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Archaeological Services

An Archaeological Evaluation on land off Hinckley Road, Leicester Forest East, Leicestershire, LE3 3PJ

NGR: SK 52000 02904

Joseph Peters



ULAS Report No 2020-141
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Site Name: Land off Hinckley Road, Leicester Forest East, Leicestershire

Grid Ref: SK 52000 02904

Author: Joseph Peters

Client: Hazelton Homes (Midlands) Ltd.

Planning Ref: 19/0789/OUT

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OASIS RECORD

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	Project Name	Land off Hinckley Road, Leicester Forest East, Leicestershire		
	Start/end dates	7 th September – 17 th September 2020		
	Previous/Future Work	No		
	Project Type	Archaeological Evaluation		
	Site Status	None		
	Current Land Use	Pasture		
	Monument Type/Period	Linear/ Undated		
	Significant Finds/Period	None		
	Reason for Investigation	NPPF		
	Position in the Planning Process	Pre-planning		
Planning Ref.	-			
PROJECT LOCATION	County	Leicestershire		
	Site Address/Postcode	Land off Hinckley Road, Leicester Forest East, Leicestershire, LE3 3PJ		
	Study Area	66.86 ha		
	Site Coordinates	SK 52000 02904		
	Height OD	110-105m aOD		
PROJECT CREATORS	Organisation	University of Leicester Archaeological Services		
	Project Brief Originator	Leicestershire County Council		
	Project Design Originator	John Thomas		
	Project Manager	John Thomas		
	Project Director/Supervisor	Joseph Peters		
	Sponsor/Funding Body	Hazelton Homes (Midlands) Ltd.		
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An Archaeological Evaluation on land off Hickley Road, Leicester Forest East, Leicestershire, LE3 3PJ

Joseph Peters

Summary

A trial trench evaluation was carried out on land off Hinckley Road, Leicester Forest East, Leicestershire (NGR: SK 52000 02904) in advance of the proposed development of the site for new housing. The Historic Environment Record (HER) for Leicestershire records no known heritage assets within the study area itself. However, there are three Listed Buildings that are within the immediate area. The Grade II Listed Oaks Farmhouse (NHLE1307550) lies 7001m to the south-east. Grade II Listed Building Boyers Lodge (NHLE1307550) lies 7001m to the south-east. The Grade II Listed Kirby Muxloe Stone of Remembrance and War Memorial Gates (NHLE1445821) lies 1km to the north.

The proposed development area consisted of two pasture fields, with the most northern field containing visible ridge and furrow earthworks. However, upon excavation, they did not appear visible in the ground.

A geophysical survey was carried out in June 2020 (Sumo Survey 2020). It concluded that the survey did not identify any anomalies of possible archaeological interest though weak linear trends, probably associated with former ridge and furrow cultivation, were identified. The remaining responses related to modern underground services and areas of ferrous disturbance.

Most of the trenches were negative containing clayey loam upper soils over a gravely clay sub-stratum, with some trenches containing field drains.

Archaeological features were revealed in six trenches. Trench 02 contained two possibly modern linear features. Trenches 11 and 16 contained a linear feature. Trenches 15, 26 and 27 contained a linear feature running between the three trenches on a north-east to south-west alignment. No other features were revealed during the evaluation.

The archive for this work will be deposited with Leicestershire Museums Service with accession number X.A65.2020.

Introduction

University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) were commissioned by Hazelton Homes (Midlands) Ltd to carry out an archaeological trial trench evaluation on land off Hinckley Road, Leicester Forest East, Leicestershire, LE3 3PJ and is intended 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 may be assessed by the Planning Authority.

The Leicester Forest East area lies in the Blaby district of Leicestershire in the Civil Parish of Kirby Muxloe. It lies just to the west of the boundary of Leicester (Fig. 1). The site centre coordinates are at approximately SK 52000 02904

The work was carried out as part of a phased programme of archaeological work in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF): Section 16 Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment (MHCLG 2019) and will be submitted to the Planning Archaeologist for approval prior to any archaeological work taking place.



Figure 1: Site Location
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Location and Geology

The assessment area consists of two distinct areas with a narrow parcel of land joining them. Area 1 is roughly square and is bounded to the south by Leicester Forest Rugby Football Club to the south-east and a farm to the north-east. Area 2 is rectangular bounded by the Club to the south-west and a housing estate to the north-east. The slight slopes gently down from the south-eastern edge down to the north-western edge of the site, 110m aOD to 105m aOD and covers a total of 4.42 hectares (Fig. 3).

The British Geological Survey website indicates that the underlying geology consists of Edwalton Member –mudstone and superficial Oadby Member -diamicton is recorded across the south-eastern part of the site



Figure 2: Plan of proposed development area. Provided by developer.

