



University of Leicester

Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological Watching Brief
At Sconsborough Hill Farm, Somerby
Road, Knossington, Leicestershire**

NGR: SK 79320912
Mathew Morris



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Mathew Morris

For: M.R. and M.E. Gibson and Son

Planning application no. 10/00014/FUL

Checked by

Signed:



Date: 07-05-2010

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ULAS Report Number 2010-084

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CONTENTS

Summary	1
Introduction.....	1
Geology and Topography	1
Historical and Archaeological Background.....	1
Archaeological Objectives	3
Methodology	3
Results.....	3
Discussion.....	6
Bibliography	6
Archive.....	6
Publication	6
Acknowledgements.....	7
Appendix 1: Design Specification for Archaeological Inspection and Recording	8
Appendix 2: OASIS Database entry	13

FIGURES

Figure 1: Location maps with development area highlighted.....	2
Figure 2: Trench location plan.....	4
Figure 3: Turbine trench – a typical section showing the basic stratigraphic sequence of topsoil, natural gravel and natural clay. Looking west.	5
Figure 4: Winch trench – showing the natural clay dropping off to the north. Looking south-west.....	5

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Mathew Morris

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was carried out at Sconsborough Hill Farm, Somerby Road, Knossington, Leicestershire (SK 79320912) by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on 5th May 2010. The work was carried out on behalf of M.R. and M.E. Gibson and Son in advance of construction of a wind turbine within a field north-west of the farm. Work involved supervision and inspection of two small machine excavated trenches and the results of the investigation proved negative. The site archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council Museum Services under the accession number X.A77.2010

Introduction

This document constitutes the final report for an archaeological watching brief carried out at Sconsborough Hill Farm, Somerby Road, Knossington, Leicestershire (SK 79320912) (Figure 1). The work was carried out on behalf of M.R. and M.E. Gibson and Son by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on 5th May 2010.

The proposed construction of a 'Proven 15' wind turbine at Sconsborough Hill Farm (Planning Application No. 10/00014/FUL) was located c.145m north-west of the farm buildings and c.123m south-west of Somerby Road approximately 1km north-west of Knossington and 21km east of Leicester (Figure 2). The total development area covered c.15.96 square meters.

The watching brief was requested by Leicestershire County Council's Historic and Natural Environment Team in their capacity as archaeological advisors to Melton Borough Council, in accordance with DOE Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning For the Historic Environment (2010), as laid out in the *Design Specification for Archaeological Inspection and Recording* (see Appendix 1).

Geology and Topography

The British Geological Survey of Great Britain, Sheet 156 (Leicester), indicates that the underlying geology likely consists of superficial deposits of Mid Pleistocene glaciofluvial gravels and Diamicton Till overlying bedrock deposits of Early Jurassic mudstone belonging to the Whitby Mudstone Formation (BGS 2008). The site lies on the crest of a broad hill at c.203m above Ordnance Datum (AOD) with the ground dropping away to the north, south and west.

Historical and Archaeological Background

The Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record (HER) shows that the site lies in close proximity to a probable Anglo-Saxon burial (HER Ref. MLE3897), recorded in the mid-19th century, and other associated remains may exist within the vicinity.

