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Archaeological Services

A strip, map and sample excavation at
Paddock south of Hinckley Road,
Barwell, Leicestershire
LE9 8DP

SP 4349 9612

Claire LaCombe



ULAS Report No: 2021-104

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Site Name: Paddock south of Hinckley Road, Barwell, Leicestershire LE9 8DP

Grid Ref: SP 4349 9612

Author: Claire LaCombe

Client: Mr & Mrs Jackson

Planning Ref. 21/00053/FUL

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OASIS RECORD

PROJECT DETAILS	Oasis No	universi1-425380		
	Project Name	Paddock south of Hinckley Road, Barwell, Leicestershire LE9 8DP		
	Start/end dates	14/06/2021 to 18/06/2021		
	Previous/Future Work	No/ Not known		
	Project Type	Strip, map and sample excavation		
	Site Status	None		
	Current Land Use	Vacant Land Previously Undeveloped		
	Monument Type/Period	Ditch/ medieval;		
	Significant Finds/Period	Pottery/ medieval, animal bone		
	Reason for Investigation	NPPF		
	Position in the Planning Process	Planning condition		
Planning Ref.	21/00053/FUL			
PROJECT LOCATION	County	Leicestershire		
	Site Address/Postcode	Paddock south of Hinckley Road, Barwell, Leicestershire LE9 8DP		
	Study Area	1378m ²		
	Site Coordinates	SP 4349 9612		
	Height OD	118m aOD		
PROJECT CREATORS	Organisation	ULAS		
	Project Brief Originator	Local Planning Authority: Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council		
	Project Design Originator	ULAS		
	Project Manager	Gavin Speed		
	Project Director/Supervisor	Claire LaCombe		
	Sponsor/Funding Body	Mr & Mrs Jackson		
PROJECT ARCHIVE		Physical	Digital	Paper
	Recipient	Leicestershire Museums Service	Leicestershire Museums Service	Leicestershire Museums Service
	ID (Acc. No.)	X.A52.2021	X.A52.2021	X.A52.2021
	Contents	Ceramic pottery find, Animal bone.	Photographs	Report/Watching brief sheets, photo index.
PROJECT BIBLIOGRAPHY	Type	Grey Literature (unpublished)		
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DRAFT

**A strip, map and sample excavation at Paddock south of Hinckley Road,
Barwell, Leicestershire LE9 8DP**

Claire LaCombe

Summary

This report details the results of an archaeological strip, map and sample excavation that was carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) at Paddock south of Hinckley Road, Barwell, Leicestershire LE9 8DP (NGR: SP 4349 9612) in June 2021 on behalf of Mr & Mrs Jackson during groundworks associated with the construction of a new Ménage.

The site lies on the southern side of Hinckley Road, immediately to the west of a rectangular earthwork enclosure believed to represent the remains of a possible medieval moated site and 1.2km south west of the historic core of Barwell.

The archaeological work revealed three ditches and gullies. No other archaeological features were recorded. A single residual Roman pottery sherd, and worked flint was retrieved from one ditch.

The archive for the project will be deposited with Leicestershire Museums Service with accession number X.A52.2021.

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 a strip, map and sample excavation at Paddock south of Hinckley Road, Barwell, Leicestershire LE9 8DP (NGR: SP 4349 9612).

The work was carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on behalf of Mr & Mrs Jackson.

Planning permission has been granted for a proposed residential development of one property on the site (21/00053/FUL) and the permission includes a condition for archaeological work.

The site lies outside the historic settlement core of Barwell but adjacent to an identified moat to the east of the site. Recent archaeological test-pitting undertaken to the immediate east of the application site had revealed evidence for use of the land during the Anglo-Saxon, Roman and medieval periods. As a consequence of this the Planning Archaeologist for Leicestershire as advisor to Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council recommended mitigation by strip, map and sample excavation and recording (preservation by record), covering the footprint of the proposed ménage, prior to the commencement of any groundworks for the development.

The aim of the work was to record any archaeological deposits which may have been impacted upon by development. Site Location, Geology and Topography

Barwell is a village and civil parish in the Hinckley and Bosworth district of Leicestershire, England, 3.5km north-east of Hinckley and 15.5km south-west of Leicester (Fig. 1). The site is located on the southern side of Hinckley Road.

The site is accessed directly from Hinckley Road, Barwell via a long trackway. The site consists of several fields, though the ménage is located in the NE corner. To the east is a farm, with fields on all other sides. The total site area is c.3.33ha.

The site was covered in grass at the time of the excavation and appeared to have been leveled by landscaping and lies at a height of approximately 118m OD.

The British Geological Survey has mapped the bedrock geology of the area as boulder clay (Oadby member), overlying mudstone.

