



University of Leicester

Archaeological Services

Archaeological attendance for
inspection and recording during
ground-works at Red Hill Field School,
Copt Oak Road, Narborough,
Leicestershire
(SP 53206 97739)

Leon Hunt



ULAS Report No 2011-157
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**Archaeological attendance for inspection and recording
during ground-works at
Red Hill Field School, Copt Oak Road,
Narborough, Leicestershire
(SP 53206 97739)**

Leon Hunt

for

Willmott Dixon

Checked by Project Manager

Signed:



Date: 11/11/2011

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Accession Number: X.A154.2011

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Archaeological attendance for inspection and recording during ground-works at Red Hill Field School, Copt Oak Road, Narborough, Leicestershire (SP 53206 97739)

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Summary

An archaeological investigation (strip, plan and sample) was carried out by ULAS during ground-works at Red Hill Field School, Copt Oak Road, Narborough, Leicestershire (SP 53206 97739).

The watching brief was required as a condition of the planning consent, issued by Blaby District Council, for a new classroom building at the school on the site of a previous temporary structure. A Roman building was discovered at the site, when the school was constructed in the 1980s.

The area was stripped under archaeological control and supervision and the excavation of most of the foundation trenches was observed. Throughout much of the area the ground had been stripped previously and then made-up to provide a level playing surface. Over much of the area a yellowish brown silty clay overlay yellow clay with flint and chalk.

No archaeological remains were discovered during the work. This may be due to landscaping during the construction of the school. The yellowish clay was up to 0.8m deep in places and was possibly colluvial in origin.

The archive for the work will be deposited with Leicestershire Museums with accession number X.A154.2011.

Introduction

University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) were commissioned by Willmot Dixon to carry out an archaeological inspection (strip, plan and sample) during ground-works at Red Hill Field School, Copt Oak Road, Narborough, Leicestershire (NGR: SP 53206 97739).

This archaeological work is in accordance with Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment, Policy HE12.3 (DCLG 2010).

The watching brief is required as a condition of the planning consent, issued by Blaby District Council, for a new classroom building at the school on the site of a previous temporary structure.

During construction of the present school in the 1980s, excavations exposed Roman archaeological remains indicating the presence of a substantial occupation site.

Site Location, Geology and Topography

The site lies to the north-east of the current Red Hill Field School, which lies at the end of Copt Oak Road, Narborough, Blaby District, Leicestershire (Figure 1).

The geology comprises mudstone bedrock (Edwalton member) with overlying sand, gravel, clay and silt (Oadby member diamicton) (British Geological Survey).

The site lies partially on a grassed area and partially on the former site of a temporary structure, which prior to any excavation was covered in made-up ground and slabs.

The site is largely flat with a slight rise to the north-east and lies at a height of c.85m.

Archaeological Objectives

The main objective of the archaeological excavation is to determine and understand the nature, function and character of any significant archaeology on the site in its cultural and environmental setting.

The aims of the strip plan and sample excavation are:

- 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 produce an archive and report of any results.



Figure 1: Site Location

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Archaeological Background

The site has a significant archaeological interest, based upon assessment of the Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record (HER). During construction of the present school in the 1980s, excavations exposed Roman archaeological remains indicating the presence of a substantial occupation site, interpreted as a villa or villa-like complex, with associated industrial and agricultural structures (HER ref.: MLE247) (Liddle 1983). In addition to the Roman remains, finds from the area also indicate the presence of prehistoric and medieval activity.

