

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
AT 9 SOMERSET CLOSE,
MELTON MOWBRAY,
LEICESTERSHIRE
(MMSC 07)
Planning Application No: 06/00918/FUL**

**Work Undertaken For
Front Row Construction**

April 2007

Report Compiled by
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ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT SERVICES



APS Report No. **50/07**

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1. SUMMARY

A watching brief was undertaken during groundworks at 9 Somerset Close, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire. The watching brief monitored the excavation of foundation trenches for a bungalow and detached garage.

The site lies adjacent to the Kirby Lane which follows the presumed course of a Roman (AD 42-410) thoroughfare, known as Sawgate Road. Fieldwork undertaken to the south of the site has produced possible evidence for an Anglo-Saxon cemetery. Medieval (AD 1066-1540) remains are located towards the centre of Melton Mowbray, although ridge and furrow of the medieval field system was recorded at the site.

The watching brief revealed a sequence of natural and undated deposits. A pond and a subsoil are undated due to a lack of artefactual material. No other archaeological deposits were identified and no finds were made.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Definition of a Watching Brief

An archaeological watching brief is defined as “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.” (IFA 1999).

2.2 Planning Background

Archaeological Project Services was commissioned by Front Row Construction to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with a new bungalow and detached garage on

land adjacent to No. 9 Somerset Close, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire. Approval for the development was sought through the submission of planning application 06/00918/FUL. The watching brief was carried out between the 12th and 14th March 2007 in accordance with a specification prepared by Archaeological Project Services (Appendix 1) and approved by the Senior Planning Archaeologist, Leicestershire County Council.

2.3 Topography and Geology

Melton Mowbray is located 21km northeast of Leicester and 14km northwest of Oakham, in Melton District, Leicestershire (Fig. 1).

The site is located 1.6km south of the centre of the town as defined by the parish church of St Mary at National Grid Reference SK 7563 1745 (Fig. 2). The site is located south of Somerset Close adjacent to an un-metalled road, Kirby Lane. The site lies at a height of c. 105m OD on land that slopes down to the west.

Local soils are of the Hanslope Association, typically calcareous pelosols (Hodge *et al.* 1984, 209). These soils are developed upon a drift geology of glacial Boulder Clay which in turn seals a solid geology of Jurassic Lower Lias clays and limestones (GSGB 1976).

2.4 Archaeological Setting

Melton Mowbray is located in an area of known archaeological remains dating from the prehistoric period to the present day. A suspected mound and ditch seen on aerial photographs to the northeast of the site may represent a Bronze Age barrow.

The site lies adjacent to Kirby Lane, a small section of a Roman thoroughfare which connected Syston with Thistleton and is traditionally called Sawgate Road (Liddle 1982, 31). The site also lies close

to the findspot of four Romano-British brooches.

Fieldwork to the south of Kirby Lane has identified a possible Anglo-Saxon cemetery site.

Melton Mowbray is first mentioned in the Domesday Survey of c. 1086. Referred to as *Medeltone*, the name is derived from the Old English '*Middel tūn*', meaning middle town (Ekwall 1989, 321). This had been Scandinavianised to *Meðaltūn*, as a result of Viking settlers (Fellows-Jensen 1978, 320). The Domesday Survey records that the land was held by Geoffrey La Guerche and contained a market, 2 mills, 20 acres of meadow and woodland with 20 villagers and 2 priests (Morgan 1979).

Extant remains of the medieval period are located close to the centre of the town and are represented by the 13th – 14th century St Mary's church, the 14th century Anne of Cleves House and 5 King Street (Pevsner 1992, 316).

Ridge and furrow of the medieval field system has been recorded as existing at the site prior to development of the area (Hartley 1987, 66).

3. AIMS

The requirements of the watching brief, as detailed in the specification (Appendix 1), were to locate and record archaeological deposits and, if present, to determine their date, function and origin.

4. METHODS

Prior to the excavation of foundation trenches topsoil was stripped from the area. Foundation trenches were then excavated by machine to depths required by the development. The sides of the trenches were then cleaned and rendered vertical. Selected deposits were excavated

further to retrieve artefactual material and to determine their function. Each deposit was allocated a unique reference number (context number) with an individual written description. A list of all contexts and their descriptions appears as Appendix 2. A photographic record was compiled and sections were drawn at a scale of 1:10. Recording was undertaken according to standard Archaeological Project Services' practice.

Following excavation the records were checked and a stratigraphic matrix produced. Phasing was assigned based on the nature of the deposits and recognisable relationships between them.

