


**Archaeological Strip, Plan and Sample
On Land at 19, Saddington Road, Smeeton Westerby
Leicestershire (SP 673 926)**

**Greg Farnworth-Jones
For John Higgs and Jessica Hall
Planning Authority: Harborough District Council**

Checked by Project Manager

Signed:



.Date:...01 08 2007

Name: Richard Buckley

**University of Leicester
Archaeological Services**

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

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Greg Farnworth-Jones

1 Summary

1.1 An archaeological evaluation comprising strip, plan and sample was carried out on Land at 19, Saddington Road, Smeeton Westerby, Leicestershire (SP 673 926) on the 27th of February 2007. This work was carried out on behalf of John Higgs and Jessica Hall in advance of the erection of a stable block, barn and ménage. The work involved observing the excavation of four trenches for any signs of archaeological activity. The results of the archaeological investigation were negative.

2. Introduction

2.1 This report presents the results of an archaeological evaluation comprising strip, plan and sample on land at 19, Saddington Road, Smeeton Westerby, Leicestershire (SP 673 926). The work was being undertaken on behalf John Higgs and Jessica Hall by University of Leicester Archaeological Services.

2.2 John Hall and Jessica Hall propose to erect a stable block, barn and ménage on land at 19, Saddington Road, Smeeton Westerby, Leicestershire (SP 673 926). The Senior Planning Archaeologist of the Historic and Natural Environment Team of Leicestershire County Council, in his capacity as archaeological adviser to the planning authority, requested that an archaeological evaluation comprising of strip, plan and sample of the site area be carried out to ensure that any archaeological remains which might be affected could be adequately recorded.

3 Site Location and Geology

3.1 The development area is located on the south of Saddington Road, adjacent to number 19, at NGR SP 673 926, on the western edge of the historic settlement core of Smeeton Westerby (HER Ref: MLE 9333). It is bounded by hedgerow to the west, Saddington Road to the north and a footpath to the east.

3.2 The development site lies upon drift comprising Diamicton Till, with the solid geology mapped as Boulder Clay of the Blue Lias formation and Charnmouth formation (British Geological Survey of Great Britain, Market Harborough, Sheet 170). The site appears to be relatively level, at c. 105m aOD.

