

# LEVEL 4 HISTORIC BUILDING SURVEY

## For Bittesby House, Bittesby Lodge and Bittesby Cottages off Mere Lane, Lutterworth, Leicestershire



For: **IDI Gazeley**

**Local Planning Authority: Harborough District Council**

**Trigpoint Conservation & Planning Ltd**

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**RTPI**  
mediation of space - making of place

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## SUMMARY

IDI Gazeley's planning application for the extension of Magna Park onto c 232 ha of land to the north west of Mere Lane (planning application ref 15/01531/OUT) proposes the demolition of Bittesby House, the former Lodge to Bittesby House and Bittesby Cottages. Bittesby House and the former Lodge are non-designated heritage assets and lie about 400m at their closest point to the scheduled Bittesby Deserted Medieval Village.

Trigpoint Conservation & Planning Ltd was commissioned by CgMs on behalf of IDI Gazeley Ltd to undertake a Level 4 Survey as set out in the levels of recording contained in *Understanding Historic Buildings – A guide to good recording practice* (English Heritage, 2006) of the three properties affected by the proposed development: Bittesby House (NGR: SP 5024 8536), Bittesby Lodge (NGR: SP 5004 8509) and Bittesby Cottages (NGR: SP 5047 8552).

The investigative survey, as agreed with Richard Clark, Leicestershire County Council's Principal Archaeologist (PA), was undertaken of the complex of existing buildings, namely Bittesby House, Bittesby Cottages and the former Lodge to Bittesby House, including ancillary and associated (former) farm buildings, roof spaces and any cellared areas; gave consideration to such aspects as the integrity of fixtures and fitting, their origins and operation, and in addition by the use of the historic documentary record and other reasonably accessible records. The survey in addition gave consideration to the relationship between the Bittesby Deserted Medieval Village and the later occupation of Bittesby House.

The survey was undertaken to provide a full historic building recording of the non-designated heritage assets as well as to assist with the determination of the planning application. Harborough District Council resolved to permit an earlier planning application (15/00919/FUL) to provide a facility for DHL Supply Chain subject to the S106 agreement and confirmation that the Secretary of State will not call in the application for his determination. That application includes the demolition of the former Lodge to Bittesby House.

This survey was carried out during November 2015 in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI), submitted to the PA in his capacity as archaeological advisor to the local planning authority, Harborough District Council.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents the results of a Level 4 historic building survey of the unlisted properties at Bittesby House (NGR: SP 5024 8536), Bittesby Cottages (NGR: SP 5047 8552), and the former Lodge to Bittesby House, (NGR: SP 5004 8509), off Watling Street, Lutterworth, Leicestershire. The survey was undertaken by Stephen Bradwell, Neil Finn and Miriam Holland for Trigpoint Conservation & Planning Ltd. at the request of CgMs Consulting acting on behalf IDI Gazeley.
- 1.2 The historic building survey has been completed to a Level 4 standard for Bittesby House and a Level 2 standard for Bittesby Lodge, Bittesby Cottages and associated agricultural buildings, as defined as defined in the English Heritage guidance document *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice* (English Heritage, 2006). The survey objectives and detailed methodology have been set out in a WSI as agreed with PA Richard Clark, in his capacity as archaeological advisor to Harborough District Council, the local planning authority (Trigpoint Conservation & Planning Ltd 2016).
- 1.3 The building recording exercise adds to the assessment, already submitted by CgMS, on the significance of the affected heritage assets. This exercise, together with the already submitted material, accords with the provisions of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF), Section 12: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment (DCLG, 2012). Paragraph 128 of the NPPF states that: *'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.'* Paragraph 135 of the NPPF applies to non-designated heritage assets and states, *'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 affect directly or indirectly non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgment will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.'*
- 1.4 The fieldwork, which was completed during three visits to the site, and the documentary research were undertaken in November 2015.

## 2. LOCATION AND CONTEXT

- 2.1 Lutterworth is a small market town within Harborough District some 12 miles (22.5km) south-east of Leicester city centre, close to the Warwickshire county boundary (Figure 1). The site of Bittesby House and its associated properties that form the subject of this survey are located about 2.5 miles to the west of Lutterworth, at NGR: SP 5024 8536 (Figure 2).
- 2.2 The study buildings are located within an area of generally open countryside to the north-west of Magna Park that is bounded to the south-west by Watling Street (A5), which runs along the county boundary between Leicestershire and Warwickshire, and to the south-east by Mere Lane.
- 2.3 This area also lies within the Leicestershire Vales Character Area, as identified by Natural England, which consists of '*an open landscape of gentle clay ridges and valleys (with)...an overall visual uniformity to the landscape and settlement pattern*' (Usher 2015a, 17) and this landform is reflected in the local topography and situation of the study buildings. Bittesby House is situated at height of c.115m AOD on the west side of a shallow valley that runs in a north-westerly direction towards the deserted Medieval village site and Bittesby Lodge to the west is situated at height of c.125m AOD. The Bittesby Cottages are located on the opposite (east) side of this shallow valley below the 115m contour.
- 2.4 For comparison the deserted medieval settlement is situated on the south side of another shallow valley that runs in a north-easterly direction on the 115m contour and is screened from Bittesby House by a spur of land that projects into the shallow valley.
- 2.5 Other than Lutterworth, the nearest local settlements are Willey in Warwickshire, which is a little over ½ mile (1km) to the south-west of Bittesby House and Claybrooke Parva and Ullesthorpe in Leicestershire, which are located about 1 mile (2km) to the north and north-east respectively. Between Bittesby House and Ullesthorpe is the deserted medieval settlement of Bittesby, which is located about 400m to the north-north-west of Bittesby House.

### 3. STATUTORY DESIGNATIONS

- 3.1 The study buildings are not included on the statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest maintained by the Secretary of State at the Department of Culture Media and Sport and are not situated within any conservation area designated by the local planning authority.

#### ***Designated Assets within the 1km of the Site***

##### *Scheduled Monuments*

- 3.2 The Scheduled Monument of Bittesby Deserted Medieval Village (UID: 17034) is located some 400m to the north-west of Bittesby House.
- 3.3 The list entry for this scheduled monument reads as follows:

#### ***Reasons for Designation***

*The village, comprising a small group of houses, gardens, yards, streets, paddocks, often with a green, a manor and a church, and with a community devoted primarily to agriculture, was a significant component of the rural landscape in most areas of medieval England, much as it is today. Villages provided some services to the local community and acted as the main focal point of ecclesiastical, and often of manorial, administration within each parish. Although the sites of many of these villages have been occupied continuously down to the present day, many others declined in size or were abandoned throughout the medieval and post-medieval periods, particularly during the 14th and 15th centuries. As a result over 2000 deserted medieval villages are recorded nationally. The reasons for desertion were varied but often reflected declining economic viability, changes in land use such as enclosure or emparkment, or population fluctuations as a result of widespread epidemics such as the Black Death. As a consequence of their abandonment these villages are frequently undisturbed by later occupation and contain well-preserved archaeological deposits. Because they are a common and long-lived monument type in most parts of England, they provide important information on the diversity of medieval settlement patterns and farming economy between the regions and through time.*

*Although partly disturbed, the deserted medieval village at Bittesby contains earthworks in good condition and retains high archaeological potential. The village is documented historically and, unusually, the period of desertion is known.*

**Details**

*Bittesby deserted village site lies 400m north of the A5 Watling Street and 4km west of Lutterworth and consists of earthworks to the east of a former railway line. The village earthworks comprise hollow ways and house platforms. A ditch up to 1m deep runs along the north of the area, near to which is some faced stonework indicating the site of a chapel known to have existed there. A north-south flowing stream runs on the eastern side of the site, down to which several hollow ways run, the largest of which is 12m wide and up to 2m deep. Bittesby is listed in Domesday Book and in 1279 the village was made up of 25 families. Enclosure and depopulation is recorded in 1488 and 1494, and by 1536 only the Salisbury family was left.*

*Listed Buildings*

- 3.4 There are two listed buildings within about ½ mile (1km) of Bittesby House:
- Grade II\* listed Church of St Leonard, Main Street, Willey, Warwickshire
  - Grade II listed Cottage Nurseries, Main Street, Willey, Warwickshire

*Conservation Areas*

- 3.5 The historic centres of Ullesthorpe and Claybrooke Magna have been designated as Conservation Areas.

*Historic Parks and Gardens*

- 3.6 The closest Registered Historic Park and Garden is the Grade II listed Newnham Paddock, which lies some 1½ miles (2.5km) to the south west of Bittesby House.



## 4. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 4.1 There was a settlement at Bittesby before the Norman Conquest. In 1066 the lordship was held by Leofwin and was valued at 30 shillings. In 1086 it was held by King William and was worth 40 shillings (Morgan 1979, 1.12; Macaulay 1791, 45-6).
- 4.2 In the Domesday Survey of 1086 the landholding at Bittesby was 5 *carucates*. There was land for 4 ploughs in addition to 1 plough in lordship, and 20 acres of meadow. There were 10 villagers (villeins) and 4 smallholders (bordars) with 2 ploughs (Morgan 1979, 1.12).
- 4.3 The '-by' suffix place-name element is Old Danish in origin, meaning 'a farmstead, a village'. The first part is derived from byttel, a diminutive of the Old English *butt* 'a (tree-) stump or mound' which refers to a stump-like hill in the northern part of the parish at NGR: SP 503 864. Combined these elements describe 'the farmstead or village at the stumpy hill' (Cox 2011, 25).
- 4.4 The place-name is recorded at various dates (in brackets) as: *Bichesbie* (1086), *Bittlesby* (1258 & 1327), *Bitlesby* (1315, 1329 & 1344), *Bittelesby* (1428), *Buttelesby* (1274), *Buttlesby* (1275), *Butlesby* (1285 & 1327), *Butlisby* (1271, 1274 & 1277), *Bytlesby* (1328), *Bettelesby* (1383), *Bettesby* (1383), *Bittesby* (1507, 1515, & 1540) and *Bitchby* (1777) (Cox 2011, 25; Welding 1984, 44).
- 4.5 Bittesby is described as a 'parish liberty' by Youngs (1991, 221). A liberty is traditionally defined as an area in which regalian right was revoked and where the land was held by a mesne lord (i.e. an area in which rights reserved to the king had been devolved into private hands). It is variously described in other published sources as a parish, liberty, hamlet or township. Bittesby was designated as a Civil Parish in 1866 having formerly been included within Claybrooke parish.
- 4.6 In 1279 there were 23 villein tenants each holding a virgate of land and 2 free tenants with 1 virgate between them. In the Itinerary of 1280 Bittesby, Ullesthorpe and Great and Little Claybrook answered collectively (Nichols 1810, 117).
- 4.7 Bittesby was assessed at £1, 14s, 6d in the Lay Subsidy of 1334, which is towards the lower end of the range for settlements within the county. At the time of the first poll tax in 1377 the taxable population was 21 (VCH 1955, 139).

- 4.8 The Leicestershire Returns to Wolsey's Inquiry of 1517 record that the Earl of Shrewsbury, then lord of the manor, evicted 60 people from Bittesby on October 2<sup>nd</sup> 1494 (Fryde 1991, 810).
- 4.9 In 1520 the Countess of Shrewsbury appeared before the Exchequer to answer for the decline of Bittesby. According to this account there were only 150 acres of arable land remaining at Bittesby in 1488 when it was largely inclosed and converted to pasture (Beresford 1987, 210).
- 4.10 It appears therefore that the population of Bittesby was in decline during the 15<sup>th</sup> century, as a response to which areas of land were enclosed and converted to pasture on which sheep were grazed. By 1488 most of the arable land had been enclosed and in 1494 the landowner completed the process by enclosing the remaining land, evicting the tenants and converting the entire lordship into an estate pasture-farm run by a tenant farmer named Salisbury (Goodacre 1994, 94, 100).
- 4.11 Bittesby is one of a small number of settlements in this part of Leicestershire that were enclosed in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, pre-dating the main enclosure movement in subsequent centuries. Goodacre argues that these early enclosures were not necessarily driven by the desire of landowners to maximise profitability by engaging in farming directed at the market, but were instead measures implemented in order to secure some return on investment in settlements where populations were already in decline, to the extent that traditional common-field farming was no longer sustainable (Goodacre 1994, 94).
- 4.12 The eviction of 60 tenants by the Earl of Shrewsbury in 1494 should therefore be viewed as one stage in a process of settlement decline that had begun at a much earlier date, probably well before 1488 by which time a significant proportion of the arable land had already been converted to pasture.
- 4.13 Goodacre notes that this most conspicuous type of enclosure, involving the conversion of whole townships into estate pasture-farms, was restricted to the first phase of enclosure and he identifies 8 settlements in the Lutterworth region, including Bittesby, where this was the case (Goodacre 1994, 94; Map IV).

- 4.14 The Salisbury family were the principal tenants of the Earl of Shrewsbury's new estate pasture-farm at Bittesby and were still tenants there in 1536, though subsequently moved to Manor House at Ullesthorpe (Goodacre 1994, 100; Hoskins 1950, 93).
- 4.15 In 1524/5 there were 3 taxpayers at Bittesby, presumably the heads of 3 households (VCH 1955, 139), which may indicate that some tenants avoided eviction in 1494.
- 4.16 By 1563 there were no households wealthy enough to pay tax (presumably the Salisburys had left Bittesby for Ullesthorpe by this date), however a fine of 1572 indicates that there were still 3 messuages with gardens and orchards at Bittesby and the landholding consisted of 40 acres of arable, 60 acres of meadow, 3 acres of wood and 1000 acres of pasture (VCH 1955, 139; Farnham 1933, 125-6; Hoskins 1950, 93). This indicates that whilst the estate was predominantly pasture, some arable crops were also grown on the land by the tenant farmers.
- 4.17 In 1588 Thomas Jusly had 280 ewes pastured at Bittesby and in 1599 Thomas Gore had 247 sheep worth 17 shillings each and four bullocks or steers worth £3 each there (Hoskins 1950, 175; Goodacre 1994, 102).
- 4.18 In his *Description of Leicestershire* first published in 1622 the antiquary William Burton wrote of Bittesby:  
  
    'This town is long since depopulated, (not one house remaining) and converted into sheep-pastures, being a most fruitful soil; it is in the parish of Calybroke [*sic*]' (Burton 1622, 42).
- 4.19 George Farnham, in Volume VI of his *Leicestershire Medieval Village Notes*, transcribes four fines relating to Bittesby, in the years 1572, 1619, 1620 and 1640 (Farnham 1933, 125-6). The 1572 fine describes 3 messuages, 3 gardens, 3 orchards, 40 acres of arable land, 60 acres of meadow, 1000 acres of pasture and 3 acres of wood in Bittesbe, alias Bitsby. The 1619 and 1620 fines both refer to 10 messuages, 200 acres of (arable) land, 50 acres of meadow and 100 acres of pasture in Bittesby. The 1640 fine refers to a messuage, a garden, 550 acres of (arable) land, 30 acres of meadow, 100 acres of pasture and 100 acres of furze and heath in Bittesbie. It is hard to reconcile the figure of 10 messuages noted in the fines of 1619 and 1620 with earlier and later records of household numbers (Table

1), or with Burton's near-contemporary description of a deserted village (see 4.18 above). It seems highly unlikely that there was such a dramatic fluctuation in the housing stock between the late-16<sup>th</sup> and the mid-17<sup>th</sup> centuries. The fines of 1619 and 1620 may refer to decayed households within the former village, or perhaps to parcels of land occupied by individual tenants on which no buildings stood, though why the term *messuage* should be used in the latter case is unclear. A *messuage* typically refers to a dwelling house together with its outbuildings, curtilage and adjacent land appropriated to its use.

- 4.20 A document in the ROLLR entitled *A Survey and Admeasurement taken 6 Feb 1629 of all the enclosed grounds called Bittesby Pastures* refers to a parcel of land called the *Townseyte* (i.e. town site) but makes no mention of houses or *messuages*. The same document also describes the *Wheate Field* (c. 77 acres) and *Barly Field* (c. 9 acres) indicating that arable crops were also grown on the land (ROLLR Ref: 23D63/1).
- 4.21 Hoskins notes that the process by which arable land had been converted to pasture at Bittesby was subsequently reversed such that in 1640 there were no fewer than 550 acres of arable in the manor (Hoskins 1942, 258-260). The results of the 2014 fieldwalking survey undertaken by MOLA suggest that fields in the south-eastern part of the Bittesby estate were predominantly used for arable in the post-medieval period (Dindol 2014, 16).
- 4.22 By 1679 the Bittesby estate had been divided into 6 closes, averaging 45 acres and 6 meadows, each of 9 acres. Goodacre argues that, as the subdivision of ancient enclosures had tended to follow earlier field and furlong divisions and natural features, the resulting closes were of irregular size and shape that were not always suited to arable production due to the need to protect these areas from grazing cattle. As a result some ancient enclosure underwent practically the same process of subdivision as the common fields of village that were being enclosed in the 17<sup>th</sup> century (Goodacre 1994, 108).
- 4.23 Potentially significant in terms of understanding the shift in settlement from the site of the medieval village to the present Bittesby House site, are a series of documents in the ROLLR collections dating from 1680/1 when the Bittesby estate was offered for sale by the Earl of Arundel (ROLLR Ref: 23D63/1). *An Account of the Lordship of*

*Bittesby and two Farms at Willey etc. given to Mr Bedford in London in the beginning of February 1680/1* includes the statement:

‘That there are but two little houses in the Lordship [of Bittesby], which stand about the middle of it, one of wch was lately built for Mr Wm Almy, and the other is a little old house wherein Joseph Pywell the sheppard lives.’

- 4.24 Particulars drawn up in January of 1680/1 identify William Almy as the bailiff at Bittesby, who had taken on land worth £200 a year, and describe his residence as ‘A little new-built house’. In the same document it is noted that ‘Joseph Pywell the sheppard holds an old little house in the houseground’ (ROLLR Ref: 23D63/1).
- 4.25 The description of these two houses as being ‘about the middle of’ the estate does not firmly tie either of them to a particular location and might relate to the former village site or the present Bittesby House site, or indeed some other location. It does at least indicate that neither house was situated on the edge of the estate. The description of Joseph Pywell’s ‘old little house’ as being ‘in the houseground’ may be a reference to the former village site. Alternatively the ‘houseground’ may refer to the site of William Almy’s new house. There is no explicit indication in the documents that the two houses were situated in close proximity to each other. The possible location of the two houses is considered further in the Discussion section of this report.
- 4.26 In 1682 it was reported that the tithe in the Wheat Field and other grounds at Bittesby ‘ceases for the present because they have laid it down from ploughing’, indicating an increase in pastoral farming once again in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century. It is also recorded that in the 1680s Richard Webster, then the ‘greatest tenant’ of land at Bittesby, ‘now deals in grazing and drives fat cattle to London’ (Goodacre 1994, 117, 160). This indicates a shift in emphasis from the rearing of sheep to the raising of fat-stock cattle to supply the London market with beef. Presumably the Wheat Field and other grounds were laid down from ploughing to provide additional grazing land on which to fatten cattle. Goodacre takes this as an indication that farmers of enclosed grounds were able to respond more flexibly to changes in the market in a way that common-field farmers were not, a view that is widely held (Goodacre 1994, 117; Barnwell and Giles 1997, 4).

- 4.27 By the Act of 1 George I statute 2 cap 55 (1715), Papists (i.e. Roman Catholics) were required to register details of their names and real estate with the Clerk of the Peace for the county in which the estate lay. The Act of 3 George I cap 18 (1716) reinforced and extended these requirements. The Registrations in the Leicestershire Quarter Sessions records date from 1717 to 1785 and give details about these estates, including acreages, names of tenants and rents (Usher 2015b, 79).
- 4.28 QS45/2/29 is the Application for Registration of the Bittesby estate of John Talbot Esq. of Longford (Salop.), dated 25<sup>th</sup> September 1717. This document describes the:  
‘...Manor of Bittesby at Bittesby with all rights member appurtenances thereof and messuage or tenement with the appurtenance...standing and being in Bittesby together with all barns, stable buildings, orchard gardens, folds, fold yards, curtilages and appurtenance to the same belonging or appertaining and with the land, meadows...pastures...’
- 4.29 Although somewhat formulaic in its wording, this entry apparently indicates that there was a single dwelling on the Bittesby estate in 1717 with a range of associated farm buildings including barns, stabling, folds and foldyards. The folds and foldyards presumably refer to accommodation for cattle which were overwintered in yards or undercover in this region, whereas sheep were not.
- 4.30 The single residence was presumably the house that had been newly built in 1680/1 for William Almy. In 1717 Stephen Andrews was the tenant.
- 4.31 Subsequent entries in the Papist Returns identify the owner of the Bittesby Estate in 1744 as Peregrine Widdington (or Widdrington) of St James Terrace, Westminster (QS45/1/20), and in 1748 as William Tempest Widdrington (QS45/3/3). Thomas Burrows is named as the principal tenant in both of these returns, with various closes let to other tenants.
- 4.32 In 1753 Bittesby passed by marriage to John Towneley, another Catholic, who submitted a return on 26<sup>th</sup> April 1753 (QS45/2/51). Thomas Burrows is again named as the principal tenant, holding a ‘Messuage and Lands with their Appurtenances in Bitsbye’. Six other tenants who also leased land on the Bittesby estate are named in this document. An 1883 Sale Catalogue of the Towneley Manuscripts removed from Towneley Hall, Lancashire lists various documents relating to the Manor of Bittesby

in Lot 167 ([http://www.towneley.org.uk/downloads/mss\\_1883sale.pdf](http://www.towneley.org.uk/downloads/mss_1883sale.pdf)), including a lease of the Manor of Bittesby dated 1759 between J. Towneley and T. Burrows.

- 4.33 The Towneley family held Bittesby throughout the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> and most of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. John Towneley Esq. is listed as the Proprietor of Bittesby in 1794 in the *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Leicester* (Monk 1794, 70). In the following year, 1795, the Crop Returns record that Thomas Burrows grew three and a half acres and seven quarters of wheat and two acres and nine quarters of oats at Bittesby (ROLLR Ref: QS28/155). In 1813 Peregrine Towneley leased the greater part of the Bittesby estate to John Burrows, Grazier. John Burrows died in 1827 bringing to an end the Burrows family tenure.
- 4.34 In the entry for Bittesby in the 1846 edition of *White's Directory* Edward Towneley Esq. is named as the landowner. This was presumably Peregrine Edward Towneley, who died in that year and was father of Colonel Charles Towneley, listed as landowner in the 1877 edition of *White's Directory*. The landowner is not recorded in directories after this date.
- 4.35 Late 18<sup>th</sup> century maps show a single building at Bittesby, in the vicinity of the present Bittesby House. The earliest part of the extant building, the *East Wing*, probably dates to the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The historic mapping and fabric evidence are considered in subsequent sections of this report.
- 4.36 Construction of the Leicester to Rugby section of the Midland Counties railway, which was opened in 1840, bisected the Bittesby estate (Lelux 1984, 104). The railway line was carried on an embankment across the site of the deserted medieval settlement and workmen engaged on its construction are reported to have discovered various remains within this area, including the foundations of a substantial Roman villa with 'a beautiful tessellated pavement and the remains of a bath' (Pickering 1933-4, 47).
- 4.37 Construction of the railway appears to have involved alterations to the route of footpaths and watercourses and two tunnels under the embankment were built within the Bittesby lands, in addition to culverts for watercourses, as shown on the 1842/3 Bittesby Tithe Award map (ROLLR Ref: Ti/36/1).

- 4.38 The 1842 Tithe Award names Peregrine Edward Towneley Esq. as the Landowner of the Hamlet of Bittesby and John Bond as the Occupier of Bittesby House, Outbuildings, Yards, Gardens, Pleasure Grounds, Fish Ponds and Orchard. The total landholding is given as: 746 acres, 1 rood, 4 perches of Arable; 654a, 0r, 3p of Meadow or Pasture; 4a, 0r, 24p of Woodland; and 13a, 0r, 24p occupied by the Midland Counties Railway (ROLLR Ref: Ti/36/1).
- 4.39 Bittesby was declared a Civil Parish in 1866, having formerly been included within Claybooke parish.
- 4.40 The Bond family were tenant farmers at Bittesby before the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century; John Bond is named as the occupant of Bittesby House and farm in the 1842/3 Tithe Award (ROLLR Ref: Ti/036/1) and in the 1846 edition of *White's Directory* (Table 2). John Bond was succeeded by his son George, who is listed as *Farmer and Grazier* at Bittesby in subsequent directories up to 1884 (Table 2). George's son, Charles John Bond, was born at Bittesby House on 27<sup>th</sup> October 1856. Charles tried his hand at farming but gave this up to pursue a medical career. He was apprenticed to a Leicester doctor in 1875 and qualified in 1879. Charles Bond became eminent in his field, promoting the use of antiseptic methods of surgery. He had a distinguished career, served on various committees and published learned papers and books on a range of medical and philosophical subjects (Walker 1984). After working in Bedford and London, Charles Bond was appointed house surgeon at Leicester Royal Infirmary in 1882. In 1890 he married Edith Simpson, daughter of George Simpson, J.P. of Hazel brow, Derbyshire. They lived in Leicester, initially at 5 Welford Road, then 63 King Street and, from 1910, at 10 Springfield Road, Clarendon Park. Charles Bond died in 1939 and is commemorated by a memorial plaque at Leicester Royal Infirmary.
- 4.41 George Simpson, father of Edith Simpson (Charles John Bond's wife), took over the tenancy of Bittesby House in or before 1888, maintaining the Bond family's long-standing association with the farm (Table 2).
- 4.42 Later tenants of Bittesby House were the Berridge family, from the 1890s until the 1910s, followed by Robert McLean and then Evan Jones, who took on the tenancy in 1933.