5. RESULTS

Following post-excavation analysis three phases were identified;

Phase 1	Natural deposits
Phase 2	Undated deposits
Phase 3	Recent deposits

Archaeological contexts are listed below and described. The numbers in brackets are the context numbers assigned in the field.

Phase 1 Natural deposits

The earliest deposits encountered at the base of the foundation trenches was a layer of yellowish brown clay with frequent limestone fragments (003, 009 and 012). This measured in excess of 0.56m thick.

Phase 2 Undated deposits

Located in the northern foundation trench was a feature (008), possibly a pond. Over 2m wide and 0.51m deep (Fig. 4, Section 2), this contained a single fill of bluish green clay (007) and was sealed by a deposit of bluish grey organic silty clay (006). A thin band of greyish brown organic silt (005) above this layer would

Evans, R, and Seale, RS, 1984 *Soils and their Use in Eastern England*, Soil Survey of England and Wales **13**

IFA, 1999 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*

Liddle, P, 1982 *Leicestershire Archaeology – The present State of Knowledge. Vol. 1 To the end of the Roman Period*, Leicestershire Museums Archaeological Report Series No. **4**

Morgan, P, 1979 *Domesday Book: Leicestershire* **22**

Pevsner, N, 1992 *Leicestershire*, The Buildings of England (2nd edition, revised E Williamson)

