

# Archaeological Evaluation

**The Secret Garden  
No. 58 The Homend  
Ledbury  
Herefordshire**

NGR: SO 70976 37870  
SMR No. 42252

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## BORDER ARCHAEOLOGY

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### REPORT SPECIFICATION

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This Report has been produced according to guidelines issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994; revised 2001) and reflects planning legislation & guidance notices



## 1. NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY

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*The evaluation located a small amount of evidence for post-medieval settlement, the earliest deposit located dating to the 18th century, although an undated deposit underlying this appeared to represent an earlier occupation layer.*

*Residual medieval pottery found within several of the post-medieval features suggests some medieval usage of the site, although the evaluation did not locate any definitive medieval features at its final depth.*



## 2. INTRODUCTION

Border Archaeology was instructed by Richard Harper Estate Development on behalf of Mr & Mrs Kirkwood to undertake an archaeological evaluation of land at No 58 The Homend in advance of the proposed redevelopment of the 'Secret Garden' site (SO 70976 37870).

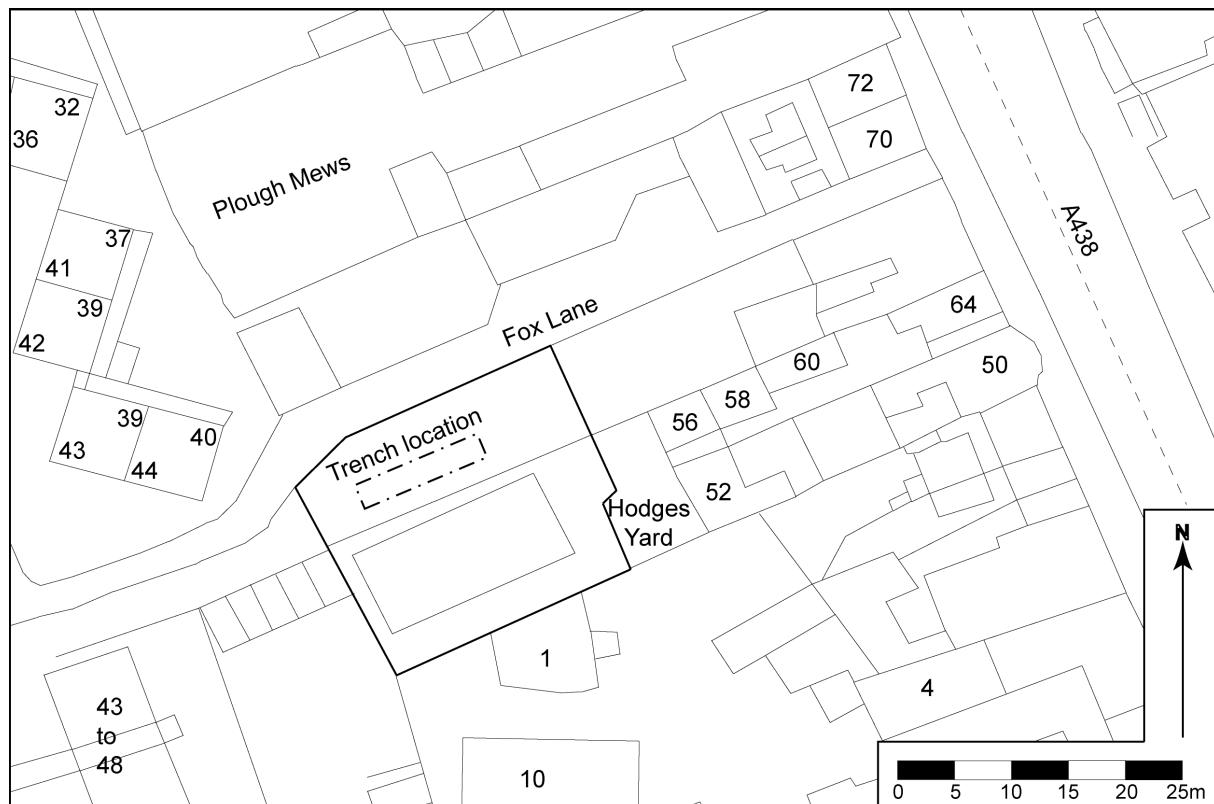


Fig. 1: Site location

The location of the trenching was based on instruction from Herefordshire Council and the practical limitations of the site.

