

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT:
TRIAL TRENCHING ON LAND OFF THE COMMON, BARWELL, LEICESTERSHIRE**

Planning Reference: 17/00531/OUT
NGR: SP 45100 96635
AAL Site Code: BACO 18
Museum Accession Number: X.A34.2018
OASIS Reference Number: allenarc1-318379



Report prepared for Pegasus Group
on behalf of Gladman Developments Ltd

By
Allen Archaeology Ltd
Report Number AAL 2018092

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Allenarchaeology



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Cover image: General view of site, looking southeast

Executive Summary

- Allen Archaeology Limited was commissioned by Pegasus Group on behalf of Gladman Developments Limited to undertake an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching on land off The Common, Barwell, Leicestershire, to support a planning application for a residential development.
- The site, currently under pasture and used for grazing horses, lies immediately to the southeast of Barwell. From medieval times up to present date, the site is likely to have remained in agricultural use rather than utilised for settlement or industry, as shown by the partial survival of ridge and furrow on the site. A geophysical survey of the site had identified few features of interest other than the ridge and furrow in the western part of the site.
- Eleven trenches were excavated across two fields, respectively located in the northwest and southern portions of site, targeting geophysical anomalies.
- All the trenches proved to be archaeologically sterile, confirming the agricultural nature of the site. In the field to the south, which preserved traces of ridge and furrow, no subsoil was observed in the stratigraphic sequence suggesting that such agricultural practices were attempted and soon abandoned in antiquity for that part of the development.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Allen Archaeology Limited was commissioned by Pegasus Group on behalf of Gladman Developments Limited to carry out an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching of land off The Common, Barwell, Leicestershire, which has been prepared to support a planning application for a residential development.
- 1.2 All archaeological work was undertaken according to a specification prepared by this company (AAL 2018) and followed current national guidelines, as set out in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists '*Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation*' (CIfA 2014), the English Heritage document '*Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment*' (Historic England 2016) and as defined in the updated Research Agenda and Strategy for the Historic Environment of the East Midlands (<http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/tpa/research/project3/index.htm>).
- 1.3 The documentary archive will be deposited within six months of the completion of the report at Leicestershire Museums, Arts and Records Service, under the museum accession number X.A34.2018.

2.0 Site Location and Description

- 2.1 The site, located to the southeast of Barwell, Leicestershire, is centred on grid reference SP 45100 96635. It extends to approximately 11 hectares and from 115m above Ordnance Datum at the north of the site to 95m aOD at the south of the site. The site is currently under pasture and is used for grazing horses. The site is bound by Dawsons Lane and residential development to the north, residential development to the west, the A47 to the south and Inglenook Farm and agricultural land to the east (Figure 1).
- 2.2 The bedrock geology comprises Bosworth Clay Member (clays and silts) towards the north of the site and Thrussington Member (glacial till with outwash sands and gravels) to the south (British Geological Survey 2018).

3.0 Planning Background

- 3.1 A planning application has been submitted for residential development of land off The Common, Barwell, Leicestershire (17/00531/OUT). A preceding heritage statement, including geophysical survey (WYG/AOC 2017) identified limited archaeological potential for the proposed development area, and as such, the Senior Planning Archaeologist at Leicestershire County Council has advised for a programme of archaeological evaluation by trial trenching in order to provide the planning authority with sufficient information to allow for the determination of a planning application, and to establish any measures that may be required to mitigate the effects of the proposed development upon the archaeological resource.
- 3.2 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 heritage assessment identified the site as having moderate potential for previously unrecorded archaeological remains to be encountered (WYG 2017).
- 4.2 There is no evidence for prehistoric activity within the study area but two enclosures identified from cropmarks southwest of the development could be prehistoric in origin (MLE2800 and MLE2801).
- 4.3 The study area lies between three Roman roads which connect Leicester, Mancetter and High Cross near Lutterworth. The majority of Roman archaeological remains in the area surrounding the proposed development have been recorded from within the village of Barwell to the northwest. These consist of a field system and remains associated with a settlement and a villa (ID23073, MLE2812, MLE7934, MLE15946 and MLE17947). Roman coins have been found from further to the south of the village and west of the development site area (MLE7933).
- 4.4 During the medieval period, Barwell is first mentioned in documentary sources in 1042, recording that Leofric, Earl of Mercia gave the manor of Barewell to the Abbey of Coventry. This is confirmed in the Domesday Book in 1086. The settlement was focussed around the historic village core and church during this period. Several sites have been recorded within the village centre indicating industrial activity such as pottery and lime kilns (MLE2802 and MLE2813). Much of the study area and the site itself were agricultural in nature as proved by records associated with earthworks such as fishponds (MLE72, MLE75), boundary ditches and pits (MLE10020, MLE10661, MLE15947). The findspot of a mirror case is recorded to the west of Inglenook within the development site (MLE10249).
- 4.5 In the post-medieval and modern periods the site is likely to have remained in agricultural use rather than utilised for settlement or industry. This is reinforced by evidence of ridge and furrow remains across the development site identified during the site walkover survey and the blank areas in the geophysical survey results.

