



Land to the rear of The Manor House, Burbage Leicestershire

Archaeological evaluation

Archaeology Warwickshire
Report No 2396
September 2023



Warwickshire
County Council

Land to the rear of The Manor House, Burbage, Leicestershire
Archaeological evaluation
Date: September 2023

Commissioned by: Nest Design & Developments Ltd
Site Code: LM23
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Planning archaeologist: William Kelly
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SUMMARY

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at Land to the rear of The Manor House, Burbage, on behalf of Nest Design & Developments Ltd, to advise upon an application for the erection of a single dwelling.

One trench, 13m long, was excavated and revealed a small pit/posthole, one boundary ditch and a large rubbish pit with a concentration of cattle bone fragments. The ditch lines up with the boundary depicted on Ordnance Survey mapping from c. 1900 and is interpreted as a late post-medieval or early modern boundary ditch. No dating evidence was achievable for the other features, though it is apparent that one of the features was at the ground surface prior to the importation of topsoil for the modern garden lawn.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 An application has been made to Hinkley & Bosworth Borough Council for the erection of a single dwelling to the rear of The Manor House, Church Street, Burbage, Hinckley, Leicestershire, LE10 2DB (Planning ref 22/01176/OUT). The Manor House is a Grade II Listed 17th century building. An Archaeological Heritage Statement produced for the site identified that it 'is located within an area of some archaeological potential', with potential for a medieval or post-medieval fishpond at the eastern end of the site.

1.2 A condition of the planning permission required the applicant to secure the implementation of a programme of archaeological evaluation to determine if there are any significant archaeological remains within the site, in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) approved by the Planning Authority (Bradbury 2023). Archaeology Warwickshire carried out a programme of archaeological evaluation, in September 2023. This report presents the results of that work.

1.3 The project archive consisting of:

	No	Type
Physical records	1	Section drawing sheets
Digital records	8	Photographs
	1	Location plan
Artefacts	20	Pottery sherds
	9	Animal bone frags
	1	Glass
	3	fossil

will be deposited at the Leicestershire Museums under accession number X.A66.2023, with digital data deposited at ADS.

1.4 The work was carried out in accordance with The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (CIa 2020).

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2 SITE LOCATION

- 2.1 The site is centred on National Grid Reference SP 4442892720, at the eastern edge of the historic settlement core of the village of Burbage (Fig 1).
- 2.2 The site comprises gardens within the domestic curtilage of the Grade II Listed 17th century Manor House (National Heritage List for England no.1178080), which lies to the west of the site. The boundaries are established property boundaries marked by domestic fencing including brick-built walls. Open fields lie to the north, east and south-east. The Grade II Listed early 18th century Burbage Hall (NHLE: 1074253) lies to the south and Manor Farm to the north-west.
- 2.3 The British Geological Survey (2023) records the underlying geology as Mercia Mudstone Group, with superficial deposits of Dunsmore Gravel – Sand and Gravel. The site lies at a height of between 125m and 128m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).

