

**THE PRIORY,
11 DESBOROUGH ROAD,
ROTHWELL,
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**

NGR REF: SP 81350 81310



ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING
(OASIS ID: independ1-424920)

(Event Nr: ENN109878)

JUNE 2021

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CONTENTS

- Summary**
- 1 Introduction**
- 2 Project Background**
- 3 Archaeological Background**
- 4 Aims**
- 5 Methodology**
- 6 Recording**
- 7 Results**
- 8 Discussion**
- 9 Archive**
- 10 Bibliography**

Appendices:

Context Descriptions

OASIS Form

Summary

Archaeological monitoring was conducted by Independent Archaeology Consultants at The Priory, 11 Desborough Road, Rothwell, Northamptonshire 11-12 May 2021. The monitoring of the excavation of the footings for the new orangery uncovered no finds or features of archaeological interest.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The site was located at The Priory, 11 Desborough Road, Rothwell, Northamptonshire (NGR: SP 81350 81310) (Figure 1-3). The project was carried out in accordance with the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Brief* issued by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists 2020, as well as discussions with Liz Mordue, Archaeological Officer at Northamptonshire County Council. The project complies with the principles of the NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework 2020).
- 1.2 Independent Archaeology Consultants is an archaeological consultancy company based in Peterborough, Cambridgeshire. The company subscribes to the *Code of Conduct, the Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Brief* (CIfA 2019), *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (EAA Occasional Paper 14) and *Research and Archaeology Revisited: a revised framework for the East of England* (EAA Occ. Paper No 24, 2011). All relevant CIfA Codes of Practice were adhered to throughout the course of the project.

2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Planning Permission has been granted for a new development at The Priory, 11 Desborough Road, Rothwell, Northamptonshire (KET/2018/0338). The development comprised the erection of a new orangery to the western elevation of the Grade II listed building.
- 2.2 The development site was located in the central parts of the village of Rothwell. It enclosed an area of some 1500m² at an average height of about 128m aOD. The site consisted of a Grade II listed property, with existing buildings in north, south and west. The site was limited by Desborough Road in the east. The geology maps indicated that the site contained Northampton Sand and Ironstone overlain by Oadby Member Diamicton (British Geological Survey).
- 2.3 The site was located within an area of archaeological potential, as defined by Northamptonshire HER. Therefore, archaeological monitoring and documentation was required prior to the proposed construction works. This condition was mentioned in the Planning Permission granted by Kettering Borough Council.

The Priory, 11 Desborough Road, Rothwell, Northamptonshire: Archaeological Monitoring

