



making sense of heritage

Land Off Barkby Road Syston, Leicestershire

Watching Brief Report



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January 2015



Land Off Barkby Road Syston, Leicestershire

Watching Brief Report

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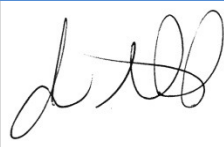
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Watching Brief Report

Summary

Wessex Archaeology were commissioned by Taylor Wimpey East Midlands Ltd. to undertake an archaeological watching brief on land off Barkby Road, Syston, Leicestershire, NGR 463540 310820. A Written Scheme of Investigation was prepared by CgMs Consulting and submitted to Charnwood Borough Council for approval.

No archaeological features or artefacts were discovered. This lack of archaeological material suggests that the Site lay at some distance from any settlement.

The archive of the watching brief is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology in Sheffield, under the project code 107250. It is recommended that the project archive be deposited at Leicestershire County Council Museums under accession number X.A158.2014. An OASIS form, wessexar1-198234, has been provisionally completed and will be finally submitted at the time of deposition.



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Watching Brief Report

Acknowledgements

The fieldwork was commissioned by Taylor Wimpey East Midlands Ltd through CgMs Consulting, and Wessex Archaeology is grateful to both parties in this regard. The assistance of Charnwood Borough Council, who monitored the work, is also acknowledged. The project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Andrew Norton. Fieldwork was undertaken by Michael Howarth, Martyn Cooper and Phil Roberts. This report was written by Ashley Tuck, and illustrated by Alix Sperr.



Land Off Barkby Road Syston, Leicestershire

Watching Brief Report

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology were commissioned by the Taylor Wimpey East Midlands Ltd (hereafter 'the Client') to undertake an archaeological watching brief on land off Barkby Road, Syston, Leicestershire, hereafter 'the Site' (NGR 463540 310820; **Figure 1**). Taylor Wimpey East Midlands Ltd have received planning permission (P/13/0925/2) for a residential development, of which condition 23 allows no development until the developer has secured an agreed programme of archaeological work. Correspondence with Charnwood Borough Council has ascertained that this work should be an archaeological watching brief.

1.1.2 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI, CgMs 2014) was prepared in accordance with current industry guidance (ClfA 2014a and 2014b) and in accordance with ClfA Codes of Conduct (2014c), and was submitted to Charnwood Borough Council for approval.

1.2 The Site

1.2.1 The Site is located on the south-eastern edge of the town of Syston. It is bounded to the north by Barkby Road, to the west by modern residential development and a field, and to the east and south it is bounded by fields.

1.2.2 The ground within the Site is relatively flat, at around 60m AOD. The underlying geology is mudstone belonging to the Branscombe Formation (<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/discoveringGeology/geologyOfBritain/viewer.html>). This is overlain by head deposits of clay, silt, sand and gravel, and sand and gravel of the Birstall Member.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 This section summarises information from the Written Scheme of Investigation (CgMs 2014).

2.1.2 No heritage assets are recording from within the Site.

2.1.3 A geophysical survey in 1999, which encompassed the south-western part of the Site proposed for a balancing pond, identified no significant archaeology on this part of the Site.



- 2.1.4 Cropmarks, comprising a ring ditch, pit alignment and an enclosure have been identified 800m west of the Site, and cropmarks of a multiple ditch system and an enclosure are known from 650m north of the Site. It is likely that these sites are prehistoric in date.
- 2.1.5 Barkby is recorded on the Domesday Survey of 1086, and the historic core of Barkby has been identified c.650m south of the Site; it is likely that the Site was part of the agricultural hinterland of Barkby throughout the Anglo-Saxon and medieval periods.
- 2.1.6 The cartographic evidence shows that the Site remained agricultural throughout the post-medieval and modern periods.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 General

- 3.1.1 Detailed methodology for the work can be found in the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) (CgMs 2014). Wessex Archaeology procedures conform to industry best practice, as outlined in the standards and guidance documentation issued by the Institute for Archaeologists (e.g. ClfA 2014a and 2014b), the United Kingdom Institute of Conservation (UKIC 2001) and relevant local and regional frameworks.

3.2 Area monitored

- 3.2.1 The initial area intended to be monitored by the watching brief is shown in **Figure 1**; and comprised the central areas of the access roads for the housing development. In practice, a large area surrounding the access roads was stripped by the contractor, meaning that a larger area than intended was monitored (**Figure 1**). The discovery of significant remains would have led to additional areas being the subject of Watching Brief, but this did not occur.

3.3 Machine excavation

- 3.3.1 Topsoil was removed by the Client using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, working under the continuous direct supervision of a suitably experienced archaeologist. Topsoil was removed in a series of level spits down to the level of the natural geology.

