



UNIVERSITY OF
LEICESTER

Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological Evaluation at
39 – 41 Castle Street,
Leicester.
Scheduled Monument Leicester Castle
and the Magazine Gateway**

NGR: SK 5826 0426

Andrew Hyam



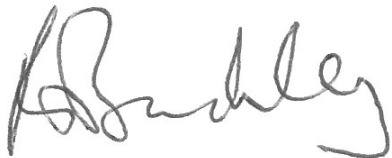
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**An Archaeological Evaluation at
39-41 Castle Street, Leicester
Scheduled Monument
Leicester Castle and the Magazine Gateway
(list entry number 1012147)**

NGR: SK 5826 0426

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For: Victoria Hall

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An Archaeological Evaluation at 39-41 Castle Street, Leicester Scheduled Monument: Leicester Castle and the Magazine Gateway (list entry number 1012147)

Andrew Hyam

Summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at 39-41 Castle Street, Leicester between the 9th and 13th July 2018 by the University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS). The site lies within the historic core of Roman and medieval Leicester with high potential for archaeological evidence of domestic and commercial activity and for the bailey ditch of Leicester Castle. The latter is a Scheduled Monument and its outer edge is projected to run through the southern part of the site. The site was redeveloped in the late 1950s to create a modern office block and a bottling depot. Prior to the redevelopment, a 19th-century school and terraced houses occupied the space. Due to the potential for exposing Roman and medieval archaeological deposits and the chance of identifying the bailey ditch the City Archaeologist at Leicester City Council (in consultation with Historic England) requested that an archaeological field evaluation take place to assess the nature and extent of any potentially surviving deposits.

Three trenches were excavated with a total length of 25m across the available space which had many constraints due to live services and the proximity of standing buildings. The results of the fieldwork indicated that much of the site had been heavily disturbed by the 1950s work. Possible archaeological deposits may have been identified 3m below current ground level.

The report will be archived under accession number Y.A18.2018

Introduction

In accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Section 12 *Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment* and the Ancient Monuments Areas Act 1979 this document forms the report for an archaeological evaluation on land at 39-41 Castle Street, Leicester, NGR SK5826 0426. The site currently contains a two-storey office building and a car park and a planning application (ref. LPA 20180604) is currently being determined by the City Council for the redevelopment of the site for the construction of new student accommodation.

The proposed redevelopment of the land has the potential to destroy or damage any surviving buried archaeological remains of the Roman, medieval and post-medieval periods which may be present. The site lies partially over the projected line of the bailey ditch of Leicester Castle which is a Scheduled Monument (list entry number 1012147). Due to this the City Archaeologist at Leicester City Council requested that an archaeological field evaluation of the affected area take place to assess the nature, extent, date and significance of any archaeological deposits which may be present.

This programme of fieldwork follows on from an archaeological desk-based assessment (DBA) produced by ULAS in 2017 (Hunt, ULAS Report 2017-110). The assessment concluded that there was a reasonably high potential for surviving buried Roman and

medieval remains including the possibility of locating the outer edge of the castle bailey ditch.

Background

The proposed development site lies within the historic core of Roman and medieval Leicester (Figure 1 and Figure 2). It is located on the northern side of Leicester Castle and is partially within the boundary of the Castle and Magazine gateway scheduled monument area (list number 1012147). In addition to the scheduled monument area the site also lies just outside the north-eastern edge of the Castle Conservation Area, the boundary of which runs along the centre of Castle Street.

At the time of the evaluation, the site consisted of a long sub-rectangular two-storey office block running from north to south along the eastern side of Castle Street (Figure 3). The architectural style of the building places it somewhere in the late 1950s or early 1960s (Figure 4). The building has a 2m deep cellar beneath it. A private access road on the northern side of the office block leads to a large open car park to the rear, eastern side, of the building (Figure 5). The total area of the site, including the offices, covers approximately 1700 square metres. The site lies at a height of around 59 metres OD and is generally flat despite the surrounding land dropping slightly towards the south and rising towards the north-east. The drop in the surrounding ground level means that the southern end of the site car park is between 0.8m and 0.9m above street level.

The development proposals are to demolish the office block and replace it with new student accommodation which would be positioned alongside the existing student accommodation complex which has been built to the east of the site (Figure 6) constructed in 2007. The proposals will create buildings along the north, south and western edges of the site leaving an enclosed courtyard on the east side of the site.

The ULAS Desk-Based Assessment (DBA) discusses much of the history of both the site and the surrounding area and will not be repeated in this report. However, the available cartographic evidence in the DBA was only able to show that there was a 19th-century school, a factory and rear plots of terraces covering the site. The latest available map in the DBA showing this information is the Ordnance Survey metric edition published in 1955 (Figure 7). The next available map used in the DBA was published in 2002. This map shows that both the site and the surrounding area had been completely transformed (Figure 8). This 2002 map shows the development site as it survives today but without the student accommodation development to the east.

Since the issuing of the ULAS DBA in 2017 an aerial photograph, taken around 1965, has been found and shows the site in a slightly different state of development to the two maps. In the photograph, the existing office block is present but there is also a large rectangular two or three-storey high factory-type building immediately to the north and east of the office block (Figure 9). The detail of this apparently concrete-built structure is not too clear but it certainly follows the same north to south alignment as the existing office block rather than the north-east to south-west alignment of the earlier 19th century buildings. It also appears to be constructed quite close to the rear, east side, of the offices.

Subsequent data searches have revealed an Ordnance Survey map of the site dated to 1976 which shows this large building running approximately 10m to the east of the existing offices and running almost as far south as Castle Street and the Scheduled Monument boundary (Figure 10). This map depicts the now-disappeared building depot with the rectangular office block appearing to serve this building. An access road runs from Castle Street into the south side of the site. An online map from 1969 shows the building to be a beer and soft drinks bottling plant. The present owner has no recollection of this now-demolished building but does remember laying the present tarmac car park surface in 1985 by which time this building was definitely not present (pers. comm. G Banks).