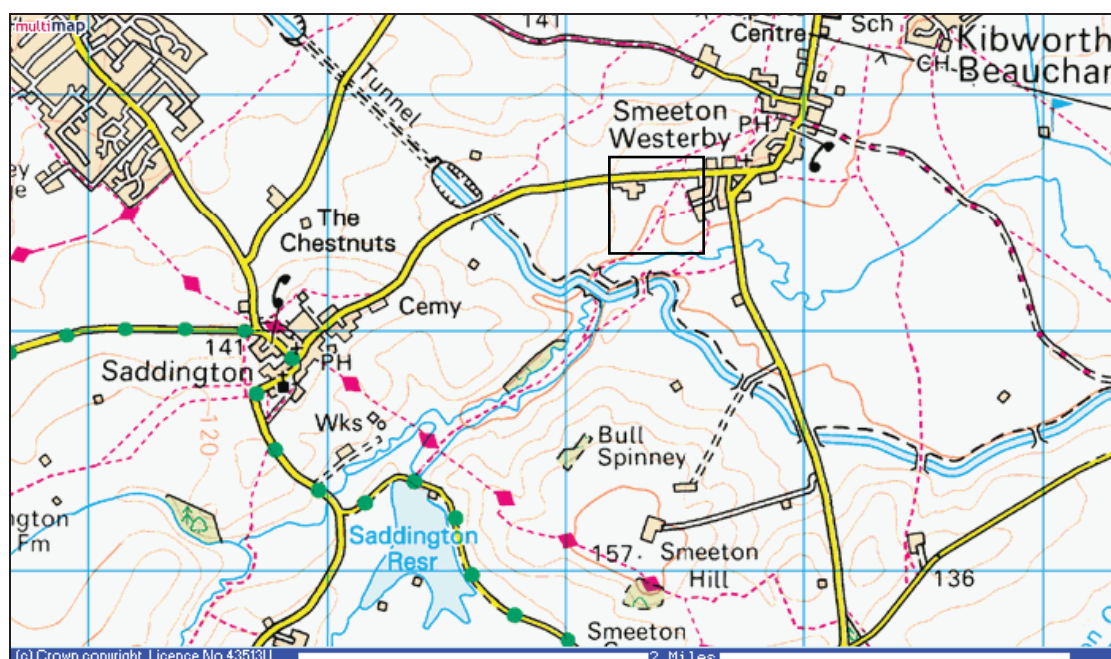


Figure 1 Site Location. 1:50000

4. Historical Background

4.1 The site is located at the western edge of the historic settlement core of Smeeton Westerby (HER Ref: MLE 9333). Although a find of Roman date has been recovered from the area to the east of Westerby Farm (MLE 7907), the indication from information contained in the HER, is that the main archaeological potential is likely to be for archaeological evidence of the medieval period.

4.2 Immediately to the south of the application site lie the earthwork remains of the medieval village (MLE 2400). Archaeological attendance during development works at Westerby Lane, observed possible footings for mud walled cottages (MLE 1523) and at the eastern end of Saddington Road, a possible medieval road surface has been recorded (MLE 8373). To the east of Westerby Farm, finds including a medieval French coin from the 14th or early 15th Century (MLE 6769) and an Anglo-Saxon hooked dress tag (MLE 6171) have been recovered.

4.3 Documentary evidence refers to a Chapel at Westerby, but the location is unknown and it was not standing in the 18th Century (MLE 2401)

4.4 To the east of Beaker Close, a small lead coffin containing a child's skeleton was found buried in an orchard on the southern edge of Smeeton in 1863. More skeletons were said to have been found in an adjacent gravel pit. (MLE 2392)

4.5 A lack of previous development on the site suggests that any archaeological remains present, will survive in a relatively good state of preservation and may be close to the present ground surface. As such, the proposed works, construction of a stable block, hay storage and ménage, including car parking area, could impact detrimentally upon any archaeological remains encountered during the works.

5. Methodology

5.1 All work followed the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) Code of Conduct and adhered to their relevant *Standard and Guidance*.

5.2 The main objectives of the evaluation were:

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

5.3 The Senior Planning Archaeologist had requested that four trenches be excavated measuring *c.* 5m (total of 100 sq. m) representing a 5% sample of the area. The trenches would target the footprint areas to be effected by the development.

5.4 The project involved the supervision of overburden removal and other ground works by an experienced professional archaeologist during the works specified above.

5.5 Topsoil and disturbed subsoil was removed in level spits, under continuous archaeological supervision, down to the uppermost archaeological deposits by JCB using a toothless ditching bucket.

