

**Archaeological Evaluation on Land
At 432, Melton Road, Leicester (SK 6032 0805)**

Greg Jones

For Shanti Niketan Ltd

**Planning Application No. 20042442
Planning Authority: Leicester City Council**

Checked by Project Manager

Signed:Date:.....

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An Archaeological Evaluation on Land at 432, Melton Road, Leicester, (SK 6032 0805)

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**Archaeological Evaluation on Land at 432, Melton Road, Leicester,
Leicestershire, (SK 6032 0805),**

Greg Jones

1. Summary

An Archaeological evaluation was carried out on land at 432 Melton Road, Leicester (SK 6032 0805) on the 1st–2nd March 2006 in advance of the proposed construction of a care home development. This work was carried out on behalf of Shanti Niketan Ltd. by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS). A total of three evaluation trenches were excavated which revealed a parallel Roman ditch and gully feature, a Roman pit and sealed Roman layers containing Roman pottery fragments. This site when discussed with the Fosse Way Roman road immediately to the east, highlights the evidence of Roman occupation near to Leicester and to the Fosse Way. The site archive will be held by Leicester City Council, accession number A12.2006.

2. Introduction

2.1 This document constitutes the first stage of archaeological assessment to have been carried out on land at 432, Melton Road, Leicester, (SK 6032 0805). The archaeological assessment was being undertaken on behalf of Shanti Niketan Ltd. by University of Leicester Archaeological Services.

2.2 Shanti Niketan Ltd propose to convert an area of *c.* 5,000 square metres of land at 432, Melton Road, Leicester into a care home. The City Archaeologist of Leicester City Council in his capacity as archaeological advisor to the planning authority requested that a preliminary archaeological assessment of the site be carried out. The assessment was to be undertaken in the form of archaeological trial trench evaluation as detailed in the *Brief for an archaeological field evaluation at 432, Melton Road, Leicester* (Leicester City Council 04/01/2006 hereinafter the ‘brief’).

2.3 The site lies very close to the Fosse Way Roman road (underneath the present day Melton Road). There was, therefore, moderate to high potential for the presence of archaeological deposits from the Roman period and a moderate to low potential for archaeological deposits from earlier and later periods.

3. Site Background

3.1 The underlying geology of the site consists of sand and gravel terracing. The site lies at a height of *c.* 51m O.D on mostly flat land with a slight rise at the car parking area to the east.

3.2 The development area covers *c.* 5,000 square metres within which is proposed the erection of a care home with a number of self-contained apartments.

3.3 The site lies next to the Roman road known as the Fosse Way (running from Exeter to Lincoln) and the 'brief' indicated that the site had the potential to contain archaeological deposits with evidence for Roman settlement or other activity.

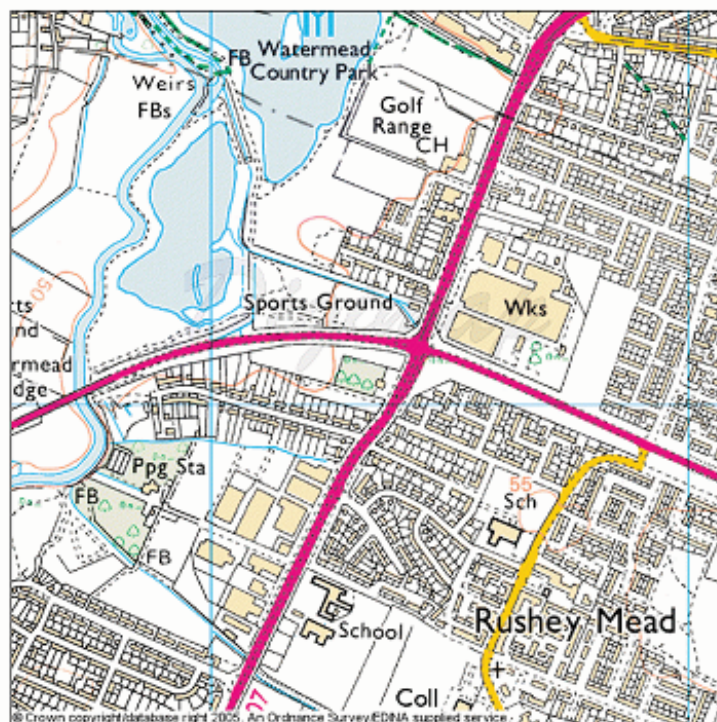


Figure 1: Site Location Scale 1:25 000

4. Methodology

4.1 All work will follow the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) *Code of Conduct* and adhere to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations*.

4.2 The main objectives of the evaluation were:

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

4.3 The Senior Planning Archaeologist had requested that *c.* 135 sq metres will be evaluated providing a equivalent of *c.* 5% sample of the area where new buildings are proposed. This will comprise three 15m x 3m wide, trenches to a maximum depth of 1.3 m.

4.4 Topsoil and disturbed subsoil was removed in level spits, under continuous archaeological supervision, down to the uppermost archaeological deposits by JCB using a toothless ditching bucket. Trenches were excavated to a width of 3m.

4.5 Trenches were examined by appropriated hand cleaning. Any archaeological deposits or significant natural deposits were planned at an appropriate scale and sample excavated by hand as appropriate to establishing the stratigraphic and chronological sequence. All plans have been tied into the National Grid using an Electronic Distance Measurer (EDM). Spot heights were taken as appropriate.

4.6 Sections were drawn as appropriate, including records of at least one longitudinal face of each trench.

4.7 Trench locations were recorded using a Total Station Electronic Distance Measurer (EDM) and tied in to the Ordnance Survey National Grid.

