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Report No. 13599.R01A
August 2006

COTTAGE FARM, OADBY, LEICESTERSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

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Bloor Homes
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ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK BASED ASSESSMENT

CONTROLLED DOCUMENT

Gifford No:		13599.R01A	
Status:	DRAFT	Copy No:	
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Revision Record					
Rev.	Date	By	Summary of Changes	Chkd	Aprvd
A	22/08/06	JK	Amended site area to 12.6 ha (section 2); Extended site area on figures (section 4); amended client details.		

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1. INTRODUCTION

Gifford has been commissioned by Wheatcroft & Son and Bloor Homes (hereafter, the Client), to prepare an archaeological Desk-based Assessment for an area of land under consideration for redevelopment to the south of Oadby, Leicestershire (Appendix A, Figure 1), in advance of a Planning Application.

This Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment (DBA) comprises the first stage of a process to assess the likelihood of encountering surviving archaeological remains of any period, character or quality that may be affected by redevelopment of the area; the DBA has been produced in response to a brief provided Richard Clark, Senior Planning Archaeologist for Leicestershire County Council.

Guidance regarding archaeological planning legislation can be found in Appendix B.

2. LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

The development site comprises an area of 12.6 hectares. The site is located to the south east of Oadby, Leicestershire, to the west of and adjacent to the A6 Glen Road/London Road at NGR SP6354 9914 (see Appendix A, Figure 1).

The site comprises a sub-rectangular area of land, bounded by the Glen Gorse Golf Club to the south, to the west by fields, by housing to the north and by the A6 to the northeast. Access to the site is from Glen Road (A6).

The site is bisected by a trackway/field boundary which runs in a northeast–southwest alignment; both halves of the site are currently under arable cultivation.

The underlying geology consists of boulder clay till overlying mudstone of the Blue Lias and Charmouth Formations (British Geological Survey, Leicester, Sheet 156).

3. OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this assessment is to gain information of the known cultural heritage resource within the site boundary and surrounding area and to assess its significance.

3.1 Methodology

To produce this DBA, a collation and synthesis of the readily available documentary and cartographic sources for the development site have been undertaken. A broad introduction and background to the known archaeological and historic development of Oadby has been presented, integrating a specific and detailed analysis of the archaeological and historic potential of the development site itself. This information is supported by Heritage Environment Records (HER) Data (Appendix C), a map regression analysis (section 5), study of an aerial photograph (section 6) and visual inspection of the site (Appendix D, Plates 1 and 2).

3.2 Sources

The sources consulted when producing a DBA to Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) standards are among the following (IFA 2001).

Type of Source	Source Consulted
Information held in the Historic Environment Record	Yes
Geological Information	Yes
Information held by Leicestershire Record Office	Yes
Printed and Manuscript Maps	Yes
Published and unpublished sources	Yes
Aerial photographic evidence	Yes, but limited to Leicestershire Record Office
Tree preservation orders	No
A site walk-over and photographic record	Yes
Preliminary consultation with the Planning Archaeologist and holder of the HER-data	No
Trade and business directories if appropriate	No
Trial pit/borehole information if available	No
Determination of presence of Listed Buildings, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Registered Parks and Gardens, Conservation Areas and Registered Battlefields	Yes

3.3 Search Radius

A search was made of the Historic Environment Record for approximately a 1km radius of the development site by the Historic Environment Record Officer on 26th July 2006 to assess the known historical and archaeological background of the site.

3.4 Limitations of the Study

This section sets out the limitations of this document; it is intended to inform the reader of what can reasonably be expected from this report.

The overall approach to the scheme has been undertaken in accordance with the *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-based Assessment* (IFA 1999). The work has been undertaken with reasonable skill, care and diligence.

The findings and opinions in this report are based upon information derived from a variety of sources that we believe to be reliable. Information from the public register was largely derived from the services such as Landmark and Leicestershire County Historic Environment database that allow data to be accessed quickly and cost effectively. Gifford cannot accept any liability for the accuracy or otherwise of any information derived from such sources or any others outside the control of Gifford.

