



UNIVERSITY OF
LEICESTER

Archaeological Services

Archaeological attendance
during groundworks at
Tudor Inn Hotel, Bondgate, Castle
Donnington, North West Leicestershire
(SK 44697 27678)

Lucy Brown



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**Archaeological attendance during
groundworks at Tudor Inn Hotel, Castle Donnington, North West
Leicestershire
(SK 44697 27678)**

Lucy Brown

For:

Castle Donnington Parish Council

Planning reference: 17/00814/FUL

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

Tel: (0116) 2522848

www.le.ac.uk/ulas

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Archaeological attendance during groundworks at Tudor Inn Hotel, Castle Donnington, North West Leicestershire, (SK 44697 27678)

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Summary

An archaeologist was in attendance for groundworks undertaken on the 4th, 6th and 9th April 2018 by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) at the Tudor Inn Hotel, Castle Donnington on behalf of Castle Donnington Parish Council. The fieldwork was a post-determination requirement on a proposed planning application (Planning reference: 17/00814/FUL) for a residential development in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Section 12.

A desk based assessment had been done for the site in 2017 by ULAS on behalf of M A Blood Building Design Limited and indicated that there was potential for prehistoric, Roman and medieval activity within the area of the site.

The archaeological watching brief confirmed that there was some prior activity on the site of post medieval and indeterminate origin. Area 1 revealed a stone wall footing which pre-dated the 18th-19th burning layer as well as a separate wall footing and surface likely to be of pre-19th century origin. A wood-lined, collapsed brick cellar was identified, which appeared to have suffered fire damage and been back filled. A secondary burning layer with rubble was also shown within Area 1.

Area 2 revealed an area of made ground which contained a large assemblage of cattle horns likely to have been related to the nearby tannery which was active as late as the 1880s.

The archive will be deposited with Leicestershire County Council under the Accession Number X.A36.2018.

Introduction

University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) were commissioned by Castle Donnington Parish Council to carry out archaeological attendance and recording during groundworks at Tudor Inn Hotel, Bondgate, Castle Donnington, North West Leicestershire, (SK 44697 27678).

This archaeological work is in accordance with NPPF Section 12: Enhancing and Conserving the Historic Environment.

The watching brief was required as a condition of the planning consent (Planning reference: **17/00814/FUL**) for the change in use of the site from a pub to a parish

community centre which included the demolition of an existing garage and the extension of the building to form a function suite.

The Planning Archaeologist for Leicestershire County 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.

Location and Geology

Castle Donnington is a small market town in the north-west of Leicestershire (Fig. 1). The proposed development site lies on the northern edge of the town and consists of a three bay building with associated gardens to the front and carpark with outbuildings to the rear. The land lies at a height of around 39mOD (Fig. 2). The surrounding land consists of a residential and industrial landscape and is comparably flat but rises sharply to the south in an area of wooded pasture (45mOD).

The assessment area was accessed from Tanyard Close via the previous pub carpark and the area to be watched consisted of tarmacked areas around the southern end of the buildings.

The British Geological Survey indicates that the underlying bedrock geology throughout the site is likely to be Edwalton Member Mudstone overlain with Hemington and Holme Pierrepont member silt, sands and gravels.

