



Northamptonshire Archaeology

An archaeological watching brief at
Hill Cottage, Potsgrove, Bedfordshire
June 2010



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Northamptonshire
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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		OASIS NO: 143705
Project name	An archaeological watching brief at Hill Cottage, Potsgrove, Bedfordshire.	
Short description	An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology on behalf of CgMs Consulting acting for their client Mr G Perano Esq of Hill Cottage, Potsgrove. The development comprised the excavation of foundation trenches for new rear and side extensions. A disturbed stratigraphy was recorded throughout the area of archaeological observation. No archaeological deposits or artefacts were present.	
Project type	Watching brief	
Site status	None	
Previous work	No	
Current Land use	Private dwelling	
Future work	Not known	
Monument type/ period		
Significant finds		
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Bedfordshire	
Site address	Hill Cottage, Potsgrove, Bedfordshire	
Study area (sq.m or ha)	c10m	
OS Easting & Northing	SP 949 302	
Height OD	153m aOD	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project brief originator	Central Bedfordshire Archaeologists	
Project Design originator	Michael Dawson CgMs Consulting	
Director/Supervisor	David J Leigh	
Project Manager	Steve Parry NA and Michael Dawson	
Sponsor or funding body	CgMs Consulting acting for Mr G Perano Esq	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	June 2010	
End date	June 2010	
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc)
Physical		
Paper	Luton Museum	Watching brief forms (2) Colour slides (6) black and white contact prints (6) Digital photographs (11)
Digital	Ditto	Report text and figures

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**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
AT HILL COTTAGE, POTSGROVE, BEDFORDSHIRE
JUNE 2010**

Abstract

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology on behalf of CgMs Consulting in June 2010 during groundworks for new rear and side extensions at Hill Cottage, Potsgrove, Bedfordshire. The work comprised observation of groundworks during the excavation of foundation trenches.

A disturbed stratigraphy was recorded throughout the area of archaeological observation. No archaeological deposits or artefacts were present.

1 INTRODUCTION

Consent to build new rear and side extensions at Hill Cottage, Potsgrove, Bedfordshire (NGR: SP 949 302; Planning Ref No: CB/10/00202/FULL; Figs 1-3) was granted by Central Bedfordshire Council. This report concerns the archaeological watching brief undertaken during groundworks for the new extensions.

The Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was approved by Martin Oake, Central Bedfordshire Archaeologists on the 16th June 2010. The watching brief was undertaken in June 2010, following the notification of commencement of works to, and with the agreement of, Central Bedfordshire Archaeologists. The work was carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology, on behalf of CgMs Consulting acting for their client Mr G Perano.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

The development area is situated on the northern side of the village of Potsgrove, approximately 6km north-east of Leighton Buzzard. The development area lies in an area of archaeological potential and within or close to the historic core of the village. Potsgrove is recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086AD which suggests that the settlement dates from at least the Late Saxon period.

Approximately 900m to the north-west lies Watling Street, the present A5. The focus of the late medieval settlement (Historic Environment Record No: 16901) lies close-by to the north of the site where Hill Farm (HER No: 5865), which is of 17th century date, presently stands. The settlement lay on a road leading southwards to Church End (HER No: 16881). The parish church of St Mary (HER No: 1099) contains traces of 14th-century masonry, however most of the present building is of 19th century date, the church having been subject to considerable restoration during 1881.

A moated site (HER No: 13) to the south of the church has been identified as corresponding to one of the manors of medieval Potsgrove. Aerial survey has identified a series of cropmarks (HER No: 1822) to the south-west of the site. These include possible closes and the remains of ploughed out ridge and furrow. A complex of

earthworks known as The Hoult (HER No: 37) lie to the north-west of the development area.

Hill Cottage (Her No: 5864) itself is of 17th century date with later additions. No previous archaeological work is recorded as having been carried out within the development area. A desk-based study undertaken at Hill Farm approximately 200m to the north-west suggested that the site was of low archaeological potential.

2.2 Topography and geology

Topographically the site is located on ground sloping down towards the south-west. The footprint of the new extensions has incorporated a small area of the garden (Fig 4).

The underlying geology, mapped by the British Geological Survey of Great Britain, comprises Glacial Till (Clay and Gravels) overlying Woburn Sand Formations (BGS Sheet 220, 1992).

