

# ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

Nether Hall, Darley Dale, Derbyshire

ARS Report N°: 25-039

OASIS ID: archaeo15-533351



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# Nether Hall, Darley Dale, Derbyshire

ARS LTD REPORT 2025/039



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**Date of compilation:** 30.04.25  
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**Approved for issue by:** John Duffy  
**Planning Reference:** 23/01316/FUL  
**Local Authority:** Derbyshire Dales District Council  
**Site central NGR:** NGR SK 27788 63205  
**OASIS ID:** archaeol5-533351

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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**Project Name:** Nether Hall, Darley Dale, Derbyshire  
**Site Code:** ARS24-286  
**Planning Authority:** Derbyshire Dales District Council  
**Planning Reference:** 23/01316/FUL  
**Location:** Nether Hall, Hallmore Road, Darley Dale, Derbyshire, DE4 2QQ  
**Parish:** Darley Dale  
**Hard Geology:** Marsden Formation – consisting of siltstone and mudstone  
**Superficial Geology:** N/A  
**Soil Type:** Soilscape 17 – loamy and clayey acid soils described as ‘slowly permeable and seasonably wet’  
**NGR:** SK 27788 63205  
**Date of Fieldwork:** 10/04/2025  
**Date of Report:** May 2025

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at Nether Hall, Darley Dale by Archaeological Research Services Ltd (ARS Ltd) on 10/04/2025 in accordance with a written scheme of works agreed with the Derbyshire Dales District Council. The purpose of the watching brief was to identify the presence or absence of archaeological remains affected by the proposed development of the construction of a small holiday apartment. The works involved the removal of a brick and timber shed and the excavation of foundation trenches. The archaeological watching brief encountered no archaeological finds, features or palaeo-environmental deposits.

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# I INTRODUCTION

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## 1.1 Background and Scope of Work

- 1.1.1 A planning application (23/01316/FUL) was submitted to Derbyshire Dales District Council (DDDC) by Jamie Ritchie for the demolition of a brick, timber and corrugated iron roofed structure to the south of Nether Hall and the subsequent construction of a small holiday cottage.
- 1.1.2 The site was deemed to have potential archaeological material and therefore a scheme of archaeological mitigation was required in compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) to record the archaeology of the site prior to development.
- 1.1.3 On the advice of Derbyshire County Council as archaeological advisors to the Local Planning Authority, a condition was set on planning permission requiring implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with an approved Written Scheme of Investigation:

Condition 7:

*'No development shall take place until a written scheme of investigation (WSI) for archaeological work has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority in writing. For land that is included within the WSI, no development shall take place other than in accordance with the agreed WSI, which shall include the statement of significance and research objectives; and:*

- ◆ *the programme and methodology of site investigation and recording and the nomination of a competent person(s) or organisation to undertake the agreed works*
- ◆ *the programme for post-investigation assessment and subsequent analysis, publication and dissemination and deposition of resulting material.*

*This part of the condition shall not be discharged until these elements have been fulfilled in accordance with the programme set out in the WSI. Reason: To safeguard the identification and recording of features of historic and/or archaeological interest associated with the site in accordance with Policy PD2 of the Adopted Derbyshire Dales Local Plan (2017)'.*

- 1.1.4 Archaeological Research Services Ltd (ARS Ltd) was commissioned by Jamie Ritchie to undertake a watching brief at Nether Hall, Darley Dale, Derbyshire (Figure 1). The watching brief comprised the continuous archaeological monitoring of the removal of an existing brick, timber and iron shed and subsequent removal of underlying soil down to the archaeological horizon below.
- 1.1.5 Works were undertaken in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI; Collie 2025) and took place on 10<sup>th</sup> April 2025.

## 1.2 Site Location and Description

- 1.2.1 The development area (DA) boundary encompassed a total area of 0.072 ha and is indicated in red on Figure 1. The site was located 1.1km from Darley Dale. The DA was bound to the north and west by the domestic and commercial residence of Derbyshire

Plumbing and Heating Services Ltd, to the south by associated garden and field land beyond and to the east by Halldale Brook. The site was centred on NGR SK 27788 63205.

