

## Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

### **ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION: THE RECTORY, STEEPLE ROW, LOUGHBOROUGH**

*on behalf of Andrew Granger & Co*



**Nicholas A Crank BSc AIFA**

**September 2004**

**ASC: 574/LSR/03**

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## Site Data

<i>ASC site code:</i>	LSR	<i>Project no:</i>	574
<i>County:</i>	Leicestershire		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Loughborough		
<i>Parish:</i>	All Saints		
<i>NGR:</i>	SK 537 200		
<i>Extent of site:</i>	0.17ha		
<i>Present land use:</i>	Former Rectory/Gardens		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Residential development		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	03/2984/2		
<i>Client:</i>	Leicester Diocesan Board of Finance C/o Andrew Granger & Co 21 High Street Loughborough Leicestershire LE11 2PY		
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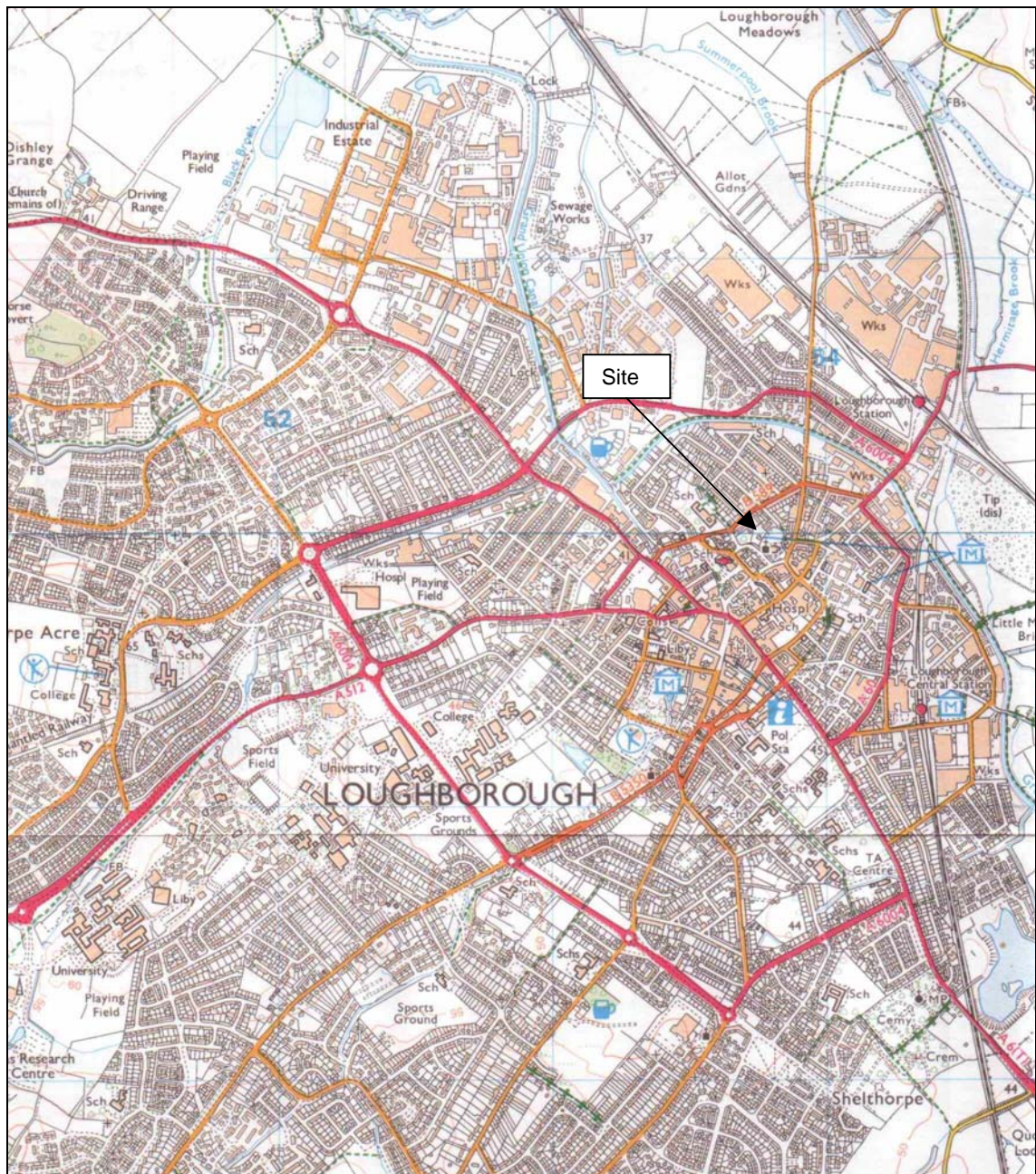
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**Figure 1:** General location (scale 1:25,000)



## Summary

*In August 2004 ASC Ltd conducted an archaeological evaluation on land at The Rectory, Steeple Row, Loughborough. The work was undertaken in advance of proposed residential redevelopment of the site, and followed an earlier desk-based assessment (Fell 2004).*

*A total of four trenches were excavated. Trenches 1 and 2 revealed an 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> century path and boundary wall identifiable from contemporary map sources. In addition, evidence for substantial truncation, possibly from sand and gravel extraction, was revealed in these trenches. No archaeological features were observed in trenches 3a and 3b although they lacked the apparent ground disturbance seen in trenches 1 and 2.*

*No archaeological features or finds pre-dating the 18<sup>th</sup> century were recovered from the trenches. In conclusion it seems likely that the area has, with the exception of the later quarrying activity, remained largely undisturbed and undeveloped until now.*

*The site archive will be deposited with Leicester County Council Heritage Services under accession number X.A229.2004*

## 1 Introduction

1.1 During August 2004 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out an archaeological field evaluation on land at The Rectory, Steeple Row, Loughborough (NGR SK 5377 1997: Fig. 1). The project was commissioned by *Andrew Granger & Co* on behalf of their clients *Leicester Diocesan Board of Finance* and was carried out according to a brief (dated 30/03/04) prepared by *Leicestershire County Council Heritage Services* (LCCHS), and a written scheme of investigation prepared by ASC (Pack 2004). The field evaluation followed an earlier desk-based assessment also undertaken by ASC (Fell 2004).

