37 WEST STREET
EASTON ON THE HILL
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

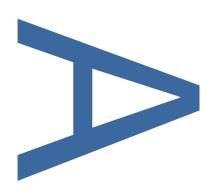
A PROGRAMME OF
ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING
AND RECORDING

LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY:
EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL



SITE CODE: ENN109035

PCA REPORT NO: R13525



MARCH 2018

PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY

37 West Street, Easton-on-the-Hill, Northamptonshire: A Programme of Archaeological Monitoring and Recording

Local Planning Authority: East Northamptonshire District Council

Planning Reference: 17/01942/FUL & 17/02022/LB

Site Code: ENN109035

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Abstract

Archaeological monitoring and recording was carried out during alterations, renovation and extensions to the Grade II listed building of 37 West Street and two associated barns, ground reduction for a new access road into the property from Orchard Way and the excavation of associated service trenches.

No archaeological deposits or features were revealed during the groundworks. It is possible that terracing for the construction of 37 West Street in the 17th century removed potential archaeological remains near the front of the property and in other areas ground reduction only removed topsoil so the archaeological level was not reached. However, it is also likely that the land to the rear of 37 West Street has always been agricultural land, and later gardening plots, and was never built upon or used for settlement.

No features pre-dating 37 West Street were found but a small number of medieval and post-medieval pottery sherds with a date range from 1100-1700 were retrieved from the subsoil to the immediate rear of the main house. The relatively good preservation of the pottery suggests that they were not imported through manuring, but originate from medieval occupation nearby, possibly the earthworks recorded c. 250m to the north.

A rapid, photographic survey was undertaken of the interior of 37 West Street after most of its modern fittings, floors and wall coverings had been removed. No further information on the chronology of the building was revealed, however, several illustrative historic elements of the building were recorded. The most interesting were the carving of the initials and date 'WD [?]1830', most likely marking alterations to the house by its then owner William Duncomb, and a flagstone floor in the northern main room of the house. The flagstone floor was dated to the early 20th century by a 1909 Edward VII penny found in the sub-base underneath the floor. The nature of the timber braces of the reed wall on the ground floor, highlighted as potentially 17th century in the building survey by ABRS, suggest that this is more likely to be a 19th century replacement.

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Planning permission and Listed Building Consent has been granted by East Northamptonshire District Council (ENDC) for alterations, renovation and extensions to the main house at 37 West Street (listed asset); the renovation, extension and conversion of two existing barns; and the sub division of the existing plot into three smaller plots by means of park rail fencing and hedges (ENDC planning refs, 17/01942/FUL and 17/02022/LB). A new site access will be formed to rear of site to serve the converted barns and paddocks beyond.
- 1.2 Together with 35 West Street, 37 West Street is a Grade II Listed building (NHLE 1225532) dating from the 17th century. The buildings originally formed one unit but are now divided into two dwellings. A Historic England Level 2/3 building survey was undertaken of 37 West Street and its associated barns and greenhouses prior to the planning application being determined (ABRS 2015).
- 1.3 In line with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012) and due to the high historical and archaeological potential of the site, a condition (4) was placed on the planning consent 17/01942/FUL, requiring the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with an approved Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI), prior to any works taking place to 37 West Street or excavation taking place at the rear of the site.
- 1.4 The Assistant Archaeological Advisor (AAA) for Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) confirmed that the archaeological works should be in the form of a programme of observation, investigation and recording during any internal and external groundworks as well as any structural alterations of the buildings (Mordue pers comm 13/02/2017).
- 1.5 Pre-Construct Archaeology (PCA) were commissioned by Messenger Construction Ltd to undertake the archaeological monitoring and recording and this document comprises the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for the works required by NCC.

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2 SITE BACKGROUND

2.1 Site location, topography and geology

- 2.1.1 Easton on the Hill is a village c. 3.4km to the south-west of Stamford in the county of Northamptonshire. 37 West Street lies in the historic northern part of the village at the western side of West Street (Figure 1). The site of 37 West Street comprises a group of mixed buildings with the main stone-built domestic house fronting onto West Street and traditional farm buildings to the rear (Figure 2). The buildings are believed to date from the 17th 19th century but most of the greenhouses date to the 20th century (ARBS 2015).
- 2.1.2 The site is bounded by Manor Farm to the south and by a 20th century housing development to the north. To the west lie overgrown gardens and paddocks.
- 2.1.3 Easton on the Hill lies on the top of a distinctive topographical edge rising above the River Welland to the north. The village and the development site itself lie on level land and c.90m AOD. The underlying geology is of the distinctive Ironstone of the Northampton Sand Formation. There are no records as to the superficial drift geology (BGS 2018).

