

**An Archaeological Watching Brief  
on land at 2 Briscoe Lane, Woodhouse  
Leicestershire  
(SK 539 155)**

*Stephen Jones*

**For: CPG Homes Ltd.**

**Checked by Project Manager**

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Leicestershire (SK 539 155)**

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**Summary**

*An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by ULAS, on behalf of CPG Homes Ltd, on land at 2, Briscoe Lane, Woodhouse, Leicestershire (SK 539 155). This addressed the requirements from Leicestershire County Council, Historic and Natural Environment Team as archaeological adviser to the planning authority (Planning Application: 2006/3355/2) and follows the Design Specification for archaeological work (ULAS 04/552). The land is located in close vicinity to the historic core of Woodhouse and therefore any groundworks on the site had potential to disturb areas of archaeological importance. The watching brief was carried out by ULAS on 19/11/07. No significant archaeological remains were evident. The site archive will be deposited with Leicestershire County Council Museums, Historic and Natural Environment Team under accession number X.A19.2008.*

**1 Introduction**

The site is located within the medieval historic core of Woodhouse, Leicestershire. Within the planning permission (PA 2006/3355/2) it was outlined that groundworks to be undertaken during the development would comprise the removal of topsoil, excavation of footings, associated services and access routes, which could severely damage or destroy any archaeological remains that may be present on the site

Planning permission was granted by Charnwood Borough Council for the erection of two dwellings at 2, Briscoe Lane, Woodhouse. In accordance with Planning Policy Guidance Note (PPG16, Archaeology and Planning), para.30, and the condition placed on planning permission, archaeological work was undertaken by ULAS in mitigation of any damage which may be caused to buried or standing archaeological remains from the development. It addresses the requirements of *A Brief for an archaeological attendance for inspection and recording (a watching brief) at 2, Briscoe Lane, Woodhouse, Leicestershire* produced by Leicestershire County Council, Historic and Natural Environment Team as archaeological advisors to the planning authority (22.6.2007 hereinafter the 'Brief') and follows the agreed design specification (Appendix).

Due to the site's location within the historic core of the village it was seen as having the potential to contain associated archaeological deposits of medieval and later periods with some potential for archaeological deposits pre-dating the early medieval period to survive, although this level of potential had not been assessed. The site lies at a height of c. 60m OD and the Ordnance Survey Geological Survey of Great Britain, Sheet 142, indicates that the underlying geology is likely to consist of clays of the Mercia Mudstone Group.