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4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORIC BACKGROUND

4.1 Designations

- One Listed building was identified within the search area; Oadby Grange farmhouse is a grade II Listed structure, 0.5km northeast of the site.
- Seven archaeological sites and find spots were identified in the HER search within a 1km radius of the development site. No entries are located within the site itself. (see Appendix A Figure 2 and Appendix C).
- There are no Scheduled Monuments, Conservation Areas, Registered Parks and Gardens, or Battlefields within or adjacent to the search area.

4.2 Site Visit

The site was visited on the 7th August 2006. The site is currently under arable cultivation, with the exception of the southwestern end of the site. This is occupied by a small copse and the remains of a steel barn that once formed part of Cottage Farm. General photographs were taken during the site visit and a selection of these is included in Appendix D – Plates 1 and 2.

4.3 Summary of Previous Archaeological Work

A number of archaeological projects have been undertaken within the search area and have produced evidence of past human activity; these are shown in Appendix A, Figure 2.

- Fieldwalking in 1991 found a single sherd of Bronze Age or Iron Age pottery approximately 500m to the west of the site (HER No: MLE4983).
- Denarii of Mark Antony, Sabina and Severus Alexander were found in 1989. Two sherds of Roman pottery were found in fieldwalking in 1991; both findspots were located approximately 500m to the west of the site (HER No. MLE8072).
- Finds from metal detecting in 1989 approximately 700m from the site included a Roman pottery base cut down as a counter, a Roman brooch and 13 Roman coins. These finds probably indicate a settlement in the vicinity (HER No. MLE8076).
- Mere Lane, Old Mere and Gorse Lane, which run parallel to the site, approximately 200m to the south, possibly represent the remains of a Roman road (HER No. 8903).
- Eight worked flints of Mesolithic to Bronze Age date found by a walker approximately 100m to the west of the site (HER No. MLE 9270).
- The foundations of an undated building were discovered during building work at 13 Highcroft Avenue in 1964 (HER No. MLE4958).

No archaeological investigations are known have taken place within the site itself.

4.4 Prehistoric Period

Palaeolithic (c. 2,000,000 - 10,000 BC)

No Palaeolithic activity has been identified within the search area.

Mesolithic (c. 8500 – 4500 B.C.)

Mesolithic flints were discovered by a walker approximately 100m to the west of the site, but it is not clear whether these relate to an occupation site.

Neolithic (c. 4500 – 2500 B.C.)

Neolithic flints were discovered by a walker approximately 100m to the west of the site, but it is not clear whether these relate to an occupation site.

Bronze Age (c. 2500 – 800 B.C)

Bronze Age flints were discovered by a walker approximately 100m to the west of the site, but it is not clear whether these relate to an occupation site.

Iron Age (c. 800 – 43 A.D.)

A single sherd of possible Iron Age pottery was discovered during fieldwalking approximately 500m to the west of the site. It is possible that this relates to Iron Age occupation in the vicinity.

4.5 Romano-British Period (43 - 410 A.D.)

The site lies within an area of known Roman activity; Mere Lane/Gorse Lane are possibly the remains of a Roman Road, and the discovery of Roman coins at two locations 500m and 700m to the west of the site, indicates a high probability of Roman activity in the area.

4.6 Anglo-Saxon Period (5th – 11th centuries)

Oadby is first recorded during the Anglo-Saxon period as being held by Earl Wallef and Sbern (a freeman) (Nichols, 1811). However, it is likely that Anglo Saxon occupation of the area had been in place for a substantial period of time; labourers digging for gravel from 1760 onwards at Brocks Hill (approximately 1km northwest of the site) discovered more than 'fourscore' skeletons, and an equal number of urns and 'ashes' (most likely cremated remains) over a period of 22 years (ibid). It is thought likely that these dated from the Anglo-Saxon period, although the area was under Danish rule until 920AD when Alfred the Great took control of the area (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oadby>).

The name *Oadby* is though likely to be derived from Old Norse *Auðarbyr* (Auði's settlement) (ibid), although it went through several mutations (Oldebi, Oudeby, Outheby, Onderby) before reaching its final form (Nichols, 1811).

