



Cotswold  
Archaeology

## Land West of Ratby, Leicestershire

*Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment*



*Report prepared for:  
Lagan Homes*

CA Project: MK0985

CA Report: MK0985\_1

August 2024



Andover Cirencester Milton Keynes Suffolk

# Land West of Ratby, Leicestershire

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CA Project: MK0985

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## SUMMARY

**Project Name:** Land west of Ratby

**Location:** Ratby, Hinckley, Leicestershire

**NGR:** 450700, 305950

In September 2023 Cotswold Archaeology was commissioned by Lagan Homes to undertake a Heritage Impact Assessment in respect of land west of Ratby, Hinckley, Leicestershire.

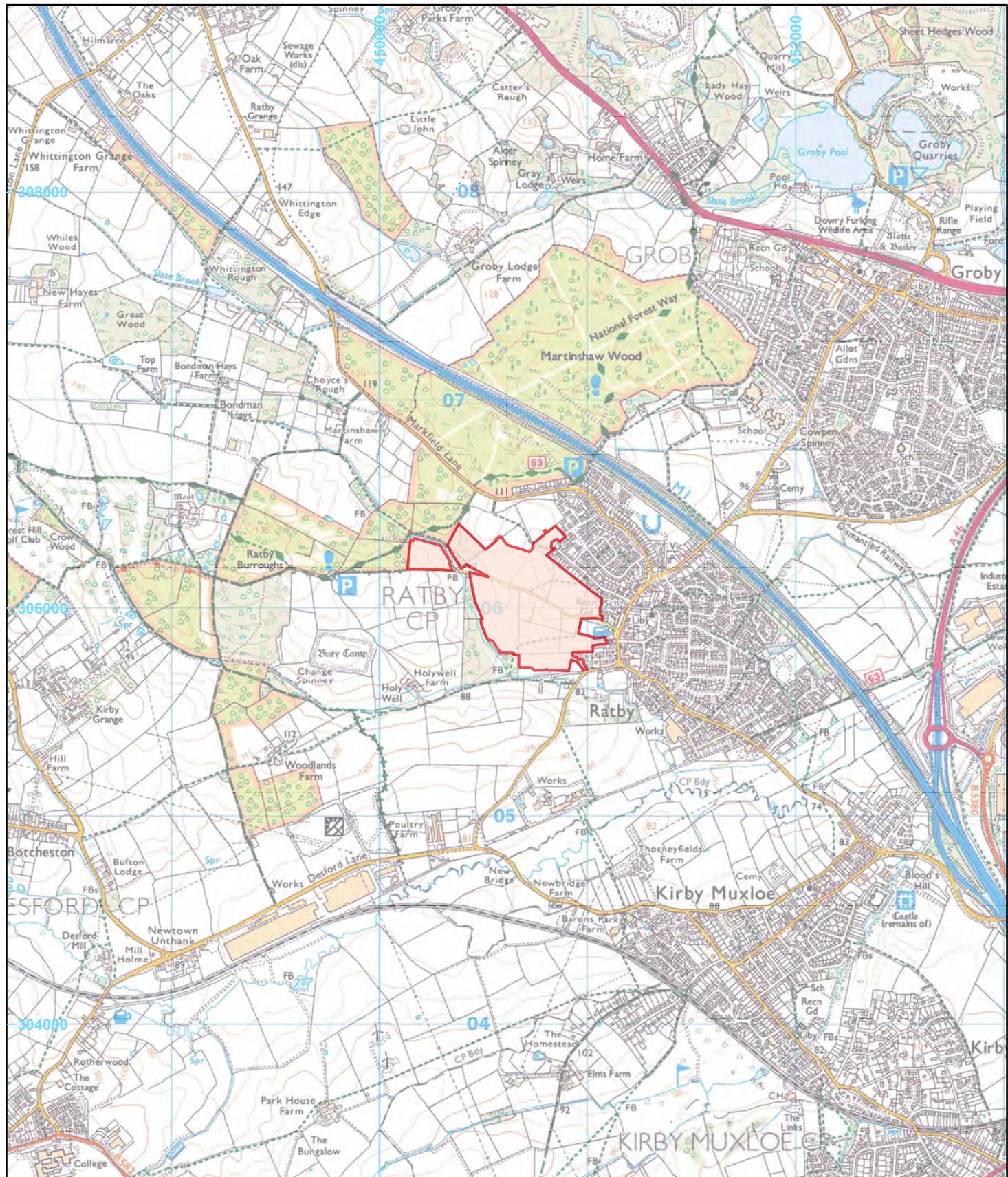
Presently in use as agricultural land, recreational land and coppiced woodland, the Site is located between the north-western edge of Ratby village, south-west of the M1, and is bisected by Burroughs Road. The Site is proposed for residential development, and forms part of a multi-phase project which will comprise the construction of new dwellings with associated access and landscaping.

The assessment has identified no overriding heritage constraints. The underlying geology within the Site indicates a potential for prehistoric flint artefacts to be present. Whilst there are records of a Roman road running through the north-east of the Site, previous investigations in this location have not identified any associated remains. Earthwork remains of ridge and furrow, associated with medieval cultivation, are present within the Site, though assessment has determined that these are of low (limited) heritage importance.

It is not anticipated that the significance of any buried archaeological remains within the Site would be of a level that would require preservation in situ. Further investigations may be required at an appropriate stage in the development process and the need for, scope and timing of any archaeological works would be agreed in consultation with the Archaeological Advisor to the Local Planning Authority (LPA).

This assessment has also considered nearby heritage assets and the effects of the proposed development upon their significance through changes to setting, in line with industry standard guidance. The assessment identified that the proposed development would result in a small degree of harm to the significance of the Ratby Conservation Area, due to the change in character to this part of the historically rural landscape within which the village developed; although this would fall well within the lower end of less than substantial. In accordance with paragraph 208 of the NPPF, such harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

The assessment confirmed that there would be no harm to the significance of any other nearby designated heritage assets as a result of the proposed development.



 Site



0 1 km

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PROJECT TITLE  
Land West of Ratby, Leicestershire

FIGURE TITLE  
Site Location Plan

DRAWN BY FC PROJECT NO. MK0985  
CHECKED BY RW DATE 13/08/2024  
APPROVED BY RPS SCALE @ A4 1:25,000

FIGURE NO.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. In September 2023 Cotswold Archaeology was commissioned by Lagan Homes to undertake a Heritage Impact Assessment in respect of land west of Ratby, Hinckley, Leicestershire (hereafter referred to as 'the Site'). The Site occupies several fields which are currently in use as agricultural land, recreational land and coppiced woodland, and located to the north and the south of Burroughs Road (NGR: 450700, 305950; Fig. 1 and Photos 1-4). The Site is bounded to the north by residential development currently under construction, and a further adjacent site which has outline planning consent. Woodland parcels and open fields bound the Site to the north-west and the west. The southern edge of the Site coincides with Desford Lane whilst the western and north-western edges of Ratby lie beyond the eastern boundary of the development area.



**Photo 1** North-west facing view of Site's northern fields; see Fig. 12 for photo location.

1.2. An outline planning application is to be submitted for a mixed-use development within the Site, comprising approximately 470 dwellings, provision of land for community hub and primary school, and associated operations, infrastructure and open space. The Site forms part of a multi-phase residential development project, with Phase 1 having been granted planning permission in May 2021 (Planning ref: 20/00462/FUL) and Phase 2 in September 2023 (Planning ref. 22/00648/OUT).

1.3. This assessment forms part of the accompanying technical reports to be submitted with the application, assessing the impact of development on the archaeological and

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built heritage resource. The archaeological potential of the Site has been further informed by a geophysical survey carried out in support of the application (Phase Site Investigations 2024), the results of which are summarised within this assessment.



**Photo 2** West facing view of Site's northern fields; see Fig. 12 for photo location.



**Photo 3** East facing view of Site's southern fields; see Fig. 12 for photo location.

### ***Objectives and professional standards***

**1.4.** The composition and development of the historic environment within the Site and wider landscape are discussed in this report. A determination of the significance of any heritage assets located within the Site, and any heritage assets beyond the Site

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boundary that may potentially be affected by the development proposals, is presented. Any potential development effects upon the significance of these heritage assets (both adverse and/or beneficial) are then described.



**Photo 4** South-east facing view of Site's southern fields; see Fig. 12 for photo location.

1.5. Cotswold Archaeology is a Registered Organisation with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (ClfA). This report has been prepared in accordance with appropriate standards and guidance, including the 'Standard and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment' published by ClfA in 2014 and most recently updated in 2020. This states that, insofar as they relate to the determination of planning applications, heritage desk-based assessments should:

*'...enable reasoned proposals and decisions to be made [as to] whether to mitigate, offset or accept without further intervention [any identified heritage] impact' (ClfA 2020, 4).*

1.6. The 'Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment' (Historic England 2015), further clarifies that a desk-based assessment should:

*'...determine, as far as is reasonably possible from existing records, the nature, extent and significance of the historic environment within a specified area, and the impact of the proposed development on the significance of the*

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*historic environment, or will identify the need for further evaluation' (Historic England 2015, 3).*

### **Statute, policy and guidance context**

- 1.7. The Site is located in the Hinckley and Bosworth District. The current Local Plan covers the period between 2006 and 2026 and includes the following Development Plan Documents (DPD): Core Strategy, Site Allocations and Development Policies, Hinckley Town Centre Area Action Plan, and Earl Shilton and Barwell Area Action Plan. Key policies within the Site Allocations and Development Policies DPD (2016) include DM11: Protecting and Enhancing the Historic Environment; DM12: Heritage Assets; and DM13: Preserving the Borough's Archaeology.
- 1.8. The Local Plan is currently under review, with the consultation draft Local Plan 2020 - 2039 having been published in January 2021. Draft policies relevant to the historic environment comprise HE01: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment, HE02: Heritage Assets, and HE03: Preserving the Borough's Archaeology.
- 1.9. This assessment has been undertaken within the key statute, policy and guidance context presented within Table 1.1. The applicable provisions contained within these statute, policy and guidance documents are referred to, and discussed, as relevant, throughout the text. Fuller detail is provided in Appendix 1.