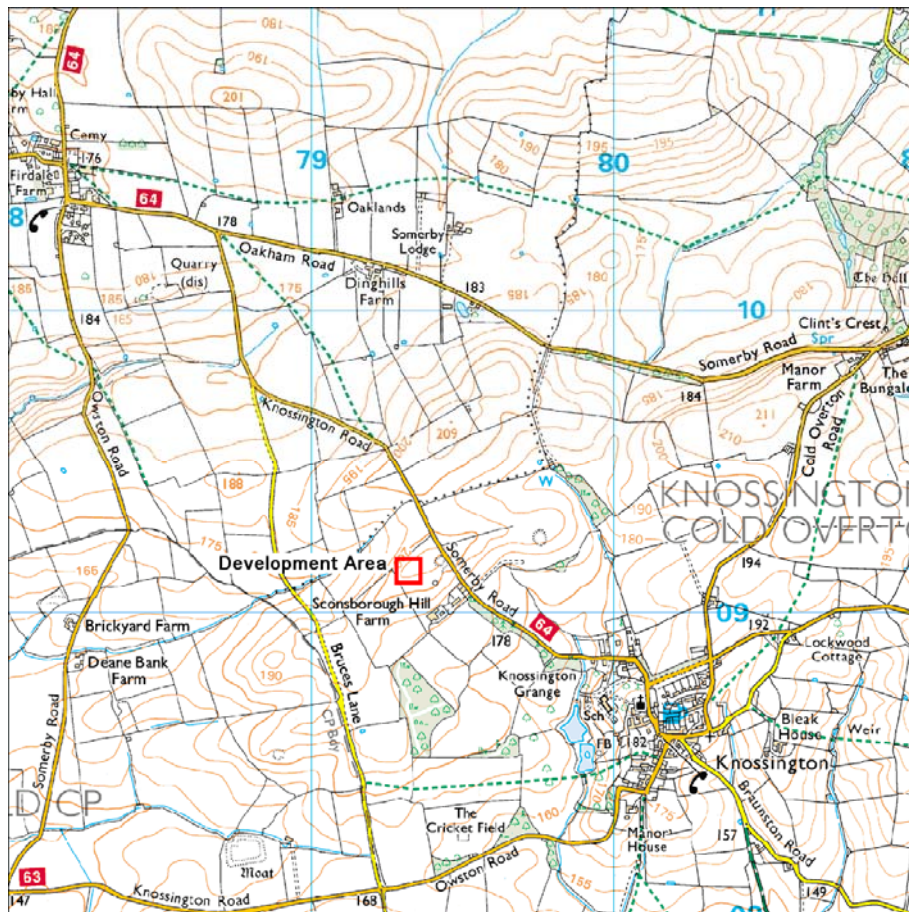


Figure 1: Location maps with development area highlighted

Reproduced from Explorer® 234 Rutland Water, Stamford and Oakham 1:25,000 OS map by permission of Ordnance Survey® on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office. © Crown copyright 2010. All rights reserved. License number AL100029495.

The village of Knossington itself is early medieval, first documented during the Domesday Survey of 1086 as Nossitone or Closintone (Morgan 1979: 1.11 and 18.1). This is thought to refer to, in Old English, the 'Estate at the Hill' or a person called 'Cnossa' (Mills 2003). During the medieval period the development area lay within

one of three open fields, Skonsborough Field, surrounding Knossington and ridge and furrow can still be identified running north to south across the present pasture. Enclosure of the open fields, and their conversion to pasture, occurred during the early 17th century and Ordnance Survey maps show the present field has remained largely unchanged since the latter half of the 19th century (Lee and McKinley 1964).

Archaeological Objectives

The principal objectives of the watching brief were:

- To identify the presence or absence of any archaeological deposits.
- To establish the character, extent and date of any archaeological deposits to be effected by the proposed ground works.
- To excavate and record any archaeological deposits to be effected by the proposed ground works.
- To produce a report and archive of any results.

Methodology

The proposed work involved the excavation of two small trenches to a depth of *c.*1.1m to *c.*1.4m below ground level. This required the presence of a professional archaeologist to supervise any work likely to impact upon any archaeological remains.

The work involved the supervision of the removal of topsoil and subsoil across the development area in order to identify any archaeological deposits or the natural substratum. This was carried out using a JCB 3C mechanical digger with a 1.5m toothless ditching bucket. All exposed areas, sections and spoil heaps were visually inspected for features and finds. Any archaeological deposits were hand cleaned, planned, photographed and sample excavated as appropriate to addressing the objectives of the watching brief. Field notes were recorded on a pro-forma ULAS watching brief record form.

