

**Highcross Quarter, Leicester:  
Project Design for Completion of Reports  
On Blue Boar Lane, Little Lane  
and St. Peter's Lane Excavations**

*Richard Buckley*

**Checked by Project Manager**

**Signed:**  **Date:** 15.1.2007..

**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/>

## Contents

University Rd., Leicester, LE1 7RH.....	1
<b>ULAS Report Number 2007-004 © 2007 .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1. Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2. Highcross Quarter and Sanvey Gate: summary of archaeological results.....</b>	<b>3</b>
2.1 Background.....	3
2.2 Site summaries (see also Appendix 1).....	3
2.2.1 <i>Highcross Quarter: Vaughan Way</i> .....	3
2.2.2 <i>Highcross Quarter: Freeschool Lane/Highcross Street</i> .....	4
2.2.3 <i>Highcross Quarter: Vine Street</i> .....	4
2.2.4 <i>Leicester Square Development: Sanvey Gate</i> .....	5
<b>3 The Unpublished Excavations .....</b>	<b>5</b>
3.1. Introduction.....	5
3.2 Blue Boar Lane .....	6
3.2.1 <i>Introduction</i> .....	6
3.2.2 <i>Summary of principal results</i> .....	6
3.2.3 <i>Draft reports completed</i> .....	8
3.3 Little Lane Excavation.....	8
3.3.1 <i>Introduction</i> .....	8
3.3.2 <i>Summary of principal results</i> .....	9
3.4 St. Peter's Lane Excavation .....	10
3.4.1 <i>Introduction</i> .....	10
3.4.2 <i>Summary of site sequence</i> .....	10
3.5 Shires Little Lane and St Peter's Lane: Draft reports completed .....	12
<b>4 Project proposal .....</b>	<b>12</b>
4.1 Introduction.....	12
4.2 State of the archives .....	13
4.3 Methodology .....	13
4.4 Schedule of tasks.....	14
4.4.1 <i>Blue Boar Lane</i> .....	14
4.4.2 <i>Little Lane and St Peter's Lane (Shires)</i> .....	15
<b>5. References.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Appendix 1: Draft publication proposal.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Appendix 2: Summaries of the main results of the Highcross Quarter</b>	
<b>Excavations.....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Programme.....</b>	<b>32</b>

## Figures

Figure 1: Plan of Roman Leicester showing principal investigations, together with the north-east quarter zone within the red line. (NB boundaries of some current sites have changed since the preparation of this plan. ....	2
Figure 2: Little Lane Phase 6.1, mid second century, showing street (F202), timber-lined cellar (structure 8) and yard surfaces (F138). ....	9
Figure 3: Little Lane, phase 7.1, showing Roman masonry strip buildings on either side of the street. ....	10

Figure 4: St Peter's Lane: principal features.....	11
Figure 5: Highcross Quarter: Vaughan Way, St. Peter's Church and Graveyard.....	24
Figure 6: Highcross Quarter: Highcross Street Area 1 .....	26
Figure 7: Highcross Quarter: Area 10 Freeschool Lane .....	28
Figure 8: Plan of the Vine Street Roman Structures.....	29

## Highcross Quarter Project, Leicester

### *Project Design for completion of unpublished reports on Blue Boar Lane, Little Lane and St. Peter's Lane excavations*

#### Summary

*Dissemination of the results of recent archaeological excavations and historic building research undertaken in advance of the new Highcross Quarter mixed use development (on behalf of Hammerson and Hermes) and the Leicester Square residential development (on behalf of Thomas Fish) is to be achieved through a combination of on-line grey-literature reports, academic articles, web-based summaries and the preparation of a substantial thematic volume. With the aid of additional funding from English Heritage, the results of excavations in advance of the construction of the inner relief road in 1958 and the original Shires development in 1988-9 will be presented in grey-literature reports, and incorporated into appropriate sections of the thematic work. This document provides details of the main results of the respective projects, together with proposed tasks to be undertaken to complete work on the unpublished sites.*

#### **1. Introduction**

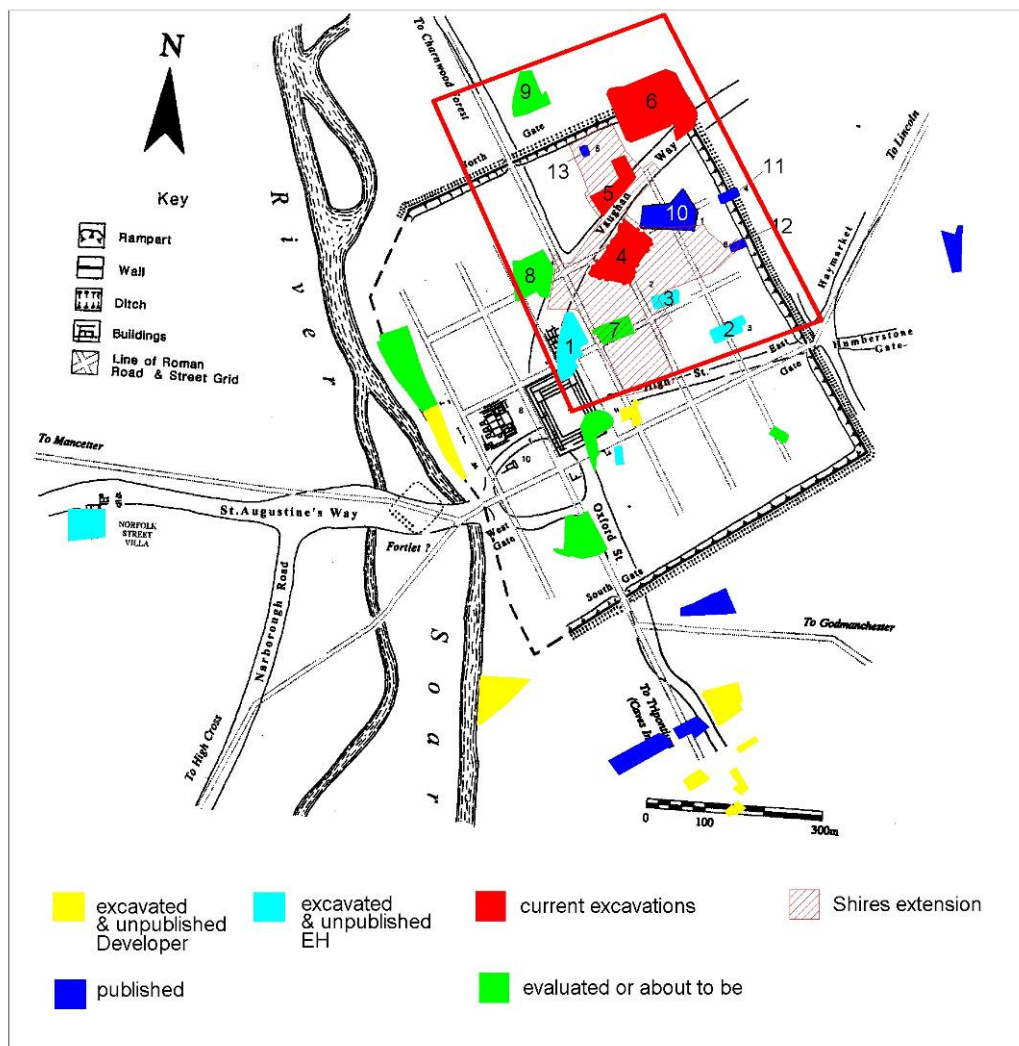
1.1 Since 2003, there has been a considerable upsurge in redevelopment in Leicester affecting some 12% or more of the historic walled area, together with further sites in the Roman and medieval suburban zones. The largest developments have been concentrated within the north-east quarter of the Roman and medieval town (enclosed with a red line on Fig. 1), the most substantial of which is the Highcross Quarter project – a large shopping centre, multi-storey car park, cinema and retail development – which provides an extension to the existing Shires shopping centre. Nearby, there has also been a large development of apartments on Sanvey Gate.

1.2 The Highcross Quarter project (fig. 1) has resulted in the full excavation of three major sites, the Vine Street Roman town house, medieval church of St Michael and graveyard (5), the Vaughan Way excavation of St Peter's Church and graveyard (4) and on Highcross Street, the excavation of a series of medieval burgage plots, including a deeply stratified frontage, with rare evidence of a collapsed Roman wall and activity of the Saxon and Saxo-Norman periods (7). Elsewhere within this development, particularly on St. Peter's Lane (to the east of 4), some other larger areas have been stripped in plan and recorded, with limited excavation of vulnerable deposits which may be destroyed or damaged by proposed foundations. The work was funded by Hammerson and Hermes. The Sanvey Gate project (6), funded by Thomas Fish, has resulted in the examination of the town defences, together with Roman and medieval intra-mural activity.

1.3 Previously within the north-east quarter of the town, a number of other significant investigations have been undertaken, in particular the Blue Boar Lane excavation of a Roman town house and market hall 1958, the Little Lane (Shires) excavation 1988-9 of Roman timber and masonry structures and medieval pits, the St Peter's Lane (Shires) excavation of 1988-9 of medieval pits and other activity, the Causeway lane excavation of 1980 and 1991 of Roman and medieval structures. The former three sites – the subject of this Project Design – were part funded by English Heritage (or its precursors) and remain unpublished. The Causeway Lane excavation was published in 1999 (Connor and Buckley 1999). Other smaller sites within the north-east quarter include the Elbow Lane excavation of 1977 (9), published in 1989; the Butt Close Lane 1968 (11) and St Peter's Lane 1974 (12) excavations, published in 1987 (Buckley and Lucas 1987) and the Stibbe evaluation (8) of 2000-2001 (Meek 2001). Other minor interventions have also been undertaken within the area,

including the Sanvey Gate evaluation of 1992 (Finn 1993) which revealed evidence for Roman and medieval extra mural activity.

1.4 In view of the fact that the recent excavations at Highcross Quarter and Sanvey Gate fall within a tight geographical area, the north-east quarter of the historic core of the town, it is proposed that they will be published as a group within a single thematic volume, but with the possibility of detailed spin-off papers, monographs or web-based reports as appropriate to satisfy a more specialist audience. Other published excavations and evaluations will of course constitute a valuable resource to feed into this publication. A major untapped source of data is from the archives of the three large unpublished sites of Blue Boar Lane, Little Lane and St Peter's Lane. All three have been subject to extensive, detailed programmes of post-excavation analysis leading to publication, but unfortunately none came to fruition, partly as a result of the closure of Leicestershire Archaeological Unit in 1995 and partly due to a lack of funds. Since the analysis has all been completed and the majority of specialist reports have been produced, English Heritage has agreed in principle to providing funding to complete the production of spiral bound grey literature reports which may then be made available online and will also be incorporated into the proposed Highcross Quarter thematic volume. This document is a project design detailing tasks required to achieve this objective.



**Figure 1:** Plan of Roman Leicester showing principal investigations, together with the north-east quarter zone within the red line. (NB boundaries of some current sites have changed since the preparation of this plan.)

1. Blue Boar Lane, 1958 (J.S. Wachter Exc; Ministry of Public Buildings and Works)
2. Little Lane 1988-9 (Shires: LAU Exc; EH, LCC, MSC & Imry Merchant)
3. St. Peter's Lane 1988-9 (Shires: LAU Exc; EH, LCC, MSC & Imry Merchant)
4. Vaughan Way 2005-6 (Highcross Quarter: ULAS Exc; Hammerson)
5. Vine Street 2004-6 (Highcross Quarter: ULAS Exc; Hammerson)
6. Sanvey Gate 2004-5 (Exc; ULAS Thomas Fish & Co)
7. Highcross Street 2006-7 (Highcross Quarter: ULAS Exc; Hammerson)
8. Vaughan Way, Stibbe (ULAS Evaluation; Westmoreland Properties. Grey lit. report)
9. Sanvey Gate 1991 (LAU evaluation; Travis Perkins)
10. Causeway lane 1980 and 1991 (LAU Exc. EH & Inland Revenue)
11. Butt Close lane (Leicester Museum & EH)
12. St. Peter's Lane (Leicester Museum & EH)
13. Elbow Lane 1977 (LAU Exc; DoE; Published)

## **2. Highcross Quarter and Sanvey Gate: summary of archaeological results**

### **2.1 Background**

2.1.1 Archaeological field evaluation of the Highcross Quarter development was undertaken on a phased basis between 2003 and 2006, as properties were acquired by the developer and cleared of any remaining buildings. For the majority of sites, a sample of 10-12% was investigated in order to characterise the archaeology sufficiently to assess the impact from proposed foundations. As evaluations were completed, the results fed into the design process, adjustments were made to foundation levels where possible, assessments of impact were made and programmes of excavation were put into effect on specific sites to mitigate any damage. The possibility of reusing the foundations of two of the existing 1960s buildings was also explored, but it was clear that the lack of surviving structural engineering documentation, together with the radical difference in existing and proposed plans, would not make this possible.

2.1.2 Aside from the below-ground archaeology, assessments were also undertaken on two listed buildings within the development area: a brick-built 18th-century town house and the 16th century Free Grammar School. The latter, also subject to a full building record, had been constructed in 1573 using materials salvaged from the demolished church of St Peter, some of which – including the nave tie beams – were identified during the course of the works, having been hidden behind later claddings.

