



UNIVERSITY OF
LEICESTER
Archaeological Services

**An archaeological evaluation on Land Adjacent to 7 Ashby Road,
Gaddesby, Leicestershire. NGR: SK 689 128**

Andrew Hyam



**ULAS Report No 2020-056
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Site Name: Land Adjacent to 7 Ashby Road, Gaddesby, Leicestershire

Grid Ref: SK 689 128

Author: Andrew Hyam

Client: Mr Karl Watson

Planning Ref: 19/01073/FUL

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OASIS RECORD

PROJECT DETAILS	Oasis No	universi1- 416303		
	Project Name	An archaeological evaluation on land adjacent to 7 Ashby Road, Gaddesby, Leicestershire		
	Start/end dates	23 rd March 2020		
	Previous/Future Work	None/ None		
	Project Type	Evaluation		
	Site Status	None		
	Current Land Use	Disused open space, former garage		
	Monument Type/Period	None		
	Significant Finds/Period	None		
	Reason for Investigation	NPPF		
	Position in the Planning Process	Ongoing		
Planning Ref.	19/01073/FUL			
PROJECT LOCATION	County	Leicestershire		
	Site Address/Postcode	Land adjacent to 7 Ashby Road, Gaddesby, Leicestershire, LE7 4WF		
	Study Area	0.13 ha		
	Site Coordinates	SK689 128		
	Height OD	82m – 84m aOD		
PROJECT CREATORS	Organisation	ULAS		
	Project Brief Originator	Melton Borough Council		
	Project Design Originator	ULAS		
	Project Manager	John Thomas		
	Project Director/Supervisor	Andrew Hyam		
	Sponsor/Funding Body	Karl Watson		
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An archaeological evaluation on land adjacent to 7 Ashby Road, Gaddesby, Leicestershire. NGR: SK689 128

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Summary

This document is a fieldwork report for an archaeological trial trench evaluation carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) in advance of the proposed development of land adjacent to 7 Ashby Road, Gaddesby, Leicestershire (NGR: SK689 128).

The work was commissioned by Mr Karl Watson in advance of a proposed housing development. The site consists of a plot of land which was occupied by a small garage and other now demolished structures. The plot has stood empty and unused for several years.

The proposed development site lies close to the historic core of Gaddesby and is located on the corner of two important village streets. Ashby Road is the main road through the village whilst Church Lane, as its name suggests, leads to the village church.

Four evaluation trenches were placed across the site to target the location of the proposed houses and a service road. The excavation revealed a heavily disturbed area in the south of the site along the Ashby, possibly caused by the former garage. Another badly disturbed area was seen in the east of the site where a structure is shown on Ordnance Survey maps. Elsewhere a lower level of disturbance was noted but the site still appeared to have undergone significant disturbance during the 20th century.

No archaeological features or deposits were observed during the evaluation.

The archive for the work will be deposited with Leicestershire Museums with accession number X.A34.2020.

Introduction

University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) were commissioned by Mr Karl Watson to carry out an archaeological trial trench evaluation on land adjacent to 7 Ashby Road, Gaddesby, Leicestershire (NGR: SK 689 128).

The fieldwork work was carried out on the 23rd March 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 trial trench evaluation work was 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.

At the time of the evaluation the site consisted of an elongated rectangular plot with no structures or vegetation present. The proposed residential development is for the construction of eight new dwellings along with an access road and associated services.

The site lies within the historic core of Gaddesby village which is around 13km to the north-east of Leicester (Fig. 1). Melton Mowbray lies approximately 8km to the north-east of the village. Gaddesby is in the Borough of Melton, Leicestershire.



Figure 1 Site Location
Site highlighted

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Location and Geology

Most of modern-day Gaddesby follows the line of Main Street, to the west of the site, which runs northwards from Ashby Road. More houses line Church Lane with the proposed development site being located on the east side of Church Lane (Fig. 2). The church is around 200m to the north of the site with the Hall sitting to the north-west of the church.

Access to the site is from Ashby Road where the site is at its widest. The site, which covers approximately 0.13 hectares extends northwards following a gentle slope upwards from around 82m aOD at road level up to approximately 84m.