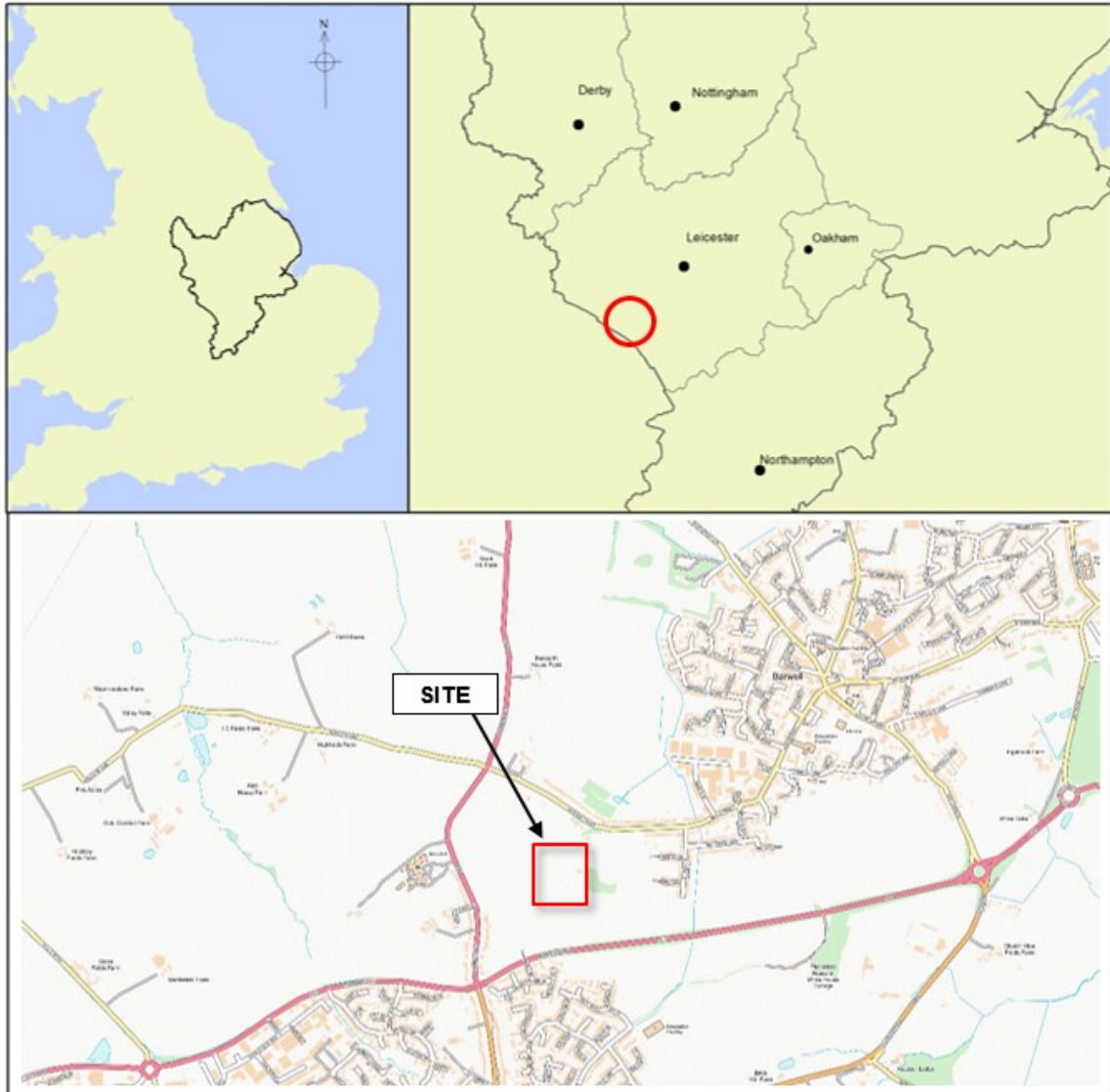


Figure 1: Site Location, within UK, county, and locally
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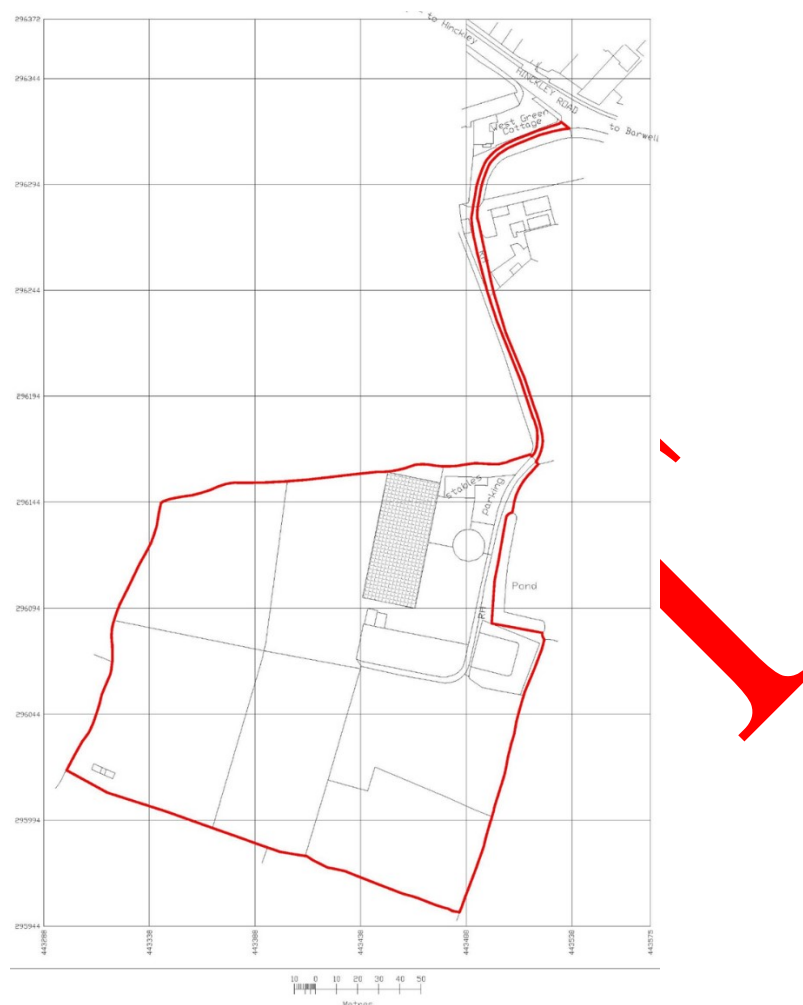


Figure 2: Detailed plan of site (provided by client) showing the location of the ménage (grey) next to the stables. Scale 50m.

