



University of
Leicester

Archaeological Services

**A Photographic Survey of the
Waterside Friars Mill site,
Bath Lane, Leicester
NGR: SK 580 046**

Sophie Clarke



ULAS Report No 2014-065.
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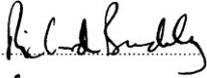
**A Photographic Survey of the
Waterside Friars Mill site,
Bath Lane, Leicester**

NGR: SK 580 046

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For: Leicester City Council

Checked by

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Summary

An English Heritage Level 2 photographic survey was carried out on the 1st of April 2014 of the waterside Friars Mill site, Bath Lane, Leicester. The site was established as a wool mill in the late 18th century, and was the premises of Donisthorpes and Co. from the late 19th century until closure in 2009. In 2012, the site was subject to an arson attack but is now proposed for restoration and redevelopment by Leicester City Council. The archive will be deposited with Leicester City Council Museums Service under the accession number A14.2014.

Background

This document presents the results of a photographic survey of the Friars Mill site, located on Bath Lane, Leicester SK580 046.

The principal mill building which fronts onto the River Soar is thought to have been constructed between 1794 and 1820. The Leicester map of 1828 records the site as 'Stubbing Mill', stubbing being a part of the process of milling raw wool. By 1887, the site is recorded as Friars Mills and incorporates the Pump House and Bath Lane Cottages. By the late 19th century the site was owned by Donisthorpes and Co., later described as 'suppliers of Hand Knitting Wools and Cotton Yarns to Central Europe and Scandinavia for over 100 years' in a trade advertisement of 1938. The site closed by 2005, with some of the later ancilliary structures demolished in 2009. In 2012, the empty buildings on site were subject to arson attack and are presently in a poor state of repair.

Leicester City Council is proposing a scheme of restoration and redevelopment for the listed buildings on site, in order to bring them into new use. It was therefore requested by the City Archaeologist that an English Heritage Photographic Survey should be made to record the buildings in their present state, prior to the implementation of the redevelopment works.



Figure 1. Waterside Friars Mill site, looking north-east.

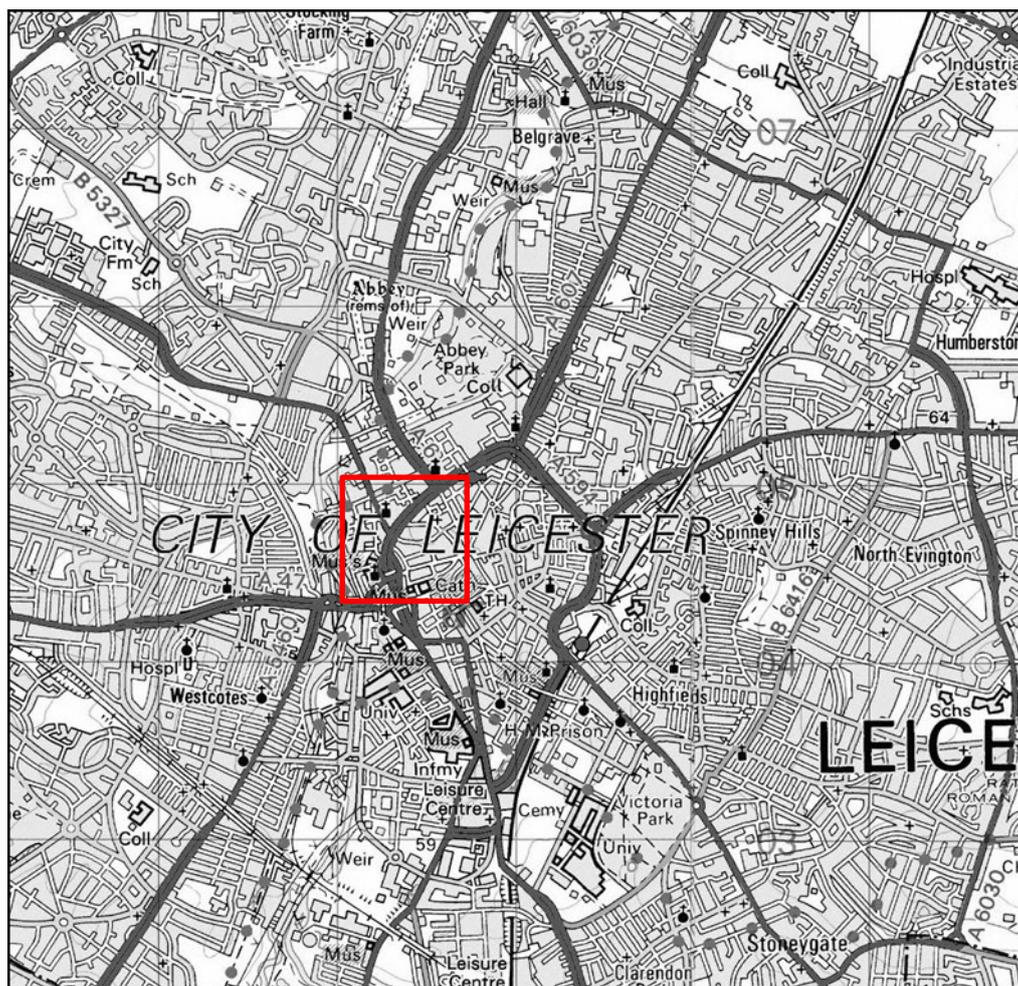


Figure 2. Site location in Leicester

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Figure 3. Site plan (supplied by Hayward Architects; not to scale)

Methodology

The photographic record followed the photographic section of Level 2 of English Heritage's *Understanding Historic Buildings* (2006). It included:

Item 1: General view or views of the exterior of the building.

Item 2: The overall appearance of principal rooms and circulation areas.

Item 3: Detailed coverage of the building's exterior appearance.

Item 4: Any external detail, structural or decorative, which is relevant to the building's design, development and use and which does not show adequately on general photographs.

Item 5: The building's relationship to its setting, to other buildings, or to a significant viewpoint.

Item 6: Internal detail, structural and decorative, which is relevant to the building's design, development and use, and which does not show adequately on general photographs.

