



Northamptonshire Archaeology

Archaeological observation, investigation and recording
on land at Old School Lane, Blakesley,
Northamptonshire
August 2012



Northamptonshire Archaeology

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QUALITY CONTROL

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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		OASIS No: 133704	
Project title	Archaeological Observation, Investigation and Recording during groundworks on land at Old School Lane, Blakesley, Northamptonshire, August 2012		
Short description	Archaeological observation, investigation, recording, analysis and publication were carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology on land at Old School Lane, Blakesley, Northamptonshire. The excavation revealed a thick layer of topsoil overlying undisturbed subsoil and natural geology No archaeological features were observed and no finds were recorded.		
Project type	Watching Brief		
Previous work	None		
Current land use	Garden		
Future work	Unknown		
Monument type and period	None		
Significant finds	None		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County	Northamptonshire		
Site address	Old School Lane, Blakesley		
Easting Northing	SP623 500		
Area (sq m/ha)	0.032ha		
Height aOD	118mOD		
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA)		
Project brief originator	Northamptonshire County Council Assistant Planning Officer		
Project Design originator	NA		
Director/Supervisor	Jason Clarke (NA)		
Project Manager	Steve Parry (NA)		
Sponsor or funding body	Mr I Bathe		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date	20/08/2012		
End date	20/08/2012		
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Contents	
Physical	NA offices	Site records (1 small archive box)	
Paper			
Digital		Client report PDF	
BIBLIOGRAPHY			
	Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (NA report)		
Title	Archaeological Observation, Investigation and Recording during groundworks on land at Old School Lane, Blakesley, Northamptonshire, August 2012		
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Front Cover: The development area, looking north

Fig 1: Site Location

Fig 2: Area of archaeological inspection

Fig 3: Topsoil and subsoil deposits in the development area, looking south

Fig 4: The excavated development area, looking south-west

Back Cover: The development area

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATION, INVESTIGATION AND RECORDING ON
LAND AT OLD SCHOOL LANE, BLAKESLEY, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
AUGUST 2012**

Abstract

Archaeological observation, investigation and recording were carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology on land at Old School Lane, Blakesley, Northamptonshire. The excavation revealed a thick layer of topsoil overlying undisturbed subsoil and natural geology. No archaeological features were observed and no finds were recorded.

1 INTRODUCTION

An archaeological observation, investigation and recording was carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA) on land at Old School Road, Blakesley, Northamptonshire (NGR SP623 500) The work was commissioned by Mr I Bathe and was undertaken as a condition of planning consent for the construction of a new detached dwelling.

The scope of works was outlined in a brief issued by the Environment and Growth Planning Services, Northamptonshire County Council (NCC 2012) and detailed in the specification prepared by Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA 2012). The objectives of the watching brief were to determine the presence of any archaeological features or deposits within the application area and to date and characterise their extent, depth of burial and state of preservation.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location and geology

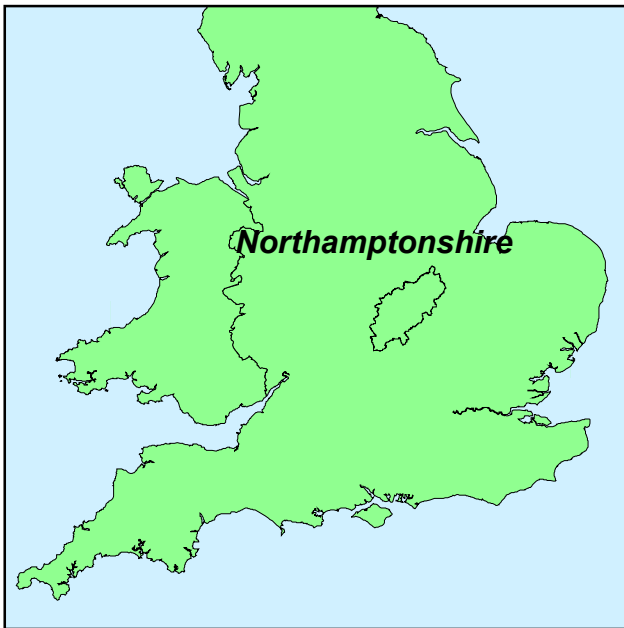
The village of Blakesley lies approximately 8km to the west of Towcester. The development area lies within the village on the north side of Old School Lane at an approximate height of 118.3m aOD.

The underlying geology has been mapped by the British Geological Survey as comprising Whitby Mudstone formation.

