age-Iron Age (Priest 2000).

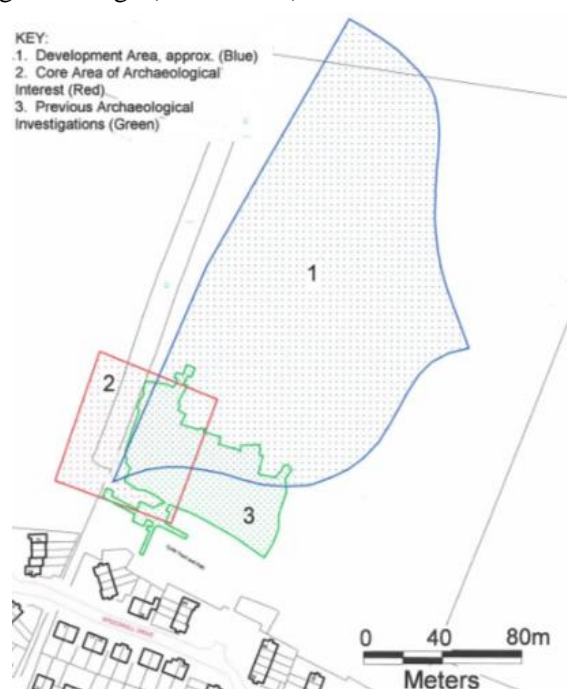


Figure 4. Known archaeological evidence at Sandhills Avenue, Leicester

4. Aims and Methods

All exploratory and mitigation work was considered in light of the *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 2010). Within the research objectives, this archaeological scheme of work could contribute to regional research agendas on medieval landscape studies and morphologies of rural settlements.

Generally the main objectives of the archaeological 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 and to advance understanding of the heritage assets.
- 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 aims, the principal objective was to establish the nature, extent, date, depth, and significance of the heritage assets within their local and regional context. The following specific research agenda topics have been identified as relevant to this study, based on the current state of knowledge within the application area:

Late Bronze Age- Iron Age

- Why area sites of this period comparatively rare in the archaeological record?
- What can we deduce about the morphology, spatial extent and functions of settlements, and in particular the processes underlying the development in some areas of enclosed occupation or activity foci?

OBJECTIVE: To characterize the Late Bronze Age-Early Iron Age settlement resource and investigate intra-regional variability.

Romano- British

- How did rural settlements relate to each other and to towns and military sites, and how may this have varied regionally and over time?
- What patterns can be discerned in the location of settlements in the landscape?

OBJECTIVE: To investigate landscape context of rural settlement

5. Methodology

The *Written Scheme of Investigation* (LaCombe 2017) approved by the City Planning Archaeologist on behalf of the planning authority, who also monitored the fieldwork, required an archaeological watching brief during groundworks in order to determine the presence/absence, character and extent of archaeological remains.

Excavation was undertaken using a Kotoba KX71-3 mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.5m ditching bucket, with topsoil and overburden removed carefully in level spits, under continuous archaeological supervision.

A photographic record of the investigations was prepared, including photographs illustrating both in general and detail the principal features. The photographic record also includes working shots to illustrate the nature of the archaeological operation mounted.

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

6. Results

The fieldwork was undertaken on the 28th and 29th of November 2017. The topsoils and subsoils of the assessment area was stripped to a depth of 0.30m below ground level under constant archaeological supervision. The topsoil consisted of a mid brown grey silty clay, approximately 0.20m in depth, and the subsoil was a mid light grey brown silty clay. Further reduction was carried out in the area where the timber building would be located, with the post settings excavated an extra 0.30m. Individual photographs of the post settings were taken (see Figs.5 and 8).

A possible ditch on a north-south alignment was recorded on the southeast area of the proposed timber building (PH17-PH20) (see Figs.6 and 8). The fill was a mid light brown grey clayey silt with frequent charcoal flecks. As the natural ground sloped south, the possible ditch was not seen on the post settings further north. No surface finds were seen, and the feature was not investigated.

A second feature, a possible pit, was seen in PH8 (Figs. 6-7), immediately northwest from the ditch. As it was recorded below the foundations of the building, it was not excavated. No finds were recovered and thus it is not possible to establish a relative chronology for either of the features.