4.7 Medieval Period (11th – 15th centuries)

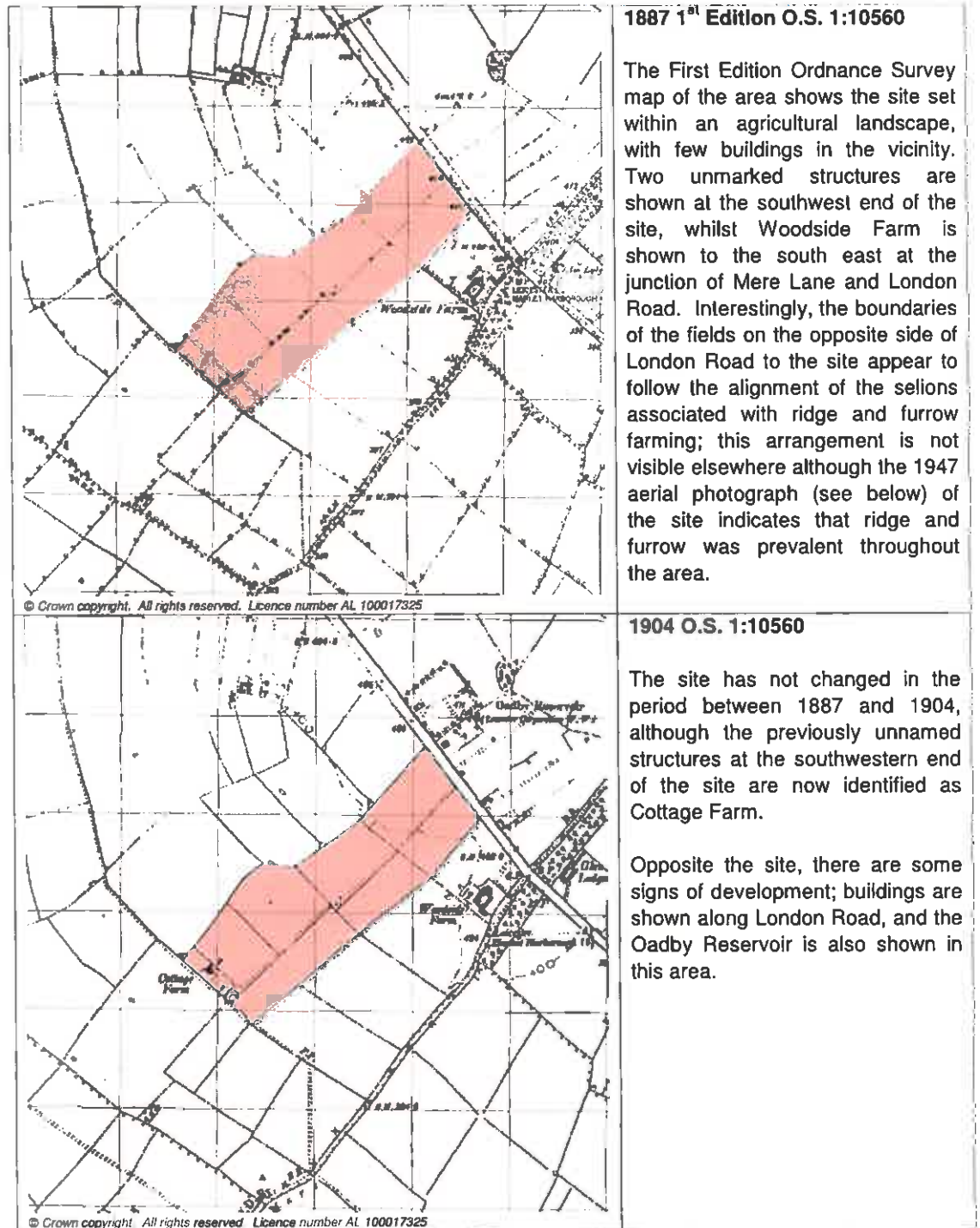
Following the Norman Conquest, William the Conqueror granted Oadby to Hugh de Grandmesnil (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oadby>). The village remained a small settlement throughout the Medieval period.

