An Archaeological Watching Brief

At Ashby-de-la-Zouch Castle, Leicestershire

NGR 359 166

James Patrick

For: English Heritage

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An Archaeological Watching Brief at Ashby-de-la-Zouch Castle, Leicestershire (NGR 359 166)

1. Summary

An Archaeological Watching Brief was carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) at Ashby-de-la-Zouch Castle, Leicestershire (NGR 359 166) during groundworks associated with the installation of eight information boards in and around the castle grounds. The site lies on the east side of Ashby town centre just south of the A511 (Market Street) and is accessed from South Street.

The work involved the hand excavation of seven small pits for display boards each measuring approximately 700 mm by 700 mm and excavated to a depth of 100mm with a further pit for an orientation board, which measured 1800mm by 1400 mm and 200mm deep. One of the proposed display board pits was not excavated. The excavations removed turf and a small amount of soil in each hole and the impact was minimal. However archaeology in the form of demolition rubble was revealed in the excavated pit for display board 4 in the kitchen area. A linear feature was also recorded in the excavated pit for board 5. This was recorded but not excavated as the ground-works did not make any impact on the feature. The archive will be deposited with Leicestershire Heritage Services.

2. Introduction

An archaeological watching brief was carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) during groundworks within the area of Ashby de la Castle, Leicestershire (Fig. 1). The Castle is a Scheduled Monument (LE1) and the work was carried out in accordance with the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979) section 2, on behalf of English Heritage.

Archaeological attendance and supervision, was required by English Heritage for ground works on the site in connection with proposed works for interpretation boards which might disturb areas of archaeological potential. The ground works lay within the Castle and around the Castle grounds. Six small holes were excavated for the location of display boards measuring an average of 700 mm by 700 mm and 100mm deep, with a further hole for the orientation board measuring 1800 mm by 1400 mm and 200mm deep. The hole for display board number seven in the Chapel was not excavated (Fig. 2).

