

**An Archaeological Watching Brief at Duns
Lane, Leicester (SK 5803 0416)**

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For: De Montfort University

Checked by Project Manager

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An Archaeological Watching Brief at Duns Lane, Leicester (SK 58030416) Centre.

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Figures

Fig. 1. Site location map, Reproduced from the 1996 Ordnance Survey Map, with the permission of the controller of HMSO Crown copyright. ULAS Licence No AL 1000211

Fig. 2. Location of ground investigation trial pits 1-11 within development area. (Not to scale)

1.2 Archaeological and Historical background

The development is located to the west of the walled town of Roman and medieval Leicester, in an area of high archaeological potential for Roman and medieval suburban occupation, industrial activity and burials.

The Sites and Monuments Record lists in the vicinity of the site excavations only c 50 m to the south east at Great Holme Street (SK 579042) and to the north at West Bridge (SK 5803 0433). The Great Holme Street excavation is adjacent to the presumed line of the Roman Fosse way and had intensive Roman occupation, two late first century pottery kilns, two stone lined wells and evidence of a late Roman cemetery in the form of a cremation and ten inhumations. The West Bridge excavation to the north revealed Roman inhumations, whilst a small stretch of possible military style ditch suggested the presence of a small fortlet on the western approach to the city controlling the river crossing. Medieval activity recorded at both sites included pits and ditches.

2. Aims and Methods

2.1 The aim of the watching brief was to identify and record archaeological deposits, and establish the character, extant and date range for any such deposits through the archaeological observation of the groundworks undertaken, examination of the spoil removed for artefacts and where appropriate examination and recording of the trench sections. The work adhered to the to the University s Health and Safety policy, and followed the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*.

2.2 The author visited the site on the 28 th and 29 th of July 2005, when machining was carried out using a JCB mechanical digger with a 0.6m toothed bucket to excavate in level spits under continuous archaeological supervision.

3. Results

3.1. Eleven trial pits were excavated each approximately 0.5m x 3m. They reached depths of 3.5 metres in general, with the exception of test pit 1 which was aborted due to hazardous access. The sides of all of the trial pits were deemed to be too sheer and unstable for safe access. The basic stratigraphy across the site consisted of layers of made up ground above subsoils of sterile alluviation resting over unconsolidated superficial deposits of graded red and orange clayey sand gravels.

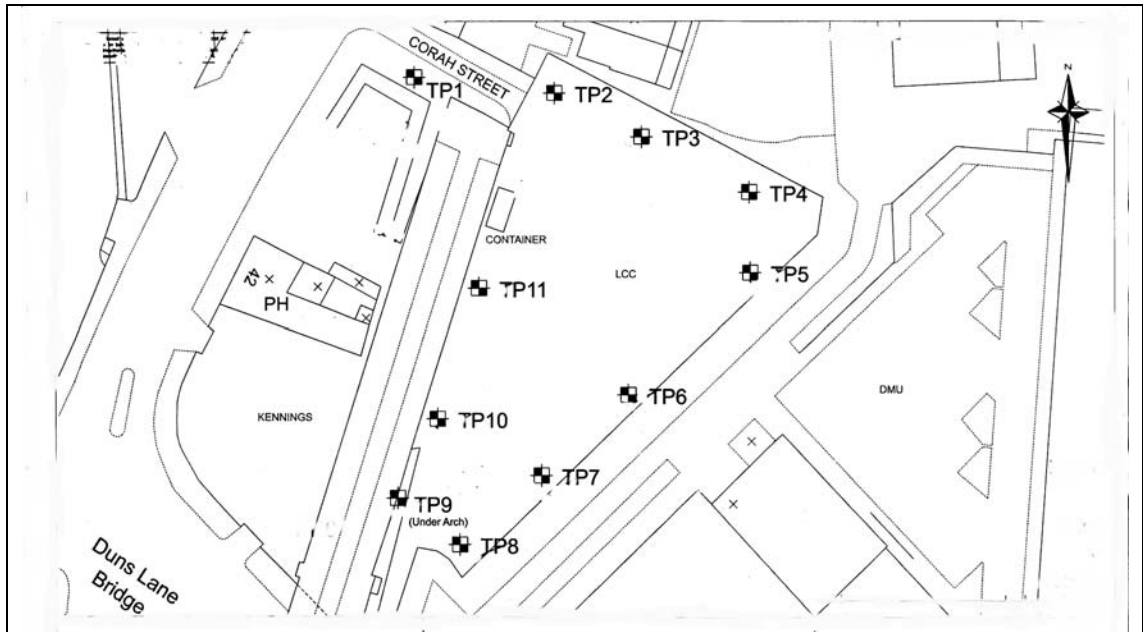


Fig. 2: Location of test pits 1-11 within development area. (Not too scale)

Trial pit 1

This was aborted due to close proximity to live services running east - west across the north of the site.

