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**Archaeological Observation and Recording (Watching Brief) at
Beaconsfield, Main Street, Thurlaston, Warwickshire
NGR SP46740 70890**

Jennifer Browning

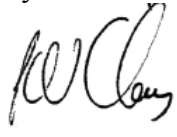


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**An Archaeological Watching Brief
At Beaconsfield, Main Street,
Thurlaston,
Warwickshire
(NGR SP46740 70890)**

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For: Mercia Building Ltd.

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Summary

Archaeological Observation and Recording (Watching Brief) was undertaken at Beaconsfield, Main Street, Thurlaston, Warwickshire (NGR SP46740 70890) in July 2013 during groundworks for a new dwelling. The work follows archaeological trial trenching in May 2013 (ULAS Report 2013-098), which revealed three archaeological features of probably medieval date. No further evidence for archaeological activity was identified during the watching brief, although several sherds of unstratified post-medieval and modern pottery were recovered. The archive will be held by Warwickshire County Council under the Accession Number T1219.

1. Introduction

This report presents the results of archaeological observation and recording (watching brief) work carried out in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), (DCLG 2012) at Beaconsfield, Main Street, Thurlaston, Warwickshire (NGR SP 46740 70890) . Beaconsfield is situated on the east side of Main Street, in Thurlaston approximately 2.5km south-west of Rugby (Figure 1). The work took place in July 2013 and was undertaken by University of Leicester Archaeological Services on behalf of Mercia Building Ltd. The work comprised groundworks for the construction of a new five bedroom dwelling and detached garage (Planning Application No: R10/106). The work follows trial trenching at the site in May 2013, which produced evidence for three archaeological features, probably dating to the medieval period (Baker 2013).

The work was requested by the Warwickshire County Council (WCC) Planning Archaeologist in their capacity as archaeological advisor to Rugby District Council, in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Section 12: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment. A strategy for a programme of archaeological work was set out in the Written Scheme for Investigation (Clay 2013), hereinafter WSI.



Figure 1: Location plan Scale 1:50000

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2. Site Description, Topography and Geology

The development area is located within Thurlaston on the corner of Main Street and Church Walk. The land was previously occupied by a former dwelling (now demolished) and gardens. The site occupies an area of *c.*540 square metres.

The British Geological Survey of Great Britain indicates that the superficial geology consists of Dunsmore Gravel (Sand and Gravel). Superficial Deposits formed up to two million years ago in the Quaternary Period and suggest a local environment previously dominated by ice age conditions. The bedrock geology consists of mudstone of the Charmouth Formation, which is a sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 190 to 202 million years ago in the Jurassic Period and indicates a local environment previously dominated by shallow seas.

(<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>) Accessed on 12th August 2013.



Figure 2: Location of site within Thurlaston from a plan by Phil Godden (supplied by client)

3. Historical and Archaeological Background

The site is located within the medieval settlement core of Thurlaston within an area of significant archaeological potential. The settlement was mentioned in the Domesday Book (1086), in which its name “Torlauestone” seems to indicate original ownership by a Scandinavian, Thorleifr - the Danelaw boundary being only a few miles to the east. Until the beginning of the 20th century it was a thriving, agricultural village owned by the Duke of Buccleuch. The village church, built in 1848, was used as a school until 1905, with Sunday services being held. In 1905, the church was licensed for public worship and furnished as a church in 1925 (<http://www.thurlaston.plus.com/thurlaston/vds.pdf>).

The Historic Environment Record for Warwickshire contains records relating to a number of sites in the vicinity. It lies within the historic core of Thurlaston close to medieval sites including the sites of a chapel (MWA3088), two granges (MWA3087/89), a moated site (MWA4105) and manor house (MWA3095). Post-medieval sites in the vicinity include the 18th century church of St Edmund and associated church house (MWA3090) and an 18th century windmill now converted to a house (MWA3093). Prehistoric sites showing as cropmarks in the vicinity include two ring ditches, which probably date to the Neolithic or Bronze Age (MWA3098; MWA4100), a pit alignment (MWA7171), and enclosures (e.g. MWA46). A Roman coin findspot is also recorded (MWA6321).

