



UNIVERSITY OF  
**LEICESTER**

Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological  
Watching Brief of land  
off Rykneld Road,  
Littleover, Derby.  
SK 31102 32477**



Claire Brown  
ULAS Report No 2018-047  
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Claire Brown**

**For: GRM Development Solutions**

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## **An Archaeological Watching Brief on Land off Rykneld Road, Littleover, Derby, Derbyshire. NGR SK 31102 32477**

Claire Brown

### **Summary**

*An archaeological watching brief was undertaken in two stages by University of Leicester Archaeological Services on behalf of GRM Development solutions on land off Rykneld Road, Littleover, Derby, in advance of proposed residential development.*

*The first visit took place on February 7th 2018, during which the excavation of 12 geo-technical test pits was monitored. This work provided no evidence for archaeology apart from ridge and furrow remains and modern pottery. A follow up watching brief took place on March 8th and 9th 2018, at the time of topsoil stripping of the site. This work confirmed the presence of the ridge and furrow across the whole site, and suggested 19th century use of the site resulting in spreads and pits containing pottery, charcoal, ceramic building material, glass and animal bone. The evidence also suggested that in the 19th/early 20th century the furrows were partially filled with top soil containing charcoal, pottery and glass in an attempt to level the field. No evidence for the Roman Rykneld Street, or associated roadside settlement, was uncovered.*

*The site archive will be held by ULAS under the Site Code ULAS – 2018-047.*

### **Introduction**

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken on land off Rykneld Road, Littleover, Derbyshire (Figures 1, 2 and 3), in advance of a proposed residential development comprising four dwellings, each with detached garage and gardens plus access road and hardstanding for cars (Figures 4 and 5).

The site is located on the southern edge of Littleover close to the junction with the A38, Burton Road. The Derbyshire Historic Environment Record (HER) for the area shows that the application site lies adjacent to the known course of the Rykneld Street Roman road (HER 99016). In this location the Roman road is thought to lie beneath the course of the modern carriageway (Rykneld Road) although it's true location has not been clarified. The test pitting undertaken on the site in February 2018 (Patrick, 2018, see Appendix 1) revealed evidence of ridge and furrow earthworks but no Roman archaeology.

Stemming from this, a second watching brief stage took place in March 2018, while the developers stripped the top soil from the entire area. Whilst the observation of the test pitting provided negative indications of the existence of archaeological evidence across the proposed area of development, the proximity to the Roman road suggested there was potential for the presence of Roman deposits close to the route of the road. (Thomas, 2017) In view of this, the Senior Planning Archaeologist for Derbyshire City Council (DCC), requested watching brief of the stripping of topsoil from the area in order to record any archaeological deposits which would be impacted on by the groundworks connected with the outline planning permission P.A 01/16/00090.



Figure 1: Location of Littleover (Scale 1:50 000)

*Reproduced from the Landranger 1:50000 map by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright 1996. All rights reserved. Licence number AL 100029495*



Figure 2: General view of the site looking south towards Rykneld Road

The programme of archaeological work was undertaken in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Section 12 Enhancing and Conserving the Historic Environment). The fieldwork was intended to provide a record of the archaeological remains in mitigation of the impact of the proposed development. The agreed scheme was set out in a Written Scheme of Investigation (ULAS 2017; hereinafter WSI).

Fieldwork was undertaken on March 8th and 9th 2018 and involved the supervision of machine removal of overburden followed by hand cleaning, excavation and recording of any archaeological remains. The archaeological work was undertaken in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework Section 12: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment (DCLG March 2012). All archaeological work was carried out 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).

### Site Description, Topography and Geology

The proposed development is located on the southern edge of Littleover, a village close to Derby City, close to the junction with the A38, Burton Road, and is adjacent to Rykneld Road to the north, which runs along the route of the Rykneld Street, the Roman routeway (Figure 3).