4.43 The Bittesby House Farm was put up for sale by auction on 12<sup>th</sup> July 1944. A copy of the Sale Particulars is in the ROLLR (Ref: DE3931). The property, extending to 735 acres was offered initially as one lot, with the option of sale in two lots, of 539 acres and 196 acres, if not sold as a whole.

4.44 Bittesby House is described as follows:

**THE RESIDENCE**, substantially built of brick and roofed with slates, being in first class structural condition, provides a superior and comfortable home with spacious rooms, and stands in an ideal position, approached through an Avenue of Chestnut and Lime trees.

**The Accommodation comprises:** - on the **Ground Floor**, Tiled Entrance Hall, Two Reception Rooms, Breakfast Room, Billiard Room, Butler's Pantry, Cloak Room with Wash Hand Basin (H. & C.), and separate W.C. Kitchen with Range, Scullery, Large Dairy, and suitable Cellarage. On the **First Floor** are Six Bedrooms, Bathroom with built-in Bath (H. & C.), Wash Hand Basin (H. & C.), and W.C., Two Servants' Rooms approached by a separate staircase, and on the **Second Floor** Two Attics.

**Outside** is the Large Wash-house, with Loft over, and Double Garage.

Adjoining the House is a Courtyard with Three-stall Nag Stable, Garage, Saddle Room and Coal Place, and in close proximity is the Orchard and the productive Kitchen Garden.

**THE EXCELLENT FARM BUILDINGS** near the House are conveniently arranged around a Stone Paved Yard, and consist of Loose Box, Shedding to tie Forty-two Cows, twelve Stalls being fitted with water bowls, the whole having feeding gangways; Barn with Granary over, and Engine House. Adjoining the above are Five enclosed Pig Styes or Calf Places with Workshop at back and Granary over. Two open Pig Styes, Large Four-bay Implement Shed with Workshop adjoining, Two Dutch Barns, one with seven bays (6 yards by 4 yards) enclosed on three sides, and one open with six bays (6 yards by 4 yards).

The lower Stone Paved Yard has Blacksmith's Shop with Forge, Large Barn with Granary over, Two Loose Boxes, Open Shed with wood front to tie twenty beasts,

Six-stall Stable, Loose Box and Chaff House with Granary over, and paved Sheep Yard with Dipping Bath, surrounded by pens and shedding.

- 4.45 In addition, the Sale Particulars describe six cottages with gardens on the estate. In the Schedule these are referred to as Two Cottages and Gardens (twice) and Lodges and Gardens, the latter presumably being the present Bittesby Lodge on Watling Street.
- 4.46 It is noted in the Sale Particulars that 16 fields in the larger western plot, with a combined area of 284.2 acres, had been 'broken up' by order of the *Leicestershire War Agricultural Executive Committee* to provide additional arable land.
- 4.47 Bittesby House was put up for sale again in 2003 with about 15.7 acres of land. A copy of the Sale Particulars is within Bittesby House. The property, which was still a residence at that date, is described as 'An exceptional period county house with garden cottage and stable yard set within extensive gardens and grounds'. It was purchased in 2003 by IDI Gazeley Properties (Source: Land Registry).
- 4.48 Since 2003 Bittesby House has been converted into office accommodation and is presently occupied by a company named Creative Bridge. Alterations associated with the conversion have mainly been superficial, including changes to the décor, lighting and installation of additional power sockets for computer equipment, etc. Surface mounted trunking is used for the additional cabling. Some of the associated farm buildings have also been converted and extended for use as offices.

#### *Population*

- 4.49 The population of Bittesby was never very large and seems to have peaked towards the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, based on the available evidence. Estimations of average household size vary over time and between regions. At Kibworth Harcourt in Leicestershire the average size of households in the late 14<sup>th</sup> century was calculated as being 3.72, although actual household sizes varied between one and six or seven individuals. In the late 13<sup>th</sup> century, average population figures for three manors in Spalding, Lincolnshire varied between 4.37 and 4.81, which is consistent with figures recorded elsewhere in the same period (Schofield 2003, 29). For the purposes of this assessment a crude estimate of between 3 and 5 individuals per household is

applied, a range which although broad is likely to encompass the actual number of inhabitants (Table 1).

Year	Population	Source
1086	14 tenants (= 14 families, perhaps 42 - 70 individuals)	Domesday Book
1279	25 tenants (= 25 families, perhaps 75 - 125 individuals)	Nichols (1810, 117)
1377	21 taxpayers (= 21 families, perhaps 63 - 105 individuals)	VCH Vol. III (1955, 139)
1494	60 inhabitants evicted	Hoskins (1950, 93)
1524/5	3 taxpayers (= 3 families, perhaps 9 - 15 individuals)	VCH Vol. III (1955, 139)
1572	3 messuages (= 3 families, perhaps 9 - 15 individuals)	Hoskins (1950, 93)
1622	'Not one house remaining' on former village site	Burton (1622, 42)
1640	1 messuage and garden	Farnham (1933, 125-6)
1681	2 households: one (newly built) occupied by William Almy (bailiff); the other occupied by Joseph Pywell (shepherd)	ROLLR: 23D63/1
1791	'[Bittesby]...contains only one house'	Nichols (1791, 48)
1841	28 living in 3 houses	Census
1851	17	Census
1871	18 living in 4 houses	Census
1881	37	Census
1891	44	Census
1901	33	Census
1911	38	Census
1921	48	Census
1931	40	Census
2001	6	Census

**Table 1.** Population of Bittesby over time.

#### Summary of *Land Owners*

4.50 The ownership of Bittesby is summarised below.

**Before 1066** - Leofwin, Bishop of Lichfield

**1066** - King William held Bittesby after the Norman Conquest

**1086** - King William granted the Manor of Bittesby to the Verdun/Verdon family. It has not been possible to trace the Manor's early lineage within this family

**1215 to 1216** - Land and property of Nicholas de Verdon seized by King John, who awarded the Bittesby estate to William de Cantilupe

**1216** - John de Verdon successfully petitioned Henry III for return of the forfeit estates.

**c.1290s** - By this period, the Manor of Bittesby had passed to Theobald de Verdun

**1309** - In this year Robert de Holland married Maud de Verdun and the Verdun lands passed to the de Holland family

**1328** - In this year Bittesby passed by marriage to William de Furnivall and remained in the Furnivall family for over a century.

**1400s** - Thomasine de Furnivall had held the manor and in 1408 her granddaughter was recorded as her heir.

**1442** - The Manor of Bittesby passed to the Talbot family following the marriage of Maud Neville, 6<sup>th</sup> Baroness Furnivall to John Talbot, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Shrewsbury.

**Mid-15<sup>th</sup> to early-17<sup>th</sup> Century** - Bittesby remained within the families of the Earls of Shrewsbury throughout this period.

**1609** - Upon the marriage of Lady Alethea Talbot (youngest daughter of Gilbert Talbot, 7<sup>th</sup> Earl of Shrewsbury) to Thomas Howard, 21<sup>st</sup> Earl of Arundel, Bittesby came under the ownership of the Arundel family.

**1676** - Thomas Howard's nephew, Henry, 1st Earl of Norwich (and 6<sup>th</sup> Duke of Norfolk), sold the manor of Bittesby to Charles Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury soon after this year.

**Early-18<sup>th</sup> Century** - Still under the ownership of the Talbot family in the early 18<sup>th</sup> Century, by 1744 Bittesby was held by Peregrine Widdrington. A Roman Catholic family, the Widdringtons continued to hold the manor until approximately 1750, when it passed by marriage to the Towneley family.

**Mid-18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries** - Peregrine Edward Towneley is named as the landowner in the 1842 Tithe Award and Bittesby remained in the Towneley family until 1878 on the death of John Towneley.

**1878 to Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century** - Colonel Charles Towneley (1803-1876) and John Towneley (1806-1878), the two sons of Peregrine Edward Towneley, both died without a male heir and on the death of Charles the estate was split between their daughters, with Bittesby passing to Charles's youngest daughter Lady Alice O'Hagan and her husband.

There were family connections between the Widdringtons and Towneleys, as well as between the Towneleys and the Howard family. Cecilia Standish married William Towneley in 1736; Cecilia was granddaughter of Henry Howard, 6<sup>th</sup> Duke of Norfolk, who had sold the manor of Bittesby in 1676.

#### *Commercial Directories*

- 4.51 Commercial Directories held by the ROLLR were searched for references to Bittesby. The earliest directories date from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, the latest is the 1941 edition of *Kelly's Directory*. The earliest directory in which Bittesby is listed is the 1846 edition of *White's Directory*. The search results are tabulated below (Table 2).

Year	Directory	Reference / Notes	Occupant	Acreage / Value
1835	Piggot	No reference to Bittesby	-	-
1846	White's, 385	Bittesby is a small liberty & township in Claybrook parish	Mr John Bond	About 600a fertile land...in one farm
1849	Hagar, 183	Bittesby	George Bond	600a in one farm
1855	Post Office, 26-7	Hamlet of Bittesby	George Bond	600a
1863	White's, 753	Noted under Lutterworth	-	-
1870	Harrod's, 403-4	Listed under Claybrooke	Mr Bond Farmer	-
1876	Kelly's, 345-6	Listed under Claybrooke	George Bond Farmer	Rateable value: £1388
1877	White's, 162	Bittesby (Lutterworth)	Mr Geo. Bond  Mr Charles Ashby	746a, 1r, 4p of fertile land nearly all in 1 farm occupies the remainder
1880	Wright's, 329	Listed under Claybrooke	George Bond Farmer & grazier	-
1881	Kelly's, 505-6	Listed under Claybrooke	George Bond Farmer	Rateable value: £1388
1884	Wright's, 330-2	Listed under Claybrooke	George Bond Farmer & grazier	-
1888	Wright's, 528	Bittesby (Claybrooke)	Thomas Berridge Farmer & grazier	Land: £610.7s.6d Buildings: £432.7s.6d
1888	Kelly's, 506-7	Bittesby (Claybrooke)	George Simpson Farmer & grazier	743a Rateable value: £1207
1891	Kelly's, 553	Bittesby (Claybrooke)	George Simpson Farmer & grazier	743a Rateable value £1130
1892	Wright's, 420	Bittesby	George Simpson Farmer & grazier	Value: c. £1100
1895	Kelly's, 53-4	Bittesby (Claybrooke)	Thomas Berridge	750a Rateable value: £969
1896	Wright's, 525-6	Bittesby	Thomas Berridge	Value: c. £1100
1900	Kelly's, 56	Bittesby	Thomas Berridge Farmer	750a Rateable value: £952
1904	Kelly's, 56-7	Bittesby parish consists of one farm-house	John Albert Berridge Farmer	750a Rateable value: £871
1908	Kelly's, 59-60	Bittesby township consists of one farm-house	John Albert Berridge	750a Rateable value: £871
1912	Kelly's, 59	Bittesby township consists of one farm-house	John Albert Berridge	750a Rateable value: £791
1916	Kelly's, 58-9	Bittesby township consists of one farm-house	Robert McLean Farmer	750a Rateable value: £505
1922	Kelly's, 59-60	Bittesby township consists of one farm-house	Robert McLean Farmer	750a Rate value: £790
1925	Kelly's, 64	Bittesby township consists of one farm-house	Robert McLean Farmer	750a Rateable value: £778
1928	Kelly's, 62	Bittesby township consists of one farm-house	Robert McLean Farmer	750a
1932	Kelly's, 62	Bittesby township consists of one farm-house	Rt McLean (executors of)	750a
1936	Kelly's, 60	Bittesby township consists of one farm-house	Rt McLean (executors of)	750a
1941	Kelly's, 58-9	Bittesby township consists of one farm-house and some cottages	Evan Jones Farmer	750a

**Table 2.** References to Bittesby in Commercial Directories.

*Summary of Map Evidence***1681 Plan of the Manor of Bittesby**

- 4.52 Listed in an 1883 Sale Catalogue of the Towneley Manuscripts removed from Towneley Hall, Lancashire, Lot 167 included papers relating to the Manor of Bittesby, with an accompanying Plan drawn and dated 1681, by W. Hill. (Other documents relating to Bittesby were also in this collection). This Plan, if it still exists, has not been located.

**1777 John Prior's Map of Leicestershire** (Figure 3)

- 4.53 Surveyed by Joseph Wyman between 1775 and 1777. Bittesby is named as *Bitchby* on this map (Welding 1984, 44). A single building is shown in the vicinity of the present Bittesby House, situated on the west side of a track running between Watling Street (the A5) and *Over Claybrook* to the north (now Claybrooke Parva).

**1787 Cary's Map of the County of Leicester** (Figure 4)

- 4.54 A similar arrangement is shown on this map to that illustrated on the 1777 Prior map, with a single building at *Bittesby*, in the vicinity of the present Bittesby House, alongside a track running between Watling Street and Claybrooke.

**1790 Map of the Outskirts of Lutterworth** (not illustrated)

- 4.55 This large-scale map held by the ROLLR (MISC 239) includes a small part of the Bittesby Township land adjacent to Watling Street, named as Bittesby Corner, but does not cover the area of Bittesby House.

**1813 Ordnance Survey drawing: Sheet 260 Rugby** (Figure 5)

- 4.56 Surveyed by Henry Stevens in 1813. Bittesby is named as *Bitchby* on this map. A group of three or four buildings is shown, apparently arranged around a courtyard, in the vicinity of the present Bittesby House. The farmstead is served by a track running westward from Mere Lane, which turns to the north-west to *Over Claybrook*. No direct access is shown from Watling Street to the south-west.

**1826 Greenwood's Map of Leicestershire** (Figure 6)

- 4.57 A group of three buildings is shown at *Bittesby*, adjacent to a bridle road running between Watling Street and Claybrooke. These buildings are in a similar location to those illustrated on the preceding map of 1813, in the vicinity of the present Bittesby House, though their arrangement is quite different. The access route, a trackway

between the A5 and Claybrooke, is similar to that shown on the 1777 and 1787 maps.

**1842/3 Tithe Award Map** (Figure 7)

- 4.58 *Map of the Hamlet of Bittesby in the Parish of Claybrook in the County of Leicester. R. Stelfox. Surveyor. Allesley 1843. Apportionment of the rent-charge in lieu of Tithes in the Hamlet of Bittesby in the parish of Claybrook in the County of Leicester 1842.*

This map provides the earliest detailed depiction of Bittesby House. The house, coloured pink, is recognisable as the extant Bittesby House, including the *Main Range* and *East Range*. The *West Range*, *North Range* and the *South Front* are not shown and were all added after this date. The detached block on the north side of the *East Range* is the extant former cart shed and saddle room. The associated agricultural buildings are arranged around two yards, one immediately to the north-east of the house and the other further to the east.

In the accompanying schedule parcel 27 containing the farmstead is described as: *Bittesby House, Outbuildings, Yards, Gardens, Pleasure Grounds, Fish Ponds and Orchard.*

*Landowner: Peregrine Edward Towneley Esq.*

*Occupier: John Bond*

Bittesby Lodge on the A5 and Bittesby Cottages are not shown on this survey and were not built until later in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Whilst the 1843 Tithe Map shows no direct access to Bittesby House from Watling Street (the A5), it does show a carriage turning circle outside the south front of the house, access to which is from the south-west, in a similar position to the present driveway. Field boundaries shown on the 1843 map correspond more or less with the route of the driveway as shown on later maps. It seems likely that there was direct access to Bittesby House from Watling Street in 1843, along a track following a similar route to that depicted on earlier and later maps, but for some reason this was not illustrated on the 1843 Tithe map.

The Midland Counties Railway line, opened in 1840, which cuts across the medieval village site, is also shown on this map.

**1860s Ordnance Survey Old Series Map Sheet 43 Leicester** 1970 edition

published by David & Charles (Figure 8).

- 4.59 The Old Series one inch to the mile maps have a complex lineage, explained in the notes accompanying the 1970 edition reprinted by David & Charles. The first edition of the Leicester map was published in four quarter sheets in June 1835. The copper plates from which the maps were printed were subsequently updated a number of times. The edition illustrated here was printed in 1867 from plates electrotyped in 1865 (SE quarter) and 1866 (SW quarter). Bittesby falls across the junction of the SW and SE quarter sheets. Little detail is discernible due to the small scale of this map, but the arrangement appears essentially similar to that depicted on the 1843 Tithe Map. The house, which is named as *Bittesby Lodge*, is shown on the SW sheet with a series of farm buildings arranged around a yard immediately to the north-east of the house. A further series of buildings arranged around a second yard is shown to the east, on the SE sheet. There is direct access from Watling Street and a track heading north-west towards Claybrooke. The pair of cottages known today as Bittesby Lodge, adjacent to Watling Street, are not shown on this map and nor are Bittesby Cottages. The term *Lodge* has a number of slightly different meanings and as used on this map, applied to the main house, may simply refer to a large country residence. The present Bittesby Lodge has the alternate meaning of 'a small house at the gates of a park, or in the grounds of a large house, occupied by a gatekeeper or other employee' (Soanes and Stevenson 2004, 837). The main residence was presumably re-named Bittesby House when the pair of cottages on Watling Street was constructed.

**1887 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map** (Figure 9)

- 4.60 By the time that the First Edition Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map was published in 1887 (surveyed in 1886) the outline of the house had altered significantly, compared with the 1842/3 Tithe map, and the house is now named as *Bittesby House*. The *North Range*, *West Range* and the extant *South Front* had all been added by this date. The detached block to the south of the *East Range* (earth closets?) is also shown as is the *Coal Place* against the north elevation of the *East Range*.

Few significant changes to the agricultural buildings are apparent, when compared with the 1842/3 Tithe map. The building at the north corner of the yard adjacent to Bittesby House had been enlarged or rebuilt in the intervening period. A large open-



fronted shed and another building had been added to the eastern complex and a detached building is shown in a field to the north of the eastern farmyard.

The carriage turning circle outside the south front of Bittesby House had gone by 1887. A tree-lined driveway from Watling Street is shown, following the line of earlier field boundaries, with two right-angle bends along its route; an *Avenue of Chestnut and Lime trees* is noted in the 1944 Sale Particulars. The avenue overlies well-preserved ridge and furrow at this point, representing the remains of medieval cultivated fields.

Bittesby Lodge, adjacent to Watling Street, is first shown on this map, as are Bittesby Cottages, to the north-east of Bittesby House, but neither property is specifically named. The trackway leading westward from Mere Lane had been altered to provide access to these cottages. Changes had also been made to the arrangement of trackways north Bittesby House by this date, which may have been associated with improvements to a watercourse that is shown on the 1887 map.

#### **1903 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map** (Figure 10)

- 4.61 No changes to the outline of Bittesby House are shown on the Second Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1903 when compared with the preceding edition. Changes to the farm buildings had included the construction of two large open-sided buildings, presumably the two Dutch barns referred to in the 1944 Sale Particulars. The house shown on the earlier Ordnance Survey, adjacent to Watling Street is now marked *Lodge*. It is also interesting to note that no trees are depicted along the south-western leg of the driveway between the Lodge and Bittesby House on this map.

#### **1962 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map** (Figure 11)

- 4.62 The next available 1:2500 scale map is the 1962 edition. Smaller-scale maps were also examined, but the site was not re-surveyed in the intervening period. No changes to the outline of Bittesby House are shown on the 1962 map when compared with the 1903 edition. No changes are shown to the farm buildings around the yard immediately adjacent to the house, though the open-sided buildings first illustrated on the 1903 map had been altered and a number of changes are shown to the buildings around the eastern farmyard.

Bittesby Lodge, alongside Watling Street, is shown as a pair of cottages, named as *Bittesby Cottages*, adjacent to which is a new semi-detached pair named as *Emmanuel Cottages*. The properties to the north-east of Bittesby House are also confusingly named as *Bittesby Cottages*, but other than the addition of single storey side extensions, these are unchanged from the earlier 1903 Ordnance Survey map.

**1994 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map** (Figure 12)

- 4.63 No changes to the outline of Bittesby House are shown on the 1994 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map edition when compared with the 1962 edition. Various changes had been made to the farm buildings however, with the addition of a number of large sheds replacing older buildings. The access to Bittesby House is shown as being from Watling Street, along the driveway past *Bittesby Cottages* (formerly Bittesby Lodge) and *Emmanuel Cottages*.

**Current Site Plan** (Figure 2)

- 4.64 No changes are shown to the outline of Bittesby House on the current site plan when compared with the 1994 map edition, although various changes have been made to the farm buildings and the access route to the house since 1994. The access road to Bittesby House was diverted across a field to the south of the house onto Mere Lane and the former access from Watling Street (the A5) past Bittesby Lodge and Emmanuel Cottages blocked. This alteration occurred after 2003 based on the evidence of Sale Particulars produced in that year by King West for the sale of Bittesby House. A series of photographs accompanying the 2003 Sale Particulars assist in identifying a number of other recent changes. The present staff carpark to the east of Bittesby House was a manège in 2003. An open-fronted shelter shed on the north side of the farmyard adjacent to Bittesby House, seen in one of the 2003 photographs, has been rebuilt since that date. A building on the south side of the farmyard has been extended and converted into office accommodation since 2003. A large pond in the field immediately to the south of Bittesby House was created between 2003 and 2006, based on a comparison of the 2003 Sale Particulars and satellite imaging of the site. Traces of ridge and furrow cultivation within this field are visible on modern satellite imaging, which survives as upstanding earthworks along the western edge of the field.

**Historic Photographs** (Figures 13-15)

- 4.65 There are three photographs of Bittesby House in the ROLLR collection DE6789:

*Bittesby House Photographs & Sileby Plans 1920-1958.*

- 4.66 Two of the photographs show the south front of Bittesby House and the third is a view of the house from the south-west. All three photographs appear to have been taken at the same time and show the same motorcar standing in front of the house, which looks like a Rolls Royce model of the 1920s or 1930s.
- 4.67 The photographs show no notable differences to the appearance of the house as it is now, except for climbing foliage over parts of the south and west elevations that is no longer present. The photographs are tightly framed on the house and no detail of the wider landscape or other buildings is shown.

## 5. DESCRIPTION OF THE BUILDINGS

5.1 The Historic Building Survey focuses primarily on Bittesby House, Bittesby Cottages and the former lodge to Bittesby House. The farm buildings associated with Bittesby House that could be accessed were also examined. The survey suggests that these buildings are of local interest only and are not of sufficient architectural or historic interest to warrant designation as statutorily listed buildings.

### ***General Description and Outline Chronology***

5.2 The long axis of Bittesby House is aligned approximately north-east to south-west. To simplify the description this is taken hereafter to be east-west, with the principal elevation being the south front (Figure 16; Photo 1). Bittesby House is composed of a number of distinct structural elements, described here as: the *Main Range, East Range, West Range, North Range, South Front and Rear Porch* (Figures 16 & 21).

5.3 There are series of associated agricultural buildings arranged around two yards, one immediately to the north-east of the house (Figures 20 & 22) and the second lying further to the east; this eastern group of buildings, which are in separate ownership, were not accessible at the time of the survey (Figure 2).

5.4 Several of the agricultural buildings have been altered or rebuilt in recent decades; early Ordnance Survey mapping and Sale Particulars prepared in 1944 provide some indication of the historic arrangement and function of the farm buildings.

5.5 The associated Bittesby Lodge, located to the south-west of Bittesby House along the A5 Watling Street, and Bittesby Cottages, lying to the north-east, are described separately below. These buildings were not accessible at the time of the survey.

5.6 The ground floor plan of Bittesby House is illustrated in Figure 17; the first floor plan is illustrated in Figure 18; the attic and cellar plans are illustrated in Figure 19 and the principal elevations shown in Figure 21. The floor plans of the accessible early farm buildings, on the south side of the yard immediately to the north-east of Bittesby House are illustrated in Figure 20 and their principal elevations shown in Figure 22.

### ***Bittesby House***

5.7 Photos 1-5 show the general appearance of Bittesby House. The chronology of the main structural elements of the house is summarised in Table 3 below.