- 1.2.2 The site was located on a gently rising slope that increased in height from south to north from between ground heights of 136m and 140m aOD (above Ordnance Datum).

### 1.3 Geology and Soils

- 1.3.1 The underlying solid geology of the DA consisted of the Marsden Formation which is a sedimentary Bedrock formed during the Carboniferous period 321.5 million – 320 million years ago, consisting of siltstone and mudstone (BGS 2024). No superficial geology was recorded.
- 1.3.2 The soils of the PDA are classified as Soilscape 17: loamy and clayey acid soils which are slowly permeable and seasonably wet (Cranfield University 2024, accessed April 2025).

### 1.4 Archaeological and Historical Background

- 1.4.1 The archaeological and historical background for the site was taken from the Historic Environment Record (Derbyshire County Council). The information below has been summarised from the WSI (Collie 2025).
- 1.4.2 The DA is adjacent to Nether Hall (MDR8940), which was formerly the barn of Darley Hall Farm. Previously Grade II listed, it was delisted in 2005.
- 1.4.3 The site of a medieval mansion originally called Nether-hall or Whitwell-hall (MDR3861) lies immediately north of the DA. The hall appears to have been erected c.1321, by agreement between John de Derlegh and his mason.
- 1.4.4 A manuscript of c.1700 in the British Library shows a hall, with features not inconsistent with a 14<sup>th</sup> century date, fronted by a castellated wall and outbuildings. A note has been added stating that it is a view of Darley Hall, alias Darley Nether Hall, pulled down about 1796.
- 1.4.5 The medieval building was purchased c.1790 by Richard Arkwright who, in 1796, demolished it and built in its place a new mansion: Darley Hall (MDR15375). Darley Hall is described as a Grade II listed late 18<sup>th</sup> century plain square mansion in extensive grounds. Built of ashlar and of three storeys, it is three sash windows wide, with a three-light angular bay on the right-hand side. The windows generally have glazing bars, except those in the facade, which has a Roman Doric porch. The building has a parapet and a hipped slate roof.
- 1.4.6 Judge Newall lived at Darley Hall before the Second World War. In the two World Wars the Hall was commandeered by the Ministry of Defence and occupied by the Army.
- 1.4.7 In 1946 and 1947 Darley Hall was purchased by Derbyshire County Council for use as a maternity hospital. Relinquished by the National Health Authority in 1990, it is now a private residential home.



Site name: Nether Hall, Darley Dale  
 Date: June 2025  
 Drawn by: TC  
 Scale: Varies

**Figure 1: Site location**



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-  Archaeological monitoring area
-  Proposed development plot area

## 2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

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### 2.1 Watching Brief Aims and Objectives

- 2.1.1 The aim of the fieldwork was ‘to record and enhance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost during the proposed development in a manner proportional to their importance, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible’ (MHCLG 2024).
- 2.1.2 The objectives of the fieldwork were to:
- ◆ monitor closely all development groundwork that may encounter archaeological remains and confer with the archaeological planning advisor to the LPA when archaeological remains have been found;
  - ◆ investigate and record any archaeological features/deposits encountered;
  - ◆ establish a relative chronological sequence and, if possible, recover datable materials from archaeological deposits and features; and,
  - ◆ establish the character, extent, form, function and likely status of the archaeological remains were found.
  - ◆ Relevant Research Aims and Objectives