Figure 3: View of Rykneld way looking south

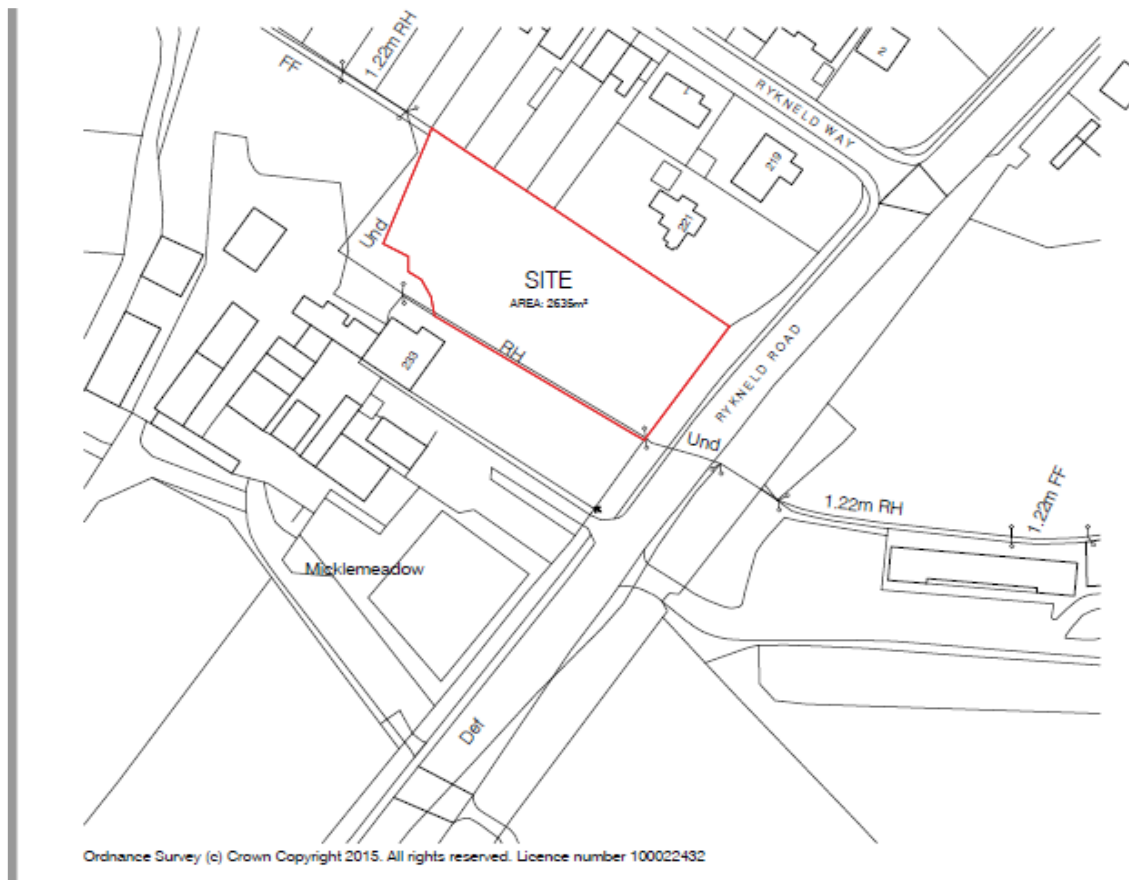


Figure 4: Location of Site

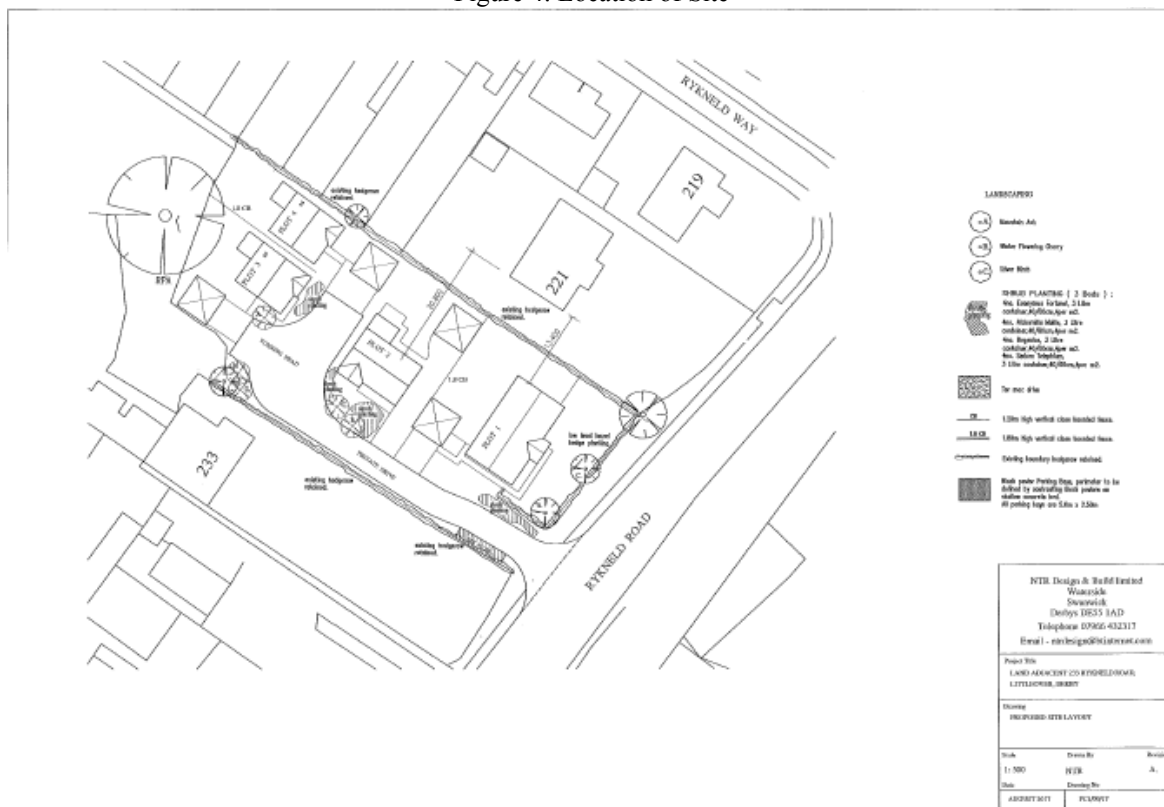


Figure 5: Site plan with 4 houses

## Archaeological and Historical Background

The application area is adjacent to the known course of the Rykneld Street Roman road (Derbyshire HER 99016), a major Roman routeway running north-south through the Midlands linking the Fosse Way near Cirencester with Rochester (Staffs), Derby, Chesterfield and perhaps extending as far north as Templeborough (Rotherham).

In this location the Roman road is thought to lie beneath the course of the modern carriageway (Rykneld Road). This appears to be slightly raised above the level of the surrounding fields where these remain undeveloped. No evidence for the Roman road has ever been encountered off the line of Rykneld Road, and some possible archaeological layers were encountered recently in Severn Trent works in the verge close to the Hollybrook Tavern, north of the current proposal site.

## Aims and Objectives

The general aims of the archaeological works were as follows:

- To identify the presence/absence of 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 revealed by stripping the topsoil that would be affected by the groundworks.
- To produce a site archive and report of any results.

Within the stated project objectives, the principal aim of the recording is to establish the nature, extent, date, depth, and significance of the heritage assets within their local and regional context.

In addition, the archaeological work was identified to have the potential to contribute to the following research aims, derived from *East Midlands Heritage: An updated research agenda and strategy for the Historic Environment of the East Midlands* (Knight *et al.* 2012) and *The Archaeology of the East Midlands: An Archaeological Resource Assessment and Research Agenda* (Cooper 2006).

