



Trent & Peak
ARCHAEOLOGY

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL
WATCHING BRIEF AT
WHITE HOUSE FARM,
SAMWORTH WAY,
MELTON MOWBRAY
LEICESTERSHIRE, 2010**



The University of
Nottingham

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WATCHING BRIEF AT
WHITE HOUSE FARM,
SAMWORTH WAY,
MELTON MOWBRAY,
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**A report for
Clegg Food Products Ltd**

*by
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SUMMARY

- An archaeological watching brief was carried out by Trent & Peak Archaeology on preparation works for a metal security fence installed around the perimeter of some open land to the south-west of Melton Mowbray, next to the A607 Leicester Road. Now owned by Melton Foods Ltd, whose modern premises are situated nearby, the land was occupied until comparably recently by White House Farm; the land is now abandoned with derelict farm buildings still standing. The fence involved the excavation by hand of 145 post-holes over 400m length. The excavation of these holes by contractors was monitored, with sections recorded and spoil checked for finds.
- The study area lies within the extensive area of Eye Kettleby Deserted Medieval Village, remains of which still show prominently to the north and east of the site, and are protected as a Scheduled Monument, and other earthworks that are known to exist running to the south-east of Leicester Road for about 200m. The manor was mentioned in Domesday Book and Poll tax returns of 1379 record 41 inhabitants of the village. The settlement had probably been abandoned by 1533 when a manor house, park, mill and fishponds were bequeathed to a relative of Sir John Digby. A chapel is also recorded as still standing in 1569 and land just north of White House farmhouse is recorded as having been called Chapel Close.
- In the 1990s land to the west of the White House farm site was the subject of archaeological investigation that recovered evidence of Bronze Age cremation burials, an Iron Age pit alignment, numerous Anglo-Saxon buildings and stock enclosures and at least one building of Medieval date on the western periphery of the Medieval village. Later work east of the Leicester Road Industrial Estate found evidence of ridge and furrow (remnants of Medieval farming practice) and in 2002 a study was made of the Mill House Nurseries site, to the north-east of the study area.
- Prior's map from 1777 show the study area open but with the former site of Eye Kettleby Church marked in a position very close to the later farm. The latter was probably built in the early 19th century. The farmhouse was a small two-cell, later extended at the back. Ordnance Survey maps from 1883 show an 'old sand pit' to the north of the farmhouse but this was later extended to exploit sand around three sides of the farmhouse and an adjacent barn, leaving them standing alone on a high point.
- Apart from areas close to farm buildings or where demolition material was present, the excavated postholes were generally of uniform stratigraphy: lower part of the topsoil (the upper part having been removed in an initial stripping of the fenceline); subsoil and then natural silty clay (sometimes with chalk inclusions) or sand.
- An appraisal of the recovered pottery was made by Paul Blinkhorn. The pottery assemblage comprised 47 sherds with a total weight of 310g. Of these 27 were of Medieval date, with 18 of these being of Stamford Ware. The range of fabric types being largely typical of contemporary sites in the region and indicate that there was activity at the site from around the time of the Norman Conquest, and possibly as early as the late 10th century, until the mid-late 14th century. The site then appears to have been largely abandoned until recent times.
- Although part of the study area has been affected by sand quarrying, a large part of the study area has been untouched due to the presence of farm buildings on the site. In light of the proximity of the Deserted Medieval Village and extensive archaeological finds to the west of the site, it must be considered to retain archaeological potential should any future development be considered.

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1. Introduction

This report is the result of an archaeological watching brief carried out by Trent & Peak Archaeology (TPA) on preparation works for a metal security fence installed around the perimeter of some open land near Melton Mowbray (Fig. 1). The site (henceforth referred to as the study area) lies to the south-west of the main built-up area, next to the A607 Leicester Road. Now owned by Melton Foods Ltd whose modern premises are situated nearby, the land was occupied until comparably recently by White House Farm. The study area is now abandoned with derelict farm buildings still standing (Plate 1). The fence is 2.4m high, about 400 metres long and involved the excavation by hand of 145 post-holes by contractors.

According to the Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record (HER) the study area lies within an area of archaeological interest. This includes the nearby recorded Deserted Medieval Village of Eye Kettleby (HER ref. MLE3950), whose Scheduled Monument (SM ref. 30250) boundary runs up to the study area. The Senior Planning Archaeologist (SPA) at the Historic and Natural Environment Team (Leicestershire County Council), acting on behalf of Melton Borough Council, had recommended that an archaeological watching brief be undertaken to monitor and record the excavations on the site, as a condition of Planning Application No. 10/00230/FUL. The work was carried out in accordance with appropriate professional standards, such as the Institute for Archaeologists' (IfA) Standards & Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief 1999. A contingency provision was included in the estimate for the possibility of detailed emergency excavation of unusual or important remains had they been found.

Following a site meeting with representative from the client, the watching brief was carried out between the 1st and the 23rd July 2010 and involved eight visits when postholes were excavated, then examined by the archaeologist and recorded and their removed spoil checked for finds. The postholes were measured and noted and at least one section was recorded by film and digital photography. The site archive includes written records, black and white film negatives and prints from 5 films and over 200 digital views in colour on two CDs. Some of the latter views are shown as plates within this report. The report includes a list of the postholes and a pottery appraisal carried out by Paul Blinkhorn (see below).

The TPA site code is FMF.1. The archive accession number provided by Leicestershire County Council (Leicestershire Museums Archaeology Collections) is X.A124.2010.

2. Historical background

The study area is thought to lie within the extensive area of Eye Kettleby Deserted Medieval Village, remains of which still show prominently to the north and east of the site, with other remains known to exist running to the south-east of Leicester Road for about 200m. The known extent of the village is shown in Figure 5. As

well as this detailed survey by Hartley, a detailed documentary history of the village has been produced by Courtney and Hawkes (reproduced in Finn and Mardsden 2002).

