

**An Archaeological Desk-based Assessment  
And Buildings Appraisal  
for the Crown Imperial Works,  
Hill Street, Barwell, Leicestershire (SP 448 968)**

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## **An Archaeological Desk-based Assessment and Buildings Appraisal for the Crown Imperial Works, Hill Street, Barwell, Leicestershire (NGR SP 448 968)**

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### ***Summary***

*The archaeological desk-based assessment and buildings appraisal for the factory located at 13 Hill Street Barwell, Leicestershire (SP 448 968), undertaken by ULAS on behalf of Savage Hayward Architects has shown that the proposed development area is located on the edge of the medieval village core of Barwell, with known prehistoric and Roman remains located to the south of the village. The factory, formerly known as the Crown Imperial Works, was constructed between 1903 and 1916 and was owned by the Ney Brothers, manufacturers of boots and shoes. The present buildings comprise a series of north light workshops, fronted by a range of three main factory buildings, facing out onto Hill Street, consisting of two connecting warehouses and a more elaborate office block, with stone ornamentation to the street elevation. The buildings are not listed and the site lies outside the Barwell B Conservation Area; however, the building has been recognised as an interesting example of the early 20th century industrial buildings that define the local landscape, reflecting the development of Barwell as an important centre of boot and shoe manufacture at this time.*

*The application area lies outside the medieval village core of Barwell and a number of prehistoric and Roman sites are located to the south of the village. The potential for the presence of earlier archaeological deposits on the site itself is not known; no previous archaeological investigation has been carried out in the vicinity of the site.*

### **1. Introduction**

1.1 In accordance with Planning Policy Guidelines 16, para. 30 (PPG16, Archaeology and Planning), this document consists of an archaeological desk-based assessment and buildings appraisal for the Paul James Knitwear Factory, formerly known as the Crown Imperial Works, located at 13 Hill Street, Barwell, Leicestershire (SP 448 968); Figures 1 & 2). Planning Application Number 04/00816/OUT).

1.2 The desk-based assessment forms part of an Archaeological Impact Assessment, following the recommendations of the Planning Archaeologist at Leicestershire County Council, Natural and Historic Environment Team, in his capacity as archaeological adviser to the Planning Authority.



1.4 The Leicestershire County Council Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), indicates that the site is located just outside the medieval village core of Barwell and that evidence of prehistoric and Roman activity has been located in the southern part of the village (**Appendix I**).

## **2. Aims and Objectives**

2.1 The aim of the desk-based assessment is to provide information on the extent, character, date, integrity, state of preservation and relative quality of archaeological deposits within the development area. This must take into account all known previous land uses. In addition, it must be established what impact the proposed development might have upon any archaeological remains. The desk-based assessment should, once the above information has been gathered, help to inform the final planning decision or indicate whether further stages of work are necessary.

2.2 All work follows the Institute of Field Archaeologist's Code of Conduct and adheres to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-based Assessments*.

## **3. Methodology**

3.1 The following sources have been consulted to assess previous land use and archaeological potential.

- 1) Archaeological records (Sites and Monuments Record, Leicestershire County Council Heritage Services).
- 2) Previous historic and Ordnance Survey maps of the area (Records Office for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LRO)).
- 3) Geological maps (University of Leicester Geology Department)
- 4) Historical background (LRO and University of Leicester Library).

3.2 A site visit was undertaken on the 4th of July 2005 in order to carry out an inspection of the site and a rapid, visual appraisal of the existing buildings. Particular attention was also paid to the current land use of all parts of the application area, in order to assess the likely condition of any buried archaeological remains that may be present within the site boundaries.

## **4. Geology and Topography**

4.1 The Ordnance Survey Geological Survey of Great Britain Sheet 169 indicates that the underlying geology is likely to consist of Wolstan sands and gravels. The proposed development area is located on a steep, south-facing slope at a height ranging from *c.* 121m OD at the north, to *c.* 116m OD at the southern end of the site.

