

**An Archaeological Evaluation  
at Home Farm, Medbourne,  
Leicestershire**

**NGR: SP 808 935**

**Jon Coward**


**For: Mr Beaty and Miss Gittins**

Checked by

**Signed**  **Date:** ...10/9/2009.

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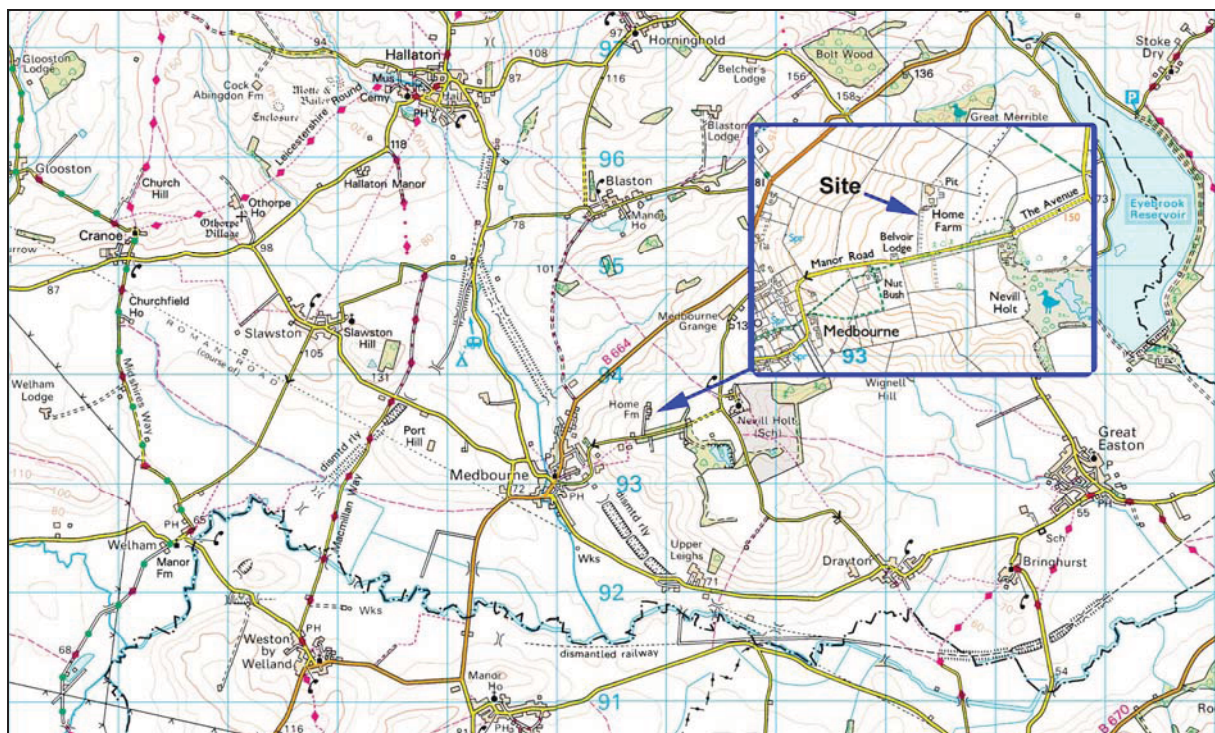
## An Archaeological Evaluation at Home Farm, Medbourne, Leicestershire

### 1. Summary

*An archaeological evaluation by trial trenching was carried out in September 2009 by ULAS for Mr Beaty and Miss Gittins at Home Farm, Medbourne, Leicestershire, NGR SP 808 935. No finds or features were revealed by the evaluation. The archive will be deposited with LMARS under accession code X.A127 2009 in due course.*

### 2. Background

In response to an enquiry about the possibility of future development on this site (Figure 1, Figure 2), the Senior Planning Archaeologist, Leicestershire County Council, recommended a programme of archaeological field evaluation in the first instance to clarify the nature, extent, date and significance of any archaeological deposits which may have been present. This was to assist in determining the potential impact of future development on buried remains and enable the formulation of an appropriate mitigation strategy to minimise damage to them, if found. The requirements of the Senior Planning Archaeologist were presented in the 'Brief for archaeological evaluation of land at Home Farm, Medbourne, Leicestershire. NGR SP 808 935'.



