

Former Leisure Centre, Hinckley 2025

Heritage and Archaeology Assessment

March 2025





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CONTENTS PAGE

<i>Executive Summary</i>	4
1.0 Introduction and Methodology	6
2.0 Heritage Planning Context	6
3.0 Site Location, Landuse, Topography and Geology	7
4.0 Gazetteer of Heritage Assets	8
5.0 Cartographic Evidence	14
6.0 Archaeological and Historical Summary	18
7.0 Assessment of Significance	19
8.0 Heritage Impact Assessment	23
9.0 Conclusion and Recommendations	25
10.0 Sources Consulted	26

Front Cover: The application site in 2018

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Application Site Name: Former Leisure Centre, Hinckley 2025

Address: Former Leisure Centre, Coventry Road, Hinckley, Leicestershire, LE10 0JR

Grid Reference: SP4232893795

Local Planning Authority: Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council

Statutory Listing: N/A, in setting of grade II listed building

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Humble Heritage Ltd is a professional built heritage and archaeological consultancy operating in the specialised area of the historic environment. The practice has extensive experience of historical and archaeological research, assessing significance and heritage impact and preparing Heritage Statements, archaeological desk-based assessments, statements of significance, conservation management plans and so forth. Humble Heritage Ltd provides heritage and archaeological advice on behalf of a wide variety of clients across much of England. The Institute of Historic Building Conservation (the IHBC) recognises Humble Heritage as a professional Historic Environment Service Provider.

Humble Heritage Ltd originally undertook this heritage and archaeology assessment of the proposed new residential development at the site of the former Hinckley Leisure Centre in July-August 2018, which resulted in a successful application for planning permission (18/01237/FUL Erection of 66 apartments within two apartment blocks and 7 houses, including the provision of access, open space and associated infrastructure).

The report was updated in March 2025 to reflect a new application for planning application for a revised scheme in part of the previously permitted site (full planning permission for a 72 bed care home, with associated landscaped grounds, staff and visitor car parking, cycle storage and an ambulance drop off area). The existing planning permission will remain extant but the proposed scheme will replace one of the previously permitted apartment blocks.

The revised scheme is similar to the part of the permitted scheme that it replaces and differs only in having a larger footprint but is one storey lower than the permitted block. It has a neutral impact on the historic environment compared with the previously permitted scheme.

This report examines the potential for below-ground archaeology to survive at the application site and also assesses the heritage impact of the proposed development upon any below-ground archaeology and a nearby grade II listed church. The report is based on the identification of heritage assets within a 250m radius of the site.

Documentary and cartographic materials were consulted in order to provide a summary of the historical and archaeological development and significance. The material held at Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record (HER), Heritage Gateway, and on-line sources were also consulted prior to a site visit.

The report finds that the proposed development will result in no harm to the grade II listed church and no harm to any buried archaeological heritage assets of more than negligible value. The existing planning permission includes a condition for pre-commencement programme of archaeological evaluation. A Written Scheme of Investigation setting out the proposed archaeological works was submitted and approved in May 2022, resulting in partial discharge of the archaeological condition. The proposed change to scheme resulting from the present application will not alter the archaeological impact of the development and no additional archaeological investigation will be required.

The proposed development meets the test of sustainable development as regards the heritage provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework and is in accord with the heritage sections of the 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act. There is no reason to refuse planning permission on heritage grounds.

INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

1.01 This heritage and archaeology assessment was first prepared by Humble Heritage Ltd, during July-August 2018. The report was updated in March 2025 to reflect a new application for planning permission which will replace part of the previously permitted scheme. This assessment considers the land and buildings that fall within the boundary of the proposed development and heritage assets within a 250m radius.

1.02 The aims of this report are:

- Inform the planning application to provide a tool to help the planning authority and other relevant bodies to understand the potential for below-ground archaeology and the significance of the known or possible heritage assets.
- Fulfil the requirement of paragraph 207 of the National Planning Policy Framework, which requires that local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting
- Help inform the client with respect to the nature, likelihood and significance of any archaeology and heritage assets.
- Assist those in the planning system advise and assess future plans for change.

1.03 This report examines the potential for below-ground archaeology to survive at the site and also assesses the heritage impact of the proposed development upon any below-ground archaeology and the nearby grade II listed church. The report is based on the identification of heritage assets within a 250m radius.

1.04 Documentary and cartographic materials were consulted in order to provide a summary of the historical and archaeological development and significance. The material held at the Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record (HER), Heritage Gateway, Historic England's PastScape (now the Historic England Research Records) and on-line sources was also consulted prior to a site visit in August 2018.

HERITAGE PLANNING CONTEXT

2.01 There are no designated heritage assets, such as listed buildings or scheduled monuments, within the site boundary and the site does not fall within a conservation area. A grade II listed church is situated close to the site boundary.

2.02 National Planning Policy for cultural heritage is provided within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The opening paragraphs (7-14) in the Framework set out the primary objectives to achieve sustainable development, a principle that all development should accord with.

2.03 Paragraph 207 of the NPPF states, '*In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.*'

2.04 Elsewhere within the NPPF, paragraphs 212-215 concern planning decisions where there is an impact on the significance of heritage assets. In terms of archaeological features '*great weight*' should be given to the conservation of scheduled monuments, local authorities should '*refuse consent*' to proposals that involve substantial harm to scheduled monuments unless specific conditions are met, while '*less than substantial harm*' should be '*weighed against the public benefits of the proposal*'. In the case of non-designated archaeological heritage assets '*a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset*' (paragraph 216).

2.05 If the development will lead to substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, paragraph 214 indicates that the development should be refused consent by the local planning authority, unless it can be proved that the loss or damage to the asset can be outweighed by substantial benefits to the public OR if the proposal can demonstrate all of the following:

'the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and

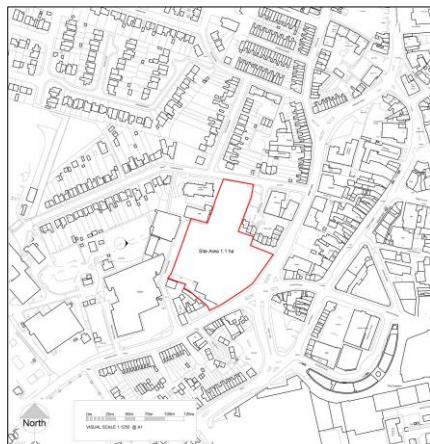
- *no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and*
- *conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and*
- *the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.'*

2.06 If the development leads to '*less than substantial harm*' to the significance of a designated heritage asset, paragraph 215 indicates that this harm still needs to be assessed against the public benefit of the scheme and whether or not the viability of the site is being optimised.

