
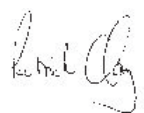


**An Archaeological Watching Brief of groundworks
at Bath Lane, Welles Street, Holy Bones
and Vaughan Way, Leicester (SK 580 045)**

Dan Stone

For: Leicester City Council

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CONTENTS

Summary	1
1. Introduction.....	1
2. Site description.....	2
3. Archaeological and Historical background.....	2
4. Archaeological objectives	3
5. Methodology	3
6. Results.....	4
6.1 Bath Lane South end	4
6.2 Bath Lane North end	5
6.3 Welles Street and Holy Bones (Fig 2 B-C).....	6
6.4 Vaughan Way.....	7
7. Conclusion	8
8. Archive and publication.....	9
9. Acknowledgements.....	9
10. Bibliography	9
Appendix 1 Ceramic and other finds D. Sawday and L. Johnson.....	16

FIGURES

Figure 1: Site location 1:50,000.....	2
Figure 2; Route of groundworks A-F (from plan supplied by client).....	4
Figure 3: View north along Bath Lane prior to groundwork.	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Figure 4: View south along west pavement Bath Lane prior to groundwork.....	11
Figure 5: View East along Welles Street prior to groundwork.....	11
Figure 6: View east along Welles Street / Holy Bones towards Vaughan Way prior to groundwork	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Figure 7: Welles Street view east along west pavement at Bath Lane junction end following groundwork.	12
Figure 8: View east of deposit under CCTV access hatch.....	13
Figure 9: View east along Vaughan Way / Holy Bones prior to groundwork.....	14
Figure 10 : View east along St Nicholas Place prior to groundwork.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Figure 11: Deposits under east pavement and parking bay Bath Lane.....	15

An Archaeological Watching Brief of groundworks at Bath Lane,

Welles Street, Holy Bones, Vaughan Way and St Nicholas Place, Leicester Dan Stone

Summary

An Archaeological watching brief was undertaken by ULAS on behalf of Leicester City Council at Bath Lane, Welles Street, Holy Bones, Vaughan Way and St Nicholas Place, Leicester (NGR SK 580 045), between October 2007 and February 2008. The watching brief attended groundworks associated with phase 1 of several street refurbishment episodes for the ward of West Bridge. No significant undisturbed archaeological finds or deposits were observed. The archive is to be deposited with Leicester City Council under accession number A13.2008.

1. Introduction

1.1 This report presents the results of an intermittent watching brief on behalf of Leicester city council, undertaken for street refurbishment groundwork undertaken in the Bath Lane, Welles Street, Holy Bones, Vaughan Way and St Nicholas Place area of Leicestershire. The route of this groundwork is marked as A-F on Figure 2. The site was visited on the 30th of October 2007, with further occasional visits until the 29th of November and on 30th of January and 4th of February 2008.

1.2 The groundworks occurred concurrently within the area of street refurbishment. These comprised specifically of 'de novo cctv' ducting trench construction groundwork with access hatches and camera mount bases along the pavements of each street along the route marked on figure 2.

1.4 The phase of groundworks also involved pavement replacement, extension and refurbishment groundworks and the replacement of adjacent road surfaces along Bath Lane and over former private land immediately adjacent to the eastern pavement. This required the reduction of deposits beneath current-pavement levels and passed along an area where earlier archaeological work had noted survival of in situ Roman floor levels at a high elevation. This work at the time of attendance was restricted to Bath Lane and included alteration of road surfaces, but no changes to road make-up levels.

1.5 Collectively this groundwork represented elements of phase 1 of a series of programmes planned to refurbish the area of the West Bridge ward of the city, associated with Leicester urban regeneration.

1.6. Due to the expeditious and dispersed nature of groundwork activities, communication and the rapid pace of the sequence of activities involved in the construction process the remit for intermittent archaeological attendance necessitated alternations between a more intensive archaeological presence during simultaneous dispersed groundwork across the site and an intermittent presence at other times.



