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Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological Evaluation Adjacent to 293 Bradgate Road, Anstey,
Leicestershire**

NGR: SK 53886 09347

Nathan Flavell



ULAS Report No 2019-117
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Site Name: Bradgate Road, Anstey, Leicestershire

Grid Ref: SK 53886 09347

Author: Nathan Flavell

Client: Wells McFarlane

Planning Ref. P/17/0508/2 & APP/X2410/W/18/3204941

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OASIS RECORD

PROJECT DETAILS	Oasis No	universi1- 366124		
	Project Name	Bradgate Road, Anstey, Leicestershire		
	Start/end dates	03-09-2019		
	Previous/Future Work	DBA (ULAS 2016-001)		
	Project Type	Evaluation		
	Site Status	None		
	Current Land Use	Grassland		
	Monument Type/Period	None		
	Significant Finds/Period	None		
	Reason for Investigation	NPPF		
	Position in the Planning Process	Planning condition		
Planning Ref.	P/17/0508/2 & APP/X2410/W/18/3204941			
PROJECT LOCATION	County	Leicestershire		
	Site Address/Postcode	293 Bradgate Road, Anstey, Leicestershire, LE7 7FX		
	Study Area	0.9 ha		
	Site Coordinates	SK 53886 09347		
	Height OD	106m aOD		
PROJECT CREATORS	Organisation	ULAS		
	Project Brief Originator	Charnwood Borough Council		
	Project Design Originator	ULAS		
	Project Manager	Gavin Speed		
	Project Director/Supervisor	Nathan Flavell		
	Sponsor/Funding Body	Wells McFarlane		
PROJECT ARCHIVE		Physical	Digital	Paper
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Contents

Summary	1
Introduction.....	1
Location and Geology.....	2
Historical and Archaeological Background	4
Archaeological Objectives	6
Research Objectives	6
Methodology	7
Results.....	8
Trench 1	9
Trench 2	9
Trench 3	10
Discussion & Conclusions	11
Archive and publication.....	11
Acknowledgements.....	12
References.....	12

Figures

Figure 1: Site Location.....	2
Figure 2: Detailed site location plan (supplied by client).....	3
Figure 3: Proposed site plan.....	7
Figure 4: Site plan.....	8
Figure 5: Trench 1 looking northwest.....	9
Figure 6: Trench 2 looking northwest.....	10
Figure 7: Trench 3 looking northeast.....	11

An Archaeological Field Evaluation Adjacent to 293 Bradgate Road, Anstey, Leicestershire

Nathan Flavell

Summary

This document is a fieldwork report for an archaeological trial trench evaluation, carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on land adjacent to 293 Bradgate Road, Anstey, Leicestershire (NGR: SK 53886 09347) in advance of the construction of a residential development.

A total of three trenches were excavated across the site revealing no archaeological features.

The archive for the site will be deposited with Leicestershire Museums with accession number X.A67.2019.

Introduction

University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) were commissioned by Wells McFarlane to carry out an archaeological trial trench evaluation on land adjacent to 293 Bradgate Road, Anstey, Leicestershire (NGR: SK 53886 09347; Figure 1). The work was carried out on 3rd September 2019.

The work is being undertaken as part of the condition (no.37 of appeal decision APP/X2410/W/18/3204941) of planning permission by Charnwood Borough Council and to fulfil the requirement of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Section 16 Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment (MHCLG 2018). Planning permission has been granted for the residential development of two houses (planning ref P/17/0508/2, 14/3/2017), subject to the appeal decision.

The application area (approximately 0.9 hectares) is that of a plot of land to the north of Bradgate Road, Anstey (Figure 2).

