



Northamptonshire Archaeology

Archaeological observation, investigation and
recording on land opposite 19 Church Street
Blakesley, Northamptonshire
May 2012



Northamptonshire Archaeology

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Report 12/100

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QUALITY CONTROL

	Print name	Signed	Date
Checked by	Pat Chapman		
Verified and approved by	Andy Chapman		

OASIS REPORT FORM 127465

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project name	Archaeological observation, investigation and recording on land opposite 19 Church Street, Blakesley, Northamptonshire, May 2012	
Short description	Northamptonshire Archaeology undertook observation, investigation and recording on land opposite 19 Church Street, Blakesley, Northamptonshire during May 2012. The work was carried out during the levelling and subsequent foundation excavations for two new houses on the site. No deposits, features or finds of archaeological interest were uncovered during the excavations.	
Project type	Archaeological observation, investigation and recording	
Site status	None	
Previous work	None	
Current land use	Unused	
Future work	None	
Monument type/ period		
Significant finds	None	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Northamptonshire	
Site address	Land opposite 19 Church Street, Blakesley	
Study area	316 sq m	
OS NGR	SP 62775 50700	
Height aOD	c131m above Ordnance Datum	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project brief originator	Liz Mordue, Northamptonshire County Council	
Project Design originator	Steve Parry, Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Director/Supervisor	James Ladocha, Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project Manager	Steve Parry, Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Sponsor or funding body	Mr J Bridgwood	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	30/04/12	
End date	22/05/12	
ARCHIVES	Location:	Content
Physical	Northamptonshire Archaeology archive store	None
Paper		Site monitoring sheets, permatrace plans & sections, site registers, photographic archive, background documents
Digital		Client PDF report
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
Title	Archaeological observation, investigation and recording on land opposite 19 Church Street, Blakesley, Northamptonshire, May 2012	
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Fig 1: Site location

Fig 2: Foundation trench location

Fig 3: Foundation trench section, west house, looking east

Fig 4: Natural substrate exposed during leveling for the east house, looking north-west

Back: East house with foundations built, looking south-west

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATION, INVESTIGATION AND RECORDING ON
LAND OPPOSITE 19 CHURCH STREET, BLAKESLEY
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**

May 2012

Abstract

Northamptonshire Archaeology undertook observation, investigation and recording on land opposite 19 Church Street, Blakesley, Northamptonshire during May 2012. The work was carried out during the levelling and subsequent foundation excavations for two new houses on the site. No deposits, features or finds of archaeological interest were uncovered during the excavations.

1 INTRODUCTION

Northamptonshire Archaeology was commissioned by Mr J Bridgwood to conduct archaeological observation, investigation and recording during the development of two residences on land opposite 19 Church Street, Blakesley, Northamptonshire (Fig 1; NGR SP 62775 50700). The works involved the levelling of the two plots and subsequent excavation of wall footings. The work was undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation produced by Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA 2012) to meet the requirements of the local authority brief, issued by Northamptonshire County Council (Mordue 2012).

