

**An Archaeological Watching Brief
At the Castle Mound,
Earl Shilton Castle, Earl Shilton,
Leicestershire (SAM 17035)**

Greg Farnworth-Jones

For: Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council and English Heritage

Checked by Project Manager

Signed: Date: 15/01/2008

Name: Patrick Clay

**University of Leicester
Archaeological Services**

University Rd., Leicester, LE1 7RH
Tel: (0116) 2522848 Fax: (0116) 2522614
Website: <http://www.le.ac.uk/ulas/>

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1. Summary

1.1 *An archaeological watching brief was carried out on land at the Castle Mound, Earl Shilton Castle, Earl Shilton, Leicestershire (SAM 17035), on the 25th September and the 31st October 2007. This work was carried out on behalf of Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council and English Heritage by University of Leicester Archaeological Services. The work involved the controlled supervision of ground works for the excavation of a new public footpath and entrance to the castle. The watching brief results uncovered modern backfill and levelling deposits within the moat, but failed to uncover any earlier deposits within the site. The site archive will be held with Leicestershire County Council Museums Section under accession number: X.A207.2007.*

2. Introduction

2.1 This document constitutes the archaeological watching brief carried out on land at Castle Mound, Earl Shilton Castle, Earl Shilton, Leicestershire, (SAM 17035). The archaeological assessment was undertaken on behalf of Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council and English Heritage by University of Leicester Archaeological Services.

2.2 Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council proposed to construct a tarmacadam footpath within the area of scheduled ancient monument 17035, Castle Mound, Earl Shilton Castle, Leicestershire, (SAM 17035). In accordance with the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979) section 2, a scheme of investigation for archaeological attendance and supervision, was required by English Heritage to be undertaken during any groundworks on the site which may disturb areas of archaeological potential.

2.3 The University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) was commissioned to carry out the watching brief on behalf of the client, Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council and English Heritage. The archaeological watching brief was undertaken by ULAS on the 27th of September and the 31st October 2007. The work involved controlled archaeological observation during excavation of foundation trenches for the construction of a new path to the entrance of Earl Shilton Castle. The groundwork involved excavating a trench across the moat bank and ditch to create a new pathway to the castle entrance. The watching brief involved archaeological supervision during excavation to identify and record any deposits of archaeological importance which might be impacted on by the groundworks. In particular English Heritage requested a section drawing to show the profile of the moat bank and ditch.

