



University of Leicester

Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological Evaluation
Land west of Leicester Road,
Countesthorpe, Leicestershire**

NGR: SK 58672 96214

Tim Higgins



ULAS Report No. 2012-042
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An Archaeological Evaluation
Land west of Leicester Road, Countesthorpe
Leicestershire

NGR: SK 58672 96214

Tim Higgins

For: Stride Treglown Limited

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An Archaeological Evaluation Land west of Leicester Road, Countesthorpe, Leicestershire, (SK 58672 96214)

Timothy Higgins

Summary

University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) carried out an archaeological Evaluation of land west of Leicester Road, Countesthorpe, Leicestershire, (SK 58672 96214) undertaken on the 23rd and 24th February 2012. This work was undertaken on behalf of the client Stride Treglown Limited. A total of three trenches were excavated to evaluate an area for a proposed new development located within the vacant land to the west of Leicester Road.

All trenches contained no archaeological features apart from medieval ridge and furrow. The site archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council under accession number X.A27.2012.

Introduction

Planning permission is being sought for development of a new crematorium on land west of Leicester Road, Countesthorpe, Leicestershire (NGR SK 58672 96214, Figure.1).

This report presents the results of a programme of archaeological trial trenching that was undertaken on the 23rd and 24th February 2012. It addresses the requirements of the *Brief For a Programme of Archaeological Investigation of Land west of Leicester Road, Countesthorpe, Leicestershire* and the *Brief for the Archaeological Field Evaluation Land west of Leicester Road, Countesthorpe, Leicestershire* (LCCHNET 08.05.2008 – hereinafter ‘Brief’). A strategy for the work was set out in the Written Scheme for Investigation, (Clay 2012, hereinafter the ‘WSI’; Appendix 1). The trial trenching was undertaken to assess the impact from the proposed development. The fieldwork was carried out in accordance with Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment (PPS5).

Geology and Topography

The development area is located in Blaby district, c 5 miles south of Leicester (Figure 1). The area lies west of Leicester Road (Figure 2). The application area consists of a field that covers c.7.4 ha and lies at approximately 84m OD

The Geological Survey of Great Britain (Solid and Drift) Sheet 156 shows that the underlying geology is likely to be Wigston members Sands and gravel

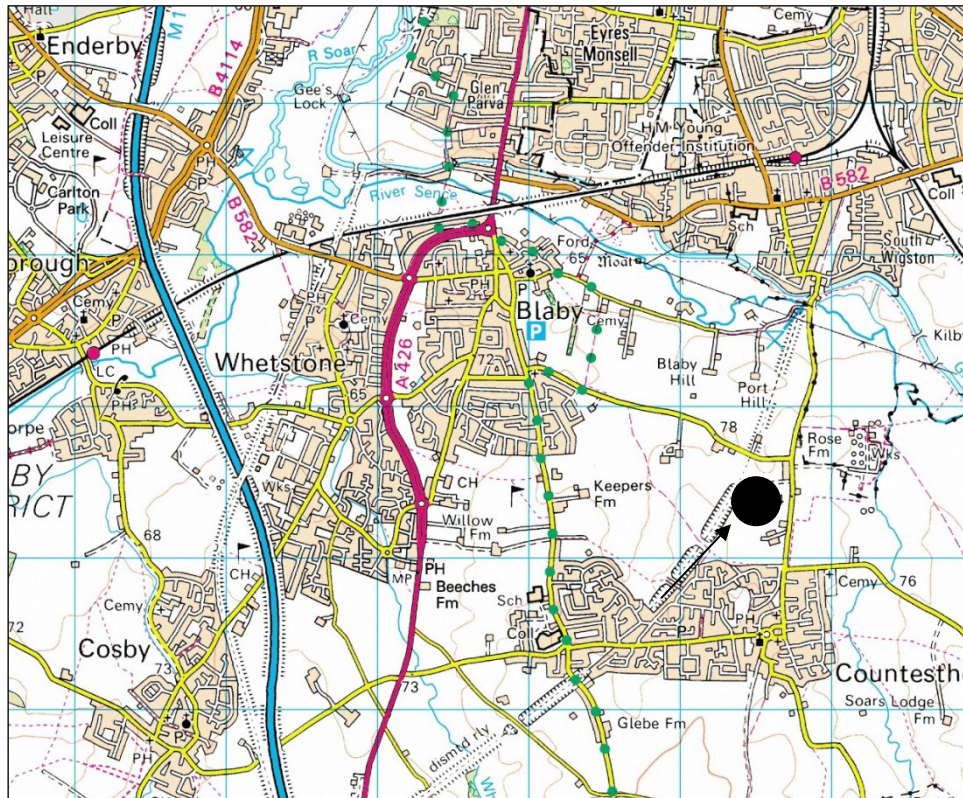


Figure 1. Location of site at Countesthorpe. Scale 1:50,000

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Historical and Archaeological Background

The Historic Environment Record shows that finds of Bronze Age, Roman and medieval dates have been recorded in the area. In the field directly to the south archaeological work in 2010 revealed Early Bronze Age urned cremation burials along with pits and ditches likely to be of similar period (Wessex Archaeology 2009).

