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# Northamptonshire Archaeology

**A Watching Brief  
at  
County Hall, George Row  
Northampton**

June 2006



Simon Carlyle

June 2006

Report 06/97

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**QUALITY CONTROL**

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Approved by	S Parry		

# OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project title	Watching Brief at County Hall, George Row, Northampton	
Short description (250 words maximum)	A watching brief was carried out at County Hall, George Row, Northampton. The work was carried out during the excavation of two postholes in the paved area in front of County Hall, which were dug to receive the sockets for two flagpoles. Due to the small size of the excavations, no archaeological features could be identified, although deposits beneath the pavement sub-base may be of archaeological interest.	
Project type (e.g. desk-based, field evaluation etc)	Watching brief	
Previous work (reference to organisation or SMR numbers etc)	None	
Future work (yes, no, unknown)	None	
Monument type and period	None	
Significant finds (artefact type and period)	None	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Northamptonshire	
Site address (including postcode)	County Hall, Northampton NN1	
Easting (use numerical 100km grid square no.)	47544	
Northing	26041	
Height OD	c 75m	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA)	
Project brief originator	None	
Project design originator	None	
Director/Supervisor	Simon Carlyle NA	
Project Manager	Steve Parry NA	
Sponsor or funding body	Northamptonshire County Council	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	6 <sup>th</sup> June 2006	
End date	6 <sup>th</sup> June 2006	
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Content
Physical	n/a	None
Paper		1 watching brief records 9 supporting records 6 B&W negative frames
Digital	n/a	6 images
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (NA report)		
Title	Watching Brief at County Hall, George Row, Northampton	
Serial title & volume	06/97	
Author(s)	Simon Carlyle	
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**Fig 1** Site Location

**Fig 2** Location of flagpoles

# **A WATCHING BRIEF AT COUNTY HALL, GEORGE ROW NORTHAMPTON**

**JUNE 2006**

## ***Abstract***

*A watching brief was carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology at County Hall, George Row, Northampton. The work was carried out during the excavation of two postholes in the paved area in front of County Hall, which were dug to receive the sockets for two flagpoles. Due to the small size of the excavations, no archaeological features could be identified, although deposits beneath the pavement sub-base may be of archaeological interest.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

A watching brief was carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA) during the excavation of two hand-dug postholes, which were dug to receive the sockets for two flagpoles to be raised outside County Hall, George Row, Northampton (site centred on NGR SP 7544 6041; Fig 1). The work was commissioned by Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) and was undertaken on the 6<sup>th</sup> June 2006. The aim of the watching brief was to monitor the excavation of the postholes and to identify and record any archaeological remains encountered during groundworks.

The two postholes were located in a level, paved area to the east of the front entrance to County Hall (Fig 2). The underlying solid geology in the area is of Jurassic age and comprises Northamptonshire Sands of the Inferior Oolite Group (BGS 1980, Sheet 185). The site lies at *c* 75m aOD.

## **2 METHODOLOGY**

The location of the flagpoles was determined by NCC and the postholes for the flagpole sockets were hand-excavated by NCC sub-contractors.

Details of each posthole were recorded on *pro-forma* sheets and a photographic record was made of the work, using both 35mm black and white negative film and digital images.

All works were carried out accordance with the IFA *Code of Conduct* (1995, revised 2000) and the *Standards and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (Institute of Field Archaeologists 1994, revised 2001). All procedures complied with the Northamptonshire County Council Health and Safety provisions and Northamptonshire Archaeology Health and Safety at Work Guidelines.

### 3 EXCAVATION RESULTS

The postholes measured approximately 0.45m long by 0.35m wide by 0.80m deep. Due to the small size of the postholes, it was only possible to record the deposits they cut through; it was not possible to identify archaeological features. The depths of deposits below ground level are given in the table below.

*Table 1: Depth of deposits below ground level*

Posthole 1		Posthole 2	
Context no.	Depth below ground level (m)	Context no.	Depth below ground level (m)
101	0	105	0
102	0.07	106	0.07
103	0.15	107	0.16
104	0.73	108	0.48
Base	0.84	Base	0.80

At the base of Posthole 1 there was a light to mid brown slightly silty sand (104), which was at least 0.14m thick, with frequent angular to sub-angular ironstone pebbles. Overlying this deposit there was a mid to dark brown silty sand (103), up to 0.58m thick, with similar frequent inclusions, including several small ironstone cobbles. The boundary between these two deposits sloped to the west, suggesting that (103) may be the fill of a cut feature in the underlying deposit. Sealing (103) was a layer of mid to dark brown silty sand (102), which was 0.08m thick and formed the sub-base for the limestone flagstones of the modern pavement.

The earliest deposit encountered in Posthole 2 was at least 0.32m thick and comprised reddish brown silty sand (108) with moderate ironstone pebbles. Overlying this was a deposit (107) comparable to (103), which was 0.32m thick, through which ran a corroded cast iron pipe with a diameter of c 0.04m. This deposit was sealed by the sub-base (106) and flagstones (105) of the modern pavement.

### 4 DISCUSSION

Due to the small size of the excavations, the watching brief was unable to identify any archaeological features, although the excavated deposits beneath the pavement sub-base may be of archaeological interest. The sloping boundary between the two deposits in the base of Posthole 1 may indicate the presence of a cut feature, such as a pit or ditch, although this cannot be confirmed. No evidence was recovered to date the deposits, although the depth of the deposits and their location suggest that they may be associated with the later post-medieval and modern development of the Sessions House and County Hall buildings.

