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Archaeological Services

**Archaeological Attendance and  
Recording During Groundworks on  
Land to the North of Kineton Lane,  
Blythe Valley Park, Blythe Gate,  
Solihull, West Midlands.  
(SP 413620 274509)**

James Patrick and Claire LaCombe



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**(SP 413620 274509)**

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*for*

**IM Properties**

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CONTENTS

Summary.....	1
Introduction.....	1
Site Location, Details and Geology.....	2
Historical and Archaeological Background.....	3
Archaeological Objectives.....	4
Methodology.....	4
Results.....	6
Conclusion.....	10
Archive.....	11
Publication.....	11
Acknowledgements.....	11
Bibliography.....	13

FIGURES

Figure 1: Site Location.....	2
Figure 2: Ordnance Survey 6” 1886 showing development Area with Siddenhales Moated Site to the north. (National Library of Scotland).....	3
Figure 3: Plan and location of archaeological areas 1, 2 and 2a.....	5
Figure 4: Development area prior to ground-works looking south-east towards Kinton Lane.....	5
Figure 5: Area 1 prior to ground-works looking west, left of public footpath. ....	6
Figure 6: Top-soil stripping of Area 1. Viewing west. ....	7
Figure 7: Area 2 west of bridleway looking north- east.....	8
Figure 8: Top-soil stripping in progress along Kinton Road showing possible track- way of Post- medieval date. Looking west. ....	8
Figure 9: Area 2a east of bridleway looking east prior to stripping after the partial removal of the bund. ....	9
Figure 10: Area 2a east of bridleway looking east after stripping.....	9
Figure 11: The area of the archaeological work (highlighted in red) in location to surrounding area.....	10

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### **Summary**

*Archaeological Attendance and Recording during groundworks was carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on park land, situated directly north of Kineton Lane, Blythe Valley Park, Blythe Gate, Solihull, West Midlands, SP 413620 274509. The work was undertaken in advance of residential and commercial development under Planning Ref: PL//2016/00863/MAOOT.*

*Archaeological ground-works were required in two phases. Phase 1 was completed in April 18 (Areas 1 and 2) with Phase 2 (Area 2a) completed in July 2018. The areas were divided from the previous negative evaluation to the North by an east to west public footpath. Area 1 was in the form of a proposed east to west drainage ditch, and the larger area 2 representing the creation of two access roads forming a triangular top-soil strip directly north-west of Kineton Lane. With the exception of faint traces of north to south ridge and furrow continuing from the previous evaluation within Area 1, no archaeological remains were revealed with exception to a modern pit containing glass and brick and a shallow wide linear orientated roughly parallel with Kineton Lane but also containing modern pottery. There was generally minimal disturbance with exception to two deep gravel filled drains associated with a man hole crossing area 2. Additionally an existing north to south ditch parallel to a metalled Bridleway divided area 2. The ground appears built up during landscaping following the development of the existing Business Park to the East. The natural geology was generally clean and undisturbed with exception to plough scars. Area 2a, situated to the east of the footpath was stripped down to the natural substratum, but was found to be heavily truncated by tree roots and land drains. No archaeological remains were revealed in this area.*

*The archive for this work will be deposited with Warwickshire Museums with accession number 00228.*

### **Introduction**

University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) were commissioned by IM Properties to carry out archaeological attendance and recording during ground-works on land to the north of Kineton Lane, Blythe Valley Park, Blythe Gate, Solihull, West Midlands, (SP 1345 7474).

Planning permission has been granted for residential and commercial development with access roads and drainage included the requirement for archaeological attendance and recording (Planning Ref: PL//2016/00863/MAOOT. The work was undertaken in

accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Section 12 Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment and followed the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI; ULAS 2018) submitted approved by the local planning authority.

### Site Location, Details and Geology

Blythe Valley Park lies just to the south of Solihull west of the M42 Motorway. The site lies directly north of Kineton Lane and comprises flat grassland at a height of c.140m OD. The site has recently been cleared of vegetation in preparation for development. Blythe Valley Business Park lies to the east and is separated from the existing grassland by a tree lined boundary and bridleway which formed the original driveway to a farm. Elsewhere the site is bounded by hedgerows and fences. The land formerly served as an open area dissected by gravel footpaths still accessible by the public.

The British Geological Survey website indicates that the underlying geology of the area is likely to be Mercia Mudstone group clay on the northern part of the site, overlain by silt and clay to the east and Arden formation sandstone on the southern part of the site, overlain by Diamicton to the west.



