



**University of
Leicester**

Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological trial trench evaluation
at Beaconsfield, Main Street, Thurlaston,
Warwickshire (SP 4683 7112)**

Stephen Baker



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**An Archaeological trial trench evaluation at
Beaconsfield, Main Street, Thurlaston,
Warwickshire (SP 4683 7112).**

Stephen Baker

**For: Mercia Building Limited
Planning Application No. R10/1965**

Checked by:

Signed:



Date: 28.05.2013

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Summary

An archaeological trial trench evaluation at Beaconsfield, Main Street, Thurlaston, Warwickshire (SP 4683 7112) by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on the 17th of May 2013. The work was carried out on behalf of Mercia Building Limited in advance of the construction of a new dwelling and car standing area. One 20m by 1.6m and one 7m by 1.6m trenches were excavated in the footprint of the proposed development and in an area for proposed car standing to the eastern front of the plot. Three archaeological features of medieval date were located in the easternmost trench.

Introduction

This document provides the interim results from a trial trench evaluation to assess potential archaeological deposits at Beaconsfield, Main Street, Thurlaston, Warwickshire (SP 4683 7112). The work was carried out on behalf of Mercia Building Ltd by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on the 17 May 2013.

The proposed development involves the construction of a new five bedroom dwelling and detached garage (Planning Application No. **R10/1065**). This will affect existing areas of paving, lawn and the complete demolition of an existing building Beaconsfield is situated on the east side of Main Street, in Thurlaston approximately 2.5km south-west of Rugby (Figure 1).

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. The required work was detailed in the *Brief for archaeological evaluation* (WCC 26.04.2013) and followed the approved Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) as laid out in the *Design Specification for Archaeological Work (Trial Trench Evaluation)* (Clay 2013).

Geology and Topography

The British Geological Survey of Great Britain shows that the underlying geology is likely to consist of superficial deposits of: Dunsmore Gravel - Sand and Gravel superficial deposits formed up to 2 million years ago in the Quaternary Period. The local environment was previously dominated by ice age conditions (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>).

The site lies on relatively flat ground at c.110m above Ordnance Datum (OD).

Historical and Archaeological Background

Thurlaston 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 proposed development lies within an area of significant archaeological potential. It lies within the historic core of Thurlaston close to medieval sites including the sites of a chapel (Warwickshire Historic Environment Record 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). There is therefore a potential for the proposed development to disturb archaeological deposits associated with the use of this area from the prehistoric and later periods.

For a list of other monuments, listed-buildings, fieldwork and historic landscape characterisation within a 1km radius of the development area see Appendix 2.

