# MONITORING AND RECORDING OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL TEST PITS:

# LONG BARN FARM, HIGH STREET, KETTON, RUTLAND

Planning References: FUL/2005/0606/CC and FUL/2007/0068 NGR: TF 34061 42118 AAL Site Code: KELB 10 OASIS Reference Number: allenarc1-73306



Report prepared for LE15 Limited

By Allen Archaeology Limited Report Number 2010010

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The Authority on Archaeological Planning Services

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#### Summary

A programme of archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken during the excavation of six test pits in advance of a residential development on land at Long Barn Farmyard, High Street, Ketton, Rutland.

There is evidence for Romano-British, Anglo-Saxon and medieval activity in the vicinity of the site and in the wider landscape. There are shrunken medieval village earthworks surrounding the village, including the field immediately to the east of the site, which is in the historic core of Ketton.

No finds or features were recorded in any of the six test pits. An undated buried soil horizon was exposed in Test Pits 4 and 6, and dumps of stone rubble and redeposited limestone brash were recorded in Test Pits 2, 4, 5 and 6, all interpreted as material associated with the construction and demolition of farm buildings on the site.

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Allen Archaeology Limited (hereafter AAL) was commissioned by LE15 Limited to carry out a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording during the excavation of six test pits on land at Long Barn Farmyard, off High Street in Ketton.
- 1.2 The excavation, recording and reporting conforms to current national guidelines, as set out in the Institute for Archaeologists '*Standards and guidance for archaeological watching briefs*' (IfA 1994, revised 2001 and 2008). All appropriate English Heritage guidelines on archaeological practice were also followed (www.helm.org/server/show/nav.7740) as well as the methodologies set out in the AAL specification (Clay 2010).
- 1.3 The documentary and physical archive will be submitted to Leicester Museum within twelve months of the completion of the report.

## 2.0 Site Location and Description

- 2.1 The proposed development area is situated within the administrative district of Rutland in the village of Ketton, approximately 5.5km west-south-west of Stamford. The site is situated to the north of the village core, and immediately to the east of the A6121 High Street, opposite Hunts Lane. The site centres on NGR TF 34061 42118 and lies at a height of approximately 40m above Ordnance Datum.
- 2.2 The local geology comprises solid Lower Lincolnshire Limestone, overlain by superficial deposits of alluvium (British Geological Survey 1978).

## 3.0 Planning Background

3.1 A planning application for residential development was submitted in June 2005 (Reference FUL/2005/0606/CC), and determined in October 2005. The application was granted subject to conditions, including the undertaking of a scheme of archaeological investigation to provide information concerning the potential archaeological resource within the proposed development area. A further application for residential development was submitted in January 2007 (Reference FUL/2007/0068). Determination of this application has been deferred pending the results of the archaeological investigations of the site. This approach is consistent with the guidelines that are set out in *Archaeology and Planning: Planning Policy Guidance Note 16* (1990).

## 4.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

- 4.1 There are no artefacts or archaeological deposits close to the site that suggest prehistoric activity, although aerial photographs have identified potential ploughed out Neolithic long barrows in the vicinity (Clay 2006).
- 4.2 In 1902 a Roman tessellated pavement was discovered during the excavation of foundations for two cottages near the Ketton post office, reflecting high status settlement activity in the vicinity (ADS Reference NMR\_NATINV-325191). Extensive evidence of rural settlement and agriculture of this date has been recorded c.1.5km to the west-north-west, at Top Grange Quarry, where Romano-British field systems, droveways and enclosures have been recorded, as well as a number of malting kilns or corn driers, and a small formal cemetery. A late Roman coin hoard and a number of burials have also been recorded c.1.8km to the north-north-east of the site at Garley's Field (TLAHS 2003).