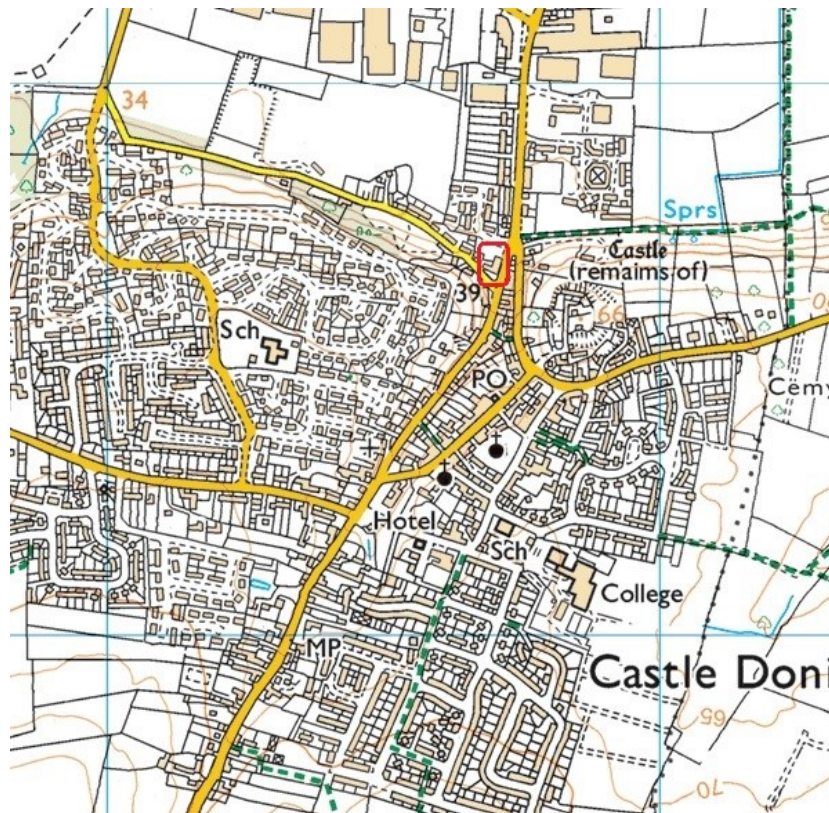


Figure 1: Site Location (red outline). 1:25000

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Figure 2: Site Location (red outline). Provided by Client

Historical and Archaeological Background

A charter regarding the boundaries of Western-on-Trent was issued by Æthelred the Unready in 1009 and mentions King's Mill, the nearby crossing on the River Trent. Known as Dunitone in the Domesday Book 1086 it had land belonging to Countess Ælfgifu and land assigned to Earl Hugh (Morris 1977). The name comes from the Old English and means the 'farmstead or village associated with Dunn' (Mills 2011, Bourne 2003). The 'castle' appears in the records for the first time in 1331 and the town is called Castoldonyngtoin in a duchy of Lancaster warrant of 1484 (LaCombe and Hyam 2017).

Bondgate, Borough Street and Clapgun Street formed the nucleus of the historic village, with the Castle standing at the eastern end of Borough Street on Castle Hill. The castle was abandoned and the stone was used to build Donington Hall within Donington Park. The site of the Inn can be seen as being occupied in the hand drawn Ordnance Survey map published in 1815 although the detail is not clear enough to show the outline of any buildings which may relate to the Inn. The 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of

1884 shows the basic outline of the main building with a small addition to the north-eastern corner. This outline stays virtually unchanged although a new porch appears on the north-eastern face in the 1971 edition (LaCombe and Hyam 2017).

The Tudor Inn, occupies a prominent position within the local conservation area (MLE23047) and consists of a three bay house with two storeys with an attic facing southwards across The Spittal road up the slope of Bondgate towards the centre of the village. Attached to the rear of this range is a parallel two storey service range. If the present size and shape of the window openings are used as a guide this range is likely to be of slightly later date than the three bay house. A modern function suite and new main entrance have been built against the north-eastern face of the building and appears to have been added in the late 1970s or early 1980s. The style of the original building suggests that it was first constructed in the late 17th or early 18th century. Overall, the building appears to have had a large number of small scale alterations and modifications from its original function as a private house through to its use as a public house. Despite this the basic shell of the structure has remained intact. Its size and setting on the edge of the village suggests that it may have been built by a reasonably well-off family. However there is evidence that there was tannery nearby at least in the later part of the 19th century. The proximity of this industry would perhaps indicate that the locality had by this time lost some of its desirability for the wealthier classes. A row of 17th century, or earlier, cottages abut the south-western corner of the building frontage along The Spittal road. A relatively recent fire caused extensive damage to the roof structure resulting in the replacement of most of the roof timbers and covering (pers. comm M Blood). No external chimney stacks are present and may have been removed during the repair work. (LaCombe and Hyam 2017)