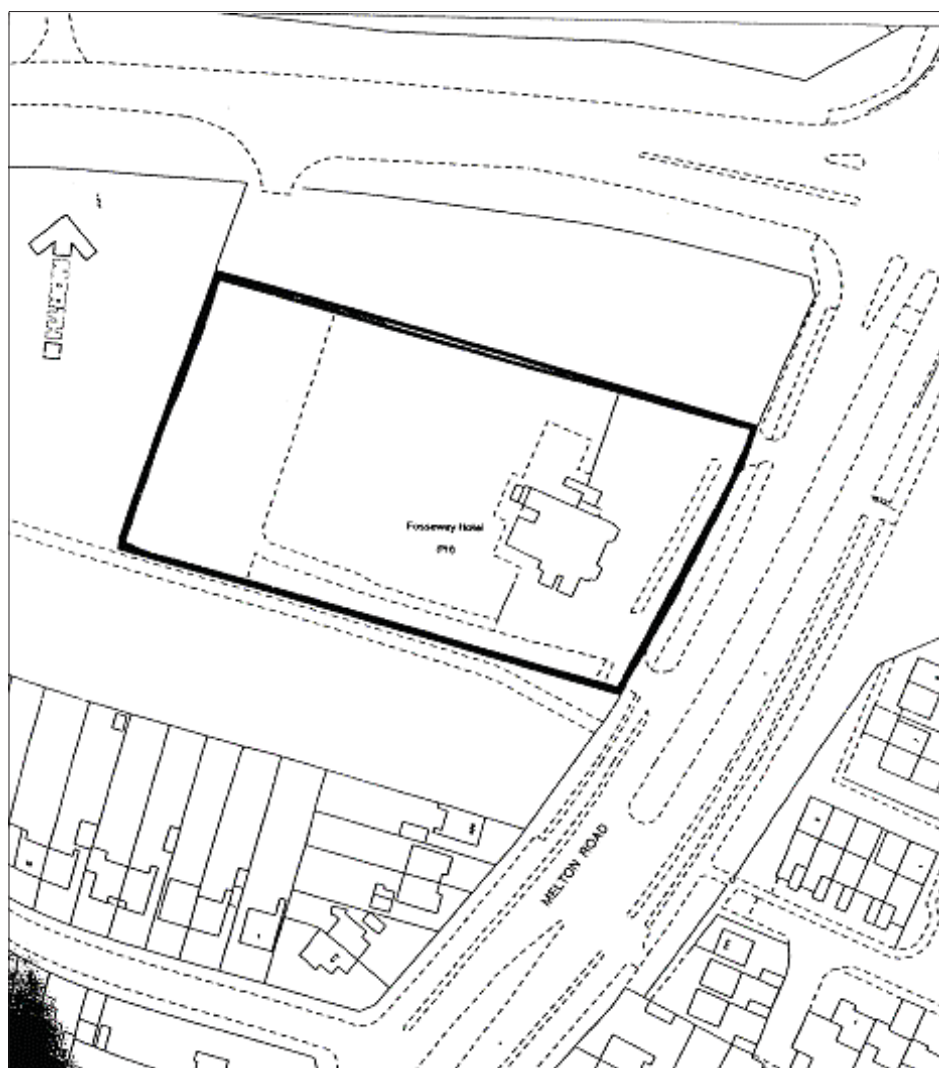


Figure 2: Site Location Scale 1: 1250

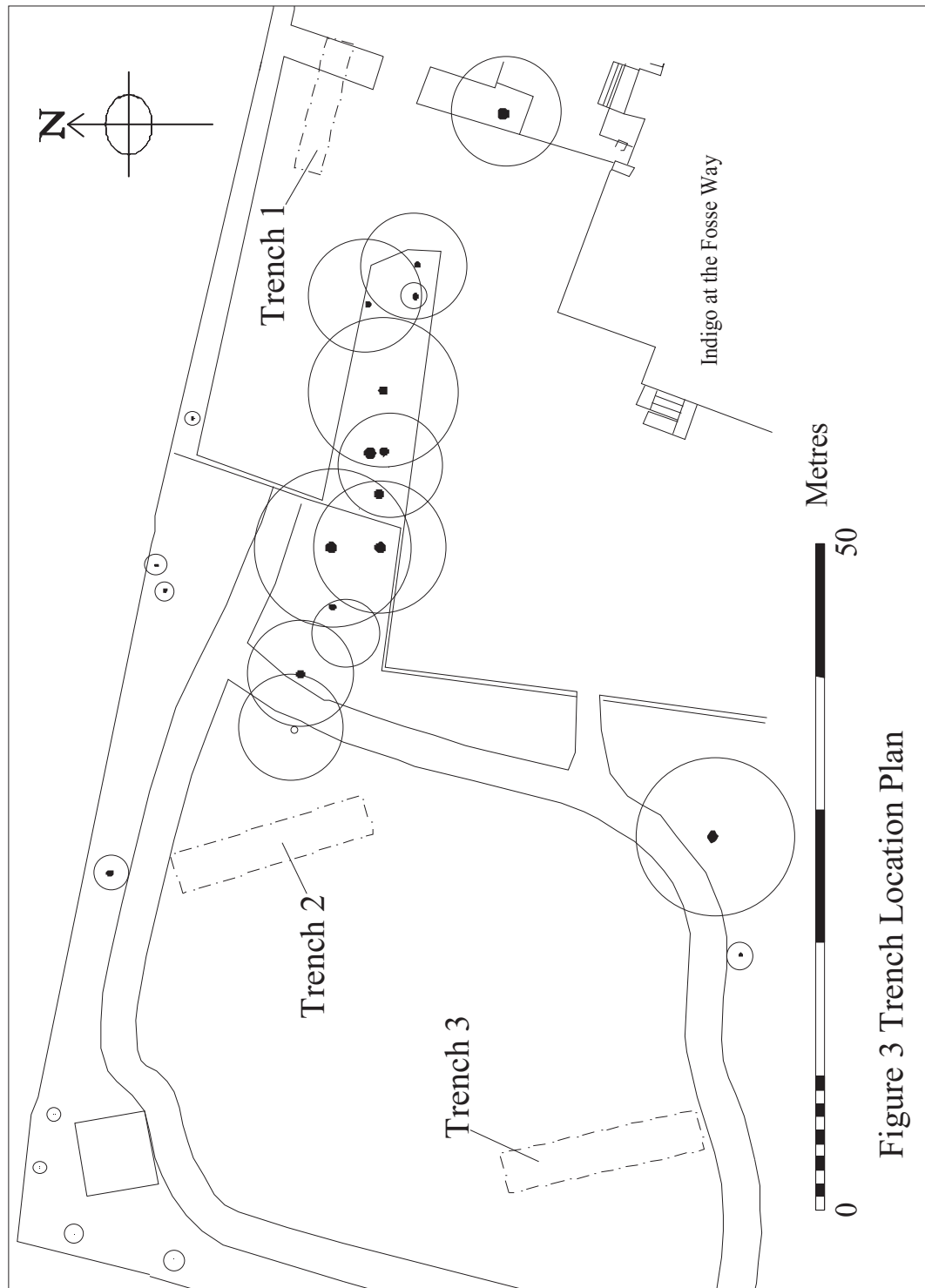


Figure 3 Trench Location Plan

Figure 3. Trench location Plan

5 Results

5.1 Trench 1

Trench 1 Details

<i>Length of Trench</i>	10m
<i>Area of Trench</i>	30sq.m
<i>Surface Level (m OD)</i>	c. 51.35m OD
<i>Base of Trench (m OD)</i>	c. 50.35m OD

Trench one was located on the eastern side of the site in the car park area and was orientated east-west (fig.3). Due to on site access restrictions and health and safety considerations trench one was smaller in size than originally planned.

Machining revealed hardcore aggregate to a depth of c. 0.5m, below which was revealed light-brown friable sandy clay subsoil. At a depth of 0.7m the natural substratum was reached, consisting of orange-brown sandy gravel. It was apparent that there were no archaeological deposits present in trench one.

5.2 Trench 2

Trench 2 Details

<i>Length of Trench</i>	15m
<i>Area of Trench</i>	45sq.m
<i>Surface Level (m OD)</i>	c. 50.55m OD
<i>Base of Trench (m OD)</i>	c. 49.85m OD

Trench two was located to the west of trench one, on the northern edge of the site, orientated north-south (fig3). Initial machining revealed a dark grey-brown friable silt topsoil to a depth of c.0.3m. This revealed a light brown firm sandy clay subsoil, also c.0.3m deep.

Below these layers the orange brown clay natural substratum was reached. Located at 6.1m from the south end of the trench was a circular pit [2], which measured 1.2m x 1.1m x 0.35m deep. The fill (1) consisted of mixed bluish-grey and orangey-red clay, with high organic content and occasional sub-rounded stones. The fill contained Roman pottery fragments including mortarium, all of which dated to c.2nd-4th century (fig.4).

