

**An Archaeological Strip, Map and Sample Excavation at  
The Old Hall, Church Lane,  
Old Dalby,  
Leicestershire  
NGR: SK 674 234**



**ULAS Report No 2021-078  
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**Site Name:** The Old Hall, Church Lane, Old Dalby, Leicestershire

Grid Ref: SK674 234

**Author:** Andrew Hyam

**Client:** Philippa Gregory

**Planning Ref. :** 20/001451/FULHH

ULAS Job No: 21/293

ULAS Report Number: 2021-078

Accession Number: X.A46.2021

Filename/Version	Checked by	Date	Notes
2021-078 Draft	Vicki Score	21/05/2021	Draft
<b>2021-078 Final</b>	<b>Vicki Score</b>	<b>3/6/2021</b>	<b>Final</b>
2021-078 Archive	Ffion Rogers	14/06/2021	Minor archive/formatting changes

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## OASIS Information

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>	<b>Oasis No</b>	universi1-501792		
	<b>Project Name</b>	A Strip Map & Sample at The Old Hall, Church Lane, Old Dalby, Leicestershire.		
	<b>Start/end dates</b>	12-05-2021		
	<b>Previous/Future Work</b>	Not known		
	<b>Project Type</b>	Archaeological strip, map and sample		
	<b>Site Status</b>	Grade II listed hall		
	<b>Current Land Use</b>	18th/19th century hall and garden		
	<b>Monument Type/Period</b>	None		
	<b>Significant Finds/Period</b>	Post medieval landscaping		
	<b>Reason for Investigation</b>	NPPF		
	<b>Position in the Planning Process</b>	Condition		
<b>Planning Ref.</b>	20/001451/FULHH			
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>	<b>County</b>	Leicestershire		
	<b>Site Address/Postcode</b>	The Old Hall, Church Lane, Old Dalby, Leicestershire. LE14 3LB		
	<b>Study Area</b>	63m <sup>2</sup>		
	<b>Site Coordinates</b>	SK674 234		
	<b>Height OD</b>	100m aOD		
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	ULAS		
	<b>Project Brief Originator</b>	Leicestershire County Council		
	<b>Project Design Originator</b>	ULAS		
	<b>Project Manager</b>	Vicki Score		
	<b>Project Director/Supervisor</b>	Andrew Hyam		
<b>Sponsor/Funding Body</b>	Client: Philippa Gregory			
<b>PROJECT ARCHIVE</b>		<b>Physical</b>	<b>Digital</b>	<b>Paper</b>
	<b>Recipient</b>	None	LCC	LCC
	<b>ID (Acc. No.)</b>	None	X.A46.2021	X.A46.2021
	<b>Contents</b>	None	Photographs	Report
<b>PROJECT BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>Type</b>	Grey Literature (unpublished)		
	<b>Description</b>	Developer Report A4 pdf		
	<b>Title</b>	An Archaeological SMS at The Old Hall, Church Lane, Old Dalby, Leicestershire.		
	<b>Author</b>	Hyam, A		
	<b>Other bibliographic details</b>	ULAS Report No 2021-078		
	<b>Date</b>	2021		
	<b>Publisher/Place</b>	University of Leicester Archaeological Services / University of Leicester		

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## **An archaeological strip map and sample excavation at The Old Hall, Church Lane, Old Dalby, Leicestershire (SK674 234)**

### **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 The Old Hall, Church Lane, Old Dalby, Leicestershire. The survey was carried out on the 12th of May 2021 on behalf of Philippa Gregory in advance of the construction of an open-air swimming pool.*

*The site consists of the Grade II listed early 19th century Hall with a garden area around it. The proposed swimming pool will be to the south-west of the main hall building on an area recently occupied by a landscaped terraced garden.*

*Excavation within the stripped footprint of the swimming pool revealed mixed and redeposited material between 0.58 and 0.75m in thickness extending down to the natural substratum. Late 19th and 20th century ceramic materials were recovered throughout the mixed deposit. Two 19th century land drains were also recorded at the interface with the natural.*

*No archaeological features or deposits were encountered within the area of the proposed swimming pool.*

*The report and archive will be deposited under Accession Number X.A46.2021*

### **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 an archaeological strip map and sample (SMS) at The Old Hall, Church Lane, Old Dalby, Leicestershire (SK 674 234).

