



UNIVERSITY OF
LEICESTER

Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological Evaluation on land at
14-21 Central Close, Whetstone,
Leicestershire. LE8 6JB
NGR: SP 455645 297766**

Jamie Patrick



**ULAS Report No. 2019-109
©2019**

**An Archaeological Evaluation on land at 14-21 Central Close, Whetstone,
Leicestershire. LE8 6JB**

SP 455645 297766

Jamie Patrick

For: Mr Mark English (MJE Contracts Ltd)

Filename/Version	Checked by	Date
2019-109_Final.docx	J Thomas	27/09/2019

University of Leicester
Archaeological Services
University Rd., Leicester, LE1 7RH
Tel: (0116) 2522848 Fax: (0116) 2522614

ULAS Report Number 2019-109
©2019
Accession Number-X.A63.2019

Contents

Summary	1
Introduction.....	1
Site Description, Topography and Geology.....	2
Archaeological and Historical Background	4
Aims and Objectives	5
Research Objectives.....	5
Methodology	5
Results.....	8
Building C.....	9
Trench 1	9
Trench 2	10
Building D.....	11
Trench 3	11
Trench 4	12
Discussion and Conclusion.....	13
Archive and publication.....	14
References.....	14
Acknowledgements.....	15

Figures

Figure 1: Site Location.....	2
Figure 2: Development areas (in yellow). Previous evaluation area to the North-west	3
Figure 3: Site of proposed buildings C with D pictured right area before excavation	3
Figure 4 Detail from 1904 Ordnance Survey map.....	4
Figure 5: Available space for evaluation trenches.....	7
Figure 6: Excavation of Trench 2 in progress, within Building Plot C	7
Figure 7: Excavated Trench Plan with Proposed Building C to the left.....	8
Figure 8: Trench 1 looking north-east	9
Figure 9: Trench 2 looking north	10
Figure 10: Trench 3 looking west	11
Figure 11: Trench 4 looking south-east	12
Figure 12: Trench 4 section	13

OASIS Information

PROJECT DETAILS	Oasis No	universi1-363749		
	Project Name	An Archaeological Evaluation on Land at 14 to 21, Central Close, Whetstone Leicestershire		
	Start/end dates of field work	12-08-2019 – 13-08-2019		
	Previous/Future Work	unknown		
	Project Type	Evaluation		
	Site Status	None		
	Current Land Use	Vacant land (unkempt grassland)		
	Monument Type/Period	None		
	Significant Finds/Period	None		
	Development Type	Residential		
	Reason for Investigation	NPPF		
	Position in the Planning Process	Planning condition		
	Planning Ref.	18/1701/FUL		
PROJECT LOCATION	Site Address/Postcode	14 to 21, Central Close, Whetstone Leicestershire. LE8 6JB		
	Study Area	160m ²		
	Site Coordinates	SP 455645 297766		
	Height OD	66m aOD		
PROJECT CREATORS	Organisation	ULAS		
	Project Brief Originator	Leicestershire County Council		
	Project Design Originator	ULAS		
	Project Manager	John Thomas		
	Project Director/Supervisor	Jamie Patrick		
	Sponsor/Funding Body	University of Leicester		
PROJECT ARCHIVE		Physical	Digital	Paper
	Recipient	Leicestershire County Museum Service	Leicester County Museum Service	Leicester County Museum Service
	ID (Acc. No.)	X.A63.2019	X.A63.2019	X.A63.2019
	Contents	None	Photos	Trench sheets, photo records, report
PROJECT BIBLIOGRAPHY	Type	Grey Literature (unpublished)		
	Title	An Archaeological Evaluation on Land at 14 to 21, Central Close, Whetstone Leicestershire		
	Author	Patrick, J		
	Other bibliographic details	ULAS Report No 2019-109		
	Date	2019		
	Publisher/Place	University of Leicester Archaeological Services / University of Leicester		

**An Archaeological Evaluation on land at 14-21 Central Close, Whetstone,
Leicestershire.
SP 455645 297766**

Jamie Patrick

Summary

This document is a fieldwork report for an archaeological trial trench evaluation, (formerly designated as a Strip, Map, and Sample) carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on land at 14-21 Central Close, Whetstone, Leicestershire (SP 556 977) on the 12th and 13th of August 2019. Planning Permission has been approved for the construction of two new 2 storey apartments at the western extent of Central Close adjacent to the embankment of the former Great Central Railway, now the Whetstone Way (Planning Application 18/1701/FUL).

