

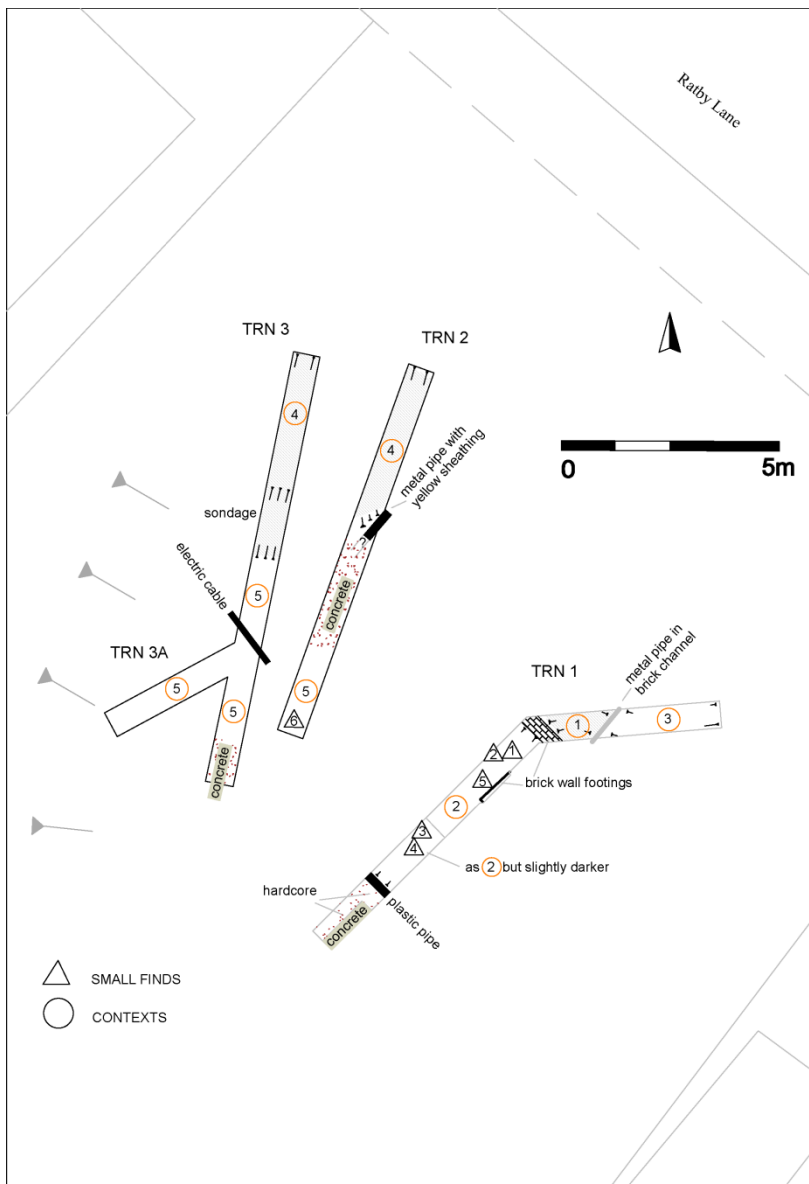


# University of Leicester

## Archaeological Services

An Archaeological Evaluation at  
402 Ratby Lane, Kirby Muxloe,  
Leicestershire SK 523 048

Jon Coward





**An Archaeological Evaluation at  
402 Ratby Lane, Kirby Muxloe,  
Leicestershire**

**NGR: SK 523 048**

**Jon Coward**

**For: J A Ball New Homes**

Checked by

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## **An Archaeological Evaluation at 402 Ratby Lane, Kirby Muxloe, Leicestershire SK 523 048**

*Jon Coward*

### **1. Summary**

*An archaeological evaluation by trial trenching was carried out by ULAS in September 2009 at 402 Ratby Lane, Kirby Muxloe, Leicestershire SK 523 048, for J A Ball New Homes. The evaluation was to assess whether archaeological deposits were present on the site, in advance of potential redevelopment. The trenching indicated that there was a survival of some medieval deposits to the rear of the evaluated area, but much evidence for more recent disturbance and truncation nearer Ratby Lane on the frontage. The archive will be deposited with LMARS under accession code X.A177.2009 in due course.*

### **2. Background**

The development area is situated at 402 Ratby Lane, Kirby Muxloe, at NGR SK 523 048. The site was recently cleared for redevelopment, the previous building on site having been demolished. Planning permission for the construction of two new dwellings has been applied for.