3.4 Recording

- 3.4.1 All archaeological features and deposits encountered were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's *pro forma* recording sheets and a continuous unique numbering system. A stratigraphic matrix was compiled to record the relationships between features and deposits. In this way, a full record of the extent and depth of monitored groundworks was made. Representative sections of non-archaeological deposits were drawn at a scale of 1:20.
- 3.4.2 A digital photographic record of the Site was kept. Due to the nature of the results of the watching brief, no film shots were required. The photographic record includes shots of the Site prior to commencement of fieldwork and the Site during work, showing specific stages of fieldwork.



4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

4.1 General

4.1.1 The general aims of the project were:

- to determine the presence or otherwise of buried remains of archaeological interest within the development area; and,
- to preserve by record any significant archaeological remains within the development area and to attempt a reconstruction of the history and use of the Site.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 The following section provides a summary of the information held in the Site archive, with a full list of context numbers and context descriptions contained in **Appendix 1**.

5.2 General

5.2.1 The natural and topsoil (**Plates 1 and 2**) were recorded at either end of the Site, with consistent results.

5.2.2 The natural undisturbed geology was mid-orange brown clay sand with 30% sub rounded small-medium stones and 1% large round stones (**101, 202**). At a depth of 0.82m below ground level, a second layer of natural was recorded (**103**), comprising compact pinkish yellow sandy clay with a high frequency of small-large well rounded pebbles.

5.2.3 The topsoil (**100, 201**) was dark brown to black clay loam with 1% sub-rounded stones and 5% charcoal. It was 0.35m or 0.3m deep.

5.2.4 No archaeological features or deposits were found.

6 FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL

6.1 General

6.1.1 No artefacts were recovered from the Site. No samples were taken from the Site.

7 DISCUSSION

7.1 General

7.1.1 No archaeological finds or artefacts were encountered on Site. The absence of archaeological material suggests that the Site lay at some distance from any settlement.



8 STORAGE AND CURATION

8.1 Museum

8.1.1 It is recommended that the project archive resulting from the excavation be deposited with Leicestershire County Council Museums under accession number X.A158.2014. Deposition of any finds with the Museum will only be carried out with the full agreement of the landowner.

8.2 Preparation of archive

8.2.1 The complete Site archive, which will include paper records, photographic records, graphics, and digital data, will be prepared following the standard conditions for the acceptance of excavated archaeological material by Leicestershire County Council Museums, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; Brown 2011; ADS 2013).

8.2.2 All archive elements will be marked with the accession code, and a full index will be prepared.

8.3 Security copy

8.3.1 In line with current best practice (e.g. Brown 2011); on completion of the project a security copy of the written records will be prepared, in the form of a digital PDF/A file. PDF/A is an ISO-standardised version of the Portable Document Format (PDF) designed for the digital preservation of electronic documents through omission of features ill-suited to long-term archiving.



9 REFERENCES

9.1 Bibliography

ADS, 2013, Caring for Digital Data in Archaeology: a guide to good practice, Archaeology Data Service & Digital Antiquity Guides to Good Practice

Brown, D.H., 2011, Archaeological archives; a guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation, Archaeological Archives Forum (revised edition)

CgMs, 2014, A Specification for An Archaeological Watching Brief: Land off Barkby Road, Syston, Leicestershire. Unpublished client report ref PG/17073/01

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Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA), 2014b, Standard and Guidance for the Collection, Documentation, Conservation and Research of Archaeological Materials

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA), 2014c, Codes of Conduct

Museum and Galleries Commission (MGC), 1992, Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections

Society of Museum Archaeologists (SMA), 1995, Towards an Accessible Archaeological Archive, Society of Museum Archaeologists

United Kingdom Institute of Conservation (UKIC), 2001, Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long Term Storage.

9.2 Online sources

NERC, 2014. *Geology of Britain online viewer*, accessed 12/08/14, <<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/discoveringgeology/geologyofbritain/viewer.html>>




10 APPENDICES

10.1 Appendix 1: Context descriptions

North end of Site		
Context	Description	Depth BGL (m)
100	Topsoil: dark brown black sandy clay loam with 1% sub rounded stone and 5% charcoal	0-0.35
101	Natural: mid orange brown clay sand 30% sub rounded small-medium stones 1% lagre sub rounded stones	0.35-0.82
102	Natural: pinkish yellow sandy clay. Firm and compact. High frequency of small to large well rounded pebble inclusions.	0.82-0.92+

South end of Site		
Context	Description	Depth BGL (m)
201	Topsoil: dark brown/blue sandy clay loam	0-0.3
202	Natural: mid orange brown clay loam with small subrounded stones 30% and large subrounded stones 5%	0.3+



	□ Site boundary □ Watching brief area	
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Site location


Figure 1



Plate 1: Representative section



Plate 2: Working shot

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