### 1.2 Reason for Work

Under current national planning policy archaeology can be a material factor in determining the outcome of planning decisions. The evaluation has been required under the terms of *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16* (PPG16), which specifically covers archaeology. When plans for the redevelopment of the site were submitted to the local planning authority (LPA), Charnwood Borough Council (planning ref. 2003/2984/2). The LPA on the advice of the Senior Planning Archaeologist (SPA) of LCCHS recommended that a pre-determination archaeological evaluation should be undertaken to establish the presence, character and significance of any buried archaeological deposits.

### 1.3 Setting

#### 1.3.1 Location and Description

The site is situated in Loughborough in the administrative district of Charnwood (Fig. 1). It lies in Loughborough town centre to the northwest of

All Saints Church and is centred at Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference (NGR) SK 5377 1997 (Fig. 2).

The site covers an area of c.0.17 ha and comprises a building known as The Rectory and the surrounding grounds. It comprises an irregular area bounded by the churchyard to the southeast, Fearon Hall to the northeast, a housing estate to the northwest and Steeple Row to the southwest (Fig. 2).

### 1.3.2 *Geology and Topography*

The site is in an urban area and the soils of the area have not been mapped. If the natural soils survive they are likely to comprise the *Whimple 3 Association*, namely fine loamy or silty soils over Permo-Triassic and Carboniferous mudstone (Soil Survey 1983). Natural drainage of the region is dominated by the River Soar. This passes the east side of the town and flows into the river Trent near Long Eaton. The site lies on slightly raised ground above the river valley at an elevation of c.45m OD.

### 1.3.3 *Existing Buildings and Access*

The site is currently occupied by a modern detached house. Access is via a drive off Steeple Row to the southwest.



**Figure 2:** Site plan (scale 1:1,250)

## 2. Aims & Methods

### 2.1 Aims

In line with the requirements of the Brief (Section 7), the aims of the evaluation were:

- To establish the presence, character and significance of any buried archaeological deposits.

### 2.2 Methods

In line with the requirements of the Brief (Section 8), the methods adopted for this project were:

- Trial trenching to provide a minimum 5% sample of the development area *i.e.* c.90m<sup>2</sup>.
- The trenches targeted the area of the postulated medieval and/or post medieval cemetery and the area of new building to the front and rear of the existing Rectory.

Four trial trenches were excavated to meet the requirements of the evaluation (Fig. 7):

- Trench 1: 20m x 1.5m, along the southeastern boundary of the site to test for archaeology associated with the adjacent cemetery.
- Trench 2: 25m x 1.5m, in the central area of the site where the proposed building footprint will be most intrusive.

Due to on-site constraints trench 3 was divided into two trenches and its location altered slightly by agreement with the County Archaeologist;

- Trench 3a: 8m x 1.5m, across the northern area of the site spanning the proposed building footprint and eastern area towards the cemetery.
- Trench 3b: 7m x 1.5m, across the northern area of the site spanning the proposed building footprint and eastern area towards the cemetery.

### 2.3 Standards

The work conformed to the project design, to the relevant sections of the Institute of Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance Notes* (IFA 2001) and *Code of Conduct* (IFA 2000a), to the *Guidelines and Procedures for Archaeological Work in Leicestershire and Rutland*, and to the relevant sections of ASC's own *Operations Manual*.



### 3 Archaeological & Historical Background

This section summarises the findings of the desk-based assessment undertaken for the development site as the first stage of the evaluation (Fell 2004). *N.b.* SMR = Sites and Monuments Record.

#### 3.1 Prehistoric (*before AD43*)

Prehistoric sites are not known in the area immediately surrounding the site.

#### 3.2 Roman (*AD43-c.450*)

There is only limited evidence for Roman activity in the area around the site but a coin of the emperor Hadrian has been found c.600m southeast of the site (SMR 7749). Sherds of Roman pottery have also been found in the town centre (Scott 1993, 113).

#### 3.3 Saxon (*c.450-1066*)

Loughborough may have originated during the Saxon period but little is known of the early history of the town. No Saxon period remains have been found within the area around the site, although the site of the church may have been in use during this period.

#### 3.4 Medieval (*1066-1500*)

The town was of considerable importance during the early medieval period and was included in the Domesday survey (1086). Loughborough continued to develop during the 12<sup>th</sup> century, with a market and fair being granted in 1221. The church of All Saints, which is situated immediately east of the site is first recorded in 1193 although much of the existing architecture is of later periods (SMR 632; Pevsner & Williamson 1998, 281).

The site lies towards the north side of the medieval town centre, much of which has been designated by *Leicestershire County Council* as an *Area of Archaeological Significance*.

