



Northamptonshire Archaeology

A Programme of Archaeological Observation
Investigation, Recording and Analysis on Land
Adjacent to Ashridge, Desborough Road
Rushton, Northamptonshire



Northamptonshire Archaeology

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QUALITY CONTROL

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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		Oasis No: 154746
Project title	A Programme of Archaeological Observation, Investigation, Recording and Analysis on Land Adjacent to Ashridge, Desborough Road, Rushton, Northamptonshire	
Short description	A programme of archaeological observation, investigation, recording and analysis was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology on land adjacent to Ashridge, Desborough Road, Rushton. One of the test pits encountered a small amount of 20th Century disturbance with the remaining three test pits showing no archaeological features.	
Project type	A programme of archaeological observation, investigation, recording, analysis and reporting	
Site status	None	
Previous work	None	
Current Land use	Garden	
Future work	Unknown	
Monument type/ period	None	
Significant finds	None	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Northamptonshire	
Site address	Ashridge, Desborough Road, Rushton, NN14 1RG	
Study area (sq metres)	100 sq. m	
OS grid reference	SP 8389 8294	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project Design originator	Anthony Maull, (Northamptonshire Archaeology)	
Director/Supervisor	Simon Markus, (Northamptonshire Archaeology)	
Project Manager	Anthony Maull	
Sponsor or funding body	Prestige Design and Build	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	29 May 2013	
End date	29 May 2013	
ARCHIVES	Location:	Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc)
Physical		None
Paper	Northamptonshire Archaeology	Watching brief forms (1) Colour slides (10) black and white contact prints (10) Digital photographs (34)
Digital		Report text and figures
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (NA report)		
Title	A Programme of Archaeological Observation, Investigation, Recording and Analysis on Land Adjacent to Ashridge, Desborough Road, Rushton, Northamptonshire	
Serial title & volume	Northamptonshire Archaeology report 13/123	
Author	Simon Markus	
Date	July 2013	

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Back: General view of site, facing north-east

**A PROGRAMME OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATION, INVESTIGATION
RECORDING AND ANALYSIS ON LAND ADJACENT TO ASHRIDGE
DESBOROUGH ROAD, RUSHTON, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
MAY 2013**

Abstract

A programme of archaeological observation, investigation, recording and analysis was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology on land adjacent to Ashridge, Desborough Road, Rushton. One of the test pits encountered a small amount of 20th-Century disturbance with the remaining three test pits showing no archaeological features.