### 2.2 Research Aims and Objectives

- 2.2.1 The aims and objectives of the archaeological watching brief are outlined in detail in the WSI (Collie 2025) and are summarised below.
- 2.2.2 The Investigations were carried out with a view of addressing objectives suggested by the published research priorities set out for the *East Midlands Historic Environment Research Framework* (Research Framework 2025; accessed April 2025) .
- 2.2.3 Relevant research topics identified in the include:
- ◆ How can we improve our understanding of the form, evolution and function of buildings within rural settlements and establish the extent of surviving Medieval fabrics?
  - ◆ How can we improve our understanding of the early landscapes of enclosure and the relationship between, arable, pasture woodlands commons and waste?
  - ◆ How can we improve our understanding of developments in medieval estates and their landscape contexts?
  - ◆ Can this site be used to further our understanding of the typology of regional buildings, styles and materials?
  - ◆ How did the medieval manor and manorial estates develop from the Anglo- Saxon period?
  - ◆ What can we learn about traditional constructional skills and designs?
  - ◆ How can we elucidate further the use of social space within buildings and across the landscape?

### 3 METHOD STATEMENT

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- 3.1.1 The methodology for the watching brief is set out in detail in the Written Scheme of Investigation (section 3.2 in Collie 2025) and was adhered to throughout the project.
- 3.1.2 Excavation was conducted under continuous archaeological supervision, allowing the archaeologist to pause work to investigate and record any potential features or deposits. A suitable mechanical excavator with a toothless bucket was used. Once the natural strata were reached and no archaeological features or deposits were identified, the trenches were further excavated to the required development depth where necessary.
- 3.1.3 Overburden was removed in level spits down to the archaeological horizon using a five-tonne mechanical excavator equipped with a 0.5m toothless bucket, under continuous archaeological supervision.
- 3.1.4 Although no archaeological material was encountered, the geological stratigraphy was drawn and recorded at an appropriate scale and in accordance with the WSI.
- 3.1.5 All features were digitally recorded into the Ordnance Survey Grid and spot heights expressed in metres aOD.
- 3.1.6 All features were digitally photographed with a full register of each photograph was kept.

#### 3.2 Professional Standards

- 3.2.1 The project was managed according to the Historic England guidance for research projects (Historic England 2015).
- 3.2.2 The archaeological fieldwork was undertaken in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) *Code of Conduct* (2022) and Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) and *Standard for archaeological monitoring and recording* and *Universal guidance for archaeological monitoring and recording*. (CIfA 2023a; CIfA 2023b).

#### 3.3 Health and Safety

- 3.3.1 All works were undertaken in full compliance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and with the Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1992.
- 3.3.2 A risk assessment (RA No. 2025/33) was produced before commencement of the work and was adhered to throughout the course of the fieldwork.

