NORTH PENNINES ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

Client Report No. CP/794/08   October 2008

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT OF 44 SWITHLAND AVENUE LEICESTER, LEICESTERSHIRE

FOR HOLMFIELD NEW HOMES LTD.

NGR SK 5851 0625

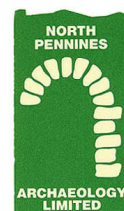**Oasis Ref: northpen3-50250**
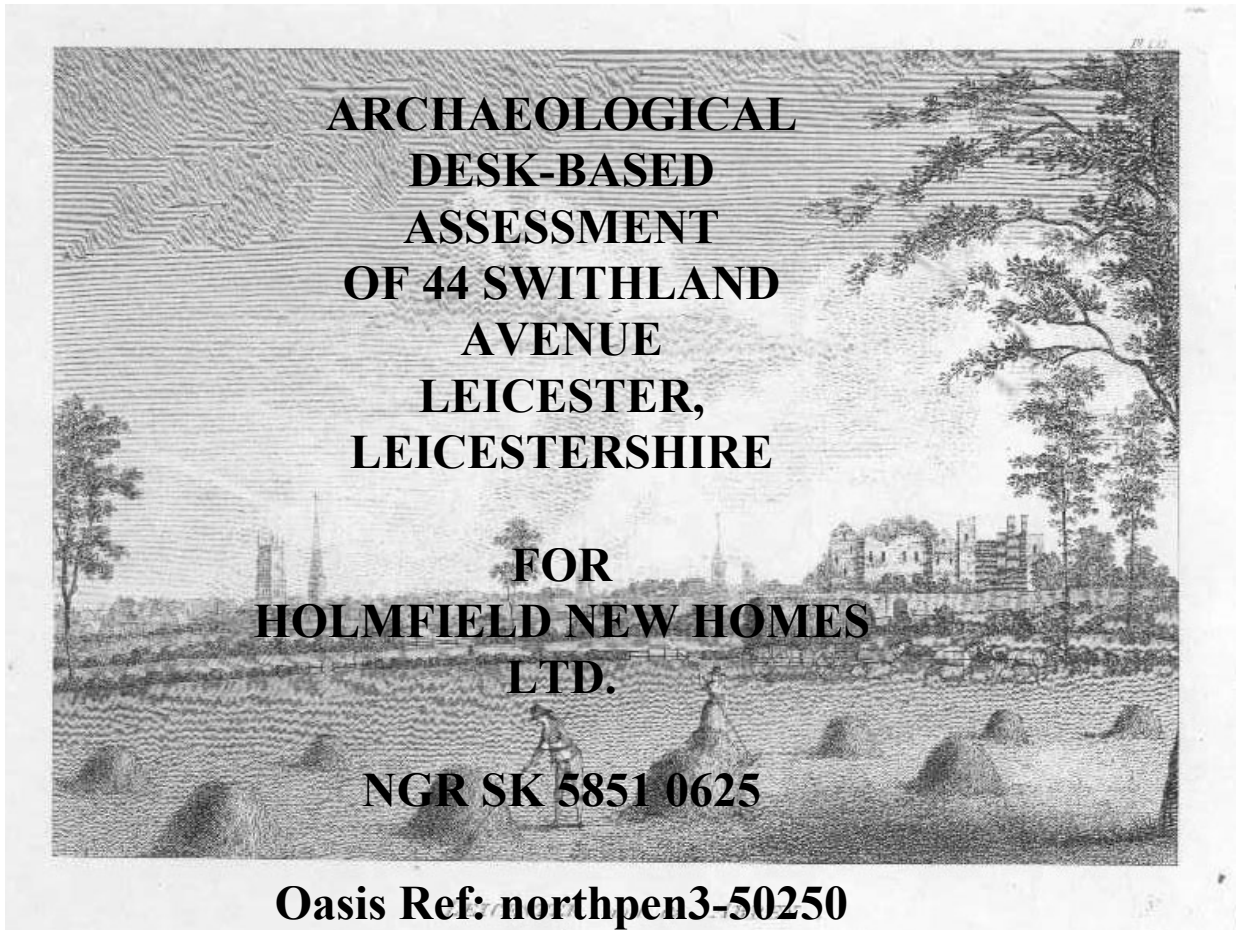
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In August 2008, North Pennines Archaeology Ltd were commissioned by Holmfield New Homes Ltd to undertake an archaeological desk-based assessment of land to the rear of 44 Swithland Ave, Leicester, Leicestershire (NGR SK 5851 0625). The work was requested as 44 Swithland Ave is due to be demolished to provide access to the land to the rear of the property, onto which 14 houses are due to be built (Planning Application No. 20080880). This site lies within 150 metres of the remains of Leicester Abbey designated as an Area of Archaeological Importance. In accordance with Planning Policy Guidance note 16 (Archaeology and Planning), a desk-based assessment was required in order to appraise the potential for the survival of archaeological deposits on site, and assess the impact construction work associated with the proposed development will have on those deposits.

The study involved the examination of all pertinent documents and cartographic sources held in the Leicester Record Offices at Wigston Magna, Leicester, as well as the local studies and library sections, and the consultation of the Historic Environment Record (HER) of Leicester City held at Leicester. The HER includes the locations and settings of Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Listed Buildings, Parks and Gardens and other, non-designated archaeological remains. In addition, an on-line search was undertaken of records held by the Archaeology Data Service, managed by York University. A number of published sources and several relevant web sites were also consulted to provide background information.

The desk-based assessment revealed that the proposed development area was unoccupied until the mid-20th century. Swithland Avenue was developed during the 1930s as a square area of inter-war two storey houses with an open parcel of vacant land in the middle. At one time this area of open land was used as a car park, but has remained otherwise undeveloped.

Previous investigations in the vicinity of the proposed development area has demonstrated that, although the area is outside of both the Roman and medieval town walls, this area of Leicester displays cultural activity during the prehistoric, Roman and medieval periods. Given the close proximity of the site to the medieval Abbey, it is possible that archaeological deposits of this period survive within the proposed development area. Nevertheless, there remains the possibility that any archaeological deposits that once existed within the site may have been truncated by the development of Swithland Avenue in the 1930s.

