

**An Archaeological evaluation of land off
Barkby Lane, Syston, Leicestershire.
(SK 621 105).**

Gavin Speed

For: RSKENSR and George Wimpey East Midlands Ltd

Checked by Project Manager

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An Archaeological evaluation of land off Barkby Lane, Syston, Leicestershire.

Gavin Speed

Summary

University of Leicester Archaeological Services carried out an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching, of land off Barkby Lane, Syston, Leicestershire (SK 621 105) in June 2005. The work was undertaken as an initial phase of archaeological field evaluation in accordance with Dept of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance note 16, in advance of a proposed residential development. The evaluation revealed evidence for three archaeological features, two undated, and one of a post-medieval/modern date.

Records will be deposited with the Historic and Natural Environment Team, Leicestershire County Council under the Accession no. XA138.2005.

1. Introduction

University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) were commissioned by RSKENSR on behalf of George Wimpey East Midlands Ltd to carry out an archaeological evaluation of land off Barkby Lane, Syston, Leicestershire (SK 621 105). The work was undertaken as the initial part of an archaeological impact assessment in advance of a proposed residential development, following an advice letter detailing the level of archaeological work required by the Historic and Natural Environment Team, Leicestershire County Council.

This report presents the results of an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching carried out in June 2005, by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS). It comprised the excavation of thirteen 30m x 2m evaluation trenches within the application area.

2. Site Description, Topography and Geology

The site is located c.1 mile to the southwest of the centre of Syston, Leicestershire. The application area in total is c.2.9 ha. The Ordnance Survey Geological Survey of Great Britain Sheet 170 indicates that the underlying geology is likely to consist of clays. The site lies at a height of c.56 m O.D.

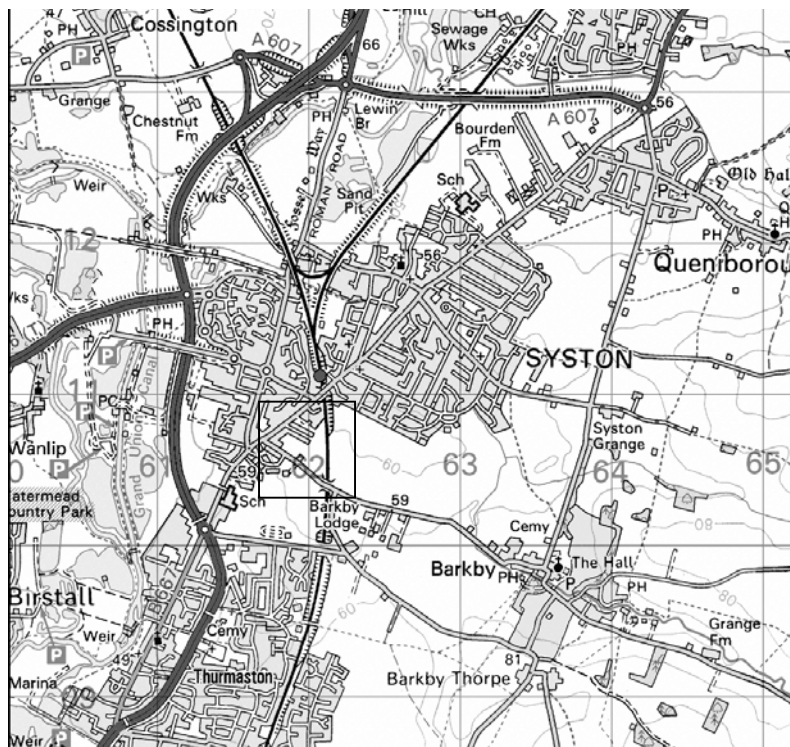


Figure 1. Site location (indicated by the square) Scale 1:50000

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3. Archaeological Background

The Leicestershire Sites and Monuments Record indicate that the site for development lies close to known prehistoric sites including Neolithic finds, a Bronze Age barrow and ring ditch, and an Iron Age enclosure and pit alignment.

