

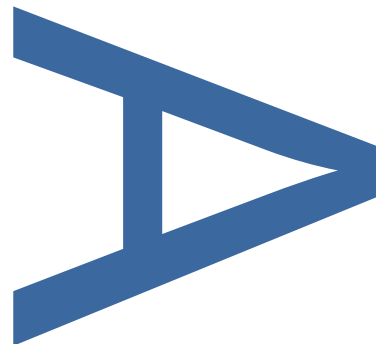
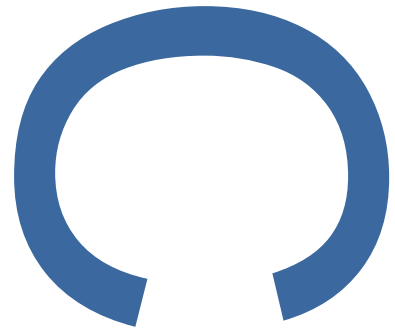
**57 THE OVAL, NEW WALK,  
CAR PARK ADJACENT  
LEICESTER,  
LE1 7JB:**

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
EVALUATION**

**Planning Reference: 20161047**

**PCA Report Number: R12776**

**January 2017**



DOCUMENT VERIFICATION


57 THE OVAL, NEW WALK, CAR PARK ADJACENT  
LEICESTER, LE1 7JB:

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

Quality Control

Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd	
Project Number	K4837
Report Number	R12776

	Name & Title	Signature	Date
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Revision No.	Date	Checked	Approved
1	30/01/2017	Kevin Trott	

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**57 The Oval, New Walk, Car Park Adjacent Leicester, LE1 7JB:**  
**An Archaeological Evaluation Report**

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**Local Planning Authority:** Leicester City Council

**Planning Ref:** 20161047

**Central National Grid Reference:** SK 59460 03663

**PCA Site Code:** ONWL17

**Written and Researched by** Kathryn Brook

**Project Manager:** Kevin Trott

**Commissioning Client:** Marble Homes Ltd

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**PCA Report Number: R12776**

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## ABSTRACT

*This report describes the results of an archaeological trial trench evaluation carried out by Pre-Construct Archaeology in a carpark adjacent to 57 The Oval, New Walk, Leicester , (SK 59460 03663) during January 2017. The archaeological work was commissioned by Marble Homes Ltd in response to a planning condition attached to the erection of a four storey building accommodating 54 self-contained student studio flats. The aim of the work was to characterise the archaeological potential of the proposed development area.*

*The archaeological evaluation recorded a limited sequence of events predominantly associated with creation of the car park. Only a single buried soil horizon was identified containing a small assemblage of artefacts predominantly dated to the late medieval-early to mid-post-medieval period.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background**

- 1.1.1 Pre-construct Archaeology Ltd was commissioned Marble Homes Ltd. in response to an archaeological planning condition attached to the erection of a four storey building accommodating 54 self-contained student studio flats (Planning Reference 20161047). An archaeological trial trench evaluation was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd (PCA) in the car park adjacent to 57 The Oval, New Walk, Leicester on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2017. (**Figures 1 and 2**).
- 1.1.2 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by Kathryn Brook of PCA (Brook 2017) a single trial trench was excavated and recorded accordingly.

### **1.2 Site Location and Description**

- 1.3 The development site is located within the New Walk Conservation Area approximately 851m south-east of Leicester City Centre. The plot of land is comprised of a tarmac carpark area, roughly rectangular in plan, measuring approximately 1,200m<sup>2</sup> (**Figure 1**). To the west of the site is residential housing, to the north lies The Oval, New Walk, to the south lies the British Psychological Society building and to the east lies an office building. The site is centred at NGR SK 59460 03663

### **1.4 Topography and Geology**

- 1.4.1 The proposed development area consists of a roughly rectangular plot of flat, tarmac land to the south of The Oval, New Walk. The site is currently being used as a car park. There are mature trees & shrubs along the western and northern boundaries of the site. The site is bounded on the east by a low wall, beyond which lies an office building. To the north lies a low hedge and metal railings which separate the site from The Oval. To the west the boundary consists of a row of bushes beyond which lies an access road and residential properties. To the south a high wall separates the site from a large building used by the British Psychological Society. The site is accessed via The Oval which leads to a gate at the northern edge of the development site.
- 1.4.2 The British Geological Survey indicates that the underlying bedrock geology on site comprises 'Branscombe Mudstone Formation' – Mudstone. This is a sedimentary bedrock that formed in a local environment previously dominated by hot deserts. This formed in the Triassic Period, around 200-217 million years ago (BGS viewer 2017).
- 1.4.3 The superficial geology was present across the site as a firm, orange red clay with very occasional medium-large sub-rounded stones and was allocated context number **105**. The natural clay was relatively uniform across the site.