Previous Archaeological Work

Although no known archaeological work has taken place within the boundaries of the proposed development site a number of evaluations have taken place on adjacent sites.

In 1966 a small area to the east of the present development site was reduced by around 2.6 metres to allow access into the cellar of the bottling factory (Clay and Pollard 1994, pp.43-44) The results of the reduction were examined to reveal evidence of pits cutting into the natural clay substratum (at around 57mOD). Of more significance to this report was the discovery of a medieval ditch approximately 5m deep and 4m wide on an east to west alignment. This seems more than likely to be the castle bailey ditch.

A programme of archaeological evaluation was undertaken by ULAS in 2001 and 2004 in advance of the construction of the student accommodation complex to the east and north-east of the proposed development site (Thomas 2001 and Score 2004). The results of the work concluded that, despite large areas of cellaring and building activity, there were still significant areas of surviving Roman and medieval archaeology.

In 2001 the car park of a former exhibition centre immediately to the east of the development site exposed surviving Roman archaeological deposits only 0.75m (approx. 58 – 59mOD) below the existing ground level. Most of the deposits were located towards the eastern edges of the 2001 site with survival levels reducing the closer the trenches got to the present development site (Figure 11). A similar result was obtained with medieval deposits although no sign of the possible castle bailey ditch was seen in this phase of work.

In 2004 an evaluation took place immediately to the north-east of the present site on the corner of Saint Nicholas Circle and Southgates. Once again well-stratified Roman and medieval deposits were observed at a depth of around 58 – 59mOD. The 2004 evaluation was well to the north of the projected line of the bailey ditch.

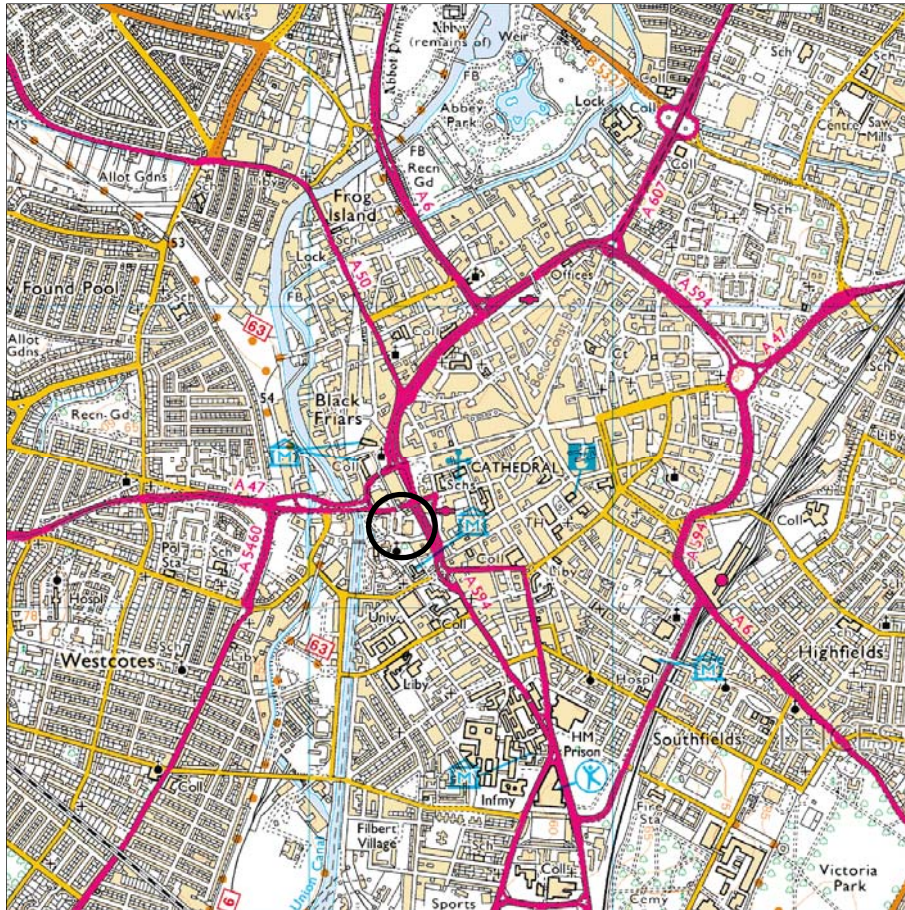


Figure 1 Site location within Leicester City Centre
Site highlighted in black circle

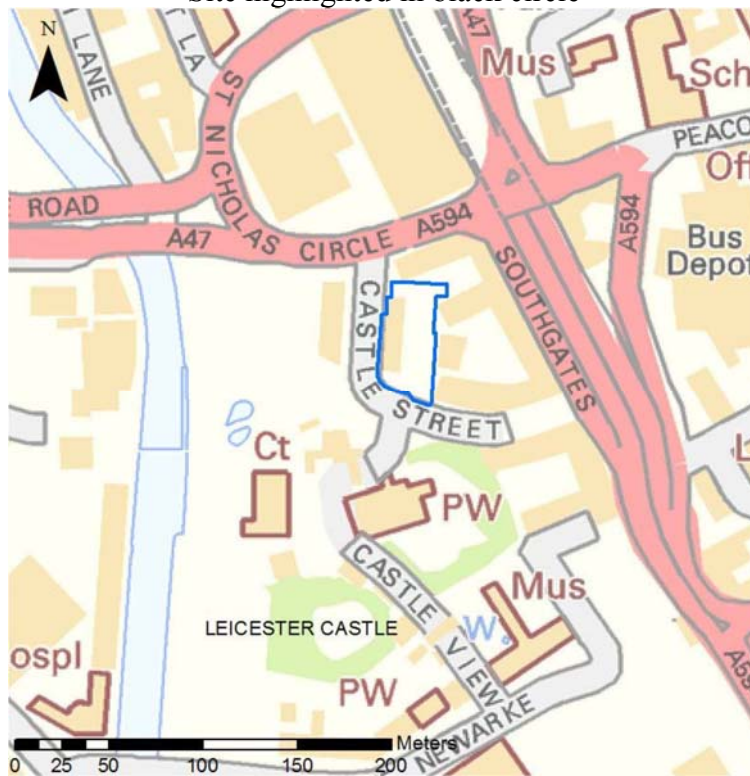


Figure 2 Site location
Site boundary shown in blue



Figure 3 Existing site plan
Plan supplied by client. North to top of plan. Castle Street highlighted in yellow