No evidence of medieval remains has been found on the site. However, the proximity to the cemetery of All Saints church highlights the possibility that the southeastern part of the site may have been used for burials during the medieval period.

The Old Rectory is to the northwest of the site (SMR 626 & 664; Pevsner & Williamson 1998, 293-4). Most of the building was demolished in 1962 (Williams 1962, 21-22b) but part of the medieval core survives, being classified as a grade II\* listed building (DoE 1984).

#### 3.5 Post-Medieval (*1500-1900*)

Early cartographic sources indicate that the present layout of the area has changed relatively little since the early 18<sup>th</sup> century and shows the church, the Old Rectory and tenements extending north from Church Gate, on the site of what is now Steeple Row.

The map of the Hastings estate (Fig. 3) dated 1735 shows the site partially within the churchyard, although the remainder comprises open ground. The 1837 plan (Fig. 4) shows that the present eastern boundary of the site had been established and that the site contained a number of trees and was within the Old Rectory Grounds.

The map of 1860 shows that the eastern boundary was lined with trees. A footpath led from east to west across the centre of the site, allowing direct access from the Old Rectory to the church. A second path led south from the latter path, towards Rectory Place, the end of which occupied the southern part of the site.

The layout of the site probably changed little during the 1860s and 1870s and the 1883 Ordnance Survey map shows a similar layout to that of 1860, with a denser growth of trees. The same layout is illustrated on the 1886 Ordnance Survey map.

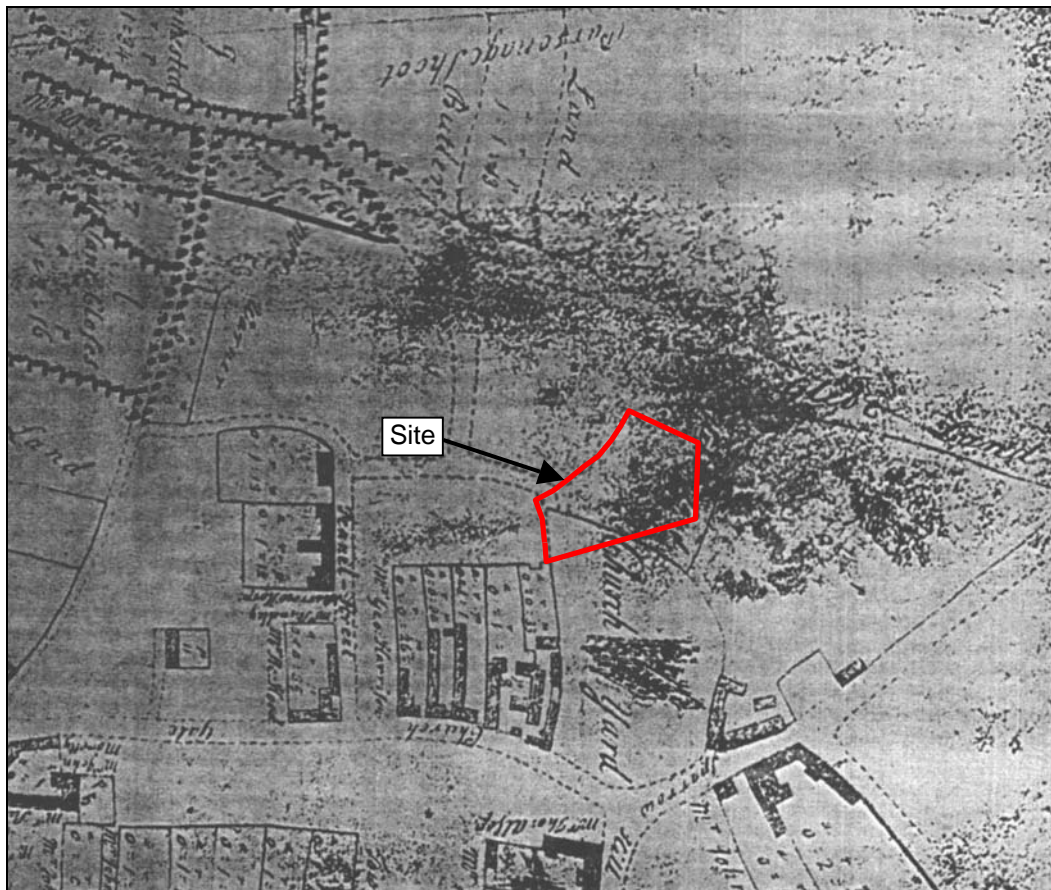
### **3.6 Modern**      *(1900-present)*

Loughborough expanded considerably during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and the 1901 Ordnance Survey map shows the site within an essentially urban environment. The layout of the site remained largely unaltered but Fearon Hall had been constructed on the northern boundary.