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

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

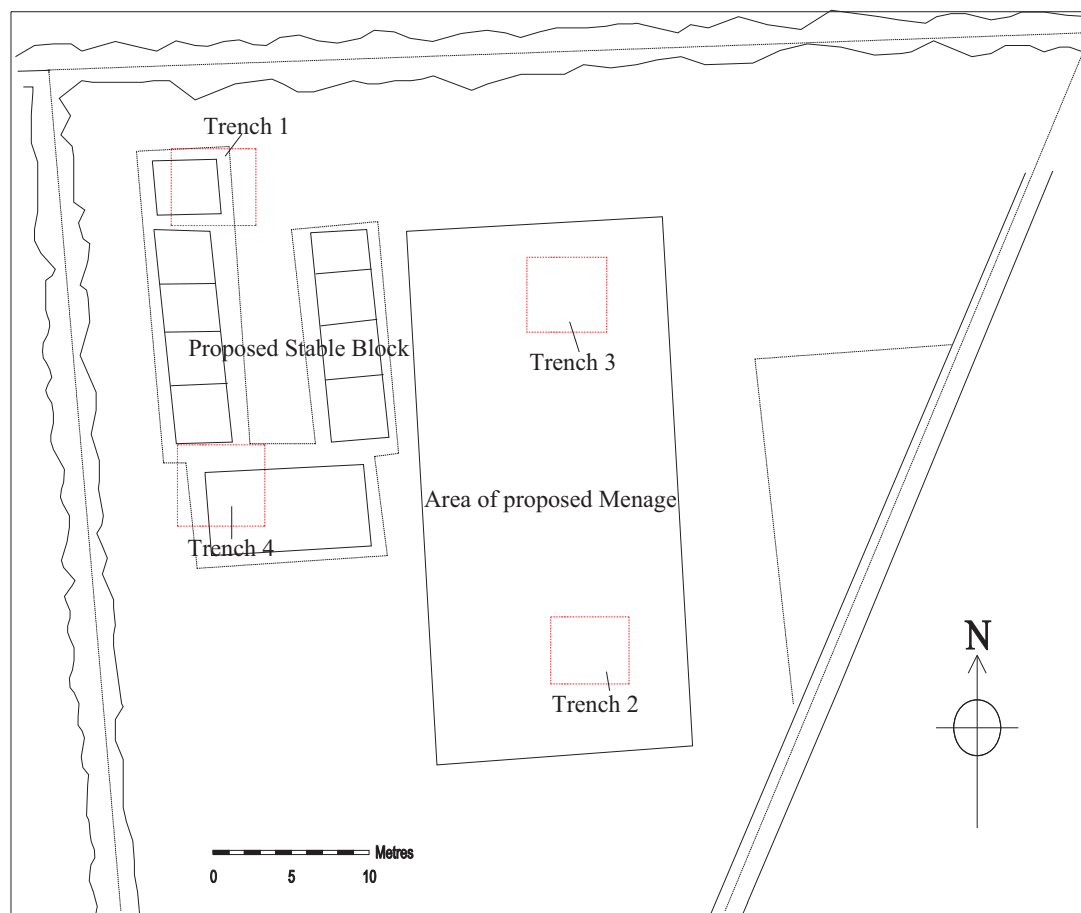


Figure 2 Trench Location Plan

5. Results

5.1 Trench 1

Trench 1 Details

Length of Trench	5m
Area of Trench	17.5sq.m
Surface Level (m OD)	c. 105m OD
Base of Trench (m OD)	c. 104.61 m OD

Trench one was located in the north western corner of the site, within close proximity to the boundary hedgerows (fig.2).

Initial machining revealed to a depth of c.0.3m, soft grey-brown clay silt topsoil, with occasional small rounded stones (>5%). Further machining revealed a light buff-brown subsoil layer c.0.09m in depth, which consisted of silt clay (40/60), with

occasional gravel patches. Below this layer, machining peeled back the subsoil to reveal the virgin natural substratum, which consisted of yellow/orange sandy boulder clay.

No archaeological finds, features or deposits were located during the excavation in trench one.



Figure 3 Trench 1 (Looking East)

Trench 2 Details

Length of Trench	<i>5m</i>
Area of Trench	<i>17.5sq.m</i>
Surface Level (m OD)	<i>c. 105m OD</i>
Base of Trench (m OD)	<i>c. 104.6 m OD</i>

Trench two was located in the north eastern corner of the development area (fig.2).

Initial machining revealed to a depth of *c.0.27m*, soft grey-brown clay silt topsoil, with occasional small rounded stones (*>5%*). Further machining revealed a light buff-brown subsoil layer *c.0.13m* in depth, which consisted of silt clay (40/60), with occasional gravel patches. Below this layer, machining peeled back the subsoil to reveal the virgin natural substratum, which consisted of yellow/orange sandy boulder clay.

No archaeological finds, features or deposits were located during the excavation in trench two.



Figure 4 Trench 2 (Looking South).

Trench 3

5.3 Trench 3

Trench 3 Details

Length of Trench	<i>5m</i>
Area of Trench	<i>25sq.m</i>
Surface Level (m OD)	<i>c. 105m OD</i>
Base of Trench (m OD)	<i>c. 104.6m OD</i>

Trench three was located to the south of trench two in the south eastern corner of the development area (fig.2).

Initial machining revealed to a depth of *c.0.27m*, soft grey-brown clay silt topsoil, with occasional small rounded stones (>5%). Further machining revealed a light buff-brown subsoil layer *c.0.13m* in depth, which consisted of silt clay (40/60), with occasional gravel patches. Below this layer, machining peeled back the subsoil to reveal the virgin natural substratum, which consisted of yellow/orange sandy boulder clay.

