

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION  
AT  
UPPINGHAM GATE,  
LEICESTERSHIRE

SK 8652 0053

*On behalf of*  
*Cannock Developments (Fields End) LLP*

JULY 2006

**REPORT FOR** Cannock Developments (Fields End) LLP  
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## **Summary**

*An evaluation of this site was conducted by John Moore Heritage Services from 4<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> July 2006. Five trenches were excavated, totalling 130 metres in length, to reveal the underlying geology. No archaeological deposits were recorded. Although presumably modern plough marks were seen within Trench 2.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Site Location** (*Figure 1*)

The site is located approximately 1.5km north of the centre of Uppingham, in Rutland at NGR SK86560053. It is approximately rectangular, totalling some 1.016ha in area. The northern boundary is formed by the A47, with the roundabout for the Ayston Road (A6003) located immediately to the north-west. The Ayston Road forms the western boundary, with a commercial/office development to the south. To the east the site opens onto farm land. The site is currently undeveloped, with a pond located to the north-west.

The geology of the site consists of top and subsoil overlying ironstone of the Jurassic Northampton Sand Formation. To the north of the site Upper Lias clays and mudstone of the Lower Jurassic Whitby Mudstone Formation may be exposed (Geological Survey of England & Wales, Stamford, Sheet 157).

### **1.2 Planning Background**

An application (FUL/2006/0204/CC) has been submitted for the redevelopment of the site for 3 two-storey office units with associated parking and circulation roads. Due to the potential for archaeological remains to be present on the site an archaeological evaluation of the sites of the proposed new buildings was required.

The Senior Planning Archaeologist of Leicestershire County Council prepared a *Brief* for such an evaluation and a *Written Scheme of Investigation* was subsequently prepared in response to this document, which outlined a method that would satisfy the requirements of the brief. The fieldwork was carried out by John Moore Heritage Services.

### **1.3 Archaeological Background**

A Desk-based Assessment conducted by John Moore Heritage Services (2006) showed that the site had a potential to contain buried archaeology. There was a particular potential for pre-medieval remains to be present. A significant Mesolithic site lies within 150m of the proposed development area – over 600 pieces of worked flint were recovered, suggesting that it was a settlement site (HER Ref. No. MLE10451). The Assessment showed that the development area and this nearby Mesolithic site have similar topography. In addition, there are numerous other areas of prehistoric and Roman activity in the vicinity.

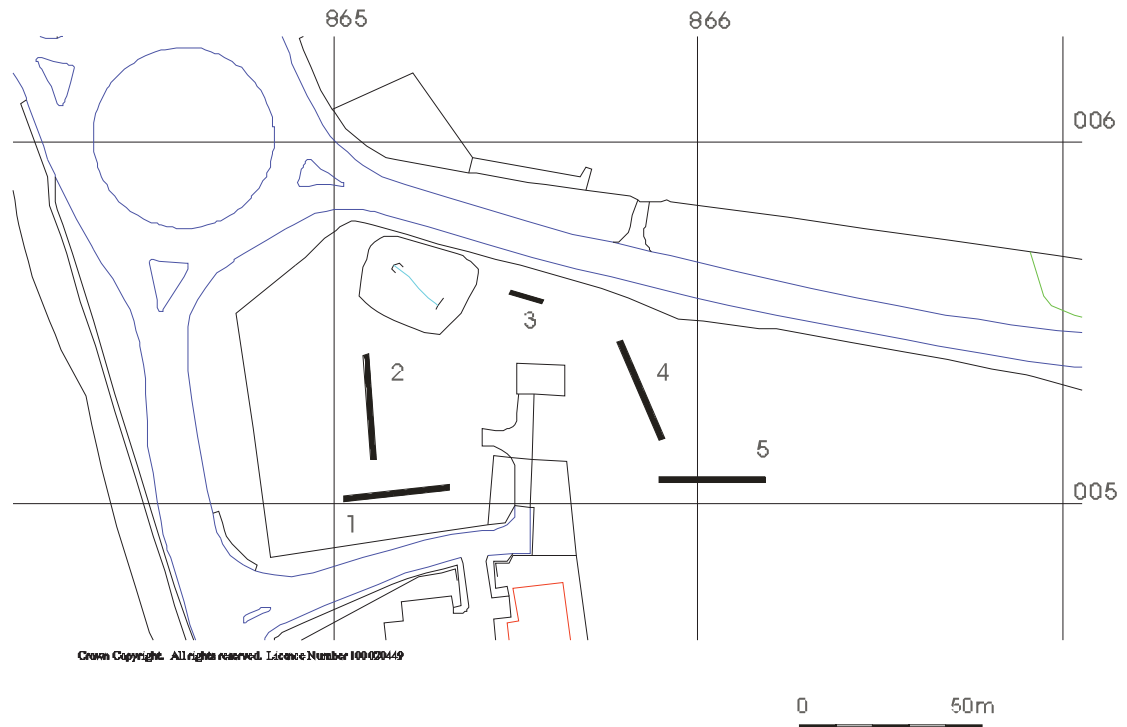


Figure 1 Site Location.

