An Archaeological Evaluation of the Former United Biscuits Factory, Smisby Road, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicestershire.

(NGR SK 35750 17270 (centre)) Gerwyn Richards

Planning Application: JK/05/01802/FUL

For: JS Bloor Services Ltd

Checked by Project Manager

Signed:..

Date:27.03.2008...

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	Summa	ary	1
1.	Introduction		1
2.	Aims and Methodology		1
3.	Results		3
4.	Conclusion		5
5.	Archive and Publication		5
6.	Bibliography		5
Figures			
Figure	1	Site Location Plan (1:50,000)	2
Figure	2	Trench 1 In Plan.	6
Figure	3	Section of Trench 5.	6
Figure	2	Trench Location Plan	7

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Summary

University of Leicester Archaeological Services were commissioned by Bloor Homes to undertake an archaeological evaluation of the former United Biscuits Factory, Smisby Road/The Callis, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicestershire. A desk-based assessment suggested the possibility of archaeological remains associated with nearby medieval settlement activity.

No remains of archaeological significance were uncovered during the course of the evaluation. The archive for the trial trenching will be held by Leicestershire County Council, under the accession number X.A47.2008.

1. Introduction

University of Leicester Archaeological Services were commissioned by Bloor Homes to undertake an archaeological evaluation of the former United Biscuits Factory, Smisby Road, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicestershire (SK 35750 17270). Outline planning permission has been granted for the construction of 155 residential units on land formally occupied by industrial units and associated car parking (Planning Application JK/05/01802/FUL).

An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment (Rouse, 2005) identified the site as having some archaeological potential. Ashby is thought to have originated in the ninth or tenth centuries as an amalgamation of three pre-existing settlements, with a charter being granted in the thirteenth century. It is likely that one of these settlements, Callis/Woodcotes (MLE4294) may have been located in close proximity to the proposed development area.

In view of this a programme of intrusive investigation through trial trenching was requested by Leicestershire County Council, as archaeological advisors to the planning authority, to confirm whether archaeological remains are present within the application area and, if necessary, formulate a mitigation strategy.

2. Aims and Methodology

The aim of the archaeological work was to ascertain whether any significant archaeological remains were present within the area to be developed. If identified a sufficient sample was to be excavated and recorded to establish their extent, date, quality, character, form and potential including environmental data. Further

archaeological recording would be undertaken, if required, in the light of the results of this programme.

The Planning Archaeologist of Historic and Natural Environment Team, Leicestershire County Council as advisor to North West Leicestershire District Council following Planning Policy Guidelines 16 (PPG 16, Archaeology and Planning para. 30) had requested a c. 3% sample - the equivalent of c. 280metre length of 1.8metre wide trenches. The trenches were to be excavated by a back actor with a ditching bucket. On site constraints, however, necessitated the reduction of this total to c. 134metre length of 1.8metre wide trenches (*Figure 2*). The evaluation took place between March 11th & 14th 2008 and followed the *Design Specification for archaeological evaluation* (06/583 Appendix 1) which addressed the requirements of the *Brief for Archaeological Evaluation of Land at the Former United Biscuits Factory, Smithsby Road, Ashby-dela-Zouch, Leicestershire* (LCC HNET 18.01.2006).

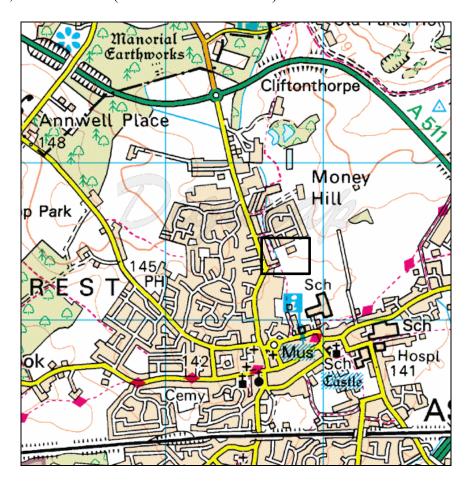


Figure 1. Site location Scale 1:50000

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3. Results

3.1 Trench 1

Trench 1 was located in the northernmost corner of the proposed development area, approximately 5 metres from the boundary. The trench was orientated north-north-west to south-south east and measured 30metres long by 1.8metres wide.

