

# Northamptonshire Archaeology

Archaeological Watching Brief at  
The Former Crown & Thistle  
3 The Mount, Dunton Bassett  
Leicestershire  
February 2007  
Accession No: X.A32.2007



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Report 07/26

## Northamptonshire Archaeology

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**QUALITY CONTROL**

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Checked by	Pat Chapman		
Verified by	Anthony Maull		
Approved by	Andy Chapman		

## OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project name	Watching brief at the former Crown and Thistle, 3 The Mount, Dunton Bassett, Leicestershire	
Short description	In mid February 2007, Northamptonshire Archaeology undertook a two day watching brief on the site of the former Crown and Thistle public house on behalf of Mount View Grange Ltd, during groundworks for redevelopment of the site. No archaeological deposits or artefacts were present, although evidence for modern build-up of terracing was seen.	
Project type	Watching Brief Planning Ref 02/01043/3	
Site status	Public House building, demolished prior to start of project	
Previous work	Desk-based assessment 2002 (NA) Watching Brief 2007 (NA)	
Current Land use	Former site of Crown and Thistle PH	
Future work	Unknown	
Monument type/ period		
Significant finds	None	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Leicestershire	
Site address	3 The Mount, Dunton Bassett, Leicestershire	
Study area	0.143ha	
OS Easting & Northing	NGR SP 5454 9060	
Height OD	124m	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project brief originator		
Project Design originator	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Director/Supervisor	Mark Spalding	
Project Manager	Anthony Maull	
Sponsor or funding body	Mount View Grange	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	15/02/2007	
End date	19/02/2007	
ARCHIVES		
	Location	Content
Physical		
Paper	X.A32.2007	
Digital		
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
Title		
Serial title & volume	07/26	
Author(s)		
Page numbers		
Date		

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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF AT THE  
FORMER CROWN AND THISTLE, 3 THE MOUNT,  
DUNTON BASSETT, LEICESTERSHIRE  
FEBRUARY 2007**

*Abstract*

*In mid February 2007, Northamptonshire Archaeology undertook a two day watching brief on the site of the former Crown and Thistle public house on behalf of Mount View Grange Ltd, during groundwork's for redevelopment of the site. No archaeological deposits or artefacts were present, although evidence for modern build-up of terracing was seen.*

**1 INTRODUCTION**

Northamptonshire Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief on 15th and 19th February 2007, at the site of the former Crown and Thistle public house, Dunton Bassett, Leicestershire (Fig 1: centred on NGR SP 5454 9060). The work was carried out on behalf of Kent Porter Warren, acting as agents for Mount View Grange Ltd who had been granted planning permission for the erection of seven houses (Planning Application No 02/01043/3). The work was undertaken to fulfil the requirements of a specification written by Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA) and agreed by the Temporary Planning Archaeologist for Leicestershire County Council Historic and Natural Environment Team (LCCHNET).

**2 BACKGROUND**

**2.1 Location and Topography**

The proposed development site probably sits within the historic core of the medieval village of Dunton Bassett and it is thought the Mount Road may have originated at this time. Due to its location it was possible that archaeological remains of the former street frontage may have survived.

The underlying geology has been mapped by the British Geological Society as comprising glacial sands and gravels overlying boulder clay. The land has a maximum height of 130m AOD and slopes down towards the north-west.

**2.2 Archaeological and Historical Background**

The archaeological and historical background is derived from a desk-based assessment (NA 2002) and from the Leicestershire Sites and Monuments Record (SMR).

The name Dunton Bassett is derived from Old English *Donitone*, which translated means 'homestead of the hill'. The later affix Bassett is a family name and was added

later. At the time of the Domesday survey, *Donitone* was recorded as being held by Robert de Buci, who probably came over from Normandy with William 1 during the Norman Conquest.

The development area has previously been discussed in detail in a desk-based assessment undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology in 2002. In summary, the site is located close to the centre of Dunton Bassett village, with the central part of the application area previously occupied by the Crown and Thistle Public House which was demolished in 2006. The desk based assessment clearly demonstrated archaeological evidence from the prehistoric to post-medieval periods within Dunton Bassett, though none derived from the immediate application site (NA 2002).

