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LEICESTER

Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological Attendance and Recording (Watching Brief) on Land
off Samworth Way, Eye Kettleby, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire. NGR:
SK 731 181**

Andrew Hyam



ULAS Report No 2020-097
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Site Name: Land off Samworth Way, Eye Kettleby, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire

Grid Ref: SK 731 181

Author: Andrew Hyam

Client: Mr James Lomas

Planning Ref: 19/01335/FUL

ULAS Report Number: 2020-097

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OASIS RECORD

PROJECT DETAILS	Oasis No	universi1-412130		
	Project Name	An archaeological attendance and recording (watching brief) on land off Samworth Way, Eye Kettleby, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire		
	Start/end dates	27th May 2020		
	Previous/Future Work	None/ None		
	Project Type	Watching brief		
	Site Status	None		
	Current Land Use	Agricultural field		
	Monument Type/Period	None		
	Significant Finds/Period	Later prehistoric flint		
	Reason for Investigation	NPPF		
	Position in the Planning Process	Ongoing		
Planning Ref.	19/01335/FUL			
PROJECT LOCATION	County	Leicestershire		
	Site Address/Postcode	Land off Samworth Way, Eye Kettleby, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire, LE14 2TS		
	Study Area	372m ²		
	Site Coordinates	SK731 181		
	Height OD	71m aOD		
PROJECT CREATORS	Organisation	ULAS		
	Project Brief Originator	Melton Borough Council		
	Project Design Originator	ULAS		
	Project Manager	Vicki Score		
	Project Director/Supervisor	Andrew Hyam		
Sponsor/Funding Body	James Lomas			
PROJECT ARCHIVE		Physical	Digital	Paper
	Recipient	LCC Museum service	LCC Museum service	LCC Museum service
	ID (Acc. No.)	X.A31.2020	X.A31.2020	X.A31.2020
	Contents	Single flint secondary blade	Digital photographs	Report/ Photo Record/ Watching brief sheet
PROJECT BIBLIOGRA PHY	Type	Grey Literature (unpublished)		
	Description	Developer Report A4 pdf		
	Title	An archaeological watching brief on land off Samworth Way, Eye Kettleby Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire		
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An Archaeological Attendance and Recording (watching brief) on land off Samworth Way, Eye Kettleby, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire. NGR: SK731 181

Andrew Hyam

Summary

This document is the fieldwork report for an archaeological attendance and recording (watching brief) carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) in advance of the proposed construction of a single barn on land off Samworth Way, Eye Kettleby, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire (NGR: SK731 181).

The work was commissioned by Mr James Lomas in advance of the proposed agricultural development. The site consists of an open field to the north side of the Leicester to Melton railway line. The barn is to be located at the edge of the field which, at the time of the watching brief, was used as arable land.

The proposed development site lies close to a possible Bronze Age ring ditch identified as a crop mark. A Roman site and an important Anglo-Saxon settlement are also close by.

Fourteen post holes were excavated in advance of the erection of the open barn. Each post hole measured approximately 1.2m by 2.1m and varied between 0.95 and 1.15m in depth. Topsoil, subsoil and the natural substratum was observed in all holes.

No earthfast archaeological features or deposits were observed during the watching brief. A single secondary flint blade of probable Bronze Age date was recovered from the topsoil of one pit. No other artefacts were observed.

The archive for the work will be deposited with Leicestershire Museums under accession number X.A31.2020.

Introduction

University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) were commissioned by Mr James Lomas to carry out an archaeological attendance and recording (watching brief) on land off Samworth Way, Eye Kettleby, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire (NGR: SK 731 181; Fig 1). Under planning application 19/01335/FUL it is intended to construct a single agricultural barn.

The fieldwork was carried out on the 27th May 2020 and was undertaken as part of a programme of archaeological work required by the Planning Authority following advice from the Senior Planning Archaeologist, Leicestershire County Council, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, MHCLG 2018).

The archaeological watching brief work was intended to provide a record of any archaeological remains in mitigation of the impact of the proposed development.

At the time of the watching brief, the site formed part of a much larger field located on the northern side of the Leicester to Melton railway line. The field was under crop although the area around the proposed barn was relatively open. The proposed barn will be used for the storage of agricultural implements and machinery associated with the upkeep of the surrounding agricultural land owned by the applicant. The completed building will measure 30.48m long in five equal bays of 6.096m by 12.19m wide in a single clear span.