Before the Norman Conquest the lordship of Eketilby or Eye Kettleby was held by Leuric Fitz Leuin as part of the manor of Melton. The manor was mentioned in Domesday Book in 1086 and it changed hands several times before being granted to Hamo Beler in 1160. Poll tax returns of 1379 record 41 inhabitants of the village. The manor was eventually purchased by Sir John Digby, who in a will of 1533, bequeathed a manor house, park, mill and fishponds to a male relative; the settlement had probably been abandoned by this date. A chapel is also recorded as still standing in 1569 and land north of White House farmhouse is recorded as having been called Chapel Close. A windmill was mentioned in an inventory of 1594.

Figure 5, the results of an earthwork survey of 1984, shows earthworks to the north and east of the study area. These include a north-south running hollow way that starts just south of a railway and whose southern end has been destroyed by a large sand quarry, whose depressions still partly surround the farmhouse and extend through the farm site. Enclosures can be seen to the west of the hollow way and other enclosures and house platforms show to the east, extending into the lower corner of the study area.

A field survey with organised fieldwalking in 1993 of open land (since built on) to the west of the study area found evidence of a multi-period site with clear evidence of an early-late prehistoric site and another of Early-Mid Saxon date, the latter being of potential national importance (Liddle, Knox and Knox, 1993). This was followed by a desk-based assessment of the site of a proposed development that demonstrated that the site was of considerable archaeological potential (Cooper 1995). The report recommended a programme of geophysical survey, metal detector survey and evaluation excavation. The two surveys were carried out in 1995 and then trial trenching in 1996 confirmed the presence of an extensive Early-middle Saxon settlement site and enclosure ditches associated with the Deserted Medieval Village of Eye Kettleby (Finn 1996). A full excavation in 1996-97 for Melton Foods (Samworth Brothers) located further remains, including Bronze Age cremation burials, an Iron Age pit alignment, numerous Anglo-Saxon buildings and stock enclosures and at least one building of Medieval date on the western periphery of the Medieval village (Finn 1997).

Further work in the immediate area involved land east of the Leicester Road Industrial Estate, to the south-east of the study area; it is shown with earthworks in the lower right part of Figure 5. This also involved a preliminary desk-based assessment in 1998, followed by a geophysical survey and a field evaluation that found evidence of ridge and furrow (remnants of Medieval farming practice).

In 2002 a desk-based assessment was produced for the Mill House Nurseries site, to the north-east of the study area. This concluded that an existing mill building might have Medieval fabric and that water management features were present

that were probably associated with fishponds within the Scheduled Monument area (Finn and Marsden 2002). An evaluation followed a short while later but this failed to identify archaeological deposits.

Prior's county map of 1777 show the study area open but with the former site of Eye Kettleby Church marked in a position very close to the later farm (Fig. 3). The latter was probably built in the early 19th century, its brickwork suggesting that it was probably built not long after 1816 when it was still not shown on an early drawing for the Ordnance Survey (Fig. 4). The farmhouse was a small two-cell, two storey building with a central entrance opening to a straight flight of steps; it was later extended at the back. Ordnance Survey maps from 1883 show an 'old sand pit' to the north of the farmhouse but this was later reopened and eventually extended to exploit sand (pre-Glacial deposits, Bytham Sands) around three sides of the farmhouse and an adjacent barn, leaving them standing alone on a high point (Plate 1), on what the British Geological Survey map 142 shows as Oadby Till. Now abandoned, the farmhouse is still largely intact, whilst other farm buildings within the study area have decayed.

3. Watching brief

The fenceline was erected to surround most of the study area, with a gap between holes 1 and 111 at the west end bridged by an existing garden boundary. At the east end the fence was extended to an existing brick wall and here was diverted in part from its intended line further to the north because of dense vegetation and awkward banking (Fig. 8). Apart from where entrances were positioned midway within the north and south sides, all postholes were generally excavated to uniform dimensions - 300mm square, 600-700mm deep and set 2.75m apart. Metal posts were then inserted and held in place by concrete (Plate 2). A total of 145 holes were excavated and with the exception of 2 of these, all were recorded.

Most of the postholes were of uniform stratigraphy: lower part of the topsoil (the upper part having been removed in an initial stripping of the fenceline); subsoil and then natural silty clay (sometimes with chalk inclusions) or sand. Variations in the content of the subsoil and the makeup of the natural were noted and the removed spoil was checked for finds. A chart of the postholes is included below.

