

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT:

TRIAL TRENCHING ON LAND OFF LEICESTER ROAD, GLEN PARVA, LEICESTERSHIRE

Planning Reference: Pre-application
NGR: SP 5688 9874
AAL Site Code: GPLR 17
Museum Accession Number: X.A120.2017
OASIS Reference Number: allenarc1-298750



Report prepared for Landmark Planning

By
Allen Archaeology Ltd
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Allenarchaeology



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Cover image: Trench 2, looking north

Executive Summary

- Allen Archaeology Limited was commissioned by Landmark Planning to undertake an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching to support a planning application for a residential development on land off Leicester Road, Glen Parva, Leicestershire.
- The site lies in an area of archaeological significance, being situated to the east of a Roman road and 5.8km south of the centre of Leicester. Immediately to the east of the site is an inactive 19th century gravel quarry where at least four Anglo-Saxon burials were found, one of which was the richly furnished 5th century burial known as the Glen Parva Lady. A previous evaluation in the western part of the site was devoid of archaeological finds or features.
- Three trenches were excavated on the site, one measuring 15m long by 1.6m wide and two measuring approximately 6m long x 1.6m wide. The trenching did not reveal any archaeological deposits or features, and as such the proposed development area is deemed to have a negligible archaeological potential.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Allen Archaeology Limited was commissioned by Landmark Planning to undertake an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching to support a planning application for a residential development on land off Leicester Road, Glen Parva, Leicestershire.
- 1.2 All archaeological works conformed to current national guidelines as set out in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists '*Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluations*' (CIfA 2014), the Historic England document '*Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment*' (Historic England 2015), as well as a specification produced by this company (AAL 2017).
- 1.3 After completion of the report the archive will be submitted to Leicestershire County Council Museum Collections where it will be stored under the museum accession number X.A120.2017.

2.0 Site Location and Description

- 2.1 The proposed development site (hereafter referred to as 'the site') is located in Glen Parva, in the administrative district of Blaby District Council in Leicestershire. It is situated 5.8km south of the centre of Leicester and 15.2km southwest of Hinckley (Figure 1). The site is approximately 0.3ha and is presently occupied by a house and associated garden and outbuildings. The site is centred at NGR SP 5688 9874 and is approximately 80m above Ordnance Datum.
- 2.2 The bedrock geology comprises Triassic Rocks consisting of mudstone, siltstone and sandstone with superficial deposits of diamicton till recorded (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>).

3.0 Planning Background

- 3.1 A planning application is due to be submitted for a proposed residential development of the site, comprising demolition of an existing dwelling and construction of five new dwellings.
- 3.2 A desk-based assessment for a previous iteration of the scheme was undertaken (AAL 2016a), followed by a programme of trial trenching in the western part of the site (AAL 2016b). The scheme was subsequently amended to entail potential impacts to the archaeological resource in the eastern part of the site and as such, a programme of intrusive trenching was commissioned in order to provide the planning authority with sufficient information to allow for the determination of the planning application, and to establish any measures that may be required to mitigate the effects of the proposed development upon the archaeological resource.
- 3.3 The approach adopted is consistent with the recommendations of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), with the particular chapter of relevance being 'Chapter 12: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment' (Department for Communities and Local Government 2012).

4.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

- 4.1 The preceding desk-based assessment identified the site as being within an area of significant archaeological interest (AAL 2016b), and the results of this study are summarised below.
- 4.2 Evidence for prehistoric activity in the vicinity of the site is represented by a number of finds of flint implements (Leicestershire Historic Environment Record (LHER) number MLE16145), as well as possible settlement features to the southeast of the site. A Bronze Age pygmy cup containing a cremation has also been recovered from the eastern part of the current site, along with further possible 'urns' although the precise nature and location of these finds is less clear, possible being derived from material imported from the adjacent quarry (LHER numbers: MLE134).
- 4.3 The western site boundary is defined by the A426 Leicester Road, which broadly follows the line of a Roman road running south from Leicester to Lutterworth (LHER number MLE1902). Nonetheless, finds of this date are sparse in the study area.
- 4.4 Gravel quarrying in the later 19th century, in the area immediately to the east of the site, encountered an early Saxon burial area, with at least four burials recorded, one of which was the richly furnished 5th century burial known as the Glen Parva Lady, now on display in Leicester Museum (LHER number MLC176).
- 4.5 The site lies away from the focus of medieval settlement, which at this time was centred at the historic core of Glen Parva to the east (LHER number MLE9099), and the historic core Blaby to the south (LHER number MLE9336).

