

# **Iain Soden Heritage Services Ltd**

Modern living in an historic environment

### Building recording on agricultural barns at The Grange, Adstone, Northamptonshire

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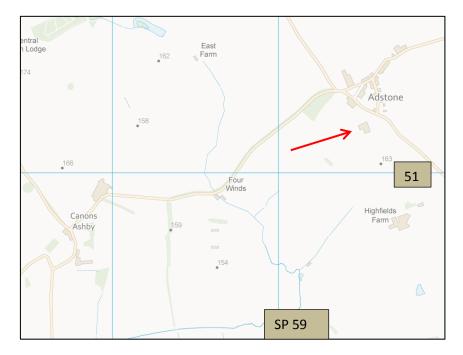
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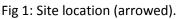
#### Summary

Two conjoined barns, probably of post-1720 date, have been added to a former 17<sup>th</sup>-century domestic service range, which was deliberately detached from its farmhouse of 1656 in order to create a farmyard access. Subsequent alterations to the ranges have probably reflected a variety of uses to which they have been put. The current plan-layout has been fully in place since before 1810.

#### Introduction

An application has been made by Mr and Mrs Cairns to convert farm buildings at The Grange, Blakesley Road, Adstone, Northamptonshire to alternative farm use (NGR: SP 5949 5124; Fig 1; Planning Application S/2016/1776/FUL).





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It was agreed in an approved Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) dated 20 August 2016 that a programme of archaeological building recording should be undertaken prior to any development in order to better understand and appreciate the farm's development, before works might commence. The level of recording was agreed with the Assistant Northamptonshire County Archaeological Advisor at Level II.

Level II is defined as a descriptive record whereby both the interior and exterior should be seen, described and photographed (Historic England 2016). The examination should produce an analysis of the development and use and discuss the conclusions reached, but need not discuss in detail the evidence on which that analysis is based.

The property was visited on 25 August 2016 in fine and dry weather conditions with a bright, but overcast sky. Full and free access was given to all of the buildings included in the application, along with other, adjacent buildings not included but within the immediate area, in order to provide context.

The buildings are not listed individually but fall within the curtilage of the main farmhouse which is Listed as Grade II. That description is as follows:

Adstone, Blakesley Lane

1/26

Manor Farmhouse GV II

Farmhouse. Dated 1656, altered C19 and C20. Coursed squared ironstone, slate roof, stone ridge and rear lateral stack. 4-unit plan. 2-storeys and attic; 7 window range. Main front to garden has 6panel, part glazed door to right of centre with moulded wood surround, timber lintel and straight hood with brackets. C19 horned sash windows of varying sizes to ground and first floors, all with timber lintels. Blocked door to right of existing door with rectangular window inset. Two 3-light chamfered stone mullion cellar windows to right of centre. Buttress to left. Nogged brick eaves and stone coped gables with kneelers. Left gable has 3-light first floor window with chamfered stone mullions and hood mould, similar 2-light window to attic and datestone above inscribed EH/1656. Interior has chamfered spine beams and 2 open fireplaces back-to-back with stop chamfered bressumers. Stone cellar. Collar truss roof.

The farmhouse is currently named *The Grange* since, after its recent sale by the previous farmer to the current owners, the historic name of Manor Farm was taken by the vendor to his current property, a new bungalow situated nearby. In order that confusion is avoided in this document, the property will be referred to as The Grange although historic references will refer to it as the Manor Farm/house.

### Background

The geology of the parish comprises mostly boulder clay with some patches of Northampton Sand Ironstone. Adstone is an historic settlement, first mentioned in written sources in the Domesday Survey of 1086 (modgov.southnorthants.gov.uk). At that time fourteen households are listed, all held by the Crown. The village had strong ties to various religious houses which held both land and property in the village. By the twelfth century the Benedictine monks of Bec Hellouin held the manor which was acquired by the Harby family in the mid sixteenth-century until Francis Harby sold it in June 1720 (for £6,893) to The Corporation of the Sons of the Clergy, a charity which supported the sons and widows of clergymen. This held much of the village, both land and property until 1916 when it sold many of its holdings. At that point in Adstone this comprised two manor houses, farmsteads, estate cottages, a school, an inn with stabling and the church.

The parish was formerly a chapelry of Canons Ashby but was made into the separate parish of Adstone in 1865.