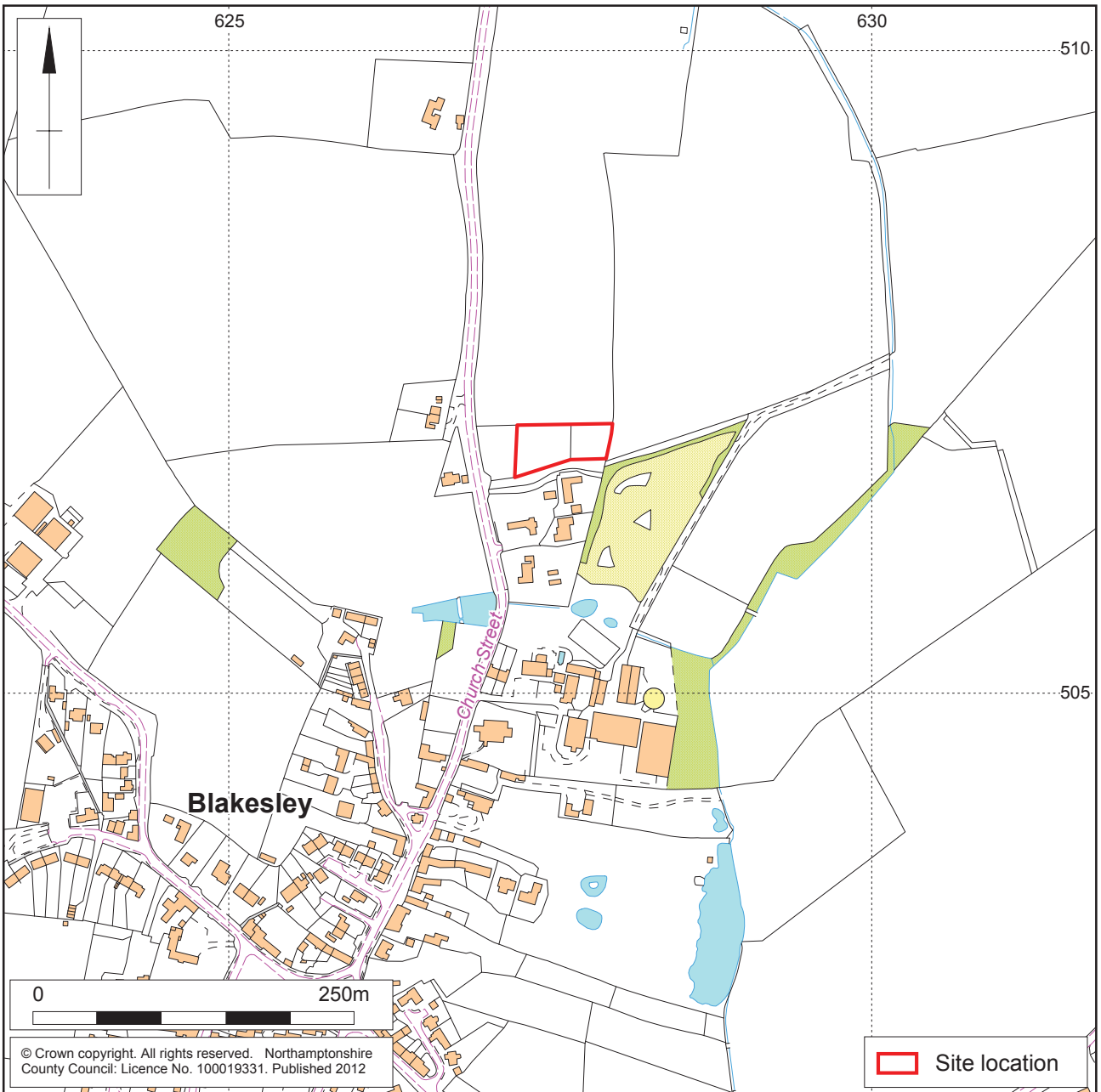
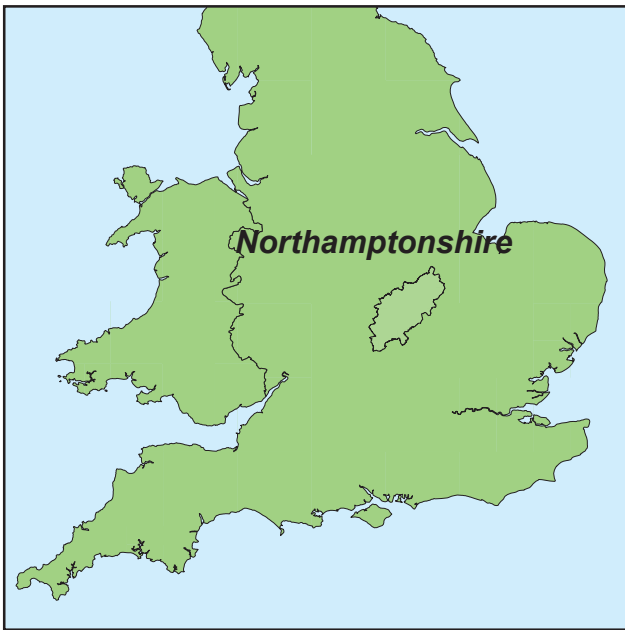
2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Historical background

The village of Blakesley contains some medieval settlement earthworks. These include hollow-ways, which may have formed part of the street pattern, together with fishponds and remains of ridge and furrow at the fringes (RCHME 1982, 13-15). The Royal Commission suggests that Church Street and Collwell Lane, the northern part of which is now a hollow-way, may be the earliest part of the village, with the southern part forming a later extension. Fieldwalking in the southern part of the village identified pottery dating to the twelfth to fourteenth centuries.