Given the potential for the survival of prehistoric, Roman, and medieval deposits within the proposed development area, it is recommended that an archaeological watching brief be carried out during groundworks at the site. A definitive decision on the extent of the works to be carried out is at the discretion of the Leicester City Archaeologist.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PROJECT

1.1.1   An archaeological desk-based assessment was undertaken following the proposal for the demolition of 44 Swithland Avenue in order to provide access to, and the erection of, 14 houses at the land to the rear of the aforementioned address (NGR SK 5851 0625; Planning Application No. 20080880) (Figures 1 and 2). North Pennines Archaeology (NPA) were commissioned by Holmfield New Homes Ltd to undertake the archaeological desk-based assessment, to meet the requirements of the Leicester Borough Council development division, undertaken according to professional archaeological standards and best practice.

1.1.2   The desk-based assessment comprised a search of both published and unpublished records held by the Historic Environment Record (HER) of Leicester. A search was made of records held at the Record Office for Leicestershire at Wigston Magna, and local libraries in the vicinity, holding local historical information.

1.1.3   The principal objective of this assessment was to undertake sufficient work in order to identify and characterise the archaeological constraints associated with the development area. This report sets out the results of the work in the form of a short document outlining the findings, followed by a statement of the archaeological potential of the area.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

2.1.1   North Pennines Archaeology Ltd was commissioned by the client to undertake a desk-based assessment on land at 44 Swithland Avenue, Leicester, Leicestershire. All work undertaken was consistent with the relevant standards and procedures of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA 2002), and generally accepted best practice.

2.2 DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

2.2.1   Several sources of information were consulted, in accordance with accepted best practice and local council requirements. The study area consisted of a broad overall history of this area of Leicester, with an additional detailed 0.5 km radius area, centred on the proposed development area, which was studied in more depth. The principal sources of information were the Historic Environment Record (HER), historical maps and secondary sources.

2.2.2   *Historic Environment Record (HER):* the HER in Leicester, a database of archaeological sites within the city, was accessed. This was in order to obtain information on the location of all designated sites and areas of historic interest and any other, non-designated sites within the study area, which included monuments, findspots, Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas. A brief record including grid reference and description was obtained for the various sites within the study area, and was examined in depth. Aerial photographs of the area were also studied.

2.2.3   *Leicestershire Record Office, Wigston Magna, Leicester:* the archives at Leicester were searched for information on the study area. In particular, the First, Second, Third and Fourth Editions of the Ordnance Survey mapping were checked, and a search was made of the local history books and pamphlets held within their collections.

2.2.4   *Leicester Central Reference Library Local Studies:* the collection of historical engravings, plans and photographs held within the local studies at Leicester Central Reference Library were consulted for any relevant information regarding Swithland Avenue and Leicester in general.

2.2.5   *National Monuments Record and Archaeological Data Services:* An electronic enquiry was also made of English Heritage's National Monuments Record and the website of the Archaeology Data Service. This was in order to enhance and augment the data obtained from a search of the appropriate repositories.

2.3   ARCHIVE

2.3.1   One copy of this report will be deposited with Leicester City HER where viewing will be available on request.

2.3.2   North Pennines Archaeology and Leicester City Council support the **O**nline **A**cces**S** to the **I**ndex of archaeological investigation**S** (**OASIS**) project. This project aims to provide an online index and access to the extensive and expanding body of grey literature created as a result of developer-funded archaeological fieldwork. As a result, details of the results of this study will be made available by North Pennines Archaeology, as a part of this national project.

3   BACKGROUND

3.1   LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

3.1.1   The site lies within an urban context north of Leicester City Centre, in Abbey Ward, centred on the NGR (National Grid Reference) SK 5851 0625 (Figures 1 and 2). Swithland Avenue is bounded to the north by Menzies Road, to the east by the River Soar, to the south by Abbey Park Road and Leicester Abbey, and to the west by Abbey Lane. The site forms an open area of vacant land, formerly used as a car park for the Bostik Group. Adjacent to this is another parcel of land that is presently occupied by 30 vacant garages. These are set within a square of inter-war two storey houses that front onto Abbey Road and Swithland Avenue The area has been developed since the 1930s, prior to this it was arable land. The area of the site measures a total of 0.627 hectares (ha).

3.1.2   Much of the geology of Leicestershire is floored with solid rock. Sands and gravels were deposited during the Ice Age and usually lie under boulder clay that covers most of East and West Leicestershire. The clay is worn away, exposing the sand and gravel beneath. These were the areas that were selected as sites to start villages (Hoskins 1957). The geology of the Swithland Avenue area is an area of undifferentiated river terrace deposits, made up of sands and gravels (www.geodata.bgs.ac.uk).

3.2   HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.2.1   The historical background is compiled mostly from secondary sources, and is intended only as a brief summary of historical developments around the study area. Site numbers refer to known cultural and historic sites within 0.5 km of the development site and are summarised in Appendix 1. The locations of the sites are illustrated in Figure 3.

3.2.2   *Prehistoric (c.45,000 BC-43AD):* evidence for the presence of activity during the Palaeolithic is seen from the flint implements found at Blackbird Road (Site 16), located 600 metres to the southwest of the site boundary. A possible Mesolithic flint tool was found at Bristol Avenue (Site 15), situated 540 metres to the west of the site boundary. It is thought that trackways and the river crossing point in Leicester could have influenced the location of a later settlement (Buckley 1997).

3.2.3   The Neolithic saw the clearing of the woodland by early farming communities in order to open land for cultivation. Neolithic stone axes have been found at Abbey Meadows (Site 14 and 24), located 415 and 360 metres to the west and east of the site; and Abbey Pumping Station (Site 13), situated 620 metres to the northeast. Bronze Age activity in Leicester is supported by a possible barrow cemetery in an area overlooking the river; this is suggested by a cremation burial from the High Street. Cropmarks of barrows, were identified in Western Park and New Parks, and an early Bronze Age dagger, associated with an inhumation, was found in Abbey Park Road (Buckley 1997). To the north of the study area is St. John's Stone, an upright monolith about 2.13 metres high and 0.914 metres in the ground. The stone, of probable Neolithic date,

had been destroyed by the time of the First Edition Ordnance Survey Map of 1887, when the area was marked as '*remains of St. John's Stone*' (Johnson 1906).

