

**LAND TO THE REAR OF
7-9 CHANCERY LANE,
THRAPSTON,
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**



ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION
(OASIS ID: independ1-395766)

JUNE 2020

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Summary

An archaeological evaluation was conducted by Independent Archaeology Consultants for the construction of two new dwellings on land to the rear of 7-9 Chancery Lane, Thrapston, Northamptonshire. While one evaluation trench was empty the second trench contained a Post-medieval wall. A few sherds of pottery were sealed by the stones in the wall and could date the feature to the Post-medieval period.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The site was located on land to the rear of 7-9 Chancery Lane, Thrapston, Northamptonshire (Grid Ref: 499539 278760) (Figure 1-3). Two evaluation trenches were opened up in the garden behind the existing building. The project was carried out in accordance with the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation* 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 complied with the principles of NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework 2012).

2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Planning Permission has been granted (19/01503/FUL) for a new development at land to the rear of 7-9 Chancery Lane, Thrapston, Northamptonshire. The development comprised the erection of two new dwellings including parking, new services and landscaping works.
- 2.2 The development site was located in the central parts of Thrapston. It enclosed an area of some 1000m² at an average height of ca. 30m AOD. The development area was situated in the centre of Thrapston and on the west side of Chancery Lane. The development area consisted at the time of the investigation of garden land, and was bounded by the gardens to the rear of no.15 to the north, which were to be developed for housing, and by commercial properties on the other three sides. The geology of the site comprised Whitby Formation Mudstone overlain by Ecton Member Sand and Gravel (British Geological Survey).
- 2.3 The site was situated within an area of archaeological potential, as defined by Northamptonshire HER. Therefore, an archaeological evaluation and documentation was required prior to the proposed construction works. This condition was mentioned in the Planning Permission granted by East Northamptonshire District Council, and was in line with standards described in *NPPF* (2012).

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The site was located in the central parts of Thrapston, in an area known for its high archaeological potential. Within 500m from the proposed development site there were about 100 entries in the local HER-register for Thrapston. The site at 7-9 Chancery Lane was also located within the larger archaeological monument that forms Thrapston City core.
- 3.2 A short distance to the north of the site is the focus of the De Vere manor and castle, thought to have been built in the late 11th or early 12th century and acquired by the De Veres in the late 12th century.
- 3.3 A Historic Building Assessment was carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology at Mulberry House some 25m north of the site in 2007 (ENN104669). Here was also another Historic Building Recording project carried out at 15 Chancery Lane by KDK Archaeology Ltd in 2020 (ENN109828).
- 3.4 Some 37m north of the proposed development site was an archaeological evaluation carried out by Archaeological Project Services in 2013. The archaeological trenching was undertaken following a pre-application planning enquiry for residential development at 15 Chancery Lane, Thrapston, Northamptonshire. The site was archaeologically sensitive, lying within the historic core of Thrapston and close to known remains of medieval and possibly Saxon date. There was also limited evidence for Roman activity in the vicinity (ENN106663).
- 3.5 Some 73m north of the proposed development site was an observation made in 1997 by NCC Historic Environment Team at 23 Chancery Lane (ENN18340). In the same area were also archaeological observations made during demolition works along Chancery Lane in 1993, but little of archaeological significance was uncovered (ENN18220).
- 3.6 Some 50m northeast of the site an archaeological watching brief was carried out by the Museum of London long Chancery Lane in 2014. From June to September 2014 an archaeological investigation comprising of strip, map, sample and recording was also carried out by the same organisation. The works identified a Roman ditch and an undated gully (ENN108150).
- 3.7 Adjacent to the above site, during the digging of foundations and drain trenches for an old people's home in 1966, it was noted that a drain trench had cut through a row of at least six skeletons, leaving heads on one side and legs on the other. The skeletons were thought to be of medieval date (ENN12084).
- 3.8 Some 23m southeast of the proposed development site archaeological observation during construction of a bungalow on an unrecorded mound on the west side of Chancery Lane in 1973 revealed that the mound was covering

Land to the rear of 7-9 Chancery Lane, Thrapston, Northamptonshire: Archaeological Evaluation

structures of at least two periods. A pit cut into the top of the mound could be dated to the 13th century (ENN12085).