## **1.5 Historical and Archaeological Background**

1.5.1 The development site lies within an area of archaeological potential relating mainly to the Roman period as highlighted in the Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment (DBA) undertaken by PCA Ltd, Brook & Sutherland 2016. Only a short Summary taken from the assessment will be detailed here.

### **1.5.2 Prehistoric**

1.5.2.1 Three potential find spots relating to prehistoric activity were identified in the DBA, the closest find to development site is of a Neolithic 'lance-head' found near 'the Pavilion' in Victoria Park, c.350m to the south.

### **1.5.3 Roman**

1.5.3.1 There are a number of instances of Roman activity recorded within the DBA search area. These are primarily isolated findspots, but also includes the putative course of a Roman road known as 'Gartree Road', which originated at Colchester and terminated at the south gate of the Roman town.

1.5.3.2 A gravel and cobbled surface thought to be part of Gartree Road was identified during the excavation of a section across New Walk, northeast of Waterloo Road. It is postulated that New Walk largely follows the route of Gartree Road, running on a roughly northwest-southeast alignment with a few deviations.

### **1.5.4 Saxon**

1.5.4.1 The study area lies to the southeast of the historic core of Leicester and as such is unlikely to contain material directly relating to the settlement referred to in the Domesday Book of 1086. It is plausible that Anglo Saxon suburbs do survive along the roads leading into the former Roman town, as highlighted in recent excavations in and around the South Gate (Finn 2004).

1.5.4.2 Only a single possible element of Anglo-Saxon activity was identified within the DBA. This element is a possible inhumation cemetery c.300m east-southeast of the site in which the discovery of a number of bronze 'antiquities' in conjunction with human bones are thought to be Anglo-Saxon in origin.

### **1.5.5 Medieval**

1.5.5.1 The development site is surrounded by locations that are mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086. Leicester, as mentioned previously, lies to the northwest of the site, as does Knighton to the southeast and Aylestone to the southwest. However, the site itself does not fall within any of these areas. Medieval activity within the vicinity of the site was limited to a single find spot, which yielded a silver penny of Edward III, c.380m southwest of the site.

### **1.5.6 Post-Medieval**

- 1.5.6.1 There is a considerable amount of post-medieval activity within the vicinity of the development site, perhaps unsurprising due to the site's location within the city of Leicester. The site lies just off New Walk, a late 18th century public walk that saw developed in the 19th century. A number of open spaces and trees lie along New Walk and a number of listed buildings front onto, and are set back from the walk. It is the combination of these factors that give the area its distinct nature and resulting designation as a Conservation Area.
- 1.5.6.2 The site lies directly off The Oval which was first established in 1866 and 'named Albert Grove, in memory of Prince Albert who died in 1861' (Boynton 2002, p.50). Prior to the creation of The Oval, New Walk curved around the western side of a large field (Figure 6) and in 1866 an area was enclosed by iron railings to form 'Albert Grove'



## **2 AIMS & OBJECTIVES**

The aims and objectives of the investigation were:

- To establish the location, nature, extent, date and state of preservation of any archaeological or geo-archaeological deposits or features within the site, to recover any associated objects and to record the surviving evidence.
- To analyse and interpret the site archive and to disseminate the results to promote local and national research objectives.
- To deposit the site archive with the Leicester Museum Service for long term conservation.

### **3 METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Fieldwork Methodology**

- 3.1.1 The Evaluation took place on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2017 in compliance with the relevant guidance document of the Institute for Archaeologists (ClfA, 2014); PCA is a ClfA-Registered Organisation. The Written Scheme of Investigation for the Evaluation, as approved by the City Archaeologist of Leicester City Council, proposed the excavation of a single trial trench which was undertaken in accordance with the WSI (**Figure 2**).
- 3.1.2 Ground reduction was carried out under archaeological supervision using a wheeled mechanical excavator, JCB, fitted with a 1.8m-wide toothless ditching bucket. Tarmac and bedding deposits were removed in spits down to the level of the undisturbed natural geological deposits where potential archaeological features could be observed and recorded. Exposed surfaces were cleaned by trowel and hoe as appropriate and all further excavation was undertaken manually using hand tools.
- 3.1.3 All exposed deposits/layers were cleaned using hand tools and recorded as set out in the PCA fieldwork manual (Taylor and Brown 2009). Contexts were recorded according to PCAs fieldwork manual approved for use in Leicestershire, including written, photographic and drawn records.
- 3.1.4 Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited is a Registered Organisation (number 23) with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists and will operate within the Institute's 'Code of Conduct'.

