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Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological Evaluation at Hall Farm, Main Street, Sutton Cheney
Leicestershire, CV13 0AJ**

NGR: SK 41730 00360

Tim Higgins



**ULAS Report No 2019-133 v3
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Grid Ref: SK 41730 00360
Author: Tim Higgins
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OASIS RECORD

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	Project Name	An archaeological field evaluation at Hall Farm, Main Street, Sutton Cheney, Leicestershire (SK 41730 00360)		
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	Site Status	None		
	Current Land Use	Farmyard		
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	Reason for Investigation	NPPF		
	Position in the Planning Process	Planning condition		
Planning Ref.	17/00401/FUL			
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	Site Address/Postcode	Hall Farm, Main Street, Sutton Cheney, Leicestershire CV13 0AJ		
	Study Area	3145msq		
	Site Coordinates	SK417003.		
	Height OD	118 m to 121 m aOD		
PROJECT CREATORS	Organisation	ULAS		
	Project Brief Originator	Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council		
	Project Design Originator	ULAS		
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An archaeological field evaluation at Hall Farm, Main Street, Sutton Cheney, Leicestershire (SK 41730 00360)

Tim Higgins

Summary

This document is a fieldwork report for an archaeological trial trench evaluation, carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) at Hall Farm, Main Street, Sutton Cheney, Leicestershire (NGR: SK 41730 00360) in advance of proposed residential development. The development site consists of a farmyard located at Hall Farm on the east side Main Street within the medieval village core.

A total of four trenches were placed across the farmyard sampling c.3% of the site. The evaluation produced some evidence for 19th- and 20th century activity – namely a cobbled surface close to Main Street, service pipes, modern wall footings, a land drain and a backfilled pond – but found no evidence for earlier archaeological features or deposits. The recorded archaeology could be equated with features and buildings present on Ordnance Survey maps over the past 140 years. Overall, it would appear that the stratigraphic sequence across the site, away from the Main Street frontage, was relatively undisturbed, whilst on the frontage there was potential for the survival of deeper intrusive features. However, no evidence was found to suggest that significant archaeological activity pre-dating the 19th century was taking place in the proposed development area.

The archive for the site will be deposited with Leicestershire Museums with accession number X.A57.2019.

Introduction

In September 2019, University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) was commissioned by The Environment Partnership (TEP) to carry out an archaeological evaluation at Hall Farm, Main Street, Sutton Cheney, Leicestershire (SK 41730 00360; Figure 1). Work was undertaken to establish the nature, extent, date and significance of any archaeological deposits which might be present, in order that an assessment may be made of the impact of any proposed development on the buried remains.

The work was carried out as part of a phased programme of archaeological work required by the local planning authority following advice from the Senior Planning Archaeologist for Leicestershire County Council. This was in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Section 16: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment (MHCLG 2019).

Work was carried out between 16th – 18th September, 2019 per a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by TEP (TEP 2019) and approved by the Senior Planning Archaeologist. This comprised a programme of trial trenching in order to assess the potential impact of the proposed scheme on any archaeology, and implement an appropriate mitigation strategy as necessary. This document presents the results of the archaeological investigation.