A summary of the building's type or purpose, historically and at present, its materials and possible date (s).

All work followed the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Code of Conduct* (rev. 2010) and adhered to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing buildings or Structures* (2008). In addition, Leicestershire County Council's *Guidelines and Procedures for Archaeological Work in Leicestershire* were adhered to.

The buildings were photographed using a Pentax K-7 digital camera and Pentax P30 35mm film camera. The film used was Ilford HP5 rated at 400asa. Digital images were taken in proprietary RAW format and converted into TIFFs for the archive.

A set of floor plans produced by Greenhatch Architects was supplied by Leicester City Council and have been used to locate the archived photographs. Selected photographs from the archive have been reproduced below in order to illustrate the report.

Site Visit

The photographic survey was carried out on the 2nd of April 2014 by Sophie Clarke of University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS), following procedure defined by English Heritage guidelines (2006) 'Understanding Historic Buildings: a guide to good recording practice'.

At the time of the site visit, the buildings were derelict and in a poor state of repair. All windows were boarded shut, with recently installed security doors at ground floor level providing the only means of access. There was very little natural light entering into the buildings and rooms were not thoroughly inspected, due to concerns over rotten floorboards. The first floor over the boiler house and third floor over Friars Mill, which were originally surveyed by Greenhatch Architects in 2003, were no longer present, the latter having been destroyed by the 2012 fire.

The Pump House showed signs of having recently been occupied by squatters and was infested with pigeons. The first floor is accessible via a modern timber staircase.

The Bath Lane cottages were not accessible at the time of the site visit: the ground floor was boarded shut and the first floor was considered unsafe to enter, but could be seen from the first floor of the Bath Lane Mill.

Results

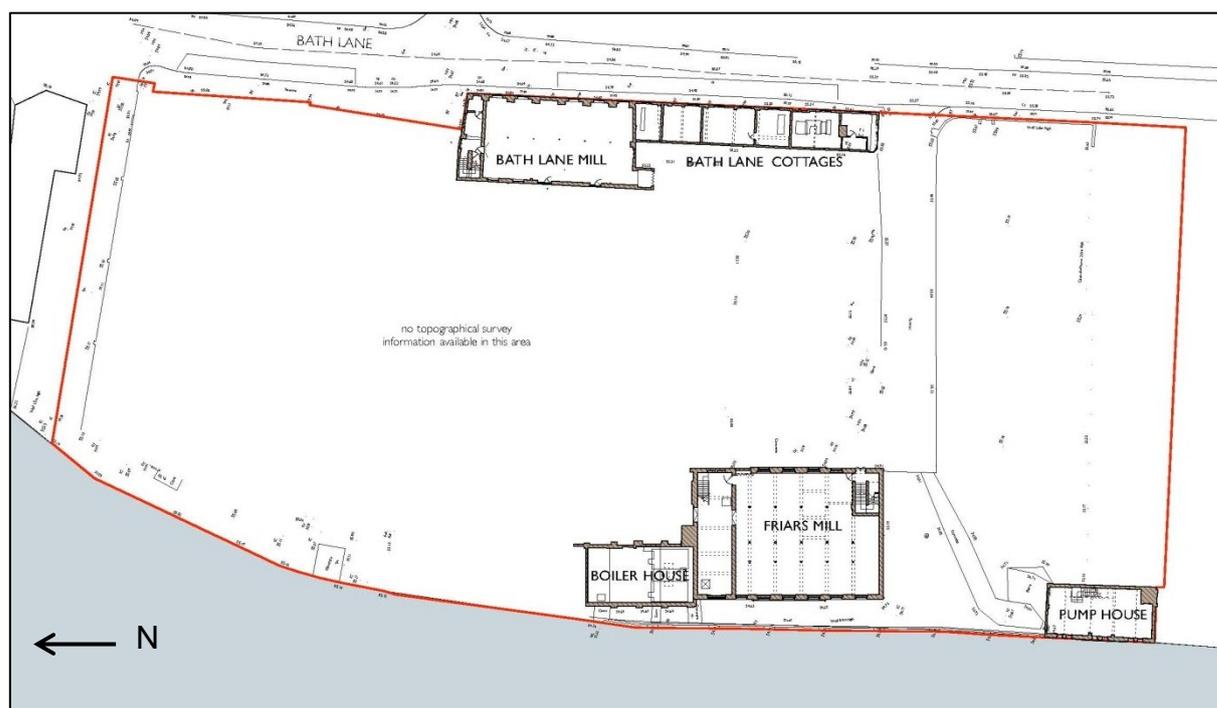


Figure 4. Site plan (supplied by Levitate Architects, not to scale).

1. Friars Mill and Boiler House

Listed building description

Donisthorpe and Company Limited: Factory overlooking River Soar



© Mr Andy Haigh 16/04/2002

A factory building thought to have been erected for textile manufacturing, with origins in the late C18. The Donisthorpe and Company's mill site, also known as Friar's Mill, is thought to have been developed as a textile manufacturing site from the late C18 onwards. The first mill is believed to have been a wool spinning mill, which by 1828 had developed into a larger U-shaped complex identified on John Flower's map of that date as 'Stubblings Mill'. From the 1820's, this part of Leicester developed into a centre for the worsted spinning industry. The processes housed in the early mill buildings are believed to have included wool preparation - carding and combing - and spinning, the final product being prepared for framework knitting. The main mill building is thought to date to the period 1794-1820, and whilst the initial processes contained within the building may have been hand-operated, the subsequent adaptation and enlargement of the main mill and later extensions and additions were related to powered processes. It is not certain when steam power was first used on the site, but the surviving engine house is thought to date to 1860-1880. The site's power generation capacity was later enhanced by the construction of a replacement engine house to the south of the mill. By the late C19 the site was owned by Donisthorpes, later described as 'suppliers of Hand Knitting Wools and Cotton Yarns to Central Europe and Scandinavia for over 100 years' in a trade advertisement of 1938. From the mid-C20, all branches of the English textile industry were in decline, and by the end of the century, the site had been closed with many of the smaller ancillary buildings having already been demolished. All of the remaining ancillary structures were demolished in 2009.

