



University of Leicester

Archaeological Services

An archaeological watching
brief during groundworks on
land off North Street,
Ashby-de-la-Zouch,
Leicestershire
(SK 358 168)

Leon Hunt



ULAS Report No 2015-041
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**An archaeological watching brief
during groundworks on land off
North Street,
Ashby-de-la-Zouch,
Leicestershire
(SK 358 168)**

Leon Hunt

For

Lychgate Homes Ltd

Planning Application Number 14/00119/FUL

Checked by Project Manager

Signed: 

Date: 02/04/2015

Name: Vicki Score

University of Leicester

Archaeological Services

University Rd., Leicester, LE1 7RH

Tel: (0116) 2522848 Fax: (0116) 2522614

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An archaeological watching brief during groundworks on land off North Street, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicestershire (SK 358 168)

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Summary

An archaeological watching brief was carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) during ground-works on land off North Street, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicestershire (SK 358 168). The work was commissioned by Lychgate Homes Ltd. and was carried out during the construction of a new building on the site.

Overburden stripping of the site and the excavation of two foundation trenches were observed. The stratigraphical sequence consisted of dark topsoil containing demolition rubble overlying sandstone and clay.

No archaeological features were observed and no finds associated with archaeological features were retrieved during the ground-works.

The archive for the site will be deposited with Leicestershire Museums under the accession number X.A22.2015.

Introduction

University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) were commissioned by Lychgate Homes Ltd. to carry out an archaeological watching brief during ground-works on land off North Street, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicestershire (NGR: SK 358 168).

The watching brief is required as a condition of the planning consent for the erection of a new office building (Planning App. No. 14/00119/FUL). This archaeological work is in accordance with NPPF Section 12: Enhancing and Conserving the Historic Environment.

The Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record (HER) shows that the site lies within the historic settlement core of Ashby-de-la-Zouch, to the rear of medieval and post-medieval burgage plots fronting onto Market Street.

Location and Geology

The site lies to the south-east of North Street in the town centre of Ashby-de-la-Zouch. The site consists of an area of around 150 square metres and was formerly park of a larger car park providing access to the properties to the rear of Market Street (Figs 1 & 2).

The site lies at a height of 127m aOD and slopes slightly to the south.

The British Geological Survey indicates that the underlying geology of the site is likely to be Wingfield Flags Sandstone (www.bgs.co.uk).

