ABBEY PARK, LEICESTER;
OUTSIDE GYM AND TREE PLANTING

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

DECEMBER 2017

PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY

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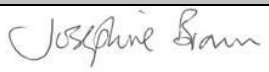
Graphics Checked by:	J Brown		13.12.2017
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Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd
Unit 54
Brockley Cross Business Centre
96 Endwell Road
London
SE4 2PD

ABBEY PARK, LEICESTER; OUTSIDE GYM AND TREE PLANTING

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Local Planning Authority:	**LEICESTER CITY COUNCIL**
Central National Grid Reference:	**SK 58390 05723**
Site Code/Event Number:	**LABL17**
Report No.	**R13119**
Written and researched by:	**James Webb** **Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd**
Project Manager:	**Tim Bradley**
Commissioning Client:	**LEICESTER CITY COUNCIL**
Contractor:	**Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd** **Unit 9, The Mill,** **Mill Lane,** **Little Shrewley,** **Warwick,** **Warwickshire** **CV35 7HN**
Tel:	**01926 485490**
E-mail:	**tbradley@pre-construct.com**
Website:	**www.pre-construct.com**

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ABSTRACT

Pre-Construct Archaeology was commissioned by Leicester City Council to undertake an archaeological evaluation at Abbey Park, Leicester. The investigations were required to assess the archaeological impact of the installation of the outdoor gym equipment and tree planting scheme.

Six test pits were undertaken which confirmed that there was no impact on any significant archaeological remains from the previous installation of the outdoor gym equipment and the planting of trees. The depth of excavation required for the installation of the equipment and the trees was only sufficient to have truncated later post-medieval levelling deposits which were recorded across the area of investigation, and furthermore no significant archaeological features, deposits or structures were recorded during the investigation.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 An archaeological test pit evaluation was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd (PCA) at Abbey Park, Leicester (centred on Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference (NGR) SK 58390 05723 Figure 1) between the 6th and 10th November 2017. The investigations were commissioned by Leicester City Council to assess the impact of previously undertaken tree planting and installation of outdoor gym equipment on the Scheduled Monument of the Augustinian monastic site of St Mary in the Meadow (List No. 1012149).

1.2 The definition of an archaeological field evaluation is 'a limited programme of non-intrusive and / or intrusive fieldwork which determines the presence or absence of archaeological features, structures, deposits, artefacts or ecofacts within a specified area or site. If such archaeological remains are present field evaluation defines their character, extent, quantity and preservation, and enables an assessment of their worth in a local, regional, national and international context as appropriate' (CIFA 2014a).

1.3 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited in response to an archaeological brief prepared by Leicester City Council.

1.4 In addition the archaeological evaluation by test pitting conforms to the guidelines and standards laid down in the following documents:

Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Evaluation, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists: Reading (CIFA 2014a);

Code of Approved Conduct for the Regulation of Arrangements in Field Archaeology, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists: Reading (CIFA 2014b);

Standard and Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists: Reading (CIFA 2014c);

Management of Archaeological Research Projects in the Historic Environment (Morphe), Historic England: London (HE 2015);

Fieldwork Induction Manual: Operations Manual 1, Pre Construct Archaeology, London (Taylor and Brown 2009);

2 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

2.1 Geology

The British Geological Survey details the underlying bedrock geology of the site to be Branscombe Mudstone Formation, sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 201 to 228 million years ago in the Triassic Period. This is generally sealed by alluvial clay, silt, sand and gravel.

2.2 Topography

The wider area of the site is generally level at approximately 54m OD, although local undulations are evident within the area of investigation. The area is grassed will an alignment of young trees towards the east and north and a range of outdoor gym equipment to the west.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 General

Abbey Park falls within the precinct of the former Augustinian monastic site of St Mary of the Meadow, a scheduled ancient monument (List No. 1012149) and grade II registered park and garden (List No. 1000956; DLC435).

3.2 Medieval

The abbey was founded in 1143 by Robert le Bossu, Earl of Leicester, and was endowed with large areas of land and many parish churches both in Leicestershire and further afield. Documentary evidence indicates that it became one of the richest and most important Augustinian houses in England.

3.3 Post-medieval

The abbey was surrendered to the Crown in 1538 and most of the buildings were demolished. After the Dissolution a mansion was built at the site, occupied first by the Hastings family and then by the Cavendish family. The precinct wall (MLC1782) remains largely extant. Building material was recovered and used for the construction of Cavendish House in the later 16th and 17th centuries.

This house was largely destroyed in 1645 when the town was first occupied by Royalist troops and then Parliamentarian forces after a short siege during the English Civil War.

3.4 Modern

By 1928 the 17th century house was in ruins and the land was given to the City of Leicester. The southern part of the precinct is known to have been occupied by fishponds and an orchard. Historic cartographic sources show the area under consideration was part of a nursery and potentially seasonally wet.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Excavation and Sampling

The Written Scheme of Investigation for the evaluation proposed the excavation of six test pits measuring 1m in length by 1m in width across the proposed development area (Figure 2). The trenches were placed in positions agreed between PCA, Leicester City Council and Historic England (Figure 2). Test Pit 6 (TP6) was moved slightly northward to avoid tree rooting.

Metal-detecting was carried out during the topsoil and subsoil stripping. Spoil heaps created were scanned by metal-detector.