Although it is located away from current settlement cores, the site of the proposed barn lies within an area of archaeological interest. Melton Mowbray lies approximately 2km to the east of the site. Eye Kettleby is in the Borough of Melton, Leicestershire (Fig. 1).

Location and Geology

The site lies in a 24-hectare plot of land located off Samworth Way (OS Grid Reg: SK731 181) and is used in relation to the applicant's arable farming business. The site is at the far south end of the field just to the east of the track that runs north up its centre. Access to the site is gained by means of a track that passes over the railway cutting and extends from Samworth Way industrial site to the south. The site is positioned away from any residential properties (Fig. 2).

The site of the proposed barn lies at a height of approximately 71m aOD. The ground slopes down to the south towards the River Eye around 500m away. At the time of the watching brief the area had a low growth of crop across much of the field although most of the barn site was reasonably clear (Figs 3 and 4).

The British Geological Survey identifies the geology of the area as Blue Lias Formation - Mudstone. This is a sedimentary Bedrock which was formed approximately 191 to 210 million years ago in the Jurassic and Triassic Periods. Around this period the local environment was dominated by warm shallow seas.



Figure 1 Site Location. Site highlighted

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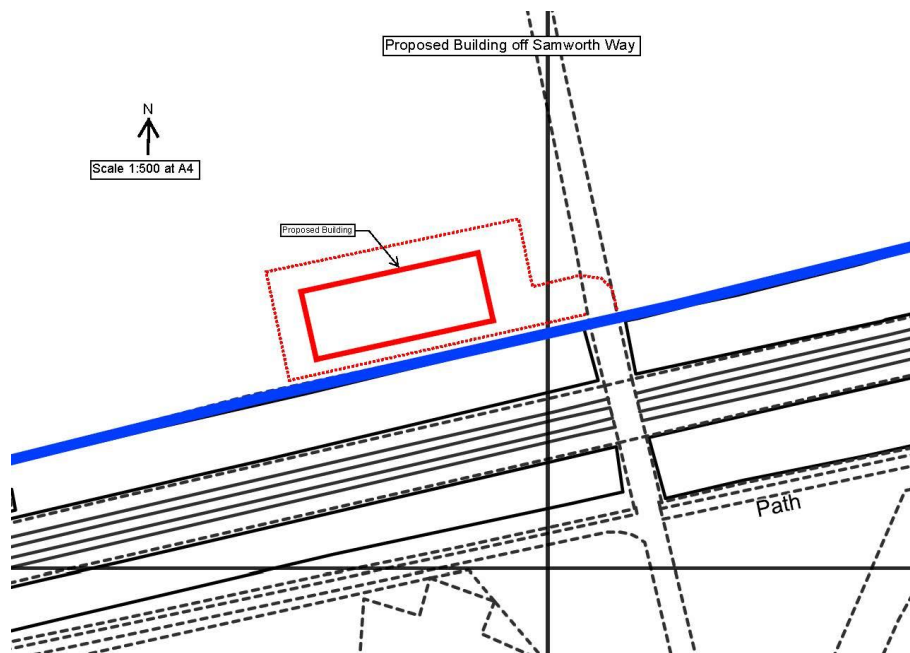
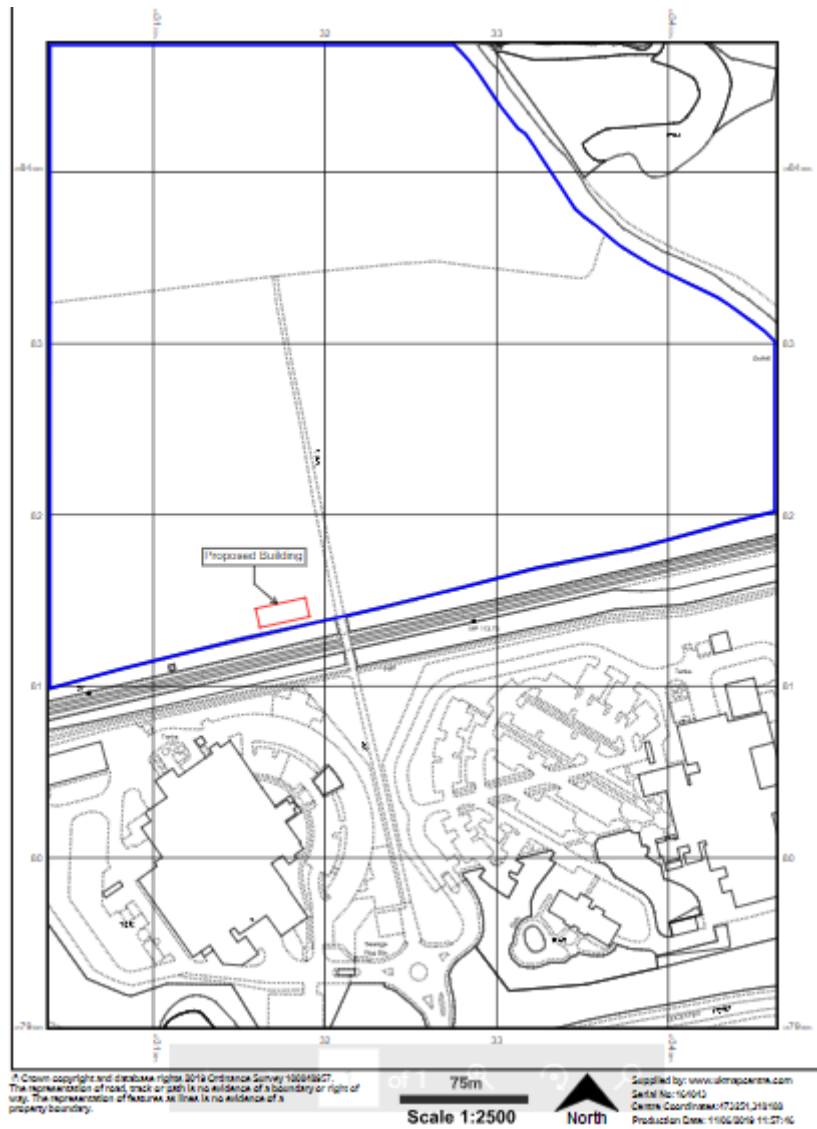