2.2 Archaeological and historical background

- 2.2.1 The following account is based on information provided in the historic building survey of the site (ABRS 2015), supplemented by online data obtained from records held by the Northamptonshire Historic Environment Record (HER). In the following text numbers in brackets refer to heritage asset numbers listed in the HER. Designated heritage assets are described by their asset number on the National Heritage List for England (NHLE) maintained by Historic England.
- 2.2.2 Three manors are recorded at Easton in the Domesday Survey of 1086 which may account for the present layout of the village which has two historic cores: one to the north around the parish church of All Saints and one to the south along the High Street (RCHME 1984). Possible medieval to post-medieval settlement earthworks (HER 2881/0/2) were identified during the Rockingham Forest Project Survey.
- 2.2.3 Until the later 13th century most of the owners of the Easton manors were

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- residents, which is why there was no manor house. The village remained relatively small throughout the medieval period and in 1801 the population stood at 128 families (RCHME 1984).
- 2.2.4 The 1817-19 Enclosure Map shows the manorial holdings in the parish as several farms, especially in the High Street, and a few cottages. This is also the first record of 37 West Street, which is clearly shown on the map and identified in the accompanying award as the freehold property of William Duncomb (ABRS 2015).
- 2.2.5 The historic building report describes the site: "There is a range of buildings filling the whole of West Street frontage as well as another building towards the northernmost boundary of the site. The linear nature of the plot suggests it is medieval in origins, the width of the plot suggests it is likely to be an amalgamation of potentially two or three earlier tenements forming an enlarged holding, this appears to be common in Easton and reflects the apparent wealth of the village" (ABRS 2015, 3).
- 2.2.6 By the late 19th century, as shown on the first edition Ordnance Survey (OS) map of 1886, the layout of the site has changed with the range along West Street having been shortened and subdivided into three units, alternation to the building to the north and the addition of several greenhouses at the rear, the latter possibly reflecting the occupation of William Dumcomb, the then owner of the site, as a gardener (ABRS 2015).
- 2.2.7 Despite changes to the northern boundary of the site and the addition of a further greenhouse in the mid- 20th century (*ibid*) the layout of the site has changed little from the early 19th century.

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3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 The main aim of the archaeological investigation, as stated in the WSI (PCA 2018), was to evaluate the archaeological potential of the site through the identification, sample excavation and recording of any archaeological remains that may be encountered by the watching brief and determining their location, extent, date, character and state of preservation.
- 3.2 With reference to regional research agendas, the specific aims of the investigation were to:
- 3.3 Recover evidence that will enhance our understanding of the origins and development of moated sites, contributing to the research aim highlighted in the regional research agenda, the East Midlands Historic Environment Research Framework¹.

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¹ Available at: https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/researchframeworks/eastmidlands/wiki/Main [Accessed 11/03/2019]

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 General

- 4.1.1 The investigation consisted of the archaeological monitoring of contamination remediation works (test pits), followed by monitoring of ground reduction to the immediate north of the main listed building, within the barns and for the new access route. The excavation of the main service trenches was also monitored (Figure 3).
- 4.1.2 A photographic survey of the listed building was carried out, after it was stripped bare of wallpaper and plaster before conversion.

4.2 Excavation methodology

4.2.1 Ground reduction and excavation of the geotechnical test pits was undertaken by a 360 mechanical excavator with a toothless ditching bucket. Archaeological features and the soil bunds were scanned using a metal-detector to maximise the recovery of metal objects. No metal objects were recovered.

4.3 Recording Methodology

- 4.3.1 The limits of excavations, heights above Ordnance Datum (m OD) and the locations of archaeological features and interventions were recorded using a Leica dumpy level and measuring tapes, with measurements taken off the surrounding buildings. Section drawings and plans of archaeological features and deposits were drawn at an appropriate scale (1:10, 1:20 or 1:50).
- 4.3.2 Field excavation techniques and recording methods followed those detailed in the PCA Operations Manual I: Fieldwork Induction Manual (Taylor and Brown 2009). All features and deposits recorded during the evaluation are listed in Appendix 1.
- 4.3.3 High-resolution digital photographs were taken at all stages of the observation process. Digital colour photographs were taken of the general site and archaeological features and deposits.

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5 INVESTIGATION RESULTS

5.1 Contamination test pits

5.1.1 Four test pits (TP1–4) were machine-excavated to enable samples to be taken by the ground investigation contractor for contamination analysis. The test pits measured 0.5m wide by c. 2m long and were excavated to a depth of approximately 1.0m below ground level (bgl). No archaeological features were encountered in the test pits. The results are presented in Table 1 and described below.

