



Enderby Bridge River Soar Natural Flood Management Scheme Leicestershire

Archaeological Watching Brief



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On behalf of The Environment Agency

Site location Land off Enderby Road (B582), Narborough
County Leicestershire
National grid reference (NGR) 455046 298413 (SP 55046 98413)
Planning authority Blaby District Council
Museum name Leicestershire County Council Museums Service
Museum accession code X.A87.2019
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WA project code 225360
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Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Atkins Ltd, on behalf of the Environment Agency, to carry out a watching brief on the extension of a pond as part of the River Soar Natural Flood Management (NFM) scheme at Enderby Bridge. The works took place on a parcel of land owned by the Environment Agency measuring approximately 0.1 ha.

The work was carried out under permitted development (PD) under Environment Agency PD Rights as a statutory water undertaker, as set out within the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 and did not require a full planning application.

The pond extension footprint, an area of approximately 60 x 20 m, was first stripped of topsoil. A 40 x 2.5 m trench was then excavated in the middle of the stripped area. The trench base lay approximately 1.5 m below the existing ground surface level. The edges of the trench were then battered back within the footprint of the topsoiled area at the required design slope to create the extension to the pond. The area was waterlogged due to high water levels in, and periodic flooding from, the adjacent River Soar. The area also received input of water via inflow from the adjacent ditch system and hydrological connectivity between the river gravels and base of the excavation. The trench and subsequent pond extension filled up with water rapidly and dewatering via pumps was required during construction.

Four deposits were encountered during the watching brief: topsoil, subsoil and two alluvial deposits: a pale orangey brown silty clay overlying a mid-brownish orange silty clay, which was seen at the base of the trench. No archaeological remains were encountered.

Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology would like to thank Atkins Ltd, in particular Ian Morrissey, for commissioning the archaeological watching brief. Wessex Archaeology is also grateful for the advice of Sophie Clarke, archaeological advisor to the Local Planning Authority (LPA), who monitored the project for Blaby District Council, and to Atkins Ltd for their cooperation and help on site.



Enderby Bridge, River Soar Natural Flood Management Scheme, Leicestershire

Archaeological Watching Brief

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project and planning background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Atkins Ltd, on behalf of the Environment Agency, to carry out a watching brief on groundworks related to the extension of a pond as part of the River Soar Natural Flood Management (NFM) scheme at Enderby Bridge. These works were part of the wider Narborough Bog NFM package of works (scheme code FS01). The works took place on a parcel of land owned by the Environment Agency measuring approximately 0.1 ha. The site was located off Enderby Road (B582), to the north-east of Narborough, Leicestershire LE19 2BH (hereafter 'the Site'), centred on NGR 455046 298413 (**Figure 1**).

1.1.2 The work was a permitted development (PD) under Environment Agency PD Rights as a statutory water undertaker, as set out within the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 and did not require a full planning application.

1.1.3 The watching brief was undertaken in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (WSI) that detailed the aims, methodologies and standards to be employed (Wessex Archaeology 2019) and 'Scope for a Programme of Archaeological Investigations' produced by Steve Dean, Senior Archaeologist at the Environment Agency (Dean 2019). Sophie Clarke, archaeological advisor to the Local Planning Authority (LPA), approved the WSI, on behalf of the LPA, prior to fieldwork commencing. The watching brief was undertaken 19/02/2020 to 27/02/2020.

1.2 Scope of the report

1.2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the results of the watching brief, to interpret the results within their local or regional context (or otherwise), and to assess their potential to address the aims outlined in the WSI, thereby making available information about the archaeological resource (a preservation by record).

1.3 Location, topography and geology

1.3.1 The Site was located to the north-east of Narborough, Leicestershire, and was bounded by the River Soar to the north-west and Enderby Road (B582) to the east. It was centred on NGR 455046 298413 and contained grassland at the time of the watching brief.

