

**Archaeological Attendance and Recording
(Watching Brief) at 87 High Street,
Barwell, Leicestershire, LE9 8DS**

NGR: SP 44229 96479

Graham Murray



Site Name: 87 High Street, Barwell, Leicestershire, LE9 8DS

Grid Ref: SP 44229 96479

Author: Graham Murray

Client: Vexford Homes

Planning Authority: Hinckley and Bosworth

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Cover photo: Working shot stripping the area.

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PROJECT DETAILS	Oasis No	universi1- 515489		
	Project Name	An Archaeological Watching Brief at 87 High Street, Barwell, Leicestershire, LE9 8DS		
	Start/end dates	22nd – 27th September 2022		
	Previous/Future Work	NA		
	Project Type	Watching brief		
	Site Status			
	Current Land Use	Garden and Domestic Dwelling		
	Monument Type/Period	NA		
	Significant Finds/Period	High medieval, 19th Century		
	Reason for Investigation	Planning regulation		
	Position in the Planning Process	Condition		
PROJECT LOCATION	Planning Ref.	19/00049/FUL		
	County	Leicestershire		
	Site Address/Postcode	87 High Street, Barwell, Leicestershire, LE9 8DS		
	Study Area	Approximately 115 m ²		
	Site Coordinates	SP 44229 96479		
PROJECT CREATORS	Height OD	117m		
	Organisation	University of Leicester Archaeological Services		
	Project Brief Originator	Hinckley and Bosworth Council		
	Project Design Originator	University of Leicester Archaeological Services		
	Project Manager	Vicki Score		
	Project Director/Supervisor	Graham Murray		
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An archaeological watching brief at 87 High Street, Barwell, Leicestershire, LE9 8DS

Graham Murray

Summary

This report details the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) at 87 High Street, Barwell, Leicestershire, LE9 8DS. The work was undertaken between 22nd -27th September 2022 on behalf of Vexford Homes in advance of the erection of 4 dwellings.

An area along the northern edge of the development site was stripped down to the natural substrata for the purposes of archaeological investigation. The area had been significantly impacted by modern services and the construction of a brick-built building, with cellar, in the 19th century. However, several ditches were seen running south-west to north-east, broadly parallel to the modern High Street. Pits and postholes were identified across the site, with a concentration in the north-east which also contained brick lined hearths. Pottery ranged from the 12th century to 14th century and a brick lined hearth was dated to the late 19th century. No other archaeological features were identified.

The archive will be deposited with Leicestershire Museums Service under the accession number X.A87.2022

Introduction

In accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Section 16 Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment, (MHCLG 2021) this document forms the report for archaeological attendance and recording (watching brief) at 87 High Street, Barwell, Leicestershire, LE9 8DS.

The work was carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on behalf of Vexford Homes.

Planning Permission has been granted for the demolition of existing buildings and the erection of 4 dwellings (revised scheme) and the permission includes a condition for archaeological work (condition 11). Due to the archaeological potential, the Planning Archaeologist for Leicestershire as advisor to Hinckley and Bosworth Council requested archaeological attendance for inspection and recording (watching brief) during any groundworks for the proposed development in order to record any archaeological remains that may be present and mitigate the impacts of the scheme.

Location, Topography & Geology

Barwell is a village 2.88km north-east of Hinckley town centre (NGR SP 44229 96479) (Figs. 1-3). It is located alongside Main Street (A6121), opposite The Limes Cottages and All Saints Church.

The area previously contained a residential property and outbuildings within a large garden, with the current iteration of archaeological investigations restricted to the area adjacent to the High Street. This area had been heavily disturbed by the footings and basement of the demolished residential property and modern services.

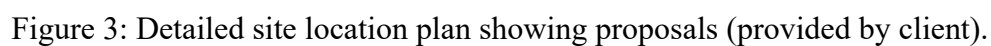
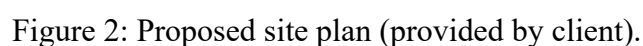
The site lies in the southern part of the village, accessed from High Street at an approximate height of 117m AOD.

The British Geological Survey identifies the geology of the area as the Mercia Mudstone Group formed during the Triassic period, overlain with of Bosworth Clay member superficial deposits (<https://www.bgs.ac.uk/map-viewers/geology-of-britain-viewer/>).

The Soilscape website indicates that the soils, will be slowly permeable seasonally wet slightly acid but base rich loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage (Soilscape 18 <http://www.landis.org.uk/soilscales/>).



Figure 1: Location of site within the UK and locally.



Historical and Archaeological Background (Taken from WSI)

Previous work on the site includes a historic building photographic survey of the building prior to demolition (Groundworks Archaeology 2019) and trial trench evaluations (Groundworks Archaeology 2022).

The following background is summarised from these reports.

Prehistoric

The HER records some prehistoric activity in the area comprising Neolithic finds and features (**MLE2810**) 305m east of the site. These included pot boilers, burnt hearthstones, a bone pick, ox horn and flint cores and implement. Eight Late Neolithic flints (**MLE17734**) were identified during a watching brief (**ELE6495**) 339m north-east of the site.

A single Bronze Age burial (**MLE2811**) has been identified 187m north-east of the site. It was comprised of a large bucket-shaped vessel with thumbled applied cordon in an upright position containing calcined bone. The rim sherd of a second vessel was also found. Trial trenching at 19 St Mary's Court (**ELE4445**) 65m east of the site identified a Late Bronze Age to Early Iron Age roundhouse (**MLE15945**).

Roman

The site lies between three Roman roads which connect Leicester, Mancetter and High Cross near Lutterworth. The evaluation at 19 St Mary's Court (**ELE4445**) also recovered Roman pottery and fragments of tile (**MLE15946**). In the early 20th century Roman coins (**MLE7933**) were reportedly found in a field 298m south of the site, while Roman pottery (**MLE17947**) was found during development works at Adcote close in 1971 approximately 227m north-east of the site. An evaluation in 2011 (**ELE8446**) identified a possible Roman field system (**MLE20615**) 463m west-north-west of the site.

A mixture of fieldwalking (**ELE894** and **8447**), geophysical survey (**ELE8796**) and trial trenching (**ELE8446**) undertaken 1km north-west of the site on the edge of the study area has identified a possible Roman villa site (**MLE2822**). The trial trenching in 2011 recorded various ditches, pits, postholes and a human cremation (see **MLE9618**) along with a large quantity of finds. Some of these suggested the presence of a high-status building in the immediate vicinity (decorated Samian, a tessera, fragment of window glass, hypocaust tile). However, the CBM assemblage included a high proportion of brick, tegula and flat tile and the fact that it was burned suggested it had been re-used in some kind of oven on a lower status site after the demise of the villa. The Roman remains appear to date predominantly from the second century, although possibly earlier and later material is present.

A further possible villa site (**MLE2812**) has been postulated 310m east of the site where examination of a sand pit in the early 20th century produced evidence of Roman settlement, including a possible floor, several hundred potsherds, brick, tile, tesserae and a whetstone. Roman pottery was also found during a watching brief in 1972.

Medieval

Barwell is likely to have been the location of at least limited settlement in the early medieval period. An archaeological investigation at High Close Cottage (**ELE893**) 162m north-east of the site in the 1960's recorded a cobbled floor, post holes and semi-circular hearth backed with re-used Roman tiles (**MLE7934**), indicating at least some early medieval settlement activity (**MLE2816**). A ditch recorded in another excavation contained a single sherd of Anglo-Saxon

pottery (**MLE17739**). An early medieval sleeve clasp has been recorded within the study area by the Portable Antiquities Scheme.

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 situation is confirmed in Domesday Book in 1086. The Manor passed through various families through the Medieval period but did not significantly alter in size or importance. During this period the settlement was focused around the historic village core (**MLE2821**) and the 14th century church (**MLE12974**). The Manor House (**MLE21406**) which was demolished in the 1960's was located 86m north-east of the site. A moated site (**MLE2818**) has been identified 621m west-south-west of the site. The 1837 Barwell Tithe Map shows three arms of a possible moat which correlate closely with the earthworks depicted on the 1888, 25" 1st Edition Ordnance Survey map. Although gardens have now been laid out on the site the features are still discernible. An associated fish pond (**MLE2819**) lies adjacent to the north-east. A second (although debatable) possible Medieval moated site (**MLE2804**) is located 793m south-west of the site. It is comprised of a rectangular earthwork enclosure - a 'moat' on two sides, ditches on the other, identified in the 1980s. A site visit in 2011 did not identify any trace of this possible site. An evaluation (**ELE5832**) at Iven's Farm 160m south of the site recorded, two substantial linear features along with a possible backfilled pond and several ephemeral features all of Medieval origin (**MLE10020**). A watching brief (**ELE4208**) recorded a probable continuation of the ditches (**MLE10661**) identified in the earlier evaluation. The evaluation at 19 St Mary's Court (**ELE4445**) also recorded boundary ditches, pottery and a possible pond (**MLE15947**).

Evidence of industry has been recognised 292m north-east of the site where finds of Medieval pottery (**MLE2802**) suggest the presence of a kiln site. A possible lime kiln (**MLE2813**) constructed of granite blocks was identified 289m east of the site in the early 20th century. Large amounts of medieval pottery were recovered from the vicinity

Post-Medieval - Modern

Barwell remained predominantly agricultural until the 19th century. The settlement in the area was concentrated in the village centre at this time. By the 1840s, framework knitting undertaken within individuals' houses was the primary employment within Barwell. The main product was hosiery produced on narrow machines. With the outbreak of the American Civil War in 1861 which disrupted cotton exports and increasing industrialisation of the textile industry framework knitting waned. The boot and shoe manufacturing which characterised much of Leicester became the dominant trade. Although this was also initially undertaken in peoples' houses, towards the end of the 19th century and early 20th century purpose-built factories and production sites were established. The recorded sites on the HER for the late post-medieval period and early modern periods are dominated by records of shoe and boot factories in the village centre. Many of these are located within the Conservation Area.

Previous work

The building survey found that the two-story brick-built structure had three phases, but that internally the building had been much altered, and few original features survived (Groundworks Archaeology 2019).