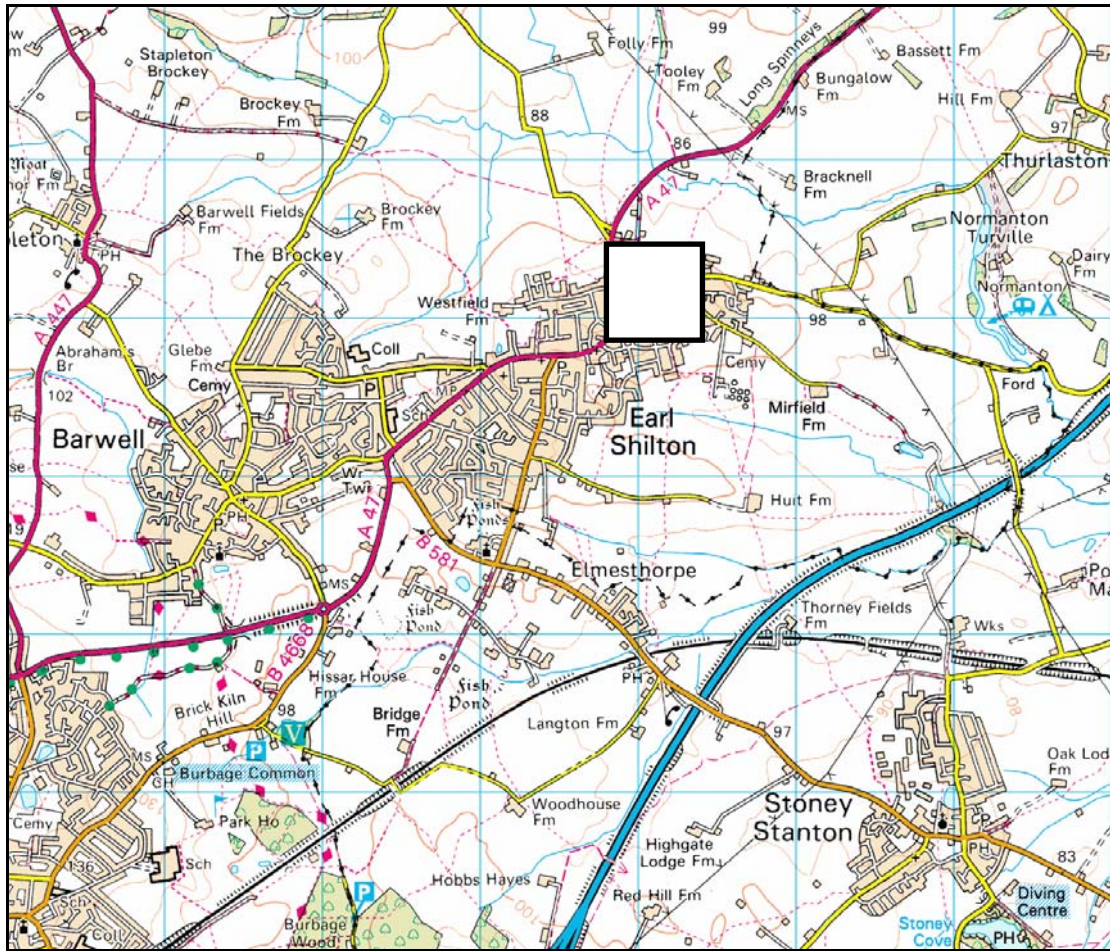


Fig. 1. Site location Scale 1:50000

Reproduced from the Landranger 140 Leicester area 1:50000 map by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright 1996. All rights reserved. Licence number AL 10002186.