The archaeological work could contribute towards the questions in section 5.7 of the Updated Research Agenda (Roads and Waterways) and in particular could contribute to Research Objectives:

*5B. Support dissemination and synthesis of information on Roman finds.*

*5C. Promote systematic application of scientific dating techniques.*

*5G. Promote further synthesis and analysis of secondary urban centres.*



## Methods

Prior to the commencement of works an Accession Code was obtained, an OASIS online record was initiated and the key fields completed on Details, Location and Creator forms. Following recommendations from the Principal Planning Archaeologist of Derbyshire City Council, a programme of archaeological investigation was undertaken in February 2018. This comprised archaeological monitoring of twelve geo technical test pits across the site, forming a rough chequered pattern over the ridge and furrow. (Figure 6) At this stage the development plan was for 5 houses on the site, since revised to 4 houses by March 2018.



Figure 6: Location of the Geo Technical Pits

In March 2018 the area was subject to a second stage watching brief while the overburden was stripped off the entire site, with the exception of Test Pit 1, which was excavated by GRM as part of the required remedial works, prior to the commencement of building works. A mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless ditching bucket (*c.*1.6m wide) was employed under constant archaeological supervision to remove overburden, with excavation ceasing at undisturbed archaeological deposits (Figure 7). Archaeological deposits were recorded at an appropriate scale by photography and written records.



