

**An Archaeological Watching Brief
at The Bath Hotel, Shearsby
Leicestershire (SP 621 900)**

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Planning Application No. 01/1469/3

For Corporate Architecture Ltd

University of Leicester Archaeological Services

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Contents

1.	Summary	1
2	Introduction	1
3	Aims and Methods	2
4	Results	2
5	Conclusion	3
6	Archive	3
7	Publication	3
8	Acknowledgements	3
Appendix	Design Specification for archaeological work (ULAS 6.8.2004)	7

Figures

Figure 1. Location Plan.	4
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Figure 2. Site Location Plan of the development area. Scale 1:2500.	5
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Figure 3. Plan of the development at the Bath Hotel, Shearsby (courtesy Corporate Architecture). Scale 1:200.	6
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An archaeological Watching Brief at The Bath Hotel, Shearsby, Leicestershire (SP 621 900)

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1. Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on the 7th and the 14th Sept 2004 on behalf of Corporate Architecture Ltd during the excavation of foundations for commercial development at The Bath Hotel, Shearsby, Leicestershire (SP 621 900). No archaeological features were observed within the trenches apart from modern rubble. The site archive will be stored with Heritage Services Section, Community Services Department, Leicestershire County Council (X.A.187.2004).

2. Introduction

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the excavation of foundation trenches, prior to the construction of extensions to buildings at The Bath Hotel, Shearsby, Leicestershire (SP 621 900). The work was undertaken as a result of an archaeological planning condition following recommendations from the Senior Planning Archaeologist at Leicestershire County Council, as advisor to the planning authority (Planning application No.01/1449/3). It addresses requirements detailed in the 'brief' from Leicestershire County Council, as archaeological adviser to the planning authority (23.07.2004 OD/HA/01/ 1469/AG/DLS).

The Leicestershire and Rutland Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) shows that the site lies in an area of archaeological interest within the vicinity of various prehistoric, Roman and medieval sites. An archaeological desk-based assessment has been prepared (George 2004) which identified one archaeological record from within the proposed development area. North west of Hall Farm, Knaptoft, in the southern section of the development site, a barbed and tanged flint arrowhead of 'Coneygar Hill' type was found (SMR Ref: **LE6323**). The arrowhead dates to the early Bronze Age.

Various archaeological finds are also known from the vicinity of the proposed development including four dating to the Roman period (George 2004). An early Roman colour-coat beaker and a Roman coin (denarius) of Marcus Fannius, dating from 82BC, were found in an area of gravel pits 435m to the southeast (**LE7862**). Seven sherds of Roman pottery were found during construction of farm buildings west of Hall Farm, Knaptoft, 245m to the south, in 1968 (**LE7863**). Four Roman coins were found in Old England field, Knaptoft, 475m to the southeast, in 1987 (**LE7864**). A 4th century Roman coin was found 650m to the north (**LE7905**).

The proposed development site is located outside the medieval village core of Shearsby (**LE9331**), which is located 245m to the north. However, various medieval sites are listed in the SMR in the vicinity of the proposed development including the ruins of a medieval church are located east of Hall Farm (Knaptoft), and 510m to the

southeast of the development (**LE1808**). The church is first mentioned in 1143, and was still standing in 1630 although probably fell into ruin during the Civil War. The site is listed as scheduled ancient monument (SAM) 17103. Earthworks of a possible medieval field system are located at The Grove (Knaptoft), 260m to the south of the development (**LE1811**) which are also part of a scheduled ancient monument (SAM 17103). A series of banks and ditches subdivides the area, although they may be old closes or woodland divisions. Knaptoft deserted medieval settlement is located 570m to the south (**LE1814**). South of the church the earthworks have been destroyed by gravel pits. However, southeast of the church are well preserved village earthworks including hollow-ways and house plots surrounded by ridge and furrow which are again part of the scheduled ancient monument (SAM 17103). A medieval Manor House is located at Hall Farm (Knaptoft), 360m to the south (**LE1815/6**).

