

**An Archaeological Watching Brief on
Land at Fourways Farm, Debdale Lane,
Smeeton Westerby, Leicestershire
(NGR: SP 685 925)**

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For: Mr and Mrs Taylor

Checked by Project Manager:

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An Archaeological Watching Brief on Land at Fourways Farm, Debdale Road, Smeeton Westerby, Leicestershire (NGR: SP 685 925)

Greg Farnworth-Jones

1. Summary

University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) carried out an archaeological watching brief on land at 'Fourways Farm', Debdale Lane, Smeeton Westerby, Leicestershire, (SP 684 925) on the 22nd and the 23rd of September 2008. This work was undertaken on behalf of Mr. and Mrs. Taylor during the ground works for the construction of a new four bedroom dwelling. No archaeological finds or deposits were observed during this work.

The site archive will be held with Leicestershire County Council, Museums Service, under the accession code: [X.A137.2008].

2. Introduction

2.1 University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) were commissioned by Mr. and Mrs. Taylor to undertake an archaeological watching brief during ground works for the construction of a new four bedroom dwelling and garage on land at 'Fourways Farm', Debdale Lane, Smeeton Westerby, Leicestershire (NGR: SP 685 925; Planning application no. 04/0540/3). The watching brief was undertaken on the 22nd and the 23rd September 2008.

2.2 To fulfil the terms of an archaeological planning condition in accordance with DOE Planning Policy Guidance note 16 (PPG 16, Archaeology and Planning, para.30) the Senior Planning Archaeologist of the Historic and Natural Environment Team of Leicestershire County Council, in his capacity as archaeological adviser to the planning authority Harborough District Council, requested that an archaeological attendance for inspection & recording (an intensive watching brief) be undertaken to confirm the presence or absence of archaeological remains at the site. This is detailed in their '*Brief for Archaeological Attendance for Inspection and Recording (an intensive watching brief)*' (LCC HNET 15.09.2008). At the request of Mr. and Mrs. Taylor an archaeological watching brief was undertaken during groundworks to confirm the presence or absence of archaeological remains at the site. This report presents the results of the watching brief.