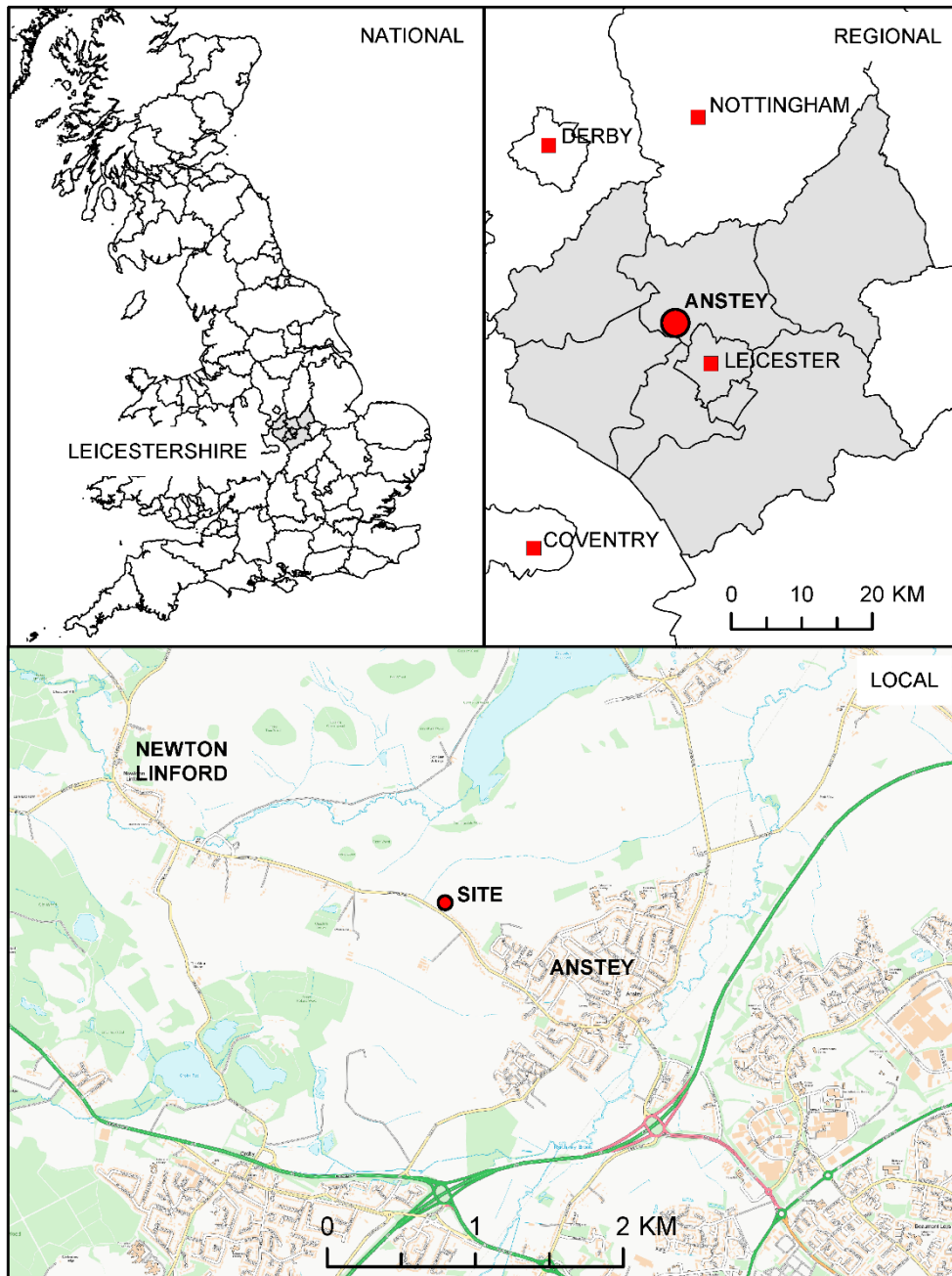


Figure 1: Site Location

Local map reproduced from by permission of Ordnance Survey® Opendata

Location and Geology

AnsteY lies in the Charnwood District of Leicestershire around 5 miles north-west of Leicester. The site consists of a sub-rectangular parcel of land on the north-eastern side of Bradgate Road at the north-western end of the village of AnsteY (**Error! Reference source not found.**). The site is accessed via a metal gate off Bradgate Road. The field is oriented north-east to south-west, covers approximately 0.9 hectares and lies at a height of around 106m aOD, with a slight fall to the east (**Error! Reference source not found.**). The field was covered in rough rassland, with areas of machine disturbance and low spoil heaps.

