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Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological Watching Brief on land at the rear of Thorsby Cottage, 17
Far Street, Wymeswold, Leicestershire, LE12 6TZ**

NGR: SK 60092362

Claire Brown



ULAS Report No 2019-093
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Site Name: Land at the rear of Thorsby Cottage, 17 Far Street, Wymeswold, Leicestershire LE12 6TZ

Grid Ref: SK 60092362

Author: Claire Brown

Client: Mr and Mrs Shepherd

Planning Ref. P/15/1859/2

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OASIS RECORD

PROJECT DETAILS	Oasis No	universi1- 358197		
	Project Name	An archaeological Watching Brief on land at the rear of Thorsby Cottage, 17 Far Street, Wymeswold, Leicestershire LE12 6TZ		
	Start/end dates	27th June2019		
	Previous/Future Work			
	Project Type	Watching Brief		
	Site Status	None		
	Current Land Use	Garden/Orchard		
	Monument Type/Period	None		
	Significant Finds/Period	None		
	Reason for Investigation	NPPF		
	Position in the Planning Process	Planning condition		
	Planning Ref.	P/15/1859/2		
PROJECT LOCATION	County	Leicestershire		
	Site Address/Postcode	Land at the rear of Thorsby Cottage, 17 Far Street, Wymeswold, Leicestershire LE12 6TZ		
	Study Area	117 m ²		
	Site Coordinates	SK 6009 236		
	Height OD	77m aOD		
PROJECT CREATORS	Organisation	ULAS		
	Project Brief Originator	Charnwood Borough Council		
	Project Design Originator	ULAS		
	Project Manager	John Thomas		
	Project Director/Supervisor	Claire Brown		
	Sponsor/Funding Body	Mr and Mrs Shepherd		
PROJECT ARCHIVE		Physical	Digital	Paper
	Recipient	LCC Museum service	LCC Museum service	LCC Museum service
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	Contents	None	Photographs	Report/ Photo Record/ Trench Sheets
PROJECT BIBLIOGRA PHY	Type	Grey Literature (unpublished)		
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	Title	An archaeological Watching Brief on land at Long Lane, Kegworth, Leicestershire (SK 485 272		
	Author	Hunt, L		
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An Archaeological Watching Brief on land at the rear of Thorsby Cottage, 17 Far Street, Wymeswold, Leicestershire (SK 6009 2362)

Claire Brown

Summary

This document is a fieldwork report for an archaeological Watching Brief, carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on land at the rear of Thorsby Cottage, 17 Far Street, Wymeswold, Leicestershire (NGR: SK 6009 2362) in advance of the construction of an access way, hardstanding for parking and a brick-built store building.

The development site consisted of a garden to the north of the barn being two set-aside fields to the north of the former workshop at the rear of Thorsby Cottage. It lies within the medieval core of Wymeswold and close to Grade II listed 18th century farm buildings and a Grade II listed late 18th century Manor House. There are also a number of other known Iron-Age, Roman and Anglo-Saxon heritage assets and find spots in the vicinity.

The area to the north of the workshop was stripped to a depth of approximately 0.30m into the overburden but no archaeological features were identified or finds recovered.

The archive for the site will be deposited with Leicestershire Museums with accession number X.A41.2019.

Introduction

University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) were commissioned by Mr and Mrs Shepherd to carry out an archaeological Watching Brief on land at the rear of Thorsby Cottage, 17 Far Street, Wymeswold, Leicestershire (NGR: SK 6009 2362; Figs 1-3). The work was carried out on the 27th June 2019.

The work was carried out as part of a phased programme of archaeological work required by the Planning Authority following advice from the Leicestershire Planning Archaeologist in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, MHCLG 2018). Planning permission has been granted for the erection of a detached brick-built store building and the creation of parking hardstanding, a wooden stable building and access to the north of workshop buildings and hardstanding to the west (14/01132/FULM, Condition 12).

The proposed access road, stable and hard standing site lay to the north of the workshops which are being converted into a residential dwelling. The groundworks had some potential to impact upon buried archaeological remains although the overburden did not need be completely removed to allow work to commence. The area was stripped down to a depth of 30m whilst being continually monitored by the archaeologist as a watching brief (Figs 4 and 5).

The second area, to the west of the workshop buildings, was largely covered in paving which needed to be removed but no further soil was to be excavated, except for an small area of made ground to the back adjacent to the fence (Fig. 6). It was therefore not considered necessary to include this in the watching brief.

