

**An Archaeological Watching Brief at
Holly Bush Cottage, Swarkestone,
Derbyshire**



Sculpture situated in the front garden of Holly Bush Cottage

ARS Ltd Report 2011/106

March 2012

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In February 2012 Archaeological Research Services Ltd were commissioned by EKV Design Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief at Holly Bush Cottage, Swarkestone, Derbyshire. The monitoring was carried out during ground works for the extension of Holly Bush Cottage.

The work comprised the topsoil strip of the area of the new building footprint, followed by the excavation of several foundation trenches. During the topsoil strip two features were uncovered: a soft water storage tank and a well. These were found to be modern in date. No features of archaeological significance or buried land surfaces were revealed.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Location and scope of work

1.1.1. In February 2012 Archaeological Research Services Ltd were commissioned by Mr. and Mrs. N. Osborne to undertake an archaeological watching brief at Holly Bush Cottage, Swarkestone, Derbyshire (Fig. 1). The work was carried out during groundworks for the extension of the current cottage.

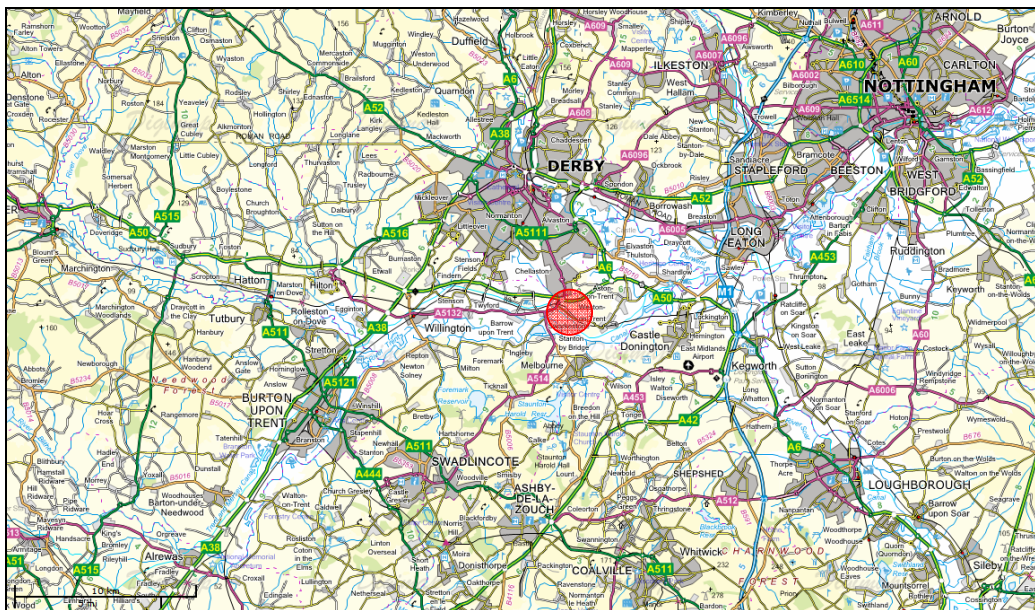


Fig. 1: Site location

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1.1.2. The site is centred at NGR SK 37091 28568 and is bordered by Church Lane to the South. The river Trent lies immediately South of Church Lane, meaning that there was the possibility of waterlogged archaeology being present on the site.

1.1.3 The village of Swarkestone was entered in the Domesday Book as *Sorchestun* or *Suerchestune*, and was noted as being the King's land, with Henry de Ferrers, a prominent local landlord, also owning some of the land in the area (Hinde 1985, 71). Approximately 1km to the north, the site of Swarkestone Lowes indicates that settlement in the area was also present during the prehistoric period. The Swarkestone Lowes site consists of a Bronze Age barrow cemetery, along with an Iron Age settlement and pit alignment (HER No. 27031) and an early Bronze Age Beaker settlement (HER No. 27006) (www.heritagegateway.org.uk). A late prehistoric settlement is also located on Barrow Lane, approximately 800m to the west (HER No. 27010) (www.heritagegateway.org.uk).

