

**An Archaeological Evaluation at  
The Rectory, 2 Shadows Lane,  
Congerstone, Leicestershire  
NGR: SK 367 054**

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## **An Archaeological evaluation at The Rectory, 2 Shadows Lane, Congerstone, Leicestershire (SK 367 054)**

### **Summary**

*An archaeological evaluation by trial trenching was undertaken in December 2008 by the University of Leicester Archaeological Services in response to a request by Leicestershire County Council Heritage Services, as archaeological advisors to the Hinckley and Bosworth District Council planning authority. This followed the undertaking of a desk-based assessment which indicated the possibility of encountering medieval remains and in advance of a proposed residential development at The Rectory, 2 Shadows Lane, Congerstone. The opening of two archaeological evaluation trenches indicated the presence of two linear features which are likely to represent gullies or ditches demarcating agricultural or residential property divisions. The retrieval of pottery from one of these features provided a probable mid or later seventeenth-century date.*

### **1: Introduction** (Figures 1&2)

1.1: An archaeological evaluation by trial trenching was undertaken in advance of a proposed development at The Rectory, 2 Shadows Lane, Congerstone, on behalf of Mr. and Mrs. Henry on 16th December 2008 by staff of the University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS). Fieldwork was carried out on the recommendation of the Senior Planning Archaeologist of Leicestershire County Council, as advisor to the Hinckley and Bosworth District Council as a result of a desk-based assessment (Speed 2008) which suggested the possibility of archaeological deposits of medieval date surviving on the proposed development site. Accordingly, planning permission was granted with a condition for exploratory archaeological trial trenching, followed if necessary by a programme of archaeological excavation.

1.2: The Ordnance Survey Geological Series of Great Britain Sheet 155 indicates that the underlying geology is likely to consist of sand and gravel. The site lies at a height of c.90m O.D. on land sloping slightly to the north.

