
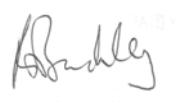


**An Watching Brief at Land adjacent to  
10, Debdale Hill, Old Dalby,  
Broughton and Old Dalby,  
Leicestershire (SK 671 238)**

**James Harvey**

**For: Vale Country Homes Ltd.**

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## **An Archaeological Watching Brief at Land adjacent to 10 Debdale Hill, Old Dalby, Broughton and Old Dalby, Leicestershire (SK 671 238)**

**James Harvey**

### **Summary**

*An archaeological watching brief was carried out at land adjacent to 10 Debdale Hill, Old Dalby, Broughton and Old Dalby, Leicestershire (SK 671 238) on the 27th February and the 3rd March 2008 by University of Leicester Archaeological Services. The work was carried out on behalf of Vale Country Homes Ltd. in advance of the construction of a new residential dwelling on the site. The work involved inspection of ground reduction and the excavation of foundation trenches of the new build for any indication of archaeological activity.*

*A single stone revetted ditch was observed that is likely to date between the late medieval and early post-medieval periods and may have acted as a drainage feature relating to the village or to the road adjacent to the site.*

*The site archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council Museum Services under the accession number X.A.52.2008.*

### **1. Introduction**

This document presents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at land adjacent to 10, Debdale Hill, Old Dalby, Broughton and Old Dalby, Leicestershire (SK 671 237). The archaeological assessment was undertaken on behalf of Vale Country Homes Ltd. by University of Leicester Archaeological Services on the 27th February and the 3rd March 2008.

Planning permission has been granted by Melton Borough Council for the erection of a dwelling at land adjacent to 10, Debdale Hill, Old Dalby, Broughton and Old Dalby, Leicestershire, Planning Application: 06/00258/ful. The proposed development lies in an area of significant archaeological potential, within the historic Anglo-Saxon-medieval village core of Old Dalby (**MLE9269**).

An archaeological investigation was requested by Leicestershire County Council's Historic and Natural Environment Team in their capacity as archaeological advisors to Melton Borough Council. The work involved a watching brief of foundation trenches within the development area as detailed in their *Brief for an archaeological attendance for inspection and recording*, in accordance with Planning Policy Guidelines 16 (PPG16, Archaeology and planning), para.30.

## 2. Site Description, Topography and Geology

Old Dalby is situated 15 miles northeast of Leicester and 6 miles west of Melton Mowbray. The development area is situated within the village core, north of Debdale Hill. (figs. 1 and 2).

The underlying geology, as indicated on the Geological Survey of Great Britain, Drift Geology sheet 142 Melton Mowbray is Charmouth Mudstone. The site consisted of an area of c. 0.05ha. of rough grassland that slopes down to the east, at a height of c.110m OD.



Figure 1: Site Location Plan (Scale 1:50000)

Reproduced from the OS map Land ranger of behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright All rights reserved Licence Number AL 100029495.

## 2. Historical and Archaeological Background

Old Dalby is referred to in the Domesday Book as “In Goscote Wapentake. Ralph son of Hubert holds 9 carucates of land in (Old) Dalby from the King and Robert from him. Land for 12 ploughs. In lordship 1. 1 man-at-arms with 2 Freemen, 13 villagers and 8 smallholders have 7 ploughs. Meadow 1 league long and ½ league wide; spinney 2 furlongs long and 1 furlong wide.” (Morgan 1979). The name Dalby means “farmstead or village in a valley” (Mills 1998).

The development area is located within the historic core of the late Anglo-Saxon to late medieval village (**MLE9269**). Linear earthworks, parallel with Nottingham Lane, on the top of Wood's Hill are visible on RAF aerial photographs (**MLE3444**). More earthworks have been located north of Woods Hill. These have been interpreted as earthworks of a shrunken medieval village including house platforms and hollow ways (**MLE3451**). Roman activity has also been recorded in the vicinity of the development area. Pottery, coins and a brooch being found over the hedge from the mill mound, northeast of Vale View Farm (**MLE9388**).