MATERIALS: the mill is constructed of red brick, with a hipped roof covered in slates laid to diminishing courses.

PLAN: rectangular on plan, with a surviving added structure at the north end.

EXTERIOR: the building is of three storeys and attics, and seven bays, the central three bays being slightly advanced below an open pediment. The window openings are set beneath shallow segmental arches and are fitted with wooden cross window frames with glazing bars. The ground floor windows are tall openings and were overboarded at the time of inspection. There are no ground floor windows to its south end and part of the north end is enclosed within a later extension on the river frontage side of the building. The east front of the building has been recently fully exposed by the removal of later accretions, revealing door openings at half landing level to the upper floors and a blocked opening at ground floor level to the north end bay. The roof supports a central hexagonal cupola with a lead-covered domed roof originally surmounted by a weathervane, now removed. There are 4 small dormer windows within the front and rear roof slopes which light the attic floor. At the north end of the building is an attached building with shallow full-height buttresses to the side walls and clerestory-like windows at eaves level on the west elevation. It does not appear to be shown, in its present form at least, on George Henton's 1893 painting of the site. The building has had a large opening formed in its north gable.

INTERIOR: the mill interior has tall timber queen-post roof trusses with collars, angle struts and squat ashlar posts; an arrangement which produces an unimpeded central roof space. The roof slopes are underboarded so the purlins and the upper sections of the principal rafters are not visible. In the lower floors, bridging beams are supported by a variety of iron columns, some with bolting faces for brackets to

support line shafting. There appears to be no consistent design or location pattern for the columns throughout the mill, suggesting that they were introduced incrementally in response to both increased floor loadings and the introduction of powered processes.

FIXTURES AND FITTINGS: there are no fixtures or fittings of special interest and the building has been cleared of machinery. The attached building at the north end of the mill has also been stripped of its plant and equipment.

Photographic Survey

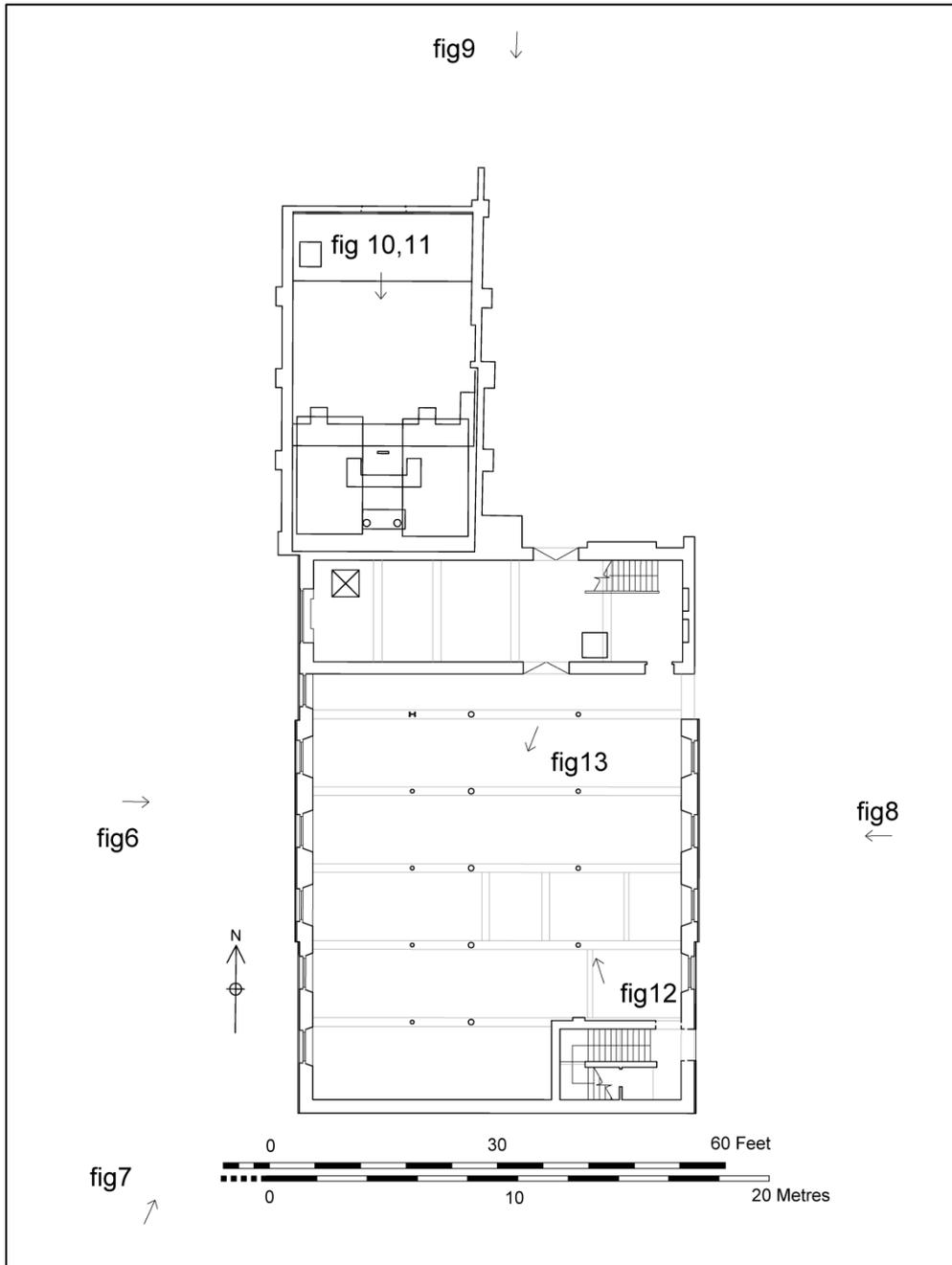


Figure 5. Location of selected photographs (figs 6-13) on ground floor plan of Friars Mill and Boiler House, to north (plan produced by Greenhatch Architects).



Figure 6. Friars Mill and Boiler House, looking east.



