



UNIVERSITY OF  
**LEICESTER**

Archaeological Services

**Archaeological Attendance and Recording during groundworks at Brookfield  
House, London Road, Leicester LE21RQ**

**NGR: SK: 60300 02878**

**Claire Brown**



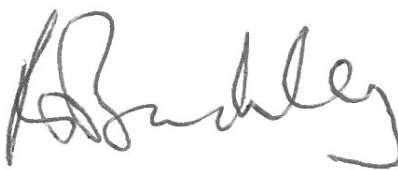
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**Client: University of Leicester.....**

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## **Archaeological Attendance and Recording during groundworks at Brookfield House, London Road, Leicester LE21RQ**

**Claire Brown**

### **Summary**

*An Archaeologist was in attendance for groundworks undertaken on 6th, 23rd and 29th August, 2018 by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on land at Brookfield House, London Road, Leicester on behalf of the University of Leicester. The fieldwork was a post-determination requirement in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Section 12 on a planning application (Planning Ref: 20171883) for the demolition of parts of buildings, construction of single-storey and three-storey extensions to the side.*

*The Historic Environment Record (HER) for Leicester indicates that there are no known archaeological remains within the assessment area itself, and the Victorian building in the grounds is not listed. However the Roman Road, the Via Devana (or Gartree Road), is postulated to run 300m to the north of the site, south-east to north-west into Leicester.*

*Although it was built on open fields in 1876, Brookfield House and grounds have been subjected to considerable additions and alterations since then, so that the area of the watching brief has been very disturbed and (following the demolition of the buildings overlying the development area) was covered with building demolition material and made ground.*

*Two adjacent areas were monitored, the first an oval area for a proposed lecture theatre and the second area, on a higher terrace above it, further rooms and offices. The foundations of the former were excavated and then unfortunately the base covered with a concrete screed before the archaeologist was able to assess for archaeological remains. The sections in the lower foundations uncovered evidence of pre-existing brick structures that penetrated below ground level c. 0.50m but did not pre-date the 19th century*

*The higher area was only excavated by the developers to sufficient depth to reveal natural ground in only a few very small areas, which were clear of archaeology, while the rest of the foundations were too shallow to reach natural ground.*

The report will be archived under accession number Y.A.16.2018.

### **Introduction**

In accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Section 12 *Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment* this document forms the report for archaeological attendance and recording during groundworks on land at Brookfield House, London Road, Leicester, LE21AQ (Figs 1 and 2)



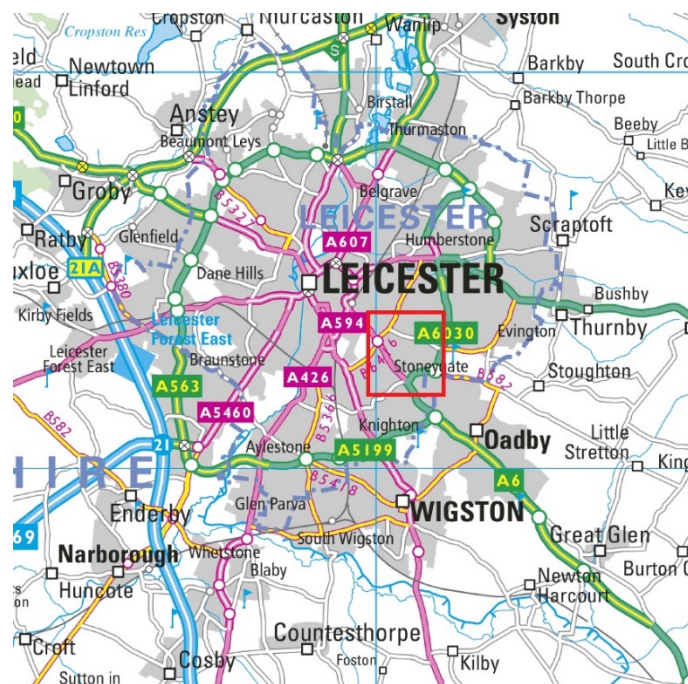


Figure 1: Site location.....