- 3.9 Some 63m southeast of the proposed development site was St James's Church located. A number of Historic Building Recording projects and other kind of archaeological surveys have been carried out of this building and its surroundings over the years. The church itself is thought to date back to the 12th century and is a Grade II listed building (ENN14395) and (ENN101189).
- 3.10 South of High Street in the south there were also a few observations of archaeological interest. Some 62m south of the proposed development site Historic Building Recording was carried out of Oakleigh House by Premises Consultants in 1998 (ENN19111). Another 20m to the south Historic Building Recording was also carried out of outbuildings at 33-36 High Street between the years 2000 and 2001 (ENN101505) and (ENN101506).
- 3.11 Based on the earlier investigations in the area the proposed development site described in this report had the potential to contain finds and features dating primarily from the Roman period to the present day.

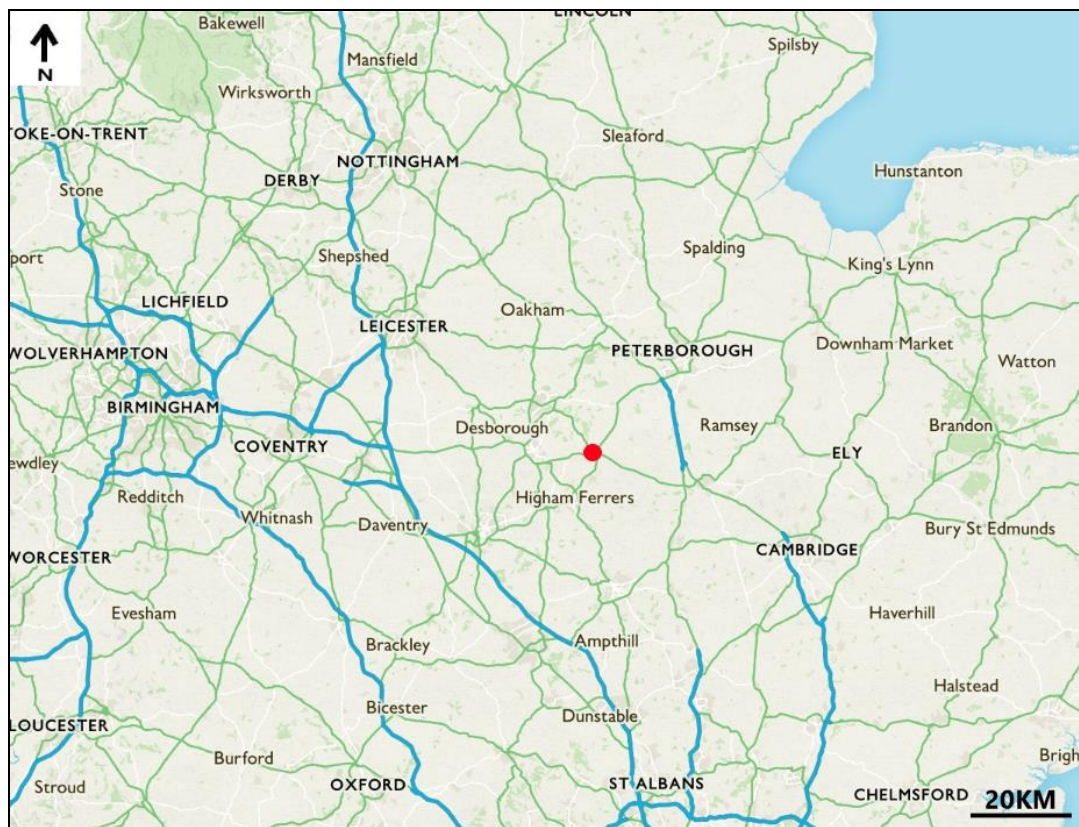


Figure 1. The location of Thrapston in England.

Land to the rear of 7-9 Chancery Lane, Thrapston, Northamptonshire: Archaeological Evaluation