All finds encountered were retained on site and returned to the PCA office where they were identified, quantified and dated to period. A terminus post quem was then produced for each stratified context and the dates used to help determine the broad date phasing for the site. On completion of the fieldwork, the finds were cleaned and packaged according to standard guidelines (CIFA 2014c). Please note, the following categories of materials will be discarded after a period of 6 months following the submission of this report, unless there is a specific request to retain them (and subject to the collection policy of the relevant depository): where unstratified; modern pottery; material that has been assessed as having no obvious grounds for retention. No archaeological features were encountered during the fieldwork.

Field excavation techniques and recording methods are detailed in the PCA Fieldwork Induction Manual (Operations Manual I; Taylor & Brown 2009).

4.2 Recording Methodology

The limits of excavations, heights above Ordnance Datum (m OD) 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. Each point was recorded in relation to the OSGB36 geod model and coded to an internal PCA database to provide a dataset which records feature type, context number, associated drawing numbers and any other information that may be relevant.

This survey provides a three-dimensional geo-referenced visual representation of the archaeology present.

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 on individual pre-printed forms (Taylor and Brown 2009). Context sheets were primarily filled in by the archaeologist who excavated the feature/deposit. All deposits recorded during the evaluation are listed in Appendix 2.

All deposits were recorded with sufficient data to allow for a full characterisation of the context and its relationships to be made and allow for future studies to query and compare the dataset with confidence.

High-resolution digital photographs were taken at all stages of the evaluation process using a Canon EOS 1300D digital SLR camera with a 18.0-megapixel resolution. Digital Photographs were taken of all deposits and all images will be labelled appropriately and cross-referenced in relation to a site specific photography register and regarded as part of the primary archive.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

5.1 Test Pit Description.

5.2 Test Pit 1

Test pit 1 (TP1) (Plate 1) was located towards the north west of the site (Figure 2). It was set out on a NW-SE axis against a unit of gym equipment. The test pit was designed to demonstrate the depth of impact of the foundations of the gym equipment - no impact was evident to any archaeological remains.

Phase 1: Natural alluvial clay

The natural alluvial clay [005] was recorded at a depth of 1.02m below ground level (bgl), 51.86m OD. The clay was sterile and a reddish grey in colour, and was consistent with the natural stratum recorded across the site in the other test pits.

Phase 2: ?19th Century made ground

A 0.10m thick layer of very dark brown silt [004] sealed the alluvial clay. This horizon was likely to represent an interface between the overlying ground raising deposits and the alluvial clay below.

A compacted sand and gravel [003], measuring 0.12m thick, was recorded sealing silt [004]. This appeared to have been deliberately deposited to raise and level the area. No finds were recovered from this deposit.

Phase 3: Modern

Sealing compacted gravel [003] was a greyish brown sandy silt layer [002] containing modern ceramic building material (CBM) flecks and modern rebar. This layer was 0.65m thick.

Overlying sandy silt [002] was a loose dark greyish brown topsoil consisting of a mix of sand clay and silt [001]. This topsoil layer was consistent with the profile of the other test pits, suggesting a site wide layer ([001] [006] [012] [016] [21] [027]). This was recorded at a height of 52.88m OD and was

excavated to a depth of 0.15m bgl.

TP1 was covered with a layer of turf found across the site.

The underside of the gym equipment's concrete base was recorded at a depth of 0.60m bgl (52.28m). The layer of modern subsoil [002] was the deepest stratigraphic unit impacted upon by the concrete base, confirming that no significant archaeological layers were impacted by the foundations of the equipment.

Plate 1: Test Pit 1 East Facing Section showing concrete base(Photo: James Webb).

5.3 Test Pit 2

Test pit 2 (TP2) (Plate 2) was located towards the west of the site within the encirclement of the gym equipment (Figure 2). It was set out on a broadly N-S alignment. The test pit showed the stratigraphic profile of deposits within the outside gym area.

Phase 1: Natural alluvial clay

The natural alluvial clay [011] was recorded at a depth of 1.10m bgl (51.87m OD). It was characterised as a sterile grey alluvial river clay consistent with the natural deposit across the other test pits. The clay was likely deposited by overbank flooding associated with the River Soar. No further excavation was carried out once the natural horizon was established.

Phase 2: 19th Century made ground

Overlying the natural alluvium was a layer of friable dark greyish brown sandy clay silt [010]. Some unfrogged brick was recovered from the layer with a date range of 1825-1900. The layer formed part of the ground make-up and levelling found across the site.

The silt layer [010] was overlain by a band of clay [009] which was 0.10m thick. The clay had similar characteristics to the natural clay [011] found across the site but with occasional charcoal flecks, suggesting redeposition of the alluvial clay for the purposes of levelling the area.

Phase 3 Modern

Overlying the redeposited clay [009] was a series of deposits formed of gravelly made ground [008], subsoil [007] and topsoil [006]. The gravelly made ground was directly overlying the redeposited clay [009] and consisted of a high concentration of pebbles set in a sandy silt matrix. Modern rebar fragments were recovered from this layer as well as animal bone (equid proximal scapula, a cattle distal tibia and a sheep/goat tibia shaft fragment) and residual Roman and medieval pottery fabrics. The subsoil [007] was a loose dark greyish brown sandy clay silt consistent with the subsoil seen across the site in the other test pits. This was overlain with the topsoil [006] at a height of 52.97m OD.

Plate 2: Test Pit 2 West Facing Section (Photo: James Webb).