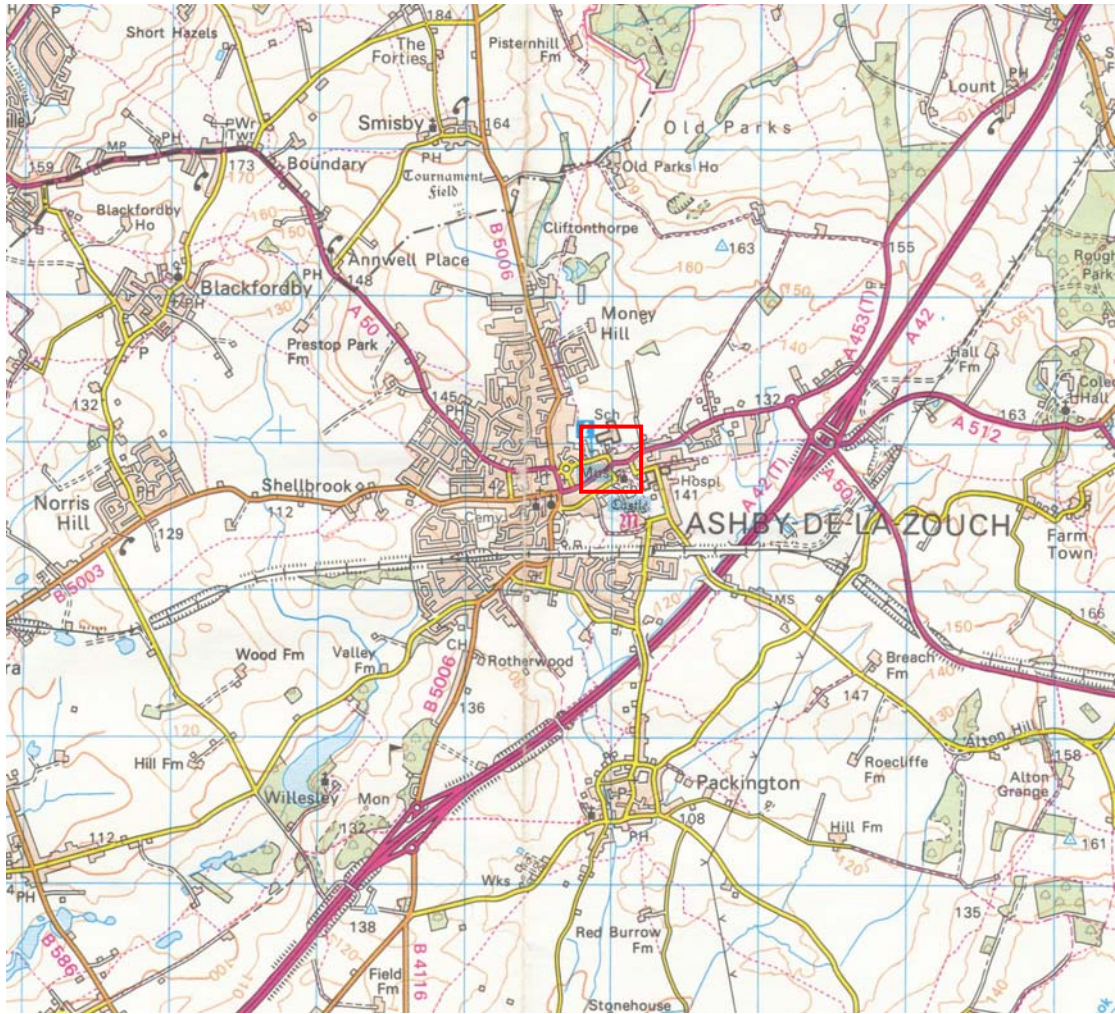


Figure 1: Site Location

Reproduced from *Landranger*® 1:50 000 scale, Sheet 128 (Derby) by permission of Ordnance Survey® on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown copyright 2001
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Historical and Archaeological Background

The Historic Environment Record (HER) for Leicestershire and Rutland has identified a number of archaeological sites that are located within the vicinity of the development area. The site lies within the medieval core of Ashby, a market town dating back at least as far as the Domesday Survey of 1086, and itself incorporates part of one burgage plot – long, narrow properties which are characteristic of early market towns. A number of medieval sites are known nearby, including a 16th-century timber-framed building at 51 Market Street and the late medieval Bulls Head at 67 Market Street.

Significant early post-medieval buildings nearby comprise the 16th/17th-century Lamb Inn at 56 Market Street and a number of other timber framed buildings mostly hidden behind 18th century brick facades, e.g. Nos 76 and 90 Market Street.

An archaeological watching brief carried out on a neighbouring site at Court 19, Market Street was negative for archaeological features (Hunt 2013).

