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Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological Watching Brief at
Ashby School, Nottingham Road,
Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicestershire
NGR: SK 3623 1679**

Dr. Roger Kipling




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**An Archaeological Watching Brief at Ashby School,
Nottingham Road, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicestershire
[NGR SK 3623 1679]**

Dr. Roger Kipling

For: Ashby School

Approved by:	
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[NGR SK 3623 1679]

Dr. Roger Kipling

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken in April 2010 by University of Leicester Archaeological Services on behalf of Ashby School prior to construction of an extension to Ashby School, Nottingham Road, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicestershire. Groundworks involved the excavation of footings and the construction of services for the proposed building. Attendance at the site occurred on the 12th and 19th April 2010.

The watching brief did not reveal any archaeological deposits or features. The site archive will be deposited with the Leicestershire County Council under the accession number X.A41.2010.

Introduction

An archaeological watching brief with control and supervision of groundworks was undertaken on land at Ashby School, Nottingham Road, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicestershire, due to the fact that the application site lies within an area of archaeological interest, namely the medieval and post-medieval historic settlement core of the town. In view of the potential impact of the development this was undertaken as a mitigation strategy following recommendations by the Leicestershire County Council Planning Archaeologist

Attendance at the site during the watching brief was on the 12th and 19th April 2010 involved the monitoring of groundworking activity, work comprising the excavation of footings and the construction of services for the proposed building.

The archaeological watching brief was undertaken in accordance with Planning Policy Guideline 16 (PPG16, Archaeology & Planning), paragraph 30. All archaeological work was in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologist's (IfA) *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*.

Site Description, Topography and Geology

The site is located at Ashby School, Nottingham Road, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicestershire (SK 3623 1679), and covers an area of *c.*0.0253 ha. which currently consists of tarmac hard standing.

The Ordnance Survey Geological Survey of Great Britain Sheet 141 indicates that the underlying geology is likely to consist of Carboniferous shale. The proposed development area is fairly flat at a height of *c.*139m OD. The site is located on relatively flat land with a slight fall to the south-west.

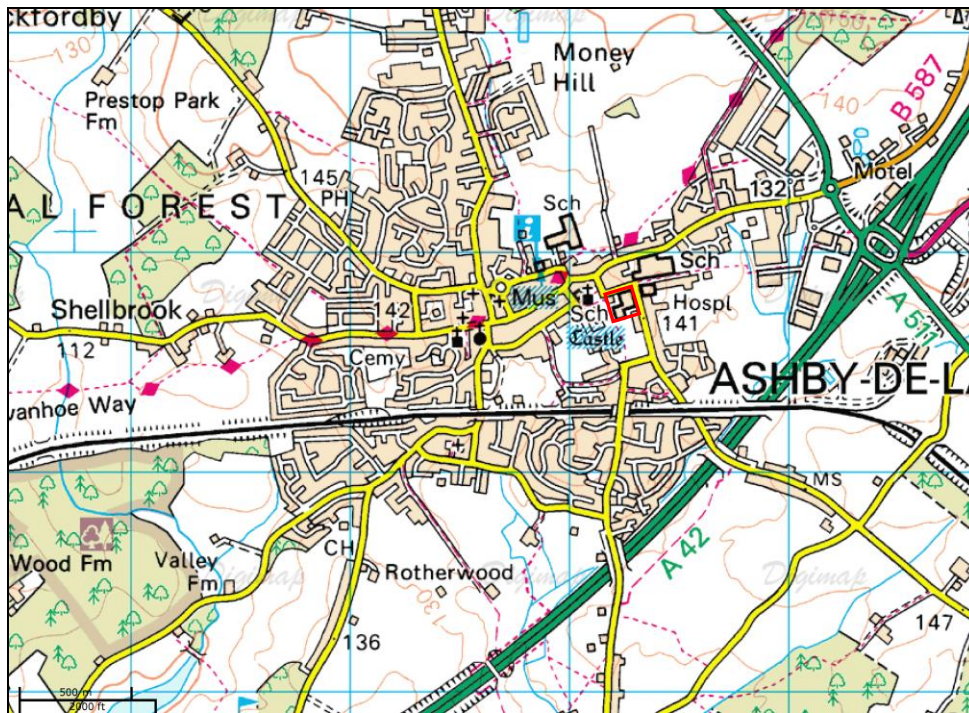


Figure 1: Site Location (Scale 1:50 000)

Reproduced from Landranger 1:50 000 by permission of Ordnance Survey® on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Licence number AL 100029495.



