

**An Archaeological Watching Brief
At Long Moor Surface Mine,
Ravenstone, Leicestershire
(SK 390 130)**

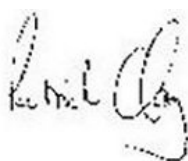
Leon Hunt & Daniel Stone

for

UK Coal Mining Ltd

Planning application No. 03/1790/7/FUL

Checked by Project Manager



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An Archaeological Watching Brief at Long Moor Surface Mine, Ravenstone, Leicestershire (SK 390 130)

Leon Hunt

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was carried out by ULAS for UK Coal Mining Limited during the excavation of a haul road to service the proposed strip mining at Long Moor Surface Mine, Ravenstone, Leicestershire (SK 390 130). The site lies in an area of archaeological potential and has been the subject of an archaeological evaluation by geophysical survey, followed up by trial trench evaluation, which was carried out by ULAS in 2006.

As the survey and evaluation showed a number of discrete undated features the planning authority requested that the haul road leading to the new mining area should be subject to a watching brief by an archaeologist during the stripping of the topsoil on the area prior to the construction of the haul road.

The site was visited during August and September 2007 and topsoil stripping and the excavation of drainage gullies were observed. No archaeological features or finds associated with archaeological features were located during the watching brief.

The archive for the work will be deposited with Leicestershire Historic and Natural Environment Team with accession number X.A54.2008.

Introduction

An archaeological watching brief was carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on behalf of UK Coal Mining Limited during the excavation of a haul road to service the proposed strip mining at Long Moor Surface Mine, Ravenstone, Leicestershire (NGR SK 390 130).

This work was carried out in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (PPG16, Archaeology and Planning), para.30, and included the attendance of the site by an archaeologist during the topsoil strip of the road.

The site lies in an area of archaeological potential, including an Iron Age and Romano-British enclosure system and settlement, which lies north-east of Cattows Farm, a Romano-British settlement south of Jubilee Plantation and a flint scatter that may indicate the presence of Neolithic activity east of Normanton-le-Heath (see Figure 2).

The wider area, within 1km of the proposed development site, includes an extensive range of further recorded archaeological sites on the Leicestershire Historic Environment Record.

A desk-based assessment was prepared for the area (Marsden 1996); this had identified the area as having archaeological potential.

Initial advice from Heritage and Natural Environment Team of Leicestershire County Council (HNET LCC) requested an archaeological evaluation of the site area by initial geophysical survey, followed up by trial trench evaluation of the site area. The

geophysical survey undertaken by Stratascan Limited while the evaluation was undertaken by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS Report 2006-126)

The survey and evaluation has shown a number of discrete undated features scattered across the site area that are of archaeological origin. Based on the information gathered the Heritage and Natural Environment Team of Leicestershire County Council (HNET LCC), as advisors to the planning authority, have now requested a watching brief within the proposed development area along the line of the haulage road.

Site Location, Geology and Topography

The site lies 0.75km south-west of the village of Ravenstone, in the parish of Ravenstone with Snibstone, 0.7km west of Normanton le Heath and 1km north of Heather (Figure 1). The total area covers approximately 70 hectares.

The Ordnance Survey Geological Survey of Great Britain Sheet 155 shows that the underlying geology of the area includes coal and carboniferous sandstone in the north and east, Mercia Mudstone in the south and west, with Bromsgrove Sandstone and Boulder Clay in some other areas; sand and gravel and alluvium would be expected along the course of Blowers Brook.

The site lies between 125-156m OD and the land slopes down from Ashby Road southwards towards the middle of the site; then rises to the south-west.