<b>Statute</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979)</b>	Act of Parliament providing for the maintenance of a schedule of archaeological remains of the highest significance, affording them statutory protection.
<b>Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act (1990)</b>	Act of Parliament placing a duty upon the Local Planning Authority (or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State) to afford due consideration to the preservation of Listed Buildings and their settings (under Section 66(1)), and Conservation Areas (under Section 72(2)), in determining planning applications.
<b>National Heritage Act 1983 (amended 2002)</b>	One of four Acts of Parliament providing for the protection and management of the historic environment, including the establishment of the Historic Monuments & Buildings Commission, now Historic England.
<b>Conservation Principles (Historic England 2008)</b>	Guidance for assessing heritage significance, with reference to contributing heritage values, in particular: <i>evidential</i> (archaeological), <i>historical</i> (illustrative and associative), <i>aesthetic</i> , and <i>communal</i> .
<b>National Planning Policy Framework (2023)</b>	Provides the English government's national planning policies and describes how these are expected to be applied within the planning system. Heritage is subject of Chapter 16 (page 57).

<b>Statute</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>National Planning Practice Guidance (updated July 2019)</b>	Guidance supporting the National Planning Policy Framework.
<b>Good Practice Advice in Planning: Note 2 (GPA2): Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (Historic England, 2015)</b>	Provides useful information on assessing the significance of heritage assets, using appropriate expertise, historic environment records, recording and furthering understanding, neglect and unauthorised works, marketing and design and distinctiveness.
<b>Good Practice Advice in Planning: Note 3 (GPA3): The Setting of Heritage Assets, Second Edition (Historic England, 2017)</b>	Provides guidance on managing change within the settings of heritage assets, including archaeological remains and historic buildings, sites, areas, and landscapes.
<b>Core Strategy DPD (Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council 2009) and Site Allocations and Development Policies DPD (Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council 2016)</b>	Comprises the local development plan (local plan), as required to be compiled, published and maintained by the local authority, consistent with the requirements of the NPPF (2023). Intended to be the primary planning policy document against which planning proposals within that local authority jurisdiction are assessed. Where the development plan is found to be inadequate, primacy reverts to the NPPF (2023).

**Table 1.1** Key statute, policy and guidance

## 2. METHODOLOGY

### *Data collection, analysis and presentation*

2.1. This assessment has been informed by a proportionate level of information sufficient to understand the archaeological potential of the Site, the significance of identified heritage assets, and any potential development effects. This approach is in accordance with the provisions of the NPPF (2023) and the guidance issued by ClfA (2020). The data has been collected from a wide variety of sources, summarised in Table 2.1.

Source	Data
<b>National Heritage List for England (NHLE)</b>	Current information relating to designated heritage assets, and heritage assets considered to be 'at risk'.
<b>Leicestershire Historic Environment Record (HER)</b>	Heritage sites and events records, Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) data, and other spatial data supplied in digital format (shapefiles) and hardcopy.
<b>Historic England Archive (HEA)</b>	Additional sites and events records, supplied in digital and hardcopy formats.
<b>Leicestershire Archives</b>	Historic mapping, historic documentation, and relevant published and grey literature.
<b>Historic England's Aerial Photograph Research Unit</b>	Vertical and oblique aerial photography ranging in date from the 1940s to present.
<b>Defra Data Services Platform (environment.data.gov.uk)</b>	LiDAR imagery and point cloud data, available from the Defra Data Services Platform
<b>Genealogist, Envirocheck, National Library of Scotland &amp; other cartographic websites</b>	Historic (Ordnance Survey and Tithe) mapping in digital format.
<b>British Geological Survey (BGS) website</b>	UK geological mapping (bedrock & superficial deposits) & borehole data.
<b>Previous archaeological investigations</b>	Including an Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment (Cotswold Archaeology 2022) and trial trench evaluation (Cotswold Archaeology 2023) undertaken on land within and adjacent to the north of the Site for application 22/00648/OUT.
<b>Phase Site Investigations 2024</b>	A geophysical survey was conducted within the Site by Phase Site Investigations in April 2024.

**Table 2.1** Key data sources

2.2. Prior to obtaining data from these sources, an initial analysis was undertaken in order to identify a relevant and proportionate study area. This analysis utilised industry-

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standard GIS software, and primarily entailed a review of recorded heritage assets in the immediate and wider landscape, using available datasets.

- 2.3. On this basis a 1km study area, measured from the boundaries of the Site, was considered sufficient to capture the relevant HER data, and provide the necessary context for understanding archaeological potential and heritage significance in respect of the Site. All of the spatial data held by the HER – the primary historic data repository – for the land within the study area, was requested. The records were analysed and further refined in order to narrow the research focus onto those of relevance to the present assessment. Not all HER records are therefore referred to, discussed or illustrated further within the body of this report, only those that are relevant. These are listed in a cross-referenced gazetteer provided at the end of this report (Appendix 2) and are illustrated on the figures accompanying this report.
- 2.4. A site visit was also undertaken as part of this assessment. The primary objectives of the site visit were to assess the Site's historic landscape context, including its association with any known or potential heritage assets, and to identify any evidence for previous truncation of the on-site stratigraphy. The site visit also allowed for the identification of any previously unknown heritage assets within the Site, and assessment of their nature, condition, significance and potential susceptibility to impact. The wider landscape was examined, as relevant, from accessible public rights of way.

### **Geophysical Survey**

- 2.5. A magnetic gradient geophysical survey was carried out in April 2024 by Phase Site Investigations. The survey was conducted across the Site, with some discrete areas inhibited by the presence of dense vegetation, field boundaries, spoil and manure heaps, play equipment, waterlogged ground and construction activity. The survey was considered to be reliable, with some areas of high magnetic disturbance attributed to the presence of modern material in the topsoil or sub-surface rather than low quality data.

### **Aerial photographs held at Historic England Archive**

- 2.6. Aerial photographs held at Historic England were examined as part of this assessment, ranging in date from 1948 to 2006. The aerial photographs show that the Site was not subject to development during the latter part of the 20th century and was largely associated with agricultural activity. Features noted, which are discussed

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in further detail below, appear to relate to such activity and correlate with historic mapping available for the Site.

### **LiDAR imagery**

- 2.7. Existing Environment Agency data was analysed with the specific aim of clarifying the extent any potential archaeological remains. Lidar DTM and DSM rasters were obtained from the DEFRA portal. The data was available at 1m resolution, for the extent of the site boundary. The rasters were downloaded as .tif files.
- 2.8. The Lidar .tif files contain British National Grid as the “native” coordinate reference system. The tiles were combined into a mosaic raster dataset using Esri ArcGIS 10.8.1 to cover the area of interest.
- 2.9. The resulting .tif was then processed using Relief Visualisation Toolbox (RVT) (Kokalj *et al.* 2019 and Zakšek *et al.* 2011) to create a number of visualisations including a hillshade, multi-hillshade, Slope, sky view factor, positive & negative openness and local relief model following Historic England guidelines (Historic England 2010) and guidance in Airborne Laser Scanning Raster Visualisation: A guide to good practice (Kokalj and Hesse 2017). The parameters were set to those appropriate for the topography of the area.
- 2.10. The output images from the RVT software were then imported into the ArcMap 10.8.2 where further settings manipulation was undertaken to enhance the visualization for archaeological feature detection.
- 2.11. DTM tile formed the basis within the desk-based assessment and is illustrated on Fig. 7.

### ***Assessment of heritage significance***

- 2.12. The significance of known and potential heritage assets within the Site, and any beyond the Site which may be affected by the proposed development, has been assessed and described, in accordance with paragraph 200 of the NPPF (2023), the guidance issued by CIIfA (2020), Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2 (Historic England 2015) and Advice Note 12: Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets (Historic England 2019). Determination of significance has been undertaken according to the industry-standard guidance on assessing heritage value provided within Conservation Principles (English Heritage 2008). This approach considers heritage significance to

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derive from a combination of discrete heritage values, principal amongst which are: i) evidential (archaeological) value, ii) historic (illustrative and associative) value, iii) aesthetic value, iv) communal value, amongst others. Further detail of this approach, including the detailed definition of those aforementioned values, as set out, and advocated, by Historic England, is provided in Appendix 1 of this report.

#### ***Assessment of potential development effects (benefit and harm)***

2.13. The present report sets out, in detail, the ways in which identified susceptible heritage assets might be affected by the proposals, as well as the anticipated extent of any such effects. Both physical effects, i.e. resulting from the direct truncation of archaeological remains, and non-physical effects, i.e. resulting from changes to the setting of heritage assets, have been assessed. With regard to non-physical effects or 'settings assessment', the five-step assessment methodology advocated by Historic England, and set out in the Second Edition of GPA3 (Historic England, 2017), has been adhered to (presented in greater detail in Appendix 1).