The evaluation took place between the 1<sup>st</sup> June 2005 and the 8<sup>th</sup> June 2005.

Copies of the report will be sent to Mr & Mrs Kirkwood, Richard Harper Estate Development, Herefordshire Archaeology and the county Sites and Monuments Record.

### 2.1 Soil Characteristics and Geology

The site and surrounding area comprise typical argillic brown earths of the BROMYARD (571b) series consisting of well drained reddish fine silty soils over Devonian reddish silty



shale, siltstone and sandstone.

### 3. SITE SPECIFIC HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The earliest recorded settlement within the immediate environs of the site, first mentioned in 1288, comprised medieval tenement plots located along the Homend, then the most populous part of Ledbury. The site is situated at the N end of this area, with building density appearing to shrink outside this area. It has been suggested that a Saxon market and other pre-urban occupation may occur to the S of this area.

Notable post-medieval buildings within the locality of the site include a Methodist Chapel and Abbey House, a merchants dating to around 1600. Also within the local environs is the site of Horn House, the birthplace of John Masefield.

### 4. METHODOLOGY

A single trench measuring 12m NE-SW x 1.8m NW-SE was hand-excavated to the first archaeological horizon and features revealed within the trench were investigated in cross-section. The trench was recorded in plan (scale 1:20) and section (scale 1:10 or 1:20) and photographed using a medium-resolution (4.0 megapixel) digital format.

A temporary benchmark (value 73.65m AOD) was established on the site, based on an Ordnance Survey benchmark of 79.17m AOD located at No. 153 The Homend.

### 5. ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Four phases of activity were identified within the trench, comprising 23 contexts in total.

#### 5.1 Phase I

The earliest activity on site was represented by deposit (022), a light orangey-brown silty clay revealed in plan at the base of two features. This contained charcoal, CBM and mortar and extended >2.75m NE-SW x >1.8m NW-SE. It is likely that this was a layer rather than the fill of a feature and presumably represented an occupation surface. Overlying this deposit, and present throughout the trench, was an accumulated homogenous layer (012) containing pottery, glass, animal bone, clay pipe and CBM, which indicated disuse of the site following the cessation



▲ Plate 1: NW facing section of slot through [021]

of activity, as represented by (022).

### 5.2 Phase IIa

All features in both sub-phases of Phase II were located at the NE end of the trench, which may indicate that the earlier activity occurred closer to the street frontage.

Cut into (012) was large irregular pit [021] (**Plate 1**) that measured >6.4m x >1.6m in plan and extended beyond the trench to the NE and SE, losing definition to the SW. An investigative slot excavated across the feature at the point of its truncation by Phase IIb feature [013] revealed a depth of 0.5m and two fills. The primary fill was a dark grey silty clay containing occasional charcoal (020), overlying which was an apparent domestic waste deposit consisting of lighter brownish-grey silty clay containing pottery and animal bone (019).



▲ Plate 2: [014] looking SE

A second slot located at the point where [021] was truncated by Phase IIb pit [014] produced a light brownish-orange silty clay with frequent charcoal and CBM (016), which is likely to have been a dumped spread used to level the upper surface of [021]. The inclusions were similar to those within (011) and it may be that the two were deposited contemporaneously. Below context (016) was a deposit (017) identical to (019) and interpreted as part of the same fill.

### 5.3 Phase II b

Two features cut through the upper fills of [021]. Pit [014] (**Plate 2**) was roughly oval in form and measured 1.1m NE-SW x >1.2m NW-SE x 0.2m, extending beyond the edge of the trench to the SE. It was backfilled with building or demolition rubble mainly comprising mortar and brick (015). No finds were recovered from this deposit,



▲ Plate 3: Rectilinear [013] looking NW

although the bricks appeared to be 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century in date. Pit [014] cut through deposit (016) in [021].

