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Modern living in an historic environment

**An archaeological desk-based assessment of
land at Home Farm,
Bugbrooke, Northamptonshire**

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An archaeological Desk-Based Assessment of land at Home Farm, Bugbrooke, Northamptonshire

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Summary

A plot at the western end of Bugbrooke is well mapped and documented from 1779, from which no evidence can be inferred that it was ever built upon before Home Farm was constructed after 1813 and before 1885. The sub-plot which is now the subject of a development proposal appears not to have been built upon until the present modern barn was constructed. Potential setting issues relating to a nearby Listed Building are negated by deliberate existing tree-belts. There is no evidence of buried archaeology on the application plot.

Introduction

Mrs Kaye Adams, of Home Farm, Bugbrooke, is applying for Planning Consent to build a single detached dwelling on land behind Home Farm, adjacent to an existing modern barn at NGR: SP 6722 5730. The site lies at about 86m above Ordnance Datum and is mapped by the British Geological Survey as lying upon clay.



Fig 1: Home Farm, viewed from the application site



Fig 2: The application site, viewed from Home Farm

The site of the proposed dwelling is on the outside of the bend of Church Lane, Bugbrooke. To its east lies Home Farm, while to its west, on the site of a former walled kitchen garden (walls now gone) lies an existing detached home (Kohna Lodge/Oerdy Ar Y Brig of 1966-78), which was substantially extended recently.

Home Farm, Bugbrooke

To the north lies open farmland on the other side of a large modern barn. To the south-west lies The Old Rectory (ironically named but actually of 1969-78), while to the south lies the highway, down a steep tree-lined bank.



Fig 3: Looking west from proposed footprint to Kohna Lodge, its recent extension nearest to the camera



Fig 4: Looking north across the proposed footprint to barn beyond

Statutory designations

Across the highway lies the Grade II-Listed New Creation Hall, another former Rectory serving Bugbrooke, and built in the early 19th century.

The following is the official listing for the nearby listed building of New Creation Hall:

BUGBROOKE CHURCH LANE

SP6757 (South side)

12/12 New Creation Hall

03/05/68 (Formerly listed as The Hall)

Grade II

House, formerly rectory. Completed 1815 for Reverend H.B. Harrison. Yellow brick in Flemish bond, hipped slate roof, brick internal stacks. Double-depth plan.

2-storey, 3-window range. Entrance front has central part-glazed double-leaf doors with moulded stone surround and overlight approached by 3 stone steps in porch with fluted Greek Doric columns to front and unfluted pilasters flanking door. 12-pane sash windows to ground and first floors all with gauged brick lintels. Chamfered stone plinth, stone storey band and deep bracketed eaves.

4-window right side elevation. Garden front to rear has round-headed central door with double-leaf, part-glazed doors, side-lights and fanlight, approached by 9 stone steps. Lower 2-storey service wing to left side with red brick to entrance front wall, windows with segmental-arched heads and dentilled brick cornice. Interior: vestibule has chequered stone paving. Similar paving to staircase hall with black diamond insets. Stone cantilever open-well staircase, iron stick balusters and ramped and wreathed mahogany handrail; top-lit with domed skylight. Reeded doorcases and surrounds to windows which all have shutters to reveals. Stone fireplace in garden hall. Garden door has panelled

Home Farm, Bugbrooke

reveals and shutters and fanlight with coloured and painted glass with family coat of arms and motto. Marble chimneypieces to principal rooms, mostly original. Brick-vaulted cellars. Built at the expense of the Harrison family who were the principal landowners in the parish as well as patrons of the living. Listing NGR: SP 67233 57288

New Creation Hall also lies just within the Bugbrooke Conservation Area, as indicated by South Northamptonshire Council (Conservation Area established 1991 and ratified March 2013). However, the application site lies outside it on a plot which is not contiguous, separated by the highway and the public footways.

