



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATION,
INVESTIGATION, RECORDING, ANALYSIS AND
PUBLICATION OF WORKS AT
THE NOOK, CHURCH LANE, ALDERTON,
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE (NN12 7LP)**

NGR SP 73977 46981

On behalf of

Jacqui Vaughan

JUNE 2016

REPORT FOR Ms J. Vaughan
The Nook
Church Lane
Alderton
Towcester
NN12 7LP

WRITTEN BY Dr Pierre-Damien Manisse, MA, D.Phil, PCifA

ILLUSTRATION BY Autumn Robson

EDITED BY John Moore

AUTHORISED BY John Moore

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ENQUIRES TO John Moore Heritage Services
Hill View
Woodperry Road
Beckley
Oxfordshire OX3 9UZ

Tel: 01865 358300
Email: info@jmheritageservices.co.uk

JMHS Project No: 3352
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CONTENTS

	Page
<i>SUMMARY</i>	<i>1</i>
1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Site Location	1
1.2 Planning Background	1
1.3 Archaeological Background	1
2. AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION	3
3. STRATEGY	3
3.1 Research Design	3
3.2 Methodology	3
4. RESULTS	4
5. FINDS	6
5.1 Pottery	6
5.2 Glass	6
6. DISCUSSION	7
7. BIBLIOGRAPHY	7

FIGURES AND PLATE

	Page
Figure 1. Site Location	2
Figure 2. Plan and section	5
Plate 1. Post-excavation photograph	4

Summary

John Moore Heritage Services carried out an archaeological observation, investigation, recording, analysis and publication of works at The Nook, Church Lane, Alderton (NGR SP 73977 46981). The excavation for the foundations and the ground reduction for the planned new single storey extension of the existing building did not reveal any archaeological evidence.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The development site is located at The Nook on the north side of Church Lane in Alderton (centred on grid ref NGR SP 73977 46981). The area is currently used as a garden. The site lies at approximately 95m above OD. The underlying geology is Rutland Formation Mudstone.

1.2 Planning Background

South Northamptonshire District Council had granted planning permission for a single storey side extension to the existing dwelling (S/2015/1131/FUL). Due to the archaeological and historical importance of the surrounding area a condition was attached to the permission requiring a watching brief to be maintained during the course of building operations or construction works on the site. This was in line with NPPF and Local Planning policies. The Assistant Archaeological Advisor of Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) prepared a *Brief* for a programme of archaeological investigation (NCC 2015).

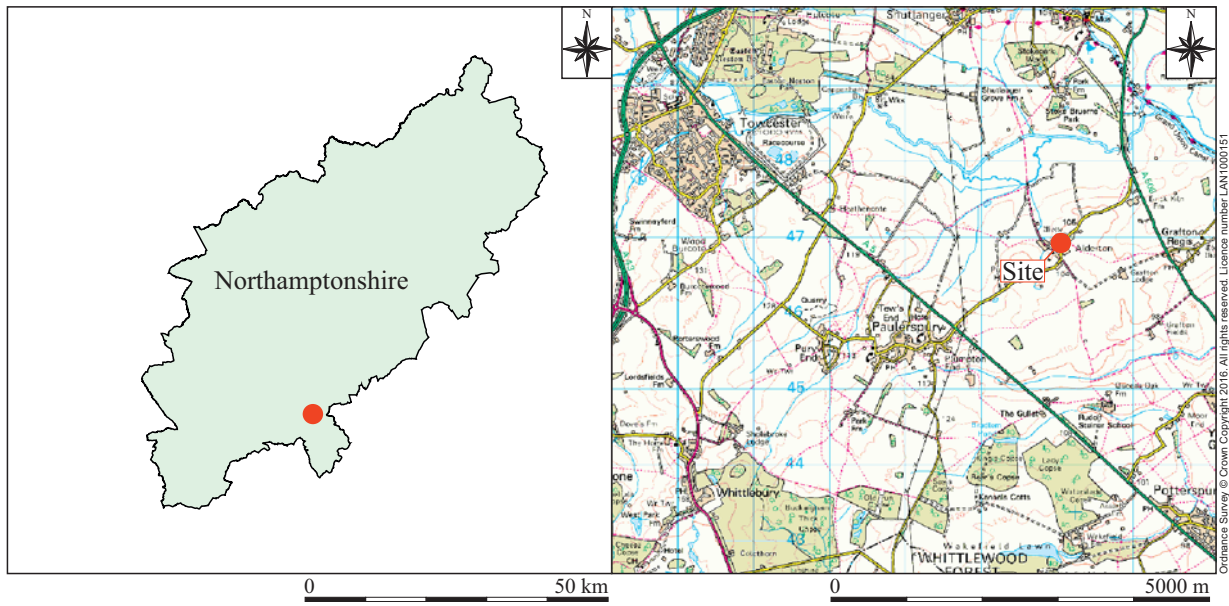
John Moore Heritage Services (JMHS) were commissioned to undertake this work, and a *Written Scheme of Investigation* (JMHS 2016) was prepared to satisfy the requirements of the *Brief*. This *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) proposed the methodology by which the archaeological investigation was to be carried out.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The following information is taken from the WSI, itself partially derived from the NCC Brief.