3.2.4   Excavations around the River Soar have shown that an Iron Age settlement was established along the east bank of the river, occupying an area of some 40 acres. The settlements are thought to have been established for trading, with finds coming from as far as France, Spain, and Italy. Fields surrounding the settlement would have provided for their agricultural needs and the woodland would have provided their building materials and fuel. The tribe were the *Coritani*, a people whose territory stretched north-eastwards toward Lincoln (Simmons 1983).

3.2.5   Further prehistoric finds consist of a flint arrowhead found in the Abbey Park Road area (Site 17), located 183 metres east of the site. From Abbey Meadows, a polished stone and flint artefacts, as well as two Neolithic antlers were also found (Sites 20, located 450 metres southwest of the site, and Site 27 located outside of the 0.5 km radius around the site boundary).

3.2.6   There is no known evidence from the Prehistoric period within the site boundary.

3.2.7   ***Romano-British (c.AD 43- AD 410):*** the beginning of Roman occupation in Leicester is dated to the middle of the 1st century when it was a military post for a short time, and grew into a substantial civilian settlement by the first half of the 2nd century (Haverfield 1918). The main functions in Roman Leicester were administrative and mercantile, with the economy based on agriculture (Simmons 1983).

3.2.8   Around 100 AD, the Roman settlement was probably instituted as the *civitas*, or tribal capital, of the *Corieltauvi*, and was known as *Ratae Coritanorum*. During this time a grid pattern of streets and buildings were built (Figure 4). Civic buildings, such as the baths and forum, were established by the mid-2nd century (Buckley 1997). The *civitas* capital was an average sized town of around 100 acres (Aston and Bond 1976).

3.2.9   By the end of the 2nd century *Ratae* was in need of defences. The first wall and ditches are dated to this time. In the 4th century, the town defences were strengthened and bastions may have been built (Simmons 1983). The modern streets of Sanvey Gate, Church Gate, Gallowtree Gate, Horsefair Street and Millstone Lane are around the outside of the Roman defences (Buckley 1997).

3.2.10   The site boundary is located outside of the Roman Town Walls. There are no known sites from the Roman period within the site boundary. However, within the 0.5 km radius around the site boundary there are seven Roman finds listed within the HER.

3.2.11   Romans built the Fosse Way (Site 12) diagonally across England from Devonshire to Lincoln. The Fosse Way entered Leicester via the West Gate, running along a main street, thought to be parallel with the present High Street, and left by the East Gate. The Fosse Way was joined in Leicester by two other roads, one running south-eastwards later known as the Gartree Road; the other running westwards to Mancetter on Watling Street. *Ratae* is listed in the *Antonine Itenerary*, a road book dating from the early 3rd century. At that time Leicester must have been a posting station to a high enough standard deserving mention in the book (Simmons 1983).

3.2.12   Roman cemeteries occupy a large area of ground around the town walls. Both cremations and inhumations have been observed. A Roman burial of a glass urn with

bones and other burials have occurred in the Abbey grounds (Sites 5, located 250 metres south of the site; Site 9 and 29, both located 410 metres to the southwest of the site) (Haverfield 1918). Also within the Abbey grounds Roman coins and brooches (Site 22), located 410 metres southwest of the site boundary, and a Roman Caistor Ware case (Site 28), 1.2 km south of the site boundary, have been found.

3.2.13　The Jewry Wall (thought to be a corruption of '*Jurats*' or medieval town councillors) is an example of Roman masonry that is still present. This wall is a fragment of a larger building, either a bath house, a basilica or town hall. Over 30 Roman pavements have been found in Leicester. These pavements provide evidence of the wealth in some of the houses during this period (Simmons 1983).

3.2.14　It is not known when the Romans left Leicester. It is thought to have happened over time as evidenced by excavations of a road north of the Jewry wall in the 1930s. Under the Romans, this road had been continually repaired with six levels of road found during excavation. The topmost level was heavily damaged by wheel tracks showing that the road had fallen into disrepair. Pottery from this area can be dated to the late 4th century (Simmons 1983).

3.2.15　***Early Medieval (410 AD 1066- AD):*** Anglo Saxons began to arrive in Leicester in the 6th century. Burial grounds found in Leicester and the surrounding area are thought to be from this period. The Angles' territory stretched from the Chiterns to the Fens. Under Peada, missionaries were introduced to the area. In 679, Mercian diocese of Lichfield was split into five smaller dioceses with Leicester being one of them. Leicester became the 13th See of the province of Canterbury in 737. Little is known about the bishops of Leicester beyond their names (Simmons 1983) (these are discussed in The Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society (TLAS) Vol. 41, 1965-1966).

3.2.16　In 865, a large army of Danes invaded East Anglia. They moved from East Anglia to York and subdued Northumbria. In 877 an agreement with Mercia divided the kingdom with the eastern division now belonging to the Danes. Their territory included the present counties of Lincoln, Nottingham, Derby and Leicester. This is the area of England that came to be called the Dane Law with Leicester becoming the base of the Danish Army. The Scandinavian character of the Danes can be seen around Leicester. The word 'gate' continues to be used in the place of the English 'street' as in Gallowtree Gate and Churchgate. The Danish ending of 'by' could be seen in the old parishes around Leicester such as Barkby, Oadby, and Groby, (Aston and Bond 1976; Simmons 1983).

3.2.17　The name Leicester emerged during this period. William of Malmesbury, Gesta Pontificum states that Leicester was named '*a Legra fluvio.*' Leicester is on the River Soar, but Legra may have been an alternate name or the name of the tributary on which the Leire stands. The old name of this river may have been identical with the Loire in France. Leicester cannot have been named from 'Roman fort on the River Legra.' An early form of the name suggests Leicester derived from an Olde English form of *Ligore,* which may have meant 'dwellers of River Legra' (Ekwall 1977). The Roman name of *Ratae Coritanorum* fell into disuse as it was not mentioned in any documents of the 8th and 9th centuries. In 803, Waerenberht, Bishop of Leicester, was described as

'*Legorensis civitatis episcopus.*' This name evolved into '*Ligera Ceaster*' by the 10th century (Simmons 1983).

3.2.18   There are no known features from the early medieval period within the site boundary. Within the 0.5 km radius around the site boundary are three features from this time. Evidence of Saxon work is found in the nave of St. Nicholas Church dating to around the year 1000 (Simmons 1983). A Norman-Saxon carving was found during excavations at Leicester Abbey (Site 21), located 252 metres to the south of the site boundary, and a watermill that was used between the early medieval to the post-medieval periods was located around the Abbey park area (Site 8), 111 metres east of the site boundary.