5.0 Aims and Objectives

- 5.1 The purpose of the evaluation was to gather sufficient information for the archaeological curator to be able to formulate a policy for the management of the archaeological resources present on the site.
- 5.2 Evidence was gathered to establish the presence/absence, nature, date, depth, quality of survival and importance of any archaeological deposits to enable an assessment of the potential and significance of the archaeological remains, and to assess the impact of the development upon the archaeology.
- 5.3 The key research agenda for the project, taken from the updated Research Agenda and Strategy for the Historic Environment of the East Midlands (Knight *et al.* 2012) related to the site's potential to contain Bronze Age and/or Anglo-Saxon burial evidence and to the potential to address the following questions:

6.3: Neolithic and Early to Middle Bronze Age (c.4,000 – 1,150 cal BC)

Agenda 3.1 Dating

- 3.1.2 How can we date more precisely the various regional styles of Neolithic and earlier Bronze Age pottery?

Agenda 3.8 Neolithic and Bronze Age Societies

- 3.8.2 How far can studies of burials, grave goods, house and barrow/cairn structures contribute to studies of status variations within and between communities

6.6: *Early medieval (c. AD 410 – 1066)*

Agenda 6.1 Demography and the identification of political and social groups

- 6.1.1 What may be deduced about changes in diet, mortality and other demographic variables from osteological studies of Anglo-Saxon cemeteries, and how might this have varied spatially and over time?
- 6.1.4 How far may studies of dress be advanced by analyses of inhumations, and how may dress accessories reflect social or political groupings?

Agenda 6.2 Ritual and belief

- Can 'sub-Roman' or 'British' cemeteries and cemeteries dating from the late 7th to 9th centuries be identified?
- Can we characterise more precisely Anglo-Saxon and Viking cemeteries and identify temporal or spatial variability in funerary traditions?

6.0 Methodology

- 6.1 A program of trial trenching was agreed with the Senior Planning Archaeologist at Leicestershire County Council. The planned works comprised the excavation of two trenches measuring 15m long by 1.6m wide. However, due to site conditions, one trench measuring 15m long by 1.6m wide and two trenches measuring approximately 6m long x 1.6m wide were excavated in order to accommodate an existing garden path and buried services (Figure 2).
- 6.2 The fieldwork was undertaken by a team of experienced field archaeologists on the 17th of October 2017.
- 6.3 The evaluation trenches were accurately located using a Leica GS08 RTK NetRover GPS unit receiving RTK corrections. A JCB 3CX wheeled excavator fitted with a smooth ditching bucket was used to remove topsoil, subsoil and underlying non-archaeological deposits in spits no greater than 10cm in depth. The process was repeated until the first archaeologically significant or natural horizon was exposed. Machine excavation was monitored at all times by an experienced field archaeologist.
- 6.4 A full written record of the archaeological deposits was made on standard AAL context recording sheets. Archaeological deposits were drawn in plan and section at an appropriate scale (1:20 and 1:50), with OD heights being displayed on each class of drawing. Colour photography formed an integral part of the recording strategy with all photographs incorporating scales, an identification board and directional arrow, as appropriate.
- 6.5 Each deposit or layer was allocated a unique identifier (context number), and accorded a written description, a summary of these are included in Appendix 1.

7.0 Results

- 7.1 The stratigraphic sequence of the site was broadly consistent, comprising a 0.24–0.42m thick topsoil deposit (100, 200 and 300) which overlay a 0.38–0.53m thick subsoil deposit of mid orangey brown sand with frequent rounded stone inclusions (101, 201 and 301). This in turn overlay the natural geology of the site, a brownish orange clayey sand with occasional grey mottling and frequent bioturbation (102, 202 and 302) (Plate 1).