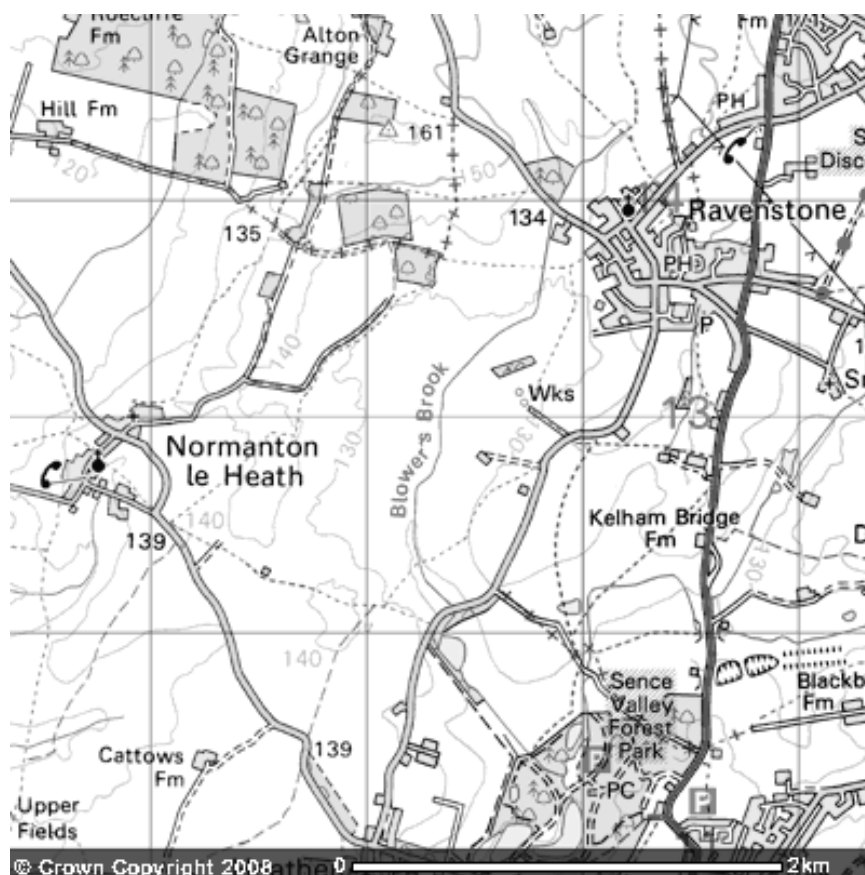


Figure 1: Site Location

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Aims and Methods

The purpose of the watching brief was to ascertain whether archaeological deposits were present. If so, the character, extent and date range of any deposits identified would be established, in order to assess their significance. Recording of these deposits would be carried out as appropriate, and an archive and this report produced. The work followed the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*, and adhered to the University's Health and Safety policy.