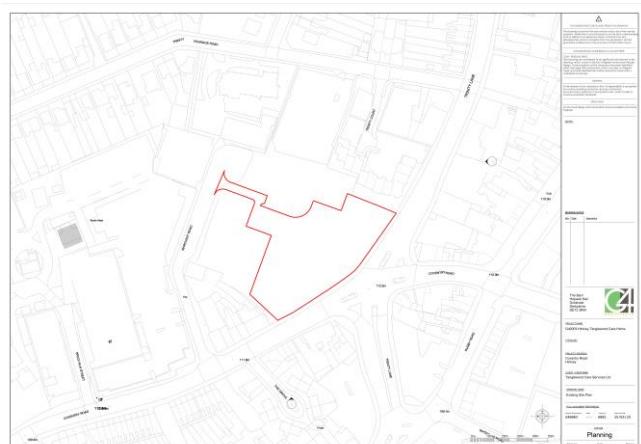
SITE LOCATION, LAND USE, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

3.01 The site is located to the west side of Hinckley. At the time of the site visit in 2018, the north part of the site is a functioning car park. The larger southern part of the site is the former location of the Hinckley Leisure Centre, now an open site covered by a levelled layer of demolition rubble (see **front cover**). It is understood that site conditions remain similar today, the only difference being that on site works have commenced relating to the existing planning permission.

3.02 The underlying geology of the site is mudstone of the Mercia Mudstone Group with superficial deposits of sand and gravel of the Wolston Sand and Gravel or diamicton (boulder clays) of the Oadby Member (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>).



Extent of existing planning permission



Extent of present application

GAZETTEER OF HERITAGE ASSETS

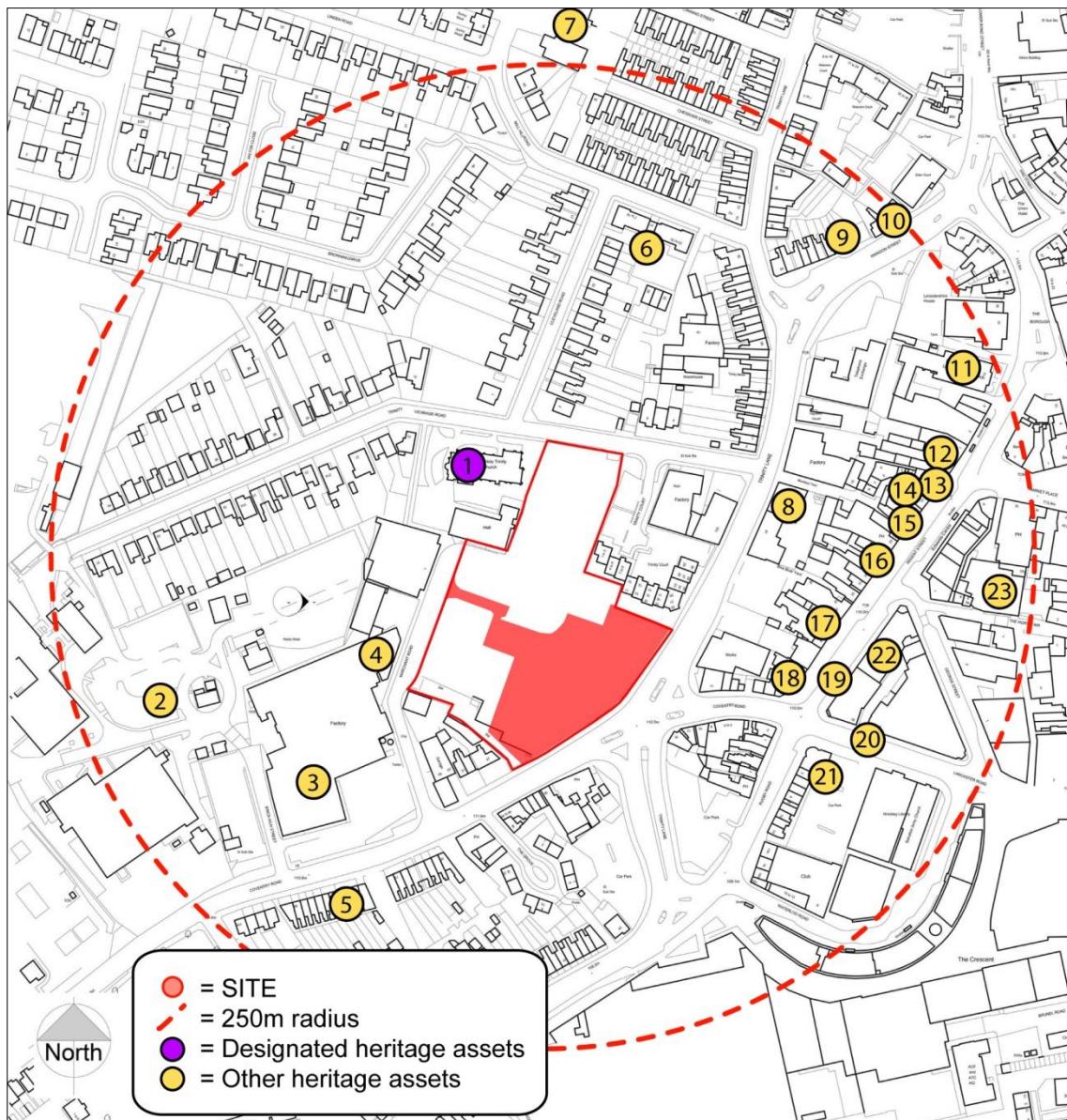
4.01 This chapter lists the archaeological investigations and heritage assets (sites, findspots and buildings/structures of archaeological or historical interest) recorded in the Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record (HER) and in other sources that are likely to be informative about the history and significance of the site. These comprise the records within a c250m radius of the approximate centre of the site. Where possible the relevant HER or other identifying number is given. The location of the recorded sites are plotted on the figure below the table.