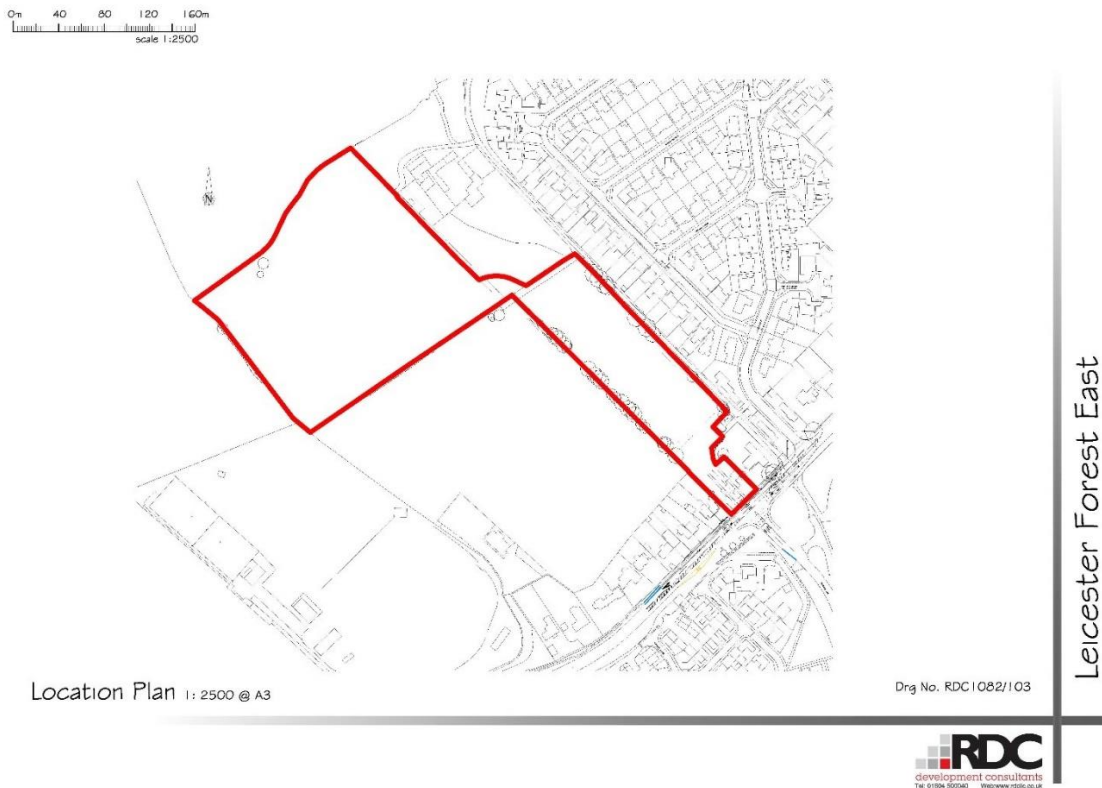


Figure 3: Proposed development area. Provided by client.

Historical and Archaeological Background

Historical Background

The Historic Environment Record (HER) for Leicestershire records no designated heritage assets (World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments or Listed Buildings) within the proposed area for development. However, there are three Listed Buildings that are within the immediate area. The Grade II Listed Oaks Farmhouse (**NHLE1074713**), 900m to the northwest. Grade II Listed Building Boyers Lodge (**NHLE1307550**) lies 7001m to the south-east. The Grade II Listed Kirby Muxloe Stone of Remembrance and War Memorial Gates (**NHLE1445821**) lies 1km to the north.

Boyer's Lodge is an early seventeenth century timber framed building with outbuildings and the only surviving keeper's lodge associated with Leicester Forest (**MLE11087** and **MLE11088**). Old Warren Farm contains farm buildings from the early to mid-nineteenth century and is built in accordance with the principles of the 'model farm' (**MLE20166**); it contains a farmhouse, barn, cow house and loose box. Kings Stand Farm is situated south of Hinckley Road and is first recorded on the 1814 OS surveyor's Drawing (**MLE22916**).

Archaeological Background

There are a number of known archaeological sites in the vicinity of the assessment area. A summary of these within a 1km radius of the assessment area is described below. The HER reference numbers are shown in bold in the text.

Approximately 375m north of the site a quantity of prehistoric worked flint was recovered including two waste flakes, a core and a blade tool (**MLE6997**). A further Neolithic/Bronze Age flint core was found approximately 685m southeast of the site (**MLE23226**). Additional worked flint was discovered in 858m south east of the site. It comprised of Neolithic/Bronze Age core and flint flakes as well a possible Lower Palaeolithic core (**MLE23229**).

A number of Bronze Age features and finds have been identified within the 1 km study area including a possible ring ditch (**MLE218**), Middle Bronze Age unlooped broad-bladed palstave (HA9) and the site of two Bronze Age cremation burials (**MLE23223**). This comprised two cinerary urns containing human bone along with a possible pit and post hole. The urns consisted of 141 sherds of Middle Bronze Age pottery. A further sherd of Middle Bronze Age pottery (from an urn) was recovered during trenching in 2015, 835m south east of the site (**MLE23225**). In 1973, a barbed and tanged arrowhead of honey brown unpatinated flint, finely flaked on both surfaces, was identified 660m south west of the site (**MLE6266**). Approximately 820m south east of the site 11 sherds of Iron Age pottery were retrieved from an area of charcoal-rich sand (**MLE23224**).

Archaeological investigations including the fieldwalking evaluation north of Forest Farm in 2001 (**ELE89**) approximately 173m north west from the site, recovered various Roman finds in an area spanning 11.6 ha. This included over 60 sherds of pottery and other ceramics such as tile, a harness fitting, a spindle whorl, a steelyard weight and a fragment of late Iron Age/early Roman terret (**MLE208**). There was a possible roman site south-east of Oaks Farm approximately 278m north west of the site. Twelve sherds of Roman pottery were discovered in 1987 and may represent substantial activity as they were large sherds of pottery (**MLE7714**). A late Roman crossbow brooch was found near a medieval rabbit warren 746m south of the site boundary (**MLE7716**).

The majority of the 1km study area, and only a small section of the north western corner of the site, is situated in the placement of the medieval Leicester Forest (**MLE22664**). The forest was originally a chase which belonged first to the de Beaumont Earls of Leicester, and later to the Earls of Lancaster. It became a forest at the end of the fourteenth century and occupied an area 14 miles long and four miles wide between the River Soar and Rothley Brook. The forest and covered approximately 5,000 acres (Cantor 1971; Squires, Anthony & Jeeves, Michael 1994). The forest is split into four areas and Area D is the largest and southern area of the forest and represents The Chase/The Thwaite.

Within the large area of Leicester Forest, several medieval features and finds have been identified including a possible medieval moated site (**MLE199**), a medieval rabbit warren which survives as three or four amorphous mounds (**MLE221**) and a medieval copper alloy seal matrix north-west of Forest House (**MLE6645**). Approximately 400 m northeast of the site several possible medieval features were identified including an oval pit, a ditch and a gully terminal (**MLE21565**). The pit contained two small pieces of Potters Marston pottery and some heavily burnt bone and charcoal.



Figure 4: Geophysical survey of the proposed area for development. Scale 1:5000 (SUMO, 2020)

Aims and Objectives

The main objectives of the archaeological work were:

- To identify the presence/absence of any archaeological deposits.
- To establish the character, extent, 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 will provide sufficient information to allow the local authority to make an informed decision on the forthcoming application and, if deemed necessary by the results of the evaluative work, develop an appropriate mitigation strategy.