## 5. Summary of the Archaeological Results

### 5.1 Archaeological Background (see Appendix I and Figure 2).

5.1.1 The following are details of relevant sites in the vicinity of the development area, that are included as part of the SMR (see appendix).

5.1.2 The proposed development area is located on the eastern edge of the medieval historic core of Barwell (**MLE2821**). Prehistoric activity has been recorded to the south of the village, in the form of a rectilinear enclosure which exists as a cropmark and is thought to date from the Neolithic period (**MLE2800**). Further evidence for Neolithic occupation has been located at High Close, in the south of the village (**MLE2810**), where hearth stones, pot boilers and flint have been found. The remains of a Middle Bronze Age cremation urn were discovered during groundworks to the north-west of High Close (**MLE2811**) and a second cropmark enclosure, thought to date to the Iron Age (**MLE2801**), has also been located to the south of the village.

Evidence for Roman occupation, including pottery, mortaria and a possible tessellated floor surface, suggestive of a possible Villa site, has been found adjacent to High Close (**MLE2812**). A Roman coin was found to the south of the Church (**MLE7933**).

Evidence for medieval occupation in the vicinity of the present development area, include a mortar, recovered from the grounds of Red Hall (**MLE6787**) and a late medieval mirror case, found in fields to the south of Dawson's Lane (**MLE10249**). The Church of St. Mary's (**MLE2815**) dates to c.1300-1350.

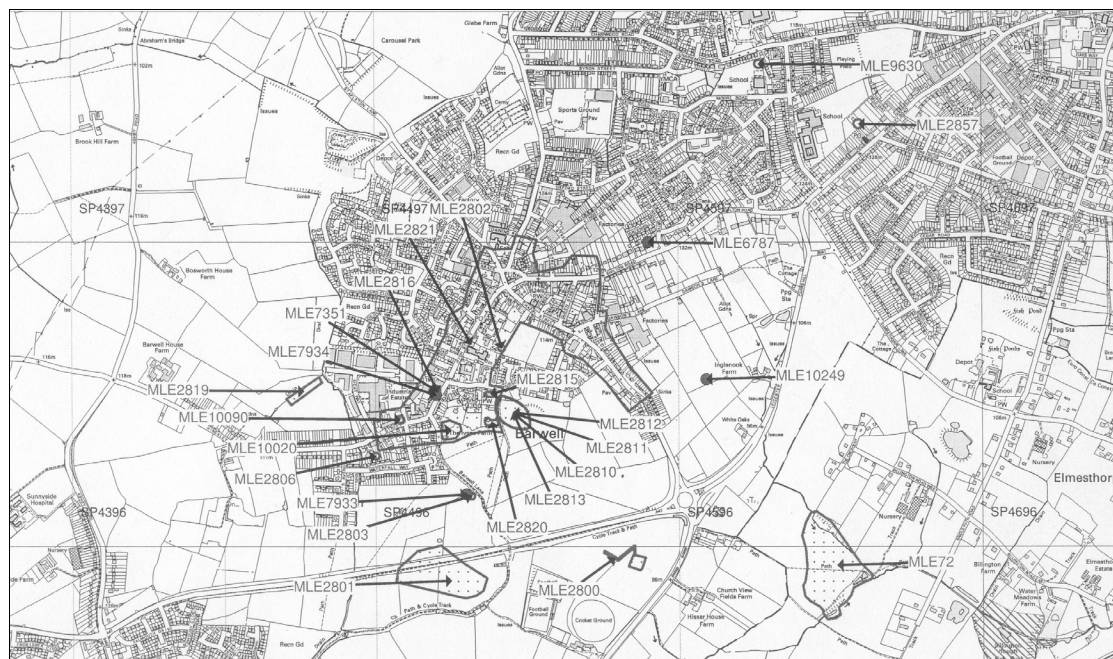


Figure 3. Location of Sites on the SMR. Scale 1:8000

## **5.2 Historical Background**

5.2.1 At the time of the Domesday Survey of 1086, Barwell or 'Barewelle' formed part of the Guthlaxton Wapentake and was held by St. Mary's Abbey of Coventry. The entry reads as follows (Morris 1979, 6:3):