Plate 1: Representative section, Trench 2, looking north, scales 1m and 0.5m

8.0 Discussion and Conclusions

- 8.1 The evaluation trenching was undertaken to assess the potential for archaeological deposits to exist on the site and to understand the likely impact of the proposed development on any remains.
- 8.2 The natural horizon was generally encountered at between 0.76m and 0.87m below current ground level, and revealed a similar stratigraphic sequence to the previous evaluation works carried out to the west of the site (AAL 2016b). The depth of overburden suggests that material has been imported on to the site, probably during landscaping associated with the construction of the existing dwelling and its grounds, and that it is this imported material that produced the Bronze Age pygmy cup and 'urns' previously reported as being found on the site, as has been suggested previously.
- 8.3 As such it is considered that the archaeological potential of the proposed development area is considered to be negligible, and that the impact of the proposed development will likewise be negligible.

9.0 Effectiveness of Methodology

- 9.1 The trial trenching methodology employed was suited to the scale and nature of the project in determining the nature of the archaeology present and the potential impacts of the proposed development. It did not identify any archaeological significant features or deposits.

10.0 Acknowledgements

- 10.1 Allen Archaeology Limited would like to thank Landmark Planning for this commission.

11.0 References

AAL, 2017, *Specification for an Archaeological Evaluation by Trial Trenching: Land off Leicester Road, Glen Parva, Leicester*, Unpublished planning document

AAL, 2016a, *Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment, Land off Leicester Road, Glen Parva, Leicestershire*, Allen Archaeology Limited report number 2016066

AAL, 2016b, *Archaeological Evaluation by Trial Trenching: Land off Leicester Road, Glen Parva, Leicester*, Allen Archaeology Limited report number 2016102

CIfA, 2014, *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation*, Reading: Chartered Institute for Archaeologists

Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, London: Department for Communities and Local Government

Historic England, 2015, *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The MoRPHE Project Managers' Guide*, Swindon: Historic England

Knight, D, Vyner, B, Allen, C, 2012, *East Midlands Heritage. An updated research agenda and strategy for the historic environment of the East Midlands*, Nottingham: University of Nottingham

Appendix 1: Context Summary List

Trench 1

Context	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Thickness/depth (m)	Interpretation
100	Layer	Soft very dark brown silty sand	-	-	0.42	Topsoil
101	Layer	Friable mid brown silty sand with occasional rounded stone inclusions	-	-	0.45	Subsoil
102	Layer	Friable light brownish orange clayey sand with occasional grey mottling and bioturbation	-	-	-	Natural geology

Trench 2

Context	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Thickness/depth (m)	Interpretation
200	Layer	Soft very dark brown silty sand.			0.24	Topsoil
201	Layer	Compacted mid orangey brown sand with frequent rounded stone inclusions			0.53	Subsoil
202	Layer	Soft mid orange sand with grey mottling and bioturbation			-	Natural geology

Trench 3

Context	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Thickness/depth (m)	Interpretation
300	Layer	Soft very dark brown silty sand			0.40	Topsoil
301	Layer	Compacted mid orangey brown sand with frequent rounded stone inclusions			0.38	Subsoil
302	Layer	Soft mid orange sand with grey clay banding and bioturbation			-	Natural geology

