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Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological Strip, Map, and Sample over Land at 51 Main Street,  
Desford, Leicestershire**

**NGR: SK 47730 03549**

**Jon Coward**



**ULAS Report No 2020-016**

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**Site Name:** 51 Main Street, Desford, Leicestershire

**Grid Ref:** SK 47730 03549

**Author:** Jon Coward

**Client:** S and S Contracting

**Planning Ref.** 18/00118/FUL

**ULAS Report Number:** 2020-016

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## OASIS RECORD

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>	<b>Oasis No</b>	universi1-412055		
	<b>Project Name</b>	An Archaeological Strip, Map, and Sample at 51 Main Street, Desford, Leicestershire		
	<b>Start/end dates</b>	22 – 24 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2020		
	<b>Previous/Future Work</b>	Evaluation		
	<b>Project Type</b>	Strip map and sample		
	<b>Site Status</b>	None		
	<b>Current Land Use</b>	Gardens		
	<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>	18/00118/FUL		
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>	<b>County</b>	Leicestershire		
	<b>Site Address/Postcode</b>	51 Main Street, Desford, Leicestershire, LE9 9GR		
	<b>Study Area</b>	104msq		
	<b>Site Coordinates</b>	SK47730 03549.		
	<b>Height OD</b>	132m aOD		
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	ULAS		
	<b>Project Brief Originator</b>	Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council		
	<b>Project Design Originator</b>	ULAS		
	<b>Project Manager</b>	Vicki Score		
	<b>Project Director/Supervisor</b>	Stephen Baker		
	<b>Sponsor/Funding Body</b>	S and S Contracting		
<b>PROJECT ARCHIVE</b>		<b>Physical</b>	<b>Digital</b>	<b>Paper</b>
	<b>Recipient</b>	LCC Museum service	LCC Museum service	LCC Museum service
	<b>ID (Acc. No.)</b>	X.A12.2020	X.A12.2020	X.A12.2020
	<b>Contents</b>	Pot, bone	Photographs Survey	Report, Indices, Context sheets
<b>PROJECT BIBLIOGRA PHY</b>	<b>Type</b>	Grey Literature (unpublished)		
	<b>Description</b>	Developer Report A4 pdf		
	<b>Title</b>	An archaeological Strip, Map, and Sample at 51 Main Street, Desford, Leicestershire		
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## **An Archaeological Strip, Map, and Sample at 51 Main Street, Desford, Leicestershire (SK 47730 03549)**

**Jon Coward**

### **Summary**

*This document is a fieldwork report for An Archaeological Strip, Map, and Sample at 51 Main Street, Desford, Leicestershire (SK 47730 03549), carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) in advance of residential development.*

*The development site consists of an area of gardens to the rear of several properties on the south-west side of Main Street, Desford.*

*Previous evaluation had revealed the presence of archaeological deposits within the footprint of the southernmost proposed dwelling (ULAS report 2029-140). After direction from Leicester County Council planning department an area was opened around the archaeology within the proposed footprint. The strip revealed evidence for archaeological activity in the form of pits and postholes of Roman, Medieval and Post-medieval date.*

*The archive for the site will be deposited with Leicestershire Museums with accession number X.A12.2020*

### **Introduction**

University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) were contracted by the client, S and S Contracting, to carry out an archaeological strip, map and sample at 51 Main Street, Desford, Leicestershire (NGR:SK47730 03549). The work was carried out between 22th –24th Jan 2020.

The work was required by the Planning Authority following advice from the Leicestershire Planning Archaeologist in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, MHCLG 2018). All work was undertaken as per the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI).

The site was located on the on the south-west side of Main Street, Desford, Leicestershire.

