

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

WATCHING BRIEF: GLEBE HOUSE, LEIRE LEICESTERSHIRE

on behalf of Mr C Everard



By
David Fell BA MA MIFA
September 2004

ASC: 599/LGH/2

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Site Data

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|--|-------------|-----|
| ASC site code: | LGH | Project no: | 599 |
| County: | Leicestershire | | |
| District: | Harborough DC | | |
| Village/Town: | Leire | | |
| Parish: | Leire CP | | |
| NGR: | SP 5252 9030 | | |
| Present land use: | Garden | | |
| Planning proposal: | Construction of swimming pool & cover building | | |
| Extent of development: | c.160 sq. m. | | |
| Planning application ref/date: | 04/00741/FUL | | |
| Client: | | | |
| Contact name: | | | |
| Telephone: | | Mobile: | |

Internal Quality Check

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|--------------------|------------|-------|---------------------------------|
| Primary Author: | David Fell | Date: | 17 th September 2004 |
| Edited/Checked By: | | Date: | |
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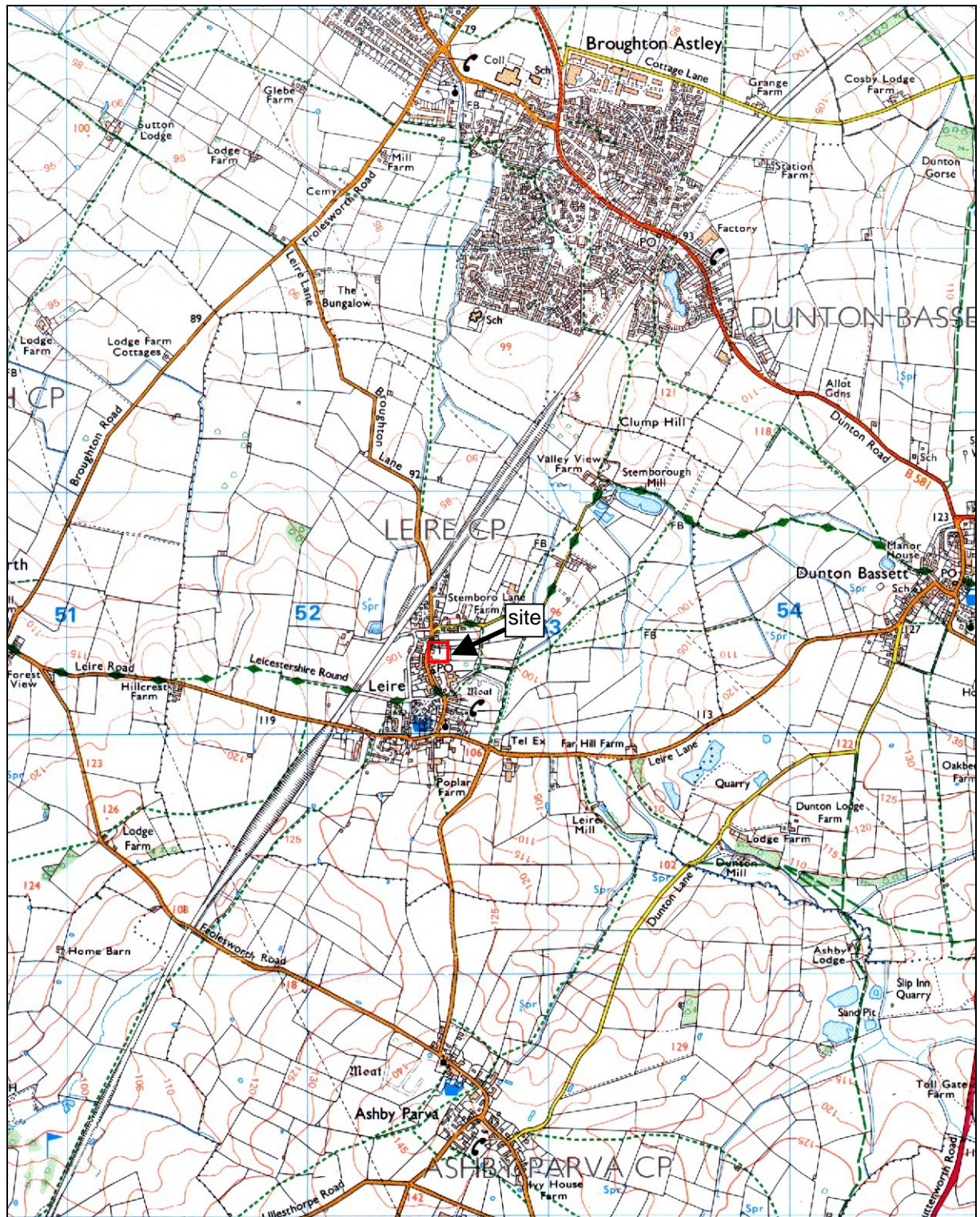