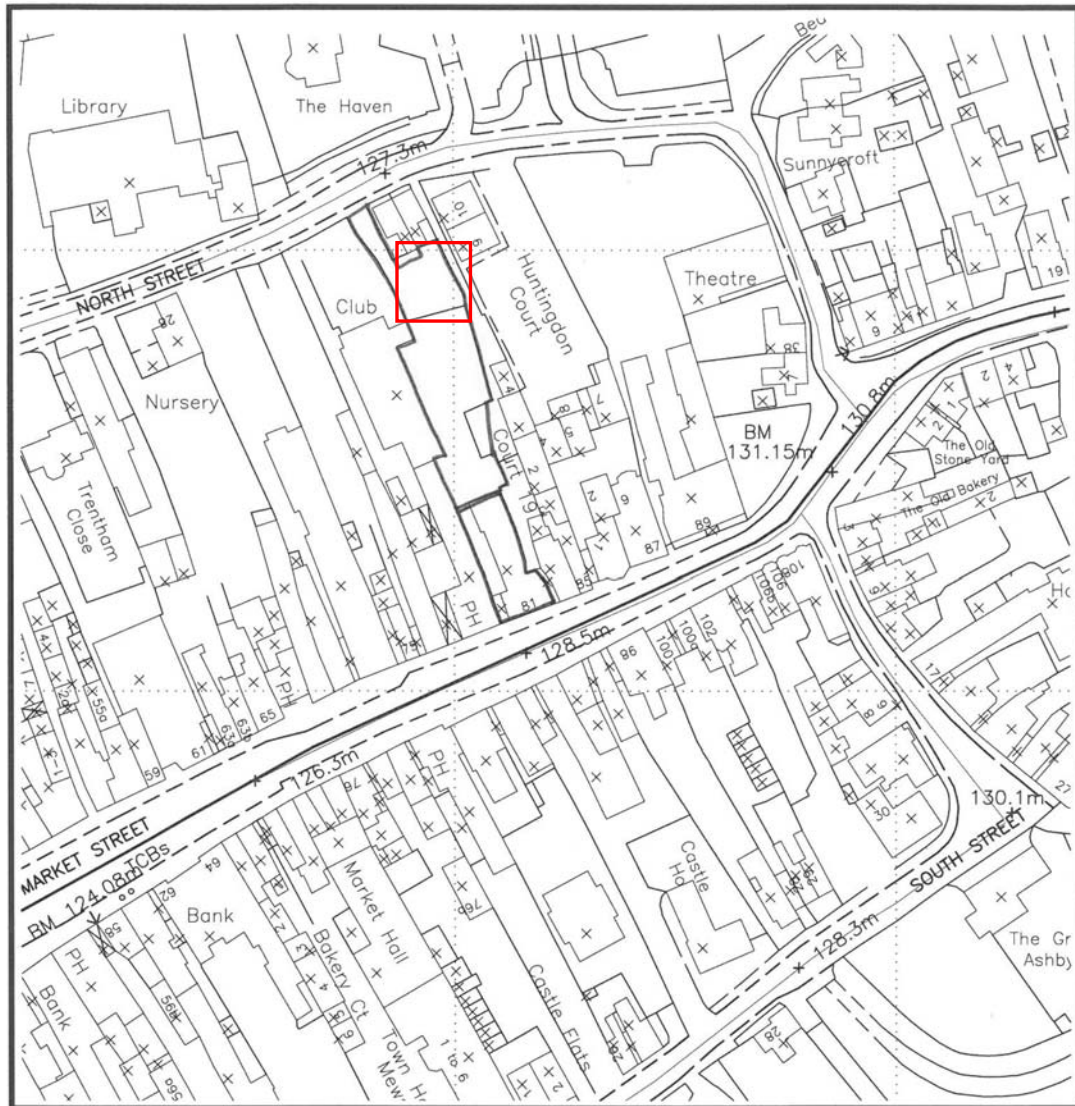


Figure 2: Location of proposed development area. Plan provided by developer.
Scale 1: 2500

Archaeological Objectives

The main objective of the archaeological excavation was 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 Watching brief were:

- 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.

