



Northamptonshire
County Council

Northamptonshire Archaeology

An archaeological watching brief
at The Church of St Nicholas,
Bringhurst, Leicestershire
July 2007



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Report 08/108

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QUALITY CONTROL

	Print name	Signed	Date
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Verified by	Andy Mudd		
Approved by	Andy Chapman		

OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project name	An archaeological watching brief at The Church of St Nicholas, Bringhurst, Leicestershire	
Short description	An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during groundworks connected with the dismantling and re-building of the stone churchyard retaining wall at The Church of St Nicholas, Bringhurst, Leicestershire. Gravesoil was noted extending the full depth of the stratigraphic sequence behind the wall. No archaeological deposits were present and no artefacts were recovered. A grave slab that had been re-used as a coping stone was noted set onto the top of the wall.	
Project type	Watching Brief	
Site status	Parish Church	
Previous work	Unknown	
Current Land use	Parish Church	
Future work	Unknown	
Monument type/ period	Medieval Church	
Significant finds		
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Leicestershire	
Site address	The Church of St Nicholas, Bringhurst, Leicestershire	
Study area (sq.m or ha)		
OS Easting & Northing	SP 8412 9214	
Height OD		
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project brief originator	The Diocesan Archaeological Consultant	
Project Design originator	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Director/Supervisor	David J. Leigh	
Project Manager	Steve Parry	
Sponsor or funding body	Harborough District Council	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	July 2007	
End date	July 2007	
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc)
Physical		
Paper		Watching brief forms (4) Colour slides (12) black and white contact prints (12) Digital photographs (86) Video (1)
Digital		Report text and figures

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**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF AT
THE CHURCH OF ST NICHOLAS, BRINGHURST,
LEICESTERSHIRE
JULY 2007**

Abstract

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology in July 2007 during groundworks connected with the dismantling and re-building of a section of the churchyard retaining wall at The Church of St Nicholas, Bringhurst, Leicestershire. No archaeological deposits were recorded and no artefacts were recovered. A grave slab that had been re-used as a coping stone was noted set onto the top of the wall.

1 INTRODUCTION

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology in July 2007 during groundworks associated with the dismantling and re-building of the churchyard retaining wall at The Church of St Nicholas, Bringhurst, Leicestershire (NGR SP 8412 9214: Fig 1; Plate 1). The work was carried out on behalf of Harborough District Council following a specification submitted to the Diocesan Archaeological Consultant by Northamptonshire Archaeology (Leigh, 2007) and approved on the 6th July 2007.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location and Topography

The development area is located within the village of Bringhurst. The underlying geology has been mapped by the British Geological Survey of Great Britain as comprising Boulder Clay.

2.2 Historical Background

The church of St Nicholas is located within the village of Bringhurst which stands on a hilltop location in the Welland Valley. To the east of the church is the site of an early medieval village (National Record No: SP 89 SW 23). Whilst to the south east lies the site of a possible Roman villa (NMR No: SP 89 SW 31) identified by field-walking.

The church itself (NMR No: SP 89) is of medieval date with later additions.

3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The aims of the watching brief were to:

- ◆ Observe the ground-works connected with the demolition and re-building of the churchyard wall, 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 the dismantling of the old wall. Only approximately one third of the wall was dismantled, from the south-western end where it joins with Church Farm to the south-east corner of the churchyard (Fig 2). The remainder of the retaining wall will be assessed as a future project. The groundworks were carried out using a 360° mini-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, 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

The retaining wall was constructed of rough stone fragments bonded together with white/cream coloured mortar. Behind the wall a consistent stratigraphy was revealed along all the dismantled section.

This comprised grey/black silt loam, which extended the full depth of the section, and contained occasional irregular stones with numerous small fragments of modern ceramic building material. This was sealed by a topsoil/turf layer, up to 0.08m thick.

At the southern entrance to the churchyard a ridged stone grave slab had been re-used as a capstone (Plate 4). This was removed during dismantling with its future location still to be decided.

At the northern entrance to the churchyard another ridged grave slab was noted (Plates 5 & 6), this section of the wall was not disturbed during the current works and therefore only a cursory examination was made. The slab had been broken in half and used as a capstone either side of

the gateway. Some evidence of inscription was noted, however the slab is in poor condition and no interpretation could be made.