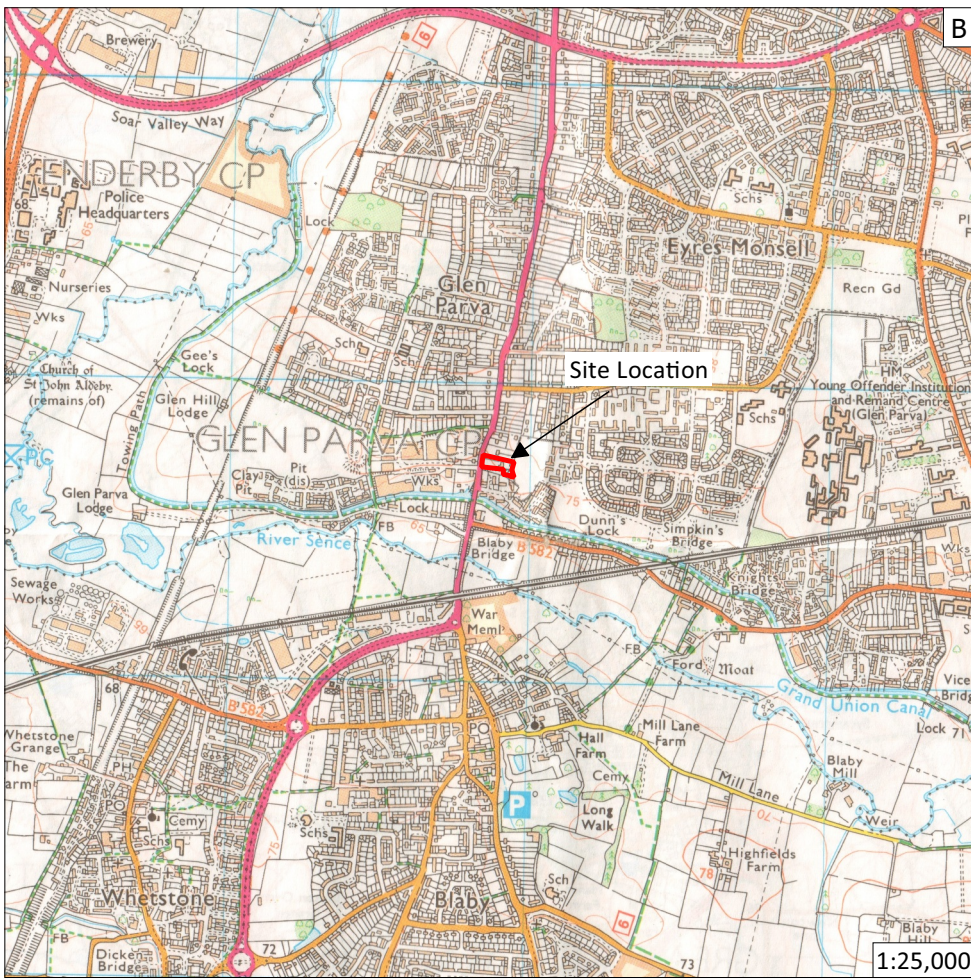
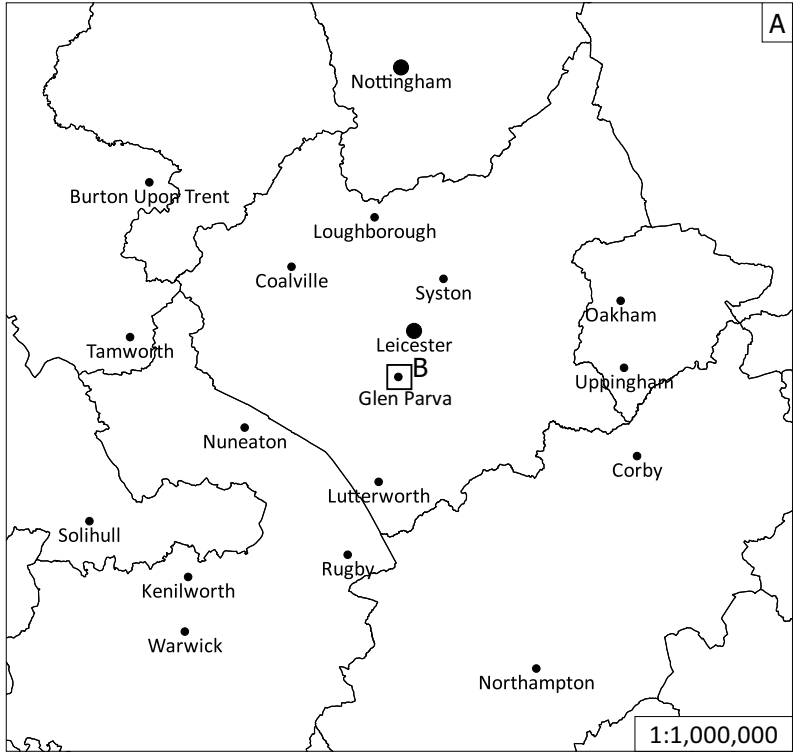
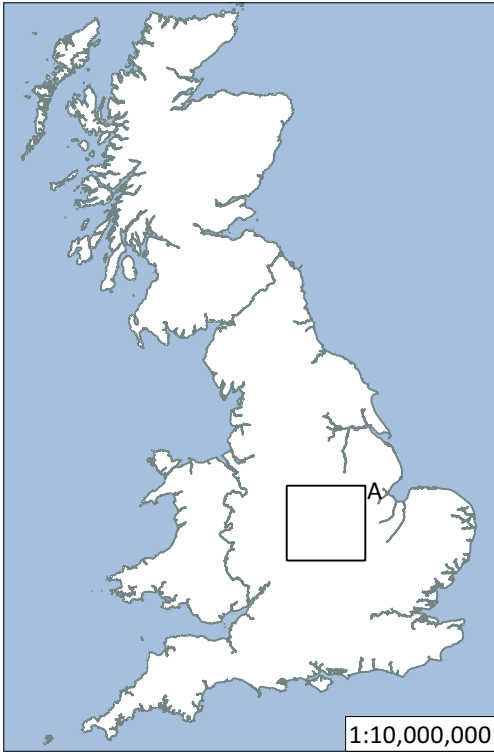