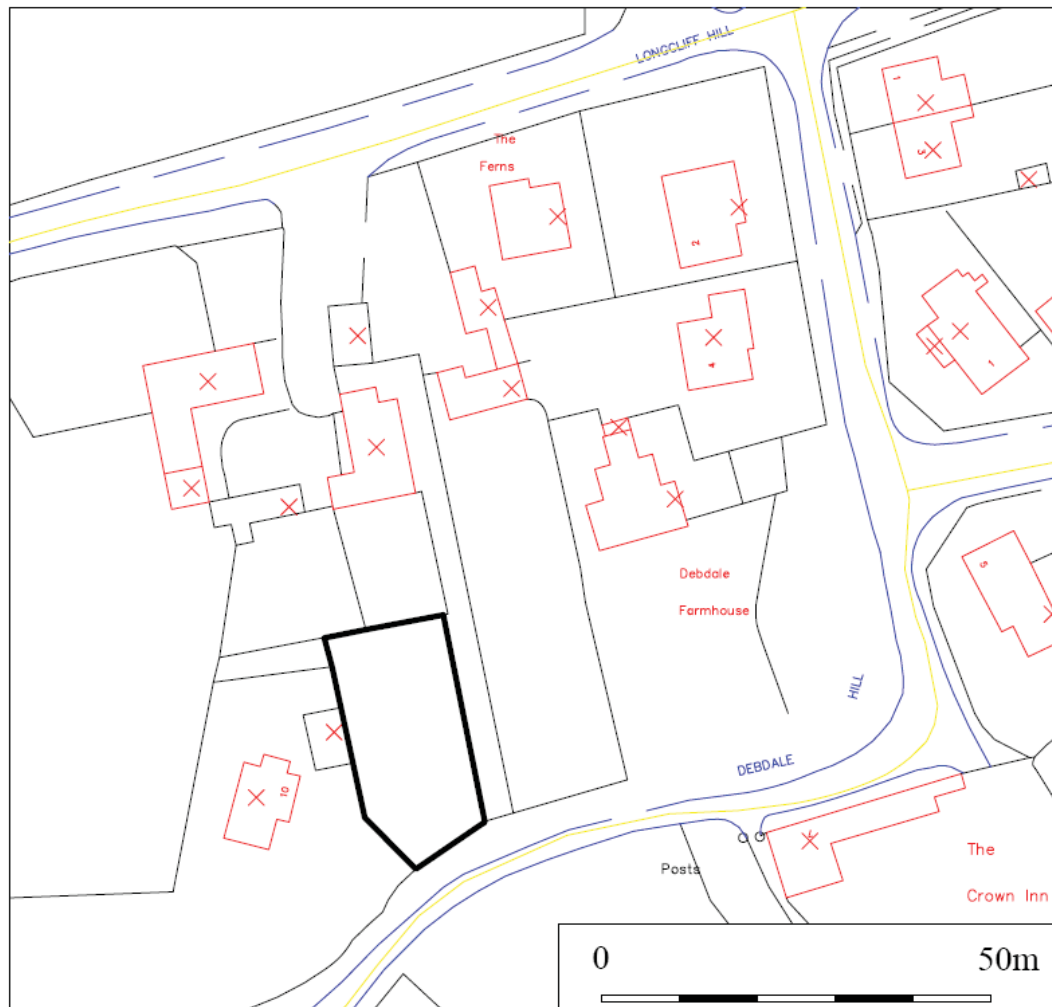


Figure 2: Site Location Plan (close up)

Reproduced from the OS map Land ranger of behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright All rights reserved Licence Number AL 100029495.

#### **4. Aims and Objectives**

The main aims through archaeological observation and investigation were:

- To identify the presence/absence of any earlier building phases or 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 produce an archive and report of any results.

#### **5. Methodology**

The project required a professional archaeologist to supervise all stripping and groundworks likely to impact upon any archaeological remains.

The work involved the supervision and observation of ground reduction as well as excavation of foundation trenches by a Hitachi tracked 360°, using 1m and 0.5m wide toothed buckets on the back actor. All stripped areas and existing spoil heaps were visually inspected for features and finds.

All work followed the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) Code of Conduct and adhere to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (1999).