A number of entries for the village are held in the Leicestershire SMR (Fig 2, Table 1). The prehistoric period is defined by a Mesolithic pebble and there is a low density of Iron Age and Romano-British activity. The medieval period is well represented by extensive areas of ridge and furrow earthworks, with a series of earthworks in a field close to the site and behind The Mount road suggesting a contemporary date to the road. The later medieval and post-medieval village layout appears to be very similar to that of the modern village. Further archaeological work undertaken after the production of the desk-based assessment found other find spots of archaeological interest in close proximity to the development site. These include an evaluation directly opposite the site at the County Primary School in 2003, where a number of Neolithic lithics and a series of burnt mounds (L Griffin pers comm) were uncovered.

*Table 1: Sites and Monuments Record data*

SMR Reference	Grid Reference	Details
SP 59 SW AX	SP 5442 9042	The very worn top of a Hunsbury quern was found in the garden of 3 Leine Lane
SP 59 SW AJ	SP 547 904	All Saints medieval church dating from 1300, partly rebuilt in the 19th century Ref: Pevsner N, 1984 <i>The Buildings of Leicestershire</i> 2 <sup>nd</sup> edition, 147
SP 59 SW AK	SP 547 905	SAM 17052 a moated site with associated fishpond 12-14th century
SP 59 SW BF	SP 545 908	Watching brief between the church and earthworks, during the construction of new houses
SP 59 SW C	SP 547 904	A Mesolithic pebble hammer of iron stained silty chert found near "Sambourne", Church close
MLE 9740	SP 544 906	Dunton Bassett primary school, excavated areas in 2003, might have been animal holding areas
MLE 15803	SP 544 906	NW of Dunton Bassett primary school, Bronze Age / Iron Age features, found in excavation in 2003
MLE 15802	SP 544 906	NW of Dunton Bassett primary school, Neolithic site, found during excavation in 2003
MLE 15800	SP 544 906	Upper Palaeolithic burin, at excavation in 2003
MLE 15804	SP 544 906	48 sherds of Roman pottery, at excavation in 2003
MLE 15801	SP 544 906	Prehistoric flint at excavations in 2003

No previous archaeological investigations are recorded as having been carried out in the development area.

### 3 METHODOLOGY

In order to examine the archaeological resource within the proposed development area the objectives of the watching brief were to:

- Observe and record all archaeological deposits, uncovered during the groundworks
- Determine and record the date, extent, character, state of preservation and depth of burial of any archaeological deposits.

A photographic record in 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). All procedures complied with the Northamptonshire County Council Health and Safety provisions and Northamptonshire Archaeology Health and Safety at Work Guidelines.

### 4 EXCAVATION RESULTS

No archaeological remains were encountered and no archaeological artefacts were recovered during the ground observation.

*Table 2: Stratigraphy at Dunton Bassett*

Site Location	Digital Photo No.	Tarmac	Buried topsoil	Buried Subsoil	Glacial Sands	Natural Boulder Clay
East edge of terrace	DSCF 0322 DSCF 0325	No	0.11	0.21	0.29	0.68
SE hill terrace	DSCF 0900 DSCF 0901	No	0.75	1.10	No	>1.3
NW edge of entranceway	DSCF 0899	0.05	0.4 Modern brick	0.5	0.7	No

The stratigraphic sequence across the site consisted of natural sands which were seen in all locations except the eastern side of the development area where the ground was observed as sloping from west to east towards a ridgeline. Here the natural comprised a chalk flecked, grey clay (Plate 3). Subsoil of varying thickness was seen in the entire development area comprising a dark brown sandy clay, which appeared shallowest over the areas where the public house stood. It was sealed by a mid brown topsoil, especially at the south-east slope part of the site. The southern part of the development area was devoid of topsoil, where it had been removed during the construction of the former pub car park and replaced by a foundation course of modern brick, used as packing material for the tarmac surface (Plate 2).

## 5 THE SITE ARCHIVE

The watching brief has created a small archive of photographs and paperwork, which will be deposited with Leicestershire Museum Services (Accession No. X.A32.2007).

*Table 3: Site Archive*

RECORD	NUMBER
Watching brief forms	4
Colour slides	7
Black and white contacts and negatives	6
Digital photographs	14

## 6 DISCUSSION

The lack of archaeological features and artefacts on the site and the severe truncation by the former pub and associated car park and garden support the findings of the desk-based assessment.

Most of the site appears to have been built up in modern times, especially the frontage of the site where terracing and levelling was observed. The presence of natural gravels immediately below the modern tarmac and brick hardcore at the southern area of the development implies that this area has been heavily truncated.

