

**An Archaeological Evaluation of  
Shires West Site 14A, Elbow Lane,  
Leicester (SK 5834 0494 )**

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**for  
Shires GP Ltd**

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# **An Archaeological Evaluation of Shires West Site 14A, Elbow Lane, Leicester (SK 5834 0494)**

## **Summary**

*Between November 2003 and February 2004, an archaeological evaluation was carried out by ULAS for Shires GP Ltd, on a site at Elbow Lane, Leicester, part of which had been excavated in 1977. Although the site had been disturbed by 19th and 20th century buildings and by late medieval cultivation episodes (as represented by extensive deposits of garden soil), the fieldwork identified evidence of truncated archaeological deposits of Roman, medieval and post-medieval date. Two trial trenches were excavated, revealing stratified Roman deposits, including possible floor foundations and floor resurfacing. Post-Roman activity was represented by medieval and post-medieval pits, suggesting probable back yards, whilst there were also signs of possible structural remains in the form of postholes. Post medieval remains of cellar walls, wall and building foundations and modern services associated with Elbow Lane frontage were also seen to the west, north and south. The site archive will be held by Leicester City Museum Service Accession number A25 2003.*

## **1 Introduction**

Between the 18th November 2003 and 25th February 2004, an archaeological evaluation was carried out by ULAS for Shires GP Ltd on a car park on the east side of Elbow Lane (Shires West Site 14A). The work was carried out as part of an archaeological impact assessment for the proposed Shires West development. The archive is to be deposited with Leicester City Museum Service with accession number A25.2003.

## **2 Aims and Methods**

The aim of the evaluation was to establish the presence or absence of archaeological deposits, and if present determine their extent, character, date, quality and state of preservation. This information would allow the Planning Archaeologist to assess the potential impact of the proposed development upon any archaeological remains. The work followed the design specification issued by ULAS.

All work followed the Institute of Field Archaeologists' (IFA) *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations*. The evaluation adhered to the Standing Conference of Archaeological Unit Managers' (SCAUM) *Health and Safety Manual* and ULAS's *Health and Safety Guidelines (2001)* and *Health and Safety Policy (2001)*. The recording followed the *ULAS Field Recording Manual*.

The trenches were excavated to the top of archaeological deposits, where present, or to the top of the natural substratum using a JCB 360° mechanical excavator using a 2.0m toothless ditching bucket. Due to the depths of overburden, it was necessary to step the sides of the trenches.

The trial trenching gave much valuable data concerning depths of overburden and thickness of archaeological deposits, together with locations of modern disturbance and truncation, thereby providing a first step in modelling the archaeological resource. However, it should be noted that areas of particular importance or interest could only

be established easily for the uppermost layers, as it is in the nature of stratified deposits to absolutely conceal earlier activity.

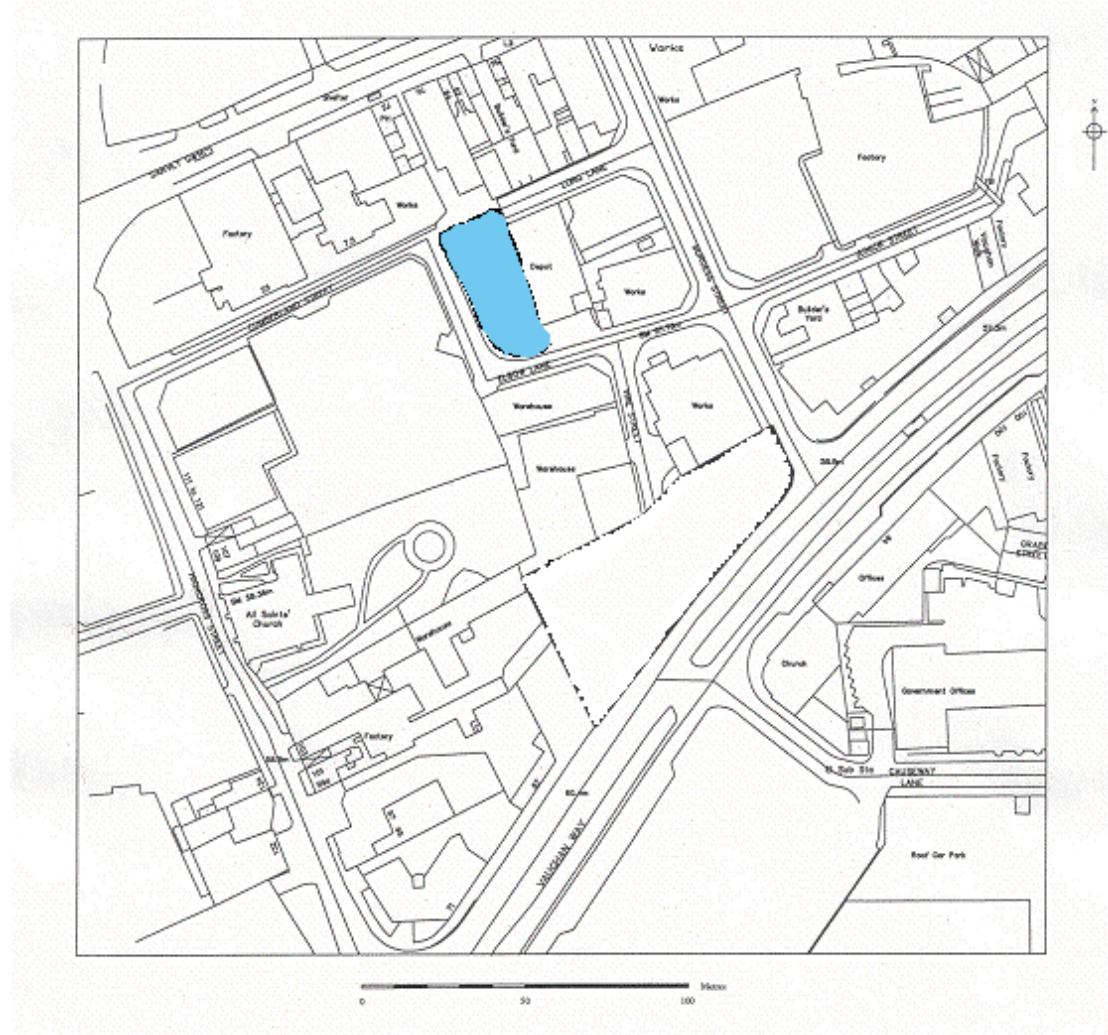


Figure 1 – Location plan showing site and relevant SMR entries at scale 1:2500. From plan supplied by City Archaeologist. Reproduced from the OS map by permission of the Ordnance Survey® on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office. ©Crown copyright 1997 All rights reserved. Licence number AL 10002187

### 3 Site Location

The site is located in the north-east quarter of the historic core of Leicester on relatively flat land on the east side of Elbow Lane, at its corner with Long Lane, with a current ground level generally around 58.5m O.D. The underlying natural substratum consists of river terrace gravels overlying red clay of the Mercia mudstone series. At the time of the evaluation, the site was a temporary car park with a tarmac surface.

