

**An Archaeological Watching Brief Carried Out at Seals Farm, Little End,
Bruntingthorpe, Leicestershire, NGR SP 603 899.**

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Summary

University of Leicester Archaeological Services was commissioned by Mr Baker to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks at Seals Farm, Little End, Bruntingthorpe. The proposed development was within the historic core of the village and medieval earthworks are located nearby to the northwest. However nothing of archaeological significance was observed during the course of the watching brief. The archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council, Heritage Services, accession number X.A176. 2004.

1. Introduction

University of Leicester Archaeological Services was commissioned by Mr Frank Barker to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the excavation of foundation trenches for a new dwelling at Seals Farm, Bruntingthorpe, Leicestershire (SP 603 899). Outline planning permission had been granted to erect a single bungalow (Planning Application Number 04/00157/3).

An examination of the Leicestershire and Rutland Sites and Monument Record (SMR) indicated that the site is located within an area of archaeological importance within the medieval core of Bruntingthorpe and close to medieval earthworks, including fishponds, to the northwest (SMR Ref: 68NW K). As a result Leicestershire County Council, Heritage Services as archaeological adviser to Harborough District Council requested a strategy of archaeological watching brief. All groundworks were to be controlled and supervised by an archaeologist.

All work followed the *Guidelines for Archaeological Work in Leicestershire and Rutland* (LMARS 1997), the Institute of Field Archaeologists' (IFA) *Code of Conduct* and adhered to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological watching briefs*. The watching brief followed the design specification for archaeological work 18.7.2003 (Appendix).

2. Methodology

Prior to redevelopment the area had been occupied by a barn, which had been demolished and the site levelled prior to the start of the watching brief. The surrounding area was occupied as hard standing for the farmyard; a rapid walk-over of the proposed development area revealed exclusively post-medieval debris, including eighteenth to twentieth century pottery and modern brick and tile fragments.

The foundation trenches were excavated by a 7-ton mini digger with a 850mm toothed bucket. Initially the trenches were to be excavated to a depth of 1.00m, however, the Harborough District Council buildings inspector requested that the depth be increased in places.

3. Results

The foundation trenches were excavated under archaeological supervision to depths ranging between 1.00m in the westernmost trench and over 3m in the northernmost trench. An examination of the exposed section indicated that the top 400mm consisted of imported sand and gravel, brought in to level the ground and probably improve drainage. The remainder of the exposed section consisted of dark grey or black silty clay alluvial deposits, which continued to an unknown depth. A single sherd of late 19th/20th century willow pattern porcelain was recovered from this deposit (but not retained).

All the excavated trenches consisted of the same stratigraphy and nothing of archaeological significance was observed. However the alluvial deposits may indicate further evidence of fishponds which are present to the northeast although no earthwork remains were visible.

4. Conclusion

Despite its promising location nothing of archaeological significance was observed during the watching brief. The landowner knew of at least two barns that had occupied the area during his lifetime, this along with the previous land use had apparently destroyed any potential archaeological remains within the proposed development area.

The exposed surface consisted of imported aggregate and below this was a deep alluvial deposit, at least 3m deep. A previous desk-based assessment commissioned by Chris Freeman Design Ltd for land off Staplecourt (Marsden 2002; ULAS Report No 2002-040) recorded the presence of probable medieval fishponds to the northwest of the proposed development area. The alluvial area uncovered during the watching brief was upslope from these fishponds and it is possible, therefore, that this deposit is a silted up fishpond within this run of fishponds. The sherd of willow pattern porcelain may have been deposited during the final silting episode before the area was built on or be an intrusive find.

5. Archive

The archive consists of a watching brief report sheet including sketch plan and photographs. The archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council, Heritage Services, accession number X.A176. 2004.

6. Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Frank Barker, the landowner and J. Dunscombe Builders for their help and co-operation during this watching brief.

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References

Gnanaratnam, A. 2002 *An Archaeological Field Evaluation on land adjacent to Staplecourt, Little End, Bruntingthorpe (NGR SP 605 899)*. ULAS Report No 2002-059

Marsden, P. 2002 *An Archaeological Desk-based Assessment for Land Adjacent to Staplecourt, Little End, Bruntingthorpe (NGR 605 899)*. ULAS Report No 2002-040.