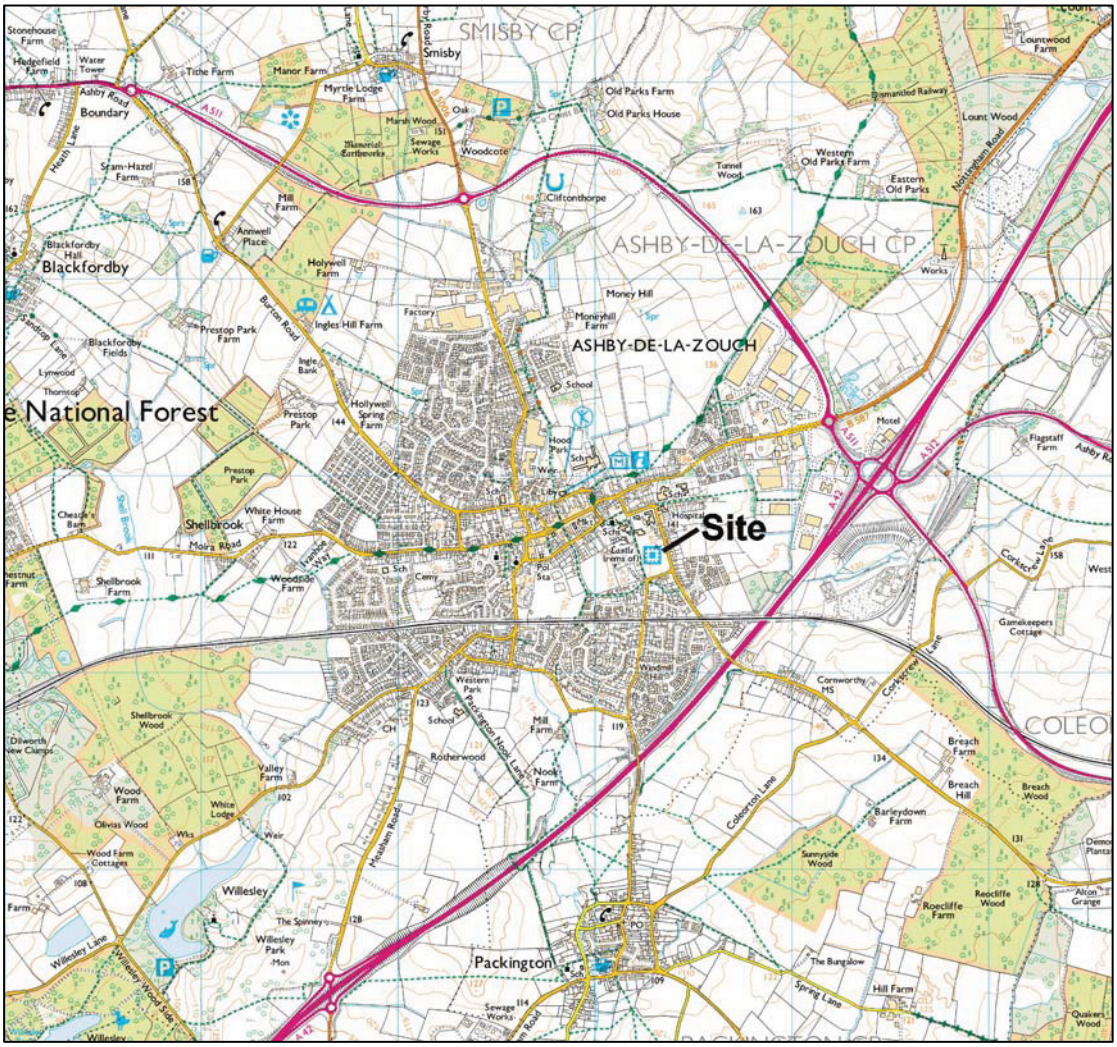

Figure 1: Site Location

3. Site Location and Geology

The site lies less than half a kilometre to the east of Ashby town centre, directly to the south of the A511 and is approached along a narrow drive of South Street. The site lies on fairly flat terrain. The geology on which the Castle stands is on the South Derbyshire Coalfield as indicated by the Ordnance Survey Geological Survey of Great Britain (sheet number 125). Triassic Sandstone surrounds the town and underlies part of the town to the west. This would have provided a convenient source of building material.

