

A Proposal for an Archaeological Evaluation and Conservation of Holly Hayes Farm, Whitwick, Coalville, Leicestershire

Ordnance Survey Grid Reference: SK443154

APRIL 2008

Summary

*At the request of the Friends of Holly Hayes Wood * (FHHW), Witan Archaeology visited the site of Holly Hayes Farm to examine the demolished buildings that comprise the farm. After consultation with members of the FHHW, Witan Archaeology agreed to submit a proposal to evaluate the site using archaeological techniques. Witan Archaeology has also offered to undertake a programme of site clearance and conservation of the earliest remnant structures at Holly Hayes Farm.*

** The Friends of Holly Hayes Wood are a Community Group comprising of local residents, who aim to set-up a social enterprise to maintain and improve Holly Hayes Wood, Coalville Meadows and Forest Rock Wood.*

1 Introduction

- a) The archaeological evaluation and subsequent conservation work would be carried out under the supervision of Stephen and Paul Saunders, (Witan Archaeology). Witan Archaeology has the responsibility for recording both archaeological features and associated finds. Witan Archaeology will also undertake post excavation analysis if required.
- b) Interim reports will be produced after each phase of the evaluation is completed and submitted to the FHHW.
- c) The evaluations will be carried out in phases as described below during the Spring / Summer of 2008.
- d) All finds including ceramic and metal objects will be recorded and processed by Witan Archaeology and returned to the FHHW, (the landowner).
- e) By arrangement with the FHHW, all results of the proposed evaluations will be notified to the Leicestershire Heritage and Environment Record.

2 Location and Topography

The site lies approximately one kilometre south east of Whitwick village, situated at the eastern edge of Holly Hayes Wood. The mean height of the site is c.180 metres OD.

3 Geology

The geological substratum is a dark orange to light yellow sandy glacial clay with frequent granite boulders.

4 Historical Background

Holly Hayes Wood has existed since the early medieval period. Apart from occasional mentions in charters, little is known about its historical and ecological development.

Historical Timeline (compiled from information supplied by Whitwick Historical Society)

- 1240** Holly Hayes Wood is found on a list of the medieval woods of Charnwood Forest.
- 1609** **Hawley Hays** was mentioned in a list of various woods and hills in Whitwick.
- 1777** Holly Hayes appears as an area of unnamed woodland on Priors map.
- 1805** Holly Hayes was already enclosed before the Enclosure Act of Whitwick.
- 1835** Holly Hayes Farm is shown on the first Ordnance Survey Map. A Thomas Jesson is listed as owning four acres at Holly Hayes.
- c.1860** John College rents Holly Hayes Wood from Thomas Jesson. John College lived in the house later called Fish Pond House and he replanted woodland, establishing a tree nursery on adjoining land.
- c.1866** The road now called Leicester Road (northern boundary of the wood), was known as Nursery Lane on title deeds.
- 1877** James Henshaw is listed as a farmer living at **Holly Ayes**.
- 1889** Thomas Williamson was the farmer living at Holly Hays, and was still listed as resident there in 1899.
- 1908** William Berrington was listed as living at Holly Hayes until 1928.
- 1920** Whitwick Quarry advertised trees for sale from this wood. During the 1920's, the quarry dammed the brook and created a pond. This was also to provide a supply of water for the quarry. A pumping station was also built nearby.
- 1948** The Electoral list shows the Roberts family at Holly Hays Cottage, the Tomlinson Family at Fishpond Cottage and John Waley at Holly Hayes Farm.
- 1963** Mr Danvers is resident at Holly Hayes Farm.

During the 1960's, Holly Hayes Farm became derelict and was later demolished by the quarry. In 2008, Holly Hayes Wood was purchased from Hanson plc by the FHHW.

5 Aims

Each area of archaeological prospection will be excavated by hand and recorded both as drawings and as digital photographs. The topsoil and subsoil, where present, will be removed in spits, under constant archaeological supervision until either archaeological features, or the natural geological substratum is revealed.