Research Objectives

While the nature, extent and quality of archaeological remains within the areas of investigation for the project remain unknown until archaeological work is undertaken, it is possible to determine some initial objectives derived from *East Midlands Heritage* research agenda (Cooper 2006, Knight *et al.* 2012). The known archaeological sites on the HER suggests that there is some potential for archaeological deposits on the site from the prehistoric and Roman periods. The evaluation therefore had the potential to contribute to the following specific research aims:

Prehistoric

- Can we further refine lithic artefact chronologies within the region? (3.1.3)
- Can we further refine our knowledge of the selective use of particular landscapes for ritual, agriculture and other activities? (3.4.3)
- What may analyse of surface lithic scatters teach us about developing settlement patterns in the region? (3.5.4)

Late Bronze Age / Iron Age

- How can we expand our knowledge of first millennium BC activity in areas with a poor record of settlement (e.g. upland valleys of the Derbyshire Peak)? (4.2.3)
- Can we shed further light upon the development of field and boundary systems? (4.6.1)
- How may agricultural changes have impacted upon settlement patterns? Can the relationship between sedentary and mobile economies be clarified, and how did this vary spatially and over time? (4.8.3)
- How can we add to our existing knowledge of industries and crafts in this region, particularly the extraction and smelting of iron and lead, salt production and quern manufacture? (4.9.1)

Romano-British

- How can we add to our existing knowledge of industries and crafts in this region, particularly the extraction and smelting of iron and lead, salt production and quern manufacture? (5.1.3)
- How can we advance our knowledge of the chronology of metal finds, particularly brooches? (5.1.4)
- How did rural settlements relate to each other and to towns and military sites, and how may this have varied regionally and over time? (5.4.3)
- How did field and boundary systems relate to earlier systems of land allotment, and how did these boundary networks develop over time? (5.4.4)
- Can we elucidate further the daily life of settlements and their role in the processing and marketing of agricultural products? (5.4.6)

Medieval

- How can we shed further light upon the origin and development of dispersed hamlets and farms in champion and pastoral areas? (7.2.2)
- Can we improve our knowledge and classification of moated sites in the region, and how can environmental data add to our knowledge? (7.3.3)
- Can we shed further light upon the origins and development of the open-field system and its impact upon agricultural practices? (7.7.1)
- What can we deduce about changes in woodland management and animal or crop husbandry (including new crops, crop rotation, field systems, more intensive cultivation of clay soils and larger animals, particularly sheep)? (7.7.3)

These research aims have been identified based on the current state of knowledge within the area of the scheme. The research aims will be re-assessed and updated during the course of the fieldwork.

Methodology

All work was carried out in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation (2020a) and adhered to their Code of Conduct (2019).

The accession number (X.A65.2020) was obtained and used to identify all records and artefacts.

Prior to machining of the trenches, general photographs of the site were taken.

Evaluation trenches were set out on OS National Grid (NGR) co-ordinates using an appropriate methodology. The position and size of trenches was flexible and was to be adjusted on site to account for any constraints, with the approval of the planning archaeologist.

The trial trench locations were designed to target the main areas of impact from the development and consisted of twenty-four 30m x 1.8m trenches spread across the development area with an additional three trenches placed in accordance with the planning archaeologists request (Fig. 4).

Topsoil and overburden were removed carefully in level spits, under continuous archaeological supervision. Excavation was carried out with a JCB 3CX fitted with a flat-bladed ditching bucket to expose the underlying strata. The trenches were excavated down to the top of

archaeological deposits or natural undisturbed ground, whichever is reached first. All excavation by machine and hand was undertaken with a view to avoid damage to archaeological deposits or features which appear worthy of preservation in situ or more detailed investigation than for the purposes of evaluation. Where structures, features or finds appear to merit preservation in situ, they were adequately protected from deterioration.

The topsoil and subsoil were routinely scanned by metal-detector during the excavation of trench for the recovery of metal artefacts. The location of any discoveries will be recorded, and the information added to the summary description of each trench.

Archaeological deposits encountered were recorded in plan and excavated using standard ULAS procedures. All exposed features were investigated (unless otherwise agreed with the Planning Archaeologist). Discrete features were half-sectioned as a minimum where possible; a 1m wide section of each linear feature were excavated.

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

A site plan was prepared showing the location of the areas examined in relationship to the overall investigation area and OS grid. All principal contexts were recorded by drawn plans (scale 1:20 or 1:50, or electronically using GPS) and drawn sections (scale 1:10 or 1:20 as appropriate). The relative height of all principal strata and features was recorded.

Excavated trench locations were recorded by GPS and tied into 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 were with a digital camera. All photographs were taken with a high-resolution digital SLR camera with sensors exceeding 12 Mega pixels and all photograph will be taken on the highest setting. The photographic record also includes overall site and working shot' to illustrate more generally the nature of the archaeological operation mounted.

After completion of the trenching, following prior agreement with the Planning Archaeologist, excavated trenches were backfilled with the excavated arisings.