**Figure 1 Medbourne, Leicestershire, and position of Home Farm (insert).**

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### ***3. Historical Background***

#### *Extract from the Brief:*

‘The development site has been identified as an area of significant archaeological potential based upon assessment of archaeological data held by the Leicestershire & Rutland Historic Environment Record (HER)’

‘In addition to the general potential for archaeological remains of past settlement to be present in the landscape around Medbourne, archaeological remains have been recovered from a site on the other side of the trackway leading to Home Farm itself. Artefacts found during fieldwalking include prehistoric worked flints (Mesolithic, later prehistoric) (HER Ref: MLE 7041, 7517, 9804, 9805), Saxon pottery and perhaps metal work (fragment of a possible knife) (MLE2069), and medieval pottery (MLE6758). There is also some evidence for metal working in the form of iron slag (MLE2070) but it is unclear what period this or process this may relate to. The fieldwalking recording sheets held by the Museums Service indicate a concentration of slag towards the trackway and almost immediately opposite the proposed development site. The results of the above fieldwork strongly indicate that this location, more or less on the top of the ridgeway within a landscape with a known history of settlement, is conducive to occupation. A lack of finds directly from the application itself is likely to relate to a lack of archaeological investigation in this area.’

### ***4. Aims***

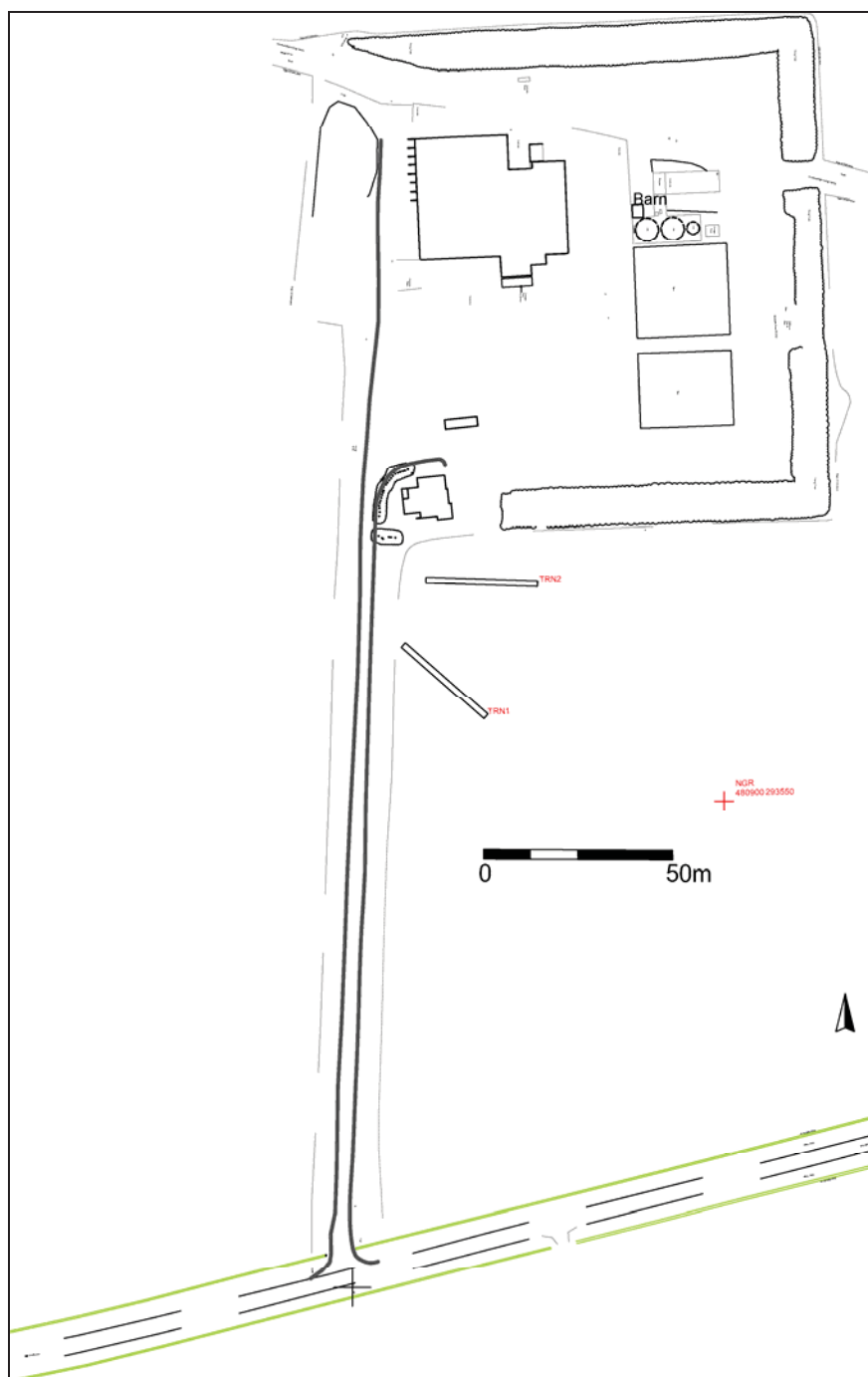
The main objectives of the evaluation were:

To identify the presence/absence of any archaeological deposits.

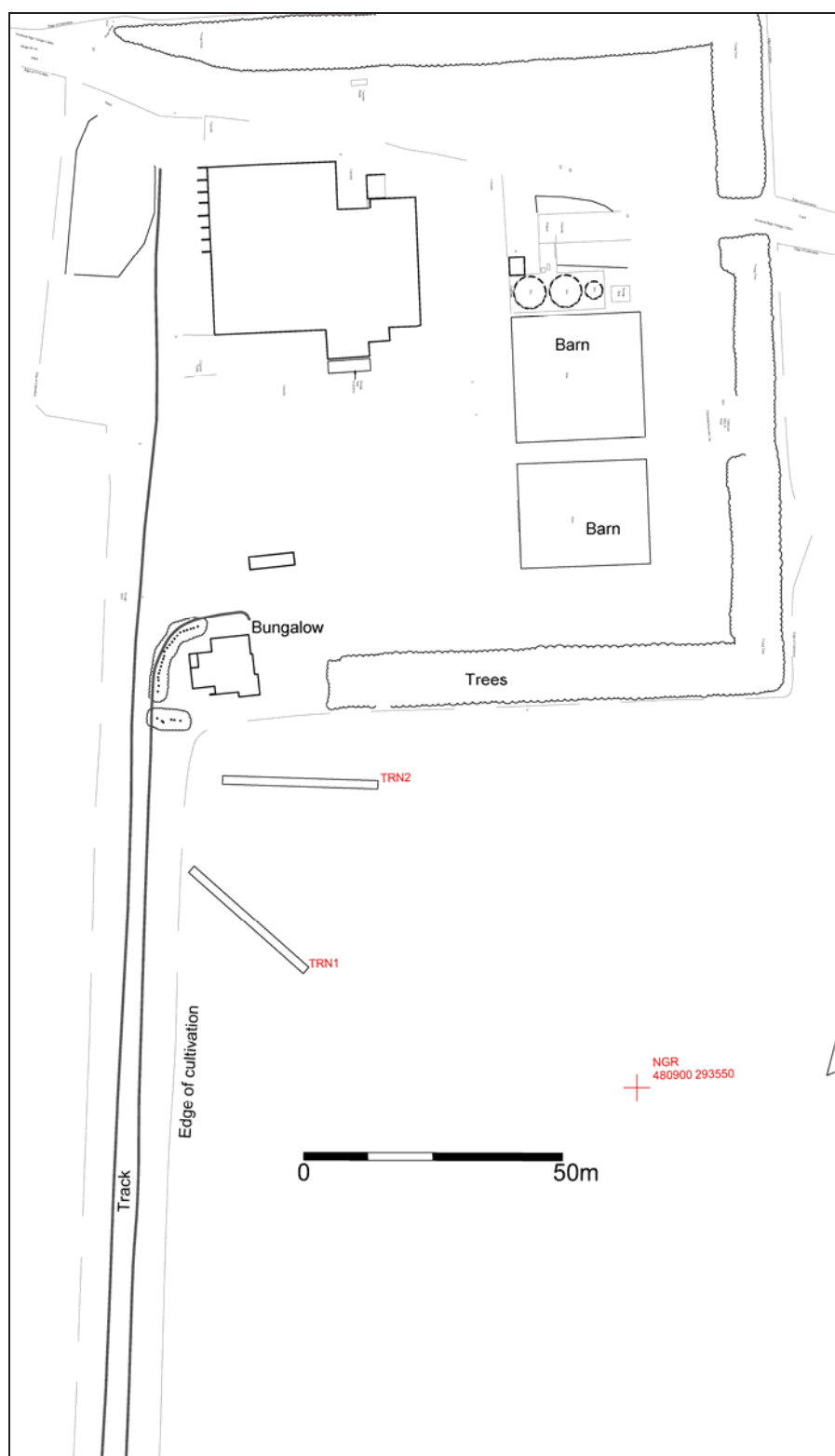
To establish the character, extent and date range for any archaeological deposits to be affected by the proposed ground works.

