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Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological Evaluation on land at Rugby Road Lutterworth
Leicestershire, LE17 4HB**

NGR: SP 545 839

Tim Higgins



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Grid Ref: SP 545 839

Author: Tim Higgins

Client: Aldi Stores Ltd

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OASIS RECORD

PROJECT DETAILS	Oasis No	universi1-368374		
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	Start/end dates	10th to 12th September 2019		
	Previous/Future Work	Geophysical survey		
	Project Type	Evaluation		
	Site Status	None		
	Current Land Use	Agricultural Land		
	Monument Type/Period	None		
	Significant Finds/Period	None		
	Reason for Investigation	NPPF		
	Position in the Planning Process	Planning condition		
	Planning Ref.	19/00646/FUL		
PROJECT LOCATION	County	Leicestershire		
	Site Address/Postcode	Rugby Road, Lutterworth, Leicestershire, LE17 4HB		
	Study Area	0.8 ha		
	Site Coordinates	SP 545 839		
	Height OD	103 m to 110 m aOD		
PROJECT CREATORS	Organisation	ULAS		
	Project Brief Originator	Harborough District Council		
	Project Design Originator	ULAS		
	Project Manager	Richard Buckley		
	Project Director/Supervisor	Tim Higgins		
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An archaeological field evaluation on land at Rugby Road, Lutterworth, Leicestershire (SP 545 839)

Tim Higgins

Summary

This document is a fieldwork report for an archaeological trial trench evaluation, carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on behalf of Aldi Stores Ltd, at Rugby Road, Lutterworth, Leicestershire (NGR: SP 545 839) in advance of the construction of a new factory and residential development.

The development site consisted of a pasture field located on the southern edge of Lutterworth A426 Rugby Road with its eastern boundary and the A4303 Lutterworth Road along its southern boundary. Immediately to north and west of the site is the River Swift. The development lies to the west an important area of medieval activity that comprised St John's hospital and cemetery, which was located within the former Mill Farm.

Geophysical survey carried out in 2019 as part of the evaluation recorded no magnetic responses that could be interpreted as being of significant archaeological interest.

Therefore, a total of eight trenches were placed across the field. The archaeological evaluation revealed no evidence for archaeological features or finds within the any of the trenches, apart from medieval ridge and furrow and east-west post-medieval boundary ditch. The majority of the trenches contained deep post-glacial colluvial deposits that measured between 0.40m and 0.70m deep. The River Swift located towards the northern end of the site appears to have eroded these deposits and created what are thought to be natural river terraces.

The archive for the site will be deposited with Leicestershire Museums with accession number X.A86.2019.

Introduction

University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) were commissioned by STOAS Architects Ltd on behalf of Aldi Stores Ltd to carry out an archaeological trial trench evaluation at Rugby Road, Lutterworth, Leicestershire (NGR: SP 545 839; Fig. 1). The work was carried out between 10th – 11th September 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 is being sought for the proposed Aldi supermarket development on the site and the Planning Archaeologist as advisor to Harborough Council has therefore requested an archaeological field evaluation.

The site is located on the southern edge of Lutterworth A426 Rugby Road with its eastern boundary and the A4303 Lutterworth Road along its southern boundary. Immediately to north

and west of the site is the River Swift. The site lies to the west of an important area of medieval activity the site of St John’s hospital and cemetery that was within the site of the former Mill Farm.

Further work comprising trial trenching was therefore required to fulfil the conditions of the planning permission.