## 4 Archaeological and Historical Background

The site area has been included in an extensive desk-based assessment (ULAS Report No. 2003-058). This indicated that the site lies within an area of significant archaeological potential. A summarised report of the archaeological implications was prepared by Richard Buckley (ULAS report 2002-028), from which the following site-specific details have been adapted and updated in the light of recent work.

### 4.1 Roman:

Following the Conquest, the earliest Roman town was established on the east bank of the river Soar, close to a possible Roman fortlet and the existing native settlement. The streets of this early settlement are on a slightly different alignment to the grid laid out in the early second century. Subsequently, Leicester was probably constituted as a *Civitas* capital in about 100-120 AD, at which time the street grid was laid out with the effect that building alignments changed. The buildings of the early town seem to have been predominantly of timber perhaps derived from the Roman military building tradition. In the mid 2nd century AD, public buildings – the forum and baths – were constructed in the centre of the town, whilst earth and timber town defences were built in the late 2nd century.

Evidence revealed so far is admittedly limited, but appears to suggest essentially domestic and commercial occupation to the east of the main focus of public buildings of Roman Leicester. Within *insula* 5, the Shires Vine Street excavation has revealed the largest proportion of a single *insula* so far in Roman Leicester, producing evidence for a substantial Roman town house, apparently of high status and perhaps fronted with commercial units. The building appears to have been comparatively long lived, with evidence for several phases of remodelling during its lifetime. Later in the Roman period, it appears to have declined in status and was probably used for a number of craft activities. To the north, the unexpected discovery of a probable Roman public building has also been made which may perhaps be a warehouse or granary. Within *insula* 11, the Causeway Lane site of 1991 revealed a long sequence of superimposed yard surfaces with timber buildings dating from the 1st - 4th centuries. Recent excavations to the south, in the northern portion of the St. Margaret's Baths site, revealed limited evidence for Roman structures in the form of robber trenches, together with street metallings. Although the site had been heavily truncated by medieval and later activity, the lack of large quantities of residual Roman material gave the impression that Roman occupation on this site had never been particularly intensive (A. Gnanaratnam pers. comm.). Roman levels had been entirely destroyed, save for a possible robbed cellar and ditch cutting the natural gravel, on the St. Peters Lane site of 1988-9 in *insula* 18, whilst to the south, the Little Lane site revealed a sequence of timber and masonry buildings in *insulae* 24 and 25. Roman remains in *insula* 17 are represented only by a fragment of cobbled surface observed recently in a watching brief during the demolition of St. Margaret's Baths. The Highcross Street frontage of the proposed development area lies immediately above the north-south street leading to the north gate of the Roman town and the projected line of the east wall of the *macellum* or market hall, a large public building. Immediately to the south of this, the development area clips the north-east corner of the forum *insula* 22 (in reality divided into two unequal-sized *insulae* by a north-south street).

Many Roman mosaics and tessellated pavements have been recorded lying within and in the immediate vicinity of the area, including the possible location of the Cyparrisus Pavement (LC1047), the Vine Street mosaic (LC170) and those recorded on Blue Boar Lane (LC109, LC110). Painted wall plaster and masonry walls indicating the location of possibly high status Roman townhouses have also been recorded in many locations across the proposed redevelopment area and close by, including the Blue Boar Lane Townhouse (LC110) with its finely decorated wall plaster. Many other Roman structures have been indicated within and very close to the area, by the discovery of the remains of walls, post holes, tessellated pavements and mortar floors.

#### **4.2 Anglo Saxon:**

Within the study area, evidence from previous excavations suggests the potential for dispersed 5th-7th century domestic occupation, after the end of Roman occupation, on the basis of pottery and other finds. Recent excavations at the former St Margaret's Baths site (Shires Site 12) and Freeschool Lane (Shires Site 11) have produced evidence for sunken featured buildings of this period, whilst a similar structure was also probably excavated nearby on St Peter's lane in 1989, although not recognised as such at the time.

It is thought that true 'urban' occupation probably does not resume again in Leicester until the late Saxon period, when it was possibly focussed on the medieval High Street, now Highcross Street, which lies to the west of the site.

#### **4.3 Medieval:**

The development area lies within a part of the walled town of medieval Leicester known as the north-east quarter. Within this quarter were back lanes which survive substantially intact in the present street pattern. Medieval activity seems to have been concentrated on the current Highcross and Southgate Streets and the development area may not have been densely settled. Within the back lanes, the character of occupation at least in the 10th-13th centuries was probably of a domestic nature, comprising buildings on the street frontages with cultivated plots to the rear.

The Vine Street site suggested some of the superstructure of the Roman buildings may have survived as late as the 13th century, at which time parts of the site appear to have been used as a graveyard, presumed to be that of the lost church of St. Michael. The pit evidence from Causeway Lane and St. Peter's Lane points to the area being occupied until the early 14th century when activity tails off. Domestic activity at Causeway Lane seems to have largely disappeared by the mid 13th century being succeeded by gardens and orchards (Connor & Buckley 1999).

Whilst the population density of the north-east quarter of Leicester may have been slight or have declined, the area was still provided with churches and cemeteries. St Michael's Church apparently lay within the vicinity and survived until demolished soon after 1450, whilst St. Peter's church stood to the south until the early 16th century. In 1956, nine skeletons were excavated in Vine Street which perhaps came from the former graveyard of St Michael's Church and recent excavations have revealed further inhumations.

Documentary and map evidence shows that the area was very sparsely settled during the post-medieval period. The remaining church of St Peter had gone out of use and was demolished in 1573, the site then being given over to cultivation.

