

**Springhill,
Higham On The Hill,
Leicestershire.**

An Archaeological Watching Brief

Planning Application
01/00784/FUL

Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit
Project No. 878
November 2001

Springhill, Higham On The Hill, Leicestershire.

An Archaeological Watching Brief

Planning Application 01/00784/FUL

by
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An Archaeological Watching Brief

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken on land adjacent to 'Springhill', Higham on the Hill, Leicestershire (NGR SP 9549 3770). The work was commissioned by R. John Craddock Associates on behalf of George Stew Ltd and was undertaken by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (BUFAU) in November 2001, ahead of the excavation of a fishing pool. Modern land drains and disturbance associated with a removed hedge boundary were observed. No archaeological features or deposits were identified. The archive will be deposited with the Leicestershire Museums, Arts and Records Service (Accession number X.A136.2001).

1.0 Introduction

This report details the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken on land adjacent to 'Springhill' in Higham On the Hill, Leicestershire (centred on NGR SP 9549 3770, hereinafter referred to as the site). The work was commissioned by R. John Craddock Associates on behalf of George Stew Ltd and was undertaken in November 2001 by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (BUFAU).

In accordance with the guidelines laid down in Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (DoE 1990), a recommendation for a programme of archaeological work to accompany a planning application was made by the Leicestershire County Archaeological Officer. The archaeological work complied with a specification defining the scope of work which was approved by the County Archaeological Officer (BUFAU 2001, Appendix I). The work was carried out ahead of the excavation of a large fishing pool (Planning Application Number 01/00784/FUL).

2.0 The Site and its Setting

Higham On The Hill is situated just to the north of the line of the Roman Watling Street, the modern day A5 (Fig.1). Finds from this period found in the vicinity include a collection of Roman coins dating to the Trajanic period and a possible altar stone (VCH 1969, 212). Further evidence of the history of the village was found, in a mound located to the south of the church, when a 'large ancient cross' (of unknown date) was uncovered during a small scale excavation in 1899 (VCH 1969, 274). The village lies within the Deanery of the Sparkenhoc Hundred, and was inclosed in 1632 (VCH 1954, 256). The site of the watching brief comprised a plot of land adjacent to 'Springhill' on the outskirts of the village. It was an open area of grassland to the north of the main street (Fig.2).

3.0 Aims

The aims of the watching brief were to:

- provide a record of any potential archaeological features or deposits that became apparent subsequent to the stripping of topsoil.
- draw up a base plan of any archaeological deposits to the north of the area of the proposed pool and leave them *in-situ*.
- sample excavate deposits occurring within the area of the proposed pool.
- provide information in order to develop a mitigation strategy and propose further work (in consultation with the County Archaeological Officer) should archaeological deposits be present.

4.0 Method

Following stripping of the topsoil, an inspection was made of the field to the north of the pond. All archaeological deposits noted in this area were to be planned fully and left *in-situ* due to the area being raised above the current ground level using set aside spoil derived from the excavation of the pool. This was followed by the monitored removal of topsoil from the proposed pool area. The removal of topsoil was undertaken using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. Any potential archaeological features were to be investigated by hand excavation and a photographic record made. Features and stratigraphy were to be recorded on detailed pro-forma record cards and supplemented by plans (at 1:20 and 1:50) and sections (at 1:10 and 1:20). It is intended to deposit the paper and finds archive with Leicestershire Museums, Arts and Records Service (Accession number X.A136.2001).

5.0 Results

Between 0.2-0.3m of topsoil were removed to reveal the top of the natural boulder clay subsoil. No archaeological features were identified cutting into it, however two modern land drains were located in the region of the pool (Fig. 2, Plate 1) and a disturbance associated with the recent removal of a hedge was observed (Fig. 2, Plate 2). The hedge line was situated directly over the route of a piped subterranean spring. A small amount of pottery was recovered from the topsoil, primarily along the line of the removed hedge. The pottery included one fragment of Cistercian Ware dating to the 16th-17th centuries, a fragment of 18th-century coarseware, nine pieces of 19th and 20th century pottery and a small fragment of abraded tile. These will be deposited with the site archive at Leicestershire Museums, Arts and Records Service (Accession number X.A136.2001). Having discussed the results of the watching brief with the County Archaeological Officer no further work was recommended.