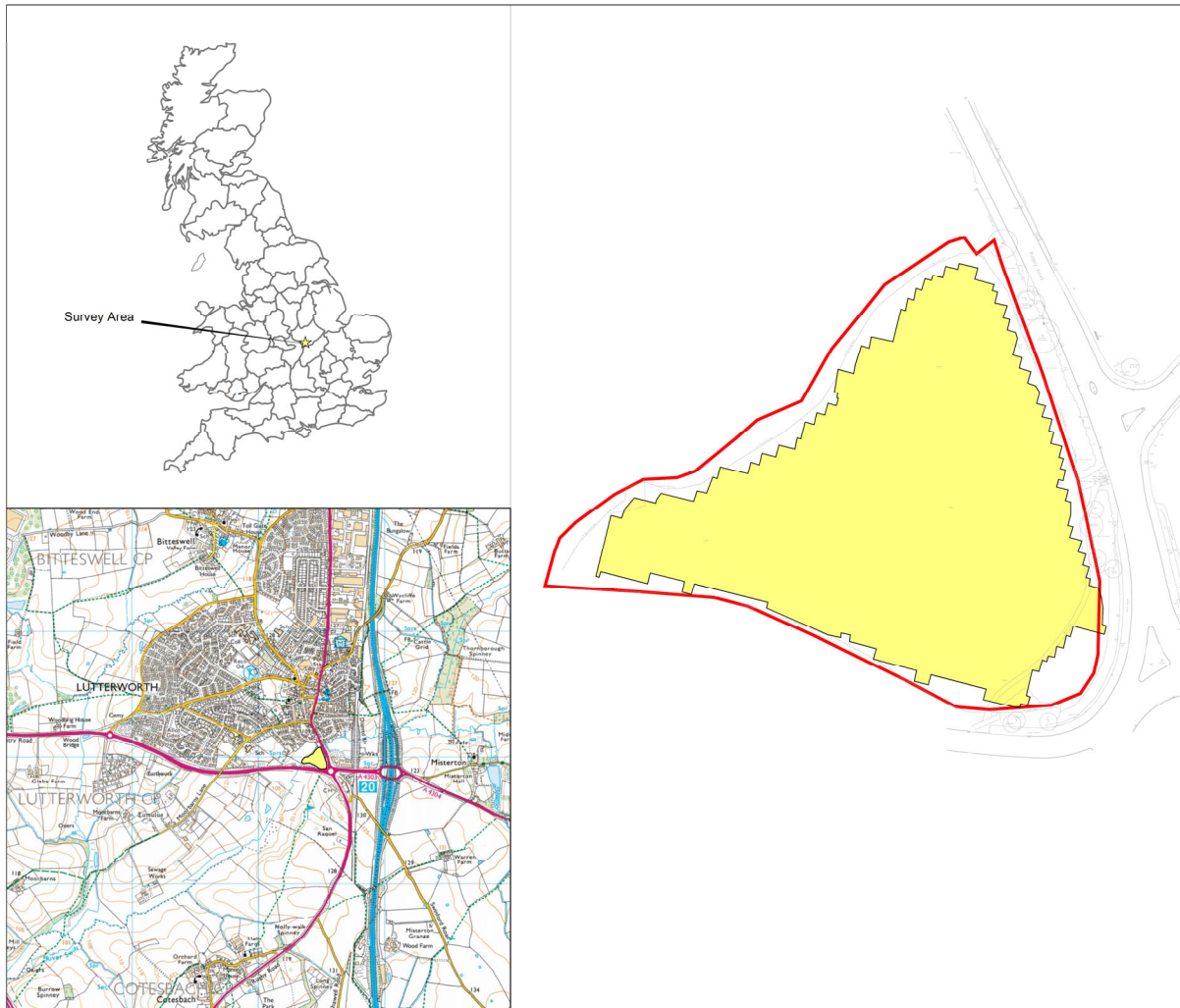


Figure 1: Site Location

*Contains OS data 1:25 000 map with permission of the controller of Her Majesty’s Stationary Office. © Crown copyright reserved Licence NO. 100018665 (1998)
Source SUMO (2019)*

Location and Geology

The site is located south of Lutterworth, west of the A426 Rugby Road and north of the A4303. Immediately to north and west of the site is the River Swift.

The development area is currently a pasture field, approximately 0.8 ha in size and has a moderate slope down towards the River Swift to the north with heights ranging from 103m aOD to 110m aOD.

The British Geological Survey website indicates that the underlying geology of the area is Blue Lias Formation – Mudstone and Limestone, Interbedded. Sedimentary Bedrock formed approximately 191 to 210 million years ago in the Jurassic and Triassic periods.

Historical and Archaeological Background

There is strong evidence for Prehistoric activity in the area with numerous find spots including flint cores, flakes and scrapers (**MLE2144**, **MLE10445** & **MLE2144**) c.631m – 340m south-east of the site towards St. John's Business Park as well as prehistoric pottery 498m south-east of the site at Lutterworth golf course (**MLE23243**). Neolithic axes were found 157m north-west of the site (**MLE7200**) and an Aurochs horn was found 102m west of the site near the bridge over the River Swift (**MLE22634**).

There is significant evidence for Roman activity with a possible Roman Road (**MLE1902**) running south from Ratae Corieltavorum (Leicester), the major Roman town of the region, to the small town of Tripontium, south of Lutterworth running directly past the eastern edge of the site whilst another possible Roman Road 'Lutterworth Road' (**MLE16101**) runs 103m south-east of the site. A large ditched enclosure and pottery suggest a possible Roman site 459m south-east of the Lutterworth Golf Course (**MLE2141**). A Roman column (**MLE7870**) was found 300m north of the site and finds spots of Roman pottery (**MLE7530**) 500m south-east of the site.