## 6. Results

### *Site Visit 1    27/02/08*

The ground sloped gradually down to the west which meant much of the western part of the site had to be reduced prior to the excavation of the foundation trenches. This reduction varied between 0-650mm and involved stripping of topsoil that consisted of greyish brown clayey loam that contained common charcoal inclusions. The topsoil was c. 350mm deep and overlaid dark greyish brown silty clay subsoil. This deposit was machined to a maximum of 300mm. No archaeological deposits were observed during the ground reduction.

### *Site Visit 2    03/02/08*

Excavation of footings along the western part of the new dwelling revealed a further c. 400mm of subsoil that overlaid the natural substratum that consisted of yellowish brown clay. Inspection of the trenches proved difficult as they were rapidly flooded by a number of truncated field drains. However, a shallow linear ditch [1] was recorded within the south-western area of the foundation trenches (the garage). It measured c. 4m in width and was a maximum of 400mm deep (figs. 3-5). Only the northern side of the feature was clearly seen in section which was concave and the base of the feature was relatively flat. The linear was east-west aligned, running parallel to the slope of Debdale Hill. Across the northern side and base of the feature was a deposit of large ironstone fragments and river pebbles (2). This measured 1.7m wide and 300 thick. The average size of these stones was 150x100x70mm. Their location on the northern side of the feature was seen in two separate foundation trenches and suggests a deliberate attempt to revet this side of the ditch. A single sherd of abraded early medieval pottery was recovered from within the matrix of the stones. The stone revetment was overlain by a dark grey clayey silt deposit (3) with orange mottles that contained common charcoal flecks. This deposit measured 1.2m and was a maximum of 150mm thick. The southern side of the feature was filled by a smooth dark grey organic silt deposit that contained abundant charcoal inclusions. This was clearly a waterborne silt deposit and contained a number of large un-abraded sherds of post-medieval pottery (c.1550-1650AD).

No other archaeological finds or features were observed during the course of this watching brief