The trial trench evaluations excavated three trenches across the development area in November 2021 (Figure 4). This identified disturbance from roots around Trench 1 to the south-west. A large rubbish pit with modern material in Trench 3 to the east is probably late 20th century in date. A single feature, a ditch, was found in Trench 2 in the north-west of the site close to and parallel with High Street containing medieval floor tile (Groundworks Archaeology 2022) (Figure 5).



Figure 2: Trench locations

Figure 4: Previous trenching locations (Groundworks Archaeology 2022)

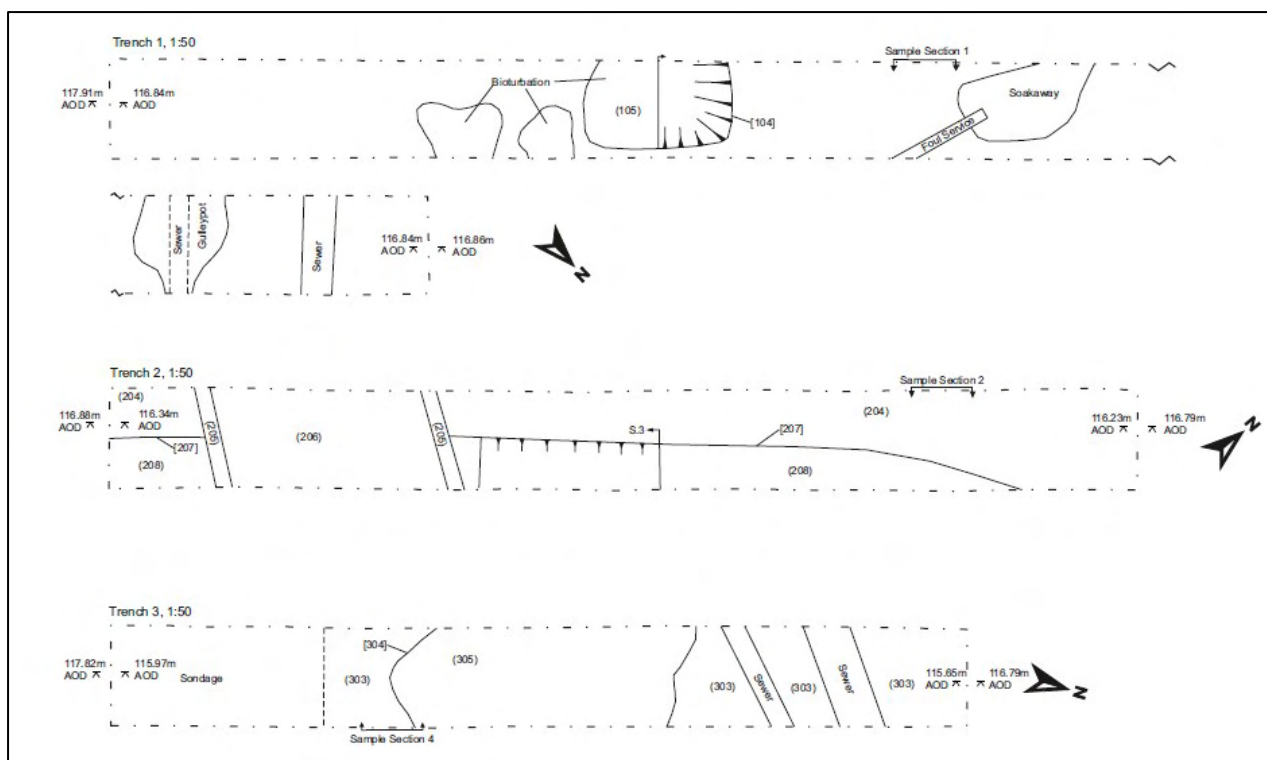


Figure 5: Detail of trench plans showing Ditch [207] in Trench 2 (Groundworks Archaeology 2022)

Aims and Objectives

The main objectives of the archaeological work were defined as follows:

- To identify the presence/absence of any archaeological deposits.
- To characterise the extent, date range, character, condition and significance of any archaeological deposits to be affected by the ground works.
- To excavate and record archaeological deposits uncovered during the work.
- To recover artefacts and ecofacts to aid in the dating and interpretation of any archaeological deposits and features encountered.
- To advance understanding of the heritage assets and establish the relationship of any remains within the wider landscape.
- To produce an archive and report of any results.

Research Objectives

The presence of possible medieval and post-medieval features indicate a potential for further archaeology within the site from these periods. The archaeological work is therefore likely to contribute to the following East Midlands Historic Environment (<https://researchframeworks.org/emherf/>) research objectives:

Medieval

- 6J Update and expand East Midlands Anglo-Saxon Pottery Project.
- 7E Investigate the morphology of rural settlements.

Post-Medieval

- 8C Establish a typology of regional building traditions.

Methodology

All work followed the procedures set out in the approved *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) for the project (ULAS 2022).

All work was carried out in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (updated 2020) and adhered to their *Code of Conduct* (updated 2021). The site archive will be accessioned under the code X.A87.2022 with Leicestershire Museums.

Fieldwork was carried out by ULAS between the 22/09/2022 and 27/09/2022 and was followed by post-excavation and reporting.

The watching brief involved the observation of the engineering works for the scheme by an experienced professional archaeologist. Two areas were monitored which measured approximately 15m x 5m (Area 1) and 8m x 5m (Area 2) and

Excavation was carried out by the client's contractor using 14.5 tonne tracked machines and flat bladed ditching bucket. A toothed bucket was used only to clear debris from the surface. The machine did not track over any surfaces until the archaeologist had inspected and cleared the area.

Monitoring

Internal monitoring procedures were undertaken with the project manager, to ensure that project targets were met, and professional standards maintained. No monitoring visits were undertaken, but photos and descriptions of the results were shared with the Planning Archaeologist during the work.

Results

The development area included the remnants of previously demolished buildings and vegetation and had been fenced off with Heras fencing for safety (Figure 6 and 7). The two areas were stripped to the natural substratum, comprising of mixed deposits of reddish orange clayey sand and orangish brown sandy clay.



Figure 6: Area prior to stripping looking south.



Figure 7: Area prior to stripping looking north-west.

Area 1

Significant disturbance from modern utilities was found across both areas, with Area 1 also impacted by the foundations and basement of the demolished. In addition, Area 1 was located at the south-western end of evaluation Trench 2 which had truncated a number of the archaeological features building (Groundworks Archaeology 2019).

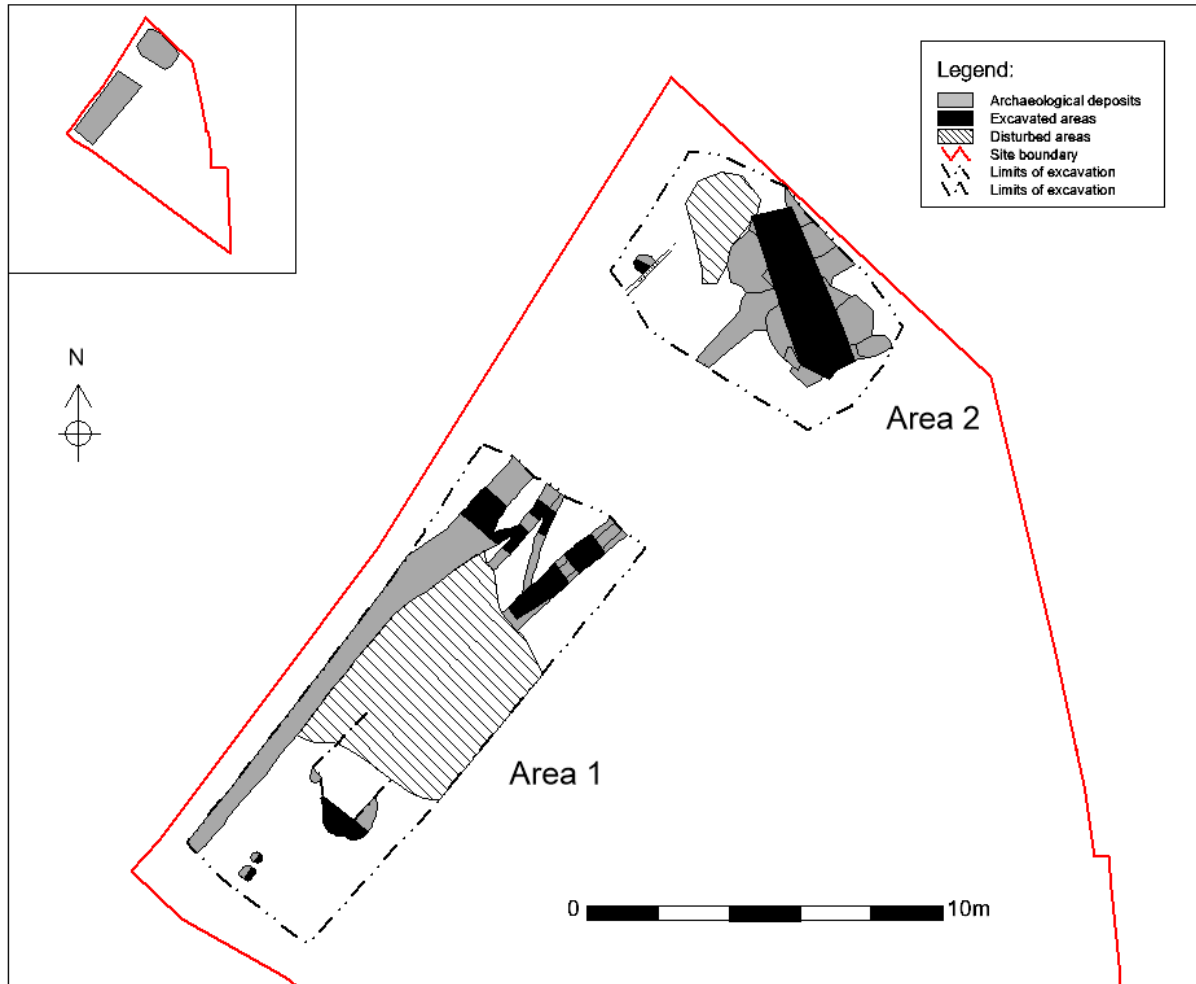


Figure 8: Plan of stripped area showing archaeological features.

