

1 ST ALBANS ROAD, LEICESTER

Report on an Archaeological Evaluation

Prepared for: SASCO Properties Ltd

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Appendix 01: Context Register

Status of report: FINAL

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The SLR staff involved in the implementation of this project were:

Name	Job Title	Role in project
John Winfer	Project Archaeologist	Fieldwork
Tim Malim	Technical Director	Management/Review

Acknowledgements

SLR is grateful for the assistance of Mohamed Shaikh (Sasco Properties) and Grahame Appleby (Leicester City Council) during the course of the site works.

The investigation was designed by Tim Malim (SLR). Fieldwork was undertaken by John Winfer.

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Project

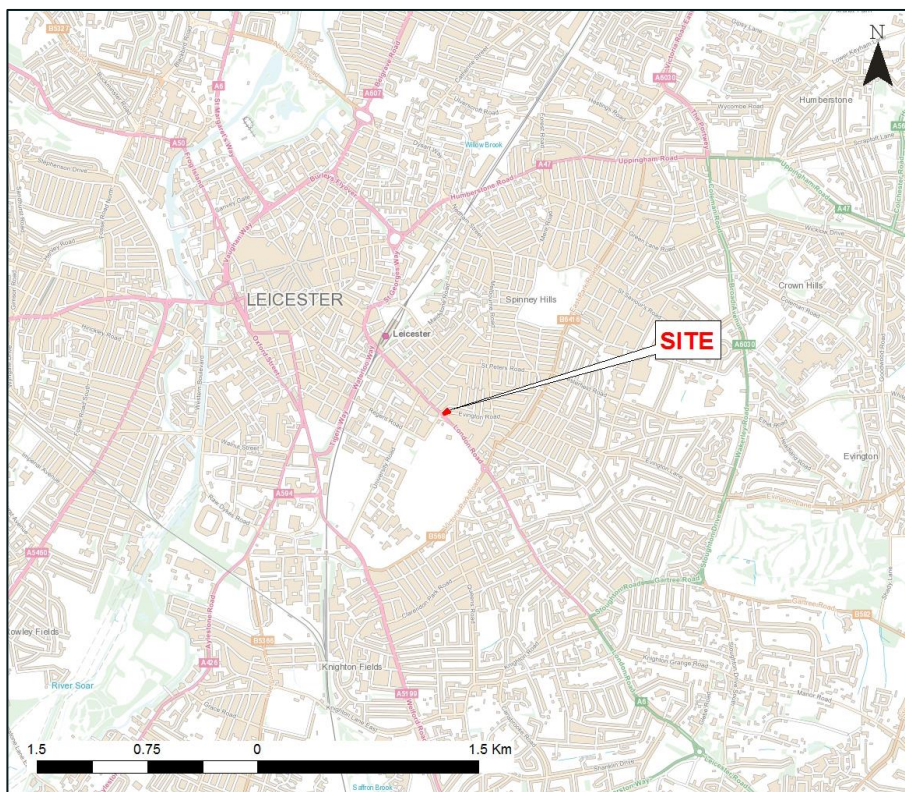
Sasco Properties (the client), have received planning permission (20172700) to extend an existing structure on land at 1 St Albans Road, Leicester (NGR: SK 598 036) and convert it into a student accommodation block, (Figure 1-1). The site comprises a total of 746 square metres. Condition 2 of this permission stated that:

'No development shall commence until a level 3 building survey and a programme of archaeological work, including a Written Scheme of Investigation, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.'

The city council confirmed that this work should take the form of an archaeological evaluation.

The client commissioned SLR Consulting to design and implement this scheme of work. A Written Scheme of Investigation was previously agreed with the planning authority and this document forms a report on the works.

Figure 1-1
Location plan of site



2.0 Archaeological Potential

2.1 Topography and Geology

The site lies in the Highfields district of Leicester, c.1.5km to the south-east of Leicester city centre and comprises a corner plot between St Albans Road to the north and Elvington Road to the south, with London Road to the west and housing to the east (grid reference 459775, 303590). Opposite and to the south lies Victoria Park, but otherwise it is surrounded by an urban landscape of residential properties, with retail and commercial along London Road. The topography of the site is relatively level, rising by just over one metre from the north-west to the south-east corners, at 99.41m and 100.65m AOD respectively.

The site lies on a superficial geology described as *Thrussington Member – Diamicton*, which include a wide range of deposits and geomorphologies associated with glacial and inter-glacial periods during the Quaternary, 2 million years ago, characterised as brown to reddish-brown with stones and matrix derived primarily from Upper Carboniferous and Triassic rocks; subordinate sand, gravel and stoneless clay and silt as well as red pebbly clay and silty clay with rock fragments. The underlying bedrock geology is comprised of interbedded mudstone and limestone (Wilmcote Limestone Member) a sedimentary deposit formed approximately 199 to 210 million years ago in the Jurassic and Triassic Periods¹.