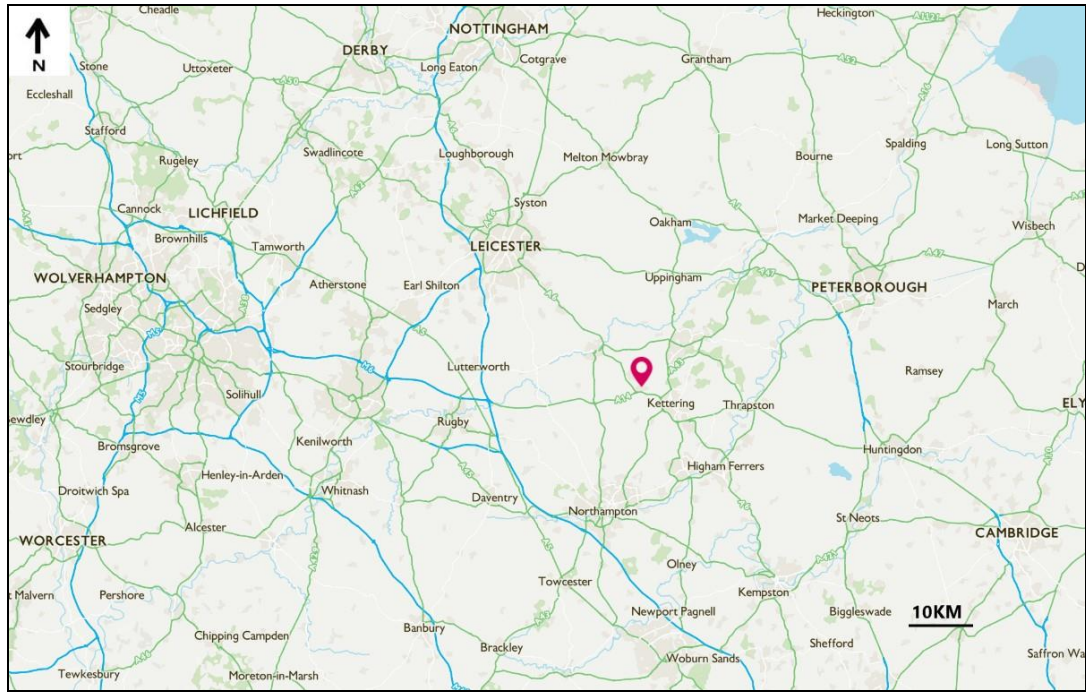


Figure 1. The location of Rothwell in England.

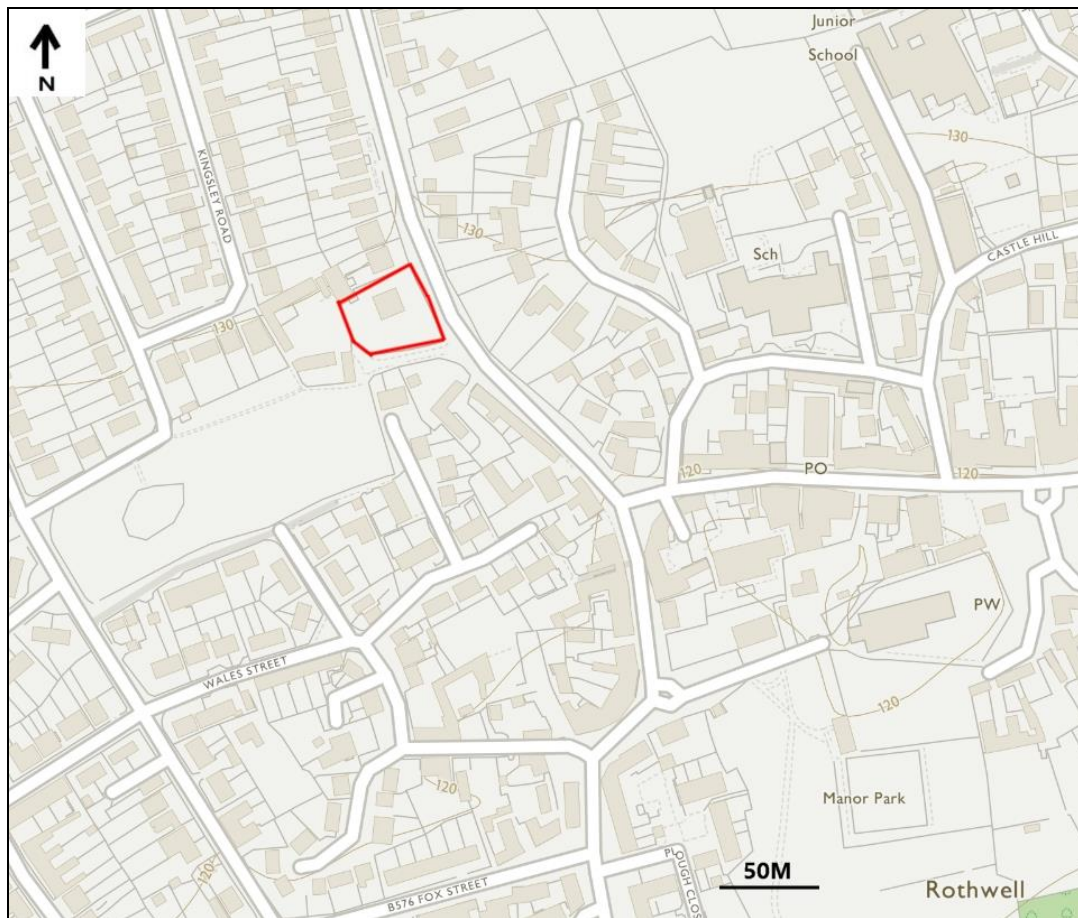


Figure 2. Site Location in Rothwell.

