



Northamptonshire Archaeology

An archaeological watching brief at
33 Main Road, Shutlanger, Northamptonshire
September 2011



Northamptonshire Archaeology

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Northamptonshire
County Council

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Report 11/197

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STAFF

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Illustrations: Andy Chapman

QUALITY CONTROL

	Print name	Signed	Date
Checked by	Pat Chapman		
Approved by	Andy Chapman		

OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		Northamp3 – 110993	
Project name	An archaeological watching brief at 33 Main Road, Shutlanger		
Short description	An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology during groundworks connected with the construction of a new house. The main range of the new house almost directly overlay the former cottage. The ground here was disturbed, with mixed topsoil directly overlying natural clays. A number of ceramic drains still partially survived, cutting into the top of the natural clay. To the rear, an extension to the new house ran partly onto the former garden. Here the natural was overlain by a thin subsoil and up to 0.6m of garden soil. There were no earlier disturbances of the natural clay in this area, and no earlier artefacts were present. The only finds recorded, but not retained, were of pottery and building materials contemporary with the demolished cottage.		
Project type	Watching Brief		
Site status	None		
Previous work	None		
Current land use	housing		
Future work	none		
Monument type/ period	None		
Significant finds	None		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County	Northamptonshire		
Site address	33 Main Road, Shutlanger, Towcester, NN12 7RU		
Study area (sq metres)	140sqm		
OS Easting & Northing	SP 7293 4998		
Height OD	c 103m aOD		
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology		
Project brief originator	Northamptonshire County Council Planning		
Project Design originator	Northamptonshire Archaeology		
Director/Supervisor	Andy Chapman		
Project Manager	Andy Chapman		
Sponsor or funding body	Mr & Mrs Spurrell		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date	September 2011		
End date	September 2011		
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc)	
Physical	-	--	
Paper	-	None	
Digital	Northamptonshire Archaeology	Report text and figures Watching brief forms Digital photographs (33)	

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**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF AT
33 MAIN ROAD, SHUTLANGER, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
SEPTEMBER 2011**

Abstract

In September 2011 an archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology during groundworks connected with the construction of a new house at 33 Main Road, Shutlanger. The main range of the new house almost directly overlay the former cottage. The ground here was disturbed, with mixed topsoil directly overlying natural clays. A number of ceramic drains still partially survived, cutting into the top of the natural clay. To the rear, an extension to the new house ran partly onto the former garden. Here the natural was overlain by a thin subsoil and up to 0.6m of garden soil. There were no earlier disturbances of the natural clay in this area, and no earlier artefacts were present. The only finds recorded, but not retained, were of pottery and building materials contemporary with the demolished cottage.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In September 2011 an archaeological watching brief was undertaken during groundworks connected with the construction of a new house at 33 Main Road, Shutlanger, Northamptonshire (NGR SP ; Figs 1 and 2).

Planning permission had been granted to Mr and Mrs Spurrell for the demolition of an existing building and the construction of a new dwelling. The planning consent was granted with a condition attached for a programme of archaeological works. A brief for these works was issued by Planning, Northamptonshire County Council in April 2011 (NCC 2011), and a Written Scheme of Investigation was prepared by Northamptonshire Archaeology on behalf of their client (NA 2011).

