

# Northamptonshire Archaeology

An Archaeological Investigation on land next to  
The Triangular Lodge  
Rushton, Northamptonshire  
January 2007



J I Burke

February 2007

Report 07/10

## Northamptonshire Archaeology

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**QUALITY CONTROL**

	Print name	Signed	Date
Checked by	Iain Soden		
Verified by	Andy Mudd		
Approved by	Steve Parry		

**OASIS REPORT FORM**

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>		
Project name	An Archaeological Investigation on land next to The Triangular Lodge, Rushton, Northamptonshire.	
Short description (250 words maximum)	An archaeological investigation was undertaken to determine the nature of a circular stone feature at land next to The Triangular Lodge, Rushton, Kettering, Northamptonshire. The feature proved to be a probable flower bed. No artefacts were present.	
Project type (eg DBA, evaluation etc)	Evaluation	
Site status (none, NT, SAM etc)	English Heritage property	
Previous work (SMR numbers etc)	None	
Current Land use	Rough ground surrounding Listed Building	
Future work (yes, no, unknown)	Unknown	
Monument type/ period		
Significant finds (artefact type and period)		
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>		
County	Northamptonshire	
Site address (including postcode)	Rushton, Kettering, Northamptonshire	
Study area (sq.m or ha)		
OS Easting & Northing (use grid sq. numbers)	SP83040 83035	
Height OD		
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project brief originator		
Project Design originator	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Director/Supervisor	James I Burke	
Project Manager	Iain Soden	
Sponsor or funding body	English Heritage	
<b>PROJECT DATE</b>		
Start date	January 2007	
End date	January 2007	
<b>ARCHIVES</b>	<b>Location (Accession no.)</b>	<b>Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc)</b>
Physical		-
Paper	NA	Watching brief forms; Colour slides, black and white contact prints
Digital	NA	Digital photographs

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**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION ON LAND NEXT TO  
THE TRIANGULAR LODGE, RUSHTON  
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.**

**JANUARY 2007**

*Abstract*

*An archaeological investigation was undertaken to determine the nature of a circular stone feature on land next to the Triangular Lodge, Rushton, Kettering, Northamptonshire. No archaeological deposits were present. The feature is thought to have been a garden bed.*

**1 INTRODUCTION**

An archaeological investigation was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology in January 2007 to investigate a circular feature on land next to The Triangular Lodge, Rushton, Kettering, Northamptonshire (NGR SP 83040 83035: Fig 1). The work was carried out on behalf of JGP Associates for English Heritage.

The investigation was required as a new visitor admissions building is to be constructed at the property and the nature of the circular feature on the site of the proposed building was unknown. It was previously thought that the circular feature might represent a rockery/flower bed or may have been a well.

**2 BACKGROUND**

**2.1 Location and topography**

The Triangular Lodge lies 1 mile West of Rushton, on an unclassified road three miles from Desborough on the A6. It was formerly part of the Rushton Hall estate. The natural geology of the site is Northampton Sand Ironstone.

**2.2 Historical background**

The Triangular Lodge was designed and constructed between 1593 and 1597 by Sir Thomas Tresham in Rushton, Northamptonshire (English Heritage 2004, from which the following is extracted). Tresham was a Roman Catholic and was imprisoned for a total of 15 years in the late 16th century for refusing to become a Protestant. Upon his release in 1593, he designed the lodge as a protestation of his faith. His belief in the Holy Trinity is represented everywhere in the lodge by the number '3': it has three walls, each 33 feet long with three triangular windows to light the three floors and each façade has three gables surmounted by three gargoyles. A Latin text thirty-three letters long runs around the building on each façade. The quotations are:-

*Aperiatum terra germinet salvatorem.* (let the earth open and bring forth a saviour)  
*Quis seperabit nos a charitate Christi* (who shall separate us from the love of Christ)  
*Consideravi opera tua domine at expavi* (I have considered thy works, lord and been afraid)

The windows on each floor are of a different equally ornate design. The largest are those on the first floor, in the form of a trefoil, which was the emblem of the Tresham family. The basement windows are small trefoils with a triangular pane at their centre. The slightly raised ground floor has an entrance in the south east façade, and above the door the numbers “5555”. The windows on this floor are of a lozenge design. The principal room on each floor is a hexagon, leaving the three corner spaces triangular, one of these spaces contains a spiral staircase, the remaining two are small rooms.