Test pit	it Topsoil Made-ground		Subsoil	
	(m)	(m)	(m)	
1	0.36	-	0.32	
2	-	0.42	-	
3	0.17	-	0.31	
4	0.14	-	0.30	

Table 1: Thickness of topsoil and subsoil in the contamination test pits

- 5.1.1 The geological substrate was 'brashy' limestone, consisting of compacted, angular limestone pebbles and cobbles in a mid-brownish orange, slightly sandy clayey silt matrix (102). Removal of the weathered surface material, which was of variable thickness, exposed the surface of the solid limestone. This had a laminated structure with seams of light brownish orange clay.
- 5.1.2 In TP1, 3 and 4 the geological substrate was overlain by subsoil (101), which had an average thickness of *c.* 0.3m and consisted of mid brown clayey silt with a moderate density of angular limestone pebbles (Plate 1 and Plate 2). This was overlain by dark brownish grey organic silt topsoil (100), which had an average thickness of *c.* 0.15m but was noticeably thicker near the back of the main buildings, where it was up to 0.36m thick.
- 5.1.3 In TP2, the topsoil and subsoil were absent and the ground had been made-up with a mixed deposit of soil and limestone rubble, including some brick rubble (103), laid directly over the geological substrate. This deposit was at least 0.42m thick, becoming thicker where the ground level rose towards the

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foundations of the southern end of the barn. TP2 was located to the immediate south of the rear barn in the location of its recently demolished southern extension ('store'). Both buildings are first shown on the first edition OS map of 1886 and it is possible that the make-up later relates to the construction of the barn.

5.2 Building extension areas and access road

- 5.2.1 Plans for the refurbishment, restoration and conversion of the buildings at West Street included the construction of extensions to the rear (west elevation) of the main building on the street frontage (37 West Street) and to the south of the rear barn.
- 5.2.2 Prior to the excavation of the foundation trenches, the ground level was reduced to the surface of the geological substrate, comprising a mid-brownish orange, slightly sandy clayey silt with frequent gravel inclusions (102) in both areas, enabling the stripped areas to be inspected by the attending archaeologist for archaeological remains. At the rear of 37 West Street, ground was reduced by a maximum of 0.6m (Plate 3) and to the south of the rear barn by a maximum of 0.3m (Plate 4). No archaeological remains were encountered in these areas, but a small quantity of medieval to post-medieval pottery was retrieved from the subsoil (101) (see Sudds, Section 6.1 below).
- 5.2.3 The route of the new access road was stripped of topsoil (100), to a depth of up to 0.3m below modern ground level, exposing the surface of the subsoil (101) at formation level (Plate 5). No archaeological remains were encountered in the road corridor, other than the brick foundations of a recently demolished building to the south of the rear barn. The soils in this area contained a quantity of modern flower pot fragments which were not retained.
- 5.2.4 Ground reduction within the front barn comprised the removal of the current concrete floor, c. 0.03m thick, and the underlying hardcore rubble make-up (104), which was c. 0.10m thick (Plate 6).

5.3 Service trench

5.3.1 A service trench which was 0.8m wide and up to 0.5m deep was excavated

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through the centre of the site from the rear barn to the West Street street frontage (Plate 7). The trench cut trough a homogenous layer of modern made ground which contained fragments of Ceramic Building Material (CBM) and modern plastic flower pot, which was not retained.

5.1 Building recording

- 5.1.1 The standing building survey by Archaeological Building Recording Services, prior to the conversion works taking place, had concluded that 37 West Street is "an impressive range of buildings" and "all of the buildings show evidence of re-building and re-modelling, which unfortunately has concealed significant aspects of their history" (ABRS 2015, 15). Similarly, modern remediation work, following the collapse of a part of the building has removed significant parts of its historic fabric, adding to the difficulty in interpretation.
- 5.1.2 The report states: "There are clear and significant ambiguities of plan, most notably in the south west corner which indicate the building originated as an 17th or even a 16th century dwelling, however this evidence is isolated and fragmentary. It is clear, however, that both 37 and 35 (to the south) were originally part of the same dwelling; it is possible that an examination of both would provide a clearer understanding of the building as a whole". The building was remodeled, or it could be argued re-built in the 19th century, retaining only fragmentary evidence of the previous structure." (ABRS 2015, 16) (Figure 4).
- 5.1.3 A historic building element was therefore included in the archaeological works required by condition (4) as it was hoped that further investigation, after some of the concealing fabrics of the building like wallpaper and plaster were removed, may shed further light on the material development of the building. A photographic survey and investigation was carried out of all accessible areas after the building had been stripped of most of its modern materials (Figure 5: Locations of 2018 building recording photos. Photographs of the building recording are included in Appendix 3.
- 5.1.4 Stripping of modern materials revealed some of the previously hidden historical fabric of the building, but no more specific clues as to its chronological development. The fabric of the reed stud wall, indicated in the building survey