An Anglo-Saxon pit (**MLE23244**) and a late Saxon/medieval boundary ditch (**MLE21783**) have been located 370m south-east of the site in an area now part of the Lutterworth golf course. The ditch follows the same alignment as the current post-medieval buildings on the site which suggests the continuation of plot boundaries from the late Saxon period through to the post-medieval period.

The site lies close to an important area of medieval activity to the west of the site of St John's hospital and cemetery, Mill Farm (**MLE1937**). Two watermills at Spital Mills, originally part of St. John's hospital (**MLE1927**) lie 103m east of the site and a well in the garden of 'The Springs' (**MLE1932**) 418m north of the site. The mill leat for the watermill at St. John's hospital, running from the River Swift (**MLE21403**) has been located 72m east of the site and the Spital mansion house, Mill Farm (**MLE16880**) lies just 82m east of the site. A medieval boundary, ditch and drain (**MLE16033**) are located 318m north of the site. The post-medieval bridge (**MLE18371**) replaces the earlier medieval bridge (**MLE1935**) on Rugby Road (A426)

over the River Swift close to the top eastern boundary of the site. A medieval stone corbel in the shape of a head was found at 'The Hollow' 237m north of the site and additional medieval features and pottery (**MLE16033**) have also been located 228m north of the site.

The former Turnpike Road (1754-1874) (**MLE20827**) running from Market Harborough to Coventry via Lutterworth (which later became the current A426 Rugby Road) runs parallel with the site's eastern boundary. At the roundabout this continues with a second Turnpike Road (1765) which runs from Banbury to the south end of Lutterworth (**MLE21274**), 81m south-east of the site. The dismantled Great Central Railway (**MLE16092**) lies 288m east of the site. Numerous pottery sherds and clay pipe have been found during field walking 300m east of the site and the St. John's Business Park (**MLE21394**).

Various archaeological evaluations and excavations have been undertaken by ULAS on the site of Mill Farm, Lutterworth, part of the former site of the medieval hospital of St. John the Baptist (Gossip 1996, Priest & Chapman 2001, 2003, Priest 2005). Previous evaluations had identified the site of the old mill, a cemetery and some undated cobble surfaces. The excavations that followed revealed a substantial medieval cemetery and cobble structures possibly associated with either the 13th-16th century hospital or the 17th-century mansion house, both of which are known historically to have occupied this site (Priest & Chapman, 2002). An archaeological evaluation undertaken in 2014 produced evidence for the medieval mill leat located on the site east of medieval St. John's Hospital (Kipling, 2014).

Whilst none of these records relate directly to the development area, archaeology nearby suggested that there was the possibility for archaeology to be present on the site so a programme of evaluative investigation was recommended by the Planning Archaeologist, Leicestershire County Council. This commenced in 2019 with geophysical survey (SUMO: Rugby Road, Lutterworth, Leicestershire, Geophysical Survey Report 15968, Davies 2019) (Fig. 3). No anomalies of clear archaeological interest were detected. Two former field boundaries were identified, which could be correlated with features recorded on late 19th-century Ordnance Survey mapping. The majority of other magnetic responses were assessed as being natural alluvial in origin or associated with medieval ridge and furrow.