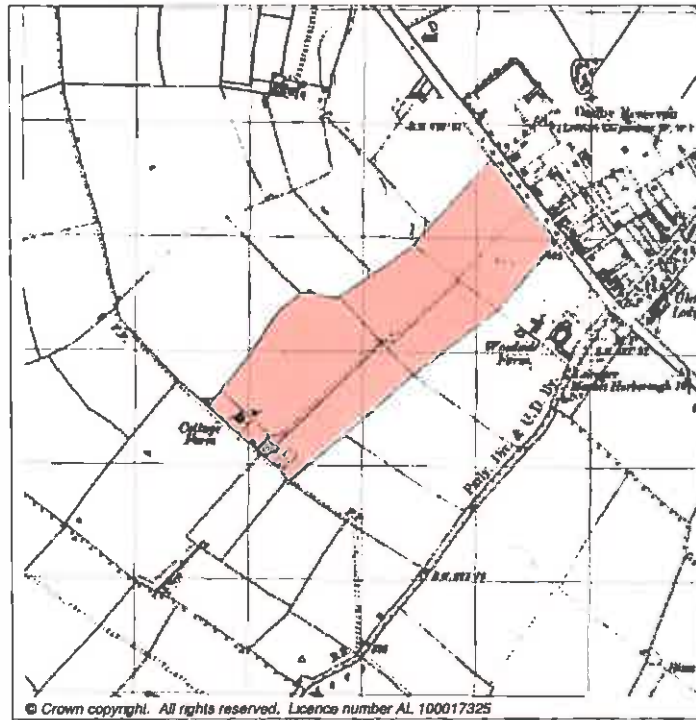
4.8 Post-Medieval Period (16th Century – 1850)

In 1540 the population of Oadby was thought to consist of approximately 40 families (Nichols, 1811) and it seems likely that the village would have remained a small-scale settlement throughout the post-medieval period. In the 19th century Oadby became a fashionable suburb of Leicester, and several substantial houses were built (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oadby>). However, there is no evidence that this expansion of the settlement reached as far south as the development site.

4.9 Modern (1851 - Present Day)

A succession of Ordnance Survey maps of the area (1887-2004) were consulted at the Leicestershire County Record office to ascertain what activity had been taking place through the site's modern history. The Tithe Map was consulted, but this did not include the area of the site.