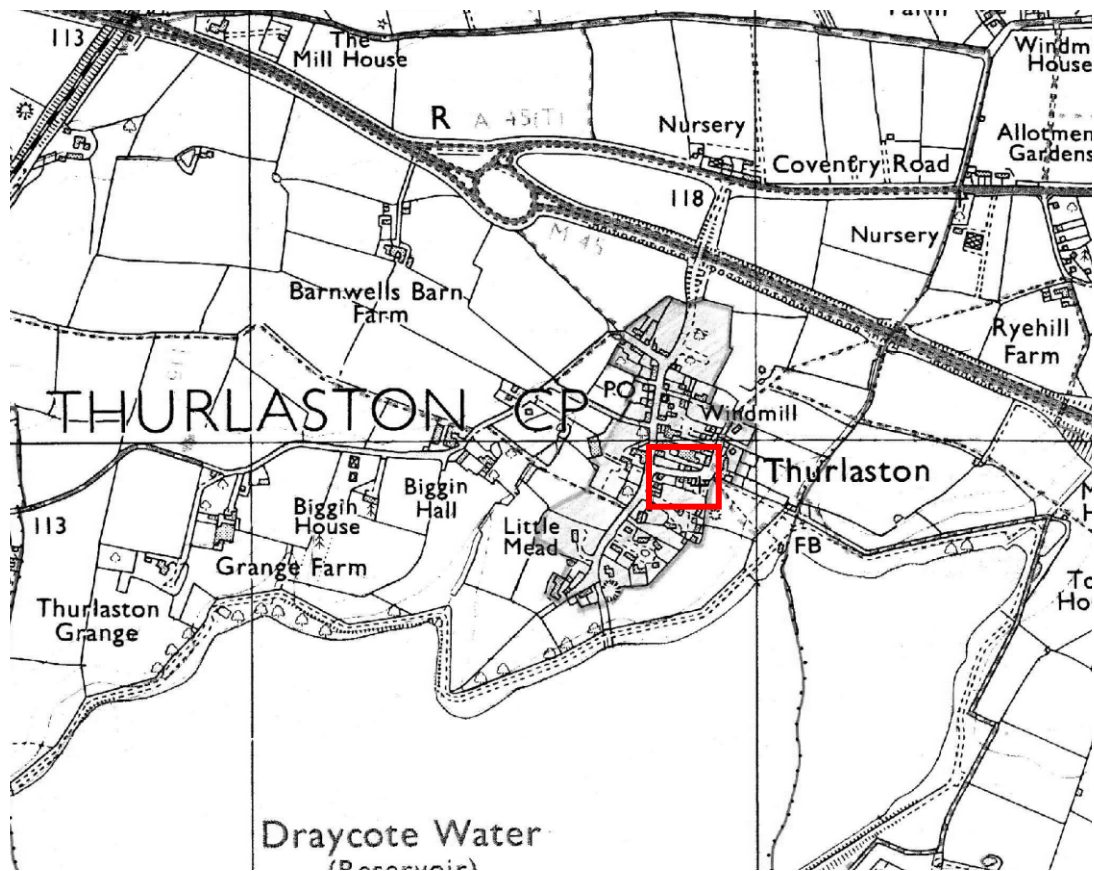


Figure 1: Location map with development area highlighted

Archaeological Objectives

The principal objectives of the archaeological work were:

- To identify the presence or absence of any archaeological deposits.
- To establish the character, extent and date of any archaeological deposits to be effected by the proposed ground works.
- To excavate and record any archaeological deposits to be effected by the proposed ground works.
- To produce a report and archive of any results.

Methodology

The approved WSI proposed two trenches to be excavated in the garden and driveway to the north and west of the former house – one 10m in length by 1.6m minimum width trench and one 7m by 1.6m. These were placed over the least disturbed areas, targeting the new dwelling and an area to the west where an area hard standing for parking was proposed (Figure 2).