Figure 2 Plan of proposed development area
Site highlighted with thick red line. Plan provided by client



Figure 3 General view of proposed barn location
Looking south-west. The hedge line and trees mark the edge of the railway cutting. The blue wooden pegs indicate the location of post holes to be excavated



Figure 4 General view of site
Looking south-west towards across the railway to the industrial estate. The bridge leads to Samworth Way

Historical and Archaeological Background

The Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record (HER) shows that the barn application site lies within an area of archaeological interest. It lies close to a Roman site (HER ref: MLE3980), which has recovered more than 300 sherds of Roman pottery as well as coins, a brooch and some Roman tile.

To the east, across the trackway a ring ditch (HER ref: MLE3960) was seen via aerial photography. It is currently unknown what period this potential ring ditch dates to but could be a bronze age barrow, an Anglo-Saxon barrow, a windmill mound, anti-aircraft emplacement or another type of archaeological feature.

Across the road to the south of the site extensive archaeological works between 1993-1997 recorded an important Anglo-Saxon settlement (HER ref: MLE3981) with 18 post-built structures and 23 Sunken-Featured Buildings. Finds included over 2,500 sherds of pottery, loomweights, bone combs, etc. There is also an Early/Middle Bronze Age cremation cemetery (HER ref: MLE8895) with at least 81 individuals buried there and a Late Bronze Age farming settlement (HER ref: MLE24358).

Archaeological Objectives

The main objectives of the evaluation were as laid out in the ULAS *Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Attendance and Recording During Groundworks: Land off Samworth Way, Eye Kettleby, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire* (the WSI) and can be summarised as:

- 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 record any archaeological deposits to be affected by the ground works.
- To establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of any archaeological deposits and features encountered.
- To record any archaeological deposits and produce an archive and report of any results.

Within the stated project objectives, the principal aim of the recording was to establish the nature, extent, date, depth, and significance of the heritage assets within their local and regional context.

Research Objectives

The presence of prehistoric features in the area suggests a potential for further features of this date. There is also potential for further information on the origins of the farm complex. It is therefore possible to determine some initial objectives derived from *The Archaeology of the East Midlands: An Archaeological Resource Assessment and Research Agenda* (2006) and *East Midlands Heritage: An Updated Research Agenda and Strategy for the Historic Environment of the East Midlands* (2012).