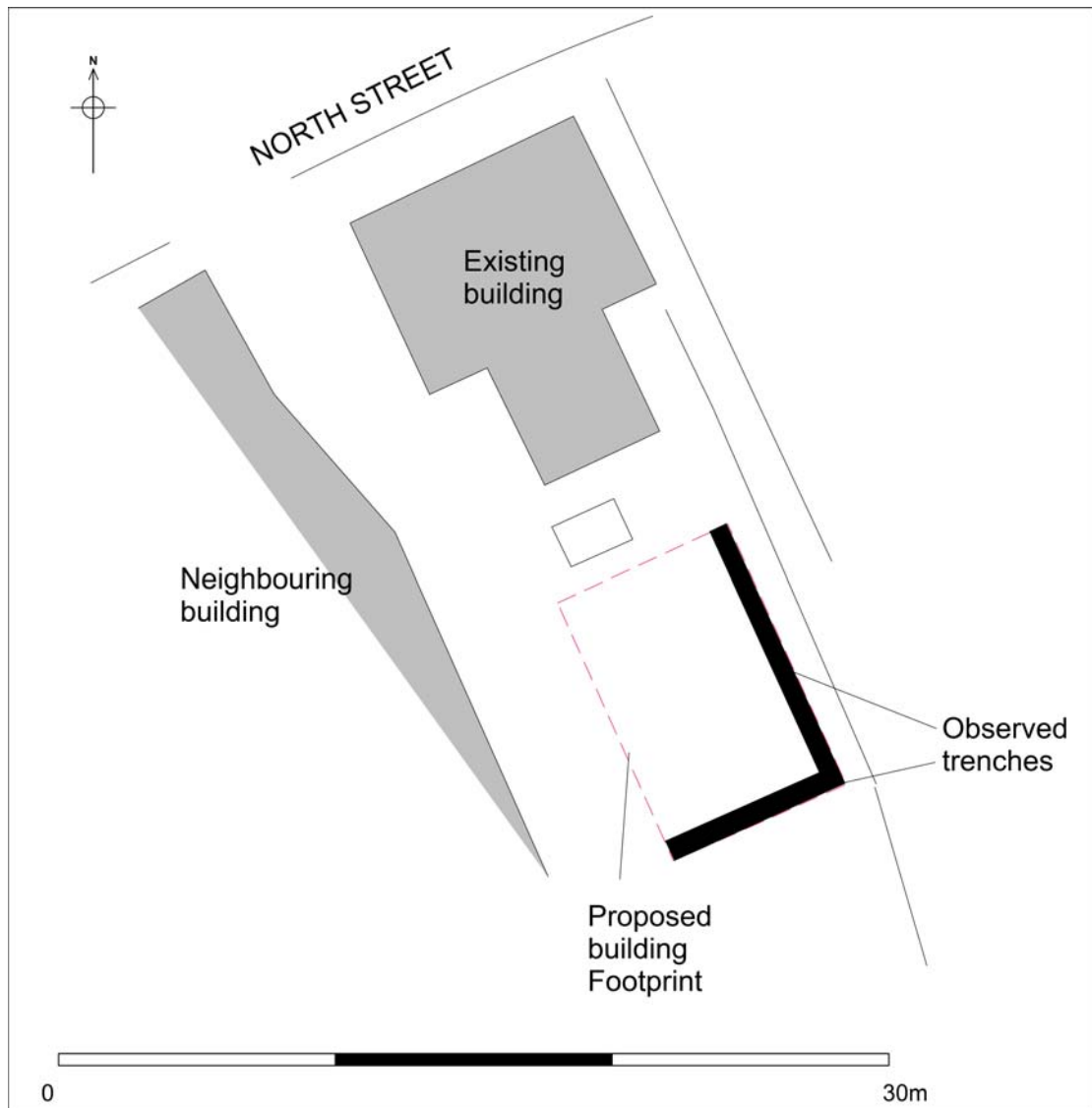


Figure 3: Plan of observations made during watching brief

Methodology

All work followed the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) *Code of Conduct* (2012) and adhered to their *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (2008).

An advice letter was provided by the Archaeological Advisor, LCC (2011), and a *Design Specification for Archaeological Work* (see Appendix) was produced by ULAS (2011) prior to the archaeological work being undertaken.

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

The work consisted of the stripping of tarmac and hardcore across the site (Figs 4-5) followed by the excavation of foundation trenches associated with the proposed new development.

The work was undertaken using a small tracked excavator fitted with a 0.5m toothless ditching bucket.



Figure 4: The site being stripped prior to excavation, looking north



Figure 5: Work in progress on north-east trench, looking north

Results

The work was carried out on 3rd March 2015.

A rectangular area approximately 16m by 9m was stripped by a machine using a flat-bladed ditching bucket to provide a flat surface, removing layers of soil, building material and hardcore.

Foundation trenches were excavated using a narrow ditching bucket. Two trenches were observed. One was oriented north-west to south-east with another running north-east to south-west. The trenches were 0.7m wide and approximately 11m and 7.5m respectively (Figs 3 and 6).

The neighbouring land to the east lay higher than the land on the site and the south-west facing section of the trench consisted of dark silty clay topsoil mixed with demolition debris of up to 1m depth overlying 0.4m of natural sub-stratum comprising yellowish-brown sandstone and clay. Under this lay 0.7m of brownish yellow clay to the base of the trench (Fig. 6).

Elsewhere the sequence consisted of 0.4m of dark topsoil with demolition rubble over 0.4m of sandstone and clay over clay. The trenches were 1.5m deep and around 0.7m wide.



Figure 6: Typical sequence from north-west facing section, looking south-east

Conclusion

The soil sequence observed during the watching brief comprised a fairly thin layer of dark topsoil and rubble overlying sandstone and clay. No archaeological features or finds associated with archaeological features were observed during the work.

The thin topsoil and rubble across the site may indicate that the area has been disturbed previously and any high-lying earth-fast archaeological features may have been already destroyed.

Following the supervision and observation of the stripping and the excavation of two long trenches it was not felt necessary to observe any further groundworks associated with this work.

Acknowledgements

ULAS would like to thank Dan Sturgess of Lychgate Homes Ltd. for his help and co-operation with this project. The project was managed by Richard Buckley of ULAS and the work was carried out by the author.

Publication

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

A summary of the work will also be submitted for publication in a suitable regional archaeological journal in due course.

OASIS data entry

Project Name	Land off North Street, Ashby-de-la-Zouch
Project Type	Watching Brief
Project Manager	Richard Buckley
Project Supervisor	Leon Hunt
Previous/Future work	None
Current Land Use	Car Park
Development Type	New building/ offices
Reason for Investigation	NPPF
Position in the Planning Process	Planning condition
Site Co ordinates	SK 358 168
Start/end dates of field work	03-03-2015
Archive Recipient	Leicestershire Museums
Study Area	150 sq m

Archive

The archive for this project will be deposited with Leicestershire Museums with accession number X.A22.2015 and consists of the following:

- 1 Unbound copy of this report
- 1 Watching Brief recording sheet
- 1 CD of digital photographs
- 1 Contact Sheet of digital photographs