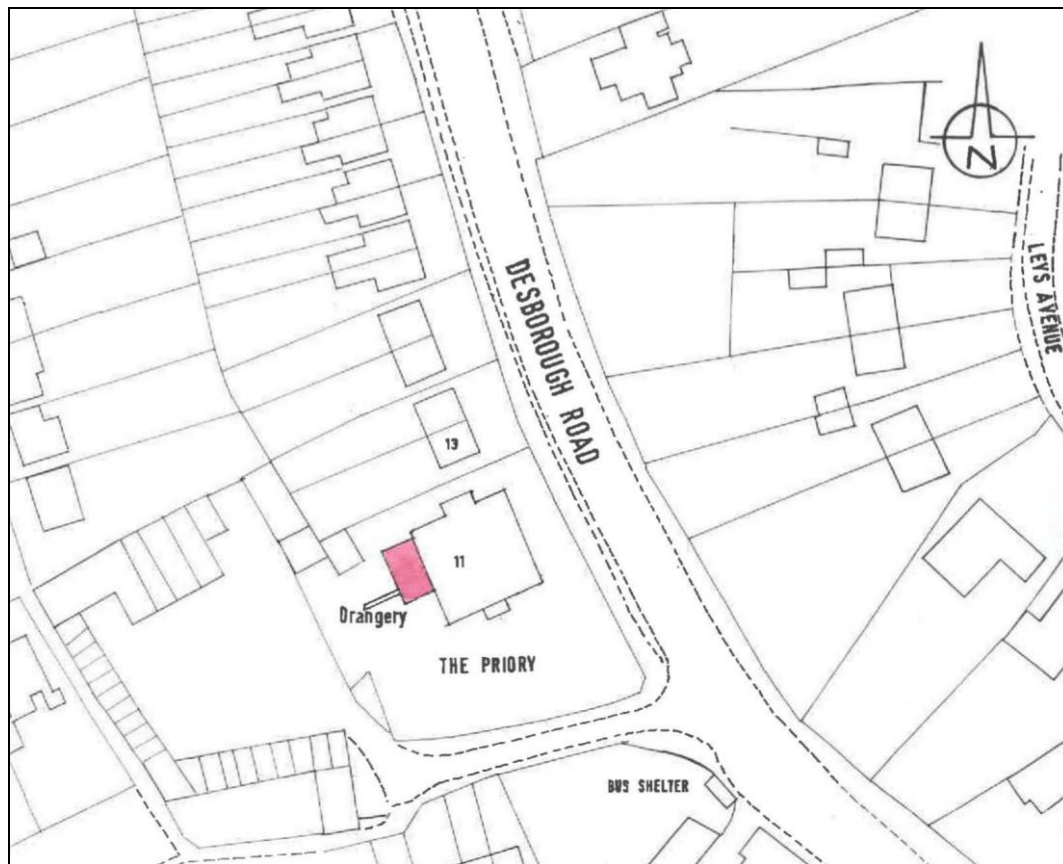


Figure 3. Site Outline.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The site was located at the northern edge of the historic settlement of Rothwell. No 11 Desborough Road is a Grade II listed former farmhouse of 17th century origins with mid-19th century remodelling. The associated outbuildings that form the Old Coach Yard were thought to be of mid-19th century date.
- 3.2 The site itself was thought to be the location of a small priory of Augustinian nuns dedicated to St John the Baptist, which was founded in the 13th century and suppressed in 1536.
- 3.3 The site has been subject to an archaeological evaluation (MoLA 2018), which identified a small amount of archaeological evidence of medieval date. This included an area of stone rubble which corresponded to the location of a circular feature shown on historic mapping.
- 3.4 Although no human remains were found during the 2018 evaluation, burials were reportedly found at the house during the 19th century remodelling (ENN8844). Presence of human remains within the development site could therefore not be ruled out.