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

Summary

In September 2004 an archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the groundworks for a swimming pool at Glebe House, Leire, Leicestershire. The site was within the medieval core of the village and the works had the potential to damage or destroy significant archaeological remains. The west side of the site had been disturbed by a modern intrusion and the natural strata was present on the east side. No significant archaeological remains were observed.

1 Introduction

1.1 During September 2004 Mr & Mrs C Everard commissioned the construction of a swimming pool at Glebe House, Main Street, Leire, Leicestershire. The developer applied to *Harborough District Council* for planning permission in support of the development (Planning application no. 04/00741/FUL) and, in line with the guidance contained in the document PPG16 *Archaeology and Planning*, the Senior Planning Archaeologist of *Leicestershire County Council* advised that the site may be archaeologically sensitive and required the developer to commission an archaeological watching brief during the groundworks phase of construction.

1.2 The developer commissioned *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd (ASC)* to undertake the watching brief and this document presents the results of the works.

1.3 Reason for Work

The work was necessary because the site is situated close to the historic core of Leire and the groundworks had the potential to damage or destroy significant archaeological remains.

1.4 Setting

1.4.1 Location

The site is situated in Leire, in administrative district of Harborough, Leicestershire (Fig. 1). Leire is a small village (current population 500+), about 6.5km north-west of Lutterworth (Fig. 1). Glebe House is located in the historic core of the village on the east side of Main Street, about 250m north of the parish church of St Peter's which has a 14th-century tower.

1.4.2 Glebe House occupies a narrow plot extending eastwards from Main Street, broadening to the south at its west end (Fig. 2). The house itself occupies the street frontage, with a drive to the north, leading to a double garage c.8m north-east of the house. The land to the east of the garage currently comprises garden: the swimming pool was constructed to the rear of the garage (Fig. 2).

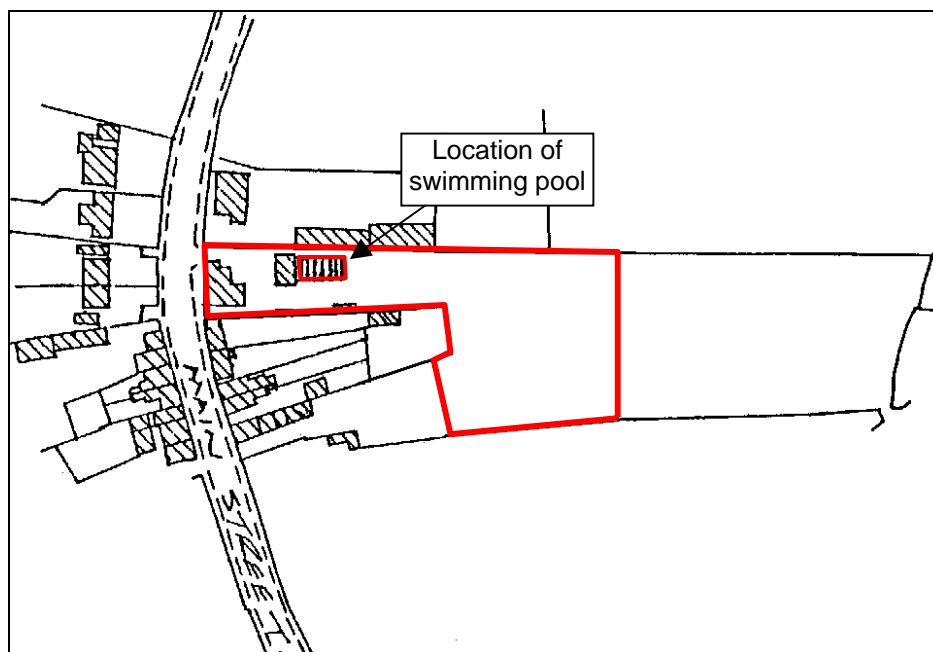


Figure 2: Site plan (scale 1:2500)