5.4 Test Pit 3

Test pit 3 (TP3) was located towards of the central north of the site, south of the northern row of newly planted trees (Figure 2). It was set out on a broadly NE-SW alignment. The test pit showed the stratigraphic profile of area to the east of the outdoor gym. TP3 suggested that neither the trees to the north or the gym equipment to the west would have had an impact on any significant archaeological deposits.

Phase 1: Natural Alluvial Clay

The depth of the natural clay [015] was established at 1.06m bgl (51.78m OD). The natural grey alluvial clay was sterile and consistent with the characteristic of the natural recorded in the other test pits.

Phase 3: Modern

There were no 19th century made ground layers in TP3. The natural clay was directly overlain by a layer of modern made ground, consisting of rounded pebbles set in a sandy silt matrix [014]. The layer of modern pebbles and

sand [014] was observed across the site [08] [018] [028] and found to have similar characteristics suggesting that this deposit was likely represent a single event. Overlying the modern made ground [014] was a layer of subsoil [013] sealed by a layer of topsoil [012], both of which are typical of the soil layer seen across the site.

Plate 3: Test Pit 3 West Facing Section (Photo: James Webb)

5.5 Test Pit 4

Test pit 4 (TP4) (Plate 4) was located towards the centre of the site, near equidistant from the trees to the north and the east and the gym equipment to the west. It was set out to a broadly NE-SW alignment. TP4 was the furthest from any potential impact from the gym equipment or the tree planting. The test pit showed the stratigraphic profile of central area of the site between the impact of the tree planting and the gym equipment.

Phase 1: Natural alluvial clay

A layer of grey alluvial clay [020] was recorded at 1.05m bgl (51.85m OD). No further excavation was carried out once the depth of the natural clay [020]

was established.

Phase 2: 19th century made ground

Overlying the natural clay [020] was a layer of 19th century made ground [019]. The layer contained remains of construction material such as CBM and mortar as well as pottery, all suggestive of a 19th century date. It had similar characteristics to the made ground layers observed across the site recorded as [004] / [010], suggesting a period of deposition and levelling during the 19th century.

Phase 3: Modern

The 19th century made ground [019] had been overlain with the same sequence of modern made ground. This included a gravelly layer set in a sandy silt matrix [018] followed by a subsoil [017] which was overlain with topsoil [016]. The modern made ground in TP4 was typical of the modern stratigraphy recorded across the site.

Plate 4: Test Pit 4 South Facing Section (Photo: James Webb)

5.6 Test Pit 5

Test Pit 5 (TP5) was located towards the southern end of the site, west of the tree pits and south east of the outdoor gym equipment (Figure 2). TP 5 was the deepest of the test pits with the natural alluvial clay being reached at 1.25m bgl (51.66m OD). The test pit demonstrated the stratigraphic profile of the southern end of the site.

Phase 1: Natural alluvial clay

The natural layer of grey alluvial clay [026] was seen at 1.25m bgl. The natural clay was the same as the other layers seen throughout the site. It was sterile and likely deposited by previous river alluviation in the area.

Phase 2: 19th century made ground

Overlying the grey alluvial clay [026] was a silty layer of 19th made ground [025]. This layer [025] was similar in nature to the layer observed in TP4, which was also a layer of silty made ground [019] directly above the grey clay suggesting a period of direct deposition during the 19th century to raise and level the natural ground – pottery recovered from this deposit confirmed a 19th century date. Overlying this 19th century silt made ground [025] was a layer of sandy gravel [024]. Unlike the modern deposits of gravel and sand seen elsewhere across the site, the sandy gravel layer [024] had inclusions of crushed sea shell, specifically mussels. This could indicate an earlier deposition of waste material for the purposes of levelling following the deposition of the silt layer [025]. Overlying the sandy gravel [024] was a further layer of silt made ground [023]. This series of levelling layers had similar CBM flecks throughout suggesting a similar period of deposition. This series of levelling layers was sealed by a layer of redeposited natural clay [022] with charcoal fleck inclusions.

Phase 3: Modern

The 19th century made ground was overlain by a layer of modern topsoil [021]. This layer of topsoil was consistent with the layer of modern topsoil seen across the site.

Plate 5: Test Pit 5 North Facing Section (Photo: James Webb)

5.7 Test Pit 6

Test pit 6 (TP6) was located towards the east of the site, north of the eastern tree line (Figure 2). The location of TP6 was chosen to assess the impact of the tree planting on archaeological resource in the area. The depth of TP6 had to be limited due to heavy tree rooting, originating from pre-existing trees running parallel with the River Soar (Figure 1). The depth of 0.80m bgl (52.11m OD) was nevertheless sufficient to determine that the recent tree planting would not have impacted on any significant archaeological layers.

Phase 3: Modern

At the maximum possible depth of 0.80m bgl the base of the test pit was still within a layer of pebbles set in a sandy silt matrix [028]. This modern made ground layer had already been observed across the site in all the other test pits. The depth of the tree planting pits was recorded at 0.50m, which suggests that no significant archaeological layers were impacted by the tree planting

scheme. Overlying the modern made ground pebble layer [028] was a layer of modern top soil [027], 0.30m thick, (52.91m OD). This top soil [027] had been observed across the site.