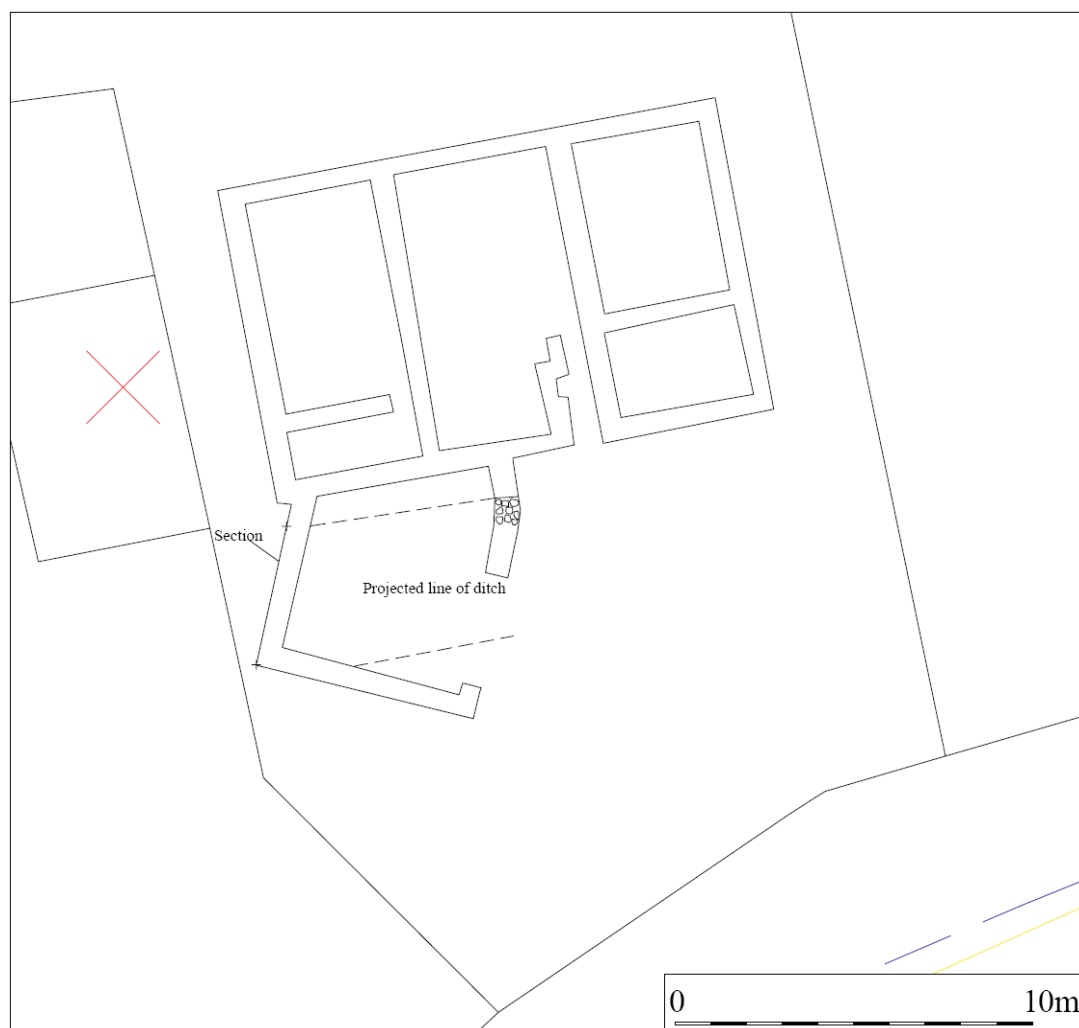


Figure 3: Plan of foundation trenches showing location of ditch [1]

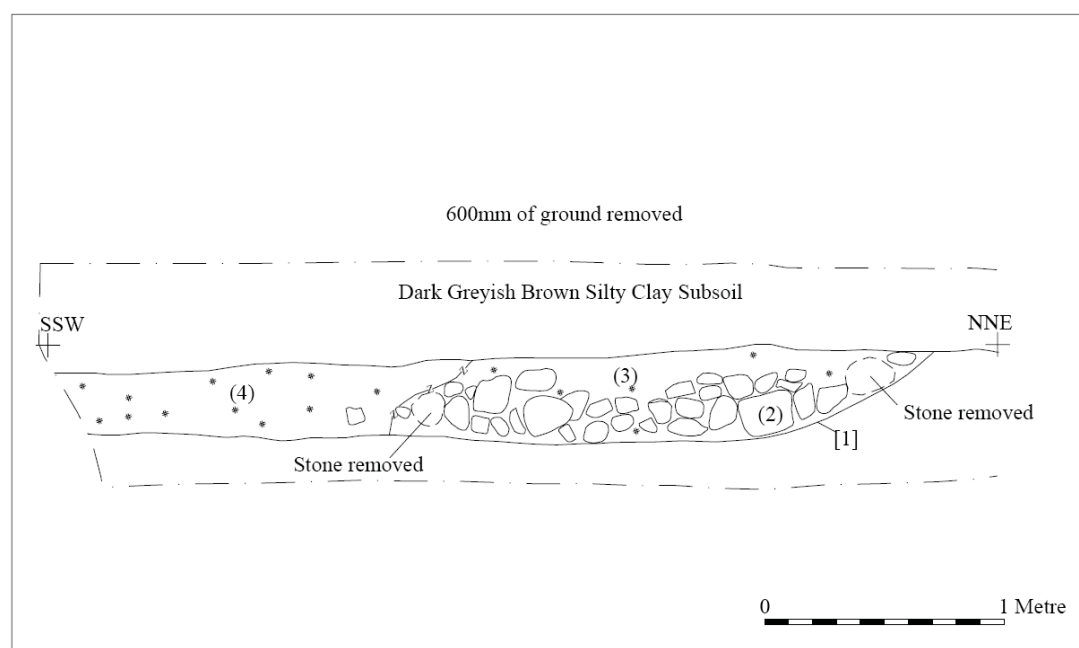


Figure 4: Plan of exposed section of ditch [1] within foundation trench





Figure 5: Exposed section of ditch [1] within foundation trench, looking west-north-west

## **7. Discussion**

Only one feature was observed during the course of this watching brief. This consisted of a large, shallow ditch that contained a stone revetment on its northern edge. The feature is likely to date between the late medieval or early post-medieval periods and may have been constructed as an open dyke in order to manage the drainage of water running off Debdale Hill towards the village. It is equally possible that it could have been a drainage feature associated with road adjacent to the site. The feature seems to have gone out of use in the early post-medieval period.