2.14. Identified effects upon heritage assets have been defined within broad 'level of effect' categories (Table 2.2 below). These are consistent with key national heritage policy and guidance terminology, particularly that of the NPPF (2023). This has been done in order to improve the intelligibility of the assessment results for purposes of quick reference and ready comprehension. These broad determinations of level of effect should be viewed within the context of the qualifying discussions of significance and impact presented in this report.

2.15. It should be noted that the overall effect of development proposals upon designated heritage assets are judged, bearing in mind both any specific harms or benefits (an approach consistent with the Court of Appeal judgement *Palmer v. Herefordshire Council & ANR* Neutral Citation Number [2016] EWCA Civ 1061).

2.16. In relation to non-designated heritage assets, the key applicable policy is paragraph 209 of the NPPF (2023), which states that:

*'The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated 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 [our emphasis].'*

2.17. Thus, with regard to non-designated heritage assets, this report seeks to identify the significance of the heritage asset(s) which may be affected, and the scale of any harm or loss to that significance.

Level of effect	Description	Applicable statute & policy
<b>Heritage benefit</b>	The proposals would better enhance or reveal the heritage significance of the heritage asset.	Enhancing or better revealing the significance of a heritage asset is a desirable development outcome in respect of heritage. It is consistent with key policy and guidance, including the NPPF paragraphs 196 and 212.
<b>No harm</b>	The proposals would preserve the significance of the heritage asset.	Preserving a Listed building and its setting is consistent with s66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act (1990). Preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area is consistent with s72 of the Act. Sustaining the significance of a heritage asset is consistent with paragraph 196 of the NPPF, and should be at the core of any material local planning policies in respect of heritage.
<b>Less than substantial harm (lower end)</b>	The proposals would be anticipated to result in a restricted level of harm to the significance of the heritage asset, such that the asset's contributing heritage values would be largely preserved.	In determining an application, this level of harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposals, as per paragraph 208 of the NPPF. Proposals involving change to a Listed building or its setting, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses, or change to the character or appearance of Conservation Areas, must also be considered within the context of Sections 7, 66(1) and 72(2) of the 1990 Act. <i>The provisions of the Act do not apply to the setting of Conservation Areas.</i>
<b>Less than substantial harm (upper end)</b>	The proposals would lead to a notable level of harm to the significance of the heritage asset. A reduced, but appreciable, degree of its heritage significance would remain.	<i>The provisions of the Act do not apply to the setting of Scheduled Monuments.</i> Proposals with the potential to physically affect a Scheduled Monument (including the ground beneath that monument) will be subject to the provisions of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979). <i>The provisions of the Act do not apply to the setting of Scheduled Monuments.</i> With regard to non-designated heritage assets, the scale of harm or loss should be weighed against the significance of the asset, in accordance with paragraph 209 of the NPPF.
<b>Substantial harm</b>	The proposals would very much reduce the heritage asset's significance or vitiate that significance altogether.	Paragraphs 205 - 208 of the NPPF would apply. Sections 7, 66(1) and 72(2) of the Planning Act (1990), and the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979), may also apply.

Level of effect	Description	Applicable statute & policy
		In relation to non-designated heritage assets, the scale of harm or loss should be weighed against the significance of the asset, in accordance with paragraph 209 of the NPPF.

**Table 2.2** Summary of level of effect categories (benefit and harm) referred to in this report in relation to heritage assets, and the applicable statute and policy.

2.18. The July 2019 revision of the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) defines non-designated heritage assets as those identified as such in publicly accessible lists or documents provided by the plan-making body. Where these sources do not specifically define assets as *non-designated heritage assets*, they will be referred to as *heritage assets* for the purpose of this report. The assessment of *non-designated heritage assets* and *heritage assets* will be equivalent in this report, in line with industry standards and guidance on assessing significance and impact. They may not, however, carry equivalent weight in planning as set out within the provisions of the NPPF.

#### ***Limitations of the assessment***

2.19. This assessment is principally a desk-based study and has utilised secondary information derived from a variety of sources, only some of which have been directly examined for the purpose of this assessment. The assumption is made that this data, as well as that derived from secondary sources, is reasonably accurate. The records held by HER and HEA are not a record of all surviving heritage assets, but a record of the discovery of a wide range of archaeological and historical components of the historic environment. The information held within these repositories is not complete and does not preclude the subsequent discovery of further elements of the historic environment that are, at present, unknown.

2.20. A selection of archival material pertaining to the Site and study area was consulted in person at the Leicestershire Archives on Tuesday 24th May 2022 (Cotswold Archaeology 2022). There may be other relevant material held by the National Archives, other local repositories, and in private collections, although sufficient information to respond to the scope of this assessment was available in from the resources consulted.

2.21. A walkover survey was conducted within the Site, which was undertaken in dry and clear weather conditions on the 15th of November 2023 and 24th April 2024. Access

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was afforded across all areas of the Site, although such observations are limited since archaeological remains can survive below-ground with no visible surface indications of their presence. There is an element of uncertainty over the nature, condition, frequency and extent of the potential buried archaeological resource, which may be clarified through intrusive investigation. There was also sufficient access to heritage assets in the wider landscape, including the Ratby Conservation Area and Listed Buildings within, to assess likely impacts upon the significance of the assets due to changes to their setting.

**2.22.** The best resolution of digital terrain model Lidar imagery of the Site, available from the EA, is 1m.

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### 3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

#### *Landscape context*

3.1. The overall size of the Site is c. 32.5ha and comprises 13 fields located both to the north and the south of Burroughs Road; however, several parcels along the west side will remain undeveloped. The Site currently includes ten fields in use for arable cultivation, one field in use for recreation, one field in use as meadow and one field of coppiced woodland. Within and bounding the Site there are a number of mature hedgerows. The Site is intersected by several public footpaths, one running through the north-east field, with a second cutting through the middle of the Site and one running approximately north-south across the fields located south of Burroughs Road.

3.2. To the east and south-east of the Site lies the historic core of Ratby and the modern development (built, in construction, and granted consent) to the north and south. To the west and south of the Site lies agricultural land interspersed with patches of woodland.

3.3. The Site lies on undulating topography which slopes from north to south; the land in the north of Burroughs Road slopes from 109m to 102m above Ordnance Datum (aOD), whilst the fields south of Burroughs Road slopes from 98m to 85m aOD.

3.4. The geological bedrock in the Site varies. The part of the Site to the north of Burroughs Road broadly includes Edwalton Member, a mudstone sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 228 to 237 million years ago in the Triassic Period. This area also comprises of a thin band of Cotgrave Sandstone Member, a sandstone sedimentary bedrock and then Gunthorpe Member, a mudstone sedimentary bedrock, both of which were also formed in the Triassic period. The part of the Site to the south of Burroughs Road includes geological horizons of the Gunthorpe Member (BGS 2023).

3.5. Superficial deposits within the Site are also mixed, with Alluvium deposits of clay, silt, sand and gravel deposits with associated River Terrace Deposits associated with the Rothley Brook extending north-south through the western part of the Site. These formed up to 2-3 million years ago in the Quaternary Period when the local environment was dominated by rivers. In the north and east of the Site lies Thrussington Member, Diamicton deposit which formed up to 2 million years ago

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during the Quaternary Period when the local environment was dominated by ice age conditions.

### ***Designated heritage assets***

3.6. There are no designated heritage assets within the Site, however, a number of designated assets are situated within the Study Area including Ratby Bury Camp Scheduled Monument (Fig. 12, A) c. 380m west of the Site, and Ratby Conservation Area (Fig. 12, B) which borders the Site to the east. Within the Conservation Area there are three Listed Buildings: the Grade II\* Listed Church of St Philip and St James (Fig. 12, C), the Grade II Orchard Cottage (Fig. 12, D), and the Grade II Listed War Memorial (Fig. 12, E). An additional Grade II Listed Building, Martinshaw Lodge (Fig. 4, F), lies c.800m north-east of the Site.

3.7. These assets are shown on Fig. 12 and are discussed further in Section 6 where relevant in terms of potential development effects.

### ***Previous archaeological investigations***

3.8. A considerable amount of archaeological fieldwork has previously been carried out within the 1km study area. Previous investigations, which included assessments as well as a range of intrusive works, such as watching briefs, evaluations and excavations, are illustrated on Fig. 2. Those of relevance to this assessment are listed in Appendix 2 and the results are discussed below.

3.9. As mentioned above a geophysical survey was conducted across the Site by Phase Site Investigations in April 2024 in support of the current planning application. The majority of the anomalies identified by the survey were interpreted as relating to modern material and agricultural activity (including ridge and furrow) and possible geological variations. Several anomalies were classed as being of uncertain origin, for which an archaeological derivation cannot be ruled out, but in the majority of cases were thought to potentially relate to drainage features or modern/agricultural activity and natural features (Phase Site Investigations 2024).