Figure 5: Preliminary Trench Locations

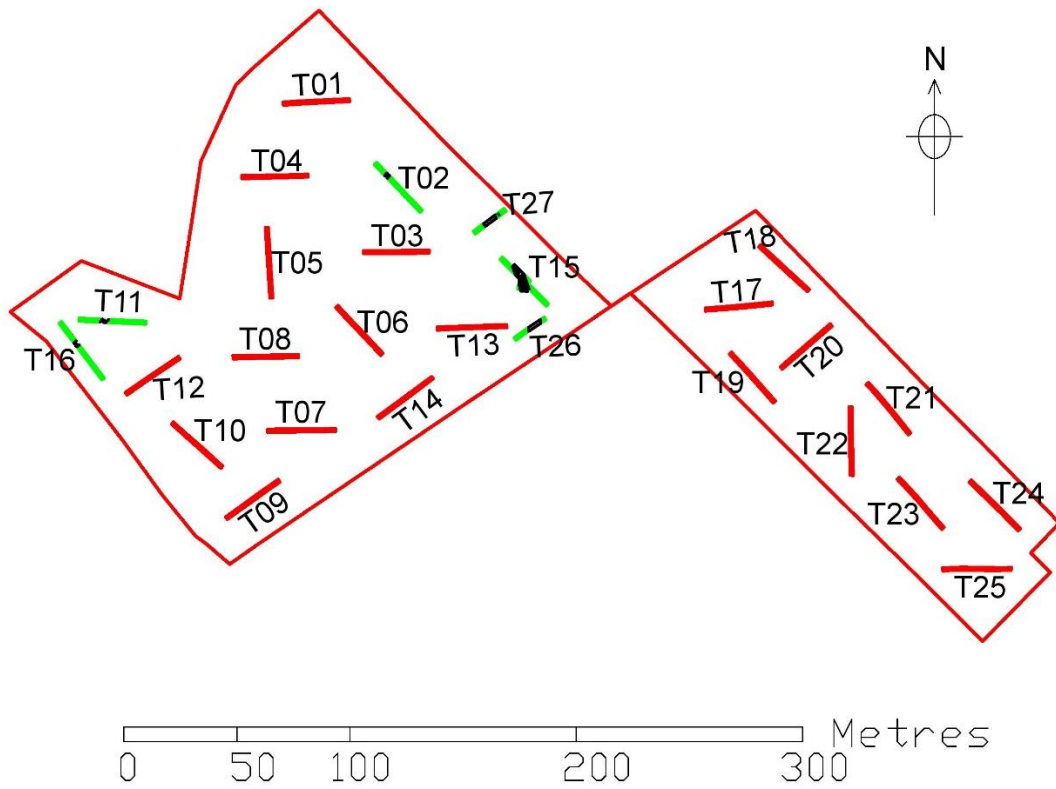


Figure 6: Trench locations (positive trenches in green, negative trenches in red)

Results

Trial Trenching covered two fields (Fig. 5). There were initially three positive trenches (02, 11 and 15), with an additional three trenches placed to further reveal archaeological remains found (16, 26 and 27).

Trench 02 contained two possibly modern linear features. Trench 11 contained a linear ditch feature, which was further revealed in Trench 16. Trench 15 contained a shallow linear feature with patches of large stones and pebbled areas. This was shown further in the sections of Trenches 26 and 27.

Throughout the site the topsoil encountered consisted of a mid-grey brown clayey loam with occasional small rounded pebbles, situated above a subsoil of dark grey brown silt and mottled orange brown clay.

Trenches 11, 12 and 16 contained made ground, comprised of redeposited natural clays and modern building materials. It is likely this ground relates to a pond located north of the site limits.

The natural sub-stratum mainly consisted of pinkish brown gravelly clay.



Figure 7: Working shot of trench being excavated

Negative Trenches

Twenty-one of the trenches were negative of any archaeological remains, although some produced evidence for ridge and furrow as well as field drains. All were sample excavated to confirm their origins. Trench 09 contained two north to south furrows, and field drains were identified in Trenches 03, 05, 07, 10, 13, 17, 18, 19, 22, 23 and 24. Where practical field drains were retained.

Trench	Orientation	Min. Depth	Max. Depth	Dimensions	OD Heights	Comments
01	E-W	0.24m	0.32m	30m x 1.5m	99.47m	-
03	E-W	0.25m	0.31m	30m x 1.5m	101.03m	Drain
04	E-W	0.24m	0.45m	30m x 1.5m	101.26m	-
05	N-S	0.25m	0.35m	30m x 1.5m	101.71m	Drain
06	E-W	0.25m	0.30m	30m x 1.5m	102.77m	-
07	E-W	0.25m	0.29m	30m x 1.5m	102.05m	Drain
08	E-W	0.27m	0.33m	30m x 1.5m	101.46m	-
09	NW-SE	0.26m	0.36m	30m x 1.5m	100.09m	Furrows
10	NE-SW	0.25m	0.30m	30m x 1.5m	99.58m	Drain
12	NW-SE	0.26m	0.30m	30m x 1.5m	101.48m	-
13	E-W	0.25m	0.33m	30m x 1.5m	102.33m	Drains
14	NW-SE	0.25m	0.33m	30m x 1.5m	101.97m	-
17	E-W	0.26m	0.33m	30m x 1.5m	106.46m	Drain
18	NE-SW	0.28m	0.45m	30m x 1.5m	106.71m	Drain
19	NE-SW	0.23m	0.34m	30m x 1.5m	106.16m	Drain
20	NW-SE	0.23m	0.55m	30m x 1.5m	105.86m	-
21	NE-SW	0.27m	0.47m	30m x 1.5m	104.89m	-
22	NW-SE	0.25m	0.32m	30m x 1.5m	105.60m	Drains
23	NE-SW	0.24m	0.31m	30m x 1.5m	104.36m	Drain
24	NE-SW	0.26m	0.34m	30m x 1.5m	103.71m	-
25	E-W	0.24m	0.32m	30m x 1.5m	104.56m	Drains

Trench 02

Trench 02 contained two undated linear features, [09] and [11], to the north – west of the trench continuing north-east to south-west past the trench limits (Fig. 8). Linear [09] measured 0.33m wide and 0.12m deep. It contained a dark greyish brown silty clay with rare coal flecks and small sub-rounded pebbles (10). Linear [11] measured 0.21m wide and 0.09m deep. It contained a dark greyish brown silty clay with rare coal flecks and small sub-rounded pebbles (12). Both fills were identical and contained no dating evidence, although given that the features were cut into the subsoil it is possible that they were relatively recent in date.

Trench 02								
Alignment	NE-SW							
Length (m)	Width (m)		Area (m ²)		Min. depth (m)		Max. depth (m)	
30.00m	1.50m		42.05m ²		0.25m		0.34m	
Interval from W	0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25m	30m	OD Height
Topsoil depth	0.26m	0.22m	0.28m	0.27m	0.25m	0.20m	0.30m	101.17m
Subsoil depth	-	0.06m	-	-	-	0.09m	-	
Top of Natural substratum	0.26m	0.28m	0.28m	0.27m	0.25m	0.29m	0.30m	
Base of trench	0.30m	0.32m	0.28m	0.28m	0.25m	0.30m	0.34m	



Figure 8: Trench 02, looking south-west



Figure 9: Linear features [09] and [11] in Trench 02, looking south-west.

