An Archaeological Evaluation of Land at Church Farm, Seaton, Rutland (NGR SP 903 981)

Jennifer Hayward

Contents

Figures

An Archaeological Evaluation of Land at Church Farm, Seaton, Rutland (NGR SK 903 981)

Summary

University of Leicester Archaeological Services were commissioned by London and Country Homes Ltd to undertake an archaeological evaluation of land at Church Farm, Seaton, Rutland, and outline planning permission has been granted for the building of three residential dwellings and the conversion of agricultural buildings to three residential dwellings.

A total, of six evaluation trenches were excavated within the proposed development area, sampling an area approximately 170m^2 in size. Wall footings and flag-stone floors from a domestic building were recorded in trench 6. No evidence for features of archaeological interest was found in the other five trenches.

The archive will be held at Rutland County Museums Service, under accession number RT09.2006

1. Introduction

University of Leicester Archaeological Services were commissioned by London and Country Homes Ltd to undertake an archaeological evaluation in advance of proposed residential development on land at Church Farm, Seaton, Rutland (SK 903 981). Outline planning permission has been granted for building of three residential dwellings on a site previously occupied by agricultural buildings to the north of Church Farm (Planning Application Number PA/06/0324/9). An archaeological desk based assessment (ULAS Report Number 2005-104) identified the site as having high archaeological potential. The site is located directly adjacent to the village church and within the historic core of Seaton. Iron Age, Saxon and Medieval remains have been found in the vicinity (ULAS Report 2005-104). In view of this, a programme of intrusive investigation through trial trenching was requested by Rutland County Council to confirm whether archaeological remains are present within the application area and, if necessary, to formulate a mitigation strategy.

The ironstone barns at Church Farm also have planning permission to be converted into three dwellings. A building survey was carried out by Gavin Speed of ULAS on 29th September 2006 (ULAS Report 2006-137).

Reviewer note: Document issued as 2006-096 in error. Renumbered as 2006-175. MGB 25/4/07

Figure 1 - Site location Scale 1:50000

2. Aims and Methodology

The aim of the archaeological work was to ascertain whether any significant archaeological remains were present within the area to be developed. If identified a sufficient sample were to be excavated and recorded to establish their extent, date, quality, character, form and potential including environmental data. Further archaeological recording would be undertaken if required in the light of the results of this programme.

The Planning Archaeologist of Historic and Natural Environment Team, Leicestershire County Council as advisor to Rutland County Council following Planning Policy Guidelines 16 (PPG 16, Archaeology and Planning para. 30) requested a 5% sample. Six 20m long trenches, 1.6m wide were to be excavated by JCB with a ditching bucket totalling 170m^2. The agricultural buildings previously on the site had been demolished prior to the commencement of the evaluation; a large spoil-heap of building rubble situated in the north-east corner of the site affected the trench locations. In view of this trenches 1 and 2 were joined in the south-east corner as the steep drop between the area of the intended new buildings where the trenches were located and the agricultural buildings intended for conversion prevented trench 1 being 20m long, therefore trench 2 was extended by 5m to ensure a 5% sample of the site was evaluated (*Figure 2*). The evaluation took place between December 5th and 8th 2006. The evaluation followed the *Design Specification for archaeological evaluation (exploratory works)* (07/537).

