

**An Archaeological Evaluation
On Land at Barnsdale House,
17, Barnsdale, Great Easton
Leicestershire
NGR: SP 84824 92783**

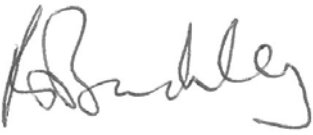
Jennifer Browning



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For: Langton Homes

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Summary

University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) carried out an archaeological evaluation on land at Barnsdale House, 17 Barnsdale, Great Easton, Leicestershire (SP 84824 92783) from the 14th-16th August 2017 on behalf of Langton Homes. Five trenches, totalling 240m², were excavated to evaluate a field adjoining a recently developed area, where it is proposed to construct six new dwellings (Planning Ref: 17/01050/FUL). None of the trenches contained pre-modern archaeological features other than medieval plough furrows and field drains. Two modern horse burials were uncovered in the northern corner of the site. It is likely that the land has been under pasture since Enclosure in the post-medieval period. The site archive will be held by Leicestershire Museums under the Accession Number X.A91 2017.

Introduction

An archaeological trial trench evaluation was carried out on land at Barnsdale House, 17 Barnsdale, Great Easton, Leicestershire (NGR SP 84824 92783) by University of Leicester Archaeological Services in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Section 12 Enhancing and Conserving the Historic Environment). Planning permission has been granted for the construction of six dwellings and associated access (Planning Ref 17/01050/FUL). The Planning Archaeologist for Leicestershire required a programme of archaeological work, comprising trial trenching, to determine the impact of the proposed scheme on any buried archaeology and produce a mitigation strategy for the site. The work was carried by ULAS on behalf of the client following consultation with Leicestershire County Council on behalf of the planning authority.

The work was undertaken in order to determine the presence, character and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed redevelopment area, in accordance with the guidelines set out in *National Planning Policy Framework* (Department for Communities and Local Government March 2012). The evaluation results will enable the Planning Archaeologist to recommend a suitable strategy to the Planning Authority with regard to the treatment of any archaeological remains found.

