

**An Archaeological Strip, plan and record operation at
41-43 High Street, / Almeys Lane,
Earl Shilton, Leicestershire
(SP 468 979)**

Sue Henderson

Planning Application Ref: 06/00497/REM
Client: Kier Partnership Ltd.

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Susan Henderson

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Summary

An archaeological strip, plan and record operation was carried out by the University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) during groundworks for the construction of residential units on land north of Almeys Lane and south of High Street, Earl Shilton, Leicestershire (SP 468 979). The aim of the work was to identify and record any deposits of archaeological importance through archaeologically controlled stripping and investigation within the development area. Initially, three trial trenches were excavated, being on average, 8.0 metres long, 1.8 metres wide and 1 metre deep. Two of the trenches were cut by modern features and the third, to the north, revealed a layer of sub soil disturbed by existing tree roots. As a result of the degree of modern disturbance to the south of the development site, further observation, here, was deemed unnecessary and whilst observation of soil stripping to the north was suggested, notification was not forthcoming.

The archive will be deposited with the Leicestershire and Rutland Sites and Monuments Record under the accession code X.A67.2007.

1. Introduction.

The development site is located on the east side of High Street, Earl Shilton, at NGR SP 468 979. The site is bounded by High Street to the West, Almey's Lane to the south-east and property boundaries to the east and south-west. The site covers 0.35 hectares. The centre of the site was previously occupied by a Victorian school building, which has now been demolished.



Figure 1. Site location, illustrated using the Ordnance Survey 1: 50,000 scale map.

2. Geology and Topography

The development site lies upon drift comprising glaciofluvial deposits of sand and gravel. The underlying bedrock is Mudstone of the Mercia Mudstone Group. The site lies at a height of approximately 121 metres OD.

