
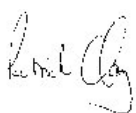


**An Archaeological Strip Plan and Record Operation  
on Land at 11 Copt Oak Road,  
Narborough, Leicestershire.**

**NGR: SP 533 977**

**Andrew Hyam**

**For: Taylored Developments**

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## **An Archaeological Strip Plan and Record Operation on Land at 11 Copt Oak Road, Narborough, Leicestershire. NGR: SP 533 977**

Andrew Hyam

### **Summary**

*An archaeological strip plan and record operation was undertaken for Taylored Developments by the University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) between the 12th and 18th of February 2008 in advance of two dwellings on land at 11 Copt Oak Road, Narborough, Leicestershire (planning application 06/0204/1). The site, covering just over 0.1ha, lies within an area of archaeological interest and is located to the east of a probable Roman villa. Two small evaluation trenches were excavated and the foundation trenches for both plots were observed. Although no archaeological features were noted within the trenches or foundations two sherds of 2nd century Grey ware pottery and one tessera were recovered from the topsoil.*

*Records will be deposited with Leicestershire County Council, under accession number X.A.40.2008*

### **1. Introduction**

In accordance with Planning Policy Guidelines 16 (PPG 16, Archaeology and Planning), para 30, this document forms the report for an archaeological evaluation on land at 11 Copt Oak Road, Narborough, Leicestershire (NGR: SP 533 977). Taylored Developments have applied for planning permission to construct two domestic dwellings on the land (planning application number 06/0204/1).

The village of Narborough lies approximately 4km to the south-west of Leicester (fig. 1). The development site is located on the corner of Copt Oak Road and Homer Drive on what was formerly the garden belonging to Number 11 Copt Oak Road (fig. 2). It is at a height of approximately 80m OD with a slight rise to the north. The underlying geology for the site, and much of Narborough, is Mercia Mudstone Group. The development area is one of the few remaining empty plots set within a small housing estate with houses built from the late 1940s to the present day. Two dwellings are to be constructed as shown in figure 3.

From information held in the Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record (HER) the site has been identified as an area of archaeological potential. This record shows that there is a probable Roman villa located to the west of the development site. In view of this, as a condition of planning permission granted by Blaby District Council, an archaeological strip plan and record operation was requested by the Senior Planning Archaeologist, Leicestershire County Council, during the groundworks.

## **2. Background**

Although not mentioned in the Domesday Book it is thought that the place-name of Narborough is derived from the borough at Broughton Astley, Narborough being north of the burg which was part of the Danelaw. However, settlement around the area is likely to be much older as the village sits on the line of the Fosse Way and, as mentioned, there is a probable villa nearby.

Map evidence indicates that the development site has remained undeveloped for at least the last one hundred years. The first edition Ordnance Survey shows the site set within an open field between two large private residences, the Woodlands to the east and Copt Oak House to the west. The site was still an open field on the 1948 Ordnance Survey map.

The house at 11 Copt Oak appears to have been built in the late 1950s and has used the development site as a mixed garden for lawns, shrubs and vegetables. At the time of the archaeological work all traces of vegetation had been removed although most of the topsoil still appeared to be intact.

## **3. Objectives**

The objectives of the work through archaeological controlled stripping and investigation were:

To identify the presence/absence of any earlier building phases or archaeological deposits.

To establish the character, extent and date range for any archaeological deposits to be affected by the proposed ground works.

To record any archaeological deposits to be affected by the ground works.

To produce an archive and report of any results.

## **4. Methodology**

Two 6m x 1.6m evaluation trenches were initially excavated to assess the potential for any surviving archaeological deposits and to assess the thickness of the overlying topsoil and subsoil. The trenches were excavated using a mini-digger with a toothless ditching bucket fitted to the front actor. The overburden was removed in spits under continuous archaeological supervision and the spoil scanned for finds. The trenches were then recorded using standard pro-forma trench recording sheets. The first trench was located within the boundary of the southern house (Plot 1) but the second trench was excavated to the west of the northern house (Plot 2) as that area was not available for work at the time of digging and had not been pegged out (fig. 4). Once the trenches had been fully recorded they were backfilled. As the ground slopes to the south-east at Plot 1 it was intended that during the construction work the ground level would be built up rather than stripped and reduced.