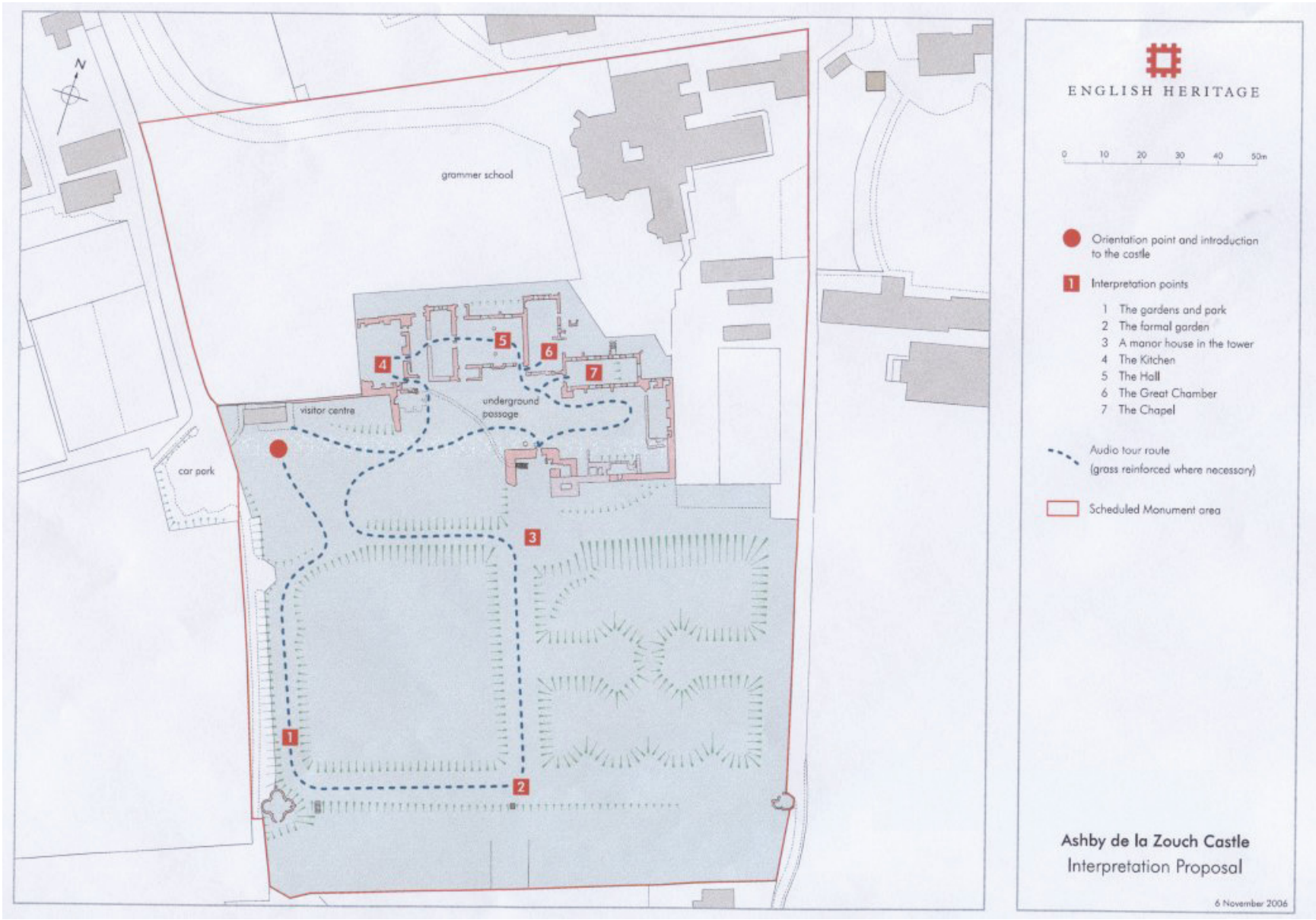

Figure 2: Location of interpretation boards around the Castle.

4. Background

The castle began as a manor house in the 12th century and only became a castle in the 15th century. It remained in use until the English Civil War when it was slighted by Oliver Cromwell in 1646, so increasing the prospect of demolition rubble being found during any ground-works. Recent archaeological excavations were conducted by English Heritage on the garden earthworks to the south of the castle in 2006.

5. Aims and Methods

The aims as identified in the specification (ULAS 2007) were:

- To identify the presence/absence of any archaeological deposits.
- To establish the character, extent and date range for any archaeological deposits to be affected by the proposed ground works.
- To record any archaeological deposits to be affected by the ground works.
- To produce an archive and report of any results.

The work followed the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*, and adhered to the University's Health and Safety policy.

The fieldwork involved two site visits by an archaeologist on 22nd January 2008 and the 13th February 2008 where groundworks were observed.

6. Results

Orientation Board

No archaeological deposits were revealed by the excavations for the orientation board.

Display boards 1, 2, 3, 6, 7

The excavations for display boards 1, 2, 3 and 6 revealed no archaeological deposits. The pit for board 7 was not excavated.

Display Board 4

Display board 4 was located close to the kitchen area (Figs 2 and 3). The excavated pit covered only a small area measuring 700mm x 700mm and provided only a key hole view into any archaeology below. However a rubble layer (001) was revealed directly below the turf and 60mm of topsoil along the west of the hole (Figs 4-6). This rubble was made up of sandstone shoddies (roughly shaped stones) measuring on average 300mm by 300 mm. This was unbonded with no mortar. This rubble stretched across the small area and sloped gradually downwards to the minimum

required depth of 100mm at the eastern side. The rubble was removed on the western side to 200mm depth and was then levelled out on the eastern side for the display boards base to rest on.

Display Board 5

Display board 5 also lay within the interior (Figs 2 and 7). The excavated pit for display board 5 revealed a light orange-brown redeposited natural material. Cut into this was a possible linear feature running east – west (Fig. 8). However due to the non-disturbance of the linear feature by the groundworks, it was not excavated.

7. Conclusion

The stone rubble revealed within the pit for display board 4 lay close to the line of the western wall of the kitchen and within in the kitchen interior. This rubble may represent a demolition / collapse layer from the kitchen wall, possibly even dating to the slighting of the Castle by Cromwell during the Civil war. Although only a limited area was observed, the rubble could be quite deep; however its horizontal spread is limited by a stone floor surface seen spreading a good few metres from the eastern wall of the kitchen. It is possible that any further rubble could have been robbed in this area. The linear feature within the pit for display board 5 remains of unknown extent and function.

8. Archive

The archive will be deposited with Leicester Heritage Services and consists of the following:

2 Watching brief forms.
1 Context sheet
1 Sheet Permotrace showing 2 section drawings and 1 plan
15 B&W contact prints
20 Digital colour photographs on CD

9. Acknowledgements

ULAS would like to thank Louisa Sherman from English Heritage for her help in coordinating the Project. James Patrick undertook the watching brief and Vicki Score was the Project Manager.

10. Bibliography

Institute of Field Archaeologists, 1999, *Standards and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief.*

ULAS 2007, *Design Specification for archaeological work, Ashby de La Zouch Castle, Leicestershire (Scheduled Monument LE1).* 07-304.

Ashby de la Zouch Castle from the English Heritage website http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/nav.11638 (accessed March 2008).

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Figure 3: Display Board 4, location shot looking north.