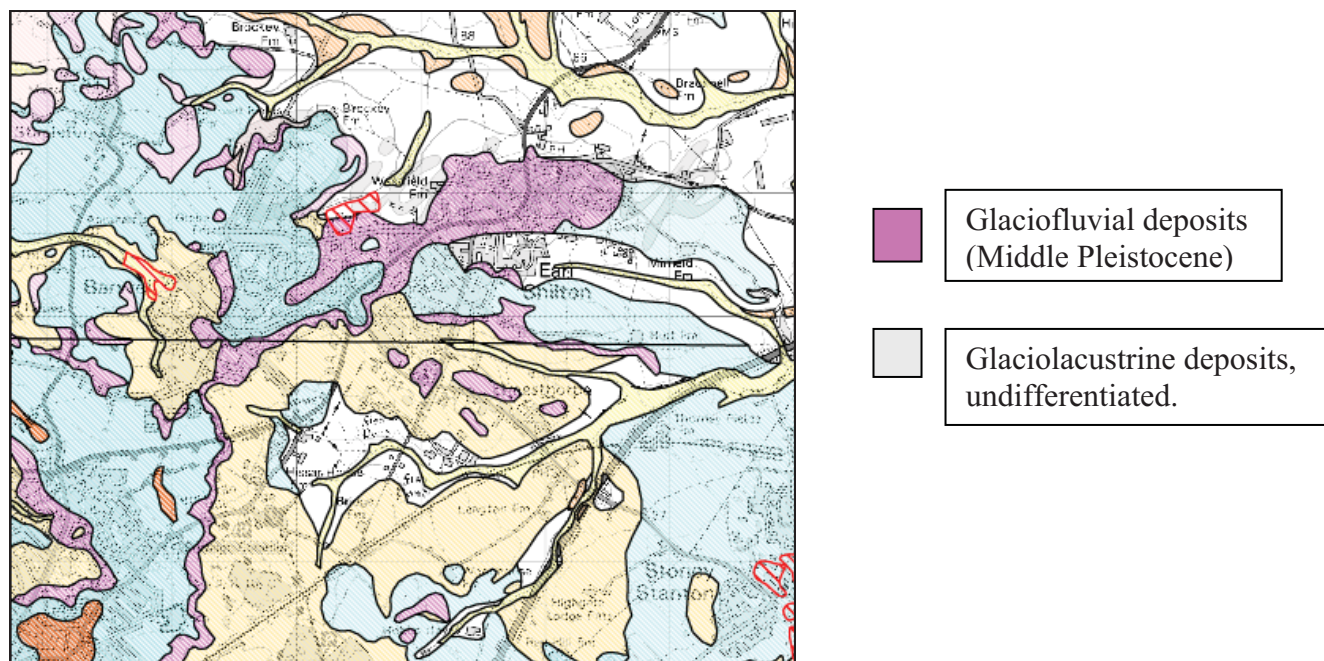


Figure 2. Map showing the geology of the site.

3. Background

The site is located within the historic settlement core of Earl Shilton, first recorded in the Domesday Book as Scheltone, the name meaning farmstead on a shelf or ledge. A motte and bailey castle demolished in the late 12th Century lay around 300 metres to the north-east and the Church which dates from the 13th century still lies 325 metres to the north-east. There are further indications of medieval activity to the north-east of the development site including a vicarage, now demolished and a possible enclosure or pound. Although the highest potential is for remains from the medieval period, there is some evidence for prehistoric and Roman activity largely as isolated finds within a 1 kilometre radius.

The Victorian school building, present on the site until recently, is shown on the 1888 Ordnance Survey Map, although documentary evidence suggests that it may have been constructed around 1858 (Tate, 2005). The 1880 map not only shows the school and outbuildings, but also a series of buildings possibly surrounding a courtyard. The map also shows buildings fronting on to the High Street. To the north of the school, the land appears to be woodland associated with the Vicarage, with a fenced area dividing this from the High Street.