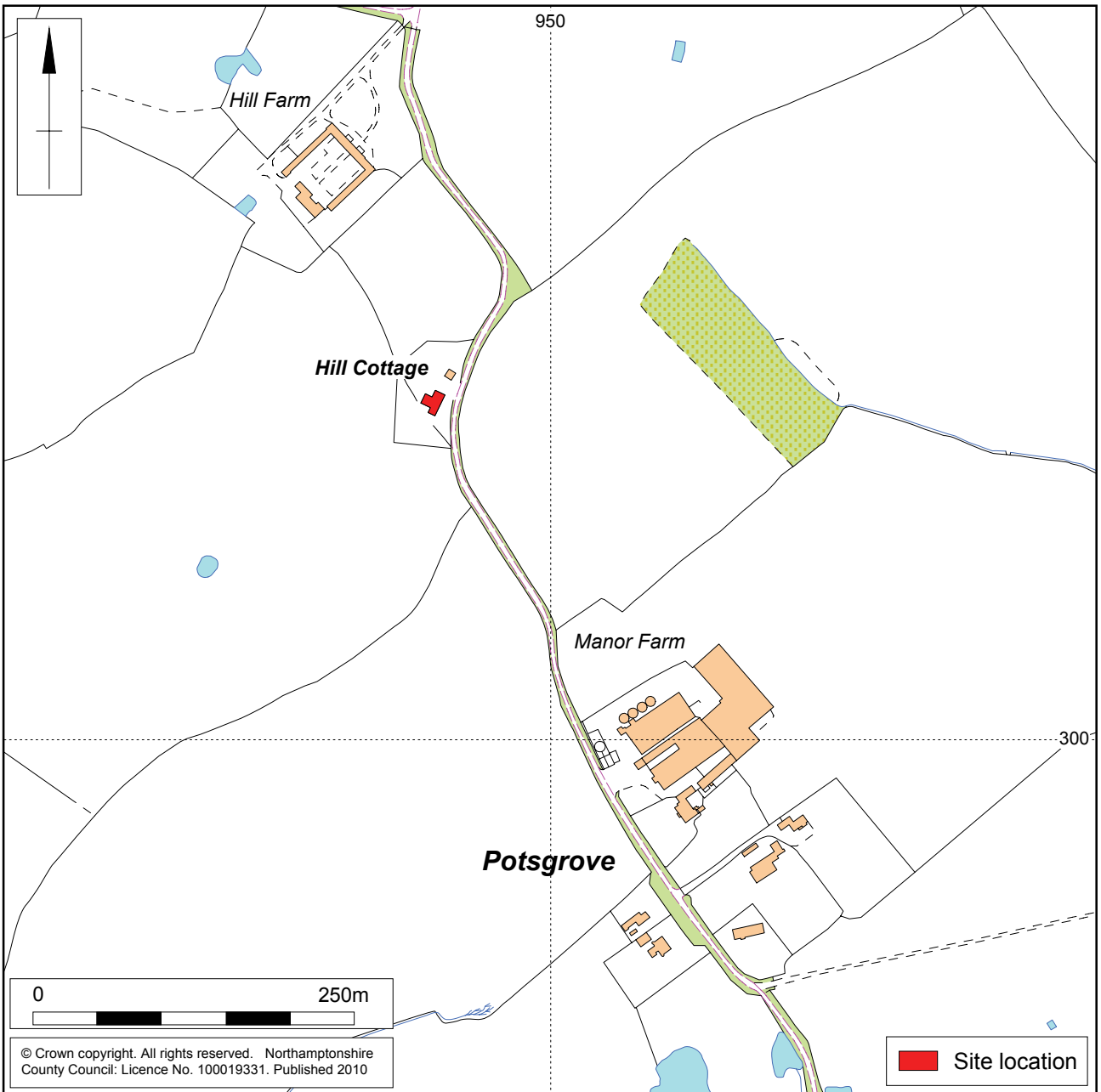
2.3 Objectives

The principal objective of the watching brief was to determine and understand the nature, function and character of any significant archaeological evidence and subsequently to put the site in its cultural and environmental setting.

The specific aims of the project were to:

- Determine whether any significant archaeology is present in the development area;
- Determine the date and character of any evidence at the site;
- obtain a chronological sequence for human activity on the site to place it within its regional context(s);
- Create a permanent archive and record of the archaeological information collected during the course of the fieldwork and post-excavation analysis.

The national framework for research is set out by English Heritage (1997). The Research Aims set out in these documents provided the context for the analysis of results from the watching brief.



Scale 1:5000

Site Location Fig 1



Scale 1:200

Hill Cottage Fig 2

3 THE RESULTS OF THE WATCHING BRIEF

3.1 Methodology

The watching brief was undertaken during two days in June 2010, comprising the observation of foundation trenches for the new extensions. The excavations were carried out using a tracked mini-digger fitted with a 0.70m wide bucket (Fig 5). A photographic record in both black and white negative and colour slide was kept, along with supplementary photographs in digital format. The written record used Northamptonshire Archaeology pro-forma record sheets (NA 2006). The watching brief was carried out in accordance with the IfA's *Standard and guidance for archaeological watching briefs* (2008) and the *Code of conduct* of the Institute for Archaeologists (1985, revised 2008).

The watching brief recorded modern disturbance throughout the area of observation.

3.2 The stratigraphy

The foundation trenches were excavated to a maximum depth of 1.2m. Examination of the trenches during and after excavation revealed a disturbed stratigraphy throughout the area of the new extensions (Fig 6). The natural substratum comprised green-grey compact clay, encountered 0.70m below present ground surface. This was sealed by orange-brown silt loam, up to 0.35m thick containing numerous fragments of modern ceramic building material and fragments of plastic sheeting. A pocket of modern bricks were noted in the south-west corner of the extension footprint. This layer was sealed by grey-brown silt loam garden soil, up to 0.35m thick, containing occasional small fragments of modern ceramic building material.



Hill Cottage, Potsgrove

Fig 3



The development area at the start of groundworks Fig 4



The groundworks in progress Fig 5



The stratigraphic sequence Fig 6

4 DISCUSSION

The watching brief undertaken at Hill Cottage, Potsgrove revealed a disturbed stratigraphy across all of the development area. The nature of the material recorded within the foundations would suggest that this disturbance has taken place relatively recently and is connected with previous alteration works on the building. The area was subsequently landscaped with the laying of topsoil and turf.

The watching brief was carried out in favourable conditions and the results are considered to be reliable.

5 THE ARCHIVE

The watching brief has generated a small archive of photographs and paperwork, which will be deposited with Luton Museum.

Record	Number
Watching brief forms	2
Colour slides	6
Black and white contacts and negatives	6
Digital photographs	11

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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