1.3.2 The affected pond is crossed by Enderby Mill Bridge (Scheduled Monument ID 1005083), which carries a public footpath. The groundworks were located in the area of the historical channel alignment of the River Soar.

1.3.3 The Site was relatively flat; it lay at 68 m OD. The underlying geology is recorded as Mercia Mudstone, overlain with superficial deposits of alluvium. (British Geological Survey online viewer 2019).



2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 Due to the regulatory context and limited nature of this NFM scheme, no detailed Cultural Heritage Desk-Based Assessment was produced for the works, although open source heritage data was consulted. The following is taken from 'Scope for a Programme of Archaeological Investigations' produced by Steve Dean, Senior Archaeologist at the Environment Agency (Dean 2019).

2.2 Archaeological and historical context

Iron Age, Romano-British (700 BC-410 AD)

2.2.1 Sophie Clarke, archaeological advisor to the LPA highlighted the presence of later prehistoric and Romano-British remains in the general area and a potential for remains within the site.

Medieval, Post-medieval (1066-1800 AD)

2.2.2 The site of the former Enderby Mill (HER ref: MLE109) is recorded on the main watercourse within the scheme area and the 15th-century Enderby Mill Bridge (HER ref: MLE85) is recorded as a scheduled monument (ID 1005083). Whetstone Grange is a Grade II listed property approximately 420 m to the east although it is considered that the scheme is unlikely to either directly or indirectly impact upon this designated heritage asset.

2.2.3 Waterlogged conditions at Narborough are recorded on 1st Edition Ordnance Survey mapping of the area issued in 1858 and the area close to the river is likely to have comprised of marsh for a considerable period of time. As such preliminary discussions with the LCA have indicated the potential for the survival of locally and possibly regionally significant palaeo-environmental deposits surviving within the waterlogged contexts of the bog.

Undated

2.2.4 The LCA highlighted the presence of an undated double-ditched linear boundary (HER ref: MLE85) immediately to the south of the area but whose course may extend into the affected area.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Aims

3.1.1 The aims of the watching brief, as stated in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2019) and as defined in ClfA's *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014a), were to:

- allow, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be established (or established with sufficient accuracy) in advance of the development or other works;
- provide an opportunity, if needed, for the watching archaeologist to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief itself are not sufficient to support treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard; and
- guide, not replace, any requirement for contingent excavation or preservation of possible deposits.



3.2 Objectives

3.2.1 In order to achieve the above aims, the objective of the watching brief, as defined in the Scope for a Programme of Archaeological Investigations (Dean 2019) was:

- to understand the significance of archaeological heritage assets present and to mitigate potential impacts that the schemes may have upon said archaeological heritage assets.

3.3 Research objectives

3.3.1 Following consideration of the archaeological potential of the Site, the Scope for a Programme of Archaeological Investigations (Dean 2019) and the East Midlands research framework (EMHERF n.d.), the research objectives of the excavation were to:

- determine the presence, absence and extent of late prehistoric and Romano-British activity within the area of the scheme;
- determine the date, extent and character of landscape organisation, and its development from the Iron Age to the Romano-British period;
- assess the potential for the recovery of artefacts to assist in the development of type series within the region; notably pottery chronologies in the late prehistoric and the transition from Late Iron Age to Roman; and
- recover environmental samples from waterlogged deposits to help determine landscape/land use: more information from dated paleochannels and waterlogged deposits providing evidence of the general and more local environment is required.

4 METHODS

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 All works were undertaken in accordance with the detailed methodology set out within the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2019) and in general compliance with the standards outlined in ClfA guidance (ClfA 2014a). The methods employed are summarised below.

4.2 Fieldwork methods

General

4.2.1 The watching archaeologist monitored all mechanical excavations within the specified area.

Recording

4.2.2 All exposed archaeological deposits were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's pro forma recording system.

