



**THE ARCHAEOLOGY CO.**

Desk-Based Assessment

The Market Bosworth School,  
Market Bosworth

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July 2024

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## **Non-Technical Summary**

This report was compiled to assess the potential for the survival of archaeological and historical heritage assets on the site prior to any development. Market Bosworth has a long history, with prehistoric activity known in the immediate vicinity of the site and continued activity in the area through to the post-medieval period. The Bosworth Links Project showed good preservation of archaeological material throughout this history. The eastern side of the site was the subject of 5 test pits in 2014, which showed that the topsoil ranges from 150 – 200mm in depth and appears to lie directly over the natural clay. This area was levelled and reseeded in 2011, likely resulting in the removal of any archaeology. There is also a small area where a former canteen has been demolished, which will have destroyed any archaeology in that area. The western side of the site, however, has not been tested and may still contain archaeology, which may be impacted during groundworks. Archaeological trial trenching to the western side of the is recommended to establish whether any archaeology survives on the site.

## **1. Introduction**

The Archaeology Co. was instructed by to carry out an archaeological desk-based assessment of the playing fields at The Market Bosworth School, Back Lane, Market Bosworth, Leicestershire CV13 0JT. The site appears to have been agricultural from at least the Medieval period through to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when they became playing fields for the school. This document forms the desk-based assessment, to assess the potential for archaeology and the need for further archaeological work.

This statement has been prepared in accordance with the policies and procedures of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), in addition to an examination, analysis and assessment of available historic records and cartographic sources and consultation with the Derbyshire Historic Environment Record (Ref CDR13562).

## 2. Aims and Objectives

The purpose of this desk-based assessment is to gain information from existing historical records, cartographic sources, and site investigation to determine the nature of the potential archaeological resource within a specified area. An assessment can then be made of its value in context and recommendations made, to determine future strategy/mitigation and management of the resource. In the case of development/re-development, it is also to define the impact of the proposals on recorded archaeological and historical resources on the periphery of the development area.

## 3. Site Location

The site lies to the west of Market Bosworth School and forms the playing grounds. The grounds are bounded to the north and west by open fields and to the south by the gardens of the houses along the north side of Station Road. The postal address is The Market Bosworth School, Station Rd, Back Lane, Market Bosworth CV13 0JT and the NGR is SK 40160 03258. The site lies outside of the Market Bosworth Conservation Area.

The wider site contains 1 entry on the Historic Environment Record, an undated mound (HER No. MLE2928). This is described as “Supposed barrow mound in field of Dixie Grammar School. In 1951 there were plans for excavation of the mound by the school but no record of it having happened”. The mound is no longer present, although is likely where the current scrub land is located, and does not appear on the OS mapping. The mound is located outside of the proposed development area.

Directly adjacent to the site to the west, a test pit was excavated as part of the Bosworth Links community archaeological project (HER No. ELE12470). The Neolithic/Bronze Age finds (HER No. MLE29105) comprised 8 flint flakes and a sherd of pottery, as well as potentially prehistoric soils. In two fields directly to the north of the site is “Medieval ridge and furrow” (HER No. MLE25060), with “possible headland, a natural spring and a (?) segment of ditch/enclosure around the perimeter of the hill”. Additionally, the Historic Settlement core of Market Bosworth (HER No. MLE2935) lies to the southern boundary of the site, relating to the medieval and post-medieval core of the town.

Further away from the site, Anglo-Saxon activity (HER No. MLE29117) was found in 2017, which revealed Saxon pottery, as well as Roman pottery (MLE29115). To the northwest of the site is a further earthwork associated with ridge and furrow (HER No. MLE9606) and to the south of the site, close to the school, is the site of a Primitive Methodist Chapel (HER No. MLE21800).

The Scheduled Monument of a Roman Villa, east of Barton Road is located c. 500m to the northeast of the site and Station Road to the south of the Market Bosworth to Measham Turnpike Road (HER No. MLE20918) from 1760.