Trial pit 2

This was aligned east - west. Observation of the section revealed 0.15m of modern make up material, above a grey black topsoil extending to a depth of 0.8m from the surface. Below this lay a band of greeny brown clayey silt, covering a further layer of grey green clayey silt. From this deposit potentially undisturbed *in situ* Roman deposits were seen as judged from pottery retrieved from removed spoil. This pottery consisted of an early Roman (late 1st to early second) domestic assemblage of vessels including samian bowls, jars, and Roman tile. Below this layer were observed successive layers of natural orange brown clayey sand and gravel, over orange brown sandy gravel over yellow brown sandy gravel.

Trial pit 3

This was aligned east - west. Observations of the section revealed modern make up material to 0.5m below ground surface. Below this a grey black topsoil similar to test pit 2 was observed, followed by a layer of cassy green silt. This produced a small collection of Roman tile and pottery. Below this were successive layers of natural orange brown clayey sand and gravel, over orange brown sandy gravel over yellow brown sandy gravel.

Trial pit 4

This aligned north - south. Observation of the sections revealed modern, made ground composed of hardcore down to 0.5m from the ground surface and modern building debris a further 0.6m down to 1.10m. Below this was a band of yellow brown clay sitting on top of black topsoil. Below this were green cassy silts and then clay gravels and extending below this yellow brown sandy gravel to 3.5m.

Trial pit 5

This was aligned north - south, parallel with the site's eastern perimeter. Observations of the sections and spoil revealed modern cellarage aligned with the contemporary eastern perimeter wall of the site. At c. 3.6m water seepage prevented further excavation.

Trial pit 6

This was aligned north - south parallel with the sites eastern perimeter. Observations of the sections and spoil revealed modern cellarage aligned with the contemporary eastern perimeter wall of the site. At 3.2 m a band of yellow brown band of clay was seen overlying brown orange gravels.

Trial pit 7.

This was aligned north-south parallel with the sites eastern perimeter wall. Observations of the sections and spoil revealed modern cellarage aligned with the contemporary eastern perimeter wall of the site. At 3.8 m below ground surface likely alluvial yellow brown clay over alluvial brown silts were observed, with signs of hydrocarbon contamination.

Trial pit 8

This was aligned north - south, parallel with the site's eastern perimeter wall. At 4.7m below ground surface, yellow brown clay was observed over black alluvial, probable riverine, silts. The latter were highly humic. Probable gravels were heard as the machine bucket hit them but not observed below this depth.

Trial pit 9.

This was aligned east - west and positioned under the sole accessible viaduct arch of the Great Central rail - line forming the west edge of the site. Observations of the spoil and sections revealed modern made up ground down to c1.75m, then light yellow brown alluvial silts down to a minimum of 3.4m.

Trial pit 10.

This was aligned north - south. Observations of the section indicated modern made up ground down to 0.8 m, then postmedieval garden silts to approximately 1m brown silts between 1 and 2 m. Below this lay a layer of cassy green silt sitting at 3.1 m depth on top of red brown sandy clay gravels.

Trial pit 11

This was aligned north - south and observation of sections revealed modern made up ground down to 2.95m below ground surface sitting upon red brown sandy gravel at 2.9m to a depth of 3.3 m.

4. Discussion and Conclusion.

Archaeological observation of the ground investigation trial pits has confirmed the presence of limited Roman deposits in the north - west corner of the area, seen in trial pit 2 and trial pit 3. It is difficult to determine the nature and extent of the deposits, in the absence of excavation. The pottery suggests typical domestic refuse; bowls, flagons, jars and beakers dated to the late first and early second century. The Roman roofing tile is indicative of building debris. These deposits may relate to Roman activity recorded to the north and the southwest in the West Bridge excavations and the Great Holme Street site excavations.

5. Archive

This archive will be held by Leicester City Museums, Service, Accession number A5 2005 and contains the following:

- 1) watching brief report 2005-138.
- 2) 1 archive box of Roman ceramic finds.
and Romano –British tile,
- 3) watching brief record sheets
- 4) site plan
- 5) photographic index
- 6) 1set colour slides
- 7) 1set black and white slides
- 8) 1 cd of digital photos.
- 9) 1 contact sheet digital photos

6. Acknowledgements

Fieldwork was carried out by the author, on behalf of De Montfort University. The pottery was analysed by Nick Cooper of ULAS. Richard Buckley also of ULAS managed the project. I am grateful to Ms Fiona Simmons of White Young and Green Consultants and Mr Michael Moat of De Montfort University for their cooperation with the archaeological observation of relevant ground investigations.