11. ABBREVIATIONS

APS Archaeological Project Services

GSGB Geological Survey of Great Britain

IFA Institute of Field Archaeologists

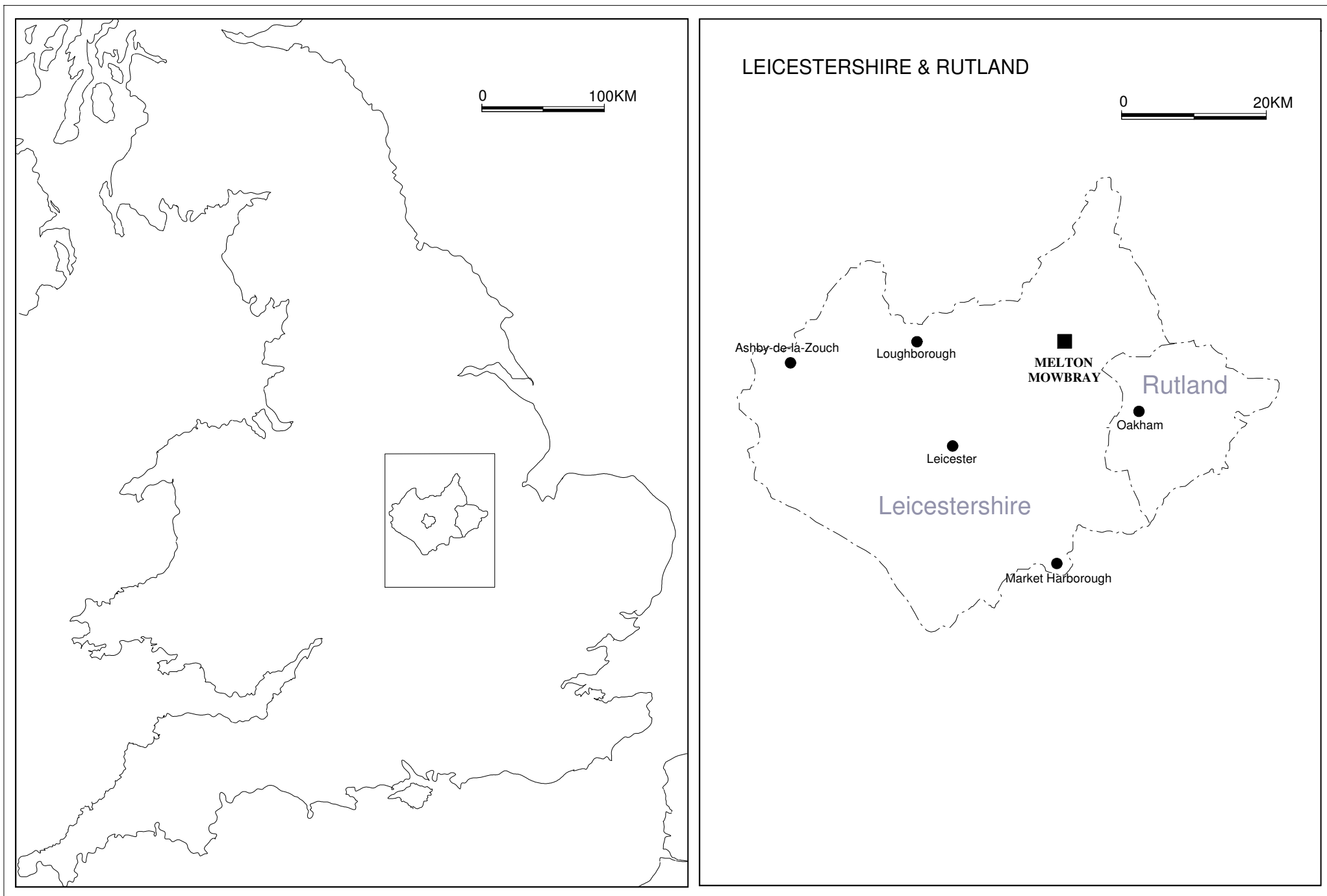
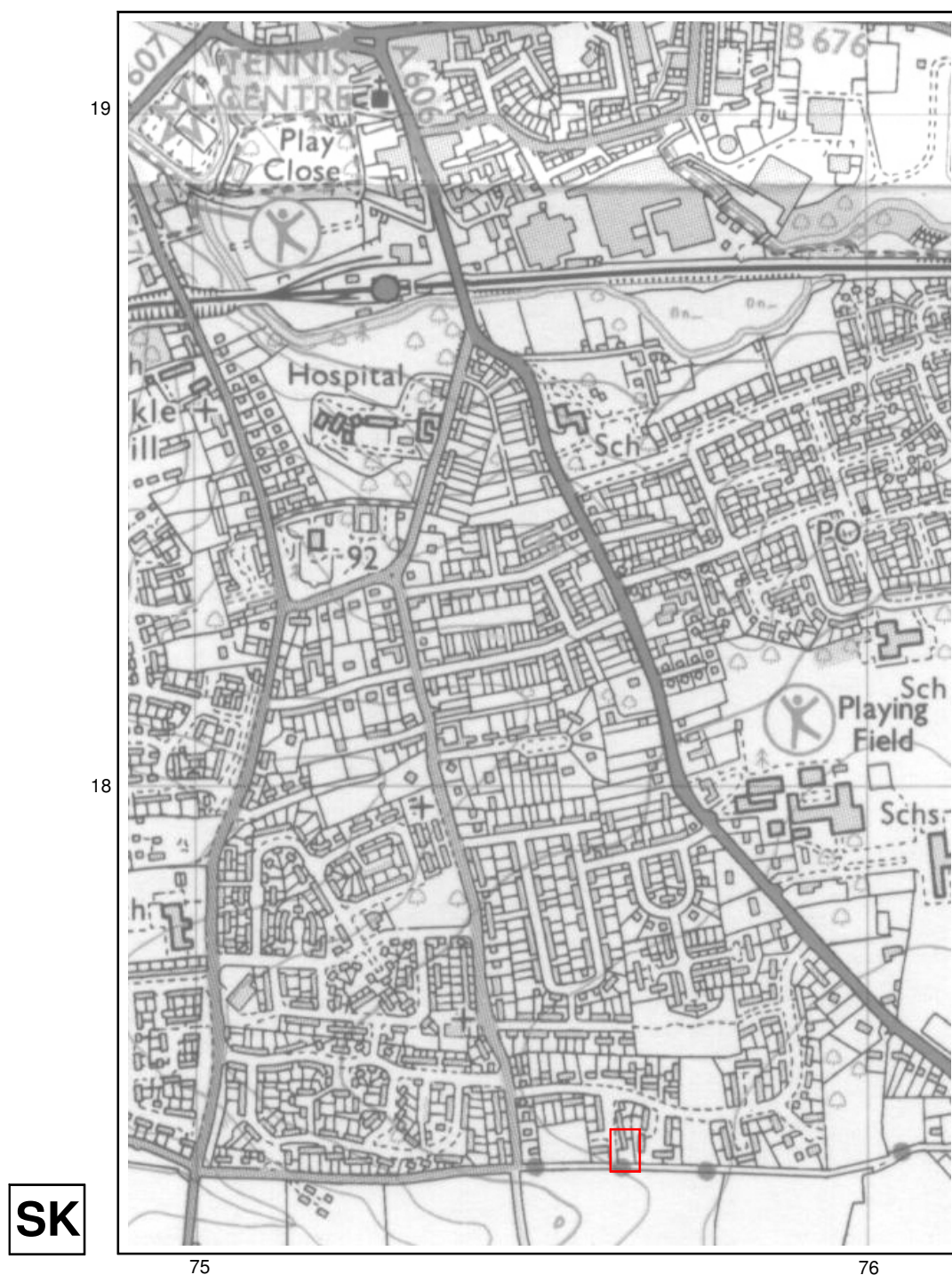


