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Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological Evaluation on Land  
Adjacent to Meadowside, Rugby Road,  
Swinford, Leicestershire, LE17 6BW**

**NGR: SP 56738 79249**

**Roger Kipling**



**ULAS Report No. 2020-040  
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**Site Name:** Meadowside, Rugby Road, Swinford, Leicestershire, LE17 6BW

**Grid Ref:** SP 56738 79249

**Author:** Roger Kipling

**Client:** Mr & Mrs Michael Mourant & HB Architects

**Planning Ref:** 19/01596/FUL

**ULAS Report Number:** 2020-040

**Accession Number:** X.A22.2020

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## OASIS RECORD

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>	<b>Oasis No</b>	universi1-387975		
	<b>Project Name</b>	An Archaeological Evaluation on Land Adjacent to Meadowside, Rugby Road, Swinford, Leicestershire		
	<b>Start/end dates</b>	4th March		
	<b>Previous/Future Work</b>	None		
	<b>Project Type</b>	Evaluation		
	<b>Site Status</b>	None		
	<b>Current Land Use</b>	Pasture		
	<b>Monument Type/Period</b>	None		
	<b>Significant Finds/Period</b>	None		
	<b>Reason for Investigation</b>	NPPF		
	<b>Position in the Planning Process</b>	Planning condition		
<b>Planning Ref.</b>	19/01596/FUL			
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>	<b>County</b>	Leicestershire		
	<b>Site Address/Postcode</b>	Meadowside, Rugby Road, Swinford, Leicestershire, LE17 6BW		
	<b>Study Area</b>	1.23 hectares		
	<b>Site Coordinates</b>	SP 56738 79249		
	<b>Height OD</b>	112-118		
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	ULAS		
	<b>Project Brief Originator</b>	Leicestershire County Council		
	<b>Project Design Originator</b>	ULAS		
	<b>Project Manager</b>	John Thomas		
	<b>Project Director/Supervisor</b>	Roger Kipling		
	<b>Sponsor/Funding Body</b>	Mr & Mrs Michael Mourant & HB Architects		
<b>PROJECT ARCHIVE</b>		<b>Physical</b>	<b>Digital</b>	<b>Paper</b>
	<b>Recipient</b>	None	Leicestershire Museums	Leicestershire Museums
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## **An Archaeological Evaluation on Land Adjacent to Meadowside, Rugby Road, Swinford, Leicestershire, LE17 6BW**

**SP 56738 79249**

*Roger Kipling*

### **Summary**

*This document is a fieldwork report for an archaeological evaluation, carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on land adjacent to Meadowside, Rugby Road, Swinford, Leicestershire (SP56738 79249) in advance of a residential development of 21 dwellings and associated works by Mr & Mrs Michael Mourant & HB Architects (19/01596/FUL).*

*The proposed development area is currently pasture land, of c. 1.23ha, on the western edge of Swinford. It is bounded to the north by Rugby Road and to the east by residential housing and hedges.*

*A desk-based assessment undertaken in 2005 for land east of the site had highlighted the potential for prehistoric, Roman and Anglo Saxon remains to be present in the vicinity of the site, whilst excavations at Starmore Farm to the east in 2018 produced evidence for medieval and post medieval activity.*

*A total of eight evaluation trenches (30m x 1.9m) were excavated within the footprints of the proposed buildings. No archaeological deposits were identified, with the exception of medieval plough furrows identified in several trenches. Standing ridge and furrow earthworks were present and a representative profile was recorded across one of the better-preserved sections of these remains.*

*The archive for the site will be deposited with Leicestershire County Museums with accession number X.A22.2020.*

### **Introduction**

In accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF): Section 16 *Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment* (MHCLG 2019) this document forms the report for an Archaeological Evaluation on land adjacent to Meadowside, Rugby Road, Swinford, Leicestershire (Fig. 1). It details the programme of Archaeological Evaluation that was undertaken in March 2020 and follows the strategy of work set out in the Written Scheme for Investigation (ULAS 2020).

Planning permission is being sought for a residential development for 21 dwellings and associated works on the site (19/01596/FUL). The archaeological work was required to provide preliminary indications of the character and extent of any heritage assets in order that the potential impact of the development on such remains might be assessed by the Planning Authority.