To produce an archive and report of any results.

Within the stated project objectives, the principal aim of the evaluation was to establish the nature, extent, date, depth, significance and state of preservation of archaeological deposits on the site in order to determine the potential impact upon them from the proposed development.



**Figure 2. Home Farm in relation to Medbourne-Nevill Holt road.  
Based on plans supplied by developer**



**Figure 3. Position of trenches. Based on plans supplied by developer.**

## **5. Methods**

All work followed the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) Code of Conduct and adhered to their Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation (2008).

The Brief required the investigation of 73 sq. m., approximating to two 25m by 1.5m trial trenches (Figure 3). Topsoil/modern overburden was removed in level spits, under continuous archaeological supervision, down to the uppermost archaeological deposits or natural substrata by JCB using a toothless ditching bucket. The trench baulks were hand-cleaned and one baulk section recorded. The position of the trenches was surveyed with an EDM and tied into the National Grid.

## **6. Results**

### *6.1 Trench 1*

Trench 1 was orientated north-west to south-east. It was 29m in length, giving an area of 45.3 m<sup>2</sup>. At its lowest point adjacent to the track it was at *c.* 137.5m OD, rising to *c.* 140.2m OD at the south-eastern end.

Interval from SE end	1m	3m	6m	9m	12m	15m	18m	21m	24m	27m	end
Topsoil depth	0.05	0.23	0.26	0.28	0.33	0.26	0.35	0.26	0.30	0.30	
Subsoil depth	0.05	0.12	0.20	0.20	0.22	0.13	0.10	0.24	0.16	0.12	
Top of nat	0.10	0.35	0.46	0.48	0.55	0.39	0.45	0.50	0.46	0.42	
Base of trnch	0.36	0.49	0.52	0.52	0.57	0.43	0.44	0.53	0.64	0.55	

Topsoil was a mid-brown clayish silt, with few coarse components. The interface between this and the subsoil was diffuse. The subsoil was a pale orangey-brown silty clay with occasional ironstone fragments, this diffused gradually into the natural, which was mostly a firm orange/yellow compact sand with frequent ironstone fragments, although there were some areas of looser sand, and compact clay/silts. No finds nor features were revealed in plan or in the baulk sections.





**Figure 4 Trench 1, looking south-east**

## 6.2 Trench 2

Trench 2 was orientated approximately east-west. It was 29.7m in length, giving an area of 47 m<sup>2</sup>. At its lowest point adjacent to the track it was at c. 136.9m OD, rising to c. 139m OD at the eastern end.

Interval from WNW end	1m	3m	6m	9m	12m	15m	18m	21m	24m	27m	end
Topsoil depth	0.27	0.28	0.30	0.24	0.27	0.26	0.29	0.25	0.29	0.26	
Subsoil depth	0.19	0.12	0.10	0.10	0.20	0.10	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	
Top of nat	0.46	0.40	0.40	0.34	0.47	0.36	0.42	0.39	0.43	0.40	
Base of trnch	0.54	0.52	0.54	0.56	0.55	0.50	0.53	0.50	0.54	0.44	

Topsoil was a mid-brown clayish silt, with few coarse components. The interface between this and the subsoil was diffuse. The subsoil was a pale orangey-brown silty clay with



occasional ironstone fragments, this diffused gradually into the natural, which was mostly a firm orange/yellow compact sand with occasional ironstone fragments, and some patches of firm clay/sand. No finds nor features were revealed in plan or in the baulk sections.



