Interim Report on Excavations (Phases 1 & 2)
At the former Corella Works
(Richard Roberts (Holdings) Limited),
Sanvey Gate, Leicester

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Project Reference: *LC448*

ULAS Job no. 05/300

For: Thomas Fish & Sons Ltd.

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Interim Report: Archaeological Excavations at Sanvey Gate Phases 1 & 2 Residential Redevelopment, former Corella Works (Richard Roberts (Holdings) Limited), Sanvey Gate, Leicester

Client: Thomas Fish and Sons Ltd.

NGR SK 584 050

Planning Authority: ***Leicester City Council***

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Summary

An excavation was carried out by ULAS on land adjacent to the former Corella Works (Richard Roberts (Holdings) Limited), south of Sanvey Gate, between Burgess Street and St. Margaret's Way. This work was in advance of a proposed residential development scheme and was carried out for Thomas Fish and Sons Ltd. Excavations took place between July 2004 and March 2005.

The excavation results have the potential to add a huge amount to our knowledge of the north-east quarter of the city. Evidence from the early Roman period right through to medieval and post-medieval activity has been identified. Evidence for the former Roman and medieval defences was found including the town ditches, the partially robbed out town wall, a Roman defensive tower, and the town rampart. A small fragment of the original town wall was also exposed during groundworks. Within the town defences a substantial Roman stone building was exposed, and a series of yard surfaces running towards an east-west street associated with another substantial wall and ditch feature, which backed the defences. The street linked in to a significant north-south road that is on the line of one recorded on previous excavations at Causeway Lane and further south at Little Lane.

Earlier activity in the form of ditches, pits and gullies, and evidence for timber structures was also exposed. Later evidence included stratified Saxon pottery, an inhumation burial and disarticulated human remains, medieval pitting, wells, and robbing of the Roman structures. The site archive will be held by LCMS, accession number A21.2003.

1 Introduction

An excavation was carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on land adjacent to the former Corella Works (Richard Roberts (Holdings) Limited), south of Sanvey Gate, between Burgess Street and St. Margaret's Way. This work was in advance of a proposed residential development scheme and was carried out for Thomas Fish and Sons Ltd. This fieldwork followed on from a desk-based assessment stage (Williams and Constable 2002, JSAC 2003) and an evaluation phase (Jarvis 2004, 2005). Excavations were carried out between July 2004 and March 2005, and included a watching brief on phase 1 groundworks, and open-area excavations prior to the phase 2 groundworks. This report represents an interim on post-excavation work that is ongoing, and summarises the significance of the archaeology identified on site, whilst also assessing the potential of the site archive for addressing the research objectives identified after the evaluation phase.

2 Background

2.1 Site Background

The site is located on the south side of Sanvey Gate in Abbey Ward, north Leicester (national grid reference SK 584 050; see Fig. 1), and adjacent to St. Margaret's Way. The Phase 1 and 2 areas front on to Sanvey Gate and Burgess Street, both of which have medieval, if not earlier, origins.

The geology of the site is Mercia Mudstone overlain by river terrace gravels (Nicholas Colt et al. 1993). The site lies at an average height of 55.8m AOD, rising gently to the south.

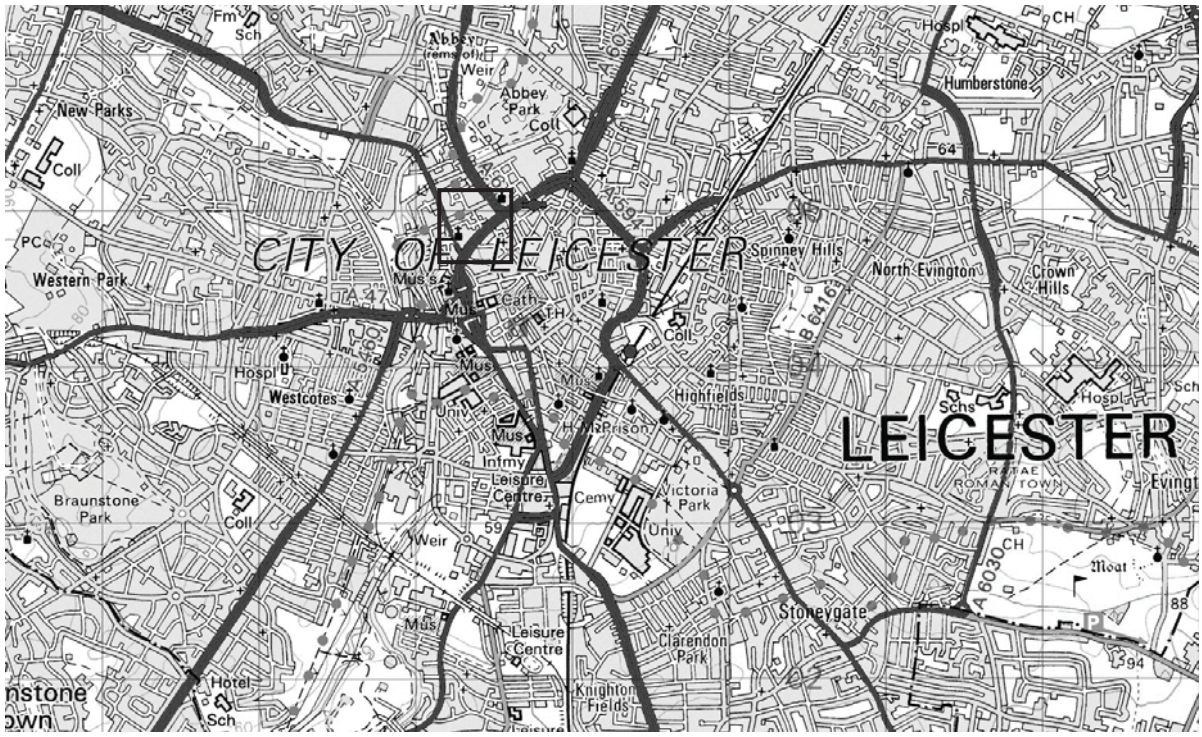

Fig. 1: Site location

The site lies within the Leicester City Archaeological Alert Area as defined in the Local Plan (Williams and Constable 2002). The site is located in the north-east corner of the Roman and medieval walled town, and the line of Leicester's defences also crosses the site (JSAC 2003; Fig. 2). The defences are known to consist of the town wall, fronted by a series of defensive ditches, and backed by an earth and turf rampart with timber revetting. It is thought that the defences remained as a substantial structure well into the medieval period, with the town ditches being maintained by recutting. The desk-based archaeological assessment also recorded a significant number of other Roman and medieval remains within the immediate vicinity of the site, including suburban occupation outside the defences, and urban activity associated with the historic town.

