



**Archaeological observation, investigation  
recording, analysis and publication on land  
adjacent to the Scheduled Monument,  
Clipston, Northamptonshire  
March 2017**

Report No. 17/70

Author: Ian Fisher

Illustrator: Olly Dindol





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**OASIS REPORT FORM**

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>		<b>OASIS No: molanort1-287032</b>	
Project title	Archaeological observation, investigation, recording, analysis and publication on land adjacent to the Scheduled Monument, Clipston, Northamptonshire, March 2017		
Short description	A programme of archaeological observation, investigation and recording was carried out during electrical improvement works on land adjacent to the Scheduled Monument, Clipston, Northamptonshire. The observed works comprised the replacement of five wooden poles and six stay wires and the excavation of a 300m electricity cable trench. The work was carried out adjacent to the Scheduled Monument. The applied methodology ensured minimal ground disturbance. Medieval ridge and furrow was observed. However, no archaeological finds were recovered and no other archaeological features were observed.		
Project type	Archaeological observation, investigation, recording, analysis and publication		
Previous work	None		
Current land use	Pasture		
Future work	None		
Monument type and period	Medieval ridge and furrow		
Significant finds	Medieval ridge and furrow		
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>			
County	Northamptonshire		
Site address	Naseby Road, Clipston		
Easting Northing	SP 70841 81527		
Area (sq m/ha)	2.046ha		
Height aOD	c 142 - 146m aOD		
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>			
Organisation	MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology)		
Project brief originator	Northamptonshire County Council		
Project Design originator	MOLA Northampton		
Director/Supervisor	Ian Fisher (MOLA Northampton)		
Project Manager	Anthony Maull (MOLA Northampton)		
Sponsor or funding body	Western Power Distribution		
<b>PROJECT DATE</b>			
Start date	13/03/2017		
End date	18/04/2017		
<b>ARCHIVES</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Contents</b>	
Physical	ENN108431	Watching brief forms	
Paper			
Digital		Client report PDF	
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>		Unpublished client report	
Title	Archaeological observation, investigation, recording, analysis and publication on land adjacent to the Scheduled Monument, Clipston, Northamptonshire, March 2017		
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# **4 Archaeological observation, investigation recording, analysis and publication on land adjacent to the Scheduled Monument, Clipston Northamptonshire March 2017**

## **Abstract**

*A programme of archaeological observation, investigation and recording was carried out during electrical improvement works on land adjacent to the Scheduled Monument, Clipston, Northamptonshire. The observed works comprised the replacement of five wooden poles and six stay wires and the excavation of a 300m electricity cable trench. The work was carried out adjacent to the Scheduled Monument. The applied methodology ensured minimal ground disturbance. Medieval ridge and furrow was observed. However, no archaeological finds were recovered and no other archaeological features were observed.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

Western Power Distribution commissioned Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA) to carry out a programme of archaeological observation, investigation, recording, analysis and publication during groundworks on land adjacent to the Scheduled Monument, Clipston, Northamptonshire (NGR SP 70841 81527; Fig 1).

Western Power Distribution received a notice from the landowner to relocate existing electricity assets at the above location. The proposed works will decommission and remove approximately 300 metres of 11KV overhead conductor, five wooden poles and three stay wires. The proposal is to replace them by installing approximately 300m of 11KV underground electricity cable, four wood poles and six stay wires (WPD 2016).

The archaeological work was carried out in accordance with an approved Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) which set out the methodology to be applied during those works (MOLA 2017). The WSI was approved by the Northamptonshire County Council Archaeological Advisor (Lesley-Ann Mather).

MOLA is a Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) registered organisation. This report has been prepared in accordance with the current best archaeological practice as defined in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance: Archaeological watching brief* (CIfA 2014a), the *Code of Conduct* (CIfA 2014b) and the Historic England (HE) procedural document *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)* (HE 2015).

