

**An Archaeological Field Evaluation
at Belvoir High School,
Barkestone Lane
Bottesford,
Leicestershire,
(SP 802 383)**

Leon Hunt

For Leicestershire County Council, Property Services
Planning Application No: eApps1661814

Checked by Project Manager



Signed: .

.....Date: 23.04.2008

Name: ...Patrick Clay.....

University of Leicester

Archaeological Services

University Rd., Leicester, LE1 7RH
Tel: (0116) 2522848 Fax: (0116) 2522614

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An Archaeological Field Evaluation at The Belvoir High School, Barkestone Lane, Bottesford, Leicestershire (NGR SP 802 383)

Leon Hunt

Summary

An archaeological field evaluation was carried out by ULAS for Leicestershire County Council, Property Services at The Belvoir High School, Barkestone Lane, Bottesford, Leicestershire (SP 802 383) in advance of the development of new buildings and a car park. The site lies in an area that has moderate potential for archaeological remains to be uncovered from the Iron Age and Romano-British period.

Two trenches were placed on the playing fields to the south of the main school buildings along the footprints of the new development. No archaeological remains were found within the trenches. Two sherds of 13th-14th century medieval pottery were found in the topsoil of trench 2.

The archive for the site will be deposited with Leicestershire Historic and Natural Environment Team with accession number X.A59.2008.

Introduction

University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) carried out an archaeological field evaluation for Leicestershire County Council, Property Services at The Belvoir High School, Barkestone Lane, Bottesford, Leicestershire (NGR SP 802 383). This work was in accordance with DOE Planning Policy Guideline note 16 (PPG16, Archaeology and Planning, para.30) and was intended to provide preliminary indications of the character and extent of any archaeological remains that may have been present on the site, so that the Planning Authority could assess the potential impact of the proposed development on such remains.

Leicestershire County Council Historic and Natural Environment Team, as archaeological advisors to the planning authority at Melton Borough Council had requested a field evaluation by trial trenching.

The site lies on the eastern side of Barkestone Lane, Bottesford (Figure 1) and consists of several school buildings, which occupy the northern part of the site, with a large area of playing fields to the south. The planning application includes the construction of a new school building, a tennis court and a car park, which would be situated on the northern part of the playing field adjacent to the present school buildings and overflow car park (Figure 2).

The site measures c.2.7 hectares, is flat and lies at a height of 31m OD. The underlying geology was likely to be fluvial sand and gravel.

Archaeological Background

A desk-based assessment was prepared for the site (Hunt 2007). This concluded that although there have been no archaeological remains discovered close to the application area, the evidence from the outlying parts of Bottesford, along with the unchanged nature of the playing fields, which were once agricultural land, suggested

that there was moderate potential for archaeology from the Iron Age and Romano-British period to be discovered during any intrusive groundworks on the site.