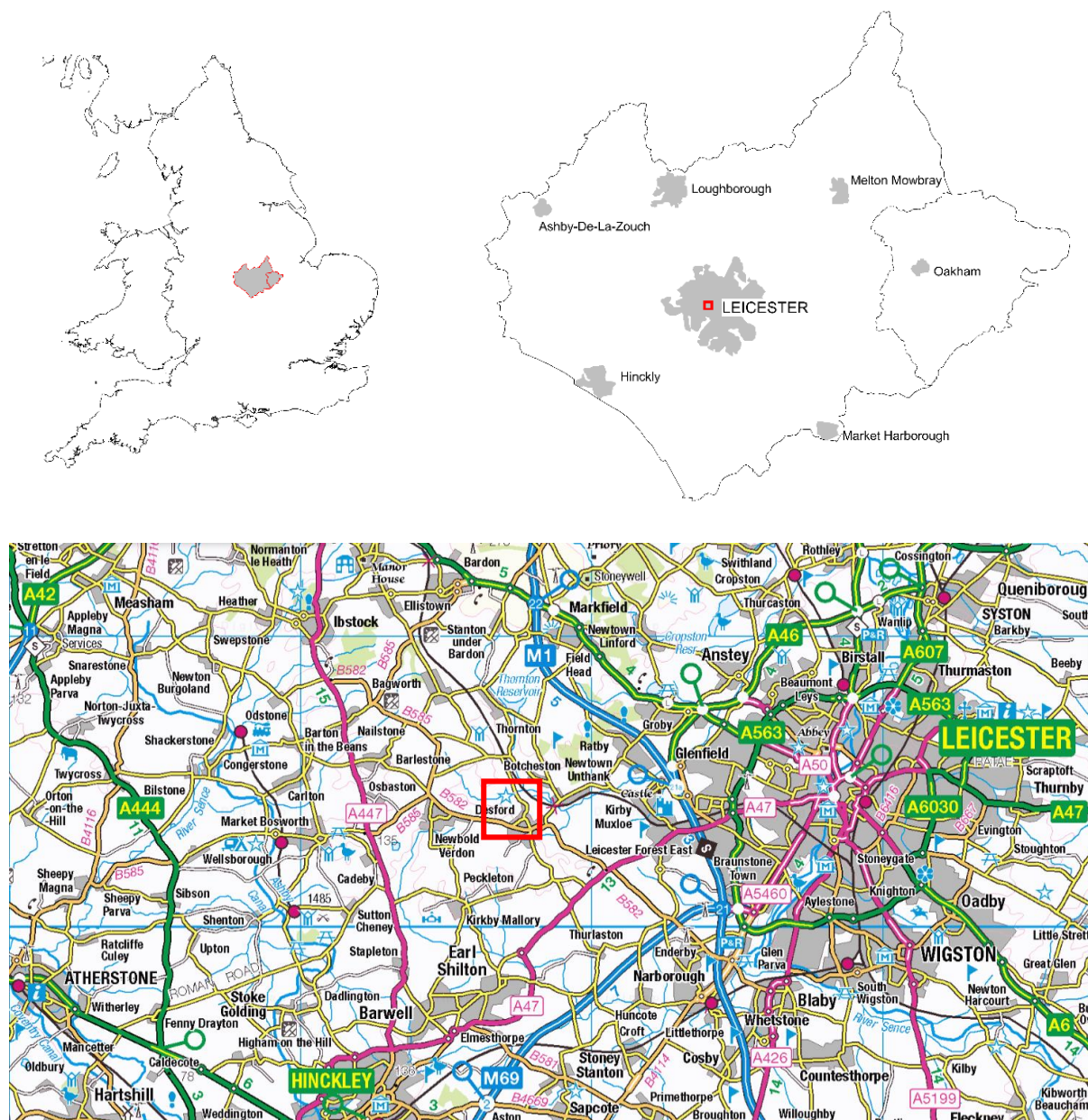


Figure 1: Site Location

*Reproduced from Landranger® 1:50 000 scale Sheet 140 (Leicester Coventry & Rugby) by permission © of Ordnance Survey ® on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office copyright 2009 All rights reserved Licence number AL 100029495.*

### Location and Geology (Figure 1)

The development area is currently an area of land to the rear of a number of residential properties along the southeast of Main Street. It comprises mostly of gardens as well as an area of hardstanding for car parking. It is generally level and lies at a height of approximately 130m aOD, rising slightly towards the south-east.

The British Geological Survey identifies the bedrock geology of the area as Edwalton Member – Mudstone. This is overlain by Sand and Gravel Glaciofluvial Deposits.

## **Historical and Archaeological Background** (from the WSI)

The site lay within the historic medieval core of the village. The historic core of the village contains a number of historical buildings however, none lie in the immediate vicinity of the development area.

The Historic Environment Record (HER) for Leicestershire and Rutland indicates that there were no known archaeological remains recorded in the assessment area itself, but adjacent to it there are records of Roman Pottery Kilns found during building work in 1960 (MLE2742).

Fieldwork has found evidence of an Iron Age/Roman site on the south side of High Street during work in 1999/2000 (MLE 9267). Excavations showed the site had two phases, the earlier of which including an enclosure and corn drier, but the later showing evidence for metalworking and tile, suggesting a stone building nearby.

An initial stage of archaeological work in the form of trial trenching, undertaken in October 2019 found a pit containing medieval pottery and bone as well as a post-hole suggested to be mediueval back-yard activity (Baker 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.

## **Research Objectives**

The site's location within the historic village core, and results from the evaluation suggested that there was potential for archaeological deposits from the medieval period onwards. The finds spots and HER records also suggested that there existed some potential for archaeological deposits of Iron Age and Roman origin. The excavation therefore had the potential to contribute to the following research aims.

