



Northamptonshire Archaeology

An Archaeological Watching Brief at the Co-op
26-30 High Street, Fleckney, Leicestershire
X.A173.2009



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Northamptonshire
County Council

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Report 10/08

January 2010



SITE ADDRESS: MIDLAND CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY
26-30 HIGH STREET
FLECKNEY
LEICESTERSHIRE

PLANNING APPLICATION 09/00330/FUL

ACCESSION NUMBER: X.A 173.2009

NGR: SK 6480 9350

ORIGINATING BODY: NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY,
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CLIENTS NAME: MIDLAND CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY
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QUALITY CONTROL

	Print name	Signed	Date
Checked by	Pat Chapman		
Verified by	Iain Soden		
Approved by	Andy Chapman		

OAS/S REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project name	An archaeological Watching Brief at the Co-Op, 26-30 High Street, Fleckney, Leicestershire.	
Short description	An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology on 130 sq m of land at 26-30 High Street, Fleckney, Leicestershire. Existing car park surfaces were removed during groundworks for the construction of an extension to existing commercial premises. A 20th century brick foundation and concrete surface were the only features uncovered. There were no other archaeological features and no artefacts were recovered.	
Project type	Watching Brief	
Site status	None	
Previous work	None	
Current Land use	Car park	
Future work	Unknown	
Monument type/ period	None	
Significant finds	None	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Leicestershire	
Site address	Land at the rear of 26-30 High Street, Fleckney	
Study area	130 sq m	
OS Easting & Northing	SP 6480 9350	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	Midlands Co-operative Society	
Project brief originator	Leicestershire County Council Planning Archaeologist	
Project design originator	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Director/Supervisor	Mark Patenall, Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project Manager	Iain Soden Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Sponsor or funding body	Midlands Co-operative society	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	January 2010	
End date	January 2010	
ARCHIVES	Location	Paper
Paper	X.A173.2009	
Digital		
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
Title	Archaeological Watching Brief on land at 26-30 High Street, Fleckney, Leicestershire	
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Cover: The Co-op, Fleckney, Leicestershire

Fig 1: Site location scale 1:2,500

Fig 2: Plan of site scale 1:150

Back cover: General view of site looking north

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
AT THE CO-OP, 26-30 HIGH STREET
FLECKNEY, LEICESTERSHIRE
X.A173.2009**

Abstract

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology on 130 sq m of land at 26-30 High Street, Fleckney, Leicestershire. Existing car park surfaces were removed during groundworks for the construction of an extension to existing commercial premises. A 20th-century brick foundation and concrete surface were the only features uncovered. There were no other archaeological features and no artefacts were recovered.

1 INTRODUCTION

In January 2010, Northamptonshire Archaeology undertook an archaeological Watching Brief on behalf of the Midlands Co-operative Society on land at the rear of the Co-op Store, 26-30 High Street, Fleckney during groundworks associated with the construction of a single storey extension at the rear of existing retail store (NGR: SP 648 935, Fig 1). The works complied with the requirements of a Specification for an archaeological Watching Brief prepared by Northamptonshire Archaeology (Soden 2009) in accordance with a brief issued by the Assistant Planning Archaeologist, Leicestershire County Council (Griffin 2009).

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Topography and geology

The development area is located on land to the west of 26-30 High Street, Fleckney. The land is an L-shaped plot of about 130 sq m located at the rear of the Midlands Co-operative Society store. It is bounded to the north by existing property boundaries, to the east by the rear of the existing co-operative store, and to the west and south by the existing open car parking for the store.

The site is level and lies at 106m OD. The underlying geology is formed of glacial till and Boulder clays (www.bgs.ac.uk/GeolIndex/index.htm).

2.2 Historical background

The existing co-operative store fronts onto the High Street, which lies on the east side of the modern village centre and within the historic core of Fleckney.

The High Street frontage of the site was the location of a smithy recorded on the First Edition Ordnance Survey mapping of 1887 and the Second Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1904. The buildings were demolished before the 1930s, the site remaining open ground until the latter part of the 20th century.

To the south-west and fronting onto Wolsey Lane, a Baptist Chapel, was built in 1877. The chapel grounds extended north-east across the western side of the present car park.

To the north, a hosiery manufacturer occupied the site in 1887 and the buildings expanded to cover much of the site until their mapped maximum in 1930. The factory buildings extended further south than the modern boundary and extended partially onto the development site and the modern car park area. The buildings were still in position on the 1952 mapping but were demolished in the 1960s when the factory site was developed for housing.