## **2 BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Location and Geology**

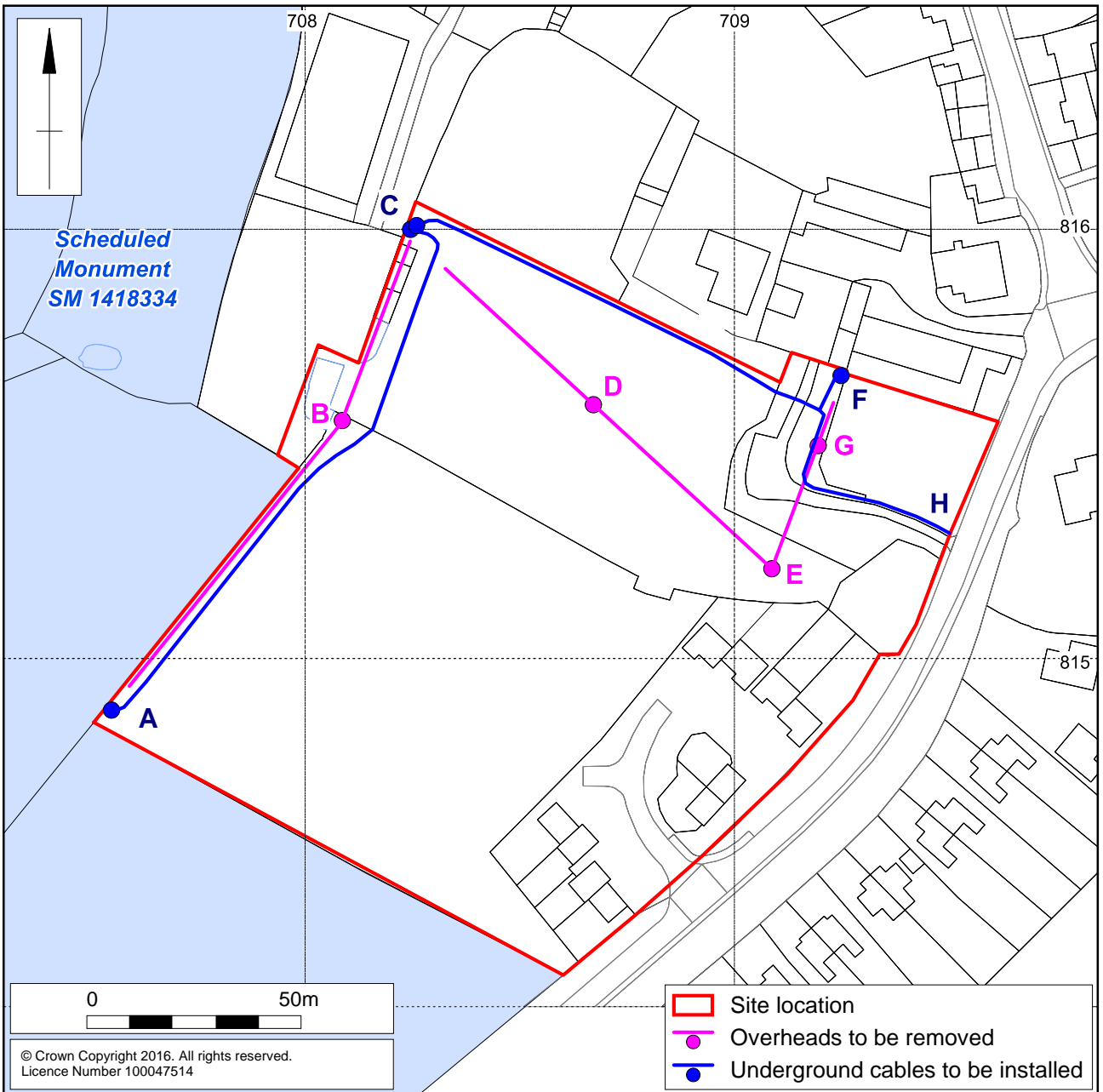
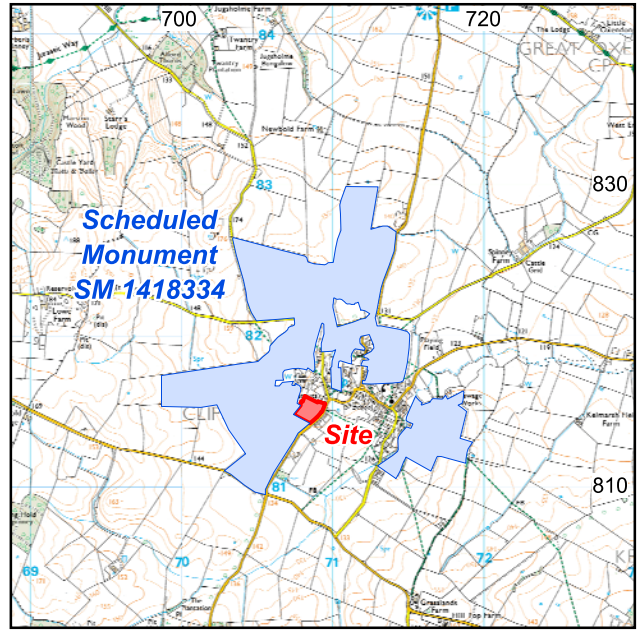
Clipston is an historic village in north-west Northamptonshire in the district of Daventry. It lies about 20km north of Northampton. The village is surrounded by farmland.