2.1.3 Within the area of the new Shires shopping centre, three large sites were excavated between 2004 and 2006, covering an area of about 1.76ha, and a number of smaller sites, where the archaeology was either less well preserved or the impacts from foundations were less, were also investigated. Fieldwork was completed in October 2006, and the sites are currently at post-excavation assessment stage, analysis being due to commence in about April 2007. The summaries of results which follow should be regarded as preliminary.

### **2.2 Site summaries (see also Appendix 1)**

#### **2.2.1 Highcross Quarter: Vaughan Way**

This site was excavated in 2004-5 and produced evidence to suggest comparatively sparse activity in the Roman period, represented principally by a large gravel quarry which apparently filled over a long period of time. From the early Anglo-Saxon period, a possible

sunken-featured building was uncovered, together with finds of the 5th-7th centuries. Evidence for medieval activity was dominated by the discovery of the remains of St Peter's Church, and its graveyard. The church was perhaps a pre-conquest foundation and was demolished in 1572, the materials being reused in the construction of the nearby Free Grammar School the following year. Over 1300 burials were excavated, with a variety of burial rites represented, along with a possible plague pit, a number of small charnel pits and a charnel house. Medieval domestic activity was represented by pits, a possible high status hall with undercroft and a mud and framed building. A probable medieval malting oven was also found.

### 2.2.2 *Highcross Quarter: Freeschool Lane/Highcross Street*

Four main areas were selected for excavation on this large site in 2005-6. One, located on the Highcross Street frontage, revealed a deeply stratified sequence from the Roman to modern period. The earliest activity consisted of a possible late 1st century cobbled surface, perhaps evidence for initial town planning, and the establishment of one of the principal north-south streets of the Roman town. Adjacent to the street, constructed along the building line, was a Roman stone wall which may either have been a boundary or an unfinished structure. A series of rectangular hearths of uncertain function were found cutting into the metalling at the edge of the street. Sealing the Roman deposits, including part of the street, was a collapsed Roman stone wall with tile levelling courses and architectural details. This is thought to relate to the market hall or macellum on the opposite side of the street. The date of the collapse remains uncertain.

Cutting into the top of the fallen wall was an Anglo-Saxon sunken featured building and another post-built structure. Elsewhere on the site, another SFB was discovered. Fragmentary evidence of Saxo-Norman timber structures was identified close to the frontage.

Medieval and post-medieval activity was represented by a series of narrow burgage plots defined by boundary walls of several phases, with structures on the frontage and a variety of backyard features, including pits, cess pits and wells. One property in particular also showed evidence for industrial activity in the form a series of kilns, perhaps associated with brewing.

Another trench revealed the rear of a series of medieval buildings on the Freeschool Lane frontage, together with associated back yard activity. Of particular significance here was evidence of intermediate phases in the medieval period of horticultural or agricultural activity leading to the development of garden soils.

Towards the St Peter's lane frontage, a trench examined the remains of a stone building of uncertain date – it is either Roman or very possibly a high-status medieval structure.

### 2.2.3 *Highcross Quarter: Vine Street*

The Vine Street site was excavated between 2004 and 2006 and revealed the complete plan of a substantial Roman town house located adjacent to the junction of two streets and occupying a significant proportion of one insula. The building appears to have grown out of an initial phase represented by two separate strip buildings which presented their long sides to the street frontages. One of these – at the street corner – appears to have retained a commercial function for most of its life. The buildings were later linked together through the construction of further rooms and corridors, followed by additional wings, creating a structure of courtyard plan. The north wing of this was furnished with an apsidal room, perhaps a *triclinium* or dining room, flanked by further heated rooms. Another heated range, perhaps a bath suite, was later tacked on to the north range; it may have replaced an earlier bath suite in the south range which appears to have gone out of use in the Roman period.

The town house appears to have declined in the 3rd-4th century, with an increase in evidence for industrial activity, including a possible smithy within the postulated commercial premises and bone working elsewhere. Of note, was the discovery of a coin hoard of AD 341 in the east range and the deliberate burial of a lead pig in an adjacent room. Other finds included

three legionary lead seals and two lead curses, one of which furnishes some twenty names of suspects in the theft of a cloak.

Next to the town house, large rectangular structure with substantial walls and plain mortar floors is of uncertain function, but likely to be a public building, perhaps a warehouse.

The medieval period on this site was represented fairly large numbers of pits, indicative of domestic activity, together with the graveyard of St Michael's church. Some 300 burials were excavated, although only fragmentary structural remains were uncovered, so it is difficult to be certain as to whether they relate to the church itself, believed to have been demolished in the mid 15th century. The remains of the surfaces of at least two medieval lanes were also uncovered, representing very rare evidence indeed for the development of Leicester's medieval street plan.

#### *2.2.4 Leicester Square Development: Sanvey Gate*

Excavations on the Sanvey Gate site in 2004 and 2005 revealed evidence for the Roman and medieval town defences, in addition to intra-mural Roman urban activity in the form of two stone buildings and a road. The defences were seen to consist of a masonry wall with granodiorite foundations some 2.9m wide. A fragment of the superstructure of the wall had collapsed in the medieval period, providing the first evidence so far of the appearance of the external face of the wall. Butting up to the wall, and most likely a later addition, were the foundations of an internal rectangular interval tower projecting some 3m away from the inside face of the wall and probably continuing about 6m parallel to it. This is the only definite tower feature so far identified in Ratae, and is closely comparable to examples from Caerwent, where they may have functioned as ballisteria, or as foundations for stairs up to the wall walk. Behind the town wall, the rampart survived up to 0.5m high and consisted of layers of clay, sand and gravel, and turf stacks. To the front of the defences were the town ditches, which were some 3m deep and 7m wide, recut in the medieval period.

Within the town, the two Roman stone founded buildings were situated some 30m and 13m from the defences respectively. Building A was most likely a strip building more than 20m long and 6m wide and had at least four rooms. Building B was a courtyard building, which also had at least four rooms, as well as two corridors, and fronted onto a major road that continued south into the town. The Sanvey Gate site is adjacent to the Vine Street excavations and it is possible that building A is a part of the larger structure seen at the latter site. Adjacent to buildings A and B were yard surfaces, boundary walls, and ditches. Earlier activity pre-dating the town defences was also identified in the form of timber structures, ditches and pits of late 1st early 2nd date.

### **3 The Unpublished Excavations**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

3.1.1 The Blue Boar Lane excavation of 1958 was directed by J.S. Wachter on behalf of the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works, in advance of the construction of Leicester's Inner Relief Road, Vaughan Way. Much of the excavation area now lies beneath the present roadline. Buildings constructed on the newly-aligned frontage in the late 1950s/60s were demolished in the late 20th-early 21st century to make way for a new casino and Travelodge. Further investigation of the site took place at this time, consisting of a strip and plan exercise, but with little excavation, the significant archaeological levels being preserved beneath the new building which was constructed on a raft foundation. The results (Derrick 2005), however, have provided some clarification of the results of Wachter's fieldwork and also have a bearing on the results of the Highcross Quarter excavations. Post-excavation analysis of the 1958 site was undertaken in the 1980s at Leicester University with funding from English Heritage, but never completed.

3.1.2 The Shires excavations took place over a period of twelve months in 1988-9 in advance of the construction of a substantial shopping centre within the heart of the city. The



work was directed by Richard Buckley and John Lucas of Leicestershire Archaeological Unit and partly funded by Leicestershire County Council, the developer, City of London Property Holdings (Imry Merchant), Manpower Services Commission and English Heritage. The work force was largely made up of inexperienced MSC and later YT (Youth Training) labour. After an assessment of previous disturbance within the footprint of the development, two sites were selected for full excavation, one on the corner of Little Lane and South Bond Street (A39.1988) and one on St. Peter's Lane (A40.1988). The sites had a high public profile, with many open days, site tours and school visits. A popular booklet, funded by the *Leicester Mercury*, was produced summarising the results of the excavations (Sawday 1989). Following post-excavation assessment, analysis commenced in 1990, with external funding for some specialists, the remainder of the work – Roman and medieval pottery, small finds and stratigraphic analysis – being covered by in-house staff at Leicestershire Archaeological Unit, funded by Leicestershire County Council. With the advent of PPG16 in late 1990, several of the in-house staff moved into a project management role, dealing with a multitude of developer-funded projects and only worked on the Shires project on an occasional basis. With the closure of Leicestershire Archaeological Unit in 1995, funding for the project was effectively withdrawn, the majority of the analysis and specialist reports having been completed. Thereafter no further work was undertaken.

## **3.2 Blue Boar Lane**

### *3.2.1 Introduction*

The Blue Boar Lane excavation was undertaken in 1958 by J.S. Wachter for the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works, in advance of the construction of Leicester's Inner Relief Road, now Vaughan Way. Two main sites were examined – designated 'A' and 'B' – which appear to have been excavated using the box grid method, each square trench or 'box' identified by a Roman numeral, hence A1-AVI and BI – IV, BVI-BXIII. In some instances, baulks between trenches were removed and some trenches were extended. Outside the two principal areas, three further trenches were examined, BXIV-BXVI.

The principal discoveries of the excavations consisted of a Roman courtyard house of the second century AD, demolished in the third century and replaced by a substantial public building, interpreted as a macellum or market hall. An interim account appeared in JRS 1959, with a more detailed discussion in the *Towns of Roman Britain* 1975. In the 1980s, Nick Cooper of Leicester University, acting as research assistant to Prof. J.S. Wachter, headed a programme of work intended to complete the analysis of the results of the project in preparation for publication. As part of this, analysis of all principal finds categories was completed and draft typewritten reports prepared. The stratigraphic matrix was completed, the site was phased and a draft structural report was written. At this point, with no further funding available, the project was placed on hold and all reports archived at the School of Archaeology and Ancient History, University of Leicester.

### *3.2.2 Summary of principal results*

#### (i) First century activity

The earliest activity on the site (phase 1A) consisted of make-ups and a possible cobbled surface of the Neronian or early Flavian period. Interestingly, evidence for similar early Roman cobbled surfaces has been identified on a number of other sites in the central part of the later Roman town, including the forum and baths sites, 9 St Nicholas Place and more recently, opposite the Blue Boar Lane site on Highcross Street. It has been suggested that such surfaces may relate to the construction of a military parade ground or, perhaps more likely, that they are a little later than the dating suggests and represent reservation of space for public buildings when the town was planned in the early second century. Very limited evidence for possible timber structures was also identified in this phase. Rubbish deposits

overlying the cobbled surface and the accumulation of silts (phase 1B), suggest subsequent abandonment of the site.

(ii) Second century Town house

The next significant phase of activity (2A) consisted of the construction of a high-status courtyard house of the second century AD, the western portion of the north range being revealed in site A and in site B, the central portion of the west range, with four rooms, 1-4, running from north to south and the peristyle running along their eastern side. To the west of the house was a street. The survival of structural evidence, including schemes of interior decoration, was unusually good, by virtue of the fact that the building was comparatively short lived and that subsequent demolition led to the accumulation of deposits which sealed and protected. Hence, a number of floors survived, including opus signinum and tessellated together with clay brick wall superstructure, some in situ painted wall plaster and deposits of collapsed wall plaster enabling the reconstruction of substantial schemes of decoration (currently on display in the Jewry Wall Museum). Phase 2B saw some refurbishment of the house, including the insertion of tessellated floors in all of the rooms whilst Phase 2C appears to mark a decline in its fortunes, with evidence for robbing of tesserae from the floors, defacing of the wall plaster and industrial activity – bone working – in one of the rooms. The roof of the peristyle may have been removed in this phase.

(iii) The macellum or market hall

The town house was demolished and the site levelled up considerably in phase 3 in preparation for the construction of a substantial public building – interpreted as a *macellum* – in phase 4. Evidence for the west and south ranges of this building derived from a series of very large medieval robber trenches together with sections of in situ masonry. The west range comprised four parallel walls on a north-south orientation, perhaps indicating a range of rooms with porticoes on the east and west sides. To the south was a possible basilican building on an east west orientation, represented by four parallel walls. Further investigations to the east of Wachter's trenches since 1958 have provided further clarification of the plan of the postulated *macellum* (Derrick 2005), whilst excavations in 2006, as part of the Highcross Quarter project, have revealed what is almost certainly the collapsed east wall of the south range, furnishing important information relating to the size and architectural design of the superstructure of this building.

Dating of the construction of the macellum is assumed to be third century, although the site narrative is not entirely clear on this point.

Evidence for activity taking place within the building is restricted to the external portico of the west range, where evidence for a hearth associated with glassmaking waste and a bloom of cupellation waste, thought to have derived from the extraction of silver from coinage.

(iv) Destruction of the macellum

Within the west range was evidence for a layer up to 0.4m thick interpreted as burnt roof timbers and tile, above which was a thick build up of rubble containing brick, stone and tile. Due to the extent of medieval robbing it is uncertain whether the walls were entirely demolished at this time or remained standing above the rubble.