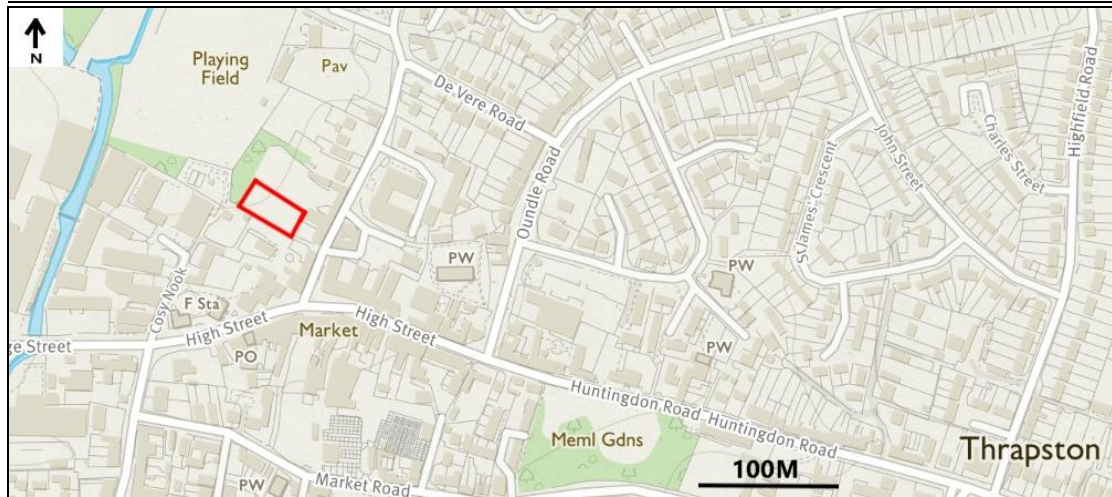


Figure 2. Site Location in Thrapston.

