17 St ANDREWS LANE,

TITCHMARSH,

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

NGR REF: TL 02676 79554

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION
(OASIS ID: 217750)

JULY 2015

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Summary

An archaeological investigation was conducted by Independent Archaeology Consultants for the construction of a new dwelling at 17 St Andrews Lane, Northamptonshire. The foundation trenches contained no archaeological features, but the foundation for an old garden wall was uncovered in the eastern part of the site. The deposits within the site consisted otherwise largely of made ground. A copper coin from the 18th century was found in the topsoil.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The site was located at 17 St Andrews Lane, Titchmarsh, Northamptonshire (NGR: TL 02676 79554) (Figure 1-2). The investigation trench was opened up in an empty plot, which used to be a former garden in the middle of the village. The trench covered an area of 500m^2, or ca. 83%, of the development site. The project was carried out in accordance with the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Investigation* issued by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA 2014), as well as discussions with Liz Mordue, Assistant Archaeological Officer at Northamptonshire County Council. The project was based on a WSI, which complies with the principles of NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework 2012).

2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

2.1 Planning Permission has been granted (15/00910/FUL) for a new development at 17 St Andrews Lane, Titchmarsh, Northamptonshire. The development comprised a detached dwelling with garage, services and new access.

2.2 The development site was located in the central parts of the village of Titchmarsh. It enclosed an area of some 600m^2 at an average height of 48m AOD. The eastern and western sides of the site were occupied by existing dwellings, while St Andrews Lane was limiting the site in the south and a green field was adjacent to the site in the north. The solid geology comprised Cornbrash Formation Limestone to the west and Blisworth Clay Formation Mudstone to the east (British Geological Survey).

2.3 The site was situated within an area of archaeological potential, as defined by Northamptonshire HER. Therefore, an archaeological investigation was required prior to any construction on the site. This condition was mentioned in the Planning Permission granted by the East Northamptonshire District Council, and was in line with standards described in *NPPF* (2012).

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 The site was located within an area of known medieval settlement. Finds of Saxon and Medieval dates are recorded from the village, especially to the west. Finds of Romano-British date have also been recorded in the area.

3.2 To the east of the site was the Scheduled Monument of Titchmarsh Castle, a moated site with associated fishponds. In 1304 John Lovell obtained a license to crenellate a house here, and in 1346 it was described as a moated site enclosed with a stone wall, but was in ruins by 1363.

3.3 A number of listed buildings were also present in the area: At nr 23 St Andrews Lane there was a Grade II listed building consisting of a limestone house dating from the early 18th century (now rendered), with thatch roof. At nr 39 High Street there was a cottage from the mid 18th century, with squared coursed limestone and thatch roof.

3.4 A large part of the village of Titchmarsh belongs to the so called "Titchmarsh conservation area". This area is about 28.83 HA large and consists basically of the core of the old village, including the Church and the former Castle.

3.5 An Architectural Survey was carried out in parts of the village in 2011, but very little archaeological work has otherwise been conducted in the village in recent years. Most records come from antiquarian excavations of the castle or observations during building works in the mid-20th century.

4 AIMS

4.1 The aims of the investigation were achieved through pursuit of the following specific objectives:

i) to gain information about the heritage assets within the proposed development area;

ii) to provide detailed information regarding the date, nature, extent, integrity and degree of preservation of the identified heritage assets,

iii) to inform a strategy for the recording, preservation and/or management of the identified assets;

iv) to mitigate potential threats,
v) to inform proposals for further archaeological investigations (namely targeted area excavations) within the ongoing programme of research;

vi) to define the sequence and character of activity at the site, as reflected by the excavated remains;

vii) to interpret the archaeology of the site within its local, regional and national archaeological context.

4.2 The investigation also considered the general investigative themes outlined by: *The Archaeology of the East Midlands: An Archaeological Resource Assessment and Research Agenda* (Ed. Nicholas J. Cooper) Leicester Archaeology Monograph No. 13, *East Midlands Heritage: An Updated Research Agenda and Strategy for the Historic Environment of the East Midlands* (Knight, D; Vyner, B; Allen, C. 2012), *English Heritage Archaeology Division Research Agenda* (1997); *Discovering the Past, Shaping the Future: Research Strategy 2005 - 2010* (English Heritage 2005).

4.3 Specifically, the following investigative aims were accommodated in the programme of archaeological work:

*characterisation of the sites in the broader landscape;
*characterisation of the activities identified on the site;
*characterisation of changes affecting land-use through time

Figure 1. The location of Titchmarsh in England.