1.2 Location and geology

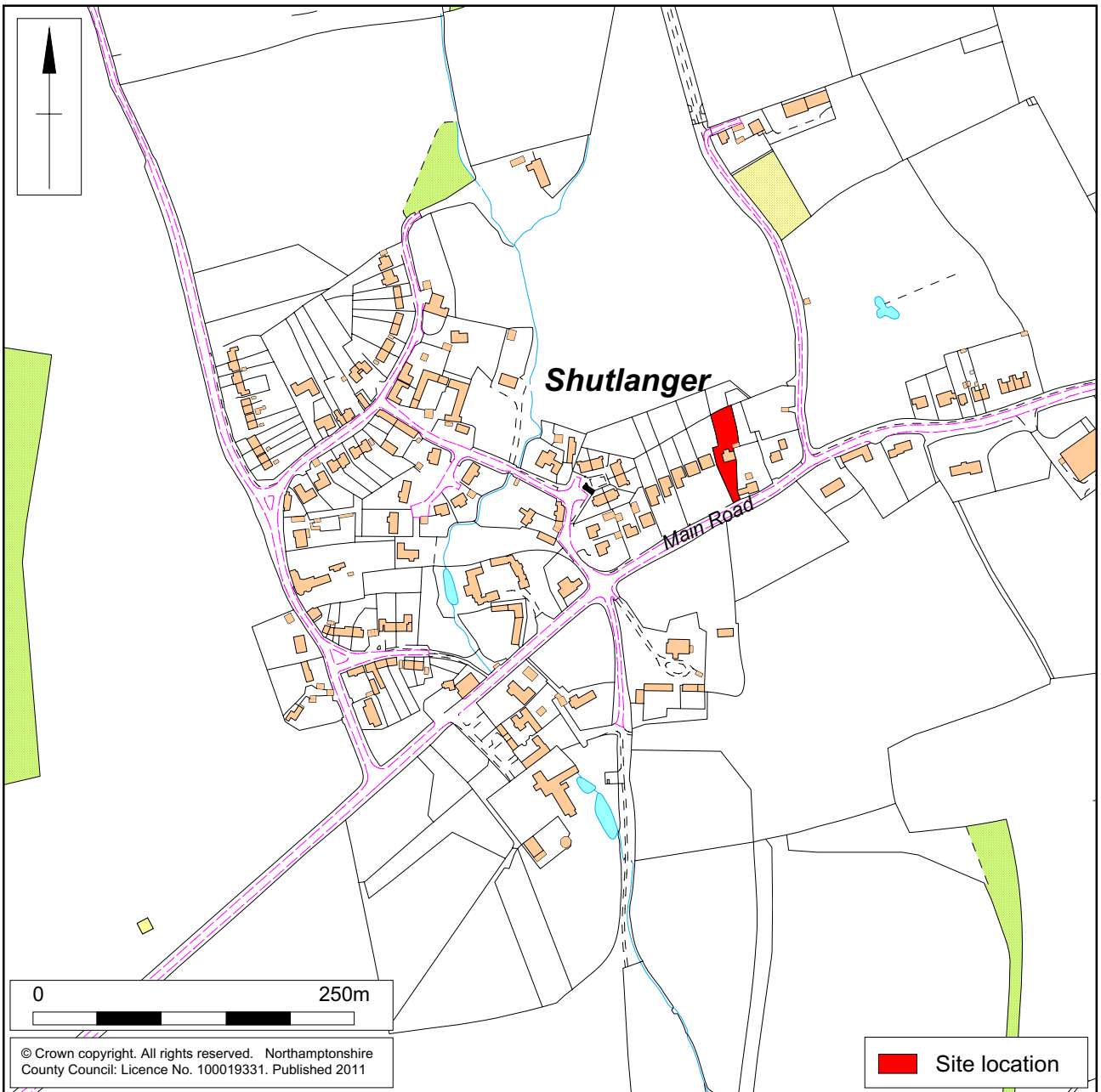
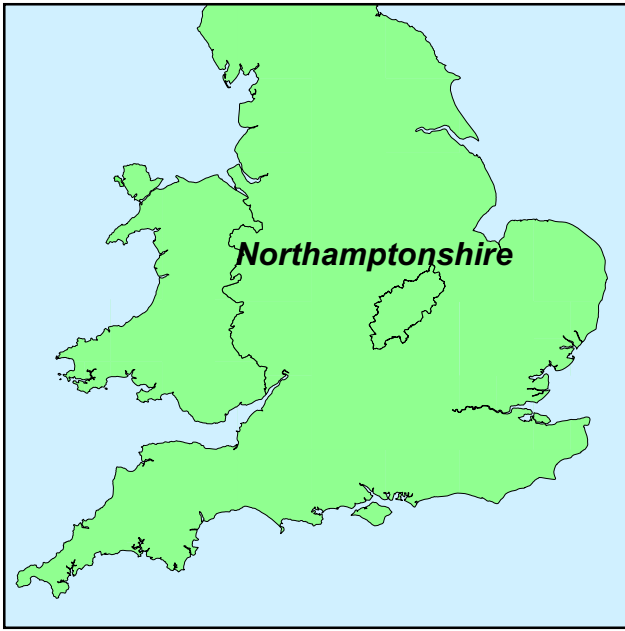
The village of Shutlanger lies approximately 11km to the south of Northampton. The development area lies towards the eastern end of the village, at a height of c103m aOD. The underlying geology has been mapped by the British Geological Survey of Great Britain as comprising Great Oolite Limestone in the north-east with Upper Estuarine clay to the south-west (www.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex/home.html; accessed June 2011). Observation of the groundworks has shown that the site sits on the Upper Estuarine clay.

1.3 Historical background

The village of Shutlanger is recorded as being a Shrunken Medieval Village. To the north-west of the site there are earthworks believed to be the remains of medieval enclosures and a medieval house. A building referred to as *the Monastery* is located on the south side of Main Road. This is a Grade I Listed building, not a monastery, with associated earthwork remains. The site has its origins in the early 14th century, and is possibly the remains of a manor or grange (RCHME 1979).

West of the site, in the garden of 25 Main Road, a quantity of medieval pottery is recorded as having been found.

No previous archaeological work is recorded as having been carried out within the site itself.