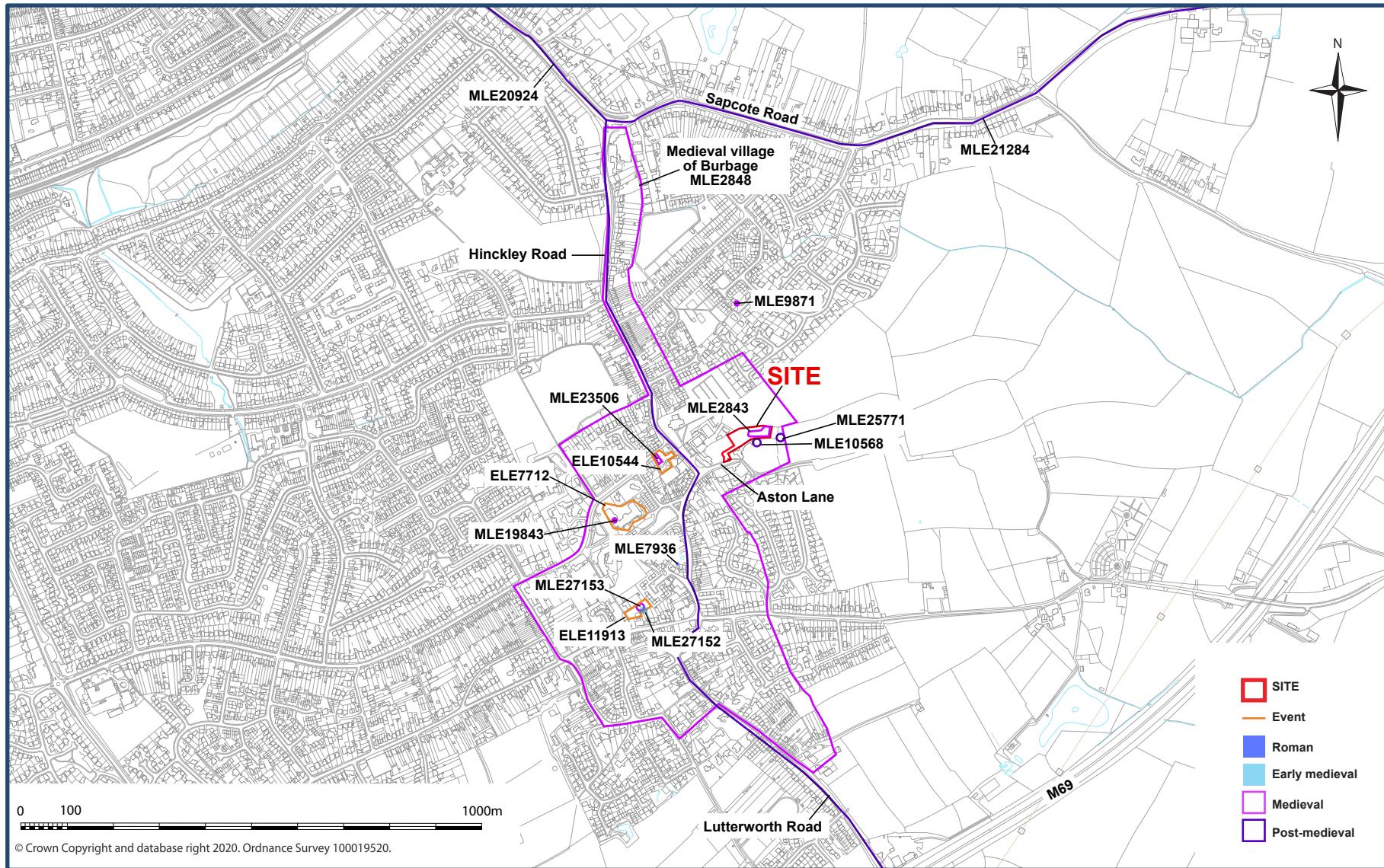


Fig 1: Location of site and selected Historic Environment information

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3 BASELINE ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATA

3.1 The baseline archaeological data was established in January 2023 (Archaeological Building Recording Services 2023) and has been summarised below. A 1km HER search was also requested from Leicestershire Historic Environment Record (HER) and was discussed in the WSI (Bradbury 2023).

Prehistoric

3.2 As yet no finds or sites known to date from the prehistoric period are recorded by the HER within the search area.

Roman

3.3 Evidence for Roman period settlement in Burbage derives from an unconfirmed report of a “Roman mosaic of some considerable quality” in the Horsepool area, some 310m south-west of the site (HER ref. MLE7936).

Early medieval

3.4 It is likely that the settlement of Burbage existed in the Saxon period (MLE2848) and a ditch containing a sherd of early to mid-Saxon pottery (MLE27152) was reported to the rear to 32 Windsor Street, some 430m south-west of the site.

Medieval

3.5 The site is located on the eastern fringe of the historic settlement core of Burbage (MLE2848; as suggested by historic mapping). A 15th century ring was found (MLE9871) some 300m north of the site and 12th century pottery (MLE19843) was reported 40m WSW of the site.

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- 3.6 The remains of two 11th or 12th century structures (MLE27153) were reported 440m SW of the site and a medieval sherd was found in one of two post-medieval pits (Event ID ELE10544) (MLE23506).
- 3.7 Within the boundaries of the current site is a possible medieval fishpond (MLE2843). Due to its proximity to Burbage Hall, the HER surmises it may have originally belonged to the Hall and not to the Manor House. The pond itself is steep sided and irregular in shape and may, in fact be a flooded brick pit.