Figure 1 - General location map



Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 map with the permission of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office
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Area detailed in Figure 3

0 500m



Archaeological Project Services

Project Name: Somerset Close, Melton Mowbray

Scale 1:10000

Drawn by: PCF

Report No: 50/07

Figure 2 - Site location plan

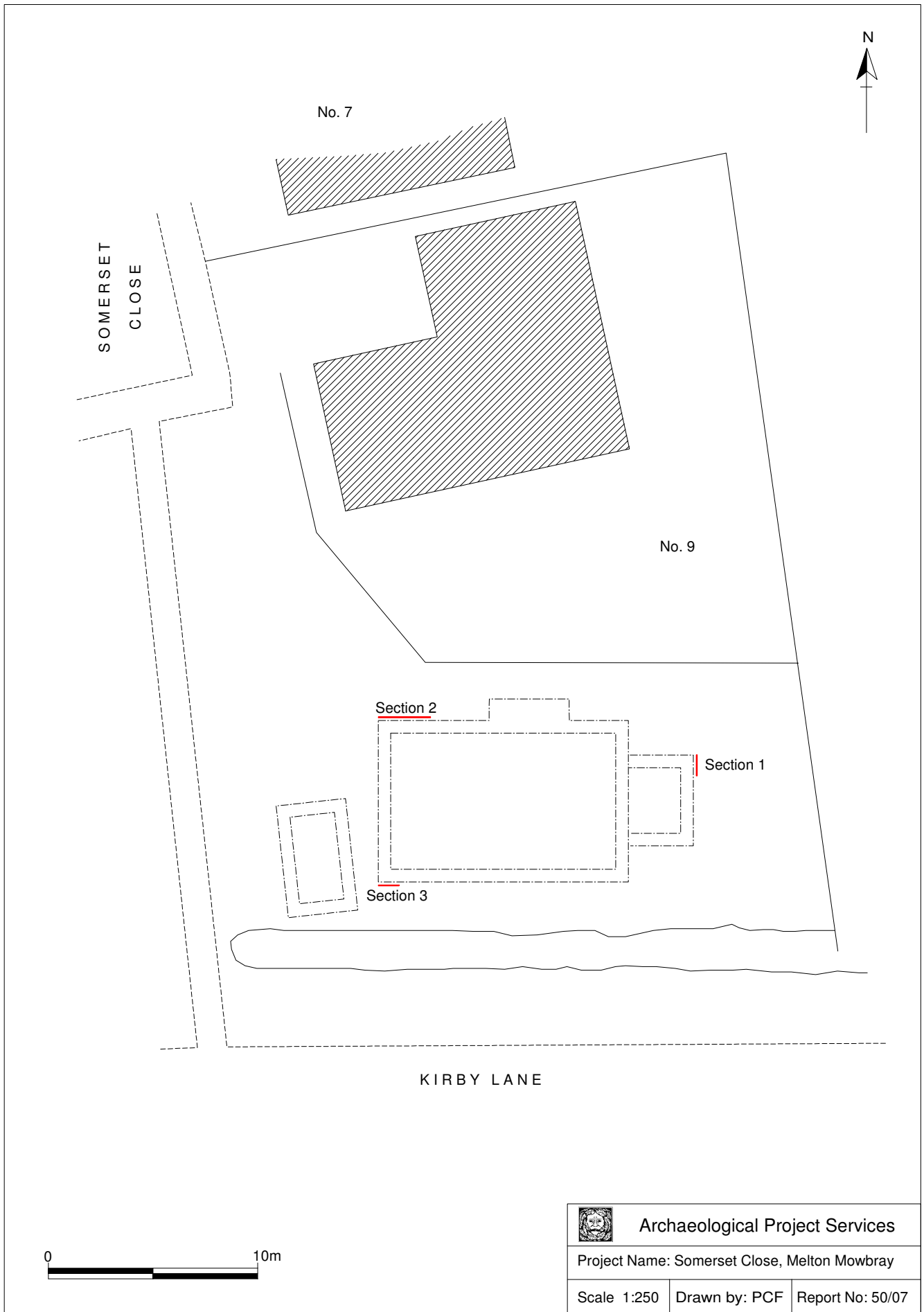
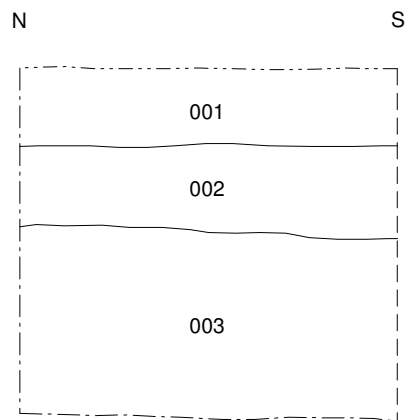
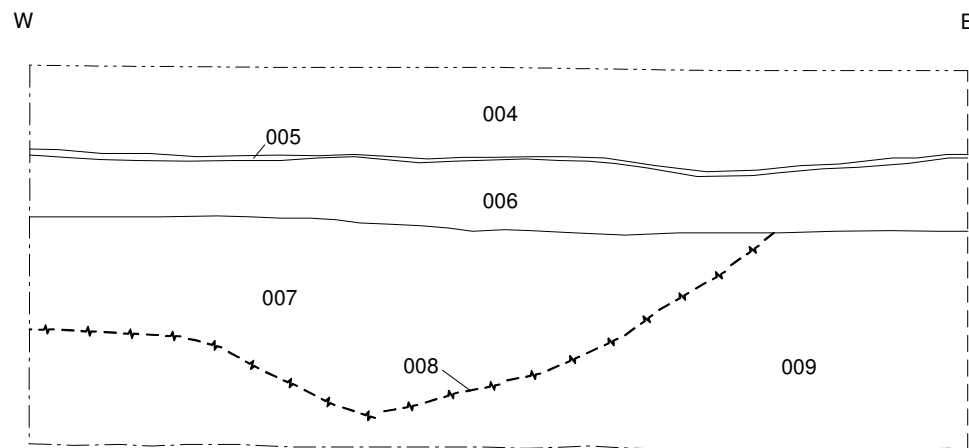