Figure 1: Site location outlined in red

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Site Code	GPLR 17
Scale	1:10,000,000 1:1,000,000 1:25,000 @ A4
Drawn by	F Johnson
Date	17/10/2017

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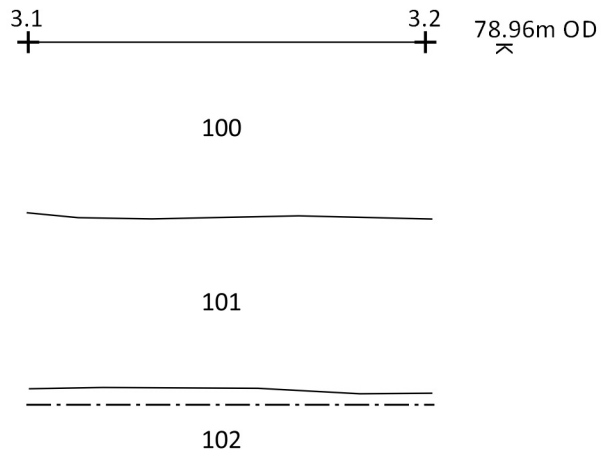
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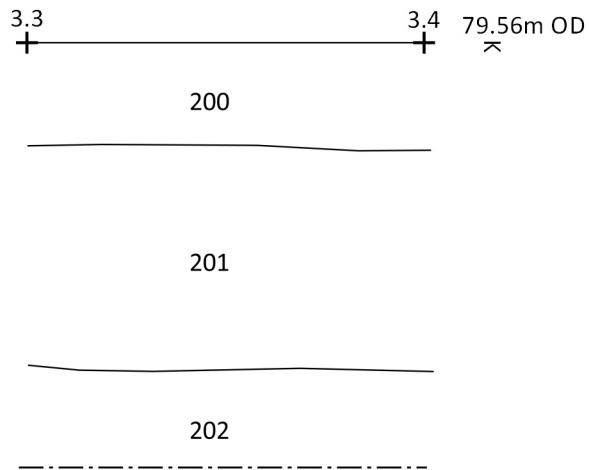


Figure 2: Trench Locations shown in blue with site location outlined in red. Base plan provided by client

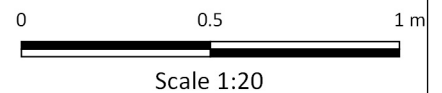
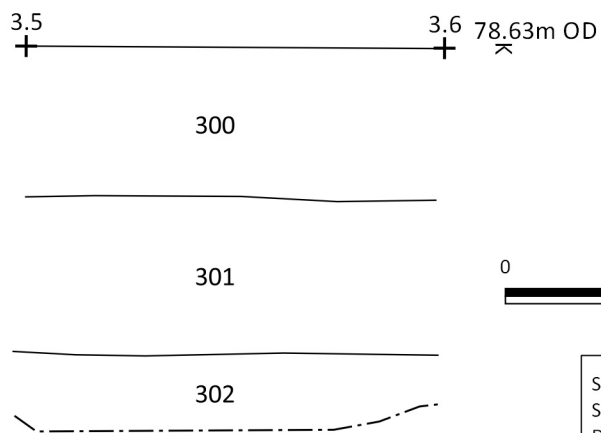
West-northwest-facing representative section of Trench 1



South-southwest-facing representative section of Trench 2



West-northwest-facing representative section of Trench 3



Site Code	GPLR 17
Scale	1:20 @ A4
Drawn By	F Johnson
Date	18/10/2017

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Figure 3: Representative sections located on Figure 2



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