University of Leicester
Archaeological Services

An Archaeological Watching Brief at 78, Main Street, Swithland, Leicestershire NGR: SK 5455 1317

Tim Higgins

ULAS Report No. 2011-124

An Archaeological Watching Brief at 78 Main Street, Swithland, Leicestershire

NGR: SK 5455 1317

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For: Pearson Property Developments Ltd

Approved by

Signed: 

Date: 09.08.2011.

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Summary

An archaeological watching brief of ground-works was undertaken at land adjacent to 78 Main Street, Swithland, Loughborough, Leicestershire by ULAS on behalf of Pearson Property Developments Ltd. The initial groundwork consisted of the removal of overburden and ground for new residential buildings. Attendance at the site occurred on the 18th July 2011.

The watching brief revealed no archaeological deposits or pre-modern artefacts during the inspection of the site. The archive will be deposited with Archaeology, Environment and Heritage Services (Leicestershire County Council Museum), subject to their confirmation with accession No. X.A95.2011

1. Introduction

This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief of groundworks on land adjacent to 78, Main Street Swithland, Leicestershire (NGR SK 5455 1317). In view of the potential impact of the development this was undertaken as a mitigation strategy following recommendations by the Leicestershire County Council Senior Planning Archaeologist.

The ground-works involved ground clearance, removal of overburden and ground reduction prior to the erection of a dwelling at Main Street Swithland, Loughborough.

The archaeological watching brief was carried out in accordance with PPS 5 (Planning for Historic Environment). All archaeological work adhered to the Institute for Archaeologist's (IfA) *Code of Conduct (rev. 2010)* and *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs (2008).*

2. Background

The development site is located on the main street on the west side of the village (Fig. 1). The site is a former farmyard and the geology of the area is Mudstone (Gunthorpe Member) overlain by sand and gravels with a band of alluvium to the south of the road (British Geological Survey).

The Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record (HER) shows that the application site lies in an area of archaeological interest, within the medieval and post-medieval historic settlement core of the village. It also lies next to an 18th century listed building (HER ref. MLE14042).