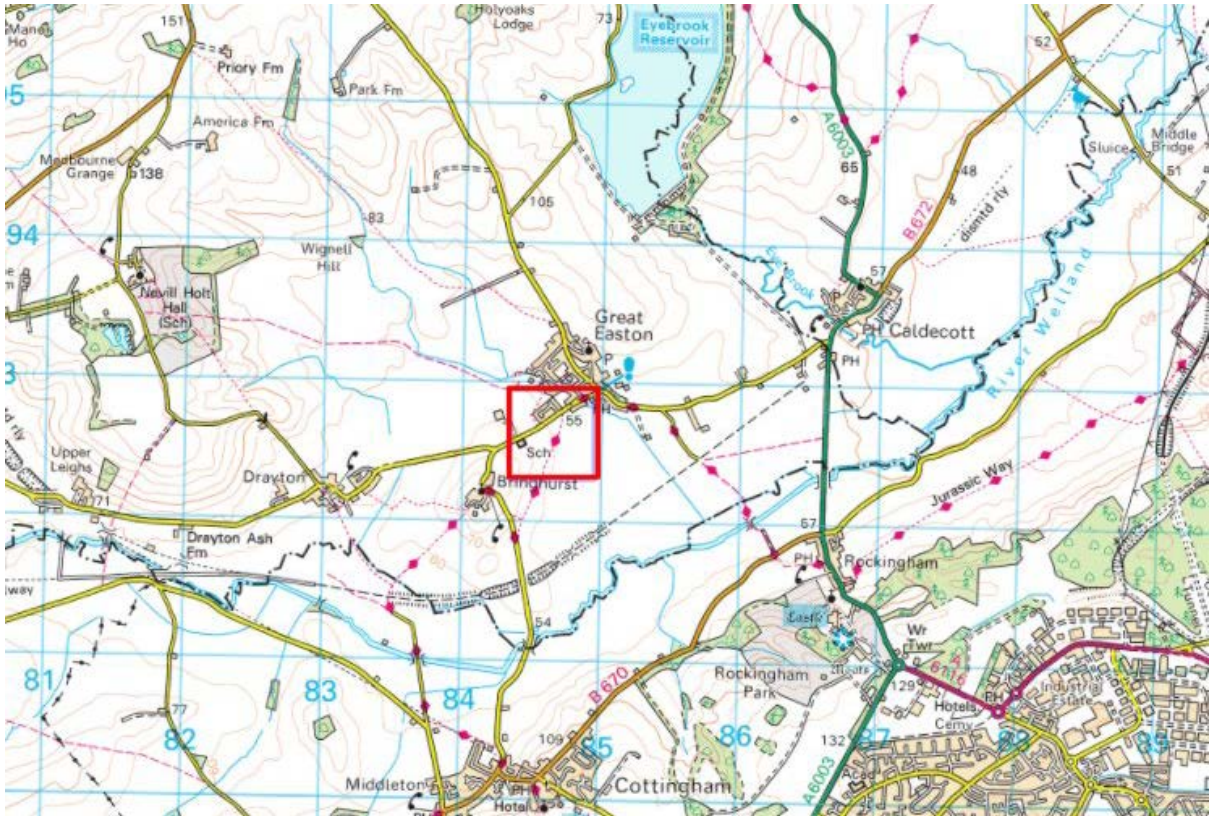


Figure 1: Location of the proposed site

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Figure 2: Detail of the area for trenching, provided by client

Site Description, Topography and Geology

Great Easton sits in the Welland Valley, approximately 11km north-east of Market Harborough and, is one of the largest parishes in south-east Leicestershire. The proposed development site is located on the south-western side of the village at a height of *c.*58m O.D.

The area to be developed comprises *c.*5600m² of land in the grounds of the Grade II Listed Barnsdale House, which is a stone-dwelling dating to the early 19th century and is currently under renovation. Six new dwellings are proposed on the northeast side of the plot, to the southwest of Barnsdale House.

The site lies on the southern edge of Great Easton and currently consists of gardens and paddocks bounded to the north by a stone wall and the road (Barnsdale), Barnsdale House and a new office development. The site is bordered on the east and west by mature hedgerows and shrubs. A modern fence separates the two parts of the site.

The British Geological Survey notes that the bedrock geology of the area consists of bands of Mudstone, specifically of the Charmouth Period and overlain with superficial river deposits of sand and gravel (River Terrace I).

Historical and Archaeological Background

A desk-based assessment has been done for the site (Brown and Score 2017; ULAS ref.: 2017-073) The Historic Environment Record (HER) has no records of known archaeological sites within the assessment area. However, the proposed site lies at the edge of medieval and post-medieval historic settlement core of the village of Great Easton (HER ref.: MLE9719). Test pits excavated during the 2003 Time Team investigation of Great Easton, revealed medieval and post-medieval pottery and other remains on plots fronting onto Barnsdale Road, to the east of the current site. Barnsdale House itself is a grade II-listed building (NHLE ref.: 1061636), a designated heritage asset and is believed to date from the early 19th century, whilst to the east is The Thatch, also grade II listed, but rather earlier, comprising a substantially rebuilt 17th/18th century cruck-framed cottage (1187994). Other archaeological remains recovered in the vicinity include a Neolithic axe (MLE7191), a medieval pit excavated to the rear of 6/10 Barnsdale (MLE21166), and Roman pottery (MLE18302).

Ridge and furrow earthworks survive in the southern half of the development area, indicating that at least this part of the site lay within the final phase of the open field system (*c.*1805; Score and Brown 2017, Fig 9). To the north, the site of Barnsdale House may lie within the village and the DBA notes the presence of possible earthworks in the vicinity. It should also be noted that the villages of Leicestershire fluctuated extensively in size throughout their history, and a number of recent excavations have revealed evidence of early medieval/late Saxon activity/occupation beyond the edge of the present village, underlying later ridge and furrow earthworks.