Structural Element	Approximate Date	Additional Comments
<i>East Range</i>	Second half of 18 <sup>th</sup> century	Earlier timber-framing members reused in roof structure; altered in the 1930s
<i>Main Range</i>	c.1828	Inscribed date on roof timber
<i>Rear Porch</i>	c.1828	Links <i>Main Range</i> and <i>East Range</i>
<i>South Front</i>	Between 1842 and 1887	Contemporary with <i>West Range</i>
<i>West Range</i>	Between 1842 and 1887	Contemporary with additions to <i>South Front</i>
<i>North Range</i>	Between 1842 and 1887	Earlier than <i>West Range</i> and <i>South Front</i> ?

**Table 3.** Chronology of the main structural elements of Bittesby House.

### *East Range*

- 5.8 The earliest element of Bittesby House is the *East Range*, which was probably constructed as a farmhouse in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It is a 2-storey building with a 3-unit linear plan. It is brick-built with Welsh slate covering to the south slope of the gabled roof and clay tiles to the north slope (Photos 6-8).
- 5.9 The brickwork of the south elevation is laid in Flemish bond, whilst the north, east and west elevations are laid in Flemish garden-wall bond. The red/orange coloured bricks are bedded in lime mortar and measure: 8  $\frac{7}{8}$ -9 x 4 $\frac{1}{4}$ - 4 $\frac{3}{8}$  x 2  $\frac{1}{2}$  inches.
- 5.10 Use of the superior Flemish bond for the south wall indicates that this was originally the front elevation of the farmhouse, although the orientation of the building was subsequently reversed with the north elevation later becoming the front. This probably occurred in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; various internal and external details indicate a phase of alteration around the 1930s.
- 5.11 The south elevation has a projecting rendered brick plinth where the ground level is lower to the east, with a chamfered blue brick plinth course, and there is a dentilated brick eaves course. There are three original first floor 3-light window openings with segmental arch heads and later blue brick cills. The window at the west end is partially obscured by the later *Rear Porch* and appears to be a 2-light window, though the curve of the arched head indicates its original proportions. The timber casements are 20<sup>th</sup> century. To the ground storey there are two wide, 4-light windows with cement rendered heads and blue brick cills of 20<sup>th</sup> century date, plus an earlier 2-light window with cambered arch head that has a pegged timber frame with chamfered detailing (Photo 9). To the west of this window is a plank and batten door that opens into the *Rear Porch*. The door has bead edged planking and big

strap hinges on pintles. There is evidence for a blocked, former doorway adjacent to the east ground floor window. The brickwork around this window has clearly been rebuilt and a section of the south wall below the centre window is rendered and lined in imitation of ashlar masonry, which may disguise other alterations.

- 5.12 There is a slate-roofed lean-to against the south elevation, supported on chamfered timber posts seated on chamfered stone blocks (Photo 9). This is likely to have been added in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and was extant by 1842/3 when it is illustrated on the Tithe Award map (ROLLR: Ti/036/1).
- 5.13 The east elevation has a projecting rendered brick plinth with later blue brick plinth course (Photos 5 & 6). There are no openings in this elevation. An internal chimneystack at this end has a single flue serving a fireplace in the ground floor room.
- 5.14 The north elevation is now the front of the *East Range*, with an off-centre doorway reached by a flight of 3 concrete steps (Photos 8 & 22). The partly glazed door has a canopy above, supported on shaped timber brackets. Both door and canopy are clearly inserted into the brickwork of the wall. All but one of the window openings in this elevation has been altered, having cement-rendered lintels, blue brick cills and 20<sup>th</sup> century casements. The first floor 2-light window at the east end has a brick segmental arch head; the blue brick cill and timber casement are later. There is a small blocked opening east of the door, at a high level, that may originally have been a window lighting a staircase. The dentilated brick eaves course matches that on the south front. There is an inserted blue brick damp proof course.
- 5.15 There is an altered or inserted 3-light window with cement-rendered head, blue brick cill and 20<sup>th</sup> century timber casement in the west wall at ground floor level and a small metal-framed first floor window, also with a cement rendered head; the wall above this has been altered (Photo 10).

#### *Interior*

- 5.16 The *East Range* has been used most recently as offices and the décor, lighting and floor coverings are all modern.

- 5.17 The door in the north elevation opens into a small lobby, off which are two reception rooms and an enclosed straight flight staircase rising to the first floor (Photos 11 & 12). A third ground floor room, at the west end, is accessed from the central room (Photos 13 & 14).
- 5.18 The central and east rooms have identical marble fire surrounds of later 19<sup>th</sup> century type; that in the east room is painted. The central room has an exposed chamfered axial ceiling beam. The surround to an under-stair cupboard in this room is of 1930s profile; all skirting throughout the ground floor is recent. The central and east rooms have recent stone tiled floors; the west room has carpet tiles over concrete. The west room was a kitchen or scullery. A range fireplace located at the north-west corner of this room has been altered to create a workspace and although the flue serving this rises through the room above it is truncated within the roof space.
- 5.19 The first floor rooms open off a corridor against the south wall (Photos 15 & 16). The three main rooms have been used most recently as offices, which is reflected in their modern décor and lighting (Photos 17-19).
- 5.20 The floor is quite uneven and, where visible, consists of modern materials, except for an area of gypsum plaster flooring within a cupboard off the corridor (Photo 20). This is likely to have been the composition of the original first floor throughout this range.
- 5.21 Most of the skirting at first floor level is recent, though a few sections of earlier skirting, 3 inches high and with a simple chamfered profile remain. This matches the door surrounds, which have an 'angular' profile (Photo 21). Door surrounds and skirting with identical profiles occur in the home of one of the authors, which was constructed in 1933. The only remaining early doors on the first floor are cupboard doors, which appear to be panelled but have been covered with sheet ply or hardboard; all other internal doors are modern.
- 5.22 The three main rooms have flues passing through them; only the central first floor room appears to have had a fireplace, which is now blocked (Photos 17-19).
- 5.23 A door at the north end of the first floor corridor opens into a small bathroom within the adjoining *Rear Porch*; all fittings are recent.

- 5.24 The roof space of the *East Range* is accessed from a ceiling hatch in the eastern room (visible in Photo 17). The 3-bay roof structure consists of rafter couples supported on side purlins that are carried on the brick cross-walls.
- 5.25 Most of the rafters on the north slope of the roof are late 20<sup>th</sup> century softwood with a bituminous felt covering on which plain clay tiles are laid. The south roof slope has older, oak rafters, some of which are evidently reused timbers (Photo 23).
- 5.26 A number of the purlins are also reused timbers. Within the east bay, one of the purlins is a re-used wall-plate, with a series of bird's-mouths for rafters and an empty lap-dovetail matrix for a tiebeam (Photos 23 & 24). Both of the purlins over the central bay have empty mortices for windbraces at either end, indicating that these timbers formerly served as purlins in a framed roof structure, probably of 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> century date (Photo 25). The purlins over the west bay could not be closely inspected but one of these also appeared to have an empty mortice in it.
- 5.27 A large slate block outside the *East Range* is the upper stone from a cheese press, which is probably 19<sup>th</sup> century in date (Photo 26). In the 1944 Sale Particulars a 'large dairy' is noted, which may have been accommodated within this range (see para 4.41 above).

#### *Main Range*

- 5.28 The *Main Range* of Bittesby House is a double-pile block of near-square plan, corresponding with the RCHME's Class 8 plan type. In the Royal Commission's survey of architectural monuments in North Northamptonshire, it is noted that: 'Square houses of double-pile plan first appear in the area at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. They are often associated with the clergy and minor gentry, and are usually fashionable houses in an up-to-date architectural style. By the 19<sup>th</sup> century the plan was also used for larger farmhouses...' (RCHME 1984, lxiv-lxv).
- 5.29 Bittesby House is an example of the use of the Class 8 plan type for a substantial farmhouse constructed in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, in the late Georgian style. The 1828 construction date of the *Main Range* is provided by an inscription on one of the purlins in the roof space that reads: *Built 1828*. Examination of the fabric, fixtures and fittings of the building raises no questions regarding the authenticity of this inscription, which is likely to represent the year in which construction was completed.



- 5.30 The *Main Range* was built at the south-west corner of the earlier farmhouse (the *East Wing*), the two elements being structurally independent but linked by a separate 2-storey block referred to here as the *Rear Porch*, which was probably also built around 1828 (Figure 16).
- 5.31 The *Main Range* is brick-built with a hipped roof covered in Welsh slate, and is of two storeys plus attic and cellar. The red-orange coloured bricks measure  $9 \times 4\frac{1}{4} \times 4\frac{3}{8}$  inches and are laid in Flemish bond pattern using lime mortar. There is a slightly projecting plinth course in the same brick; a blue brick damp-proof course is a later insertion. The roof has wide eaves supported on paired timber brackets.
- 5.32 The principal elevation of the *Main Range* is the south front (Photo 27). This was remodelled later in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the only part of the original elevation that remains is the recessed first floor section above the central doorway. The window in this section of wall has a rendered flat arched head (probably masking brick soldier coursing), which contrasts with the stone heads of all other (later) windows in this elevation. The 2 over 2 pane sash within this opening is also later. In its original form the south front was probably a plain, symmetrical composition, in keeping with the Georgian styling of the building.
- 5.33 The north elevation appears to be largely as built in 1828, except for the replacement of some window frames, addition of the small *North Range* in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and the recent blocking of one of the ground floor windows (Photo 28). The arrangement of the window openings in this elevation is not precisely symmetrical, reflecting functional rather than purely aesthetic considerations.
- 5.34 There are two multi-pane timber casement windows on the ground floor of the north elevation that appear to be original. These have pegged timber frames, side-hung opening casement lights and flush, lead-covered cills (Photo 29). Two of the first floor windows have similar cills. All of the window openings (except for the attic dormer) have brick cambered arch heads. All first floor windows have later 19<sup>th</sup> century 2 over 2 pane sashes. The blocked ground floor window and the first floor window above this have non-original stone cills.
- 5.35 Lighting the head of the attic stair and the central attic room is a bonneted dormer set into the north slope of the roof (Photo 30). The segmental pediment over this window

is ornamented with close-set shaped timber brackets giving a dentilated appearance. The 3 over 3 pane sash, with slender glazing bars and without horns, appears to be original; sash windows to the principal rooms on the south front may have been glazed in a similar manner in 1828.

- 5.36 An original rear entrance towards the centre of this elevation is now masked by the later *North Range*.
- 5.37 The west elevation is entirely hidden by the later *West Range*.
- 5.38 The east elevation has two original windows, in a corresponding position on the ground and first floors (Photos 5 & 61). These are in the same style as the two early windows in the north elevation, with cambered arch heads, lead-covered cills and multi-pane timber casements. There is a wide cellar light below an iron grating at ground level, lighting the cellar beneath the room at the south-east corner of this range. A substantial 4-panel door at the north end of the east elevation opens into the *Rear Porch*.

#### *Interior*

- 5.39 The ground floor rooms open off a central, stone-flagged hallway, on the east side of which is the principal staircase rising to the first floor (Photos 31-32). The open string, straight flight with winder stair has a ramped mahogany handrail, stick balusters and carved brackets under the tread ends. The balusters are turned around a modest cast iron newel on a curtail step at the foot of the staircase; every seventh baluster is cast iron (Photos 33-34). The form of this staircase is typical of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century (e.g. Hall 2005, 120-1). The side of the staircase is panelled, enclosing the stair descending to the cellar which is accessed from the kitchen.
- 5.40 The principal rooms are on the south side and the original kitchen, which retains this function, occupies the north-east room. The room at the north-west corner has been recently altered to accommodate male and disabled toilets; the window in the north elevation lighting this room was blocked as part of these alterations. At an earlier date a corridor was created within this room, providing access to the *West Wing* added in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

- 5.41 The room at the south-east corner of this range was probably the dining room as there is a door in its north wall opening into the kitchen; it is now the main reception area for the business that occupies the premises (Photo 35). The fireplace in the north wall has a tiled insert and hearth and a timber surround with rebates in its top, presumably for an over-mantel mirror; this is late Victorian or Edwardian. Arch-headed recesses flank the chimneybreast.
- 5.42 The room at the south-west corner of the *Main Range* has a Victorian brown marble fire surround with a modern wood-burning stove within it (Photos 36-37). A bell-pull to summon servants, set into the wall by the fireplace, is still operational. This room has tall skirting and a picture rail that are probably Victorian additions, and a modern ceiling rose. In both of the ground floor southern rooms boxed in ceiling beams mark the position of the original south front wall.
- 5.43 Internal doors within this range are of the 4-panel variety and could be early 19<sup>th</sup> century. These have ebonised beehive knobs and matching key plates. The door at the north end of the entrance corridor is a modern copy of a 4-panel door.
- 5.44 The kitchen at the north-east corner of this range has modern fitted units and tiled floor. A fireplace in the south wall, now blocked, would have accommodated a range for cooking. There is an early recessed cupboard with panelled door to one side of this. The two original windows, in the north and east walls, and the 4-panel door opening into the *Rear Porch* have already been noted (Photo 38). Access to the cellar is via a 4-panel door in the south-west corner of this room.
- 5.45 The northern (back) hallway was altered and extended when the *West Range* was added in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century; the glazed timber partition enclosing a lobby area presumably formed part of this work (Photo 39). Of particular note within the back hallway is the run of 14 servants' bells (2 of which are now missing), each with a plaque denoting the room with which the bell communicated (Photos 40-42). These are: *Front Entrance; Mr Simpson's Room; Bath Room; Children's Room; [Missing]; Spare Room; Young Ladies Room; School Room; Garden Entrance; Library; Dressing Room; Boys Room; Dining Room and Governess Room*. George Simpson is listed as the occupant of Bittesby House in directories between 1888 and 1892 (see Table 2). The servants' bells, a number of which are still operational,

provide an indication of how the rooms within the house were utilised in the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### *First Floor*

- 5.46 The mahogany handrail and balustrade of the staircase are continued to enclose the staircase opening on the first floor landing (Photo 43). This area is lit by the window in the only remaining section of the original south front wall. The two principal bedrooms, on the south side of the house, open off the landing area and have 4-panel doors similar to those on the ground floor of this range. A doorway on the north side of the landing opens onto a corridor from which the other first floor rooms are accessed; the attic stair also opens off this corridor (Photo 44).
- 5.47 All first floor rooms are now used as offices/workspaces.
- 5.48 The two principal southern bedrooms both have painted slate or stone fire surrounds with cast iron inserts. That in the south-east room is a Pantheon pattern hob grate, which is likely to be an original fitting (Photos 45-46). The arch-headed grate with side hobs in the south-west bedroom may be a later 19<sup>th</sup> century replacement (Photos 47-48; Eveleigh 1983, 5; 9). These rooms are quite plain in their styling, having a modest skirting profile and no picture rail or ceiling cornice. Boxed in ceiling beams denote the position of the former south front wall.
- 5.49 The northern first floor rooms have 4-panel doors of similar design, except that the panels are raised and fielded only on their external face. Skirting, where present, is of a similar design to the principal rooms, but of more modest scale.
- 5.50 The fireplaces within the north-east and north-west bedrooms are blocked and their surrounds removed (Photo 49). In the west wall of the north-east room there is an original under-stair cupboard (beneath the attic stair) with a small 4-panel door, and a later cupboard or wardrobe with double doors of 2-panel configuration.

### *Attic*

- 5.51 The 4-panel door that opens onto the attic stair has an early spring latch with brass knob, in addition to a later rim lock (Photo 50). The straight flight with winder staircase is constructed from elm and is unpainted (Photo 51). A simple handrail and balustrade encloses the top of the stairwell (Photo 52).

- 5.52 The staircase opens into the central one of 3 attic rooms, which is lit by the dormer on the north slope of the roof. The floor in this room has been replaced recently with oriented strand board (OSB) sheets. The ceiling and roof slopes were formerly underdrawn with plaster on lath between the exposed purlins, which was removed when the roof was re-laid at some stage. The walls are also plaster on lath.
- 5.53 The outer rooms of the attic are accessed from the central room through bead edged plank and batten doors with wrought iron strap hinges that have wooden cased locks (Photo 53). The outer rooms have no natural lighting and served only for storage.
- 5.54 The east attic room has loose flooring composed of boards up to 15 inches wide (Photos 54-55). Within this space there is an old water tank consisting of a substantial dovetailed pine box with lead lining.
- 5.55 The west attic room has recent sheet flooring and contains modern storage racking. The wire mechanisms by which the servant bells operate are accommodated within this space (Photo 56). Carefully cut into one of the purlins on the west slope of the roof, probably using a small gouge, is the inscription: *Built 1828* (Photo 57). On several of the other purlins there are shipping marks indicating that the timber is imported, probably from the Baltic (Photo 58).
- 5.56 The roof structure of the *Main Range* is carried on two substantial king-post trusses, which also form the walls between the three attic rooms (Photo 54). The two trusses are identical in form. In each the tiebeam is around 10.4m (34 feet) long. The king post is bolted through the tiebeam and has sloping joggles and a raised splayed head that houses a ridge plate. There are double punchions set either side of the king post and a series of raking braces. The principals are notched into the tiebeam and diminish in thickness towards the apex of the truss. Three sets of side purlins are carried over the backs of the principals supported on cleats (see Campbell 2000 for an explanation of technical terminology).
- 5.57 These roof trusses are notable for their very wide span; various 19<sup>th</sup> century writers advocated the use of king-post trusses for roof spans up to 30 feet, with queen-post trusses recommended for wider spans (Peters 1988, 29). Within the rear wing of the former St Peter's Priory in Hinckley, constructed in 1824, was a king-post truss 32 feet wide that had been modified, possibly due to its excessive span for the scantling

of the timber used in its construction (Buckley and Finn 1999). The roof timbers at Bittesby House are of substantial section and display no signs of movement or failure. The length of timber available for the tiebeams may have dictated the north-south dimension of the house.

- 5.58 Due to the present attic storage arrangements which impose limitations on access, the form of the roof trusses is not illustrated in the measured survey of the building. Ideally the storage shelving within the east attic room would be moved in order that that this could be completed and a better photographic record made.

#### *Cellar*

- 5.59 The cellar, beneath the south-east room and hallway of the *Main Range*, is accessed by a straight flight brick staircase from the kitchen. The main room has white painted walls, a brick floor with perimeter drain and various brick thralls with stone shelves (Photo 59). Two ceiling beams support the floor above, one of which is a chamfered timber beam and the other a replacement steel I-beam. The floor above consists of wide butted boards, possibly elm. A timber supporting the fireplace over the north end of this space has an empty pegged mortice in its underside and is evidently reused in this context. This fragment is evidently derived from a timber-framed structure, though its original context and date are unknown.
- 5.60 The smaller west cellar room, with vaulted brick ceiling, is a wine cellar fitted with a series of 6 stone and brick bins (Photo 60).

#### *Rear Porch*

- 5.61 The *Rear Porch* is a small, 2-storey block at the junction of the *Main Range* and *East Wing* (Photo 61). It is brick-built with a hipped slate roof and dentilated brick eaves course. The brickwork of the east front is laid in Flemish bond, whilst the south elevation is an irregular version of the same bond pattern. There is a doorway with cambered arch head in the east front and a window above this with a cement rendered head, chamfered blue brick cill and modern timber casement window. In the south elevation there is a small, blocked cambered arch-headed window at ground storey level.

- 5.62 This range provides a covered access between the *Main Range* and *East Wing*, as well as access to the enclosed yard area at the south-east corner of the house. The first floor room is now a bathroom serving the *East Wing*.
- 5.63 The *Rear Porch* is clearly later than the *East Wing*, partly blocking one of its first floor windows. The south wall of the *Rear Porch* abuts the outer face of the east wall of the *Main Range* and is not tied in to this wall. The porch is therefore also later than the *Main Range*, but was probably built around the same time, c.1828, providing a link between this and the earlier *East Range*, which thereafter accommodated ancillary domestic functions, apparently including the scullery and dairy.

#### *South Front*

- 5.64 Bittesby House was given a new *South Front* in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, sometime before 1887 based on map evidence (Photo 27). The *West Range* was probably constructed at the same time (see below). Alterations to the *South Front* involved the addition of substantial, two-storey square bays, either side of a single-storey porch. The bays were set some way forward of the original south wall line and almost the entire south front of 1828 was taken down, save for the section above the porch.
- 5.65 The brickwork is laid in Flemish bond pattern, with the red-orange coloured bricks measuring 9 x 4<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 2<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches. The bricks are bedded in lime mortar with a beaded joint finish surviving in areas sheltered from the weather (Photo 62).
- 5.66 The bays have tripartite windows at each level, with a wide central sash and narrower outer sashes; the ground storey windows are taller than those on the first floor. The windows have chamfered stone mullions, heads and cills. The mullions also have a hollow-section detail along their length. Some of the sash frames appear to be modern replacements. The bays have hipped slate roofs and wide bracketed eaves, in the same style as the *Main Range*.
- 5.67 The slightly recessed, flat roofed porch has a continuous stone band with roll moulding forming the head of the doorway and flanking lights, with a chamfered section over each of the openings (Photo 63). The sidelights have chamfered stone cills and sash windows with leaded lights. The 6-panel door has a chamfered brick

surround and leaded over-light. Inside the porch a glazed timber inner doorway opens into the main hallway (Photo 31).

### *West Range*

- 5.68 The *West Range* is a large L-shaped block that was added in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, before 1887 based on map evidence (Photos 64-65). It is constructed in the same style and materials as the *South Front* and these two elements appear to be contemporary. The brickwork of the walls is laid in Flemish bond pattern and the bricks correspond in size and colour to those of the *South Front* (see above). The hipped roof is covered in Welsh slate and has wide eaves with paired brackets. The junction of this roof with that of the *Main Range* is rather awkward.
- 5.69 Windows in the north and south elevations are 2 over 2 pane sashes with stone heads and sills, symmetrically arranged. There is a similar first floor window in the west elevation, below which there is a large canted bay with stone detailing and a slate-covered roof.
- 5.70 A door on the west side, in the angle of the 'L', has chamfered brick sides and a stone head. The door has seven panels, in the format 1 over 3 over 3, and an over-light with similar glazing to that of the *South Front* porch. This is the *Garden Entrance* named on the run of servants' bells.

### *Interior*

- 5.71 On the ground floor there are two rooms within the *West Range*, separated by a corridor leading to the *Garden Entrance*. The larger southern room is heated by a fireplace in its north wall which has a white marble surround and an arch plate register grate (Photos 66-67). This room has tall angular skirting, a picture rail, ceiling cornice and wooden panelling below the windows. Internal doors throughout the *West Range* are consistently 7 panel doors, in 1 over 3 over 3 configuration, with beehive doorknobs and matching key plates similar to those within the *Main Range*.
- 5.72 This room was presumably the *Billiard Room* mentioned in the 1944 Sale Particulars, though this was not its original function, based on the evidence of the servants' bells (perhaps originally the *Library*).



- 5.73 The smaller north room has a blocked corner fireplace, panelling beneath the window and ceiling cornice, though no picture rail (Photo 68).
- 5.74 On the first floor, there are 3 rooms within the *West Range*, off a central corridor. The smallest, unheated room can be accessed both from the corridor and via an inserted doorway from the principal bedroom in the *Main Range*; this was perhaps a dressing room or bathroom (Photo 69). There is no longer a bathroom on the first floor of the main part of Bittesby House.
- 5.75 The other two first floor rooms would have been bedrooms and as elsewhere within this range have tall angular skirting, timber panelling beneath the windows, ceiling cornices and 7-panel doors (Photos 70-71). In both of these rooms the fireplace has been blocked and the surround removed.
- 5.76 The roof space of the *West Range* was not accessible.

#### *North Range*

- 5.77 The *North Range* is a small, single-storey block added to the north elevation of the *Main Range* in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, before 1887 based on map evidence. This seems to have been built as a porch, but was subsequently converted into a WC and is now the female toilets. This is the *Cloak Room with Wash Hand Basin (H. and C.)*, and *W.C.* noted in the 1944 Sale Particulars.
- 5.78 This range is constructed in brick laid in Flemish bond pattern and roofed in Welsh slate (Photo 72). The bricks measure 9 x 4½ x 2¾ inches and have a very weathered, pitted appearance. There is a chamfered blue brick plinth course and decorative timber bargeboards to the north elevation. The window in the north elevation has a brick segmental arch head, stone cill and 2 over 2 pane sash. This is accommodated within an earlier, blocked doorway, which is infilled with red-orange coloured brickwork. There is a small, high-set window with stone head and cill in the recessed part of the north elevation, lighting the WC.