FMF: LIST OF POSTHOLES						Stone/		Measurements in cm			PAGE 8	
No.	Depth	Topsoil to	Hard-core to	Rubble to	Subsoil to	Brick in Sub.	Natural at	Comments	Finds Med	Finds PM	Finds Modern	Plate
#001	80cm		15	40			40					
#002	75	removed			20		20				Y	
#003	70	removed			16		16				Y	
#004	70	removed			20		20					
#005	70	removed			30		30	drain backfill in subsoil			Y	
#006	70	removed			20/*60		60	*dark subsoil with bone etc			Y	
#007	70	removed			20/*60		60	ditto	Y			
#008	70	removed			40		40	dark band S. side at 40cm	Y			
#009	70	removed			*60		60	*dark subsoil with bone etc			Y	
#010	70	removed			45		45	ashy in subsoil				
#011	70	removed			45		45	wood in north side			Y	
#012	70	removed		20	45		45	bricks at 10-20				
#013	70	removed	20		45		45	bricks at 20-25				
#014	70	removed	20	*45			45	*brick/stone rubble				
#015	75	removed			25/75			metal pipe at 40			Y	
#016	75	30			60		60	loose soil/turf at top				
#017	75	30			60		60	ditto				
#018	75	20			35		35					
#019	75	25			45		45				Y	
#020	75	15			40		40					
#021	70	15			45		45				Y	
#022	70	15			45		45	orange natural			Y	
#023	70	20			45		45	ditto				
#024	70	15			45		45	bricks at 25-32, 3 sides				
#025	70	5			15/*40	Y	40	*brick/stone rubble				
#026	70	15			40		40					
#027	70	5			40	Y	40			Y		
#028	70	5			40	Y	40					
#029	70	5			40	Y	40				Y	
#030	75	10			*60	Y	60	*drain fragments			Y	
#031	70	5			40		40					
#032	70	12			40		40		Y		Y	
#033	75	10			40		40					
#034	75	10			75	Y		rubble spread			Y	
#035	75	10			75	Y		rubble spread			Y	
#036	75	15			40	Y	40		Y		Y	
#037	75	8			40		40					
#038	70	5			17/35		35	darker top part of subsoil	Y			
#039	75	6			35		35		Y		Y	
#040	70	15			45		45		Y			
#041	72	10			40		40	charcoal in top of subsoil	Y			
#042	70	6		18	35		35				Y	
#043	70			55			55	demolition rubble			Y	Y
#044	70			50			50	ditto				
#045	78	7			40		40				Y	
#046	75	15			55	Y	55				Y	
#047	80			35	50		50				Y	
#048	50			50				loose rubble only			Y	
#049	55			55				ditto				
#050	55			55				ditto				
#051	60			40				ditto				
#052	60		23	38	60							
#053	60			50			50	fine sandy lower subsoil	Y			

		Topsoil	Hard-	Rubble	Subsoil	Sto/Bri	Natural	Comments	Finds	Finds	Finds	9
No.	Depth	to	core to	to	to	in Sub.	at		Med	PM	Modern	Plate
#054	70	5			15/30		30				Y	
#055	75	14		20	40		40			Y		
#056												
#057	70	5			40	Y	40		Y			
#058	70	5			40		40					
#059	70	15			25		25					
#060	70	20			35		35					
#061	70	35			50		50	buried turfline				
#062	70	40			50		50	ditto				
#063	75	35			45		45	ditto				
#064	70	25			35		35	ditto				
#065	70	10			25		25					
#066	70	15			30		30					
#067	70	10			30		30					Y
#068	70	5			30		30					
#069	70	40			60		60	buried turf				
#070	70	25			70			by open cowshed				
#071	70	30			70							
#072	70				60		60					
#073	70		20		40		40					
#074	70		20		40		40					
#075	70		25		50		50					
#076	70	15			55		55	mortar, bricks in subsoil				
#077	70	15			55		55					
#078	70	15			50		50					
#079	70	10			45		45					
#080	70	15			50		50					
#081	70	12			45		45					
#082	70	15			35		35					
#083	70	10			45		45					
#084	70	10			50		50					
#085	70	20			50		50					
#086	70	20			50		50					
#087	70	28			50		50					
#088	65	30			50		50					
#089	65	30			50		50					
#090	60	30			50		50					
#091	50				50			all disturbed ground				
#092	75	30			60		60		Y			
#093	60				60			all disturbed ground				
#094	50	20			50			ditto				
#095	45	20			45							
#096	60	15			40		40					
#097	60	15			40		40					
#098	65	10			30		30		Y			
#099	60	10			25		25					
100	70	12			30		30					
101	65	10			30		30	brick at base of subsoil	Y			
102	55	10			30		30					
103	65	10			30		30					
104	65	15			33		33					
105	60	10			33		33					
106	66	10			30		30					
107	70	8			30		30					

		Topsoil	Hard-	Rubble	Subsoil	Sto/Bri	Natural	Comments	Finds	Finds	Finds	10
No.	Depth	to	core to	to	to	in Sub.	at		Med	PM	Modern	Plate
108	70	10			30		30					
109	65	10			30		30					
110	70		25		55/70							
111	70				25/50		50					
112	65	15	35		55		55					
113	65	20	65									
114	60	15	40/60									
115	70	15	45		70							
116	55	10			30	hardcore to 55						
117	75	10			25		25					
118	65	10			25		25					
119	65	10			25/35	tarmac to 55						
120	65	10			30	hardcore to 50						
121	65	12			30		30					
122	70	12			30		30					
123	65	15			30		30					
124	65	12			25		25					
125	60	12			30		30					
126												
107	65	10			25/33		33					
128	65	8			22		22					Y
129	63	8			20		20					
130	65	8			20		20					
131	68	8			20		20					
132	63	10			25		25					
133	65	10			25/*45		45	*concrete and brick				
134	73	10			25/*45		25	*pebbles and stones				
135	70	10			28		28					
136	72	10			27/*72			ash and brick to base				
137	70	10			25		25					
138	65	10			27/65			bricks frags. to base				
139	65	10			27/40		40					
140	60	10			25		25					
141	62	8			20/30		30					
142	60	8			20/30		30					
143	65	40			65	Y		buried turf at 40				
144	80	15			30		30	orange sand at 65				
145	75	10			25		25	orange sand at 65				Y

4. Pottery Report

A small quantity of modern finds including demolition material associated with the farm was found. Also, a quantity of pottery was recovered that varied in date from the Medieval period to the modern era and these were appraised by pottery specialist Paul Blinkhorn. The distribution of the Medieval pottery is shown in Figure 9, with the main cluster of finds from postholes 32-41, situated just north of the former farmhouse.