Plate 6: Test Pit 6 South Facing Section (Photo: James Webb)

6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL PHASE DISCUSSION

6.1 The following represents an overview of the trench phasing on a site-wide basis:

6.2 Phase 1: Natural Alluvial Clay

Evidence for the uniformity of the natural alluvial clay was present in all test pits. It was primarily characterised by a grey alluvial clay, with a slight variation of colour in TP1. The height of the clay appeared to drop gently to the east, from 51.86m OD in TP1 to 51.66m OD in TP6, presumably reflecting the slope down towards the River Soar.

6.3 Phase 2: 19th Century Made Ground

This phase was characterised by a variety of different deposits being used as made ground to level and raise the ground. Whilst primarily a brown charcoal and CBM flecked silty layer observed in TP1, TP2, TP4 and TP 5, there was some variation in TP4 and TP5 with a redeposition of natural clay also being used for levelling. These layers produced a very limited amount of archaeological material, using material brought in from elsewhere.

6.4 Phase 3: Modern

This was characterised by relatively thick layer of gravel set in a sandy silt matrix overlain with subsoil and top soil sealed with turf. This was a modern made ground with the sandy pebbles likely being deliberately selected to provide drainage to the area once the site was under the ownership of the City of Leicester. There was modern rebar and plastic found in the subsoil and topsoil.

7 FINDS ASSESSMENTS

POTTERY - Chris Jarrett

Introduction

A total of eight sherds of pottery, representing the same number of vessels (MNV) and weighing 94g was recovered from the archaeological work and found in three contexts. Single sherds of residual Roman (18g) and medieval (2g) pottery occurred, while contemporaneous post-medieval wares made up the bulk of the assemblage (five sherds, 5 MNV, 51g). The state of the pottery is fragmentary, although it is not in an abraded state and occurs as non-diagnostic body sherds. A small number of vessel shapes could be recognised. The pottery was likely to have been deposited under secondary and tertiary conditions.

The pottery was quantified by sherd count, minimum number of vessels and weight. The assemblage was examined macroscopically and microscopically using a binocular microscope (x20), and recorded in a database format by fabric, form and decoration. The classification of the pottery types is according to that of ULAS (Davies Sawday 1999) and is discussed as an index.

Index

Context [8], spot date: c. 1789–1900

- Roman fine sandy reduced ware (GW), 40–400, 1 sherd, 1 MNV, 18g, form: jar/closed form. Body sherd, reduced, externally burnished, internal and external (partial) iron rich deposit
- Medieval shelly ware (SHL), 1100–1400 1 sherd, 1 MNV, 25g, form: unidentified. Body sherd, hard, frequent shell, ranging in size from fine to large. Pale buff surfaces, grey core
- Derbyshire stoneware (SW5), 1700–1900, 1 sherd, 1 MNV 8g, form: bowl, medium rounded. Rim sher with a narrow rounded external thickening

- Transfer-printed whiteware (EA10), 1780–1900 1 sherd, 1 MNV, 7g, form: tureen. Internally-lid-seated rim wall carination. Willow pattern, *c*. 1789+

Total: 4 sherds, 4 MNV, 58g

Context [19], spot date: 18th-19th century

- Earthenware, horticultural, (EA), *c*. 1700–1900, 1 sherd, 1 MNV, 7g, form: flower pot. Wall sherd

Context [25], spot date: 19th century

- Iron Glazed Earthenware (EA2), c. 1600–1900, 1 sherd, 1 MNV, 21g, form: unidentified. Body sherd, unglazed, although iron-rich washes occur on the internal and external surfaces. High-fired, pale yellow, marbled fabric with moderate iron ores and sparse quartzes
- Pearl ware (EA9), 1780–1840, 1 sherd, 1 MNV, 4g, form: bowl. Footring
- English stoneware (SW), 1700–1900, 1 sherd, 1 MNV, 4g, form: bottle, cylindrical. Wall sherd, salt-glazed. 19th century

Total: 3 sherds, 3 MNV, 29g

Significance, potential and recommendations for further work

The pottery has little significance at a local level as the material survives in a fragmentary state and without much meaning. The pottery does have the potential to date the contexts it was found in and indicates possible Roman, medieval and post-medieval activity on the study area. There are no recommendations for further work on the assemblage.

BUILDING MATERIAL – Kevin Hayward

Introduction and Aims

Three bags of ceramic building material and stone were retained from the evaluation at Abbey Park, Leicester, Leicestershire LABL17

This very small assemblage (10 examples 760g) was assessed in order to:

- Identify the fabric of the stone in order to determine what the material was made of and from where it may be coming from.
- Identify the fabric and form of the ceramic building material to ascertain whether it is Roman, medieval or later. In particular whether any relate to Leicester Abbey or the early post medieval Cavendish House.
- The database for this site is LABLbm.accdb
- Made recommendations for further study.

Methodology

The application of a 1kg masons hammer and sharp chisel to each example ensured that a small fresh fabric surface was exposed. The fabric was examined at x20 magnification using a long arm stereomicroscope or hand lens (Gowland x10).

As there was no Leicestershire ceramic building material reference collection housed at PCA each new ceramic fabric from this site was prefixed by LEIC followed by 1, 2, 3 etc thus *LEIC1; LEIC2.* .

Geological Background

Leicester lies on soft Triassic Keuper Marl which consists of red lacustrine siltstones and mudstones (now Mercia Mudstone Group). None of which are

suitable for building stone, though the mudstone may be a source of clay for the brick and tile.

Ceramic Building Material 3 examples 731g

Most of the assemblage is in a highly fragmentary, often, abraded and intermixed condition. There is no surviving mortar.