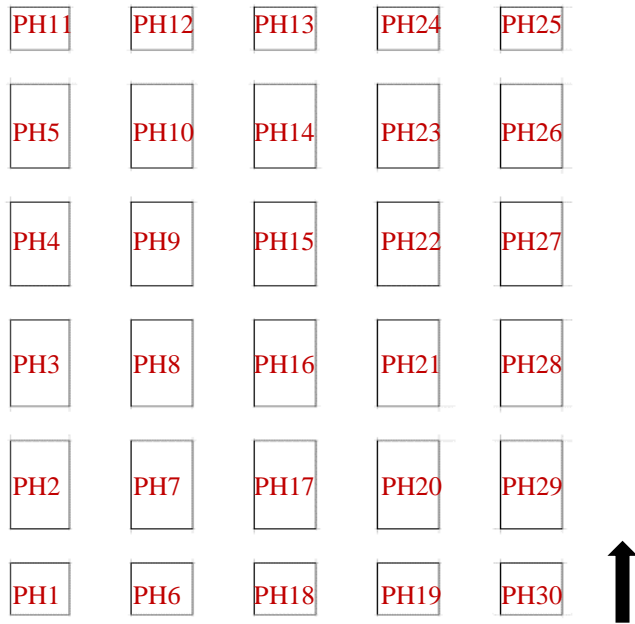


Figure 5. Plan of post settings



Figure 6. PH17-PH20 (Scales 1.00m, 0.50m and 0.30m)



Figure 7. Possible pit in PH8 (Scales 1.00m, 0.50m and 0.30m)

7. Archive and Publications

A copy of the report shall be submitted to the Leicestershire Historic and Environment Records (HER) as a single bound copy with PDF/A on a CD, the completed OASIS record (Appendix I) and digital images. The site archive consists of:

- The approved Written Scheme of Investigation
- This report
- 2 Watching Brief Record Sheet
- 1 Photographic Index Sheet
- A CD-ROM containing 43 digital photographs, photographic index (excel file) and a PDF/A copy of this report

A version of this report and excavation summary will appear in due course in the *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society*. The University of Leicester Archaeological Services supports the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) project. The online OASIS date entry has been completed detailing the results of the project (Appendix I).

8. Acknowledgements

Thanks are extended to the contractors for their cooperation on site. Mireya González Rodríguez of University of Leicester Archaeological Services undertook the archaeological observation with the assistance of Naomi Cooper on behalf of Jag's Childcare. The project was managed by Richard Buckley.

9. Bibliography

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Dr Mireya González Rodríguez

University of Leicester Archaeological Services
University of Leicester
University Road
Leicester LE1 7RH