Cut through fill (019) of [021] was rectilinear pit [013] (**Plate 3**) measuring 3.96m NE-SW x >0.3m NW-SE x 0.6m and extending beyond the trench to the NW. A 2.75m slot was excavated through the feature, which revealed two fills, the lower of which (018) was a 0.5m thick mid greyish-brown silty clay. Within this fill was pottery, animal bone and glass fragments and it seems likely to have been a domestic waste dumping deposit. Covering this was a 0.1m thick dark brownish-grey sandy clay (011) with frequent burnt debris, such as baked clay, CBM and charcoal. This deposit seems likely to have been the dumped residue of some light industrial process such as brick-making. Finds from this fill included pottery, animal bone, glass and CBM. It is possible that (011) and Phase IIa deposit (016) were deposited at roughly the same time, as the inclusions seemed to be similar, or it could be that the same process was occurring for some time on the site.

#### 5.4 Phase III

A phase of abandonment followed the backfill of the Phase IIb features, which saw the build-up of homogenous humic deposit (009) containing pottery, glass, animal bone, iron (Fe) objects, copper (Cu) objects, clay pipes and CBM. This deposit is seen as representing use of the site as allotments.

#### 5.5 Phase IVa

Cut into the SE end of the trench was a square pit [008] (**Plate 4**) measuring >0.73m NW-SE x >0.6m NE-SW x 0.41m and extending beyond the trench to the SW and SE. Part of a probable drainage system, the pit was lined with brick (007) and rendered in concrete on the internal face. On the SE face was a ceramic drain declining in a south-easterly direction away from the pit. The primary fill of the pit

was a probable collapse or demolition layer consisting of waterlogged clayey silt (006) containing a large quantity of modern debris, including pottery, glass, CBM, paper and Fe objects. Covering this was a brownish-yellow silty clay containing occasional modern debris (005), which seems to have been a capping deposit representing the deliberate backfilling of the feature.



▲ Plate 4: Drain [008] looking SW

A dump of reddish clay (010) was deposited over the whole of the trench area except around [008], suggesting that this feature was still active when (010) was deposited. No finds were recovered and it seems that this material was a levelling deposit or was perhaps intended to make a firmer surface than that provided by (009).

### 5.6 Phase IV b

Over (005) and the SW end of (010) was a mid brownish-grey silty deposit (004), which may have been dumped deliberately to bury [008] or may have represented silting of the void left in (010) by the collapse or demolition of [008]. No finds were recovered from (004).

Throughout the trench was dumped a dark brownish-grey clayey sand layer (003), which produced frequent modern finds, including glass, plastic, pottery, paper and a 2p coin (dated 2000). Over this was a heavily compacted gritty sand (002), which also contained modern finds, including pottery, glass, plastic and a penny (dated 1976). These deposits probably related to the use of the site as a car park. A thin layer of gravel was subsequently deposited over the entire site.

The trench revealed four distinct phases, of which Phase I can be divided into two sub-phases of deposition. (022), although revealed only partially in the base of later features, appears to have been an occupation layer. This layer was not evaluated and so no date could be obtained for it. In the second sub-phase, a broad homogenous deposit (012) accumulated over (022). This seemed to be a buried soil layer, probably indicating use of the site as a garden. Finds from (012) included pottery sherds and fragmentary glass objects of probable 18<sup>th</sup> century date.

Phase II consists of archaeological activity cutting into (012). Phase IIa is represented by the cut of large, irregular pit [021], which revealed two fills, the upper of which produced five sherds of post-medieval pottery.

