


**An Archaeological Watching Brief at
13 Hall Gate, Diseworth,
Leicestershire
(SK 45026 324560)**

Gavin Speed

For

Workplace Design & Build Ltd


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Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken in June 2008 at 13 Hall Gate, Diseworth, Leicestershire (SK 45026 24560) by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on behalf of Workplace Design & Build Ltd.

No significant archaeological finds or deposits were observed during this work. The site archive will be deposited with Leicestershire County Council, Sites and Monuments Record, under accession number XA.85.2008.

1. Introduction

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) during ground-works for redevelopment of a grade II listed barn at 13 Hall Gate, Diseworth, Leicestershire.

The site had been identified as an area of archaeological potential from information held in the Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record. In view of this, an archaeological watching brief during the ground-works was required as part of the planning conditions by North West Leicestershire Borough Council.

University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) were then commissioned to carry out the watching brief on behalf of the client, Workplace Design & Build Ltd, which was undertaken on the 9th and 11th June 2008. The work involved archaeological observation during the reduction of the floor levels in three rooms of a barn, in preparation for its renovation and conversion to a residential building (figures 9 and 10).

2. Site Location and Geology

The application area lies to the north of Hall Gate in the village of Diseworth, Leicestershire. The underlying geology consisted of Mercia Mudstone (The Ordnance Survey Geological Survey of Great Britain, Solid and Drift Geology, Sheet 144). The site lies at a height of c.56 m O.D.

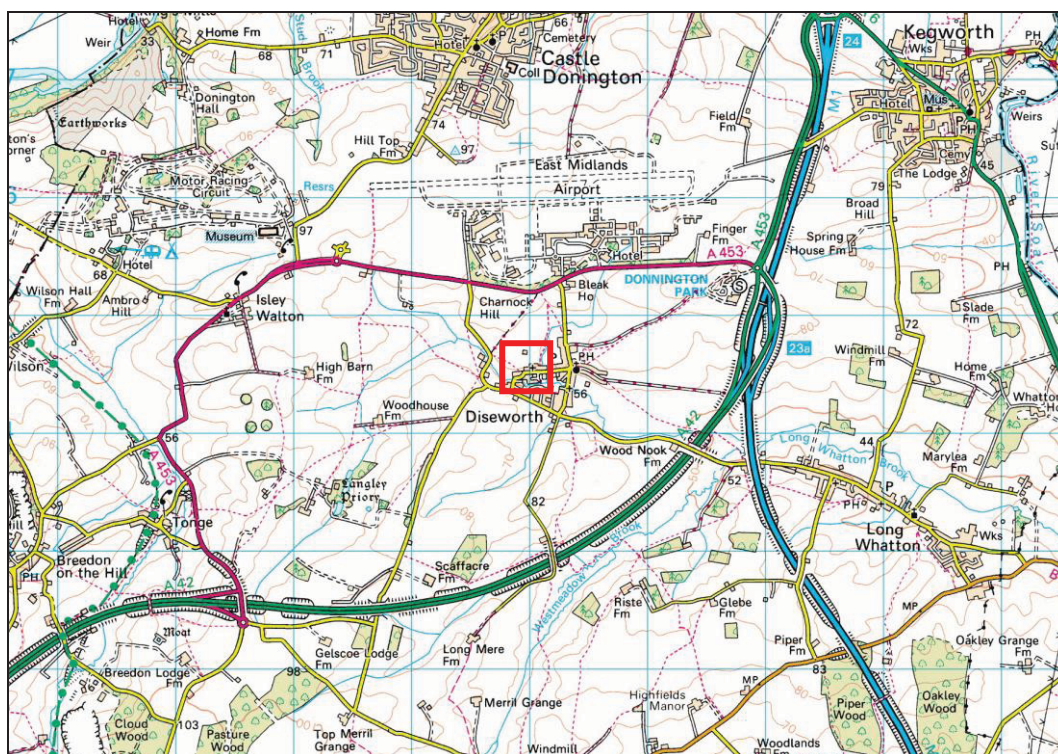


Figure 1: Site Location. Scale 1: 50 000

Reproduced from the Landranger OS map 140 Leicester , Coventry and Rugby area 1:50000 map by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office.
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Figure 2: Site Location within Diseworth
(adapted from plan supplied by A + G Architects Ltd 03/08/07)

3. Aims and Objectives

The aims of the watching brief were:

- To identify the presence/absence of any archaeological deposits.
- To establish the character, extent and date range of any archaeological deposits to be affected by the proposed ground works.
- To excavate and record any archaeological deposits to be affected by the ground works.
- To assess the local, regional and national importance of any deposits.
- To define an appropriate mitigation strategy if necessary.
- To produce an archive and report of any results.