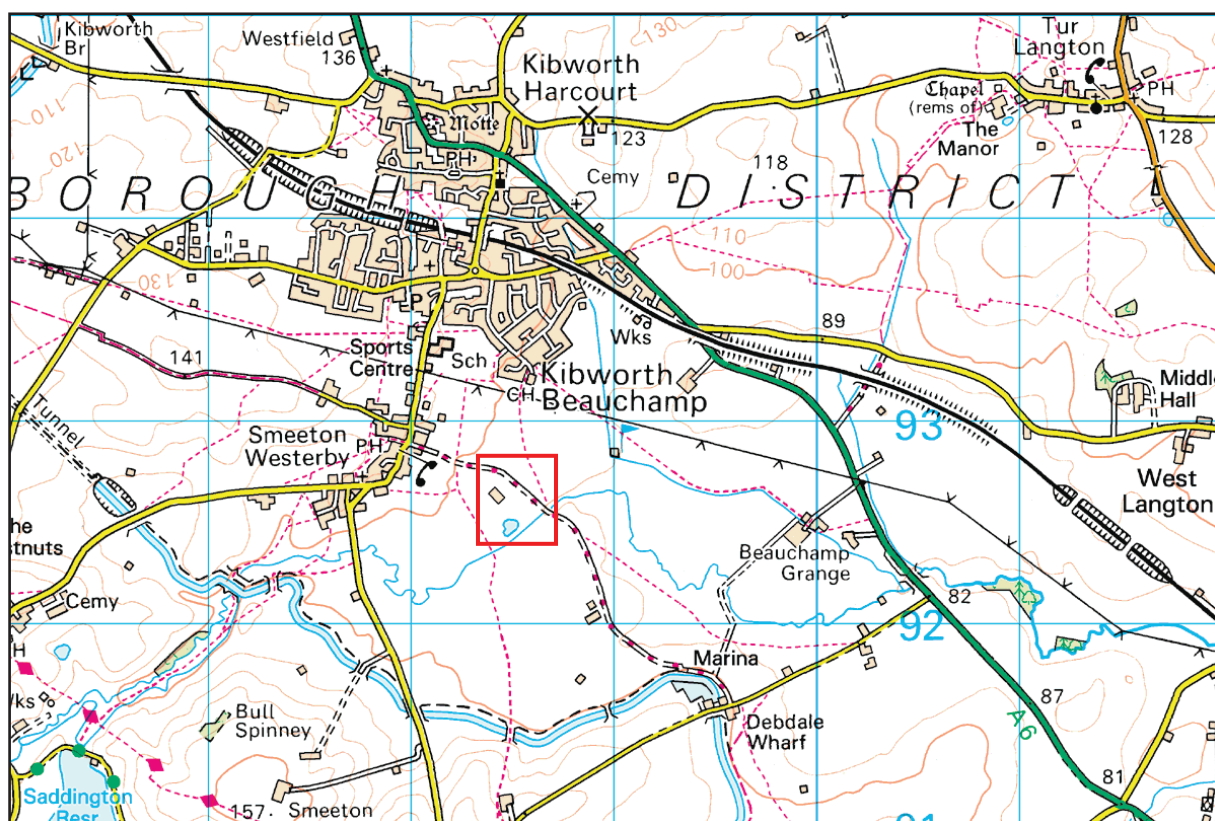


Fig.1 Site location

Reproduced from the OS map Landranger 1:50000 map by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright 1996. All rights reserved. Licence number AL 10002186.

3. Site Location

3.1 Smeeton Westerby lies 10 miles south of the city of Leicester and 1 mile south of Kibworth Beauchamp. The proposed development site is located to the south-east of Smeeton Westerby (Figures 1 and 2) off Debdale Lane (Figure 3).

3.2 The proposed development will consist of the construction of a four bedroom dwelling with garage.

4. Geology and Topography

4.1 The development site lies upon drift comprising Diamicton Till, with the solid geology mapped as Boulder Clay of the Blue Lias formation and Charnmouth formation (British Geological Survey of Great Britain, Market Harborough, Sheet 170). The site appears to be relatively level, at c. 105m OD.

5. Archaeological and Historical Background

5.1 The Historic Environment Record (HER) indicates that the application site lies in an area of archaeological interest. Several find spots of archaeological material are recorded in close proximity to Fourways Farm. These include: a Neolithic axe head (MLE7225), part of

a Bronze Age Axe (MLE6335), found to the north-west of the present chicken shed and a Roman coin found with some Roman pottery, raising the possibility of a Roman occupation site close by.

The proposal is likely to include the excavation of footings, landscaping and the introduction of services, etc., that will damage or destroy buried archaeological remains within the development area.