**Figure 5 Trench 2, looking east-north-east.**

### *6.3 Discussion*

Not only were no features revealed in the stripping process, observation of the spoil revealed no finds from any period, despite good visibility and the fact that a greater area was stripped than requested in the Brief. This complete lack of finds is unusual given the volume of soil disturbed, though the site is roughly equidistant from two villages and thus probably less likely to receive the manuring scatter common to the village in-fields. Nevertheless, fieldwalked material (including medieval pottery) has been retrieved up to the west side of the adjacent track, and there is no obvious explanation why this material should not have re-appeared on the east. The ground in the area of the evaluation certainly showed no signs of

having been redeposited from elsewhere. For the position of the track to have influenced any deposition of material seems unlikely, as the layout of the farm and track in the landscape appear post-enclosure to the author. Although most of the original buildings are demolished, the remnants appear to be roughly early/mid 19th century. There is the possibility that different agricultural regimes on the two sides of the track over the last 150 years have influenced the survival of any artefacts in the soil. Another factor could be that the soil is quite light, and the depth of the cultivation soil over the natural substrata was noticeably shallow. A few centuries of ploughing would tend to move the soil and associated artefacts westwards down the slope, though if this is the explanation it must have occurred before the track was constructed, as this would act as a barrier to soil creep.

## **7. *Archive***

The archive consists of:

- 2 *pro-forma* trench record sheets
- 1 sheet of contact prints
- 1 photographic index sheet
- 7 digital images

It will be deposited with LMARS under accession code X.A127 2009 in due course.

## **8. *Acknowledgements***

The project was carried out by Jon Coward with the assistance of Siobhan Brocklehurst. Project management was by Richard Buckley. ULAS would like to thank the client and Mark Abell of Peter Wilmot Architects for their assistance.

## **9. Appendix: Design Specification**

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

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

***Job title: Home farm, Medbourne, Leicestershire (SP 424 023)***

***Client: Peter Wilmot Architects***

***Planning Authority: Harborough District Council Council***

**NGR SP 808 935**

#### **1 Introduction**

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

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

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

#### **2 Background**

##### **2.1 Context of the Project**

2.1.1 In response to an enquiry about the possibility of future development on this site, the Senior Planning Archaeologist, Leicestershire County Council, has recommended a programme of archaeological field evaluation in the first instance to clarify the nature, extent, date and significance of any archaeological deposits which may be present. This should assist in determining the potential impact of future development on buried remains and enable the formulation of an appropriate mitigation strategy to minimise damage to them.

2.1.2 The requirements of the Senior Planning Archaeologist are presented in the 'Brief for archaeological evaluation of land at Home Farm, Medbourne, Leicestershire. NGR SP 808 935' (hereinafter 'the Brief').

##### **2.2 Archaeological and Historical Background (taken from the Brief)**

2.2.1 'The development site has been identified as an area of significant archaeological potential based upon assessment of archaeological data held by the Leicestershire & Rutland Historic Environment Record (HER)'.

2.2.2 'In addition to the general potential for archaeological remains of past settlement to be present in the landscape around Medbourne, archaeological remains have been recovered from a site on the other side of the trackway leading to Home Farm itself. Artefacts found during fieldwalking include prehistoric worked flints (Mesolithic, later prehistoric) (HER Ref: MLE 7041, 7517, 9804, 9805), Saxon pottery and perhaps metal work (fragment of a possible knife) (MLE2069), and medieval pottery (MLE6758). There is also some evidence for metal working in the form of iron slag (MLE2070) but it is unclear what period this or process this may relate to. The fieldwalking recording sheets held by the Museums Service indicate a concentration of slag towards the trackway and almost immediately opposite the proposed development site. The results of the above fieldwork strongly indicate that this location, more

or less on the top of the ridgeway within a landscape with a known history of settlement, is conducive to occupation. A lack of finds directly from the application itself is likely to relate to a lack of archaeological investigation in this area.'