Figure 1: Site location

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2. Site description

2.1 The site of the observed groundwork lies within West Bridge Ward, in the western part of the historic town core and consists of the public roads in the vicinity of the Jewry Wall museum and site. These comprise the south end of Bath Lane between West Street Bridge northwards to the junction with Welles Streets. (Figure 2A- B) and Welles Street with its junction with Holy Bones (Figure 2 B-C). To the north the groundworks continued south-north along Vaughan Way parallel with the churchyard of St Nicholas church to the junction with St Nicholas Circle (Figure 2 C-D). Further groundworks took place between the junction of Vaughan way and St Nicholas Circle eastwards to St Nicholas Place (Figure 2 D-F).

2.2 The Ordnance Survey Geological Survey of Great Britain (Sheet 156) shows the site lying on Mercia Mudstone overlain by river terrace sands and gravels. Bath Lane lies at around 56m OD, with Vaughan way pavements at approx 64.2m OD.

3. Archaeological and Historical background

3.1 Archaeological potential

The Leicester Historic Environment Record shows that the site lies within a significant area of archaeological interest comprising the western side and waterfront of the prehistoric, Roman, medieval and post-medieval town. Numerous archaeological investigations have been undertaken in the vicinity of the groundworks. These suggested a high potential for the presence of in situ archaeological deposits in the immediate vicinity.

3.2 Roman occupation.

The site lies west of the Roman forum of the city within the river side insula bordered by the western defences. Within this area are upstanding remains of the Jewry Wall Roman baths, the only upstanding masonry remains of Roman public baths in the country. Adjacent to St Nicholas Place within the NPC car park further Roman remains were encountered on earlier excavations at a shallow depth.

3.3 Post-Roman to post-medieval

The groundworks were close to the medieval parish church of St Nicholas and its adjacent graveyard. The church of St Nicholas has Saxon origins, and the surrounding graveyard may have extended beyond the modern perimeter during the medieval period. Human remains have been found in the vicinity outside the modern boundary of the churchyard of St Nicholas, including during preparatory test pitting along the length of the cctv ducting trench, prior to the commission of archaeological attendance.

3.4 Modern

From the 19th century onwards the area has been the subject of fairly intensive industrial development. The site was landscaped during modern times with the straightening of Bath Lane in the later 19th century and raising of the ground level west of it. Viaducts for the Great Central railway cut across the site from the north to the south including the Great Central Station buildings north of the site. Modern semi-industrial units and offices occupy the east side of Bath Lane.

The redevelopment of the inner ring road A594 and the Southgate's underpass was constructed in stages in the 1960's and 1970's. These excavations cut through the historic roman and medieval town centres.

4. Archaeological objectives

4.1 Aims

The aim of the watching brief was to identify the presence/absence of any archaeological deposits and record any archaeological deposits, and establish the character, extant and date range for any such deposits through the archaeological observation of the groundwork undertaken, examination of the spoil removed and where appropriate examination and recording of the trench sections, and retrieval of artefacts and ecofacts.

5. Methodology

5.1 The project involved the observation of overburden removal and other groundworks by an experienced professional archaeologist during the works specified above. The groundworks and spoil removed were observed for potential archaeological deposits .

5.2 All work and archaeological deposits encountered was to be recorded in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*, and the standard policy and practice of ULAS.