1.1.4 During the medieval period a causeway approximately 1.1km in length was built across the river Trent from Swarkestone to Stanton by Bridge, and this is now a Grade I Listed Building and a Scheduled Monument. The oldest part of the bridge is thought to be dated to the late 13th century, although there is reference to a bridge at the site in 1204 (HER No. 26404) (www.heritagegateway.org.uk). Both Swarkestone Old Hall (HER No.

27014) and St. James' Church (HER No. 27020) were also built during the medieval period and are Grade II Listed Buildings.

1.1.5 During the post-medieval period, Cobster Cottage and associated out-buildings were constructed approximately 30m west of the site of Holly Bush Cottage. Cobster Cottage consists of a small brick cottage building with a boundary wall and stone platform. It was built at some point during the first half of the 19th century along with a washhouse, privy and pigsty (HER No. 27037). Due to the close location of the aforementioned sites to the proposed development site, it was likely that archaeological remains would be uncovered during the excavations.

1.2. Geology and preservation

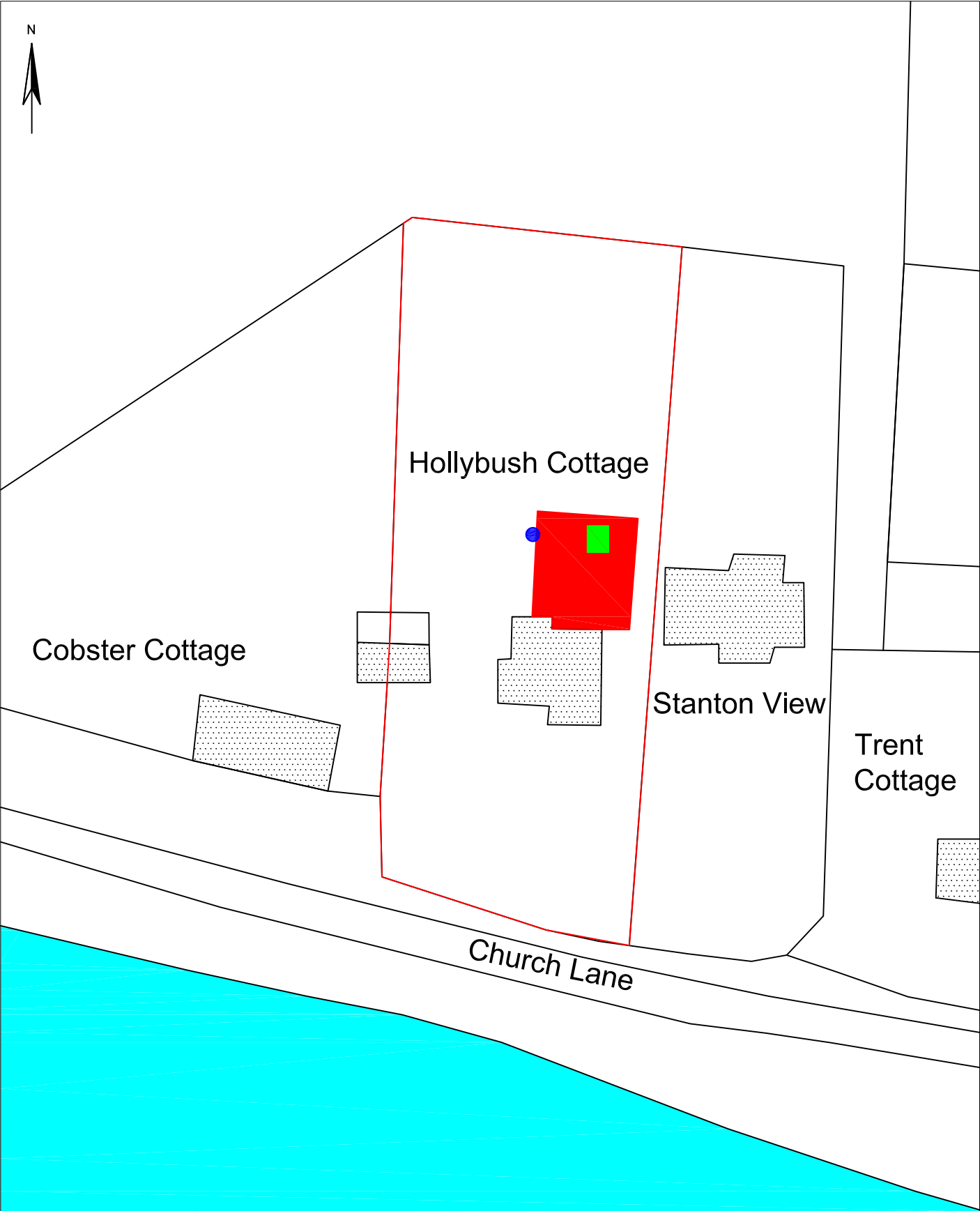
1.2.1 The solid geology of the site consists of Tarporley Siltstone formation and the drift geology consists of clay, silt, sand and gravel alluvium (British Geological Survey 2011).