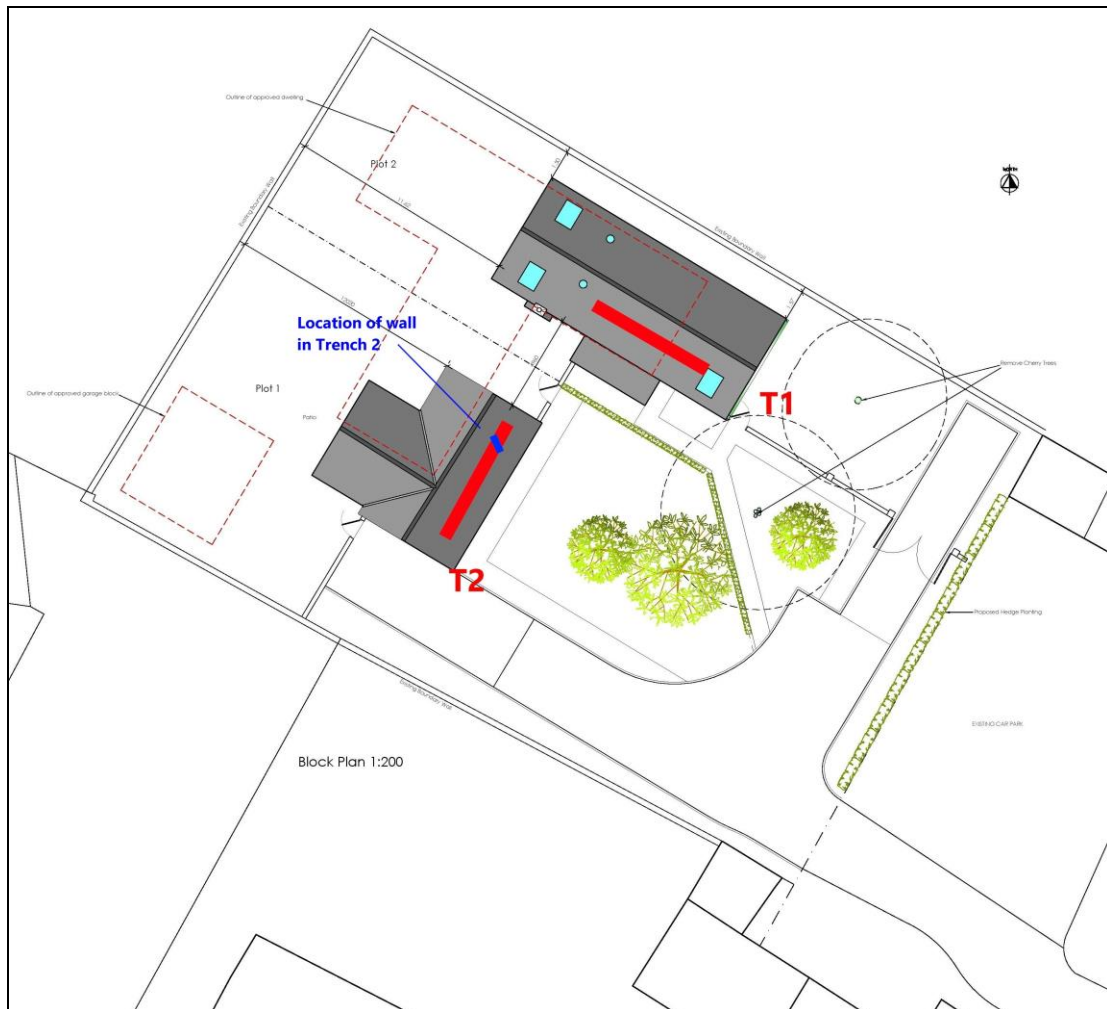


Figure 3. Site Outline and Trench Locations.

4 AIMS

4.1 The aims of the evaluation 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 evaluation 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, *Research and Archaeology: A Framework for the Eastern Counties* (Glazebrook 1997; Brown & Glazebrook 2000), *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 site in the broader landscape;

*characterisation of the activities identified within the site;

*characterisation of changes affecting land-use through time

5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 Trial Trenching

It was suggested that two 12.5m long machine cut trenches, both with a width of 2m, would be excavated under constant archaeological supervision using a flat bladed

ditching bucket. The total length of trenching was therefore 25m, totalling 50m², or ca. 5% of the 1000m² large development area.

The location of the trenches targeted areas of proposed future ground disturbance and provided representative sample coverage. The location of the trenches were slightly flexible, and took into consideration potential above- and below-ground constraints and/or hazards, such as trees, utility trenches, overhead cables and areas of modern disturbance.

The trenches were excavated 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 any features exposed.

The field evaluation was not carried out at the expenses of the heritage assets and was minimally intrusive to archaeological remains.

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. Deeply buried signals were investigated only if agreed as part of the hand excavation programme.

5.3 Hand Excavation

All man-made features were investigated. Apparently natural features (such as tree throws and natural strips of clay in the natural) 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 and character, and to allow appropriate levels of recording.

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. Thereafter, mechanical removal and visual scanning for artefacts was accepted. A machine dug sondage were opened up at the end of both trenches in order to test the geology of the site.

All exposed features were subject to a minimum of 50% excavation. Structural remains (stake holes, post holes and gullies, as well as masonry foundations or low masonry walls and associated features like hearths) were excavated to an extent which was appropriate to the requirements of the project.

The evaluation provided a representative sample of the site's archaeology at no significant cost to the value or integrity of the archaeological remains therein. Judgement regarding the removal of structural remains, or other special remains or deposits, was led by this consideration and was always made in consultation with the Archaeological Advisor for Northamptonshire County Council.

6 RECORDING

- 6.1 A numbered single context-based recording system, written on suitable forms and indexed appropriately, was used for all elements of the archaeological recording programme.
- 6.2 Measured plans were produced to show all exposed features (including natural features, modern features, etc.) and excavated areas. Individual measured plans and sections in the scales 1:20 and 1:50 were produced for all excavated features and deposits. These were accurately tied into trench plans/trench location plans that in turn were accurately related to the Ordnance Survey grid and to suitably local features (boundaries, buildings, roads, etc.). All sections and plans were related accurately to Ordnance Datum.
- 6.3 A photographic record comprising monochrome, digital and colour slides formed part of the excavation record. The photographic record followed the outlines in NAAWG 2014 paragraph A1.10.9 for site photographic guidance.

7 RESULTS

Trench 1

- 7.1 Trench 1 was 12.5m long, 2m wide and up to 1m deep. Underlying all other deposits in Trench 1 was the natural ground, consisting of light yellow, soft sandy silt. No archaeological features could be seen cutting into the Natural in Trench 1 (Figure 4).
- 7.2 The Natural deposits in Trench 1 were sealed by the up 0.23m thick subsoil (103) of light brown, soft silty clay with occasional flecks of charcoal. The subsoil was in turn covered by the up to 0.25m thick older ground horizon (102) of light brown, soft silty clay with occasional roots, charcoal and smaller stones.
- 7.3 The uppermost deposit in Trench 1 consisted of the up to 0.27m thick imported garden soil (101) of dark brown, soft silty clay with frequent roots and occasional smaller stones.
- 7.4 A sondage was opened up in the western end of Trench 1 in order to test the geology of the trench. The sondage was about 0.25m deep and confirmed that no further archaeological horizons were present in Trench 1.