#### ***Ancillary Buildings***

- 5.79 The 1944 Sale Particulars distinguish between a series of ancillary buildings arranged around a courtyard adjoining the house and the farm buildings:

*'Adjoining the House is a Courtyard with Three-stall Nag Stable, Garage, Saddle Room and Coal Place, and in close proximity is the Orchard and the productive Kitchen Garden.'*

- 5.80 The *Garage* and *Saddle Room* are accommodated within a formerly detached building on the north side of the *East Range*. The low, brick-built structure with shallow pitched, slate-covered roof appears to have been built as a cart shed or trap house, with 3 sets of double doors in its east elevation, although the southern pair of doors is now missing (Photos 73-74). This range may date to the late 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century. A portion of the west wall has been rebuilt slightly further to the west of its original line at some stage, probably in the 20<sup>th</sup> century to accommodate a motorcar that was otherwise too long to be housed within the building. The north bay was the *Saddle Room* with a plank and batten door and timber framed window in the east elevation. The interior has a brick floor, the remains of bead-edged matchboard to the walls and a plaster on lath ceiling (Photos 75-76). There was formerly a stove set against the south wall.
- 5.81 This building, now in a poor state of repair, is shown on the Tithe Award map of 1842/3 as a detached structure. By 1887 the area between this building and the *East Range* had been infilled with the construction of a brick and slate-roofed shed that probably served as the *Coal Place* mentioned in the 1944 Sale Particulars. This has a higher roofline than the *Garage/Saddle Room* range and a door and window in its east and west elevations (Photo 73).
- 5.82 The *Three-stall Nag Stable* referred to in the 1944 Sale Particulars is located to the north-east of Bittesby House (Photo 77). This is brick-built and roofed in clay tiles with ridge ventilators. All openings are in the south front (Photo 78). At the west end is a loose box with stable door and a small, high-set 2-light timber window. To the east of this is a second stable door opening into what was formerly a pair of stalls, each with a timber sliding shuttered window. Within the loosebox there is a corner hayrack but no other fittings (Photo 79). The stall dividers have been removed from the larger stable, over which there are two principal roof trusses with raking braces and side purlins carried on cleats over the backs of the principals (Photo 80). This building probably dates to the late 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century and seems originally to have extended further to the east. It is notable for the fact that the roofline and

brickwork follow the slope of the ground rather than being laid horizontally. There is a later lean-to addition against the north side of the stables.

- 5.83 There is a small, detached single-storey outbuilding located to the south of the *East Range*. This is brick-built with a Welsh slate roof covering and has doors in its north, south and west elevations (Photo 81). The interior was not accessible and appears to have been altered recently. This structure was built between 1842/3 and 1887. On the 1903 Ordnance Survey map it is shown as being divided into a series of 6 small rooms. This block may have accommodated a number of earth closets for the use of servants and farm hands.

### ***The Associated Farm Buildings***

- 5.84 The farm buildings arranged around the yard immediately adjacent to Bittesby House were examined as part of the survey. The buildings associated with the eastern farmyard, which are in separate ownership, were not accessible.
- 5.85 Buildings along the north side of the farmyard immediately adjacent to Bittesby House are recent in date (i.e. of later 20<sup>th</sup> or early 21<sup>st</sup> century date) and of no historic architectural significance. On the south side of this yard are a series of traditional buildings, all but one of which have recently been converted into office accommodation (Figure 20; Photo 82). The interpretation of the earlier, agricultural functions of these buildings is based on the 1944 Sale Particulars (ROLLR Ref: DE3931) and a photograph in the 2003 Sale Particulars that shows the buildings prior to conversion. From west to east these buildings were a barn with granary over, a cow house and a range housing 'Five enclosed Pig Styes or Calf Places with Workshop at back and Granary over' (ROLLR Ref: DE3931). All of these buildings date from before the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and are illustrated on the 1842/3 Tithe Award map.
- 5.86 The *Barn with Granary Over* is two storey brick building roofed in plain clay tiles (Photo 83). The bricks are laid in Flemish Garden Wall bond. There is a dentilated brick eaves course on the north and south elevations. Ground and first floor window openings in the north elevation, facing into the yard, are original. The ground floor window has a segmental brick arch head, a chamfered blue brick cill and modern timber casement window. The first floor window, which also has a modern frame, is tucked in under the eaves. There are ground and first floor windows in the south

elevation that have timber lintels above and modern casements; these may be inserted openings. In the west gable end there is a large, off-centre opening with a modern glazed timber insert and door. The interior is an open plan office space with a mezzanine level reached by a modern timber staircase in the south-west corner. The roof is supported by a king-post truss of 19<sup>th</sup> century type (Photo 84). The purlins are carried on cleats over the backs of the principals.

- 5.87 The former *Cow House* is identified as such based on its appearance in a photograph included in the 2003 Sale Particulars when it had 3 wide doorways in its north elevation with split doors, which now have glazed timber inserts (Photo 85). The 3-bay, single-storey building is constructed in brick and roofed with plain clay tiles. The roof was replaced and the north elevation largely rebuilt when this range was renovated after 2003. The interior is an open-plan office space with toilets and a kitchen at the west end (Photo 86). At the bay intervals are king-post roof trusses of 19<sup>th</sup> century type. Two sets of purlins are carried on cleats over the backs of the principals. A 2-bay structure adjoining the south side of this range was newly built after 2003 (seen in Photo 82).
- 5.88 At the east end of this run of buildings is an unusual structure described in the 1944 Sale Particulars as *Five enclosed Pig Styes or Calf Places with Workshop at back and Granary over*. This is brick-built, the brick laid in Flemish Garden Wall bond, and is roofed in plain clay tiles to the north slope of the roof and corrugated asbestos to the south slope. This may have been built as a conventional 4-bay cow house or stable, but was subsequently altered with the addition of 5 small enclosed stalls on its north side (Photo 87). Each stall has a low, semi-circular arch headed doorway with ledged and braced plank door on pintle hinges in its north elevation, except for that at the east end which has a full height doorway. Four of the stalls have timber slatted windows adjacent to the door, except for the second stall from the west end that has a cross ventilator. Each stall also has a small, high-set timber slatted vent in its south wall, a brick floor, whitewashed walls and a feeding trough against the inside face of the north wall (Photo 88).
- 5.89 The larger southern part of this building, described as a *Workshop* in 1944 is now a single undivided space lit by 4 windows in the south elevation and accessed by way of a door at the west end of the north wall. Two of the windows in the south elevation were formerly doorways (the first and third from the west end) and there are

indications that the interior was formerly divided by timber stall partitions (Photo 89-90). A series of transverse beams at ceiling level are the tie-beams of roof trusses at the bay intervals. These also support a first floor that is partly gypsum plaster and partly timber. The loft above, accessed by way of a fixed iron ladder at the west end, served as a grain store and is lit by a window in the east gable wall. The 3 principal roof trusses have raking struts rising from the tiebeam to the principals (Photo 91). Two sets of purlins are supported on cleats over the backs of the principals.

- 5.90 It is likely that the 5 enclosed stalls were built to house young calves, rather than pigs (or dogs as has also been suggested). In this region accommodation for pigs invariably included an adjoining enclosed yard and indeed, the historic map evidence indicates that a pair of pigsties was formerly located against the end of this building, the outline of which are visible on the external face of the east wall (Photo 92).

### **Bittesby Lodge**

- 5.91 Bittesby Lodge lies about 400m to the west-south-west of Bittesby House and stands alongside the former estate entrance on Watling Street (A5), at NGR: SP 5004 8509.

#### *Historical Development*

- 5.92 There is no indication of the lodge on the 1842/3 Bittesby Tithe Award map and the property is first shown on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map, published in 1887 (Figure 9).
- 5.93 This map illustrates a number of changes that had taken place within the Bittesby House estate during the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. These included the construction of a dog-legged, tree-lined drive that extended westwards from Bittesby House to Watling Street, closely following the boundaries to field nos. 25 and 26 shown on the 1842/3 Tithe Award map. Bittesby Lodge was then constructed to the north of this drive alongside its junction with Watling Street.
- 5.94 This new drive and lodge may be part of the overall aggrandisement of the Bittesby House estate during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as illustrated by the extensions to Bittesby House itself.
- 5.95 The lodge and drive are then shown on the subsequent Ordnance Survey maps throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, although the drive no longer serves Bittesby House. The

only significant change to Bittesby Lodge was the construction of the Emmanuel Cottages on land to the side (north east) of the lodge in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These cottages are of no architectural or historic merit.

#### *Description of the Building*

- 5.96 As it was not possible to gain access to the property, this description is based on an external visual appraisal from Watling Street (Photo 93).
- 5.97 The lodge, originally built as a pair of semi-detached dwellings, reflects the improving status of Bittesby House and its occupants. It is of two storeys with a simple rectangular plan form, under a pitched roof running along the length of the building, to which has recently been added a projecting single-storey gabled porch with a central doorway. The porch presumably masks two original entrances.
- 5.98 The lodge is built in red brick laid in a Flemish bond, but it was intended to have some visual presence with the use of some decorative polychromatic brickwork to embellish its appearance. The building has a string course of blue brick headers at the ground and first floor cill levels, and deeper string courses, consisting of two courses of blue bricks sandwiched between a single course of cream brick headers in line with the ground floor lintels and at eaves level. Contrasting blue and cream bricks, laid on end, form segmental arches over the ground and first floor windows.
- 5.99 However the lodge has undergone a number of alterations, most likely in the later half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The original windows have been replaced with upvc units; the roof fitted with concrete roof tiles and the rainwater goods are now plastic. More substantial changes to the fabric and appearance of the building include the construction of the large brick and tile porch on the front elevation and in the end gable to Watling Street, an original doorway appears to have been altered to form a window, and a second window has been reduced in height with the original cill being raised above four courses of brick commons.

#### **Bittesby Cottages**

- 5.100 Bittesby Cottages lie about 200m to the east-north-east of Bittesby House, standing alongside the former estate drive to Mere Lane (NGK: SP 5047 8552).

*Historical Development*

- 5.101 The cottages are not shown on the 1842/3 Bittesby Tithe Award map and are first illustrated on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map published in 1887 (Figure 9).
- 5.102 This map illustrates a number of changes that had taken place within the Bittesby House estate during the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. These included the re-alignment of the track that ran in a general south-east-north-west alignment between Mere Lane and a tunnel beneath the railway embankment as shown on the Tithe Award map.
- 5.103 This track originally ran alongside a small watercourse that marked the south-eastern boundary of field no. 23. However during the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century this track was realigned to cut through field no. 36 to provide a more direct access to Bittesby House from the east, from Mere Lane.
- 5.104 This new drive and cottages may be part of the overall aggrandisement of the Bittesby House estate during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as illustrated by the extensions to Bittesby House itself.
- 5.105 The realigned drive and cottages are shown on the 1887 Ordnance Survey map and then on subsequent maps throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century without substantial changes.

*Description of the Building*

- 5.106 As it was not possible to gain access to the cottages, this description is based on an external visual appraisal from the existing access farm track (Photo 94).
- 5.107 This property was originally built as a pair of semi-detached cottages, with a T-shaped floor plan with a rectangular block to the rear and a pair of projecting gables to the front elevation, with the entrance door situated in the rear block alongside the projecting gables. The properties also have a slate roof with a large single chimney stack, with eight pots, through the centre of the building. The front elevation of the gables have a pair of casement windows on the ground and first floors with a brick segmental arch over, and a pair of moulded brick stringcourses run between the ground and first floor windows.
- 5.108 The cottages have undergone some alterations with the installation of modern multi-pane casement windows and a pitched roof porch over the entrance door.

## 6. DISCUSSION

- 6.1 The earliest part of Bittesby House is the *East Range*, which was probably constructed in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century to house a tenant farmer on the Bittesby estate owned by John Towneley. Thomas Burrows is named as the principal tenant in 1744 and successive generations of the Burrows family occupied this position until 1827. The *East Range* is presumably the building illustrated on the 1777 Prior map and the 1787 Cary map.
- 6.2 Various re-used timbers incorporated into the roof of the *East Range* are derived from an older, framed roof structure. These timbers may have come from an earlier building located on or near the same site.
- 6.3 This observation may be supported by the findings from the fieldwalking survey undertaken by MOLA in 2014, which identified a concentration of 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century pottery in the northern part of field 19, immediately to the south-east of Bittesby House. This spread of pottery was thought to indicate the location of a domestic dumping/waste area, indicating an occupation site in the near vicinity (Dindol 2014, 16; Figure 6). Although an alternative interpretation of this pottery, as part of a general manuring scatter, has been suggested based on the results of a subsequent archaeological evaluation (Albion Archaeology 2016, 32). Trial trenching of this area in 2015 did not locate any corresponding 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> century features, though Iron Age remains were encountered (Albion Archaeology 2015, 10; Trenches 21 & 22).
- 6.4 Documentary sources indicate that in 1680/1 there were two small houses situated in 'about the middle of' the Bittesby estate (ROLLR Ref: 23D63/1). One of these, occupied by the shepherd Joseph Pywell, was described as an 'old little house' and the other, occupied by William Almy, the farm bailiff, as a 'little new-built house'; both are likely to have been timber-framed buildings. It is tempting to suggest that one of these houses may have been located in the vicinity of the present Bittesby House and was taken down when the extant *East Wing* was constructed in the latter half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, reusing some of the roof timbers, though this cannot be proven.
- 6.5 Early 19<sup>th</sup> century maps show a number of buildings in the vicinity of the present Bittesby House. The 1813 Ordnance Survey drawing shows a cluster of buildings arranged on a loose courtyard plan (Figure 5). The 1826 Greenwood map shows a



quite different, linear arrangement of buildings and it is difficult to reconcile the evidence of these two maps (Figure 6). The Ordnance Survey drawing is probably the more reliable of the two, though both are at a small scale which limits their value in terms of identifying individual buildings with confidence.

- 6.6 Some of the extant farm buildings on the north-east side of Bittesby House are likely have been built at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> or early in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, including the stable block, cart shed/trap house with saddle room and the barn with granary over.
- 6.7 An inscription cut into one of the roof timbers of the *Main Range* of Bittesby House reads '*Built 1828*'. The double pile plan form of this range was relatively long-lived, having been introduced towards the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and remaining current throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> and well into the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The architectural styling, materials and internal fixtures and fittings are all consistent with a construction date in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and offer no reason to doubt the authenticity of the inscribed date. The original principal staircase and the attic stair remain and there are one or two first floor fireplaces that are also likely to be original. There are a good series of 4-panel doors in this part of the house, the form of which reflects the relative status of the rooms they open on to. The king-post roof trusses are of an unusually wide span but are consistent with a construction date of 1828.
- 6.8 The *Main Range* is likely to have been built by Peregrine Edward Towneley in 1828 for an incoming tenant, following the death of John Burrows in the previous year which brought to an end the long Burrows family tenancy. It is probable that the new tenant in 1828 was John Bond, who already leased land in Bittesby and is listed as the occupant of Bittesby House 14 years later, in 1842. The Bond family had a long association with Bittesby House, for at least 50 years if the period in which Charles John Bond's father-in-law was tenant is included.
- 6.9 The *Rear Porch*, which may have been added in 1828, or soon afterwards, provided a link between the newly built *Main Range* and the earlier *East Wing* which thereafter became the scullery, dairy and servants' accommodation. It is probably because this earlier range existed, and was retained, that the outer attic rooms within the *Main Range* were not used as servants' bedrooms. These rooms seem only ever to have been used for storage, evidenced by their loose floorboards and lack of underdrawn ceilings and natural light.

- 6.10 The 1842/3 Tithe Award map shows the *Main Range* in its original form, with a simple, near-square plan, adjoining the south-west corner of the *East Range* (Figure 7). The rear porch and lean-to covered walkway were both extant by this date. This map also shows a series of farm buildings arranged around two yards. A significant number of these buildings are likely to have provided accommodation for cattle, reflecting the importance of cattle to the economy of the farm at that date. The cow houses in the yard closest to Bittesby House have not survived intact, though are recorded in the 1944 Sale Particulars. A series of five enclosed pens facing into this yard on its south side are described in the 1944 Sale Particulars as 'enclosed Pig Styes or Calf Places'. The form of these is not typical of the accommodation usually provided for pigs and they were probably constructed to house young cattle, involving the adaptation of an earlier building (Figure 20). A barn and granaries also formed part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century agricultural building stock, demonstrating the contribution of arable production to the farm economy at that time.
- 6.11 Although there is no access from Watling Street (the A5) shown on the 1842/3 Tithe Award map there almost certainly was a driveway on this side of the house, evidenced by the carriage turning circle outside the south front that terminates incongruously at a field boundary (Figure 7). It is highly improbable that visitors to Bittesby House were driven through the farmyard on route to the house. Direct access from Watling Street is shown on earlier and later maps. It is not clear at what date the associated avenue of chestnut and lime trees was established; these are first illustrated on the 1887 Ordnance Survey map, but may have been planted rather earlier in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- 6.12 Bittesby House was substantially enlarged and updated in the later 19<sup>th</sup> century, with the construction of a new *South Front* and *West Wing*. These additions had been completed by 1887 based on map evidence, as had the *North Wing*, which may have been built at a slightly earlier date to judge from the brickwork used in its construction. The *North Wing* appears originally to have been a porch but was subsequently converted into a W.C.
- 6.13 The *South Front* and *West Wing* appear to have formed a single construction phase. These additions may have been made for George Simpson when he took over the tenancy in the 1880s. George Bond is listed as the tenant in the 1884 edition of

*Kelly's Directory* and George Simpson is first listed in the 1888 edition; it is possible that the improvements to the house were made in the intervening period (Table 2).

- 6.14 There are discrepancies in the 1888 editions of *Kelly's Directory* and *Wright's Directory* in terms of the tenant and the stated value of the property (Table 2). Whilst directories are not always reliable and often repeat outdated information from earlier editions, it is notable that there is a difference in the value of the Bittesby House estate of approximately £165 between these two entries, representing an increase in value of over 15%, which may reflect improvements to the house undertaken at around that time.
- 6.15 The surviving servants' bells within the back hall of Bittesby House provide a useful indication of the function of the various rooms following enlargement of the house and also offer some indication the household structure towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- 6.16 Relatively few changes appear to have been made to the fabric and interior layout of the main part of Bittesby House since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, most significant of which have been the recent alterations to the sanitary provisions associated with the conversion from a private residence into office accommodation after the 2003 sale. This involved the removal of the first floor bathroom, changes to the layout of the ground floor north-west room of the *Main Range* to accommodate staff toilets and blocking of one of the windows in the north elevation at this point. Other windows have had their frames replaced.
- 6.17 The *East Wing*, which is the oldest part of Bittesby House, has been subject to a number of phases of alteration. Following construction of the *Main Range* in 1828, the *East Wing* seems to have been converted into a scullery and dairy with servants' accommodation on the first floor. In the 1930s the orientation of the building was reversed with the north elevation becoming the front; the north front door dates to this period. Many of the windows were replaced and the staircase may have been repositioned at the same time. These alterations seem to have been associated with the conversion of the former service wing back into a self-contained dwelling. Conversion of the building into office accommodation after 2003 involved replacement of the gypsum plaster first floor, changes to various windows,

installation of modern doors throughout, alterations to the range fireplace in the ground floor west room, a new bathroom and other cosmetic changes.

- 6.18 The agricultural buildings associated with Bittesby House have been subject to alteration and replacement over the course of the last two centuries. Of the remaining early buildings, the stable, cart shed/trap house and the calf place/workshop are the best preserved. The former barn with granary over and the adjoining building have been converted into office accommodation in recent years.
- 6.19 Assessment of the exteriors of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Bittesby Lodge and Bittesby Cottages suggests that these remain largely as built, except for the replacement of windows and the addition of a porch in the case of Bittesby Lodge. The extent of any internal alterations is unknown.
- 6.20 Following the enclosure of Bittesby and eviction of most of the population in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century, the former township was run as an estate pasture-farm with a principal tenant, or bailiff, appointed by the absentee landlord to manage the estate, subject to the terms of a lease and in return for a fixed annual payment to the landlord. The bailiff may have had some degree of flexibility in how the estate was managed, as long as the annual payments to the landlord were met. Documentary sources indicate that, in addition to the bailiff, there were also a small number other tenants resident on the Bittesby estate from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards (Table 1). A total of 3 households at Bittesby are indicated in 1524/5 and 1572. A document of 1640 refers to one tenement and in 1680/1 there were two houses at Bittesby, one occupied by the farm bailiff, William Almy, and the other by the shepherd, Joseph Pywell. It is hard to reconcile the figure of 10 messuages referred to in fines of 1619 and 1620 with the evidence for the number of households on the estate before and after that date and it is suggested that these fines may relate to decayed properties within the depopulated village. There was only one house by the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, based on Nichols' account, which the early map evidence indicates was in the vicinity of the present Bittesby House (Nichols 1810, 117).
- 6.21 Parts of the Bittesby estate were let to other local farmers as grazing land for sheep flocks and later cattle, which is indicated in surviving documents and is also reflected in some of the fieldnames, which include personal names of individuals resident in surrounding villages and the nearby town of Lutterworth (Cox 2011, 26). When

cereal prices were high pasture was ploughed up for arable use and subsequently returned to pasture when it became advantageous to do so. The accommodation provided for the estate tenants, which was the responsibility of the landlord, appears to have been modest prior to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Both the house occupied by Joseph Pywell and William Almy's house, which was newly-built 1680/1, are described as 'little' houses. The *East Wing* of Bittesby House, constructed in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, is also of modest proportions. It was not until the early 19<sup>th</sup> century that there seems to have been major investment in the building stock, including both the house and agricultural buildings.

- 6.22 There is no explicit evidence to indicate the date at which the medieval village site was finally abandoned. It is possible that in the late 15<sup>th</sup> and early 16<sup>th</sup> centuries the Salisbury family, as principal tenants, along with any other tenants who remained, resided within the former village site.
- 6.23 It is a common enough pattern within deserted medieval settlements for the manorial holding to become the only farmhouse, with Knaptoft being a local example within the Lutterworth area. At the deserted medieval settlement of Eye Kettleby in north-east Leicestershire, which was enclosed and depopulated in the late 15<sup>th</sup> or early 16<sup>th</sup> century, there was a single tenant in the 17<sup>th</sup> century who occupied the former manor house. This was eventually demolished in the third quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and replaced by a modest farmhouse nearby.
- 6.24 It is unlikely however that any of Bittesby's medieval lords were ever resident there and no reference has been noted in the documentary sources to a dwelling of manorial status (e.g. a principal messuage), which might have persisted as a focus of occupation in the post-enclosure period. It is possible therefore that the former village site had been abandoned by the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century and a new tenant farmhouse established elsewhere on the estate.
- 6.25 According to Burton, writing in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, Bittesby was by then 'long since depopulated' with 'not one house remaining' (Burton 1622, 42). This presumably refers specifically to the former village site rather than the township as a whole and it is likely that there was a house, or houses, elsewhere on the estate at that date, as discussed above (para. 6.20). The description of Joseph Pywell's house in 1680/1 as 'a little old house' suggests that this may have been standing in the early 17<sup>th</sup>

century, when Burton was writing (ROLLR Ref: 23D63/1). This house was presumably not therefore on the site of the medieval village.

- 6.26 It has been suggested that Bittesby House represents one of many dispersed historic farmsteads scattered along Watling Street (Usher 2015b, 40). Ostensibly Bittesby House in its enclosed landscape setting may resemble these later post-enclosure farmsteads however the process by which it arrived at this point is quite different. The enclosure of Bittesby occurred at a much earlier date, before the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, which was probably influenced by its small size and status as a parish liberty or township. Population decline in the 15<sup>th</sup> century may have had a disproportionately greater impact on the viability of small settlements such as this (Dyer 2010, 29-30).
- 6.27 At the same time the small size of townships like Bittesby made them suitable for enclosure as single farms, a process that was more easily accomplished where they were held in single ownership (Jones 2010, 26). The conversion of whole townships into estate pasture-farms is a recognised characteristic of this early phase of enclosure in the Lutterworth region (Goodacre 1994, 94).
- 6.28 The Historic Building Survey provides a detailed record of Bittesby House and its associated buildings, considering the development of these structures within their wider historical and landscape setting and the appraisal of these buildings suggests that they are of local interest only and are not of sufficient architectural or historic interest to warrant designation as statutorily listed buildings.

## **7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

- 7.1 The project was commissioned by CgMs Consulting Ltd, on behalf of IDI Gazeley Ltd and was monitored by Dr Ramona Usher on behalf of CgMs. Information provided by Dr Ramona Usher and Alexandra Thornton is acknowledged with gratitude.
- 7.2 This report has been prepared by Stephen Bradwell, Neil Finn and Miriam Holland for Trigpoint Conservation & Planning Ltd, in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with Richard Clark, Principal Archaeologist for Leicestershire County Council.

## **8. ARCHIVE**

- 8.1 The project archive consisting of annotated survey drawings, field notes, colour digital photographs and photographic catalogue will be deposited with Leicestershire Museums Service.