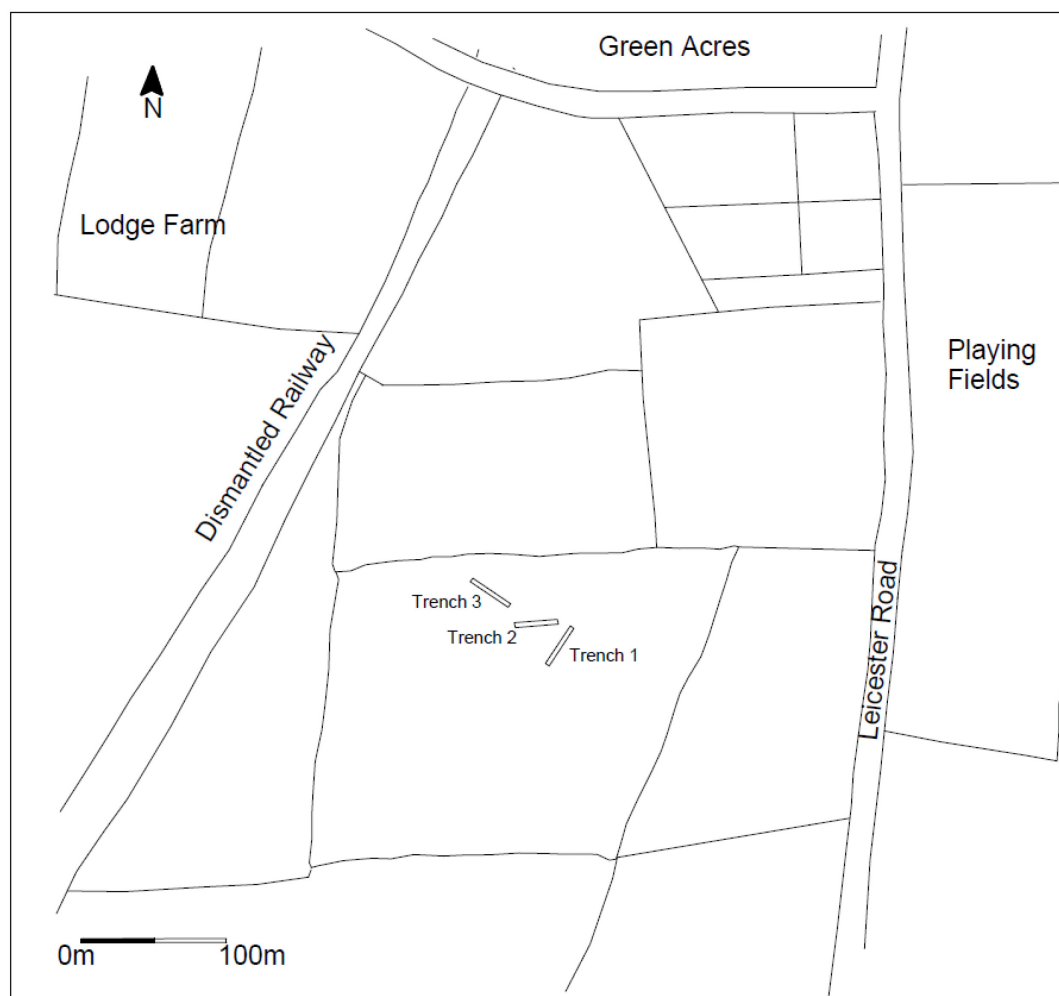


Figure 2. Trench Location Plan

Archaeological Objectives

The main aims of the evaluation were:

- To identify the presence/absence of any archaeological deposits. In particular these would target the anomalies highlighted by the geophysical survey.
- To establish the character, extent and date range for any archaeological deposits to be affected by the proposed development
- To produce an archive and report of any results.

Within the stated project objectives, the principal aim of the evaluation was to establish the nature, extent, date, depth, significance and state of preservation of archaeological deposits within the southern area of the site in order to determine the potential impact upon them from the proposed development.