At the time of the report all vegetation had been cleared from the site leaving an open space with only a modern fence forming the northern boundary (Fig. 3). A house and garden wall form part of the north-eastern corner boundary with the remainder having Heras fencing to

mark the limits of the site. A large tree trunk had been grubbed out giving an indication of the vegetation (and therefore possible ground disturbance) that was present on the site. As well as vegetation some topsoil had also been removed prior to the evaluation, however this did not appear to have caused any disturbance to the underlying strata.

The British Geological Survey website identifies the bedrock geology of the area as Branscome Mudstone Formation – a sedimentary bedrock formed in the late Triassic Period.

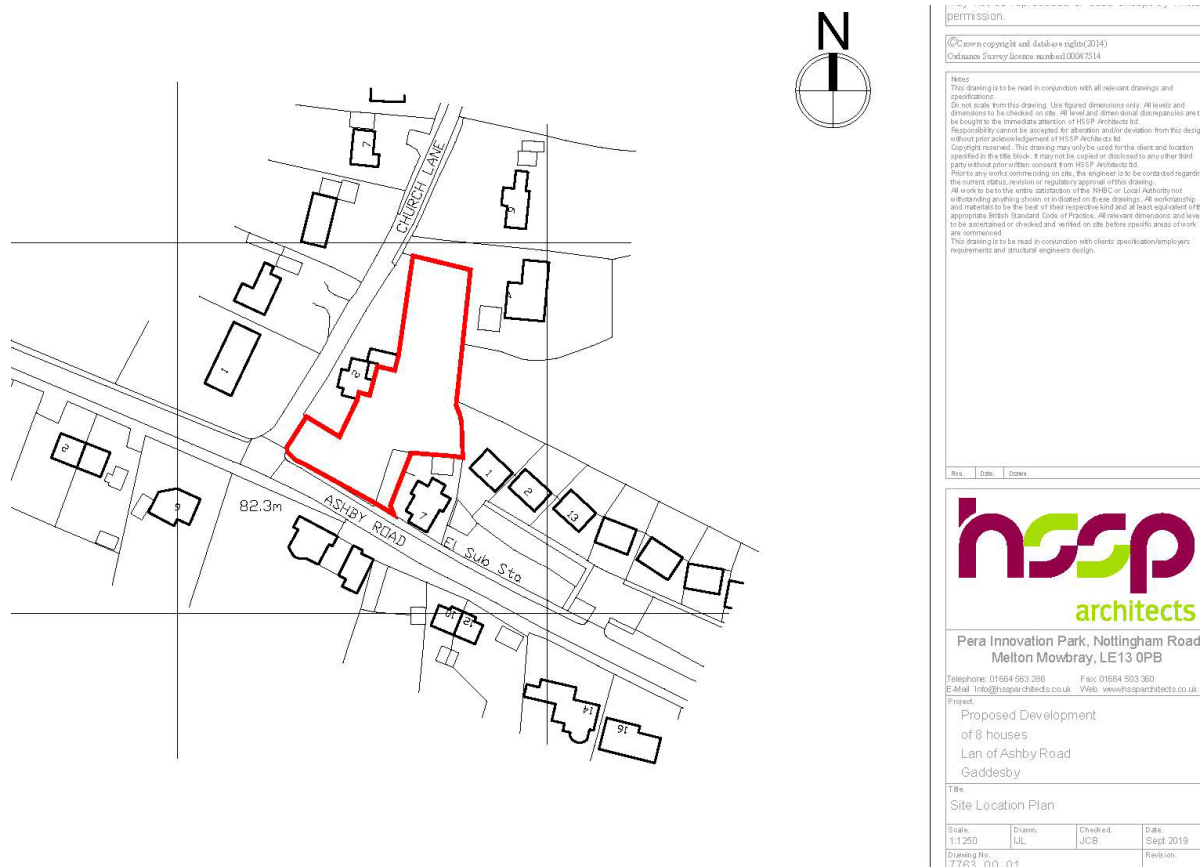


Figure 2 Plan of proposed development area Site highlighted. Plan provided by developer



Figure 3 General view of site from Ashby Road
Looking north-east



Figure 4 General view of site from north end
Looking south-west towards Ashby Road

Historical and Archaeological Background

Little archaeological work has taken place within the immediate vicinity of the proposed development site, although the Historic Environment Record (HER) for Leicestershire and Rutland indicates that it lies within an area of archaeological potential. The site lies within the medieval and post-medieval historic settlement core of the village close to Saint Luke's Church (HER Ref: MLE44674). It is however just outside the Gaddesby Conservation Area.