3.10. A number of previous investigations have occurred within various parts of the Site's northern fields as part of the investigation works for the Phase 1 development (Planning ref: 20/00462/FUL). This includes a desk-based assessment (George 2005; Fig. 2, **E1**), a geophysical survey (Sabin and Donaldson 2005; Fig. 2, **E2**), and 2014 fieldwalking (Browning 2014; Fig. 2, **E3**). The geophysical survey identified several instances of potential ridge and furrow within this part of the Site, as well as

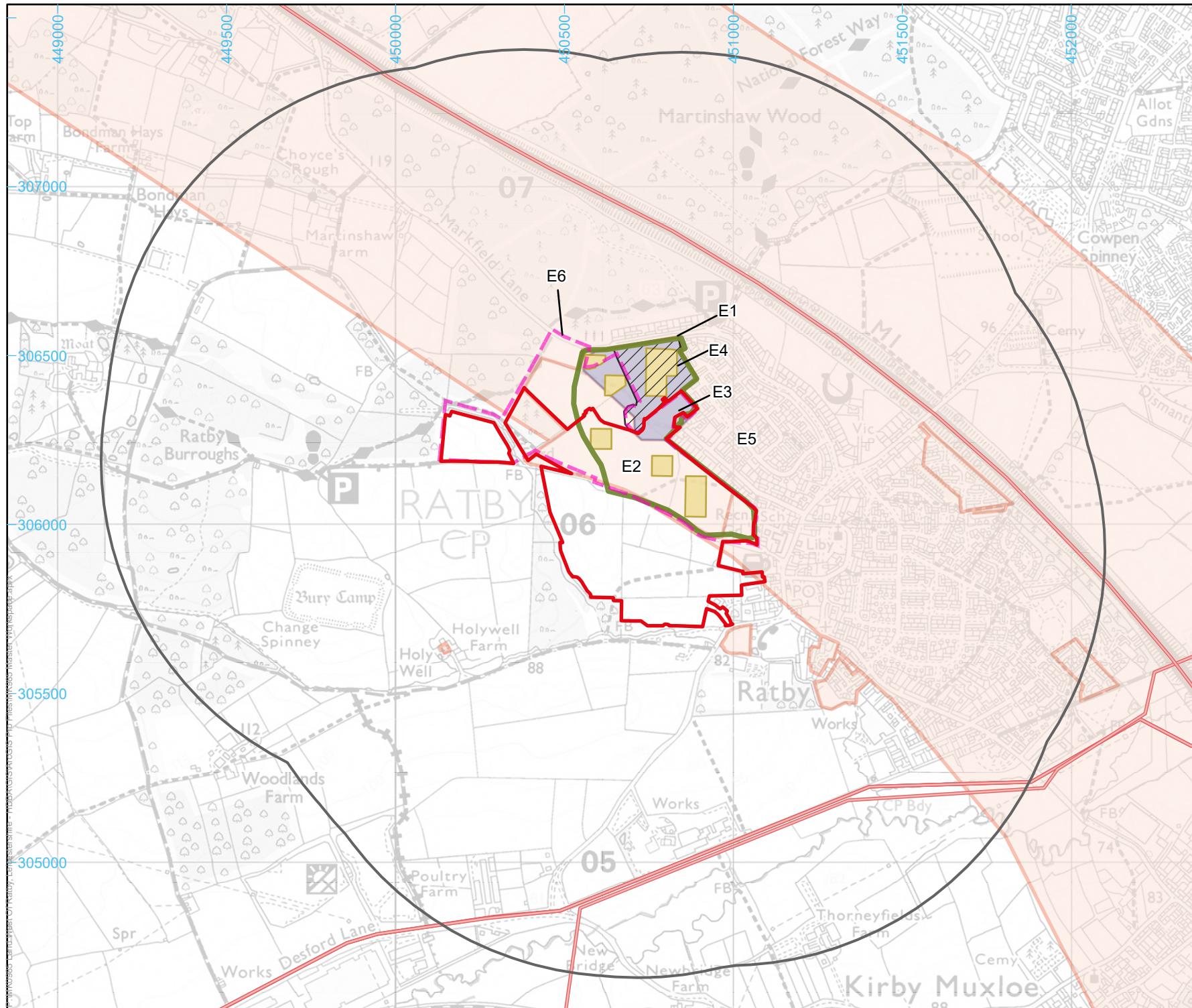
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a possible field boundary, and the field walking identified two medieval pottery sherds and a low-level scatter of post-medieval pottery. Adjacent to the Site boundary, a trial trench evaluation was undertaken in 2021 as part of the investigation for Phase 1 (Archaeological Research Services 2021; Fig. 2, **E4**).

- 3.11. For the Phase 2 development (Planning ref. 22/00648/OUT), a Heritage Impact Assessment was carried out on the land within and immediately adjacent to the north of the Site, with the southern part included in the wider study area for the assessment (Cotswold Archaeology 2022; Fig. 2, **E6**). The DBA was followed by a geophysical survey (Phase Site investigations 2023) and trial trench evaluation (Cotswold Archaeology 2023) which were conducted within the application area, just to the north of the current site (Fig. 2). The evaluation recorded a small number of archaeological features, including a Late Iron Age ditch terminus, a Late Iron Age/Early Roman ditch and a small undated ditch.
- 3.12. The study area for the 2022 Lidar analysis project as part of the widening of junctions 21-30 on the M1 falls within part of the Site's northern fields (Birmingham Archaeology 2007; Fig. 2, **E5**). Any features identified as part of this investigation are discussed in the historic background below.
- 3.13. Additional investigations within the study area include fieldwalking, desk-based assessments, watching briefs, excavations, and building surveys. The results of these are discussed in the periodic discussion below, where of relevance to the understanding of the Site's archaeological potential, detailed in Appendix 2, and shown on Fig. 2.

#### ***Early Prehistoric: Palaeolithic (c. 950,000 – 10,000 BC) and Mesolithic (c. 10,000 – 4,000)***

- 3.14. Hominid and human activity throughout the Palaeolithic period was influenced by successive periods of cold glacial and warm inter-glacial climatic conditions, and small bands of hunter-gatherers which exploited resources within a wide variety of landscape types. Many settlements were in floodplains due to dependencies on scavenging and/or hunting for meat and foraging for vegetable foods (Groote *et al.* 2017). One of the principal foci of human settlement for much of the Palaeolithic appears to have been the river valley, in this case the Soar Valley, and therefore river terraces indicate the spatial and temporal extent of Palaeolithic settlement (Cooper 2006).



- Site
- Study Area
- 2005 Desk-Based Assessment
- 2005 Geophysics
- 2014 Fieldwalking
- 2021 Trial Trench evaluation
- Cotswold Archaeology 2022
- Additional previous investigations

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FIGURE TITLE  
Previous Investigations

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3.15. The Mesolithic period is defined by the gradual increase in temperature following the Devensian glacial period and saw a change in the practices of early humans with the development of agricultural technologies. Early prehistoric remains are scarce within Leicestershire and are largely focused along river valleys and the associated floodplains (Cooper 2006).

3.16. There are no known Palaeolithic remains within the study area, however a number of Mesolithic artefacts have been identified, indicating evidence of seasonal occupation. This includes a Mesolithic flint scatter and pebble hammer (Fig. 3, 1) respectively at c. 1km and 620m north of the Site, and two flint microliths (Fig. 3, 2) c. 590m west of the Site. The flint scatter (1), located slightly beyond the study area, was identified during fieldwalking in 1983 and comprised two scrapers, four retouched flints, six core blades, ten rejuvenated core flakes, six blades, seven snapped and retouched blades, two end scrapers, five blades and two microburin, suggestive of a flint production site. This scatter was identified in an area which contains superficial deposits of sand and gravel, indicating a likely historic floodplain. Similar superficial deposits have been recorded within the Site, and thus there is a potential for similar deposits to be located within the Site.

***Late Prehistoric: Neolithic (c. 4,000 BC – 2,500 BC), Bronze Age (c. 2,500 – 700 BC) and Iron Age (c. 700 BC – AD 43)***

3.17. The transition from the Mesolithic to Neolithic period coincided with the development of agricultural practices and more established settlement patterns. A number of agricultural features are recorded within river terraces locally, although environmental evidence suggests that in the early Neolithic period much of the area likely comprised woodland, with clearance in the later Neolithic period leading to additional areas of settlement (Cooper 2006).