## **9. PUBLICATION**

- 9.1 A summary of the findings of the project will be submitted to the editor of the *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* for inclusion in the annual roundup of archaeological work in Leicestershire and Rutland.
- 9.2 The full report will be made available via the Archaeology Data Service's OASIS website.

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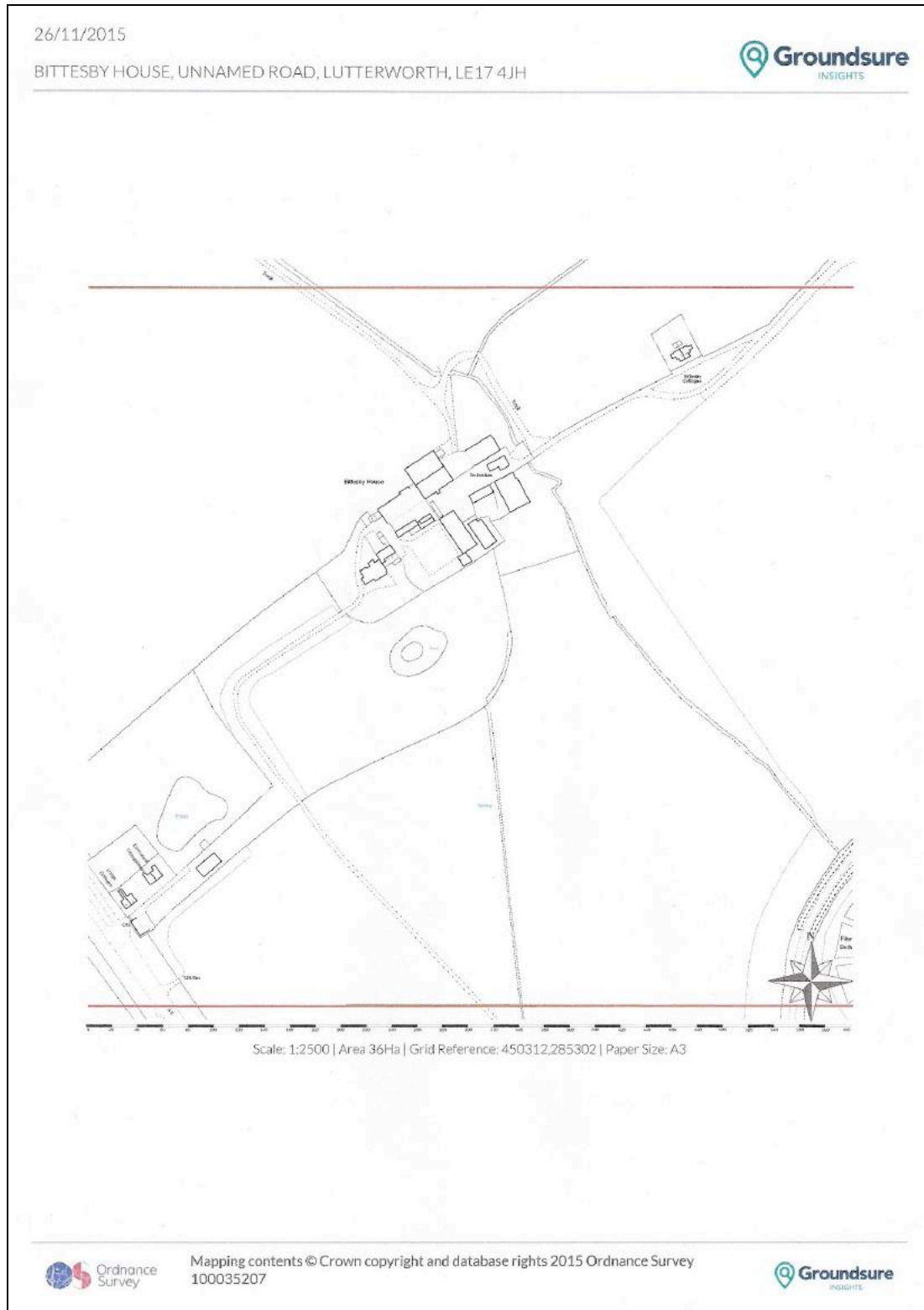
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Welding, J.D., 1984. *Leicestershire in 1777: An Edition of John Prior's Map of Leicestershire with an introduction and commentary by members of the Leicestershire Industrial History Society*. Leicestershire Libraries and Information Service.



**Figure 1.** General Location Plan. Bittesby House and deserted village site circled in red.  
Based on Ordnance Survey Landranger Map sheet 140. Grid = 1Km squares.



**Figure 2.** Location Plan showing Bittesby House, Bittesby Lodge and Bittesby Cottages.

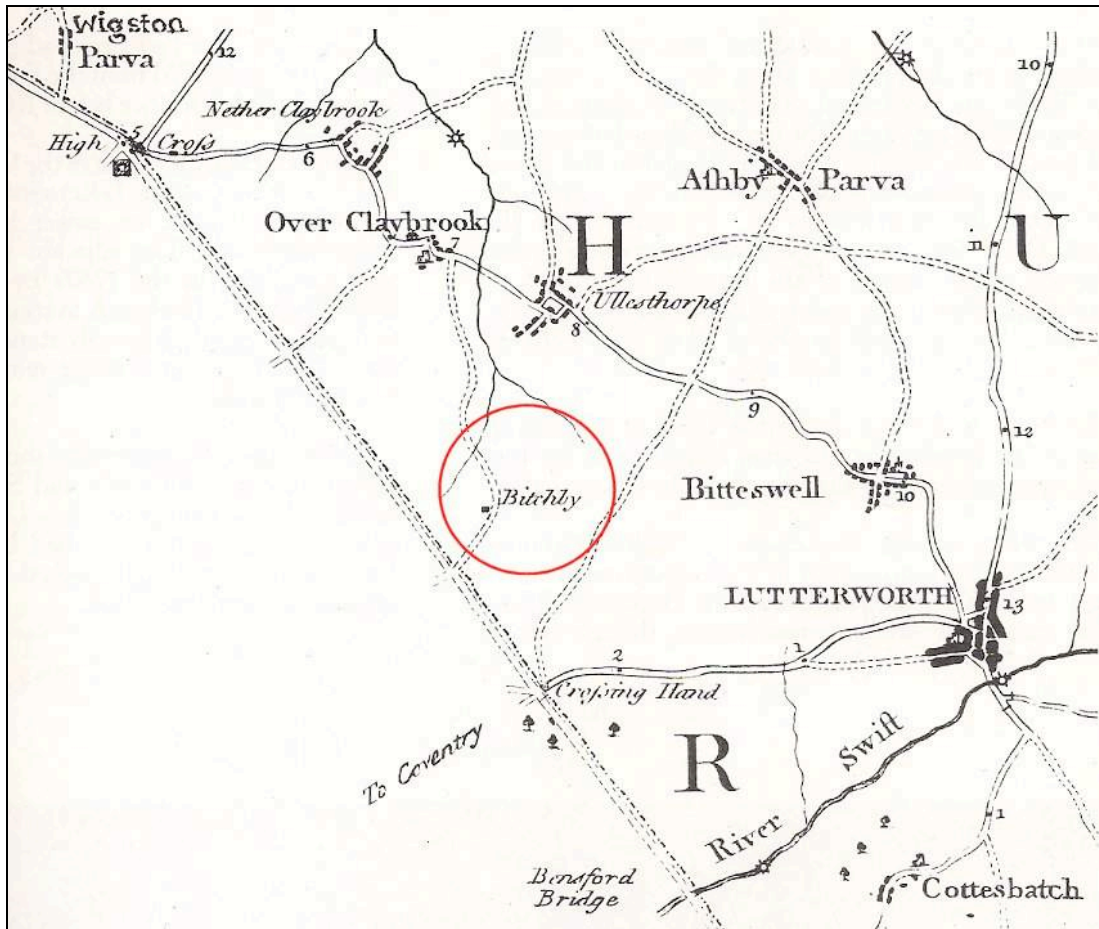


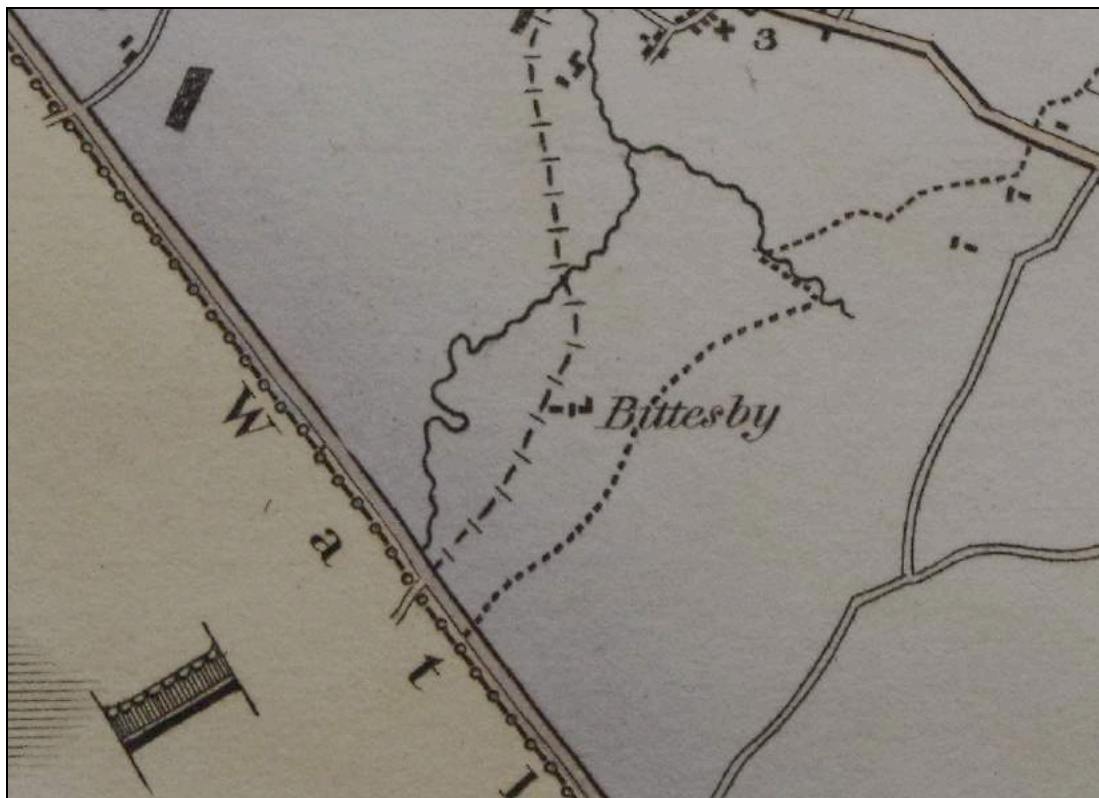
Figure 3. Detail of 1777 Prior Map of Leicestershire, Bittesby circled (Welding 1984, 44).



Figure 4. Detail of 1787 Cary Map of the County of Leicester.



**Figure 5.** Detail of 1813 Ordnance Survey Drawing Sheet 260 Rugby, Bittesby circled.



**Figure 6.** Detail of 1828 Greenwood Map of Leicestershire.

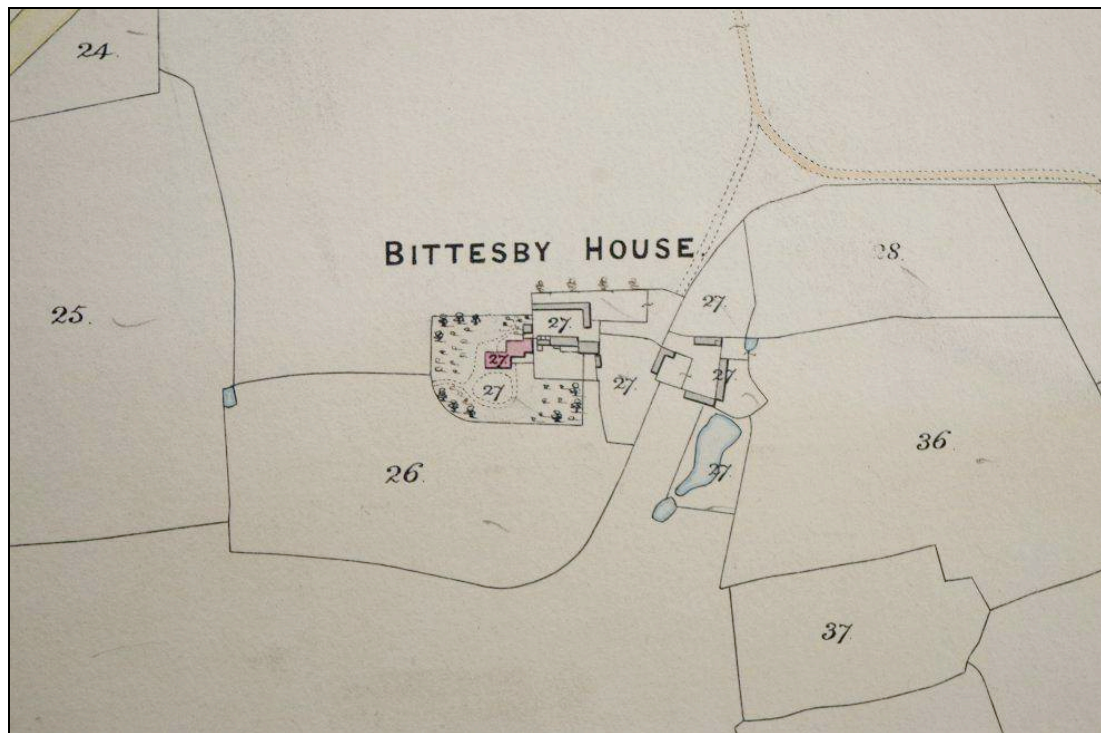


Figure 7. Detail of Bittesby House from 1842/3 Tithe Award Map.

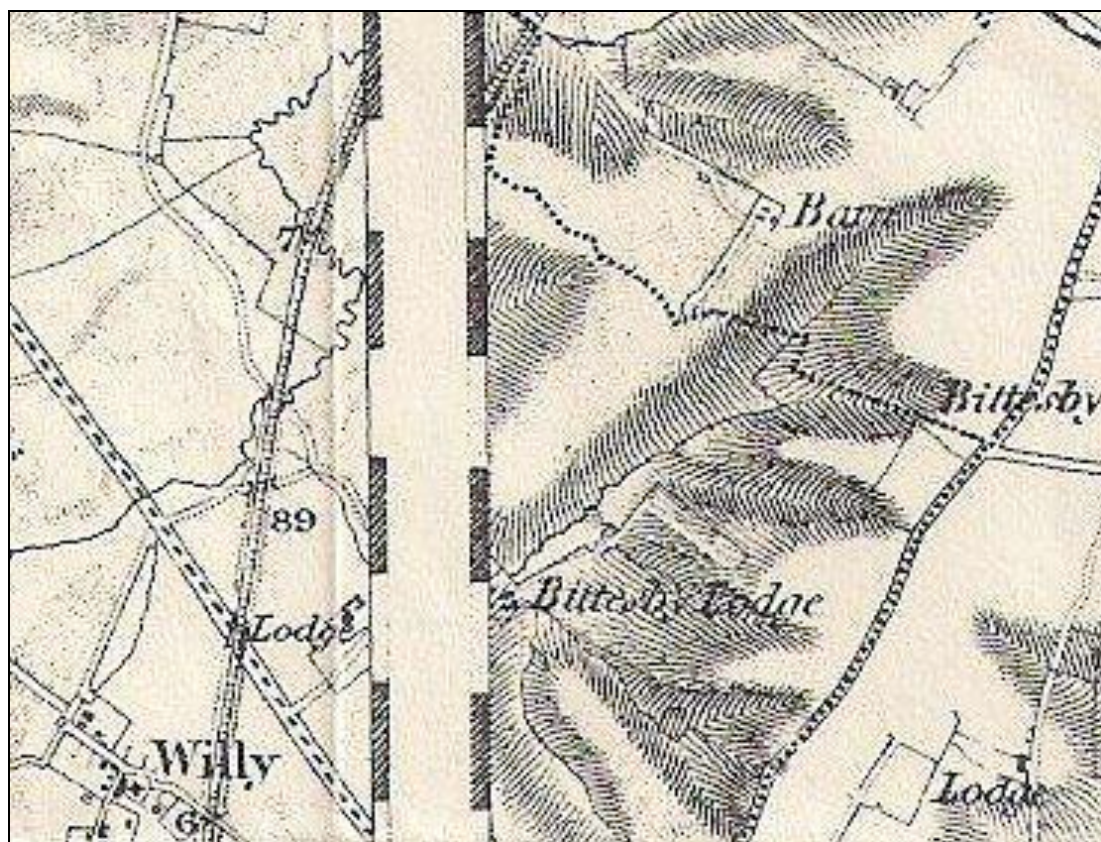


Figure 8. Detail of 1860s Ordnance Survey Old Series Map Sheet 43, SE & SW quarters.

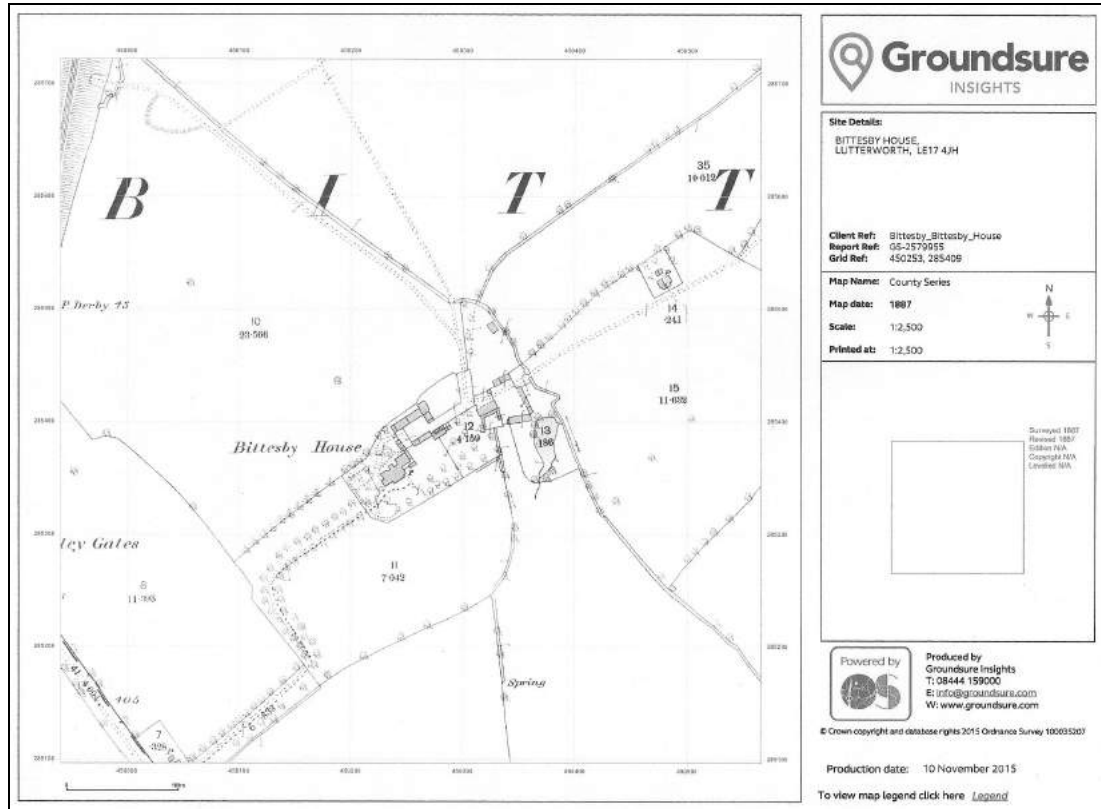


Figure 9. Detail of 1887 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 Scale Map.

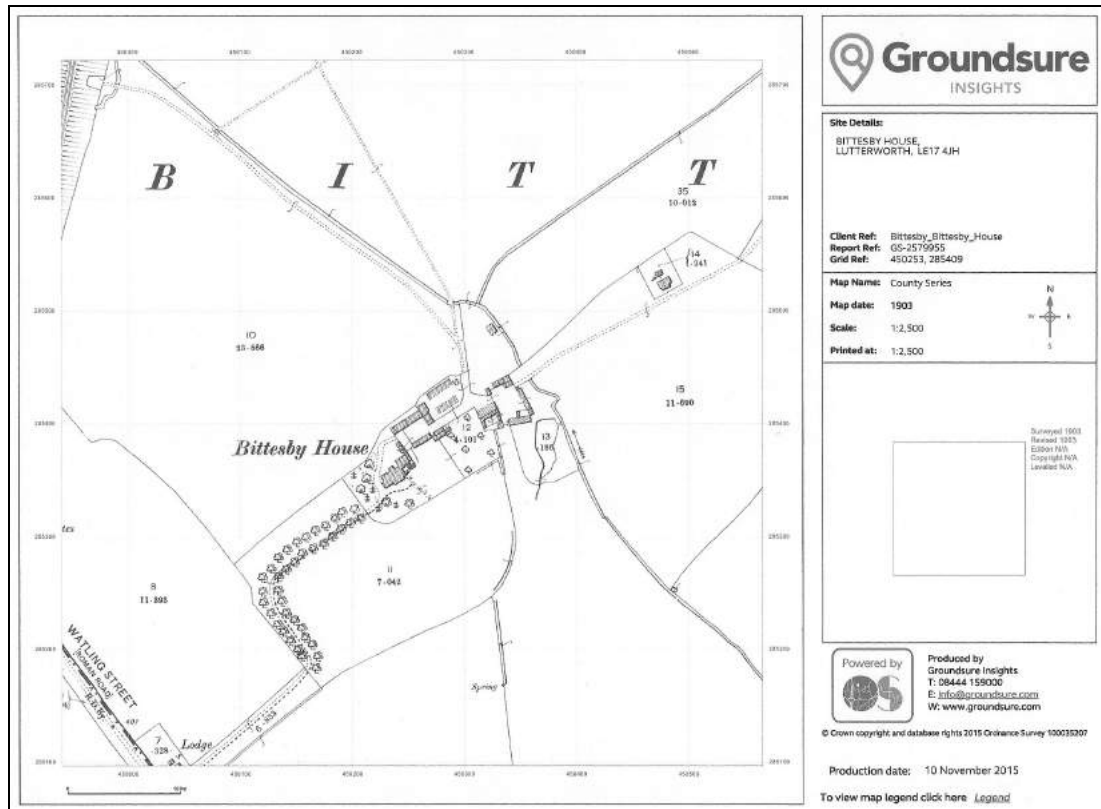


Figure 10. Detail of 1903 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 Scale Map.



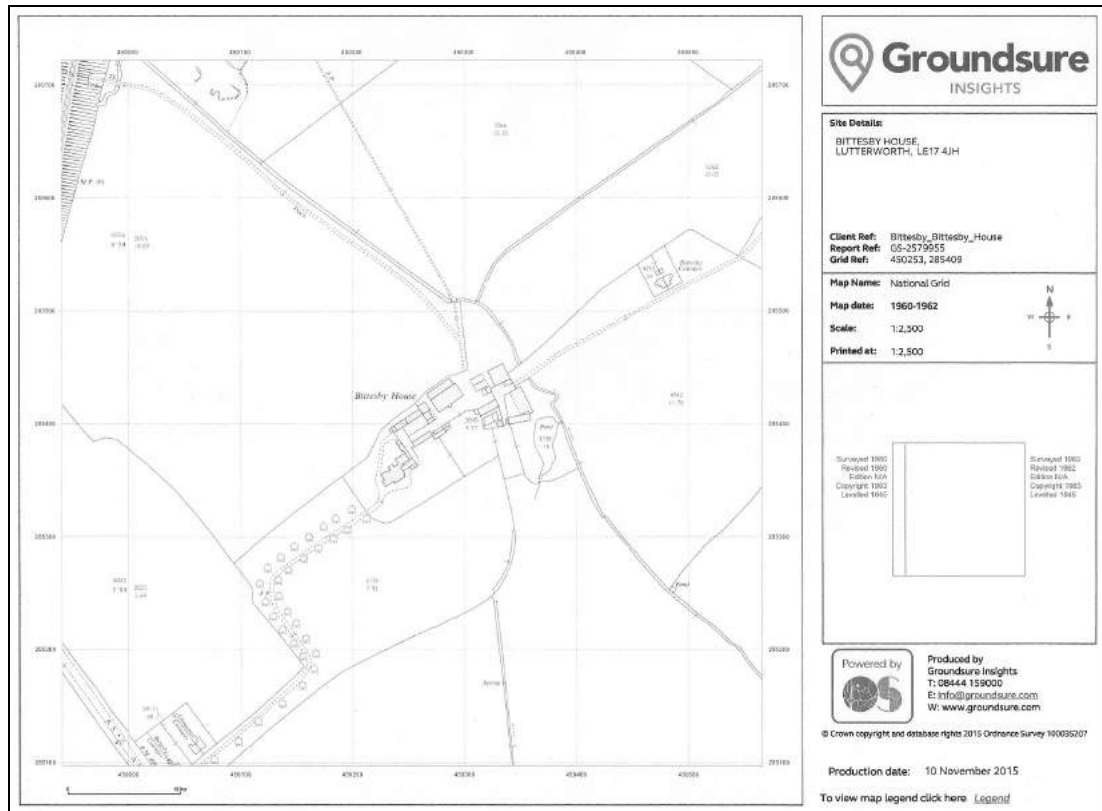


Figure 11. Detail of 1962 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 Scale Map.