### 3. Archaeological Objectives

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

## 2 Methodology

### 4.1 General Methodology and Standards

- 4.1.1 All work will follow the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) Code of Conduct and adhere to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (2008).
- 4.1.2 Staffing, recording systems, health and safety provisions and insurance details are included below.
- 4.1.3 Internal monitoring procedures will be undertaken including visits to the site by the project manager. These will ensure that project targets are met and professional standards are maintained. Provision will be made for external monitoring meetings with the Senior Planning Archaeologist the Planning authority and the Client.

### 4.2 Trial Trenching Methodology

- 4.2.1 Topsoil/modern overburden will be removed in level spits, under continuous archaeological supervision, down to the uppermost archaeological deposits by JCB 3C or equivalent using a toothless ditching bucket.
- 4.2.2 Trenches will be excavated to a width of 1.5m and down to the top of archaeological deposits. The area of the trenches will be protected by barrier fencing.
- 4.2.3 The trenches will be backfilled and levelled at the end of the evaluation.
- 4.2.4 The Brief requires the investigation of 73 sq. m., approximating to two 25m by 1.5m trial trenches. The exact location of the trenches may need to be modified depending on constraints on site.
- 4.2.5 Trenches will be examined by hand cleaning and any archaeological deposits located will be planned at an appropriate scale and sample-excavated by hand as appropriate to establishing the stratigraphic and chronological sequence. All plans will be tied into the Ordnance Survey National Grid. Spot heights will be taken as appropriate.
- 4.2.6 Sections of any excavated archaeological features will be drawn at an appropriate scale. At least one longitudinal face of each trench will be recorded. All sections will be levelled and tied to the Ordnance Survey Datum, or a permanent fixed bench mark.
- 4.2.7 Trench locations will be recorded using an electronic distance measurer. These will then be tied in to the Ordnance Survey National Grid.
- 4.2.8 Any human remains will initially be left *in situ* and will only be removed if necessary for their protection, under Ministry of Justice guidelines and in compliance with relevant environmental health regulations.



### 4.3 Recording Systems

- 4.3.1 The ULAS recording manual will be used as a guide for all recording.
- 4.3.2 Individual descriptions of all archaeological strata and features excavated or exposed will be entered onto pro-forma recording sheets.
- 4.3.3 A site location plan based on the current Ordnance Survey 1:1250 map (reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO) will be prepared. This will be supplemented by a trench plan at appropriate scale, which will show the location of the areas investigated in relationship to the investigation area and OS grid.
- 4.3.4 A record of the full extent in plan of all archaeological deposits encountered will be made. Sections including the half-sections of individual layers of features will be drawn as necessary, typically at a scale of 1:10. The OD height of all principal strata and features will be recorded.
- 4.3.5 A photographic record of the investigations will be prepared illustrating in both detail and general context the principal features and finds discovered. The photographic record will also include 'working shots' to illustrate more generally the nature of the archaeological operation mounted.
- 1 This record will be compiled and checked during the course of the excavations.

## 2 Finds and Samples

- 5.1 The IfA *Guidelines for Finds Work* will be adhered to.
- 5.2 Before commencing work on the site, a Site code/Accession number will be agreed with the Planning Archaeologist that will be used to identify all records and finds from the site.
- 5.3 During the fieldwork, different sampling strategies may be employed according to the perceived importance of the strata under investigation. Close attention will always be given to sampling for date, structure and environment. If significant archaeological features are sample excavated, the environmental sampling strategy is likely to include the following:
  - i. A range of features to represent all feature types, areas and phases will be selected on a judgmental basis. The criteria for selection will be that deposits are datable, well sealed and with little intrusive or residual material.
  - ii. Any buried soils or well sealed deposits with concentrations of carbonised material present will be intensively sampled taking a known proportion of the deposit.
  - iii. Spot samples will be taken where concentrations of environmental remains are located.
  - iv. Waterlogged remains, if present, will be sampled for pollen, plant macrofossils, insect remains and radiocarbon dating provided that they are uncontaminated and datable. Consultation with the specialist will be undertaken.
- 5.4 All identified finds and artefacts are to be retained, although certain classes of building material will, in some circumstances, be discarded after recording with the approval of the Senior Planning Archaeologist. The IfA *Guidelines for Finds Work* will be adhered to.
- 1 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.