All work followed the *Institute for Archaeologists' (IfA) Code of Conduct* and adhered to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* and the *Guidelines for Archaeological Work in Leicestershire and Rutland (LMARS)*.

Results

The area impacted by the construction of the wind turbine comprised one *c.*3.6m by *c.*3.6m trench for the turbine's footing and one *c.*1.5m by *c.*2m trench for the winching point (Figure 2). Both trenches were dug to a depth of *c.*1.1m to *c.*1.4m.

On excavation the same basic stratigraphic sequence was observed in both trenches (Figure 3). Initial machining removed *c.*0.21m to *c.*0.29m of turf and fine, friable grayish-brown loam topsoil to expose coarse, loose grayish-orange clayey sand and gravel containing abundant poorly sorted small to large sub-angular and sub-rounded stones. This was observed to be *c.*0.33m thick in the Turbine Trench and between *c.*0.4m and *c.*0.95m thick in the Winch Trench. These gravels were observed to rapidly thicken as the natural clay substratum dropped away to the north (Figure 4). The natural substratum was reached *c.*0.62m below ground level in the Turbine Trench and between *c.*0.68m and *c.*1.16m in the Winch Trench. This was compact orangeish-grey clay containing frequent small to medium sub-rounded stones and scattered large boulders. No archaeological features or deposits were observed during the watching brief.