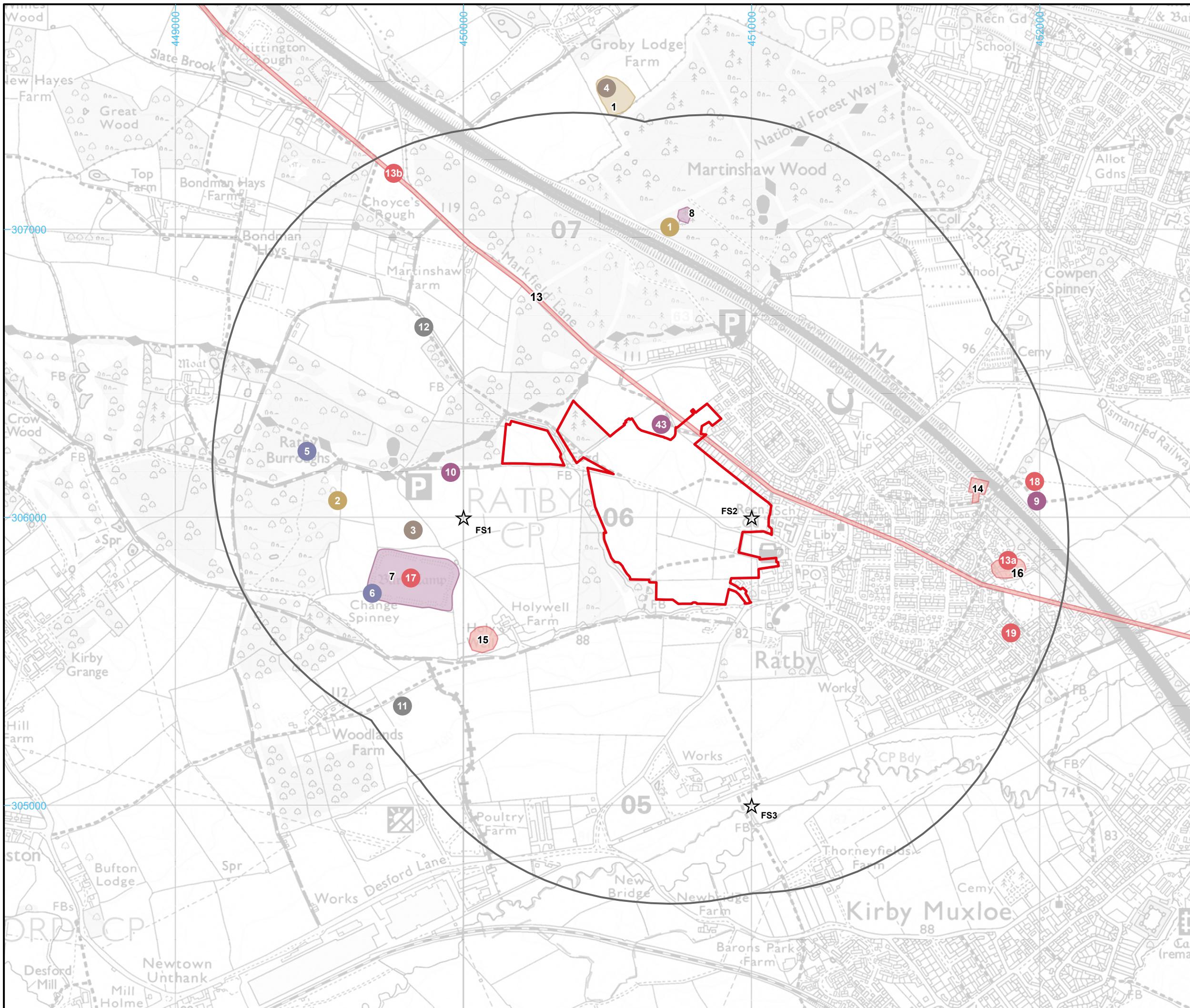
3.18. A number of Neolithic and Bronze Age artefacts have been recorded within the study area or immediately beyond, including a Neolithic axe (Fig. 3, 3) c. 390m south-west of the Site, two Neolithic or Bronze Age flints (Fig. 3, 4) c. 1.1km north; a flint knife (Fig. 3, 5) c. 670m west, and Bronze Age pottery from Ratby Camp (Fig. 3, 6) c. 830m to the south-west. However, only settlement remains of Iron Age date have been identified within the study area.

3.19. A univallate hillfort known as Bury Camp (Fig. 3, 7) is located c. 360m south-west of the Site. Slight univallate hillforts are defined as enclosures of various shapes,

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generally between 1ha and 10ha in size, situated on or close to hilltops and defined by a single line of earthworks, the scale of which is relatively small (Historic England 2018a). Hillforts are generally defined as defended enclosures comprising a system of earthwork bank and ditches and would have often included wooden stakes forming ramparts. They are most commonly associated with the Iron Age period (Historic England 2018a), although many were later reused with multiple phases of activity present. Bury Camp hillfort is rectangular in form with banks and ditches and four entrances, one of which is the original entrance (VCH 1907), and unusually is noted as not having extensive views from within and appears not to have been laid out with strategic positioning in mind (McWhirr 1971). This could indicate that the enclosure was set within woodland, so long distance views would not have been possible and as such they were not planned for. The highest point of the camp is c. 112m aOD and the valley to the south-east is at c. 75m aOD. Sherds of Bronze Age pottery (6) have been located within the hillfort, suggesting possible early use.

- 3.20. The trial trench evaluation undertaken immediately to the north of the Site as part of the Phase 2 development identified two ditch features containing a small assemblage of pottery of Late Iron Age or Early Roman date (Fig. 3, **43**). The ditches were interpreted as forming part of a field system within the agricultural hinterland of a minor settlement such as a farmstead (Cotswold Archaeology 2023).
- 3.21. Further Iron Age features within the study area include a possible enclosure (Fig. 3, **8**) located c. 660m north of the Site. This enclosure was identified through cropmarks on aerial photography and assigned a rough Iron Age date by the HER due to its morphology; the date however has not been confirmed and Historic England identify this as a medieval enclosure. A number of additional undated features have been identified through cropmark evidence. These, like the above-mentioned enclosure, may be prehistoric in date, however, could also be dated to Roman or medieval periods. This includes two circular enclosures (Fig. 3, **11** and **12**) c. 940m south-west and 430m north-east of the Site respectively, the latter of which has been identified by the HEA as a ring ditch.
- 3.22. Additional Iron Age remains within the study area include the findspots of pottery sherds (Fig. 3, **9**), c. 920m east, and a bridle bit (Fig. 3, **10**), c. 180m west.



-  Site
-  Study Area
-  Mesolithic
-  Neolithic
-  Prehistoric
-  Later Prehistoric
-  Roman
-  Undated
-  Find Spot

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## PROJECT TITLE

## FIGURE TITLE

# Selected non-designated assets: Prehistoric to Roman

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3.23. Given the identified remains within surrounding landscape, there is some potential for prehistoric remains to survive within the Site. If present these will likely comprise features associated with low level agricultural activity or rural settlement.

#### **Roman (AD 43 – AD 410)**

3.24. Settlements of Roman date are usually more extensive in scale than those of later prehistory, with a far greater variety of material culture (pottery, worked bone, metalwork and glass etc.); there is also widespread use of stone, brick and tile for building. Major re-organisation of the countryside occurred throughout the 1st century BC to 2nd century. The changes from the second half of the 1st century may have been a consequence of the establishment of the Roman road network and the growth of both large towns, together with more localised market and crafting centres, especially near river crossings.

3.25. The Roman period in the wider area is largely characterised by rural settlements and larger urban towns, regional scale craft/industrial production and an expansive network of roads (Cooper 2006). Locally, the most important focus of the Roman period is the development of the Roman town at Leicester (*Ratae*) (location not illustrated), c. 7.5km to the south-east of the Site, and its associated hinterland.

3.26. The HER records the route of a potential Roman road leading towards Leicester (Fig. 3, **13**) which extends through the north-west part of the Site. Excavation in 1954/5 identified earthworks of a road from Whittington Grange Farm to Markfield Lane, north of the Site, with an evaluation dating the road to the Roman period (HER ref: ML4345, full report could not be accessed). Two additional areas (Fig. 3, **13a** and **13b**) have been recorded by the HER along the route where evidence of a hollow way and metal surfaces, thought to be the Roman road, have been identified. However, more recent evaluations along the route of the road did not find any evidence of a road or any other Roman remains. The route of the potential road crosses through one of the areas subject to the 2005 geophysical survey (Fig. 2, **E2**). No evidence of the Roman road was identified; however, this area was subject to ferrous disturbance through magnetic material which may have masked the response of the road (Archaeological Surveys 2005). One of the trenches in the 2021 trial trench evaluation (Fig. 2, **E4**; (Archaeological Research Services 2021) and three of the trenches excavated in the 2023 trial trench evaluation (Fig. 3; Cotswold Archaeology 2023) were also located along this route and revealed no evidence of a Roman road, or any evidence of wider

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Roman activity. The exact alignment of the road remains unknown, and the alignment through the Site is not supported by archaeological evidence.