Figure 4 Site viewed from Castle Street
Looking south-east. Entrance to site car park on left of picture



Figure 5 Car park
Looking south



Figure 6 Development proposals
Plan (ground floor) supplied by client. North to top of picture

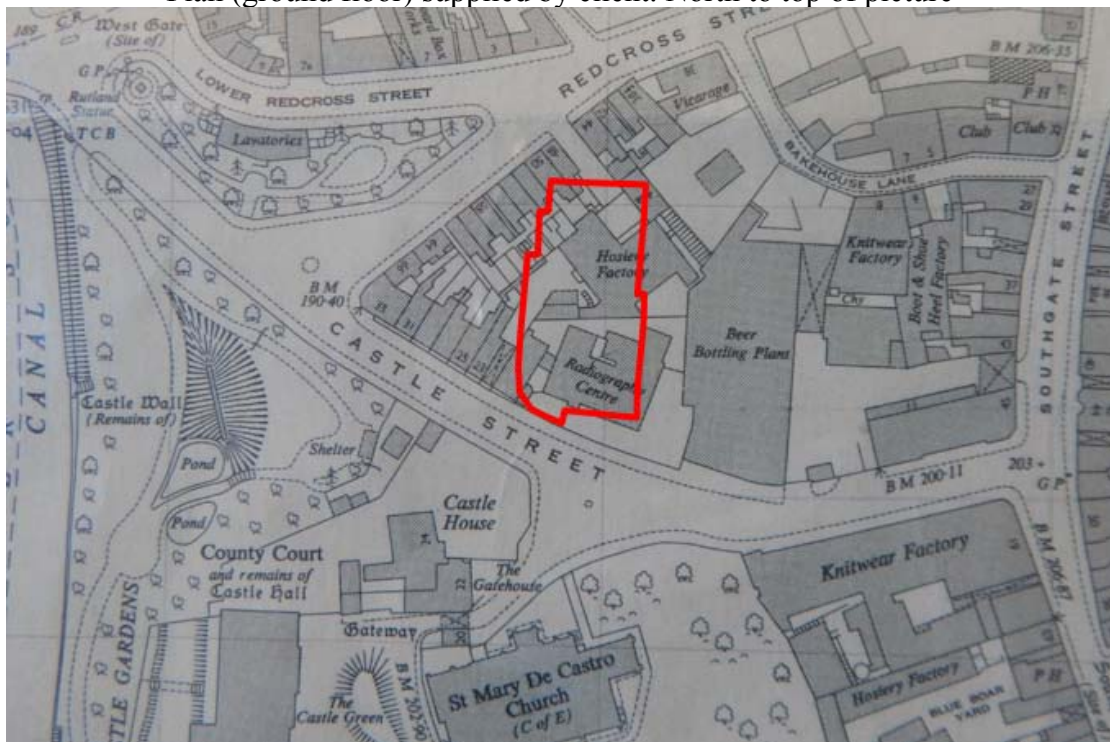


Figure 7 Detail from 1955 Ordnance Survey map
Sheet SK 5804. Site highlighted

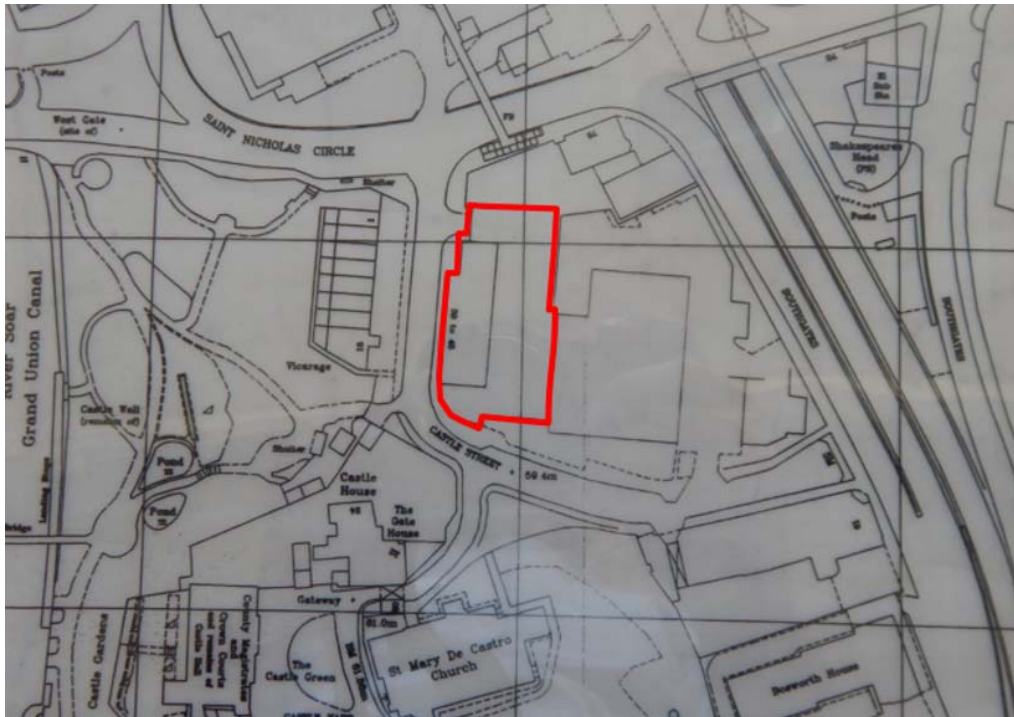


Figure 8 Detail from 2002 Ordnance Survey map Sheet SK5804SW. Site showing offices and car park highlighted