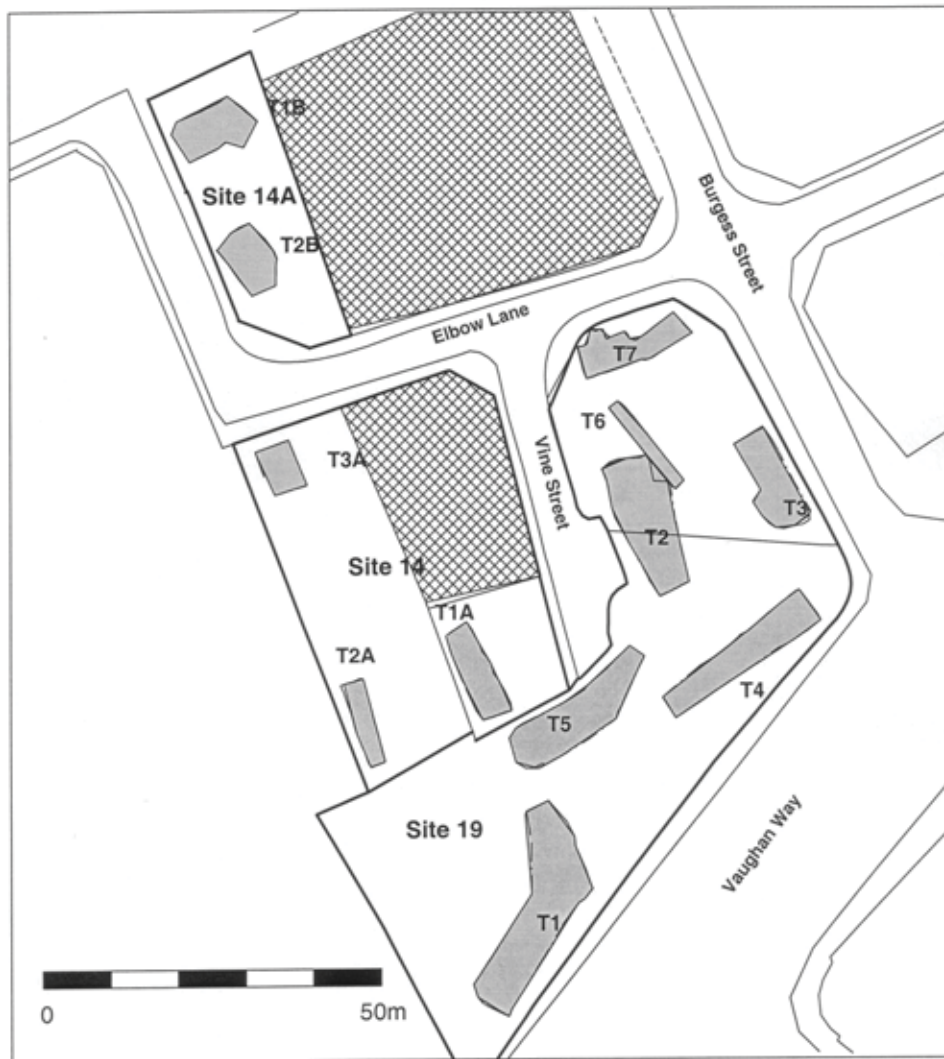
In the 18th century, the 1741 Roberts Map suggest the area in the vicinity of the site was largely gardens, whilst in the later 19th and 20th centuries it was occupied by domestic and industrial buildings, before reverting to a private car park.

#### **4.4 Previous excavations within Site 14a**

In 1977, a small trench some 11m by 3.25m was excavated within the backyards of 15-23 Elbow Lane just prior to the demolition of the houses for anticipated redevelopment (Lucas 1977). A small area of Roman archaeology survived later disturbances and contained evidence for a timber building of the first to early second century AD, represented by a beam slot. Later Roman levels included spreads of the 2nd or 3rd century, containing tesserae painted wall plaster and building materials suggesting the presence of substantial; masonry buildings in the vicinity. The post-Roman levels contained pits of the 12th to mid-13th centuries, perhaps dug for gravel extraction purposes, which were then sealed by a substantial deposit of garden soil. In the 17th to 19th century, a possible gravel quarry measuring 3.16m wide, 8.4m long and 2.2m (min) deep cut through all earlier levels. A quarry of a similar nature was also encountered on the Causeway Lane excavations of 1991 (Connor and Buckley 1999).

## **5 Technical Details .**

5.1 Following the demolition of domestic/industrial buildings some years ago, the area was levelled and tarmaced to serve as a temporary car park. Site dimensions were 653sq. m in area. Two trial trenches, Trench 1B and Trench 2B, were examined, each 10m by 3m, representing approximately 9% of the site. The present modern ground level varies from trench to trench as a result of disturbance associated with demolition works.



**KEY**

 not evaluated       evaluated

Fig 2. : Location of trial trenches examined within Shires west Sites 14 and 19 between November 2003 and February 2004

### 5.2 Summary of Levels

The levels are based on the bench mark 57.78m O.D. on the corner of Elbow Lane and Burgess Street, Leicester and all heights are in metres above Ordnance Datum.



### **5.3 Trench 1B:**

*Dimensions (at ground level): 10m long, 3m wide*

*Total depth of overburden to Roman levels: 2.20 m (58.50m O.D. to 56.30 O.D.)*

*Modern Ground Surface: 58.50m O.D.(west end), 58.55m O.D. (east end.)*

*Modern Overburden Depth: 0.70m(58.50m O.D. to 57.80m O.D.)*

*Post medieval/medieval Overburden Depth: 1.50m (57.80m O.D. to 56.30m O.D.)*

In the middle of the trench the garden soil was cut by pits, which were visible at a level of 57.25m O.D. in section. The later pits post-dated earlier garden soil but truncated earlier deeper pits in the east to a minimum depth of 55.70m O.D.

