

Northamptonshire Archaeology

An Archaeological Watching Brief at
Grange Park, Desborough
January 2007



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Report 07/13

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QUALITY CONTROL

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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project title	Watching brief at Grange Park, Desborough	
Short description	A watching brief during the initial stages of development was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology. Extensive areas of the site had been quarried for ironstone in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, so only undisturbed areas were investigated. Observation concentrated on the west side of the development close to the general location of a Saxon cemetery discovered before 1757. However, no archaeological features or artefacts were found during the present work.	
Project type	Watching Brief	
Previous work	None	
Future work	No	
Monument type and period	None	
Significant finds	None	
Project location		
County	Northamptonshire	
Site address	Land at Grange Park, Desborough, Kettering, Northants	
Easting	7990	
Northing	8400	
Height OD		
Project creators		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project brief originator	Northamptonshire Senior Planning Archaeologist	
Project Design originator	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Director/Supervisor	Chris Jones	
Project Manager	Joe Prentice	
Sponsor or funding body	Magnetic Park Partnership	
Project date		
Start date	January 2007	
End date	February 2007	
Archives	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc)
Physical		None
Paper	Northamptonshire CC Environment & Heritage Services,	Watching brief forms (18) Colour slides (51) black and white contact prints (55)
Digital	ditto	Report; text and figures

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AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF AT GRANGE PARK DESBOROUGH

Abstract

A watching brief during the initial stages of development was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology. Extensive areas of the site had been quarried for ironstone in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, so only undisturbed areas were investigated. Observation concentrated on the west side of the development close to the general location of a Saxon cemetery discovered before 1757. However, no archaeological features or artefacts were found during the present work.

1 INTRODUCTION

Archaeological watching brief was carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology between January and February 2007 on land to the east of the former A6 immediately north of Desborough (Fig 1, NGR SP 79908400).

There were no conditions attached to planning permission relating to archaeology for this development. However the developer kindly agreed to fund a watching brief to ensure that any archaeological remains could be recorded. Tew Associates acting as the developer's architects also greatly facilitated the arrangements for the watching brief.

The brief was prepared by the Senior Environmental Planner, Growth Management Team, Northamptonshire County Council in order to ensure that archaeological remains particularly any relating to a Saxon cemetery discovered before 1757 could be recorded.

2 TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

The parish of Desborough lies immediately north of the River Ise, which forms its southern boundary. The valley side rises from 90m OD to 145m OD and exposes Upper Lias Clay and Northampton Sand before forming part of the Boulder Clay plateau which divides the Rivers Nene and Welland. The development area slopes from north-east to south-west broadly following the contours of the valley at a point where the Boulder Clay gives way to the underlying Northampton Sand. The edge of the ironstone quarries appears to follow this boundary thereby leaving undisturbed Boulder Clay areas adjacent to the former A6.

3 BACKGROUND

Considerable archaeological finds discovered mainly from ironstone-workings, have been recorded in and around Desborough. These include four Anglo-Saxon cemeteries and a single burial. The number of cemeteries and the quality of artefacts associated with the burials is unusual and may betoken that the settlement was important during the Saxon period which is further suggested by the place name which is derived from Deor's *burh* or fortified place (Brown and Foard 2004, 89-90).

Antiquarian discoveries point to the presence of an early Saxon cemetery containing both inhumation and cremation burials close to the present development. The actual location is uncertain but was probably adjacent to the old A6, Harborough Road, northwest of Desborough town. The original finds, which included amber and glass beads, an iron ring and several bronze clasps are reported to have come from a gravel pit excavated to provide material for the Desborough turnpike sometime before 1757 (RCHME 1977, 34: Desborough (7)). It is possible that the field pond just south west of the A6 might represent the remains of the pit (Fig 2).

4 THE WATCHING BRIEF

The watching brief was carried out in a programme of visits undertaken as the contractor stripped areas of topsoil in the development area. The only areas of potential to have significant archaeological remains were outside the reinstated quarry. These areas were close to the Harborough Road at the west end of the area and to the north close to the Stoke Road (Fig 2).

The topsoil was stripped using an excavator with a toothless bucket and three D8 caterpillars across all the areas, under archaeological supervision, to a depth of 0.30m on to the orange brown clay subsoil (Plates 1-5). No archaeological features were found.

A metal detector survey was undertaken across the site but no archaeological finds were found.