The British Geological Survey website indicates that the underlying geology is likely to be Oadby Member Diamicton overlying Edwalton Member Mudstone.

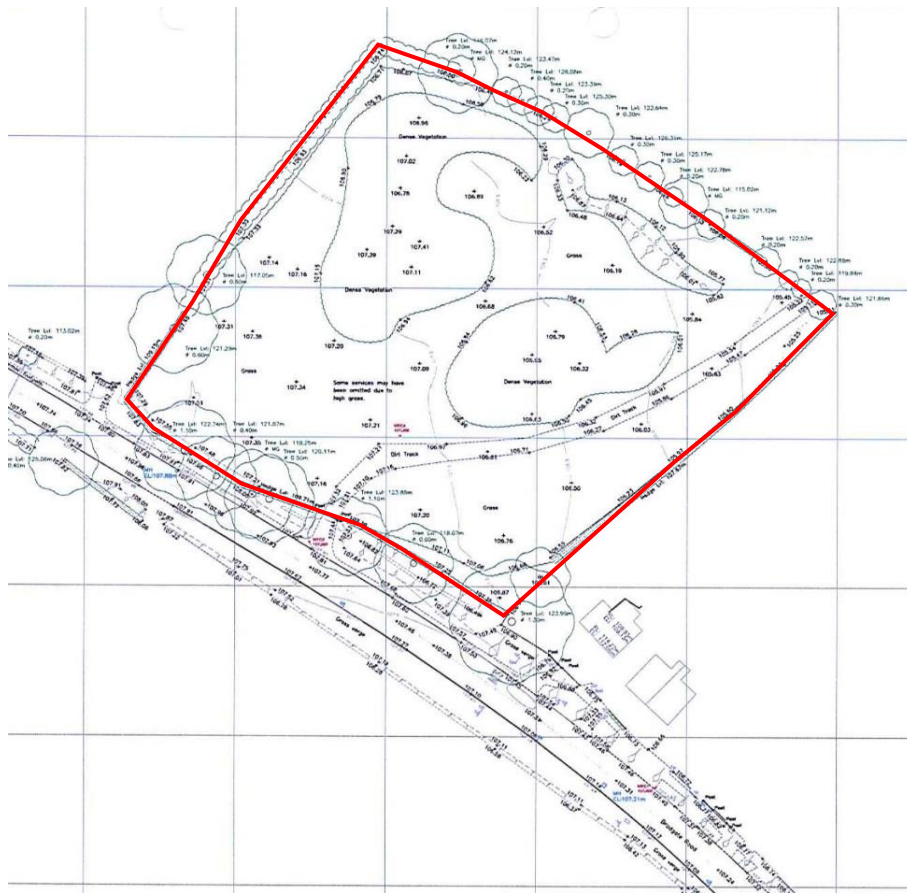


Figure 2: Detailed site location plan (supplied by client)

Historical and Archaeological Background

The site has been identified by the Leicestershire HER as lying to the north-west of the medieval historic village core (and conservation area) of Anstey. The archaeological and historic background of the site was set out in an archaeological desk based assessment (Hunt 2016). It showed that there are no known archaeological sites within the assessment area itself. However, there are a number in the vicinity and the site lies close to Bradgate Park, which is very rich in archaeological features, the results are included in summary below:

Prehistoric

A late Upper Palaeolithic hunting site is known from Bradgate Park (L. Cooper pers. comm.). A flint blade dating from the late Mesolithic to early Neolithic was found in a garden along Bradgate Road, 400m south-east of the assessment area (**MLE15734**).

