

**An Archaeological Field Evaluation
For land adjacent to Barleythorpe Road,
Oakham, Rutland.
(NGR SK 855 092)**

Leon Hunt

For
Prime Life Ltd.
and Corporate Architecture Ltd.

Checked by Project Manager

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| | |
|-----------------------------------------------|---|
| Summary | 1 |
| Introduction | 1 |
| Location and Geology | 2 |
| Aims and Methods | 2 |
| Archaeological and Historical Background | 3 |
| The Results | 4 |
| <i>Trench 01</i> | 4 |
| <i>Trench 02</i> | 4 |
| <i>Trench 03</i> | 5 |
| <i>Trench 04</i> | 5 |
| <i>Trench 05</i> | 6 |
| <i>Trench 06</i> | 6 |
| <i>Trench 07</i> | 6 |
| <i>Trench 08</i> | 7 |
| <i>Trench 09</i> | 7 |
| Discussion | 7 |
| The Archive | 8 |
| The Pottery and Miscellaneous Finds. D.Sawday | 8 |
| Acknowledgements | 8 |
| Bibliography | 9 |

Appendix 1- Brief

Appendix 2- Design Specification

List of Illustrations

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Figure 1: Location map of study area. Scale 1:25 000. Study area arrowed. | 10 |
| Figure 2: Location map of study area, with the evaluated site highlighted. | 11 |
| Figure 3: 1930 map showing study area as forming part of agricultural showground. Source map scale: 1: 2500 | 12 |
| Figure 4: Map of Trench Plan. Scale 1:5000 | 13 |
| Figure 5: Close-up of Trench Plan. Scale 1:2500 | 14 |

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Summary

*The University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) carried out an Archaeological field evaluation by trial trenching for Prime Life Ltd and Corporate Architecture Ltd on land to the north of Rutland Memorial Hospital and off Barleythorpe Road, Oakham, in advance of the development of three 20 bedroom residential nursing homes and social centre together with 27 elderly person cottages, new access road and roundabout (planning application **FUL/2003/0944/MS**). The site consists of two main areas; part of a playing field and an adjacent triangular piece of rough ground. The site lies in an area of potential for prehistoric and Roman remains. No archaeological features were revealed during the evaluation. A 19th century ceramic beer bottle was recovered from one trench and a small flint end scraper and a piece of post-medieval pottery were recovered from another. The site archive will be deposited with Rutland County Museum with accession number **RA1.2004**.*

Introduction

The University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) carried out an archaeological evaluation for Prime Life Ltd and Corporate Architecture on land to the north of Rutland Memorial Hospital (NGR 855 092) as part of the planning proposal for the redevelopment of Barleythorpe Hall Elderly Person's Home. This would require the building of three 20 bedroom residential nursing homes and social centre together with 27 elderly person cottages, a new access road and roundabout (planning application **FUL/2003/0944/MS**).

The development site consists of two main areas. The piece of land that will form part of the access road to the main site is the outer edge of a sports field, bordered by a narrow piece of woodland along its eastern edge (Area 1, Fig.4). The main area of the development site is a triangular piece of land of 1.98 hectares (Area 2, Fig.4), which lies behind the Rutland Memorial Hospital and consists of rough, disused grassland. This is uneven in places and is partially overgrown with bramble bushes along its western edge where it meets the strip of woodland. A gap in the woodland joins the two pieces of land. Small areas of hard standing can be seen on the rough ground. Several local people have described the land as belonging to the agricultural showground in the past (pers. comm.), and this is also borne out by map evidence (Fig. 3).

A desk-based assessment had been undertaken for the application (Clarke 2003) and had indicated that the site lies to the west of the historic core of Oakham, within Oakham parish in the county of Rutland and close to the find spots of many prehistoric, Roman and medieval artefacts. Bronze Age ring ditches and an Anglo-Saxon sunken building were also discovered close to the application area.

The Planning Archaeologist at Leicestershire County Council Heritage Services therefore requested an archaeological evaluation of the development brief (Brief for Archaeological Evaluation on Land to North of Rutland Memorial Hospital, Cold Overton Road, Oakham. 2003). The work followed the *Design Specification for Archaeological Work* (ULAS 04/570 17/12/2003).