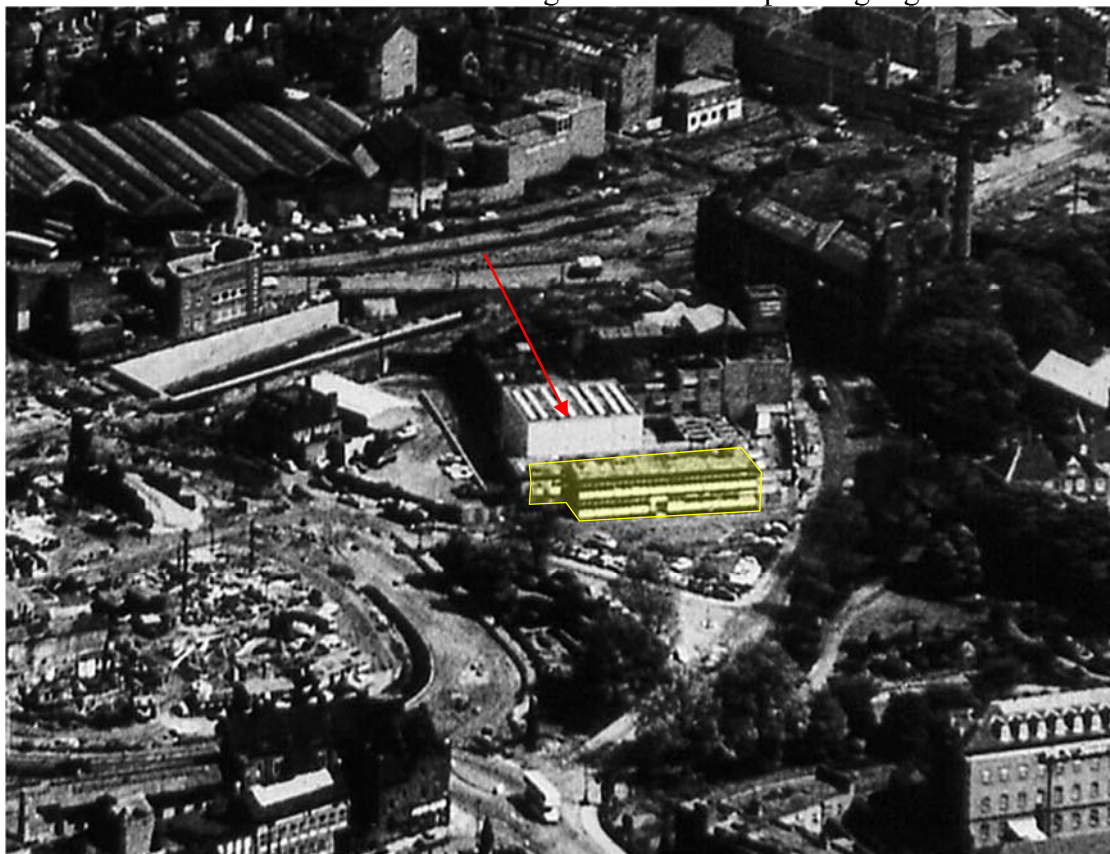


Figure 9 Aerial photograph taken around 1965 Looking east. Existing office block highlighted in yellow. Large building not shown on available maps arrowed. Saint Nicholas Circle under construction bottom left

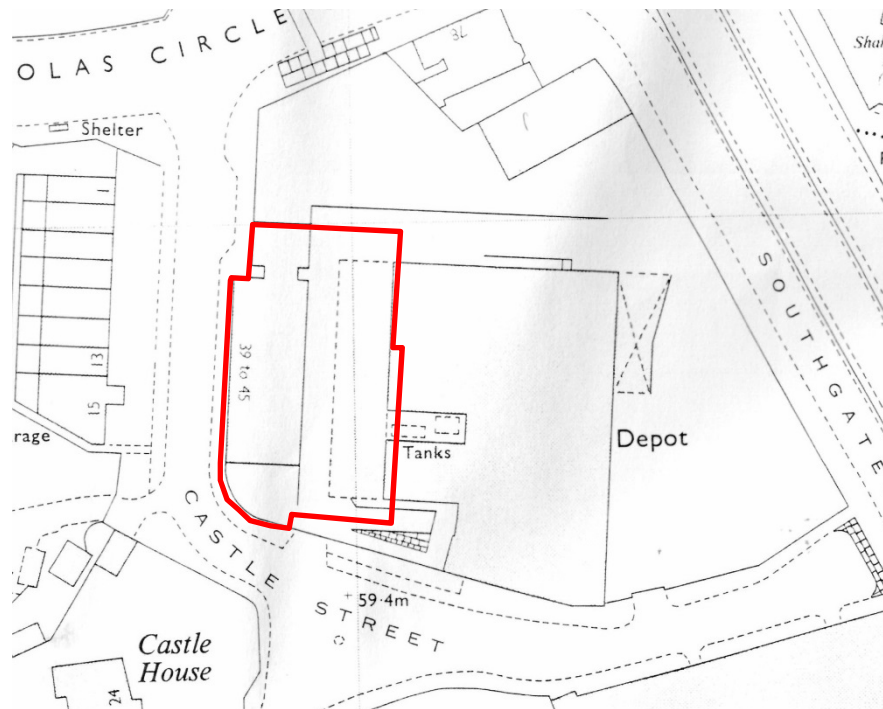


Figure 10 Detail from 1976 Ordnance Survey map Sheet SK5804 SW



Figure 11 Location of 2001 evaluation trenches
Current development site highlighted

Objectives

The overall objectives and research agenda are detailed in the ULAS Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for *Archaeological Evaluation at 39-41 Castle Street, Leicester* (ULAS 2018).