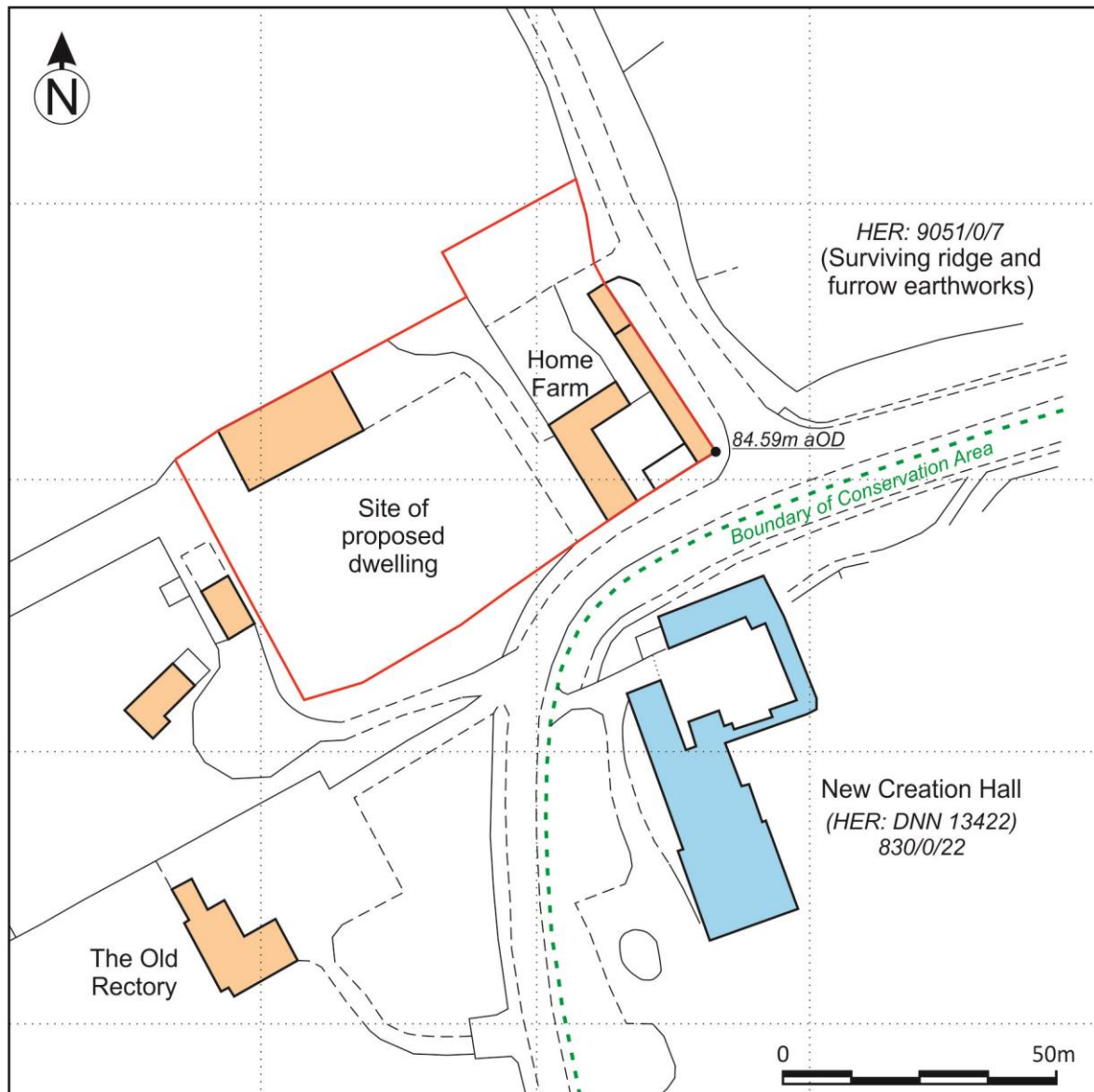


Fig 5: The application site and its heritage setting, including relevant HER data

Home Farm, Bugbrooke

Setting

The southern fringe of the application site and the northern one of New Creation Hall are both marked by dense belts of mature mixed deciduous and evergreen trees. The site was visited to take account of any setting issues which a proposed development might generate.