*Top of Roman deposit: 56.30m O.D. (at the mid west end of trench), 56.40m O.D. (in the south west corner.)*

*Top of natural substratum: not observed in this trench.*

### **5.4 Trench 2B**

*Dimensions (at ground level): 10m long, 3m wide*

*Total overburden to Roman levels: 2.35m (from 58.55m O.D. to 56.40m O.D.)*

*Modern Ground Surface: 58.65m O.D.*

*Modern Overburden Depth: 0.82m (from 58.65m O.D. to 57.83m O.D.)*

*Medieval/Post Medieval Overburden Depth: 1.50m (57.83m O.D. in the south of the trench and 57.64m O.D. in the north.)*

*Top of Roman deposit: 56.30m O.D. (north end of trench), 56.31m O.D. (south end)*

*Top of natural Substratum: not observed in this trench.*

## 6 RESULTS

### 6.1 Trench 1B

This trench was located in the north-west corner of site 14A, running parallel with Long Lane. Overburden was taken down to the visible top of archaeological deposits. No discrete cut features were identified which could have been safely emptied to permit the characterisation of underlying deposits.

#### 6.1.1 Natural

The natural substratum was not seen in this trench.

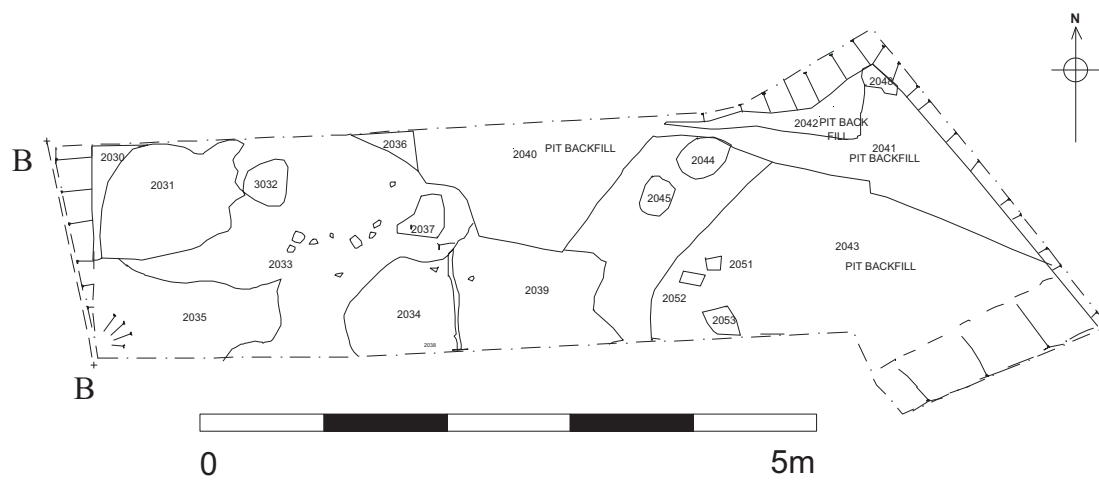


Fig. 3: Plan of Trench 1B

### 6.1.2 Roman

*Possible make ups* (2104), (2049), (2048), (2039), (2031), (2032), (2033), (2037) (2034), (2038), (2097), (2035), (2030), (2036).

These may form dumped make up layers for levelling and construction purposes, associated with a structural presence.

Deposits (2049), brown yellow sand and (2104) mid brown silt, were only seen in section and are of unknown dimensions.

The following were all seen in plan.

Layer (2048) consisted of light yellow sand and layer (2039) was green brown silt. Deposit (2031) was a light orange sand. Deposit (2032) consisted of red brown sand with 10% gravel.

Deposit (2033) was a light green silt with occasional medium angular stones and may represent a post surface dump. Context (2037) was light orange sand with occasional small angular stone. Spread (2034) consists of grey brown silt with occasional small angular and regular stones.

Spread (2038) was red silty clay, apparently fire hardened. It is possible that this material is redeposited wall rendering. Context (2097) consisted of light yellow brown silt with grey and yellow mottling. (2035) was mid orange yellow silt. (2030) was dark red sand. (2036) consisted of light orange sand.

*Possible surfaces* (2081), (2080), 2083), (2084), (2098), (2085), (2086), (2075), (2076), (2077), (2087), (2079), (2088), (2089), (2055), (2056), (2057), (2058), (2090), (2091), (2092), (2093)

These spreads were of unknown extent. They were seen in section only in the west and south west corners of the trench at 56.40m O.D. and appear to be a sequence of overlying spreads with an average thickness of 0.03-0.05m. These may represent floor surfaces probably relating to a single structure although possibly of more than one phase.

The majority of the spreads were silts, possibly representing rammed earthen floors. (2075) was a spread of yellow mortar and sand, (2077) consisted of red clay or daub possible fire hardened. (2079) was a mid yellow mortar. Deposit (2055) consisted of yellow mortar 90% and 10% sand. (2057) was a mid yellow sand.

*Possible Structural deposit, (2078)*

(2078) was possibly a posthole although it was only visible in the east-facing section. It cut (2030) and was sealed beneath the garden soil.