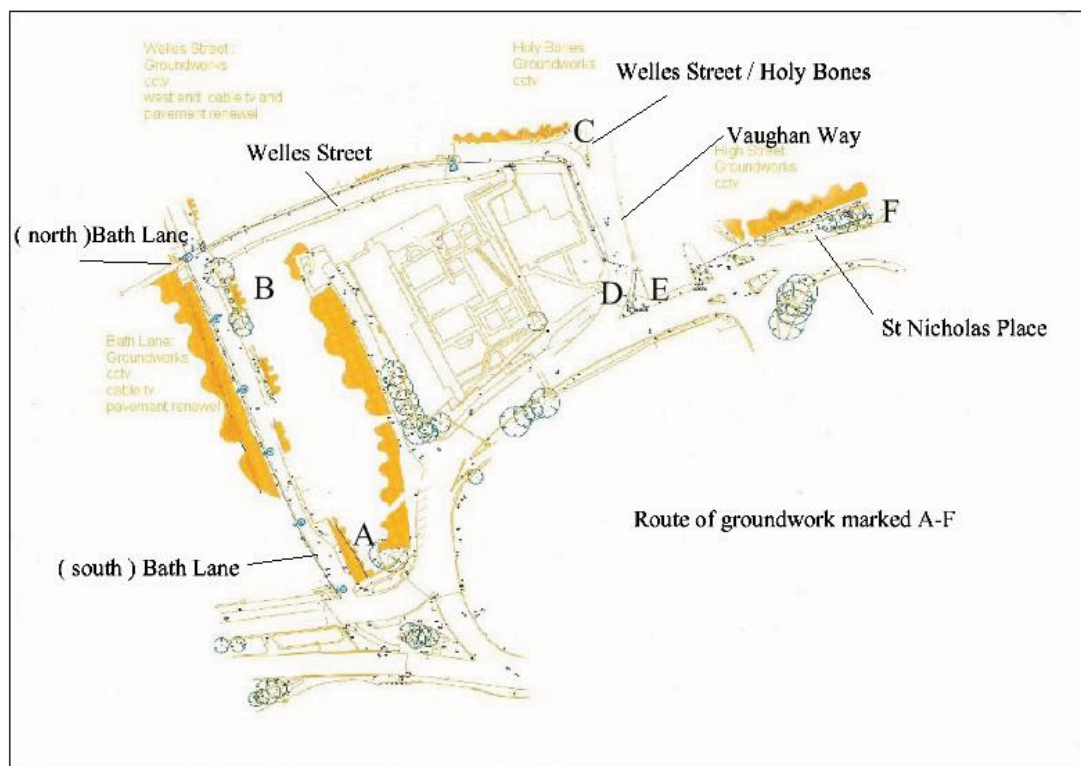


Figure 2; Route of groundworks A-F (from plan supplied by client).

6. Results

6.1 Bath Lane South end: c. 56.4m OD

6.1.a Street refurbishment groundwork and CCTV ducting (figure 2 A- B)

Groundworks for pavement upgrading and laying of CCTV cables involved the removal of the present made ground and surfaces and their replacement with new granite paving slabs set on thicker foundations (figures 3-4). The new formation levels rested at levels deeper than the current or normal pavement foundation levels. This greater depth accommodated deeper and thicker foundations, composed of successive new concrete pads, mortar gravel bedding mix and adhesive resins for the overlying new Chinese granite paving slabs. Initially this involved ground breaking of existing tarmac paving and associated concrete pads with a tracked mini digger using a 0.6m toothed and ditching buckets. Adjacent property frontages where these constituted road access ramps, extended pavement verges and edges of the street road surface were also affected by groundworks along the length of Bath Lane while parking bays at the south end were also affected.

6.1.b Pavement and parking bay groundworks, (Figure 2)

These groundworks involved the breaking of the concrete hard standing parking bays fronting the pavement and properties along the street. These formed a regular rectangle of 11x 6m and were excavated with a tracked 360 mini digger. The pre-

existing concrete was 100mm in depth. The area was excavated to the depth of 500mm, as required for the supporting components of the new block paving. Modern cables were observed running parallel with the road at the road side edge of the excavation. Further utility pipes and cables were observed exiting the adjacent property and leading out to the road along both the north and south sides of the plot.

6.1.c Deposits. c. 56.25 OD- 55.9 OD

Parking bays

Below the modern made ground lay a mixed layer of brown silty make up 100mm in depth. Beneath these was a homogenous layer of black silty loam containing occasional animal bone, medieval pottery (appendix 1), occasional oyster shell with very small occasional mortar flecks. These appeared to constitute potentially well preserved late medieval deposits of garden soil from 150mm to a depth of 500mm from the modern ground surface. No other archaeological deposits were observed (Figure 11).

6.2 Bath Lane North end: c. 56.4 OD

6.2.a Street refurbishment groundwork and cctv ducting

Initial removal and lowering of the pavements along Bath Lane's eastern side began on the 30th of October at the intersections with Welles Street and St Augustinians Way (Fig. 2a). CCTV cables were laid subsequently along the western side of the street prior to new pavement construction. Initial action involved ground breaking of tarmac pavements and adjacent concrete slabs on the eastern pavement. The western pavement had cctv ducting trenching excavated, with pavement refurbishment to follow later.

Street lighting cable access hatches and trees occurred along the length of the area and these were left in situ, with the surrounding ground level reduced by 300mm from the ground surface. The ground was very mixed and disturbed and reduction of the eastern pavement was performed by a wheeled 360 JCB with 0.5m wide ditching bucket.