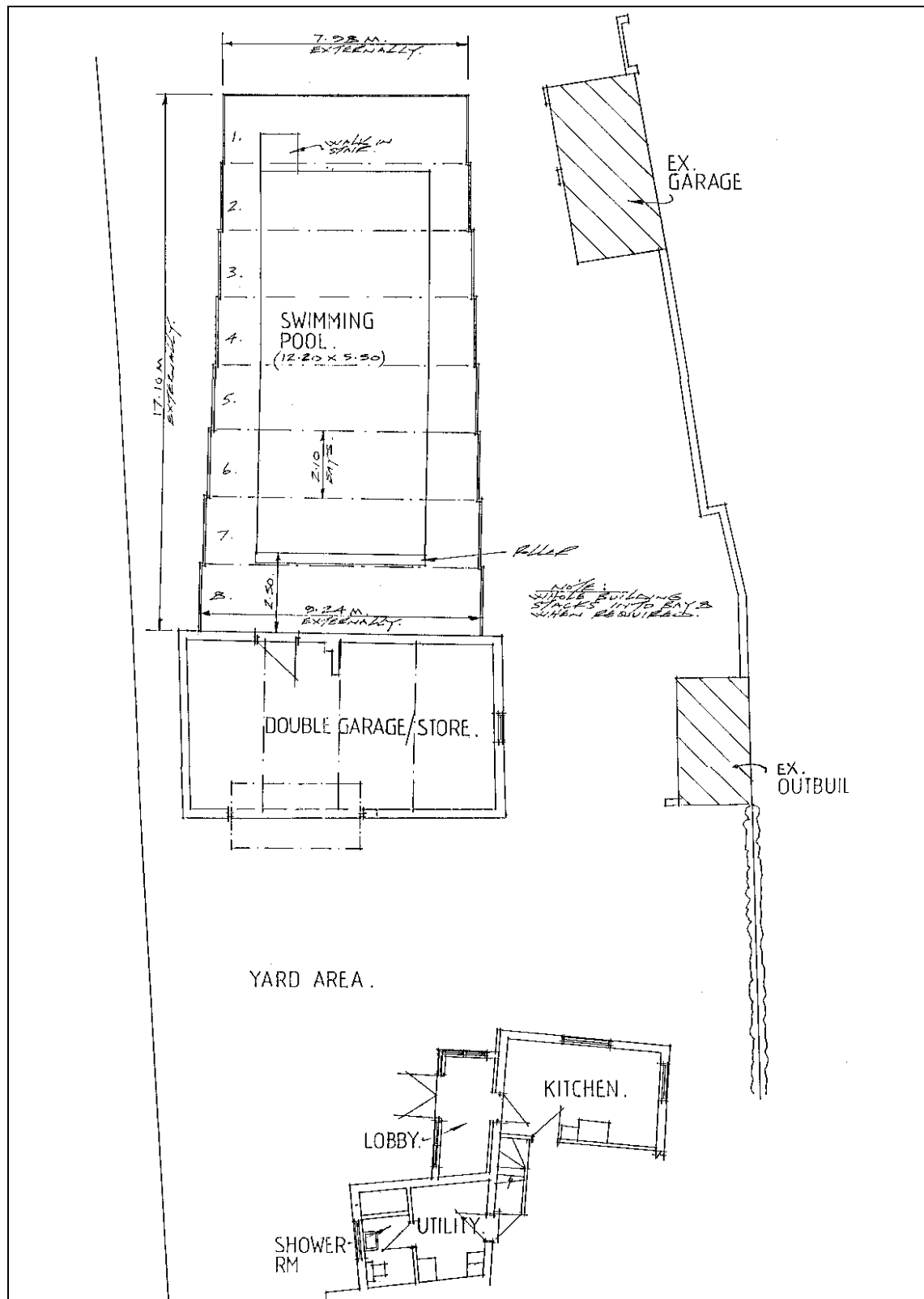


Figure 3: Plan of the proposed development (not to scale)

1.4.3 Topography

Prior to the construction, the site sloped slightly from east to west, but the area as an elevation of c.105m OD. Soils in the environs of the site belong to the Beccles 3 association (Soil Survey 1983, 711t), and are described as ‘slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged fine loamy over clayey soils and similar soils with only slight seasonal waterlogging. Some calcareous clayey soils, especially on steeper slopes’. The underlying geology comprises chalky till.