5 FINDS

No archaeological artefacts were found.

6 CONCLUSION

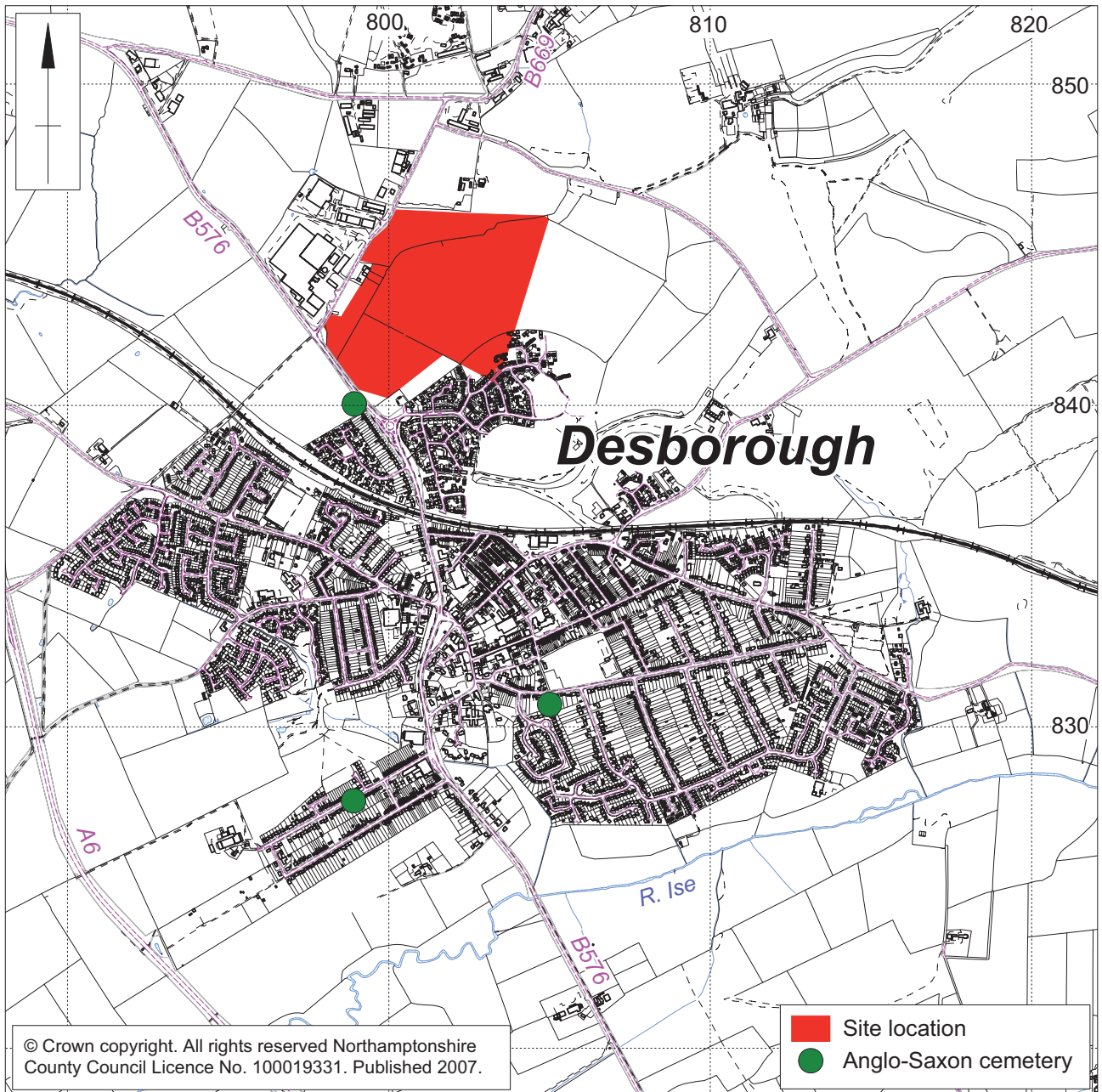
The watching brief did not find any archaeological remains and the location of the antiquarian discoveries remains unknown.