Figure 7: Mechanical excavator looking north

## Results

The stripped area revealed evidence of ridge and furrow running approximately north to south across the site, with deposits of Victorian made ground containing Victorian pottery, glass, charcoal, brick and occasional animal bones forming linear ‘stripes’ in the furrows probably the result of 19th Century ground levelling (See Figure 8, 9, 10 and 11).



Figure 8: Dark linear formed by in-filling the furrows to level the area in the 19th century. Looking South.



Figure 9: Site stripped of overburden apart from made ground remaining in furrows as dark 'stripes'.  
Looking north-west.



Figure 10: Site stripped of overburden looking south-east.



Figure 11: Excavation of furrow 'linear' formed by 19th century levelling.

Two post holes [03] and [05] were identified in line with the western boundary of the site (Figures 12 and 13).

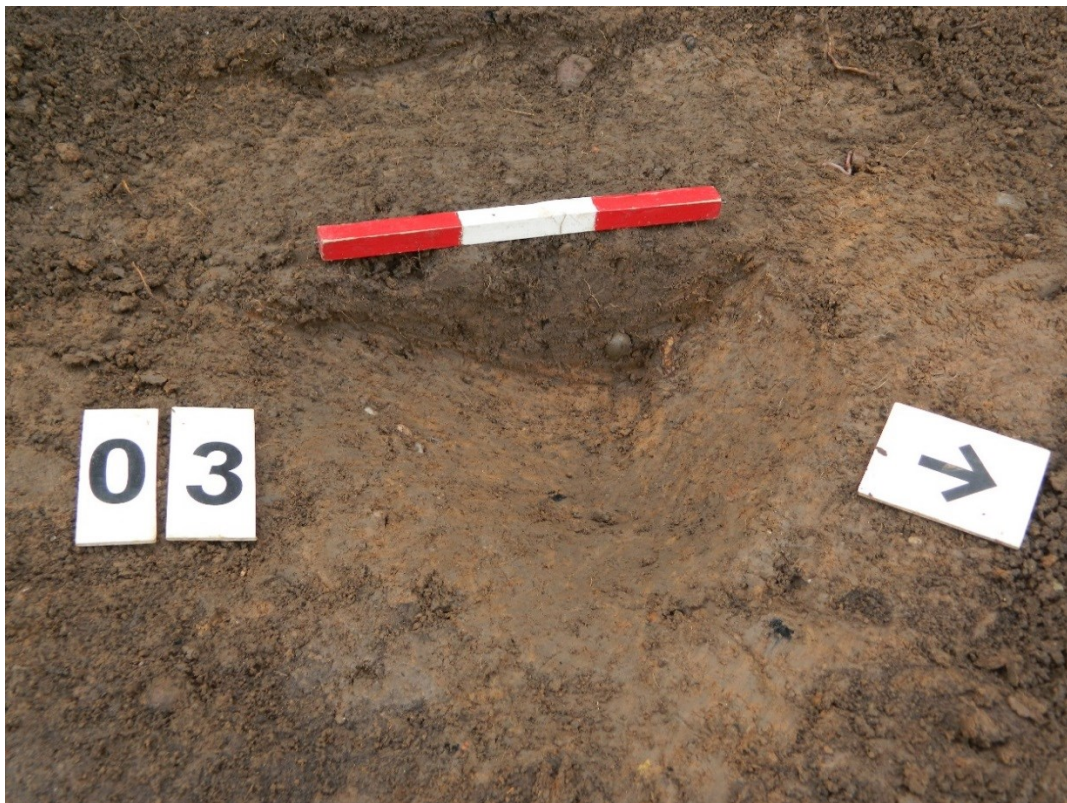


Figure 12: Post hole [03]



Figure 13: Post hole [05]

They were shallow, less than 0.1m in depth and less than 0.5m in diameter, and contained mid grey brown silty clay fill containing occasional charcoal and brick fragments but no dateable evidence.

In the centre of the site two small pits [07] and [09] containing Victorian material (pottery, glass, brick, and animal bone) were identified and excavated (although [10] only partially – excavation ceasing once modern material was discovered), [07] is seen in Figure 14.



Figure 14: Pit [07].

Pit [07] was 0.1m in depth and 0.5m in diameter and the fill was mid-orange grey silty clay with charcoal inclusions.