Methodology

Prior to any machining of trial trenches general photographs of the site areas were taken.

The LCC Planning Archaeologist has requested *c.* 110sq m. of trenching, the equivalent of three 30m x 1.6 m trench a 5% sample area. The provisional trench plan attached (Fig. 1) shows the proposed locations of the trench. The size and position of the trench indicated on the provisional trench plan may vary due to unforeseen site constraints (Figure. 2).

The topsoil and overlying layers were removed under full archaeological supervision until either the top of archaeological deposits or natural undisturbed substratum was reached, or to a maximum safe depth given the specific site conditions.

The bases of the trenches were cleaned in areas where potential archaeology was observed. Archaeological remains were recorded and sample excavation was undertaken in order to determine the character and date of any remains. Bulk soil samples were taken as appropriate in order to evaluate the environmental potential of the site. Archaeological contexts as a cut are indicated by square brackets e.g [09], while those that are fills are indicated by round brackets e.g (07).

The trenches were located using a Topcon Hiper Pro GPS+ RTK System attached to a Topcon FC-100 controller. The data was processed using Topcon Tools GPS+ Post Processing Software and the final plans completed with the aid of TurboCad v.15 design software.

All the work followed the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Code of Conduct (2010) Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations (2008)*.

Results

Trench	Orientation	Length(m)	Average depth (m)	Notes feature/context descriptions	Minimum depth to archaeology or natural substratum
1	North-east to South-west	30.00m	1.60m	Furrows	0.39m natural substratum
2	East to west	30.00m	1.60m	Furrows	0.41m natural substratum
3	South east to north west	30.00m	1.60m	Furrows	0.42 natural substratum

Trench 1 (Plate 1)

Trench 1 targeted the south eastern side of the proposed development and was orientated northeast to southwest (Figure 2). A natural substratum was reached at depth average depth of 0.39m. The natural comprised yellowish brown clay and reddish brown sand, mixed with small rounded chalk pebbles. A total of three medieval furrows were present within this trench running east to west. The furrows contained a single fill, which consisted of yellowish brown silty clay mixed with occasional charcoal flecks and pebble and measured approximately 4.00m wide. Overlying the furrows was a layer of subsoil consisting of yellowish brown clay silt subsoil up to 0.25m deep. The top soil comprised dark greyish brown clay silt mixed with a rare small pebble, and measuring 0.25m deep.

Trench 2 (Plate 2)

Trench 2 was located towards the centre of the development and was orientated east to west. The natural substratum was reached at an average depth 0.41m below the surface. A single furrow was observed at the east end of the trench running eastward. Overlying the was a layer subsoil 0.15m deep, which was sealed by a topsoil 0.30m deep

Trench 3 (Plate 3)

This trench was located in the northwest corner of the development area and was running in a southeast to northwest direction. The natural substratum was reached at an average depth 0.42m below the surface. Two furrows were observed within this trench measuring 3.00m wide and running east to west. Sealing the furrows was subsoil measuring up to 0.20m deep and overlying was a topsoil 0.30m deep.



Plate 1 Trench 1 looking southwest



Plate 2 Trench 2 looking northeast



Plate 3 Trench 3 looking east

Discussion

The archaeological evaluation by trial trenching revealed no evidence for archaeological features apart from medieval furrows cutting the natural.

Only the occasional modern glass or brick fragment were found within the topsoil (which were examined and then discarded), which probably came from a periods when the field was manured. The trial trenching suggests that there are unlikely to be any archaeological deposits present within the proposed development area.

Bibliography

Clay, P., 2010, *Written scheme of investigation for archaeological work: Land west of Leicester, Countesthorpe, Leicestershire (NGR: SK 58672 96214) ULAS Specification 12-597* (Appendix 2 of this report).

Archive

The site archive consists of:

- 1 Unbound A4 copy of this report
- 3 A4 Trench recording sheets
- 1 A4 Photo record sheet

Black and white contact print Black and white picture negatives

A4 Colour digital contact print 1 CD of 24 digital photos

The archive will be held by Leicester Museum Service under the accession number X.A27.2012.

Publication

Since 2004 ULAS has reported the results of all archaeological work to the *Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations* (OASIS) database held by the Archaeological Data Service at the University of York (Appendix 1).

A summary of the work will also be submitted for publication in the local archaeological journal, the *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society*, in due course

Acknowledgements

Thanks are extended to the client for their co-operation and assistance on site. Fieldwork undertaken by the author and the project was managed for ULAS by Patrick Clay.