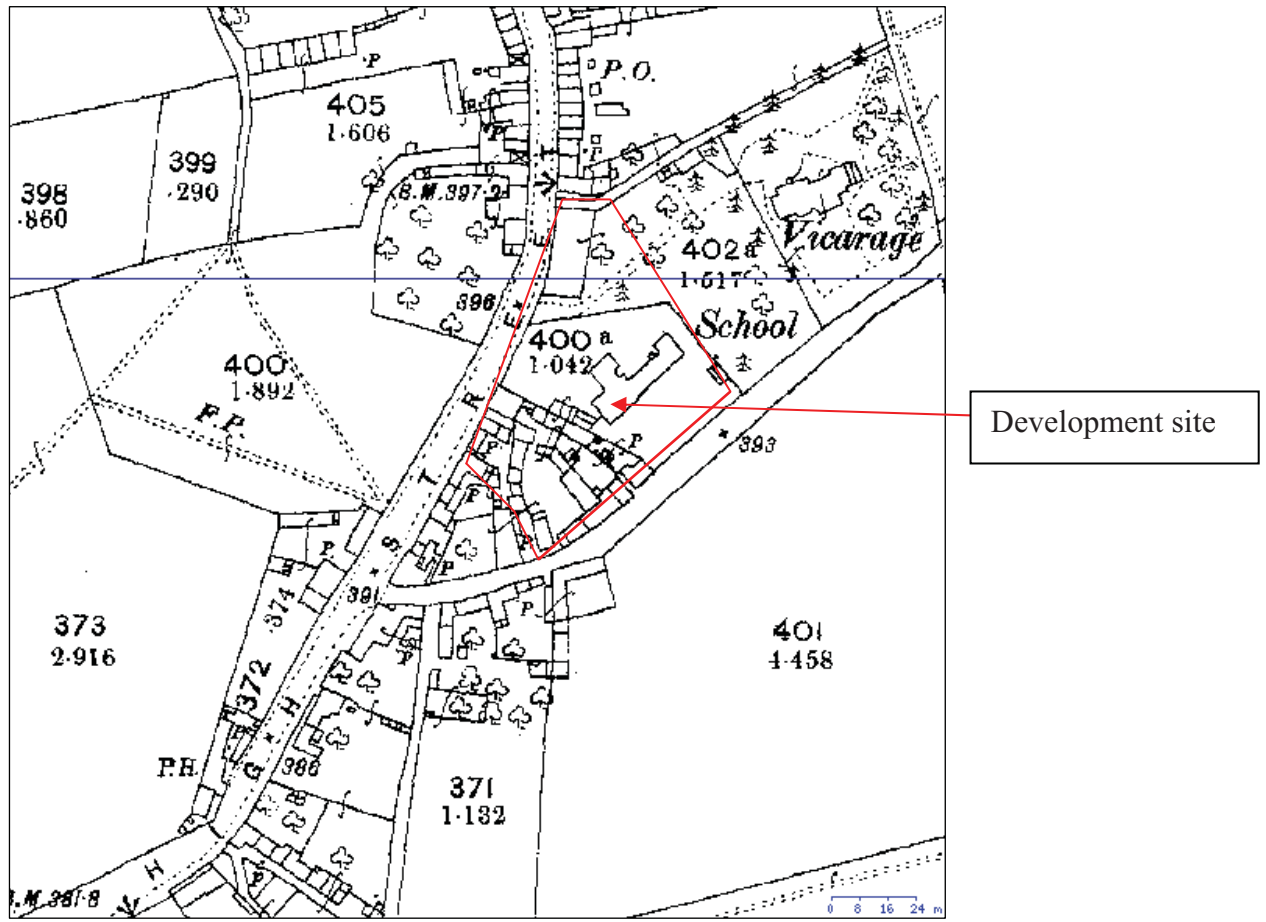


Figure 3. 1888 Ordnance Survey Map of area scheduled for development.

By 1964 the Ordnance Survey National Grid map indicates that these buildings have largely disappeared and been replaced by a school extension to the west.

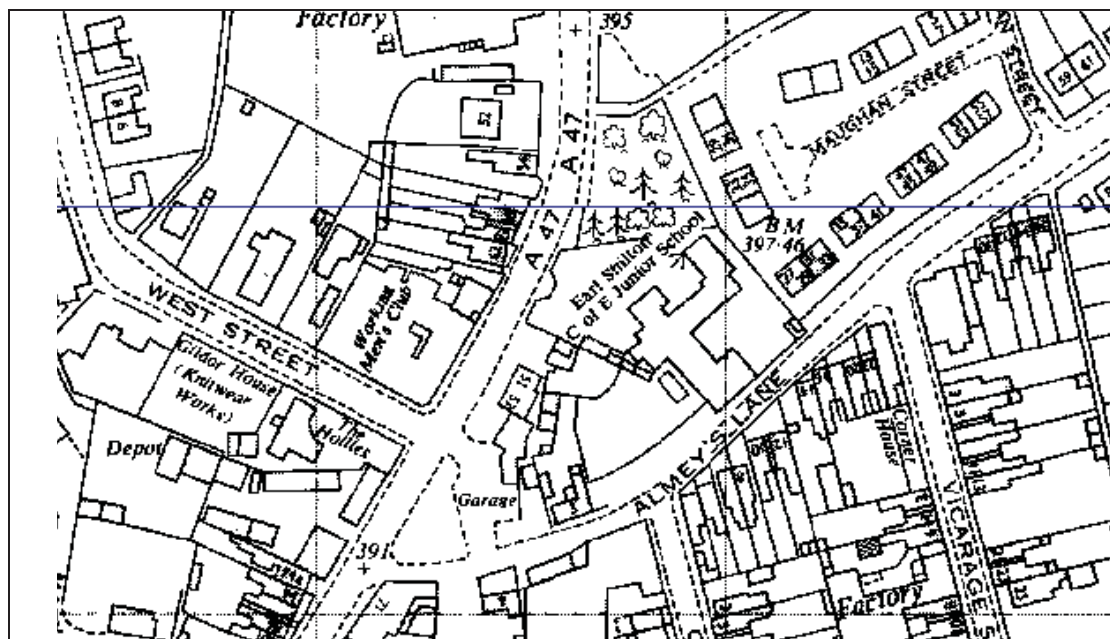


Figure 4. 1964 Ordnance survey map

4. Archaeological objectives

Through archaeological controlled stripping and investigation the objectives were:

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

5. Methodology

Initially, it was proposed to open three trial trenches to assess the depth of topsoil or overburden and determine the presence or absence of any archaeological remains. In the event that significant archaeological remains were identified in an initial trial trench, and found to be 0.15m or less below proposed formation, the site was to be stripped down to the top of the archaeological deposits, followed by a programme of excavation and recording, using additional personnel as necessary.

In the event that archaeological remains of uncertain significance were located in the initial trench/test pit (e.g. undated post-hole/pit), further trenching would be needed, to clarify their nature and significance and determine the need for a full topsoil strip. In the event that no archaeological deposits were identified within the trench, or the depth of overburden was greater than 0.15m, there would be no requirement for the site to be stripped to a level below proposed formation and subsequent groundworks would be subject to an intermittent watching brief.

Trenching was completed using a 13 tonne 360C excavator with a 1.8 metre toothless ditching bucket. All work adhered to the Institute of Field Archaeologist's (IFA) *Code of Conduct* and *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Strip, plan and record operation s* and the *Guidelines for Archaeological work in Leicestershire and Rutland* (LMARS).

6. Results

The location of the trial trenches was determined in advance using the background information from the desk based assessment but there was also an attempt to provide as clear a preview as possible. Unfortunately one of the planned locations lay across the temporary site entrance and was so moved further south-east. The other two were changed to accommodate boundaries and existing vegetation. The final location of the trenches is illustrated in figure 5.

Trench 1 was 7 metres long and 1.8 metres wide and reached an average depth of one metre. The trench revealed two corroded modern water pipes; the pipe to the south was in a larger cut than that to the north. The pipe was not, however, central to the cut and may have filled an earlier ditch. The ditch reached a depth of 0.98 metres and was filled with silty clay and some modern brick rubble. The pipes and possible ditch ran east to west towards a brick well which had been identified during demolition of the school buildings.

Trench 2 revealed 0.35 metres of top soil and 0.6 metres of an orangey light brown silty sand subsoil, disturbed only by existing tree roots. A layer of natural sand and gravel was reached at an average depth of 0.9 metres.

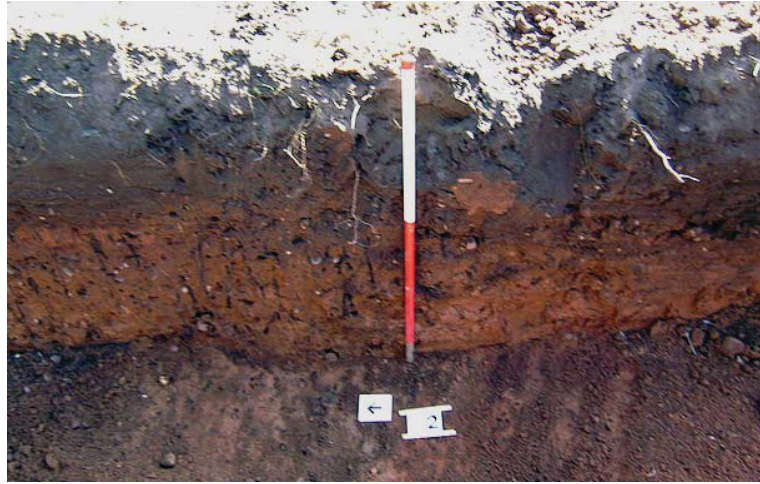


Figure 5. Trench 2, west facing section.