## 2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The aims of the investigation as laid out in the Written Scheme of Investigation were as follows:

- To establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the site.
- To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains encountered.
- To make available to interested parties the results of the investigation subject to any confidentiality restrictions.

In particular

- To establish the presence or absence of the Mesolithic activity in the area.

## 3 STRATEGY

### 3.1 Research Design

In response to a brief issued by the Historic and Natural Environment Team (HNET) of Leicestershire County Council a scheme of investigation was designed by JMHS and agreed with the HNET's Senior Planning Archaeologist and the applicant. The work was carried out by JMHS and involved the excavation of a total of five trenches across the site (fig. 1).

Site procedures for the investigation and recording of potential archaeological deposits and features were defined in the *Written Scheme of Investigation*. The work was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994).

### 3.2 Methodology

The trenching sample of 130.0 x 1.70m amounts to just over 2% of the area. This was achieved through the excavation of four 30.0m long trenches and one 10.0m trench (see Fig. 1).

All trenches were 1.7 m wide and were excavated by a JCB fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. The resultant surfaces were cleaned by hand prior to limited hand excavation of any identified archaeological deposits.

Ten buckets of arising were sieved from each end of Trenches 1, 2, 4 and 5 and from one end of Trench 3 to assess the density of artefacts and specifically to record lithics.

Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each deposit encountered, with scale plans and sections drawings compiled where appropriate. A photographic record was produced. The trenches were backfilled after recording.

## 4 RESULTS

All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers in [ ] indicate features i.e. pit cuts; while numbers in ( ) show feature fills or deposits of material.

The topsoil (1/01), (2/01), (3/01), (4/01) and (5/01) was uniform across the site being a friable brown-grey sandy loam with approximately 20% small stones. The thickness of this deposit varied from about 0.19m to 0.3m.

In the south of the site the topsoil lay directly above a subsoil (1/02), (2/02), (4/02) and (5/02) of orange-brown clayey sand with up to 50% small stones (Fig. 2). This subsoil varied between 0.18m and 0.25m in thickness. Trench 2 showed notable plough marks cut from the topsoil into the subsoil; these marks were aligned north to south and were approximately 0.2m apart. To the north of the site the topsoil (3/01) lay directly on top of the natural (3/02) of compact clay and mudstone.

The subsoil in the south of the site was above a deposit of orange-grey clay sand with very little stone content (1/03) and (5/03). Being higher upslope than the deposits recorded in Trenches 2, 3 and 4, this layer was possibly the upper layer of natural that would have been eroded away at a lower elevation. It was about 0.2m thick.

The natural (1/04), (2/03), (4/03) and (5/04) to the south of the site was a compact orange-grey clayey sand with approximately 20% small stones.

## 5 FINDS

### 5.1 Pottery (*By Paul Blinkhorn*)

The pottery assemblage comprised 37 sherds with a total weight of 351g. It mainly comprised a range of post-medieval wares, although two sherds of late medieval pottery and a single extremely small and abraded sherd of probable Iron Age date were also noted.

The assemblage was recorded using the conventions of the Leicestershire County type-series (Sawday 1994), as follows:

- MP2: Midland Purple ware, 1375-1550. 2 sherds, 30g.
- CW2: Cistercian ware 2, 1475-1550. 3 sherds, 5g.
- FR: Frechen Stoneware, 1550+. 1 sherd, 9g.
- EA3: Staffordshire Mottle Ware, 1650 – 1770. 4 sherds, 14g.
- SW4: Staffordshire White-glazed Stoneware, 1730+. 2 sherds, 9g.
- SW5: English Brown Salt-Glazed Stoneware, 1700+. 1 sherd, 2g.
- 19th: All 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century wares. 19 sherds, 259g.