Location and Geology

The site lies off of the Barleythorpe Road (A606) opposite the site of the Barleythorpe Agricultural Society, between playing fields and the site of Rutland Memorial Hospital and The Parks School, close to the centre of Oakham, Rutland (Fig. 2). The British Geological Survey South Sheet, Third Edition Solid, 1979, indicates that the geology is likely to consist of Middle Lias of the Lower Jurassic. The site lies at approximately 115m OD.

Aims and Methods

Geophysical Survey

It was required that a geophysical survey be carried out using Magnetic Susceptibility at 20 metre intervals combined with detailed gradiometry as appropriate.

The geophysical survey was carried out by Stratascan in accordance with the guidelines in Research & Professional Services Guidelines No. 1 '*Geophysical Survey in Archaeological Field Evaluation.*' English Heritage 1995.

The reconnaissance technique of magnetic susceptibility was employed over the whole of the survey area. From this two areas of enhancement were targeted with detailed magnetometer survey.

The survey revealed a number of anomalies that were likely to be associated with agricultural activities, land drainage, former land boundaries or services. The survey did not reveal features that were likely to be archaeologically significant (Sabin 2003).

Archaeological Evaluation

The aim of the evaluation was to establish the presence or absence of archaeological deposits and, if present, determine their extent, character, date and quality of preservation. This would allow the Planning Archaeologist to assess the potential impact of the proposed development upon any archaeological remains.

All work followed the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations.* The evaluation adhered to the Standing Conference of Archaeological Unit Manager's (SCAUM) Health and Safety Manual and ULAS's Health and Safety Guidelines (2001) and Health and Safety Policy (2001). The recording followed the ULAS Field Recording Manual.

The design brief (section 9.2.1) asked for a 2% sample to be taken of the site. It was therefore proposed to excavate nine 30mx1.5m trenches; two on the proposed access road (Area 01) and seven within the main site (Area 02). An attempt was made to place the trenches to give the broadest coverage to the site, although special attention was given to the anomalies on the north eastern side of the main site (Area 2), discovered by the Geophysical Survey. Some areas of hard standing precluded the placing of more than one trench at the south eastern end of the main site.

The trenches were excavated by a JCB 3CX back-actor using a toothless ditching bucket under the constant supervision of a member of ULAS. The trenches were excavated to the top of the natural or to the top of archaeological deposits, whichever was encountered first.

Trench 1 had to be re-aligned slightly to avoid a field drain, otherwise the site presented few obstacles.

Archaeological and Historical Background

A desk-based assessment was commissioned for the overall development (Clarke 2003) and the following is summarised from it:

Historical Background

The manor and castle of Oakham, part of the dowry of the Anglo-Saxon queens of England, came to Edith wife of Edward the Confessor in the mid 11th century. The manor was held by William the Conqueror in 1075. Domesday also shows that the settlement was served by a priest and church, perhaps a predecessor to the largely Decorated and Perpendicular All Saints. Albert the Clerk held, under the King, the churches of Oakham, Hambleton and Stamford with associated lands. Although the church and some land were granted to Westminster Abbey by William II (1087-1100), the manor, including the castle, remained in royal hands. It was held by Henry Beaumont, first Earl of Warwick, in the early 12th century, probably passing to the Ferrers family about 1119.

The town grew under the patronage of the castle and had a market by 1249. Its 14th and 15th century prosperity was due to the wool trade. Its late 17th and early 18th century buildings may be connected with the wealth of the then lord of the manor, Daniel Finch, Earl of Nottingham.

Archaeological Background

A number of prehistoric findspots are located in the immediate vicinity of the application area, including a Neolithic flint axe (80NE.BE), 0.2km to the southwest. Two cropmark ring-ditches (80NE.T) have been identified as being of probable Bronze Age origin, 0.45km to the northwest of the site. Metal detectors located an Iron Age horse fitting and assorted medieval coins from the playing fields

immediately to the northwest of the site (**80NE.BH**). A beehive quern was found close to the railway station in 1900 (**80NE.AP**)

Directly to the south of the site, Roman and early medieval pottery was discovered during an extension to the hospital (**80NE.BP**), although the methods employed during the groundworks meant that no features could be recorded. A Roman rubbish pit was excavated 0.2km to the south of the application area (**80NE.C**), during a second watching brief carried out in 1966.

