



Northamptonshire Archaeology

Archaeological Watching Brief During Soil Stripping in Phase 2, Ibstock Quarry Ibstock, Leicestershire September 2011



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QUALITY CONTROL

	Print name	Signed	Date
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OASIS report form

PROJECT DETAILS	
Project name	An archaeological watching brief during soil stripping in Phase 2 Ibstock Quarry, Ibstock, Leicestershire
Short description	An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology in September 2011 to observe soil stripping of Phase 2 at Ibstock Quarry. The remains of an early 20th-century colliery building were the only features present.
Project type	Watching Brief
Site status	None
Previous work	DBA (JSAC); Geophysical survey (GSB); Trial trenching (BUFAU and NA; Watching Brief (NA)
Current land use	Arable
Future work	Unknown
Monument type/ period	Colliery structures 19th to 20th centuries
Significant finds	-
PROJECT LOCATION	
County	Leicestershire
Site address	Ibstock Quarry, Ibstock, Leicestershire
OS Easting & Northing	SK 4220 1090
Area	2ha w/b area
Height aOD	
PROJECT CREATORS	
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA)
Project brief originator	Leicestershire County Council
Project Design originator	John Samuels Archaeological Consultants
Director/Supervisor	Jonathan Elston NA
Project Managers	Mark Holmes, NA Simon Mortimer CgMs Consulting
Sponsor or funding body	
PROJECT DATE	
Start date	12/09/11
End date	21/09/11
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**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF DURING
SOIL STRIPPING IN PHASE 2, IBSTOCK QUARRY, IBSTOCK
LEICESTERSHIRE
SEPTEMBER 2011**

Abstract

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology in September 2011 to observe soil stripping of Phase 2 at Ibstock Quarry. The remains of an early 20th-century colliery building were the only features present.

1 INTRODUCTION

Northamptonshire Archaeology were commissioned by CgMs Consulting, acting on behalf of Ibstock Brick (Leicester) Ltd, to carry out an archaeological watching brief in September 2011 to observe soil stripping during Phase 2 of quarrying at Ibstock Quarry, Ibstock, Leicestershire (NGR: SK 4220 1090; Fig 1).

The work was carried out in accordance with a specification originally compiled by John Samuel Archaeological Consultants (JSAC 2003) and in line with the requirements of the brief issued by the Senior Planning Archaeologist to Leicestershire County Council.