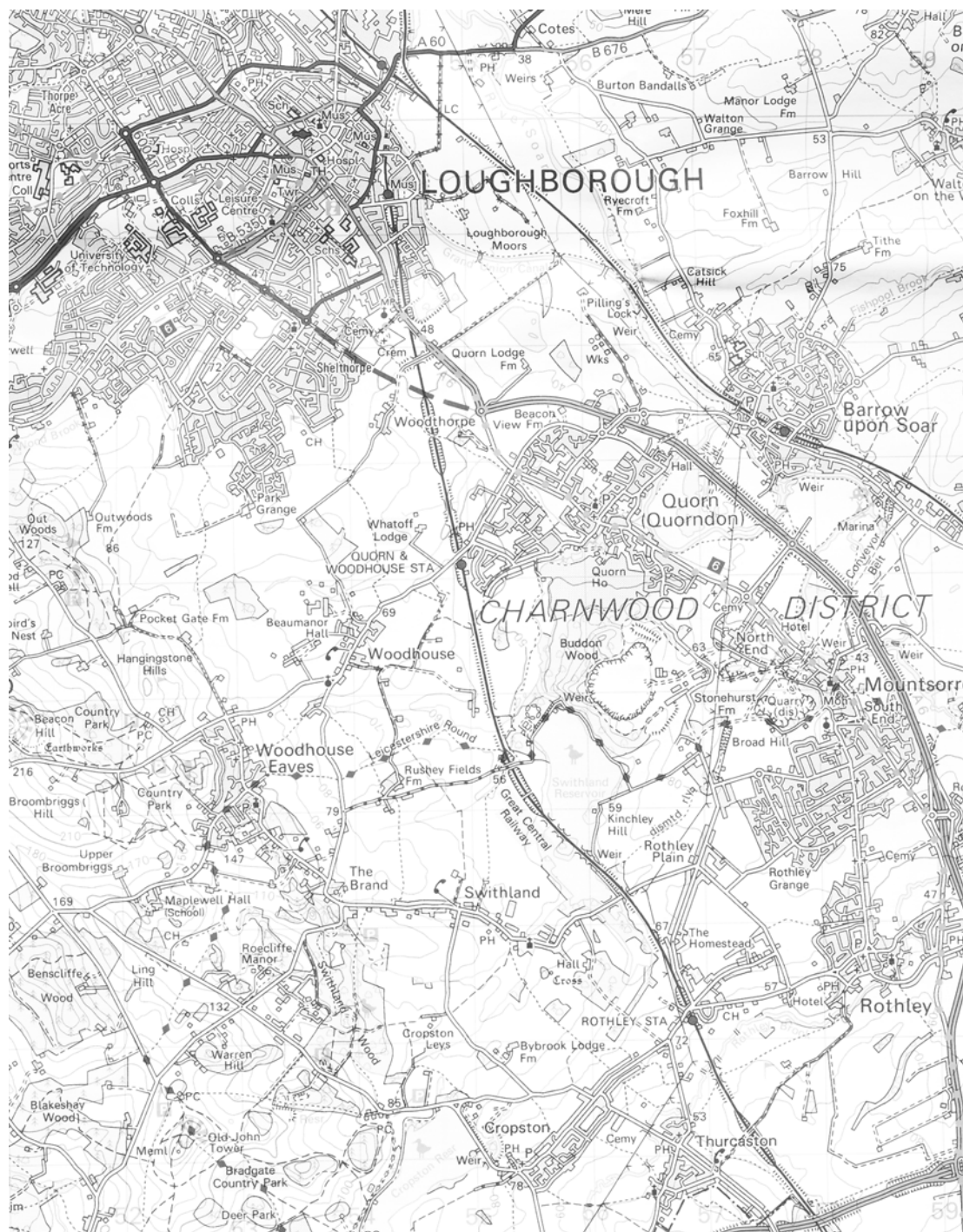


Figure 1 Location map with Briscoe Lane, Woodhouse highlighted.

Archaeological supervision, attendance and recording was therefore requested to monitor the topsoil stripping and ground works deemed likely to disturb any archaeological remains present.

The archaeological watching brief was carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on 19/11/07.