- 3.5 The site has also been the subject of a Desk Based Assessment carried out by Iian Solden Heritage Services Ltd in 2018. This study focused on the garden wall which the proposed orangery will be erected against, as well as its closest surroundings.
- 3.6 Occasional Roman finds and features are also known from the area. Some 80m north of the site unstratified Roman finds were uncovered at 49 Desborough Road in 1970 (ENN8835).
- 3.7 Some 45m southeast of the site a historic building survey was carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology Unit in 1988 of the building known as “the Nunnery” (ENN8849). The same unit also opened up four test trenches in this area, but was only able to identify limited modern and post-medieval features and two undated cut features (ENN8847).
- 3.8 In 1996 Northamptonshire Archaeology carried out a Desk Based Assessment and an archaeological evaluation on land off Wales Street, some 60m south of the site, as Saxon quarry pits were known from this area (ENN18217).
- 3.9 The same unit also carried out an archaeological excavation in this area the following year and suggested that the area at Saxon Street may have formed part of a series of large planning blocks, laid out at any time between the 9th and 11th centuries over earlier quarry pits (ENN18387).
- 3.10 Some 85m southeast of the site Northamptonshire Archaeology carried out an archaeological evaluation in 1996. Four trenches were opened up and dispersed and eroded archaeological features dating from the early Iron Age and possibly the late Saxon and/or early medieval periods were uncovered (ENN18215).
- 3.11 Adjacent to this site, at 2 Whiteman Lane, a watching brief was carried out by Witham Archaeology in 2016. The groundworks revealed building remains including ironstone wall footings and standing walls and brick and mortar floor surfaces. At least some of these floors and walls were of late 19th century date, and the majority of artefacts retrieved from the site were of 17th to 19th century date. The building remains may represent buildings depicted on early Ordnance Survey maps of the area, but at least some appear to post-date buildings shown on an 1819 parish plan. Significant disturbance was recorded at the west end of the site, apparently resulting from the erection of the existing 20th century buildings on the site. Aside from naturally formed deposits, no features or deposits likely to pre-date the late post medieval period were identified during the investigations. A single sherd of 12th to 13th century pottery attests to earlier activity in the vicinity and one of two reused pieces of worked stone masonry recovered from a wall footing may be of 17th century date (ENN108464).

- 3.12 Some 120m southeast of the site Museum of London carried out an archaeological investigation at 9-11 High Street in 2019, although the site report has not yet been published (ENN109733).
- 3.13 A few smaller archaeological investigations have also been carried out east of Desborough Road. In 2001 Northamptonshire Archaeology carried out a trial excavation at School Lane some 140m east of the site. Occasional unstratified medieval pottery was uncovered (ENN101560).
- 3.14 Some 120m southeast of the site three collared urns and a food vessel were found during iron mining around 1903 (ENN8836).
- 3.15 It appeared therefore, prior to the archaeological monitoring was carried out, as if the site had the potential to contain finds and features spanning from Prehistoric times into the Modern period.

4 AIMS

- 4.1 The aims of the archaeological watching brief were achieved through pursuit of the following specific objectives:
- Provide a record of archaeological remains whose preservation *in situ* is threatened by the proposed work. If applicable, remains that can be preserved *in situ* will be recorded and prepared for re-burial. Therefore, steps will be taken to ensure construction and future maintenance do not threaten preserved remains
 - Provide detailed information regarding the date, character, extent and degree of preservation of all excavated archaeological remains
 - Define the sequence and character of activity at the site, as reflected by the excavated remains
 - Interpret the archaeology of the site within its local, regional, and national, archaeological context
- 4.2 The watching brief also considered the general investigative themes outlined by: Knight, D; Vyner, B; Allen, C., 2012 *East Midlands Heritage: An Updated Research Agenda and Strategy for the Historic Environment of the East Midlands* (University of Nottingham/York Archaeological Trust), *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 on the site;
- *characterisation of changes affecting land-use through time

5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 Monitoring of Groundworks

All significant groundwork excavations were carried out in a way that allowed the early identification of archaeological features.

All significant construction excavations were supervised by an archaeologist who was granted the opportunity to clean and record any potential archaeological remains that were being revealed in the ground.

The program of fieldworks 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 footings for the new orangery were excavated into natural deposits. The watching brief was not carried out at the expenses of the heritage assets within the site and was minimally intrusive to potentially archaeological remains.

5.2 Metal Detecting

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 and deposits were investigated. 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 was 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. All exposed features were subject to a minimum of 50% excavation.

Structural remains were excavated fully and in plan/phase, as appropriate to the requirements of the project. The watching brief provided a representative sample of the site's stratigraphy and geology at no significant cost to the value or integrity of any archaeological deposits.

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 showing all exposed features (including natural features and modern features etc.) and excavated areas. Individual measured plans and sections were also 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 mapped local features (boundaries, buildings, roads etc.). All sections and plans were related accurately to Ordnance Datum.

A photographic record comprising monochrome and digital photos formed part of the excavation record. A selection of digital photographs was also used in this report (a maximum of two photographs per A4 sheet).

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 that 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 and digital photos formed part of the excavation record. A selection of digital photos was also included in this report.