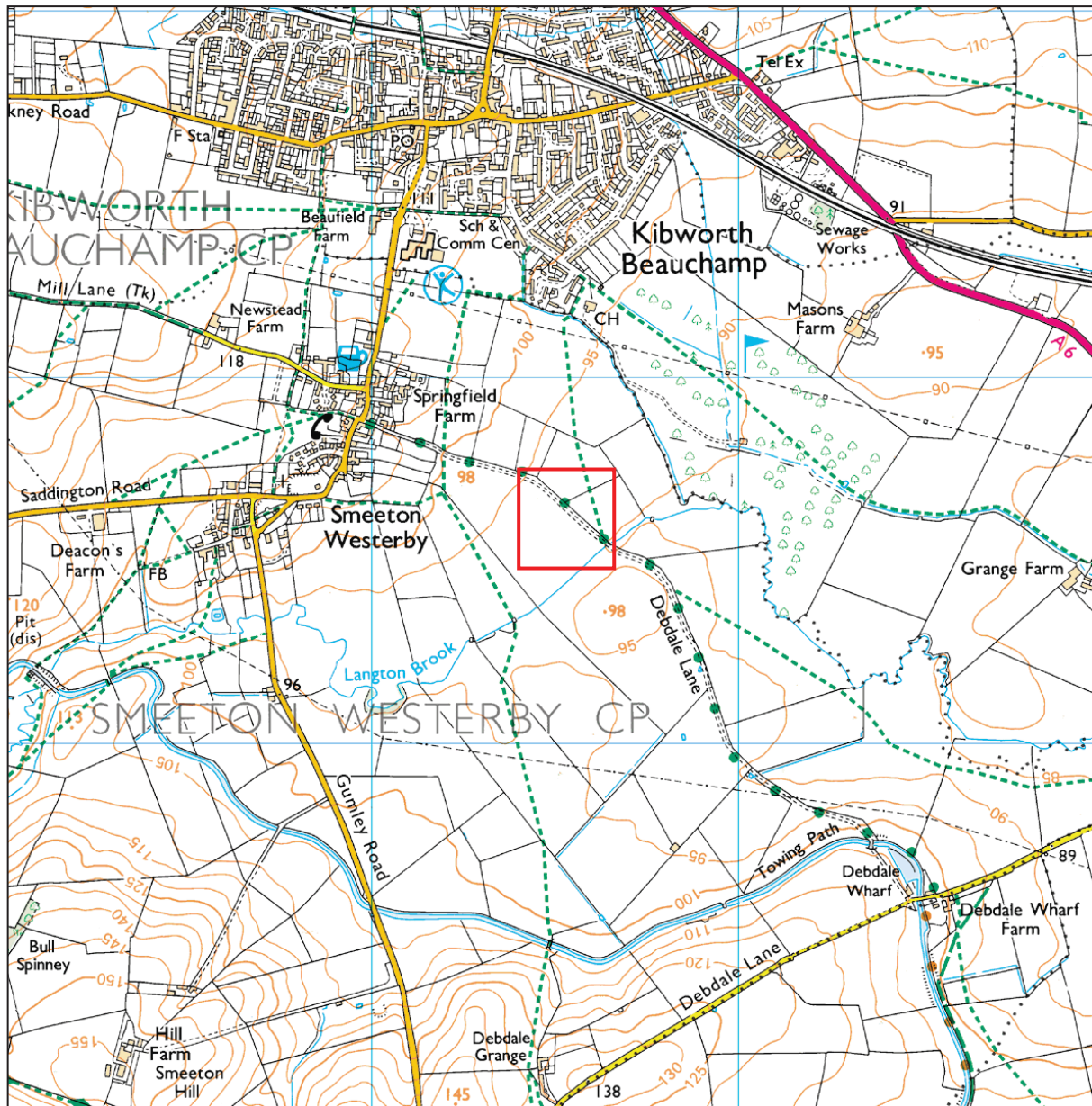


Figure 2: Site Location (marked in red). Scale 1:25000 © Crown Copyright 1996. All rights reserved. Licence number AL 10002186.

6. Methodology

6.1 All archaeological work adhered to the Institute of Field Archaeologist's (IFA) *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* and

archaeological excavations the *Guidelines for Archaeological Work in Leicestershire and Rutland* (LMARS). The work followed the approved design specification (Appendix).

6.2 The archaeological watching brief involved the inspection and recording of groundworks to identify any deposits of archaeological importance.

6.3 The main objectives of the archaeological watching brief were:

- 1. To identify the presence/absence of any 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.

6.4 Any archaeological deposits located were to be hand cleaned and planned as appropriate. Samples of any archaeological deposits located would be hand excavated and measured drawings of all archaeological features prepared at a scale of 1:20 and tied into an overall site plan of 1:100.

6.5 Archaeological deposits were to 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 would be paid to the potential for buried palaeosoils and waterlogged deposits in consultation with ULAS's environmental officer.