#### **3.2 Recording Methodology**

- 3.2.1 The limits of excavations, heights above Ordnance Datum (mOD) and the locations of archaeological features and interventions were recorded using a Leica 1200 GPS rover unit with RTK differential correction, giving three-dimensional accuracy of 20mm or better.
- 3.2.2 Manual plans and section drawings of archaeological features and deposits were drawn at an appropriate scale (1:10, 1:20 or 1:50).
- 3.2.3 Deposits or the removal of deposits judged by the excavating archaeologist to constitute individual events were each assigned a unique record number (often referred to within British archaeology as 'context numbers') and recorded utilising PCAs printed pro forma.
- 3.2.4 High-resolution digital photographs were taken at all stages of the evaluation process. Digital Photographs were taken of all archaeological features and deposits.
- 3.2.5 Artefacts and ecofacts were collected by hand and assigned to the record number of the deposit from which they were retrieved, receiving appropriate care prior to removal from the site (ClfA 2014).

### **3.3 Post Fieldwork Methodology**

- 3.3.1 Historic England's Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (Historic England 2015) was used as the framework for post-excavation work.
- 3.3.2 A small assemblage of pottery, animal bone and clay pipe was recovered from a single context during the fieldwork phase. Assessment reports on the artefacts are given in Section 5. No other artefactual or eco-factual material was recovered.

### **3.4 The Contexts**

- 3.4.1 A unique context number was assigned to each distinguishable depositional event. Context numbers will be discussed in greater detail in Section 4 and will be given in bold.
- 3.4.2 Three context numbers were allocated to deposits associated with the modern car park whilst a further context number was given to a layer. Five distinct contexts were observed during the works are presented in **Appendix 1**.

## **4 THE RESULTS**

### **4.1 Natural Deposits**

- 4.1.1 As mentioned previously the superficial geology across the site consisted of a compact, orange red sandy clay. The natural clay was allocated context number **105** and was relatively uniform across the site.

### **4.2 The Archaeological Sequence**

- 4.2.1 The archaeological evaluation identified a limited sequence of archaeology which was mainly related to the leveling of the area to form the current car park, **101** Tarmac surface, **102** bedding layer for the tarmac, **103** rubble hard core leveling deposit (Section 1 Figure 3).
- 4.2.2 Only a narrow band of buried soil **104** survived below the car park leveling layer **103**. This buried soil horizon consisted of a mid to dark grey sandy clay it contained nine fragments of pottery, the majority was early to mid-post medieval in date with the exception of one fragment of Cistercian type ware dating the late medieval period. None of the pottery recovered showed sign of abrasion, suggesting it had not been disturbed since its deposition. Fragments of a single cattle molar was also recovered along with three fragments of clay tobacco pipe, also dated to the early to mid-post-medieval period. This buried soil horizon sealed the natural **105**.

### **4.3 Additional Deposits**

- 4.3.1 The trench also contained a ceramic land drain approximate halfway along the trench aligned northeast –southwest. A further pipe trench cut across the south western position of the trench (Figure 3).

## **5 FINDS ANALYSIS**

### **5.1 Pottery Report** *by Kevin Trott & Jane Young*

#### **5.1.1 Introduction**

5.1.1.2 In total nine sherds of pottery representing seven vessels were submitted for examination. The pottery recovered ranges in date from the late medieval to the early Victorian periods. Where possible the codenames used for the archive of this site have been related to known Leicestershire codes (Connor and Buckley 1999), although the lack of an official printed or digital Leicestershire ware type series with adequate definitions seriously hampers consistency in the ceramic record. The post-Roman Pottery Type Series held at Leicester University was consulted and every effort was made to parallel the sherds found on this site with examples in it.

