



University of Leicester

Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological Watching Brief
The Chestnuts, 25 Mount Road,
Hinckley, Leicestershire
NGR: SP 4480 9367 centre**

Tim Higgins



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**An Archaeological Watching Brief at
The Chestnuts, 25, Mount Road,
Hinckley, Leicestershire**

NGR: SP 4280 9367

Tim Higgins

For: Shooting Star Nurseries

Approved by:

Signed: ...



Date: .08.10.2012..

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CONTENTS

1. Summary	1
2. Introduction.....	1
3. Site description, topography and geology.....	1
4. Archaeological and Historical background.....	2
5. Aims and method.	3
6. Results.....	4
7. Conclusion.	5
8. Acknowledgements and publication.....	5
9. Archive.....	5
10. Bibliography	6
Appendix 1 Oasis Summary	7
Appendix 2 Design Specification	8

FIGURES

Figure 1: Site Location Hinckley	2
Figure 2: Location of the Development	3
Figure 3: Machine excavated foundations	4

An Archaeological Watching Brief at The Chestnuts, 25, Mount Road, Hinckley, Leicestershire

(NGR: SP 4280 9367)

Tim Higgins

1. Summary

An archaeological watching brief of groundworks at Chestnuts, 25, Mount Road, Hinckley, Leicestershire was undertaken by ULAS on behalf of Shooting Star Nurseries. The initial groundwork comprised removal of overburden and the excavation of new foundations for new extensions to an existing building. Attendance at the site was undertaken on the 17th September 2012.

The watching brief revealed no archaeological deposits or pre-modern artefacts during the inspection of the site.

The archive will be deposited with Leicestershire County Council, subject to their confirmation. Accession No. X.A88.2012

2. Introduction

This report presents the results of an extended archaeological watching brief of groundwork at land adjacent to The Chestnuts, 25, Mount Road, Hinckley, Leicestershire (NGR SK 4280 9367). In view of the potential impact of the development this was undertaken as a mitigation strategy following recommendations by the Leicestershire County Council Planning Archaeologist as advisor to the planning authority covering planning permission for a new extension (P.A. 11/0099/FUL).

The ground-works involved ground clearance, reduction of the ground levels and the excavation of foundations.

The fieldwork was carried out in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Section 12 Enhancing and Conserving the Historic Environment (March 2012). All archaeological work adhered to the Institute for Archaeologist's (IfA) *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* and followed the design specification approved by LCC (Appendix 2).

3. Site description, topography and geology

The proposed development site is located on land at The Chestnuts 25 Mount Road Hinckley Leicestershire (SP 4280 9367; figs.1 and 2). It consists of an area of c.0.1ha, within which it is proposed a change of use from registrar's office and offices to children's nursery including extension and alterations. The Ordnance Survey Geological Survey of Great Britain, Sheet 155 indicates that the underlying geology is likely to consist of sands and gravels. The site lies at a height of c.126m above Ordnance Datum