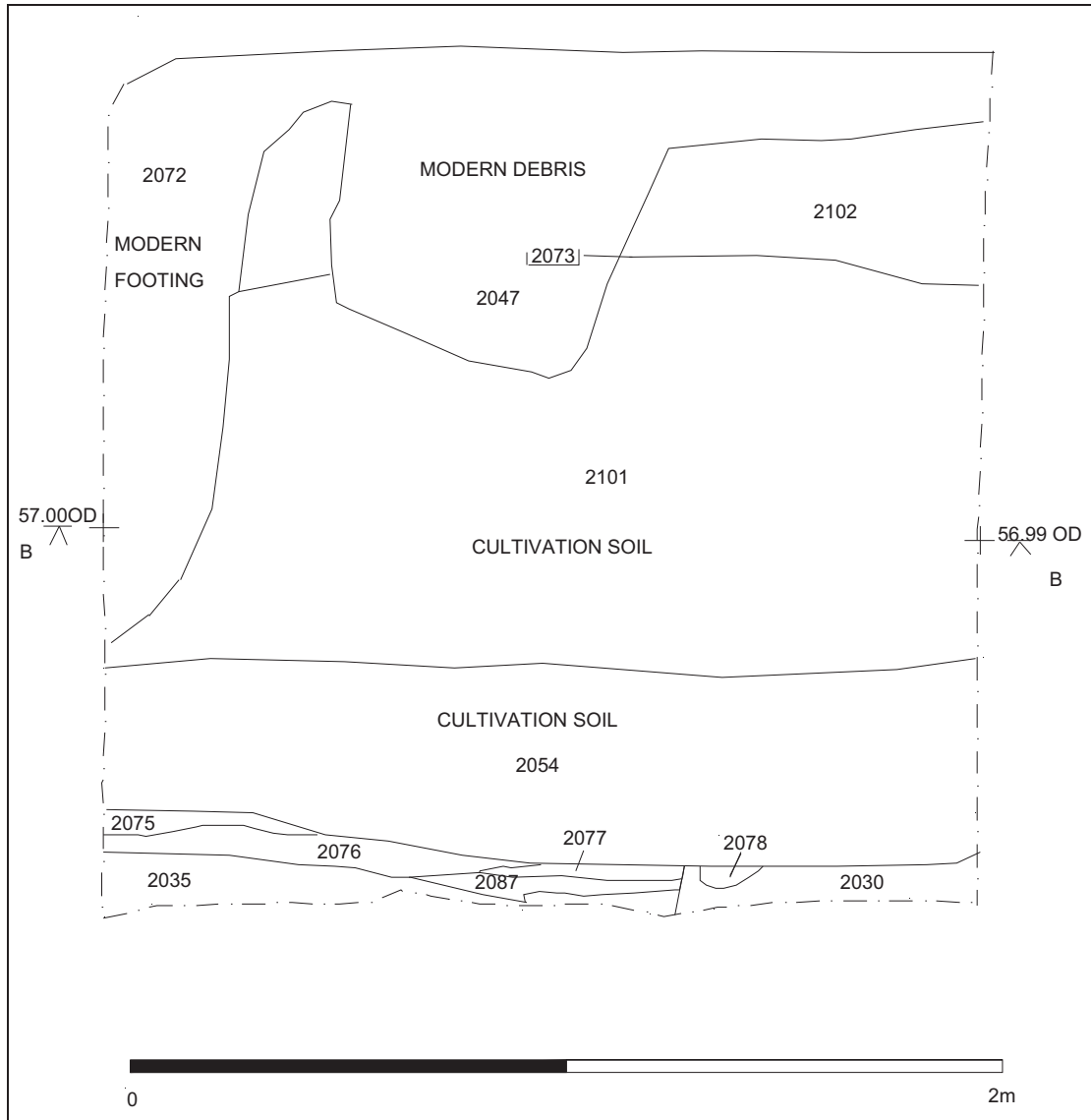


Fig 5: Section A Evaluation trench 1B

### 6.1.3 Medieval

Garden/ Cultivation soils (2054), (2101), (2102). These combined were approximately 1.5m thick and extended from 57.8m OD to 56.3m OD.

Layer (2102) was dark brown silt with large occasional charcoal flecks and had a maximum thickness of 0.20m extending from 57.80m O.D. to 57.60m O.D.

Layer (2101) was 0.90m thick and composed of light brown silt with frequent small charcoal flecks. It extended from 57.60m O.D to 56.70m O.D.

Layer (2054) was about 0.40m thick and extended from 56.70m O.D. to 56.30m O.D. It consisted of light brown silt with frequent small charcoal flecks, small angular and regular stones, mortar flecks and rare small bone and medium, angular stones. The inclusions were evenly distributed suggesting ploughing action. There were no plough scars apparent below this fill. These presumably formed from a combination of decaying organic matter, windblown sediments and intentional manuring of the area

and do not appear to represent dark earth. However the garden soils exhibited a general absence of post Roman ceramics and clear domestic food waste and debris.

*Uncertain (2052), (2051), (2053)(2045), (2044)*

These deposits (2052), (2051), (2053) were seen in plan and were not excavated and so their form and function remains uncertain. They may have been postholes and appeared to post-date probable pit (2100). In the absence of excavation, little further interpretation is possible.

Deposits (2045), grey brown silt with frequent small charcoal and daub flecks and deposit (2044), grey brown silt with frequent small charcoal and daub flecks, seem identical. They may represent the fills or backfill of postholes, or beamslots(2044) appeared to be truncated by later pit (2050).

#### **6.1.4 Medieval / post medieval**

*Pits (2100) (2046) (2047) (2050)*

Pit (2100) was only partly seen in plan and is therefore of unknown dimensions. The fills were of considerable thickness and this appeared to be the earliest pit in the east end of the trench. Fill (2043) was grey brown silt with occasional small angular stones. Fill (2094) was mid brown silt and may represent a redeposited subsoil. (2095) was red brown silt with frequent small red clay flecks and small charcoal flecks. Possibly this is a backfilled quarry pit.

Pit (2046) was only partly seen in plan, and was not fully excavated. A depth of 1.35m was visible in section from 57.25m O.D. but its absolute depth is unknown. It did seem to have a vertical west side. The feature had numerous successive fills of which the lowest (2040) was dark black silt. Above this was a long linear fill (2059), brown yellow sand. Linear Fill (2062) consisted of mid brown silt. Linear fill (2061) consisted of dark yellow brown sand. These may represent upcast from the cutting of pit (2047). Fill (2060) consisted of black brown silt and fill (2063) was red brown silt. Both may be possible waterborne eroded garden soil silts from the adjacent contemporary ground surface deposited before the incision of pit (2047) or prior to its backfilling or upcast from (2047).

Pit (2047) was the most recent pit and cut both (2046) and pit (2050).

Fill (2042) consisted of grey brown silt with very rare small angular stones and was the earliest fill visible. It probably derives from waterborne erosion of the adjacent contemporary ground surface. Fill (2068) a dark brown sandy silt and fill (2067) was mid black silt with occasional small and medium angular and regular stones. Fill (2064) consisted of red brown silt similar to (2063). Fill (2065) was a dark brown silt with occasional small angular stones and was similar to (2060). Fill (2066) was a dark red brown silt similar to (2063). Both may be waterborne eroded material from the adjacent contemporary ground surface.

Pit (2050) was only partly seen in plan and seemed to be more linear than the others. It was cut by both (2046) and (2047) and cut (2100). Fill (2041), consisted of grey black silt with rare small angular stones. Fill (2105), consisted of dark brown silt. Fill (2106) consisted of light brown silt. This may be a quarry pit or robber extraction cut.

### **6.1.5 Modern**

*Drain (2099),*

This feature was backfilled with modern cement, silt and occasional red house brick.

*Brick wall foundation (2071), (2071), (2073), (2074).*

These appeared to be modern footings for cellar walls.