Historic mapping indicates that the site has contained a number of structures from at least the late 19th century. The First Edition Ordnance Survey map, published in 1884, shows buildings present in the centre of the site and around the southern and south-eastern edges. The map also shows a wing extending eastwards from the house on Church Lane to the west of the site (Fig. 5). Nothing on the site is shown at this time along the Ashby Road frontage although a trackway can be seen running from Church Lane eastwards to serve the building located in the south-east corner. By the time of the 1952 Ordnance Survey edition the building in the south-east corner has gone but the structure in the centre of the site is still present as is the wing extending from the adjacent Church Lane property (Fig. 6). The detail is not clear, but trees still appear to be present in the south-west corner of the site and no garage is mentioned although there is a possible forecourt area in the eastern part of the Ashby Road frontage.

The next available map is the 1973 Ordnance Survey map which shows the southern half of the site as a filling station with a large forecourt covering much of the Ashby Road frontage. The building in the centre of site is still present as is the eastern wing of the adjacent property. This 1973 map is shown on the Edina DigiMap website and cannot be reproduced in this report due to copyright reasons. The author of this report remembers the garage in the early 1970s as a concreted or paved forecourt served by the building running northwards along the eastern edge of the site. The building also operated as a small shop.

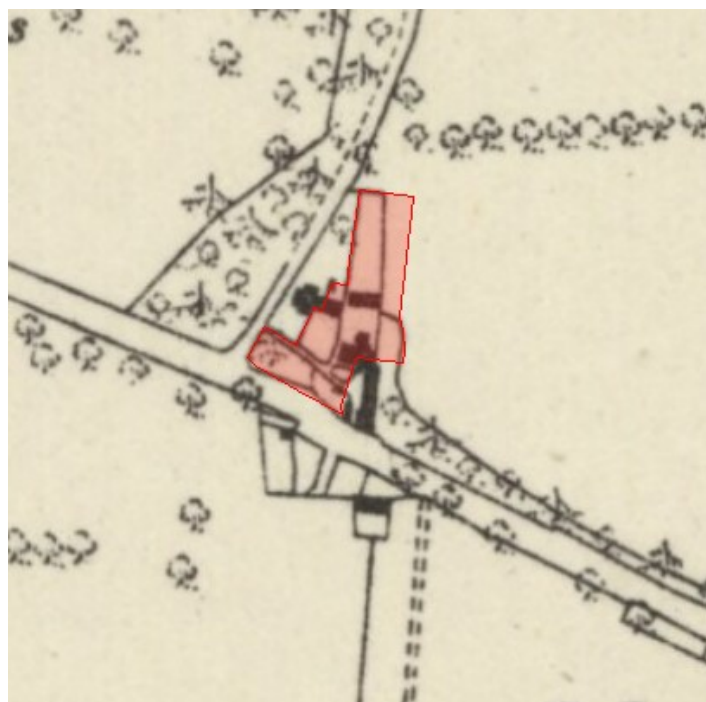


Figure 5 Detail from the First Edition Ordnance survey map 1884 Sheet XXVI.NE. Approximate site location highlighted