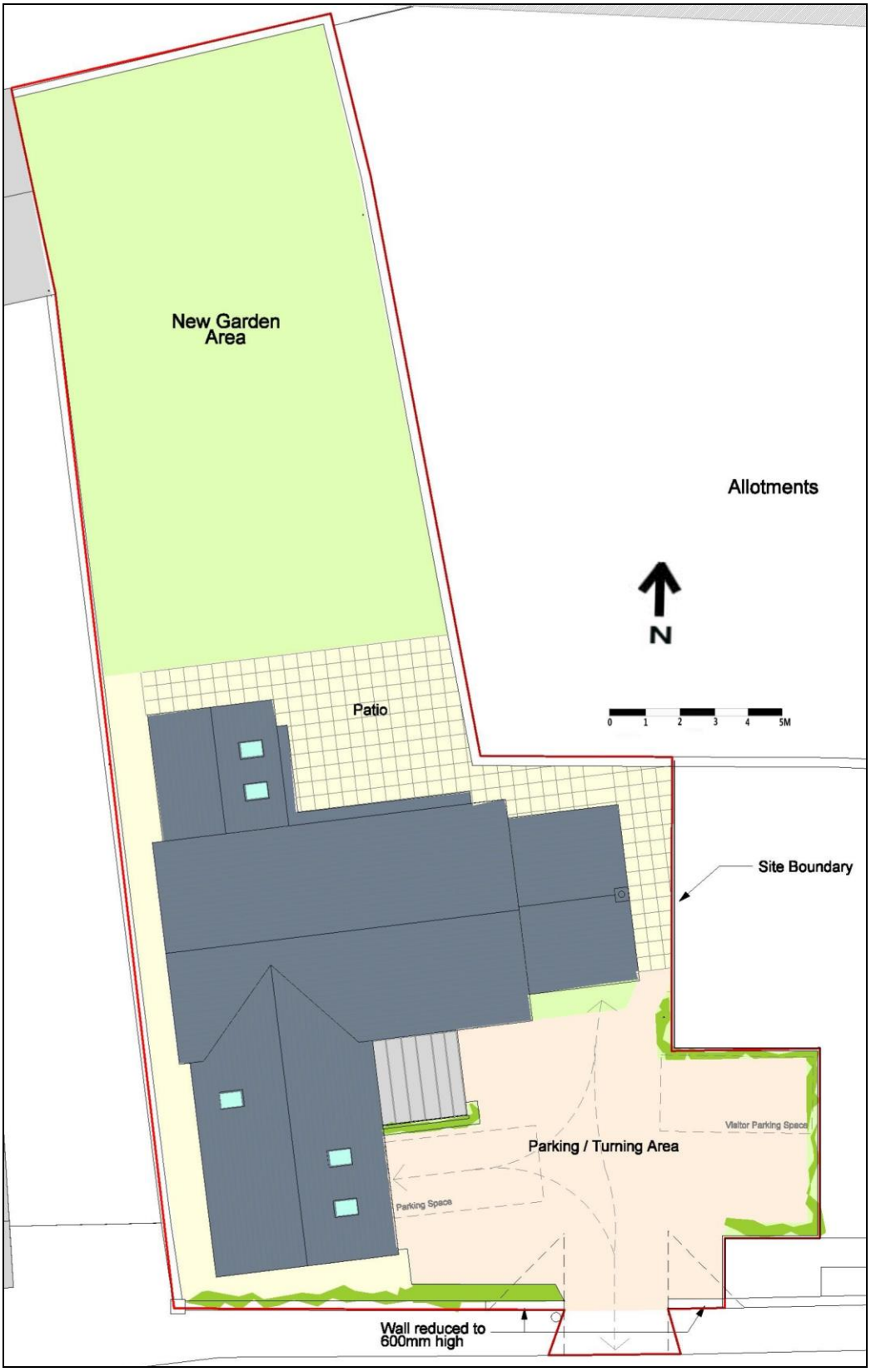

Figure 2. Site outline and footprint of the new dwelling.

5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 Stripping of topsoil and overburden within the investigation area

The archaeological investigation consisted of the continuous observation of removal of topsoil and overburden within the investigation area. The open area investigation was concentrated to areas of development, and focused on the footprint of the new dwelling. The open area excavation was originally expected to cover ca 500m^2 and reach down to natural deposits. However, as the site turned out to contain thick layers of made ground the open area investigation was threatening the stability of the new building. The open area investigation was therefore turned into a watching brief for the digging of the new foundations. Remaining parts were subject to monitoring during landscaping work or excavation of service trenches.

The stripping of overburden was conducted under constant archaeological supervision using a flat bladed ditching bucket. The investigation area was mechanically stripped to the upper interface of secure archaeological deposits or, where these were not present, to the upper interface of natural deposits. Thereafter, hand-excavation was required to sample the exposed features.

The excavation of the site took into consideration potential above- and below-ground constraints and/or hazards, such as trees, utility trenches, overhead cables and areas of modern disturbance. Topsoil and overburden were stored within the development site during the course of the archaeological investigation. Guidance for suitable depths for the stripping was obtained from the Evaluation report.

When archaeological features were encountered they were hand cleaned, investigated and recorded according to the parameters described below.

The investigation was not carried out at the expenses of the heritage assets within the site.

5.2 Metal Detecting

Thorough metal detector sweeps of exposed features and spoil heaps were carried out in advance of, and during, the excavation process.

5.3 Hand Excavation

All man-made features were hand cleaned, photographed, excavated and documented. Apparently natural features (such as tree throws) were sampled sufficiently to establish their origin and to characterise any related human activity. Hand excavation and feature sampling were sufficient to establish the date, character and relationships with other features. Deposits and layers (including buried horizons of top- and subsoils) were sampled sufficiently to enable a confident interpretation of their character, date and relationships with other features.