1 INTRODUCTION

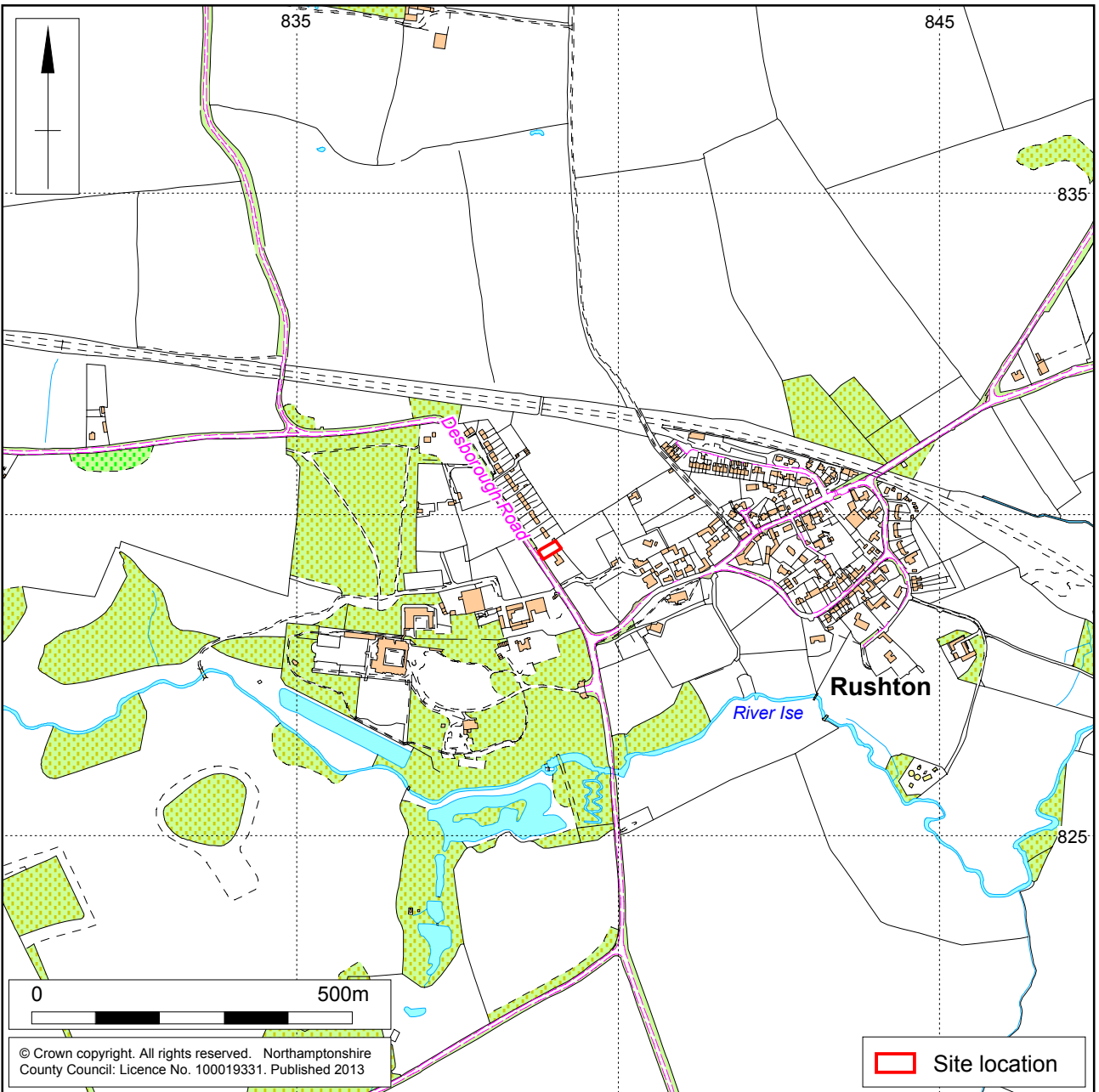
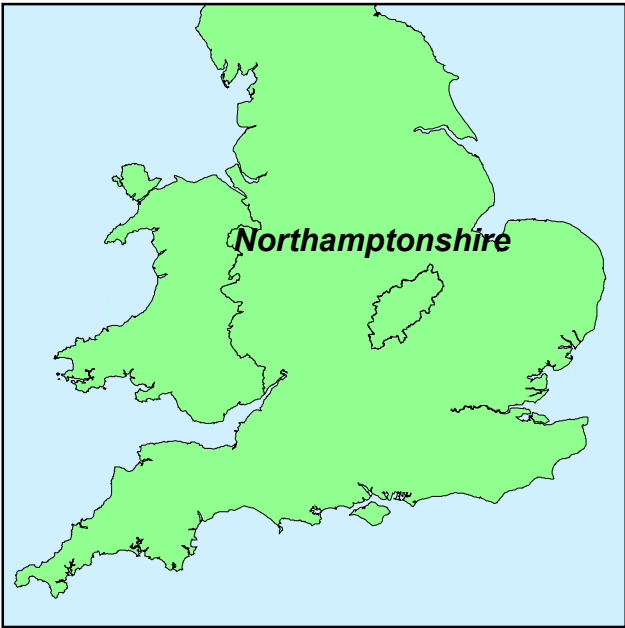
A programme of archaeological observation, investigation and recording was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology on behalf of Prestige Design and Build, on land adjacent to Ashridge, Desborough Road, Rushton, Northamptonshire (NGR SP 8389 8294: Figs 1 and 2). The work was carried out following the procedural document MoRPHE issued by English Heritage (EH 2006) along with the appropriate national standards and guidelines, as recommended by the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA 2008) and the National Planning Policy Framework (2012). Work followed a *Written Scheme of Investigation* produced by Northamptonshire Archaeology (Maull 2013).