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

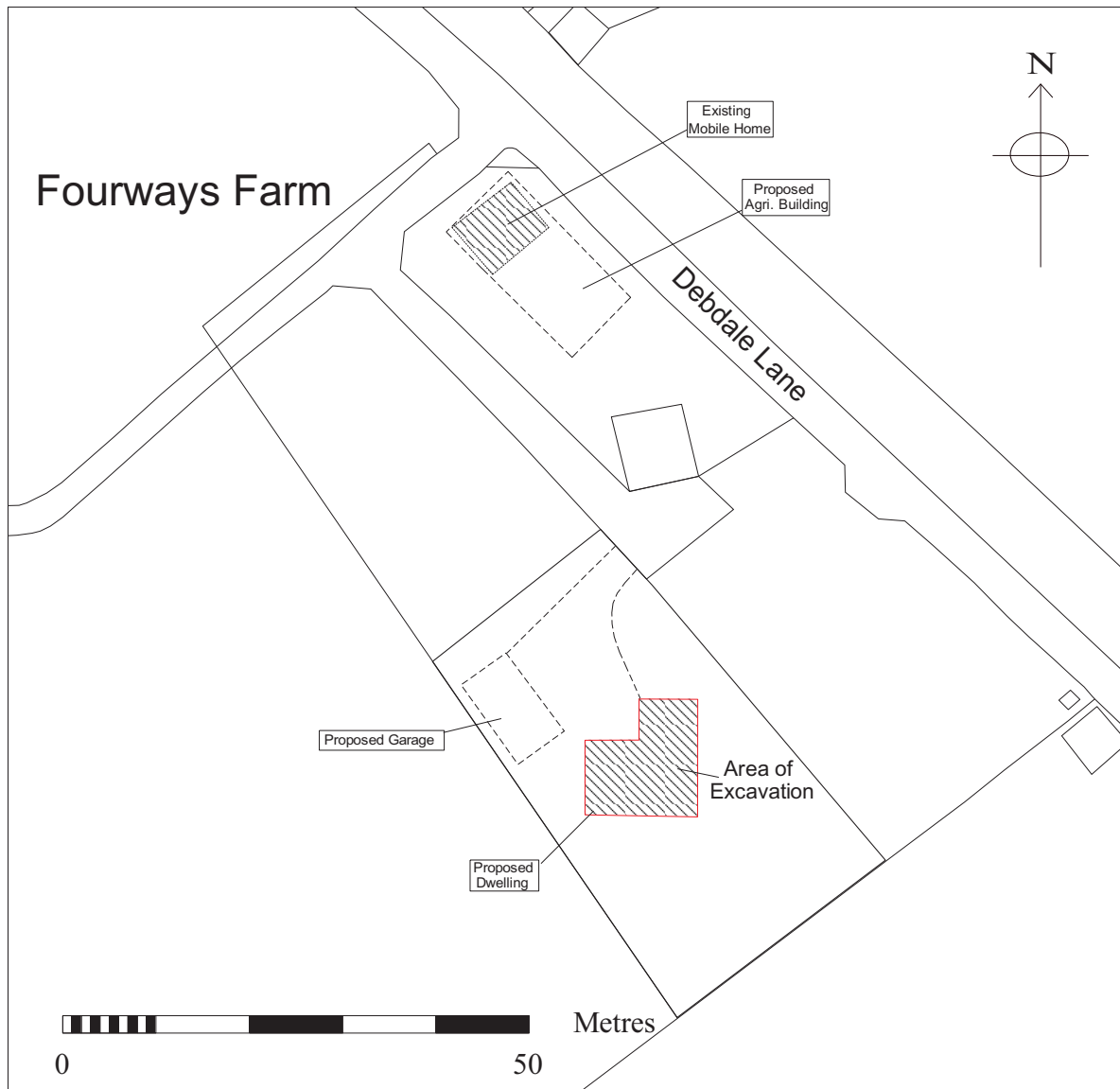


Fig. 3 Location of excavation

7. Results

7.1 Inspection of the surface following initial machining carried out earlier revealed a mid grey sandy clay silt topsoil with occasional small rounded stones, down to a depth of *c.*0.3m. Further machining during the watching brief revealed, to a further depth of *c.*0.8m, light brown/slightly orange sandy silt clay subsoil. Removal of this layer revealed the natural substratum which consisted of light orange brown sandy clay.

7.2 The same sequence of soil horizons was observed in all of the foundation trenches.

7.3 The north-eastern corner of the excavated area was composed of a make up layer, consisting of mid-greyish-brown, mixed silty clay with crushed brick fragments, occasional angular stones, charcoal flecks and pieces of plastic.

7.4 No archaeological finds or deposits were located within the machine-excavated foundation trenches and no archaeological deposits were visible in the sections. No archaeological deposits appeared to have been present and no artefacts were located within the spoil.



Fig.4 General view of the site facing south

8. Conclusion

8.1 No archaeological deposits, features or pre-modern artefacts were encountered during the watching brief.

8.2 Preliminary groundworks undertaken before the watching brief had stripped the topsoil to a depth of *c.* 0.3. Beneath this was a subsoil layer, 0.8m deep, overlying the natural substratum. No archaeological finds or features were observed within the base of the topsoil or the subsoil.

8.3 During archaeological supervision of the groundworks involving foundation trench excavation, no archaeological deposits were revealed.

8.4 The results of the archaeological investigation were therefore negative. Although the development was located close to known Roman finds any surviving archaeological deposits are outside the development area.

9. Archive

9.1 The site archive consists of 32 colour digital photographs and two watching brief recording forms and will be held by Leicestershire County Council, Museums Service, under the accession code: [X.A137.2008].

Archive accession code [X.A137.2008] contents:

Copy of Report:	Recording Sheets:	Digital Colour Photographs:
1	2	32

10. Oasis Record

Project Name	Fourways Farm, Debdale Lane, Smeeton Westerby, Leicestershire (SP 685 925)
Project Type	Watching Brief
Project Manager	Patrick Clay
Project Supervisor	Greg Farnworth-Jones
Previous/Future work	No previous work
Current Land Use	Agricultural
Development Type	Residential
Reason for Investigation	PPG16
Position in the Planning Process	As a condition
Site Co ordinates	NGR: SP 684 928
Start/end dates of field work	22.09.08/23.09.08
Archive Recipient	Leicestershire
Study Area	c.400 m sq

11. Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the clients, Mr and Mrs Taylor for their assistance and co-operation on site. Patrick Clay managed the project and the fieldwork was carried out by the author, both of ULAS.