Bibliography

- Chartered Institute
for Archaeologists
(CIfA) 2008 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*
- CIfA 2012 *Code of Conduct*
- LCC 2011 *Advice Letter CLE8347/RC*
- Hunt, L. 2013 *An archaeological watching brief during groundworks at Court 19, Rear of 81, Market Street, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicestershire (SK 3591 1682). ULAS Report No. 2013-166*
- ULAS, 2015 *Design Specification for Archaeological Work 12/126*

Leon Hunt
ULAS
University of Leicester
University Road
Leicester LE1 7RH

Tel: 0116 252 2848

Fax: 0116 252 2614

Email:

lh90@le.ac.uk

09-03-2015

APPENDIX: Design Specification for archaeological work**UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES****Written Scheme of Investigation for archaeological attendance,
inspection and recording (watching brief)****Court 19, Market Street (rear of No 81) Ashby De La Zouch Leicestershire LE65 1AJ****SK 3591 1682****For: Stephen Bryan****Planning application: 08/01302/FUL****Planning Authority: North-West Leicestershire District 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 the construction of a new building.
- 1.2 The document provides details of the following work proposed by ULAS on behalf of the client as recommended by the Principal Planning Archaeologist, Leicestershire County Council.
 - Archaeological monitoring of development groundworks

2. Background***Context of the Project***

- 2.1. The planning consent is for the construction of a two storey building comprising two flats. (Fig. 3).

Archaeological and historical background

- 2.4 The Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record (HER) shows that the site lies within the historic settlement core of Ashby de la Zouch, to the rear of medieval and post-medieval burgage plots fronting onto Market Street.
- 2.5 Although no archaeological sites are recorded within the application area, this may simply reflect the lack of previous archaeological investigations.
- 2.6 Archaeological investigations in the vicinity have produced evidence from the medieval and post-medieval periods whilst a number of negative archaeological watching briefs have also been undertaken.
- 2.7 The Historic Environment Record (HER) for Leicestershire and Rutland has identified a number of archaeological sites that are located within the vicinity of the development area. The site lies within the medieval core of Ashby, a market town dating back at least as far as the Domesday Survey of 1086, and itself incorporates part of one burgage plot – long, narrow properties which are characteristic of early market towns. A number of medieval sites are known nearby, including a 16th-century timber-framed building at 51 Market Street and the late medieval Bulls Head. at 67 Market Street.
- 2.8 Significant early post-medieval buildings nearby comprise 16th/17th-century Lamb Inn at 56 Market Street and a number of other timber framed buildings hidden behind 18th century brick facades, e.g. 76 and 90 Market Street.

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 ground works, 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. Standard sampling amounts are:

- 50% of the exposed area of each pit and other discrete archaeological features.
- 10% (minimum 1m section) of the exposed lengths of linear features (including slotted and interrupted ditches and pit alignments). Excavation sections will be placed to provide adequate coverage of the features and will include excavation of terminals and intersections. A flexible approach will be adopted to the location of excavation samples such that areas of exposed ditch fill with higher artefact or ecofact content may be targeted.
- 25% of ring gullies will normally be excavated to include excavation of the terminals. Special regard will be given to significant stratigraphic relationships and concentrations of artefactual material.
- Structural and foundation deposits will be exposed and cleaned with a view to defining their nature and any relationships.

- 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://ads.ac.uk/project/oasis> 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 is due to commence at a date to be confirmed.

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 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. 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*
- Chartered
Institute for
Archaeologists
(CIfA) 2008 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*
- CIfA 2012 *Code of Conduct*
- LCC 2011 *Advice Letter CLE8347/RC*
- English
Heritage 2001 *Centre for Archaeology Guidelines on Archaeometallurgy*
- Hunt, L. 2013 *An archaeological watching brief during groundworks at Court 19, Rear of 81, Market Street, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicestershire (SK 3591 1682). ULAS Report No. 2013-166*

Richard Buckley
Director
ULAS
University of Leicester
University Road
Leicester LE1 7RH