Cut into the upper fill of [021] were two Phase IIb features. [014] was a broad, shallow pit, apparently used for the dumping of building rubble, including mortar and brick of apparent



▲ Plate 5: Composite photograph of trench

18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century date. [013] was a rectilinear pit measuring nearly 4m NE-SW and extending beyond the trench to the NW. The lower fill (018) produced a number of green-glazed pottery sherds of late medieval date and the upper fill (011) produced 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century pottery and seems to have been a dump of burnt material that included charcoal, baked clay and CBM. It seems likely that the initial function of [013] was a waste pit, which was later reused to dump material possibly relating to industrial processes such as brick-making.

Over these features accumulated Phase III deposit (009), a broad homogenous humic layer probably relating to use of the site as allotments.

Cut into this was Phase IVa feature [008], a square brick-lined drainage pit that appears to



►Plate 6: View of trench, looking NE

have been a waste drain, possibly relating to the sluicing of animal effluent or some form of toilet. The primary fill of the drain was a collapse or destruction deposit and this contained modern finds, including paper.

During Phase IVb a broad dump of reddish clay (010) was deposited, apparently to level the ground surface. This dump ended before [008], suggesting the feature was still in use when (010) was laid down. After [008] went out of use, silty deposit (004) accumulated over it, possibly filling the footprint of whatever stood over the drain, although this is unclear. Layer (003) was then dumped over the whole trench, presumably as a footing for the subsequent layer (002), a heavily compacted gritty sand. These deposits are interpreted as relating to use of the site as a car park.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Taken as a whole, the trench represents a considerable amount of deposition in a relatively short space of time; the earliest datable deposit found (012) appeared to be 18<sup>th</sup> century. Layer (022) exposed below this contained mortar flecking, CBM and charcoal and is likely to have represented a further occupation surface. As no date could be obtained for this layer during the scope of the evaluation, it is impossible to say at what depth any potential medieval or earlier archaeology may lie. The presence of residual medieval pottery in fills (018) and (020) may suggest that there is some medieval activity in the vicinity of the trench.

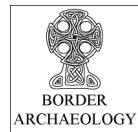
## 7. COPYRIGHT

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## 8. CONTEXT REGISTER

(001)	Gravel layer. Maximum 0.04m thick. Overlies (002)
<i>INTERPRETATION</i>	<i>Modern dump of Cotswold gravel forming surface</i>
(002)	Heavily compacted light yellowish-brown gritty sand. Frequent gravel and small angular stones. Maximum 0.1m thick. Occasional modern finds. Underlies (001), overlies (003).
<i>INTERPRETATION</i>	<i>Dumped hardcore material, probably relating to use of site as car park.</i>
(003)	Friable dark brownish-grey clayey sand. Occasional charcoal flecks and gravel. Moderate CBM. Deposit thicker towards SW end of trench, up to maximum of 0.44m and minimum 0.05m (NE end of trench). Occasional modern finds, including glass, paper, plastic. Underlies (002), overlies (004)
<i>INTERPRETATION</i>	<i>Dumped modern material, possibly relating to use of site as car park.</i>
(004)	Friable mid brownish-grey clayey silt. No inclusions. Maximum 0.1m thick, covers 0.8m <sup>2</sup> area as seen in trench. No finds recovered. Overlies (005) and (010)
<i>INTERPRETATION</i>	<i>Dump of silty material apparently confined to area covering collapsed drain [008] and may be an intentional burying of that feature.</i>
(005)	Friable light brownish-yellow silty clay. Occasional modern debris including CBM. 0.09m thick throughout area framed by (007). Underlies (005), overlies (006), fills [008].
<i>INTERPRETATION</i>	<i>Clayey backfill of drainage feature [008].</i>
(006)	Loose, waterlogged dark grey clayey silt. Frequent modern debris. Occasional medium angular stones. Frequent snail shells where waterlogged. 0.32m deep throughout area framed by (007). Finds included pottery, glass, CBM, paper and Fe objects. Underlies (005), overlies (007), fills [008].
<i>INTERPRETATION</i>	<i>Collapse or demolition deposit in drainage feature [008].</i>
(007)	Brick-built lining of drain [008]. Bricks measured 240mm x 115m x unknown depth. Internal face of drain lined with concrete. Bricks bonded by modern cement. On SE internal face a ceramic drain was inserted declining SE from drain. Whole lining measured 0.6m NE-SW x 0.73m NW-SE x 0.41m. Base of drain lined with concrete which may have covered a brick floor. Lining not removed during evaluation. Underlies (006). Fills [008].
<i>INTERPRETATION</i>	<i>Concrete rendered brick lining of drain [008].</i>
[008]	Squarish cut with 90° corners. As seen in trench, measured 0.73m NW-SE x 0.6m NE-SW x >0.41m. Break of slope at top and base sharp, sides straight and vertical, base flat. Filled by (005), (006) and (007), cuts (009).
<i>INTERPRETATION</i>	<i>Brick-lined drain of Victorian construction. May have related to toilet facilities or to sluicing of animal effluent.</i>
(009)	Firm dark brownish-grey humic silty clay. Frequent CBM flecks and lumps. Frequent mortar and charcoal flecks. Moderate small-medium angular stones. Maximum 0.3m thick. Finds included pottery, glass, animal bone and Fe objects. Underlies (010), cut by [008], overlies (011) and (015).
<i>INTERPRETATION</i>	<i>Buried soil layer, probably relating to use of site as allotments.</i>

