

**An Archaeological watching brief  
At 1144, Derby Quad,  
Corporation Street,  
Derby  
(SK 3531 3631)**

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For

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## **An Archaeological watching brief at 1144, Derby Quad, Corporation Street, Derby (SK 3531 3631)**

### **Summary**

*An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) for Derby City Council at Derby Quad, Corporation Street, Derby. The area has seen considerable development in the past, but an area had been recognised as having more archaeological potential and had been highlighted for archaeological supervision. The work was heavily restricted by paving and a large amount of services. This limited the work to a series of small trenches, placed on the grassed areas throughout the site.*

*The excavations revealed that the site had undergone a lot of disruption in the past and underneath the topsoil lay a considerable amount of back-fill and rubble, along with other unforeseen services. The archive for the site will be deposited with Derby City Museums with accession number 2006-368.*

### **Introduction**

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) for Derby City Council at Derby Quad, Corporation Street, Derby (NGR SK 3531 3631). This work was carried out in advance of ground-works associated with the construction of a new arts centre on the site (Planning application number DER/04/043/00722/PRI).

The Development Control Archaeologist, Derbyshire County Council, in his capacity as the archaeological advisor to the planning authority requested archaeological work in advance of the development, in accordance with Planning Policy Guidelines 16 (PPG16, Archaeology and Planning), paragraph 30.

An archaeological desk-top assessment for the site produced by Trent and Peak Archaeological Unit had identified the area as lying close to the possible footprint of the Anglo-Saxon burh of Derby. Extensive demolition and rebuilding in the area was carried out during the post-medieval and modern periods.

The Archaeological Assessment tender document prepared for Derby City Council by Buro Four Project Services (Appendix 1) outlined the need for archaeological supervision during the stripping of the areas across the centre and the east of the site (Figure 2) as this area was less likely to have been disturbed by previous excavations. The footprint of the previous basement on the site was known to cover the majority of the area to the south and west.

A *Design Specification for Archaeological Work* (Appendix 2) was prepared by ULAS in advance of the supervised archaeological work being undertaken.

The site lies in Derby City Centre on the western side of Corporation Street, c.100m south of the Assembly Rooms theatre (Figure 1). The total development area measures c.0.12ha and lies at a height of 46.9m OD.