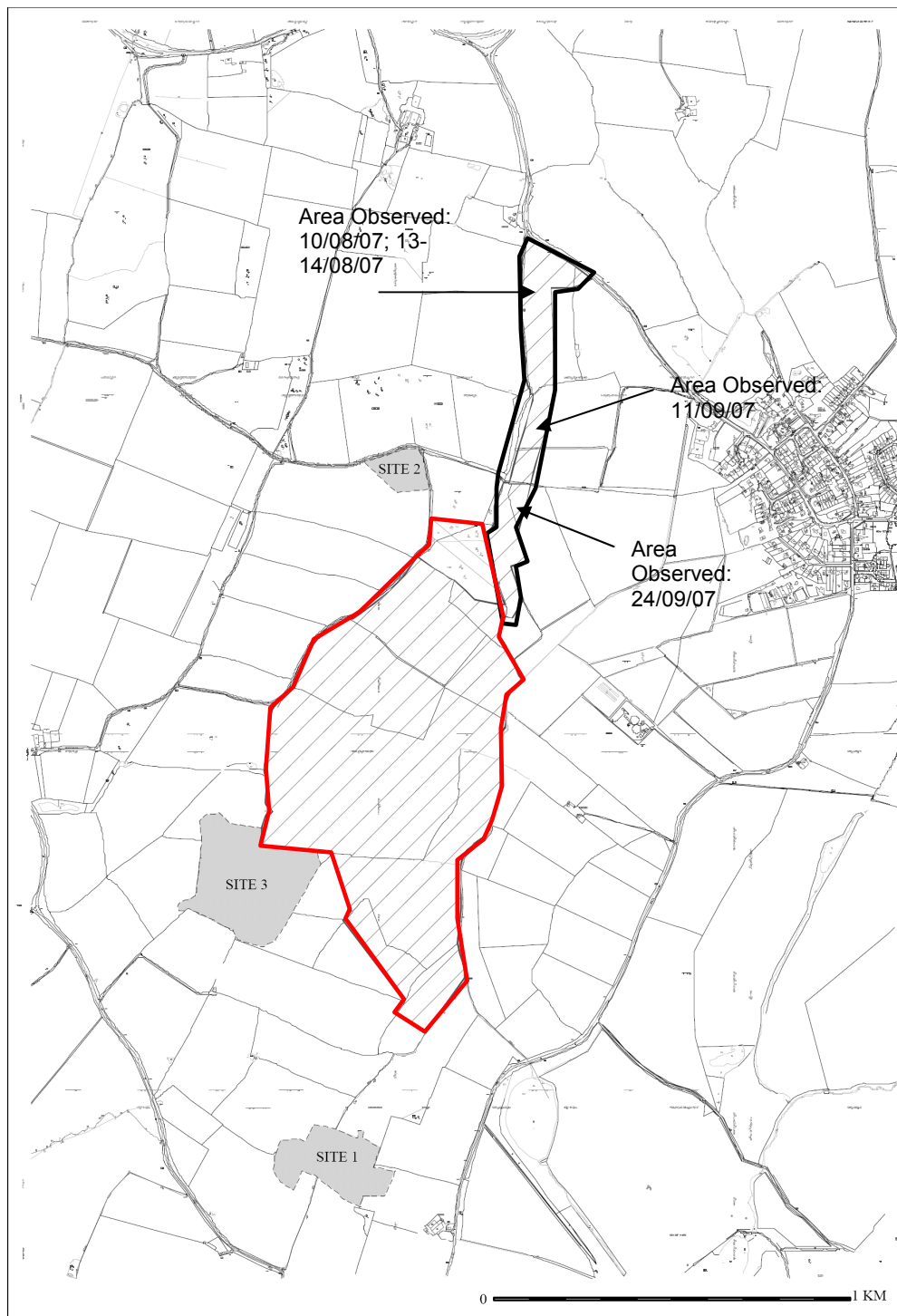


Figure 2: Plan of proposed Long Moor mine, with haul road (black) and mining area (red) highlighted

The work follows the ULAS *Design Specification for Archaeological Work* (Appendix)

The site was visited by an archaeologist on 10th, 13th and 14th August 2007 and the 11th and 24th September 2007 and topsoil stripping of the haul road and the excavation of drainage channels was observed.

Results

The site was visited initially on 10th August and topsoil stripping on the area close to Ashby Road was observed. The machine, fitted with a flat bladed ditching bucket, stripped approximately 0.3m of dark brown clayey silty topsoil down to reddish brown clay with patches of sand and gravel. In some areas patches of topsoil were left on as the depth of the soil varied.

During the visits of 13th and 14th August the stripping of the rest of the northern part of the haulage road was observed. The depth of the stripping was between 0.3-0.4m revealing a similar mixture of reddish brown clay and gravel patches. The excavation of narrow drainage gullies down the sides of the proposed haul road was also observed at this juncture. These were excavated around 0.4m into the natural substratum (0.8m from the top of the topsoil) and were v-shaped in cross section, with a flat base.

The following visits of 11th and 24th of September were carried out shortly after the areas along the two fields further to the south were stripped. The surface was flat and it was fairly easy to observe the natural substratum of reddish brown clay and sand and gravel bands; although the area was covered in patches of silty subsoil in places. There had been heavy rain throughout the night prior to both the later visits and many areas were flooded or partially flooded. Further drainage gullies had been dug, which were similar in profile to those seen during the previous visits; with 0.3m of topsoil overlying 0.1m of silty subsoil over 0.4m of reddish brown clay. Throughout these later visits no archaeological features were observed.

Conclusion

Despite being located close to areas of archaeological interest, no archaeological features or finds associated with archaeological features were found during this watching brief.

The underlying substratum observed throughout the work on the haul road was Mercia Mudstone Group clay with patches of sand and gravel.

References

- Harvey, J., 2006 *An Archaeological Evaluation by Trial Trenching at the Long Moor Surface Mining Scheme, Ravenstone with Snibstone, Leicestershire (SK 390 130)* ULAS Report No. 2006-126
- Marsden, P., 1996 *An Archaeological Desk-based Assessment for Land at the Proposed Thorntree Opencast Coal Site, east of Normanton le Heath, Leicestershire (SK 387 127)* ULAS Report No. 96/81

Acknowledgements

ULAS would like to thank Peter Greenwood and UK Coal for their help and co-operation during this watching brief. The watching brief was carried out by Dan Stone and Leon Hunt; Patrick Clay was the project manager.