## 4 RESULTS

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### 4.1 Overview

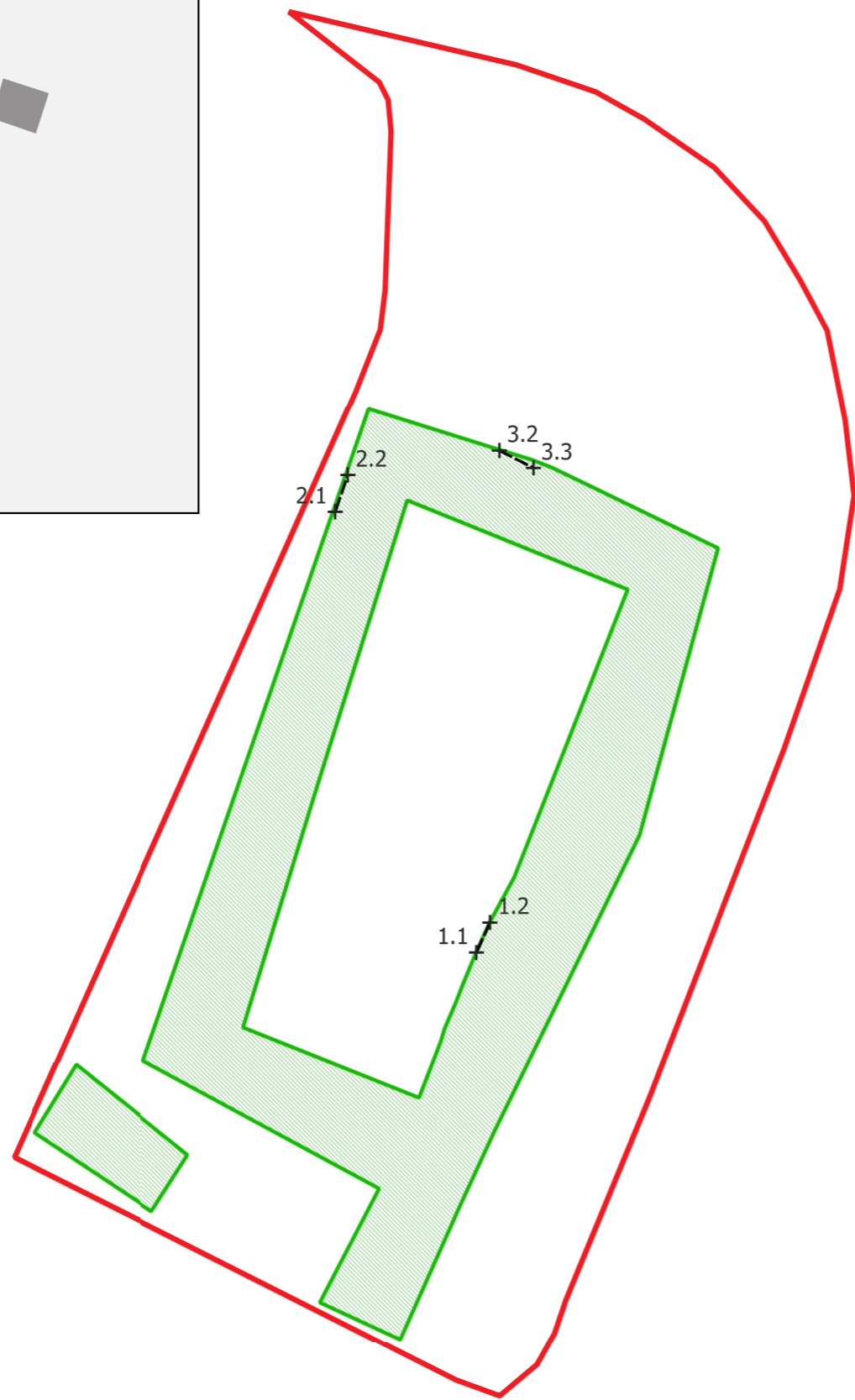
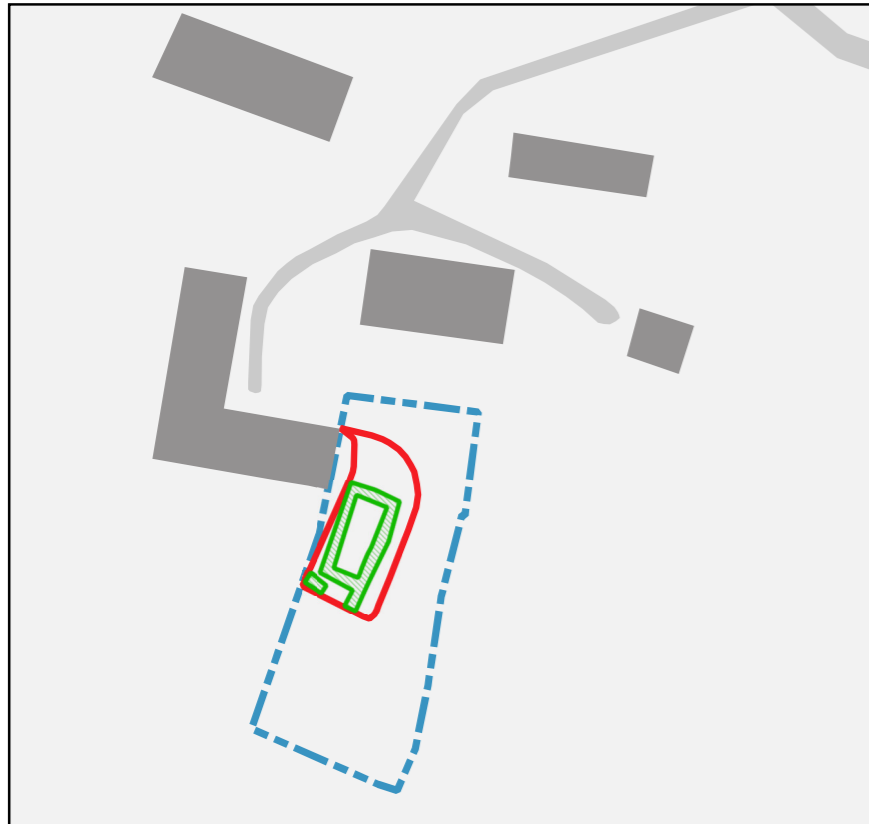
- 4.1.1 An overall plan of the watching brief area is presented in Figure 3 below along with section drawings. A context description table is contained in Appendix I and summary text descriptions of key features are presented below in chronological order. Plans, section drawings and photographs of the watching brief results are included in this section. Additional digital photographs are contained in the project archive.
- 4.1.2 The overburden across the area subject to watching brief was machine excavated to the start of the archaeological horizon or depth of development, whichever was the shallower, under continuous archaeological supervision. The depth of the excavations did not exceed 1.9m below ground level (BGL).