Tel: 0116 252 2848
Fax: 0116 252 2614
Email: rjb16@le.ac.uk

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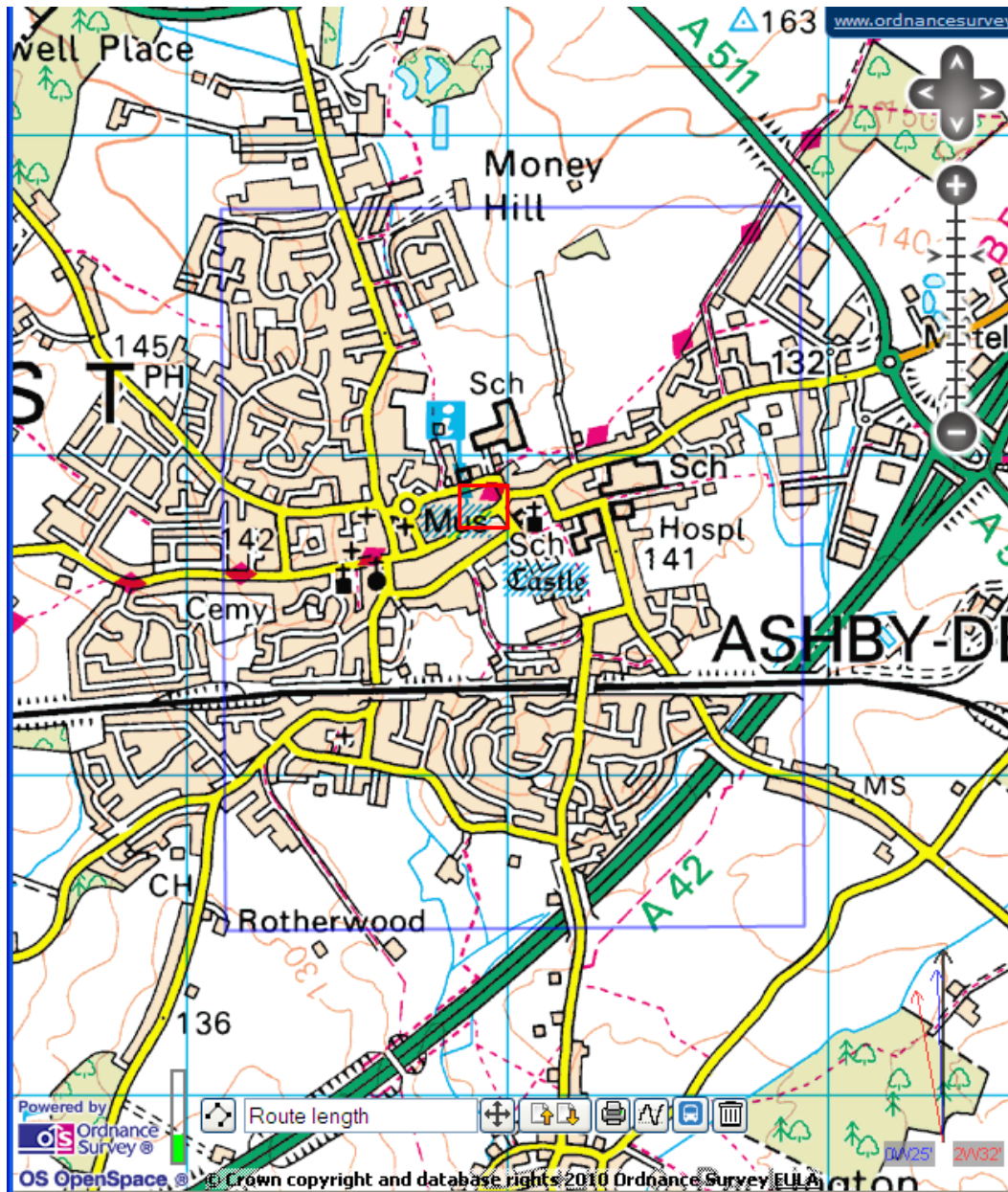


Fig. 1 Site Location (1km grid)