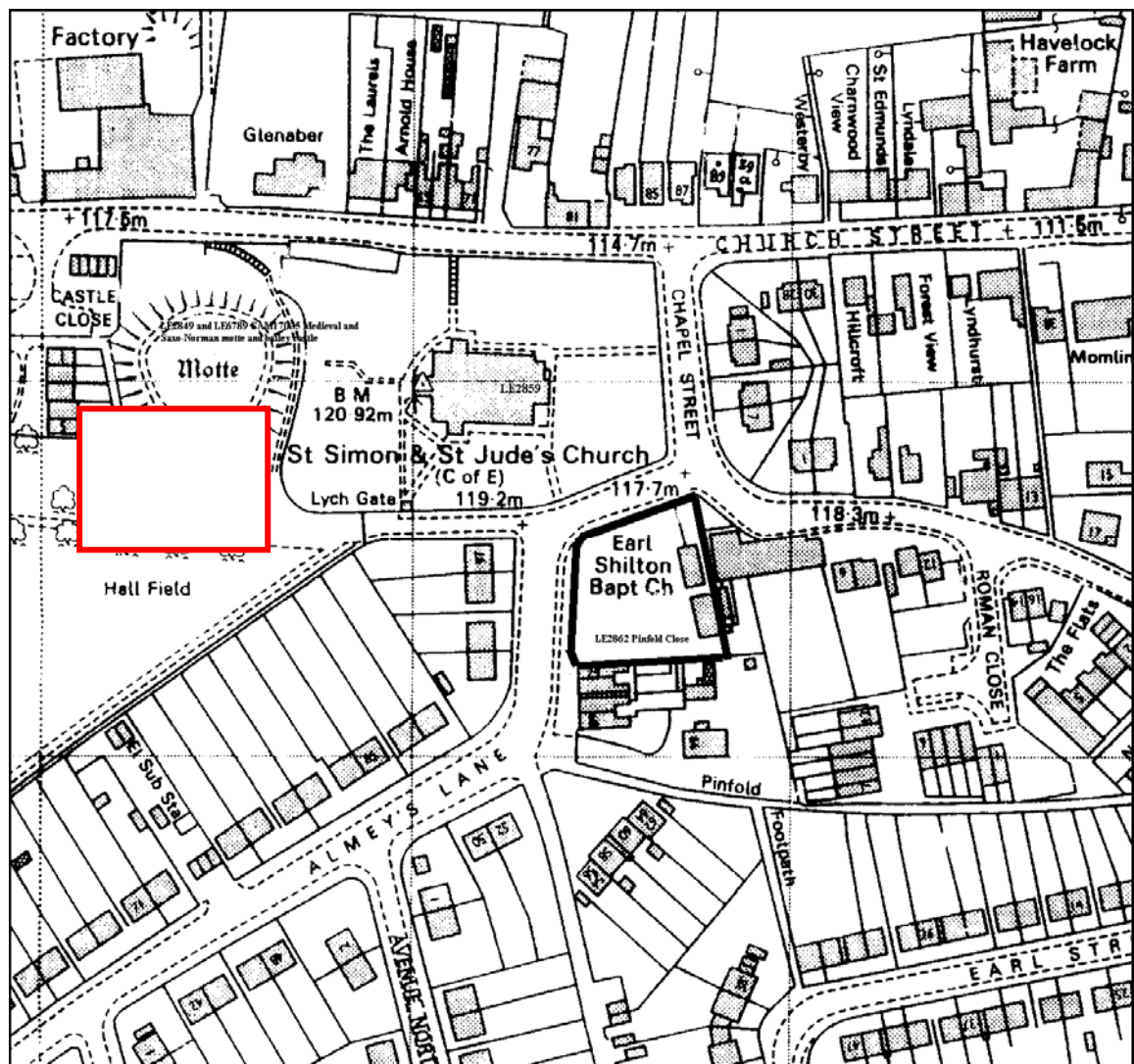


Fig. 2. Site Location

1992 SP4698 and 1987 SP4798 Ordnance Survey map Leicestershire . (Scale 1:2500)
Reproduced from the OS map Sheet Leicestershire SP4698 and SP4798 1:2500 map by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright 1987/1992. All rights reserved. Licence number AL 10002186.

3. Geology and Topography

3.1 The Ordnance Survey Geological Survey of Great Britain, Sheet 155, indicates that in most of the area the underlying geology is likely to consist of boulder clay with under and over lying sand and gravel. Some Red marl with beds of sandstone may be present within parts of the application area. The site lies at a height of c. 105m OD

4. Historical and Archaeological Background

4.1 The Leicestershire and Rutland HER shows that the works lie within the area of a scheduled ancient monument (**LE2849 SAM17035**), a medieval motte and bailey

castle. The proposed footpath involves a cutting through the bailey. There is the possibility, therefore that the work may impact on archaeological deposits.

4.2 Earl Shilton Castle (LE2849, SAM 17035). Earthworks remain of the Earl Shilton Castle, which dated to the early medieval period. The castle was founded some time after the Norman Conquest, and demolished in or about the 12th century (Cantor 1977-8). A large motte *c.* 10' high by 120' wide is surrounded by a ditch. The extent of the bailey may be represented by the churchyard, and there seems to be a strong relationship between the castle and church (Creighton 1997). The Earls of Leicester owned the castle in the medieval period. The proposed development site is located 10m to the north of the Scheduled area. Pottery dating to the 12th or 13th century has been found on the Earl Shilton Castle Mound (LE6789).

