

**The Old School House,
57 Leicester Road, Groby, Leicester:
Historic Building Assessment**

Neil Finn

For Mr and Mrs Jarvis

Checked by Project Manager

Signed:Date

Name:

University of Leicester Archaeological Services

Report 2006-152 ©2006

The Old School House, 57 Leicester Road, Groby, Leicester: Historic Building Assessment

1. Introduction

This report presents the results of a *Rapid Assessment* of The Old School House, 57 Leicester Road, Groby, Leicester, LE6 0DQ (SK 526 074), as defined in the English Heritage guidelines *Informed Conservation* (Clark 2001, 33-34). It has been prepared on behalf of the owners Mr and Mrs Jarvis in response to a request from the Conservation Officer at Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council for further information in respect of proposals to alter the building.

The report is intended to provide an overview of the history and development of the building, based on a visual (non-intrusive) appraisal of the structure itself and assessment of readily available historical sources. Its purpose is to provide an understanding of the significance of the building, to highlight areas of risk or uncertainty, and to establish the need for further work if necessary (Clark 2001, 34). The report content should contribute towards the formulation of appropriate and informed planning decisions.

The building is located within the Groby Conservation Area; it is not listed.

2. Development Proposals

The proposed alterations are detailed in drawings HP3253/a/1 and HP3253/b/2 prepared by Building Plan Services. In summary, it is proposed to raise in height from one storey to two the west range of the building and to demolish the single-storey east range and construct a new two-storey range in its place. Internally the first floor layout will be revised to create a new shower room and provide access to two new bedrooms housed within the extensions. A new detached garage is also proposed.

3. Description of the Building

An inspection was made on 13 October 2006, all areas of the building were examined.

The building consists of a number of distinct structural elements identified as ranges **A-D** on Figure 2. The earliest element appears to be **A**. This is a two-storey range constructed from rendered granite rubble and roofed in local slate (Photo 1). There is an exposed roof truss in the east gable with 18th century and later brick infill (Photo 3). There are further areas of 18th century brickwork in the principal (street-facing) south elevation and at the south-west corner of this range. All of the window openings have brick detailing. There is evidence for at least one blocked window in the south elevation at first floor level, partially obscured by render. In plan this range consists of two bays of unequal size. The front door opens onto a hallway and staircase within the shorter bay, beyond which is a small scullery, formerly heated by a corner chimneystack backing onto the staircase. The larger bay is occupied by a living/dining room heated by a fireplace against the south wall, which is served by a 19th century brick stack. On the first floor of this range are a bedroom, bathroom and W.C. Within the roof space there are two timber trusses: one at the east end (Photo 5) and the other at the bay interval. It seems likely that a third similar truss was located at the west end, though the west gable has been rebuilt (badly) in stone at some stage. The two roof trusses are of generally similar form having curved principals with inset feet and a scissor apex, a collar at mid-height and presumably a tiebeam (though in neither case is this visible). The truss at the bay interval has

raking braces rising to the underside of the collar. The east gable truss has a series of vertical staves nailed into position that may have formed the basis of earlier infill to this gable (Photo 5). There are heavy side purlins and a square-set ridge purlin. Slender windbraces are nailed to the backs of the principals and tenoned into the undersides of the purlins. Much of the timber in this roof structure is clearly reused; craftsmanship is generally poor with crudely formed joints. Several of the timbers display evidence of scorching or charring suggesting a fire, however these pieces appear in the main to have been reused in their current positions.

B is a single-storey range on the west side of **A** (Photo 2). It is constructed from granite rubble and roofed in local slate. Internally it consists of a single room lit by a large window in the south elevation with late (i.e. 20th century) brick detailing and a barred window set high in the west gable wall (Photo 7). Sockets in the stonework of the north wall suggest there was formerly shelving here. The room has no fireplace and no evidence for one having been removed. The walls had been lined with panelling composed of timber and asbestos sheeting, which had been largely removed at the time of the inspection. The roof structure was not exposed.

C is a substantial two-storey range on the north side of **A**, again constructed from granite rubble with a local slate roof (Photo 4). 3-light casement windows in the east elevation have 19th century brick detailing and L-hinges. Internally this range comprises of a single large room on either floor, each heated by a fireplace in the north gable wall. On the ground floor there were formerly fitted cupboards either side of the fireplace, now removed. The fire surround, now also removed, was of mid-20th century type. The walls are lined internally with lathe and plaster. The roof of this range was visible from within the roof space of **A** but was not directly accessible.

D is a single-storey range on the east side of **A**, presently a kitchen (Photo 3). The north and east walls are constructed from granite rubble, the south wall is 19th century brick. The roof is local slate. The north wall (and possibly a portion of the east wall) is of comparable thickness to the walls of **A** and the remainder of **D** is effectively a lean-to built against this wall. There is evidence of a former window in the north wall now converted into a cupboard. There is a door and three-light window in the south elevation. The south wall is splaying outwards under the weight of the roof.

Internally, first floor structures are of gypsum plaster type throughout. The staircase has faceted newels and plain, rectangular-section balusters and is typical of the mid 19th century (Photo 8). Fixtures and fittings such as the ledged doors, door furniture, architraves and skirtings are comparable throughout the building, pointing to a single episode of refurbishment, these would all be consistent with a mid 19th century date, as would the two remaining bedroom fireplaces.

