

**Archaeological Watching Brief on Land
At Springfield Farm, Forest Road, Huncote
Leicestershire (SP 518 980)**

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1 Summary

1.1 An archaeological watching brief was carried out on land at Springfield Farm, Forest Road, Huncote Leicestershire, on the 18th September 2007. This work was carried out on behalf of Mr S.N. Preson by University of Leicester Archaeological Services and involved the controlled supervision of ground works associated with the construction of a barn. No archaeological remains were identified during the course of the work. The archive will be held with Leicestershire County Council Museums Section under accession number: X.A206.2007

2. Introduction

2.1 This document provides details of the results of archaeological investigations at Springfield Farm, Forest Road, Huncote Leicestershire (SP 518 980) by University of Leicester Archaeological Services on behalf of Mr S.N. Preson (Fig.1).

2.2 As archaeological adviser to the planning authority, the Senior Planning Archaeologist of the Historic and Natural Environment Team of Leicestershire County Council requested archaeological control and supervision of groundworks associated with the construction of a new barn. This requirement was secured by a planning condition and was intended to ensure that any significant archaeological remains affected by the proposals would be adequately recorded.

2.3 University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) was subsequently commissioned by Mr. Preson to undertake the work on his behalf and the writer attended the site on 18th September 2007. The work involved archaeological observation during excavation of foundation trenches for the construction of a barn (Fig. 2).

3. Geology and Topography

3.1 The Ordnance Survey Geological Survey of Great Britain, Sheet 155, indicates that in most of the area the underlying geology is likely to consist of boulder clay with under and overlying sand and gravel. Some Mercia Mudstone with beds of sandstone may be present within parts of the application area.

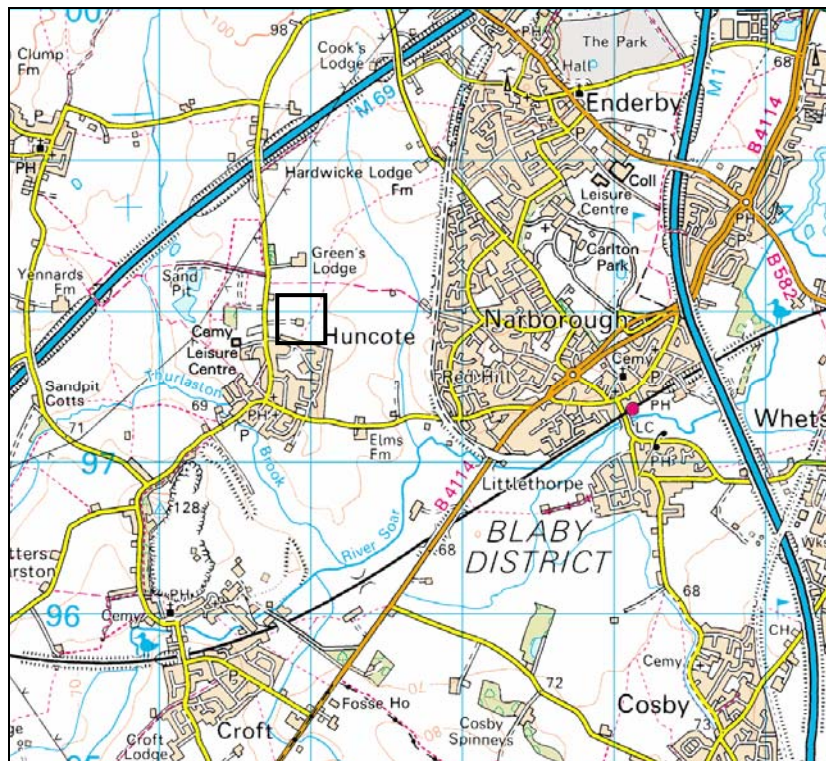


Figure 1 Site Location 1:50000

Reproduced from the Landranger 140 Leicester area 1:50000 map by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright 1996. All rights reserved. Licence number AL 100029495.

4. Archaeological Background

A search of the Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record (HER) during a desk-based assessment for another development site at nearby Huncote Quarry (Browning 1999) has shown that the surrounding area is rich in sites and finds of prehistoric, Roman, Saxon and medieval date, the most notable being the Iron Age settlement to the north of the village on the opposite side of Forest Rd to the present development.

