



University of Leicester

Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological Watching Brief at
Arbour Road, Croft, Leicestershire
NGR: SP 518 952 centre**

Dr. Roger Kipling



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**An Archaeological Watching Brief at
Arbour Road, Croft, Leicestershire**

[NGR SP 518 952]

Dr. Roger Kipling

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An Archaeological Watching Brief at Arbour Road, Croft, Leicestershire (NGR SP 518 952)

Dr. Roger Kipling

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken in September 2009 by University of Leicester Archaeological Services on behalf of Leicestershire County Council prior to construction of an extension to the Highways Depot at Arbour Road, Croft, Leicestershire. Groundworks involved the removal of topsoil and subsoil and site levelling prior to construction of an area of hard standing and a balancing pond. Attendance at the site occurred from 21st to the 23rd September 2009.

The watching brief did not reveal any archaeological deposits or features. However, the recovery of a small quantity of prehistoric flint artefacts and a single sherd of Neolithic pottery from the area of the proposed balancing pond is likely to indicate the presence of human activity and/or occupation on or in close proximity to the development area. The site archive will be deposited with the Leicestershire County Council under the accession number X.A182.2009.

Introduction

An archaeological watching brief with control and supervision of groundworks was undertaken on land at the Leicestershire County Council Highways Depot at Arbour Lane, Croft, Leicestershire, following the identification of a number of archaeological sites within 1.5km of the proposed development. In view of the potential impact of the development this was undertaken as a mitigation strategy following recommendations by the Leicestershire County Council Planning Archaeologist

Attendance at the site during the watching brief was between the 21st and 23rd September 2009 in order to observe groundworks involving the removal of topsoil and subsoil in order to construct a hard standing area for vehicles and associated balancing pond.

The archaeological watching brief was undertaken in accordance with Planning Policy Guideline 16 (PPG16, Archaeology & Planning), paragraph 30. All archaeological work was in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologist's (IfA) *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*.

Site Description, Topography and Geology

The site is located at Arbour Road, Croft, Leicestershire (SP 518 952), and covers an area of c.2ha, which currently consists of rough grassland but which was until recently ploughed arable land.

The Ordnance Survey Geological Survey of Great Britain, Sheet 169, indicates that the underlying geology is likely to consist of alluvium and till. The land lies at a height of *c.*72m OD. The site is located on relatively flat land with a slight ridge in the eastern part of the area.



Figure 1: Site Location (Scale 1:50 000)

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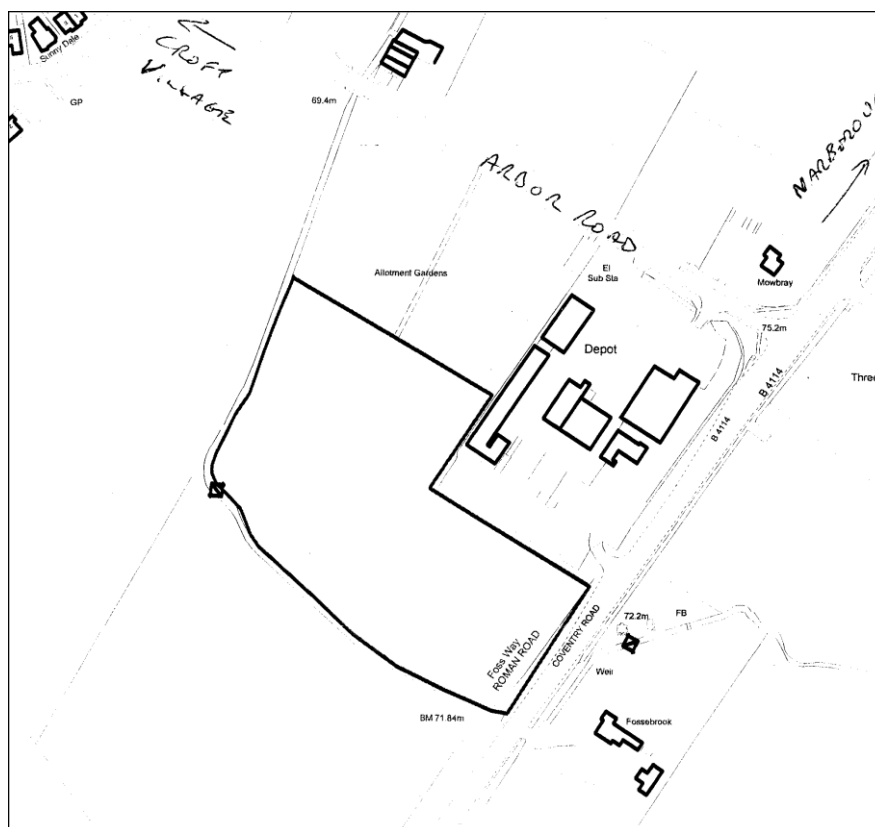