Map No.	Name of Known Sites, Findspots or Interventions	Date: Origins	HER/Other Number	Description
Designated Heritage Assets				
1	Church of the Holy Trinity	20th century	Grade II listed building. List entry Number: 1014001 And HER entry MLE12997 and PastScape entry: 527226	<p>Church. 1909-10 by Alexander Ellis of Birmingham in a Gothic style; baptistery completed 1930. Random rubble with ashlar dressings and plain tile roofs with stone coped verges. 5-bay nave with apsidal west baptistery, north-west and south-west porches and a south [<i>sic=north</i>] aisle; 2-bay chancel with south vestry and organ chamber. It was intended to build a north [<i>sic=south</i>] aisle and tower but the church was never completed. The bay divisions of the south [<i>sic=north</i>] aisle are marked by buttresses surmounted by cast iron rainwater heads. Each bay is under a gable and has a pointed 3-light window with Decorated tracery and a trefoil opening in the gable. The clerestory has pointed 2-light windows, a cyma reversa moulded cornice and pinnacles at the corners. The south [<i>sic=north</i>] porch is gabled and has a pointed arch on cylindrical shafts. It is matched on the north [<i>sic=south</i>] side by an identical porch, and hard up against this is the stub of the west wall of the intended north [<i>sic=south</i>] aisle.</p> <p>Also on this side, at the east end of the nave, is a buttress surmounted by a small timber framed bell cote containing a single bell. The west end is finished with an apsidal baptistery with small lancet windows. Like that of the nave the north [<i>sic=south</i>] wall of the chancel is blind and it was evidently intended that there should be an attached building here. The pointed east window has 5 lights and Decorated tracery, and there is a trefoil opening in the gable above. The vestry and organ chamber on the south [<i>sic=north</i>] side are gabled to the east and south and the porch within the re-entrant angle of this L-shaped plan, has an openwork parapet and a doorway with Caernarvon arch.</p> <p>Interior: 5-bay nave arcades of pointed arches on cylindrical columns, each with 4 banded shafts and moulded base. The capitals of the south arcade are very richly carved with naturalistic foliage; each one is different and the models used include roses and thistles, oak leaves and acorns, vine leaves and bunches of grapes and ears of corn together with a serpent and birds. The capitals of the blind north arcade are left uncarved but were clearly intended to be treated as their counterparts to the south. At the west end of the nave is a lower 3-bay arcade, also with naturalistic capitals and</p>

				<p>banded shafts, which leads to the baptistery with a polygonal apse. A double chamfered chancel arch springs from a pair of corbelled cylindrical shafts with capitals; these too have naturalistic foliage. To each side of the chancel are 2-bay arcades like those of the nave but on a smaller scale; again the north arcade is blind. Wooden barrel-vaults over the nave and chancel on a series of thin transverse ribs which spring from shafted corbels, with naturalistic foliage in the chancel but left uncarved in the nave. The window rear-arches spring from shafts and have returned hood moulds. Fixtures and fittings: Font with octagonal basin on cylindrical shaft with octagonal steps in the baptistery. Simple bench pews in the nave, and choir stalls with openwork poppyheads. Octagonal stone pulpit on a cylindrical base with multiple shafting; the sides have Decorated tracery. Brass lectern with cylindrical shaft on inverted funnel-shaped base with clawed feet; the shaft is inscribed with Romanesque patterns; foliage brackets to an openwork book rest. Altar rail on wrought iron legs.</p> <p>2 sedilia with cinquefoil heads on cylindrical shafts with carved capitals. Piscina in the same style, and common hood mould over both. Simple wooden reredos with cinquefoil arcading. Stained glass: High quality throughout. East window of after 1931 with Jesus the Good Shepherd in the centre and Saint Peter and Dorcas to the right and Saints John and Paul to the left. In the south aisle, second from the east of after 1901, possibly by Kempe and Co.; third from the east of after 1957. The westernmost window of the aisle is a First World War memorial. In the baptistery small windows of (from north to south); 1946, 1936, 1936, 1936, 1942, by A.J. Davies of Bromsgrove, Worcs. B.O.E. p.177.</p> <p>HER ENTRY: [Copy of list description] PASTSCAPE ENTRY: Former church of 1839 demolished and replaced by the present Holy Trinity Church in 1909-10.</p>
Map No.	Historic Environment Record entries	Date: Origins	HER/ Other Number	Description
2	Gas works, Coventry Road	19th century	MLE21632	The new Gas Works opened in 1873, replacing an earlier one built in 1834. They were designed to light a town of 7,000 inhabitants. Apart from the works, meters etc, 'there is a large house for materials, with a Director's room, Manager's office, meter-fitting place, and fittings shops etc. A station meter was also purchased by the Company, shewing the amount of work done. The gasometer will hold 60,000 feet of gas.' In 1881 Hinckley Local Board purchased the Hinckley Gaslight and Coke Company Ltd, bringing it into public ownership. In 1922 the works were improved, and in 1928. In 1948 the gas industry was nationalised by the government and became part of the West Midlands Gas Board. Production of gas ceased at the works in 1962 and clearing of the site began. The buildings fronting onto Coventry Road were demolished in about 1975.
3	Hosiery factory, Brick Kiln Street	20th century	MLE17929	Hosiery factory occupied by H J Hall & Son from 1977. H J Hall & Son. Famous for their 'Indestructible and Softop Socks'. Established in 1882 by Mr John Hall in the village of Stoke Golding and moved to Hinckley in 1977. Featured in

				the 'Hinckley Hosiery Trail'.
4	Post-medieval windmill south of Hollycroft Park	19th century	MLE2889	Documentary evidence for a post-medieval tower windmill. It was erected in 1809 and can be seen on the OS Surveyor's Drawing (1814).
5	Roman coins from Walton Terrace	Roman	MLE7941 and PastScape 338162	<p>HER ENTRY: Two Roman coins are recorded from the gardens at the rear of Walton Terrace - a sestertius of Trajan and a dupondius of Titus.</p> <p>PASTSCAPE ENTRY: "Granville Road: A sestertius of Trajan and a Dupondius of Titus came from the gardens at the rear of Walton Terrace, Coventry Road" (SP 422936). (Tr Leic AS 18 1934-5 188 (A J Pickering)) The above coins are probably in the collection of A J Pickering which is now crated and held by Hinckley Grammar School. (Field Investigators Comments F1 FDC 26-JUN-72)</p>
6	Mill Hill Works, Mill Hill Road	20th century	MLE19933	Building assessment was carried out in 2006 prior to demolition. The hosiery works were dated 1916, with the principal elevation facing north and fronting Mill Hill Road.
7	Post-medieval windmill, Mill Hill	18th century	MLE2886	A windmill is shown on a map of Hinckley (1782), Prior's map (1779), OS 2" Drawing (1814) and the OS 1st edition 1" map. The area is shown as Mill Hill on the 1925 OS map
8	Archaeological investigation	-	NMR excavation index 1848286, 1840784, 1840806	5-7 REGENT STREET, HINCKLEY
9	Archaeological investigation	-	NMR excavation index 1905202, 1904635	12 MANSION STREET
10	20 Mansion Street	17th century	MLE17984	Relatively intact C17th timber framed cottage, disguised by modern imitation framing on exterior.
11	United Reform Church	19th century	MLE13007	Congregational Chapel, built in 1866-8. The walls are of red brick with an ashlar front and hipped slate roof. The front, of three bays with a gabled centre, has four columns with foliage capitals flanking the entrances.
12	1 Regent Street	16th century	MLE9165 and MLE16355	<p>The building was originally a late C16th/early C17th jettied timber framed structure with the infill replaced with brick. Dendrochronology dates the building to after 1586. It was much altered in the late C18th/early C19th, raised to three storeys and re-roofed.</p> <p>This may have originally been a second bay of 1 Regent Street (MLE9165), but if so it was removed in the late C18th when the present building was constructed. It seems that no. 3 was rebuilt before no. 1 was remodelled. It is a three-storey brick building.</p>
13	Archaeological investigation	-	NMR excavation index 1822460	LAND AT 1-3 REGENT STREET
14	Site of medieval/post-medieval house,	Medieval	MLE9161	The front range of the building was a two-bay jettied structure dated to 1625 (or 1509-1534?) by dendrochronology. The building was re-modelled in the late