5.1.1.3 The assemblage was quantified by three measures: number of sherds, weight and vessel count within each context. Fabric identification of some of the pottery was undertaken by x20 binocular microscope. The ceramic data was entered on an excel database incorporating Lincolnshire (Young et al.) and Nottingham (Nailor and Young 2001) fabric codenames with a concordance with Leicestershire codenames (see Table 1). Recording of the post-Roman assemblage was in accordance with the guidelines laid out in Slowikowski, et al. (2001).

#### **5.1.2 Condition**

5.1.2.1 The pottery is mostly in an unabraded to slightly abraded condition with sherd size mainly falling into the small to medium size range (below 50grams). Only two vessels are represented by more than one sherd and there are no cross-context joining sherds were found.

#### **5.1.3 Overall Chronology and Source**

5.1.3.1 A range of seven post-Roman pottery ware types were identified; the type and general date range for these fabrics are shown in Table 1. The post-Roman pottery ranges in date from the late medieval to the early modern periods and includes local and regionally imported ceramics. A fairly limited range of vessel types was recovered including a range of bowls, dishes, and mug/cups.

Leicestershire Codename	Full name	Earliest date	Latest date	Total sherds	Total vessels
CW2	Brown glazed earthenware (Cistercian type)	1475	1550	1	1
EA1	Earthenware	1500	1750	1	1
EA2	Brown-glazed earthenware	1600	1750	1	1
EA7	Yellow/brown slipware earthenware	1600	1750	1	1
SW5	English brown salt-glazed stoneware	1670	1900	1	1
EA	Brown-glazed earthenware	1700	1900	2	1
EA8	Creamware	1750	1900	2	1

Table 1: Pottery codenames and date ranges with total quantities by sherd and vessel count

#### 5.1.4 Late Medieval

5.1.4.1 Overall, only one of the pottery vessels recovered from the site can be dated to the late medieval period, between the late 15th and mid-16th centuries. This sherd came from the base of a Cistercian-type cup (CW2) produced in the Ticknall kilns, Derbyshire. This sherd was found in an un-abraded condition indicating it had not been abraded in an environment like regularly cultivated fields.

#### 5.1.5 Post-medieval to early modern

5.1.5.1 Six vessels are of early-post-medieval to early modern type and date to between the early-16th and late 18th centuries. The single un-glazed earthenware sherd recovered from the site (EA1) is in a coarse buff/orange fabric that is a product of the Chilvers Coton Kilns in South-West Leicestershire. The body sherd from a brown-glazed earthenware (EA2) dish is in a Cistercian-like fabric and represents the transition of Cistercian ware into post-medieval earthenwares, it is a product of the Tickhill kilns. Both sherds encapsulate a date range between the mid-16th & 17th centuries. A slipware dish (EA7) is clearly a Staffordshire product and would fit comfortably within a later 16th to later 17th century date range.

5.1.5.2 Two conjoining Brown-glazed Earthenware sherds (EA) with mid-brown internal manganese glaze came from a large bowl of mid-18th to early 19th century date.

5.1.5.3 The latest conjoining sherds found on the site were from a Creamware (EA8) cup and is of late 18th to early 19th century date.

#### 5.1.6 Summary and Recommendations

5.1.6.1 This small assemblage of relatively un-abraded pottery recovered from a buried garden soil (104) suggests late-medieval occupation in the area (between the mid-15th and mid-16th centuries). The presence of early-post medieval ceramics (early 16th century) and post-medieval to early modern pottery (17th to late 18th centuries) suggests a continuity of nearby occupation. The assemblage is too small to suggest the nature or extent of this occupation,

although previous documentary and cartographic research suggests this area adjacent to New Walk was open fields. It is potentially possible that occupational material from the urban settlement of Leicester was deposited on the open fields surrounding Leicester in agricultural manuring. It is surprising that the majority of the sherds are un-abraded if they are associated with manuring practices.

### **5.1.7 Retention**

5.1.7.1 The entire assemblage should be retained for future study and consulted if further work on the site is carried out.

### **5.1.8 References**

- Connor, A. and Buckley, R 1999, *Roman and Medieval Occupation in Causeway Lane, Leicester*. Leicester Archaeology Monograph 5
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## **5.2 Bone Report** *by Kevin Trott,*

### **5.2.1 Description of bones**

5.2.1.1 The site collection consisted of just one broken upper cattle molar (in three pieces) recovered from context (104), this representing a post-medieval garden soil. The molar (1 & 2m) derives from an adult cow with a Grant (1975) wear stage j. No further analysis is required

### 5.3 Clay Tobacco Pipe Report *By Kevin Trott*

#### 5.3.1 Introduction

5.3.1.1 Three clay tobacco pipe fragments weighing a combined total of 17 grams were recovered from a single context: Garden soil (104).

