



Iain Soden Heritage Services Ltd

Modern living in an historic environment

Archaeological monitoring during groundworks on land at Manor Farm, Slapton, Northamptonshire

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Manor Farm, Slapton

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Summary

A watching brief on the foundations a new barn range to provide bed and breakfast accommodation demonstrated that after the previous part demolition of former farm buildings to create a slurry yard, the ground had been reduced. No archaeology was present.

Introduction

Mrs B Smith of Slapton Manor Farm was given Planning Consent by South Northamptonshire Council for demolition of a modern barn and rebuilding of a new barn range to provide bed and breakfast accommodation on a previous slurry yard at Slapton Manor Farm, Slapton NN12 8PF (NGR: SP 639 468; Fig 1. Application No: S/2015/1562/FUL). The permission included two conditions on archaeology, for the pre-commencement production of a Written Scheme of Investigation (6) and production of a report on the same (7). The site had previously been the subject of a Desk Based Archaeological Assessment by CgMs (Dawson M, 2015 *Manor Farm, Slapton, Northants: Heritage Assessment*) which suggested that the likelihood of archaeological remains surviving was small.

The archaeological scope for archaeological monitoring during groundworks was set out in a Written Scheme of Investigation, dated 28 March 2017 and approved by the Assistant Archaeological Advisor for Northamptonshire County Council.

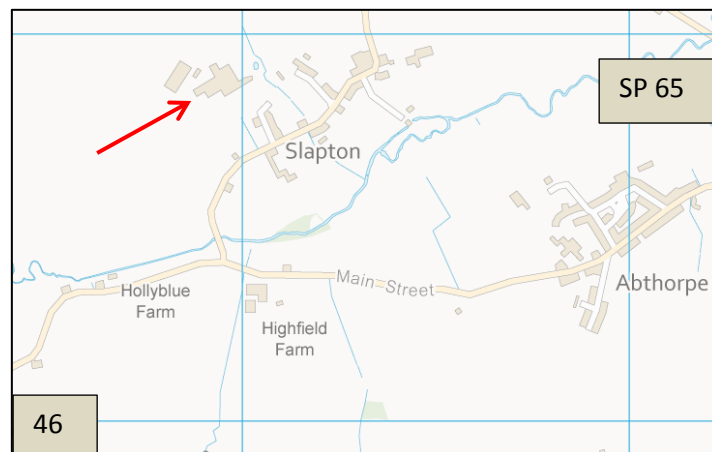


Fig 1: Site location (arrowed).

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Fieldwork

Attendance took place between 8 to 11 May 2017 in fine weather.

The foundation trenches of all six units were watched following the removal of concrete yard surface and cutting back of the sloping land adjacent to an agricultural shed. Stripping was carried out and foundation trenches were dug using a 180-degree JCB-type excavator with varying bucket sizes, working under archaeological control.

The site had previously supported a steel-framed shed over a concrete slurry yard which had been demolished. The site had been entirely under concrete, with a rear wall to a former (north range) cowshed which was removed to expose a cut-back face behind.

The exposed face showed the lie of the previous land surface, which had been considerably reduced to the south and east to form a slurry yard.