#### **4. Archaeological and Historical Background**

The Leicestershire Historic Environment Record (HER) lists several Bronze Age finds within the modern town area, including the undated mound on the site itself. Additionally, there is a cremation urn from The Rectory, south of Rectory Lane (HER No. MLE6354) and a palstave (axe) from Bosworth Hall (HER No. MLE6355), and to the south-east of the town a possible Bronze Age ring-ditch cropmark (HER No. MLE2920) in Bosworth Park. The Bosworth Links Project (Morris 2017) revealed small quantities of flint debitage in 21 of the 25 test-pits, potentially identified an extensive early Bronze Age landscape beneath the town.

Iron Age and Roman activity is also recorded across the town, with the most notable being the aforementioned Scheduled Monument of the Roman Villa. This comprises a large ditch and at least three structures, and limited excavation has revealed part of a mosaic pavement, as well as late Iron Age and Roman pottery, quern fragments, and several coins and building materials. Several other Roman finds have also been found across the town suggesting Roman occupation of the area.

There is little to denote the Saxon period in the town, although pottery fragments were found during excavations in 2017. The name Bosworth comes from 'Bosworde' as it is recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086, thought to come from the name 'Bosa' and the word Old English word 'word', meaning enclosure (Market Bosworth Society; Morris

2017). Evidence suggests that the town did not begin to develop in its present location until the 10th century. This early activity appears to concentrate along Park Street, south of St Peter's parish church, and north of the market place.

Following the Conquest, the land was held by the Earl of Mellent and Hugh de Grantmesnil, and the settlement was served by a priest and deacon. During the 12<sup>th</sup> century the two demesnes were amalgamated and the Harcourts became Lords of the manor until the early 16<sup>th</sup> century. By the 12<sup>th</sup> century the town appears to have become well established, and a market was established by 1292. A watermill is mentioned in 1294 (HER No. MLE2918) and a bake house in 1328 (Morris 2017). The Parish church of St Peter was construed in the 14<sup>th</sup> century and possible property boundary ditches have been found from this period within the town, and 13th-14th century domestic refuse has also been found on Church Street.

From the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards, the town began to fully develop with properties clustered around the market place and the roads leading out. Several of the buildings in the area still retain some of the 16<sup>th</sup> century elements within their structure. Toby Mathews surveyed the town in 1592 and described it as "well and roundly compact together having many streets and lanes in it" (Morris 2017). In the late 16<sup>th</sup> / early 17<sup>th</sup> century the Gramer School was re-founded by the Dixies. Speed's map of Leicestershire from 1610 shows "Bosworth" as a prominent town with a church, but little further detail is given. Towards the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century Bosworth Hall was constructed. A newspaper report from 1731 records "A neat apothecary's shop" was for sale following the death of the owner, Thomas Campion (Stamford Mercury 29/07/1731). The grammar school was closed for repairs towards the end of the century, and reopened in 1789, with Rev. W Wood as the head master (Aris's Brimingham Gazette 29/06/1789).

The 19th century saw the canal and railways coming to the town, which further aided the development and expansion. The grammar school was rebuilt in the early part of the century and the Union Workhouse built in 1836. This was designed to care for 200 paupers and cost around £3000 to build. The 1886 OS map shows the site at this time as a series of empty fields. The fields may have been formed from the medieval strip fields, facing onto Station Road. The 1903 OS map shows a similar situation and a grammar school was constructed to the east of the site. Market Bosworth Secondary Modern

School has been constructed prior to 1947 (Leicester Daily Mercury 27/08/1947) and the 1958 OS mapping shows the school as well as the playing fields to the west.

The Market Bosworth School was established as a comprehensive school in 1969 and a new building constructed in 1989, with the old canteen demolished. The rubble from this was deposited on the proposed site location. From 2003 the eastern end of the site was rough ground until c. 2011 when it was levelled and reseeded. Trial pitting on the site was undertaken in March 2024.

## 5. Discussion

Test pit 2 from the 2017 Bosworth Links Project gives a good analysis of the below ground archaeology in the immediate vicinity of the site. This was excavated to 400mm deep and hit natural, with faint ridge and furrow observed in the playing fields. 33 finds were recovered, ranging from medieval to modern material in the top 0.3m. They concluded that the bulk of the finds assemblage was probably introduced to the soil through manuring the field with domestic waste brought in from elsewhere (Morris 2017). At the base of the trench a possible prehistoric soil was discovered, with several pieces of flint and a single pottery sherd found. This was a relatively large assemblage of worked flint to find in a test-pit and suggests flint knapping was taking place nearby (Morris 2017).