A total of 4 trenches of variable length were excavated, two across each of the proposed building plots. No archaeological features or deposits were observed.

The archive for the site will be deposited with Leicestershire Museums Service with accession number X.A63.2019.

Introduction

In accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Section 16 *Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment* this document forms the report for an Evaluation on land at 14-21 Central Close, Whetstone, Leicestershire.

A planning application (18/1701/FUL) has been submitted by MJE Contracts Limited for the construction of two new 2 storey apartments. The Leicestershire County Planning Archaeologist as archaeological advisor to the planning authority, requested an archaeological strip, map, and sample to identify and record any archaeological remains of significance in order to determine the impact of the proposed scheme on any buried archaeology.

The proposed development footprint of the two combined apartment blocks covers an area of 160 square metres located in a roughly rectangular area of unkempt grassland and lawn with the latter adjacent to Apartment numbers 19 & 21. No previous development has taken place on the site. The development area is bounded on the west by the Whetstone Way footpath and Cycle Track, with car parking for the existing Apartment Blocks to the south. Central Close Road is located directly east with a property boundary separating further houses to the north. Previous work included an archaeological desk-based assessment undertaken in 2014 with a subsequent field evaluation. This was undertaken in 2015 by ULAS in fields on the west side of Whetstone Way revealing Iron-Age features in the form of ditches, pits, and post holes (Flavell 2015). The results of this evaluation prompted the requirement for a Strip, Map, and Sample (SMS) approach on the present site. However due to the extreme depth of the overburden encountered from the onset of the machining, this method was abandoned. After consultation with the Planning Archaeologist it was decided to excavate four trenches instead of the SMS to evaluate the potential for surviving remains. An existing Tree Preservation order limited the restricted area for soil storage generated by the trench excavation.

The alternative field evaluation undertaken followed the standard methodology as defined in a Written Scheme for Investigation for this type of field work. Therefore the strategy of work set out in the original SMS Written Scheme for Investigation was not applicable to this phase of work (Peters 2019).

Site Description, Topography and Geology

The study area is located on the north-west side of the village of Whetstone, and bounded by the former Great Central Railway (now the Whetstone Way cycle track/footpath) with the previously evaluated fields situated on the western side of the footpath. Whetstone Village is bounded on the west by the M1 motorway and the A426 Blaby Bypass to the east. It is located approximately seven kilometres south-west of Leicester City centre (Figs 1 and 2). The footprint of the proposed two apartment blocks covers a combined area of approximately 160 square metres forming a rectangular shape. The site sits on slightly uneven grassland lying at a height of c.66aOD (Fig. 3). The British Geological Survey indicates that the underlying geology consists of Wanlip Member sand and gravel overlying Branscombe Member mudstone.

