



# Northamptonshire Archaeology

Archaeological watching brief on land at  
The Old School, Main Road, Avon Dassett  
Warwickshire  
May - June 2011



## Northamptonshire Archaeology

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Northamptonshire  
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Report 13/121

July 2013



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**QUALITY CONTROL**

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**OASIS REPORT FORM**

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>		<b>OASIS No 154756</b>	
Project name	An archaeological watching brief on land at The Old School, Main Road, Avon Dassett, Warwickshire		
Short description	An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology, on behalf of Richard MacAngus Architectural Design acting for their client Mr J Runnicles, between May and June 2011 during groundworks for a new detached garage and single storey extension on land at The Old School, Main Road, Avon Dassett, Warwickshire. Modern disturbance was recorded throughout the investigation area. No pre-modern archaeological deposits or artefacts were present.		
Project type	Watching brief		
Site status	None		
Previous work	None		
Current Land use	Domestic garden		
Future work	Unknown		
Monument type/ period			
Significant finds			
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>			
County	Warwickshire		
Site address	The Old School, Main Road, Avon Dassett		
Study area (sq metres)	15m		
OS Easting & Northing	SP 411 501		
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>			
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology		
Project brief originator	The Planning Archaeologist, Warwickshire County Council		
Project Design originator	Northamptonshire Archaeology		
Director/Supervisor	David J Leigh		
Project Manager	Anthony Maull		
Sponsor or funding body	Richard MacAngus Architectural Design acting on behalf of Mr James Runnicles		
<b>PROJECT DATE</b>			
Start date	May 2011		
End date	June 2011		
<b>ARCHIVES</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc)</b>	
Physical			
Paper	Warwickshire Museums	Watching brief forms (3) Colour slides (6) black and white contact prints (6) Digital photographs (23)	
Digital		Report text and figures	
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>			
	Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (NA report)		
Title	An archaeological watching brief on land at The Old School, Main Road, Avon Dassett, Warwickshire, May – June 2011		
Serial title & volume	Northamptonshire Archaeology report 13/121		
Author	David J Leigh		
Date	July 2013		

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**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF  
ON LAND AT  
THE OLD SCHOOL, MAIN ROAD, AVON DASSETT  
WARWICKSHIRE  
MAY – JUNE 2011**

*Abstract*

*An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology, on behalf of Richard Mac Angus Architectural Design on behalf of their client Mr J Runnicles, between May and June 2011 during groundworks connected with the construction of a new detached garage and a single storey extension on land at The Old School, Main Road, Avon Dassett, Warwickshire. Modern disturbance was recorded throughout the investigation area. No pre-modern archaeological deposits or artefacts were present.*

**1 INTRODUCTION**

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology between May and June 2011 during groundworks connected with the construction of a new detached garage and single storey extension on land at The Old School, Main Road, Avon Dassett, Warwickshire (NGR SP 411 501; Figs 1, 2 and 3). The work was undertaken on behalf of Richard MacAngus Architectural Design acting for their client Mr J Runnicles and was carried out following a request for an archaeological watching brief by the Planning Archaeologist, Warwickshire County Council in a brief for archaeological work issued 11 March 2011 (Stocks 2011).

It adhered to Planning Policy Statement 5, subsequently superseded by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2012) and followed a Written Scheme of Investigation produced by Northamptonshire Archaeology (Leigh 2011) and 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).

## **2 BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Location and topography**

Avon Dasset is situated on the south-western slopes of the Dasset Hills within the county of Warwickshire. The development area lies on relatively level ground fronting directly onto Main Road. The northern half of the garden lying at a slightly higher level than the southern half. Up to the present application the site has been in use as an area of the domestic garden belonging to The Old School.