4.2.3 A full photographic record was made using digital cameras equipped with an image sensor of not less than 10 megapixels. Digital images have been subject to managed quality control and curation processes, which has embedded appropriate metadata within the image and will ensure long term accessibility of the image set.

4.3 Finds and environmental strategies

4.3.1 Strategies for the recovery, processing and assessment of finds and environmental samples were in line with those detailed in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2019) and



included: *Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (ClfA 2014b) and *Environmental Archaeology: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Methods, from Sampling and Recovery to Post-excavation* (English Heritage 2011).

4.4 Monitoring

- 4.4.1 The archaeological advisor monitored the watching brief on behalf of the LPA, was kept informed of the results of the watching brief and given opportunity to provide input and carry out monitoring visits.

5 STRATIGRAPHIC EVIDENCE

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 The pond extension footprint, an area of approximately 60 x 20 m, was first stripped of topsoil (**Plate 1**). A 40 x 2.5 m trench (**Plate 2–Plate 4**) was then excavated in the middle of the stripped area. The trench base lay approximately 1.5 m below the existing ground surface. The edges of the trench were then battered back within the footprint of the topsoiled area at the required design slope to create the extension to the pond (**Plate 5Plate 8**). The area was waterlogged due to high water levels in, and periodic flooding from, the adjacent River Soar. The area also received input of water via inflow from the adjacent ditch system and hydrological connectivity between the river gravels and base of the excavation (**Plate 4**). The trench and subsequent pond extension filled up periodically and dewatering via pumps was required during construction.

- 5.1.2 The following section provides a summary of the information held in the Site archive; a list of context numbers and context descriptions arising from the work is presented in Appendix 1.

5.2 Soil sequence and alluvial deposits

- 5.2.1 Four deposits were recorded during the excavation. A mid-brownish orange sandy clay alluvial deposit (1004) could be seen at the base of the trench. This was overlain by a paler alluvial deposit (1002). This was a 0.15 m thick pale brown sandy clay with rare rounded pebbles, which was in turn sealed by a 0.65 m-thick accumulation of mid-brown sandy silt subsoil (1003). The topsoil (1001) across the site was a dark brown sandy silt, 0.25 m thick (**Plate 2**).

6 FINDS EVIDENCE

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 No finds were recovered during the watching brief.

7 ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

7.1 Introduction

- 7.1.1 No environmental samples were collected during the watching brief due to the absence of archaeological remains.
- 7.1.2 The superficial deposits have been mapped by the British Geological Society (BGS) as alluvium, most likely dating to the current Holocene epoch, and associated with the floodplain of the River Soar. To the east of the Site the floodplain is flanked by Pleistocene river terrace sands and gravels of the Wanlip Member, part of the Soar Valley Formation,



- dating to the last (Devensian) ice age. To the west and north-west of the Site the BGS map mid Pleistocene glaciofluvial deposits, broadly dated to the Cromerian to Ipswichian (800-120kya), also likely representing a former terrace deposit of the River Soar. Cold Stage slope wash (Head) deposits are mapped to the south of the Site. Till deposits (deposits directly deposited by the ice sheet) are mapped widely across the entire area, corresponding the Thrussington Member and dating to the Anglian glaciation (478-424kya).
- 7.1.3 The superficial deposits revealed during the watching brief comprise a 0.25 m dark brown silty loam topsoil, underlain by a light brown sandy silt to a depth of 0.9 m (1003). This deposit was in turn underlain by a 0.15 m thick light brown layer of sandy clay (1002), including rare rounded pebbles, which sealed a mid-brown orange sandy clay (1004).
- 7.1.4 The deposits underlying the topsoil represent successive water-lain alluvial deposits accumulating within the floodplain of the River Soar. These deposits are all likely to date to the current Holocene epoch (<11.7 kya). No evidence for peat or other organic rich deposits of high geoarchaeological potential was noted during the course of the watching brief.
- 7.1.5 The geoarchaeological potential of the alluvium can be defined as low. Although these deposits have the potential to contain biological remains (e.g. pollen, plant macrofossils), preservation is generally poorer in minerogenic sediments, the remains are likely to derive from a potentially large and uncertain source area, transported fluvially or eroded and redeposited from numerous contexts within the catchment. Alluvium also lacks suitable organic material of secure stratigraphic context for radiocarbon dating. Although alluvium has a low geoarchaeological significance, it still has the potential to contain archaeological remains.