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- as potentially original (ABRS 2018; Figure 4), was revealed. However, the timbers of the primary bracing seemed to be too well cut and slender to suggest a 17th century date (Plate 8 and Plate 9). A 19th century replacement of the original wall seems more likely.
- 5.1.5 A large flagstone floor was revealed in the northern main room of 37 West Street (Plate 10). This, too, was dated to the 19th century by a 1909 Edward VII penny found in the sub-base below one of the flagstones.
- 5.1.6 An interesting detail was the carving of the initials "WD" in two places near the north-western door into the dwelling (Plate 11). This was revealed after the removal of the modern porch to the door at the north-western corner of 37 West Street. The carving by the door is difficult to make out but could read "WD 83 o", or most likely "WD 1830" (Plate 11). "WD" stands for William Duncomb who is known to have been the owner of the property between 1817-19 and the mid-19th century (see above and ABRS 2015). The layout of the buildings at 37 West Street changed significantly between the Inclosure Map of 1817-19 and the first edition OS map of 1886 (ABRS 2015) and the carving suggests that this remodelling of the buildings took place prior to or in 1830, in a programme undertaken by William Duncomb.
- 5.1.7 Building and re-furbishing continued up to the present day, as a 1909 Edward VII penny found in the levelling layer underneath the flagstone floor in the northern room of 27 West Street dates the laying of that floor to the early 20th century.

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6 THE FINDS

6.1 Post-Roman pottery By Berny Sudds

6.1.1 A small assemblage of unstratified post-Roman pottery was recovered from subsoil (101) in various locations during the watching brief, amounting to 8 sherds, weighing 105g. The pottery is in fairly good condition and ranges in date from the 12th to 18th century. The fabrics were examined under x20 magnification and recorded in accordance with the Northamptonshire Ceramic Type Series (Blinkhorn 2003). A catalogue of the pottery appears below in Table 2. The range of types can largely be well paralleled in the region (Blinkhorn 2001, 2011), and although unstratified, attest to contemporary activity in the vicinity.

CTS code	Common name	Description	No	Wg	Date
F330	Shelly coarseware	Jar rim, everted. Soapy feel, grey	1	19	1100 – 1300
		core, buff surfaces. Moderate shell			
		inclusions.			
F330	Shelly coarseware	Body sherd, external sooting.	1	4	1100 – 1300
		Soapy feel, grey core, oxidised			
		internal surface, brown external			
		surface. Moderate shell inclusions.			
F320	Lyveden/ Stanion-	Jug body sherd, external green	1	3	1225 – 1400
	type 'B' ware	glaze			
MISC GL	Unsourced glazed	Jug body sherd. Hard, thin-walled	1	3	1200 – 1500
	ware	oxidised sherd with white slip and			
		clear glaze. Moderate quartz,			
		sparse iron oxide and calcareous			
		inclusions.			
F401	Late medieval/	Flat base sherd. Unglazed, hard,	1	19	1400 – 1600
	transitional	fine feel with buff core and orange			
	oxidised ware	margins and surface. Sparse, very			
		fine quartz, calcareous and iron			
		oxide inclusions.			
F401	Late medieval/	Thin-walled, hard body sherd.	1	12	1400 – 1600
	transitional	Oxidised core, grey margins,			
	oxidised ware	oxidised surfaces. External pale			

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		grey slip? Fine fabric with sparse			
		fine calcareous inclusions. Late			
		Potterspury?			
F406	Midlands Yellow	Body sherd. Fine off-white fabric	1	10	1500 – 1700
	ware	with oxidised outer surface.			
		Moderate very fine quartz and iron			
		oxide. Internal yellow glaze.			
F427	Glazed red	Bowl or dish rim, thickened rim,	1	35	1550 – 1800
	earthenware	internal ridge/ cordon and clear/			
		green glaze.			

Table 2: The unstratified post-Roman pottery. CTS = Ceramic Type Series; No = Number of sherds; Wg = Weight in grams.

6.2 Modern coin

6.2.1 A bronze penny, showing a bare head Edward VII facing right on the obverse, was picked up from the sub-base (105) of the flagstone floor in the northern room of 37 West Street. The reverse of the penny features Britannia, seated left, holding a trident, and the date of 1909. The coin dates the laying of the flagstone floor to the early 20th century.

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7 DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The archaeological investigations revealed no archaeological features or deposits. There was no evidence for any activity on the site prior to the construction of no. 37 West Street, most likely in the 17th century. However, eight pottery sherds were found in the subsoil across the site, dating from 1100-1700, a period pre-dating the construction of the cottage.
- 7.2 The ground rises considerably at the back of the building and it is likely that terracing had taken place prior to the construction of the cottages. This may have removed any potential traces of previously existing features, at least near the street frontage of the property. In the area of the access road, ground reduction only reached the upper interface of the subsoil, so archaeological features would not have been revealed. However, the service trench provided a useful section across the centre of the site and no archaeological features were revealed.
- 7.3 All observations during ground reduction and in foundation trenches at the rear of the property revealed a relatively sterile topsoil and subsoil. Eight fragments of medieval to post-medieval pottery were retrieved from the subsoil at the back of 37 West Street, and several fragments of modern ceramic and plastic plant pot (the latter were not retained) were retrieved from the topsoil across the site.
- 7.4 The land to the rear of no. 37 West Street was most likely agricultural land prior to enclosure and became market gardening plots after enclosure and up to the present day. Apart from the known historical barns and greenhouses, it was never built upon. Rubbish disposal during the life of the cottages, barns and gardening activities, which may have been expected in the form of midden deposits or rubbish pits on the garden land, may have been in areas not revealed during the investigations, or disposed of in a more organized way off site. The medieval pottery could have been spread across the site through manuring, however, its good condition also suggests that it may have travelled only a short distance from occupational sites nearby (Sudds, see above). It is possible that the medieval/post-medieval settlement earthworks recorded