Leicestershire County Council, Historic and Natural Environment Team (LCCHNET) as archaeological advisors to the planning authority, requested an intensive watching brief to identify and locate any archaeological remains of significance and propose suitable treatment to avoid or minimise damage by the development. This was detailed in their 'Brief for Attendance For Inspection And Recording (An Intensive Watching Brief) at Land at 402 Ratby Lane Kirby Muxloe Leicestershire NGR SK 523 048' (04.08.2009 – Hereinafter the 'Brief').

The prospective developers requested limited field evaluation to assess whether archaeological remains are present. This was agreed with the Planning Archaeologist as advisor to BDC.

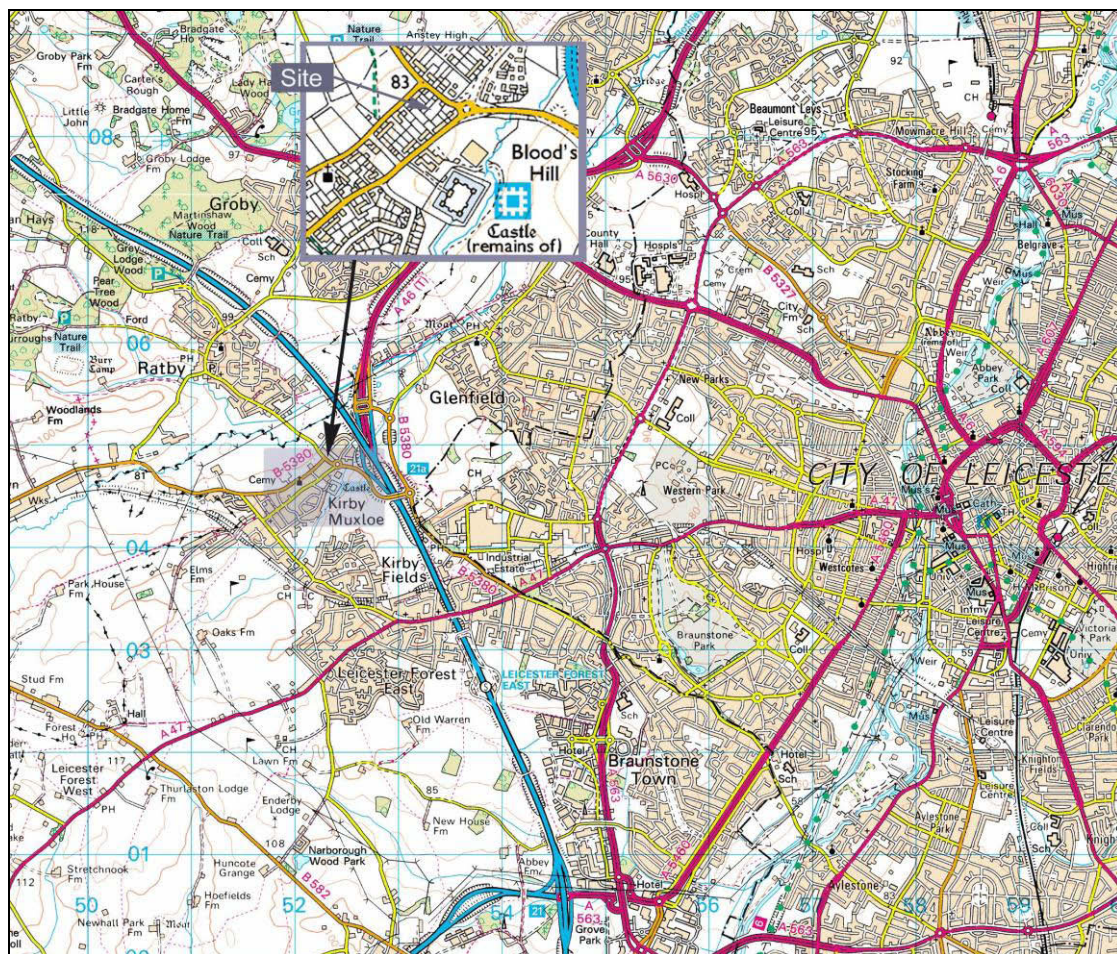


Figure 1. Kirby Muxloe, and position of site

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### 3. Historical Background

The site is located within the historic core of the settlement of Kirby Muxloe where remains relating to the evolution of the village are likely to be present (HER Ref: MLE 211). The early 20th-century building recently demolished is the only structure known to have occupied the site. The plot is undeveloped on the late 19th-century Ordnance Survey map. The proposed development would disturb and destroy any archaeological remains present.



