



# Iain Soden Heritage Services Ltd

Modern living in an historic environment

## **An Archaeological Watching Brief at 12 Duck End, Hinton-in-the Hedges, Northamptonshire, 2021**

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### **Summary**

An archaeological watching brief at 12 Duck End, Hinton-in-the-Hedges, on the very edge of the village, found no pre-19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century archaeology. The site, laid out on a very slight post-medieval terrace of the natural hillslope, contained a number of drains, including a very large example for surface-water off the adjacent fields.

### **Introduction**

Full Planning Consent was granted by the former South Northamptonshire Council for the construction of a new home on land (the former garden) at Rookery Farm Cottage, 10 Duck End, Hinton-in-the-Hedges, Northamptonshire NN13 5NF (S/2020/0305 at NGR: SP 56084 36779; Fig 1).

Some archaeological work has previously been carried out in Hinton, with varying success, but opportunities have not been common. A traditional overview of the parish's archaeology is published in RCHME (1982, 91-2). The relevant background research agendas to which this gave rise are published by Cooper (2006) and Knight et al (2012).

The present consent relates to an area in which there have more recently been both a possible prehistoric pit-alignment and a medieval boundary (Liz Mordue, pers comm). The site also looks across a small river valley to the former medieval moated manor house site (Fig 2). As Northamptonshire County Council's Assistant Archaeological Advisor Liz Mordue advised a planning condition (4) was applied to the consent for a programme of archaeological observation to accompany the development.

In pursuance of this, a Written Scheme of Investigation was produced (22 February 2021) and approved for the Local Authority, West Northamptonshire Council as successor Unitary Authority to both Northamptonshire County Council and South Northamptonshire Council.

## 12 Duck End, Hinton-in-the-Hedges



Fig 1: Site location (arrowed). Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown Copyright and database right 2021

Archaeological fieldwork was carried out in accordance with the written scheme by Iain Soden Heritage Services on 27-28 September 2021 in fine weather conditions.



Fig 2: The village in the 1880s. The garden-plot site is arrowed. The agricultural buildings to the east no longer stand but the overgrown platform on which they stood is still there. OS 1884 6-inch map, sheet 63NW.

The village plan-form appears in the landscape atlas by Partida et al (2013, Maps 83M and 83EM), where the edge of the present plot formed part of the southern edge of the medieval and later village. Evidently it is considered to be a long-lived boundary, although both it and nearby field boundaries have the straight lines and angles typical of post-medieval parliamentary enclosure plots.

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## Fieldwork

The footprint of the new house was stripped, along with a border of about 2m around the outside, using a 3-ton tracked excavator with a wide toothless ditching bucket. This was to remove the turf and most of the topsoil growing medium, to a depth of about 200mm. This did not necessarily expose natural geology all over but did so noticeably along the tail of the hedged southern boundary 'bank' (at left in Fig 3, below). The resulting up-cast was temporarily stored on site before removal to tip.



Fig 3: View across the site stripped of turf and most topsoil, looking west towards Rookery Cottage, 10 Duck End. The ring-foundation trench is marked out in blue and the tail of the terrace-bank is visible at left

The same excavator was deployed to dig the foundation trench of the new house (timber-framed with a stone outer skin). This time a 600mm-wide toothless bucket was used, under archaeological scrutiny, to a depth of about 1m (deeper in places, as directed by Building Control).

## Results

No pre-19<sup>th</sup>-century archaeology was present.

The overall site-strip exposed the tail of a low escarpment which marks the southern edge of the garden plot, which might be imperceptible in the wider landscape but for a mature hedge along it (a boundary marked as early as 1884). To the eastern end of this escarpment lies a former platform on which a former agricultural building once stood. This is visible on the 1<sup>st</sup> Edition OS map (Fig 2) and in that map constitutes merely an extension of the back plot boundary of the older properties on the south side of Duck End, which have been laid out as a shallow terrace along the hillslope.

The foundation dig cut through remnants of the topsoil still in place and then some 700mm of sandy clay natural drift geology, gradually becoming stonier with pieces of Northampton Sand with Ironstone towards the bottom where it exposed very flat well-laid limestone solid geology at the

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level of the seasonal water-table. This lay at about 1m below the modern ground surface. This distinctive local valley-side geology is highlighted by the RCHME (1982, 91)

In the eastern length of the foundation trench lay a 2m-wide wide, 1m-deep ditch aligned south-west to north-east which produced two sherds of 19<sup>th</sup> century pottery - unglazed flower pot and willow-pattern china (not retained) and at the bottom of which lay a segmental clay agricultural land-drain, with water still running (Fig 4). This appears to be a ditch dug through unstable overburden which was thus necessarily wide in order to lay the drain at depth. Further west, a similar segmental clay land-drain also crossed the northern and southern arms of the foundation trench but at a much shallower depth.

About half way along the northern length of the foundation trench was a 1m-deep and 1m-wide soakaway, which contained mainly limestone rubble but included a number of complete house-bricks (Fig 4). The northern and southern edges of this soakaway collapsed into the trench as they were only a little wider to either side. A 4-inch diameter salt-glazed pipe on the east side of the soakaway acted as an overflow. The inlet pipe lay on its western side, again constructed of 4-inch salt-glaze pipe, was truncated in two places but happened to follow the line of the new foundation for some five metres. This soakaway may have served as drainage for a small building or structure which is just visible on the 1884 map outside the present site. It was probably an outbuilding serving either what is now No 10 or No 15 Duck End, both traditional stone thatched cottages.