Post-medieval & modern

- 3.8 The HER records a number of features of historic significance dating to the post medieval and modern periods within the search area. The main road through Burbage follows the alignment of the Hinckley to Lutterworth Turnpike (MLE20924), north of Burbage the road meets the Burbage to Narborough Turnpike (MLE21284).
- 3.9 The site itself is within the curtilage of the Grade II Listed 17th century *Manor House* (NHLE: 1178080; MLE13029).
- 3.10 The earliest cartographic source viewed was John Prior's Map of Leicestershire published in 1777 (not reproduced). The map records the village as a number of buildings fronting the principal thoroughfares and clearly distinct to Hinckley to the north-west. It is unclear whether the buildings are a true representation of the village and its lay out or merely indicative. There is a roadway following the alignment of what is currently Hinckley Road, Church Street and Lutterworth Road and there are buildings recorded fronting this roadway within the vicinity of the proposed development area, one of which could conceivably be the Manor House.
- 3.11 More immediate to the site, archaeological work at the early 18th century Burbage Hall, which has a shared boundary with the site, recorded walls of

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an outbuilding associated with the Hall (MLE10568) and a ditch containing animal bone (MLE25771).

- 3.12 The next available map of the proposed development area is a tithe map of 1841 (ROLLR Ref PP451/14 (not reproduced)). The site occupies the easternmost extent of an irregular shaped parcel of land east of the Manor House and is, at the time undeveloped. The accompanying apportionment identifies the house as No. 116, "House, outbuildings, yards & garden", this would indicate that at the time the house was part of a working farm, most likely Manor Farm, which is now a modern farmhouse to the east of the traditional farm buildings north of Manor House. The site itself, No. 119 is identified as "Plantation". The pond is apparently mapped in outline, but not identified.
- 3.13 The First Edition Ordnance Survey of the area was published in 1888 (ROLLR Ref XLII.12; not reproduced); it is the first modern map to record the site in significant detail. The Manor House is now identified as such, but appears still to be part of Manor Farm, the site itself is again recorded as undeveloped, but does include standing trees, supporting the plantation description of the Tithe Map. The pond is clearly recorded.
- 3.14 The remainder of the early 20th century Ordnance Survey maps (Fig 2) show no alterations to the site itself and only minor alterations to the Manor House.



Fig 2: Detail from Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map of 1903 (Leicestershire XXLII.12)

4 AIMS AND METHODS

- 4.1 The main aim of the evaluation is to determine if there are any significant archaeological remains in the area to be developed; to form an understanding of their value and their potential to shed light on the subsequent development of the area.
- 4.2 Secondary aims included placing the results in their wider local and regional contexts as appropriate.
- 4.3 The objectives were to locate, record and analyse archaeological materials and deposits and to disseminate the results in an appropriate format.
- 4.4 The area was evaluated with one trial trench, which was 13m long by 1.6m wide (Photo 1). The full extent of the trench as set out in the WSI was not practicable due to the physical constraints around the site and health and safety concerns imposed thereby.
- 4.5 Topsoil, former ploughsoils and demonstrably modern overburden were removed by an appropriate machine using a toothless bucket under direct archaeological supervision. Ground reduction was carried out in shallow spits until the uppermost archaeological horizon, or the geological natural was reached (whichever the higher).

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1 Trench 1, looking east

5 **RESULTS**

Geological Natural

5.1 The geological natural across the site varied from reddish brown clay with limestone fragments (103) in the western part of the trench, to yellowish brown clay with small to medium gravel (104) in the sloping eastern side of the trench. It was exposed at 125.44m aOD at the eastern end of the trench and 127.44m aOD at the western end of the trench. This was between 0.60m and 0.80m below the current ground surface (124.94m – 126.57m aOD).

Deposit Sequence

5.2 In the western half of the trench, the clay substrate was overlain by a simple sequence of clay derived subsoil (102) with thickness of 0.08m topped with an organic dark brown clay ploughsoil (101) which is 0.35m thick. The recent topsoil is a loose organic dark brown clay (100) 0.2m thick. In the eastern half of the trench, the clay substrate was directly overlain by the modern topsoil (100).