*The Abbey holds 4c. of land itself in Barwell.*

*In lordship 1 plough.*

*14 villagers with a priest and 3 smallholders have 2 ploughs.*

*Meadow 1 furlong long and as much wide; woodland 1 league long and 3 furlongs wide.*

*Value 30s.*

*In the same village are 8 Freemen who have 5 ploughs. To this village belongs 1c. of land in Stapleton, whose stock is entered above.*

That the community was served by a priest, can perhaps be taken as an indication that a church was in existence before the time of the Conquest.

5.2.2 In Nichols' accounts of 1811, it is recorded that the village was presented to the St. Mary's Abbey in 1042, during the reign of Edward the Confessor, by Leofric, Earl of Mercia. The lordship of Barwell was granted to Hugh of Hastings by Henry I, passing through marriage from the Hastings family to the Greys of Ruthin during the 14th century.

5.2.3 In 1596, the lordship passed into the hands of Sir John Harrington who, in 1600, sold it to one Samuel Culverville. At this time, prominent landowners in Barwell were Anne Gilman, John Patchett, George and Peter Somerfield and Thomas and Richard Wightman. By 1660, the manor was held by John Oneby, who served as Bailiff of Leicester during 1687/8 and landowners are named as the Pagets, the Shentons and the Parrs.

5.2.4 Writing in 1811, Nichols observes that ' In Barwell are many gardeners who not only supply the Hinckley market with vegetables, but also send much of their produce to Leicester market. Market gardening continued to be the main source of occupation in Barwell until the 1840s, when framework knitting was introduced into the area. By 1845, 300 frames were recorded in Barwell, with a population of just 1300 – this reflects the rapid expansion of the knitting industry at this time and suggests that almost every household contained a frame, with entire families involved in the manufacture of knitted goods.

5.2.5 During the 'cotton famine' of 1860s, brought on by the American Civil War, when cotton imports were scarce, the area fell into decline; as a means of escaping the depression, knitwear manufacturers began to diversify and Barwell began to prosper once more, as a centre for boot and shoe production. By the 1880s, following the advent of steam power, factories were being built, replacing the 'basket-work' of home production. By 1896, there were 11 boot and shoe manufacturers in Barwell, which became a major centre of production during the 20th century, producing boots for the army during the First World War. The industry was at its peak during the 1950s; since the 1970s however, foreign competition has made local shoe production economically unviable (Shaw 1987; HBBC 2000).

5.2.6 A pamphlet ‘*Barwell and Earl Shilton Boot and Shoe Trail*’, issued in 2000 by the Earl Shilton Local History Society, in conjunction with Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council, lists the factory on Hill Street as belonging to the Ney Brothers, who made boots for boys and girls.

5.2.7 The contract agreement between the Ney Brothers, entitled ‘Articles of Partnership’, which is dated 20th December 1915, is held at the Records Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland. This document formalizes the agreement between Mr Louis M.P. Ney and Mr. John Ney, whilst noting that they have already been operating as a partnership for ‘some time past’ and lists the capital of the partnership, including ‘the factory warehouses, buildings and premises known as the Crown Imperial Works, in Hill Street’.

5.2.8 According to information provided by the Earl Shilton Local History Society, at some point following the First World War, the Ney Brothers were taken to court on tax evasion charges and were eventually forced to sell their business. The Crown Imperial Works were subsequently purchased by George Ward, an important local businessman, who owned many of the Barwell Boot and Shoe factories, becoming one of the largest manufacturers in the country (Linda Bent, pers. comm.).