Figure 1: Site Location

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## Historical and Archaeological Background

Previous archaeological assessment has been undertaken for the Business Park (west and east) including desktop surveys, geophysical survey, trial trenching and watching briefs. The Archaeology chapter of the Environmental Statement (ES) identified that generally there has been relatively little human activity in the area until the medieval period with the establishment of farms, mills and several moated sites with documentary evidence for the assarting, or clearance, of woodland (Browning 2014). One of the moated sites was situated on the land of the former Siddenhales Farm north of the site, (Fig. 2) which had been excavated prior to the previous development (Nichol 1999). This was originally reached via a Bridleway orientated south to north bounding the western side of the existing Business Park. Valentines Farm, also demolished is situated on the east side of the Bridleway close to Kinton Road with once associated farm land partly under the existing bund. Another demolished farm building (name unknown) existed near the west end of Area 1, (Fig. 2). There are mill ponds and leats on the northern part of the site.

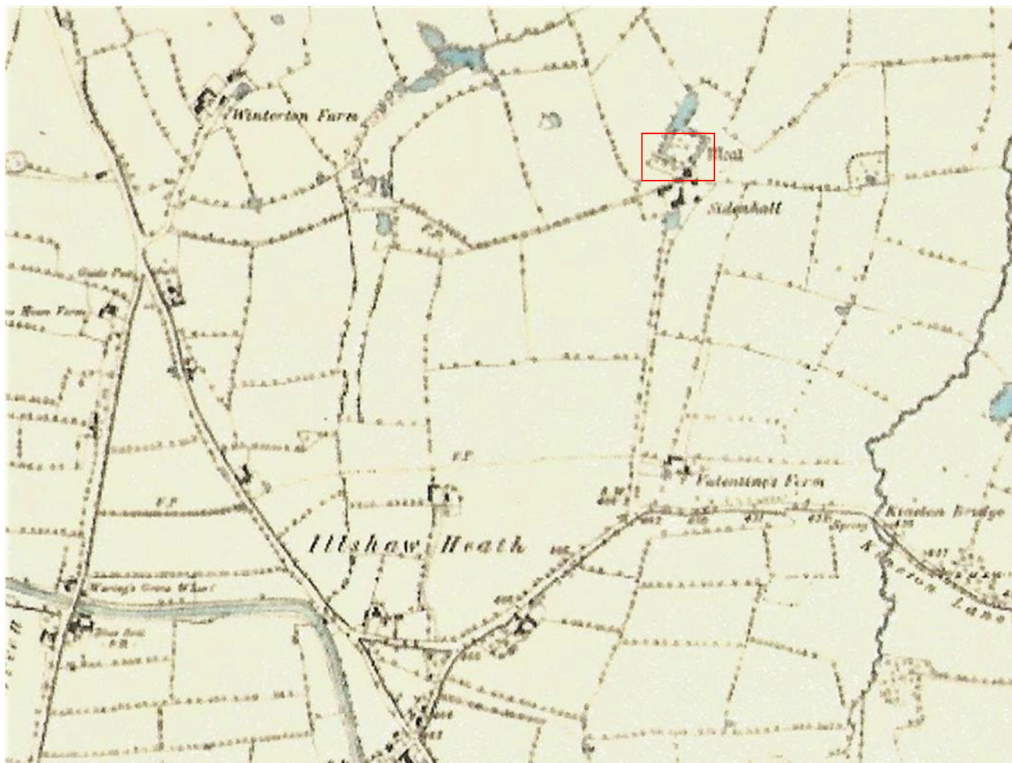


Figure 2: Ordnance Survey 6" 1886 showing development Area with Siddenhales Moated Site to the north. (National Library of Scotland)

## Archaeological Objectives

The main objectives of the Archaeological Attendance & Recording (watching brief) 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 objectives, the principal aim of the watching brief is to establish the nature, extent, date, depth, significance and state of preservation of archaeological deposits on the site in order to determine the potential impact upon them from the proposed development.

## Methodology

This report presents the results of a programme of archaeological attendance and recording during groundworks. The work was undertaken in line with a project design set out in the WSI (ULAS 2017) and agreed with the Planning Archaeologist for Warwickshire. All work followed the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Code of Conduct* (2014) in accordance with their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (2014).

Fig. 3 shows the area of the stripping. This comprised three areas (Fig. 3, red shaded areas, 1, 2 and 3). The development area to the north (represented by blue shaded areas on Fig. 3) had previously been trial trenched with only ridge and furrow and modern field boundary ditches revealed. The green shaded area on Fig. 3 indicates minimal disturbance of less than 100mm of vegetation clearance only.

The work comprised 2 phases of stripping. The 1<sup>st</sup> phase was undertaken between 4<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> April 2018 and covered Areas 1 and 2. Phase 2 (Area 2a) was completed in July 2018.