8 CONCLUSIONS

8.1 General

- 8.1.1 The watching brief has met the aims and objectives as set out in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2019).
- 8.1.2 The purpose of the watching brief was to monitor and establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the area of Enderby Bridge. No remains of archaeological interest were recorded during the monitoring works.
- 8.1.3 The Site was waterlogged as was expected due to its proximity to the river, which may have hindered the identification of any small or subtle features that may have been present. Dewatering of the excavations were maintained during the construction period.
- 8.1.4 Deposits encountered consisted of topsoil, subsoil, possible infill of a palaeochannel and alluvium.
- 8.1.5 No finds or environmental samples was recovered from the site due to the absence of archaeological features.
- 8.1.6 The sediments are fluvially deposited fine-grained alluvium, deposited within the floodplain of the River Soar during the current Holocene epoch. No organic rich deposits of high geoarchaeological potential were revealed during the course of the watching brief and the deposits overall have a low geoarchaeological potential, though they may still contain archaeological remains. The deposits are not suitable for radiocarbon dating and any palaeo-environmental remains contained in the deposits are likely to be transported over potentially large distance from within the local catchment of the River Soar and therefore



unsuited for informing on the local environment and evidence for land-use. There is no further geoarchaeological potential in the deposits.

8.2 Discussion

- 8.2.1 No evidence of late prehistoric and Romano-British activity was encountered during the excavation.
- 8.2.2 No evidence of the undated double-ditched linear boundary noted nearby was encountered during the excavation.
- 8.2.3 Evidence of the historical channel alignment of the River Soar was evident with the layer of possible infill of a palaeochannel that was overlying the alluvial deposit.

9 ARCHIVE STORAGE AND CURATION

- 9.1.1 The archive resulting from the watching brief is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology in Sheffield. Leicestershire County Council Museums Service has agreed in principle to accept the archive on completion of the project, under an accession code X.A87.2019.

9.2 Preparation of the archive

- 9.2.1 The archive, which includes paper records, graphics and digital data, will be prepared following the standard conditions for the acceptance of excavated archaeological material by Leicestershire County Council Museums Service, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; ClfA 2014c; Brown 2011; ADS 2013).
- 9.2.2 All archive elements are marked with the **site/accession code**, and a full index will be prepared. The physical archive currently comprises the following:
 - 01 files/document cases of paper records and A3/A4 graphics.

9.3 Security copy

- 9.3.1 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.

9.4 OASIS

- 9.4.1 An OASIS (online access to the index of archaeological investigations) record (<http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main>) has been initiated (366446), with key fields completed (Appendix 2). A.pdf version of the final report will be submitted following approval by the archaeological advisor at Blaby District Council on behalf of the LPA. Subject to any contractual requirements on confidentiality, copies of the OASIS record will be integrated into the relevant local and national records and published through the Archaeology Data Service (ADS) ArchSearch catalogue.



10 COPYRIGHT

10.1 Archive and report copyright

- 10.1.1 The full copyright of the written/illustrative/digital archive relating to the project will be retained by Wessex Archaeology under the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* with all rights reserved. The client will be licenced to use each report for the purposes that it was produced in relation to the project as described in the specification. The museum, however, will be granted an exclusive licence for the use of the archive for educational purposes, including academic research, providing that such use conforms to the *Copyright and Related Rights Regulations 2003*. In some instances, certain regional museums may require absolute transfer of copyright, rather than a licence; this should be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.
- 10.1.2 Information relating to the project will be deposited with the Historic Environment Record (HER) where it can be freely copied without reference to Wessex Archaeology for the purposes of archaeological research or development control within the planning process.