6.0 Acknowledgements

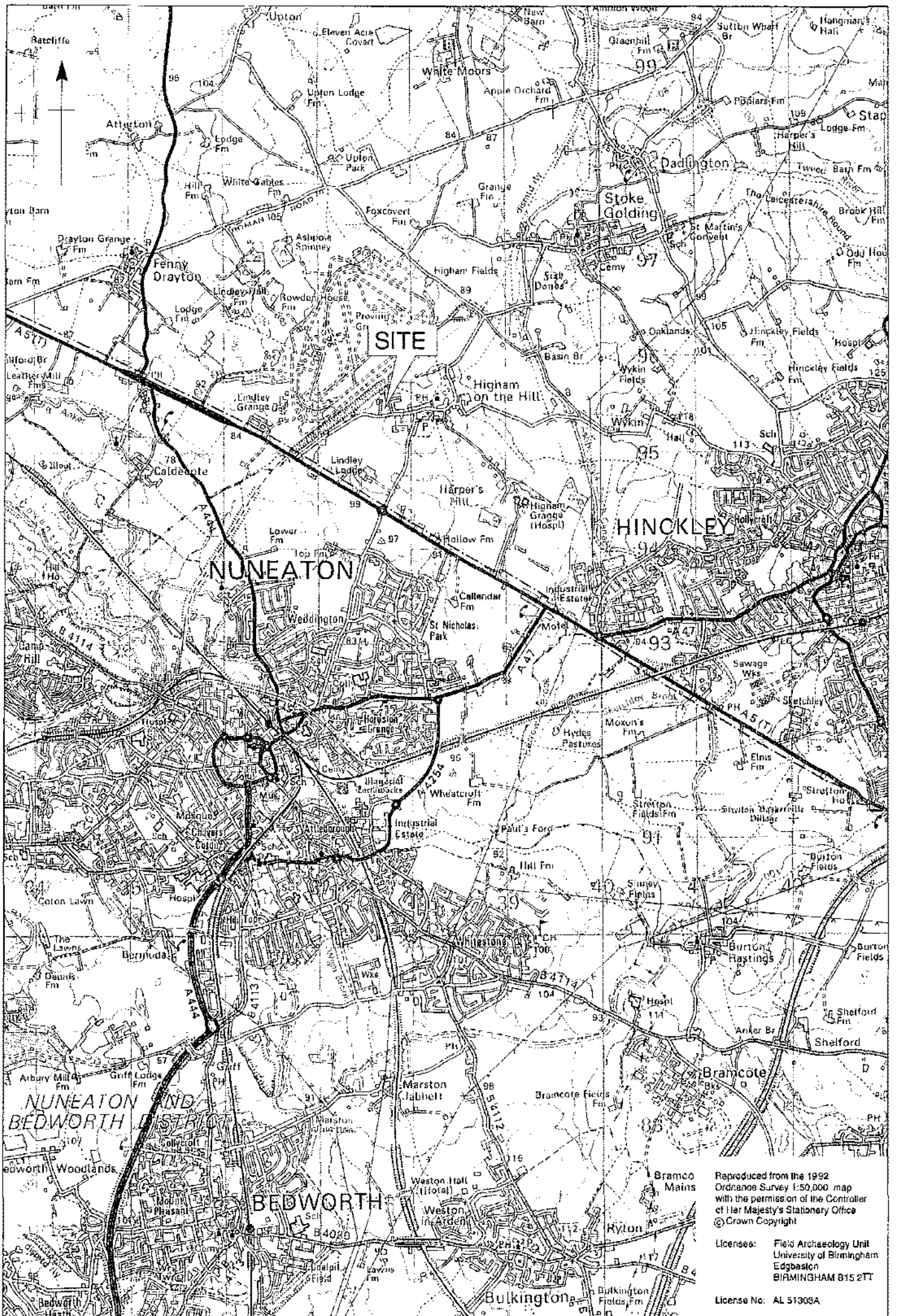
The project was commissioned by R. John Craddock Associates on behalf of George Stew Ltd. Thanks are due to Mr G Stew and Son for their co-operation, and Andrew Taylor for his help on behalf of R. John Craddock Associates. Thanks are also due to Anne Graf who monitored the project on behalf of Leicestershire County Council. The watching brief was undertaken by Kate Bain who also produced the written report, with figures by Mark Breedon, and plates by Kirsty Nichol. The project was monitored for BUFAU by Kirsty Nichol who also edited the report.