4. Aims and Objectives

The principal aims of the archaeological evaluation are:

- To identify possible areas of archaeological potential liable to be threatened by the proposed development.
- To establish the location, extent, date, and significance of any archaeological deposits located.
- To define the quality and state of preservation of these deposits.
- To assess the local, regional and national importance of any deposits.
- To produce an archive and report of any results.

The objective is to gain an indication of the nature, extent, date and significance of any archaeological deposits in order that an appropriate mitigation strategy may be adopted for remains that may be affected by the development proposals.

5. Methodology

Thirteen trenches (30 metres in length and 2m in width) covering an area of 780 sq. m. were spread over the application site in order to gain as good an understanding as possible of the presence of archaeological finds or deposits.

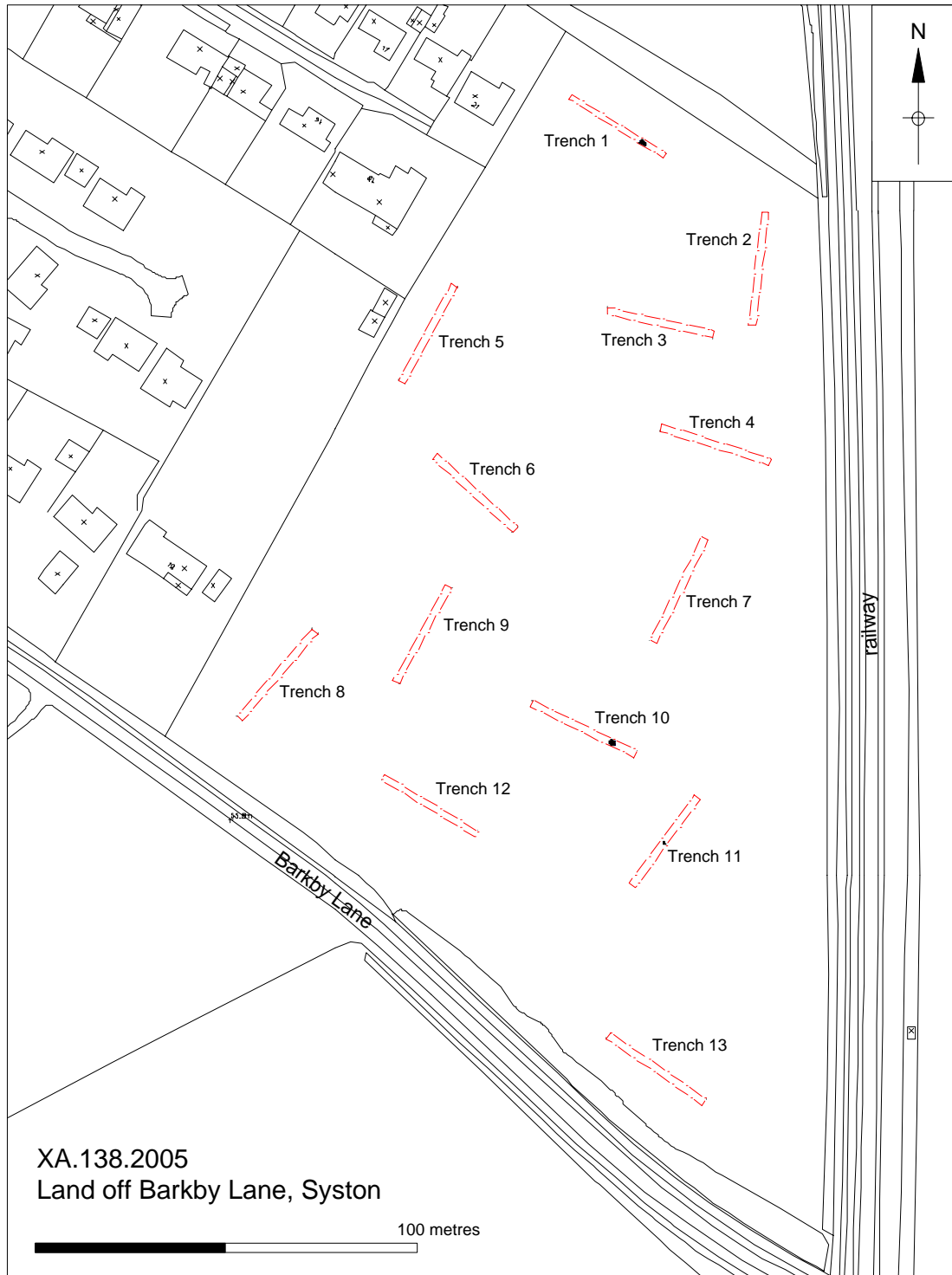


Figure 2: Trench location plan.

The trenches were excavated using a JS 220 mechanical digger equipped with a 2m wide toothless ditching bucket. The topsoil and overlying layers were removed under full archaeological supervision until either the top of archaeology or natural undisturbed ground was reached, or to a depth of 1.20m.

The trenches were located using an Electronic Distance Measurer linked to a hand-held Psion data logger. The data was processed using N4ce survey software and the final plans completed with the aid of TurboCAD version 7.1 design software.