7. References

Britannia Volume 7, 1976 . Roman Britain in 1976 p 327

Britannia Volume 8, 1977. Roman Britain in 1977 p 392-3

Britannia Volume 9, 1978 Roman Britain in 1978 p 435

Buckley R. 2005 *Design Specification for a watching brief during ground investigations at Duns Lane , Leicester, ULAS Report 05-176-01*

Clay P, and Pollard R, 1994 *Iron Age and Roman Occupation in the West Bridge Area, Leicester Excavations 1962-1971*, Leicestershire Archaeological Unit, Leicester.

Pollard R.J. 1994 The Great Holme St Pottery Kilns: the products.

Transactions of The Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society 1974-1975 Volume 50, p57-58.

Transactions of The Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society 1975-1976 Volume 51, p59.

Transactions of The Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society 1976-1977 Volume 52, p86-87.

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Appendix.1

Ceramic finds from Watching Brief at Duns Lane, Leicester A5.2005

Nicholas J. Cooper

Roman Pottery

A total of 33 sherds of Roman pottery weighing 695g was retrieved from two test pits 2 and 3 as catalogued below. The assemblage has been identified by fabric and form according to the established county and national type series (Pollard 1994, Tomber and Dore 1998) and quantified by sherd count and weight. This archive record exists as an excel database, the analysis of which is summarised below.

Romano-British Pottery from DunsLane A5.2005.								
Cut	Context	fabric	NRFRC	Form	Type	Décor	No.Sherds	Weight
Test Pit 2	Subsoil	SamianSG		Bowl	Drag 29	veg scroll	1	23
Test Pit 2	Subsoil	WW2		flagon			1	41
Test Pit 2	Subsoil	OW2		bowl	carinated		5	89
Test Pit 2	Subsoil	OW3		jar	necked		7	161
Test Pit 2	Subsoil	GW3		jar	necked		2	45
Test Pit 2	Subsoil	GW3		beaker		barbdot	2	15
Test Pit 2	Subsoil	GW3		beaker	evertrim		1	6
Test Pit 2	Subsoil	GW3		jar		barbdot	1	12
Test Pit 2	Subsoil	GW3		jar		barbdot	1	9
Test Pit 2	Subsoil	GW3		bowl	carinated	inciseline	1	10
Test Pit 2	Subsoil	GW3		jar			1	31
Test Pit 2	Subsoil	GW3		jar			1	52
Test Pit 2	Subsoil	GW3		jar	necked		1	34
Test Pit 2	Subsoil	GW6		jar		rusticated	1	22
Test Pit 2	Subsoil	GW6		Bowl	Tshaperim		3	62
Subtotal							29	612
Test Pit 3		BB1		jar	HB12	acc.latt	1	28
Test Pit 3		BB1		bowl	HB38		1	23
		GW3		jar		acc.latt	1	4
		GW6		jar			1	28
Subtotal							4	83
Total							33	695

The majority of the material came from a subsoil layer in Test Pit 2, which appears to comprise a fairly coherent group dating to the later first or early second century. The most diagnostic vessel is a Form 29 samian bowl from South Gaul dating from AD 50-70. The remainder of the group comprises a mixture of jars bowls and beakers in grey (GW), white (WW) and oxidised (OW) wares with barbotine dot being the most common decorative technique on the grey ware vessels. This evidence, combined with the lack of BB1, would indicate that the group was deposited no later than c. 150, and quite possibly several decades earlier.

Only four sherds came from Test Pit 3 but included two vessels in BB1 dating to the middle decades of the second century.

Roman Tile

A group of 37 fragments of Roman tile weighing 14kg was retrieved from Test Pit 2. Unusual amongst the group was a fragment of flat tile with incised lattice on both surfaces, and two other fragments of tegulae with the same lattice, in one case on the sanded surface as well as the upper surface, executed ante-firing and indicating the need for keying into mortar. Otherwise the group represents typical building debris, perhaps representing selected re-use (due to low number of imbreces) of reclaimed material.

Form	Frag	Weight (g)
Tegula	21	5918
Imbrex	3	1119
Wall	12	6348
Incised Flat	1	621
Total	37	14006

Test Pit 3 yielded two fragments of tegula tile weighing 464g.

References

Pollard R.J. 1994 'The Late Iron Age and Roman Pottery' in P.N. Clay and R.J. Pollard *Iron Age and Roman Occupation in the West Bridge Area of Leicester: Excavations 1962-1971*. Leicester: Leicestershire Museums Arts and Record Service.

Tomber, R. and Dore, J.N., 1998 *The National Roman Fabric Reference Collection: a handbook*. MoLAS Monograph 2. London.

Appendix II Design Specification for Archaeological Watching Brief.

**UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES**

**Design Specification for a watching brief during ground investigations at
Duns lane, Leicester**

Client:	De Montfort University
Site:	Duns Lane, Leicester
NGR:	SK5803 0416 (centre)
Development:	Ground Investigation trial pits
Project:	Archaeological Watching Brief
Planning Authority:	Leicester City Council
Planning Application:	pre-planning

1 Definition and scope of the specification

1.1 This document constitutes a written scheme of archaeological investigation which ULAS proposes to implement on behalf of the Client in mitigation of any potential damage to buried archaeological deposits which may be caused by the excavation of a series of trial pits for ground investigation purposes at a site on Duns Lane, Leicester. Although there are no formal requirements for the work from the planning authority (the work is to be undertaken in advance of planning), the client has agreed to follow best practice to ensure any archaeological remains encountered are adequately recorded. . The strategy comprises archaeological attendance during groundworks with contingency provision for excavation and/or recording of significant deposits.

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 Scope of archaeological work

The watching brief is will cover the excavation of eleven trial pits by mechanical excavator for ground investigation purposes. A series of boreholes are also to be undertaken, but these will not be monitored.

2.2 Archaeological potential

Although the site lies to the west of the walled town of Roman and medieval Leicester, it is in an area of high archaeological potential for Roman and medieval suburban occupation and for burials of the Roman period. The projected line of the Roman Fosse Way runs just to the north of the site, whilst two large excavations were undertaken at Great Holme Street in 1978, revealing evidence for a Roman cemetery and suburban industrial activity.

3 Aims

3.1 Through archaeological observation of groundworks by the client's contractors:

1. To identify the presence/absence of any 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 presence on site of an experienced professional archaeologist during the works specified above. During these groundworks, 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 establish 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 Client, Leicester City Council 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 Client and Leicester City Council.

4.7 In the event of significant archaeological remains being located during the watching brief which will be affected by the proposals, the archaeologist will have the power to halt the works. The Client and the City Archaeologist will be informed

immediately in order that discussions can take place with a view to securing the preservation of such remains *in situ*, or for the implementation of a programme of archaeological work to mitigate any damage that will take place.

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 Some 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.

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 Leicester City Council, 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.

6.4 Any disk-based data will be provided for the Leicester City SMR.

6.5 ULAS is participating in the Archaeology Data Service and National Monuments Record OASIS project and will complete the appropriate OASIS forms upon completion of the report

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 will observe groundworks as appropriate to the level of disturbance which has already taken place on the site. An experienced archaeologist will be present during this work. It is proposed to watch all works in undisturbed areas 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 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.

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Appendix

Draft Project Health and Safety Policy Statement

Groundworks at Duns lane, Leicestershire

For: De Montfort University.

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 Standing Committee of Archaeological Unit Managers manual, as revised in 1997, 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.

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.

Richard Buckley
June 2005

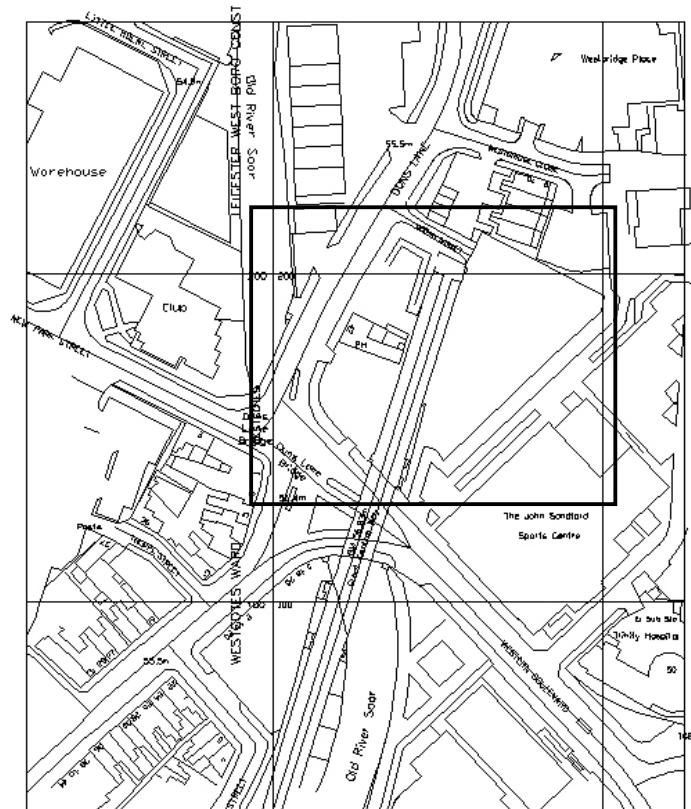


Fig. 1: Site Location © Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Licence number AL 1000211