

Northamptonshire Archaeology

An archaeological watching brief at
Hawridge Court, Hawridge,
Chesham, Buckinghamshire
February – March 2006



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Report 07/017

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QUALITY CONTROL

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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project name	An Archaeological Watching Brief at Hawridge Court, Hawridge, Chesham, Buckinghamshire	
Short description	An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during ground-works connected with the construction of a new kitchen extension at Hawridge Court, Hawridge, Chesham, Buckinghamshire. The works comprised the excavation of a strip foundation trench running parallel with the dwelling. Evidence of an un-dated buried soil was revealed in the northern end of the trench, a truncated natural substratum was present throughout the remainder. No archaeological artefacts were recovered.	
Project type	Watching brief Planning Application No: 2002/1336/CH Scheduled Monument Consent HSD 9/2/5139	
Site status	Within the confines of Scheduled Ancient Monument No: 27155	
Previous work	An Archaeological Evaluation in 1998 undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Current Land use	Domestic dwelling with associated outbuildings and garden	
Future work	Unknown	
Monument type/ period	Ringwork Possibly Late Saxon or Early Medieval	
Significant finds		
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Buckinghamshire	
Site address	Hawridge Court, Hawridge, Chesham, Buckinghamshire	
Study area		
OS Easting & Northing	49501 20583	
Height OD		
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project brief originator	Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service	
Project Design originator	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Director/Supervisor	David J. Leigh	
Project Manager	Andy Mudd	
Sponsor or funding body	Lawrence Wiggins Associates on behalf of Dr and Mrs A S E Bristow	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	February 2006	
End date	March 2006	
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc)
Physical		
Paper	Buckinghamshire County Museum Acc No: 1999.40	Watching brief forms (6) Colour slides (22) Black and white contact prints (Camera fault 0) Digital photographs (35)
Digital	Ditto	Report text and figures

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**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
ON LAND AT HAWRIDGE COURT,
CHESHAM, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE
FEBRUARY – MARCH 2006**

Abstract

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology during ground-works connected with the construction of a new kitchen extension at Hawridge Court, Hawridge, Chesham. The works comprised the excavation of a strip foundation trench running parallel with the dwelling. Evidence of a an un-dated buried soil was revealed in the northern end of the trench, a truncated natural substratum was present throughout the remainder. No archaeological artefacts were recovered.

1 INTRODUCTION

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology between February and March 2006 during ground-works connected with the construction of a new kitchen extension at Hawridge Court, Hawridge, Chesham, Buckinghamshire (NGR: SP 9501 0583; Planning Application No:2002/1336/CH; Fig 1). The work was carried out on behalf of Lawrence Wiggins Associates acting on behalf of their clients Dr and Mrs A S E Bristow and was undertaken to fulfil the requirements of a brief for an archaeological watching brief issued by Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service on the 21st August 2002. The work was conducted under Scheduled Monument Consent, reference number HSD 9/2/5139.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location and Topography

The development area is located to the north-west of Chesham on the western side of a dry valley situated between the valley of the River Chess and Cholesbury, and lies within a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The underlying geology has been mapped by the British Geological Survey of Great Britain as comprising Clay with Flints. The site is presently in use as a private dwelling.

2.2 Historical Background

The buildings that comprise Hawridge Court are located within a well preserved ringwork (Figure 2; Plate 1), a Scheduled Ancient Monument (No: 27155), of possible late Saxon or medieval date. The interior of the ringwork is oval in plan, measuring 60.0m west – east by 45.0m north – south. The bank stands almost 5.0m high and is between 8.0m and 12.0m wide. The ditch is between 8.0m and 11.0m wide and has been partially filled in; it survives to a

maximum depth of 1.5m. There is a probable original entrance to the east (Plate 2), while the main buildings of the present house, and access to them, lie across the northern side of the defences. The earliest documentary reference is from the 13th century, which describes the site as the principle holding of the manor of Hawridge. The location of the 13th - century manor house is unknown, but is presumed to have stood near the centre of the earthwork. It is thought to have replaced by a new range in the 16th century.

Immediately to the north is the church of St Mary (Sites and Monuments Record No: 1900; Figure 2; Plate 3), the earliest reference to which is from the 13th century.