Approximately 200mm to 500mm of road stone was excavated before an horizon of alluvial material was exposed, a further 200mm to 300mm of this material was removed to confirm it was not re-deposited or sealed earlier deposits.

There were no remains of archaeological significance within the trench and it was recorded and released for backfilling.

3.2 Trench 2

Trench 2 was located approximately 13metres south of trench 1, the trench was aligned east-north-east to west-south-west and measured 16metres long by 1.8metres wide.

A similar depth of road stone as trench 1 was excavated before the same alluvial deposits were encountered.

There were no remains of archaeological significance within the trench and it was recorded and released for backfilling.

3.3 Trench 3

Trench 3 was located approximately 10metres south of trench 2, and was aligned north-north-west to south-south-east and measured 21metres long by 1.8metres wide.

A similar depth of road stone as trenches 1 and 2 was excavated before the same alluvial deposits were encountered.

There were no remains of archaeological significance within the trench and it was recorded and released for backfilling.

3.4 Trench 4

Trench 4 was located approximately 45metres south-east of trench 3, and was aligned north-north-west to south-south-east and measured 30metres long by 1.8metres wide.

Unlike previous trenches, there was a limited amount of topsoil and subsoil below the road stone which contained nineteenth/twentieth century building material and ceramic. Approximately 400mm of this material was removed before the alluvial deposit observed within the previous trenches was exposed.

There were no remains of archaeological significance within the trench and it was recorded and released for backfilling.

3.5 Trench 5

Trench 5 was the only trench located on the western bank of the Gilwiskaw Brook, within the only potentially undisturbed part of the proposed development area on that western bank of the brook. The former factory building had occupied most of the western part of the proposed development area, and it was expected, therefore, that archaeological remains would be limited.

The trench was located approximately 30metres south of the existing bridge, and was aligned north-west to south-east and measured 5metres long by 1.8metres wide.

Approximately 700mm of rubble and other re-deposited material was excavated before what appeared to be alluvial deposits were uncovered. A further 600mm was excavated to confirm this.

Due to the unstable nature of the overburden, only 5 metres in length was excavated. There were no remains of archaeological significance within the trench and it was recorded and released for backfilling.

3.6 Trench 6

Trench 6 was located approximately 35metres south of trench 4, on the southernmost edge of the proposed development area, approximately 13metres from the southern boundary. The trench was aligned east-north-east to west-south-west and measured 17metres long by 1.8metres wide.

Approximately 550mm to 700mm of road stone was excavated before the same alluvial deposits seen in previous trenches were exposed. A further 300mm of this was also excavated.

There were no remains of archaeological significance within the trench and it was recorded and released for backfilling.

3.7 Trench 7

The final trench was excavated in the north-western corner of the proposed development area, approximately 35metres west of trench 1. The trench was aligned north-west to south-east and measured 15metres long by 1.8metres wide.

A similar depth of road stone as was found in trench 1 was excavated before the same alluvial deposits were encountered.

There were no remains of archaeological significance within the trench and it was recorded and released for backfilling.

4. Conclusion

Nothing of archaeological significance was recorded during the course of this evaluation. It appears the proposed development area had been extensively levelled during the construction of the car park, all topsoil and subsoil had been removed and a considerable depth of road stone had been imported onto site. The underlying substratum was alluvial deposits from the nearby Gilwiskaw Brook; it is likely, therefore, that the area was waterlogged and too flood prone for any settlement activity. In all likelihood the settlement of Callis/Woodcotes was on the higher ground to the west, where there is still settlement activity.