In view of the archaeological potential of the area, the Senior Planning Archaeologist, as archaeological advisor to the planning authority, recommended that a programme of archaeological work be undertaken. This was in accordance with the Department of Environmental Planning Policy Guideline No. 16 (PPG 16 Archaeology and Planning 1990). Although the 'brief' originally requested trial trenching in view of the reduction in potential impact from the groundworks this was modified to be a watching brief. A building survey was also requested which will be subject to a separate report.

3. Aims and Methods

The aim of the work was to ascertain whether any archaeological deposits were present, and whether the ground works would destroy them. Any deposits found would be recorded as appropriate. The work followed the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) *Standard and Guidelines for Archaeological watching briefs* and the *Design Specification for archaeological work* (ULAS 9.5.2003; Appendix).

The site was visited on the 7th and the 14th Sept 2003. The programme of work consisted of overburden and rubble removal prior to excavation of foundations for the construction of two extensions to the main building.

The foundation trenches were excavated by a Kabuta using a 0.6m. toothed bucket. An archaeological observation and a record were made during the excavation, and spoil from both the topsoil and subsoil stripping was examined for finds.

4. Results

The site was visited twice during the laying digging of foundation trenches. These were placed in areas adjacent to the existing hotel and therefore were considerably disturbed by former construction work. No Archaeological features or finds were observed at this stage.

The trenches were put in at a width of 0.6m and to a depth of 1m. No topsoil remains but modern rubble could be seen to a depth of 0.20m. The rest of the depth was cut through the natural substratum. The natural was made up of mid blue-grey clay with patches of dark yellow-orange gravel. The trenches were truncated by live services as

well as old drainage pipes. Some modern (20th century) pottery sherds were present in the topsoil which after identification were discarded.

5. Conclusion

The area had suffered considerable disturbance during the construction of The Bath Hotel and no archaeological features or finds were observed during the watching brief. Although in the vicinity of various archaeological sites the absence of any pre-modern finds may suggest that the area was not occupied prior to the construction of the Hotel. However evidence may have been lost during the construction of the original Bath house as well as the subsequent extensions.

6. Archive

The archive will be held by the Heritage Services Section, Community Services Department, Leicestershire County Council, which consists of written record of the watching brief and colour transparencies (Accession Number X.A187.2004).

7. Publication

A version of the summary (above) will be published in *Transactions of Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* in due course.

8. Acknowledgements

The watching brief was undertaken by David Parker and James Harvey. We would like to thank Corporate Architecture Limited for their help and assistance. The project was managed by Patrick Clay.

9. References

George, S., 2004 *An Archaeological Desk-based Assessment for Bath Hotel, Shearsby, Leicestershire (SP 621 900)* ULAS Report 2004-075

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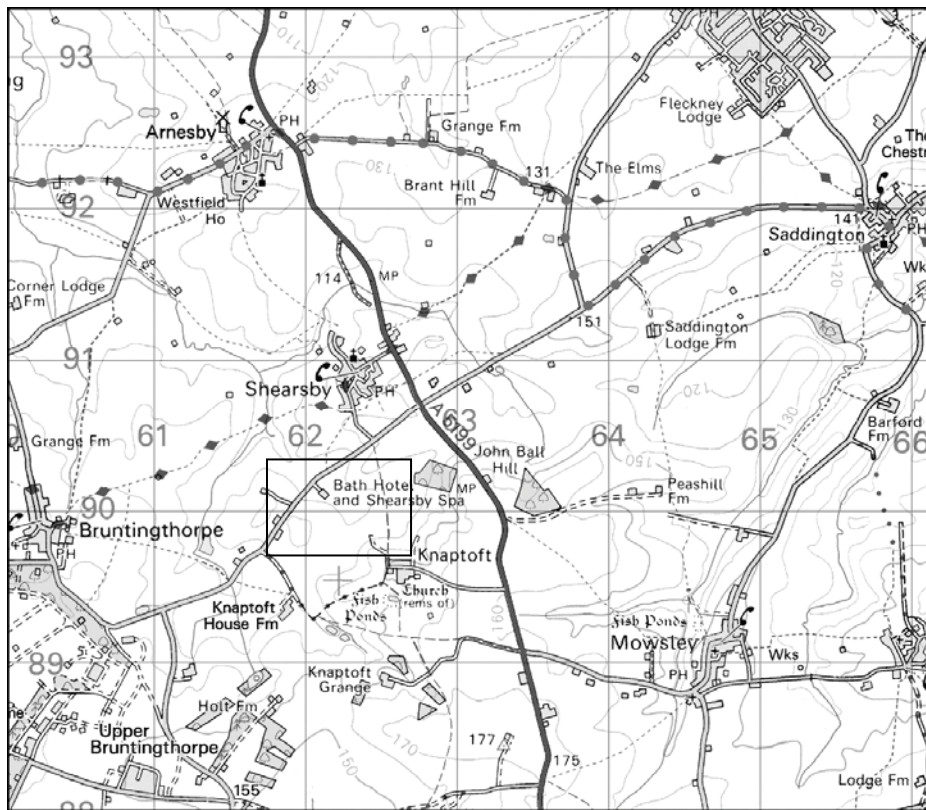