Figure 4: Display board 4, Sandstone rubble (001) prior to removal in hole, looking east.

Figure 5: Display board 4, East facing section showing rubble layer (001)

Figure 6: North facing section through rubble layer (001)

Figure 7: Location of hole for display board 5.

Figure 8: Display board 5 showing possibly linear feature, looking north.

11. Appendix 1: Design Specification

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

Design Specification for archaeological work

Ashby de La Zouch Castle, Leicestershire (Scheduled Monument LE1)

Planning Application: N/A

For: English Heritage

1 Definition and scope of the specification

1.1 In accordance with the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979) section 2, this specification provides a written scheme of investigation for archaeological attendance and supervision, as required by English Heritage of any ground works on the site which may disturb areas of archaeological potential in connection with proposed works for eight interpretation boards within the area of scheduled monument LE1, Ashby de la Castle, Leicestershire (Fig. 1).

1.2 All archaeological work will adhere to the Institute of Field Archaeologist's (IFA) *Code of Conduct* and *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* and the *Guidelines for Archaeological Work in Leicestershire and Rutland* (LMARS 1997).

2 Background

2.1 Requirement for archaeological work

2.1.1 The archaeological watching brief involves archaeological supervision during excavation for the installation of orientation panels, site graphics and hardstanding, to identify and record any deposits of archaeological importance which might be impacted on by the groundworks.

2.2 Archaeological potential

2.2.1 The castle began as a manor house in the 12th century and only became a castle in the 15th century. Between 1474 and his execution by Richard III in 1483, Edward IV's Chamberlain Lord Hastings added the chapel and the impressive keep-like Hastings Tower – a castle within a castle. The buildings include a 24 metre high tower, which offers fine views. Later the castle hosted many royal visitors, including Henry VII, Mary Queen of Scots, James I and Charles I.

2.2.2 A Royalist stronghold during the Civil War, the castle finally fell to Parliament in 1646, and was then made unusable. An underground passage from the kitchen to the tower, probably created during this war, can still be explored today. In 2006 archaeologists investigated the mysterious castle garden, famous for its elaborately shaped sunken features (from the English Heritage website http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/nav.11638).

2.2.3 The Leicestershire and Rutland HER shows that the works lie within the area of the scheduled ancient monument including works within the buildings and the gardens (Fig. 2). There is the possibility, therefore that the work may impact on archaeological deposits.

3 Aims

3.1 Through archaeological control and supervision of excavation by the client's contractors:

- To identify the presence/absence of any archaeological deposits.
- To establish the character, extent and date range for any archaeological deposits to be affected by the proposed ground works.
- To record any archaeological deposits to be affected by the ground works.
- To produce an archive and report of any results.

4 Methods

4.1 The project will involve the continuous supervision of groundworks by an experienced professional archaeologist during the works specified above. The works comprise the excavation of holes for the installation of orientation panels, site graphics and hardstanding. During these ground works, if any archaeological deposits are seen to be present, the archaeologist will record areas of archaeological interest.

4.2 The archaeologist will co-operate at all times with the contractors on site to ensure the minimum interruption to the work.

4.3 Any archaeological deposits located will be hand cleaned and planned as appropriate. Samples of any archaeological deposits located will be hand excavated. Measured drawings of all archaeological features will be prepared at a scale of 1:20 and tied into an overall site plan of 1:100. All plans will be tied into the National Grid using an Electronic Distance Measurer (EDM) where appropriate.

4.4 Archaeological deposits will be excavated and recorded as appropriate to establishing the stratigraphic and chronological sequence of deposits, recognising and excavating structural evidence and recovering economic, artefactual and environmental evidence. Particular attention will be paid to the potential for buried palaeosols and waterlogged deposits in consultation with ULAS's environmental officer (‘brief’12).

4.5 All excavated sections will be recorded and drawn at 1:10 or 1:20 scale, levelled and tied into the Ordnance Survey datum. Spot heights will be taken as appropriate.

4.5 Any human remains encountered will be initially left *in situ* and only be removed under a Home Office Licence and in compliance with relevant environmental health regulations. English Heritage, Leicestershire County Council and the coroner will be informed immediately on their discovery.

4.6 Internal monitoring procedures will be undertaken including visits to the site from the project manager. These will ensure that professional standards are being maintained. Provision will be made for monitoring visits with representatives of English Heritage and Leicestershire County Council.

4.7 In the event of significant archaeological remains being located during the watching brief there may be the need for contingency time and finance to be provided to ensure adequate recording is undertaken. On the discovery of potentially significant remains the archaeologist will inform the English Heritage and Leicestershire County Council. If the archaeological

remains are identified to be of significance additional contingent archaeological works may be required.