Trench 3 revealed a series of modern features including a modern ceramic drainpipe, an electricity cable, a brick-lined well and a shallow wall footing. Modern disturbance exceeded the 0.3 metres of anticipated ground clearance in the majority of the trench. Elsewhere, the natural orange sand and gravel substratum was evident.



Figure 6. Overall shot of modern features in trench 3 from the north-east.

Site plan showing the location of the trial trenches at Almeys Lane, Earl Shilton.

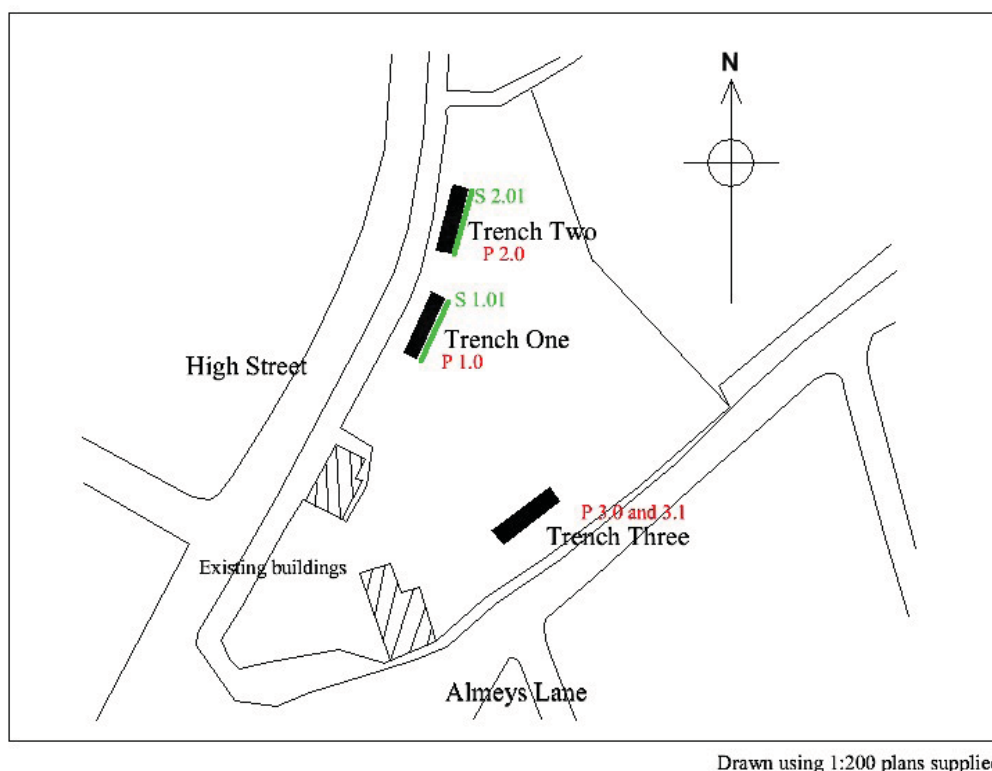


Figure 7. Site plan of Almeys Lane, Earl Shilton, scale 1:200.

7. Conclusion

Two of the three trial trenches demonstrated little other than disturbance caused by activity related to the buildings identified on the early Ordnance survey maps (see figures three and four). Trench 2, however, in the north of the site, showed only root disturbance and the map evidence indicates that this area was free from development in the 19th century. Whilst there was potential here for undisturbed archaeology, notification of topsoil stripping was not given so the proposed intermittent watching brief did not take place.

8. Archive

The archive consists of:

- 1 strip, plan and record operation recording form
- 16 digital photographs
- 1 photographic index

These will be held by the Leicestershire County council under Accession number X.A67.2007.

9. Publication

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

10. Acknowledgements

ULAS would like to thank Kier Partnership Ltd. for their assistance and co-operation in the completion of this project. The project was managed by Dr Patrick Clay and fieldwork completed by the author.