3.2.19   *Medieval (1066-1485):* medieval Leicester occupied the same area as Roman Leicester and comprised of 130 acres (Buckley 1997). Leicester was guarded on three sides by walls, on the site of the original Roman walls, and on the west side by the River Soar. Four gates of the town stood at the northwest, northeast, southeast, and southwest points of the compass. The main road through the town entered at the South Gate and passed out through the North Gate. The area beyond the town walls to the north was in existence from 'very early times.' This area contained the Hospital and Church of St. Leonard, and led to the Abbey of St. Mary in the Meadows, or Leicester Abbey (further discussed in 3.2.23) (Johnson 1906). The medieval street pattern was different to its Roman predecessor (Figure 5) (Buckley 1997). Leicester was one of the most densely populated counties during the medieval period (Johnson 1906).

3.2.20   In 1068 William the Conqueror set out to secure his position in the Midlands. He built castles at strategically important places at Warwick, Nottingham, York, and Lincoln. Upon his return to London, he built castles at Huntingdon and Cambridge. It is thought that Leicester Castle dates from this time. There is no evidence of a castle existing in Leicester before the Norman conquest. The castle was built on the right bank of the river, to the south of the point at which the Roman Fosse Way crossed it. It had a 40 foot high motte, surrounded by a palisade, enclosed by a wall and ditch. William entrusted Leicester to Hugh de Grandmesnil, as well as extensive estates in Leicestershire and the surrounding country (Simmons 1983).

3.2.21   The *Domesday Book* (1086) states that Leicester had six churches, 322 houses and 56 burgesses. It can be assumed that each burgess was owned by a householder, therefore the total number of houses in Leicester was at least 378. More than half of these were owned by Hugh de Grandmesnil. The *Domesday Book* also mentions two mills and implies the existence of a mint. At this time, Leicester was a town surrounded by open fields to the east, south, and west with woodland to the north. The west field belonged to Hugh de Grandmesnil, the east field to the Bishop of Lincoln, and the south field to Countess Judith.

3.2.22   The earliest recorded charter for Leicester is that given by the first Earl stating '*my merchants of Leicester the guild of their merchants with all the customs by which they held from the time of William the Conqueror onwards*' (Simmons 1983). During this time, trade was regulated by the Guild Merchant. As soon as a man was a member of the guild, he was free to carry out his business and not have to pay the toll that non-guildsmen would have to pay. Only guildsman were allowed retail trade in the town (Billson 1920). The earliest detailed information concerning the Guild comes from the

Guild roll that began in 1196 giving the list of names of the new entrants admitted to the Guild (Simmons 1983). In 1197 the Merchant Guild was re-established and every tradesmen in the town was expected to become a member. The Guild was governed by an Alderman and a council of 24 members, thus forming the Leicester Town Council meetings (Johnson 1906).

3.2.23 There was a religious house in Leicester prior to the Norman conquest. It was stated that when the castle was built, a church that stood by the site had to be destroyed. In 1107, Robert de Beaumont established a college restoring the lost church and land to the canons. In 1143, Beaumont's son, Robert the Hunchback, transformed his father's work into an abbey of the Augustinian order, which he established in the opposite side of town beyond the Soar and the north wall (Simmons 1983). Leicester Abbey (Site 1) or St. Mary de Pratis, or de la Pre, so called because of its location on and views of the meadows was described by Nichols as being '*seated in an extraordinary rich and fertile soil, both giving and receiving a delicate prospect and having all imaginable accommodations for receipt and provisions in its demesnes, granges, pastures, feeding, tithes, mills, woods, fishing, boons, rents, tenants, and c. and standing just upon the great road from London into the North, it was frequented by, and gave entertainment to, persons of all qualities, and gave great relief to the neighbourhood and the poor of the country*' (Nichols 1815). According to the report of an eye-witness, the church of the Abbey of St. Mary of the Meadows was '*140 feet in length and 30 feet wide, with a large cross aisle in the centre 100 feet long and 30 feet wide and nearly as high as Westminster Abbey.*' The Abbey may have been the wealthiest Augustinian house in England with the exception of Cirencester Abbey. However, little was ever recorded about the church. After the death of Cardinal Wolsey, the abbey was dissolved and anything of value was sold. The Abbey was left abandoned to decay (Johnson 1906). The site came into possession of the Earl of Huntingdon who built a mansion there, Cavendish House (Site 3); however this was destroyed during the Civil War (Ellis 1976).

3.2.24 Robert the Hunchback's son, the 3rd Earl of Leicester, was against King Henry II. In 1173 the King sent an army to lay siege to Leicester. The town was destroyed and many of the citizens were killed. The area of the town near the Church of St. Michael is said to have suffered the most, with the edifice of the church demolished and the parish completely destroyed. Many of the remaining citizens had to bribe the King's soldiers in order to leave the town. It was not long before the deserted streets became green lanes and the sites of the houses that remained uninhabited for centuries afterwards, were converted into orchards. Around 1200 the uninhabited and destroyed town began to be re-populated by people from surrounding villages. The town walls were rebuilt and the church restored (Johnson 1906).

3.2.25 A fair of unknown origin was held in June for 15 days. A grant made by Henry III in 1228-1229 altered the date of the fair to the second day of February, the day of the Purification of Our Lady, and the 14 days that followed. The fair must have been a popular institution founded on ancient customs as the grant is addressed to the community, to the '*good men of Leicester probis hominbus*' and not to the Earl. The Earl had his own fair, granted in 1307, held for 15 days starting on the Feast of the Holy Trinity (Johnson 1906).

3.2.26 Another market was held on Saturday in the present market place as early as 1298 conveniently called 'The Saturday Market.' At this time the Market Place occupied the entire southeast corner of town. It was bounded on the northeast and southeast by the town walls. On the inside of the northeast wall ran a causeway called the Cornwall, where farmers would show samples of their grain and horse dealers displayed their horses. Mentioned in the records of the borough are the grain and bean markets, established in 1314, sheep and swine markets and cattle markets, established in 1341. Later a horse fair (1508) and a wool market (1599) were established (Johnson 1906).