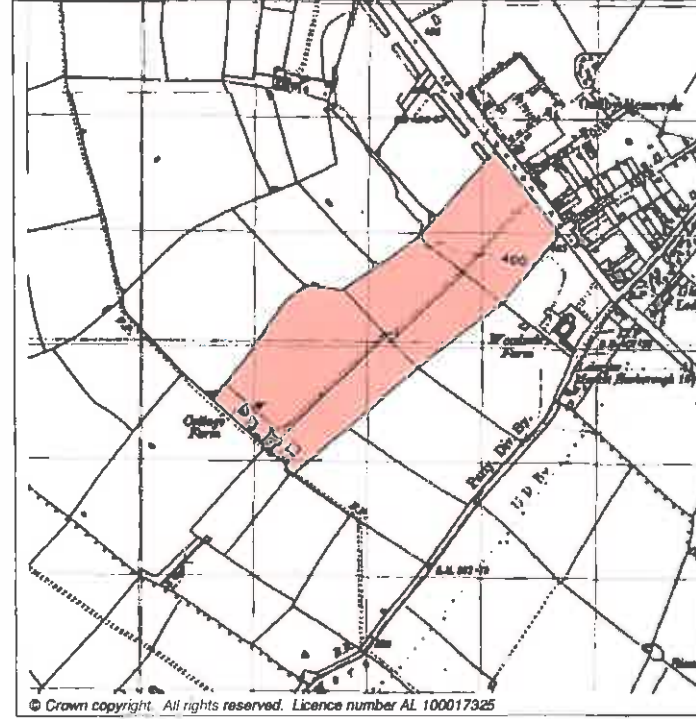




1930 O.S. 1:10560

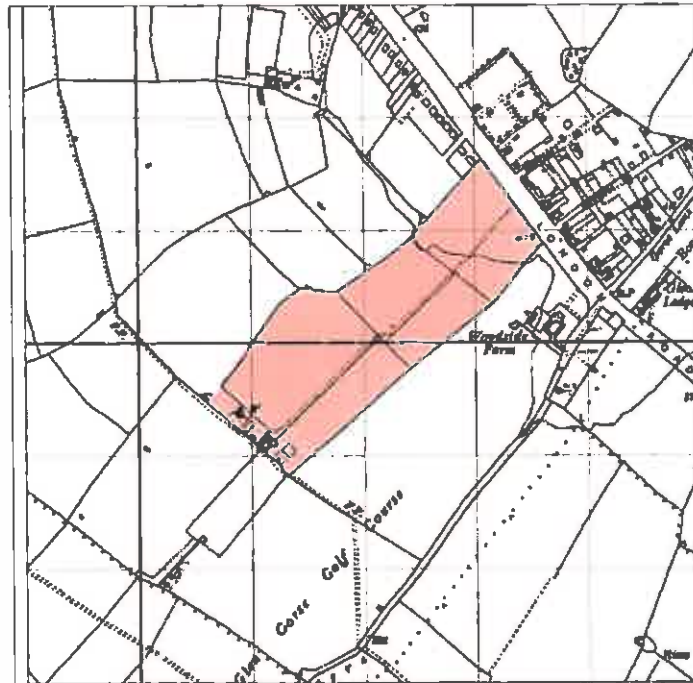
The most obvious change between 1904 and 1930 is the new development that has taken place on the opposite side of London Road to the site. Additional houses are shown adjacent to London Road, and also to the north of Gorse Lane; two formative side-roads are shown leading off from London Road, and houses have also sprung up along these.

The site itself has not changed, save for the removal of a field boundary in the southwestern corner of the site.



1938-1952 O.S. 1:10560

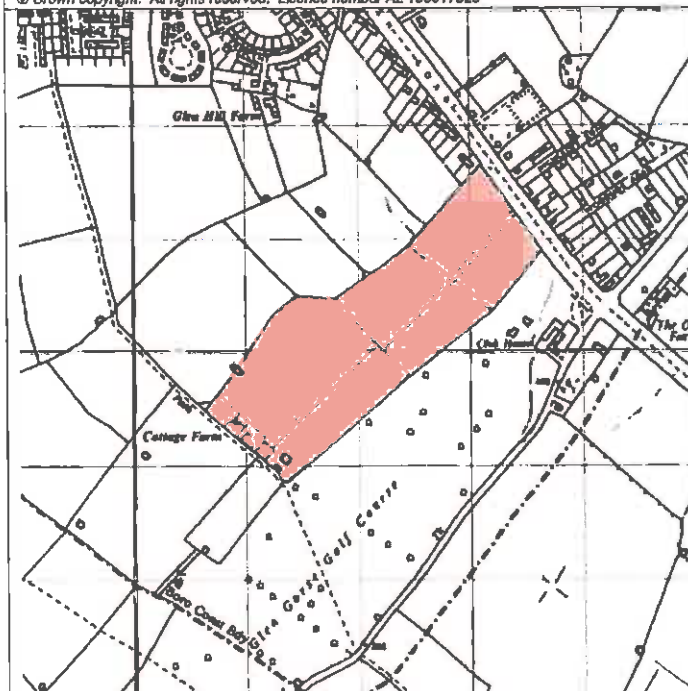
By 1952 no change had taken place on the site itself. Development opposite the site appears to have come to a halt, although the side roads are now marked as Highcroft Road and Woodside Road. The indicative position of additional new housing is marked to the northwest of the site, although not in detail, it is probable that these were still under construction at the time of the survey.



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1956-1959 O.S. 1:10560

By 1959 the new houses to the northwest of the site are now shown in detail. To the south of the site, several field boundaries have been removed and the area is marked as the Glen Gorse Golf Course. The site itself has not changed.