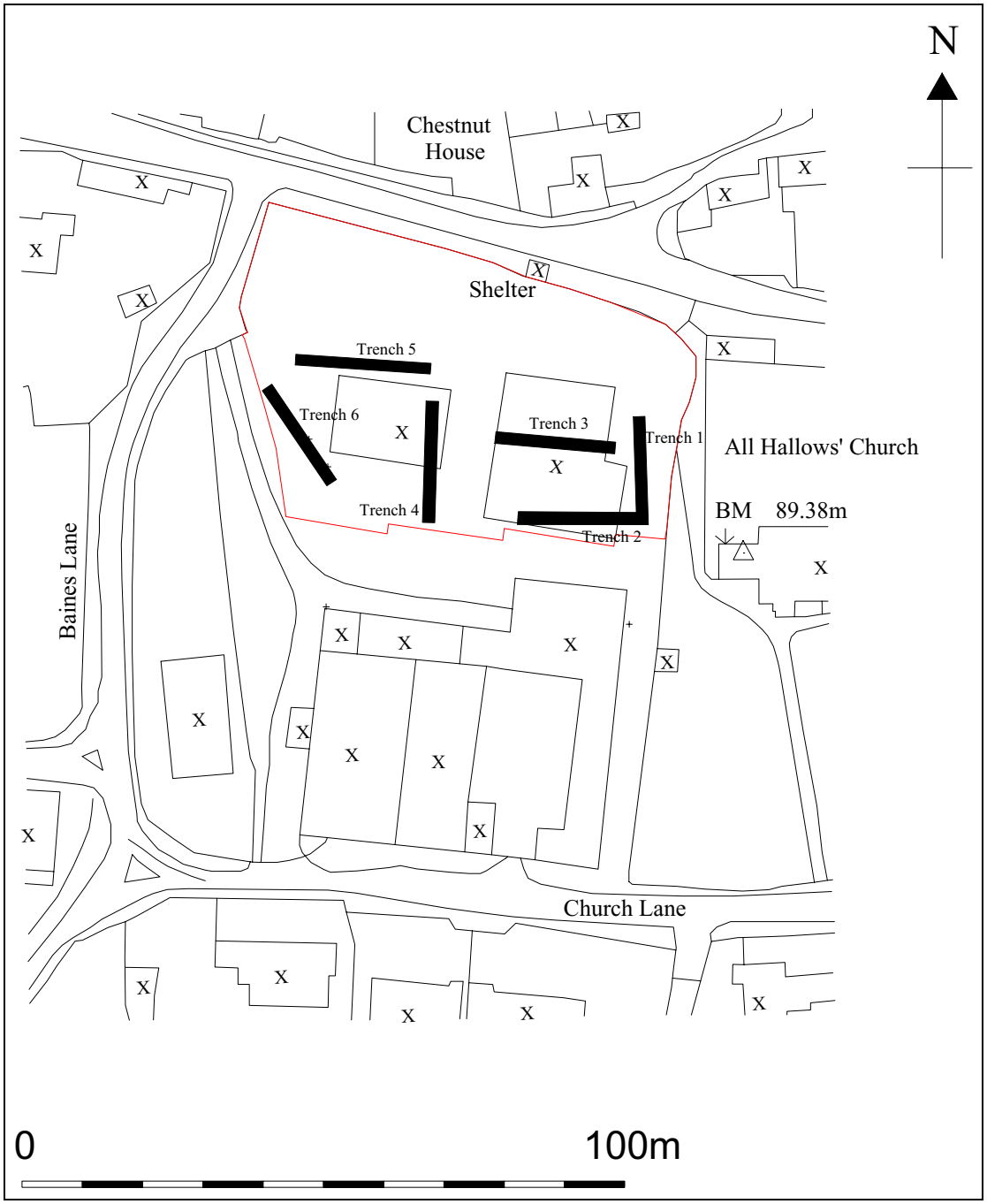

Figure 2 – Trench locations

3. Results

3.1 Trench 1

Trench 1 was located to the eastern edge of the evaluation area. Approximately 320mm to 410mm of topsoil was excavated revealing a layer of mid-orange brown colluvium; a further 300mm to 500mm of silt was excavated before another change was encountered. At this level, the base of the trench consisted of mid-orange brown friable sand (degraded ironstone) and 30% mid orange brown iron stone. An area of modern disturbance was noted in the far south of the trench, containing black plastic,

string and glass. This probably represented an episode of ground surface levelling prior to the construction of agricultural buildings on this site.

There was nothing of archaeological significance within the trench and it was recorded and released for backfilling.

3.2 Trench 2

The second excavated trench was located immediately west of, and joining trench 1. Approximately 400mm to 900mm of topsoil was excavated revealing the same colluvial deposit as trench 1. Excavation of this layer continued until undisturbed bed rock was reached at approximately 900mm below current ground level at the eastern most end of the trench and 600mm at the western end of the trench. As expected the greatest depth of colluvium was at the eastern end of the trench, where there was modern disturbance of the topsoil.

An area approximately 2m wide, of angular ironstones up to 0.20m by 0.17m, containing modern drain material was noted mid-way along the trench. This probably represented the remains of a heavily disturbed land-drain.

There was nothing of archaeological significance within the trench and it was recorded and released for backfilling.

3.3 Trench 3

Trench 3 was located 10m north of trench 2 and aligned approximately east-west. Between 200mm and 300mm of hardcore rubble was excavated revealing the same colluvium layer noted in the first two trenches, a further 400mm to 700mm of this subsoil was excavated until ironstone bedrock was reached.

Three large postholes were encountered, between 800mm and 1m in size, spaced at 5.20m, 8.10m and 11.5m from the eastern end of the trench, the largest being the most westerly. These contained modern material (string and black plastic) and were probably for the supports of the modern barn previously located on this part of the site.