Figure 2 Rear of the site looking west, showing new fencing and spoil heap behind.



Figure 3 Front of the site looking NNE.

#### **4. Aims**

The main objectives of the evaluation were:

To identify the presence/absence of any archaeological deposits.

To produce an archive and report of any results.

Trial trenching is an intrusive form of evaluation that can demonstrate the existence of earth-fast archaeological features that may exist within the area.

#### **5. Methods**

Trial trenching was to have been carried out using a JCB with a 1.6m ditching bucket; however, in the event a mini-digger was supplied. This had a 600mm toothless bucket, but it was unable to remove the compact clay subsoils and so a 600mm toothed bucket had to be employed instead. This change in methodology had some impact on the evaluation in that less area (approx.21m<sup>2</sup>) could be uncovered, and moreover the trench bases were channelled by the bucket teeth, which hampered visibility and rendered hand cleaning of the trench bases problematic. Multiple services were present across the sampled area which further complicated the machining and restricted visibility. Large areas of concrete, some of which appeared to be *in situ*, were visible in several locations. A skim of disturbed soil, mixed with various building debris and areas of gravel chippings, was widespread across the sampled area and will not be individually described in the trench results. Trenches were recorded using *pro forma* recording sheets, and a digital photographic record was made.

#### **6. Results**

##### **6.1 Trench 1**

This was commenced at the east end, heading west, but after encountering a service pipe, disturbed area, and then a brick wall footing it was continued along another alignment to the south-west in order to try to locate an area relatively free of obstacles. In total 11.2 metres were excavated.

At the east end, beneath the skim of mixed soil and building debris, a compact very dark grey clay soil was encountered. This had numerous inclusions, including abundant pieces of charcoal and occasional brick fragments, and was obviously re-deposited. At a depth of 0.45m it gave way to a clean mid-brown clay with occasional small pebbles. This was probably the natural substratum, although it too had some charcoal flecks within it and may have been disturbed. This extended westwards to a services pipe but could not be located on the other side; instead the compact dark grey soil was present with no sign of the putative brown natural substratum beneath. However, on a change in direction after a wall footing was encountered, a mid-brown clay substratum was encountered at a relatively shallow depth of *c.* 0.25m. This had charcoal flecks, small pebbles and stone fragments, and had the appearance of a plausible *in situ* subsoil. The trench was machined back at this level until a further service pipe was encountered, followed by more hardcore and concrete. As this was at the extent of the proposed new building footprint, the trench was halted at this point.



