



University of Leicester

Archaeological Services

An Archaeological Watching Brief
at Old Hall Farm,
Markfield Road,
Groby, Leicestershire
(SK 5241 0757)

Gerwyn Richards



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**An Archaeological Watching Brief
at Old Hall Farm, Markfield Road,
Groby, Leicestershire.
(NGR SK 5241 0757)**

Gerwyn Richards

Planning Application: 10/00267/LBC

For: Country House Ltd.

Approved by

Signed: ...



Date: 6 July 2011

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Summary

University of Leicester Archaeological Services was commissioned by Country House Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks during conversion work at Old Hall Farm, Groby, Leicestershire. The existing buildings are being converted to residential use.

The proposed development area had been identified as being of archaeological potential, located within the historic settlement core of the village and adjacent to a Scheduled Monument. Only limited evidence of archaeological deposits was encountered during the course of the watching brief, most significantly evidence which confirmed that the bailey ditch of the nearby Groby Castle continues within the proposed development area.

The archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council, under the accession number X.A4.2011.

1. Introduction

University of Leicester Archaeological Services was commissioned by Country House Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief on groundworks carried out during the conversion of outbuildings at Old Hall Farm, Markfield Road, Groby (SK 5241 0757; *Figure 1*). Planning permission and Scheduled Monument Consent has been granted to convert the outbuildings into four residential units with associated infrastructure and landscaping. The groundworks consisted of the excavation of a number of service trenches and lifting a concrete slab.

The Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record (HER) indicates that the proposed development area lies in an area of archaeological interest, located within the medieval and post-medieval historic settlement core of the village of Groby (HER Ref MLE5991). The outbuildings themselves are within the curtilage of the Grade II* Listed Groby Old Hall (HER Ref MLE11722), which, briefly consists of a brick-built medieval manor house, the earliest component of which is the open hall which is 15th century in date. It was extended in brick in the later 15th century, however by the 16th century the hall was let as a tenant farm. To the north of the proposed development area lies Groby Castle (HER Ref MLE2758), a motte and bailey castle earthwork built by Hugh de Grantmesnil towards the end of the 11th century. It was besieged and eventually destroyed by Henry II in 1176. The castle is a Scheduled Monument (Appendix 1, National Monument Number. 17066), part of the proposed development area falls within the boundary of the Scheduled Monument.

There are also a wide variety of known archaeological sites ranging from prehistoric to post medieval within the vicinity of the proposed development area.

The Senior Planning Archaeologist, Leicestershire County Council as advisor to Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council advised that the proposed works may have an impact upon buried archaeological remains. In view of this a programme of archaeological attendance was approved. This consisted of a watching brief carried out during the groundworks undertaken by the client's contractors. This work followed Planning Policy Statement 5 (*Planning and the Historic Environment*) (Department for Communities and Local Government March 2010).