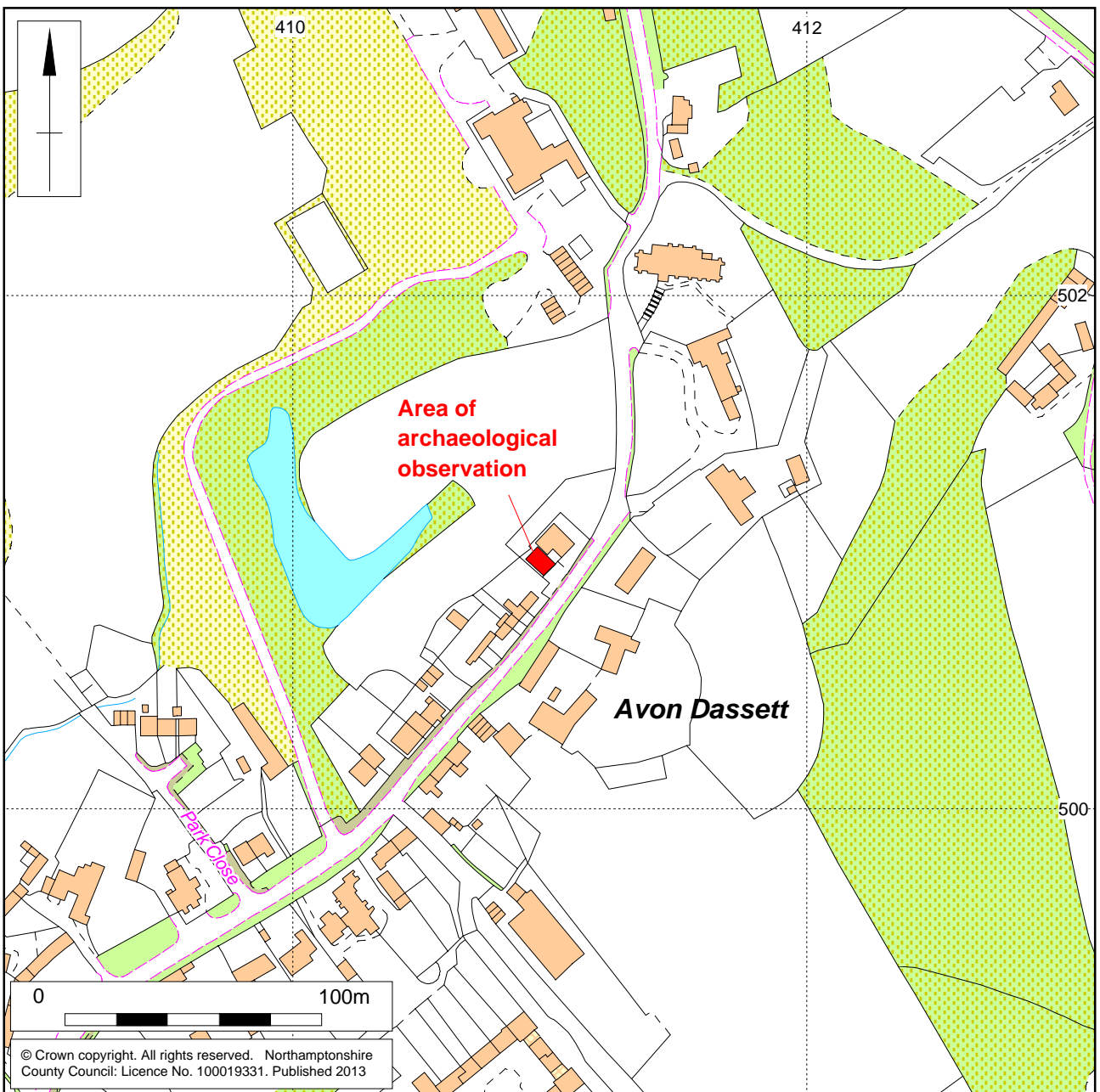
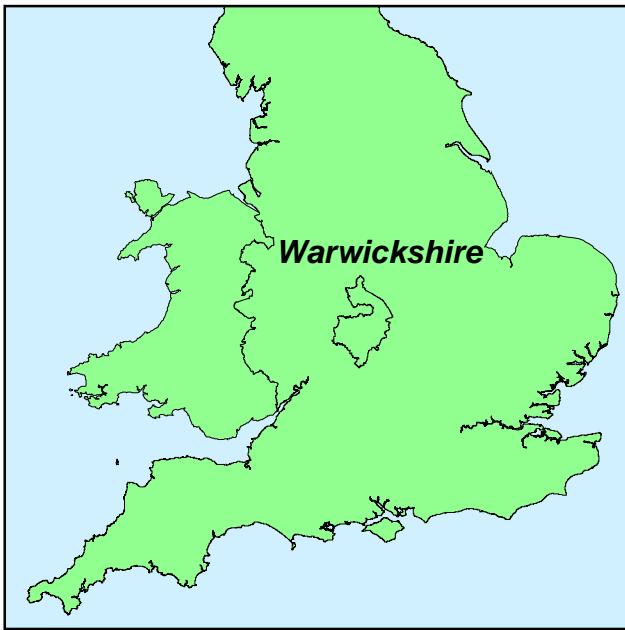
The underlying geology has been mapped by the British Geological Survey of Great Britain as comprising part of the Lias Group (BGS Geindex: <http://www.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex>).