Figure 2: Location plan of proposed building extension. Scale unknown



Figure 3: General view south-west across development area during installation of services



Figure 4: View north across development area

Archaeological and Historical Background

A desk-based assessment of the development area undertaken prior to the watching brief (Tate 2005) had indicated that the site lies within the boundaries of the medieval core of Ashby. The Leicestershire County Council Historic Environment Record (HER) indicates that the site is located within the medieval and post-medieval historic settlement core of Ashby (MLE4295). It is to the east of Ashby Castle (HER Ref. No. MLE15050), and part of the castle's civil war defences lie to the south-east (MLE15048). The site is directly between a listed building - late 19th century school buildings (MLE15046) - and other, earlier, curtilage listed school buildings (MLE15167). In addition, various medieval sites have been located within 1km of the development area (MLE4280, MLE4285, MLE4296 and MLE4297). These are also various post-medieval sites identified in the vicinity (MLE4272, MLE4273, MLE4274, MLE4277, MLE4278, MLE4287, MLE4300, MLE8494, MLE8517 and MLE8518). There is also one Iron Age site (MLE8291) and one Roman site (MLE10361) identified in the vicinity of the development area.

As it was deemed likely that the proposed development would have a damaging effect on any archaeological deposits, if present, within the application area, the undertaking of an archaeological watching brief was required by the planning authority following an approved design specification (ULAS 2009). Consequently a watching brief was undertaken by ULAS in April 2010, which did not reveal any archaeological features or finds.

Aims and Methods

Through archaeological attendance and, as appropriate, controlled stripping and investigation the aim of the watching brief was:

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

All work and archaeological deposits encountered were recorded in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*, the standard policy and practice of ULAS as set out in the design specification (Appendix 1) and adherence to the University's Health and Safety policy.

Groundworking activity involved the installation of drainage services followed by the excavation of footings for the new building. Archaeological supervision was undertaken throughout this work in order to monitor for evidence of archaeological deposits or remains. Following initial marking out and cutting of the tarmac surface, service trenches were machine excavated using a tracked 360° excavator equipped with a toothed 0.50m ditching bucket to a depth of c.2.0m prior to the laying of drainage pipework (Day 1). Trenches observed included a pipe trench aligned south-west to north-east measuring c.23m x 0.50m x 2.0m deep and a connecting manhole trench (3m x 1.50m x 1.30m deep) situated at the corner of an existing flanking building (Figure 5).

The second stage of the archaeological watching brief (Day 2) monitored the initial stages of removal of overburden down to formation level the of rectangular floor slab defining the footprint of the new building (Figure 7; Figure 8). Work was undertaken using a tracked 360° excavator equipped with a 1.20m toothed ditching bucket in the area of site located adjacent to the north-east corner of the existing school boarding accommodation block.

Results

All trenches revealed a comparable sequence, namely dense, pale yellowish-brown natural clay located a depth of c.0.30m-0.65m below the present tarmac car park surface and underlying road stone foundation material.

Machine lowering of the area adjacent to the present building, monitored on the second site visit, revealed a c.9m-wide area of disturbed ground consisting of brick rubble and topsoil crossed by Victorian drainage pipe work likely associated with now-demolished structures flanking the present accommodation block (Figure 8). Machining east of this area revealed the same yellowish-brown natural clay as observed on the first visit, at a depth of c.0.40m below the present tarmac car park surface. No archaeological features or finds were encountered during the watching brief.