The work was carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on behalf of Philippa Gregory.

Planning permission has been obtained for an open-air swimming pool (20/001451/FULHH) and the permission includes a condition for archaeological work.

The village of Old Dalby lies around 6 miles to the north of Melton Mowbray, 9 miles ENE of Loughborough and approximately 12 miles to the north-east of Leicester City centre (Fig. 1). The Old Hall is located on Church Lane towards the southern edge of the village (Fig. 2). The Church of Saint John the Baptist lies to the north of the Hall with the rest of the present village radiating out to the west, north and east. Access to the Old Hall grounds is from Lawn Lane to the south-west.

In advance of the proposed works the Leicestershire County Council Senior Planning Archaeologist, as advisor to Melton Borough Council planning authority, requested that an Archaeological Strip, Map and Sample (SMS) excavation took place prior to the

commencement of the ground works associated with the construction of the swimming pool (Figs 3 and 4).

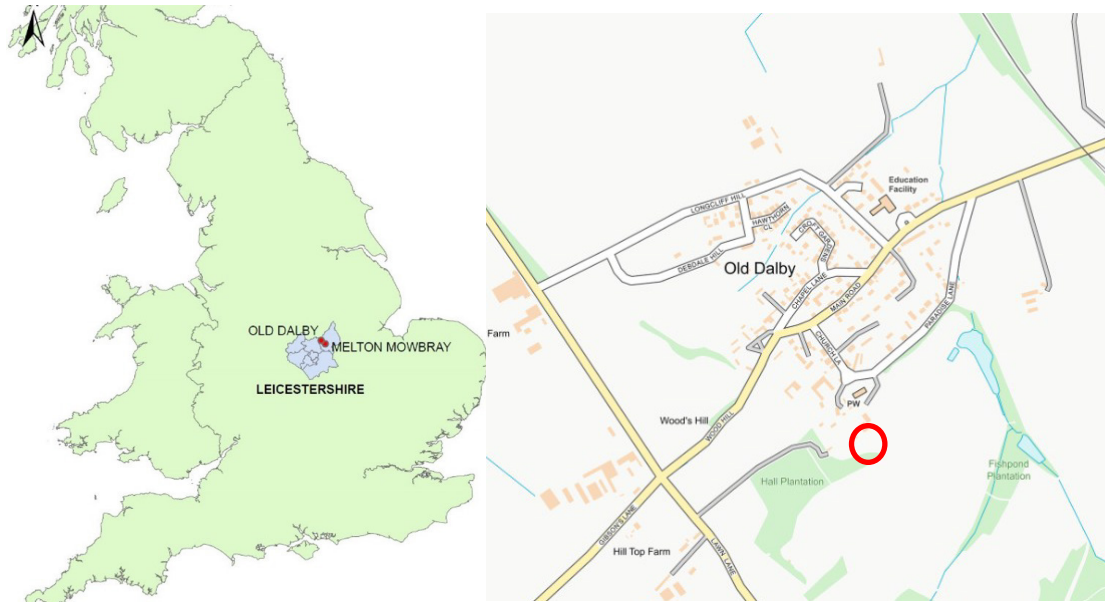


Figure 1: Site Location

Reproduced from 1:50000 map by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office. ©Crown Copyright 1990. All rights reserved.