An Iron Age enclosure, which most likely was still in use during the Roman period lies 650m north-west of the assessment area within Bradgate Park (**MLE21909**). There is another nearby around 850m north-west of the site (**MLE21915**).

Romano-British

A pair of straight parallel ditches shown as cropmarks that may be a section of Roman road, lie 400m east of the assessment area (**MLE10657**). Roman pottery has been found at High Leys Farm, 400m south-west of the site (**MLE7731**). A Roman finger ring was found near High Leys (PAS No. **LEIC-4F6746**) and a coin along Bradgate Road itself (PAS No **LEIC-8CE875**). There is also an undated earthwork 150m west of the assessment area in a nearby field. This may be Roman in date, possibly later (**MLE404**).

Various finds dated from the Roman period, including kiln bars, have been found on a site 900m north-east of the assessment area (**MLE735**).

A Roman coin was found at Link Road, 900m east of the assessment area (**MLE7730**) and sherds of Roman pottery have been found close to Bradgate House, 980m north of the site (**MLE15842**). A Roman pin was also found ‘west of Anstey’ PAS No. **LEIC- E3CC44**).

Medieval

The Site lies around 550m to the north-west of the historic village core of Anstey (**MLE402**). The place-name Anstey is most likely derived from the Old English word ‘*anstiga*’. This has generally been interpreted as referring to a short or narrow length of road, possibly on a slope or a hill.

The settlement was in existence prior to the Norman Conquest and at the time of the Domesday survey in 1086 was held by one of the county’s largest landholders, Hugh de Grantemesnil, castellan of Leicester. The Domesday Book records that 1 plough and 4 serfs were held by the lord, 13 villeins and 4 bordars held 2 ploughs, 8 acres of meadow and two stretches of woodland. Anstey was a chapelry of Thurcaston until 1866 when it became an independent parish. Thurcaston also included the hamlet of Cropston. Both Anstey and Cropston were presumably once berewicks or manorial dependencies of Thurcaston.

Robert fitz Parnell, Earl of Leicester (1191-1204) granted land and four cottages in Anstey to Leicester Abbey. He also granted the Abbey the rights to pasturage in that part of Leicester Forest lying between the roads from Leicester to Anstey and Groby. This area can be identified with the extra-parochial areas known in modern times as Anstey Pastures, Leicester Frith and Gilroes (Courtney 2003).

Leicester Abbey manor was clearly not the only estate in Anstey by the 14th century. The Ferrers family also held a manor in the west. Some of the Ferrers land was granted to Ulverscroft priory in the 1280s and 1290s. In the late 13th century, the Cistercian abbey of Garendon was granted rent from two properties in Anstey by Margaret Ferrers. Before the Dissolution nearly half, if not more, of the Ferrers manor in Anstey must have been in monastic hands. The Ferrers estates descended by marriage in 1445 to the Grey family (later Earls of Stamford), who lived in Bradgate House from 1500 until 1709, after which date they dwelt permanently at Enville in Staffordshire.

The nearby Bradgate Park was in existence by 1241 and survives now as a Country Park. The original extent of the boundary pale took account of the fall of the landscape (**MLE748**). The park was extended by the Grey family after they took possession of the park in 1445 around the time that Bradgate House was built (**MLE749**). It is a Registered Park (**10000958**).

The ruins of the 15th century Bradgate House, one of the earliest unfortified brick built manor houses, lies around 1km north-west of the assessment area (**MLE745. SM 1008831**). There is a late medieval chapel within the ruins of the house (**MLE746**).

A moated lodge lay nearby. The moat measures 55m x 40m and there are also fish ponds nearby (**MLE739. SM 1008813**). There is also a mill nearby (Bradgate Mill). The leat still exists and ran from the Little Matlock stream to the mill via the fishpond (**MLE750**).