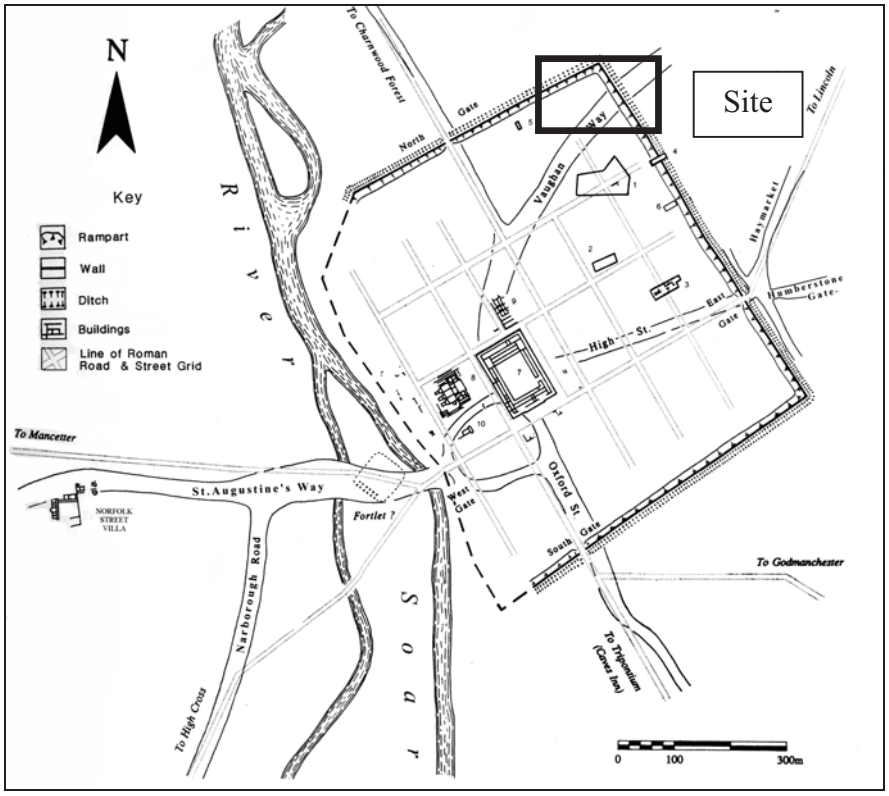

Fig. 2: Roman Leicester (from Connor and Buckley 1999)

2.2 Evaluation Results

The phase 1 and 2 evaluations identified a range of defensive structures of Roman and medieval date (Jarvis 2004, 2005). The east-west town wall was largely represented as a robber trench. Only in the east of the phase 2 area did the town wall foundations survive, as coursed granodiorite drystone footings *c.*2.9m wide (trench 10, see Fig. 3). The wall was associated with an earth rampart, which survived in this area of the site virtually at current ground level, and consisted of varying layers of redeposited soil with occasional buried turf. At the back or tail of the rampart (i.e. south end) structures were identified. These included *in situ* painted wall plaster representing the south-west corner of a mud-brick walled structure. Outside the line of the town wall the massive Roman and medieval town defensive ditches were observed. These consisted of a series of intercutting ditches aligned east-west with a total width of *c.*20m, and continuing to a depth beyond *c.*3m. All three of the main defensive features were within the footprint of the proposed Burgess House building, and were thus threatened by the development. For most of the length of the defences, however, the rampart lies outside the line of the new build, and an agreement was

made with the developer to preserve this feature *in situ* by building the ground level up by 0.5m.

Further trial trenching also encountered medieval activity including a stone building outside the town defences and fronting on to Sanvey Gate (trench 11). To the south and within the town, robber trenches were exposed indicating the outline of a presumed Roman building (trench 16), and to the east a north-south Roman road cut by a further robber trench (trench 17). Trench 15 exposed a 1.5m deep sequence of surviving Roman stratigraphy just within the defences, and trench 8 in the phase 1 area exposed a similar sequence of medieval date.

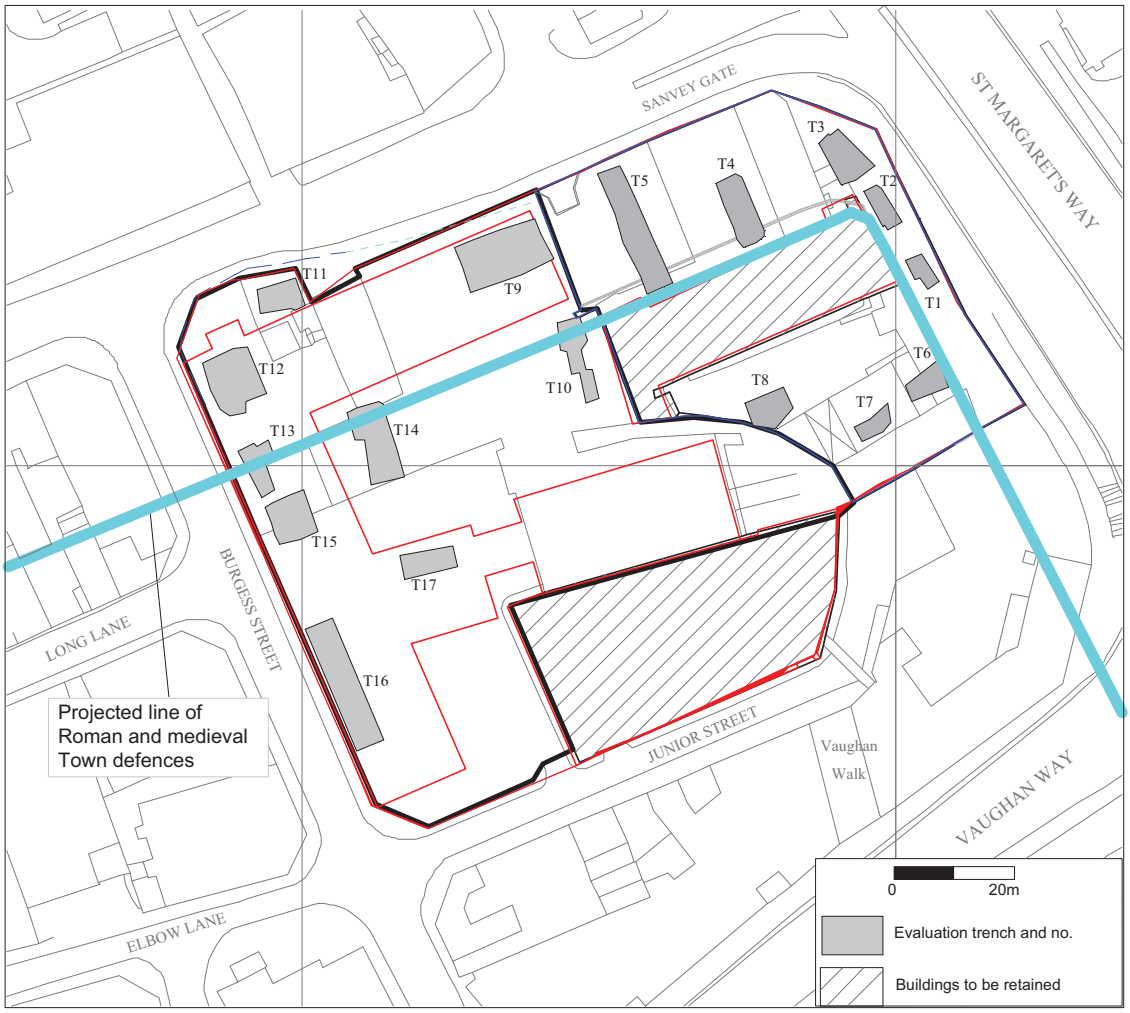

Fig. 3 Location of evaluation trenches.

2.3 Excavation Methodology

Based on the evaluation results, a proposed scheme of archaeological site works was suggested by ULAS in consultation with the Leicester City Planning

Archaeologist of Leicester City Council, in his capacity as archaeological advisor to the planning authority (Meek 2004). The objectives of the excavation were set out; (see appendices 6.1), and an excavation specification produced (see 6.2). This fieldwork took place in two stages:

1) - The excavation by machine and recording of two sections through the town defensive ditches within the footprint of the proposed basements on the Sanvey Gate frontage.

- The excavation by machine and by hand of a third, complete section through the defensive ditches running south from Sanvey Gate, parallel with Burgess Street.

- The hand excavation of a small area on the Sanvey Gate frontage on which lie the remains of probable medieval buildings.

2) - The machine stripping of overburden from the remaining area of the footprints of the proposed basements down to the top of surviving archaeological levels.

- The hand excavation of all surviving archaeological deposits revealed within the footprints of the proposed basements/ramp on the Burgess Street frontage.

- The control and supervision of the removal of remaining material from the footprint of the proposed basement on the Sanvey Gate frontage during basement construction.