The application area is located to the west of the historic core of medieval Oakham. Early Saxon occupation of the town is represented by the remains of an extremely rare Saxon sunken featured building (grübenhaus), located 0.6m south-east of the application area and excavated during a 1994 watching brief (**80NE.BR**).

The Results

Trench 01

| Interval | 0m North | 5m | 10m | 15m | 20m | 25m | 28.5m South |
|---------------|-------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|----------------|
| Ground (OD) | 116.11m | 115.98m | 116.02m | 116.06m | 116.07m | 116.06m | 116.06m |
| Topsoil Depth | 115.81m | 115.80m | 115.84m | 115.86m | 115.89m | 115.92m | 115.87m |
| Subsoil Depth | 115.55m | 115.57m | 115.55m | 115.66m | 115.68 | 115.67m | 115.68m |
| Trench Base | 115.26m | 115.46m | 115.52m | 115.60m | 115.57m | 115.57m | 115.57m |
| | | | | | | | |

This trench was 29.3m in length, 1.5m wide, orientated north-south and was situated at the edge of the playing fields, close to the narrow woodland. The topsoil consisted of a yellowish brown clay loam with very few small sub-rounded and sub-angular pebbles, with occasional larger pebbles or pieces of modern brick. The sub-soil consisted of a very yellowish brown silty clay with no stones. The natural substratum consisted of light brownish yellow clay. A field drain consisting of rounded pebbles was encountered at the beginning of the trench to the west. The trench was realigned slightly to avoid this.

Trench 02

| Interval | 0m North | 5m | 10m | 15m | 20m | 25m | 29.7m South |
|---------------|-------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|----------------|
| Ground (OD) | 116.07m | 116.03m | 115.99m | 116.00m | 116.01m | 116.03m | 116.04m |
| Topsoil Depth | 115.89m | 115.84m | 115.78m | 115.80m | 115.82m | 115.90m | 115.94m |
| Subsoil Depth | 115.56m | 115.59m | 115.56m | 115.58m | 115.57m | 115.41m | 115.54m |
| Trench Base | 115.49m | 115.53m | 115.45m | 115.49m | 115.52m | 115.27m | 115.48m |
| | | | | | | | |

This trench was 29.7m in length and 1.5m wide. This trench was also north-south orientated and situated close to the woodland. The topsoil consisted of a yellowish brown clay loam with very few small sub-rounded and sub-angular pebbles, with

| | ENE | | | | | | WSW |
|---------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Ground (OD) | 112.57m | 112.64m | 112.75m | 112.79m | 112.79m | 112.81m | 112.78m |
| Topsoil Depth | 112.47m | 112.49m | 112.59m | 112.67m | 112.76m | 112.73m | 112.71m |
| Subsoil Depth | 112.02m | 112.11m | 112.25m | 112.37m | 112.49m | 112.33m | 112.27m |
| Trench Base | 111.94m | 112.00m | 112.15m | 112.25m | 112.35m | 112.27m | 112.24m |
| | | | | | | | |

This trench was 27.7m long and 1.5m wide and was orientated east northeast-west southwest. The trench sloped slightly down to the east northeast. The topsoil was rather thin at this end of the field and consisted of yellowish brown clay loam. The subsoil was a yellowish brown silty clay which appeared darker in the southern end of the trench. Both the topsoil and the subsoil showed evidence of modern building material, including small pieces of concrete and brick. A buried surface could be seen clearly in both sections of the trench. This started at the 7m mark from the east northeast end until the 17.5m mark. The top of the surface was at 112.54m and its base was at 112.31m. It consisted of pieces of concrete rubble and grey/blue clay. The natural substratum was yellow clay.

Trench 06

| Interval | 0m South | 5m | 10m | 15m | 20m | 25m | 30.4m North |
|---------------|-------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|----------------|
| Ground (OD) | 113.20m | 112.62m | 113.28m | 113.37m | 113.45m | 113.56m | 113.61m |
| Topsoil Depth | 112.97m | 113.03m | 113.11m | 113.20m | 113.32m | 113.41m | 113.45m |
| Subsoil Depth | 112.80m | 112.87m | 112.96m | 113.03m | 113.12m | 113.24m | 113.26m |
| Trench Base | 112.67m | 112.75m | 112.84m | 112.92m | 112.99m | 113.11m | 113.18m |
| | | | | | | | |

This trench was orientated north-south and was 30.4m long and 1.5m wide. The trench sloped down very slightly to the south. The topsoil was a yellowish brown clay loam; the subsoil was a yellowish brown silty clay. Neither soil included stones. The natural substratum was a brownish yellow clay. A metal service pipe, orientated east northeast-west southwest, was uncovered approximately halfway along the trench. No features or finds were uncovered from this trench.