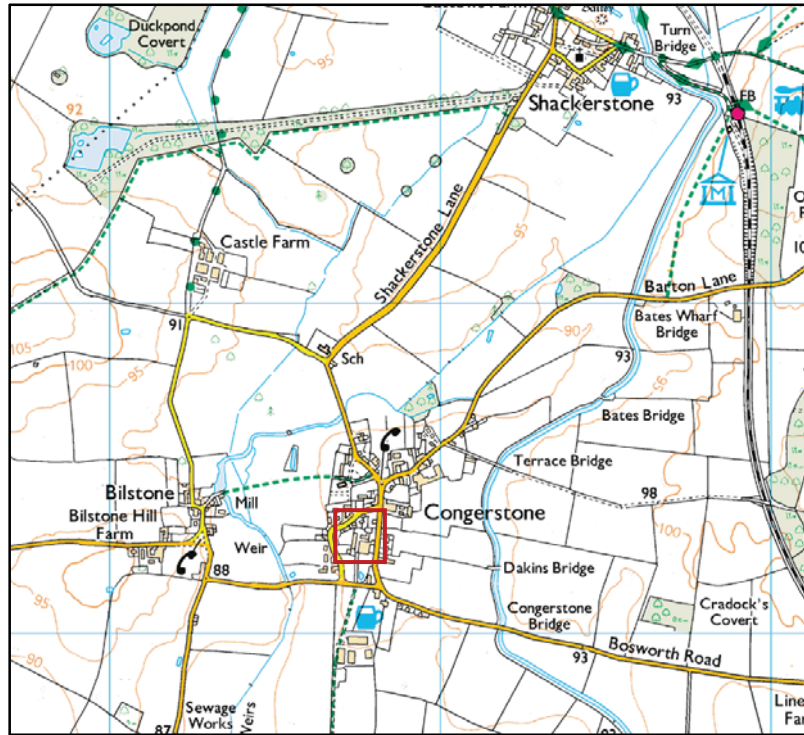


Figure 1: Site location. Scale 1: 50 000

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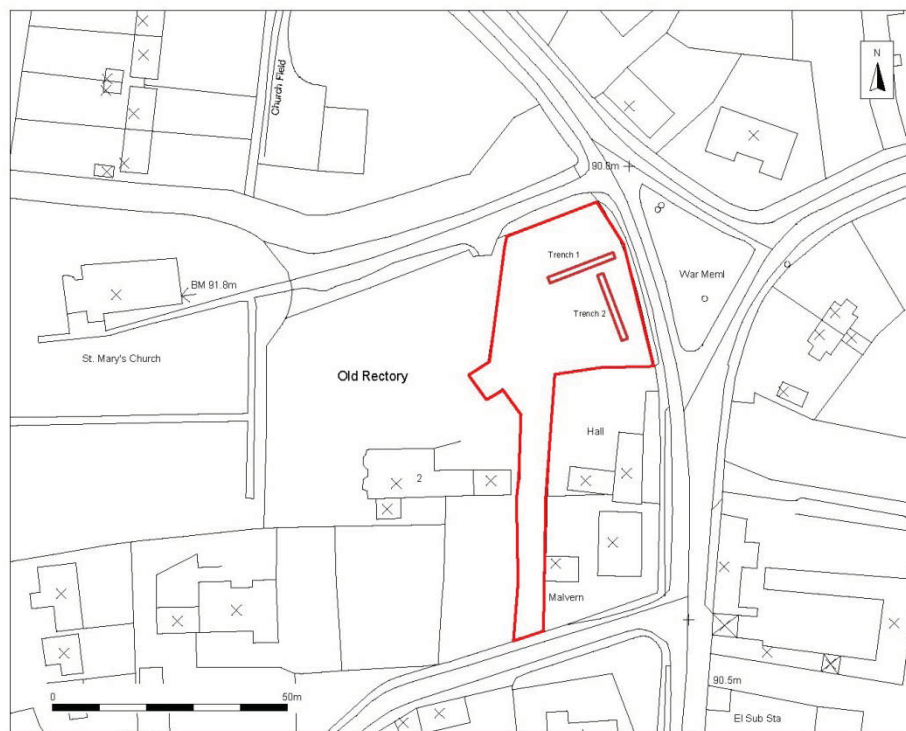


Figure 2: Site location within Congerstone



## **2: Aims and Methods** (Figures 3-5)

2.1: The aim of the archaeological field evaluation was to ascertain whether any archaeological deposits were present within the area of development through the excavation of trial trenches. All work was undertaken in accord with the Institute of Field Archaeologists' (IFA) Code of Conduct and adhering to their *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation*.

2.2: The archaeological evaluation was carried out on 16th December by Dr. Roger Kipling, assisted by Jamie Patrick of ULAS. Following methodologies detailed in the approved design specification (ULAS 2008), two trenches measuring 15m x 1.5m were machine excavated by a JCB 3C excavator using a toothless ditching bucket. Full archaeological supervision was undertaken throughout this work in order to monitor for evidence of archaeological deposits or remains.

2.3: Topsoil was removed to the top of natural clays and gravels and the exposed areas examined by hand cleaning. Archaeological features were planned and sample excavated in order to determine their stratigraphic and chronological sequence. Plans were tied in to the Ordnance Survey National Grid spot heights taken prior to machine backfilling of the trenches.



Figure 3: General view of site looking south-east

### 3: Results (Figures 6-10)

3.1: Trench 1 ran parallel with the northern site boundary and was aligned approximately SW to NE. The removal of the overlying 0.40m-0.70m accumulation of garden soil revealed the pale yellow-brown sandy natural clay. A probable tree bole was located at the east end of the trench, whilst the central area was occupied by two *c.*0.20m wide field drains of likely modern date. A third cut feature crossing the trench N-S appeared to be an electrical service trench. No dateable features or finds were forthcoming from the trench.



Figure 4: General view of site looking southwest



Figure 5: General view of site looking north





Figure 6: Trench 1 general view northwest

3.2: Trench 2, orientated broadly NNW to SSE, was located along the eastern edge of the proposed development area. The same sandy natural clay (002) was observed beneath 0.30m-0.5m of topsoil (001). The trench produced the only evidence for archaeological activity in the form of two intercutting linear gullies or shallow ditches cutting the natural clays. The earlier feature (005) traversed the trench on a broadly north-south orientation. Excavation revealed a shallow, open U-shaped feature measuring *c.*1m wide and *c.*0.25m deep with 45° sloping eastern side and a 30° western side to a flat base. The single fill (006) consisted of a pale grey-brown clay silt. The feature was cut at right angles by a second linear feature (008) running broadly SW to NE. In form it was broadly similar to the first, with 45° sides and a flattish base, and measured *c.*1.4m wide and *c.*0.40m deep. It contained a single pale yellow-grey sandy clay fill (009) which produced pottery of probable mid- or later seventeenth-century date (see Appendix).