2.2 Historical and archaeological background

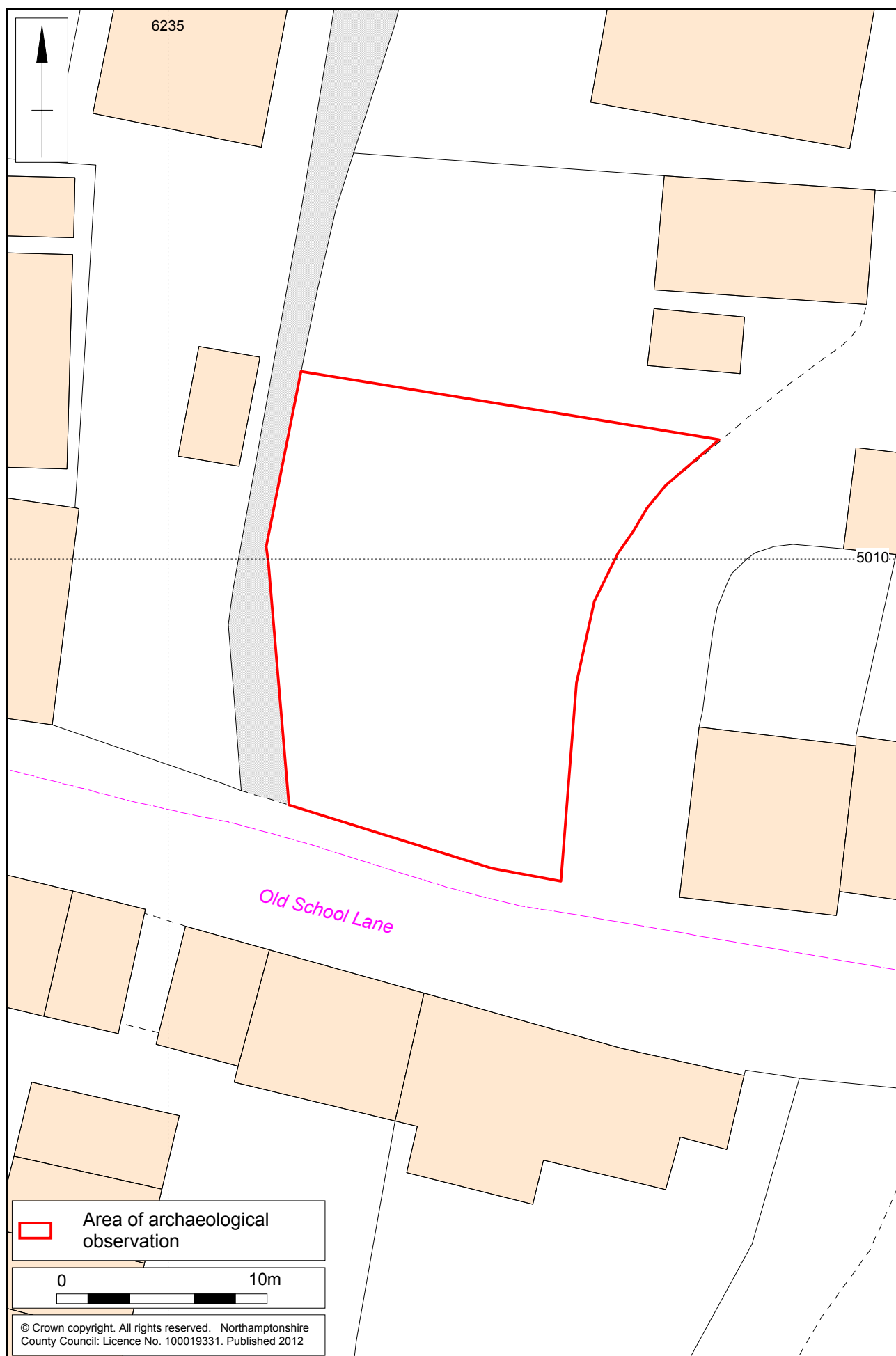
The site lies within an area of archaeological interest and within the historic core of the settlement. The village is mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086AD where it is recorded as *Baculveslea*.

To the south of the site lie earthworks of medieval date, whilst pottery of 12th and 14th century date was found on a vacant plot of land close by on the High Street. To the north lies the parish church of St Mary, the earliest parts of which date to the 13th century with subsequent restoration and rebuilding in 1874 and 1897. The Royal Commission (RCHME 1982) suggests that the earliest part of the settlement may have been situated in the area of Church Street and Collwell Lane.



Scale 1:5000

Site location Fig 1



Scale 1:250

The area of archaeological observation Fig 2

3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

A six-ton mechanical excavator with a flat ditching bucket was used to remove overburden to the required depth for the development. The area was cleaned sufficiently to enable the identification and definition of archaeological features if any had been present.

Recording followed standard NA procedures as described in the *Fieldwork Manual* (NA 2011). Deposits were described on *pro-forma* sheets to include measured and descriptive relationships and interpretation. Photography was with 35mm black and white film and colour slides, supplemented with digital images. Spoil heaps and features were scanned with a metal detector to maximise the recovery of metal objects.

All works were conducted in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (IfA 2010) and *Guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (IfA 1994, revised 2008).

4 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

The maximum depth of the groundworks was 1.00m below the modern ground surface. The underlying geology of clay and mudstones was observed throughout the development area and was overlain by 0.20-0.40m of mid orange-brown sandy clay subsoil, which was overlain by 0.30-0.60m of dark black-brown sandy clay topsoil. No archaeological features were present within the development area and no finds were recovered.



Topsoil and subsoil deposits in the development area, looking south: Fig 3



The excavated development area, looking south-west: Fig 4

5 THE SITE ARCHIVE

The site archive comprises:

RECORD	NUMBER
Watching brief logs	1
Colour slides	10
Black and white contacts and negatives	10
Digital photographs	18

6 DISCUSSION

The archaeological watching brief identified no archaeological features within the development area. Discussions with the former landowner indicates that the development area was the cottage garden to the neighbouring property, and the thick deposit of topsoil was due to soil being imported from a nearby field to improve the growing quality of the soils.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BGS 2001 *Solid geology map, UK South sheet, Scale 1:625,000*, British Geological Survey

IfA 1994 (revised 2008) *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief*, Institute for Archaeologists

IfA 2010 *Code of Conduct*, Institute for Archaeologists

NA 2011 *Archaeological fieldwork manual*, Northamptonshire Archaeology

NA 2012 *Written scheme of investigation for a programme of archaeological observation, investigation, recording, analysis and publication during groundworks on land at Old School Lane, Blakesley, Northamptonshire*, Northamptonshire Archaeology

NCC 2012 *Brief for a programme of archaeological observation, investigation, recording, analysis and publication during groundworks on land at Old School Lane, Blakesley, Northamptonshire*, Northamptonshire County Council Planning

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Websites

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