Figure 3: Plan and location of archaeological areas 1, 2 and 2a



Figure 4: Development area prior to ground-works looking south-east towards Kineton Lane





Figure 5: Area 1 prior to ground-works looking west, left of public footpath.

The two areas covered approximately 0.6 ha with Area 1 observed first in advance of the construction of an east - west drainage ditch. The second stage of top-soil strip was in Area 2 which formed a triangular shape off Kineton Lane where the two access roads converge into one. This was marked out prior to ground-works, however, further physical definition was required to ensure the area was fully covered. Safety fencing was erected around the site due the close proximity of public footpaths thus delaying the ground-works. Area 2 was divided into two stages primarily west of the present ditch and bridleway watched in April with Area 2a to the east monitored in July. The site was excavated specifically for the archaeological observation using a tracked 13 tonne excavator with a 2.0m ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision. After inspection and recording, Area 1 and the northern part of area 2 was immediately backfilled for safety reasons. The rest of Area 2, and 2a was left to weather for a few days before a final inspection.

## Results

The topsoil consisted of a dark brownish-grey loam to a depth of 0.30m. Subsoil was present in Area 2 which consisted of a light yellowish-brown silty-clay averaging 0.20m in depth. Across much of the area was a re-deposited soil extending the overall depth to 0.80m probably resulting from recent landscaping associated with the previous Business Park development. The natural substrata was generally showing as a clean light yellow clay with gravel patches.

Area 1 comprised a linear 8m wide strip in advance of a proposed drainage ditch extending to a length of 150 metres orientated east to west and running south of and parallel to a public footpath (Fig. 6). With the exception of faint traces of ridge and furrow, oriented north to south, the area proved negative for archaeological remains and was backfilled shortly after.



Figure 6: Top-soil stripping of Area 1. Viewing west.

Area 2 was stripped in three stages of groundworks covering an area of approximately 175m along Kinton lane and 85 metres to the north-west. The northern part was undertaken in advance of the single access road. The area proved negative for archaeological remains and was backfilled in the same manner as Area 1.

The southern part of Area 2 was left open to weather (Fig. 7). No archaeological remains were revealed except for a small modern pit, cut by a ceramic field drain which contained modern broken glass and a modern brick and a linear feature running parallel to Kinton Lane. This comprised a 5m wide band of sub-soil with a gully containing modern pottery (Fig. 8). A test-slot excavated through the feature found modern pottery at the base of the deposit (a depth of 0.10m to the natural substrata). Plough scars and field drains were also observed criss-crossing the site.

Area 2a, located to the east of the bridal way and north of Kinton Road, is a small triangular area. On arrival part of the bund which partly covered the area had to be removed and a very large tree stump taken out. Additionally, the foot path / bridleway which runs north-south to the west of the area had to be fenced off and re-routed. The area was stripped of heavily disturbed / re-deposited topsoil to a variable depth of approximately 0.25m. The subsoil, a yellowish - brown silty clay, also contained a lot of modern debris and was truncated by an abundance of tree roots, tree throws and land drains across the whole area (Figs 9-10). The natural substratum was at a depth of 0.40m with the subsoil being 0.15m. The area proved negative for archaeological remains.



Figure 7: Area 2 west of bridleway looking north- east



Figure 8: Top-soil stripping in progress along Kineton Road showing possible trackway of Post- medieval date. Looking west.



Figure 9: Area 2a east of bridleway looking east prior to stripping after the partial removal of the bund.



Figure 10: Area 2a east of bridleway looking east after stripping

## Conclusion

Despite the suggested possibility of surviving medieval settlement remains/activity associated with moated sites within the locality (Hooke 2011), the watching brief proved negative (Fig. 9). Within Area 1 only traces of ridge and furrow was located similar to the results of the previous evaluation to the north (Speed, 2007). This could possibly be strip farming remains associated with the Moated site excavated at Siddenhailes Farm (Nichol 1999). No ridge and furrow was observed in Area 2.

The shallow linear located near parallel to Kineton Lane contained modern pottery and glass and it may have represented an earlier line of Kinetone Lane. Evidence for tree throws suggest that the road here could have been tree-lined (Fig. 8).