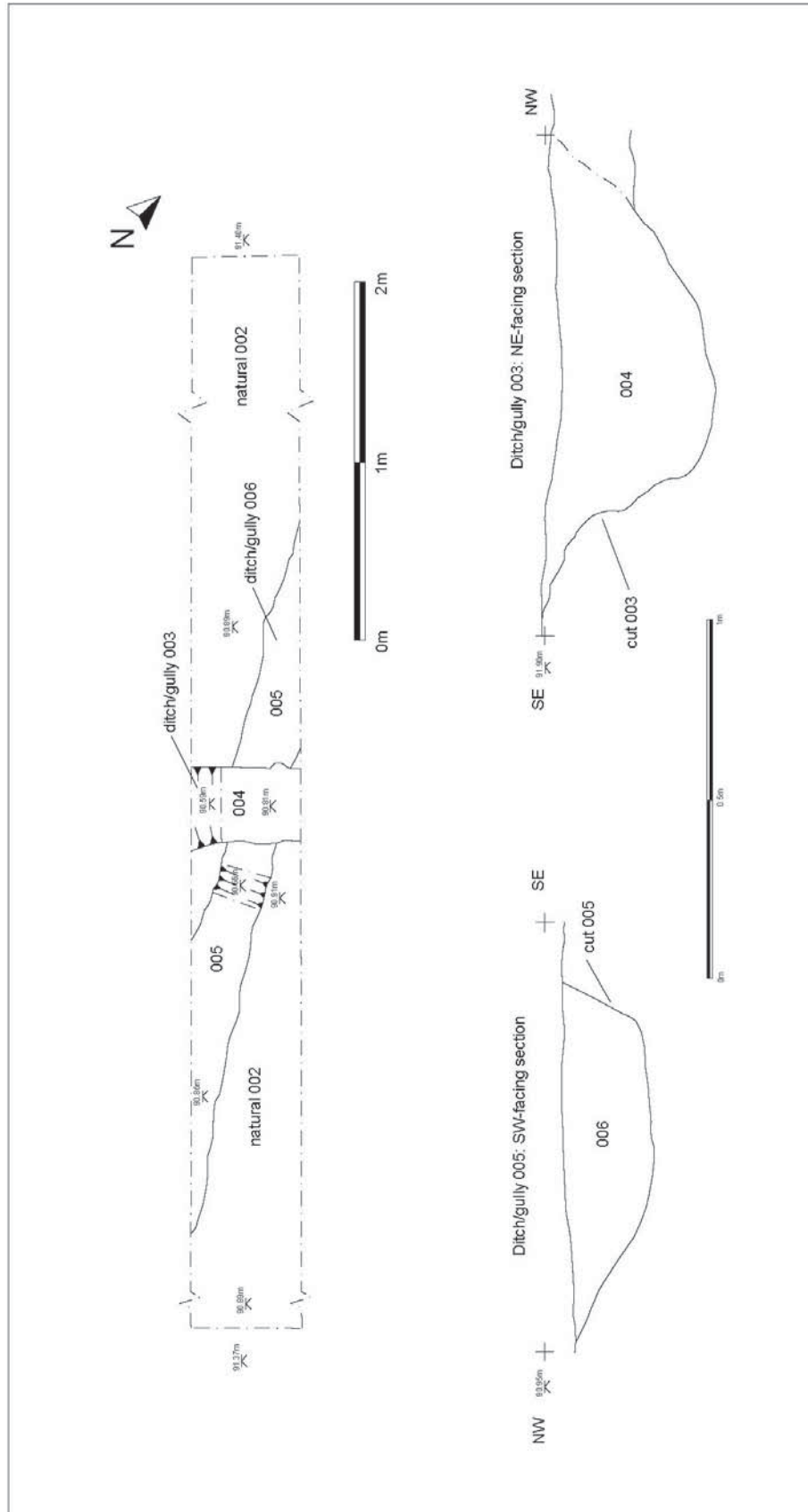


Figure 7: Trench 2: Plan & sections of gullies/ditches F3 & F5



Figure 8: Trench 2 viewed north-west



Figure 9: Ditch/gully F003; south-west facing section





Figure 10: Ditch/gully F005; north-east-facing section

#### **4: Conclusions**

4.1: The excavation of evaluation trenches at The Rectory, Congerstone, has indicated the presence on the development site of linear features, either gullies or truncated ditches, with pottery evidence probably dating them to the 18th- or 19th-centuries. Their form or function is unclear, but they are likely to represent some form of land demarcation or subdivision. Their proximity to the village core suggests a residential rather than agricultural function.

#### **5: Archive**

The site archive (X.A1.2009) consisting of paper records, plans and photographs will be housed with the Historic and Natural Environment Team, Leicestershire County Council.

#### **6: Publication**

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

#### **7: Acknowledgements**

Dr. Roger Kipling and James Patrick undertook the evaluation on behalf of Mr. & Mrs. Henry. The project manager was Richard Buckley.

## **8: Bibliography**

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*Appendix: The Pottery*      *Deborah Sawday*

The pottery, 9 sherds weighing 534 grams, was catalogued with reference to the ULAS fabrics Series (Sawday 1989), (Davies and Sawday 1999). All this material was recovered from the backfill of the ditch [3].

The pottery is in a range of early post medieval wares, Midland Yellow, Cistercian/Midland Blackware, and coarse Earthenwares, fabrics EA1 and EA. The absence of Mottled ware, fabric EA3, suggest a terminal date some time before the mid or later 17<sup>th</sup> century for the group.