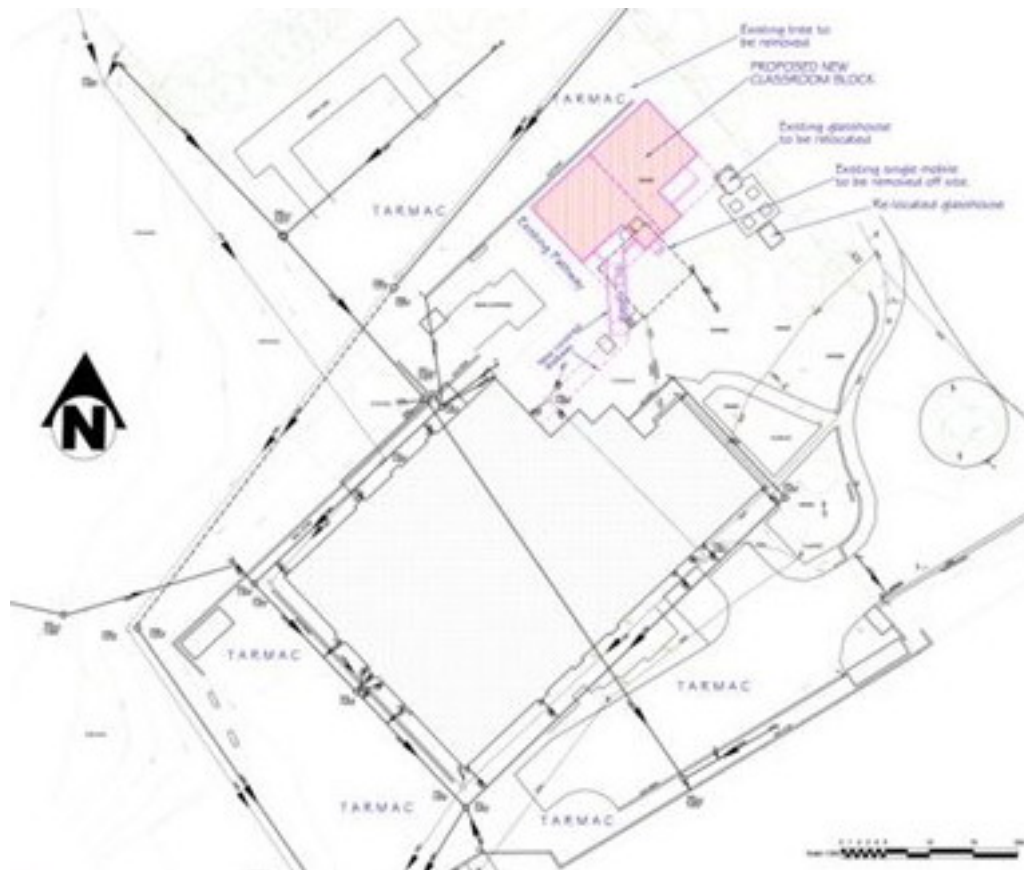


Figure 2: Plan of school and proposed development.
Provided by Leicestershire County Council

Methodology

All work followed the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Code of Conduct* (2010) and adhered to their *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (2008).

A Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Work was produced by ULAS prior to the archaeological work being undertaken.

The project involved the supervision of overburden removal and other groundworks by an experienced professional archaeologist during the works.

The site was visited on the 17th and 19th October 2011 and ground-works associated with new classroom were supervised and inspected. The ground-works were carried out by a small tracked excavator. Most of the 18th October involved the removal of large amounts of spoil and so inspection resumed on 19th October.

Results

The former temporary classroom had been removed prior to the archaeological attendance, leaving bare ground and a number of concrete slabs. Most of the rest of the site was covered in grass and a number of wooden seats (Plate 1).

Initially a narrow strip was excavated under supervision, along the line of the south-west foundations, using a 0.45m toothless ditching bucket (Plate 2). The soil sequence was shown to consist of 0.1m of turf and topsoil, over 0.2-0.3m of made-up ground, consisting of yellowish brown sandy silt, with numerous small pieces of modern ceramic building material and sub-angular stones (Plate 3). This overlay 0.4-0.5m of yellowish-brown silty clay, with no coarse components, over very yellowish-brown clay with stones. The total depth of the trench (representing the finished foundation level) was around 0.9m. The natural clay was exposed at a higher level the further the trench moved northwards, following the slight rise to the north. After the trench had been inspected the trench was widened to 0.7m with a toothed bucket.

The footprint of the building was then stripped using a 1m wide toothless ditching bucket (Plate 4). Due to a rise to the north and north-east, this varied in depth from 0.20m at the south-west corner of the site to around 0.60m at the north-east corner. The final area stripped measured around 18.4m by 16.4m, although this area was not square at the south-eastern end against the trees and landscaping.