Pit [09] was larger, 0.75m in diameter and 0.12m in depth, with grey-brown silty clay fill containing brick, modern glass and animal bone. It was not fully excavated as the bone also appeared recent and was possibly a deposit of a diseased animal (Figure 15).



Figure 15: Partially excavated pit [09] containing ?diseased animal and modern brick/glass

The location of these features can be found in Figure 16 (below).

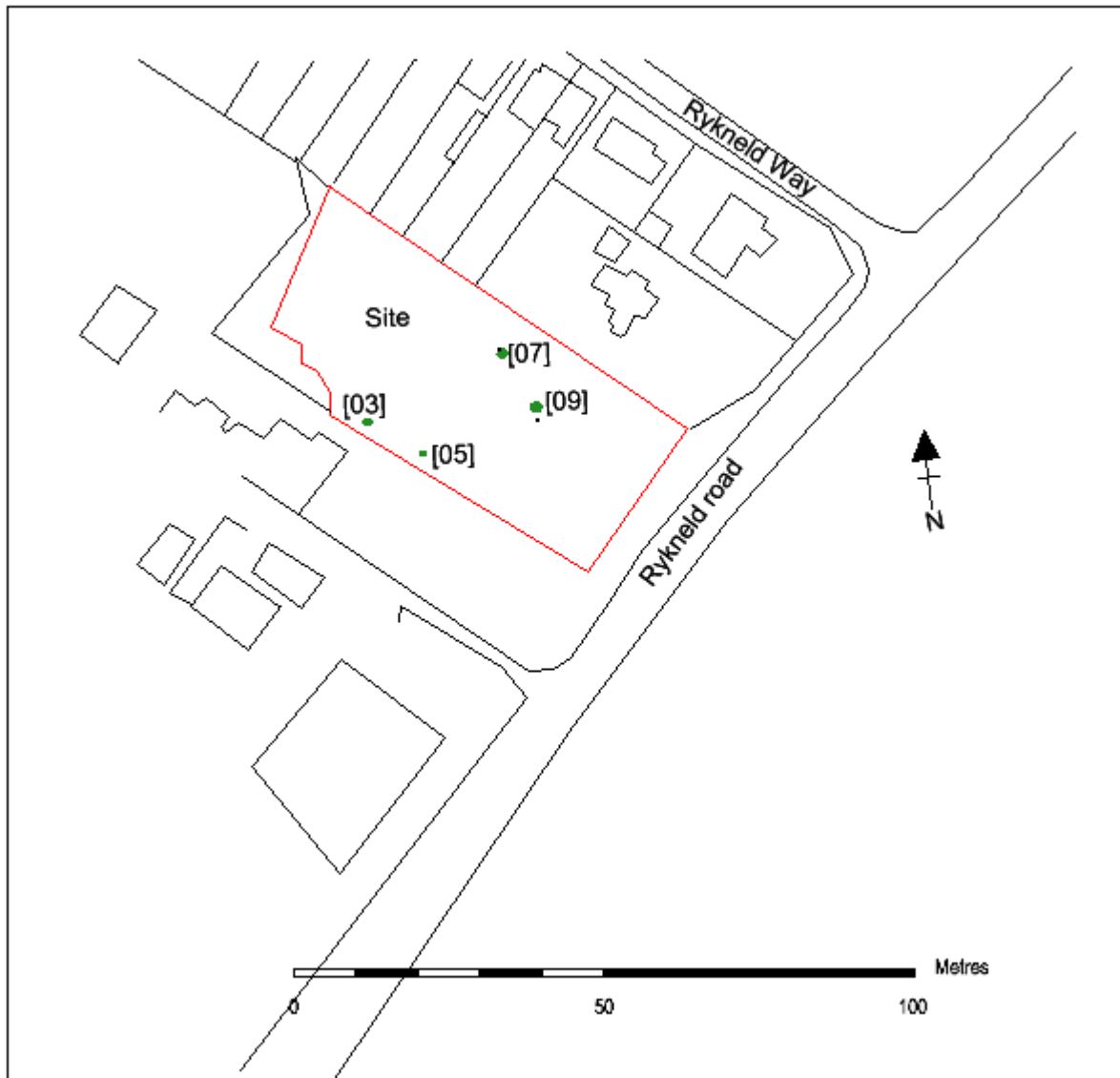


Figure 16: Site plan showing approximate location of probable 19th century postholes and pits.