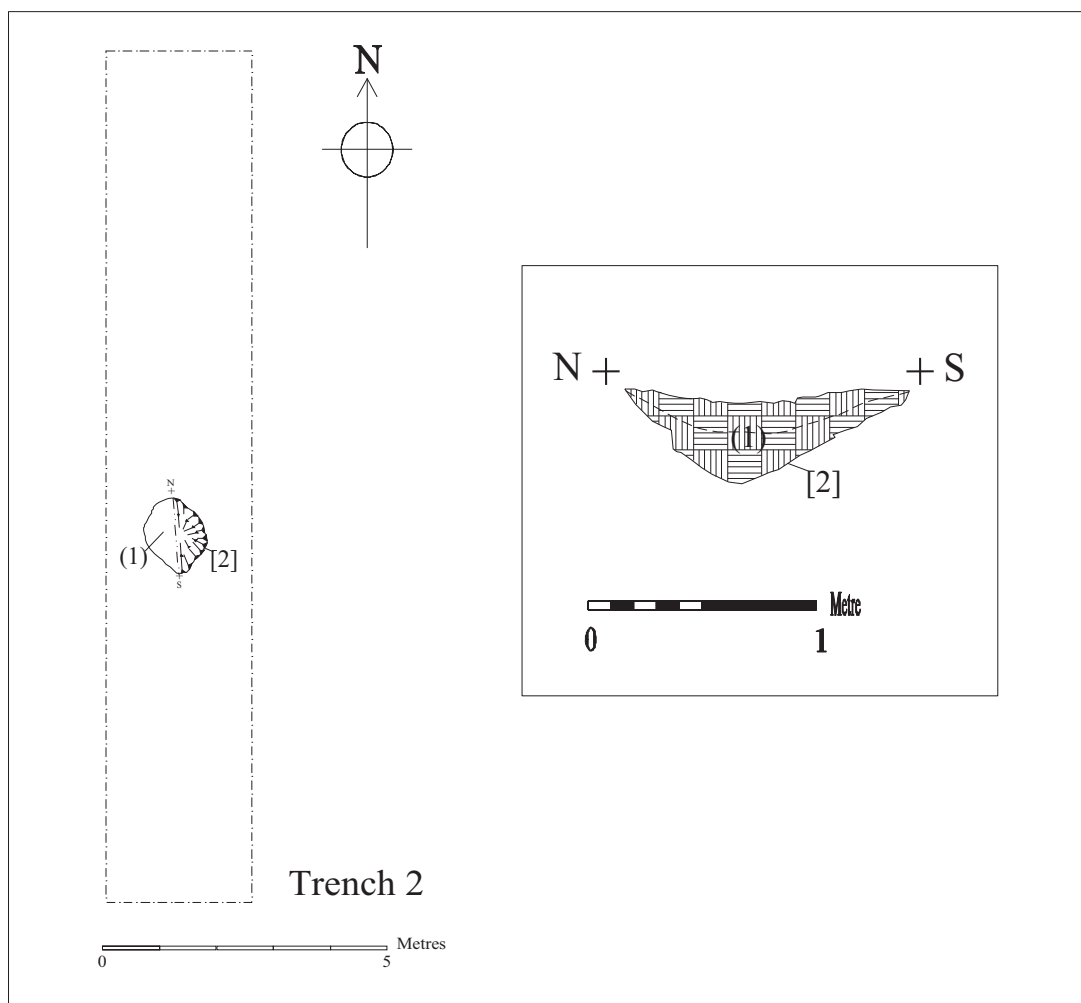


Figure 4. Plan and Section of Feature in Trench 2

5.3 Trench 3

<i>Length of Trench</i>	15m
<i>Area of Trench</i>	45sq.m
<i>Surface Level (m OD)</i>	c. 50.71m OD
<i>Base of Trench (m OD)</i>	c. 49.71m OD

Trench three was located to the south of trench two, orientated north-south. Initial machining revealed topsoil and subsoil layers similar to those observed in trench two. These revealed a mixed yellow sandy gravel and grey sandy clay natural substratum at a depth of c.1m.

At the north end of trench three, cut into the subsoil at a depth of 0.2m, layer (8) was revealed which appeared to be the remnants of a post-medieval land drain (fig.6). This layer contained fragments of post-medieval pottery and clay pipe fragments.

Below the land drain and the remaining subsoil, located near the north end of the trench, at a depth of 0.5m, was revealed a firm greyish-blue silty clay layer (7), with small angular stones, which contained Roman pottery sherds, dating to the 2nd to the 4th century.

This layer sealed a parallel gulley [4] and ditch [6], which were located from the north end of the trench, at 1m and 2.3m respectively. Both features were orientated north-west to south-east (fig.5). Gulley [4] measured over 1m in length (seen) east-west 0.25m wide and 0.24m deep. The cut was vertical on the north side and slightly sloped on the south side, with a concave base. The fill (3) consisted of firm greyish-blue silty clay with occasional angular stones, but did not contain any finds. Ditch [6] was 3m long (seen) east-west, 1.9m wide and 0.36m deep. The fill (5) consisted of firm bluish-grey, gritty clay silt, with very small stones. Contained within the fill was a Roman tegula fragment and a sherd of mortarium pottery, dating to the early to mid 2nd century.

6 Discussion

6.1 Roman Period

6.1.1 The pit located in trench two [2] contained Roman pottery sherds dating from the 2nd to the 4th centuries (Appendix 1). The high organic content of the fill (1) suggests that the feature may have actually been the result of bioturbation, such as from a tree bowl, rather than from actual pitting. However, the pottery recovered is evidence of possible nearby domestic activity.

6.1.2 The ditch [6] and gulley [4] in trench three can both be safely dated to the Roman period, as they are sealed by layer (7), which contained Roman pottery. The pottery dates are long lived and early pottery is more likely to be residual considering the earlier activity demonstrated by the ditch and gulley. The purpose of the ditch is unknown, but it is conceivable that it may indicate evidence of field boundaries or land division. The site is located close to the Fosse Way Roman road, which throws up the possibility that the ditch and gulley may be connected in some way to it.

6.2 Post Medieval

6.2.1 The post-medieval period is characterised here by the sealed layer (8), which cut through the subsoil and contained a Post-medieval field drain, clay pipe fragments and pottery which dated to the 17th – 18th centuries.