4. Historical Sources

Prior to 1925 the house at 57 Leicester Road formed part of the Bradgate Estate of the Grey family, Earls of Stamford and Warrington. Primary sources of information on the early history of the building include estate papers and maps held in the Records Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland (ROLLR) and in a private collection at Enville Hall, Staffordshire. Deeds held by the current owners provide information on the history of the building after 1925. Other sources of information include published historical accounts, unpublished research by local historians, commercial directories, Ordnance Survey map evidence and other documentation held by the ROLLR. All sources are cited in the text and listed in the Bibliography and Sources section, below.

4.1 Map evidence

The earliest historical source that can be confidently related to the property at 57 Leicester Road is a map of the Manor of Groby made by John Doharty in 1757 (Figure 4). This very detailed map, which includes birds-eye views of the various buildings, was produced for the Earl of Stamford possibly as a prelude to enclosure. The original is in the private collection held at Enville Hall, Staffordshire though there are copies in the ROLLR collections (ref: PP443/1-3) and published extracts in *Groby & its Railways* (Ramsey 1982, 18) and *The Landscape of a Leicestershire Parish* (Woodward 1984, Figs. 12 & 17). This map shows a building standing within a small plot of land on the north side of the Leicester Road, at the east end of the village. The plot is readily identifiable as the property that later became 57 Leicester Road. The building is 1½ storeys high with dormer windows lighting the upper floor rooms. On the ground floor there is a door towards the north end and an adjacent window. A chimney is located at the south end. It is likely that elements of this building are incorporated within the existing structure as range A.

A map made in 1816 by Thomas Miles, also in the Enville Hall collection but reproduced in *Groby & its Railways* (Ramsey 1982, 19), shows a plan view of the building on the site at that time. There are two distinct elements: a frontage range towards the Leicester road and behind this a range offset to the south. A similar arrangement is shown on the Bailey map in the ROLLR collections (ref: DG 20/MA/132/1) (Figure 5). Although undated this map certainly pre-dates the construction of the church in 1840 and, it has been suggested, may have been made at the time of enclosure (1789). The piece of ground to the north and east of the building is named as ‘The Gravel Close’ on this map.

Another undated map in the ROLLR collections (DG 20/MA/132/3) is attributed a mid 19th century date, this is certainly post-1840 as the church is illustrated. This map shows a more complex plan form to the building, not dissimilar to the present arrangement, unfortunately a crease in the map obscures some of the detail, in particular the rear range. This map is not reproduced here.

An estate map of 1859 reproduced by Ramsey (1982, 40) shows a broadly similar arrangement to the present layout, however this is at a small scale and detail is lacking.

The first edition Ordnance Survey 25 inch to the mile map sheet XXX.4, published in 1886, shows the plan form of the building to be identical to the present arrangement (Figure 6), as do all subsequent OS editions.

4.2 Documentary evidence

The Earl of Stamford built a school at Groby in 1787 (see Table 1). The earliest specific reference to a schoolmaster’s house occurs in the 1846 edition of William White’s *History, Gazetteer and Directory of Leicestershire and the Small County of Rutland* (1846, 587):

‘Near it [the church] is a National School, with a house for the master, erected about four years ago, by the Earl of Stamford, in lieu of the school founded by his predecessor in 1800.’

Accounts in the Enville Hall collection record that the school built in 1842 was erected at a cost of £250, 3s, 9d (cited in Ramsey 2002, 24). In the following year, 1843, the accounts record that Thomas Rudkin, builder, was engaged by the Earl of Stamford ‘on mason’s work

at the Old School House'. This ties in well with the structural and map evidence for the building at 57 Leicester Road having undergone extensive alterations around the mid 19th century, some time after 1840.

It is possible that, prior to 1842, the building at 57 Leicester Road served as both master's house and schoolhouse though this cannot be proved with certainty. Following construction of the new school in 1842 the Old School House was altered and thereafter served as the residence of successive school masters and mistresses (see Table 2) until it was sold along with the rest of the Bradgate estate in 1925.

The Bradgate Estate was auctioned as 227 separate lots in November 1925 at the Bell Hotel Humberstone Gate, Leicester by the direction of Mrs K.V.H. Grey. A copy of the sale particulars is in the ROLLR collections (ref: DE 1032/8). Lot number 121 was 'The Capital Dwelling House known as "The Schoolmaster's House" situate adjoining the old schools'. It extended in area to about 37 perches and was described thus:

'The house is built of stone and brick with thatched roof and contains 3 bedrooms, boxroom, 3 sitting rooms, kitchen, larder. Gas and water laid on. Coalhouse, closet, good garden.
Let to Mr. Wm. Waldrom on a quarterly tenancy'.

The purchaser was Henrietta Kate Waldrom, wife of William James Waldrom the schoolmaster. According to the booklet produced by Groby Village Society: *A Guided Tour*, the purchase price was £310. The papers held by the current owners include various mortgage agreements between Mrs Waldrom and the Leicester Permanent Building Society. Henrietta Kate Waldrom died on 23 April 1940 and the property passed to her daughter Sybil Christine Waldrom. In 1951 a strip of land on the Leicester Road frontage was sold to Leicestershire County Council, presumably for the purposes of widening the road. In 1954 Sybil Christine Waldrom sold a portion of the garden on the west side of the house to Mr W.G. Harris (builder) and Miss P.A. Winterburn (spinster). The house subsequently erected on this plot is now 55 Leicester Road. Other documents in this collection relate to agreements over shared drainage between numbers 55 and 57. Sybil Christine Waldrom died 29 September 2005 and the property was subsequently purchased by Mr and Mrs Jarvis.

