



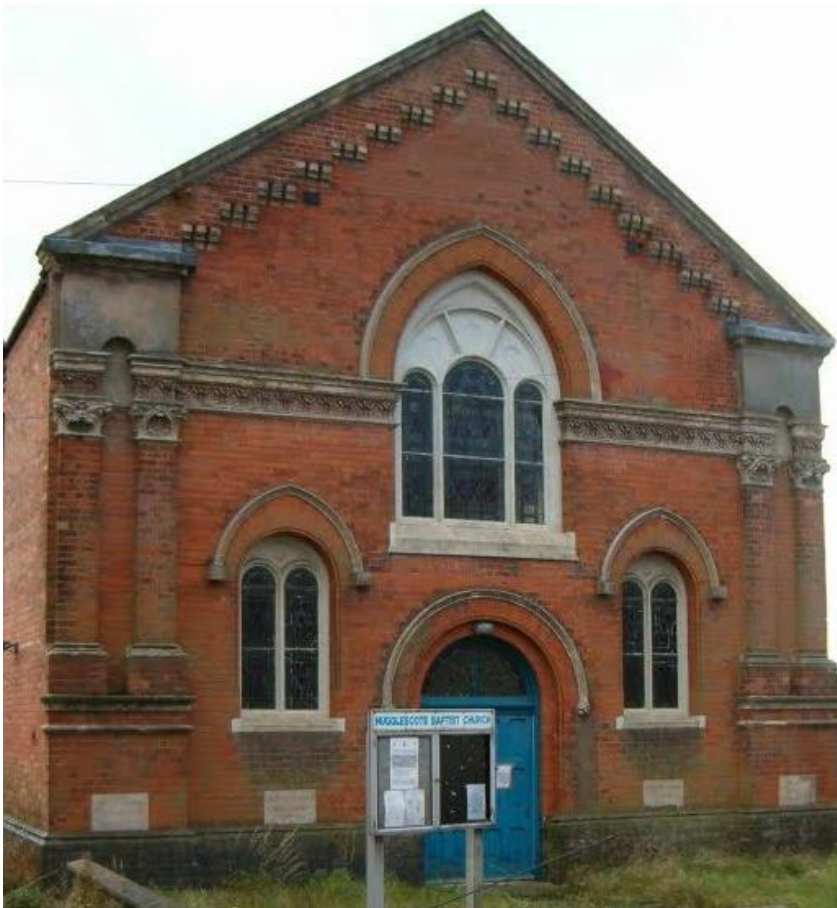
University of
Leicester

Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological Watching Brief
on the site of Hugglescote Baptist
Church, Dennis Street, Hugglescote,
Leicestershire**

NGR: SK 423 128

Mathew Morris



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**An Archaeological Watching Brief
on the site of Hugglescote Baptist Church
Dennis Street, Hugglescote, Leicestershire**

NGR: SK 423 128

Mathew Morris

**For: Lychgate Homes Ltd.
Planning application no. 09/00253/7**

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An Archaeological Watching Brief on the site of Hugglescote Baptist Chapel, Dennis Street, Hugglescote, Leicestershire (SK 423 128)

Mathew Morris

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was carried out on the site of the former Baptist Church on Dennis Street, Hugglescote Leicestershire (SK 423 128) on the 18th and 23rd June, 1st July and 8th December 2009 by University of Leicester Archaeological Services. The work was undertaken on behalf of Lychgate Homes Ltd. in advance of construction of nine new dwellings and associated garaging. The work involved observation of previously machine stripped surfaces and the supervision and inspection of machined foundation trenches for any indication of archaeological activity. The results of the investigation were largely negative with only one feature of note being observed. This was a post-medieval stone-lined culvert running north-west to south-east across the site's frontage from no. 16 Dennis Street to the west beneath the footings of late 19th century Baptist Church. The site archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council Museum Services under the accession number X.A.125.2008.

Introduction

This document constitutes the report on a series of archaeological watching briefs carried out on the site of the former Hugglescote Baptist Chapel on the 18th and 23rd June; 1st July and 8th December 2009 by University of Leicester Archaeological Services. The work was undertaken on behalf of Lychgate Homes Ltd.