5.0 Aims and Objectives

- 5.1 The purpose of the evaluation was to establish the presence, absence, quality and extent of archaeological remains and their location within the development area, gathering sufficient information to enable an assessment of the potential significance of any archaeological remains to be made and of the impact that development will have upon them.
- 5.2 In more specific terms, 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. As such these works may address the following agendas:

Research Objective 7E

Investigate the morphology of rural settlements in the medieval period

Research Objective 8E

Identify agricultural improvements of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries

Further research objectives may be identified during the evaluation process and will be incorporated into any further planned archaeological investigations.

6.0 Methodology

- 6.1 A trenching strategy, comprising 11 trenches measuring 30m long by 1.8m wide was agreed with the planning archaeologist at Leicestershire County Council.
- 6.2 The trenches were excavated across two fields, respectively located in the northwest and south of the development area and targeted anomalies identified during the geophysical survey. Apparently blank areas were not tested at this stage of works (Figure 2).
- 6.3 The fieldwork was undertaken by a team of experienced field archaeologists from AAL over four working days, between 23rd and 27th April 2018, and supervised by Ben Moore.
- 6.4 The evaluation trenches were accurately located using a Leica GS08 RTK NetRover GPS unit receiving RTK corrections.
- 6.5 In each trench, a tracked excavator fitted with a smooth ditching bucket was used to remove topsoil, subsoil and any underlying non-archaeological deposits in spits no greater than 0.10m thick. The process was repeated until the first archaeologically significant or natural horizon was exposed and all further excavation was carried out by hand. Machine excavation was monitored at all times by an experienced field archaeologist.
- 6.6 A full written record of the archaeological deposits was made on standard AAL context recording sheets. Deposits were drawn in section at an appropriate scale (1:20), 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.
- 6.7 Each deposit or layer was allocated a unique identifier (context number), and accorded a written description, a summary of these are included in

6.8 Appendix 1.

7.0 Results

Trenches 1–8 (Figure 3)

- 7.1 Trenches 1–8 were located in the field in the northwest of the site. Trenches 1, 3, 6 and 8 had a northeast to southwest alignment, whereas Trenches 2, 4, 5 and 7 were aligned northwest to southeast.
- 7.2 The trenches were all excavated to the top of the natural geology, consisting of firm, mottled mid orange brown sandy clay with dark reddish brown and yellow patches and frequent rounded pebbles (Plate 1). This deposit was overlain by a 0.09m to 0.2m thick layer of subsoil, which was sealed by topsoil, measuring between 0.24m and 0.37m thick (Plate 2). Several modern land drains, mostly with a northwest to southeast orientation, were observed. The geophysical anomaly in Trench 5 turned out to be a manhole cover. Land drains were recorded in Trenches 3, 5, 6 and 7. No archaeologically significant features or deposits were observed.



Plate 1: Trench 6, looking southwest, scales 2x1m



Plate 2: Southeast-facing section of Trench 1, scale 1m

Trenches 9–11 (Figure 3)

- 7.3 Trenches 9–11 were positioned in the field at the south end of the development site and as with the other trenches, they were placed over anomalies recorded during the geophysical survey. Trenches 9 and 11 were oriented northwest to southeast and Trench 10 had a northeast to southwest alignment. Due to logistical issues, Trench 11 was moved from its original location in the field to the southeast corner of site.
- 7.4 The earliest deposit encountered in all the trenches was the natural geology, consisting of firm, mid brownish yellow clay with reddish grey sandy patches and frequent medium to small rounded pebbles. This was covered by topsoil, measuring approximately 0.3m in depth. A number of modern land drains, running from northwest to southeast were recorded in Trenches 9 and 10. No features or deposits of archaeological significance were encountered.



Plate 3: Trench 10, looking southwest, scales 2x1m



Plate 4: Southwest-facing section of Trench 9, scale 1m

8.0 Discussion and Conclusions

- 8.1 The stratigraphic sequence across the northwest field, where Trenches 1–8 were excavated, did not show any significant variations, consisting of the natural geology overlain by subsoil and topsoil. In the southern field no subsoil was recorded in Trenches 9–11 and the natural clay was sealed by topsoil only. It is possible that the subsoil recorded in Trenches 1 to 8 represents a remnant of the former medieval ground surface, whereas the field which contained Trenches 1 to 9, where elements of the ridge and furrow were still visible, has not been ploughed as extensively since the medieval period.

