



Northamptonshire
County Council

Northamptonshire Archaeology

An archaeological watching brief
on land at Higham Park Farmhouse,
Higham Park Road, Rushden
Northamptonshire
November 2007 – January 2008



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May 2008

Report 08/094

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QUALITY CONTROL

	Print name	Signed	Date
Checked by	Steve Parry		
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Approved by	Andy Chapman		

OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project name	An archaeological watching brief on land at Higham Park Farm House, Higham Park Road, Rushden, Northamptonshire	
Short description	An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during groundworks connected with the construction of a new extension and the excavation of a service trench on land at Higham Park Farm House, Higham Park Road, Rushden Northamptonshire. A truncated natural substratum was present in the area of the new extension whilst undisturbed soils were noted throughout the length of the service trench. No archaeological deposits were present and no artefacts were recovered.	
Project type	Watching Brief Planning Application No: EN/04/0987/FUL	
Site status	None	
Previous work	Unknown	
Current Land use	Residential dwelling	
Future work	Unknown	
Monument type/ period		
Significant finds		
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Northamptonshire	
Site address	Higham Park Farm House, Higham Park Road, Rushden, Northamptonshire NN10 0SL	
OS Easting & Northing	SP 982, 643	
Height OD		
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project brief originator	The Historic Environment Team, Northamptonshire County Council	
Project Design originator	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Director/Supervisor	David J. Leigh	
Project Manager	Steve Parry	
Sponsor or funding body	Mrs Hunt	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	December 2007	
End date	January 2008	
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc)
Physical		
Paper	Northamptonshire Archaeology	Watching brief forms (3) Colour slides (28) black and white contact prints (28) Digital photographs (26)
Digital		Report text and figures

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**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF ON LAND AT
HIGHAM PARK FARM HOUSE, HIGHAM PARK ROAD,
RUSHDEN, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
DECEMBER 2007 – JANUARY 2008**

Abstract

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology between December 2007 and January 2008 during groundworks connected with the construction of a new extension and the excavation of a service trench on land at Higham Park Farm House, Higham Park Road, Rushden, Northamptonshire. A truncated natural substratum was present within the area of the new extension, whilst undisturbed soils were noted throughout the length of the service trench. No archaeological deposits were present and no artefacts were recovered.

1 INTRODUCTION

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology between December 2007 and January 2008 during groundworks connected with the construction of a new extension and the excavation of a service trench on land at Higham Park Farm House, Higham Park Road, Rushden, Northamptonshire (NGR SP 982, 643; Planning Application No: EN/04/0987/FUL: Fig 1; Plate 1). The work was carried out on behalf of Mrs Hunt following a specification submitted by Northamptonshire Archaeology on the 7th October 2004 and approved by The Heritage Environment Team, Northamptonshire County Council.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location and Topography

The development area is located on level ground to the south-east of Rushden. The underlying geology has been mapped by the British Geological Survey of Great Britain as comprising Chalky Till.

2.2 Historical Background

The development site lies close to the Great Lodge Moated site (Plate 2), a Scheduled Ancient Monument (No: 13646). Great Lodge is the site of a medieval hunting lodge which survives as an earthwork and is considered to be of national archaeological importance.

Up to the present application the development area has functioned as part of the garden of Higham Park Farm House. No previous archaeological work has been carried out within the area of development.

3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The aims of the watching brief were to:

- ◆ Observe the groundworks connected with the construction of the new extension and the excavation of a service trench, and to record all archaeological deposits uncovered.
- ◆ Determine the date, character, state of preservation and depth of any archaeological deposits observed and to retrieve all datable artefacts.
- ◆ Create a permanent archive and record of the archaeological information collected during the course of the fieldwork and post-fieldwork analysis.

The work was undertaken as part of the refurbishment of a former agricultural building known as 'The Barn' belonging to Higham Park Farm House.

The fieldwork comprised two visits to the site during the excavation of foundation trenches for a new extension at the north end of 'The Barn' and the excavation of a service trench which ran from 'The Barn' to another agricultural building approximately 80m to the north (Plate 3). The groundworks were carried out using a mechanical mini-digger fitted with a combination of toothed and toothless buckets.

A photographic record in both black and white negative and colour slide was kept, 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 2000).

4 THE RECORDED EVIDENCE (Fig 2)

4.1 The new extension

A disturbed stratigraphy was noted throughout the area of the new extension. This comprised pale grey/brown compact clay natural substratum, containing numerous fragments of chalk. Overlying this was pale grey/brown silt loam, up to 0.50m thick, containing numerous pockets of clay and chalk fragments along with numerous fragments of modern ceramic building material.