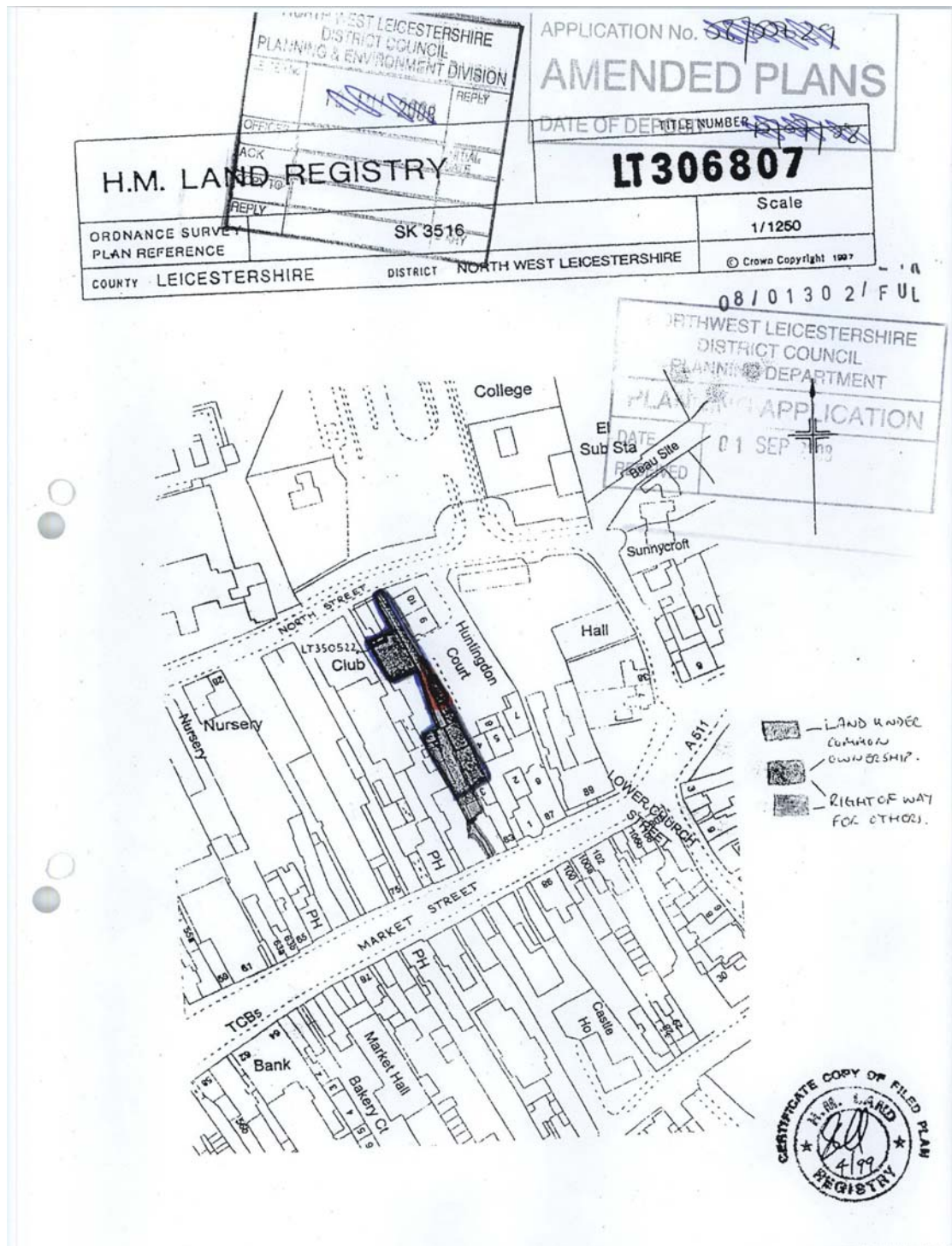


Fig.2 Site location

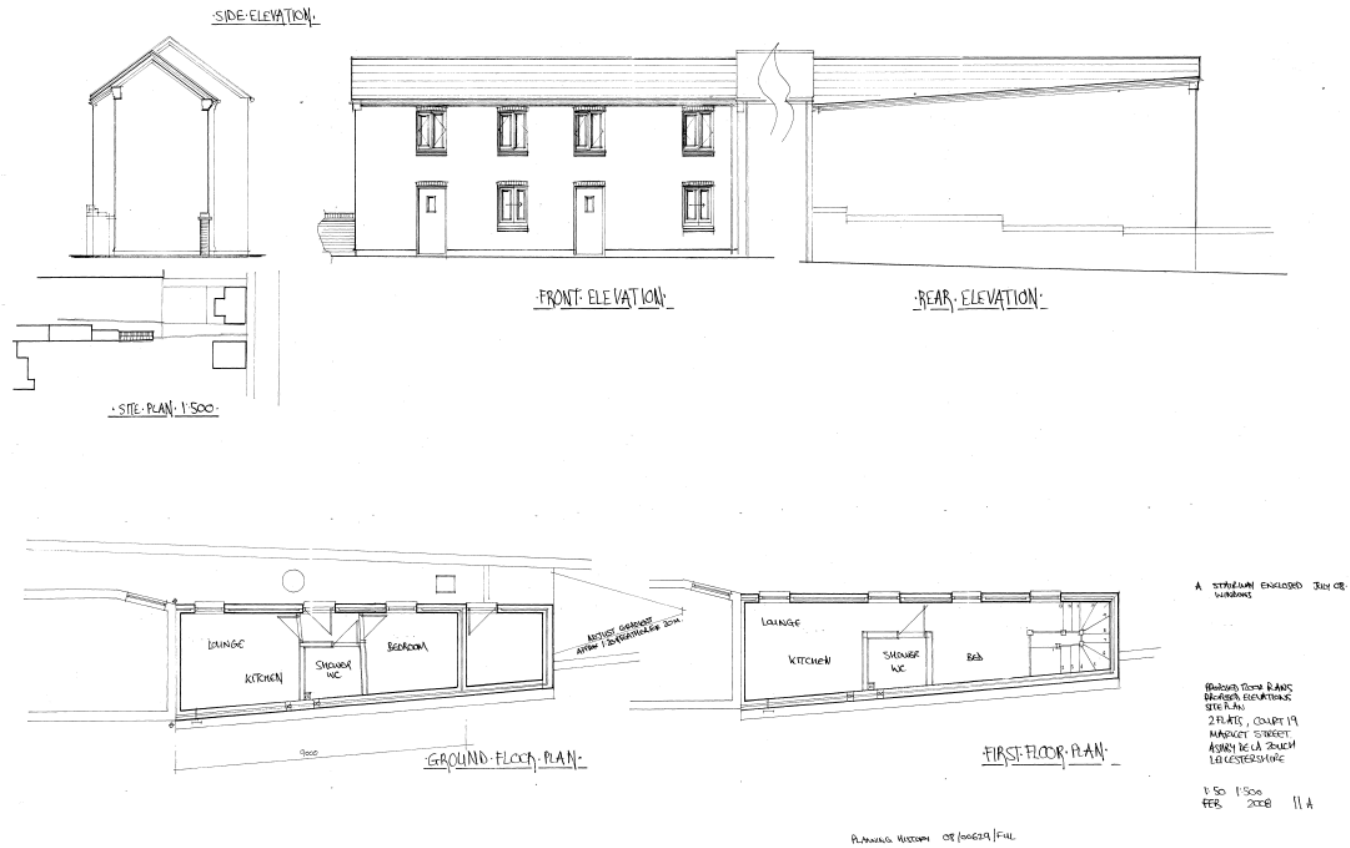


Fig 3 Proposed site layout (not to scale)

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF METHOD STATEMENT & RISK ASSESSMENT

Site Name	Job No	Start Date	PM	Contact
Court 19, Market Street, Ashby de la Zouch	12-126	TBC	Richard Buckley	0116 252 2848
Site Director	Site Contacts	Team (Nos)		
TBC		1		

SITE WORKS & METHOD STATEMENT

The work will involve the monitoring of groundworks across the area as detailed in the specification followed by excavation of archaeological deposits.

All work will adhere to the University of Leicester Health and Safety Policy and follow the guidance in the ULAS Health and Safety Manual (2001)

Watching Brief Method Statement

Any known services will be marked on the ground and avoided. All machine excavation will be carefully monitored.

Excavation: Work will be conducted as per the *Methodology* detailed in the specification. Machining will be conducted using ULAS SSOW1. Any lone working on site will be undertaken according to ULAS SSOW2 (Appendix 1).

A first aid kit and a site phone will be available on site at all times. At least one member of staff will have first aid training.

Equipment

All plant will be the responsibility of the client.

ULAS vehicles or personal cars will be used (all appropriately insured and maintained).

Besides the plant, equipment will include a variety of hand tools (e.g. shovels, mattocks, trowels), recording materials (e.g. photographic equipment, computers, levels etc.), survey equipment (e.g. EDM, DGPS) CAT scanners and metal detectors may be used.