Subsequently the 0.4m wide foundations for Plots 1 and 2 were excavated using the same mini-digger. All work took place under continuous archaeological observation and the spoil scanned for finds.

All deposits were recorded by notes, sketches and digital colour photographs. Some key photographs were also taken using 35mm black and white film. The excavation work was observed and the spoil scanned for finds. All work followed the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) Code of Conduct and adhered to their *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* and the *Guidelines for Archaeological Work in Leicestershire and Rutland* (LMARS).

## 5. Results

### *Trench 1*

Trench 1, measuring 6m x 1.6m, was located in the south-eastern corner of the proposed Plot 1. A layer of dark brown friable silty-clay with an average thickness of 0.23m was removed apart from a disturbed area in the east which appeared to have been a regular bonfire site. During the topsoil strip a rim sherd of 2nd century Grey ware pottery and a single tessera were recovered from the spoil (below p.4). A number of modern bottle fragments, bricks and concrete were also noted within the topsoil. Beneath this was a layer of mid orange-brown friable silty-clay with a higher proportion of clay than in the topsoil. Apart from the bonfire disturbance at the eastern end this layer had an average depth of 0.4m.

Removal of the subsoil revealed the natural substratum consisting of a yellow-orange sandy clay (fig. 5). No archaeological features or deposits were observed cutting into or disturbing the substratum.

### *Trench 2*

Trench 2, measuring 5.9m x 1.6m, was located in the north-east part of the site in what will be the garden belonging to Plot 2. Topsoil with the same consistency as in Trench 1 was removed and found to have an average depth of 0.19m. Beneath the topsoil was a thinner layer of subsoil having an average depth of only 0.2m compared with the 0.4m in Trench 1. Removal of the subsoil revealed the same undisturbed natural substratum as seen in Trench 1 (fig. 6). No archaeological features or deposits were observed cutting into the substratum.

### *Foundation excavations. Plot 1*

The 0.4m wide foundation trenches were all excavated below the top of the natural substratum. It was noted that the depth of subsoil was at its greatest in the south-east corner near to Trench 1. Elsewhere the subsoil had an average depth of between 0.2m and 0.3m. The outline trenches for the property and some of its internal walls were monitored but no artefacts or archaeological features were observed (fig. 7).

### *Plot 2*

Much of this area was formerly the vegetable plot and was regularly rotavated which was apparent by the lack of definition between the topsoil and subsoil. The substratum at the base of the foundation trenches had a higher clay content than seen elsewhere and also contained patches of gravel and sandy clay. No archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were observed within these trenches (fig. 8).

## 6. Discussion

Despite the initial promise hinted at by the Roman pottery within the topsoil around Trench 1 no other evidence of any archaeological features was observed during the work. It is possible that the sherds are the remains of manure scattering on the fields belonging to the nearby villa.

The possible reason for the thicker subsoil in the south-east corner of the site could be due to plough action and the movement of soil down the natural slope. The lack of a clear boundary between the topsoil and subsoil beneath Plot 2 is, as mentioned, probably due to recent gardening activity which can be seen on recent air photographs.

From the results of this work it seems likely that there are no buried archaeological features within the site boundaries.

## 7. The Finds Elizabeth Johnson

1. u/s topsoil spoil Grey ware, a sandy Grey ware dog bowl rim with a reduced surface. 2nd century.
2. u/s topsoil spoil Single tessera made from a tile were recovered from the spoil

## 8. Archive

The archive consists of:

This report,

Finds (2 pottery sherds; 1 tessera)

2 pro-forma trench recording sheets,

3 watching brief sheets,

1 contact sheet of digital photographs,

1 contact sheet of black and white photographs,

35mm black and white negatives,

1 index sheet of digital and black and white photographs,

1 cd of this report and the digital photographs.