5 THE SITE ARCHIVE

The project has generated a small archive comprising:

RECORD	NUMBER
Watching brief forms	4
Colour slides	12
Black and white contacts and negatives	12
Digital photographs	86
Video	1

6 CONCLUSIONS

No archaeological deposits were present and no artefacts were recovered during the course of the watching brief.

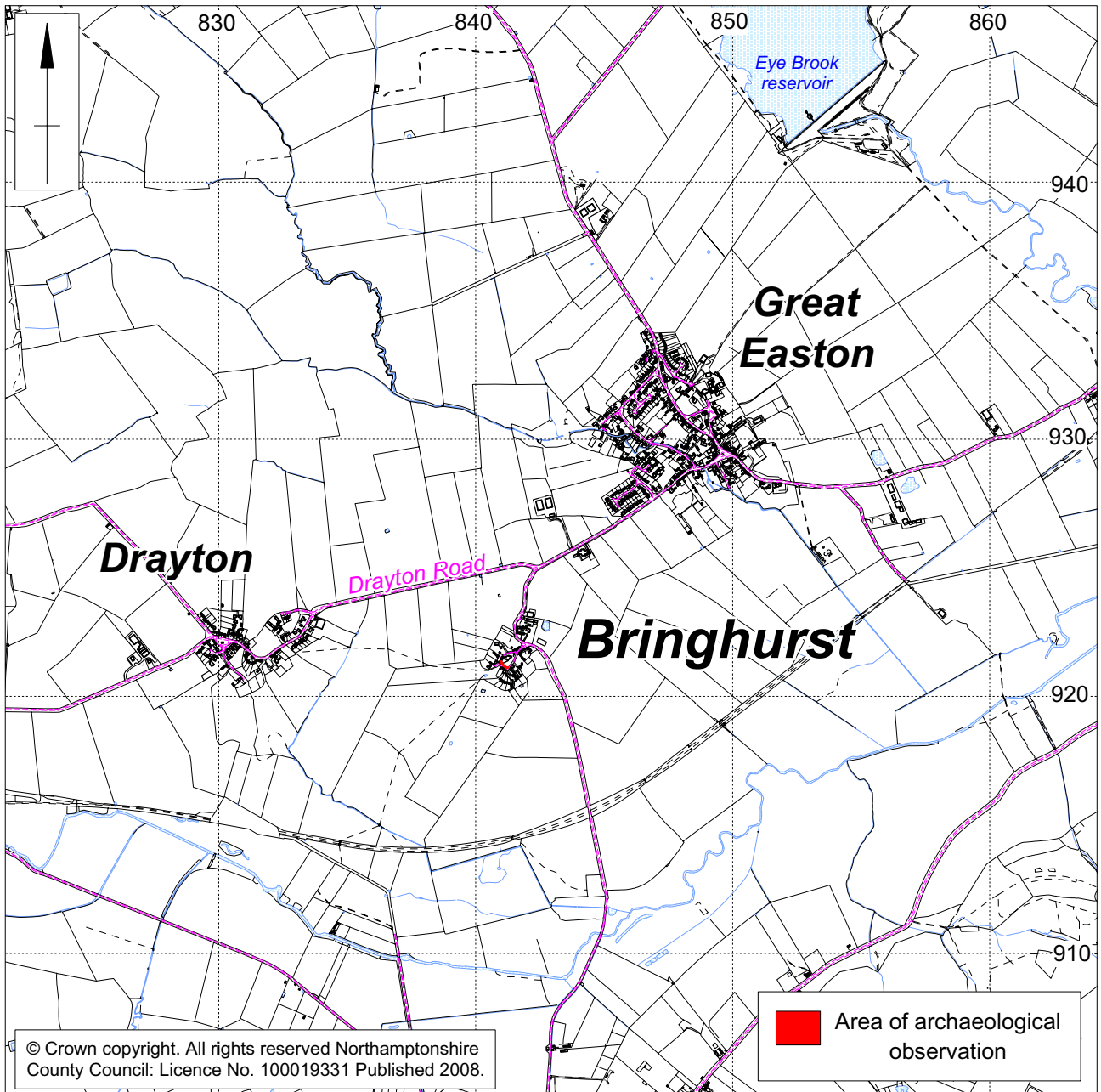
Two ridged grave slabs were noted on the top of the wall which had been re-used as capstones. No date can be assigned to these, however stylistically it is possible that they are of medieval date.