The map regression indicates that following the closure of the smithy on the High Street frontage, the present development site and car park were partially within the curtilage of the chapel to the west and the hosiery factory to the north. The remainder of the site seems to have remained as open ground or yards throughout much of the early 20th century.

In the 1960s, the development of the new housing estate on the site of the earlier hosiery factory provided the impetus to develop the present site. A single storey retail shop and storage was built on the street frontage with car parking extending over the remainder of the site. The present development is an extension to the original single storey retail store and located on the current loading area at the rear of the building.

The site boundaries have remained the same since the 1960s phase of development.

The historic core of Fleckney is believed to lie to the west around St Nicholas church. It is believed there is potential for evidence of the medieval and post-medieval development of the village in and around the co-operative store and car park site. No archaeological work has previously been undertaken within the development area.

3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The objectives of the watching brief were to:

- Observe the groundworks connected with the foundations of the new building and to record all archaeological deposits uncovered.
- Determine the date, character, state of preservation and depth of any archaeological deposits observed and to retrieve all datable artefacts.
- Create a permanent archive and record of the archaeological information collected during the course of the fieldwork and analysis.

The fieldwork comprised a watching brief during removal of the current car park surface and excavation of new foundation trenches for the extension to the store (Fig 2).

A photographic record in both black and white negative and colour slide was kept, along with supplementary photographs in digital format. The written record used Northamptonshire Archaeology pro-forma sheets (NA 2003). The watching brief was carried out in accordance with the Code of conduct (IfA 2008) and the Standard and guidelines for an archaeological watching brief (IfA 2008).

4 THE RECORDED EVIDENCE

The area covered by the new building was approximately 130sq m. The footprint of the building was stripped of the tarmac surface and modern levelling layers to a depth of 0.4m revealing the undisturbed red clay natural substrate.

The foundation trenches were cut into the clay 0.6m wide, 0.6m deep and extended about 40 linear metres (Fig 2).

A buried square brick structure was observed 1.5m to the west of the Co-op building; this consisted of four walls of double-thickness bonded bricks, 2m square and extending down to 1m in depth. The interior was backfilled with concrete at least 0.5m thick, this overlay the natural substrate which constituted the remaining 0.5m depth. This structure was covered with 0.05m of concrete which extended for another metre to the west and north-west. This created a solid concrete surface of unknown purpose (Fig 2).

No other pre-20th century archaeological features or artefacts were uncovered during the groundworks.

5 CONCLUSION

It is clear from the watching brief that considerable modification of the original ground surface had taken place before and during the construction of the co-operative store and car park. The factory buildings that had extended over the north of the site had clearly been demolished and the site levelled preparatory to the 1960s development of the site.

There was no evidence of any original topsoil or subsoil on the site and none of the artefactual evidence that might be expected on a site within the historic core of a village with medieval antecedents.

To the west, the ground at the rear of the Baptist chapel is over 0.5m higher than the modern car park surface on the development site. The brick and concrete structure exposed in the stripping of the car park was clearly of 20th century date and may relate to either the latter use of the mapped hosiery factory to the north, or possibly to a temporary fuel store or bund associated with the development of the adjoining housing estate in the 1960s. In the absence of any other physical or documentary evidence, its purpose must remain conjectural.