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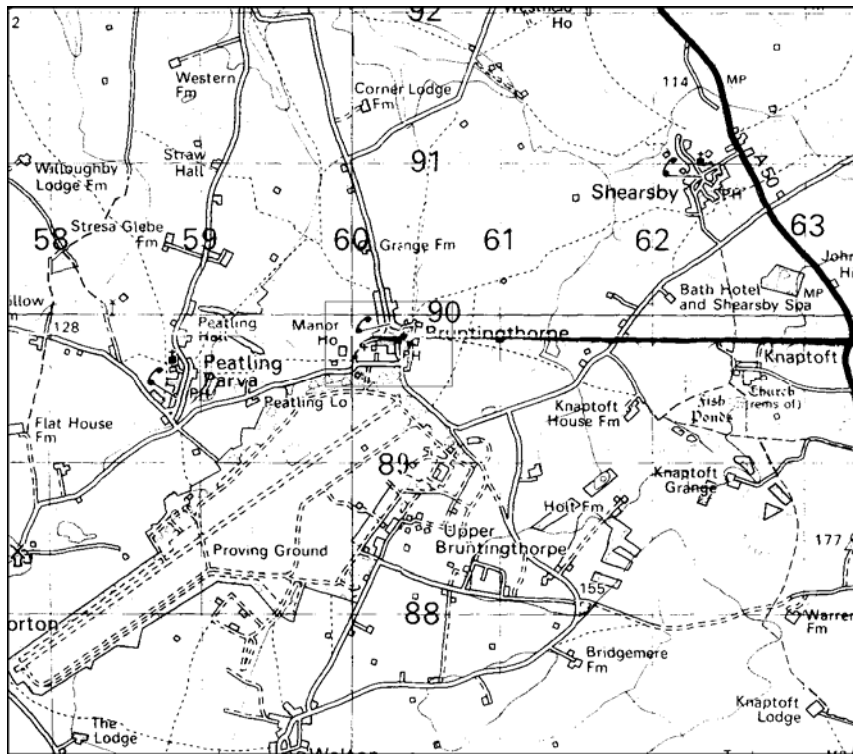


Figure 1 – Site Location at scale 1:50000

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Fig.2. Location of Watching Brief
Original Scale 1:2500 (Drawing Supplied By Client)

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Figure 3 Site plan showing location of proposed dwelling. Scale 1: 500

Figure 4 Foundation plan of new dwelling. Alluvial deposits were present in all foundation trenches. Scale 1:100

Appendix

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

Design Specification for archaeological work

*Seals Farm, Little End, Bruntingthorpe,
Leicestershire (SP 603 899)*

Planning Application: 04/00157/3

For: Mr F Baker

1 Definition and scope of the specification

1.1 In accordance with Planning Policy Guidelines 16 (PPG16, Archaeology and planning), para.30, this specification provides a written scheme for an archaeological watching brief, as required by the Planning Authority, of any ground works on the site which may disturb areas of archaeological potential in connection with a planning application for residential development at Seals Farm, Little End, Bruntingthorpe, Leicestershire (SP 603 899; Planning Application: 04/00157/3) for Mr F Baker. It addresses the requirements detailed in *The brief for an archaeological watching brief on land at Seals Farm, Little End, Bruntingthorpe, Leicestershire* (10.6.2004; hereinafter 'brief') from Leicestershire County Council, Heritage Services as advisors to Harborough District Council. It forms part of a scheme of work to fulfil the planning conditions required by Harborough District Council.

1.2 All archaeological work will adhere to the Institute of Field Archaeologist's (IFA) *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* and the *Guidelines for Archaeological Work in Leicestershire and Rutland (LMARS)*.

2 Background

2.1 Requirement for archaeological work

2.1.1 The archaeological watching brief involves and supervision of ground disturbance to identify any deposits of archaeological importance.

2.2 Archaeological potential

2.2.1 The site lies within the medieval core of Bruntingthorpe and close to medieval earthworks to the northeast (SMR Ref: 68NW K) and a post medieval barn to the northwest (SMR Ref: 68NW U).

3 Aims

3.1 Through archaeological supervision of existing overburden stripping and groundworks by the client's contractors:

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 the 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.

4 Methods

4.1 The project will involve the supervision of overburden and other groundworks by an experienced professional archaeologist during the works specified above. During these ground works, if any archaeological deposits are seen to be present, the archaeologist will record areas of archaeological interest.

4.2 The archaeologist will co-operate at all times with the contractors on site to ensure the minimum interruption to the work.

4.3 Any archaeological deposits located will be hand cleaned and planned as appropriate. Samples of any archaeological deposits located will be hand excavated. Measured drawings of all archaeological features will be prepared at a scale of 1:20 and tied into an overall site plan of 1:100. All plans will be tied into the National Grid using an Electronic Distance Measurer (EDM) where appropriate.

4.4 Archaeological deposits will be excavated and recorded as appropriate to establishing the stratigraphic and chronological sequence of deposits, recognising and excavating structural evidence and recovering economic, artefactual and environmental evidence. Particular attention will be paid to the potential for buried palaeosols and waterlogged deposits in consultation with ULAS's environmental officer.

4.5 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.

4.5 Any human remains encountered will be initially left *in situ* and only be removed under a Home Office Licence and in compliance with relevant environmental health regulations. The developer, Leicestershire County Council, Heritage Services and the coroner will be informed immediately on their discovery.

4.6 Internal monitoring procedures will be undertaken including visits to the site from the project manager. These will ensure that professional standards are being maintained. Provision will be made for monitoring visits with representatives of the owners, Leicestershire County Council, Heritage Services and Harborough District Council.

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

5 Recording Systems

5.1 Individual descriptions of all archaeological strata and features excavated or exposed will be entered onto prepared pro-forma recording sheets.

5.2 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 plan at 1:200 (or 1:100), which will show the location of the areas investigated.