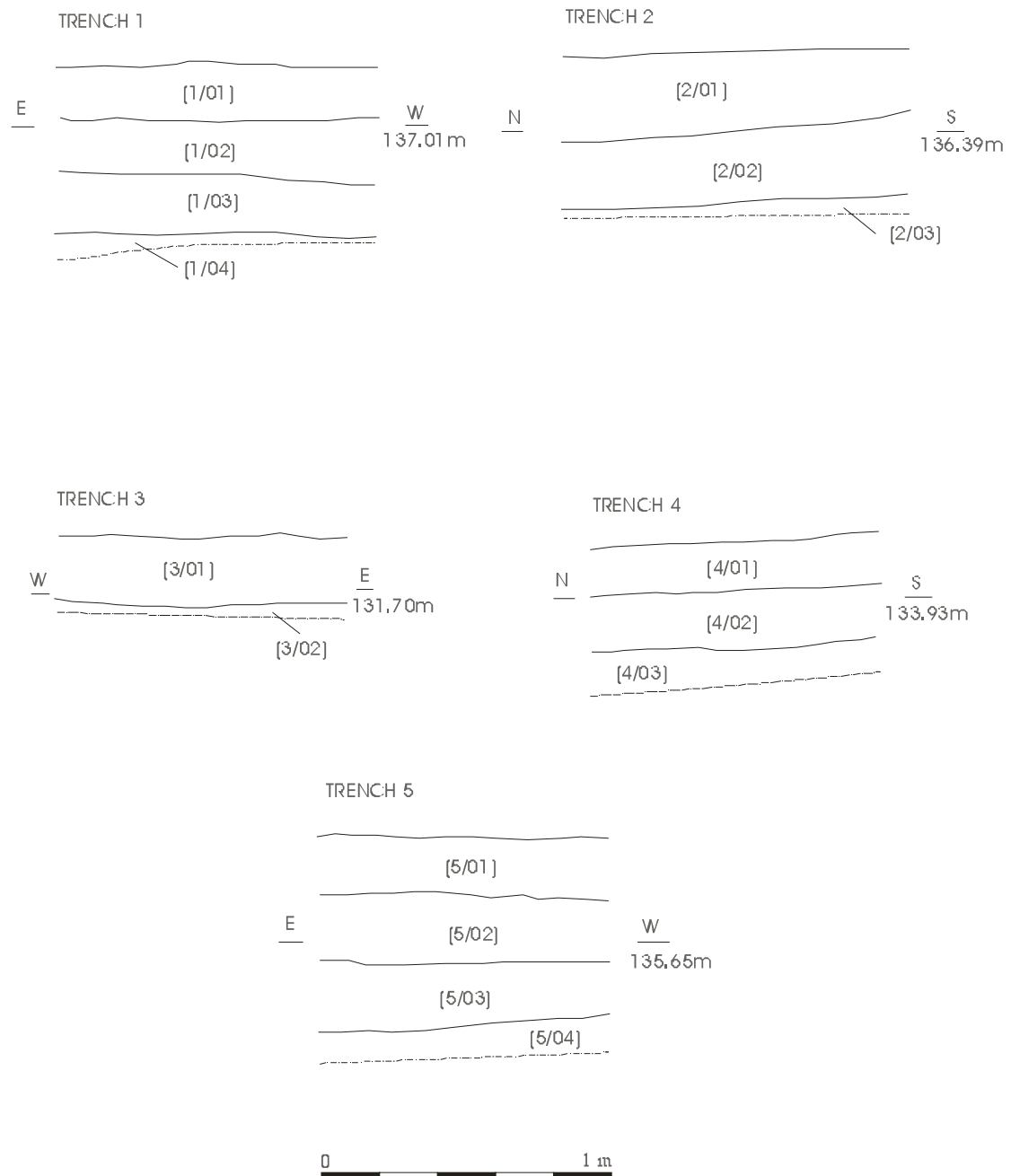


Figure 2 Representative sections.



The following, not in the published Leicester type-series, were also noted:

*LMO: Late Medieval Oxidized Ware, c. ?AD1450-1550 (McCarthy 1979).* This material has a number of sources in Northants and Bucks. Fabric is generally very hard and grey, with weak to bright orange surfaces, sometimes with a poor quality green glaze. Moderate to dense subrounded quartz up to 1mm, with sparse rounded ironstone up to 2mm. Occasional calcareous fragments. Full range of late medieval/transitional vessel forms (Cisterns, 'fish dishes' etc). 2 sherds, 15g.

*SS: Staffordshire Slip-Trailed Earthenware, AD1650-1750.* Fine cream fabric with white slip and pale yellow lead glaze, commonest decoration is feathered dark brown trailed slip. Chiefly press-moulded flat wares, although small bowls and mugs etc are known. 2 sherds, 7g.

