University of Leicester

Archaeological Services

An Archaeological Evaluation
Sword Drive, Hinckley, Leicestershire
NGR: SP 417 952

Harriet Jacklin

ULAS Report No 2010-198.

An Archaeological Evaluation

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NGR SP 417 952

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For J.S. Bloor Ltd

Checked by

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An Archaeological Evaluation by Trial Trenching, Sword Drive, Hinckley, Leicestershire (NGR SP 417 952)

Summary

University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) carried out an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching off Sword Drive, Hinckley, Leicestershire (NGR SP 417 952). The work was undertaken as part of an archaeological assessment in advance of a proposed development. Fourteen trial trenches, totalling 345m in length were excavated targeting and sampling anomalies previously identified during geophysical survey as well as blank areas of the site. A boundary ditch was excavated that had been identified on the 1886 OS 1st edition map. All of the other geophysical anomalies investigated were found to be modern or non-archaeological in origin. No other archaeological evidence was found within the development area. The site archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council Heritage Services Section, accession no. X.A181.2010.

Introduction

Archaeological trial trenching was carried out by ULAS on agricultural land off Sword Drive, Hinckley, Leicestershire (NGR SP 417 952) between the 18th and 22nd October 2010. Archaeological evaluation of the site had been requested by Leicestershire County Council Historic and Natural Environment Team, as archaeological advisors to the planning authority to identify and locate any archaeological remains of significance prior to redevelopment of the land.

The fieldwork was carried out in accordance with Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment (PPS5), and was undertaken prior to development to provide preliminary indications of the character and extent of any buried archaeological remains in order that the potential impact of development may be assessed by the Planning Authority. Results of a geophysical survey (Stratascan 2010) indicated the presence of a number of possible archaeological features.

This report presents the results of the archaeological evaluation by trial trenching, assessing the impact of the proposed development upon any archaeological deposits identified.

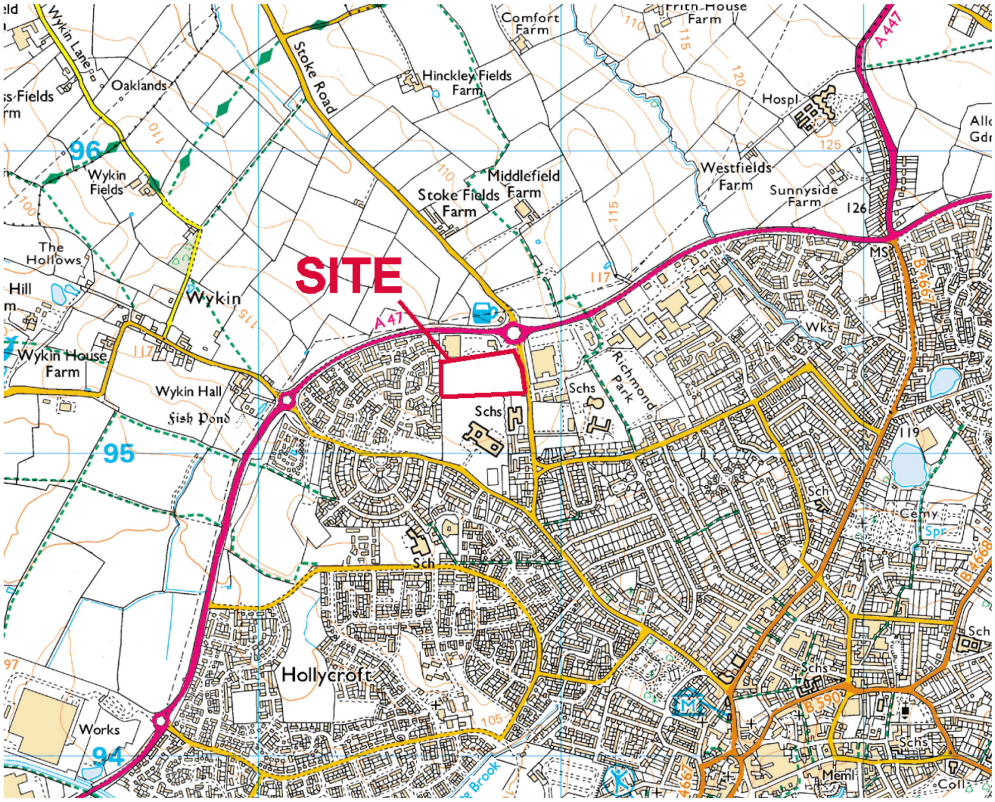

Figure 1: Location plan of site. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Licence number AL 100029495.