Roman

There is Roman archaeology nearby and the project could contribute to:

5H. investigate the landscape context of rural settlements

Anglo Saxon/Medieval

There is some potential for furthering our understanding of Anglo Saxon Barrow practice and Settlement patterns, given the site's close proximity to the Anglo Saxon settlement (HER ref: MLE3981) and Melton Mowbray. (Research Agenda 6.2, 6.4). The site is located near the medieval town of Melton Mowbray and therefore could contribute to our understanding of the town and its origins (Research Agenda 7.2)

6C. Review the evidence for developing settlement hierarchies

6J. Update and expand the East Midland Anglo-Saxon pottery project

7E. Investigate the morphology of rural settlements.

7F. Investigate the development, structure and landholding of manorial estate centres.

7I. Investigate the development of the open-field system and medieval woodland management.

Post medieval

8E. Identify agricultural improvements of the 16th to 18th centuries.

These research aims were identified based on the current state of knowledge within the area of the scheme. Depending on the findings of the evaluation the research aims would be re-assessed and updated as necessary during the course of the fieldwork.

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) prepared by ULAS and agreed with the Leicestershire County Council Planning Archaeologist (May 2020). The work was monitored by the Leicestershire County Council Planning Archaeologist although due to the movement restrictions caused by the current Coronavirus contact with the Planning Archaeologist was by telephone, email and site photographs.

The archaeological watching brief entailed the monitoring, observation and recording of 14 post holes which will hold the upright stanchions of the proposed barn. Each post hole measured approximately 1.2m wide by 2.1m long. Post holes were numbered in order of excavation (Fig. 5).

Excavation of each post hole was carried out using a mechanical excavator supplied by, and operated by, the client Mr J Lomas. Topsoil, subsoil and natural substratum was removed carefully in level spits, under continuous archaeological observation. Post hole depths varied between 0.95m and 1.15m below current ground level with natural substratum being exposed in all cases. All of the excavated spoil was inspected for archaeological artefacts.

An accession number (X.A31.2020) was obtained prior to commencement of the project and used to identify all records.

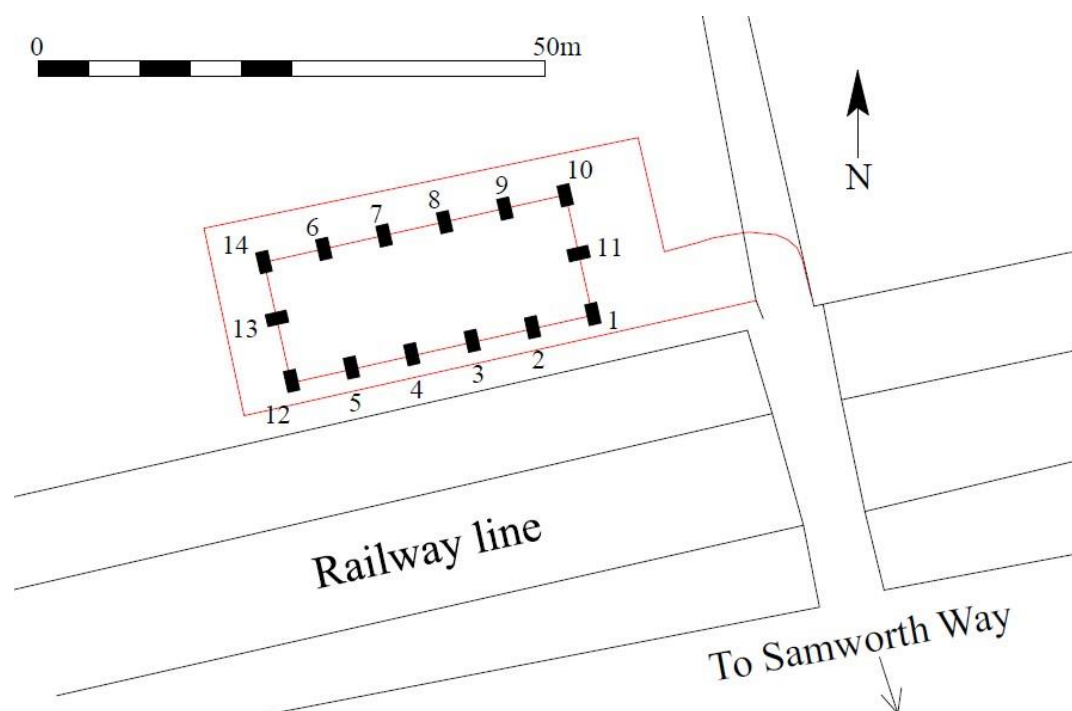


Figure 5 Post hole locations
Holes numbered in order of excavation

Results

A total of 14 stanchion post holes were excavated during the watching brief. As shown in Figure 5 each long side of the barn had 6 holes with a central hole being dug at each shorter end. Depths of each post hole are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Table of results for the post holes