Figure 2: Location plan of development area. Scale unknown



Figure 3: General view southwest across future site of hard standing area during topsoil strip

Archaeological and Historical Background

A desk-based assessment of the development area had been undertaken prior to the evaluation (Bocock 2004), indicating the existence of various archaeological sites within 1.5km of the development site. The Leicestershire County Council Historic Environment Record (HER) indicates that three prehistoric (**LE38**, **LE63** and **LE6571**) and one Anglo-Saxon (**LE9334**) site have been recorded in the vicinity. In addition, four medieval (**LE37**, **LE57**, **LE6085** and **LE9335**) and two undated (**LE39** and **LE60**) sites have been identified. The Fosse Way Roman road bounds the development site to the south-east (**LE1380**).

As it was deemed likely that the proposed development would have a damaging effect on any archaeological deposits, if present, within the application area, the undertaking of an archaeological watching brief was required by the planning authority following an approved design specification (ULAS 2009). Consequently a watching brief was undertaken by ULAS in September 2009, which did not reveal any archaeological features. A small number of prehistoric flint artefacts and pottery sherds were, however, recovered.

Aims and Methods

Through archaeological attendance and, as appropriate, controlled stripping and investigation the aim of the watching brief was:

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 proposed ground-works.
3. To record any archaeological deposits to affected by the ground-works.
4. To produce an archive and report of any results.

All work and archaeological deposits encountered were recorded in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*, the standard policy and practice of ULAS as set out in the design specification (Appendix 2) and adherence to the University's Health and Safety policy.

Groundworking activity was undertaken in two distinct zones, firstly comprising the area subsequently to be occupied by the LCC Highways Department depot compound extension (Day One). Full archaeological supervision was undertaken throughout this work in order to monitor for evidence of archaeological deposits or remains. Turf and topsoil were removed by machine prior to ground stabilisation with lime prior to laying of tarmac. Machining initially involved the use of a 360° hymax equipped with a toothless ditching bucket down to the level of the underlying subsoil. However, it was subsequently deemed necessary to only partially remove topsoil, for which purpose a bulldozer was utilised. Due to the complete absence of archaeological features or artefacts during monitoring up to this juncture, it was agreed between the ULAS representative and the contractors that, where required, further topsoil removal would be undertaken by bulldozer.

The second stage of the archaeological watching brief (Days 2 & 3) targeted the site of the proposed balancing pond, located south of the first area. The 360° machine removal of material, following bulldozer topsoil stripping across an area measuring c.20m x30m to an overall total depth of c.2m, was continually monitored.

Results

No archaeological features or finds were encountered in the first (northern) of the two areas. However, the subsequent machine strip of topsoil and subsoil in the balancing pond area did produce a small assemblage of prehistoric flint artefacts and pottery sherds.



Figure 4: Topsoil strip in progress; view north



Figure 5: Machining of balancing pond in progress; view north-east



Figure 6: Machining of balancing pond; view north

Conclusions

The archaeological watching brief at Arbour Road, Croft, revealed limited evidence for activity during the prehistoric period in the form of a small assemblage of prehistoric flint artefacts and a single Neolithic pottery sherd and indicating occupational activity on or in the near vicinity of the development site during the prehistoric period.

Archive and Publications

The site archive (X.A182.2009), consisting of paper and photographic records, will be housed with the County Historic and Natural Environment Team, Leicestershire County Council.

The archive consists of:

- Finds, consisting of pottery and flint artefacts.
- Two watching brief attendance forms
- 6 digital photographs
- 6 monochrome (film) photographs
- A risk assessment form

Publication

6.1: A version of the excavation summary (see above) will appear in due course in the *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society*.

Acknowledgements

7.1: Dr. Roger Kipling of ULAS undertook the archaeological evaluation on behalf of Leicestershire County Council. The project was managed by Dr. Patrick Clay.

Bibliography

Bocock, S., 2004 *An Archaeological Desk-based Assessment for a Proposed Extension to the Highways Depot, Arbour Road, Croft, Leicestershire (SP 518 952)*. ULAS Report 2006-093

ULAS 2009 *Design Specification for Archaeological Work at Arbour Road, Croft, Leicestershire (SP 518 952) 09/555*

Oasis Information

Project Name	
Project Type	Watching brief
Project Manager	Patrick Clay
Project Supervisor	Roger Kipling
Previous/Future work	Construction
Current Land Use	Pasture
Development Type	LCC Highways Dept. depot extension
Reason for Investigation	PPG16
Position in the Planning Process	Planning consent granted, construction in progress.
Site Co ordinates	NGR SP 518 952
Start/end dates of field work	21st-23 rd September 2009
Archive Recipient	Leicestershire County Council
Study Area	2ha

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Appendix 1: The Finds

Prehistoric Flint Lynden Cooper

The assemblage consists of seven worked flints, all unstratified. Included is a core that appears to be Upper Palaeolithic based on a distinctive basket-work patina. It has partial edge faceting and three removals, one at least representing a blade. A tertiary bladelet in very good condition is likely to be of Mesolithic date. The remaining pieces are likely to be of later prehistoric date. These include a retouched flake, a utilised blade and two secondary flakes.