Two postholes were located within the southern end of Area 1. Posthole [001] was sub-circular with a maximum diameter of 0.36m and depth of 0.05m, moderate sloping sides and a flat base. The fill (002) was a dark greyish-brown silty sand.

Posthole [003] was sub-square with a maximum width of 0.40m and depth of 0.08m, moderate sloping sides to the north-east and steep to the south-west, with a flat base. The fill (004) was a mid greyish-brown silty sand, with rare sub-rounded and rounded stones and charcoal flecks. Neither posthole contained any finds.



Figure 9 South-East Facing Sections of Undated Postholes [001] and [003].

Just to north-east of the post holes, was pit [009], partially disturbed by evaluation Trench 2 (Figure 10). The northern quadrant of the pit had been removed during the evaluation as the area had been machine excavated to a much deeper level as a sondage. What remained of the pit indicated that it was sub-circular in shape, approximately 1.57m in diameter and 0.38m deep. The sides were moderately sloped with a concave base. The fill (010) was a mid-orangish-brown sand, with rare sub-rounded and rounded stones and charcoal pieces, 14th century pottery sherds, fragments of large mammal bone and a sheep/goat femur from an animal less than 60 months of age.



Figure 10: South-West Facing Section of Pit [009] showing truncation by Evaluation Trench 2 Sondage (labelled as 013). Looking North-East.

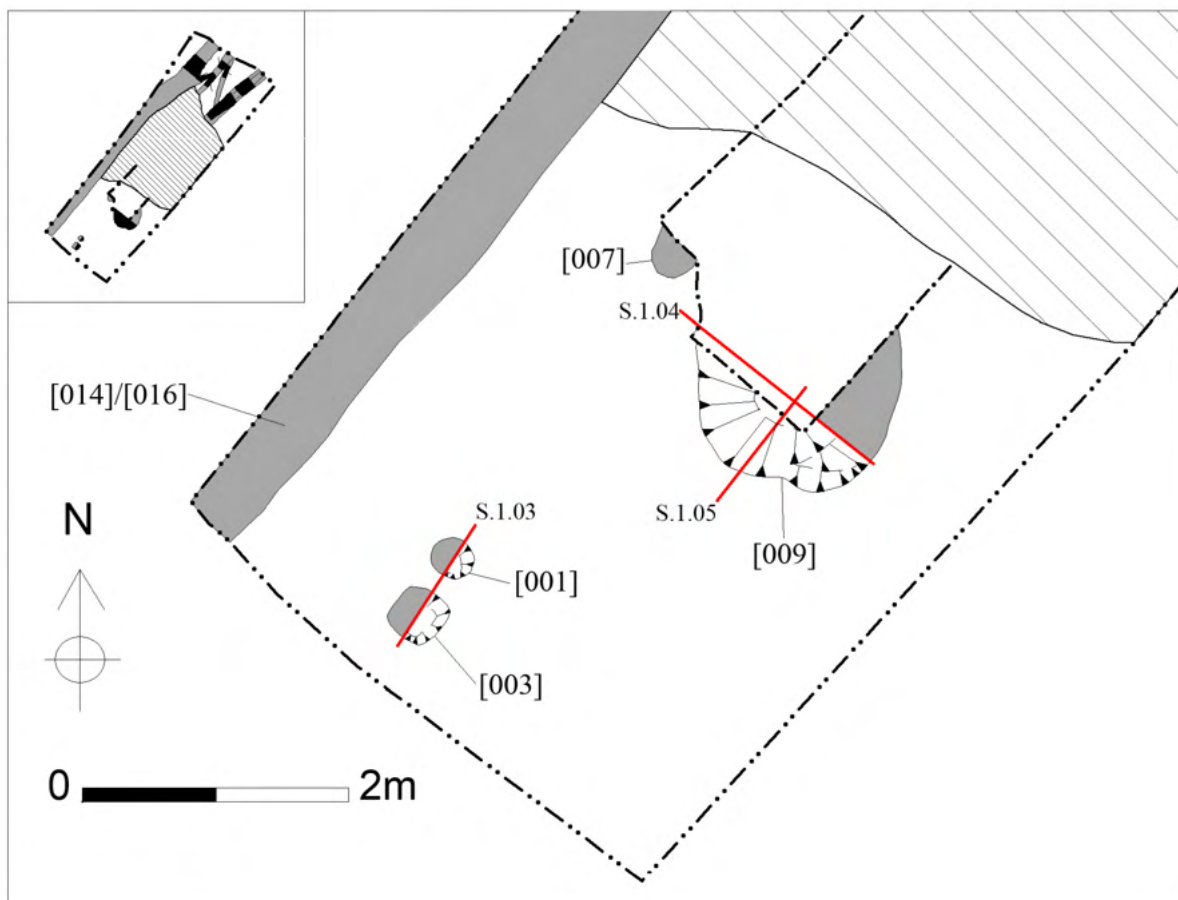


Figure 11: Plan of Area 1 – South with the evaluation trench shown as a dot-dash.

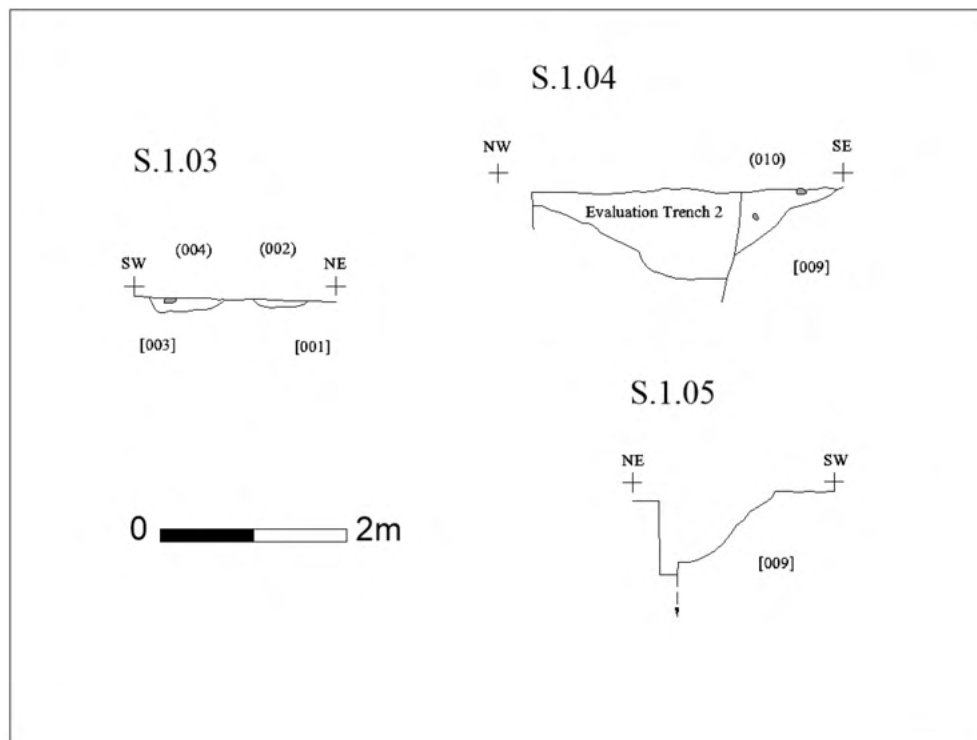


Figure 12: Sections and profile from Area 1 - South.

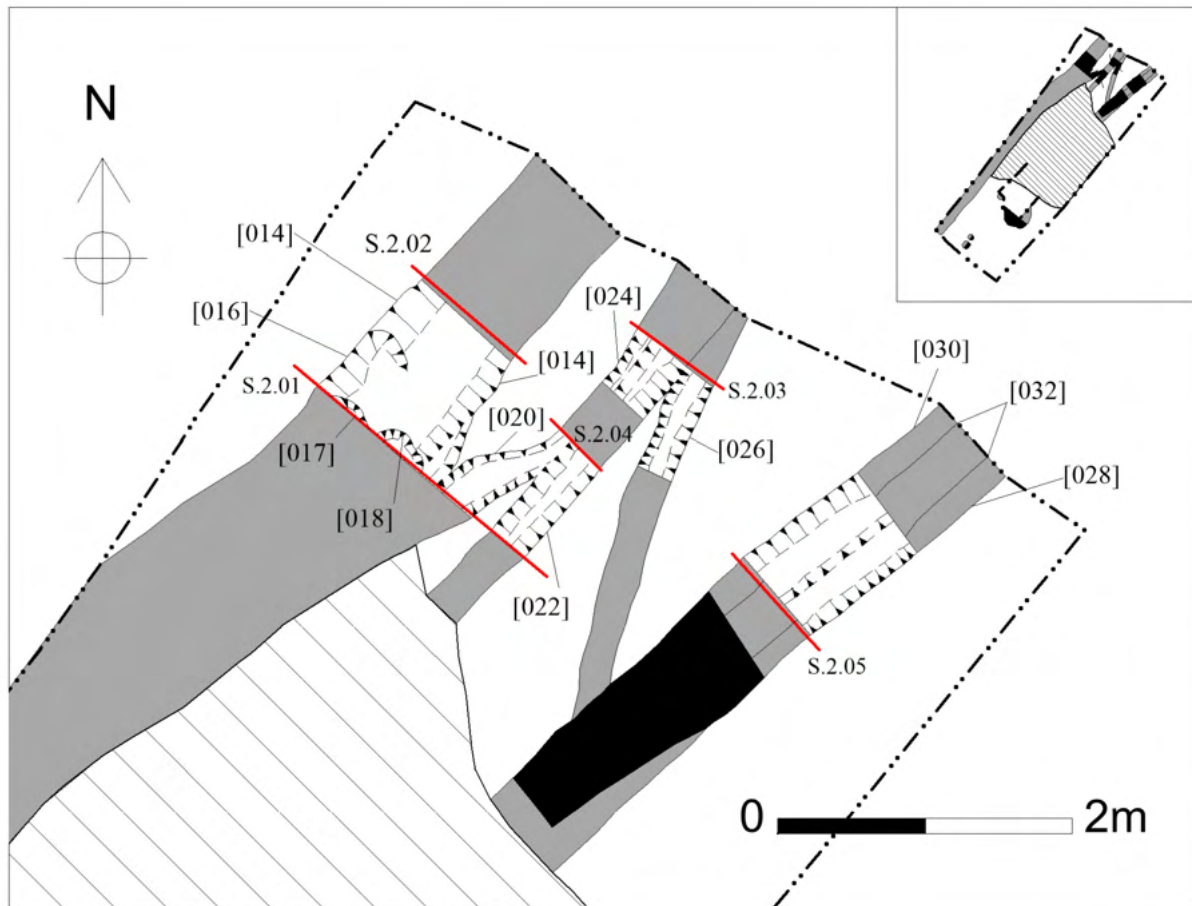


Figure 13: Plan of Area 1 - North.