The building is crowned, above the quotations on each façade, by three steep gables each surmounted by three sided obelisk at the apex. Among the emblems carved on the gables is the highly symbolic seven branched candelabrum representing the seven eyes of God. A pelican emblem, a symbolic of Christ and the Eucharist, is also present. The triangular chimney is adorned with the holy monogram “IHS”, a lamb and a cross, and a chalice.

While the lodge is indisputably a testament to the faith of Tresham, it is also an example of the Elizabethan love of allegory. Carved in the gables are the unexplained numbers “3509” and “3898”. Among the dates carved on the building are 1580, thought to be the date of Tresham’s conversion, but also the dates 1626 and 1641. The broken inscriptions on each gable combine to read “*Respicite non mihi laboravi*” (look I have not worked only for myself).

### 3 AIMS AND METHODS

The aim of the investigation was to examine the circular stone feature on land next to the Triangular Lodge, to determine whether it represented a well or a rockery.

The fieldwork was undertaken on a single visit to the site in January 2007. The feature was sectioned (Plates 1 & 2, Fig 1). A photographic record in both black and white negative and colour slide was kept along with supplementary digital photographs and a written record using Northamptonshire Archaeology pro-forma sheets.

#### 4 FIELDWORK

The raised stone feature was cleared of vegetation and excavated to a depth of 0.60m. The perimeter of stonework was found to be made of small pieces of limestone rubble laid roughly in two un-bonded courses to a height of 0.2m above the surrounding ground surface with a diameter of 1.62m. The soil inside the circle of stonework was found to be a dark brown loamy soil indicative of cultivated soil suggesting that it had been used as a flower bed. It was heavily contaminated by roots and animal burrows. Two fragments of pantile were present (not recovered) in the feature, but no other finds were present.

#### 5 THE SITE ARCHIVE

The site archive comprises:

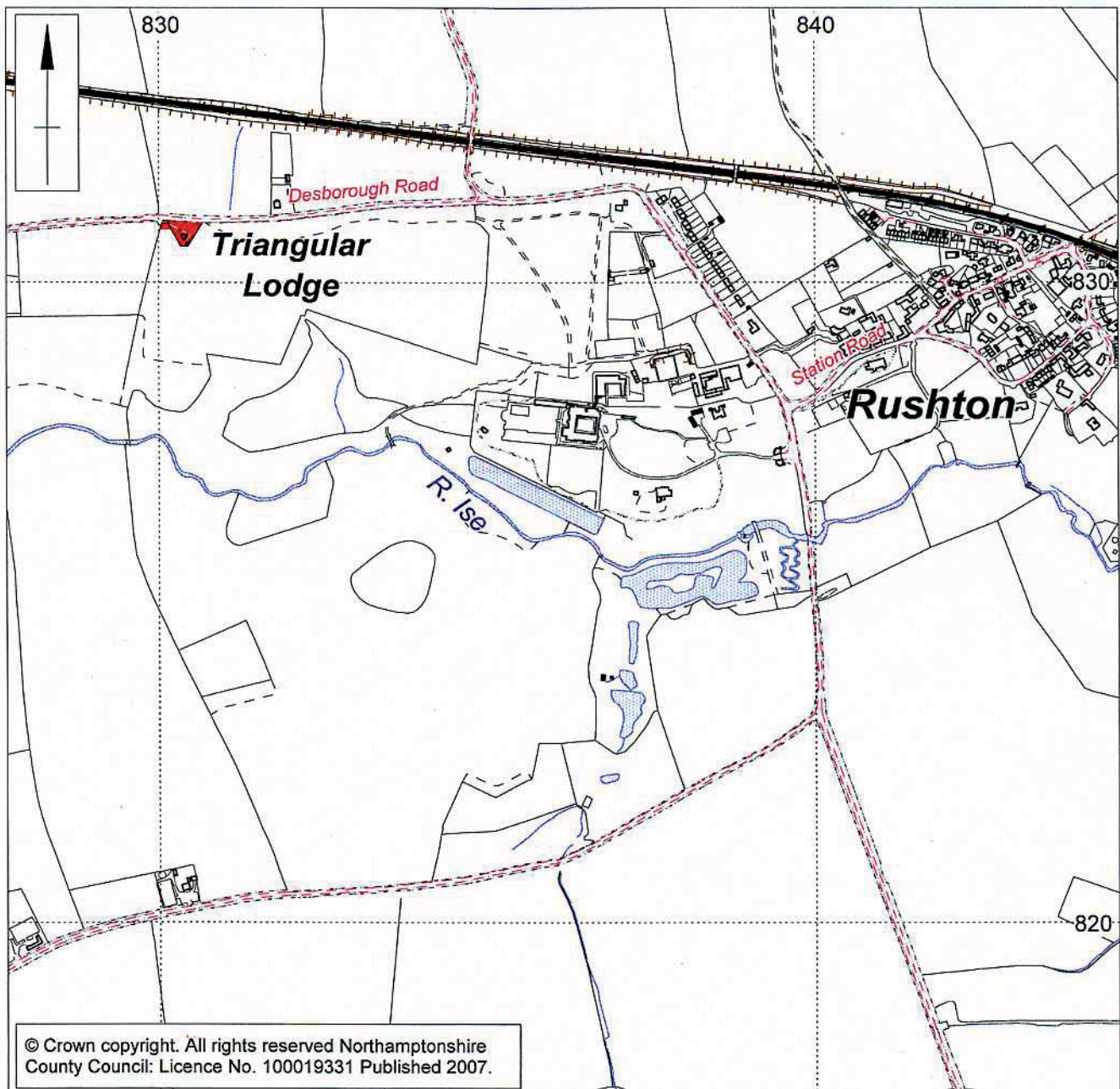
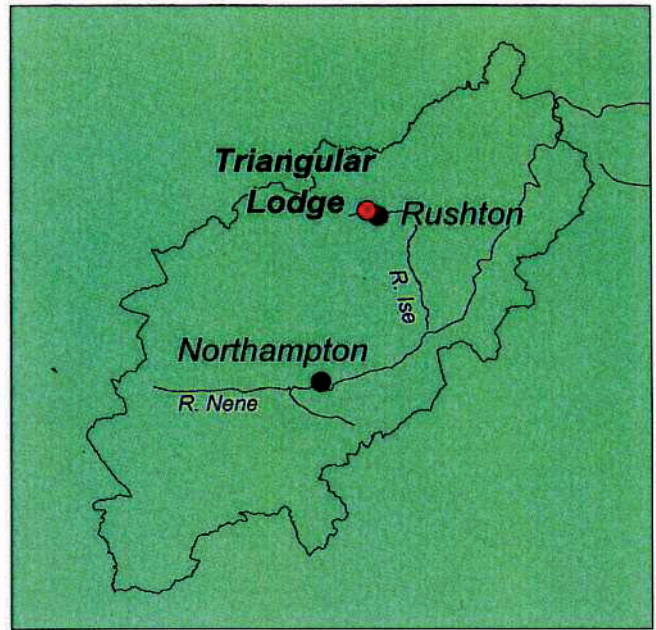
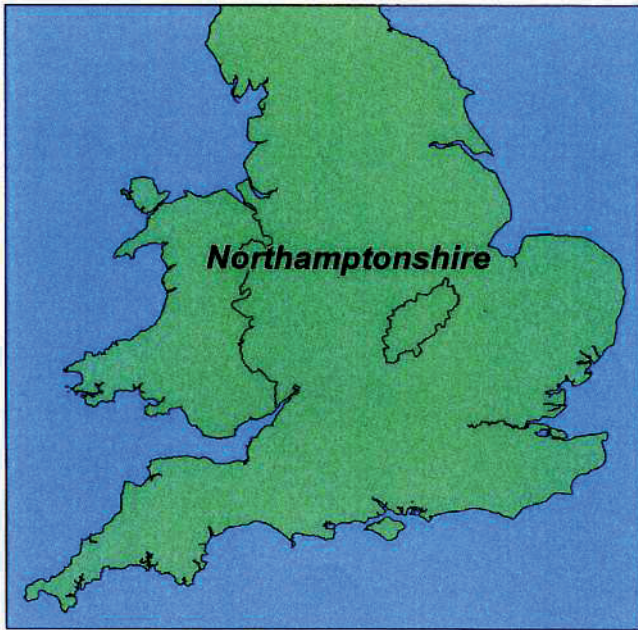
RECORD	NUMBER
Day record forms	1
Context Record form	3
Colour slides	8
Black and white contacts and negatives	6
Digital photographs	6