The area of the proposed electrical works is situated to the south-west of the village, in two fields adjacent to a Scheduled Monument (National Heritage List for England (NHLE) ID 1418334). The Scheduling covers two areas to the east and west of the modern village which comprise the extensive and well-preserved earthwork remains of the former Clipston medieval settlement. The area which will be affected by the electrical works lies beyond the limits of the scheduled area.

The fields slope very gently down to the south-east, from around 146m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) to the north-west down to c.142m aOD in the south-east corner.

The bedrock geology comprises mudstone of the Whitby Mudstone Formation, overlain with Mid Pleistocene Diamicton till (BGS 2017). The soil type of the site comprises slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged fine loamy over clayey, fine silty over clayey and clayey soils of the Wickham 2 association (LAT 1983).





Scale 1:1500

Site location and proposed services Fig 1

## 2.2 Historical and archaeological background

A search of the Historic Environment Record for Northamptonshire (HER) was undertaken as part of the WSI. The following background is drawn from relevant records within a 500m radius of the site, as well as from other sources. The HER results are summarised below, and reproduced in Appendix 2, 3 and 4 of this report.

### ***Romano-British***

There are no recorded finds or features within a 500m radius of the site which predate the Anglo-Saxon period, although the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England (RCHME) records that four small Roman settlements have been identified within the parish of Clipston, the closest of which is situated around 1.2km to the south-west of the site (RCHME 1981).

### ***Anglo-Saxon and medieval***

It is recorded in the RCHME (1981) that a single Saxon burial was identified at the south-east part of the village during the 19th century, possibly in the vicinity of the church. The skeleton was accompanied by a knife, a scramasax and part of a spearhead. No other remains of this period are known.

To the north-west of the village of Clipston lies the deserted village of Nobold. Little is known of the history of the village and its name is not recorded until 1284. The meaning of its name 'New Building', as well as the site of the village, suggests that it was a later secondary settlement of Clipston (RCHME 1981).

The Shrunken Village of Clipston may date from the Anglo-Saxon period; it was recorded in 1086 in the Domesday Survey (NHLE ID 1418334; HER MNN5865). The Scheduled Monument is discussed further below, but comprises earthwork remains of the medieval village, including parallel streets, hollow-ways, closes with house sites edged by low banks or scarps, and with associated extensive ridge and furrow cultivation remains. The majority of the HER records for this area relate to earthworks or features of the Shrunken Village. Several phases of development can be observed. Some spot finds of medieval pottery are known from the west of the village (MNN28031). Also to the west, the Nobold (End) manor house was situated, and was still standing in 1752 (MNN28032).

### ***Clipston Shrunken Medieval Village***

The following description is taken from the National Heritage List for England entry 1418334 (HE 2014):

*The scheduled monument includes the earthworks and buried archaeological remains of the medieval village of Clipston comprising tofts, crofts, enclosures and areas of medieval ridge and furrow. These remains surround the currently inhabited core of Clipston village. It is not possible to say if the extensive remains represent the maximum expansion of the village at any one time or are the results of changes in location and layout spread over a long period. There are two main areas of the settlement which appear to have been occupied by dwellings. The first and most concentrated is at the western end of the village, centred around Pegs Lane, and the second is in the paddocks lying between Chapel Street and Harborough Road. These two areas are linked by earthworks and the remains of the medieval field system including ridge and furrow and embanked enclosures, both characteristic of the medieval rural economy. At the east end of the village enclosures defined by low banks and scarps are clearly evident to the east of Kelmarsh Road and Church Lane, but few show sign of tofts suggesting they were never occupied by dwellings but were possibly for the purpose of stock enclosure.*

