

**An Archaeological Watching Brief  
at Springfield Road, Sileby,  
Leicestershire  
(SK 606 157)**

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Planning Application ref: P/03/2002/2

Client: Jelson Ltd,

Checked by Project Manager

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## An Archaeological Watching Brief at Springfield Road, Sileby, Leicestershire (SK 606 157).

### Summary

*An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during April and May 2004 by University of Leicester Archaeological Services during groundworks for the proposed residential development by Jelson Limited at Springfield Road, Sileby, Leicestershire. The intermittent watching brief was required as a condition of the planning permission by Charnwood Borough Council. The site lies close to the medieval core of Sileby and a number of entries from the Leicestershire Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) are recorded in the vicinity. The majority of the site area had previously been used as allotment gardens. No archaeological features were seen and no significant archaeological finds were recovered during the observed groundworks at the site. The site archive will be deposited with the Leicestershire County Council, Historic and Natural Environment Team under the Accession Number XA199.2004.*

### 1 Introduction

1.1 An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) during groundworks for a housing development at Springfield Road, Sileby, Leicestershire (fig. 1). The archaeological works were commissioned by Jelson Limited.

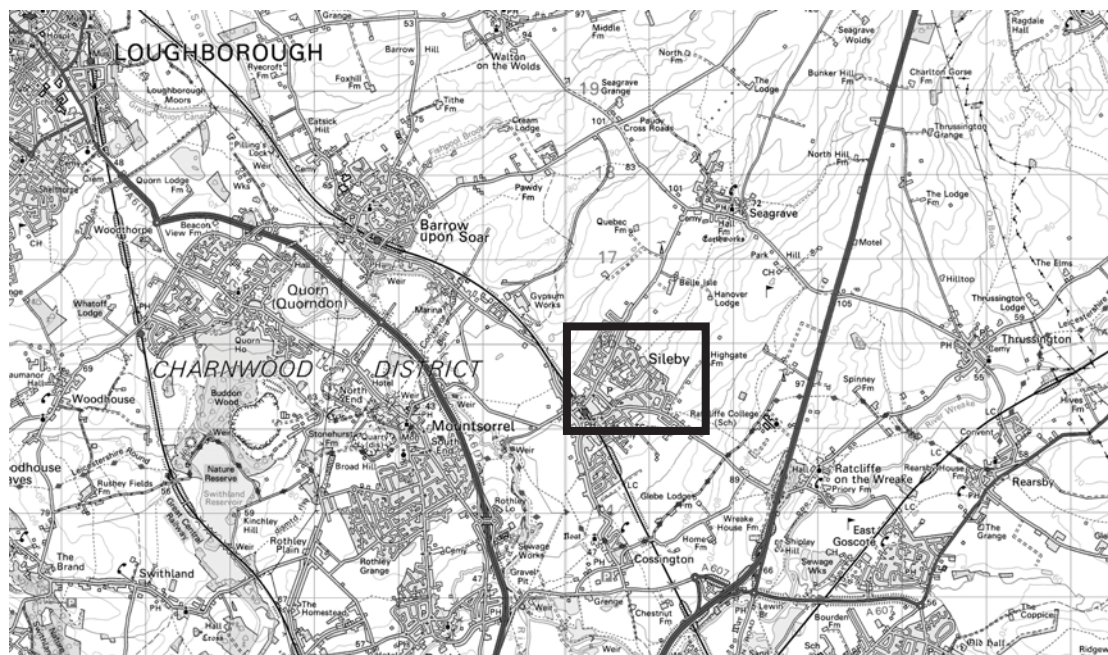


Figure 1: Location of Sileby

Reproduced from the Landranger OS map 129 Nottingham and Loughborough area 1:50000 map by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright 1996. All rights reserved. Licence number AL 10002186.

1.2 The watching brief was undertaken between April and May 2004, with three phases of groundworks being observed: geotechnical test pits; site clearance; foundation excavation.

1.3 The site had been identified as an area of limited archaeological potential from information held in the Leicestershire Sites and Monuments Record, lying just outside the medieval village core of Sileby. In view of this an archaeological watching brief during the ground works was required as part of the planning conditions set out by Charnwood Borough Council (planning application no. P\03\2002\2).

1.4 Following discussions with the Senior Planning Archaeologist of Leicestershire County Council's Historic and Natural Environment Team (in his capacity as archaeological advisor to the planning authority) it was agreed that an intermittent watching brief should be undertaken during groundworks. The reason for this condition was to ensure that any archaeological deposits that may have been exposed, damaged or destroyed by the groundworks could be archaeologically investigated and recorded.

## **2 Aims and Methods**

2.1 The archaeological watching brief was undertaken in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologist's (IFA) Code of Conduct and adhered to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*. The work also was in accordance with the Leicestershire County Council *Guidelines and Procedures for Archaeological Work in Leicestershire and Rutland*.