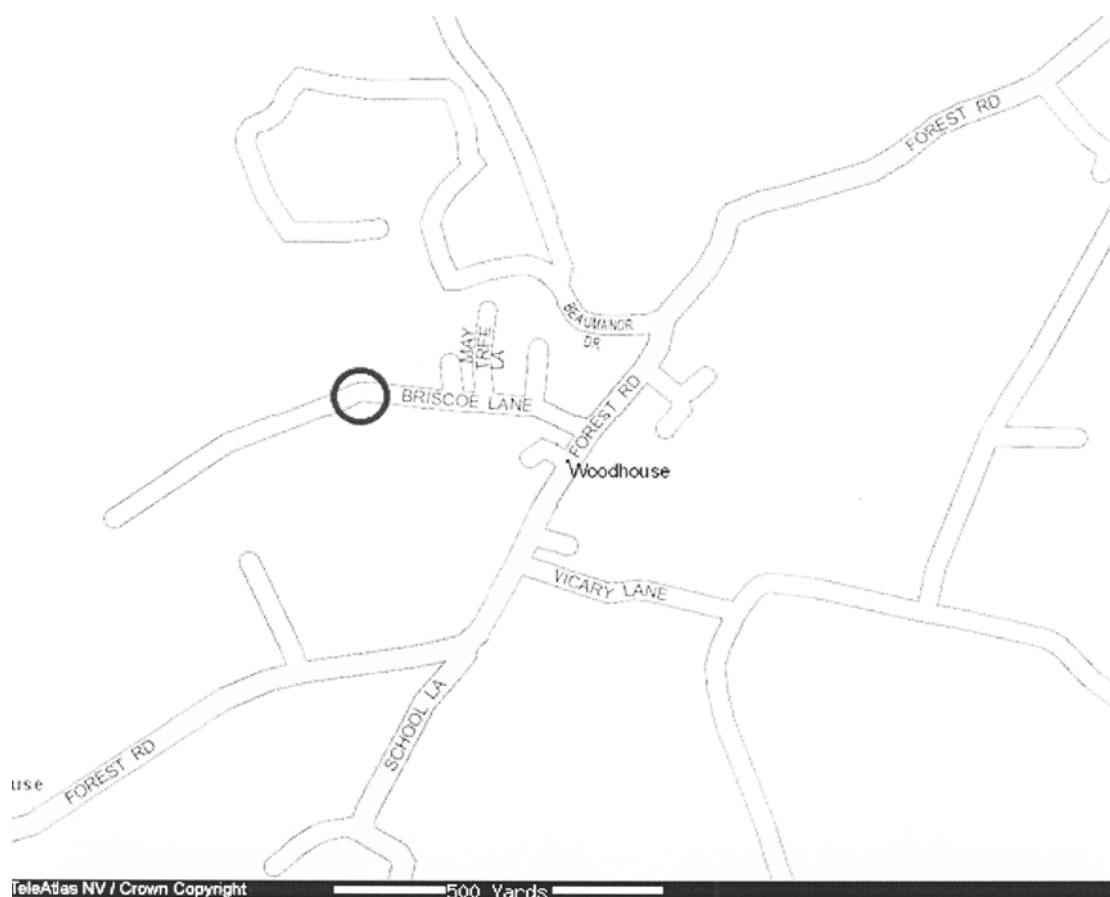


Figure 2 Location of development on Briscoe Lane

## 2 Background

The Domesday Book makes no mention of Woodhouse, Quorn or Beaumanor, the latter being unsurprising given its French origins. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century Beaumanor was formed from parts of the huge adjoining manors of Barrow and Loughborough as a hunting estate for the Despenser family. The manor was owned by the Herrick family from 1595 until after the Second World War.

The village of Woodhouse is Conservation Area. Most of the archaeological sites in the vicinity recorded on the Historic Environment record (HER) date from the medieval period, although two Roman brooches were found during metal-detecting near Garats Hay (*MLE9426*).

## 3. Objectives

The objective of the archaeological work was to ascertain whether any significant archaeological remains were present within the area to be developed. If identified, a sufficient sample was then to be recorded to establish the extent, date, quality, character, form and potential, including environmental data. Further archaeological recording was also to be considered if deemed necessary.

The excavation of a trial trench and test pit were closely monitored during the visit (See Figs 3-5).

#### 4. Methods

The specific aim of the work was to ascertain whether any archaeological deposits were present and whether they would be destroyed by the groundworks. Any deposits encountered were recorded as appropriate and the spoil was searched for finds. The work followed the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*.