Site description, Topography and Geology

The site is situated to the north-western side of Hinckley, Leicestershire and covers approximately 3.3 hectares (Fig. 1). The area to be affected by the development is generally flat and comprises rough pasture and scrub. The geology of the site comprises Triassic Mudstone, with overlying geology of Flint (type of stagnogleyic earth). The site consists of a single parcel of land which is bounded to the north and east by roads, to the south by a dividing hedge and to the west by a tree line separating it from a residential area (Nexus Heritage 2010).

Historical and Archaeological Background

Prior to the trial trenching a geophysical survey was undertaken by Stratascan (Stratascan 2010). The survey revealed the presence of possible archaeological features including two linear anomalies running north-south through the middle of the site, a L-shaped linear anomaly to the east, a number of east-west anomalies (possibly related to agricultural activity) and a number of possible pits to the east of the site (Stratascan 2010).

Aims and Objectives

The principal aims of the archaeological evaluation were:

- To identify possible areas of archaeological potential liable to be threatened by the proposed development.
- To establish the location, extent, date, and significance of any archaeological deposits located.
- To define the quality and state of preservation of these deposits.
- To assess the local, regional and national importance of any deposits.
- To produce an archive and report of any results.

Trial trenching is an intrusive form of evaluation that will demonstrate the existence of earth-fast archaeological features that may exist within the area. This information would allow the County Archaeologist to assess the potential impact of the proposed development upon any archaeological remains.

The objective is to gain an indication of the nature, extent, date and significance of any archaeological deposits in order that an appropriate mitigation strategy may be adopted for remains that may be affected by the development proposals.

Figure 2: Greyscale of geophysical survey results (from Stratascan 2010).

Methodology

Thirteen trial trenches were located including an extension to Trench 12 to try and locate a geophysical anomaly. Once on site, slight alterations to the trench layout in the WSI were necessary due to the obstruction of a number of large bushes and trees (Fig. 3). A CAT scan was undertaken in the area of each trench before excavation commenced to identify any live services. The topsoil and underlying layers were excavated under continuous archaeological supervision using a Kubota U50 360° with a 2m ditching bucket until either the top of archaeology or the natural substratum/undisturbed ground was reached. The resulting spoil was scanned with a metal detector.

The bases of the trenches were cleaned in areas where potential archaeological deposits were observed. Any possible features were sample excavated in order to determine the character and date of any remains and they were photographed, described and drawn to scale.

All the work followed the Institute for Archaeologists (IFA) *Code of Conduct* (2010) and *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations* (2008). The trenches were located using GPS and the final plans completed with the aid of TurboCad v.15 design software.

Results

Figure 3 shows the location of the trenches and each trench is summarised in Table 1. The topsoil across the site (001) was a dark brown fine loamy agricultural soil containing small stones and ploughed-in organic matter and varied in depth from 100-200mm. The subsoil (002) was similar to the topsoil, the main difference being that of colour (a redder hue) and consistency (more clayey).

Trench 1

Trench 1 was located in the north-west corner of the site. The topsoil was between 90mm and 180mm thick and the subsoil between 180mm and 250mm. The natural subsoil consisted of a mixture of silty clays, sands and gravels. Two furrows and one land drain (all orientated east-west) were identified. The land drain was cut into one of the furrows. No archaeological deposits were identified in this trench.

Trench 2

Trench 2 was located in the south-west corner of the site to investigate a linear feature running north-west – south-east. The topsoil was between 60mm and 170mm thick and the subsoil between 180mm and 230mm. The natural subsoil consisted of a mixture of silty clays, sands and gravels. One furrow and one land drain (with a smaller land drain connected at 45%) both orientated east-west, were identified. Although the geophysical anomaly was not identified there is a land drain on the same alignment and in a similar location (Fig. 3). No archaeological deposits were identified in this trench.

Table 1: Summary of trench details

Trench	Orientation	Length (m)	Width (m)	Min. Depth (m)	Max. Depth (m)	Archaeology identified?	Additional Details
1	SE-NW	30	2	0.33	0.40	No	Furrows and land drain
2	NE-SW	30	2	0.32	0.42	No	Furrows and land drains
3	E-W	30	2	0.36	0.30	No	-
4	S-N	30	2	0.27	0.36	No	Furrows and land drains
5	E-W	30	2	0.30	0.40	No	Field boundary (identified in 1886 Os map), furrows, field scars and land drains
6	E-W	30	2	0.36	0.40	No	Land drains
7	SE-NW	30	2	0.33	0.40	No	Land drain
8	NE-SW	30	2	0.32	0.38	No	Furrows and land drains
9	S-N	15	2	0.36	0.42	No	Remnants of modern brick culvert (see T10)
10	S-N	15	2	0.32	0.36	No	Remnants of modern brick culvert (three rows)
11	W-E	15	2	0.30	0.34	No	Land drain
12	S-N	30	2	0.30	0.40	No	Land drain/ sewage pipe
13	E-W	15	2	0.32	0.35	No	-
14	W-E	15	2	0.30	0.34	No	Modern fe