It is recorded that the thatched roof was replaced with slate at a cost of £100 (Groby Village Society: *A Guided Tour*). It has been suggested that this occurred around 1900 following a fire. Certainly there is evidence within the building for a roof fire, but the 1925 auction catalogue suggests that it was still thatched at that time.

Comparing the description in the 1925 auction catalogue with the building today suggests that the interior layout has not changed significantly in the intervening period. One of the bedrooms has been converted into a bathroom and perhaps the present W.C. occupies the boxroom noted in 1925.

A search was made at the ROLLR for early photographs. The only photograph which includes this building is an undated aerial photo, probably mid 20th century (ref: DE3736 box 47). This provided no additional information on the building and is not reproduced here.

5. Discussion and Dating

The earliest element of the building at 57 Leicester Road is the central core of the house (**A**), which was certainly in existence in 1757 and is likely to have been constructed in the early part of the 18th century. There is a slight possibility that this range is earlier still, being of timber-framed construction, subsequently encased in stone; the poor quality of the timberwork in the roof tends to argue against this interpretation, however.

There is some evidence to suggest that this structure originally extended further to the east, most notably the scarf joint in one of the purlins just inside the east gable wall (Photo 6); also the fact that the north wall of range **D**, the kitchen, is stone-built and of comparable thickness to the walls of **A**. The 1757 map shows a chimney at the east end of the building (Figure 4); there is no evidence within the extant fabric of an early chimneystack on the line of the present east wall and it is suggested that there may have been another bay to the east with the original east gable wall falling approximately on the line of the east wall of the present kitchen.

The Earl of Stamford undertook extensive building work, including refurbishment of existing housing stock, during the 1830s and 1840s in Groby, Anstey and Newtown Linford. The church in Groby was built in 1840 and the new school in 1842. Four new estate cottages were built in Groby between 1841 and 1843 (Ramsey 2002, 24). Structural and map evidence point to the building at 57 Leicester Road having been extended and refurbished in the mid 19th century, which ties in neatly with the documentary reference to Thomas Rudkin being engaged on mason's work at the Old School House in 1843. It seems reasonable to suppose that the building referred to in 1843 as 'The Old School House' and the present building at 57 Leicester Road are one and the same.

The current plan form was certainly in place by 1886. It is unfortunate that a crease on the estate map of c.1850 obscures the detail which would have confirmed that these alterations had been undertaken by that date. Brickwork in the south wall of the kitchen (**D**) and elsewhere would be consistent with a mid 19th century construction date. There is very little diagnostic detail within the suspected schoolroom (**B**) from which to suggest a date (Photo 7), however the map evidence appears to place the construction of this range in the 19th century, almost certainly after the 1842 school was built, in which case it is unlikely to have functioned as a schoolroom. Having said this, the fact that the room is unheated suggests a non-domestic function; it is also well lit as would be expected of a schoolroom. These characteristics, however, would also be typical of a workshop of some kind. In the late 1870s there was both a schoolmaster, Abraham Ferryman (or Forryan), and a sewing mistress Miss Elizabeth Ferryman (presumably his daughter or spinster sister) (Table 2). Where were the sewing lessons conducted – at the school or in the master's house?

As there was a school in Groby from at least 1787, and accepting that the building at 57 Leicester Road is the 'Old School House' referred to in 1843, then this may well have functioned as the schoolhouse between 1787 and the construction of the new school in 1842, though it was subsequently extensively altered with only the early core (**A**) now remaining. Schoolhouses with master's accommodation survive in other villages within the County, for example at Kimcote (David Smith, pers. comm.).

There was certainly a building in this position before the first school was founded in 1787 which raises the question of its original function. The location of the building is notable, early maps show that it lay at the very edge of the village in a marginal position. The 1757, 1816 and c. late-18th century Bailey maps all show a row of small cottages on the opposite side of

the road (see Figures 4 & 5). These occupy a narrow spit of ground on the margin of the Leicester Road and are likely to represent squatter dwellings, tolerated perhaps because the occupants provided seasonal labour or were employed in other activities such as quarrying. The 1757 map shows a small gravel pit adjacent to these cottages and the Bailey map identifies the field behind the house at 57 Leicester Road as 'The Gravel Close' (Figure 5). It is tempting to suggest that the early building at 57 Leicester Road may have been associated with quarrying, perhaps a manager's cottage given its size in relation to the smaller cottages on the opposite side of the road. No evidence has been found to support this suggestion however and quarrying in the village at this date appears to have been a relatively ad hoc affair which only later became an organised industry. That the building is semi-sunken with external ground level corresponding with window sill level on the north and west sides suggests that it may have been built over an old quarry. The row of smaller cottages on the opposite side of the road appears to have been demolished by the 1850s (see the maps of c.1850 and 1859 reproduced in Ramsey 1982, 14 & 40).