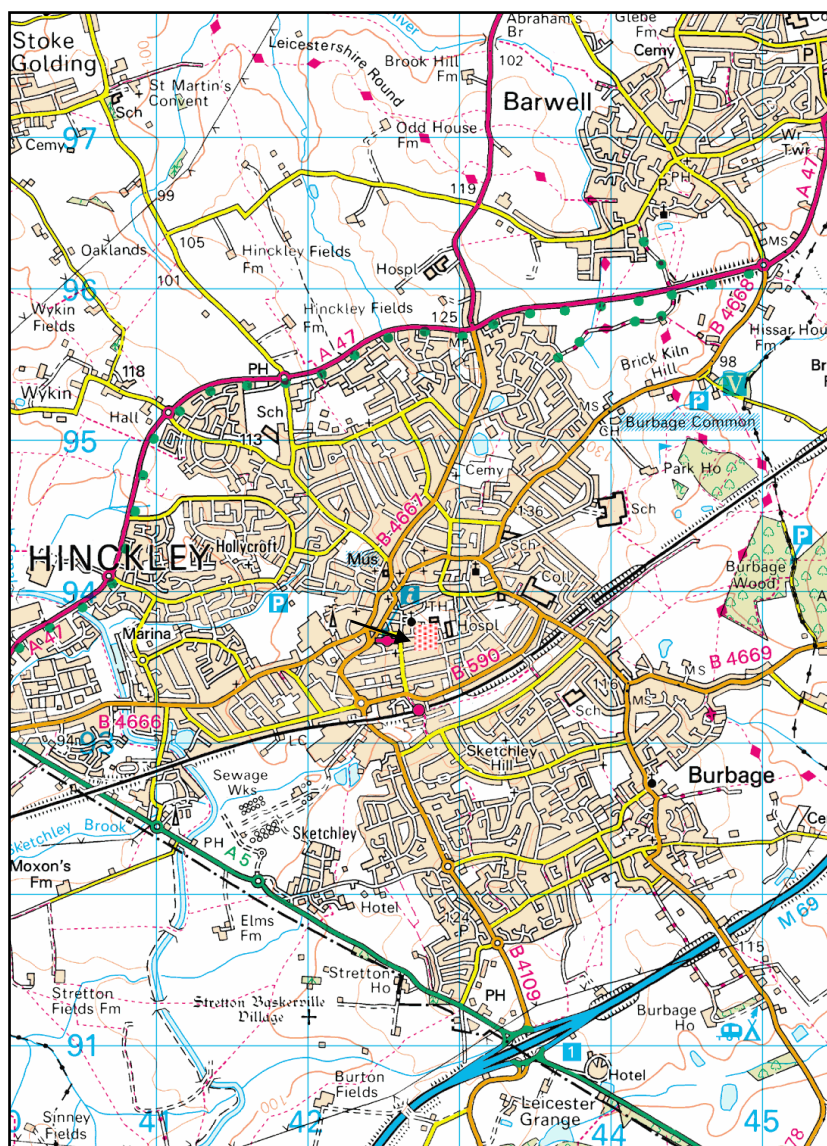


Figure 1: Site location Hinckley

Reproduced from the Landranger OS map 129 Leicester, Nottingham and Loughborough area 1:50000 map by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright 1996. All rights reserved. Licence number AL 100029495.

4. Archaeological and Historical background

The application area lies close to the historic core of Hinckley and within a Conservation Area. It lies close to Castle Hill, the remains of an early medieval motte and bailey castle mound (HER Ref No: **MLE2891**), which is a scheduled monument (**SM17039**) and the findspot for an Iron Age brooch (**MLE6500**). There is also evidence for the bailey of the castle and sherds of medieval pottery have been located within the assessment area (**MLE16342-MLE16343**). The site is also adjacent to the site of a medieval Benedictine priory (**MLE2878 & MLE2879**) and contains two war memorials, both Grade II Listed buildings (**MLE13008 & MLE13009**).

5. Aims and methods.

Through archaeological attendance and, as appropriate, controlled stripping and investigation the aim of the watching brief was:

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

All work and archaeological deposits encountered were recorded in accordance and follow the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*, the standard policy and practice of ULAS as set out in the design specification (appendix 2) and adherence to the University's Health and Safety policy.