In the south range, a thin layer of 'dirt' accumulated over floor surfaces and was sealed by a dump of building rubble, layers of silt and finally a sheet of painted wall plaster from the ceiling which had fallen face down. Dating for the abandonment of the building is not clear from the site narrative.

(v) Post-macellum occupation

Overlying the build up of debris in the west range was a series of silts, suggesting abandonment, although below the final silt was a spread of stone, brick, tile and nails which may simply have been a dump of building rubble, or could be suggestive of a floor and some kind of timber structure of which only the fixings survive. The latter was suggested by

Wacher in the Towns of Roman Britain in order to give an impression of living conditions in the late fourth or early fifth century AD.

### 3.2.3 *Draft reports completed*

#### (i) Partially-completed draft structural report

33 pp typescript with sketch plans, some sketch sections and a site matrix.  
No digital file exists.

The report is well written and provides a coherent account of the site sequence, although it is essentially descriptive, with little discussion and no detailed presentation of the dating evidence.

Although the descriptive elements require comparatively little editing, further work will be required to incorporate dating evidence from specialist reports, to incorporate results of specialist analysis and to discuss each phase of activity. Plans and sections need to be drawn (or re-drawn) and cross referenced to the text.

The following specialist reports are largely complete, but may require further editing. All exist only as typescripts and will need to be scanned.

(ii) Roman painted wall Plaster Reconstructed schemes (R. Ling). This has been proof read by R Ling and is annotated with alterations.

(iii) Painted wall plaster: Unreconstructed Schemes, G. Shaw.

(iv) Mortar and Pigment Analysis JK Ashley & G.C. Morgan

(v) Graffiti R.P. Wright

(vi) The Mosaic Reconstructions D.S. Neal

(vii) The Architectural Stonework J. Huskinson and C. Caplan

(viii) Relief patterned flue tiles J. Gower

(ix) Roman pottery: E. MacRobert

Reports on: Samian, mortaria, amphorae and coarse pottery

(x) Medieval pottery E. MacRobert

(xi) Roman Glass H Cool

(xii) Small Finds Irena Lentowicz

(xiii) Coins R. Abbott

(xix) Roman relief stamped tiles J Leveson-Gower

(xx) Faunal Remains Leslie Cram

(xxi) Crucible Justine Bayley

(xxii) Iron Objects Kathy Ashley

(xxiii) Slag and Ash G.C. Morgan

(xxiv) Altar fragment Clive Caplan and Janet Huskinson

## 3.3 *Little Lane Excavation*

### 3.3.1 *Introduction*

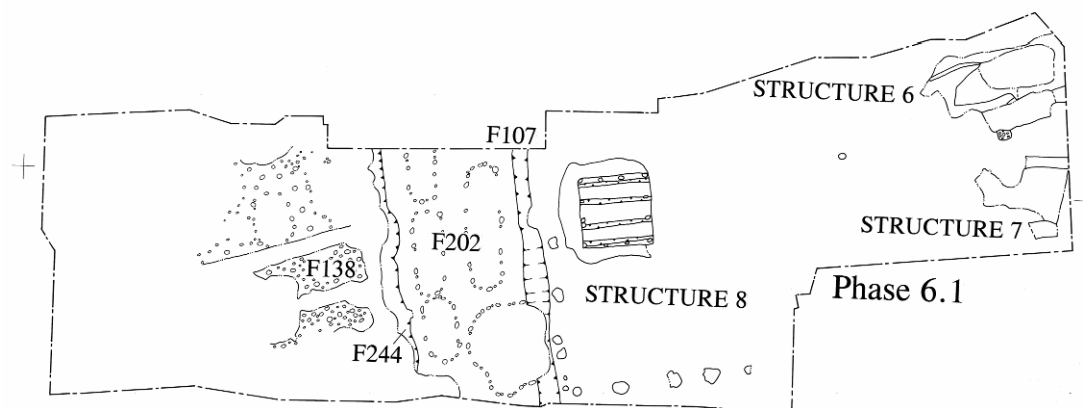
The Little Lane excavation was located on the corner of South Bond Street and Little Lane, to the north of the High Street – the medieval Swinesmarket. As noted above, the site was selected for excavation on the basis that records indicated that there were few cellars or other modern disturbance and archaeological levels were likely to reasonably well preserved. Overburden, comprising modern material and substantial deposits (up to 2.5m in thickness) of so-called medieval and post-medieval garden soils was stripped by 360 degree mechanical excavator down to the top of archaeological levels. A block of garden soil was left in situ for hand excavation in spits with three dimensional recording of finds in order to shed light on depositional processes.

### 3.3.2 Summary of principal results

(i) The earliest activity identified consisted of truncated B horizons and a ditch which have been interpreted as Iron Age, perhaps cultivation in the fields to the east of the main area of Iron Age settlement.

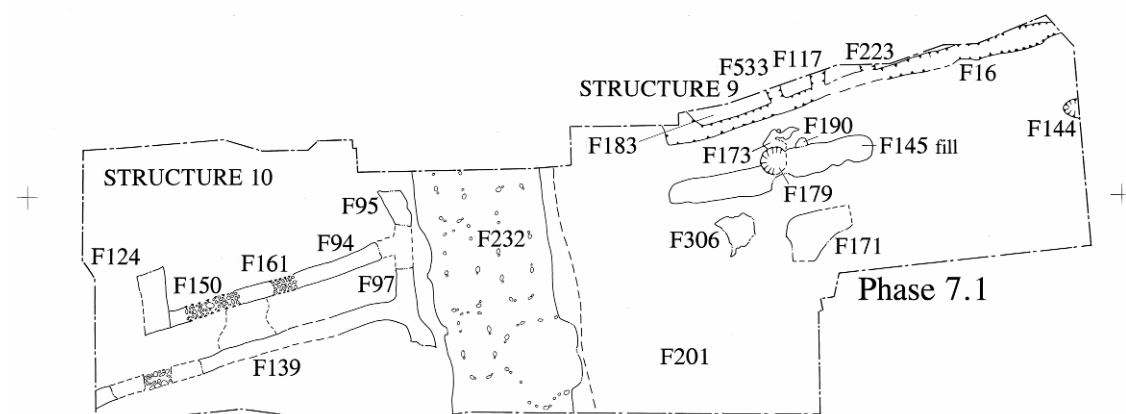
(ii) The first Roman activity on the site was represented by a sequence of beamslots, aligned on the street grid, attesting the presence of timber buildings in the late first to early second century. Also of this period, were ditches marking the street line, although as elsewhere, it is suspected that the street metalling itself was laid down later, as insulae became developed. Further light weight timber structures of this period are indicated by post and stake holes and the fragmentary remains of some hard surfaces. Hearths attest some industrial activity of unknown scale, but probably including ironworking.

(iii) In the early second century, there is evidence for further timber structures and a sequence of drainage ditches. Pebble surfaces start to appear and slight timber structures again are in evidence. Two hearths indicate significance industrial activity. The street is metalled in the early second century and furnished with side ditches, with evidence for surface repairs and ditch recuts throughout the second century. East of the street, pits possibly represent small scale gravel and clay (Mercia mudstone) extraction, followed by intensive industrial activity represented by two clusters of small hearths and associated scatters of charcoal and ash. No significant buildings were identified associated with these. By the mid second century, three timber buildings were constructed on the east side of the street. Towards the middle of the second century, the one closest to the frontage, was replaced with a substantial post-built structure (structure 8) containing a timber-lined cellar with timber floor supported on earthfast joists.



**Figure 2: Little Lane Phase 6.1, mid second century, showing street (F202), timber-lined cellar (structure 8) and yard surfaces (F138).**

(iv) At about the turn of the second century, the timber structures were swept away and on both sides of the road, substantial stone-founded strip buildings were constructed, represented by robber trenches, although there is little evidence for their nature and function due to later disturbance. To the east, most of structure 9 lay north of the excavation, whose main area was dominated by a possible garden. To the west it is very difficult to define the lay out of the building that seems to cover the area excavated and it is quite possible that it represents two adjoining strip buildings rather than one, each with a narrow frontage and an alley between them.



**Figure 3: Little Lane, phase 7.1, showing Roman masonry strip buildings on either side of the street.**

(v) In the 3rd-4th century, the stone structures continued, with evidence for only minor activity elsewhere, except on the road. Here, the contemporary metalling did not survive, but interestingly there was evidence for a series of enigmatic shallow rectangular features cutting the street and aligned with it.

(vi) The late Roman period was represented by a series of stake holes, post holes, spreads and a hearth, perhaps indicative of flimsy timber structures. It is not entirely clear whether the masonry structures remained standing at this time

(vii) The medieval and post-medieval periods were characterised by the robbing of Roman masonry structures between 1100 and 1250 and again between 1475 and 1550, together with large numbers of pits, wells and cess pits representing back yard activity, perhaps relating to properties fronting on to the medieval Swinesmarket. No medieval or post-medieval structures were identified on the site. Later, there was evidence from deep deposits of so-called garden soil for horticultural or agricultural activity.

### 3.4 *St. Peter's Lane Excavation*

#### 3.4.1 *Introduction*

The St. Peter's Lane site was located on the corner of West Bond Street and St Peter's Lane, and like Little Lane, was selected for excavation on the basis that it was unlikely to have seen significant disturbance from 19th-century and later buildings. Records of the discovery of a masonry structure on west Bond Street in the 19th century led to the suggestion that this was the location of the lost church of St. Peter, now known to be to the north, on the opposite side of St Peter's Lane (see Vaughan Way, above). No trial trenches were examined to assess the potential of the site before excavation commenced.

Removal of modern overburden and medieval/post-medieval garden soils was by machine, down to the top of archaeological levels. A small block of garden soil was selected for hand excavation to assess depositional processes. This site was characterised by a significant number of intercutting pits and other features, together with considerable truncation from probable horticultural activity. Such activity was so intense that no horizontal stratification survived above the level of the natural sand and gravel whilst surface of the latter only survived in one or two small areas, having been disturbed so heavily by earthfast features.

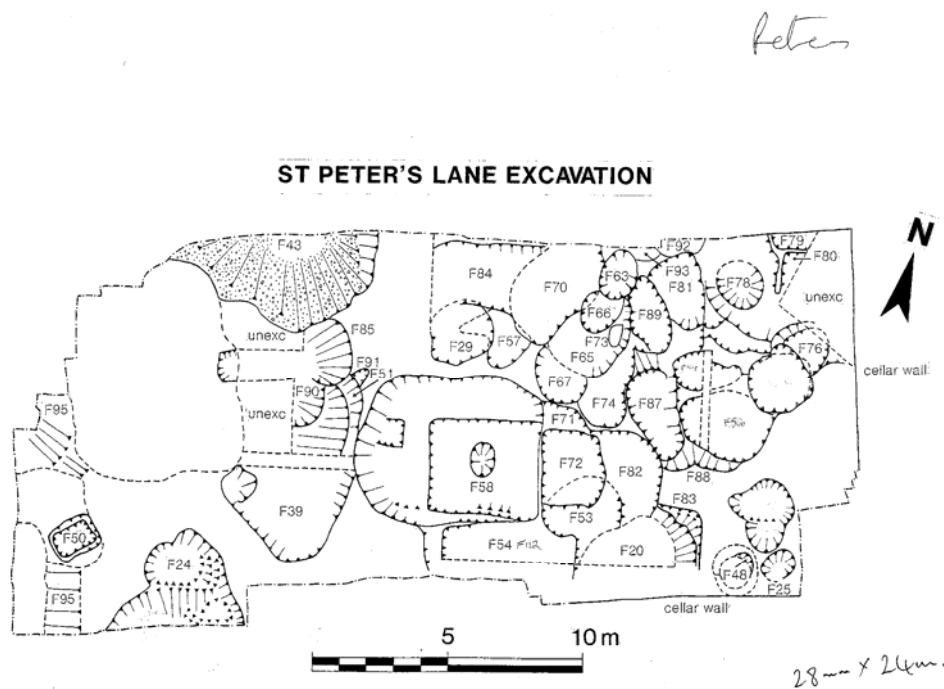
#### 3.4.2 *Summary of site sequence*

(i) The earliest evidence identified on the site consisted of a north-south orientated Roman ditch and a pit. Within the centre of the site, was a square feature filled with medieval deposits which, from its form, may represent the robbed remains of a Roman structure,

perhaps a cellar or hypocaust. However, the robbing and other disturbance was so considerable that it was impossible to refine this interpretation any further.

(ii) Although no features of the Anglo-Saxon period were identified on the site, some 58 sherds of hand made pottery and a triangular composite bone comb of this period were recovered. The comb is tentatively dated to the 5th-6th century AD and came from a large irregular medieval pit to the west of the centre of the site. Although the Anglo-Saxon material is all apparently residual in medieval contexts, the discovery in 2005-6 of a sunken-featured building some 30m to the west on the Highcross Street site and another on the former St Margaret's baths site on Vaughan Way less than 60m away, it is now thought very likely that there was one in the western part of the site, heavily disturbed by later pits. In view of the fragility of an item such as the bone comb, it is conceivable that small remnants of fill of a *grubenhaushaus* survived, but were not recognised for what they were at the time. It is perhaps worth noting that at the time of the excavation, no definite Anglo-Saxon structures had been identified in the county as a whole.