## **6.2 Trench 2B**

This trench was located to the mid west of the site, parallel with Elbow Lane running north-west to south-east. Overburden was removed down to the visible top of archaeological deposits at 56.30m O.D. No cut deposits were seen, which could have been safely emptied to permit the characterisation of underlying layers.

### **6.2.1 Natural**

The natural substratum was not seen in this trench.

### **6.2.2 Roman**

*Possible make ups and surfaces (2016), (2017), (2018), (2024),*

These may have been dumped deposits acting as a make-up for overlying surface deposits. Spreads (2016) and (2024) were mixed deposits of yellow mortar, gravel and sand.

Spread (2017) was orange yellow sand with occasional small regular stones.

(2018) consisted of light yellow brown silty sand. This spread (2018) had a fragment of samian pottery.

*Post surface dumps (2015), (2025), (2026), (2027), (2028), (2029).*

Spread (2015) consisted of a light orange sand with occasional small regular pebbles.

Spread (2025) consisted of dark brown black silt with frequent small mortar flecks, charcoal and daub flecks and was similar to (2027) and (2028). These may represent demolition debris, trample or disuse.

Spread (2026) was a green brown silty sand. Layer (2029) consisted of dark brown green silt.

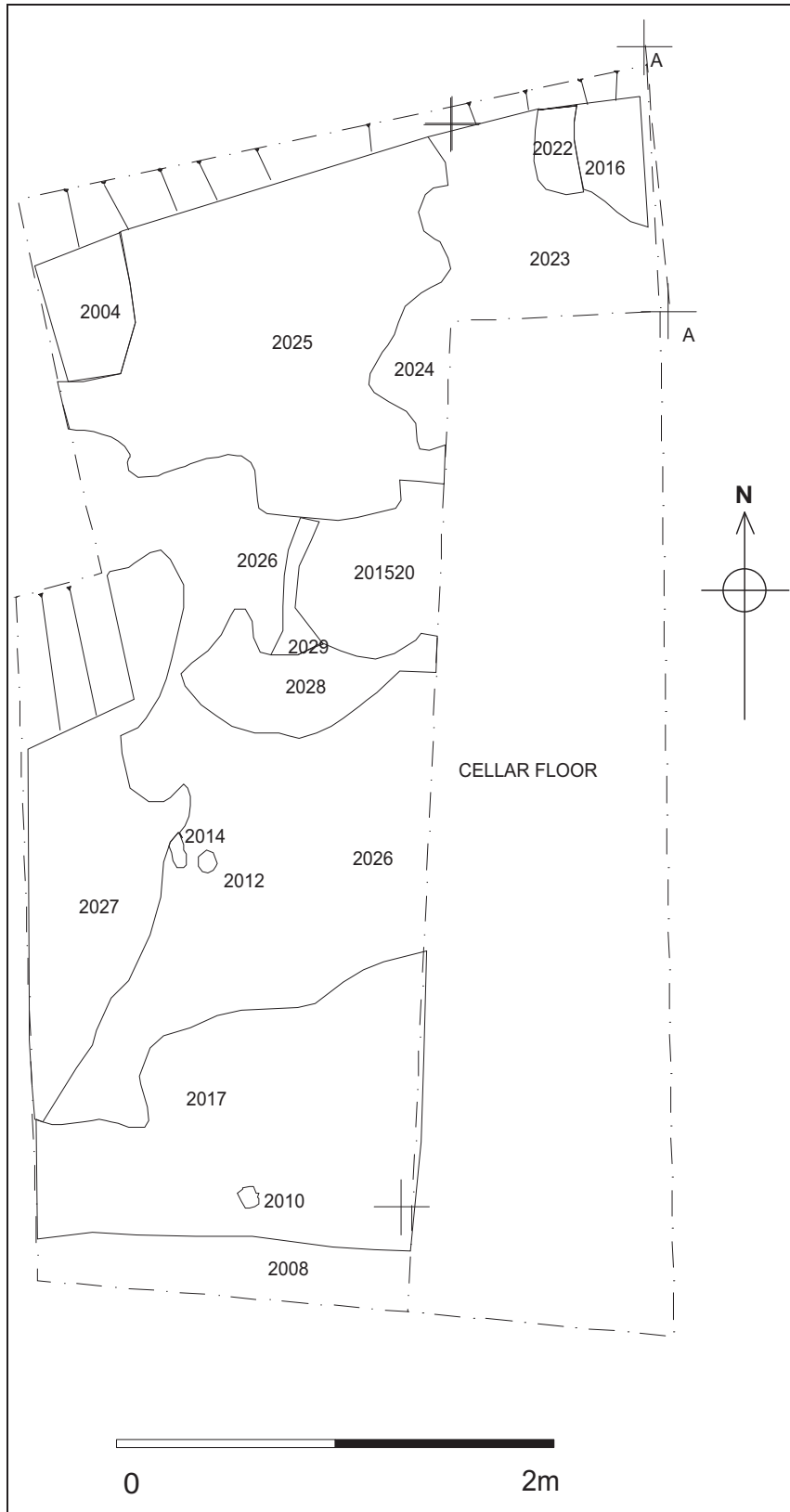


Fig 5: Evaluation trench plan: Trench 2B

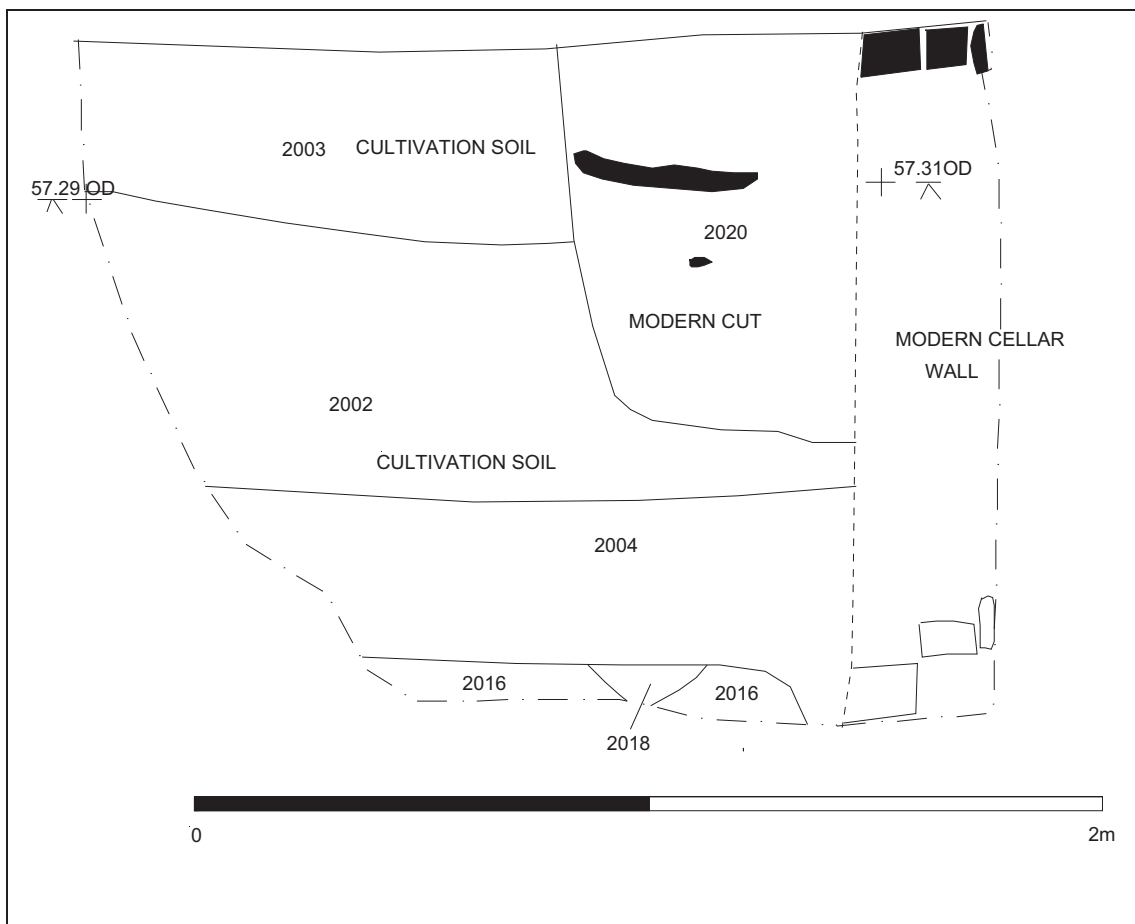


Fig 6: Section A Evaluation trench 2B

*Possible Structural deposits (2011), (2012), (2013), (2014), (2009), (2010), (2022), (2023).*

(2011), (2013), (2009) were probable postholes. (2012) was probably the burnt *in situ* remains of a stake or post. It was not possible to say if they form part of a single structure or even if they are related or whether they were driven in from a higher level in the post Roman period.

(2022) consisted of a yellow brown, sand and (2023) consisted of a yellow mixed sand and mortar deposit. They may represent a fragment of wall make up or internal floor.

*Uncertain (2007)(2008)*

This deposit (2008) appeared to be sitting in a linear cut (2007), which truncated (2017). It was of unknown length and width and may be a robber trench, or backfilled refuse or quarry pit. However without further excavation the nature of the feature is unknown.



### 6.2.3 *Medieval/ post medieval*

*Garden soils/cultivation soils (2002), (2003), (2004), (2021).*

These deposits, visible from 57.80m OD, were horizontal layers of light brown silt (2002) & (2004), with small frequent charcoal flecks, occasional small bone, mortar, angular and regular stones and dark brown silts (2003) & (2021) and were probably cultivation soils. They extended approximately 1.5m in depth to 56.3m OD. These presumably formed from a mix of decaying organic matter, windblown sediments and intentional manuring of the area and do not appear to represent dark earth. They do exhibit a general absence of post Roman ceramics and clear domestic food waste and debris.

There was a lack of dating evidence for the formation of these deposits but they all postdate the roman layers and had a noticeable lack of residual Roman construction or demolition material within them.

### 6.2.4 *Modern*

*Structural remains (2001)*

Stone wall (2001) was constructed of medium to large angular stone and rare small brick bonded with occasional mortar. Its form and function are not clear. It is possible this is an external boundary wall or structural foundations.