Historical and Archaeological Background (from WSI)

Barwell (Barewelle) was a settlement in Domesday Book, in the hundred of Guthlaxton and the county of Leicestershire. It had a recorded population of 22 households in 1086, putting it in the largest 40% of settlements recorded in Domesday (NB: 22 households is an estimate, since multiple places are mentioned in the same entry), and is listed under 2 owners in Domesday Book. Barwell is noted in the Oxford English Dictionary of place names as 'Spring or stream frequented by boars' (Mills 1998).

The Historic Environment Record (HER) for Leicestershire and Rutland indicates that there were no known archaeological remains recorded on the site itself, however there were records for the adjacent plot indicating that the application area had the potential to include heritage assets of archaeological interest.

The proposed site lies close to known heritage assets with an archaeological interest. This includes an area immediately to the west of a rectangular earthwork enclosure, believed to represent the remains of a medieval moated site near Hall Close (MLE2804). The rectangular earthwork enclosure - a 'moat' on two sides, ditches on the other - was noted in the 1980s in the area of trees to the east of the site. The moat was assessed in 2011 and appeared to have been destroyed since it was noted, if it originally existed.

Trial trenching recently undertaken approximately 280m to the north-east of the site has identified a series of ditches and gullies containing medieval and Anglo-Saxon pottery, which is of particular significance due to its scarcity. Further work is likely to follow in advance of permitted development in this location (S. Clarke email of 2/3/21 to Harry White H&BBC) and there is a strong likelihood that similar remains relating to medieval and/or Anglo-Saxon activity might be present within the current application area.

In the surrounding area, around 350m to the east, an evaluation, watching brief and earthwork survey for the new pipeline recorded ridge and furrow and residual Bronze Age lithics. (ELE6784,6785,6786, Cope-Faulkner & Moulis 2010). Around 300m to the east a single sherd of Pantheon ware was recovered during a watching brief in April 2011 (MLE20183). The first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1888 shows the site within the fields, largely as seen today. The early 1900s maps show the area used as an allotment.

Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of the strip, map and sample excavation were defined as follows:

- To identify the presence/absence of any archaeological deposits.
- To characterise the extent, date range, character, condition and significance of any archaeological deposits to be affected by the ground works.
- To excavate and record archaeological deposits uncovered during the work.
- To recover artefacts and ecofacts to aid in the dating and interpretation of any archaeological deposits and features encountered.
- To advance understanding of the heritage assets and establish the relationship of any remains within the wider landscape.
- To 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 WSI identified the potential for research topics identified in *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/>: to be addressed namely:

6. Early Medieval

- 6.1 Demography and the identification of political and social groups
- 6.4 Rural settlement patterns
- 6.7 The agricultural economy and rural landscape

7. High Medieval

- 7.2 Rural settlement
- 7.3 Manors and manorial estates
- 7.7 The agrarian landscape and food-producing economy

Methodology

The work followed the methodological statement set out in the *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) for the project (Speed 2021).

All work was carried out in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (2014b, updated 2020) and adhered to their *Code of Conduct* (2014a revised 2019).

The archaeological work was carried out between 14/06/2021 and 18/06/2021.

Date	Site Staff	Description
14/6/21	CL	7:30-4:45
15/6/21	CL / CN	8:00-4:00
16/6/21	CL / CN	8:00-4:00
17/6/21	CL / CN	8:00-4:00
18/6/21	CL / CN	8:00-4:00

The development proposal was for a new ménage to be located to the north of the site, west of an existing barn. Prior to the site being stripped the location of underground services had been identified. A small row of bushes was removed which sat within the development area and two small trees.

The area was stripped using a tracked 21 ton excavator fitted with a flat-bladed ditching bucket. The designated area for strip, map and sample was the footprint of the new ménage, covering around 1378m². The work involved the removal of overburden under the supervision of an experienced professional archaeologist to determine the presence/absence of any archaeological remains.

The Site Accession Number (X.A52.2021) was used to identify all records.