7.0 References

DoE 1990 *PPG 16: Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: Archaeology and Planning*
Department of the Environment

VCH Leics, i 1969 *Victoria History of the County of Leicestershire*, Vol.1.

VCH Leics, ii 1954 *Victoria History of the County of Leicestershire*, Vol.2.



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Fig.1

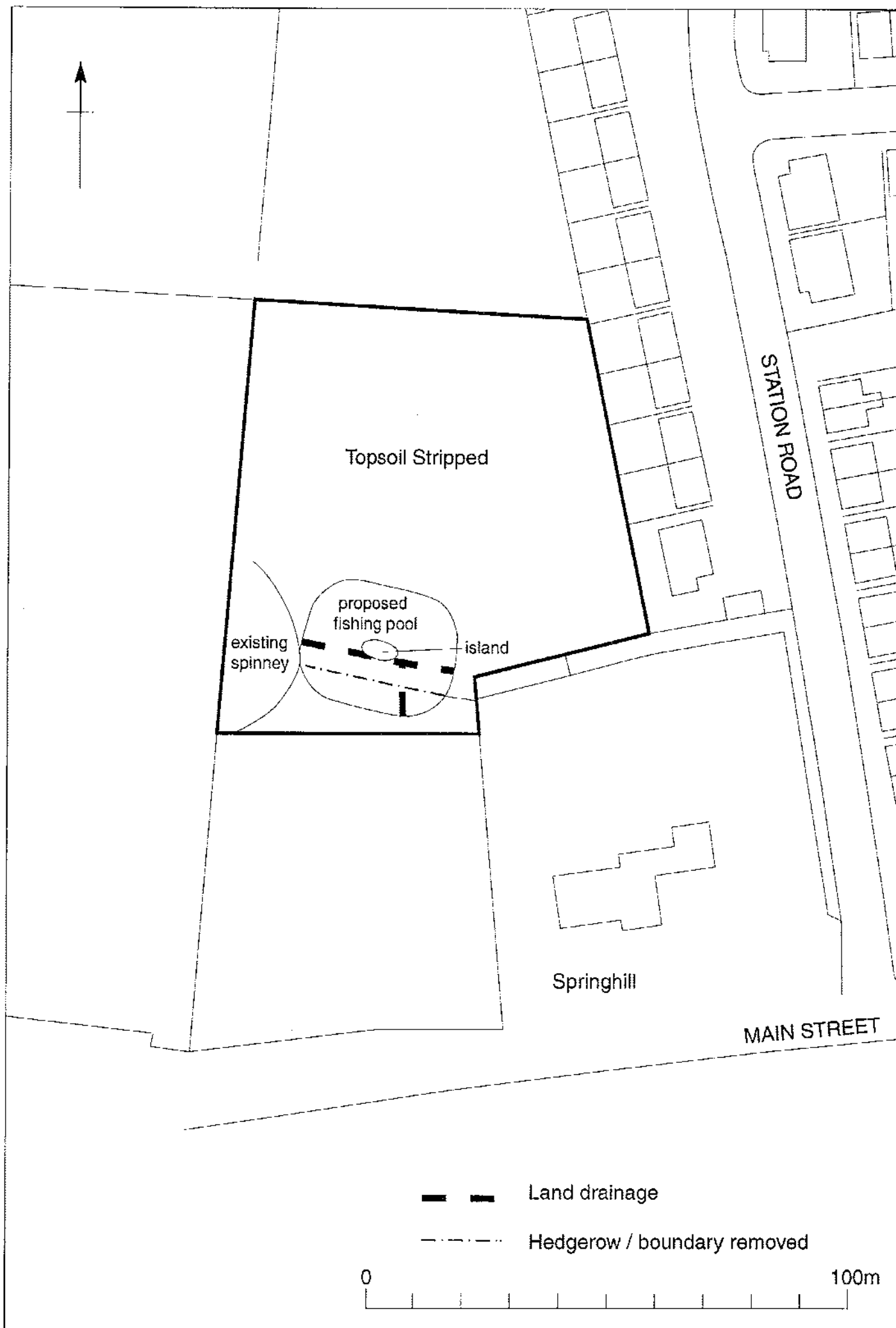


Fig.2

Plate 1

General view of the area of the proposed pond after stripping, a field drain is visible in the foreground.