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 The specification required that a watching brief should be carried out to observe any ground works taking place for the proposed development, in order to identify any potential archaeological remains. This involved monitoring the excavation of five foundation trenches (Fig. 2) averaging 1m in depth.

2.2 The trenches were excavated by machine, using a back-acting toothless ditching bucket under continuous archaeological supervision. The machine removed the topsoil (101) in level spits until the first potential archaeological horizon (102) was exposed. The surface was then cleaned using hand tools in order to expose any archaeological features.


2.3 A single context recording system was employed. Each layer encountered was given a unique context number and a full written description. Photographs were taken in black and white print and colour transparency in order to record the ground work.




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Figure


Key:


 Area of Excavation

 River Trent

 Buildings

 Site Boundary

 Water storage tank (103)

 Well (106)

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Site Code:
Drawing Ref:
Date:
Drawn: KM
Scale: 1:500 at A4

Notes:

3. RESULTS

3.1 *Topsoil*

The topsoil (101) covered the whole of the site and was an average of 0.25m in depth. It consisted of a fine dark greyish brown sandy silt with a small amount of inclusions of rounded pebbles and some inclusions of hardcore. The deposit also contained some modern pottery.

3.2 *Subsoil*

The subsoil (102) covered the entirety of the site, and as it was not excavated to its full extent across the site its overall depth is unknown. In certain places, however, such as slots excavated for new wall foundations, the base of the subsoil was observed at a depth of c.1.25m below ground level. The subsoil consisted of fine mid brownish orange silty sand (with patches of paler yellow) with a low amount of inclusions of small stones. Several utility pipes and cables ran through this subsoil deposit indicating that it has been regularly disturbed, especially in the area close to the current house.

3.3 *Storage tank*

Cut through the subsoil deposit (102) in roughly the centre of the area of excavation was found a storage tank, cut [103], structure (104) (possibly for soft water) constructed of modern brick and concrete. It was approximately 2.5m by 2m by 1.5m (exact depth unknown, but observed to 1.5m depth), rectangular in shape with regular vertical sides and a flat base. It was lined with concrete and had several pipes emptying into it, along with an arched brick ceiling containing a metal hatch. It appeared to be disused as there was no water present.



Figure 3: Storage tank prior to excavation



Figure 4: Storage tank after demolition. Note the concrete lining and pipes.

3.4 *Well*

Cut through the subsoil deposit (102) in the most westerly trench was a well, cut [105], structure/infill (106). This was circular in shape and was constructed of dry red bricks, late post-medieval to modern in date. The bricks were unfrogged and were 24cm x 12cm x 9cm in size. There was no evidence of the bricks being bonded, and there was no lining to the interior of the well. The well had been filled with topsoil, ceramic building material and concrete chunks and had been covered over with topsoil. It measured 1.2m in diameter and extended approximately 0.3m into the trench. The full depth of the structure is unknown as it extended below the base of the trench (0.8m). The cut, [105], for the well structure was not visible in section.



Figure 5: Disused well, looking west.

3.2. *Natural substratum*

Below the subsoil (102) and cut by both the storage tank (104) and the well (106) was situated the natural substratum. This consisted of coarse, mid brownish-orange sand with gravel patches.