All work follows the Institute of Field Archaeologist's Code of Conduct and adheres to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-based Assessments*.

4. Methodology

The watching brief involved supervision of the reduction of the floor levels in three rooms within the barn (figure 11). The floor levels were reduced using a JCB mechanical digger equipped with a ditching bucket. Following the machine excavation, the entire stripped area were examined and recorded by written record and photographs.

The work followed the *Archaeological design specification for archaeological work*, and the Institute of Field Archaeologists' (IFA) *Code of Conduct and the Standard and Guidance for Archaeological watching briefs*.

5. Results

The barn is built onto the north elevation of the farmhouse at 13 Hall Gate. It extends northwards, aligned north to south. To the north of the barn is a row of small outbuildings (of 19th to 20th century date), and were not part of the watching brief (though they are covered in the building survey of Watson & Simons 2008). The west elevation of the barn serves as the boundary wall to the property and is constructed of late 18th / early 19th century stone and brick. The barn is a timber-framed construction and the crucks survive within a later 18th / 19th century brick shell. Some timber purlins survive but the main barn has been re-roofed with corrugated asbestos. The cruck timbers have been dated by dendrochronology (Arnold *et al* 2008) that show that the southern barn is of late 16th or early 17th century, whilst the barn connected to the north is late 17th century (Watson & Simons 2008, 8). The southern part of the barn may have been a former farmhouse.

The rooms have been given the same number as used in the building survey by Watson & Simons 2008 (shown on figure 11).

Room A/O/1 (figures 3 and 8)

This room, at the far south end of the barn, is of cruck construction and may have originally been part of a house, dating to the late 16th or 17th century, before being converted into a barn at a later date (Watson & Simons 2008, 7). During the watching brief the removal of the late 18th / early 19th century brick cattle trough, along with a later 20th century tank were observed. The floor, consisting of pitched cobble sets and brick was placed on a thin layer of mortar. This was set on the natural substratum (figure 8). No evidence was revealed for earlier floor layers, no finds or earlier archaeological features were observed.

Room A/O/2 (figures 4, 5, 6)

The central room in the barn contained brick-built troughs along the west elevation with arches underneath, these are to remain (figure 6). The floor consisted of pitched cobbles and brick that was placed on a thin layer of mortar. A brick drainage gully was observed running north-south along the floor (figure 5). The floor was set on the natural substratum. No evidence was revealed for earlier floor layers, no finds or earlier archaeological features were observed.

Room A/O/3 (figures 4 and 7)

The room at the north end of the barn contained brick built troughs along the west elevation, these had been removed prior to arrival. The floor consisted mainly of brick that was placed on a thin layer of mortar. Medium to large stone slab flooring was observed along the eastern-end of the room. The floor was set on the natural substratum. Some stone foundations for the barn were identified along the west elevation (figure 7). No evidence was revealed for earlier floor layers, no finds or earlier archaeological features were observed.

6. Conclusion

No significant archaeological finds or deposits were observed during the watching brief, any internal floor layers that may have existed were likely to have been removed within Room A/O/1 when it was converted from a house to a barn in the late 17th century.

7. Archive

A full copy of the archive as defined in The Guidelines For The Preparation Of Excavation Archives For Long-Term Storage (UKIC 1990), and Standards In The Museum: Care Of Archaeological Collections (MGC 1992) and Guidelines for the Preparation of Site Archives and Assessments for all Finds (other than fired clay objects) (Roman Finds Group and Finds Research Group AD 700-1700 1993) will usually be presented to within six months of the completion of fieldwork. This archive will include all written, drawn and photographic records relating directly to the investigations undertaken.

The archive consists of:

- site notes, plans, and indices, (12 sheets)
- digital prints (x27)
- unbound copy of the report

It will be deposited with Leicestershire County Council, under accession number XA.85.2008.

8. Publication

A summary of the work will be submitted for publication in the local archaeological journal *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* in due course. The report has been added to the Archaeology Data Service's (ADS) Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) database held by the University of York.