2.2 The archaeological work was carried out between the 22nd of April and the 20th of May. Visits were undertaken by James Meek, Jon Coward and Matt Parker of ULAS in order to monitor the machine excavation of geotechnical test pits, site clearance and foundation trenches. A total of 4 site visits was conducted.

2.3 The aims of the watching brief were:

- To identify the presence/absence of any archaeological deposits.
- To establish the character, extent and date range of any archaeological deposits to be affected by the proposed ground works.
- To excavate and record any archaeological deposits to be affected by the ground works.
- To assess the local, regional and national importance of any deposits.
- To produce an archive and report of any results.

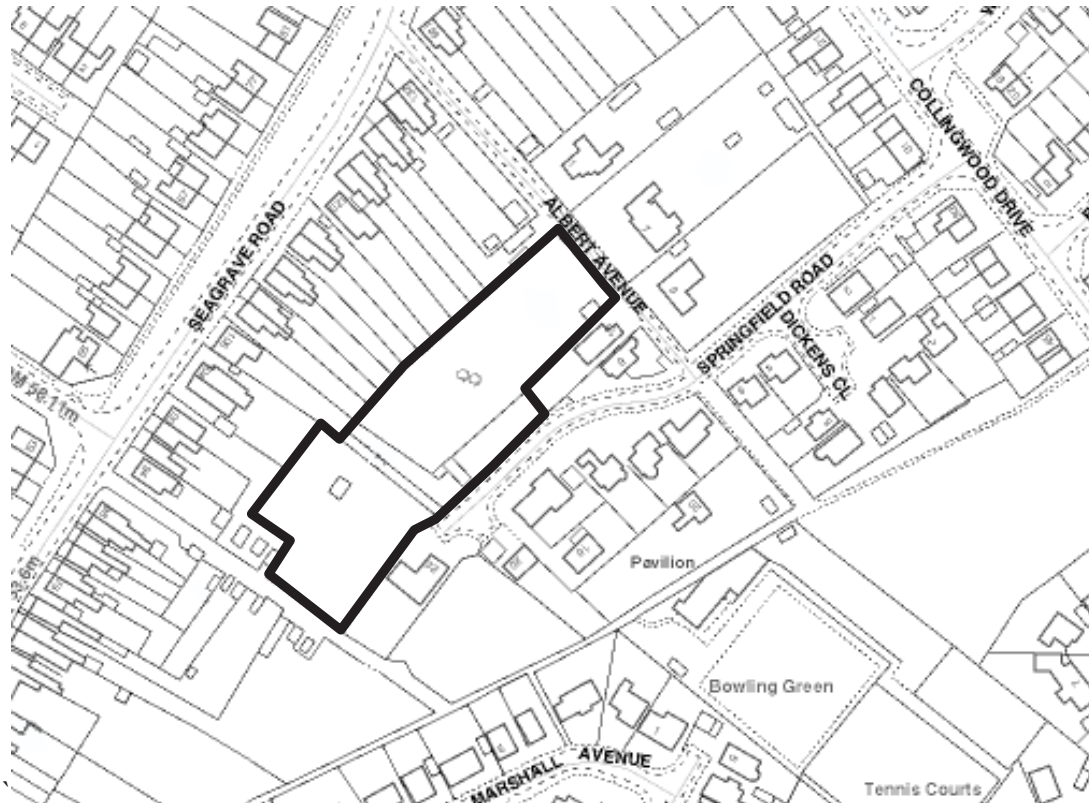


Figure 2 Location of Development Area at Springfield Road, Sileby, Leicestershire.  
based on OS information supplied by Jelson Limited

### 3 Geology

3.1 The Ordnance Survey Geological Survey of Great Britain Sheet 156 indicates that the underlying geology is likely to consist of river gravels. During the process of the foundation trench and geotechnical test pit excavation, the underlying geology was found to primarily consist of boulder clay.

### 4 Results

#### 4.1 *Geotechnical Test Pits*

4.1.1 The first visit to the site was carried out on 22nd April 2004, during geotechnical investigations. The site was noted as being overgrown with a very rough ground surface. The central and north-western area had previously been allotment gardens, although had long since been abandoned. Mounds of rubbish were noted across the site, which contained the remains of former sheds, compost heaps and plant etc. originally from the allotments. Sheds were still extant in the central part of the site adjacent to the end of Springfield Road.

4.1.2 The excavation of five geotechnical test pits was observed on 22nd April 2004, which were located across the north-western part of the site area. The depth of topsoil was recorded as *c.* 0.30m to 0.50m in depth. It was very dark brown in colour and contained considerable amounts of modern rubbish and debris including a few fragments of asbestos.

4.1.3 The subsoil across the site comprised a thin layer of dark grey brow clayey soil. The natural substrata was grey to light grey brown boulder clay. The geotechnical test pits revealed the clay to be much greyer and also much firmer beneath about 0.5m below present ground surface.