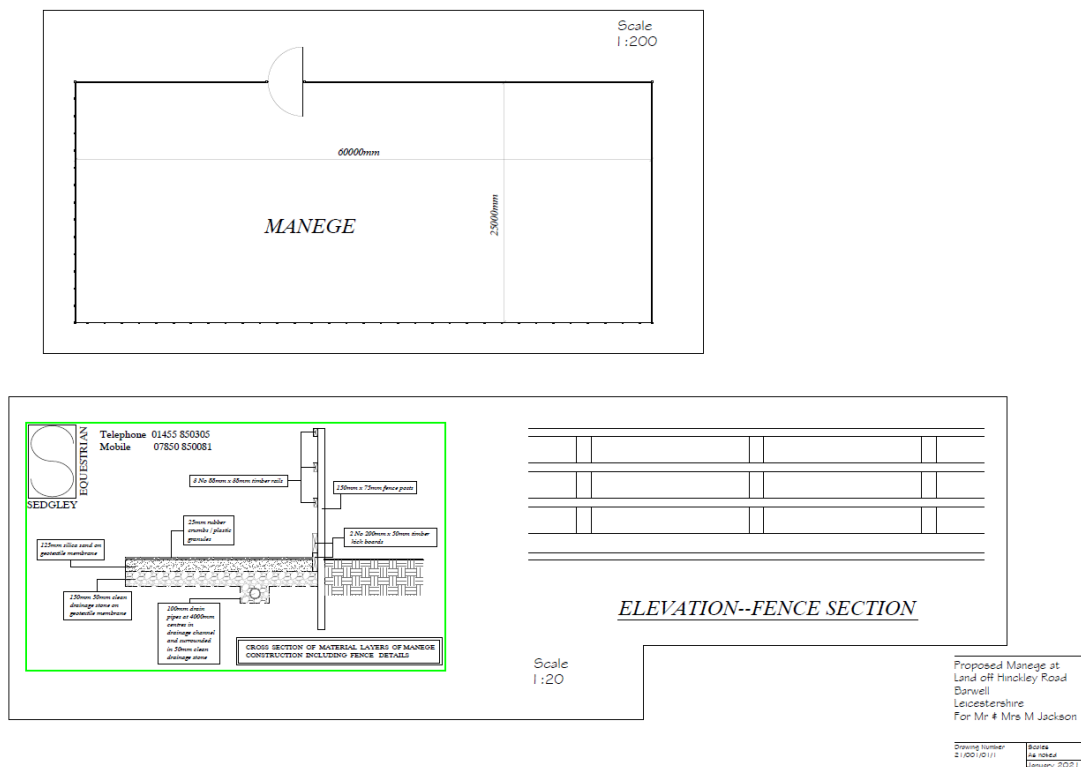


Figure 3: Plan of proposed development (provided by the client).

Monitoring

The Planning Archaeologist was not able to visit the site but was sent photographs and kept apprised of progress throughout the project.



Figure 4: The site prior to excavation, looking south. Note the small row of shrubs which were removed prior to excavation.



Figure 5: The site prior to excavation, looking east across the southern extent of the ménage.

Results

A decision was made by the client to slightly reduce the planned length of the ménage due to the positioning of an existing shed. The area was stripped from north to south covering an area of 26m x 53m (1378m²).



Figure 6: Work in progress, looking south-east.

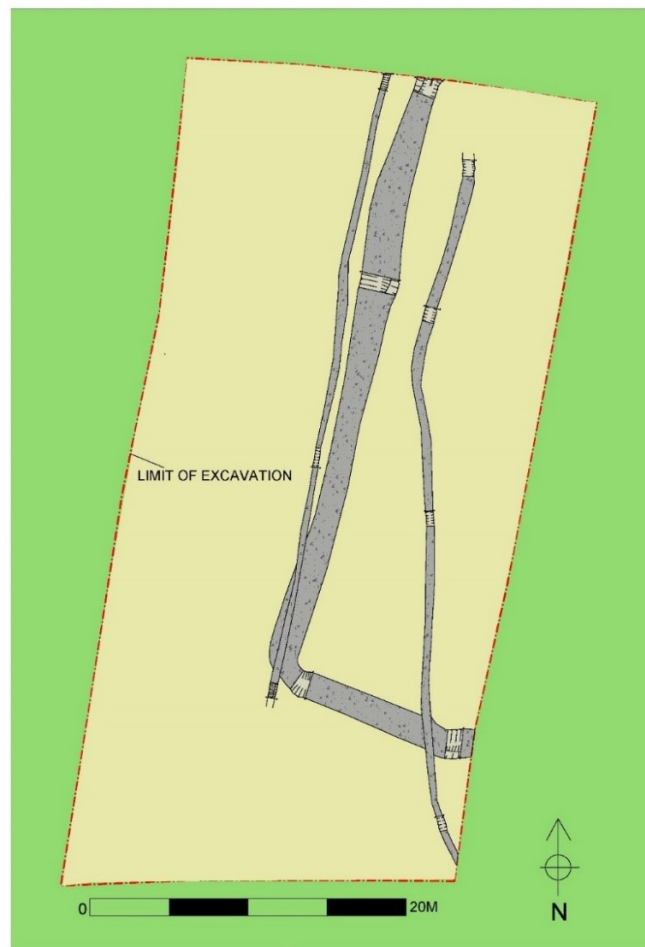


Figure 7: Plan of the stripped area showing features and sample locations. Scale 20m.

The topsoil across the area was a dark grey sandy loam containing some small rounded pebbles and modern debris. It ranged from 0.16m – 0.40m in depth due to recent landscaping of the area to create a flat surface. The subsoil was a mid-brown silty clay containing some small rounded pebbles and ranged from 0.20m - 0.41m in depth. The natural sub-stratum comprised of a very mixed red / grey / orange / brown clay with some patchy areas <3% of bright orange sand and sub-rounded pebbles. There was also <1% chalk and flint inclusions throughout the site. Three features were located during the strip, one large ditch and two smaller ditches (Fig 7).

