



Northamptonshire Archaeology

An archaeological watching brief on land
at The Old Woodyard,
Weldon, Northamptonshire
November 2010



Northamptonshire Archaeology

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Report 11/42

February 2011



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QUALITY CONTROL

| | Print name | Signed | Date |
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| Approved by | Andy Chapman | | |

OASIS REPORT FORM

| PROJECT DETAILS | | |
|---------------------------|--|--|
| Project name | An archaeological watching brief on land at The Old Woodyard, Weldon, Northamptonshire. | |
| Short description | An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during groundworks connected with the construction of a new dwelling with garage on land at The Old Woodyard, Weldon, Northamptonshire. Modern disturbance was recorded throughout the investigation area. No archaeological deposits or artefacts were present. | |
| Project type | Watching Brief | |
| Site status | None | |
| Previous work | None | |
| Current Land use | Former woodyard | |
| Future work | Unknown | |
| Monument type/ period | None | |
| Significant finds | None | |
| PROJECT LOCATION | | |
| County | Northamptonshire | |
| Site address | The Old Woodyard, Weldon, Northamptonshire | |
| Study area (ha) | 0.5ha | |
| OS Easting & Northing | SP 929 824 | |
| Height OD | | |
| PROJECT CREATORS | | |
| Organisation | Northamptonshire Archaeology | |
| Project brief originator | North Northamptonshire County Council | |
| Project Design originator | David J Leigh, Northamptonshire Archaeology | |
| Director/Supervisor | David J Leigh | |
| Project Manager | Dr William A Boismier, Northamptonshire Archaeology | |
| Sponsor or funding body | Mr D Moffett | |
| PROJECT DATE | | |
| Start date | November 2010 | |
| End date | November 2010 | |
| ARCHIVES | Location (Accession no.) | Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc) |
| Physical | | |
| Paper | | Watching brief forms (3) Colour slides (23) black and white contact prints (23) Digital photographs (23) |
| Digital | | Report text and figures |

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**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF ON LAND AT
THE OLD WOODYARD,
WELDON, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
NOVEMBER 2010**

Abstract

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology in December 2010 during groundworks for the construction of a new dwelling with garage on land at The Old Woodyard, Weldon, Northamptonshire. Modern disturbance was noted throughout the investigation area. No archaeological deposits or artefacts were present.