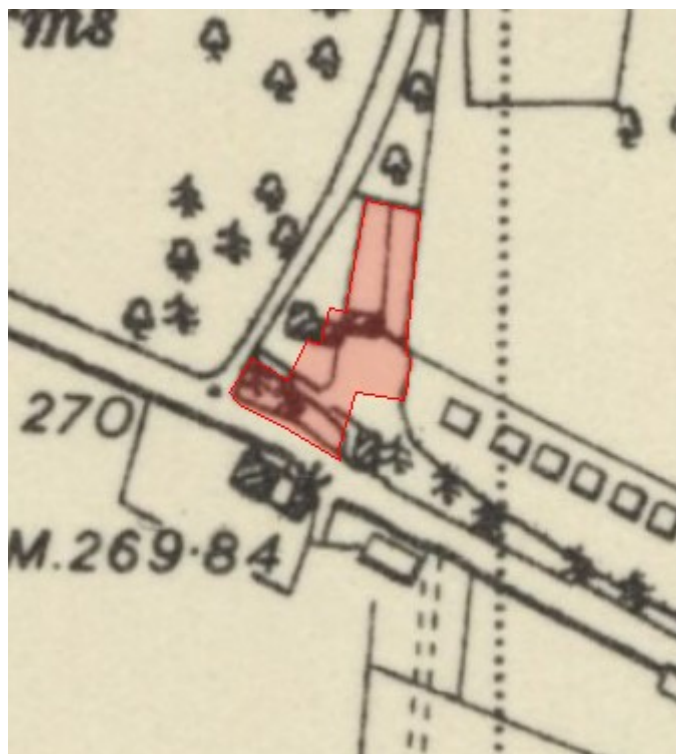


Figure 6 Detail from the 1952 Ordnance Survey map Sheet XXVI.NE. Approximate site location highlighted

Archaeological Objectives

The main objectives of the evaluation were as laid out in the ULAS *Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Field Evaluation: Land Adjacent to 7 Ashby Road, Gaddesby, 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 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.

Within the stated project objectives, the principal aim of the evaluation was to establish the nature, extent, date, depth, significance and state of preservation of any archaeological deposits which might be identified on the site in order to determine the potential impact upon them from the proposed development.

The results of this evaluation will provide information in order for the local planning authority to make informed recommendations and, if required, to identify an appropriate mitigation strategy for the proposed development.

Trial trenching is an intrusive form of evaluation that will demonstrate the existence of earth-fast archaeological features that may exist within the area.

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 site's location close to the historic village core suggested that there was potential for archaeological deposits from the medieval period onwards.

Early Medieval

6.4 Rural settlement patterns,

6.7 Agricultural economy and rural landscape

High Medieval

7.2 Rural settlement,

These research aims were identified based on the current state of knowledge within the area of the scheme. Dependant 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 (March 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.

Two 20m long trenches were specified in the ULAS WSI but an additional two trenches were added as contingency trenches following advice from the Senior Planning Archaeologist.

Excavation was carried out using a mechanical excavator fitted with a flat-bladed bucket to expose the underlying strata. Topsoil and/or overburden was removed carefully in level spits, under continuous archaeological supervision. The trenches were excavated down to the top of archaeological deposits, should any be present, or down to natural undisturbed ground, whichever was to be reached first. All excavation was undertaken with a view to avoid damage to any possible archaeological deposits or features which appeared worthy of preservation in situ or which would require a more detailed investigation than for the purposes of evaluation.

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

An accession number (X.A34.2020) was obtained prior to commencement of the project and used to identify all records.

Results

Three trenches were placed in order to target the three blocks of proposed housing and a fourth trench was placed along the line of the service road (Fig. 7). All of the trenches were intended to be 20m in length although site constraints and the presence of existing services meant that this length had to be modified during the evaluation (Table 1).

Table 1: Table of results for the four trenches

Trench	Orientation	Length	Width	Min depth	Max depth	Comments
01	NE-SW	12.6m	1.6m	0.45m	0.72m	Little topsoil. Subsoil remains intact. No features
02	N-S	20.0m	1.6m	0.32m	0.75m	Disturbed topsoil, Subsoil OK. Possible truncation of natural at south end. No features
03	N-S	21.3m	1.6m	0.84m	0.93m	Heavy disturbance. No topsoil or subsoil. Natural probably truncated. No features
04	E-W	20.2m	1.6m	0.76m except for over water pipe	0.83m	Heavy disturbance. No topsoil or subsoil. Natural probably truncated. No features



Figure 7 Location of evaluation trenches

Trench 01

Trench 01 was placed at the northern end of the site to run along the line of the proposed houses. The narrow width of the site at this point meant that the trench had to be angled slightly in order to give the excavator room to manoeuvre. Prior to the evaluation much of the silty sandy topsoil had been removed leaving only a thin layer between 0.08m and 0.20m thick. This however did not appear to have affected the sandy clay subsoil which had a thickness of between 0.30m and 0.48m. Removal of both layers revealed the natural substratum which consisted of a mid-yellow brown sandy clay (Figs 8 and 9).

No archaeological features or deposits were observed in this trench. A circular section land drain was seen following the slope of the land down to the south. The depth of the natural substratum was slightly lower at this point which may possibly suggest the remnant of a plough furrow although there was no evidence of this in the overlying layers.