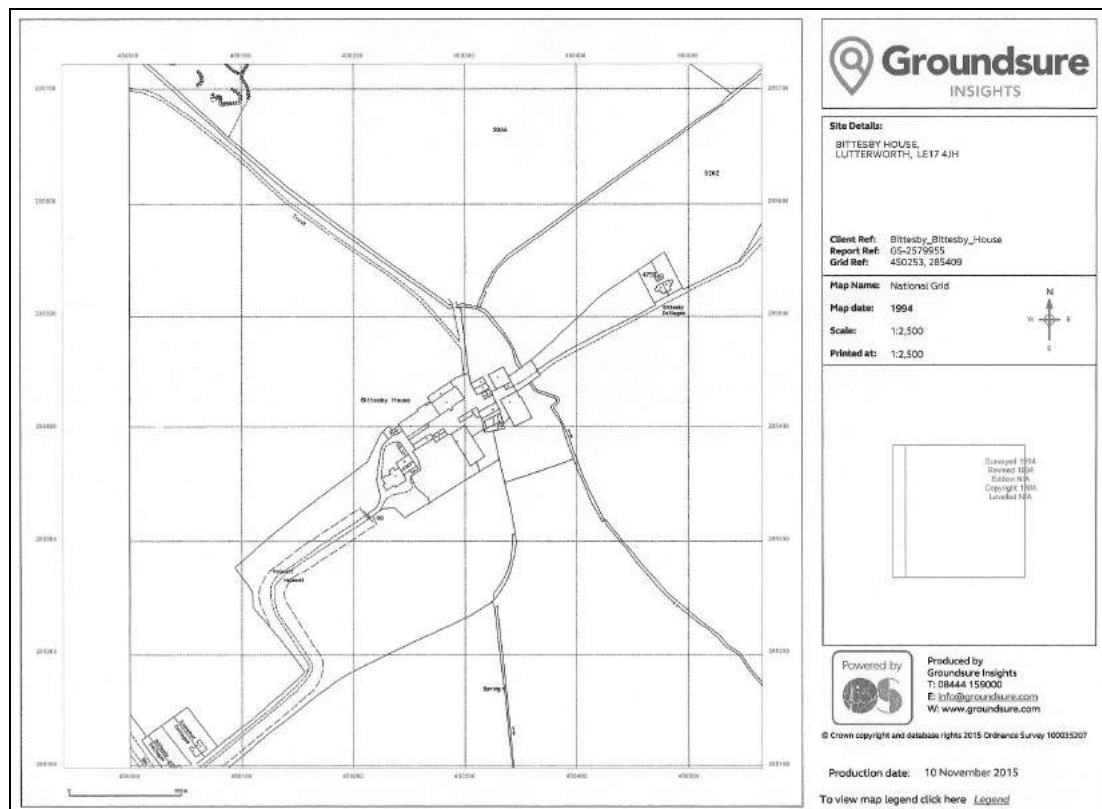


Figure 12. Detail of 1994 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 Scale Map.



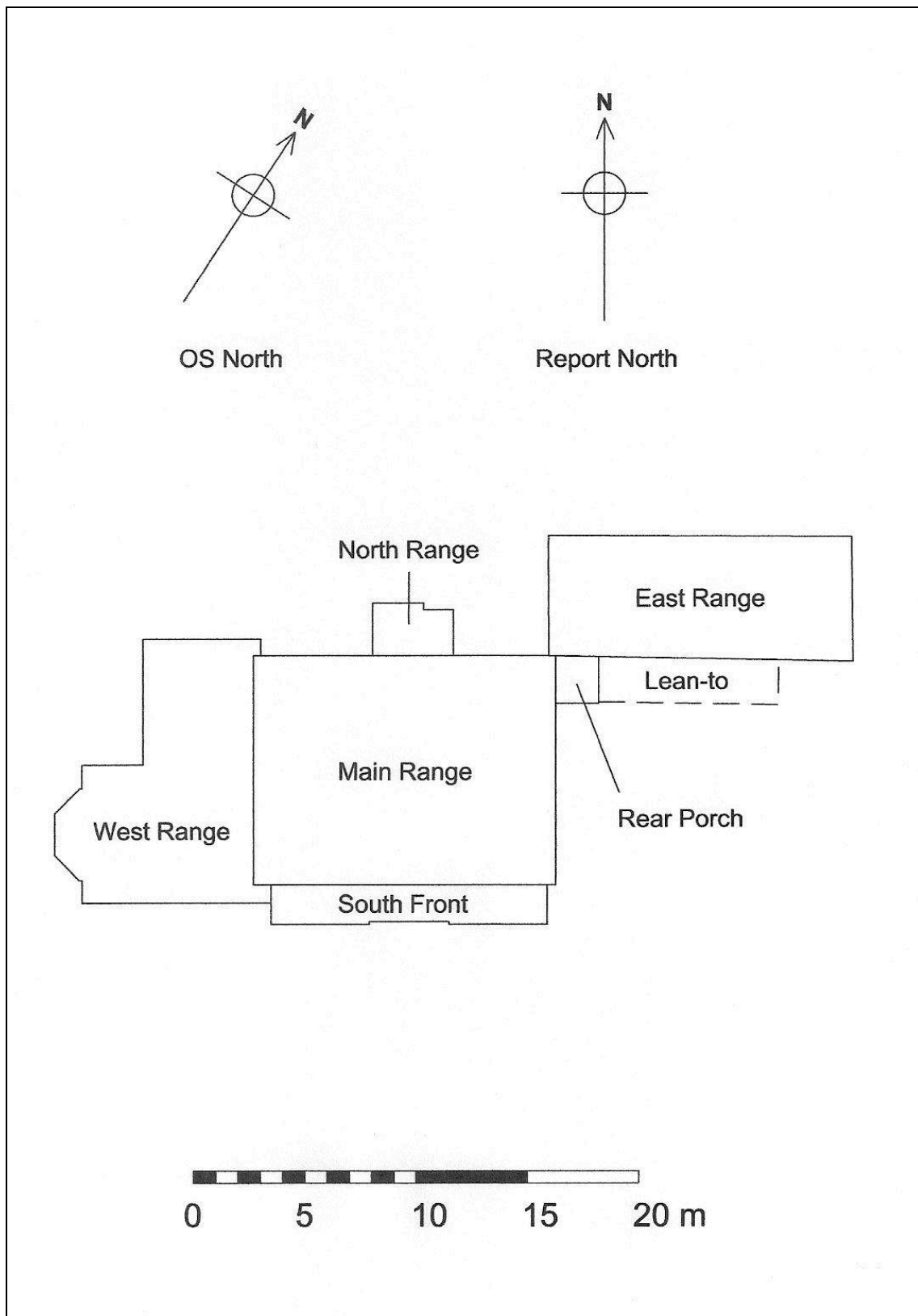
**Figure 13.** Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Photo of S Front of Bittesby House (ROLLR Ref: DE6789).



**Figure 14.** Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Photo of S Front of Bittesby House (ROLLR Ref: DE6789).



**Figure 15.** Early 20th Century Photo of Bittesby House from the SW (ROLLR Ref: DE6789).



**Figure 16.** Block Plan Showing Main Constructional Elements of Bittesby House.

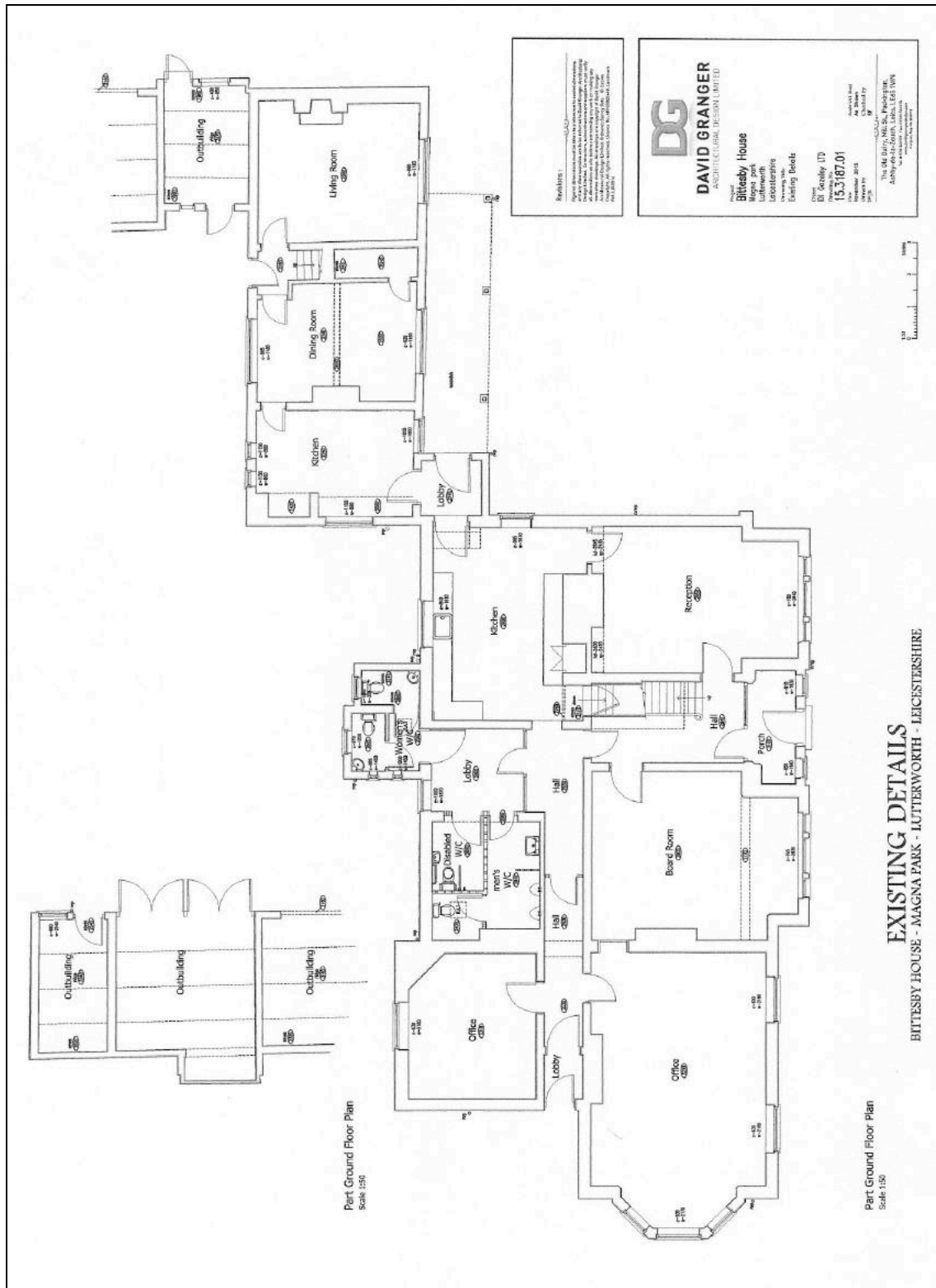


Figure 17. Ground Floor Plan of Bittesby House, report north to left.

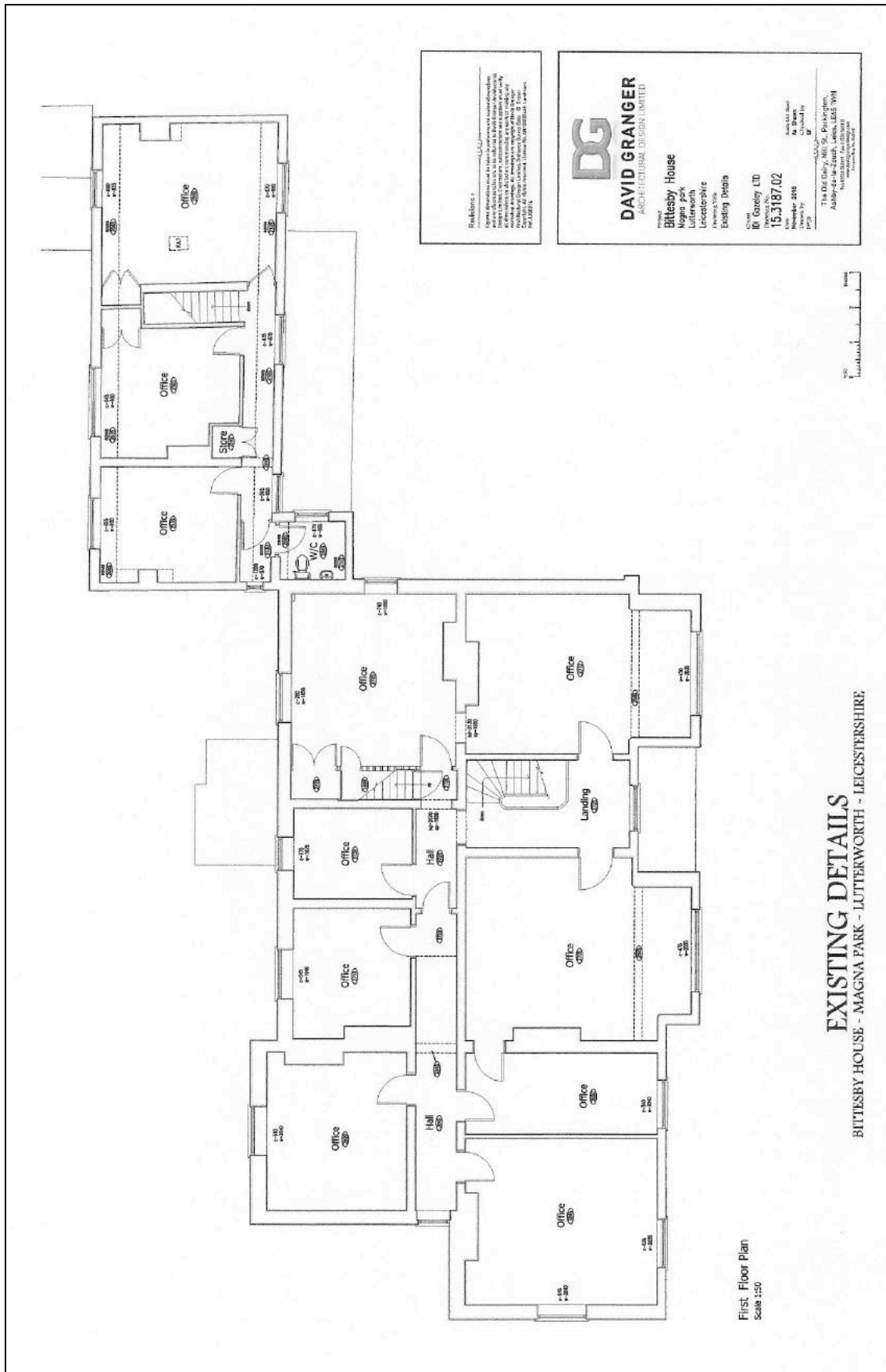


Figure 18. First Floor Plan of Bittesby House, report north to left

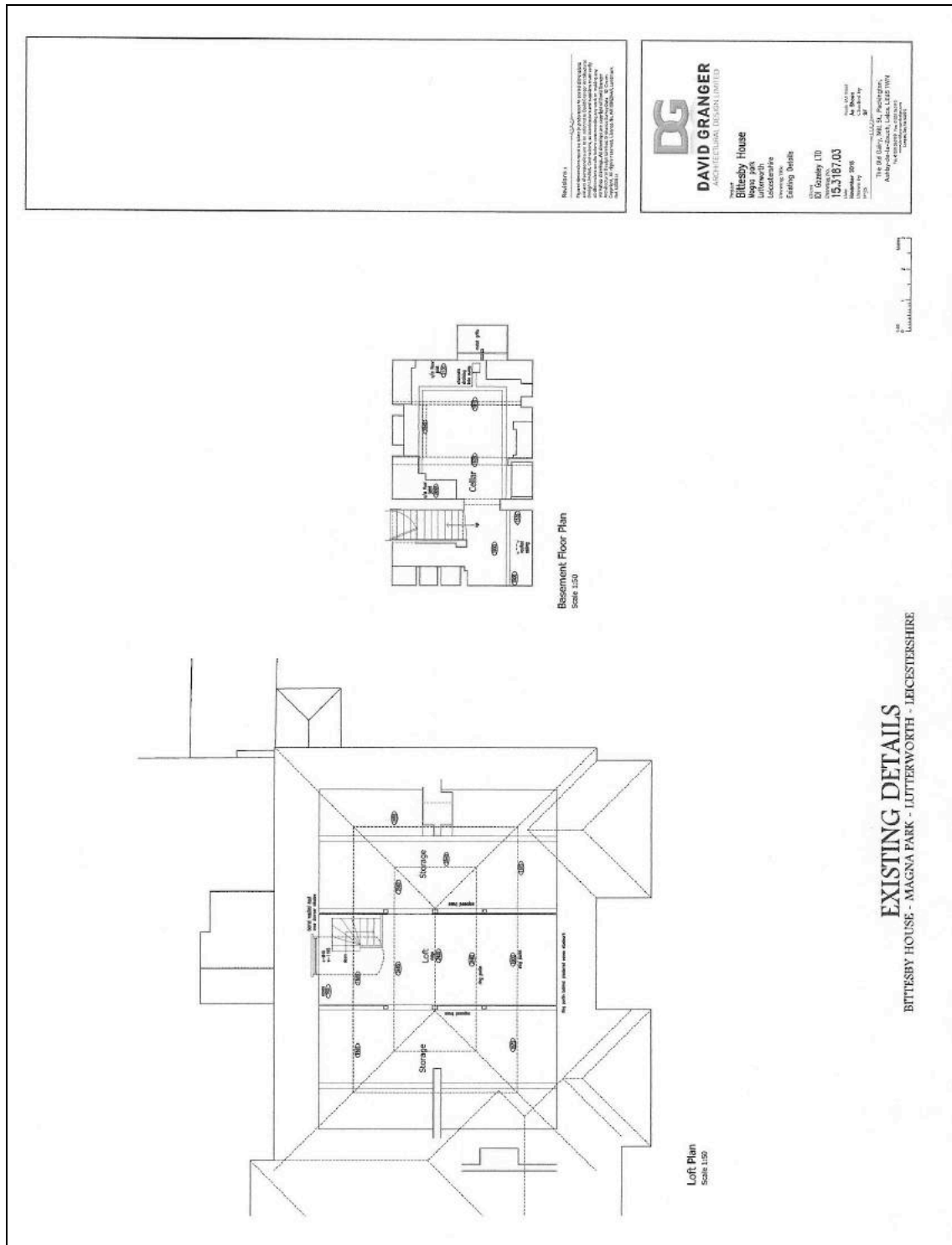
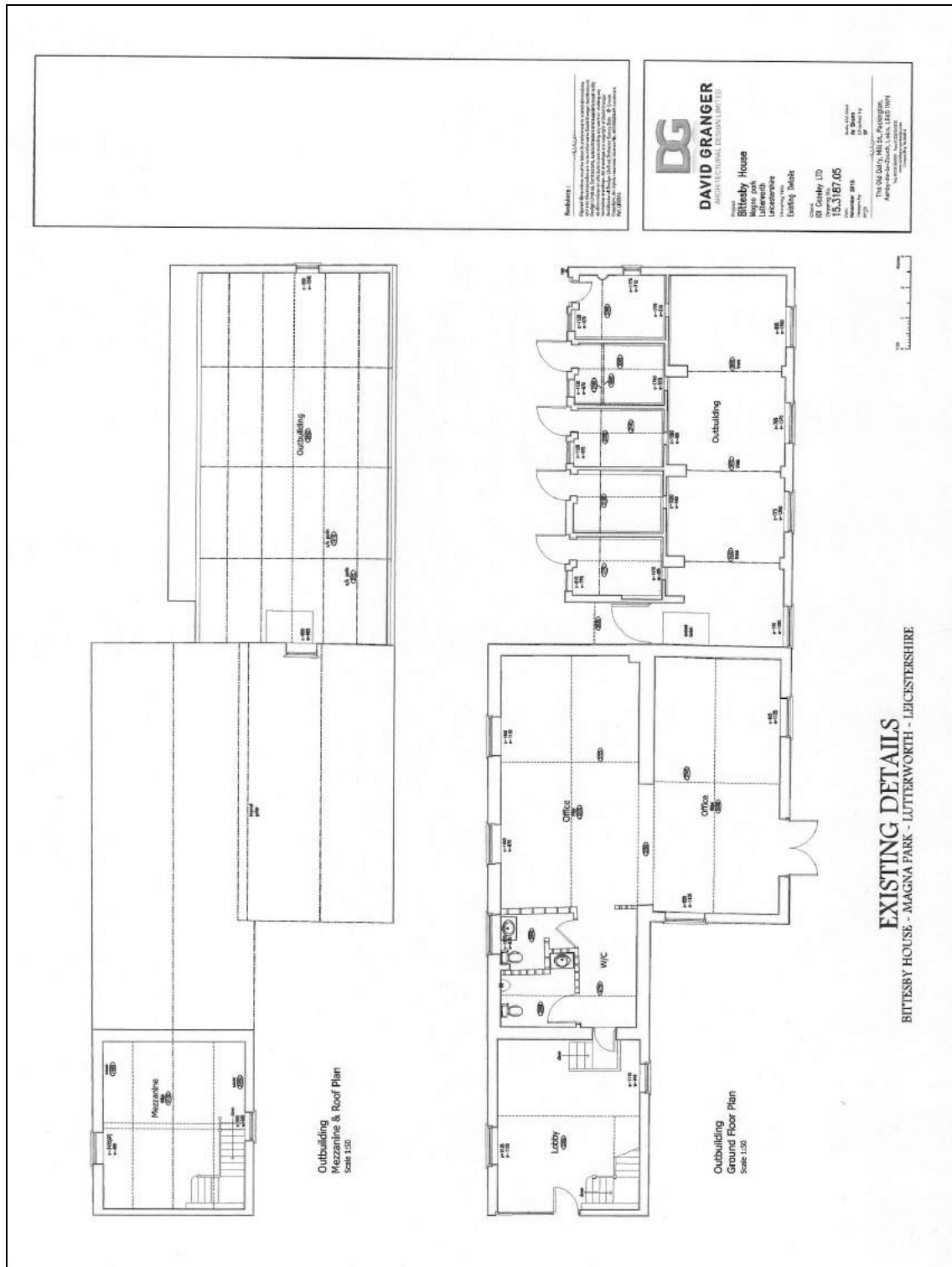


Figure 19. Attic and Cellar Plans of Bittesby House, report north to left.