Trench 07

| Interval | 0m East | 5m | 10m | 15m | 20m | 25m | 30.3m West |
|---------------|------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------------|
| Ground (OD) | 113.44m | 113.53m | 113.69m | 113.74m | 113.79m | 113.84m | 113.94m |
| Topsoil Depth | 113.37m | 113.45m | 113.59m | 113.66m | 113.71m | 113.73m | 113.84m |
| Subsoil Depth | 113.14m | 113.25m | 113.38m | 113.44m | 113.46m | 113.53m | 113.61m |
| Trench Base | 112.96m | 113.10m | 113.23m | 113.33m | 113.34m | 113.42m | 113.48m |
| | | | | | | | |

This trench was orientated east-west, with a slight slope down to the East. It was 30.3m long and 1.5m wide. The topsoil was a mid-brown clay loam and the subsoil

was a yellowish brown silty clay. The natural substratum was a brownish yellow clay. No finds or features were discovered in this trench.

Trench 08

| Interval | 0m North | 5m | 10m | 15m | 20m | 25m | 29.9m South |
|---------------|-------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|----------------|
| Ground (OD) | 114.27m | 114.31m | 114.14m | 114.07m | 114.00m | 113.88m | 113.86m |
| Topsoil Depth | 114.13m | 114.04m | 113.93m | 113.95m | 113.82m | 113.72m | 113.70m |
| Subsoil Depth | 113.85m | 113.83m | 113.74m | 113.72m | 113.64m | 113.50m | 113.43m |
| Trench Base | 113.86m | 113.75m | 113.65m | 113.63m | 113.52m | 113.39m | 113.29m |
| | | | | | | | |

This trench was orientated north-south and was 29.9m long and 1.5m wide. The topsoil was a mid-brown clay loam and the subsoil was a yellowish brown silty clay. The natural substratum was a brownish yellow clay. No finds or features were discovered in this trench.

Trench 09

| Interval | 0m North | 5m | 10m | 15m | 20m | 25m | 29.9m South |
|---------------|-------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|----------------|
| Ground (OD) | 114.53m | 114.51m | 114.44m | 114.44m | 114.34m | 114.23m | 114.27m |
| Topsoil Depth | 114.35m | 114.33m | 114.24m | 114.26m | 114.16m | 114.03m | 114.11m |
| Subsoil Depth | 114.08m | 114.09m | 114.01m | 113.98m | 113.88m | 113.78m | 113.73m |
| Trench Base | 113.99m | 114.03m | 113.94m | 113.90m | 113.79m | 113.69m | 113.64m |
| | | | | | | | |

This trench was orientated north-south, sloping slightly to the south, and was 29.9m long and 1.5m wide. The topsoil was a mid-brown clay loam, with very few large (<40mm) pebbles and the subsoil was a yellowish brown silty clay. The natural was a brownish yellow clay. No finds or features were discovered in this trench. A large metal service pipe was uncovered, orientated southeast-northwest at the southern end.

Discussion

The archaeological evaluation of this site uncovered no discernable archaeological features. The features in Trench 02 proved to be geological in origin. The buried surface in Trench 05 was undoubtedly modern, due to the concrete and brick encountered, and is possibly associated with the hard standing areas at this end of the site. Discussions with local people during the evaluation point to the possibility that Area 02 once formed part of the Rutland Agricultural Showground (pers. comm.). This is borne out by the areas of hard standing, particularly at the south eastern end of the site, which may have supported small buildings. Historical maps of the area also show it as forming part of the showground (Fig. 3).

The Archive

The archive will be lodged at Rutland County Museum with accession number **AI.2004** and consists of the following:

- 9 Pro-forma trench sheets.
- 1 Colour Slide Film
- 1 Print Film B/W

The Pottery and Miscellaneous Finds.