Archive

The archive for this project will be lodged with Leicestershire Historic and Natural Environment Team with accession number X.A54.2008 and consists of the following:

- 4 watching brief recording sheets
- 1 photographic record
- 3 contact sheets of digital photographs
- 1 CD of digital photographs
- 1 drawing record
- 1 Piece of permatrace containing plan of northern haul road
- 1 unbound copy of this report (2008-044)

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28/03/08



Plate 1: Work in progress on initial strip, looking west



Plate 2: Post-excavation shot of northernmost field, looking south



Plate 3: Post excavation shot of second part of haul road, looking south



Plate 4: East facing section of drainage gully, looking west

Appendix 1

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

Design Specification for archaeological work

Proposed Long Moor Surface mining Scheme,

Ravenstone with Snibstone, Leicestershire

NGR: SK 390 130

Client: UK Coal Mining Ltd.

Planning Authority: North-West Leicestershire District Council

Planning application No. 03/1790/7/FUL

1. Introduction

1.1 Definition and scope of the specification

In accordance with Planning Policy Guidance Note (PPG16, Archaeology and Planning), para.30, and the condition placed on planning permission, this specification constitutes a 'written scheme of archaeological investigation' which ULAS intends to implement on behalf of the Client in mitigation of any damage which may be caused to buried or standing archaeological remains from the development.

1.2 The definition of archaeological watching brief, taken from the Institute of Field Archaeologists Standards and Guidance: for Archaeological Watching Briefs (IFA S&G: AWB) is a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons. This will be within a specified area or site on land, inter-tidal zone or underwater, where there is a possibility that archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed. The programme will result in the preparation of a report and ordered archive.

1.3 The purpose of a watching brief, as laid down in the IFA S&G AWB is:
to allow, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be established (or established with sufficient accuracy) in advance of development or other potentially disruptive works.
to provide an opportunity, if needed, for the watching archaeologist to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief itself are not sufficient to support treatment.

1.4 This document provides a scheme of works for an 'intensive watching brief' as defined by the IFA:

Archaeological supervision, attendance and recording during topsoil stripping and groundworks likely to disturb archaeological remains, if present.

2. Archaeological Objectives

The main objectives, within the resources available, are

- 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 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 excavate and record any archaeological deposits to be affected by the ground works.
- To produce an archive and report of any results.

3. Background

2.1 Context of the Project

- 2.1.1 UK Coal Mining Ltd. is proposing open cast coal extraction to the west of Coalville. The proposed site of the coal mine is located 0.75km south-west of the village of Ravenstone, 0.7km west of Normanton le Heath and 1km north of Heather (centred on SK 390 130; figs. 1 and 2). It consists of an area of c.70ha. The Leicestershire Sites and Monument Record indicates that the proposed site includes areas where archaeological sites are known and is therefore recognised as having a significant archaeological potential.
- 2.1.2 The area lies at a height of approximately 120-145m OD.
- 2.1.3 Initial advice from Heritage and Natural Environment Team of Leicestershire County Council (HNET LCC) requested an archaeological evaluation of the site area by initial geophysical survey, followed up by trial trench evaluation of the site area. The geophysical survey undertaken by Stratascan Limited while the evaluation has been undertaken by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS Report 2006-126)
- 2.1.4 The survey and evaluation has shown a number of discrete undated features scattered across the site area that are of archaeological origin.
- 2.1.5 Based on the information gathered the Heritage and Natural Environment Team of Leicestershire County Council (HNET LCC) have now requested a watching brief within the proposed development area along the line of the haulage road.

2.2 Geological and Topographical Background

- 2.2.1 The Ordnance Survey Geological Survey of Great Britain Sheet 155 indicated that the underlying geology is varied over the proposed development area. These include coal and carboniferous sandstone in the east and north; Mercia Mudstone in the south and west; Bromsgrove Sandstone in several areas; Boulder Clay mainly in the west; sands and gravels in the south and alluvium along the course of Blowers Brook in the northeast.
- 2.2.2 The altitude of the site rises from the gentle valley of Blowers Brook at about 130 to 140m OD. The relief slopes gently down towards Blowers Brook.