6.2.b Deposits Eastern pavement;

Initial deposits were mixed modern overburden layers representing backfills into existing cable trenches, and adjacent horizontal homogenous light grey brown silts. Deposits revealed were modern overburden and made up ground of modern brick, silt and graded modern gravels. The base level revealed deposits of grey silty earth, further modern overburden and outlines of modern single brick wall footings off alignment with the modern course of the road. These deposits were disturbed and possibly re-deposited within the modern overburden immediately under the tarmac pavement. The spoil did contain occasional Roman tile, mortar and modern detritus. No clear in situ pre-modern deposits were visible at the depths excavated during the groundwork at the northern end, although the homogenous exposed grey brown silts appeared similar to Roman make up deposits observed within areas of the Vine Street excavation in 2006 (Higgins 2007).

Western pavement: (figure 4)

Deposits observed in sections of the CCTV ducting trenches suggested subsurface layers were modern made up ground for the depth observed.

6.3 Welles Street and Holy Bones (Fig 2 B-C)

56.4 OD (at base of Welles Street) – c. 63.2M OD (at top of Holy bones)

6.3a CCTV ducting groundwork

The CCTV ducting groundwork required a single continuous trench along the course of the pavements in the area from Bath Lane to St Nicholas Place, passing along Welles Street) ((Fig 2 B-C; Fig.5), along the north and east external edge of the graveyard boundary wall of St Nicholas church at Holy Bones (figure 6). A linear extended trench measuring 0.4m wide and min of 0.4m depth was excavated following prior test pitting along the length of the proposed circuit of ducting prior to archaeological attendance. This was excavated piecemeal on successive occasions along the length of the route of the groundworks.

Along its western course this followed the course of existing electric cabling and predominantly required re-excitation of modern backfill from the interior of the pre-existing larger utility trench. This was excavated from a southern point on the western north - south pavement of Bath Lane and crossed the road at the junction of Bath Lane with Welles. The existing tarmac pavement was cut and a tracked 360 mini digger was used to excavate to the required depth and width.

The trench passed under the route of the former viaduct arch of the former Great Central Railway. The ducting trenching continued east along Welles Street to the start of Holy Bones where it diagonally crossed the road from the northern east - west pavement to the southern pavement (Fig 2). At this point it passed the approach to the entrance to St Nicholas walk and continued east along the outside of the north edge of St Nicholas Church graveyard.

6.3b Deposits

Deposits observed within the ducting trench were modern made ground layers of gravel and sands for contemporary pavement construction.(Fig 7). An anomalous deposit was observed 1m south of the north face of the railway viaduct within the trench base on the west side. This appeared solid and firm, directly beneath the make up of the pavement. The material constituted yellow mortar bonded to angular small granite blocks, approx 0.3, length x 0.15m width, reminiscent of Roman mortared walling and resembled the mortar excavated further north at the Vine Street excavation (Figure 8; Higgins 2007). The deposit measured approx 0.7m x 0.7m square and was cut down its centre by modern cables and to the north by ceramic pipe work. The confines of the trench prevented further examination and a CCTV access hatch was laid over the deposit, which remained in situ. This may represent the line of a wall, or mortar concrete dump, of uncertain date, orientation, function or origin.

At Holy Bones / north end of Welles Street silt deposits were observed in the southern face of the trench, with small degraded bone and shell fragments and mortar fleck inclusions. These were interpreted as garden silts or subsoils associated with the graveyard directly south and west of the trench and deriving from a period prior to the contemporary enclosure of the Victorian graveyard.

6.4 Vaughan Way

6.4 a CCTV ducting groundwork

At the junction with Vaughan Way (figure 9) the CCTV trench turned south along the pavement parallel to the eastern perimeter of St Nicholas churchyard. At the junction with St Nicholas Circle it crossed Vaughan Way and continued in an easterly direction passing along the northern east / west pavement of St Nicholas place (Figs 2 and 10) .