The aims are:

- 1) To establish the nature, character and extent of any archaeological deposits within the area.
- 2) To establish a date range for any archaeological deposits located.
- 3) To define the state of preservation of any such deposits.
- 4) To ascertain the function, date and chronology of the archaeological deposits present.
- 5) To locate and record any structural elements associated with these deposits.

6 Objectives

The objectives are:

- 1) To identify, date and record the earliest phases of construction at Holly Hayes Farm.
- 2) To identify and record archaeological deposits within the Holly Hayes Farm complex.
- 3) To provide the FHHW with a comprehensive report on the archaeological resource at Holly Hayes Farm.
- 4) To provide guidance and assistance with the conservation of designated features within the Holly Hayes site.

7 The Evaluation Phases

Phase 1

- a) The clearance of undergrowth around the eastern side of Holly Hayes Farm. This will reveal more of the structure possibly containing brickwork dating from the late 18th / early 19th century.
- b) Test pits will be excavated in the eastern enclosure to record any archaeological deposits and to recover finds for dating purposes. Completion of this phase will allow stacking of brick and granite boulders to take place during Phase 2.

Phase 2

- a) The rubble around the eastern end of the farm will be cleared with granite boulders and bricks being sorted and stacked for later use.
- b) External and internal walls will be cleaned and recorded.
- c) Further test pits may be excavated to investigate areas identified as earlier phases of farm.

Phase 3

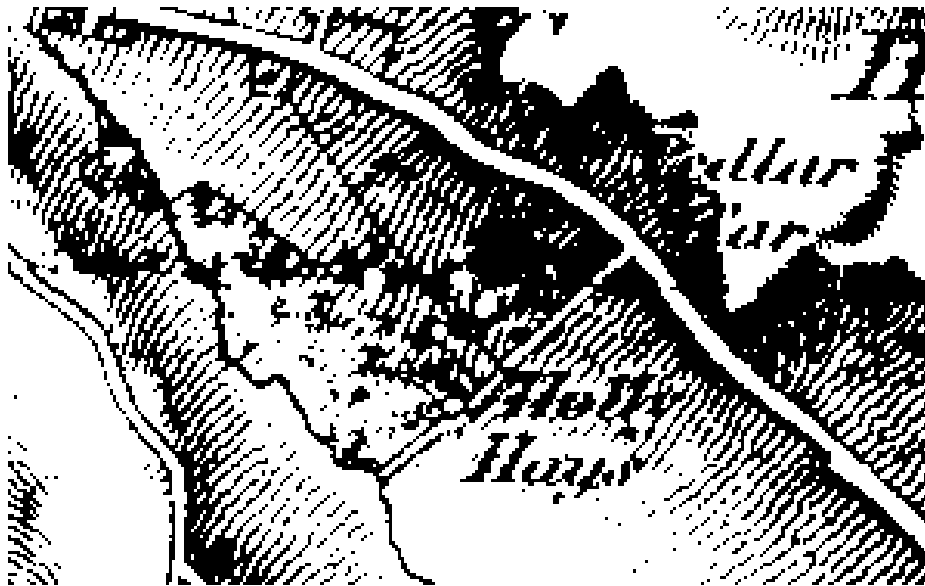
- a) Designated structural features will be conserved *in situ*.
- b) All materials used and restoration work undertaken will be appropriate to the original construction of these features.
- c) Witan Archaeology, (with the support of the FHHW), will bid for funding in order to provision equipment and materials for this phase.

8 Site Responsibility

- a) Witan Archaeology will be responsible for the conduct and supervision of its group members whilst working on site.
- b) Witan Archaeology is not responsible for any accidents or injury sustained by group members or other participants.
- c) Witan Archaeology has not undertaken any insurance liability for this proposed work.

SITE PLAN c.1835 & c.1960

HOLLY HAYES FARM 1835 ORDNANCE SURVEY MAP



HOLLY HAYES FARM 1960 ORDNANCE SURVEY MAP