#### 5.3.2 Description

5.3.2.1 The two plain stem fragments are 18th century in style exhibiting signs of iron staining, the single complete bowl derives from a Higgins (2004) Type 5 dated c.1690-1710. All three clay tobacco pipe fragments are in excellent condition and showed little signs of soil abrasion.

Context	Total	Weight (g)	Type	Description	Date Range
104	1	2	Plain stem	Unabraded with iron staining	18th century
104	1	2	Plain stem	Unabraded with iron staining	18th century
104	1	13	Bowl	Spur pipe, bottered & internally cut rim, three-quarters milled	c.1690-1710

Table 2: Clay Tobacco Pipe Inventory

#### 5.3.3 Recommendations

5.3.3.1 The clay tobacco pipe assemblage is in good condition and the collection should be retained for future study with the remainder of the archive.

#### 5.3.4 References

Higgins D.A., 1999, 'The Clay Tobacco Pipes' in A. Connor and R. Buckley (ed.), *Roman and Medieval Occupation in Causeway Lane, Leicester*. Leicester Archaeology Monograph **5** 215-234.

Higgins, D.A., 2004, 'Clay Tobacco Pipes' in N. Finn, *The Origins of a Leicester Suburb*. British Archaeological Report 372. 100-102.

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## **6 CONCLUSIONS**

- 6.1.1 The observation fulfilled the aims and objectives of the archaeological evaluation and recorded a very limited archaeological sequence,
- 6.1.2 Natural deposits on the site consisted of clay deposits, discussed earlier, with reference to the British Geological Survey.
- 6.1.3 No evidence of any Prehistoric, Roman or Anglo-Saxon activity was identified on this site.
- 6.1.4 The only layer of archaeological interest was a buried soil horizon containing a small assemblage of finds. The finds were predominantly dated to the early – mid post medieval period with the exception of a single fragment of late medieval pottery. The assemblage was unabraded and most like represent the disposal of domestic rubbish from the expanding urban city of Leicester. The dumping of urban waste from the city has been encountered archaeologically on the outskirts of Leicester, like Abbey Park (Graham Morgan, pers. Comm.).

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### **7.2 Websites**

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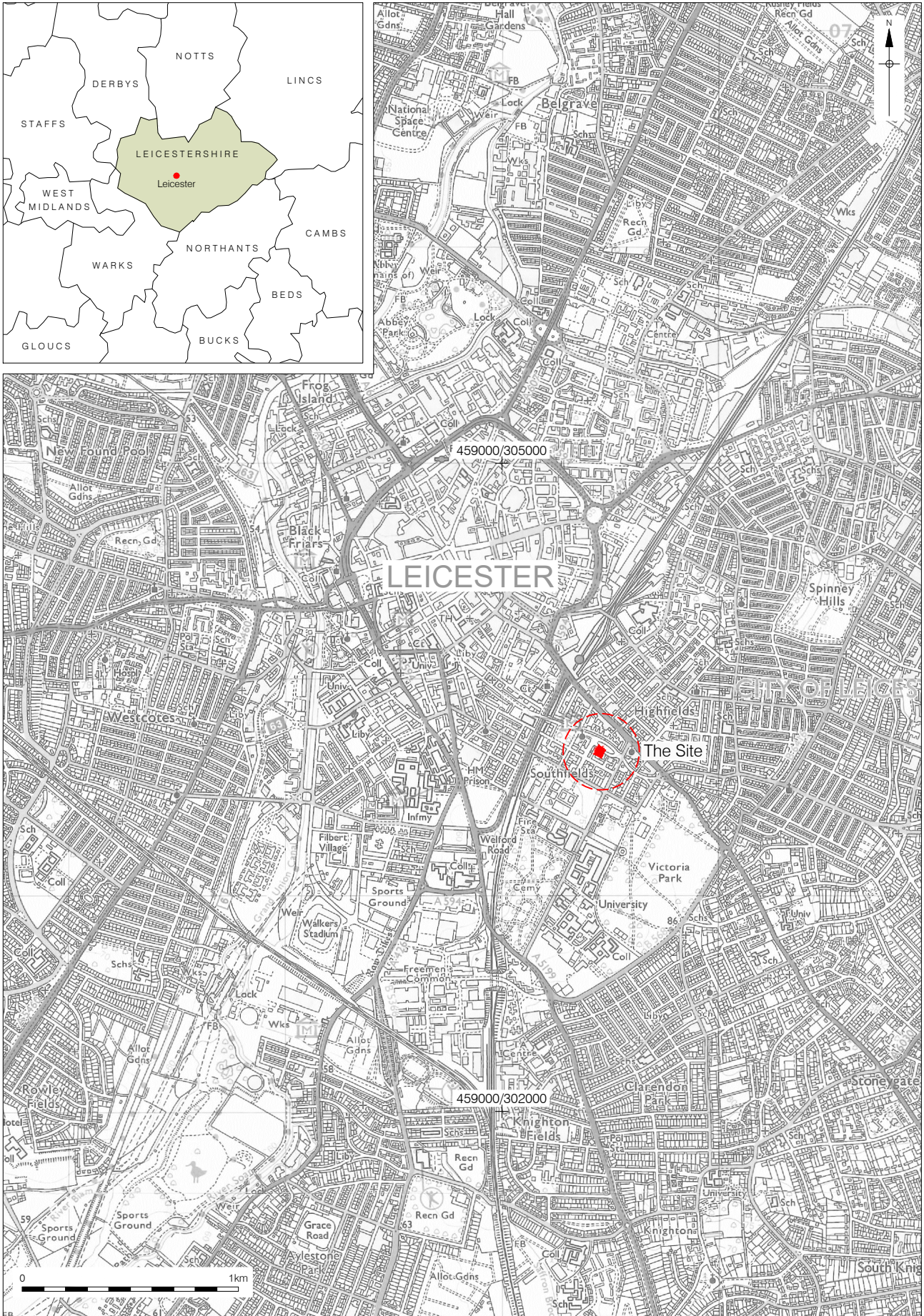
Institute for Archaeologists (IfA), 2014a, *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation*