	5-7 Regent Street			C18th. Following demolition, a late medieval pit and boundary wall were recorded during a watching brief on groundworks.
15	9-11, Regent Street	Post-medieval	MLE17980	C16th/C17th timber framed building with exposed framing in the front block and in the external wall of the rear wing. The front block was largely rebuilt in the C19th/C20th.
16	27, Regent Street	18th century	MLE17982	The building is probably C18th, incorporating earlier fabric, and altered mid C19th and C20th. Inside there is a remnant of a truss.
17	39-41a, Regent Street	Medieval?	MLE17983	Despite extensive C20th alteration, the core of this complex property, an old Atkins family residence, is an intriguing building. It may be medieval - it has an unusual upper cruck roof structure with end crucks.
18	45, Regent Street	18th century	MLE17985	Early C18th building with a good dogleg staircase.
19	Possible medieval road remains, Regent Street	Medieval?	MLE2896 and PastScape entry: 338137, 338158	<p>HER ENTRY: During sewer enlargement in 1913-14 a pavement constructed of a double row of kidney stones was exposed 5' below the surface. A top stone of a quern lay above this level. The pavement ran for many yards along Regent Street. It was also recorded that a much battered and worn mortar with 4 lugs was found in the foundations of the Regent Club, Regent Street.</p> <p>PASTSCAPE ENTRY: The broken top stone of a quern was found, during sewage operations from the Borough to Sketchley in 1913-14, above a pavement of a 'double row of kidney stones' which ran for many yards 5 ft below the surface along the Regent street and had been previously recorded at Regent Street and Coventry Road Corner. (SP 42479375). (Tr Leic AS 18 1934-5 187)</p> <p>There is no record of this find in Leicester Museum. (Field Investigators Comments F1 FDC 26-JUN-72)</p> <p>PASTSCAPE ENTRY: A small, much worn stone mortar was found in the foundations of the Regent Club, Regent St, Hinckley. (Tr Leics AS 18 1934-5 188 (A J Pickering)) The Regent Club is at SP 42479367; it was constructed in 1928 when doubtless, the above find was made. The mortar is probably now in the Pickering collection which is crated and held by Hinckley Grammar School. (RCHM Recorder comment JDC 04-JUL-1973)</p>
20	Cobbled surface, Lancaster Road	Post-medieval?	MLE2885	In 1913 a cobble pavement 8' deep was noted in Lancaster Road, some 20 yards from Regent Street. It was at least 10' by 12'.
21	The Regent Theatre/Gaumont Cinema/Classic Cinema, 2, Rugby Road	20th century	MLE19811	1,000 seat theatre/cinema opened in 1929, built in an Art Deco style. It closed as a cinema in 1968 and reopened as a Bingo Hall, though this use finally came to an end in 2013.
22	Hosiery factory, Regent Street	20th century	MLE17928	1930s hosiery factory building.
23	St George's Ballroom, 4, The Horsefair	20th century	MLE22778	Ballroom that opened in 1935. Brick façade with some Art Deco details.

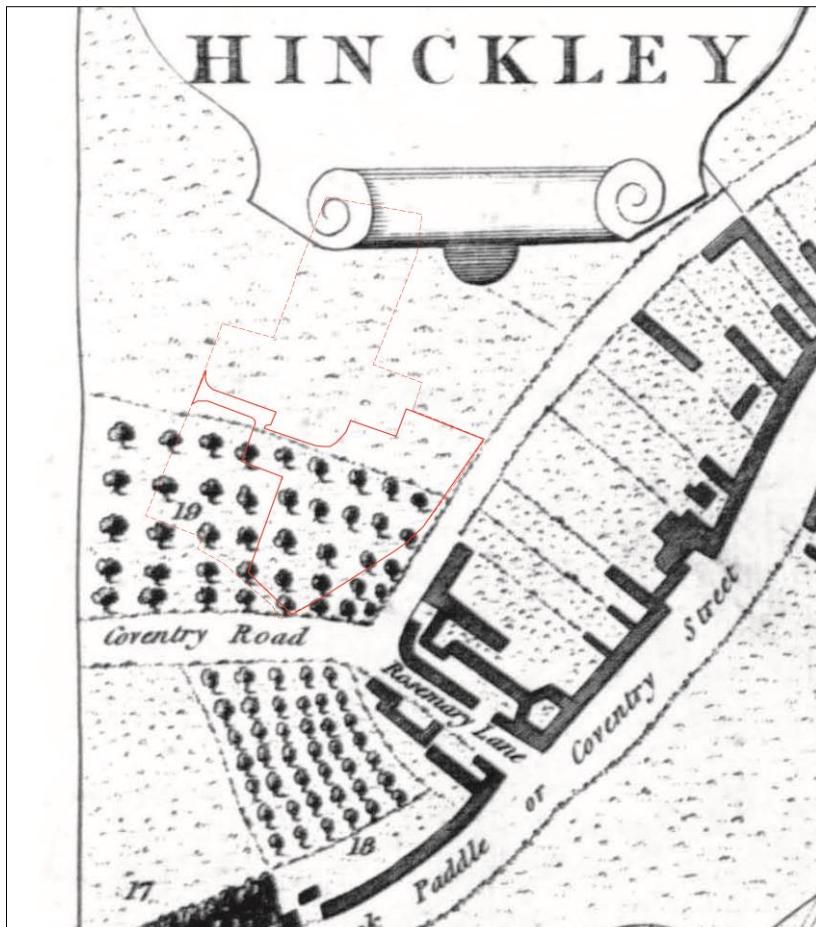


Location of gazetteer entries – Present application in red shading. Red line shows existing planning permission

1 - church (grade II listed building); 2 - gasworks; 3 - hosiery factory; 4 - windmill; 5 - Roman coins; 6 - 1916 factory; 7 - windmill (SM); 8 - archaeological investigation; 9 - archaeological investigation (SM); 10 - seventeenth century building; 11 - 1860s church; 12 - sixteenth century building; 13 - archaeological investigation; 14 - site of medieval house; 15 - sixteenth century building; 16 - eighteenth century building; 17 - medieval? building; 18 - eighteenth century building; 19 - road remains? quern?; 20 - cobbled surface; 21 - 1920s cinema; 22- 1930s hosiery factory; 23 - 1930s ballroom

CARTOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE

5.01 The earliest map available is the 1782 town plan of Hinckley, which shows the site to be in agricultural land with no buildings shown. The caption for the '19' marked on the map in the south part of the site reads 'Gardens planted with fruit trees'. The site remained undeveloped at the time of the 1914 Ordnance Survey 2" to 1 mile preliminary survey map.