3.2.27 There are no known features from the medieval period within the site boundary. All of the finds from the medieval period that are in the 0.5 km radius of the site boundary are from the Abbey grounds. These include the Abbey itself (Site 1), 350 metres to the south of the site; Abbot Penny's Wall (Site 34), 457 metres to the south of the site boundary; and other medieval artefacts from Abbey Meadows (Sites 19 and 30), both located 440 metres to the southwest of the site. Outside of the 0.5 km radius around the site boundary are the precinct walls (Site 2), located 660 metres to the north; the Abbey's Deer Park (Site 10), situated 1.4 km to the west of the site boundary.

3.2.28 *Post-medieval (1485-1900):* at the beginning of the 16th century, it is thought that there were seven parishes within and encircling the town walls. Three of these (St. Martin, St. Peter, and St. Nicholas) lay within the town walls. All Saints and St. Mary de Castro lay partially within the walls and partially out. The two parishes that were entirely outside the walls were St. Leonard and St. Margaret. The land on either side of St. Leonard's parish was extra-parochial and belonged to Leicester Abbey. By this time the west field, that was largely privately owned, had been enclosed. The east and south fields were not enclosed until the late 18th century (Charman 1951).

3.2.29 In the 19th century, Lammas pasture rights (the right of burgesses to graze their livestock over open fields after the harvest had been taken in) prevented the town from expanding their building area. Three open fields practically surrounded the ancient town. One field east-northeast of the town was enclosed in 1764 allowing the town to grow in that direction. In 1845 commissioners reported that Leicester '*was spread over an unusual extent of ground in proportion to its population.*' Large gardens were present in the centre of town. Streets were wider than average compared to other manufacturing towns. Working class homes were no more than two storeys and had four rooms and there were rarely more than one family per house. These houses generally had yards and were better built than their counterparts in other industrial towns. The flat geography led to drainage problems and mortality was high even for the times (Hoskins 1963).

3.2.30 By the Tudor and Stuart periods the medieval fabric of Leicester, including the castle abbey and college, had largely gone, and during this time Leicester was considered to be an unimportant country town. The suburb outside the south gate and the northeast suburbs were the poorest parts of town. The southeast suburb was much wealthier, maybe in part due to its position alongside the London road. In 1654 Leicester was described by Evelyn as '*the old and ragged citty [sic] of Leicester, large and pleasantly seated, but despicably built, the chimney flues like so many smith's forges.*' Another traveller noted Leicester as '*an old stinking town, situated upon a dull river.*' In 1698, Celia Fiennes described the town as '*old timber building except for one or two*

of brick.' At this time, the Brick Age that transformed the appearance of Leicester had begun (Hoskins 1957).

3.2.31   More of the 19th century industrial landscape survives in Leicester than in any other East Midland town. These industrial buildings are characterized by their high quality brickwork. Cornices and string courses incorporate moulded brick and terracotta ornaments and factories used pointed gables and bay windows to break the monotony of their flat facades (Palmer and Neaverson 1992).

3.2.32   Beginning in the 1670s the hosiery industry brought new impetus to the town (Hoskins 1957). By the late 18th century, Leicester was establishing itself as a major centre of the hosiery industry (Aston and Bond 1976).

3.2.33   The depression of the hosiery industry in the mid-19th century was alleviated by the boot and shoe manufactory introduced from Northamptonshire. In 1851, 10 percent of the workforce in Leicester was employed in the hosiery manufactory and two percent in boots and shoes. By 1881, boot and shoe manufactory overtook the hosiery industry, with 10.6 percent of workers working in boots and shoes compared to 6.8 percent in hosiery (Palmer and Neaverson 1992).

3.2.34   In 1832, a railway was built from Leicester to Swannington (Site 35). This enabled Leicester to transport their own coal and finally compete with the Derbyshire coals.

3.2.35   The town of Leicester trebled in population in the first 40 years of the 19th century. Around the core of the city, except on the west, new streets and buildings were laid out. In 1841 there were more houses in Leicester borough than there had been in Leicestershire during the reign of Elizabeth I (Hoskins 1957).

3.2.36   ***Victorian and Modern (1900-present):*** in 1901 the population of Leicester was more than 12 times larger than that of 100 years ago. Much of the change was brought about with the first electric tram, followed by the motorcar and motorbus. The horse tramways were bought out in 1901 and the system was electrified in 1904-1905.

3.2.37   The industrial development of the 19th century transformed Leicester but left the medieval street plan intact as well as most of the 'chief' medieval buildings. Everything else was effaced in favour of new commercial and industrial buildings. In 1902 the High Street was widened losing all trace of its past. In 1904 old houses abutting into Magazine Gateway were demolished to make way for the entrance to the Newarke. Also in 1904, the ancient annual fair in Humberstone Gate was held for the last time.

3.2.38   At the end of World War I, the King George V conferred on Leicester the title of city (Ellis 1976).

4   ASSESSMENT RESULTS

4.1   INTRODUCTION

4.1.1   The assessment results are based on primary documents, most notably maps, and on the secondary sources used in *Section 3.2*. The results are presented according to the archive from which they were consulted. There are 35 HER records for the study area defined as a 0.5 km radius centred on the site, of which three are Listed Buildings, one is a Scheduled Monument, and one is a Registered Park. A list of the HER sites identified by the assessment is given Appendix 1 and illustrated in Figure 3.

4.2   HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD (HER)

4.2.1   *HER:* there were a total of 35 HER records within the study area that has been defined as a 0.5 km radius around the site. Within close proximity to the proposed development area is the site of Leicester Abbey (MLC8), located to the south of the site boundary; Cavendish House, a 16th century mansion owned by the Earl of Huntingdon, and the formal gardens associated with the mansion; a watermill located to the southeast of the site boundary; and a flint arrowhead found along riverside allotments off of Abbey Park Road. There are no HER entries relating to the proposed development area.

4.2.2   *Listed Buildings:* there are three Listed Buildings located within a 0.5 km radius of the proposed development area on Swithland Avenue. These buildings are Leicester Abbey ruins (Site 1), Abbot Penny's Wall (Site 34) and Cavendish House (Site 3). There are no Listed Buildings located within the proposed development area.

4.2.3   *Conservation Areas:* Swithland Avenue is not located within the Leicester Conservation Area, but it is within the vicinity of a registered park, Abbey Park.