(iii) During the period c. 1100-1300, activity on the site was characterised by the excavation of large numbers of pits, of which a major cluster seems to respect the central area: i.e. the postulated Roman cellar or other feature, which may suggest that the building (whatever it was) remained standing into this period.



**Figure 4: St Peter's Lane: principal features**

(iv) In the later medieval period, the postulated Roman structures in the centre of the site appear to have been heavily robbed, leaving a large hole which appears to have influenced subsequent activity for some considerable time, due to probable subsidence. The feature contains many layers of rubble in its upper fill, suggesting attempts to consolidate a waterlogged hollow. It also contained a deposit of crushed local Dane Hills sandstone, indicating stone dressing in the vicinity. Elsewhere on the site, further pits were excavated, including one adjacent to the north baulk which contained large quantities of partially burnt blue lias limestone from a local source. This may suggest a lime kiln in the vicinity;

interestingly similar such structures have been identified on the Vaughan Way (St Peter's Church) site just to the north.

(v) After the earlier pits had filled, and the site had been partially levelled up, there was evidence for possible industrial activity on the site, represented by a short length of clay lined channel.

(vi) Later in the medieval period, an east west sandstone wall was constructed, running almost the entire length of the site. It is uncertain as to whether it represents a boundary wall or is part of a structure.

(vi) In the late medieval/early post medieval period, the site appears to have been turned over to cultivation, leading to the accumulation of substantial deposits of garden soil.

### **3.5 *Shires Little Lane and St Peter's Lane: Draft reports completed***

- (i) Site Narrative. John Lucas. Draft Roman and medieval phasing, completed phase plans and sections. Discussions require further work and reports need reformatting in word.
- (ii) The Small Finds Nicholas Cooper  
including Brooches, D Mackreth; Bone Objects, A. Carey; Bone Knife Handle, G Lloyd Morgan.  
Inked up drawings have been completed.
- (iii) The Roman Glass Louise Monk
- (iv) The Roman Coins John Davies
- (v) Roman Pottery Richard Pollard  
The Amphorae, including a synthesis of amphorae from Leicester and a discussion  
The Stamped Mortaria Kay Hartley  
The Traded Wares from Little Lane, including catalogue of colour-coated wares from stratified Roman contexts R Pollard  
The Traded Wares from St Peter's Lane R Pollard  
The Mortaria Kay Hartley with Richard Pollard  
The Pottery from the cellar fill, F186  
Evidence for Pottery Production  
The Illustrated Roman Pottery R Pollard. Drawings are believed to be inked, mounted, but not labelled.  
Assemblage Formation Processes: a case study from Leicester R Pollard
- (vi) Post Roman pottery – Debbie Sawday. Inked drawings and drawing catalogues have been completed. There is a report on the Anglo-Saxon pottery by Paul Blinkhorn and a draft by John Hurst on continental imports.
- (vi) The Animal Bones Louisa Gidney. A summary of the AML archive report
- (vii) The Fish Remains Rebecca Nicholson
- (viii) Macrofossil plant remains L Moffett
- (ix) Industrial residues G C Morgan
- (x) Romano British Tile John Lucas
- (xi) Celtic Coin A Fitzpatrick
- (xii) Charcoal Graham Morgan
- (xiii) Oyster shells Angela Monckton

## **4 Project proposal**

### **4.1 Introduction**

In view of the advanced state of post-excavation analysis on the three unpublished sites, it is considered that comparatively little further work will be required to unlock the research dividend from these significant excavations, to feed into the proposed Highcross Quarter

thematic volume (appendix 1), thereby providing added value. For all three unpublished sites, the stratigraphic reports (without discussions) and most of the specialist reports exist in draft, although not all are in digital form. For all sites, many of the drawings have been completed and inked up, but need to be scanned, labelled and arranged in page layout.

#### **4.2 State of the archives**

The archive for the Blue Boar Lane site is currently within the School of Archaeology at the University of Leicester, whilst those for the Shires sites are housed with Leicester City Museum Service, at the Jewry Wall Museum. An initial inspection of the archives has been undertaken in connection with the preparation of this document, although it is worth noting that the storage conditions of the Shires sites in particular are not ideal and not all elements have been located as yet. Enquiries to the computer centre at the University of Leicester has confirmed that no digital files (principally wordprocessed documents) survive for the Blue Boar Lane site, but the existing typescripts are in good condition and should be capable of scanning and OCR. For the Shires sites, there is an archive of digital files, although some are on an obsolete DOS-based word-processing package and will require conversion.

#### **4.3 Methodology**

4.3.1 A two-stage approach is proposed for the project. First, spiral bound A4 grey-literature reports will be produced incorporating the site narratives, illustrations, and existing specialist reports and illustrations. Some scanning of documents and conversion and reformatting of files into a consistent house style will be required, together with some editing/correction of the text, but no attempt will be made at this stage to address omissions, to update reports in the light of more recent research or to prepare discussions. Once these initial compiled reports have been produced, an assessment will be made of further work which will be required to create a final draft excavation report capable of being made accessible via the web (probably through the Archaeology Data Service). Should major omissions be identified, a judgement will be made as to the significance of the study area in research terms and whether additional outlay to secure completion would be worthwhile.

4.3.2 It is envisaged that after completion of phase 1, the data will be accessible to specialists working on the Highcross Quarter project, the post-excavation analysis of which is scheduled to commence in about April/May 2007. Based on current knowledge, the value of the data from the three published sites to the project as a whole is considered to be as follows:

(i) The excavation of the Blue Boar Lane town house will furnish valuable comparative data to that from the recent excavation of the complete plan of a Roman town house at Vine Street.

(ii) Evidence from the Blue Boar Lane site ties in with the results of the Highcross Street/Freeschool Lane excavation, in particular the fact that the collapsed east wall of the basilican building at the southern end of the *macellum* has been identified.

(iii) The general impression of the Roman levels from the Shires Little Lane excavation is that of successive timber and masonry strip buildings, probably commercial, fronting on to a north-south street, evidence which will complement that from the Vine street site which is essentially of a residential character, but with some industrial activity.

(iv) The emerging fragmentary evidence for occupation in late Roman and early Anglo-Saxon Leicester comes from both the unpublished sites and the recent Highcross Quarter excavations. A reconsideration of earlier data in the light of new results is clearly a research priority.

(v) The medieval levels from both Shires excavations were characterised by large numbers of pits, the environmental and artefactual evidence from which will complement the results from the excavation of complete medieval properties on Highcross Street/Freeschool Lane and possible high status structures from Vaughan Way.



#### 4.4 Schedule of tasks

##### 4.4.1 Blue Boar Lane

<b>Task No.</b>	<b>Task</b>	<b>Staff</b>	<b>Per day</b>	<b>Days/no.</b>	<b>Cost £</b>
		<i>(internal staff)</i>			
<b>BBL1</b>	Scan & OCR typescript of Stratigraphic report draft create Word version	Roger Kipling	216.08	4	864.32
<b>BBL2</b>	Scan sketch sections and plans	Roger Kipling	216.08	3	648.24
<b>BBL3</b>	Label sketch sections and plans	Roger Kipling	216.08	4	864.32
<b>BBL4</b>	Edit stratigraphic report draft and add figures	Roger Kipling	216.08	4	864.32
<b>BBL5</b>	Identify photographs to illustrate stratigraphic report and scan	Roger Kipling	216.08	1	216.08
<b>BBL6</b>	Scan & OCR typescript of wall plaster reports report draft and create Word version	Roger Kipling	216.08	3	648.24
<b>BBL7</b>	Edit wall plaster draft report draft	Roger Kipling	216.08	1	216.08
<b>BBL8</b>	Scan, arrange and label wall plaster figures, add to text	Roger Kipling	216.08	2	432.16
<b>BBL9</b>	Scan & OCR typescript of altar and tile report draft and create Word version	Roger Kipling	216.08	2	432.16
<b>BBL10</b>	Scan & OCR typescript of RB Pottery drafts (incl. Samian, Mortarium stamps, amphorae) and create Word version	Roger Kipling	216.08	5	1080.4
<b>BBL11</b>	Scan inked RB Pottery drawings and label	Roger Kipling	216.08	2	432.16
<b>BBL12</b>	Scan & OCR typescript of Post Roman Pottery drafts & create Word version	Roger Kipling	216.08	2	432.16
<b>BBL13</b>	Scan inked Post RB Pottery drawings and label	Roger Kipling	216.08	1	216.08
<b>BBL14</b>	Scan & OCR typescript of Roman glass	Roger Kipling	216.08	3	648.24
<b>BBL15</b>	Scan & OCR typescript of Small finds	Roger Kipling	216.08	3	648.24
<b>BBL16</b>	Scan, arrange and label small finds and glass figures, add to text	Roger Kipling	216.08	1	216.08
<b>BBL17</b>	Scan & OCR typescript of Coins, prehistoric finds, crucible deposits, slag, charcoal, animal bone	Roger Kipling	216.08	2	432.16
<b>BBL18</b>	Assemble Draft report	Roger Kipling	216.08	4	864.32
<b>BBL19</b>	Assess report, draw up costed schedule of outstanding tasks	Roger Kipling/Richard Buckley	216.08	4	864.32

<b>BBL20</b>	Project Management	Nick Cooper	267.69	4	1070.76
					<b>12090.84</b>
	Consumeables				200.00
	<b>Unit overheads @ 25% (on internal staff)</b>				3,022.71
				TOTAL	15,313.55

#### 4.4.2 Little Lane and St Peter's Lane (Shires)

<i>Task No.</i>	<i>Task</i>	<i>Staff (internal staff)</i>	<i>Per day</i>	<i>Days/no.</i>	<i>Cost £</i>
SH1	Create Word version of draft stratigraphic report, Little Lane Roman	Roger Kipling	216.08	3	648.24
SH2	Create Word version of draft stratigraphic report, Little Lane Post Roman	Roger Kipling	216.08	3	648.24
SH3	Create Word version of draft stratigraphic report, St Peter's Lane RB/medieval	Roger Kipling	216.08	3	648.24
SH4	Scan Little Lane inked sections and plans and label	Roger Kipling	216.08	4	864.32
SH5	Edit stratigraphic report draft and add figures	Roger Kipling	216.08	3	648.24
SH7	Identify photographs to illustrate stratigraphic report and scan	Roger Kipling	216.08	1	216.08
SH8	Format/Edit Small finds, coins and Roman glass text	Roger Kipling	216.08	2	432.16
SH9	Scan and label small finds and Roman glass drawings	Supervisor	216.08	2	432.16
SH9	Format and edit Roman Pottery text	Roger Kipling	216.08	5	1080.4
SH10	Scan, arrange and label Roman Pottery drawings	Roger Kipling	216.08	4	864.32
SH11	Format and edit Post Roman pottery report drafts and illustration list	Roger Kipling	216.08	2	432.16
SH12	Scan, arrange and label Post Roman Pottery Drawings	Roger Kipling	216.08	4	864.32
SH13	Format and edit Animal Bone report	Roger Kipling	216.08	0.5	108.04
SH14	Format and edit Environmental reports	Roger Kipling	216.08	1	216.08
SH15	Format and edit minor specialist reports	Roger Kipling	216.08	0.5	108.04
SH16	Assess report, draw up costed schedule of outstanding tasks	Roger Kipling/Richard Buckley	216.08	3	648.24
SH17	Project Management	Nick Cooper	267.69	4	1070.76
				Staff total	9930.04
	<b>Unit overheads @ 25% (on internal staff)</b>			overhead	2482.51
	Consumeables		100		100

				TOTAL	12,512.52
--	--	--	--	-------	-----------

4.4.3 Project Total

				TOTAL	27,826.07
--	--	--	--	-------	-----------

**5. References**

Buckley, R. and Lucas, J., 1987 *Leicester Town Defences*. Leicestershire Museums, Arts and Records Service.