*At the western end of the village, particularly north, south and west of Pegs Lane and the properties along Pegs Lane, extensive settlement remains appear*

*to be based on two hollow ways (sunken tracks). One extends from the bend in Pegs Lane, north of the property known as The Limes, running to the north-west where it joins the second hollow way running roughly north to south either side of Pegs Lane, beneath a property known as Cherrywell on the south side and adjacent to a large agricultural building on the north side. On both sides of these hollow ways are many small closes or crofts, some with identifiable house sites (tofts) within them. Both tofts and crofts are evident as low banks and scarps which in plan depict the crofts as rectangular enclosures measuring up to c.70m by 20m with the tofts c.20m by 30m adjacent to the hollow ways which themselves survive up to a depth of c.1.2m. To the west of Pegs Lane, further tofts and crofts are evident amongst other old embanked closes which do not appear to have been occupied by dwellings.*

*To the rear (north) of crofts on the north side of Pegs Lane a wide gully, possibly a back lane, separates the crofts from the ridge and furrow to the north. This gully aligns with a similar feature in the paddocks located between Chapel Lane and Harborough Road; at its eastern end it links with the main north to south-running hollow way which runs parallel to the aforementioned roads. Together these earthworks are believed to be part of the second phase of village expansion or change in layout of the village. This hollow way survives up to 1.5m deep. Again tofts and crofts about the hollow way indicating the positions of former dwellings and east of Harborough Road further earthworks are evident adjacent to the existing road.*

To the east of the village, earthworks comprise enclosures defined by low banks and scarps, but with little indications of tofts. This has been interpreted to mean that the eastern area was never occupied by dwellings but was utilised for the purpose of stock enclosure. The presence of a possible back lane or hollow-way to the rear of the crofts on the west and east sides of the village has been identified as giving evidence for a second phase of village expansion or change in layout of the village.

Ridge and furrow earthworks are extensive and in a good state of survival on all sides of the village, but particularly to the north, south-west and south-east of the existing settlement, where some ridges are surviving up to 0.75m high. The furlongs are often short and interlocked in response to the broken nature of the landscape (RCHME 1981). In the field to the north of the village, the site of a windmill is known. On the site itself, aerial photographs show that ridge and furrow is extant in the southern field of the site on a south-east by north-west alignment.

It is difficult to determine the size of population in the original Clipston village, however, it was presumably large for in Domesday Book there are four manors listed for Clipston, three of which have a combined recorded population of 41.

### ***Other post-medieval and modern***

A Watching Brief undertaken in 2016 at Kelmarsh Road, around 650m east of the site, lay adjacent to the Scheduled Monument (Sharman 2016). However, despite the close proximity of a known medieval site, the lack of any pre-modern finds suggested that the site was not in use until the 19th century. Archaeology on the site comprised modern layers, surfaces and brick footings associated with a demolished pole barn and cottage. Finds of pottery and clay tobacco-pipe would appear to suggest a 19th-century origin for these structures.

The common fields of Clipston were apparently enclosed by an Act of Parliament in 1776 (RCHME 1981). HER records for the post-medieval and modern periods are mainly associated with historic buildings, some of which are still standing as extant or converted structures. The closest asset of this date, around 80m to the north-east of the site, is a mid-18th century, two-storey house on Gold Street, known as The Chestnuts (MNN109079; Grade II\* Listed). Around 270m to the east is the site of the

former beer house known as the Red Lyon, which was constructed before 1701, and included outhouses, barns, stables, yard and an orchard (MNN170326). The historic pub was replaced in the first half of the 19th century by the Old Red Lion, which was converted to residential use in 2014 (MNN170325). Other historic and Listed Buildings are detailed in Appendix 4.

A brief overview of historic mapping for the site indicates that little has altered in the layout or use of the area since the first Ordnance Survey map of 1886. At this time, the fields to the west of the current site were under orchard, and the property in the north-east corner of the site may have been enclosed within a bank. A small pond and trees are depicted within a small field area to the south-west of the site. By 1952, the orchard is no longer depicted, and a small row of houses to the east of Naseby Road had been constructed.