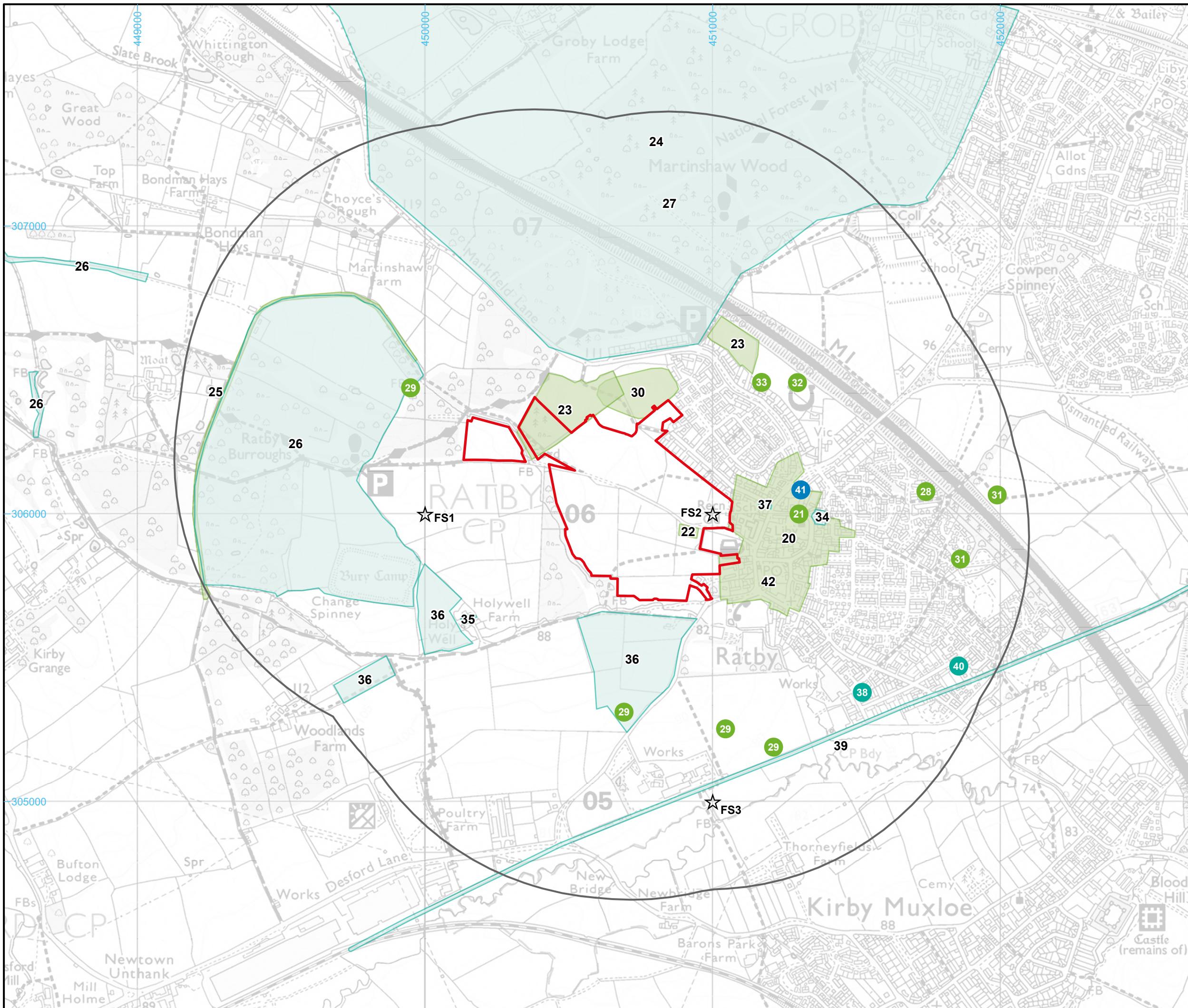
- 3.27. Confirmed Roman period remains have however been recorded within the study area. This includes a settlement (Fig. 3, **14**) identified c. 720m east of the Site during a watching brief (Coward 2010). Ditches, pits, gullies, and postholes were uncovered alongside the presence of Roman building material, suggesting the presence of structures. Evidence of pottery and a tessellated floor (Fig. 3, **15**) were also identified c. 600m south-west of the Site, suggesting further evidence for settlement.
- 3.28. Additional known remains include artefactual evidence comprising two brooches and 21 sherds of pottery recovered from a watching brief in 2001 (Hunt 2005; Fig. 3, **16**) c. 800m east of the Site, and pottery sherds (Fig. 3, **17**, **18**, and **19**) located c. 750m west of the Site within Bury Camp (**7**), c. 940m east of the Site, and c. 900m south-east of the Site, respectively.
- 3.29. Numerous finds are also recorded by the Portable Antiquities Scheme, such as coins, pottery, and brooches (PAS; Fig. 3, **FS1**, **FS2**, and **FS3**). These are assigned a 4-figure grid reference indicating their general location. These finds have likely been deposited from the Roman settlement as a result of transient movement and later agricultural activities.

#### ***Early medieval and medieval (AD 410 – 1540)***

- 3.30. A number of archaeological features pertaining to early medieval and medieval land use have been identified within the environs of the Site. This includes medieval settlement, agricultural land, and parkland. These are discussed by land use below.

##### ***Settlement***

- 3.31. Placename evidence indicates that there was a settlement at Ratby in the early medieval period. The name *Ratby* has two possible origins, one being that the Old English interpretation stands for ‘the earthworks enclosure called *Ratae*’ suggesting a pre-Roman origin for the name and connection with Ratby Bury Camp (Fig. 3, **7**). The other interpretation is that the ‘by’ suffix indicated Danish origins, meaning ‘Rota’s Settlement’ (University of Leicester Archaeological Services 2005). Indeed, the Domesday survey of 1086 records a settlement of 10 villagers and five smallholders, indicating some level of small settlement within the early medieval period.



- Site
- Study Area
- Medieval
- Post-Medieval
- Modern
- Find Spot

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3.32. The Domesday survey records the settlement as comprising six ploughlands (two Lords teams and four men's teams) and a mill (Powell-Smith 2024). The settlement of Ratby (and likely the Site) fell within the land of Lord Hugh de Grandsmenil. The HER records the extent of the medieval and post-medieval village (Fig. 4, **20**) as bordering the eastern edge of the Site. This extent has been determined through cartographic evidence, although it is likely the early medieval and medieval elements were smaller in size, with some expansion occurring in the post-medieval period

3.33. Evidence for surviving medieval remains within the settlement of Ratby is scarce however, a timber framed building of possible medieval date (Fig. 4, **21**) c. 230m east of the Site, and the Church of St Phillip and St James (Fig. 12, **C**) c. 220m east of the Site, retaining 13th, 14th and 15th century elements are known to survive within the study area.

3.34. During the 11th century Ratby and the surrounding land was, along with land at Bromkinsthorpe c. 7km east of the Site (location not reproduced), under the ownership of Lord Hugh de Grentemesnil, who passed the lands to the Earl of Leicester in the 12th century. By the 13th century there is evidence of two manors in Bromkinsthorpe but no evidence of a manor in Ratby has been identified.

3.35. A possible moated house has been recorded by the HER (Fig. 4, **22**) within the east of the Site. This feature has been identified through cropmark evidence, and whilst were often associated with high status dwellings within the medieval period, there is no evidence to suggest this comprised a manor. The site walkover survey within this part of the Site did not identify any aboveground traces of the possible moated site (Photo 5). The Lidar analysis (Fig. 6) also does not show any traces of the possible moated site, and no anomalies potentially corresponding to the feature were identified in this part of the Site by the geophysical survey (Phase Site Investigations 2024). Historic aerial images viewed at the Historic England Archive also did not show any features within the Site which could be interpreted as a moated site.



**Photo 5** East facing view of the supposed moated site location

3.36. Fieldwalking within the Site to the north of Burroughs Road, north of the supposed moated feature in the 1990s (no source available) found no medieval remains. The manuring scatter (Fig. 4, **30**) within this part of the Site only contained two sherds of medieval pottery; the quantity of finds recovered is thus not consistent with that which might be expected for a settlement site. It is noted within the HER record that the interpretation of the cropmarks (not visible during the walkover survey) may have mischaracterised the feature, which could instead be associated with agricultural use or a natural feature in the landscape.

#### *Agricultural land*

3.37. The land surrounding the village comprised its agricultural hinterland, which as recorded in the Domesday Survey was partially owned by the Lord of the Manor. Medieval settlements were typically surrounded by a three-field open field system.

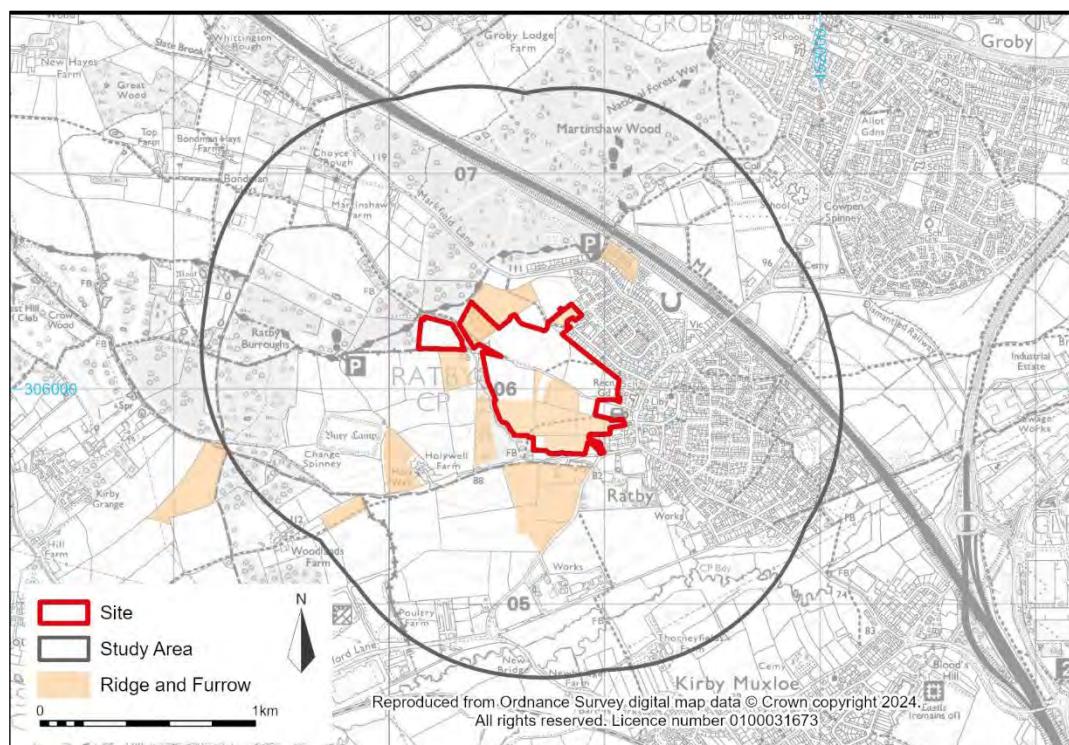
3.38. Several areas of possible medieval ridge and furrow are identified by the HEA (Fig. 4), one of which lies partially with the north of the Site (Fig. 4, **23**) and was also recorded by the 2005 geophysical survey of the Site (Archaeological Surveys 2005). The morphology of the ridge and furrow within this part of the Site, exhibiting a straight form, indicates a possible post-medieval date. Within the west this area, the depicted ridge and furrow are of a less structured and straight form than those in the north, giving an indication of an earlier date, possibly medieval.