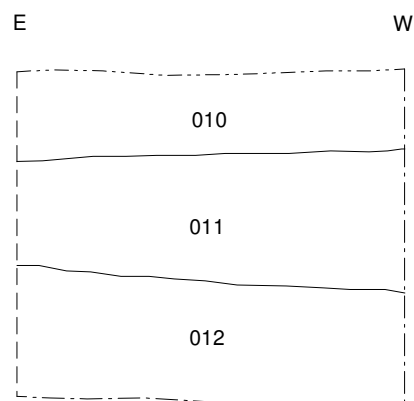
Figure 3 - Plan of the development showing section locations



Section 1



Section 2



Section 3



Archaeological Project Services

Project Name: Somerset Close, Melton Mowbray

Scale 1:20

Drawn by: PCF

Report No: 50/07

Figure 4 - Sections 1 to 3



Plate 1 - View across the development area, looking southwest

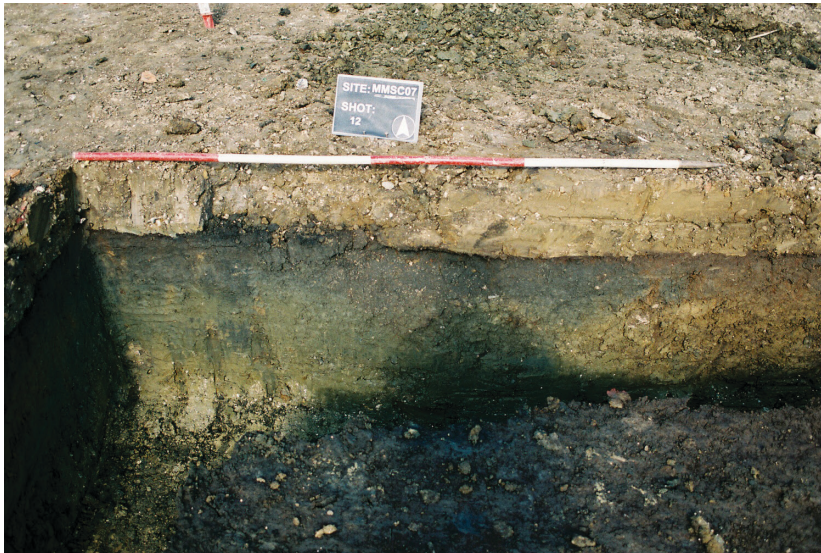


Plate 2 - Section 2 showing the undated pond (008), looking north



Plate 3 - Section 3 showing the general sequence of deposits, looking south

Appendix 1

LAND AT 9 SOMERSET CLOSE, MELTON MOWBRAY, LEICESTERSHIRE - SPECIFICATION FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 *A watching brief is required during construction of a toilet extension at 9 Somerset Close, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire.*
- 1.2 *The site lies in an area of archaeological potential, lying adjacent to a Roman road with roman medieval remains found close by and a potential Anglo Saxon Cemetery to the south,*
- 1.3 The archaeological work will consist of a watching brief during development works on the site.
- 1.4 *On completion of the fieldwork a report will be prepared detailing the results of the watching brief. The report will consist of a narrative supported by illustrations and photographs.*