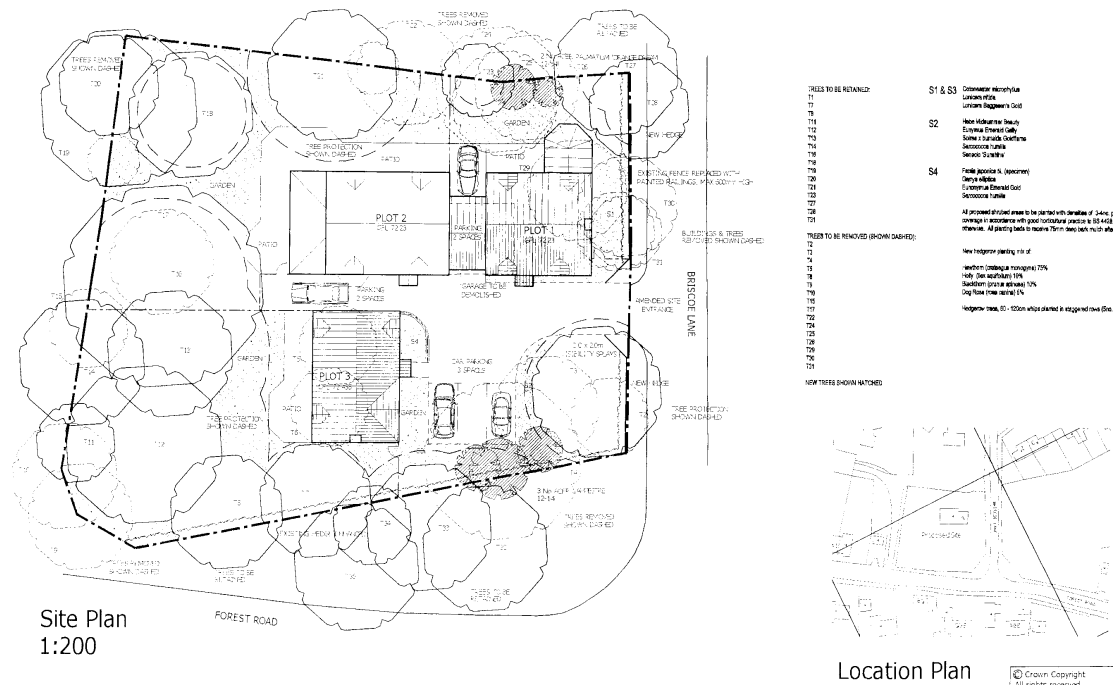


Figure 3 Plan of the development proposals



Figure 4 Test pit showing topsoil and Mercia Mudstone substratum viewed from the south

#### **4 Results (Figures 2-4)**

The watching brief was undertaken during the excavation of a test pit and a trial trench in the area of Plots 1 and 3. In both areas the topsoil comprised a shallow (0.25m) fine clean grey brown sandy loam with occasional root fragments. No modern or earlier artefacts were present. The red marl Mercia Mudstone substratum was similarly clean and showed no evidence of disturbance.

#### **4 Conclusions**

The watching brief revealed no significant archaeological evidence. The topsoil was extremely shallow overlying the natural substratum and showed no evidence of previous disturbance. It is likely that this area had been used for agricultural purposes prior to the construction of the existing dwelling and not in an area of previous occupation.

#### **6 Archive**

The site archive consists of

- 1 watching recording sheet
- 14 digital photographs
- Copy of report



The archive will be held at Leicestershire County Council under accession number X.A19.2008.



Figure 5: Trial trench viewed from the east in area of plot 1. The existing building in the background forms Plot 2.



## 7 Acknowledgments

This report was compiled from information collected on site by the author. The project was managed by Dr. Patrick Clay.

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## Appendix

### UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

#### Design Specification for Archaeological Works

*Site: 2, Briscoe Lane, Woodhouse, Leicestershire*

*NGR: SK 539 155*

*Client: CPG Homes Ltd*

*P.A 2006/3355/2*

*Planning Authority: Charnwood Borough Council*

#### 1. Introduction

##### 1.1 *Definition and scope of the specification*

In accordance with Planning Policy Guidance Note (PPG16, Archaeology and Planning), para.30, and the condition placed on planning permission, this specification constitutes a 'written scheme of archaeological investigation' which ULAS intends to implement on behalf of the Client in mitigation of any damage which may be caused to buried or standing archaeological remains from the development. It addresses the requirements of *A Brief for an archaeological attendance for inspection and recording (a watching brief) at 2, Briscoe Lane, Woodhouse, Leicestershire* produced by Leicestershire County Council, Historic and Natural Environment Team as archaeological advisors to the planning authority (22.6.2007 hereinafter the 'Brief')

1.2 The definition of archaeological watching brief, taken from the Institute of Field Archaeologists Standards and Guidance: for Archaeological Watching Briefs (IFA S&G: AWB) is a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons. This will be within a specified area or site on land, inter-tidal zone or underwater, where there is a possibility that archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed. The programme will result in the preparation of a report and ordered archive.