2.2 Historic Background

The Site lies south-east of the Archaeology Alert Area which includes the City Centre, the Roman town and medieval religious houses located on the periphery of the historic core. Within 500m of the site a series of mills are recorded from historic mapping, showing that the area north of London Road was developed during the industrial revolution for manufacturing and residential purposes. To the south of London Road and west of the site, the area was developed for smart suburban housing in the second half of the 19th century. The Old Racecourse (MLC1843) and the Georgian New Walk (MLC591) provided an earlier period of recreational use, but in 1882 the racecourse was changed into a public park (MLC396) and named after the queen. Two war memorials have been erected in the park, MLC1844 dating from the end of the First World War, and MLC2718 dedicated to US airman from the Second World War. Both Victoria Park and New Walk are nationally Registered Parks and Gardens at Grade II, and a Conservation Area called New Walk has been designated to protect this footpath and surrounding Victorian suburban expansion of villas and other wealthy houses.

Within 500m very few archaeological artefacts and remains have been recorded. These include a beehive quern (MLC688) in College Street, medieval and post-medieval pottery (MLC2647) at The Oval, a silver penny (MLC793) in Lancaster Road, a Roman coin (MLC1149) from Victoria Park and a possible Roman or Anglo-Saxon cemetery (MLC300) suggested by the discovery of '*Antiquities in bronze found with about 100 human bones*' recovered from '*the former Toll Gate, London Road*' in the 1850s. The description recorded on the Museum index card states "...*Skeletons, between one and two hundred in number which were discovered confusedly interred together with fragments of Saxon fibulae, etc., (recovered) in the year 1853, in levelling the brow of the hill on the London Road, adjoining Evington Lane – some of them being only a few inches below the surface*" (reported by William Kelly). This cemetery is located on the Roman road that headed south-east from Leicester (*Ratae Corieltavi*) (Margary route 57a, Gartree Road or *Via Devana*) to Huntingdon (*Durovigutum*).

¹ <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html?location=leicester>

3.0 Aims and Objectives

The aims set out in the WSI for this work were:

- to investigate and record the extent of archaeological remains within the development envelope (and in particular whether the known cemetery on London Road extended into the site)
- to assess the evidence and enable design of a mitigation strategy proportional to the heritage significance of the remains found during the trial trench evaluation exercise

The objectives that were set out were:

- to investigate sub-surface deposits;
- to establish the general deposit sequence on the site;
- to establish the extent, nature and date of any man-made archaeological features or remains which may be present on the site;
- to undertake post-excavation analysis of the records, artefacts and samples recovered during the work to produce a report for submission to the local planning authority; and
- to deposit an archive of site records, reports and artefacts with an appropriate body

4.0 Methodology

Three trenches were excavated within the yard area to the rear of the existing building. This area is used for car parking and has been surfaced in tarmac. The location of the trenches was set out using measurements from known points. The tarmac, made ground and any other masking deposits were removed within the trench areas by a mechanical excavator with a toothless bucket down to the underlying naturally deposited strata, supervised by an experienced archaeologist.

All fieldwork was carried out as outlined in the WSI for this work.²

4.1 Monitoring

All archaeological work was monitored by Grahame Appleby, City Archaeologist (CA) of Leicester City Council via telephone / email conversations with SLR.

4.2 Destination Museum

No artefacts were found and the archive for an investigation with negative results would not be wanted by the museum. Instead this report has been uploaded to the OASIS website and is recorded as slrconsu1-330342.

4.3 Reporting

Approved versions of this report will be circulated to:

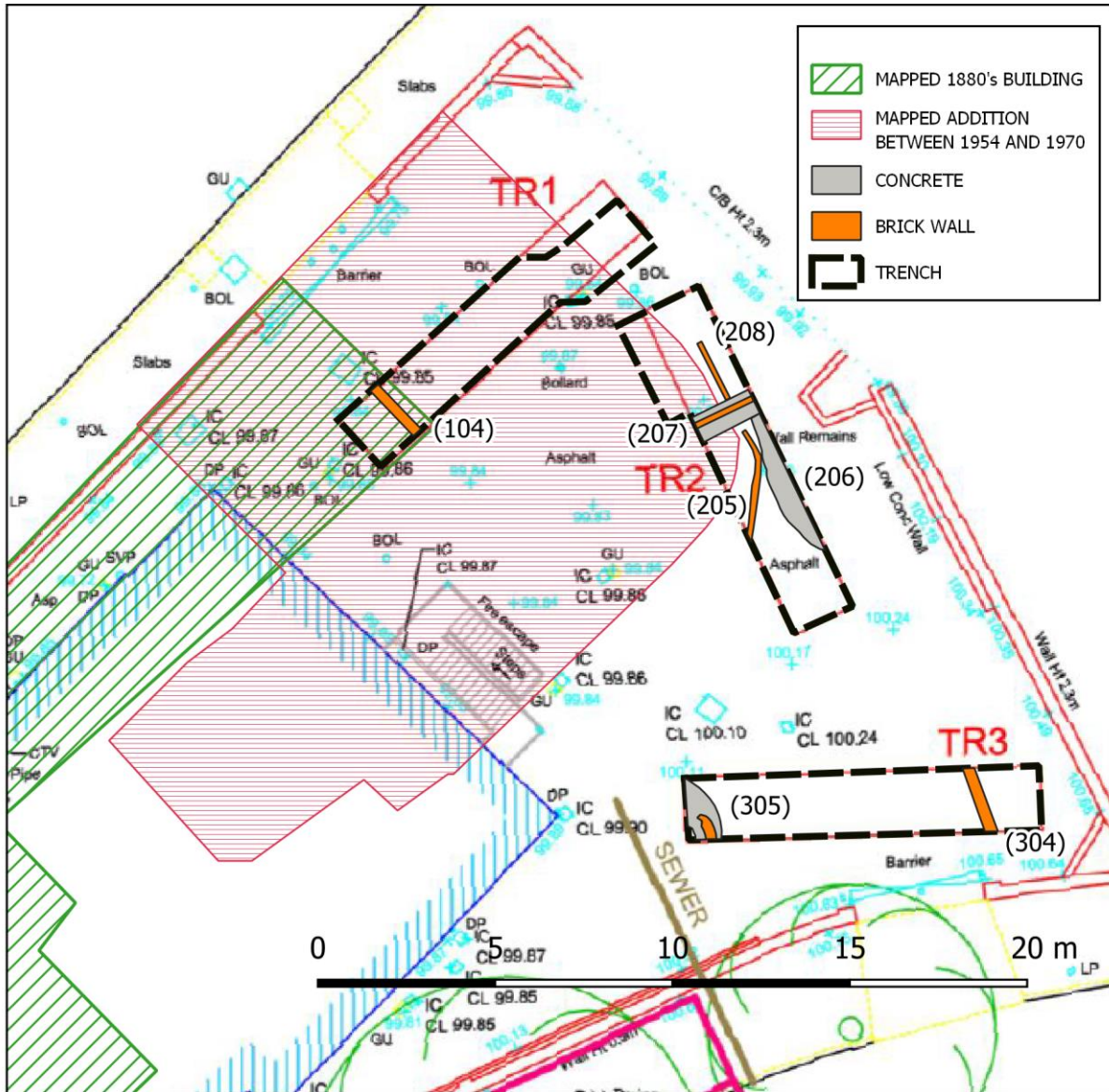
- The Client;
- The City Archaeologist (CA);
- The Local Planning Authority
- SLR Consulting Limited.

² SLR Consulting 2018 1 St Albans Road, Leicester, Written Scheme of Investigation

5.0 Results

All of the trenches measured 10m long by 1.8m wide (Figure 5-1).

Figure 5-1
Location of trenches showing features and mapped extents of previous buildings on site



5.1 Trench 1

Trench 1 was the most northerly trench on the site and was orientated north east – south west. The trench was excavated with a dog-leg due a large concrete obstruction under the tarmac. Light grey silt clay geology was observed at between 99.71m and 99.75m AOD across the trench (Figure 5-2). This was covered by 0.23m of dark grey hardcore which was in turn covered by 0.1m of tarmac (Figure 5-3).

Figure 5-2
Trench 1 looking south west



A curving drain was observed approximately half way along the trench containing a ceramic pipe. Towards the south west end of the trench a brick foundation (104) was observed (Figure 5-1). This was orientated similarly to the rear wall of the building present at the west of the site and was 0.32m wide. It was built of unfrosted bricks measuring 22.5cm x 11cm x 7.5cm bonded with a lime mortar. The foundation appears to represent the rear wall of the original building complex. Design drawings of the building dated 16 December 1886 show this part of the complex to have been a toilet, tool shed and coal shed³.

³ SLR Consulting 2018 *No. 1 St Albans Road, Leicester; Historic Building Survey (Level 3)*

Figure 5-3
Trench 1 section looking south east



No other archaeological features were identified.

5.2 Trench 2

Trench 2 was excavated to the south of Trench 1 and was orientated north west – south east. The trench was widened at the northern end to avoid a foundation running along the line of the trench (Figure 5-1).