There was nothing of archaeological significance within the trench and it was recorded and released for backfilling.

3.4 Trench 4

Trench 4 was located 10m west of trench 3 in the centre of the proposed development area, aligned approximately north-south. A 300mm thick layer of hardcore representing the demolition spread of the agricultural-building, overlay a dark-brown/ dark grey clay with modern inclusions, this deposit was 580mm thick and lay on top of the ironstone bedrock. At the southern end of the trench an area of ironstone averaging 420mm in depth was noted; this overlay a grey brown silty sand deposit. The ironstone dump and silty sand represented modern disturbance of the southern part of the development area, probably a consolidation of the higher ground prior to

the construction of the modern agricultural buildings. A modern land-drain was noted on a north-south alignment within this trench.

There was nothing of archaeological significance within the trench and it was recorded and released for backfilling.

3.5 Trench 5

Trench 5 was excavated 5m north of trench 4, aligned east-west. As with trenches 3 and 4, approximately 200mm of hard core and a further 200mm to 300mm of subsoil was excavated before the horizon with the ironstone bedrock was reached.

Four large post holes were noted, cut from below the hardcore and containing modern material. These represent modern barn roof supports.

There was nothing of archaeological significance within the trench and it was recorded and released for backfilling.

3.6 Trench 6 – (figures 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8)

Trench 6 was located to the far west of the proposed development area, aligned north-west to south-east. Topsoil and subsoil depths were similar to those within the previous trenches and the base of the trench consisted of the same ironstone bedrock.

This trench contained the only feature of archaeological significance on the site; this being the remains of a stone building. Three ironstone walls were recorded, along with two flag-stone floors, one on a slightly higher level and having a chequered pattern of flag stones and red tiles/ sandstone flags. This chequered pattern floor is unlikely to be from an agricultural building, and is more likely to represent a domestic use for this part of the building. The plain flag-stone floor on the lower level indicates an agricultural use for this part of the building (the surviving buildings at Church Farm have similar floors, though with smaller flag stones than were recorded in the trench).
These walls appear to be of dry-stone construction, having little evidence of mortar bonding; however, a small quantity of yellow, sandy, mortar-like material was noted in the core of the far south-eastern wall. A double-walled dry stone wall is constructed with two faces of stones, usually with a core filled with smaller stones; however it was also common to use sand or earth in the core or "hearting" of double-walled dry stone walls, when they were used for domestic structures, in order to reduce draughts (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dry-stone_wall#Dry_stone_buildings; DSWA 2004: 112).