The site of the proposed dwelling is on naturally high ground, in relation to Home Farm and the road, which proceeds through a walled cutting. Behind the walls on both sides of the road, and up the bank on the north, lie a density of trees which mean that a viewer from the road has to strain very hard to catch more than a glimpse of one corner of the Listed New Creation Hall. Similarly the belt on the north, together with the brow of the rising ground, screen the footprint of the proposed new-build from the road. Through both belts of trees the aspect of the one and the prospect from the other, are totally independent of each other.



Fig 6: The listed New Creation Hall, straining to be viewed from the application site through two belts of trees. It is almost invisible.



Fig 7: The application site viewed from the Conservation Area boundary and one belt of trees. It remains almost invisible.

Interestingly this secluded effect is what the village Conservation Area Appraisal (4.4) suggests was the original intention of the Harrison family, who built what is now New Creation Hall.

'...west side...has numerous trees. Key feature is the boundary hedge which surrounds New Creation Hall, enclosing the space almost entirely and forming a defined boundary. These, like a number of other trees in the vicinity, appear to have been planted as part of a wider design. This may have been to restrict views of the village from the rectory, as well as to limit views into the parkland.'

In maturing, the tree-belts have fully achieved this potentially desired effect, with the result that the setting of the Listed building and the appreciation of the Conservation Area would be unaffected by the proposed new dwelling.

Home Farm, Bugbrooke

Historic maps and documents

There is a good sequence of historic maps back to 1779 which depict the area and to some extent, the individual plot.

The historic plan-form of the village of Bugbrooke is distinctive, and the location of the site is notable as lying on the outside of the right-angled southern bend at the western end of the High Street. This road swept around what appears to be an open field on the Inclosure Map in 1779 but in all probability is the former manorial demesne land, some of which had been hived off as church land by the late 18th century (NRO: 53p/331). The northernmost, largest plot was known simply as Homestead, yard, gardens and Homestead Close, owned by the Rector.

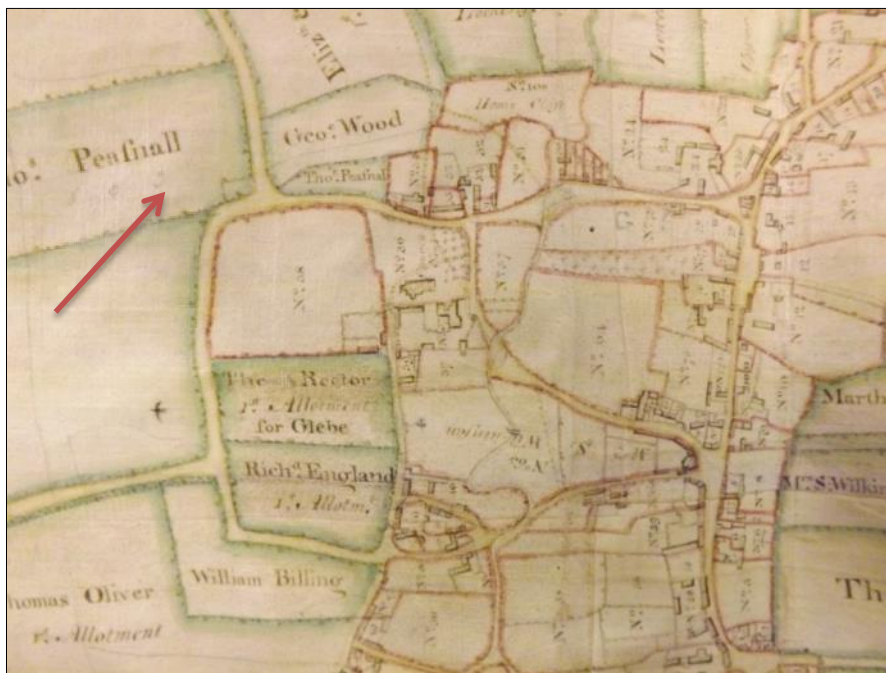


Fig 8: Extract from the Bugbrooke Inclosure Map of 1779. The site is arrowed; (NRO: 53p/331)