The present farmhouse dates from the 18th century and was extended and renovated in the early 1900s. Of the buildings that comprise Hawridge Court, the detached building to the south of the development area, is the only survival from the 16th - century rebuilding (Figure 2; Plate 4). This is a Grade II Listed Building and was formerly used as a granary.

Previous archaeological work has comprised an archaeological evaluation in 1998 (Fig 2), which recorded traces of a late medieval soil horizon and an unexcavated earlier feature cut into the natural (Chapman 1998). The evaluation also showed that the ground in the vicinity of the present buildings has been subject to extensive post-medieval disturbance which penetrated down to, and into, the natural.

The present development comprises an extension to the present kitchen and is located within an area of hard-standing adjacent to the access driveway (Plate 5).

3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The objectives of the watching brief were to:

- ◆ Observe and record all archaeological deposits, uncovered during the ground-works for the new kitchen extension.
- ◆ Determine and record the date, extent, character, state of preservation and depth of any archaeological deposits.

The ground-works comprised the removal of an existing porch and the removal of up to 0.50m of material within the footprint of the new extension. Following this the foundation trench was excavated. This ran parallel with, and to the east, of the present eastern wall of the kitchen (Fig 2; Plate 6). The work was carried out using a combination of hand and power tools. A photographic record in both black and white negative and colour slide was kept, along 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 2001).

4 THE RECORDED EVIDENCE

Up to 0.50m of material was stripped within the footprint of the new extension. This revealed mid brown compact clay with numerous fragments of modern ceramic building material, overlying this was modern hard-standing material, up to 0.35m thick, comprising numerous fragments of modern ceramic building material and concrete fragments. The foundation trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.20m below present ground level, and was 0.50m wide. A salt-glazed drainage pipe was revealed running almost the full length of the trench with a brick-built manhole located mid way along the trench.

The stratigraphic sequence was consistent along almost the full length of the trench. The natural clay was encountered 0.70m below present ground surface, and comprised mid brown compact clay, containing numerous fragments of flint. Overlying this was mid-brown, re-deposited natural clay, up to 0.35m thick, containing numerous fragments of modern ceramic building material and flint fragments. Sealing this was a modern hard-standing, up to 0.35m thick, comprising modern ceramic building material and concrete fragments.

In the northern section at the end of the foundation trench, beyond the edge of the hard-standing, a different stratigraphy was revealed. This comprised mid-brown natural clay, containing numerous fragments of flint., this was encountered 0.60m below present ground surface. Overlying this was grey/black silt loam, up to 0.15m thick, containing occasional flint fragments, which appeared to be a buried soil horizon. This was sealed by mid brown re-deposited clay, up to 0.30m thick, containing occasional flint fragments. This in turn was sealed by grey/brown silt loam topsoil/turf layer, up to 0.15m thick.

5 THE SITE ARCHIVE

The watching brief has generated a small archive, which comprises:

RECORD	NUMBER
Watching brief forms	6
Colour slides	22
Black and white contact prints (Camera fault)	0
Digital photographs	35

6 CONCLUSIONS

The watching brief revealed a truncated stratigraphy along the full length of the foundation trench, however, evidence of a buried soil was revealed in the northern section of the trench. This was sealed by re-deposited natural clay that did not contain the numerous fragments of modern building material that was evident in the main body of the trench. As the foundation trench lies within the area of the former bank of the ringwork it is possible, although not certain, that this material is connected with the earthwork.

The results of the watching brief suggest that whilst post-medieval development has resulted in the truncation of the natural substratum in the immediate vicinity of the present dwelling, undisturbed archaeological deposits may be present in the remainder of the site.