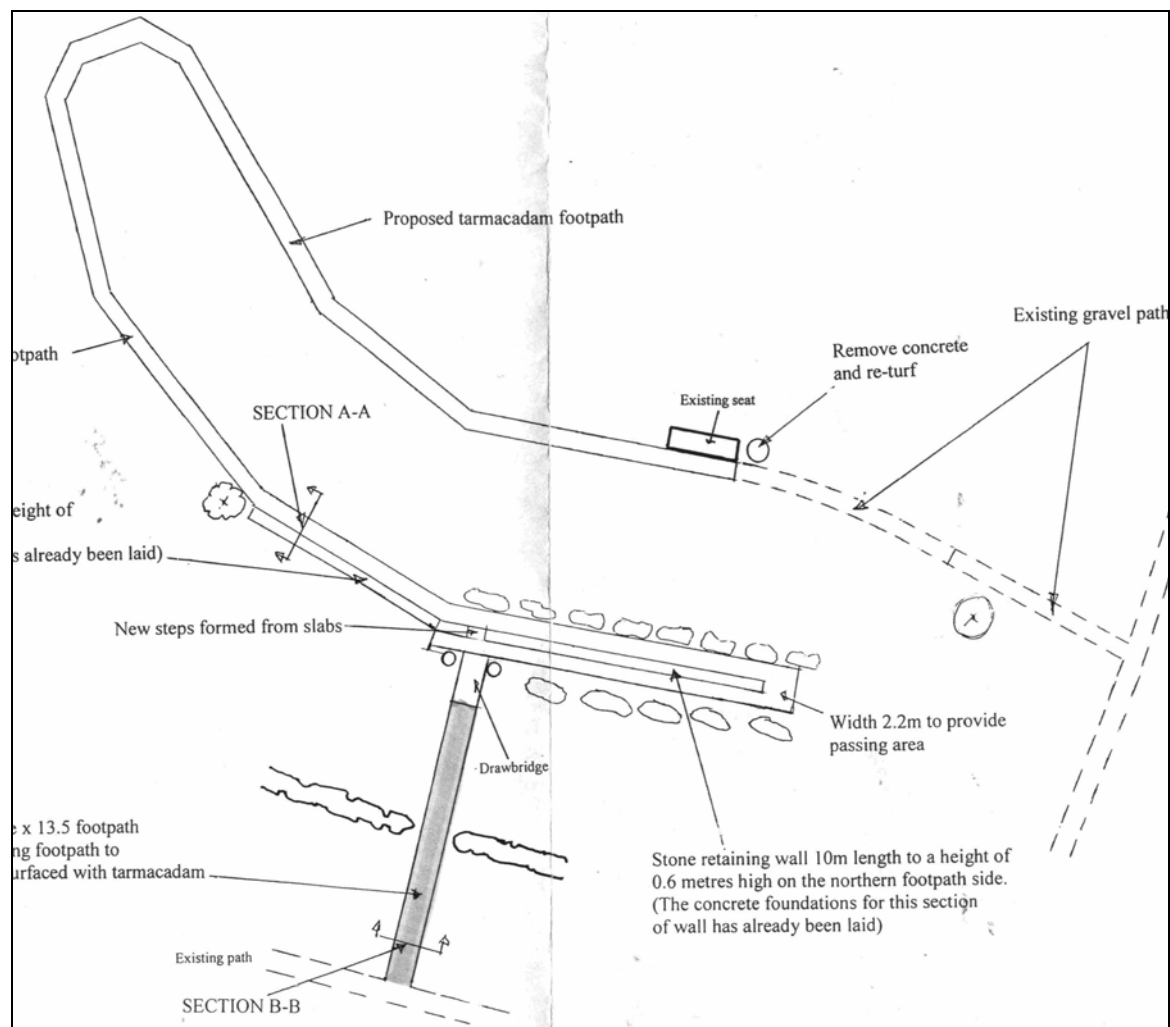


Fig 3. Plan of site supplied by developer (not to scale).

5. Methodology

5.1 All archaeological work adhered to the Institute of Field 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).

5.2 The archaeological watching brief carried out on land at Earl Shilton Castle, involved control and supervision of ground disturbance to identify any deposits of archaeological importance.

5.3 The main objectives of the watching brief, through archaeological supervision of existing overburden stripping and ground works by the client's contractors were:

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, including a drawn section across the castle moat.
4. To produce an archive and report of any results.