Progress was inhibited by the need to remove spoil from the site so that areas were gradually exposed, checked and the spoil removed, until the strip was completed (Plates 5 & 6). The spoil was checked for artefacts; only small pieces of modern brick and hardcore were identified.

After the area was stripped it was possible to identify the make-up layer lying over the surface for around 9m at the south-west end with the yellowish-brown silty clay covering the north-east end.

Once the spoil had been removed from the north-western edge of the site, the north-western trench was excavated (Plate 7). This was excavated from south-west to north-east into the slope. The trench itself was 0.5m deep throughout its entirety, but with the stripped area above the total depth of the excavations from the top of the turf to the base varying between 0.8m and 1.2m.

Around 9m along the trench, visible in the sections of the trench, as the trench cut into the original slope of the land the division between the yellowish-brown silt and the natural substratum of yellow clay with flint and chalk could be seen (Plate 8).

Therefore, at its greatest depth (at the north-eastern end) the trench consisted of 0.15m of turf and topsoil over 0.8m of yellowish-brown silty clay over 0.4m of yellow clay with flints.

After the rest of the site had been stripped a further two trenches were observed at the south-eastern end of the site (Plate 9). These were 0.8m deep and 0.7m wide and consisted of 0.3m of made-up ground over 0.5m of yellowish-brown silty clay, with yellow clay and chalk at the base. As the trench moved north-east, the silt became thinner, exposing more substrate within the trench.

As further trenches would mostly consist of the natural substrate the last quarter of the trenches were not observed.