Scale 1:5,000

Site location Fig 1

1.4 Objectives and methodology

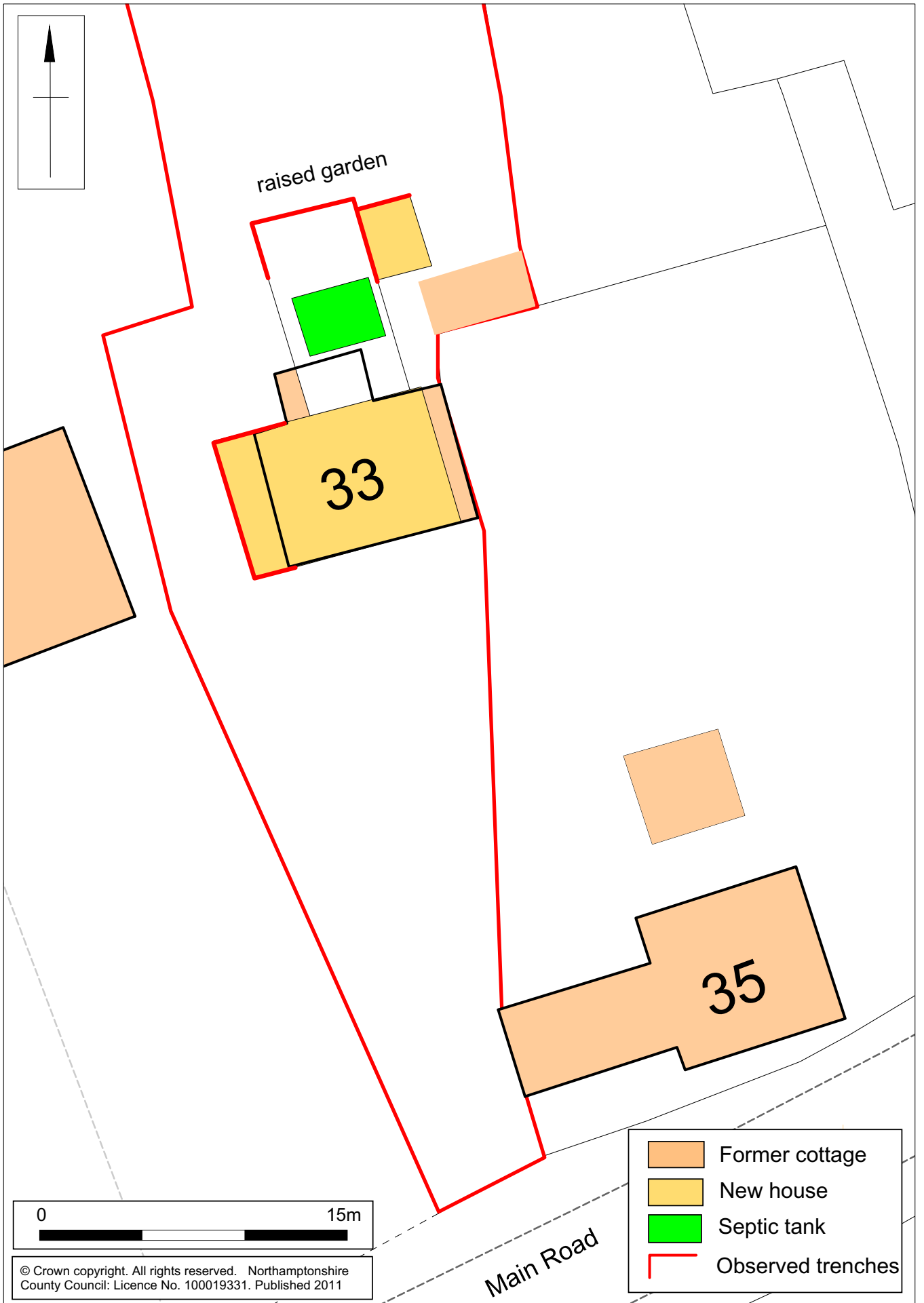
The objectives of the watching brief were to:

- ◆ Identify, investigate and record all archaeological deposits, exposed during the groundworks for the new dwelling and any associated groundworks;
- ◆ Determine and record the date, extent, character, state of preservation and depth of burial of any archaeological deposits;
- ◆ Create a permanent archive and record of the archaeological information collected during the course of the fieldwork and analysis.

Northamptonshire Archaeology was contacted by the developers as groundworks were in hand for the construction of the new dwelling. The former cottage had been demolished and levelled sometime previously.

The fieldwork comprised two visits. The first, on 8 September 2011, was to view the excavation of the foundation trenches for the main range of the new house, which closely respected the footprint of the demolished cottage. The second visit, on 15 September 2011, was to view the excavation of the foundation trenches for the extension at the rear of the new house, which ran onto part of the former garden.