Pottery from Melton Foods Site, Melton Mowbray, Leics. (Site X. A124.2010)

Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 47 sherds with a total weight of 310g. It was recorded using the conventions of the Leicestershire County type-series (Sawday 1994), as follows

- CC2: Chilvers Coton 'C' ware, 1200-1475. 1 sherd, 26g.
- EA: Post-medieval Red Earthenware, mid 16th century. 1 sherd, 11g.
- EA3: Staffordshire Slipware, 1650-1780. 1 sherd, 6g.
- EA6: Post-medieval Blackwares, late 17th century +. 2 sherds, 23g.
- EA10: Modern Earthenwares, 1800+. 16 sherds, 103g
- LY4: Shelly wares, 1100-1400. 4 sherds, 24g.
- MP1: Midland Purple ware, 1375-1550. 1 sherd, 38g.
- PM: Potter's Marston ware, 1100-1300. 2 sherds, 4g.
- ST: Stamford ware, 900-1150. 18 sherds, 75g.

The following, not listed in the published type-series, was also present:

- BOUA: Bourne 'A' Ware, 13th – 14th century (McCarthy and Brooks 1988, 259). 1 sherd, 2g

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 1. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*. The range of fabric types is largely typical of contemporary sites in the region. The range of pottery types indicate that there was activity at the site from around the time of the Norman Conquest, and possibly as early as the late 10th century, until the mid-late 14th century. The site then appears to have been largely abandoned until recent times.

The two sherds of Stamford Ware from context 53 are both heavily burnt and have a thick, glassy residue, which in one case has run over the broken edge of the sherd. This indicates that either they are fragments of crucibles, or broken sherds which were used as crucibles or parting-trays in an industrial process such as non-ferrous metal- or glass- working.

The assemblage is largely in good condition and the sherds appear reasonably fresh, although the mean sherd size is fairly low, although still within the acceptable range as an indicator of activity within the vicinity of the excavations.

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Sawday, D, 1994 *The post-Roman pottery in P Clay and R Pollard Iron age and Roman Occupation in the West Bridge Area, Leicester. Excavations 1962-71* Leics. Museums

Table 1: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type

	ST		LY4		PM		CC2		BOUA		MP1		EA		EA3		EA6		EA10		
Cntxt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	Date
U/S															1	6			6	70	U/S
3																			1	2	19thC
7							1	26													13thC
8											1	38									L14thC
27																	2	23			L17thC
32	4	22																	3	4	19thC
36	2	7																			L10thC?
38	3	11	1	12																	12thC
39	1	4			2	4													2	4	19thC
40	3	15																			11thC
41	1	2	2	3																	12thC
42																			2	17	19thC
43																			1	2	19thC
53	2	11																			11thC?
54																			1	4	19thC
55													1	11							M16thC
57			1	9																	12thC
92									1	2											13thC
98	1	1																			L10thC?
101	1	2																			11thC?
Total	18	75	4	24	2	4	1	26	1	2	1	38	1	11	1	6	2	23	16	103	

5. Conclusions

The most surprising result from the watching brief is the high percentage of Stamford Ware sherds, 18 in total from 27 Medieval sherds that were recovered, notwithstanding that a number of these will have been from the same vessel. This ware is generally of early Medieval date, from AD 900-1150. As no previous archaeological investigation has been carried out on the actual site of the Deserted Medieval Village of Eye Kettleby, apart from some limited evaluation trenches close to its margins, this result is of some interest. The main cluster of finds from postholes 32-41 is close to the likely site of the village's former church and, by

implication, the 'historic core' of the village. On early Ordnance Survey maps the area north of the farmhouse was called Chapel Nook.

Medieval pottery was found in four general locations around the perimeter of the study area. In several instances it was found along with modern material, indicative of redeposition from elsewhere. However, the main concentration of Medieval pottery at postholes 32-41 were from the subsoil layer found generally across the site. Although no Roman artefacts were found, a Roman brooch has been found nearby, just south of Leicester Road (MLE8004 on Figure 6). Although part of the study area has been affected by sand quarrying (bright sand was showing in postholes 144 and 145), a large part of the study area has been untouched due to the presence of farm buildings on the site. It must be considered to retain archaeological potential should any future development be considered.