2 BACKGROUND

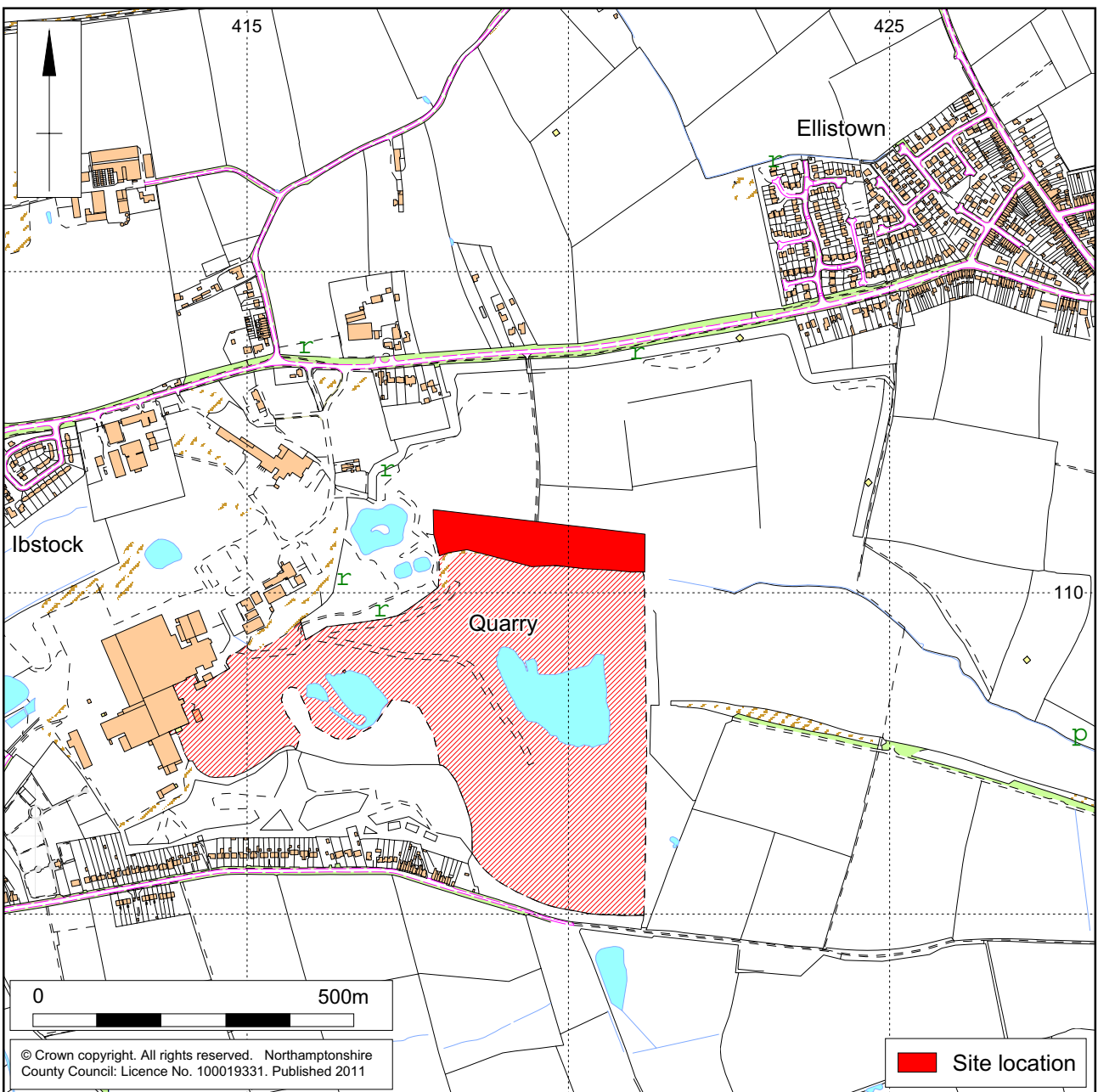
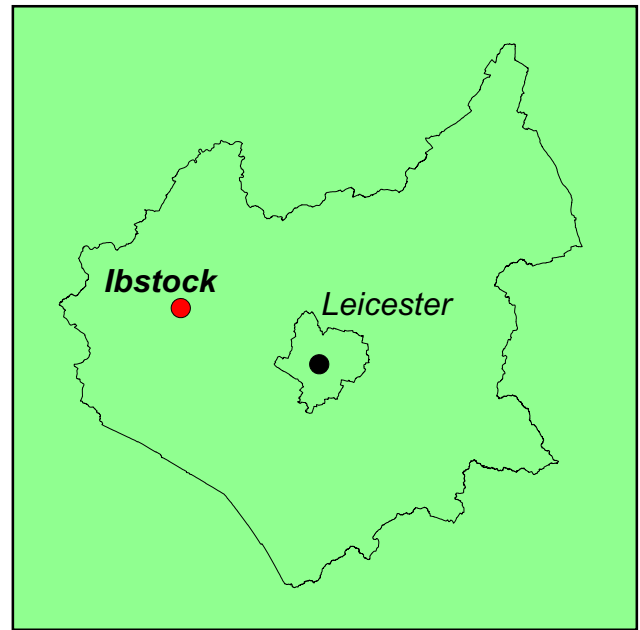
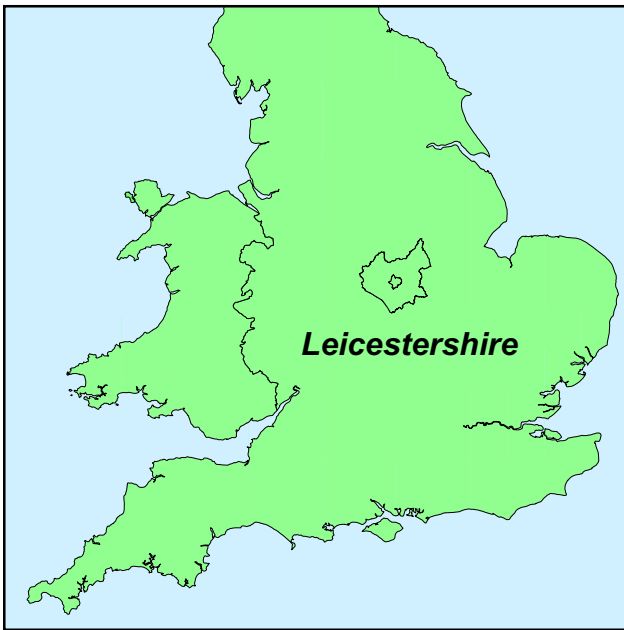
2.1 Location and geology

Ibstock Quarry is situated east of the village of Ibstock and west of Ellistown, Leicestershire on the B591 Leicester Road. The watching brief area is surrounded by previously quarried land and arable fields (Fig 2).

The underlying geology comprises Triassic Rocks (Undifferentiated) siltstone, mudstone and sandstone with Diamicton superficial deposits (<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/GeolIndex>).