The bases of the trenches were hand cleaned and examined for archaeological remains. Where archaeological remains existed they were planned to scale and recorded. Limited excavation of archaeological features was carried out to determine the character and date of any remains. Archaeological features were recorded with reference to the ULAS recording manual. All work followed the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations*, and the *Guidelines and Procedures for Archaeological Work in Leicestershire and Rutland* (Leicestershire County Council).

6. Results

A total of 13 trenches were excavated in the proposed development area (fig.2). Only three trenches contained archaeological deposits (1,10,11), the remainder were void of archaeological finds or deposits. The topsoil consisted of a brownish-grey silty clay-loam, it was friable with occasional small-large sub-rounded stone, it ranged in depth from 0.27m – 0.48m. Below this was a mid-light orange-brown silty-clay subsoil, this was friable with occasional small-large sub-rounded stone, it reached a depth between 0.45m – 0.6m. The natural substrata consisted of a light yellow-brown clay which was reached at a depth of 0.45m - 0.85m in all trenches.

Note: Archaeological contexts as a cut are indicated by: [], those that are fills are indicated by: ().

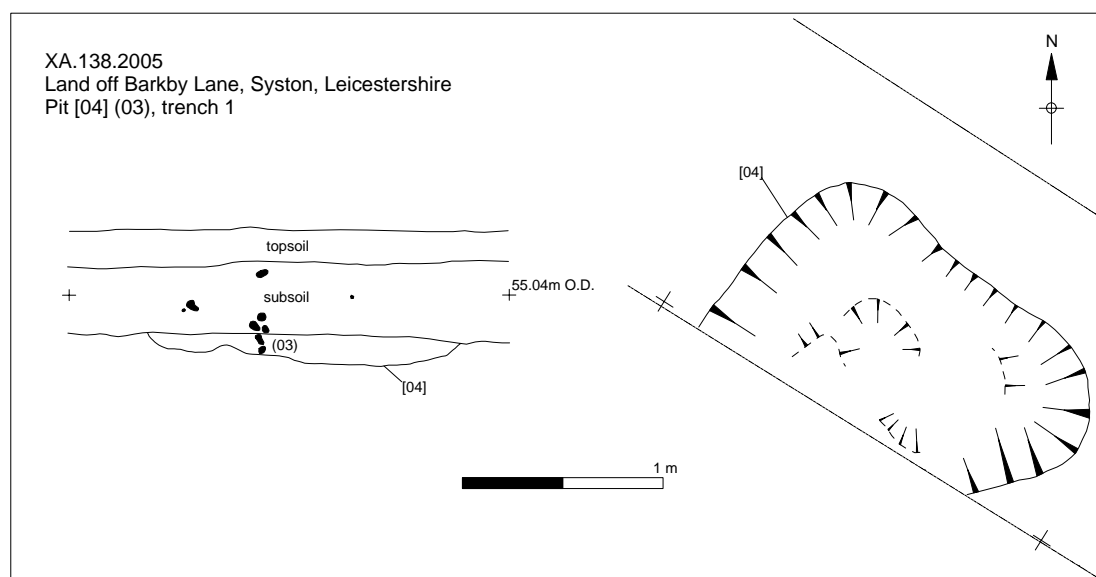


Figure 3: Feature from trench 1.