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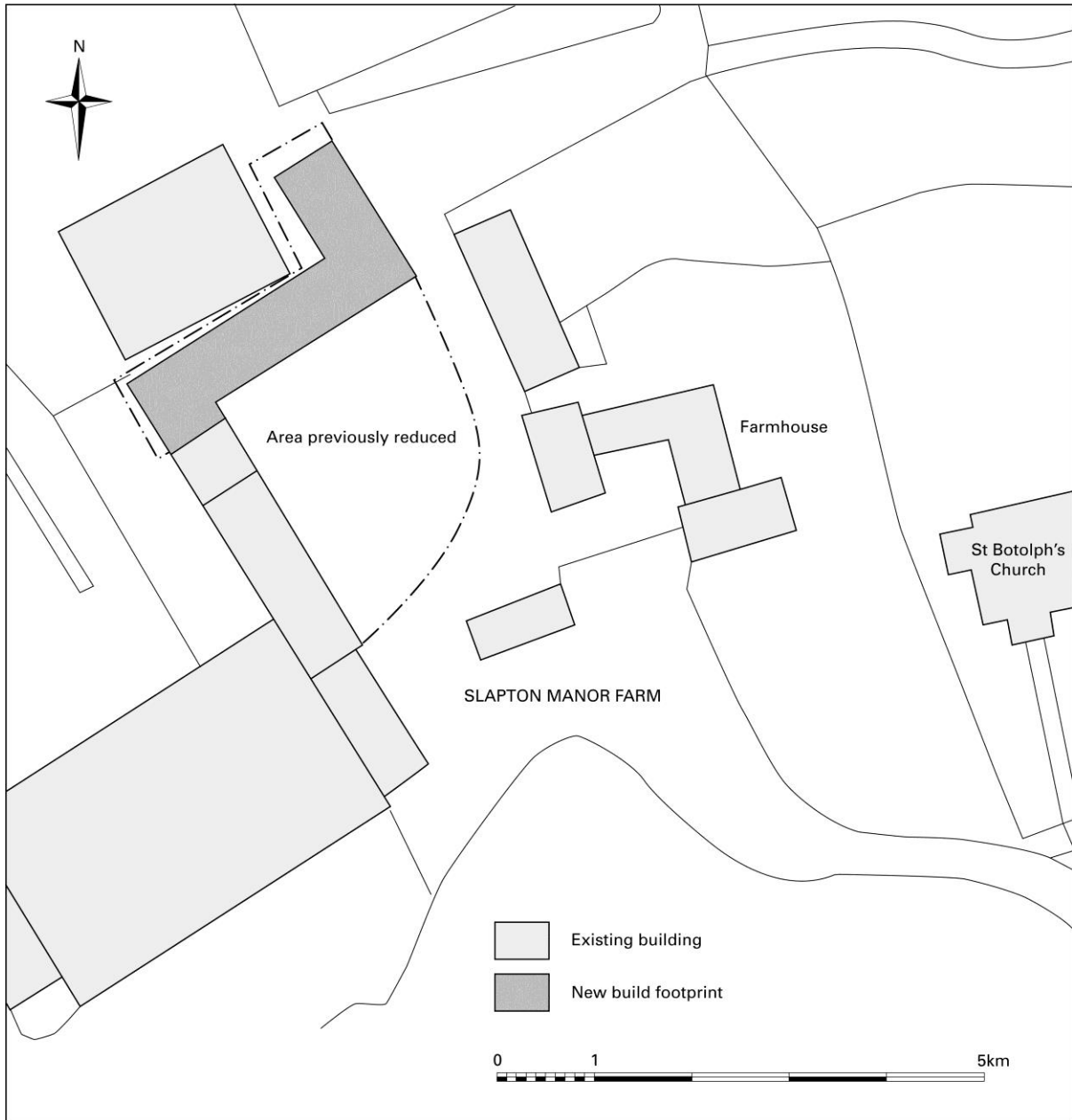


Fig 2: Location of the new building and ground previously reduced (Andy Isham)

Results

All of the foundation trenches were observed in addition to the cutting back of the slopes below the remaining agricultural shed. In none of the foundation trenches for the 6 units of the new range was there any archaeology of any period observed as the area had been previously reduced for the former cowshed and slurry yard. There were no finds of any date although it was clear that the concrete of the slurry yard was laid on areas of strewn brick and other rubble which may have been derived from 19th century farmyard buildings lost when the area was reduced.



Fig 3: View looking west, showing the extent to which the natural land surface had been previously reduced by over a metre to create the concrete slurry yard; Scale 1m



Fig 4: Foundation trenches of a portion of the new range completed, looking north-east. A surviving portion of the old concrete yard surface can be seen to the top right, lying on the truncated geology.

Conclusion

This site has apparently not been used for any discernible purpose other than agricultural with its last function as a slurry yard and animal shed over which was placed an extensive steel shed in recent decades. These recent uses had involved widespread ground reduction, resulting in the loss of any historic ground surface. No archaeology remained.

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Appendix

OASIS data

Project Name	Manor Farm, Slapton
OASIS ID	IainSode1-285855
Project Type	Watching Brief
Originator	Iain Soden Heritage Services Ltd
Project Manager	Iain Soden
Previous/future work	Foregoing Heritage Assessment by CgMs
Current land use	Agricultural yard
Development type	Commercial
Reason for investigation	Planning Condition
National grid reference	SP 639 468
Start/end dates of fieldwork	8 – 11 May 2017
Archive recipient	Northamptonshire Archive
Study area	c1000 sq m



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24 May 2017