It was the Harby family who built The Grange although it is uncertain whether it was Edward snr (dates unrecorded) or junior (<u>www.historyofparliamentonline.org</u>). Edward Harby jnr (c1633-89) was perhaps rather young to have been building such a large house in 1656 at which time he would have been about 23 years old. However, he had graduated from Wadham College, Oxford in 1652 and was married to Frances, daughter of John Elmes of Greens Norton (date unknown).

His father, Edward snr, was a parliamentarian in the Civil War and was returned to Higham Ferrers as a recruiter. As a member of the winning side in that conflict it seems that it is more likely that it was Edward snr who had the money and opportunity to enlarge, or more likely, build a new property at Adstone which the family had held since the post-Dissolution period. Edward jnr had a double return decided against him in 1660 (the year of the Restoration of the monarchy) and he retired to from public life. He later applied for a licence for Presbyterian Worship in 1672 and died on 8 May 1689. He was buried at Canons Ashby. It was his son who sold the manor in 1720.

The Corporation of the Sons of the Clergy then held the manor until 1916 and during that time would have had many tenants; these have not been traced for the purposes of this report.

Historic maps have revealed little new information of the development of the farm complex. It is not known when the parish was enclosed (RCHME) and no enclosure map survives though it is thought that it was during the first half of the eighteenth century.

An Ordnance Survey preparatory map of c1810 shows the complex to comprise the farmhouse and barns beyond with a further group of farm buildings to the north. This is shown in exactly the same configuration but in more detail on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1881 (Fig 2).

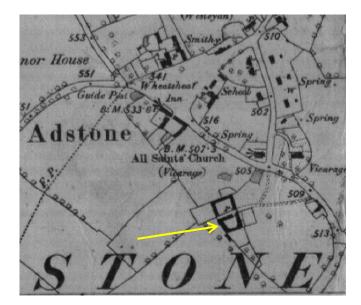


Fig 2: The First Edition 6 inch Ordnance Survey map c1881 (sheet L sw).

It is worth noting that at that time the title 'Manor Farm' is applied to the property currently known as Adstone House on the north side of the village green and *The Grange* is un-named. The same layout is depicted on the 1950 edition after which the present steel-framed and concrete sheds must

have been erected on the site of the former ranges to the north of the farmhouse. The ranges which form the focus of this report remain un-altered as the farm changed around them (Fig 3).

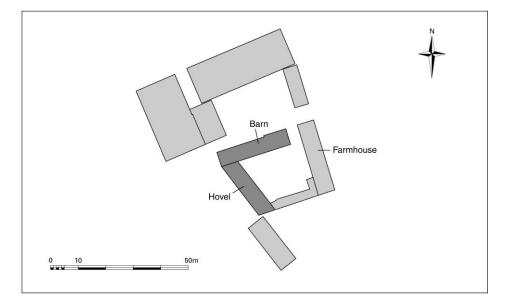


Fig 3: The farm layout with principal buildings of this report labelled (Andy Isham)

### The building survey

The northernmost range of barns is aligned roughly north-east to south-west whilst the western range is aligned roughly north-west to south-east. For ease of reference the ranges will be described as being the north range (barn) and west range (hovel). They have been allocated phases which, apart from the easternmost section of the north range cannot be ascribed specific dates but rather broad date ranges on the basis of the architectural style and building materials.

### A 17<sup>th</sup> century service range

The easternmost portion of the north (barn) range appears to have been originally joined to the rear (west side) of the Grange which is dated to 1656 (Fig 4). It seems to have been a domestic arrangement and has all the small embellishments which accompany part of the house, and not a barn.

## The Grange (formerlyManor Farm) Barns, Adstone

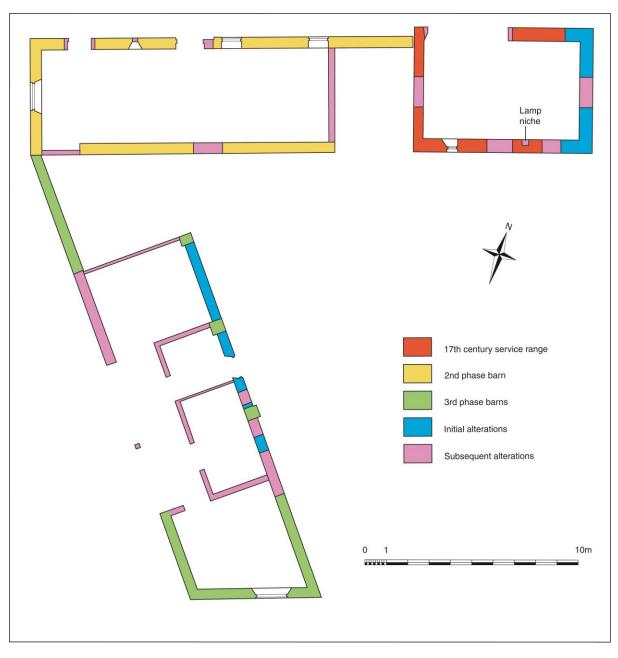


Fig 4: The barn group showing phases and alterations (Andy Isham after Roger Coy Partnership)