1.3 The purpose of a watching brief, as laid down in the IFA S&G AWB is:

to allow, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be established (or established with sufficient accuracy) in advance of development or other potentially disruptive works.

to provide an opportunity, if needed, for the watching archaeologist to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief itself are not sufficient to support treatment.

1.4 This document provides a scheme of works for an 'intensive watching brief' as defined by the IFA:

Archaeological supervision, attendance and recording during topsoil stripping and groundworks likely to disturb archaeological remains, if present.

#### 2. Archaeological Objectives

The main objectives, within the resources available, are

- To identify the presence/absence of any archaeological deposits.
- To establish the character, extent and date range for any archaeological deposits to be affected by the proposed ground works.
- To excavate and record any archaeological deposits to be affected by the ground works.

- To produce an archive and report of any results.

### **3. Background**

- 3.1 The site is located within the medieval historic core of Woodhouse.
- 3.2 Due to the site's location it is seen as having the potential to contain associated archaeological deposits of medieval and later periods. There is still a potential for archaeological deposits predating the early medieval period to survive, although this level of potential has not been assessed.
- 3.3 Planning permission has been granted by Melton borough Council for the erection of a single dwelling. A condition for an archaeological watching brief has been placed on the planning decision.
- 3.4 The groundworks to be undertaken during the development will comprise the removal of topsoil, excavation of footings, associated services and access routes, which could severely damage or destroy any archaeological remains that may be present on the site.

### **4. Methodology**

#### **4.1 *General Methodology and Standards***

- 4.1.1 All work will follow the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) Code of Conduct and adhere to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*.
- 4.1.2 Staffing (as far as is possible), Recording systems, Health and Safety provisions and Insurance details are included below.
- 4.1.3 Internal monitoring procedures will be undertaken including visits to the site by the project manager. These will ensure that project targets are met and professional standards are maintained. Provision will be made for external monitoring meetings with the Senior Planning Archaeologist of the Historic and Natural Environment Team, Leicestershire County Council, Rutland County Council planning authority and the Client, if required.

#### **4.2 *Watching brief methodology***

- 4.2.1 The archaeologist will be present during all groundworks that have the potential to affect any surviving archaeological deposits within the development area. The commencement of groundworks and subsequent timetable of works has been agreed between the Client, the Client's contractor and ULAS.
- 4.2.2 The archaeologist will supervise and observe any topsoil stripping and the excavation of foundation trenches and drains, by the Client's contractors, in order to obtain an adequate record of any archaeological deposits or finds disturbed or exposed by groundworks associated with the development.
- 4.2.3 The archaeologist will cooperate at all times with the contractors to ensure that there are no unnecessary delays to the work. However, if any archaeological deposits are seen to be present, the archaeologist will have the power to temporarily halt the works in order to define and record areas of archaeological interest.
- 4.2.4 Any archaeological deposits encountered will be recorded and excavated using standard ULAS procedures (see section 5 below).
- 4.2.5 In the event that unforeseen archaeological discoveries are made during the development, ULAS shall have the power to halt any ground works and shall inform the site agent/project manager and the Senior Planning Archaeologist, and prepare a written statement with plan detailing the archaeological evidence. Following assessment of the archaeological remains by the Senior Planning Archaeologist, ULAS shall, if required, implement on behalf of the Client a contingency scheme for salvage excavation of affected archaeological features.

#### **4.3. *Environmental Sampling***

- 4.3.1 If significant archaeological features are subject to excavation, the sampling strategy will include the following if practicable, within the scope of the project and with the allocated resources:

A range of features to represent all feature types, areas and phases will be selected on a judgmental basis. The criteria for selection will be that deposits are datable, well sealed and with little intrusive or residual material.

Any buried soils or well-sealed deposits with concentrations of carbonised material present will be intensively sampled taking a known proportion of the deposit.

Spot samples will be taken where concentrations of environmental remains are located.

Waterlogged remains, if present, will be sampled for pollen, plant macrofossils, insect remains and radiocarbon dating provided that they are uncontaminated and datable. Consultation with the specialist will be undertaken.