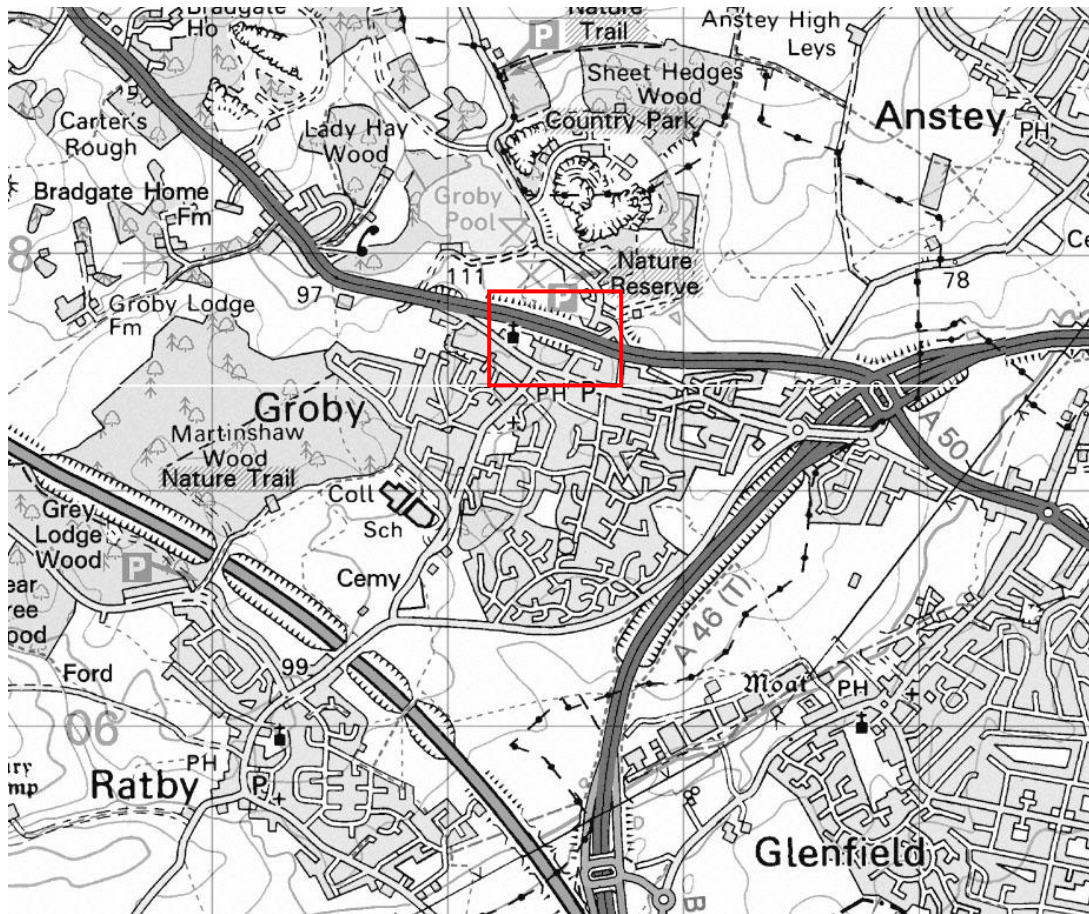


Figure 1. Site location

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2. Aims and Methodology

The aim of the archaeological work, through archaeological inspection and recording of groundworks by the client's contractors, was to:

- To identify the presence/absence of archaeological deposits.
- To establish the character, extent and date range for any archaeological deposits to be affected by the proposed ground works.
- To record any archaeological deposits to be affected by the ground works.
- To produce an archive and report of any results

The work followed the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Code of Conduct* (2006) and *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (2008), the *Guidelines for Archaeological Work in Leicestershire and Rutland* (LMARS) and adhered to the University's Health and Safety policy. The methodology to be followed was detailed in the *Design Specification for Archaeological work* (ULAS 11-146).

All groundworks were carried out by a 5.5 tonne mini digger fitted with a toothed bucket under continuous archaeological supervision. The exposed substratum was observed and the spoil searched for finds. The watching brief took place on June 10th, 14th and 27th 2011.

There has been no previous intrusive archaeological work within the proposed development area. There have been a number of limited archaeological investigations within the Scheduled Monument and the Old Hall, to the north and east. The outbuildings themselves were recorded by photographic survey (Richards 2011), the building identification suffixes have been retained for the purposes of this report (*Figure 3*).