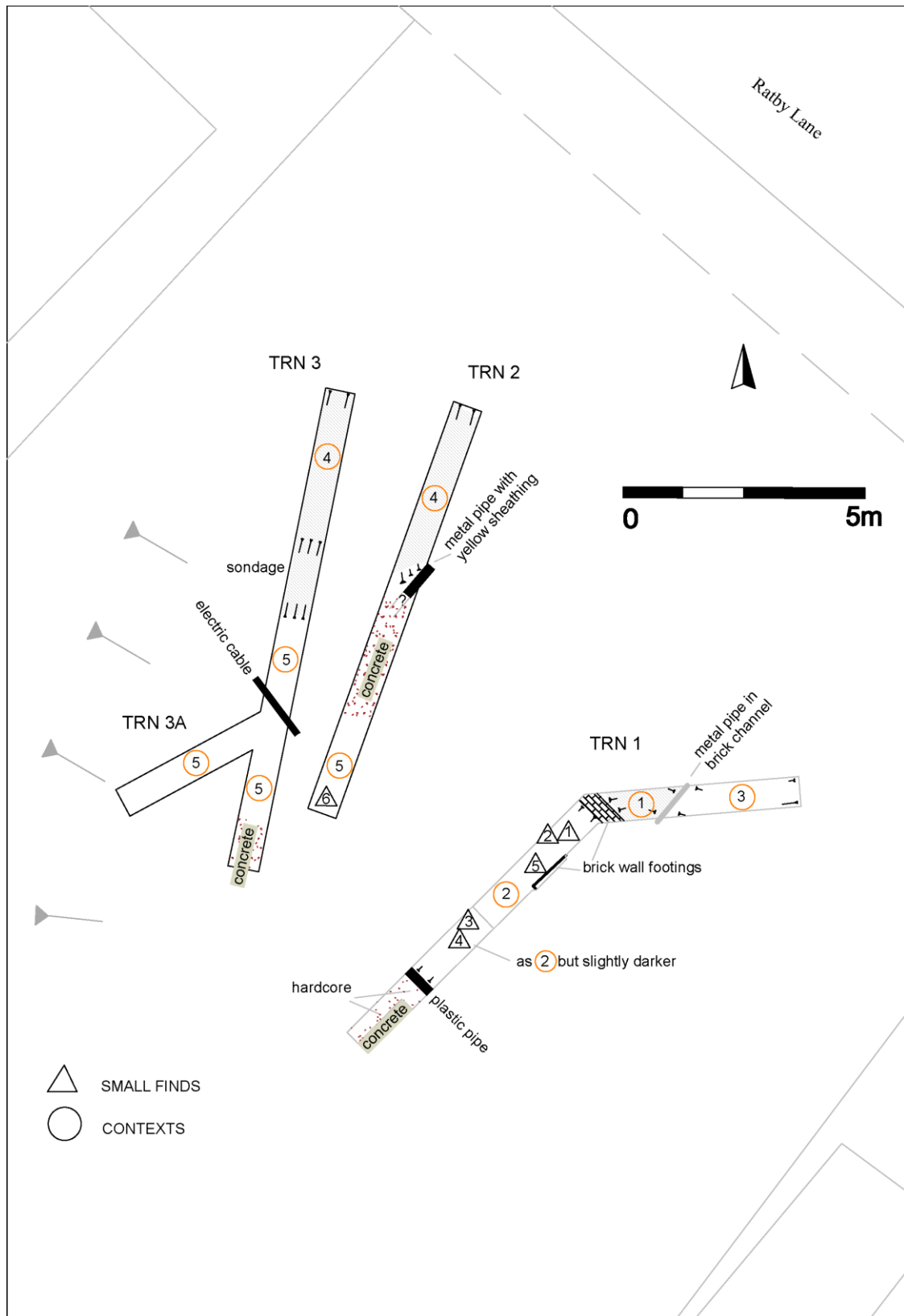


Figure 4 Position of evaluation trenches within the area.



Figure 5 Trench 1, looking NE.



Figure 6 Bone in deposit.

Cleaning the brown clay subsoil revealed several sherds of pottery and pieces of animal bone (Figure 5, Figure 6). One piece of bone was of some size and was

mostly left in situ. There was a suggestion of a slightly darker component to the subsoil near the south-western end, but this could not be definitely confirmed and the services pipe and concrete had truncated this darker area. The pottery was of medieval date (see Sawday, below).

### 6.2 Trench 2

This was commenced at the NNE end, heading SSW. In total 9m was excavated. Under the skim of debris, compact dark-grey redeposited clay with building debris and frequent charcoal fragments was present; this carried on down to the base of the trench at 0.50m. After three metres, a metal service pipe sheathed in yellow plastic was encountered. This ran into an area of concrete just below the skim of debris which extended another 3m along the trench, before giving way to a mid- brown clayish subsoil *c.* 0.15m below the present surface. This was indistinguishable to that in trench 1, and was no doubt the same deposit. Hand-cleaning of this surface revealed a sherd of Potters Marston medieval pottery.



Figure 7 Trench 2 (left), Trench 3 (right), looking S.

### 6.3 Trench 3

This trench was 10.2 metres in length, sited roughly parallel to trench 2. The NNE end exhibited the same dark grey compacted redeposited clay down to a depth of 0.50m. A small sondage was excavated to attempt to find the depth of this deposit, but it continued down to a depth of 1m without any base or natural substratum being encountered. However, immediately to the south of the sondage the mid brown

clayish subsoil was revealed at approximately 0.20m, similar to that in trenches 1 and 2, with slightly more sand in the clay. An electricity cable was encountered at this depth. The mid- brown clay subsoil carried on south until 9.25m from the start where more concrete was encountered. Probing revealed this extended some distance so the trench was abandoned at this juncture. No finds were recovered.

#### *6.4 Trench 3A*

This short stub of trench was taken at an angle away from trench 3 to avoid the electricity cable, and ran back for 3.6m. The mid-brown clay subsoil (5) with sand was present throughout at a depth of *c.* 0.15m, but no finds were noted.



Figure 8 Trench 3A, looking ENE.