The site lies within the historic settlement of Alderton and between two Scheduled Monuments. To the east is the site of Castle Mount, the remains of a medieval ringwork of 11th – 12th century origins. To the west is another mound, thought to be a small motte and the predecessor to Castle Mount.

To the north and west of The Nook, and surrounding the motte, is a complex and extensive area of earthworks incorporating a number of ponds. These are the remains of formal gardens associated with a manor house built in the late 16th century, which appears to have stood on or near the site of Manor Court, Bramblewood and Mull House.



Key  Site boundary  Monitored area

Figure 1: Site location

Archaeological work in the village has centred on the ringwork and the areas around it. An adjacent site to the north east was subject to a geophysical survey during a Time Team project in 2000 but no further work was undertaken. A findspot of a late Iron Age/Romano British coin hoard is recorded here, found in 1821, but the exact location is unknown.

Archaeological works to the rear of other properties in Church Lane (JMHS 2014 and JMHS 2015) have identified a number of finds and features of medieval and post-medieval date, the earlier of which are likely to be related to the castle.

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The aims of the investigation as laid out in the Written Scheme of Investigation were as follows:

- To determine and understand the nature, function and character of an archaeological site in its cultural and environmental setting
- To make a record of significant archaeological remains revealed during the course of any operations that may disturb or destroy archaeological remains.

In particular:

- To attempt to establish the date, nature and extent of any activity or occupation in the development site.
- To establish the relationship of any remains found to the surrounding contemporary landscapes.
- To recover artefacts to assist in the development of type series within the region.
- To recover palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions as an intrinsic part of the investigation.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation in accordance with the Brief issued by NCC. Standard JMHS techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each deposit encountered, with scale plans and section drawings compiled where appropriate and possible. A photographic record was also produced.

The recording was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2014) and the principles of MoRPHE (English Heritage 2006).

3.2 Methodology

A 1.8 ton mini excavator Kubota KX018-4, equipped with a 0.60m wide digging bucket, was used.

One archaeologist was present on site during the ground reduction (approximately 0.35m deep) and digging of the foundations (1m deep, 0.60m wide, 8.70m long) for the extension. The footprint of the extension was about 21.62m². Previous groundwork to allow access to the back of the house for the machine and dumper was not monitored.

The resultant spoil from the works was visually scanned, especially for finds relating to the medieval period. A metal detector was also used in situ.

4 RESULTS (Figure 2)

All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers without brackets indicate features i.e. pit cuts, numbers in () show feature fills or deposits of material, while numbers in bold indicate structural features.

The top geological horizon (04) was as a very compact light grey/whitish clayey sand that could be the mudstone recorded by the British Geological Survey. It was thicker than 0.50m. Above it is a medium compacted mid brown clay colluvium (05) (0.30m thick maximum) that encompass more that the excavated area. It contained no finds. It is overlaid by a medium compacted mid greyish/yellowish brown clay to loamy clay (03) with very common unsorted limestone (0.01-0.30m), up to 0.40m thick. It could be a made-up ground relating to the construction phase of the house. Over it is either a garden soil (02), a very dark brown thick loam to clayey loam deposit encountered to the edge, or, closer to the house, a late 19th / early 20th century. rubbish deposit (01) with a similar infill mixed with rubbles (bricks, concrete, tile, stones).

The work was conducted under an overcast weather with wet ground but finished before any rain. Moreover excellent cooperation from the contractor and the landowner and good visibility ensured that the reliability of the results could be considered to be good.