3.39. Other ridge and furrow features are depicted by Lidar imagery (Fig. 6) spreading across several fields included within the south part of the Site but are not included within the HEA records (Fig. 5). The morphology of the ridge and furrow across this

area (Fig. 6), curving to the headlands of the fields, is consistent with that of medieval ridge and furrow remains. The Site visit identified that the ridge and furrow within the south of the Site survives as well-defined earthworks. Further discussion on the significance of the ridge and furrow is presented in Section 4, below.

### *Parkland*

3.40. A medieval deer park, known as Burgh Park (Fig. 4, **24**) is located within the study area, c. 190m north of the Site. Burgh Park was first mentioned in 1270 and is mentioned up until 1512 (Ball 1982). The full extent of the park is unknown as it was incorporated into a later post-medieval park, known as The Burroughs and the area recorded within the HER and shown on Fig. 4 is taken from the 1773 enclosure map (Fig. 7), thus likely representing the post-medieval extent.



**Fig. 5 Distribution of ridge and furrow across the landscape, as recorded by this assessment and Historic England Archive.**



**Fig. 6 Lidar 2022 data 1m resolution DTM/ DSM multi hillshade, showing surviving ridge and furrow earthworks**

3.41. A second post-medieval park (Fig. 4, 26) known as Groby park is also located within the study area, c. 280m west of the Site. This park is also thought to have originated as an earlier medieval park which was smaller in size. As an associated medieval park pale, located between c. 280m and 1km from the north-west to the south-west of the Site (Fig. 4, 25), survives along the west side of the wood and a wood bank (Fig. 4, 27) has been identified c. 660m north of the Site, within Burgh Park which is also thought to date to the medieval period. Groby Park lies within area of Charnwood Forest, and it is possible that prior to the enclosure of this land into a park the area formed part of Hereswode Forest, the Royal Hunting Forest of Leicester, however this has not been confirmed. From the mid-12th century onwards, the Forest was broken up into smaller hunting reserves/deer parks, in which deer were kept specifically for hunting (Leicester Mercury 1993), such as that at Groby Park.

3.42. An earthwork bank (Fig. 4, 28) is also recorded c. 675m east of the Site. This is noted in the HER as medieval in date, marked on landscape maps and likely a trackway; however, given its location next to a Roman settlement (Fig. 3, 14), there is a potential that this feature is of Roman date.

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3.43. Additional medieval remains within the study area include findspots including coins (Fig. 4, 29) c. 230m north-west and between c. 360m and 600m south of the Site, a manuring scatter (Fig. 4, 30) c. 100m north of the Site, pottery (Fig. 4, 31) c. 770m and 900m east of the Site, a horse pendant (Fig. 5, 32) c. 550m north-east of the Site, and a papal bull (Fig. 4, 33) c. 560m north-east of the Site. The manuring scatter contained a large quantity of post-medieval pottery, post-medieval clay pipe fragments and building material. Only two sherds of medieval pottery were recovered from this manuring spread, suggesting that it is likely post-medieval in date. Additional artefactual finds are recorded as part of the PAS (Fig. 4, FS1, FS2, FS3) and are detailed in Appendix 2.

3.44. During the medieval period the Site was located on the periphery of the medieval village of Ratby and potentially contained a medieval moated Site although no definitive evidence of this has been identified. Evidence of medieval ridge and furrow is present within the Site, and thus it appears to have formed part of the agricultural hinterland associated with the settlement. There is potential for settlement remains in the south of the Site to be present, as well as a potential for agricultural remains and artefacts.

#### ***Post-medieval and modern***

3.45. During the post-medieval period the Site and study area were subject to enclosure, both in the form of agricultural field enclosure, and post-medieval parks (Fig. 4, 24 and 26). The parks themselves were later converted to agricultural land, with the exception of a small part of Groby Park which became Martinshaw Wood. A Hunting Lodge (Fig. 12, F) was constructed on the southern edge of Groby Park in c. 1880 for the Earl of Stamford and Warrington, indicating the continued use of the park at this point. The land within the Site and the majority of the study area was enclosed into small irregular shaped fields, with subsequent field boundary changes, as evidenced in the historic cartography as disused below.

3.46. Two 18th century farms are located within the study area including Nook Farm (Fig. 4, 34) located within the village core, c. 270m east of the Site, and Holywell Farm (Fig. 4, 35) c. 500m south-west of the Site. Holywell Farm is located next to a spring and small pond known as 'Holywell'. Evidence of post-medieval agricultural activities is also provided through surviving blocks of ridge and furrow, identified in this area by the HEA (Fig. 4, 36 and Fig. 5). Additional post-medieval features within the study

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area include the ‘site of’ a windmill (Fig. 4, **40**) c. 880m south-east of the Site, and a number of unstratified artefacts as recorded by the PAS (Fig. 4, **FS1** and **FS2**).

- 3.47. The Enclosure Act of 1773 resulted in many tenant farmers losing their livelihood, creating an opportunity for new employment (Hinckley Borough Council 2013). Many people within Ratby sought employment as Framework Knitters in the hosiery industry, with the village becoming a major centre for the industry in the 18th and 19th centuries.
- 3.48. The Enclosure map of Ratby was produced in 1773 (Fig. 7). This shows the Site to be made up of 19 parcels of land under mixed ownership. There is no indication of the land use in this map, however it appears that the Site was under agricultural cultivation. The Site was not covered by the Tithe Map for Ratby.
- 3.49. Two late 19th century workshops (Fig. 4, **37**) were located at the junction of Stamford Street and Main Street, c. 100m east of the Site. A further workshop (Fig. 4, **38**) is recorded c. 610m south-east of the Site.
- 3.50. The establishment of the Leicester to Swannington Railway in 1846 (Fig. 4, **39**), running north-east to south-west c. 650m south of the Site, encouraged more hosiers into the village and by 1852 there were seven hosiers in Ratby (Hinckley Borough Council 2013). The railway also encouraged coal merchants to the area and a number of quarries were expanded in Groby, none of which fall within the study area. As a result of these profitable industries, the village expanded through the 19th and 20th centuries.

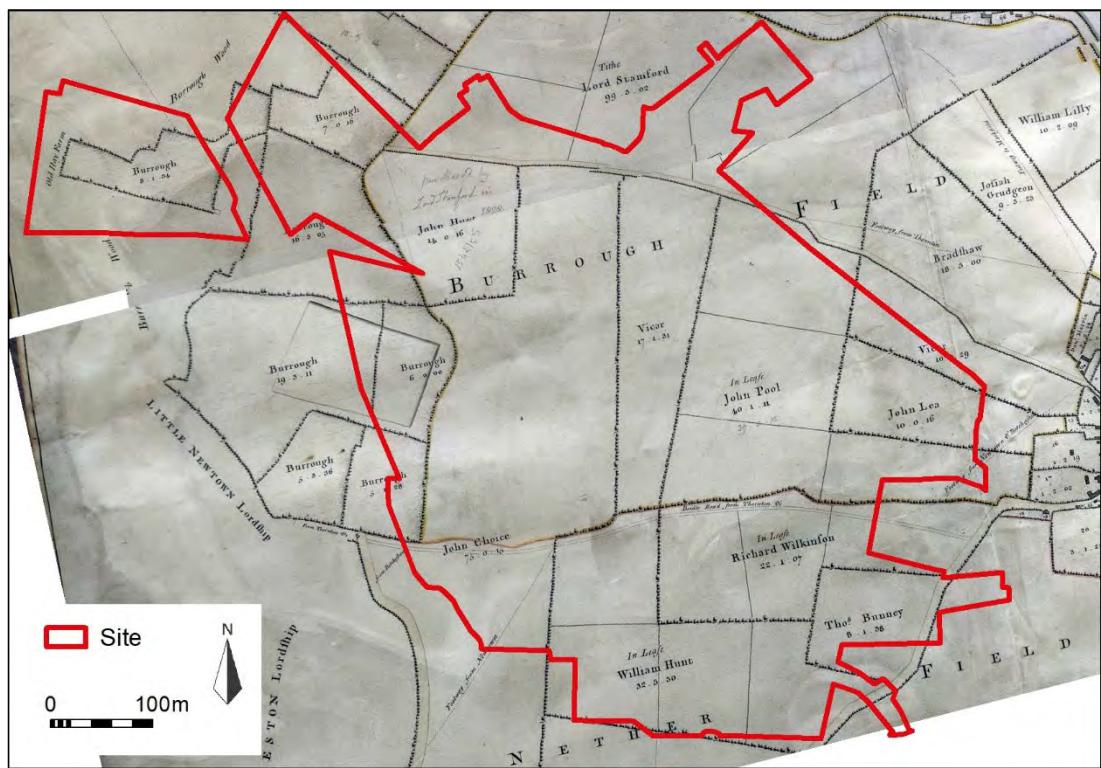


Fig. 7 Extract of the 1773 Enclosure Map of Ratby; courtesy of Leicestershire Archive (DG20/MA/260/1)

3.51. The field boundaries within the Site had been altered by the 1885 Ordnance Survey Map (Fig. 8), which shows fields were amalgamated to create larger fields. The boundaries that were lost illustrate a change in farming practices in the 19th century from the 18th century. A change in use is observed within the Site on the 1930s Ordnance Survey Map, where two areas of Allotment Gardens are depicted along the western Site's boundaries, to the north and the south of Burroughs Road (Fig. 9).