A photographic record was kept in digital format. The written record used Northamptonshire Archaeology pro-forma watching brief sheets. The watching brief was carried out in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (IfA 2008) and the English Heritage procedural document *Management of Research Project in the Historic Environment* (EH 2006).



Scale 1:250

33 Main Road, showing house footprint and observed trenches Fig 2

2 THE WATCHING BRIEF

2.1 Site observation

The main part of the new house, some 10m long by 7m wide, closely follows the footprint of the former cottage. Observation within the foundation trenches of the new house indicated that there had been a cellar under at least the north-western corner of the former cottage, and only the western end of the new house lay beyond the footprint of the former cottage.

The foundation trenches measured 0.6m wide and were, on average, 1.6m deep. West of the former cottage, the natural substratum was encountered at a depth of approximately 0.35m below the present ground surface, although in places the natural was disturbed by ceramic drains associated with the former cottage (Figs 3 & 4). The topsoil had been much disturbed during the demolition and levelling of the former cottage and contained fragments of building material, mainly brick and tile. In addition, there were a few sherds of late post-medieval to recent pottery, spanning the 18th to 20th centuries relating to the occupation of the former cottage. These have been briefly described and discarded.



Excavation of the foundation trench for the west wall of the new main house, looking south, showing natural disturbed by drains, right Fig 3



Foundation trench for new house, looking south-east, showing natural clay, right, and backfilled cellar of former cottage, left Fig 4

To the rear of the new house, there is a narrower extension, 10m long by 5m wide, with a further smaller room to the east.

The southern end of this extension lay over a small extension at the rear of the former cottage. The central part of the extension lay over an area to the north of the former cottage that had contained a septic tank. The tank had been emptied and removed, and the hole backfilled, between the two site visits to observe the digging of the foundation trenches. As a result of these disturbances, only the foundation trenches at the northern end of the extension lay on undisturbed ground within the former garden, where the ground level was at a higher level.



General view of foundation trenches at the northern end of the house extension, looking south Fig 5

Across the northern end of the extension some 0.4m of garden soil had been removed across the entire area prior to the excavation of the foundation trenches, which were 0.60m wide by 1.6m deep. Here, the clay natural comprised light brown clay with light grey clay above (Fig 6). A subsoil layer above this, typically 0.15m thick, comprised limestone chips in a matrix of clean brown to orange-brown sand. Above this there was a further 0.2m of topsoil/garden soil, given a total depth of 0.6m of garden soil.

The clean and sharply defined natural and subsoil layers showed no sign of any cut disturbances and no finds were present in the garden soils across this northern area.



Section in northernmost foundation trench, showing deep topsoil over clean subsoil and natural clay, looking south Fig 6

2.2 The finds by Pat Chapman

Eight ceramic items were recovered from the disturbed topsoil around the demolished cottage. They are described but were not retained.

A sherd of Staffordshire Slipware with a pie-crust edge and a sherd of blue and white transfer-printed pottery with a Chinese design are of 18th-century date. There were four sherds of 19th to early 20th-century mass-produced tableware and the top of a small modern blue vase.

A thin sherd from a red glazed wall tile, stamped with MONOCOTTURA MADE IN ITALY on the back (monocottura meaning single firing), is of 20th century date. A complete white brick is stamped with WHITWICK COLY CO LIMITED BRICKWORK COALVILLE on the inside the broad shallow frog. Coalville Colliery in Leicestershire, which opened in 1824 and closed in 1986, had its own brickworks.

The recovered ceramics are all items of appropriate dates for use in the demolished cottage. No artefacts of an earlier date were present.

3 CONCLUSIONS

Archaeological observation of the excavation of the foundation trenches for the main new house revealed natural clay at a shallow depth and disturbed soils above. To the east the new house overlies the former cottage, where a cellar had removed any earlier deposits that may have existed. To the west the new foundations lay in ground where the only evident disturbance was from drains associated with the former cottage.

To the north, the new extension lies partly over an area where a septic tank would have removed any earlier remains. To the north of this, on part of the former garden, deep topsoil overlay clean subsoil and natural that showed no signs of earlier disturbance. Examination of the disturbed soils produced artefacts and building materials contemporary with the use of the former cottage, which were not retained.

No archaeological deposits or artefacts pre-dating the use of the recently demolished cottage were present. The watching brief was carried out in favourable conditions and the results are considered to be reliable.

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EH 2006 *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment*, English Heritage Procedural Document

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NCC 2011 *Brief for a programme of archaeological observation, investigation, recording, analysis and publication of works at 33 Main Road, Shutlanger, Northamptonshire*, Planning, Northamptonshire County Council

RCHME 1979 *County of Northampton, Archaeological Sites, Volume Two Central* Royal Commission on Historical Monuments England



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