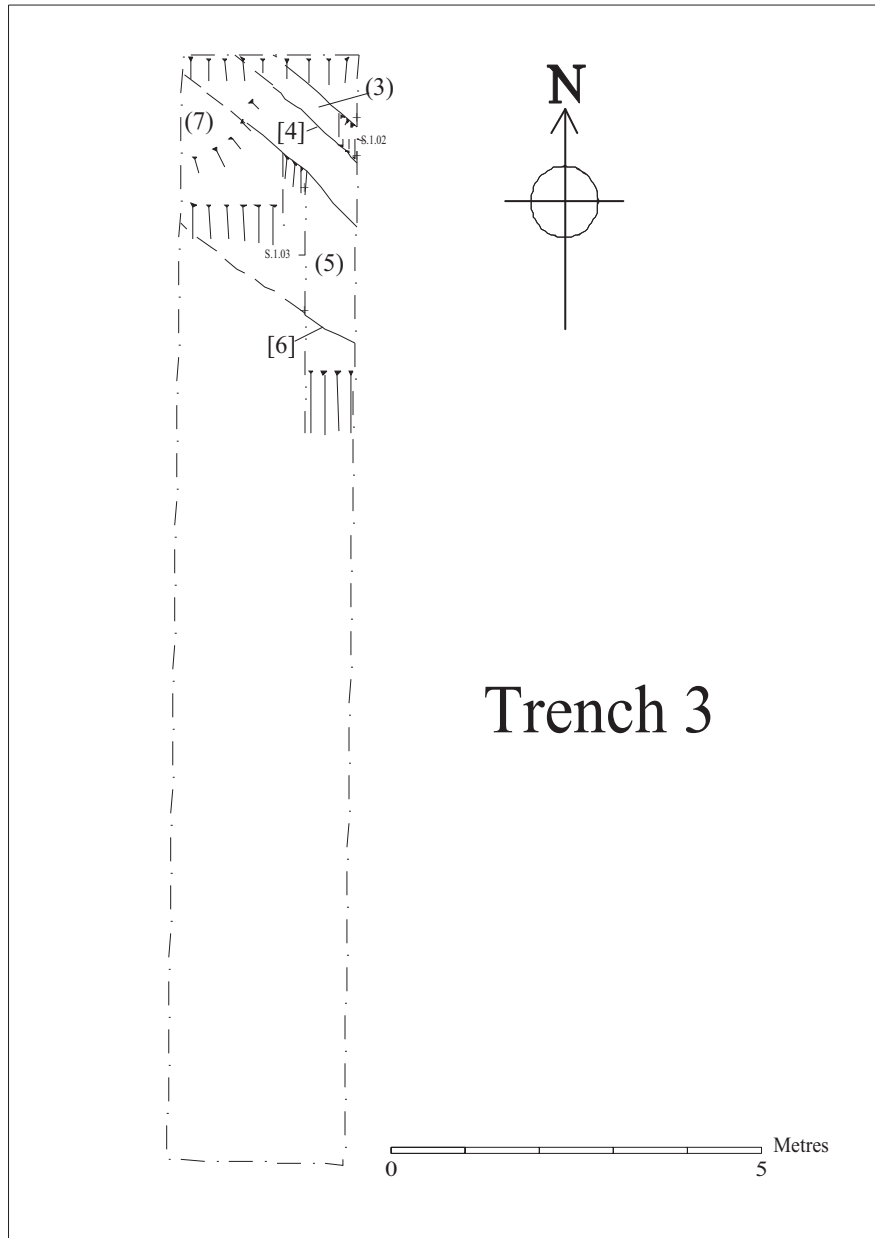


Figure 5. Plan of Trench 3

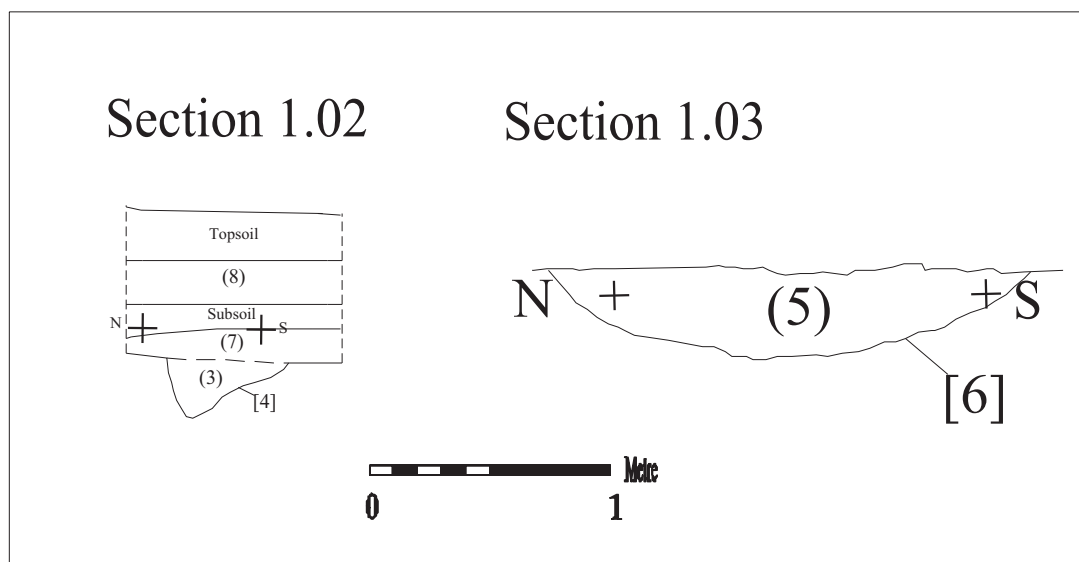


Figure 6. Sections through features in Trench 3

7 Conclusion

7.1 The archaeology at 432, Melton Road, Leicester, shows evidence of Roman activity, in the way of a ditch and gully possibly connected with the Fosse Way Roman road, located immediately to the east of the site. There is also evidence of a small amount of post-medieval activity on the site.

8 Archive

8.1 The site archive (A12 2006), consisting of paper records, black and white slides and colour photographs will be housed with Leicester City Council.

9 Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the clients, Shanti Niketan Ltd and Mr and Mrs Ghelani for their assistance and co-operation on site. Patrick Clay, who managed the project, and the fieldwork was carried out by the author with the assistance of Dave Parker, all of ULAS.

10 Bibliography

Clay, P., 2006 *Design Specification for archaeological evaluation 432 Melton Road, Leicester (SK 6032 0805)* ULAS Ref. 06/120

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28.3.2006

11 *Appendix 1***Ceramic and Miscellaneous Finds from Evaluation Excavations at 432 Melton Road, Leicester A12.2006***Elizabeth Johnson, ULAS***Introduction**

As part of evaluation excavations material was recovered from two trenches opened at the site of 432 Melton Road, Leicester. Most of the finds retrieved date to the Roman period, however a small amount of Post-Roman material was also recovered.