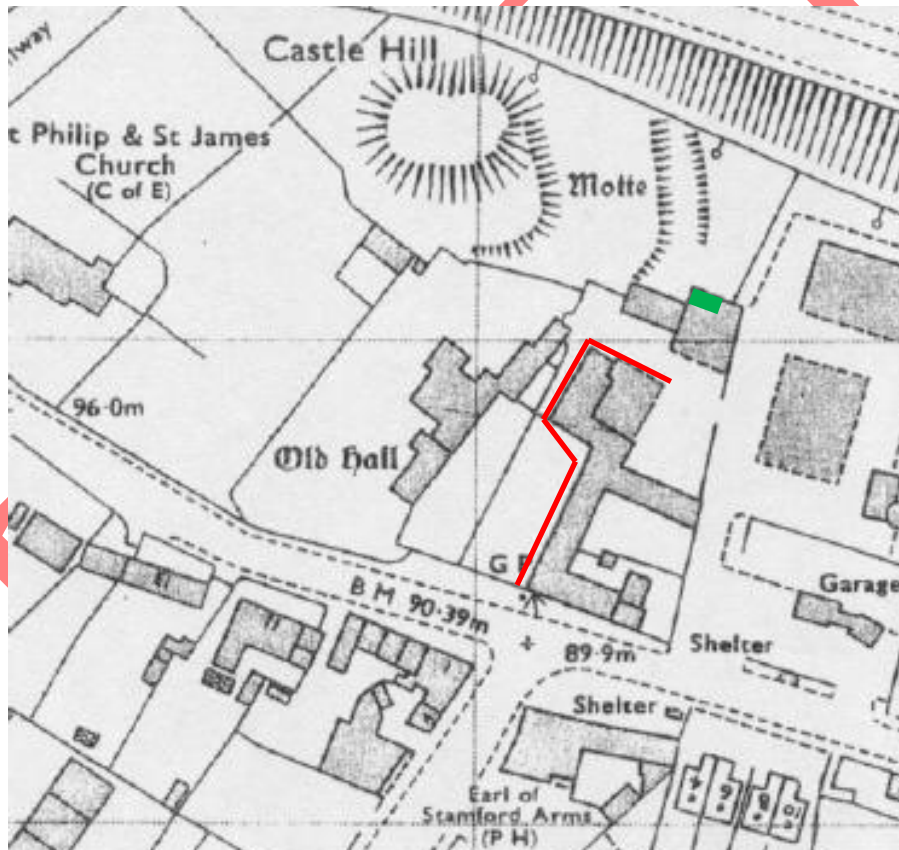


Figure 2

Principal areas of archaeological watching brief (service trench in red, lifted slab in green).
(Based upon 1991 Ordnance Survey original scale 1:2500)

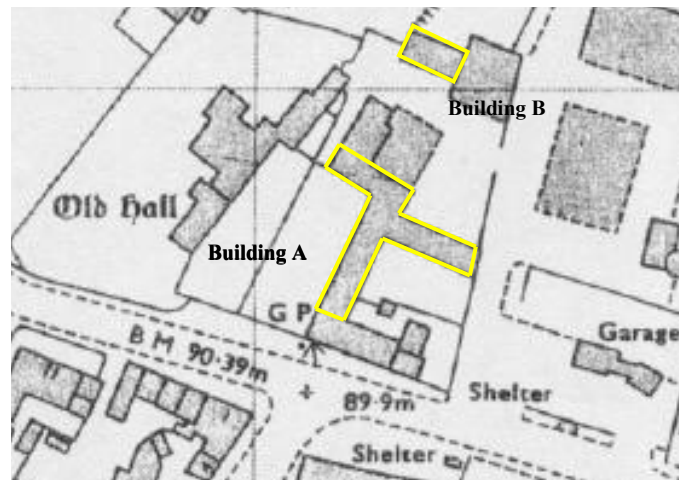


Figure 3 Building identification suffixes, retained from Richards, 2011.

3. Results

The watching brief monitored two main areas of groundworks. The majority of the proposed development area is currently laid under a modern poured concrete slab, including two areas of recently demolished buildings.

The initial watching brief was carried out during the excavation the main service trench from the Markfield Road frontage through the length of the proposed development area, skirting the standing buildings (Figure 4). The second watching brief was carried during the lifting of the concrete slab within the Scheduled Monument at the northern end of the proposed development area (Figure 4).

The service trench was approximately 1.1m wide and 1m deep; the exposed stratigraphy consisted of approximately 0.5m of modern overburden overlying weathered mudstone substrata. Towards the northern end of the service trench, adjacent to the westernmost gable of building A (Figure 4) an earlier surface of granite setts was exposed immediately below the concrete slab, probably indicating the original 19th-century track through the farmyard.

The limited remains of an earlier brick-built structure were exposed within the southernmost section of the service trench at its northern end. This is likely to be an early 19th century building recorded on early maps of the site (Figure 8). The service trench followed the external face of the wall without disturbing it and it remained *in-situ*.

The service trench uncovered largely the same undisturbed substrata throughout the proposed development area. No remains of archaeological significance were observed within the trench nor were any finds of archaeological significance recovered.

A second archaeological watching brief was carried out during the lifting of the modern concrete slab at the northern end of the proposed development area, within the boundary of the Scheduled Monument, adjacent to the easternmost gable of building B, for which Scheduled Monument consent had been granted. The works within the Scheduled Monument were limited, which along with careful

archaeological supervision ensure no unnecessary disturbance occurred. Below approximately 0.3m of concrete a surface of granite setts was exposed, below which was a 19th or early 20th-century demolition layer, which was not excavated. A short length of brick-built wall was uncovered. Most likely this wall and the demolition layer relate to one of the 19th-century buildings which are recorded within the proposed development area on early maps (*Figure 8*).

It was noted that the demolition layer became softer and noticeably sank towards the eastern part of the stripped area; this coincides with the alignment of the castle ditch, confirming that the ditch does continue within the proposed development area.

Again, no remains of archaeological significance were observed within the area nor were any finds of archaeological significance recovered.

4. Conclusion

The proposed development area occupied a promising location within a rich archaeological landscape within the historic settlement core of the village of Groby and adjacent to the Scheduled Monument of Groby Castle, but only limited evidence of archaeological deposits and no artefacts were encountered during the course of this watching brief. The service trench which crossed the full length of the proposed development area did not contain any archaeologically significant deposits. A John Flower engraving of 1826 (*Figure 7*) suggests considerable ground reduction may have occurred during the later part of the 19th Century when the current farmyard was laid out, and truncated any potential archaeological deposits.