5.3 In the topsoil 100 and subsoils 101 and 102 in the east side of the trench, a concentration of postmedieval pottery fragments, tile fragments and brick fragments were recovered, though it was unclear from which precise context they derived. A full handmade brick measured 220 x 70 x 10 mm. This material is redeposited from a nearby source, added during the landscaping of the garden during the second half of the 20th century when the area's function changed from being part of a cattle enclosure to part of the landscaped garden of the Grade II listed The Manor House.

Archaeological Features and Deposits (Fig 3)

5.4 Undated circular posthole/pit 105 was 0.35m in diameter by 0.15m deep. It was filled with grey clay 106 containing charcoal flecks and a fragment of animal bone (Photo 2).

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5.5 NW-SE aligned ditch 107 was 0.93m wide and 0.1m deep. It is located on the sloping western side of the trench where sediment has been removed and added in creating the current landscaped slope towards the pond. The grey clay fill contained gravel and charcoal flecks (Photo 3). The ditch roughly lines up with the dashed line on the 1903 mapping of the area and is therefore interpreted as boundary ditch of a cattle enclosure.

5.6 In the lowest part of the trench, feature 109 was 2.5m wide and more than 0.3m deep. The brown clay fill contained cattle bones and charcoal flecks (Photo 4). This feature was only overlain by topsoil (100), rather than the ploughsoils, suggesting that this feature was open prior to the importation of topsoil. There is, further, some evidence for a trampled horizon at the top of this feature, where yellow clay is visible.