Figure 5-4
Trench 2 section looking south west



The stratigraphy within the trench (Figure 5-4) comprised natural grey brown silt clay geological deposits (204) recorded at between 99.42m and 99.46m AOD. This was overlain by a layer of crushed brick (203) up to 0.05m thick which was in turn covered by yellow grey hardcore (202) 0.05m thick, dark grey hardcore (201) up to 0.25m thick and 0.1m of tarmac (200).

Figure 5-5
Trench 2 looking north west



A total of three foundations were identified within the trench as well as an area of concrete (Figures 5-1 and 5-5). Two of the foundations, (205) and (208), appeared to be part of the same structure but had been cut by later foundation (207). OS Mapping shows foundations (205) and (208) relate to a building constructed between 1958 and 1970 (Figure 5-1). It was demolished before 1991. The foundation was constructed using frogged bricks measuring 21.5cm x 11cm x 7.5cm and was bonded using cement mortar. Concrete (206) to the east of the foundation appeared to respect the foundation and may represent an external floor. The date of later foundation (207) is not clear.

No further archaeological features were identified.

5.3 Trench 3

Trench 3 was the most southerly of the trenches and was orientated roughly east - west (Figure 5-1).

Figure 5-6
Trench 3 looking west



Natural light grey brown silt clay geology (303) was recorded at between 99.71m and 99.75m AOD across the trench (Figure 5-6). This was covered by up to 0.35m of dark grey brown silt clay which contained pieces of brick and charcoal (Figure 5-7). It appeared to be derivative of the underlying geology and may represent landscaping at the site. It was covered by rubble up to 0.2m thick that was covered by 0.1m of tarmac. At the very east of the trench a brick foundation was identified connected to a steel frame which was covered in concrete (304). The frame was set in yellow builder's sand. Its purpose is unclear. It may be part of an entrance feature at the gate of the car park. At the western end of the trench a concrete and curving modern brick foundation (305) was identified which may also have been part of an entrance feature.

Figure 5-7
Trench 3 section looking north



No further archaeological features were identified.

6.0 Summary and Conclusion

The evaluation identified that the stratigraphy across the site comprised light grey brown silt clay superficial geology covered by a mixed deposit of soil derivative of the geology with charcoal and brick inclusions, on the south of the site. This suggested the site may have been disturbed at some stage during landscaping work. This mixed soil and the rest of the site was covered in modern made ground.

A late 19th century foundation relating to a now demolished part of the building that stands at the west of the site was recorded in Trench 1, while mid to late 20th century foundations were identified in Trench 2. Modern features were identified in Trench 3.

No further archaeological features were identified.

APPENDIX 01

Context Register

Context No	Type	Fill of	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Interpretation
100	Deposit	N/A	Trench	Trench	0.1	Tarmac	Car park
101	Deposit	N/A	Trench	Trench	0.23	Dark grey hardcore	Made ground
102	Deposit	N/A	Trench	Trench	N/A	Light grey brown silt clay	Geology
103	Cut/Fill	N/A	1.75	0.35	Unexcavated	Drain	Drain
104	Structure	N/A	1.8	22.5	Unexcavated	Wall foundation. Bricks 22.5x11x7.5cm, cement mortar	Modern wall foundation
200	Deposit	N/A	Trench	Trench	0.1	Tarmac	Car park
201	Deposit	N/A	Trench	Trench	0.25	Dark grey hardcore	Made ground
202	Deposit	N/A	Trench	Trench	0.05	Yellow grey hardcore	Made ground
203	Deposit	N/A	Trench	Trench	0.05	Crushed brick	Made ground
204	Deposit	N/A	Trench	Trench	N/A	Light grey brown silt clay	Geology
205	Structure	N/A	3	0.3	Unexcavated	Wall foundation. Bricks 21.5x11x7.5cm cement mortar	Modern wall foundation
206	Structure	N/A	4.25	0.6+	Unexcavated	Concrete pad	Concrete pad
207	Structure	N/A	1.8	0.75	Unexcavated	Concrete/brick wall foundation, bricks 21.5x10x6.5cm, cement mortar	Modern wall foundation
208	Structure	N/A	1.8	21.5	Unexcavated	Continuation of 205	Modern wall foundation
300	Deposit	N/A	Trench	Trench	0.1	Tarmac	Car park
301	Deposit	N/A	Trench	Trench	0.2	Rubble and hardcore	Made ground
302	Deposit	N/A	Trench	Trench	0.35	Dark grey brown silt clay, brick and charcoal	Made ground
303	Deposit	N/A	Trench	Trench	N/A	Light grey brown silt clay	Geology
304	Structure	N/A	2+	1.8+	Unexcavated	Modern wall with steel frame attached covered in concrete	Modern feature
305	Structure	N/A	1.8+	1+	Unexcavated	Concrete base with modern brick wall on top	Car park entrance feature?

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