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location and topography

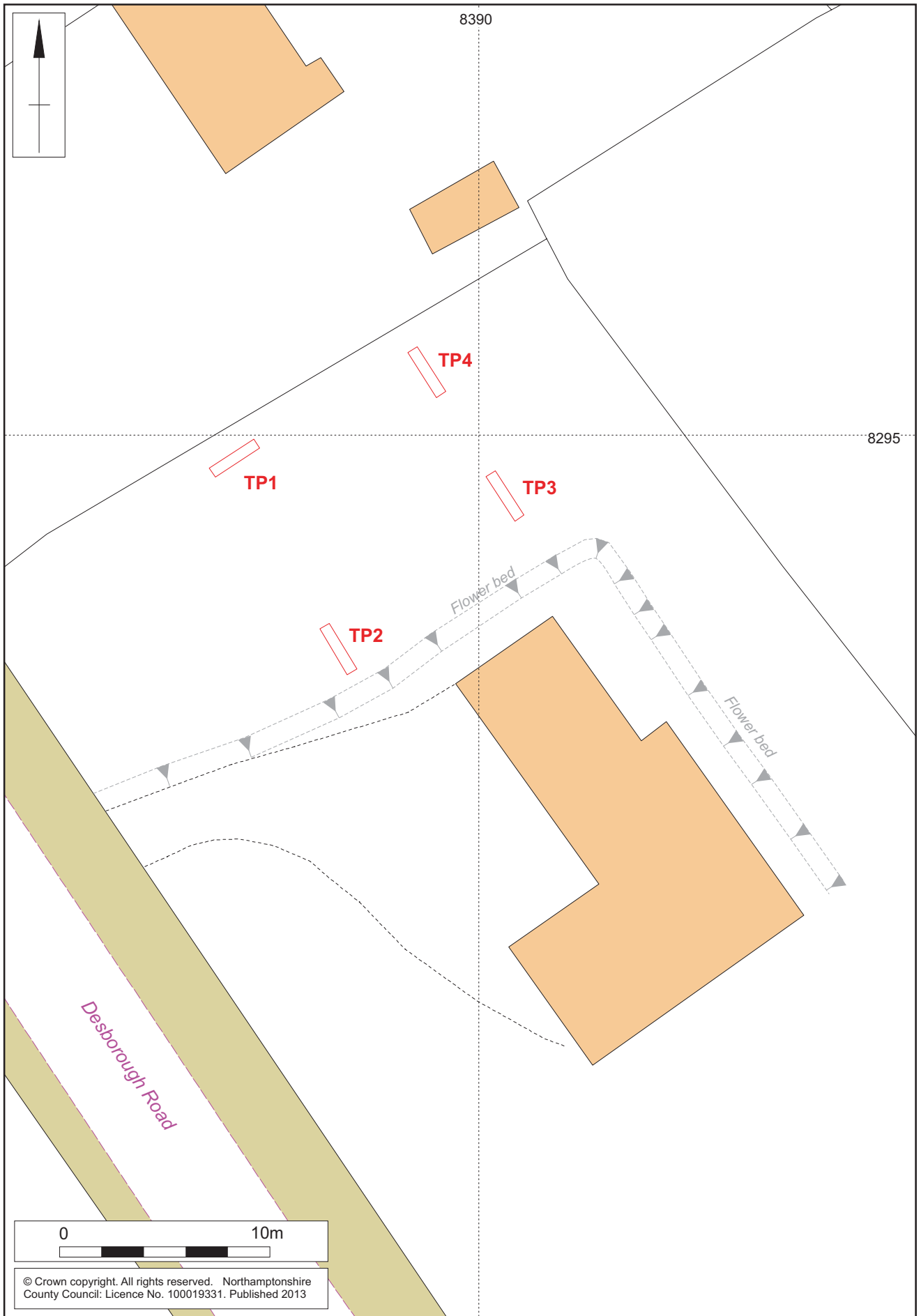
The village of Rushton lies in the central part of the county within undulating countryside. The development area lies north-west of the village, bounded by Desborough Road to the west.

The site is situated on ground at a height of c100m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) with the River Ise to the south. The underlying geology has been mapped by the British Geological Survey as lying close to the junction of the Lower Lincolnshire Limestone and mudstones and Siltstones of the Grantham Formation (BGS 2013).



Scale 1:10,000

Site location Fig 1



Scale 1:250

The excavated test pits Fig 2

2.2 Historical background

The site lies north-west of the historic settlement of Rushton All Saints and east of the deserted medieval village of Rushton St Peters.

A number of prehistoric and undated cropmarks are known within the vicinity of the site and include HER 5877 and HER 5332. An unstratified, Neolithic find (HER 5795/0/0) is recorded in a field approximately 125m north-east of the proposed development site.