**Figure 20.** Floor Plans of Farm Buildings on S Side of Yard Adjacent to Bittesby House.



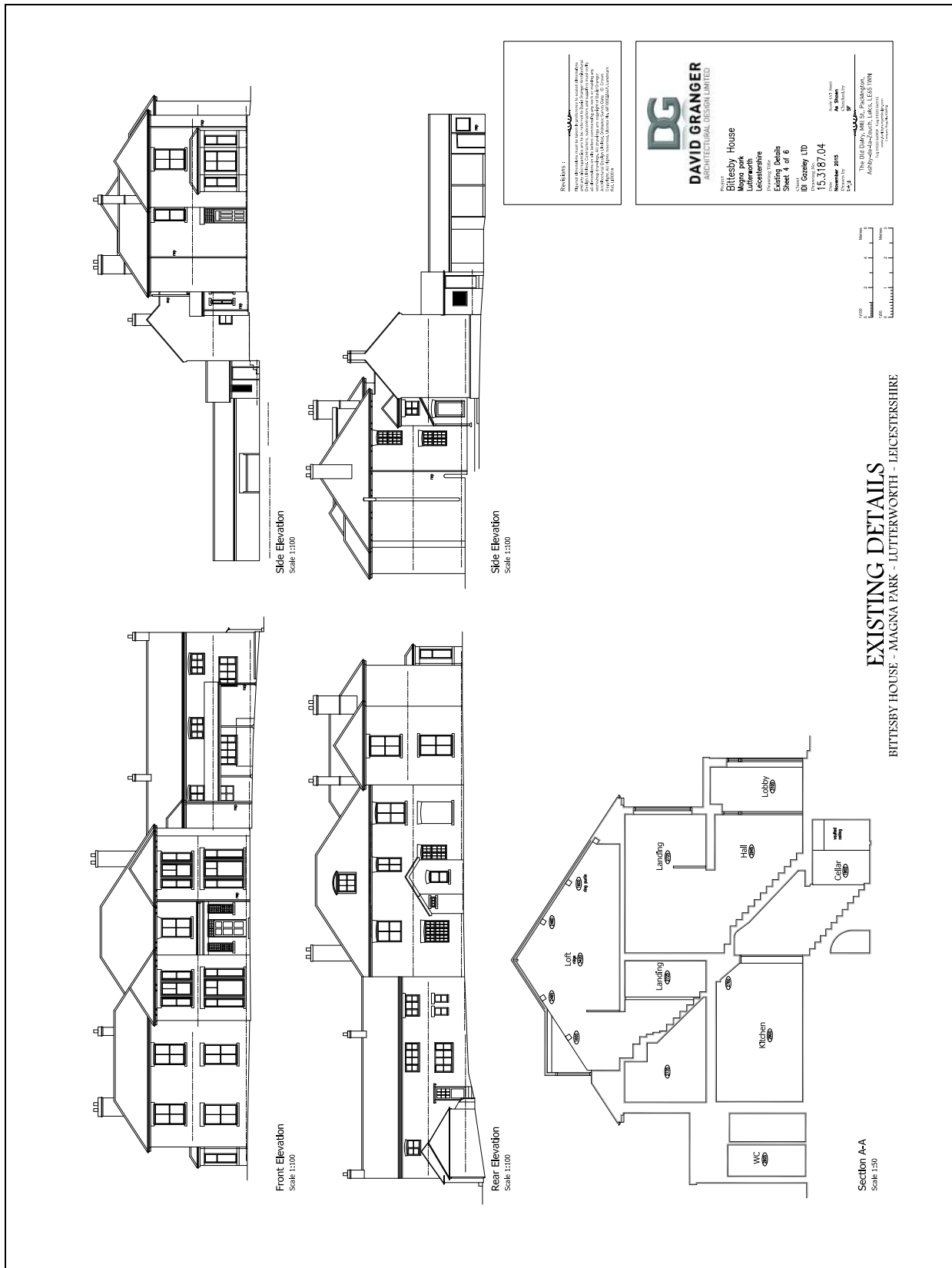


Figure 21. Principal Elevations of Bittesby House.

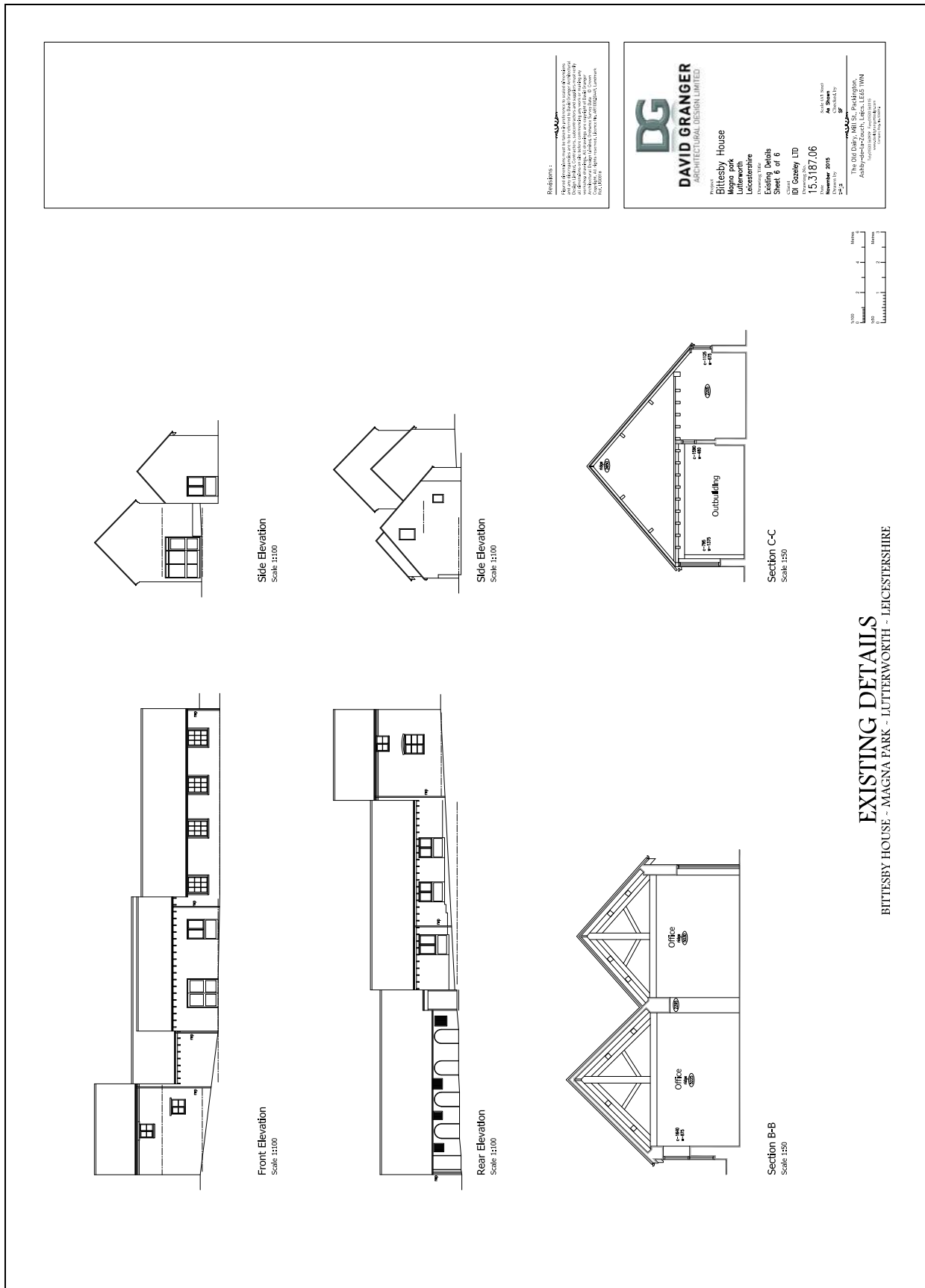


Figure 22. Principal Elevations of Agricultural Buildings at Bittesby House.

**Level 4 Historic Building Survey:  
Selection of Photographs**

**Bittesby House, Bittesby Cottages and Bittesby Lodge,  
Lutterworth, Leicestershire**



**Photo 1.** General view of Bittesby House from the S.



**Photo 2.** General view of Bittesby House from the SW.



**Photo 3.** General view of Bittesby House from the NW.



**Photo 4.** General view of Bittesby House from the N (*Main Range & West Range to right*).



**Photo 5.** General view of Bittesby House from the E (gable of *East Range* in foreground).



**Photo 6.** *East Range* of Bittesby House from the SE.



**Photo 7.** South elevation of the *East Range*, looking NNE.



**Photo 8.** North elevation of the *East Range*, looking SSE.



**Photo 9.** S elevation of *East Wing* (right), covered *Lean-to* and *Rear Porch*, looking NW.



**Photo 10.** W elevation of *East Range*, looking WSW.





**Photo 11.** Ground floor E room of *East Range*, looking SE.



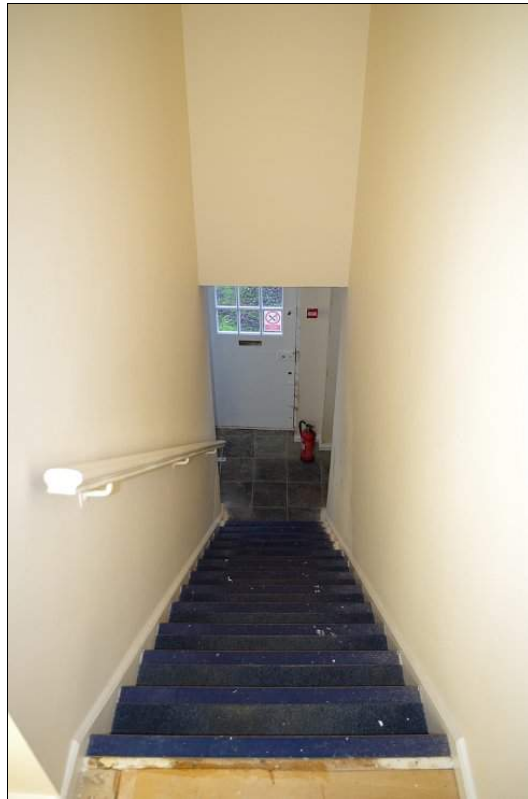
**Photo 12.** Ground floor central room of *East Range*, looking SW.



**Photo 13.** Ground floor W room of *East Range*, looking N.



**Photo 14.** Door in S wall of W room of *East Range* opening into *Rear Porch*, looking N.



**Photo 15.** View down staircase to N front door of *East Range*, looking N.



**Photo 16.** View W along first floor corridor on S side of *East Range*.



**Photo 17.** First floor E room within *East Range*, looking NE (note roof access hatch).



**Photo 18.** First floor centre room within *East Range*, looking NW.



**Photo 19.** First floor W room within *East Range*, looking NW.



**Photo 20.** Remnant of gypsum plaster first floor within *East Range*, looking N.



**Photo 21.** Detail of 1930s style doorframe within *East Range*.



**Photo 22.** North front door and canopy of *East Range*, looking SE.



**Photo 23.** Roof space over E bay of *East Range*, note lap dovetail matrix in purlin on right.



**Photo 24.** Wall plate re-used as purlin in roof of *East Range*, with empty lap dovetail matrix for tie-beam and birds-mouths for rafters.



**Photo 25.** Roof structure over centre bay of *East Range*, empty mortices for wind braces are just visible in the upper face of the purlin on the left, towards either end, looking W.



**Photo 26.** Upper stone from cheese press in garden area to south of *East Range*.





**Photo 27.** *South Front of Main Range* as rebuilt in the later 19<sup>th</sup> century, looking N.



**Photo 28.** North elevation of *Main Range*, looking S.



**Photo 29.** Early window in N elevation of *Main Range*, looking S.



**Photo 30.** Early dormer window lighting attic of *Main Range*, looking S.



**Photo 31.** Entrance hall within *Main Range*, looking S.



**Photo 32.** Entrance hall and staircase within *Main Range*, looking N.



**Photo 33.** Detail of staircase newel, curtail step and handrail within *Main Range*.



**Photo 34.** Detail of shaped tread ends to staircase within *Main Range*.



**Photo 35.** Former dining room at SE corner of *Main Range* with door into kitchen, looking N.



**Photo 36.** Reception room at SW corner of *Main Range*, looking NW.



**Photo 37.** Victorian fireplace in SW reception room of *Main Range* & servant bell pulls.



**Photo 38.** Kitchen at NE corner of *Main Range* with door into *Rear Porch*, looking NE.



**Photo 39.** Glazed timber partition within back hall of *Main Range*, looking N.



**Photo 40.** Back hall in *Main Range* with servant bells and door into kitchen, looking E.



**Photo 41.** Detail of servant call bells in back hall of *Main Range*.



**Photo 42.** Detail of servant call bells in back hall of *Main Range*.





**Photo 43.** First floor landing within *Main Range*, looking S.



**Photo 44.** First floor rear hallway within *Main Range*, looking E.



**Photo 45.** Principal bedroom (now office) at SE corner of *Main Range*, looking N.



**Photo 46.** Fireplace in SE bedroom with stone/slate surround and hob grate, looking NE.



**Photo 47.** Principal bedroom (now office) at SW corner of *Main Range*, looking NW.



**Photo 48.** Fireplace in SW bedroom with stone/slate surround and arch-headed insert.



**Photo 49.** Bedroom (now office) at NE corner of Main Range, looking N.



**Photo 50.** Doorway in rear corridor of *Main Range* leading to attic staircase, looking E.



**Photo 51.** Attic staircase within *Main Range*, constructed from elm, looking N.



**Photo 52.** Balustrade around top of attic staircase within *Main Range*, looking S.



**Photo 53.** Door into west attic room within *Main Range*, looking SW.



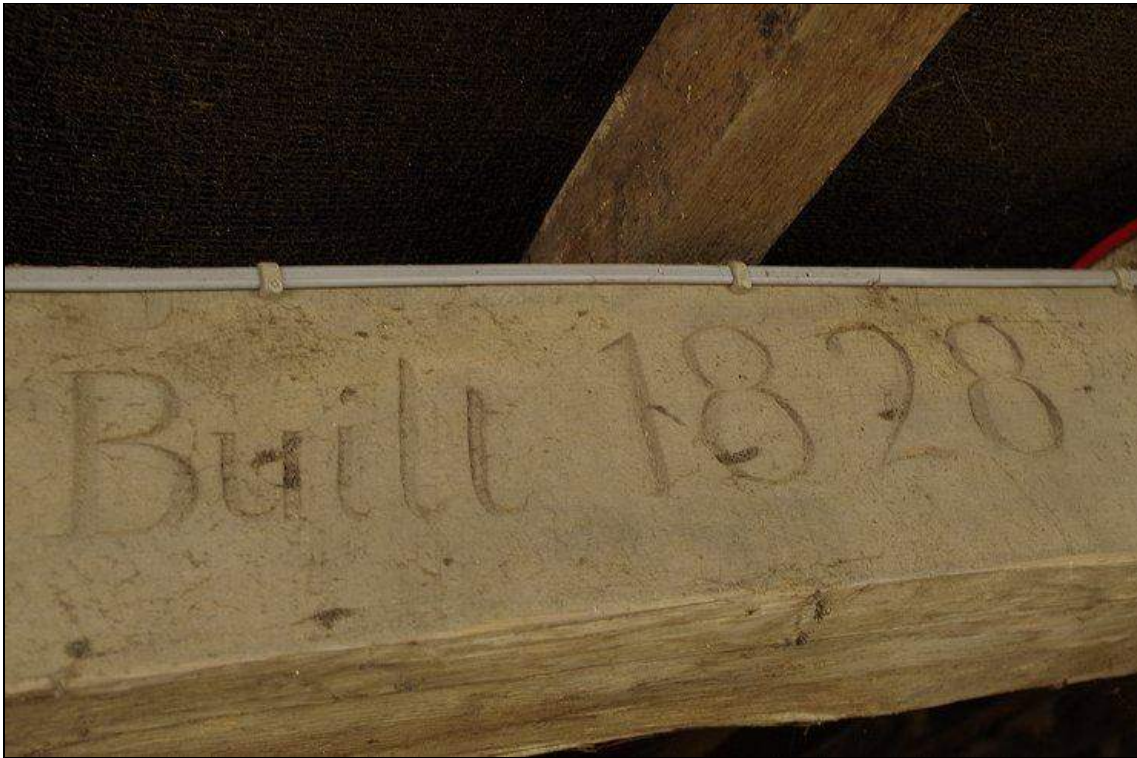
**Photo 54.** East attic room within *Main Range*, showing king-post roof truss, looking NW.



**Photo 55.** East attic room within *Main Range*, looking SE.



**Photo 56.** West attic room within *Main Range*, looking SW.



**Photo 57.** Inscription on roof purlin within west attic room of *Main Range*: 'Built 1828'.



**Photo 58.** Shipping marks on roof purlin within *Main Range*.





**Photo 59.** Larger cellar room at SE corner of *Main Range*, looking E.



**Photo 60.** Smaller cellar room below *Main Range* with wine storage bins, looking N.



**Photo 61.** The *Rear Porch* linking *Main Range* (left) and *East Wing* (right), looking NW.



**Photo 62.** Detail of beaded mortar joints to brickwork of *South Front*.



**Photo 63.** Central porch to *South Front*, looking N.



**Photo 64.** The *West Range*, looking NE.



**Photo 65.** The *West Range* looking SW.



**Photo 66.** Principal southern ground floor room within the *West Range*, looking W.



**Photo 67.** Fireplace within principal ground floor room of *West Range*, looking N.



**Photo 68.** Northern ground floor room within *West Range*, looking NE.



**Photo 69.** First floor former dressing room or bathroom within *West Range*, looking N.



**Photo 70.** Southern bedroom within *West Range*, looking N.



**Photo 71.** Northern bedroom within *West Range*, looking SE.



**Photo 72.** *North Wing* showing former doorway converted into window, looking S.



**Photo 73.** From left to right: *Coal Place, Garage and Saddle Room* noted in 1944 Sale Particulars, looking W.



**Photo 74.** North end of Saddle Room, looking SSW.





**Photo 75.** Interior of *Saddle Room* looking E towards doorway.



**Photo 76.** Matchboard on walls of *Saddle Room* and iron sheet behind stove, looking SW.



**Photo 77.** *Three-stall Nag Stable* described in 1944 Sale Particulars, looking NE.



**Photo 78.** South front of *Three-stall Nag Stable* noted in 1944 Sale Particulars, looking N.



**Photo 79.** Interior of west stable with corner hayrack, looking N.



**Photo 80.** Roof structure of *Three-stall Nag Stable* range, looking NE.



**Photo 81.** Detached structure to S of *East Range* (former earth closets?), looking NE.



**Photo 82.** Former agricultural buildings on S side of yard NE of Bittesby House, looking NE.



**Photo 83.** *Barn with Granary Over & Cow House* noted in 1944 Sale Particulars, looking SE.



**Photo 84.** King-post truss supporting roof of *Barn with Granary Over*, looking E.



**Photo 85.** North front of former *Cow House* recently converted for office use, looking SW.



**Photo 86.** Interior of former *Cow House* showing king-post roof trusses, looking E.



**Photo 87.** *Five enclosed Pig Styes or Calf Places* noted in 1944 Sale Particulars, looking S.



**Photo 88.** Interior of *Pig Sty or Calf Place*, looking N.



**Photo 89.** South elevation of *Workshop* noted in 1944 Sale Particulars, looking N.



**Photo 90.** Interior of *Workshop*, looking E.





**Photo 91,** *Granary over Workshop*, looking E.



**Photo 92.** Constructional break between *Workshop* and later *Pig Sties* or *Calf Places* plus outline of former *Pig Sties* adjoining E end of *Workshop*, looking SSW.



**Photo 93.** Bittesby Lodge with Emmanuel Cottages in background, looking N.



**Photo 94.** Bittesby Cottages, looking N. (from Usher 2015a, 43).

# WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION FOR HISTORIC BUILDING SURVEY

## Bittesby House, Bittesby Lodge and Bittesby Cottages off Mere Lane, Lutterworth, Leicestershire



For: IDI Gazeley

Local Planning Authority: Harborough District Council

Trigpoint Conservation & Planning Ltd

February 2016



**RTPI**

mediation of space · making of place

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## Document Control Sheet

<b>PROJECT NAME:</b>	<b>Lutterworth_Bittesby House</b>
CLIENT:	IDI Gazeley
PROJECT REFERENCE	15074
PROJECT LEAD	S Bradwell, MA MRTPI IHBC
TEAM MEMBERS	Neil Finn

Version	File Ref	Description	Prepared	Checked	Date
FINAL (PDF)	15074	Written Scheme of Investigation	NF	SB	7 February 2016

**Produced by:**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Trigpoint Conservation & Planning Ltd has been commissioned to prepare an Historic Building Survey of Bittesby House and associated former agricultural buildings (NGR: SP 5024 8536), Bittesby Lodge (NGR: SP 5004 8509) and Bittesby Cottages (NGR: SP 5047 8552) by CgMs Consulting Ltd, acting for their client IDI Gazeley Ltd.
- 1.2 The Historic Building Survey will inform the determination of development plans for a proposed extension to the Magna Park warehouse distribution facility on the outskirts of Lutterworth in south Leicestershire, submitted to Harborough District Council, the local planning authority, on behalf of IDI Gazeley Ltd (planning application refs. 15/00919/FUL & 15/01531/OUT).
- 1.3 This document is a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) defining the scope of the Historic Building Survey, agreed in consultation with Ricard Clark the Principal Planning Archaeologist (PA) at Leicestershire County Council during a meeting held at County Hall on 2 November 2015. Present at this meeting, in addition to the PA, were Ramona Usher of CgMs Consulting Ltd and Stephen Bradwell and Neil Finn of Trigpoint Conservation & Planning Ltd.
- 1.4 The agreed scope of the Historic Building Survey included provision for a Level 4 record of Bittesby House and a Level 2 record of Bittesby Lodge, Bittesby Cottages and associated agricultural buildings, as defined the English Heritage guidance document *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice* (English Heritage 2006).
- 1.5 The requirement for completion of the building recording exercise prior to determination of the planning applications accords with the provisions of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF), Section 12: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment (DCLG, 2012). Paragraph 141 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities: *'should also require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner **proportionate** {emphasis added} to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible. However, the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted.'*

## 2. LOCATION AND CONTEXT

- 2.1 Lutterworth is a small market town within the Harborough District of Leicestershire, some 12 miles (22.5km) south-east of Leicester city centre, close to the

Warwickshire county boundary (Figure 1). The site of Bittesby House and its associated properties is about 2.5 miles to the west of Lutterworth (Figure 2).

- 2.2 Located some 400m to the north-north-west of Bittesby House is the site of Bittesby Deserted Medieval Village, which is a Scheduled Monument (UID: 17034).
- 2.3 The study buildings are located within an area of generally open countryside to the north-west of Magna Park that is bounded to the south-west by Watling Street (A5), which runs along the county boundary between Leicestershire and Warwickshire, and to the south-east by Mere Lane.
- 2.4 This area also lies within the Leicestershire Vales Character Area, as identified by Natural England, which consists of ‘an open landscape of gentle clay ridges and valleys (with)...an overall visual uniformity to the landscape and settlement pattern’ (Usher 2015a, 17). This landform is reflected in the local topography and situation of the study buildings. Bittesby House is situated at height of c.115m AOD on the west side of a shallow valley that runs in a north-westerly direction towards the deserted Medieval village site and Bittesby Lodge to the west is situated at height of c.125m AOD. The Bittesby Cottages are located on the opposite (east) side of this shallow valley below the 115m contour. The deserted medieval settlement of Bittesby is situated on the south side of another shallow valley that runs in a north-easterly direction on the 115m contour and is screened from Bittesby House by a spur of land that projects into the shallow valley.
- 2.5 Other than Lutterworth, the nearest local settlements are Willey in Warwickshire, which is a little over ½ mile (1km) to the south-west of Bittesby House and Claybrooke Parva and Ullesthorpe in Leicestershire, which are located about 1 mile (2km) to the north and north-east respectively.

### **3. Statutory Designations**

- 3.1 The study buildings are not included on the statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest maintained by the Secretary of State at the Department of Culture Media and Sport and are not situated within any conservation area designated by the local planning authority. The buildings have been identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of their local heritage interest (‘non-designated heritage assets’), in accordance with the provisions of the *National Planning Policy Framework*, Section 12: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment (DCLG 2012).

3.2 Designated heritage assets within 1km of the application site include:

*Scheduled Monuments*

- 3.3 The Scheduled Monument of Bittesby Deserted Medieval Village (UID: 17034) is located some 400m to the north-north-west of Bittesby House. The list entry for this scheduled monument reads as follows:

*Reasons for Designation*

*The village, comprising a small group of houses, gardens, yards, streets, paddocks, often with a green, a manor and a church, and with a community devoted primarily to agriculture, was a significant component of the rural landscape in most areas of medieval England, much as it is today. Villages provided some services to the local community and acted as the main focal point of ecclesiastical, and often of manorial, administration within each parish. Although the sites of many of these villages have been occupied continuously down to the present day, many others declined in size or were abandoned throughout the medieval and post-medieval periods, particularly during the 14th and 15th centuries. As a result over 2000 deserted medieval villages are recorded nationally. The reasons for desertion were varied but often reflected declining economic viability, changes in land use such as enclosure or emparkment, or population fluctuations as a result of widespread epidemics such as the Black Death. As a consequence of their abandonment these villages are frequently undisturbed by later occupation and contain well-preserved archaeological deposits. Because they are a common and long-lived monument type in most parts of England, they provide important information on the diversity of medieval settlement patterns and farming economy between the regions and through time.*

*Although partly disturbed, the deserted medieval village at Bittesby contains earthworks in good condition and retains high archaeological potential. The village is documented historically and, unusually, the period of desertion is known.*

*Details*

*Bittesby deserted village site lies 400m north of the A5 Watling Street and 4km west of Lutterworth and consists of earthworks to the east of a former railway line. The village earthworks comprise hollow ways and house platforms. A ditch up to 1m deep runs along the north of the area, near to which is some faced stonework indicating the site of a chapel known to have existed there. A north-south flowing stream runs on the eastern side of the site, down to which several hollow ways run, the largest of which is 12m wide and up to 2m deep. Bittesby is listed in Domesday Book and in 1279 the village was made up of 25 families. Enclosure and depopulation is recorded in 1488 and 1494, and by 1536 only the Salisbury family was left.*

### *Listed Buildings*

- 3.4 There are two listed buildings within about ½ mile (1km) of Bittesby House:
- Grade II\* listed Church of St Leonard, Main Street, Willey, Warwickshire
  - Grade II listed Cottage Nurseries, Main Street, Willey, Warwickshire.