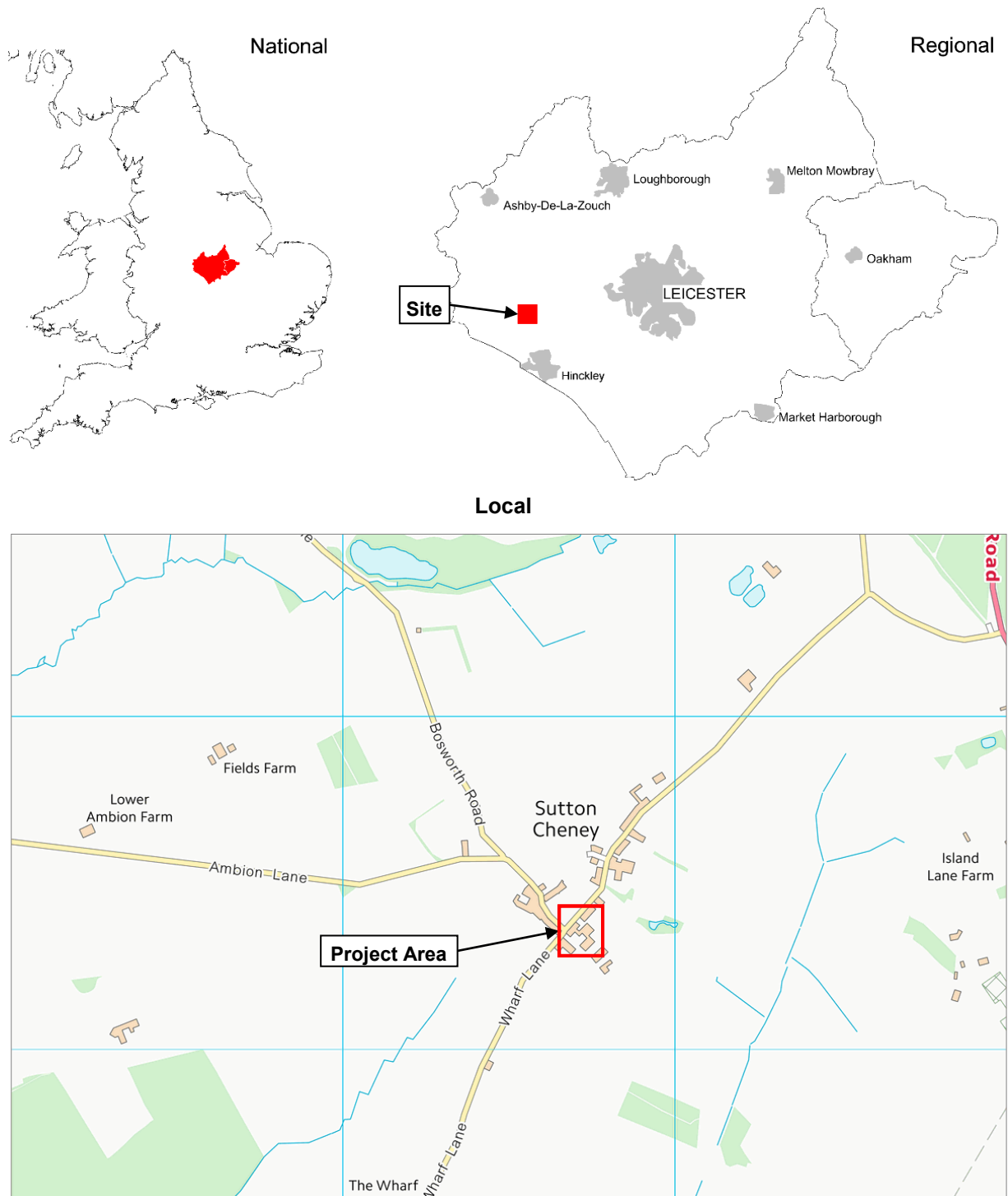


Figure 1: Site Location

Contains OS data © Crown copyright [and database right] (2016)

Location and Geology

The site is located at Hall Farm east of Main Street, Sutton Cheney, Leicestershire CV13 0AJ (Figure 1). The site is approximately 0.3 hectares centred on National Grid Reference SK 41730 00360. The development area is sited in the centre of Sutton Cheney, bounded by the existing village to the north, west and south with fields to the east (Figure 2).

Ground across the site was relatively flat, with a slight slope up from 118m above Ordnance Datum in the south-west to 119m aOD in the north-east

The British Geological Survey (BGS) shows the underlying geology to comprise sedimentary mudstone of the Gunthorpe Member, formed approximately 237 to 247 million years ago. Superficial deposits consist of glaciofluvial sand and gravel deposits formed up to 2 million years ago under ice age conditions.