6. References and acknowledgements

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ILLUSTRATIONS

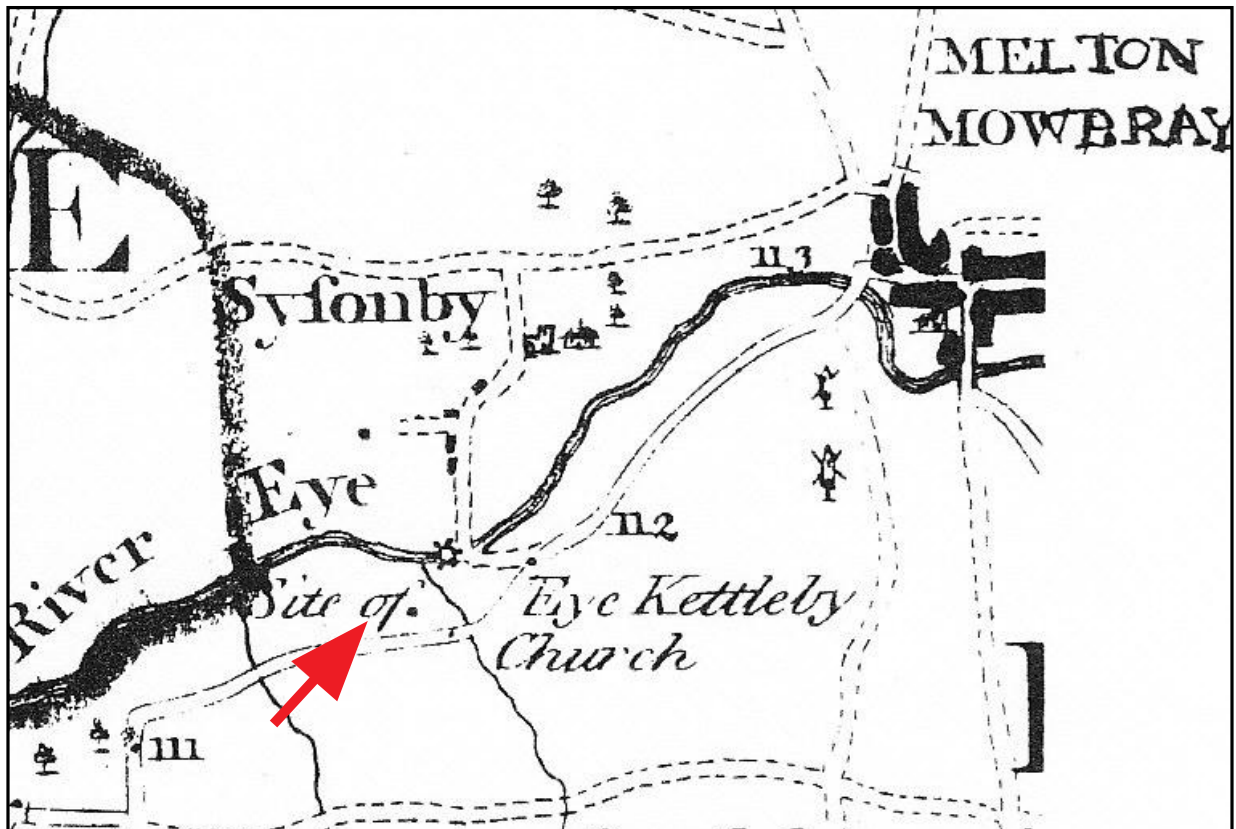


Figure 2: Site location highlighted on Prior's county map of 1777 (after Welding 1984). Not to regular scale.



Figure 3: Site location highlighted on an Ordnance Survey drawing of the Melton Mowbray area by Boyce in 1816. Not to regular scale.

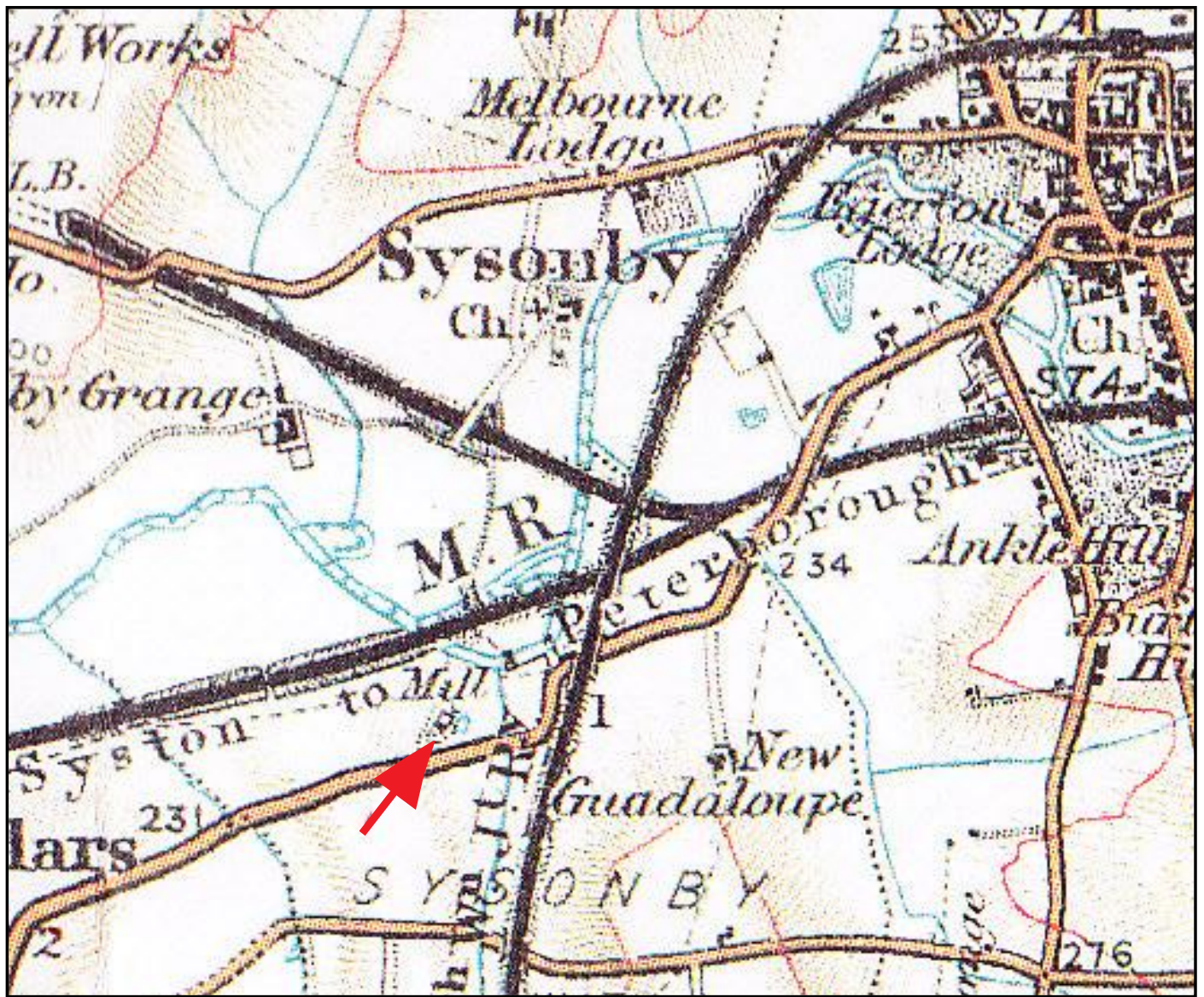


Figure 4: Location of the study area highlighted on an Ordnance Survey One Inch scale map of 1898 (Sheet 142; Godfrey Edition). Not to regular scale.