There is evidence of enclosure at Bradgate in 1519-1520, but no evidence of a deserted 'village'. LiDAR data has picked up hollow ways (**MLE21921**) and house platforms so the settlement may have been dispersed (**MLE756**).

There are several other medieval features dating from the medieval period within Bradgate Park relating to Bradgate House. These include a garden wall (**MLE14007**), tiltyard (**MLE14008**), and pheasantry (**MLE18593**).

No evidence has come from within the site or its immediate vicinity to suggest that medieval settlement activity extended into the site, which most likely formed part of the agricultural field system to Anstey.

Post Medieval

A circular stone well was located at Top Green, 850m south-east of the assessment area (**MLE405**). There are possible post-medieval saw pits north-west of Thorn Wood, 700m north-west of the site, although they may be clay extraction areas (**MLE21916**). There are several post-medieval additions to Bradgate House and Bradgate Park, such as a deer barn (**MLE18602**), Cropston Reservoir (**MLE16810**) and a watermeadow (**MLE18601**). There are a number of historic buildings in the vicinity of the assessment area. The vast majority are located within the village core of Anstey and therefore the proposed new development will have little impact upon them.

Modern

The site was shown as a field in the earliest available map of 1762 (an enclosure map of Anstey). This shows the assessment area as part of a larger enclosed field, called Rammer Leys, which at the time was part of the land belonging to the Earl of Stamford (the Grey family). The next available map is the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of the area, dated 1884. By this time the large field has been further sub-divided and the assessment area lies within a fairly large sub-triangular field numbered 530. There is little change until a 1957 map that shows the large field has been further sub-divided with the assessment area now in its current format, surrounded by borders on all sides.

Archaeological Objectives

The main objectives of the evaluation were:

- To identify the presence/absence of any archaeological deposits 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 establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of any archaeological deposits and features encountered.
- 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.

Trial trenching is an intrusive form of evaluation that will demonstrate the existence of earth-fast archaeological features that may exist within the area, the results of which will provide information for the local planning authority to identify an appropriate mitigation strategy.

Research Objectives

Based on the HER and DBA it is possible to determine some initial objectives derived from *East Midlands Heritage* research agenda (Cooper 2006, Knight *et al.* 2012, <https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/researchframeworks/eastmidlands/wiki/>), based on what is currently known in the surrounding area. The assessment area at Bradgate Road, Anstey lies around 550m outside the historic core and Conservation Area of the village and around 1km south-east of the medieval buildings and features at Bradgate Park. There are a few findspots for prehistoric artefacts in the area, and there are also finds from the Roman period and Roman features in the vicinity. The evaluation therefore has the potential to contribute to the following research themes:

- *Late Bronze Age and Iron Age*: 4.1 Dating, 4.2 site visibility, prospection and landscape exploration, 4.3 late Bronze Age and early Iron Age settlements, 4.4 Middle Iron Age settlements, 4.5 Late Iron Age settlements, 4.6 field systems and major linear boundaries, 4.8 the agricultural economy and landscape.
- *Romano-British*: 5.4 Rural settlement patterns and landscapes, 5.5 agricultural economy.
- *Early Medieval*: 6.4 Rural settlement patterns, 6.7 agricultural economy and rural landscape.

- *High Medieval*: 7.2 Rural settlement, 7.7 agrarian landscape and food-producing economy.
- *Post-Medieval*: 8.3 agricultural landscapes and food-producing economy, 8.4 rural settlement patterns.

Methodology

All work followed the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) *Code of Conduct* (rev. 2014a) in accordance with their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (rev. 2014b). The archaeological work followed the *Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for Archaeological Evaluation* prepared by ULAS and agreed with the Leicestershire County Council Planning Archaeologist (July 2018). The work was monitored by the client and the Charnwood Borough Council.