#### *6.5 Discussion*

In general terms, the evaluation indicated that the area of the site nearer the road appears to have undergone disturbance and truncation, whereas the area further back,

although also disturbed, has the potential for the survival of *in-situ* archaeological strata. There is a noticeable drop from the north-west side of the site down into the trenched area; the fact that several services were located at a depth of 0.20m or less indicates that a large amount of material has already been removed from the site, presumably during the recent demolition process. On the other side of the rear fence, which is new, a large mound of soil (Figure 2) was present which probably derived from this area. There seems to be a compacted re-deposited dark-grey clay layer (contexts 1 and 4) common to the area. This may be part of the recent demolition (or underpinning, see below) process, but equally could represent material deposited during the construction of the original Victorian building, as there was nothing in it to suggest recent (i.e. late 20th century) formation. Also, it appeared uniformly compacted. Further back, the mid-brown clay layer (contexts 2 and 5) has the potential to represent *in-situ* archaeological strata. Although only four sherds of pottery and some animal bone were recovered from this layer, given the small surface area revealed this represents a potentially significant finds density. No definite features were noted.

The large fragments of concrete noted in the ground, and areas of concrete revealed by the machining, could be explained by a comment from a member of the public who was passing the site, who said that there had been a recent attempt to underpin the Victorian house on the site before its final demolition.

## **7. Archive**

The archive consists of:

- 3 trench record sheets
- 5 context sheets
- 12 digital photographs and contact sheet
- 4 sherds of pottery
- animal bone

It will be deposited with LMARS under accession code X.A177.2009 in due course.

## **8. Acknowledgements**

The project was carried out by Jon Coward of ULAS. Patrick Clay was the project manager. ULAS would like to thank Ms Wendy Ball of JA Ball new homes for her assistance during the project.

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## Appendix 1: The finds

Deborah Sawday

### The Pottery

The pottery, four sherds, weighing 24 grams, was catalogued with reference to the ULAS fabrics Series (Davies and Sawday 1999). Potters Marston ware, dating from the late 11th or, more probably, the 12th or early 13th centuries was recovered in contexts (2) and (5). A fragment of unclassified Reduced Sandy ware in context (2) may be Saxo-Norman or early medieval in date.

### Bibliography

Connor, A., and Buckley, R., 1999 *Roman and Medieval Occupation in Causeway Lane, Leicester*, Leicester Archaeology Mon. 5.

Davies, S., and Sawday, D., 1999 'The Post Roman Pottery and Tile' in A. Connor and R. Buckley, 1999, 165-213.

Site/ Parish: Ratby Lane, Kirby Muxloe, Leics	Submitter: J. Coward
Accession No.: X.A177.2009	Identifier: D. Sawday; J Browning (bone)
Document Ref: kirby muxloe2.docx	Date of Identification: 11.10.09
Material: pottery	Method of Recovery: evaluation
Site Type: village core	Job Number: 10-505

Small find	Fabric/Ware	No s	Gram s	Comments
POT				
<3>	PM – Potters Marston	1	5	Sooted externally , thin walled.
<4>	PM	1	10	Thin walled, reduced grey throughout.
<5>	RS – Reduced Sandy ware	1	4	Base fragment – flattish, reduced black externally.
<6>	PM	1	5	Oxidised jar or jug neck & shoulder fragment.
MISC				
<1>	Animal Bone	6		fragments of scapula (unidentified mammal)
<2>	Animal Bone	1		- sheep/goat phalanx

## ***Appendix 2: The Design Specification***

***Job title: 402, Ratby Lane, Kirby Muxloe, Leicestershire (SK 523 048)***

***Client: J A Ball New Homes***

***Planning Authority: Blaby District Council***

***Planning application No. 09/0028/1***

### **1 Introduction**

#### **1.1 *Definition and scope of the specification***

This document is a design specification for an initial phase of archaeological field evaluation (AFE) at the above site, in accordance with DOE Planning Policy Guidance note 16 (PPG16, Archaeology and Planning, para.30). The fieldwork specified below is intended to provide preliminary indications of the presence, character and extent of any buried archaeological remains in order that the client can make a decision over purchase.

- 1.2 The definition of archaeological field evaluation, taken from the Institute for Archaeologists Standards and Guidance: for Archaeological Field Evaluation (IfA S&G: AFE) 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 on land, inter-tidal zone or underwater. While most evaluations would also include an assessment of the character, extent, quality and preservation, in this case the specific aim is to assess whether deposits are present.