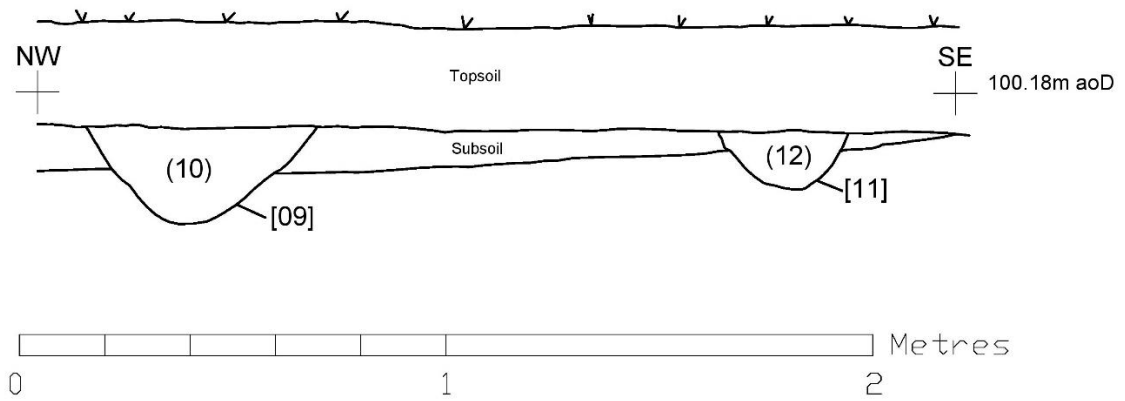


Figure 10: Section of linear features [09] and [11]

Trench 11

Trench 11 contained a linear feature [01] located to the west of the trench continuing north-east to south-west past the trench limits. It also was identified in Trench 16 (Fig. 16). The feature measured 2m wide and 0.56m deep. It contained three fills; a dark reddish brown and greyish brown mottle slightly silty clay with large cobbles in base and occasional small rounded pebbles (02), a dark greyish brown and orange brown mottle silty clay with occasional small rounded stones (03), a dark greyish brown clayey silt with rare small rounded pebbles (04). No dating evidence was found.

Trench 11								
Alignment	E-W							
Length (m)	Width (m)		Area (m ²)		Min. depth (m)		Max. depth (m)	
30.00m	1.50m		43.60m ²		0.25m		0.75m	
Interval from W	0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25m	30m	OD Height
Topsoil depth	0.25m	0.25m	0.25m	0.16m	0.23m	0.26m	0.25m	101.04m
Subsoil depth	0.25m	0.16m	0.12m	0.09m	0.20m	0.30m	0.45m	
Top of Natural substratum	0.50m	0.41m	0.37m	0.25m	0.43m	0.56m	0.70m	
Base of trench	0.52m	0.43m	0.40m	0.25m	0.45m	0.56m	0.75m	



Figure 11: Trench 11, looking east



Figure 12: Linear feature [01] in Trench 11, looking north-west.

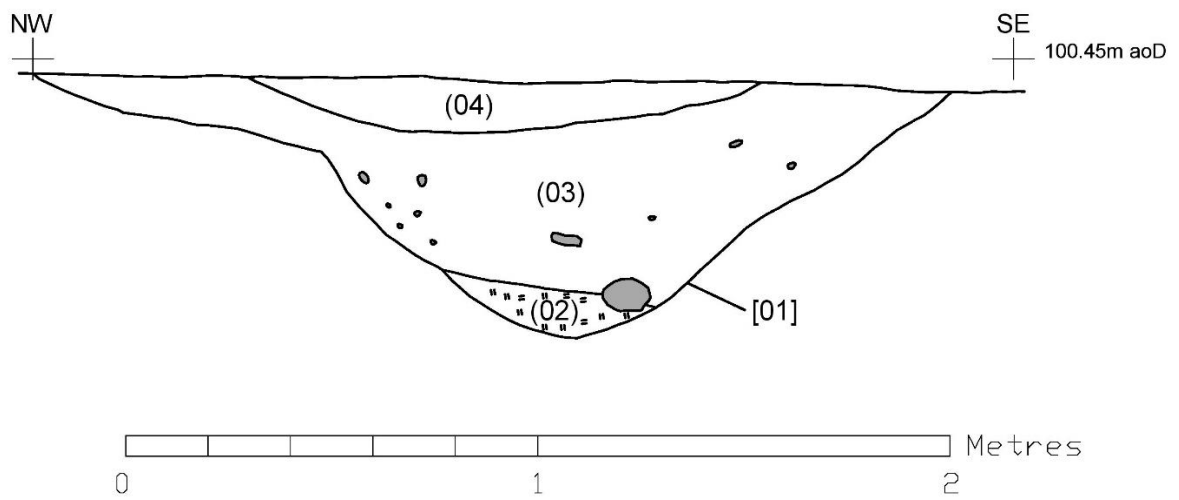


Figure 13: Section of linear feature [01]

Trench 16

Trench 16 contained a linear feature [05] located to the west of the trench continuing north-east to south-west past the trench limits. It also was identified in Trench 11 (Fig. 16). The feature measured 2.30m wide and 0.50m deep. It contained three fills; a dark reddish brown and greyish brown mottle slightly silty clay with large cobbles in base and occasional small rounded pebbles (06), a dark greyish brown and orange brown mottle silty clay with occasional small rounded stones (07), a dark greyish brown clayey silt with rare small rounded pebbles (08). No dating evidence was found. Samples were taken from fill (06) but no charred plant remains were recovered. The only artefact was a flint flake found in the soil sample.