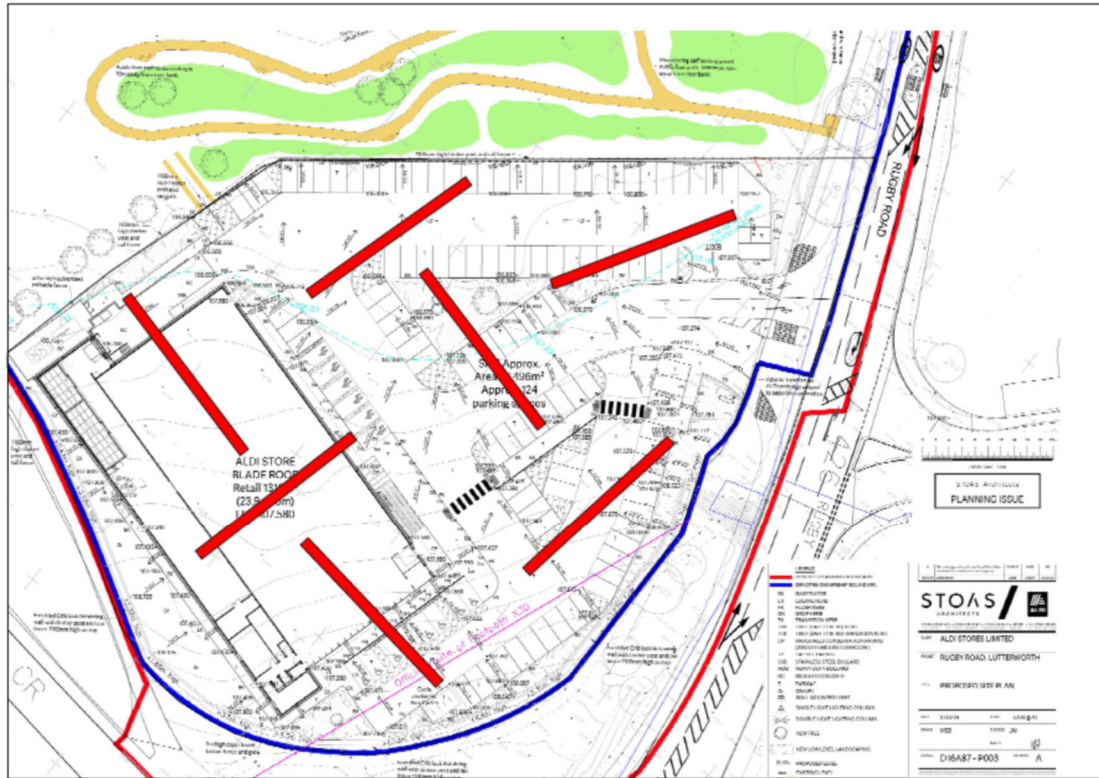


Figure 2: Location of study area to be evaluated with proposed trial trenches.

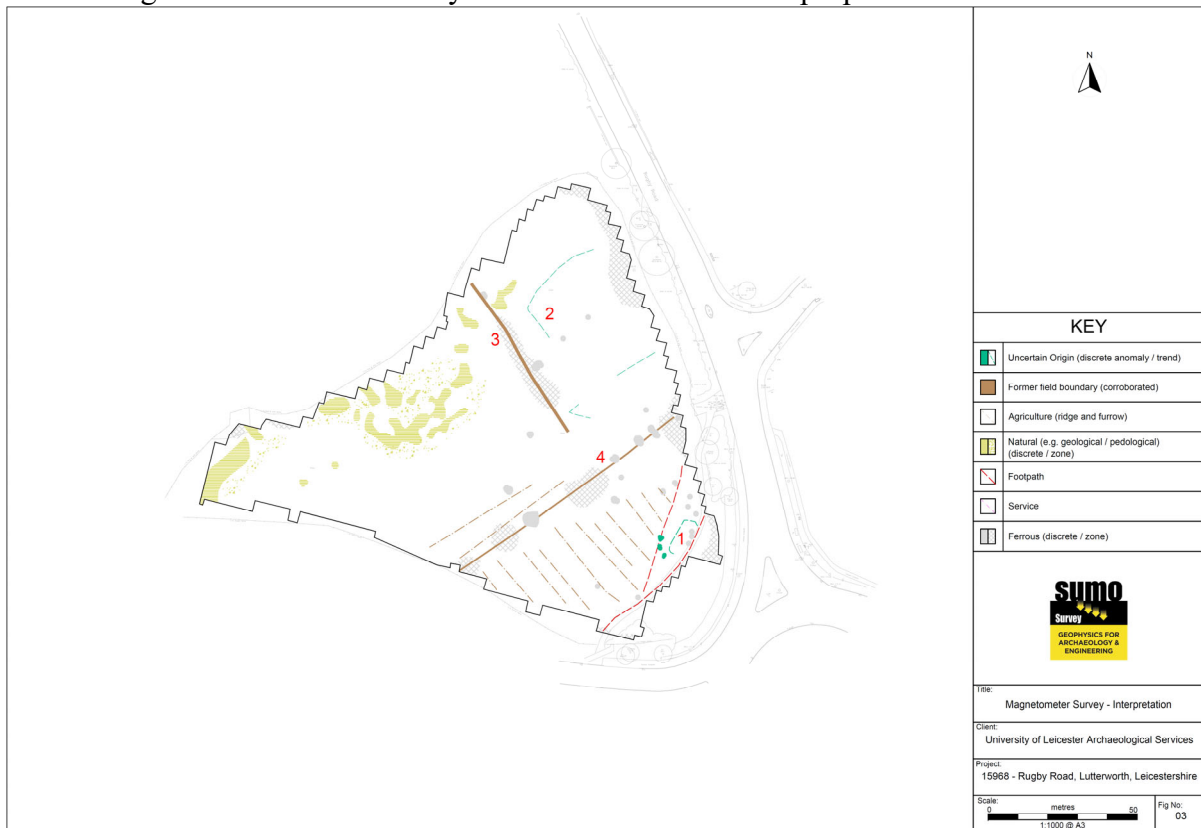


Figure 3: Plan showing results of geophysical survey (after Davies 2019)

