



# Northamptonshire Archaeology

Archaeological Building Recording during a  
Watching brief at 27 High Street, Daventry  
Northamptonshire  
April 2011



## Northamptonshire Archaeology

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Northamptonshire  
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Report 11/138

June 2011



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**QUALITY CONTROL**

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Checked by	J Prentice		29/6/11
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**OASIS REPORT FORM**

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>	
Project title	Archaeological buildings recording during a watching brief at 27 High Street, Daventry, Northamptonshire
Short description	Archaeological watching brief during stripping out at the Grade II-listed 27 High Street, Daventry, enabled records to be made of areas of the east and west walls of the property, revealing a former doorway and a previous stair location. A floored-over cellar was located. All these have been covered over by the refurbishment.
Project type	Building Recording
Previous work	None
Future work	Unknown
Monument type and period	Post-medieval building, Grade II* listed
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>	
County	Northamptonshire
Site address	27 High Street, Daventry, NN11 4BG
Easting	57324
Northing	62503
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>	
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology
Project brief originator	N/A
Project Design originator	Northamptonshire Archaeology
Director/Supervisor	N/A
Project Manager	Iain Soden BA MIfA
Sponsor or funding body	Oasis Dental Care Ltd
<b>PROJECT DATE</b>	
Start date	April 2011
End date	April 2011
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	
Title	Archaeological buildings recording during a watching brief at 27 High Street, Daventry, Northamptonshire
Serial title & volume	Northamptonshire Archaeology Report 11/138
Author(s)	Iain Soden BA MIfA
Page numbers	7
Date	30 June 2011

# Contents

1	INTRODUCTION	1
2	HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	2
3	SCOPE OF RECORDING	4
4	RESULTS	5
5	CONCLUSIONS	6
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	7

## List of Figures

1	Site location
2	1803 Enclosure Map on modern OS base
3	Ground floor plan
4	View of former stairwell in west wall
5	View of blocked doorway in west wall
6	View of plain east wall, interior face (Butt joint to the right)
7	View of former stair location

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL BUILDING RECORDING DURING A WATCHING BRIEF AT  
27 HIGH STREET, DAVENTRY, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE  
APRIL 2011**

*Abstract*

*Archaeological watching brief during stripping out at the Grade II-listed 27 High Street, Daventry, enabled records to be made of areas of the east and west walls of the property, revealing a former doorway and a previous stair location. A floored-over cellar was located. All these have been covered over by the refurbishment.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

Oasis Dental Care Ltd and their agents Rapleys LLP, acting in accordance with Planning Consent and Listed Building Consent for change of use from retail to a dental surgery (DA/2011/0024), have altered the interior of the ground floor of 27 High Street, a Grade II\* Listed Building of the 17th century (NGR: SP 57324 62503; Fig 1). The Conservation Officer of Daventry District Council requested that a condition be applied to the Planning Consent for the alterations. She subsequently approved a Written Scheme of Investigation for the Level 2 recording of any historic interior features during conversion. The watching brief and recording took place during stripping out and alteration before the new interiors for the dental practice were inserted, during April 2011.

The property, facing north, fronts onto the south side of the High Street. West of the property is a narrow pedestrian access to a rear yard, beyond which lies no. 29, while to the east is an adjoining building, no. 25 (Fig 1).

### **1.1 Status**

The property was listed (Grade II\*) in 1953. The following comprises the wording of the official listing ([www.imagesofengland.org.uk](http://www.imagesofengland.org.uk)) - note the reference to the ground floor (author's bold text):

HIGH STREET

5324 (South Side) (See front cover)

No27

SP57621/21,4.12.53.

II\*GV

2.

*Late C17. Ashlar. Machine tiled roof with modern modillioned cornice. 3 storeys, 3 sash windows, projecting full height 1 window bay with hipped tiled roof. Modern shop windows with early C19 modillioned cornices. **Interior of ground floor modernised**, of 1st floor retains C17 oak panelled room. Fine staircase said to run from 1st to 2nd floor. Stone chimneypiece with moulded chamfers, flattened pointed arch, to 1st floor.*

*Listing NGR: SP 57324 62503*

The building also lies in the Daventry Conservation Area (Fig 1).

## 1.2 Previous work

A previous watching brief in the yard to the rear of the property had recorded undated structural elements, including what was probably a bridge over a ditch, pits and a 17th/18th century horticultural trench (Northamptonshire Historic Environment Record 638/0/8, 638/0/9 and 638/0/77).