Trench 1

A pit was located towards the southeast end of the trench [04]. The pit contained one fill (03) which was a mid-dark brown-grey silty-clay, it contained 10% large sub-rounded pebbles and was of a friable compaction. Fragments of brick and a piece of late 18th – 19th century glass was recovered from the fill. Therefore this feature dates to the post-medieval/modern period.

Trench 10

A large sub-circular pit measuring 1.4m x 1.65m was located towards the southeast end of the trench [08]. The pit contained one fill (07) which was a dark brown clay with some sand inclusions, it contained less than 5% small rounded pebbles and was of a firm compaction. No finds were recovered from the feature, its fill appears more leached compared to the post-medieval pit in trench 1, therefore it is possible to be of an earlier date, although given the lack of finds this is uncertain.



Figure 4: Pit [8] from trench 10.

Trench 11

A small sub-circular pit measuring 1m x 0.6m was centrally located within the trench [05]. The pit contained one fill (06) which was a dark grey-brown silty-clay, it was of a firm compaction. No finds were recovered from the feature, its fill appears to be quite similar to the pit in trench 10, therefore it is possible that these may be contemporary features, although given the lack of datable evidence this remains uncertain.

Trenches 2-9, & 12-13.

No archaeological deposits or finds were identified within these trenches.

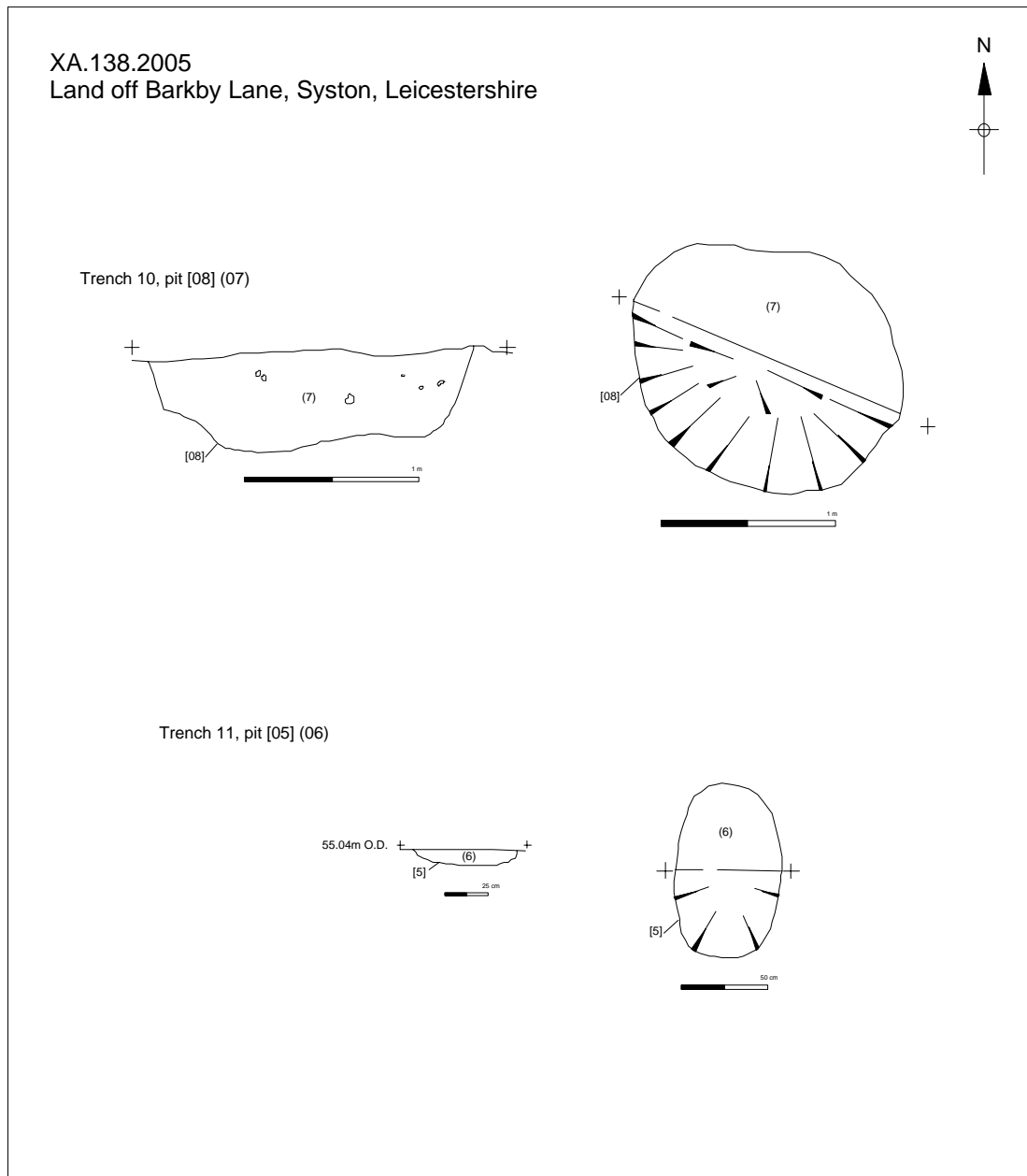


Figure 5: Features from trench 10 & 11.

7. Conclusion

Only three archaeological features were identified from over 780 sq.m. of the excavated area, therefore given the low ratio of evidence the potential for further features is low. Trenches 1,10,11 demonstrated clear archaeological deposits, the feature from trench 1 dates to the post-medieval/modern period, whereas the two features in trenches 10 and 11 are of an uncertain date.

8. Archive

The archive consists of site notes, sketches, photographs, survey data, and finds to be held by the Historic and Natural Environment Team, Leicestershire County Council under accession number X.A.138.2005.