It is notable that successive Earls appear to have deliberately contained the development of the village to the west side of the Leicester Road, with only the Old Hall and one or two other buildings standing on the east side. Later, major undertakings such as the church and school were constructed on the east side of the road. It was not until after the sale of the Bradgate estate however, that significant development occurred on this side of the road. In this context it is tempting to suggest that the construction of the house on the site of 57 Leicester Road, in the early 18th century, may have been an undertaking of one of the Earls of Stamford, perhaps meeting some obligation to house a dependant villager, such as a widow or retainer.

No evidence has been found to support the suggestion that the building functioned at one time as a toll house (Groby Village Society: *A Guided Tour*). This may have arisen from the building's location on the periphery of the village - a position typically occupied by toll houses.

6. Conclusions

Whilst documentary and cartographic sources provide a considerable amount of information on the history of the building there are still areas of uncertainty, for example the relationship between the existing north range **C** and the rear range illustrated on 18th century maps; and the question of whether the kitchen range **D** incorporates early 18th century elements. The proposed works are likely to reveal and/or remove evidence for the historical development of the building and if planning consent is granted this is likely to include a condition requiring more detailed recording of the structure.

In terms of the specific question of whether the single storey west range **B** ever functioned as a schoolroom, it appears that this was not built until after the adjacent schoolhouse was constructed in 1842. However, this range is not obviously domestic in character and may therefore have been built to serve some other function. Its form is not inconsistent with what would be expected of a schoolroom, but equally a framework knitting workshop, for example, would share similar characteristics.

7. Bibliography and Sources

7.1 Published Sources

Clark, K., 2001. *Informed Conservation*. English Heritage.

Gadsden, A., 1990. *Education in Groby A Celebration: Groby Church and Village*.

Groby Village Society: *A Guided Tour*, n.d. Copies in Groby village library.

Ramsey, D.A., 1982. *Groby and its Railways*. TEE Publishing.

Ramsey, D.A., 2002. *Time Line... Old John* 2nd Edn. Bradgate Books.

Woodward, S., 1984. *The Landscape of a Leicestershire Parish*. Leicestershire Museums, Art Galleries and Records Service: Leicestershire Museums Publication No. 58.

7.2 Other Sources

Various historical directories on line at <http://www.historicaldirectories.org/>

Documents in the Records Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland (ROLLR).

Deeds to the property held by the owner.

David Ramsey has provided considerable information from his own research into the Earl of Stamford's Bradgate estate and Groby village, including references to material held in the private collection at Enville Hall, Staffordshire. His assistance is gratefully acknowledged.

Ordnance Survey 25" to 1 mile map sheet XXX.4: 1886, 1903, 1916 & 1930 editions.

Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map sheet SK5207, 1991 edition.

Table 1. Groby Schools – documentary references (reverse chronological order)

Date	Reference	Source
1907	Building which now serves as Groby village hall was opened as an annex to the county primary school (Martinshaw Primary School) on 7 Jan 1907. The headmaster was Mr Waldrom. This closed as a school at Easter 1980 and was converted to the village hall in 1986.	<i>Education in Groby</i> by Audrey Gadsden (1990, 20)
1894	A letter to Groby Granite Company makes reference to their desire to pull down the old Grammar School said to be in a dangerous condition and position. This probably refers to the school built in 1842 (see below).	<i>Groby and its Railways</i> by D.A. Ramsay (1982, 45)
1873	The building now referred to as ‘the Old School’ was built in 1873 as a Church of England School at the expense of the Countess of Stamford and Warrington. The 1877 edition of White’s Directory states that the school built in 1873 was on the site of the earlier school.	Groby Village Society: <i>A Guided Tour</i> (n.d.) William White’s Directory (1877)
1843	Thomas Rudkin, builder, was engaged on mason’s work at the Old School House by the Earl of Stamford.	Estate papers in Enville Hall collection
1842	‘Near it [the church] is a National School, with a house for the master, erected about four years ago, by the Earl of Stamford, in lieu of the school founded by his predecessor in 1800’. The schoolmaster at that time was Jno. Jackson. The school built in 1842 was erected at a cost of £250, 3s, 9d	William White’s <i>Directory</i> (1846) Estate papers in Enville Hall collection; cited in <i>Time Line ... Old John</i> by D.A Ramsay (2 nd edn. 2002, 24)
1835	Reference to payment made for flagging Groby School.	Estate papers in Enville Hall collection
c.1800	The reference in White’s 1846 Directory (above) notes that the school built ‘about four years ago’ replaced an earlier school founded in 1800. White’s dates appear to be fairly approximate and this may equate with the 1787 reference below.	William White’s Directory (1846, 587)
1787	School built at Groby by the Earl of Stamford.	Estate papers in Enville Hall collection; cited in <i>Time Line ... Old John</i> by D.A Ramsay (2 nd edn. 2002, 21)

Table 2. Directory evidence for school masters and mistresses

Name	Title	Dates	Source
William J. Waldrom	Master	1907-1908	<i>Education in Groby</i> (1907) Kelly’s Directory (1908)* not searched after this date
Miss Ellen Coo	Mistress	1899	Wright’s Directory (1899)
Miss Louisa Ward	Mistress	1880-1899	Wright’s Directory (1880, 1887-8, 1889-90, 1892, 1899) Kelly’s Directory (1891, 1895)
Abraham Ferryman Miss Elizabeth Ferryman	Master Sewing Mistress	1876-1878 1876-1878	Post Office Directory (1876) White’s Directory (1877) Wright’s Directory (1878) Note spelling of surname in 1877 & 1888 was Forryan – see below
John Stephens	Master	1875	Barker & Co. Directory (1875)
Richard Forryam	Master	1870	Harrod & Co. Directory (1870)
Joseph Pearson	Master	1855-1863	Post Office Directory (1855) Drake’s Directory (1861) White’s Directory (1863)
William Slingsby	Master	1854	Melville Directory (1854)
Jno. Jackson	Master	1846	White’s Directory (1846)



Photo 1. Front elevation of 57 Leicester Road (A to right).