## 2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The property can be traced on maps back to the late 18th century, and is depicted on historic maps as follows:

### 2.1 1571 Daventry reconstruction

This plan, the work of Dr A E Brown, formerly of Leicester University, purports to show the plot on which no. 27 stands, from the town survey of 1571, the so-called *Dragge-Book*. The building, then a cottage, appears to have stood on a plot occupied by one J Farmer. He also occupied the plot of what became no. 29. The plan is not depicted here, but is published by Brown (1991, fig 8).

## **2.2 1788 High Street Plan (NRO Map 1701)**

This plan, produced for paving the High Street, shows only the nearest frontage of the buildings along the street. However, no. 27 is discernible, occupied by Mr (Samuel) Montgomery. To the west is no. 29, occupied by a Mr Watkins; to the east Mr Deacon. The plan is illustrated by Greenall (1999, 80-81).

## **2.3 1803 Inclosure Map of Daventry (NRO Map)**

This map depicts the building, albeit crudely. It is recognisable and indicated in Fig 2, overlaid on the modern Ordnance Survey base, along with the surrounding contemporary plot layout. It shows that the main property had reached almost its current layout by 1803.

## **2.4 1884 and 1925 Ordnance Survey, 1st and 2nd editions**

Neither of these Ordnance Survey maps show the building in sufficient detail to bridge the divide between the 1803 depiction and that of the modern Ordnance Survey. They are not reproduced here.

## **2.5 Historic documents**

A visit was made to Northamptonshire Record Office to ascertain whether historic documents had survived for the property. Nothing was found based upon the address, but considerable evidence was found for Samuel Montgomery, a gentleman, grocer by trade, and a bailiff of Daventry (d. before 1822). He seems to have flourished from about 1760 and had interests in property across the town and nearby Drayton, although from indexes none of the surviving records is to be readily associated with 27 High Street. They would need to be looked at methodically and in detail to realise any potential, a task beyond the scope of this exercise. Ironically a full deed sequence survives for the adjacent property no. 29, from 1723-1947 (NRO Bu(D)1, which in any future research might provide abuttals for no. 27 as the neighbour during the same period.

### **3 SCOPE OF RECORDING**

#### **3.1 Opportunity and limitations of the evidence**

Three separate visits were made to view the ground floor interior of the building during stripping out for the change of use. As the Listing Description of 1953 indicates, the space had long since been opened up and turned into a shop, with no previous recording known. The entire ground floor was open, except for modern brick piers in modern (1950s onwards) Fletton bricks supporting the first floor on a network of reinforced steel joists (See back cover). The historic ground floor had clearly lost all its internal dividing walls, whether load-bearing or partition. The floor was concrete.

The nature of the change of use meant that the softwood timber framework or dry-lining onto which the former shop interiors were fastened was not taken out. This process had been followed previously in earlier shop-fitting exercises. This left any historic wall surfaces still masked by one or more layers of stud-coverings which remain there in the new layout.

As a result the historic wall surfaces could not be sensibly accessed; these faces were therefore recorded by photographic and written means, since obstructions meant there could be little recourse to drawn elevations.

The new shop interiors were then set out just inside the old stud walls which for the most part needed no new disturbance. The result of this is that the usable interior space has been steadily and incrementally lost to new set-outs, each successive one of which narrows the building internally.

The discovery of a floored-over cellar was perhaps not too surprising, given that many historic properties on Daventry High Street have cellars, such as Hay's Hair Salon, on the north side of the street). This is high ground, well-drained, and on a mercantile street.

The cellar at 27 High Street was partially exposed, measured for the current recording, and re-floored over as unnecessary in the new development plans. It is rubble-filled (Fig 3).



## **4 RESULTS**

### **4.1 The west wall**

Two lengths of the west wall were exposed beneath the former dry-lining. Each measured some 6.5m long and stretched from floor to ceiling (Fig 3).

The more northerly comprised a structure of modern Fletton-type brick with a doorway stopped up in block-work (Fig 4). This comprised a former stair connection to the first floor, now only accessible from the exterior. It is entirely modern.

The southerly exposure uncovered a former wide brick arch for a doorway, which originally opened out into the passageway and yard on the west side (Fig 5). It measures 2m high at the apex x 1.8m across. On the exterior there is no visible evidence of the doorway, having been covered over in modern brickwork and render.