The earliest Ordnance survey map of the area that could be consulted was published in 1883 where no mention of an inn is made however the nearby building is referred to as a Tannery. The current OS map appears to indicate that the assessment area has remained broadly the same during most of the 19th century however several smaller buildings appear to have been demolished by the publication of the 1903 OS map.

Archaeological Objectives

The main objective of the archaeological work is to determine and understand the nature, function and character of any significant archaeology on the site in its cultural and environmental setting.

The aims of the Watching brief are:

- 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 produce an archive and report of any results.

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 2012). 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.

A Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Work was produced by ULAS prior to the archaeological work being undertaken (ULAS 2016).

The project involved the supervision of overburden removal and other groundworks by an experienced professional archaeologist during the works. The supervision was undertaken by Lucy Brown and took place on the 4th of April 2018.

The work was carried out by an 8 tonne tracked excavator with a 0.6m ditching bucket and consisted of the excavation of foundation trenches for an extension to the existing single-story building to the north as well as the footings for a single-storey garage to the west of the existing buildings.

A photographic record of the investigation was prepared as per WSI. This included photographs illustrating in both detail and general context 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).

Results

The programme of archaeological observation, investigation and recording (a Watching Brief) consisted of the observation of the excavation of foundation trenches for the extension of the existing building and the erection of a single-storey garage (Fig. 3).