### **2. Background**

#### **2.1 *Context of the Project***

- 2.1.1 The development area is situated at 402 Ratby Lane, Kirby Muxloe, at NGR SK 523 048. The site is presently cleared for redevelopment, the previous building on site having been demolished.
- 2.1.2 Planning permission has been applied for, for the construction of two new dwellings.
- 2.1.3 Leicestershire County Council, Historic and Natural Environment Team (LCCHNET) as archaeological advisors to the planning authority have requested an intensive watching brief to identify and locate any archaeological remains of significance and propose suitable treatment to avoid or minimise damage by the development. This is detailed in their *Brief for Attendance For Inspection And Recording (An Intensive Watching Brief) at Land at 402 Ratby Lane Kirby Muxloe Leicestershire NGR SK 523 048* (04.08.2009 – Hereinafter the ‘Brief’).
- 2.1.4 The prospective developers have requested limited field evaluation to assess whether archaeological remains are present. This has been agreed with the Planning Archaeologist as advisor to BDC (email of 20.08.2009).

#### **2.2 *Archaeological and Historical Background***

- 2.2.1 The site is located within the historic core of the settlement of Kirby Muxloe where remains relating to the evolution of the village are likely to be present (HER Ref: MLE 211). The early 20th century building recently demolished, is the only structure known to have occupied the site. The plot is undeveloped on the late 19th century Ordnance Survey map.
- 2.2.2 The proposed development will disturb and destroy any archaeological remains present. Archaeological remains are a finite and non renewable resource and are recognised as such by the planning process.

### **3. Archaeological Objectives**

- 3.1 The main objectives of the evaluation will be:
- To identify the presence/absence of any archaeological deposits.
  - To produce an archive and report of any results.
- 3.2 Trial trenching is an intrusive form of evaluation that will demonstrate the existence of earth-fast archaeological features that may exist within the area.

### **4. Methodology**

#### **4.1 *General Methodology and Standards***

- 4.1.1 All work will follow the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) Code of Conduct and adhere to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (2008).
- 4.1.2 Staffing, recording systems, health and safety provisions and insurance details are included below.
- 4.1.3 Internal monitoring procedures will be undertaken including visits to the site by the project manager. These will ensure that project targets are met and professional standards are maintained. Provision will be made for external monitoring meetings with the Senior Planning Archaeologist the Planning authority and the Client.

#### **4.2 *Trial Trenching Methodology***

- 4.2.1 Topsoil/modern overburden will be removed in level spits, under continuous archaeological supervision, down to the uppermost archaeological deposits by JCB 3C or equivalent using a toothless ditching bucket.
- 4.2.2 Trenches will be excavated to a width of 1.5m and down to the top of archaeological deposits or the natural substratum, whichever is the more shallow.
- 4.2.3 The trenches will be backfilled and levelled at the end of the evaluation. Any archaeological deposits located. Any remains exposed will be properly and safely buried as part of the backfilling, for example using a breathable geotextile membrane if necessary
- 4.2.4 The application area covers c. 0.04 ha. A c. 8% sample of the area is the equivalent of two 10m x 1.6m trenches totaling c. 35 sq m. (Fig. 2). The exact location of the trenches may need to be modified depending on constraints on site.
- 4.2.5 Trenches will be examined by hand cleaning and any archaeological deposits located will be planned at an appropriate scale. A limited sample will be excavated by hand as appropriate to establishing the presence of deposits. All plans will be tied into the Ordnance Survey National Grid. Spot heights will be taken as appropriate.
- 4.2.6 Trench locations will be recorded and tied in to the Ordnance Survey National Grid.
- 4.2.8 Any human remains will initially be left *in situ* and will only be removed if necessary for their protection, under Ministry of Justice guidelines and in compliance with relevant environmental health regulations.

#### **4.3 *Recording Systems***

- 4.3.1 The ULAS recording manual will be used as a guide for all recording.
- 4.3.2 Individual descriptions of all archaeological strata and features excavated or exposed will be entered onto pro-forma recording sheets.
- 4.3.3 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 trench plan at appropriate scale, which will show the location of the areas investigated in relationship to the investigation area and OS grid.
- 4.3.4 A record of the full extent in plan of all archaeological deposits encountered will be made. Sections including the half-sections of individual layers of features will be drawn as necessary, typically at a scale of 1:10. The OD height of all principal strata and features will be recorded.



- 4.3.5 A photographic record of the investigations will be prepared 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.
- 4.3.6 This record will be compiled and checked during the course of the excavations.