No archaeological deposits were present and no artefacts were found during the course of the watching brief. The watching brief results are considered to be reliable.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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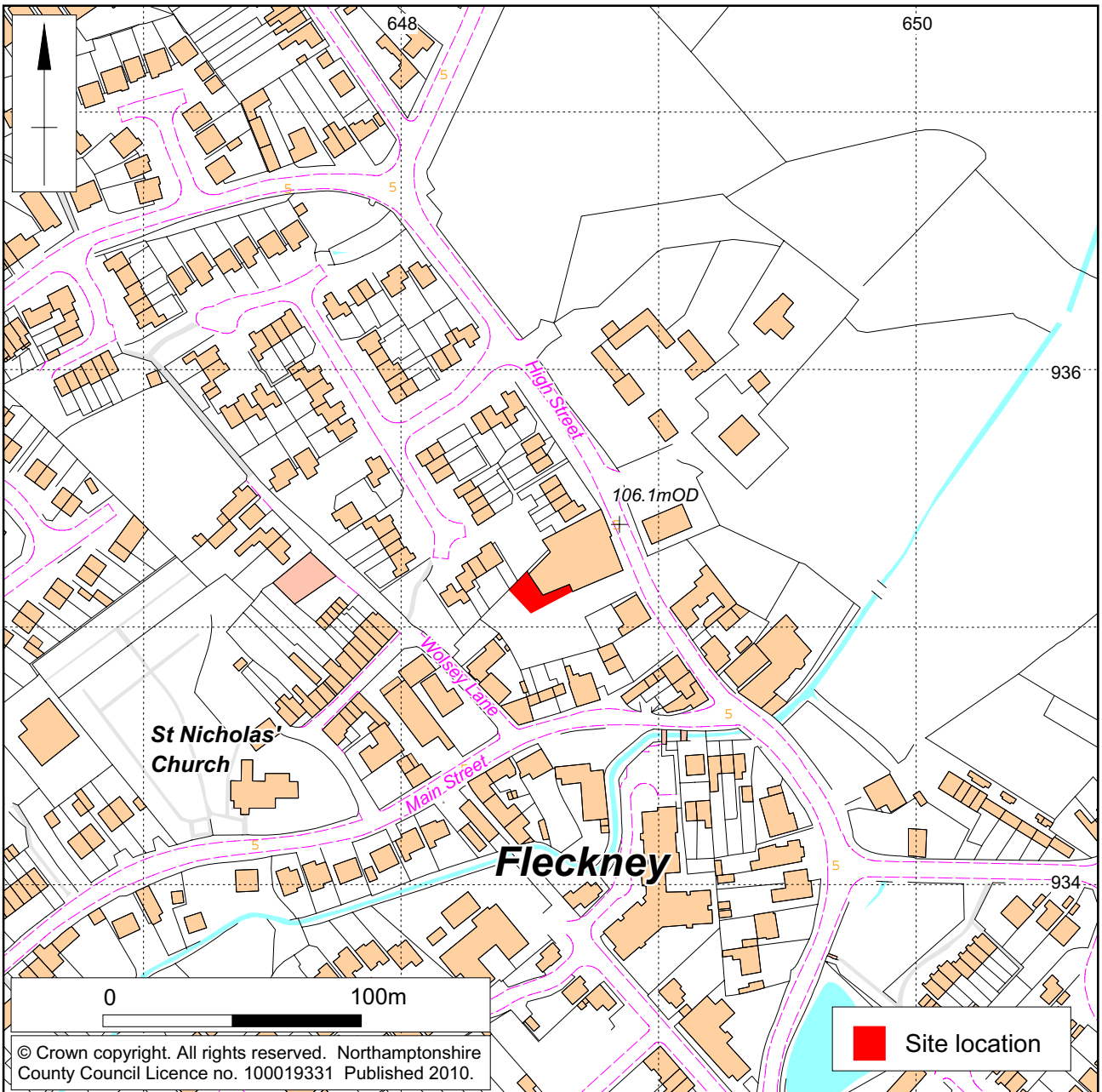