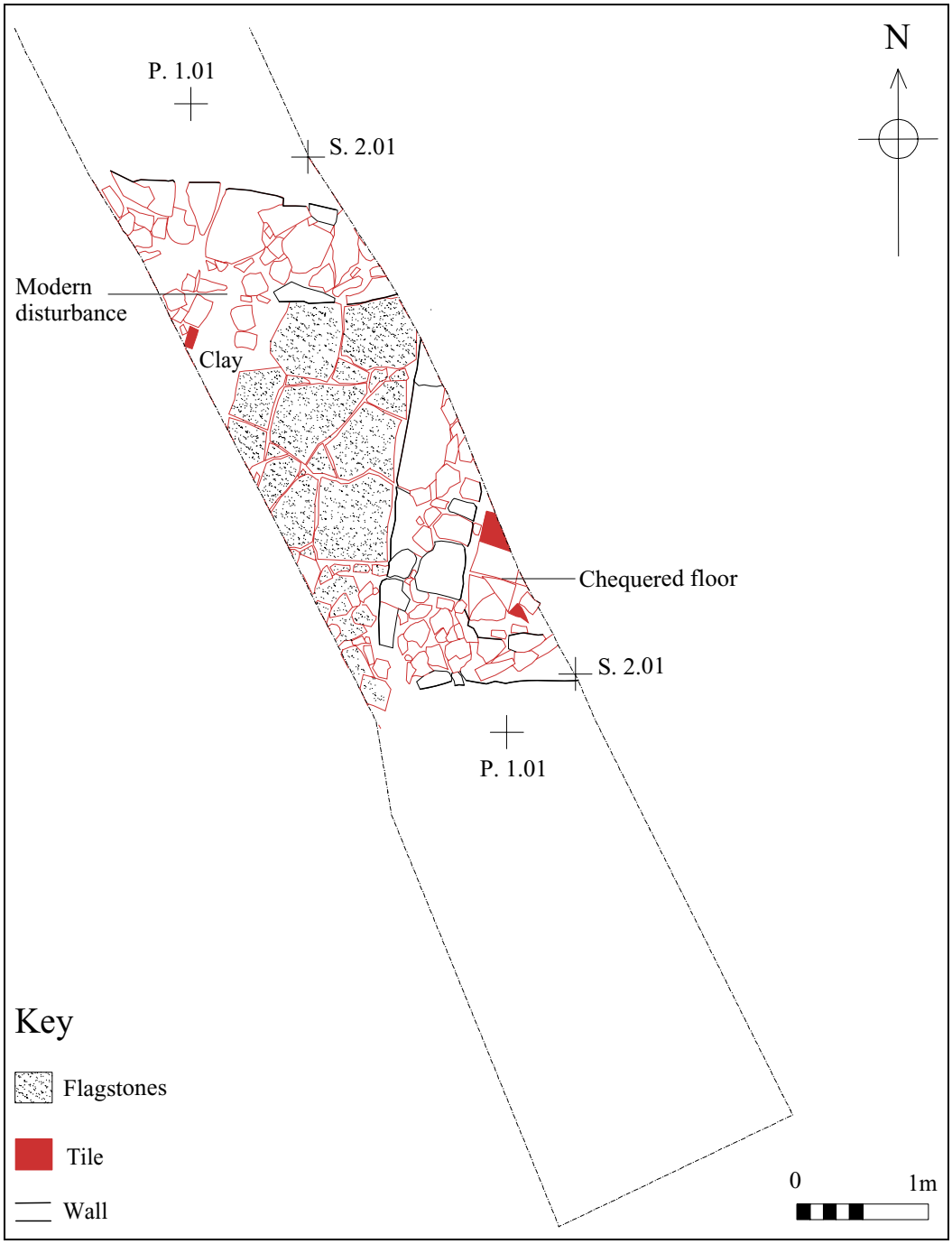

Figure 3 – Plan of trench 6 showing remains of building with flag-stone floors.