(010)	Firm mid reddish-brown sandy clay. Moderate CBM flecks and fragments. Maximum of 0.2m thick and terminated 0.26m NE of SW end of trench. No finds recovered. Underlies (004), overlies (009).
<i>INTERPRETATION</i>	<i>Levelling layer, presumably relating to use of site as a car park.</i>
(011)	Friable dark brownish-grey sandy clay. Frequent CBM lumps and patches. Frequent burnt clay lumps and flecks. Frequent charcoal flecks and patches. Occasional small angular stones. Maximum 0.18m thick. Finds included pottery, animal bone, glass and CBM. Underlies (009), overlies (018), fills [013].
<i>INTERPRETATION</i>	<i>Dump of burnt material in [013]. May have been intended as a levelling dump or may indicate reuse of feature as a raking pit or similar.</i>
(012)	Firm mid greyish-brown silty clay. Frequent CBM flecks. Moderate charcoal flecks. Moderate small angular stones. Occasional medium-large angular stones. Maximum >0.2m thick. Not fully excavated. Cut by [021], overlies (022).
<i>INTERPRETATION</i>	<i>Buried soil layer.</i>
[013]	NE-SW linear / rectilinear cut measuring 3.96m NE-SW x >0.3m NW-SE x 0.6m. Cut extended beyond limit of trench to NW. Break of slope at top sharp, sides steep and straight, break of slope at base gradual. Undulating base incorporated possible post indentation near SW end. This depression was irregular and only 0.02m deeper than the base of the feature so may have been anomalous. Filled by (011) and (018), cuts (019).
<i>INTERPRETATION</i>	<i>Pit or linear of uncertain function. Primary function appears to have been as a waste pit; possible subsequent use as a pit for burnt material and CBM – possible waste from an industrial process such as brick-making.</i>
[014]	Sub-oval cut measuring >1.2m NW-SE x 1.1m NE-SW x 0.2m. Break of slope at top sharp, sides steep and straight on NE, gradual and straight on SW and NW, break of slope at base gradual, base flat. Filled by (015), cuts (016).
<i>INTERPRETATION</i>	<i>Waste pit, used to dispose of building rubble.</i>
(015)	Friable mid brownish-grey sandy clay. Frequent brick rubble and mortar, including broad lenses of mortar. Maximum 0.2m thick. Finds included CBM. Underlies (009), fills [014].
<i>INTERPRETATION</i>	<i>Dump of building / demolition rubble in pit [014].</i>
(016)	Loose-friable light brownish-orange silty clay. Frequent charcoal and CBM flecks and lumps. 0.15m deep where sampled. Finds included CBM. Cut by [014], overlies (017).
<i>INTERPRETATION</i>	<i>CBM and charcoal spread in top of pit [021].</i>
(017)	Firm light brownish-grey silty clay. Frequent charcoal flecks. Occasional CBM flecks and lumps. 0.25m deep where sampled. No finds recovered. Underlies (016). Same as (019), fills [021].
<i>INTERPRETATION</i>	<i>Probable domestic waste deposit.</i>
(018)	Friable mid greyish-brown silty clay. Occasional small angular stones. Moderate charcoal flecks. 0.5m thick. Finds included pottery, animal bone and glass. Underlies (011), fills [013].
<i>INTERPRETATION</i>	<i>Apparent primary fill of pit [013], probable domestic waste deposit.</i>
(019)	Firm light brownish-grey silty clay. Occasional charcoal flecks. Occasional mortar flecks. Maximum of 0.2m thick in sampled area. Finds included pottery and animal bone. Underlies (016), overlies (020), same as (017), fills [021].