Trench 2

- 7.5 Trench 2 was 12.5m long, 2m wide and up to 1.25m deep. Underlying all other deposits in Trench 2 was the natural ground, consisting of light yellow, soft sandy silt and frequent Cornbrash. The wall (204) and a modern land drain could be seen cutting into the Natural in Trench 2 (Figure 5).

- 7.6 The wall (204) was northwest-southeast orientated and visible over a distance of 2.25m in Trench 2. The wall was 0.50m wide and had been constructed of 0.20m-0.65m large, flat lime stones without mortar. The interpretation of the wall is that it was an earlier garden- and/or boundary wall (Figure 6).
- 7.7 A hand excavated slot was opened up through the wall at its western end in order to investigate its construction and to search for any relevant dating evidence. It turned out that the stones in the wall sealed Post-medieval sherds of unglazed Redware, unglazed Stoneware and a piece of 19th-20th century white China. This made it likely that the wall is of Post-medieval date. The cut [205] for the wall had been dug down about 0.50m into the Natural deposits.
- 7.8 The wall was sealed by the up 0.20m thick subsoil (203) of light brown, soft silty clay with occasional charcoal and smaller stones. The subsoil was in turn covered by the up to 0.25m thick older ground horizon (202) of light brown, soft silty clay with occasional roots, charcoal and smaller stones.
- 7.9 The uppermost deposit in Trench 2 consisted of the up to 0.30m thick imported garden soil (201) of dark brown, soft silty clay with frequent roots and occasional smaller stones.
- 7.10 A sondage was opened up in the northern end of Trench 2 in order to test the geology of the trench. The sondage was about 0.35m deep and confirmed that no further archaeological horizons were present in Trench 2.



Figure 4. Trench 1. Overview. West facing photo. Pre-excavation.



Figure 5. Trench 2. Overview. North facing photo. Pre-excavation.



Figure 6. The stone wall (204) in Trench 2. The wall was interpreted as an earlier garden and/or boundary wall. Southeast facing photo. Pre-excavation.

8 FINDS

- 8.1 It total 3 find posts were recovered during the archaeological evaluation. All finds consisted of sherds of pottery and china and could be dated to the Post-medieval period.

The Pottery (By Paul Blinkhorn)

- 8.2 The pottery and china assemblage comprised 3 sherds with a total weight of 40g. It was recorded using the conventions of the Northamptonshire County Ceramic Type-Series (CTS), as follows:

Unglazed Stoneware, 16th-early 19th century. 1 sherd, 21g.

Unglazed Redware. 1 sherd, 9g.

White China. 19th-early 20th century. 1 sherd, 10g.

- 8.3 The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 1. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*. The range of fabric types is typical of sites in the region (Blinkhorn 2010).
- 8.4 The assemblage is in good condition, with little evidence of abrasion and appears reliably stratified.

Table 1: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in grams) of sherds per context by fabric type.

| Context | Stoneware | | Redware | | China | | Date |
|---------|-----------|----|---------|----|-------|----|---|
| | No | Wt | No | Wt | No | Wt | |
| (204) | 1 | 21 | 1 | 9 | 1 | 10 | 16 th - 20 th C |
| Total | 1 | 21 | 1 | 9 | 1 | 10 | 3 |

9 DISCUSSION

- 9.1 The archaeological evaluation carried out on land to the rear of 7-9 Chancery Lane, Thrapston, Northamptonshire indicated that a Post-medieval wall was present in the western parts of the site. This wall is likely to have been an earlier garden and/or boundary wall.
- 9.2 The orientation of the wall is of interest, as it had a northwest-southeast orientation, while the old garden walls that were limiting the site in the north and west formed a 90-degree angle in the north western corner of the site. This difference in orientation could indicate that the boundaries of (and the constructions within) the site has changed over time. This change could be significant for understanding the shift of ownership and/or purpose of the site in the Post-medieval period.
- 9.3 The wall is likely to be younger than the De Vere Norman manor just to the north of the site, and it is therefore possible that the wall belonged to a later settlement just to the south of the former manor. Before the present dwellings were erected along the west side of Chancery Lane it is likely that a few older garden walls and/or other features were demolished in the area, but the wall in question is not showing on any older maps of Thrapston.
- 9.4 The archaeological evaluation on land to the rear of 7-9 Chancery Lane, Thrapston, therefore, contributed with only limited new archaeological information about the area. The wall that was uncovered in Trench 2 may however indicate a shift of ownership and/or use of the site in the Post-medieval period.