Stage 1 excavation took place prior to the insertion of the sheet piling on the basement. A watching brief was carried out during the sheet piling when a leader trench was being dug. The stage 2 excavations were carried out after this work.

3 Results

Fieldwork took place between July and September 2004 (stage 1), and November 2004 and March 2005 (stage 2). Between these, a watching brief was carried out on the sheet piling leader trench. A final stage of open area excavations is currently scheduled for September 2005. Open area stripping took place using a 360º excavator with toothless ditching bucket where practicable. The total area of the

excavations (Burgess House basement, trenches 18-23, see fig. 4) was *c.*2400 square metres, one of the largest archaeological excavation areas examined in Leicester.

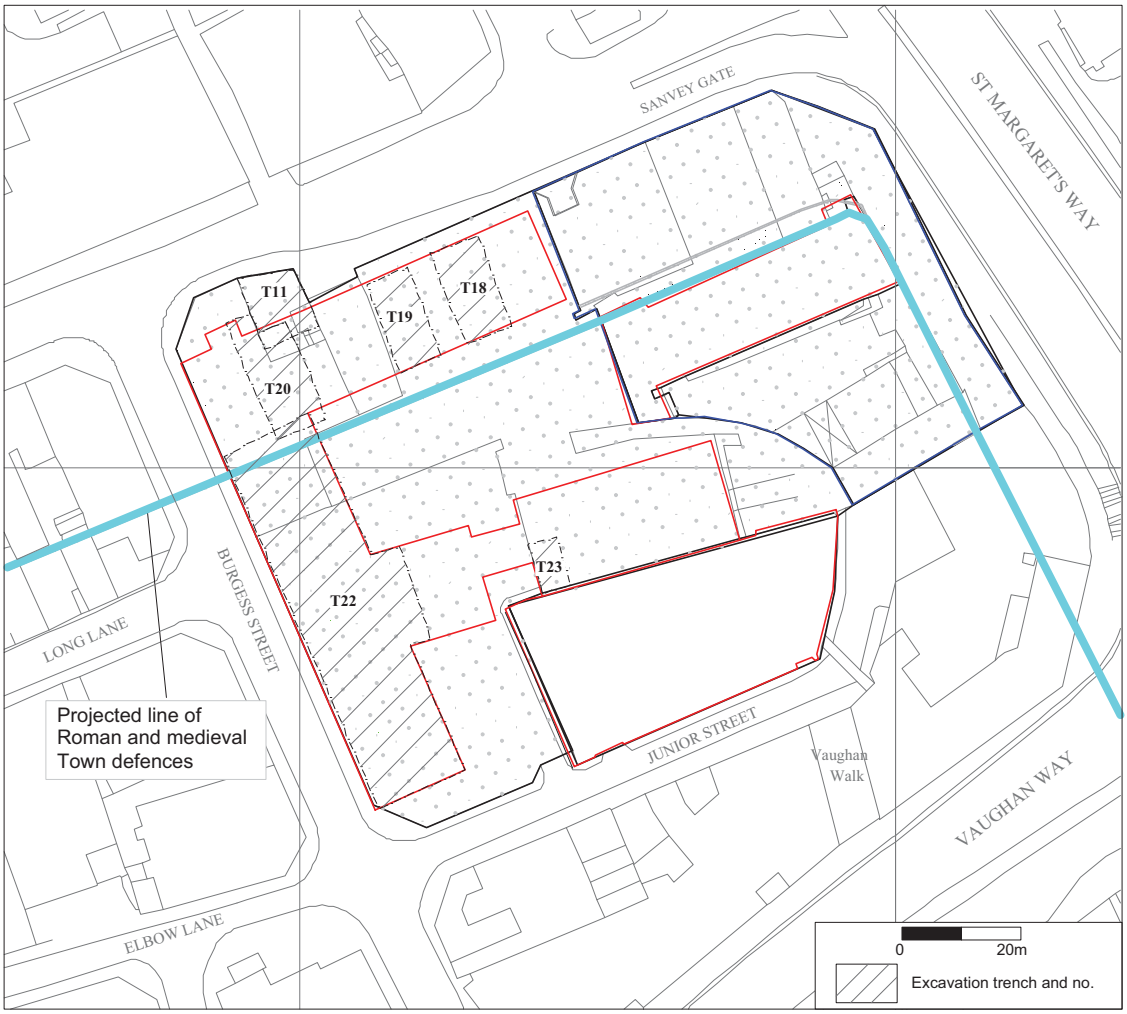

Fig. 4 Location of excavation trenches.

3.1 Results By Area

Stage 1 (Trenches 11, 18-20, Fig. 4)

Trench 11 was situated on the frontage of Sanvey Gate in the north-west corner of site. The trench was enlarged by machine stripping from the original evaluation area, in an attempt to expose more of the presumed medieval stone building. Unfortunately this was truncated on three sides by modern intrusions, and the structure did not continue to the south. However, further medieval features were excavated including a clay floor, structural beamslots, and a series of postholes, pits

and gullies. A large Roman north-south ditch and a probable late medieval stone-lined well were also excavated.

Trenches 18, 19 and 20 were located to target the town defensive ditches running slightly south of trench 11 (see Fig. 4). These were machined out under archaeological supervision, and were stepped to allow the full sequence right to the base of the ditches to be recorded i.e. to a depth of *c.*3m. During machining, any features that were exposed were explored to determine their nature and date. These features consisted of pits and a well, and are considered late as they obviously post-date the infilled town ditches. Dating evidence from these features will assist in our understanding of the date at which the defensive ditches went out of use. Additionally, stray finds of pottery exposed during the machining were surveyed using a total station EDM in an attempt to provide dating of the town ditch fills from which the pottery came. Results were disappointing in the sense that little pottery was recovered, however assessment of this pottery is ongoing and it may assist with the dating of the ditches. After machining, the trenches were hand cleaned and the features assessed then recorded using standard ULAS procedures, including photographs, and scale plan and composite section drawings. The sequence was seen to consist of two main parallel, approximately east-west, ditches with a series of recuts. It was considered that the majority of the fills represented medieval activity, which would have cut through earlier, Roman, deposits. Only at the base and edges of the cuts were potential Roman ditch fills identified. Samples were taken from all potentially productive ditch fills, in the main waterlogged sediments towards the base of the sequence. Due to this waterlogging, organic material was preserved including wood, worked timber and a fragment of a leather object, possibly a shoe. The wood items have been recorded and will be assessed prior to environmental and archaeological analysis. These organic items are currently in storage. In addition to the waterlogged samples, a series of pollen tins were used to produce a column sample through the lower ditch fills. These will also be assessed to see if they are productive of environmental information and radiocarbon dating material. This is considered to provide the most likely opportunity for dating of the town ditches so far identified in Leicester. After this recording phase, the most significant fills (e.g. primary fills) were excavated by hand to retrieve dating evidence in the form of pottery.

Fig. 5 Main features, all phases.

During machining of the south end of trench 19 (Fig. 4) a fragment of the Roman town wall was exposed, the first piece of faced town wall recovered in Leicester. This has provided a great deal of information about the construction of the town wall, for example the facing of the wall was of thin granodiorite blocks (see plate 1) in a lime mortar. The wall had toppled northwards from its original position, and excavated evidence from underneath the wall will provide a date for this event, presumably when the wall was being demolished for partial robbing. A stable fragment of this wall section was lifted and is currently stored in the basement on site, awaiting long-term consolidation prior to its display on the development site.

Plate 1. Surviving fragment of town wall facing stones.

Watching Brief Stage (Burgess House sheet piling)

The most significant feature exposed during this intervening stage was without doubt a single inhumation burial. This was sited to the south of the presumed line of Long Lane and is likely to be of medieval date. Observation of the leader trench also exposed the line of the defensive rampart, and other features that were dealt with during stage 2.