Project Name	An Archaeological Watching Brief at 13 Hall Gate, Diseworth, Leicestershire
Project Type	Watching Brief
Project Manager	Richard Buckley
Project Supervisor	Gavin Speed
Previous/Future work	Unknown
Current Land Use	Barn
Development Type	Residential
Reason for Investigation	PPG16
Position in the Planning Process	As a condition
Site Co ordinates	SK 45026 24560
Start/end dates of field work	9th and 11th June 2008
Archive Recipient	Leicestershire County Council
Study Area	1340m ²

9. Bibliography

- Arnold, A.J.; Howard, R.E.; Hurford, M. 2008 *Tree-ring analysis of timbers from barns to the rear of No. 13 Hall Gate, Diseworth, Leicestershire*. Nottingham Tree-ring Dating Laboratory unpublished report.
- MAP 2 1991 *The Management of Archaeological Projects* (2nd edition). English Heritage.
- MGC 1992 *Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections 1992* (Museums and Galleries Commission)
- RFG/FRG 1993 *Guidelines for the preparation of site archives*. Roman Finds Group and Finds Research Group AD 700-1700.
- SMA 1993 *Selection, retention and Dispersal of Archaeological Collections. Guidelines for use in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*. Society of Museum Archaeologists.
- Watson, C. and Simons, E. 2008 *Historic Building Assessment of the Barn and Outbuildings at 13 Hall Gate, Diseworth*. AOC Archaeology unpublished report.

10. Acknowledgements

The fieldwork was undertaken by Gavin Speed. The project was managed by Richard Buckley.

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16/06/08

Appendix 1: Selected photos from archive



Figure 3: East elevation of barn, Room A/0/1



Figure 4: East elevation of barn, Rooms A/0/2 and A/0/3



Figure 5: Cobble and brick floor, Room A/0/2, looking SW



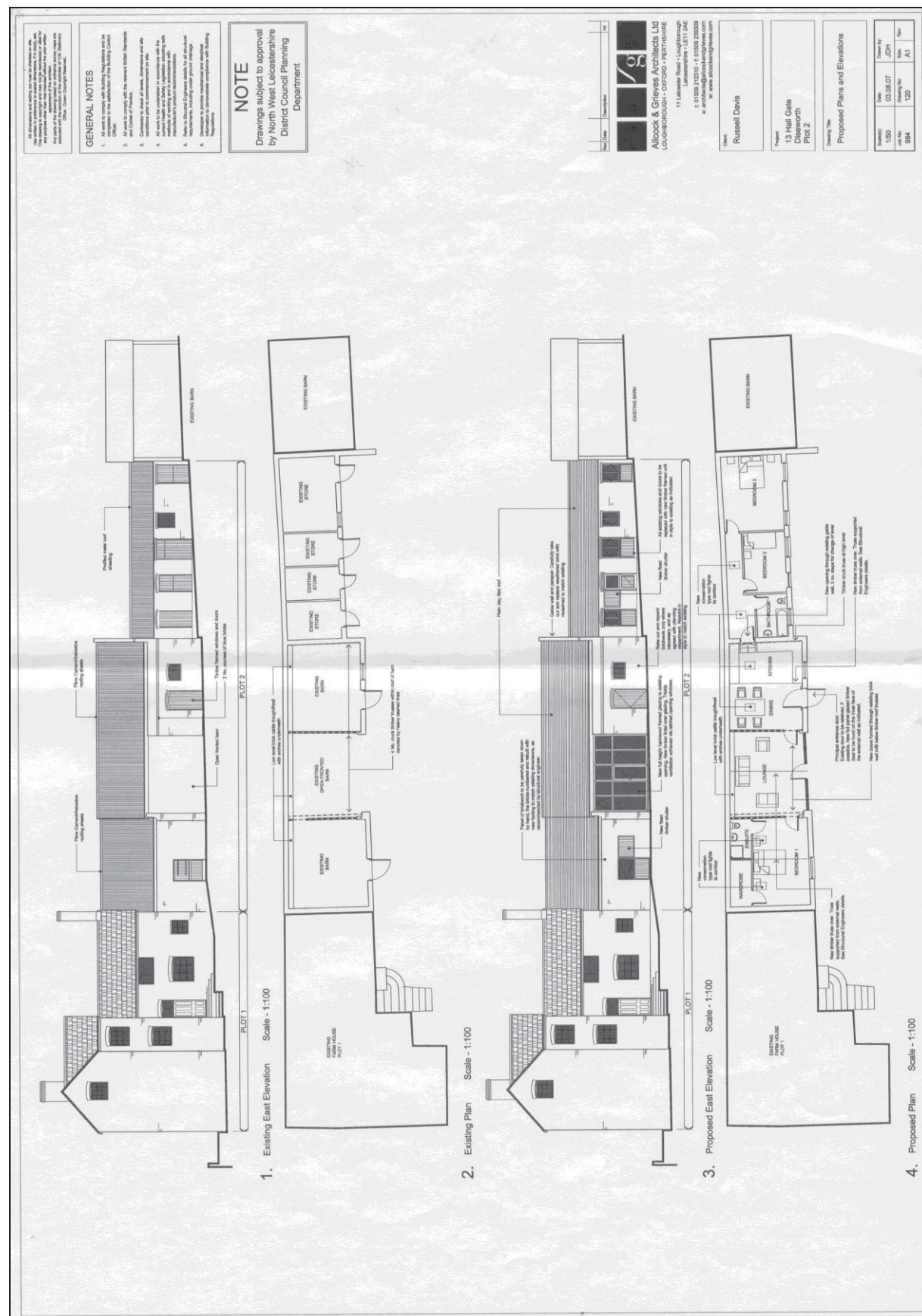
Figure 6: Cattle troughs with arches, Room A/0/2, looking west