10.2 Third party data copyright

- 10.2.1 This document and the project archive may contain material that is non-Wessex Archaeology copyright (e.g., Ordnance Survey, British Geological Survey, Crown Copyright), or the intellectual property of third parties, which Wessex Archaeology are able to provide for limited reproduction under the terms of our own copyright licences, but for which copyright itself is non-transferable by Wessex Archaeology. Users remain bound by the conditions of the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* with regard to multiple copying and electronic dissemination of such material.



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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Context description

		Length 60 m	Width 20 m	Depth 1.5 m
Easting 455046		Northing 298413		M aOD
Context Number	Fill Of/Filled With	Interpretative Category	Description	Depth BGL
1001		Topsoil	Dark brown sandy silt.	0-0.25
1003		Subsoil	Mid brownish sandy silt.	0.25-0.90
1002		Layer	Alluvium. Light orangey brown silty clay with rare rounded small pebbles. Possible sediment layer from a paleo channel.	0.90-1.05
1004		Layer	Alluvium. Mid brownish orange silty clay	1.05+



Appendix 2: OASIS record

OASIS ID: wessexar1-366446

Project details

Project name	Narborough Bog, Leicestershire
Short description of the project	Archaeological watching brief of a parcel of land measuring approximately 0.1 ha located on land off Enderby Road (B582), to the north-east of Narborough, Leicestershire LE19 2BH. The archaeological watching brief monitored groundworks related to the construction of a storage pond as part of the River Soar Natural Flood Management Scheme. A 60 x 20 m area was stripped of topsoil. A 40 x 2.5 m trench was then excavated in the middle of the stripped area. The trench base lay approximately 1.5 m below the existing ground surface. The edges of the trench were then battered back within the footprint of the topsoiled area to create the extension to the pond. The area was waterlogged due to the high water levels of the river nearby, and the trench filled up with water rapidly. Four deposits were encountered during the watching brief: topsoil, subsoil and two alluvial deposits: a pale orangey brown silty clay overlying a mid-brownish orange silty clay, which was seen at the base of the trench. No archaeological remains were encountered.
Project dates	Start: 19-02-2020 End: 27-02-2020
Previous/future work	Not known / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	225360 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	X.A87.2019 - Museum accession ID
Type of project	Recording project
Current Land use	Woodland 6 - Parkland
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	""Watching Brief""
Prompt	Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015