The proposed residential development, involving the demolition of the former Baptist Chapel and construction of nine two-storey dwellings and associated garaging (planning application no. 09/00253/7), was situated on the south side of Dennis Street, Hugglescote, Leicestershire (SK 423 128) between and to the rear of existing properties no.16 and no.22 (Figure 1). In all the development area comprised c.0.167 ha.

As previous archaeological evaluation on the site (Baker 2008) had demonstrated the potential for medieval and post-medieval remains to be present the watching brief was requested by Leicestershire County Council's Historic and Natural Environment Team in their capacity as archaeological advisors to North West Leicestershire District Council, as specified in their *Brief for archaeological attendance for inspection and recording (a watching brief)*. This was in accordance with Planning Policy Guidelines 16 (PPG16, Archaeology and planning), para.30.

Geology and Topography

The Ordnance Survey Geological Survey of Great Britain, Sheet 155 indicates that the underlying geology is likely to consist of Mid-Pleistocene glacial Till, commonly known as Boulder Clay, overlying deposits of Triassic mudstone belonging to the Mercia Mudstone Group. The site lies at a height of c.140m above Ordnance Datum with the ground dropping away by c.1m to the south from its frontage on Dennis Street.

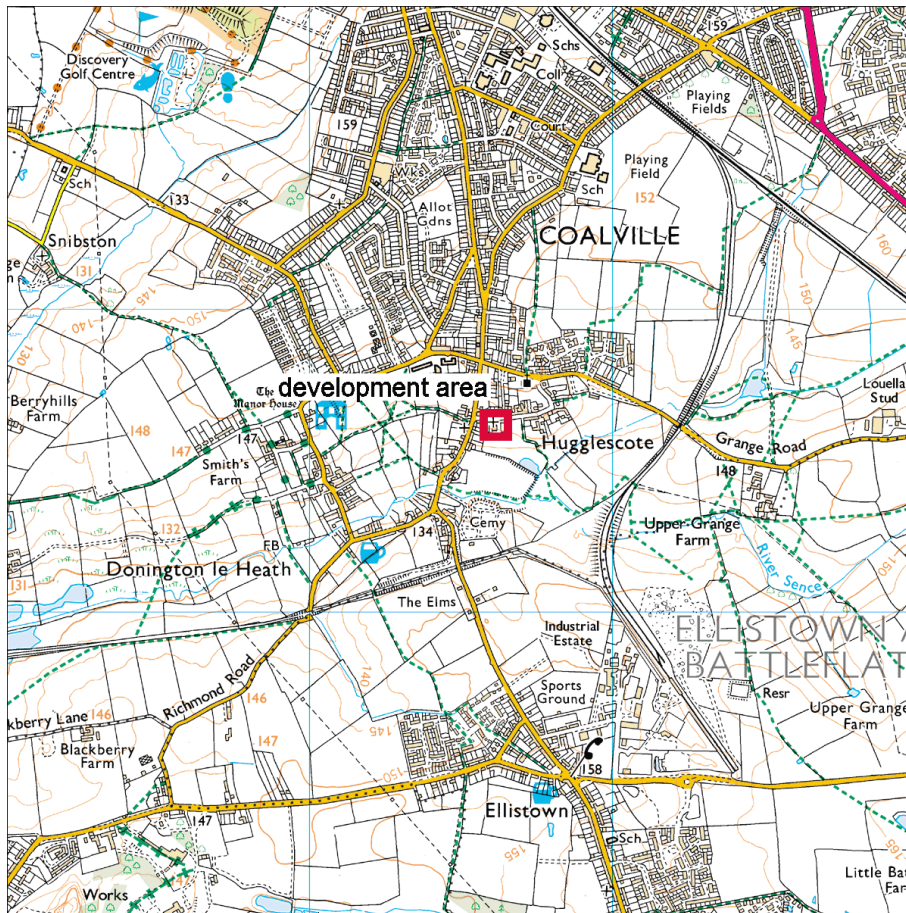


Figure 1: Location plans with development area highlighted

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Historical and Archaeological Background

Historically the site is situated on the south side of Lower Main Street (now Dennis Street) within the core of the medieval and post-medieval village close to the former site of the medieval chapel of St James (Historic Environment Record ref. MLE4569). Its neighbour to the west, no. 16, is a listed Grade II timber-framed house with brick infill of 17th century or earlier date, whilst opposite, at no. 15, is a listed Grade II brick and stone house of 18th century date, and to the east, at nos. 26 and 28, are two further Grade II listed timber-framed houses originally dating to the 16th century.