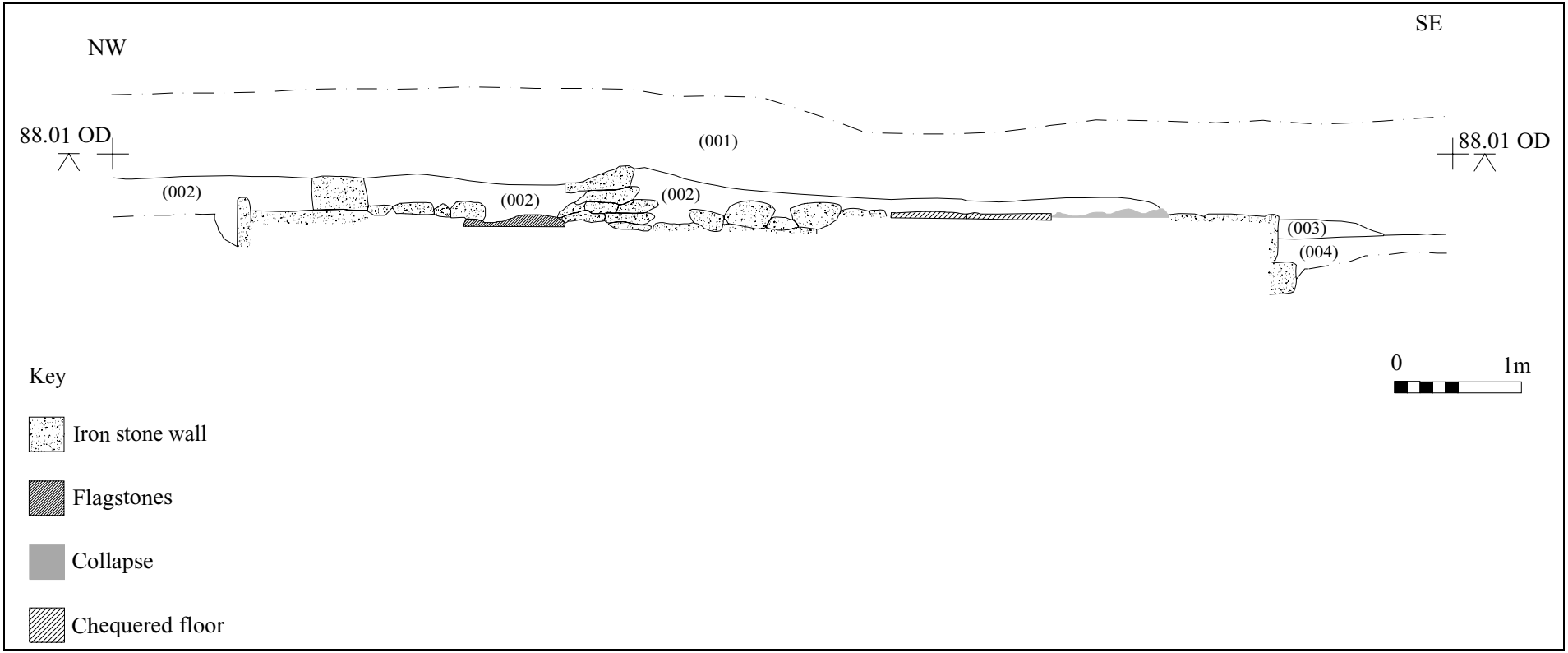

Figure 4 – Section of trench 6, showing walls and floors of building

Figure 5 – View of building remains, showing small hand-excavated slot to the south-east that revealed a second course of iron-stone foundations

4. Conclusion

No evidence for earlier buildings on the site had been noted during the desk-based assessment or the building survey. However, a rapid survey of the high wall surrounding the farm found evidence of stoned-up doorways, as well as some interesting areas of stonework, including evidence for well constructed buildings with granite quoins (see figures 6, 7 and 8). The walls are bonded with a yellow sand mortar very similar to that associated with the building foundations in trench 6. These buildings clearly pre-date the construction of the current iron-stone buildings at Church Farm.

Church Farm is constructed on two level terraces, the northern terrace forming the area of this evaluation and being up to 3 metres higher OD than the southern terrace. These terraces do not correspond with the gently sloping ground levels in the church yard of All Hallows immediately east of Church Farm (see figure 8 – a height difference of 1 metre between the church yard and the southern terrace of Church Farm is visible), suggesting that the natural slope of the site was cut into to form these terraces at the time of the construction of the current buildings at Church Farm.

The earlier buildings evidenced in the boundary wall show that the terracing of Church Farm occurred after their demolition. A row of granite stones was visible at the base of the wall on the churchyard side, shown in figure 7 (partially obscured by plants), indicating that this would have been the outer face of the wall. On the western side of the wall (Church Farm side) the ground level has been cut away to form the southern terrace on which a U-shaped range of iron-stone barns is constructed. This

indicates that the buildings evident within the wall went out of use prior to the construction of these barns.

Figure 6 – Evidence for earlier building within surrounding wall of Church Farm, looking north from within grounds of Church Farm.

Figure 7 – Evidence for earlier building within surrounding wall of Church Farm, taken looking east from within the churchyard.

Figure 8 – Evidence for earlier building within boundary wall of Church Farm and All Hallows Church, looking north-east from Church Lane

The desk-based assessment (ULAS Report 2005-104) concluded that the current barns at Church Farm pre-date 1888 as they are shown on the 1st edition OS map of the area. However, the exact date of their construction is unknown. Although buildings are recorded in the location of Church Farm on the 1846 tithe map of Seaton (ULAS Report 2005-104), they are highly unlikely to be those now standing, due to the materials used in their construction. The iron pillars and brick window surrounds and quoins suggest that the buildings were constructed in the latter part of the 19th century, after the railway line through Seaton was built, as these are not locally made building materials and transport of them would have been difficult by road; a railway line from Rugby to Peterborough passed within 600m of the farm (Matt Hurford *pers comm*), this railway line was granted permission to be built by an act of parliament in 1846 (http://www.opsi.gov.uk/chron-tables/local/chron033.htm) and would have been built soon after this.

The remains of a possible farm house and ancillary building, predating the construction of the current buildings at Church Farm, were recorded in trench 6. Although highly speculative the ancillary building may have served as a dairy as cheese was an important export from the area in the 18th century and even more so as the railways expanded (English Heritage 2006:7). Such an attached farmhouse and barn/dairy is known as a laithe house and is more commonly found in the northern parts of England, particularly the Pennines, however, examples of this type of building are known elsewhere in the country (English Heritage 2006:69).

It is possible that the terracing of the site which occurred prior to the construction of the modern agricultural buildings truncated any earlier features in the eastern part of the site.

However, the building remains recorded in trench 6 are of interest as no record of this previous use of the site was noted in the course of the desk-based assessment.

5. Acknowledgements

The work was undertaken by Matthew Hurford and Jennifer Hayward of ULAS on behalf of London and Country Homes Ltd. The text was prepared by Jennifer Hayward while Matthew Hurford assisted with figure 3, and provided figure 4. The project was managed by Patrick Clay

6. References

D.S.W.A. 2004 *Dry Stone Walling Techniques and Traditions.* Gainsborough: G W Belton Ltd.