Connor, A. and Buckley, R. 1999 *Roman and Medieval Occupation in Causeway Lane, Leicester*. Leicester Archaeology Monograph 5. University of Leicester

Derrick 2005 *An Archaeological Evaluation of Land at Highcross Street and Vaughan Way, Abbey Ward, Leicester* ULAS Report 2005-180

Finn, N., 1993 'An archaeological evaluation at 71-95 Sanvey Gate, Leicester (SK 5826 0502)'

Lucas J., *et al* 1989. 'An Excavation in the North-East Quarter of Leicester: Elbow Lane, 1977' *Trans. Leics. Archaeol. Hist. Soc.*, **63** pp.18-47

Meek, J. 2001 *An Archaeological Evaluation of Land at the Former Maxim and Stibbe Buildings, Leicester (SK 5826 0473)* Unpub. ULAS Report 2001-047

Sawday, D., 1989 *Peephole to the Past*. Leicester: Leicestershire Museums

Wacher, J.S., 1974, *The Towns of Roman Britain*. Book Club Associates, London

## Appendix 1: Draft publication proposal

### Summary

*Dissemination of the results of archaeological excavations and historic building research undertaken in advance of the new Highcross Quarter mixed use development (on behalf of Hammerson and Hermes) and the Leicester Square residential development (on behalf of Thomas Fish) is to be achieved through a combination of on-line grey-literature reports, web-based summaries and the preparation of a substantial thematic volume. With the aid of additional funding from English Heritage, the results of excavations in advance of the original Shires development in 1988-9 will be presented in grey-literature reports, and incorporated into appropriate sections of the thematic work.*

### 1. Introduction

Dissemination of the results of archaeological fieldwork projects to date in Leicester has been of a traditional form, either by publication of individual site-based excavation reports (Jewry Wall, Causeway Lane, Bonners Lane, Newarke Street and Clarence Street) or as collections of smaller interventions on the basis of connected themes or by location (e.g. Leicester Town Defences, Bath Lane and West Leicester sites). Depending on size, reports have been produced either as monographs or as articles in local or national archaeological journals. Such reports provide valuable and accessible benchmark data, but it can be argued that some of them at least contain a significant quantity of technical information, leading to the view that they are written by specialists for specialists, rather than for the consumption of the informed public or indeed the archaeological profession as a whole. Attempts have been made to produce site-based publications with a more popular appeal, such as ‘Peepholes to the Past’, a summary of the main results of the Shires excavations of 1988-9 (Sawday 1989). However, this was written before the fieldwork had been completed or any analysis had been undertaken and only aimed to consider the results in very summary form. Hence there would seem to be a gap in the available literature on the city’s archaeology – a general account is clearly needed, but with sufficient detail to satisfy the informed reader.

### 2 Dissemination proposal

2.1 Taken together, the investigations undertaken in connection with the Highcross Quarter and Leicester Square Developments represent the largest-scale archaeological interventions within the city to date, producing for the first time ‘joined up’ archaeological data, that is a coherent picture of a substantial area of the Roman and medieval town, rather than the more usual keyhole excavations of the past. This provides a rare opportunity to undertake cross-site analysis during the post-excavation stage and to produce a single volume considering all of the results together, rather than a series of site-based reports which would individually be of limited appeal to the archaeologists and public alike.

2.2 So what form should the volume take? In particular, how do we reconcile the need to provide supporting data to underpin the interpretation of the site sequences and to satisfy the requirements of finds and environmental specialists – in terms of detail – whilst still producing a readable account? Rather than attempting a compromise within the published volume, it is considered that a better approach would be to produce outputs targeted to specific audiences on a phased basis:

For example:

a) A4 spiral bound report for each of the main sites (including the unpublished excavations, Blue Boar Lane, Little Lane and St Peter’s Lane), containing the site narrative and summaries

of the principal results of the finds analysis, with discussion limited to intra site interpretation. In some instances, complete finds reports may be included, but in the case of major studies, such as the human bone and perhaps pottery, these could be made available separately. Reports would be converted to pdf format and uploaded to the Archaeology Data Service website as part of the Oasis project, in due course becoming accessible online through the National Monuments Record. Some reports may warrant presentation as monographs, perhaps as British Archaeological Reports.

b) Preparation of summaries with illustrations on the ULAS website of the principal results of the investigations, together with supplementary pages highlighting finds or study areas of particular interest or significance.

c) Hardbound publication of c. 400-500pp, presenting the results of the investigations on a thematic basis.

d) Specialist publication in appropriate journals to consider aspects of the results of detailed analysis undertaken for particular study areas, e.g. human bone, pottery etc.

2.3 At the time of writing, the Highcross Quarter sites are undergoing post-excavation assessment, so the publication outline which follows should be regarded as an initial suggestion as to possible themes which may be adopted. They will, however, be subject to re-evaluation as the project progresses.

### **3 Published Volume Outline**

#### **3.1 *Format***

A4 hardbound, c. 400-500pp, some colour illustrations

#### **3.2 *Possible chapter headings***

*(i) Archaeology and the Highcross Quarter (or North-east quarter?)*

The nature and survival of urban archaeological deposits

Background to previous investigations in the area

Antiquarian discoveries

Excavations at Blue Boar Lane: circumstances of the excavation, approaches.

Excavations for the first Shires development (Little Lane/St Peter's Lane): approaches, legislative background

Excavations along the line of the town defences and the Elbow Lane excavation 1977

Causeway Lane excavation 1980/1991

Archaeological investigations for the 'Highcross Quarter' – assessment, foundation design, mitigation strategy

Leicester Square development (Sanvey Gate) – assessment, foundation design, mitigation strategy

#### **3.3 *The development of urban topography***

This section will consider the evidence for the development of the infrastructure of the Roman and medieval town and a chronological overview of the evolution of the urban landscape.

Possible themes might include:

The origin and development of the Roman town, including town planning (creation of street grid, definition of areas for public buildings, residential development etc)

The end of Roman Leicester and early Anglo-Saxon settlement

Mid-late Anglo-Saxon Leicester: possible focus of occupation, archaeological evidence

Saxo-Norman Leicester – evidence from Highcross Street excavation

Medieval Leicester – the development of the medieval street plan; the survival of Roman fabric and its influence on the development of the town in later periods

location of parishes; principal buildings, discussion of street names, nature of urban occupation; decline; horticulture and the development of so-called ‘garden soils’.

Post-medieval Leicester

### **3.4 Buildings**

This section should consider the buildings of this part of the town – both excavated and from historic building survey, in terms of their plans, constructional techniques and materials used. This would be presented chronologically

Roman:

Domestic

Vine Street Roman town house

?Leicester Square

Public

Vine Street Building

Macellum

Commercial

Vine Street smithy

Little Lane buildings

?Leicester Square

Military

?Leicester Square

Medieval/post-medieval

Residential Buildings

Highcross Street/Freeschool Lane

59 Highcross Street

Vaughan Way

Commercial buildings and shops

Highcross Street/Freeschool Lane

Public buildings

St Peter’s Church (Vaughan Way)

St Michael’s Church (Vine Street)

## The Free Grammar School

Building materials – tile, slate, painted wall plaster. Architectural details – hypocausts, drains, foundation construction, floor types

### 3.5 *Religion, death and burial*

*Roman* – not much evidence, but curse tablets, Venus figurines, intaglios with religious subjects, the ‘pan’ folding knife from Shires 1, objects of possible religious significance from Shires 1: e.g. pottery tazza.

*Medieval*: the medieval parishes of the Highcross quarter.

All Saints, St Michael’s and St Peter’s. Chronological survey and overview, drawing on archaeological and documentary sources.

St Peter’s Church and graveyard. Details of the evolution and dating of the church, evidence for its appearance from architectural fragments and surviving timbers in the Free Grammar School. Evidence for bell casting. Discussion of burial rites, chronology of the graveyard, evidence for possible plague pits, details of the charnel house and other charnel pits. Can we suggest a date for the church? Why was it located here?

St Michael’s Church and graveyard. Evidence for the date and nature of the structure; discussion of burial rites, chronology of burials – e.g. burials from both St. Michael’s and All Saints. Discussion of the relationship of St Michael’s church and graveyard with underlying Roman building: is it possible that some of the Roman building was incorporated into the church? If not, does the Roman building show any evidence of having been demolished early in the medieval period in preparation for the construction of the church?

All Saints Church – strictly speaking outside the development area, but for completeness, a brief summary of its history and architecture from published sources.

*Post-medieval*

Non Conformist Chapels in the Highcross Quarter 1600-1950

Vine Street Baptist chapel, Ebenezer Chapel, East Bond Street Congregational Chapel and the Salem Chapel. Details of what we know of the buildings in terms of appearance and dating. Discussion of burial rites – e.g. N-S orientation of some, burials in brick-lined vaults etc.

Great Meeting Unitarian Chapel could be mentioned for completeness, again summarised from published sources.

### 3.6 *The People of the Highcross Quarter*

*Roman*

Can we say anything about the cultural makeup of the inhabitants? Evidence from names on the curse tablets, names from graffiti on pottery and tile.

What can we say about the wealth and social status of the inhabitants? The occupants of the Vine Street town house, presumably wealthy, and almost certainly with a substantial household, presumably made up mostly of slaves (cf names on curse tablets). Were they a Romanised Iron Age elite, Roman

officials, town councillors or perhaps of a commercial class? Perhaps the house changed hands several times? Perhaps at some stage, the house went into decline and was in multiple occupancy? We also have evidence for an artisan class – in the workshops in the corner of the house, from the cellar and possible shops from Little Lane. Evidence from Sanvey Gate?

Evidence for health from a study of cess pits.

Status – cross reference to food and drink and possibly trade and industry for evidence of imported foodstuffs and goods

#### *Anglo-Saxon*

Some discussion at least of the Anglo-Saxon settlers in terms of where they came from and perhaps what they were like as people – i.e. can we say anything about their attitudes to the pre-existing Roman town from their choice of location for building their houses? Are they targeting areas largely devoid of Roman structures and does this bear out the view that they had a suspicion of the ‘work of giants’.

#### *Medieval*

Evidence for health and living conditions from a study of the human bone assemblages from the two graveyards. Working life – i.e. evidence for traumas, heavy lifting/physical labour General health – evidence for dietary deficiencies, disease etc.

Evidence from cess pits – parasites

### **3.7. *Food and Drink***

#### *Roman*

Environmental evidence from plant remains for foods eaten

Fish bones

Shellfish

Animal Bone: including animal husbandry and butchery

Wine, oil and fish sauce – evidence from amphorae

#### *Medieval*

Environmental evidence from plant remains for foods eaten

Fish bones

Shellfish

Animal Bone: including animal husbandry and butchery

Beer/ale – evidence for brewing

### **3.8. *Shopping, trade and industry***

#### *Roman*

Shopping – shopping in Roman Leicester, the macellum and forum. The possible Roman shops/tavern at Little Lane. Weighing scales/steelyards from



Sanvey Gate and Vine Street. Smithy and bone working at Vine Street. Any other Roman industry in the area – the odd hearths at Freeschool Lane.

#### *Medieval*

The markets, especially the Wednesday market at the junction of Highcross Street and High Street. Possible ale house on the Highcross Street site. What sort of range of goods might one expect in Roman and medieval shops in Leicester and from how far afield had such goods come?

Malting and brewing at Highcross Street and Vaughan Way.

Lime kilns at Vaughan Way and St Peter's Lane

#### *Post-medieval*

Perhaps a discussion of the nature of trade and industry in the area in the post-medieval period from trade directories, early OS maps.

### **3.9 *Work and play***

What do we know about the daily life of Leicester's Roman and medieval inhabitants from a study of what was thrown away or lost?

Small finds by functional category

Pottery – the nature of cooking wares and table wares. Pottery vessels

### **3.10 *Conclusion***

## **4. *Contributing sites***

### **4.1 *Main sites:***

1. Vaughan Way: the excavation of the medieval church of St Peter and its graveyard, together with domestic structures of the Anglo-Saxon and medieval periods (undertaken 2004-5; Hammerson and Hermes)
2. Highcross Street, Freeschool Lane and St. Peter's Lane: the excavation of a series of medieval burgage plots, with additional evidence for buildings of the Roman, Anglo-Saxon and Saxo-Norman periods. (undertaken 2005-6; Hammerson and Hermes)
3. Vine Street: the excavation of a Roman town house, public building and the medieval graveyard of St Michael's (undertaken 2004-2006; Hammerson and Hermes).
4. Sanvey Gate: the excavation of the Roman and medieval town defences and domestic structures of the Roman period (undertaken 2004-5; Thomas Fish).
5. Blue Boar Lane – the excavation of a Roman town house and later market hall (1958).
6. Little Lane, the excavation of Roman commercial and residential properties fronting on to a north-south street, with additional evidence for medieval backyards. (undertaken 1988-9; Imry Merchant, Leics., County Council, MSC and English Heritage)

### **4.2 *Smaller sites***

7. St Peter's Lane: the excavation of medieval pit sequences and limited Roman activity (undertaken 1988-9; Imry Merchant, Leics., County Council, MSC and English Heritage)

8. East Bond Street/St Peter's Lane: the excavation of medieval and Roman activity (undertaken 2006; Hammerson and Hermes)

### **4.3 Historic Buildings**

7. Free Grammar School: historic building record of 16th century school, constructed from materials re-used from the demolished St Peter's Church.

8. 59 Highcross Street: historic building record of an 18th-century town house.