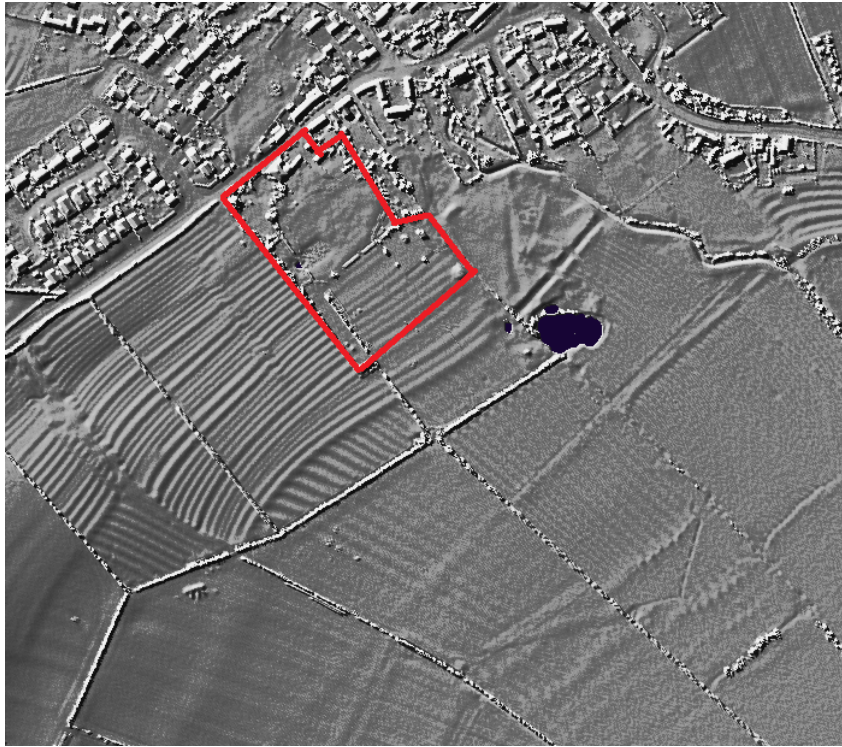


Figure 3: LiDaR image of the site and surrounding area

Aims and Objectives

The main objectives of the archaeological work 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 aims, the principal objective was to establish the nature, extent, date, depth, and significance of the heritage assets within their local and regional context in order to formulate a mitigation strategy to address the impacts of the proposed development on cultural heritage.

Draft Research Themes

While the nature, extent and quality of archaeological remains within the areas of investigation for the project remain unknown until archaeological work is undertaken, it is possible to determine some initial objectives derived from *East Midlands Heritage* research agenda (Knight *et al.* 2012)

Although there is the low potential for the site the following specific research topics have been identified:

Prehistoric

Characterise the prehistoric settlement resource and investigate intra-regional variability (4C).
Investigate intra-regional variations in development of fields and linear boundaries (4F)

Romano-British

Investigate landscape context of rural settlements (5H)

Early Medieval – High Medieval

Review the evidence for developing settlement hierarchies (6C)

Investigate the morphology of rural settlements (7E)

Investigate development of the open field system and woodland management (7I)

Methodology

The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by the Principal Planning Archaeologist at Leicestershire County Council, and a strategy devised by ULAS, set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) *Design Specification for archaeological evaluation: : Land at Barnsdale House, 17, Barnsdale, Great Easton, Leicestershire LE16 8SG NGR: SP 484796 292788* (ULAS 2017).

A total of 5 x 30m long trenches were excavated within the proposed development area. The trenches were excavated under constant archaeological supervision using a mechanical excavator (JCB) equipped with a 1.6m wide toothless bucket.

The topsoil and overlying layers were removed under full archaeological supervision until either the top of archaeological deposits or the natural undisturbed substratum was reached. Trenches were examined for archaeological deposits or finds by hand cleaning. The trenches were recorded and then backfilled at the end of the evaluation. The location of the trenches and any features were recorded using differential GPS (Topcon HiperV).

The work adhered to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) *Code of Conduct* and their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations* (2014).



Figure 4: Plan of the site prior to development, supplied by client



Figure 5: Plan of the proposed development (supplied by client)