10 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.

11 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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APPENDICES

OASIS FORM

OASIS ID: independ1-395766

Project details

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Project name | Land to the rear of 7-9 Chancery Lane, Thrapston, Northamptonshire |
| Short description of the project | The two trench evaluation was able to uncover a Post-medieval stone wall and occasional pottery sherds. |
| Project dates | Start: 01-06-2020 End: 02-06-2020 |
| Previous/future work | No / Not known |
| Any associated reference codes | project CLT20 – Sitecode |
| Any associated reference codes | project 19/01503/FUL - Planning Application No. |
| Type of project | Field evaluation |
| Site status | Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area |
| Current Land use | Vacant Land 2 - Vacant land not previously developed |
| Monument type | SN CL Post Medieval |
| Monument type | UF SN Post Medieval |
| Significant Finds | SN CL Post Medieval |

Land to the rear of 7-9 Chancery Lane, Thrapston, Northamptonshire: Archaeological Evaluation

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Significant Finds | SN CL Post Medieval |
| Methods & techniques | "Sample Trenches" |
| Development type | Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.) |
| Prompt | Planning condition |
| Position in the planning process | After full determination (eg. As a condition) |

Project location

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Country | England |
| Site location | NORTHAMPTONSHIRE EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE THRAPSTON Land to the rear of 7-9 Chancery Lane, Thrapston, Northamptonshire |
| Postcode | NN14 4JL |
| Study area | 1000 Square metres |
| Site coordinates | SP 99539 78760 52.397409418683 -0.536890945371 52 23 50 N 000 32 12 W Point |
| Height OD / Depth | Min: 29m Max: 31m |

Project creators

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Name of Organisation | Independent Archaeology Consultants |
| Project brief originator | Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body |
| Project design originator | Independent Archaeology Consultants |
| Project director/manager | Christer Carlsson |

Project supervisor Christer Carlsson

Type of sponsor/funding body Developer

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient Northamptonshire County Council

Physical Contents "Ceramics"

Digital Archive recipient Northamptonshire County Council

Digital Contents "Ceramics"

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

Paper Archive recipient Northamptonshire County Council

Paper Contents "Ceramics"

Paper Media available "Context sheet", "Photograph", "Plan", "Report", "Section"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

Title Land to the rear of 7-9 Chancery Lane, Thrapston, Northamptonshire

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Date 2020

Issuer or publisher Independent Archaeology Consultants

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Entered by Christer Karlsson (contact@independentarchaeology.co.uk)

Entered on 5 June 2020

CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

| Context nr | Depth (m) | Description | Younger than | Older than |
|------------|-----------|---|--------------|------------|
| | | | | |
| | | Trench 1 (12.5m by 2m) | | |
| (101) | 0.27 | Dark brown, soft silty clay with frequent roots and occasional smaller stones | (102) | - |
| (102) | 0.25 | Light brown, soft silty clay with occasional roots, charcoal and smaller stones | (103) | (101) |
| (103) | 0.23 | Light brown, soft silty clay with occasional flecks of charcoal | Natural | (102) |
| Natural | - | Light yellow, soft sandy silt | - | (103) |
| | | | | |
| | | Trench 2 (12.5m by 2m) | | |
| (201) | 0.30 | Dark brown, soft silty clay with frequent roots and occasional smaller stones | (202) | - |
| (202) | 0.25 | Light brown, soft silty clay with occasional roots, charcoal and smaller stones | (203) | (201) |
| (203) | 0.20 | Light brown, soft silty clay with occasional charcoal and smaller stones | (204) | (202) |
| (204) | 0.50 | Wall of flat lime stones | [205] | (203) |
| [205] | 0.50 | Cut for wall (204) | Natural | (204) |
| Natural | - | Light yellow, soft sandy silt and frequent Cornbrash | - | [205] |

FINDS LIST

| Find nr | Context | Material | Object | Description | Period |
|---------|---------|------------|------------------|---|---------------|
| 1 | (204) | Fired Clay | Sherd of pottery | A sherd of 19 th -20 th century China | Post Medieval |
| 2 | (204) | Fired Clay | Sherd of pottery | A sherd of unglazed Redware | Post Medieval |
| 3 | (204) | Fired Clay | Sherd of pottery | A sherd of unglazed Stoneware | Post Medieval |