Photo 2. Suspected single-storey school room B (to left).



Photo 3. Range A to left and single-storey kitchen D.



Photo 4. Two-storey rear (north) range C



Photo 5. Roof structure of A, looking towards east gable.



Photo 6. Detail: roof structure of A showing scarfed purlin.



Photo 7. Interior of suspected schoolroom (B).



Photo 8. Landing area showing faceted newels to staircase.

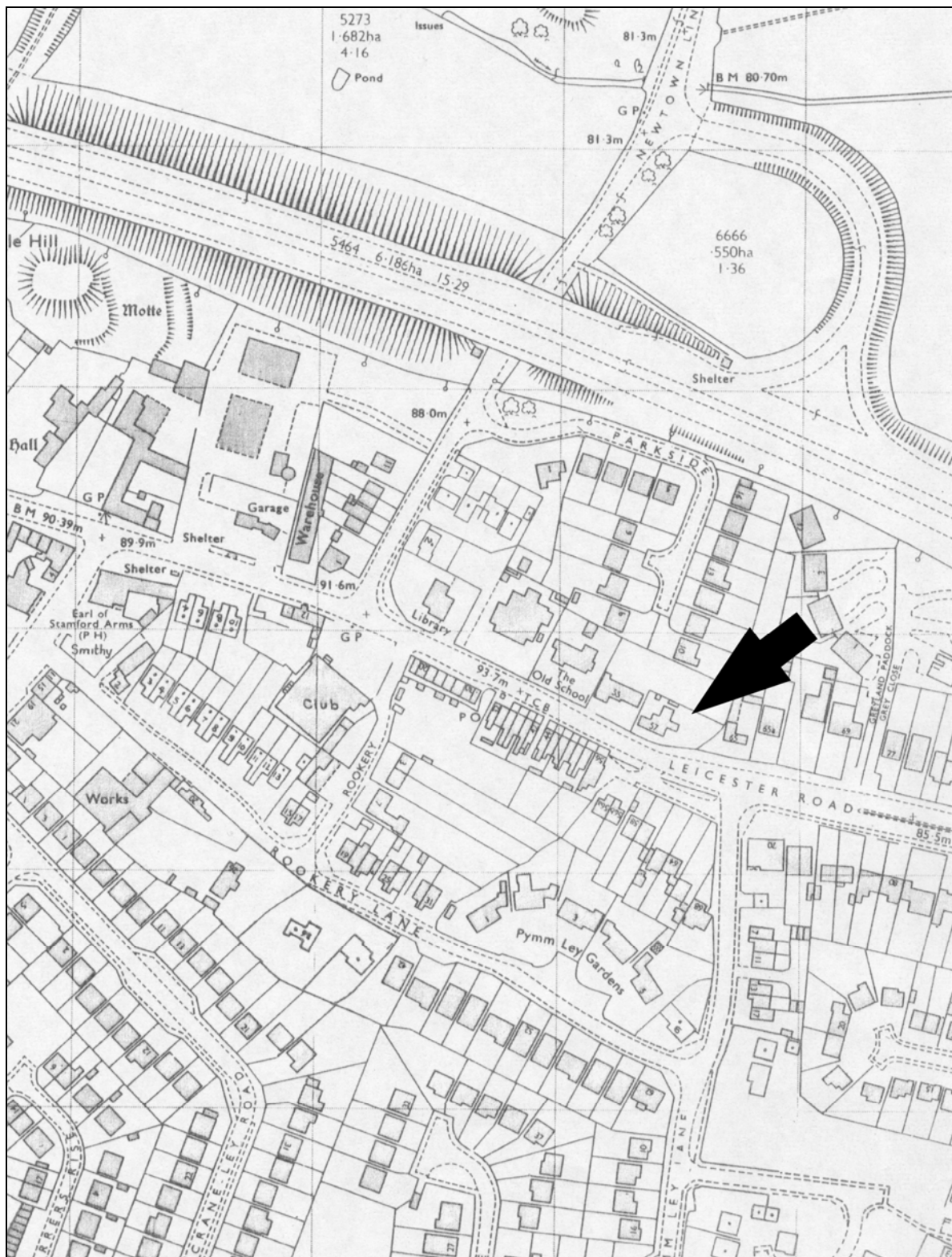


Figure 1. Location Plan. Based on 1991 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map SK SK5207. 57 Leicester Road arrowed.