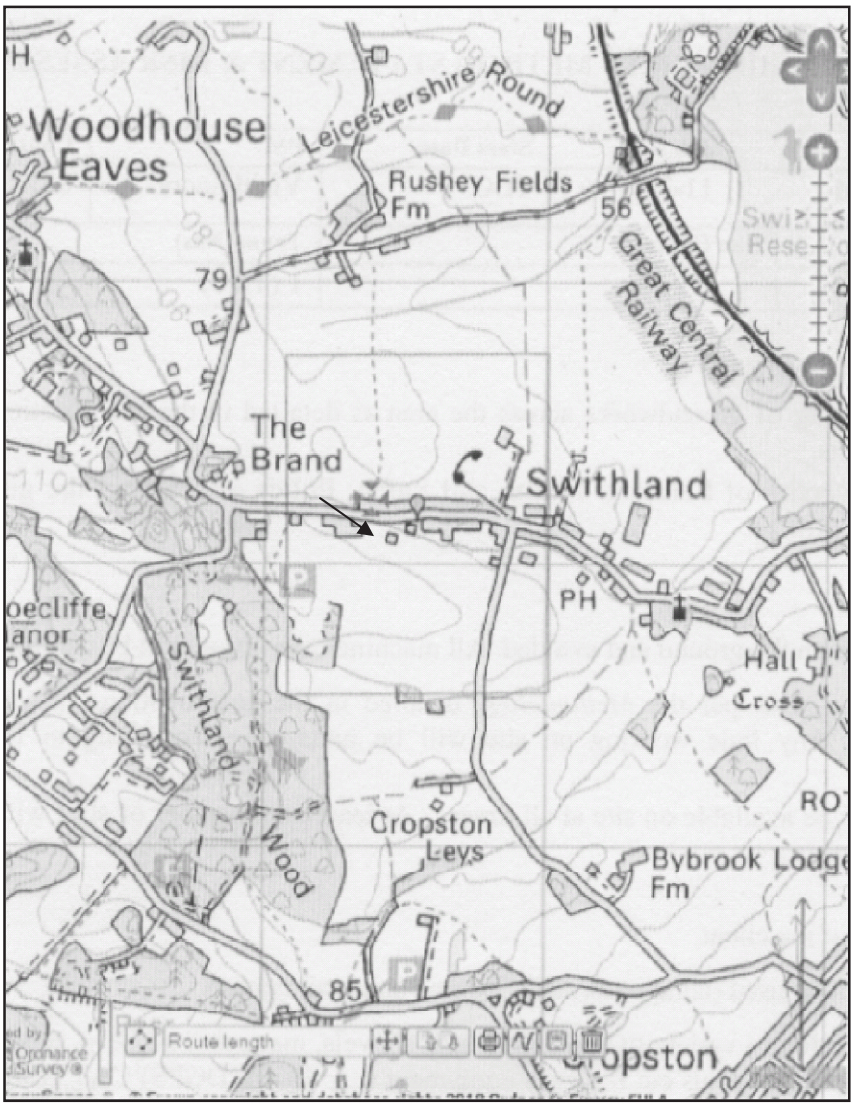

Figure 1: Site location plan

3. Aims and Methods

The aim of the watching brief was through archaeological attendance and investigation:

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

All work followed the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Codes of Conduct* (2010), *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (2008), the standard policy and practice of ULAS as set out in the Design Specification (Appendix 1) and adherence to the University's Health and Safety policy.