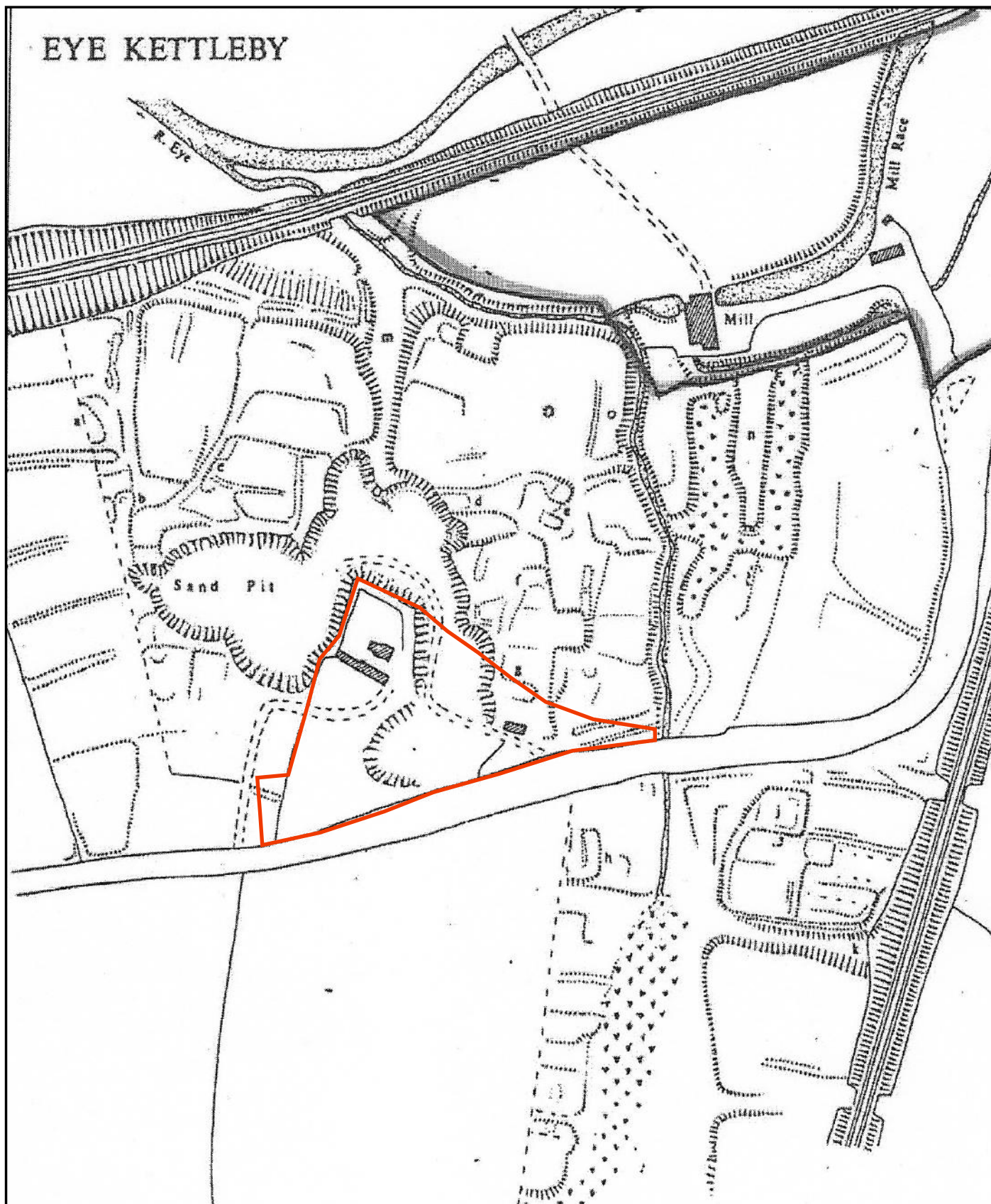


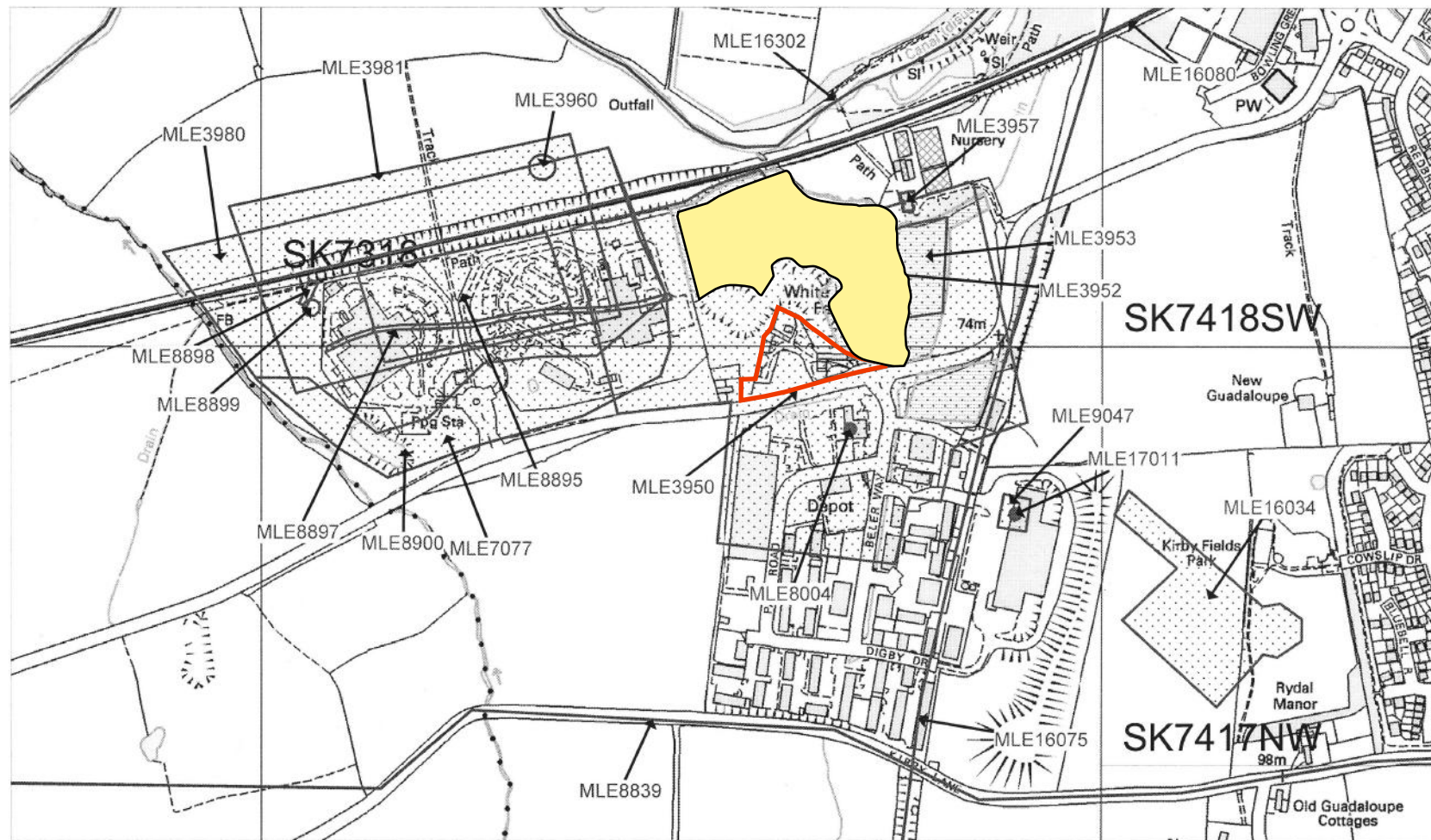
Figure 5: Location of the study area highlighted on a plan of Eye Kettleby deserted Medieval village (from Hartley 1987, 30). Not to regular scale.

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Figure 6: Plan showing archaeological sites and finds within the vicinity of the study area (highlighted in red) provided by the Leicestershire Historic Environment Record. Limit of Scheduled area derived from English Heritage map and overlain in yellow. Not to regular scale.



Figure 7: Site proposal plan at White House Farm, Melton Mowbray provided by client. Not to regular scale.