7 RESULTS

- 7.1 The lowest deposit encountered in the development area was the Natural deposits, which consisted of yellow-white, firm sandy and gravelly clay. No potentially archaeological features could be seen cutting into the Natural deposits.
- 7.2 Covering the Natural was the 0.25m-0.35m thick Subsoil (102) of light- to mid-yellow brown. plastic sandy clay. The Subsoil contained moderate fine to

medium sized rounded, sub-rounded, angular and sub-angular gravels and frequent roots.

- 7.3 The uppermost deposit within the development area was the 0.40m-0.50m thick Topsoil (101) of dark grey-brown, loose sandy silt. The Topsoil was gritty with moderate small to medium rounded, sub-rounded, angular and sub-angular clasts and moderate degraded flecks of CBM and frequent roots and root fibres.



Figure 4. East facing photo of the new footings in north.



Figure 5. North facing photo of the new footings in west.



Figure 6. East facing photo of the new footings in south.

8 DISCUSSION

- 8.1 The archaeological monitoring at The Priory, 11 Desborough Road, Rothwell, Northamptonshire revealed nothing of archaeological interest. No artefacts or features of archaeological significance were uncovered during the fieldworks.
- 8.2 Even though a large number of archaeological sites are known from the surrounding landscape the monitoring, which is described in this report, was not able to locate any traces of such settlements.
- 8.3 Rothwell is otherwise known for having being inhabited from the Prehistoric period onwards, as indicated by the information in the HER-archive for

Northamptonshire. Future archaeological investigations in the area may therefore reveal further evidence for such settlements.

9 ARCHIVE

The archive consists of the following:

Paper Record

The project brief

Written Scheme of Investigation

The photographic and drawn records

The project report

The primary site records

The archive is currently maintained by Independent Archaeology Consultants.

The archive will be transferred to:

The Archaeological Collections of Northants ARC.

10 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Knight, D; Vyner, B; Allen, C (2012) *East Midlands Heritage: An Updated Research Agenda and Strategy for the Historic Environment of the East Midlands* (University of Nottingham/York Archaeological Trust).

National Planning Policy Framework. 2020. London.

Technical Advisory Service for Images Introductory Pack: Image Capture: Hardware and Software available online at www.tasi.ac.uk.

Treasure Act of 1996. London.

APPENDICES

CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Context nr	Depth (m)	Description	Younger than	Older than
(101)	0.40-0.50	Topsoil of dark grey-brown. loose sandy silt. Gritty with moderate small to medium rounded, sub-rounded, angular and sub-angular clasts. Moderate degraded flecks of CBM, Frequent roots and root fibres.	(102)	-
(102)	0.25-0.35	Subsoil of light- to mid-yellow brown. plastic sandy clay. Containing moderate fine to medium sized rounded, sub-rounded, angular and sub-angular gravels and frequent roots.	Natural	(101)
Natural	-	Natural of yellow-white, firm sandy and gravelly clay.	-	(102)

OASIS FORM

OASIS ID: independ1-424920

Project details

Project name The Priory, 11 Desborough Road, Rothwell, Northamptonshire

Short description of the project Archaeological monitoring for the construction of a new orangery.

Project dates Start: 11-05-2021 End: 12-05-2021

Previous/future work No / No

Any associated project reference codes PDR20 - Sitecode

Any associated project reference codes KET/2018/0338) - Planning Application No.

Type of project Recording project

Site status Area of Archaeological Importance (AAI)

Monument type N/A None

Monument type N/A None

Significant Finds N/A None

Significant Finds N/A None

Investigation type "Watching Brief"

PromptPlanning condition

Project location

Country England

Site location NORTHAMPTONSHIRE KETTERING ROTHWELL The Priory, 11 Desborough Road, Rothwell, Northamptonshire

Postcode NN14 6JG

Study area 1500 Square meters

Site coordinates SP 81350 81310 52.423341016815 -0.803557948675 52 25 24 N 000 48 12 W Point

Height OD / Depth Min: 127m Max: 129m

The Priory, 11 Desborough Road, Rothwell, Northamptonshire: Archaeological Monitoring

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 "other"

Digital Archive recipient Northamptonshire County Council

Digital Contents "none","other"

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

Paper Archive recipient Northamptonshire County Council

Paper Contents "none","other"

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

Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

Title The Priory, 11 Desborough Road, Rothwell, Northamptonshire

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

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