4.8 A certificate of SMCC 6 has been obtained for the work.

5 Recording Systems

5.1 Individual descriptions of all archaeological strata and features excavated or exposed will be entered onto prepared pro-forma recording sheets.

5.2 A site location plan based on the current Ordnance Survey 1:1250 map, (reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO) will be prepared. This will be supplemented by a plan at 1:200 (or 1:100), which will show the location of the areas investigated.

5.3 A record of the full extent in plan of all archaeological deposits encountered will be made on drawing film, related to the OS grid and at a scale of 1:10 or 1:20. Elevations and sections of individual layers of features should be drawn where possible. The OD height of all principal strata and features will be calculated and indicated on the appropriate plans.

5.4 An adequate photographic record of the investigations will be prepared. This will include black and white prints and colour transparencies illustrating in both detail and general context the principal features and finds discovered. The photographic record will also include 'working shots' to illustrate more generally the nature of the archaeological operation mounted.

5.5 This record will be compiled and fully checked during the course of the watching brief.

5.6 All site records and finds will be kept securely.

6 Report and Archive

6.1 A report on the watching brief will be provided following the groundworks. Following the fieldwork the on-line OASIS form at http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis will be completed.

6.2 Copies will be provided for the client, Historic Environment Record and Pllanning Authority. The copyright of all original finished documents shall remain vested in ULAS and ULAS will be entitled as of right to publish any material in any form produced as a result of its investigations.

6.3 A full copy of the archive as defined in the 'Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long-term storage' (UKIC 1990), and Standards in the Museum care of archaeological collections (MGC 1992) and 'Guidelines for the preparation of site archives and assessments for all finds (other than fired clay objects) (Roman Finds Group and Finds Research Group AD 700-1700 1993) will be presented to Leicestershire County Council, Heritage Services normally within six months of the completion of analysis. This archive will include all written, drawn and photographic records relating directly to the investigations undertaken.

7 Publication

7.1 A summary report will be submitted to a suitable regional or national archaeological journal within one year of completion of fieldwork. A full report will be submitted if the results are of significance.

8 Timetable and Staffing

8.1 The watching brief is scheduled to commence at the inception of the contractors groundworks on 22nd January and will take approximately one day. An experienced archaeologist will be present during all of this work.

9 Health and Safety

9.1 ULAS is covered by and adheres to the University of Leicester Statement of Safety Policy and uses the ULAS Health and Safety Manual (2001) with appropriate risks assessments for all archaeological work. A draft Health and Safety statement for this project is in the Appendix. The relevant Health and Safety Executive guidelines will be adhered to as appropriate.

10 Insurance

10.1 All ULAS work is covered by the University of Leicester's Public Liability and Professional Indemnity Insurance. The Public Liability Insurance is with St Pauls Travellers Policy No. UCPOP3651237 while the Professional Indemnity Insurance is with Lloyds Underwriters (50%) and Brit Insurances (50%) Policy No. FUNK3605.

11. Bibliography

MAP 2, *The management of archaeological projects* 2nd edition English Heritage 1991

MGC 1992, *Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections* (Museums and Galleries Commission)

RFG/FRG 1993, *Guidelines for the preparation of site archives* (Roman Finds Group and Finds Research Group AD 700-1700)

SMA 1993, *Selection, retention and Dispersal of Archaeological Collections. Guidelines for use in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (Society of Museum Archaeologists)

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14.01.2008

Appendix

Draft Project Health and Safety Policy Statement

Ashby de la Zouch Castle, Leicestershire (SM LE1)

Planning Application: N/A

For: Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council and English Heritage

For: English Heritage

1 Nature of the work

1.1 This statement is for archaeological supervision of groundworks.

1.2 The work will involve observation of groundworks during daylight hours and recording of any underlying archaeological deposits revealed. Overall depth is currently unknown but is unlikely to exceed 1m. This will involve the examination of the exposed surface with hand tools (shovels, trowels etc) and excavation of any archaeological features. All work will adhere to the University of Leicester Health and Safety Policy and follow the guidance in the ULAS Health and Safety Manual (2001) together with the following relevant Health and Safety guidelines.