### 4.2 Excavation Descriptions

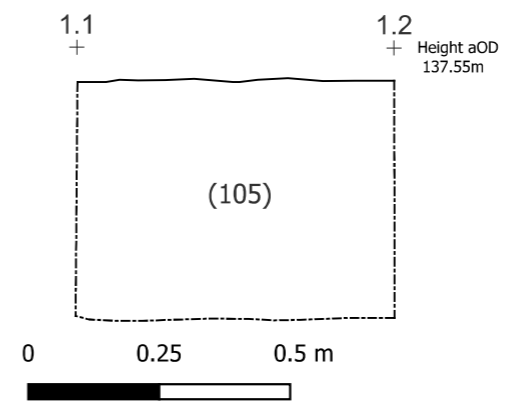
- 4.2.1 The excavation involved ground reduction from a rectangular area with an additional small square trench for the footings of the new building (see Figure 2 below). These foundations measured 13.5m in length and 6m in width.



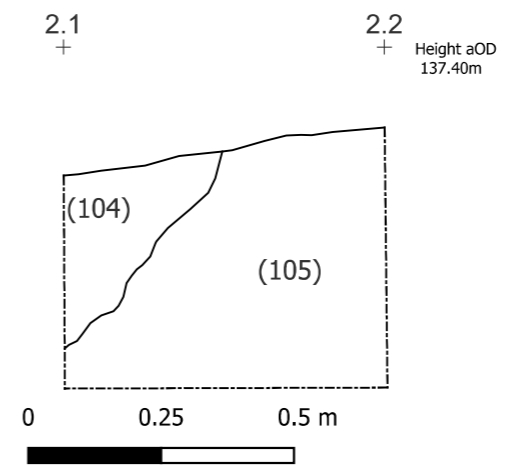
*Figure 2: Looking NW towards the building foundation trench*