### 3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of the works, as specified in the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI), were to:

- mitigate the impact of the development through preservation by record;
- supervise the works to ensure that ground disturbance is kept to a minimum as detailed in the approved method statement (WPD 2016);
- establish the date, nature and extent of activity or occupation in the development site;
- establish the relationship of any remains found to the surrounding contemporary landscapes;
- assess the significance of any archaeological remains of any period;
- recover artefacts to assist in the development of type series within the region, and to;
- recover palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions as an intrinsic part of the investigation.

Specific research objectives would have been drawn from national and regional research frameworks as relevant depending upon the results of the work (Cooper 2006, Knight, Vyner and Allen 2012). It was anticipated that the work may have been able to contribute towards the agenda for medieval settlement and the study of shrunken and deserted villages, namely:

Rural settlement (Lewis, in Cooper 2006) and;

Research objective 7E (Knight *et al* 2012); to investigate the morphology of rural settlements, including:

- Shedding further light upon the origin and development of dispersed hamlets and farms in champion and pastoral areas;
- Improving our understanding of the form, evolution and functions of buildings within rural settlements and establish the extent of surviving medieval fabrics;

- Clarify further the processes of settlement desertion and shrinkage, especially within zones of dispersed settlement

However, the results of the Watching Brief were negative, and so no research agenda aims or objectives were able to be met.

#### **4 METHODOLOGY**

The wooden poles were lifted from their position by a JCB mechanical excavator with an attached Strimech under constant archaeological supervision. The wooden poles did not have concrete base blocks and they were lifted vertically with minimal disturbance to the ground (Fig 1).

A JCB was used to augur new wooden poles and stay wires at locations A, C & F to a depth of up to 3m into the ground. The holes were cleaned and photographed before the new poles were installed. By using this method of installation there was minimum disturbance as the stay wires were screwed into the ground.

The cable trench was excavated using a JCB fitted with a toothless grading bucket under continuous archaeological supervision.

#### **5 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE**

##### **Pylons**

The pylons to be removed were extracted by a JCB fitted with a front loader utility pole grab. This enabled them to be easily lifted vertically from the ground with little disturbance to the surrounding soils. The holes left by the pylons generally measured 0.45m in diameter and 2.7m deep (Figs 2 & 3).

Due to the narrow width and the depth of the postholes it was not possible to fully observe the stratigraphy within them. The vertical lifting of the pylons also resulted in a smearing of the sides of the holes. The observable, upper portion of the postholes, was cleaned and photographed. The topsoil comprised of firm mid grey brown silty clay to an approximate depth of 0.2m – 0.35m. The general stratigraphy recorded across the site suggests that the topsoil overlies a subsoil of firm light grey brown silty clay with a general thickness of 0.2m-0.5m, and it can be assumed that this would also be shown to overlie the natural geology of clay. No archaeological finds were recovered and no archaeological features were observed.

##### **Cable trench**

A 300m long cable trench was excavated under continuous archaeological supervision (Figs 1, 4 & 5) using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket, to the required depth (1.1m deep) for the cable ducting.

The topsoil and subsoil was removed in 100mm spits up to a depth of 1.1m under continuous archaeological observation. The observed stratigraphy in the excavated area comprised a topsoil of firm mid grey brown silty clay, 0.20m - 0.35m thick, overlying a subsoil of firm light grey brown silty clay, 0.2m-0.5m thick (Fig 5). The natural geology comprised of compact light grey blue clay with orange mottling.

Medieval ridge and furrow cultivation is preserved as earthworks, aligned north-west to south-east, in the south-western field containing Pylon A. The earthworks are weathered and eroded around the edge of the field where the cable trench was excavated and are not easily identified in the excavated cable trench (Fig 6).



No archaeological finds were recovered and no other archaeological features were observed in the trench.

## 6 DISCUSSION

The archaeological works occurred adjacent to the Scheduled Monument. The vertical method of utility pole extraction enabled minimal ground disturbance in this area. Topsoil and subsoil was recorded within the upper extent of the postholes, however close examination of the underlying stratigraphy was restricted due to the narrow diameter of the holes. The excavation of the cable trench was carried out under archaeological supervision and revealed only remnant medieval ridge and furrow with topsoil and subsoil overlying natural clay. This work did not reveal any other archaeological features and no archaeological finds were recovered.