The site in 1779 is part of an undeveloped field, except for a small enclosure at the south east, off the road junction. This is the first sub-division which would eventually become the site of Home Farm. While the field containing the site is not in 1779 the subject of a redistribution for Inclosure and therefore not set out in detail – and so is missed out of the Inclosure schedule, a later hand has faintly scribbled the area of the entire field in pencil as 8a Or 3p. This notation may just be visible above the arrow in the above figure. The owner, Thomas Peasall, is significant, and is discussed later.

The 1813 map of the district made for the Ordnance Survey surveyors is not usually reliable due to its small scale but it does suggest that some buildings were constructed on the Homestead Close at the inner corner of the main road in the intervening period 1779-1813. Their identification is unclear, but they are likely to be the first buildings of the current 'New Hall' (New Creation Hall), actually the former Rectory, and finished by 1815. The application site is shown as clear.

It is notable that in 1813 the application site remains just a clear field, although its boundaries have altered, with some subdivision of the eastern end for the first time as it begins to presage modern

Home Farm, Bugbrooke

layouts. It remains an undeveloped field, however (www.bl.uk, Ordnance Survey Surveyors' Drawing – Northampton 11). The area to the west of the site has been sliced through by the coming of the Grand Junction Canal in 1793 and to some extent fields contiguous with this, appear to have taken their east-west layout from the canal's new influence on the landscape (NRO: Canal deposited plan 7). The depiction of the village is unusually detailed as buildings shown match well with the 1779 map and later maps. These maps are not reproduced here.

A tithe map of 1850 shows the same distinctive plan form for the village but lacks any further detail (NRO: T.22). The plan for making the turnpike road through the village lacks enough detail at 1833 (NRO: Turnpike deposited plan 8B).

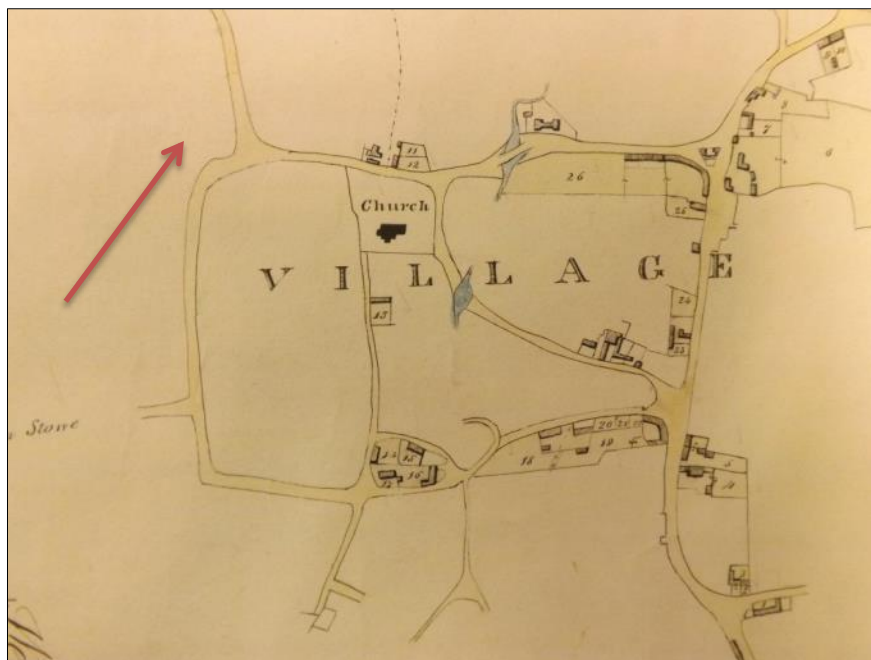


Fig 9: Extract from the 1850 Bugbrooke Tithe Map. The site is arrowed; (NRO: T22)