Tel: 0116 252 5665

Fax: 0116 252 2614

Email: mgr8@le.ac.uk

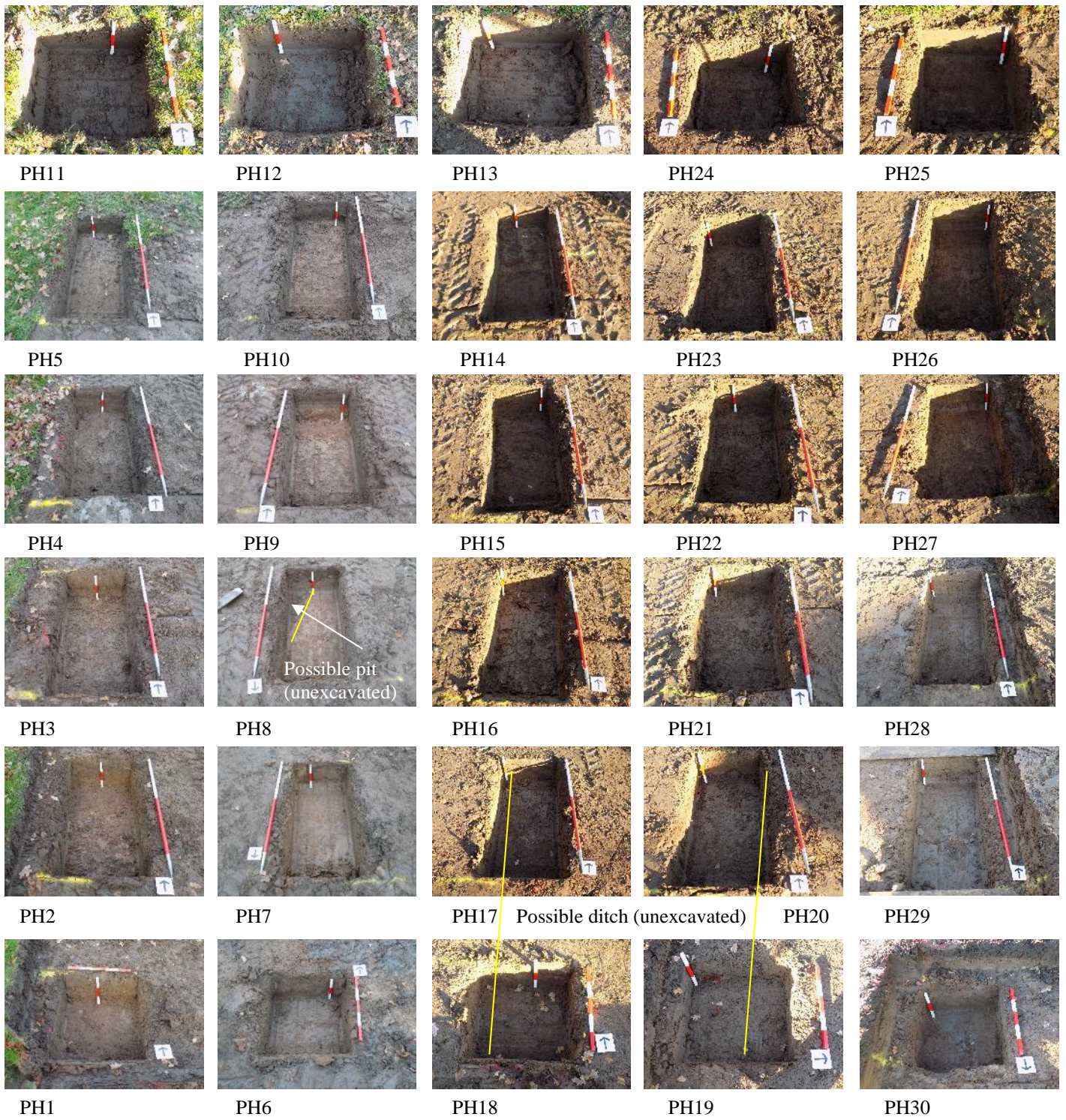


Figure 8. Post settings and location of possible archaeological features

Appendix I. OASIS Data Entry

PROJECT DETAILS	OASIS ID	Universi1-308919		
	Project Name	Archaeological Watching Brief at High Hopes Nursery, North Hamilton		
	Start/end dates of field work	28-11-2017/29-11-2017		
	Previous/Future Work	No/No		
	Project Type	Recording Project –Watching Brief		
	Site Status	None		
	Current Land Use	Garden		
	Monument Type/Period	None		
	Significant Finds/Period	None		
	Development Type			
	Reason for Investigation	National Planning Policy Framework		
	Position in the Planning Process	As Condition		
	Planning Ref.			
	PROJECT LOCATION	Site Address/Postcode	High Hopes Nursery, Sandhill Avenue, North Hamilton LE5 1LU	
Study Area		144m ²		
Site Coordinates		SK 62994 07309		
Height OD		88-89m aOD		
PROJECT CREATORS	Organisation	University of Leicester Archaeological Services		
	Project Brief Originator	Local Planning Archaeologist		
	Project Design Originator	Patrick Clay		
	Project Manager	Richard Buckley		
	Project Director/Supervisor	Mireya González Rodríguez		
	Sponsor/Funding Body	Developer: Jag's Childcare		
PROJECT ARCHIVE		Physical	Digital	Paper
	Recipient		Leicester City Museums Service	Leicester City Museums Service
	ID (Acc. No.)		A11.2017	A11.2017
	Contents		Digital Photography Spreadsheet Text	Context sheets Report
PROJECT BIBLIOGRAPHY	Type	Grey Literature		
	Title	An Archaeological Watching Brief on Land at Hope Primary School, Sandhills Avenue, North Hamilton, Leicester LE5 1LU		
	Author	Gonzalez Rodriguez, M.		
	Other bibliographic details	University of Leicester Archaeological Services Report No. 2018-027		
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UNIVERSITY OF
LEICESTER

Archaeological Services

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



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