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This document comprises a specification for archaeological watching brief during construction of a bungalow with conservatory and detached garage, in the rear garden of Somerset Close, Melton Mowbray Leicestershire.
- 2.2 This document contains the following parts:
 - 2.2.1 Overview.
 - 2.2.2 Stages of work and methodologies.
 - 2.2.3 List of specialists.
 - 2.2.4 Programme of works and staffing structure of the project

3 SITE LOCATION

- 3.1 Melton Mowbray is located approximately 15km north east of Leicester. The site is located in the south of Melton Mowbray. It lies south of Somerset Close and north of Kirby Lane.

4 PLANNING BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Planning consent has been granted for the construction of a single bungalow with conservatory and detached garage. The Senior Planning Archaeologist for Leicestershire County Council has requested a watching brief during the groundwork's for the site.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL OVERVIEW

- 5.1 The site is located in an area of archaeological potential, lying adjacent to a Roman Road and close to the find spot of Roman Brooches.
- 5.2 Fieldwork to the south of Kirkby Lane identified the possible site of an Anglo Saxon cemetery and mediaeval pottery and coins have been found in the vicinity.

6 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 6.1 The aims of the watching brief will be:
 - 6.1.1 To record and interpret the archaeological features exposed during the excavation of the foundation trenches and other areas of ground disturbance.

6.1.2 The objectives of the watching brief will be to:

- Determine the form and function of the archaeological features encountered;
- Determine the spatial arrangement of the archaeological features encountered;
- As far as practicable, recover dating evidence from the archaeological features, and
- Establish the sequence of the archaeological remains present on the site.

7 SITE OPERATIONS

7.1 General considerations

- 7.1.1 All work will be undertaken following statutory Health and Safety requirements in operation at the time of the watching brief.
- 7.1.2 The work will be undertaken according to the relevant codes of practise issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA), under the management of a Member of the institute (MIFA). Archaeological Project Services is IFA registered organisation no. 21.
- 7.1.3 Any and all artefacts found during the investigation and thought to be 'treasure', as defined by the Treasure Act 1996, will be removed from site to a secure store and promptly reported to the appropriate coroner's office.

7.2 Methodology

- 7.2.1 The watching brief will be undertaken during the ground works phase of development, and includes the archaeological monitoring of all phases of soil movement.
- 7.2.2 Stripped areas and trench sections will be observed regularly to identify and record archaeological features that are exposed and to record changes in the geological conditions. The section drawings of the trenches will be recorded at a scale of 1:10. Should features be recorded in plan these will be drawn at a scale of 1:20. Written descriptions detailing the nature of the deposits, features and fills encountered will be compiled on Archaeological Project Services pro-forma record sheets.
- 7.2.3 Any finds recovered will be bagged and labelled for later analysis.
- 7.2.4 Throughout the watching brief a photographic record will be compiled. The photographic record will consist of:
- the site during work to show specific stages, and the layout of the archaeology within the trench.
 - groups of features where their relationship is important
 - additionally, the two external elevations to be covered by the extension will be recorded photographically
- 7.2.5 Should human remains be located they will be left in situ if possible. Disturbed remains will be passed to the incumbent for reburial.

8 POST-EXCAVATION

8.1 Stage 1

- 8.1.1 On completion of site operations, the records and schedules produced during the watching brief will be checked and ordered to ensure that they form a uniform sequence

forming a level II archive. A stratigraphic matrix of the archaeological deposits and features present on the site will be prepared. All photographic material will be catalogued and labelled, the labelling referring to schedules identifying the subject/s photographed.

- 8.1.2 All finds recovered during the fieldwork will be washed, marked and packaged according to the deposit from which they were recovered. Any finds requiring specialist treatment and conservation will be sent to the Conservation Laboratory at the City and County Museum, Lincoln.

8.2 Stage 2

- 8.2.1 Detailed examination of the stratigraphic matrix to enable the determination of the various phases of activity on the site.

- 8.2.2 Finds will be sent to specialists for identification and dating.

8.3 Stage 3

- 8.3.1 On completion of stage 2, a report detailing the findings of the watching brief will be prepared.