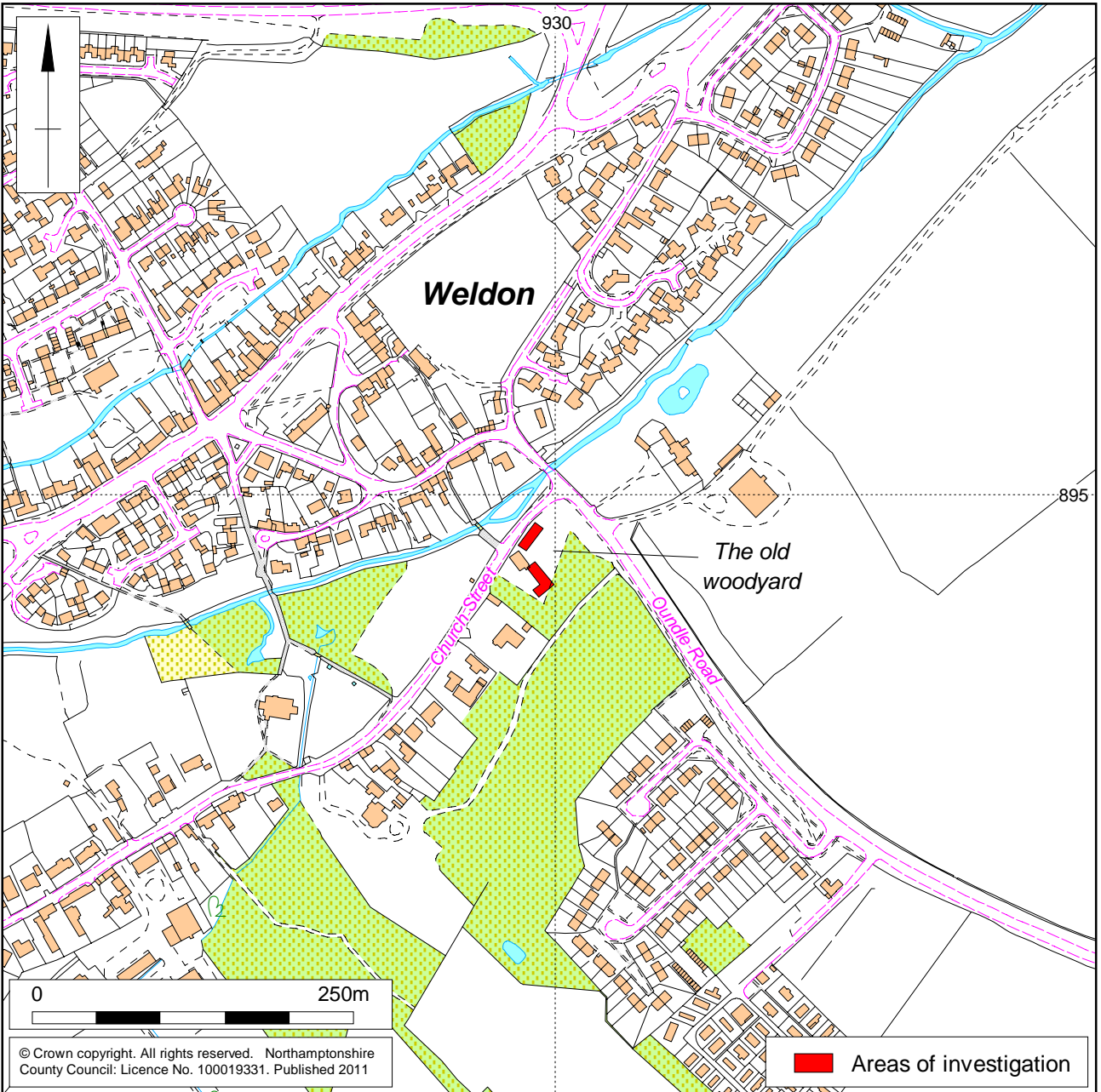
1 INTRODUCTION

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology in December 2010 during groundworks for the construction of a new dwelling with garage on land at The Old Woodyard, Weldon, Northamptonshire (NGR SP 929 894; Figs 1 and 3). The work was carried out on behalf of Mr D Moffett and followed a specification produced by Northamptonshire Archaeology (Leigh 2010). It adhered to the procedural document MoRPHE issued by English Heritage (EH 2006) and the appropriate national standards and guidelines, as recommended by the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA 2008).