Section 1



Section 2



Section 3

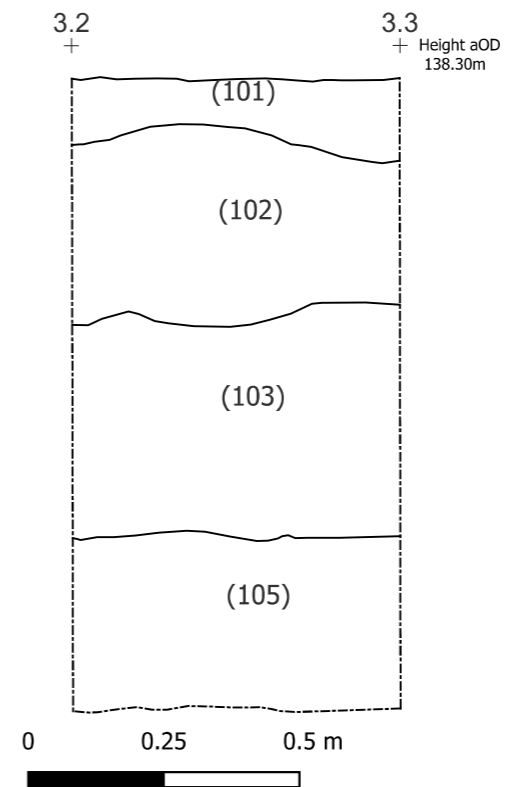


Figure 3: Area of Archaeological Watching Brief

- + Section Points
- Sections
- Excavated building foundation
- Archaeological monitoring area
- Building
- Road
- Holiday cottage plot area



Site name: Netherhall, Darley Dale  
 Date: April 2025  
 Drawn by: TS  
 Scale: 1:100

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### 4.3 Results

- 4.3.1 The uppermost deposit (101), measuring depth of 0.25m, consisted of a mid-greyish brown aggregate material suggesting the material was modern and most likely laid as a driveway surface for vehicle access to the rear of the property (Figure 3).
- 4.3.2 Directly below deposit (101) was deposit (102), which consisted of coarse textured light-grey sandy soil. This layer measures 0.6m in depth and was interpreted as made ground, likely serving as foundation base for the drive surface deposit (101) (Figure 3).
- 4.3.3 Deposit (103) consisted of mid-orange brown sandy clay soil. A moderate amount of ceramic building material (CBM) inclusions were present throughout. The deposit varied slightly in depth, reaching a maximum of 0.7m, and was interpreted as made ground, composed of demolition debris and remnant topsoil, used to consolidate and raise the ground level for improved rear property access (Figure 3).
- 4.3.4 Deposit (104) was observed along the eastern limit of excavations. It consisted of dark grey clay soil with a maximum depth of 0.56m. The deposit was located beneath deposit (103) and overlaid deposit (105) (Figure 3). Like deposit (103), this layer was also interpreted as redeposited topsoil used to level the area for access purposes.
- 4.3.5 Deposit (105) consisted of medium-textured mid-brown orange clay soil. With a depth of 0.52m, this deposit marked the natural clay and the base level of the excavation (Figure 3).
- 4.3.6 No archaeological remains were identified through the excavation of the initial surface strip beneath the demolished shed or within the building foundation footprint. The stratigraphical sequence identified a total of five deposits.
- 4.3.7 Deposit (101) represented a modern surface deposited for a driveway surface for vehicles. Deposits (102) (103) and (104) were interpreted as redeposited soils, consisting of demolition material and remnant topsoil. These three deposits levelled and consolidated the ground prior to the placement of deposit (101). Deposit (105) represented the natural substrate and the base level of the excavation. No anthropogenic material, remains or features were observed in any of the exposed levels.

## DISCUSSION

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### 4.4 Site Context

- 4.4.1 The archaeological watching brief was conducted in accordance with the WSI (Collie 2025) as approved by Derbyshire County Council according to industry standards and guidance, which recommended archaeological monitoring to ensure the identification and recording of any historic or archaeological material that might be impacted by the proposed groundworks.

### 4.5 Conclusion

- 4.5.1 The watching brief encountered no archaeological remains. Deposits (101) (102) (103) and (104) are interpreted as modern made ground associated with ground levelling and facilitating vehicle access to the rear of the property.
- 4.5.2 As no archaeological materials were revealed, the results of the Watching Brief do not contribute to the research objectives outlined in Section 2.2 above.

## 5 PUBLICITY, CONFIDENTIALITY AND COPYRIGHT

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- 5.1.2 ARS Ltd retain the copyright of all documentary, photographic and video material under the Copyright, Designs and Patent Act (1988). This report may not be reproduced in part or in whole without the express permission of the authors.