## Discussion and Conclusions

The monitoring of geo technical test pitting and topsoil strip of the site off Rykneld Road in February and March 2018, respectively, confirmed the presence of for ridge and furrow earthworks on the site and a period of ground levelling undertaken in the 19th century to reduce the dimensions of these earthworks. Activity of perhaps light industrial/agricultural nature at the same time resulted in widespread deposits, surface spreads and a few shallow pits of modern charcoal, building material, pottery, glass and animal bone. There was no evidence of Roman archaeological remains and, apart from ridge and furrow suggesting medieval farming on the site, no further evidence for activity until the 19th century.

## Archive and Publications

The site archive (ULAS – 2018-047), consisting of paper, drawing and photographic records will be held by ULAS.

The archive consists of:

- 2 x watching brief record sheets
- Context record sheet
- Photographic record indices
- 13 x digital photographs
- Risk assessment form
- Geo Technical Pit assessment results

## Acknowledgements

The Watching Brief was undertaken for ULAS by Jamie Patrick (Phase 1) and Claire Brown (Phase 2) on behalf of GRM Development Solutions. The project was managed by John Thomas.

## Bibliography

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22/03/2018

## Appendix 1: Geo technical pits at land off 233, Rykneld Road, Littleover, Derby

Initially 10 pits were to be excavated across the site with a 600mm bladed bucket. However due to the small volume of land only 6 were to be excavated. A 1.60m bladed ditching bucket was requested to provide a better insight into the underlying red clay geology, then once the pits were recorded, the 600 mm bucket would excavate further into natural for the geological exercise. The pits measured a length of two by one metres with an average depth of 0.25- 0.30m of top-soil. This consisted of dark yellowish / greyish brown firm silty clay onto clean red clay natural. Well defined ridge and furrow is visible across the site oriented east to west and is well defined on satellite photographs of the study area. While some test pits were placed within the furrows where no sub-soil was evident, 3 of the initial six test pits were positioned onto ridges. Subsoil was evident within these pits consisting of light orangish brown friable clayey silt with an average depth of 0.55m to 0.60m. No archaeological remains were revealed within the limited number of pits. Therefore in order for reasonable site coverage, a further 6 test pits were requested even though they were not to form geo technical pits. These formed a rough chequered pattern across the site over the ridge and furrow. However despite the coverage increasing to approximately 11% of the 0.27 ha area, no remains were found. The top soil was very sterile with no artefacts apart from modern pottery. The non- geotechnical pits were backfilled after inspection.



Ridge and furrow. Looking west from Rykneld Strasse



Test pit 5



Test pit 7

## Appendix 2. Watching brief 8th and 9th March 2018 Contact sheets



DSCN6072 - Copy - Copy.JPG



DSCN6072 - Copy (2).JPG



DSCN6072 - Copy (3).JPG



DSCN6072 - Copy.JPG



DSCN6072.JPG



DSCN6073.JPG



DSCN6076.JPG



DSCN6079.JPG



DSCN6080.JPG



DSCN6081.JPG



DSCN6082.JPG



DSCN6085.JPG



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DSCN6089.JPG



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DSCN6097.JPG



DSCN6098.JPG



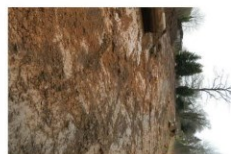
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DSCN6102.JPG