Neolithic Pottery Nicholas J. Cooper

A single, unstratified bodysherd of Neolithic pottery weighing 32g was retrieved. External surface and margin buff/orange, core internal margin and surface, black. Fabric fine, slightly micaceous clay matrix with angular crushed white pebble quartz inclusions of 1 to 5mm (Fabric Q2) and was used in a number of the impressed ware vessels for Rothley, Leicestershire (XA240.2004). External surface is decorated entirely with fingernail impressions produced by putting thumb and index finger together and pinching the clay. The same technique was used on a sherd of impressed ware from Asfordby, Melton (XA124.2008), but is also known, though the motifs are more widely spaced, on a thin-bodied, rusticated beaker also from the Asfordby site. The thickness of the present sherd and the continuous nature of the decoration would be consistent with classification as impressed wares within the broad Peterborough ware tradition of the south of Britain. It has been recognised through calibrating the impressed ware typologies against radiocarbon dates that the tradition was fully established by c.3000BC with associated dates spanning the period c.3600 BC to c.2500 BC (Gibson 2002, 80 and fig. 38).

Two joining fragments of fired clay (5g) of unknown date were also retrieved unstratified.

Reference

Gibson, A.M., 2002 *Prehistoric Pottery in Britain and Ireland*. Stroud Tempus.

Appendix 2: Design Specification

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

Design Specification for archaeological work

Job title: Arbour road, Croft, Leicestershire

NGR: SP 518 952

Client: Leicestershire County Council

Planning Authority: Blaby District Council

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 for inspection and recording (a watching brief), as required by the Planning Authority, of any groundworks on the site which may disturb areas of archaeological potential in connection with a planning application for the proposed extension to the Highways Depot at Arbour Road, Croft, by Leicestershire County Council.

1.2 All archaeological work will adhere to the Institute for 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 attendance (a watching brief) within the development area to identify any deposits of archaeological importance as detailed in the *Brief for the Archaeological inspection and recording (intermittent watching brief) at Highways depot, Arbour Road, Croft, Leicestershire* (hereinafter the 'Brief' 15.04.2008).

2.2 Archaeological potential

2.2.1 A desk-based assessment has been prepared for the area (ULAS Report; 2004-093). The Leicestershire County Council Historic Environment Record (HER) indicates that various archaeological sites are located within 1.5km. Three prehistoric (**LE38**, **LE63** and **LE6571**) and one Anglo-Saxon (**LE9334**) site have been recorded. In addition, four medieval (**LE37**, **LE57**, **LE6085** and **LE9335**) and two undated (**LE39** and **LE60**) sites have been identified. The Fosse Way Roman road bounds the development site to the south-east (**LE1380**).

3 Aims

3.1 Through archaeological attendance and, as appropriate, investigation:

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

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.

4.2 Should significant archaeological remains be identified a programme of excavation and recording may be necessary, using additional personnel as necessary.

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

4.4 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.

4.5 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.

4.6 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.

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

4.8 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.

4.9 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 Senior 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 prior to the commencement of the project (Brief 8.1). Following the fieldwork the on-line OASIS form at <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis> will be completed. A report on the investigation will be provided following the groundworks.

6.2 Copies will be provided for the client, Historic Environment 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 Brown (2008) will be presented to Leicestershire County Council, 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 2007) 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

Brown, D., *Standard and guidance for the preparation of Archaeological Archives* (Institute for 2008 Archaeologists)

George, S., 2004 *An Archaeological Desk-based Assessment for a Proposed Extension to the Highways Depot, Arbour Road, Croft, Leicestershire* (SP 518 952). ULAS Report 2004-093