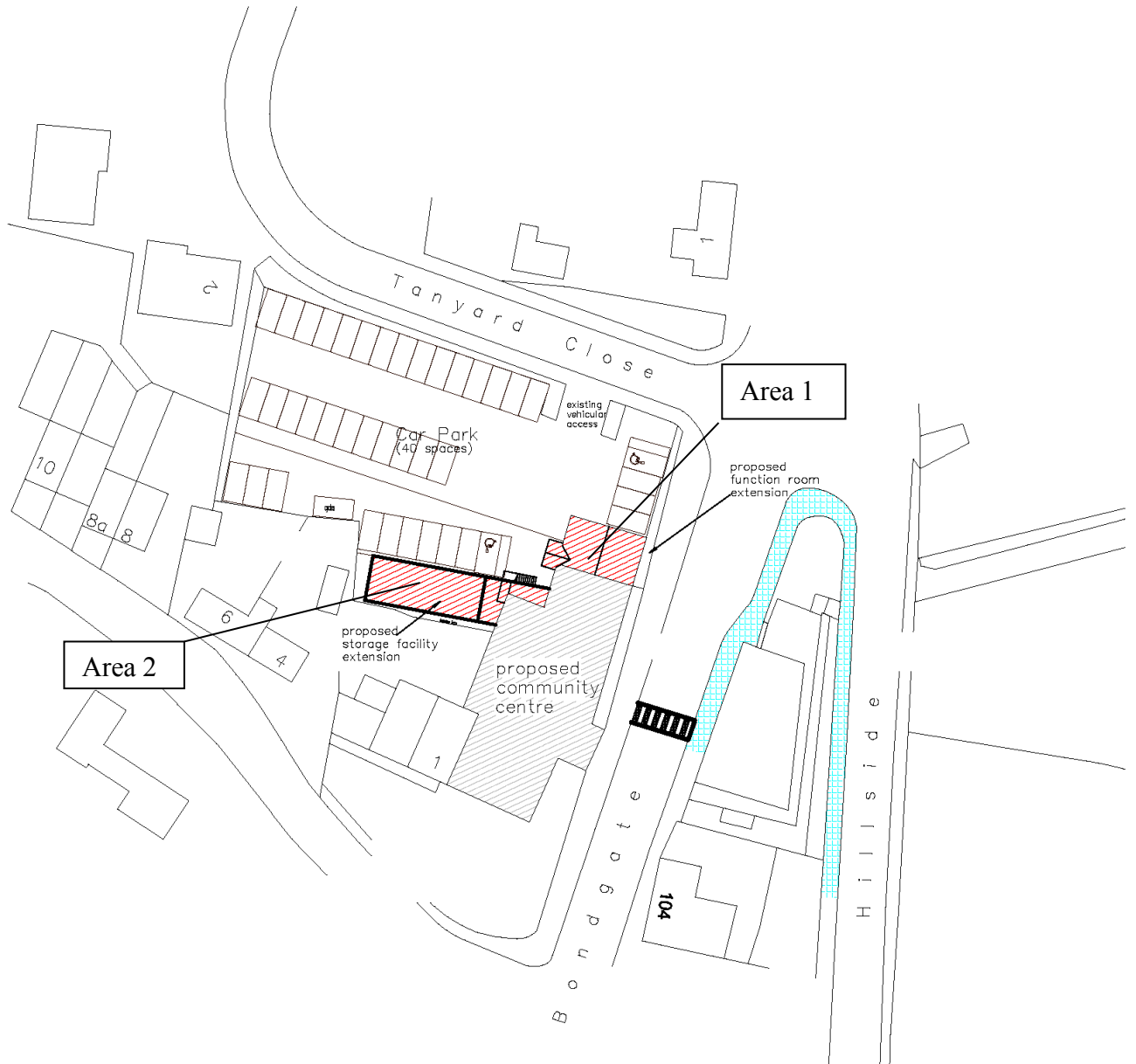


Figure 3: Proposed plan with works in Areas 1 and 2 (shown in red)



Figure 4: Site plan with features (shown in red)

Area 1

Contexts: (1), (2), (3), collapsed brick cellar and secondary burning layer

Area 1 consisted of a tarmacked area immediately to the north of the existing building and will form the footings of a single-storey extension to the gable-ended former restaurant area (Fig. 6). The natural substratum for this area was a mid blue-grey silty clay with areas of black contamination from upper layers of burning. There was no evidence for subsoil, with the ground largely consisting of a variety of made ground layers as well as burnt demolition rubble and another separate layer of burning immediately above the natural substratum (Fig. 5).

The footings for Area 1 were excavated to a depth of approximately 1m below ground level along the north-south orientations and 1.65m along the east-west trench. These footings were 6m in length from the end of the building and 9m across at the northern end. The width of these footing trenches was to the width of a single ditching bucket (0.6m) (Fig. 7) and the plan of these footings consisted of three sides of a square from the northern end of the existing building. The excavation of these footings revealed several features related to previous occupations of the site.