Archaeological Objectives

The main objectives of the archaeological work were:

- To identify the presence/absence of any archaeological deposits.
- To establish the character, extent and date range and significance of any surviving archaeological deposits.
- 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.

The results of the evaluation would assist the archaeological adviser to the local planning authority to assess the impact of the proposed development upon buried archaeological remains and, if necessary, make an informed decision over the need for further archaeological investigation to mitigate any damage which might occur.

Research Objectives

While the nature, extent and quality of archaeological remains within the areas of investigation for the project remained unknown until archaeological work was undertaken, it was possible to determine some initial objectives derived from the East Midlands Heritage Research Agenda and strategy (Cooper 2006, Knight et al. 2012). The site's location just outside an historic market town suggested that there was potential for archaeological deposits from the medieval period onwards. The finds spots and HER records also suggested that there was some potential for archaeological deposits of Iron Age and Roman origin. The evaluation therefore had the potential to contribute to the following research aims.

The Iron Age and Roman Periods (Taylor 2006; Willis 2006; Knight et al 2012; English Heritage 2012)

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

The Medieval period (Lewis 2006, Knight et al 2012; English Heritage 2012)

The evaluation may contribute towards research into the origins and development of medieval settlement, landscape and society. Environmental evidence could provide information on local environmental conditions as well as settlement activity, craft, industry and land use. Artefacts can assist in the development of a type series within the region and provide evidence for evidence for craft, industry and exchange across broad landscape areas. The evaluation has the potential to contribute to Research Agenda topics 7.1.2, 7.1.4, 7.2.1-7.2.4, 7.3.1-7.3.5, 7.5.4,

7.6.1-2, 7.7.1-7.7.5 and Research Objective 7E - *Investigate the morphology of rural landscapes.*

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

Methodology

Prior to any machining of trial trenches, general photographs of the site areas were taken. The trenches were excavated using a mechanical excavator equipped with a 1.6m wide toothless ditching bucket. The topsoil and overlying layers were removed under full archaeological supervision until either the top of archaeological deposits or the natural undisturbed substratum was reached. Trenches were examined for archaeological deposits or finds by hand cleaning. The trenches were tied into the Ordnance Survey National Grid and were then backfilled and levelled at the end of the evaluation.

The work followed the approved design specification (ULAS 2019) and adhered to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) *Code of Conduct and adhered to their Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations* (2014).