1.3 HSE Construction Information Sheet CS8 Safety in excavations.
HSE Industry Advisory leaflet IND (G)143 (L): Getting to grips with manual handling.
HSE Industry Advisory leaflet IND (G)145 (L): Watch Your back.
CIRIA R97 Trenching practice.
CIRIA TN95 Proprietary Trench Support Systems.
HSE Guidance Note HS(G) 47 Avoiding danger to underground services. HSE Guidance Note GS7 Accidents to children on construction sites

1.4 The Health and Safety policy on site will be reassessed during the evaluation .

1.5 All work will adhere to the contractors' health and safety policy.

2 Risks Assessment

2.1 Working within a building site

Precautions. No work will be undertaken beneath section faces. Loose spoil heaps will not be walked on. Protective footwear will be worn at all times. Hard hats will be worn at all times. A member of staff qualified in First Aid will be present at all times. First aid kit, vehicle and mobile phone to be kept on site in case of emergency.

2.2 Working with plant.

Precautions. Hard hats, protective footwear and hazard jackets will be worn at all times. No examination of the area of stripping will take place until machines have vacated area. Observation of machines will be maintained during hand excavation. Liaison will be

maintained with the contractors to ensure programme of machine movement is understood. **ULAS SOP1: Working with plant and heavy machinery** will be used as guidance.

2.3 Working within areas prone to waterlogging.

Precautions.Protective clothing will be worn at all times and precautions taken to prevent contact with stagnant water which may carry Wiels disease or similar.

2.4 Working with chemicals.

Precautions.If chemicals are used to conserve or help lift archaeological material these will only be used by qualified personnel with protective clothing (i.e a trained conservator) and will be removed from site immediately after use.

2.5 Lone working
Precautions. Where archaeologist are working on their own a buddy system will be set up to allow the main office to know when they are on site. **ULAS SOP2: Lone Working** will be used as guidance.

2.5 Other risks

Precautions. If there is any suspicion of unforeseen hazards being encountered e.g chemical contaminants, unexploded bombs, hazardous gases work will cease immediately. The client and relevant public authorities will be informed immediately.

2.9 No other constraints are recognised over the nature of the soil, water, type of excavation, proximity of structures, sources of vibration and contamination.

Vicki Score
14.01.2008

Working with plant and heavy machinery
Guidance Used: SCAUM Manual Section 4.1 – 4.3

1. All machine operators must be competent in their operation and must have correct certification for the work.
2. PPE must be worn by all persons while machinery is working on site. Minimum PPE includes, high visibility clothing, hard hats and suitable footwear. Ear protection should be available if required. Note – ear plugs are better at noise reduction than ear defenders.
3. Plant should not be left running where exhaust gases can build up.
4. Further advice on soil handling and stripping is available at http://www.defra.gov.uk/environ/landuse/soilguid/ (ULAS safety alert 26/06/06)

Excavators

5. At least one member of staff should act as a banksman to supervise the machine during all archaeological work. All other staff should keep away from the working area.
6. Members of staff working with the machine should stand at a safe vantage point, away from the radius of the bucket arm and in full view of the driver. They should make sure that the driver has fully stopped the machine and is aware of their intentions before inspecting the stripped ground.
7. Basic signals should be agreed with the driver before work commences.
8. Passengers are not allowed on the machine at any time unless on a seat or safe riding position.
9. Do not approach machinery particularly from behind unless you are sure that the driver has seen you.
10. Banksmen should be particularly aware of the dangers involving the changing of buckets/breakers. The machine operator should confirm the bucket/breaker has been attached properly by crowning (lifting) the attachment away from other people before work re-commences (see ULAS safety alert 10/04/06)
11. Members of staff should be aware that the weight of machinery can affect the stability of the sides of an excavation.
12. Members of staff should also be aware of the possibility of unforeseen hazards in the ground (such as services) or any overhead hazards (as for example power cables, telephone wires etc).

Dumper trucks

13. Dumpers are not to be used on roads unless they comply with the Road Traffic Acts.
14. Loading should be even and the load should not obscure the driver's vision.
15. Loads must not be tipped while the machine is in motion. During loading/unloading, the handbrake must be applied and the gears put in neutral. Adequate means of preventing an overrun should be provided on all edges.
16. Dumpers require more room to manoeuvre than is often realised. The driver should be aware of local gradients, obstructions and ground conditions and reduce speed when necessary.

Working alone in Safety
Guidance used: HSE Leaflet INDG73 (rev). Working alone in Safety

Definition

Lone workers are those who work by themselves without direct supervision. Examples of this type of work include

- Site visits
- Site/building recording
- Walkover surveys
- Some watching briefs
- Office work out of hours
- Starting early/finishing late on site without the team or other contractors.