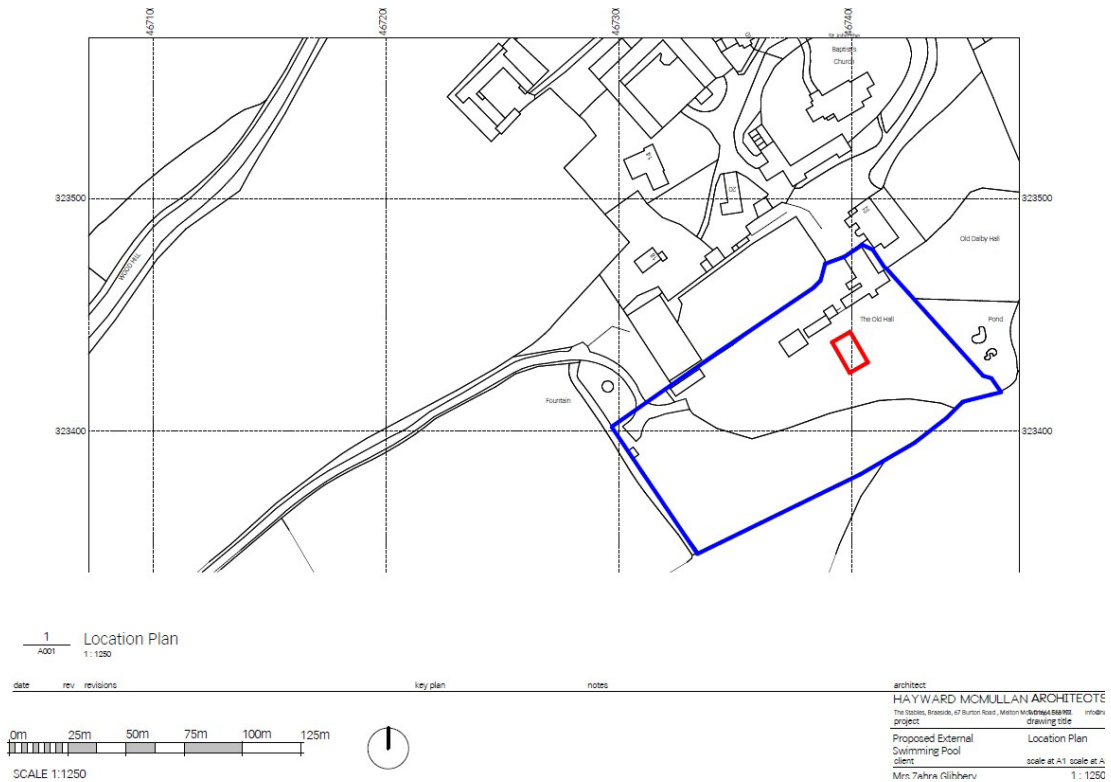


Figure 2: Site location

Blue line represents the property boundary, red line is the location of the pool.  
Plan provided by client