At just past the mid-point of the northern foundation trench was a substantial pre-formed and lidded concrete inspection chamber, a hollow cube of some 1m dimensions (Figs 4, 6). This served a large 8-inch salt-glaze drain which angled in from the south-west. The downhill outlet was directly north, heading out of the site and behind the plots on the north side of Duck End and other village blocks to its north. The invert level of both the incoming drain and the inspection chamber lay at or below the level of the solid natural geology, cut through the drift above.

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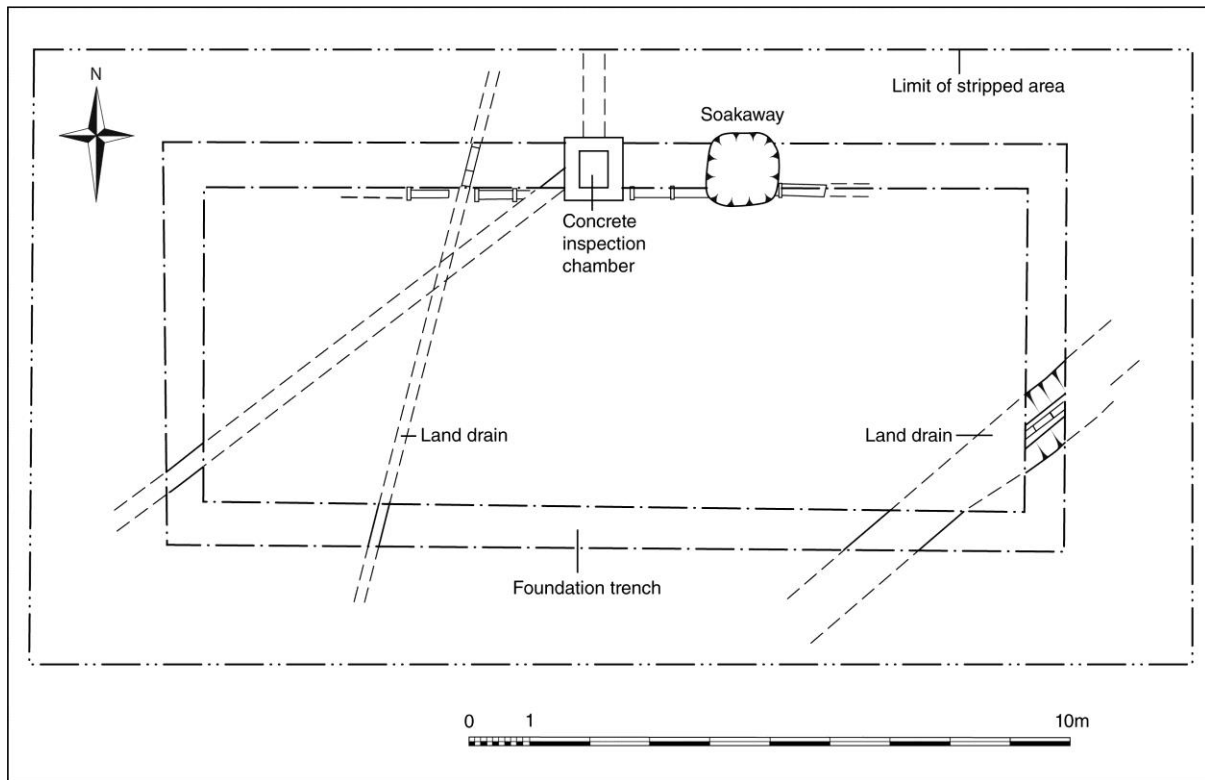


Fig 4: Plan of the site with drain-features present (Andy Isham, after Roger Coy Partnership, with thanks)



Fig 5: Machining the foundation trenches, looking west; scale 2m



Fig 6: 8-inch ceramic collector drain and inspection chamber, looking east

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## Conclusions

No archaeology pre-dating the 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> century was present. Each intervention made found drains and relatively recent disturbance. The site exhibits a distinctive local geological stratification already noted by the RCHME.

The house-plots and this garden (formerly the garden of 10 Duck End) form a long and very gentle terrace which has smoothed out the natural north-facing hillslope. The hedged bank which forms the southern boundary of the site marks that break of slope. The new house, 12 Duck End, merely uses another stretch of this long-smoothed-out terrace.

While this plot has certainly existed since at least 1884, and may be the edge of the much older settlement, it seems that that same peripheral location has acted as a place to concentrate drains for either the village and/or the fields in an awkward confluence which turns a corner of the village that has been hitherto unchanged for at least a century. Otherwise, it has probably only ever been a village garden, flattened out of the sloping arable field.

## Bibliography

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Knight D, Vyner B, and Allen C, 2012 *East Midlands Heritage: an updated research agenda and strategy for the historic environment of the East Midlands*, Nottingham University/English Heritage

Partida, T, Hall, D, and Foard, G, 2013 *An atlas of Northamptonshire: the medieval and early-modern landscape*, Oxbow Books.

RCHME 1982 *An inventory of the historical monuments in the County of Northampton; Volume IV: Archaeological sites in South-West Northamptonshire*, Royal Commission on Historical Monuments England



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## Appendix

### *OASIS data*

Project Name	12 Duck End, Hinton-in-the-Hedges
OASIS ID	431724
Project Type	Watching Brief
Originator	Iain Soden Heritage Services Ltd
Project Manager	Iain Soden
Previous/future work	No/no
Current land use	Garden
Development type	Domestic dwelling
Reason for investigation	Planning Condition
National grid reference	SP 56084 36779
Start/end dates of fieldwork	27-28 September 2021
Archive recipient	Northamptonshire Archive Centre
Study area	c200 sq m



Iain Soden Heritage Services Ltd

8 October 2021