The barn range is constructed throughout in Northampton Sand Ironstone bonded in a pale creamy white lime mortar. The individual stones have been squared with dressed faces and laid in courses of varying thickness. Much altered, there are at present no door openings which relate to its original phase and the only access now is through a large full-height double door in the north side (Figs 4 and 5).



Fig 5: The north elevation of the 17<sup>th</sup> century service range, looking south-east; 2m scale. The original farmhouse lies to the left; note the rendered west wall beneath the chimney stack.

The north wall of this now separate building aligns exactly with the north gable end of the farmhouse whilst the south elevation aligns with the south side of the chimney stack gable where a ragged scar in the stonework indicates alteration (Fig 6). The same chimney stack gable of the farmhouse is also currently rendered which suggests that that section of walling has undergone significant change; perhaps the now rendered elevation was originally built as an internal dividing wall and once exposed was felt insufficiently weatherproof. The north-west corner of the farmhouse also indicates full height re-building where quoins are not properly tied in to the original north gable; neither do they follow the original coursing.

No maps consulted (back to 1810) show the two sections of building joined but it is clear from the layout and methods of construction that they are contemporary. The stonework of the barn is laid in the same way as is used in the farmhouse and the width and height of the buildings is identical (see Figs 5 and 6). They had thus been separated prior to 1810 when they are shown with the present entranceway between the two.

After the building had been separated from the main farmhouse range this section of building appears to have been altered to serve as a simple barn. A full height double door was created in the north wall which remains today (Figs 4 and 5). The present doors and frame appear to be relatively modern replacements but perhaps reflect the earlier configuration.



Fig 6: The south elevation of the 17<sup>th</sup> century service range, looking north; 2m scale. Note the vertical edge of the rendering on the chimney stack gable of the farmhouse to the right.

In order to make that entranceway, presumably for access when the west barn range was added (see below) sections of the north and south walls were removed and a new east gable wall built, severing this service range from the house. That new gable does not have the same quality of stonework seen on the original sections of the north and south walls neither do to courses of the new gable match those of the original elements (Fig 7). Also missing are the large 'long and short' quoins visible both on the original corners of the farmhouse and the south-west corner of the service building (see Fig 6, left side).

### The Grange (formerlyManor Farm) Barns, Adstone



Fig 7: The east gable inserted when the service range was separated from the farmhouse, looking south-west; 2m scale. Secondary infilled door and hayloft door.

Set within both the north and south walls are two oak lintels. They are situated at the very east end of the surviving north and south walls and retain only the west jambs in each case (see Figs 5, 6 and 7). The eastern jambs must have been located in the now removed section of the north and south walls which joined the barn to the west side of the farmhouse, further evidence of their original single phase of building. Both of the western jambs lie opposite each other although the lintels are set at different heights; that in the north wall is higher than that in the south.

There is a now infilled doorway in the re-built east gable wall which would have given access at ground level (Fig 7). Directly above it is a window which appears was intended as a hayloft door fitted with what appears to be sheet plastic. Both are set beneath oak lintels.

The only other features which appear to relate to the first phase are two windows in the south elevation, one complete the other surviving only as an infilled opening with the fragmentary remains of the western jamb (Figs 4 and 6). The western of the two shows that the jambs, lintel and sill are

each cut from a single slab of ironstone set into the wall end-ways. The inner face of each slab is slightly chamfered but there is no indication of groves suggestive of glazing.

Within the west gable are two openings which may relate to the original configuration, one each at ground and first floor level (Figs 4 and 8).



Fig 8: The west gable of the 17<sup>th</sup> century service range, looking north-east; 2m scale.

The lower opening, formerly a doorway, retains only the outline only in the change of stonework and a few quoins, situated only on the south side; the lintel does not remain. The first floor opening is infilled with red brick and is of the same width. It does retain its lintel which is of wood, presumably oak, although neither the bricks nor the lintel could be closely examined due to their height above the ground surface.

Internally the barn retains little which indicates how it might have originally been utilised. As has been previously noted there are no original door openings and only the single window in the south wall, not visible from the interior due to it being covered with a timber sheet. The floor is of modern concrete.