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c.250m to the north (HER 2881/0/2) could be the source of the pottery.

7.5 Investigation of the building fabric, after the removal of most of the modern floors, wallpaper and plaster, revealed no further clues as to the chronology of the building. Some of the historic fabric revealed confirmed conclusions by the original building survey that the building was extensively remodeled and refurbished in the 19th century and not much of its original fabric survies. However, several historic features, like a flagstone floor in the northern room of 37 West Street and carved initials of the property holder William Duncomb dating to c.1830, provided further illustrative details of the historic use of the property.

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8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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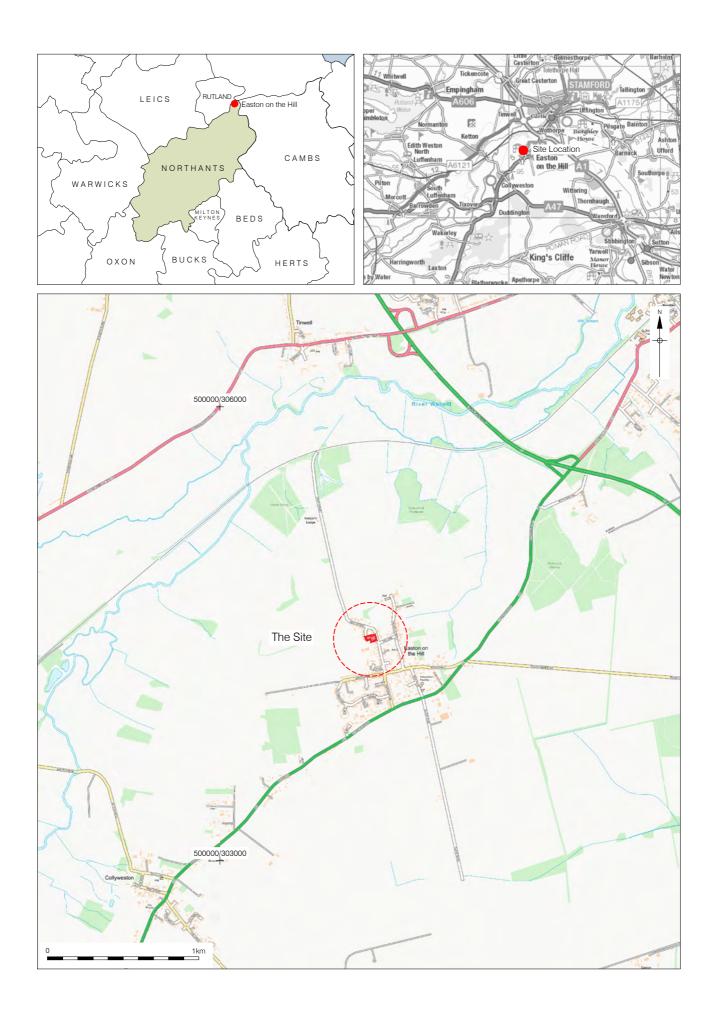
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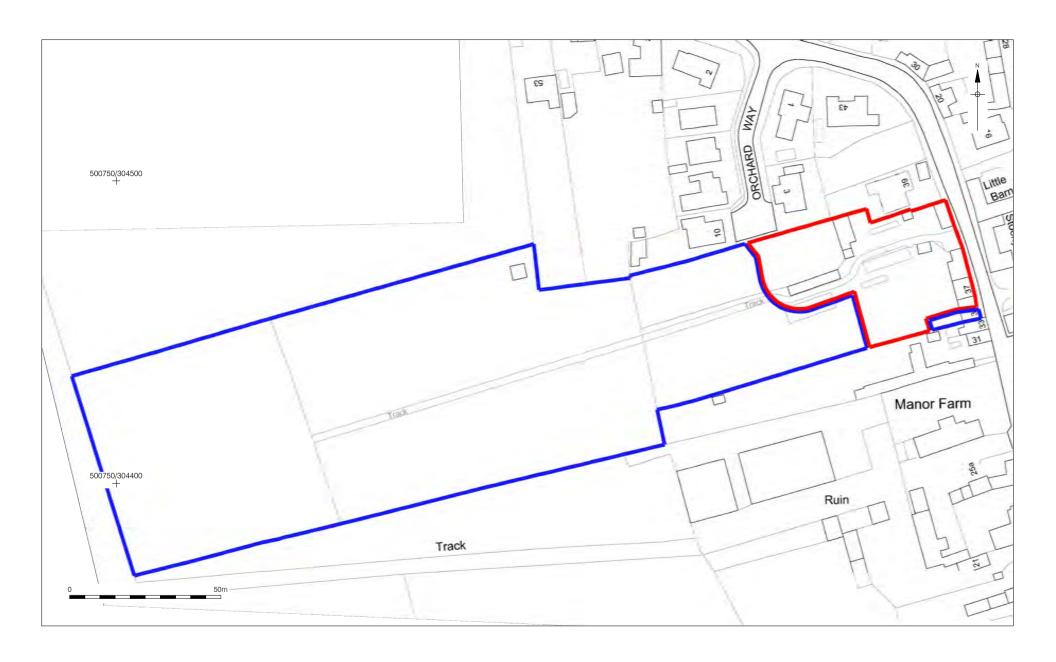
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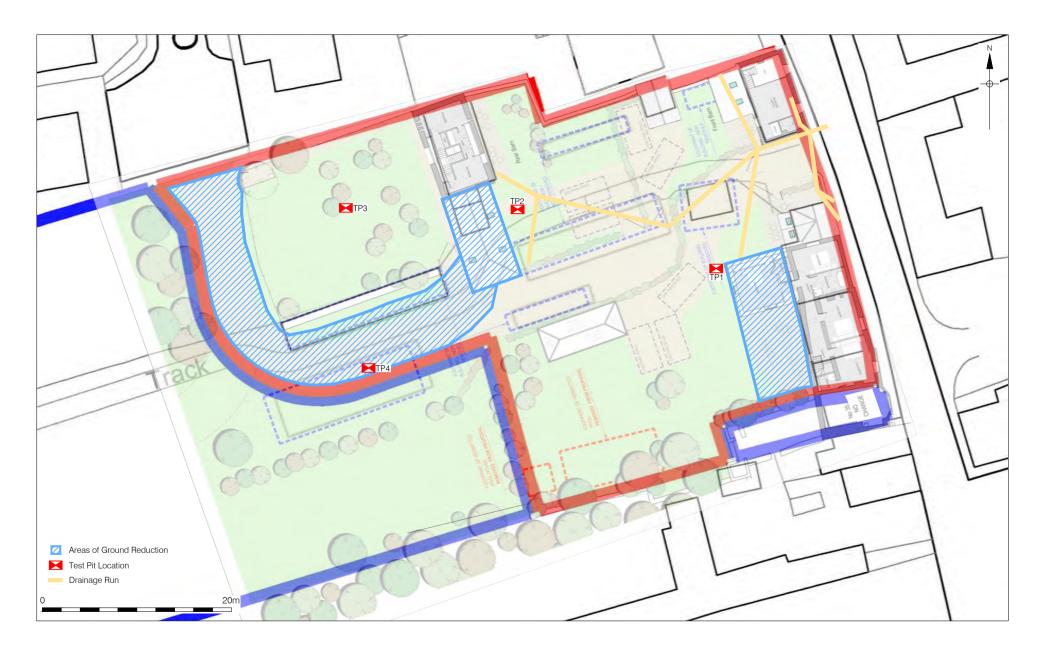
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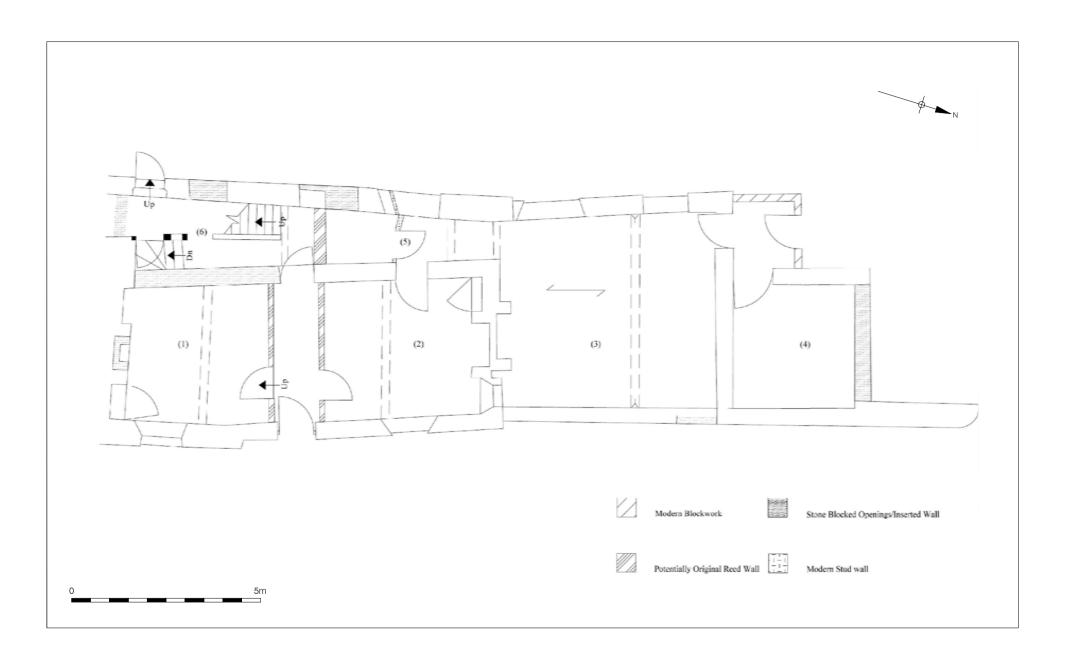
10 FIGURES