Deborah Sawday.

APPENDIX: The pottery from an evaluation at Barleythorpe Road, Oakham, Rutland.
D. Sawday

The pottery, the base and lower wall of an internally glazed wide mouthed bowl or pancheon (Davies and Sawday 1999, fig.97.179-182), was catalogued with reference to the ULAS fabric series (*ibid.* 1999). This kind of material is ubiquitous in post medieval and modern contexts throughout the country and dates from the 17th or 18th to the 19th or 20th centuries. Local sources include Chilvers Coton, a suburb of Nuneaton, in Warwickshire, and Ticknall in Derbyshire.

Bibliography

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| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Site/Parish: Barleythorpe Rd, Oakham, Rutland Accession No/ Doc Ref: RA1 2002/oakham1 Material: pottery Site Type: village | Submitter: L. Hunt Identifier: D. Sawday Date of Id: 29.03.04 Method of Recovery: wb |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

| context | fabric/ware | Frag. Nos. | weight grams | comments |
|----------|--------------------------------------|------------|--------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Trench 2 | Flint | 1 | | worked |
| Pot | | | | |
| Trench 2 | EA2 – Earthenware 2/Pancheon ware | 1 | 75 | Base and lower wall of an internally glazed wide mouthed bowl or pancheon. |

Acknowledgements

ULAS would like to thank Prime Life Ltd and Corporate Architecture for their help and assistance. Leon Hunt would like to thank Rutland County Council with their help

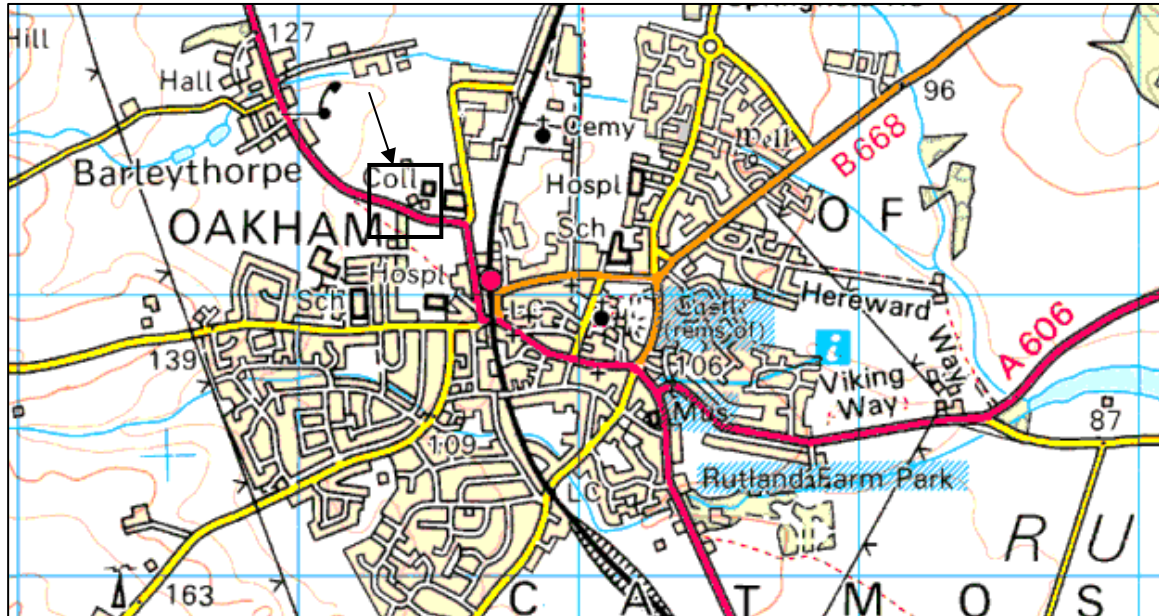
with access. Leon Hunt and Eric Thurston carried out the fieldwork. The project manager was Patrick Clay

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Figure 1: Location map of study area. Scale 1:25 000. Study Area arrowed.