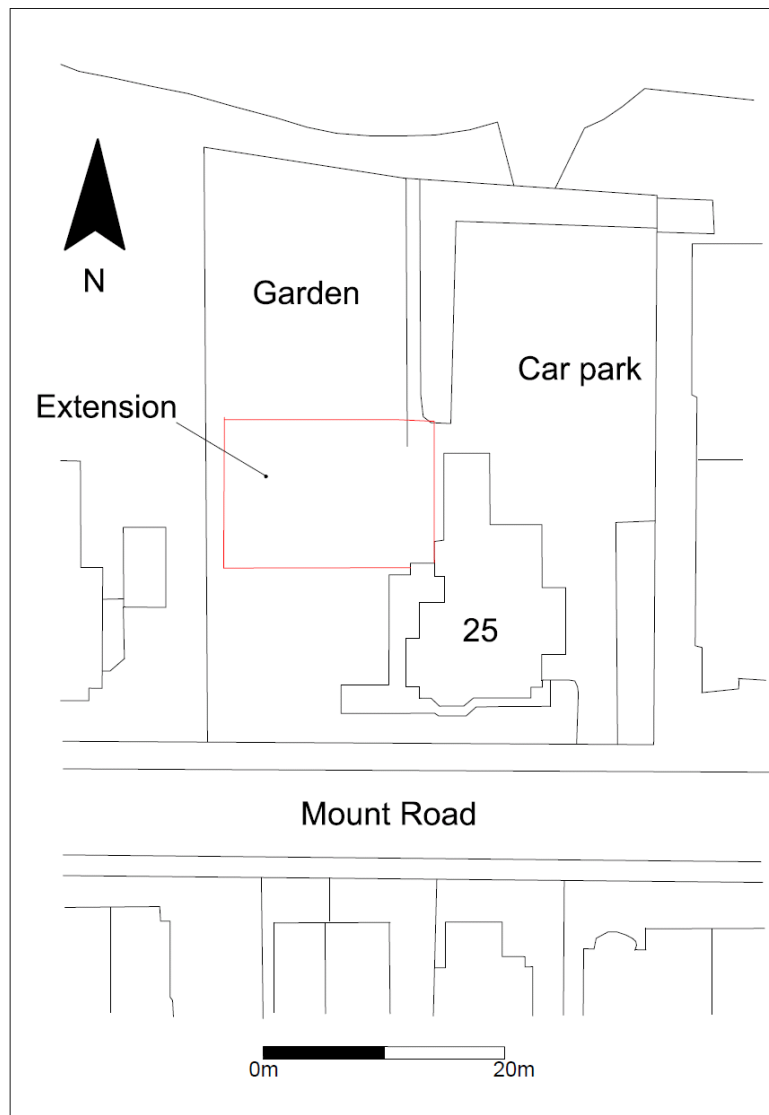


Figure 2: Location of the development area

6. Results

Initial groundwork involved the clearance of topsoil and an area strip for the new dwelling down to the natural substratum (Figure 2) during a site visit undertaken on the 17th September 2012. The machine used for the ground works was a Komatsu 360 degree excavator fitted with a 0.60m wide toothed bucket. A visual inspection was conducted across the new foundation trenches.

The excavations were located in west side of the development area and comprised an area strip for the new extension measuring 16m x 12.50m. The natural substratum consisted of reddish brown sandy clay found at depth of 0.70m below the present ground surface.

This area appeared to have been previously levelled, with a layer, 0.50m deep, comprising dark greyish brown silty clay and sand mixed with frequent pebbles and appears to have been re-deposited to raise the ground levels. The re-deposited layer and levelling probably occurred during the construction of 25 Mount Road, and may have removed evidence of any potential early archaeological deposits. The re-deposited subsoil was sealed by layer of topsoil 0.20m deep.



Figure 3 Machine excavating foundation trenches

Within the foundations on the east side of the extension an old drainage pipe was exposed. All of the stripped areas, and spoil heaps were walked over and visually inspected. No archaeological deposits or pre-modern artefacts were encountered during the inspection of the site.

7. 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 development site at 25 Mount Road 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 modern mixed layer used to raise the ground levels. Any potential archaeological deposits that may have been located within the development area could have been removed by the construction of 25 Mount Road and remodelling of the ground levels.

8. Acknowledgements and publication

I would like to thank the clients for their help and co-operation on site. The project was managed by Dr Patrick Clay and the fieldwork was carried out by the author, Tim Higgins, both of ULAS.

A summary of the work will be submitted for publication in a suitable regional or national archaeological journal within one year of completion of fieldwork. The report has been added to the Archaeology Data Service (ADS) Online Access to the index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) database held by the University of York.

9. Archive

A full copy of the archive as defined in Brown (2008) will usually be presented to within six months of the completion of fieldwork. This archive will include all records directly relating to the investigation undertaken.

The archive consists of 1 copy of this report, indices, 1 watching brief recording forms, copies of site location plans and synthesised plans, 1 copy brief for archaeological work, 1 photo index form, colour digital photo contact sheet, and 1 CD containing 8 digital photos, B+W photos contact sheet and negatives.

Subject to confirmation it will be deposited with Leicestershire County Council under accession number X.A88 2012.

All modern artefacts found during the watching brief were examined and then discarded.

10. Bibliography

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

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27.09.2012

Appendix 1 Oasis Summary

INFORMATION REQUIRED	EXAMPLE
Project Name	An archaeological watching brief Chestnuts, 25, Mount Road, Hinckley, Leicestershire (NGR SP 4280 9367).
Project Type	Archaeological watching brief
Project Manager	Patrick Clay
Project Supervisor	Tim Higgins
Previous/Future work	Unknown
Current Land Use	Garden
Development Type	Children's Nursery
Reason for Investigation	(NPPF) Section 12
Position in the Planning Process	As a condition
Site Co ordinates	NGR SP 4280 9367
Start/end dates of field work	17/09/12
Archive Recipient	Leicestershire County Council
Study Area *	Approx 0.1ha

Appendix 2 Design Specification

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES
Written Scheme of Investigation for archaeological attendance,
inspection and recording (watching brief)
The Chestnuts, 25, Mount Road, Hinckley, Leicestershire LE10 1AD
SP 4280 9367

For: Shooting Star Nurseries.

Planning application: 11/00991/FUL

Planning Authority: Hinckley and Bosworth 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 development at The Chestnuts 25 Mount Road Hinckley Leicestershire LE10 1AD.
- 1.2 The document provides details of the following work proposed by ULAS on behalf of the client as recommended by Leicestershire County Council, as advisors to the planning authority.