The archive is to be held by Leicestershire County Council under accession number X.A.40.2008

## 9. Publication

A summary of the work will be submitted for publication in the *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* in due course. A record of the project will also be submitted to the OASIS project. Oasis is an online index to archaeological grey literature reports.

## 10. Acknowledgements

The fieldwork was undertaken by A R Hyam. The project was managed by Dr P Clay.

## 11. Bibliography

Clark, R. 2007. *A Brief for Archaeological Attendance for Inspection and Recording*. Leicestershire County Council.

Clay, P. 2008. *Design Specification for Archaeological Work*. 11 Copt Oak Road, Narborough, Leicestershire. (ULAS 08/581)

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## Appendix 1. Figures

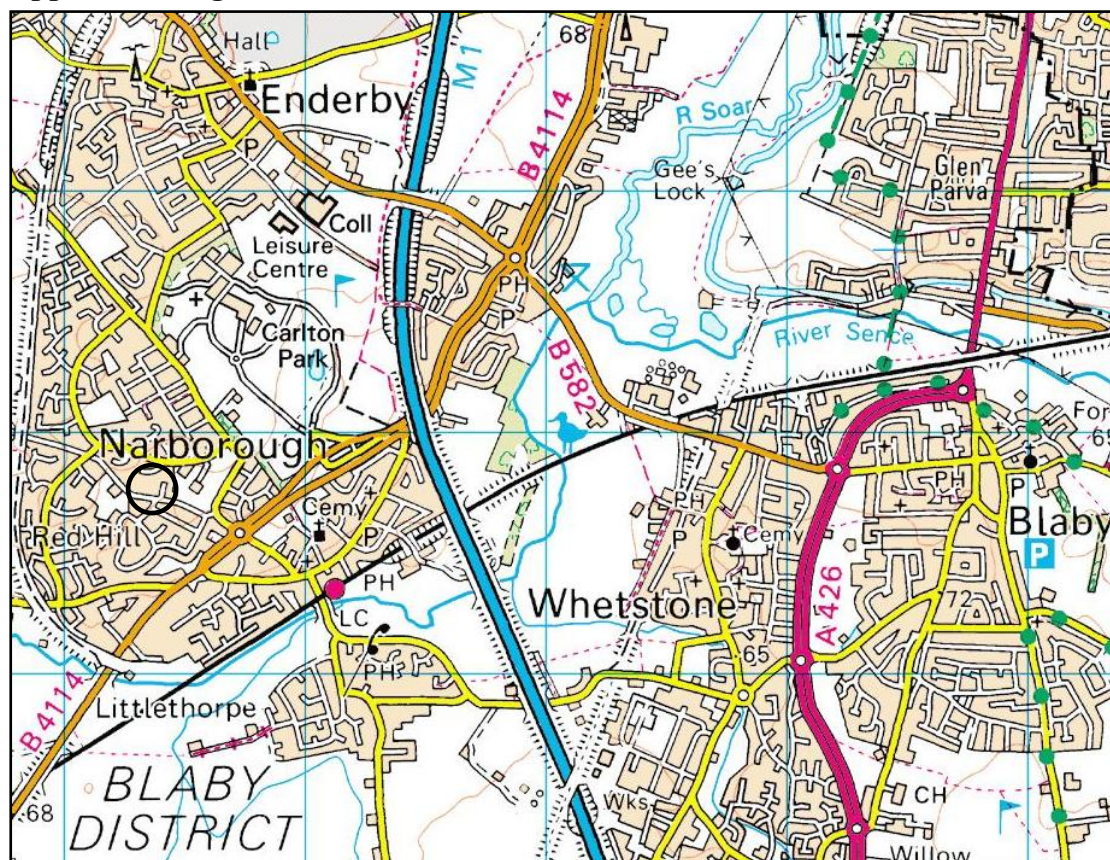


Figure 1. Narborough and site location.