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 No features, finds or deposits of archaeological significance were revealed during the excavation process. The presence of a disused early modern well along with a modern soft-water tank and various cables and pipes within the excavation area indicates that the ground has been largely disturbed during the past 100-150 years. Although the nearby Cobster Cottage and its associated out-buildings are known to have been built earlier in the post medieval period, any similar remains that may have originally been present on this site are no longer visible. The well was likely to have been built in the early modern period and is likely to be contemporary with the current Holly Bush Cottage building. It is possible that archaeological remains may be present further to the north where the land has been used as a garden and is less disturbed.

5. PUBLICITY, CONFIDENTIALITY AND COPYRIGHT

- 5.1. Any publicity will be handled by the client.
- 5.2. Archaeological Research Services Ltd will retain the copyright of all documentary and photographic material under the Copyright, Designs and Patent Act (1988).

6. ARCHIVING AND PUBLICATION

- 9.1 A digital and paper archive will be prepared and deposited with Derby Museum and Art Gallery by July 2012. This will consist of all primary written documents, plans, sections, photographs and electronic data associated with the project.
- 9.2 A summary of the project, with selected drawings, illustrations and photographs will be submitted within 2 years of the completion of the project to the Derbyshire Archaeological Journal for publication. The results of the work will be published at least in summary form in the Derbyshire Archaeological Journal.

7. STATEMENT OF INDEMNITY

- 7.1 All statements and opinions contained within this report arising from the works undertaken are offered in good faith and compiled according to professional standards. No responsibility can be accepted by the author/s of the report for any errors of fact or opinion resulting from data supplied by any third party, or for loss or other consequence arising from decisions or actions made upon the basis of facts or opinions expressed in any such report(s), howsoever such facts and opinions may have been derived.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 8.1. Archaeological Research Services Ltd would like to thank all those involved in this project, in particular Mr and Mrs Osborne of Holly Bush Cottage and Steve Baker of Derbyshire County Council.

9. REFERENCES

Derbyshire Historic Environment Record entries 26404, 27006, 27010, 27014, 27020 27031 and 27037. www.heritagegateway.org.uk

Hinde, T. (ed.) (1985). *The Domesday Book: England's Heritage Then and Now*. Guild Publishing, London.

Websites

British Geological Survey www.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex/index.htm
Heritage Gateway www.heritagegateway.org.uk

APPENDIX I: Specification

Holly Bush Cottage, Swarkestone, Derbyshire

Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief



Archaeological Research
Services Ltd

1 Introduction

- 1.1 A planning application has been submitted for an extension of Holly Bush Cottage, Swarkestone, Derbyshire (NGR: SK 37091 28568).
- 1.2 This Written Scheme of Investigation has been prepared for the Development Control Archaeologist for Derbyshire County Council.
- 1.3 Given the historic importance of the immediate area, a condition has been attached to the planning consent requiring an archaeological watching brief during groundworks.
- 1.4 The objective of the watching brief is to ensure that any archaeological features encountered during the conversion works in the specified area are recorded and interpreted and, if at all possible protected.

2 Archaeological Background

- 2.1 The village of Swarkestone was entered in the Domesday book as *Sorcbestun* or *Suercbestune*, and was noted as being the King's land, with Henry de Ferrers, a prominent local landlord, also owning some of the land in the area (Hinde 1985, 71). Approximately 1km to the north, the site of Swarkestone Lowes indicates that settlement in the area was also present during the prehistoric period. This site consists of a Bronze Age barrow cemetery, along with an Iron Age settlement and pit alignment (HER No. 27031) and an early Bronze Age Beaker settlement (HER No. 27006) (www.heritagegateway.org.uk). This is supported by a late prehistoric settlement on Barrow Lane, approximately 800m to the west (HER No. 27010) (www.heritagegateway.org.uk).
- 2.2 During the medieval period a causeway approximately 1.1km in length was built across the river Trent from Swarkestone to Stanton by Bridge, and this is now a Grade I Listed Building and a Scheduled Monument. The oldest part of the bridge is thought to be from the late 13th century, although there is reference to a bridge at the site in 1204 (HER No. 26404) (www.heritagegateway.org.uk). Both Swarkestone Old Hall (HER No. 27014) and St. James' Church (HER No. 27020) were also built during the medieval period and are Grade II Listed Buildings.
- 2.3 During the post-medieval period Cobster Cottage and associated out-buildings were constructed approximately 30m west of the site of Holly Bush Cottage. Cobster Cottage consists of a small brick cottage building with a boundary wall and stone platform. It was built at some point during the first half of the 19th century along with a washhouse, privy and pigsty (HER No. 27037). Due to the close location of the