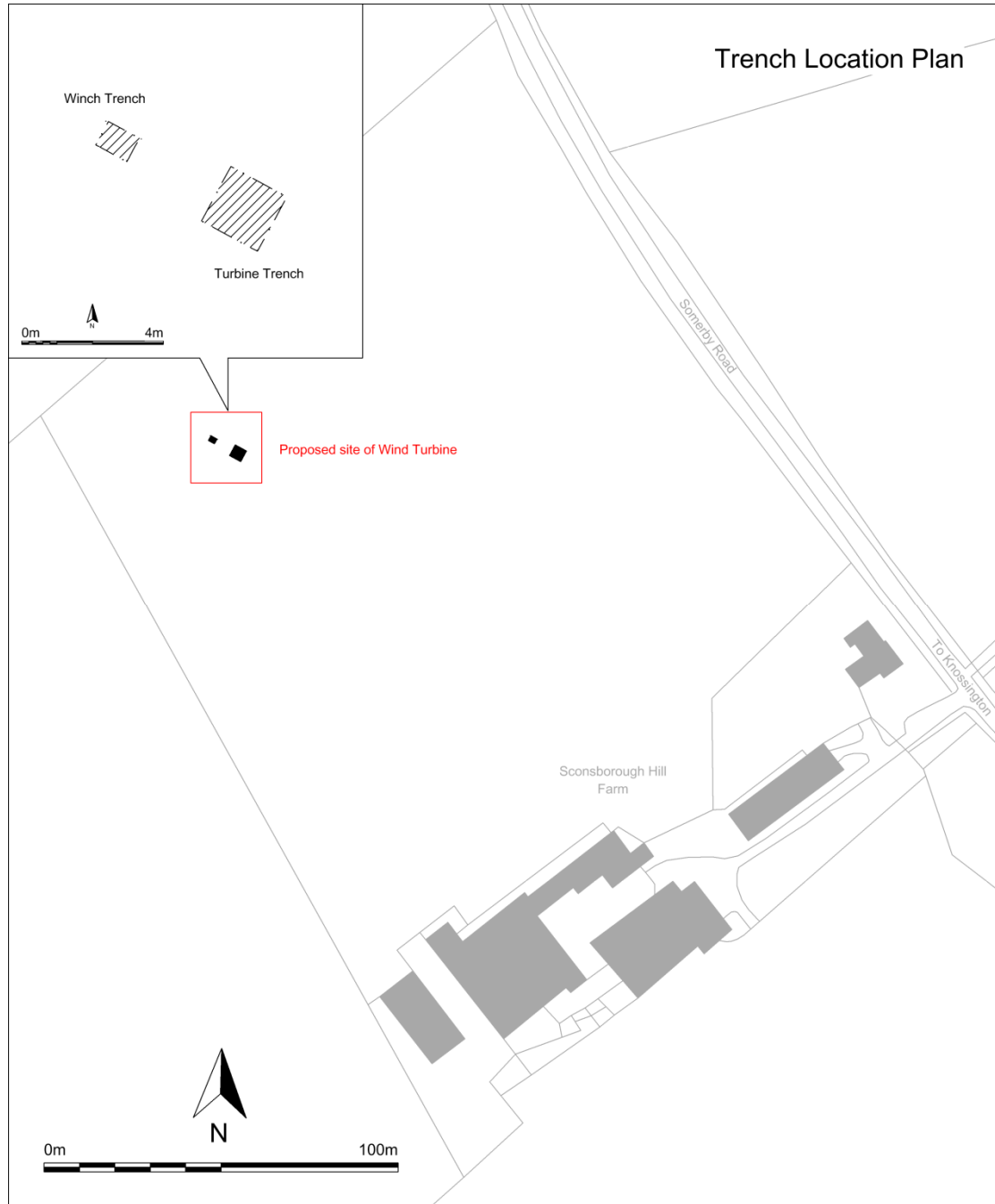


Figure 2: Trench location plan



Figure 3: Turbine trench – a typical section showing the basic stratigraphic sequence of topsoil, natural gravel and natural clay. Looking west.



Figure 4: Winch trench – showing the natural clay dropping off to the north. Looking south-west.

Discussion

No features of archaeological significance were identified during the ground-works and the gravel and clay deposits exposed beneath the topsoil appeared to be natural in origin, matching the superficial deposits noted in the British Geological Survey of Great Britain. The relatively thin topsoil and lack of subsoil highlights the lack of activity within this area and suggests there has been little cultivation within this field since the medieval period. This further supports the documented enclosure and conversion to pastoral use of the medieval open fields during the early 17th century.

Bibliography

B.G.S., 2008 *England and Wales Sheet 156 Leicester: Bedrock and Superficial Deposits*. 1:50,000 scale geology series.

Lee, J.M. & McKinley, R.A. (eds.), 1964 'Knossington' in *A History of the County of Leicestershire: Volume 5*. 187-193.

Mills, A.D., 2003 'Knossington' in *A Dictionary of British Place-Names*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Morgan, P., 1979 *Domesday Book 22: Leicestershire*. Chichester, Phillimore.

Archive

The site archive consists of: 1 A4 watching brief record form
12 digital photographs

The archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council Museum Services under the accession number X.A77.2010.

Publication

Since 2004 ULAS has reported the results of all archaeological work to the *Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations* (OASIS) database held by the Archaeological Data Service at the University of York (Appendix 2).

A summary of the work will also be submitted for publication in the local archaeological journal, the *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society*, in due course.

Acknowledgements

Thanks are extended to the client and contractors for the co-operation and assistance on site. Fieldwork was undertaken, and the report written by Mathew Morris. The project was managed for ULAS by Vicki Score.

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5/5/2010

Appendix 1: Design Specification for Archaeological Inspection and Recording

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

Design Specification for Archaeological Inspection and Recording

Sconsborough Hill Farm, Somerby Road, Knossington

NGR: 479501, 309074

Client: MR & ME Gibson and Son

Authority: Melton Borough Council

Planning Application No: 10/00014/FUL

1. Introduction

Definition and scope of the specification

- 1.1 This document is a design specification for a phase of archaeological investigation and recording at the above site, in accordance with Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning For The Historic Environment (2010). The fieldwork specified below is intended to provide information on the character and extent of any buried archaeological remains which may exist on the site.
- 1.2 This document provides details of the work proposed by ULAS on behalf of the client, and should be submitted to the Archaeological Advisor to the Planning Authority for approval before archaeological investigation by ULAS is implemented. The document provides details of the work proposed by ULAS on behalf of the client for:
 - Archaeological attendance for inspection and recording
 - Contingency provisions for further emergency recording if required.