Institute for Archaeologists (IfA), 2014b, *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation and research of archaeological materials*

<http://www.archaeologists.net/codes/ifa>

## **8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Pre-construct Archaeology Ltd would like to thank Marble Homes Ltd. for commissioning the work. Project management and editing were undertaken by Kevin Trott of PCA Midlands. Figures accompanying this report were prepared by Charlotte Faiers of PCA's CAD department.

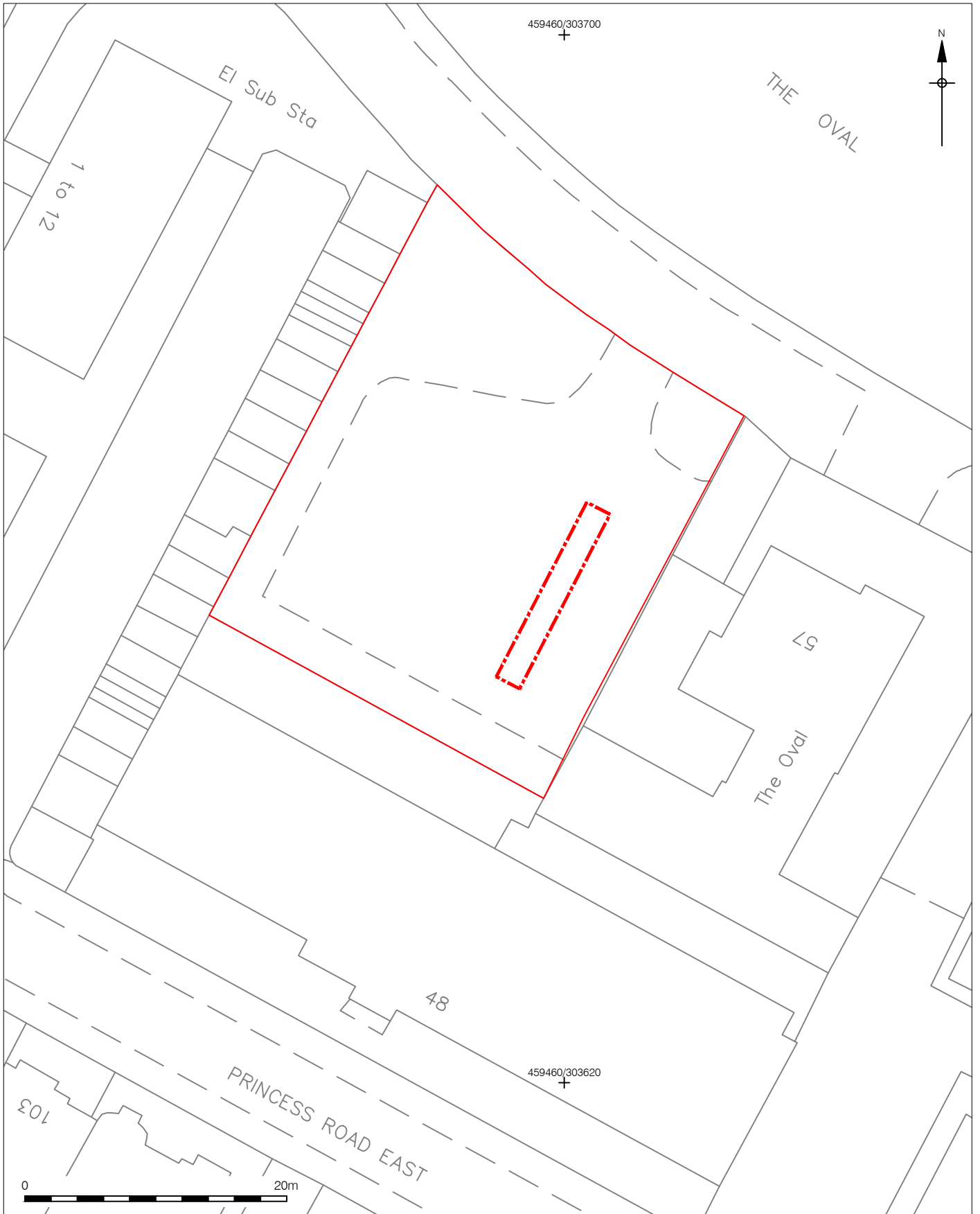


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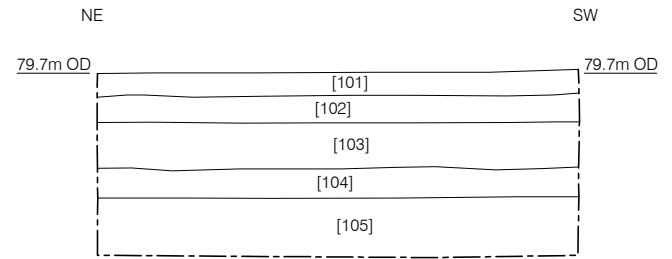
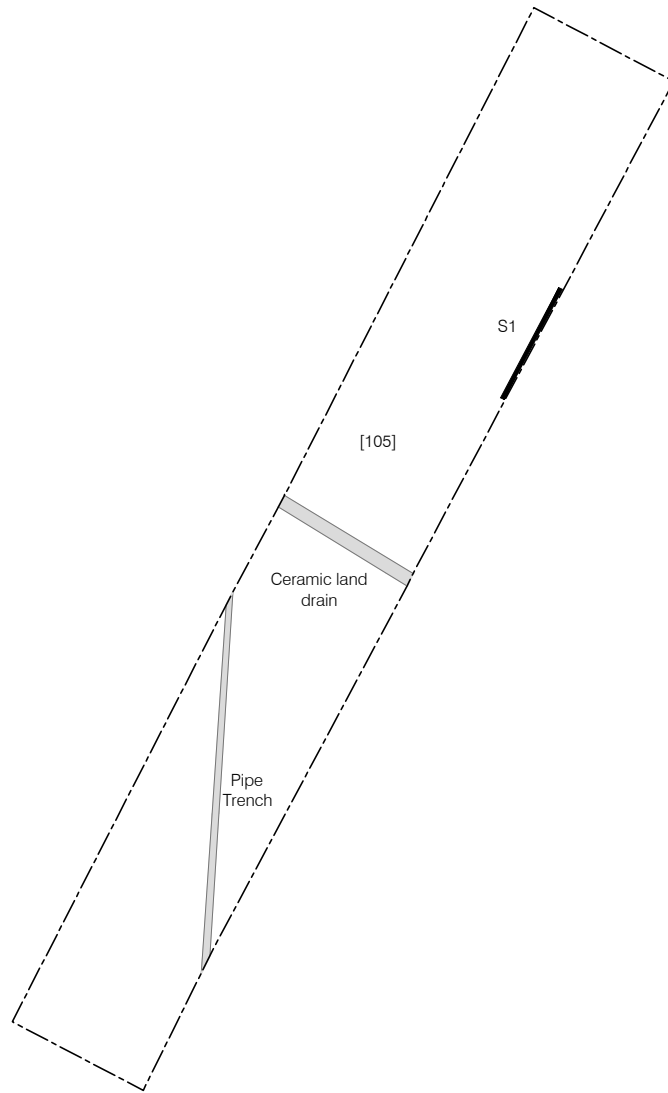
Figure 1  
 Site Location  
 1:2,500,000; 1:25,000 at A4