Figure 7: Stone foundations within Room A/0/3, looking west



Figure 8: Cobble floor overlying natural, Room A/0/1, looking south



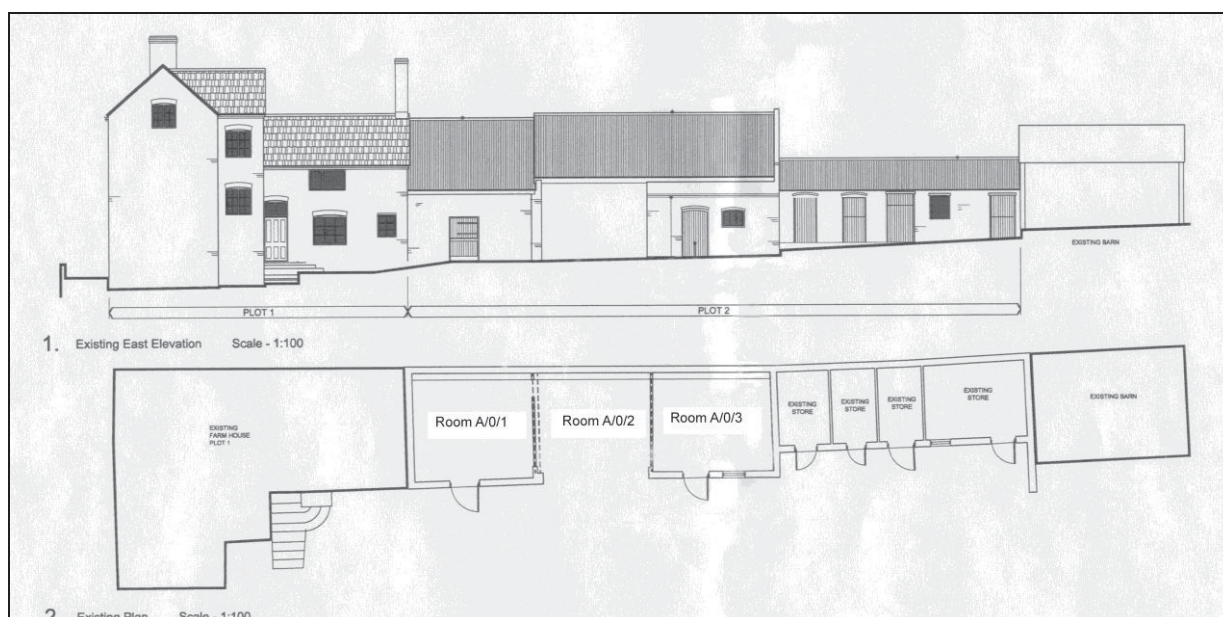


Figure 11: Plan showing room numbers
(adapted from plan provided by A + G Architects Ltd)