Trench 3

Trench 3 was located in the western part of the site. The topsoil was between 100mm and 160mm thick and the subsoil between 150mm and 200mm. The natural subsoil consisted of a mixture of silty clays, sands and gravels. No archaeological deposits were identified in this trench.

Trench 4

Trench 4 was located to the south in the western part of the site. The topsoil was between 120mm and 180mm thick and the subsoil between 120mm and 200mm. The natural subsoil consisted of a mixture of silty clays, sands and gravels. Three furrows and two land drains (all orientated east-west) were identified. Two of the land drains were cut into two of the furrows. No archaeological deposits were identified in this trench

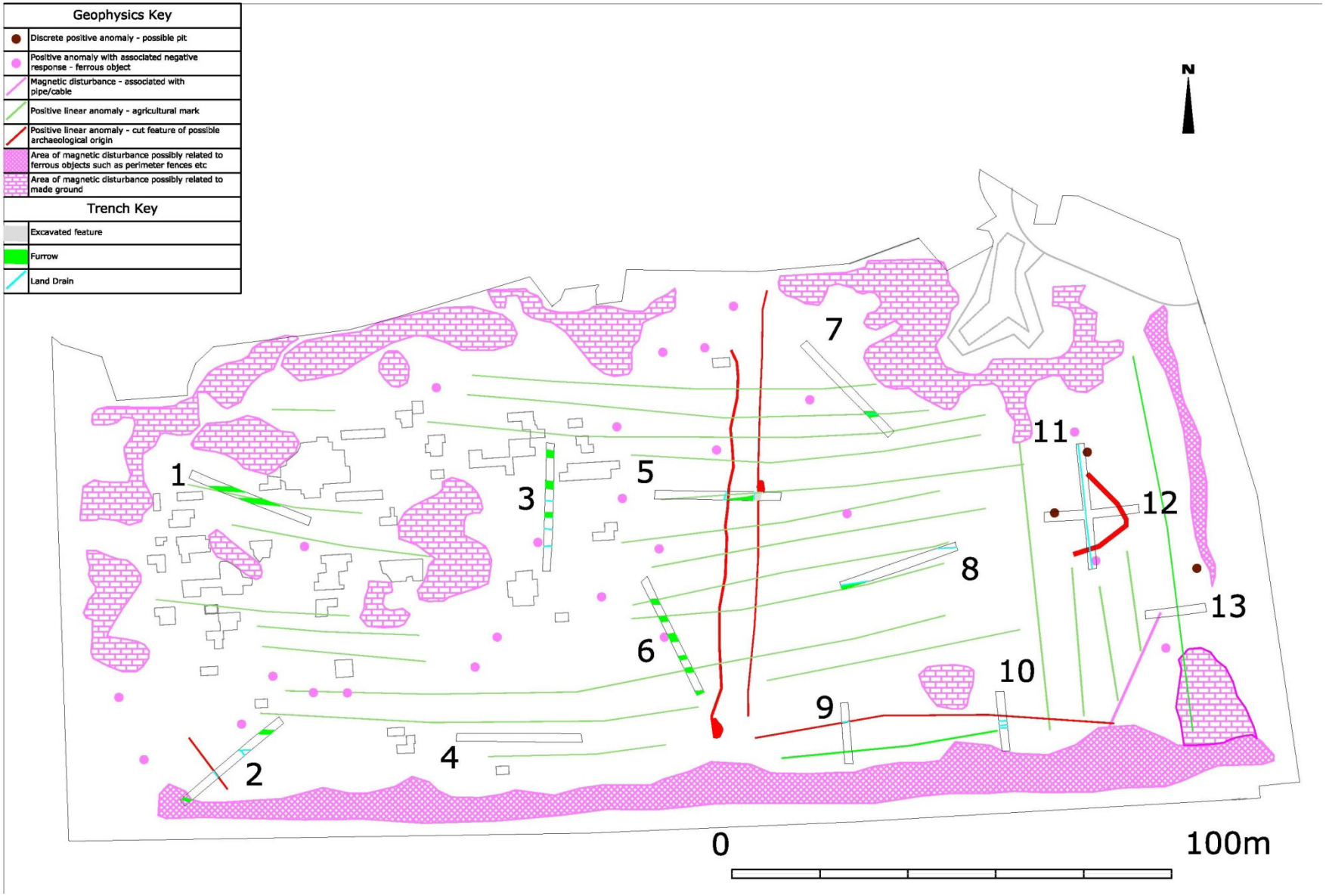

Figure 3: Trench Locations overlain on geophysical survey showing excavated furrows (green) and land drains (cyan).