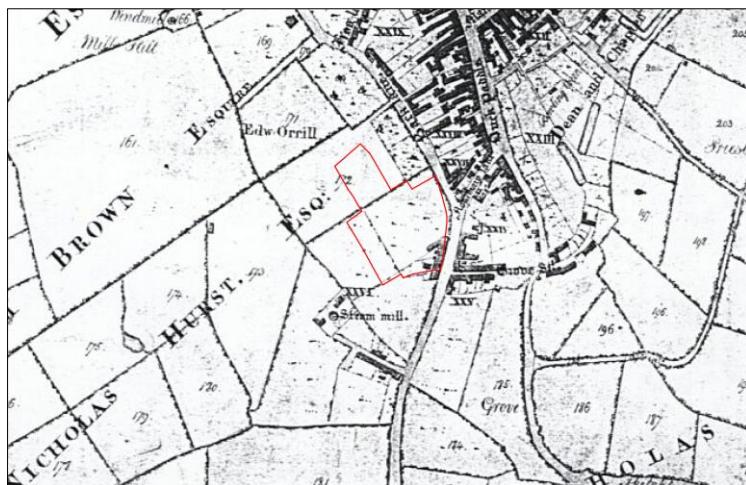


1782 town map of Hinckley (site location approximate) Present application solid red line, existing planning permission shown as dashed line

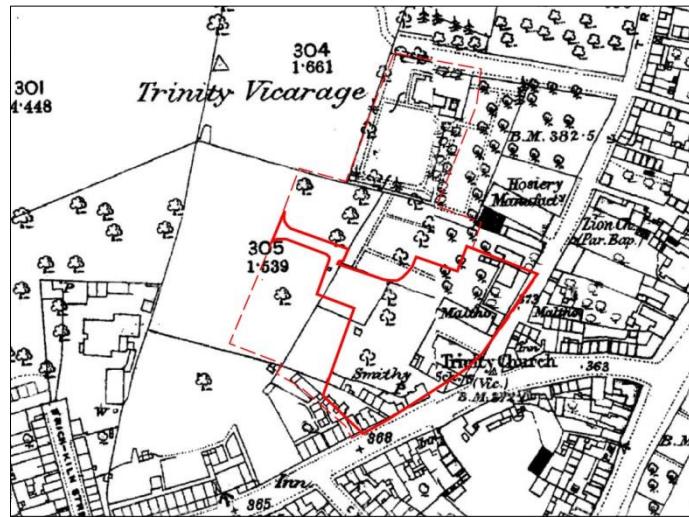


1814 Henry Stevens map for the Ordnance Survey 2" to 1 mile (site location approximate)

5.02 The first buildings on the site are shown on the 1818 tithe apportionment map, a range of buildings on the Coventry Road frontage. By comparison with the later Ordnance Survey maps, these were probably a smithy and adjacent buildings, possible stables. The Trinity Church, the neighbouring malthouse (later labelled as 'warehouse') and the Trinity Vicarage had yet to be built on the site. These buildings are all shown on the 1889 Ordnance Survey map with the bulk of the site still shown as agricultural or garden land.

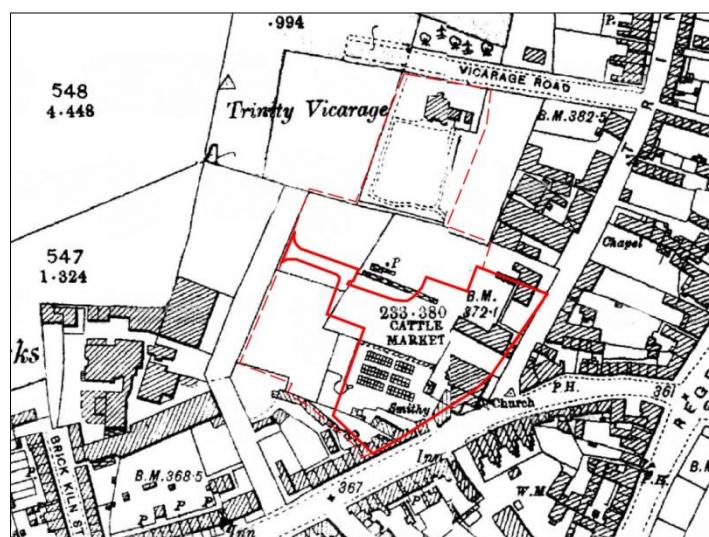


1818 Tithe apportionment map (site location approximate) Present application solid red line, existing planning permission shown as dashed line

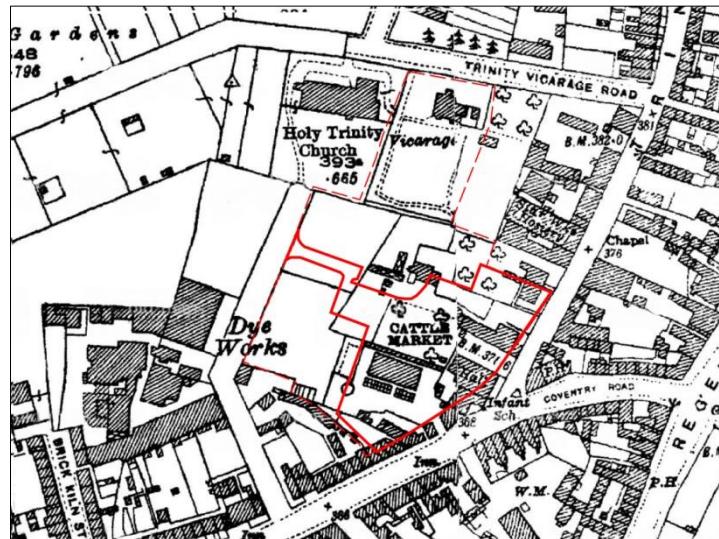


1889 Ordnance Survey (1:2500) Present application solid red line, existing planning permission shown as dashed line

5.03 In the period between the 1889 map and the 1903 map a cattle market was established in the southern part of the site, initially with a walled area enclosing a series of pens on the 1903 map, with the addition of a number of covered buildings by the time of the 1924 map. In 1903 Trinity Church (within the site) was still labelled 'church' but by the time of the 1924 map - the present-day Church of the Holy Trinity having been built in 1909-10 - the former Trinity Church had become a hall.

