

**An Archaeological Watching Brief conducted
during groundworks for the construction of
a bungalow adjacent to Sandfield Farm,
240 Station Road, Cropston, Leicestershire
(SK 555 110).**

Sue Henderson

Planning Application Ref: P.A 04/4360/2:

Client: Lychgate Homes Ltd.

Checked by Project Manager



Signed: ..

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An Archaeological Watching Brief conducted during groundworks for the construction of a bungalow adjacent to Sandfield Farm, 240 Station Road, Cropston, Leicestershire (SK 555 110).

Sue Henderson. April 2007

Summary

A watching brief was carried out by the University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) during groundworks for a proposed bungalow, on the land adjacent to Sandfield Farm, 240 Station Road, Cropston. The brief involved archaeological attendance and control and supervision of any ground works on the site, which may disturb areas of archaeological potential. Overburden had been removed prior to the commencement of the watching brief and the ground compacted. Trenching revealed, largely, natural clay, disturbed only in the eastern corner by a square shallow back-filled cut, with a partial, thin granite lining. The fill included slate and handmade brick and the cut may relate to a small post-medieval storage area or outbuilding. There were no other features or deposits of archaeological significance.

The archive has been deposited with the Leicestershire and Rutland Sites and Monuments Record under the accession number X.A62.2007.

1. Introduction

Sandfield Farm (SK 555 110) is situated on the road between the villages of Cropston and Rothley. The farmhouse itself and the barns on the adjacent plot are currently undergoing renovation. Planning permission has been granted for the construction of a dormer bungalow in the land between the farm and the barns. Leicestershire County Council, as advisors to Charnwood Borough Council, requested a watching brief to monitor the groundworks, which may disturb areas of archaeological potential. ULAS on behalf of the clients Lychgate Homes Limited, implemented a watching brief to cover the proposed groundworks.

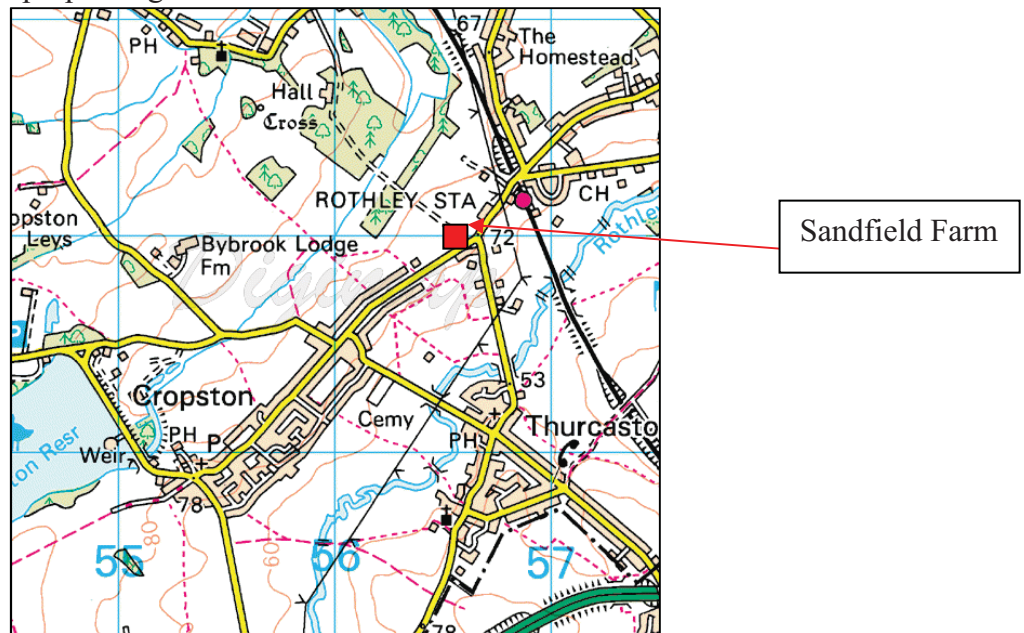


Figure 1 Site location, illustrated using the Ordnance Survey 1: 50,000 scale map.