Pylon C1, following removal looking north-west Fig 2





Pylon H, following removal looking south-east Fig 3



The stratigraphy within the cable trench, looking south-east Fig 4





The stratigraphy within the cable trench (possible furrow), looking north-west Fig 5



Back-filled cable trench, looking north-west towards location C Fig 6



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MOLA

8 June 2017

## Appendix I: Context inventory

Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts
001	Topsoil	Firm mid grey brown silty clay Few inclusions, very clean	0.20 – 0.35m deep	-
002	Subsoil	Firm grey brown silty clay with orange tinge Few inclusions, very clean	0.20 – 0.50m deep	-
003	Natural	Compact light grey / blue clay with orange mottles	-	-

## Appendix II: List of HER records within 1km radius of the site

Ref	Site Name	Period	Summary Description	NGR
MNN5865	SHRUNKE N VILLAGE	Early Saxon to Modern - 410 AD? to 1999 AD	Shrunken village of Clipston and Nobold	SP 7098 8164
SM 1418334	Clipston medieval settlement	Early Saxon to Modern - 410 AD? to 1999 AD	Earthwork remains of the medieval villages of Clipston and Nobold with associated nationally important ridge and furrow cultivation remains	SP 7098 8164
MNN164460	Clipston Village Green	Early Medieval to Modern - 1200 AD? to 1999 AD?	The second stage of development may have been a planned extension to the north west comprising three parallel streets with the village green in the south east corner.	SP 7119 8166
MNN28031	Unstratified medieval pottery	Medieval - 1066 AD to 1539 AD	3 medieval pot sherds were recovered from animal scrapes on the platform adjacent to the hollow way	SP 7087 8178
MNN24118	Medieval/ post medieval closes	Medieval to Post Medieval - 1066 AD? to 1749 AD?	Closes of former houses, bounded by shallow ditches or low banks and scarps	SP 7099 8192
MNN24117	Medieval/ post medieval hollow way	Medieval to Post Medieval - 1066 AD? to 1749 AD?	The second stage of development may have been a planned extension in the north west comprising three parallel streets. The third of these streets, lying equidistant between the other two (Chapel Lane and Harborough Road) is a broad hollow-way up to 2.5m deep	SP 7107 8185
MNN24120	Medieval/ post medieval hollow ways	Medieval to Post Medieval - 1066 AD? to 1749 AD?	Later expansion may have been in the area south west of Chapel Lane where there are extensive settlement remains apparently based on two hollow ways; one of these extends from the bend in Pegs Lane and runs north west until it meets the other, which is longer and curves south east and then south west.	SP 7083 8178
MNN164464	Medieval/ post medieval closes	Medieval to Post Medieval - 1066 AD? to 1749 AD?	On both side of the hollow are many small closes, some with identifiable house sites within them.	SP 7066 8169
MNN164461	Medieval/ post medieval closes	Medieval to Post Medieval - 1066 AD? to 1749 AD?	Closes of former houses, bounded by shallow ditches or low banks and scarps	SP 7117 8171
MNN164463	Medieval/ post medieval closes	Medieval to Post Medieval - 1066 AD? to 1749 AD?	On both side of the hollow are many small closes, some with identifiable house sites within them.	SP 7077 8186
MNN28032	Nobold (End) manor house	Medieval to Modern - 1066 AD? to 1752 AD?	The Nobold (End) manor house still stood in 1752, presumably somewhere in the earthworks to the west of Clipston	SP 707 817

