

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION:
LAND AT THE DEFENCE ANIMAL CENTRE HEADQUARTERS
REMOUNT ROAD
MELTON MOWBRAY
LEICESTERSHIRE**

*on behalf of
Parkwood Project Management*



Lizzie Gill BSc PgDip

March 2007

ASC: 892/MMR/2

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Site Data

<i>ASC project code:</i>	MMR	<i>ASC Project No:</i>	892
<i>Event No:</i>	N/A	<i>Accession No:</i>	X.A44.2007
<i>County:</i>	Leicestershire		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Melton Mowbray		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Melton District		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	SK 7372 1963		
<i>Present use:</i>	Fenced Paddock		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Construction of indoor riding school		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	06/01222/FUL		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	Melton Borough Council		
<i>Date of fieldwork:</i>	5/03/07-6/03/07		
<i>Client:</i>	Parkwood Project Management Atherstone Barns Alscot Estate Atherstone-on-Stour Stratford-upon-Avon CV37 8NE		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Michael Neale, Assistant Project Manager		

Internal Quality Check

<i>Primary Author:</i>	Lizzie Gill	<i>Date:</i>	15 th March 2007
<i>Revisions:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	
<i>Edited/Checked By:</i>	David Fell	<i>Date:</i>	

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Figure 1: General Location (scale 1:25,000)

Summary

During March 2007 an archaeological evaluation was undertaken on land at the Defence Animal Centre, Remount Road, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire, in the vicinity of a known Roman settlement. The work was required to locate, define and characterise any surviving archaeological remains prior to construction of an indoor riding school. Four trenches were excavated, of which two produced no archaeological features. A pit was revealed in the westernmost trench and a possible gully in the trench closest to the southern boundary of the site. No finds were recovered from this feature and two small fragments of pottery recovered from the pit proved to be undiagnostic. The small amount of archaeology uncovered during this evaluation suggest that the site lies on the periphery of any past human activity.

1 Introduction

1.1 In March 2007 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd (ASC)* carried out an evaluation at the Defence Animal Centre Headquarters, Remount Road, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire (NGR SK 7372 1963: Fig. 1). The project was commissioned by Parkwood Project Management, and was carried out according to a brief (Clark, 2007) prepared on behalf of the local planning authority (LPA), *Melton Borough Council*, by their archaeological advisor (AA), *Leicestershire County Council Historic & Natural Environment Team (HNET)*, and a project design prepared by ASC (892/MMR/1). The relevant planning application reference is 06/01222/FUL.

1.2 *Planning Background*

This evaluation was required under the terms of *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (PPG16)*, in response to proposals for the construction of an indoor riding school (Fig. 2).

1.3 *Location and Description*

The site is located to the west of the town of Melton Mowbray (Fig. 1; NGR SK 7372 1963). It is situated between Asfordby Road (the A6006) and Welby Lane, to the west of Remount Road. The site comprises a roughly rectangular area of approximately 0.65ha and lies at the southwestern corner of the Remount complex. It is currently in use as a paddock.

1.4 *Geology & Topography*

The site is on slightly sloping ground, at an elevation of c.100 - 105m OD. It lies on the boundary of two natural soil types, the Hanslope Association and the Wickham 2 Association. The Hanslope Association comprises slowly permeable calcareous, and some non-calcareous, clayey soils with a slight risk of water erosion (Soil Survey 1983: 411d) and the Wickham 2 Association, comprises slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged fine loamy over clayey, fine silty over clayey and clayey soils with small areas of slowly permeable calcareous soils on steeper slopes (*ibid* 711f). The geology is likely to consist of drift deposits over Jurassic and Cretaceous clay or mudstone (*ibid*).