5. Bibliography

Rouse, C. 2005. Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment: Former United Biscuits Sites, Smisby Road, Ashby-de-la-Zouch. Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd.

6. Archive & Publication

The site archive consists of

7 Trench recording sheets,

1 A3 permatrace sheet containing trench identification

14 Black and white negatives with contact sheets

1 CD of 14 Digital Colour Images

1 A4 Colour Contact Sheet

A4 photo index sheet.

Unbound Copy of This Report

The archive will be held at Leicestershire County Council, under the accession number X.A51.2008

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



Figure 2 Trench 1 In Plan.



Figure 3 Section of Trench 5.

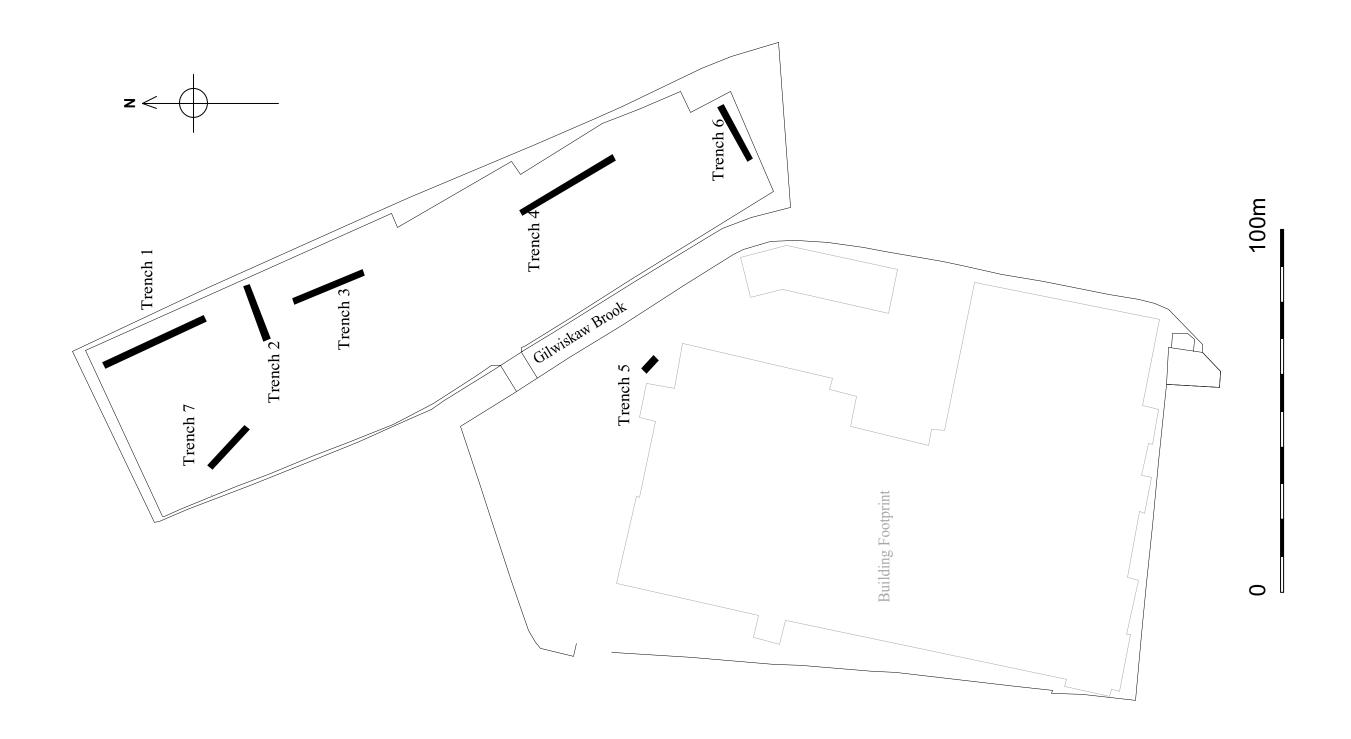


Figure 4 Trench Location Plan.