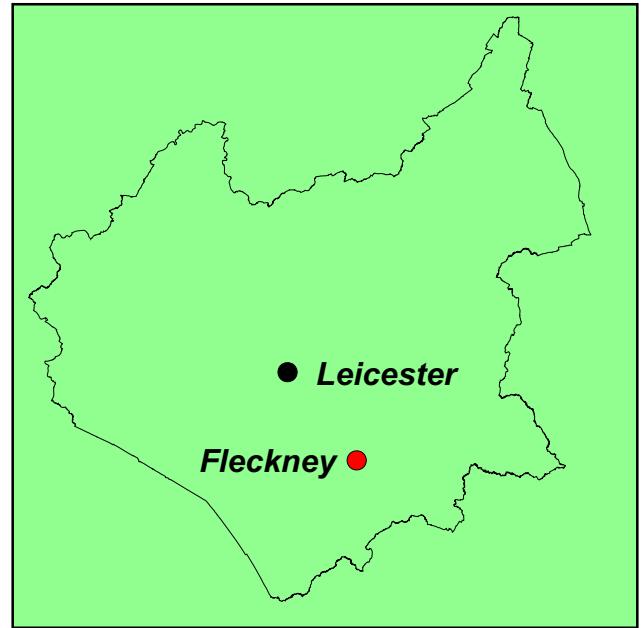
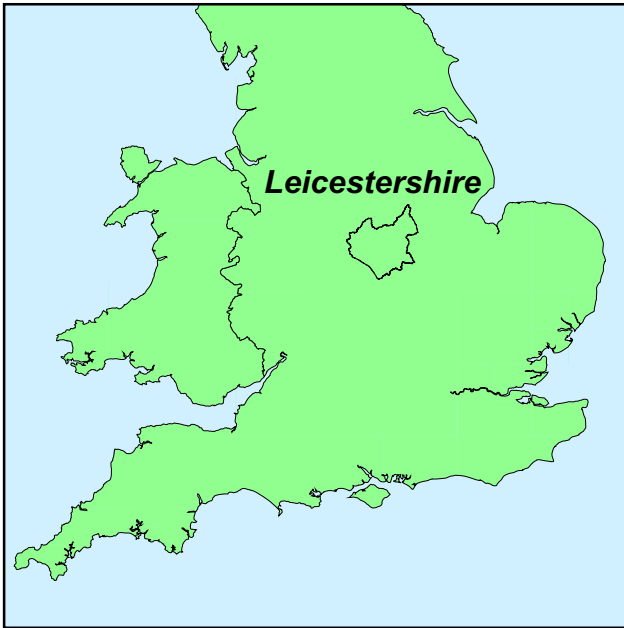
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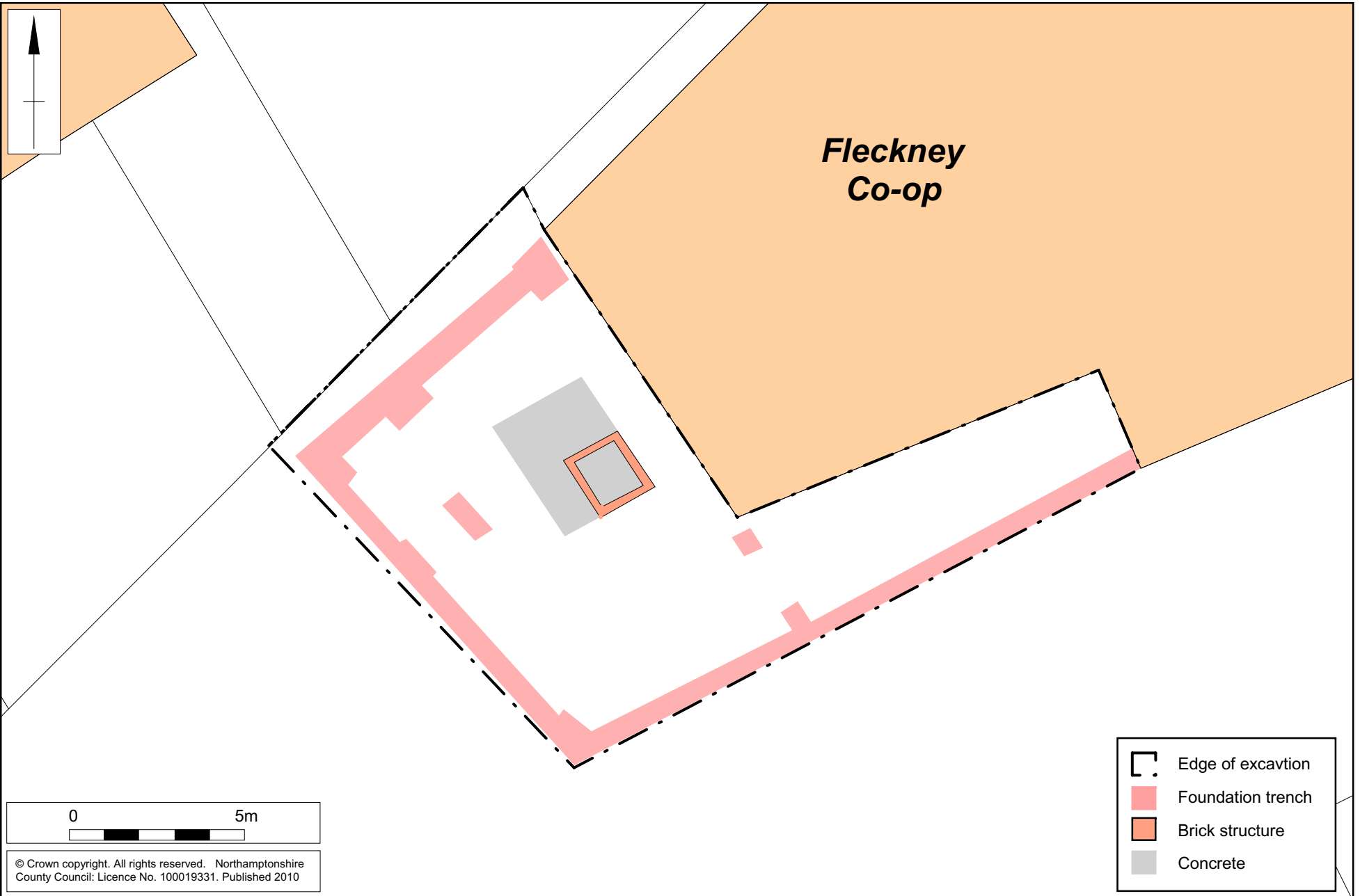
Scale 1:2,500

Site location Fig 1

Scale 1:150

General site plan

Fig 2





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