Stage 2 (Trenches 22-3, Fig. 4)

The south area of Burgess House i.e. southwards from the edge of the town ditches was dealt with as an open area excavation and was stripped under close archaeological supervision. The site area had been heavily truncated during the

medieval period represented by a relatively flat horizon of archaeological deposits surviving sealed underneath a homogeneous garden soil layer *c.*1m deep, probably from farming activity. After stripping, the site was then gridded out on a 5x5m grid, and pre-excavation plans were drawn. The single context system was adopted where appropriate to produce a stratified plan record of features, and corresponding Harris context and plan matrices were maintained during excavations.

Excavation identified a large stone walled building, thought to be of Roman date (south end T22, see Figs. 4, 6). This was 21.5m long (north-south) and 6.6m wide (east-west) continuing outside the site boundaries, and had at least four rooms. It appears to have been robbed out almost totally in the medieval period, and due to later truncation no floor surfaces survived, hence its original function is unclear. It was probably a substantial strip building, and with granite footings some 0.75m wide could have been two storeys; it was perhaps a house, workshops or shops. The absence of large amounts of *tesserae* and painted wall plaster would indicate it was not a high status building, although such buildings are known to exist nearby (Lucas *et al.* 1989). Further work will include comparison of the dimensions of this building with similar structures in Leicester, and with Roman activity recently identified at the Shires 19 site to the west (T. Higgins pers. comm.). The Sanvey Gate building ran parallel to a Roman road, some 12m to the east, which is a continuation of one seen at Causeway Lane (Connor and Buckley 1999). The road was over 7m wide, had a series of resurfacing episodes, and appeared to be associated with/on the same alignment as a pair of substantial ditches, and a robber trench representing a further wall-line. Other features excavated include pits, stone wells and a timber lined well, metalled surfaces, structures indicated by posthole alignments, beamslots, and ditches and gullies.

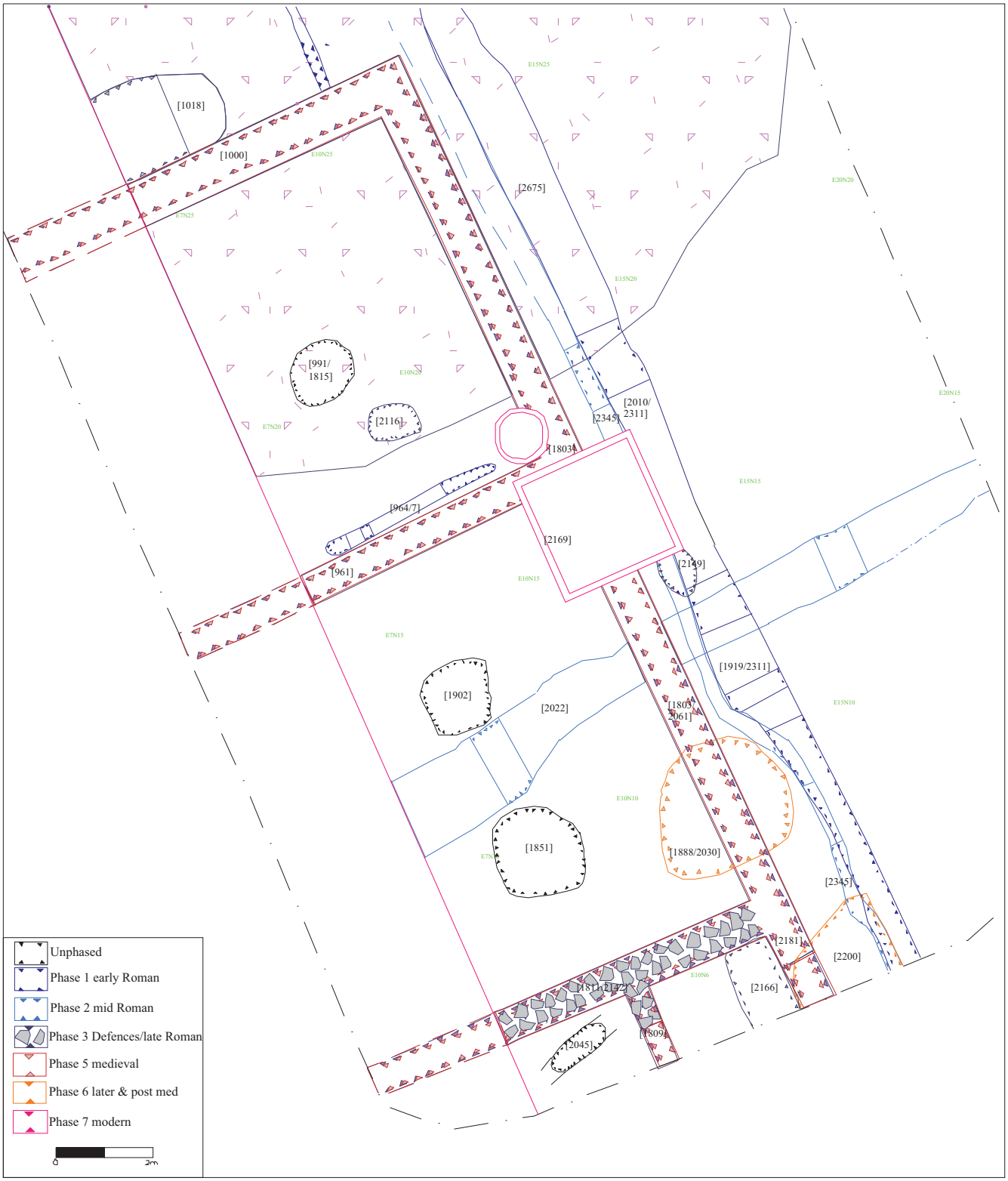

Fig. 6 Main building, all phases and associated features.

In the north area of trench 22 the defences were excavated, and consisted of the south edge of the town ditches, the line of the town wall, and the rampart bank cut by the footings for a Roman tower (see Fig. 7). The survival of the southern edge of the town ditches has allowed a full section through the defences to be constructed, the first sequence recorded in Leicester and a significant tool in understanding the development and nature of the town defences. A large medieval robber trench more than 3m wide and 1m deep represented the line of the Roman town wall.

Disturbed granodiorite footings were recorded in places, where only partial robbing had occurred. The south edge of the robber trench cut through *c.*0.6m of surviving rampart layers, which consisted of clay deposits with some sand and gravel – basically redeposited natural. Sample excavation by hand through these layers produced pottery, which will add to the known dating sequence for the construction of the defensive rampart.

Plate 2: Tower footings (foreground, and arrowed in background), and town wall robber (foreground arrow).