The specific objectives for this programme of work 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 proposed ground works.
- To establish the relationship of any remains found to the surrounding contemporary landscape.
- To recover artefacts and ecofacts to compare with other assemblages and results
- To produce an archive and report of the results.
- To ascertain the nature and extent of any further mitigation works required prior to development commencing.

Methodology

The methodology and recording system used throughout the evaluation is discussed in detail in the ULAS WSI. For this evaluation a 360⁰ tracked mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket was used under constant archaeological supervision. After marking out the trenches a 0.2m-thick layer of reinforced concrete covering the entire car park was broken through using a pneumatic breaker attached to the excavator. The WSI indicated that three trenches were to be opened with one to be placed within the Scheduled Area to the south of the site (Figure 12) for which Scheduled Monument Consent was granted by the Secretary of State (ref. 00192141 dated 21st June 2018). The presence of a number of live services and pipes meant that severe constraints were placed on the final trench positions such that two of the trenches were shorter than originally specified (Figure 13).

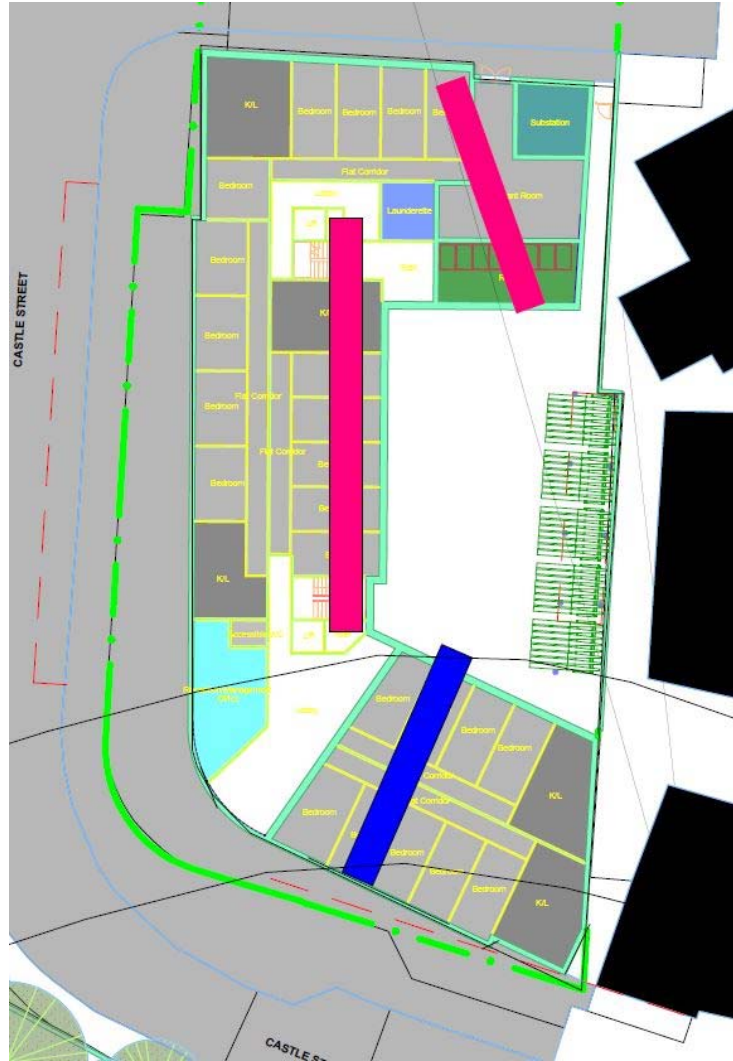


Figure 12 Proposed trench locations
Superimposed over development proposals. Blue trench shows Scheduled Area trench

Results

Trench 1

Trench 1 was placed to run between the office block and a live sewer pipe following a north to south orientation (see Figure 13 above). The trench ran from the south-east corner of the building towards another service pipe running out to join the north to south sewer pipe. Because of these constraints only a 6.1m long by 1.6m wide trench could be excavated.

Once the reinforced concrete and a loose-stone bedding layer had been removed, a 0.85m-thick layer of degraded slate and sandstone rubble contained within a yellow-brown silty sand matrix was encountered. This layer was very compacted and appeared to have been laid as solid base for the car park surface. No building rubble or rubbish was seen in this homogeneous layer during excavation. Beneath this layer was an approximately 0.25m-thick layer of densely packed mid-grey slate and sandstone debris. Again this layer was quite clean with no building rubble or other material within it. Removal of this layer exposed a deposit of broken brick rubble with many lumps of reinforced concrete and other modern debris including an aluminium Coca Cola can (Figs 14 to 16). This layer continued down to 2.09m below car park surface level at which it was decided to halt machine excavation due to the trench's proximity to the building (1.1m away). A small hand-dug sondage continued for a further 0.2m before a large block of reinforced concrete prevented any further digging. It is not known how much deeper this layer continues for.