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2. Geology and Topography

The bedrock in the region of Sandfield farm is Mercia Mudstone. There are superficial glaciofluvial deposits and deposits of till and alluvium. The area immediately surrounding the farm is arable farmland with some woodland and parkland to the west. As the name of the farm implies, there are deposits of sand and gravel in the land to the north and these have been quarried in the past. Such quarries are detailed on the 1956 Ordnance Survey map.

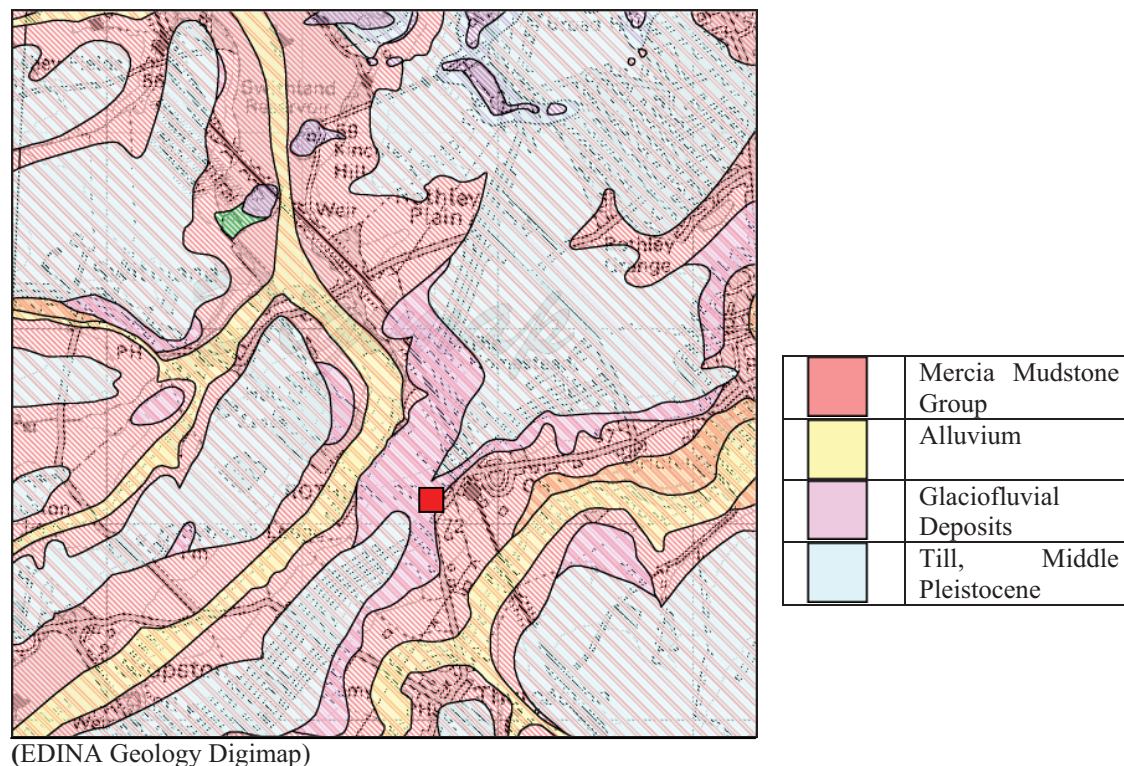


Figure 2. The geology in the region of the site, illustrated on a scale of 1: 50000.

3. Background

Sandfield farm is a red brick-built, early nineteenth century farmhouse with associated barns. The whole complex of buildings is currently undergoing renovation. A further dormer bungalow is being built on the land between the farmhouse and the barns. The farm itself is not within a settlement, but there are sufficient recorded finds in the locality, specifically Roman and Anglo-Saxon burial areas (MLE1024 and MLE880), for the site to have archaeological potential. The burial sites lie on the modern boundaries of Rothley.