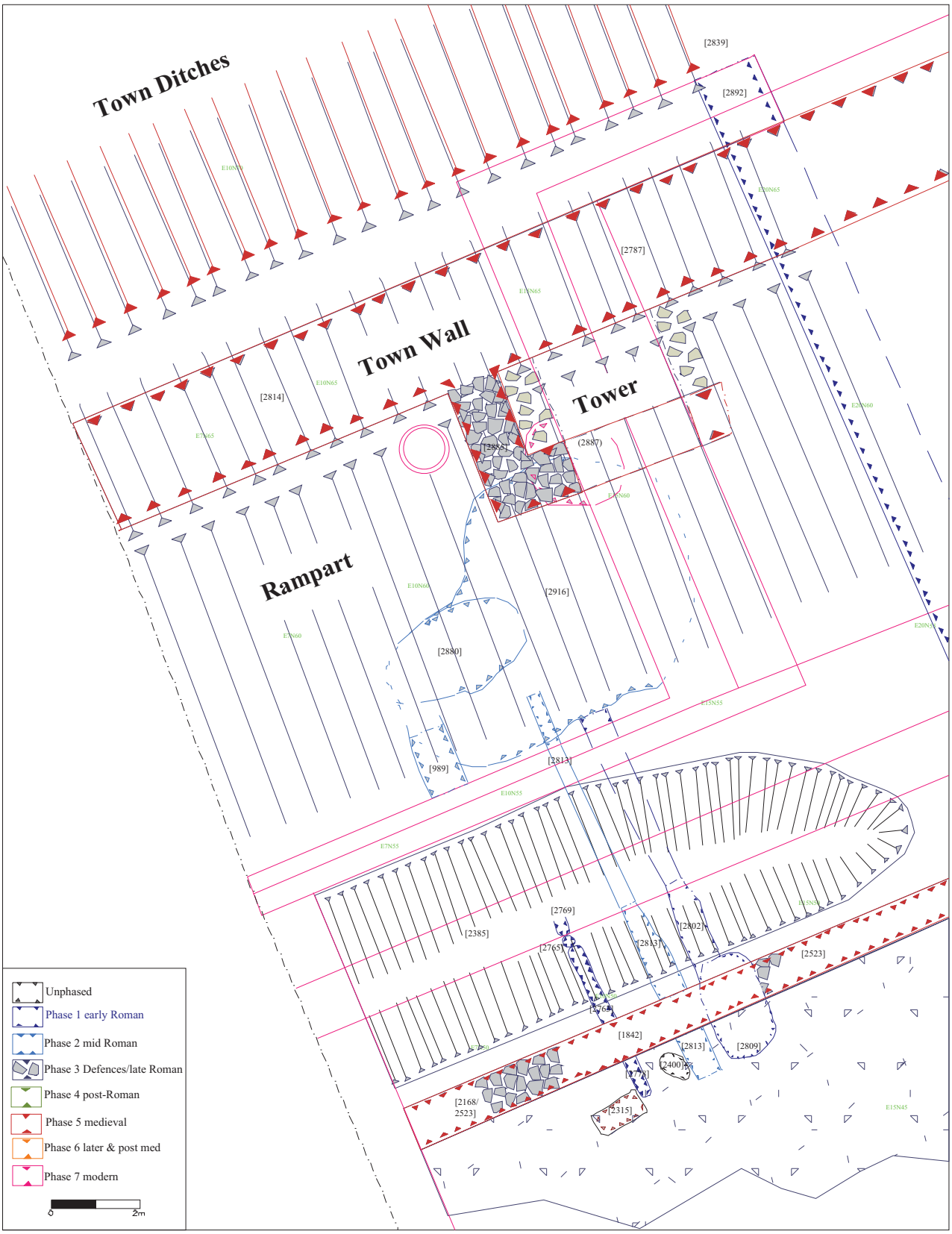

Fig. 7 Defences, all phases and associated features.

The rampart was cut by the L-shaped footings for a tower structure, which continued south of the town wall line for 3m then had a return wall running eastward for over 2m (see plate 2). Most of the tower area was badly truncated by modern disturbance, however the survival of a clay and granodiorite infill to the tower was seen continuing to the east suggesting a structure that would originally have been *c.*6m long (parallel to the town wall).

3.2 Results By Preliminary Phase (Fig. 5)

Dating work is currently in progress hence the phasing of features should be regarded as preliminary, and is based upon observations on site, stratigraphic relationships, spot finds and parallels from other sites.

Phase 0 – Unphased

Linear features [1802], [2045]

Pits [1851], [1902], [2000], [2400]

Postholes [2263], [2958], [2959]

A series of discrete features, not currently stratigraphically related to other contexts. The two linear features [1802], [2045] at the south of trench 22 are considered to be of likely Roman date, and are probably associated with the other Roman features here. Pits [1851] and [1902] were fairly shallow, of uncertain function – perhaps rubbish pits, and may be medieval in date. Pits [2000] and [2400] were also shallow. Cut [2000] contained wood fragments and is therefore most likely late, whilst [2400] was thought by the excavator to be of Roman date. Postholes [2958] and [2959] were observed during the watching brief on the east of trench 22, were substantial features (stone filled, *c.*0.5m diameter, 0.3m deep), but did not produce dating evidence and could not be stratified beyond the fact that they were cutting the early Roman ditch [2621] fill (2786).

Phase 1 – Early Roman

Linear features [1919], [2621] etc.

Pits [2442], [2452], [2809]

Beamslots [964], [2459], [2722]

Posthole [2765]

Significant features of early Roman date were excavated in trench 22. Linear feature [2621] was a large north-south ditch predating the defences, which has produced a large finds assemblage including late 1st-early 2nd century pottery. It is on the same alignment as the Roman road and the town grid, the laying out of which has traditionally been dated to the first half of the second century (Clay and Pollard 1994, 47). Parallel to this ditch and 8m to the west were a deep gully cut [1919] some 50m long, and a linear feature, posthole [2765] and beamslot [2459] structure *c.*26m long. These represent a substantial boundary feature and structure such as a palisade or building, perhaps with internal/return divisions [964] and [2722]. Evidence for early timber structures in the north-east quarter of Leicester is significant because it proves that occupation may have expanded and reached this supposed 'backwater' early in the life of the Roman town. Further analysis of the dating from these features is necessary to tie down the dating for these features, to see when this expansion occurred, and to establish a date for when the town grid came in to use. Additionally these features pre-date the town defences, so they will provide a relative date, or *terminus post quem*, for when the defences were constructed. In the east of the Burgess House basement area, and adjacent to the Corella works factory, a curvilinear gully [2956] was excavated. This produced early Roman pottery and may be the eaves drip gully of a roundhouse, both late Iron Age and early Roman examples of which are known of locally.

Phase 2 – Mid Roman

Linear features [1734], [2011], [2345], [2620], [2755], [2952] etc.

Pits [1860], [2242], [2680], [2698], [2880], [2916]

Road surface (1059) etc.

On the same alignment as the early Roman linear features [2621] and [1919] discussed above, and presumably replacing them were cuts [2620] and [2345]. Again, these features were a large boundary ditch and a smaller but still substantial gully to the west. Both these linear features also appear to predate the town defences. The boundary ditch [2620] may continue northwards and beyond the defences as seen in trench 11 (cut [1734]). This was cut by a perpendicular ditch [2011] in the south of the site area. The make up layers (1059 etc.) for the north-south Roman road in the east of trench 22 have been assigned to this mid Roman phase in line with evidence

from other parts of the town (see plate 3). The stratigraphic relationship between this road and the north-south ditches just to the west could not be determined because of the robber trench [2461] cutting through (see phase 5, below). Cuts [2755] and [2952] were small linear features, stratigraphically assigned to this phase. Additionally, pits [1860], [2242], [2680], [2698], [2880], [2916] are included here. Cuts [2880] and [2916] are potentially the most important as they underlie the defensive rampart, and thus provide a relative date for the defensive earthwork.

Plate 3 Working shot from south, showing Roman road (right) and roadside wall robber

Phase 3 – Defences/Late Roman

Town ditches [1201], [1243] etc.

Town wall line [698], [2814] etc.

Rampart (2878) etc.

Tower footings [2885]

Building [1811] etc.

Wall lines [1059], [2523], [2576] [2932] etc.

Metalled surfaces (2189) (2341), (2938) etc.