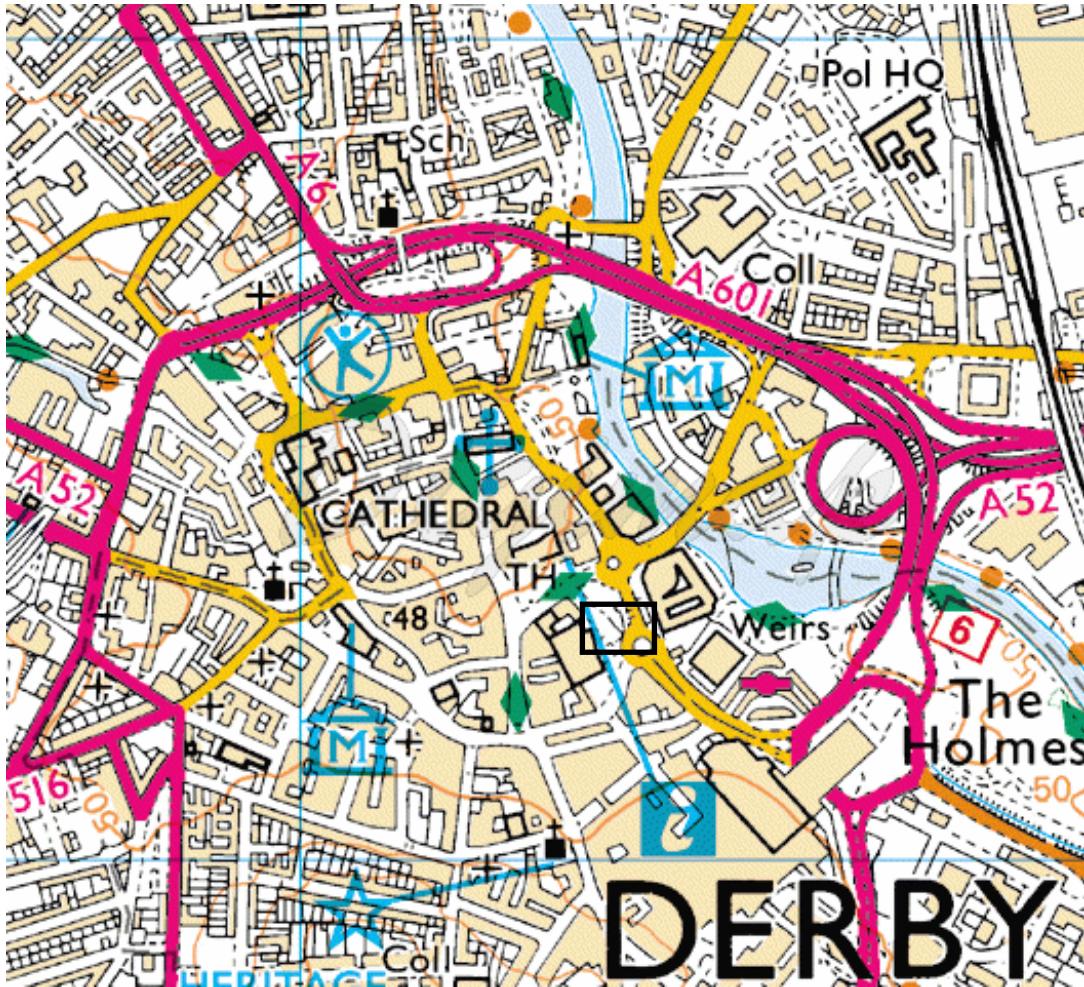


Figure 1: Site Location. Scale 1:50 000

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### Aims and Methods

The purpose of the watching brief was to ascertain whether archaeological deposits were present. If so, the character, extent and date range of any deposits identified would be established, in order to assess their significance. Recording of these deposits would be carried out as appropriate, and an archive and this report produced. The work followed the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*, and adhered to the University's Health and Safety policy.

An archaeologist visited the site on 11th September 2006 and the supervised stripping by JCB of the designated area was undertaken. The area consisted of paved areas, grass and trees (Plate 2). Part of the grassed area had been built up into a substantial mound (Plate 1).



**Figure 2: Plan of development area, with development area (black), footprint of previous basement (green), and area of archaeological potential (red) highlighted. Scale 1:500**

## Results

The site was visited by an archaeologist on 11/09/06. After the initial setting out of the area to be investigated (Figure 2, in red), it was discovered that the services marked on the plans provided were located further to the west than originally thought. Part of the area to be excavated under supervision was also under paving slabs, which it had been agreed were not to be removed at this juncture. Furthermore, several trees were on the designated area and could not be removed.

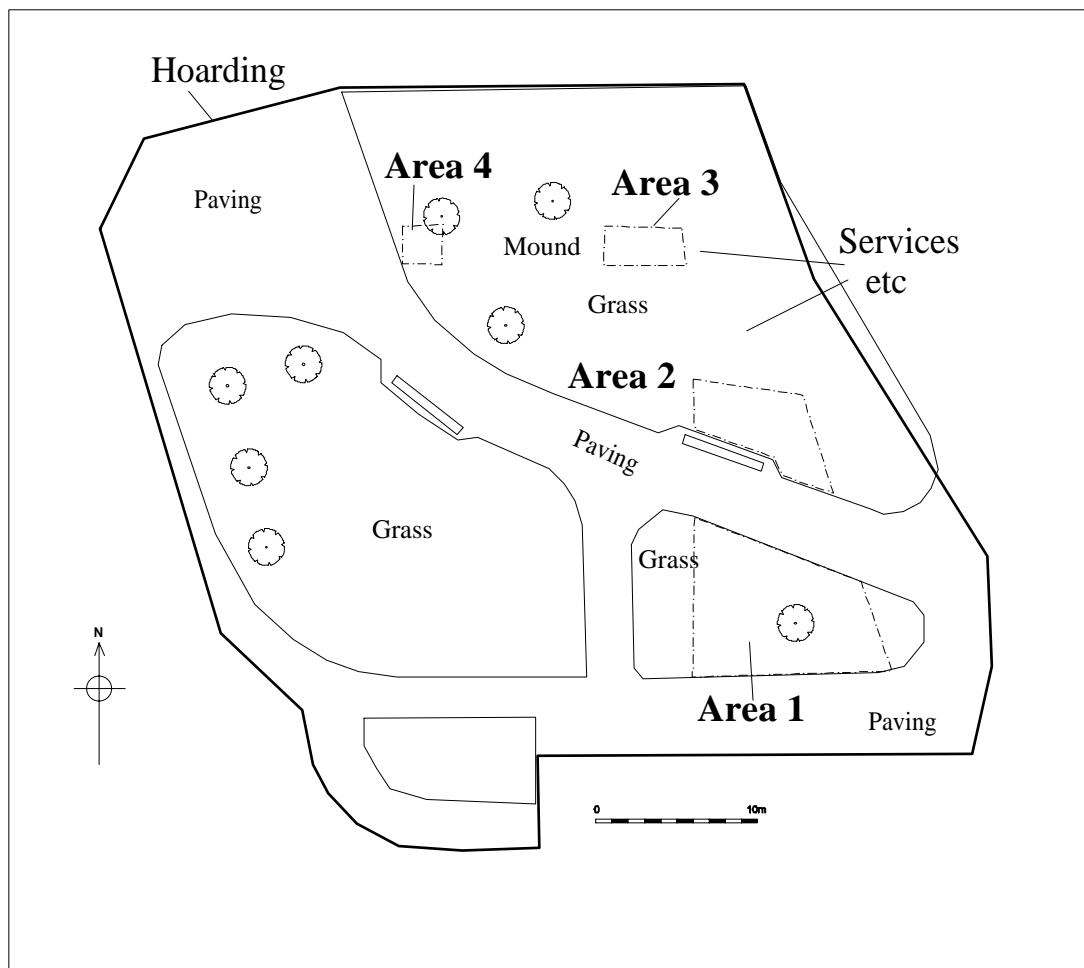
Therefore the area that could be excavated was reduced to those areas that lay within the areas of grass between the paving. A series of large service manholes lay to the east of the designated area and these were found to lead across a large area of the grass, further reducing the area that could be successfully excavated.