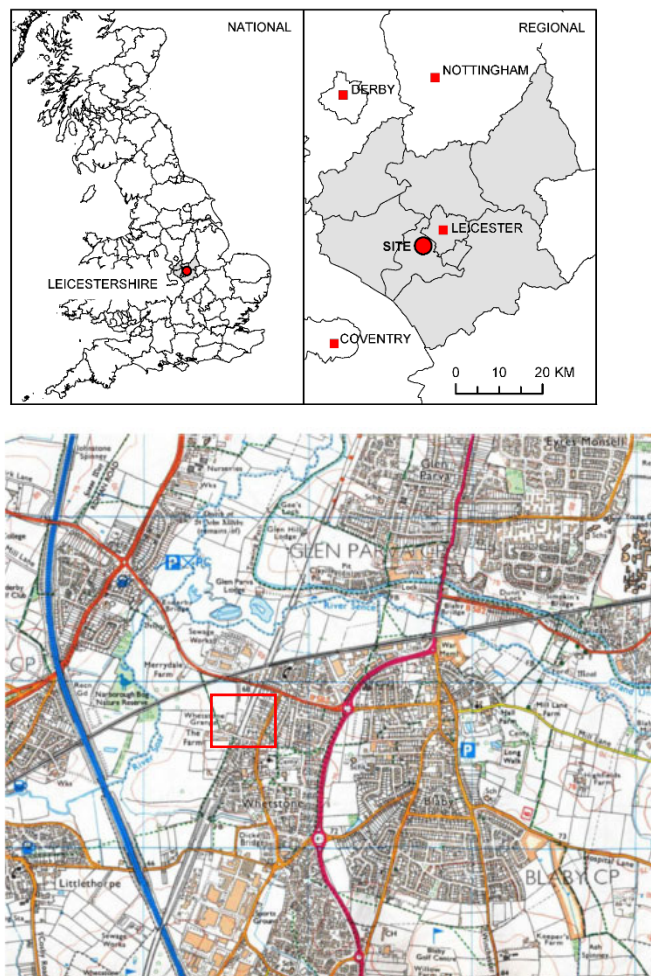


Figure 1: Site Location.