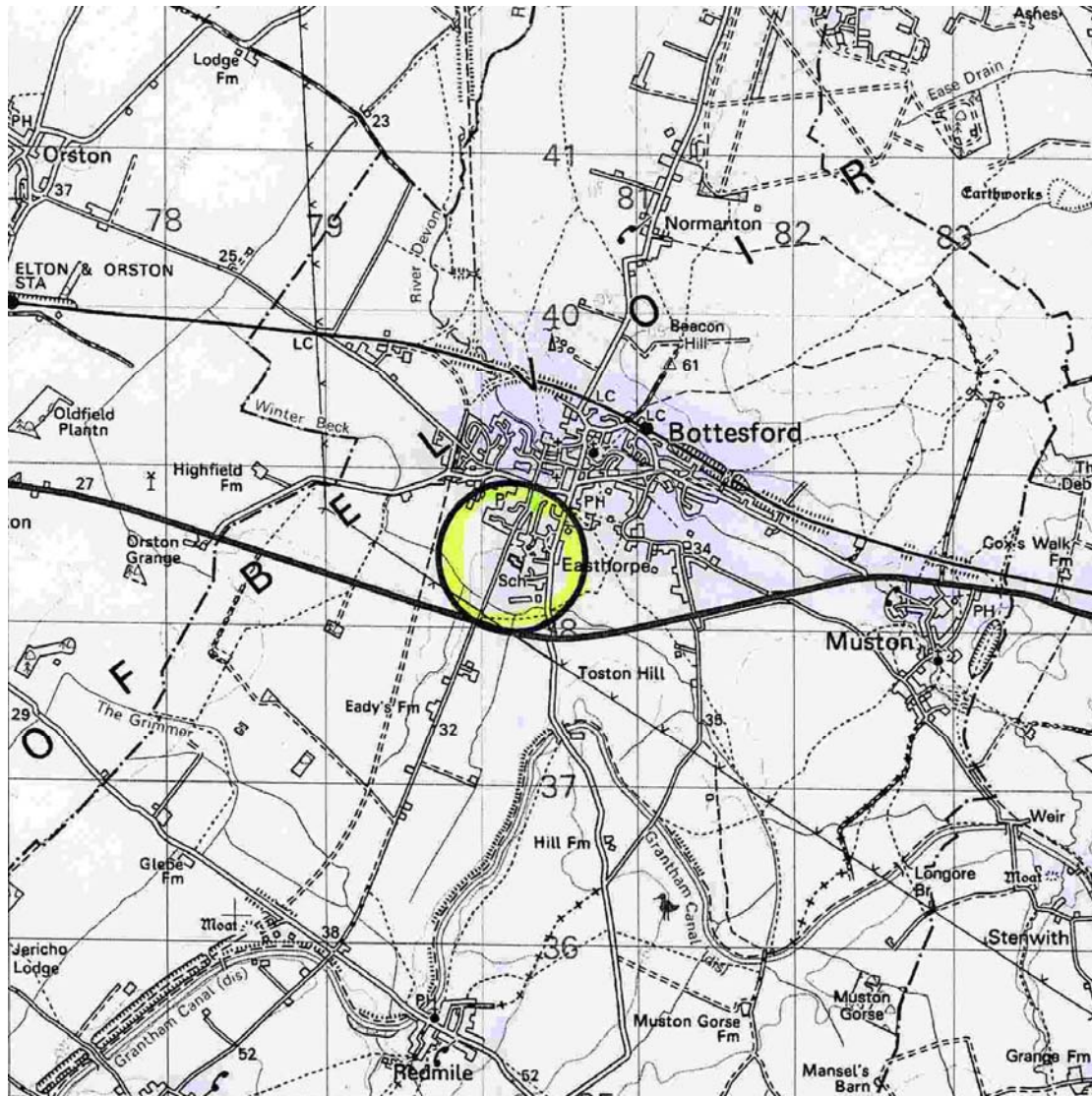


Figure 1: Location of Belvoir High School

Aims and Methods

The aim of the evaluation was to establish the presence or absence of archaeological deposits and, if present, determine their extent, character and quality of preservation. This would allow the Planning Archaeologist to assess the potential impact of the proposed development upon any archaeological remains.

All work followed the *Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations* and adhered to the Standing Conference of Archaeological Unit Manager's (SCAUM) Health and Safety Manual and ULAS's Health and Safety Guidelines (2001) and Health and Safety Policy (2001). The recording followed the ULAS Field Recording Manual.

All the work adhered to the system of work set out in the *Design Specification for Archaeological Work* produced by ULAS (Appendix II).

A 5% sample of the accessible areas of the proposed new building, car park and tennis courts was required. This equated to two c.30m x 1.5m trenches with a total area of c.90 square metres.

These trenches were placed to the east and south of the current car park on the proposed footprint of the new building (Trench 1) and the tennis courts (Trench 2).

Both were excavated using a JCB 3CX fitted with a flat 1.5m wide ditching bucket in level spits down to archaeological deposits or the natural substratum, whichever the higher. The trenches were then inspected for archaeological finds and deposits and were appropriately recorded.

The trenches were backfilled and levelled at the completion of the work.

Results

Two trenches were excavated on the playing fields by machine. Trench 1 was placed to the east of the small car park and was oriented north-west to south-east and Trench 2 was placed to the south of the car park and was oriented east-west (Figure 2). Both were 1.6m wide and were approximately 28m long. In both trenches the topsoil was a weak and friable mid yellowish brown silty clay with very few small angular stones, which overlay a thin layer of subsoil, which consisted of firm yellowish grey clayey silt, which contained flecks of charcoal. The substratum was a brown-yellow clay, with patches of gravel.