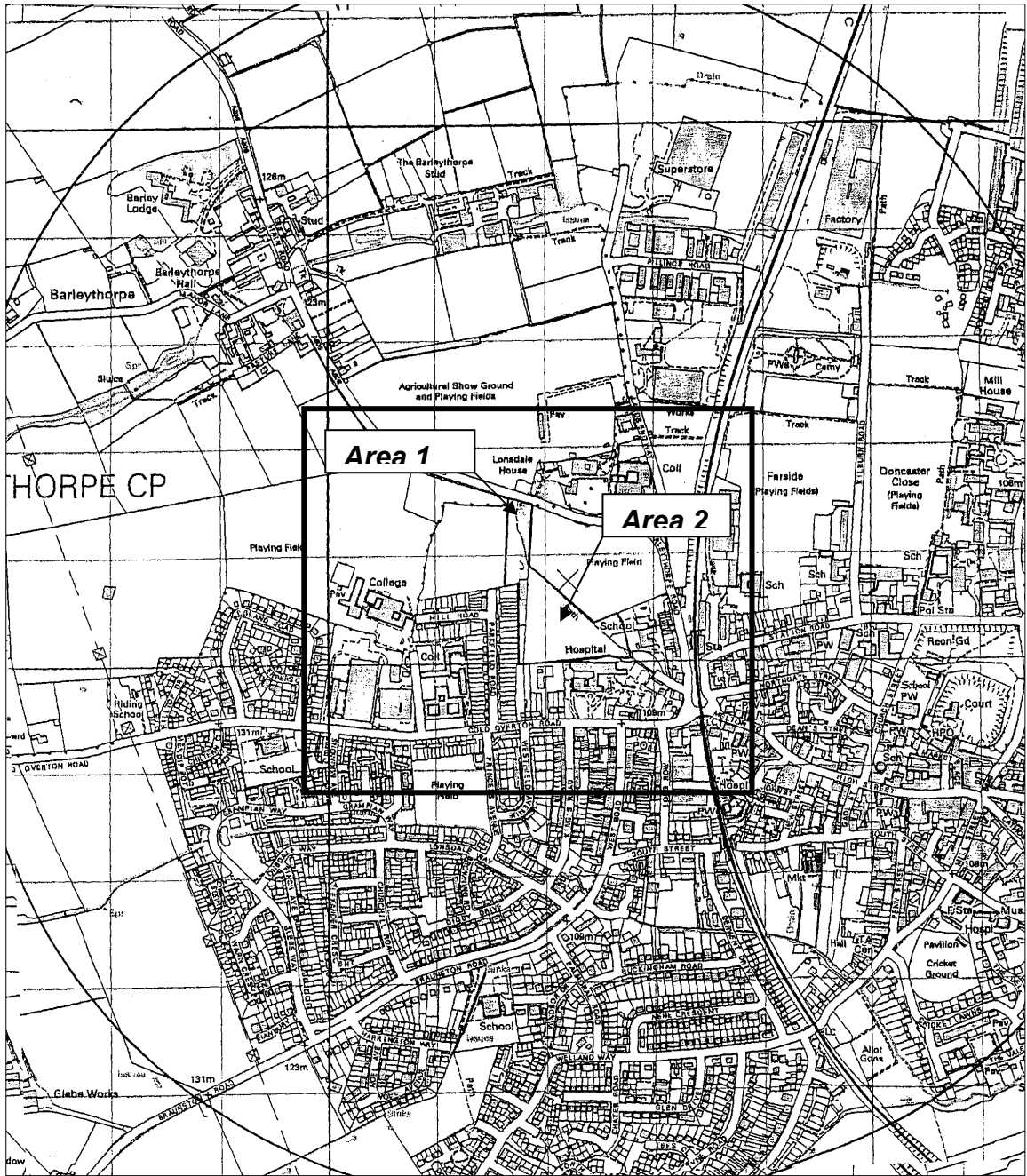


Figure 2: Location map of study area, with the evaluated site highlighted. Source map 1:10 000. From Nicholls Colton Geotechnical, 2003. Report for Corporate Architecture on Behalf of Rutland County Council and Prime Life Ltd. on A Proposed Residential Development at Barleythorpe Reprovision, Oakham, Leicestershire.