### **5.3 Map Evidence**

5.3.1 The earliest map held by the LRO which depicts the present development area, is the Tithe map of Barwell, dated 1841 (Figure 4, below), which shows the area to have existed as open fields at this time, with no indication of any development on the site. Marked as part of area 177, the site is listed as ‘Dawson’s Berry Hill, consisting of pasture; the landowner is listed as one George White.

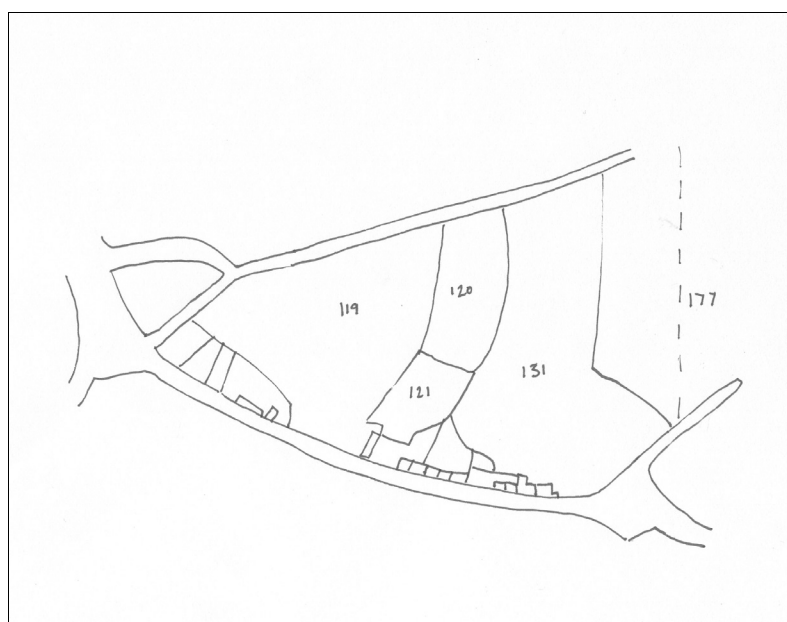


Figure 4. Tracing from 1841 Tithe Map of Barwell (not to scale).



5.3.1 The 1st and 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey maps of 1881 and 1903 (fig. 5) show no further development to have taken place within the present development area at this time, although the line of what is now Hill Street, is marked on the maps as a footpath.



Fig. 5. 1881 OS maps Leicestershire XVI.9 & XXXVI.13, with development area outlined (Scale 1:2500)

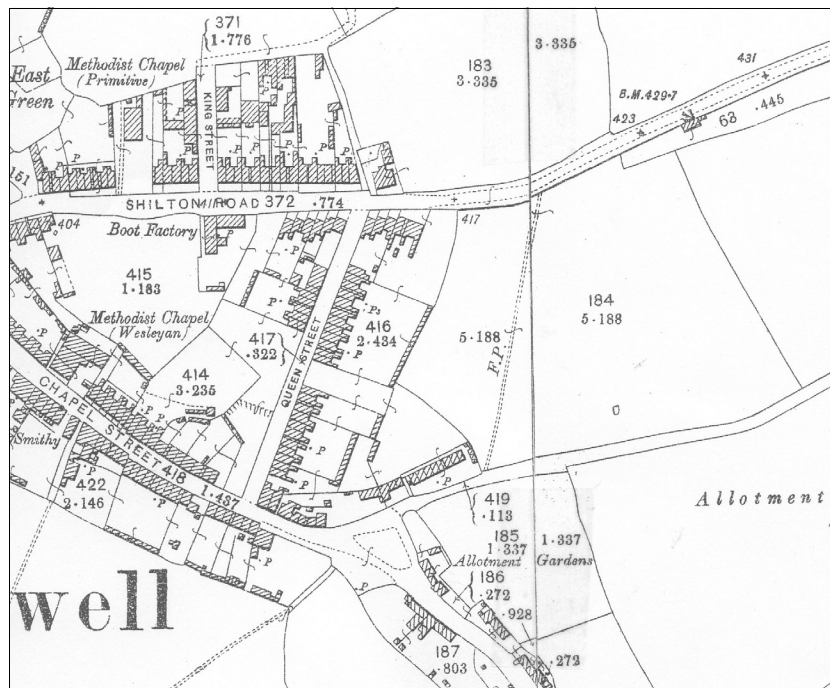


Fig. 6. 1903 OS map Leicestershire XVI.9 and XXXVI.13 with development area outlined (Scale 1:2500).



