



Iain Soden Heritage Services Ltd

Modern living in an historic environment

**Archaeological observation and recording on
a new house plot at 3 South Street, Isham,
Northamptonshire**

Iain Soden BA MCI(A)

Email: iain@isheritage.co.uk

Tel: 07742 901760

Website: www.isheritage.co.uk

Archaeological observation and recording on a new house plot at 3 South Street, Isham, Northamptonshire

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Summary

Observation of groundworks to strip a single new house plot in preparation for construction work to commence revealed that the area was a long-lived garden with deep soils, with remains of an 18th- to 20th-century well serving the existing house. There was no earlier archaeology present.

Introduction

Planning consent was granted by Wellingborough Council for the construction of a single new home in the back-plot of 3 South Street, Isham. South Street, along with Church Street and Middle Street, may be one of three parallel roads which remain from a medieval planned settlement. Medieval remains have been found on Middle Street but so far such remains have eluded enquiry along South Street (NGR: SP 8865 7390; Fig 1). The village's archaeology was set out by the former Royal Commission (RCHME 1979, 99-101, and fig 95 for layout).

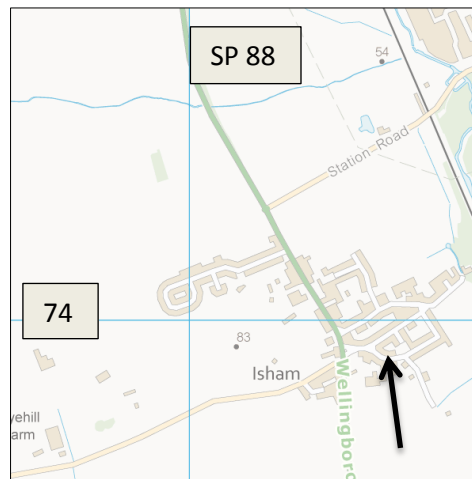


Fig 1: Site location (arrows) Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown Copyright and database right 2017

3 South Street, Isham

Methodology

The house footprint was stripped of a fine and loamy, dark compacted topsoil of variable thickness using a 5-ton 360-degree excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket and under the scrutiny of an archaeologist (Fig 2). There was virtually no separable subsoil and the operation bottomed directly onto a mottled grey-brown sandy-clay natural geology with numerous limestone fragments, alternating with patches of bright orange sandy clay. The work took place in overcast but dry conditions on 25 January 2017. It was carried out in accordance with an approved Written Scheme of Investigation by Iain Soden Heritage Services Ltd, dated 27 December 2016.