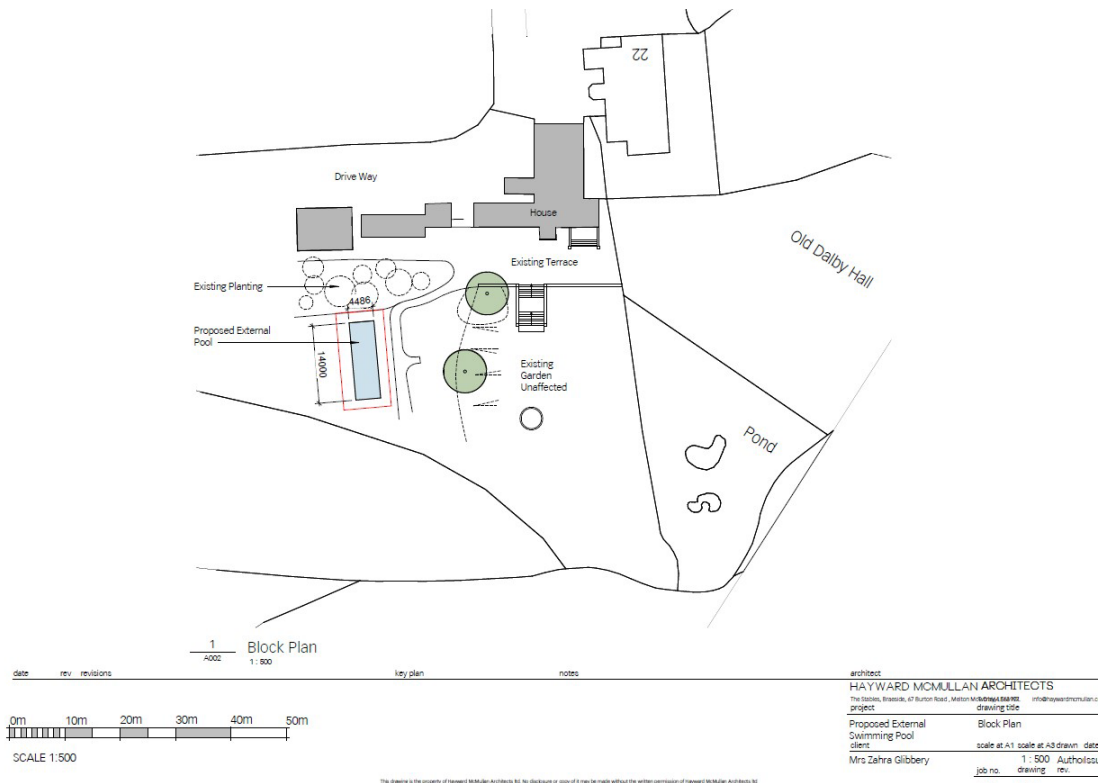


Figure 3: Proposed pool plan  
North to top of plan. Plan provided by client

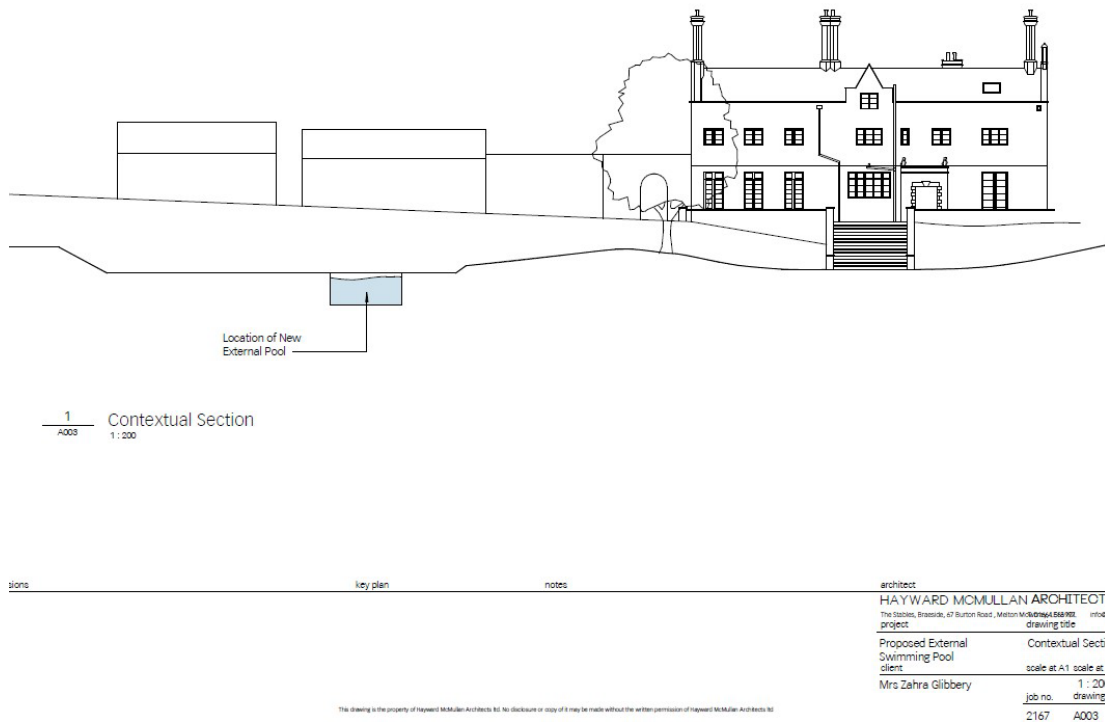


Figure 4: Relative heights and location of proposed pool  
Plan provided by client

### Site Geology and Topography

The Old Hall and associated buildings lie towards the north-eastern part of the grounds overlooking a wide and low valley which extends to the south and south-east. To the west the land rises quite steeply towards Lawn Lane. Immediately to the south of the Old Hall building is a small terrace with a landscaped and grassed area beyond it.

The rectangular shaped pool is located to the south-west of the Old Hall and will measure approximately 4.5m by 14m. The northern end of the pool lies at a height of approximately 100m aOD with the southern end being nearly a metre lower. Prior to the groundworks the pool area was occupied by a terraced area covered by a geometric style garden with slate and stone kerbs all laid on geotextile.