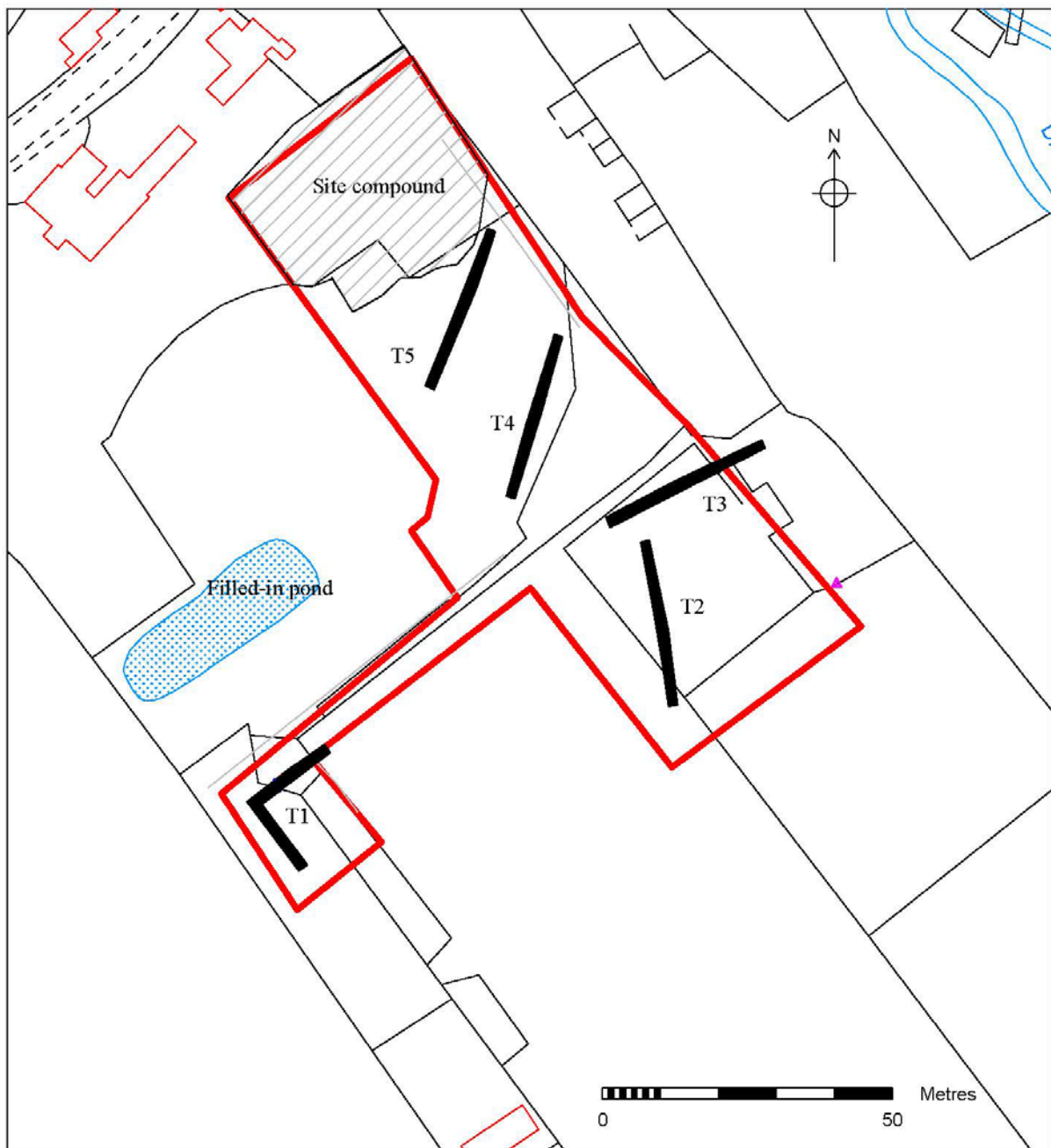


Figure 6: Trench location plan

Results

Five 30m trenches were excavated in the proposed development areas; making a total of 240m² (Figure 4). The northern part of the area was under lawn, while the southern part, accessed through a gate, was rough pasture/paddock.

Trench 1 was located on the southern edge of the development, within a long strip of land in the paddock. It was excavated in a right angle, to accommodate a hedge running to the south. The topsoil consisted of dark brown silty clay loam, rather loose and rooty with moderate pebbles. The subsoil consisted of compact mid yellow brown silty clay with frequent pebbles and stones. The natural subsoil was light orange/brown sandy clay with patches of dark brown

grit. The trench was crossed by ceramic land drains on both NE-SW and NW-SE alignment. A blue pipe, probably ferrying water or power down to the stables at the far end of the field, was noted parallel with the land drain. Close to the northeast end of the trench, a discontinuous linear feature, with abundant roots was noted, at right angles to the axis of the trench. This was in line with an extant hedge to the southwest.