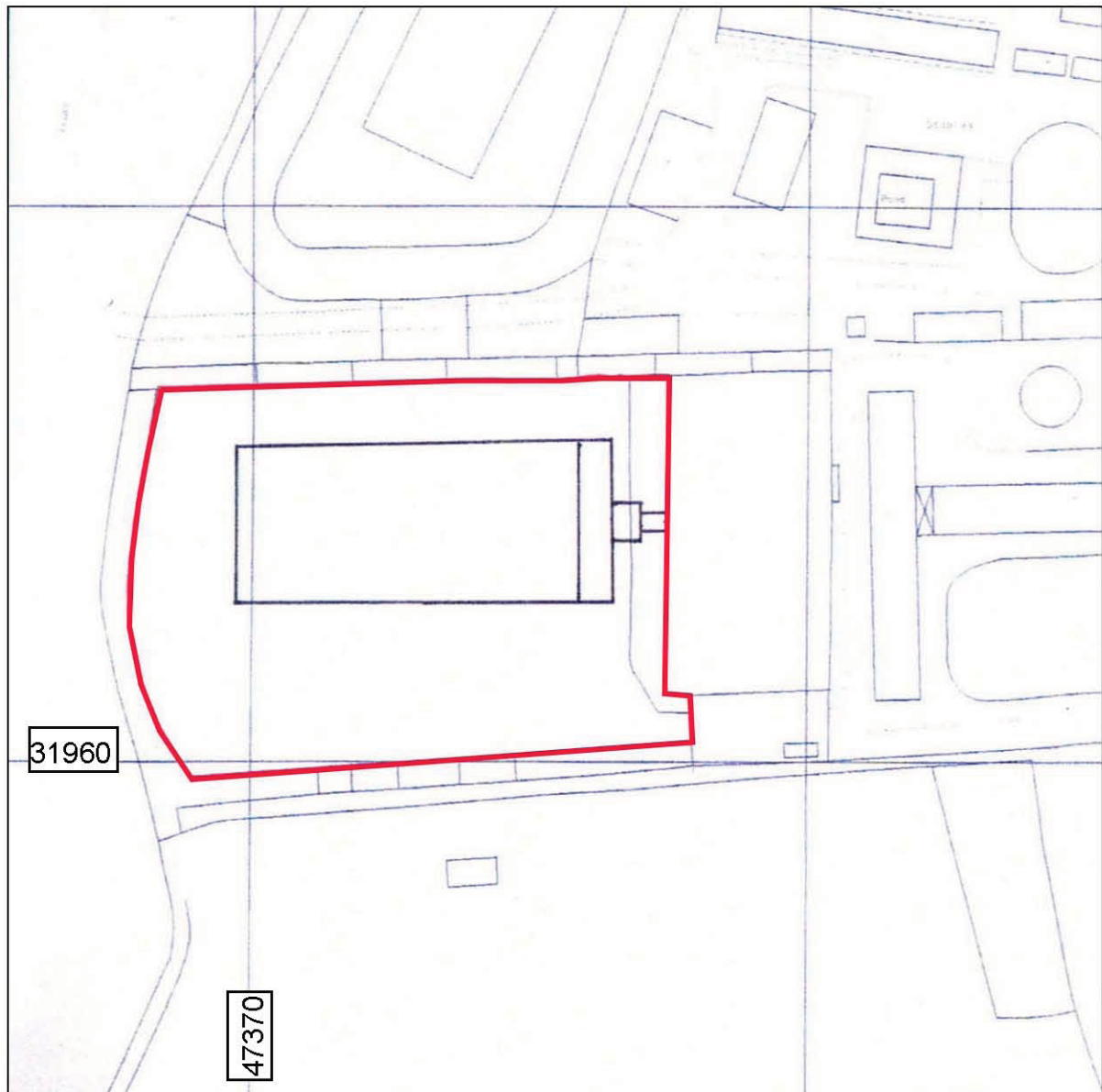


Figure 2: Site Plan showing Proposed Development (scale 1:1250)

2 Aims & Methods

2.1 Aims

As described in the brief (Section 8), the aims of the evaluation were:

- To gather sufficient evidence to establish, supplement, improve and make available information about the archaeological deposits in relation to development proposals.