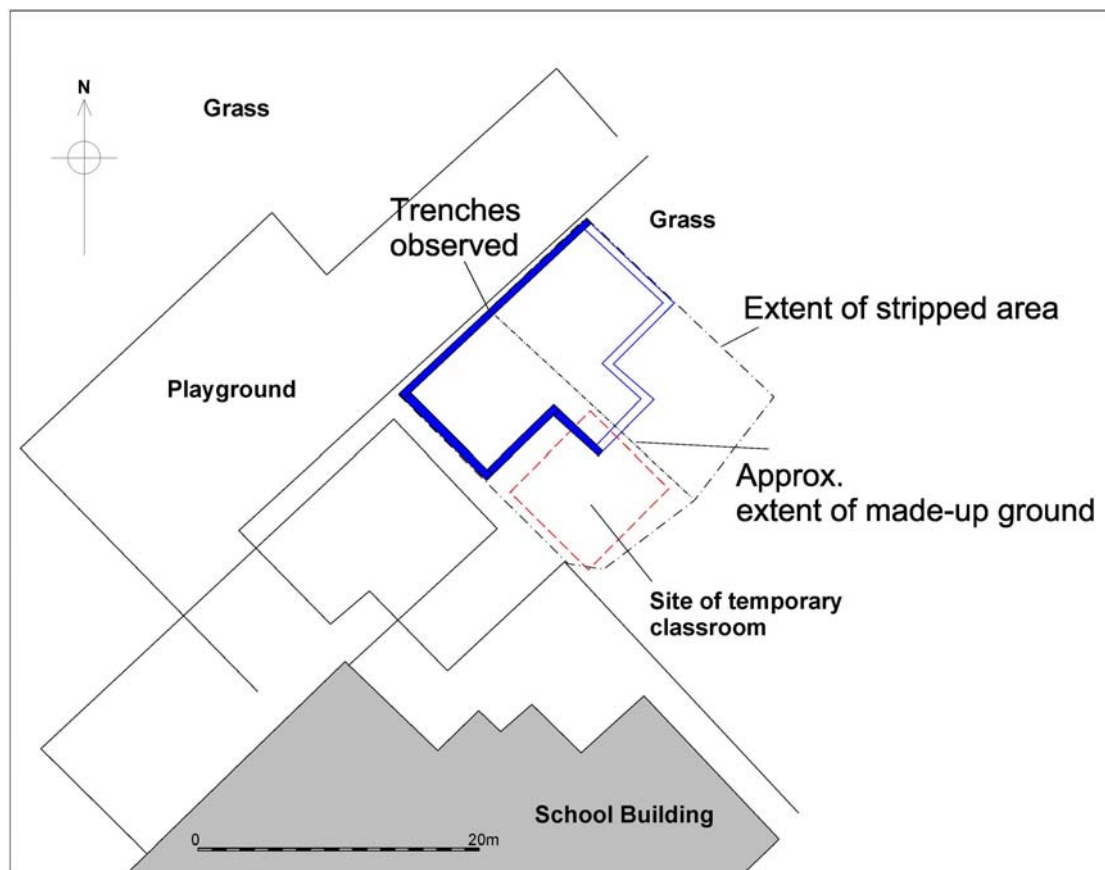


Figure 3: Plan of observations during archaeological work

Conclusion

The stripping of the site at Red Hill Field School revealed that much of the original upper soil sequence of the site had been removed prior to the excavation work. The surrounding land falls from a high point at the north-western edge of the playing fields to a low point at the development site. From the sequence observed within the trenches it was possible to note that the whole area, including the school building, playgrounds and this flattish area on which the new building was to be constructed had been excavated flat out of the slope. The height of the clay and flint substrate varied within the trenches at the north-eastern end of the site suggesting that the land originally may have sloped to the south-west significantly.

If any archaeological remains had existed at this point, they most likely would have been removed when the area was landscaped during the building of the school. What is interesting is the relatively high depth of the overlying subsoil of yellowish brown silty clay, observed at a depth of up to 0.8m in some places.

The landfall across the site from north-west to south-east is over 5m, so the deep subsoil is most likely colluvial in origin.

References

Liddle, P., 1992 'An Excavation in Narborough- An Interim Report' in *Archaeology in Leicestershire and Rutland 1983* in *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* **58**, 8.

Acknowledgements

ULAS would like to thank Gary Kefford and Liam Fletcher of Greswolde Construction for their help and co-operation during this work. The work was carried out by the author. Richard Buckley was the project manager.

Archive

The archive for this project will be deposited with Leicestershire Museums with accession number X.A154.2011 and consists of the following:

- 1 Unbound Copy of this report
- 2 Watching Brief Recording Sheets
- 1 CD Digital Photographs
- 1 Contact Sheet of Digital Photographs
- 1 Set B&W Prints (as a contact sheet)
- 1 Set B&W Negatives

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10-11-11

Appendix 2 OASIS

INFORMATION REQUIRED	EXAMPLE
Project Name	Red Hill School Narborough
Project Type	Strip/map and sample excavation
Project Manager	Richard Buckley
Project Supervisor	Leon Hunt
Previous/Future work	Previous: 1980s excavation. Future: Unknown
Current Land Use	School
Development Type	School
Reason for Investigation	PPS5
Position in the Planning Process	As Condition
Site Co ordinates	SP 53206 97739
Start/end dates of field work	Oct 2011
Archive Recipient	LMARS
Height min/max	-OD
Study Area	0.04 ha
Finds	No



Plate 1: Site prior to excavation, looking north-east



Plate 2: Work in progress on initial trench, looking north



Plate 3: South-west facing section of trench, looking north-east.
Made-up ground over silty clay



Plate 4: Stripping in progress, looking north-east



Plate 5: Most of area stripped, south-western end looking east



Plate 6: Area stripped looking north-west



Plate 7: Trench at north-western side, looking north-east



Plate 8: South-east facing section of north-west trench: turf and topsoil over silty clay (stepped) over yellow clay with flints



Plate 9: Work in progress on south-western trench, looking east



Plate 10: South-east facing section of trench: made-up ground over silty clay

APPENDIX: Design Specification for archaeological work

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES
Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Investigation (Strip,
Plan and Sample) and Archaeological Attendance for Inspection and Recording
Red Hill Field Primary School, Copt Oak Road, Narborough

NGR: SP53206 97739

Client: Wilmott Dixon

Planning Ref:

Authority: Blaby District Council

1. Introduction

Definition and scope of the specification

- 1.1 This document is a design specification for a phase of archaeological investigation and recording at the above site, in accordance with Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment, Policy HE12.3 (DCLG 2010). This specification provides a written scheme of investigation (WSI) for a phase of archaeological investigation (strip, plan and sample) followed by archaeological attendance for inspection and recording. The fieldwork specified below is intended to provide information on the character and extent of any buried archaeological remains which may exist on the site.
- 1.3 This document provides details of the work proposed by ULAS on behalf of the client, and should be submitted to the Archaeological Advisor to the Planning Authority for approval before archaeological investigation by ULAS is implemented. The document provides details of the work proposed by ULAS on behalf of the client for:

Archaeological investigation (Strip, Plan and Sample)

2. Background

Context of the Project

- 2.1. The project involves the replacement of a single mobile with a two classroom build at the above school (Figs 1 and 2).