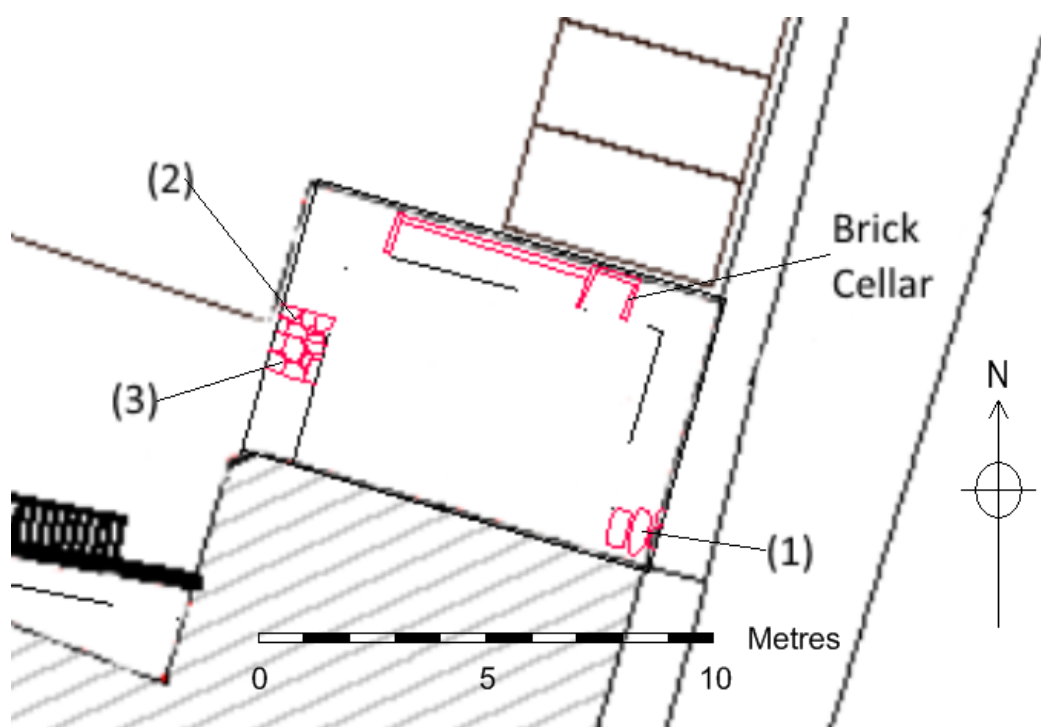


Figure 5: Detail of features (shown in red) in Area 1



Figure 6: Shot of Area 1 pre-excitation, looking south



Figure 7: Post excavation shot of Area 1, looking south east

Wall (1)

In the south-eastern trench of Area 1 was evidence for a single-stone wall (1) orientated east-west across the trench (Fig. 9). The wall consisted of large grey-green sandstone basal stones with smaller fragments of the same material in between them. The lack of mortar suggests that this wall was earlier in origin than the other walls found in Area 1. No dating evidence was found within the wall itself however this feature was below the primary burning layer and showed no sign of heat damage. (1) Therefore pre-dated the 18th -19th century cellar that had burnt down and was found in this layer elsewhere in Area 1.



Figure 8: View of excavated section in Area 1, looking west



Figure 9: Wall feature (1) in Area 1, looking south east (0.5m scale)

Wall (2) and surface (3)

In the south-western trench there was also evidence for a wall structure (2) with an associated stone surface (3) (Fig. 10). Both features were made of a blue-grey sandstone and contained fragments of a mid brown-cream mortar. Wall (2) was 0.58m wide and double bonded. It is probable that this feature constituted the basal stones for a reasonably substantial building. Immediately south of this wall was what appeared to be a stone surface (3) of a mosaic construction. This surface was 0.92m in width with a straight edge at the southern end and consisted of wide, flat stones. The stones themselves do not appear significantly worn and are may be associated with an out building or garden rather than a main domestic building. Stratigraphically these features were below the level of 19th century brickwork and the mortar appeared to be of a lime-based material which would suggest a pre-19th century date.



Figure 10: Wall (2) and surface (3) in Area 1, looking south (0.5m scale)

Collapsed cellar and brickwork

The northern trench (east-west orientation) was dug to a considerably greater depth (1.65m) than the southern areas due to the presence of what appeared to be the remains of a collapsed brick and timber cellar. Evidence for a double-skin brick frame were identified as well as a wooden-lining to the brickwork in the eastern end (Figs 11-12). The northern end also appeared to show evidence for lime-washing. Most of the timbers were burnt and there were large amounts of burnt material surrounding this structure suggesting that the cellar had suffered fire damage and thus been backfilled with large amounts of outside materials. The presence of brick, glass and willow-pattern potter within this structures suggests a 19th century date.