2 Section of pit/posthole 105

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3 Section of ditch 107



4 Partly sectioned pit 109

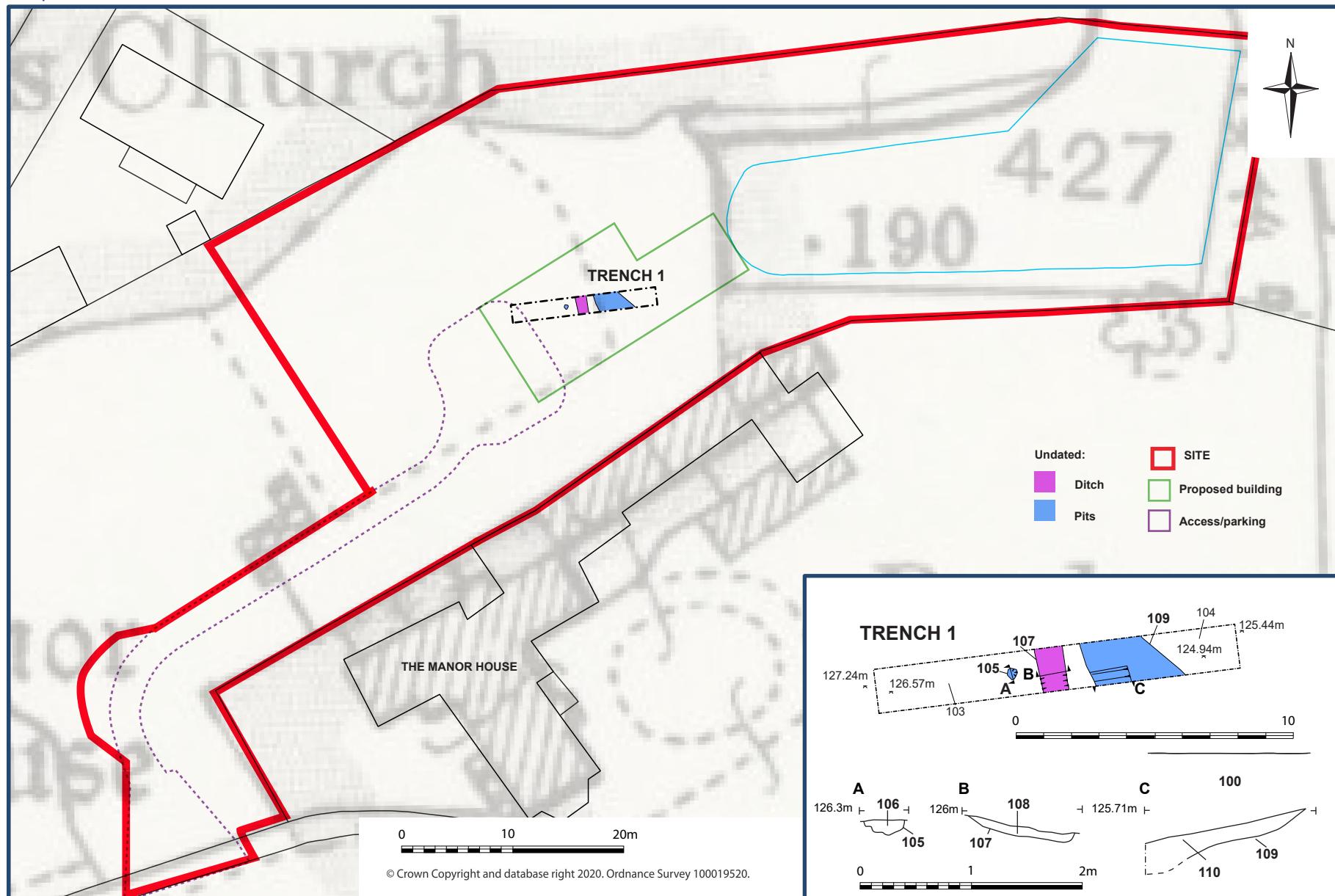


Fig 3: Location of excavated trench with 1903 mapping behind, and sections A to C

6 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The evaluation revealed three features of archaeological interest. Feature 105 is a circular shallow posthole/pit containing one fragment of sheep bone and charcoal flecks. Ditch 107 is N-S aligned, is very shallow and aligns with a boundary depicted on the 1903 mapping and before, suggesting a late post-medieval origin. Feature 109 is situated in the eastern end of the trench and contains fragments of cattle bone which suggests that this was used as rubbish pit.
- 6.2 All features lack datable finds. However, they are all in an area associated with a boundary on early OS maps, so may be contemporary, especially as the large potential pit towards the east possesses some evidence that it was at the ground surface prior to the importation of topsoil for the lawn.
- 6.3 Halfway in the trench the site slopes down towards the current pond. Around 1960 the area of the site became part of the garden of the Grade II Listed The Manor House. Prior, it was part of the cattle enclosure of the neighbouring farm whereby the pond was used as drinking hole (pers. comm. current owner). The change from ploughsoil to topsoil in the trench overburden is likely as a result of material being imported for the creation of the lawn, and this would explain why the topsoil is proportionately thicker at the eastern end of the trench, adjacent to the pond.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeology Warwickshire would like to thank Nest Design & Developments Ltd for commissioning the work.

The fieldwork was carried out by Els Meirsman, Harry Mason-Hodges and Charlie Palmer; the identification of the finds by Bekky Hillman and Dr. Cathy Coutts.

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BGS British Geological Survey 2023 *Geology Viewer*, accessed September 2023
geologyviewer.bgs.ac.uk

Bradbury, F. 2023 *Land to the rear of The Manor House, Burbage, Leicestershire: Written Scheme of Investigation: Archaeological evaluation*

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIIfA) 2020 *Standard and guidance for an archaeological field evaluation*

Cartographic sources

Ordnance Survey map, 1903, 1:2500, digitised version

Ordnance Survey map, 1925, 1:2500, digitised version

APPENDICES

A List of Contexts

Context	Description	Depth (m)	Comment
100	Dark brown organic clay with roots from turf	0.20	Topsoil
101	Dark brown organic clay with small to medium pebbles, evenly distributed	0.35	Plough soil
102	Light brown clay	0.08m	Subsoil
103	Reddish brown clay with occasionally small to medium angular limestone fragments		Geological natural in western half of the trench
104	Yellowish brown clay with small to medium sub-rounded gravel, evenly distributed		Geological natural in eastern sloping part of the trench
105	Circular cut with shallow rounded base	Diameter: 0.35 Depth: 0.15	Cut of posthole
106	Grey clay with charcoal flecks	0.15	Fill of posthole 105
107	Linear cut with rounded base, NW-SE aligned	Length: >1.50 Width: 0.93 Depth: 0.1	Cut of ditch
108	Grey clay with gravel and charcoal flecks	Length: >1.50 Width: 0.93 Depth: 0.1	Fill of ditch
109	Partly cut pit with sloping sides	Length: +1.6 Width: 2.5 Depth: +0.30	Cut of pit
110	Brown clay with pebbles and charcoal flecks	Length: +1.6 Width: 2.5 Depth: +0.30	Fill of pit 109