11. References

Bourne J. 2003. *Understanding Leicestershire and Rutland place names*. Heart of Albion Press. Loughborough.

Tate J. 2005. *An archaeological Desk-based assessment for 41-43 High Street, Earl Shilton, Leicestershire (SP 468 979)* ULAS report No.2005-108.

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04.06.2007

12. Appendices

Appendix A. Design Specification for archaeological work at 41-43 High Street, / Almeys Lane, Earl Shilton, Leicestershire (SP 468 979)

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

Design Specification for archaeological work

41-43 High Street, / Almeys Lane, Earl Shilton, Leicestershire (SP 468 979)

Planning Application: 06/00497/REM

Planning authority: Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council

For: Kier Partnership Ltd

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 strip plan and record, as required by the Planning Authority, of any ground works on the site which may disturb areas of archaeological potential in connection with a planning application for the residential units and associated works at land north of Almeys Lane and south of High Street, Earl Shilton, Leicestershire (SP 468 979) for Kier Partnership Ltd..

1.2 All archaeological work will adhere to the Institute of Field Archaeologist's (IFA) *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Strip, plan and record operation s* 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 a strip plan and record operation within the development area to identify any deposits of archaeological importance as detailed in the *Brief for Archaeological investigation (strip, plan and sample excavation) 41-43 High Street, Earl Shilton* (LCC 25.04.2007).

2.2 Archaeological potential

2.1 The development site is located on the east side of High Street, Earl Shilton, at NGR SP 468 979. The site is bounded by High Street to the West, Almey's Lane to the south east, property boundaries to the east and to the south west. The site comprises c. 0.35 ha in area and the Victorian school building (HER Ref: MLE 10637), previously occupying the centre of the site, has now been demolished.

2.2 The DBA (ULAS 2005-108) records the development site as having being subject to previous development and for the most part, tarmaced. The remains of a small brick structure were present in the east of the site during the site visit for the DBA. Services were noted to the north and to the west of the now demolished school building (ULAS 2005-108).