Geological and Topographical Background

- 2.2 The school lies in the middle of Narborough, Leicestershire (NGR SK77173103; Figs 1 and 2).
- 2.3 The geology comprises mudstone bedrock (Edwalton member) with overlying sand, gravel, clay and silt (Oadby member diamicton) (British Geological Survey)..

Archaeological and Historical Background (from the advice letter)

- 2.4 The site has a significant archaeological interest, based upon assessment of the Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record (HER). During construction of the present school in the 1980's, excavations exposed Roman archaeological remains indicating the presence of a substantial occupation site, interpreted as a villa or villa-like complex, with associated industrial and agricultural structures (HER ref.: MLE247). In addition to the Roman remains, finds from the area also indicate the presence of prehistoric and medieval activity.
- 2.5 The Senior Planning Archaeologist has recommended an archaeological strip, plan and sample to be undertaken using a machine equipped with a toothless ditching bucket, followed by archaeological excavation of any archaeological deposits with a contingency for recording and detailed excavation if required.

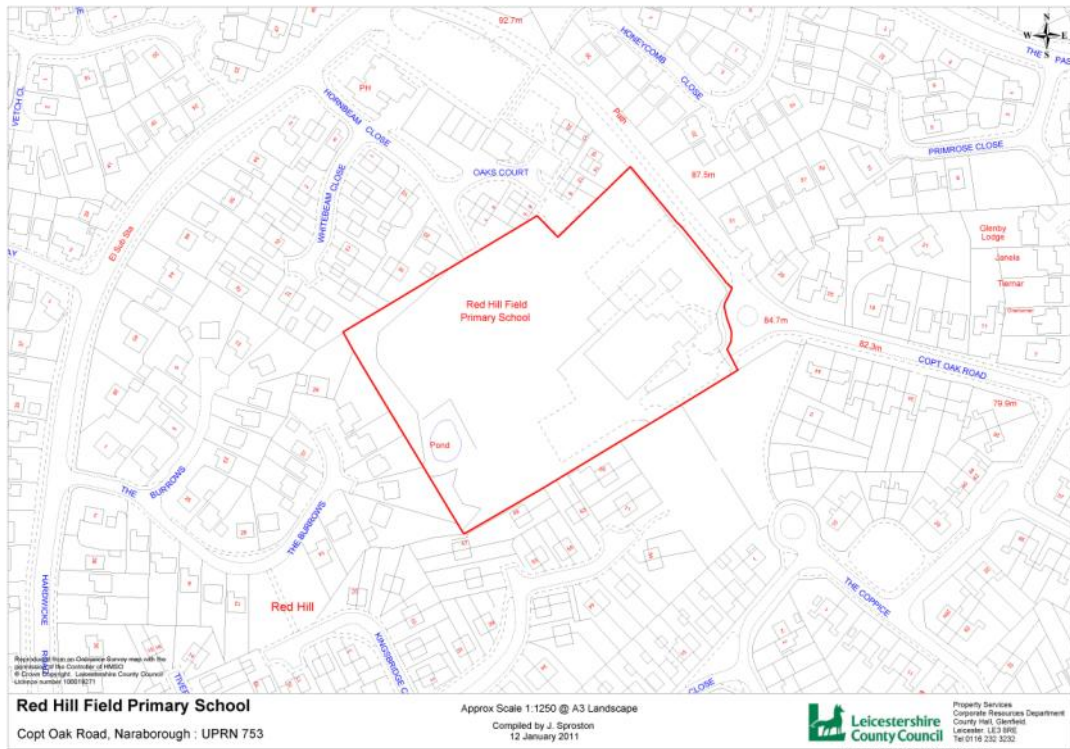


Figure 1: Location of site (plan provided by client)