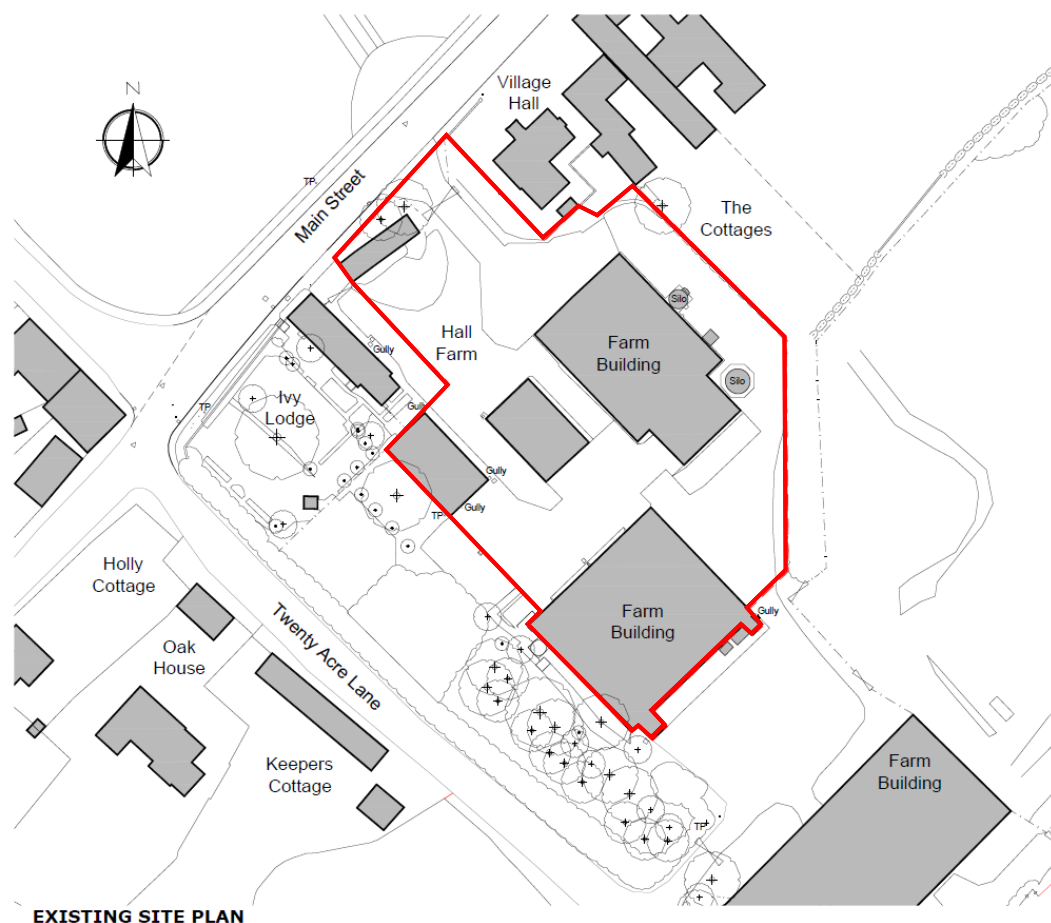


Figure 2: Plan of the site at time of work (red line). Image supplied by client.

Historical and Archaeological Background (from the WSI, TEP 2019)

The evidence for Prehistoric activity in the 1km study area is represented by two Bronze Age bowl barrows (NMR 315029), which survive as earthworks, as well as several instances of possible prehistoric features viewed as cropmarks. The Bronze Age barrows are situated 300m to the north-west of the development site and a single Early Bronze Age bone pin was recovered from one of the barrows. There are also two further undated mounds (NMR 965013) seen on aerial photographs near Ambion Wood, 900m to the West of the site.