A list of other monuments on the HER, Listed Buildings, fieldwork and historic landscape characterisation, including historic maps, can be found in the trial trenching report (Baker 2013).

Archaeological trial trenching was carried out in May 2013 and revealed three features cutting the natural subsoil (Baker 2013). This work comprised the excavation of two trenches, measuring 7m and 10m respectively, which were located to target the least disturbed areas, including the new dwelling and an area to the west where hard standing for

parking was proposed (Figure 2). Trench 1, excavated in the proposed parking area, produced no archaeological deposits or finds. Trench 2 produced some evidence for medieval activity. This included a shallow pit *c.* 0.9m diameter by 0.27m deep containing a fragment of medieval ridge tile in medieval sandy ware dating to the 13th or 14th century. To the north-east a second shallow pit, measuring *c.* 0.9m diameter by 0.15m deep was observed. Four metres to the east a steep-sided circular feature 1m in diameter was observed, measuring over 1m deep. Burnt stone and a sherd of Chilvers Coton ware of 13th or 14th century date were recovered from it. Two soil samples assessed for potential to provide archaeobotanical evidence produced a high number of un-charred root and rootlets fragments together with some modern seeds, suggesting a degree of post-depositional soil disturbance which could denote intrusive material. The results therefore suggest some back of plot activity away from the medieval frontage on to Main Street. However there remains the possibility that the features may be of post-medieval or modern date with the medieval finds being residual.

