



Iain Soden Heritage Services Ltd

Modern living in an historic environment

**An archaeological evaluation on land adjacent to
153 Bradshaw Way, Irchester, Northamptonshire**

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Summary

A small plot of land, formerly part of the garden of 91 Wollaston Road, accessed from Bradshaw Way, was the focus of trial-trenching exercise ahead of proposed development for a single house. No archaeological remains were present and the trenching showed only signs of modern garden cultivation.

Introduction

Planning permission has been granted for a single dwelling on a site in Bradshaw Way in the rear plot of a former garden behind 91 Wollaston Road, Irchester, Northamptonshire (Planning ref WP/14/00514/OUT at NN29 7DW; NGR: SP 9198 6548; Fig 1). The house associated with the former garden plot post-dates the Second World War. This is now subdivided for development and lies adjacent to 153 Bradshaw Way.

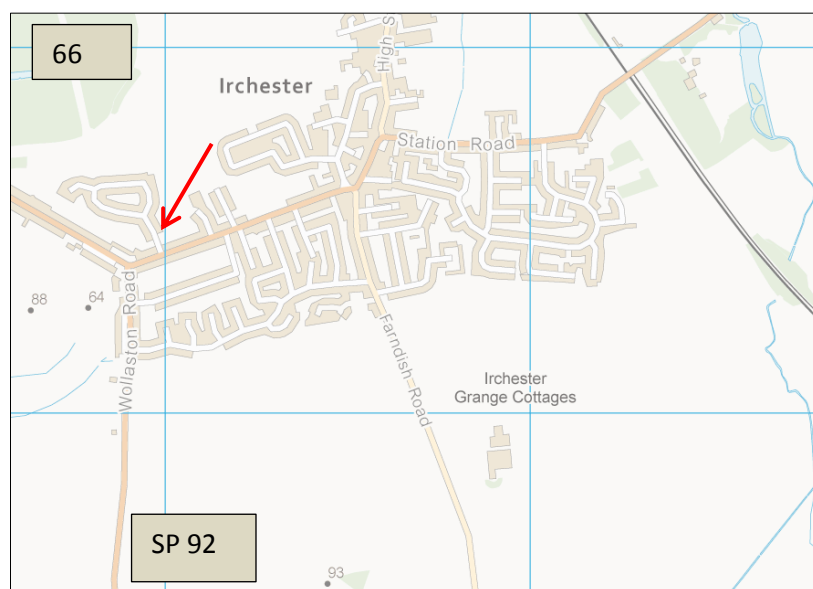


Fig 1. Site location (arrowed). Contains Ordnance Survey data
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Bradshaw way was developed in the late 1960s or 1970s. It is laid out in the form of a single access road leading to a roughly circular loop road forming a cul-de-sac. No archaeological investigation is

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known to have taken place during the construction of any of the housing close to the present site which lies approximately ½ mile (1 kilometre) to the west of the medieval core of the village of Irchester.

Previously-known archaeological activity is limited but sufficient to necessitate a planning condition to be levied on the development. The Roman town of Irchester lies approximately ½ mile to the north. Much of the area between the current investigation site and the Roman town has been formerly quarried for ironstone. It now comprises the Irchester Country Park.

Evaluation was carried out in accordance with an approved Written Scheme of Investigation dated 21 January 2016 by Iain Soden Heritage Services Ltd.

Fieldwork

The site was accessed via a gap in the former 91 Wollaston Road west garden boundary on Bradshaw Way. It is bounded by gardens to south and east, with 153 Bradshaw Way adjacent directly to the north.

No services were known to be present on the plot, nor were there overhead cables. The soil had been uncultivated for some time and had recently before been cleared of weed-tree growth and brambles. Deposits of modern rubbish had been dumped on the plot and had been cleared into a heap at the southern end.

The trenching was undertaken using a small tracked excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. All such excavation was undertaken under archaeological supervision. Two trenches were dug, in a T-plan, in order to fully investigate the plan of the proposed new dwelling (Fig 2). The overall total length of the trenches was 11.3m x 1.5m wide.

The first arm of the trench was that located roughly east-west across the southern end of the new dwelling to a total length of 5.5m. After the removal of weed growth, dark brown well cultivated garden soil was revealed. It extended to a depth of approximately 0.4m and lay directly above a very thin subsoil of mid grey/brown clay-loam. This in turn lay above the natural yellow/orange clay which represents the undisturbed natural geology (Fig 3).