4.2.4   *Scheduled Ancient Monuments:* there is one Scheduled Ancient Monument located within a 0.5 km radius of the proposed development area. This comprises Leicester Abbey, the 17th century mansion and ornamental gardens (SAM 17131), located 350 metres to the south of the site boundary

4.2.5   *Registered Parks or Gardens:* there is one registered park within the 0.5 km search radius around the site boundary. This is Abbey Park (Site 11), a late 19th century public park that is located to the south of the proposed development area.

4.2.6   *Aerial Photography:* the photograph collections held by the Leicestershire Record Office were checked for any aerial photographs relevant to the development site and study area. There were two relevant aerial photographs; these were taken in 1948 and 1950. The photograph from 1949 (Plate 1) is taken from the south and the shot shows Leicester Abbey. The medieval wall that once encircled the Abbey can be seen running beside the road on the left. The plan of the Abbey church can be seen at the top right hand corner of the Abbey. Swithland Avenue is due north of the Abbey. In this photograph, the layout of the neighbourhood can be seen, but due to the angle at which the picture is taken, no details can be made out. The 1950 photograph (Plate 2) is taken from the south, looking north. This photo shows all of Leicester from the north of the city centre. Swithland Avenue can be seen in a little more detail and appears to have changed little from the present day form. This photograph also has evidence of narrow

rigg and broad rigg cultivation in many of the undeveloped fields to the west and north of the site.

4.2.7 ***Archaeological Investigations:*** a search was made of the records at the Leicestershire Record Office in Wigston Magna for known archaeological works which have previously been undertaken within the vicinity of Swithland Avenue. The results of which are provided in the table below:

ID	Bibliographic Reference	Site	Type	NGR (SK)	Results
1	University of Leicester Archaeology Services (ULAS) 2004	Archaeological Evaluations at 72 St. Nicholas Circle, Leicester	Evaluation	SK 5832 0432	Roman finds were found beneath a cellar floor. Medieval deposits were found. In two of the trenches medieval deposits cut through Roman ones. Post-medieval and modern deposits truncated a lot of the site.
2	ULAS 2004	Rupert Street, Leicester	Watching Brief	SK 5860 0420	No archaeological finds or features found.
3	ULAS 2004	Primary School Site, North Hamilton, Leicester	Watching Brief	SK 633 074	Site was located in an area that in the past has revealed Roman and Iron Age connections. No archaeological finds or features were found.
4	ULAS 2004	Rupert Street, Leicester	Photographic Survey	SK 5860 0420	A photographic survey was carried out on a factory building and garage in advance of proposed redevelopment.
5	ULAS 2004	Vaughan College, Leicester	Watching Brief	SK 58 04	This site lies within the limits of the Jewry Wall Roman Baths. The watching brief revealed no archaeological features, although many finds of a Roman date were discovered.
6	ULAS 2004	Thomas Cook Public House, 48, Narborough Road South, Braunstone Town, Leicester.	Watching Brief	SK 550 001	This site lies within the vicinity of the Roman Fosse Way. No archaeological finds or features were found.
7	ULAS 2005	38 Braunstone Gate, Leicester	Evaluation	SK 579 040	Post-medieval and modern damaged some of the archaeological deposits. Archaeological finds revealed are indicative of settlement activity along the Roman Fosse Way.

ID	Bibliographic Reference	Site	Type	NGR (SK)	Results
8	ULAS 2005	Land at Highcross Street and Vaughan Way, Abbey Ward, Leicester	Evaluation	SK 5831 0459	
9	ULAS 2005	Early Iron Age crowding alley and stockyard at Hamilton North, Humberstone, Leicester	Excavation	SK 634 074	Structural Iron Age evidence found. This excavation provides important information on animal stock management in the 1st millennium BC.
10	ULAS 2005	Land at Bede Street, Leicester	Evaluation	SK 579 039	Found sections of surviving Roman Fosse Way.
11	ULAS 2005	Goscote Hall, Goscote Hall Road, Leicester	Evaluation	SK 5894 0892	No archaeological finds or features found.
12	ULAS 2006	Land off Oxford St., De Montfort University, Leicester	Evaluation	SK 5846 0404	Roman, medieval, and post-medieval features were excavated in two trenches. Most of the activity was in the trench closest to Oxford St. where Roman property boundary activity was found under medieval garden soil. Later medieval and post-medieval pitting was also observed.
13	ULAS 2006	Boston House, Abbey Park Road, Leicester	Photographic Survey	SK 5875 0605	Former boot and shoe factory from around the 1920's.
14	ULAS 2006	Land adjacent to Raw Dykes, Leicester	Evaluation	SK 834 0270	No archaeological finds or features found.
15	ULAS 2006	Land south of The Tower Hospital, Gipsy Lane, West Humberstone, Leicester	Excavation	SK 6172 0590	Excavation revealed evidence of small-scale settlement activity in the vicinity of the Medieval village of Humberstone. Ceramic evidence dated this to the 12th or 13th century. Iron Age pot was also found.
16	ULAS 2006	Land at The Towers, Gipsy Lane, West Humberstone, Leicester	Evaluation	SK 616 056	No archaeological finds or features found.
17	ULAS 2005	Sandhills Avenue, North Hamilton, Leicester	Watching Brief	SK 636 071	No archaeological finds or features found.
18	ASC Ltd. 2006	Former BUSM Works, Ross Walk, Leicester	Evaluation	SK 5909 0643	Presence of made ground and air raid shelters have most probably destroyed any archaeological features.

ID	Bibliographic Reference	Site	Type	NGR (SK)	Results
19	ULAS 2005	Bursom Business Park Extension, Mowmacre, Leicester	Evaluation	SK 576 088	Three small features of unknown date were excavated, possibly plough marks. One small linear feature could be dated to the Iron Age.

4.3   LEICESTERSHIRE RECORD OFFICE, WIGSTON MAGNA, LECIESTER

4.3.1   Leicestershire Record Office, Archives and Local Studies Centre, holds a comprehensive series of Ordnance Survey Mapping of Leicester and a good library of books based on the local history of the area. All of these were checked whilst undertaking the research for this report, with relevant information and sources referenced within the text of this report.

4.4   LEICESTER CENTRAL REFERENCE LIBRARY LOCAL STUDIES

4.4.1   Leicester Central Reference Library holds a wealth of historic and geographic information on the county as a whole, and its holdings were checked as part of the research for this report. Again relevant information and sources are referenced within the text of this report.