### *Medieval*

To investigate the morphology of rural settlements in the medieval period (7E)

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



## Methodology

The Principal Planning Archaeologist as archaeological advisor to the planning authority requested an archaeological strip, map, and sample over the footprint of one of the proposed dwellings. Part of the forecourt and garage of the proposed dwelling overlies a current tarmacked car park, however as there is a slight rise towards the back of the proposed dwelling, after removal of the tarmac this area is to be stoned up to raise the formation level and existing subsoil will not be disturbed.

Prior to any machining, general photographs of the site areas were taken. The developer marked the footprint of the building on the ground, and then the area was excavated using a 3 tonne Kubota mechanical excavator equipped with a 1.5m wide toothless ditching bucket, with an archaeologist in constant attendance. The stripped area was examined for archaeological deposits by hand cleaning. The area was designated as Area 5 (to follow on from trenches 1-4 used in the evaluation), and was tied into the Ordnance Survey National Grid using a Topcon Hiper SR GPS.

The work followed the approved WSI, 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 2 The area before stripping, looking south





Figure 3 Topsoil stripping, looking north





Figure 4 The stripped area, looking south



Figure 5: Original Trench Location plan (Baker, 2019).

## Results

An unusual depth of friable dark grey brown sandy silty loam topsoil was present at the south-west side of the area, up to 1m; this gradually reduced to 0.3 – 0.4m towards the north. The subsoil underlying this was a consistent mid-light brown silty sand, with common small – large sub-rounded and rounded pebbles with a clear distinction to the natural, which comprised orange clayey-sandy gravels.

The strip revealed a feature cutting the subsoil at the southern edge (Fig. 6). This was a pit [2] with a clayey sandy fill (1). This was 1.1m by 0.65m wide, although the very eastern edge

went into the baulk so the true length could be nearer 120cm (Figs. 7 and 11). The pit contained the semi-articulated skeleton as well as a few fragments of brick/tile and a single potsherd of 13<sup>th</sup> – early 15<sup>th</sup> century date. The pit contained large quantities of bone and was interpreted as a deliberate burial of a pig, between 1-2 years old and probably male (Johnson; pers comm)

Two square modern postholes cuts [6] and [4], which contained fragments of modern china, were identified in section cutting the subsoil. The public house on the front of the plot (now closed) contained childrens' play equipment and these features may be associated with structures or fencing or similar for this area.



Figure 6 Excavated features





Figure 7 Pit [2], looking south east

Cutting the natural, but running into the north-west baulk outside the proposed building footprint was another large feature. The strip was widened to try to pick up the full extent of the feature, and a 2.90m by 2.06m pit [8] was revealed (Figs 8 and 11). Excavation proved this to be quite shallow, a maximum of 0.17m deep. Its fill (7) was a dark grey sandy silt with clay patches, and a lens of burnt humic material. Animal bone including cow scapula and patella, and sheep scapula (gnored by dogs) (Johnson; per comm) were recovered, and a sherd of post-medieval (Sawday; per comm) pot were recovered. The extension of the strip not only revealed the edge of pit [8], but one side of a fresh pit which was outside the footprint; the strip was not widened further but the exposed deposit was excavated to reveal a large deposit of animal bone with modern pottery, probably another carcass burial. Excavation was halted at this point and the pit was not recorded.





Figure 8 Pit [8], looking west





Figure 9 Posthole [10], looking north-west

Two plausible postholes with leached fills were also identified, albeit both shallow. Posthole cut [10] was 0.26m by 0.2m but only 0.08m deep (Figs 9 and 11), filled with a mid-greyish brown sandy clay with some small pebbles and charcoal flecks. A small animal burrow (eg mouse/vole) had disturbed the northwest quadrant. No finds were recovered.

The second undated posthole [12], was 0.2m x 0.14m and 0.13m depth. Its fill (11) was similar to that of posthole [10], but again no finds were recovered (Figs 10 and 11).