The roof is a finely constructed oak structure with details and elements which indicate its original status as a building joined to the farmhouse and is embellished with a much higher level of craftsmanship than is usually seen in barns (Fig 9).



Fig 9: The 17<sup>th</sup> century service range roof, looking east towards the later east gable wall.

There are two principal trusses at present, their disposition further indicating that the range extended to the east since the eastern of the two is unnecessarily close to the re-built east gable wall (Figs 4 and 9). However, it is the quality of the finish on all of the timbers that is unusual. Both of the principal truss tie beams are chamfered on their lower edges and all chamfers ends in step and run-out stops (Alcock and Hall 1994, 36.g). This type of stop is usually only seen in domestic interiors and the example quoted above dates from 1577, though being one of the most simple designs it has a long lifespan and its use here is not unusual for the mid-seventeenth century. In addition to this, the undersides of all the visible purlins (two rows to each side), principal *and* secondary rafters as well as the collars have chamfered lower edges. This high degree of finish is unusual in a domestic roof unless they could be seen close up but is even more rare in a barn. It is worth noting that the Listing description notes the 'chamfered beams' and 'collar truss roof' when describing the farmhouse. That the same form of construction is present here confirms the fact that the present barn and the farmhouse were built at the same time and using the same methods. The roof has been relatively recently re-covered since the present tiles are twentieth-century concrete tiles laid over an impermeable membrane.

The large beam set between the north and south walls is probably not original to the building as it is set at a height which would have made for a first floor head-height which would have been essentially unusable. Its presence perhaps relates to its insertion as a tie beam during the removal or re-building of the present east gable. If so, it may have been situated elsewhere in this building since it retains notched sockets indicative of settings for floor joists.

### The 2<sup>nd</sup> phase north range barn

This barn forms the remainder of the north range and was built against the west gable of the 17<sup>th</sup> century service range (Fig 4). It, too, has been much altered with blocked and inserted openings, a common feature of farm buildings which are frequently adapted over the years as farming practice and/or ownership changed.

The barn is constructed of the same Northampton ironstone used in the remainder of the complex (Fig 10).



Fig 10: The north elevation of the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase barn, looking south; 2m scale.

The individual stone blocks are less well squared but are laid in neat courses of varying thickness, bonded in lime mortar. Both the north (Fig 10) and south (Fig 11) elevations show signs of former or subsequent openings but the height of the walls remains unaltered, although the west gable with its raised coping, steep pitch and kneelers suggests that originally it had a thatched covering. It is currently covered with blue slate suggesting re-covering during the nineteenth-century.

The north elevation retains two window openings which appear to be original in size but reconfigured; they both have bullnose brick sills which suggest remodelling during the latter half of the nineteenth-century. They both have timber, probably oak, lintels. Each is currently boarded over and no indications remains as to the earlier fittings. The only other opening in this elevation is a narrow ventilation slit located towards the west gable, now infilled only on the outer surface so that the deeply splayed internal jambs remain visible (Fig 4). A second slit partially remains on the east edge of the doorway inserted slightly further west, but in this case only part of the east side of the splay survives.

The doorway located more centrally to this elevation appears to be in an original location, but altered. The east jamb has been heavily repaired, mostly in red brick and modern blockwork although its original dimensions appear to have been retained. The lintel is of painted timber, probably oak. The door frame and current two-leaf stable doors are modern as are all the fittings.

The doorway at the west end, as previously mentioned, is a later insertion. The opening rises the full height of the wall to the eaves although the door itself is of standard height; the section above has been infilled most recently with plywood sheeting. Neither the frame nor the two-leaf stable door is original and both retain modern fittings.

To the east of the door is a low-set opening which relates to a grain-drying duct system which was most likely added to the barn during the second half of the twentieth-century when such systems became widely utilised. The opening is now infilled with Fletton brick beneath a concrete lintel; internally the associated duct is made of blockwork and extends across the width of the barn.



Fig 11: The south elevation of the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase barn, looking north; 2m scale.

The west gable retains a single hayloft door at first floor level suggesting that this end of the barn, at least, was used for the storage of fodder. The opening is set beneath a timber lintel and is currently partially covered with corrugated sheeting; no evidence remains of any original door.

The south elevation is only partially visible in its entirety since the west (hovel) range was built against its west end (Figs 4 and 11). The eastern bay of the barn comprises a full-width and full height door opening (Figs 4 and 12). The opening appears to be part of the original layout and was at that stage simply a cart opening either for storage or for loading and unloading. At a later date, most likely during the early years of the nineteenth century, this bay was separated from the remainder of the barn by the insertion of an interior brick wall.