## **8. Archive and Publication**

The archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council Museum Services under the accession number X.A.52.2008. The content of the archive consists of:

- 1 Unbound A4 copy of this report
- 1 A3 Permatrace Plan Sheet
- 1 A4 Watching Brief recording sheet
- 1 A4 Colour digital photo contact print
- 1 CD of 17 digital photos

A record of the project will also be submitted to the OASIS project under the code universil-40364. Oasis is an online index to the mass of archaeological grey literature that has been produced as a result of the advent of large-scale developer funded fieldwork.

A summary of the work will be submitted for inclusion in the *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* in due course.

## **9. Acknowledgements**

The fieldwork was carried out by the author. Richard Buckley managed the project, both of ULAS. I would like to thank the client, Vale Country Homes Ltd. for their assistance and cooperation throughout the duration of the project.

## **10. Bibliography**

Mills, A., 1998 *Dictionary of English Place-Names*. Oxford University Press.

Morgan, P., 1979. *Domesday Book 22 Leicestershire*. Philimore and Co. Ltd.

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**Appendix 1: The Pottery***Deborah Sawday****THE POST ROMAN POTTERY FROM A WATCHING BRIEF AT OLD DALBY, LEICS.****Deborah Sawday*

The pottery, six sherds, weighing 231 grams, was catalogued with reference to the ULAS fabric series (Davies and Sawday 1999), (Sawday 1989). The results are shown below.

Site/ Parish: Debdale Hill, Old Dalby, Leics. Accession No.: XA52 2008 Document Ref: old dalby3.doc Material: pottery & animal bone Site Type: village core	Submitter: J. Harvey Identifier: D. Sawday Date of Identification: 28.3.08 Method of recovery: w.b. Job Number: 08/130
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Context	Fabric/Ware	Nos	Grams	Comments
POTTERY				
2 revetment	OS6 – Oxidised Sandy ware 6	1	26	Abraded, sooted ext. Early medieval - ?12 <sup>th</sup> – mid 13 <sup>th</sup> C.
4 silted backfill of revetted ditch	MS3 – Medieval Sandy ware 3	2	41	Sooted ext, medieval – ? mid 13 -14 <sup>th</sup> C+.
4	EA1 – Earthenware 1	3	164	Oxidised version of internally glazed vessel, probably a jar. Early post medieval c.1550-1650+
BONE				
4	Animal bone/horn	3		

**Bibliography**

- Connor, A., and Buckley, R., 1999. *Roman and Medieval Occupation in Causeway Lane, Leicester*, Leicester Archaeology Mon. **5**.
- Coppack, G., 1980. *The Medieval Pottery of Lincoln, Nottingham & Derby*. Unpub. PhD thesis, University of Nottingham.
- Davies, S., and Sawday, D., 1999. 'The Post Roman Pottery and Tile' in A. Connor and R. Buckley, 1999, 165-213.
- Sawday, D., 1989. 'The post Roman pottery' in J.N. Lucas, 'An excavation in the north east quarter of Leicester: Elbow Lane, 1977', *Trans. Leicestershire Archaeol. and Hist. Soc.* **63**, 18-47 (28-41).

## ***Appendix 2: Design Specification***

### **UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES**

#### **Design Specification for archaeological work**

***Debdale Hill, Old Dalby, Leicestershire SK672 237***

***For: Vale Country Homes Ltd***

#### ***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 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 a residential development at the above site.

It addresses the requirements from Leicestershire County Council as archaeological advisors to Melton Borough Council and forms part of a scheme of work to fulfil a planning condition.

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 attendance for inspection and recording during ground disturbance to identify any deposits of archaeological importance.

##### ***2.2 Archaeological potential***

###### ***2.2.1 Unknown***

#### ***3 Aims***

3.1 Through archaeological supervision of 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 the stripping 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 and Hinckley and Bosworth Borough 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 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 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 An accession number will be drawn before the commencement of groundworks. A report on the watching brief will be provided following the groundworks. Following the fieldwork the work will be entered on to the OASIS project database.