9. Publication

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

10. Acknowledgements

This report was compiled from information collected on site by the author, Steve Baker, and Alex Beacock. Dr. Patrick Clay managed the project.

11. Bibliography

- MAP 2 The management of archaeological projects 2nd edition English Heritage 1991
- MGC 1992 Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections 1992 (Museums and Galleries Commission)
- RFG/FRG 1993 Guidelines for the preparation of site archives (Roman Finds Group and Finds Research Group AD 700-1700 1993)
- SMA 1993 Selection, retention and Dispersal of Archaeological Collections. Guidelines for use in England, Wales and Northern Ireland 1993 (Society of Museum Archaeologists)

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Appendix 1: Trench summaries

Trench	Length (m)	Average depth O.D	Notes	Minimum depth to archaeology (m)
1	30	55.01	Post-Med/modern pit	55.0
2	30	55.3	Negative	N/A
3	30	54.8	Negative	N/A
4	30	55.7	Negative	N/A
5	30	54.9	Negative	N/A
6	30	55.1	Negative	N/A
7	30	55.5	Negative	N/A
8	30	55.1	Negative	N/A
9	30	55.1	Negative	N/A
10	30	55.5	Undated pit	55.2
11	30	55.7	Undated pit	55.5
12	30	55.2	Negative	N/A
13	30	55.6	Negative	N/A

Appendix 2: Context summaries

Context	Cut	Below	Area	Description
1	-	-	-	Topsoil
2	-	-	-	Subsoil
3	4	-	T1	Fill of pit
4	-	3	T1	Cut of pit
5	-	6	T10	Cut of pit
6	5	-	T10	Fill of pit
7	8	-	T11	Fill of pit
8	-	7	T11	Cut of pit

Appendix 3: Finds assemblage

Context	Object	Date
3	Brick fragment	Unknown
3	Glass base fragment	late 18 th - early 19 th century

Appendix 4:

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

Design Specification for Archaeological Evaluation by Trial Trenching

Job title: Land off Barkby Lane, Syston, Leicestershire

NGR: SK 621 105

Client: RSKENSR and George Wimpey East Midlands Ltd

Planning Authority: Charnwood Borough Council

Planning application Nos. 04/0232/2

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 character and extent of any buried archaeological remains in order that the potential impact of the development on such remains may be assessed by the Planning Authority.