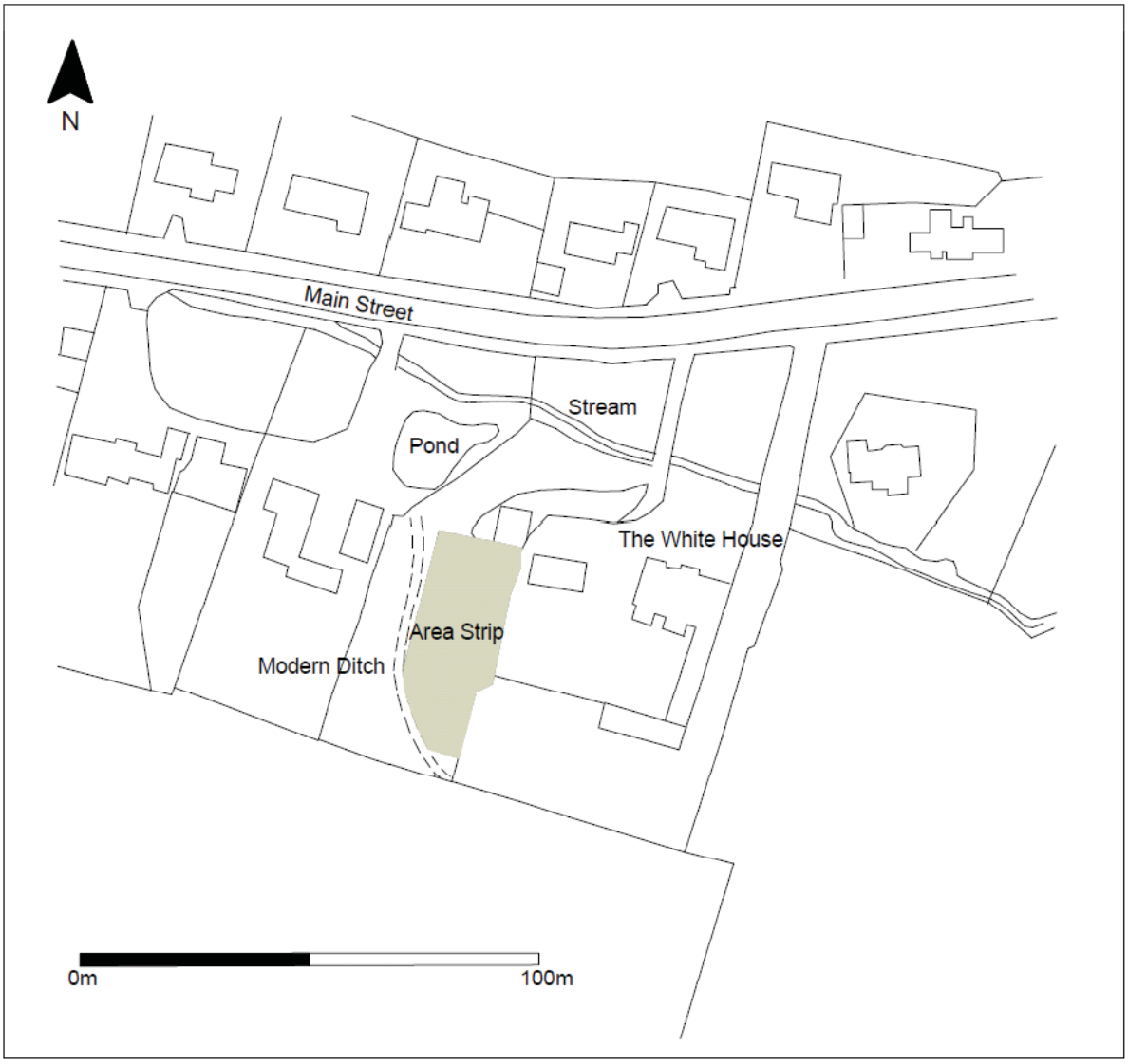

Figure 2: Plot location plan

4. Results

Initial groundwork involved the clearance and stripping of overburden from the former farmyard (Fig. 2 and Plate 1) and a site visit was undertaken on the 18th July 2011. The machine used for the ground works was a Mini JCB 360 degree excavator fitted with a 1.60m wide ditching bucket. A visual inspection was conducted across the striped area.

The excavations were located in the south-east corner of the development area and comprised an area measuring approximately 750m sq (Fig. 2). The natural substratum consisted of pale yellowish brown clay and mixed pebbles at depth of 0.40m below the present ground surface. This area appeared to have been previously levelled, and sealed with a layer 0.40m deep comprising yellowish brown clay and sand mixed with modern building materials apparently deposited to raise the ground levels (see Plate 1). The layer of raised ground was sealed by layer of turf.

A modern drainage ditch measuring 1.50m wide and 1.10m deep was observed across the western side of the development area. The drainage ditch was running diagonal south-east to north-west

across the centre of the site (Fig. 2). No archaeological deposits, features or pre-modern artefacts were encountered during this inspection of the site.

All of the stripped areas and spoil heaps were walked over and visually inspected. No archaeological deposits or pre-modern artefacts were encountered during this second inspection of the site.

Figure 3: Development area looking southeast

Figure 4: Machine stripping overburden within the development plot

5. Conclusion

Despite its location within the historic village core, nothing of archaeological significance was uncovered during the course of the archaeological work. The inspection of the ground works at the development site 78 Main Street revealed that the natural horizons appeared to have been levelled at some point in the past. The topsoil and subsoil had been removed and replaced with mixed layers of re-deposited natural soil mixed with demolition debris used to raise the ground levels, which were then sealed under turf surfaces. Any potential archaeological deposits that may have been associated with an early property that perhaps once fronted on to Main Street are likely to have been disturbed or truncated as a result of this.

6. Archive and Publication

The archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council under accession number X.A95.2011.

The content of the paper archive consists of:

1 Unbound A4 copy of this report

1 A4 Trench watching brief sheets

1 A4 Photo record sheet

A4 Colour digital contact print 1 CD of 11 digital photos

A record of the project will be submitted to the Oasis project under the code universi1-107372. Oasis is an online index to grey literature reports.

A summary of the work will be submitted for publication in Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society Transactions in due course.

7. Acknowledgements

The fieldwork was carried out by the author while Vicki Score managed the project.

8. Bibliography

Score, V., 2011, *Written scheme of investigation for archaeological work: 78, Main Street, Swithland, Leicestershire (NGR: SK 5455 1317)* ULAS Specification 11/352 (Appendix 1 of this report).

Institute for Archaeologists (IfA), 2010, *Code of Conduct*

Institute for Archaeologists (IfA), 2008, *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations.*

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9.08.2011

Appendix 1 Specification

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

Written Scheme of Investigation for archaeological attendance,

inspection and recording (watching brief)

Land adjacent to 78 Main Street, Swithland, Loughborough, LE12 8TH

SK 5455 1317

For: Pearson Property Developments Ltd.

Planning application: P/09/1876/2

Planning Authority: Charnwood Borough Council

1 Introduction

Definition and scope of the specification

1.1 This document is a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for archaeological attendance and monitoring at the above site, in accordance with PPS 5 (Planning for the Historic Environment). This specification provides a written scheme for an archaeological watching brief, as required by the Planning Authority, of any groundworks in connection with the erection of a dwelling at Main Street Swithland, Loughborough as detailed in the planning conditions (Condition 6).