Figure 14 Trench 1 at final depth
Looking south. 1m scale

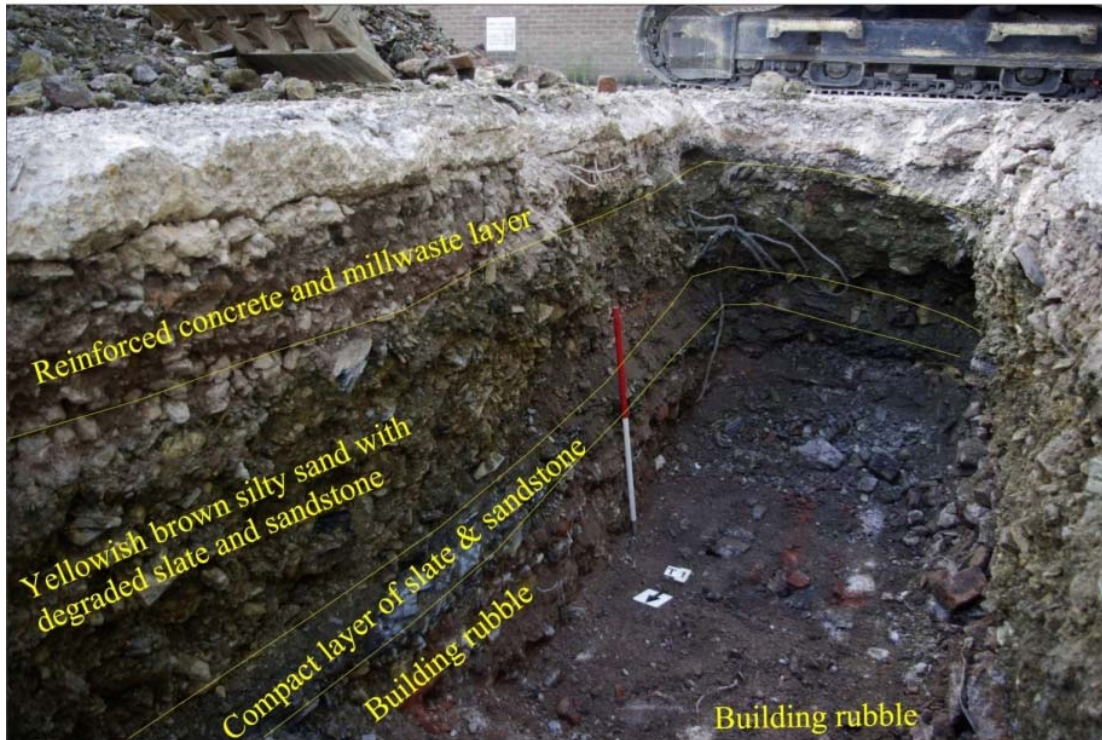


Figure 15 Trench 1 deposits
Looking south-east. 1m scale

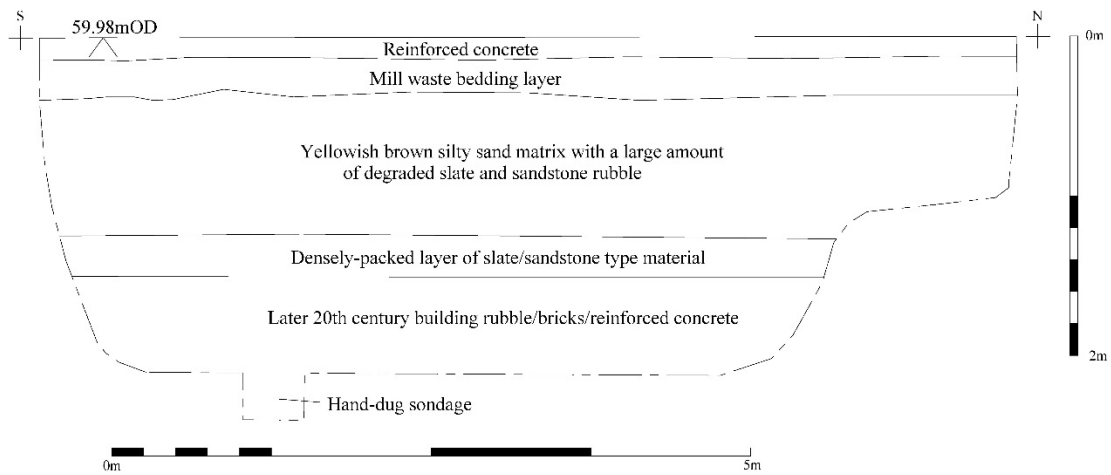


Figure 16 Trench 1 east-facing section
Current ground level at 59.98mOD

Trench 2

Trench 2 was placed in the south-west corner of the site within the Scheduled Monument area (see Figure 13). It was hoped that this location would be able to identify the outer edge of the projected bailey ditch. The trench was placed on a north-east to south-west alignment between a BT cable and a live sewer to create a trench 8.35m long by 1.7m wide (Figure 17).

After breaking through the reinforced concrete and bedding layer (approximately 0.4m thick) a loose and disturbed rubble layer 0.85m thick was encountered. This layer contained a high quantity of modern brick rubble and broken stone. In the centre of the trench, the base of a brick wall projected across this layer. The bricks were laid in a stretcher bond with red bricks laid as a base with seven courses of blues on top. The bricks appeared to be quite modern mass-produced bricks dating to the second half of the 20th century. The wall ran on a north to south alignment and coincided with the step in the site boundary wall. The 1969 Digimap image shows an access gateway and wall in this location which would suggest that the wall in this trench is likely to be part of this. On the eastern side of the wall was a thick reinforced concrete beam against which the wall appeared to be built (Figure 18).

The rubble layer beneath the concrete was excavated down to 1.3m below current ground level on the eastern side of the excavated wall. Since the rubble was so loose and because of the need to avoid damage to the nearby sewer pipe, it was decided not to excavate any deeper at this end of the trench. On the western side of the wall the loose rubble extended down as far as a second layer of reinforced concrete laid on a sheet of polythene indicating that neither it nor the overlying rubble was particularly old. Breaking through the 0.3m-thick layer of concrete exposed an approximately 0.6m-thick layer of a dark brown silty clay matrix with a lots of brick rubble within it very similar in nature to the lower layer seen in Trench 1. An earthenware drainpipe with a disused cable was seen running through this layer suggesting that it is of probable mid-20th-century date. The cut for the brick wall could also be seen cutting into this layer. Another demolition layer with a lot of brick and sandstone rubble within an orangey sandy silty matrix extended below the dark brown clay layer and continued down to 2.95m below ground level.