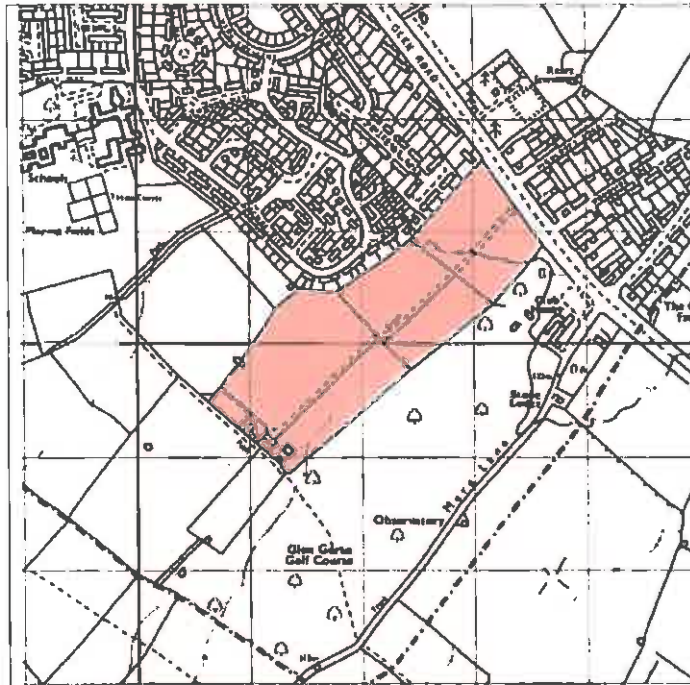


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1966 O.S. 1:10560

By 1966 a significant new housing development has been built to the north of the site, in the vicinity of Glen Hill Farm (this was not named on previous maps, although the farm buildings were marked). To the south of the site the remaining field boundary has been removed and Woodside Farm has become the Club House.

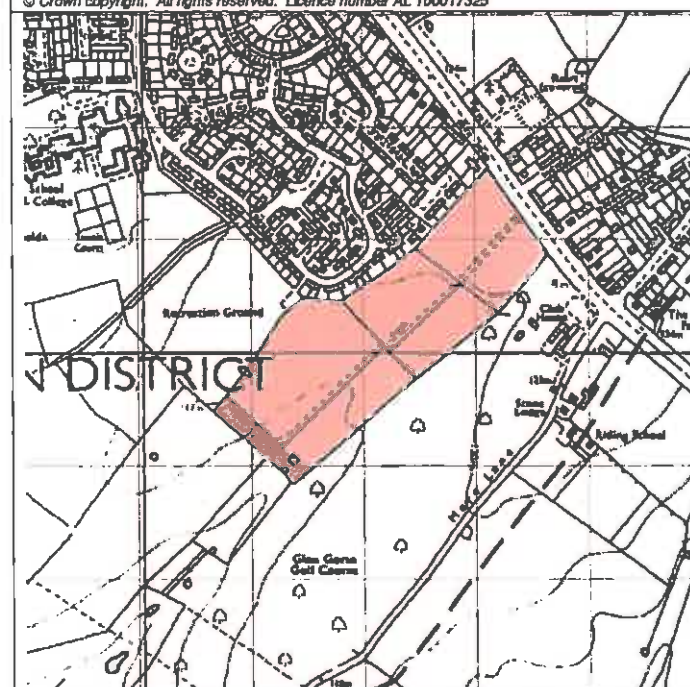
The site itself has not changed.