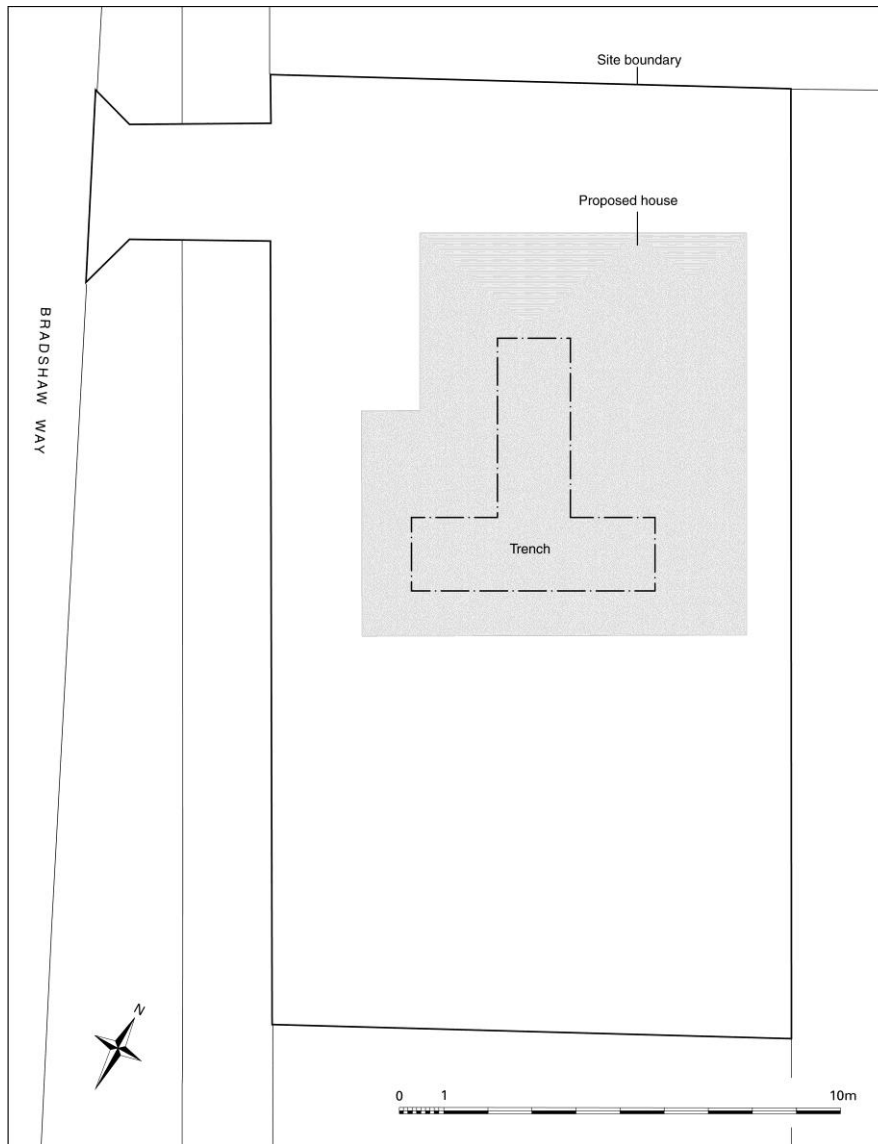


Fig 2: The site, proposed house and trench locations (Andy Isham). This is the foot of the former rear garden of 91 Wollaston Road, which lies to the south-east.



Fig 3: The southern trench, across the south end of the building plot, looking west. Scale 1m.

There were no archaeological features cutting either the subsoil or underlying geology, and finds were few. Occasional pieces of modern (twentieth-century) flower pot and occasional fragments of plastic were gathered from the topsoil but were not retained. There were no other finds.

The second arm of the trenching was joined from the north side and was aligned north-south (Figs 2 and 4). It measured 5.8m x 1.5m. The stratification was identical to that in the first trench. Towards the north end a narrow band of darker soil was revealed which lay parallel to the northern boundary of the former garden plot.



Fig 4: The north-south arm of the trenching, looking north; scale 1m.

Two small pieces of modern flower pot were retrieved from it. Since it could be seen that it was cut from the base of the cultivated garden soil layer, this is very probably a modern planting trench. Such deep digging, at the very end of a garden, is not uncommon in gardens where vegetables are grown, particularly in a clay soil where manuring and composting are essential to improve the soil and drainage.

No other features were present.

Conclusion

The building plot revealed a well-cultivated garden soil lying directly above a truncated subsoil which in turn lay over undisturbed natural geology. There were no archaeological features apart from a recent planting or bedding trench associated with the post-World War 2 garden at 91 Wollaston Rd.

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Appendix

OASIS data

Project Name	Land adjacent 153 Bradshaw Way, Irchester
OASIS ID	Iainsode1-246695
Project Type	Evaluation
Originator	Iain Soden Heritage Services Ltd
Project Manager	Iain Soden
Previous/future work	No
Current land use	Garden
Development type	Domestic housing
Reason for investigation	Planning Condition
National grid reference	SP 9198 6548
Start/end dates of fieldwork	12 March 2016
Archive recipient	Northamptonshire Archive
Study area	c100sqm



Iain Soden Heritage Services Ltd

28 March 2016