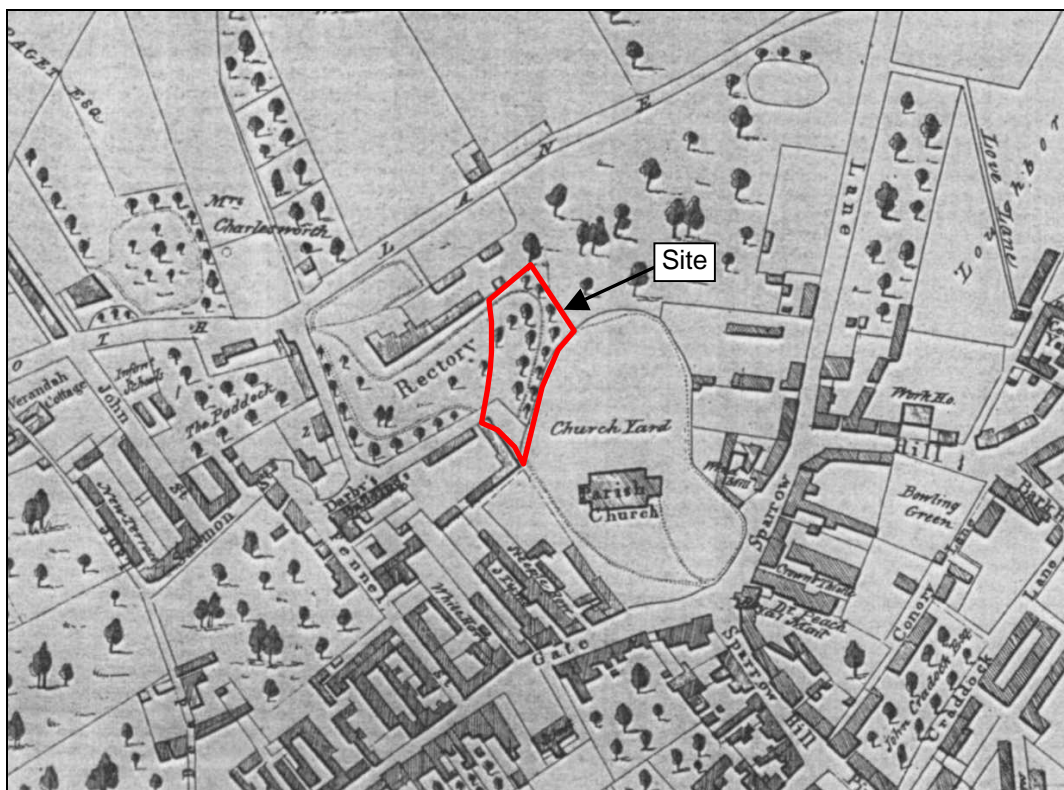
The 1921 edition Ordnance Survey map (Fig. 5) illustrates a number of minor changes that took place during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The trees in the northern part of the site had been removed and a new division, perhaps a hedge or fence had been added to separate the northern part of the site, from the gardens to the south. The division was immediately north of the rear entrance from the churchyard.

The construction of Steeple Row in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century resulted in a number of changes to the layout of the site. A new southern boundary was established on the north side of the new road and the layout of the garden was simplified by the removal of the footpaths.

The site was probably developed in its present form during the 1960s and 1970s on part of the garden of the Old Rectory. The late 20<sup>th</sup> century detached house on the site may be contemporary with or post-date the demolition of the Old Rectory. The building is enclosed in its own grounds and has separate access from Steeple Row.