aforementioned sites to the proposed development site, it is likely that archaeological remains may be uncovered during the excavations.

3. Objectives

3.1 The objective of the watching brief is to ensure that any archaeological features encountered during the course of the groundworks are recorded and interpreted.

4. Fieldwork Methodology

4.1 The groundworks (an area of c.15 x 15m) will be undertaken by a suitable mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket once all concrete and stone has been removed. Arrangement will be made to avoid any tracking of machinery across recently stripped areas until the areas have been checked and cleared by a representative of Archaeological Research Services Ltd (ARS Ltd). If significant archaeological features are identified the Archaeological Development Control Officer of Derbyshire County Council will be notified and a decision taken as to the best method of proceeding.

4.2 Excavation will be carried out in spits. This will provide the maximum visibility of cut features such as postholes and pits and will allow for minimum disturbance of buried masonry structures. The attending archaeologist will supervise mechanical excavation to ensure maximum archaeological visibility.

4.3 ARS Ltd will provide a suitably qualified archaeologist at all times during any ground works on the site to undertake a watching brief. The on-site archaeologist will be given the opportunity to stop site work in order to investigate potential archaeological features and adequate time will be allowed for recording any such features.

4.4 A written, drawn and photographic record will be maintained during the watching brief plus all significant archaeological remains will be recorded and/or retrieved. All excavations will be recorded in accordance with normal principles of archaeological evaluation upon pro forma context sheets. All significant architectural features will be photographed (with scale) *in situ* and their location recorded on a plan of the site.

4.5 Where archaeological features and/or deposits are identified during the watching brief, then a sufficient quantity of the said features will be investigated by hand to allow their date, nature and degree of survival to be ascribed. All features thus investigated will be recorded in plan and section and significant archaeological finds recovered will be retained for analysis. Any archaeological features identified will be photographed and drawn in plan at a scale of 1:20 and in section at a scale of 1:10. The stratigraphy, where relevant and apparent, will be recorded.

4.6 For brick structures, the record will include details of brick dimensions and type (handmade/machine-made, plain/frogged), mortar (colour, composition, hardness) and the extent of structures (number of courses, thickness in skins).

4.7 A plan of the excavated areas will be maintained, features noted and section lines recorded. All drawings will be carried out at an appropriate scale and all contexts will be recorded using a single context recording system. The site archive will include plans and

sections at an appropriate scale, a scale photographic record, and full stratigraphic records on recording forms/context sheets or their electronic equivalent. Should archaeological features be present then the locations and height AOD of the features will be accurately fixed, surveying in either the planning baselines or the features themselves.

4.8 The watching brief will be undertaken in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists *Standards and Guidelines for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (2008).

4.9 Any human remains discovered will initially be left *in-situ* and, if removal is deemed necessary, this will be undertaken in accordance with the relevant Ministry of Justice regulations.

4.10 Archaeological Research Services Ltd will ensure that heavy plant or machinery will not be operated in the immediate vicinity of archaeological remains until the remains have been recorded. Contractors and plant operators will be notified that any observations of archaeological remains must be reported immediately to the archaeologist on site.

4.11 A risk assessment will be undertaken before commencement of the work and health and safety regulations will be adhered to at all times.

5 Artefact and Ecofact collection and Recording

5.1 Artefact collection policy will be concerned with the provision of adequate samples for meeting the objectives of the work. All finds of medieval and earlier date will be collected as a matter of course. Discarded artefactual materials will be described and quantified through assignment to broad categories in the field. Analysis of finds will be undertaken, as necessary, by suitably qualified specialists. Retained finds will be cleaned, marked, catalogued and packed in materials, as appropriate, for long term storage (see 8 Archive Deposition below).