English Heritage 2006 *Historic Farmsteads. Preliminary Character Statement: East Midlands Region.* Gloucester: University of Gloucestershire.

Tate, J. 2005 *An Archaeological Desk-based Assessment for Church Farm, Seaton, Rutland (SP 9035 9825).* ULAS Report 2005-104.

Speed, G. 2006 *A Photographic Building Survey of Church Farm, Church Lane, Seaton, Rutland (SP 903 981)*. ULAS Report 2006-137.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dry-stone_wall#Dry_stone_buildings

http://www.opsi.gov.uk/chron-tables/local/chron033.htm

7. Archive & Publication

The site archive consists of

1 A3 permatrace sheet containing plan of trench 6
5 A4 Trench Recording Sheets
4 A4 Context recording sheets

Black and white negatives with contact sheets
1x CD of Digital Colour Images and A4 contact sheet
1 A4 Photo Index Sheet

The archive will be held at Rutland County Museums Service, under accession number RT09.2006

A version of the summary (above) will be published in *Transactions of Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* in due course.

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

Tel: 0116 252 2848
Fax: 0116 252 2614
Email: jlh29@le.ac.uk

21.12.2006

Appendix

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

Design Specification for archaeological evaluation (exploratory works)

Church Farm, Church Lane, Seaton, Rutland
NGR: SK 903 981
P.A 06/0324/9
Client: London and Country Homes
Planning Authority: Rutland County Council

1. *Definition and scope of the specification*

1.1 This specification is for archaeological evaluation by trial trenching for land at Church Farm, Church Lane, Seaton, Rutland (SK 903 981) for London and Country Homes (P.A 06/0324/9). A desk-based assessment and photographic survey has been prepared by ULAS (Reports 2005-104; 2006-137)

1.2 All archaeological work will adhere to the Institute of Field Archaeologist's (IFA) *Code of Conduct* and *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations* and the *Guidelines and procedures for archaeological work in Leicestershire and Rutland* (Leicestershire County Council).

2. Background

2.1. The area is currently a levelled farmyard within which it is proposed to erect three new dwellings. Leicestershire County Council as advisors to the planning authority have requested a programme of archaeological work comprising trial trenching to further elucidate the archaeological potential and, if necessary, formulate a mitigation strategy (LCC 5.1.2006)

2.2. The application area is within the historic core of Seaton. Iron Age, Saxon and medieval remains have been located in the vicinity (ULAS Report 2005-104).

3. Objectives

3.1 The objective of the archaeological work is to ascertain whether any significant archaeological remains are present within the area to be developed. If identified a sufficient sample to establish their extent, date, quality, character, form and potential including environmental data will be recorded.

4 General Methodology

4.1 All work will follow the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) *Code of Conduct* and adhere to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evalu*ations.

4.2 Staffing, recording systems, Health and Safety provisions and insurance details are provided.

4.3 Internal monitoring procedures will be undertaken including visits to the sites from the project manager. These will ensure that project targets are being met and professional standards are being maintained. Provision will be made for external monitoring meetings with representatives of Rutland County Council and Leicestershire County Council. The strategy will be reviewed in the light of the quality of the archaeological resource as revealed at different stages of the fieldwork.

4.4 Trial trenching

4.4.1 Trial trenching totalling *c.* 170 sq metres will be undertaken providing a *c.* 5 % sample of the *c.* 3400 sq. m. area (Fig. 1). This will comprise six 20m x 1.5m trench. The location may be varied according to any constraints on the availability of the area for trenching.

4.4.2 The topsoil and overburden will be removed in spits by machine with toothless ditching bucket (or similar) under full supervision, until archaeological deposits or undisturbed substrata are encountered.

4.4.3 The location of the trenches will be surveyed using a Total Station Electronic Distance Measurer (EDM) linked to a hand held computer.

4.4.4 Any archaeological deposits located will be hand cleaned. Samples of any archaeological deposits located will be hand excavated and planned as appropriate to addressing the aims and objectives of the evaluation. Measured drawings of all archaeological features will be prepared at a scale of 1:20 and tied into an overall site plan of 1:100. All plans will be tied into the National Grid using an Electronic Distance Measurer (EDM).

4.4.5. Particular attention will be paid to the potential for buried palaeosols in consultation with ULAS's environmental officer. Deposits which may provide radiocarbon dating evidence will be sampled.

4.4.6 All excavated sections will be recorded and drawn at 1:10 or 1:20 scale, levelled and tied into the Ordnance Survey datum. Spot heights will be taken as appropriate.