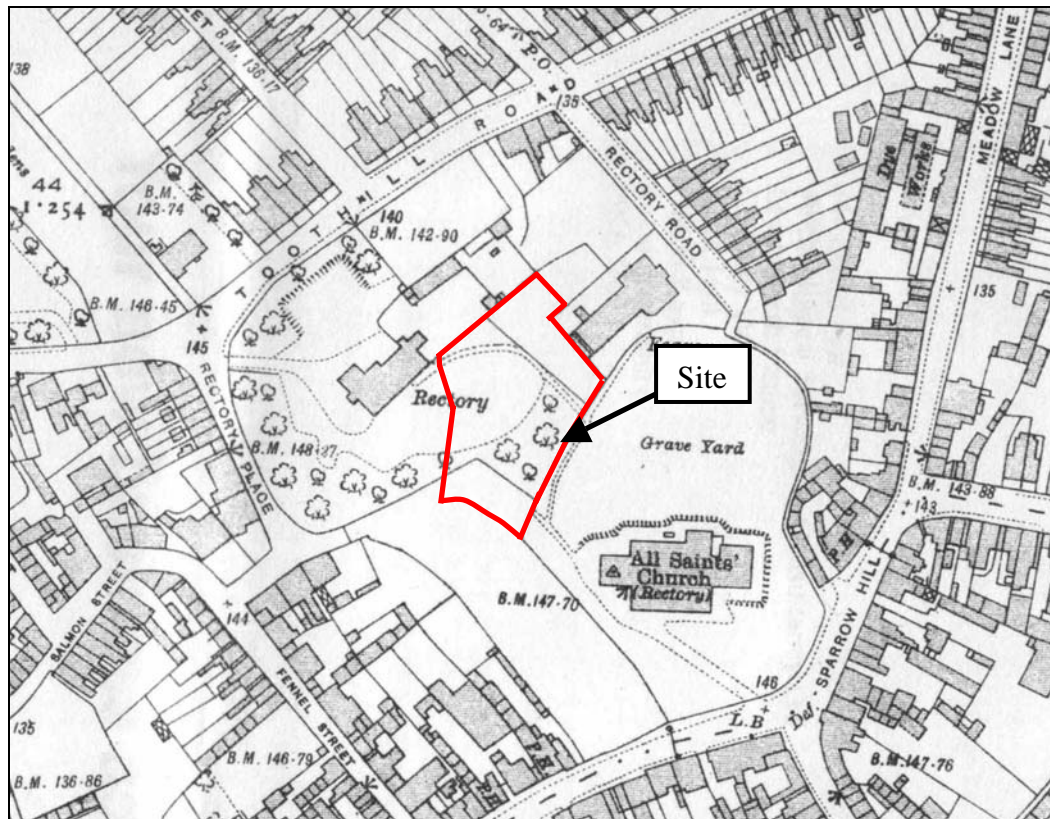


**Figure 3:** Extract from a map of Hastings family land, Loughborough (1735)

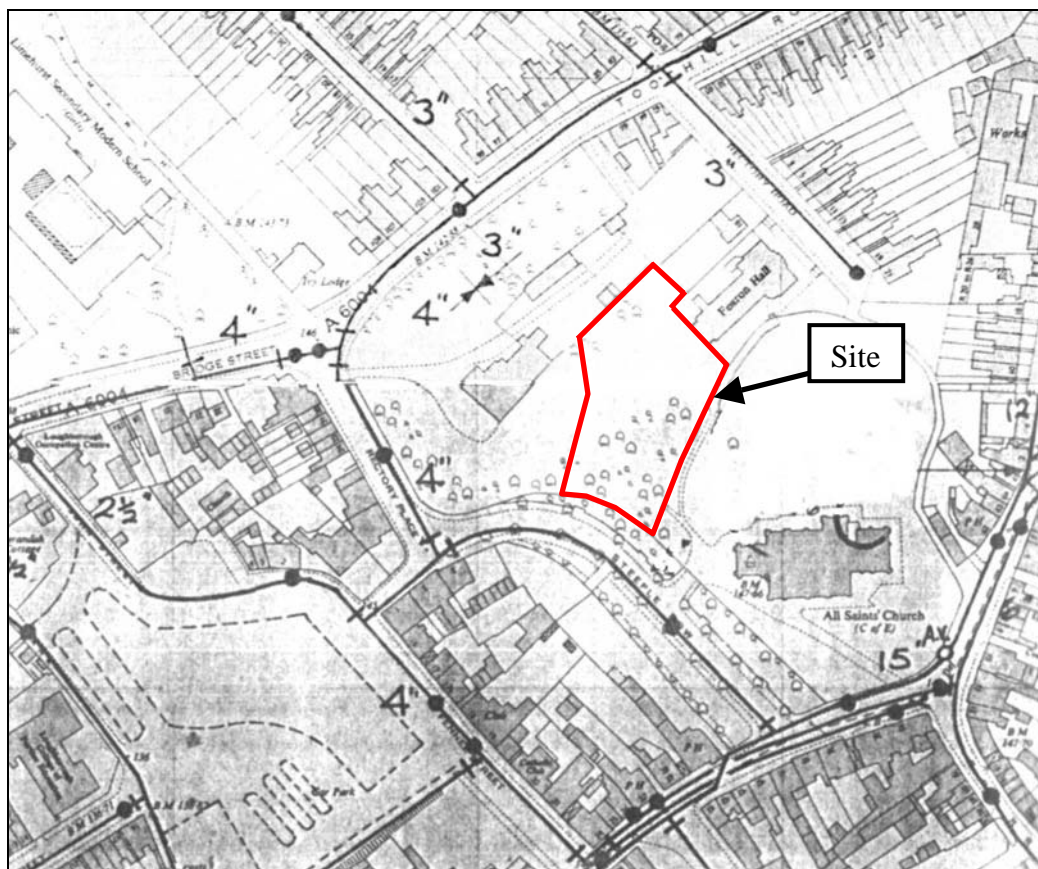


**Figure 4:** Extract from a plan of Loughborough (1837)





**Figure 5:** Extract from the 1921 edition Ordnance Survey map (*not to scale*)



**Figure 6:** Extract from the 1962 edition Ordnance Survey map (*not to scale*)

## 4 Results

- 4.1 Each trench was excavated by machine to a recognisable archaeological horizon (if present) or the undisturbed natural subsoil, which comprised of a mid brownish orange soft sand with moderate patches of flint gravel.
- 4.2 Full trench record sheets are reproduced in Appendix 1. Trenches with significant features are described below.

### 4.3 Trench 1 (Fig. 8)

The area of the trench appeared to have been subject to substantial truncation due to probable quarrying and subsequent levelling. As a consequence the overburden was surprisingly deep at c. 1.5m along the length of the trench, consisting of topsoil (101) overlying a c. 0.6m thick dumped soil layer (115) which contained 19<sup>th</sup> / 20<sup>th</sup> century pottery. This in turn overlay the natural sand and gravel (100) which was much disturbed by tree rooting and the possible quarrying on its upper horizon (116).

A pathway aligned north west to south east traversed the south western part of the trench (103)(Plate 2). Measuring 1.3m in width, the pathway consisted of a 0.05m thick layer of rammed pebbles. On its north east side it was flanked by a wall foundation surviving as two courses of undressed limestone blocks (105)(Plate 1). The south west edge of (103) was bounded by (104) a line of four limestone blocks set in a mortar base. Sealing both the wall and pathway was a compacted sand and gravel levelling layer (102) that was in turn sealed by the topsoil (101). A hand-excavated slot to the south west of the pathway (Plate 3) revealed a probable modern machine cut service trench [107] that truncated another partial cobbled surface (108) possibly representing an earlier pathway. A mortar and brick rubble filled robber trench [118] and dumped deposits containing 19<sup>th</sup> / 20<sup>th</sup> century pottery were also revealed.