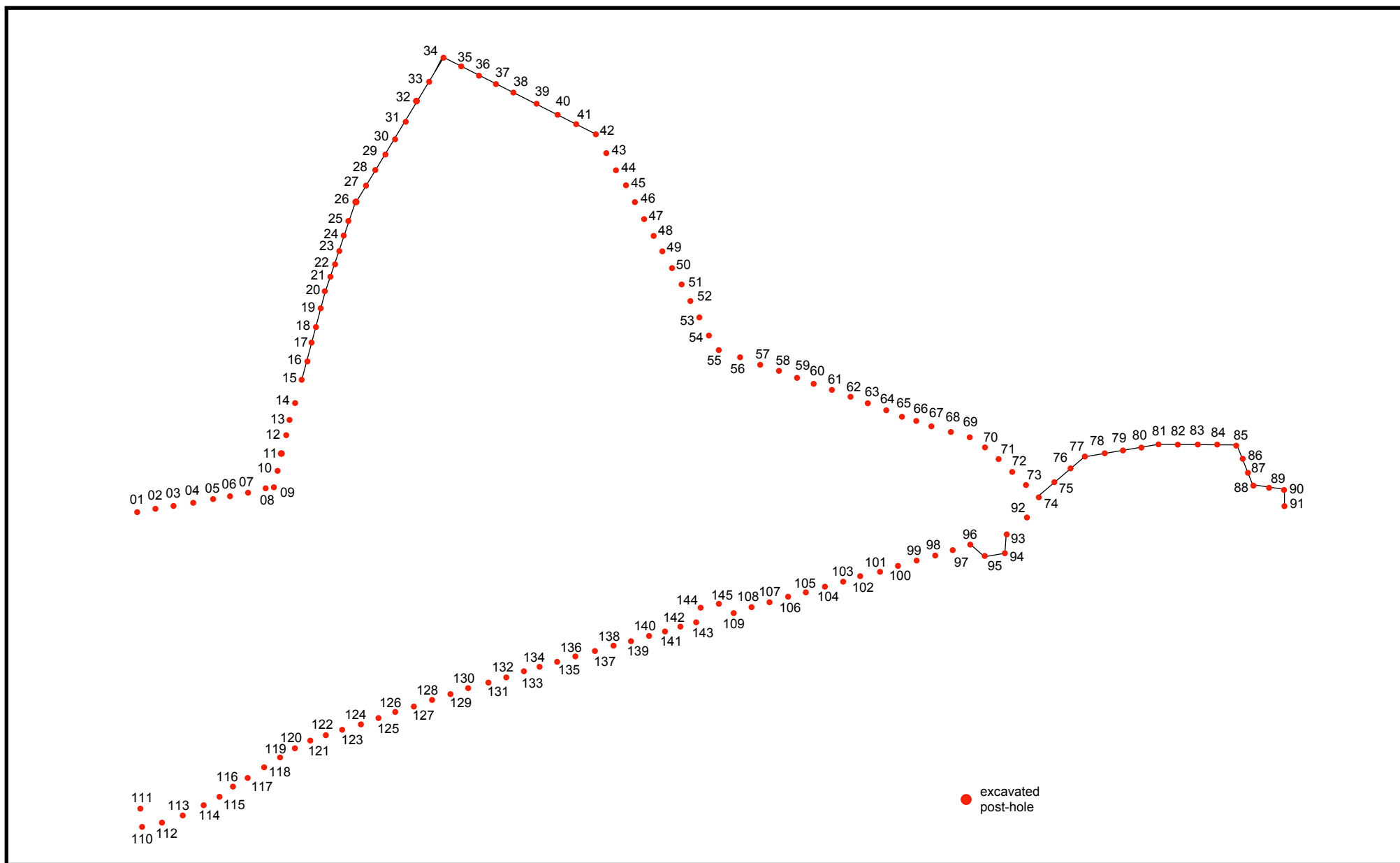


Figure 8: Plan showing positions of excavated postholes 1-145 at White House Farm near Melton Mowbray. Base plan supplied by client. Scale 1:800.

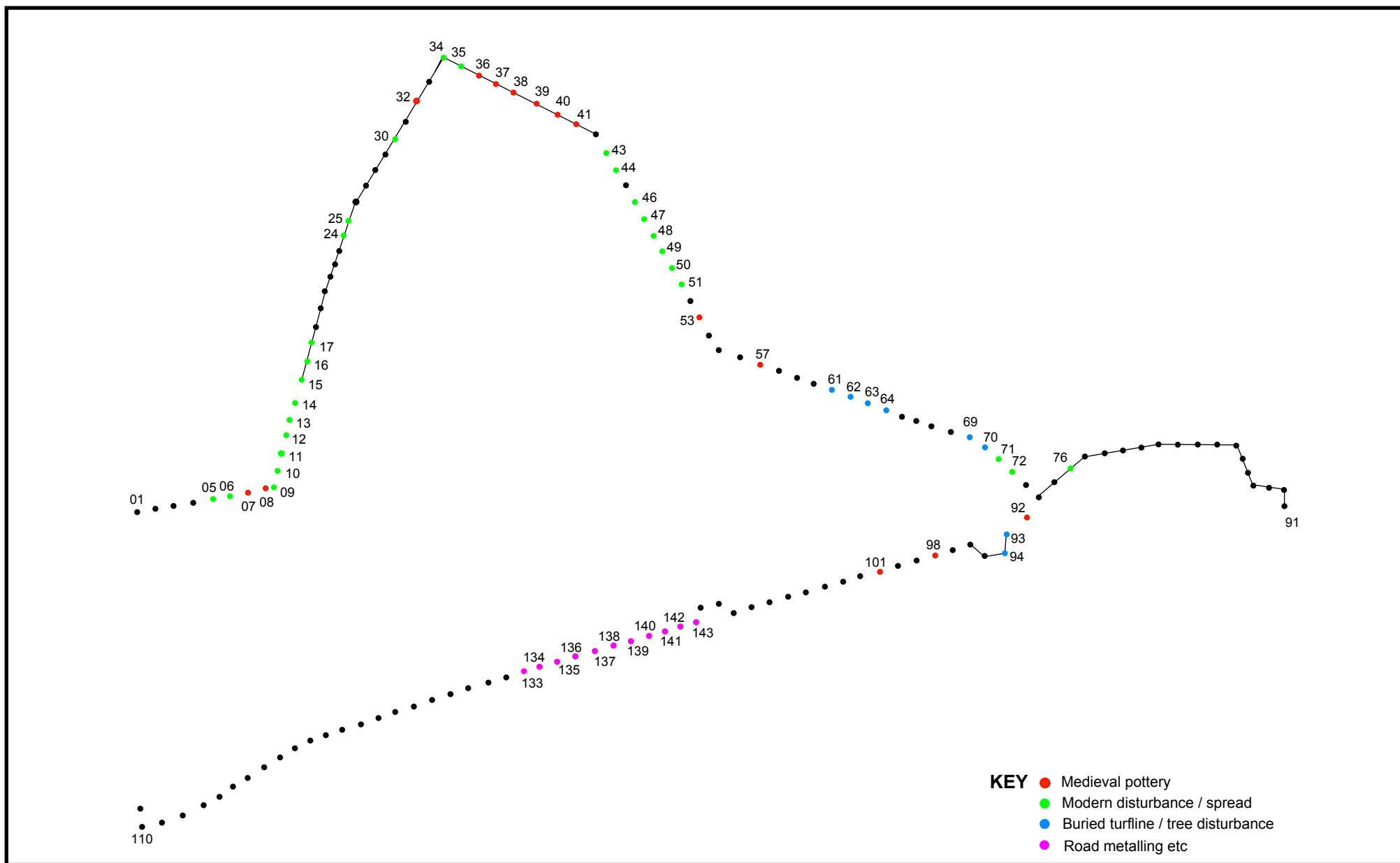


Figure 9: Plan showing postholes from which sherds of Medieval pottery were recovered and areas of modern disturbance at White House Farm near Melton Mowbray. Base plan supplied by client. Scale 1:800.



Plate 1: View of the farmhouse, barn (top left) and another derelict farm building at White House Farm, Samworth Way, Melton Mowbray.



Plate 2: Fence posts in the process of being installed in the west part of the site at White House Farm, Melton Mowbray.



Plate 3: Example of the most typical section of the postholes at White House Farm, showing sequence of remains of topsoil, subsoil and yellow clay natural.



Plate 4: Example of a posthole at the north end of the site, filled with demolition rubble close to the former farmhouse.



Plate 5: Example of a posthole on the south-west part of the site, with distinct white-flecked clay natural.



Plate 6: Example of a posthole on the south central part of the site, where a bright orange sand natural can be found.