2. Background

- 2.1. The work involves the erection of a 'Proven 15' wind turbine at Sconsborough Hill Farm, Somerby Road, Knossington, LE15 8LY (Figs 1 and 2) .
- 2.2 At the time of the Domesday Book (1086) Knossington was known as Nossitone and by c. 1150 it was Cnossintona. The name in Old English means 'Estate at the hill, or of a man called 'Cnossa' (Oxford online Dictionary of British Place-Names, accessed April 2010). The Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record (HER) shows that the site lies in close proximity to a probable Anglo-Saxon burial (HER Ref. MLE3897), recorded in the mid 19th century. Associated remains may therefore exist in the vicinity.
- 2.3 The Senior Planning Archaeologist has therefore recommended archaeological attendance during groundworks for the work as outlined in *Archaeological Considerations* (3rd Feb 2010).

Geological and Topographical Background

- 2.3 The underlying geology of the site is likely to comprise Mudstone (Whitby Mudstone Formation), overlain with superficial deposits of Diamicton Till (British Geological Survey of Great Britain).

3. Archaeological Objectives

- 3.1 Through archaeological monitoring of groundworks:
 - 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 record any archaeological deposits to be affected by the ground works.
 - To produce an archive and report of any results.

4. Methodology

General Methodology and Standards

- 4.1 All work will follow the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Code of Conduct* (2008) and adhere to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (2008).
- 4.2 Staffing, recording systems, health and safety provisions and insurance details are included below.
- 4.3 All ground reduction and excavation is to be undertaken using a toothless ditching bucket unless otherwise agreed with the Planning Archaeologist.

Watching Brief Methodology

- 4.4 The project requires archaeological attendance during groundworks. This will involve the inspection of all groundworks by an experienced professional archaeologist. During these groundworks, if any archaeological deposits are seen to be present, the archaeologist will record areas of archaeological interest.
- 4.5 Whilst fulfilling the requirements of the brief is the top priority, the archaeologist will co-operate at all times with the contractors on site to ensure the minimum interruption.
- 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. All plans will be tied into the National Grid.
- 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 in compliance with relevant Ministry of Justice and environmental health regulations. The Planning Archaeologist, the Client and the coroner will be informed immediately on their discovery.

Contingency

- 4.10 In the event that significant archaeological discoveries are made during the project that cannot be dealt within by the original brief, ULAS shall inform the site agent/project manager, Client and the Senior Planning Archaeologist and Planning Authority. Following assessment of the archaeological remains by the Senior Planning Archaeologist, ULAS shall, if required, implement the contingency provision for further emergency recording and archaeological excavation.

5. Recording Systems

- 5.1 The ULAS recording manual will be used as a guide for all recording.
- 5.2 Individual descriptions of all archaeological strata and features excavated or exposed will be entered onto pro-forma recording sheets.
- 5.3 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.
- 5.4 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. The relative height of all principal strata and features will be recorded. The stratigraphy of all trenches shall be recorded even where no archaeological features are identified.

5.5 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.

5.6 This record will be compiled and checked during the course of the excavations.

6. Finds & samples

6.1 The IfA *Guidelines for Finds Work* will be adhered to.

6.2 All antiquities, valuables, objects or remains of archaeological interest, other than articles declared by Coroner's Inquest to be subject to the Treasure Act, discovered in or under the Site during the carrying out of the project by ULAS or during works carried out on the Site by the Client shall be deemed to be the property of ULAS provided that ULAS after due examination of the said Archaeological Discoveries shall transfer ownership of all Archaeological Discoveries unconditionally to LCC for storage in perpetuity.