2.2 Historical background

A desk-based assessment, which included a full description of the archaeological background, was previously compiled by JSAC (1997). Of archaeological significance is a Roman settlement located 1km north-west of the site and a possible Roman road and pottery scatter within the current quarry area. An area of colluvium at the base of the stream valley was noted and it was suggested that this could potentially seal archaeological deposits. A geophysical survey carried out by GSB Prospection identified pits and linear anomalies. However, a subsequent trial trench evaluation by the Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit in 2001 failed to find any archaeological features and only recovered residual Iron Age pottery.



Scale 1:10,000

Site Location Fig 1

As part of stream diversion works in 2003, Northamptonshire Archaeology carried out archaeological trial trenching. This revealed two undated ditches and medieval and post-medieval furrows (Lewis 2004). Also in 2003 a watching brief was carried out on the site of a proposed clay haul road within the Phase 3 area. No significant archaeological deposits or features were uncovered, and only a residual Roman pottery sherd and a flint flake were recovered (Griffin 2003). No archaeological features or finds were found during a subsequent watching brief in 2004 as part of the excavation of a stream culvert (Westgarth 2004).



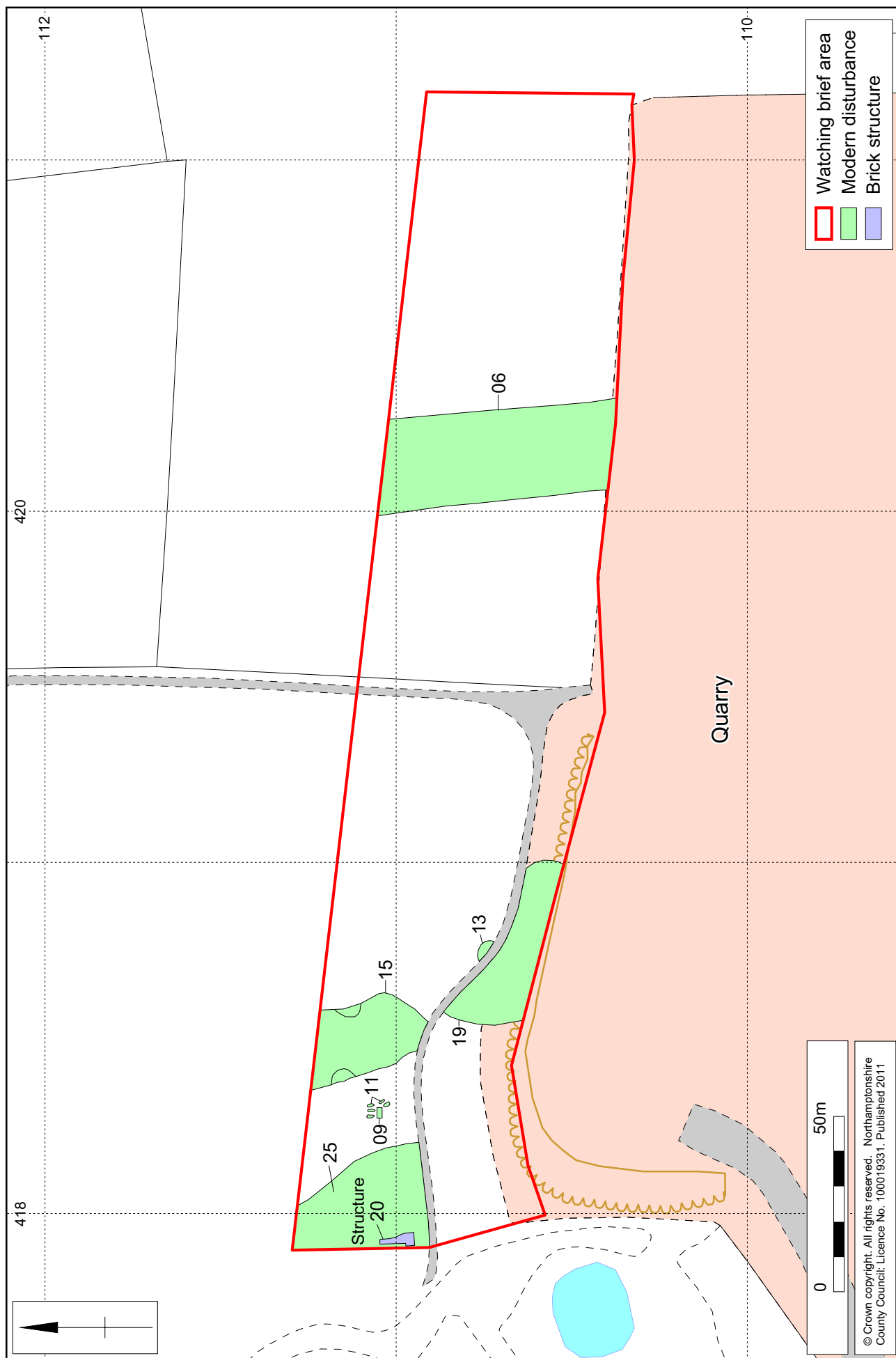
View of site before excavation, looking west Fig 2