5.4 Any archaeological deposits located were hand cleaned and planned as appropriate. Samples of any archaeological deposits located were hand excavated. Measured drawings of all archaeological features were 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.

5.5 Archaeological deposits were 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 was paid to the potential for buried palaeosoils and waterlogged deposits in consultation with ULAS's environmental officer.

5.6 All excavated sections were 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.

6. Results

6.1 The first phase of the archaeological watching brief investigation was carried out on the 25th September which involved the controlled supervision of ground works for the excavation of a new public footpath.

6.2 Initial machining revealed the topsoil (001), to a depth of *c.*0.1m, which consisted of mid/dark greyish brown sandy silt loam (20:80), with occasional moderately sorted, small rounded stones <2% (fig.4). This layer sloped down northwards toward the Castle Mound. Further machining peeled this layer back to reveal at the northern end of the trench a concrete foundation for the drawbridge to rest upon and at a depth of *c.*0.2m, a mid darkish grey brown layer (002), which consisted of loose sandy silt (40:60), which frequent small gravelly stones (fig.4). Layer (002) appeared to be a modern backfill or make-up layer, although no finds were recovered, making exact dating of this context difficult.

6.3 Continued machining in a southern direction revealed at a depth of *c.*0.2m and to an excavated depth of *c.*0.35, a mid light yellow brown silty sand layer (20:80) (004), with occasional rounded stones >3% and occasional rubble fragments. Located at a distance of *c.*6.5m from the drawbridge, cut [003] was observed which ran from east to west across the trench (fig.4). Cut [003] was filled by (002) and cut layer (004).

6.4 The second phase of the archaeological watching brief investigation was undertaken on the 31st October 2007 and involved the controlled supervision of the excavation of a footing trench across the castle moat for the construction of a new entrance way to the Castle Mound.

6.5 Initial machining revealed mid greyish brown sandy silt loam, (30:70), topsoil containing occasional stone, crushed stone fragments and Victorian quarry tile slate fragments <2%, down to a depth of *c.*0.3m. No pre-modern archaeological finds or features were encountered during the final phase of the watching brief.