Posthole No.	Topsoil thickness (m)	Subsoil thickness (m)	Top of natural	Maximum depth (m)	Archaeological features?	Artefacts in spoil
1	0.35	0.38	0.68	1.10	No	No
2	0.31	0.39	0.70	1.00	No	No
3	0.50	0.50	1.00	1.00	No	No
4	0.43	0.35	0.78	1.08	No	No
5	0.44	0.41	0.85	1.05	No	Flint blade
6	0.40	0.38	0.78	1.12	No	No
7	0.38	0.37	0.75	1.08	No	No
8	0.42	0.33	0.75	1.02	No	No
9	0.40	0.34	0.74	1.00	No	No
10	0.42	0.36	0.78	1.05	No	No

11	0.41	0.39	0.80	0.95	No	No
12	0.44	0.34	0.78	1.05	No	No
13	0.45	0.41	0.86	1.04	No	No
14	0.45	0.42	0.86	1.15	No	No

In all cases the topsoil consisted of a dark reddish brown silty clay. Close to the field boundary in the south and near to the trackway across the field the topsoil was relatively compact, possibly from vehicles tracking along these areas. Elsewhere, the topsoil was quite fine and friable. Beneath the topsoil the subsoil consisted of a mid-orange brown slightly sandy silty clay. The natural substratum consisted of a mid-orange silty sand with areas of gravel which were most noticeable towards the north-western corner of the proposed barn.

Despite its proximity to the railway cutting no evidence of disturbance or upcast material from the building of the cutting was observed in any of the post holes. No other modern disturbance was seen in any of the post holes.

No archaeological features or deposits were observed in any of the post holes. A single piece of worked flint was recovered from the topsoil in Post hole 5 close to the south-west corner of the barn. The blade has been identified by L. Cooper of ULAS as being secondary flint blade with some possible nibbling around the edge which is likely to be damage rather than deliberate re-touching, probably due to the effects of ploughing and movement through the topsoil. The blade could date range from the Upper Palaeolithic to Bronze Age but is most likely to be of Bronze Age origin.

During the excavation of each post hole the spoil was closely inspected for any finds. No archaeological artefacts were observed or recovered.

Below are a small selection of photographs taken during the work. A photograph of each post hole is shown in Appendix 1 of this report.



Figure 6 Post hole 2 close to the south-eastern corner of the barn
Looking west. 1m scale



Figure 7 Post hole 12 in the south-west corner of the barn
Looking west. 1m scale



Figure 8 Post-excitation photograph of all post holes
Looking west. 1m scale. Railway line on left of picture



Figure 9 Post-excitation photograph of all post holes
Looking east. The ring ditch cropmark is located close to the hedge line on the horizon

Conclusion

Despite the potential for revealing prehistoric, Roman and Anglo-Saxon archaeological features and deposits none were found within any of the fourteen post holes. The results indicate that the area of the proposed barn and, presumably, the surrounding area is relatively undisturbed so that should any nearby features still be present they should be in a reasonable state of survival. The only find was the prehistoric flint blade recovered from the topsoil.

Archive and publication

The archive for this project will be deposited with Leicestershire Museums with accession number X.A31.2020 and consists of the following:

- 1 Unbound copy of this report (ULAS Report No. 2020-097)
- 1 Watching brief recording sheet
- 1 Photo Record sheet
- 1 Contact sheet of digital photographs
- 1 DVD 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 Mr J Lomas for the excavation work and assistance during the watching brief. Andrew Hyam carried out the fieldwork for ULAS and the project was managed by Vicki Score. The excavator was provided by the client.

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26.06.2020

Appendix 1 Post hole photographs

1m scale used in all photographs



Post hole 1



Post hole 2



Post hole 3



Post hole 4



Post hole 5



Post hole 6



Post hole 7



Post hole 8



Post hole 9



Post hole 10



Post hole 11



Post hole 12



Post hole 13



Post hole 14



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