Romano-British Ceramic Finds

A total of 20 stratified sherds weighing 921g of Romano-British pottery was recovered from the site, along with two sherds (20g) of re-deposited material. The material was classified using the Leicestershire Fabric Series (Pollard 1994) and quantified by sherd count and weight as shown in the table below. The average sherd weight is 46g however this high figure is due to the presence of three large sherds of mortaria and grey ware. Excluding these sherds from the calculation provides an average sherd weight of 18g, which still suggests a good level of preservation. A single fragment of Roman ceramic building material was also recovered.

Trench 2 (Context 1)

The finds from the single context within this trench comprise nine sherds of Romano-British pottery recovered from a pit feature. The Mancetter-Hartshill mortarium (MO) rim sherd dates from the mid-third to mid-fourth century (Pollard 1986: 4; Clark 1999: 157-158) whilst the remaining grey ware (GW) sherds are mostly likely locally made and are not closely dateable. No Post-Roman material was recovered from this trench.

Trench	Feature	Cut	Context	Fabric	Form	Sherds	Weight (g)	TPQ
Tr2	Pit	2	1	MO	Mortarium	1	122	mid3rdC
Tr2	Pit	2	1	GW	Jar	1	20	2nd-4thC
Tr2	Pit	2	1	GW	Jar	3	22	2nd-4thC
Tr2	Pit	2	1	GW	Jar	4	26	2nd-4thC
Tr3	Gully		3	C	Bowl	1	22	4thC
Tr3	Gully		3	Samian	Bowl	1	40	mid/late2ndC
Tr3	Ditch	6	5	MO	Mortarium	1	378	mid2ndC+
Tr3	Layer		7	C	Dish	1	40	4thC
Tr3	Layer		7	C	Body sherd	1	3	3rdC+
Tr3	Layer		7	GW	Bowl	1	38	mid3rdC+
Tr3	Layer		7	GW	Lid	1	16	late1st-2ndC

Tr3	Layer		7	GW	Jar	1	114	2nd-4thC
Tr3	Layer		7	MO	Mortarium	1	28	early-mid2ndC
Tr3	Layer		7	GW	Jar	2	52	2nd-4thC
Tr3	Ditch	6	5	CBM	Tegula	1	200	
U/S				GW	Jar	2	20	2nd-4thC

Trench 3 (Contexts 3; 5; 7)

The features in this trench comprise a layer (7) overlying a ditch (5) and gully (3) from which a total of eleven sherds of Romano-British pottery were recovered along with one fragment of ceramic building material. The material from context 7 suggests activity during the later Roman period, with Nene Valley colour-coat finewares (C) from the third and fourth centuries (Howe *et al* 1980: 24-25). The grey wares are most likely locally made, the presence of a bead and flange bowl suggesting a date from the mid-third century onwards. The remaining dateable sherds in context 7 are likely to be residual, as lid forms are more common during the later first and second centuries, and the Mancetter-Hartshill mortarium form dates to the early-mid second century (Pollard 1986: 4-5).

Two sherds were recovered from the gully (3), a fourth century Nene Valley colour-coat dish (Howe *et al* 1980: 24-25) and a Central Gaulish Samian Drag.38 bowl dating to the mid-late second century (Webster 1996: 51). One sherd of Mancetter-Hartshill mortarium was recovered from the ditch (5) along with the fragment of *tegula* roof tile. Without diagnostic features present, the mortarium can only be dated from the mid-second century onwards.

Post-Roman Finds

The Post-Roman finds were recovered from trench 3 context 8 as detailed in the table below (identification provided by D. Sawday).

Trench	Feature	Cut	Context	Fabric	Form	Sherds	Weight (g)	TPQ
Tr3	Layer		8	EA6	Body sherd	1	10	17th-18thC
Tr3	Layer		8	Clay pipe		1	1	Post Medieval
U/S				Clay pipe		1	2	Post Medieval

Miscellaneous Finds

One iron nail was recovered from trench 3 context 7.

Summary

Most activity on the site appears to date to the later Roman period from the mid-third century onwards. The surfaces of the grey wares are abraded, though this is not apparent to the same extent on the material with slipped surfaces. In this instance the abrasion may be a result of waterlogging of some kind rather than continuous post-

depositional disturbance, as only the grey ware fabrics have been affected and the overall sherd size suggests reasonably good preservation.

All the Post-Roman material was recovered from the layer (8) in trench 3 and is all post-medieval in date.

Bibliography

Howe, M. D., Perrin, J. R. and Mackreth, D. F., 1980: *Roman Pottery from the Nene Valley: A Guide. Peterborough City Museum Occasional Paper No. 2.* Peterborough: Peterborough City Museum.

Pollard, R., 1986: *Roman Pottery in Leicestershire.* Unpublished: Leicestershire Archaeological Unit.

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Webster, P., 1996: Roman Samian Pottery in Britain. Practical Handbooks in Archaeology no. 3. York: Council for British Archaeology.