Despite the truncation in the centre of the area, this did not affect north-east to south-west aligned ditch [014], located on the western length of Area 1. The ditch was, roughly parallel to the modern High Road. Within the trench the ditch measured 14m in length, with a maximum width of 1.04m and depth of 0.22m, moderately sloping concave sides and concave base. It's fill (015) was a mid-greenish-grey sandy clay with occasional charcoal and small stones which contained a concentrated dump of 12th century pottery.

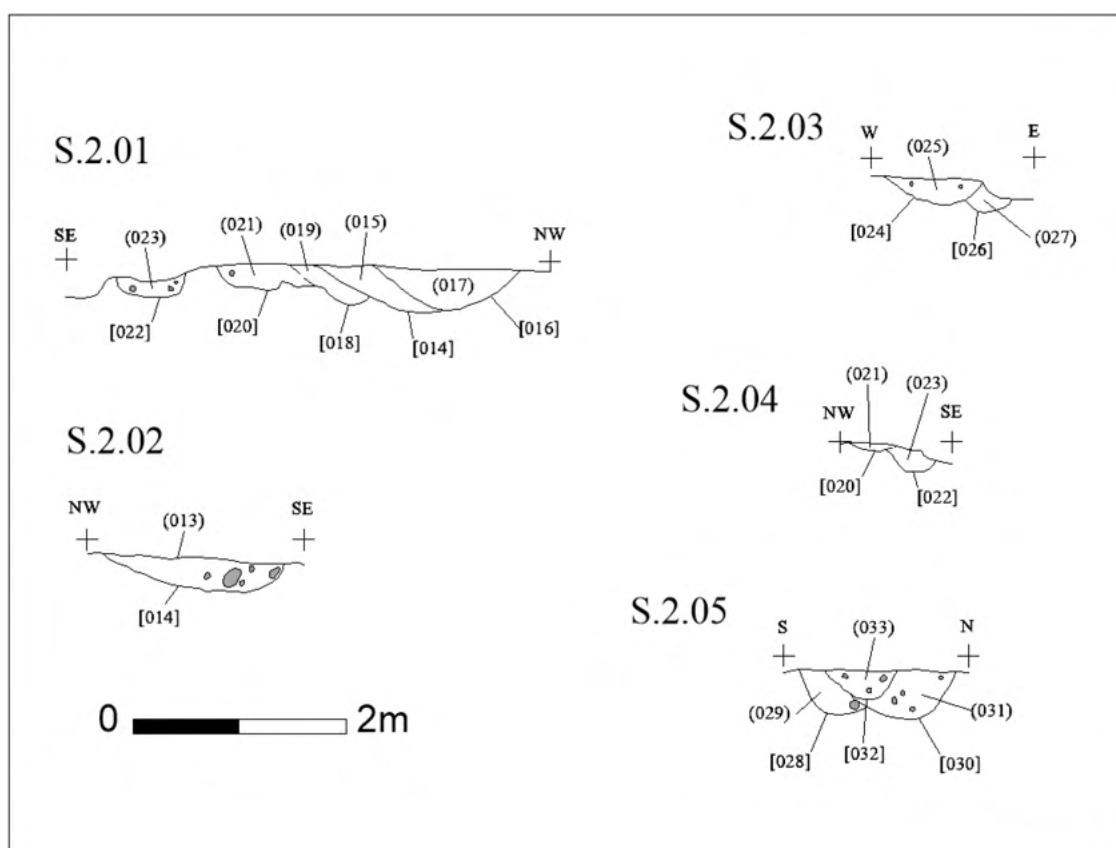


Figure 14: Sections from Area 1 - North.

In section, ditch [014] cut feature [018] and was cut by ditch [016] (Figure 14). Sample 2 was taken from the contexts within this feature but the material is most likely to contain a mixture of the 12th century ditch [014] and mid-13th century ditch recut [016]. This contained the greatest concentration and variety of plant remains, and adds to our understanding of the activities that took place on the site but was taken at the point of truncation between the two features.

At the northern end of Area 1 was a sequence of ditches, including the aforementioned ditch [014]. The earliest ditch or gully is [026] which runs north north-west to south south-east and is truncated by gully [022]/[024] to the north. The relationship between [026] and [030] is unclear as it was part of the evaluation trenching and not detailed within that report. Gully [026] was 3.01m long, with a maximum width of 0.27m and depth of 0.14m, with moderately sloping concave sides and a concave base. The fill (027) was a light brownish-grey silty sand with occasional small stones and flecks of charcoal; no finds were recovered.

Gully [020] runs between ditch [014] to the north and gully [022]/[024] to the south merging with both. It is at least 1.20m in length with a maximum width of 0.31m and depth of 0.12m, with steeply sloping concave sides and a concave base. In section (Figure 14) it is cut by feature [018] and cuts gully [022]/[024]. Its fill (021) was a mid-brownish-grey silty clay containing charcoal flecks and a single sherd of 11th to 13th century pottery.

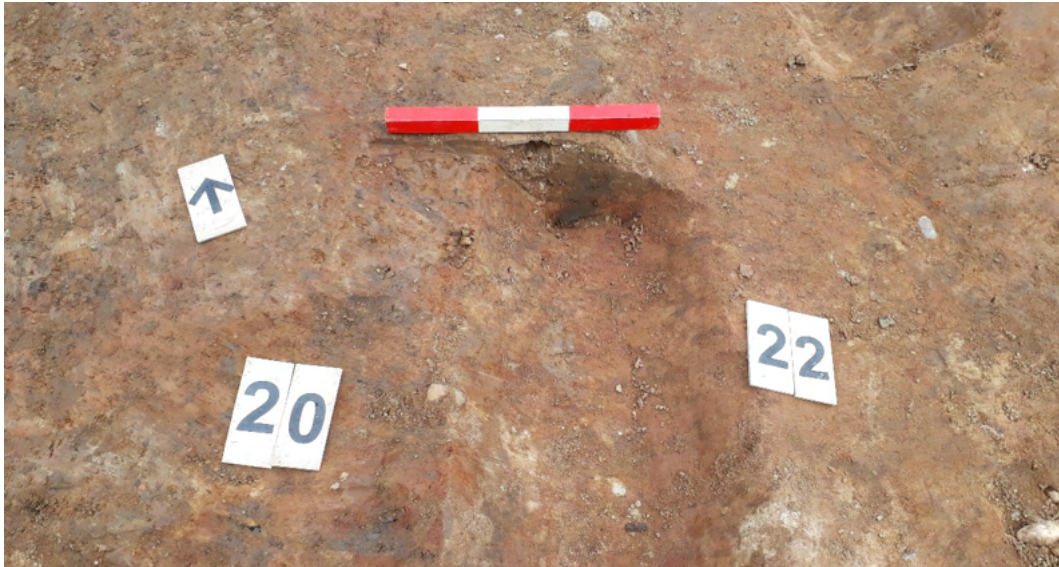


Figure 15: South Facing Section of Gullies [020] and [022]. Looking North.

Gully [022]/[024] runs parallel to ditch [014] but its southern end has been completely truncated by the later 19th century building. The remaining visible portion is 2.85m long with a maximum width of 0.41m and depth of 0.12m and moderately sloping concave sides with a concave base. In section (Figure 14) it is cut by gully [020] and cuts gully [026]. The fill (023)/(025) is a light brownish-grey clayey-sand with occasional cobbles and small stones. Two sherds of pottery were recovered from the fills (one from each) dating to the 11th – 13th century along with 6 fragments of 12th century ceramic building material from (025).

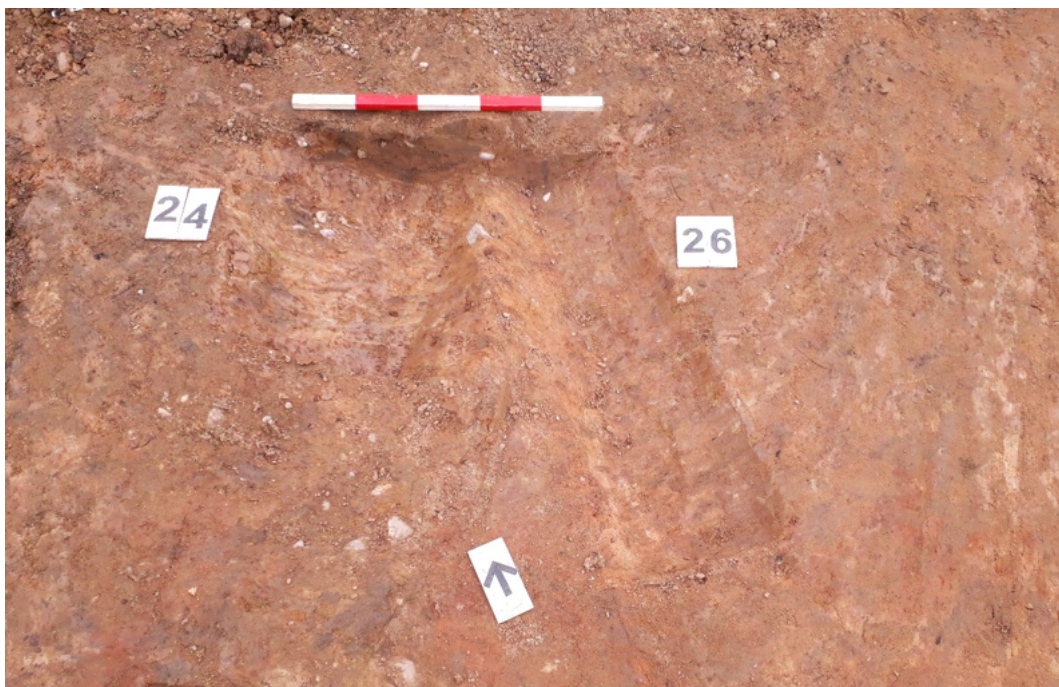


Figure 16: South Facing Section of Gullies [024] and [026]. Looking North

Feature [018] is either a pit or ditch terminus subsequently cut by ditch [014]. It's excavated length was 0.14m, with a maximum width of 0.38m and depth of 0.22m. Its fill (019) was a mid brownish-grey silty-clay with charcoal flecks that contained two sherds of pottery dating to the 12th century.