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 on Wednesday 27th February 2008, at the inception of the contractor's 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 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 employees, consultants and volunteers are covered by the University of Leicester public liability insurance, £20m cover with St. Paul Travellers (policy no. UCPOP3651237). Professional indemnity insurance is with Lloyds Underwriters 50% and Brit Insurance 50%, £10m cover (policy no. PUNIO3605). Employer's Liability Insurance is with St. Paul Travellers, cover £10m (policy no. UCPOP3651237).

## **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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15/02/2008

## **Appendix**

### **Draft Project Health and Safety Policy Statement**

*Debdale Hill, Old Dalby, Leicestershire SK672 237*

#### *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.*

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  
15/02/2008



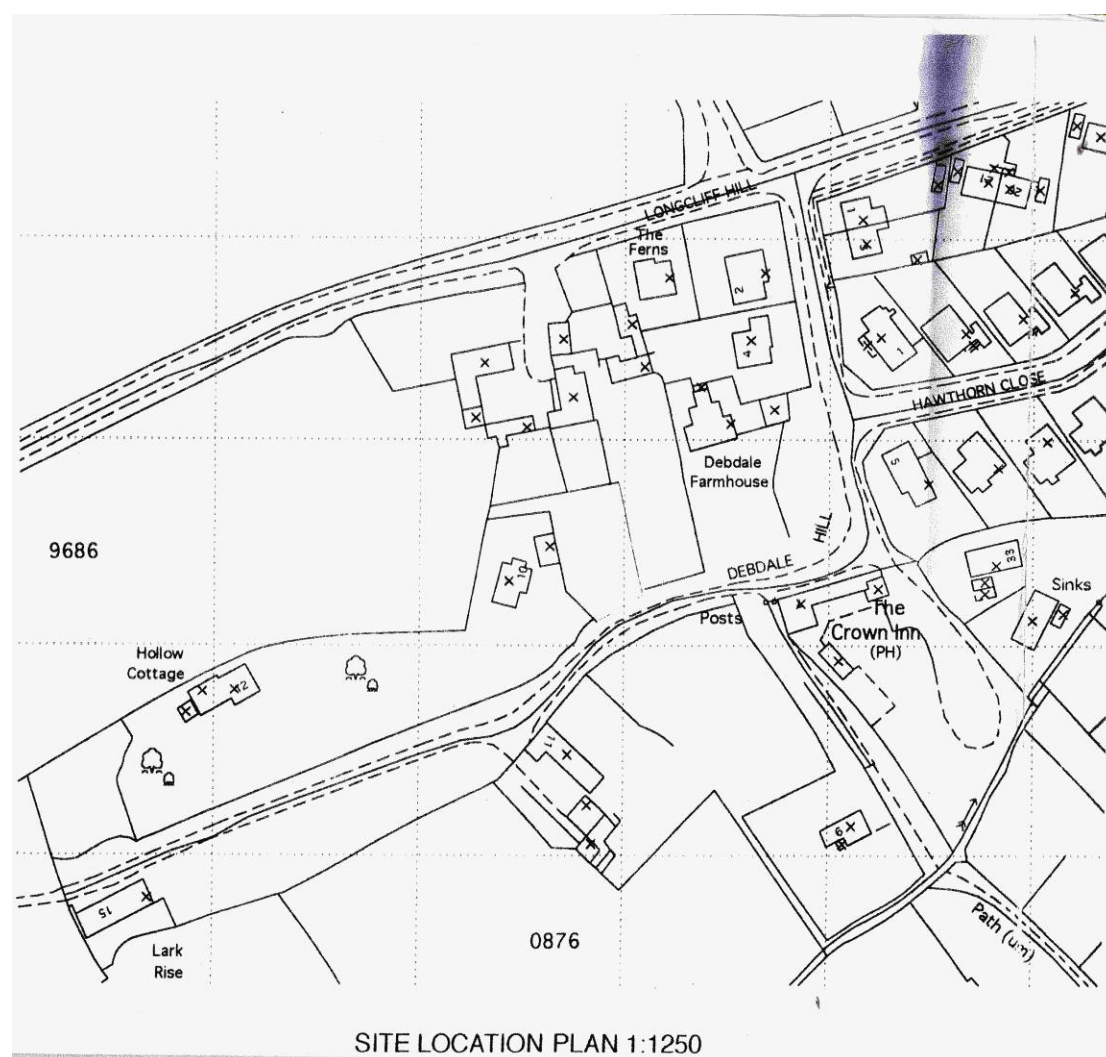


Fig. 1 Site Location

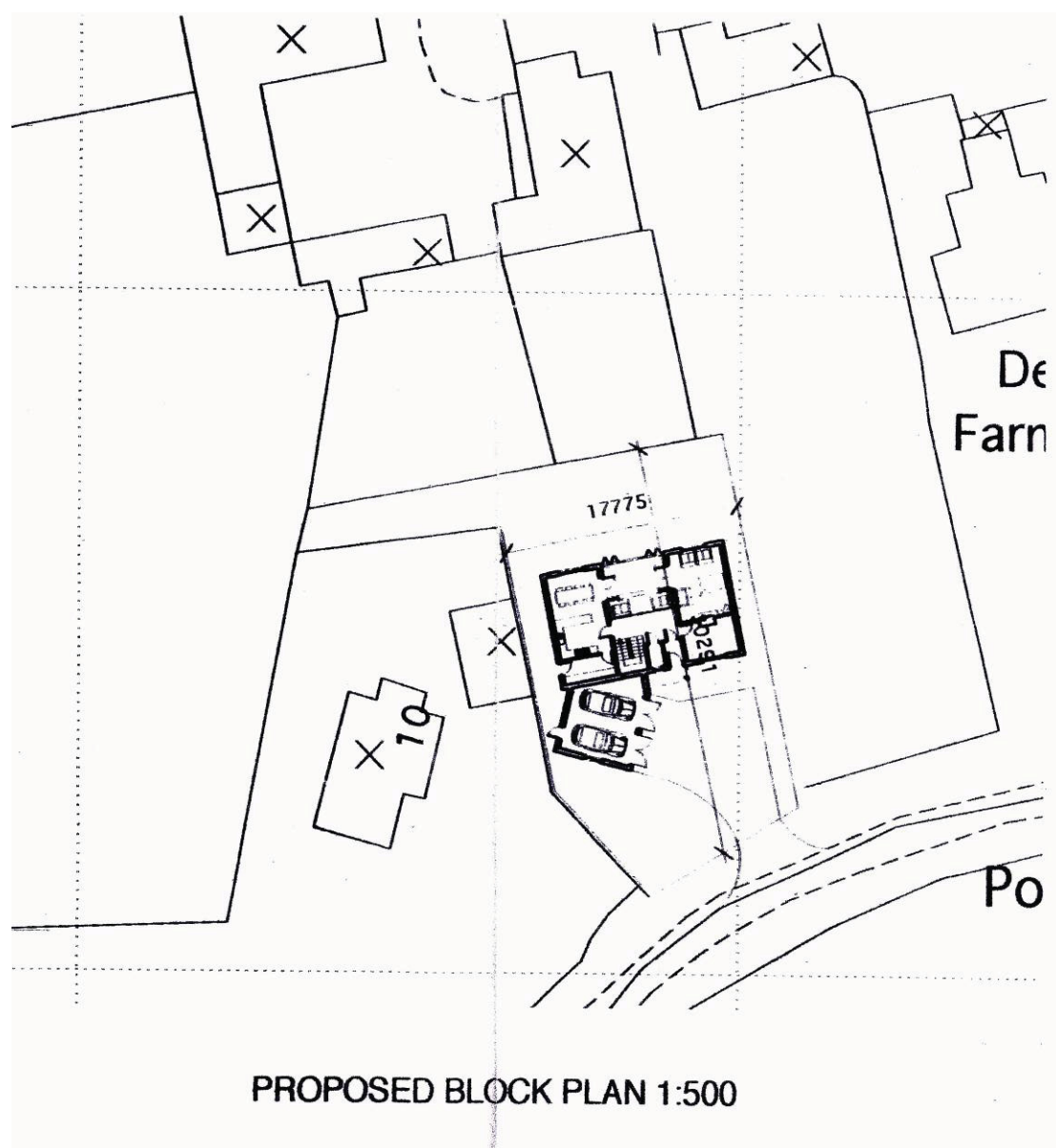


Fig. 2 layout