Trench 5

Trench 5 was located to the middle of the site targeting a double linear feature running the width of the field (Fig. 3). The topsoil was between 120mm and 200mm thick and the subsoil between 140mm and 200mm. The natural subsoil consisted of a mixture of silty clays, sands and gravels. A field boundary orientated north-south and four land drains (orientated north-south and east-west) were identified including a land drain in the base of the field boundary (Fig. 3). The field boundary appears to be on the same alignment and in the same locations as the eastern geophysical linear anomaly and the land drain matches the western anomaly identified by Stratascan. A field boundary in this location appears on the 1886 1st edition OS map (Fig. 4). A sample was taken from the feature but given the modern date no further assessment was undertaken. No further archaeological deposits were identified in this trench.

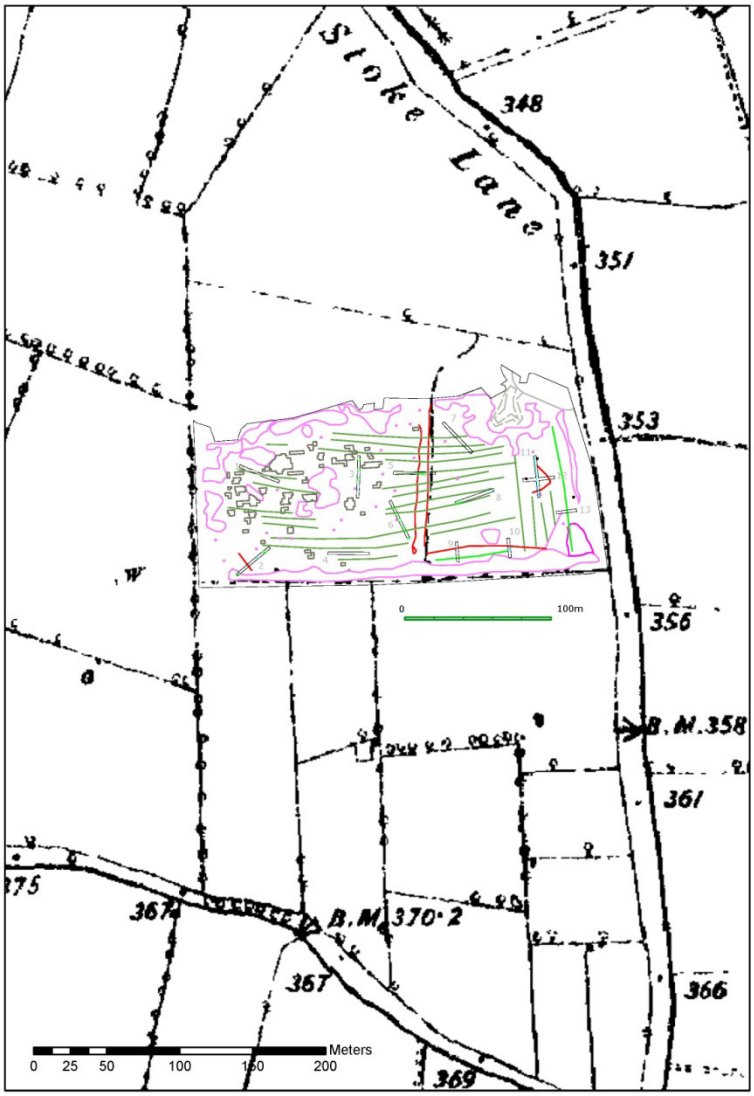

Figure 4: 1886 1st edition OS map overlain on the geophysical survey.

Trench 6

Trench 6 was located south of Trench 5. The topsoil was between 50mm and 170mm thick and the subsoil between 200mm and 280mm. The natural subsoil consisted of a mixture of silty clays, sands and gravels. One furrow and one land drain (with a smaller land drain connected at 45%), all orientated east-west were identified and one land drain was cut into the furrow. No archaeological deposits were identified in this trench.