Procedures for lone working on site

1. No personnel are to work alone on site without their line manager being aware of it.
2. Pregnant women should not work alone.
3. A mobile phone and personal first aid kit should be carried at all times on site (not buried in the site vehicle parked miles away!).
4. Emergency procedures (e.g. location of nearest A&E, office contacts) should be set out on the risk assessment form.
5. A risk assessment should be carried out prior to work taking place and hazards identified that might pose a risk to lone workers. Special consideration should be given to
   - the use of any substances, goods and heavy objects.
   - the risk of violence
   - risks to young or female members of staff
   - medical conditions of the staff involved
   - what training has been given
6. All lone workers should be assigned to a 'buddy'. Depending on the circumstances, a system needs to be set up to ensure adequate communication. At the very least this should involve
   - knowing when the lone worker is on site (e.g. phone call or text to let the buddy know they are on/off site)
   - A failsafe means of regular contact (e.g mobile phone/radio)
   - An emergency procedure for the buddy to follow should the lone worker not make contact at the appropriate time.
   - Checks that the lone worker has returned home or to base after completion of the work.

   The procedures set up MUST be documented either in the risk assessment or as an attachment to the risk assessment.

Procedures for lone working in the office

1. Anyone working in the office outside normal hours (7:30am – 6:00pm), should sign the Out of Hours book located at Reception in the Front Lobby.
2. A mobile phone or land line should be available when working alone.