2.2 Standards

The work conformed to the project design (892/MMR/1), to the relevant sections of the Institute of Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (IFA 2000) and *Standard & Guidance Notes* (IFA 2001), Leicestershire County Council's *Guidelines and Procedures for Archaeological Work in Leicestershire and Rutland*, and to the relevant sections of ASC's own *Operations Manual*.

2.3 Methods

The work was carried out according to the brief (Section 9), which required:

- An accession number to be requested prior to commencement of this project
- A minimum of 2% of the site to be investigated. Initially 4 trenches measuring c.20m x 1.6m were excavated. Trench locations are shown in Figure 3. No alterations of the proposed trench location were necessary.

2.4 Constraints

A period of heavy rainfall immediately preceding the evaluation meant there was a high volume of standing water on site, particularly at the southern end of the site. All trenches were affected by this, with trench 4 affected particularly badly.

3 Archaeological & Historical Background

- 3.1 The site lies within an area of archaeological interest and there was a likelihood that buried archaeological remains would be encountered during the proposed development.
- 3.2 The site lies close to a Roman settlement where 500 sherds of Roman pottery (HER ref MLE9546) and 2 sherds of Iron Age pottery (MLE9547) were found (Clark 2007: Section 6).
- 3.3 In 1998 an archaeological desk-based assessment of land at the Animal Defence Centre Headquarters was undertaken by the University of Leicester Archaeological Services (Marsden 1998; ADS record EHNMR-1330187). This identified the potential of the area to contain archaeological remains ranging in date from the prehistoric to the medieval periods. An archaeological watching brief undertaken at Remount Depot in 2000-2001 by Archaeological Project Services recorded evidence of Roman ditches and pits (Albone 2002; ADS record EHNMR-1373353).
- 3.4 The evaluation area lies within *c.* 700m of Sysonby medieval village and *c.* 1.5km from Sysonby Grange medieval earthworks.