<b>MNN10382</b>	Nobold (End) manor	Medieval to Modern - 1066 AD? to 1752 AD?	Manor	SP 707 817
<b>MNN135217</b>	Open Fields Project	Medieval to Modern - 1066 AD? to 1766 AD?	Earthwork: Ridge and furrow	SP 71063 81855
<b>MNN134019</b>	Open Fields Project	Medieval to Modern - 1066 AD? to 1766 AD?	Earthwork: Ridge and furrow	SP 7078 8192
<b>MNN134021</b>	Open Fields Project	Medieval to Modern - 1066 AD? to 1766 AD?	Earthwork: Ridge and furrow	SP 7117 8113
<b>MNN133296</b>	Open Fields Project	Medieval to Modern - 1066 AD? to 1766 AD?	Earthwork: Ridge and furrow	SP 7061 8143
<b>MNN117761</b>	Possible Post Medieval Enclosure	Post Medieval - 1540 AD to 1749 AD	Earthwork: Unconfirmed	SP 7087 8191
<b>MNN117760</b>	Post medieval settlement remains	Post Medieval - 1540 AD to 1749 AD	Crop/soilmark+Earthwork	SP 7058 8178
<b>MNN117758</b>	Post medieval settlement remains	Post Medieval - 1540 AD to 1749 AD	Crop/soilmark+Earthwork	SP 7062 8157
<b>MNN117759</b>	Post medieval settlement remains	Post Medieval - 1540 AD to 1749 AD	Crop/soilmark+Earthwork	SP 7075 8189
<b>MNN109075</b>	Hornhill Farmhouse	Post Medieval - 1550 AD to 1599 AD	Farmhouse. Probably late C16	SP 71130 81780
<b>MNN170326</b>	The Red Lyon	Post Medieval to Unknown - 1701 AD?	First mentioned in 1701, the Red Lyon was located by the Green in Clipston	SP 7112 8165
<b>MNN109070</b>	Nos.4 and 6	Post Medieval to Modern - 1730 AD to 1770 AD	Two houses. Mid C18. Rendered cob with slate roof. Each originally one-unit plan	SP 71200 81720
<b>MNN109079</b>	The Chestnuts	Post Medieval to Modern - 1730 AD to 1770 AD	House. Mid C18	SP 70950 81600
<b>MNN109071</b>	Clipston House, The Green	Modern - 1800 AD? to 1999 AD	House. Early C19.	SP 71187 81618
<b>MNN109076</b>	The Old Manse	Modern - 1800 AD to 1849 AD	Manse, now house. Early C19	SP 70925 81909
<b>MNN170325</b>	The Old Red Lion	Built, Modern to Unknown - 1800 AD?	Former public house now converted to residential use	SP 7112 8165
<b>MMN109077</b>	The Baptist Chapel	Modern to Unknown - 1803 AD	The Baptist Chapel, Constructed in 1803, altered c1864	SP 70410 81850

### Appendix III: HER Events

Ref	Event Name	Date	Description	NGR
<b>ENN1 07960</b>	10 The Green, Clipston, 2015 (Evaluation)	20 April 2015	Two trenches were excavated in advance of a proposed residential development. There were no archaeological features	SP 71076 81724
<b>ENN1 07380</b>	The Woodyard, 2014	01/06/2014	Evaluation ahead of development has shown that this site retains no evidence of previous activity or occupation. It does not appear to have lain within the medieval village of Clipston	SP 7106 8152
<b>ENN1 08076</b>	The Old Red Lion, Clipston	29/10/2013	Architectural Survey	SP 7112 8165
<b>ENN1 08077</b>	The Old Red Lion, Clipston	01/10/2013	Archaeological trial trench evaluation produced no archaeological deposits or artefacts predating the 19th century	SP 7109 8163
<b>ENN6 052</b>	RCHM survey site 7	01/01/1981	Earthwork - measured survey/air photography/map	SP 7093 8171

### Appendix IV: HER Listed Buildings in Clipston

Ref	Property name	Period	Description	NGR
<b>DNN2 530</b>	Clipston House	Early C19	House. Early C19.	SP 7118 8161
<b>DNN2 659</b>	Hornhill Farmhouse	Late C16	Farmhouse. Probably late C16.	SP 7113 8178
<b>DNN2 523</b>	Nos. 4 and 6	Mid C18	Two houses. Mid C18.	SP 7120 8172
<b>DNN2 431</b>	The Baptist Chapel	1803	Baptist Chapel. Datestone 1803 altered by E.F. Law 1864.	SP 7090 8183
<b>DNN2 444</b>	The Chestnuts	Mid C18	House. Mid C18.	SP 7095 8159
<b>DNN2 413</b>	The Old Manse	Early C19	Manse, now house. Early C19.	SP 7092 8191



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