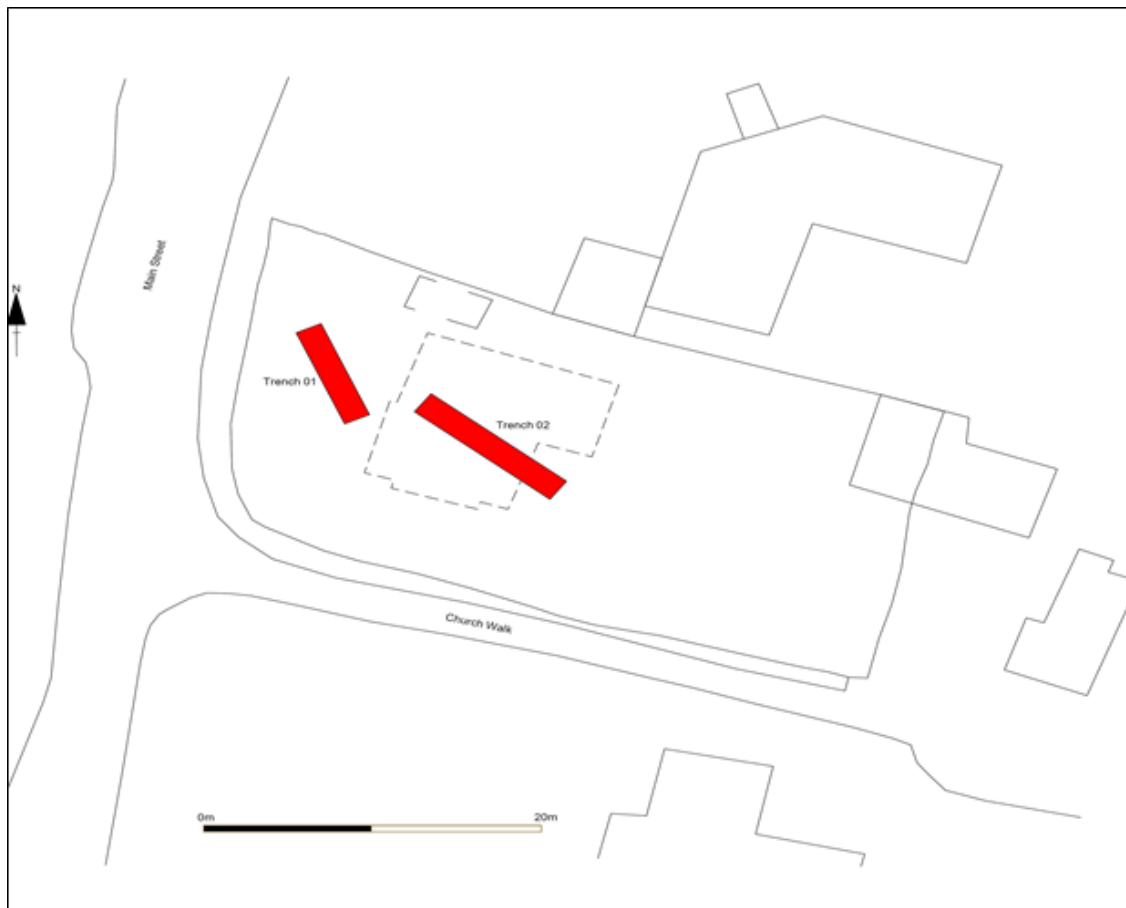


Figure 3: Location of the two trial trenches

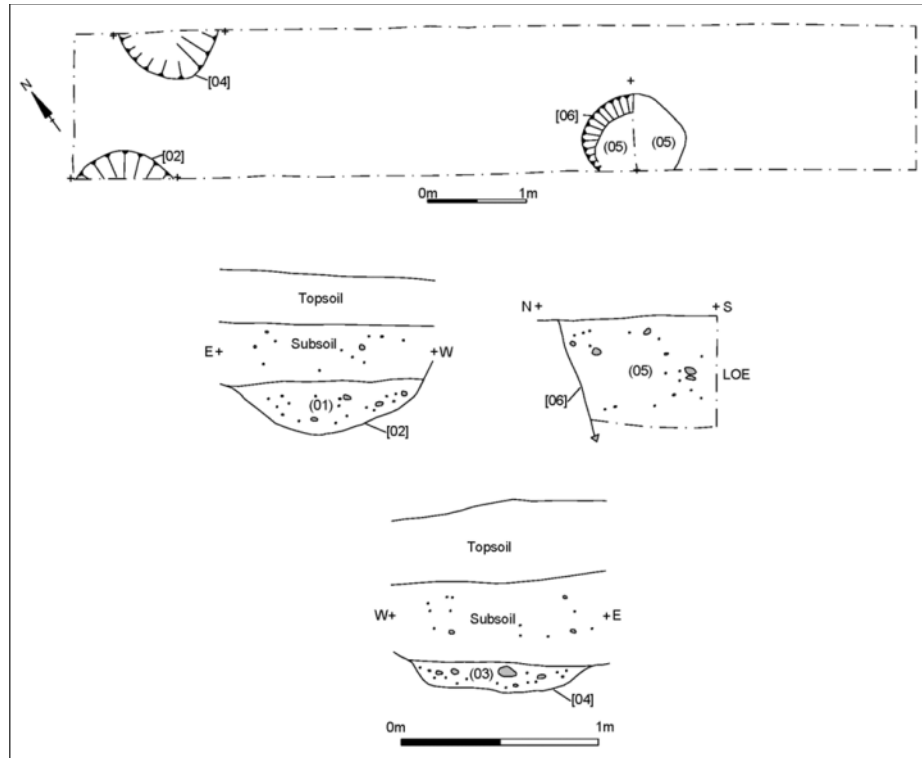


Figure 4: The features identified during the trial trenching (Baker 2013)

4. Aims and Objectives

The purpose of the current archaeological work was:

- To identify the presence/absence of any 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 advance understanding of the heritage assets
- To produce an archive and report of any results.

5. Methodology

The work followed the WSI (Clay 2013) and adhered to the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Code of Conduct* (rev. 2010) and adhered to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (rev. 2008). In order to effectively determine the presence or absence of any archaeological deposits

The programme of work consisted of the excavation of a soakaway close to the frontage of Main Street, reduction of ground level across the footprint for the new building and the excavation of foundation trenches for the new dwelling and a retaining garden wall, using a mini-digger with a toothed bucket. The exposed surfaces were visually inspected, hand-cleaned where appropriate and recorded following standard ULAS methods.