6.4 b Deposits

Sections and excavation revealed the presence at this depth of extensive previous groundworks for modern utilities including gas/water pipes and electricity cables. These had been backfilled with associated modern deposits, derived from imported graded gravels and sands, tarmac, bricks and concrete slabs resulting in extensive modern truncation of underlying deposits. These overlay further pre-existing pipework which lay at the same or greater depth than required for the laying of the CCTV ducting. This ducting was therefore laid alongside or above this pre-existing ducting and backfilled. The trenching therefore only cut modern overburden and made up ground underlying the tarmac layer of pavement. The natural substratum was not seen but a mixed silty brown soil was visible in the trench sections and base of the trench mid-way along its length. This material was interpreted to be a possible mixed upper horizon of disturbed graveyard soils. Clay pipe stems, oyster shell, small mortar flecks, red tile fragments, small chopped animal bone, early modern glazed ceramics fragments and very abraded disturbed possibly human bone were observed within the matrix of the silt as rare inclusions.

6.5 St Nicholas Place

6.5a CCTV ducting groundwork

The excavation of CCTV trenches carrying the ducting across Vaughan Way eastwards was undertaken and backfilled during the night to minimise traffic disruption. Archaeological attendance was unavailable at this time and deemed unnecessary.

Approaching St Nicholas Place from the west the route of the trenching first passed across the concrete pads of the hard standing area forming the lay-by parallel to St Nicholas Place. The trenching was then continued east along the northern pavement of St Nicholas Place in a 400mm wide trench

6.5b Deposits under lay by.

This trench was approximately 720mm in depth. In section deposits consisted of 200 mm of concrete surfacing with horizontal reinforced steel rods. Below this was 150mm of black silt and tarmac. Below this was a further 150mm of concrete. These later two deposits were interpreted as surviving elements of the former road surface of the earlier high street road alignment. Below this was orange sand and gravel. This was interpreted initially as in situ natural gravels, but appeared likelier to constitute modern road make up deposits.

6.5c Deposits under northern pavement.

Deposits beneath the pavement observed in section were orange sand and layers of graded well sorted gravels, interpreted as pavement and road make up material. Below this lay dark homogenous sterile, silt layers possible representing in situ subsoil.

7. Conclusion.

7.1 Groundwork for CCTV

Groundwork to a depth of 400mm below present pavement surfaces for CCTV ducting pipes along the length of route of groundwork marked A- F on figure 2, revealed no surviving significant undisturbed deposits.

7.2 Street refurbishment

Bath lane pavement refurbishment groundwork

The attendance at street refurbishment and pavement groundwork at Bath Lane has confirmed the presence of undisturbed medieval dark earth deposits at the south end of Bath Lane beneath and west of the eastern pavement and the presence of a homogenous silty subsoil disturbed by modern utilities along the length of the eastern pavement from the south side of the junction with Welles Street.

Welles Street CCTV ducting

The attendance at groundworks along the cctv ducting route revealed no associated significant or definitive undisturbed archaeological deposits, features or pre-modern artefacts.

Holy Bones cctv ducting

The attendance at CCTV ducting groundwork along the course of Welles Street/ Holy Bones intersection has confirmed the presence of disturbed homogenous brown black subsoil under the southern pavement at the east end of Welles street and Holy Bones, adjacent to the north edge of the St Nicholas graveyard. This is likely to be residual disturbed medieval graveyard material. No definite human remains were observed.

The material appears disturbed and truncated by heavy modern truncation, associated with the insertion of utilities including gas pipe work, water mains piping, electricity cable ducting, sewerage piping and drainage. The subsoil is presumed to derive from deposition processes associated with the deposition of the graveyard soils of St Nicholas Church prior to the enclosure of the graveyard within its contemporary current boundary wall. No associated significant undisturbed archaeological deposits, features or pre-modern artefacts were encountered.

Vaughan Way and St Nicholas Place CCTV ducting groundwork

The attendance at groundworks along the cctv ducting route has confirmed the presence of disturbed homogenous brown black subsoil. This is likely to be residual disturbed medieval graveyard material. No human remains were observed. The

material appears disturbed and truncated by heavy modern truncation, associated with the insertion of utilities including gas pipe work, water mains piping, electric cable ducting, sewerage piping and drainage. The subsoil is presumed to derive from deposition processes associated with the deposition of the graveyard soils of St Nicholas Church prior to the enclosure of the graveyard within its contemporary current boundary wall. No associated significant or definitive undisturbed archaeological deposits, features or pre-modern artefacts were encountered.