Figure 5: Manhole trench; view north-west; 1m scale

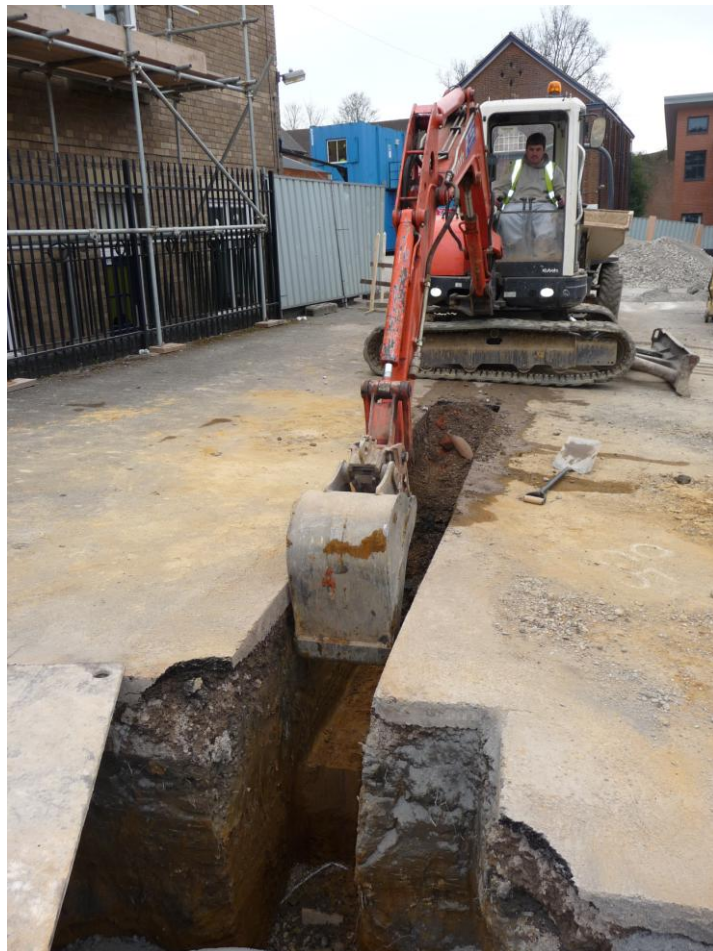


Figure 6: Machining of drainage service trenches in progress; view south-east



Figure 7: General view south-east during machining for floor slab



Figure 8: View south-west showing disturbed ground associated with demolished 19th century structures

Conclusions

The archaeological watching brief at Ashby School, Nottingham Road, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, revealed no evidence for archaeological finds or features within the development site. This is likely to have been in part due to the disturbance from the construction of 19th century buildings on site although the absence of finds also suggests that the area may not have been intensively occupied prior to the 19th century.

Archive and Publications

The site archive (X.A14.2010), consisting of paper and photographic records, will be housed with the County Historic and Natural Environment Team, Leicestershire County Council.

The archive consists of:

- Two watching brief attendance forms
- 17 digital photographs
- 17 monochrome (film) photographs
- A risk assessment form

Publication

A version of the excavation summary (see above) will appear in due course in the *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society*.

Acknowledgements

Dr. Roger Kipling of ULAS undertook the archaeological evaluation on behalf of Ashby School. The project was managed by Dr. Patrick Clay.

Bibliography

Tate, J., 2005 *An Archaeological Desk-based Assessment for a Proposed Classroom Block at Ashby School, Nottingham Road, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicestershire (SK 364 167)*. ULAS Report 2005-167

ULAS 2010 *Design Specification for Archaeological Work at Ashby School, Nottingham Road, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicestershire (SK 364 167)*. 10/694

Oasis Information

Project Name	Ashby School
Project Type	Watching brief
Project Manager	Patrick Clay
Project Supervisor	Roger Kipling
Previous/Future work	Construction
Current Land Use	Car parking
Development Type	Classroom extension
Reason for Investigation	PPG16
Position in the Planning Process	Planning consent granted, construction in progress.
Site Co ordinates	NGR SK 364 167
Start/end dates of field work	12 th & 19 th April 2010
Archive Recipient	Leicestershire County Council
Study Area	c.0.0253 ha.

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Appendix 1: Design Specification

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Design Specification for archaeological work

Job title: Ashby School, Nottingham Road, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicestershire

NGR: SK 3623 1679

Client: Ashby School

Planning Authority: North West Leicestershire District Council

P.A. 08/1604/7

1 Definition and scope of the specification

1.1 In accordance with Planning Policy Guidelines 16 (PPG16, Archaeology and planning), para.30, this specification provides a written scheme for archaeological attendance for inspection and recording (an intensive watching brief), as required by the Planning Authority, of any groundworks on the site which may disturb areas of archaeological potential in connection with a planning application for a proposed extension to Ashby School, Nottingham Road, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicestershire.

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

2 Background

2.1 Requirement for archaeological work

2.1.1 The archaeological work involves attendance (a watching brief) within the development area to identify any deposits of archaeological importance as detailed in the *Brief for the Archaeological inspection and recording (an intensive watching brief) at Ashby School, Nottingham Road, Ashby De La Zouch, Leicestershire NGR SK 3623 1679* (hereinafter the 'Brief' 10.07.2010).