*Victorian Cellar wall*

This brick cellar cut through the garden soils and appeared to rest upon the Roman horizontal deposits adjacent at approximately 56.3m OD.

*Pit? (2019)*

This deposit was seen in section only and had a single fill (2020), a mid to dark black brown silt with frequent small mortar, stone, brick and tarmac. This may have formed a construction cut for the adjacent cellar wall.

*Drain cut (2005)*

This was a modern drain traversing the site north east to south west with a single fill (2006) a mid grey brown silt and small gravel mix.

## 7 Summary of the archaeological activity

### 7.1 *Roman.*

The natural substratum was not seen in either trench.

Possible truncated Roman activity was seen in the form of horizontal layers of unknown plan, shape or function on the western end of trench 1B at 2.2m (56.30m OD) below the ground surface. These may be floor foundations and potential floor surfaces constituting structural remnants of building activity. This is reinforced further by the painted wall plaster fragments, tessera, wall tile and domestic ceramics found here. The form, size and status of any building are unknown. Roman activity is also evident in trench 2B with horizontal deposits of possible floor foundations, surfaces and post surface dumps of material at 2.3m (56.30m OD) below the ground surface.

### 7.2 *Medieval*

The medieval activity on site is represented by a single type of garden soil deposit.

Minimal churning visible in the lower levels of the soil is suggestive of ploughing. These could be seen in trenches 1B and 2B. There was no clear sequence going from Roman to medieval and the garden soils appeared medieval rather than the possible early Anglo Saxon 'dark earth' identified above Roman levels on sites elsewhere. Thus, there was no evidence of how the garden soils related to late Roman deposits and there was no evidence of late Roman or early post-Roman dark earth deposits. Although 'dark earth' deposits were absent it is possible that any similar deposits could have been incorporated into the, presumably medieval, garden soils.

The absence of substantial construction or destruction debris in both trenches further suggests post-Roman truncation prior to the accumulation of medieval/mixed garden soils. There were no traces of immediate post Roman occupation and the garden soils exhibit a general absence of post Roman ceramics and clear domestic food waste and debris. Possibly this truncation indicates intensive materials reclamation or extensive agrarian clearance of debris. It has been noted on sites elsewhere in Leicester such as at Causeway Lane (Connor and Buckley 1999) that Roman deposits and stratified features survived until the 12th–13th century, but were then significantly truncated – if not entirely removed – before re accumulation of garden soil from the 14th–15th century. At Causeway Lane the evidence that Roman features had existed came from a large fragment of street metalling and a piece of masonry superstructure, which had collapsed into medieval pits. The latter respected the line of Roman walls, which were presumably not robbed until later. Subsequently truncation removed all trace of horizontal stratification here down to the top of the natural sand and gravel.