2 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The archaeological watching brief was required in response to the planning condition, in accordance with local plan policy and national planning guidance (PPG 16 'Archaeology and Planning'). The purpose of the work was to identify and record archaeological deposits during development.

The fieldwork comprised five separate visits over the course of two weeks during the soil stripping of Phase 2 groundworks. The watching brief area measured 2ha (Fig 3).

All stripping works were undertaken under continuous archaeological supervision using a 360-degree excavator fitted with a toothless bucket. Excavation proceeded to the first archaeological remains or, where these were absent, the upper interface of geological deposits.



1:1,500

Area of archaeological observation and features

Fig 3

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All potentially significant features were investigated by hand to determine their date and character and were fully recorded following standard Northamptonshire Archaeology procedures (NA 2006). This comprised features and deposits being given separate context numbers with written descriptions being made on pro-forma context sheets (including details of the context, its relationships, interpretation and a checklist of associated finds). Drawings were made at appropriate scales. Finds were collected from the individual deposits and appropriately packed by context. A photographic record was kept of the excavation, comprising black and white negatives and related prints, and colour slides with supporting digital photographs.

The watching brief was carried out in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (IfA 2008) and the English Heritage procedural document *Management of Research Project in the Historic Environment* (EH 2006).

4 THE RECORDED EVIDENCE

The area subject to the watching brief revealed remnants of a colliery building with associated modern activity to the south and west of the area (Fig 3). No other archaeological features or finds were present on site.

4.1 General stratigraphy

The local geology comprised bands of boulder clay (a light grey clay with chalky flakes and nodules) (4), and a marbled red and yellow course sand with slight clay content (5). The geology was typically present at a depth of 0.30m and 0.40m below ground level.

Subsoil was only present in the southern edge of the central part of the site (Fig 4). Here it comprised a mottled light brown-yellow sandy clay (3) with inclusions of small to medium angular stones. It was a thin layer measuring up to 0.20m thick.

Between the natural and the plough horizon in the eastern part of the site was a mid grey-brown silty clay interface layer c 0.10m thick (2). The plough soil (1) was dark grey-brown sandy loam with a moderate amounts of rounded stones and occasional flint nodules. It was generally between 0.30m and 0.40m deep.



A typical stratigraphy sequence Fig 4

4.2 Brick-built yard surface and associated colliery activity

At the extreme western edge of the watching brief area were the remains of a former colliery building [20] comprising a rectangular brick-built yard surface [21], measuring approximately 10m by 3m, with associated drain [22], chimney base [23] and a wooden beam [24] along its western side (Figs 5 - 7).

To the east of the building were further associated features, comprising pits [9], [11], [13] and large areas of modern disturbance (6)(15)(19)(25). The pits contained ash, clinker and brick as well as late 19th-century and early 20th-century glass and pottery. The areas of modern disturbance contained clinker and brick and are probably dumps of waste from the colliery. The largest of these disturbances was (6), a linear feature 25m wide and aligned north to south with very steep sloping sides and two separate fills (Fig 8).



Structure [21], looking north Fig 5



Drain [28], looking north Fig 6



Chimney [29], looking east Fig 7



Modern linear feature [6], looking west Fig 8

5 THE FINDS

Finds associated with the colliery building and associated features comprised 19th to mid 20th-century glass, pottery and bricks. The assemblage has no further research value and may be considered for discard.

No earlier archaeological material was found anywhere else on site.

6 CONCLUSIONS

The archaeological remains comprised features dating to the 19th and 20th centuries, associated with the colliery that was present to the south and west of the area of the watching brief. The putative Roman road thought to run in the vicinity of the site was not present and no other archaeological features or finds were uncovered.

Reference to the historic mapping (old-maps.co.uk) indicates that there was no building at the location of the brick surface on the 1903-04 map but there was a building there by 1929. This building stood in 1955, when most of the other colliery buildings had been demolished, but it was gone by 1960. It is shown as a simple rectangular building aligned east-west, and lay at the east most end of the complex of colliery buildings. The brick surface was probably an extended yard abutting the eastern end of this building. The yard could have been associated with a workshop, but as no upstanding walls survived, the plan is uncertain.

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