5.3 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

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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.

5.4 An adequate photographic record of the investigations will be prepared. This will include black and white prints and colour transparencies 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.

5.5 This record will be compiled and fully checked during the course of the watching brief.

5.6 All site records and finds will be kept securely.

6 Report and Archive

6.1 A report on the watching brief will be provided following the groundworks.

6.2 Copies will be provided for the client, Sites and Monuments Record and planning Authority. The copyright of all original finished documents shall remain vested in ULAS and ULAS will be entitled as of right to publish any material in any form produced as a result of its investigations.

6.3 A full copy of the archive as defined in the 'Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long-term storage' (UKIC 1990), and Standards in the Museum care of archaeological collections (MGC 1992) and 'Guidelines for the preparation of site archives and assessments for all finds (other than fired clay objects) (Roman Finds Group and Finds Research Group AD 700-1700 1993) will be presented to Leicestershire County Council, Heritage Services normally within six months of the completion of analysis. This archive will include all written, drawn and photographic records relating directly to the investigations undertaken.

7 Publication

7.1 A summary report will be submitted to a suitable regional or national archaeological journal within one year of completion of fieldwork. A full report will be submitted if the results are of significance.

8 Timetable and Staffing

8.1 The watching brief is scheduled to commence at the inception of the contractors groundworks, currently scheduled for 28.6.2004. An experienced archaeologist will be present during this work. It is proposed to watch all works, as specified above, with appropriately timed visits during the work in consultation with the contractors.

9 Health and Safety

9.1 ULAS is covered by and adheres to the University of Leicester Statement of Safety Policy and uses the ULAS Health and Safety Manual (2001) 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.

10 Insurance

10.1 All ULAS work is covered by the University of Leicester's Public Liability and Professional Indemnity Insurance. The Public Liability Insurance is with Gerling Insurance

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Services Policy No. 62/99094/D, Risk Reference LT 35101 while the Professional Indemnity Insurance is with Sun Alliance Insurance Policy No. 03A/5A 001 05978, Risk Reference LT 27229.

11. Bibliography

MAP 2, *The management of archaeological projects* 2nd edition English Heritage 1991

MGC 1992, *Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections* (Museums and Galleries Commission)

RFG/FRG 1993, *Guidelines for the preparation of site archives* (Roman Finds Group and Finds Research Group AD 700-1700)

SMA 1993, *Selection, retention and Dispersal of Archaeological Collections. Guidelines for use in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (Society of Museum Archaeologists)

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21.6.2004

Appendix

Draft Project Health and Safety Policy Statement

*Seals Farm, Little End, Bruntingthorpe,
Leicestershire (SP 603 899)*

Planning Application: 04/00157/3

For: Mr F Baker

1 Nature of the work

1.1 This statement is for an archaeological watching brief.

1.2 The work will involve observation of groundworks during daylight hours and recording of any underlying archaeological deposits revealed. Overall depth is likely to be c. 0.2-0.5m. This will involve the examination of the exposed surface with hand tools (shovels, trowels etc) and excavation of archaeological features. 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) together with the following relevant Health and Safety guidelines.

1.3 HSE Construction Information Sheet CS8 Safety in excavations.
HSE Industry Advisory leaflet IND (G)143 (L): Getting to grips with manual handling.
HSE Industry Advisory leaflet IND (G)145 (L): Watch Your back.
CIRIA R97 Trenching practice.
CIRIA TN95 Proprietary Trench Support Systems.
HSE Guidance Note HS(G) 47 Avoiding danger to underground services. HSE Guidance Note GS7 Accidents to children on construction sites

1.4 The Health and Safety policy on site will be reassessed during the evaluation .

1.5 All work will adhere to the contractors' health and safety policy.

2 Risks Assessment

2.1 Working within a building site

Precautions. No work will be undertaken beneath section faces. Loose spoil heaps will not be walked on. Protective footwear will be worn at all times. Hard hats will be worn at all times. A member of staff qualified in First Aid will be present at all times. First aid kit, vehicle and mobile phone to be kept on site in case of emergency.

2.2 Working with plant.

Precautions. Hard hats, protective footwear and hazard jackets will be worn at all times. No examination of the area of stripping will take place until machines have vacated area. Observation of machines will be maintained during hand excavation. Liaison will be maintained with the contractors to ensure programme of machine movement is understood.

2.3 Working within areas prone to waterlogging.

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Protective clothing will be worn at all times and precautions taken to prevent contact with stagnant water which may carry Vialls disease or similar.

2.4 Working with chemicals.

If chemicals are used to conserve or help lift archaeological material these will only be used by qualified personnel with protective clothing (i.e a trained conservator) and will be removed from site immediately after use.

2.5 Other risks

Precautions. If there is any suspicion of unforeseen hazards being encountered e.g chemical contaminants, unexploded bombs, hazardous gases work will cease immediately. The client and relevant public authorities will be informed immediately.

2.9 No other constraints are recognised over the nature of the soil, water, type of excavation, proximity of structures, sources of vibration and contamination.

Patrick Clay
28.6.2004