2.2 Location, topography and geology

The village lies 7.9km west-north-west of Towcester. The works are located opposite 19 Church Street which extends from The Green northward past the church (Fig 1). The village is situated on the valley side close by the confluence of two streams located to the south and east which form tributaries of the River Tove. The site slopes generally down towards the south but there is also a slight depression running down slope in the centre of the site. The site lies at approximately 131m aOD. The valley side has exposed a succession of geological strata including Upper Lias Clay, Northampton Sand with Ironstone and patches of limestone.



Scale 1:5,000

Site location Fig 1

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the work was to identify any archaeological remains that may be revealed by the development and then determine and understand the nature, function and character of such remains in their cultural and environmental setting. The objectives were established in pursuit of national and regional research agendas (EH 1991; Cooper 2006 and Knight *et al* 2012).

The specific objectives of the observation, investigation and recording, as determined by the Brief (Mordue 2012), were to:

- establish the date, nature and extent of activity or occupation in the development site,
- establish the relationship of any remains found to the surrounding contemporary landscape,
- recover artefacts to assist in the development of type series within the region,
- recover palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions as an intrinsic part of the investigation,
- Create a permanent archive and record of the archaeological information collected during the course of the fieldwork and analysis.

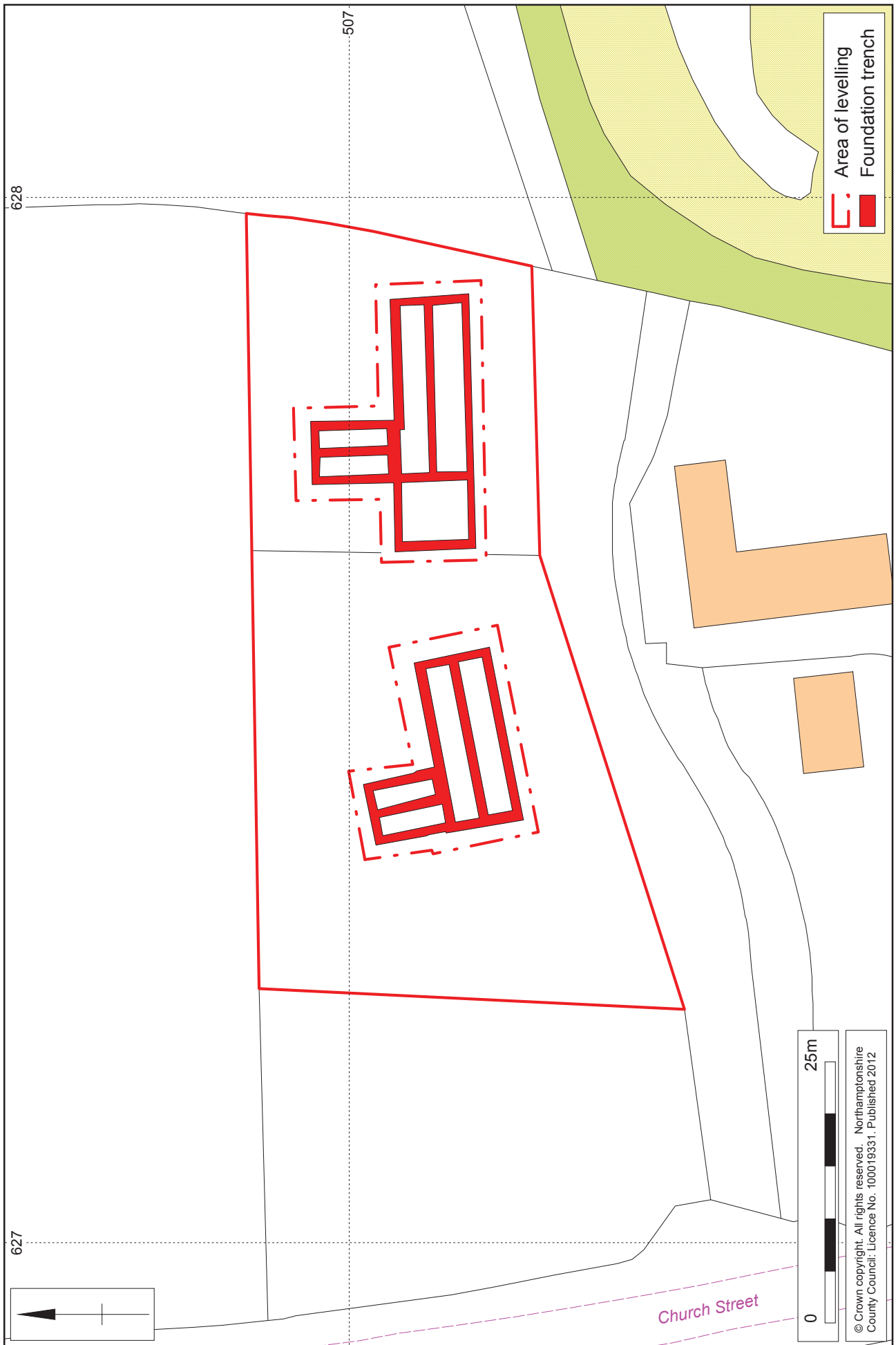
In light of the overall lack of archaeological evidence it was not possible to advance the specific objectives of the project.