At the northern end of and truncating ditch [014] was later ditch [016] terminus (Figure 17). As a probable recut of ditch [014] it is likely to also extend beyond the southern boundary of the site. The sides were moderately sloping with a concave base, and was over 12.5m in length, with a maximum width of 0.69m and depth of 0.20m. It's fill (017) was a mid greenish-grey sandy clay with fragments of charcoal and coal, small patches of sand and occasional cobbles. Twenty-one sherds of pottery were recovered from fill (017), the majority of which was identified as Potters Marston with a single sherd of Chilvers Coton which suggests dating to be in the mid-13th century rather than earlier.



Figure 17: North-East Facing Section of Ditches [014], [016], [018] and Gully [020].
Looking South-West.

Running parallel to in the same north-east to south-west alignment and south-east of ditch [014] was ditch [028]. It was truncated by subsequent ditch recuts [030] and [032] and the construction of the later building in the 19th century (Figure 14). It was identified and excavated during the evaluation stage. What remained was 4.08m in length (although continuing beyond the northern limit of excavation) with a maximum width of 0.34m and depth of 0.20m, with steeply sloping concave sides and a concave base. The fill (029) was a light greenish-brown silty-clay with occasional cobbles and small stones.

Two recuts of ditch [028] were identified as [030] and [032] (see section S.2.05) with [032] as the latest in the sequence of successive ditch reforming. Additionally, the ditches had been truncated during the 19th century by building foundations and the evaluation trenching both of which appear to have removed evidence for a ditch terminus. The total length of the ditch sequence seen within the area of excavation was 4.08m; ditch [030] was 0.42m wide and 0.24m deep whilst [032] was generally smaller at 0.34m wide and 0.14m deep. Fill (031) was a light brownish-grey clayey-sand with occasional pebbles and a small assemblage of animal bone including the femur from a cow. Whilst fill (033) was a light greenish-yellow sandy-silt with frequent small stones.



Figure 18: Post-excavation photo of 12th Century ditches and gullies [014], [020], [022], [024], [026] and Undated ditches [028], [030], [032]. Looking West.

Area 2

Area 2 was in the northern part of the site and separated from Area 1 by land retained for construction of an access road to the rear of the new build properties. This was due to be excavated to a depth of 0.1m and would not impact any underlying archaeology.

Stripping of the overburden revealed an isolated pit and a ditch with a series of intercutting medieval pits and later 19th century hearths (Figure 19).

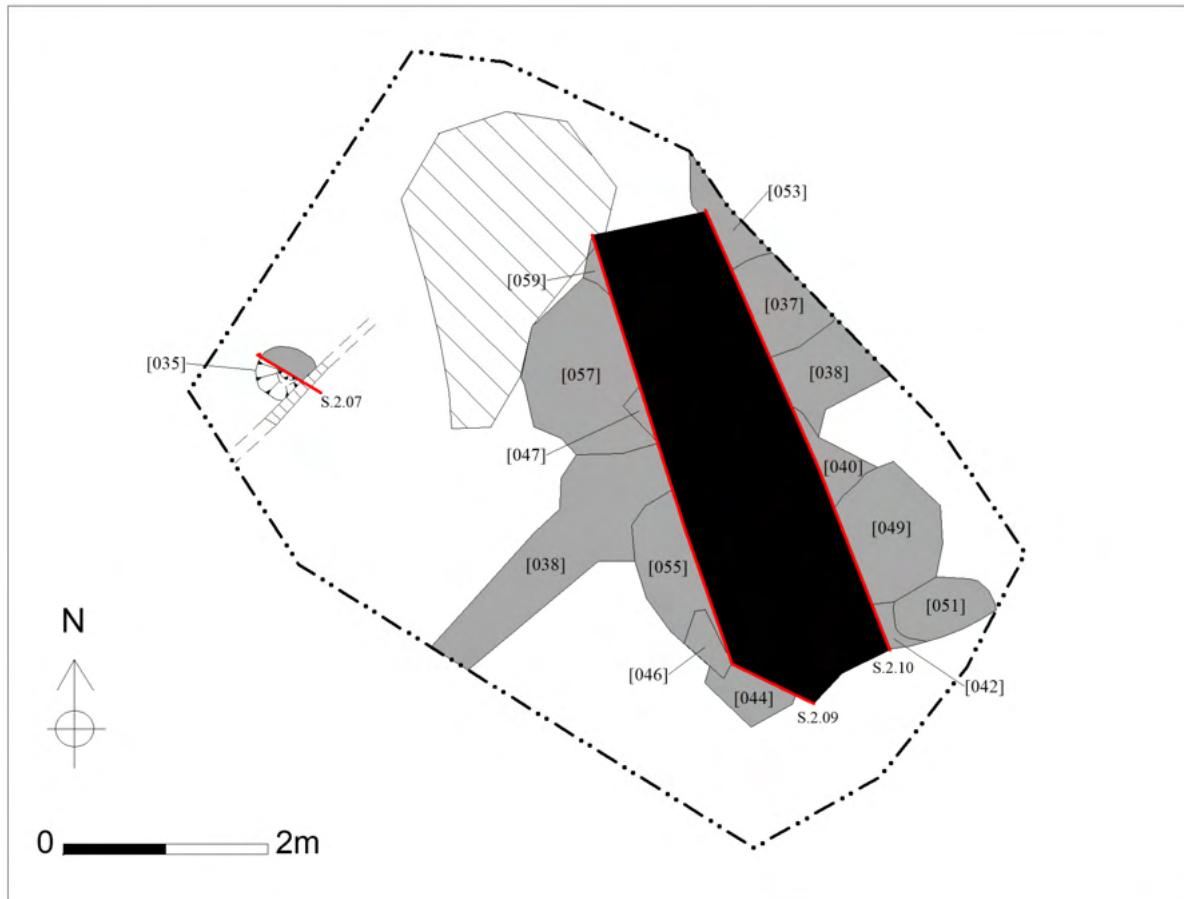


Figure 19: Plan of Area 2.

In the south-west corner of the area of excavation was pit [035], 0.6m in diameter with a maximum depth of 0.24m, moderately sloping sides and a concave base. Its fill (036) was a mid greyish-brown sandy-clay including small stones and some undiagnostic fired clay building material. It was cut by a modern pipe trench on its southern side.

A concentration of pit-like features and a ditch were located in the eastern half of Area 2. Only a small group of these features can be definitely dated as medieval from the finds and stratigraphic relationships. Ditch [038] was stratigraphically the earliest feature, orientated north-east to south-west across the area of excavation and running parallel to the modern High Road. It spanned the area of excavation, measuring 5.01m in length with a maximum width of 1.13m and depth of 0.30m with steeply sloping sides and a concave base. Three sherds of pottery dating to the mid-13th century were found within its fill (039), a dark brownish-grey silty-clay with occasional stones.

Pit [037], truncated ditch [038] and pit [053], and was partially revealed against the eastern limits of excavation. It was at least 0.70m wide and 0.94m long with a recorded minimum depth of 0.10m shallow sloping concave sides and a concave base. Its fill (034) was a mid greyish-brown clayey-silt with frequent charcoal and cobbles. It contained the largest assemblage of pottery from the scheme of work, 59 sherds, dating to the mid-13th century and indeterminate large mammal bone fragments. Environmental Sample 4 taken from the feature contained plant remains consistent with hearth waste.