4.2 The service trench

The service trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.48m below present ground level, with a maximum width of 0.50m. The natural substratum was encountered at a depth of 0.45m, and comprised pale grey/brown compact clay containing numerous chalk fragments. Overlying this was pale mid brown silt loam, up to 0.33m thick, containing numerous chalk fragments. This in turn was sealed by grey/brown silt loam topsoil, up to 0.13m thick, containing numerous small chalk fragments and occasional rounded stones.

5 THE SITE ARCHIVE

The project has generated a small archive comprising:

RECORD	NUMBER
Watching brief forms	3
Colour slides	28
Black and white contacts and negatives	28
Digital photographs	26

6 CONCLUSIONS

The results of the watching brief clearly show that the area of the new extension has been subject to considerable modern disturbance, whilst undisturbed soils are present throughout the length of the service trench.

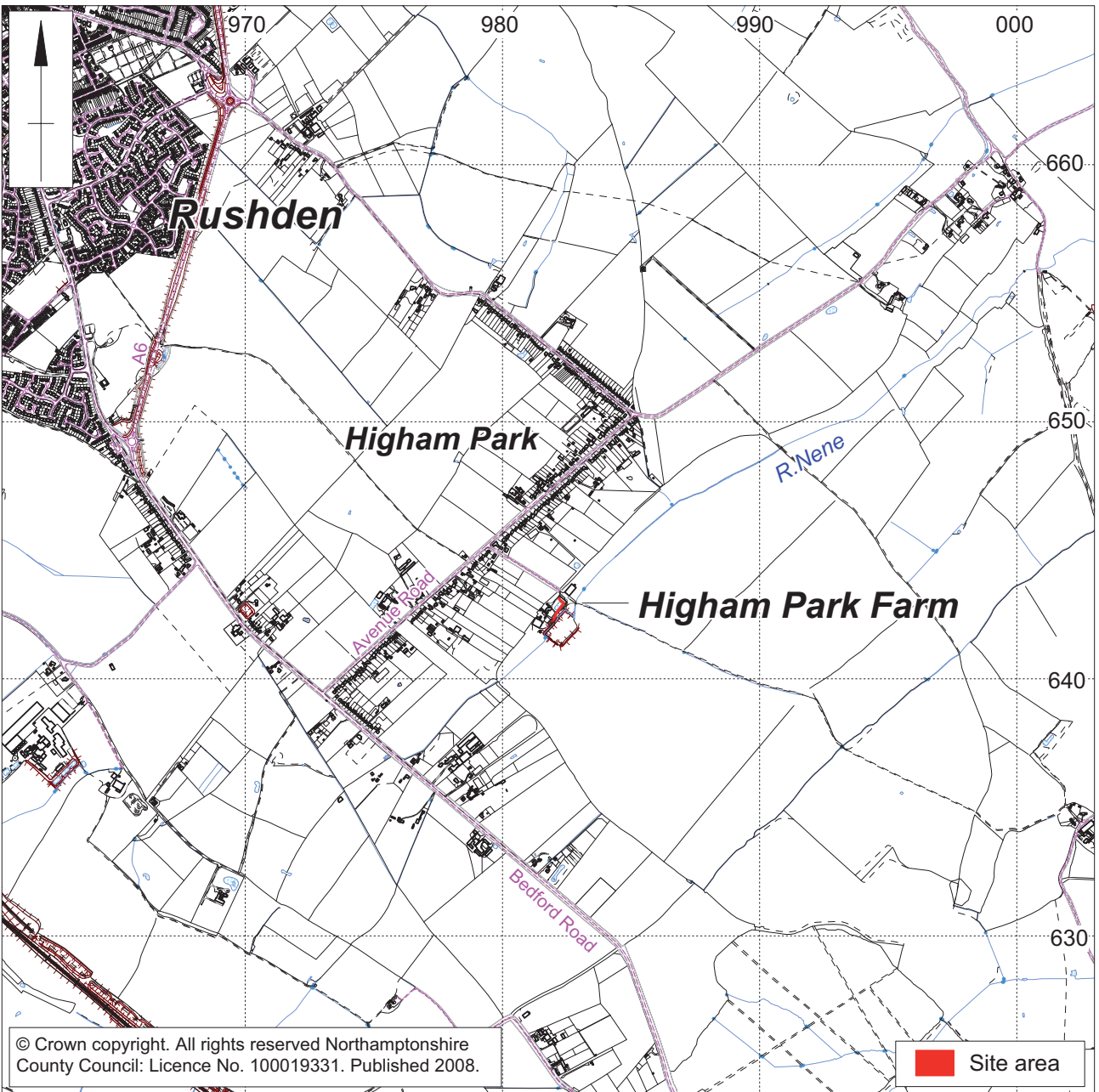
Evidence, such as the blocked up opening at the northern end of 'The Barn', would suggest that the new extension is located within the footprint of previous addition or extension to 'The Barn'. This has resulted in severe truncation of the natural substratum in this area.