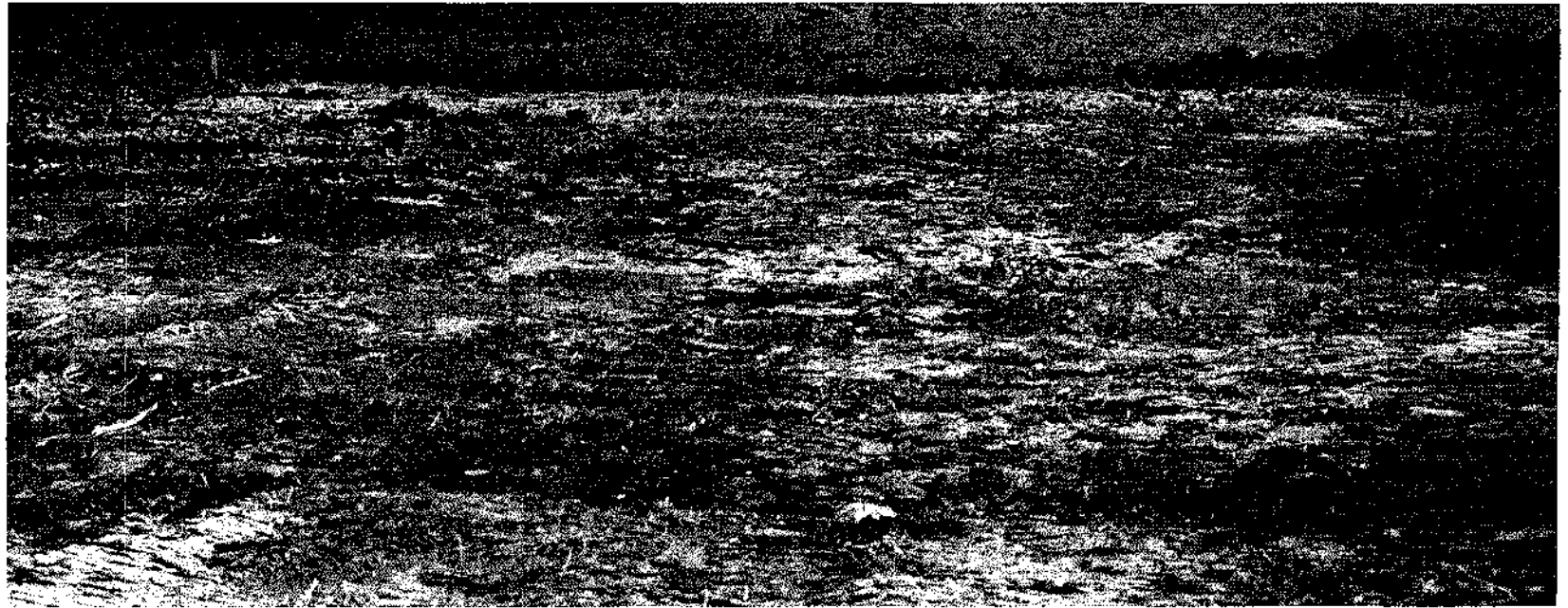


Plate 2

General view of the area of the proposed pond during stripping, the remains of the removed hedge are visible in the centre.



APPENDIX I

Springhill, Higham On The Hill, Leicestershire

Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Observation and Recording

1.0 Introduction

This document outlines the programme of work required to undertake an archaeological watching brief at the above site. It forms a written scheme of investigation required as part of the planning permission. Any variation in the scope of work would be agreed with Anne Graf, Planning Archaeological Officer for Leicestershire, before implementation.

The work will be carried out following the topsoil strip ahead of the excavation of a pool.

2.0 Aims

The archaeological watching brief is intended to provide a record of any archaeological deposits or features which might be present below the modern ground surface. These aims will be achieved through a programme of archaeological monitoring, which will include site inspection following stripping of the topsoil over the pool and the adjacent field.

3.0 Method

The proposed work will involve an inspection, following stripping of the topsoil, of the area where the pool is to be situated, and the adjacent area. Any archaeological deposits encountered within the area of the proposed pool will be, at this stage, sample excavated to determine their date and character only. This will inform any subsequent mitigation work that the County Archaeological Officer may require. A full record will be made of these deposits and features.

Archaeological deposits encountered in the adjacent area will be planned fully and left *in-situ* as the area is to be raised above the current ground level using set aside spoil deriving from the excavation of the pool itself. Recording will be by means of pre-printed pro-formas for contexts and features, supplemented by plans (at 1:20 and 1:50), sections (at 1:10 and 1:20), monochrome print and colour slide photography. All artefacts will be recovered and recorded.