12 *Appendix 2*

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

Design Specification for archaeological evaluation

Land at 432, Melton Road, Leicester (SK 6032 0805)

P.A. 20042442

For: Shanti Niketan Ltd

1. Definition and scope of the specification

1.1 This specification is for archaeological evaluation by trial trenching in advance of a proposed care home development at land west of 432 Melton Road, Leicester (SK 6032 0805), for Shanti Niketan Ltd

1.2 It addresses the requirements for archaeological evaluation from the City Archaeologist, Leicester City Museum Service as archaeological advisor to the planning authority following Planning Policy Guidelines 16 (PPG16, Archaeology and Planning para.30) as detailed in the *Brief for an archaeological field evaluation at 432, Melton Road, Leicester* (LCC 04/01/2006 hereinafter the 'brief').

1.3 All archaeological work will adhere to the Institute of Field Archaeologist's (IFA) *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations* and the *Guidelines and procedures for archaeological work in Leicester* (Leicester Museum Service).

2. Background

2.1. The proposed development is for residential care homes. It lies close to the line of the Fosse Way Roman road and therefore has some archaeological potential for remains of this period. A programme of archaeological work comprising trial trenching is now required to confirm whether archaeological remains are present within the application area and, if necessary, formulate a mitigation strategy.

3. Objectives

3.1 The objective of the archaeological work is to ascertain whether any significant archaeological remains are present within the area to be developed. If identified a sufficient sample to establish their extent, date, quality, character, form and potential including environmental data will be recorded. Further archaeological recording may be required in the light of the results of this programme.

4 General Methodology

4.1 All work will follow the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) *Code of Conduct* and adhere to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations*.

4.2 Staffing, recording systems, Health and Safety provisions and insurance details are provided.

4.3 Internal monitoring procedures will be undertaken including visits to the sites from the project manager. These will ensure that project targets are being met and professional standards are being maintained. Provision will be made for external monitoring meetings with representatives of the clients and Leicester City Council. The strategy will be reviewed in the light of the quality of the archaeological resource as revealed at different stages of the fieldwork.

4.5 Trial trenching

4.5.1 The 'brief' has requested trial trenching totalling *c.* 135 sq metres the equivalent of three 15m x 3m wide, trenches to a maximum depth of 1.3 m.

4.5.2 The topsoil and disturbed subsoil will be removed in spits by machine using a toothless ditching bucket (or similar) under full supervision, until archaeological deposits or undisturbed substrata are encountered.

4.5.3 The location of the trenches will be surveyed using a Total Station Electronic Distance Measurer (EDM) linked to a Psion hand held computer.

4.5.4 Any archaeological deposits located will be hand cleaned and planned as appropriate to addressing the aims and objectives of the evaluation. 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).

4.5.5. Particular attention will be paid to the potential for buried palaeosols in consultation with ULAS's environmental officer. Deposits which may provide radiocarbon dating evidence will be sampled.

4.5.6 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.

4.5.7 Any human remains encountered will only be removed under a Home Office Licence and in compliance with relevant environmental health regulations. The client, Leicester City Council and the coroner will be informed immediately on their discovery.

4.6 Mitigation Strategy

4.6.1 Depending on the results of the trial trenching and following consultation with the City Archaeologist and the client a mitigation strategy may need to be formulated.

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, enlarged to 1:500 (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 Some 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 undertaken.

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

5.6 All site records and finds will be kept securely.

6 Report and Archive

6.1 Before commencement of work an accession number will be obtained from Leicester City Museums. A report on the fieldwork will be provided following analysis of the records and materials.

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

6.3 A full copy of the archive as defined in the 'Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long-term storage' (UKIC 1990), and Standards in the Museum care of archaeological collections (MGC 1992) and 'Guidelines for the preparation of site archives and assessments for all finds (other than fired clay objects) (RFG/FRG 1993) will be presented to Leicester Museums. This archive will include all written, disk-based, drawn and photographic records relating directly to the investigations undertaken.

6.4 On the completion of fieldwork The originating organisation should complete the on-line OASIS form at <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project> /oasis on completion of the fieldwork.

7 Timetable and staffing

7.1. The trial trenching will be undertaken within a one week period and can commence during early March 2006.

8. Health and Safety

8.1 ULAS is covered by and adheres to the University of Leicester Statement of Safety Policy and uses the ULAS Health and Safety Manual (2001) with appropriate risks assessments for all archaeological work. The relevant Health and Safety Executive guidelines will be adhered to as appropriate.

9. Insurance

9.1 All ULAS work is covered by the University of Leicester's Public Liability and Professional Indemnity Insurance. The Public Liability Insurance is with Gerling Insurance Services Policy No. 62/99094/D, Risk Reference LT 35101 while the Professional Indemnity Insurance is with Sun Alliance Insurance Policy No. 03A/5A 001 05978, Risk Reference LT 27229.

10. Bibliography

MAP 2, *The management of archaeological projects* 2nd edition English Heritage 1991

MGC 1992, *Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections* (Museums and Galleries Commission)

RFG/FRG 1993, *Guidelines for the preparation of site archives* (Roman Finds Group and Finds Research Group AD 700-1700)

SMA 1993, *Selection, retention and Dispersal of Archaeological Collections. Guidelines for use in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (Society of Museum Archaeologists)

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10.02.2006

Draft Project Health and Safety Policy Statement

Land at 432, Melton Road, Leicester (SK 6032 0805)

P.A. 20042442

For: Shanti Niketan Ltd

1. Nature of the work

1.1 This statement is for trial trenching. It will be revised following the commencement of operations when the extent of risks can be assessed in full.

1.2 The work will involve machine dug trial trenching during daylight hours and recording of any underlying archaeological deposits revealed. Overall depth is likely to be c. 0.2-0.5m. This will involve the examination of the exposed surface with hand tools (shovels, trowels etc) and excavation of archaeological features. All work will adhere to the University of Leicester Health and Safety Policy and follow the guidance in the Standing Committee of Archaeological Unit Managers manual, as revised in 1997, together with the following relevant Health and Safety guidelines, including the following.