No archaeological finds, features or deposits were located during the excavation in trench three.



Figure 5 Trench 3 (Looking East)

Trench 4

5.4 Trench 4

Trench 4 Details

Length of Trench	<i>5m</i>
Area of Trench	<i>25sq.m</i>
Surface Level (m OD)	<i>c. 105m OD</i>
Base of Trench (m OD)	<i>c. 104.55m OD</i>

Trench four was located to the west of trench three in the south western corner of the development area, close to the boundary hedge (fig.2).

Initial machining revealed to a depth of *c.0.22m*, soft grey-brown clay silt topsoil, with occasional small rounded stones (>5%). Further machining revealed a light buff-brown subsoil layer *c.0.23m* in depth, which consisted of silt clay (40/60), with occasional gravel patches. Below this layer, machining peeled back the subsoil to reveal the virgin natural substratum, which consisted of yellow/orange sandy boulder clay.

No archaeological finds, features or deposits were located during the excavation in trench four.



Figure 6 Trench 4 (Looking South)

6. Conclusion

6.1 The results of the archaeological strip, plan and sample excavation on land at 19, Saddington Road, Smeeton Westerby, (SP 673 926), were negative as no archaeological finds or features were uncovered. This absence of archaeology on the site appears to suggest that the land has always seen use as agricultural land. 19 Saddington Road is situated outside the village core and it may be that this has always been the case. In fact the site itself is on relatively low-lying ground with poor drainage, whilst the village core of Smeeton Westerby is on slightly higher ground where the natural substratum consists of sand and gravels. It is therefore likely that the site was never built on due simply to these drainage problems.

7. Acknowledgements

7.1 The author would like to thank John Higgs and Jessica Hall for their help and co-operation on site. The project was managed by Richard Buckley and the fieldwork was carried out by the author, both of ULAS.

8. Bibliography

Buckley, R., 2007. *Design Specification for archaeological work (Strip, Plan and Sample excavation) 19 Saddington Road, Smeeton Westerby, NGR: SP 673 926.*
ULAS Ref. 07-147-01

Leicestershire County Council, 2007. *Brief for archaeological investigation (strip, plan and sample excavation) at 19 Saddington Road, Smeeton Westerby, Harborough, Leicestershire.* Planning Reference: 06/01669/FUL

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

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

01.08.2007

9. *Appendix 1*

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

Design Specification for archaeological work (Strip, Plan and Sample excavation)

19 Saddington Road, Smeeton Westerby

Planning Application: P/06/01669/FUL

NGR: SP 673 926

Planning Authority: Harborough

For: John Higgs and Jessica Hall

1 Definition and scope of the specification

1.1 In accordance with Planning Policy Guidelines 16 (PPG16, Archaeology and planning), para.30, this specification provides a written scheme for archaeological attendance, including control and supervision of ground works, as required by the Planning Authority, of any ground works on the site which may disturb areas of archaeological potential in connection with a planning application for the erection of a stable block, barn and ménage at the above site.

1.2 All archaeological work will adhere to the Institute of Field Archaeologist's (IFA) *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* and the *Guidelines for Archaeological Work in Leicestershire and Rutland (LMARS)*.

2 Background

2.1 Requirement for archaeological work

2.1.1 The archaeological work involves control and supervision of groundworks during the development area to identify any deposits of archaeological importance as detailed in the brief from the Senior Planning Archaeologist, Leics. County Council.

2.2.2 This requires the examination of an initial trial pit or pits to establish the depth of overburden and the presence or absence of archaeological deposits. Should such deposits be identified, and lie within 15cm of the proposed formation depth, the site is to be stripped under archaeological supervision down to the uppermost archaeological horizon. Subsequently, a programme of hand cleaning and archaeological excavation is to be implemented to make a record of significant deposits before destruction.

2.2 Archaeological potential (from the brief)

2.2.1 The site lies on the western edge of the historic settlement core of Smeeton Westerby and the main archaeological potential is considered to be of the medieval period. To the south of the site are medieval village earthworks. To the east of Westerby farm, are recorded finds of Anglo-Saxon and medieval date, whilst development works on Westerby lane revealed the foundations of mud walled cottages..