Figure 4: Work in progress on Trench 5, looking north

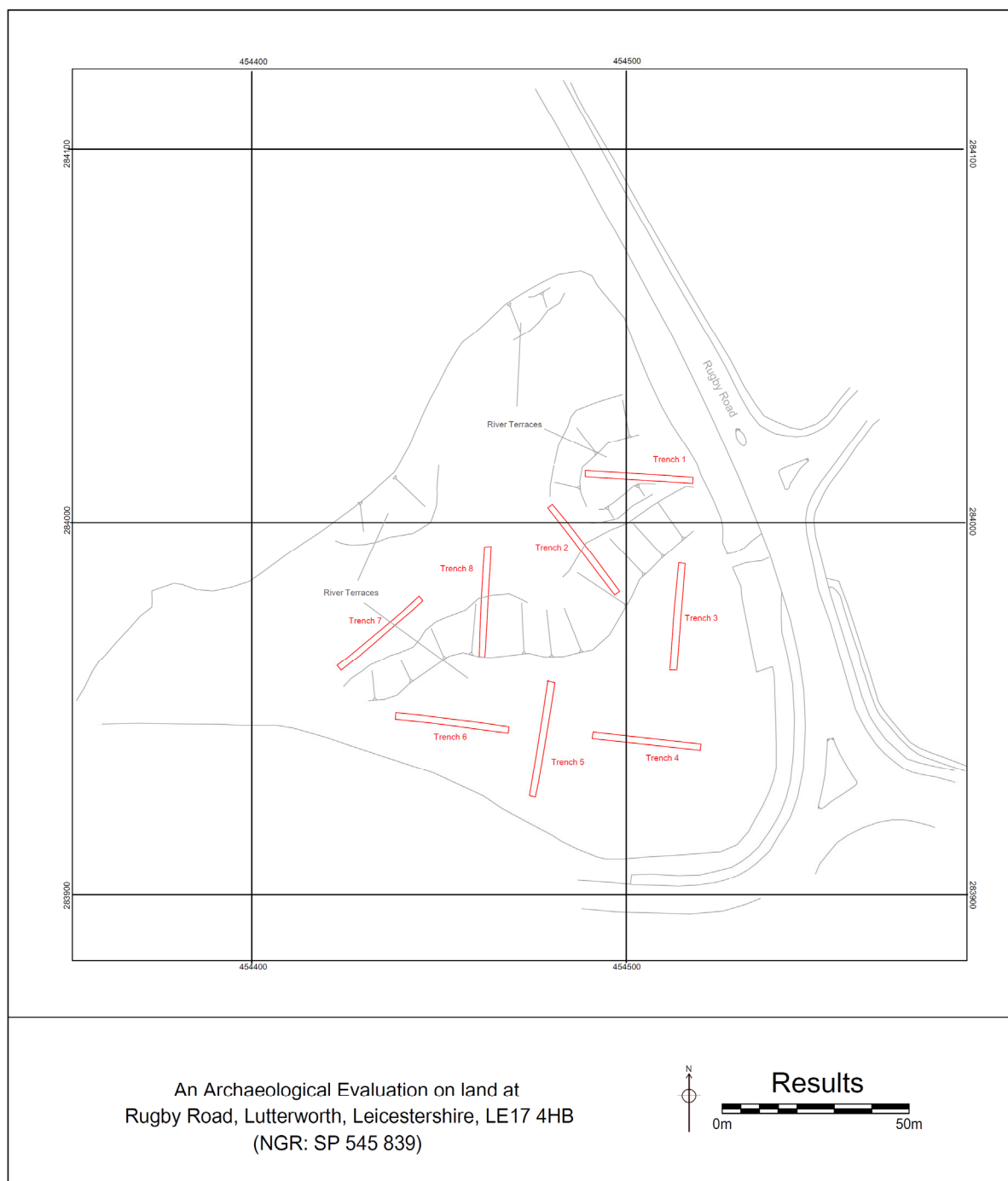


Figure 5: Location of trial trenches

Results

Eight trenches were excavated within the development area (Fig. 5).

No archaeological finds or deposits were located within any of the trenches. The natural substratum was generally reached after around 0.25m-0.50m of topsoil and subsoil had been removed. The only features revealed were field drains observed within four trenches (2, 3 4 and 6). The field drains were typically orientated east to west and comprised ceramic pipes or bricks and granite rubble.

No modern material was found within any of the trenches and the top soil was generally clean which suggests that topsoil has had generally very little modern disturbance apart from agricultural activity.

The archaeological evaluation by trial trenching revealed no evidence for archaeological features or finds within the any of the trenches, apart from an east-west post-medieval boundary ditch revealed within trenches 3, 5 and 6, and medieval ridge and furrow visible in trenches 3, 4, and 5 (Fig. 6). There is a modern water pipe running east to west down the centre of the field and its construction may account for the modern disturbance observed with trenches 2, 3 and 8. The majority of the trenches (Trenches 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 8) contained deep post-glacial colluvial deposits that measured between 0.40m and 0.70m deep. The River Swift located towards the northern end of the site appears to have eroded these deposits and created what are thought to be natural platforms or terraces (Fig. 5).

Trenches 1 and 7 were placed within the northern end of the proposed development, in the natural flood plain area which may have been levelled as the trenches contained modern field drains (Fig. 5).



Figure 6 Excavated trenches overlying geophysical results.

Trench 1

Figure 7 Trench 1, post excavation, looking north-west

OD Height: 105.45m	(SE) 0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25m	28m (NW)
Topsoil Depth	0.20m	0.20m	0.20m	0.20m	0.20m	0.20m	0.20m
Subsoil Depth	0.30m	0.20m	0.35m	0.40m	0.35m	0.25m	0.25m
Depth of Natural	0.50m	0.40m	0.55m	0.60m	0.55m	0.45m	0.45m
Base of Trench	0.60m	0.45m	0.65m	0.65m	0.60m	0.50m	0.50m

This trench was located within the north-east corner of the proposed development and targeted a moderately sloping earth platform (Figs 5 and 7). No archaeological finds or deposits were located within this trench. The natural substratum was generally reached after around 0.40m-0.60m of topsoil and subsoil had been removed. The only features revealed gradual undulating natural clays and gravels.