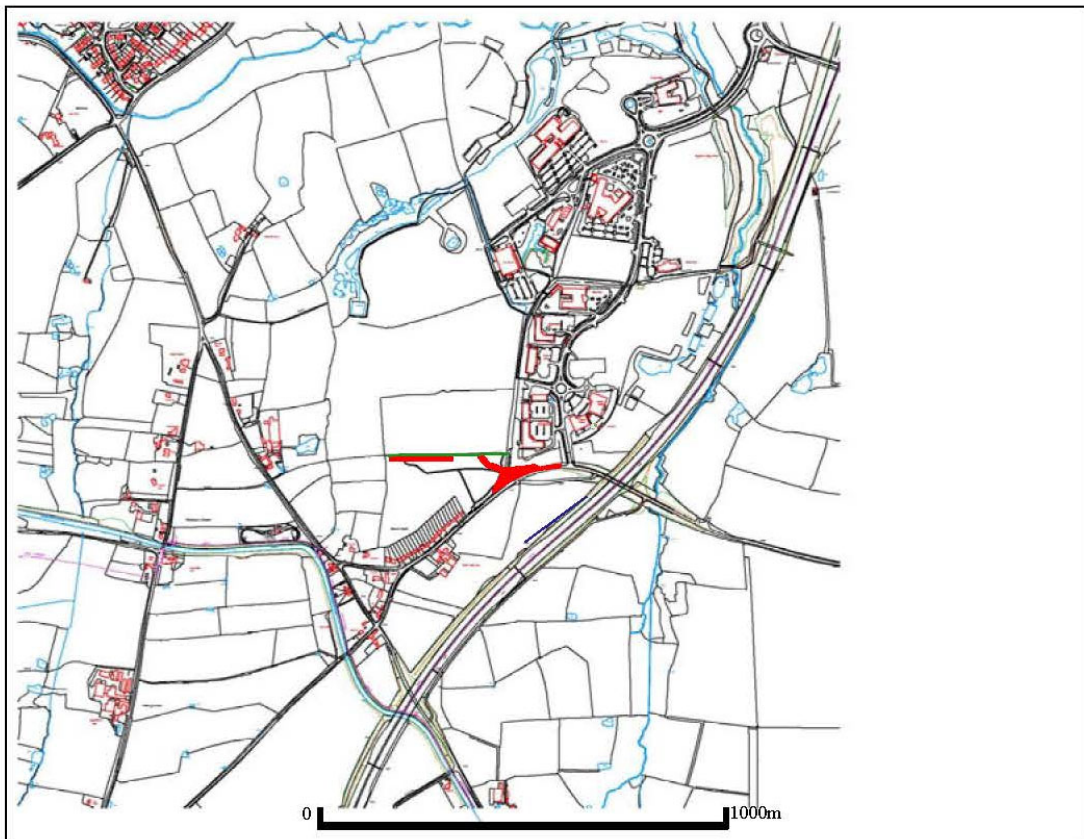


Figure 11: The area of the archaeological work (highlighted in red) in location to surrounding area

## **Archive**

The archive consists of the following:

- 12 Watching brief record sheets
- 2 Photographic Index sheets
- 1 Unbound copy of this report
- 1 CD digital report
- 2 Contact sheet of digital photographs
- 1 CD digital photographs

## **Publication**

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

A summary of the work will also be submitted for publication in a suitable regional archaeological journal in due course.

## **Acknowledgements**

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**OASIS data entry**

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>	<b>Oasis No</b>	universi1- 335446		
	<b>Project Name</b>	Archaeological Attendance and recording during groundworks on Land to the north of Kineton Lane, Blythe Valley Park, Blythe Gate, Solihull, West Midlands		
	<b>Start/end dates of field work</b>	04- 04-2018 to 27-07-2018		
	<b>Previous/Future Work</b>	None		
	<b>Project Type</b>	Attendance and Recording during Groundworks		
	<b>Site Status</b>	None		
	<b>Current Land Use</b>	Former farm and Park land		
	<b>Monument Type/Period</b>	None/none		
	<b>Significant Finds/Period</b>	None		
	<b>Development Type</b>	Commercial/Residential		
	<b>Reason for Investigation</b>	NPPF		
	<b>Position in the Planning Process</b>	Planning Condition		
	<b>Planning Ref.</b>	PL//2016/00863/MAOOT		
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>	<b>Site Address/Postcode</b>	Land to the north of Kineton Lane, Blythe Valley Park, Blythe Gate, Solihull, West Midlands		
	<b>Study Area</b>	0.6 ha		
	<b>Site Coordinates</b>	SP 413620 274509		
	<b>Height OD</b>	c 140m OD		
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	ULAS		
	<b>Project Brief Originator</b>	Local Planning Authority		
	<b>Project Design Originator</b>	ULAS		
	<b>Project Manager</b>	Vicki Score/Jon Thomas		
	<b>Project Director/Supervisor</b>	James Patrick		
	<b>Sponsor/Funding Body</b>	Developer : IM Properties		
<b>PROJECT ARCHIVE</b>		<b>Physical</b>	<b>Digital</b>	<b>Paper</b>
	<b>Recipient</b>	NA	Warwickshire Museums	Warwickshire Museu
	<b>ID (Acc. No.)</b>		00228	00228
	<b>Contents</b>		Photos Survey data	Fieldwork records Field Notes
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