Roman

No Roman Ceramic building material was encountered

Medieval

No medieval Ceramic building material was encountered

Post Medieval 3 examples 731g

Brick

LEIC 1 Fine red sandy fabric, intermittent small to moderate size quartz fragments and larger quartzite laths (Triassic Bunter Pebble) about 6mm across.

From Test pit 2 [10] part of a well made unfrogged brick with sharp arises. At 61mm thick or 2/38 inches and pointed in a hard white lime sandy mortar on three edges this brick is at least Early Victorian in Age. Suggested spot date 1825-1900+. Further fragmentary examples from Test pit 4 [19] in a similar mortar suggest comparable date.

Mortar 7 examples 29g

Two mortar types (Fig. 1 below) have been identified. Type 1 found on the brick from [10] and [19] is hard lime mortar with clinker or coal inclusions is Victorian in date. Type 2 a soft pink variant has inclusions of red brick probably late post medieval. Note this is not *opus signinum.*

Mortar/Concrete Type	Description	Use at LABL17

Type 1	Hard lime sandy mortar with floating quartz set within white lime material, flecks of coal or charcoal	. VICTORIAN Used to point bricks from [10] and [19]
Type 2	Soft fine pink mortar with small flecks of red brick	LATE POST MEDIEVAL Fragment from Test Pit 2 [19]

Fig 1 Mortar types from LABL17

Stone 4 examples 9g

Little comment on the stone is necessary, other than the fragmentary examples probably derive from the underlying Mercia Mudstone group.

MoL fabric code	Description	Geological Type and source	Quantity	Use at LABL17
3120	Very fine red-pink siltstone	Mercia mudstone Triassic (Local bedrock)	4 fragments 9g	Natural from [19] Test pit 4

Figure 1 Table summarising the character, source, quantity from LABL17

Distribution

Context	Fabric	Material	Size	Date range of material		Latest dated material		Spot date	Spot date Mortar
10 Test Pit 2	LEIC1; 3101	Well made later post medieval unfrogged red brick pointed in a hard lime sandy mortar	1	1825	1900	1825	1900	1825-1900	1750-1900+?
19 Test Pit 4	LEIC1; 3101; 3120	Later post medieval unfrogged red brick pointed in a hard lime sandy mortar with charcoal flecks Type 1 Type 2 later post medieval brick	8	1825	1900	1825	1900	1825-1900	1750-1900+ Possible residual slightly earlier pink brick

Context	Fabric	Material	Size	Date range of material		Latest dated material		Spot date	Spot date Mortar
		mortar, Natural Triassic Mercia Mudstone fragments							mortar (1700-1900)

Summary

Test Pits 2 and 4 only contain elements of later post medieval (Victorian) ceramic building material and mortar, whilst the stone is only natural. There is no evidence for earlier Roman, medieval Leicester Abbey or early post medieval Cavendish House tile, brick, mortar or stone. The brick may well relate to buildings such as the bandstand, brick garden walls or the bridges set up in the late 1870s to convert the marshland by the river to the Abbey Gardens.

ANIMAL BONE – Kevin Reilly

Introduction

The site was situated towards the south-east corner of Abbey Park, alongside the River Soar, just to the south of the ornamental gardens, this park within the central part of Leicester. This area lies within the confines of a scheduled ancient monument, the nearby remains of Leicester Abbey and the later 17th century mansion on the same site, the area under consideration probably sited within the southern precinct of the Abbey and later used as an orchard and nursery. A total of 6 test pits were excavated in lieu of the placement of outside gym equipment as well as some tree planting. These pits provided evidence for 19th century activity, essentially levelling/made ground deposits which also contained residual dating evidence (pottery) no doubt relating to the nearby abbey and mansion. A small quantity of animal bones was hand collected from deposits derived from 3 of these test pits.

Methodology

The bone was recorded to species/taxonomic category where possible and to size class in the case of unidentifiable bones such as ribs, fragments of

longbone shaft and the majority of vertebra fragments. Recording follows the established techniques whereby details of the element, species, bone portion, state of fusion, wear of the dentition, anatomical measurements and taphonomic including natural and anthropogenic modifications to the bone were registered.

Description of faunal assemblage

The site provided a grand total of 5 hand collected animal bones, as follows:- Test Pit 2, context (8) with an equid proximal scapula, a cattle distal tibia and a sheep/goat tibia shaft fragment; Test Pit 4, (18) with a cattle-size rib; and Test Pit 5, (25) with the anterior part (premaxilla) of a cattle skull. These were generally in good condition, although most of these bones did show some erosion, related in part to a level of exposure prior to burial as well as some root etching. Notably while 19th century in date, there is no evidence for the presence of large animals, as might be expected by this time with the introduction/use of 'improved' stock. This would suggest the continued use of older 'unimproved' stock or else of those new 'breeds' which were not noticeably larger (see Rixson 2000, 215).

Conclusion and recommendations for further work

It can be proposed that this small collection accumulated following the demise of the manor house and its gardens. The bones clearly represent the remains of general processing and food waste as well as perhaps an additional element, the equid scapula, perhaps accommodating waste from a nearby knackers yard. With the lack of any obvious 19th century traits, it is always possible that these bones could derive from an earlier period, however, the evidence is insufficient to confirm or deny this supposition.

No further work can be recommended for this bone collection.