Trench 2

Figure 8 Trench 2, post excavation, looking north-east

OD Height: 105.64m	(S) 0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25m	29m (N)
Topsoil Depth	0.20m	0.20m	0.20m	0.20m	0.20m	0.20m	0.20m
Subsoil Depth	0.25m	0.55m	0.30m	0.25m	0.20m	-	-
Depth of Natural	-	0.75m	0.50m	0.45m	0.40m	-	-
Base of Trench	0.45m	0.75m	0.55m	0.45m	0.40m	0.20m	0.20m

Trench 2 was situated in the north-east corner of the site and was orientated north to south. It had targeted a surface that comprised terrace or platform, which sloped downward from north to south and extended into a level flood plain area (Figs 5 and 8). This trench revealed at the base a sloping natural comprising brown grey sands and gravels, which were sealed under 0.55m subsoil or post glacial colluvial deposit. The northernmost end of the trench was level and natural was truncated by several land drains laid in lattice pattern and sealed under a subsoil that measured 0.20m deep. A modern water pipe had truncated the southern end of the trench. No archaeological features were identified.

Trench 3

Figure 9 Trench 3, post excavation, looking south east

OD Height: 107.92m	(NE) 0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25m	29m (SW)
Topsoil Depth	0.20m	0.20m	0.20m	0.20m	0.20m	0.20m	0.20m
Subsoil Depth	-	0.40m	0.40m	0.40m	0.40m	0.50m	0.60m
Depth of Natural	-	0.75m	0.50m	0.45m	0.40m	0.70m	0.80m
Base of Trench	0.30m	0.80m	0.80m	0.70m	0.75m	0.80m	0.90m

Trench 3 was placed towards the east end of the proposed development area and targeted both a level area and geophysical anomalies, that were thought to be medieval ridge and furrow and a post-medieval boundary ditch (Figs 5 and 6). Excavation of the trench revealed natural sands and gravels at base of the trench that sloped gradual downwards south to north (Fig 9). Overlying was deep subsoil that measured between 0.40m and 0.60m deep, which was thought to be a post-glacial colluvial deposit. Towards the southern half of the trench ridge and furrow

features were only visible as moderate undulating features within the topsoil. The northern half of the trench contained a backfilled boundary ditch and the occasional modern pottery retrieved and recorded before it was discarded. A modern water pipe had truncated the northern end of the trench.

Trench 4



Figure 10: Trench 4, post excavation, looking north

OD Height: 109.55m	(S) 0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25m	31m (N)
Topsoil Depth	0.20m	0.20m	0.20m	0.20m	0.20m	0.20m	0.20m
Subsoil Depth	0.25m	0.30m	0.30	0.30m	0.30	0.35m	0.40m
Depth of Natural	0.45m	0.50m	0.50m	0.50m	0.50m	0.55m	0.60m
Base of Trench	0.60m	0.55m	0.50m	0.50m	0.60m	0.60m	0.70m

This trench was located within the southern half of the site and targeted a flat area with geophysical anomalies thought to be medieval ridge and furrow (Figs 5 and 6). Following the removal of the overburden it was clear that no archaeological remains occupied the trench (Fig. 10). The natural at the base of the trench comprised sands and gravels and sloped gradual downwards south to north. The remnants of the medieval ridge and furrow field system were visible as moderate undulating features within the topsoil.

Trench 5

Figure 11: Trench 5, post excavation, looking north-east

OD Height: 107.51m	(W) 0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25m	30m (E)
Topsoil Depth	0.20m	0.20m	0.20m	0.20m	0.20m	0.20m	0.20m
Subsoil Depth	0.30m	0.45m	0.50m	0.45m	0.45m	0.30m	0.20m
Depth of Natural	0.50m	0.65m	0.70m	0.65m	0.65m	0.50m	0.40m
Base of Trench	0.65m	0.80m	0.85m	0.85m	0.80m	0.70m	0.60m

Trench 5 had been placed towards the south-west corner of the development area and had targeted an area of geophysical anomalies thought to be medieval ridge and furrow and a post-medieval boundary ditch (Figs 5 and 6). Excavation of the trench revealed natural sands and gravels mixed with clay at base of the trench (Fig. 11). The natural sloped gradually downwards from south to north and was overlain by a deep post-glacial colluvial deposit or hill wash that measured between 0.30m and 0.50m deep. This trench did contain ridge and furrow but it was only visible as moderate undulating features within the topsoil, whilst a modern boundary ditch was seen at the northern end of the trench.