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B List of Finds

Context	Material	Quantity/ Weight (g)	Date/Comments
100/101	Pottery	11 / 226	1 EA2 North Midlands Earthenware body sherds with internal black glaze and external iron rich slip. 1 EA3 Mottled Ware bodysherd. 1 SW5 Stoneware bodysherd from blacking jar. 1 EA9 Pearlware bodysherd. 1 SW Later Stoneware bodysherd. 6 EA10 Modern Glazedware sherds: 1 rimsherd with blue transfer decoration, 1 bodysherd with black transfer decoration, 4 with cream glaze one base sherd.
100/101	Glass	1 / 9	Clear green bottle body fragment
102	Pottery	9 / 221	1 EA2 North Midlands Earthenware rim sherd with internal black glaze. 3 EA9 pearlware: 1 base sherd, 1 rimsherd in two pieces, 1 bodysherd. 4 EA8 creamware bodysherds three from the same vessel
106	Animal bone	1 / 2	Sheep rib shaft fragment
110	Animal bone	8 / 167	1 cattle calcaneous complete, 5 skull fragments, 2 unidentified shaft fragments
110	Fossil	3 / 72	Gryphaea

OASIS Summary for archaeol27-519364

OASIS ID (UID)	archaeol27-519364
Project Name	Land to the rear of The Manor House, Burbage, Leicestershire Archaeological evaluation
Sitename	Land to the rear of The Manor House, Burbage, Leicestershire
Sitecode	LM23
Project Identifier(s)	LM23
Activity type	Evaluation
Planning Id	22/01176/OUT
Reason For Investigation	Planning: Between application and determination
Organisation Responsible for work	Archaeology Warwickshire
Project Dates	14-Sep-2023 - 14-Sep-2023
Location	Land to the rear of The Manor House, Burbage, Leicestershire NGR : SP 44428 92720 LL : 52.53054412815997, -1.346513850412637 12 Fig : 444428,292720
Administrative Areas	Country : England County : Leicestershire District : Hinckley and Bosworth Parish : Burbage
Project Methodology	The area was evaluated with one trial trench, which was 13m long by 1.6m wide. The full extent of the trench as set out in the WSI was not practicable due to the physical constraints around the site and health and safety concerns imposed thereby. All work will be undertaken in accordance with AW's Procedures Manual, and the Standards and Guidelines of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (ClfA).
Project Results	The evaluation revealed three features of archaeological interest. Feature 105 is a circular shallow posthole/pit containing one fragment of sheep bone and charcoal flecks. Ditch 107 is N-S aligned, is very shallow and aligns with a boundary depicted on the 1903 mapping and before, suggesting a late post-medieval origin. Feature 109 is situated in the eastern end of the trench and contains fragments of cattle bone which suggests that this was used as rubbish pit. All features lack datable finds. However, they are all in an area associated with a boundary on early OS maps, so may be contemporary, especially as the large potential pit towards the east possesses some evidence that it was at the ground surface prior to the importation of topsoil for the lawn. Halfway in the trench the site slopes down towards the current pond. Around 1960 the area of the site became part of the garden of the Grade II Listed The Manor House. Prior, it was part of the cattle enclosure of the neighbouring farm whereby the pond was used as drinking hole. The change from ploughsoil to topsoil in the trench overburden is likely as a result of material being imported for the creation of the lawn, and this would explain why the topsoil is proportionately thicker at the eastern end of the trench, adjacent to the pond.
Keywords	
Funder	Private individual
HER	Leicestershire HER - unRev - STANDARD

Person Responsible for work	Paul Clarke
HER Identifiers	
Archives	Physical Archive, Digital Archive - to be deposited with Leicester Museums & Galleries;

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