By the time of the arrival of the Romans in Britain from 43 AD, Leicestershire would have already been part of a settled agricultural landscape. The small farmsteads and hamlets across the county tended to continue life very much in a similar way into the Roman period, with some adoption of a new money economy, and adaptation of existing farming practices with the construction of timber buildings on earlier Iron Age sites. In the study area Roman activity is evidenced by findspots including a bronze figurine of a Roman officer or god (NMR 965000)

found 900m to the north of the development site and a Roman quern stone (NMR 315035) found 600m to the west. Other pottery evidence has also been found in the fields surrounding the village

The Saxon origins of the village can be seen from its place-name with 'Sutton' comprising the Old English words 'sud' meaning south and 'tun' meaning a settlement. 'Cheney' is a manorial affix referring a 13th Century landowner, John Chaynel. There is no Anglo Saxon evidence within the 1km search area with a single Anglo Saxon burial identified on a site at Dadlington approximately 3.2km from Sutton Cheney. In Leicestershire as a whole, Anglo Saxon settlement evidence is sparse with the majority of evidence consisting of cemetery sites and pottery recovered during fieldwalking.

In the Domesday Book of 1086, Sutton Cheney is listed as a small settlement within the Guthlaxton Hundred under the lordship of Arnold of Sibleby. A chapel was extant in the village in 1220 which was served three times a week from the mother church of St Peter at Market Bosworth. The church later became the church of St James with the majority of the church dating to the early-13th Century with additional Perpendicular Gothic features.

Cropmarks approximately 200m from the development site indicate the site of a possible medieval shrunken village (NMR 315075). Aerial photographs however, suggest the site is more likely to be the result of destroyed field banks rather than shrinkage.

Approximately 1km to the south-west of the development site is an undated field system (NMR 965014) which underlies the surviving ridge and furrow and therefore possibly represents Anglo Saxon or early medieval farming.

Sutton Cheney is located 1.3km from the site of the Battle of Bosworth Field which was the last significant battle of the War of the Roses and where Richard III was killed in battle.

Post medieval Sutton Cheney is represented by contrasting 17th Century structures consisting of six limestone Almshouses (NMR 520833) and the two-storeyed house of Sutton Cheney Hall (NMR 315079). Sutton Cheney Hall was built in 1613 by Sir William Roberts who also built the almshouses in 1612 and is remembered by a monument erected in the Church of St James.

At the turn of the 19th Century, the Hinckley and Bosworth District was split economically between manufacturing in the towns and rural agriculture. 19th Century OS mapping indicates that Sutton Cheney had expanded northwards during this period with two inns and a Methodist church now shown.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the development site is shown as consisting of an L-shaped building and field with the existing farmhouse immediately to the south-west. There was therefore some potential for post medieval foundational remains related to the L-shaped building to be found within the development site. Land immediately to the north of the site was described as a school.

Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping for 1929 still depicts the L-shaped building on the site as well as several additional outbuildings. By 1980 the L-shaped building was no longer shown and the modern barn which occupies much of the site to the south had been built as well as several farm buildings south of the site. There was therefore potential for the presence of archaeological remains relating to the early-20th Century outbuildings within the northern part of the site.

Archaeological Objectives

The main objectives of the work were:

- To identify the presence/absence of any archaeological deposits on the site.
- To establish 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 the cultural heritage and to help formulate a mitigation strategy.
- To record any archaeological deposits and produce an archive and report of any results.

The programme of work was designed to allow for the need for, and scope of, further archaeological mitigation to be designed and undertaken as necessary. This was in accordance with paragraphs 189, 190, 197 and 199 of the NPPF (MHCLG 2019).

The research objectives of the programme of work were determined by what, if any, archaeological remains were present within the development footprint. However, subsequent assessment and analysis was considered in light of the East Midlands Research Agenda (Cooper 2006) and updated Agenda and Strategy (Knight et al. 2012), particularly:

- Research Objective 4C: Characterise the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age settlement resource and investigate intra-regional variability (Knight et al. 2012, 62).
- Research Objective 5H: Investigate the landscape context of rural settlements in the Romano-British Period (Knight et al. 2012, 79).
- Research Objective 7E: Investigate the morphology of rural settlements in the medieval period (Knight et al. 2012, 100).

