



# University of Leicester

## Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological Evaluation at  
Pipe Lane,  
Orton-on-the-Hill,  
Leicestershire  
NGR: SP 430525 303760**

Dr. Roger Kipling




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**An Archaeological Evaluation at  
Pipe Lane, Orton-on-the-Hill,  
Leicestershire  
NGR: SP 3052 0376**

**Dr. Roger Kipling**

**For: CgMs Consulting Limited/Sharrotts**

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## **An Archaeological Evaluation at Pipe Lane, Orton-on-the-Hill, Leicestershire**

**[NGR: SP 430525 303760]**

Dr. Roger Kipling

### **Summary**

*An archaeological evaluation was undertaken in May 2010 by University of Leicester Archaeological Services on behalf of CgMs Consulting Limited and Sharrotts as a pre-determination requirement to inform the Local Authority's decision on a proposed planning application for residential housing at Pipe Lane, Orton-on-the-Hill, Leicestershire.*

*The evaluation work did not reveal any archaeological deposits or features, with the exception of two undated features which are likely to be animal burials. The site archive will be deposited with the Leicestershire County Council under the accession number X.A74.2010.*

### **Introduction**

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken on land at Pipe Lane, Orton-on-the-Hill, Leicestershire. The application site lies within an area of archaeological potential for the survival of medieval and potentially earlier remains relating to the historic core of Orton-on-the-Hill.

In view of the potential impact of the development upon archaeological remains, the archaeological evaluation was undertaken as a pre-determination requirement to inform the Local Authority's decision on the proposed planning application and following recommendations by the Leicestershire County Council Planning Archaeologist.

Fieldwork was carried out between 4th and 6th May 2010 and involved the machine excavation of three trial trenches in order to assess the archaeological potential of the proposed development area.

The archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS5, Planning and the Historic Environment), and in line with Policy BE14 of the local development plan policy framework, provided by the Hinckley and Bosworth Local Plan (February 2001). All archaeological work was in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologist's (IfA) *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for Archaeological field evaluation*.

## Site Description, Topography and Geology

The site is located at Pipe Lane, Orton-on-the-Hill, Leicestershire (SP 430525 303760) and covers an area of *c.*0.2 ha. currently occupied by a bungalow, gardens and associated pastureland.

The Ordnance Survey Geological Survey of Great Britain Sheet 141 indicates that the underlying geology is likely to consist of the Mercia Mudstone Group, which comprises Dolomitic Siltstone. The proposed development area lies within the village of Orton-on-the-Hill on a slight rise 0.5m above the roads to the south east at an approximate height of 100m above Ordnance Datum. Orton-on-the-Hill is located on a slight promontory over valley of the River Anker is fairly flat at a height of *c.*139m AOD.



Figure 1: Site Location (Scale 1:50 000)

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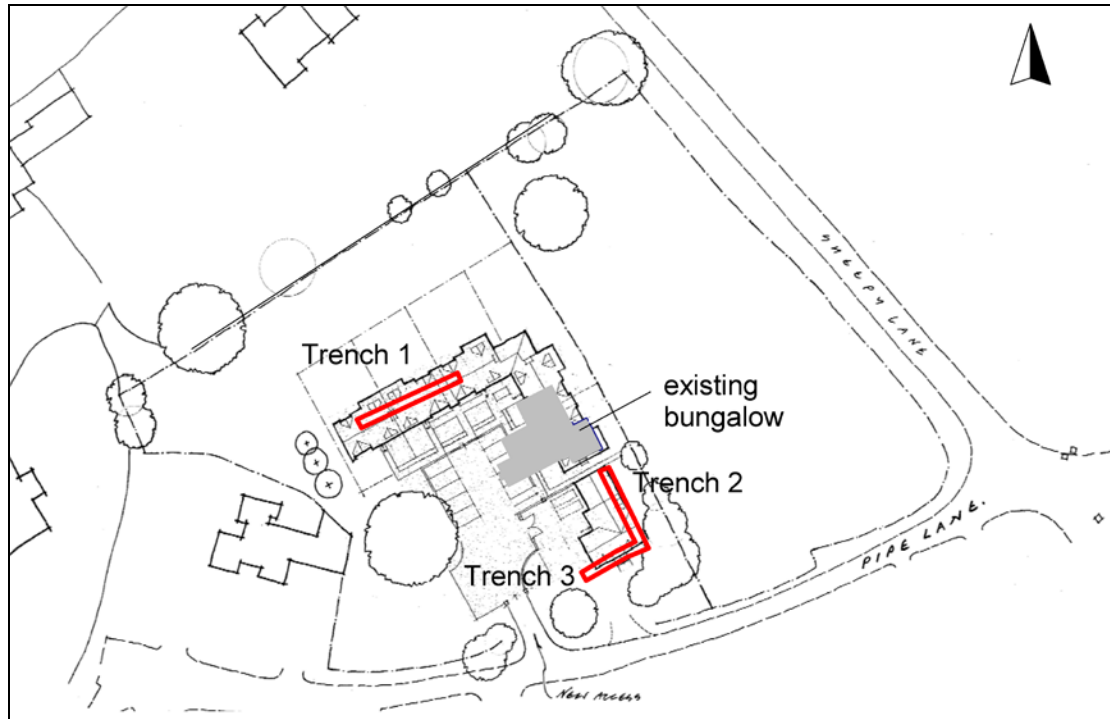