Even with excavation, it is possible that a firm date may not be established due to the truncation of underlying deposits and reworking of the soil through ploughing and cultivation. The truncation is then followed immediately by accumulation of the garden soil which reaches 1.5m thick.

### **7.3 Medieval/Post medieval.**

The medieval/post medieval activity comprised four large pits in the east of trench 1B. These each extended down through the garden soils, truncating the lower Roman deposits below. They were not investigated and are of unknown depth. The type of backyard activity represented by pitting would extend into the post-medieval period. Due to the small areas seen in plan it was not possible to determine if there were any significant distributions or alignments of pits, such as were observed at Causeway Lane (Connor and Buckley 1999). However the pits did cluster together in the east end of trench 1B, repeatedly cutting each other and may represent quarrying, or robber extraction cuts.

## **8 Archaeological Impact of the Development**

This part of site 14 will be affected by piles and pile caps for the new multi-storey car park to be constructed here. The soffit levels for the pile caps will be at approximately 55.8m below OD and will therefore penetrate archaeological deposits going through medieval garden soils and potential pits into truncated Roman levels, the top of which lie at about 56.30m OD. The piles will obviously penetrate deeper and will generally be in groups of 4 with groups on a 7.5m by 16m grid. In view of the truncated nature of surviving significant deposits and the limited impact from piles and caps, the City Archaeologist has indicated that no prior archaeological excavation will be required before development commences.

## **9 Conclusions**

9.1 This phase of work was evaluative only and in view of the nature of the stratigraphy, the limited amount seen and the limited dating evidence found, the work resists all but the most basic interpretation.

9.2 While there has been extensive but shallow modern disturbance in both trenches to a thickness of 0.70m below the present ground surface, this has permitted reasonable survival below it.

9.3 The earliest western deposits encountered in trenches 1B and 2B were visible about 2.2m below the current ground surface. They appeared to consist of horizontal stratified deposits rather than simple fills and suggest, in combination with the presence of Roman building material, potential make up layers for floor foundations and possible floor surfaces/ building remains. These are of archaeological interest. Significant Roman features have been identified and excavated in the immediate vicinity to the south at Site 19 Vine Street A22. 2003 and to the east at Sanvey Gate A21.2003, including remains of several Roman town houses. The character of the Roman deposits at site 14A suggests Roman remains to be present in this area. These Roman deposits are truncated by medieval agricultural and horticultural activity and sealed by garden soils up to 1.5m thick.

9.4 The garden soils appear to be medieval and the evidence suggests they were under cultivation. The garden soils exhibit a general absence of post Roman ceramics and clear domestic food waste and debris.

9.5 The eastern end of trench 1B has seen medieval/post-medieval heavy pitting, however the western end seems unaffected by later truncation. This pitting may be quarrying. Trench 2B is undisturbed to the west but disturbed to the east by a deep modern cellar foundation which cuts the garden soils but appears to rest upon the Roman deposits below. This suggests impact upon the underlying Roman deposits may be minimal and this horizon may extend further east.

9.6 The buildings to the east are due for demolition and further investigation is needed to clarify the extent and survival of deposits within this area.

## **10 Archive**

The archive will be lodged with Leicester City Museum Service with accession number A25.2003 and consist of the following:

1. ULAS report 2005-144
2. 1 plan drawing index
3. 1 section index
4. 2 trench plans
5. 10 trench sections
6. 1 context index
7. 106 context sheets.
8. 1 level book index
9. 1 photo record index.
10. 1 set colour slides
11. 1 set black and white slides
12. 1 contact sheet digital photos
13. 1 archive box roman ceramic finds, medieval ceramic finds, Romano- British tile, Roman painted wall plaster, and animal bone.

## **11 Publication**

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

## **12 Acknowledgements**

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Johnson, James Harvey, Greg Jones, Tim Higgins and the writer Dan Stone and the project was managed by Richard Buckley.

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## APPENDIX 1

### Finds

#### The Roman period pottery

*Nicholas J. Cooper*

The stratified assemblage has been identified by fabric and form according to the established county and national type series (Pollard 1994; Pollard 1999; Tomber and Dore 1998) and quantified by sherd count and weight.

Context	Trench	Fabric	Form	Sherds	Weight(g)	Dating
2016	2B	CG1A	Lidseated jar	1	46	Channel Rim Mid late first century
2018	2B	C.Gaulish Samian	Dr. 18/31	1	12	AD 120-150
2032		C.Gaulish Samian	Dr.27	1	22	AD 100-160
2032		GW		1	6	2 <sup>ND</sup> -4 <sup>TH</sup>
2034		C.Gaulish Samian	Dr.33	1	11	2 <sup>ND</sup> century
2103		C.Gaulish Samian	Dr.18/31	1	11	AD 120-150 Residual
2103		C2 NV	Beaker	1	10	L.2 <sup>nd</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> Residual
2103		GW5	Jar	1	30	2 <sup>nd</sup> -4 <sup>th</sup> Residual
<b>Total</b>				<b>8</b>	<b>148g</b>	<b>Avge Sherd Wt 19g</b>

#### Discussion

This small assemblage is skewed in content with samian ware being predominant, all of which is central Gaulish in origin. The lack of medieval material in (2016)–(2034) may suggest a broadly second century date. Diagnostically first century material comes only from (2016). Material from (2103) is residual.

#### Medieval Pottery

Context	Type	Form	Sherd	Weight	Dating
2103	Sandy	Misc	3	29	
2103	Chilvers Coton	Misc	1	10	
<b>Total</b>			<b>4</b>	<b>39</b>	

#### Romano- British Tile

Context	Type	Fraggs	Weight
2039	Tegula	1	32

2103	Wall Tile	2	460
2103	misc	1	9
<b>Total</b>		<b>4</b>	<b>501</b>

### Painted wall plaster

Context	Frag	Weight (g)	Description
2039	1	90	Turquoise with white and red border
2103	1	23	beige
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>113</b>	

### Animal Bone

Context	Type	Frag
2103		<b>1</b>