An accession number (X.A67.2019) was obtained prior to commencement of the project and used to identify all records. A total of 3, 30m x 1.6m trenches were proposed targeting areas of new proposed buildings.

Trenches were measured in using DGPS. The excavation of the trenches was carried out using a JCB 3CX fitted with a 1.6m wide ditching bucket under constant supervision by an experienced archaeologist. Trenches were excavated to the level of the natural sub-stratum or to archaeological layers, whichever the higher in the sequence. All archaeological work was undertaken as specified within the WSI.



Figure 3: Trench plan, in relation to the proposed development

Results

All three trenches were negative for archaeological remains (Figure 4). The natural consisted of mixed pink-orange pebbly clay. Subsoil was brown-orange clay sand with pebble inclusions. Topsoil was mid-dark brown clay loam.

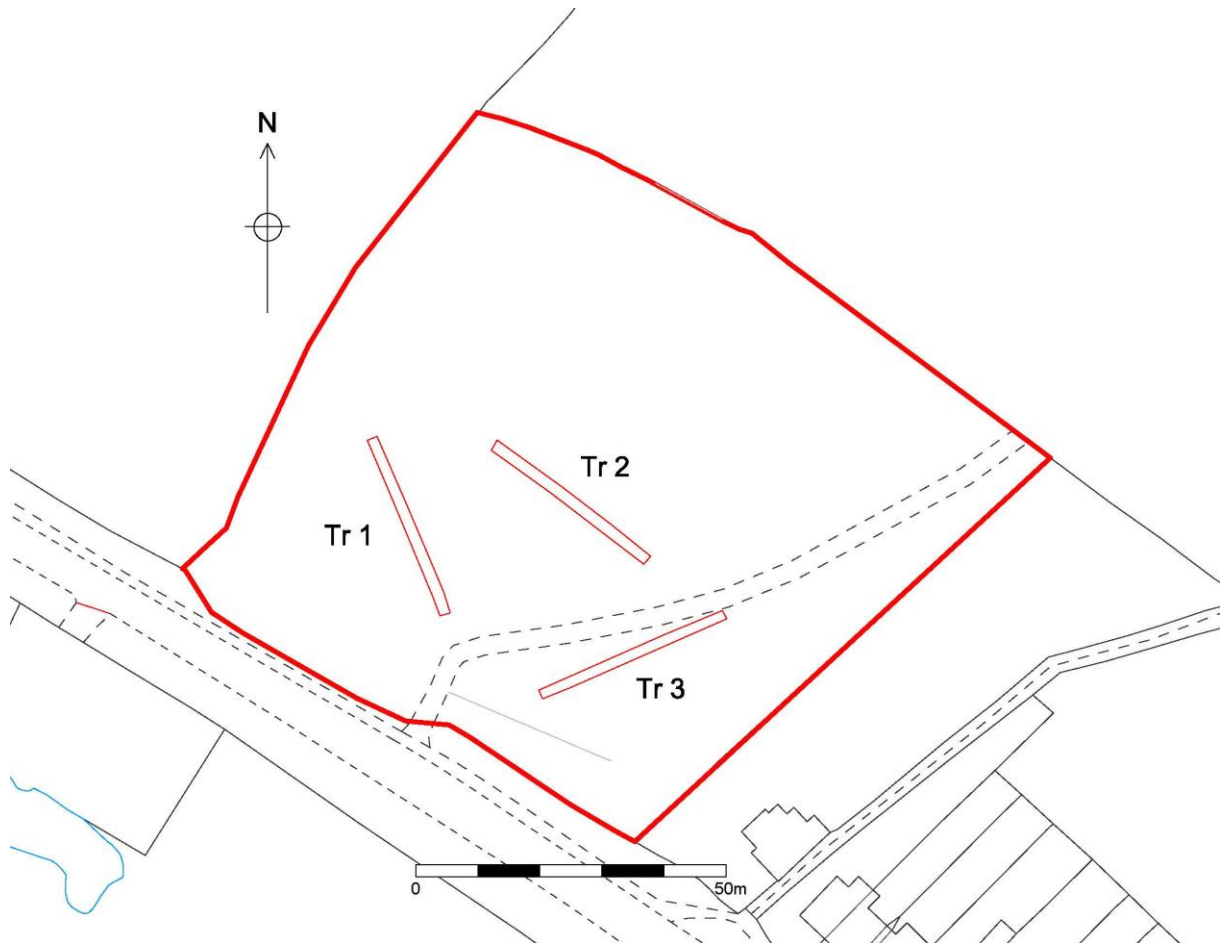


Figure 4: Site plan

Trench 1

Trench 1 measured 30.2m x 1.6m, and was aligned northwest to southeast (Figure 5). The natural substratum was encountered at a depth of between 0.37m – 0.46m below ground level. Above this was a thin subsoil 0.07-0.1m thick. This was covered by topsoil, 0.29-0.36m thick. No archaeological finds or deposits were present.

OD Height: 107.34m	(SE) 0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25m	30.2m (NW)
Topsoil Depth	0.36	0.31	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.29	0.3
Subsoil Depth	0.1	0.1	0.07	0.09	0.09	0.08	0.07
Depth of Natural	0.46	0.41	0.37	0.39	0.39	0.37	0.37
Base of Trench	0.48	0.46	0.4	0.41	0.42	0.42	0.4



Figure 5: Trench 1 looking northwest

Trench 2

Trench 2 measured 30.2m x 1.6m, and was aligned northwest to southeast (Figure 6). The natural substratum was at a depth of between 0.31m–0.6m below ground level. Above this was subsoil, 0.06-0.09m thick. This was covered by topsoil, 0.25-0.6m thick. No archaeological finds or deposits were present.