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 1. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*.

Table 1: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type

Tr	Cntxt	IA		LMO		FR		MP2		CW2		SS		EA3		SW4		SW5		19th	
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt
1	E	1	1			1	9	1	7			1	1	1	1					1	1
1	W													1	2						
1	1											1	6							1	4
1	2							1	23												
2	N																			4	6
2	S									1	2										
2	1															2	9			1	1
3														1	3						
4	N			1	6															5	17
4	S									2	3									2	15
4	1																			4	214
5	E			1	9															1	1
5	W													1	8						
5	1																	1	2		
	Total	1	1	2	15	1	9	2	30	3	5	2	7	4	14	2	9	1	2	19	259

## 5.2 Other Finds

In accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation, ten buckets of arisings were sieved. Table 2 shows the quantity and range of artefacts recovered. The majority being very small fragments under 2x2cm.

Table 2 Artefact recovered while sieving.

	Pottery	Glass	CBM	Slag	Clay Pipe	Iron	Plastic etc.	Bone	Daub	Flint	Roof Slate
TR1 (E)	7	2						1			
TR1 (W)	2		2								
TR2 (N)	4	1							3		
TR2 (S)	1	1		1		1	1				
TR3	1		1				1				
TR4 (N)	6	10	3	1	1					1	2
TR4 (S)	4	1		1			1				
TR5 (E)	2	2						1			1
TR5 (W)	1	5		1	1						

Three pieces of clay pipe stem were found; one from context (2/02), one while sieving the south end of Trench 4 and one while sieving the west end of Trench 5.

The flint object was a hard hammer struck secondary flake with signs of later damage. It probably dates to the Late Neolithic or Bronze Age.

## 6 DISCUSSION

The evaluation recorded no subsurface archaeological features, with very few artefacts recorded during the excavation. The sieving of material from the trenches also recorded very few artefacts. The soil conditions appeared incompatible for bone preservation. Those artefacts collected cover a wide date range and are typical of assemblages from agricultural plough soils; the majority probably brought to the site during episodes of manuring.

The subsoil in Trench 2 (2/02) showed plough-marks cutting into it. It also contained fragments of clay tobacco pipe. The subsoil in Trench 1 (1/02) contained a single sherd of 16<sup>th</sup> century pottery. It is possible that this subsoil is an earlier agricultural soil.

## 7 CONCLUSIONS

Although a significant Mesolithic site lies within 150m of the proposed development it would appear that activity of this date did not encroach upon this area.

Whilst any decision regarding further work on the site must rest with Leicestershire and Rutland County Councils, it is the opinion of John Moore Heritage Services that no further archaeological work needs to be conducted regarding the redevelopment of this site.

## 8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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**APPENDIX – ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY**

Context	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Width (m)	Length (m)	Findings	Date
<b>Trench 1</b>			0.59	1.7	30		
1/01	Layer	Topsoil	0.19	Tr.	Tr.	Pot	Modern
1/02	Layer	Orange-brown sandy loam	0.18	Tr.	Tr.	Pot	
1/03	Layer	Orange-grey clay sand	0.22	Tr.	Tr.	-	
1/04	Natural	Orange clay sand with ironstone	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Trench 2</b>			0.55	1.7	30		
2/01	Layer	Topsoil	0.3	Tr.	Tr.	Pot	Modern
2/02	Layer	Orange-brown sandy loam	0.25	Tr.	Tr.	Clay Pipe	
2/03	Natural	Orange clay sand with ironstone	-	Tr.	Tr.	-	-
<b>Trench 3</b>			0.3	1.7	10		
3/01	Layer	Topsoil	0.3	Tr.	Tr.	Pot	Modern
3/02	Natural	grey-orange clay with mudstone	-	Tr.	Tr.	-	-
<b>Trench 4</b>			0.4	1.7	30		
4/01	Layer	Topsoil	0.2	Tr.	Tr.	Pot	Modern
4/02	Layer	Orange-brown sandy loam	0.2	Tr.	Tr.	-	-
4/03	Natural	Orange clay sand with ironstone	-	Tr.	Tr.	-	-
<b>Trench 5</b>			0.4	1.7	30		
5/01	Layer	Topsoil	0.22	Tr.	Tr.	Pot	Modern
5/02	Layer	Orange-brown sandy loam	0.2	Tr.	Tr.	-	-
5/03	Layer	Orange-grey clay sand	0.18	Tr.	Tr.	-	-
5/04	Natural	Orange clay sand with ironstone	-	Tr.	Tr.	-	-