Some of the pottery, notably the Cistercian/Midland Blackware and jar in EA1 are particularly roughly finished and, in the case of the latter, distorted – their crudeness suggesting that they may not have travelled far and that they may have been made fairly locally. However, Congerstone lies almost equidistant between the post medieval pottery production centres at Ticknall approximately 23 km to the north, Chilvers Coton, approximately 16 km to the south and Polesworth, approximately 12 km to the south west. The latter seems to be an unlikely source as the earliest documentary evidence for the purchase of pottery from the kiln dates from 1688 (Melton and Scott 1999, 97). Ticknall is the most obvious kiln site for the Midland Yellow ware (Woodfield 1984), and perhaps for the rest of the wares, the fragmentary remains of the 2 coarse earthenware jars could not be directly paralleled with material from any known production centre.

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Site/ Parish: The Rectory, 2 Shadows Lane, Congerstone, Leics. Accession No.: Document Ref: congerstone1.docx Material: pottery Site Type: village core	Submitter: R. Kipling Identifier: D. Sawday Date of Identification: 5.01.09 Method of recovery: evaluation Job Number: 08/220/01
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Context	Fabric/Ware	Nos	Grams	Comments
POTTERY				
4 [3] ditch	MY – Midland Yellow	4	196	Profile – shallow dish or platter, Woodfield form NfA (Woodfield 1984). Thin yellow glaze interior, roughly trimmed exterior with flat base & traces of red clay/slip and spots of yellow glaze on exterior surfaces.
4 [3]	CW/MB – Cistercian ware/Midland Blackware	1	88	Base, coarse fabric, thick walled hollow ware, roughly made & finished, possibly a Ticknall product.
4 [3]	EA1 – Earthenware 1	1	150	Upright, externally thickened jar rim, stacking evidence on rim, glaze wash internally, distorted body, reduced, semi vitrified.
4 [3]	EA – Earthenware	1	73	Upright jar rim with externally collar, slipped and glazed internally, slipped externally over oxidised buff body, small red & black ?fe & sparse grog inclusions, early in sequence.
4 [3]	EA2	2	27	Body fragment, slipped and blackish brown glaze internally
BONE				
4 [3]	Animal Bone	1		Cow tibia - butchered