4.4.7 Any human remains encountered will only be removed under a Home Office Licence and in compliance with relevant environmental health regulations. The developers, Leicestershire County Council and the coroner will be informed immediately on their discovery.

4.5 Mitigation Strategy

4.5.1 Depending on the results of the exploratory works and following consultation with the planning authority, the LCC Planning Archaeologist and the developer, a mitigation strategy may need to be formulated.

5 Recording Systems

5.1 Individual descriptions of all archaeological strata and features excavated or exposed will be entered onto prepared pro-forma recording sheets.

5.2 A site location plan based on the current Ordnance Survey 1:1250 map, enlarged to 1:500 (reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO) will be prepared. This will be supplemented by a plan at 1:200 (or 1:100), which will show the location of the areas investigated.

5.3 Some record of the full extent in plan of all archaeological deposits encountered will be made on drawing film, related to the OS grid and at a scale of 1:10 or 1:20. Elevations and sections of individual layers of features should be drawn where possible. The OD height of all principal strata and features will be calculated and indicated on the appropriate plans.

5.4 An adequate photographic record of the investigations will be prepared. This will include digital, black and white prints and colour transparencies, as appropriate, illustrating in both detail and general context the principal features and finds discovered. The photographic record will also include 'working shots' to illustrate more generally the nature of the archaeological operation undertaken.

5.5 This record will be compiled and fully checked during the course of the excavation.

5.6 All site records and finds will be kept securely.

6 Report and Archive

6.1 A report on the fieldwork will be provided following analysis of the records and materials.

6.2. The copyright of all original finished documents shall remain vested in ULAS and ULAS will be entitled as of right to publish any material in any form produced as a result of its investigations.

6.3 A full copy of the archive as defined in the 'Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long-term storage' (UKIC 1990), and Standards in the Museum care of archaeological collections (MGC 1992) and 'Guidelines for the preparation of site archives and assessments for all finds (other than fired clay objects) (RFG/FRG 1993) will be presented to Rutland County Museums within six months of the completion of post-fieldwork analysis. This archive will include all written, disk-based, drawn and photographic records relating directly to the investigations undertaken.

7. Timetable and staffing

7.1. The trial trenching will be undertaken over one day and can commence on 01.07.2006.

8. Health and Safety

8.1 ULAS is covered by and adheres to the University of Leicester Statement of Safety Policy and uses the ULAS Safety Manual (2005) as its Health and Safety Manual with appropriate risks assessments for all archaeological work. The relevant Health and Safety Executive guidelines will be adhered to as appropriate. An initial risks assessment is included in the appendix. This will be revised as appropriate following the commencement of fieldwork.

9. Insurance

9.1 All ULAS work is covered by the University of Leicester's Public Liability and Professional Indemnity Insurance. The Public Liability Insurance is with St Pauls Travellers Policy No. UCPOP3651237 while the Professional Indemnity Insurance is with Lloyds Underwriters (50%) and Brit Insurances (50%) Policy No. FUNK3605.

10. Bibliography

MAP 2, *The management of archaeological projects* 2nd edition English Heritage 1991

MGC 1992, *Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections* (Museums and Galleries Commission)

RFG/FRG 1993, *Guidelines for the preparation of site archives* (Roman Finds Group and Finds Research Group AD 700-1700)

SMA 1993, Selection*, retention and Dispersal of Archaeological Collections. Guidelines for use in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (Society of Museum Archaeologists)