## **5. Finds and Samples**

- 5.1 The IfA *Guidelines for Finds Work* will be adhered to.
- 5.2 Before commencing work on the site, a Site code/Accession number will be agreed with the Planning Archaeologist that will be used to identify all records and finds from the site.
- 5.3 During the fieldwork, different sampling strategies may be employed according to the perceived importance of the strata under investigation. Close attention will always be given to sampling for date, structure and environment. If significant archaeological features are sample excavated, the environmental sampling strategy is likely to include the following:
- i. A range of features to represent all feature types, areas and phases will be selected on a judgmental basis. The criteria for selection will be that deposits are datable, well sealed and with little intrusive or residual material.
  - ii. Any buried soils or well sealed deposits with concentrations of carbonised material present will be intensively sampled taking a known proportion of the deposit.
  - iii. Spot samples will be taken where concentrations of environmental remains are located.
  - iv. Waterlogged remains, if present, will be sampled for pollen, plant macrofossils, insect remains and radiocarbon dating provided that they are uncontaminated and datable. Consultation with the specialist will be undertaken.
- 5.4 All identified finds and artefacts are to be retained, although certain classes of building material will, in some circumstances, be discarded after recording with the approval of the Senior Planning Archaeologist. The IfA *Guidelines for Finds Work* will be adhered to.
- 5.5 All finds and samples will be treated in a proper manner. Where appropriate they will be cleaned, marked and receive remedial conservation in accordance with recognised best-practice. This will include the site code number, finds number and context number. Bulk finds will be bagged in clear self sealing plastic bags, again marked with site code, finds and context numbers and boxed by material in standard storage boxes (340mm x 270mm x 195mm). All materials will be fully labelled, catalogued and stored in appropriate containers.

## **6. Report and Archive**

- 6.1 The full report in A4 format will usually follow within eight weeks of the completion of the fieldwork and copies will be dispatched to the Client, Senior Planning Archaeologist; HER and Local Planning Authority.
- 6.2 The report will include consideration of:-
- The aims and methods adopted in the course of the evaluation.
  - The nature, location, extent, date, significance and quality of any structural, artefactual and environmental material uncovered.
  - The anticipated degree of survival of archaeological deposits.
  - The anticipated archaeological impact of the current proposals.
  - Appropriate illustrative material including maps, plans, sections, drawings and photographs.
  - Summary.
  - The location and size of the archive.
  - A quantitative and qualitative assessment of the potential of the archive for further analysis leading to full publication, following guidelines laid down in *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage).
- 6.3 A full copy of the archive as defined in the *IfA Standard and Guidance for archaeological archives* (Brown 2008) will normally be presented to Leicestershire County Council within six months of the completion of fieldwork. This archive will include all written, drawn and photographic records relating directly to the investigations undertaken.

## **7 Publication and Dissemination of Results**

- 7.1 A summary of the work will be submitted for publication in the *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society*.

## **8. Acknowledgement and Publicity**

- 8.1 ULAS shall acknowledge the contribution of the Client in any displays, broadcasts or publications relating to the site or in which the report may be included.
- 8.2 ULAS and the Client shall each ensure that a senior employee shall be responsible for dealing with any enquiries received from press, television and any other broadcasting media and members of the public. All enquiries made to ULAS shall be directed to the Client for comment.

## **9. Copyright**

- 9.1 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.

## **10. Timetable**

- 10.1 The evaluation start is proposed for 09.09.2009.
- 10.2 The on-site director/supervisor will carry out the post-excavation work, with time allocated within the costing of the project for analysis of any artefacts found on the site by the relevant in-house specialists at ULAS.

## **11. Health and Safety**

- 11.1 ULAS is covered by and adheres to the University of Leicester Archaeological Services Health and Safety Policy and Health and Safety manual with appropriate risks assessments for all archaeological work. A draft Health and Safety statement for this project is attached as Appendix 1. The relevant Health and Safety Executive guidelines will be adhered to as appropriate. The HSE has determined that archaeological investigations are exempt from CDM regulations.
- 11.2 A Risks assessment will be completed prior to work commencing on-site, and updated as necessary during the site works.

## **12. Insurance**

- 12.1 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.

