



Northamptonshire
County Council

Northamptonshire Archaeology

An archaeological watching brief
on land at 32 Mill Road, Rearsby,
Leicestershire
June 2006



David J. Leigh

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Report 07/104

Northamptonshire Archaeology

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QUALITY CONTROL

	Print name	Signed	Date
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Approved by	Andy Chapman		

OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project name	An archaeological watching brief on land at 32 Mill Road, Rearsby, Leicestershire	
Short description	An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during groundworks connected with the construction of a new extension and the alteration of an existing building on land at 32 Mill Road, Rearsby, Leicestershire. A disturbed stratigraphy was noted across the development area. An undated cobble wall foundation and a cobble-lined well were recorded. No datable archaeological deposits were present and no artefacts were recovered.	
Project type	Watching brief Planning Application No: P/05/3496/2	
Site status	Grade II Listed Building	
Previous work	None	
Current Land use	Private dwelling and garden	
Future work	Unknown	
Monument type/ period	18 th /19 th -century building (formerly two dwellings)	
Significant finds		
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Leicestershire	
Site address	32 Mill Road, Rearsby, Leicestershire	
Study area (sq.m or ha)		
OS Easting & Northing	SP 6494 1445	
Height OD		
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project brief originator	The Senior Planning Archaeologist, Leicestershire County Council	
Project Design originator	David J. Leigh Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Director/Supervisor	David J. Leigh	
Project Manager	Steve Parry	
Sponsor or funding body	Ms S Bird 32 Mill Road, Rearsby, Leicestershire	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	June 2006	
End date	June 2006	
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc)
Physical		
Paper	Leicestershire Museums, Arts and Record Service Accession No: X.A67.2006	Watching brief forms (4) Colour slides (13) black and white contact prints (13) Digital photographs (31) Video (1)
Digital	Ditto	Report text and figures

Contents

1	INTRODUCTION
2	BACKGROUND
3	OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY
4	THE RECORDED EVIDENCE
5	THE SITE ARCHIVE
6	CONCLUSIONS
	BIBLIOGRAPHY

Figures

Fig 1: Location of 32 Mill Road, Rearsby

Fig 2: The location of the areas of archaeological observation

Plates

Plate 1: General view of the groundworks in progress

Plate 2: The groundworks within the barn

Plate 3: The cobble-lined well

Plate 4: The cobble wall foundation

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF ON LAND AT
32 MILL ROAD, REARSBY,
LEICESTERSHIRE
JUNE 2006**

Abstract

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology in June 2006 during groundworks connected with the construction of a new extension and the alteration of an existing building on land at 32 Mill Road, Rearsby, Leicestershire. A disturbed stratigraphy was noted across the development area. An undated cobble wall foundation and a cobble-lined well were recorded. No datable archaeological deposits were present and no artefacts were recovered.

1 INTRODUCTION

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology in June 2006 during groundworks associated with the construction of a new extension and the alteration of an existing building on land at 32 Mill Road, Rearsby, Leicestershire (NGR SP 6494 1445; Planning Application No: P/05/3496/2; Fig 1). The work was carried out on behalf of Ms S Bird and was undertaken to fulfil the requirements of a written specification for archaeological investigation produced by Northamptonshire Archaeology (Leigh 2006) and approved by The Senior Planning Archaeologist, Leicestershire County Council on the 2nd June 2006.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location and topography

The development area is located within the village of Rearsby and fronts directly onto Mill Road. The underlying geology has been mapped by the British Geological Survey of Great Britain as comprising Reddish Till.

2.2 Historical background

The development area is located within the historic medieval and post medieval core of the village of Rearsby (Historic Environment Record No: MLE 862). The present building dates from the mid 18th-century and is a Grade II Listed Building (MLE 13801), one of around twenty in the village of Rearsby. The building is thought to be the site of an old Methodist Chapel and was originally two dwellings with 19th-century additions.

No previous archaeological work is recorded as being carried out within the area of development. Up to the present application the development area has functioned as a private garden with outbuilding.

3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The specific aims of the project have been to:

- ◆ Observe the groundworks connected with the construction of the new extension and alterations to the existing outbuilding and associated groundworks, 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 analysis.

The fieldwork comprised visits to the site during groundworks. Prior to the start of the watching brief some cleaning of the area had taken place along with the demolition of a small modern brick-built out-building. The groundworks were undertaken in two phases and comprised the removal of material within the outbuilding followed by the removal of material in the rear garden down to formation level. The groundworks were carried out using a 360° mini-excavator excavator fitted with a combination of both 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 2001).

4 THE RECORDED EVIDENCE

4.1 The outbuilding

A consistent stratigraphy was revealed within the area of the outbuilding, which has been a barn. Natural red/brown silt clay was encountered 0.40m below present ground surface. This was overlain by grey/brown silt loam, up to 0.32m thick, containing numerous fragments of modern ceramic building material and occasional concrete fragments. Sealing this was modern concrete hard-standing 0.08m thick.

4.1 The rear garden

The stratigraphic sequence across the rear garden comprised red/brown natural silt clay overlain by grey/brown silt loam, up to 0.48m thick and containing numerous fragments of modern ceramic building material and occasional fragments of modern plastic.

The small modern brick-built out-building, which had been demolished prior to the archaeological watching brief, was seen to have stood on a cobble foundation wall (Fig 2 and Plate 4). This comprised a right-angled section of wall approximately 0.23m high by 0.25m wide. It was cut by a modern red-brick wall.