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

Tel: 0116 252 2848
Fax: 0116 252 2614
Email: pnc3@le.ac.uk

30.11.2006

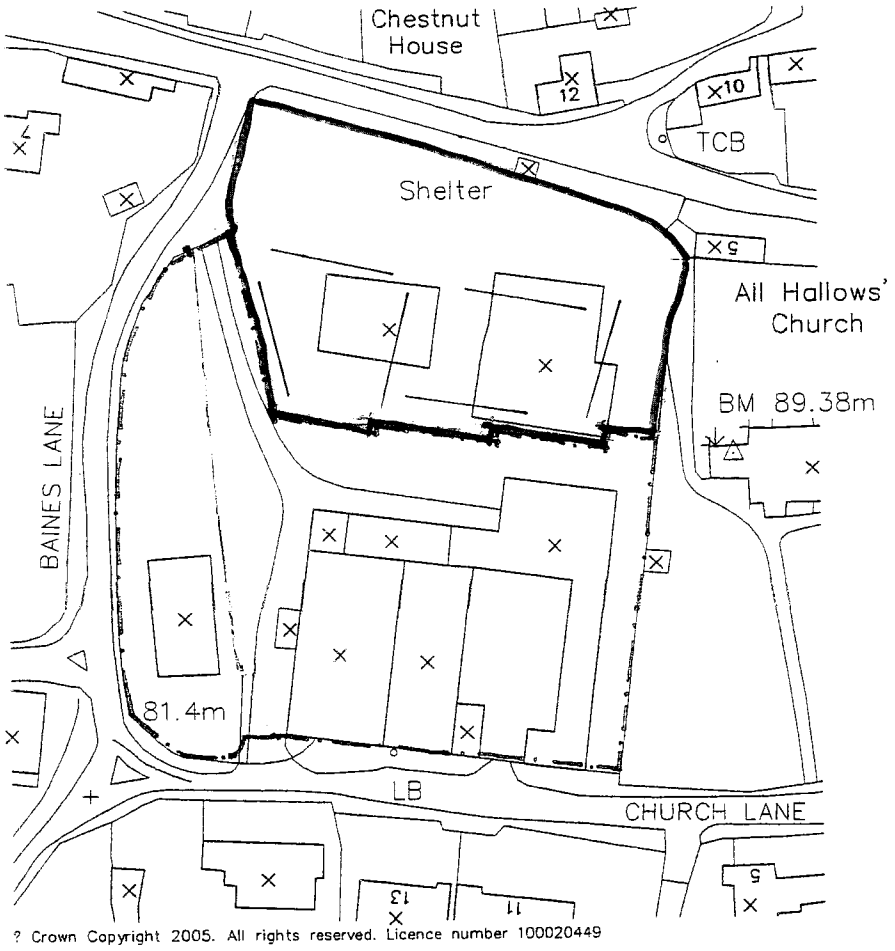

Figure 1 - Location of the proposed development area showing proposed location of trenches

Draft Project Health and Safety Policy Statement

Church Farm, Church Lane, Seaton, Rutland
NGR: SK 903 981
P.A 06/0324/9
Client: London and Country Homes
Planning Authority: Rutland County Council

1. Nature of the work

1.1 This statement is for trial trenching. It will be revised following the commencement of operations when the extent of risks can be assessed in full.

1.2 The work will involve machine-dug trial trenching during daylight hours and recording of any underlying archaeological deposits revealed. Overall depth is likely to be *c.* 0.2-0.5m. This will involve the examination of the exposed surface with hand tools (shovels, trowels etc) and excavation of archaeological features. All work will adhere to the University of Leicester Health and Safety Policy and follow the guidance in the Standing Committee of Archaeological Unit Managers manual, as revised in 1997, together with the following relevant Health and Safety guidelines, including the following.

HSE Construction Information Sheet CS8 Safety in excavations.
HSE Industry Advisory leaflet IND (G) 143 (L): Getting to grips with manual handling.
HSE Industry Advisory leaflet IND (G) 145 (L): Watch Your Back.
CIRIA R97 Trenching practice.
CIRIA TN95 Proprietary Trench Support Systems.
HSE Guidance Note HS (G) 47 Avoiding danger to underground services. HSE Guidance Note GS7 Accidents to children on construction sites

1.3 The Health and Safety policy on site will be reassessed during the evaluation .All work will adhere to the company's health and safety policy.

2 Risks Assessment

2.1 Working within an excavation.

Precautions. No work will be undertaken beneath section faces deeper than 1.2m. Loose spoil heaps will not be walked on. Protective footwear will be worn at all times. A member of staff qualified in First Aid will be present at all times. First aid kit, vehicle and mobile phone to be kept on site in case of emergency.

2.2 Working with plant.

Precautions. Hard hats, protective footwear and hazard jackets will be worn at all times. No examination of the area of stripping will take place until machines have vacated area. Observation of machines will be maintained during hand excavation.

2.3 Working within areas prone to waterlogging.

Protective clothing will be worn at all times and precautions taken to prevent contact with stagnant water which may carry Weil's disease or similar.

2.4 Working with chemicals.

If chemicals are used to conserve or help lift archaeological material these will only be used by qualified personnel with protective clothing (i.e. a trained conservator) and will be removed from site immediately after use.

2.5 Other risks

Precautions. If there is any suspicion of unforeseen hazards being encountered e.g. chemical contaminants, unexploded bombs, hazardous gases work will cease immediately. The client and relevant public authorities will be informed immediately.

2.6 No other constraints are recognised over the nature of the soil, water, type of excavation, proximity of structures, sources of vibration and contamination.

30.11.2006