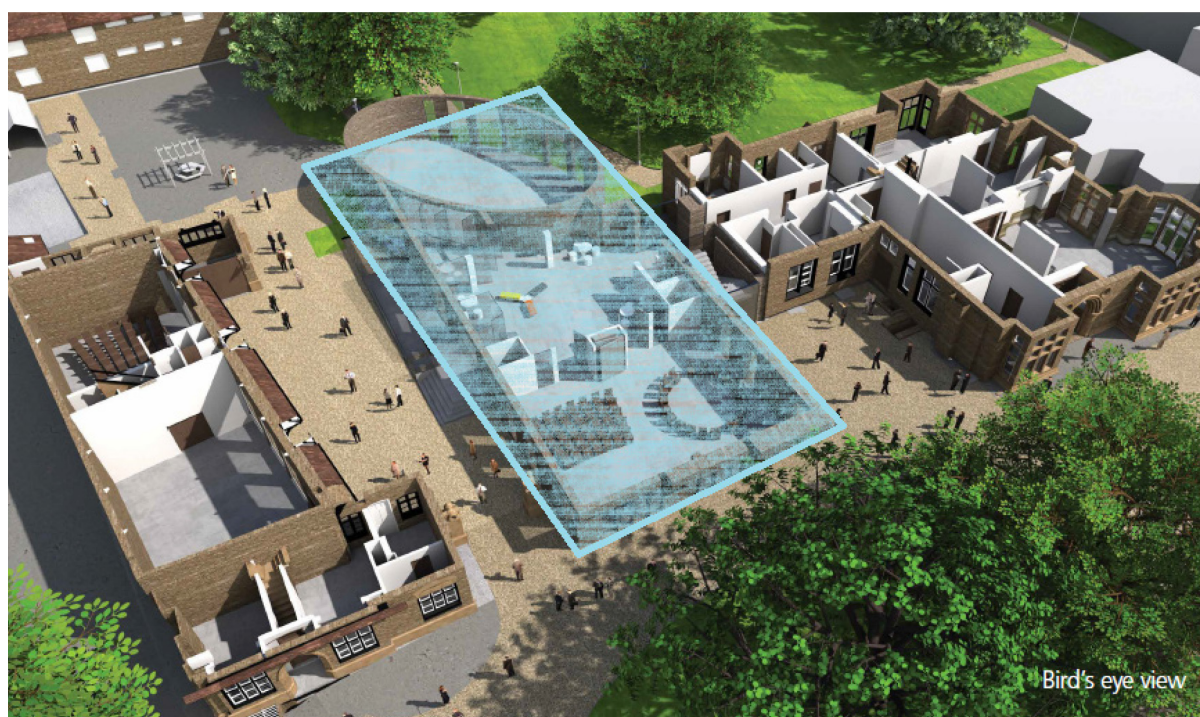


Figure 2: Proposed Development (Provided by UOL) with watching brief area in pale blue

The watching brief was required as a condition of the planning consent (Planning reference: 20171883) for the construction of a lecture theatre and associated buildings.

The Planning Archaeologist for Leicester City Council as advisor to the planning authority, specified the need for a scheme of work comprising archaeological observation, investigation, recording, analysis and publication during any groundworks in order to mitigate the potential impact of the development on any such archaeological remains as might be present.



## Site Description, Topography and Geology

The development area lies approximately 2km south-east of Leicester City Centre on the A6 London road, and approximately 1km east of the main campus of the University of Leicester. The site covers approximately 3.03ha and lies at a height of 80m aOD.

The superficial geology is Thrussington Member Diamacton clay, while the bedrock is Blue Lias formation – Mudstone.

The site lies set back 100 metres from London Road, between Brookfield House and the stable buildings, where pre-existing brick structures have been demolished and the ground formed into two terraces, the higher of which is therefore made ground of nearly 2 metres in depth, while the lower is made ground and possible basement structures to a depth of c 1.50m.



Figure 3: Site looking west, showing pilings and area of made ground under orange barriers.

Brookfield House was built as a small country house in 1876, as the first house in Leicester to be faced in half-timbering. It was built on what were open fields on the outskirts of Leicester at the time. The development area lies between the house and the stable block to the west (Fig.2), where 20th century additions to the house have been demolished to make space for a lecture theatre complex and associated rooms.