As a consequence of the Planning Archaeologist recommended mitigation by trial trenching and recording targeting the footprints of the proposed buildings.

## Site Description, Topography and Geology

The development area is currently farm land, comprising 1.23ha (Fig. 2). It is generally level and lies at a height of approximately 118m aOD to the north, sloping down to 112m aOD in the south.

The British Geological Survey identifies the bedrock geology of the area as Charmouth Mudstone Formation – Mudstone, overlain by superficial deposits of Till, Mid Pleistocene – diamicton (British Geological Survey Geology of Britain Viewer (accessed 21 January 2020)).

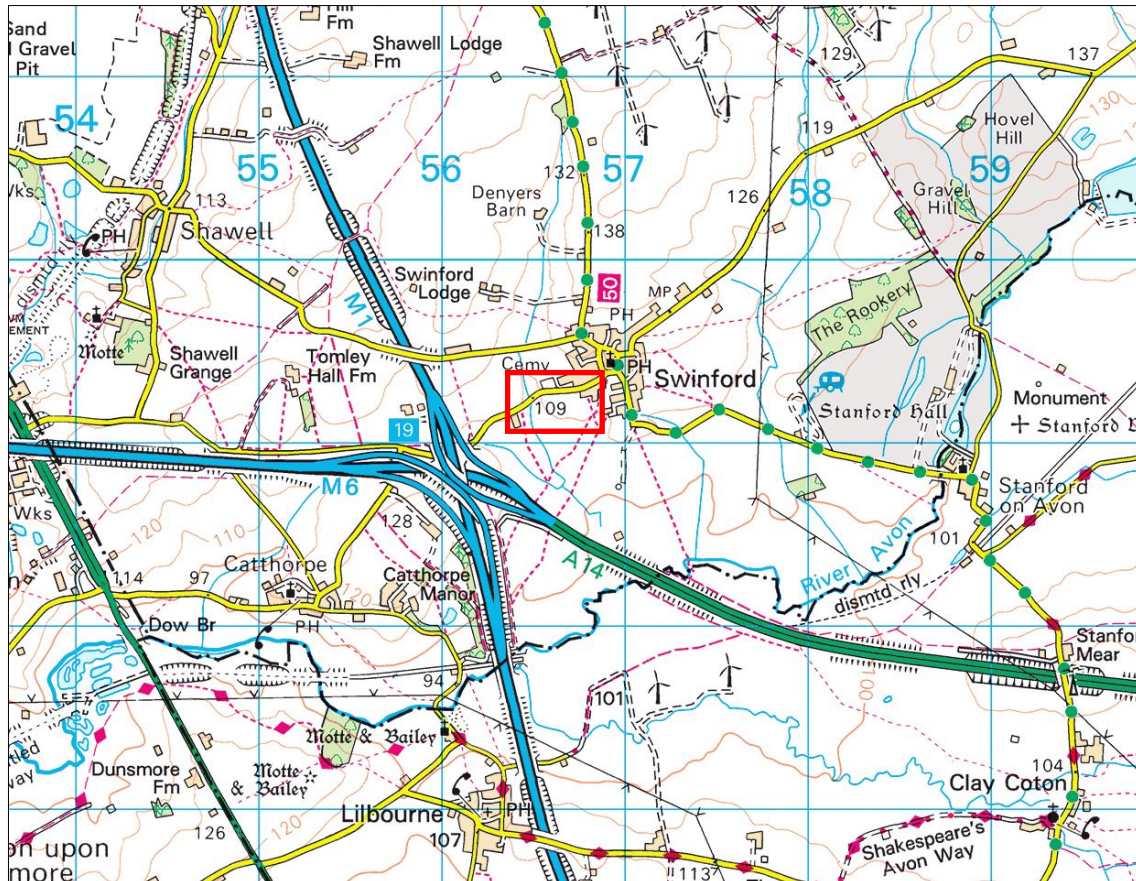


Figure 1: Location of site

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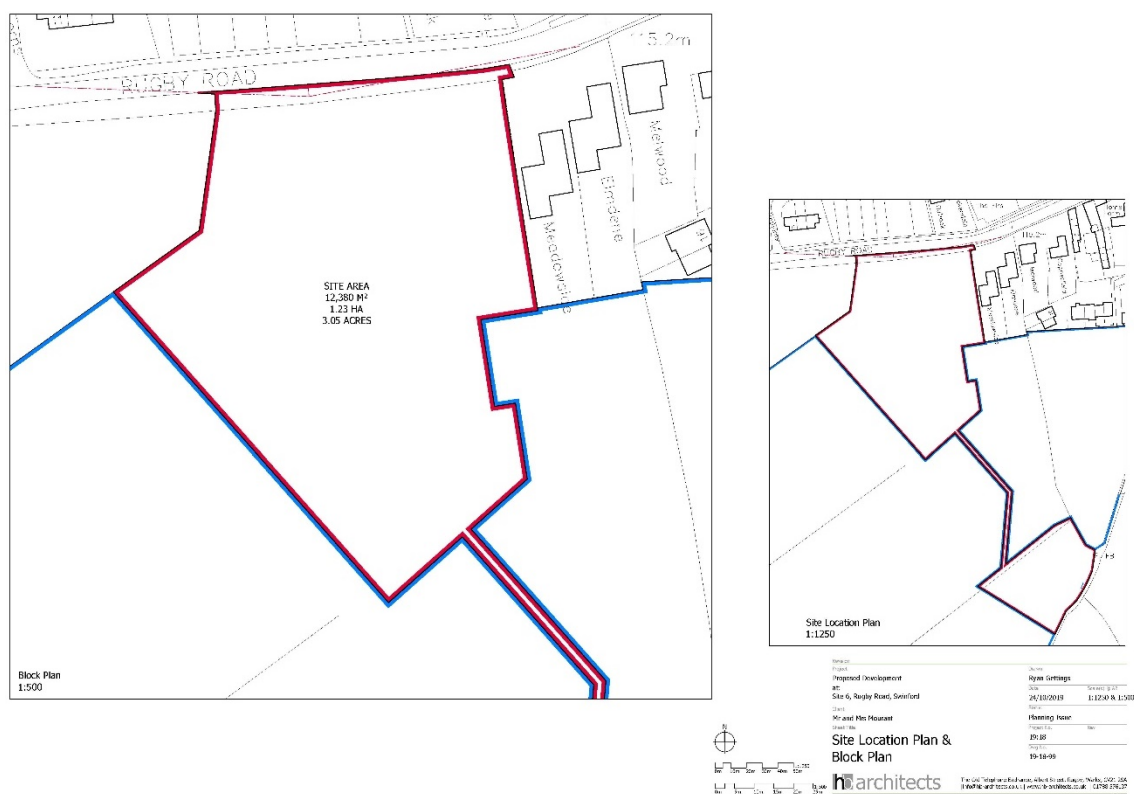


Figure 2: Location of site within Swinford. Plan supplied by client

## Historical and Archaeological Background

The village of Swinford was known as Suineford in the Domesday Book (Bourne 2003, 84) and consists of a historic village core with four main roads that lead off this centre (HER **MLE10318**). The main conservation area in Swinford (**DLE515**) is made up of cottages and former farm houses and farm land.

Previous desk-based assessments have been carried out in the area (Harvey 2005, Hunt 2010). These have identified the following archaeological information:

### *Prehistoric*

Various prehistoric archaeological sites have been recorded in the vicinity of the proposed development area. A burnt broken flint point dating to the Neolithic or early Bronze Age has been found 740m to the west. One Mesolithic blade and four blade like flakes were recovered during fieldwalking 850m to the southwest. A single sherd of Iron Age pottery was recovered during fieldwalking 640m to the west. This pottery may be associated with two undated trapezoidal enclosures, apparently double-ditched, that have been identified from aerial photography). Another undated enclosure (SP 566 782) may be of Iron Age date. A possible enclosure recorded as a cropmark (SP 562 788) was not confirmed by evaluation.

An excavation at Swinford windfarm was carried out in 2011 following on from trial trenching in 2010. This revealed a series of late Iron Age and Roman settlement features (Morris 2011).