### *Conservation Areas*

- 3.5 The historic centres of Ullesthorpe and Claybrooke Magna have been designated as Conservation Areas.

### *Historic Parks and Gardens*

- 3.6 The closest Registered Historic Park and Garden is the Grade II listed Newnham Paddox, which lies some 1½ miles (2.5km) to the south-west of Bittesby House.

## **4. PREVIOUS STAGES OF INVESTIGATION**

- 4.1 CgMs Consulting Ltd has produced the following documents which assess the relative significance of Bittesby House and its associated properties:
- *Bittesby House, Lutterworth Briefing Note*  
Dated 16 December 2014, CGMS Document Ref: RU/JCG18281/1
  - *Heritage Statement in Respect of: Magna Park Extension: DHL Supply Chain*  
Dated June 2015, CGMS Document Ref: RU/JCG18281/7
  - *Heritage Statement in Respect of: Magna Park Extension: Hybrid Application*  
Dated September 2015, CGMS Document Ref: RU/JCG18281/10
- 4.2 CgMs Consulting Ltd has also prepared or commissioned a number of other studies assessing the archaeological significance of the proposed development site.

## **5. Research Aims and Objectives**

- 5.1 Regional research aims are defined in *East Midlands Heritage: An Updated Research Agenda and Strategy for the Historic Environment of the East Midlands* (Knight, Vyner and Allen 2012), which builds on an earlier Resource Assessment and Research Agenda for the East Midlands region (Cooper 2006).
- 5.2 Section 6.8 of *East Midlands Heritage: An Updated Research Agenda and Strategy for the Historic Environment of the East Midlands* provides a research agenda for the post-medieval period (1485-1750). Research themes to which the investigation of Bittesby House and its associated buildings and landscape may contribute are defined within para. 8.3 – *Agricultural landscapes and the food-producing economy*, specifically 8.3.1: How can we improve our understanding of the early landscapes of



enclosure and improvement and the interrelationship between arable, pasture, woodland, commons, and water? (Knight, Vyner and Allen 2012, 108).

- 5.3 Section 6.9 of *East Midlands Heritage: An Updated Research Agenda and Strategy for the Historic Environment of the East Midlands* provides a research agenda for the modern period (1750 to present). Further research themes to which the investigation of Bittesby House and its associated buildings and landscape may contribute are defined within para. 9.5 – *Estates, parks, gardens and woodland*, specifically 9.5.1: What was the social role and influence of country houses and estates? (Knight, Vyner and Allen 2012, 122).
- 5.4 The specific objectives of the Historic Building Survey are to provide a Level 4 Record of Bittesby House and a Level 2 Record of Bittesby Lodge, Bittesby Cottages and the agricultural buildings associated with Bittesby House.
- 5.5 Levels of recording are defined in the English Heritage document *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice* (English Heritage 2006, 14).
- 5.6 Level 2 is a descriptive record that will present conclusions regarding the study building's development and use, but will not discuss in detail the evidence on which these conclusions are based. Both the exterior and the interior of the building will be viewed, described and photographed. A plan and sometimes other drawings may be made but the drawn record will normally not be comprehensive.
- 5.7 Level 4 provides a comprehensive analytical record that will draw on the full range of available resources and discuss the study building's significance in terms of architectural, social, regional or economic history. The investigation will include a thorough examination of all areas of the building and the preparation of detailed written, drawn and photographic records.
- 5.8 The Historic Building Survey will be undertaken to a standard that will allow the future understanding and interpretation of the building within the context for which it was originally designed, as well as later uses. An archive and report will be created as a result of the survey.

## **6. Methodology**

- 6.1 The programme of historic building recording will be undertaken in accordance with best practice set out in the English Heritage guidelines *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice* (2006) and the Chartered Institute for

*Archaeologists' Standard and Guidance for the Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings or Structures* (1996, revised 2014).

- 6.2 The Historic Building Record will involve the preparation of written, drawn and photographic records, as follows:
- 6.3 *The Written Account* (Level 2: items 1-3 & 6; Level 4: items 1-3, 4-8, 10-22, sometimes 23).
1. The building's precise location, as a National Grid reference and in address form.
  2. A note of any statutory designation (listing, scheduling or conservation area). Non-statutory designations (historic parks and gardens registers, local lists, etc.).
  3. The date of the record, the name(s) of the recorder(s) and, if an archive has been created, its location.
  4. A summary (if no further details are called for) of the building's type or purpose, historically and at present, its materials and possible date(s), in so far as these are apparent from a superficial inspection.
  5. A table of contents and a list of illustrations or figures.
  6. An expansion of 4, if appropriate, summarising the building's form, function, date and sequence of development. The names of architects, builders, patrons and owners should be given if known. The purpose of such an expansion is to describe the building when no fuller record is necessary, to serve as an introduction to the more detailed body of the record that may follow, and to satisfy those users who may need no more than a summary of the report's findings.
  7. An introduction, setting out the circumstances in which the record was made, its objectives, methods, scope, and limitations, and any constraints which limited the achievement of objectives. Where appropriate the brief for the work or the project design should be stated or appended.
  8. Acknowledgements to all those who made significant contributions – practical, intellectual or financial – to the record or its analysis, or who gave permission for copyright items to be reproduced.
  9. A discussion of published sources relating to the building and its setting, an account of its history as given in published sources, an analysis of historic map evidence (map regression) and a critical evaluation of previous records of the building, where they exist.
  10. An expansion of 9, if appropriate, drawing additionally on primary documentary sources.

11. An account of the building's overall form (structure, materials, layout) and its successive phases of development, together with the evidence supporting this analysis.
12. An account of the past and present uses of the building and its parts, with the evidence for these interpretations. An analysis of any circulation pattern or decorative, iconographic or liturgical scheme. An account of any fixtures, fittings, plant or machinery associated with the building, and their purposes. For an industrial building, a sequential account of the ways in which materials or processes were handled.
13. Any evidence for the former existence of demolished structures or removed plant associated with the building.
14. A summary of the findings of any specialist reports (dendrochronology or paint analysis, for example).
15. A discussion of the building's past and present relationship to its setting: for example, its relationship to local settlement patterns, to a field system, to a park, garden, moat, graveyard or other artificial landscape; its part in any larger architectural or functional group of buildings; its visual importance as a landmark.
16. An assessment of the potential for further investigative or documentary work, and the potential survival of below-ground evidence for the history of the building and site.
17. A discussion of the architectural or historical context or significance of the building locally, regionally or nationally, in terms of its origin, purpose, form, construction, design, materials, status or historical associations.
18. Copies of historic maps, drawings, views or photographs illustrating the development of the building or its site (the permission of owners or copyright holders may be required).
19. Copies of other records of the building, including specialist reports (again with any necessary permissions), or a note of their existence and location.
20. Any further information from documentary sources, published or unpublished, bearing on any of these matters, or bearing on the circumstances of its building, designer, craftsmen, ownership, use and occupancy, with a note on the sources of the information.
21. Relevant information from owners, builders, architects or others who may be acquainted with the building, including oral history. The sources of the information must be given and it is important that the particular strengths and weaknesses of oral information are weighed.
22. Full bibliographic and other references, or a list of the sources consulted (in long reports it is preferable to include both). Websites which may prove to be

ephemeral should be avoided as references wherever possible; where their use is unavoidable the date on which the site was consulted should be noted.

23. A glossary of architectural or other terms likely to be unfamiliar to readers. If few in number, terms may be explained more economically within the text or in foot or endnotes.

6.5 *The Drawn Record* (Level 2: sometimes item 1, sometimes one or more of items 2-7; Level 4: item 2, sometimes one or more of items 3-12).

1. Sketched plan, section, elevation or detail drawings (if a more thorough record is not made). Sketches may be roughly dimensioned.
2. Measured plans (to scale or full-dimensioned) of all main floors as existing. Plans should show the form and location of any structural features of historic significance, such as blocked doors, windows and fireplaces, masonry joints, ceiling beams and other changes in floor and ceiling levels, and any evidence for fixtures of significance, including former machinery.
3. Measured drawings recording the form or location of other significant structural detail, such as timber or metal framing.
4. Measured cross-sections, long-sections or elevational sections illustrating the vertical relationships within a building (floor and ceiling heights or the form of roof trusses, for example).
5. Measured drawings showing the form of any architectural decoration (the moulding profiles of door surrounds, beams, mullions and cornices, for example) or small-scale functional detail not more readily captured by photography. A measured detail drawing is particularly valuable when the feature in question is an aid to dating.
6. Measured elevations, where these are necessary to an understanding of the building's design, development or function and not more readily obtained by photography.
7. A site plan, typically at 1:500 or 1:1250, relating the building to other structures and to related topographical and landscape features.
8. A Plan or plans identifying the location and direction of accompanying photographs.
9. Copies of earlier drawings throwing light on the building's history.
10. Three-dimensional projections when these are of value in understanding the building. If these are to be considered as components of the record they must always be supported by measured plans, sections and elevational details.
11. Reconstruction drawings and phased drawings, when these are of value. Since these are by their nature interpretative, the evidence on which any reconstruction or phasing is based must always be given. Successive phases

of a building's development may be shown by graded tone (dark to light, with the darker being the earlier), by colour, by sequential diagrams or by annotation. Whenever phased drawings are included in a record, they must be accompanied by the unmarked drawings on which they are based.

12. Diagrams interpreting the movement of materials (process flow) or people (circulation), or the segregation of people or activities (e.g. permeability diagrams), where these are warranted by the complexity of the subject. As with items 10 and 11, the evidence supporting the interpretations must be provided.

In each of the above cases, use may be made of available plans (i.e. those prepared as part of a planning application). In all cases these shall be checked by the Historic Building specialist and supplemented or amended where necessary.

#### 6.6 *The Photographic Record* (Level 2: items 1, 2 & 4; Level 4: items 1-9).

1. A general view or views of the building (in its wider setting or landscape).
2. Detailed coverage of the building's external appearance. Typically a series of oblique views will show all external elevations of the building, and give an overall impression of its size and shape. Where an individual elevation embodies complex historical information, views at right angles to the plane of the elevation may also be appropriate.
3. Further views may be desirable to indicate the original design intentions of the builder or architect, where these are known from documentary sources or can be inferred from the building or its setting. In the case of building elevations which have been conceived as formal compositions, views at right angles to the plane of the elevation may again be appropriate.
4. The overall appearance of the principal rooms and circulation areas.
5. Any external or internal detail, structural or decorative, which is relevant to the building's design, development or use and which does not show adequately on general photographs. When photographing details it can be helpful to include a clearly marked and suitably sized scale next to the subject and parallel to one edge of the photograph.
6. Any machinery or other plant, or evidence for its former existence.
7. Any dates or other inscriptions, any signage, makers' plates or graffiti which contribute to an understanding of the building or its fixtures or machinery, if not adequately captured by transcription. A contemporaneous transcription should be made wherever characters are difficult to interpret.

8. Any building contents or ephemera which have a significant bearing on the building's history (for example, a cheese press or a malt shovel), where not sufficiently treated in general photographs.
9. Copies of maps, drawings, views and photographs, present in the building and illustrating its development or that of its site. The owner's consent may be required.

6.7 The photographic record will be in digital format and made using a Pentax K30 digital SLR camera. Digital photography will comply with the Historic England guidelines *Digital Image Capture and File Storage: Guidelines for Best Practice* (2015) and the following standards:

- Photographs will be taken with a high-resolution digital SLR camera with sensors exceeding 12 Mega pixels;
- Photographs will be taken by staff who have been trained properly to use the camera;
- All photographs will be taken using the highest quality setting producing RAW and JPEG files. Where detailed images are required (for publication for example), TIFF files will be created by converting RAW files.
- Established procedures will be employed to ensure that JPEG images will not be constantly re-opened and re-saved and that filing naming processes do not lead to additional image compression.
- All photographs will be taken in colour;
- Photographs will be taken either on a manual, aperture or shutter priority setting;
- Low ISO settings will be used. Higher ISO settings generate additional noise (equivalent to the graininess on 'wet processed' film).
- The aperture setting will be appropriate to the required depth of field of the image;
- Where light levels are low, a tripod will be used so that a long exposure shot (slower shutter speed) can be taken;
- Low light levels will not be compensated for by using a higher ISO and/or larger aperture;
- All photographs (except large general or publicity shots) will include a suitable scale bar or rod.
- Photographs will be taken in appropriate light conditions as far as this is possible (i.e. not strong sun). When this is not feasible, measures will be taken to ensure the features that photograph is aiming to capture are clear;
- A photographic register will be kept of each shot;

- Where 'bracketed shots' are taken (where it may not be possible to check an image for quality immediately or where lighting levels may affect contrast), only one image from the bracketed shots will be archived, the rest will be deleted.
- All digital photographs will be saved with a file name that uses the Accession Number, then an underscore followed by 'Figure' and a simple numerical sequence. e.g. XA1232014\_Figure123
- All digital images will be backed up on an external hard drive in addition to the internal computer memory. Digital images will be transferred from the camera memory to computer on a daily basis, and back-up copies of those files will also be made.
- An appropriate discard policy for digital data will be implemented in accordance with Archaeology Data Service guidelines:  
<http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/advice/selectionGuidance>.

6.8 Use may be made of information recorded during earlier assessment stages, supplemented by additional written, drawn and photographic records, as necessary.

## 7. REPORT AND ARCHIVE

7.1 An accession number for the project will be requested from Leicestershire Museums Service and a report on the results of the survey will be prepared following completion the fieldwork.

7.2 Copies of the report will be issued to the client and/or their agent, the Local Planning Authority, the County Archaeologist and the Historic Environment Record.

7.3 The finalised report will be uploaded onto the on-line OASIS database:  
<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis>.

7.4 A full and ordered archive will be deposited with Leicestershire Museums Service in accordance with *The Transfer of Archaeological Archives to Leicestershire County Council Museum Collections* (Leicestershire County Council 2014) normally within six months of the completion of analysis. This archive will include all written, drawn, survey and photographic records relating directly to the investigations undertaken.

## 8. PUBLICATION

8.1 A report on the results of the investigation will be submitted for publication in a suitable regional or national archaeological journal within one year of completion of fieldwork (eg. *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical*

*Society*). The length and content of the report will reflect the significance of the findings of the survey.

## **9. OPERATIONAL MATTERS**

- 9.1 The client has indicated that appropriate resources have been allocated for the completion of the survey as set out above.
- 9.2 The principal survey and research work was commenced in November of 2015.
- 9.3 The survey will be prepared by Stephen Bradwell, Neil Finn and Miriam Holland. The measured survey will be prepared by David Granger Architectural Design Ltd.
- 9.4 The following guidelines will be adhered to (in addition to guidelines referred to above):
- Leicestershire County Council's *Guidelines and Procedures for Archaeological Work in Leicestershire and Rutland*
  - Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for the Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings or Structures* (1996, revised 2014)
  - English Heritage guidelines *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice* (2006)
  - Historic England guidelines *Digital Image Capture and File Storage: Guidelines for Best Practice* (2015)

## **10. HEALTH AND SAFETY**

- 10.1 All work will be conducted in compliance with the *Health and Safety at Work etc Act* 1974. The guidance set out in the Federation of Archaeological Managers and Employers (FAME) *Health and Safety in Field Archaeology Manual*, 1997 (updated 2006) will also be followed.
- 10.2 A risk assessment will be made prior to the commencement of work on site and will be updated as necessary during the course of the fieldwork. Safe methods of working will be employed taking due account of all potential risks and hazards.

## **11. CONSTRAINTS**

- 11.1 During an initial site visit made on 13 November 2015, it became apparent that access could not be made available to examine Bittesby Lodge, Bittesby Cottages and a number of the former agricultural buildings associated with Bittesby House. The exterior of Bittesby Lodge was examined and photographed from the public



highway (the A5). Bittesby Cottages were examined from a distance; the description is based in part on an earlier photograph reproduced from CgMs document ref: RU/JCG18281/7 (Usher 2015a). The former agricultural buildings immediately to the north-east of Bittesby House were investigated, but a series of buildings further to the east, in separate ownership/occupation, could not be accessed or examined.

11.2 Bittesby House was occupied by a company called Creative Bridge at the time of the Historic Building Survey. Access was made available to all parts of the building during normal working hours over a series of visits, though with some limitations on access to particular areas at certain times.

11.3 At the meeting held on 2 November 2015 to agree the scope of the Historic Building Survey, the Planning Archaeologist made reference to an historical study of Bittesby that was in preparation at that time, which apparently included information derived from archive materials not in the public domain. The author of this historical study was not prepared to make any information available to the authors of the Historic Building Survey report. The Historic Building Survey report is based on all information available to the authors within the project timeframe.

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Usher, R., 2014. *Bittesby House, Lutterworth: Briefing Note*. CgMs Consulting.  
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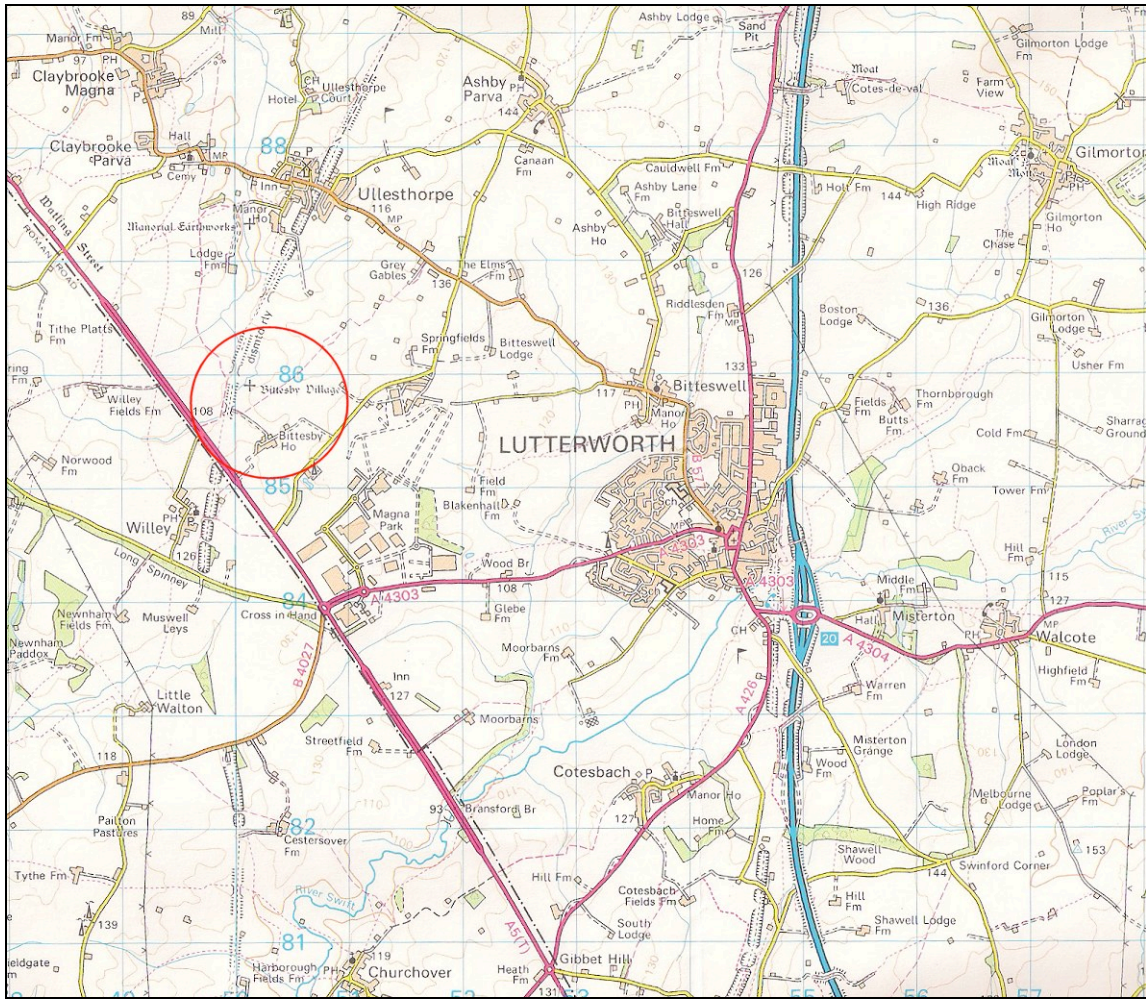
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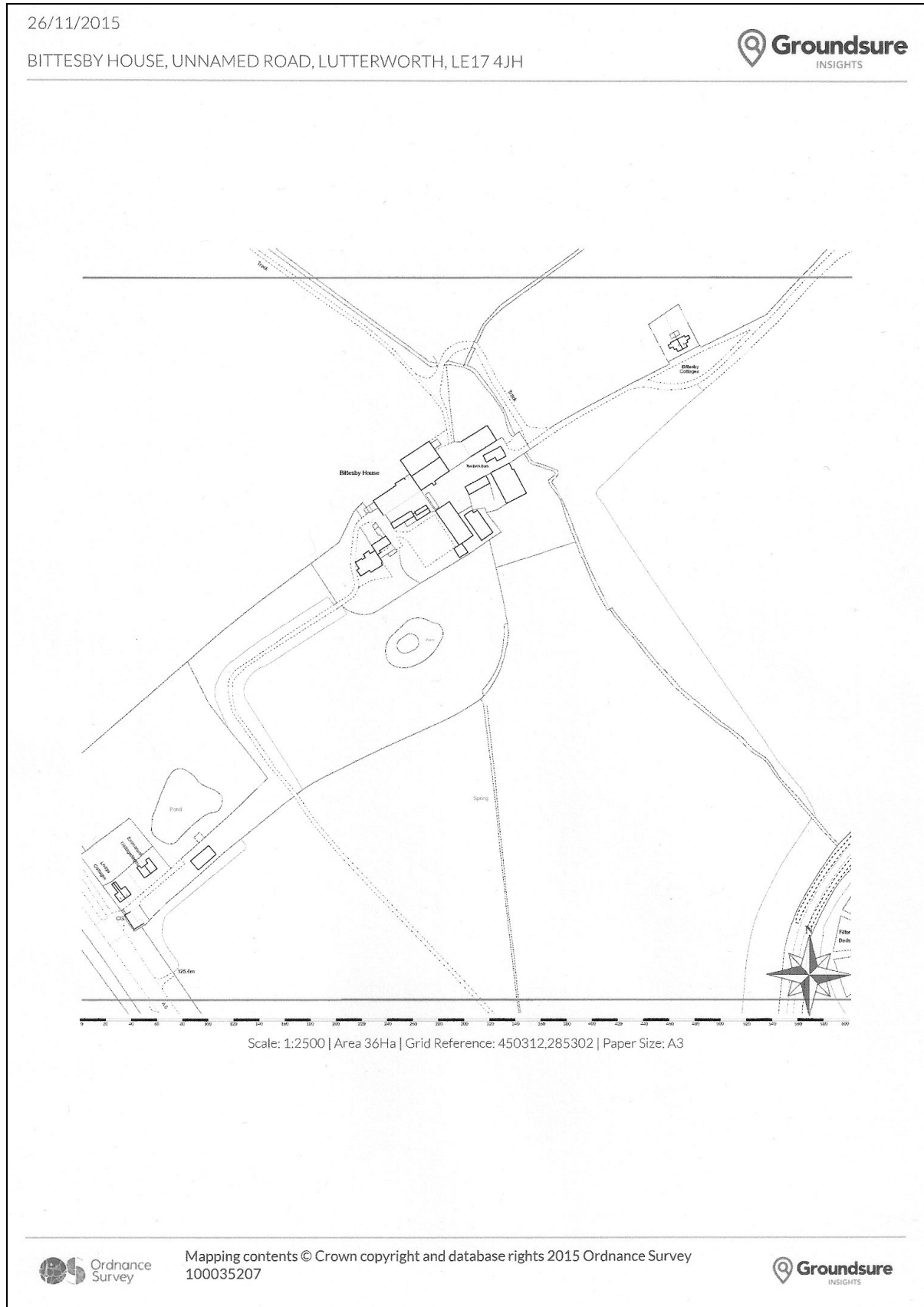
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**Stephen Bradwell & Neil Finn**

**WSI Prepared 10.11.2015, updated 07.02.2016**



**Figure 1.** General Location Plan. Bittesby House and deserted village site circled in red. Based on Ordnance Survey Landranger Map sheet 140. Grid = 1Km squares.



**Figure 2.** Location Plan showing Bittesby House, Bittesby Lodge and Bittesby Cottages.