No archaeological features or deposits were observed in this trench.



Figure 8 Trench 01
Looking north-east. 1m scales. Note land drain just beyond scales



Figure 9 Trench 01
Looking south-west. 1m scales. Land drain running across the trench this side of scales

Trench 02

Trench 02 was placed to target the proposed service road running northwards across the site from Ashby Road. A modern drain, water pipe and gas pipe had been installed where the trench was originally intended to be therefore the trench was moved slightly further south and west and also given a slight curve to avoid the pipes (see Fig. 7 above). These service pipes will not form part of the new development, but it was thought that their installation had probably disturbed the ground and would not therefore produce any meaningful results, hence the relocation of the trench.

The east wing of the adjacent property on Church Lane, which is shown on all available maps has been demolished leaving only the brick foundation wall at ground level. It is not clear when this demolition took place. The foundations extended into the development site and, as with the service pipes, were thought likely to have disturbed any surviving archaeology. The rest of the house appeared to be of 19th century date with later additions and the brick foundations were of a similar date, therefore Trench 02 was moved slightly in order to avoid them.

The loose silty sand topsoil in this part of the site appeared to have been extremely disturbed and contained many fragments of brick, stones, late 19th and 20th century pottery along with many pieces of rusting metal. The topsoil had a thickness of between 0.10m and 0.30m along most of its length although it increased to a thickness of 0.75m for the final 4m of the southern end of the trench. The same sandy clay subsoil as seen in Trench 01 was encountered along most of the trench except for the final 4m at the southern end of the trench where only disturbed topsoil was seen extending all of the way down to the top of natural (Figs 10 and 11). Where present the subsoil had a thickness varying between 0.20m and 0.35m. A possible electrical cable was seen running across the northern end of the trench just cutting into the top of the mid-yellow brown sandy clay natural. This was left in place.

No archaeological features or deposits were observed in this trench. The natural substratum appeared to have been truncated for the final 4m of the southern end of the trench which corresponded with the lack of subsoil. It would appear that this area had undergone some form of landscaping, possibly during the creation of the garage forecourt area or during the demolition of the structures formerly on site. No land drains or evidence of ridge and furrow was observed.



Figure 10 Trench 02

Looking south towards Ashby Road. 1m scales. Note foundation wall of demolished wing of adjacent house running under the fencing on the right of the picture



Figure 11 Trench 02

Looking north-east. 1m scales. Note how the depth of natural increases at the southern end of the trench

Trench 03

Trench 03 was located on the eastern side of the site on a north to south orientation in order to target the proposed block of houses to be built there. This part of the site appeared to be heavily disturbed and the extremely mixed and loose topsoil/overburden contained large quantities of brick debris, concrete, drain pipe, stones, metal and 20th century glazed pottery (Fig. 12). No subsoil was present anywhere along the length of the trench.

The thickness of the topsoil/overburden varied between 0.75m and 0.90m which extended down the mid-yellow brown sandy clay natural substratum. At the north end of the trench a sharp cut filled with black silty material had a number of metal posts wrapped with plastic sheeting sticking out showing the feature to be very modern. To the south of this the overburden was very loose all the way down to the natural where a series of land drains ran across the base of the trench (Figs 13 and 14). These may be associated with the nearby structures shown on the Ordnance Survey maps. As noted, there was no subsoil present in this trench.

The depth of natural was significantly deeper than in nearby Trench 02 which would suggest that some truncation has taken place here. This may have been caused by the demolition of nearby structures. No archaeological features or deposits were observed in this trench.

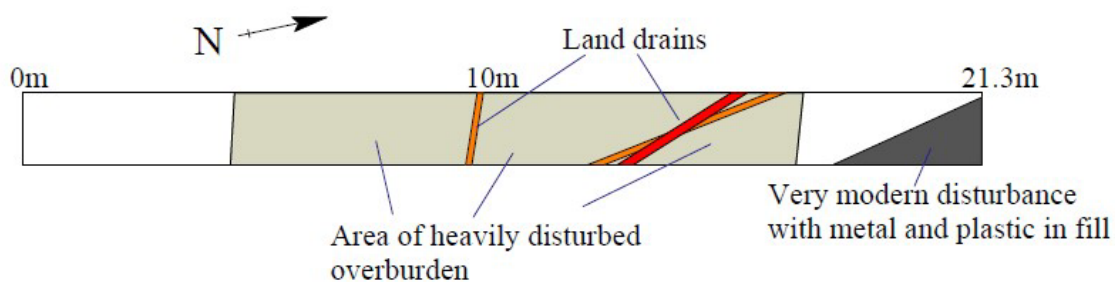


Figure 12 Trench 03 plan



Figure 13 Trench 03
Looking south. 1m scales. Heavily disturbed area just beyond the scales