### 4.4 Trench 2

As in trench 1 substantial truncation and subsequent levelling was apparent throughout the trench. The overburden was also deep at c. 1.25m along the length of the trench, consisting of topsoil (200) overlying a 0.8m thick dumped soil layer (201) containing brick and masonry rubble and 19<sup>th</sup> / 20<sup>th</sup> century pottery. This in turn sealed the natural sand and gravel (202) which was much disturbed by tree rooting.

The continuation of the north west to south east aligned pathway (103) observed in trench 1 was revealed at the southern end of the trench, but was much truncated by the presence of a modern quarry pit to the north and a modern soakaway to the south. In addition two modern service pipes ran through the centre of the heavily truncated cobbled surface.





**Plate 1:** Wall foundation (105), Trench 1

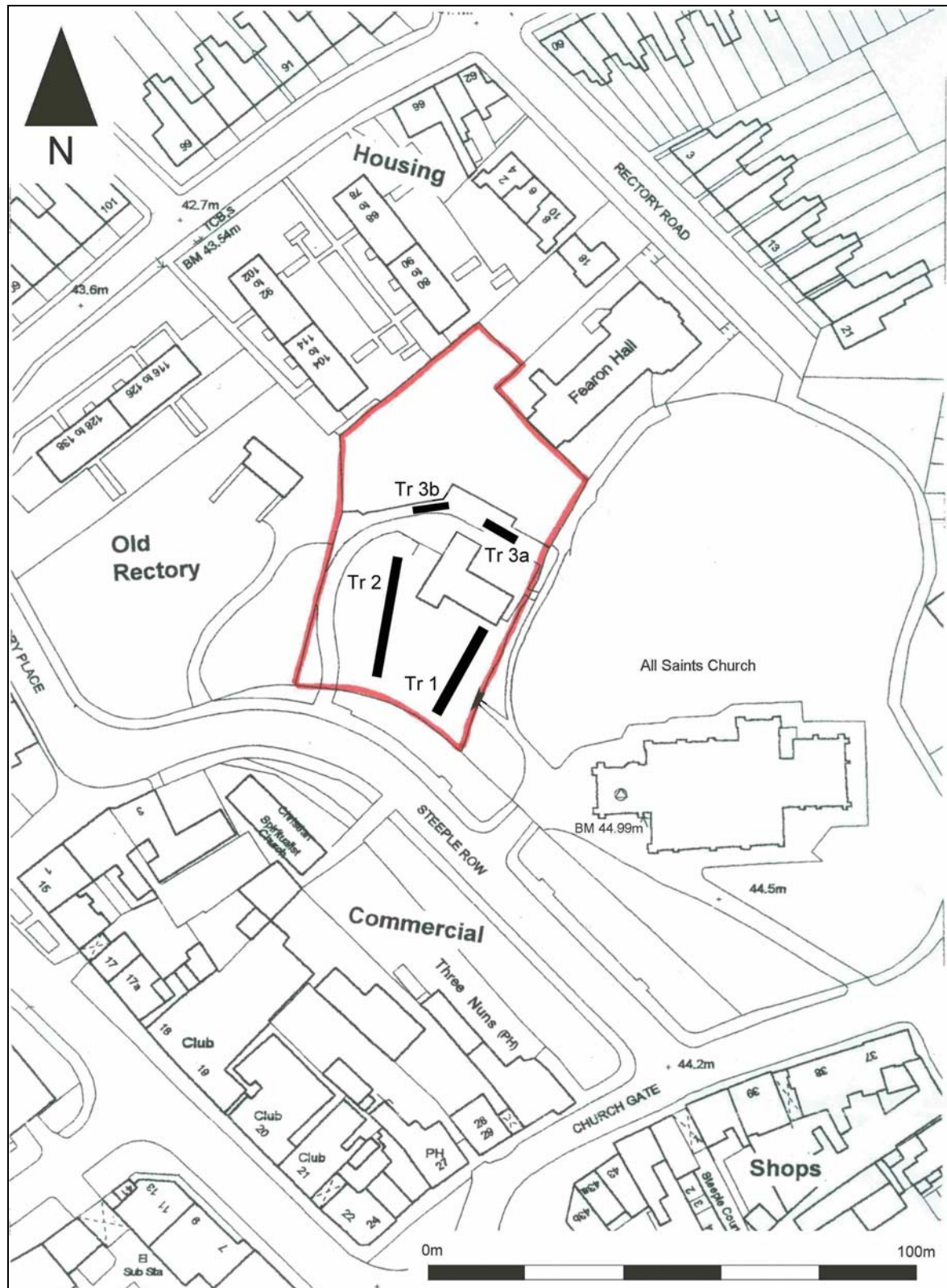


**Plate 2:** Pathway (103) and wall (105), Trench 1



**Plate 3:** Cobbled surface (108) and Modern Trench [107], Trench 1





**Figure 7:** Trench plan (Scale 1:1,250)

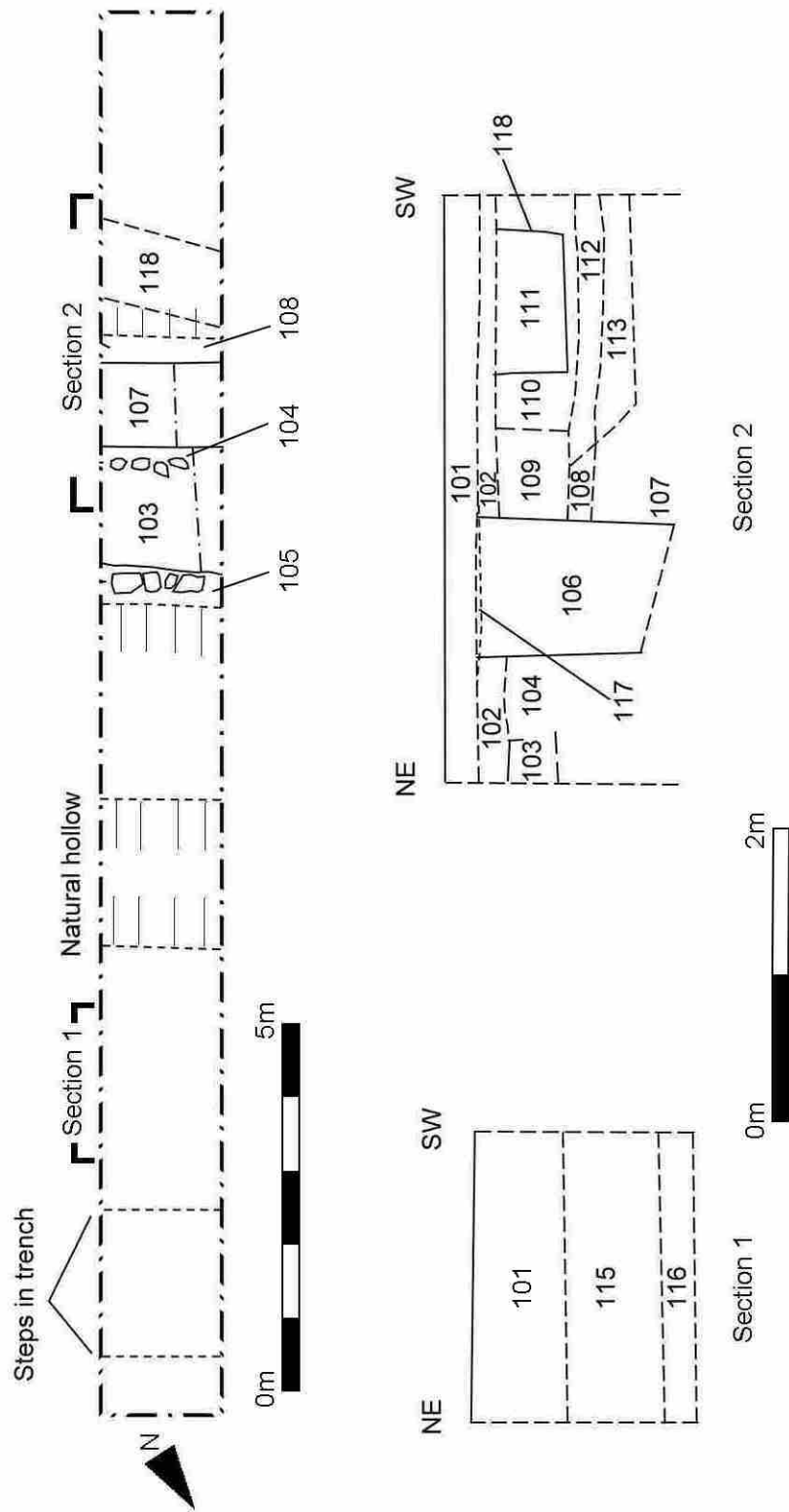


Figure 8: Trench 1 Plan and Sections

## 5. Conclusions

- 5.1 The evaluation sampled c. 5% of the area of the proposed development plot.
- 5.2 Trenches 1 and 2 in the southern area of the site revealed deep and extensive disturbance and truncation. On the basis of the presence of significant amounts of modern brick rubble within the dumped deposits sealing the natural subsoil in these trenches it is suggested that this disturbance is probably 19<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup> century in date and may relate to sand and gravel extraction undertaken during the construction of Steeple Row.
- 5.3 Trenches 1 and 2 also revealed a north west to south east aligned cobbled pathway (103) with a wall foundation (105) on its north east edge, in addition to an earlier possible cobbled surface in trench 1 (108) much truncated by later modern activity. The alignment and location of both the wall foundation and the pathway coincide well with the southern boundary to the Old Rectory marked on the 1837 plan (Fig. 4) and on all the subsequent maps up to the 1921 OS sheet (Fig. 5) (Fell 2004). This