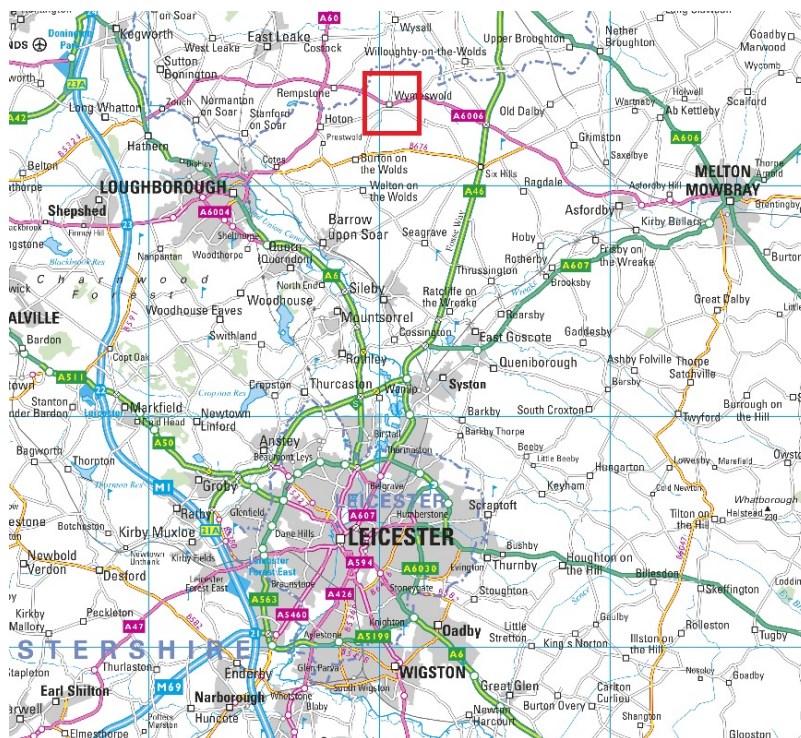
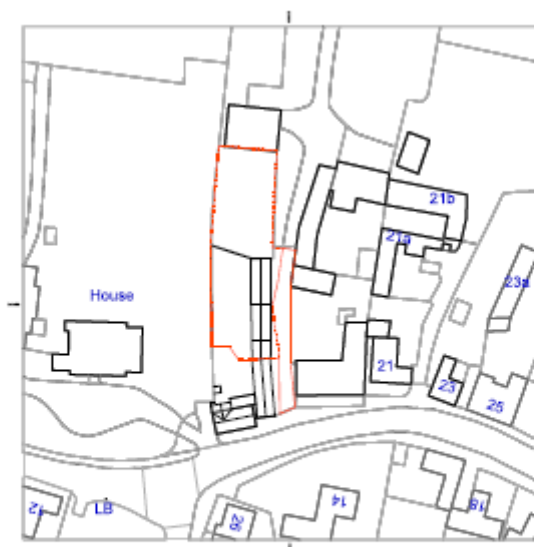


Figure 1: Site Location
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SITE LOCATION PLAN 1:1250

Figure 2: Plan of the proposed development site (supplied by client)