The following tables represent the depth of layers from the top of the land surface:

Trench 1: Ground surface: 30.97m OD

Interval	0m (NW)	5m	10m	15m	20m	25m	28m (SE)
Topsoil Depth	0.35m	0.30m	0.1m	0.27m	0.27m	0.26m	0.33m
Subsoil Depth	Not visible	0.4m	Within cut of feature	0.35m	0.4m	0.36m	0.45m
Base of trench	0.35m	0.5m	0.35m	0.37m	0.4m	0.36m	0.45m

Trench 1 contained two modern field drains, which ran from north-east to south-west and were placed around 10m apart. A linear feature measuring 0.5m wide, with a visible extent of c.13m could be seen running north to south across the trench. This feature was filled with rubble and a porous membrane.

Trench 2: Ground surface: 30.62m OD

Interval	0m (W)	5m	10m	15m	20m	25m	28m(E)
Topsoil Depth	0.34m	0.24m	0.23m	0.20m	0.20m	0.25m	0.25m
Subsoil	Not	0.30m	0.30m	0.27m	0.30m	0.30m	0.30m

Depth	visible						
Base of trench	0.34m	0.37m	0.37m	0.34m	0.36m	0.35m	0.30m

Trench 2 contained no features whatsoever. Two sherds of Nottingham ware pottery dated to the mid 13th to mid 14th century were found in the topsoil of the trench along with 2 pieces of clay pipe stem.