1.4.4 Archaeological and Historical Background

The village of Leire is recorded in the Domesday Survey (1086), with 20 households. The name ‘Leire’ is thought to originate from the old British name for the river Soar, variously *Leir*, *Leyre* and *Legre*, a tributary of which rises to the south of the village and passes about 1km to the east. The Leicestershire Sites & Monuments Record (SMR) contains references to a number of sites in the environs of Glebe House.

The site is located within the medieval core of the village. The church of St Peter (SMR ref. 59SW AV), situated c.250m south of the site, is a mid 19th century building, rebuilt onto a 14th century tower, the earthworks of a medieval moated manor complex (59SW AS) is located to the south-east, and the site of a manor house (59SW AU) is close by. Medieval cobbled areas, pits, etc., have also been located in the immediate area.

Main Street was probably in existence by the medieval period and the existing property boundaries, particularly on the east side, have the appearance of medieval tenement boundaries. The layout of the area in the late 19th century is shown on the 1889-91 Ordnance Survey map (Fig. 4).

Glebe House was probably constructed during the late 18th century and a plaque bearing the inscription “WB TSS 1793” is centrally located at the top of the façade. It is a typical small Georgian red brick constructed townhouse on three storeys (Plate 1). The layout in 1889-91 is shown on the Ordnance Survey map (Fig. 4) and shows the house on the street frontage, set within a rectangular plot. A number of buildings are shown to the rear of the house, including one on the site of the present garage. A variety of outbuildings stood in the garden until the mid 20th century, when they were demolished and the existing garden laid out (C. Everard, *pers com*).