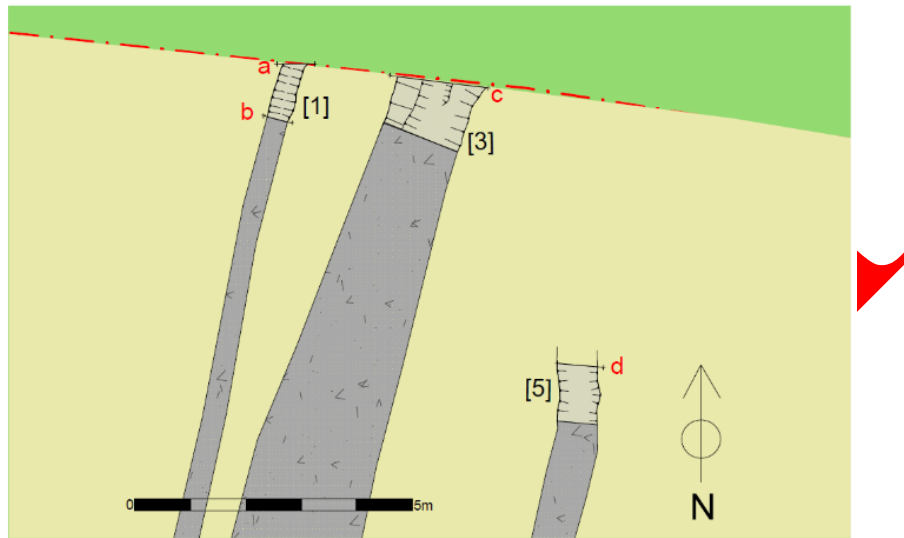


Figure 8: Plan showing detail of the northern area of the excavation showing archaeological features [1][3][5]. Scale 5m.

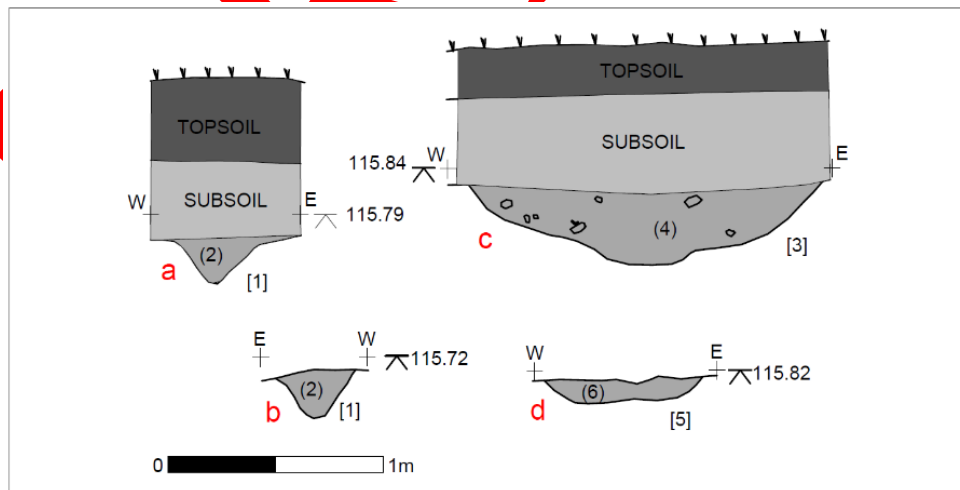


Figure 9: Illustration of the sections of the features [1][3][5]. Scale 1m.



Figure 10: Small ditch [1] looking north.
Scale 0.5m



Figure 11: Large ditch [3] looking north.
Scale 1m



Figure 12: Ditch [5] looking north. Scale 0.5m

The most substantial ditch was 'L' shaped in its construction and was the earliest feature on the site. The ditch turned towards the east and appeared to be aligned with the possible moat located in the adjacent plot to the east. The total visible length of the ditch was 51.5m. Four areas were hand excavated across it ([3][9][19][21]). The ditch was fairly shallow with a concave base at a depth of 0.33m – 0.51m. It had shallow to moderately sloping sides and measured 1.48m – 2.38m in width at the surface. The single fill (4 = 10 = 20 = 22) comprised of mid brown / yellow silty clay which contained <1% small rounded pebbles and was quite sterile (figs 8, 9, 11, 13, 14, 16, 19, 20, 23, 24). 27 fragments of poorly preserved animal bone were recovered from the fill of the ditch (10) belonging to a single dog skull. Also some very small fragments of degraded bone was recovered from [19] (20) but were discarded as they were fragmentary and unidentifiable.