Five test pits were excavated to the east side of the site in order to check soil and subsurface condition in March 2024 (Hemstock Design 2024). Test pits 1, 2 and 3 revealed a 100-200mm topsoil over the natural clay. This area was scrub land until 2011 when it was levelled and reseeded. The shallow depth of the natural clay and thin topsoil suggests that the levelling may have resulted in the removal of any archaeology present. Test pit 4 revealed a 150-200mm topsoil again, although this lay over a rubble layer to a depth of 1m, where the natural was once again located. Test pit 5 revealed a similar situation, with 150mm of topsoil over very hard rubble-filled ground. These likely relate to the demolition of the former canteen building in 1989 (Hemstock Design 2024).

The proposed MUGA pitch would result in the removal of around 400mm of ground level. The Bosworth Links Project shows that the area contains archaeology related to the prehistoric through to post-medieval periods within this depth. However, the 2024 test pits show the east side of the site has been levelled, likely resulting in the loss of archaeology, as well as the demolition of the canteen building.

## **6. Archaeological Potential**

### *Prehistoric*

The site lies adjacent to the location of a suspected Bronze Age mound, although this had been removed prior to 1999 (as shown on Google Earth). A trial pit west of the site undertaken in 2017 revealed prehistoric flint flakes with a total depth of 0.4m. The conclusion of the 2017 community project was that there may be an extensive early Bronze Age landscape beneath the town, with 21 of the 25 test pits revealing some prehistoric archaeology. As such, there is a high potential for prehistoric archaeology to be found on the site where the ground is undisturbed to the west, but low to the east.

### *Roman*

The Scheduled Monument of a Roman Villa is located to the northeast of the site, and the evidence suggests that Market Bosworth was occupied during the iron Age and Roman period. This appears to have been focused towards the northern side of the town however. As such, there is a low potential for Roman archaeology.

### *Saxon*

Prior to the 2017 community project, no Saxon activity was documented in Market Bosworth. The project, however, revealed evidence in three of the pits, in terms of seven total sherds of pottery. This suggests some presence during this period, although the potential for the site itself to contain Saxon archaeology is low.

### *Medieval*

Market Bosworth was occupied from the 10<sup>th</sup> century, and several surrounding fields show evidence of ridge and furrow. The field systems as shown on the 19<sup>th</sup> century mapping may also show remnants of having begun as Medieval strip fields and several

fragments of medieval pottery have been found in the area. Lidar mapping of the site shows potential ridge and furrow. As such there is a medium potential for the site to contain Medieval archaeology, likely as stray finds.

#### *Post-Medieval*

By the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century, the town appears to have re-occupied areas which had become depopulated in the later medieval period. Post-medieval pottery was found in 22 of the 25 test pits from 2017 and one pit suggested cottage-manufacture of clay tobacco pipes. The site, however, appears to have continued to be in agricultural use. Therefore, there is a medium potential for post-medieval archaeology to be on the site, again, most likely in terms of stray finds.

#### *Industrial*

The site appears to have continued in agricultural use throughout this period, until the school took over the use as playing fields. Therefore, there is a low potential for industrial archaeology to be on the site.

Table 2: Assessment of Archaeological Potential

| Period        | Significance of Setting                                                                                                                                                                         | Significance                                                                                                                                             | Potential                                                                                                                |
|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Prehistoric   | <i>Regional</i><br>Prehistoric evidence has been found in the immediate vicinity of the site, and suggestive of a Bronze Age landscape, also suggested by the (now demolished) possible barrow. | <i>Regional.</i><br>Artefacts found from the period will add to the body of information about the prehistory of the area.                                | <i>Medium</i><br>It is possible that prehistoric activity will be found, likely in terms of flint knapping debris.       |
| Roman         | <i>Regional</i><br>Roman activity is known in the area, with a Roman Villa located c. 500m away.                                                                                                | <i>Regional.</i><br>Artefacts found from the period will add to the body of information about the Roman occupation of Market Bosworth and the wider area | <i>Low</i><br>Roman activity appears to be located more towards the northern side of the town than on the site itself.   |
| Saxon         | <i>Regional</i><br>Little evidence exists for the Saxon period, although place-name evidence and pottery found in 2017 suggests it was occupied at this time                                    | <i>Regional</i><br>Artefacts found from the period will add to the body of information about the Saxon occupation of the town and the wider area         | <i>Low</i><br>Little evidence was found during the Bosworth Links Project, and what was found was not close to the site. |
| Medieval      | <i>Local</i><br>Market Bosworth is known to have been occupied since the 10 <sup>th</sup> century.                                                                                              | <i>Regional.</i><br>Artefacts found from this period will add to the growing body of evidence of Medieval occupation of the area                         | <i>Medium</i><br>The site was likely agricultural through this period, likely in the form of strip fields.               |
| Post-medieval | <i>Local</i><br>The area continued to be occupied during this period,                                                                                                                           | <i>Local</i><br>Archaeological remains will add to the growing picture of post-medieval occupation of the area                                           | <i>Medium</i><br>The site continued to be agricultural through this period                                               |