Table 1: Trench 1 dimensions

Trench 1	NW/SE and NE/SW							
Length (m)	Width (m)	Area (sq. m)		Min. depth (m)			Max. depth (m)	
	1.6	51.04		0.53			0.88	
Interval (m) from NE	0	5	10	14	16	20	25	to SW end 30
Topsoil depth	0.30	0.35	0.23	0.35	0.31	0.23	0.23	0.21
Subsoil depth	0.40	0.25	0.35	0.41	0.43	0.42	0.41	0.42
Top of Natural substratum	0.70	0.60	0.58	0.76	0.74	0.65	0.64	0.63
Base of trench	0.88	0.62	0.60	0.87	0.82	0.67	0.72	0.69

Trench 2 was located on the eastern side of the field, within the proposed plot 6. There had previously been a menage or tennis court in this area. The topsoil here was thin and topped by a thin layer of gravel and tarmac, suggesting that the site had previously been stripped and levelled. The subsoil consisted of compact, light-brown silty clay, with sandy inclusions. The natural subsoil consisted of yellowish-brown clay. A ceramic land drain crossing the trench on a northwest to southeast alignment, was located towards the southern end.

Table 2: Trench 2 dimensions

Trench 2	N-S								
Length (m)	Width (m)		Area (sq. m)		Min. depth (m)			Max. depth (m)	
29.1	1.6		46.56		0.43			0.74	
Interval (m) from NE	0	5	10	15	20	25	to SW end 29		
Topsoil depth	0.24	0.26	0.17	0.15	0.10	0.10	0.12		
Subsoil depth	0.35	0.30	0.35	0.28	0.30	0.30	0.28		
Top of Natural substratum	0.59	0.56	0.52	0.43	0.40	0.40	0.40		
Base of trench	0.64	0.57	0.60	0.54	0.50	0.43	0.74		

Trench 3 was also located within plot 6, parallel to the hedge line which divided the two areas of the site. The topsoil and subsoil were similar to that observed in Trench 2 but were more compact in texture. The natural subsoil consisted of yellowish-orange sandy clay with seams of sandier and more gravelly material. No archaeological features were observed. Approximately halfway down the trench, a ceramic land drain was observed on a similar alignment to the example in trench 2.

Table 3: Trench 3 dimensions

Trench 3	NE-SW						
Length (m)	Width (m)		Area (sq. m)		Min. depth (m)		Max. depth (m)
30.7	1.6		49.12		0.40		0.89
Interval (m) from NW	0	5	10	15	20	25	to SE end 29
Topsoil depth	0.32	0.33	0.39	0.18	0.18	0.23	0.10
Subsoil depth	0.35	0.50	0.43	0.54	0.58	0.49	0.30
Top of Natural substratum	0.67	0.83	0.81	0.72	0.76	0.72	-
Base of trench	0.75	0.89	0.86	0.77	0.82	0.74	0.40

Trench 4 was positioned with the northern field, within the proposed plot 5, slightly off a north-south alignment. The topsoil was topped with turf. Across the majority of the trench, modern topsoil concealed a layer of clay subsoil overlying a buried topsoil, indicating that this area had been built up and levelled in recent times. Below the buried topsoil, the subsoil comprised a thick layer of compact sandy clay with frequent roots. Natural subsoil was reached at a depth of between 0.55m and 0.94m and consisted of light brown sandy clay with orange and greyish patches. No archaeological features were observed, with the exception of ridge and furrow, which crossed the trench at right angles. A sherd of 18th-century slipware was recovered from the subsoil (D. Sawday pers. comm.).

Table 4: Trench 4 dimensions

Trench 4	N-S						
Length (m)	Width (m)		Area (sq. m)		Min. depth (m)		Max. depth (m)
29.3	1.6		46.88		0.66m		0.98m
Interval (m) from W	0	5	10	15	20	25	to E end 29
Topsoil depth	0.18	0.31	0.20	0.25	0.32	0.32	0.25
Subsoil depth	0.76	0.56	0.65	0.68	0.38	0.30	0.30
Top of Natural substratum	0.94	0.87	0.85	0.93	0.70	0.62	0.55
Base of trench	0.98	0.88	0.87	0.94	0.73	0.69	0.66

Trench 5 was located at the north-eastern end of the site and positioned on a NNE-SSW alignment. The topsoil and subsoil were similar to those in Trench 5. At the northern end of the trench, two square cut features were identified, each containing the articulated skeleton of a pony. The cuts were seen relatively high up in the section and finds recovered from the backfill of both features, included modern glass and ceramics (flowerpot and panchionware), suggesting a relatively recent date. The date of the finds was confirmed by the ULAS ceramic specialist (Deborah Sawday) and then discarded. The skeletons were not fully excavated and removed. No other features were observed, with the exception of a northwest- southeast aligned land drain.