1.2 The document provides details of the following work proposed by ULAS on behalf of the client as recommended by the advice letter from Leicestershire Historic and Natural Environment Team (2007).

- Archaeological monitoring of all development groundworks

2. Background

Context of the Project

2.1. The planning consent is for the erection of one dwelling on land adjacent to 78 Main Street, Swithland (Figs 1 and 2).

Archaeological and historical background (taken from the advice letter)

2.4 The site lies within an area of archaeological importance. It falls within the medieval and post-medieval historic settlement core of the village. It also lies next to an 18th century listed building (HER ref. MLE14042). There is therefore the possibility that buried archaeological remains may be affected by the development.

3. Archaeological Aims and Objectives

3.1 The purpose of the archaeological work may be summarised as follows:

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

4. Methodology

General methods

4.1 All work will follow the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Code of Conduct* (2010) and adhere to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (2008).

4.2 Staffing, recording systems, health and safety provisions and insurance details are included below.

4.3 An accession number will be obtained prior to commencement of the project and used to identify all records and artefacts.

Archaeological attendance for inspection and recording

4.4 The project will involve a watching brief of all groundworks (including stripped areas and service and foundation trenches) by an experienced professional archaeologist. During these ground works, if any archaeological deposits are seen to be present, the archaeologist will record areas of archaeological interest.

4.5 Excavation should be undertaken by a mechanical excavator using a toothless bucket for stripping in level spits. A toothed bucket may be used for removing modern overburden or rubble deposits.

4.6 If the initial monitoring identifies areas of no archaeological interest (e.g. modern made ground or disturbed areas), then the archaeologist may stand down monitoring of that area following consultation with the Planning Authority.

4.7 If significant archaeological deposits are discovered work may need to be halted in order for contingency excavation and recording to be carried out. The archaeologist will co-operate at all times with the contractors on site to ensure the minimum interruption to the work.

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

4.9 Archaeological deposits will be excavated and recorded using standard ULAS procedures. Sufficient of any archaeological features or deposits will be hand excavated in order to provide the stratigraphic and chronological sequence of deposits, recognising and excavating structural evidence and recovering economic, artefactual and environmental evidence. Standard sampling amounts are:

- 50% of the exposed area of each pit and other discrete archaeological features.
- 20% (minimum 1m section) of the exposed lengths of linear features (including slotted and interrupted ditches and pit alignments). Excavation sections will be placed to provide adequate coverage of the features and will include excavation of terminals and intersections. A flexible approach will be adopted to the location of excavation samples such that areas of exposed ditch fill with higher artefact or ecofact content may be targeted.
- 25% of ring gullies will normally be excavated to include excavation of the terminals. Special regard will be given to significant stratigraphic relationships and concentrations of artefactual material.
- Structural and foundation deposits will be exposed and cleaned with a view to defining their nature and any relationships.

4.10 All below ground stratigraphy will be recorded. Particular attention will be paid to the potential for buried palaeosols and waterlogged deposits in consultation with ULAS's environmental officer.

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

4.12 Spoil will be monitored for artefacts. A representative sample of unstratified finds may be retained.

4.13 Any human remains encountered will be initially left in situ, covered and protected, and only be removed in accordance with a Ministry of Justice licence and in compliance with relevant environmental health regulations. The landowner and/or developer, the Planning Authority and the coroner will be informed immediately of their discovery.

Preservation in situ and Contingency Provisions

4.14 In the event of significant archaeological remains being located during the archaeological investigation there may be the need for contingency time and finance to be provided to ensure adequate recording is undertaken.

4.15 On the discovery of potentially significant remains the archaeologist will inform the developer and the planning authority in order for detailed discussion between all relevant parties to take place.

Recording Systems

4.16 The ULAS recording manual will be used as a guide for all recording.

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

4.18 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.

4.19 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. The relative height of all principal strata and features will be recorded. The stratigraphy of all trenches shall be recorded even where no archaeological features are identified.

4.20 A photographic record of the investigations will be prepared as per the brief, 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.

4.21 This record will be compiled and checked during the course of the excavations.

5 Finds & samples

5.1 The IfA Guidelines for Finds Work will be adhered to.

5.2 An Accession number will be obtained prior to the commencement of any on-site works, that will be used to identify all records and finds from the site.