DSCN6103.JPG



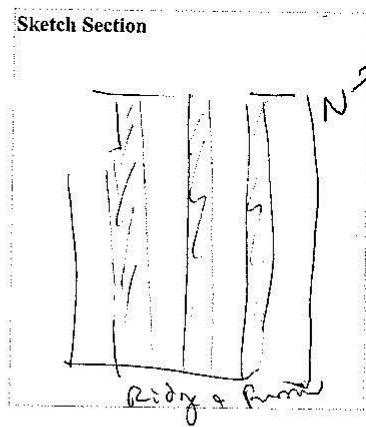
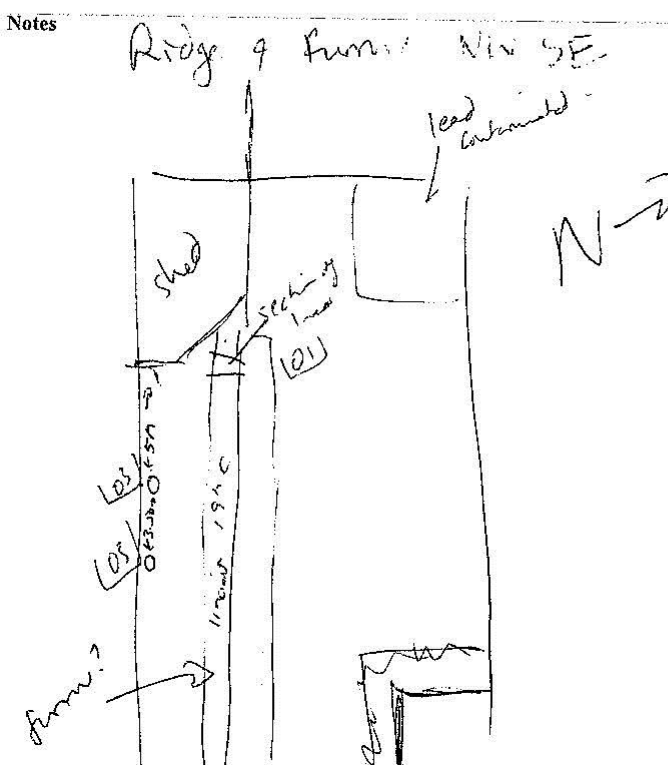
DSCN6104.JPG

**Appendix 3: Field records**

ULAS: Watching Brief Recording Form

Site Name: Rykneld Rd Littleover  
 Page No.  
 Acc No: Report No 2018 047

Location	Littleover, Rykneld Rd	Date	07/1/18
Arrival Time	9 AM	Departure Time	4 PM
Visit No.		Contact Details	
Type of Machine/ Bucket	Tombler bucket loader.		
Who's on Site?	Clive Bann		
Watching What?	Watching brief - stripping of overburden of devel. site.		
Conditions (eg freshly stripped, compacted/tracked on, weathered)			
Notes	Ridge & furrow N to SE		
	Finds?		
	Features?		
	Photos?		
	Drs?		
	Located?		



**Photos**

B/W No	Colour No	Description	Looking	Scale
1	1	Site looking SE	SE	
2	2	Diagonal	SE	
3	3	horizontal	SE	
4	4	Terran	S	
See photo index				

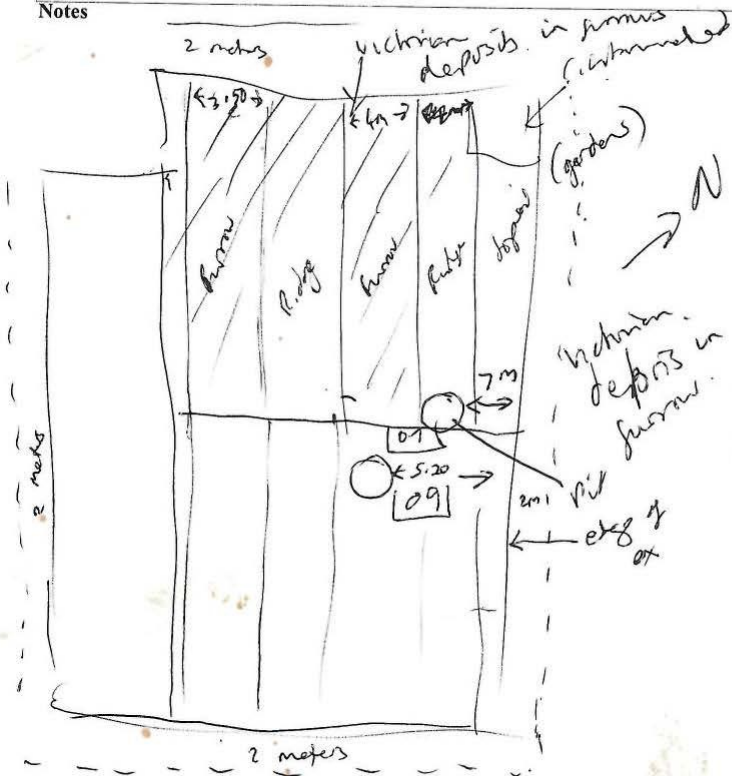
Completed by

ULAS: Watching Brief Recording Form

Site Name: *Rykneld Rd Littleover*  
 Report No: *2018 047*  
 Page No. *2*

Location	<i>Little over, Rykneld rd</i>	Date	<i>9/3/18</i>
Arrival Time	<i>9.36</i>	Departure Time	<i>3pm</i>
Visit No.	<i>2</i>	Contact Details	
Type of Machine/Bucket	<i>Toothless bucket 360 exc.</i>		
Who's on Site?	<i>Clare Bann</i>		
Watching What?	<i>Watching brief - stripping of overburden of devel. site</i>		Finds?
Conditions (eg freshly stripped, compacted/tracked on, weathered)			Features?
			Photos?
			Drs?
			Located?