Fig 12: The 2<sup>nd</sup> phase barn with inserted brick wall at the east end, looking north-west; 2m scale.

The brick wall when inserted was not keyed into either the north or south stone walls but simply butted against both. The wall is of standard 9-inch construction using Flemish garden-wall bond, where three stretchers are used between each header in each course (Brunskill 1990). The wall rises only to the height of the eaves above which one of the roof trusses is located. The truss is of simple tie beam construction with raking queen struts (Cordingley 1961). Presumably when the brick wall was inserted the truss was also infilled with further timber struts, covered with split laths and plastered. At the same time a brick floor was laid to provide a smooth and easily cleaned surface (Fig 12). This separation and laying of the new floor suggests a change of use from cart storage or loading to a separate, enclosed, coach house. It is probable that the double doors were added at this time. A timber frame was inserted (probably pine) and double doors hung, only one of which now survives.

To the west of this opening a pedestrian doorway has been infilled though its outline can be discerned (Figs 4 and 11). The oak lintel survives.

A further opening at the far west end of the south elevation appears to have been made when the west range was added, but subsequently infilled with blockwork (Fig 4).

Internally there is little which indicates original usage or whether there was any sub-division. The floor (apart from the coach-house) is of modern concrete throughout.

The roof comprises three tie-beam trusses of the same configuration as previously described (Fig 13).



Fig 13: The roof of the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase barn, looking east. Note the lath and plaster infill within the far truss above the brick wall which forms the west side of the coach-house.

Many of the roof timbers, both rafters and purlins, have been re-used and retain empty sockets, peg holes and nails. They are all of oak. The present loft floor appears to be of pine but was not closely investigated since its structural integrity was not certain.

### The west (hovel) range

This single storey range closes the west side of the courtyard which lies to the west of the farmhouse (Fig 4). It is set an acute angle to the western of the two barns which make up the north range though the reason for this angle is unclear. The only section of walling which abuts the north range barn is built with a simple butt joint with no attempt at keying. From the west the elevation presents a long, low facade of plain wall although only the two ends relate to the first phase of building (Figs 4 and 14).



Fig 14: The west range, looking east; 2m scale.

The section of walling to the north of the two open bays is modern infill- it lies above a damp proof membrane of polythene sheet. It therefore appears that originally, or at least at some stage, the west side had solid walls at the north and south ends and three open bays in the centre.

The east elevation is much altered and shows signs that it originally comprised free-standing piers creating four open sided bays, almost certainly for the storage of carts (Figs 4 and 15). The fact that these once-open bays faced east/north-east complies with the standard configuration for such buildings where a north or east facing open side was desirable so that the timberwork of the carts did not dry out too much in heat from direct sunlight. They can only have been used once the entrance into the courtyard was made by separating the seventeenth-century service range from the west side of the farmhouse unless the now infilled south side of this complex was not built at that time.



Fig 15: The east elevation of the west range, looking west, infilled bays marked; 2m scale.

Each of the piers is square in section and constructed of well-dressed blocks of ironstone bonded in lime mortar. Currently only the northern bay remains open although this has a modern garage door and subsidiary pedestrian door fitted into it (Fig 15, right side). The remaining three bays have been subsequently infilled with ironstone laid neatly in courses of varying thickness. The central bay currently has a doorway leading into the range with, to the south, a small blocked window. In the southern infilled bay there is evidence of two further blocked openings partially visible behind the current panel of hedging (Fig 15, left side) where lintels are visible.

It is probable that when the east side was infilled at the same time the west side was opened up so that the central three bays were opened, facing the fields beyond. When this was done the internal floor must have been raised, since the ground level to the west is higher than that within the courtyard, on which side three steps give access to the current interior (Fig 15).

The current roof has a shallow pitch and is covered with blue slate; it is not the original roof as none of the trusses sit directly on top of each of the piers along the east side of the building (Fig 4). At best they lie close to the edge of the pier, but in the other cases sit on top of the later infill. The trusses are of typical mid nineteenth-century construction, all made of machine-sawn pine (Fig 16).



Fig 16: The roof trusses of the west range, looking south.

Each truss comprises a tie beam, king-post and integral principal rafter. There is a vertical iron bolt fixing the king-post to the tie beam in each. On each principal rafter are cleats which support a single purlin on either side; these in turn support the secondary rafters which support the laths onto which the slates are fixed. There is a thin ridge-plank. This simple type of roof truss is illustrated in pattern books for such buildings during the third quarter of the nineteenth-century (Newlands 1880).