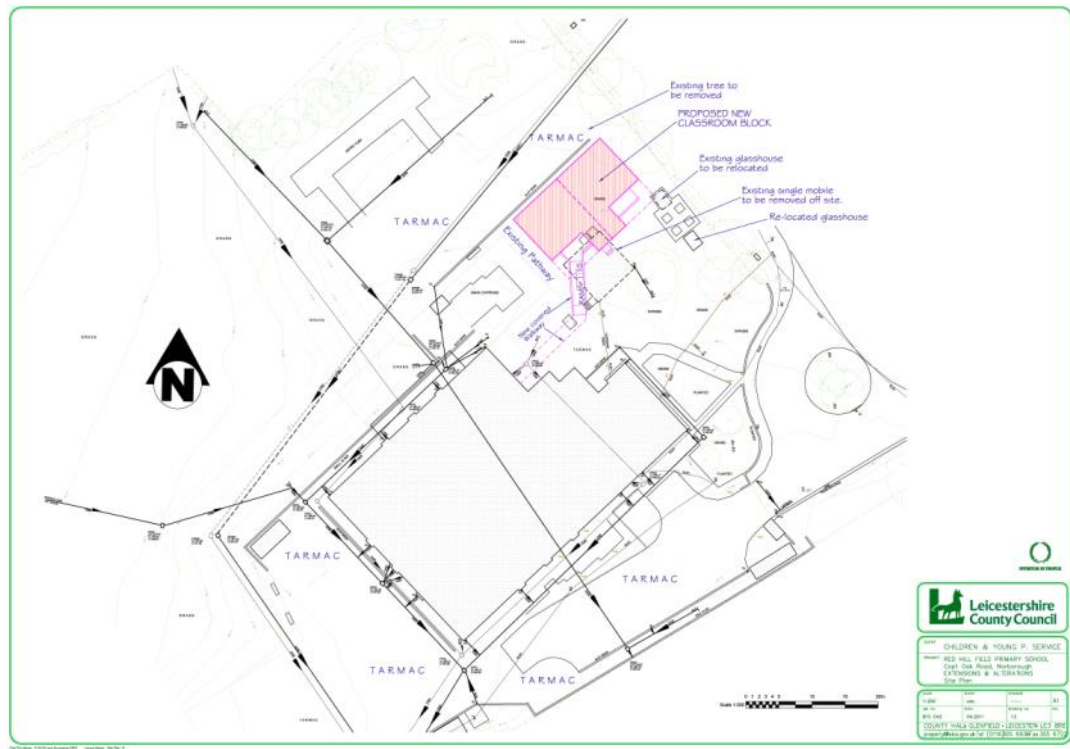


Figure 2: Location of new classroom (plan provided by client)

3. Archaeological Objectives

3.1 Through archaeological controlled stripping 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 the proposed ground works.
- To record any archaeological deposits to be affected by the ground works.
- To produce an archive and report of any results.

4. Methodology

General Methodology and Standards

- 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 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 Planning authority and the Client, if required.
- 4.4 An accession number will be obtained prior to commencement of the project and used to identify all records and artefacts.
- 4.5 The existing mobile classroom will be removed prior to excavation. All of the existing buildings are above ground and no disturbance of the ground is expected during demolition.

Strip, Plan and Sample

- 4.6 The project will involve the supervision of overburden removal and other groundworks by an experienced professional archaeologist during the works specified above.
- 4.7 The footprint of the building will be stripped down either to the top of archaeological deposits or the top of natural. This will be followed by a programme of excavation and recording appropriate to the deposits found, using additional personnel as necessary. Where there is significant depth of overburden the area will be stripped to the foundation level.
- 4.8 Subsequently all services and further groundworks likely to impact upon archaeological remains will be monitored, and any archaeological remains revealed appropriately investigated and recorded.
- 4.9 The archaeologist will co-operate at all times with the contractors on site to ensure the minimum interruption to the work.
- 4.10 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 using an Electronic Distance Measurer (EDM) where appropriate.
- 4.11 Archaeological deposits will be excavated and recorded as appropriate to establish the stratigraphic and chronological sequence of deposits, recognising and excavating structural evidence and recovering economic, artefactual and environmental evidence. Particular attention will be paid to the potential for buried palaeosols and waterlogged deposits in consultation with ULAS's environmental officer.
- 4.12 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.
- 4.13 Any human remains encountered will be initially left in situ and only be removed under a Home Office Licence and in compliance with relevant environmental health regulations. The developer and Leicestershire County Council will be informed immediately on their discovery.

