



University of Leicester

Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological Watching Brief
at Manor Court,
Lutterworth Road,
Bitteswell Leicestershire
(SK 538 857)**

Gerwyn Richards



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**An Archaeological Watching Brief
at Manor Court, Lutterworth Road.
Bitteswell, Leicestershire.**

(NGR SK 538 857)

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Planning Application: 10/00739/PCD

For: Mr N. Salt.

Checked by Project Manager

Signed:



Date: 23/9/2010

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Road, Bitteswell, Leicestershire (SK 538 857)**

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Summary

University of Leicester Archaeological Services was commissioned by Mr N. Salt to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the groundworks in advance of the construction of new residential unit at Manor Court, Bitteswell, Leicestershire.

The proposed development area had been identified as being of archaeological potential, located within the historic settlement core of Bitteswell. Extensive evidence of recent ground disturbance, including quarrying and tipping was exposed, all undated. Nothing of archaeological significance was observed during the course of this watching brief.

The archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council, under the accession number X.A136. 2010.

1. Introduction

University of Leicester Archaeological Services was commissioned by Mr N. Salt to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the groundworks in advance of the construction of a new residential unit at Manor Court, Lutterworth Road, Bitteswell (SP 358 857; *Figure 1*). The proposed development area was located to the south east of the current Manor House. The groundworks initially consisted of a topsoil strip followed by the excavation of foundation trenches.

The Leicestershire & Rutland Historic Environment Record (HER) indicates that the proposed development area lies in an area of archaeological interest, located within the medieval and post-medieval historic settlement core of the village of Bitteswell.

The Senior Planning Archaeologist, Leicestershire County Council advised Harborough District Council that the proposed works may have an impact upon buried archaeological remains. In view of this a programme of archaeological attendance was recommended, to be secured by a condition on the planning permission. This consisted of a watching brief carried out during the groundworks undertaken by the client's contractors. This work followed Planning Policy Statement 5 (*Planning and the Historic Environment* (Department for Communities and Local Government March 2010)).