2 BACKGROUND

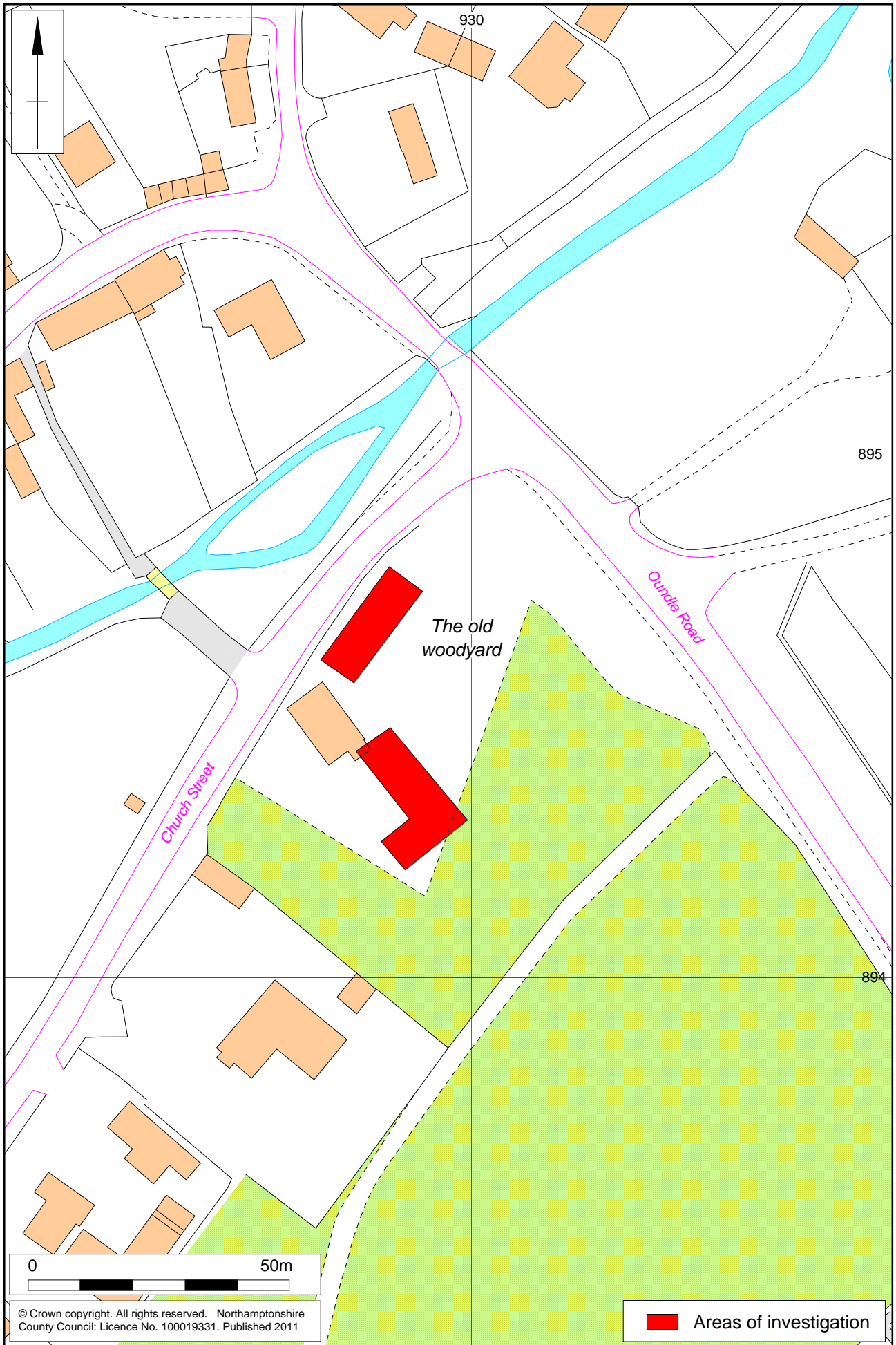
2.1 Location and topography

The development area is located on the south-eastern edge of the village of Weldon approximately 3km to the east of Corby. The land rises steeply up towards the rear of the plot, where a number of mature trees are situated. It encompasses an area approximately 0.5ha and is situated at the junction of Church Street and Oundle Road. The underlying geology has been mapped by the British Geological Survey of Great Britain as comprising Lower Lincolnshire Limestone, and the overlying soils close to the boundary of the Hanslope and Ragdale Series.



Scale 1:5000

Site location Fig 1



Scale 1:1000

Area of archaeological observation Fig 2

2.2 Historical background

The development lies within an area of archaeological interest on the south-eastern edge of the village of Weldon. Weldon comprises two villages Great Weldon and Little Weldon.

Weldon Roman villa (Scheduled Ancient Monument No: 105) lies approximately 450m to the north of the development area. There are also records of Bronze Age activity, Iron Age occupation and pagan Anglo-Saxon burials within the village.

Both Great Weldon and Little Weldon have Saxon origins, both being recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086AD. The name Weldon means 'hill with a spring' (Steane 1974, 58) and accurately describes the location of St Mary's Church, Great Weldon. Radiocarbon dating of ironworking waste in Rockingham Forest area suggests that the industry may have been one of the most significant nationally from the middle/late Saxon until the early medieval period. Both documentary and archaeological evidence exists for medieval ironworking within Great Weldon.

A significant centre for stone working was also located in Weldon during the mediaeval and post-mediaeval periods. Weldon Freestone (Lincolnshire Oolite Series) was used for repairs to Rockingham Castle in the reign of Edward I and was also used in the construction of Gonville and Caius College Cambridge and other buildings in the town. The quarries at Weldon were mentioned by Leland in the 17th century (Vellacott 1906, 293-8).

Great Weldon was the site of a medieval fair and, for a short time during the 17th century, a market. Both Great Weldon and Little Weldon contain a number of standing buildings dated to the 16th to 18th centuries. Within the village an unusual circular stone lock-up is located on the green. This is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM No: 99) and has been dated to around 1600AD.

An archaeological excavation undertaken on land to the north of the development area in 2001 revealed a medieval house, along with iron smelting slag and part of a smelting furnace (Thorne 2003).

Up to the present application the site, having ceased to be a functioning woodyard some years ago, has remained undeveloped and is currently covered in light vegetation with a number of trees. No previous archaeological work is recorded as having been carried out within the development area.



The development area at the start of groundworks, looking north-west Fig 3

3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The aims of the watching brief were to:

- ◆ Observe the groundworks connected with the construction of the new dwelling and garage 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.

The fieldwork comprised visits to the site during ground reduction works within the footprint of the new dwelling, garage and access (Figs 2 and 4). The groundworks were carried out using a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless grading bucket.

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. The watching brief was carried out in accordance with the standards and guidelines for an archaeological watching brief (IfA 2008).



General view of the development area during groundworks, looking north-west Fig 4

4 THE RECORDED EVIDENCE

The natural substratum was encountered approximately 0.30m below present ground level and comprised pale grey-brown limestone slabs. This was overlain by mid grey-brown silt loam topsoil, up to 0.30m thick, containing occasional irregular stones and numerous small fragments of modern ceramic building material and fragments of plastic and numerous fragments of corroded metal objects.



The groundworks in progress, looking north-east Fig 5

5 THE SITE ARCHIVE

The project has generated a small archive comprising:

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

6 CONCLUSIONS

Evidence obtained during the course of the watching brief clearly indicates that the areas of archaeological investigation within the development area have been subject to relatively modern truncation. This is most likely to have occurred during the period when the woodyard was in operation.

No groundworks were undertaken at the rear of the development area where several mature trees are situated, therefore it is unclear if modern truncation extends into this area of the site

The watching brief was undertaken 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

IfA 2008 *Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief*, Institute for Archaeologists

Leigh, D J, 2010 *A Specification for a Programme of Archaeological Monitoring, Investigation and Recording on land at The Old Woodyard, Weldon, Northamptonshire* Northamptonshire Archaeology Project Design

Thorne, A 2003 *A medieval tenement at Dene End, Weldon, Northamptonshire*, *Northamptonshire Archaeology* **31**, 105-123



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