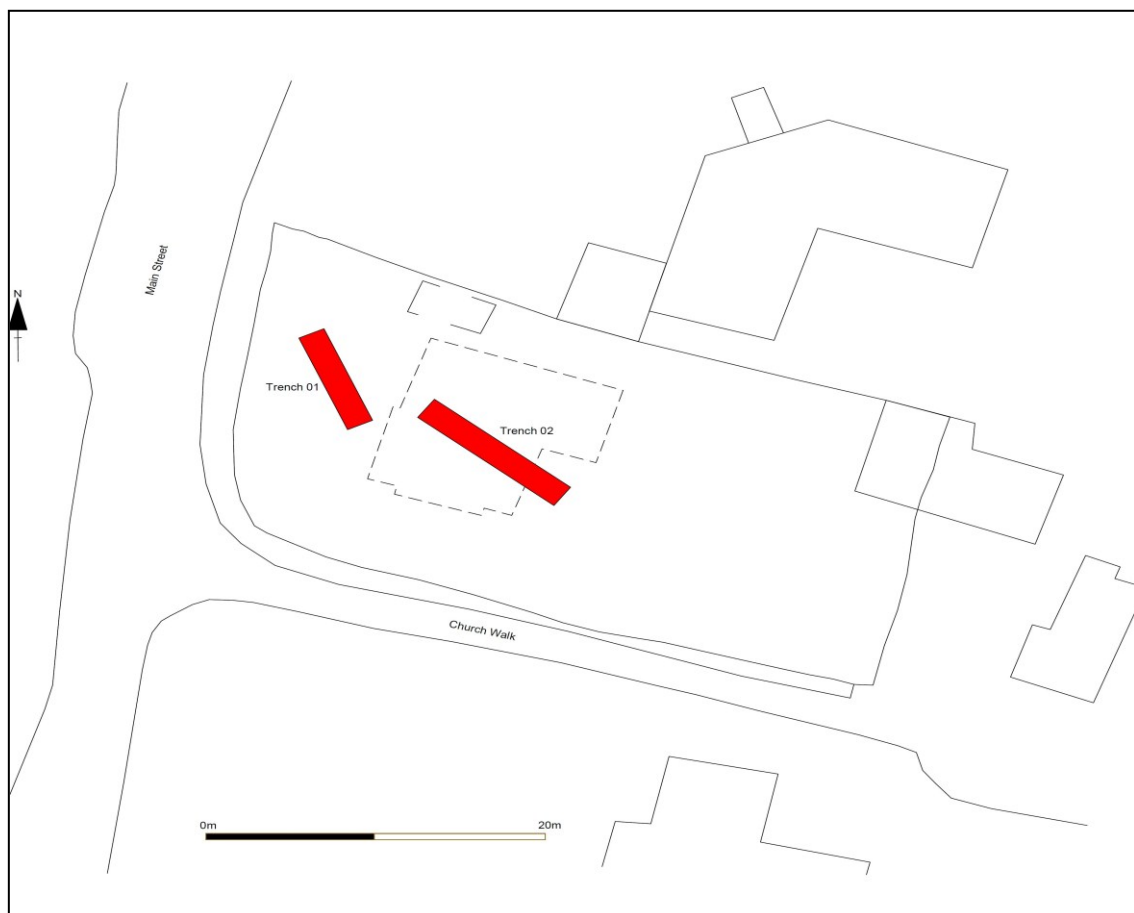


Figure 2: Plan of the development area showing the location of the trenches

Both trenches 1 and 2 were relocated to avoid known service runs and to avoid existing foundations from the demolished building. The work required a professional archaeologist to supervise all groundwork likely to impact upon any archaeological remains. Service plans, a CAT scanner and a

visual inspection of the ground were used to ensure pipes and services were traced and avoided before work commenced. Topsoil and overburden were then removed in level spits under continuous archaeological supervision. The trenches were excavated using a JCB 3CX with a c.1.6m wide, toothless ditching bucket.

Trenches, any other exposed areas, sections and existing spoil heaps were visually inspected for features and finds. Archaeological features, if present, were hand cleaned, planned, photographed and sample excavated as appropriate to addressing the objectives of the evaluation. Field notes were recorded on pro-forma ULAS trench recording forms whilst all stratigraphic units would be given a unique context number and recorded on pro-forma ULAS context sheets if deemed appropriate. Archaeological features if present would be drawn to a scale of 1:20, trench plans to a scale of 1:50 and sections to a scale of 1:10. The trenches were located in relation to prominent features within the property and tied into the Ordnance Survey National Grid.

All work followed the *Institute for Archaeologists' (IFA) Code of Conduct* and adhered to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological field evaluations*.

Results

Trench 1

Length (m)	Width (m)	Area (sq. m)	Min. depth (m)	Max. depth (m)	Archaeology?
7	1.6	11.2	0.64	0.78	No
Interval (m) from S end	0	2	4	7	
Topsoil	0.42	0.34	0.48	0.40	
Subsoil	0.19	0.30	0.14	0.22	
Top of Natural	0.61	0.64	0.62	0.62	
Base of Trench	0.73	0.78	0.64	1.24	

Trench 1 to the west targeted an area of proposed ground reduction for a parking area. Measuring 7m by 1.6m aligned north-west to south-east it contained an upper fill comprising dark brown grey silty-loam, 0.34m – 0.48m thick overlying a lighter brown grey silty-loam 0.14m-0.30m thick with occasional pebble. The natural substratum comprising a red-orange silty-clay was located at a depth of 0.61-0.64m. A modern service trench, 1m wide, crossed the east end of the trench aligned north-east to south-west. No archaeological deposits or finds were present.