## 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  
NA 2002 *Desk-based Assessment at the Crown and Thistle, 3 The Mount, Dunton Bassett, Leicestershire*, Northamptonshire Archaeology  
NA 2007 *Specification for an archaeological watching brief at the former Crown and Thistle, 3 the Mount Dunton Bassett, Leicestershire*, Northamptonshire Archaeology



**PLATES**



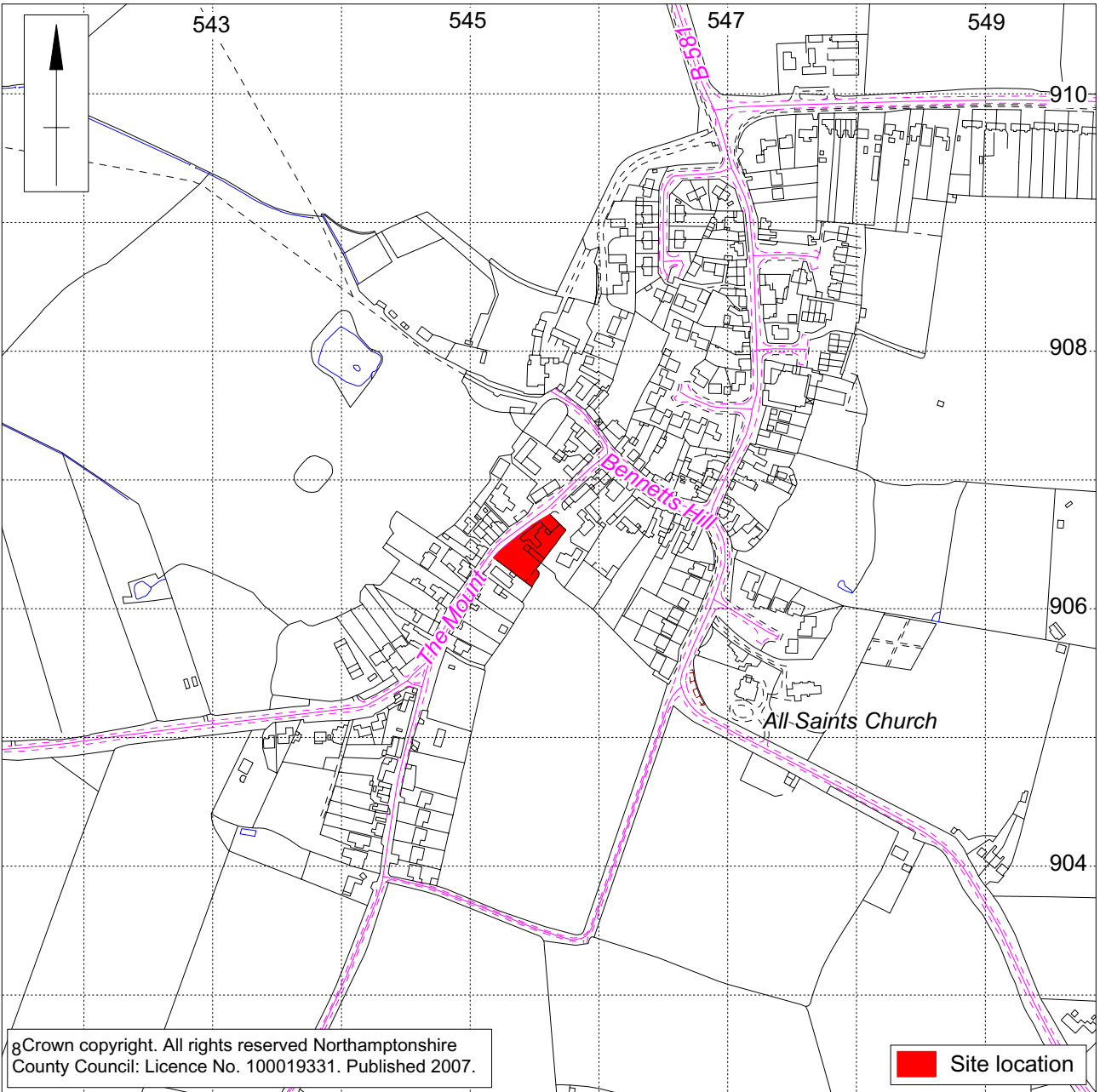
Plate 1: Northern boundary wall, looking north