3 Aims

3.1 Through archaeological controlled stripping and 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.

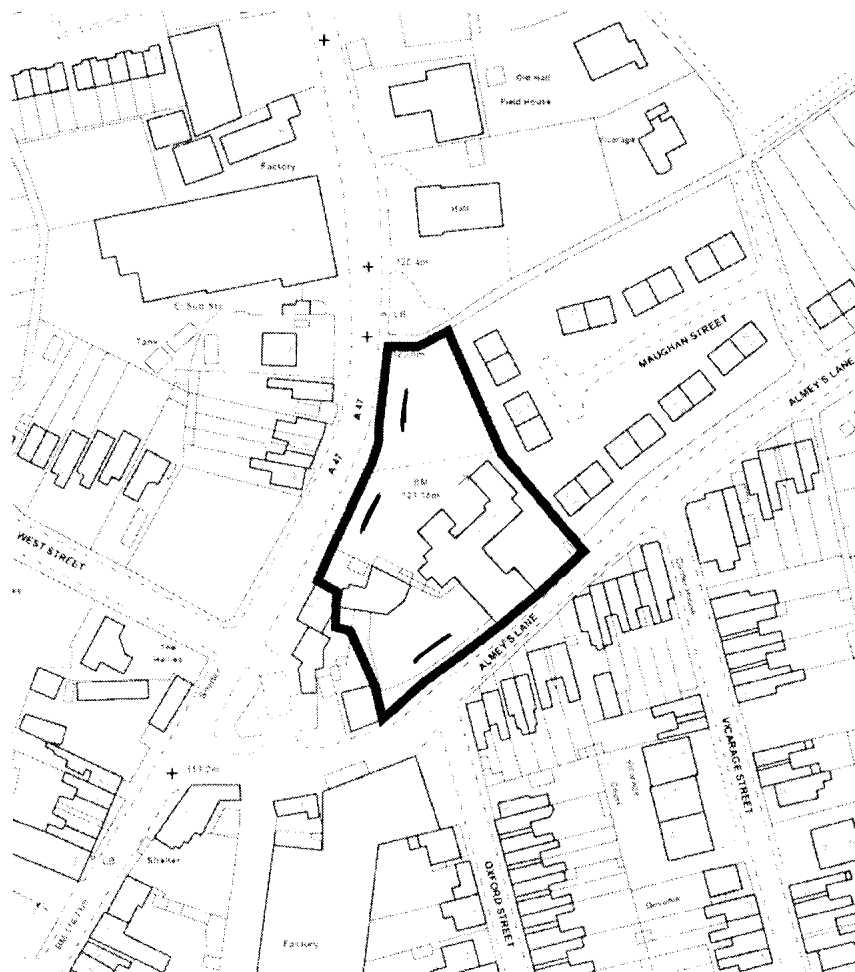


Fig 1 Suggested location of initial trenches

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. Initially it is proposed to open three initial trial trenches to assess the depth of topsoil/overburden and determine the presence/absence of any archaeological remains.

4.2 Should significant archaeological remains be identified in an initial trial trench, and found to be 0.15m or less below proposed formation, the site is to be stripped down to the top of the archaeology, followed by a programme of excavation and recording, using additional personnel as necessary.

4.3 In the event that archaeological remains of uncertain significance are located in the initial trench/test pit (e.g. undated post-hole/pit), further trenching may be necessary, at the discretion of the site supervisor, to clarify their nature and significance and determine the need for a full topsoil strip.

4.4 If no archaeological deposits are identified within the trench, or the depth of overburden is greater than 0.15m, there will be no requirement for the site to be stripped to a level below proposed formation and subsequent groundworks will be subject to an intermittent strip, plan and record operation .

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

4.6 Any archaeological deposits located will be hand cleaned and planned as appropriate. Samples of any archaeological deposits located will be hand excavated. Measured drawings of all archaeological features will be prepared at a scale of 1:20 and tied into an overall site plan of 1:100. All plans will be tied into the National Grid using an Electronic Distance Measurer (EDM) where appropriate.

4.7 Archaeological deposits will be excavated and recorded as appropriate to establishing the stratigraphic and chronological sequence of deposits, recognising and excavating structural evidence and recovering economic, artefactual and environmental evidence. Particular attention will be paid to the potential for buried palaeosols and waterlogged deposits in consultation with ULAS's environmental officer.

4.8 All excavated sections will be recorded and drawn at 1:10 or 1:20 scale, levelled and tied into the Ordnance Survey datum. Spot heights will be taken as appropriate.

4.9 Any human remains encountered will be initially left in situ and only be removed under a Home Office Licence and in compliance with relevant environmental health regulations. The developer and Leicestershire County Council will be informed immediately on their discovery.

4.10 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.

4.11 In the event of significant archaeological remains being located during the strip, plan and record operation 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 Planning Archaeologist at Leicestershire County Council, Heritage Services 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 strip, plan and record operation .

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, Sites and Monuments 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 investigation is scheduled to commence at the start of the contractors groundworks currently scheduled for 21.02.2007. 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 2005) 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)

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25.04.2007

Draft Project Health and Safety Policy Statement

41-43 High Street,/Almeys Lane, Earl Shilton, Leicestershire (SP 468 979)

Planning Application: 06/00497/REM

Planning authority: Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council

For: Kier Partnership Ltd

1. Nature of the work

1.1 This statement is for archaeological excavation. 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 overburden stripping by hymax 360 or similar during daylight hours and recording of any underlying archaeological deposits revealed. Overall depth is likely to be c. 1.0 – 1.2m. Following stripping the exposed deposits will be examined with hand tools (shovels, trowels etc) and archaeological features will be excavated. All work will adhere to the University of Leicester Health and Safety Policy and follow the guidance in the ULAS Health and safety and the Standing Committee of Archaeological Unit Managers manuals, 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.

25.04.2007