Appendix

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

Design Specification for Archaeological Evaluation by Trial Trenching Proposed Residential development at the Former United Biscuit Factory Smisby Road, Ashby de la Zouch, Leicestershire NGR: SK 35750 17270 (centre) Planning Application Number: JK/05/01802/FUL Client: Bloor Homes

Planning Authority: North-West Leicestershire District Council

1 Introduction

1.1 Definition and scope of the specification

This document is a design specification for a phase of intrusive 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.
- 1.3 The document provides details of the work proposed by ULAS on behalf of the client, and should be submitted to the Archaeological Advisor to the Planning Authority for approval before archaeological investigation by ULAS is implemented. The scheme includes the following:
 - Evaluation by intrusive trial trenching

2. Background

2.1 Context of the Project

- 2.1.1 Bloor Homes are seeking planning permission to redevelop land at the former United Biscuit factory with the erection of 155 dwellings and garages. The proposed development site is located c.500m north of the town centre of Ashby de-la Zouch, to the east of Smisby Road (centred on SK 35750 17270; figs. 1 and 2) and it consists of an area of c. 3.0 ha. A desk-based assessment has been conducted for the site (Rouse 2005), this has highlighted that the site has a moderate archaeological potential. The Leicestershire Historic Monument Record (HER) indicates that the proposed site lies in close proximity to the known medieval settlement of Callis/Wooddcotes. The site also has a potential for environmental remains.
- 2.1.2 The area lies at a height of approximately 125-130m O.D.
- 2.1.3 The Heritage and Natural Environment Team of Leicestershire County Council (HNET LCC) have requested an archaeological evaluation of the site by trial trenching the area. The evaluation has been commissioned from University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS).

2.2 Geological and Topographical Background

2.2.1 The Ordnance Survey Geological Survey of Great Britain Sheet 141 indicates that alluvial clays, sands and silts lie along the valley of the Gilwiskaw, Underlying deposits on the eastern side of the site are likely to consist of Triassic sedimentary rocks of the Lower Coal Measures, while to the west the underlying deposits are likely to consist of Carboniferous mudstone of the Bromsgrove Formation.

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- 2.3 Archaeological and Historical Background (from the Brief prepared by the Senior Planning Archaeologist of Leicestershire County Council)
- 2.3.1 A desk-based assessment has been conducted for the site (Rouse 2005) that concluded that while no archaeological activity is recorded within the proposed development area, there is a potential for Roman and prehistoric deposits to survive, as well as conditions possible being suitable for environmental sampling.
- 2.3.2 Ashby is thought to have originated in the 9th/10th centuries AD and may represent an aggregation of three pre-existing communities, linked by the establishment of the market in the early 13th century, centred on the present day Market Street (Historic Environment Record (HER) ref: MLE4295). The early settlement foci comprise to the east, the village of Ashby perhaps centred on Wood Street and Upper/Lower Church Street, to the west Kilwardby, in the vicinity of Kilwardby Street, and to the north, Callis/Woodcotes, which may have been located in close proximity to the current development site (MLE4294).

3. Archaeological Objectives

- 3.1 The main objectives of the evaluation will be:
 - To identify the presence/absence of any archaeological deposits in areas where the survey did not reveal possible archaeological anomalies.
 - To provide information on the extent, character and date of archaeological deposits within the application area.
 - The potential impact of the proposed development on any archaeological remains, whether known or postulated, will be assessed.
 - The archaeological evaluation, once the above information has been gathered, will serve to
 determine a decision being made on planning permission regarding archaeological issues.
 Potentially further stages of archaeological investigation will be required as a condition of
 planning permission.
 - 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 and significance of archaeological deposits on the site in order to determine the potential impact upon them from proposed development.
- 3.3 Archaeological evaluation is an intrusive form of archaeological evaluation. The scheme of the trenching will involve randomly sampling the area in order to get a representative sample of the proposed development area although trench locations will be constrained by the extant buildings and known services.