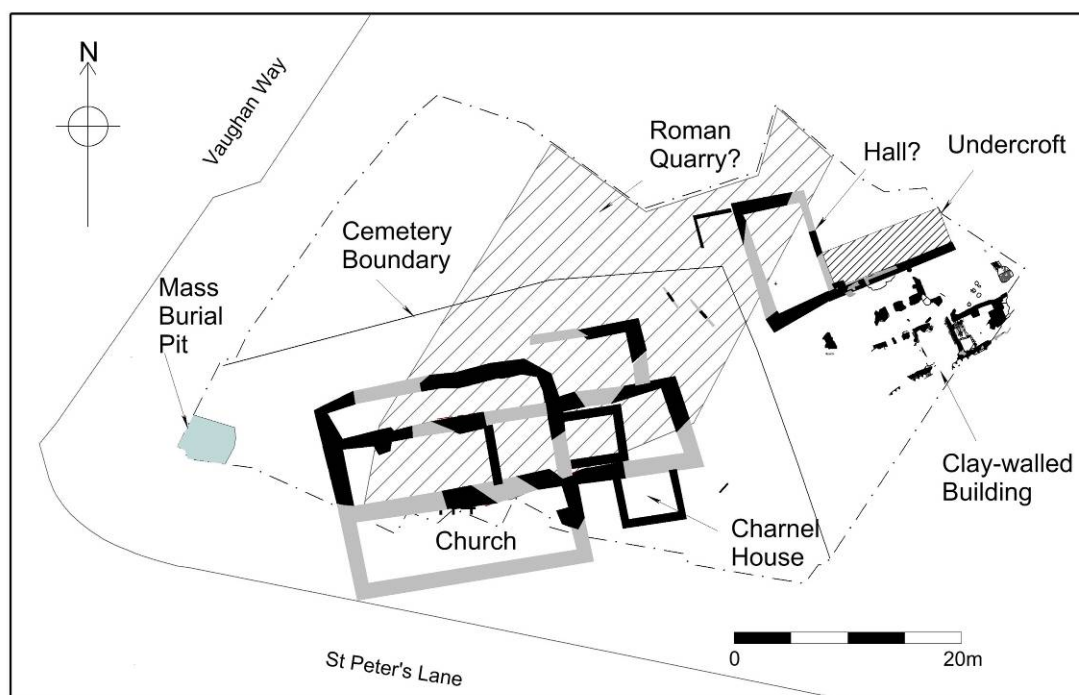
## **Appendix 2: Summaries of the main results of the Highcross Quarter Excavations**

### **1 Vaughan Way (A Gnanaratnam)**

1.1 The earliest activity identified was a large Roman quarry covering much of the middle of the site. This seems to have filled gradually and contained few finds, although an unfinished Roman column drum of Derbyshire millstone grit was found – presumably an expensive imported stone and therefore likely to have been intended for an important structure. By the 4th century, the quarry had been filled and was covered over by a rough gravel surface, strewn with tesserae. Found on top of this surface were the remains of two Roman hob-nailed boots. The leather had rotted, leaving the nails in their original positions. Also found on top of this were traces of flimsy timber structures. Apart from these structures, this seems to have been a largely open area during the Roman period, an unexpected finding. The projected lines of two Roman streets crossed the site and areas of metalling were identified during the investigations, but proved to be too fragmentary to confirm alignments.

1.2 The Saxon period is represented by an early brooch (short long type) and a possible *grubenhaus*. This was a small structure with a sunken floor, characteristic of the early Saxon period and the first discovery of such a building within the town walls, although settlement in this area had been postulated on the basis of finds distributions (Connor and Buckley 1999). Previously, the only structural evidence of the early Anglo-Saxon period has come from outside the walls, to the south. The later Saxon period was represented by finds evidence including a coin of King Eadgar of the 10th century.

1.3 The excavation focussed on the investigation of the medieval church and cemetery of St Peter's, one of the four 'lost' churches of Leicester. It is probably one of the churches that existed at the time of Domesday, and was perhaps constructed in the 10th-11th century; the Borough Records show that it was being dismantled in 1572 to provide building materials for the nearby Free Grammar School. Prior to this, St Peter's had absorbed the defunct parish of St Michael's to the north, the church there having disappeared at some point in the 15th century. Although the stone work had been almost entirely robbed, some wall fragments survived and most of the ground plan of the church was revealed by excavation. This may have started as a small two-celled building, the nave was later extended and by the late twelfth century a western bell tower had been added, within which was a large bell-casting pit. Aisles were added, the chancel extended, and a sunken-floored charnel house built.



**Figure 5: Highcross Quarter: Vaughan Way, St. Peter's Church and Graveyard**

1.4 The excavation yielded almost no traces of moulded stonework, however work on the nearby Free Grammar school, part of which was demolished in the late nineteenth century, yielded fragments of Perpendicular tracery which almost certainly derive from the church. This, together with a number of floor tile fragments of 14th century or later date and 15th century tie beams reused within the roof structure of the Free Grammar School, suggest that the church was still being extended and embellished into the later medieval period and was not a small or impoverished church, as might have been expected given its short life.

1.5 The bell casting pit was an unusual find and was over two metres across and contained substantial amounts of bell mould fragments. It ought to be possible to gain an idea of the size of the bell and the techniques of casting. The features of the pit seem consistent with those described by the monk Theophilus perhaps writing in the twelfth century on bell-casting methods.

1.6 A late addition to the church was the small sunken-floored charnel house, which measured around 4.20 x 3.70m internally. The bones were originally stacked against the walls of the charnel house and the middle of the room left open. This was re-floored with cobbles and later filled with bone as space ran out. There was no close dating evidence for the charnel house. Although, charnel houses survive –as for example at Rothwell in Northamptonshire–, it is rare to find one where the bones have not been re-arranged.

1.7 Some 1340 burials were recovered from the cemetery. Historical evidence uncovered by Dr Paul Courtney suggests that the church may have only acquired burial rights in the twelfth century and clearly early burials seem absent from within the church. A number of distinct burial practices were seen, including roughly a dozen charcoal burials, where the body was laid on a layer of charcoal, and variations on the use of stones as linings or supports within the grave. It is likely that the stones often supported covers, perhaps simple planks. These practices are of early date and probably cease after the 12th century. Around twenty-five coffined burials were revealed inside the church, including some with a layer of ash within the coffin. One of these included a *bull*a of Pope Innocent VI (1352-62) perhaps originally attached to an Indulgence. At the east end of the North Aisle, a cluster of coffined burials was revealed which included two ash-lined burials. These may be a high-

status, related group possibly within a chapel. The use of ash as a lining is uncommon and may be a symbol of penitence.

1.8 In the southwestern part of the site, the corner of a mass grave was uncovered. The grave pit appears stratigraphically very early and it may pre-date the Black Death. As the analysis progresses, the nature and date of this feature should become clear.

1.9 Medieval building remains and pits were found sealed beneath the cemetery, showing that its boundaries were not static. Just outside the northern cemetery boundary, other medieval buildings included a robbed-out basement or undercroft indicating a high-status building. Next to this was a stone building and a mud-walled building, which were probably contemporary with the church and churchyard. Post-excavation analysis should reveal something of the contemporary environs of the church.

1.10 The size of the cemetery means that this is a rare opportunity to examine much of the population of a single medieval parish. Although many of the burials were inter-cutting, survival and completeness seems good enough to aim at suggesting prevalence rates for different pathologies, and begin to reconstruct meaningful demographic data. This is enhanced by the number of clearly higher status individuals buried within the church. Detailed scientific analysis of the St Peter's skeletal assemblage will complement the skeletal analysis. Initial on-site inspection of the skeletal remains, by the Project Osteologist, Harriet Jacklin, indicates a number of pathologies and evidence of trauma. These include vitamin deficiencies such as anaemia (Cribra Orbitalia and Porotic Hyperostosis), rickets and possibly scurvy. Osteoarthritis of the spine was common but Osteoarthritis of the hands and knees was also seen, along with signs of Rheumatoid Arthritis. Many older adults exhibited signs of Schmorl's nodes; possibly the result of heavy lifting. Instances of DISH (Diffuse Idiopathic Skeletal Hyperostosis) were seen, mostly in older individuals. DISH may be associated with obesity and diabetes and is characterised by bone growth along the spine fusing the vertebrae. Dislocations of the hip and shoulder were seen, together with fractures, mainly of the lower arm but also of the clavicle. Most of these had healed well although some were misaligned. Possible evidence of Tuberculosis and Meningitis was seen and also non-specific infections in the form of Periostitis and Chronic Osteomyelitis, which was often very advanced. These latter may be the result of trauma or soft tissue infection.

## **2 Highcross Street and Freeschool Lane**

2.1 This site was divided into five principal areas: Area 1 on the Highcross Street frontage, between the free Grammar school and 59 Highcross Street; Area 7 at the extreme eastern end of the site; Area X, close to the St Peter's Lane frontage, Area 10 on the Freeschool Lane frontage and Area X on the Highcross Street frontage to the north, and to the rear of, 59 Highcross Street. Areas were selected for excavation on the basis of the results of prior evaluation and identified impacts from foundations.

### *Highcross Street (Area 1)*

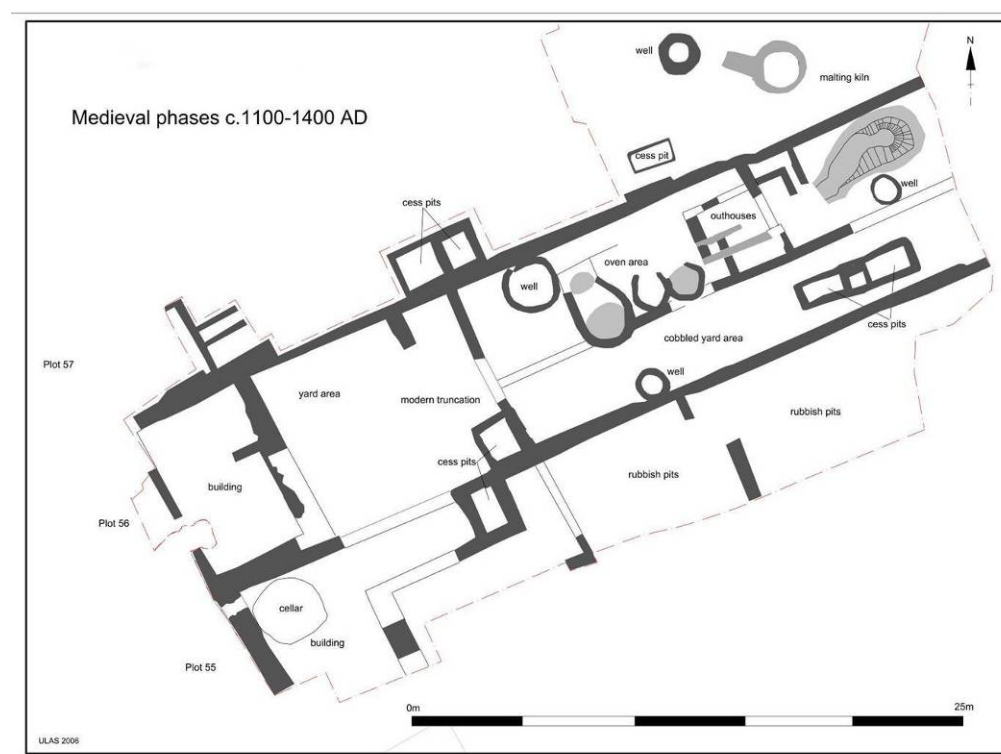
2.2 This site fronted on to one of the principal streets of Roman and medieval Leicester, now the line of Highcross Street, and revealed a deeply stratified and complex sequence of Roman, Sub-Roman, Saxo-Norman, medieval, and post-medieval buildings and back yard activity. The post-Roman levels lay within three burgage plots, stretching back some 40m from the frontage.

2.3 The site was not fully excavated to natural ground, in places some 3.5m-4.0m below present, as deposits at this level would only be disturbed by piles and not by pile caps or other structures. Hence our impression of early activity is based largely on a few trial sondages and from observation of deposits revealed in the sides of later cut features. Apart from a small assemblage of unstratified flint, and a rare Palaeolithic core, no evidence for pre-Roman activity was identified on the site. The earliest identified occupation appears to be a thin gravel and pebble surface of the Roman period sitting on top of subsoil, as seen elsewhere on

Area 1 (and also area 10). It is possible that this is a similar early surface to that identified on a number of sites within the central part of the Roman town. Broadly contemporary was the establishment of a north-south street with side ditch in the Roman period, on a similar alignment to Highcross Street. This had a marked camber, had been remetalled many times, and silts had washed towards its eastern edge. A Roman wall footing was revealed constructed along its eastern side, marking the building line to the adjacent insula. Several hearths were revealed cut into the edge of this street, adjacent to the wall, whilst another hearth to the east of the wall was enclosed by a post and beam-slot building. There were a few other postholes from this period in the area which form no apparent pattern.

2.4 Sealing the hearths, wall and street, was a substantial collapsed Roman wall of mortared stone with tile bonding courses, a tile relieving arch and other possible architectural features, presumed to be part of the macellum which originally stood on the opposite (west) side of the Roman street and identified in the 1968 Blue Boar Lane excavation. This was cut by several large postholes and a sub-rectangular Anglo-Saxon sunken-featured building. Elsewhere on the frontage, Roman levels were sealed by a widespread and thick 'raft' of demolition/levelling rubble of similar composition.

2.5 Several occupation layers and potential structures on the frontage have provided the first evidence in the city of structural activity of the Saxo-Norman period, with a large (1000+sherds) assemblage of pottery and at least two timber buildings. In addition, a 3.0m by 1.5m sub-rectangular flat bottomed pit may represent a cellar of this period, although this could belong to an earlier or later phase. Away from the frontage, the three plots contained a sequence of inter-cutting domestic refuse pits.