## **Roman**

Two Roman sites have been identified in the vicinity of the proposed development area, comprising a sherd of Roman pottery (SP 562 788) and a dispersed scatter of Roman pottery (SP 663 788) both located during fieldwalking surveys.

## **Saxon and Medieval**

Anglo Saxon activity has also been identified from fieldwalking survey (SP 561 788) and trial trench evaluation (SP 563 788).

Trenching and excavation carried out at Starmore Farm to the south-east identified large ditches probably representing boundary ditches. These were partially excavated and produced pottery of early to mid-medieval date, 1100-1400, with a few sherds of 9th century pottery and roman pottery which is probably residual. A smaller shallow ditch cutting the larger ditch contained later pottery dating from 1300-1500. The ditches suggest the field was once sub-divided into smaller plots perhaps associated with the building of the farms along Stanford Road (Cooper, 2018).

A windmill is recorded from 1279 while Luffe's mill (type unknown) was mentioned in 1481.

## **Post Medieval - modern**

Post-medieval sites include a windmill recorded on the Ordnance Survey first edition map of 1836 (SP 570 798), the 17th-18th century landscaped park at Stanford Hall.

A watermill was recorded in Domesday and again in 1485. The suggested location of the mill is 950m to the south, situated on the River Avon.

Four incomplete raised circles were photographed by Jim Pickering in 1987 that appear to overlay ridge and furrow, located 400m to the north of the proposed development area. The HER suggests that these may relate to a windmill. However they are in fact mounds erected during WW2 as a decoy to direct bombing away from Rugby and Coventry (M Mourant/ J Paybody pers.comm).

Historic OS mapping shows the site with much the same sub-rectangular fields as are laid out today. Google satellite imagery appears to indicate ridge and furrow earthworks on the site and also in many of the adjoining fields.

## ***Conservation Areas and Historic Buildings***

Listed buildings include an 18th century Grade II Listed barn east of the application area (Coward 2003) while Home Farm immediately to the northwest is also Grade II listed. All Saints Church is located 100m to the north. The north arcade consists of two bays has been dated to the 13th century; the rest of the church is mostly 14th century with renovations in 1778 and 1895.

## **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.

## Research Objectives

Initial research objectives were derived from *The Archaeology of the East Midlands: An Archaeological Resource Assessment and Research Agenda, Leicester Archaeology Monograph 13*, (ed. Cooper 2006) and *East Midlands Heritage: An Updated Research Agenda and Strategy for the Historic Environment of the East Midlands* (ed. Knight et al 2012), and updated here:

<https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/researchframeworks/eastmidlands/wiki/>:

The site's location just outside the historic village core 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:

### *Iron Age*

4.6 Field systems, 4.8 Agricultural economy & landscape

### *Romano-British*

5.4 Rural settlement patterns & landscapes

### *Early Medieval*

6.4 Rural settlement patterns, 6.7 Agricultural economy and rural landscape

### *High Medieval*

7.2 Rural settlement

## 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 the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for archaeological evaluation prepared by ULAS and agreed with the Leicestershire County Council Planning Archaeologist (February 2020). The work was monitored by the client (Mr & Mrs Michael Mourant & HB Architects) and the Leicestershire County Council Planning Archaeologist.

An accession number (X.A22.2020) was obtained prior to commencement of the project and used to identify all records and artefacts.

A total of eight trenches each measuring 30m x 1.9m and totalling an area of 432m<sup>2</sup> were opened across the development area, targeting the footprints of the proposed houses (Figs 3-4).

Excavation was carried out using a 360° tracked machine fitted with a flat bladed 1.9m wide bucket. Overburden was removed carefully in level spits, under continuous archaeological supervision with topsoil and subsoil stored separately. The area was excavated down to the top of the natural substratum.

The ULAS recording manual was used as a guide for all recording. Individual descriptions of archaeological strata were entered onto pro-forma recording sheets.

The excavated area was recorded by an appropriate method and was tied in to the Ordnance Survey National Grid. A photographic record of the investigations was prepared, illustrating in both detail and general context the 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' which illustrate more generally the nature of the archaeological operation mounted.

After completion of the excavation and with agreement of the client and the Planning Archaeologist, the excavated area was re-instated.