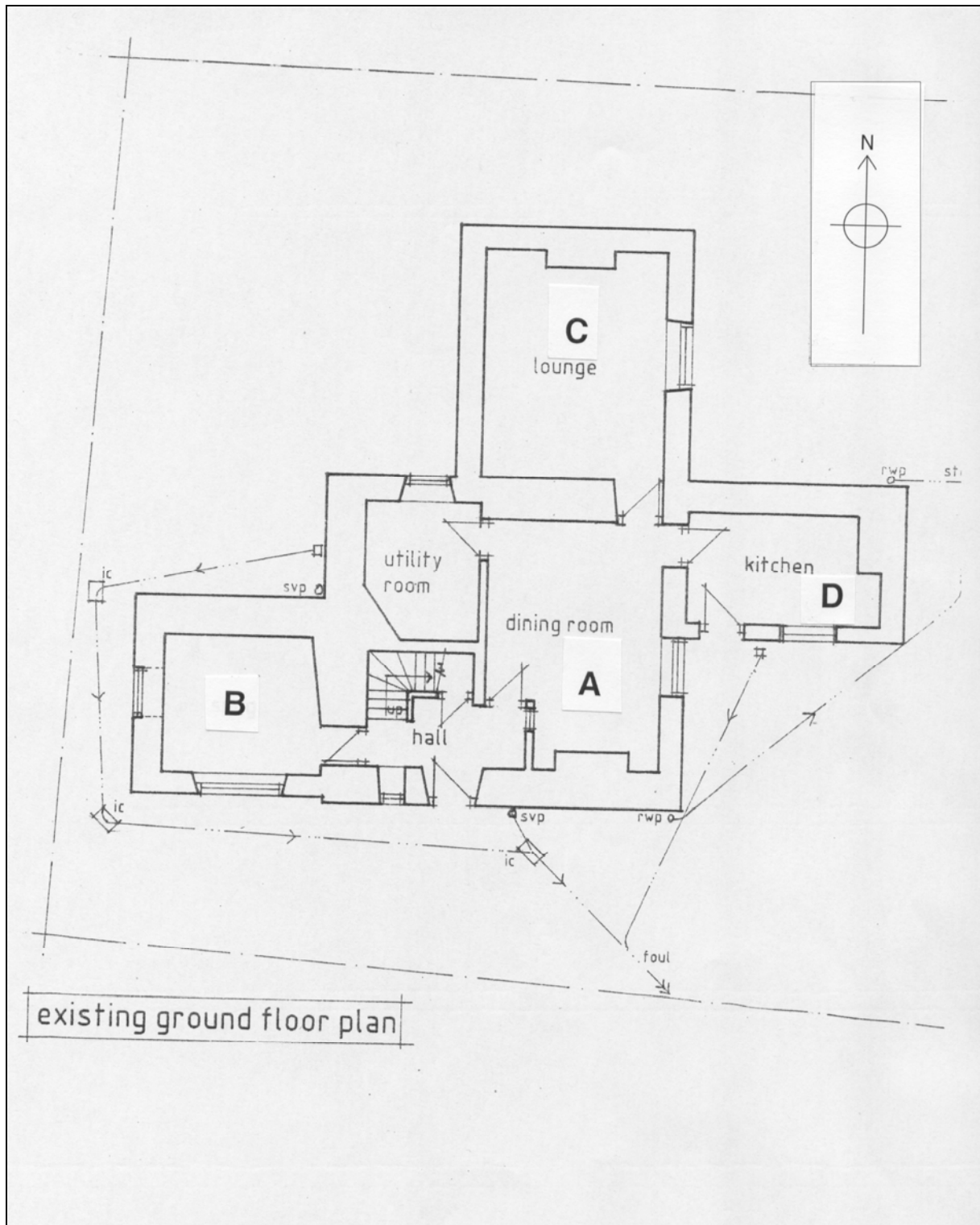


Figure 2. Existing Ground Floor Plan. Extract from Building Plan Services drawing HP3253/a/1 (not to scale).