- 4.3 There is no firm evidence of Anglo-Saxon activity in the village, although the parish church of St Mary appears to have originated in the Saxon period; with evidence strongly suggesting is was formerly a Minster (ADS Reference NMR\_NATINV-325197). Fieldwork at the church recorded a soil horizon with a single burial and a sherd of Late Saxon pottery (TLAHS 2002). Slightly further afield, at Top Grange Quarry, a high status Late Saxon centre has been excavated, comprising a large house with associated chapel and graveyard. It was noted that medieval ridge and furrow respected the site to the east and south, suggesting into continued in use into the early medieval period, or its remains prevented a significant obstacle to agriculture at this time (TLAHS 2002).
- 4.4 By the time of the Domesday Survey of 1086 the settlement of '*Chetene*' (Ketton) was held by the King (Williams and Martin 1992). There was land for 13 ploughs and a mill, with 40 acres of meadow and 16 acres of scrubland. The village at the time was populated by 45 villagers of varying status, along with their dependants. This number included three slaves, as well as a priest (*ibid*.).
- 4.5 Surrounding the village, and depicted on aerial photographs, are earthworks and a drained fishpond indicating shrunken medieval village remains (ADS Reference NMR\_NATINV-964787). The Ketton area was also an important source of building stone from at least the medieval period, quarrying the same oolitic Limestone present at sites such as Ancaster and Clipsham (Lewis 2006).
- 4.6 Previous investigations prior to the construction of settling ponds at Castle Cement, comprising a magnetometer survey and trial trenching, did not expose any significant archaeological remains (ADS Reference EHNMR-1377493). Similarly, further archaeological evaluation to the east of Pit Lane did not identify any dateable archaeological remains (ADS Reference EHNMR-1377493).

## 5.0 Methodology

- 5.1 The test pits were excavated using a JCB 3CX excavator fitted with a 1.6m wide toothless dykeing bucket, and were monitored at all times by Maria Piirainen. The fieldwork was carried out on Thursday February 25<sup>th</sup> 2010.
- 5.2 All exposed plan and section surfaces were inspected for any archaeological features and deposits to determine the stratigraphic sequence. Each context was recorded on pro-forma AAL context record sheets, accompanied by representative section drawings at appropriate scales. A photographic record was maintained throughout the fieldwork, with selected images included as an appendix to this report (see Appendix 1).
- 5.3 Each deposit or layer was allocated a unique identifier (context number), and accorded a written description, a summary of these are included in Section 6 below and presented in tabular form. The test pits are shown in plan on Figure 2, and the sections are shown on Figure 3.

# 6.0 Results

# Test Pit 1

Context	Туре	Description	Interpretation	Thickness			
No.		-	-				
100	Layer	Tarmac, seals 101	Tarmac surface	0.1m			
101	Layer	Mid brown/yellow sandy clay, frequent sub-angular limestone. Sealed by 100	Natural limestone brash	>0.55m			

# Test Pit 2

Context	Туре	Description	Interpretation	Thickness		
NO.						
200	Layer	Fairly loose dark brown silty sand, seals 201	Modern topsoil	0.09-0.14m		
201	Layer	Limestone rubble ranging from 100x150mm to 400x250mm, sealed by 200	Dump of limestone rubble, associated with demolition of farm buildings	> 0.90m to LOE		

# Test Pit 3

Context No.	Туре	Description	Interpretation	Thickness			
300	Layer	Fairly loose dark brown silty sand. Seals 301	Modern topsoil	0.1m			
301	Layer	Mid brown sandy clay with frequent sub-angular limestone. Sealed by 300, seals 302	Natural limestone brash	0.45m			
302	Layer	Firm mid orange sandy clay occ sub-angular limestone. Sealed by 301, seals 303	Natural clay	>0.34m to LOE			

### Test Pit 4

Context No.	Туре	Description	Interpretation	Thickness
400	Layer	Loose dark brown silty sand with modern debris. Seals 401	Modern topsoil	0.14-0.19m
401	Layer	Sub-angular limestone rubble. Sealed by 400, seals 402	Modern demolition/ levelling layer	0.50m
402	Layer	Firm mid greyish brown sandy clay with occasional limestone fragments and charcoal flecks. Sealed by 401, seals 403	Buried soil horizon	0.50m
403	Layer	Firm mid orange silty clay with occ sub-angular limestone	Natural geology	>0.22m to LOE