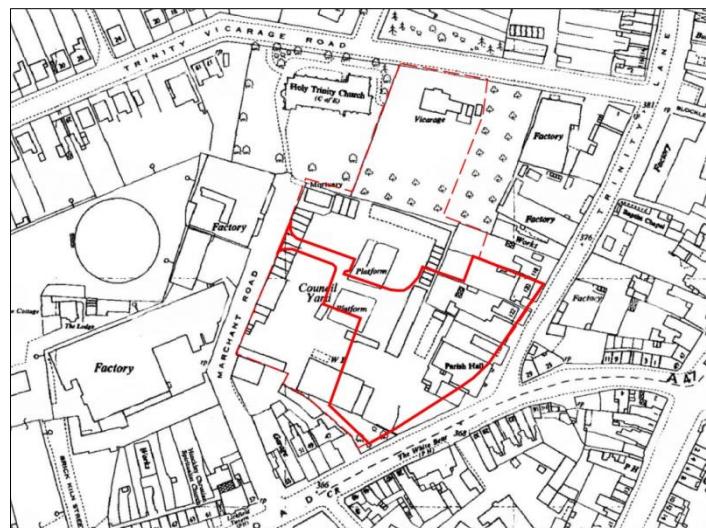


1903 Ordnance Survey map (1:2500) Present application solid red line, existing planning permission shown as dashed line

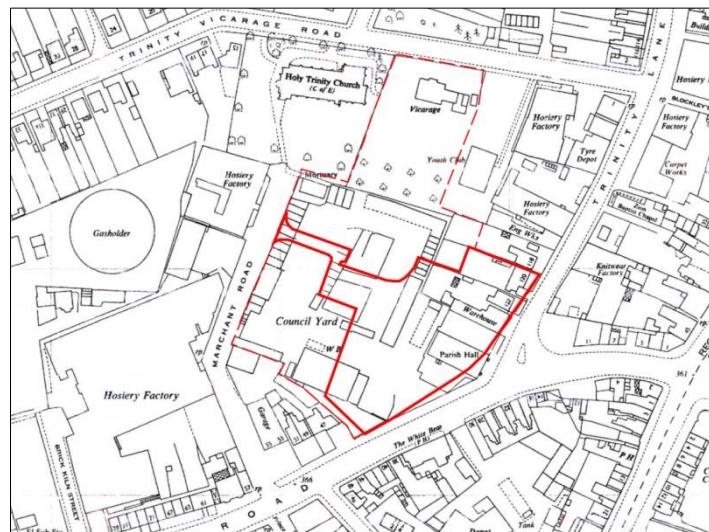


1924 Ordnance Survey map (1:2500) Present application solid red line, existing planning permission shown as dashed line

5.04 The site changed in the middle part of the twentieth century, with the cattle market being replaced by the council depot. The smithy and possible stable had also been removed by this time. The gasworks to the west of the site had been constructed and the hosiery factory to the southwest had reached its full extent.



1961 Ordnance Survey map (1:2500) Present application solid red line, existing planning permission shown as dashed line



1966 Ordnance Survey map (1:1250) Present application solid red line, existing planning permission shown as dashed line

5.05 Between the 1966 map and the present-day, the site changed out of all recognition. The former leisure centre was built in the mid-1970s, necessitating the demolition of the former Trinity Church (Trinity Hall), the warehouse to its north (formerly a malthouse) and all traces of the previous cattle market and council depot. Presumably it was around this time that the former Trinity Vicarage in the north part of the site was demolished and the extant church hall to the south of the present-day Church of the Holy Trinity was built.

5.06 The leisure centre was demolished in 2016, leaving a functioning car park at the north end of the site and a rubble covered area across the rest.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SUMMARY

6.01 Based upon the gazetteer in Chapter 4 and secondary sources, the following is a summary of the general archaeological and historical background of activity within the search area around the site and wider area. The associated gazetteer entry numbers are referred to in brackets, e.g. (26).

Roman, medieval and early modern

6.02 Hinckley was a medieval market town. The castle was founded by the Earl of Leicester (mid twelfth century) and was ruined by the sixteenth century. It was a motte and bailey castle. Various remains were recorded during the construction of the supermarket (59 Castle Street), which is on the site of the motte. The site is beyond the historic core of the medieval and post-medieval town, as derived from a town plan of 1782 (Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record (HER) MLE2901). At the time of the 1782 plan the site was agricultural land.

6.03 Within the study area a number of features date from the medieval or post-medieval period, although as would be expected, given the fact that the site is beyond the boundary of the medieval or post-medieval settlement, none of these is within the site boundary or close to it. To the east of the site is a seventeenth century cottage (10), the former site of a medieval house (14), a sixteenth or seventeenth century building (15), an eighteenth century building (16), a probable medieval building (17), an early eighteenth century building (18). The presence of a 'paved' road was discovered during sewer works in 1913-14, which is recorded as a possible medieval road in the Leicestershire and Rutland HER (19) but, as discussed below, the account of

the discovery contains insufficient detail to identify exactly what was found. A similar caution needs to be exercised in interpreting the apparent 'cobbled pavement' found in 1913 nearby (20).

6.04 Hinckley lies close to but does not appear to have been directly connected to the Roman road of Watling Street, which linked London to Chester. The local historian A J Pickering writing in the 1930s was convinced of the Roman origin of the town '*Although no particular locality in this parish has been definitely identified with Roman occupation, there is much scattered evidence pointing to the probability that Hinckley was an occupied, site in Romano-British times.*' A number of Roman period artefacts have been found in Hinckley but little is known of the Roman settlement, if any. Close to the site is the findspot of two Roman coins (5) recorded in 1934-5. These were recorded by the same A J Pickering quoted above and were supposedly part of his collection. Also potentially of Roman date was the quern found during sewer works in 1913-4, supposedly above the level of a paved road (19). Without a better description of the quern it is impossible to say whether this was a Roman rotary quern, an Iron Age beehive quern or some other misidentified object such as a loom weight or even a small millstone. Found nearby was 'mortar', although it is unclear what was meant by this description; it may refer to a Roman *mortarium* or a stone mortar or even the lower half of a quern.

6.05 The lack of well-attested Roman finds within the study area and the fact that the site appears to have lain beyond the limit of the town until the nineteenth century suggest that artefacts or features from the Roman period until the eighteenth or nineteenth century are **unlikely** to be present.

The late eighteenth century and nineteenth century

6.06 The town went on to become a major centre for the production of hosiery in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. According to Palmer and Neaverson in *Industrial Landscapes of the East Midlands* (1992, 182-3):

"Hinckley... Is known as 'the cradle and home of the hosiery trade' because of a claim that the first stocking frame outside London was recorded here in 1640. The industry grew rapidly, making the town the most important hosiery centre in the county: in 1778 the trade occupied nearly half the total population who worked 864 stocking frames. By 1844 the number of frames in Hinckley and the surrounding villages of Barwell, Burbage, Earl Shilton, Stoke Golding and Dadlington had risen to 3,500. Unlike Loughborough, no spinning was carried out and yarn was obtained from Leicester and the West Midlands. Hinckley remained a one-industry town until the end of the century when shoe manufacture was introduced.