Trench 16								
Alignment	NW-SE							
Length (m)	Width (m)		Area (m ²)		Min. depth (m)		Max. depth (m)	
30.00m	1.50m		45.61m ²		0.25m		0.70m	
Interval from W	0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25m	30m	OD Height
Topsoil depth	0.23m	0.24m	0.26m	0.21m	0.22m	0.21m	0.11m	101.14m
Subsoil depth	0.10m	-	-	-	0.06m	0.30m (OB)	0.60m (OB)	
Top of Natural substratum	0.33m	0.24m	0.26m	0.21m	0.28m	0.51m	0.70m	
Base of trench	0.35m	0.27m	0.26m	0.25m	0.28m	0.56m	0.70m	



Figure 14: Trench 16, looking south



Figure 15: Linear feature [05] in Trench 14, looking north.

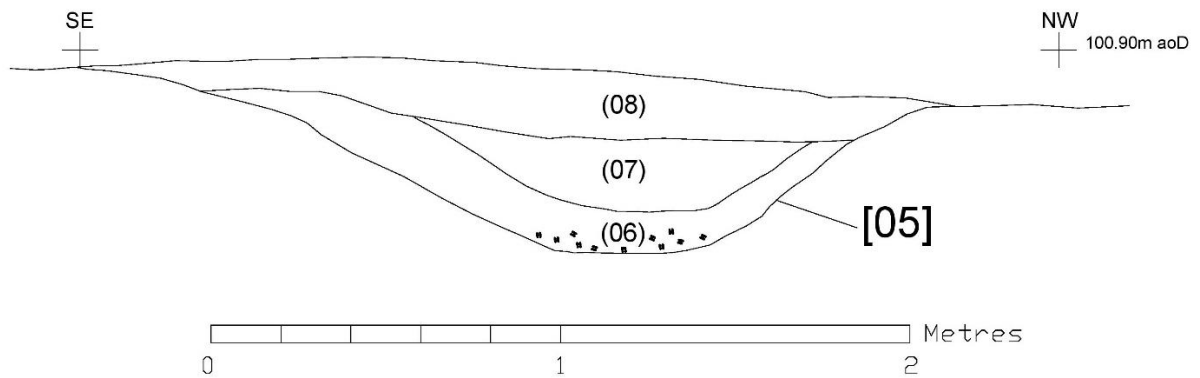


Figure 16: Section of linear feature [05]

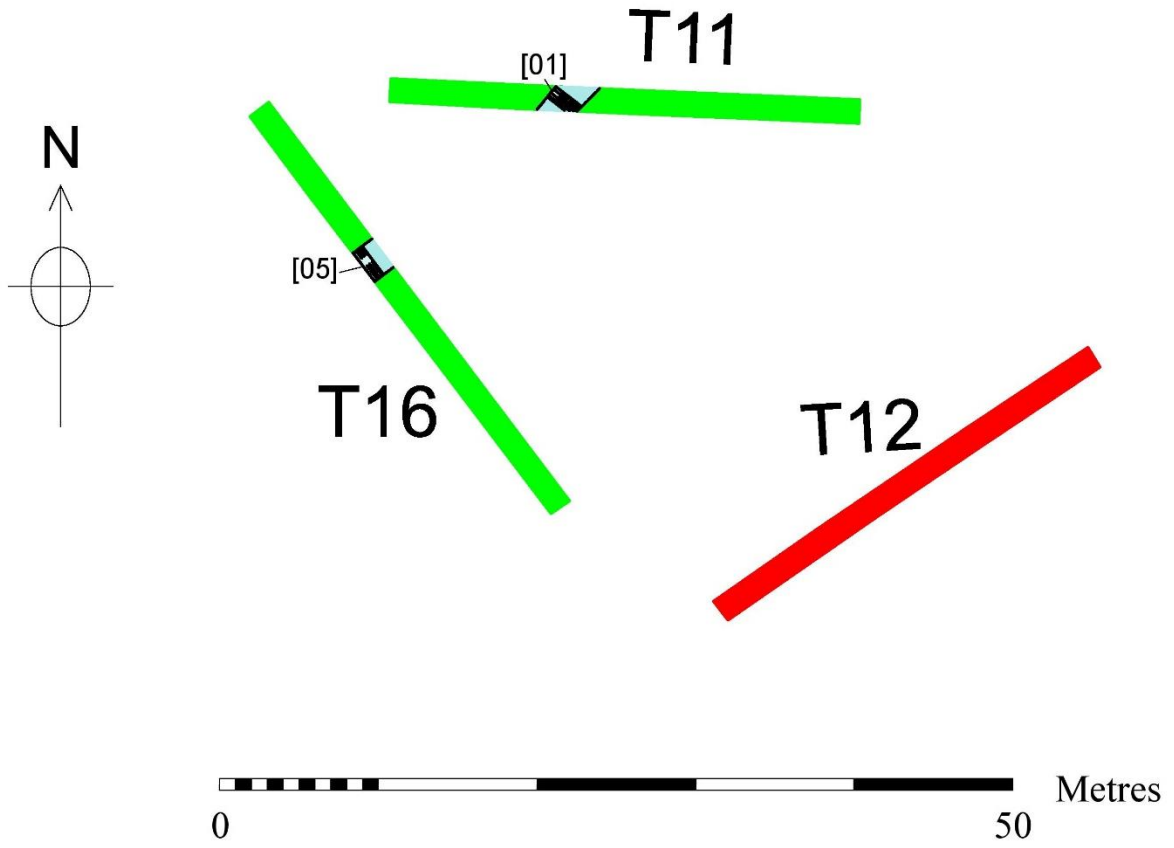


Figure 17: Trenches 14, 15, 19 and linear features [05] [07].

Trench 15

Trench 15 contained a north to south linear feature [13] located in the centre of the trench. The feature continues north and south of the trench limits. Three excavation slots were placed in this feature. The feature measured 3.50m wide and 0.42m deep. It contained three fills; a dark yellowish-brown clayey silt with occasional pebbles and rare charcoal flecks (14), large stone cobbles (15), and a cobbled surface comprised of small sub-rounded pebbles and sandy silts (16).

Trench 15 was expanded on both sides to profile the feature (Fig. 20). Additionally, evidence for this feature was found in the sections of Trenches 26 and 27 (Fig. 21).