Fig. 7. 1916 OS map Leicestershire XVI.9 and XXXVI.13 with development area outlined (Scale 1:2500)

5.3.2 The 1916 edition Ordnance Survey shows the Crown Imperial Works (Boot and Shoe) factory in place, with all of the elements of the extant premises apparently constructed by this time.



Figure 8. 1955 Ordnance Survey map with development area highlighted. Scale 1:2500

5.3.3 The Ordnance Survey of 1955 shows no further changes to have taken place to the factory buildings at this time. Figure 10 (below) is taken from the 1955 O.S. map held by the University of Leicester Geography Department map library. According to the departmental librarian, the hand written notes along the right-hand margin of the map were made during the late 1960s, by a Phd student who was studying patterns in the local boot and shoe industry at this time – the Crown Imperial Works has been annotated as Number 10, which has been marked as being owned by G. Ward.

5.3.4 The 1979 Ordnance Survey (Figure 11) and the most recent edition of 1987 (Figure 2) show some slight changes to have taken place within the layout of the factory buildings, including some enlargement to the rear north-light workshops and also some building along the northern site boundary, to incorporate what is now the engine house into the main body of the factory workshops. A close date for these building modifications has not been ascertained at this stage – although they appear to have taken place after 1916, the level of detail shown on the map of 1955 (figure 10) is not sufficient to determine whether they were in place by this time.



Figure 9. 1979 Ordnance Survey map SP4496 with development area highlighted.  
Scale 1:2500

## 5.4 *Site Visit*

5.4.1 A site visit was undertaken on the 4th July 2005. The application area is located at the lower end of Hill Street, on land which slopes steeply from north to south. The factory premises are presently occupied by Paul James Knitwear, and consist of three adjoining factory warehouse units along the street frontage, with a series of northlight factory workshops, aligned east/west, to the rear of warehouses. Also behind the warehouses is a yard area, surfaced with tarmac, and a brick built Engine House, with chimney stack.

## 6. Buildings Appraisal



Plate 1: The Hill Street Frontage (looking north-east)

Whilst being closely dated to the early part of the 20th century, certainly constructed between 1903 and 1915, three very distinct elements of build are apparent in the factory buildings that front onto Hill Street.



Plate 2: Principal factory building (looking south-east)

The principal factory building is located at the northern end of the range and comprises a brick building, near-square in plan, of two-storeys plus attic and basement. The roof is hipped, with gables; the roof covering consists of Welsh slate. The principal elevation to the Hill Street frontage has a prominent, stone-faced central bay, defined by rusticated brick pilasters which support an ornamental, semi-circular, arch-head surround to a gabled dormer window. The stone dormer has a three-light window and is near-Diocletian\* in style. There is a keystone above the central light.



Plate 3: Hill Street Elevation

On the ground floor is a recessed central doorway, with overhead, within a round-headed opening. Above this, at first floor level, is a canted oriel window, in stone, supported on a console.

The outer bays, with no stone facing, each have a small, circular window at ground floor level and larger, segmental arch-headed windows at first floor level, with projecting brick detail below the sill. There are plain brick pilasters to the outer corners of the building.

Most of the glazing to the frontage is modern replacement, with the exception perhaps, of the dormer window and that of the overhead to the ground floor entrance.

The other elevations are plain in style, except for corner pilasters and are built entirely of brick. The rear elevation displays irregular fenestration; one or two original timber window surrounds survive at first floor level, but the majority of windows have been replaced.