Methodology

The Senior Planning Archaeologist for Leicestershire County Council, as archaeological advisor to the local planning authority, requested a c. 4% sample (c.120 sq m) of the undisturbed area comprising five 15m by 1.6m trenches (Figure 3). However, with the agreement of the consultants TEP and the Senior Planning Archaeologist, Trench 3 was not excavated (see below).

The trenches were excavated using a 22 tonne 360° JCB JS 220 LC mechanical digger equipped with a 1.6m wide toothless ditching bucket. The farmyard surfaces and underlying layers were removed under full archaeological supervision until either the top of archaeological deposits or the natural undisturbed substratum was reached. All trenches, open areas, exposed sections, and spoil heaps were visually inspected for features and artefacts. Features were hand cleaned, planned, photographed and sample excavated as appropriate. Field notes were recorded on pro-forma ULAS urban trench recording forms whilst stratigraphic units were, as necessary, given a unique context number and recorded on pro-forma ULAS context sheets. Trench and feature plans/sections were drawn at appropriate scales and tied into the National Grid using appropriate methods. A photographic record of the excavation was prepared, illustrating in both detail and general context the principal features and finds discovered. Colour digital photographs were taken throughout the excavation. The photographic record also included

‘working shots’ to illustrate more generally the nature of the archaeological operation mounted. The work followed the approved WSI (TEP 2019) and adhered to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologist’s (CIfA) *Code of Conduct* (rev. 2014a) in accordance with their *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (rev. 2014b).



Figure 3: Location of trenches showing archaeological features, modern services and pertinent information from 1st & 2nd edition 1:2500 Ordnance Survey maps (1886 & 1903).

An accession number (X.A57 2019) was obtained from Leicestershire Museums prior to commencement of the project and used to identify all records and artefacts.

Results

A total of 4 trenches was excavated within the development area (Figure 3). This meant 95.4 sq m of trenching was completed, comprising a 3.2% sample of the site.

Trench 1

Table 1: Summary of Trench 1

Length (m)	Width (m)	Area (sq m)			Min. depth (m)		Max. depth (m)
10	1.8	18			0.8		1.1
Interval from W end	0m	2m	4m	6m	8m	10m	
Ground (m aOD)	118.6	-	-	-	-	118	
Gravel thickness (m)	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	
Brick rubble thickness (m)	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	
Cobble surface thickness (m)	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	-	-	
Depth of natural substratum (m)	0.8	0.8	1	1	-	-	
Natural substratum (m OD)	117.8	-	-	-	-	-	
Trench depth	0.9	0.9	1.1	1.1	0.8	0.8	



Figure 4: Trench 1, post excavation, looking east

Trench 1 was located toward the north end of the site, c.20m south of Main Street, and was broadly orientated west to east. Ground gently sloped down across the trench area from 118.6m aOD in the east to 118m aOD in the west. Modern gravel farmyard surface (c.0.2m thick) and made ground comprising a layer of modern brick rubble up to 0.6m thick was removed exposing a cobbled surface (c.0.2m thick) overlying natural substratum (Figure 4). The surface covered the western two-thirds of the trench and contained late 19th/20th-century pottery (spotted dated on site and not retained). The natural substratum, mottled red clay with patches of sand and gravel, was observed

at c.117.8m aOD at the west end of the trench. At the east end, the cobbles and natural were truncated by a service cable. No other archaeological features or deposits were visible.

The brick rubble may have come from the demolition of part of a brick farm building immediately north of the trench, dismantled in the 1970s or 80s, but this is by no means certain and it could be imported made ground. The cobbled surface presumably relates to an earlier phase of the farmyard. When it was first laid is unclear but it was presumed to be of 19th-century date.