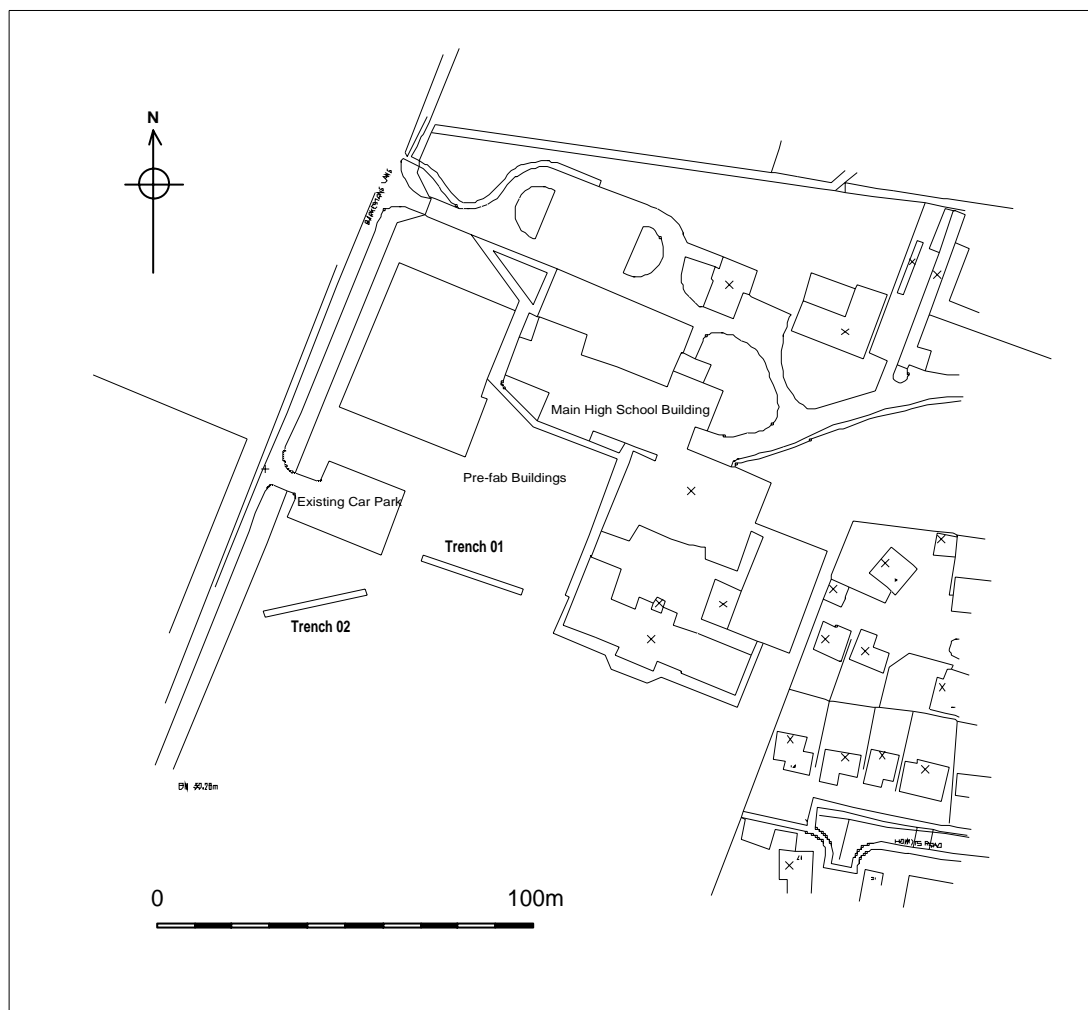


Figure 2: Location of Evaluation Trenches

Conclusion

The archaeological evaluation at Belvoir High School revealed no archaeological features in the areas that will be affected by the new development. The rubble filled linear feature is likely to be associated with pre-fabricated school buildings which once stood on this area, close to the current small blocks. Remnants of a porous membrane may suggest that it may be a backfilled service trench.

The substratum appeared to be glacial till (Boulder Clay), which is often found in areas otherwise dominated by sand and gravel.

The presence of small amounts of medieval pottery in the topsoil is not unusual in these contexts; they are often associated with the manuring of agricultural fields or may have even been brought in when the playing fields were created, which may have also involved the importing of soil or turf from elsewhere.

References

Hunt, L., *An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment for The Belvoir High School, Barkestone Lane, Bottesford, Leicestershire (SP 802 383)*. ULAS Report No: 2007-024

Acknowledgements

ULAS would like to thank Leicester County Council Property Services and the staff at Belvoir High School. The evaluation was carried out by Peter Watkin and the author. Patrick Clay was the project manager.

Archive

An archive will be produced and deposited with Leicestershire Historic and Natural Environment Team with accession number X.A59.2008 and consists of the following:

- 1 copy of this report no.2008-052
- 1 copy of desk-based assessment report no. 2007-024
- 2 trench recording sheets
- 1 photographic record
- 1 B & W photographic contact sheet
- 1 set of B & W negatives
- 1 contact sheet of digital images
- 1 CD of digital images

Leon Hunt

ULAS
University of Leicester
University Road
Leicester LE1 7RH

Tel: 0116 252 2848

Fax: 0116 252 2614

lh90@le.ac.uk

22/04/08



Plate 1: Trench 1 post excavation, looking north west



Plate 2: Trench 2 post-excavation looking east

APPENDIX I: THE POST-ROMAN FINDS

Deborah Sawday

The pottery, 2 sherds, weighing 29 grams, was catalogued with reference to the ULAS fabric series (Davies and Sawday 1999). Both sherds were in Nottingham ware, (Coppack 1980) and dated from the early to mid 13th to the mid 14th centuries. Two fragments of post medieval or modern clay tobacco pipe stems were also recovered. All the finds occurred in unstratified contexts in trench 2.

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.

Site/ Parish: Belvoir High School, Barlestone Lane, Bottesford Accession No.: XA59 2008 Document Ref: bottesford2.doc Material: pottery & clay pipe Site Type: ?open fields	Submitter: L. Hunt Identifier: D. Sawday Date of Identification: 4.4.08 Method of recovery: evaluation Job Number: 08/606
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Context	Fabric/Ware	Nos.	Grams	Comments
POT				
U/S T2 topsoil	NO3 – Nottingham ware	2	29	Abraded, 1 green glazed both with decorative rilling, probably from jugs, c.1230-1350
MISC				
U/S T2 topsoil	China Clay	2		Tobacco pipe stems, post medieval/modern.

Appendix II: UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

Design Specification for archaeological work

*Job title: The Belvoir High School, Barkestone Lane, Bottesford,
Leicestershire (SP 802 383)*

Client: Leicestershire County Council, Property Services

Planning Authority: Melton Borough Council

Planning application No. eApps1661814

1 Introduction

1.1 Definition and scope of the specification

This document is a design specification for an initial phase of archaeological field evaluation (AFE) at the above site, in accordance with DOE Planning Policy Guidance note 16 (PPG16, Archaeology and Planning, para.30). The fieldwork specified below is intended to provide preliminary indications of character and extent of any buried archaeological remains in order that the potential impact of the development on such remains may be assessed by the Planning Authority.