### **2.2 Historical background**

The site lies within the village of Avon Dasset and within an area of archaeological interest. The village is mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086AD where it is recorded as *Derceto*. The remains of the medieval village of Avon Dasset lies close by to the south of the site (Warwickshire Historic Environment Record No: MWA 8949).

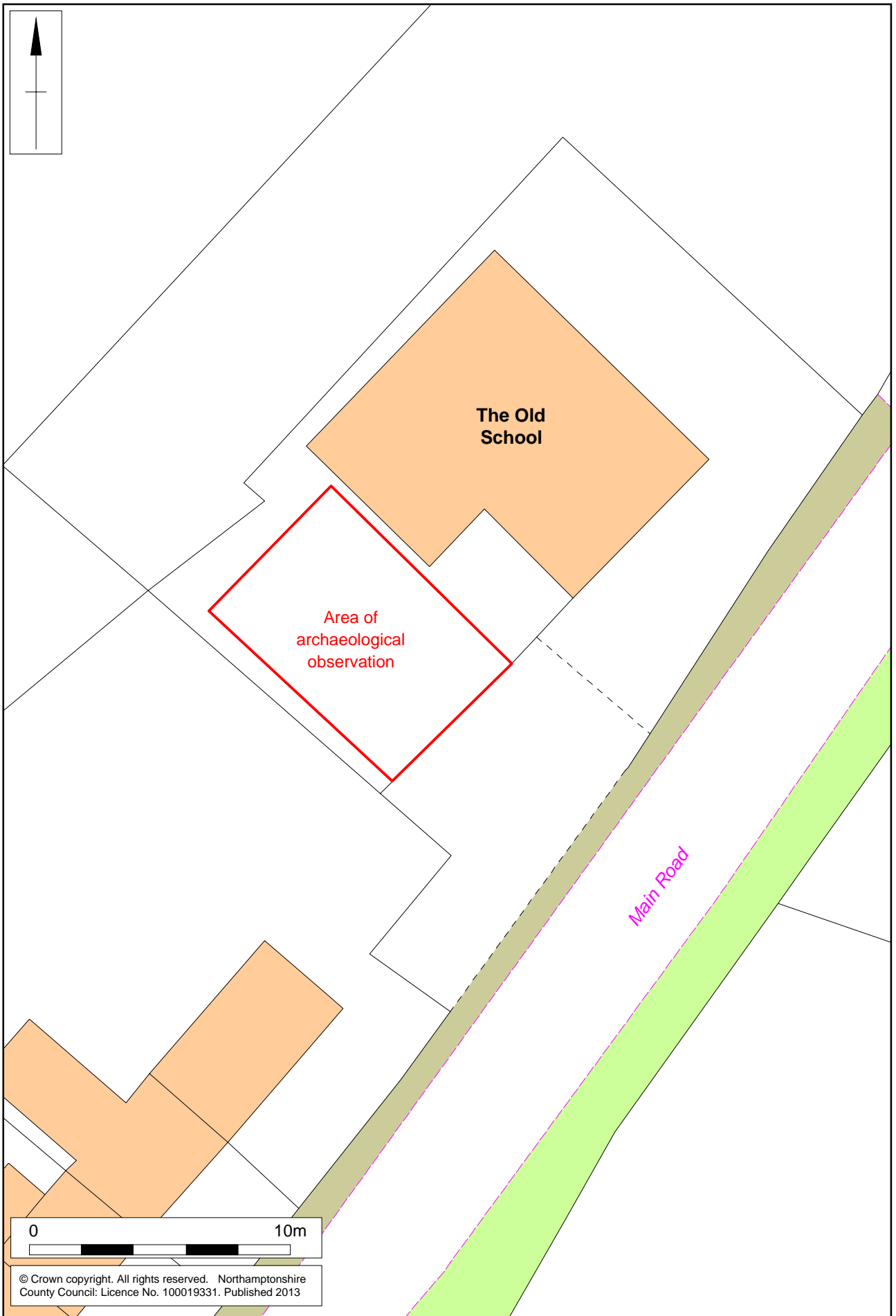
Avon Dasset, held by three theigns prior to the Norman Conquest, was held in 1086 by the Count of Meulan (VCH 1949). The Domesday Book also mentions a priest, implying that the village had a church here by the 11th century, although the oldest stonework found dates to the 12th century, much of the rest being 14th century. The old church was pulled down in 1868 and rebuilt, the present church, which is a Grade II Listed Building, reusing some of the old fabric (VCH 1949; MWA 670). On a hill above the church lies the site of a windmill, which may be a successor to one mentioned in the 13th century (Warwickshire Sites and Monuments Record MWA 671). The development area lies within the probable extent of the medieval settlement of Avon Dasset, the likely extent of which was taken from the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey map (MWA 8949). The parish was enclosed in 1779.