Trench 2

Table 2: Summary of Trench 2

Length (m)	Width (m)	Area (sq m)				Min. depth (m)			Max. depth (m)
15	1.8	27				0.4			0.9
Interval from SE end	0m	2m	4m	6m	8m	10m	12m	14m	
Ground (m aOD)	118.4	118.4	118.4	118.4	118.4	118.4	118.4	118.4	
Gravel thickness (m)	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	
Brick rubble thickness (m)	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	
Subsoil thickness (m)	-	-	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.2	0.3	0.3	
Depth of natural substratum (m)	-	-	0.9	0.9	0.8	0.6	0.6	0.6	
Natural substratum (m OD)	-	-	117.5	117.5	117.6	117.8	117.8	117.8	
Trench depth	0.4	0.4	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.6	0.6	0.6	



Figure 5: Trench 2, post excavation, looking south-east

Trench 2 was located on the west side of the site, 12m south of Trench 1 and was placed between a workshop and a barn broadly orientated south-east to north-west on level ground at 118.40m OD. Modern gravel farmyard surface (c.0.1m thick) and made ground comprising a layer of modern brick rubble up to 0.3m thick was removed exposing subsoil (up to 0.5m thick) overlying natural substratum (Figure 5). The subsoil, which thickened from c.0.3m in the north to c.0.5m in the south, was dark greyish-brown sandy clay mixed with pebbles. The natural substratum, mottled yellowish-orange and brown sand with gravel patches, was observed

between *c.* 117.5m aOD towards the south end of the trench and *c.* 117.8m at the north. At the south end of the trench, the natural was truncated by a service cable. No other archaeological features or deposits were visible.

Trench 3

Trench 3 was to be located at the centre of the site between two barns (Figure 3 & Figure 6). However, due to site constraints (confined space, deep concrete surfaces and the possible presence of an electricity cable) it was agreed with the consultants TEP and the Senior Planning Archaeologist for Leicester County Council that this trench would not be excavated.



Figure 6 Location of proposed Trench 3, looking north.

Trench 4

Table 3: Summary of Trench 1

Length (m)	Width (m)	Area (sq m)			Min. depth (m)		Max. depth (m)	
15	1.8	27			1		1.1	
Interval from NW end	0m	2m	4m	6m	8m	10m	12m	
Ground (m aOD)	118.9	118.9	118.9	118.9	118.9	118.9	118.9	
Gravel & rubble thickness (m)	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	
Subsoil thickness (m)	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.65	-	
Depth of natural substratum (m)	1	1	1	1	1	1.05	-	
Natural substratum (m OD)	117.9	117.9	117.9	117.9	117.9	117.85	-	
Trench depth	1.1	1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	0.4	

Trench 4 was located on the east side of the site east of a large barn, broadly orientated north-west to south-east, on level ground at 118.9m aOD. Modern gravel farmyard surface and brick rubble hardcore (*c.* 0.4m thick) was removed exposing subsoil (up to *c.* 0.65m thick) overlying natural substratum (Figure 7). The subsoil was dark greyish-brown sandy clay mixed with pebbles. The natural substratum, mixed pale orangeish-brown sandy-clay and orangeish-brown

sand mixed with frequent pebbles, was observed at *c.*117.9m aOD. At the south end of the trench, the presence of a service drain meant that ground was not excavated down to natural. At the north end of the trench a modern land drain was observed. No other archaeological features or deposits were visible.



Figure 7: Trench 4, post excavation, looking south.

Trench 5

Table 4: Summary of Trench 1

Length (m)	Width (m)	Area (sq m)			Min. depth (m)		Max. depth (m)	
13	1.8	23.4			1.3		1.7	
Interval from SW end	0m	2m	4m	6m	8m	10m	12m	
Ground (m aOD)	118.5	118.5	118.5	118.5	118.5	118.5	118.5	
Gravel & hardcore thickness (m)	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.4	
Soil thickness (m)	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.4	0.9	0.9	0.9	
Depth of natural substratum (m)	1.6	1.6	1.7	1.7	1.3	1.3	1.3	
Natural substratum (m OD)	116.9	116.9	116.8	116.8	117.2	117.2	117.2	
Trench depth	1.6	1.6	1.7	1.7	1.3	1.3	1.3	