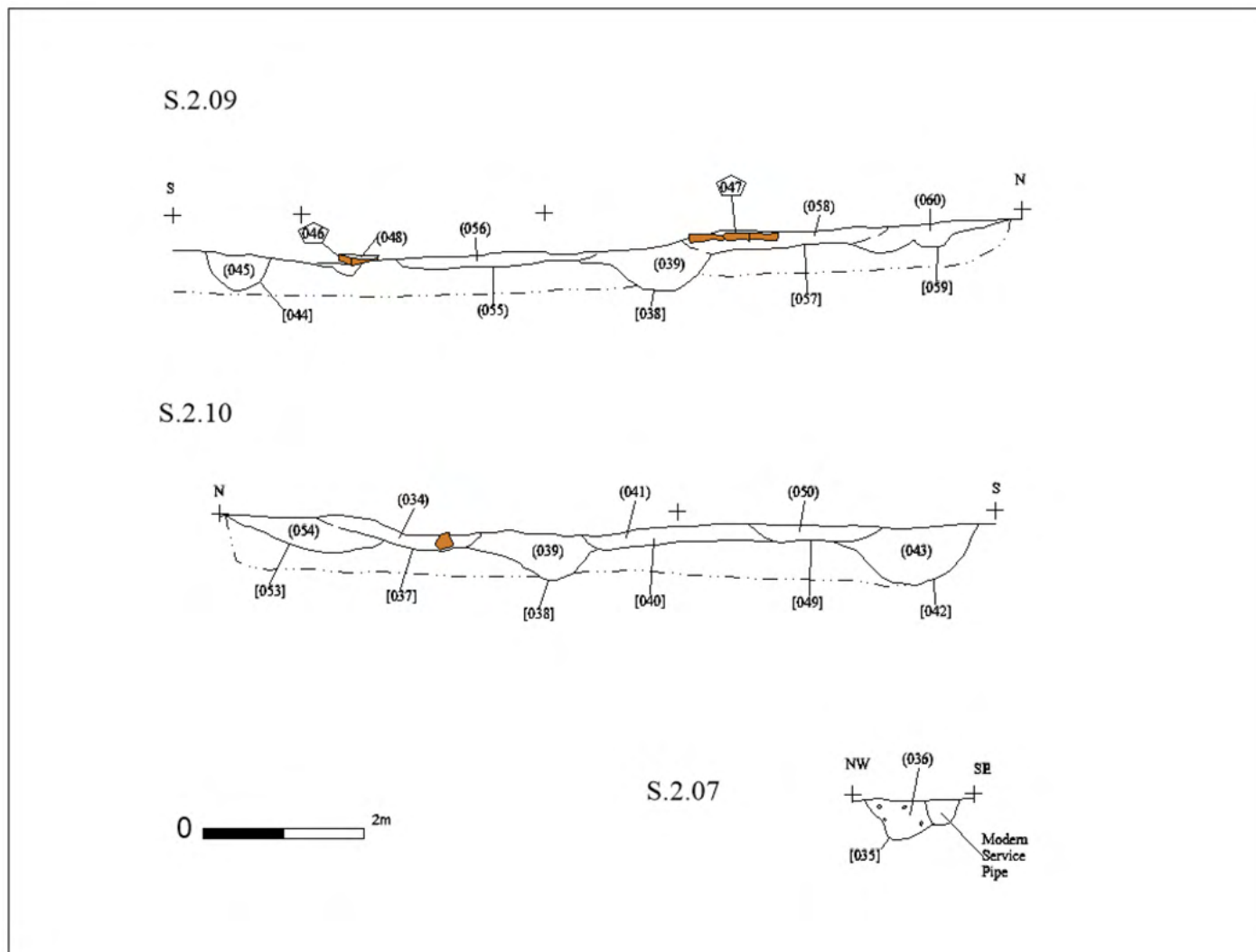


Figure 20: Sections from Area 2



Figure 21: Area 2 Pre-excavation of area of pitting. Looking North-West.



Figure 22: Area 2 – South-West Facing Section through Feature Group, including ditch [038] and pits [053], [037], [040], [049] and [042]. Looking North-East.

A third medieval feature, [053], was only partially revealed within the excavation area. It appeared to be an oval pit, the visible portion being 1.19m in length, 0.38m in width and 0.22m in depth, with a mid greenish-grey silty clay fill (054) with occasional charcoal fragments and small stones. The sides were moderately sloping and concave, leading to a concave base. Whilst no finds were recovered from the fill it was cut by pit [037], which is dated to the mid-13th century.

The remainder of the pits are not securely medieval in date and more likely to be later in date. Pit [040] also truncated ditch [038] and was cut by a later pit [049]. Its recorded dimensions are 1.20m in length and 0.50m in width with a maximum depth of 0.10m, with shallow sloping concave sides and flat base. Its fill (041) was a mid greenish-grey clayey-sand with frequent small stones at its base. Two late post-medieval horseshoes were found within the fill of the pit.

Pit [042] was an incomplete feature cut by pit [049] and pit [051]. Its remaining dimensions were 0.82m in length and a minimum width of 0.20m and maximum depth of 0.34m, with moderately sloping convex sides and a concave base. Its fill was a mid-brownish-grey silty-clay with charcoal and small stones.

Pit [049] was an oval feature, 1.60m in length, 1.30m in width and 0.10m in depth, with moderately sloping, concave sides and a flat base. Its fill (050) was a mid-greenish-grey clayey sand with occasional small stones. It could be seen to cut pits [040] and [042] in both plan and section. The fill contained a single sherd of Potters Marston Ware, dated to the 12th century but as demonstrated by the stratigraphy is residual.

Pit [051] was an oval pit, 0.98m in length, 0.52m in width and of undetermined depth. Its fill (052) was a mid greenish-grey clayey-sand with few small stones, within which was found a sherd of mid-13th century pottery. It could be seen cutting pit [042] in plan and is also likely to be later in date.

Pit [059] was oval in plan, 0.96m in length, 0.60m in width and 0.18m in depth, with shallow to moderately sloping convex sides leading to an irregular concave base. Its fill (060) was a mid greenish-grey silty clay with occasional small stones. It is cut by pit [057].

Feature [057] was a sub-oval pit with a length of 1.70m, width of 1.50m and depth of 0.14m. It had moderately sloping concave sides leading to a flat base. Its fill (058) was a mid-greenish-grey silty sand with rare small stones and occasional cobbles. It too was overlain by a similar rectangular brick hearth [047] 0.50m in length, 0.28m in width and approximately 0.05m in depth (Figure 23). The bricks appeared to be laid into the upper fill of pit [057] with no identifiable cut, with evidence of burning on their top; they have been identified as 19th century in date.



Figure 23: Brick Hearth [047] (eastern half excavated). Looking North-West.

Pit [044] was a sub-rectangular pit overlain by a brick hearth [046]. It was 1.00m in length and 0.60m wide with a maximum depth of 0.22m, with moderately sloping concave sides and concave base. Its fill (045) was a mid-greyish-brown clayey sand.

Pit [055] was sub-oval, with moderate and shallow sloping concave sides and a flat base. It was 1.25m in length, 1.10m in width and 0.08m in depth. The fill (056) was a mid-greenish-brown clayey silt with rare small stones and occasional pebbles. It truncated ditch [038] and was also partially overlain by brick hearth (046), which is most likely 19th century in date.

Feature [046] was a rectangular brick hearth, 0.50m in length, 0.38m in width and approximately 0.10m in depth. The bonding was a yellowish clay with frequent charcoal. The bricks are similar to those of feature [047] which were dated to the 19th century. It appears to be set into the upper fills of pits [044] and [055]. An industrial layer (048) was found above it and sampled (Sample 3). The sample contained no plant remains but did contain abundant large pieces of charcoal, iron slag, vitrified hearth lining, coal and flake hammerscale suggesting it was associated with industrial activity rather than food preparation. The finds are indicative of secondary smithing but the associated bricks show only evidence of sooting and not the heat alteration expected from a metal working hearth.

Feature [061] was a rectangular brick hearth, 0.50m in length, 0.28m in width and approximately 0.10m deep. It was located approximately 1m south of feature [047] and was completely removed during machine excavation of a sondage trench through the cluster of features in Area 2. It had been set into the upper fill of ditch (038) and was associated with a small amount of charcoal flecks. Its similarities to features [046] and [047] suggest it is probably 19th century in date.



Figure 24: Brick Hearth [046] (eastern half excavated). Looking North.

The Finds

All finds have been recorded and reported on in line with the CIfA toolkit for specialist reporting and following the more specific specialist guidelines.

The Pottery

Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 115 sherds with a total weight of 2248g. The stratified material was all medieval and dated to the 12th – 14th centuries. It was recorded using the conventions of the Leicestershire County type-series (Davies and Sawday 1999), as follows

Table 1: Pottery summery

	Type	Date	Quantity	Weight
CC1	Chilvers Coton 'A' Ware	1200-1400	6 sherds	63g
EA6	Post-medieval Blackwares	late 17th century +	4 sherds	77g
EA10	Modern Earthenwares	1800+	3 sherds	31 g
LY4	Shelly Wares	1100-1400	3 sherds	132 g
PM	Potters Marston Ware	1100-1300	97 sherds	1895g
SW5	English Brown Salt-glazed Stoneware	1700+	1 sherd	43g
CC2	Chilvers Coton 'C' Ware	1200-1475	1 sherd	7g

A single small fragment of fired clay weighing < 1g occurred in context 27. It is unidentifiable.

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*. The range of fabric types is typical of contemporary sites in the region. It shows that medieval activity was entirely limited to the 12th – 14th centuries. There was no Saxo-Norman (11th century) material such as St Neots Ware (Leicestershire fabric SN) or Stamford Ware (fabric STAM) and usually common 14th century wares such as CC2 were very scarce. Medieval pottery dating to the late 14th century or later, particularly Midland Purple Ware (fabric MP) and Cistercian Ware (fabric CIST), was entirely absent.

The range of vessel types was restricted to jars, bowls, and jugs which is a typical pattern for the earlier medieval period. The more “developed” medieval vessel forms associated with the storage, preparation, transportation and consumption of food and drink which are generally very rare before the mid – late 14th/15th century (McCarthy and Brooks 1988, 107-115) were entirely absent. It seems very likely therefore that activity at the site did not extend much beyond the early-14th century.

The bulk of the assemblage consisted of fairly large, fresh sherds, as is suggested by the mean sherd weight of 19.6g for the medieval pottery and it all seems to be reliably stratified.

Table 2: Pottery occurrence by number and weight(g) of sherds per context by fabric type

	PM		LY4		CC1		CC2		SW5		EA6		EA10		
Cntxt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	Date
U/S									1	43	4	77	3	31	U/S
10	1	16			1	11	1	7							14thC
13	10	267													12thC
17	20	365			1	10									M13thC
19	1	11													12thC
21	1	3													12thC
23	1	8	1	11											12thC
25	3	6													12thC
34	56	1145	2	121	1	3									M13thC
39	2	39			1	19									M13thC
50	1	11													12thC
52	1	24			2	20									M13thC
Total	97	1895	3	132	6	63	1	7	1	43	4	77	3	31	

The Building Materials

Georgina Clipstone

Methodology

In total 13 fragments weighing 1818g of ceramic building material (CBM) were retrieved from three contexts across the site. The assemblage has been recorded by context and quantified by count and weight in grams. Diagnostic samples have been retained in the archive with the remainder recommended for discard and this is recorded within the associated Excel spreadsheet.

Table 3: Summary of ceramic tile by weight (g)

Context	Count	Weight	Date
25	6	485	12thC
36	6	113	Unknown
47	1	1220	19thC

Results

One near-complete brick was recovered from the small brick hearth (47). It is an irregular handmade brick with surviving fingerprint impression and obvious signs of sooting. It measures at a width of 110mm, height of 49mm, and the length is incomplete, these measurements are likely indicative of a mid to late 19th century date (Symonds 2013). The remaining material consists entirely of undiagnostic fragments of red tile which are likely to be medieval in date.

Statement of potential

The assemblage has been fully recorded and no further work is recommended.