1974 O.S. 1:10000

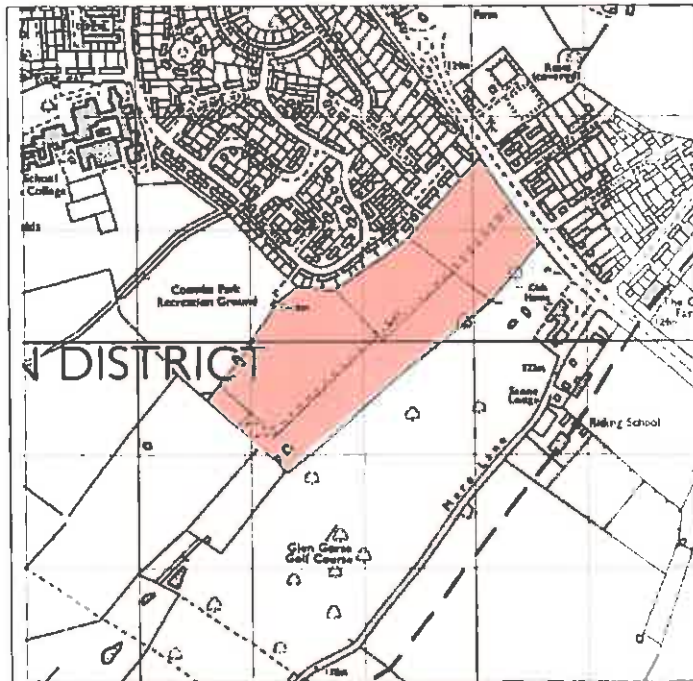
Major changes have taken place in the vicinity of the site. Housing now extends to the northern boundary of the site; Glen Hill Farm is no longer present. Schools, together with playing fields have been built to the northwest of the site. London Road is now shown as Glen Road.

The site itself has not changed, although Cottage Farm is no longer named on the map, and a few structures appear to have been removed.



1983-1985 O.S. 1:10000

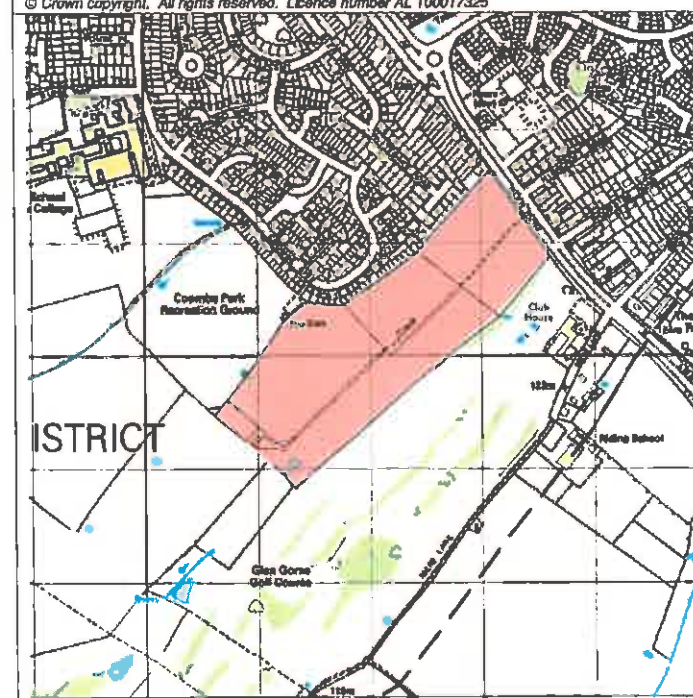
Little has changed in the vicinity of the site since 1974; the most significant change is the removal of all but two of the structures that once comprised Cottage Farm. The site itself has not changed.



1991-1992 O.S. 1:10000

No significant change has taken place since 1985.

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2004 O.S. 1:10000

A significant housing development has been built to the northeast of Glen Road, but the site itself has not changed.

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A single aerial photograph, dating from 1947, was held by the Leicestershire County Record Office (see below). This clearly shows the predominantly rural nature of the site and its environs at this time.



1947 Aerial Photograph - CPE/U.K.1925.JAN.16.'47 1018

Medieval ridge and furrow is widespread throughout the landscape, including the eastern end of the site; in the southwestern and central parts of the site the ridge and furrow has been ploughed-out, but remains visible as soil marks; no soil- or cropmarks are visible that may represent archaeological features. No ridge and furrow remains were visible during the site

visit, however the site is under crop and therefore the detailed landform of the site could not be observed.

The review of modern maps has shown that the site has remained relatively unchanged since at least the late 19th century, with consistent agricultural land use and no evidence of structures on the site other than Cottage Farm itself. These conditions are likely to have been conducive to the preservation of archaeological remains, although modern ploughing may have resulted in some damage, the extent of which is unknown.

5. STATEMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL

The table below summarises the findings of the assessment; it outlines the known archaeological and historic evidence for the site and its environs and the assessed potential for archaeological remains to exist within the area proposed for redevelopment. The table does not detail the individual sites and features, but rather characterise the known archaeological and historic evidence from the named periods.

Period	Summary of Evidence	Potential for Remains to be Present
Prehistoric	Finds dating from the Mesolithic to the Bronze Age have been found to the west of the site. There is potential for finding further prehistoric remains of any date, as the site has not been developed in the past.	Medium/High
Romano-British	Significant finds of Roman coins have been found to the west of the site, possible Roman Road to the south of the site. There is the potential to find Romano-British remains, as the site has not been developed in the past.	High
Anglo-Saxon/ Danish	There is no archaeological evidence from this period within the site, although a cemetery found at Brocks Hill to the northwest is considered likely to date from this period. It is probable that settlement remains dating from this period are located within the area of the historic core of Oadby but the possibility of remains being found on the site cannot be discounted.	Low
Medieval	No known medieval remains are located within the development site boundary. Ridge and furrow visible in the aerial photograph indicates that the site was in use for agriculture during this period.	Low
Post-Medieval	The site appears to have remained in agricultural use during this period, although the remains of Cottage Farm may be of local interest.	Low
Modern	The site is currently in agricultural use.	Low
Conservation Areas	The development site is not located within a Conservation Area.	N/A
Listed Buildings	There are no Listed Buildings on the development site itself.	N/A
Locally Listed Buildings	There are no Locally Listed Buildings on the development site itself.	N/A
Scheduled Monuments	None within the development site boundary.	N/A
Registered Parks and Gardens	None within the development site boundary.	N/A
Registered Battlefields	None within the development site boundary.	N/A

Explanation of Terms:

<i>Period:</i>	Generally accepted date range representing a specific episode in the past development of this country.
<i>Evidence:</i>	Evidence present or not present on or near the site.
<i>Potential:</i>	The likelihood of encountering additional material evidence of this period/feature (ranging from low, medium to high) within the site development area.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The desk-based assessment has shown that significant finds of archaeological material have been made in the vicinity of the site, and these suggest that there is a medium to high potential for prehistoric and Romano-British remains to be found on the site. The absence of recorded finds on the site itself, however, is likely to reflect the fact that, to date, the site has not been subject to development or archaeological investigation. Given the extent of the site (12 ha) and the distribution of known archaeological sites in the vicinity, the presence of buried archaeological remains in the proposed redevelopment area is very likely. However, the location, nature, significance or survival of any such remains can only be determined through the implementation of a programme of archaeological field investigation.

In order to define areas of archaeological potential within the site, it is recommended that a staged programme of archaeological field evaluation is undertaken. The Leicestershire Senior Planning Archaeologist has provided a Brief for geophysical survey; however we consider that there would be significant value in adopting the strategy outlined below:

- The first stage is fieldwalking and metal detecting which should be undertaken at a time of year when the crop has been lifted and the fields have been allowed to weather. Fieldwalking involves the collection of archaeological artefacts, such as pottery, from the surface of the field. The positions of these finds are then plotted which allows areas of potential archaeological interest to be identified, and also provides an indication of the date of the remains that may be encountered.
- A range of geophysical survey techniques could be considered as a means of enhancing the understanding of potential areas of interest indicated by fieldwalking results and informing the design and layout of any subsequent investigations that are required.
- It is possible that the survey results will lead to a requirement for trial trenching. The layout and size of evaluation trenches will need to be designed with reference to both survey results and the arrangement of principal areas of below-ground impact in the proposed redevelopment scheme.

Consideration of the results of the evaluation by the Leicestershire Senior Planning Archaeologist may lead to a requirement in the form of a Planning Condition for appropriate mitigation measure to be implemented prior to or during construction. Such a requirement may pose a risk to programme and budget, and it is therefore recommended that the scheme of investigation outlined above could be implemented in order to effectively manage the archaeological risks.

7. REFERENCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

Nichols, J. 1811 *The History and Antiquities of the County of Leicester*. John Nichols. London

PPG16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*, Dept of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance 16, HMSO

Web: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oadby>