Home Farm, Bugbrooke

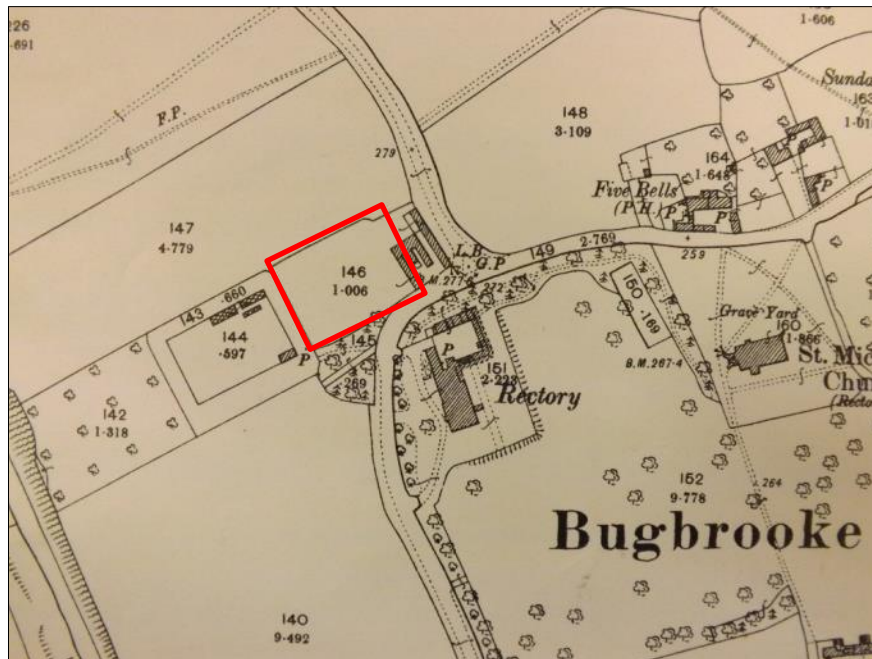


Fig 10: Extract from OS 2nd Edition of 1900, sheet LI.2. The site is outlined; (NRO)

The First (1885) and Second (1900) editions of the Ordnance Survey carry almost identical depictions of the site, but for florid, less stylised trees on the first. Both can be found on-line, but the second edition is shown above since that is the edition held by Northamptonshire Record Office in this case.

By 1885 the site was one of three compartments in an east-west row, a layout which has remained virtually unchanged until the modern period. The eastern compartment (the application site) remained as a yard serving the adjacent Home Farm (on map evidence built between 1813 and 1885), until the present barn and access were built after 1982. The middle compartment, for many years since at least 1885 supporting a walled kitchen garden, had the present house built (Oerdy Ar Y Brig) in the period 1966-78 (alternatively called Kohna Lodge), while the western compartment, shown in the period 1885-1900 as a probable orchard, has now been lost.

A modern composite map has called the two western compartments and the plot to the north 'clay-pits', possibly relating to the lining of the adjacent Grand Junction Canal cutting (1793) but on what authority is unclear (Bugbrooke History Society 1999, 113-4, plot 66).

To the south the house noted now as 'The Old Rectory' was in fact not built until the period 1969-78. Across the road, 'New Hall' or 'New Creation Hall', home to the well-known Jesus Army, was in fact built as The Rectory and is Victorian. It smothered the site of earlier buildings, which had been built on historic map evidence, between 1779 and 1813.

The present St Michael's Parish Church lies some way east of the site at the centre of its own churchyard. The site of the medieval manor house and its fishponds, focus of the Manor of Bugbrooke, for which there is excellent documentation back to c1206 and particularly from the 1220s, lie some way beyond (Willis 1916, 7, xviii-xix, 19-20; Farrer 1924, 226-7; Soden 2009, 52, 81, 108,120). The medieval village core may lie close to the churchyard. The post-medieval village has moved eastwards.