## **7. Conclusions and Mitigation Recommendations**

The Bosworth Link Project showed that prehistoric archaeology was present in the area, just above the natural clay. The 2024 trial pitting shows the east side of the site has been levelled, likely removing archaeology in this area. It is not known, however, if any such levelling has occurred to the western side of the site. Therefore, the potential for the site to contain archaeology is low to the east, but high to the west (figure 9). Mitigation recommendations are for archaeological trial trenches to the western side of the site to establish the survival of archaeology in this area, as the proposed development will negatively impact upon any archaeology present.

## **8. Copyright**

Full copyright of this commissioned report and other project documents shall be retained by the author of the report under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988

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## **Appendix 1: Figures**

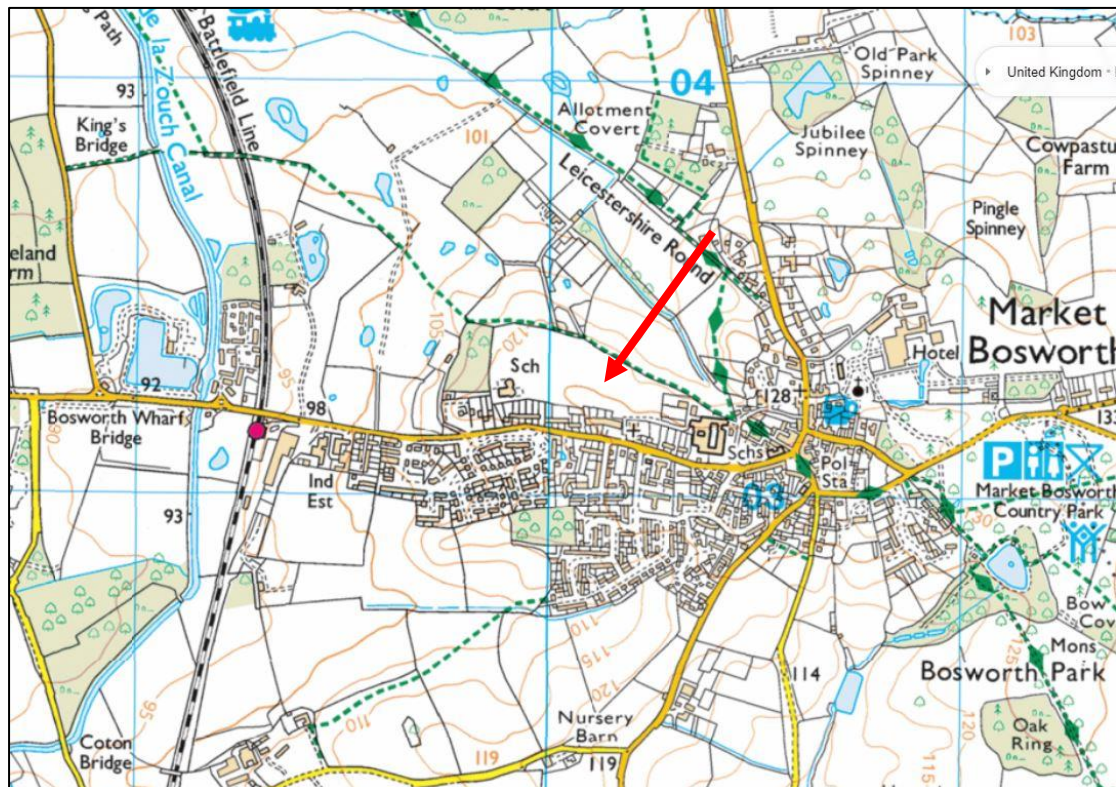


Figure 1: Site location plan (OS Licence Number: 100057911)