boundary is not apparent on the earlier 1735 plan (Fig. 3) or the 1962 OS sheet (Fig. 6) where the modern Steeple Row has been laid out. Clearly the wall and pathway are late 18<sup>th</sup> century to early 19<sup>th</sup> century in date and respectively formed and followed the boundary marked on the 19<sup>th</sup> and earlier 20<sup>th</sup> century plans.
- 5.4 Trenches 3a and 3b also revealed deep deposits overlying the natural subsoil. However, these were devoid of pre-modern material and consisted of topsoil overlying an undisturbed ‘mature’ subsoil layer sealing the natural sand and gravel.
- 5.5 The desk-based assessment (Fell 2004, 26) indicated that the trench locations had *good archaeological potential*. However, the evaluation revealed no artefacts or features pre-dating the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The wall foundation and pathway located in trenches 1 and 2 can be readily identified with mapped features from 19<sup>th</sup> century and later sources and additionally the area appeared to have been subject to substantial truncation and levelling possibly relating to quarrying activity from the same period. Similarly, no archaeological remains were observed in trenches 3a and 3b. However, this area did not appear to have been disturbed by 19<sup>th</sup> century and later truncation.
- 5.6 In conclusion it seems likely that the areas subject to investigation have remained largely undeveloped during the past with the exception of the more recent disturbance and boundaries identified in trenches 1 and 2. It cannot be ruled out that the medieval / post-medieval cemetery may at one time have extended further westwards into the assessment site, as evidence of this may have been removed by the extensive truncation evident in trenches 1 and 2. However, no evidence of graves was observed or human bone recovered from any of the trenches. Furthermore no archaeological features or finds pre-dating the late 18<sup>th</sup> century were observed.
- 5.7 It is unlikely that significant quantities of archaeological remains are present on the site, although the potential presence of occasional isolated remains away from the evaluation trenches should not be entirely excluded.