## **13. Monitoring arrangements**

- 13.1 Unlimited access to monitor the project will be available to both the Client and his representatives and Planning Archaeologist subject to the health and safety requirements of the site. At least one weeks notice will be given to the LCCHS Senior Planning Archaeologist before the commencement of the archaeological evaluation in order that monitoring arrangements can be made.
- 13.2 All monitoring shall be carried out in accordance with the IfA *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations*.
- 13.3 Internal monitoring will be carried out by the ULAS project manager.

## **14. Bibliography**

Brown, D., *Standard and guidance for the preparation of Archaeological Archives* (Institute for  
2008 Archaeologists)

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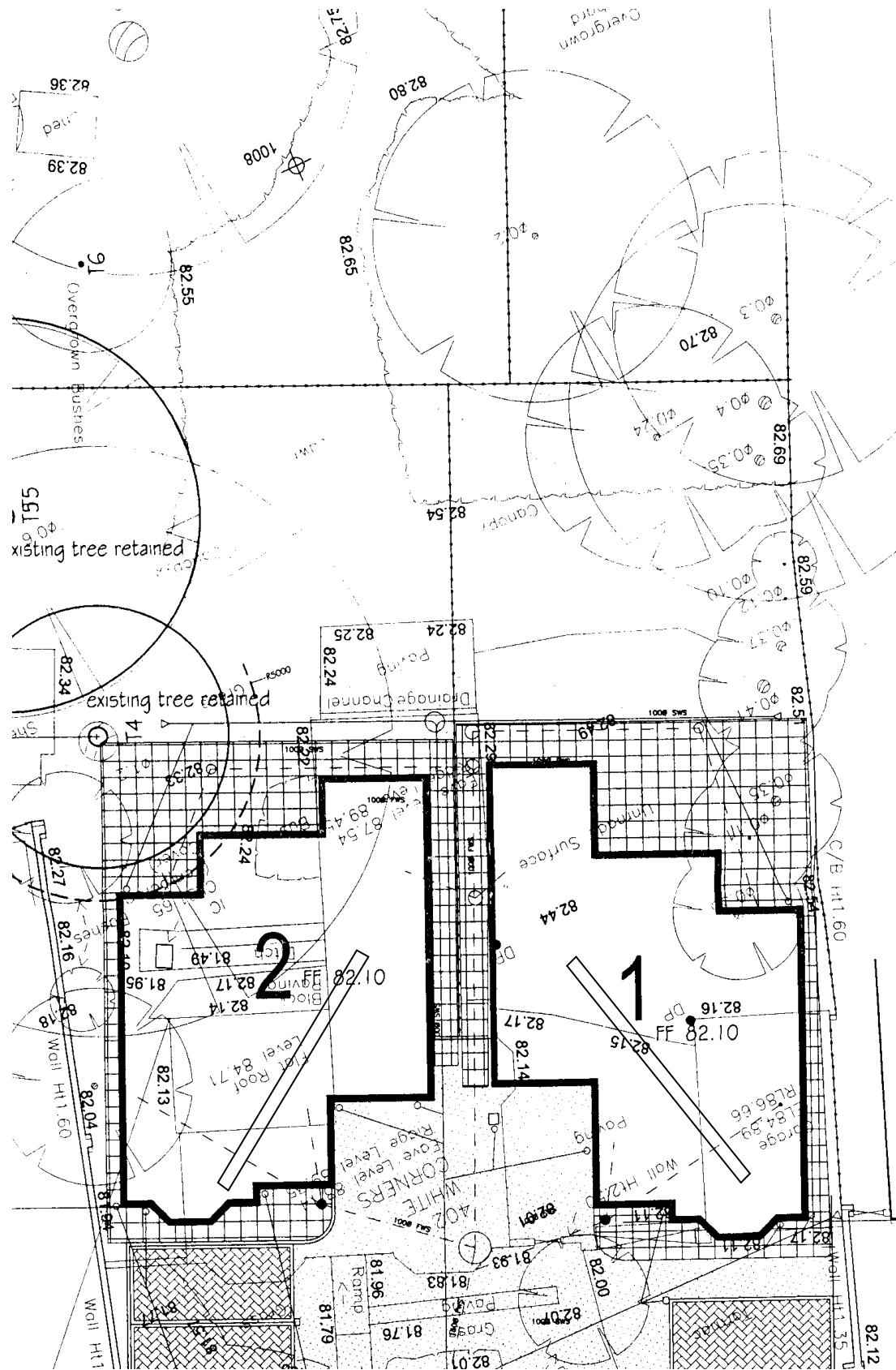


Figure 2 Proposed trench locations in relation to the new dwellings