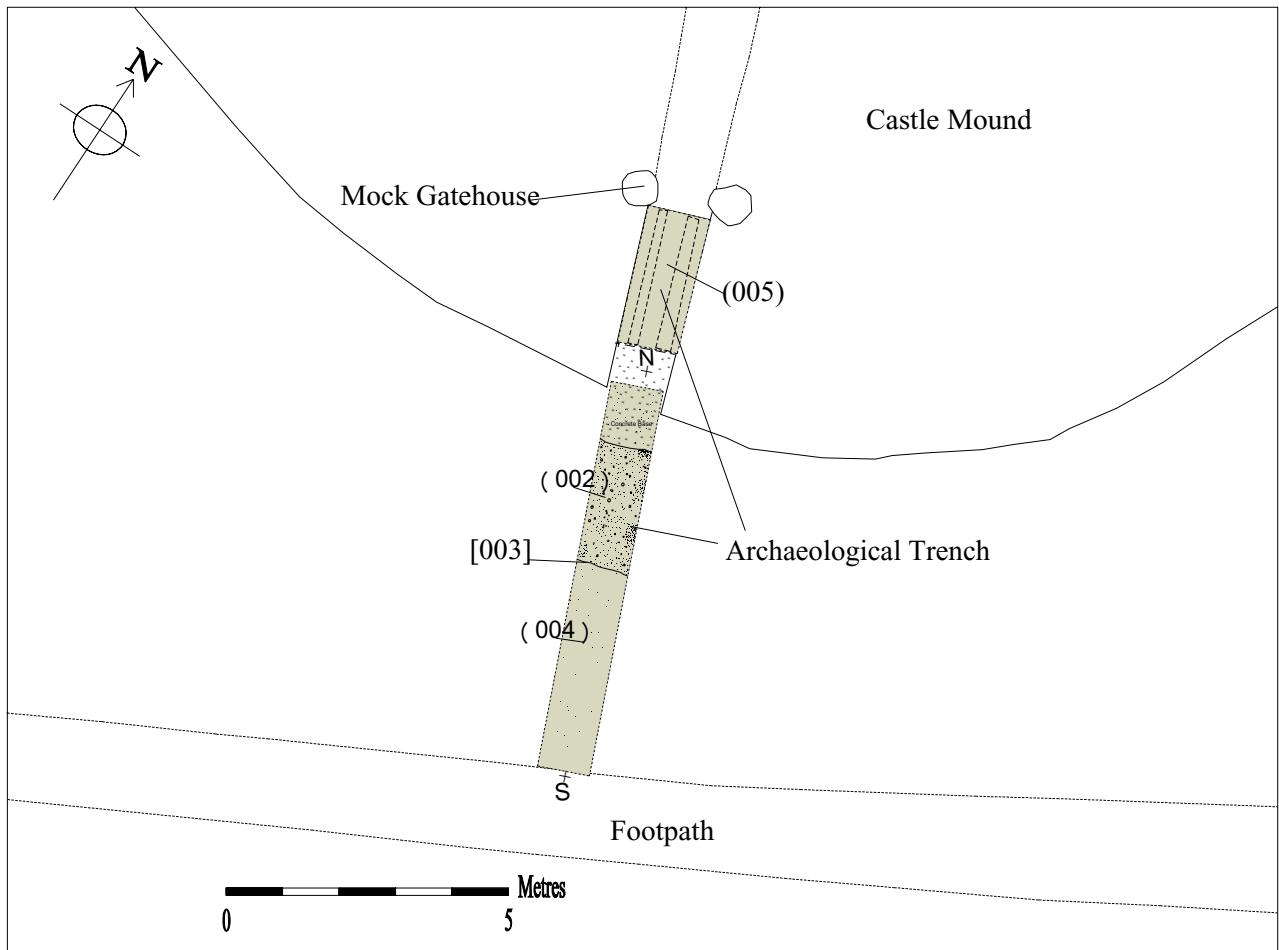


Fig 4. Plan of Site Showing Location of Archaeology.