The site was formerly occupied by the Hugglescote Baptist Church built in 1874. This included a Day and Sunday school at the back which closed in 1924. This was the third Baptist meeting place in the village, the first being in a farmhouse (now the Castle Inn) further up the road and the second, built in 1796, being a wooden church constructed in land which is now the Grange Road Cemetery.

An archaeological evaluation on the site in 2008 (Baker 2008) recorded a post-hole and possible well and sherds of medieval and post-medieval pottery were also recovered. These demonstrated that the site did have a potential for medieval and post-medieval remains to be present although the site had clearly been disturbed following construction of the chapel in the late 19th century.

Archaeological Objectives

The principle objectives of the watching brief were:

1. To identify the presence or absence of any archaeological deposits.
2. To establish the character, extent and date range for any archaeological deposits to be affected by the proposed ground works.
3. To excavate and record any archaeological deposits to be affected by the ground works.
4. To produce an archive and report of any results.

Methodology

The project required a professional archaeologist to supervise all groundwork likely to impact upon any archaeological remains.

The work involved the observation of previously machine stripped surfaces and the supervision and inspection of machine dug foundation trenches. This was carried out using a 360° or JCB 3C mechanical excavator using a 0.6m wide toothed bucket. The foundation trenches were typically dug to be c.0.6m wide and between 1m and 1.3m deep. The exception to this was Plots 3 and 4 where footings were dug to c.1.9m in depth, a building requirement due to the proximity of a laylandii hedge to the west.

All exposed areas, sections and existing spoil heaps were visually inspected for features and finds. Archaeological deposits were hand cleaned, planned, photographed and sample excavated as appropriate to addressing the objectives of the watching brief. Field notes were recorded on a pro-forma ULAS watching brief recording form whilst any stratigraphic units would be given a unique context number and recorded on pro-forma ULAS context sheets if deemed appropriate. A measured site plan at a scale of

1:100 was created showing the disposition of all archaeological features in relation to the surrounding topography.

All work followed the *Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) Code of Conduct* and adhered to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* and the *Guidelines for Archaeological Work in Leicestershire and Rutland (LMARS)*.

Results

Plots 1 and 2

At the northern end of site the former church had once been separated from the street frontage by a small area of lawn. Once removed this turf was revealed to rest directly on undisturbed natural substratum just c.0.1m below modern ground level with no evidence for any interleaving subsoil deposits. To the east and west, adjacent to nos. 16 and 22 Dennis Street, this natural deposit had been truncated by modern service trenches also associated with the church, whilst to the south it had been truncated by the church footings themselves. These had been dug c.0.5m into the underlying natural substratum.

The substratum was a coarse greyish-orange sandy clay mixed with a high percentage of gravel and occasional very large glacial stone deposits. To the west this became paler greyish-yellow sand with the sandy-clay dropping beneath it. The only evidence of subsoil was also recorded along the western side adjacent to 16 Dennis Street. This was a c.0.3m thick dark grey clayey-silt settling down to the west.

Just one feature of note was identified within this frontage area. This was a narrow stone-lined culvert (Figure 4 and Figure 5) running from north-west to south-east across the south-west corner of Plot 1. It was constructed at the base of a 0.4m wide tapered linear cut, c.1.2m to c.1.3m deep, using pitched irregular sized granite stones capped with further large flat granite and slate slabs to create an inverted triangular channel c.0.1m to c.0.2m wide. Deposited on the culvert's roof was further well packed rubble (including granite, brick and slate) before the trench was backfilled with redeposited clay indistinguishable from the surrounding natural.

This culvert appeared to be draining water away from 16 Dennis Street beneath the chapel, which it pre-dated, following the natural drop of the ground down to the south into the valley of the River Sence. As clearly as could be distinguished from the little of its alignment revealed it appeared to be heading beneath the 19th century brick outhouse in the garden to the rear of 22 Dennis Street. This, however, could be coincidental.