Personnel

The site director (as above) will be responsible for the day to day running of the site. Specialists and visitors may be invited to visit the site during fieldwork. It is expected to hire plant and operators from a reputable local company.

All personnel are experienced in working with plant and in the excavation of trenches. All site staff hold CSCS cards and many also hold a SPA quarry passport. All site staff have some first aid training.

Normal working hours are 7 hours a day between 8am and 6pm Monday to Friday.

Monitoring and communications

ULAS management and site staff details are as above.

Work will be monitored internally by the ULAS Project Manager and/or Health & Safety Co-ordinators.

ULAS method statements are prepared following standard guidelines and after consultation with the University Safety Services Department. Communication of the contents of the method statement to site staff is the responsibility of the Site Director. The risk assessment will be updated weekly or when conditions change.

Accident Reporting

All accidents will be logged using ULAS accident forms and report to the ULAS Main Office (0116 2522848) and if necessary to the University of Leicester Safety Services Dept (Appendix 2).

Contact Details

Richard Buckley or Patrick Clay
University of Leicester Archaeological
Services (ULAS)
University of Leicester,
University Road,
Leicester LE1 7RH

T: +44 (0)116 252 2848

F: +44 (0)116 252 2614

E: ulas@le.ac.uk

w: www.le.ac.uk/ulas



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