1:25000© Crown copyright 2010 All rights reserved. Licence number AL 100029495

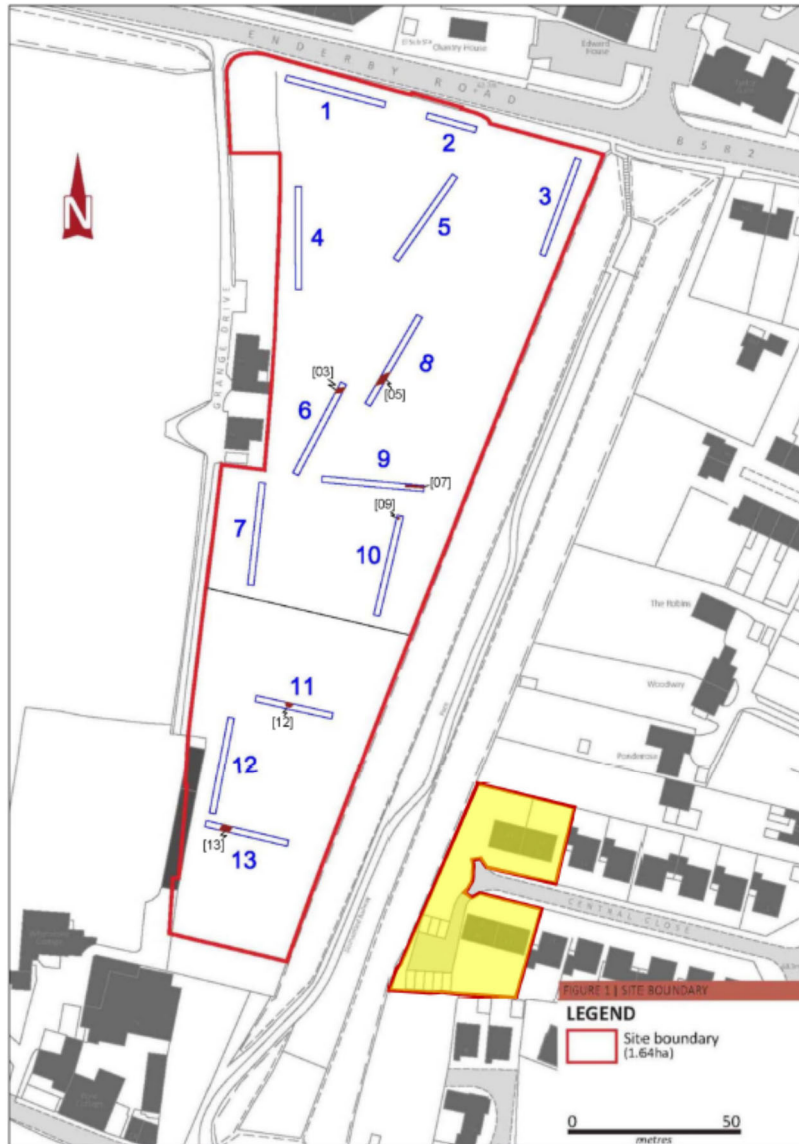


Figure 2: Development areas (in yellow). Previous evaluation area to the North-west



Figure 3: Site of proposed buildings C with D pictured right area before excavation
Looking south-west and North-west. Railway Embankment pictured left.

Archaeological and Historical Background

A desk-based assessment has been prepared for the site (Hunt, 2014). The Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record (HER) indicates that the proposed development lies relatively close to a group of cropmarks of enclosures and a possible ring ditch to the south west, which are possibly prehistoric or Roman in date. Field walking here has produced artefacts from the Mesolithic through to the Anglo-Saxon period. A multiple ditch system representing prehistoric enclosures is located on land to the south of Narborough Bogs, 750m south-west of the application area (HER Ref: MLE366). Further cropmarks indicate other enclosures (MLE368). Iron Age pottery has also been found at the site (MLE16998). Several Iron Age sites are also known at Enderby c. 2km to the north.

The site lies close to where Iron Age remains were located in a ULAS evaluation in 2015 (Flavell 2015). The study area is also located near to the historic core of Whetstone village. The embankment constructed for the former Great Central Railway runs along the western edge of the site and is shown on the Second Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1904 (Fig. 4). Due to the archaeological potential of the site, the Principal Planning Archaeologist for Leicestershire County Council recommended that the two new building footprints should undergo a Strip, Map and Sample excavation. This was subsequently amended to become an evaluation by trial trenching due to the constraints discussed in the introduction of this report.

The evaluation at Enderby Road, Whetstone revealed evidence for Iron Age activity in the form of ditches, pits and post-holes (Fig. 2). East Midlands scored ware pottery was located in two contexts. The evidence from the site indicated that it was part of small Iron Age farmstead typical of many such settlements known from the East Midlands (Willis 2006). Analysis of landscapes in the area suggests that Iron Age sites such as this may be present every 1.82 square km (Clay 2002, 82).



Figure 4 Detail from 1904 Ordnance Survey map
Approximate location of site highlighted

Aims and Objectives

The general objectives of the archaeological work were:

- To identify the presence/absence of any archaeological deposits.
- To determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any archaeological remains within the development site
- To establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of any archaeological deposits and features encountered.
- To assess the impact of previous land use on the site
- To provide sufficient information on the archaeological potential of the site to assess the impact of the proposed development on cultural heritage and to help formulate a mitigation strategy
- To record any archaeological deposits and produce an archive and report of any results.

The results of the evaluation will provide information in order for the local planning authority to make informed recommendations and to identify an appropriate mitigation strategy for the proposed development.

Research Objectives

The archaeological evaluation has the potential to contribute to the following research aims (Taylor 2006; Willis 2006; Knight et al 2012; English Heritage 2012):

The Iron Age and Roman

The evaluation may contribute to knowledge on Iron Age – Roman transitions in rural settlement, landscape and society. Artefacts may identify trade links and economy.

Medieval

Agricultural landscapes and the food-producing economy. Agricultural landscapes and the food-producing economy and rural settlement patterns and building traditions.

These research aims have been identified based on the current state of knowledge within the area of the scheme.

Methodology

All work was carried out in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation (2014b) and adhered to their Code of Conduct (2014a). The archaeological work followed a standard Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for archaeological evaluation prepared by ULAS as an on-site alternative to the initial Strip, Map and Sample initially agreed with the Leicestershire County Council Planning Archaeologist (June 2019). The work was monitored by the client (MJE Contracts Limited) and Leicester County Council Planning Archaeologist.