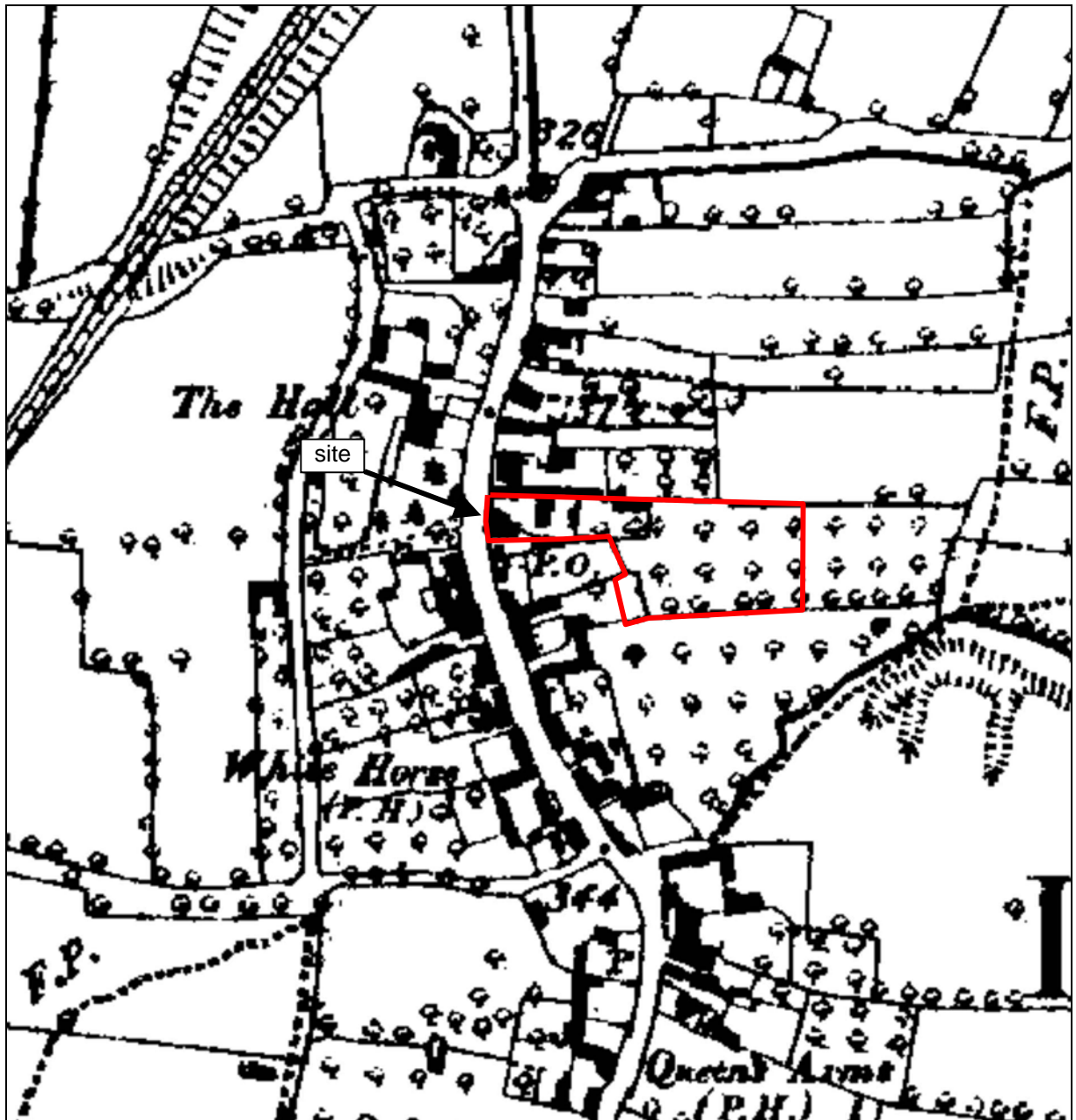


Figure 4: Extract from the 1889-91 Ordnance Survey 25 inch map (*not to scale*)



Plate 1: View of the façade of Glebe House



Plate 2: View of the site, prior to the development



Plate 3: View of the footprint of the swimming pool, during stripping (*scale = 1m*)

2 Aims and Methods

2.1 Aims

The aims of the watching brief were:

- to consider the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains which are liable to be threatened by the development.
- to produce an accurate and full record of any archaeological remains present, such that a permanent record will be made and the results presented in such a way that they may be re-examined and interpreted in the future.

2.2 Methods

The methods adopted for the watching brief were:

- An archaeological watching brief, involving monitoring by an experienced archaeologist of groundworks for the swimming pool, and rapid investigation and recording of any archaeological features or deposits present.
- If required, a programme of post-fieldwork analysis, archiving and publication.

2.3 Standards

The work conforms to the project design, to the relevant sections of the Institute of Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (IFA 2000) and *Standard & Guidance Notes* (IFA 2001), to *Guidelines and Procedures for Archaeological Work in Leicestershire and Rutland* (LMARS, 1997), and to the relevant sections of ASC's own *Operations Manual*.

3 Results

3.1 Three visits were made to the site between the 6th and 8th September 2004 in both overcast and sunny conditions. Full co-operation was received from the building contractors and a high degree of confidence is attached to the results of the watching brief.

3.2 Results

Two trees within the footprint of the swimming pool were removed and the soil removal operation was monitored. The footprint measured c.17m by c.8m and was stripped using a mini excavator, to an initial base level of 0.95m. Beneath the turf, the soil was very mixed, and contained a high proportion of obviously modern building debris, probably from the outbuildings shown on the 19th century map (Fig. 4). The roots of the two trees were also present.

The soil was c.0.65m deep and, in the southern part of the area, excavation to the level of the pool apron (0.95m) involved removal of the entire depth of soil. The underlying natural strata, which comprised orangy brown sand, was revealed in this area. Due to the slight slope in the ground, the base of the soil was not reached on the north side (It appears as a grey area on the right in Plate 3).

The swimming pool measured 12.2 by 5.5m and its excavation involved removal of the natural sand. The east part of this area was undisturbed. An area of modern disturbance was present in the west, adjacent to the garage. It comprised a subrectangular pit and continued to the south and west, beyond the limits of the area. It was filled with a deposit of mixed building debris, concrete fragments, bricks, etc. This is a modern feature and is not archaeologically significant.

A small number of 19th and 20th century ceramic and glass vessels were observed. Within the soil and modern pit. These were rapidly examined and then discarded.

3.3 Conclusions

No significant archaeological remains or artefacts were observed during the watching brief. It is unlikely that archaeological remains were present on the site and the archaeological impact of the development is considered to be minimal.

A modern pit was partially revealed on the west side of the footprint, adjacent to the existing garage. Any archaeological remains in this area are likely to have been disturbed by the pit and the garage. The east side of the site was undisturbed, but no archaeological features or artefacts were observed.

The swimming pool is situated to the rear of Glebe House and is set back c.20m from the street frontage. It is possible that Glebe House was constructed on the site of an earlier building and it possible that medieval or post-medieval remains may be present elsewhere in the garden.