- 8.2 The entirety of the trenches across the two fields were archaeologically sterile, proving that the geophysical anomalies targeted by the trial trenching programme are variations of the natural geology and the result of modern drainage.

9.0 Effectiveness of Methodology

- 9.1 The programme of trial trenching was appropriate for the nature and extent of the archaeological features encountered. It has revealed a negligible archaeological potential for these fields within the proposed development area.

10.0 Acknowledgements

- 10.1 Allen Archaeology would like to thank Pegasus Group, and their client, Gladman Developments Limited, for this commission.

11.0 References

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Appendix 1: Context Summary List

Trench 1

Context	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Thickness/depth (m)	Interpretation
100	Layer	Compact, mid greyish brown sandy silt with occasional medium rounded pebbles charcoal, flecks and CBM fragments	-	-	0.37	Topsoil
101	Layer	Compacted, mid yellowish brown sandy clay with frequent rounded pebbles	-	-	0.14	Subsoil
102	Layer	Firm, mottled mid orange brown sandy clay with frequent rounded pebbles of medium and small size	-	-	N/A	Natural geology

Trench 2

Context	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Thickness/depth (m)	Interpretation
200	Layer	Compact, mid greyish brown sandy silt with occasional medium rounded pebbles charcoal, flecks and CBM fragments. Presence of roots throughout	-	-	0.3	Topsoil
201	Layer	Compact, mid yellowish brown sandy clay with frequent small rounded pebbles	-	-	0.18	Subsoil
202	Layer	Firm, mottled mid orange brown sandy clay with dark reddish brown and yellowish patches. Frequent rounded pebbles of medium size and occasional presence of roots.	-	-	N/A	Natural geology

Trench 3

Context	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Thickness/depth (m)	Interpretation
300	Layer	Compact, mid greyish brown sandy silt with occasional medium rounded pebbles charcoal, flecks and CBM fragments	-	-	0.2	Topsoil
301	Layer	Compact, mid yellowish brown sandy clay with frequent small rounded pebbles	-	-	0.2	Subsoil
302	Layer	Firm, mottled mid orange brown sandy clay with greyish sand patches. Frequent rounded pebbles and traces of Iron panning, indicating leaching or presence of stagnant water	-	-	N/A	Natural geology

Trench 4

Context	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Thickness/ depth (m)	Interpretation
400	Layer	Compact, mid greyish brown sandy silt with occasional medium rounded pebbles charcoal, flecks and CBM fragments	-	-	0.25	Topsoil
401	Layer	Compact, mid yellowish brown sandy clay with frequent small rounded pebbles	-	-	0.1	Subsoil
402	Layer	Firm, mottled mid orange brown and red sandy clay with very frequent rounded pebbles	-	-	N/A	Natural geology

Trench 5

Context	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Thickness/ depth (m)	Interpretation
500	Layer	Compact, mid greyish brown sandy silt with occasional medium rounded pebbles charcoal, flecks and CBM fragments	-	-	0.3	Topsoil
501	Layer	Compact, mid yellowish brown sandy clay with frequent small rounded pebbles	-	-	0.14	Subsoil
502	Layer	Firm, mottled mid orange brown sandy clay with dark reddish brown and yellowish and grey patches. Frequent rounded pebbles of medium size and occasional traces of Iron panning.	-	-	N/A	Natural geology

Trench 6

Context	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Thickness/ depth (m)	Interpretation
600	Layer	Compact, mid greyish brown sandy silt with occasional medium rounded pebbles charcoal, flecks and CBM fragments	-	-	0.28	Topsoil
601	Layer	Compact, mid yellowish brown sandy clay with frequent small rounded pebbles	-	-	0.2	Subsoil
602	Layer	Firm, mottled mid reddish brown sandy clay with very frequent small to medium sized pebbles	-	-	N/A	Natural geology]

Trench 7

Context	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Thickness/depth (m)	Interpretation
700	Layer	Compact, mid greyish brown sandy silt with occasional medium rounded pebbles charcoal, flecks and CBM fragments	-	-	0.3	Topsoil
701	Layer	Compact, mid yellowish brown sandy clay with frequent small rounded pebbles	-	-	0.13	Subsoil
702	Layer	Firm, mottled mid orange brown sandy clay with reddish brown clay patches. Presence of Iron panning	-	-	N/A	Natural geology

Trench 8

Context	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Thickness/depth (m)	Interpretation
800	Layer	Compact, mid greyish brown sandy silt with occasional medium rounded pebbles charcoal, flecks and CBM fragments	-	-	0.24	Topsoil
801	Layer	Compact, mid yellowish brown sandy clay with frequent small rounded pebbles	-	-	0.09	Subsoil
802	Layer	Firm mid orange brown clay with sandy patches and frequent small rounded pebbles	-	-	N/A	Natural geology