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27/02/2012

Appendix 1: OASIS Database entry

Project Name	Leicester Road, Countesthorpe,Leicestershire
Project Type	Evaluation
Summary	<p>University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) carried out an archaeological Evaluation of land west of Leicester Road, Countesthorpe, Leicestershire, (SK 58672 96214) undertaken on the 23rd and 24th February 2012 . This work was undertaken on behalf of the client Stride Treglown Limited. A total of three trenches were excavated to evaluate an area for a proposed new development located within the vacant land to the west of Leicester Road.</p> <p>All trenches contained no archaeological features apart from medieval ridge and furrow. The site archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council under accession number X.A27.2012.</p>
Project Manager	Patrick Clay
Project Supervisor	Tim Higgins
Previous/Future work	None
Current Land Use	Field
Development Type	crematorium
Reason for Investigation	PPS5
Position in the Planning Process	Pre planning
Site Co-ordinates	SK 58672 96214
Start/end dates of field work	23/02/2012 to 24/02/2012
Archive Recipient	Leicestershire County Council Heritage Services
Study Area	7.4ha

Appendix 2: Design Specification

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

Written scheme of investigation for archaeological work

Job title: Land west of Leicester Road, Countesthorpe, Leicestershire

NGR: SP 58672 96214

Client: Stride Treglown Limited

Planning Authority: Blaby District Council

P.A.

Proposed start date: 20/02/2012

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 PPS 5: Planning for the Historic Environment, partially addressing the requirements of Planning Condition 5. The fieldwork specified below is intended to provide further 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 and an appropriate mitigation strategy put in place.

- 1.2 The definition of archaeological field evaluation, taken from the Institute for Archaeologists Standards and Guidance: for Archaeological Field Evaluation (2008) 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

Context of the Project

- 2.1 Countesthorpe lies in Blaby district, c. 5 miles south of Leicester (Figure 1). The area lies on the west side of Leicester Road (Figure 2). The application area consists of a field that covers c.7.4 ha and lies at approximately 84m OD.

Geology and topography

- 2.2.1 The Geological Survey of Great Britain (Solid and Drift) Sheet 156 shows that the underlying geology is likely to be Wigston member Sands and gravel.
- 2.3 Planning permission is being sought for the provision of a new crematorium.
- 2.4 Following Planning policy Statement 5 (PPS5) Policy HE6 the planning authority require that evaluation by trial trenching is undertaken to further define and characterise the remains suggested by the results from the geophysical survey.

Archaeological and Historical Background

- 2.5 The Historic Environment Record shows that finds of Bronze Age, Roman and Medieval dates have been recovered in the area. In the field directly to the south, archaeological work in 2010 revealed Early Bronze Age urned cremation burials along with pits and ditches likely to be of a similar period (Wessex Archaeology 2009).

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

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 Field Evaluation* (2008). The *LCC Guidelines and Procedures for Archaeological work Leicestershire and Rutland* (1997) will be adhered to.
- 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.

Trial Trenching Methodology

- 4.4 Prior to any machining of trial trenches general photographs of the site areas may be taken.
- 4.5 A 5% sample of the areas of disturbance is proposed, totalling c. 110 sq m. of trenching, the equivalent of three 30m x 1.6m trenches. The provisional trench plan attached (Fig. 2) shows the proposed location of the trench. Some modification of the trench locations may be necessary depending on site constraints.
- 4.6 Topsoil and overburden will be removed carefully in level spits, under continuous archaeological supervision using a mechanical excavator using a toothless bucket. Trenches will be excavated down to the top of archaeological deposits or natural undisturbed ground, whichever is reached first. All excavation by machine and hand will be undertaken with a view to avoid damage to archaeological deposits or features which appear worthy of preservation in situ or more detailed investigation than for the purposes of evaluation. Where structures, features or finds appear to merit preservation in situ, they will be adequately protected from deterioration.
- 4.7 Trenches will be examined by hand cleaning and any archaeological deposits located will be planned at an appropriate scale. Archaeological deposits will be sample-excavated by hand as appropriate to establish the stratigraphic and chronological sequence, 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.
- 4.8 Measured drawings of all archaeological features will be prepared at a scale of 1:20 and tied into an overall site plan. All plans will be tied into the Ordnance Survey National Grid. Relative spot heights will be taken as appropriate.
- 4.9 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 benchmark.
- 4.10 Trench locations will be recorded by an appropriate method. These will then be tied in to the Ordnance Survey National Grid.