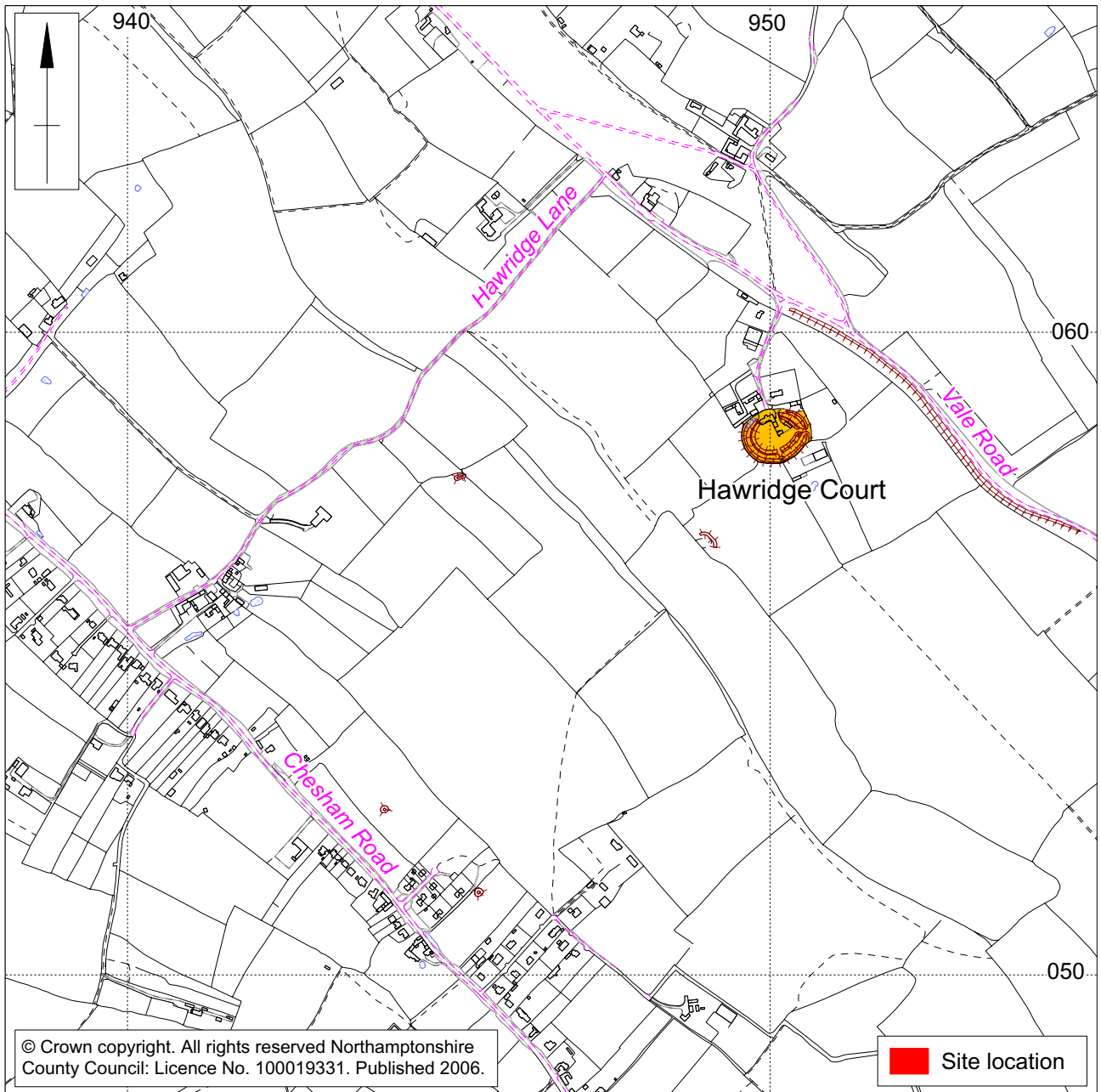
The watching brief was carried out in favourable conditions and the results are considered to be reliable.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BCAS, 2002 *Brief for an Archaeological Watching Brief, Hawridge Court, Chesham*
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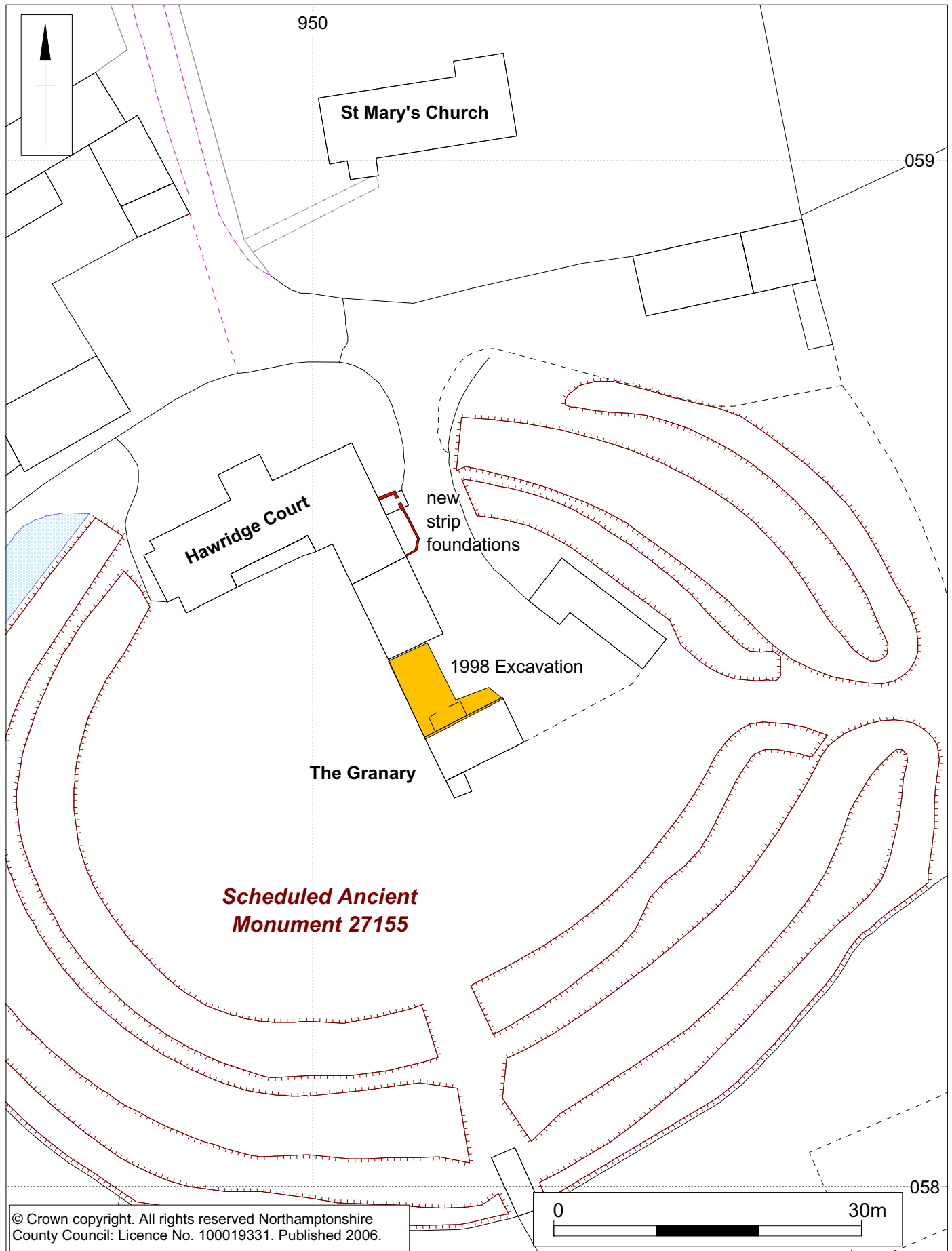
Chapman, A, 1999 *Archaeological Excavation Of Land At Hawridge Court, Cholesbury, Bucks,*
October 1998 Northamptonshire Archaeology Client Report

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



Scale 1:10,000

Location of Hawridge Court, Chesham Fig 1



Scale 1:500

Hawridge Court showing new strip foundations and excavation of 1998 Fig 2



Plate 1: Hawridge Court, and the bank and ditch of the ringwork



Plate 2: The probable entrance in the east side of the ringwork



Plate 3: the 13th century church of St Mary



Plate 4: The former 16th century granary, a Grade II Listed Building



Plate 5: The present driveway, on the right of the photograph is the development area



Plate 6: The ground-works in progress, viewed from the south east