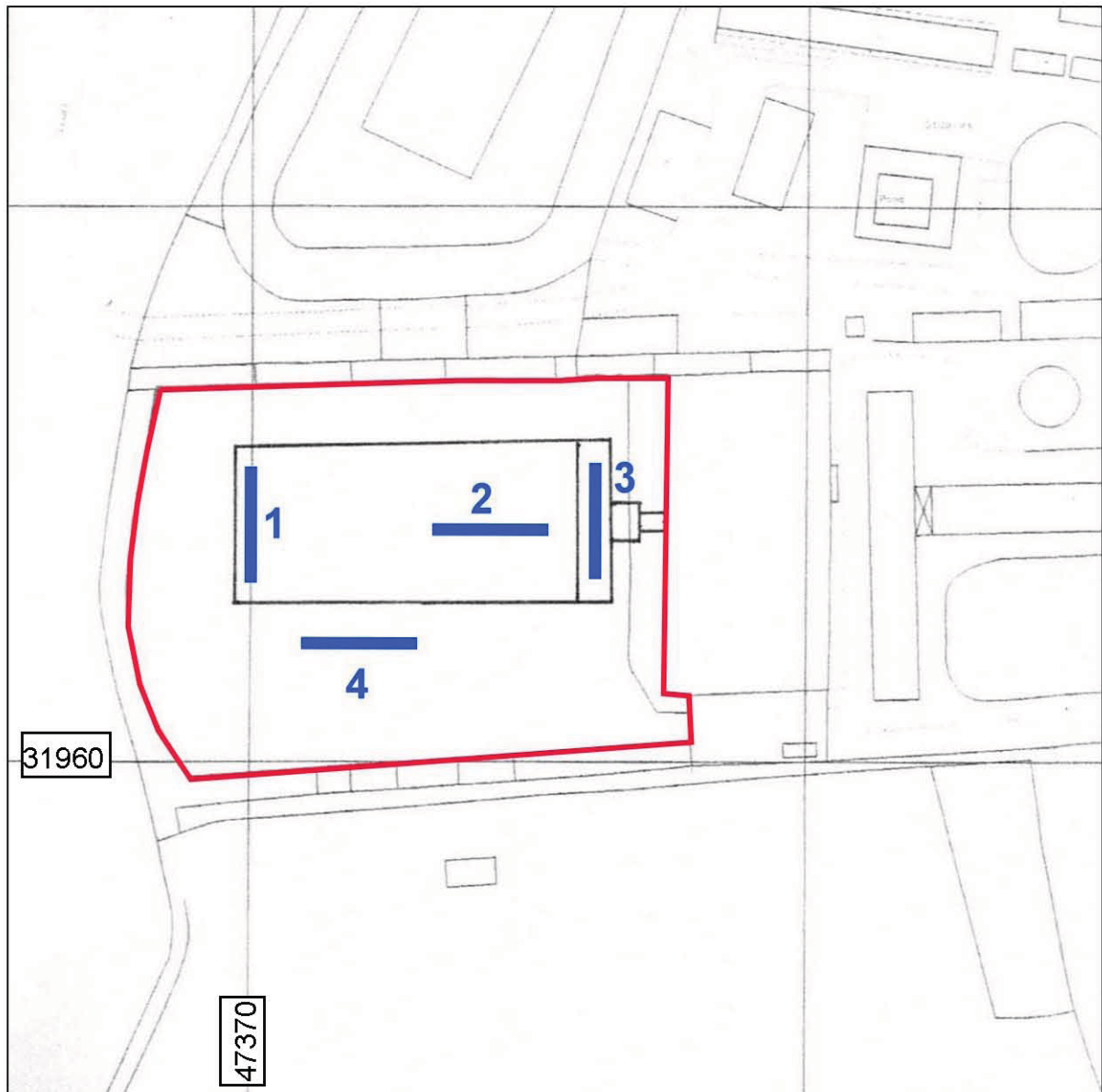
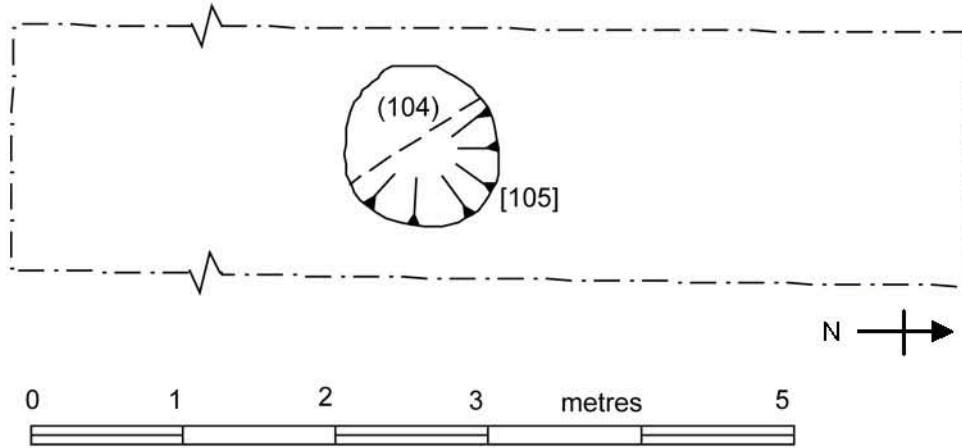


Figure 3: Trench Plan (scale 1:1250)