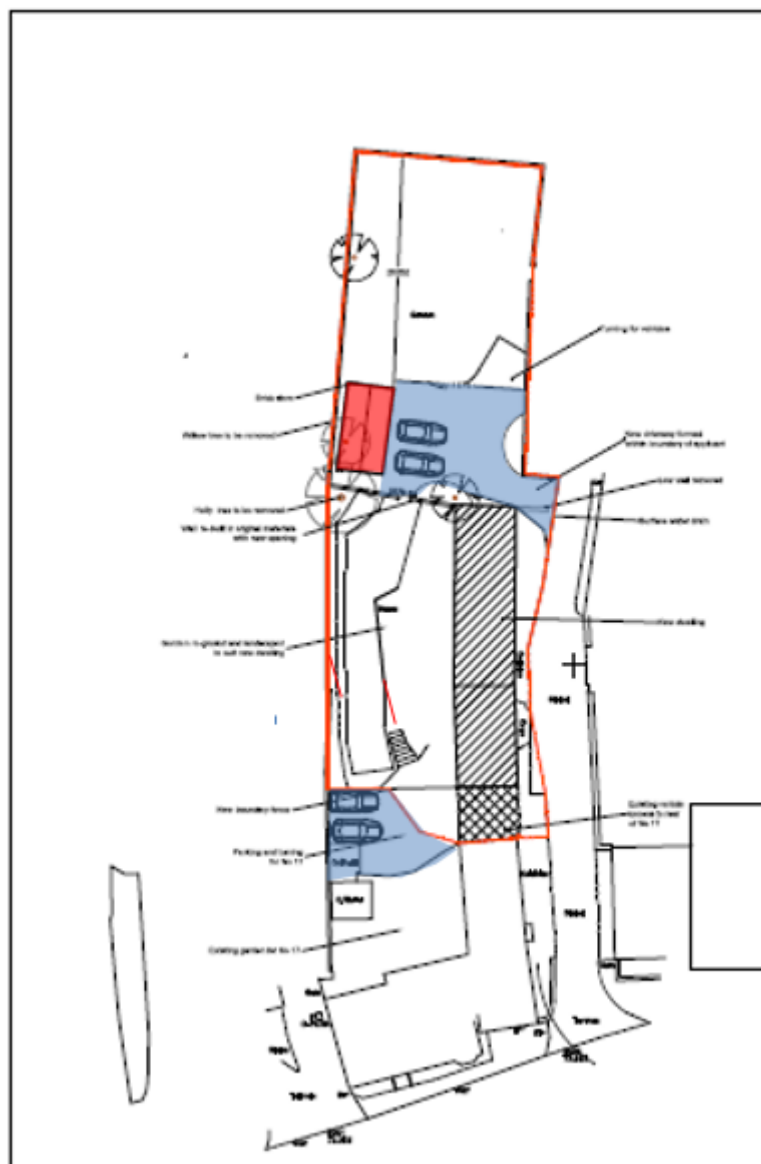


Figure 3: Overall site plan showing proposed area for strip, map and sample (outlined in red) and for watching brief (outlined in blue). NB the client revised plans for the garage (red area) to erect a timber built stable on a concrete raft instead so this area was included in the area for the watching brief as it would no longer be requiring foundations. Plan provided by client.



Figure 4: Area of potential hardstanding and stable building looking south-west.



Figure 5: Development area looking south. Earthworks marking previous allotments.



Figure 6: Area of hardstanding to the west of the workshop looking west.

Location and Geology

Wymeswold village lies at the northern edge of Leicestershire around 5 miles from the centre of Loughborough (Fig. 1). The northern development area lies in a walled garden, previously allotments and is roughly 117m² (Figs 2, 3, 4 and 5).

The site is mostly flat although raised platforms in the grass mark the areas of where allotment plots were situated, and lies at a height of around 77m aOD.

The western development area is also mostly flat and currently paved with a small raised flower bed to the back against the wall (Fig. 6)

The British Geological Survey website indicates that the underlying geology is likely to be Barnby Member Mudstone on the northern part of the site, with Blue Anchor Formation Mudstone on the southern part of the site, overlain by Oadby Member Diamicton.

Historical and Archaeological Background

The place name of Wymeswold, shown as ‘Wimundeswald’ within the Domesday Survey of 1086, is Anglo-Saxon in origin and means ‘Forest land of a man called Wigmund’ (Mills 2003). This is possibly the same Wigmund or Wymund that gave his name to Wymeswold in the eastern part of the county (Potter 1915).

The Historic Environment Record for Leicestershire & Rutland indicates that the application area lies immediately to the north of a Grade II Listed Building comprising a range of late 18th century farm buildings, the south gable fronting on to Far street (**MLE14162**). Immediately east of the proposed entrance way for the application area is the Grade II Listed late 18th century Manor House (**MLE14161**). It lies within the medieval core of Wymeswold (**MLE1149**). The village itself is Anglo-Saxon in origin and the medieval core of the village has been determined using early maps. There are a number of other known heritage assets (archaeological sites and historic buildings) in the vicinity of the assessment area including Iron-Age, Roman and Anglo-Saxon pottery, and medieval coins etc.

There was the possibility that significant buried remains could be affected by the proposed development. It was recommended that a watching brief was carried out on the area to the north of the workshop during the excavation for the new access areas (and the site to the west if necessary).

Archaeological Objectives

The main objectives of the watching brief were:

- To identify the presence/absence of any archaeological deposits and provide evidence of the nature and extent of surviving archaeological remains on the site.
- To characterise the extent, date range, character, condition and significance of any archaeological deposits to be affected by the proposed ground works.
- To excavate and record significant archaeological deposits whose future integrity may be compromised by groundworks associated with the proposed construction works.
- To advance understanding of the heritage assets
- To produce an archive and report of any results.