Trench 7

Trench 7 was located to the northern limit of the eastern part of the site. The topsoil was between 100mm and 190mm thick and the subsoil between 150mm and 200mm. The natural subsoil consisted of a mixture of silty clays, sands and gravels. One furrow with a land drain cut into it was recorded orientated east-west. No archaeological deposits were identified in this trench.

Trench 8

Trench 8 was located in the middle of the site. The topsoil was between 90mm and 190mm thick and the subsoil between 130mm and 200mm. The natural subsoil consisted of a mixture of silty clays, sands and gravels. Six furrows and one land drain (with a smaller land drain connected at 45%), orientated east-west, were identified. No archaeological deposits were identified in this trench.

Trench 9

Trench 9 was located at the southern limit of the eastern part of the site targeting a linear geophysical anomaly running east-west. The topsoil was between 140mm and 170mm thick and the subsoil between 200mm and 240mm. The natural subsoil consisted of a mixture of silty clays, sands and gravels. Remnants of modern brick culvert were located, orientated east-west on the same alignment and in approximately the same location as the linear anomaly identified by the geophysical survey. No archaeological deposits were identified in this trench.

Trench 10

Trench 10 was also located to target the anomaly running along the southern boundary of the site. The topsoil was between 120mm and 170mm thick and the subsoil between 150mm and 200mm. The natural subsoil consisted of a mixture of silty clays, sands and gravels. Remnants of modern brick culvert (in a row of three) orientated east-west were recorded similar to that seen in Trench 9. The culvert appears to be on the same alignment and in the same location as the geophysical linear anomaly. No further archaeological deposits were identified in this trench.

Trenches 11, 12 and 14

Trenches 11, 12 and 14 were located to the eastern part of the site and to target a possibly curving ditch and pits recorded by the geophysical survey. The topsoil was between 100mm and 190mm thick and the subsoil between 150mm and 200mm. The natural subsoil consisted of a mixture of silty clays, sands and gravels. The curving geophysical anomaly was not identified in Trench 11 and Trench 12 was therefore extended to attempt to locate the feature (Trench 14). No archaeological deposits were identified in either trench although north-south orientated land drains/service pipes were recorded. Although no archaeological deposits were recorded at the

western end of Trench 12 where a possible pit was identified on the geophysical survey, a lump of iron ore was found in a similar location to the recorded feature. The possible pit identified at the northern end of Trench 11 was not identified during excavation.

Trench 13

Trench 13 was located at the eastern limit of the site. The topsoil was between 100mm and 220mm thick and the subsoil between 150mm and 200mm. The natural subsoil consisted of a mixture of silty clays, sands and gravels. No archaeological deposits were identified in this trench.

Discussion

Trenches 2, 5, 9, 10 11 12 and 14 targeted the anomalies highlighted by the geophysical survey (Stratascan 2010). The linear anomalies identified in Trench 9 appear to represent a modern field boundary and land drain while those in trenches 2, 5 and 10 also appear to represent field drains and modern debris. No trace was found of the curving anomaly or the pits indicated by the survey in the locations targeted by Trenches 11, 12 and 14. Given that further excavation also failed to locate the curving anomaly this may represent a feature of geological origin. No archaeological features or finds other than furrow and land drains were found within any of the other trenches.

Archive

A full copy of the archive as defined in Brown (2008) including all written, drawn and photographic records relating to the investigations undertaken will be deposited with Leicestershire County Council under the accession no X.A181.2010

The archive consists of: A copy of the report,
14 x trench recording sheets
1 x section drawing of field boundary and land drain, Trench 5
Digital and B&W photos with contact prints and photographic index

The report will be listed on the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) held by the Archaeological Data Service at the University of York. Available at: http://oasis.ac.uk/

Oasis Summary

INFORMATION REQUIRED	
Project Name	Sword Drive, Hinckley, Leicestershire
Project Type	Evaluation (Trial Trenching)
Project Manager	Vicki Score
Project Supervisor	Harriet Jacklin
Previous/Future work	Geophysical survey
Current Land Use	Wasteland
Development Type	Residential
Reason for Investigation	PPS5
Position in the Planning Process	Archaeological work done as a condition of the Planning Permission
Site Co ordinates	NGR SP 417 952
Start/end dates of field work	18.10.10 to 22.10.10
Archive Recipient	Leicestershire County Council
Study Area	c. 3.3 hectares

Acknowledgements

The site work was carried out by the author and Gerwyn Richards, Vicki Score managed the project. Thanks to Lee Griffin of Bloor Homes, Richard Clarke of Leicestershire County Council and Anthony Martin of Nexus for their help on the project.

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