Notes



Sketch Section

*top soil varied  
 10 cm (ridge)  
 → 30-40cm furrow*

Photos

B/W No	Colour No	Description	Looking	Scale
		<i>see photo index</i>		

Completed by

Report No 2018 047

Page No.

**SITE** Rykneld Littleover **PHOTO INDEX**

COL	B&W	FEAT #	DESCRIPTION	ORIENT	SCALE	INITS
1			Site looking SE			
2			Digger	NE corner		
3			Contaminated area	NE corner		
4			" "	"		
5			Site looking NW			
6			digging down to thing			
7			Digger digging trench	natural		
8			" "	"		
9			Rykneld Way	SE of site		
10			looking NW at bed & next door			
11			Property boundary to W			
12			linear feature farm?	NW		
13		101	Section of linear feature	101 NW		
14		101	Linear feature (101)	S		
15		103	Post hole 103	W boundary		0.5m
16		105	" " 105	W boundary	Section of 103	0.5m
17			Linear feature/farm	looking NW		
18			Site looking NW			
19			Further digging of ditch	SW		
20			Shallow channel post hole	SW		
21			3/4 post hole looking	NW		
22			" " looking	W		
23			" " "	E		
24			Further site from Nedae			
25		108	Shallow post hole	108 NW		0.75m
26		091 - photo 103	" " "	101 (10m on photo) W		0.75m
27			Site looking S			
28			Eastern border of site	SE		
29			bottom 13rd looking	W		
30			Site showing R&F	NW		
31			Near road thing 1st pit + further	W		
32			Area next to road to South	W		
33			Whole site from road	NW		





#### Appendix 4: Oasis Data Entry

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>	<b>OASIS ID</b>	Universi1-312535		
	<b>Project Name</b>	Rykneld Road, Littleover, Derby		
	<b>Start/end dates of field work</b>	8 <sup>th</sup> -9 <sup>th</sup> March 2018		
	<b>Previous/Future Work</b>	no		
	<b>Project Type</b>	Evaluation		
	<b>Site Status</b>	None		
	<b>Current Land Use</b>	pasture		
	<b>Monument Type/Period</b>	none		
	<b>Significant Finds/Period</b>	none		
	<b>Development Type</b>	Residential development		
	<b>Reason for Investigation</b>	NPPF		
	<b>Position in the Planning Process</b>	Post-determination		
	<b>Planning Ref.</b>	01/16/00090		
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>	<b>Site Address/Postcode</b>	Land adjacent to 233 Rykneld road, Littleover, Derby		
	<b>Study Area</b>	0.27ha		
	<b>Site Coordinates</b>	SK 3110232477		
	<b>Height OD</b>	67m OD		
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	ULAS		
	<b>Project Brief Originator</b>	Local Planning Authority (Derby City Council)		
	<b>Project Design Originator</b>	ULAS		
	<b>Project Manager</b>	John Thomas		
	<b>Project Director/Supervisor</b>	Claire Brown		
	<b>Sponsor/Funding Body</b>	GRM Development solutions		
<b>PROJECT ARCHIVE</b>		<b>Physical</b>	<b>Digital</b>	<b>Paper</b>
	<b>Recipient</b>	ULAS	ULAS	ULAS
	<b>ID (Acc. No.)</b>			
	<b>Contents</b>		Photos	Site records Field notes
<b>PROJECT BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>Type</b>	Grey Literature (unpublished)		
	<b>Title</b>	<i>An Archaeological Brief on land adjacent to 233 Rykneld Road, Littleover, Derby</i>		
	<b>Author</b>	Brown, C.		
	<b>Other bibliographic details</b>	ULAS Report No 2018-047		
	<b>Date</b>	2018		
	<b>Publisher/Place</b>	University of Leicester Archaeological Services / University of Leicester		
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