2.3 Archaeological and Historical Background (From Marsden 1996)

- 2.3.1 The Domesday book records that the land of Countess Judith included in Heather land held by 'Earl Waltheof, and 1 Freeman Esbern'. Meanwhile Ravenstone is mentioned twice, with both William Bonvallet and Nigel of Stafford owning land there.
- 2.3.2 From studies of open cast sites in other locations at Lount, Coleorton and Measham there is a potential for early coal workings surviving in areas of North West Leicestershire. The 14th century workings at Coleorton are among the earliest deep coal mines found in Europe (using the pillar and stack method) and are of international importance. Coalfield Farm is located to the southeast of the site and may suggest post-medieval or medieval mining in the area although the depth of Triassic deposits overlying the coal measures within the proposed extraction area would suggest early workings are unlikely to be present.
- 2.3.3 The proposed open cast coal mine lies in an area of significant archaeological potential, although the site has not been subject to systemic archaeological investigation. Three sites are known from the surrounding area as well as a number of other archaeological monuments and findspots that reflect the wider potential of the development. The proposals are likely to include works that will detrimentally impact upon any buried archaeological remains. It is

advance of the development, to allow proper consideration of the archaeological issues and the preparation of an appropriate mitigation strategy.

- 2.3.4 The desk-based assessment (Marsden 1996) reports of three known archaeological sites close to the proposed coal extraction site. These comprise of an Iron Age and Romano-British Enclosure System and Settlement northeast of Cattows Farm (Site 1). Ariel photographs showed a compact series of rectangular cropmark enclosures and associated double ditched linear features, indicating possible Iron Age settlement with droveways. Fieldwalking produced a small scatter of high quality flint at the centre of the cropmark site (Liddle 1990). The subsequent excavations of 1990 produced evidence of several phases of enclosures, a trackway, structures and buildings at the site dating to the mid-late Iron Age. There was also evidence of continuity of the site into the Roman period. This consisted of a large enclosure, metalling of the trackway and a semi-circular shelter or windbreak for the livestock (Thorpe, Sharman and Clay 1994). Also a Romano-British settlement has been located by fieldwalking south of Jubilee Plantation (Site 2). Three phases of activity were identified. Phase 1 dated to the late second – early third century and included an east-west ditch which may have formed the southern boundary of an enclosed settlement as well as forming the northern boundary of an associated enclosure. Phase 2 seemed to date to the mid-late third century and included a droveway, a rectangular structure and a kiln. The final phase related to the creation of a group of enclosures that dated to the late third – late fourth century. Finally a flint scatter has been identified, east of Normanton le Heath (Site 3) that may indicate a Neolithic settlement based on the flints recovered although geophysical survey failed to locate any archaeological anomalies.
- 2.3.5 The wider area, within 1km of the proposed development site, includes an extensive range of recorded archaeological sites from the Leicestershire Sites and Monuments Record. These can be divided by broad period as follows:

Prehistoric

- Possible Mesolithic occupation, east of Melbourne Road based on fieldwalking. NGR: SK402124.
- Possible Mesolithic occupation, north of Kelham Bridge Farm based on fieldwalking SK404122.
- Bronze Age (?) ring ditch (cropmark), north of Jubilee Plantation. SK387141.
- Iron Age (?) enclosure (cropmark), north of Jubilee Plantation. SK392142.
- Two Iron Age gold stater (coin) found north of Hall farm. SK378109.
- Bronze Age (?) features (cropmarks) including enclosures, a linear feature, 3-4 circular features and pit alignment, west of Heather Hall. SK378107.
- Iron Age (?) enclosure (cropmark), west of Sparkenstone estate. SK384 08.
- Two Iron Age (?) enclosures (cropmarks), north of Hall Farm. SK380 113.