Plate 1 : post-excavation photograph

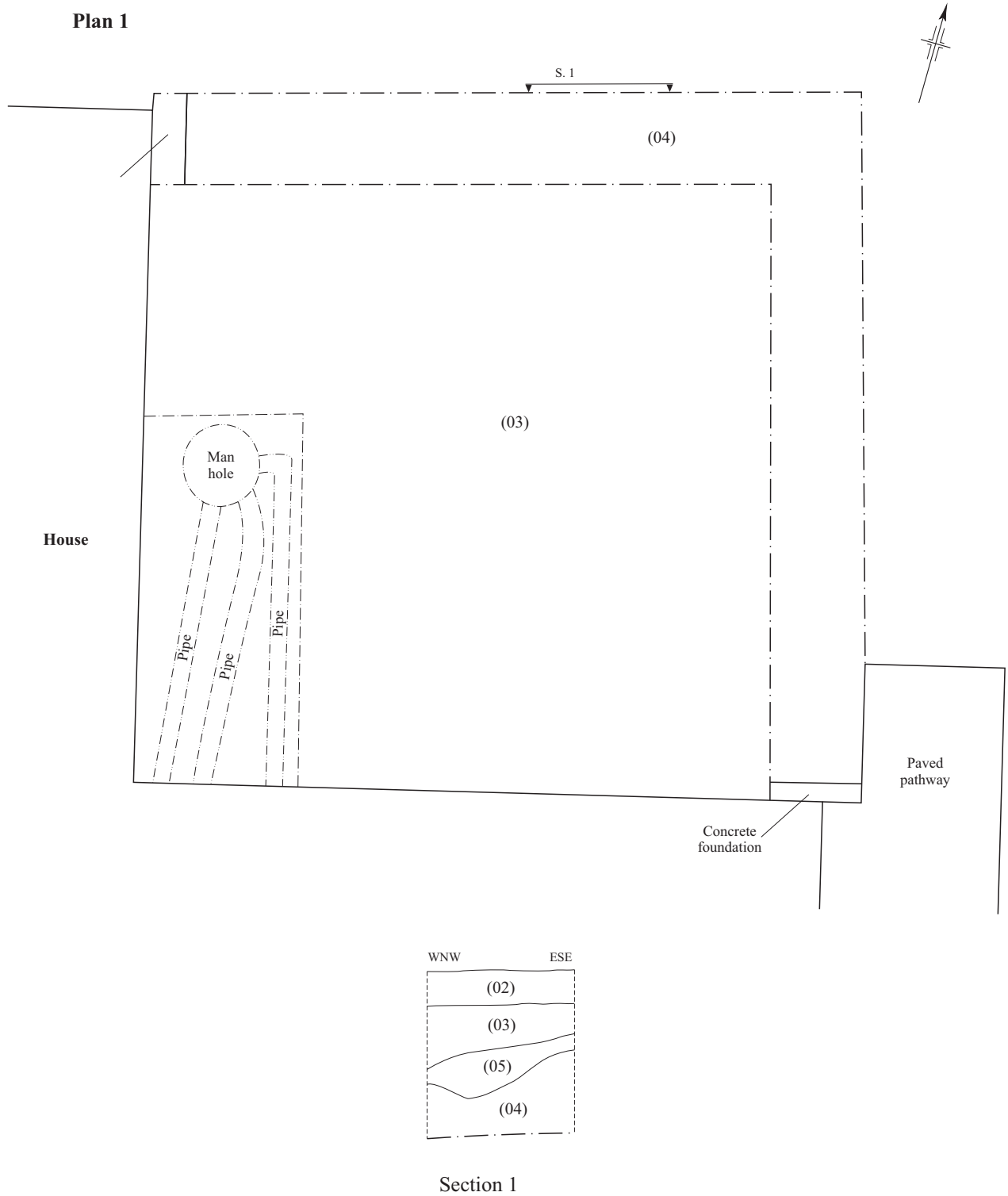


Figure 2: Plan and section

5 FINDS

In accordance with the *Selection, Retention and Dispersal of Archaeological Collections* guideline (1993) written by the Society of Museum Archaeologists, no finds were considered worth retaining.

5.1 Glass

The glass assemblage comprises 7 items with a total weight of 919g. It consists only of one light shade and 6 mineral water bottle sherds coming from the top layer (01), a rubbish deposit.

Description	Color	Preserved Height (mm)	Diameter (mm)	Weight (mm)	No. of sherds	Date range
Bottle sherd inscribed [...]BY /[THE W]ATLING WELL [TRA]DEMARK below the design of an house. Base inscribed RBB	Aquamarine	100	62	150	1 (rounded base)	late 19 th /20 th C.? (after 1857)
Bottle sherd inscribed TOWCESTER below a monogram	Aquamarine	97	65	107	1 (rounded base)	late 19 th /20 th C.?
Bottle sherd inscribed [MINERA]L WA[TER]	Aquamarine	115	-	50	1	late 19 th /20 th C.?
Bottle sherd inscribed /[...]R[...] [TO]WCES[TER] [...]N[...]	Aquamarine	65	-	29	1	late 19 th /20 th C.?
Bottle sherd	Aquamarine	65	74x71	213	1 (rectangular base)	late 19 th /20 th C.?
Bottle sherd inscribed [MINE]RAL WATER	Aquamarine	150	-	191	1	late 19 th /20 th C.?
Light shade	White opaque	92	116	179	1 (complete)	late 19 th /20 th C.?

5.2 Pottery

The pottery assemblage comprises 3 items with a total weight of 825g. It consists only of probable late 19th century. pottery coming from the top layer (01), a rubbish deposit. The rim looks similar to those of the ginger beer bottle.

Description	Fabric	Height (mm)	Diameter (mm)	Weight (mm)	No. of sherds	Date range
Creamy glazed bulk/master ink bottle with no mark	Stoneware	150	83	510	complete	late 19 th /20 th C.?
Glazed champagne shaped bottle inscribed WA[LKER & SOAMES] TOWCESTER & NORTHAMPTON /[GENUINE] OLD FASHI[ONED] GINGER BEER with maker's mark POWELL BRISTOL on the back, near the base.	Stoneware	90	68	248	2 (including full base)	Late 19 th C. (and before 1906)
Glazed rim, possibly from the above ginger beer bottle	Stoneware	-	77	67	rim	late 19 th /20 th C.?

6 DISCUSSION

Despite the proximity of the mounds and medieval remains revealed in the nearby Moat House, no archaeological evidence was found within the excavated perimeter.

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