6. Results

The site was visited on the 22nd, 24th and 25th July 2013. At the time of the first visit the vegetation had been cleared from the site. A soakaway measuring 1.2m x 3m was excavated to a depth of 1.15m (see figure x for location). The topsoil consisted of mid grey brown silty loam and was 0.3-0.4m thick. The subsoil consisted of mid reddish brown silty sand with medium stones and occasional pottery fragments. The natural subsoil consisted of bright orange sands and gravels and was encountered at 0.8m below ground level. No archaeological features were observed within the area of the soakaway.

The ground was reduced by approximately 0.4m in the centre of the plot, increasing to 0.8m where the back of the new dwelling would be located. The exposed surface was inspected, although this was inhibited slightly by the friable nature of the dry subsoil; however, no archaeological deposits were seen intruding into the subsoil. A footing for a retaining garden wall was excavated along the eastern edge of the reduced level. This was 0.55m wide and 1.4m deep below former ground level and was dug into undisturbed natural subsoil.

The foundation trenches were 0.7m wide and approximately 1.0m deep (below reduced level). At the eastern end of the building they were excavated into undisturbed subsoil but some remaining overburden (*c.*0.6m thick) was still present at the western end. Where the former house had stood, areas of ground were disturbed to a depth of 0.8m. In one south-facing section a possible feature was noted, measuring 1.3m wide and 0.8m deep. However, further investigation indicated that it was likely to represent the extent of the disturbance caused by the demolition of the former dwelling.

Several sherds of pottery and occasional clay pipe stems were recovered from the subsoil, however no archaeological deposits were observed.

7. Conclusion

Archaeological observation and recording (watching brief) was undertaken at Beaconsfield, Main Street, Thurlaston during groundworks for a new dwelling. The watching brief followed the excavation of trial trenches on the site, which had revealed three archaeological features of probable medieval date. The watching brief did not identify any further archaeological activity, however several pottery sherds of post-medieval and modern date were recovered from unstratified contexts (D. Sawday, see Appendix). A single sherd of Cannon Park ware, produced in Stoke, may be evidence for medieval activity and is perhaps not unexpected within the medieval village core. A fragment of clay pipe recovered from the site is also thought to have been made at Stoke in the 19th century. Pottery dating from the later 17th to the 18th and 19th centuries was also present.

8. Archive

The site archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council HNET, with the Accession No: T1219

The archive contains site notes (watching brief pro forma sheets), digital photographs and photo index.

The report is listed on the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) held by the Archaeological Data Service at the University of York. Available at: <http://oasis.ac.uk/>



Figure 5: Plan of the development (supplied by client)

9. Publication

The report will be added to the Archaeology Data Service's (ADS) Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) database held by the University of York.



Figure 6: The trench for the retaining garden wall, showing the strata



Figure 7: Footing trench running NW-SE in the centre of the house footprint. Disturbed ground can be seen in the centre of the trench.

OASIS Information

Project Name	Beaconsfield, Main St. Thurlaston, Warks
Accession Number	T1219
Project Type	Archaeological observation and recording (watching brief)
Project Manager	P. Clay
Project Supervisor	J. Browning
Previous/Future work	-
Current Land Use	Residential garden
Development Type	Single new dwelling
Reason for Investigation	As a condition
Position in the Planning Process	Full determination
Site Co ordinates	NGR SP 46740 70890
Start/end dates of field work	22.07.2013 to 25.07.13
Archive Recipient	Warwickshire County Council
Study Area	c. 540 square metres

10. Bibliography

Baker, S. 2013 *An Archaeological trial trench evaluation at Beaconsfield, Main Street, Thurlaston, Warwickshire* (SP 4683 7112) ULAS Report 2013-098

Brown, D., 2008 *Standard and guidance for the preparation of Archaeological Archives* (Institute for Archaeologists)

Clay, P. 2013 *Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Observation and Recording (watching brief) Beaconsfield, Main Street, Thurlaston, CV23 9JS* ULAS 13/688

Institute for Archaeologists (IfA), (rev. 2012), *Code of Conduct*

Institute for Archaeologists (IfA), (rev. 2008), *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*

11. Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Mercia Building Ltd for their co-operation and assistance on site. The fieldwork was carried out by Jennifer Browning. The historical maps were consulted during a visit to Warwickshire Public Record Office undertaken by Sophie Clarke. Deborah Sawday identified the pottery and Patrick Clay managed the project.