At 2.95m below current ground/car park level the rubble layer ended to reveal a dark grey brown silty clay deposit with frequent flecks of charcoal. This homogeneous deposit had a firm and almost waxy texture (Figure 19). At nearly 3m down the trench could not be entered safely and site constraints meant that the trench could not be widened therefore excavation stopped at this point. The machine bucket removed a thin spit of this material for inspection but no finds, modern or otherwise, were recovered. It is possible that this may be the upper layer of the backfilled bailey ditch although this cannot be positively stated.

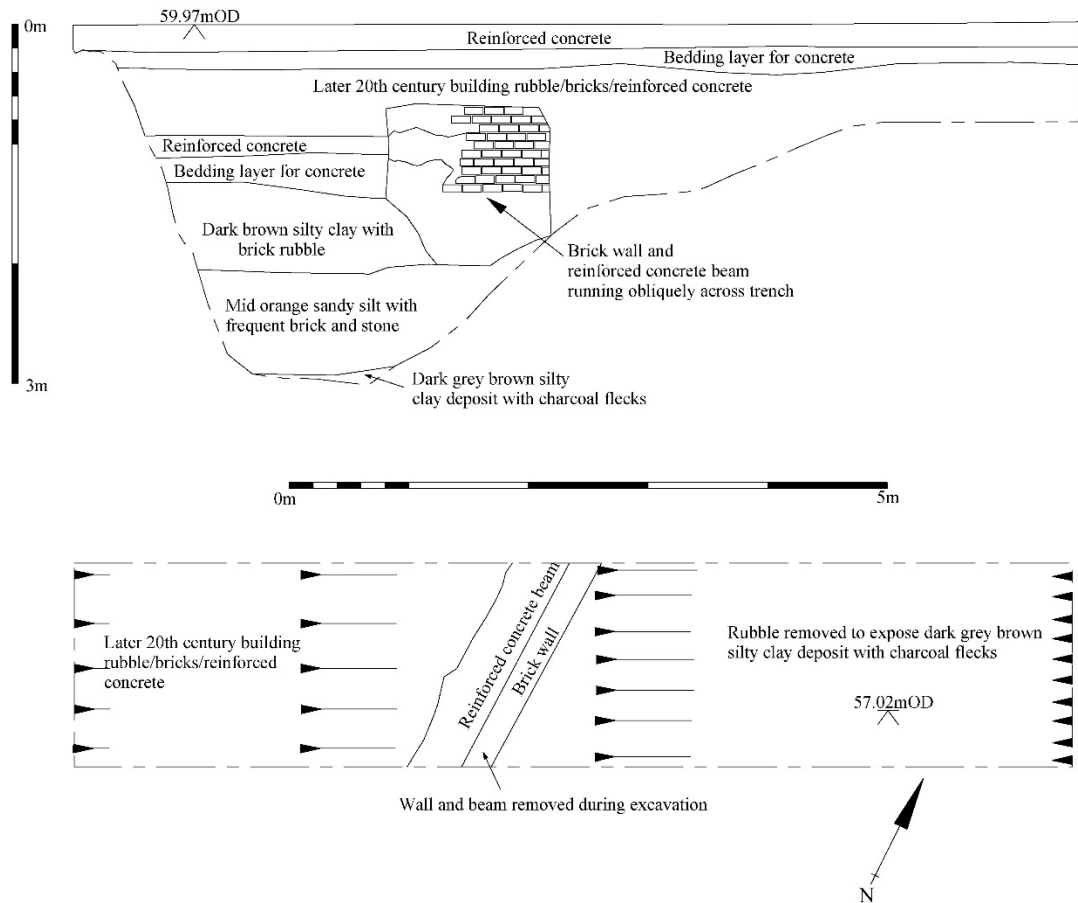


Figure 17 Trench 2 SE facing section and plan
Current ground level at 59.97mOD



Figure 18 Trench 2
Looking north-east. 1m scales. Note that the wall has been broken through and removed



Figure 19 Trench 2 NW facing section
Looking south-east. 1m scales

Trench 3

Trench 3 was placed in the north-eastern corner of the site close to a large tree planted within a large rectangular brick planter. There were fewer constraints with services for this trench allowing a 10.2m by 1.65m trench to be excavated. As with the other trenches this trench was covered in a thick layer of reinforced concrete laid on a bed of mill waste type material. Beneath this was a layer of building rubble and rocky debris with later 20th style bricks and waste throughout. At between 0.86m and 0.92m below current ground level a solid concrete foundation wall with reinforced piles was exposed running from north to south along the trench (Figure 20). This was on the same alignment as the adjacent office block 10m to the west and is the foundation of the large building shown in Figure 9 above. The building rubble and rocky debris continued down either side of the foundation but the decision was made not to excavate any deeper in this trench (Figure 21).

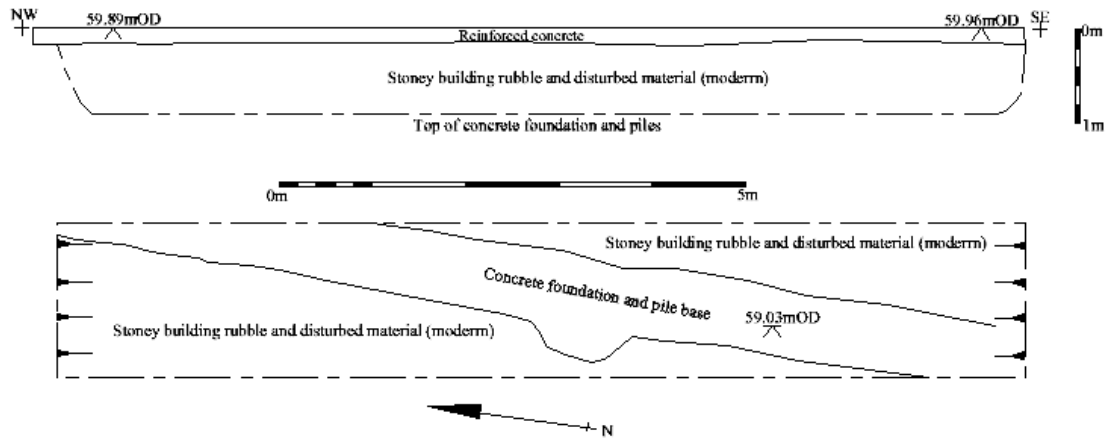


Figure 20 Trench 3 section and plan
Current ground level at 59.89mOD rising to 59.96mOD