Figure 2: Plan of development area; scale 1:500



Figure 3: View northeast across pastureland and Trench 1

## **Archaeological and Historical Background**

A desk-based assessment of the development area undertaken prior to the archaeological evaluation (Pugh, Gidman and Heard 2009) indicated that there are no Scheduled Monuments, Historic Parks and Gardens or Registered Battlefields on or within close proximity of the site, which lies within Orton-on-the-Hill Conservation Area.

No known Prehistoric finds or features have been identified within the site. There was deemed to be low potential for late Prehistoric activity across the site. Similarly, there is no evidence of Roman activity within the development area, and hence it has a low potential for Roman activity.

Documentary evidence suggests that Orton-on-the-Hill was an agricultural area prior to the Norman Conquest; however, Anglo Saxon-Early Medieval settlement is not recorded in the village and therefore there is low archaeological potential for this period.

The site is situated close to the medieval church and manor. Hartley's survey of Leicestershire's medieval earthworks (Hartley 1984) identified extant house platforms to the south of the site, suggesting that it lies within the medieval settlement. Hence, a moderate to high potential is identified for the medieval period.

The area appears to have remained predominantly an area of agricultural activity, with post-medieval and modern activity limited to small structures situated close to the western and southern site boundaries. Map evidence suggests the presence of a single dwelling within or close to the plot in the early modern period.

As it was deemed likely that the proposed development would have a damaging effect on any archaeological deposits, if present, within the application area, an archaeological evaluation was required by the planning authority following an approved written scheme of investigation (Patrick 2010). Consequently an archaeological evaluation was undertaken by ULAS in May 2010.

## **Aims and Methods**

The aims of the archaeological evaluation were to:

1. Identify the presence/absence of any earlier building phases or archaeological deposits.
2. Establish the character, extent and date range for any archaeological deposits to be affected by proposed ground-works.
3. Record any archaeological deposits to affected by the ground-works.
4. Produce an archive and report of any results.

All work was recorded in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*, the standard policy and practice of ULAS. The University of Leicester's Health and Safety policy was adhered to.

The programme of archaeological evaluation consisted of the excavation of three trial trenches, positioned in order to provide a representative sample of the site and so as to target the footprints of the proposed buildings, as agreed with the Planning Archaeologist prior to the commencement of the evaluation. Information relating to services was also taken into account.

Excavation was undertaken using a JCB mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.6m wide toothless ditching bucket prior to hand cleaning, limited excavation and recording of the resultant trenches.

Trench 1, measuring 23m in length and 1.6m wide, was positioned in order to assess the grassland area to the north of the bungalow presently occupying the site. Trenches 2 and 3, measuring 15m and 12m in length respectively and both 1.60m wide, targeted the southern part of the site with the aim of targeting archaeological remains potentially fronting onto Pipe Lane.

The presence of a standing building on the site dictated slight modifications to the location of Trenches 2 and 3, whilst space constraints necessitated the shortening of Trench 3 and the consequent lengthening of Trench 1.

## Results

*Trench 1*, aligned approximately north-east to south-west, measured 23m long, 1.60m wide and between 0.30m and 0.55m deep. Top of trench measured 100.23m AOD. and base at 99.93m-99.68m AOD. Mechanical removal of 0.28m-0.40m of mid-grey silty clay loam topsoil and 0.10m-0.25m of underlying mottled mid grey/dull reddish-brown silty clay loam subsoil revealed a dull reddish-brown natural clay.

The western end of the trench was occupied by two animal burials occupying shallow cuts in the natural clay. Feature [01] consisted of an oval cut measuring *c.*0.38m in diameter and *c.*0.13m deep. The single fill [02] contained a partially-articulated lamb or sheep skeleton. The second burial [02], located *c.*2m to the east of [01], was partially exposed extending from the southern trench section, similarly occupied by a single animal skeleton. The feature consisted of a likely rectangular shallow cut measuring *c.*1.30m long, 0.30m+ wide and a minimum of 0.13m deep. Neither feature produced any indications of dating; however, their proximity to the present ground surface may be indicative of a modern date.