Directly against and slightly under the eastern corner of the present dwelling there was a cobble-lined well (Fig 2; Plate 3). This was constructed of river cobbles, and no bonding material was noted. The well still, which still contained water, measured 0.46m in diameter and was in excess of 2.0m deep. Three courses of modern red-brick were laid on top of the cobble lining. A modern water down-pipe fed into the well.

5 THE SITE ARCHIVE

The project has generated a small archive of photographs and paperwork, which has been deposited with Leicestershire Museums Service (Accession No: X.A67.2006).

RECORD	NUMBER
Watching brief forms	4
Colour slides	13
Black and white contacts and negatives	13
Digital photographs	31
Video	1

6 CONCLUSIONS

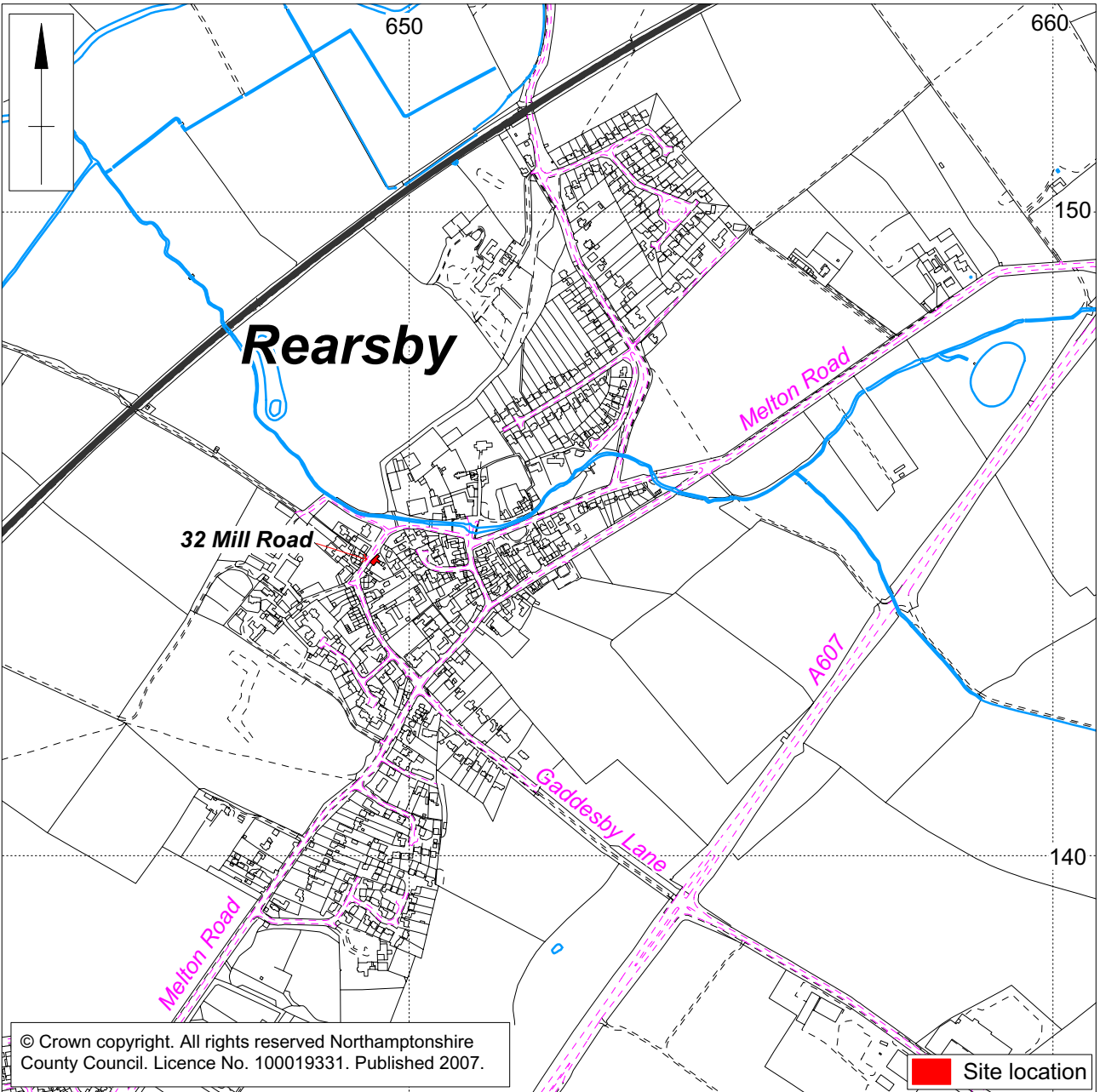
No dating evidence was recovered from either the cobble wall foundation or the cobble-lined well. Cobble foundations can be found on a number of buildings in Rearsby, including number 32. A late medieval to post-medieval date seems likely, predating the availability of cheap bricks, but a more precise date cannot be suggested.

A building of unknown form or function is shown to the rear of number 32 on the 1885 Ordnance Survey Map and it is possible that the cobble foundation revealed in the watching brief is connected with this. Whilst the cobble-lined well is of similar construction to the foundation, its location almost beneath the present dwelling would suggest that it is of earlier date.

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

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- IFA 2001 *Standards and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief*, Institute of Field Archaeologists
- Leigh, D J, 2006 *A specification for an archaeological watching brief on land at 32 Mill Road, Rearsby, Leicestershire* Northamptonshire Archaeology, Project Design for Archaeological Work



Scale 1:1000

Location of 32 Mill Road, Rearsby Fig 1

Scale 1:1000

The location of the areas of archaeological observation

Fig 2





Plate 1: General view of the groundworks in progress



Plate 2: The groundworks within the barn



Plate 3: The cobble-lined well



Plate 4: The cobble wall foundation