Pits [1018], [1839], [2035], [2048], [2116], [2288], [2327], [2376], [2468], [2469], [2586], [2612]

Well [1948]

Linear features [2385], [2556]

It is likely that the town ditches [1201], [1243] etc. were open for much of the period of Roman occupation, requiring recutting and perhaps relocation over time. The ditches are included with this phase to tie in with the town wall [698], rampart (2878) and tower [2885], although the sequence of construction will only be determined by further analysis of the stratigraphy and dating. The town wall footings only survived in situ in trench 10 (Fig. 3, and see above 2.2) within cut [698], however the rest of the town wall line was identified by the massive robber cut, presumably medieval removal of stone, [2814] etc. The town wall construction has been initially assigned to the later Roman period (*c.*3rd century) based on parallels from other sections through the defences in Leicester and other Roman towns (Buckley and Lucas 1987). As mentioned above, further analysis on the pottery from the rampart layers will provide dating for the Sanvey Gate defences. The dating of the stone phase of the structure has also been applied to the large building [1811], the roadside walls [1059], [2576], [2932] and the east-west boundary wall [2523]. The latter boundary wall is significant because it is sited in a key area separating the defensive zone from the urban area of town, and it is a feature not seen before in Leicester. The roadside walls [1059], [2576], and [2932] are interesting as well, because these seem to be boundary walls rather than buildings, whilst it is usual for buildings to front directly on to the road. It could be suggested that the main stone building [1811] replaced an earlier timber structure, a pattern paralleled in other areas of the town, a sequence not seen before in the north-east quarter of the town (Cooper and Buckley 2003). The fact that this building is so far from the road might suggest that it actually fronted on to another street outside the site area. Between this building and the north-south road area was a large metalled yard surface (2189 etc.), which also ran northwards almost joining up with a series of street surfaces (2341 etc.) adjacent to the main boundary wall. Beyond (and to the north of) this boundary wall a large east-west ditch cut [2385] was seen, which probably dates to this phase. To the south was another linear feature [2556], and a series of pits that may be rubbish pits associated with nearby occupation. Well [1948] was of stone build, and only produced Roman pottery.

Phase 4 - Post-Roman

Postholes [1670], [1685], [2048], [2107], [2052], [2417], [2592], [2595], [2637],
Pit [2265], [2315]

Pits [2265] and [2315] are assigned to this phase on stratigraphic evidence. The large posthole [2048] produced a large assemblage of early Saxon pottery, the first stratified material from within the town walls. Just to the south-east a series of substantial postholes are also of this phase on stratigraphic grounds. Cuts [2052], [2592] and [2637] were so similar in nature that they are probably contemporary and part of a single building or similar structure. Preliminary spot dating has identified Saxon pottery in eight contexts, though most of these are thought to be later in date, with the Saxon pottery being residual.

Phase 5 – Medieval

Robber cuts [1000], [1059], [1811], [1842], [2168], [2461], [2787]
Grave cut [1783]
Stone building (1468), (1492)
Pits/wells [1103], [1806], [1895], [1943], [2051], [2139], [1897], [2200], [2236], [2237], [2382], [2937], [2948]

The robber cuts [1000], [1059], [1811], [1842], [2168], [2461], and [2787] are assigned to this phase based on parallels from other sites i.e. the robbing of Roman stone structures usually occurred during the medieval period. Also the grave cut [1783] and burial (1788) – see plate 4, and the stone structure in trench 11 (see above 3.1) are considered to be medieval. Well [1943] was of timber build, and is presumed to be medieval, based on its construction and pottery dating. Well [2237] retained the stone construction, whereas [1806] may have been robbed out, or of timber construction. These produced bulk environmental samples, which will be assessed during the post-excavation stage.

Plate 4 East-west inhumation burial, south of defences.

Phase 6 – Later/Post Medieval

Pits [1119], [1383], [1498]

Wells [1326], [1888]

Linear features [1126], [1128]

Pits [1119], [1383] and well [1326] cut the infilled town ditches, and will provide dating for the disuse of the defences. Because of this relationship they are considered to be later or post-medieval in date. Linear features [1126] and [1128] were situated north of the town ditches and are related, most likely, to the frontage of Sanvey Gate. Wells [1326] and [1888] were also sampled (see above).

Phase 7 – Modern

The effects of modern intrusions varied across site. Cellars for Victorian housing, and the foundations for the former factory adjacent to Burgess Street have caused most disturbance. Also, a grubbed out ring beam ran north-south through the Roman tower.

3.3 Current State of Archive and Post-Excavation Work

The finds, documentary, and environmental archives are catalogued in the appendices (see 6.3). All the bulk finds have been processed – washed, dried, marked with accession number and context number, and bagged and boxed according to

material. Small finds (see plate 5), organic materials, and environmental samples have been stored in a stable environment pending specialist work. All basic records are now on the site database, which will facilitate querying of records and report production as required for the post-excavation assessment. The plans, context sheets and digital photographs have been indexed. Preliminary Harris matrices have been produced for the plans and contexts for the open area excavations (trenches 11, 22 and 23), and trenches 19 and 20 (town ditches). The stratigraphic information has been used along with site records to highlight significant contexts for spot dating. These are mainly the early Roman and defensive features. The spot-dated pottery results are also on the site database ordered by context and feature. A site plan of the main features has been produced in digital format (Cad drawing), and these features have been assigned to interim phases (as Cad layers) as outlined above.

Plate 5: Small find of Roman bronze steelyard.

3.4 Work Pending for the Assessment Stage

All finds and samples will be assessed for their productivity both as regards the original excavation objectives (see 6.1), and for new research objectives that have come to light. The latter, for example, includes the remains of the defensive tower,

which was not exposed during the evaluation. Environmental samples will be processed as part of the assessment, and only productive samples will be analysed further. Two samples taken of possible cremations (from [2491] and [2493]) will be assessed, and the results included with the human bone report if positive. It is known that features, particularly wells, may contain a high proportion of residual dating material. Bulk samples will be processed only if they are securely dated. Because of this, more detailed pottery analysis is required, which will be carried out during the assessment stage. Waterlogged samples will be assessed to see if they produce organic material e.g. contexts suitable for dating of the town ditches by C14 dating. A second stage of pottery spot dating will be also carried out in order to verify the preliminary phasing of features, and to provide dating for unphased contexts. Additionally, other materials will be assessed as to their significance. These will include building materials – brick/tile, mortar samples, slate and other worked stone, painted wall plaster, and animal bone, shell and horn cores.

The site matrices will be completed for the other trenches (1-18, 21 - evaluation and town ditch trenches). The stratigraphic relationships will be added to the site database, and a sample will be added to the digital matrix software package Stratify (or similar), for testing to see if this speeds up interpretation of the stratigraphic record. Cross-referencing of plans and sections will be carried out and these will also be entered on to the database, to allow quick searching for drawings in the archive. All features not currently digitised will be added to the all-features site plan, by phase where appropriate.

4 Discussion and Conclusions

The results from the Sanvey Gate excavation are highly significant, not alone because the site is one of the largest excavations in Leicester. It is the first excavation to produce a complete sequence, or section, through the defences and incorporating both the suburban and intra-mural areas. Additionally, much of the previous work on the defences was in the first half of the 20th century, whereas we are able to use techniques that have only recently been developed – digital surveying and photography, carbon dating and pollen analysis for example, which will aid in our understanding and the dating of the defences.

More specifically, the site has produced the first evidence in Leicester for a Roman defensive tower, actual facing stones and fabric of the town wall, and the

survival of archaeology in the zone behind the defences. The results from the excavation of the defences might potentially be of national significance, as Roman defensive archaeology is a problematic area. However, the poor survival of the masonry phase would rule out the Sanvey Gate site (i.e. they are almost totally robbed out). The results are regionally important however, and add to the wider national debate, which is currently based on a relatively meagre amount of evidence for Roman defences. For example, there is some debate as to whether the defences were constructed in response to a perceived or real threat, or were actually a display of civic pride. In finer detail, the sequence and dating of the defences is currently not well understood in Leicester either, and the Sanvey Gate results will add much to our knowledge, for example dating of the rampart and construction of the tower. Additionally, there is evidence for the medieval defences in the form of the recut town ditches, and the eventual disuse of these and the robbing of the town wall. (I would argue that the defences have a significant potential for the region and adds to the wider national debate. Add a line about this national debate – ie response to internal/external threats, real or perceived.)