Figure 11: Remains of a timber and brick structure, looking west (0.5m scale)



Figure 12: Remains of double-skin brick cellar with evidence of lime-washing, looking north

Secondary burning/rubble layer

Across Area 1 there was evidence of a secondary burning layer which contained burnt stone and gravels approximately 0.5m below ground level (Fig. 13). This layer may be associated with a relatively recent fire which destroyed parts of the adjacent 17th century building. Above this layer were various other thin layers of made ground that were capped by tarmac.



Figure 13: Mid-excavation section of Area 1 showing secondary burning layer, looking east

Area 2

Contexts: Slate edging, made ground with cattle horns

Area 2 consisted of land immediately to the west of the existing buildings and had formed part of the carpark. This area had been tarmacked and included a single-storey garage to the far west of the site's boundary, which had been demolished prior to the arrival of the archaeologist. The footings dug in this area were a 22m by 9m rectangular outline for a single storey garage with 3 internal dividing walls separating the individual bays. The natural substratum in this area was a mid grey-brown silty clay to a depth of 2m to the south and 2.4m to the north. There was a small amount of a mid orange-brown sandy-loam subsoil to the south and west of the evaluation area however the rest of the site consisted of large amounts of made ground. Single width slate edging was identified running north-west to south-east across the eastern end of the site and a cattle horn assemblage was found within the made ground to the north.