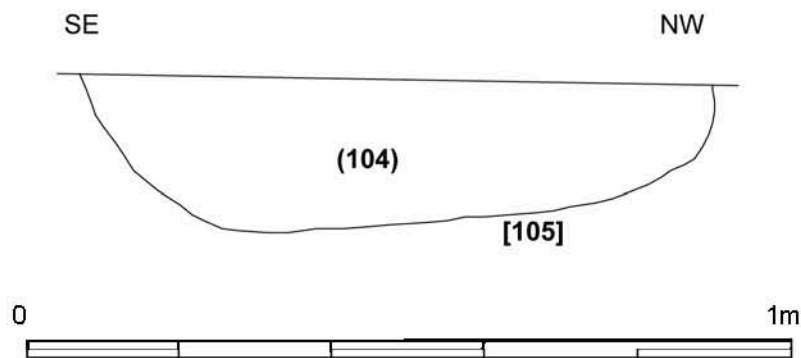
4 Results

- 4.1 This section provides a summary of results from the evaluation. Full details of the trenches in table form can be found in Appendix 1.
- 4.2 Four trenches were excavated (Fig 3) through dark brown humic clayey topsoil and mid orangey grey silty subsoil onto light brownish grey clay natural using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. Basic trench information was recorded and a photographic record made of the trenches.
- 4.3 The evaluation took place after a period of heavy rainfall and there was a high volume of standing water present on the site (Plate 4). This did not cause problems with initial identification of features but did make it impossible to fully excavate gully [405].
- 4.4 Natural strata were reached in each trench, which consisted of mid yellowish grey silty clay with frequent calcareous inclusions.
- 4.4 *Trench 1 (Fig. 3)*
- 4.4.1 Trench 1 was orientated N-S and was located at the west of the site. The trench was 20m long, 1.7m wide and reached a maximum depth of 0.42m. The stratigraphy consisted of *c.* 0.3m of topsoil (101) and *c.* 0.12m of subsoil (102) over the natural geology (103).
- 4.4.2 One archaeological feature was identified and excavated: a pit [105] (Plate 6). This had a diameter of 1m and a fully excavated depth of 0.2m, containing one fill (104). This consisted of mid brown grey silty clay from which two sherds of pottery were recovered. These are described as being ‘undiagnostic body sherds, one of buff-brown fabric with inclusions of grit and the other a black fabric with dark brown outer surface and inclusions of calcite material.’ (pers. comm. Bob Zeepvat).
- 4.5 *Trench 2 and trench 3 (Fig. 3)*
- 4.5.1 Trench 2 was orientated E-W and was located just to the east of the centre of site, with trench 3 orientated N-S and located towards the eastern edge of the site. Both trenches were 20m long, 1.7m wide and were respectively 0.47m and 0.37m in depth. The stratigraphy of trench 2 consisted of *c.* 0.27m of topsoil (201) and *c.* 0.2m of subsoil (202) over the natural geology (203) whilst that in trench 3 consisted of 0.27m of topsoil (301) and 0.1m of subsoil (302) over the natural geology (303). No archaeological features or finds were observed in either trench.
- 4.6 *Trench 4 (Fig. 3)*
- 4.6.1 Trench 4 was orientated E-W and was located to the SW of the site. The trench was 20m long, 1.9m wide and reached a maximum depth of 0.47m. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.3m of topsoil (401) and 0.17m of subsoil (402) over the natural geology (403).