Trench 2

Length (m)	Width (m)	Area (sq. m)	Min. depth (m)	Max. depth (m)	Surface level	Archaeology?
10.10	1.6	16.16	0.64	0.82		Yes
Interval (m) from S end	0	2	4	6	8	10
Topsoil	0.31	0.33	0.30	0.31	0.32	0.34
Subsoil	0.13	0.21	0.24	0.26	0.31	0.33
Top of Natural	0.44	0.54	0.54	0.57	0.63	0.67
Base of Trench	0.64	0.71	0.76	0.78	0.80	0.82

Trench 2 to the east targeted the area of new build alongside the previous building. It measured 10m by 1.6m and was orientated east to west. It contained an upper fill comprising dark brown-grey silty-loam, 0.31m-0.34m thick overlying a lighter brown grey silty-loam 0.13m-0.33m thick with occasional pebble. The natural substratum comprising a red-orange silty-clay was located at a depth of 0.44-0.67m.

Below the subsoil and cutting the natural silty-clay substratum were three features. To the south-west and continuing under the baulk was a shallow pit [02] c. 0.9m diameter by 0.27m deep with a mid-brown silty-clay fill (01) containing a fragment of medieval ridge tile in medieval sandy ware dating to the 13th or 14th century. To the north-east and continuing under the north baulk was another shallow pit [04] c. 0.9m diameter by 0.15m deep with a mid-brown silty-clay fill (03). Four metres to the east a deeper feature over 1m deep and 1m in diameter with steep sides was located [06]. This had a dark-brown sandy-silt fill (05) with some burnt stone and a sherd of Chilvers Coton ware of 13th or 14th century date.