Subsequent to these restrictions, four separate areas were excavated within the planned area (Figure 3). In area one the turf and topsoil (0.2m) were removed to expose a make-up layer of clay, soil and rubble backfill. This area was slightly restricted by a tree and an electrical cable, but the area excavated revealed very compacted backfill and rubble to a depth of 0.4m. The ground became very hard with hardcore at this depth and further excavation with a JCB became very difficult.

In area two the topsoil was slightly deeper (0.3m), but the lower horizon of rubble backfill was broadly the same as area one, except that the backfill was far sandier and contained large sections of kerbstones and, particularly in the SW corner, sections of asphalt and rubberised paint, suggesting remnants of a road surface.

Area three was excavated into an earth mound, which was situated at this point on the Quad. The mound was entirely constructed of topsoil, to a height of over 1m above the ground surface. Under the topsoil, to a depth of 1m, lay brick rubble and clay backfill. Further trees and services, restricted the excavation further into the mound and so a further small trench was excavated between the mound and the paving.

Area four consisted of a narrow trench, 1.5m wide, which was excavated between another tree and a known service. This trench was excavated to a depth of 0.8m until a further electrical service cable was discovered in the northern side of the trench and a new water pipe was located at 0.8m. No further supervised excavation of the area was attempted. The trench in area four consisted of 0.4m of topsoil and 0.4m of hardcore.



**Figure 3: Site plan showing areas excavated under archaeological supervision**

## **Conclusions**

The archaeological watching brief at Derby Quad was severely restricted by hitherto unknown services and the proximity to known services and trees. The excavation was also restricted by the paving slabs, which could not be removed during at this time. The investigations and observations undertaken during this archaeological work do suggest that the area, which it had been suggested had be subject to little disturbance in the past, has been disrupted by previous excavations and landscaping.

## **References**

Kinsley, G 2005 *An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment of Quad Media Centre, Corporation Street, Derby*. (TPAT Report: DqdDbarep.doc)

## **Archive**

The archive will be deposited with Derby City Museums with accession number 2006-368 and consists of the following:

- 1 Watching Brief Recording Sheet
- 1 CD of Digital Photographs
- 1 Contact sheet of digital photographs
- 1 Unbound copy of this report

## **Acknowledgements**

ULAS would like to thank Darren Swain and Lee Dobb of Bluestone for their help and co-operation. Leon Hunt undertook the archaeological work. Patrick Clay was the project manager.

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**Plate 1: Derby Quad prior to excavation, showing mound, looking east**



**Plate 2: Southern end of site, prior to excavation, looking east**





**Plate 3: Area 1, post-excitation, looking west**



**Plate 4: Kerbstones in Area 2, looking north east**



**Plate 5: North facing section in Area 3, showing topsoil and rubble back-fill, looking south**



**Plate 6: Area 4 trench, showing services encountered, looking west**

**APPENDIX 1: Archaeological Assessment Tender Document**

## **APPENDIX 2: Design Specification for Archaeological Work**