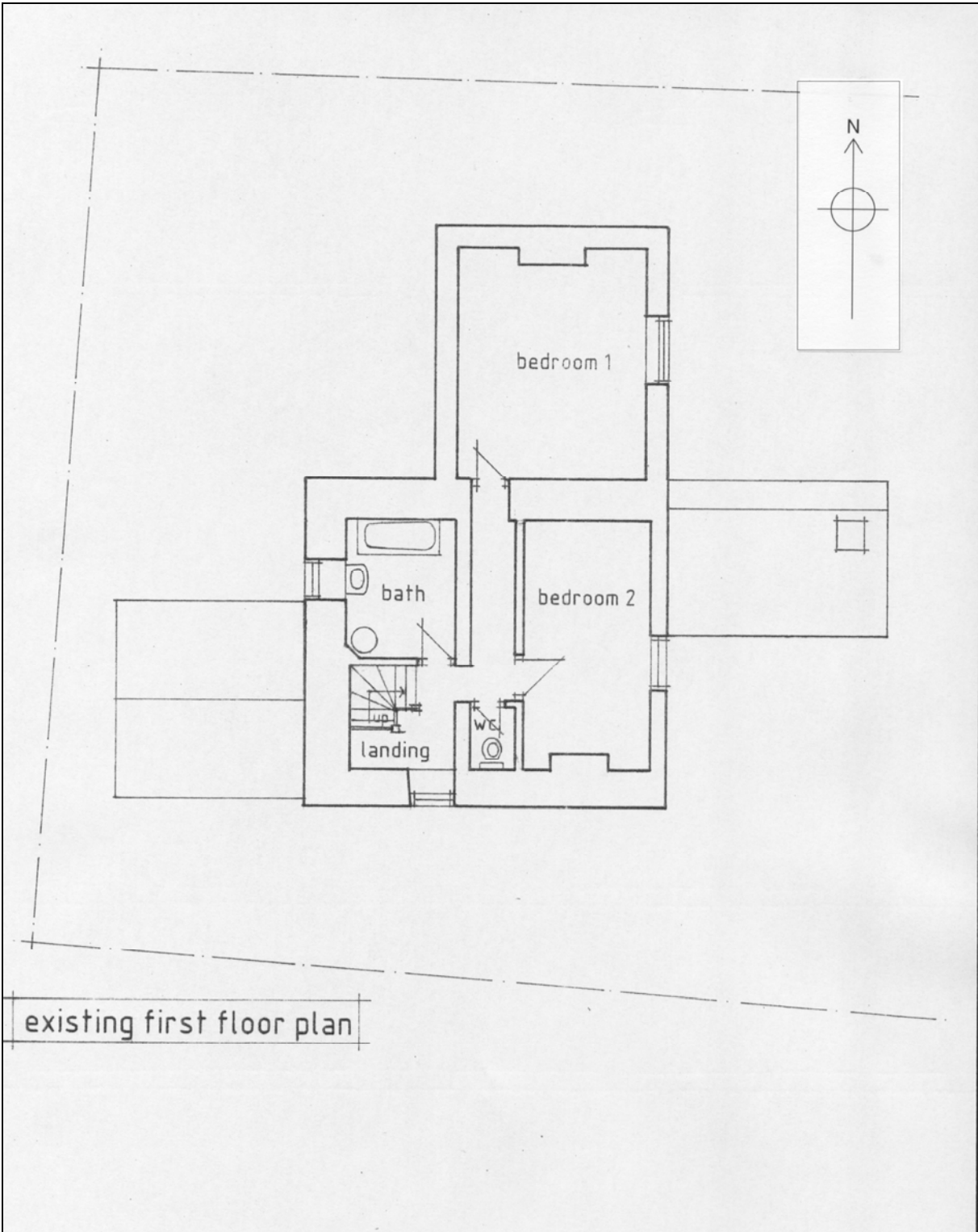


Figure 3. Existing First Floor Plan. Extract from Building Plan Services drawing HP3253/a/1 (not to scale).

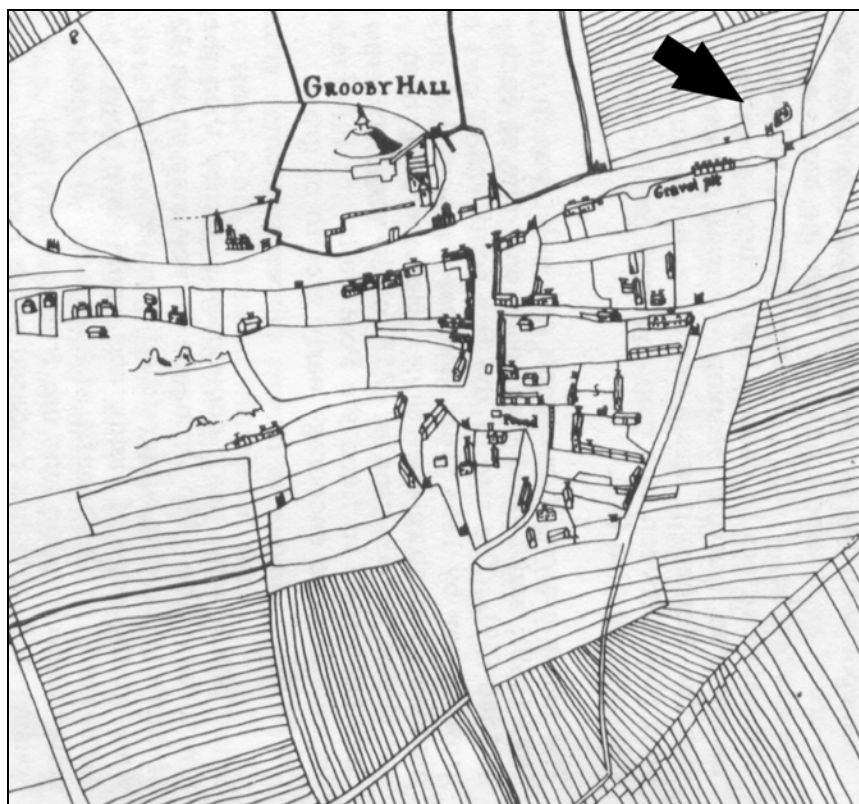


Figure 4. Extract from copy of 1757 map by John Doharty. 57 Leicester Road arrowed.