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 Planning authority and the Client, if required.

4.2 Trial Trenching Methodology

- 4.2.1 Prior to any machining of trial trenches general photographs of the site areas may be taken.
- 4.2.3 Topsoil and overburden will be removed carefully in level spits, under continuous archaeological supervision by JCB 3C or equivalent using a toothless ditching bucket. Trenches will be excavated to a width of 1.8m and down to the top of archaeological deposits or natural undisturbed ground, whichever is reached first.

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- 4.2.4 The brief has suggested a minimum of c. 3% sample of the proposed development area would need to be trial trenched. Therefore for the c.1.68ha area available (excluding the existing building footprints), this equated to the equivalent of c.280m length of 1.8m width trenches. The provisional trench plan attached (figure 3) indicates 5 trenches of 30m length (150m), 4 trenches of 25m (100m) and 2 trenches of 15m length (30m). There is a contingency of additional trenching to be located if necessary to confirm the character and extent of any surviving archaeological features. The size and position of the trenches indicated on the provisional trench plan may vary due to unforeseen site constraints.
- 4.2.5 Trenches will be examined by hand cleaning and any archaeological deposits located will be planned at an appropriate scale. Archaeological deposits will be sample-excavated by hand as appropriate to establish the stratigraphic and chronological sequence. All plans will be tied into the Ordnance Survey National Grid. Relative 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 benchmark.
- 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 a Home Office Licence and in compliance with relevant environmental health regulations.

5. Finds

- 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 LCC for storage in perpetuity.
- An Accession number will be obtained from the Assistant Keeper of Archaeological Archives at Leicestershire County Council that will be used to identify all records and finds from the site, prior to the commencement of any on-site works.
- 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.
- 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 Senior Planning Archaeologist/SMR (5 copies) to be distributed amongst relevant sections of Leicestershire County Council as necessary.
- 6.2 The report will include consideration of:
 - The aims and methods adopted in the course of the evaluation.
 - The nature, location and extent 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).
- 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 local archaeological journal, 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.
- 7.2 University of Leicester Archaeological Services supports the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) project. The online OASIS form at http://ads.ac.uk/project/oasis will be completed detailing the results of the project. ULAS will contact Leicestershire County Council's SMR prior to completion of the form. Once a report has become a public document following its incorporation into Leicestershire SMR it may be places on the web-site. The Developer should agree to this procedure in writing as part of the process of submitting the report to Leicestershire SMR.'

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 archaeological evaluation is scheduled to start in March 2006 and will last approximately 5-6 days.
- 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.
- 10.3 An interim report on the results of the evaluation can be prepared, if required, after the completion of the 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.
- 11.2 A Risks assessment form will be completed prior to work commencing on-site, and updated as necessary during the site works.
- 11.3 The location of a high-pressure gas main crosses the western part of the site area and an overhead electricity cable also crosses the north-western corner. Information on the known

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location of any other services or other constraints will need to be supplied by the Client, prior to the commencement of works on the site.

12 Insurance

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. Notice will be given to the Leicestershire 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

In the unlikely event, due to the non-intrusive nature of the evaluation techniques being employed, that unforeseen archaeological discoveries are made during the project, ULAS shall inform the site agent/project manager, Client and the Senior 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 Senior Planning Archaeologist, ULAS shall, if required, implement an amended scheme of investigation on behalf of the client as appropriate.