3.52. By the turn of the 21st century, the textile factories and the rail line had closed. The village became instead became a commuter village for people employed within Leicester, with modern expansion concentrated on the south-eastern extent of the study area. Modern developments of archaeological interest within the study area include the Grade II Listed War Memorial (Fig. 12, **E**), a Second World War spigot mortar emplacement (Fig. 4, **41**) c. 250m east of the Site, and a cinema (Fig. 4, **42**) 150m east of the Site.

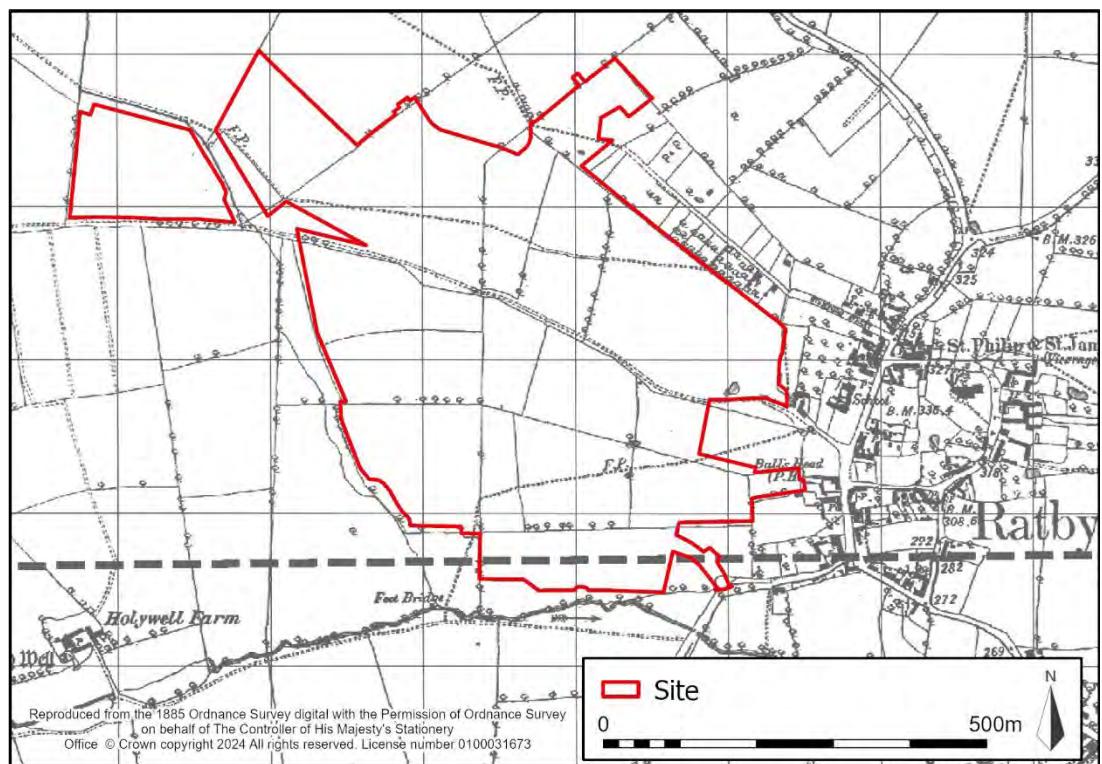


Fig. 8 Extract of the 1885 OS Map

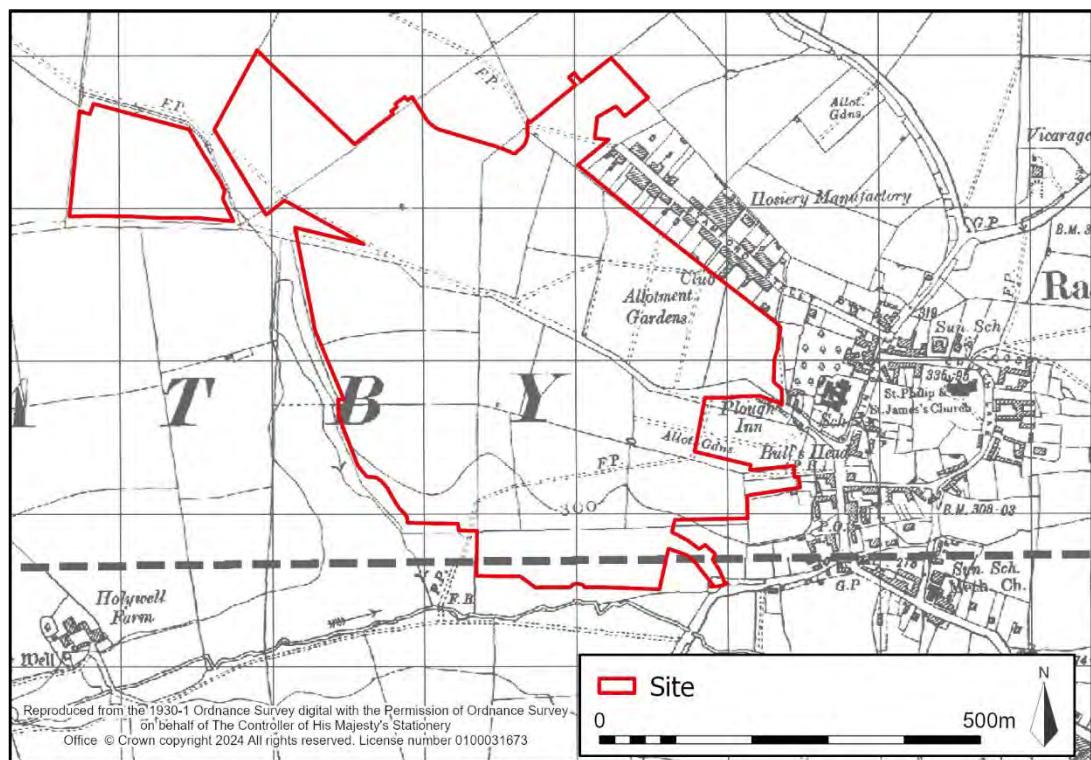


Fig. 9 Extract of the 1930-31 OS Map

3.53. The pattern of boundary loss continued into the 1970s, where a further field boundary is recorded to have been removed within the Site area spreading north of Burroughs

Road (Fig. 10). No further changes are depicted within the Site, however, the parcels of land in the along the western Site's boundaries, to the north and the south of Burroughs Road, are no longer in use for allotments but have reverted to arable farmland, which was its likely use during the medieval and post-medieval periods.

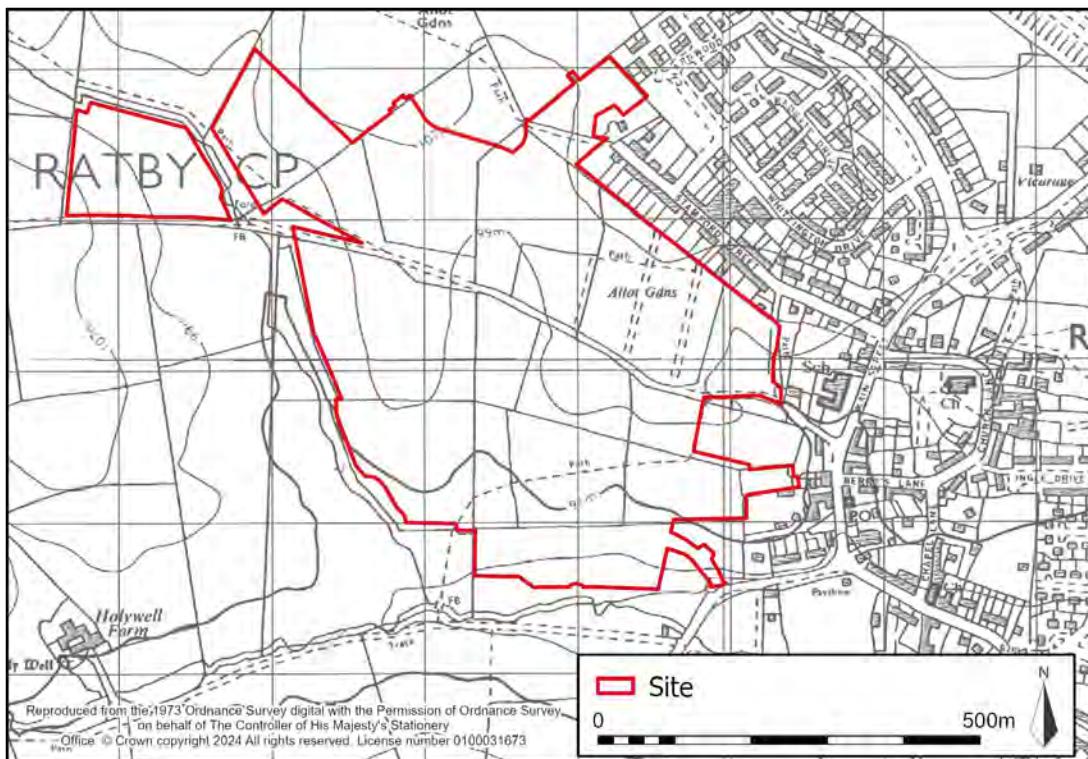


Fig. 10 Extract of the 1973 OS Map

3.54. No further changes are recorded within the Site, which can be regarded as mostly comprising 20th century post-enclosure farmland as per the Historic Landscape Characterisation Data supplied by the HER (Fig. 11).