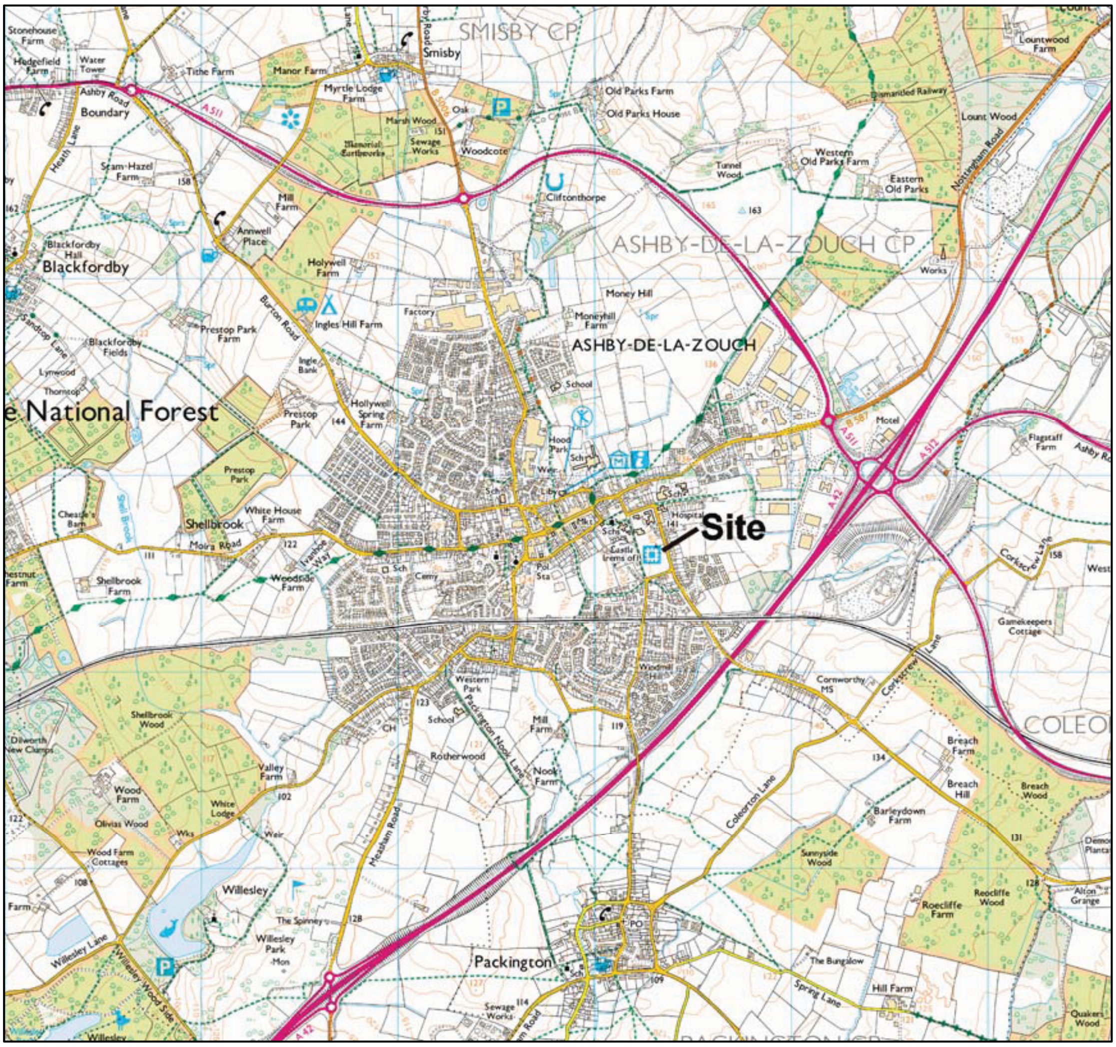

Figure 9: Location of the site

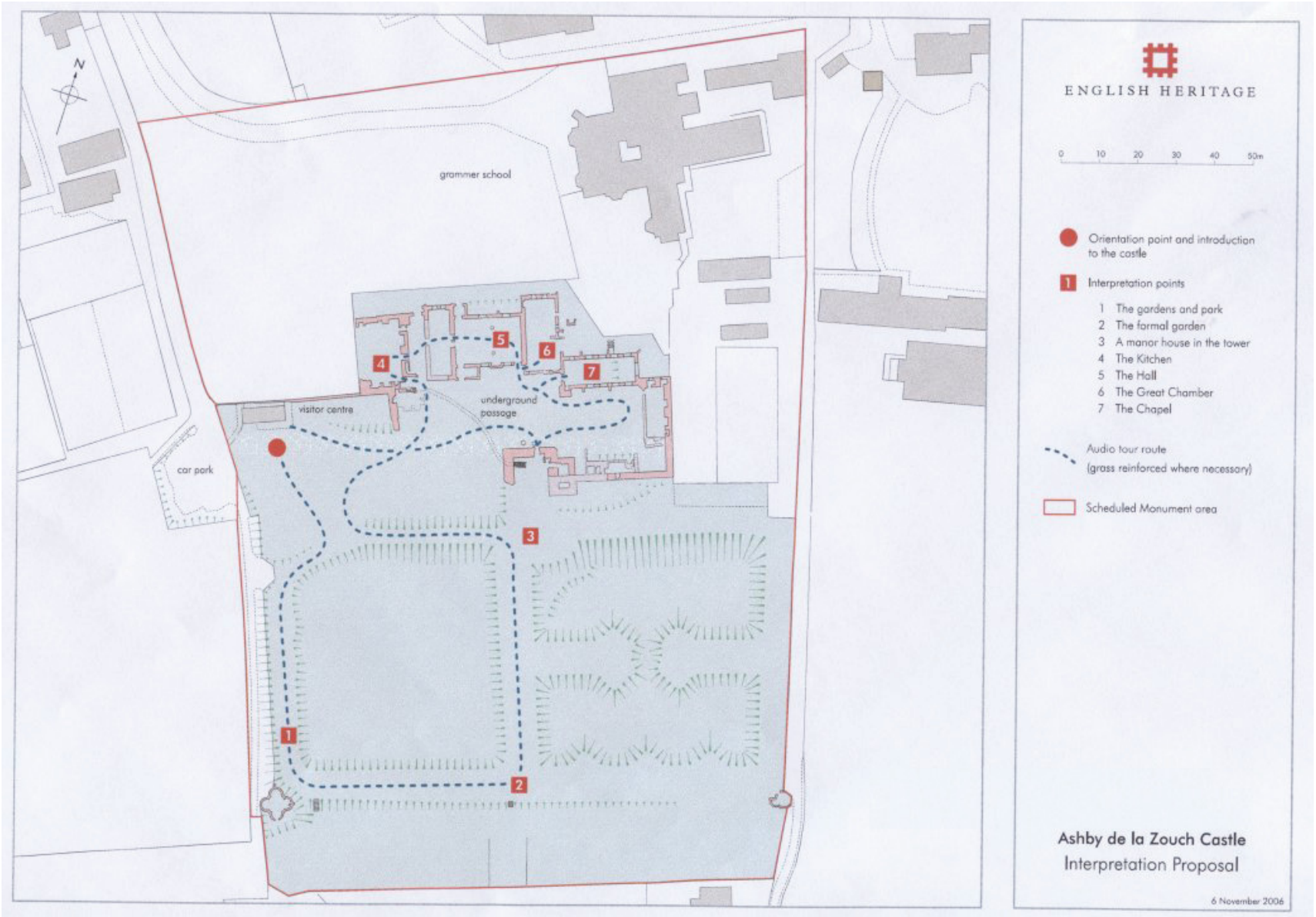

Figure 10: Location of orientation and interpretation points (Plan supplied by English Heritage)