Figure 2: Site plan showing 2024 test pit locations (Courtesy of client)

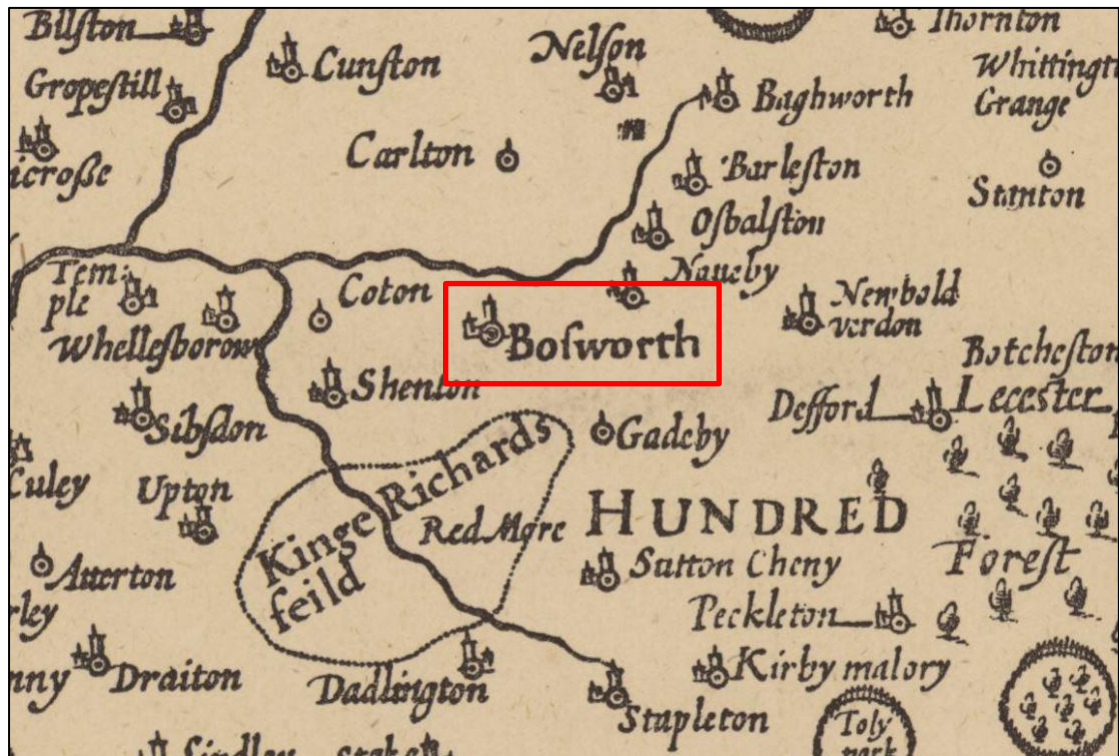


Figure 3: 1610 Speeds' map of Leicestershire

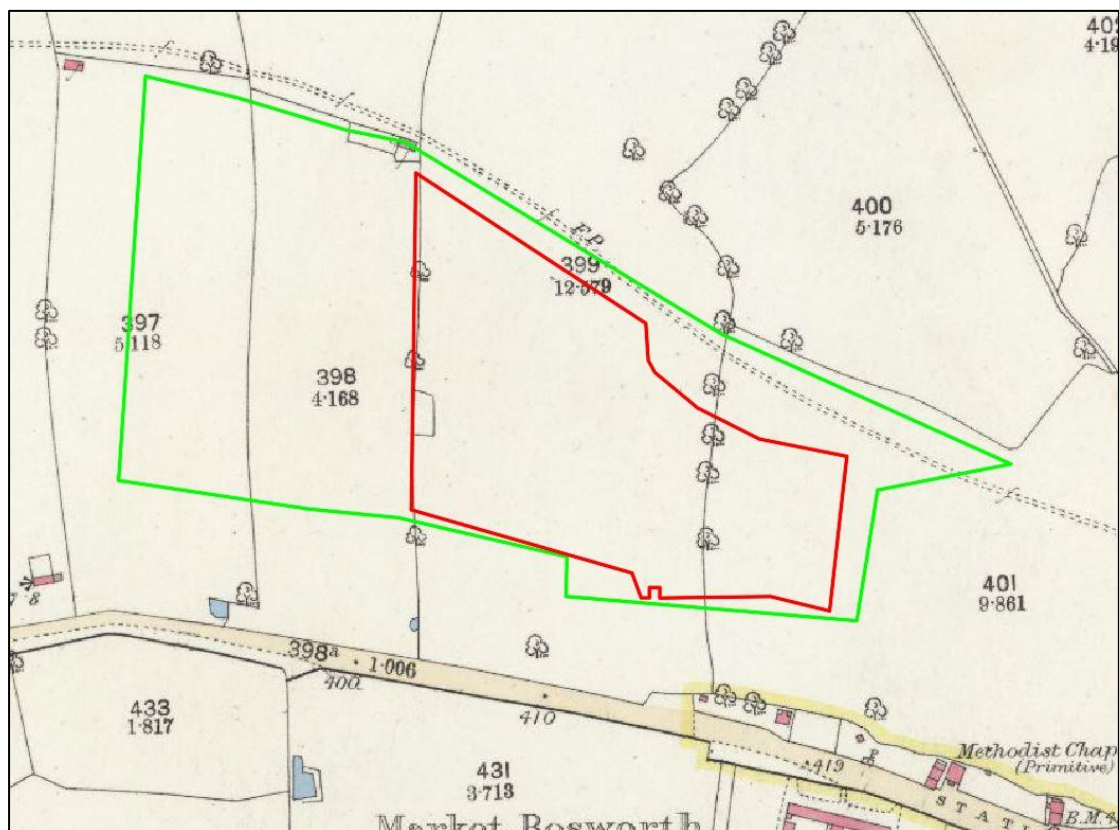


Figure 4: 1886 OS map Leicestershire Sheet XXIX.15 showing site (green) and area of proposed development (red)