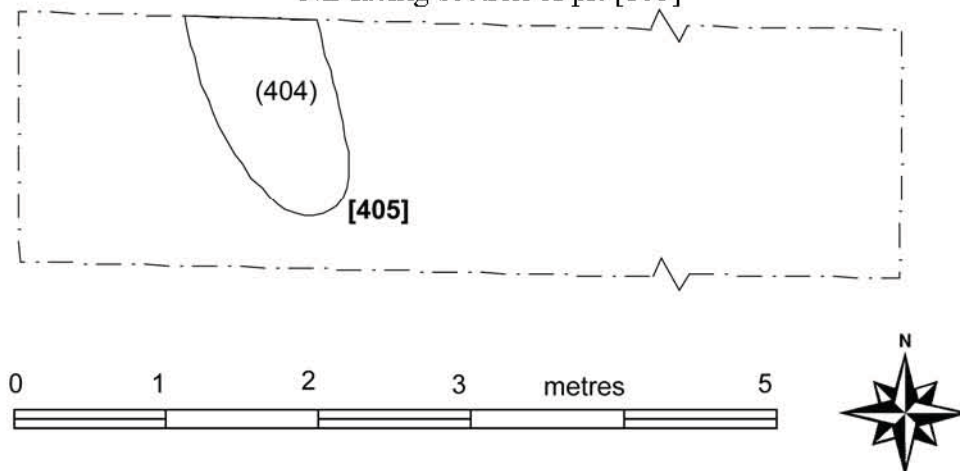
4.6.2 One archaeological feature was identified in this trench: the terminal end of a gully [405]. This had a maximum width of *c.* 0.9m and an unknown depth. An attempt was made to excavate the feature but standing water prevented this and no profile or depth dimension could be obtained. The mid brownish grey silty clay fill of this feature (404) was examined for finds as thoroughly as possible but none were retrieved.



Northern end of trench 1 showing pit [105]



NE facing section of pit [105]



Western end of trench 4 showing possible gully [405]

Figure 4: Feature Plans and Section



Plate 1: View of the SE corner of the site



Plate 2: View towards the NW corner of the site



Plate 3: Trenches 3 and 2 with the nineteenth century stable block in the distance

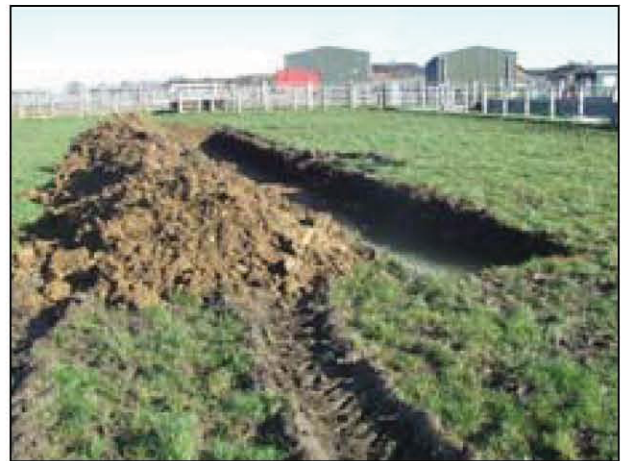


Plate 4: Trench 3 and the NE corner of the site



Plate 5: Section of trench 1 (1m scale)



Plate 6: NE facing section through pit [105]
(1m scale)

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 The evaluation revealed a small amount of archaeological evidence. One pit, [105] was located to the northwest of the evaluated area in trench 1 and contained two fragments of pot identified as undiagnostic body sherds. A possible gully [405] was also revealed to the south of this in trench 4 but could not be fully excavated and consequently is undatable.
- 5.2 Although it is not possible to assign a date to either of the features revealed during the evaluation, the low density of archaeology uncovered suggests that past human activity has been minimal.
- 5.3 The site is in close proximity to Roman activity and within *c.*700m of Sysonby medieval village (see section 3.2) It is possible that the archaeology observed during this evaluation could be associated either with the periphery of the known Roman site or outlying activity of the medieval settlement.
- 5.4 *Confidence Rating*
- 5.4.1 The conditions during the evaluation were generally bright and breezy, with isolated showers of rain on the first day. The ground was extensively waterlogged, especially at the bottom of the slope in the vicinity of trench 4 but this did not effect the identification of archaeological features, which were well defined against the natural geology.
- 5.4.2 Although it was not possible to excavate one possible gully due to standing water, it is unlikely that doing so would produce significantly more data. Therefore a good degree of confidence is attached to these results.

6. Acknowledgements

The writer is grateful to Mr. Michael Neale of Parkwood Project Management for commissioning ASC to carry out the evaluation on behalf of the M.O.D. The assistance of the the staff at the Defence Animal Centre is also gratefully acknowledged.