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

BIBLIOGRAPHY

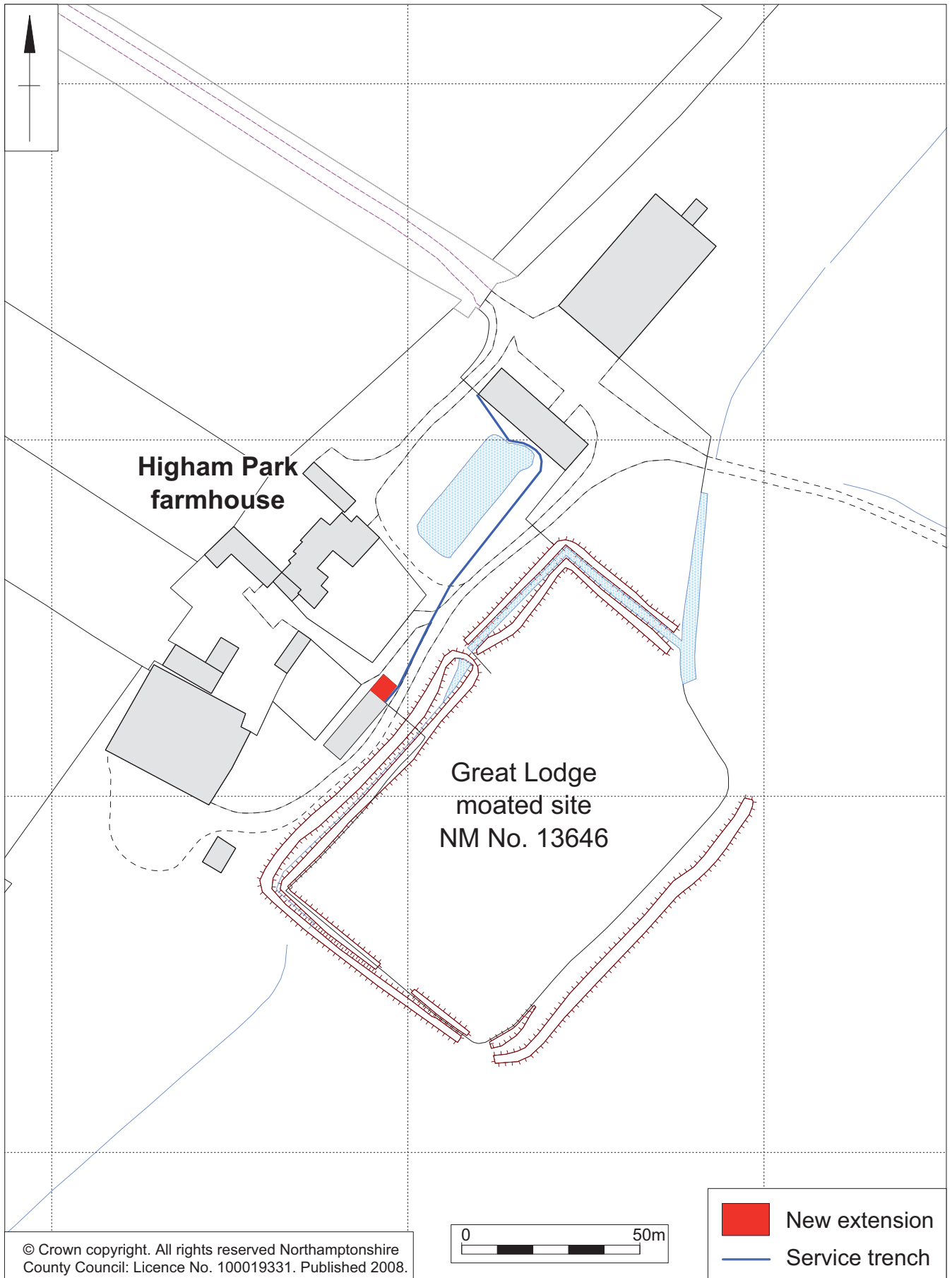
IFA 2000 *Standards and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief* Institute of Field Archaeologists

Walsh T, 2004 *Specification for archaeological watching brief at 'The Barn' Higham Park Farmhouse, Rushden* Northamptonshire Archaeology Specification for archaeological works



Scale 1:12,500

Site Location Fig 1



Areas of archaeological observation Fig 2



Plate 1: General view of the development area



Plate 2: View across to Great Lodge Moated site



Plate 3: The service trench at its northern termination



Plate 4: The stratigraphic sequence within the service trench