Plots 3 to 9

Across the rear of the site similar natural sandy-clays were observed c.1.4m below the top of the footings. This was c.2m to c.2.5m below their observed level along the street frontage and clearly shows the natural drop in slope from north to south across the site. Here though, this natural material was sealed beneath naturally occurring subsoil of pale yellowish-brown clayey-silt (Figure 6). This was observed to be c.0.62m thick across the western end of site (Plots 3 and 4) but was only c.0.31m thick to the east beneath Plots 8 and 9.

It was sealed beneath a further *c.*0.4m to *c.*0.46m of dark brown silt which likely represented the area's ground-level prior to terracing associated with the construction of the chapel (Figure 6). Evidence of this terracing was apparent along the southern edge of site where a brick retaining wall marked a *c.*0.8m drop between the ground level within the development area and the pasture beyond. Across the southern half of the development area ground level appears to have been deliberately raised with up to *c.*0.57m of very dark brownish-grey topsoil mixed with large quantities of 19th century building rubble spread across the site to level the slope off.

No archaeological features or deposits could be identified in plan or section within the foundation trenches across Plots 3 to 9 and the only intrusive features visible appeared to post-date the deposition of the final soil and rubble layer. These included a modern service trench along the western side of Plot 3, the relocation of the 2008 evaluation trench in Plots 3 and 4, the church footings and associated disturbance across Plots 5 to 9, and various ceramic land drains typically running north to south across the area.

Conclusion

For the most part the watching brief identified no significant archaeological deposits across the site with the area to the rear of the present street frontage being particularly barren. This appears mainly due to modern disturbance associated with previous buildings on the site and notably the construction of the Baptist Church which appeared to have truncated the natural substratum to varying depths.

No evidence of the medieval or post-medieval street frontage survived either and it seems apparent that this area had been artificially levelled, probably landscaping associated with the construction of the church in the late 19th century.

The one exception was the presence of the stone-lined culvert running across the frontage area. Its exact purpose other than to carry away water, a role it appears to still be adequately fulfilling judging by the presence of fresh water-born sediment in its channel, remains unclear, as does its date, although it clearly predates the construction of the church in 1874. The small quantity of brick within its construction was of similar fabric and size to the bricks used to infill the timber-framing of the 17th century building (no. 16) to the west and, as it also appears to extend away from this building, it is possible it could be contemporary with it.

Bibliography

Baker, S, 2008 *An Archaeological Evaluation at Hugglescote Baptist Church, Dennis Street, Hugglescote, Coalville, Leicestershire*, ULAS Report No. **2008-142**

Archive

The site archive consists of: 4 A4 watching-brief recording forms
2 A4 digital photo indices
54 digital photographs

The archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council Museum Services under the accession number X.A.125.2008

Publication

Since 2004 ULAS reports the results of archaeological work to the *Online Access to the Index of archaeological investigations* (OASIS) database held by the Archaeological Data Service at the University of York (see Appendix 1).

A summary of the work will also be submitted for publication in the local archaeological journal, the *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society*, in due course.

Acknowledgements

Thanks are extended to Lychgate Homes Ltd. for their assistance and co-operation on site. Fieldwork was undertaken by Mathew Morris and Martin Shore. The report was written by Mathew Morris, and the project was managed for ULAS by Dr Patrick Clay.

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11/12/2009



Figure 2: Plan of development area showing location of important features



Figure 3: View looking north across the development area towards Dennis Street



Figure 4: View showing the exposed stone culvert beneath Plot 1. Looking west



Figure 5: View showing an exposed section across the stone culvert



Figure 6: View showing a typical section of stratigraphy in the southern half of the development area

Appendix 1: OASIS database entry

Project Name	An Archaeological Watching Brief on the site of Hugglescote Baptist Chapel, Dennis Street, Hugglescote, Leicestershire
Project Type	Watching Brief
Project Manager	Dr Patrick Clay
Project Supervisor	Mathew Morris
Previous/Future work	Evaluation XA125.2008 (ULAS Report 2008-142)
Current Land Use	Site of former Baptist Church
Development Type	Residential
Reason for Investigation	PPG16
Position in the Planning Process	As a condition
Site Co-ordinates	SK 423 128
Start/end dates of field work	18/6/09 to 8/12/09
Archive Recipient	Leicestershire County Council Museum Services
Study Area	c.0.167 ha

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