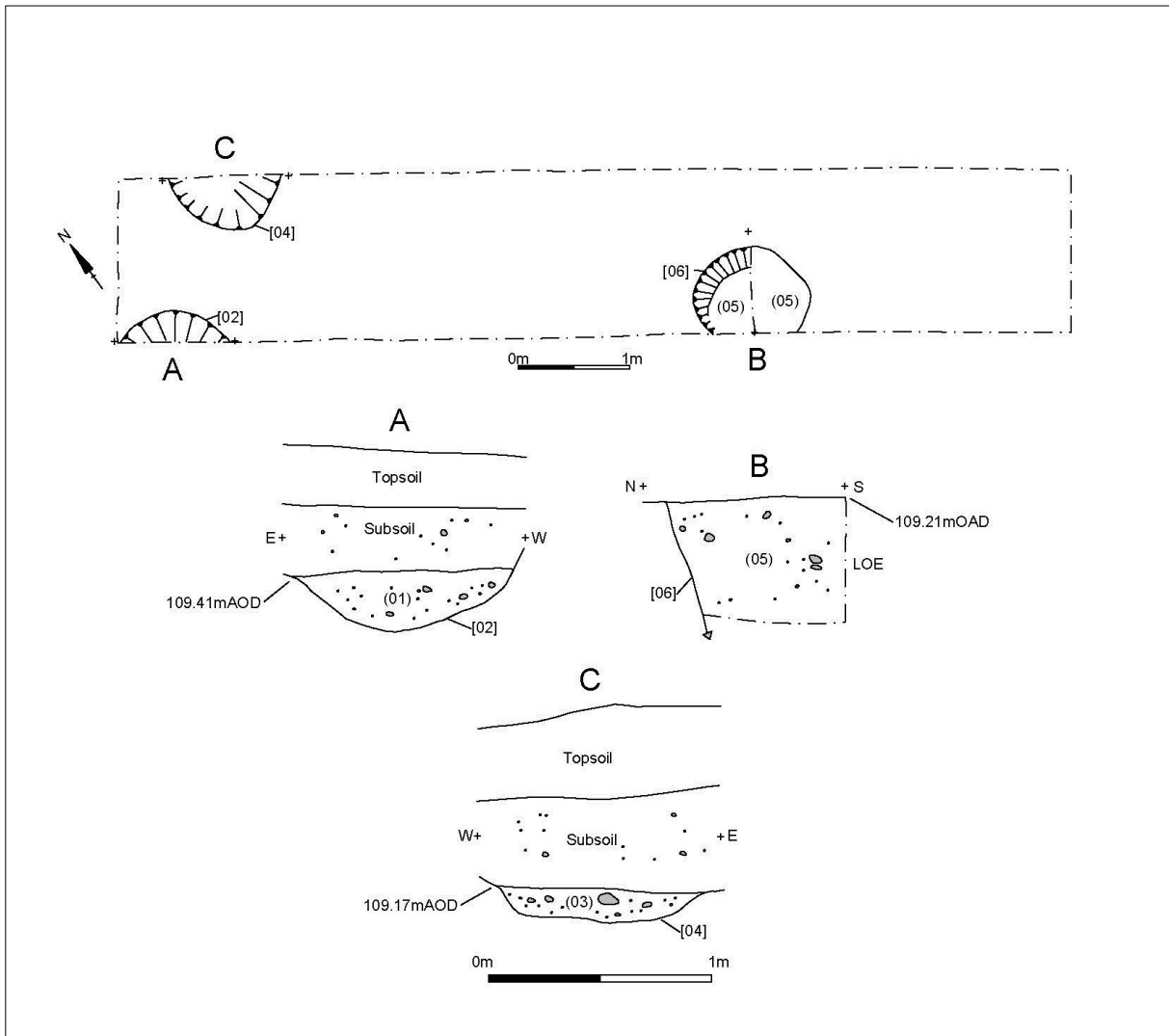


Figure 3: Trench 2 plan showing features

The Ceramics by *Deborah Sawday*

Trench 2 (01) [02] Fragment of medieval ridge tile in medieval sandy ware dating to the 13th or 14th Century. Weight 31g

Trench 2 (05) [06] Sherd of Chilvers Coton ware 13th or 14th century. Weight 4g.

Assessment of Potential for Environmental Analysis by *Anita Radini*

Two samples were assessed for their potential to provide evidence about past environment, food production, and consumption at the site.

Samples 1 (03), and 2 (05) consisting of 5 litres, respectively, of dark brown silty-clay soil, were wet-sieved in a sieving tank using a 0.5mm mesh with flotation through a 0.30 mm mesh sieve. The residue in the tank mesh was air dried and sorted for all finds. The flotation fraction (flots) was air dried and scanned under a stereomicroscope at magnification between 10x and 40x.

The fragments recovered from the flots were preserved in the form of charred remains. A high number of un-charred root and rootlets fragments were recovered in the flots together with some modern seeds, suggesting a degree of post-depositional soil disturbance.

Overall, the archaeobotanical assemblage was poor and the remains found could represent residual or intrusive material.

Discussion

Some evidence of medieval activity was revealed. Three features, the deepest one [06] perhaps being a well while the other two were shallow pits were located in Trench 2 to the east. A few finds of 13th-14th century date were present. This suggests some back of plot activity away from the medieval frontage on to Main Street. However the finds were very few in number and the features may possibly be of post-medieval or modern date with the medieval finds being residual.

Bibliography

B.G.S., 1982, *England and Wales Sheet 201 Banbury: Bedrock and Superficial Deposits*. 1:50,000 scale geology series

Mills, A. D. (ed.), 2011, *A Dictionary of British Place Names (Oxford Paperback Reference)*. Oxford, Oxford University Press

Archive

The site archive consists of: 1 A4 trench recording forms, 1 A4 photo index, 9 digital photographs and 9 monochrome photographs.