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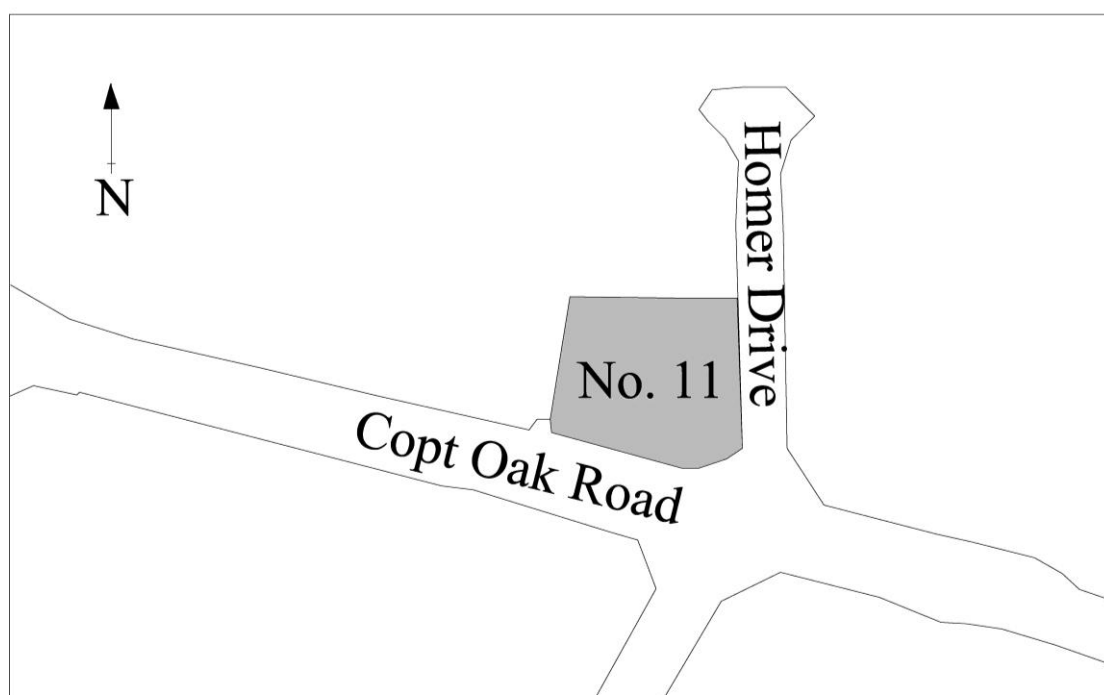


Figure 2. Site location.

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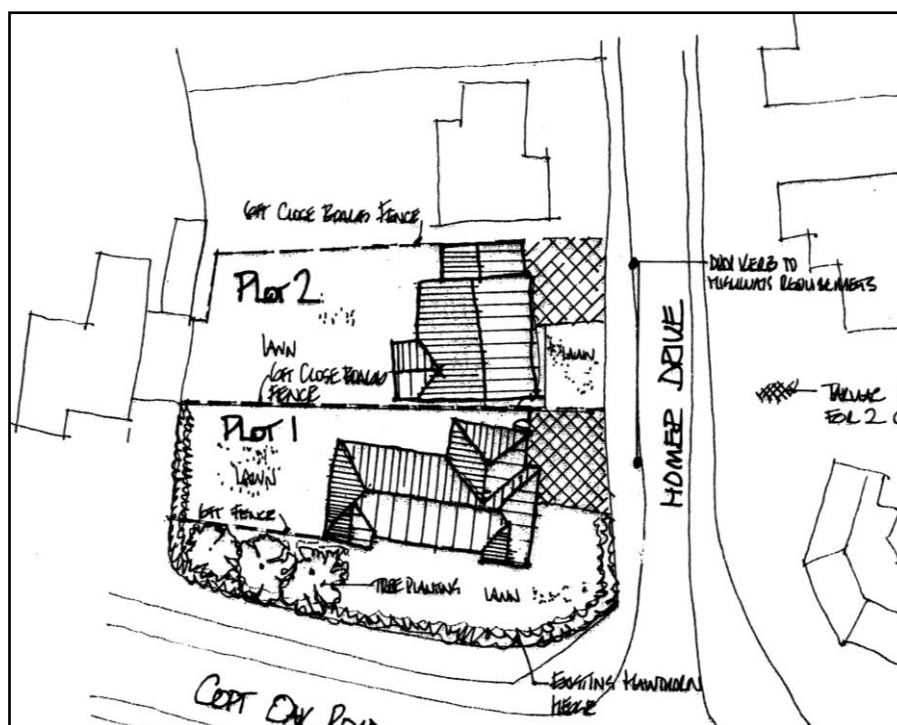


Figure 3. Developer's plan.