- 4.11 Any human remains encountered will initially be left in situ and will only be removed if necessary for their protection, under Ministry of Justice guidelines and in compliance with relevant environmental health regulations.
- 4.12 In the event that unforeseen archaeological discoveries are made during the project a contingency may be required to clarify the character or extent of additional features. The contingency will only be initiated after consultation with the Client and Planning Authority. Following assessment of the archaeological remains by the Planning Authority, ULAS shall, if required, implement an amended scheme of investigation on behalf of the client as appropriate.
- 4.13 The trenches will be backfilled and levelled at the end of the evaluation.

Recording Systems

- 4.14 Any archaeological deposits encountered will be recorded and excavated using standard procedures as outlined in the ULAS recording manual. Sufficient of any archaeological features or deposits will be hand excavated in order to provide the information required.
- 4.15 Individual descriptions of all archaeological strata and features excavated or exposed will be entered onto prepared pro-forma recording sheets.
- 4.16 A record of the full extent in plan of all archaeological deposits encountered will be made on drawing film, related to the OS grid and at a scale of 1:10 or 1:20. Elevations and sections of individual layers of features should be drawn where possible. The OD height of all principal strata and features will be calculated and indicated on the appropriate plans.
- 4.17 An adequate 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.
- 4.18 This record will be compiled and fully checked during the course of the project.

5. Finds

- 5.1 The IfA *Guidelines for Finds Work* will be adhered to.
- 5.2 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.
- 5.3 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 appropriate authority 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 with the approval of the 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.
- 5.6 Finds which may constitute 'treasure' under the Treasure Act, 1996 must be removed to a safe place and reported to the local Coroner. Where removal cannot take place on the same working day as discovery, suitable security will be taken to protect the finds from theft.

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 (i.e datable) will be bulk sampled (50 litres 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 50 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.
- 6.6 Where evidence of industrial processes are present (eg indicated by the presence of slag or hearth bases), samples will be taken for the analysis of industrial residues (e.g hammer scale).
- 7 Report and Archive**
- 7.1 A draft version of the report will normally be presented within four weeks of completion of site works. The full report in A4 format will usually follow within eight weeks. Copies will be provided for the client and the Local Planning Authority and deposited with the Historic Environment Record.
- 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.
 - a summary of artefacts, specialist reports and a consideration of the evidence within its local, regional, national context.
 - 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).
- 7.3 A full copy of the archive as defined in the IfA Standard and Guidance for archaeological archives (Brown 2008) will normally be presented to Leicestershire County Council within six months of the completion of fieldwork. This archive will include all written, drawn and photographic records relating directly to the investigations undertaken and will follow the LCC guidelines detailed in *The Transfer of Archaeological Archives to Leicestershire Museums, Arts and Records Service* (LMARS).
- 7.4 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.
- 8 Publication and Dissemination of Results**

- 8.1 A summary report will be submitted to a suitable regional archaeological journal following completion of the fieldwork. A full report will be submitted to a national or period journal if the results are of significance.
- 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://www.oasis.ac.uk> will be completed detailing the results of the project. ULAS will contact the HER prior to completion of the form. Once a report has become a public document following its incorporation into the HER it may be placed on the web-site.
- 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 Copyright**
- 10.1 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.
- 11 Monitoring arrangements**
- 11.1 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.
- 11.2 All monitoring shall be carried out in accordance with the IfA Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations (2008)
- 11.3 Internal monitoring will be carried out by the ULAS project manager.
- 12 Timetable and Staffing**
- 12.1 A start date is likely to be w/c 20.02.2012. The work is likely to take two to three days to complete and a minimum of two experienced archaeologists will to be present during the work.
- 12.2 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.
- 13 Health and Safety**
- 13.1 ULAS is covered by and adheres to the University of Leicester Statement of Safety Policy and uses the ULAS Health and Safety Manual (revised 2010) with appropriate risks assessments for all archaeological work. A draft Health and Safety statement for this project is in the Appendix. The relevant Health and Safety Executive guidelines will be adhered to as appropriate.
- 14. Insurance**
- 14.1 All ULAS work is covered by the University of Leicester's Public Liability and Professional Indemnity Insurance. Employers Liability Insurance and Public/Products Liability Insurance Allianz Insurance plc Policy No. SZ/21696148 Professional Indemnity Insurance – Newline Underwriting Management Ltd Policy No. WD1100541
- 15. Contingencies and unforeseen circumstances**
- 15.1 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.

16. Bibliography

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

IfA, 2008 *Codes of Conduct and Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation.*

Wessex Archaeology 2011 'Leicester Road, Countesthorpe (SP5840 9605)' *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* 85, 221.

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