5. Historical Background

There is no known date for the founding of Huncote but the name is thought to have an Anglo-Saxon origin. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle states that in AD 836 the King of Mercia, Wiglaf, assembled a Mercian council somewhere within his lands. It is thought to have been Croft Hill. The purpose of the council was the occasion of the granting of land by the king to Hanbury monastery in Worcestershire (Hoskins 1950, 86). However, more recent research has suggested that although Croft Hill is an important landmark, some of the flatter land around may have been the site of the council in 836 (Sturgess 1997, 3). The Domesday Book records that around 1086 Huncote was in the Wapentake of Guthlaxton and belonged to the Count of Meulan. In the 17th century, Huncote was in the possession of the Stafford family.

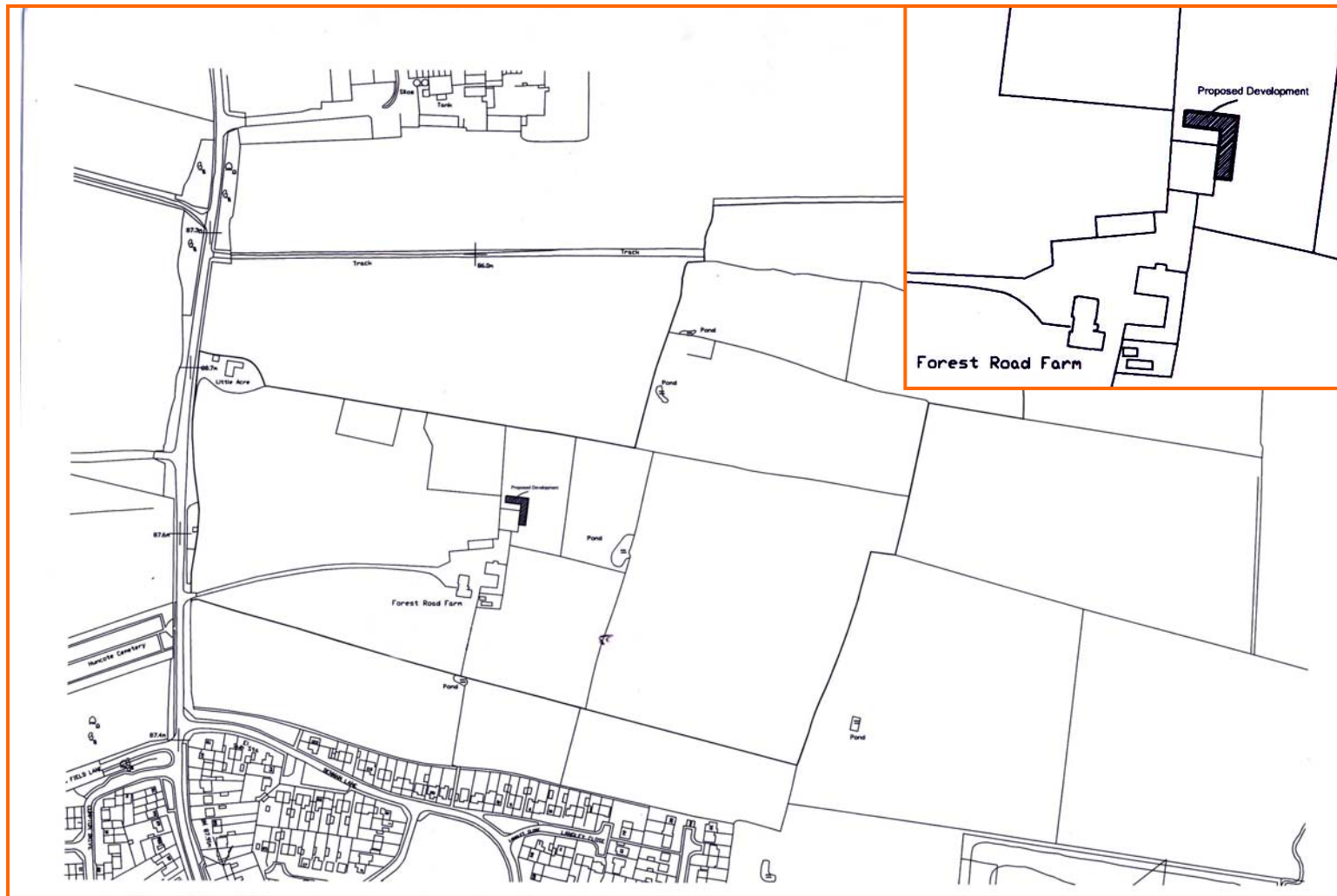


Figure 2 – Site location of Springfield Farm (previously Forest Road Farm) with inset of watching brief area

6. Methodology

6.1 All archaeological work adhered to the Institute of Field Archaeologist's (IFA) *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* and the *Guidelines for Archaeological Work in Leicestershire and Rutland* (LMARS).

6.2 The archaeological watching brief carried out on land at Springfield Farm, Forest Road, Huncote, Leicestershire (SP 518 980), involved control and supervision of ground disturbance to identify any deposits of archaeological importance.

6.3 The main objectives of the watching brief, through archaeological supervision of existing overburden stripping and ground works by the client's contractors were:

1. To identify the presence/absence of any earlier building phases or 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 record any archaeological deposits to be affected by the ground works.
4. To produce an archive and report of any results.

6.4 Any archaeological deposits located were hand cleaned and planned as appropriate. Samples of any archaeological deposits located were hand excavated. Measured drawings of all archaeological features were prepared at a scale of 1:20 and tied into an overall site plan of 1:100. All plans will be tied into the National Grid using an Electronic Distance Measurer (EDM) where appropriate.

6.5 Archaeological deposits were excavated and recorded as appropriate to establishing the stratigraphic and chronological sequence of deposits, recognising and excavating structural evidence and recovering economic, artefactual and environmental evidence. Particular attention was paid to the potential for buried palaeosols and waterlogged deposits in consultation with ULAS's environmental officer.