Figure 21 Trench 3
Looking north. 1m scales

Discussion

Despite the expected potential, no archaeological features or deposits were positively identified during this evaluation. The overall impression is that the site has been much more heavily disturbed than had previously been appreciated with the result that any surviving deposits are likely to have been severely truncated

Trench 1 appears to be full of building rubble probably relating to the initial clearance of the 19th century buildings removed in the 1955 demolition phase. The upper layers then seem to be related to the reorganisation and concreting of the present car park following the removal of the large bottling plant in the late 1970s or early 1980s. The ground around Trench 1 may also have been disturbed during the excavation of the 2m deep office block cellar.

There is also the possibility that in the 1960s and 1970s the ground level between the office block and the former bottling plant was lower than it is today. According to the present owner until the late 1990s a brick-built tree planter was located against the north-east corner of the office building and to the west of the existing tree planter. The owner said that when this planter was removed a 2m deep hole was created and, more importantly, that a speed restriction sign attached to the office wall was seen below current ground level. This would suggest that the roadway was significantly lower than at present. It may also explain why blocked doorways were observed in the east wall of the office cellar when a brief inspection of the building was made.

Trench 2 within the Scheduled area gave a possible glimpse of what may be the upper fill of the bailey ditch but at a very truncated depth. The brick wall and concrete beam coincide with, and are likely to be associated with, the 1960s entrance gateway to the site from Castle Street. If vehicles were entering site from the street it would suggest that the ground level may be built up now but was probably at same height as the road hence the second layer of reinforced concrete.

The rubble layers below the second layer of concrete in Trench 2 are probably debris from the demolished 19th century buildings. These layers cover the homogenous dark brown fill seen at the base of the trench. The view of this deposit was extremely limited but it did not appear to contain any building debris so it could be archaeological in nature although this is by no means certain.

Trench 3 was excavated down to the top of the concrete foundation base for the large bottling plant building in place between the mid-1960s to the later 1970s. The excavation work in 1966 suggests that this building had a cellar but there is every indication that the ground on either side of the foundation will be disturbed.

Overall, the site seems to have undergone a large amount of disturbance since the late 1950s. The areas around Trenches 1 and 3 has been shown to be disturbed down to at 2.3m below current ground level by the office block, access road and bottling plant. The level of disturbance almost certainly continues down below this depth. Trench 2, within the scheduled area, indicates that disturbance is likely to have taken place down to around 3m below car park level and around 2.3m below the pavement level of Castle Street.

Archive

The archive consists of:

This report,
3 pro-forma trench recording sheets,
84 digital photographs,
3 A4 contact sheets of the digital images,
1 DVD containing the digital images.

Publication

A summary of the work will be submitted for publication in the *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* in due course. A record of the project will also be submitted to the OASIS project. OASIS is an online index to archaeological grey literature.

Acknowledgements

The project was managed by R. Buckley. The fieldwork was carried out by A Hyam, D Clark and G Isset. Thanks are due to the site owner Mr G Banks for his cooperation and supplying of background information during the project.

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ULAS, 2018. *Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Evaluation 39-41 Castle Street, Leicester*.

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Appendix 1 OASIS Information

PROJECT DETAILS	Oasis No	universi1-323351		
	Project Name	An Archaeological Evaluation at 39-41 Castle Street, Leicester		
	Start/end dates of field work	09-07-2018 - 13-07-2018		
	Previous/Future Work	No/ Not known		
	Project Type	Evaluation by trial trench		
	Site Status	Scheduled monument (part of site)		
	Current Land Use	Offices and car park		
	Monument Type/Period	Possible bailey ditch/medieval		
	Significant Finds/Period	None/ None		
	Development Type	Residential		
	Reason for Investigation	NPPF & Ancient Monuments and Areas Act 1979		
	Position in the Planning Process	Pre-planning condition		
	Planning Ref.			
PROJECT LOCATION	Site Address/Postcode	39-41 Castle Street, Leicester. LE1 5WN		
	Study Area	1400m ²		
	Site Coordinates	SK 5826 0426		
	Height OD	59m OD		
PROJECT CREATORS	Organisation	ULAS		
	Project Brief Originator	Local Planning Authority (LCC)		
	Project Design Originator	ULAS		
	Project Manager	R Buckley		
	Project Director/Supervisor	A Hyam		
	Sponsor/Funding Body	Developer / Victoria Hall		
PROJECT ARCHIVE		Physical	Digital	Paper
	Recipient	NA	LCC MusService	LCCMusService
	ID (Acc. No.)		Y.A18.2018	Y.A18.2018
	Contents		Photos	Field Notes
PROJECT BIBLIOGRAPHY	Type	Grey Literature (unpublished)		
	Title	An Archaeological Evaluation at 39-41 Castle St, Leicester.		
	Author	A Hyam		
	Other bibliographic details	ULAS Report No 2018-126		
	Date	2018		
	Publisher/Place	University of Leicester Archaeological Services / University of Leicester		
	Description	Developer Report A4 pdf		

Appendix 2 Trench dimensions

	Length	Width	Maximum depth	Lowest depth of trench OD
Trench 1	6.1m	1.6m	2.29m	57.69m
Trench 2	8.35m	1.7m	2.95m	57.02m
Trench 3	10.2m	1.65m	0.92m	58.11m



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