#### 4.4 **Recording Systems**

4.4.1 The ULAS recording manual will be used as a guide for all recording.

4.4.2 Individual descriptions of any observed archaeological strata and features exposed by the works will be entered onto pro-forma recording sheets.

4.4.3 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 appropriate scale, which will show the location of the investigation area in relation to the OS or site grid, as appropriate.

4.4.4 A record of the full extent in plan of all archaeological deposits encountered will be made. Sections including the half-sections of individual layers of features will be drawn as necessary, typically at a scale of 1:10. Relative levels of archaeological deposits will be taken across the site area.

4.4.5 A photographic record of the investigations will be prepared 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.

4.4.6 As a minimum, the watching archaeologist will record the location and depths of any areas of groundworks, including descriptions and depths of all principal strata disturbed, even if no archaeological features are present.

#### 5. **Finds and Samples**

5.1 The IFA Guidelines for Finds Work will be adhered to.

5.2 All antiquities, valuables, objects or remains of archaeological interest, other than articles declared by Coroner's Inquest to be subject to the Treasure Act, discovered in or under the Site during the carrying out of the project by ULAS or during works carried out on the Site by the Client shall be deemed to be the property of ULAS provided that ULAS after due examination of the said Archaeological Discoveries shall transfer ownership of all Archaeological Discoveries unconditionally to Leicestershire Museums for storage in perpetuity.

5.3 An accession number will be obtained for the watching brief which will be used to identify all records and finds from the site.

5.4 All identified finds and artefacts are to be retained, although certain classes of building material will, in some circumstances, be discarded after recording with the approval of the Senior Planning Archaeologist. The IFA Guidelines for Finds Work will be adhered to.

5.5 All finds and samples will be treated in a proper manner. Where appropriate they will be cleaned, marked and receive remedial conservation in accordance with recognised best-practice. This will include the site code number, finds number and context number. Bulk finds will be bagged in clear self sealing plastic bags, again marked with site code, finds and context numbers and boxed by material in standard storage boxes (340mm x 270mm x 195mm). All materials will be fully labelled, catalogued and stored in appropriate containers.

#### 6. **Report and Archive**

6.1 The full report in A4 format will usually follow within four weeks of the completion of the fieldwork and copies will be dispatched to the Client (2 copies), Senior Planning Archaeologist/Leicestershire SMR (2 copies) and Rutland County Council Planning Officer (1 copy).

6.2 The report will include:-

- Summary
- The aims and methods adopted in the course of the watching brief.

- The nature, location, extent, date, significance and quality of any structural, artefactual and environmental material uncovered.
  - Appropriate illustrative material including maps, plans, sections, drawings and photographs.
  - The location and size of the archive.
- 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 usually be presented to within six months of the completion of fieldwork. This archive will include all written, drawn and photographic records relating directly to the investigations undertaken.
- 7 Publication and Dissemination of Results**
- 7.1 A summary of the work will be submitted to the *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* for publication. A larger report will be submitted for inclusion if the results of the archaeological works warrant it.
- 8. Acknowledgement and Publicity**
- 8.1 ULAS shall acknowledge the contribution of the Client in any displays, broadcasts or publications relating to the site or in which the report may be included.
- 8.2 ULAS and the Client shall each ensure that a senior employee shall be responsible for dealing with any enquiries received from press, television and any other broadcasting media and members of the public. All enquiries made to ULAS shall be directed to the Client for comment. The Senior Planning Archaeologist will also be consulted when dealing with such enquiries.
- 9. Copyright**
- 9.1 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.
- 10. Timetable/Staffing**
- 10.1 One member of ULAS staff will be present on the site during groundworks. An initial start date for the works is to be agreed.
- 10.2 The report will normally be completed within eight weeks of the completion of fieldwork.
- 11. Health and Safety**
- 11.1 ULAS is covered by and adheres to the University of Leicester Archaeological Services Health and Safety Policy and Health and Safety manual with appropriate risks assessments for all archaeological work. A draft Health and Safety statement for this project is attached as Appendix 1. The relevant Health and Safety Executive guidelines will be adhered to as appropriate. The HSE has determined that archaeological investigations are exempt from CDM regulations.
- A Risks assessment form will be completed prior to work commencing on-site, and updated as necessary during the site works.
- It is assumed that the locations of all services on the site are already known to the Client, and that this information will be made known to the attending archaeologist.
- 12. Insurance**
- 12.1 All employees, consultants and volunteers are covered by the University of Leicester public liability insurance, £20m cover with St. Paul Travellers (policy no. UCPOP3651237). Professional indemnity insurance is with Lloyds Underwriters 50% and Brit Insurance 50%, £10m cover (policy no. PUNIO3605). Employer's Liability Insurance is with St. Paul Travellers, cover £10m (policy no. UCPOP3651237).
- 13. Monitoring arrangements**
- 13.1 Unlimited access to monitor the project will be available to both the Client and his representatives and Senior Planning Archaeologist subject to the health and safety requirements of the site.
- 13.2 All monitoring shall be carried out in accordance with the IFA *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*.
- 13.3 Internal monitoring will be carried out by the ULAS project manager.