Figure 4: Lower area of site prior to excavations with pilings in situ, looking north.

### **Aims and Methods**

The overall objectives and research agenda are detailed in the ULAS Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for an Archaeological Watching Brief at Brookfield house (LaCombe, 2018).

The main objectives 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 establish the relationship of any remains found to the surrounding contemporary landscape and to advance understanding of the heritage assets.
- To recover artefacts and ecofacts to compare with other assemblages and results
- To produce an archive and report of any results.

Within the stated project aims, the principal objective of the recording was to establish the nature, extent, date, depth, and significance of the heritage assets within their local and regional context.

### ***Draft Research themes***

The archaeological scheme of work had the potential to contribute to the objectives identified in the WSI and derived from *East Midlands Heritage: An Updated Research Agenda and Strategy for the Historic Environment of the East Midlands* (Knight *et al.* 2012) and *The Archaeology of the East Midlands: An Archaeological Resource Assessment and Research*



*Agenda* (Cooper 2006). This watching brief therefore had the potential to contribute to the following specific research agenda topics:

***Neolithic and Early to Middle Bronze Age***

3.1.1 Can we further refine lithic artefact chronologies within the region?

***Roman***

*Roads and Waterways:*

5.7.1. Can the chronology of road construction and links between road building and campaigns of conquest be clarified?

5.7.4. How many roads and waterways have impacted upon established communities and how may roads have influenced urban morphology?

***Post Medieval***

8.1.2. How were towns organised and planned, and how did population growth impact upon their internal spatial organisation?

8.8.3. Can we identify the changing material culture of the urban and rural poor, the emerging middle classes and the aristocracy?

***Modern***

9.1.3. How have settlements expanded beyond their historic cores (e.g. suburban growth, peripheral housing estates and industrial parks)?

9.2.1. Can we establish a typology of modern buildings, particularly of the twentieth century, and how does this vary regionally?

9.2.2. How have building types changed (e.g. adaption of industrial buildings to new uses) and what has been the impact of building regulations?

9.2.4. To what extent are issues of power, control and status reflected in regional building types?

## **Methodology**

The WSI approved by the City Planning Archaeologist on behalf of the planning authority provided details of the methodology for an archaeological watching brief during groundworks in order to determine the presence/absence, character and extent of archaeological remains.

Prior to the assessment, 20th century brick buildings were demolished and the building material used to build up the ground of the assessment area into two level areas, the southern half being over 1m higher than the northern half. Subsequently concrete pilings of 0.6m width were driven into the ground below the level of the excavations (the base of which was not observed) at 1-2m intervals (Figs 3 and 4).

Excavation was undertaken using a mechanical excavator fitted with a 0.6m toothed ditching bucket.

A photographic record of the investigation was prepared as per WSI. This included photographs illustrating in detail and in general the groundworks as they progressed.

All work was undertaken in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIFA) *Code of Conduct* (2014), and adhered to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (2014) and *Archaeological Excavations* (2014).

## Results

The programme of archaeological observation, investigation and recording (a Watching Brief) consisted of the observation of foundation groundworks associated with the building of a lecture theatre and associated rooms.

General building material and demolition residue characterised the overburden of much of the site. Where the natural substratum was exposed, it was orange-grey silty clay.

The foundation trenches were begun under the observation of the archaeologist, who noted the presence of brick-built structures down to a depth of 1 metre (Fig. 5). The plan provided by the client shows the lower half of the site was the site of outbuildings and a boiler house, partly subterranean (Fig 6, Building 8).



Figure 5: Foundation trench with evidence of brick structures seen in section.





Figure 6: Layout of buildings prior to commencement of groundworks. Provided by Client.

Work was then halted as the ground crew were required to do different work. The archaeologist was to be informed when work recommenced and there was an excavated area to inspect. However this did not happen and when the archaeologist returned to the site the foundations of the lower area had been completed and covered with 0.1m of concrete screed, making archaeological examination of the natural ground impossible (Fig. 6).