4.0 Staffing

The fieldwork will be monitored for BUFAU by Kirsty Nichol (Project Officer, AIFA). The fieldwork will be carried out by an experienced and qualified Site Supervisor.

Specialist staff will be, where appropriate:

Lynne Bevan - Flint artefacts and small finds.

Marina Ciaraldi- Charred plant remains.

Dr Emily Murray, Birmingham Environmental Laboratory - Animal bone.

Dr James Greig - Pollen and plant macro-fossils.

Dr David Smith - Micro-fauna.

Dr Susan Limbrey - Soils.

Dr Ann Woodward - Prehistoric ceramics.

Annette Hancocks - Romano-British pottery.

Stephanie Ratkai - Medieval and Post-Medieval pottery.

5.0 Report

The results of the archaeological work will be described in an illustrated report, which will contain the following:

- (a) Description of the archaeological background.
- (b) Method.
- (c) A narrative description of the results and discussion of the evidence, set in their local and regional context, supported by appropriate plans and sections.
- (d) Summary of the finds and environmental evidence.
- (e) Specialist assessments of the finds and environmental evidence.

The written report will be made publicly accessible within six months of completion. A summary report will be submitted for inclusion in the appropriate regional and period journals.

6.0 Timetable

The archaeological watching brief will be undertaken following the removal of the topsoil, which was undertaken on 18th November 2001. Resourcing of any further work will be dependant on the results of the initial survey, and the contractors' programme.

7.0 General

All project staff will adhere to the Code of Conduct of the Institute of Field Archaeologists.

The project will follow the requirements set down in the Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs (Institute of Field Archaeologists 1994).

*Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit,
20th November 2001.*