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12.08.2013

Appendix I: The Post Roman Pottery

Deborah Sawday

The Finds

The finds are listed below (table 1).

The Pottery and Clay Pipe

The pottery, four sherds, weighing 80 grams, was catalogued with reference the guidelines set out by the Medieval Pottery Research Group, (MPRG 1998), (MPRG, 2001) and the Warwickshire fabric series (Soden and Ratkai 1998). Also present was part of a clay tobacco pipe. All these finds are from unstratified contexts.

The Cannon Park ware is of interest, and may be evidence of medieval activity in the area, which lies within the core of the village. Typically the sherd is local in origin, the pottery production centre at Stoke in Coventry lies less than 20 km to the north-west of Thurlaston. The clay pipe fragment is also thought to have been made at Stoke in the 19th century. Pottery dating from the later 17th to the 18th and 19th centuries was also present.

The Flint

A flint was also recorded in an unstratified context. This was a secondary flake with edge wear or a possible retouch (W. Jarvis, pers. comm.)

Bibliography

MPRG, 1998 *A Guide to the Classification of Medieval Ceramic Forms* Medieval Pottery Research Group, London

MPRG, 2001 *Minimum Standards for the Processing, Recording, Analysis and Publication of Saxon and Medieval Ceramics*

Ratkai, S. and Soden, I., 1998 *Warwickshire Medieval and Post-Medieval Ceramic Type Series*. Unpublished manuscript held by Warwickshire Museum Archaeological Field Services.

Redknap, M., 1985 'Twelfth And Thirteenth Century Coventry Wares, With Special Reference To A Waster Group From The Cannon Park Estate (Lychgate Road) Coventry'. *Medieval Ceramics* **9**, 65-77

Taylor, S. and Gault, W.R., 1979 in P. Davey (ed.) 1979 *The Archaeology of the Clay Tobacco Pipe I: Britain: The Midlands and Eastern England*, BAR (Brit. Ser.) **63**

Table 1: The pottery by fabric, sherd numbers and weight (grams) and tobacco pipe by context.

Context	Fabric/ware	no	gr	
POT				
U/S	SQ231/2 - Cannon Park ware	1	8	Externally glazed body, probably part of a jug, 13th - 14th C, (Redknap 1985).
U/S	MANG – Manganese Mottled ware	1	3	Body fragment with external reeding, part of a tankard, c.1680-1740.
U/S	- Imitation Manganese Mottled ware	1	12	Red slip under a lead glaze with manganese streaks later 17th – early mid-18th C.
U/S	STE – English Stoneware	1	57	Lid seated and everted brown salt glazed stoneware jar rim with a horizontal handle on shoulder, grey body and light brown iron wash externally under the salt glaze, 18th-19th C.
MISCELLANEOUS				
U/S	China Clay	1		Part of a tobacco pipe bowl and stem. A similar pipe thought to be a Stoke, Coventry product, is dated to the 19th century (Taylor and Gault 1979, 31c).
U/S	Flint	1		A secondary flake, edge wear or possible retouch?