Rothley is listed as Rodolei in the Domesday Book (Morris 1979) with a population of around fifty and the name translated to 'a clearing in the woods by a stream.' (Bourne 2003) Work on the construction of the railway in 1896 and later the Ridgeway in 1901, uncovered remains of a sixth century Anglo Saxon inhumation cemetery and a Roman villa of the courtyard style, excavated and documented in 1970 (NMR No.SK51 SE 7). Sandfield farm is situated to the south west of these sites and to within half a mile.

The farm and the northernmost barns are evident on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1885. By 1929, these barns had been extended to include all buildings involved in the renovation (see figure 3).

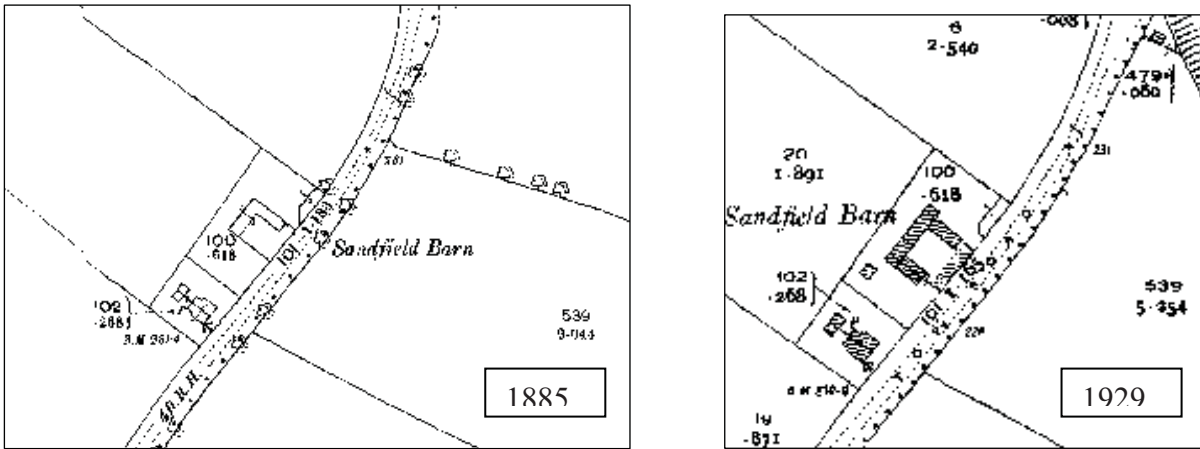


Figure 3. Comparing the buildings illustrated on the Ordnance Survey maps of 1885 and 1929

By 1956 the western barn had been demolished and whilst an outbuilding to the north is evident on the two later maps there are no recorded buildings on the site of the proposed bungalow itself. Also marked on the 1956 map are the 6th century Anglo Saxon inhumation cemetery and Roman villa site.

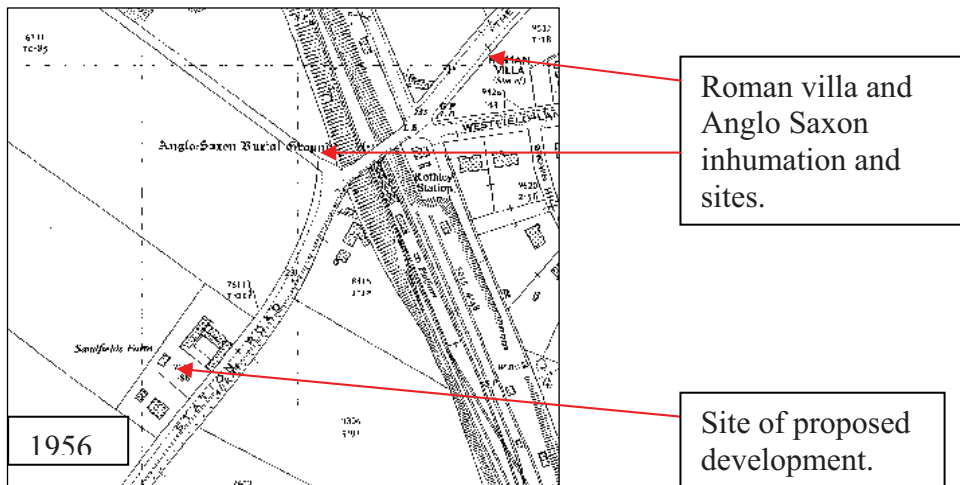


Figure 4. 1956 Ordnance Survey map showing development site and adjacent sites of archaeological significance.