Publication

Since 2004 ULAS has reported the results of all archaeological work through the *Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations* (OASIS) database held by the Archaeological Data Service at the University of York.

A summary of the work will also be submitted for publication in a suitable regional archaeological journal in due course.



Figure 4: Trench 1, looking north-west, with service trench in the foreground.



Figure 5: Trench 2 with features sectioned, looking north-east.

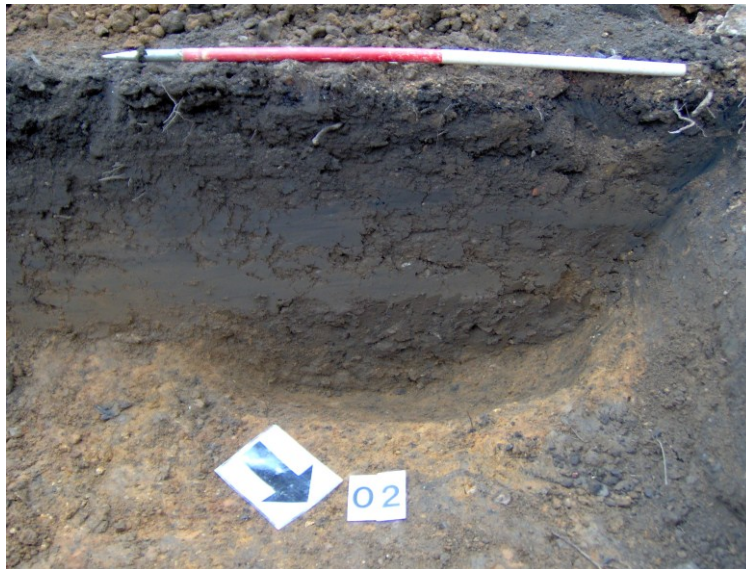


Figure 6: Section through Feature [02] in Trench 2 looking south-west.



Figure 7: Section through Feature [04] in Trench 2 looking east



Figure 8: Section through Feature [06] in Trench 2 looking south-east

OASIS Reference

OASIS no.	197231
Project Name	Beaconsfield
Project Type	Evaluation
Project Manager	Patrick Clay
Project Supervisor	Stephen Baker
Previous/Future work	None
Current Land Use	Lawn, driveway
Development Type	Residential
Reason for Investigation	NPPF, Section 12
Position in the Planning Process	As a condition
Site Co ordinates	SP 4683 7112
Start/end dates of field work	17-05-2013
Archive Recipient	Rugby Art Gallery and Museum
Study Area	c.43.2 square meters

Acknowledgements

Thanks are extended to Mercia Building Ltd and Planters Ltd for their co-operation and assistance on site. Fieldwork was undertaken by Stephen Baker; a visit to Warwickshire Public Record Office was undertaken by Sophie Clarke; the report was written and the project was managed for ULAS by Patrick Clay.

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Appendix 1: Cartographic Evidence