The British Geological Survey notes that the superficial geology around the site consists of areas of Diamicton head created by creeping hill wash deposits of sands, gravel and clay. The bedrock geology is likely to consist of Charmouth mudstone formation with areas of laminated shales and limestone. Between the site of the proposed pool and Lawn Lane are areas of landslide deposits created by rapid slips of mudstone down the slope to the west of the area.



Figure 5: The Old Hall and pool site  
Looking north. The pool is to be located in the stripped area lower left





Figure 6: Area of proposed pool  
Looking west. The two canes mark the northern end of the pool. Note the landscaped lawn beyond the stripped ground

### Archaeological and Historical Background

Low levels of Roman activity have been recorded around Old Dalby with a series of ditches and gullies being identified near to the north of the village in 2009. There are also Roman metalwork finds recorded nearby (HER ref. MLE9388). Place-name evidence suggests that Old Dalby has possible Viking or early medieval origins. Previous investigations of land within the village core (MLE9269) has produced some evidence of Anglo-Saxon and medieval remains (MLE15774 and 15775). Medieval settlement remains lie on land to the west of the village (MLE3451), with further medieval earthworks to the south of this area (MLE3444).

Old Dalby Hall is a Grade II listed building dating to around 1830 but is likely to have earlier origins some of which may be fossilised within the present structure. The building is constructed from local ironstone and limestone and has a number of 19th and 20th century additions and modifications. A significant part of the Old Hall was destroyed by a fire in the first half of the 20th century leaving the present L-shaped building. A number of historical figures are reputed to have an association with the Old Hall who include Oliver Cromwell and Judge Jefferies. The building was listed in 1953 and has a fairly brief entry which is as follows:

*Country house, c.1830 with older origins and C20 alterations. Coursed squared ironstone, graded slate roofs, rendered end and ridge stacks. L- plan. 2-storey, 7-window train range. Main front faces garden and has 5- light ovolo-moulded stone mullion window to ground floor centre. C20 stone porch to right and French windows to far right and left of centre with stone lintels. 1-, 2- and 3-light windows with*

*chamfered stone surrounds to ground and first floor. Central stone gabled dormer window. Tall rendered octagonal Tudor-style chimneys. Wing to rear right altered C20.*

The proposed area for the pool appears to have been used as a lawn or garden at least since the First Edition map which was published in 1884. Map evidence is discussed in the section below. The Old Hall lies within the Old Dalby Conservation Area.

The Grade II\* listed Church of Saint John the Baptist lies to the north of the Old Hall and the present building dates to 1835 with later phases of restoration and rebuilding. Also to the north of the Old Hall are the Grade II listed 18th century stable buildings.

To the south-east of the Old Hall is a Scheduled Monument covering the earthworks and probable, but unknown, below-ground archaeological evidence belonging to a medieval preceptory. Preceptories were founded to raise revenues to fund the 12th and 13th century crusades to Jerusalem. By the 15th century the revenues were being used to contribute towards the defence of Rhode against the Turks. Preceptories could also function as recruiting and training centres in addition to providing hospitality to pilgrims and travellers.

The preceptory at Old Dalby was held by the Knights Templars and, later, the Knights Hospitallers. As it is one of only four known sites within Leicestershire the preceptory is of national importance.

The site covered by the Scheduled area is relatively small but it is possible that other evidence of medieval activity and settlement may extend north and westwards towards the present village. The list entry for the scheduled area is as follows:

*The monument at Old Dalby is situated on a spur of land, south of the village, 8km north-east of Melton Mowbray, and includes the below ground remains of the Preceptory buildings.*

*The below ground building remains are represented by earthworks standing to a maximum of 0.5m high. On the south-east side is a square enclosure, with an internal dimension of about 20m. There is a long mound to the north of the enclosure. To the west of this are the earthwork remains of a rectangular building 70m long and approximately 15m wide and divided in two places at the north end. A late 18th century writer recorded the location and remains of the preceptory. The function of the various buildings has yet to be ascertained.*

*A preceptory of the Knights Templars was founded in the early years of Henry II reign and was in use until the suppression of the order in 1312. Ten years later the site was granted to the Knights Hospitallers, whose order was dissolved in 1540. A 13th century pilgrim flask from an abbey at Burton on Trent and a late 15th century pilgrim badge from Walsingham were found on the site in 1980.*