- 1.2 The definition of archaeological field evaluation, taken from the Institute of Field 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. If such archaeological remains are present field evaluation defines their character, extent, quality and preservation, and enables an assessment of their worth in a local, regional, national or international context as appropriate.

2. Background

2.1 *Context of the Project*

- 2.1.1 The proposed development site is located on land at Barkby Lane, Syston, Leicestershire (SK 621 105). It consists of an area of c. 2.9 ha.
- 2.1.2 Planning permission has been granted for residential development.
- 2.1.3 An advice letter by Leicestershire County Council, Heritage Services as archaeological advisors to the planning authority details the level of archaeological work required (4.9.2004).

2.2 *Geological and Topographical Background*

2.2.1 The Ordnance Survey Geological Survey of Great Britain Sheet 170 indicates that the underlying geology is likely to consist of clays. The site lies at a height of c.56 m O.D.

2.3 *Archaeological and Historical Background*

- 2.3.1 The Leicestershire Sites and Monuments Record indicates that the site for development lies and close to known prehistoric sites including Neolithic finds, Bronze Age barrow and ring ditch and Iron Age enclosure and pit alignment.

3. Archaeological Objectives

- 3.1 The main objectives of the evaluation will be:
- 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 produce an archive and report of any results.
- 3.2 Within the stated project objectives, the principal aim of the evaluation is to establish the nature, extent, date, depth, significance and state of preservation of archaeological deposits on the site in order to determine the potential impact upon them from the proposed development.
- 3.3 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 of Field Archaeologists (IFA) Code of Conduct and adhere to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (1999).
- 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 Prior to any machining of trial trenches general photographs of the site areas will be taken.
- 4.2.2 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. Trenches will be excavated to a width of 1.6m and down to the top of archaeological deposits.
- 4.2.3 The trenches will be backfilled and levelled at the end of the evaluation.
- 4.2.4 A c. 2% sample of the area (2.9 ha), the equivalent of 13 30m x 1.5m trenches is proposed (Fig. 1). The location of these may vary 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 and sample-excavated by hand as appropriate to establish the stratigraphic and chronological sequence. All plans will be tied into the Ordnance Survey National Grid. Spot heights will be taken as appropriate.
- 4.2.6 Sections of any excavated archaeological features will be drawn at an appropriate scale. At least one longitudinal face of each trench will be recorded. All sections will be levelled and tied to the Ordnance Survey Datum, or a permanent fixed bench mark.
- 4.2.7 Trench locations will be recorded using an electronic distance measurer. These will then be 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 a Home Office Licence 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 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 the relevant Museum for storage in perpetuity.
- 5.3 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.
- 5.4 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.
- 5.5 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.
- 5.6 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; SMR 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 Guidelines For The Preparation Of Excavation Archives For Long-Term Storage* (UKIC 1990), and *Standards In The Museum: Care Of Archaeological Collections* (MGC 1992) and *Guidelines for the Preparation of Site Archives and Assessments for all Finds* (other than fired clay objects) (Roman Finds Group and Finds Research Group AD 700-1700 1993) will usually be presented to 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*. A larger report will be submitted for inclusion if the results of the evaluation warrant it.

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 is scheduled to start during w.c 20th June 2005 with two staff. Further staff will be added if archaeological remains are discovered.
- 10.2 The report will be ready within three weeks of the completion of fieldwork. 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 form will be completed prior to work commencing on-site, and updated as necessary during the site works.