## 2 Report and Archive

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



- ☐ The anticipated degree of survival of archaeological deposits.
  - ☐ The anticipated archaeological impact of the current proposals.
  - ☐ Appropriate illustrative material including maps, plans, sections, drawings and photographs.
  - ☐ Summary.
  - ☐ The location and size of the archive.
  - ☐ A quantitative and qualitative assessment of the potential of the archive for further analysis leading to full publication, following guidelines laid down in *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage).
- 6.3 A full copy of the archive as defined in the *IfA Standard and Guidance for archaeological archives* (Brown 2008) will normally be presented to Leicestershire County Council within six months of the completion of fieldwork. This archive will include all written, drawn and photographic records relating directly to the investigations undertaken.

## **7 Publication and Dissemination of Results**

7.1 A summary of the work will be submitted for publication in the *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society*.

1 On the completion of fieldwork, the on-line OASIS form will be completed at the archaeology Data Service website: <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis>.

## **2 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.

1 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.

## **2 Copyright**

9.1 The copyright of all original finished documents shall remain vested in ULAS and ULAS will be entitled as of right to publish any material in any form produced as a result of its investigations.

## **10. Timetable**

10.1 The evaluation start is proposed for 3rd September 2009 with two staff. .

10.2 The on-site director/supervisor will carry out the post-excavation work, with time allocated within the costing of the project for analysis of any artefacts found on the site by the relevant in-house specialists at ULAS.

## **11. Health and Safety**

11.1 ULAS is covered by and adheres to the University of Leicester Archaeological Services Health and Safety Policy and Health and Safety manual with appropriate risks assessments for all archaeological work. A draft Health and Safety statement for this project is attached as Appendix 1. The relevant Health and Safety Executive guidelines will be adhered to as appropriate. The HSE has determined that archaeological investigations are exempt from CDM regulations.

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

## **12. Insurance**

12.1 All ULAS work is covered by the University of Leicester's Public Liability and Professional Indemnity Insurance. The Public Liability Insurance is with St Pauls Travellers Policy No.

UCPOP3651237 while the Professional Indemnity Insurance is with Lloyds Underwriters (50%) and Brit Insurances (50%) Policy No. FUNK3605.

**13. Monitoring arrangements**

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

**14. Contingencies and unforeseen circumstances**

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

**15. Bibliography**

Brown, D., *Standard and guidance for the preparation of Archaeological Archives* (Institute for 2008 Archaeologists)