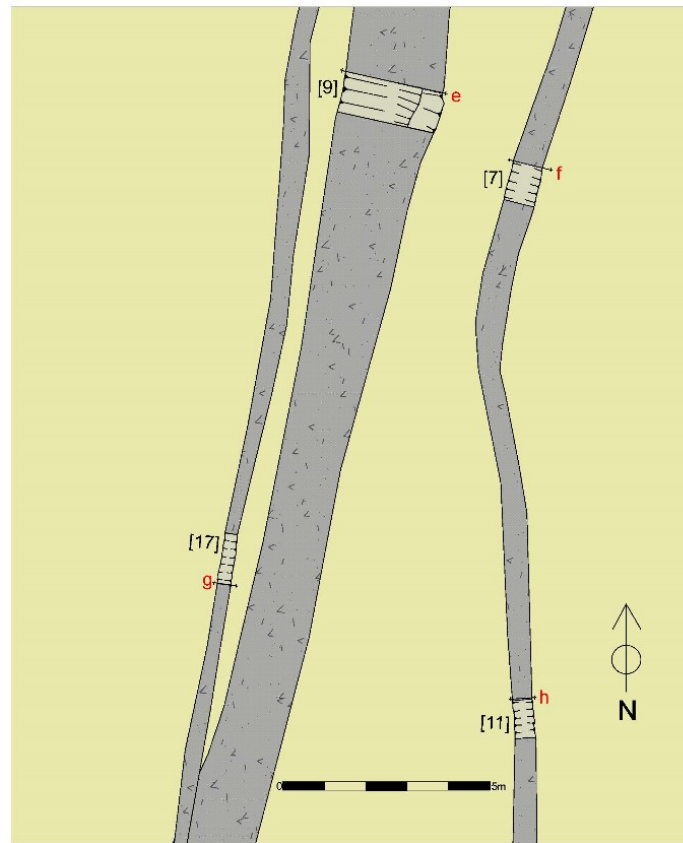


Figure 13: Plan of central area of the excavation, showing archaeological features [9][7][17][11]. Scale 5m.

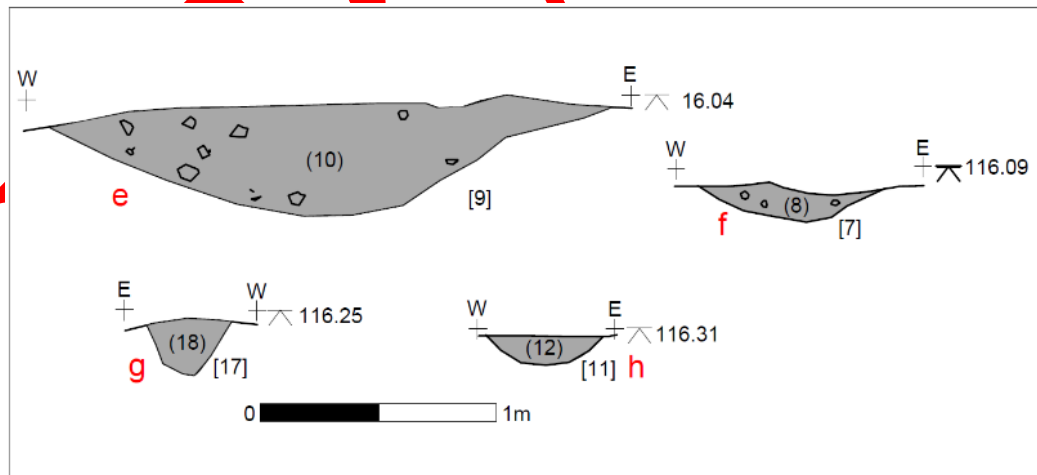


Figure 14: Sections of features [9][7][17][11]. Scale 1m.



Figure 15: Ditch [7] looking north. Scale 0.5m.



Figure 16: Ditch [9] looking north. Scale 1m.



Figure 17: Ditch [11] looking north. Scale 0.5m.



Figure 18: Ditch [17] looking south. Scale 0.5m.

The western linear ditch was aligned approximately north – south and was of a later date than the central more substantial ditch which it cut through towards the southern extent (figs 8-10, 13, 4, 18–21). The total visible length of the ditch was 40.35m. Three sections were hand excavated along its length ([1], [15], [17]) and it was ‘V’ shaped in profile with a depth of 0.22m – 0.3m. It had steep sloping sides and measured 0.3m – 0.4m in width at the surface. The single fill (2 = 16 = 18) comprised of mid brown / yellow silty clay which contained <1% small rounded pebbles and was quite sterile. No datable evidence was recovered from this feature.

The eastern linear ditch was aligned approximately north – south and was of a later date than the central more substantial ditch which it cut through towards the southern extent (figs 8, 9, 12, 14, 15, 17, 19, 20, 22). The total visible length of the ditch was 45m. Four sections were hand excavated along its length ([5], [7], [11], [13]) and it was very shallow with a concave base at a depth of 0.09m – 0.2m. It had shallow to moderately sloping sides and measured 0.36m – 0.76m in width at the surface. The single fill (6 = 8 = 12 = 14) comprised of bright yellow silty clay which contained <1% small rounded pebbles and was quite sterile. A very abraded Roman pottery sherd (Shell-tempered ware) was recovered from this feature [7] (8), it may have been residual.