The fieldwork was undertaken for ASC Ltd. by Lizzie Gill BSc PgDip and Zoe Clarke. This report was written by Lizzie Gill BSc PgDip and edited by David Fell BA MA MIFA.

7. Archive

7.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Brief
2. Project Design
3. Initial Report
4. Site records
5. Finds records
6. Finds
7. List of photographs
8. B/W prints & negatives
9. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

7.2 The archive will be deposited with Leicestershire County Council Museums Service under accession number X.A44.2007

8. References

Standards & Specifications


- Albone, J. 2002. *Archaeological Watching Brief on Land off Welby Lane, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire*. Archaeological Project Services report 094/02.
- Clark, R. 2007. Brief for Archaeological Exploratory Trial Trenching of Land at the Animal Defence Centre Headquarters, Remount Road, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire (Leicestershire County Council).
- EH 1991 *The Management of Archaeological Projects, 2nd edition*. English Heritage (London).
- IFA 2000a Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct*.
- IFA 2001 Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance documents (Desk-Based Assessments, Watching Briefs, Evaluations, Excavations, Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings, Finds)*.
- Leicestershire County Council 1997. *Guidelines and Procedures for Archaeological Work in Leicestershire and Rutland*
- Marsden, P. 1998. *An Archaeological Desk-based Assessment for Defence Animal Centre, Land off Welby Lane, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire*. University of Leicester Archaeological Services.


Secondary Sources


- Hawtin, T. 2007. *Land at the Defence Animal Centre Headquarters, Remount Road, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire: Project Design*
- Soil Survey 1983 *1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend* (Harpندن).


Appendix 1: Trench Summary Table

(All levels are relative)

Trench 1						
	Max Dimensions (m)					
	Length	20	Width	1.7	Depth	0.4
	Levels					
	Trench base north		0.88m			
	Trench top north		0.52m			
	Trench base south		1.43m			
	Trench top south		0.9m			
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	S	SK 473800 319732	N	SK 473800 319752		
	Orientation		N-S			
Reason for Trench		General evaluation				
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)	
101	Layer	Dark brown loamy topsoil	-	300	0	
102	Layer	Mid orangey grey silty clay. Subsoil	-	120	300	
104	Fill	Light-mid brownish grey silty clay with occasional flecks of charcoal and very occasional fragments of ceramic. Fill of pit.	850	200	400	
105	Cut	Discrete feature, probably a pit. Gradual sides and concave base.	850	-	400	
103	Layer	Mid yellowish grey silty clay with frequent calcareous inclusions. Natural Strata.	-	-	400	

Trench 2						
	Max Dimensions (m)					
	Length	20	Width	1.7	Depth	0.47
	Levels					
	Trench base west			1.16m		
	Trench top west			0.76m		
	Trench base east			1.41m		
	Trench top east			0.94m		
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	W	SK 473841 319733		E	SK 473861 319733	
	Orientation			E-W		
Reason for Trench						
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)	
201	Layer	Dark brown loamy topsoil	-	300	0	
202	Layer	Mid orangey grey silty clay. Subsoil	-	170	300	
204	Layer	Mid yellowish grey silty clay with frequent calcareous inclusions. Natural strata.	-	-	470	

Trench 3						
	Max Dimensions (m)					
	Length	20	Width	1.7	Depth	0.37
	Levels					
	Trench base north			1.34m		
	Trench top north			0.71m		
	Trench base south			1.88m		
	Trench top south			1.33m		
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	S	SK 473862 319738		N	473862 319758	
	Orientation			N-S		
Reason for Trench						
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)	
301	Layer	Dark brown loamy topsoil	-	270	0	
302	Layer	Mid orangey grey silty clay. Subsoil.	-	100	270	
304	Layer	Mid yellowish grey silty clay with frequent calcareous inclusions and lenses of orange gravel. Natural strata.	-	-	370	