**Figure 6: Highcross Quarter: Highcross Street Area 1**

2.6 Medieval and earlier post-medieval occupation was represented by a complex structural sequence on the Highcross street frontage, with intensive back yard activity to the rear. The street front walls of the building sequence appear to exhibit considerably more phases than the rear walls, reflecting either more frequent rebuilding of the public face, or loss of evidence from earlier phases through the construction of a late medieval wall footing.

Within one property (55) was evidence for massive and long-lasting localised slumping, the attempts to maintain levels leading to the build-up of a sequence of many superimposed hearths.

The main focus of activity in the backyard area during this period was within plot 57. Consisting of numerous small buildings, ovens, wells, cess pits, and rubbish pits. Initially there was a complex sequence of small buildings, perhaps outhouses. Later, the area was opened up, some of the smaller room divisions removed and there was a change to intensive industrial activity, represented by five kilns probably of similar (uncertain) function and date. Each consisted of a stone-lined circular chamber measuring *c.* 1.8m in diameter, set onto a cobble base, for which there was substantial evidence for burning. A fifth kiln was a 'tear-drop'-shaped 1.56m deep pit lined with a rough clay-bonded granite wall and with a granite-paved floor. The 3m long flue led from the kiln-chamber to a flight of worn steps which had been cut into the natural gravels. The kiln-pit was 2.86m in diameter at the excavated level, and 0.95m in diameter at its base. The function is as yet unknown, although in form, it is thought that the structure has qualities associated with either corn-drying or malting grain.

A narrow open yard or alley area ran along the south length of the plot, the area dominated by a sequence of carefully constructed cobbled yard surfacing, cut by later rubbish pits. Stone-lined cess pits were identified along the edge of one of the plot boundary walls as were three wells.

The back of plots 56 and 58 during these phases appear to have been used as an open yard, later heavily disturbed by inter-cutting rubbish pits. One cess pit and a well were located. Another kiln with stone lining and paved floor was located within this plot, very similar to those next door, though 'keyhole' shaped and much smaller. A flue led from the kiln-chamber to a flight of steps which had been cut into the natural gravels.

2.7 Finds from the medieval phases have included a triangular piece of riveted chain maille of *c.* 1350-1475, thought to have been a decorative piece designed to be attached to a larger maille garment to enhance its appearance and probably worn by a person of high status.

2.8 The footings of a demolished bay of the Free Grammar School (built 1573) were revealed in plot 56, whilst the area to the rear of this appears to have been used as an open yard.

2.9 Victorian cellars and basements were present, but fortuitously not on the frontage itself except for a small semi-basement in plot 56. A large brick-arched culvert led to the street from deep brick built sumps which had truncated the archaeology down to early Roman levels. The remains of Georgian brick cellar vaulting was noted during the machining immediately north of the plot 57/58 wall boundary

2.10 Twentieth century occupation was represented by concrete sill beams and pads, a sewer and much century refuse and demolition material.

#### *Freeschool Lane: Area 7*

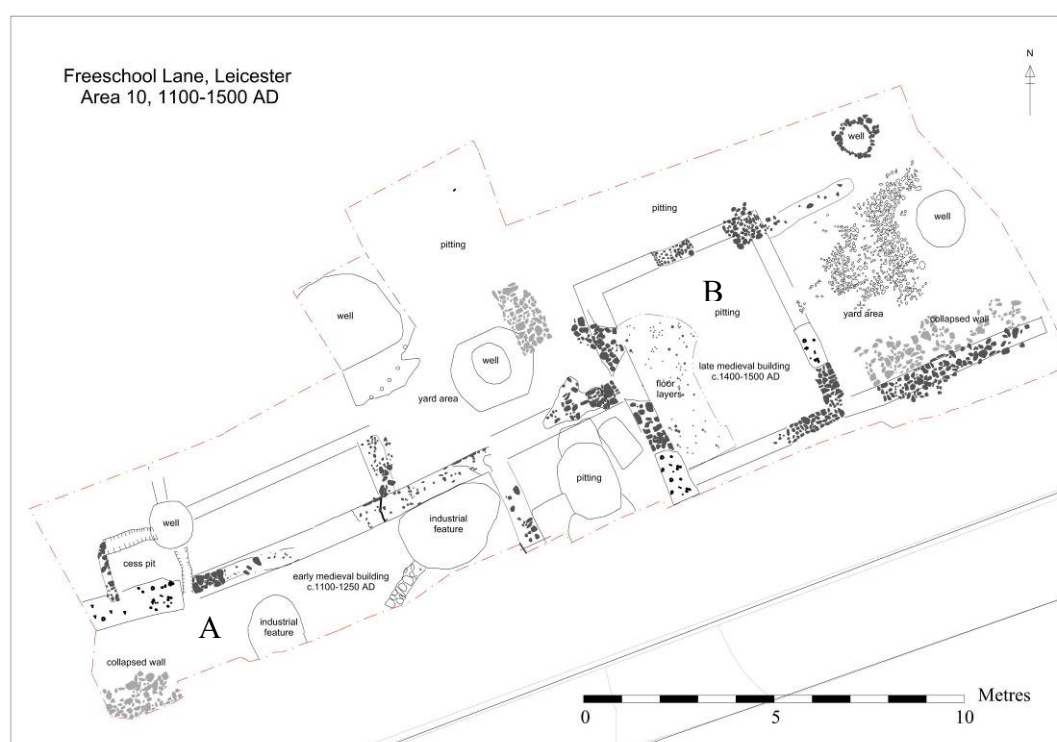
2.11 A small area was investigated at the western end of the site to identify the source of the Saxon pottery encountered during trial trenching. This revealed a probable sunken-feature building, together with post holes which were not necessarily contemporary. Later activity was represented by medieval and post-medieval pits.

#### *Freeschool Lane, Area 10*

2.12 This trench was located in the south-west corner of the development area, fronting on to Freeschool Lane (medieval Dead Lane), and revealed evidence for early to late medieval properties, industrial activity, and yard activity between two cultivation episodes, represented by garden soils. Due to the 19th-century widening of Freeschool Lane and the presence of cellars, only the backs of the frontage buildings survived.

2.13 Roman soil layers were identified, but no evidence for structures or streets. Above this was a thick layer of so-called ‘garden soil’, perhaps *c.* 400-1100, with the earliest structural activity dated to about 1100-1250, comprising the rear of a building (A) fronting on to Freeschool Lane which perhaps remained in use up to *c.*1500 AD. It contained two industrial features of uncertain function, although a number of mould fragments from a nearby refuse pit may suggest the manufacture of bells or cauldrons. Cess pits and other yard activity was identified beyond the rear wall of the building. A second building (B), with some surviving floor layers, was constructed to the east in the later medieval period. A number of wells, cess pits, and domestic refuse pits were identified to the north of buildings A and B. By *c.*1500 both buildings fell out of use as many of the robbed walls date to this period. Incidentally the Free Grammar School was constructed in 1573, leading to the speculation that some of the material used to construct this may come from the buildings identified in area 10.

2.14 Between 1500 and 1650, most of the area had been levelled off with gravels, followed by the accumulation of a thick layer of ‘garden soil’ up to about 1750, suggesting agricultural or horticultural activity. From the 18th and 19th centuries, residential and commercial structures were identified.



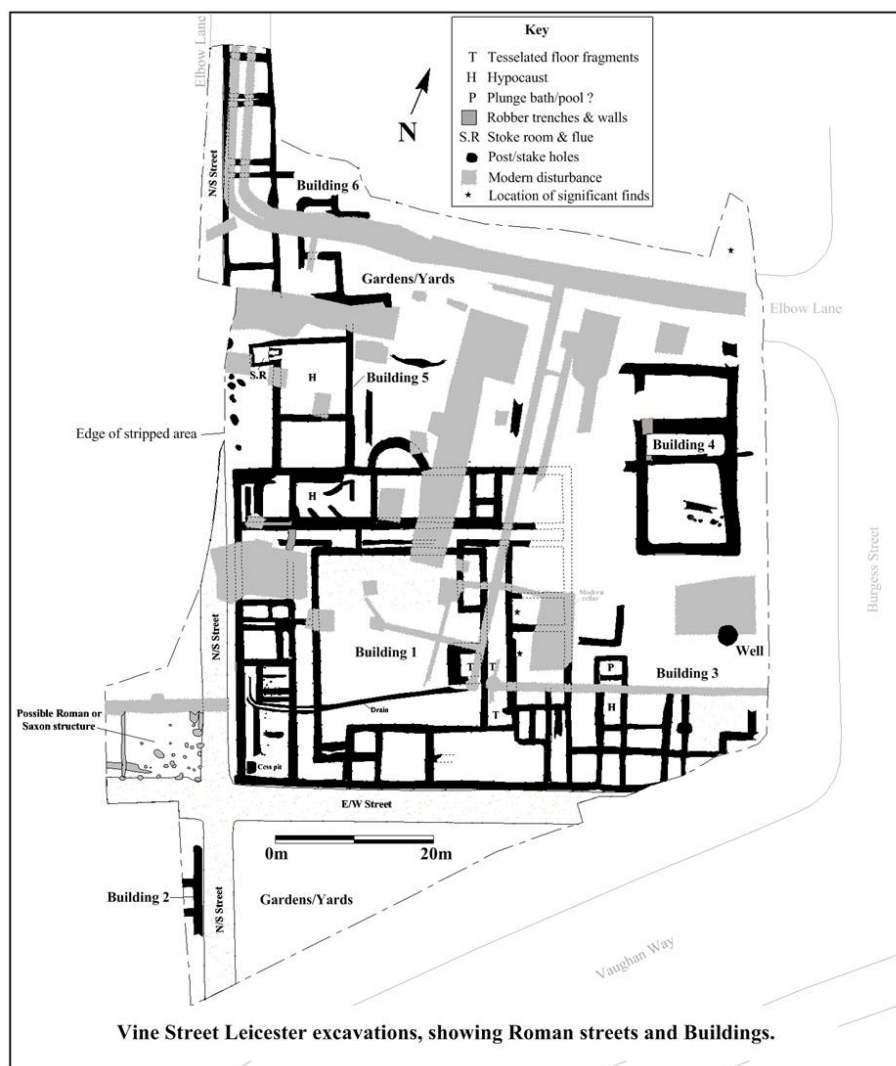
**Figure 7: Highcross Quarter: Area 10 Freeschool Lane**

### 3 Vine Street (*Tim Higgins*)

3.1 The Vine Street site was dug between 2004 and 2006 and, at 6,500 square metres, is the single largest excavation ever undertaken within the city, around 60% of one of the Roman insulae. The work revealed a substantial Roman townhouse of courtyard plan building 1), measuring some 40m by 38m, together with an adjacent possible public building (building 4). Later, part of the site was occupied by the medieval church of St. Michael and its graveyard.

3.2 Early Roman archaeological deposits were only subject to detailed investigation where they would be directly affected by pile caps or by localised deeper disturbances such as lift pits. The earliest activity identified consisted of stretches of ditch marking the lines of the

east-west and north-south streets. That the streets were surfaced later is indicated by the presence of turf lines beneath the level of the first metallings, running down into the ditch, perhaps indicating the natural formation of grassland. Traces of various possible early timber buildings, represented by slots for sill beams, post holes and hearths were identified sealed under various floors and surfaces of the later masonry buildings, whilst potential early yard surfaces were recorded running off the east-west and north-south streets. To the north a series of substantial post settings was revealed, which appeared to coincide with later wall lines associated with Building 4 perhaps suggesting a timber precursor with a similar footprint.



**Figure 8: Plan of the Vine Street Roman Structures**

3.3 Evidence for the courtyard house, Building 1, was represented by a complex sequence of robber trenches and superimposed floor surfaces, with fragments of *in-situ* walls and footings. The final plan suggests a long evolution spanning the mid-2nd to the 4th century, with many phases of remodelling and enlargement.

3.4 The first phase comprised two rectangular masonry structures fronting lengthways on to the east-west and north-south streets, with access yard surfaces at either ends of the structures. A similar rectangular structure and yards were found north of the courtyard house fronting on to the north-south street.



3.5 The second phase suggests a precursor courtyard structure. The two rectangular buildings were linked together by the construction of additional rooms and a corridor. An east range with corridor was also added, creating a courtyard bounded on three sides with ranges of rooms. Building 1 was then fully enclosed in the third phase with the addition of a north wing which included an apsidal room, suggestive of a *triclinium* (dining room), whilst other rooms at either end of this range were clearly heated, as indicated by remnants of the robbed hypocaust flues. At the same time parts of the south range fronting on to the east-west street were demolished to be replaced with a possible formal entrance hall (*atrium*) and the pre-existing corridors, remodelled to create possible porticos, are also extended from the east and west to adjoin it. This third phase of remodelling completes the enclosure and the yards and gardens inside created a possible peristylum (open courtyard).

3.6 To the east, a semi-detached range of the courtyard house (building 3) contained a possible bath suite. This was represented by evidence for a hypocaust, comprising a series of *in situ* mortared tile *pilae*, with an adjacent partially sunken-walled, square structure which may have been a plunge bath. Both rooms appear to have become redundant and were backfilled a short time after construction. At the east end of the range lay a series of courtyard surfaces, separated from the building by a granite wall which may have formed part of a portico or porch. The abandonment of the bath house may have been due to the construction of a possible replacement attached to the west end of the north range, consisting of two large rooms, one of which contained a hypocaust with a stoke house attached to its western side.