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08.09.2009

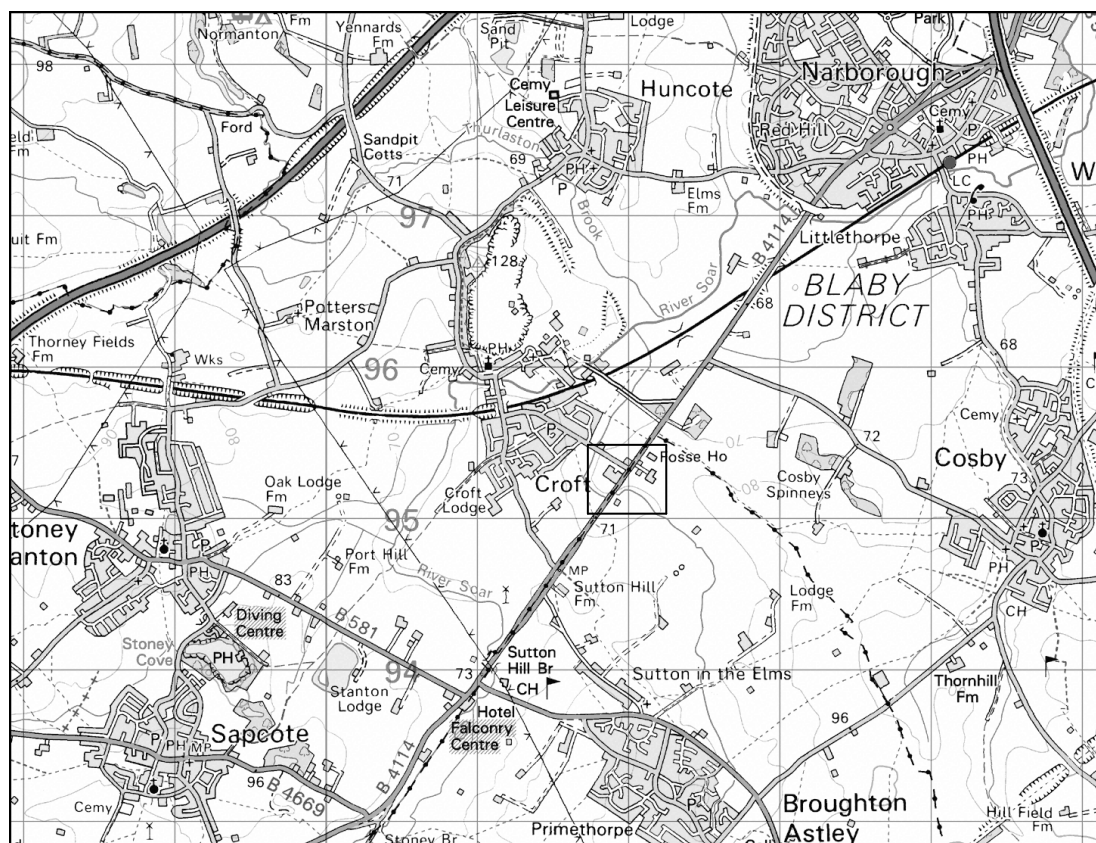


Fig 1 Location of Development



Fig. 2 1991 Ordnance Survey maps Leicestershire SP5195 with development area outlined

Draft Project Health and Safety Policy Statement

Job title: Arbour road, Croft, Leicestershire

NGR: SP 518 952

Client: Leicestershire County Council

Planning Authority: Blaby District Council

1. Nature of the work

1.1 This statement is for an intermittent archaeological watching brief. It will be revised following the commencement of operations when the extent of risks can be assessed in full.

1.2 The work will involve overburden stripping by JCB 3C or similar during daylight hours and recording of any underlying archaeological deposits revealed. Overall depth is likely to be c. 1.0 – 1.2m. Following stripping the exposed deposits will be examined with hand tools (shovels, trowels etc) and archaeological features will be excavated. All work will adhere to the University of Leicester Health and Safety Policy and follow the guidance in the ULAS Health and safety and the Standing Committee of Archaeological Unit Managers manuals, together with the following relevant Health and Safety guidelines, including the following.

HSE Construction Information Sheet CS8 Safety in excavations.

HSE Industry Advisory leaflet IND (G)143 (L): Getting to grips with manual handling.

HSE Industry Advisory leaflet IND (G)145 (L): Watch Your back.

CIRIA R97 Trenching practice.

CIRIA TN95 Proprietary Trench Support Systems.

HSE Guidance Note HS(G) 47 Avoiding danger to underground services. HSE Guidance Note GS7 Accidents to children on construction sites

1.3 The Health and Safety policy on site will be reassessed during the evaluation. All work will adhere to the company's health and safety policy.

2 Risks Assessment

2.1 Working within an excavation.

Precautions. No work will be undertaken beneath section faces deeper than 1.2m. Loose spoil heaps will not be walked on. Protective footwear will be worn at all times. A member of staff qualified in First Aid will be present at all times. First aid kit, vehicle and mobile phone to be kept on site in case of emergency.

2.2 Working with plant.

Precautions. Hard hats, protective footwear and hazard jackets will be worn at all times. No examination of the area of stripping will take place until machines have vacated area. Observation of machines will be maintained during hand excavation.

2.3 Working within areas prone to waterlogging.

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

2.4 Working with chemicals.

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

2.5 Other risks

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

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

08.09.2009