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\* Diocletian Window: semi-circular window with two mullions, so-called because of the Baths of Diocletian in Rome. Also called a Thermae Window (Pevsner 1992, 534).



Plate 4: Rear Elevation

A second phase of building exists to the south, adjoining the principal building at a lower level, reflecting the steep, downward slope of the street. This building is of two-storeys, consisting of five bays, with slightly recessed, square, multi-pane windows. The windows have coped brick sills, and simple moulded brick heads, above steel lintels. The roof covering is of Welsh slate.



Plate 5: Factory Buildings at lower end of Hill Street

The third factory building adjoins the second, again at a lower level, reflecting the slope of the street. This brick building is located on the corner of Hill Street and Dawson's Lane and is of two-storeys, with 4/5 bays. There are 4 segmental arch-headed windows to ground and first floor, with stone, or rendered, sills and

decorative, Terracotta detailing to the eaves course. At the southern end of the building, at ground floor level, is a recessed, segmental arch-headed doorway, with overlight; steps lead down from the doorway, to street level.



Plate 6: Rear north-light workshops

A series of five, single-storey, staggered, north light workshops are located to the rear of the principal buildings, in addition to, on the opposite side of the yard area, a single-storey, brick built engine house/boiler room, with square built chimney stack located on the southern side.



Plate 7: Engine House/Boiler Room

## **7. Discussion**

7.1 A scan of the readily-available map evidence indicates that the factory complex on Hill Street was constructed at some time between 1903 and 1916. From an architectural point of view, it would seem likely that the structure located on the corner of Hill Street and Dawson's Lane, is the earliest element. The principal building at the northern end of the Hill Street range, along with the central element, certainly seem later in style and it is possible that they are contemporary, built as an office and warehouse block, with associated manufacturing unit. By 1916 however, it seems that most of the presently extant buildings had been constructed, with some minor changes to the layout of the buildings certainly in place by 1979, but probably completed by the middle of the 20th century.

7.2 The history and development of Barwell during the 19th and 20th centuries is inextricably linked to its status as an important centre of boot and shoe manufacture. The contribution that the industry has made in shaping the built environment has been recognised, resulting in the designation of the Barwell B Conservation Area, manifest evidence of the significance that is placed on the preservation of industrial buildings. Although the development area does not fall within either one of the two designated Barwell Conservation Areas, the former Crown Imperial Works on Hill Street have been highlighted by Palmer and Neaverson (1992) as an interesting example of the elaborate office blocks, fronting north-light workshops, which are characteristic of the early 20th century industrial buildings in the area.

## **8. Appraisal of the Development Impact**

8.1 A planning application (No. 04/00816/OUT) has been submitted which proposes to demolish the existing factory, with a view to constructing a new apartment block, comprising thirty-three flats, together with associated access and services. No detailed plans of the development proposals have been supplied.

8.2 The application area is located on the edge of the medieval historic core of Barwell, with a number of prehistoric and Roman sites known to the south of the village. The potential for the presence of archaeological remains within the development area itself is unknown, as no previous archaeological investigation has been carried out either on the site, nor in the immediate vicinity of the site.

8.3 The arrangement of the windows on the rear elevation of the principal building, suggests the presence of cellaring on site. The extent of any such cellaring is not known. It would seem highly unlikely that any earlier archaeological remains would survive where cellaring does exist on site: the potential for the survival of any earlier archaeological deposits elsewhere on site is considered to be higher but is dependent on the extent of any intrusive groundworks associated with the construction of the present factory.