- 8.3.2 This will consist of:

- A non-technical summary of the results of the investigation.
- A description of the archaeological setting of the watching brief.
- Description of the topography of the site.
- Description of the methodologies used during the watching brief.
- A text describing the findings of the watching brief.
- A consideration of the local, regional and national context of the watching brief findings.
- Plans of the archaeological features exposed. If a sequence of archaeological deposits is encountered, separate plans for each phase will be produced.
- Sections of the trenches and archaeological features.
- Interpretation of the archaeological features exposed, and their chronology and setting within the surrounding landscape.
- Specialist reports on the finds from the site.
- Appropriate photographs of the site and specific archaeological features.

9 **REPORT DEPOSITION**

- 9.1 Copies of the report will be sent to the Client; North West Leicestershire District Council Planning Department; and to the County Council Archaeological Sites and Monuments Record.

10 **ARCHIVE**

- 10.1 The documentation and records generated during the watching brief will be sorted and ordered into the format acceptable to Leicestershire Museums Service. This sorting will be undertaken according to the document titled *The Transfer of Archaeological Archives to Leicestershire Museums, Arts and Records Service* for long-term storage and curation.

11 PUBLICATION

- 11.1 Details of the investigation will be input to the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS).
- 11.2 A report on the results of the investigation will be submitted for inclusion in the journal *Transactions of the Leicestershire Historical and Archaeological Society*.
- 11.3 If appropriate, notes on the findings will be submitted to the appropriate national journals: *Britannia* for discoveries of Roman date, and *Medieval Archaeology* and the *Journal of the Medieval Settlement Research Group* for findings of medieval or later date; and *Church Archaeology*.

12 CURATORIAL RESPONSIBILITY

- 12.1 Curatorial responsibility for the archaeological work undertaken on the site lies with North West Leicestershire District Council. They will be given written notice of the commencement of the project.

13 VARIATIONS AND CONTINGENCIES

- 13.1 Variations to the proposed scheme of works will only be made following written confirmation of acceptance from the archaeological curator.
- 13.2 In the event of the discovery of any unexpected remains of archaeological importance, or of any changed circumstances, it is the responsibility of the archaeological contractor to inform the archaeological curator.
- 13.3 Where important archaeological remains are discovered and deemed to merit further investigation additional resources may be required to provide an appropriate level of investigation, recording and analysis.
- 13.4 Any contingency requirement for additional fieldwork or post-excavation analysis outside the scope of the proposed scheme of works will only be activated following full consultation with the archaeological curator and the client.

14 PROGRAMME OF WORKS AND STAFFING LEVELS

- 14.1 The watching brief will be integrated with the programme of construction and is dependent on the developers' work programme. It is therefore not possible to specify the person-hours for the archaeological site work.
- 14.2 An archaeological supervisor with experience of watching briefs will undertake the work.
- 14.3 Post-excavation analysis and report production will be undertaken by the archaeological supervisor, or a post-excavation analyst as appropriate, with assistance from a finds supervisor, illustrator and external specialists. It is expected that each fieldwork day (equal to one person-day) will require a post- excavation day (equal to one-and-a-half person-days) for completion of the analysis and report. If the fieldwork lasts longer than about four days then there will be an economy of scale with the post-excavation analysis.

15 SPECIALISTS TO BE USED DURING THE PROJECT

- 15.1 The following organisations/persons will, in principle and if necessary, be used as subcontractors to provide the relevant specialist work and reports in respect of any objects or material recovered during the investigation that require their expert knowledge and input. Engagement of any particular specialist subcontractor is also dependent on their availability and ability to meet programming requirements.

<u>Task</u>	<u>Body to be undertaking the work</u>
Conservation	Conservation Laboratory, City and County Museum, Lincoln
Pottery Analysis	Prehistoric - Trent & Peak Archaeological Trust
	Roman - B Precious, Independent Specialist
	Post-Roman - J Young, Independent Specialist/A Boyle, APS
Non-pottery Artefacts	J Cowgill, Independent Specialist, or G Taylor, APS
Animal Bones	J Kitch, APS
Environmental Analysis	J Rackham, Independent Specialist

16 INSURANCES

- 16.1 Archaeological Project Services, as part of the Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire, maintains Employers Liability Insurance of £10,000,000, together with Public and Products Liability insurances, each with indemnity of £5,000,000. Copies of insurance documentation can be supplied on request.