4.1.4 No archaeological features were revealed within the test pits and no significant finds were made.

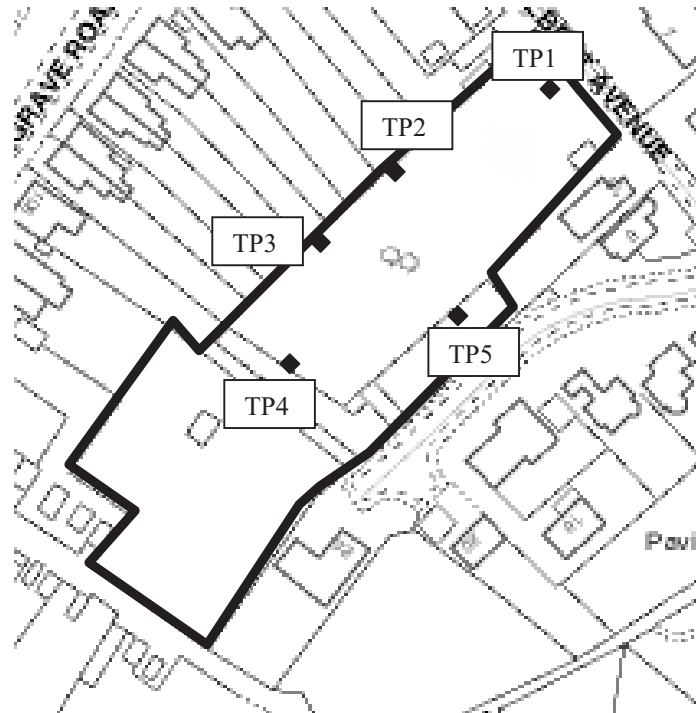


Figure 3: Approximate locations of geotechnical test pits

#### 4.2 *Site Strip/Ground Clearance*

4.2.1 A second visit to the site was undertaken on 26th April 2004, when it was expected that the site area would be stripped of topsoil and prepared in advance of foundation excavation.

4.2.2 It was noted that the site area was levelled, with the removal of the rubbish heaps and shed structures. No topsoil strip was taking place, and the member of ULAS staff was told that there was no instructions for topsoil stripping to take place.

#### 4.3 *Excavation of Foundation Trenches*

4.3.1 Two visits were undertaken to the site during the excavation of foundation trenches, on 19th May 2004 and 20th May 2004.

4.3.2 By the time of the first visit the site area had been stripped of topsoil, with the thin subsoil still visible in places.





asbestos tile, presumably from former shed roofs that had stood on the site. Other modern rubbish was also noted, indicating it had been cultivated fairly recently.

5.3 The site was stripped of topsoil without an archaeologist being present, and no archaeological features were recorded either on this surface or within the foundation trenches. The lack of significant archaeological finds picked up from the resulting ground surface and spoil heaps would suggest that it is unlikely that significant archaeological features had been present. Only a single small sherd of Romano British pottery was recovered from the entire site area.

5.4 The development area is situated on the north-eastern side of Sileby village. It is located away from the historic core of the village and lies between the two main arterial roads heading east from the centre. It is likely that the site area was used as agricultural land during the medieval period and as such, little archaeological evidence would survive. The site is indicated as open farm land on the first edition Ordnance Survey map of the area.

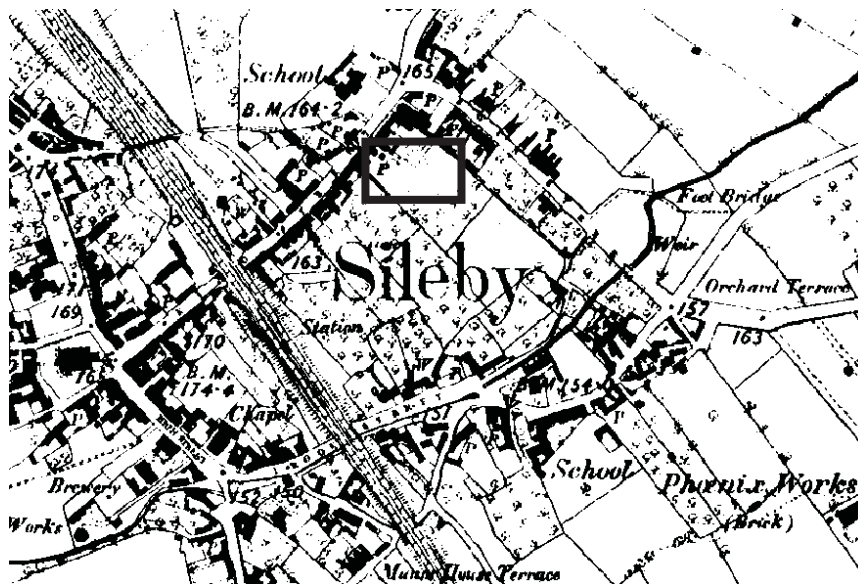


Figure 5: Detail from first edition Ordnance Survey map of Sileby

5.5 The site may have previously been covered in ridge and furrow, the earthwork remains of medieval farming methods, but any indication of this would have been removed when the area was developed for housing during the twentieth century, and the site area itself used as allotment gardens.

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