The investigation provided a full documentation and interpretation of the site's archaeology at no significant cost to the value or integrity of historical remains therein. Judgement regarding the removal of human remains, structural remains (*in situ* wood or masonry), or other special remains or deposits, were led by this consideration, and was always made in consultation with the Archaeological Advisor for Northamptonshire County Council.

The developer was informed that provision had to be made for delays caused by the need for archaeological recording or bad weather.

5.4 Recording

A numbered single context-based recording system, written on suitable forms and indexed appropriately, was used for all elements of the archaeological recording programme.

Measured plans were produced that show all exposed features (including natural features, modern features, etc.) and excavated areas. Excavation plans and sections in the scales 1:20 and 1:100 were produced for all excavated features and deposits. These were accurately tied in to trench plans/trench location plans, that in turn were accurately related to the Ordnance Survey grid and to suitably mapped local features (boundaries, buildings, roads, etc.). All sections and plans were related accurately to Ordnance Datum. A Hemisphere S320 GPS (RTK) was used during all stages of fieldwork, in order to increase the accuracy of the documentation.

A photographic record comprising monochrome and digital photos formed part of the excavation record. A selection of digital photos was also used in this report (a maximum of two photos per A4 sheet). The photographic record followed the outlines in NAAWG 2014 paragraph A1.10.9 for site photographic guidance.

6 RESULTS

6.1 The lowest deposit encountered within the site was the natural ground, which consisted of blue-grey, firm clay. Cut into this clay was the foundation trench [105] of a demolished brick garden wall (104). The foundation trench was 0.45m deep, 0.50m wide, and had vertical sides and a flat bottom. This garden wall was probably not more than 200 years old, as the bricks gave a fairly recent impression (Figure 5).

6.2 Covering the wall was a 0.52m thick layer of light brown, soft soil with occasional fragment of bricks, mortar and charcoal (103). This layer was possibly an old horizon of buried top/gardensoil.

6.3 Covering (103) was a 0.53m thick layer of made ground, consisting of greyish, plastic clay with frequent pieces of 19th and 20th century mortar, bricks and concrete. The uppermost deposit within the site was a 0.57m thick layer of dark brown, soft garden soil with occasional small stones and roots (101).

Figure 3. Overview of site after stripping of topsoil (101). Southwest facing photo.

Figure 4. The foundation for the demolished garden wall (104). North facing photo.

Figure 5. Foundation trenches in the southern part of site. Northwest facing photo.

7 FINDS

7.1 An 18th century copper coin was found in the western part of the site, standing on its side in the topsoil (101) and leaning against the preserved garden wall. The coin was much worn from weather, but is probably from the mid 18th century and was struck during either George II or George III.

8 DISCUSSION

8.1 The archaeological investigation was carried out at 17 St Andrews Lane, Titchmarsh, Northamptonshire. Titchmarsh is an old village with a long and rich history. The site proved to contain the foundations of a 100-200 year old garden wall, and a coin in the topsoil can be contemporary with the wall. Even if no older archaeological features were discovered during the investigation in July 2015 the village is still of interest for the historical research of eastern Northamptonshire.

8.2 The area surrounding St Andrews Lane has proven to contain archaeological remains, and a large number of the preserved historic buildings in the village can be found less then 100m away from the site described in this report. Future investigation in the area is therefore recommended, and should focus on increasing our knowledge of this fascinating British village.

9 ARCHIVE

The archive consists of the following:

Paper Record

The project brief	The project report
Written Scheme of Investigation	The primary site records
The photographic and drawn records	Finds

The archive is currently maintained by Independent Archaeology Consultants. The archive will be transferred to:

The Archaeological Collections for Northamptonshire County Council.

10 BIBLIOGRAPHY

First Aid for Finds. English Heritage. London 2001.

HER for Northamptonshire. Northamptonshire County Council. Northampton 2015.

NPPF 2012. (National Planning Policy Framework). Department for Communities and Local Government. London 2012.

Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Investigation. Chartered Institute for Archaeologists. Reading 2014.

APPENDICES

CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Context nr	Depth (m)	Description	Younger than	Older than
(101)	0.57	Dark brown, soft garden soil with occasional small stones and roots.	-	(102)
(102)	0.53	Made ground. Greyish, plastic clay. Frequent pieces of 19th- 20th century mortar, bricks and concrete	(103)	(101)
(103)	0.52	Light brown, soft soil with occasional bricks, mortar and charcoal. Possibly old, buried topsoil.	(104)	(102)
(104)	0.45	North-south running foundation for brick garden wall.	[105]	(103)
[105]	0.45	Cut of foundation trench for garden wall (104). Vertical sides and a flat bottom.	Natural	(104)
Natural	-	Blue grey, firm clay.	-	[105]

FINDS LIST

Find nr	Context	Material	Object	Description	Period
1	(101)	Copper	A copper coin.	A much worn 18th century copper coin.	18th century