The opening potentially once held double doors, being too wide for an ordinary pedestrian doorway. The brickwork appeared to be of later 18th century date, using bricks smaller than the standard adopted by the brick tax in the 1780s, although they do have a capacity for re-use. The archway had been reduced once before blocking and had subsequently been propped at its northern end, using modern Flettons, reducing its span unevenly by about 300 mm. It seems to have survived in use as an alcove in an earlier shop-interior before being lost from view in the most recent shop-fit. It remains enclosed beneath the new dry-lining of the Dental Surgery.

To the north of the doorway was an area of surviving roughly-coursed ironstone, into which had been keyed modern Fletton brickwork, probably when the adjacent modern stair was introduced.

### **4.2 The east wall**

Approximately 11m of the eastern wall face was exposed for examination, still behind the old dry-lining. The wall was devoid of features and unremarkable, being of rough-coursed ironstone, bonded with lime mortar, plaster-rendered and lime-washed (Fig 6). The portion to the front of the building was an older lime-render, whereas to the rear this changed to a more recent painted, cement-render. The change took place where the line of the east wall changes very slightly and this location is a vertical butt-joint indicative of where a historic rear wing was added before 1803 (from the mapped layout of that year).

Here too an angled plaster-line strongly suggests this was the location of a former stairway to the first floor (Fig 7).

### **4.3 The cellar**

In the western half of the frontage the removal of floor coverings exposed a void spanned by deep pine joists, each measuring 230mm x 80mm on 400mm centres. Full exposure of the void showed it to be an ironstone-built cellar measuring 4.7m north-south x 3.6m east-west (Fig 3). It was filled with modern builders' rubble which appears to have been tipped in through a former central trapdoor between joists (which had not survived). The depth, so far as could be ascertained (at the north-east corner around the rubble), was 1.66m, but it is unclear if this was the floor proper. No physical access was possible. The joists which spanned it had been set onto the cellar walls and then packed out with a mixture of brick and concrete. The cellar, which in terms of size and location related neatly to the former western half of the property frontage, has once more been covered over.

## **5 CONCLUSIONS**

This is a listed 17th century property which has little surviving of its ground floor interiors. Recording has detailed parts of the former shell exterior walls, but almost nothing of any former layout, but for the hitherto forgotten existence of a disused cellar, seemingly of no use to at least the most recent shop. It has been re-floored over.

The layout shows clearly where the old frontage building had a rear wing added, before 1803, and where a probable former stair lay against the east wall. Likewise a former service doorway has been rediscovered in the west wall, which once linked with the yard at the side.

The ground floor contains no historic features which can be seen in the present use, other than the exterior facade.

While a complete stripping out of all the interiors would add further information in the future, it is likely that the previous conversion to a shop some decades ago lost its entire internal layout. The ground floor interior has little to contribute to the historic significance of this Listed Building.