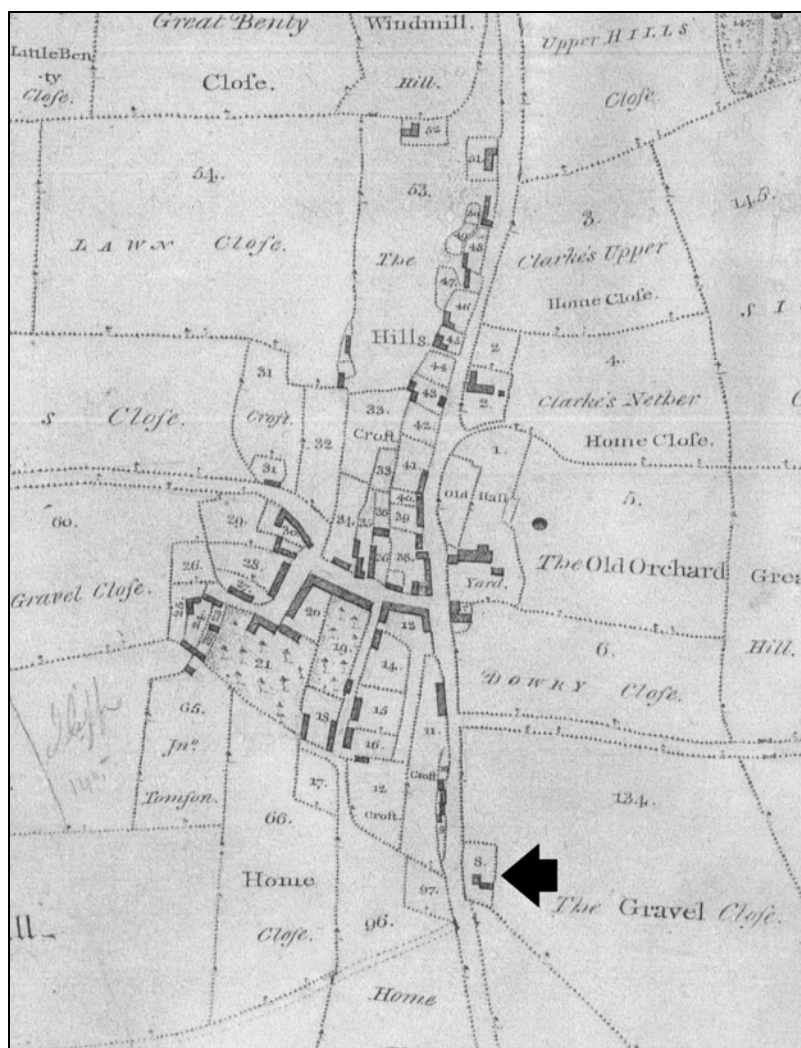


Figure 5. Extract from c. late 18th century Bailey map (ROLLR: DG20/MA/132/1). 57 Leicester Road arrowed.

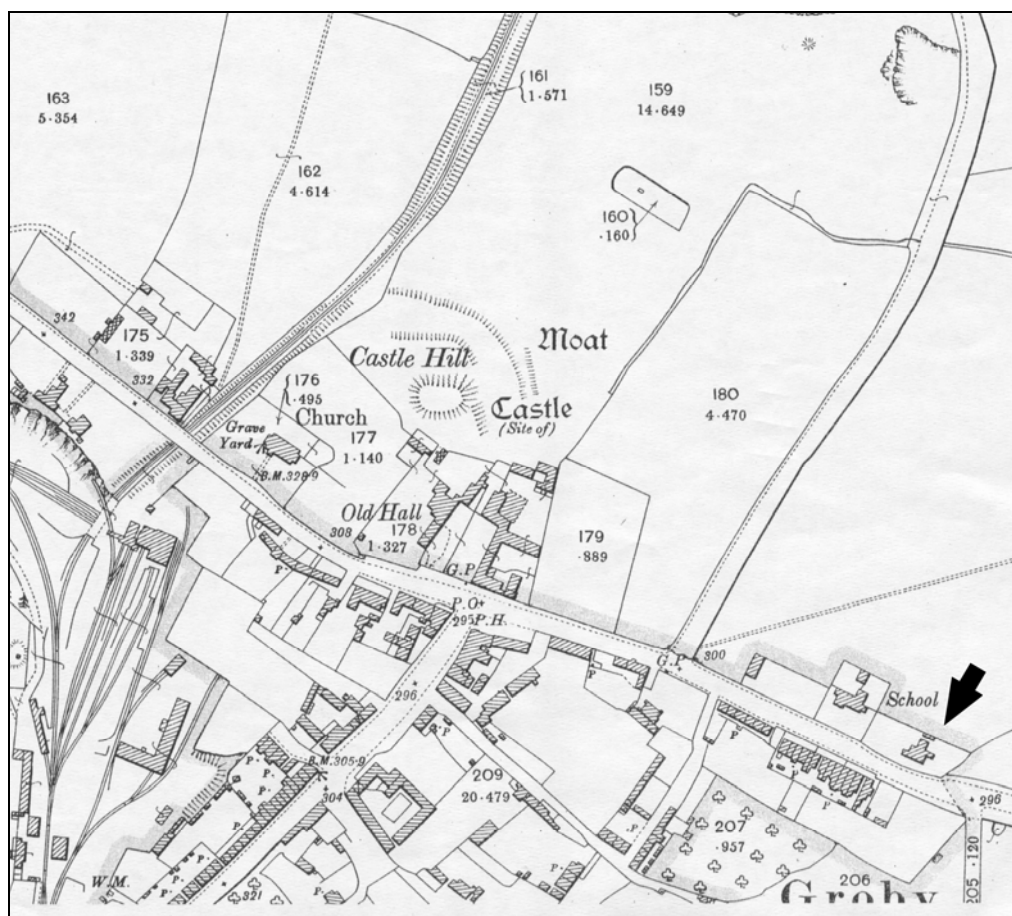


Figure 6. Extract from 1886 First edition Ordnance Survey map sheet XXX.4. 57 Leicester Road arrowed.