Figure 4: Trench 1, view north-east; scale: 1m



Figure 5: Trench 1, animal burial [01] viewed north-east; scale 0.30m



Figure 6: Trench 1, animal burial [03] viewed south-east; scale 1m

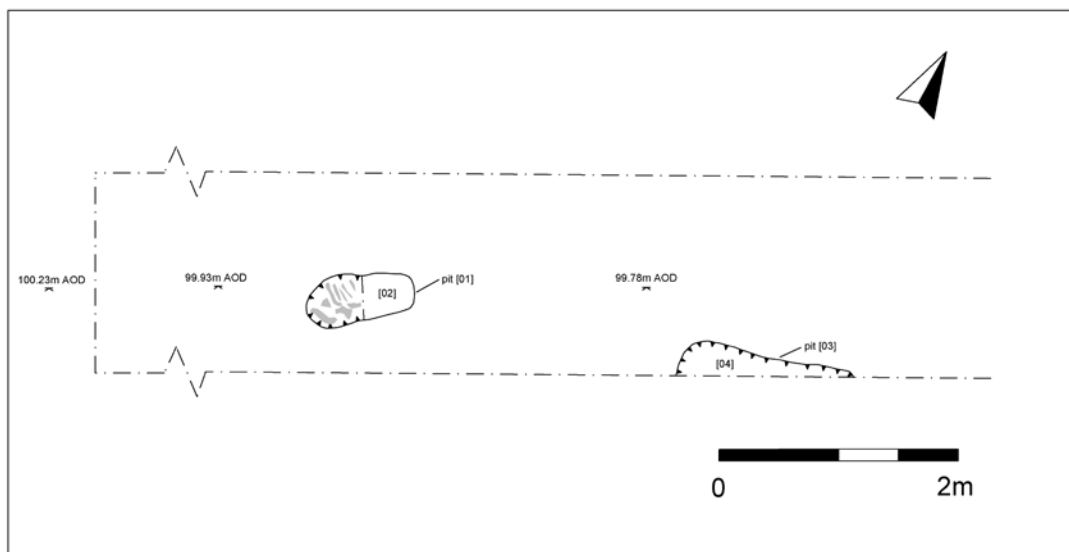


Figure 7: Features [01 and [03], Trench1

*Trench 2* was aligned north-west to south-east and measured 15m long, 1.60m wide and between 1m and 1.24m deep. Top of trench measured 98.65m AOD and base at 97.41m to 97.65m AOD. Removal of a thin layer of overlying turf and topsoil layer revealed a *c.*0.30m-0.70m deep accumulation of reddish-brown silty clay subsoil overlying 20th-century soil and building rubble dumps, material likely to represent ground levelling attempts. Natural Mercia Mudstone and clays were observed beneath this material at a depth of *c.*1.20m.





Figure 8: Trench 2 viewed north-west; scale 1m

*Trench 3*, extending southeast from Trench 1 and measuring 12m x 1.60m x 1.2m deep, produced similar results to its neighbour, namely substantial quantities of building rubble overlying the natural clay, observed at the southeast end of the trench at a depth of c.1.20m. Top of trench was at a height of 97.63m AOD. and its base at 96.43m AOD.



Figure 9: Trench 3 viewed north-east; scale 1m

The heavy disturbance to the area of the site south of the bungalow and fronting Pipe Lane revealed in Trenches 2 and 3 is likely to be associated with the backfilling of a quarry pit with imported material prior to construction of the bungalow. This may represent the feature marked on earlier Ordnance Survey maps and would explain the complete absence of archaeological finds or features.

## **Conclusions**

The archaeological watching brief at Pipe Lane, Orton-on-the-Hill, revealed no evidence for archaeological finds or features within the development site, with the sole exception of two likely modern animal burials. In the case of the trenches in the southern site area, fronting Pipe Lane, the evidence of heavy modern disturbance is likely to have erased any archaeological features or structures occupying the road frontage. In the case of the northern area of grassland, the absence of structural evidence may be explained by its distance from the road frontage, and that this area of the village was never occupied but rather may have, as today, have had a purely agricultural function.

## **Archive and Publications**

The site archive (X.A74.2010), consisting of paper and photographic records, will be housed with the County Historic and Natural Environment Team, Leicestershire County Council.

The archive consists of:

- Three trench recording sheets
- One drawing sheet
- 12 digital photographs
- 19 monochrome (film) photographs
- A risk assessment form

## **Publication**

A version of the excavation summary (see above) will appear in due course in the *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society*.

## **Acknowledgements**

Dr. Roger Kipling of ULAS undertook the archaeological evaluation on behalf of CgMs Limited and Sharrotts. The project was managed by Dr. Patrick Clay.

## **Bibliography**

Hartley, R. 1984 *The Medieval Earthworks of North West Leicestershire, Hinckley and Bosworth*. Leicestershire Museums, Art Galleries, and Records Service

Pugh, G., Gidman, J. and Heard, H. 2009 *Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment for Orton-on-the-Hill, Leicestershire*. CgMs Consulting Limited

Patrick, C. 2010 *Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation, Pipe Lane, Orton-on-the-Hill*. CgMs Consulting Limited

## Oasis Information

Project Name	Pipe Lane, Orton-on-the-Hill
Project Type	Archaeological assessment
Project Manager	Patrick Clay
Project Supervisor	Roger Kipling
Previous/Future work	Construction
Current Land Use	Pasture/residential
Development Type	Residential housing
Reason for Investigation	PPG16
Position in the Planning Process	Pre-determination requirement
Site Co ordinates	NGR SP 430525 303760
Start/end dates of field work	4th and 6th May 2010
Archive Recipient	Leicestershire County Council
Study Area	c.0.2 ha.

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