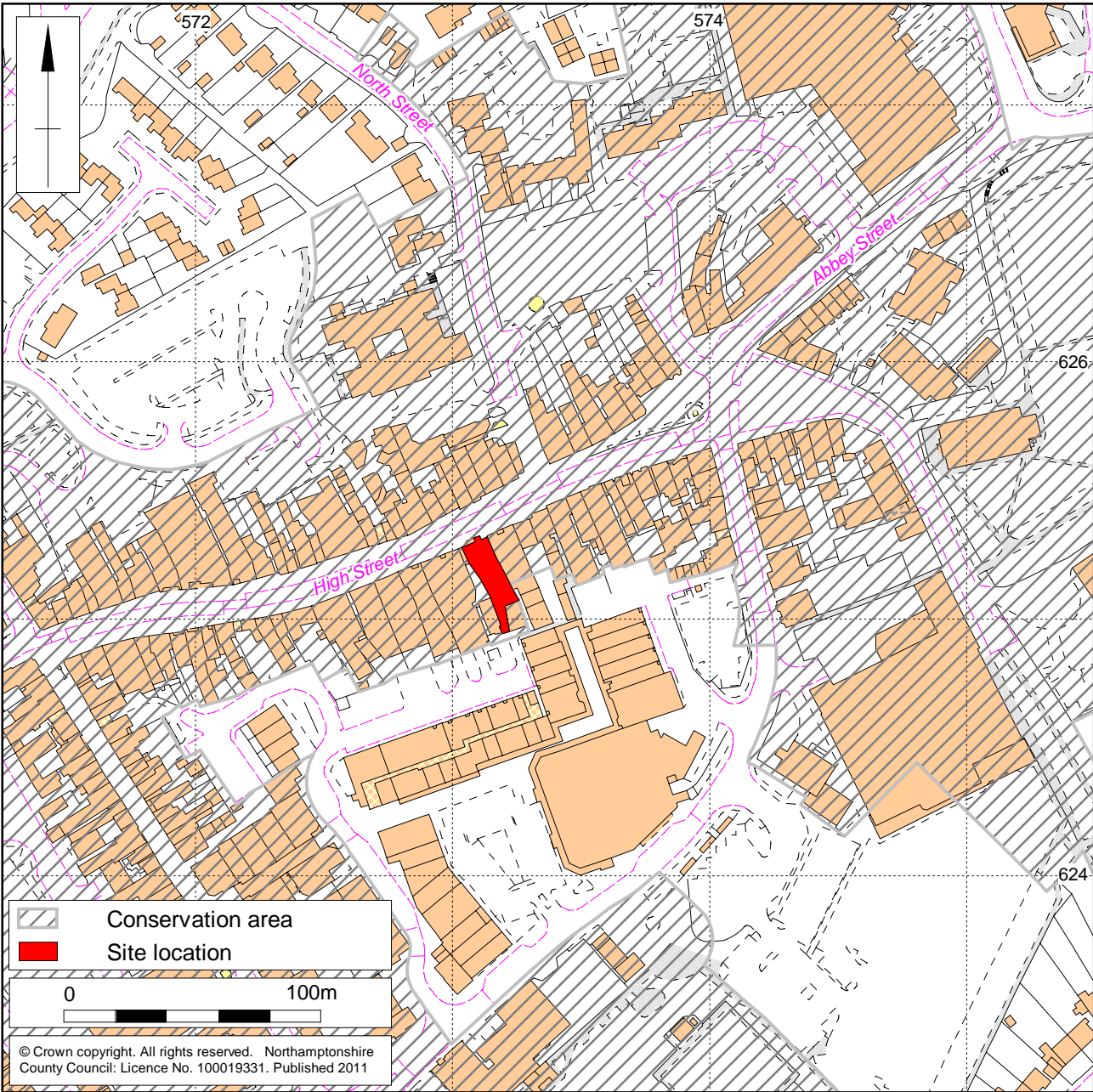
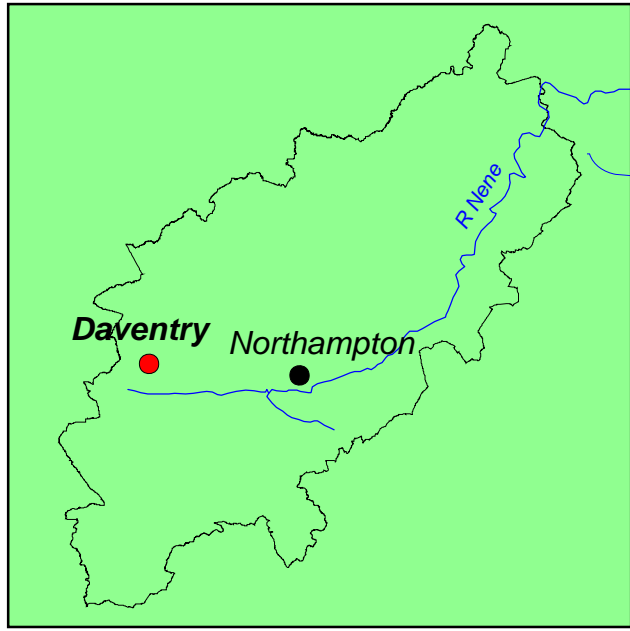
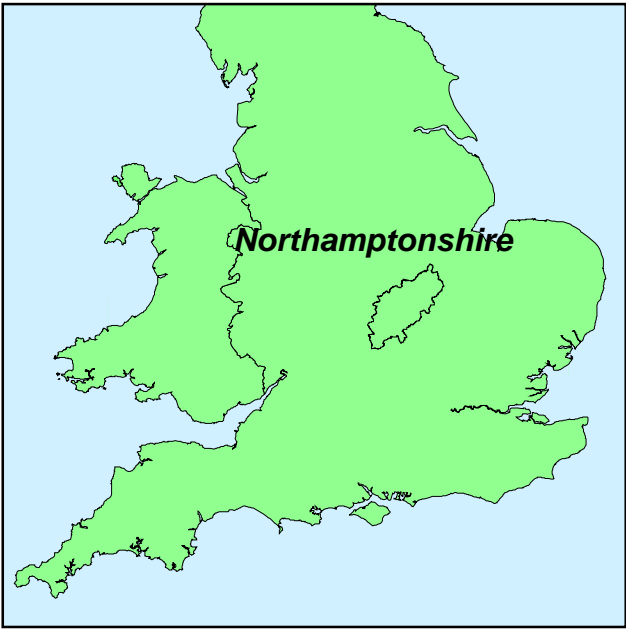
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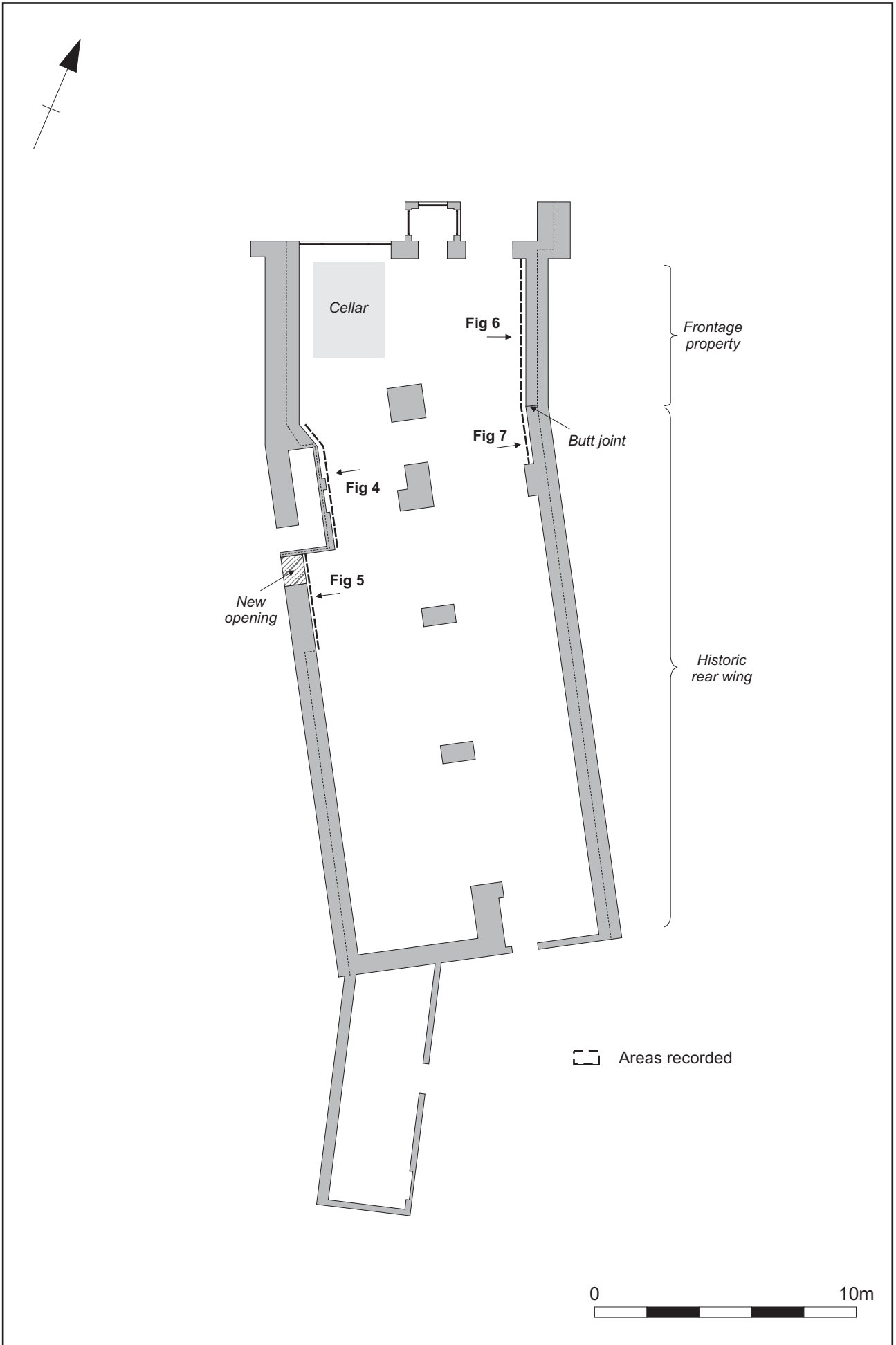
Scale 1:2500 (A4)

Site location Fig 1



Scale 1:1250 (A4)

183 enclosure map on modern OS base Fig 2



Scale 1:200 (A4)

Ground floor plan Fig 3





View of former stairwell in west wall Fig 4



View of blocked doorway in west wall Fig 5



View of plain east wall, interior face. (Butt joint to the right) Fig 6



View of former stair location Fig 7





Northamptonshire County Council

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