Trench 6

Figure 12: Trench 6, post-excitation, looking north-west

OD Height: 106.06m	(SE) 0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25m	30m (NW)
Topsoil Depth	0.30m	0.30m	0.20m	0.20m	0.30m	0.30m	0.30m
Subsoil Depth	0.30m	-	0.45m	0.20m	0.40m	0.30	0.50m
Depth of Natural	0.60m	-	0.65m	0.50m	0.70m	0.60m	0.80m
Base of Trench	0.80m	0.70m	0.80m	0.70m	0.90m	0.75m	0.90m

Trench 6 was placed towards the north-west corner of the site and targeted an area of geophysical anomalies thought to be a boundary ditch (Figs 5 and 6). This trench had targeted what appeared to be a moderate sloping earth platform but excavations of the trench revealed natural brown sands and gravels that sloped downwards from south to north (Fig 12). Overlying was a post-glacial colluvial deposit that measured 0.30m deep at the southern end of the trench and 0.50m at the northern end. A potential feature was seen towards the centre of the trench which on investigation revealed a natural feature. At the southern end of the trench a modern boundary ditch was visible.

Trench 7

Figure 13 Trench 7, post excavation, looking east

OD Height: 103.38m	(W) 0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25m	29m (E)
Topsoil Depth	0.20m	0.20m	0.20m	0.20m	0.20m	0.20m	0.20m
Subsoil Depth	0.05m	0.053m	0.10m	0.10m	0.10m	0.15m	0.1 0m
Depth of Natural	0.25m	0.25m	0.30m	0.30m	0.30m	0.35m	0.300m
Base of Trench	0.25m	0.25m	0.30m	0.30m	0.30m	0.35	0.30m

This trench targeted a blank geophysical area on the north-west corner of the field and a flat flood plain area (Figs 5 and 6). Excavations revealed a natural grey silty clay with several ceramic pipe field drains laid in a lattice pattern (Fig. 13). The trench contained little or no subsoil which suggests possible landscaping activity or natural erosion. No archaeological features were revealed within the trench.

Trench 8

Figure 14 Trench 8, post excavation, looking north-east

OD Height: 103.64m	(SW) 0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25m	32m (NE)
Topsoil Depth	0.20m	0.20m	0.20m	0.20m	0.20m	0.20m	0.20m
Subsoil Depth	0.70m	0.50m	0.50m	-	0.40m	0.50m	-
Depth of Natural	0.90m	0.70m	0.70m	-	0.60m	0.70m	-
Base of Trench	0.92m	0.80m	0.80m	0.20m	0.70m	0.85m	0.20m

Trench 8 had been placed towards the centre of the development area and had a sloping earth platform or terrace (Fig 5 and 6). Excavation of the trench revealed natural sands and gravels

mixed with clay at base of the trench (Fig. 14). The natural that sloped gradually downwards from south to north was overlain by a deep colluvial deposit or hill wash that measured between 0.40m and 0.70m. The northernmost end of the trench was flat and natural was truncated by several land drains. No archaeological feature were visible.

Discussion and Conclusion

The archaeological evaluation by trial trenching revealed no evidence for archaeological features or finds within the any of the trenches, apart from an east-west post-medieval boundary ditch revealed within trenches 3, 5 and 6, and medieval ridge and furrow visible in trenches 3, 4, and 5. There was no evidence of any other features in the trenches and other potential anomalies located by the geophysical survey were most likely geological in nature.

There is a modern water pipe running east to west down the centre of the field and its construction may account for the modern disturbance observed with trenches 2, 3 and 8. The majority of the trenches (Trenches 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 8) contained deep post-glacial colluvial deposits that measured between 0.40m and 0.70m deep. The River Swift located towards the northern end of the site appears to have eroded these deposits and created what are thought to be natural terraces.

Trenches 1 and 7 were placed within northern end of the proposed development and were located within a natural flood plain area, which may have been levelled as the trenches contained modern field drains.

As no archaeological deposits were identified, 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 Leicestershire Museums with accession number X.A86 2019 and consists of the following:

- 1 Unbound copy of this report (ULAS Report No. 2019-128)
- 8 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 thank Jonathan Wood and Mathew Browne both of STOAS Architects Ltd for their help and co-operation with the project. Tim Higgins carried out the trial trenching for ULAS and the project was managed by Dr Richard Buckley. The excavator was provided by Planters. The project was monitored by Richard Clarke Planning Archaeologist for Leicestershire County Council.

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