HSE Construction Information Sheet CS8 Safety in excavations.

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

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

CIRIA R97 Trenching practice.

CIRIA TN95 Proprietary Trench Support Systems.

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

1.3 The Health and Safety policy on site will be reassessed during the evaluation .All work will adhere to the company's health and safety policy.

2 Risks Assessment

2.1 Working within an excavation.

Precautions. No work will be undertaken beneath section faces deeper than 1.2m. Loose spoil heaps will not be walked on. Protective footwear will be worn at all times. A member of staff qualified in First Aid will be present at all times. First aid kit, vehicle and mobile phone to be kept on site in case of emergency.

2.2 Working with plant.

Precautions. Hard hats, protective footwear and hazard jackets will be worn at all times. No examination of the area of stripping will take place until machines have vacated area. Observation of machines will be maintained during hand excavation.

2.3 Working within areas prone to waterlogging.

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

2.4 Working with chemicals.

If chemicals are used to conserve or help lift archaeological material these will only be used by qualified personnel with protective clothing (i.e a trained conservator) and will be removed from site immediately after use.

2.5 Other risks

Precautions. If there is any suspicion of unforeseen hazards being encountered e.g chemical contaminants, unexploded bombs, hazardous gases work will cease immediately. The client and relevant public authorities will be informed immediately.

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

10.02.2006

Carless & Adams Partnership

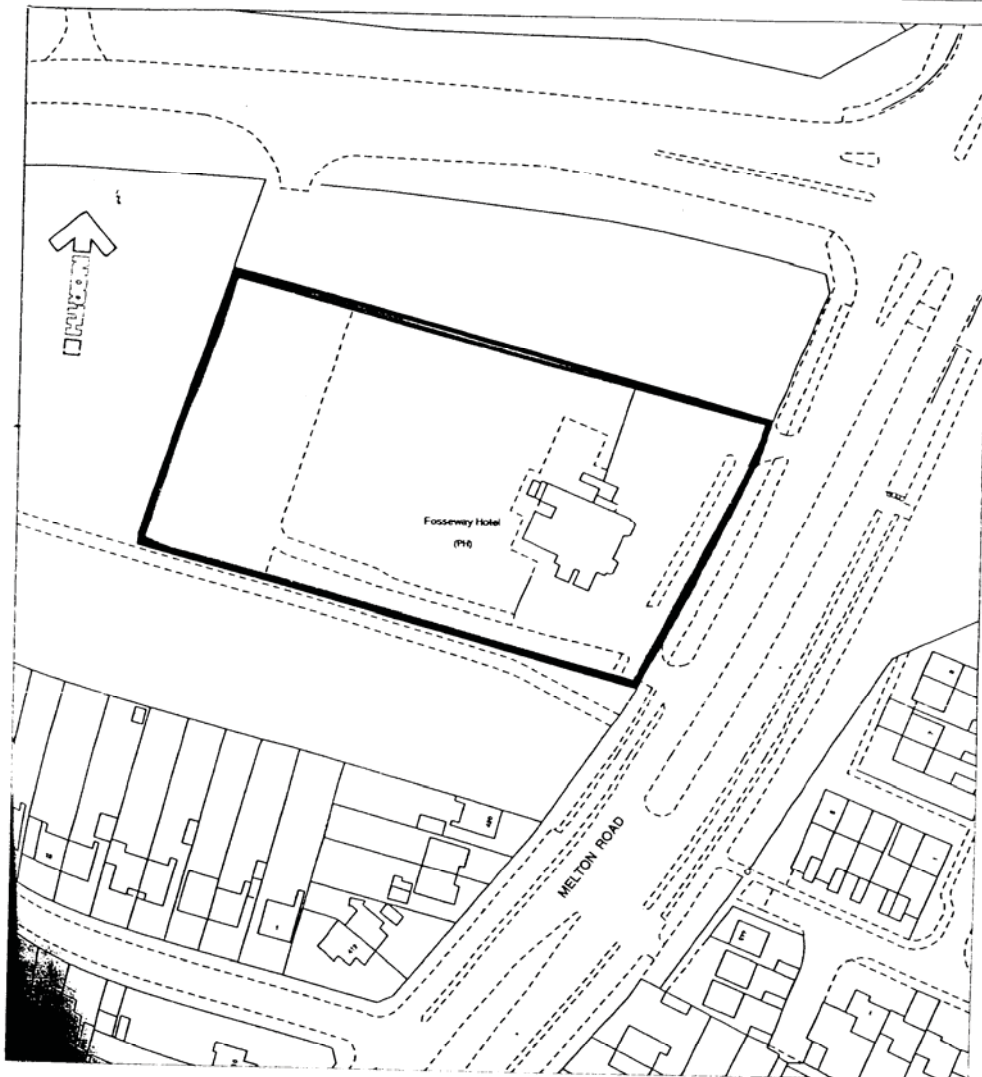
Architects, Building Surveyors, Quantity Surveyors
Project Managers, Planning Supervisors



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Project: PROPOSED CARE DEVELOPMENT	Job No: A 490
Location: 432 MELTON ROAD, LEICESTER	O.S. Map No:
Title: Location Plan	Dwg No: 05



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Date: JAN 06	Scale: 1:1250	Drawn by: MFB	Checked:
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Form CAP 5.1

07/2002

Figure 1. Plan of the development area showing proposed trial trench locations Scale 1:1250