Figure 7. Friars Mill and Boiler House, looking north-east.



Figure 8. Friars Mill and Boiler House, looking west.



Figure 9. Friars Mill and Boiler House, looking south.



Figure 10. Boiler House interior, looking south.



Figure 11. Boiler House, first floor ceiling structure, looking south.



Figure 12. Friars Mill interior, ground floor. Looking north-west.



Figure 13. Friars Mill interior, ground floor, looking south-west.

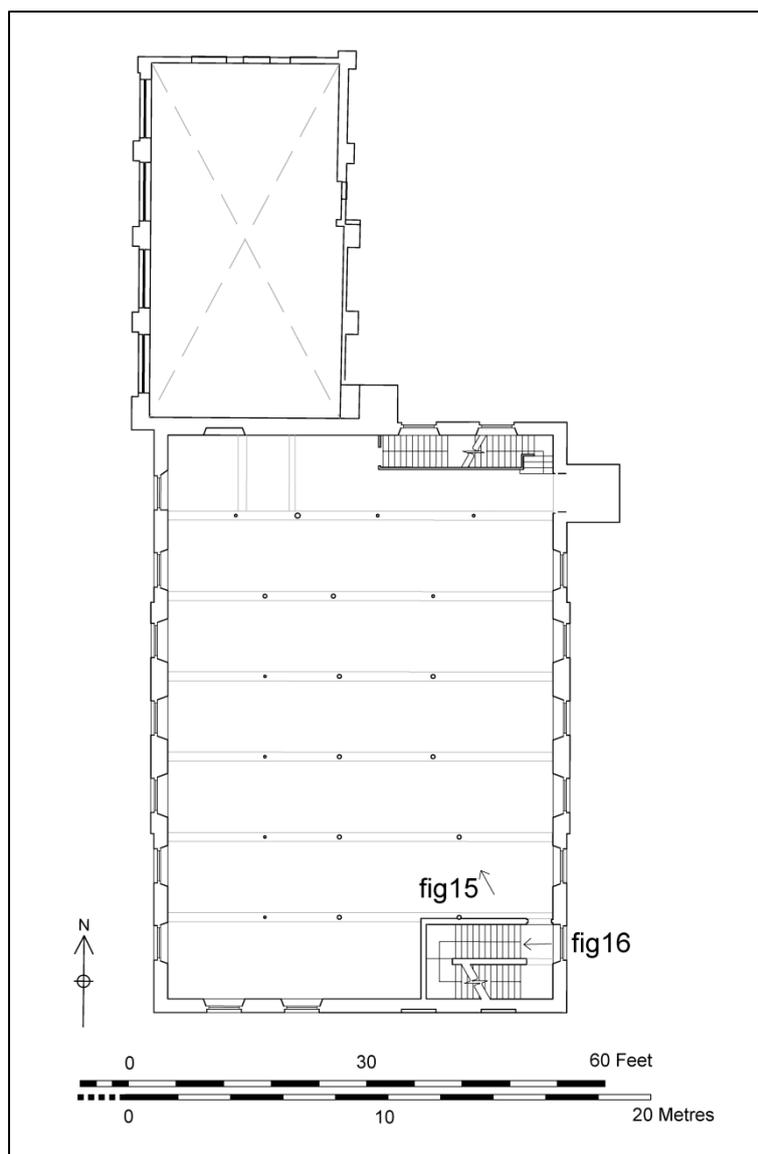


Figure 14. Location of selected photographs (figs 15-16) on first floor plan of Friars Mill (plan produced by Greenhatch Architects).



Figure 15. Friars Mill, first floor, looking north-west.



Figure 16. Friars Mill, first floor staircase, looking west.

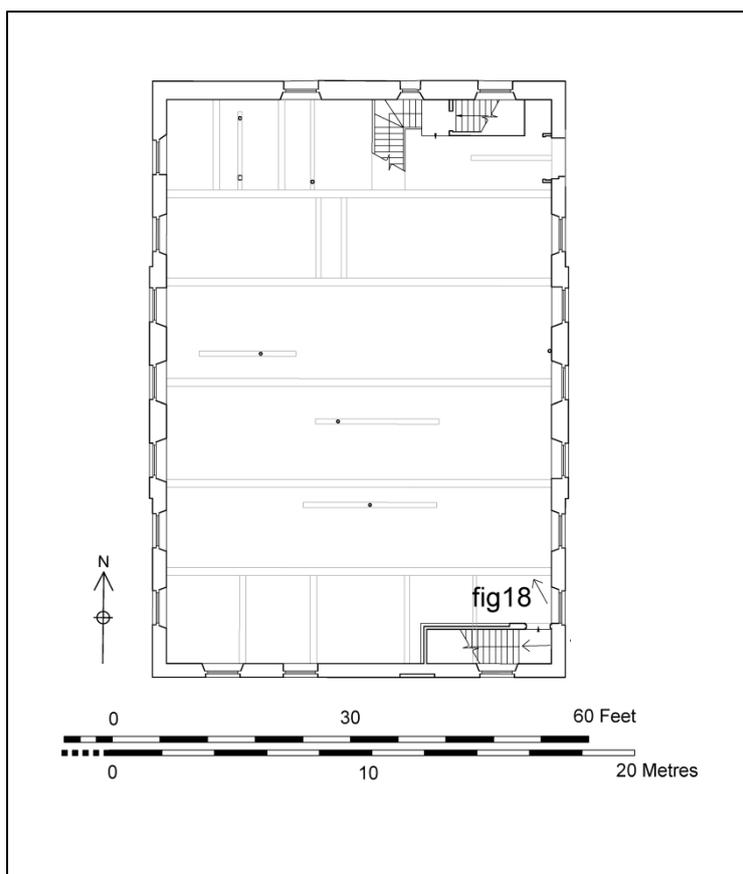


Figure 17. Location of figure 18, on second floor plan of Friars Mill (plan produced by Greenhatch Architects).



Figure 18. Friars Mill, second floor, looking north-west.