From P James, Surveyors and Architectural Services.



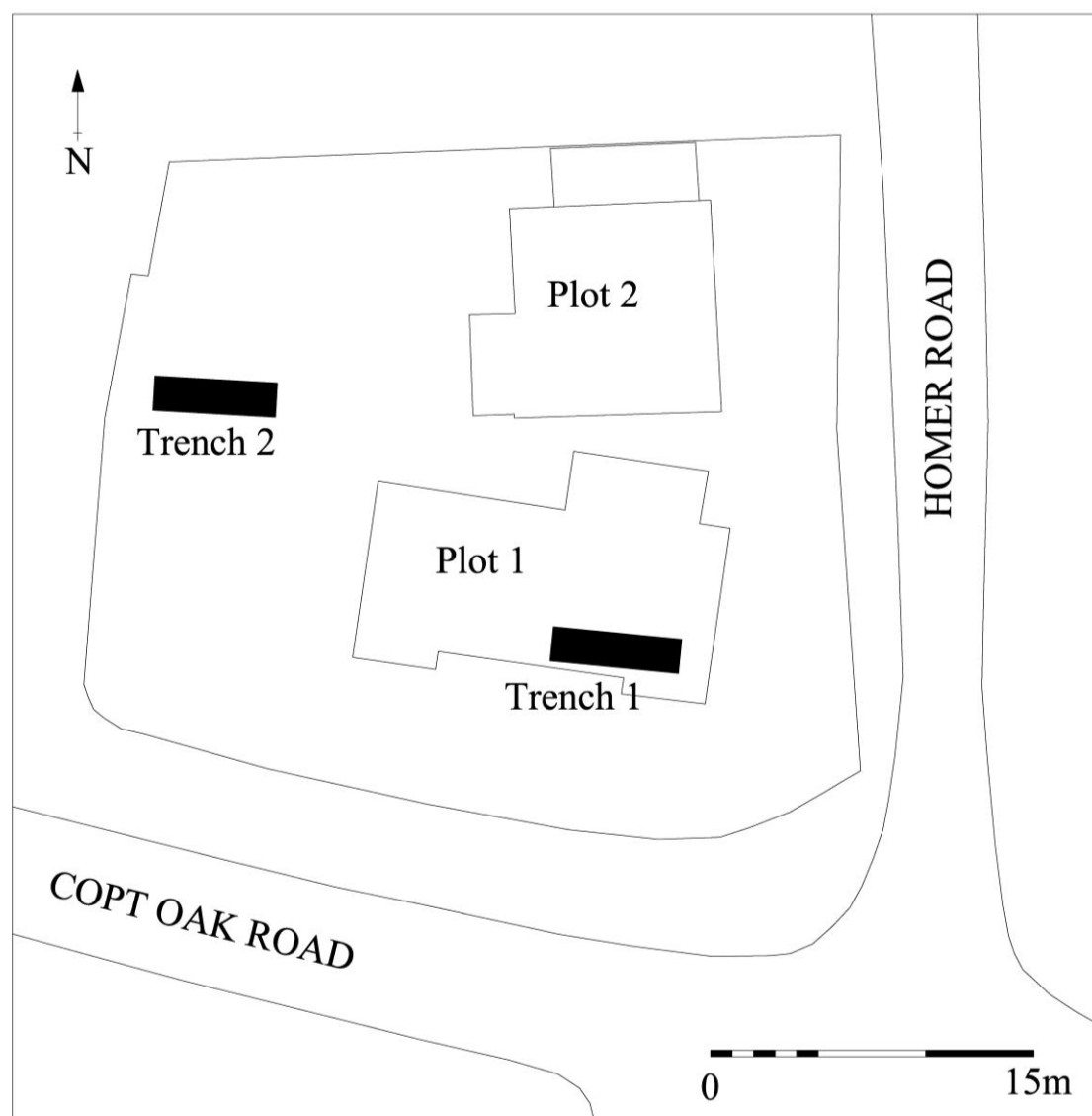


Figure 4. Trench and house locations.