- 1.2 The definition of archaeological field evaluation, taken from the Institute of Field Archaeologists Standards and Guidance: for Archaeological Field Evaluation (IFA S&G: AFE) is a limited programme of non-intrusive and/ or intrusive fieldwork which determines the presence or absence of archaeological features, structures, deposits, artefacts or ecofacts within a specified area or site on land, inter-tidal zone or underwater. If such archaeological remains are present field evaluation defines their character, extent, quality and preservation, and enables an assessment of their worth in a local, regional, national or international context as appropriate.

2. Background

2.1 Context of the Project

- 2.1.1 The site is The Belvoir High School, Barkestone Lane, Bottesford, Leicestershire (NGR SP 802 383). The application area currently contains the school buildings themselves in the northern part of the area, with areas of grass, paths and a car park, with a large grassed playing field to the south. The site is on flat ground and covers c.2.7ha.
- 2.1.2 An application has been made for the addition of a new building, tennis courts and car park.
- 2.1.3 Leicestershire County Council, Historic and Natural Environment Team (LCCHNET) as archaeological advisors to the planning authority have requested a field evaluation by trial trenching to identify and locate any archaeological remains of significance and propose suitable treatment to avoid or minimise damage by the development. This requirement is detailed in their 'brief' of 18.12.2007.

2.2 Archaeological and Historical Background

- 2.2.1 The site is has been subject to a desk-based assessment (Hunt 2007) which has identified a number of anomalies of possible archaeological origin. Archaeological remains have not been discovered close to the application area, although the evidence from outlying areas around Bottesford, combined with the relatively unchanged nature of the playing field area does suggest that there is moderate potential for archaeology from the Iron Age through to the Roman period to be discovered during any intrusive groundworks that might take place in this part of the site.

3. Archaeological Objectives

- 3.1 The main objectives of the evaluation will be:
- 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 produce an archive and report of any results.
- 3.2 Within the stated project objectives, the principal aim of the evaluation is to establish the nature, extent, date, depth, significance and state of preservation of archaeological deposits on the site in order to determine the potential impact upon them from the proposed development.
- 3.3 Trial trenching is an intrusive form of evaluation that will demonstrate the existence of earth-fast archaeological features that may exist within the area.

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 Field Evaluation* (1999).
- 4.1.2 Staffing, 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 the Planning authority and the Client.

4.2 *Trial Trenching Methodology*

- 4.2.1 Prior to any machining of trial trenches general photographs of the site areas will be taken. A Cat scanner will be employed to attempt to locate underlying services.
- 4.2.2 Topsoil/modern overburden will be removed in level spits, under continuous archaeological supervision, down to the uppermost archaeological deposits by JCB 3C or equivalent using a toothless ditching bucket. Trenches will be excavated to a width of 1.5m and down to the top of archaeological deposits. The area of the trenches will be protected by heras fencing.
- 4.2.3 The trenches will be backfilled and levelled at the end of the evaluation.
- 4.2.4 The area of impact covers c. 0.39 ha, of which c. 50% is not accessible due to the presence of an existing tennis court and services (Fig.1). A c. 5% sample of the accessible areas of the new building, car park and tennis courts is the equivalent of c. two 30m x 1.5m trenches totaling c. 90 sq m. (Fig 2). The exact location of the trenches may need to be modified depending on constraints on site.
- 4.2.5 Trenches will be examined by hand cleaning and any archaeological deposits located will be planned at an appropriate scale and sample-excavated by hand as appropriate to establishing the stratigraphic and chronological sequence. All plans will be tied into the Ordnance Survey National Grid. Spot heights will be taken as appropriate.
- 4.2.6 Sections of any excavated archaeological features will be drawn at an appropriate scale. At least one longitudinal face of each trench will be recorded. All sections will be levelled and tied to the Ordnance Survey Datum, or a permanent fixed bench mark.
- 4.2.7 Trench locations will be recorded using an electronic distance measurer. These will then be tied in to the Ordnance Survey National Grid.
- 4.2.8 Any human remains will initially be left *in situ* and will only be removed if necessary for their protection, under Ministry of Justice guidelines and in compliance with relevant environmental health regulations.