4. Acknowledgements

The writer is grateful to Mr & Mrs C Everard for sponsoring the watching brief and to Mr Bob Cherry of *Glennfox Pools* for assistance and co-operation on site. Richard Clark MA AIFA, Senior planning Archaeologist of *Leicestershire County Council* acted as curatorial monitor.

The fieldwork was undertaken for *ASC Ltd* by David Fell BA MA MIFA. The report was prepared by David Fell and edited by Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA.

5. Archive

5.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Project Design
2. Initial Report
3. Clients site plans
4. Site Monitoring Sheets
5. List of photographs/slides
6. Colour slides
7. B/W prints & negatives
8. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

6.2 The archive will be deposited with *Leicestershire Museums Service*, under reference X.A233.2004.

6. Bibliography

- Allen J L & Holt A St J, 1986 (with later updates) *Health & Safety in Field Archaeology*. Standing Conference of Unit Managers (London).
- EH 1991 *The Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd edition. English Heritage (London).
- EH 2002 *Environmental Archaeology: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Methods, from Sampling and Recovery to Post-Excavation*. English Heritage (London).
- Ferguson L.M. & Murray D.M. 1997 *Archaeological Documentary Archives: Preparation, Curation and Storage*. Institute of Field Archaeologists' Paper 1 (Manchester).
- IFA 2000a Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct*.
- IFA 2000b Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology*.
- IFA 2001 Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance documents (Desk-Based Assessments, Watching Briefs, Evaluations, Excavations, Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings, Finds)*.
- LMARS 1997 *Guidelines and Procedures for Archaeological Work in Leicestershire and Rutland*. Leicestershire CC Museums, Arts and Records Service (Leicester).
- Soil Survey 1983 *1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend* (Harpندن).

Appendix 1: Field Monitoring Sheets

A.S.C. LTD

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD

Project:

GLEBE HOUSE, LITTLE

Project No/Code:

S99 / LS4

Sheet:

1 of 3

Date of visit:

6 SEPT 2004

Client/Developer

MN CHMS EVENDEN

Contact:

Phone:

Duration of Visit
(inc. travel):

Start: 8:00

Finish: 13:00

Completed by:

DF

Development Type:

Footings Services Roads Levelling Quarrying Pipelines Other (specify):

Soil strip & swimming pool.

Site & weather conditions:

DULL AND OVERCAST

Observations:

ARRIVE c 9.15 AM. SOIL STRIPPING ABOUT TO START.

INITIAL STAMP TODAY WILL BE TUNED TOPSOIL REMOVAL

TO DEPTH c. 200 MM.

OBSERVE THIS UNTIL AOT 12:00. ONLY TREE ROOTS,

TOPSOIL AND LIMES/KATTENS OF MODERN BUILDINGS

DETONIS

No ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS PRESENT

Comments:

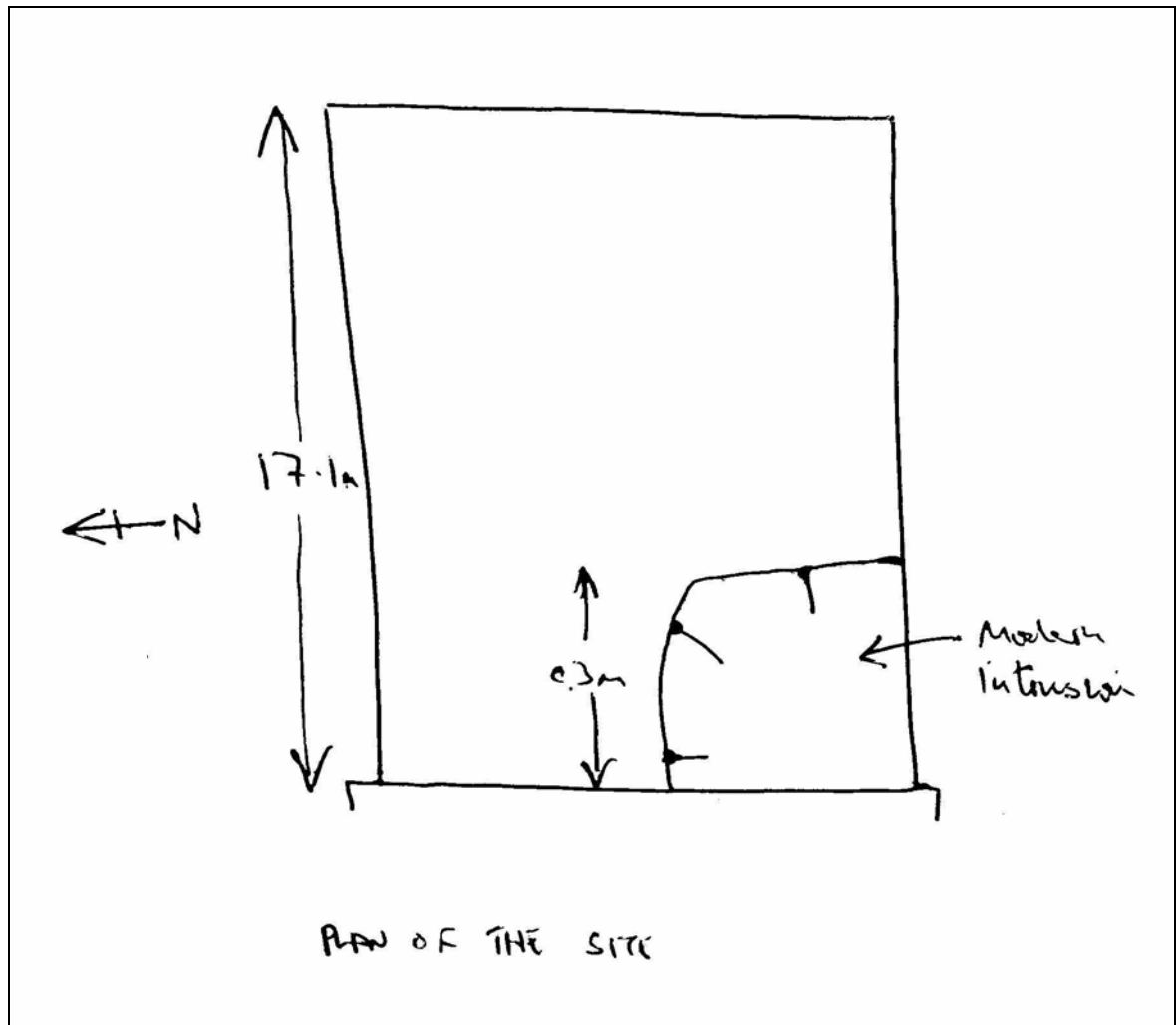
ANOTHER VISIT REQUIRED TOMORROW

For sketch plan, use reverse ©ASC, 2003

| A.S.C. LTD | | ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD | | | | |
|---|----------|--|-----------|---------------|-----------|---|
| Project: GLEBE HOUSE, LEIRE | | Project No/Code: 599 1 LSH | | Sheet: 2 of 3 | | |
| | | Date of visit: 07/09/04 | | | | |
| Client/Developer: MR & MRS EVERARD | | | | | | |
| Contact: | | | | Phone: | | |
| Duration of Visit (inc. travel): | | Start: 9.45 | | Finish: 12.30 | | |
| Completed by: DF | | | | | | |
| Development Type: | | | | | | |
| Footings | Services | Roads | Levelling | Quarrying | Pipelines | Other (specify): Swimming pool excavation |
| Site & weather conditions: HOT AND SUNNY. | | | | | | |
| Observations: | | | | | | |
| EXCAVATION OF FOOTPRINT FOR SWIMMING POOL CONTINUING. | | | | | | |
| TOP SOIL/ TURF - COMPLETED REMOVAL OF. | | | | | | |
| REDUCTION OF GROUND TO BASE LEVEL NOW COMMENCING. | | | | | | |
| UNDERLYING STRATA IS SOFT REDDISH ORANGE SAND. | | | | | | |
| FAMILY CLEAN - AT A DEPTH OF C.0.6M. | | | | | | |
| ONE AREA IN S.W. CORNER HAS BEEN DISTURBED - HAS BEEN OUT BEFORE. - AND IS FILLED WITH OBVIOUSLY MODERN RUBBLE - CONCRETE, BRICK FRAGMENTS ETC. | | | | | | |
| NO ARCHAEOLOGICAL FEATURES WAS OBSERVED | | | | | | |
| Comments: | | | | | | |
| FURTHER VISIT REQUIRED ON 8/9/04 TO MONITOR COMPLETION OF THE SOIL REDUCTION | | | | | | |

For sketch plan, use reverse

©ASC, 2003



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