As a result of careful planning and archaeological supervision the works within the Scheduled Monument was limited to lifting the modern concrete slab and did not disturb any earthfast archaeological remains. However it was observed that the bailey ditch did continue within the proposed development area and was marked by an area of softer ground and a slight slope down to the east.

5. Archive & Publication

The site archive consists of:

- 1 A3 permagraph sheet containing sketch plan & site notes
- 14 Black & White negatives and contact prints
- CD containing 28 digital images
- 1 A4 contact sheet
- 1 A4 photo index sheet
- 2 A4 watching brief sheet
- Unbound copy of this report (ULAS Report Number 2011-104)

The archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council under the Accession Number X.A4.2011.

A version of the summary (above) will be published in *Transactions of Leicestershire Historical & Archaeological Society* in due course.

6. References

Finn, N. 2009 *Groby Old Hall, Markfield Road, Groby, Leicestershire: Historic Building Assessment*. ULAS Report 2009-126

IfA, 2008 *Code of Conduct*

IfA, 2008 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation*

Richards, G. 2011 *A Photographic Survey of Outbuildings at Groby Old Hall Farm, Markfield Road, Groby, Leicestershire. (NGR SK 5241 0757)*. ULAS Report 2011-009

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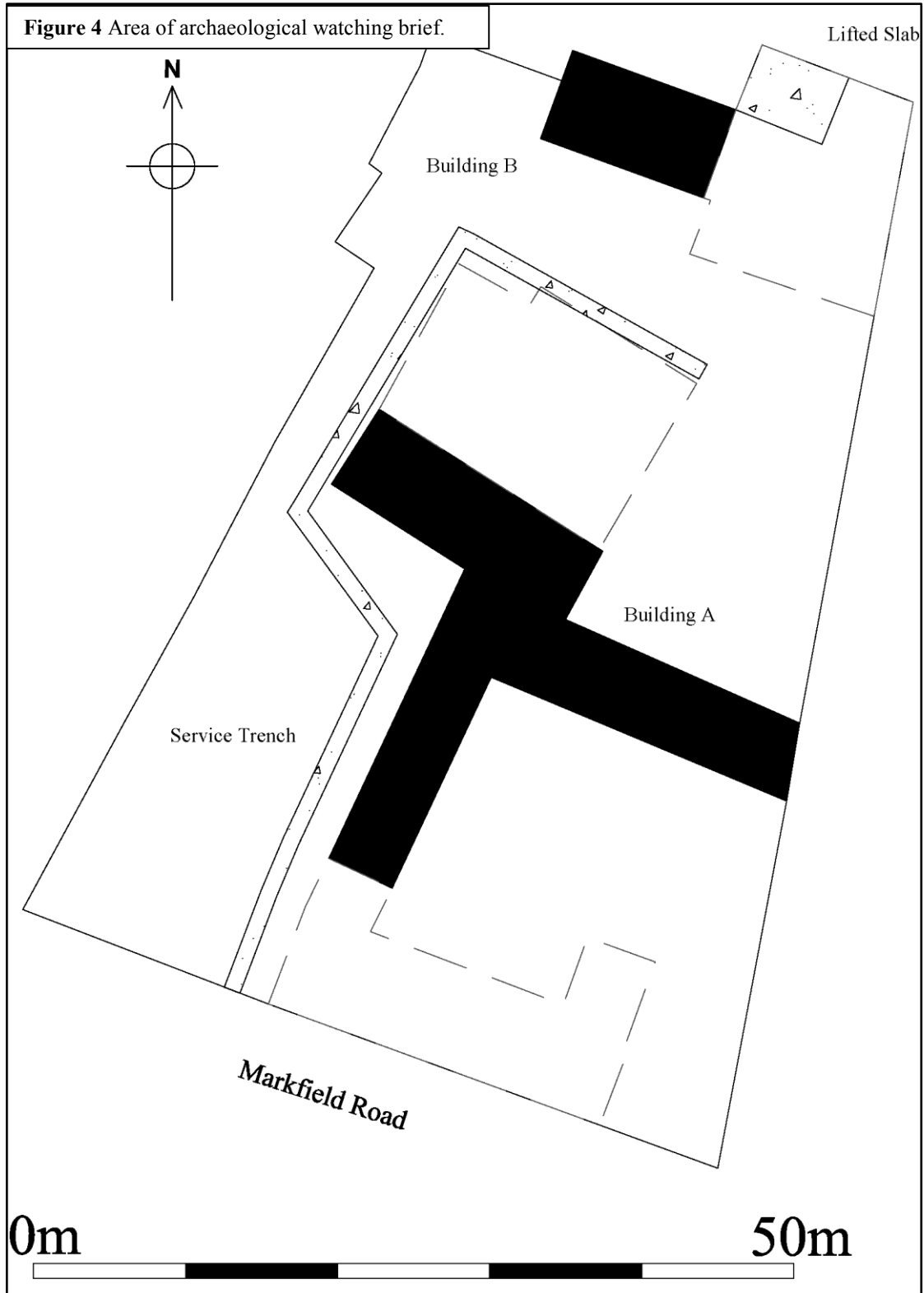