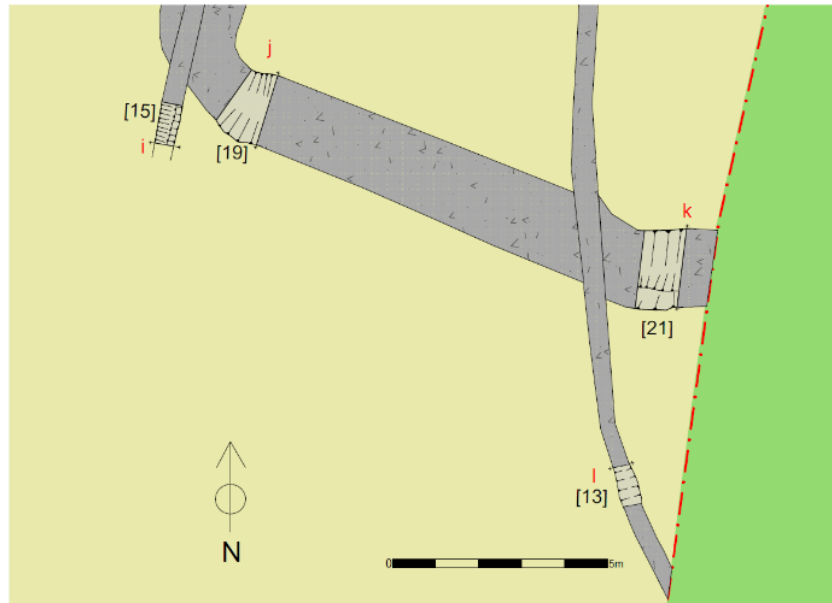


Figure 19: Plan of southern area, showing features [15][19][21][13]. Scale 5m.

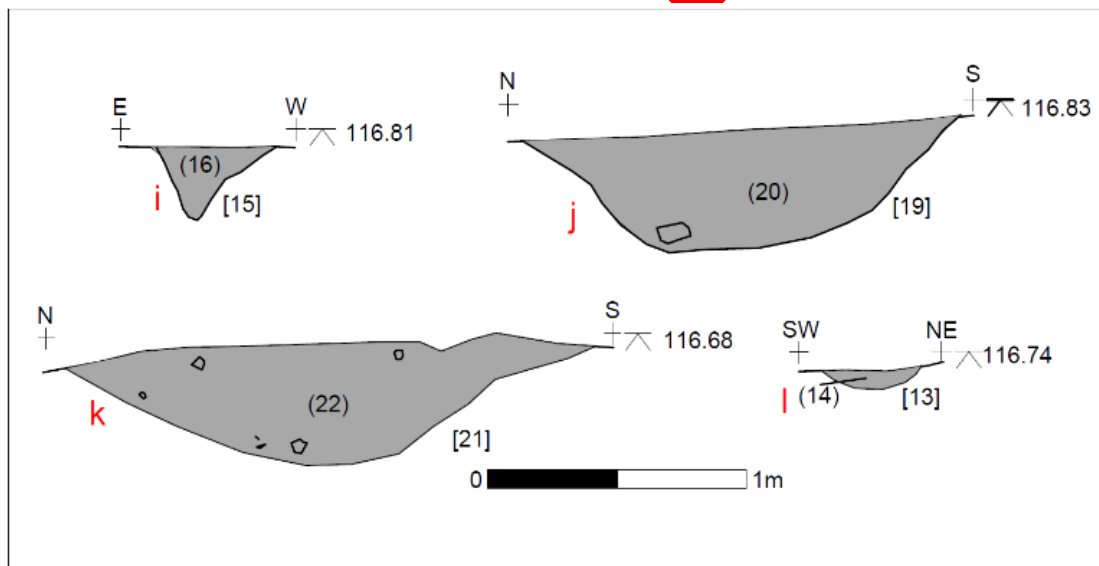


Figure 20: Sections of features [15][19][21][13]. Scale 1m.



Figure 21: Ditch [15] looking south. Scale 0.5m



Figure 22: Ditch [13] looking north west. Scale 0.5m.



Figure 23: Ditch [19] looking south east. Scale 1m.



Figure 24: Ditch [21] looking east. Scale 1m.

The Pottery Finds – Nick Cooper

One sherd of pottery was found within context (8). It is shell-tempered ware (Leics. Fabric CG1A) (22g) from a jar and probably early Roman rather than medieval but it is very abraded and probably residual wherever it was found.

The Animal Bone - William Johnson

Context (10) yielded 27 fragments of bone. The fragments were poorly preserved and likely belong to a single dog skull. The only identifiable fragments included two maxillary fourth premolars (left and right) and a right maxillary first molar. Other fragments were identifiable as deriving from the skull.

The Flint – Nick Cooper

The single flint, found within context (8) is a struck flake in a light grey flint. Broadly Neolithic to Bronze Age in date.

Discussion

The development site lies directly adjacent to a rectangular earthwork enclosure, believed to represent the remains of a possible medieval moated site (MLE2804). The rectangular earthwork enclosure - a 'moat' on two sides, ditches on the other - was noted in the 1980s in the area of trees to the east of the site. The moat was assessed in 2011 and appeared to have been destroyed since it was noted, if it originally existed. However, it is possible that the moat at this point was seasonally dry as it has been noted by the current land owner that the ditch 'dries out' during the summer months and is full of water during the rest of the year.

Historic England states; "Around 6,000 moated sites are known in England. They consist of wide ditches, often or seasonally water-filled, partly or completely enclosing one or more islands of dry ground on which stood domestic or religious buildings. In some cases the islands were used for horticulture. The majority of moated sites served as prestigious aristocratic and seigneurial residences with the provision of a moat intended as a status symbol rather than a practical military defence. The peak period during which moated sites were built was between about 1250 and 1350 and by far the greatest concentration lies in central and eastern parts of England. However, moated sites were built throughout the medieval period, are widely scattered throughout England and exhibit a high level of diversity in their forms and sizes. They form a significant class of medieval monument and are important for the understanding of the distribution of wealth and status in the countryside."