Home Farm, Bugbrooke

The antiquarian county historians Rev George Baker and John Bridges, relate the medieval descent of the manor, but give no topographic information which might be of help in understanding the application site (Baker 1833-40: I, 120-8; Bridges 1791, 484-8). The recent historic landscape atlas of Northamptonshire maps the wider plot as comprising the very western edge of the village, mixed in with the nearest of the medieval open fields (Foard et al, 2012).

Other documents give more information, through records of the early owner, Thomas Peasnall. Peasnall was a farmer and publican and he and his family merit numerous mentions in documents, some relating to the early maps.

On the 1779 Inclosure map, the site is denoted as belonging to Thomas Peasnall. The accompanying schedule notes plot 34 as his home:

34 Thos Peasnall, Homestead, yard, garden and home close 0a 3r 37p

This is the house yard and garden which became, and today remains, The Five Bells public house, where Peasnall was publican. His father Stephen had been publican since 1756 and Thomas remained publican until around 1800. Successive Peasnalls then continued to hold it until 1874 (Bugbrooke History Society 1999, 132). It was a local family and numerous Peasnall wills are held by Northamptonshire Record Office dating between 1716 and 1831.

A sequence of documents notes the Peasnall interest in this property and also in two nearby plots, one of which was known as *West Meadow* (a name confusingly used for at least three separate plots in the post-medieval village).

West Meadow is noted as being 4a 1r and 28p and it is associated with another plot nearby of about 4 acres (never further delineated or separately named). It is possible that the two together later constitute the contiguous plots shown on the 1885 and 1900 OS map (the latter above, Fig 10) plots 142-147, which together come to about 8 acres in extent. This is very close to the pencilled in area of the named Peasnall-owned field on the 1779 Inclosure map (8a 0r 3p).

If correct, then the field was noted extensively in documents of 1831-1845 as including *West Meadow* (NRO ZB 366/68-70, 75 & 76).

The documents suggest it was repeatedly tenanted out as much as eight times during the Peasnall ownership, as might befit a family whose time may have been taken up mostly in running the Five Bells.

Historic Environment Record

The Northamptonshire Historic Environment Record (HER) was consulted for records of Statutory Designations, archaeological observations and previous fieldwork or recorded finds. Initially the search covered the entire village, which unsurprisingly, given its medieval origins, contains numerous examples of each category, with earlier remains suspected from aerial photographs, in the fields to the north. However, the vast majority of all records relate to an area no closer to the current application site than the medieval Parish Church.

Home Farm, Bugbrooke

The search was therefore narrowed to a radius of 150m (west of the church), as being the medieval village of immediate relevance to the application site and its context on the western side of the village.

Three records are noted (Figure 5, above):

- HER: DNN 1342 (830/0/22) Listed Building Grade II of New Creation Hall
- HER: 9051/0/1 Surviving ridge and furrow earthworks. These are now mapped in Foard, Hall and Partida (2012). Their location this close to Church Lane, suggests that the lane forms the edge of the medieval village which lay to the south. The site seems to lie at the margins of medieval settlement, and the medieval open fields.
- Bugbrooke Conservation area.

Thus the HER adds no relevant data within the immediate vicinity to the above discussions which might suggest that the application site contains any archaeology, or that development would have the potential to adversely affect any known or suspected buried archaeology. Issues relating to the setting of the Listed Building of New Creation Hall have been addressed above.

Conclusions

The site is well mapped from 1779, and may be the subject of a sequence of related tenancy documents but appears from that early date to have been entirely agricultural, with no suggestion that it supported either medieval or post-medieval buildings or other remains.

There is no evidence or record of any buried significant archaeology on or near the application footprint.

Adjacent buildings on nearby plots are of no great age, but one, New Creation Hall of c1815, is statutorily listed - Grade II. However, the very distinctive double belt of mature trees which surround it, both screens the building totally from the outside and prevents any views out. The Conservation Area appraisal, recently updated in March 2013, notes this potentially deliberate feature and the seclusion it continues to afford. The presence of the tree-belts means that the new development would have no impact upon the setting of the Listed Building, whether that be its prospect looking out or its aspect looking in.

Home Farm, Bugbrooke

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