Figure 5. Trench 1  
Looking east.





Figure 6. Trench 2  
Looking west.





Figure 7. Plot 1 foundations during excavation.



Figure 8. Plot 2 foundations during excavation.

## **Appendix 2. ULAS Design Specification.**

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

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

*11, Copt Oak Road, Narborough, Leicestershire (SP 533 977)*

**Planning Application: 06/0204/1**

**Planning Authority: Blaby District Council**

**For: Taylored Developments**

### **1 Definition and scope of the specification**

1.1 In accordance with Planning Policy Guidelines 16 (PPG16, Archaeology and planning), para.30, this specification provides a written scheme for archaeological attendance for inspection and recording (a watching brief), as required by the Planning Authority, of any groundworks on the site which may disturb areas of archaeological potential in connection with a planning application for the erection of two dwellings at 11, Copt Oak Road, Narborough, Leicestershire (SP 533 977) Planning Application: 06/0204/1 for Taylored Developments.

1.2 All archaeological work will adhere to the Institute of Field Archaeologist's (IFA) *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* and the *Guidelines for Archaeological Work in Leicestershire and Rutland* (LMARS).

### **2 Background**

#### *2.1 Requirement for archaeological work*

2.1.1 The archaeological work involves a strip plan and record exercise within the development area to identify any deposits of archaeological importance as detailed in the *Brief for archaeological attendance for inspection and recording (a watching brief), at 11 Copt Oak Road, Narborough, Leicestershire* (LCC HNET 16.11.2007).

#### *2.2 Archaeological potential*

The site is located close to a probable Roman villa (MLE247).

### **3 Aims**

3.1 Through archaeological controlled stripping and investigation:

1. To identify the presence/absence of any earlier building phases or archaeological deposits.
2. To establish the character, extent and date range for any archaeological deposits to be affected by the proposed ground works.
3. To record any archaeological deposits to be affected by the ground works.
4. To produce an archive and report of any results.

### **4 Methods**

4.1 The project will involve the supervision of overburden removal and other groundworks by an experienced professional archaeologist during the works specified above. Initially it is proposed to open some initial trial trenches to assess the depth of topsoil/overburden and determine the presence/absence of any archaeological remains.

4.2 Should significant archaeological remains be identified in an initial trial trench, and found to be 0.15m or less below proposed formation, the site is to be stripped down to the top of the archaeology, followed by a programme of excavation and recording, using additional personnel as necessary.

4.3 In the event that archaeological remains of uncertain significance are located in the initial trench/test pit (e.g. undated post-hole/pit), further trenching may be necessary, at the discretion of the site supervisor, to clarify their nature and significance and determine the need for a full topsoil strip.

4.4 If no archaeological deposits are identified within the trench, or the depth of overburden is greater than 0.15m, there will be no requirement for the site to be stripped to a level below proposed formation and subsequent groundworks will be subject to an intermittent watching brief.

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

4.6 Any archaeological deposits located will be hand cleaned and planned as appropriate. Samples of any archaeological deposits located will be hand excavated. Measured drawings of all archaeological features will be prepared at a scale of 1:20 and tied into an overall site plan of 1:100. All plans will be tied into the National Grid using an Electronic Distance Measurer (EDM) where appropriate.

4.7 Archaeological deposits will be excavated and recorded as appropriate to establishing the stratigraphic and chronological sequence of deposits, recognising and excavating structural evidence and recovering economic, artefactual and environmental evidence. Particular attention will be paid to the potential for buried palaeosols and waterlogged deposits in consultation with ULAS's environmental officer.