Accession number (X.A63.2019) was obtained prior to commencement of the project and used to identify all records and artefacts.

The original Strip, Map, and Sample approach, as recommended by the Leicestershire County Council Planning Archaeologist was modified due the extreme depth of the overburden

overlying the natural strata. The average trench depth was 1.30m below the present ground surface. Therefore safety would be compromised site staff and members of the public if the whole site was to be stripped. The size of the site also restricted the available space for soil storage. A tree preservation order also limited space between the two proposed building plots.

Following initial topsoil stripping four trenches of variable length were excavated with two trenches across each of the two proposed building plots. Approximately 42m² of Building Plot C on the south side of Central Close road was covered in hardstanding along with an east to west wall and car park. Due to these obstructions the trenches could not extend into the southern half of the proposed building. The remaining trenches were excavated using rubber tracked 360° mini excavator with a 1.10m ditching bucket supplied by the client (Figs 5 to 7). The total trench coverage was approximately 22% of the two combined building plots.

The overburden was removed carefully in level spits, under continuous archaeological supervision. The top and sub-soil were stored a metre from either side of the trench edge. No stepping was undertaken due to space constraints therefore access into the trenches was prohibited due to safety reasons. The trenches were excavated down to the top of any archaeological deposits or natural undisturbed ground, whichever was encountered first.

The ULAS recording manual was used as a guide for all recording. Individual descriptions of overburden and archaeological strata, if applicable, were entered onto pro-forma recording sheets. Excavated trench locations were recorded by an appropriate method and be tied in to the Ordnance Survey National Grid. A photographic record of the investigations was prepared, illustrating in both detail and general context any principal features and finds discovered and their location and context. The primary photographic record was by digital camera and the record also included overall site and working shots' to illustrate more generally the nature of the archaeological operation mounted.

After completion of the trenching and following prior agreement with the Planning Archaeologist, the trenches were re-instated by MJE Contracts Limited.