## 6 STATEMENT OF INDEMNITY

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- 6.1.1 All statements and opinions contained within this report arising from the works undertaken are offered in good faith and compiled according to professional standards. No responsibility can be accepted by the author/s of the report for any errors of fact or opinion resulting from data supplied by any third party, or for loss or other consequence arising from decisions or actions made upon the basis of facts or opinions expressed in any such report(s), howsoever such facts and opinions may have been derived.

## 7 ARCHIVE

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- 7.1.1 The archive will follow the recommendations provided by ClfA's (2020) *'Standard and Guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives'*, and the Society of Museum Archaeologists' (1993) *'Selection, Retention and Dispersal of Archaeological Collections. Guidelines for use in England, Wales and Northern Ireland'*.
- 7.1.2 As the site meets the definition of "sterile" according to ClfA's (2022) *'Toolkit for Selecting Archaeological Archives'*, the archive will consist of an OASIS record and HER deposition.
- 7.1.3 The OASIS online record <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/> has been initiated and completed for this work, including an uploaded pdf version of the approved report. The OASIS ID number is archaeoI5-533351. A copy of the report will be deposited with Derbyshire Historic Environment Record (HER).

## 8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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- 8.1.1 ARS Ltd would like to thank Jamie Ritchie for commissioning the work and Steve Baker, development control archaeologist with Environmental Services at Derbyshire County Council, for their advice.

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## APPENDIX I CONTEXT DESCRIPTION TABLE

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Context Number	Context Type	Context Description	Length	Width	Depth	Finds	Palaeoenvironmental Residues	Estimated Date
101	Deposit	Type 1 aggregate material. Forming the uppermost deposit within the excavation area. Located above (102).	14.00	1.50	0.25	No	No	Modern
102	Deposit	Sandy base material for (101). Located above (103), a made ground deposit.	13.50	1.50	0.60	No	No	N/A
103	Deposit	Remnant topsoil below (102). Containing a moderate amount of demolition material, possibly to help consolidate the ground, making it more sturdy	13.50	1.50	0.70	No	No	N/A
104	Deposit	Clay with roots, located below (103) and truncating (105).	13.50	1.50	0.56	No	No	N/A
105	Deposit	Natural clay at the base of excavations. Located below (103) and (104)	13.50	1.50	0.52	No	No	

## APPENDIX II OASIS FORM

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# OASIS Summary for archaeol5-533351

OASIS ID (UID)	archaeol5-533351
Project Name	Watching Brief at Nether Hall, Darley Dale, Derbyshire
Sitename	Nether Hall, Darley Dale, Derbyshire
Sitecode	NET2025
Project Identifier(s)	ARS24-286
Activity type	Watching Brief
Planning Id	23/01316/FUL
Reason For Investigation	Planning: Post determination
Organisation Responsible for work	Archaeological Research Services Ltd
Project Dates	10-May-2025 - 10-May-2025
Location	Nether Hall, Darley Dale, Derbyshire NGR : SK 27788 63205 LL : 53.165244803229214, -1.585813839141342 12 Fig : 427788,363205
Administrative Areas	Country : England County/Local Authority : Derbyshire Local Authority District : Derbyshire Dales Parish : Darley Dale
Project Methodology	The purpose of the watching brief was to identify the presence or absence of archaeological remains affected by the proposed development of the construction of a small holiday apartment. The fieldwork entailed the continuous monitoring of all sub-surface groundwork required to prepare the site for development. This involved staged visits during the key phases, which included clearance, ground reduction, cutting of foundations, inserting utilities/drains, landscaping, and tree planting.
Project Results	The works involved the removal of a brick and timber shed and the excavation of foundation trenches. The archaeological watching brief encountered no archaeological finds, features or palaeo-environmental deposits.
Keywords	
Funder	Private individual
HER	Derbyshire County Council - unRev - STANDARD
Person Responsible for work	Tom Collie
HER Identifiers	
Archives	