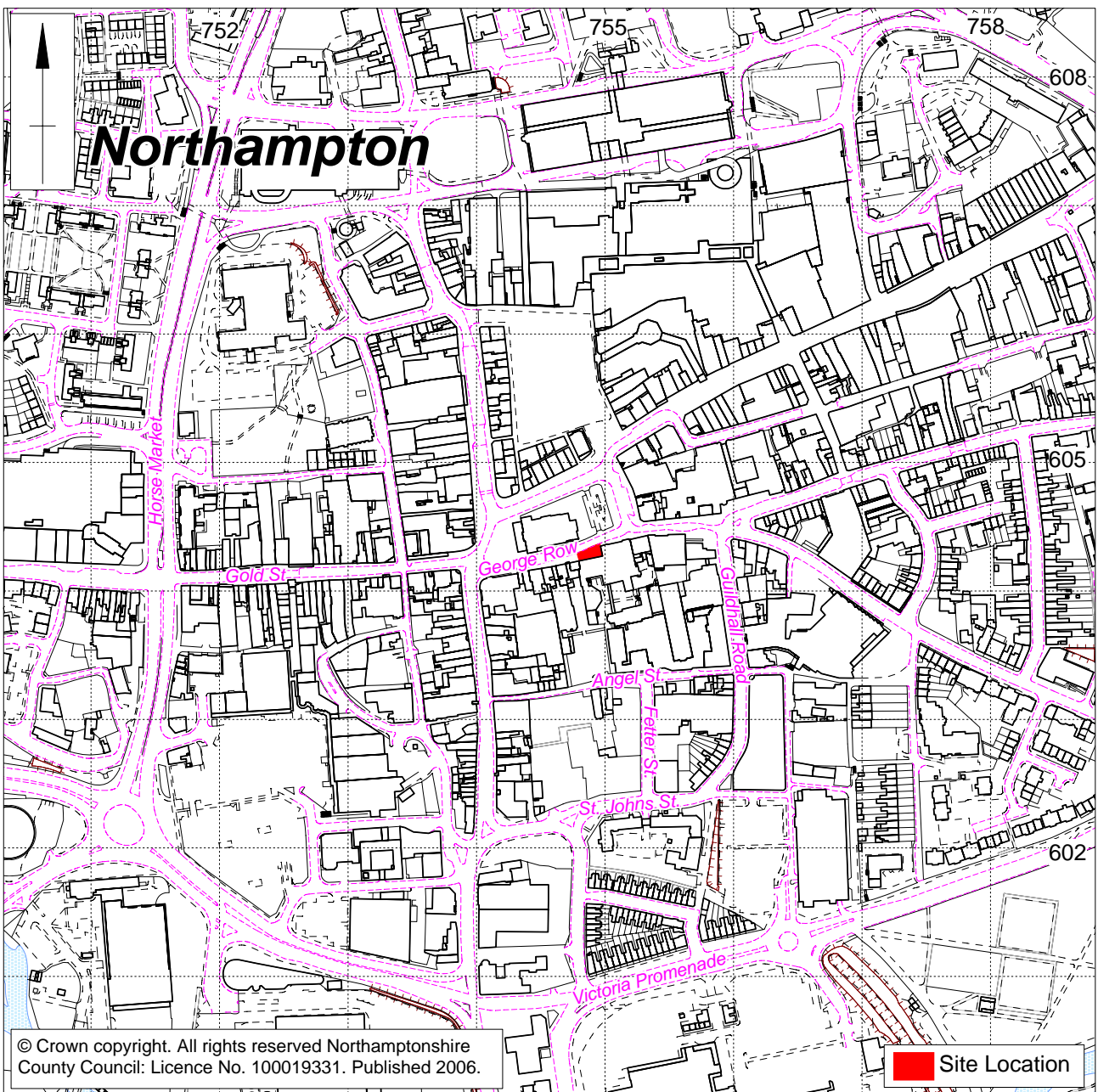
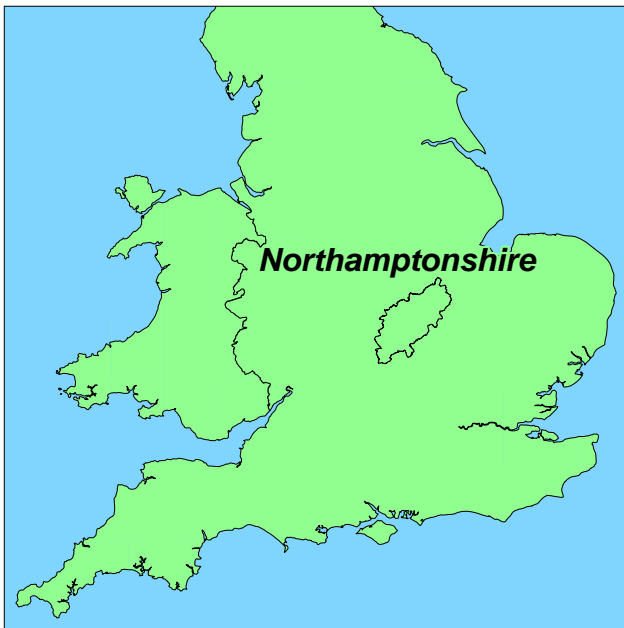
## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

IFA 1994 *Standards and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief*, revised 2001, Institute of Field Archaeologists

IFA 1995 *Code of Conduct*, revised 2000, Institute of Field Archaeologists

## **Maps**

BGS 1980, *Solid and Drift Geology*, Sheet 185, British Geological Survey, 1: 50,000

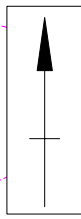


Scale 1:5000

Site Location Fig 1



Scale 1:500



Flagpole Locations  
Fig 2