17 COPYRIGHT

- 17.1 Archaeological Project Services shall retain full copyright of any commissioned reports under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with all rights reserved; excepting that it hereby provides an exclusive licence to the client for the use of such documents by the client in all matters directly relating to the project as described in the Project Specification.
- 17.2 Licence will also be given to the archaeological curators to use the documentary archive for educational, public and research purposes.
- 17.3 In the case of non-satisfactory settlement of account then copyright will remain fully and exclusively with Archaeological Project Services. In these circumstances it will be an infringement under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 for the client to pass any report, partial report, or copy of same, to any third party. Reports submitted in good faith by Archaeological Project Services to any Planning Authority or archaeological curator will be removed from said planning Authority and/or archaeological curator. The Planning Authority and/or archaeological curator will be notified by Archaeological Project Services that the use of any such information previously supplied constitutes an infringement under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 and may result in legal action.
- 17.4 The author of any report or specialist contribution to a report shall retain intellectual copyright of their work and may make use of their work for educational or research purposes or for further publication.

Appendix 2

CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

No.	Description	Interpretation
001	Loose to firm mid greyish brown silty clay with frequent limestone fragments and gravel, 0.2m thick	Made-ground
002	Soft mid brown silty clay, 0.25m deep	Former subsoil
003	Soft light yellowish brown clay with frequent limestone fragments, >0.49m thick	Natural deposit
004	Firm light greyish brown silty clay with frequent limestone fragments and gravel, 0.25m thick	Made-ground
005	Friable dark greyish brown organic silt, 30mm thick	Former turf line
006	Friable dark bluish grey organic silty clay, 0.18m thick	
007	Firm mid bluish green clay, 0.49m thick	Fill of (008)
008	Feature, >2m wide by 0.5m deep, gradual sides and rounded base	Pond
009	Soft light yellowish brown clay with frequent limestone fragments, >0.56m thick	Natural deposit
010	Loose to firm mid greyish brown silty clay with frequent limestone fragments and gravel, 0.24m thick	Made-ground
011	Loose mid brown clayey silt, 0.37m thick	Former subsoil
012	Firm light yellowish brown clay with frequent limestone fragments, >0.34m thick	Natural deposit

Appendix 3

GLOSSARY

Boulder Clay	A deposit formed after the retreat of a glacier. Also known as till, this material is generally unsorted and can comprise of rock flour to boulders to rocks of quite substantial size.
Bronze Age	A period characterised by the introduction of bronze into the country for tools, between 2250 and 800 BC.
Context	An archaeological context represents a distinct archaeological event or process. For example, the action of digging a pit creates a context (the cut) as does the process of its subsequent backfill (the fill). Each context encountered during an archaeological investigation is allocated a unique number by the archaeologist and a record sheet detailing the description and interpretations of the context (the context sheet) is created and placed in the site archive. Context numbers are identified within the report text by brackets, <i>e.g.</i> (004).
Cut	A cut refers to the physical action of digging a posthole, pit, ditch, foundation trench, <i>etc.</i> Once the fills of these features are removed during an archaeological investigation the original 'cut' is therefore exposed and subsequently recorded.
Fill	Once a feature has been dug it begins to silt up (either slowly or rapidly) or it can be back-filled manually. The soil(s) which become contained by the 'cut' are referred to as its fill(s).
Layer	A layer is a term to describe an accumulation of soil or other material that is not contained within a cut.
Medieval	The Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1066-1500.
Natural	Undisturbed deposit(s) of soil or rock which have accumulated without the influence of human activity.
Prehistoric	The period of human history prior to the introduction of writing. In Britain the prehistoric period lasts from the first evidence of human occupation about 500,000 BC, until the Roman invasion in the middle of the 1 st century AD.
Romano-British	Pertaining to the period dating from AD 43-410 when the Romans occupied Britain.
Saxon	Pertaining to the period dating from AD 410-1066 when England was largely settled by tribes from northern Germany.

Appendix 4

THE ARCHIVE

The archive consists of:

12	Context records
1	Photographic record sheet
2	Sheets of scale drawings
1	Stratigraphic matrix

All primary records are currently kept at:

Archaeological Project Services
The Old School
Cameron Street
Heckington
Sleaford
Lincolnshire
NG34 9RW

The ultimate destination of the project archive is:

Leicestershire County Council Heritage Services
Room 500
County Hall
Leicester Road
Glenfield
Leicester
LE3 8TE

Accession Number: X.A42.2007

Archaeological Project Services Site Code: MMSC 07

The discussion and comments provided in this report are based on the archaeology revealed during the site investigations. Other archaeological finds and features may exist on the development site but away from the areas exposed during the course of this fieldwork. *Archaeological Project Services* cannot confirm that those areas unexposed are free from archaeology nor that any archaeology present there is of a similar character to that revealed during the current investigation.

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