*The earthwork remains of stock enclosures surround the buildings of the preceptory but do not survive well and are not included in the scheduling.*

### **Cartographic Evidence**

The earliest available Ordnance Survey map was published in 1884 and indicates that the area immediately to the south of the Hall has been landscaped to create a sunken terrace for at least the past 150 years (Fig. 7). The proposed pool area to the west of this sunken area appears to have been laid out as a garden with ornamental trees or as a small orchard. This map also shows the full extent of the Hall buildings prior to the fire

in the early 20th century. The 1920 edition of the OS map shows the same building and garden layout although there are significantly less trees in the area of the proposed pool.

By the time of the 1952 edition of the Ordnance Survey the central portion of the Old Hall has been removed and the outbuildings to the south-west have also been altered (Fig. 8). The sunken terrace to the east of the proposed pool is still present but a number of large and well-defined paths have been laid throughout the garden. Nothing appears to be in the footprint of the pool.

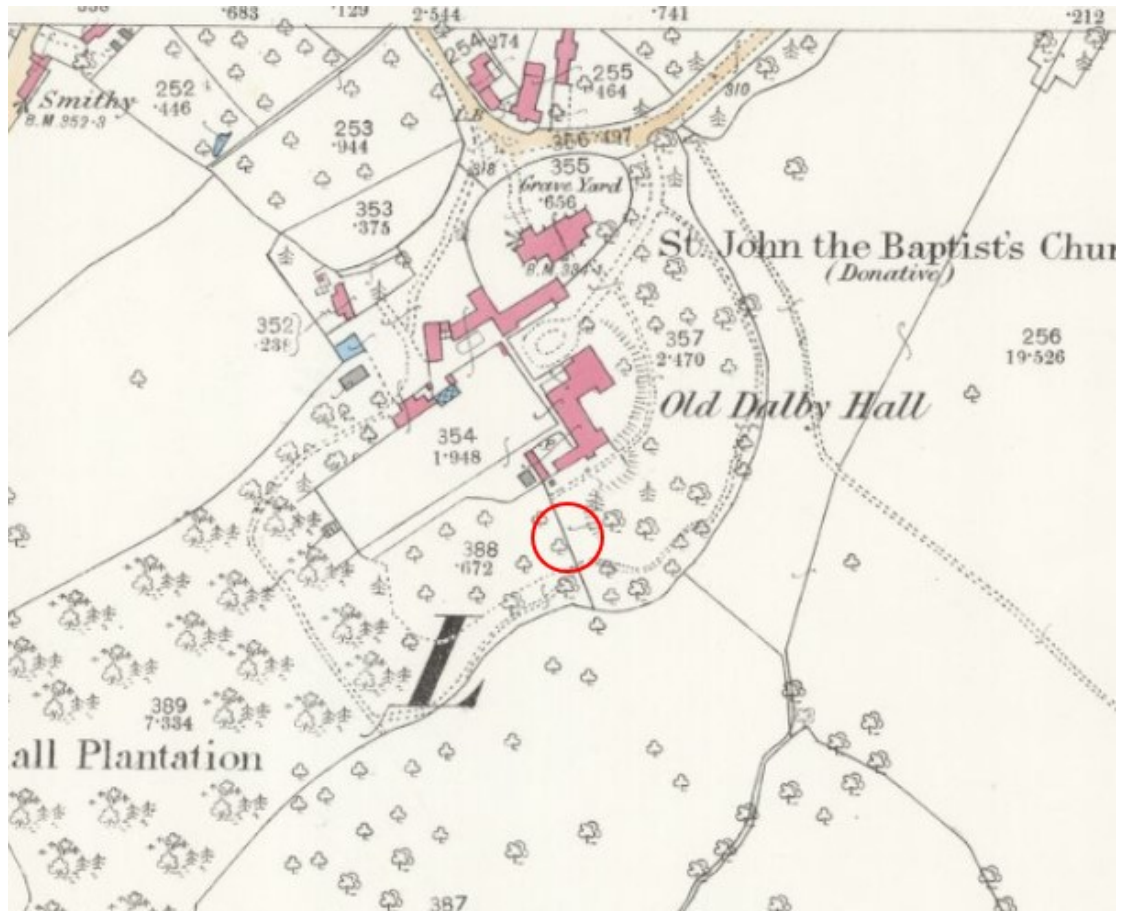


Figure 7: Detail from the 1884 First Edition Ordnance Survey 25 inch map Sheet XII.14. Pool site highlighted