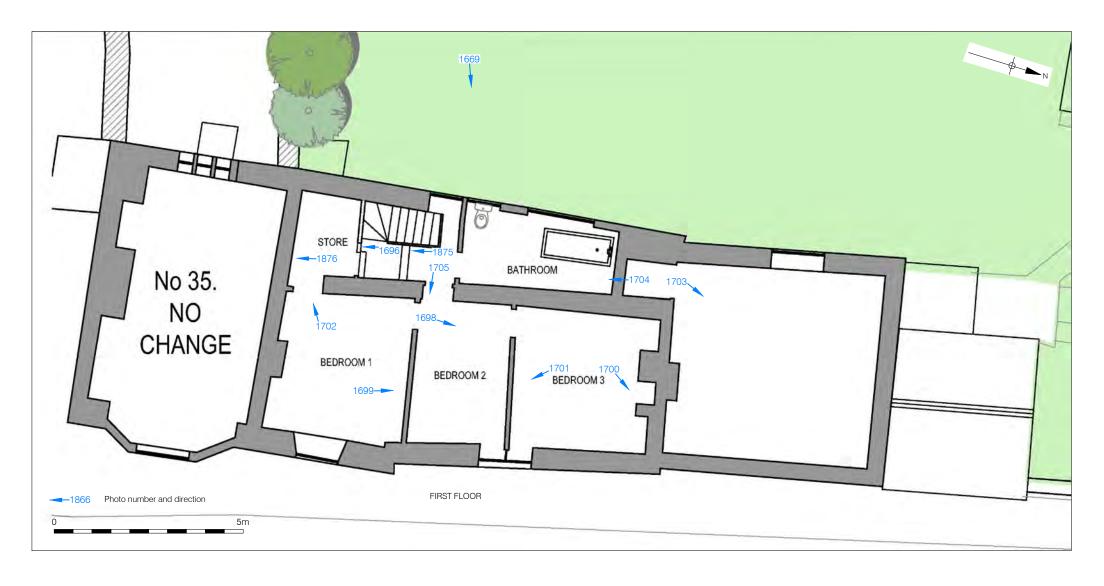
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11 PLATES



Plate 1: Test pit 3



Plate 2: Test pit 4

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Plate 3: Ground reduction at rear of 37 West Street, looking SSE



Plate 4: Ground reduction to S of rear barn, looking N

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Plate 5: Ground reduction of access road, looking N towards Orchard Way



Plate 6: Ground reduction inside front barn, looking N

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Plate 7: Service trench, looking E



Plate 8: Reed Wall on ground floor

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Plate 9: Reed wall detail



Plate 10: Flagstone floor in northern room of 37 West Street, looking SSW

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Plate 11: Initials 'WD' and ?1830 date carving adjacent to N doorway

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APPENDIX 1: CONTENTS INDEX

11.1 Context Index

Context	Туре	Description	
100	Topsoil	Dark brownish grey organic silt. 0.14-0.36m thick.	
101	Subsoil	Mid brown clayey silt with a moderate inclusions of angular limestone pebbles. C. 0.30m thick	
102	Natural	Mid brownish orange, slightly sandy clayey silt with frequent inclusions of gravel.	
103	Make-up layer	Mixed deposit of mid greyish brown soil and limestone rubble with moderate inclusions of CBM fragments. 0.42m thick. Located in TP 2 adjacent to rear barn.	
104	Make-up layer	Compact, light, whitish grey angular limestone rubble. 0.10m thick. Located below concrete floor in front barn.	
105	Make-up layer	Light yellowish brown, fine, gritty, loose silty sand. 0.03m thick. Sub-base for flagstone floor in northern room of 37 West Street.	