15. Bibliography

Clarke, R. Brief for Archaeological Evaluation of land at The Former United Biscuit Factory, Smisby Road, Ashby de la Zouch, Leicestershire. Prepared on 18th January 2005

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)

Rouse, C. Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment: Former United Biscuits Site, Smisby Road,

Ashby de la Zouch. Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd. Project No. SRA

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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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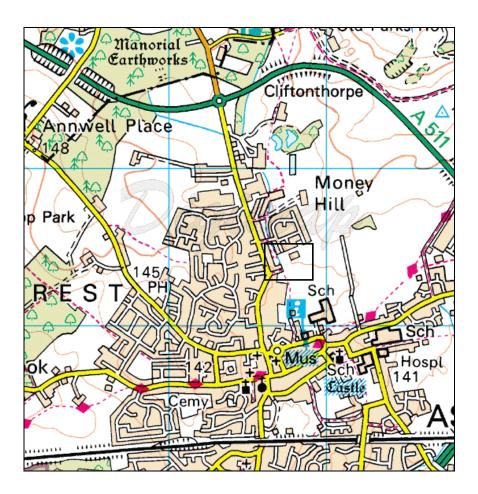


Fig. 1: Site location

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Fig. 1: Site location (close up)

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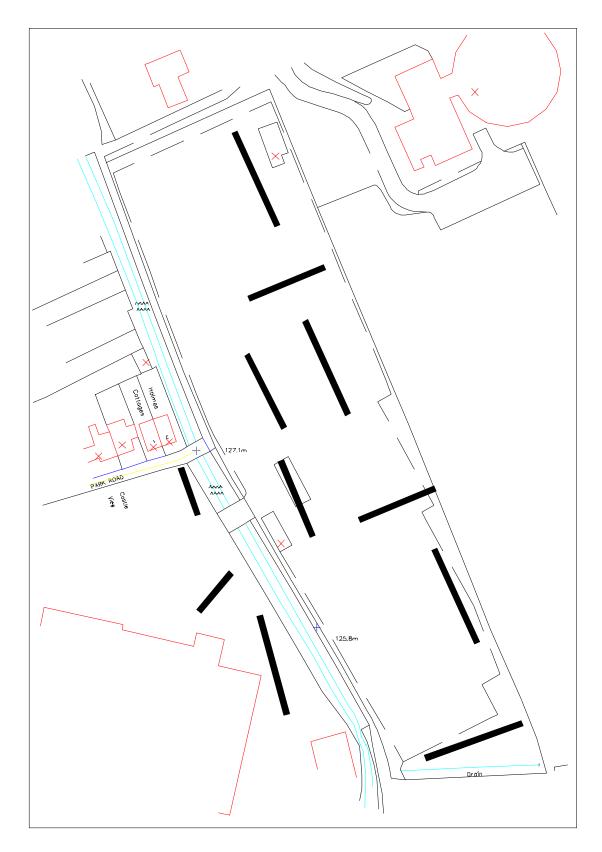


Figure 3 Proposed Trench Location Plan

APPENDIX 1: Draft Project Health and Safety Policy Statement:

Proposed Residential development at the Former United Biscuit Factory

Smisby Road, Ashby de la Zouch, Leicestershire

NGR: SK 35750 17270 (centre)

Planning Application Number: JK/05/01802/FUL

Client: Bloor Homes

Planning Authority: North-West Leicestershire District Council

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 The work will involve trial trenching during daylight hours to reveal underlying archaeological deposits. The work will involve excavation using machine (JCB or equivalent with toothless ditching bucket), of trial trenches under the control and supervision of archaeologists.

2 Risks Assessment

2.1 Trial Trenching

The work will involve machine excavation by mechanical excavator 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. 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. It is assumed that there is safe and permitted access to the site area.

2.3 Working in vicinity of services

A high-pressure gas main crosses the western part of the site area. No machining of trenches will be undertaken within 20m of the centreline of the gas main. The relevant gas company will be informed prior to the commencement of the works.

An overhead electricity cable runs along the north-western corner of the site area. No machine will pass beneath the cable unless there is substantial clearance. No machining will be undertaken beneath the cable.

2.4 Working within areas prone to waterlogging.

In the event of waterlogging preventing work continuing, it is proposed to excavate a sump, suitably fenced and clearly marked to enable the water to drain away from the trenches to facilitate recording. Protective clothing will be worn at all times and precautions taken to prevent contact with stagnant water which may carry Vialls disease or similar.

2.5 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.

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2.6 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.