The current floor is of concrete throughout and the range has been sub-divided to make individual stable stalls.

### Conclusions

The group of agricultural barns at *The Grange*, Adstone have undergone varying degrees of change and alteration during their lifetimes. The barns can be readily separated into three distinct phases as illustrated on Figure 4 and throughout the text above.

The earliest was clearly once part of the farmhouse and, when connected to it, appears to have most likely served as a rear service range. This survey did not examine the farmhouse and therefore it has not been possible to establish whether the detailing visible on the timberwork of the roof of the now detached barn matches exactly with that surviving in the house. However, given the form of construction, size of the building and the matching configuration in plan there seems little doubt that the two were once conjoined.

This interpretation would establish the eastern barn of the north range as dating to the mid seventeenth-century i.e. to 1656 and built by the Harby family, along with the farmhouse.

The long, slightly lower, barn added to the west side of the barn converted from the service building is a typical eighteenth-century style farm barn both in size, configuration and construction. Although altered, it retains its original outline in plan and elevation with relatively minor changes to openings

through the external walls. These no doubt reflect changes in farming practice and ownership over the years. It probably dates to the period post-1720 when the Harby family sold the manor to the Corporation of the Sons of the Clergy but pre-dates 1810 when it is depicted on the Ordnance Survey preparatory map. The roof has been re-covered in blue slate although the timberwork has been retained; it was almost certainly originally thatched.

The west range perhaps dates to the same period since it too is depicted on the 1810 map. That range has undergone more extensive alteration with large sections of infilling and probable removal, particularly along the west side. In addition the whole roof structure has been replaced during the nineteenth-century, most likely during the latter half when slate became much more commonly used when widespread use of the ever-increasing railway network made such material cheap and widely available.

Farm buildings, like most working structures, undergo changes throughout their lives in response to changing requirements and technologies as well as changes in ownership. The barns at Adstone are typical of most farm buildings in that many of the changes cannot be ascribed particular dates or functions; this is in part due to the often *ad hoc* methods of alteration often made by the farmers themselves, but also because some of the alterations have themselves been altered. The storage and re-use of materials further confuses interpretation.

One of the few identifiable insertions is the ducting used for grain drying since this methodology was not in use until after the Second World War but even here it could have been built at almost any time between the late 1950s and the 1970s. None of the associated grain drying or storage system survives.

Throughout the complex previous and current owners have kept the buildings in good, weather-tight condition, ensuring their survival.

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### Glossary of architectural terms

Ashlar – Smooth-faced masonry cut from square-hewn freestone.

Bullnose brick – A brick with a rounded corner. Used mostly, but not exclusively, in agricultural buildings on jambs to prevent livestock damaging itself on sharp corners.

Collar – In a roof, a horizontal member tying together a pair of inclined members, usually a principal rafter, common rafters or sides of a truss

Eaves – The underside of a sloping roof overhanging a wall.

Gable – The triangular upper part of a wall supporting the end of a ridged roof.

Header – The end of a brick.

Jamb – The side of a doorway, window or fireplace.

Lintel – A horizontal stone or timber beam spanning an opening and supporting the wall above.

Mullion – A vertical bar of stone or wood dividing the lights of a window.

Purlin – A horizontal beam running parallel to the ridge of a roof and carrying the common rafters.

Quoin – The external angle of a wall or building, quoins or quoin stones are the dressed stones forming the angle.

Rafter - A sloping timber beam within the framework of a roof rising from the eaves to the ridge. Principal rafters are those which carry the purlins. Common rafters rest on the purlins and carry the laths supporting slates or tiles.

Stretcher – The long side of a brick.

Tie beam – A horizontal timber between two walls of a building. It may be part of a truss or used in isolation for stabilisation/strengthening purposes.

Truss – A framework of timbers supporting a roof.

### Appendix

OASIS data

Project Name	The Grange, Adstone
OASIS ID	lainsode1-262623
Project Type	Heritage Asset Survey
Originator	Iain Soden Heritage Services Ltd
Project Manager	lain Soden
Previous/future work	No
Current land use	In use as buildings
Development type	Domestic
Reason for investigation	To accompany planning
National grid reference	SP 5949 5124
Start/end dates of fieldwork	25 Aug 2016
Archive recipient	Northamptonshire Archive
Study area	2500 sq m



Iain Soden Heritage Services Ltd

15 September 2016