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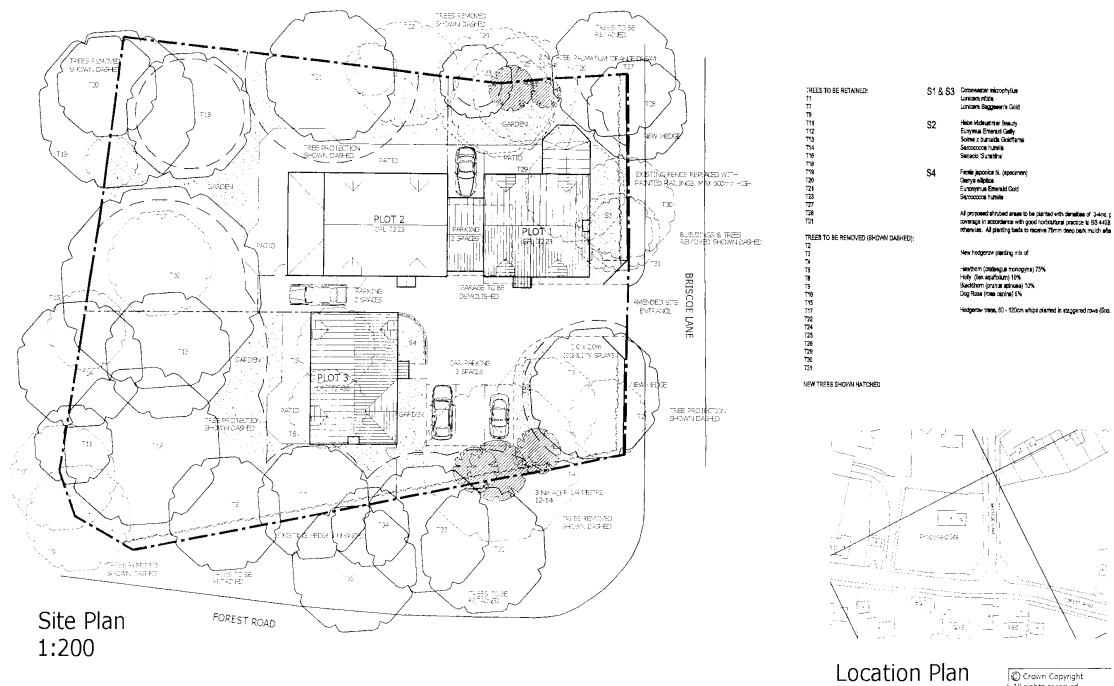


Figure 1: Site location plan indicating site area (plan supplied by developer)



## **Draft Project Health and Safety Policy Statement**

***Site: 2, Briscoe Lane, Woodhouse, Leicestershire***

***NGR: SK 539 155***

***Client: CPG Homes Ltd***

***P.A 2006/3355/2***

***Planning Authority: Charnwood Borough Council***

### ***1. Nature of the work***

1.1 This statement is for archaeological excavation. 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 hymax 360 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.

08.08.2007