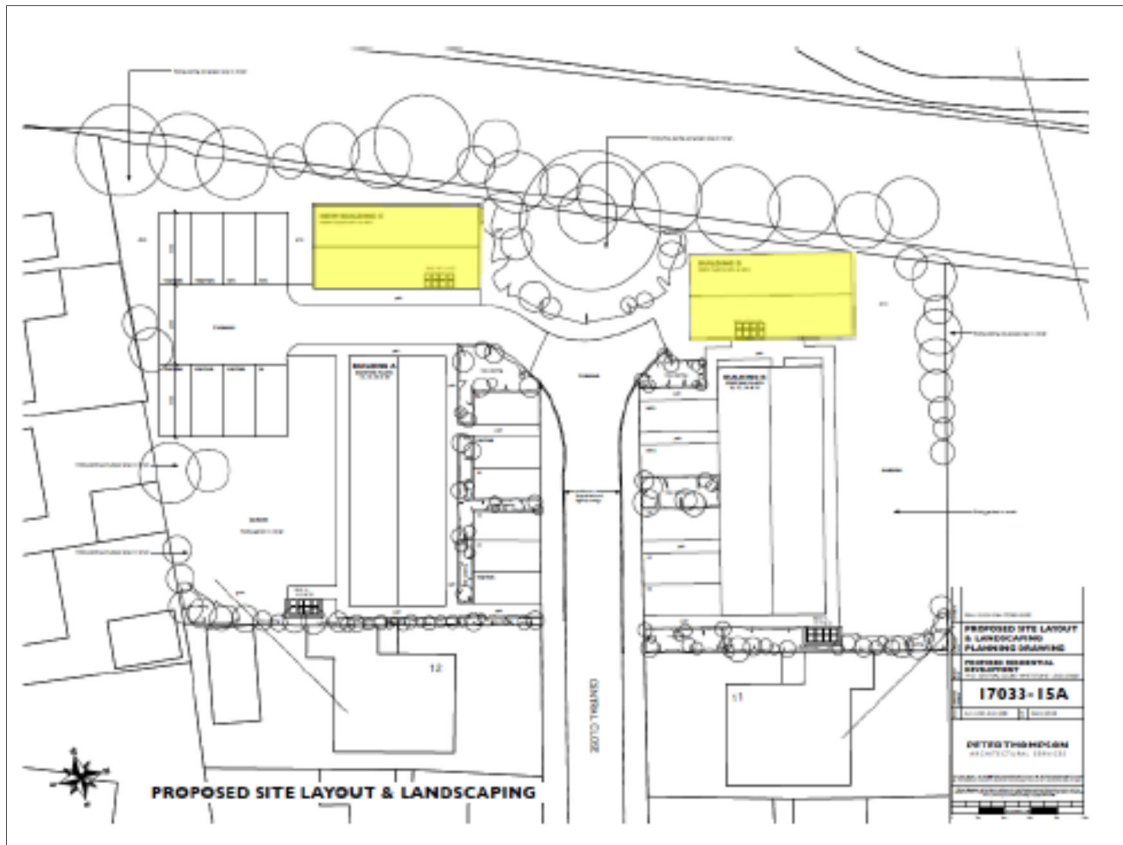


Figure 5: Available space for evaluation trenches



Figure 6: Excavation of Trench 2 in progress, within Building Plot C

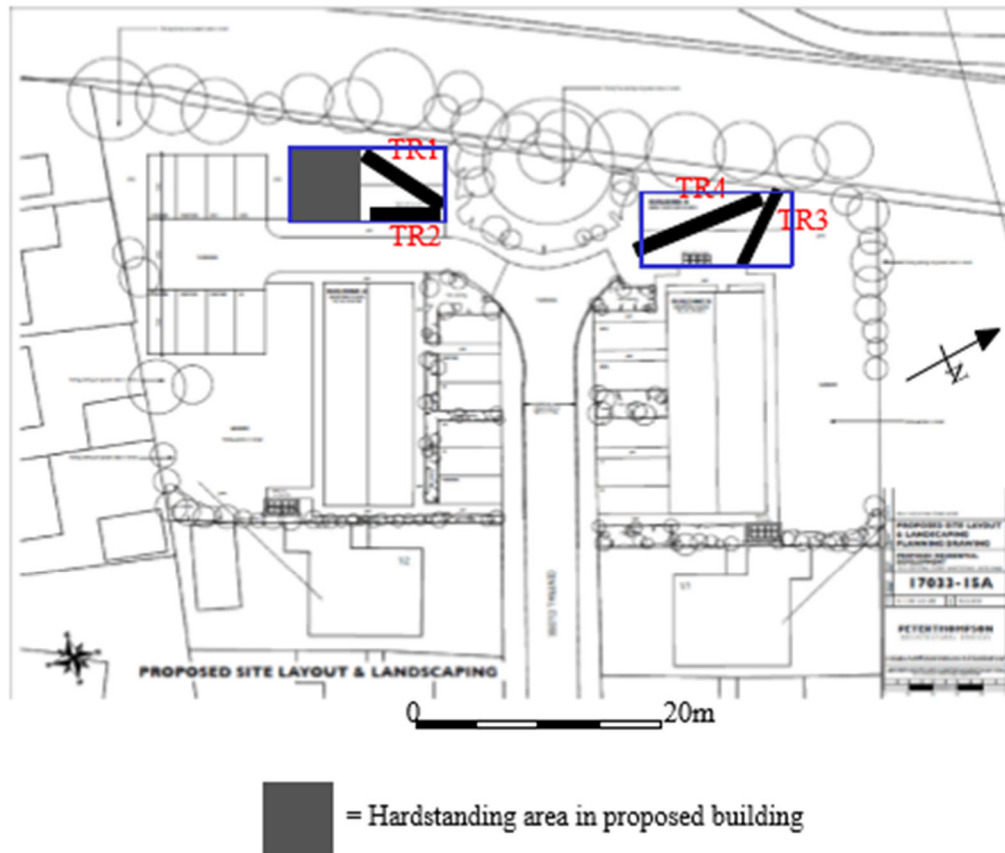


Figure 7: Excavated Trench Plan with Proposed Building C to the left

Results

Overburden across the excavated trenches consisted of three main deposits: up to a depth of approximately 0.80m was a makeup layer probably associated with the former Great Central Railway embankment that lay adjacent. This consisted of a mixed dark yellowish grey friable clayey silt with moderate rubble, occasional house bricks, large stones, and scrap metal. The waste was evident especially to the south west within Building plot C, although the made ground covered the whole area with a gradual slope down towards the embankment. Below this existed a buried top-soil with an average depth of 0.20m. This consisted of a dark yellowish grey loose silt. There was an absence of a buried turf layer. Either this had bio-degraded after the construction of the railway embankment during the late 19th century, or the top of the original top-soil had been truncated. The boundary between the layers was sharp onto an undisturbed consistently deep sub-soil. This had an average depth of approximately 0.42m in depth consisting of a mid-yellowish grey loose silt which contained rare small rounded stones and a small amount of animal bone. The natural subsoil consisted of light orange-ish grey silty sand to a yellow grey silty sand with occasional gravel.

Building C

Trench 1

Interval	(SW) 0m	2m	4m	6m	8m (NE)
Made ground	0.70m	0.70m	0.65m	0.60m	0.60m
Top-soil Depth	0.20m	0.20m	0.23m	0.22m	0.20m
Subsoil Depth	0.40m	0.42m	0.44m	0.42m	0.40m
Top of Natural	1.30m	1.32m	1.32m	1.24m	1.20m
Base of Trench	1.30m	1.35m	1.35m	1.24m	1.20m