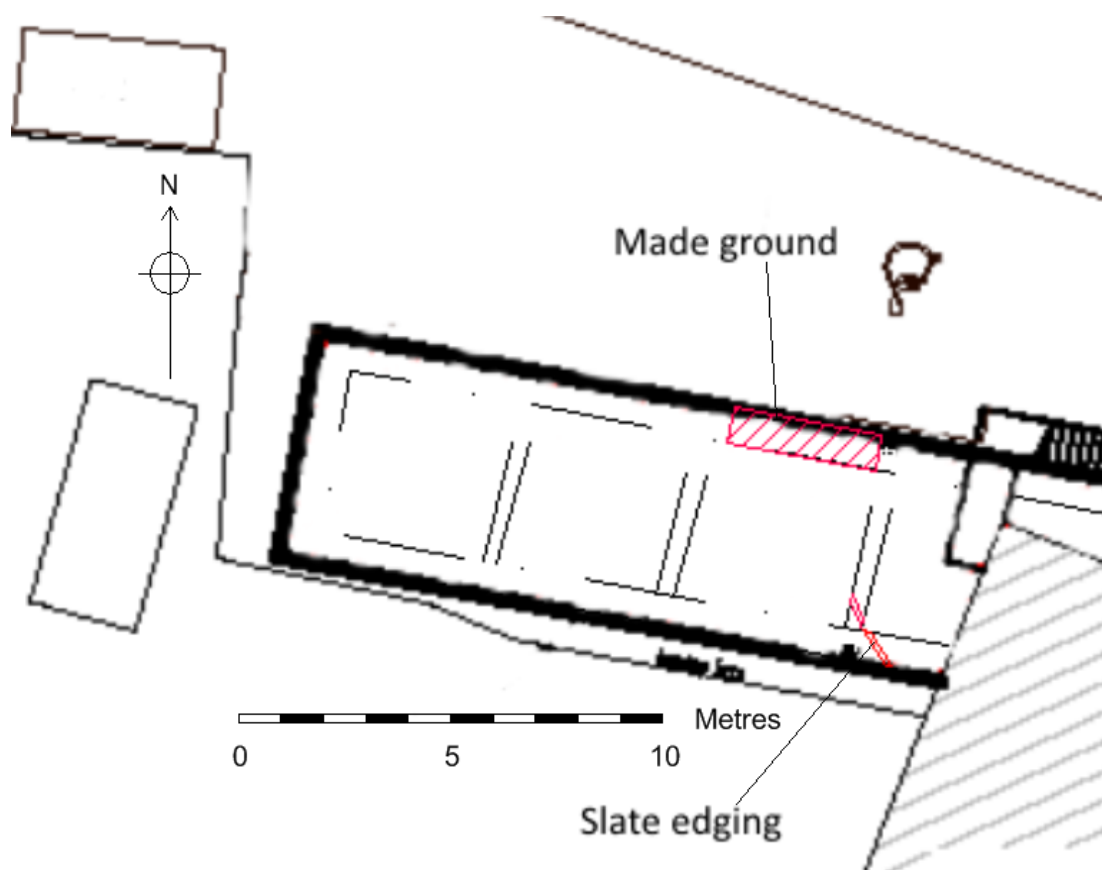


Figure 14: Details of the features (shown in red) in Area 2



Figure 15: Pre-excitation shot of Area 2, looking south-east

Slate edging

Slate edging was identified in the eastern area within the made ground layer and marked the edge of a loosely gravelled area close to the buildings. This layer contained modern glass and 20th century pottery and therefore is likely to be part of a modern yard or garden which predated the car park.



Figure 16: Shot of slate edging in Area 2, looking south

Made ground with cattle horns

Within the northern footing was a 4m long area of made ground which formed the deepest (2.2m) section of the trench and consisted of large amounts of dark black-brown silty clay (Fig. 17). This ground contained large amounts of ceramic building material fragments and glass as well as c.14 individual cattle horns. The horns all appeared to consist of only the corneal process and were missing a keratin dermis (Fig. 18). This assemblage is likely to be associated with the tannery that was immediately adjacent to the buildings on the 1901 Ordnance Survey map and recorded as disused by 1922. Post medieval pictorial evidence shows that cattle hides were often bought with the horns still attached with the horns cut out on site and then the outer sheaths sold on to horn workers (Armitage, 1972, p.84). Due to the proximity of the tannery it is therefore likely to have been deposited on the site as the result of waste industrial activity nearby rather than on-site processing.

The fence line to the west of the site appears to have incorporated dressed stones from the nearby ruined castle and has obviously been repaired using similar bricks to those found in the adjacent made ground (Fig. 19). It is therefore probable that this boundary pre-dates the infilling of the made ground in Area 2.



Figure 17: Pre-excavation shot of made ground in Area 2, looking south



Figure 18: Cattle horns taken from made ground in Area 2 (0.5m scale)



Figure 19: The western boundary wall including dressed stones probably from the castle, looking west

Conclusion

The excavations of footings at the Tudor Inn revealed some evidence of post medieval activity across the site.

Area 1 contained a wall consisting of single basal stones without mortar running east-west across the site. This wall appears to predate the 18th-19th century burning layer of the adjacent cellar and is therefore likely to be the earliest feature identified on the site. Another more substantial wall footing and associated stone surface were recorded and appear likely to be of a pre-19th century date. To the north of both of these features was a collapsed wood-lined cellar that had suffered substantial fire damage. The brickwork and associated finds date the backfilling of this cellar as having taken place in the 19th century. This could correspond with the demolition of several buildings in this area of the site between the 1883 Ordnance Survey map and the 1903 edition.

Area 2 contained much less activity aside from an area of made ground which included a large cattle horn assemblage. These single horns were within a layer which contained large amounts of brick fragments and were likely to be deposits associated with the tannery that was active close to the site until the late 19th century.

Acknowledgements

ULAS would like to thank the contractors including Barry Bradbury and Austin Smith for their co-operation on site. Lucy Brown of the University of Leicester Archaeological Services undertook the archaeological observation on behalf of the North West Leicestershire District Council. The project was managed by John Thomas.

Archive

The archive for this project will be deposited with Leicestershire County Council Museums and will consist of:

3x watching brief forms

1x photograph record

1x contact sheet of photographs

1x Fieldwork report

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Lucy Brown
ULAS
University of Leicester
University Road
Leicester LE1 7RH

Tel: 0116 252 2848

Fax: 0116 252 2614

Email:

lb379@le.ac.uk

Contact Details

Richard Buckley or Vicki Score
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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