The Roman period is evidenced by a site located approximately 0.5km to the north-east of Rushton. Archaeological investigation by Northamptonshire Archaeology (Carlyle *et al* 2010) on a major infrastructure project on behalf of Anglian Water Services along the route of the Empinham to Hannington Pipeline located a Roman site at NGR: SP 8476 8308. Geophysical survey had detected a number of archaeological features within the easement and in evaluated areas either side of the easement (Butler *et al* 2008), including a Roman enclosure and driveway. A Roman villa is known to lie to the west at Whitegates Farm (HER 3961); the bathhouse is situated in the adjacent field. The settlement remains identified by the geophysical survey are probably associated with the villa estate and its Iron Age predecessor.

The enclosure was sub-rectangular in plan and measured 21m by c 16m, which upon excavation measured 2.6m wide by 0.8m deep and contained Roman pottery and animal bone.

The Royal Commission volume for Central Northamptonshire describes that during the medieval period the parish comprised a number of separate settlements (RCHME 1979). This included the former settlements of Glendon (SP 847814) and Barford (SP 853828), both now deserted. The modern village of Rushton is, in fact, composed of two former settlements, Rushton St Peter and Rushton All Saints, both lying on the north bank of the River Ise.

The Royal Commission describes the deserted medieval village of Rushton St. Peter as situated within the grounds of the present Rushton Hall (HER 3969/2). The village is listed in the Domesday Book together with Rushton All Saints. However, nothing now remains of the village of Rushton St Peter or its church (HER 3969/1), having been extensively landscaped over a number of years for the gardens of the Hall. The Royal Commission does however describe the remains of a Holloway, measuring approximately 10m wide by 0.25m deep north of the present entrance to the park, which was suggested as being remnants of the Eastern end of the main street.

Extensive village earthworks (HER 3962/0/1), formerly part of Rushton All Saints have been recorded by the Royal Commission are concentrated around the existing All Saints Church on the south side of the existing village street (RCHME 1979). The remains comprise a number of denuded earthworks, and include remains of former closes and fishponds (HER 3962/011 and 3962/012).

3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

In order to examine the archaeological resource within the proposed development area the objectives of the investigation are to:

- Identify, investigate and record all archaeological deposits exposed during the groundworks associated with the construction of the house;
- 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.

Further objectives include:

- Establishing the relationship of any remains found to the surrounding contemporary landscapes;
- Recovering artefacts to assist in the development of type series within the region;
- Recovering palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions as an intrinsic part of the investigation.

Four test pits were cut within the building footprint; these were 0.40m wide and 3m long. The test pits were machine stripped under continual archaeological supervision (Fig 2).

The character, composition and general depositional sequence of stratification was recorded on *pro-forma* Northamptonshire Archaeology watching brief sheets in accordance with the *Fieldwork Manual* (NA 2011).

A photographic record was maintained, consisting of digital and 35mm monochrome images. A plan of the trench locations was created at a scale of 1:100, and representative sections were drawn at a scale of 1:10.

All records were compiled during fieldwork into a comprehensive site archive in accordance with best practise (EH 2009; IfA 2008).

4 THE RECORDED EVIDENCE

A consistent stratigraphic sequence was recorded in all four of the test pits excavated. The natural substratum (104) was encountered at a depth of approximately 0.32m – 0.37m below present ground level and comprised orange clayey-sand, grey-blue compact clay, and light grey mudstone. This was overlain by subsoil deposits (103) of mid orangey-brown silty clay with large lumps of sandstone/mudstone 0.20m – 0.25m thick, and topsoil (101) consisting of dark brown clay loam 0.12m thick.

Within test pit 1, a layer of light grey clay with large lumps of mudstone (102) was present between the subsoil and topsoil.

No further archaeological remains were present.



Test Pit 1 section, facing north-west Fig 3

5 CONCLUSIONS

The light grey clay and mudstone layer (102) which was only detected in test pit 1 is likely linked to the construction of the house adjacent to the area of excavation in the 20th century. As the landscape around the house constructed adjacent to the site has been cut away, it is likely that this material was off cast from this process, levelled at the top end of the investigation area.

As no artefacts were recovered from any of the test pits, and no features were detected, it is unlikely that any of the archaeological activity noted around the site extends within the investigation area.

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