4.5   CARTOGRAPHIC SOURCES

4.5.1   A search of maps recording Leicester was carried out at Leicester Central Reference Library and Leicestershire Record Office. Only those that reveal the area around the development site and of direct relevance have been included (Appendix 2).

4.5.2   *Map of Roman Leicester (Figure 4):* this map of Roman Leicester can be found in Simmons' 1983 book *Leicester: The Ancient Borough to 1860.* This map is a street plan of the streets of Leicester during the Roman period and shows the location of the town walls, forum and baths. The site boundary is located to the north of the Roman walls, and not within the area shown.

4.5.3   *Map of Medieval Leicester (Figure 5):* this map of medieval Leicester is also found in Simmons' 1983 book *Leicester: The Ancient Borough to 1860.* This street plan of medieval Leicester also has the location of the town walls, roughly following the same line as the Roman wall and has the street names labelled. The site is located about 0.5 miles to the north of medieval Leicester and is not on this map.

4.5.4   *Plan of Leicester's Parish and Boundary Borough's in 1525 (Figure 6):* this map can be found in Charman's 1951 article in *TLAS, Leicester in 1525.* This map shows the location of the different parishes in Leicester during the medieval period. Leicester Abbey and the extra-parochial lands belonging to the abbey are labelled. Leicester Abbey was in the north suburb of Leicester. As previously mentioned in 3.2.25, the land on either side of St. Leonard's parish was extra-parochial and belonged to Leicester Abbey. At this time, St. Leonard's Church belonged to the abbey and was located at the junction of Woodgate and Abbey Gate. St. Leonard's was a poor parish

with the church being in a state of disrepair by the 16th century and thought to have been demolished by the 17th century (Buckley 1997).

4.5.5   ***Speed's Map of Leicestershire, 1610 (Figure 7):*** Leicester Abbey and the land to the north first appears on Speed's map but in very little detail. The inset map shows the location of the abbey (No. 2 on map) in relation to the city centre and town walls. The area to the north of the abbey is not shown on the inset map.

4.5.6   ***Bleau's Map of Leicestershire, 1645 (Figure 8):*** this map depicts Leicester with a castle. The abbey is labelled to the north of the city and west of the Soar. No other detail is given.

4.5.7   ***Morden's Map of Leicestershire, 1695 (Figure 9):*** this map is similar to Bleau's map in terms of detail. Leicester is labelled by a large cross. The abbey is labelled by a mound and a smaller cross to the north of the city and west of the Soar.

4.5.8   ***Map of Leicester, 1835 (Figure 10):*** this map of Leicester shows the Abbey Grounds as being occupied by Warner Nursery. The remains of the abbey are labelled. Abbey Park is labelled as Abbey Meadows. At this time, the site boundary is clearly ploughed, arable land.

4.5.9   ***Map of Leicester, 1835 (Figure 11):*** this map shows the street plan of Leicester City Centre. The abbey is labelled as '*Remains of Leicester Abbey.*' The land to the north continues to be ploughed, arable land.

4.5.10   ***Map of Leicester in 1857 (Figure 12):*** this map of Leicester can again be found in Simmons' 1983 book *Leicester: The Ancient Borough to 1860.* This map is a detailed street plan of Leicester in the post-medieval period. Leicester Abbey is labelled as well as Abbey Meadows to the east. The land to the north of the abbey is present but not in any detail as in some of the previous maps.

4.5.11   ***First Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1887 (Figure 13):*** Warner's Nursery still occupies the Abbey grounds and the land to the west of the site boundary. The land to the north of the Abbey is open land. A sewage pumping station is shown to the north of the site boundary. To the east of the site boundary is the River Soar and Abbey Meadows. The remains of St. John's Stone (3.2.3) are to the west of the site boundary.

4.5.12   ***Second Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1904 (Figure 14):*** the Second Edition Ordnance Survey Map retains much of the same shape as the First Edition. On the Second Edition Map the Great Central Railway is now present to the west of the site running next to the line of the Fosse Road, the course of the Roman Fosse Way. To the southwest of the abbey, north of Wolsey Street, is the Abbey iron foundry.

4.5.13   ***Third Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1915 (Figure 15):*** there is little change between the Second and Third Edition maps. The site boundary is still located in open land with the sewage pumping station to the north and Abbey Meadows to the east. The sewage pumping station is now disused. Leicester Abbey is still occupied by the nursery. A Dye Works and Rope Walk are now located to the east of the sewage pumping station and the River Soar in an area that was previously occupied by the Public Baths.

4.5.14   ***Fourth Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1921 (Figure 16):*** the grounds of Leicester Abbey are no longer being used by the nursery and retain the same shape. The open land to the north of the abbey, the location of the site boundary, has now been divided

into two open fields. The land to the west of the site boundary is now Blackbird Mills, a hosiery manufactory, and to the south of this is a bakery. The Fosse Road has been renamed Blackbird Road. The sewage pumping station has been converted into allotment gardens. The dye works and rope walk are still present to the east of the River Soar. To the south of this is a shoe works and hosiery factory.

4.5.15 ***Ordnance Survey Map, 1938 (Figure 17):*** the abbey grounds retain the same shape, however most of the land around the abbey, is much changed with the appearance of new houses and more factories. Swithland Avenue is now present and in similar shape to that of present day. The area to the north of Swithland Avenue is becoming more developed with more buildings than on previous maps. Blackbird Mills and bakery are still present. The area between Blackbird Road the Railway, once open land with the exception of a few houses, has now been completely developed. The former sewage pumping station is still allotment gardens. The Abbey Meadows area still has the dye works, rope walk, and shoe and hosiery manufactories present. In addition to these is another rope walk just south of the original one.

4.5.16 ***Ordnance Survey Map, 1944 (Figure 18):*** this map retains the same shape as the 1938 Ordnance Survey map.

4.6 SITE WALKOVER SURVEY

4.6.1 The site was visited on October 9th, 2008 to assess whether any as-yet unknown archaeological features were visible within the boundaries of the proposed development, and to assess the impact any development may have on known archaeological, historical and cultural features in the vicinity.

4.6.2 The site was presently enclosed by a locked gate on the south of the site boundary and surrounded by the extant houses of Swithland Avenue preventing access (Plate 3 and 4). The open area of the site was once used to provide 75 car parking spaces for employees of the Bostik group. This area is now so overgrown and littered with debris that it is not possible to tell whether or not this is an area of hardstanding or a grassy overgrown field. Adjacent to this area is another parcel of open land that is presently occupied by 30 vacant garages (Plate 5).