4. Archaeological objectives

The main objectives, through the archaeological supervision of existing overburden stripping and groundworks are:

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.

5. Methodology

The monitoring of groundworks was to include the supervision of the stripping of existing overburden and the excavation of foundation trenches, anticipated to be 0.6 metres wide and 1.0 metre deep. Any archaeological deposits seen to be present were to be excavated and recorded as appropriate. Overburden had, however, been removed sometime prior to the commencement of the watching brief and the area compacted by traffic use. Trenching was observed and completed using a 360 mini-digger fitted with a 0.6 metre toothed ditching bucket. All work adhered to the Institute of Field Archaeologist's (IFA) *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* and the *Guidelines for Archaeological work in Leicestershire and Rutland (LMARS)*.

6. Results

Prior to the commencement of the watching brief the ground had been partially cleared of the small outbuildings evident to the northwest on the 1956 map. The ground was consequently covered by a layer of compacted demolition rubble and tracing features at this point was impossible. Trenching began in the northwest corner and because of adjacent trees, had to descend to a depth of 1.2 metres. The top soil was relatively thin, on average 0.4 metres of silty clay with occasional pebbles and demolition debris.

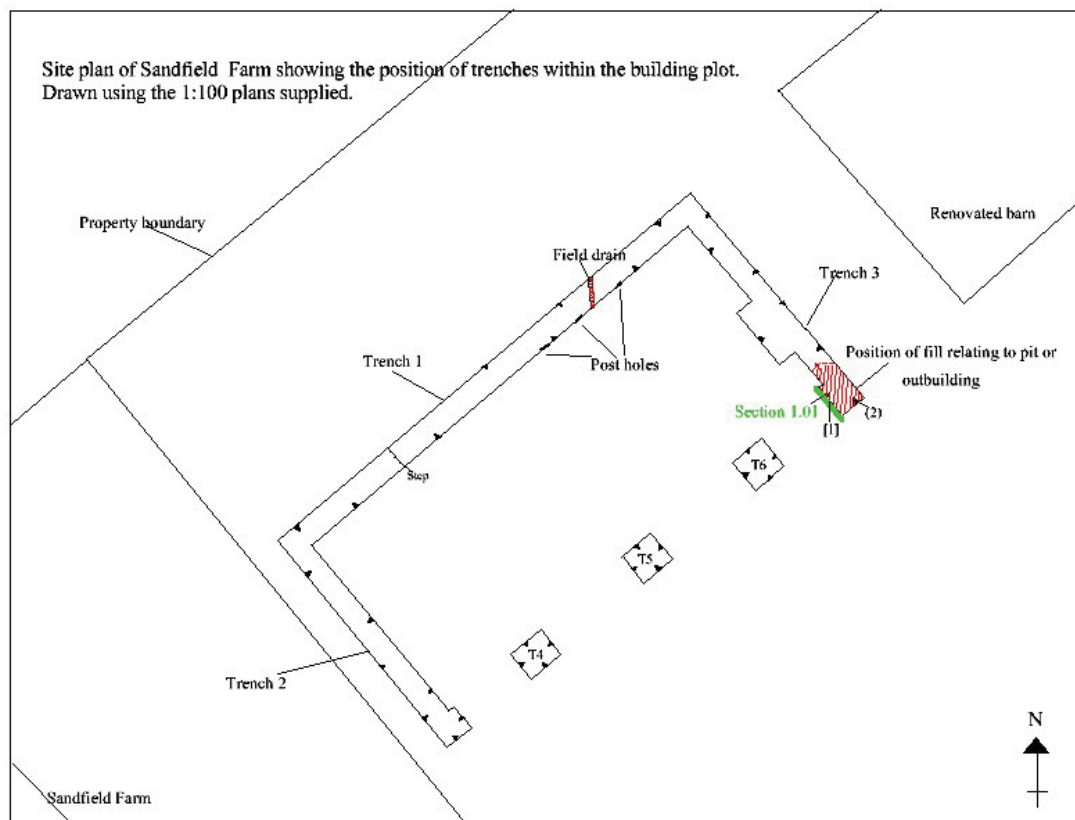


Figure 5. Site plan of Sandfield Farm, Cropston.

The depth of trench one was stepped to one metre at a point approximately three metres along its length. Below the top soil was a sub soil layer of mid reddish brown silty sand to an average depth of 0.6 metres. Existing beneath this sub soil and to the base of the trench was a layer of pinkish