The Animal Bone

William Johnson

Data collection, analysis and report completed on 25/10/2022

Introduction

This report presents the analysis of bone fragments with a view to assessing the potential of the site to inform on diet and animal husbandry practices. During excavations 14 fragments of animal bone were recovered by hand from three contexts; 14th century pit [9], fill (10), mid-13th century pit [37] fill (34) and probable medieval ditch [30] fill (31). Four bulk samples were taken during the excavation, two of which contained animal bone and are considered separately to the hand recovered material. These derived from ditch fill (15) and industrial layer (48) above hearth [46].

Methodology

Identification to element and taxa was attempted on all fragments through comparison to reference material housed at the University of Leicester and with the University of Leicester Archaeological Services. Associated and joining fragments were grouped together and recorded as individual specimens. Notes on the presence of epiphyseal fusion, butchery, pathology and gnawing were recorded for each specimen. Preservation was recorded following Harland *et al.* (2003). Information on epiphyseal fusion timings was taken from Reitz and Wing (2008). For sample processing methodology see Small and Johnson (this report).

Results

Table 4: Catalogue of hand collected animal bone

Context	Cut	Frgs	Specs	Pres	Taxa	Element	Notes
10	9	7	1	4	L.mammal	Long bone	Shaft fragments
10	9	1	1	3	Sheep/goat	Femur	Unfused distal epiphysis fragment
31	30	1	1	4	Cattle	Femur	Shaft fragment
31	30	4	4	4	L.mammal	Indet	Fragments
34	37	1	1	4	L.mammal	Indet	Fragment

Grouping of associated bone fragments reduced the assemblage count from 14 fragments to eight specimens. Preservation was very poor with only one specimen, a sheep/goat femur from (10) showing flaking on less than 50% of its surface. The sheep/goat femur specimen was a fragment of an unfused distal epiphysis, indicating it had derived from an animal under 60 months of age. The only other identifiable specimen within the assemblage was a shaft fragment of a cattle femur from (31).

Three specimens were recovered during processing of the environmental samples. Two herring vertebrae were recovered, one from (15) and one from (48). The third specimen was an associated bone group of a partial mole skeleton. The mole bones showed a far better level of preservation than those from the rest of the site so have been interpreted as intrusive.

Statement of Potential

No further work is needed on the assemblage. The small quantity and poor preservation of the material limit its interpretative value and no conclusions about diet or animal husbandry practices can be drawn. Should further work be carried out at the site, recovery and analysis of the animal bone is recommended as a larger assemblage could provide insights into activities at the site as well as add to wider regional data. A suitable sampling strategy should be implemented to facilitate the recovery of fish remains and other smaller taxa.

The Charred Plant Remains and Charcoal

Rachel Small and William Johnson

Processing, analysis and report completed October 2022

Introduction

Four soil samples were taken during a strip, map and sample at Barwell. The samples dated from the 12th to 14th centuries and were taken from pit fills, a ditch fill and a hearth. One to ten litres were processed for each sample using flotation (described below). In this report, the charred plant remains and charcoal recovered are assessed for their potential to inform upon diet, site activity and landscape use.

Methodology

Following Campbell et al. (2011), the soil samples were processed in a York tank using a 0.5mm mesh with flotation into a 0.3mm sieve. The flotation fractions (flot) were air dried and sorted for plant remains and other artefacts under an x10-60 stereo microscope. The heavy residues were also air dried and then passed through 4mm and 2mm sieves. The fractions over 4mm and 2-4mm in size were sorted in their entirety. The under 2mm fractions were scanned but contained little material and therefore were not sorted. Plant remains were identified by comparison to modern reference material available at ULAS and their names follow Stace (1991). All specimens were counted: this was quantitatively for plant remains and semi-quantitatively for charcoal. The following semi-quantitative scale was used: + 0-10; ++ 11-50; +++ 51+. The flots and extracted finds are to be submitted as part of the site archive.

Results

Plant remains were recovered from three of the four samples and identifications are listed in Table 5. Grains, chaff, legumes, nutshells and wild seeds were present. The three samples were similar in composition; cereal grains predominated in all and other plant remains were found in smaller quantities (Figure 25). Sample 2, which was from the fill (15) of ditch [14], contained the greatest concentration of remains and the greatest variety (Table 5). Charcoal fragments were found in all four samples. The plant remains are discussed in more detail below, followed by the charcoal.

Cereal grains: free-threshing wheat (*Triticum* spp.) was the dominant grain. Smaller numbers of rye (*Secale cereale* L.) grains were found and in sample 2 also barley (*Hordeum vulgare* L.). In sample 2, an oat (*Avena* sp.) grain was also present and a lemma base which was identified

as cultivated oat (*Avena sativa* L.). It is possible some of the large grass (Poaceae) seeds were also oat but their preservation was too poor to confirm.

Chaff: in addition to the cultivated oat lemma base, a small fragment of a free-threshing wheat rachis internode was found. However, it was not possible to differentiate between bread (*Triticum aestivum* L.) or rivet wheat (*Triticum turgidum* L.) due to poor preservation. Two straw culm nodes were also found.

Nutshell/legumes: other food plants identified included hazelnut (*Corylus avellana* L.) shell, and bean/pea (*Vicia/Pisum/Lathyrus*) fragments. It was possible to identify a small number of the larger fragments as bean (*Vicia faba* L.) and pea (*Pisum sativum* L.) based on the shape of the specimen and hilum.

Wild seeds: a small number of wild seeds were identified. This included sedges (*Carex* spp.), goosefoots (*Chenopodium* spp.), cleavers (*Galium aparine* L.), brambles (*Rubus* spp.), docks (*Rumex* spp.) and vetches (*Vicia* spp.).

Charcoal: sample 3, which was taken from the fill (48) of hearth [46], did not contain any plant remains but was abundant in larger pieces (>4mm) of charcoal. Due to the high concentration of charcoal, it is thought the feature is industrial in nature rather than related to food preparation. This is supported by the industrial residues found in the fill (see Addison in this report). The other samples studied contained smaller quantities of charcoal.

Discussion and recommendations for further work

The plant remains appear to represent hearth waste from food preparation and consumption that was subsequently deposited or accumulated in ditches and pits. Cereal grains appear to have come to the site partially cleaned, due to the low quantities of chaff and wild seeds. Grinding grain was not typically a domestic task during the period, instead it was carried out in a mill, nor was baking bread which was undertaken in communal ovens (Monckton 2004, 165). Whole grains would have been purchased by households for use in dishes such as potage (Ibid.). Legumes were also added to such dishes. The data adds to the regional dataset; it provides insight into rural diet and provisioning.

No further work is recommended on the plant remains as these have been fully quantified. However, the charcoal could be identified to species to provide insight on fuel consumption and woodland management. If further work is undertaken at the site, it is recommended a suitable sampling strategy is employed. This report has shown the potential for identifiable plant remains to be present and in suitable quantities (over 50 items) for interpretation.

Table 5: Plant remains recovered from flots and heavy residue fractions >2mm.

Sample	1	2	3	4	
Context	13	15/17	48	34	
Cut	14	14/16	46	37	
Feature	Ditch	Ditch	Hearth	Pit	
Date	12thC	12thC-M13thC	Med	M13thC	
Grain					
<i>Avena</i> sp.		1		1	Oat
<i>Hordeum vulgare</i> L.		12			Barley
<i>Secale cereale</i> L.	2	4		2	Rye
<i>Triticum</i> sp. free-threshing	17	43		15	Wheat free-threshing
Indeterminate cereal	26	58		22	Indeterminate cereal
Chaff					
<i>Avena sativa</i> L. lemma base		1			Cultivated oat lemma base
<i>Triticum</i> sp. free-threshing rachis internode		1			Wheat free-threshing rachis internode
Straw culm nodes	2				Straw culm nodes
Legumes					
<i>Vicia/Pisum/Lathyrus</i>	1	3			Bean/Pea
<i>Vicia faba</i> L.		2			Bean
<i>Pisum sativum</i> L.		1			Pea
Nutshell					
<i>Corylus avellana</i> L.	9	3		2	Hazelnut
Wild seeds					
<i>Carex</i> sp.		2			Sedges
<i>Chenopodium</i> sp.		1			Goosefoots
<i>Galium aparine</i> L.		1			Cleavers
Poaceae (large)	3	9		7	Grass (large)
<i>Rubus</i> sp.		1			Brambles
<i>Rumex</i> sp.		2			Docks
<i>Vicia</i> sp.	5	9		2	Vetches
Indeterminate seeds	3	2			Indeterminate seeds
Total	68	156	0	51	
Sample volume (L)	10	10	1	10	
Items per litre	6.8	15.6	0.0	5.1	
Charcoal >4mm	+	++	+++	++	

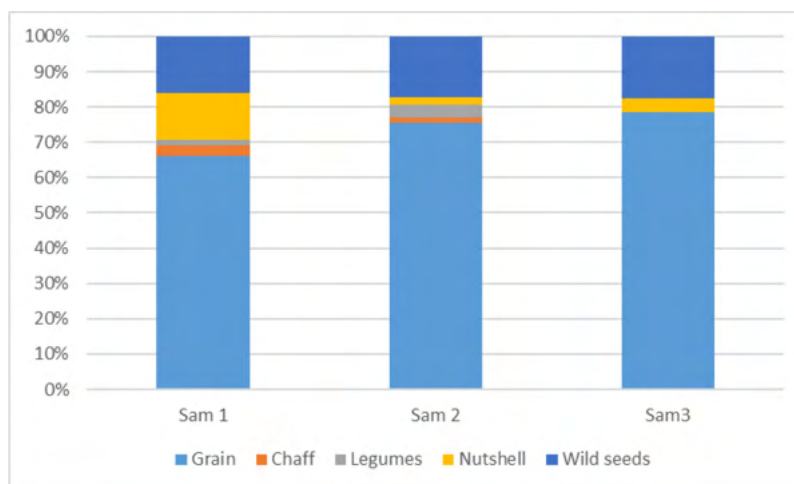


Chart 1 showing the proportion of plant types within the samples]

The Finds and Industrial Residues

Heidi Addison

Data collection and report 25th October 2022

Introduction and Methodology

The limited assemblage produced seven finds, three of which were iron from the bulk finds, contexts (34) and (41), and four from one bulk soil sample 3 (48). Magnetic material was also extracted from the sample using a magnet and a stereo microscope x 10-40, and the identification followed national guidelines (Historic England 2015). A qualitative judgment was made for the density of hammerscale recovered using a scale method of items seen (used for plant remains): 0-10=rare, 10-50=common and 50+=abundant.