Project location

Country	England
Site location	LEICESTERSHIRE BLABY NARBOROUGH Narborough Bog
Postcode	LE19 2BH
Study area	0.1 Hectares
Site coordinates	455046 298413 455046 00 00 N 298413 00 00 E Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Wessex Archaeology
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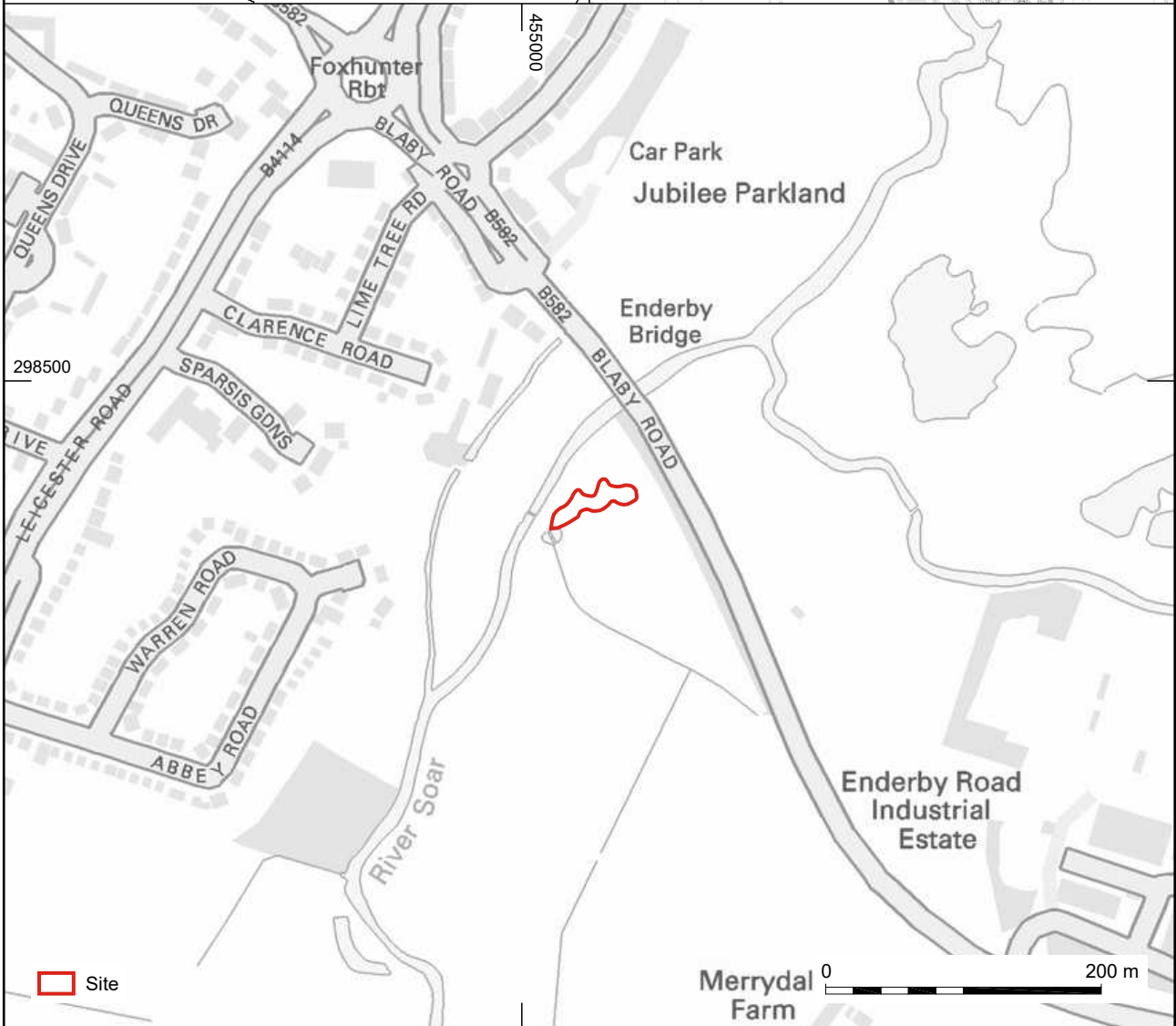


Project brief originator	Atkins
Project design originator	Wessex Archaeology
Project director/manager	John Winfer
Project supervisor	Martina Tenzer

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Leicestershire Museums
Digital Contents	"none"
Digital Media available	"Database","Images raster / digital photography"
Paper Archive recipient	Leicestershire Museums
Paper Contents	"none"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Diary","Report"

Entered by	Kristin Sylvia Ragnarsdottir (k.ragnarsdottir@wessexarch.co.uk)
Entered on	17 March 2020



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Site location

Figure 1



Plate 1: Overview of area topsoil stripped, view from the south



Plate 2: Trench excavated down to alluvial deposits. Showing topsoil, subsoil, possible palaeochannel infill and alluvium at the base


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Plate 3: Trench in middle of the site, view from the south-west



Plate 4: Trench filled with water, view from the south-west


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Plate 5: Overview of working area, view from the south-west



Plate 6: Overview of working area, view from the south



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Plate 7: Overview of working area, view from the north



Plate 8: Overview of working area, view from the south

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