6.6 All excavated sections were recorded and drawn at 1:10 or 1:20 scale, levelled and tied into the Ordnance Survey datum. Spot heights will be taken as appropriate.

7. Results

7.1 Initial machining revealed the topsoil which consisted of mid reddish-grey-brown sandy clay (40:60), with occasional moderately sorted, rounded stones to a depth of c. 0.4m. Further machining revealed to a depth of 0.4m the subsoil, which consisted of mid brown silt clay with occasional, rounded stones. The natural substratum consisted of slightly gravely yellow clay (Figs 3 and 4)

7.2 The same sequence of soil horizons was observed in all of the foundation trenches.

7.3 No significant archaeological finds, features or deposits were located within the machine-excavated foundations.



Figure 3 **General Shot Looking South-West**



Figure 4 **General Shot Looking West**

8. Conclusion

8.1 No archaeological deposits, features or pre-modern artefacts were encountered during the watching brief.

8.2 The absence of archaeological features during the archaeological watching brief carried out on land at Springfield Farm, Forest Road, Huncote, Leicestershire (SP 518 980), seems to confirm that the site was situated outside the medieval village core. It is therefore most likely that the application area saw only use as agricultural or horticultural land during the medieval and post-medieval periods due to the lack of archaeological features. However, the controlled ground work excavation only removed the topsoil down to a depth of c.0.3-0.4m. Therefore if any archaeology was present it would have been unlikely to have been observable at that level. Moreover, at this shallow depth it is unlikely that the construction of the barn foundations would have any impact upon any potential archaeology present.

8.3 During archaeological supervision of the ground works involving existing overburden stripping, no archaeological deposits, finds or features were encountered. The results of the archaeological watching brief were therefore negative.

9. Acknowledgements

9.1 I would like to thank the client, Mr S. N. Preson, for his assistance and co-operation on site. Richard Buckley managed the project and the fieldwork was carried out by the author, both of ULAS.

10. Archive

The site archive consists of digital photographs and a watching brief recording form. The archive will be held with Leicestershire County Council Museums Section under accession number: X.A206.2007

11. Bibliography

Browning, J., 1999. *Huncote Quarry Desk-Based Assessment* (ULAS Ref. 1999-128)

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