2. Background

Context of the Project

- 2.1. The proposed development site is located on land at The Chestnuts 25 Mount Road Hinckley Leicestershire (SP 4280 9367; figs.1 and 2). It consists of an area of c.0.1ha, within which it is proposed a change of use from registrar's office and offices to children's nursery including extension and alterations

Geology and topography

- 2.2 The Ordnance Survey Geological Survey of Great Britain, Sheet 155 indicates that the underlying geology is likely to consist of sands and gravels. The site lies at a height of c.126m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological and historical background (taken from the advice letter)

- 2.3 The application area lies close to the historic core of Hinckley and within a Conservation Area. It lies close to Castle Hill, the remains of an early medieval motte and bailey castle mound (HER Ref No: **MLE2891**), which is a scheduled monument (**SM17039**) and the findspot for an Iron Age brooch (**MLE6500**). There is also evidence for the bailey of the castle and sherds of medieval pottery have been located within the assessment area (**MLE16342-MLE16343**). The site is also adjacent to the site of a medieval Benedictine priory (**MLE2878 & MLE2879**) and contains two war memorials, both Grade II Listed buildings (**MLE13008 & MLE13009**).

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 during groundworks by an experienced professional archaeologist. During these groundworks, 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.
- 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.
- 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-slugs (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://oasis.ac.uk> 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 The watching brief start date is to be arranged.

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 Employers Liability Insurance and Public/Products Insurance is with Allianz Insurance plc Policy No. SZ/21696148 and Professional Indemnity Insurance is with Newline Underwriting Management Limited, Policy No. WD1100541. Details are provided in the Health & Safety Method Statement.

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*

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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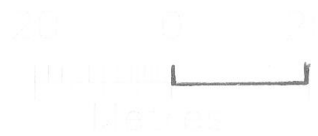


Fig. 1 Location plan. Scale bar = 20m

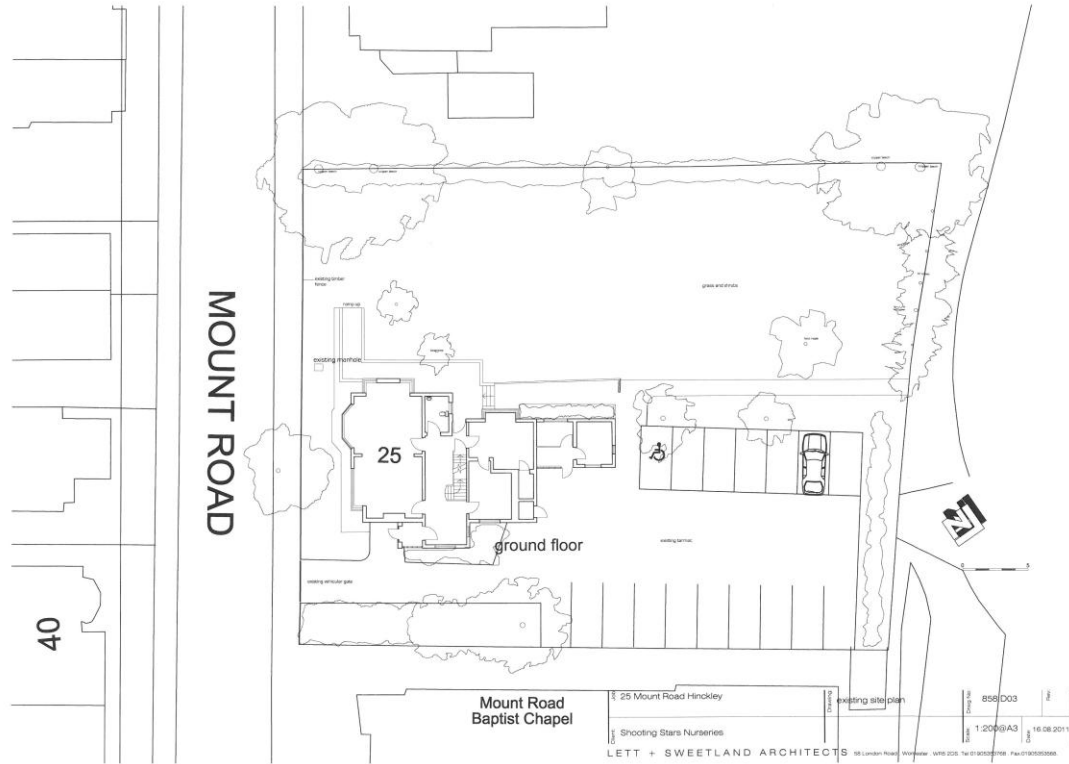


Fig. 2 Proposed development plan.

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