Trench 15								
Alignment	NE-SW							
Length (m)	Width (m)		Area (m²)		Min. depth (m)		Max. depth (m)	
30.00m	1.50m		72.42m ²		0.23m		0.36m	
Interval from W	0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25m	30m	OD Heights
Topsoil depth	0.23m	0.24m	0.22m	0.23m	0.21m	0.22m	0.24m	101.75m
Subsoil depth	-	-	-	-	-	0.07m	0.09m	
Top of Natural substratum	0.23m	0.24m	-	0.23m	0.21m	0.29m	0.33m	
Base of trench	0.28m	0.24m	0.24m	0.23m	0.26m	0.33m	0.36m	



Figure 18: Trench 15, looking south.



Figure 19: Northern sondage of linear feature [13]

Figure 20: Section of linear feature [13]

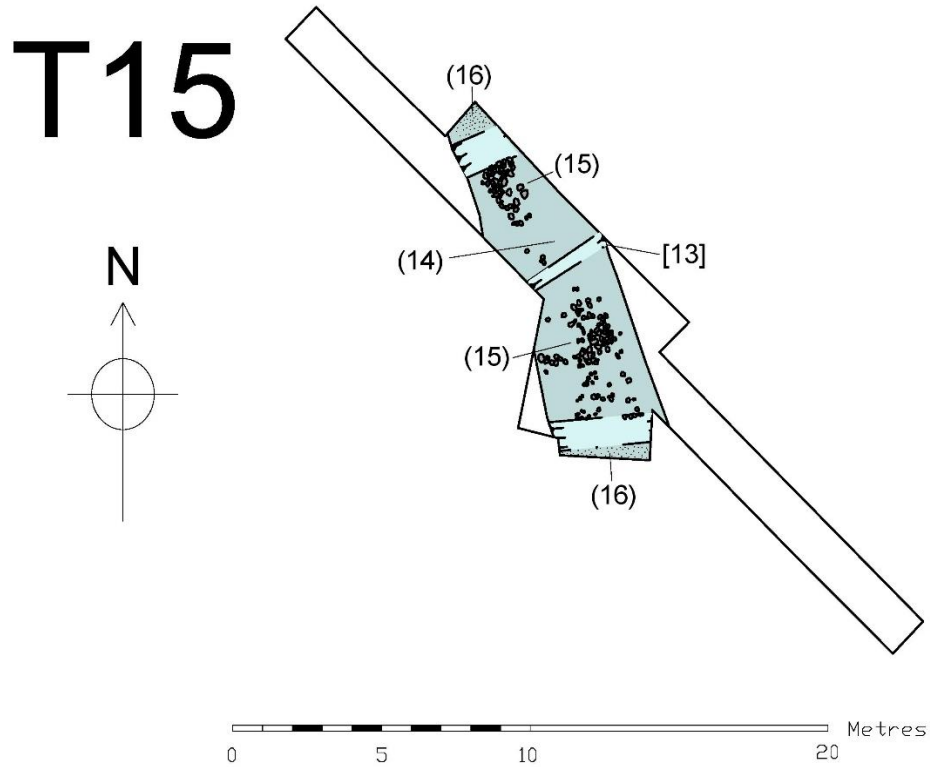
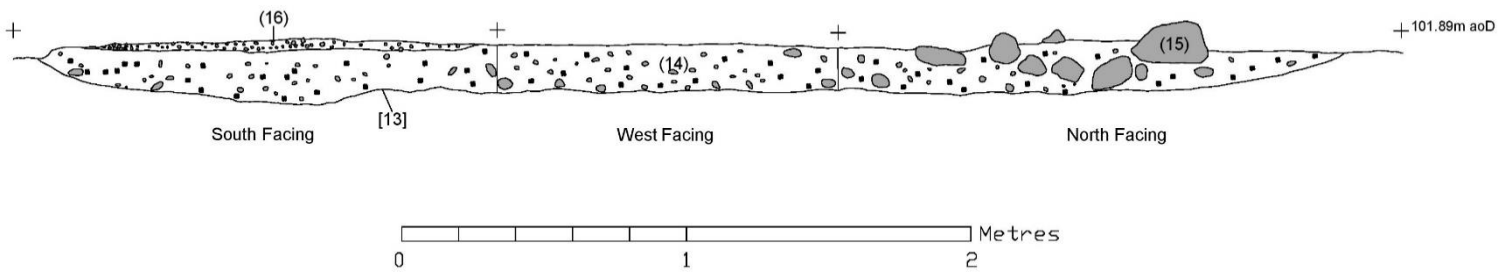


Figure 21: Trench 15 plan



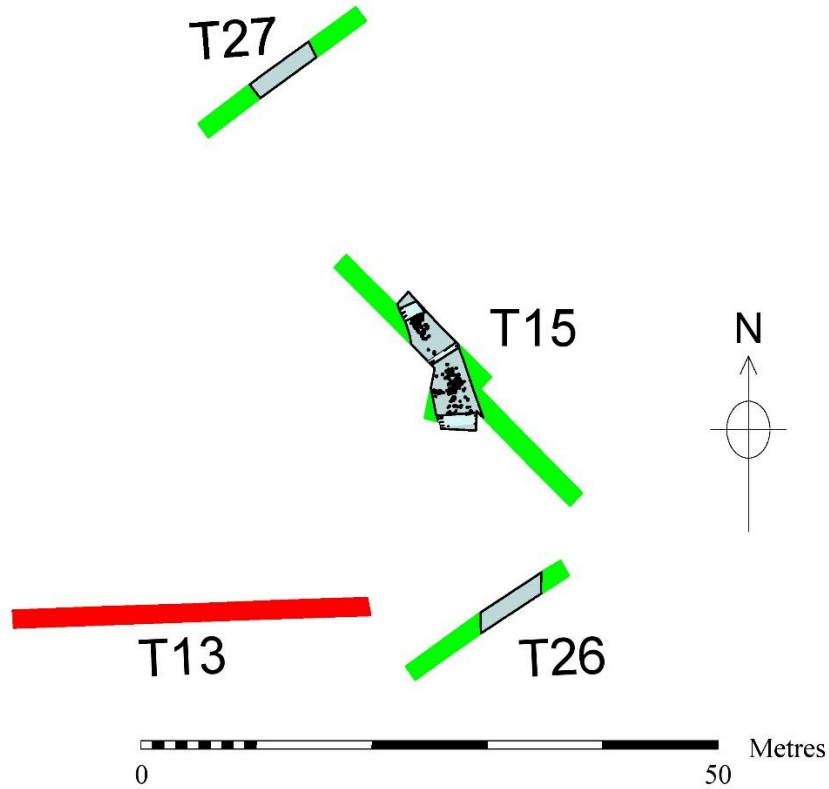


Figure 22: Projected line of linear feature [13] (in blue) over Trenches 15, 26, 27.