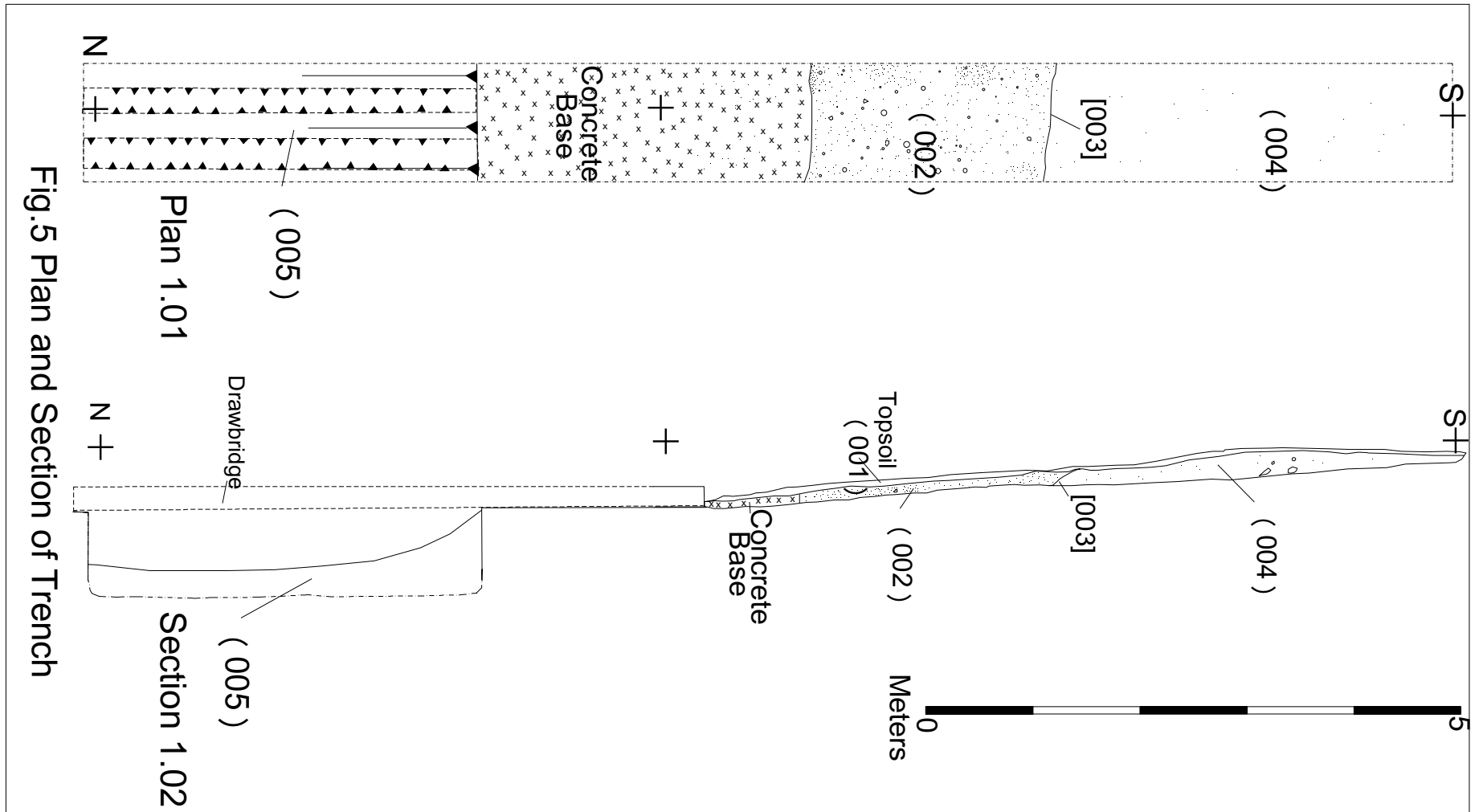


Fig.5 Plan and Section of Trench



Fig.6. Working shot looking north-west



Fig.7. General shot looking north-east



Fig.8. Trench looking north



Fig.9. Trench looking south



Fig.10. Trench across moat looking east



Fig.11. Trench across moat looking south

7. Conclusion

7.1 The archaeological watching brief investigation undertaken at Earl Shilton Castle Mound, Earl Shilton (SAM 17035) during the groundworks for the construction of a new footpath and entrance, provided an excellent opportunity to investigate the archaeology of the castle ditch and bank. Unfortunately, due to the limited depth of excavation (c.0.2m – 0.3m) only the top of modern backfill deposits and levelling layers (002), (005) were uncovered and not the earlier medieval deposits which had been hoped for. However, the possible cut for the ditch [003] was observed which suggests that during the medieval period the moat may have originally been much wider than it is today.

7.2 The stratigraphy encountered during the archaeological watching brief demonstrated that layer (002) (fig.4), was most likely to have been part of the original bank and that ‘cut’ [003] formed part of the original ditch profile, or else part of a subsequent re-cutting of the ditch. The gravely ditch fill (004) was modern in date and appeared to have been levelled off for the construction of the drawbridge. Fill (005) was also modern in date, consisting of loamy ‘topsoil’ and containing 19th century demolition material.

8. Acknowledgements

8.1 I would like to thank the clients Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council, for their assistance and co-operation on site. Patrick Clay, who managed the project and the fieldwork, was carried out by the author, both of ULAS.