Plate 2: Section in area of former car park area, looking south



Plate 3: South-east corner of development area, looking south



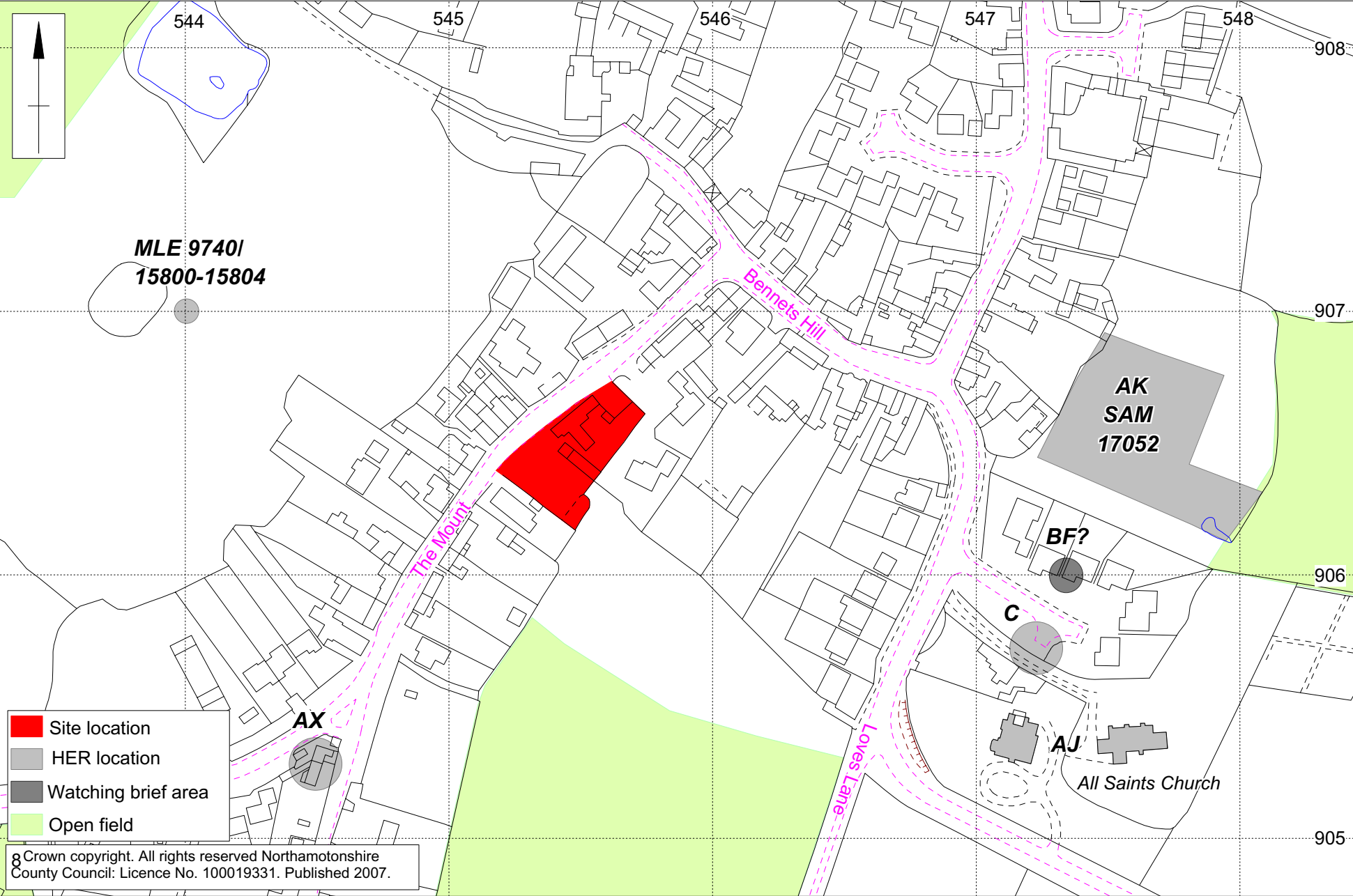
Scale 1:5000

Site location Fig 1

Scale 1:2000



Site and Monuments Record data Fig 2



- Site location
- HER location
- Watching brief area
- Open field

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