Roman

- Roman occupation, south of Normanton le Heath. Finds have included pottery, metal objects and other artefacts. SK 376 119.
- Roman settlement, north of Highfield Farm, Ravenstone. Excavations by LAU revealed three pottery kilns and a tile kiln. Other features included potholes, graves, ditches and buildings dating to the third-fourth century. SK 303 115.
- Roman quern and stone mortar found in Normanton le Heath. SK378127

Medieval and Post-medieval

- Holy Trinity Church, Normanton le Heath, dated to 1220. SK377127
- Medieval windmill located north of Jubilee Plantation. SK388141
- Earthworks of a DMV located west of Alton Cottages, extensive closes and quarry activity also observed. SK390148.
- Medieval Church, Heather SK390108

- Medieval and post-medieval manor house, Heather. SK389108
- A papal Bulla of Innocent IV (1243-1254) found east of Normanton le Heath. SK388112.
- Foil Die found north of Sparkenstone Estate that may date to the seventh century SK38751105
- St. Michaels Church, Ravenstone, some of the church may be pre-14th century. SK402139
- Ravenstone medieval village. SK400138.
- Medieval Grange, Ravenstone.
- Ravenstone Hall, built around 1750. SK400139

4. Methodology

4.1 General Methodology and Standards

- 4.1.1 All work will follow the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) Code of Conduct and adhere to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*.
- 4.1.2 Staffing (as far as is possible), Recording systems, Health and Safety provisions and Insurance details are included below.
- 4.1.3 Internal monitoring procedures will be undertaken including visits to the site by the project manager. These will ensure that project targets are met and professional standards are maintained. Provision will be made for external monitoring meetings with the Senior Planning Archaeologist of the Historic and Natural Environment Team, Leicestershire County Council, Rutland County Council planning authority and the Client, if required.

4.2 Watching brief methodology

- 4.2.1 The archaeologist will be present during all groundworks that have the potential to affect any surviving archaeological deposits within the development area. The commencement of groundworks and subsequent timetable of works has been agreed between the Client, the Client's contractor and ULAS.
- 4.2.2 The archaeologist will supervise and observe any topsoil stripping and the excavation of services, by the Client's contractors, in order to obtain an adequate record of any archaeological deposits or finds disturbed or exposed by groundworks associated with the development.
- 4.2.3 The archaeologist will cooperate at all times with the contractors to ensure that there are no unnecessary delays to the work. However, if any archaeological deposits are seen to be present, the archaeologist will have the power to temporarily halt the works in order to define and record areas of archaeological interest.
- 4.2.4 Any archaeological deposits encountered will be recorded and excavated using standard ULAS procedures (see section 5 below).
- 4.2.5 In the event that unforeseen archaeological discoveries are made during the development, ULAS shall have the power to halt any ground works and shall inform the site agent/project manager and the Senior Planning Archaeologist, and prepare a written statement with plan detailing the archaeological evidence. Following assessment of the archaeological remains by the Senior Planning Archaeologist, ULAS shall, if required, implement on behalf of the Client a contingency scheme for salvage excavation of affected archaeological features.

4.3 Environmental Sampling

- 4.3.1 If significant archaeological features are subject to excavation, the sampling strategy will include the following if practicable, within the scope of the project and with the allocated resources:

A range of features to represent all feature types, areas and phases will be selected on a judgmental basis. The criteria for selection will be that deposits are datable, well sealed and with little intrusive or residual material.

Any buried soils or well-sealed deposits with concentrations of carbonised material present will be intensively sampled taking a known proportion of the deposit.

Spot samples will be taken where concentrations of environmental remains are located.

Waterlogged remains, if present, will be sampled for pollen, plant macrofossils, insect remains and radiocarbon dating provided that they are uncontaminated and datable. Consultation with the specialist will be undertaken.

4.4 Recording Systems

- 4.4.1 The ULAS recording manual will be used as a guide for all recording.
- 4.4.2 Individual descriptions of any observed archaeological strata and features exposed by the works will be entered onto pro-forma recording sheets.
- 4.4.3 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 appropriate scale, which will show the location of the investigation area in relation to the OS or site grid, as appropriate.
- 4.4.4 A record of the full extent in plan of all archaeological deposits encountered will be made. Sections including the half-sections of individual layers of features will be drawn as necessary, typically at a scale of 1:10. Relative levels of archaeological deposits will be taken across the site area.
- 4.4.5 A photographic record of the investigations will be prepared 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.
- 4.4.6 As a minimum, the watching archaeologist will record the location and depths of any areas of groundworks, including descriptions and depths of all principal strata disturbed, even if no archaeological features are present.