3 Aims

3.1 Through archaeological observation of existing overburden stripping and groundworks by the client's contractors:

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

4 Methods

4.1 The project will involve the supervision of overburden removal and other groundworks by an experienced professional archaeologist during the works specified above. Initially an initial trial pit or pits c. 5m square (max) will be examined to assess the depth of topsoil/overburden and determine the presence/absence of any archaeological remains.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4.9 Any human remains encountered will be initially left *in situ* and only be removed under a Home Office Licence and in compliance with relevant environmental health regulations. The

developer and Leicestershire County Council will be informed immediately on their discovery.

4.10 Internal monitoring procedures will be undertaken including visits to the site from the project manager. These will ensure that professional standards are being maintained. Provision will be made for monitoring visits with representatives of the owners and Leicestershire County Council.

4.11 In the event of significant archaeological remains being located during the watching brief there may be the need for contingency time and finance to be provided to ensure adequate recording is undertaken. On the discovery of potentially significant remains the archaeologist will inform the developer, the Planning Archaeologist at Leicestershire County Council, Heritage Services and the planning authority. If the archaeological remains are identified to be of significance additional contingent archaeological works will be required.

5 Recording Systems

5.1 Individual descriptions of all archaeological strata and features excavated or exposed will be entered onto prepared pro-forma recording sheets.

5.2 A site location plan based on the current Ordnance Survey 1:1250 map, (reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO) will be prepared. This will be supplemented by a plan at 1:200 (or 1:100), which will show the location of the areas investigated.

5.3 A record of the full extent in plan of all archaeological deposits encountered will be made on drawing film, related to the OS grid and at a scale of 1:10 or 1:20. Elevations and sections of individual layers of features should be drawn where possible. The OD height of all principal strata and features will be calculated and indicated on the appropriate plans.

5.4 An adequate photographic record of the investigations will be prepared. This will include black and white prints and colour transparencies illustrating in both detail and general context the principal features and finds discovered. The photographic record will also include 'working shots' to illustrate more generally the nature of the archaeological operation mounted.

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

5.6 All site records and finds will be kept securely.

6 Report and Archive

6.1 An accession number will be drawn prior to the commencement of the project. Following the fieldwork the on-line OASIS form at <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis> will be completed. A report on the investigation will be provided following the groundworks.

6.2 Copies will be provided for the client, Sites and Monuments Record and planning Authority. The copyright of all original finished documents shall remain vested in ULAS and ULAS will be entitled as of right to publish any material in any form produced as a result of its investigations.

6.3 A full copy of the archive as defined in the 'Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long-term storage' (UKIC 1990), and Standards in the Museum care of archaeological collections (MGC 1992) and 'Guidelines for the preparation of site archives and assessments for all finds (other than fired clay objects) (Roman Finds Group and Finds Research Group AD 700-1700 1993) will be presented to Leicestershire County Council,

Heritage Services normally within six months of the completion of analysis. This archive will include all written, drawn and photographic records relating directly to the investigations undertaken.

7 Publication

7.1 A summary report will be submitted to a suitable regional or national archaeological journal within one year of completion of fieldwork. A full report will be submitted if the results are of significance.

8 Timetable and Staffing

8.1 The investigation is scheduled to commence at the start of the contractors groundworks. An experienced archaeologist will be present during this work.

9 Health and Safety

9.1 ULAS is covered by and adheres to the University of Leicester Statement of Safety Policy and uses the ULAS Health and Safety Manual (revised 2005) with appropriate risks assessments for all archaeological work. A draft Health and Safety statement for this project is in the Appendix. The relevant Health and Safety Executive guidelines will be adhered to as appropriate.

10 Insurance

10.1 All ULAS work is covered by the University of Leicester's Public Liability and Professional Indemnity Insurance. The Public Liability Insurance is with St Pauls Travellers Policy No. UCPOP3651237 while the Professional Indemnity Insurance is with Lloyds Underwriters (50%) and Brit Insurances (50%) Policy No. FUNK3605.