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

BIBLIOGRAPHY

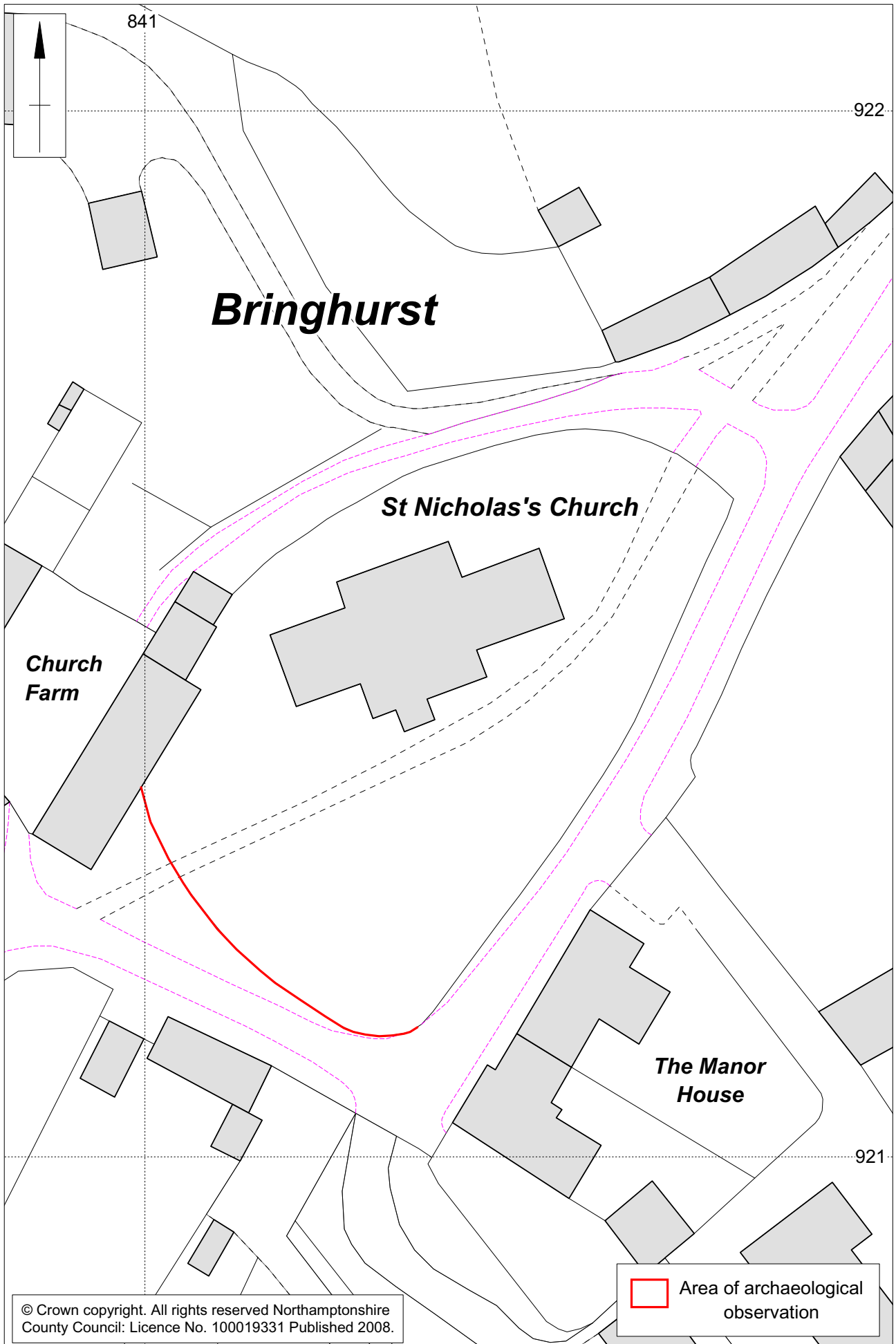
IFA 2000 *Standards and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief* Institute of Field Archaeologists

Leigh D 2007 *Specification for an archaeological watching brief at The Church of St Nicholas, Bringham, Leicestershire* Northamptonshire Archaeology Project Design



Scale 1:25,000

Site location Fig 1



Scale 1:500

Area of archaeological observation Fig 2



Plate 1: The Church of St Nicholas, Bringhurst



Plate 2: General view of the churchyard retaining wall



Plate 3: General view after removal of the retaining wall



Plate 4: The grave slab



Plate 5: The grave slab at the northern entrance to the churchyard



Plate 6: The grave slab at the northern entrance to the churchyard