4.3 **Recording Systems**

- 4.3.1 The ULAS recording manual will be used as a guide for all recording.
- 4.3.2 Individual descriptions of all archaeological strata and features excavated or exposed will be entered onto pro-forma recording sheets.
- 4.3.3 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 trench plan at appropriate scale, which will show the location of the areas investigated in relationship to the investigation area and OS grid.
- 4.3.4 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. The OD height of all principal strata and features will be recorded.
- 4.3.5 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.
- 4.3.6 This record will be compiled and checked during the course of the excavations.

5. **Finds and Samples**

- 5.1 The IFA *Guidelines for Finds Work* will be adhered to.
- 5.2 Before commencing work on the site, a Site code/Accession number will be agreed with the Planning Archaeologist that will be used to identify all records and finds from the site.
- 5.3 During the fieldwork, different sampling strategies may be employed according to the perceived importance of the strata under investigation. Close attention will always be given to sampling for date, structure and environment. If significant archaeological features are sample excavated, the environmental sampling strategy is likely to include the following:
 - i. 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.
 - ii. Any buried soils or well sealed deposits with concentrations of carbonised material present will be intensively sampled taking a known proportion of the deposit.
 - iii. Spot samples will be taken where concentrations of environmental remains are located.
 - iv. 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.
- 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 stored in appropriate containers.

6. **Report and Archive**

- 6.1 The full report in A4 format will usually follow within eight weeks of the completion of the fieldwork and copies will be dispatched to the Client, Senior Planning Archaeologist; SMR and Local Planning Authority.
- 6.2 The report will include consideration of:-
 - The aims and methods adopted in the course of the evaluation.
 - The nature, location, extent, date, significance and quality of any structural, artefactual and environmental material uncovered.

- The anticipated degree of survival of archaeological deposits.
 - The anticipated archaeological impact of the current proposals.
 - Appropriate illustrative material including maps, plans, sections, drawings and photographs.
 - Summary.
 - The location and size of the archive.
 - A quantitative and qualitative assessment of the potential of the archive for further analysis leading to full publication, following guidelines laid down in *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage).
- 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 for publication in the *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society*. A larger report will be submitted for inclusion if the results of the evaluation 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.

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

- 10.1 The evaluation start is to be arranged with two staff. Further staff will be added if archaeological remains are discovered.
- 10.2 The on-site director/supervisor will carry out the post-excavation work, with time allocated within the costing of the project for analysis of any artefacts found on the site by the relevant in-house specialists at ULAS.

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

12. Insurance

- 12.1 All ULAS work is covered by the University of Leicester's Public Liability and Professional Indemnity Insurance. The Public Liability Insurance is with St Pauls Travellers Policy No. UCPOP3651237 while the Professional Indemnity Insurance is with Lloyds Underwriters (50%) and Brit Insurances (50%) Policy No. FUNK3605.

13. Monitoring arrangements

- 13.1 Unlimited access to monitor the project will be available to both the Client and his representatives and Planning Archaeologist subject to the health and safety requirements of the site. At least one weeks notice will be given to the LCCHS Senior Planning Archaeologist before the commencement of the archaeological evaluation in order that monitoring arrangements can be made.
- 13.2 All monitoring shall be carried out in accordance with the IFA *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations*.
- 13.3 Internal monitoring will be carried out by the ULAS project manager.

14. Contingencies and unforeseen circumstances

- 14.1 In the event that unforeseen archaeological discoveries are made during the project, ULAS shall inform the site agent/project manager, Client and the Planning Archaeologist and Planning Authority and prepare a short written statement with plan detailing the archaeological evidence. Following assessment of the archaeological remains by the Planning Archaeologist, ULAS shall, if required, implement an amended scheme of investigation on behalf of the client as appropriate.