red clay, with occasional patches of mottled greyish yellow sandstone. This pattern was true of all trenches excavated, although the sub soil descended to a depth of 0.9 metres at the eastern end, where above this and below the top soil, there also existed a compacted spread (approximately 0.10 metres) of ash and slag waste. This had the appearance of a deliberately distributed levelling layer or rough yard surface.

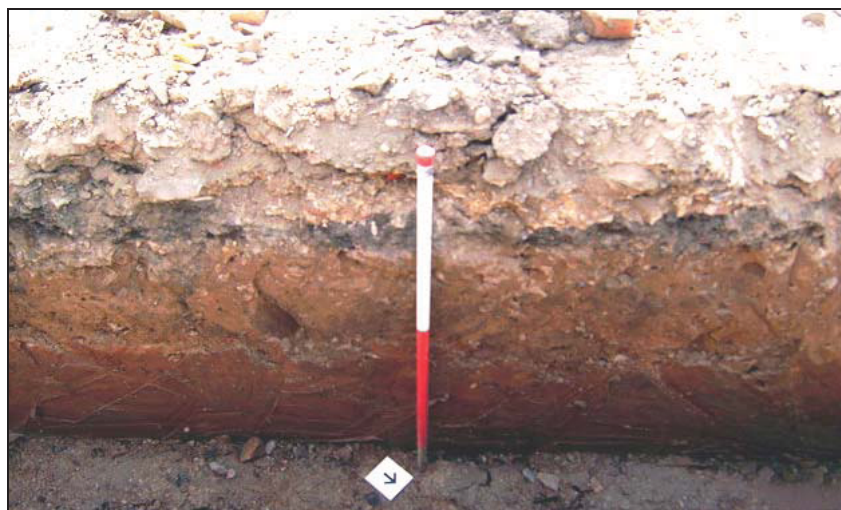


Figure 6. Photograph of trench 3 section, illustrating layers described in the text.

No features were observed in the trenches to the south. Trench one, to the north-west, was cut by a field drain and three post slots relating to the modern outbuilding. In trench three, at the far eastern end and cutting the corner of the trench was a shallow, (approximately 0.98 metres) backfilled, probable, pit. The actual shape of the cut was difficult to determine in the snap shot allowed by the corner of the trench and the feature could not be traced on the surface. The western edge was, however, clear and lined with a single course of relatively thin pieces of rough hewn granite.



Figure 7. Photograph showing thin granite pieces pressed into the side of the cut.

These ran, visibly, for the metre exposed by the end of the trench and certainly continued in to the section to the north. The clean line of the cut suggested that more stone may have existed above and below, but had been removed. The fill was a greyish mid brown clayey silt, with occasional brick fragments, slate and lumps of lime mortar. Some of the pieces of brick and slate were pushed in to the line of the cut and may have been part of the construction rather than the backfill, but this is difficult to say with any certainty. Other than the brick, which was thin (80mm) and hand-made, no dateable finds were recovered from the fill.