Bibliography

Brown, A E, and Foard, G, 2004 The Anglo Saxon period, in M Tingle (ed) *The Archaeology of Northamptonshire*

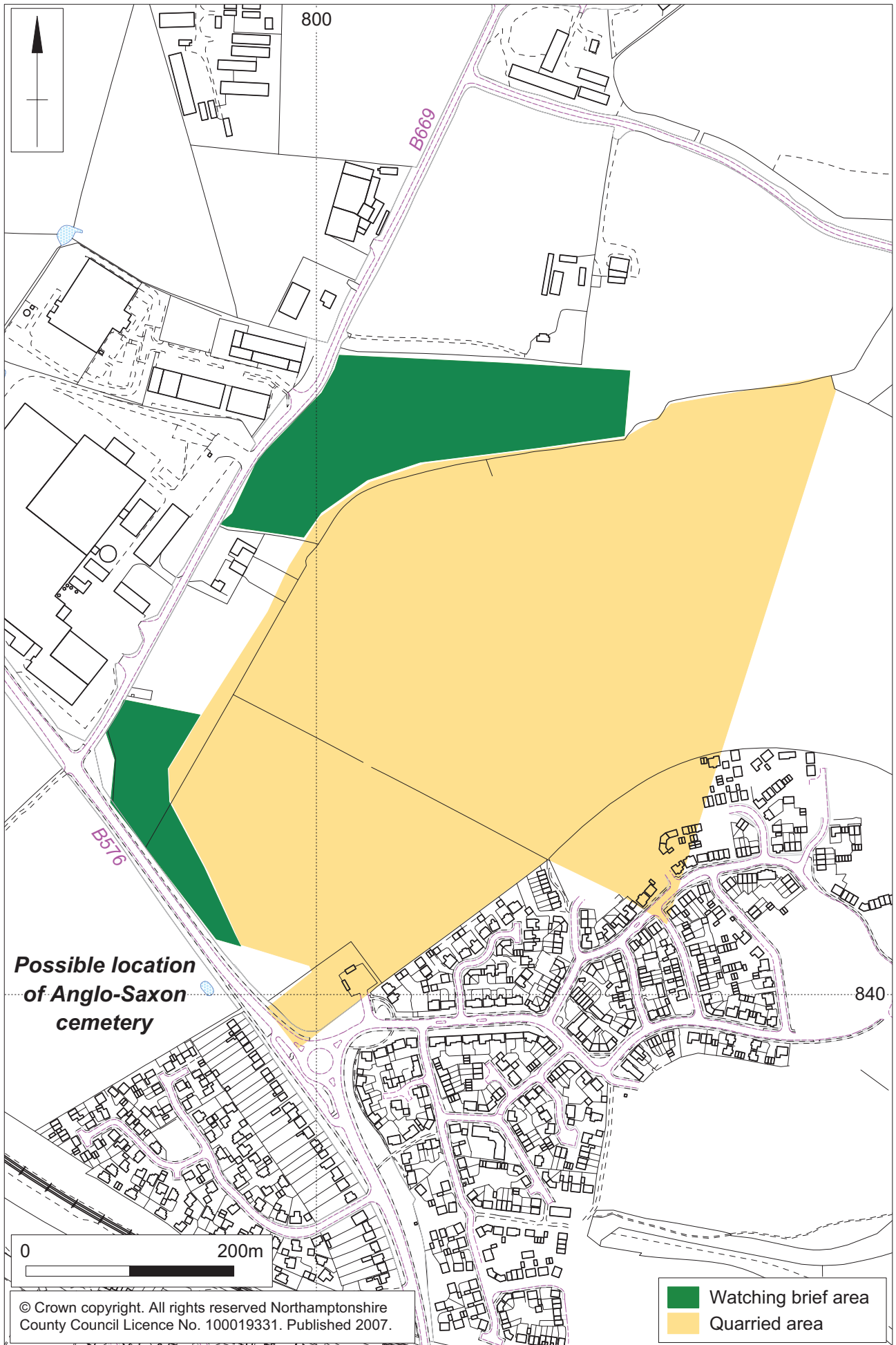
Flitcroft, 2006, *Brief for Archaeological Watching Brief*

RCHME, 1977, *An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in the County of Northampton*, Volume II Archaeological Sites in Central Northamptonshire



Scale 1:20,000

Site location Fig 1



Scale 1:5000

Watching brief areas Fig 2



Plate 1
South side of area looking west



Plate 2
South side of area looking north east



Plate 3
South side of area looking east



Plate 4
West side of area looking north



Plate 5
West side of area looking south