Figure 8: Detail from the 1952 Ordnance Survey 6 inch map Sheet XII.14 SW. Approximate area of pool highlighted

### Objectives

A Written Scheme of Investigation: *Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Strip Map and Sample. Site: The Old Hall, Church Lane, Old Dalby, Leicestershire*, was produced by ULAS which defines the project and details the scope of the project.

The main objectives of the archaeological work were defined as follows:

- Identify the presence/absence of archaeological features and deposits.
- Record all archaeological features and deposits encountered.
- Sample sufficient of the archaeological features and deposits to establish relative sequence, likely dating and quality of preservation.
- Gather sufficient information to establish the character, extent, form, function and likely status of any surviving archaeological deposits with a view to evaluating their significance and potential to inform the aims and objectives outlined in the WSI.
- To record any archaeological deposits and produce an archive and report of any results.

### Research Objectives

Excavations may contribute to knowledge on rural settlement, landscape and society. Information on the sequence and chronology of boundaries and their relationship to settlements may be recovered and palaeoenvironmental evidence could provide information on agricultural practices and land use. Artefacts can provide evidence for evidence for craft industry and exchange across broad landscape areas.

Old Dalby village and the surrounding area has early medieval origins, indicating the potential for further similar surviving evidence in the area. There is also a low level indication of Roman activity. It is therefore possible to determine some initial objectives identified within *The Archaeology of the East Midlands: An Archaeological Resource Assessment and Research Agenda*, Leicester Archaeology Monograph 13, (ed. Cooper 2006), and *East Midlands Heritage: An Updated Research Agenda and Strategy for the Historic Environment of the East Midlands* (ed. Knight et al 2012).

#### *Roman*

There is a need to investigate how Romano-British rural settlements related to each other, towns and military sites. In particular sections 5.2 The military impact and 5.4 Rural settlements, patterns and landscapes.

#### *Early Medieval*

Research into the origins and development of the medieval open-field system and its impact are discussed in sections 6.4, 6.7 (Rural settlement patterns, the agricultural economy and rural landscape).

#### *High Medieval*

Research into the relationship between rural settlements and estates. Sections 7.2, 7.3 (Rural settlement, manors and manorial estates).

### **Methodology**

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

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

The fieldwork was undertaken on the 12th of May 2021.

The excavation area was located over the footprint of the proposed new pool which will have a footprint of approximately 4.5m x 14m (see Fig. 3). A wheeled mechanical excavator fitted with a flat-bladed ditching bucket on the back actor was used for the excavation work. Level spits of overburden were removed down to archaeological deposits or natural undisturbed ground. All work was supervised by the archaeologist on site.

The Site Accession Number (X.A46.2021) was used to identify all records.

### **Monitoring**

The requirement for an SMS for this project was specified by the Senior Planning Archaeologist at Leicestershire County Council. The Planning Archaeologist did not visit the site, but was kept apprised of progress throughout the project.

### **Results**

The proposed swimming pool will be located on sloping land to the south-west of the Old Hall and to the west of a sunken terraced lawn. Prior to the excavation the pool area



was covered in a formal laid out garden consisting of slate chip pathways separating small beds. Immediately before the start of stripping the slate, border stones and underlying geotextile sheeting had been removed to expose a dark grey mixed silty clay layer (01) (Fig. 9). The footprint of the finished pool will be approximately 4.5m wide by 14m long laid on a roughly north to south axis.

Removal of the dark grey silty layer (01) showed it to have a thickness varying between 0.2m and 0.3m across the entire area. No archaeological artefacts were recovered from this layer although a number of later 20th century bricks and brick fragments were observed which suggests that it is a recently imported layer associated with the creation of the formal garden.