#### 6 CONCLUSION

It is thought that the feature represents a former flower bed, or a border around a former tree. No dating evidence was recovered from the feature which may relate to former landscaping, either during the time of English Heritage ownership of the site or, more likely, during previous ownership of the property. There was no indication that the feature was associated with a well.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

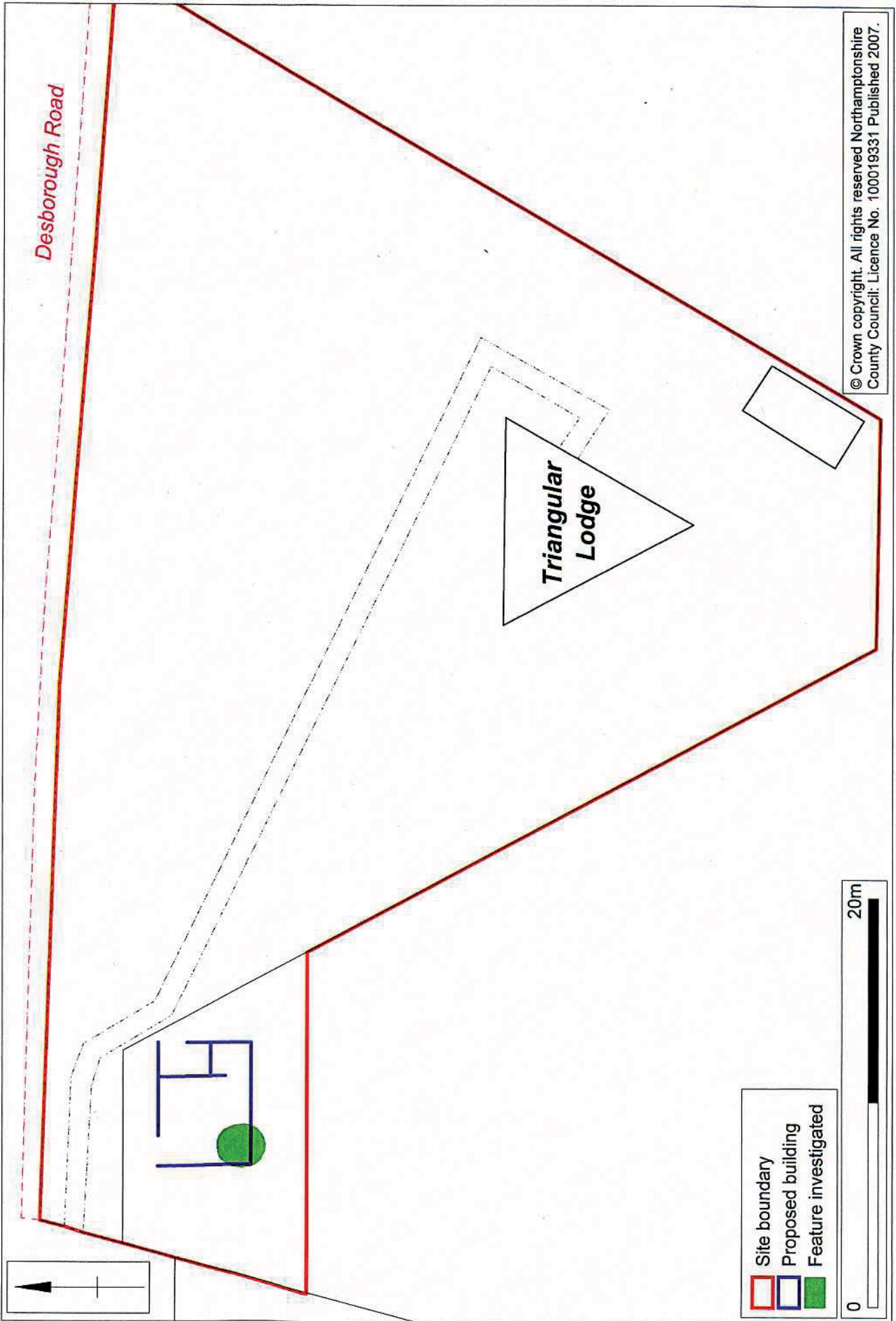
English Heritage 2004 *Rushton TriangularLodge Guide Book*



Scale 1:10,000

Site location Fig 1





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County Council: Licence No. 100019331 Published 2007.

Feature location Fig 2



Plate 1: The raised stone feature before excavation



Plate 2: The stone feature after excavation