Within the history of the town, Sanvey Gate has the potential to add to our knowledge of the north-east quarter and its suburb. Traditionally, this part of town has been seen as a relative backwater (by whom?!)in the Roman and medieval periods (Cooper and Buckley 2003), however the presence of Roman timber and stone buildings, and the early Roman activity, suggests that this is an oversimplification. The dating evidence might indicate that this area was occupied much earlier, in a more formal manner (i.e. laid out according to the street grid), and more intensively than formerly thought (Elbow Lane?!). There is also definite evidence that this north-east quarter was occupied relatively intensively before the construction of the defences. It will also be possible to relate the evidence from site with previous sites nearby, and those currently under excavation, such as Vine Street to the west. For the Saxon period, the Sanvey Gate site has produced the first stratified finds from within the town walls, and further finds, though probably residual, add to the evidence of Saxon occupation on site. Further work is required on the phasing of features to identify possible structures of this date. Aside from the stone building fronting Sanvey Gate, domestic medieval archaeology on site is perhaps of less significance, although the presence of pits and wells will add to the evidence for backyard activity in Leicester.

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6 Appendices

6.1 Extract: *Excavation Objectives* (Meek 2004)

Based on the interim results of the Phase I and II archaeological evaluations, the following specific objectives were suggested:-

Evolution of the early Roman community and establishment of the civitas: The evaluation has shown the presence of archaeological features that potentially pre-date the ramparts of the town defences within the Phase II area. These deposits could potentially be of early Roman or even Iron Age date, and include a likely pre-rampart buried soil.

The development of the Roman and medieval town defences: The evaluation has shown that survival of all elements of the town defences are present on the site, including a good sequence of ditches; the town wall robber trench, including some elements of surviving footings; rampart material, surviving close to the present ground surfaces in places. There is a good potential that a detailed chronology of the development and eventual removal of the town defences will be achievable from the proposed excavations within the Phase II area. This will also utilise the information and sections recorded during the evaluation stage of work in the central area of the site, where the archaeological remains are to be preserved. There is a potential for lower fills of the town ditches to contain waterlogged remains, preserving environmental and organic material.

Development and character of intramural activity within the north-east part of the Roman town: The evaluation has shown that Roman deposits survive over the southern part of the Phase II area, although truncated to a significant depth by later medieval and post-medieval cultivation and development. These Roman remains indicate the presence of structures, roads and possibly a cellar. A deeper sequence of deposits has also been revealed on the former line of Long Lane where it used to cross the site.

The character of Post-Roman and Anglo-Saxon occupation at Leicester: Potential finds of Anglo-Saxon date have been recovered from the site, and thus there is a good potential that other evidence may be present.

Development of the early medieval town: The excavation will investigate the character and chronology of the intra-mural medieval settlement. The development and chronology of Long Lane may also be established with excavation on the western side of the site on the line of the former road.

Evolution of the medieval suburbs: The excavation of the area on the Sanvey Gate frontage where the remains of medieval buildings have been found during the evaluation may be able to provide evidence regarding the development and character of the north suburb, and better understand the settlement patterns and land-use.

Development of the post-medieval town: The site should be able to provide evidence regarding the date of disuse and backfilling of the town ditches. The character of the subsequent reuse of the area will also be studied. Evidence should also be revealed regarding the continued use of Long Lane and the character of post-medieval activities in the area.

6.2 Extract: *Excavation Methodology* (Meek 2004)

The proposed Leicester Square development, Phase II will involve the construction of a roughly L-shaped apartment building along the Sanvey Gate and Burgess Street frontages. The building will have basement car parking over its entire footprint, which will severely damage or destroy any archaeological remains that are present, and thus the archaeological excavation strategy proposed will be almost entirely within this footprint. The Corella Works building on the Junior Street frontage is being retained and converted to residential use and an adjacent existing basement area will be converted to car parking, so neither area will affect below ground archaeological deposits.

The broad character of the archaeological remains, as revealed during the evaluation of the Phase II area, can be broken down into five parts:

- ***Probable Medieval buildings on Sanvey Gate frontage***

Trench 11 revealed the footings of a probable medieval masonry building, as well as potential remains for timber structures and clay floors. This lies outside the footprint of the basements, but in an area in which piles are proposed to carry an upper projection to the building. The archaeological deposits lie close to the present ground

surface, and are thus threatened by the development proposals. Full excavation of these deposits is proposed within the area to be affected by the proposals.

- ***Defensive Ditches running parallel to Sanvey Gate***

The line of the defensive ditches that surrounded the town walls were recorded along the entire length of the proposed footprint of the basement on the Sanvey Gate frontage. The ditches will be a sequence of ditch cuts and re-cuts dating from the Roman and medieval periods, with disuse and backfilling in the post-medieval period. The archaeological deposits lie at a depth of around 1m below present ground level, and will be partly destroyed by the construction of the basements and piling for the upper floors of the building. Sample excavation of these deposits is proposed.

- ***Line of Town Wall and Rampart***

The former line of the Roman and medieval town walls and rampart runs parallel to Sanvey Gate. The line lies to the south of the footprint of the basement running along Sanvey Gate, but will be affected by the basement running along the Burgess Street frontage. The archaeological deposits lie very close to the present ground surface in the central part of the site area, but have been damaged by basements, foundations and stanchions adjacent to Burgess Street. The majority of the line of the town wall and rampart lie in an area that will not be affected by the development proposals, and are intended to be preserved beneath approximately 0.5m of imported material. A hand excavated section through the entire sequence of rampart and town wall deposits is proposed on the eastern side of the basement on the Burgess Street frontage, away from areas of known modern truncation.

- ***Former Line of Long Lane***

The area to the south of the southern extent of the rampart corresponds roughly with the line of the former Long Lane. The evaluation has demonstrated that a deeply stratified sequence of archaeological deposits lie beneath the present ground level, including deposits relating to former Long Lane road surfaces of medieval to modern date. The character of lower archaeological deposits has not been fully identified during the evaluation, and deep truncation from services was recorded. The former line of the road passes across the width of the proposed basement area, and then runs around the proposed and existing basement. Full hand excavation of the deposits affected by the basement is proposed.

- ***Intra-mural Area***

To the south of Long Lane archaeological deposits of almost entirely Roman date were revealed at a depth of *c*.1.5m below present ground level. These deposits were sealed by cultivation horizons of medieval and post-medieval date, which are likely to have truncated through late Roman and later deposits. The remains recorded during the evaluation suggest Roman structures, a road and a possible cellar. There does not appear to be a great depth of surviving archaeological deposits across this area. It is proposed that hand excavation of all archaeological deposits within the footprint of the proposed basement along Burgess Street, and the link basement to the existing one on the northern side of the extant Corella Works building is undertaken.

- ***Medieval buildings on Sanvey Gate frontage***

Trench 11 has been specifically left open from the evaluation, which covers almost the entire area of the medieval buildings in the area of proposed truncation. To the east and west are areas of truncation from former cellaring, and thus the majority of this area is already open.

The area surrounding the trench will have the present ground surface and modern overburden removed in level spits by mechanical excavator down to the uppermost archaeological deposits using a toothless ditching bucket.

The area will then be hand cleaned, planned and all archaeological deposits will be excavated using standard ULAS procedures.

Potentially the remaining footings of the medieval building may be left *in-situ* and made a visible feature for the Leicester Square development, although this will be dependant on a number of factors that will be assessed during excavation.