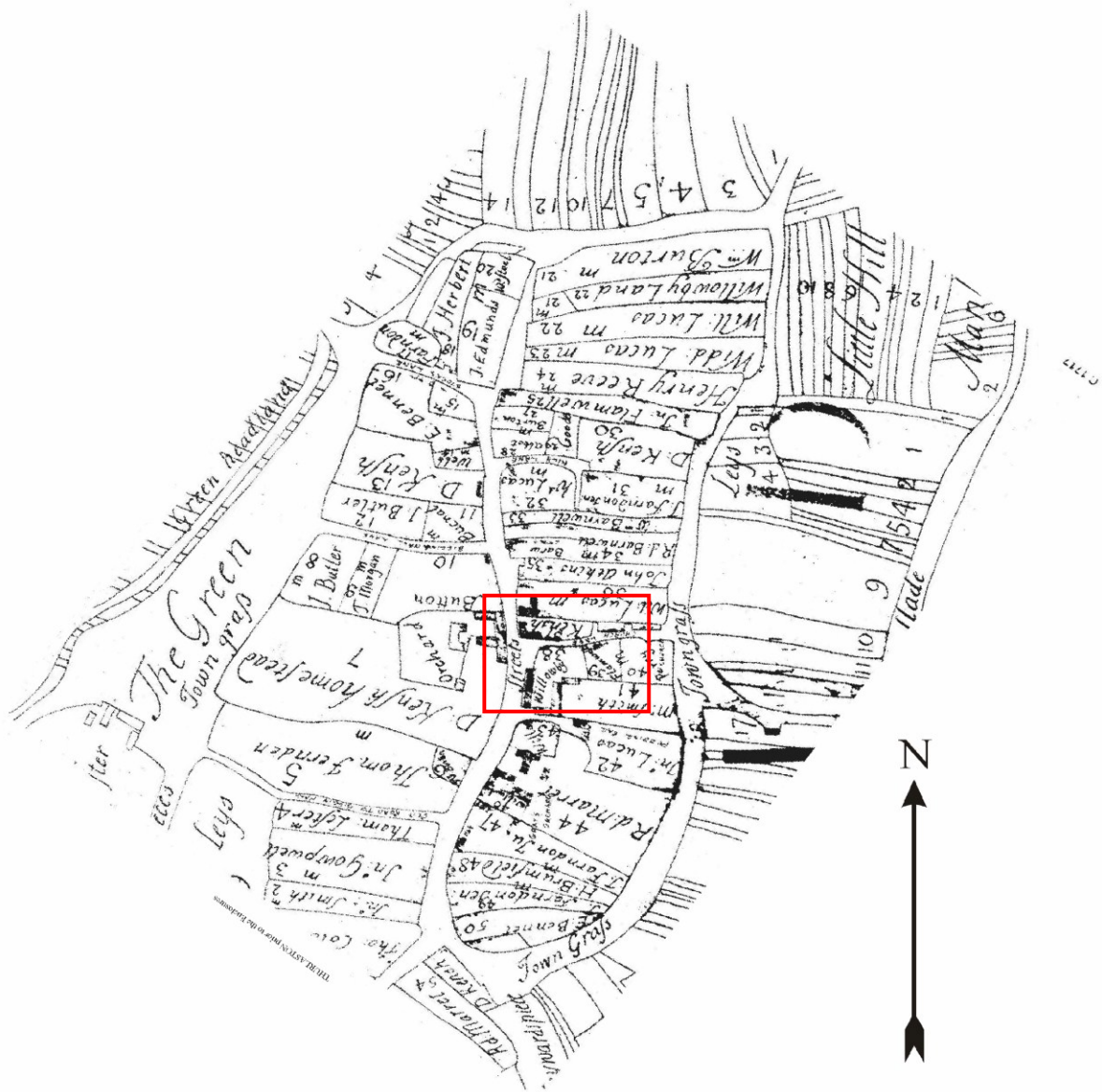


Figure 9: Detail from 1775 map of the area with development areas outlined (from <http://www.thurlaston.plus.com/thurlaston/vds.pdf>)



Figure 10 Detail from 1842 Tithe map with application area outlined. North arrowed (courtesy of Warwickshire RO)



Figure 11: Detail from the 1905 25'' Ordnance Survey map of the area with development areas outlined (Warwickshire Sheet 28.13, courtesy of Warwickshire RO)



Figure 12: Detail from the 1925 6'' Ordnance Survey map of the area with development areas outlined (Warwickshire Sheet 28.13, courtesy of Warwickshire RO)



Figure 7: Detail from the 1925 6'' Ordnance Survey map of the area with development areas outlined (Warwickshire Sheet 28.13, courtesy of Warwickshire RO)

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