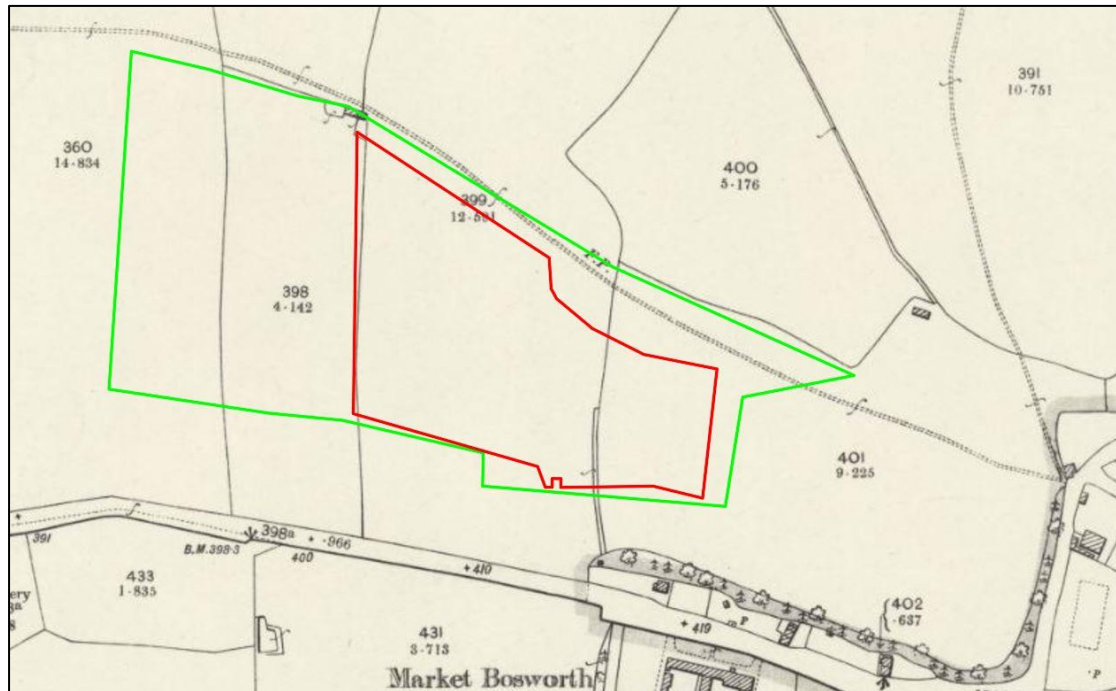


Figure 5: 1903 OS map Leicestershire Sheet XXIX.15

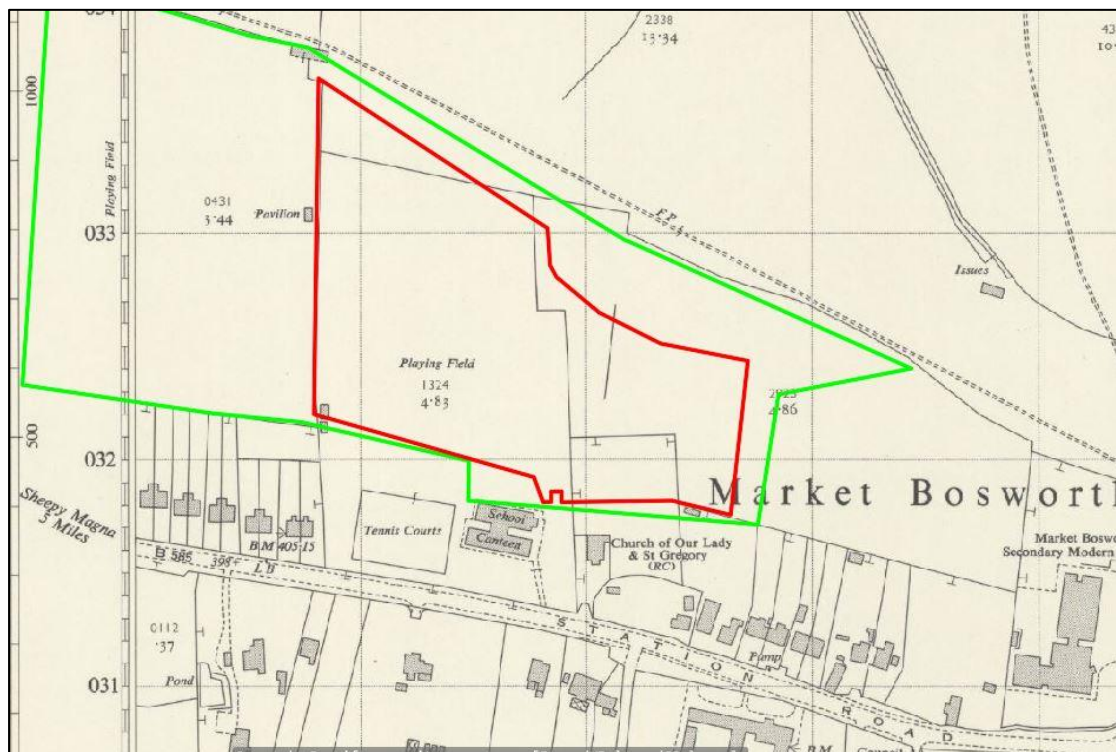


Figure 6: 1958 OS map Leicestershire Sheet SK4003



Figure 7: 1999 Google Earth image



Figure 8: 2010 Google Earth image showing scrub land to east side of site



Figure 9: 2010 Google Earth image showing test pits and demolished canteen area (blue), area of low archaeological potential due to levelling (red) and area of high archaeological potential (green)

## Appendix 2: Plates



Plate 1: Aerial show of the site looking east from the north



Plate 2: Aerial shot of the sit looking east from the south



Plate 3: Aerial shot of the western site boundary showing remains of possible mound



Plate 4: Aerial shot of the site looking west



Plate 5: Aerial view of possible mound (HER No. MLE2928)



Plate 6: View across the site from the southeast corner



Plate 7: View across site from the northeast



Plate 8: General shot of site looking west



Plate 9: Houses to the southern boundary



Plate 10: Western side of site looking east



Plate 11: General shot across site from the west



Plate 12: Western boundary of the site looking south