12. Insurance

- 12.1 All employees, consultants and volunteers are covered by the University of Leicester public liability insurance with Gerling Insurance Service Co. Ltd. and others (leading policy no. 62/99094/D). Professional indemnity insurance is with Sun Alliance, £10m cover, policy no. 03A/SA 001 05978. Employer's Liability Insurance is with Eagle Star, cover £10m. Copies of the certificates of insurance are provided.

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 LCC 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. Contingencies and unforeseen circumstances

- 14.1 In the event that unforeseen archaeological discoveries are made during the project, ULAS shall inform the site agent/project manager, Client and the Planning Archaeologist and Planning Authority and prepare a short written statement with plan detailing the archaeological evidence. Following assessment of the archaeological remains by the Planning Archaeologist, ULAS shall, if required, implement an amended scheme of investigation on behalf of the client as appropriate.

15. Bibliography

- MAP 2 The management of archaeological projects 2nd edition English Heritage 1991
- MGC 1992 Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections 1992 (Museums and Galleries Commission)
- RFG/FRG 1993 Guidelines for the preparation of site archives (Roman Finds Group and Finds Research Group AD 700-1700 1993)
- SMA 1993 Selection, retention and Dispersal of Archaeological Collections. Guidelines for use in England, Wales and Northern Ireland 1993 (Society of Museum Archaeologists)

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Fig 1 Suggested trench plan. (Trenches 30m x 1.5m) . NTS

APPENDIX

Job title: 66, High Street, Syston, Leicestershire

NGR: SK 624 118

Client: Mather Jamie

Planning Authority: Charnwood Borough Council

Planning application Nos. 05/0232/2

Draft Project Health and Safety Policy Statement

A risks assessment will be produced by on-site staff, which will be updated and amended during the course of the evaluation.

1. Nature of the work

- 1.1 The work will involve machine excavation by JCB 3C or equivalent during daylight hours to reveal underlying archaeological deposits. Overall depth is likely to be c. 0.5 m with possible features excavated to a depth of another 1m. Trenches will not be excavated to a depth exceeding 1.3m. Spoil will be stockpiled no less than 1.5 m from the edge of the excavation, the topsoil and subsoil being kept separate. Remaining works will involve the examination of the exposed surface with hand tools (shovels, trowels etc) and excavation of archaeological features. Deeper features will be fenced with lamp irons and hazard tape. Three staff will be used on the evaluation.

2 Risks Assessment

2.1 Working on an excavation site.

Precautions. Trenches to not be excavated to a depth exceeding 1.3m. Spoil will be kept 1.5m away from the edge of the excavated area to prevent falls of loose debris. Loose spoil heaps will not be walked on. Protective footwear will be worn at all times. Hard hats will be worn when working in deeper sections or with plant. First aid kit to be kept in site accommodation/vehicle. Vehicle and mobile phone to be kept on site in case of emergency.

2.2 Working with plant.

Precautions. Archaeologists experienced in working with machines will supervise topsoil stripping at all times. Hard hats, protective footwear and hazard jackets will be worn at all times. Machine driver to be suitably qualified and insured. If services or wells are encountered machining will be halted until extent has been established by hand excavation or areas where it is safe to machine have been established. Overhead power lines are present to the south of the areas to be evaluated. The machine will maintain a distance of at least 10 m to the north of the powerlines.

2.3 Working within areas prone to waterlogging.

If waterlogging occurs on site preventing work continuing it is proposed to excavate a sump, suitably fenced and clearly marked to enable the water to drain away. If this is insufficient a pump will be used. The sump will be covered when not in use and backfilled if no longer required. Protective clothing will be worn at all times and precautions taken to prevent contact with stagnant water which may carry Weils disease or similar.

2.4 Working with chemicals.

If chemicals are used to conserve or help lift archaeological material these will only be used by qualified personnel with protective clothing (i.e. a trained conservator) and will be removed from site immediately after use.

2.5 *Other risks*

Precautions. If there is any suspicion of unforeseen hazards being encountered e.g. chemical contaminants, unexploded bombs, hazardous gases, work will cease immediately. The client and relevant.