8 DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS

8.1 The programme of archaeology evaluation at Abbey Park Leicester revealed that the area of investigation had been significantly raised during a process of ground raising and levelling which appears to have commenced in the 19th century and continued after the acquisition of the site by the City of Leicester in the 20th century. This is likely to have been in response to the area being relatively low-lying and prone to flooding due to it's location close to the River Soar, and as was evidenced by the alluvial clay recorded at the base of the exposed sequence.

8.2 Due to the extent of the ground raising, the impact of the tree pits (understood to have been excavated of approximately 0.50m depth) and foundations of the recently installed gym equipment (base exposed at 0.60m bgl) were found to not to have impacted on anything beyond the modern levelling layers with no impact on any significant archaeological deposits, features or structures.

8.3 There was no direct evidence of activity related to the historic abbey located to the north of the site, or its demolition, in any of the test pits. No conclusions can be drawn from the presence of single sherds of medieval and Roman pottery from the site as these were present within a modern levelling deposit and their primary context and origin remain unknown.

9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

9.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd would like to thank Geoff Mason of Leicester City Council for commissioning the work. PCA are also grateful to Grahame Appleby, Leicester City Archaeologist, for his advice and Neil Rimmington, Assistant Inspector of Ancient Monuments, Historic England, for monitoring the work. The author would also like to thank the project team for their assistance on site. Illustrations were produced by Ray Murphy, finds analysis was conducted by Chris Jarrett, Kevin Reilly and Kevin Hayward. The project was managed for PCA by Tim Bradley.

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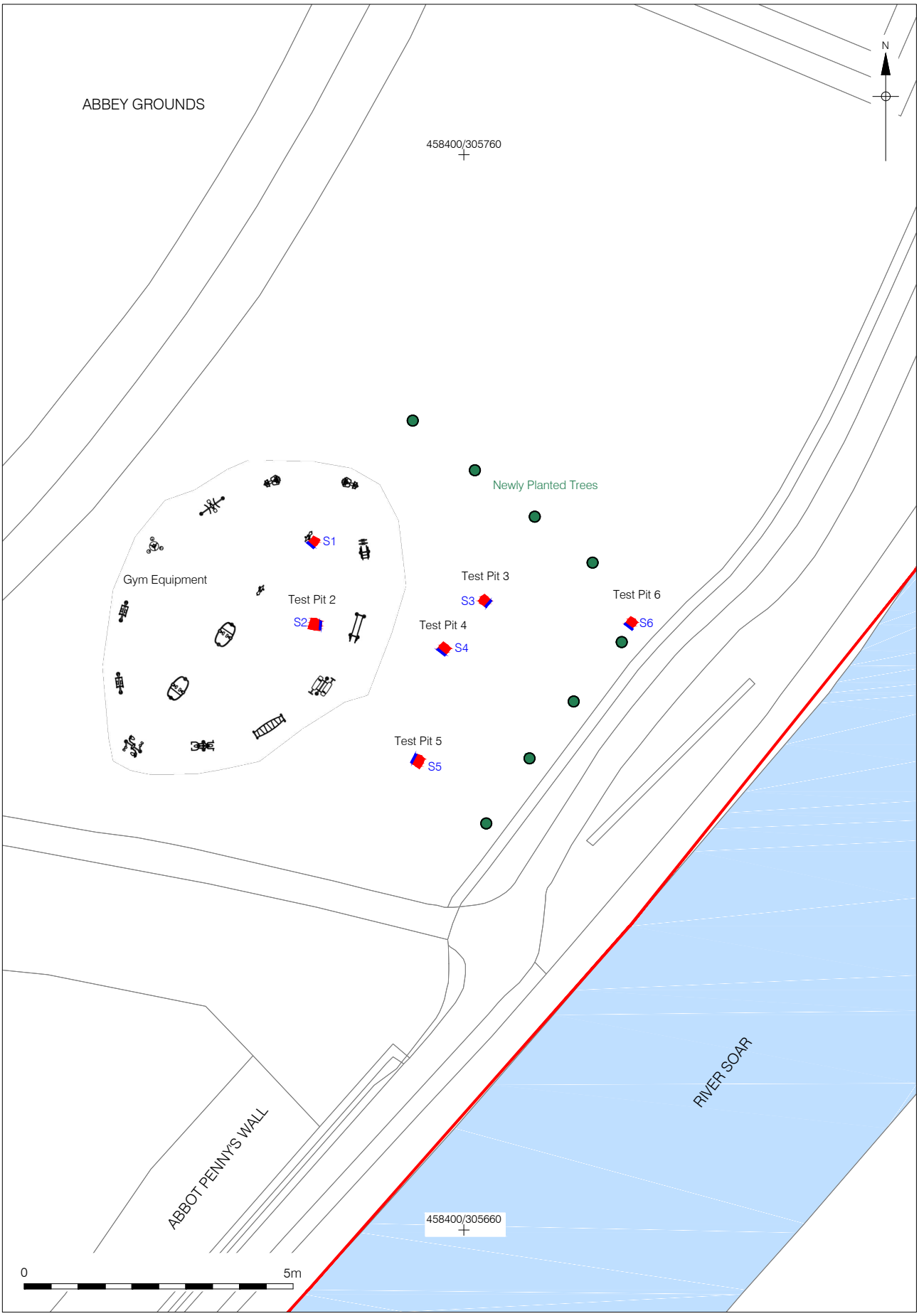
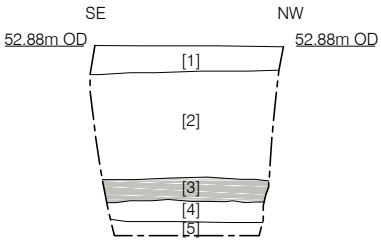
12/12/17 RM