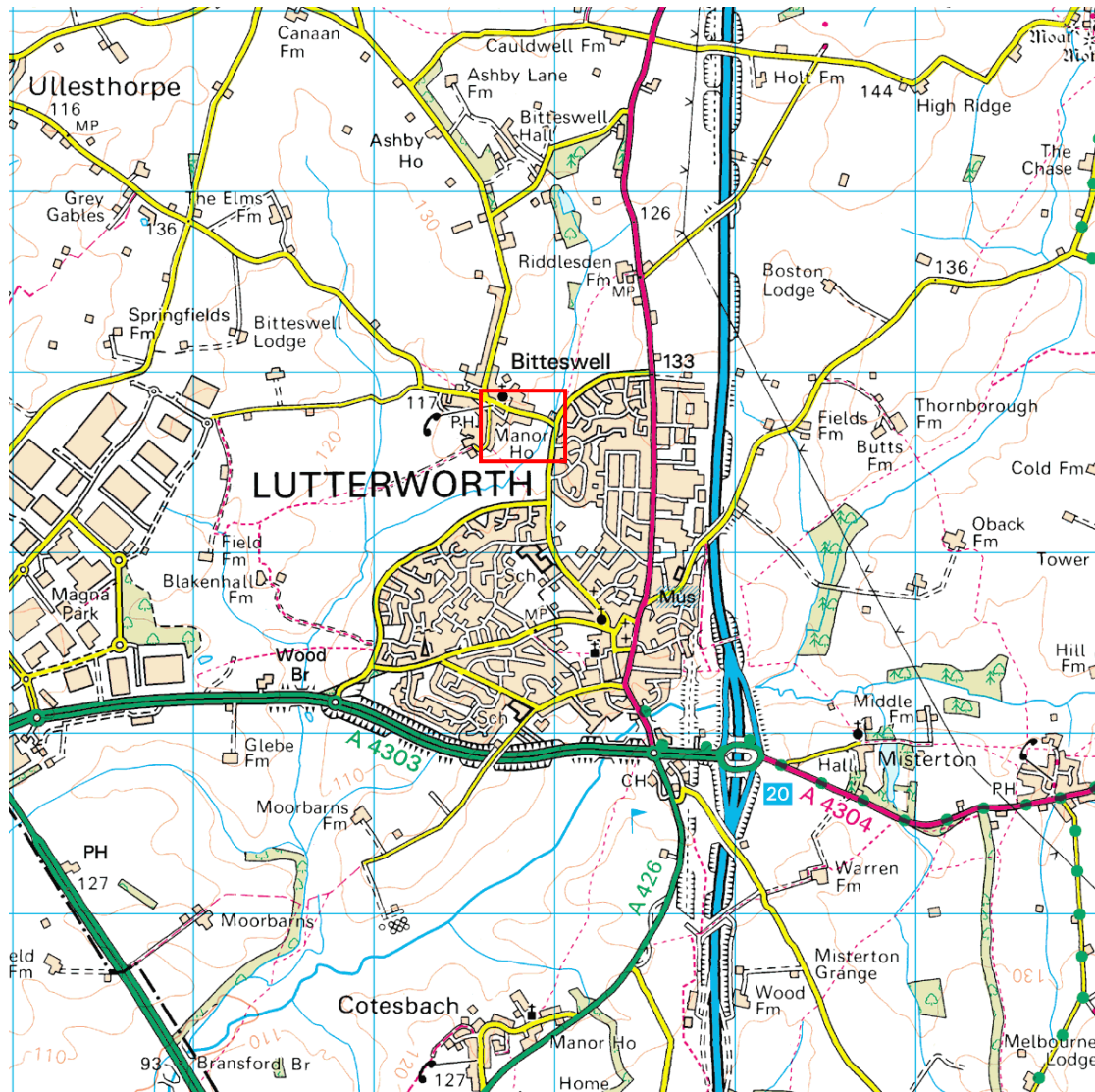


Figure 1. Site location (1km squares)

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2. Aims and Methodology

The aim of the archaeological work, through archaeological inspection and recording of groundworks by the client's contractors, was to:

- To identify the presence/absence of archaeological deposits.
- To establish the character, extent and date range for any archaeological deposits to be affected by the proposed ground works.
- To record any archaeological deposits to be affected by the ground works.
- To produce an archive and report of any results

The work followed the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Code of Conduct* (2006) and *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (2008), the *Guidelines for Archaeological Work in Leicestershire and Rutland* (LMARS) and adhered to the

University's Health and Safety policy. The methodology to be followed was detailed in the Design Specification for Archaeological work (ULAS 10-161).

All groundworks were carried out by a 21 tonne back-actor fitted with a ditching bucket and JCB 3CX under continuous archaeological supervision. The exposed substratum was observed and the spoil searched for finds. The watching brief took place between August 2nd and 4th 2010.

3. Results

The proposed development area occupied an area of abandoned formal gardens, a tennis court and a small paddock to the south east of the current Manor House. The site sloped down from the south to the north. A visual survey of the proposed development area prior to work commencing indicated that the area of the former tennis court had been cut and filled to level the tennis court. Later monitoring of overburden removal from the tennis court confirmed extensive disturbance had occurred within this area and nothing of archaeological significance was observed.

The topsoil strip began within the paddock area at the southern edge of the proposed development area. Approximately 250mm to 300mm of topsoil was removed revealing a substratum of light brown sandy silt. Towards the western end of the paddock this substratum became increasingly disturbed with frequent inclusions of brick, rubble and modern ceramics. It appears a large amount of material had been imported in to the area and dumped and the area contained nothing of archaeological significance.

Towards the northern end of the proposed development area the underlying substratum became increasingly disturbed, with no clear undisturbed geology. Approximately 400mm of garden soil was excavated revealing a mixed deposit of silty sand with abundant inclusions of 19th- and 20th-century glass and ceramics. Due to the unclear nature of this layer it was decided to monitor the excavation of the footings as well. The excavation of the northernmost footing trench revealed a series of borrow pits (*Figure 2*) excavated to exploit the underlying gravels. Nothing of archaeological significance was exposed within the remainder of the footing trenches.

4. Conclusion

The proposed development area occupied a promising location within the historic settlement core of Bitteswell. However, no archaeologically significant deposits or remains were encountered during the course of this watching brief. The majority of the proposed development area had been affected by earlier groundworks, including small scale quarrying, landscaping and dumping.

5. Archive & Publication

The site archive consists of:

8 Black & White negatives and contact prints
CD containing 8 digital images
1 A4 contact sheet

1 A4 double sided watching brief sheet
1 A4 mid 20th C map showing outline of tennis court
1 A4 1:2500 map showing proposed development area
Unbound copy of this report (ULAS Report Number 2010-170)

The archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council under the Accession Number X.A136. 2010.

A version of the summary (above) will be published in *Transactions of Leicestershire Historical & Archaeological Society* in due course.

5. References

IfA, 2008 *Code of Conduct*

IfA, 2008 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation*

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Figure 2 Backfilled Borrow Pit Visible in Northernmost Footing Trench.

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