2. The Pump House

Listed building description

SK 50 SE SP/562

II 718/562



© Mr. Brian Arnold 16/04/2001

Mid to late C19. Steam Engine House. Brick. Two storeys. Pitched tile roof carried up to form a small pyramid at north end. Tapering brick stack at south east corner. Three bays, each with one pair of windows, segmental headed on first floor and round-arched on ground floor. Also known as the Sarah Engine House, allegedly after the wife of the mill owner, A.R. Donisthorpe, who bought it in 1866. However, the adjoining street was called Sarah Street in 1828.

Listing NGR: SK 57993 04610

Photographic Survey

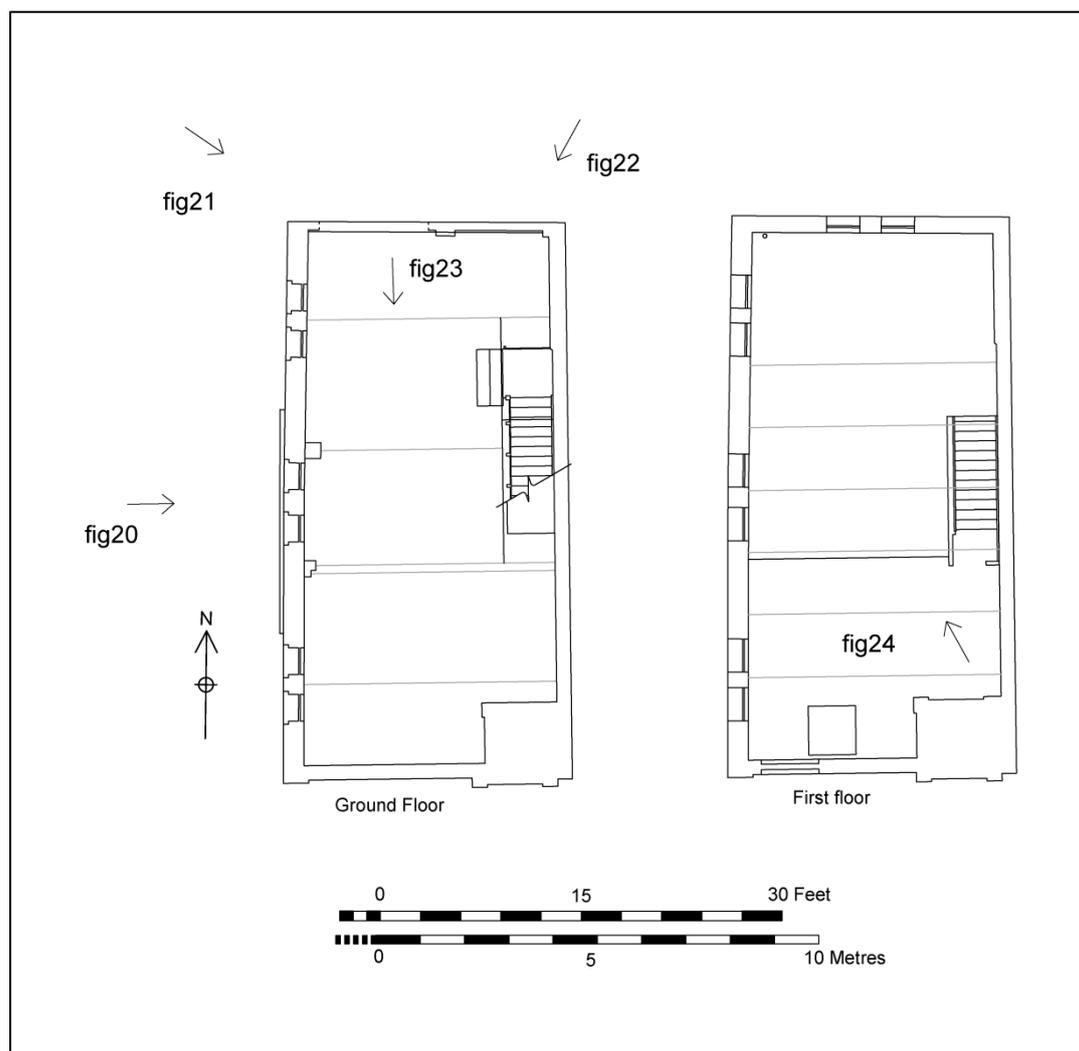


Figure 19. Location of selected photographs (figs 20-24) on ground and first floor plans of Pump House (plans produced by Greenhatch Architects).



Figure 20. Pump House, looking east.



Figure 21. Pump House, looking south-east.



Figure 22. Pump House, looking south-west.



Figure 23. Pump House interior, ground floor, looking south.



Figure 24. Pump House interior, first floor, looking north-west.

3. Bath Lane Buildings

Listed Building Description

No. 16-24 Bath Lane (or Sarah Street) (Donisthorpe and Company Limited range of three buildings to right of entrance fronting Bath Lane)

SK 5804 7/211



©Mr Andy Haigh 16/4/2002

Building immediately right of entrance : early C19, red brick, slate roof with hipped end, two storeys, three widely-spaced dashes with glazing bars in flush casing, segmental brick arches to ground floor, two of ground floor windows have shutters, coupled moulded doorcases with rectangular fanlights and fielded-panel doors.

Centre section : probably early C19, factory building, red brick, slate hipped roof, two storeys, four windows, first floor with segmental brick arches over horizontally sliding cashes with glazing bars. Ground floor iron-frame windows with brick segmental arches. Building at far right at end : probably C18 or early C19, factory building, red brick, slate roof with one end gabled the other hipped three storeys, symmetrical front of seven windows, segmental brick arches, fixed- light wood windows with glazing bars, the ground floor with shutters and one blind. Doorway on right with brick segmental arch and rectangular fanlight with glazing bars, blocked elliptical-arch doorway at centre.