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□ ULAS 24/07/2009

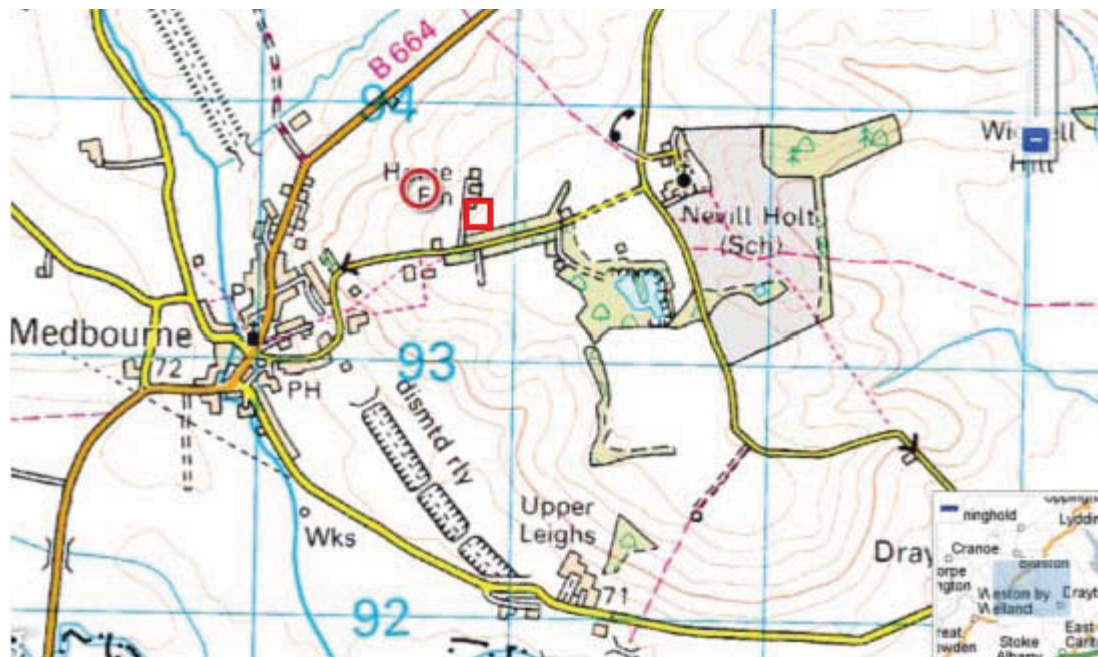
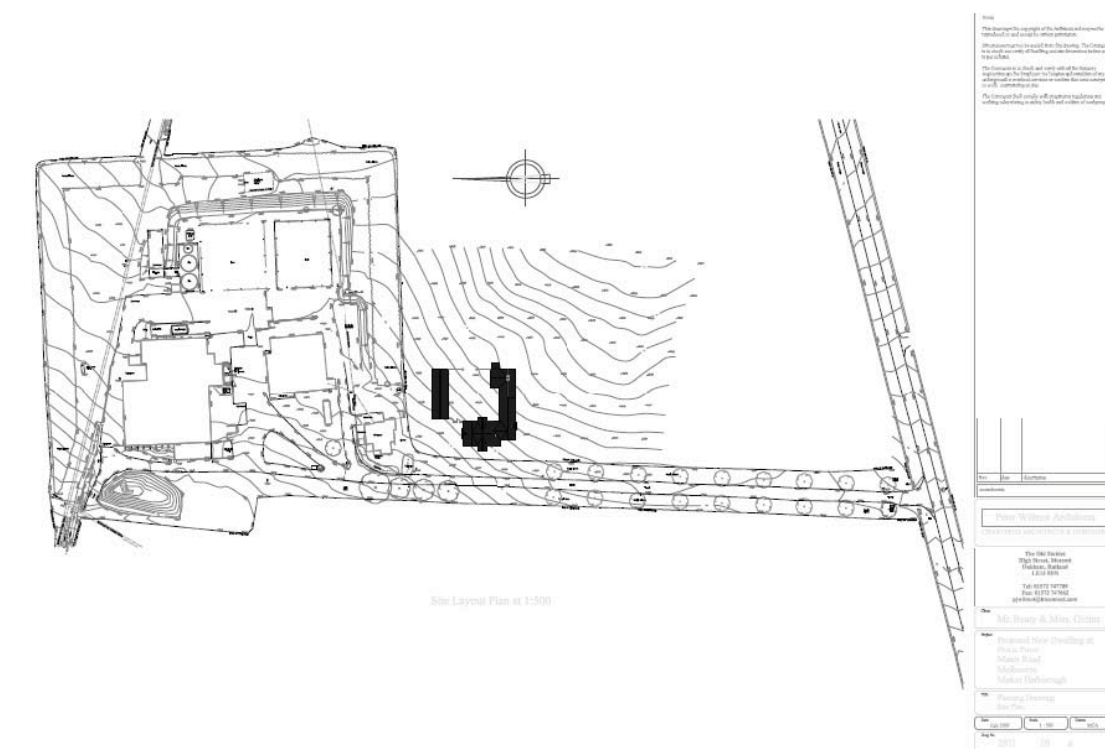


Figure 1 Location of the application area (red square)

Figure 2 Proposed trench locations Figure 3 Plan of proposed residential development (supplied by Architect)



## APPENDIX 1

*Job title: Home farm, Medbourne, Leicestershire (SP 424 023)*

*Client: Peter Wilmot Architects*

*Planning Authority: Harborough District Council Council*

**NGR SP 808 935**

### ***Draft Project Health and Safety Policy Statement***

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

#### **1. Nature of the work**

##### **1.1 Brief description of the work involved e.g.**

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

#### **2 Risks Assessment**

##### **2.1 *Working on an excavation site.***

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

##### **2.2 *Working with plant.***

Precautions. Archaeologists experienced in working with machines will supervise topsoil stripping at all times. Hard hats, protective footwear and hazard jackets will be worn at all times. Machine driver to be suitably qualified and insured. If services or wells are encountered machining will be halted until extent has been established by hand excavation or areas where it is safe to machine have been established.

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

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

R Buckley 29 August 2009