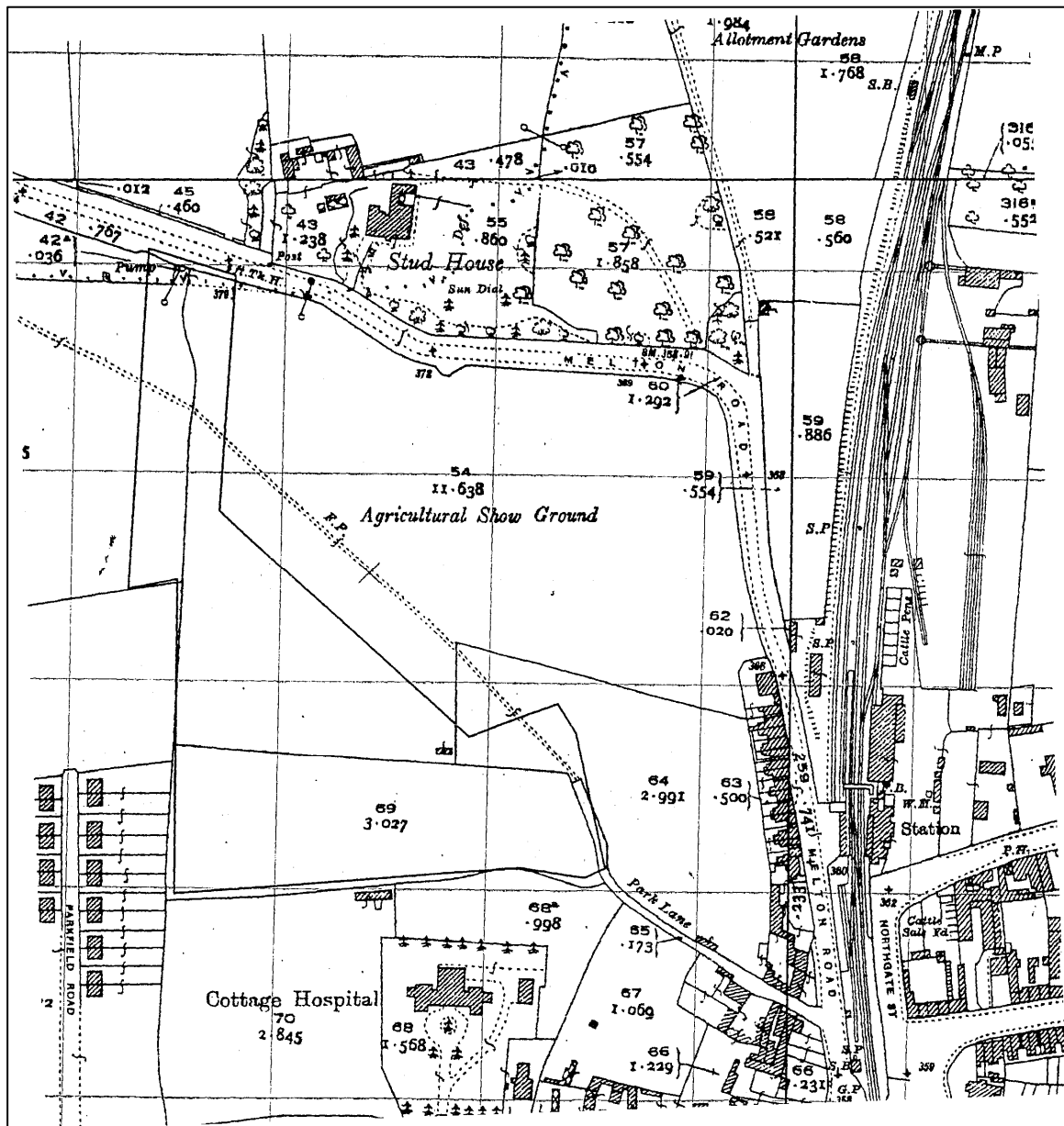


Figure 3: 1930 map showing study area as forming part of agricultural showground. Source map scale: 1: 2500. From Nicholls Colton Geotechnical, 2003. *Report for Corporate Architecture on Behalf of Rutland County Council and Prime Life Ltd. on A Proposed Residential Development at Barleythorpe Repron, Oakham, Leicestershire.*

Q

Figure 5: Close-up of Trench Plan. 1:2500

**Appendix 1- Brief for Archaeological Evaluation on Land to the North of
Rutland Memorial Hospital, Cold Overton Road, Oakham.**

Appendix 2- Design Specification for Archaeological Work