Listing NGR: SK58024 04688

Photographic Survey

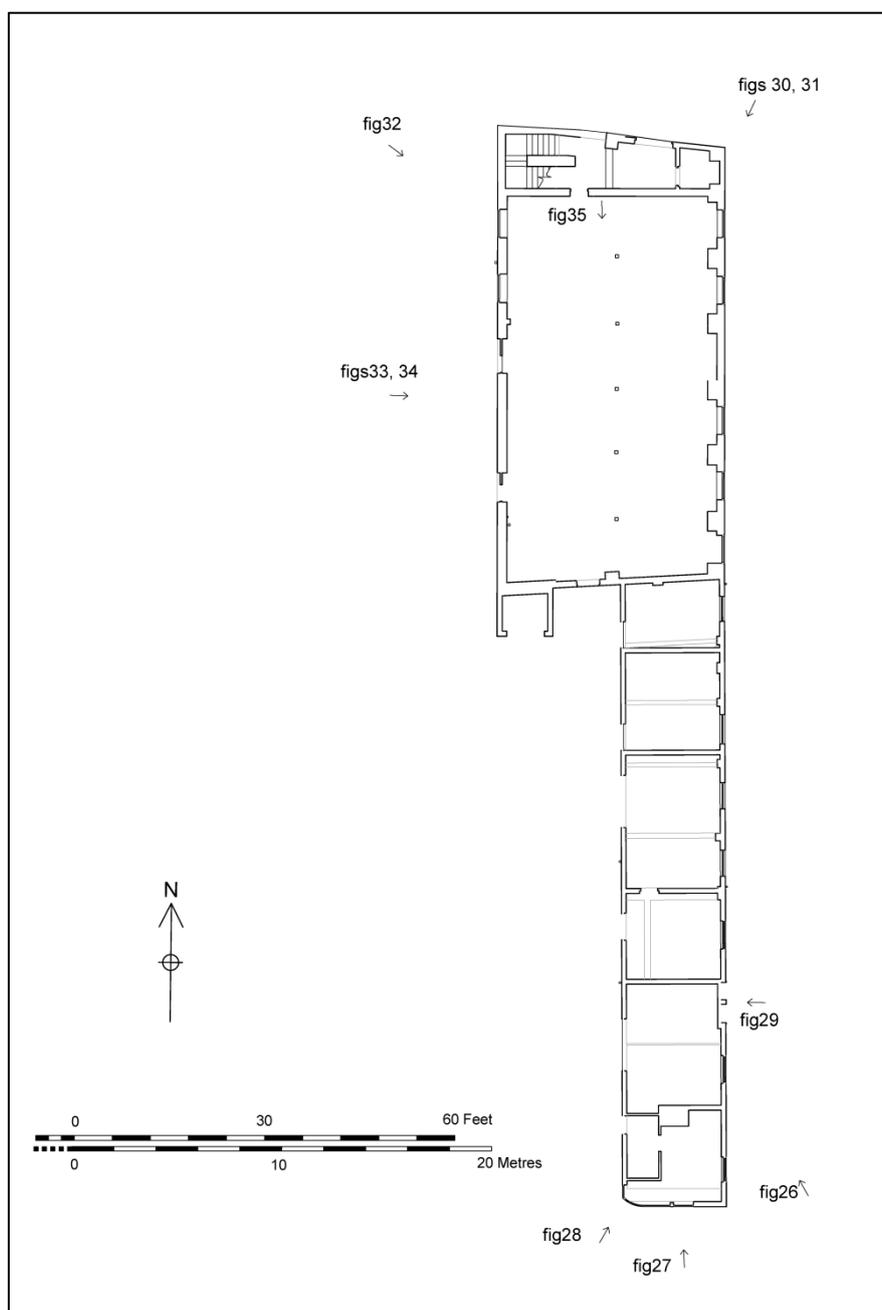


Figure 25. Location of selected photographs (figs 26-35) on ground floor plan of Bath Lane Mill and Cottages (plan produced by Greenhatch Architects).



Figure 26. Bath Lane cottages, looking north-west.



Figure 27. Bath Lane cottages and factory gate, with Donsithorpes sign, looking north.

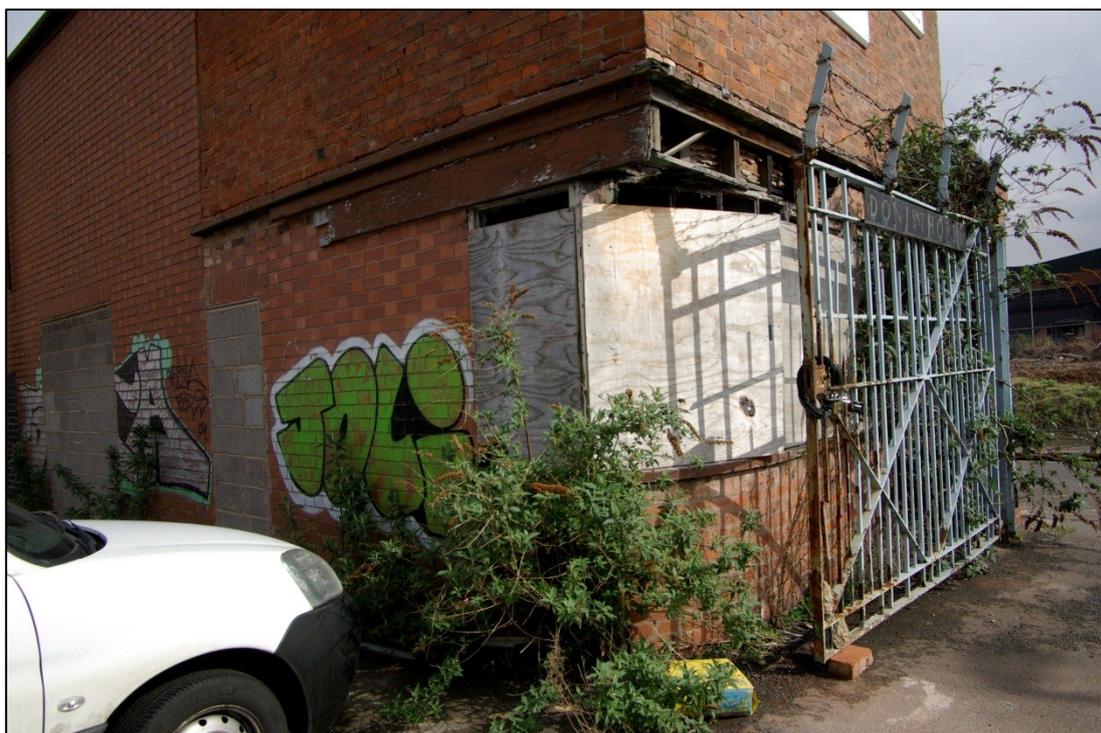


Figure 28. Bath Lane Cottages, timber windows and fascia boards to former offices, looking east.