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Figure 2  
Location of stripped areas monitored  
1:400 at A4



Section 1  
North West Facing



Figure 3  
Trench Plan and Section 1  
1:100 and 1:25 at A4

## Appendix 1: Site Photographs



**Plate 1:** View form the site entrance facing southwest.



**Plate 2:** View of west facing trench section scales 1m & 0.5m



**Plate 3:** View across the evaluation trenching facing northeast. Scales 2x1

## Appendix 2: Context Index

Abbreviations: UE means 'unexcavated'; N/A means 'not applicable'; > means 'greater than'; < means 'up to'; Context numbers are followed by a brief description and interpretation; their dimensions in metres (in the order length x width x depth; or diameter x depth); and their critical stratigraphic relationships.

Context	Category	Description			Interpretation	Dimensions (m)	Above	Below
		Colour	Texture	Inclusions				
101	Surface	Black	Compact gravel and tarmac	non	Car Park surface	c.0.07-0.08m deep	102	N/A
102	Deposit	Mid grey	Moderately loose sand interspaced with crushed brick rubble	Occasional slate pieces and charcoal fragments	Bedding layer	0.08-0.09m deep	103	101
103	Deposit	Reddish orange	Moderately loose crushed brick and slate rubble	non	Levelling deposit	0.12-0.14m deep	104	102
104	Layer	Mid to dark grey	Compact sandy clay	Very occasional gravel flint, quartz pebbles and charcoal flecks	Buried garden soil	0.08m to 0.10m deep	105	103
105	Layer	Red orange	Firm clay	Very occasional medium-large sub-rounded stones	Natural	0.2m>	N/A	105



## Appendix 3: Oasis Form

### OASIS ID: preconst1-274694

#### Project details

Project name	57 The Oval, New Walk, Car Park Adjacent Leicester
Short description of the project	This report describes the results of an archaeological trial trench evaluation carried out by Pre-Construct Archaeology in a carpark adjacent to 57 The Oval, New Walk, Leicester , (SK 59460 03663) during January 2017. The archaeological work was commissioned by Marble Homes Ltd in response to a planning condition attached to the erection of a four storey building accommodating 54 self-contained student studio flats. The aim of the work was to characterise the archaeological potential of the proposed development area. The archaeological evaluation recorded a limited sequence of events predominantly associated with creation of the car park. Only a single buried soil horizon was identified containing a small assemblage of artefacts predominantly dated to the late medieval-early to mid-post-medieval period.
Project dates	Start: 17-01-2017 End: 27-01-2017
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	Conservation Area
Current Land use	Other 15 - Other
Monument type	N/A None
Monument type	N/A None
Significant Finds	POTTERY Post Medieval
Significant Finds	CLAY TOBACCO PIPE Post Medieval
Methods & techniques	"Targeted Trenches"
Development type	Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.)
Prompt	Planning condition
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

#### Project location

Country	England
Site location	LEICESTERSHIRE LEICESTER 57 The Oval, New Walk, Car Park Adjacent Leicester

Postcode	LE1 7JB
Study area	1200 Square metres
Site coordinates	SK 59460 03663 52.62711260549 -1.121452723031 52 37 37 N 001 07 17 W Point

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#### Project creators

Name of Organisation	PCA Midlands
Project brief originator	Leicester City Archaeologist
Project design originator	Kathryn Brook
Project director/manager	Kevin Trott
Project supervisor	Kathryn Brook

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#### Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	Leicester City Museum
Physical Contents	"Animal Bones","Ceramics"
Digital Archive recipient	Leicester City Museum
Digital Contents	"none"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Leicester City Museum
Paper Contents	"none"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Plan","Report","Section","Unpublished Text"

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#### Project bibliography 1

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Entered by Kathryn Brook (kbrook@pre-construct.com)

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# PCA

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