## **6. Acknowledgements**

The writer is grateful to Mr Rupert Harrison of *Andrew Granger & Co* for commissioning the field evaluation on behalf of *Leicester Diocesan Board of Finance*. Peter Liddle County Archaeologist and Richard Clark Senior Planning Archaeologist of *Leicestershire County Council Heritage Service* acted as curatorial officers.

The work was undertaken by Nicholas A Crank BSc AIFA, assisted by Nigel Wilson HND AIFA. The report was prepared by Nicholas A Crank and edited by David Fell BA MA MIFA.

## **7. Archive**

7.1 The project archive will comprise:


1. Brief
2. Project Design
3. Initial Report
4. Clients site plans
5. Site records
6. List of photographs/slides
7. Colour slides
8. B/W prints & negatives
9. CDROM with copies of all digital files.


7.2 The archive will be deposited with Leicestershire County Council Heritage Services under accession number X.A229.2004


## 8. Bibliography


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## Appendix 1: Trench Summary Tables

Trench 1							
	Max Dimensions						
	Length	19.0m	Width	1.6m	Depth	1.5m	
	Levels						
	Trench base north east			43.85m OD			
	Trench top north east			45.04m OD			
	Trench base south west			43.81m OD			
	Trench top south west			45.51m OD			
	NGR Co-ordinates						
	NE	SK 53761 19972		SW	SK 53752 19954		
	Orientation			North east to south west			
	Reason for Trench			General evaluation			
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation			Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)
100	Layer	Natural – Mid brownish orange soft sand with moderate patches of flint gravel					>1500
101	Layer	Topsoil - Dark brown loose sandy loam				400	0-400
102	Layer	Levelling – Compacted sand and gravel			>1600	200	
103	Surface	C 19 <sup>th</sup> cobbled pathway			1300	50	
104	Curb	Line of stones on SW edge of (103)			200	200	
105	Wall	Roughly coursed foundation, NE of (103)			300	400	
106	Fill	Orangey brown silty clay/sand fill of [107]			1000	>1200	
107	Trench?	Probable machine cut service trench			1000	>1200	
108	Surface?	Truncated possible earlier pebbled surface			400	100	
109	Layer	Modern dumped deposit			600	500	
110	Layer	Modern dumped deposit			400	500	
111	Fill	Mortar/brick rubble fill of [118]			1000	450	
112	Layer	Modern dumped deposit			4000	150	
113	Layer	Disturbed natural sand			4000	200	
114	Layer	Sand base for (103)			1300	50	
115	Layer	Modern dumped deposit			10000	600	
116	Layer	Disturbed natural sand			10000	150	
117	Surface?	Possible later clinker pathway above (103)			2000	50	
118	Robber trench	Cut of modern robber trench containing (111)			1000	450	

Trench 2						
	Max Dimensions					
	Length	25.0m	Width	1.6m	Depth	1.29m
	Levels					
	Trench base north north east			43.70m OD		
	Trench top north north east			44.86m OD		
	Trench base south south west			43.70m OD		
	Trench top south south west			44.99m OD		
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	NNE	SK 53744 19986		SSW	SK 53740 19962	
	Orientation			North north east to south south west		
Reason for Trench			General evaluation			
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation			Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)
200	Layer	Topsoil – Dark brown loose sandy loam			700	0-700
201	Layer	Modern dumped deposit – Mid to light brown loose silty sand with frequent modern brick and masonry rubble			800	700-1250
202	Layer	Natural – Mid brownish orange soft sand with moderate patches of flint gravel				>1250

Trench 3a						
	Max Dimensions					
	Length	8.0m	Width	1.6m	Depth	1.18m
	Levels					
	Trench base north west			43.65m OD		
	Trench top north west			44.83m OD		
	Trench base south east			43.84m OD		
	Trench top south east			44.84m OD		
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	NW	SK 53762 19993		SE	SK 53768 19989	
	Orientation			North west to south east		
Reason for Trench			General evaluation			
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation			Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)
300	Layer	Topsoil - Dark brown loose sandy loam			330	0-330
301	Layer	Subsoil - Mid to light brown loose silty sand			620	330-950
302	Layer	Natural - Mid brownish orange soft sand with moderate patches of flint gravel				>950

Trench 3b						
	Max Dimensions					
	Length	7.0m	Width	1.0m	Depth	1.09m
	Levels					
	Trench base east			43.60mOD		
	Trench top east			44.69m OD		
	Trench base west			43.69m OD		
	Trench top west			44.76m OD		
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	E	SK 53755 19997		W	SK 53747 19996	
	Orientation			East to west		
Reason for Trench			General evaluation			
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation			Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)
350	Layer	Topsoil - Dark brown loose sandy loam			430	0-430
351	Layer	Subsoil - Mid to light brown loose silty sand			540	430-970
352	Layer	Natural - Mid brownish orange soft sand with moderate patches of flint gravel				>970