The excavation of the planned area for development revealed three ditches. The larger and the earliest of the three formed an 'L' shape extending north towards the current field boundary and eastwards. LIDAR data indicates the ditch may continue and possibly joins the moated site (fig 25). This suggests that it is contemporary to, or of a very similar date to the known moated earthwork.

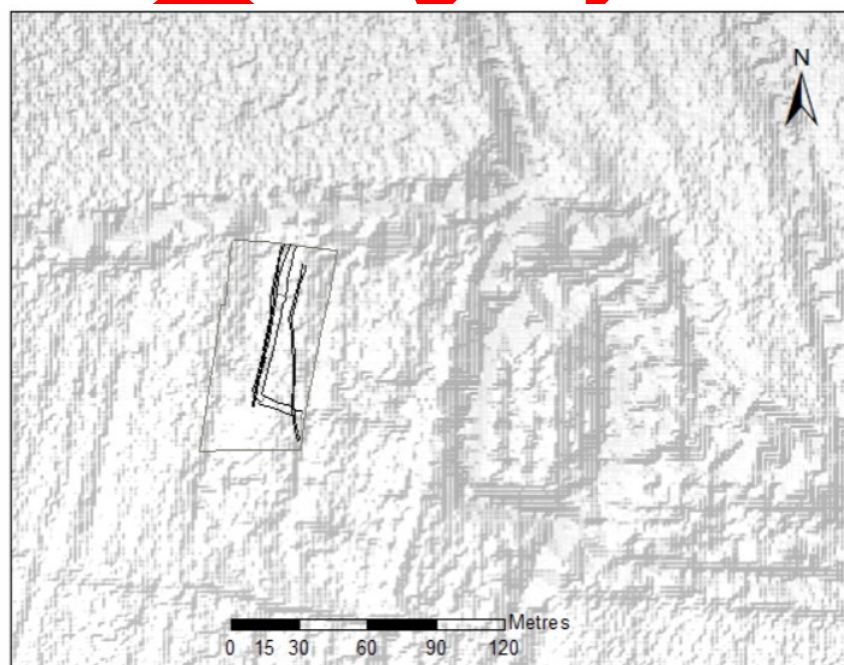


Figure 25: Lidar image of the site with the excavation area and ditches illustrated

The ditch, incorporating existing boundaries, forms an enclosure. An island of dry ground possibly for horticulture and associated with the moat. There is no evidence of a building or

any structure in the excavated area, however a large section of the enclosure has not been investigated and is currently occupied by a stable, a trackway and some temporary storage units. To the west of the enclosure and to the west of the proposed area for development is a series of medieval field systems ('ridge and furrow'), which again can be associated with moated sites.

Interestingly, the proposed development site is located directly south of an area called 'West Green' (fig 26). 'There are numerous small hamlets bearing the name 'green' associated with areas of common grazing land as well as moated sites. These types of settlement are known to have medieval roots' (Historic England 2021).

The two later ditches, which cut directly through the large ditch, could be associated with the allotments gardens which were illustrated in early maps from the 1931 Ordnance Survey map of the area (fig 26). The ditches could have possibly as a form of drainage given that the natural substrata is clay and holds the water.

Summary

The strip, map and sample excavation, although small in scale, provided evidence of archaeological features from the medieval period, with residual finds dating from Neolithic / Bronze Age and Roman suggesting that people have occupied this land for many centuries. The evidence contributes to a growing corpus of data relating to medieval moated sites in the East Midlands.

Archive and Publication

The archive for the project will be deposited with Leicestershire Museums with accession number X.A52.2021. The archive consists of the following:

- 1 unbound copy of this report (2021-104)
- 2 A4 sheets of notes
- 1 context record sheet
- 22 context sheets
- 1 permatrace sheet of primary drawings
- 1 drawing record
- 1 photographic record
- 1 CD of 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.

Acknowledgements

ULAS would like to thank Mr & Mrs Jackson for the work. The excavation was carried out by Claire LaCombe and Chris Naisbitt, the project was managed by Gavin Speed. Pottery and flint analysis was by Nick Cooper, and animal bone by William Johnson. The post-excavation work was co-ordinated by Nicholas Cooper.

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Appendix 1: Context List

Context	Type	Description	Finds	Suggested Date
1	Cut	Ditch (west)		
2	Fill	Fill of 1	No finds	
3	Cut	Ditch		
4	Fill	Fill of 3	No finds	
5	Cut	Ditch (east)		
6	Fill	Fill of 5	No finds	
7	Cut	Ditch (east)		
8	Fill	Fill of 7	Pottery sherd	shell-tempered ware (Leics. Fabric CG1A) (22g) from a jar - ROMAN
9	Cut	Ditch		
10	Fill	Fill of 9	Animal bone / flint	Flint- struck flake Neolithic / Bronze Age Bone – (canine) Unknown date
11	Cut	Ditch (east)		
12	Fill	Fill of 11	No finds	
13	Cut	Ditch (east)		
14	Fill	Fill of 13	No finds	
15	Cut	Ditch (west)		
16	Fill	Fill of 15	No finds	
17	Cut	Ditch (west)		
18	Fill	Fill of 17	No finds	
19	Cut	Ditch		
20	Fill	Fill of 20	Bone fragments - discarded	
21	Cut	Ditch		
22	Fill	Fill of 21	No Finds	No Finds



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