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

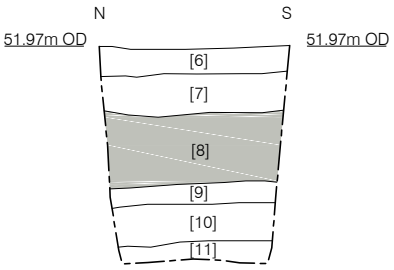


12/12/17 RM

Figure 2
Test Pit Location Plan
1:500 at A4



Section 1
Test Pit 1
Northeast Facing



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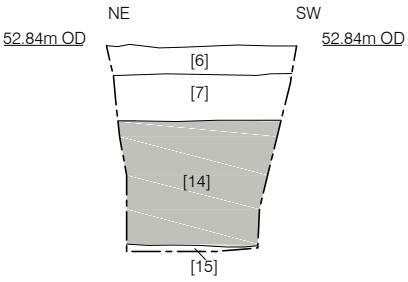
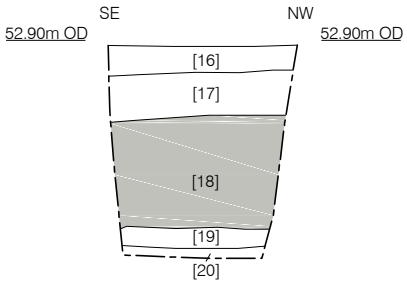
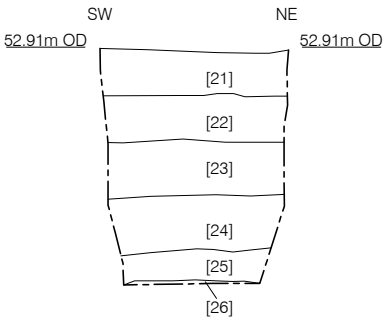
Test Pit 2
West Facing



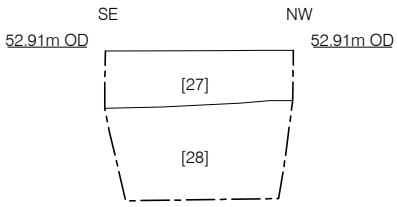
Section 3
Test Pit 3
Northwest Facing



Section 4
Test Pit 4
Northeast Facing



Section 5
Test Pit 5
Southeast Facing



Section 6
Test Pit 6
Northeast Facing

12/12/17 RM

Figure 3
Sections
1:40 at A4

APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT INDEX

Test Pit 1

Length: 1.00m Width: 1.00m Orientation: NE-SW

Average Depth: 1.02m Maximum Depth: 1.02m

Context Number	Context Type	Description	Height/Depth	Discussion
00	Unstratified	N/A	N/A	Unstratified finds located around trench area.
001	Topsoil	Dark Greyish Brown, Sandy Clay Silt, with Freq. rooting	0.00m bgl	Topsoil
002	layer	Dark greyish brown, sandy clay silt.	0.15m bgl	subsoil
003	layer	Compact, yellowish light brown, sand and rounded pebbles	0.80m bgl	Made ground pebble layer.
004	layer	Friable, Very Dark Brown, clay silt	0.92m bgl	Very dark organic layer
005	Layer	Firm, mid reddish grey, clay	1.02m bgl	Natural Alluvial clay

Test Pit 2

Length: 1.00m Width: 1.00m Orientation: N-S

Average Depth: 1.10m Maximum Depth: 1.10m

Context Number	Context Type	Description	Height/Depth	Discussion
?00	Unstratified	N/A	N/A	Unstratified finds located around trench area.
006	Topsoil	Dark Greyish Brown, Sandy Clay Silt, with Freq. rooting.	0.00m bgl	Topsoil
007	Layer	Dark greyish brown, sandy clay silt.	0.15m bgl	Subsoil
008	Layer	Compact, yellowish light brown, sand and rounded pebbles	0.35m bgl	Modern pebbled leveling layer.
009	Layer	Mid grey clay with charcoal fleck inclusions	0.75m bgl	Clay layer redeposit.
010	Layer	Dark greyish brown sandy clay silt with mod. CBM and charcoal fleck inclusions	0.85m bgl	Made Ground Layer
011	Layer	Firm Grey Clay	1.10m bgl	Natural alluvial clay