5. Finds and Samples

- 5.1 The IFA Guidelines for Finds Work will be adhered to.
- 5.2 All antiquities, valuables, objects or remains of archaeological interest, other than articles declared by Coroner's Inquest to be subject to the Treasure Act, discovered in or under the Site during the carrying out of the project by ULAS or during works carried out on the Site by the Client shall be deemed to be the property of ULAS provided that ULAS after due examination of the said Archaeological Discoveries shall transfer ownership of all Archaeological Discoveries unconditionally to Leicestershire Museums for storage in perpetuity.
- 5.3 An accession number will be obtained for the watching brief which will be used to identify all records and finds from the site.
- 5.4 All identified finds and artefacts are to be retained, although certain classes of building material will, in some circumstances, be discarded after recording with the approval of the Senior Planning Archaeologist. The IFA Guidelines for Finds Work will be adhered to.
- 5.5 All finds and samples will be treated in a proper manner. Where appropriate they will be cleaned, marked and receive remedial conservation in accordance with recognised best-practice. This will include the site code number, finds number and context number. Bulk finds will be bagged in clear self sealing plastic bags, again marked with site code, finds and context numbers and boxed by material in standard storage boxes (340mm x 270mm x 195mm). All materials will be fully labelled, catalogued and store

6. Report and Archive

- 6.1 The full report in A4 format will usually follow within four weeks of the completion of the fieldwork and copies will be dispatched to the Client (2 copies), Senior Planning Archaeologist/Leicestershire SMR (2 copies) and Rutland County Council Planning Officer (1 copy).
- 6.2 The report will include:-
 - Summary

- The aims and methods adopted in the course of the watching brief.
- The nature, location, extent, date, significance and quality of any structural, artefactual and environmental material uncovered.
- Appropriate illustrative material including maps, plans, sections, drawings and photographs.
- The location and size of the archive.

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 usually be presented to within six months of the completion of fieldwork. This archive will include all written, drawn and photographic records relating directly to the investigations undertaken.

7 Publication and Dissemination of Results

7.1 A summary of the work will be submitted to the *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* for publication. A larger report will be submitted for inclusion if the results of the archaeological works warrant it.

8. Acknowledgement and Publicity

8.1 ULAS shall acknowledge the contribution of the Client in any displays, broadcasts or publications relating to the site or in which the report may be included.

8.2 ULAS and the Client shall each ensure that a senior employee shall be responsible for dealing with any enquiries received from press, television and any other broadcasting media and members of the public. All enquiries made to ULAS shall be directed to the Client for comment. The Senior Planning Archaeologist will also be consulted when dealing with such enquiries.

9. Copyright

9.1 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.

10. Timetable/Staffing

10.1 One member of ULAS staff will be present on the site during groundworks.

10.2 The report will normally be completed within eight weeks of the completion of fieldwork.

11. Health and Safety

11.1 ULAS is covered by and adheres to the University of Leicester Archaeological Services Health and Safety Policy and Health and Safety manual with appropriate risks assessments for all archaeological work. A draft Health and Safety statement for this project is attached as Appendix 1. The relevant Health and Safety Executive guidelines will be adhered to as appropriate. The HSE has determined that archaeological investigations are exempt from CDM regulations.

A Risks assessment form will be completed prior to work commencing on-site, and updated as necessary during the site works.

It is assumed that the locations of all services on the site are already known to the Client, and that this information will be made known to the attending archaeologist.

12. Insurance

12.1 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).

13. Monitoring arrangements

- 13.1 Unlimited access to monitor the project will be available to both the Client and his representatives and Senior Planning Archaeologist subject to the health and safety requirements of the site.
- 13.2 All monitoring shall be carried out in accordance with the IFA *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*.
- 13.3 Internal monitoring will be carried out by the ULAS project manager.

14. Bibliography

- MAP 2, The management of archaeological projects 2nd edition English Heritage 1991
- MGC 1992, Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections 1992 (Museums and Galleries Commission)
- RFG/FRG 1993, Guidelines for the preparation of site archives (Roman Finds Group and Finds Research Group AD 700-1700 1993)
- SMA 1993, Selection, retention and Dispersal of Archaeological Collections. Guidelines for use in England, Wales and Northern Ireland 1993 (Society of Museum Archaeologists)

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