Overview

The small assemblage dates from the mid-13th century, with a building fitting dated by the pottery. A 'keyhole' type horseshoe dating to the late post-medieval date was also recovered. The remaining finds were retrieved from the bulk sample, producing modern finds including a (slate) stylus. Flake hammerscale from the same sample also provided evidence for iron smithing in the vicinity. The modern material will be discarded.

Iron

- 1) (34) [37] Medieval. Building fitting. Incomplete (?) hinge pivot comprises two square arms set at a right angle, with one tapering square-section arm. Surviving length 80mm. The hinge pivot is a long lived form, but pottery recovered from the context is dated to the mid-13th century
- 2) (41) [40] Late Post-medieval. Horseshoe. An incomplete horseshoe of the 'keyhole' type. (672g). Surviving length 120mm, width 120mm. Branch width estimated 35-50mm.
- 3) (41) [40] Late Post-medieval. Horseshoe branch. An incomplete heavily corroded branch from a horseshoe (253g). Surviving length 100mm. Branch width c.50mm.

- 4) (48) >4mm Sample 3. Modern. Circular section nail shaft (L.20mm)

Copper alloy

- 5) (48) <4mm Sample 3. Modern. Eight machine made, small flat-headed screws used for intricate fittings L.12mm

Glass

- 6) (48) <4mm Sample 3. Modern. One black glass annular 'seed bead' (d.2.5mm).

Stone

- 7) (48) >4mm Sample 3. Modern. Stylus. A cylindrical rod of a dark grey stone, possibly slate, which is faceted into a point at one end and broken at the other end. Surviving L.30mm.

Industrial residues

The magnetic material extracted from the bulk soil sample 3 (48) (<4mm) was identified and included iron slag, vitrified hearth lining fragments, coal and flake hammerscale. The presence of hammerscale, although of low density (rare) in the sample, is indicative of secondary smithing (forging of iron). These are from the oxidised layer on the iron that falls away with the striking of the hammer. Fragments of coal (14g) was also within the sample, a resource which has been mined since the 15th century in the north-west of Leicestershire. The residues were found above a small hearth feature (47), though the condition of the modern brick material merely shows sooting and not the expected heat alteration to the ceramic for a metal working hearth.

Conclusion

The small finds and industrial residue assemblages are limited to a late post-medieval and modern date, with the exception of the earlier iron building fitting from context [37].

All finds have been fully recorded and no further work is recommended.

Discussion and Conclusions

The archaeological strip, map and sample has revealed a series of medieval ditches and other activity that appear to be associated with a 12th to 14th century medieval plot of land. The area of the Site is fossilised in the 19th century mapping for Barwell and the truncation by the 19th century buildings, as seen on site, can be corroborated by the buildings depicted on the OS historical maps. The absence of any medieval structural remains, despite the area of excavation fronting onto High Street does suggest this plot of land was not developed until later on in the 19th century. The absence of any later medieval or early post-medieval finds supports this interpretation as do the results of the evaluation (Groundworks 2022) with few archaeological features and limited medieval material.

Within Area 1, ditch [014] was a clearly defined boundary running parallel to High Street. The ditch appears to terminate between Areas 1 and 2 as there is no evidence for its continuation in Area 2. Ditch [038] in Area 2 is however on a very similar alignment although it appears to be aligned with ditch [022/024] in Area 1.

The cluster of pits includes evidence for medieval activity but most of these are likely to be later in date as indicated by the later horseshoes and subsequent sequence of hearth-like features formed of 19th century bricks. The single sherds of pottery within some of the pit fills are more likely to be residual rather than indicative of the date of use or backfill.

The pottery recovered from the excavation is for the most part Potters Marston ware which is recognised as having a production date range of approximately 1100 – 1300 (Davies and Sawday 1999). There are three larger assemblages of pottery from the site, two of which were recovered from the main boundary ditch [014]. The pottery from this feature was mostly Potters Marston with a single sherd of Chilvers Coton from the fill of the later terminal [017]. This main ditch therefore appears to silt up and likely falls out use around the mid-13th century.

The third larger assemblage of pottery is from pit [034] in Area 2, with 59 sherds present including a very small sherd of Chilvers Coton ware. This slightly later sherd has been used as the indicator for the spot date but could equally be intrusive as the remainder of the sherds are earlier and relatively large Potters Marston (56 sherds) and Lyveden Stanion ware (2 sherds).

Evidence for domestic waste is limited particularly as the animal bone assemblage is small. The charred plant remains do indicate domestic activity in the vicinity of the site but the assemblages are as with the animal bone relatively small. Their association with the larger groups of medieval pottery is however of note and suggestive of ad hoc, discrete waste disposal in the main boundary ditch and pit.

The excavations have contributed to our understanding of the medieval landscape of Barwell. The settlement was concentrated around the medieval Manor and Church, which are 86m and 147m away from the Site respectively. Therefore it can be considered that the Site was part of the settlement centre during the medieval period. High Street is likely to have been an element of medieval Barwell and the results of this work demonstrate that it is unlikely that the village was densely populated until the 19th century as the land for the site was unoccupied by any domestic structures. The results of this work contribute directly to the research framework objective to investigate the morphology of rural settlement (Research Objective 7E).

Archive and Publication

The archive for the project will be deposited with Leicester Museum Service in line with their guidance (LMARS 2018) and in accordance with national standards (Brown 2011; Cifa 2020b) under accession number X.A87.2022 and consists of the following:

- 1 Unbound copy of this report (2023-045) and electronic copy (pdf_A).
- 1 Photographic record sheet
- 1 DVD of digital photographs
- 2 Permatrace sheet with drawings
- 1 digital file of GPS survey data
- 1 Contact sheet of digital photos
- 1 box – all finds including CPR

A summary of this report will appear in due course in the Transactions the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society.

The online OASIS data entry has been completed detailing the results of the project and will be digitally accessible through The Archaeological Data Services (<http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/>).

Acknowledgements

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Appendix 1: Context List

Area	Context	Type	Description	Finds	Note	Suggested Date
1	001	Cut	Cut of Posthole	n/a		
1	002	Fill	Fill of Posthole [001]	None		
1	003	Cut	Cut of Posthole	n/a		
1	004	Fill	Fill of Post hole [003]	None		
1	005	Cut	Cut of Ditch	n/a		
1	006	Fill	Fill of Ditch [005]	None		
1	007	Cut	Cut of disturbed posthole or terminus	n/a		
1	008	Fill	Fill of disturbed posthole or terminus [007]	None		
1	009	Cut	Cut of Pit	n/a		
1	010	Fill	Fill of Pit [009]	Pottery, bone	Femur sheep / goat and large mammal indeterminable	14thC pottery
1	011	Cut	Cut of Ditch	n/a		
1	012	Fill	Fill of Ditch[011]	None		
1	013	Fill	Fill of Ditch [014]	Pottery	VOID – Same as 014	12thC pottery
1	014	Cut	Ditch cut	n/a		
1	015	Fill	Fill of Ditch [014]	None		
1	016	Cut	Ditch Recut	n/a		
1	017	Fill	Fill of Ditch recut [016]	Pottery		Mid 13thC Pottery
1	018	Cut	Cut of pit/Ditch / terminal	n/a		
1	019	Fill	Fill of pit / ditch / terminal [018]	Pottery		12thC Pottery
1	020	Cut	Cut of Gully	n/a		
1	021	Fill	Fill of Gully [020]	Pottery		12thC Pottery
1	022	Cut	Cut of Gully	n/a		
1	023	Fill	Fill of Gully [022]	Pottery		12thC Pottery
1	024	Cut	Cut of Gully	n/a		
1	025	Fill	Fill of Gully [024]	Pottery and CBM		12thC Pottery and 12thC CBM
1	026	Cut	Cut of Gully	n/a		
1	027	Fill	Fill of Gully [26]	None		
1	028	Cut	Cut of Ditch	n/a		
1	029	Fill	Fill of Ditch [28]	None		
1	030	Cut	Ditch Recut	n/a		
1	031	Fill	Fill of Ditch recut [30]	Bone	Cattle Femur / Large mammal indeterminable	
1	032	Cut	Ditch Recut	n/a		
1	033	Fill	Fill of Ditch Recut [32]	None		
2	034	Fill	Fill of Pit [037]	Pottery, bone + ??	Large Mammal indeterminable	Mid 13thC Pottery
2	035	Cut	Cut of Pit	n/a		

2	036	Fill	Fill of Pit [035]	CBM	Date indeterminable	
2	037	Cut	Cut of Pit	n/a		
2	038	Cut	Ditch cut	n/a		
2	039	Fill	Ditch Fill [038]	Pottery		Mid 13thC Pottery
2	040	Cut	Cut of Pit	n/a		
2	041	Fill	Fill of Pit [040]	Pottery +?		
2	042	Cut	Cut of Pit	n/a		
2	043	Fill	Fill of Pit [042]	None		
2	044	Cut	Cut of Pit	n/a		
2	045	Fill	Fill of Pit [044]	None		
2	046	Masonry	Brick structure	n/a		
2	047	Masonry	Brick structure	n/a		Late 19thC
2	048	Masonry	Industrial structural residue	n/a		
2	049	Cut	Cut of Pit	n/a		
2	050	Fill	Fill of Pit [049]	Pottery		12thC Pottery
2	051	Cut	Cut of Pit	n/a		
2	052	Fill	Fill of Pit [51]	Pottery		Mid 13thC Pottery
2	053	Cut	Cut of Pit	n/a		
2	054	Fill	Fill of Pit [053]	None		
2	055	Cut	Cut of Pit	n/a		
2	056	Fill	Fill of Pit [055]	None		
2	057	Cut	Cut of Pit	n/a		
2	058	Fill	Fill of Pit [057]	None		
2	059	Cut	Cut of Pit	n/a		
2	060	Fill	Fill of Pit [059]	None		
2	061	Masonry	Brick Hearth	n/a		
1	062	Cut	Cut of modern evaluation ditch			
1	063	Fill	Fill of modern Evaluation ditch [062]	Brick, Pottery, CBM – discarded	Demolition rubble / backfill	

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