5.3 Any finds that may constitute 'treasure' under the Treasure Act, 1996 will be reported to the local Coroner and removed to a safe place.

5.4 All antiquities, valuables, objects or remains of archaeological interest, other than articles declared by Coroner's Inquest to be subject to the Treasure Act, discovered in or under the Site during the carrying out of the project by ULAS or during works carried out on the Site by the Client shall be deemed to be the property of ULAS provided that ULAS after due examination of the said Archaeological Discoveries shall transfer ownership of all Archaeological Discoveries unconditionally to LCC for storage in perpetuity.

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.

5.5 Although the environmental potential of the site is uncertain, if significant archaeological features are sample excavated, the following environmental sampling strategy will be adopted, following consultation with the ULAS Environmental Officer.

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.

5.6 Wet sieving with flotation will be carried out using a York Archaeological Trust sieving tank with a 0.5mm mesh and a 0.3mm flotation sieve. The small size mesh will be used initially as flotation of plant remains may be incomplete and some may remain in the residue. The residue > 0.5mm from the tank will be separated into coarse fractions of over 4mm and fine fractions of > 0.5-4mm. The coarse fractions will be sorted for finds. The fine fractions and flots will be evaluated and prioritised; only those with remains apparent will be sorted. The prioritised flots will not be sorted until the analysis stage when phasing information is available. Flots will be scanned and plant remains from selected contexts will be identified and further sampling, sieving and sorting targeted towards higher potential deposits.

5.7 Where there is evidence for industrial activity, macroscopic technological residues (or a sample of them) may be collected. Separate samples (c. 10ml) may be collected for micro-slags (hammer-scale and spherical droplets). All industrial samples will be undertaken with reference to the Centre for Archaeology Guideline on Archaeometallurgy (English Heritage 2001).

5.8 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

6. Report and Archive

6.1 Arrangements will be made for the archive, consisting of record sheets, original drawings, drawn plans, photographs, notes, copies of all reports along with an index to the archive to be deposited at Leicestershire Museums in accordance with the relevant procedures.

6.3 The archive will be quantified, ordered, indexed and internally consistent and marked with the site accession number.

6.4 The archive will be prepared in line with appropriate professional guidelines (e.g. UKIC and ADS guidelines for the preparation of archaeological archives for long term storage and *Archaeological Archives: A Guide to Best Practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation* (AAF 2007).

6.7 The full report in A4 format will usually follow within six weeks of the completion of the fieldwork and copies will be directed to the client, the Planning Authority and to the Historic Environment Record.

6.8 The report will include consideration of:

- A non-technical summary.
- The aims and methods adopted in the course of the work.
- The location, date, significance and quality of the building.
- The nature, location and extent of any structural, artefactual and environmental material uncovered.
- The anticipated degree of survival of archaeological deposits.
- The local, regional and national context as appropriate highlighting any research priorities where applicable.
- Appropriate illustrative material including maps, plans, sections, drawings and photographs.
- The location and size of the archive.
- Contents of the archive

7 Publication and Dissemination of Results

7.1 A summary of the work will be submitted to the local archaeological journal. A larger report will be submitted for inclusion if the results of the evaluation warrant it.

7.2 University of Leicester Archaeological Services supports the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) project. The online OASIS form at http://ads.ac.uk/project/oasis will be completed detailing the results of the project. Once the report has become a public document following its incorporation into the HER it may be placed on the web-site.

8. Copyright

8.1 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.

9. Timetable

9.1 A date for the commencement of the watching brief has not yet been set. It is understood that the work may begin in early June.

10. Health and Safety

10.1 A Risks Assessment form will be completed prior to work commencing on-site, and updated as necessary during the site works (see end of this document|).

11 Insurance

11.1 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.

12. Monitoring arrangements

12.1 Unlimited access to monitor the project will be available to both the Client and his representatives and to the Planning Authority subject to the health and safety requirements of the site. Notice will be given to the Development Control Archaeologist before the commencement of the archaeological survey in order that monitoring arrangements can be made.

12.2 Internal monitoring will be carried out by the ULAS project manager.

13. Bibliography

AAF 2007 *Archaeological Archives: A Guide to Best Practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation*

LCC 2007 *Advice Letter*

English Heritage 2001 *Centre for Archaeology Guidelines on Archaeometallurgy*

Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) 2008 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*

Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) 2010 *Code of Conduct*

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