- ***Defensive Ditches running parallel to Sanvey Gate***

It is proposed to machine excavate two sections through the defensive ditches that lie within the footprint of the basement running parallel with Sanvey Gate. The sections will be stepped for health and safety reasons to allow archaeologists to enter the trenches to record the exposed sections through the ditches.

It is also proposed to machine and hand excavate one section through the ditches on the western side of the Phase II area. This section will project beyond the edge of the basement to the north and then run down the eastern side of the basement that runs

parallel with Burgess Street. The aim of this trench will be to expose a continuous section through the entire sequence of defensive ditches running back as far as the former line of the town wall.

The trenches will be excavated using mechanical excavator, which will remove the present ground surface and modern overburden in level spits down to the uppermost archaeological deposits using a toothless ditching bucket. Excavation will then continue using mechanical excavator through the ditch fills under close supervision by an archaeologist.

As buckets of fill are removed from the ditch, they will initially be placed at the side of the trench, away from the main spoil heap, to allow a brief attempt to recover any dateable finds. Recovered finds will then be recorded as a depth below present ground surface, and as a specific context (if possible). The spoil will then be moved onto the main spoil heap, to make way for the next bucket. If significant archaeological deposits are exposed during machining that require hand excavation, machine excavation will temporarily stop to allow this to happen, and the deposits to be recorded, before machine excavation continues. This methodology may change slightly on-site at the discretion of the site director once the work is underway.

If waterlogged deposits are revealed in the base of the ditches, these will be hand excavated and sampled for environmental remains. A column sample for pollen analysis will be taken through the sequence of ditch deposits if thought appropriate in consultation with the ULAS environmental specialist.

It is more than likely that the excavation of this sequence through the deposits will be connected and tied into the recording of the line of the town wall and ramparts (see below).

Sections exposed through the ditches will be hand cleaned and drawn and recorded using standard ULAS procedures.

During the excavation of the basement footprint during construction, the control and supervision of machining will be undertaken as the remainder of the area of the defensive ditches is removed. The archaeologist will have the power to halt earth moving operations in order to record and significant archaeological deposits exposed by the works.

- ***Line of Town Wall and Rampart***

The eastern side of the proposed footprint of the basement running along Burgess Street is relatively unaffected by truncation from cellaring, footings and stanchions, in contrast with the western side adjacent to the street frontage. It is proposed to hand excavate a section through this part of the proposed footprint of the basement, which will include the line of the town wall and the ramparts.

An attempt will be made to join this section with the long section through the full sequence of town ditches, in an aim to achieve a complete sequence through the town defences.

The present ground surface and modern overburden will be removed in level spits down to the top of the uppermost archaeological level. Archaeological deposits will then be hand excavated below this point. Potentially the fill of the robber trench along the line of the former town wall may be partially excavated by machine, under close archaeological supervision, using similar methodology as described for the ditches above.

Archaeological deposits will be recorded using standard ULAS procedures.

If turf lines are found present in the construction of the rampart, pollen samples may be taken from them for analysis. This will be done in consultation with the ULAS Environmental Specialist. Buried turf lines beneath the rampart, or other buried soil horizons may also be analysed for pollen and also potentially soil micromorphological samples will be taken.

- ***Former Line of Long Lane***

Where the former line of Long Lane crosses through the footprint of the proposed basement along Burgess Street, the modern ground surface and modern overburden will be removed in level spits using a mechanical excavator under continuous archaeological supervision down to the uppermost archaeological level.

The area is known to have archaeological deposits surviving close to the present ground surface, including former road surfaces associated with Long Lane. Modern road surfaces will be removed by machine. Post-medieval surfaces will be recorded, sample excavated and removed by machine. Medieval road surfaces will be sample excavated and then removed by hand (although potentially by machine dependant on

the quality of the archaeological deposits). All subsequent levels will be hand excavated.

All archaeological deposits encountered will be drawn and recorded using standard ULAS procedures.

The sections of the excavated area through the former road surfaces of Long Lane will be drawn and recorded, creating a sequence from its earliest incarnation to modern road and subsequent disuse.

- ***Intra-mural Area***

The site area to the south of Long Lane within the footprint of the proposed basements that will affect archaeological deposits will be hand excavated.

The present ground surface and modern overburden will be removed by mechanical excavator under constant archaeological supervision in level spits to the uppermost archaeological layer. The evaluation has shown that former garden soils are present across this part of the site area, of post-medieval and possibly earlier date. These deposits will also be removed in level spits by mechanical excavator, under close archaeological supervision, to reveal underlying deposits.

Significant archaeological deposits, of predominantly Roman date are present below these garden soils. These will be exposed, hand cleaned, excavated and recorded using standard ULAS procedures, to the base of the archaeological deposits.

In general all exposed archaeological deposits will be examined by hand cleaning and planned at an appropriate scale and excavated by hand as appropriate to establish the stratigraphic and chronological sequence. A site grid will be established, which will be used as a basis to locate all recorded features across the area. Spot heights will be taken of all deposits as appropriate and tied to the Ordnance Datum. The site grid will be tied into the Ordnance Survey National Grid.

The majority of the site area will involve the excavation of the entire footprint of the proposed basements. The edges of the excavation area will potentially be quite deep, as archaeological levels have been seen at depths of over 1.5m. It is proposed that a small step is left in the side of the machined excavation area along the site edge to ensure the safety and integrity of the excavation area baulks. Shoring of the sides

may be used in certain areas where it is necessary. Areas of loose fill in the sides of the trench, such as modern backfilled cellars, will be battered to prevent slippage or collapse into the excavation area.

Potentially machine excavation of larger archaeological layers or fills may be undertaken at the discretion of the site director.

Sections of any excavated archaeological features will be drawn at an appropriate scale. At least one longitudinal face of each trench will be recorded. All sections will be levelled and tied to the Ordnance Survey Datum, or a permanent fixed benchmark.

The site area will be located using an electronic distance measurer. These will then be tied in to the Ordnance Survey National Grid.

Any human remains will initially be left *in situ* and will only be removed if necessary for their protection, under a Home Office Licence and in compliance with relevant environmental health regulations.

6.3 Archive

Documentary Archive

Indices 284 sheets. Consists of 85 (context indices) 104 (levels) 18 (drawing indices) 35 (drawing records) 6 (samples) 8 (SFs) 25 (survey) 3 (matrices)
Context sheets 3000 sheets (*c.*1000 A5, 2000 A4)
Site drawings (plans/sections) – Large & small permatrace
Photos – Colour slide films
– Black and white negatives + contact sheets
– Digital archive 1144 files 1.4Gb
Digital archive – Survey 32 .log files
– Contexts database .mdb file 6Mb
– Digital photo database .mdb file 1.8Mb

FINDS ARCHIVE 119 boxes (catalogued below)

TYPE	CURRENT #	TO ADD	TOTAL		
Roman pot	19	1	20		
Medieval pot	10	1	11		
Pmed/Modern pot	1	1	2	**POT TOTAL**	**33**
Slate	3	0	3		
other stone	1	0	1		
CBM	36	0	36		
PWP/mortar	8	0	8	**BM TOTAL**	**48**
Animal bone	23	0	23		
Horn	8	0	8	**BONE TOTAL**	**31**
Human bone	1	0	1		
misc finds + shell, #	2	0	2		
SFs	1	0	1		
Fe Objs	3	0	3		
				GRAND TOTAL	**119**

+ Other Finds - worked timber

Environmental samples – Bulk charred 78 bags
– Waterlogged 64 bags
– Spot 5 bags
– Stone, B.M. 2 samples
– Wood 3 samples
– Pollen 4 tins + 2 bulk pollen

Materials in conservation

Worked timber + wood samples in lab tanks

Glass small finds in water

Leather small finds in water

Non-ferrous metal small find objects to be cleaned and stored according to advice from Grahame Morgan (University Archaeological Conservator).