- 4.14 In the event of significant archaeological remains being located there may be the need for contingency time and finance to be provided to ensure adequate recording is undertaken. On the discovery of potentially significant remains the archaeologist will inform the developer, the Planning Archaeologist at Leicestershire County Council, Heritage Services and the planning authority. If the archaeological remains are identified to be of significance additional contingent archaeological works will be required.

Recording Systems

- 4.15 The ULAS recording manual will be used as a guide for all recording.
- 4.16 Individual descriptions of all archaeological strata and features excavated or exposed will be entered onto pro-forma recording sheets.
- 4.17 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.
- 4.18 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.
- 4.19 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.
- 4.20 This record will be compiled and checked during the course of the excavations.

5. Finds

- 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 LCC for storage in perpetuity.
- 5.3 An Accession number will be obtained from the Assistant Keeper of Archaeological Archives at Leicestershire County Council that will be used to identify all records and finds from the site, prior to the commencement of any on-site works.
- 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.
- 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

6. Environmental Sampling

- 6.1. If features are appropriate for environmental sampling a strategy and methodology will be developed on site following advice from ULAS's Environmental Specialist. Preparation, taking, processing and assessment of environmental samples will be in accordance with current best practice. The sampling strategy is likely to include the following:
- 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.

- Any buried soils or well-sealed deposits with concentrations of carbonised material present will be intensively sampled taking a known proportion of the deposit.
 - Spot samples will be taken where concentrations of environmental remains are located.
 - Waterlogged remains, if present, will be sampled for pollen, plant macrofossils, insect remains and radiocarbon dating provided that they are uncontaminated.
- 6.2 All collected samples will be labelled with context and sequential sample numbers.
- 6.3 Appropriate contexts will be bulk sampled (up to 50 litre or the whole context depending on size) for the recovery of carbonised plant remains and insects.
- 6.4 Recovery of small animal bones, bird bone and large molluscs will normally be achieved through processing other bulk samples or 30 litre samples may be taken specifically to sample particularly rich deposits.
- 6.5 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.

7. Report and Archive

- 7.1 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 Senior Planning Archaeologist/HER to be distributed amongst relevant sections of Leicestershire County Council as necessary.
- 7.2 The report will include consideration of:
- The aims and methods adopted in the course of the evaluation.
 - The nature, location and extent 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.
- 7.3 Copies will be provided for the client, Historic Environment Record and planning Authority. 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.
- 7.4 A full copy of the archive as defined in Brown (2008) will be presented to Leicestershire County Council, normally within six months of the completion of analysis. This archive will include all written, drawn and photographic records relating directly to the investigations undertaken.

8. Publication and Dissemination of Results

- 8.1 A summary of the work will be submitted to the local archaeological journal, 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.
- 8.2 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. ULAS will contact Leicestershire County Council's SMR prior to completion of the form. Once a report has become a public document following its incorporation into Leicestershire SMR it may be

placed on the web-site. The Developer should agree to this procedure in writing as part of the process of submitting the report to Leicestershire SMR.

9. Acknowledgement and Publicity

9.1 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.

9.2 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.

10. Timetable

10.1 The work is expected to start on 12h September. It will involve one - two people on site at varying times throughout the groundworks.

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 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. Bibliography

Brown, D., 2008	<i>Standard and guidance for the preparation of Archaeological Archives</i> (Institute for Archaeologists)
IfA, 2010	<i>Standards and Guidelines for Archaeological Watching Briefs.</i>
IfA, 2008	<i>Code of Conduct</i>
LCC, 2010	<i>Brief for Archaeological Investigation (Strip, Plan and Sample Excavation) at The Bungalow, 22 Main Street, Stathern, Leicestershire (NGR SK77173103)</i>

12-08-2011

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