Figure 14 Trench 03
Looking north. 1m scales

Trench 04

Trench 04 was located in the southern end of the site parallel to Ashby Road and followed a roughly east to west alignment. The trench was located in this position to target the block of houses which will be constructed here. The trench also had the potential to expose archaeological evidence of any street frontage properties which may have survived.

As with Trench 03 the overburden appeared to be extremely disturbed all of the way down to the natural substratum with no evidence of any subsoil. For the first 5m of the western end of the trench the upper 0.3m to 0.5m of sandy silt overburden was full of tree roots. Beneath the roots was an area of sandy gravel containing a water pipe. The pipe appeared to lead from a stopcock in the road towards the adjacent house on Church Lane and was left intact (Fig. 15). Eastwards, beyond the root disturbance the overburden consisted of a mixed sandy silt with areas of brick rubble, ashy patches and stones. A spark plug was found within this material at around 0.7m below present ground level. The undisturbed natural substratum consisted of a yellow brown sandy clay which was slightly darker than that seen in the other trenches. The darker hue may be due to a certain amount of staining from the overburden which appeared to be slightly oily in places.

No evidence of any underground petrol tanks was seen during the excavation of this trench. The owner indicated that these were slightly further north than the location of Trench 04 although it is possible that their installation and, later, removal has caused a significant amount of disturbance to a wider area. The top of undisturbed natural was significantly deeper than in the other trenches which may suggest that the ground has been truncated in this part of the site.

No archaeological features or deposits were observed in this trench.



Figure 15 Trench 04
Looking east. 1m scales. Ashby Road on right. Water pipe in foreground



Figure 16 Trench 04
Looking west. 1m scales. Ashby Road on left, Church Lane at far end of trench

Discussion and Conclusion

Despite the potential for revealing medieval and post medieval archaeological features none were found in any of the four trenches. Much of the site appears to have been heavily disturbed during the past century.

Trench 01, in the northern part of the site, appears to have undergone the least amount of disturbance. It is also the furthest away from any possible early buildings facing onto Church Lane or Ashby Road. The very slight dip in the level of the natural where the land drain was found may suggest the presence of a furrow which, if this is correct, may in turn suggest that this part of the site may have been part of a field system during the medieval period.

Trench 02 was slightly more disturbed than Trench 01 and was also negative. The drop in the level of the natural at the southern end might indicate the edge of the heavily disturbed area seen in Trench 04. The lack of any subsoil in this part of the trench also points to a degree of disturbance which is likely to have damaged any surviving deposits.

The high level of disturbance in Trench 03 appears to have been caused by the earlier buildings shown in this part of the site on the Ordnance Survey maps. The number and style of bricks found within the overburden indicates that the buildings were likely to be later 19th century brick-built structures. Map evidence and the quantity of modern debris within the overburden indicates that they were probably demolished in the later 20th century.

Prior to the evaluation Trench 04 offered the greatest potential for evidence of buildings fronting onto Ashby Road. Unfortunately, the level of disturbance caused by the former garage appears to have removed any potential archaeological features which may have survived. The number of tree roots towards the western end of the trench also appears to have added to the disturbance.

Archive and publication

The archive for this project will be deposited with Leicestershire Museums with accession number X.A34.2020 and consists of the following:

- 1 Unbound copy of this report (ULAS Report No. 2020-056)
- 1 Unbound copy of the WSI
- 4 Trench recording sheets
- 1 Photo index sheet
- 1 Contact sheet of digital photographs
- 1 DVD containing 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.

Acknowledgements

ULAS would like to thank Karl Watson and Jake for the work and their assistance during the evaluation. Andrew Hyam carried out the trial trenching for ULAS and the project was managed by John Thomas. The excavator was provided by the developer.

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