15. 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)
- Smalley 2007 *Geophysical Survey report. Loughborough University* Stratascan Report J2397

Patrick Clay
Director

ULAS
University of Leicester
University Road
Leicester LE1 7RH

Tel:0116 252 2848
Fax: 0116 252 2614

Email: pnc3@le.ac.uk

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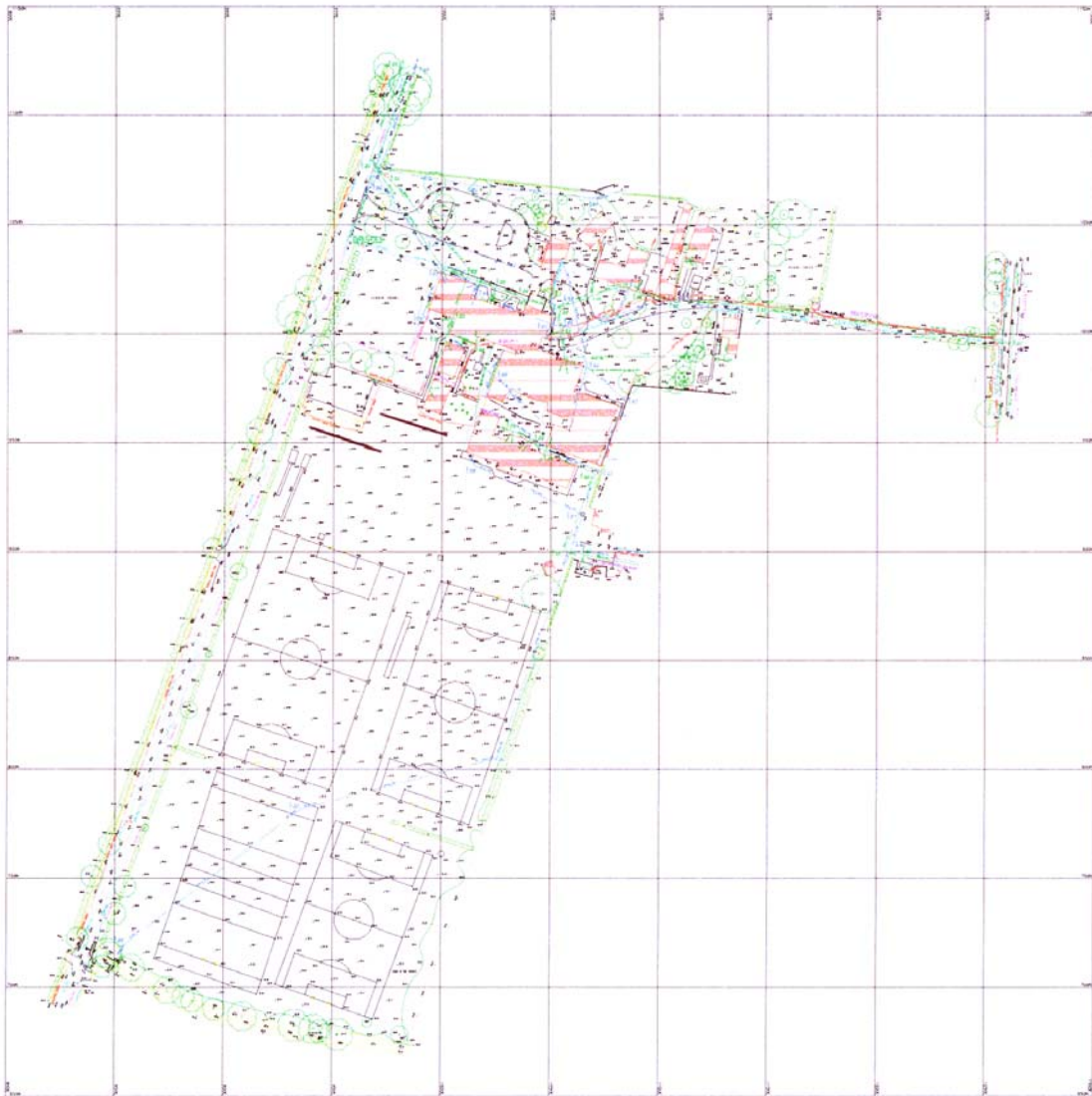