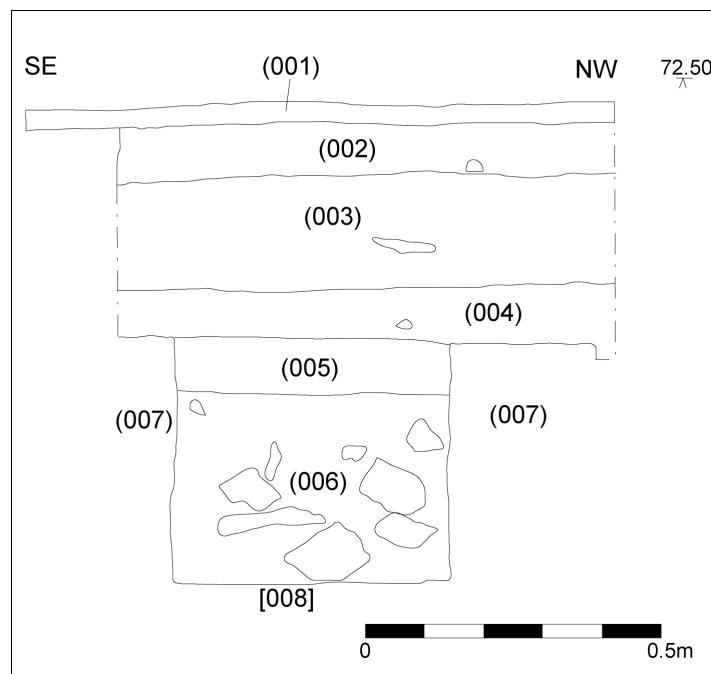


<b>INTERPRETATION</b>	<i>Probable domestic waste deposit.</i>
(020)	Firm dark greyish-brown silty clay. Occasional charcoal flecks. Occasional small rounded stones. Maximum of 0.25m thick in sampled area. No finds recovered. Underlies (019), fills [021].
<b>INTERPRETATION</b>	<i>Apparent primary fill of pit [021].</i>
[021]	Large irregular pit truncated by pits [013] and [014]. >6.4m NE-SW x >1.6m NW-SE x 0.54m where sampled. Break of slope top sharp, sides gradual and concave for roughly half of the depth then dropping away sharply, break of slope at base sharp, base flat where visible. Filled by (016), (017)=(019) and (020), sampled via a 1m wide slot and an exploratory slot where truncated by [014], cuts (012).
<b>INTERPRETATION</b>	<i>Large pit of uncertain function. From the small area sampled it appears to have been a rubbish or waste pit.</i>
(022)	Firm and plastic light orangey-brown silty clay. Moderate charcoal flecks and patches. Occasional CBM flecks and fragments. Occasional mortar flecking. Deposit exposed in plan only. Underlies (012).
<b>INTERPRETATION</b>	<i>Homogenous deposit revealed in sondage across [021] and [013] and also in the base of [013]. This may be the fill of a further feature, although it seems more likely to be a layer.</i>