OD Height: 107.04m	(SE) 0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25m	30.2m (NW)
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Topsoil Depth	0.5	0.5	0.32	0.32	0.25	0.31	0.6
Subsoil Depth	0.06	-	0.09	-	0.09	-	-
Depth of Natural	0.56	0.5	0.41	0.32	0.34	0.31	0.6
Base of Trench	0.6	0.56	0.42	0.32	0.36	0.31	0.64



Figure 6: Trench 2 looking northwest

Trench 3

Trench 3 measured 31.5m x 1.6m, and was aligned northeast to southwest (Figure 7). The natural substratum was at a depth of between 0.3m – 0.43m below ground level. Subsoil was 0.06-0.8m thick. This was covered by topsoil, 0.24-0.36m thick.

OD Height: 107.32m	(SW) 0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25m	31.5m (NE)
Topsoil Depth	0.36	0.32	0.35	0.33	0.33	0.24	0.3
Subsoil Depth	0.06	0.05	0.08	-	-	0.07	-
Depth of Natural	0.42	0.37	0.43	0.33	0.33	0.31	0.3
Base of Trench	0.45	0.38	0.44	0.45	0.43	0.34	0.43



Figure 7: Trench 3 looking northeast

Discussion & Conclusions

Excavation of the three trenches has shown a lack of any significant archaeology. Some rough stone drains were noted but these would appear to be post-medieval in nature. Also noted was the possibility of ploughed out furrows which would explain the intermittent subsoil within trenches 2 and 3. The excavation has confirmed that the archaeological evidence is of little significance, and therefore no further archaeological work is recommended for this site.

Archive and publication

The archive for this project will be deposited with Leicestershire Museums with accession number X.A67.2019 and consists of the following:

- 1 Unbound copy of this report (ULAS Report No. 2019-117)
- 3 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.

Acknowledgements

ULAS would like to thank Wells McFarlane for their help and co-operation with the project. Nathan Flavell carried out the trial trenching for ULAS and the project was managed by Dr Gavin Speed. The excavator was provided by Planters.

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