Foundation trenches were then begun on the upper section of the site, which had been covered in made ground from the recently demolished buildings. The trenches here were less than 1m and so did not extend below to natural ground (Figs 7 and 8).

Two small areas of the upper half of the site did extend below the made ground to natural but were empty of features (Fig. 9).





Figure 7: Lower area with foundation trenches opened and layered with concrete in the base. Looking north-east.



Figure 8: Foundation trenches in the upper area, looking west towards London Road.





Figure 9: Upper portion of site, looking west towards London Road.



Figure 10: Deeper foundation trench (c1.10m) looking north.

## Discussion and Conclusion

The watching brief at Brookfield House was unfortunately only partially accomplished, as explained above. Nevertheless, previous buildings and foundations on the site, and the groundwork that had been carried out prior to the commencement of the digging of the foundations resulted in low probability for archaeological survival of features. In the lower area of the site there was evidence of previous structures seen in section, however these post-dated the building of the house itself. The upper area of the site had been built up to a depth of over 1m with demolition rubble, and natural ground and any archaeological features were largely protected from the groundworks. Small areas where foundations were deeper did not reveal anything of archaeological significance. There were no finds recovered.

## Archive and Publications

The site archive will be deposited with Leicester City Museums Service under Accession Number Y.A.16.2018.

The archive consists of:

- This report,
- 3 ULAS pro-forma Watching Brief Record sheets,
- One DVD of 18 digital photographs in .jpeg and .tiff format, photographic index in an excel file and pdf\_A copy of this report.

The University of Leicester Archaeological Services supports the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) project. An OASIS record will also be produced and this report will be uploaded onto the Archaeology Data Service website.

## Bibliography

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

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LaCombe, C 2018. *Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Attendance and Recording During Groundworks at Brookfield House, 266 London Road.* ULAS Ref. 18-068

## Appendix: OASIS data entry

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.

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>	<b>Oasis No</b>			
	<b>Project Name</b>	Brookfield House, 266 London Road, Leicester.		
	<b>Start/end dates of field work</b>	6 <sup>th</sup> , 23 <sup>rd</sup> and 29 <sup>th</sup> August 2018		
	<b>Previous/Future Work</b>	No/No		
	<b>Project Type</b>	Recording (Watching Brief)		
	<b>Site Status</b>			
	<b>Current Land Use</b>	Site of demolished buildings		
	<b>Monument Type/Period</b>	Modern		
	<b>Significant Finds/Period</b>	None		
	<b>Reason for Investigation</b>			
	<b>Position in the Planning Process</b>	As Condition		
<b>Planning Ref.</b>	20171883			
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>	<b>Site Address/Postcode</b>	Brookfield House, 266 London Road, LE21RQ		
	<b>Study Area</b>	3.03ha		
	<b>Site Coordinates</b>	SK 60300 02878		
	<b>Height OD</b>	80m aOD		
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	University of Leicester Archaeological Services		
	<b>Project Brief Originator</b>	Leicester City Council		
	<b>Project Design Originator</b>			
	<b>Project Manager</b>	Dr Richard Buckley		
	<b>Project Director/Supervisor</b>	Claire Brown		
	<b>Sponsor/Funding Body</b>	University of Leicester		
<b>PROJECT ARCHIVE</b>		<b>PHYSICAL</b>	<b>PAPER</b>	<b>DIGITAL</b>
	<b>Recipient</b>		Leicester City Museums	Leicester City Museums
	<b>ID (Acc. No.)</b>		<b>Y.A.16.2018</b>	<b>Y.A.16.2018</b>
	<b>Contents</b>		Context Sheet Correspondence Report	Digital photography Spreadsheet Text
<b>PROJECT BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>Type</b>	Grey Literature		
	<b>Title</b>	An Archaeological Watching Brief at Brookfield House, 266 London Road, Leicester LE2 1RQ		
	<b>Author</b>	Brown, C		
	<b>Other bibliographic details</b>	University of Leicester Archaeological Services Report No.		
	<b>Date</b>	2018		
	<b>Publisher/Place</b>	University of Leicester/Leicester		
	<b>Description</b>	A4 pdf_A developer report		





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