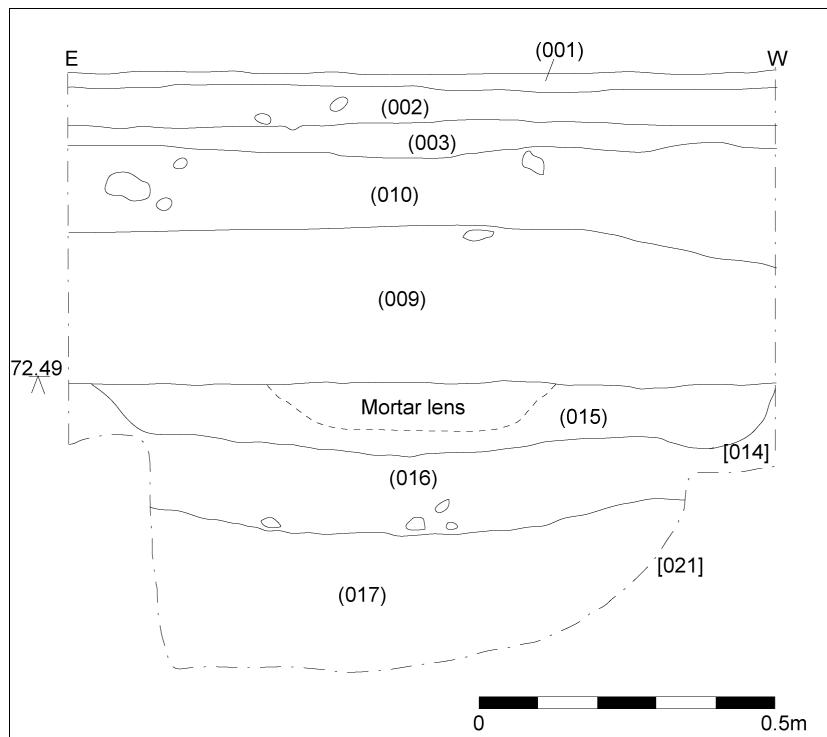
## 9. ILLUSTRATIONS

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▲ Fig 4: NW-facing section through (021)

▼ Fig 5: NE-facing section through (008)





## 10. SITE SUMMARY

<b>Report Name and Title</b>	Archaeological Evaluation at 'Secret Garden' Homend Ledbury Herefordshire	
<b>Contractors Name and Address</b>	Border Archaeology, PO 36, Leominster, Herefordshire, HR6 OYQ	
<b>Site Name</b>	'Secret Garden' No. 58 The Homend Ledbury Herefordshire	
<b>Grid Reference (8 fig)</b>	SO 70976 37870	<b>Planning Application Number:</b> —
<b>SMR number/s of site</b>	SMR No. 42252	
<b>Date of Field Work</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> —8 <sup>th</sup> June 2005	
<b>Date of Report</b>	October 2005	
<b>NUMBER AND TYPE OF FINDS</b>		
<b>Pottery</b>	<b>Period:</b> Late medieval <b>Number of sherds</b> 5	
<b>Other</b>	<b>Period:</b> Post-medieval <b>Quantity</b> 12	
<b>NUMBER AND TYPE OF SAMPLES COLLECTED</b>		
<b>Sieving for charred plant remains</b>	<b>No of Features sampled</b> N/A <b>No of buckets</b> N/A	
<b>Pollen</b>	<b>No of Columns/spot samples</b> N/A <b>Name of pollen specialist</b> N/A	
<b>Bone</b>	<b>Number of buckets sieved for bone</b> N/A	<b>Period</b> N/A
<b>Other</b>	<b>Type and specialist</b> N/A	
<b>Summary of the report</b>	The earliest datable deposit found (012) appeared to be 18 <sup>th</sup> century. Layer (022) exposed below this contained mortar flecking, CBM and charcoal and is likely to have represented a further occupation surface. As no date could be obtained for this layer during the scope of the evaluation, it is impossible to say at what depth any potential medieval or earlier archaeology may lie. The presence of residual medieval pottery in fills (018) and (020) suggests the presence of some medieval activity in the vicinity of the trench.	