Table 5: Trench 5 dimensions

Trench 5	NE-SW							
Length (m)	Width (m)		Area (sq. m)		Min. depth (m)		Max. depth (m)	
29.8	1.6		47.68		0.58		1.07	
Interval (m) from NW	0	5	10	15	20	25	to SE end 30	
Topsoil depth	0.40	0.37	0.29	0.32	0.33	0.28	0.28	
Subsoil depth	-	0.53	0.53	0.54	0.65	0.54	0.40	
Top of Natural substratum	-	0.90	0.82	0.86	0.98	0.82	0.78	
Base of trench	0.58	1.07	0.86	0.97	1.06	1.02	0.84	



Figure 7: Head of horse/pony burial 1, with very worn teeth indicating age



Figure 8: Head of horse/pony burial 2

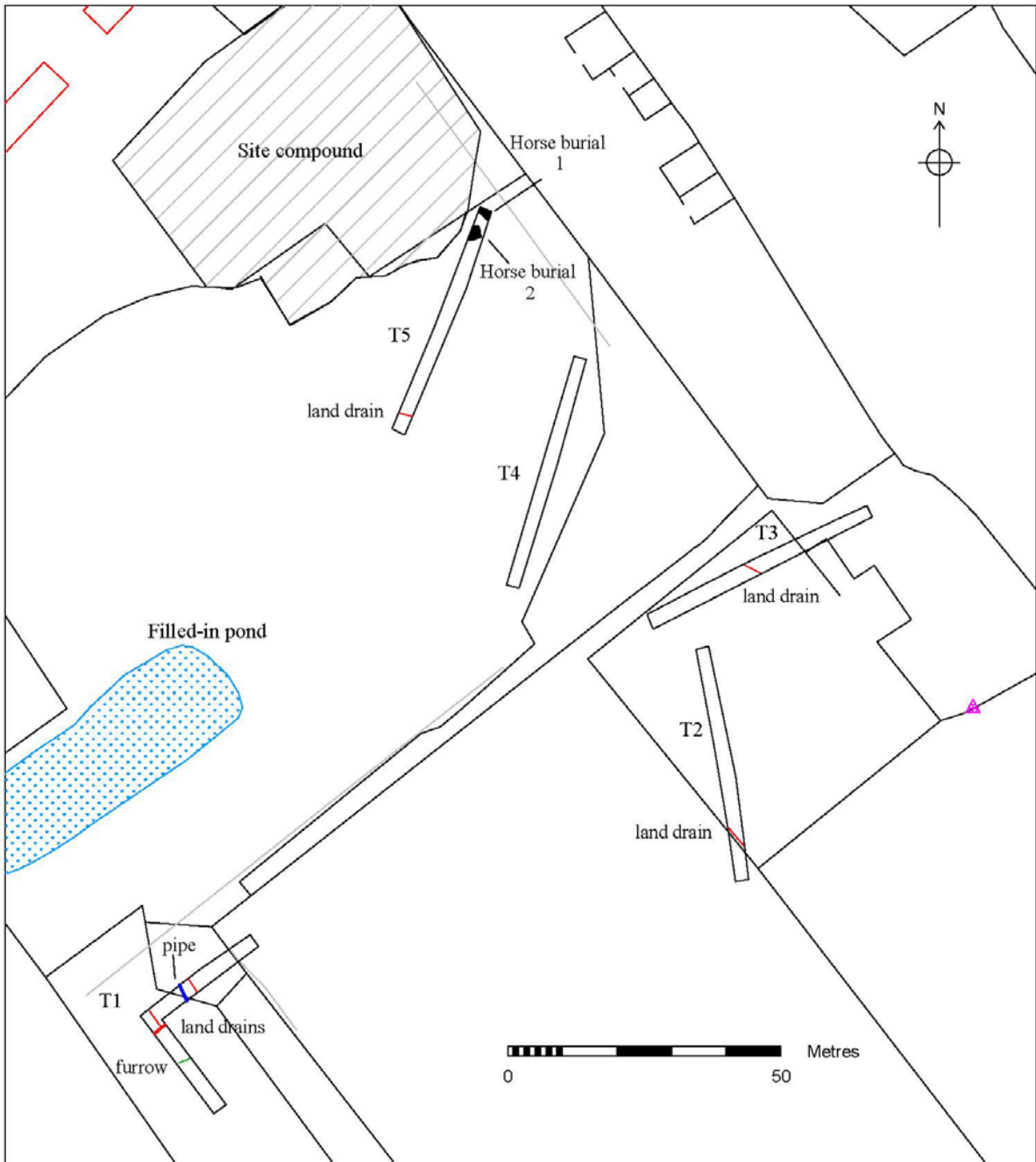


Figure 9: Trench plan showing drains and horse burials



Figure 10: Trench 1, looking northwest



Figure 11: Trench 1, looking southwest



Figure 12: Trench 2, looking south.