9. Archive

9.1 The site archive will be deposited with Leicester County Council Museums Section under accession number: X.A207.2007 and consists of the following:

- 1 copy of this report
- 1 sheet of permatrace with site illustrations
- 2 watching brief record sheets
- 4 archaeological context sheets
- CD of digital photographs (Containing 30 digital photographs)
- Architect’s plans (x3)

10. Bibliography

Clay, P., 2007 *Design Specification for archaeological work on land at Castle Mound Earl Shilton Castle, Earl Shilton, Leicestershire (SAM 17035)*. ULAS Ref: 07/594

Greg Farnworth-Jones
Archaeological Supervisor
University of Leicester Archaeological Services
University of Leicester
University Road
Leicester LE1 7RH

Tel: 0116 252 2848
Fax: 0116 252 2614
Email: gj28@le.ac.uk

015/01/08

11. Appendix: *Design Specification*

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

Design Specification for archaeological work

Castle Mound, Earl Shilton, Leicestershire (SAM 17035)

Planning Application: N/A

For: Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council and English Heritage

1 Definition and scope of the specification

1.1 In accordance with the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979) section 2, this specification provides a written scheme of investigation for archaeological attendance and supervision, as required by English Heritage of any ground works on the site which may disturb areas of archaeological potential in connection with proposed works to construct a tarmacadam footpath within the area of scheduled ancient monument 17035, Earl Shilton Castle, Leicestershire.

1.2 All archaeological work will adhere to the Institute of Field 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 1997).

2 Background

2.1 Requirement for archaeological work

2.1.1 The archaeological watching brief involves archaeological supervision during excavation to identify and record any deposits of archaeological importance which might be impacted on by the groundworks.

2.2 Archaeological potential

2.2.1 The Leicestershire and Rutland HER shows that the works lie within the area of a scheduled ancient monument (17035), a medieval castle motte and bailey castle. The proposed footpath involves a cutting through the bailey. There is the possibility, therefore that the work may impact on archaeological deposits.

3 Aims

3.1 Through archaeological control and supervision of excavation by the client's contractors:

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 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 continuous supervision of groundworks by an experienced professional archaeologist during the works specified above. The works comprise the excavation of drainage channels. During these ground works, if any archaeological deposits are seen to be present, the archaeologist will record areas of archaeological interest.

4.2 The archaeologist will co-operate at all times with the contractors on site to ensure the minimum interruption to the work.

4.3 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.

4.4 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 palaeosoils and waterlogged deposits in consultation with ULAS's environmental officer ('brief' 12).

4.5 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 Any human remains encountered will be initially left *in situ* and only be removed under a Home Office Licence and in compliance with relevant environmental health regulations. English Heritage, Leicestershire County Council and the coroner will be informed immediately on their discovery.

4.6 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 English Heritage and Leicestershire County Council.

4.7 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 English Heritage and Leicestershire County Council. If the archaeological remains are identified to be of significance additional contingent archaeological works may 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 A report on the watching brief will be provided following the groundworks. Following the fieldwork the on-line OASIS form at <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis> will be completed.

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 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) (Roman Finds Group and Finds Research Group AD 700-1700 1993) will be presented to Leicestershire County Council, Heritage Services 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 watching brief is scheduled to commence at the inception of the contractors groundworks. An experienced archaeologist will be present during this work. It is proposed to watch all works, as specified above, with appropriately timed visits during the work in consultation with the contractors.

9 Healths 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 (2001) 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

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)

Patrick Clay
Director
ULAS
University of Leicester
University Road
Leicester LE1 7RH

Tel: 0116 252 2848
Fax: 0116 252 2614
Email: pnc3@le.ac.uk

10.01.2007

Appendix

Draft Project Health and Safety Policy Statement

Castle Mound, Earl Shilton, Leicestershire (SAM 17035)

Planning Application: N/A

For: Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council and English Heritage

1 Nature of the work

1.1 This statement is for archaeological supervision of groundworks.

1.2 The work will involve observation of groundworks 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 ULAS Health and Safety Manual (2001) together with the following relevant Health and Safety guidelines.

1.3 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

1.4 The Health and Safety policy on site will be reassessed during the evaluation.

1.5 All work will adhere to the contractors' health and safety policy.

2 Risks Assessment

2.1 Working within a building site

Precautions. No work will be undertaken beneath section faces. Loose spoil heaps will not be walked on. Protective footwear will be worn at all times. Hard hats 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. Liaison will be maintained with the contractors to ensure programme of machine movement is understood.

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 Wile's 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.

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

Patrick Clay
10.01.2007