The trench was positioned approximately 2m away from the wooden fence bounding the west side and the former railway embankment at the foot of a gentle slope. The trench was orientated towards the north-east where it joined Trench 2. The trench had an area of 8.8m². No archaeological features were observed.



Figure 8: Trench 1 looking north-east
0.30m scale (north arrow wrongly positioned)

Trench 2

Interval	(S) 0m	2m	4m	5m (N)
Made ground	0.60m	0.60m	0.60m	0.60m
Top-soil Depth	0.20m	0.20m	0.20m	0.20m
Subsoil Depth	0.45m	0.45m	0.42m	0.44m
Top of Natural	1.25m	1.25m	1.22m	1.24m
Base of Trench	1.25m	1.25m	1.22m	1.24m

The trench was positioned towards the eastern extent of the proposed buildings approximately one metre to the north of the existing wall and car park. The total area was 5.5m². A single cylinder type ceramic field drain was revealed running across the trench width cutting into the natural geology. No archaeological features were observed.



Figure 9: Trench 2 looking north
0.30m scale

Building D

Trench 3

Interval	(SW) 0m	2m	4m	6m	8m (NE)
Made ground	0.70m	0.70m	0.65m	0.60m	0.60m
Top-soil Depth	0.20m	0.20m	0.23m	0.22m	0.20m
Subsoil Depth	0.40m	0.42m	0.44m	0.42m	0.40m
Top of Natural	1.30m	1.32m	1.32m	1.24m	1.20m
Base of Trench	1.30m	1.35m	1.35m	1.24m	1.20m

As with Trench 1, this trench was also positioned diagonally to enable more coverage across the width of the proposed building. It was positioned towards the north width of the Building Plot approximately one metre from the post and rail fence along the west side and 1.50m from the northern edge of the present standing building (no's 19 & 21). Although the made ground was still present adjacent to the former railway embankment, much less rubble/waste was encountered. A small amount of animal bone was recovered in the sealed sub-soil from this trench. The trench had an area of 8.8m². However no archaeological features were observed.