There is little archaeological evidence for its 17th century industry apart from the important timber-framed cottages in Lower Bond Street. The buildings remaining represent the transition to powered machines in the last three decades of the 19th century, with small utilitarian factory buildings. From these several large firms, such as Atkins, emerged to dominate the 20th century industry. The scale of change can be appreciated by comparing their cottages and factory facing each other across Lower Bond Street. Like Leicester, the prosperity of the hosiery industry has ensured the survival of factories but recent trade recession has put many of its buildings at risk."

6.07 The earliest development on the application site was between c.1814 and c.1818 when a smithy and adjacent probable stables were built on the Coventry Road frontage, presumably located here initially to take advantage of the passing trade of travellers approaching the city. Later these buildings would have served the growing suburbs around them and the cattle market. They stood until after 1924 and are shown as demolished on the 1966 Ordnance Survey map. There is a **moderate likelihood** that below-ground traces of these buildings will remain, although this will be dependent on the degree of later disturbance during the period when this was a council yard and later a leisure centre. The area in which these stood is unlikely to have been affected by the

excavation of swimming pool or other deep excavation associated with the 1970s leisure centre, although they may have been affected by site clearance and levelling following the leisure centre's demolition in 2016.

6.08 In around 1840 Trinity Church was built on the corner of Trinity Lane (1840 - *Hinckley Times* 2016; 1839 - PastScape entry on replacement church). It later became a church hall used for weddings and other events following the opening of the Church of the Holy Trinity in 1909-10 to the northwest of the site (1). It reportedly fell into disuse in the 1950s-60s and was demolished in 1973 to make way for the new leisure centre. There is a **low likelihood** that below-ground remains of its foundations may remain. The church was directly below the former leisure centre and may have been affected by the deep excavations necessary for the construction of a swimming pool or by later grubbing up of foundations associated with the site clearance following the demolition of the leisure centre in 2016.

6.09 Probably contemporary with the construction of Trinity Church, Trinity Vicarage was built in the northern part of the site before 1889. It was still present in 1966. It is understood to have been demolished at the time of the leisure centre's construction in the mid-1970s to make way for a car park. There is a **moderate likelihood** that below-ground traces of this building will remain below the present-day car park.

Twentieth Century

6.10 A cattle market was established on the site in the very late nineteenth or early twentieth century, with open pens being joined by covered buildings by 1924. The cattle market appears to have been removed in the mid-twentieth century to make way for a council depot.

6.11 The former leisure centre was formally opened in July 1977. On the ground floor was the swimming pool and diving pool, separated by a glass partition from the learner pool. On the first floor was the clubroom, lounge bar, player's bar, saunas, lounge, cafeteria, and administration offices.

6.12 The construction began in 1973 with the demolition of Trinity Hall and its neighbouring outbuilding (possibly a stable), which at the time had fallen into disuse following Trinity Church's construction of a new church hall (itself later replaced by the present-day hall at the rear of the church).

6.13 The total floor space of the building was 180,000 square feet. The main hall was 12,600 square feet, and was said to resemble an aircraft hanger rather than a sports hall.

6.14 The leisure centre was closed in May 2016 after the construction of a replacement leisure centre at Argents Mead and was demolished in late 2016.

6.15 As a result of the demolition and site levelling in 2016, the Written Scheme of Investigation produced by Wessex Archaeology in 2022 stated that '*A review of the Site Investigation reports on the site has identified a significant depth of disturbed ground over much of the development area (Solmek 2015), with made ground deposits over 2m deep in places.*'

ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Policy Framework

7.01 In the NPPF 'significance' is defined as '*The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.*'

7.02 The NPPF defines a 'heritage asset' as '*A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage assets include designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing)*'.

7.03 The importance of identifying the significance of a site is highlighted in the NPPF as this is essential in informing future change to heritage assets. The aim of conservation is to sensitively manage change to ensure that significance is protected, and also revealed, reinforced and enhanced, at every possible opportunity.

7.04 This assessment of significance has been informed by non-intrusive site investigation combined with a review of historic mapping and secondary source material. This appraisal considers the significance of the heritage assets that may survive on the site or nearby.

Pre-nineteenth century archaeological features

7.05 These are unlikely to be present. If Roman features were found, their rarity in the context of Hinckley means that they would be of **medium/regional** significance.

Early nineteenth century smithy and adjacent stables

7.06 There is a moderate likelihood of below-ground survival depending on the extent of later site clearance. Built between 1814 and 1818 the smithy and associated buildings were initially located to serve travellers approaching Hinckley and later presumably served the adjacent cattle market. Despite their relatively early date, such service buildings are not rare and during their long life it is likely that later developments will have erased earlier features. Below ground remains are likely to be very limited in scope, especially as these were probably relatively lightweight buildings with little in the way of foundations. Any below ground remains are likely to have **negligible heritage significance**.

Mid-nineteenth century Trinity Church (later Trinity Church Hall) and Trinity Vicarage

7.07 There is a moderate likelihood of the survival of below-ground traces of the vicarage below the present-day car park, with a lower likelihood of traces of the church below the former site of the leisure centre. While of some local importance while standing, the demolished remains of these buildings have little value in heritage terms. Such remains are not rare in the context of Hinckley and the buildings are a relatively well-documented and well-understood element of the town's history. Any below-ground remains will be of **negligible heritage significance**.

Early twentieth century cattle market

7.08 While of some importance to the economy of the town in the early twentieth century, the cattle market was relatively limited in extent and short-lived. Its remains will be limited to lightweight foundations. Any below-ground traces of its buildings are of **no heritage significance**.

Early twentieth century grade II listed Church of the Holy Trinity

7.09 The church lies beyond the site boundary but the site is within its setting and may make a contribution to the significance of the church.

7.10 The church was built in 1909-10 to replace the former Trinity Church. The church derives the main part of its heritage significance from the quality of the architectural work, which is described at length in the list description.

7.11 The setting of the church also makes a contribution to its significance, but it is important to understand the church's historical development in order to establish the way in which its setting contributes. When this church was built (as with its predecessor the Trinity Church) this part of Hinckley was a built-up area and the church was emphatically an urban church. To its north were the expanding areas of housing in the Hinckley suburbs, while to the east - beyond the plot of the vicarage - was the town itself, filled with hosiery workshops and housing. To the immediate south and southwest were the expanding cattle market and a large dye-works.

7.12 To the south of the church a substantial church hall was constructed after 1966 (**Plate 1**). The effect of this large building is to screen the church from the proposed development site to the south/southeast. To the east of the east end of the church is a fence and a substantial hedge screen which serves to screen the church from the northern part of the site. The effect of these blocking elements is that a visitor to the church cannot see the site of the proposed development, the only exception being through a narrow gap between the church hall and the neighbouring building to the southwest (**Plate 2**).