3.7 Some rooms and corridors had clearly had tessellated pavements, with one substantial portion of geometric pattern preserved, and it is reasonable to suggest that the Vine Street mosaic discovered in 1830 belonged to this building. There is also a suggestion that the walls were highly decorated as demolition spreads of painted wall plaster have been found associated with the building.

3.8 Interestingly, elements of the west range of Building 1 appear always to have been of a commercial character, despite being part of what is essentially a high status town house. The early phase rectangular structure in the south west corner revealed hard stone and mortar floors of a utilitarian character, which are maintained and replaced several times. These surfaces were subdivided by timber partitions, suggestive of possible shops or workshops fronting on to the east-west and north-south streets. By the 3rd century it appears that commercial development was expanded to encompass all the south range including the first bathhouse, which comprised the subdivision of rooms and the expansion of others fronting on to the east-west street. The southern end of the open courtyard has a culvert inserted running east-west into the west range of rooms and turning northwards. These rooms were remodelled with new mortar floors and subdivided with timber and masonry walls.

3.9 Building 1 seems to have declined in status towards the end of the Roman period, with parts being used for industrial or craft activities, which include probable smithing in the postulated commercial premises at the south west corner and bone pin making in south east corner rooms. Storage or refuse pits appear during this period, encroaching onto the courtyards and into certain rooms. In the east wing of the house, several dispersed coin hoards, deposited in around AD 341, were discovered buried inside one of the rooms and appeared to have been disturbed in antiquity – perhaps during digging to retrieve hoarded items of greater value. In an adjacent room, a lead ingot had been deliberately buried and covered over with roofing slates.

3.10 Building 4, to the north, seems to have been constructed in the 3rd century, and was clearly a substantial structure, with walls up to 1.2m in thickness. Although the walls were robbed, significant *in-situ* stone footings survived, together with fragments of superstructure, and evidence for several phases of mortar flooring together with make ups and other deposits within individual rooms. Surfaces were dated by associated finds to the third century. Finds from the second to the fourth century were also recovered, along with extensive painted wall

plaster and red clay from deposits which probably pre-dated the construction of the building. These appeared to be demolition waste either imported or re-deposited for reuse as make up layers beneath successive floors. The utilitarian character of the floor surfaces may suggest that it could be a warehouse or granary.

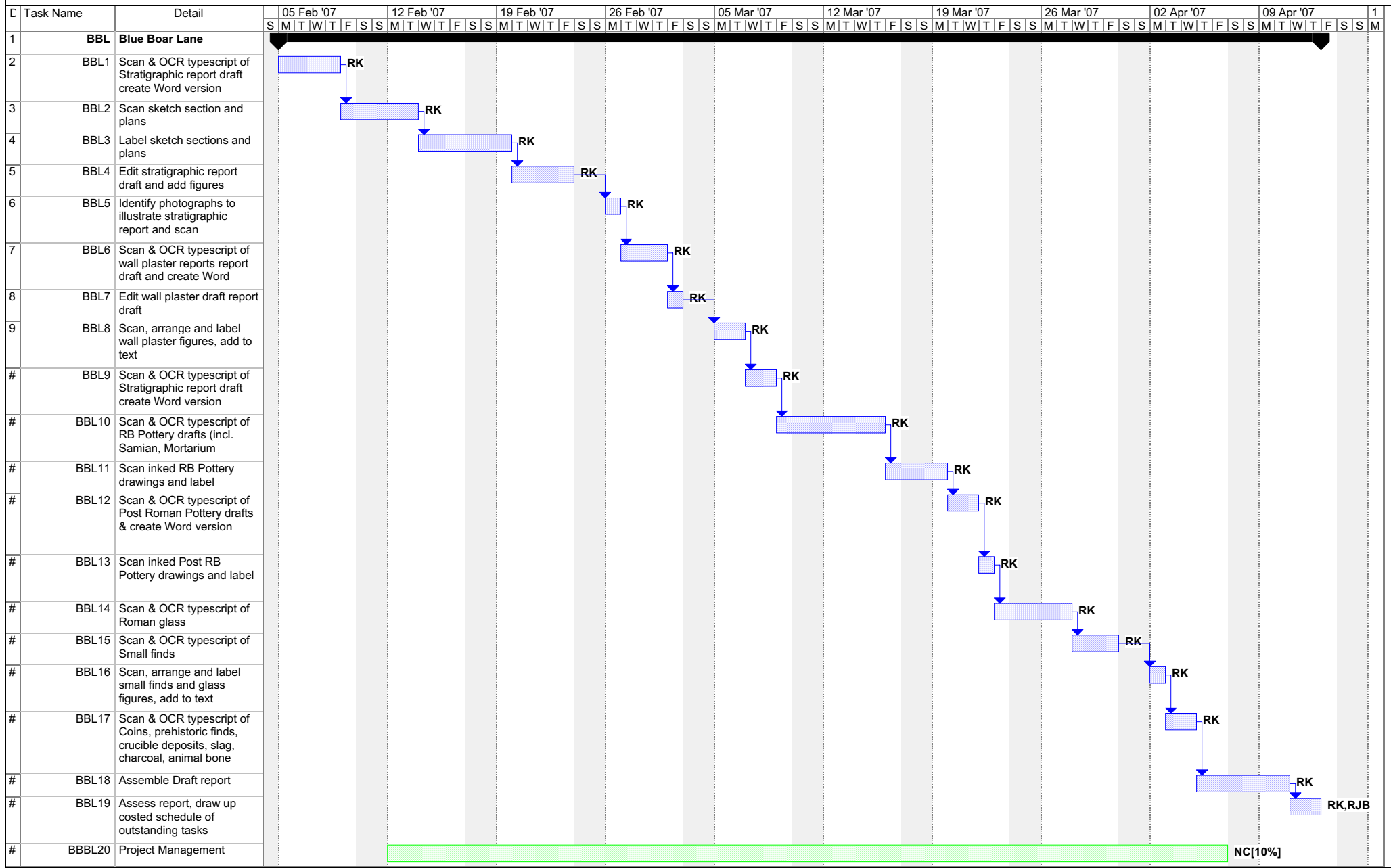
3.11 Significant finds from the Vine Street Roman levels have included two lead curses, currently in the process of being translated and three lead seals, two of which are identifiable as being from the sixth and twentieth legions. They would have been used for sealing documents or consignments of goods and may hint that the house, and perhaps adjacent building, had connections with a public official.

3.12 For the medieval period, the archaeological evidence appears to confirm the presence of at least two lanes running under, and along the same alignments as, the modern roads of Elbow Lane and Grape Street. There is also the possibility that a third lane was found under Vine Street running south from Elbow Lane to join Grape Street. The streets appear to comprise a first phase of metalling of small pebbles, to be replaced by a second phase consisting of rough cobble surface. All three lanes have to some extent protected the underlying Roman deposits from truncation with the best preserved remains such as workshop floors, a tessellated floor and the two hoards have all been found directly under the alignment of these streets. A light scatter of medieval pits and wells have been found either side of the streets suggesting possible backyard activities associated with buildings fronting on to these streets. The evidence of the structures found were ephemeral with only the occasional post hole and beam slot surviving. A large medieval boundary ditch was found to the north of Elbow Lane and it appears to have respected the sharp bend in that lane, which along with the metal surfaces may help confirm its medieval origins.

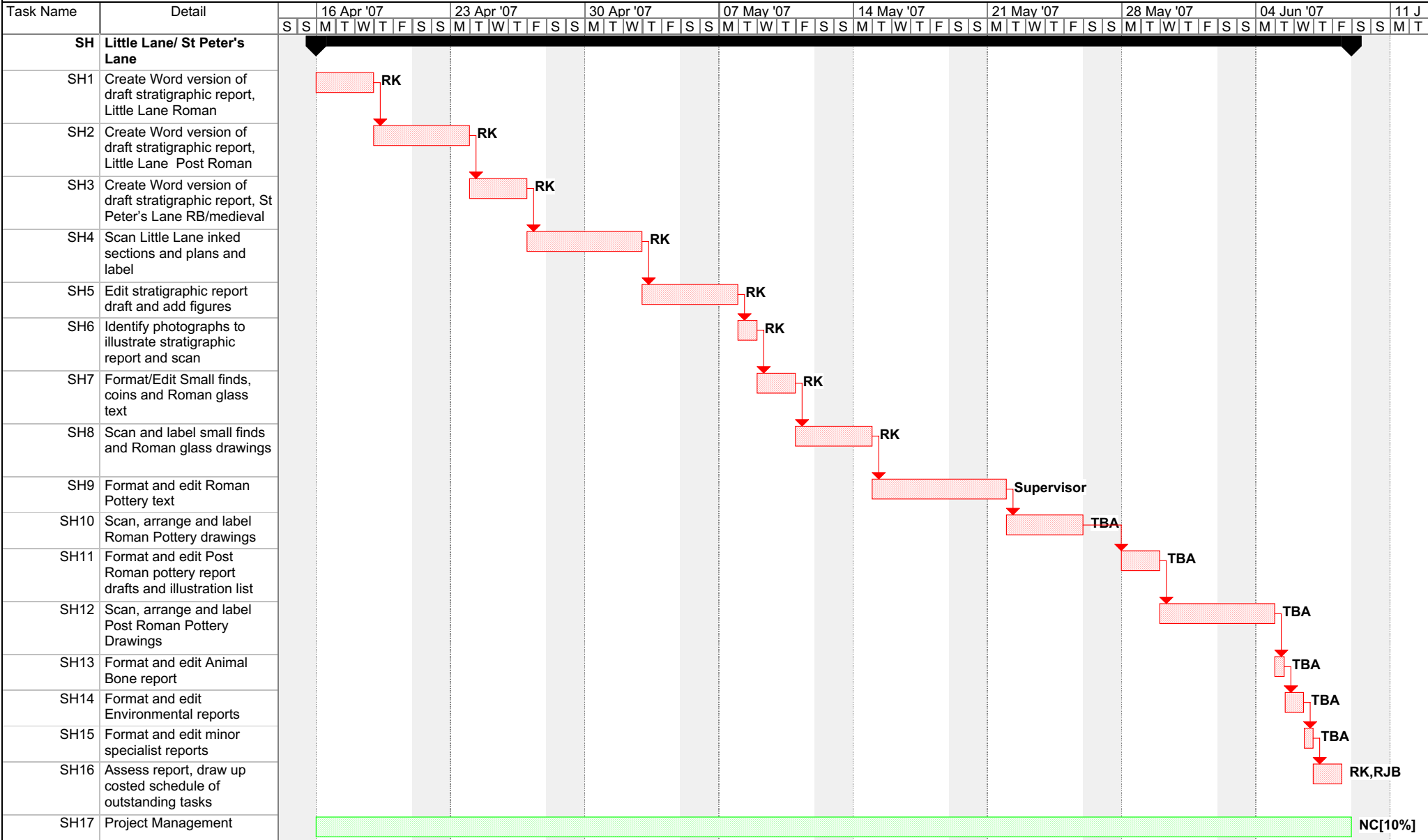
3.13 A major medieval cemetery, which contained 300 burials, was found on the eastern side of the excavation site and its boundaries were probably defined by the three medieval lanes of Elbow Lane to the north, Vine Street to the west and Grape Street to the south. The cemetery is thought to be associated with the lost church of St Michael's, but only fragmentary medieval structures were found within the cemetery. It is at present unclear as to whether these structures represent the remains of the church. The majority of the medieval features including the robbing of the Roman walls all appear to date from the 1200s to the 1450s. Any finds and features dating from after the 15th century to the 18th centuries were sparse in number across the whole site. This absence of post medieval activities is reflective of our historical records and understanding, which suggests that the town had a declining population in the 14th and 15th centuries. The decline in the population had probably led to the closure and then demolition of St Michael's Church by the 1450s. A thick deposit of garden soil had accumulated over the medieval features and suggests that this area of the town had reverted to mostly horticultural activities during the post medieval period. Historical records state that a parcel of ground or croft called St Michael's Churchyard was sold to All Saints Church in the late 16th century to be used as an extension to their graveyard. Excavations of some of the burials are suggestive of this possible 16th century re-use. Some of the later burials appear to be on different alignments when compared with earlier burials, and post date the possible abandoned churchyard as they cut into medieval road surfaces and demolished structures.

3.14 Later activity on the site included the 19th century Vine Street Baptist chapel and 19th century domestic properties, some of which were cellared, together with remnants of industrial buildings of the 19th and 20th centuries.

## **Programme**



Project: Highcross_Quarter2 Date: Fri 19/01/07	Task		Progress		Summary		External Tasks		Deadline	
	Split		Milestone		Project Summary		External Milestone			



Project: Highcross_Quarter2 Date: Fri 19/01/07	Task		Milestone		External Tasks	
	Split		Summary		External Milestone	
	Progress		Project Summary		Deadline	