Figure 13: Trench 3, looking southwest.



Figure 14: Trench 4, looking south.



Figure 15: Trench 5 looking south. Horse burials in foreground.

Conclusion

The trenches did not produce any pre-modern features. Land drains were observed across the site and Trench 1 revealed drains on two different alignments, as well as a modern pipe and cable. Ridge and furrow was observed in the field to the west of the site and evidence for their continuation on the same alignment were encountered within Trench 1. This is also visible on the LiDaR survey (Figure 3).

In the northern corner of Trench 5, two square cut features were encountered containing articulated horse burials. Pottery and glass recovered from the backfill of both burial pit indicated that these had a modern date.

Archive

The site archive is currently held with ULAS but will be deposited with Leicestershire Museums under the Accession Number: X.A91 2017.

After examination by our specialist, the modern finds were discarded. One fragment of 18th-century slipware (u/s) was retained.

The site archive consists of:

- 1 x Unbound A4 copy of this report
- 5x A4 Trench recording sheets
- 1 x A4 Photo record sheet
- A4 Colour digital contact print, 1 CD of digital photos

Publication

Since 2004 ULAS has reported the results of all archaeological work to the *Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations* (OASIS) database held by the Archaeological Data Service at the University of York (Appendix 1).

Acknowledgements

The fieldwork was carried out by Claire LaCombe and Jennifer Browning of ULAS. Vicki Score managed the project. Sophie Clark (Planning Archaeologist) monitored the work on behalf of the Planning Authority. We would also like to thank Paul of Planters and Andy Craven of Langton Homes for their assistance with this project.

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24/08/2017

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Score, V. and Brown, L., 2017 *An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment for Proposed Development on land at Great Easton, Leicestershire (SP84835 92747 and SP84496 92564)*.
ULAS Report 2017-073

ULAS 2017 *Written Scheme of Investigation for evaluation. Location: Barnsdale House, 17 Barnsdale, Great Easton, Leicestershire (NGR: SP 84824 92783)* ULAS Specification 17-271

Sources

<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/discoveringGeology/geologyOfBritain/viewer.html>

Appendix 1: OASIS data entry

PROJECT DETAILS	Oasis No			
	Project Name	An Archaeological Evaluation Barnsdale House; 17 Barnsdale, Great Easton, Leics		
	Start/end dates of field work	14/08/2017 – 16/08/2017		
	Previous/Future Work	None		
	Project Type	Evaluation		
	Site Status	None		
	Current Land Use	Paddock		
	Monument Type/Period	None		
	Significant Finds/Period	None		
	Development Type	Residential		
	Reason for Investigation	NPPF		
	Position in the Planning Process	Planning Condition.		
Planning Ref.	Planning Ref 17/01050/FUL			
PROJECT LOCATION	Site Address/Postcode	Barnsdale House, 17 Barnsdale, Great Easton, Leics		
	Study Area	0.7ha		
	Site Coordinates	SP 84824 92783		
	Height OD	114m OD		
PROJECT CREATORS	Organisation	ULAS		
	Project Brief Originator	Local Planning Authority. Leicestershire County Council		
	Project Design Originator	ULAS		
	Project Manager	Vicki Score		
	Project Director/Supervisor	Jennifer Browning		
	Sponsor/Funding Body	Langton Homes		
PROJECT ARCHIVE		Physical	Digital	Paper
	Recipient	Leicestershire Museums	Leicestershire Museums	Leicestershire Museums
	ID (Acc. No.)	XA91 2017	XA91 2017	XA91 2017
	Contents	None	Photos	Evaluation records Field Notes
PROJECT BIBLIOGRAPHY	Type	Grey Literature (unpublished)		
	Title	An Archaeological Evaluation on Land at Barnsdale House, 17 Barnsdale, Great Easton, Leics.		
	Author	Browning, J.		
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	Date	14/08/2017 – 16/08/2017		
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	Description	Developer Report A4 pdf		



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