11. Bibliography

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

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

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

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

Richard Buckley
Director
ULAS
rjb16@le.ac.uk

University of Leicester, University Road
Leicester LE1 7RH
Tel:0116 252 2848
Fax: 0116 252 2614

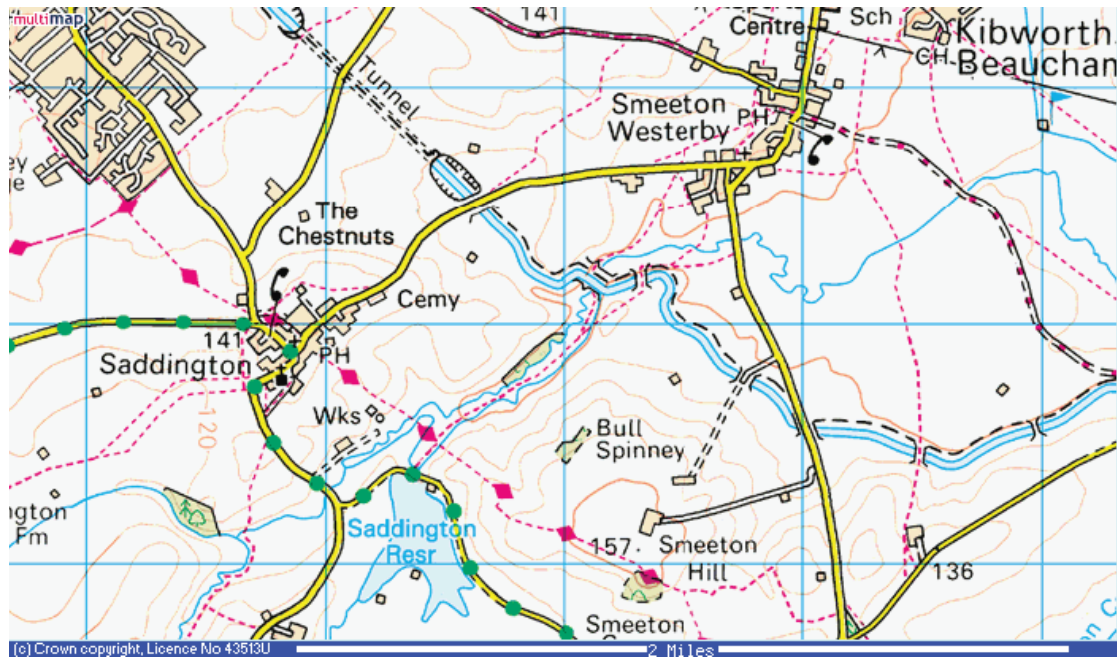


Figure 1 Location of Development. (Multimap)

Appendix 1

Draft Project Health and Safety Policy Statement

1 Nature of the work

1.1 This statement is for an archaeological watching brief.

1.2 The work will involve observation of groundworks during daylight hours and recording of any underlying archaeological deposits revealed. Overall depth is likely to be c. 0.2-0.5m. This will involve the examination of the exposed surface with hand tools (shovels, trowels etc) and excavation of archaeological features. All work will adhere to the University of Leicester Health and Safety Policy and follow the guidance in the ULAS Health and Safety Manual (2001) together with the following relevant Health and Safety guidelines.

1.3 HSE Construction Information Sheet CS8 Safety in excavations.
HSE Industry Advisory leaflet IND (G)143 (L): Getting to grips with manual handling.
HSE Industry Advisory leaflet IND (G)145 (L): Watch Your back.
CIRIA R97 Trenching practice.
CIRIA TN95 Proprietary Trench Support Systems.
HSE Guidance Note HS(G) 47 Avoiding danger to underground services. HSE Guidance Note GS7 Accidents to children on construction sites

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

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

2 Risks Assessment

2.1 Working within a building site

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

2.2 Working with plant.

Precautions. Hard hats, protective footwear and hazard jackets will be worn at all times. No examination of the area of stripping will take place until machines have vacated area. Observation of machines will be maintained during hand excavation. Liaison will be maintained with the contractors to ensure programme of machine movement is understood.

2.3 Working within areas prone to waterlogging.

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

2.4 Working with chemicals.

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

2.5 Other risks

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

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

Richard Buckley
27/2/07