Fig 1 Suggested trench locations

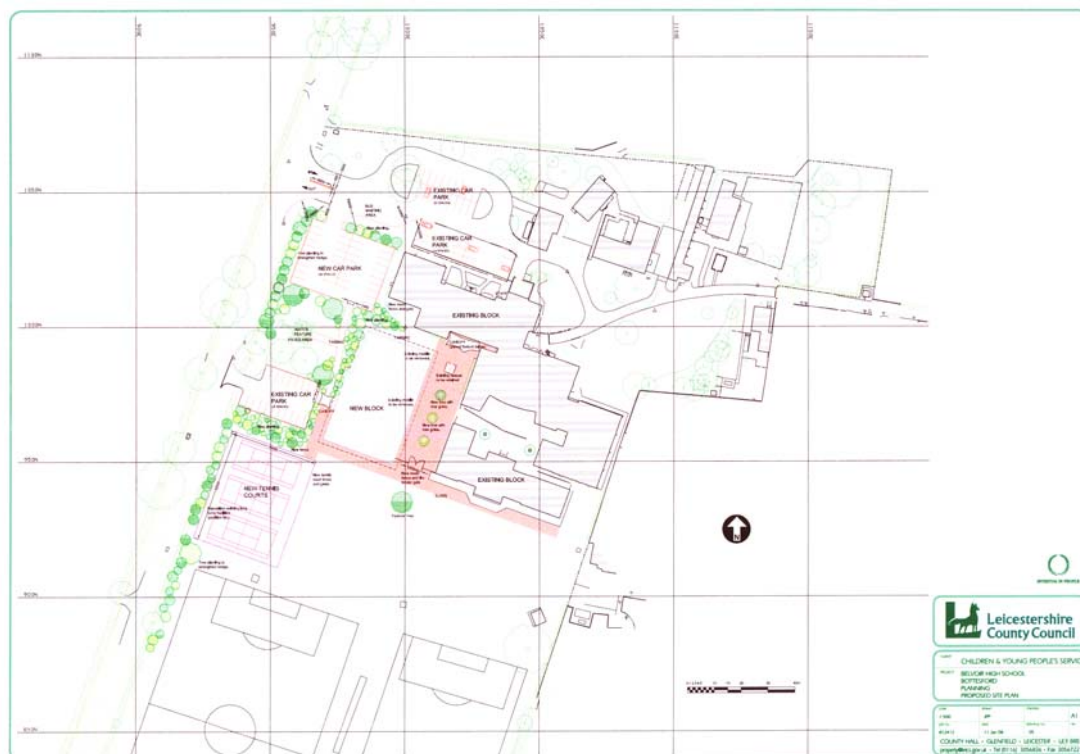


Fig 2 Plan of proposed development

APPENDIX 1

Draft Project Health and Safety Policy Statement

A risks assessment will be produced by on-site staff, which will be updated and amended during the course of the evaluation.

1. Nature of the work

1.1 Brief description of the work involved e.g.

The work will involve machine excavation by JCB 3C or equivalent during daylight hours to reveal underlying archaeological deposits. Overall depth is likely to be c. 0.5 m with possible features excavated to a depth of another 1m. Trenches will not be excavated to a depth exceeding 1.2m. Spoil will be stockpiled no less than 1.5 m from the edge of the excavation, the topsoil and subsoil being kept separate. Remaining works will involve the examination of the exposed surface with hand tools (shovels, trowels etc) and excavation of archaeological features. Deeper features will be fenced with lamp irons and hazard tape. Three staff will be used on the evaluation.

2 Risks Assessment

2.1 *Working on an excavation site.*

Precautions. Trenches to not be excavated to a depth exceeding 1.2m. Spoil will be kept 1.5m away from the edge of the excavated area to prevent falls of loose debris. Loose spoil heaps will not be walked on. Protective footwear will be worn at all times. Hard hats will be worn when working in deeper sections or with plant. First aid kit to be kept in site accommodation/vehicle. Vehicle and mobile phone to be kept on site in case of emergency.

2.2 *Working with plant.*

Precautions. Archaeologists experienced in working with machines will supervise topsoil stripping at all times. Hard hats, protective footwear and hazard jackets will be worn at all times. Machine driver to be suitably qualified and insured. If services or wells are encountered machining will be halted until extent has been established by hand excavation or areas where it is safe to machine have been established. Overhead power lines are present to the south of the areas to be evaluated. The machine will maintain a distance of at least 10 m to the north of the powerlines.

2.3 ***Working within areas prone to waterlogging.***

If waterlogging occurs on site preventing work continuing it is proposed to excavate a sump, suitably fenced and clearly marked to enable the water to drain away. If this is insufficient a pump will be used. The sump will be covered when not in use and backfilled if no longer required. Protective clothing will be worn at all times and precautions taken to prevent contact with stagnant water which may carry Wile's 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.