Figure 10 Posthole [12], looking south

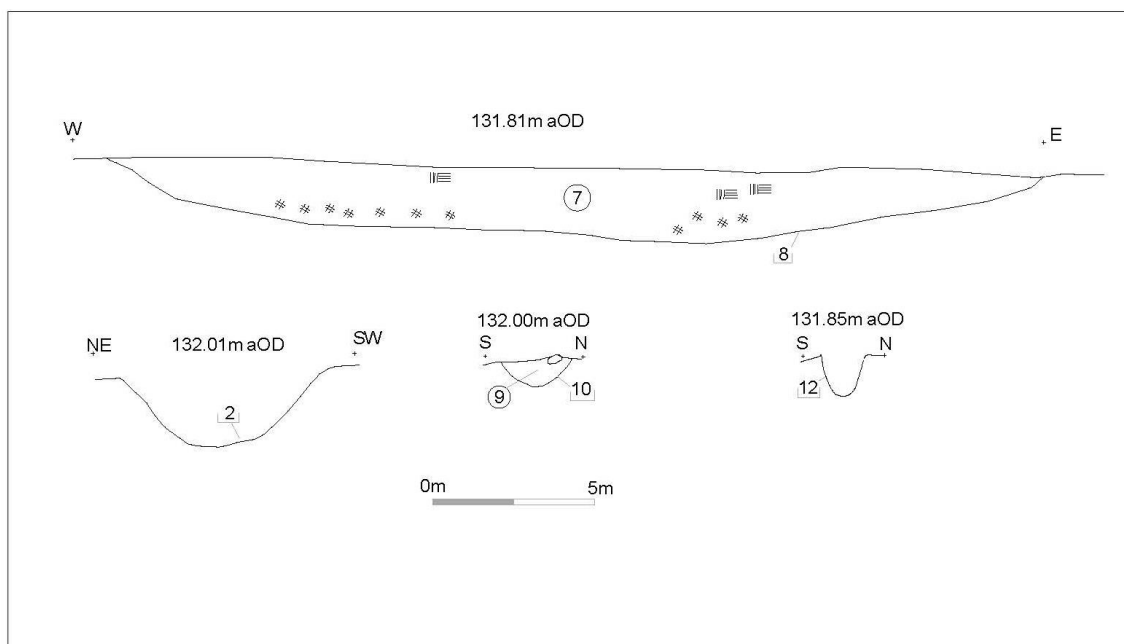


Figure 11 Sections/Profiles

## The Ceramic Finds - Deborah Sawday

### Methodology

The pottery was examined under an x20 binocular microscope and catalogued with reference to current guidelines (MPRG 1998, MPRG 2016) and the ULAS fabric series (Sawday 2009). The results are shown below, (tables 1-2).

Table 1: The medieval pottery fabrics.

Fabric	Common Name/Kiln & Fabric Equivalent where known	Approx. Date Range
OW	Oxidised ware	?Roman/Medieval
CC2	Chilvers Coton C ware	Early/mid-13th – c.1400.
NO3	Nottingham Reduced Green Glazed ware	c.1300-1500
EA2	Earthenware/Pancheon ware	post med/modern.
EA10	Fine White Earthenware/China	modern

### Conclusion

The pottery dates from the Roman or medieval into the modern period. The relatively large average sherd weight of the Nottingham ware sherd may suggest the survival of relatively intact archaeological levels in the vicinity; however the small size of both the pottery assemblage as a whole and the presence of modern material in all of the contexts suggests that the site is peripheral to the medieval village.

Table 2: The finds by context.

Context	Fabric	No	Gr	Part	Comments
<b>POTTERY</b>					
1	CC2	1	5	body	c.1300-1500
1	EA2	1	3	body	Internally glazed, post med/modern.
3	OW	1	3	body	Buff coloured fine wheel thrown body some grits. Of uncertain date – Roman or medieval
3	EA10	1	1	body	Modern
7	NO3	1	47	base	Possible base of a jug, reduced grey core, late 13 <sup>th</sup> – early 15 <sup>th</sup> C.
7	EA2	1	10	body	Internally glazed, post med/modern.
<b>CERAMIC BUILDING MATERIAL</b>					
1	EA	5	93		Discarded – post med/modern
<b>MISCELLANEOUS</b>					
3	Glass	1			window modern - discarded
3	charcoal	1			discarded
7	glass	1			Botte glass – modern - discarded
7	coal	1			discarded

## Discussion and Conclusion

The previous trial trenching (Baker 2019) revealed a pit containing medieval pottery and a post-hole and this further area strip appears to have revealed evidence for similar archaeological activity in the area. Aside from the two probably post-medieval carcass burials little can be detailed about functionality or purpose. No features nor finds were revealed for any period before the medieval, and the most plausible scenario is that the features represent back yard medieval activity at the extreme rear of a burgage plot associated with properties fronting onto Main Street c.65m to the east.

## Archive and publication

The archive for this project will be deposited with Leicestershire Museums under accession code X.A12.2020 and consists of the following:

- 1 Unbound copy of this report (ULAS Report No. 2020-016)
- 1 Photo Record index sheet
- 12 Context record sheets
- 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 S and S Contractors for their help and co-operation with the project. Jon Coward and Sophia Picken carried out the fieldwork for ULAS with the assistance of Stephen Baker, and the project was managed by Vicki Score. The project was monitored by Sophie Clarke, Planning Archaeologist for Leicestershire County Council.

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