#### Test Pit 5

Context No.	Туре	Description	Interpretation	Thickness
500	Layer	Loose dark brown silty sand. Seals 501	Modern topsoil	0.03m
501	Layer	Coarse light brown yellow silty sand with frequent sub- angular limestone. Sealed by 500, seals 502	Limestone brash, possibly redeposited	0.22-0.32m

502	Layer	Coarse, firm mid greyish brown sandy clay with frequent sub-angular limestone. Sealed by 501, seals 503	Natural limestone brash	0.48m
503	Layer	Firm mid grey orange sandy clay with occ sub-angular limestone	Natural clay	>0.13m to LOE

### **Test Pit 6**

Context	Type	Description	Interpretation	Thickness
No.		·		
600	Layer	Loose dark brown silty sand with frequent rootlet intrusions. Seals 601	Modern topsoil	0.09-0.11
601	Layer	Coarse mottled orange and dark grey/brown sand and frequent subangular limestone. Sealed by 600, seals 602	Probable redeposited and mixed topsoil and limestone brash	0.28-0.29m
602	Layer	Firm mid greyish brown sandy clay with limestone fragments and rare charcoal flecks. Sealed by 601, seals 603	Buried soil horizon	0.35-0.44m
603	Layer	Firm mid orange silty clay with occasional sub-angular limestone. Sealed by 602	Natural geology	>0.06m to LOE

## 7.0 Discussion and Conclusion

- 7.1 The fieldwork has identified a negligible archaeological potential, with no finds or features being recorded. The natural geology was identified in five of the six test pits (excluding Test Pit 2), comprising brown alluvial clays and clayey limestone brash. The natural geology was exposed at depths below the modern ground surface varying between 0.1m in Test Pits 1 and 3, and 1.2m in Test Pit 4.
- 7.2 Sealing the natural geology in Test Pits 4 and 6 towards the east side of the site, was a probable buried soil horizon up to 0.5m thick. This was undated but is likely to reflect a ploughsoil or topsoil predating the farm buildings and other structures occupying the site from the 19<sup>th</sup> century until recently.
- 7.3 This buried soil horizon was sealed by dumps of building rubble and redeposited limestone brash. A further dump of building rubble was recorded in Test Pit 2 (the depth of this layer was not tested due to the collapsing sides of the pit and the rising water table). These deposits are again undated by artefactual evidence, but are likely to be a result of building and demolition work associated with the various farm buildings and other structures that have occupied the site. Historic maps of the area show the existing farm buildings occupying the western part of the site from at least 1886, with structures to the east shown on the 1952 Ordnance Survey map, which were not present on the map of 1904. These later structures are still present on the 1986 map, but have since been demolished, leaving only their concrete floor slabs in situ.
- 7.4 The uppermost deposits recorded in the test pits was for the most part a very thin topsoil horizon, except for Test Pit 1, where a thin tarmac layer was he uppermost surface, directly overlying the natural geology. The very thin depth of topsoil that has formed over the underlying demolition layers is further evidence to suggest the recent date of this material.

### 8.0 Effectiveness of Methodology

8.1 The test pit methodology was appropriate to the scale and nature of the development. It has identified a negligible archaeological potential for the proposed development area, and has illustrated a significant degree of disturbance of the site by earlier building activity.

### 9.0 Acknowledgements

9.1 Allen Archaeology Limited would like to thank LE15 Limited for this commission.

## 10.0 References

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## 11.0 Site Archive

11.1 The documentary archive is currently in the possession of Allen Archaeology Limited. It will be submitted to Leiciester Museum within twelve months of the completion of the project.

**Appendix 1: Colour Plates** 



**Plate 1:** South-facing representative section of Test Pit 1, looking north-north-east

**Plate 2:** East-facing representative section of Test Pit 2, showing rising ground water. Looking west



**Plate 3:** North-facing representative section of Test Pit 3. Looking south



**Plate 4:** South-south-west-facing representative section of Test Pit 4. Looking north-north-east



**Plate 5:** East-facing representative section of Test Pit 5. Looking west



**Plate 6:** North-facing representative section of Test Pit 6. Looking south





**Figure 1:** Site location at scale 1:25,000, with site outlined in red ©Crown copyright 2006. All rights reserved. Licence Number 100047330