8.4 Given that the existing development on site is likely to have occurred during a single phase of activity, any archaeological deposits which do survive on site are likely to exist relatively close to the ground surface. Assuming a depth of one metre for foundation and service trenches, any groundworks associated with the future



development of the site may have a damaging impact upon any such archaeological deposits

## **9. Conclusion**

9.1 The desk-based assessment and buildings appraisal has shown that the factory located at 13 Hill Street, Barwell was constructed between 1903 and 1916, as the Crown Imperial Works, owned by the Ney Brothers, manufacturers of boots and shoes. The premises comprise a series of north light workshops, fronted by a range of three main factory buildings, facing out onto Hill Street, consisting of two connecting warehouses and a more elaborate office block, with stone ornamentation to the street elevation. The buildings are not listed and the site lies outside the Barwell B Conservation Area; however, the building has been recognised as an interesting example of early the 20th century industrial buildings that define the local landscape, reflecting the development of Barwell as an important centre of boot and shoe manufacture at this time.

9.2 The application area lies outside the medieval village core of Barwell and a number of prehistoric and Roman sites are located to the south of the village. The potential for the presence of earlier archaeological deposits on the site itself is not known; no previous archaeological investigation has been carried out in the vicinity of the site.

9.3 The state of preservation of any earlier archaeological deposits present on the site is dependent on the extent of any intrusive groundworks carried out during the construction of the existing factory. It is unlikely that any earlier archaeological deposits will survive where cellars are present.

9.4 A scheme of further archaeological work should be discussed with the Senior Planning Archaeologist for Leicestershire County Council, as advisor to the Planning Authority.

## **8. References**

- |                                |      |  |
|--------------------------------|------|--|
| Morris, J. (ed.)               | 1979 | <i>Domesday Book: Leicester</i> . Phillimore, Chichester.                  |
| Nichols, J.                    | 1805 | <i>History and Antiquities of Leicestershire</i> , 3ii.                    |
| Palmer, M. and Neaverson, P.   | 1992 | <i>Industrial Landscapes of the East Midlands</i> . Phillimore, Chichester |
| Pevsner, N. and Williamson, E. | 1992 | <i>The Buildings of England: Leicestershire and Rutland</i>                |

## **10. Sources**

Leicestershire County Council, Heritage Services Sites and Monuments Records.

LLRRO Record Office for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland maps and records

The British Geological Survey of Britain Sheet 169

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## **Appendix I: Sites and Monuments Record**

The following sites are located in the vicinity of the development area and are listed in the Leicestershire County Council Heritage Services, Sites and Monuments Record.

### **1. Prehistoric**

**MLE2811** (SP 44419654) Middle Bronze Age cremation urn found, northwest of High Close, Barwell.

**MLE2810** (SP 445964) Neolithic Occupation Site- hearth stones, pot boilers, flint- High Close, Barwell

**MLE2800** (SP 448959) Prehistoric rectilinear enclosure cropmark, southeast of church, Barwell

### **2. Roman**

**MLE2812** (SP 445964) Roman Villa, high Close, Barwell

**MLE7934** (SP 442965) Roman tile found re-used in medieval hearth

**MLE7933** (SP 4430 9617) Roman coin found to the south of the church.

### **3. Medieval**

**MLE2821 49NW BP (SP444969)** Medieval historic core of Barwell village

**MLE6787 49NW R (SP449970)** Medieval mortar found, Red Hall, Barwell

**MLE2802 49NW S (SP444966)** Medieval pottery and possible kiln, north-east of Manor Farm, Barwell

**MLE2813 49NW AF (SP445964)** Medieval lime kiln and pottery found, High Close, Barwell

**MLE2815 49NW AL (SP443965)** Medieval church of St Mary, Barwell

**MLE2816 49NW AM (SP442965)** Medieval cobbled surface and hearth, High Close Cottage, Barwell

### **4. Post-medieval**

**MLE2806 49NW AA (SP440963)** Post-medieval windmill, west of Ivens, Barwell

**MLE7351 49NW AM (SP442965)** Early post-medieval jetton found, Barwell

**MLE2803 49NW AT (SP44309617)** Post-medieval brick kiln (probably 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> century), south of church, Barwell

**5. Undated**

**MLE2820 49NW BE (SP443964)** Undated fishpond, possibly associated with Rectory, south of church, Barwell