Figure 3: Plan of evaluation trenches



Figure 4: Machining in progress: view north

## Results

Topsoil observed across the trenches consisted of a pale grey organic loam of friable consistency measuring 0.10m to 0.28m in depth. Subsoil comprised a 0.10m-0.32m accumulation of mottled mid orange-brown compact clay silt with sparse rounded gravel inclusions. The natural substratum was formed of bands of pale yellowish-grey and dull orange-brown sandy silty clay (Figs 5-7).

Table 1: Details of trenches

TRENCH NO.	ORIENTATION	DEPTH (MIN-MAX)	DEPTH TOPSOIL	DEPTH SUBSOIL	ARCHAEOLOGY PRESENT?
01	E-W	0.31m-0.52m	0.13m-0.22m	0.10m-0.22m	Yes – four plough furrows
02	NE-SW	0.30m-0.47m	0.10m-0.23m	0.15m-0.32m	Yes- five plough furrows
03	NNE-SSW	0.30m-0.60m	0.10m-0.22m	0.15m-0.25m	None
04	N-S	0.39m-0.58m	0.18m-0.25m	0.12m-0.28m	None
05	N-S	0.28m-0.54m	0.10m-0.22m	0.10m-0.20m	None
06	E-W	0.35m-0.58m	0.16m-0.28m	0.12m-0.30m	Yes – six plough furrows
07	E-W	0.6m-0.53m	0.16m-0.25m	0.10m-0.20m	Yes – two plough furrows
08	E-W	0.40m-0.61m	0.12m-0.20m	0.16m-0.32m	None

Standing medieval ridge and furrow earthworks were observed across the development area, a representative profile of which was produced adjacent to Trench 02 (Figs 8 & 9). Trenches 01, 02, 06 and 07 featured furrows and observed as metre-wide linear features aligned north-south and with pale grey clay silt fills.



Figure 5: Trench 02: view northwest (1m scale)



Figure 6: Trench 04: view north (1m scale)



Figure 7: Trench 08: view east (1m scale)



Figure 8: Trench 02: view northeast showing ridge & furrow (1m scale)

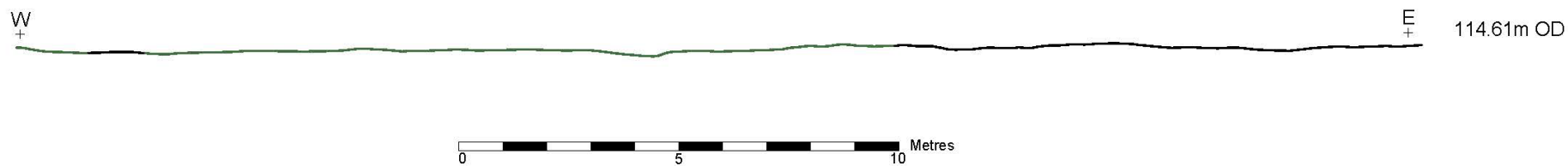


Figure 9: Profile east-west across earthworks adjacent to Trench 02

## Discussion and Conclusion

The proposed development on land at Rugby Road, Swinford, Leicestershire, offered some potential for undisturbed archaeological remains to be present. Previous desk-based assessments for the area had identified a number of prehistoric and Roman archaeological sites in the vicinity of the proposed development site, in addition to Anglo Saxon material recovered during fieldwalking surveys.

No archaeological features were identified during the excavation, with the exception of a number of plough furrows associated with medieval agricultural practice associated with the standing earthworks visible across the study area. Therefore the results will not contribute towards the Regional research objectives identified in the Written Scheme of Investigation.

## Archive and Publication

The archive for this project will be deposited with Leicestershire County Museums with accession number X.A22.2020 and consists of the following:

- 1 Unbound copy of this report (ULAS Report No. 2020-040)
- 8 trench record sheets
- 1 Drawing Record sheet
- 1 A3 Permatrace sheet of section drawings
- 1 Photo Record sheet
- 1 Contact sheets of digital photographs
- 1 CD containing a copy of this report and the 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

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- ULAS 2020 *Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Evaluation, Land Adjacent to Meadowside, Rugby Road, Swinford, Leicestershire, LE17 6BW* ULAS WSI 20-549.

## Acknowledgements

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