Beneath the grey silty layer (01) was another disturbed deposit of pale yellow brown clay interspersed with layers and patches of darker yellowish brown clay (02). Also within this mixed deposit were patches of dark grey clayish silt. This mixed deposit extended across the entire footprint of the SMS area and extended down to the top of the undisturbed natural substratum (Fig. 10). Within the patches of dark grey clayish silt and close to the interface with the dark grey silty layer (01) and layer (02) a number of white-glazed fragments of plates and saucers were recovered along with white glazed bottles, brown glazed bottles and pieces of beer bottle all dating to the later 19th or early 20th centuries (Fig. 11). These modern finds were left with the client. Fragments of brick of a similar age was also observed throughout this (02) layer.

Exposure of the natural substratum showed it to consist of a pale yellow brown clay with areas of limestone brash and mid orange brown sandy patches. At the northern end of the stripped pool area the natural was seen at 0.58m below current ground level but dropped down to 0.75m at the southern end following the general fall of the surrounding land. No archaeological features or deposits were observed cutting into the natural although two ceramic horseshoe profile land drains ran on an approximate east to west alignment across the area (Figs 12 and 13). Towards the south-western corner of the stripped area a modern area of disturbance lay above one of the land drains and contained a substantial number of broken plant pots and a fragment of a modern white-glazed mug with part of the Prince of Wales cipher on it.



Figure 9: Proposed pool area before SMS  
Looking north-west. Pool limits marked by the four canes



Figure 10: Typical section  
Looking west. 1m scale





Figure 11: Finds recovered from within context (02)



Figure 12: Excavated area of pool  
Looking south. 1m scales

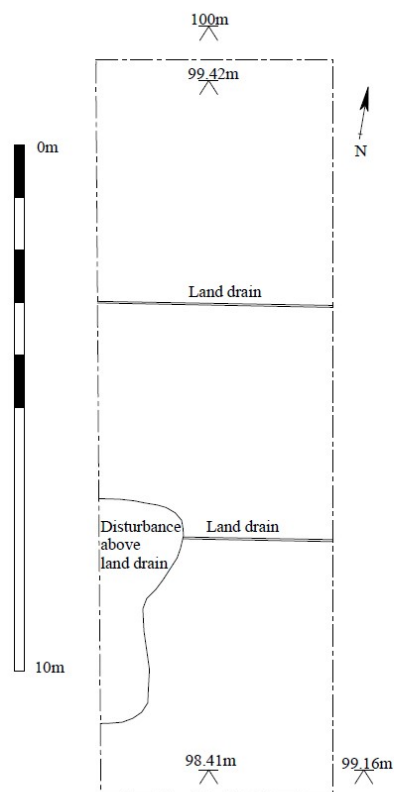


Figure 13: Plan of pool area

## Conclusion

The strip map and sample at The Old Hall provided no evidence of any archaeological features or deposits within the footprint of the proposed swimming pool. The number of later 19th or early 20th century finds recovered from the disturbed layer which extended down to the natural suggests that the area has undergone extensive landscaping in the relatively recent past. The terraced garden and lawns to the east and west of the pool provide further evidence that the Old Hall grounds have been remodelled.

## Archive and Publication

The archive for the project will be deposited with Leicestershire County Council Museums Service with accession number X.A46.2021 and consists of the following:

- 1 Unbound copy of this report (2021-078)
- 1 unbound copy of the WSI (21-301)
- 1 Context index sheet
- 2 context record sheets
- 1 field note sheet
- 1 Photographic record sheet
- 1 Contact sheet of digital photos
- 1 DVD containing a copy of this report and 20 digital photographs

A summary of this report will appear in due course in the Transactions the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society.

The University of Leicester Archaeological Services supports the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) project. The online OASIS data entry has been completed detailing the results of the project and will be digitally accessible through The Archaeological Data Services (<http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/>).

### **Acknowledgements**

Thanks are due to Philippa Gregory and family and Zahra Glibbery for their assistance and interest in the project. The project was managed by Vicki Score. The fieldwork was carried out and the report written by Andrew Hyam.



## References and Sources

All websites accessed May2021

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## Appendix 1. Digital Photographs taken during the fieldwork



## Appendix 2. Context list

Context	Description
01	Dark grey mixed silty clay layer. Beneath geotextile layer and very disturbed
02	Disturbed deposit of pale yellow brown clay interspersed with layers and patches of darker yellowish brown clay. 19th/20th century finds. Extends down to natural



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