Figure 29. Bath Lane cottages, pair of moulded timber doorcases, with boarded fanlights and panelled doors. Looking west.



Figure 30. Bath Lane Mill, looking south-west.



Figure 31. Bath Lane frontage, looking south.



Figure 32. Bath Lane Mill, looking south-east.



Figure 33. Bath Lane Mill, looking east.



Figure 34. Detail of above, with blocked window openings and scars of removed structures. Looking east.



Figure 35. Bath Lane Mill, ground floor interior. Looking north.

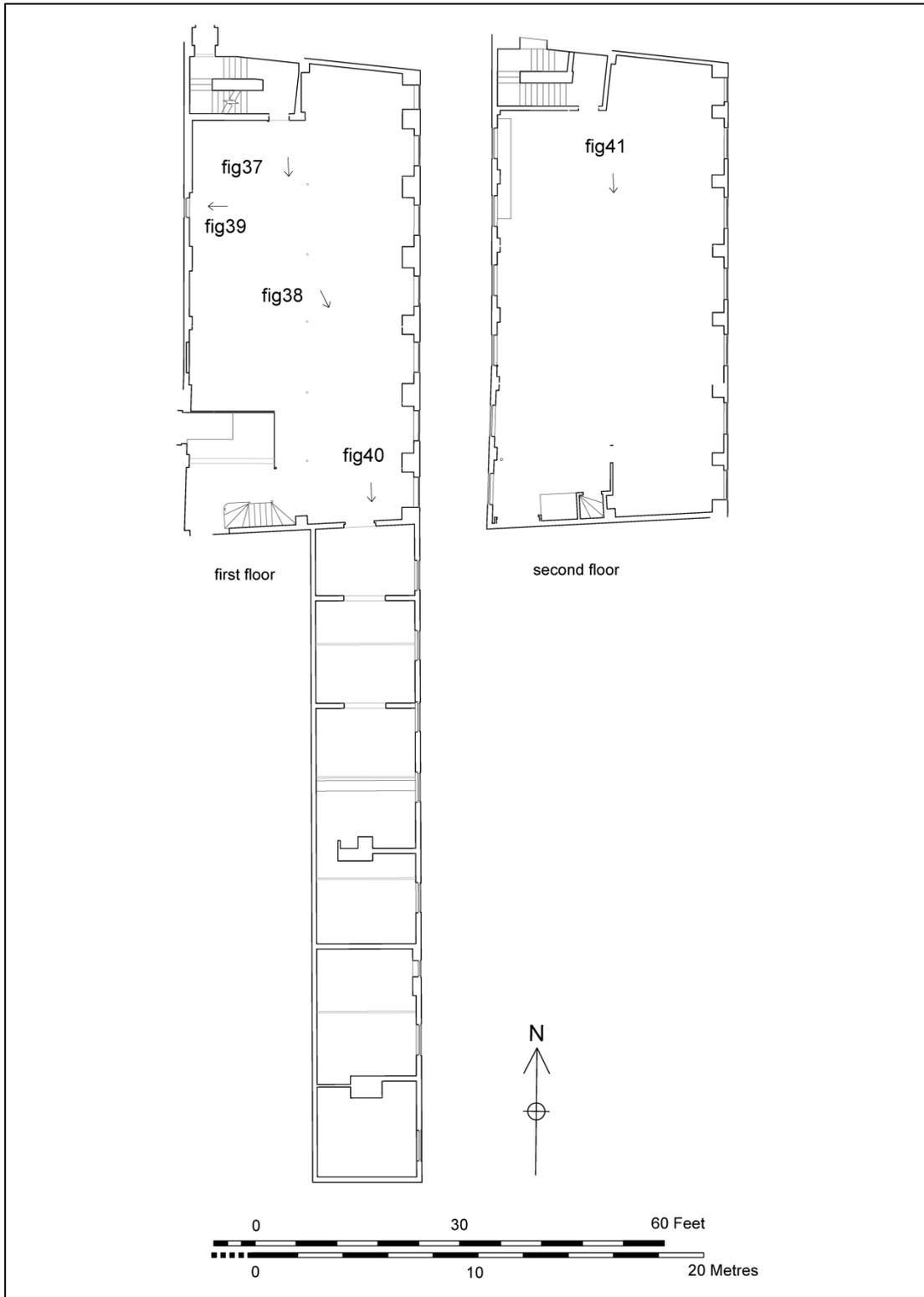


Figure 36. Location of selected photographs (figs 37-41) on first and second floor plans of Bath Lane Mill and Cottages (plan produced by Greenhatch Architects).



Figure 37. Bath Lane Mill interior, first floor, looking south.



Figure 38. Bath Lane Mill, first floor, timber multi-pane window frames, looking south-east.