No previous archaeological work is recorded as having been carried out within the investigation area. The present building dates from 1875 and was in use as a school house up to 1938.



Scale 1:2500

Site location Fig 1



Scale 1:200

Area of archaeological observation Fig 2



### 3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The aims of the archaeological investigation were to:

- ◆ Observe the groundworks for the new detached garage and single storey extension and to record all archaeological deposits uncovered;
- ◆ Determine the date, character, state of preservation and depth of any archaeological deposits observed and to retrieve all datable artefacts;
- ◆ Create a permanent archive and record of the archaeological information collected during the course of the fieldwork and analysis.

A photographic record in both black and white negative and colour slide was kept, with supplementary photographs in digital format. The written record used Northamptonshire Archaeology pro-forma sheets (NA 2011). The watching brief was carried out in accordance with the *Standards and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (IfA 2008).

The fieldwork was undertaken between May and June 2011 during groundworks for the new garage and extension. The groundworks were carried out using a 360° mini excavator fitted with a combination of toothed and toothless buckets. The works comprised the removal of up to 1.30m of soil for a new garage and extension followed by the excavation of strip foundations.



The Old School, looking north-west Fig 3



The groundworks in progress, looking west from Main Road Fig 4

#### 4 THE RECORDED EVIDENCE

The natural substratum was encountered at a depth of approximately 0.30m below present ground level in the southern half of the investigation area and comprised mid-pale grey-brown sandy clay. This was overlain by slightly paler grey-brown coarse sandy loam, up to 0.25m thick, containing occasional small fragments of modern ceramic building material and stone chippings. Sealing this was a turf layer up to 0.05m thick.

Towards the north, in the area where the garden sat at a higher level, the natural substratum was encountered approximately 0.95m below present ground level. This was overlain by grey-brown sandy loam, up to 0.40m thick containing occasional small fragments of modern ceramic building material and small irregular stones. Sealing this was dark grey-brown sandy loam, up to 0.40m thick, containing numerous large fragments of unworked stone and fragments of modern ceramic building material and concrete. This in turn was sealed by grey-black sandy loam topsoil/turf, up to 0.15m thick, containing occasional small fragments of ceramic building material.

No archaeological deposits or artefacts were present.



The stratigraphic sequence in the southern half of the site Fig 5



The stratigraphic sequence in the northern half of the site Fig 6

## 5 THE SITE ARCHIVE

The project has generated a small archive comprising:

RECORD	NUMBER
Watching brief forms	3
Colour slides	6
Black and white contacts and negatives	6
Digital photographs	23

The project archive will be consolidated and prepared for deposition with Warwickshire Museums.

## 6 CONCLUSIONS

Modern disturbance was noted throughout the investigation area. Evidence of modern ground make-up was noted in the northern half of the site.

No pre-modern archaeological deposits or artefacts were present. The archaeological investigation was carried out in favourable circumstances and the results are considered to be reliable.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- BGS 2009 <http://www.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex/home.html> British Geological Survey website
- EH 2006 *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment*, English Heritage procedural document
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