Within the stated project objectives, the principal aim of the evaluation is to verify the geophysical survey and establish the nature, extent, date, depth, significance and state of preservation of any archaeological deposits identified on the site in order to determine the potential impact upon them from the proposed development.

Trial trenching is an intrusive form of evaluation that will demonstrate the existence of earth-fast archaeological features that may exist within the area.

Research Objectives

Initial Research objectives were derived from East Midlands Heritage research agenda (Cooper 2006, Knight *et al.* 2012) and include:

The excavation results had potential to contribute to knowledge on Iron Age – medieval transitions in rural settlement, landscape and society. Specific research questions include:

- How are the nucleated settlements related to one another and to other settlements of the period? In particular, is there evidence for a developing settlement hierarchy? [4.5.2];

- Can we shed further light upon the development of field and boundary systems? [4.6.1];
- How did field and boundary systems relate to earlier systems of land allotment, and how did these boundary networks develop over time? [5.4.4];
- Can we elucidate further the daily life of settlements and their role in the processing and marketing of agricultural products? [5.4.6].
- How can we improve our understanding of the early landscapes of enclosure and improvement and the interrelationship between arable, pasture, woodland, commons and waste? [8.3.1]

Methodology

All work followed the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) *Code of Conduct* (rev. 2014a) in accordance with their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (rev. 2014b). The archaeological work followed the *Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for strip map and sample and watching brief* prepared by ULAS and agreed with the Leicestershire County Council Planning Archaeologist (June 2019). The work was monitored by the client and the Leicestershire County Council Planning Archaeologist.

An accession number (X.A41.2019) was obtained prior to commencement of the project and used to identify all records and artefacts

The area to the west of the workshop was assessed and a decision taken that the disturbance to the ground (removal of paving slabs and replacing with tarmac) was minimal so that any surviving archaeology would be preserved in situ. The site was not stripped at the time of the visit but it was felt that archaeological observation was not necessary.

The area to the north of the workshop was stripped to a depth of 0.30m, this being the maximum depth necessary for the creation of hardstanding, access route and erection of a wooden stable. This was undertaken with the archaeologist in constant attendance (Fig. 6).



Figure 7: Work in progress on the area north of the workshop, looking south-east

Results

The 0.30m of overburden excavated from the walled garden development area was a uniformly dark brown fine soil with occasional very small stones. It was richly organic, the result of many years (perhaps decades and longer) of enriching the soil as the walled garden was cultivated especially during its earlier use as allotments. It is likely the soil originally came from elsewhere and had much additional composting/manuring. The subsoil was occasionally glimpsed where the overburden was thin and it appeared quite different in substance and structure, being mid orange brown silty clay.

The area was stripped to approximately 0.30m in depth and no superficial archaeological features or finds were discovered (Figs 8-11)



Figure 8: Development site looking north



Figure 9: Development site looking east



Figure 10: Development site looking south-west



Figure 11: Development site looking east, towards the proposed (and current) access.

Discussion and Conclusion

The proposed development areas on land to the north of Thorsby Cottage had some potential for archaeological remains due to its proximity to Grade II listed buildings and being within the medieval core of the village. However no archaeological finds or features were uncovered, although the shallow nature of the site stripping meant that archaeology, if present, was deeper than the depth to which the site was excavated. This means that it would not be negatively affected by the proposed development.

The overburden itself likely contained a high percentage of imported soil, compost and organic matter so the origin of any finds at this depth would be difficult to ascertain. The lack of features and finds meant that it was not possible to contribute towards the Regional Research Objectives, although any further, more invasive future development in the garden would provide the opportunity to investigate any existing archaeology and thus contribute to our knowledge of Wymeswold.

Archive and publication

The archive for this project will be deposited with Leicestershire Museums with accession number X.A2.2019 and consists of the following:

- 1 Unbound copy of this report (ULAS Report No. 2019-093)
- 1 watching brief sheet
- 1 Photo Record sheet
- 1 Contact sheet of digital photographs
- 1 CD digital photographs

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

ULAS would like to. Mr and Mrs Shepherd for their help and co-operation with the project. Claire Brown carried out the trial trenching for ULAS and the project was managed by John Thomas. The excavator was provided by the client.

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