Figure 10: Trench 3 looking west
1m scale

Trench 4

Interval	(NW) 0m	2m	4m	6m	8m	11m (SE)
Made ground	0.50m	0.60m	0.70m	0.70m	0.80m	0.90m
Top-soil Depth	0.20m	0.20m	0.25m	0.30m	0.30m	0.25m
Subsoil Depth	0.40m	0.45m	0.40m	0.45m	0.45m	0.30m
Top of Natural	1.10m	1.25m	1.35m	1.45m	1.55m	1.45
Base of Trench	1.10m	1.25m	1.40m	1.45m	1.55m	1.50

Located less than 2m from the north-western end of Trench 3, this trench was the longest of the trenches and also the deepest. The made ground became significantly deeper to the south-east. The total trench area was 12.1m². No archaeological features were observed.



Figure 11: Trench 4 looking south-east
12m scale



Figure 12: Trench 4 section
Looking west (1m scale)

Discussion and Conclusion

The proposed development area on land at the west end of Central Close, Whetstone, Leicestershire, had the potential for archaeological remains to be exposed in the evaluation trenches due to nearby discoveries. Despite the potential for Iron-Age remains this work proved to be negative.

With exception to the small amount of animal bone found within the deep sub-soil of Trench 3, no other artefactual evidence (excluding modern pottery) was recovered. Any surviving archaeological remains are unlikely to have been affected by the railway embankment construction although the topsoil may have been truncated. As no archaeological deposits were identified during the work, the results from this site will not contribute towards the regional research objectives.

Archive and publication

The archive for this project will be deposited with Leicester City Museums Service with accession number X.A63.2019 and consists of the following:

- 1 Unbound copy of this report (ULAS Report No. 2019-109)
- 4 Trench recording sheets
- 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.

References

- Brown, D. (2008). *Standard and guidance for the preparation of Archaeological Archives* (Institute for Archaeologists).
- CifA (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists) 2014a, *Code of Conduct*
- CifA (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists) 2014b, *Standard and Guidance for Field Evaluation*
- CifA (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists) 2014c. *Standard and Guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives*
- MHCLG (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government) 2019 (Rev.), *National Planning Policy Framework*
- Cooper, N. (Ed.) (2006). *The Archaeology of the East Midlands: An Archaeological Resource Assessment and Research Agenda*. Leicester Archaeological Monographs No. 13. University of Leicester Archaeological Services: Leicester.
- Historic England, 2006a. *Management of research Projects in the Historic Environment*
- Flavell, N. 2015. *An Archaeological Evaluation of Land at Whetstone, Leicestershire*, ULAS report no:2015-136
- Knight, D., Vyner, B. and Allen, C. (2012). *East Midlands Heritage: An updated research agenda and strategy for the Historic Environment of the East Midlands*. University of Nottingham and York Archaeological Trust.

LCC, *Guidelines and Procedures for Archaeological work Leicestershire and Rutland*

LMARS, 2014. *The Transfer of Archaeological Archives to Leicestershire Museums, Arts and Records Service.*

Peters, J. 2019. *Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for a phase of archaeological investigation on land at 14 – 21 Central Close, Whetstone, Leicestershire.*

Acknowledgements

ULAS would like to thank Mr Mark English of MJE Contracts Limited and Justin Hewkin also of MJE Contracts Limited who dove the excavator. The project was managed by Vicki Score and John Thomas.

James Patrick
ULAS
University of Leicester
University Road
Leicester LE1 7RH
Tel: 0116 252 2848
Fax: 0116 252 2614
Email: jrp28@le.ac.uk
15/08/2019



UNIVERSITY OF
LEICESTER

Archaeological Services

University of Leicester
University Road
Leicester LE1 7RH
UK

Directors

Dr Richard Buckley OBE BA PhD FSA MCifA

e: rjb16@le.ac.uk

t: +44 (0)116 252 2848

f: +44 (0)116 252 2614

e: ulas@le.ac.uk