4 METHODOLOGY

The site was previously an allotment and the majority of the topsoil had been stripped from the area when the allotment was moved to an adjacent field. This took place over a year prior to the start of the development and vegetation had started to grow on the site again. The vegetation was stripped across the site and the two housing plots (the west and east houses) were reduced to a suitable level. The wall footings were then excavated from this level (Fig 2). All excavations were conducted using a mechanical excavator with a 1.8m bucket for the levelling and a 0.6m bucket for the foundation trenches. The west house had a maximum of 0.6m of material (in the north-west of the plot) removed during levelling and the foundations were 0.65m wide and 0.7m deep in the majority of the trenches. The east house had up to 1.0m of material (in the north-east of the plot) removed during levelling and the foundations were 0.65m wide by, on average, 1.0m deep.

Potential archaeological features and deposits were cleaned using a trowel within the confines of the excavation. All recording on site followed standard Northamptonshire Archaeology recording methods (NA 2011). A full photographic record comprising both 35mm monochrome negatives and colour transparencies was maintained, supplementing digital photographs which form the principal photographic record for the purpose of this report. Scale map plots were produced using mapinfo 8.0 software from Ordnance Survey data and annotated with reference to the *pro-forma* watching brief record sheets. This was supplemented with sketches as necessary. Furthermore, a Leica System 1200 GPS was used to accurately record the position of the excavations.

The archaeological investigation was undertaken in accordance with current best archaeological practice as defined in the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standards and Guidance* (IfA 2008), *Code of Conduct* (IfA 2010) and the procedural documents of English Heritage (EH 1991; 2009).



Scale 1:500 (A4)

Foundation trench location Fig 2

5 OBSERVATION, INVESTIGATION AND RECORDING

The natural substrate was encountered within the majority of the excavations. The exceptions to this were in the south-east and south-west corners of the west and east houses respectively, where it was on the boundary between natural and overlying layer. The natural substrate consisted of a mix of orange sandy clay with ironstone and patches of yellow-orange clay. This was overlain in both house plots by mid greyish orange-brown slightly sandy loam (Fig 3). Apart from occasional thin patches of dark greyish-brown sandy loam topsoil overlying it in the west house, this was the only deposit encountered across the site. It was noticeably quite clean with only occasional small sub-rounded stones and quite frequent root disturbance. In the west house it ranged from 0.6m thick in the west to 0.8m in the east and generally thickened with the slope of the natural substrate. In the east house it was 0.65m in the east and 1.1m in the south-west, and again thickened with the slope of the natural substrate (Fig 4). As the topsoil was removed prior to development it was initially thought that this deposit was subsoil, however due to the thickness and relative cleanness of the layer it is unlikely to be agricultural subsoil. It instead may be more akin to hill wash but this is also problematic as the slope across the site is not very pronounced.



Foundation trench section, west house, looking east Fig 3



Natural substrate exposed during levelling for the east house, looking north-west Fig 4

7 DISCUSSION

The observation, investigation and recording identified no features, deposits or finds of antiquity. The excavations were characterised by the natural substrate overlain by a thick layer of possible hill wash type material. This was the only deposit consistently encountered across the site as the topsoil had been removed prior to development.

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