Plate 1: The 1960s/70s church hall to the south of the Church of the Holy Trinity, looking east



Plate 2: Looking southeast past the 1960s/70s church hall towards the site

7.13 Views of the church's upper parts are possible from various parts of the proposed development site but these are limited. The most valuable views are primarily from the car park in the northern part of the site towards the eastern end (**Plate 3**). Views from the southern part of the site and the roadside of Coventry Road are of less value, and in both cases the 1960s/70s church hall blocks clear views (**Plates 4-5**).



Plate 3. Looking northwest towards the church from the car park in the north part of the site



Plate 4: Looking towards the church and church hall from the southern part of the site



Plate 5: Looking towards the church and church hall from Coventry Road across the site

7.14 While the east end is of architectural value, the southern elevation of the church was clearly intended to be extended with the addition of a south aisle (mistakenly referred to as a 'north aisle' in the list description). Below the clerestory level there are no openings in the southern elevation and there are two rubble-finished wall stubs that mark where the intended south aisle was to be constructed.

7.15 In modern times (after 1966) the elevation has seen two phases of unsympathetic brick extension, totally out of keeping with the rubble stone exterior and in contrast with the sympathetic western extension built in the 1930s (**Plate 6**).



Plate 6: The unfinished southern elevation of the church with unsympathetic brick additions

7.16 The proposed development site does not form a significant part of the setting of the church. Visitors to the church largely cannot see the proposed development site. The views of the church from the southern part of the former leisure centre site, where the present application site is located, and from Coventry Road are limited by the 1960s/70s hall and are of the unfinished southern side of the church, and include unsympathetic modern brick extensions. The views of the church that contribute the most to its significance are towards its north elevation and main entrance from Trinity Vicarage Road, which will be unaffected by the proposed development.

HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

8.01 This section assesses the potential impact of the proposed development, although since the precise construction details/piling depth etc of the proposed development is not known at the time of writing it is necessarily general.

The proposal

8.02 The revised scheme is similar to the part of the permitted scheme that it replaces and differs only in having a larger footprint but is one storey lower than the permitted block.

Potential heritage impact: archaeology

8.03 Site clearance and other groundworks will have high impacts on any potential below-ground archaeological remains.

Table summarising below ground archaeology and potential impacts

Heritage Asset	Significance	Level of Impact	Nature of Impact
Low to moderate possibility of early and mid nineteenth century smithy, stables, vicarage and church	Negligible	High	Construction groundworks: site clearance, levelling and ground reduction, foundations, associated infrastructure and service trenches
Moderate likelihood of early twentieth century cattle market remains	None	High	Construction groundworks: site clearance, levelling and ground reduction, foundations, associated infrastructure and service trenches

8.04 There is a high likelihood of harmful impact, but given the negligible heritage significance of the potential archaeological features no mitigation was recommended in the original 2018 assessment. Subsequently LCC Archaeology, who advise the local planning authority, recommended pre-commencement archaeological trial trenching as a condition of the 2018 planning permission. A Written Scheme of Investigation for trial trenching was prepared by Wessex Archaeology and approved in May 2022. There have been no changes in planning policy or in the proposed scheme that would result in a different outcome or recommendation for the present application.

8.05 The present application will have no greater impact on the buried archaeological remains than the successful 2018 application. Since the existing permission which is and will remain extant contains a condition to cover archaeological investigation of the entire site (including the site of the present application), there does not seem to be any need to include a corresponding condition for the present application. However if a corresponding condition is included, the existing WSI written by Wessex Archaeology and approved in 2022 would be sufficient to partially discharge the condition in this application.

8.06 Subject to the required archaeological investigation, to be achieved as a condition of planning permission, there would be no overall harm to any archaeological remains. The 'Planning Committee 15 October 2019: Report of the Planning Manager' agreed and noted that:

'8.39. It is considered that the proposed development would have a neutral impact upon the grade II listed church and any buried archaeological heritage assets subject to the recommended conditions.'

Potential heritage impact: grade II listed church

8.07 The application site does not contribute to the significance of the church, and the proposed care home will have no impact on the heritage significance of the grade II listed building.

8.08 The proposed development has no greater impact than the existing planning permission, which does not cause harm to the historic environment. This conclusion was endorsed at the time of the successful planning application in 2018. The 'Planning Committee 15 October 2019: Report of the Planning Manager' noted that:

'8.38. In conclusion, the setting of the church has been urban since its construction. The site makes a small contribution to the significance of the church, but this is limited to the views of the east end of the church that are presently possible from the car park area at the north end of the site. These views would be retained. Visitors to the church will be unaffected as they will be largely screened from the development by the 1960s/70s church hall to the south of the church and the hedge and fence between the church and the car park area to the east. Part of the new housing development would be viewable but it is considered to be compatible with the urban setting of the church. Views of the church from the south of the site and Coventry Road are largely blocked by the church hall and are in any case limited to the less important, unfinished south elevation of the church (to which a south aisle was intended to be added) which has been harmed by unsympathetic brick additions. Therefore, the harm to the overall significance of the church would be neutral.'

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.01 This heritage and archaeological assessment has been prepared to assess the implications of the proposed development at the site of the former leisure centre, Hinckley.
- 9.02 Documentary and cartographic materials were consulted in order to provide a summary of the historical and archaeological development and significance of the site and its surroundings. The material held at the Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record was also consulted prior to a site visit.
- 9.03 Based on the research undertaken for this desk-based assessment, archaeological remains of sufficient significance to prevent development are unlikely to be present. Archaeological remains from any period prior to the early nineteenth century are unlikely to be present. There is a low to medium likelihood of the below-ground remains of an early nineteenth century smithy and neighbouring stables (demolished in the mid-twentieth century), the mid nineteenth century Trinity Church (demolished mid-1970s) and the early twentieth century cattle market (replaced by a council depot in the mid-twentieth century). Any remains that have survived the construction of the leisure centre (complete with the deep excavations for the swimming pool) in the mid-1970s and the subsequent demolition and site clearance in 2016 will be limited to the remains of foundations. They will have negligible heritage significance.
- 9.04 Planning permission granted for the previous scheme in 2018 included a condition requiring pre-commencement archaeological investigation and a suitable Written Scheme of Investigation was approved in 2022. There have been no changes in planning policy and the present scheme does not differ with regards to its impact on potential below ground archaeology, therefore the present application will be subject to the same requirements. Subject to these conditions there will be no harm caused to potential below ground archaeological remains.
- 9.05 The application site is not within the setting of the grade II listed Church of the Holy Trinity (built 1909-10), which stands to the northwest of the site. There will be no harm to the significance of the church.
- 9.06 The proposed development meets the test of sustainable development as regards the heritage provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework and is in accord with the heritage sections of the 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act. There is no reason to refuse planning permission on heritage grounds.

SOURCES CONSULTED

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