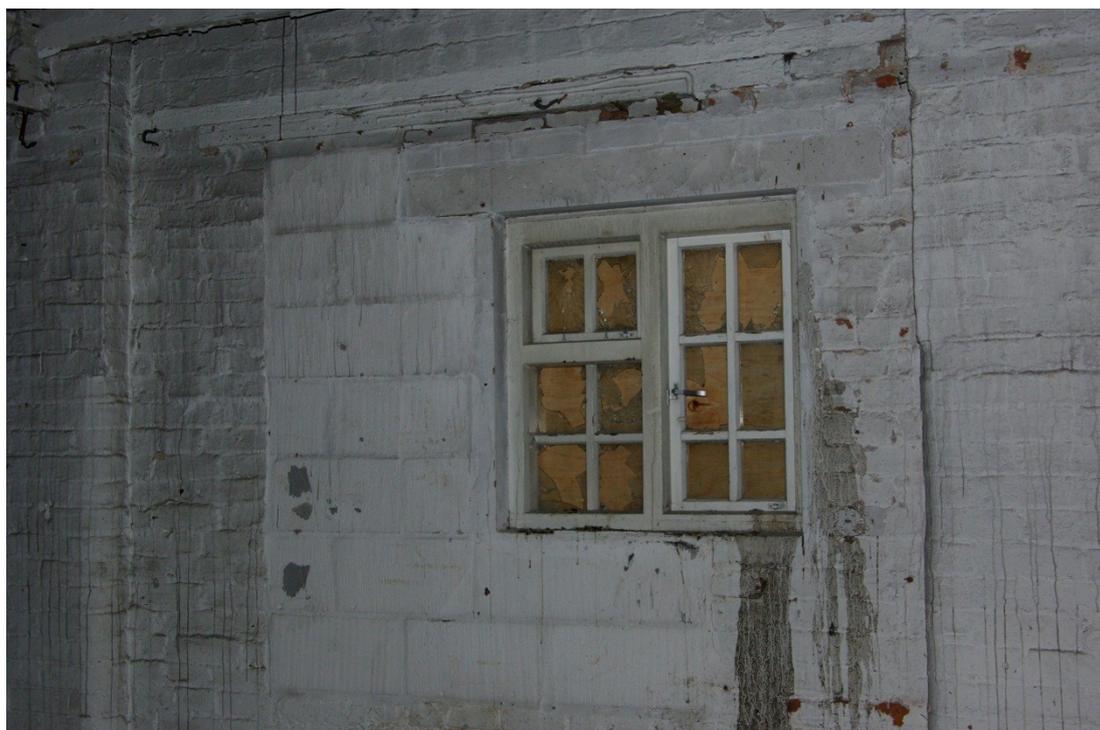


Figure 39. Bath Lane Mill, first floor. Small timber multi-paned window frame inserted within larger, blocked original window opening. Looking west.

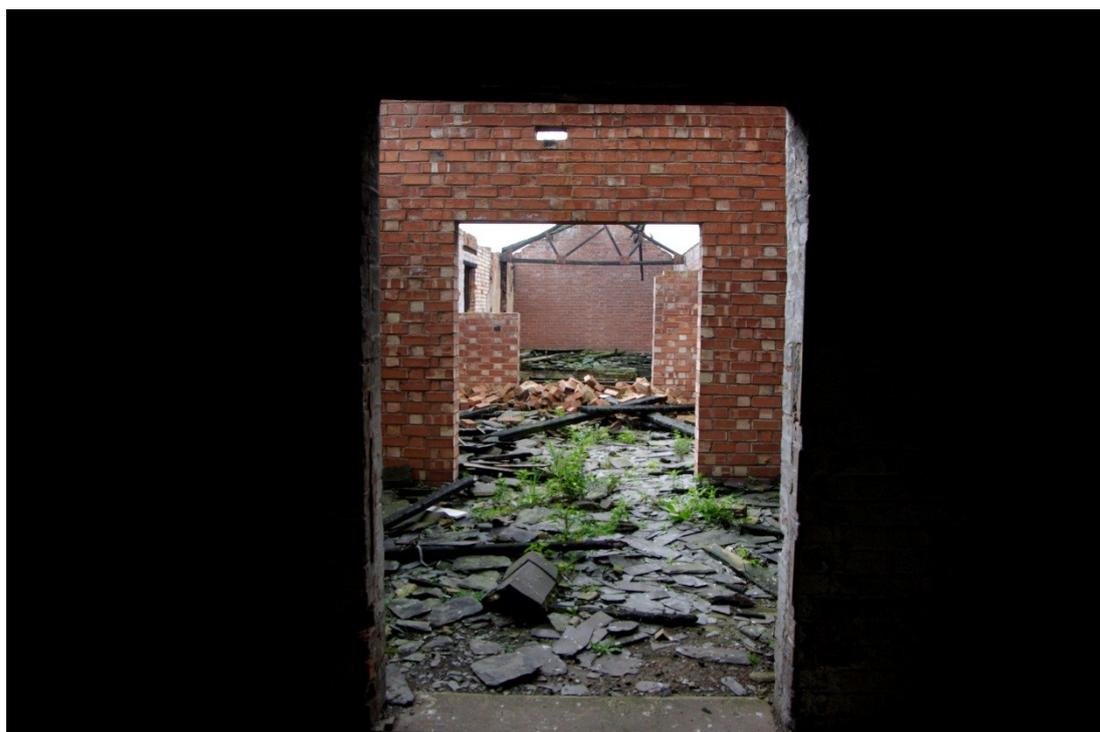


Figure 40. Bath Lane cottages, first floor, seen from Bath Lane Mill interior. Looking south.



Figure 41. Bath Lane Mill, second floor. Timber queen-strut roof trusses, with upper king-posts supported by a strainer beam. Looking south.

Archive

The archive consists of the digital image files on DVD, digital contact sheets, monochrome film and associated contact prints, floor plans of the buildings showing position and direction of all photographs taken and a photographic index. It will be deposited with Leicester City Council under the accession number A14.2014.

Publication

A version of the summary will appear in *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* in due course. The report will be added to the Archaeology Data Service's (ADS) Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) database.

Acknowledgements

The project was managed by Richard Buckley and carried out by Sophie Clarke of ULAS.

Bibliography

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04-04-2014

Appendix 1: Oasis Record

INFORMATION REQUIRED	EXAMPLE
Project Name	Friars Mill
Project Type	Building survey
Project Manager	Richard Buckley
Project Supervisor	Sophie Clarke
Previous/Future work	unknown
Current Land Use	industrial
Development Type	mixed
Reason for Investigation	Planning condition
Position in the Planning Process	ongoing
Site Co ordinates	SK 580 046
Start/end dates of field work	March 2014
Archive Recipient	LCM
Height min/max	not known
Study Area *	0.5 ha
Finds	None

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