7. Conclusion

The only feature of archaeological note was the shallow backfilled pit in the eastern corner of trench three. Whilst little masonry survived or was evident in the backfill, it appears that the cut had a thin granite lining. The structure was not substantial in terms of depth and it seems likely that the feature was a small, lined pit, possibly a storage pit. The hand-made brick was of a type not evident in any of the structures standing on the site. The role of the brick, however, cannot be certain. It may have formed part of a structure later robbed and demolished, or it may have been re-deposited as part of the backfill. As such, it is difficult to date the feature with any certainty, but the backfill was post-medieval at the earliest. There is, thus, the possibility of an earlier building phase on the ground adjacent to the barn, but the evidence from these groundworks is insubstantial.

8. Archive

The archive consisting of the report, drawings, site notes and digital photographs, on disc and as prints, is held by Leicestershire County Council under Accession No. X.A62.2008.

9. Publication

A summary of the work will be submitted to a relevant local journal for publication in due course.

10. References

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

Morris J. 1979. *Domesday Book Leicestershire*. Phillimore. Chichester.

11. Acknowledgements

ULAS would like to thank Lychgate Homes (developer) for their assistance and co-operation in the completion of this project. The project was managed by Dr Patrick Clay and fieldwork completed by the author.

12. Appendices

Appendix A. Design Specification for archaeological work at Sandfield Farm, 240, Station Road, Cropston, Leicestershire.

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Appendix A

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

Design Specification for archaeological work

Sandfield Farm, 240, Station Road, Cropston, Leicestershire

NGR: SK 555 110

Planning Application: P.A 04/4360/2:

For: Lychgate Homes Ltd,

1 Definition and scope of the specification

1.1 In accordance with Planning Policy Guidelines 16 (PPG16, Archaeology and planning), para.30, this specification provides a written scheme for archaeological 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 residential development at Sandfield farm, 240, Station Road, Cropston, Leicestershire (SK 555 110); Planning Application: 04/04360/3) for Lychgate Homes Ltd. It addresses the requirements detailed in the advice letter of 23.10.2006 from Leicestershire County Council as advisors to Charnwood Borough Council.

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 watching brief involves attendance for inspection and recording during ground disturbance to identify any deposits of archaeological importance.

2.2 Archaeological potential

2.2.1 The site lies close to known Roman and Anglo-Saxon burial areas (MLE1024; MLE880).

3 Aims

3.1 Through archaeological supervision 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 and other groundworks by an experienced professional archaeologist during the works specified above. During these ground works, if any archaeological deposits are seen to be present, the archaeologist will record areas of archaeological interest.

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

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

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

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

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

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

4.7 In the event of significant archaeological remains being located during the watching brief there may be the need for contingency time and finance to be provided to ensure adequate recording is undertaken. On the discovery of potentially significant remains the archaeologist will inform the developer, the Planning Archaeologist at Leicestershire County Council 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 before the commencement of groundworks. A report on the watching brief will be provided following the groundworks. Following the fieldwork the work will be entered on to the OASIS project database.

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 watching brief is scheduled to commence at the inception of the contractors groundworks. An experienced archaeologist will be present during this work. It is proposed to watch all works, as specified above, with appropriately timed visits during the work in consultation with the contractors.

9 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 (2005) with appropriate risks assessments for all archaeological work. A draft Health and Safety statement for this project is in the Appendix. The relevant Health and Safety Executive guidelines will be adhered to as appropriate.

10 Insurance

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

11. Bibliography

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

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

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

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

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Appendix

Draft Project Health and Safety Policy Statement

Sandfield Farm, 240, Station Road, Cropston, Leicestershire

NGR: SK 555 110

Planning Application: P.A 04/4360/2:

For: Lychgate Homes Ltd,

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 Vialls disease or similar.

2.4 Working with chemicals.

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

2.5 Other risks

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

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

Patrick Clay
11.04.2007