Trench 4						
	Max Dimensions (m)					
	Length	20	Width	1.7	Depth	0.47
	Levels					
	Trench base east			1.89m		
	Trench top east			1.25m		
	Trench base west			1.70m		
	Trench top west			1.27m		
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	W	SK 473809 319720		E	SK 473829 319720	
	Orientation			E-W		
Reason for Trench			General evaluation			
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)	
401	Layer	Dark brown loamy topsoil	-	300	0	
402	Layer	Mid orangey grey silty clay. Subsoil.	-	170	300	
404	Fill	Mid brownish grey silty clay. Fill of possible gully.	900	-	470	
405	Cut	Not fully excavated.	900	-	470	
403	Layer	Mid yellowish grey silty clay with frequent calcareous inclusions. Natural strata	-	-	470	

Appendix 2: Finds Concordance

Context	Pottery		Bone		Flint (no)	Shell (g)	Stone (no)	Other Finds	
	(no)	(g)	(no)	(g)				Type	(no)
104	2								

Appendix 3: List of Photographs

SITE NAME: Land at Remount Rd, Melton Mowbray, Leics.			SITE NO/CODE: 892/MMR
Shot	B&W	Digital	Subject
1	✓	✓	General overview of trench 3 1x1m scale from S
2	✓	✓	East facing section of trench 3 1x1m scale
3	✓	✓	Overall shot of trench 2 1x1m scale from east
4	✓	✓	South facing section of trench 2 1x1m scale
5	✓	✓	Overall shot of trench 1 1x1m scale from south
6	✓	✓	East facing section in trench 1 1x1m scale
7	✓	✓	Overall shot of trench 4 1x1m section from east
8	✓	✓	South facing section of trench 4 1x1m scale
9	✓	✓	NE facing section of pit [105] in trench 1 1x1m scale

Appendix 4: ASC OASIS Form

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name:	Animal Defence Centre Headquarters, Remount Road, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire		
Short Description:	<i>During March 2007 an archaeological evaluation was undertaken on land at the Defence Animal Centre, Remount Road, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire, in the vicinity of a known Roman settlement. The work was required to locate, define and characterise any surviving archaeological remains prior to construction of an indoor riding school. Four trenches were excavated, of which two produced no archaeological features. A pit was revealed in the westernmost trench and a possible gully in the trench closest to the southern boundary of the site. No finds were recovered from this feature and two small fragments of pottery recovered from the pit proved to be undiagnostic. The small amount of archaeology uncovered during this evaluation suggest that the site lies on the periphery of any past human activity</i>		
Project Type:	Trial Trenching		
Site status: (eg. none, SAM, Listed)	none	Previous work: (eg. SMR refs)	
Current land use:	Paddock	Future work: (yes / no / unknown)	
Monument type:	-	Monument period:	-
Significant finds: (artefact type & period)	-		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County:	Leicestershire	OS reference: (8 figs min)	SK 7372 1963
Site address: (with postcode if known)	Animal Defence Centre Headquarters, Remount Road, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire		
Study area: (sq. m. or ha)		Height OD: (metres)	
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd		
Project brief originator:	<i>Leicestershire County Council Historic & Natural Environment Team (HNET)</i>	Project design originator:	Teresa Hawtin BA MSc
Project Manager:		Director/Supervisor:	
Sponsor / funding body:	<i>Parkwood Project Management</i>		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date:	5th March 2007	End date:	6th March 2007
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical:	L.C.C Museums Service	Pottery	
Paper:	L.C.C museums Service	Brief, PD, report, site records, photographs, plans	
Digital:	L.C.C museums Service	PD, report, photographs	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title:	Land at the Animal Defence Centre Headquarters, Remount Road, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire Archaeological Services and consultancy Report 892/MMR/2		
Author(s):	Lizzie Gill BSc PgDip		
Page nos	-	Date:	15 th March 2007