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APPENDIX 2: OASIS FORM

OASIS ID: preconst1-339165

Project details

Project name 37 West Street, Easton-on-the-Hill, Northamptonshire

project

Short description of the Watching brief and building recording during building conversion of main cottages and barns on land at 37 West Street, Easton on the

Hill. The investigations revealed no archeological features. Fragments of modern ceramic and plant pot in the topsoil and subsoil gives evidence of the market gardening history of the property.

Start: 22-02-2018 End: 20-11-2018 Project dates

Previous/future work No / No

Any associated project ENN109035 - HER event no.

reference codes

Type of project Recording project

Monument type **BUILDING Post Medieval**

Monument type **BARN Post Medieval**

Project location

Country England

Site location NORTHAMPTONSHIRE EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE EASTON

ON THE HILL 37 West Street, Eaton on the Hill

Postcode PE9 3LS

Study area 0.3 Hectares

Site coordinates TF 0104 0145 52.601070273719 -0.507946613855 52 36 03 N 000

30 28 W Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited

Project brief originator Northamptonshire County Council

Project design originator Pre-Construct Archaeology

Project director/manager Christiane Meckseper

Christiane Meckseper Project supervisor

Project supervisor Simon Carlyle Project supervisor Harvey Furniss

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient Northamptonshire Museums Service

Physical Contents "Ceramics","Metal"

Digital Archive recipient Northamptonshire Museums Service

Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography", "Text"

Paper Archive recipient Northamptonshire Museums Service

Paper Media available "Context sheet","Report"

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Project bibliography 1

Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

Publication type

Title 37 West Street, Easton on the Hill, Northamptonshire: A Programme

of Archaeological Monitoring and Recording

Author(s)/Editor(s) Carlyle, S

Author(s)/Editor(s) Meckseper, C

Other bibliographic R13525

details

Date 2019

Issuer or publisher Pre-Construct Archaeology

Place of issue or Pampisford

publication

Description Digital copy only

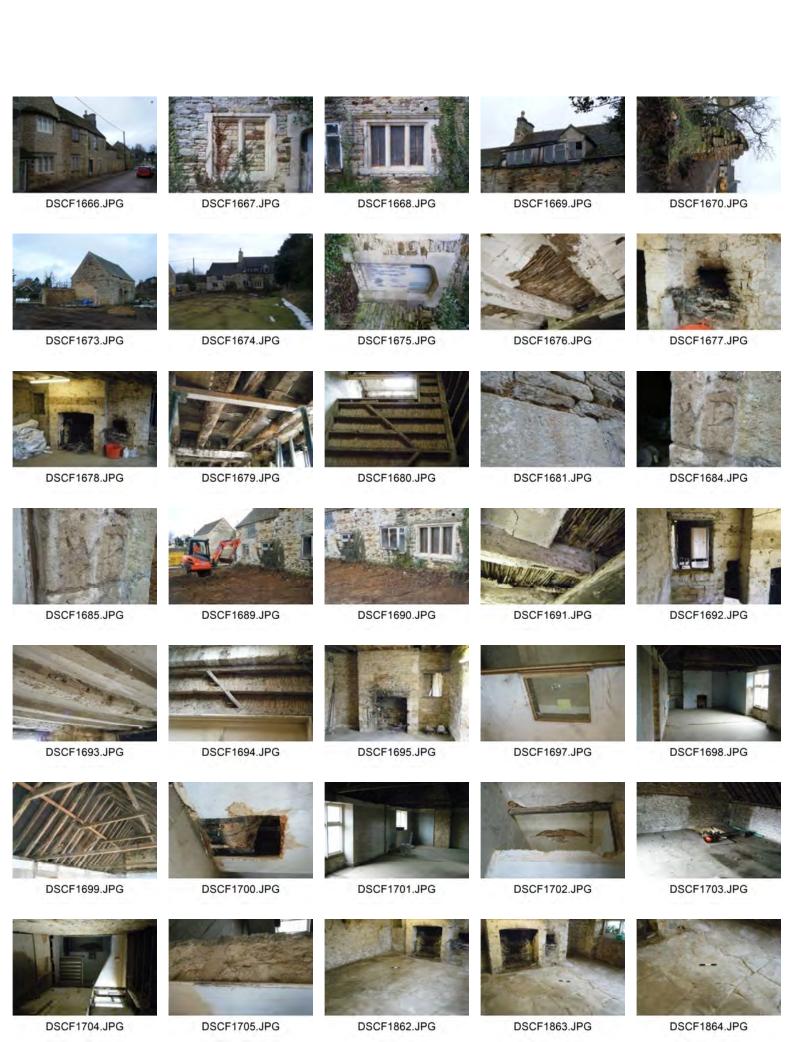
Entered by Christiane Meckseper (cmeckseper@pre-construct.com)

Entered on 14 January 2019

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12 APPENDIX 3: THUMBNAILS OF BUILDING RECORDING PHOTOGRAPHS

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DSCF1665.JPG

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