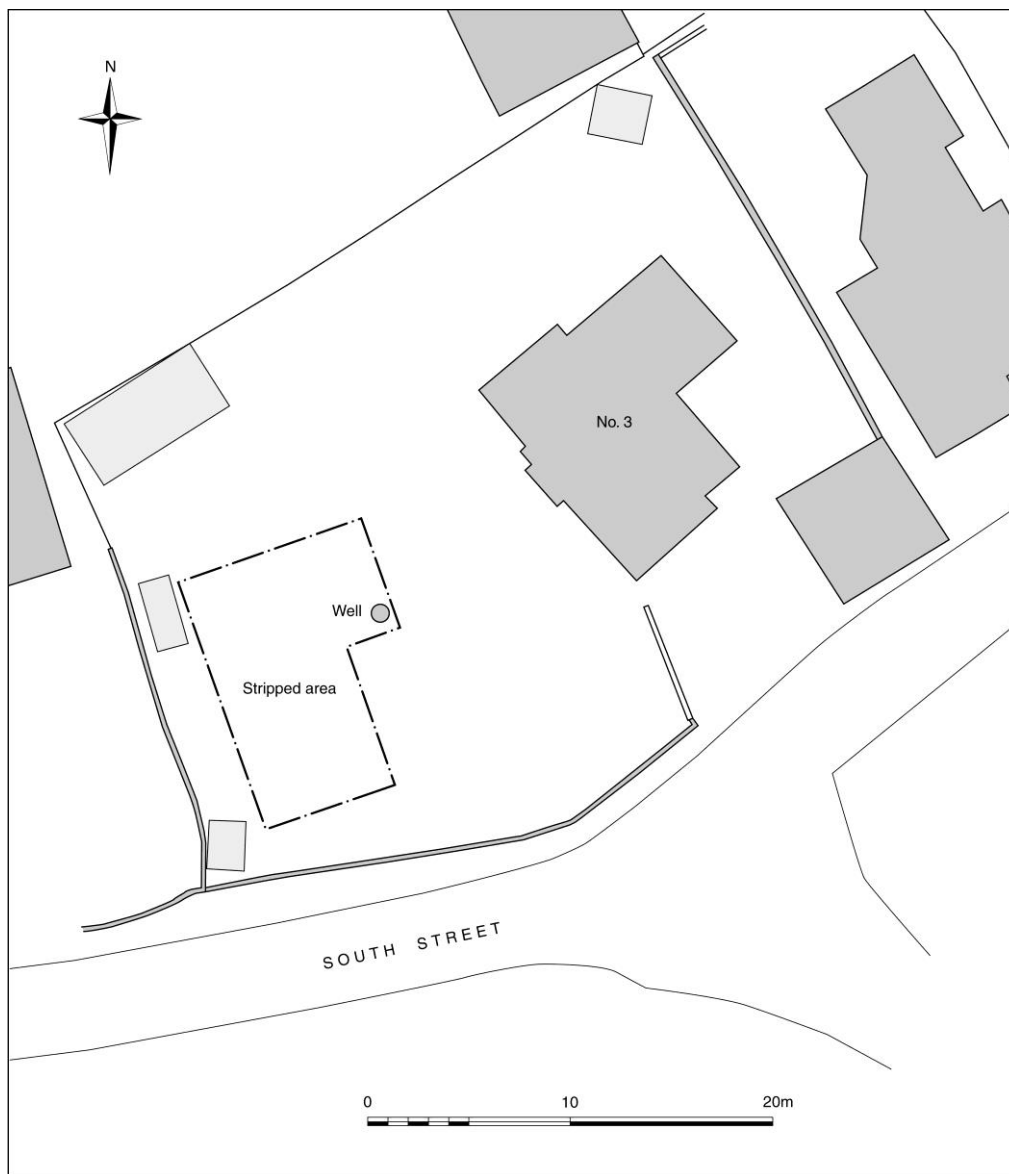


Fig 2: Location of fieldwork at 3 South Street, Newnham (Andy Isham)

Results

Between 500mm and 800mm of dark loamy topsoil was stripped using the mechanical excavator. Directly underlying this was the undisturbed natural geology, comprising patches of bright orange clay alternating with areas of grey-brown clayey silt containing numerous limestone pieces.

The only disturbance into the natural was by a previous episode of mechanical digging to remove the stump of a large willow tree some years ago. This disturbance was easily visible as a black patch against the natural geology.

In one corner of the excavated area was found an ironstone- and limestone-built well approximately 1m in diameter. It contained at least 1.8m of standing water and retained a galvanised steel pipe. Thus it had clearly been in use to draw water for the nearby house at no 3, substantially into the modern period. It had been capped with corrugated iron sheets, brick rubble and a concrete top.



Fig 3: The site looking south, during machining; scales 2m and 1m. Note well and stump-removal disturbance at far left



Fig 4: The water-filled well; scale 1m

There were no finds predating the 20th century.

Conclusions

This plot has not been put to any discernible use other than gardening, and then only from the 18th century onwards. If Isham is indeed a planned medieval settlement, then one might assume that not all plots were taken up immediately, if not for a very long time.

Reference

RCHME 1979 *An inventory of the Historical Monuments in the County of Northampton; II: Archaeological sites in Central Northamptonshire*, Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England



Iain Soden Heritage Services Ltd,

February 2017

3 South Street, Isham

Appendix *OASIS data*

Project Name	3 South Street, Isham
OASIS ID	iainsode1-275516
Project Type	Excavation
Originator	Iain Soden Heritage Services Ltd
Project Manager	Iain Soden
Previous/future work	No
Current land use	Garden
Development type	Residential, single home
Reason for investigation	Planning Condition
National grid reference	SP 8865 7390
Start/end dates of fieldwork	25 January 2017
Archive recipient	Northamptonshire Archive
Study area	200 sq m