Site/Parish: Beaconsfield, Main St, Thurlaston, Warwicks Accession No.: T/1219 Document Ref: thurlaston1.docx Material: pot & misc. finds Site Type: village core	Submitter: J. Browning Identifier: D. Sawday Date of Identification: 17.08.2013 Method of Recovery: watching brief Job Number: 13/688
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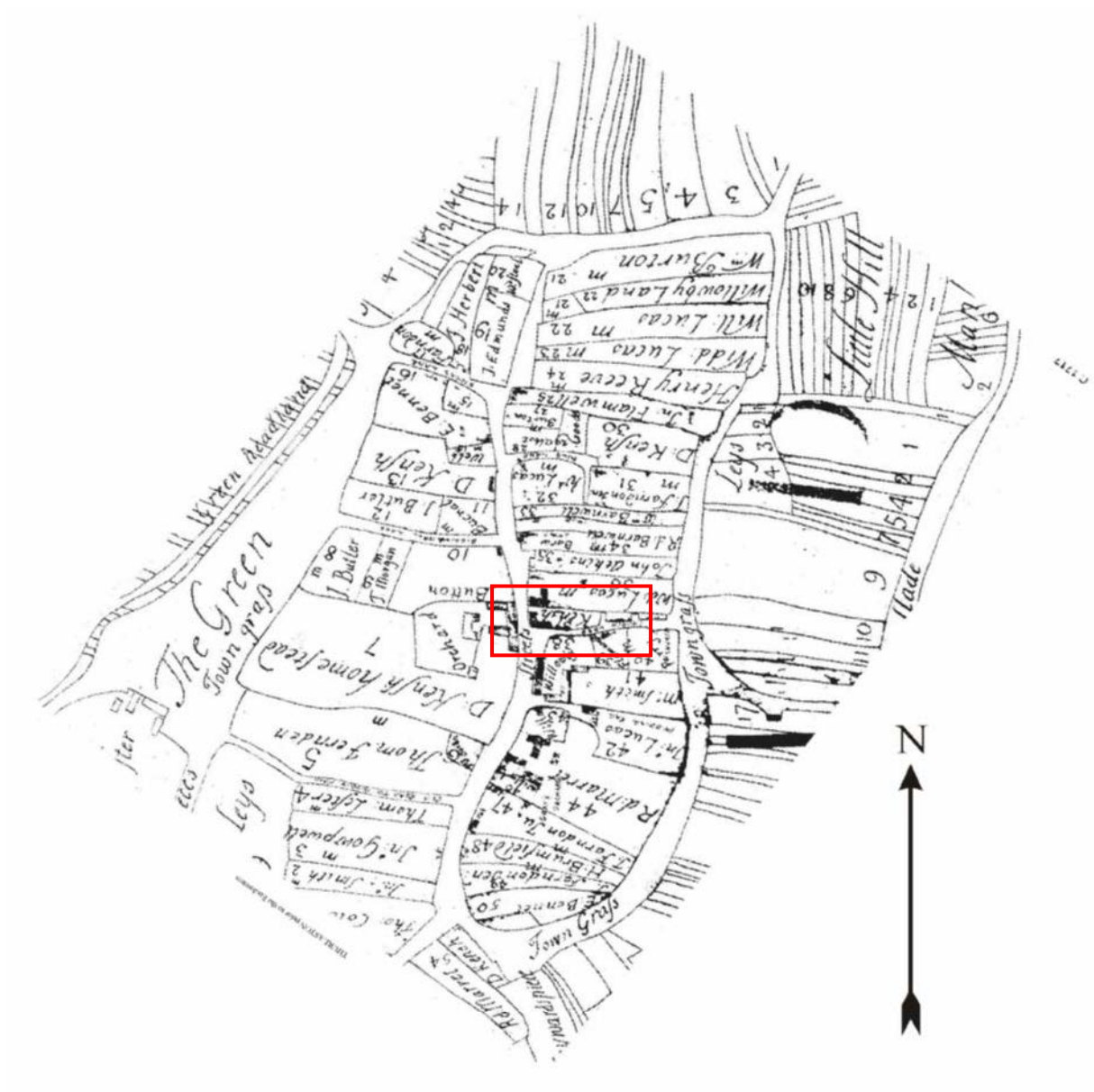


Figure 9: Detail from 1775 map of the area with development areas outlined (from <http://www.thurlston.plus.com/thurlston/vds.pdf>)

Other historical maps can be found in Baker (2013).

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