Figure 1. Location Plan.

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Appendix

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

Design Specification for archaeological work

*The Bath Hotel, Shearsby, Leicestershire
NGR: SP 621 900*

Client: Corporate Architecture Ltd

Planning Authority: Harborough District Council

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 archaeological attendance (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 the The Bath Hotel, Shearsby, Leicestershire (NGR SP 621 900). It addresses requirements for archaeological work from Leicestershire County Council, Heritage Services as archaeological adviser to the planning authority (their advice letter of 23.7.2004) modified in view of the impact from exploratory works to a watching brief.

1.2 All archaeological work will adhere to the Institute of Field Archaeologist's (IFA) *Code of Conduct, 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 is required to cover any ground disturbance to identify any deposits of archaeological importance. This forms part of a scheme of work to fulfil the planning conditions required by Harborough District Council following recommendations from Leicestershire County Council, Heritage Services as advisors to the planning authority.

2.2 Archaeological potential

2.2.1 The site comprises The Bath Hotel, Shearsby, Leicestershire (NGR SP 621 900), an early 19th century Spa building. The buildings are shortly to be extended and the surrounding area landscaped. A desk-based assessment has been prepared by ULAS (ULAS Rep. 2004-075) and a photographic survey is subject to a separate specification (ULAS 30.6.2004). The Leicestershire Sites and Monuments Record includes various prehistoric, Roman and medieval sites in the vicinity of the development area (ULAS rep 2004-075, 4-5).

3 Aims

3.1 Watching brief

3.1.2. Through archaeological attendance during overburden removal and excavation of foundation and service trenches 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 Watching brief

4.1.1 The project will involve the presence on site of an experienced professional archaeologist during the works specified above. The archaeologist will monitor the topsoil removal and if necessary observe the foundation excavations. During these groundworks, if any archaeological deposits are seen to be present, the archaeologist will record areas of archaeological interest.

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

4.1.3 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.

4.1.4 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.

4.1.5 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.

4.1.6 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 contractor, Leicestershire County Council, Heritage Services and the coroner will be informed immediately on their discovery.

4.1.7 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 Leicestershire County Council, Heritage Services and Harborough District Council.

4.1.8 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 Senior 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 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 desk-based assessment will be submitted on completion while the 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 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 remainder of the contractors groundworks. 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 Safety Manual (2001) as its Health and Safety Manual with appropriate risks assessments for all archaeological work. It also follows the guidance in the Standing Committee of Archaeological Unit Managers manual, as revised in 1997. The relevant Health and Safety Executive guidelines will be adhered to as appropriate. An initial risks assessment is included in the appendix. This will be revised as appropriate following the commencement of fieldwork.

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.

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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6.8.2004

Appendix

Draft Project Health and Safety Policy Statement

**The Bath Hotel, Shearsby, Leicestershire
NGR: SP 621 900**

Client: Corporate Architecture Ltd

Planning Authority: Harborough District Council

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 Weils 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
6.8.2004