6.3 An Accession number will be obtained from the Assistant Keeper of Archaeological Archives at Leicestershire County Council that will be used to identify all records and finds from the site, prior to the commencement of any on-site works.

6.4 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. As part of this phase, environmental sampling will be undertaken as appropriate in order to assess the environmental potential of the deep ditch or pond-like features under investigation. 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.

6.5 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.

6.6 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

7. Report and Archive

7.1 The full report in A4 format will usually follow within eight weeks of the completion of the fieldwork and copies will be dispatched to the Senior Planning Archaeologist/HER to be distributed amongst relevant sections of Leicestershire County Council as necessary.

7.2 The report will include consideration of:

- The aims and methods adopted in the course of the evaluation.
- The nature, location and extent of any structural, artefactual and environmental material uncovered.
- The anticipated degree of survival of archaeological deposits.
- The anticipated archaeological impact of the current proposals.
- Appropriate illustrative material including maps, plans, sections, drawings and photographs.
- Summary.
- The location and size of the archive.
- If required, 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 2* (English Heritage 1991).

7.3 A full copy of the archive as defined in Brown (2008) will be presented to Leicestershire County Council, 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.

8. Publication and Dissemination of Results

8.1 A summary of the work will be submitted to the local archaeological journal, the Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society. A larger report will be submitted for inclusion if the results of the evaluation warrant it.

8.2 University of Leicester Archaeological Services supports the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) project. The online OASIS form at <http://ads.ac.uk/project/oasis> will be completed detailing the results of the project. ULAS will contact Leicestershire County Council's SMR prior to completion of the form. Once a report has become a public document following its incorporation into Leicestershire SMR it may be placed on the web-site. The Developer should agree to this procedure in writing as part of the process of submitting the report to Leicestershire SMR.

9. Acknowledgement and Publicity

9.1 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.

9.2 ULAS and the Client shall each ensure that a senior employee shall be responsible for dealing with any enquiries received from press, television and any other broadcasting media and members of the public. All enquiries made to ULAS shall be directed to the Client for comment.

10. Copyright

10.1 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.

11. Timetable

11.1 The work is currently scheduled for Mid April 2010. It will involve one person on site at varying times throughout the groundworks.

11.2 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.

11.3 An interim report on the results of the evaluation can be prepared, if required, after the completion of the fieldwork.

12. Health and Safety

12.1 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.

13. Insurance

13.1 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.

14. Monitoring arrangements

14.1 Unlimited access to monitor the project will be available to both the Client and his representatives and Senior Planning Archaeologist subject to the health and safety requirements of the site. Notice will be given to the Leicestershire Senior Planning Archaeologist before the commencement of the archaeological evaluation in order that monitoring arrangements can be made.

14.2 All monitoring shall be carried out in accordance with the IFA Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations.

14.3 Internal monitoring will be carried out by the ULAS project manager.

15. Bibliography

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

IfA, 2008 *Standards and Guidelines for Archaeological Watching Briefs.*

IfA, 2008 *Code of Conduct*

IfA 2001 *Guidance for Finds work*

LCC
(12-02-2010) *Brief for Archaeological Attendance for Inspection and Recording (an intensive watching brief) at Land at the Rear of 3-9 Leicester Road, Oady, Leicestershire.*

14th April 2010

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Appendix 2: OASIS Database entry

Project Name	Sconsborough Hill Farm, Somerby Road, Knossington
Project Type	Watching Brief
Project Manager	Vicki Score
Project Supervisor	Mathew Morris
Previous/Future work	None
Current Land Use	Pasture
Development Type	Wind Turbine
Reason for Investigation	PPS 5
Position in the Planning Process	As a condition
Site Co ordinates	SK SK 79320912
Start/end dates of field work	5/5/10
Archive Recipient	Leicestershire County Council Museum Services
Study Area	15.96 square meters

Contact Details

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