4.8 All excavated sections will be recorded and drawn at 1:10 or 1:20 scale, levelled and tied into the Ordnance Survey datum. Spot heights will be taken as appropriate.

4.9 Any human remains encountered will be initially left in situ and only be removed under a Home Office Licence and in compliance with relevant environmental health regulations. The developer and Leicestershire County Council will be informed immediately on their discovery.

4.10 Internal monitoring procedures will be undertaken including visits to the site from the project manager. These will ensure that professional standards are being maintained. Provision will be made for monitoring visits with representatives of the owners and Leicestershire County Council.

4.11 In the event of significant archaeological remains being located during the watching brief there may be the need for contingency time and finance to be provided to ensure adequate recording is undertaken. On the discovery of potentially significant remains the archaeologist will inform the developer, the Planning Archaeologist at Leicestershire County Council, and the planning authority. If the archaeological remains are identified to be of significance additional contingent archaeological works will be required.

## **5 Recording Systems**

5.1 Individual descriptions of all archaeological strata and features excavated or exposed will be entered onto prepared pro-forma recording sheets.

5.2 A site location plan based on the current Ordnance Survey 1:1250 map, (reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO) will be prepared. This will be supplemented by a plan at 1:200 (or 1:100), which will show the location of the areas investigated.

5.3 A record of the full extent in plan of all archaeological deposits encountered will be made on drawing film, related to the OS grid and at a scale of 1:10 or 1:20. Elevations and sections of individual layers of features should be drawn where possible. The OD height of all principal strata and features will be calculated and indicated on the appropriate plans.

5.4 An adequate photographic record of the investigations will be prepared. This will include black and white prints and colour transparencies illustrating in both detail and general context the principal features and finds discovered. The photographic record will also include 'working shots' to illustrate more generally the nature of the archaeological operation mounted.



5.5 This record will be compiled and fully checked during the course of the watching brief.

5.6 All site records and finds will be kept securely.

## **6 Report and Archive**

6.1 An accession number will be drawn prior to the commencement of the project (Brief 8.1). Following the fieldwork the on-line OASIS form at <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis> will be completed. A report on the investigation will be provided following the groundworks.

6.2 Copies will be provided for the client, Historic Environment Record and planning Authority. The copyright of all original finished documents shall remain vested in ULAS and ULAS will be entitled as of right to publish any material in any form produced as a result of its investigations.

6.3 A full copy of the archive as defined in the 'Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long-term storage' (UKIC 1990), and Standards in the Museum care of archaeological collections (MGC 1992) and 'Guidelines for the preparation of site archives and assessments for all finds (other than fired clay objects) (Roman Finds Group and Finds Research Group AD 700-1700 1993) will be presented to Leicestershire County Council, Heritage Services normally within six months of the completion of analysis. This archive will include all written, drawn and photographic records relating directly to the investigations undertaken.

## **7 Publication**

7.1 A summary report will be submitted to a suitable regional or national archaeological journal within one year of completion of fieldwork. A full report will be submitted if the results are of significance.

## **8 Timetable and Staffing**

8.1 The investigation is scheduled to commence at the start of the contractors groundworks. An experienced archaeologist will be present during this work.

## **9 Health and Safety**

9.1 ULAS is covered by and adheres to the University of Leicester Statement of Safety Policy and uses the ULAS Health and Safety Manual (revised 2005) with appropriate risks assessments for all archaeological work. A draft Health and Safety statement for this project is in the Appendix. The relevant Health and Safety Executive guidelines will be adhered to as appropriate.

## **10 Insurance**

10.1 All 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.

## **11. Bibliography**

MAP 2, *The management of archaeological projects* 2nd edition English Heritage 1991

MGC 1992, *Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections* (Museums and Galleries Commission)

RFG/FRG 1993, *Guidelines for the preparation of site archives* (Roman Finds Group and Finds Research Group AD 700-1700)

SMA 1993, *Selection, retention and Dispersal of Archaeological Collections. Guidelines for use in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (Society of Museum Archaeologists)

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