12. Bibliography

Clay, P., 2008. *Design Specification for an Archaeological Watching Brief on Land at 'Fourways Farm', Smeeton Westerby, Leicestershire (SP 685 928)*. ULAS Ref: 09/518

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04.10.2008

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

Design Specification for archaeological work

Fourways Farm, Debdale Road, Smeeton Westerby,

Leicestershire (SP 685 925)

Planning Application: 04/01540/3

For: Mr and Mrs S. Taylor

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 an archaeological watching brief, during ground works for a proposed dwelling and detached garage as required by the Planning Authority, in connection with a planning application for Fourways Farm, Debdale Road, Smeeton Westerby, Leicestershire (SP 685 925) for Mr and Mrs S. Taylor.

1.2 It addresses the requirements detailed in the *Brief For archaeological attendance for inspection and recording (a watching brief)* (LCCHNET 15.09.2008).

1.3 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 The development area is located on Debdale Lane, Smeeton Westerby, Leicestershire, at NGR SP 685 925.

2.2 The Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record (HER) shows that the application site lies in an area of archaeological interest. Several findspots are recorded in the vicinity of Fourways Farm including a Neolithic axe head (MLE7225), Bronze Axe fragment (MLE7225) and a Roman coin and pottery (MLE7908).

3 Aims

3.1 *Archaeological watching brief.* Through archaeological inspection and recording of groundworks by the client's contractors:

1. To identify the presence/absence of 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 examination of groundworks by an experienced archaeologist. If any archaeological deposits are seen to be present, the archaeologist will record areas of archaeological interest.

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

4.4 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.

4.5 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.

4.6 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.

4.7 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, Leicestershire County Council, Heritage Services and the coroner will be informed immediately on their discovery.

4.8 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, Leicestershire County Council, Heritage Services and Harborough District Council.

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 A report on the investigation will be provided following the groundworks.

6.2 Copies will be provided for the client, Sites and Monuments 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 watching brief is scheduled to commence at the inception of the contractors groundworks, currently scheduled for w.c 22.09.2008. 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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27.09.2008

Appendix

Draft Project Health and Safety Policy Statement

Fourways Farm, Debdale Road, Smeeton Westerby,

Leicestershire (SP 685 925)

Planning Application: 04/01540/3

For: Mr and Mrs S. Taylor

1 Nature of the work

1.1 This statement is for an archaeological watching brief.

1.2 The work will involve observation of groundworks during daylight hours and recording of any underlying archaeological deposits revealed. Overall depth is likely to be *c.* 0.2-0.5m. This will involve the examination of the exposed surface with hand tools (shovels, trowels etc) and excavation of archaeological features. All work will adhere to the University of Leicester Health and Safety Policy and follow the guidance in the ULAS Health and Safety Manual (2001) together with the following relevant Health and Safety guidelines.

1.3 HSE Construction Information Sheet CS8 Safety in excavations.

HSE Industry Advisory leaflet IND (G)143 (L): Getting to grips with manual handling.

HSE Industry Advisory leaflet IND (G)145 (L): Watch Your back.

CIRIA R97 Trenching practice.

CIRIA TN95 Proprietary Trench Support Systems.

HSE Guidance Note HS(G) 47 Avoiding danger to underground services. HSE Guidance Note GS7 Accidents to children on construction sites

1.4 The Health and Safety policy on site will be reassessed during the evaluation .

1.5 All work will adhere to the contractors' health and safety policy.

2 Risks Assessment

2.1 Working within a building site

Precautions. No work will be undertaken beneath section faces. Loose spoil heaps will not be walked on. Protective footwear will be worn at all times. Hard hats will be worn at all times. A member of staff qualified in First Aid will be present at all times. First aid kit, vehicle and mobile phone to be kept on site in case of emergency.

2.2 Working with plant.

Precautions. Hard hats, protective footwear and hazard jackets will be worn at all times. No examination of the area of stripping will take place until machines have vacated area. Observation of machines will be maintained during hand excavation. Liaison will be maintained with the contractors to ensure programme of machine movement is understood.

2.3 Working within areas prone to waterlogging.

Protective clothing will be worn at all times and precautions taken to prevent contact with stagnant water which may carry Vialls disease or similar.

2.4 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.

2.9 No other constraints are recognised over the nature of the soil, water, type of excavation, proximity of structures, sources of vibration and contamination.

Patrick Clay

27.09.2008