Trench 5 was located on the south side between two barns, broadly orientated south-west to north-east, on level ground at 118.5m aOD. Modern gravel farmyard surface and brick rubble hardcore (*c.*0.3m thick) was removed exposing dark greyish-brown topsoil (up to 0.5m thick) overlying dark greyish-brown sandy-clay (up to 0.9m thick) mixed with occasional pebbles, brick and tile. These soils appeared to fill in a large hollow crossing much of the trench, probably a pond shown on editions of Ordnance Survey maps between 1886 and 1929 but absent from an edition of 1958. The lower sandy-clay fill of the pond contained late 19th/20th-century pottery (spotted dated on site and not retained). The natural substratum, mixed pale orangeish-brown sandy-clay and orangeish-brown sand and gravel, was observed at 117.2m aOD to the east outside the 'pond' and 116.8m aOD beneath the 'pond'. The water table appeared to have been reached here, as water seeped into the trench at this low lying point.



Figure 8: Trench 5, west end post excavation, looking north-west showing dark soils backfilling a 'pond'. The unmachined area to the right contains a modern service pipe.



Figure 9: Trench 5, east end post excavation, looking north-west. The pond edge can be seen on the left edge of the image.

Discussion and Conclusion

The evaluation produced some evidence for 19th- and 20th century activity on the site – namely a cobbled surface, service pipes, modern wall footings, a land drain and a backfilled pond – but found no evidence for earlier archaeological features or deposits.

On the Main Street frontage, the cobbled surface in Trench 1 probably relates to a small enclosed yard area associated with an L-shaped building and pump shown on the 1st edition 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map of 1886. This appears to be a small 19th-century farmyard or service yard to the east of Ivy Lodge, itself a late 18th / early 19th-century building with possible earlier elements (Andrew Hyam pers. comm.). Ordnance Survey maps show that part of the L-shaped building was demolished sometime between 1966 and 1983 and this may account for the large quantity of brick rubble found on top of the cobbled surface in Trench 1. Pottery from the surface gave it a *terminus post quem* of the late 19th / 20th century and it is probably contemporary with the L-shaped building, which also appears to be of 19th-century date, rather than the earlier house to the west. Subsoil was not present beneath the surface, which rested directly on the natural substratum, and it is unlikely that earlier stratified deposits survived in this area although deeper intrusive features, if present, might remain relatively intact.

To the south, maps show that much of the present farmyard covered ground which was formerly field, probably pasture, until the late 20th century. This is reflected in the soil sequence in Trenches 2 and 4 which both revealed undisturbed subsoil with a diffuse interface with the natural substratum. This suggests that the soil formed naturally and had seen very little disturbance. Topsoil was missing from these trenches, having been previously removed when hardcore and gravel was laid to create the farmyard. Neither trench produced evidence of archaeological activity in the vicinity.

A similar soil sequence was observed at the east end of Trench 5, at the southern end of the site, but most of the trench crossed a large waterlogged ‘hollow’ which coincides with the southern edge of a rectangular pond depicted on Ordnance Survey maps from 1886 to 1929. The pond was backfilled with soil containing 20th-century pottery and building material. This is consistent with map evidence which indicates that the pond was filled in sometime between 1929 and 1958. The brick and concrete footings in Trench 5 cannot be directly equated with any building on Ordnance Survey maps. However, they clearly post-dated the backfilling of the pond and must, therefore, be of later 20th-century date and are probably associated with the farmyard which was built in the 1970s/80s.

Overall, it would appear that the stratigraphic sequence across the site, away from the Main Street frontage, was relatively undisturbed. However, no evidence was found to suggest that significant archaeological activity pre-dating the 19th century was taking place in the proposed development area.

Archive and publication

The project archive will be deposited with Leicestershire Museums with accession number X.A57 2019 and consists of the following:

- 1 Unbound copy of this report (ULAS Report No. 2019-133 v3)
- 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.

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