Test Pit 3

Length: 1m Width: 1m Orientation: N-S

Average Depth: 1.05m Maximum Depth: 1.05m

Context Number	Context Type	Description	Height/Depth	Discussion
?00	Unstratified	N/A	N/A	Unstratified finds located around trench area.
012	Topsoil	Dark Greyish Brown, Sandy Clay Silt, with Freq. rooting.	0.00m bgl	topsoil
013	layer	Dark greyish brown, sandy clay silt.	015m bgl	subsoil
014	layer	Compact, yellowish light brown, sand and rounded pebbles	0.40m bgl	Modern pebbled leveling layer.
015	layer	Firm grey clay	1.05m bgl	Natural alluvial clay
TEST PIT 4	Length 1m	Width 1m	Depth: 1.05m	N-S
Context Number	**Context Type**	**Description**	**Height/Depth**	**Discussion**
?00	Unstratified	N/A	N/A	Unstratified finds located around trench area.
016	Topsoil	Dark Greyish Brown, Sandy Clay Silt, with Freq. rooting.	0.00m bgl	topsoil
017	layer	Dark greyish brown, sandy clay silt.	015m bgl	subsoil
018	layer	Compact, yellowish light brown, sand and rounded pebbles	0.40 bgl	Modern pebbled leveling layer.
019	layer	Dark greyish brown sandy clay silt with mod. CBM and charcoal fleck inclusions	0.95m bgl	Made ground
020	layer	Firm grey clay	1.05m bgl	Natural alluvial clay
TEST Pit 5	Length 1m	Width 1m	Depth: 1.25m	N-S
Context Number	**Context Type**	**Description**	**Height/Depth**	**Discussion**
00	Unstratified	N/A	N/A	Unstratified finds located around trench area.
021	Topsoil	Dark Greyish Brown, Sandy Clay Silt, with Freq. rooting.	0.00m bgl	topsoil
022	layer	Mid grey clay with charcoal fleck inclusions.	025m bgl	Redeposit of natural clay
023	layer	Dark greyish brown sandy clay silt with mod. CBM and charcoal fleck inclusions	0.50m bgl	Silt leveling layer

Context Number	Context Type	Description	Height/Depth	Discussion
024	layer	Light Orangeish Borwn sandy gravel, freq.charcole, mod. Seashell	0.80 bgl	Sandy Graval
025	layer	Friable, mid grey clay silt freq,charcoal,occ shell frags.	1.10m bgl	Made ground
026	layer	Natural clay	1.25m bgl	Natural alluvial clay
Test Pit 6	Length: 1m	Width 1m	Depth 0.80m	N-S
027	layer	Dark Greyish Brown, Sandy Clay Silt, with Freq. rooting	0.00m bgl	Top soil
028	layer	Compact, yellowish light brown, sand and rounded pebbles	0.30m bgl	Made ground

APPENDIX 2: OASIS FORM

Project details

Project name	Abbey Park, Leicester; Outside Gym and Tree Planting: An Archaeological Evaluation
Short description of the project	Pre-Construct Archaeology was commissioned by Leicester City Council to undertake an archaeological evaluation at Abbey Park, Leicester. The investigations were required to assess the archaeological impact of the installation of the outdoor gym equipment and tree planting scheme. Six test pits were undertaken which confirmed that there was no impact on any significant archaeological remains from the installation of the outdoor gym equipment and the planting of trees. The work carried out during the installation of the equipment and the trees was only deep enough to impact on later post-medieval levelling deposits.
Project dates	Start: 06-11-2017 End: 10-11-2017
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	Site of Special Scientific Importance (SSSI)
Current Land use	Other 14 - Recreational usage

Project location

Country	England
Site location	LEICESTERSHIRE LEICESTER LEICESTER Abbey Park, Leicester; Outside Gym and Tree Planting
Postcode	LE4 0BT
Study area	5300 Square metres
Site coordinates	SK 58390 05723 52.645747705627 -1.136896063312 52 38 44 N 001 08 12 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 51.66m Max: 51.86m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	PCA Warwick
Project brief originator	Grahame Appleby, Leicester City Archaeologist
Project design originator	Tim Bradley, PCA
Project director/manager	Tim Bradley
Project supervisor	James Webb
Type of	City Council

sponsor/funding body	
Name of sponsor/funding body	Leicester City Council

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	Jewry Wall Museum
Physical Contents	"Animal Bones","Ceramics"
Digital Archive recipient	Jewry Wall Museum
Digital Contents	"Animal Bones","Ceramics"
Digital Media available	"Survey","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Jewry Wall Museum
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Report","Section","Unpublished Text"

Entered by	Tim Bradley (tbradley@pre-construct.com)
Entered on	14 December 2017

P C A

PCA CAMBRIDGE
THE GRANARY, RECTORY FARM
BREWERY ROAD, PAMPISFORD
CAMBRIDGESHIRE CB22 3EN
t: 01223 845 522
e: cambridge@pre-construct.com

PCA DURHAM
UNIT 19A, TURSDALE BUSINESS PARK
TURSDALE
DURHAM DH6 5PG
t: 0191 377 1111
e: durham@pre-construct.com

PCA LONDON
UNIT 54, BROCKLEY CROSS BUSINESS CENTRE
96 ENDWELL ROAD, BROCKLEY
LONDON SE4 2PD
t: 020 7732 3925
e: london@pre-construct.com

PCA NEWARK
OFFICE 8, ROEWOOD COURTYARD
WINKBURN, NEWARK
NOTTINGHAMSHIRE NG22 8PG
t: 01636 370410
e: newark@pre-construct.com

PCA NORWICH
QUARRY WORKS, DEREHAM ROAD
HONINGHAM
NORWICH NR9 5AP
T: 01223 845522
e: cambridge@pre-construct.com

PCA WARWICK
UNIT 9, THE MILL, MILL LANE
LITTLE SHREWLEY, WARWICK
WARWICKSHIRE CV35 7HN
t: 01926 485490
e: warwick@pre-construct.com

PCA WINCHESTER
5 RED DEER COURT, ELM ROAD
WINCHESTER
HAMPSHIRE SO22 5LX
t: 01962 849 549
e: winchester@pre-construct.com