Trench 26

Trench 26 presented evidence for the continuation of linear feature [13] found in Trench 15.

Trench 26							
Alignment	NE-SW						
Length (m)	Width (m)		Area (m ²)		Min. depth (m)		Max. depth (m)
17.00m	1.50m		23.92m ²		0.28m		0.36m
Interval from W	0m	5m	10m	15m	17m		OD Heights
Topsoil depth	0.26m	0.24m	0.26m	0.22m	0.24m		103.01m
Subsoil depth	-	0.12m	0.10m	0.08m	0.06m		
Top of Natural substratum	0.26m	0.36m	0.36m	0.30m	0.30m		
Base of trench	0.28m	0.36m	0.36m	0.32m	0.30m		



Figure 23: Trench 26, looking north-east.

Trench 27

Trench 27 presented evidence for the continuation of linear feature [13] found in Trench 15

Trench 27							
Alignment	NE-SW						
Length (m)	Width (m)		Area (m ²)		Min. depth (m)		Max. depth (m)
18.00m	1.50m		25.30m ²		0.28m		0.40m
Interval from W	0m	5m	10m	15m	18m		OD Heights
Topsoil depth	0.22m	0.20m	0.16m	0.22m	0.20m		101.69m
Subsoil depth	0.08m	0.10m	0.10m	0.12m	0.08m		
Top of Natural substratum	0.30m	0.30m	0.26m	0.34m	0.28m		
Base of trench	0.30m	0.36m	0.32m	0.40m	0.28m		



Figure 24: Trench 24, looking south.

Discussion and Conclusion

The site at Leicester Forest East had potential for archaeological remains, situated as it was within the location of the former medieval Leicester Forest.

However, the geophysical survey carried out in advance of the trial trench evaluation was largely negative with only a few possible anomalies highlighted during the survey, as well as ridge and furrow earthworks, still visible in parts of the site.

The majority of trenches were negative, revealing a shallow topsoil and subsoil, reflecting the land being mainly put over to pasture. Trenches also revealed field drains and a sub-stratum mainly consisting of mixed clay and patches of gravel.

Archaeological remains were identified in six trenches (02, 11, 15, 16, 26 and 27). Trench 02 contained linear features [09] and [11]. Despite the lack of dating evidence, both were seen to cut through the subsoil, and it is likely that they represent relatively modern drainage features.

Trench 11 contained a substantial ditch [01] running south-west to north east of the trench limits. This feature appears to be the same as ditch [05] seen in Trench 16. Sample excavations of both features revealed similarities in fills and shape in plan. No dating evidence was recovered from either feature. However, the leached nature of the fills could suggest these features are prehistoric in date. This ditch is presumably a boundary or enclosure feature that continues past the site limits.

Trench 15 revealed a shallow linear feature [13] running north to south of the trench limits. Evidence for this feature was also seen in the sections of trenches 26 and 27. Initially thought to be wall foundations, irregular patches of large stones (15) appeared to be situated above a

mottled redeposited natural (14). Sample excavations additionally revealed a capping layer of pebble metalling (16) situated above fill (14) and within the gaps of the large stones (15). This feature is presumably a trackway and could be related to the original alignment of Beggars Lane. However, due to the limited nature of the evaluation, further investigation would need to be conducted to confirm this theory. Unstratified pottery was recovered from above this feature. The rim of a Midland Black ware vessel (Leicestershire, Fabric MB) of 16th-early 18th century date, and a body sherd of a tin glazed earthenware bowl (Leics. Fabric EA11) dating to the 18th century. This may suggest that the trackway is post-medieval in origin.

The archive for this project will be deposited with Leicestershire Museums with accession number X.A65.2020 and consists of the following:

- 1 Unbound copy of this report (ULAS Report No. 2020-141)
- 27 Trench recording sheets
- 3 Photo Record Sheets
- 3 Contact Sheet of digital photographs
- 1 CD of digital photographs
- Context Sheets

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

Joseph Peters and James Harvey undertook the fieldwork on behalf of ULAS. The project was managed by John Thomas.

The Finds

The Post-medieval and early modern pottery - Nicholas J. Cooper

No Iron Age pottery was recovered during the evaluation, but this may simply be due to the limited area of excavation available. The only pottery recovered comprised two unstratified sherds of post-medieval and early modern pottery. One (5g) a rim of Midland Black ware vessel (Leics, Fabric MB) of 16th-early 18th century date, and a body sherd of a tin glazed earthenware bowl (Leics. Fabric EA11) dating to the 18th century. These were recovered from above the trackway in Trench 15 and therefore may suggest that the trackway is post-medieval in origin. The finds have not been retained in the finds archive.

The Plant Remains - Rachel Small

During excavations at Leicester Forest East, a soil sample was taken from within fill (06), associated with ditch [05]. The sample was processed in a York tank using a 0.5mm mesh with flotation into a 0.3mm sieve. The flotation fraction (flot) was left to air dry and then sorted for plant remains and other artefacts under an x10-40 stereo microscope. The heavy residue was also air dried and then sorted by eye. The flot contained many modern rootlets; charcoal flecks were present, but no charred plant remains. A flint flake was recovered from the heavy residue. If further work is undertaken at the site, it is recommended that a suitable sampling strategy should be implemented to aid the recovery of flint micro-debitage as well as charred plant remains.

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