4.6.3 At present, 44 Swithland Avenue is still extant (Plate 6). This is a modern red-bricked, two-storey semi-detached house with a driveway on the side. The area to the back of the property has a fence that was also locked preventing access to the rear of the site boundary.

5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL

5.1.1   There is evidence of prehistoric activity within the 0.5 km radius around the proposed development area in the form of Neolithic stone axes, Mesolithic flint implements, and other flint artefacts. Although the site lies outside of Roman Leicester, there is known evidence for Roman activity, in the form of urns, coins, and the Fosse Way in the vicinity of the proposed development area. The potential for archaeological remains within the site pre-dating the medieval period is therefore considered medium.

5.1.2   All of the archaeological deposits from the medieval period that fall within the 0.5 km radius around the proposed development area were found within Abbey Grounds. The proximity of the development area to Leicester Abbey makes this an area of high archaeological potential.

5.1.3   There is the possibility, however, that any early archaeological deposits that once existed within the site may have since been truncated by modern developments in the area.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.2.1   All of the standing structures identified within the proposed development area can be dated to between 1921-1938. A brief photographic record was made of the buildings on the site during the site visit, and consequently it is not deemed necessary for any further work to take place on the extant structures.

5.2.2   The site boundary was undeveloped until the mid-20th century. It is probable that the foundations of 44 Swithland Avenue and the surrounding houses have destroyed any archaeological deposits that may have been present.

5.2.3   It appears that the open ground to the rear of 44 Swithland Avenue has remained undeveloped during the history of the land-use, with the exception of being used as a car park. It is not known if the foundations of the former car park have truncated this area. Assuming that no significant truncation has occurred, the potential for the survival of any archaeological remains beneath this surface is high.

5.2.4   Given the potential for the survival of prehistoric, Roman and medieval deposits within the development area, it is recommended that an archaeological watching brief be carried out while groundworks are ongoing. A definitive decision on the level and extent of archaeological mitigation will be decided by the Leicester City Archaeologist.

6 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Bleau's Map of Leicestershire, 1645

Morden's Map of Leicestershire, 1695

Map of Leicester, 1828

Map of Leicester, 1835

Tithe Map of Parish of St. Leonard, 1852

Leicester Extension, 1891

First Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1887

Second Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1904

Third Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1915

Fourth Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1921

Ordnance Survey Map, 1938

Ordnance Survey Map, 1944,

Aerial Photograph 4052 541-212

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APPENDIX 1: GAZETTEER OF SITES

HER Sites (within 0.5 km radius of proposed development site)

ID	SMR	Site Name	Description	Northing	Easting	Period
1	MLC8	Leicester Abbey	Abbey	458400	305800	Medieval
2	MLC9	Abbey Precinct Walls	Stone walls to medieval abbey precinct	458400	305900	Medieval
3	MLC10	Cavendish House	Site of 16th century mansion	458050	313900	Post-medieval
4	MLC11	Leicester Abbey-Formal Gardens	Gardens associated with post-medieval mansion	458400	306100	Post-medieval
5	MLC12	Cremation	Roman cremation with artefacts	458400	305900	Roman
6	MLC13	Findspot	Undated artefacts, including human bone	458400	305900	Unknown
7	MLC14	Findspot	Undated artefacts, including human bone	458000	306000	Unknown
8	MLC15	Watermill	Watermill	458600	306100	Early medieval to Post-medieval
9	MLC16	Roman pot	Possible Roman cinerary urn	458000	306000	Roman
10	MLC28	Abbey Deer Park	Deer Park	457000	306000	Medieval
11	MLC29	Abbey Park	Late 19th century public park	458000	305000	Post-medieval to Modern
12	MLC607	Fosse Way, North	Course of Roman road running north	460000	307280	Roman
13	MLC613	Abbey Pumping Station	Neolithic polished stone axe	458900	306700	Prehistoric
14	MLC614	Abbey Meadows	Neolithic stone axe	458000	306000	Prehistoric
15	MLC615	Bristol Avenue	Possible Mesolithic flint	457900	306300	Prehistoric
16	MLC640	Blackbird Road	Palaeolithic flint implement	458000	305800	Prehistoric
17	MLC652	Riverside Allotments, Abbey Park Road	Flint arrowhead	458700	306200	Prehistoric
18	MLC653	Abbey Meadows	Middle Bronze Age rapier	459000	306000	Prehistoric
19	MLC694	Abbey Meadows	Medieval artefacts	458000	306000	Medieval

ID	SMR	Site Name	Description	Northing	Easting	Period
20	MLC869	Abbey Meadows	Polished stone and flint artefacts	458000	306000	Prehistoric
21	MLC891	Leicester Abbey-early medieval artefacts	Saxon-Norman carving	458400	305900	Early medieval
22	MLC1011	Abbey Meadows	Roman coins and brooches	458000	306000	Roman
23	MLC1246	Newfoundpool	4th century Roman coin	457000	305000	Roman
24	MKC1360	Abbey Meadows	Neolithic stone axe	458864	306153	Prehistoric
25	MLC1485	Wolsey Street/St. Margaret's Way	Early post-medieval buildings	458200	305900	Post-medieval
26	MLC1600	Great Central Station	19th century railway	458146	304817	Post-medieval
27	MLC1673	Abbey Meadows	Two Neolithic antlers	458000	305000	Prehistoric
28	MLC1674	Abbey Meadows	Roman Caistor Ware case	458000	305000	Roman
29	MLC1675	Abbey Meadows	Roman urn	458000	306000	Roman
30	MLC1676	Abbey Meadows	Medieval metal artefact	458000	306000	Medieval
31	MLC1677	Abbey Meadows	Small Cannon	458000	306000	Post-medieval
32	MLC1678	Abbey Meadows	Cannon ball found in canal	458000	306000	Post-medieval
33	MLC1680	Abbey Meadows	Stone boss depicting a monk with a cowl	458000	306000	Unknown
34	MLC1782	Abbot Penny's Wall	Patterned Brick Wall to enclose an enlarged abbey	458274	305732	Medieval
35	MLC1814	Swannington-Leicester Railway	Railway	456706	305360	Post-medieval

APPENDIX 2:   FIGURES AND PLATES