Figure 5 Representative section of service trench.



Figure 6 Area of lifted slab.



Figure 7a

Groby Old Hall from the east. (John Flower 1826). Comparison with Fig. 7b below suggests significant ground reduction may have taken place within the proposed development area.



Figure 7b

Groby Old Hall from the north-east, showing evidence of ground reduction in the foreground, with retaining wall and steps.



Figure 8

Extract from mid 19th century map (post-1840), showing buildings no longer standing within proposed development area.

Appendix 1

EXTRACT FROM ENGLISH HERITAGE'S RECORD OF SCHEDULED MONUMENTS

MONUMENT: Motte and bailey castle and manorial complex at Groby

PARISH: GROBY

DISTRICT: HINCKLEY AND BOSWORTH

COUNTY: LEICESTERSHIRE

NATIONAL MONUMENT NO: 17066

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE(S): SK52390761

DESCRIPTION OF THE MONUMENT

The monument at Groby is situated on the north side of the village and includes a motte and the surviving part of the bailey, together with the remains, above and below ground, of a manorial complex. The castle motte is situated on the north side of the site. It is oval in shape, 5-6m high with a flatish top and measures 38m from east-west and 25m north-south. To the east of the motte is a flat bailey area extending for 20m and enclosed by a ditch. The bailey ditch section survives for a length of 35m, is 15m wide and 2m deep. On its outer east side it has a slight outer bank 1m high. Excavations in advance of the by-pass road which now truncates the site on the north side revealed evidence that the motte had been built around a substantial stone building measuring 7m x 5m with walls standing at up to 2m high. The exact nature and function of this early building is not fully understood. The castle was built by Hugh de Grantmesnil towards the end of the 11th century. It was besieged and eventually destroyed by Henry II in 1176.

Subsequently the site was re-used as the location for a medieval manorial complex. Extant and below ground ruins of this manor survive in the area to the south of the motte, some incorporated into the buildings of Old Hall which now occupy the site. The most visible ruined wall not incorporated into later buildings extends for some 15m south-eastwards from the churchyard wall which lies to the west of the monument. This ruined wall stands 2m high and within its fabric are the remains of a doorway and window as well as part of a supporting buttress. This wall is shown on a map dated 1757 as extending towards the end of the surviving building to the south-east known as the 'tower' and is hence interpreted as the exterior wall of the southern range of the manorial complex. Further stretches of ruined walling also survive incorporated into modern garden walls in the area to the south of the motte. There are known to be the remains of other manorial buildings within the immediate area and, further research may show the complex to extend further. This medieval manor is thought to have been established soon after the abandonment of the motte and bailey. A chapel is mentioned in 1343 which a description of 1371 calls the 'olde chapel' and is also depicted on the map of 1757, (the present church was built on a new site in 1840). Other buildings mentioned in early sources include a cloister, a long house called a sheepcote and a dovecote. The present Groby Old Hall, built in stone, was the home of the Greys before 1446. It was extended in brick in the late 15th century. The buildings of the Old Hall are listed grade II* and are excluded from the scheduling together with all pathways and modern walls, other than those incorporating medieval fabric. The ground beneath all these features is included in the scheduling.

Appendix 2 OASIS

INFORMATION REQUIRED	EXAMPLE
Project Name	Old Hall Farm
Project Type	Watching Brief
Project Manager	Richard Buckley
Project Supervisor	Gerwyn Richards
Previous/Future work	Previous: Building Survey. Future: None
Current Land Use	Derelict
Development Type	Residential
Reason for Investigation	PPS5
Position in the Planning Process	As a condition
Site Co ordinates	SK52390761
Start/end dates of field work	June 2011
Archive Recipient	LMARS
Height min/max	89mOD
Study Area	N/A
Finds	None

DRAFT

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