8. Archive and publication

8.1 A full copy of the archive as defined in The Guidelines For the Preparation Of Excavation Archives For Long Term Storage (UKIC 1990), and the Standards In The Museum: Care Of Archaeological Collections (MGC 1992) and Guidelines for the Preparation of Site Archives and Assessments for all finds will usually be presented to within six months of the completion of fieldwork. This archive will include all records directly relating to the investigation undertaken.

The archive consists of 1 copy of this report, three watching brief sheets, site plan, 1 cd of 181 digital photos, and 1 contact sheet of 181 digital photos.

It will be deposited with Leicestershire City Council, under accession number A.13 2008.

A summary of the work will be submitted for publication in the local archaeological journal *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* in due course. The report has been added to the Archaeology Data Service (ADS) Online Access to the index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) database held by the University of York.

9. Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the client and subcontractors for their help and cooperation on site, the project was managed by Patrick Clay and the fieldwork was carried out by the author, Dan Stone, both of ULAS.

10. Bibliography

Higgins, T., 2007 Vine Street (SK 583 048) *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* **81**, 192-205

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)

Oasis record

INFORMATION REQUIRED	EXAMPLE
Project Name	An archaeological watching brief at Bath lane, Welles street, Holy Bones, and Vaughan Way Leicester .
Project Type	Watching Brief
Project Manager	Patrick Clay
Project Supervisor	Daniel Stone
Previous/Future work	unknown
Current Land Use	Residential /public footpaths
Development Type	Refurbishment of footpaths
Reason for Investigation	PPG16
Position in the Planning Process	As a condition
Site Co ordinates	SK 582 045
Start/end dates of field work	30 th October 2007- 4 th February 2007
Archive Recipient	Leicestershire City Council
Study Area *	0.5ha



Figure 3: view north along Bath Lane prior to groundwork.



Figure 4: View looking south along west pavement Bath Lane prior to groundwork.



Figure 5: view East along Welles Street prior to groundwork.



Figure 6: view east along Welles Street / Holy Bones towards Vaughan Way prior to groundwork



Figure 7; Welles Street view east along west pavement at Bath Lane junction end following groundwork



Figure 8: view east of deposit under CCTV access hatch



Figure 9: View east along Vaughan Way / Holy Bones prior to groundwork



Figure 10 : View east along St Nicholas Place prior to groundwork.



Figure 11: Deposits under east pavement and parking bay Bath Lane

Appendix 1 Ceramic and other finds D. Sawday and L. Johnson

Debbie Sawday and Elizabeth Johnson

Roman and later finds

A total of four sherds of Roman pottery weighing 120g and five sherds of medieval pottery weighing 169 g were retrieved from three areas of groundworks at Holy Bones/Vaughan Way, and from the east pavements at the south end of Bath Lane and

context	nos.	grams	Period	Site A13 2008 - Holy Bones - ROMAN AND LATER FINDS
Holy Bones				
subsoil	1	65	Roman	MO4 - Mancetter Hartshill mortarium mid 2nd - early 3rd C.
subsoil	1	13	Early Med	PM - Potters Marston - 12thC -13C
subsoil	2		post med	clay pipe stems
South Bath Lane				
Subsoil /	1	18	Roman	MO4 - 2nd C+
subsoil	3	145	Med	PM, CC1 - Chilvers Coton jar - hard fired, c.1250-1350+
subsoil	1	74	Med	MS3 - ridge tile - 14C+
North Bath lane				
made ground	2	37	Roman	GW3,- a body sherd and a necked jar - the latter not closely datable, 2nd-3rd C.
made ground	1	11	Medieval	MS - Med Sandy - 14th -15th C+
made ground	1	7	Modern	EA10 - White Earthenware

at the junction of Welles Street and Bath Lane. The assemblage has been identified with reference to the county fabric/form series (Connor and Buckley 1999), (Pollard 1994) and quantified by sherd count and weight.

The finds exhibit a range of dates and suggest disturbed ground along the route of the cctv ducting trench.

References

Connor, A., and Buckley, R., 1999, Roman and Medieval Occupation in Causeway Lane, Leicester. Leicester, Leicester Archaeology Monograph 5.

Pollard R.J. 1994 'The Late Iron Age and Roman Pottery' in P.N. Clay and R.J. Pollard *Iron Age and Roman Occupation in the West Bridge Area of Leicester: Excavations 1962-1971*. Leicester: Leicestershire Museums Arts and Record Service.