Trench 9

Context	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Thickness/depth (m)	Interpretation
900	Layer	Compact, mid greyish brown sandy silt with occasional medium rounded pebbles charcoal, flecks and CBM fragments	-	-	0.3	Topsoil
901	Layer	Firm, mid brownish yellow clay with reddish grey sandy patches and frequent small to medium rounded stones	-	-	N/A	Natural geology

Trench 10

Context	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Thickness/depth (m)	Interpretation
1000	Layer	Compact, mid greyish brown sandy silt with occasional medium rounded pebbles charcoal, flecks and CBM fragments	-	-	0.29	Topsoil
1001	Layer	Firm, mid brownish yellow clay with reddish grey sandy patches with	-	-	N/A	Natural geology

Context	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Thickness/depth (m)	Interpretation
		frequent small to medium rounded pebbles				

Trench 11

Context	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Thickness/depth (m)	Interpretation
1100	Layer	Compact, mid greyish brown sandy silt with occasional medium rounded pebbles charcoal, flecks and CBM fragments	-	-	0.29	Topsoil
1101	Layer	Firm, mid brownish yellow clay with reddish grey sandy patches with frequent small to medium rounded pebbles	-	-	N/A	Natural geology



Figure 1: Site location outlined in red

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Site Code	BACO 18
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Drawn by	E Montanari
Date	31/05/2018

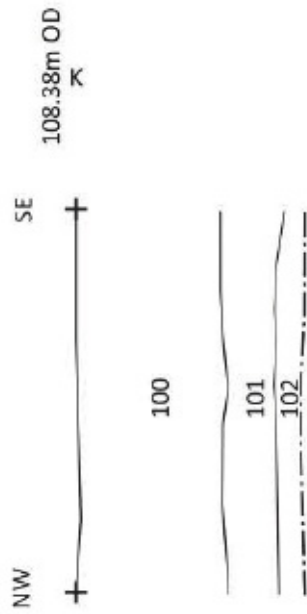
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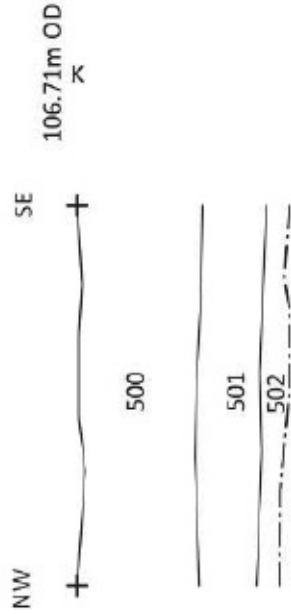
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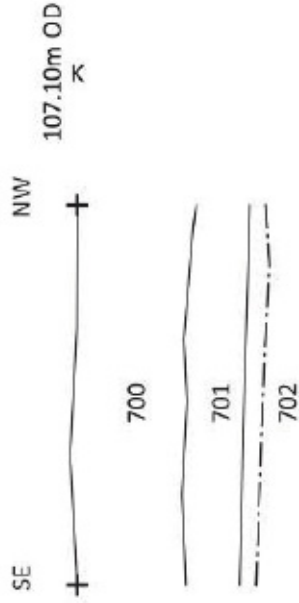
Southwest-facing section of Trench 1



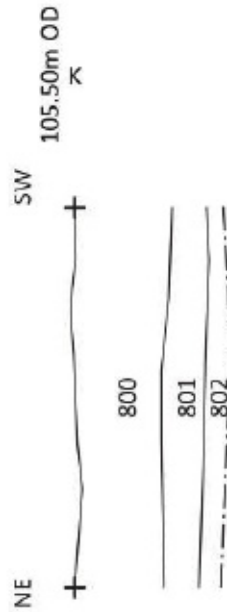
Southwest-facing section of Trench 5



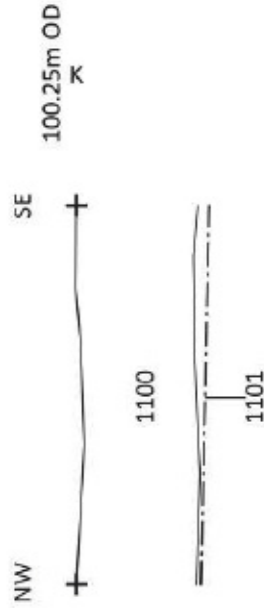
Northeast-facing section of Trench 7



Northwest-facing section of Trench 8



Southwest-facing section of Trench 11



Site Code
Scale
Drawn By
Date

BACO 18
1:20 @ A4
E Montanari
31/05/2018

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Figure 3: Representative sections of Trenches 1, 5, 7, 8 and 11



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