2.2.2 An archaeological desk-based assessment has been prepared (Tate 2005). The Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record (HER) shows that the application site lies in an area of archaeological interest, within the medieval and post-medieval historic settlement core of the town. It is to the east of Ashby Castle (HER Ref. No. MLE15050); part of the castle's civil war defences lies to the south-east (MLE15048). The site is directly between a listed building - late C19th school buildings (MLE15046) - and other, earlier, curtilage listed school buildings (MLE15167).

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

3 Aims

3.1 Through archaeological attendance and, as appropriate, investigation:

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

4 Methods

4.1 The project will involve the supervision of overburden removal and other groundworks by an experienced professional archaeologist during the works specified above.

4.2 Should significant archaeological remains be identified a programme of excavation and recording may be necessary, using additional personnel as necessary.

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 Ministry of Justice Licence and in compliance with relevant environmental health regulations. The developer and Leicestershire County Council 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 and Leicestershire County Council.

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

5 Recording Systems

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

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

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

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

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

5.6 All site records and finds will be kept securely.

6 Report and Archive

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

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

6.3 A full copy of the archive as defined in 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.

7 Publication

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

8 Timetable and Staffing

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

9 Health and Safety

9.1 ULAS is covered by and adheres to the University of Leicester Statement of Safety Policy and uses the ULAS Health and Safety Manual (revised 2007) 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

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

Tate, J., 2005 *An Archaeological Desk-based Assessment for a Proposed Classroom Block at Ashby School, Nottingham Road, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicestershire (SK 364 167)* ULAS Report 2005-167

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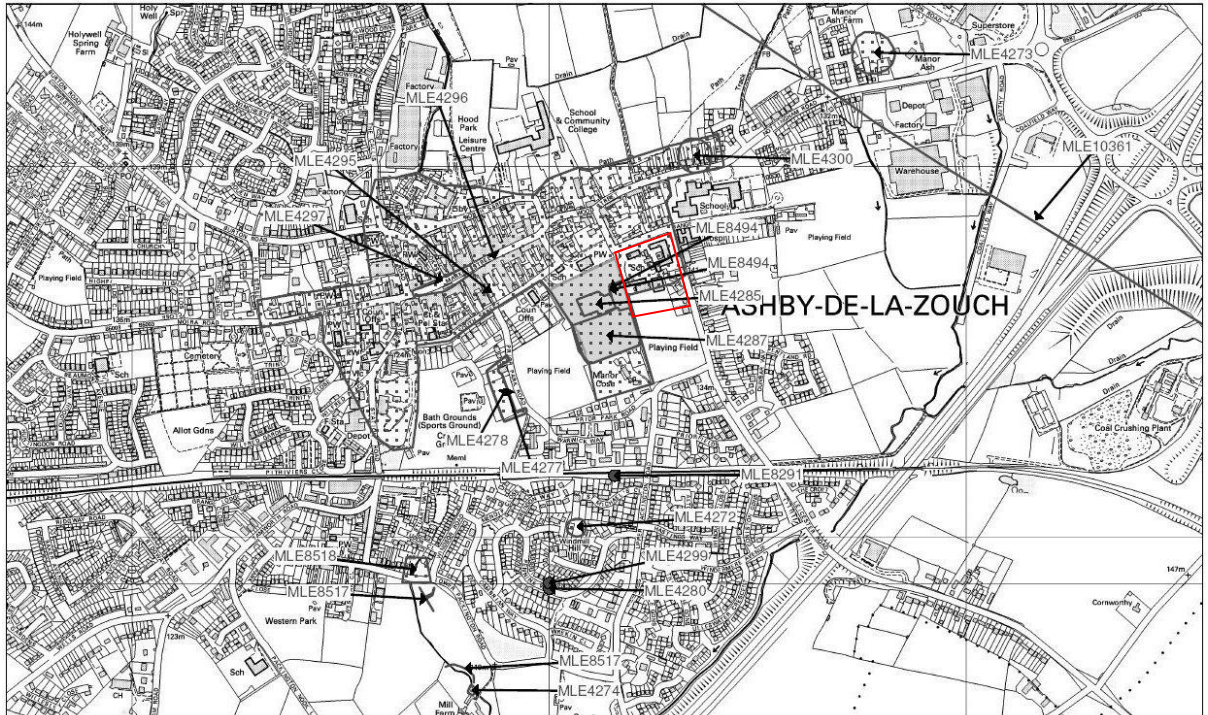


Figure 1 Location Plan showing sites recorded on the HER.



Figure 2 Location of proposed extension

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