5.2 Unstratified finds will only be collected where they contribute significantly to the project objectives or are of particular intrinsic interest. Finds of 'treasure' will be reported to the Coroner in accordance with the Treasure Act (1996).

5.3 Collection and policies for structural remains and industrial residues have been set out by the Society of Museum Archaeologists (SMA, 1993). The presence of such materials within a context will be recorded even where comprehensive retention is not considered appropriate.

5.4 The representative from Archaeological Research Services Ltd will inspect and monitor the upcast spoil from the site investigations, and unstratified pottery will be retained only if it is of early post-medieval date, or earlier.

5.5 If significant waterlogged deposits are found, which are judged to be of palaeoenvironmental significance in relation to archaeological deposits, contingency will be set aside to allow for retrieval and assessment of such samples.

6 Monitoring Arrangements

6.1 Reasonable prior notice of the commencement of the ground works will be given to the Derbyshire County Council Development Control Archaeologist. The DCA contact will be:

Steve Baker,
Derbyshire County Council,
Shand House,
Dale Road South,
Matlock,
Derbyshire DE4 3RY
Tel: 01629 539773

6.2 Archaeological Research Services Ltd. will liaise with the Derbyshire Development Control Archaeologist at regular intervals throughout the course of the work.

7. Report

7.1 Within two months of the completion of the watching brief, Archaeological Research Services Ltd will produce a report which will include:

- Non-technical summary
- Introductory statement
- Aims and purpose of the project
- Methodology
- A location plan showing all excavated areas and any archaeological features with respect to nearby fixed structures and roads
- Illustrations of all archaeological features with appropriately scaled hachured plans and sections.
- An objective summary statement of results
- Conclusions
- Supporting data – tabulated or in appendices
- Index to archive and details of archive location
- References
- Statement of intent regarding publication
- Confirmation of archive transfer arrangements
- A copy of the DCA brief
- A copy of the OASIS form

7.2 Copies of the final report will be deposited with the Derbyshire Historic Environment Record.

8. Archive Deposition

8.1 A digital, paper and artefactual archive will be prepared by Archaeological Research Services Ltd, consisting of all primary written documents, plans, sections, photographs and electronic data (in a format to be agreed by the repository museum which in this case is the Derbyshire City Museum and Art Gallery). The archive will be deposited within two months of the completion of the fieldwork. The accession number for this archive is DBYMU 2011-99. The Development Control Archaeologist and Museum Curator will be notified in writing on completion of the fieldwork with projected dates for the completion of the report and deposition of the archive. The date for deposition of the archive will be confirmed in the report and the Development Control Archaeologist informed in writing on final deposition of the archive.

8.2 All artefacts and associated material will be cleaned, recorded, properly stored and deposited in the archive (see above).

8.3 A full set of annotated, illustrative pictures of the site, excavation, features, layers and selected artefacts will be supplied to the HER and deposited with the archive as digital images on a CD ROM along that will be attached with the report.

8.4 At the start of work (immediately before fieldwork commences) an OASIS online record <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/> will be initiated and key fields completed on Details, Location and Creators forms. All parts of the OASIS online form will be completed for submission to the HER. This will include an uploaded .pdf version of the entire report (a paper copy will also be included within the archive).

9. Changes to Methodology or Work Programme

9.1 Changes to the approved methodology or programme of works will only be made with prior written approval of the Development Control Archaeologist.

10. Publication

10.1 A summary of the project, with selected drawings, illustrations and photographs, will be submitted within 2 years of the completion of the project to Derbyshire Archaeological Journal for publication. The results of the work will be published at least in summary form in Derbyshire Archaeological Journal.

11. References

Derbyshire Historic Environment Record entries 26404, 27006, 27010, 27014, 27020 27031 and 27037. www.heritagegateway.org.uk

Hinde, T. (ed.) (1985). *The Domesday Book: England's Heritage Then and Now*. Giold Publishing, London.

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