

**Programme of archaeological work
at 34, Abbey Road
Pershore
Worcestershire**

WSM 41756

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Programme of archaeological work at 34 Abbey Road, Pershore, Worcestershire

Introduction

A programme of archaeological work was undertaken at 34 Abbey Road, Worcestershire (WSM 41756; SO 9454 4567; Fig 1) at the request of Mr John Mills, according to a brief provided by Worcestershire County Archaeology Service (planning ref W/06/0787). This was undertaken during excavation of the driveway to the immediate north of the property for the installation of new services.

Brief background to the site

The programme of archaeological work took place in order to investigate the presumed position of the original Abbey precinct boundary. It is believed that it could have followed the parish boundary between St Andrews and Holy Cross parishes, itself aligned upon a road running north-south. This road was abandoned in the mid 20th century when Abbey Road was built. Documentary research took place on 19th October 2009 at Worcestershire County Record Office and the Worcestershire Historic Environment Record.

The map evidence

The earliest available map is the Ordnance Survey map of 1883 (Fig 2.1). This shows the location of the site as being occupied, to the west by a road running north to south and to the east by an open area of grassland with trees. The Ordnance Survey map of 1904 (Fig 2.2) shows a similar situation, with the land to the west now being occupied by an orchard. By the time of the Ordnance Survey map of 1938 (Fig 2.2) the existing Abbey Road had been laid out and the plots for the existing properties on its western side were beginning to be laid out.

Information from Worcestershire Historic Environment Record

A number of pieces of work have been undertaken with one objective being the location of the abbey precinct boundary (WSM 11870). So far no conclusive evidence for the western boundary has been found.

The abbot of Pershore's part of the town was High Street, where excavation shows occupation commenced in the late 11th or 12th century, and Newlands (west of the abbey) where a new suburb was laid out by the 13th century (Dalwood 1996). Following the abbey's dissolution in 1539, most of the abbey precinct became a private house and grounds

The identification of extent of the Anglo-Saxon precinct is based on documentary evidence for the medieval precinct. It is suggested that the precinct is broadly defined by the known medieval boundary on the west, south and north (with minor variations). The limits of the precinct cannot be precisely defined at present and it was anticipated that the current project might throw light upon the western boundary.

Analysis

The fieldwork

Fieldwork took place on the 28th October 2009. The entire area between 34 Abbey Road, the property boundary to the north and the public highway to the east was stripped to the natural subsoil (context 002), which lay at a depth of between 0.3 and 0.45m.

Description

Only brief descriptions of the deposits are given here. Full descriptions of the contexts are given in Appendix 1. The typical deposit profile (Fig 3) comprised the topsoil (context 001) overlying a mid orange brown sandy gravel (context 002). The only features cut into the natural subsoil were modern service trenches (contexts 003, 004 and 005; Figs 3 and 4).

The finds

No finds were recovered from the excavations.

Discussion

The area of the programme of archaeological work was heavily disturbed by service trenches dating to the mid 20th century and later. However, in the areas where undisturbed deposits remained, these comprised solely of the undisturbed natural subsoil. No sign of a boundary consisting of a ditch was present.

There are a couple of possible explanations for this. Primary among these is that the western boundary of the abbey precinct lay a short distance to the east or west. The area of the archaeological project was restricted by existing property boundaries and development. The precinct boundary could lie under the existing Abbey Road or be in the back gardens of the current properties, beyond the limits of the stripped area. It would still have, broadly speaking, followed the parish boundary described above which may have became truly fossilized only in the mid 19th century, with the development of systematic and detailed Ordnance Survey mapping.

The western precinct boundary may not have taken the form of a ditch. If, for example, it was a hedge bank, or merely a hedge, it is unlikely that it has survived in any archaeologically recognisable form to the present day, given that the site was subject to extensive development in the mid 20th century.

Summary

The archaeological project demonstrated that, notwithstanding the heavy level of modern disturbance, the Abbey precinct boundary, if it took the form of a ditch, was not located in the position of the site strip.

Bibliography

Dalwood, H, 1996 *Archaeological assessment of Pershore, Hereford and Worcester*, Hereford and Worcester County Council, 335

Acknowledgements

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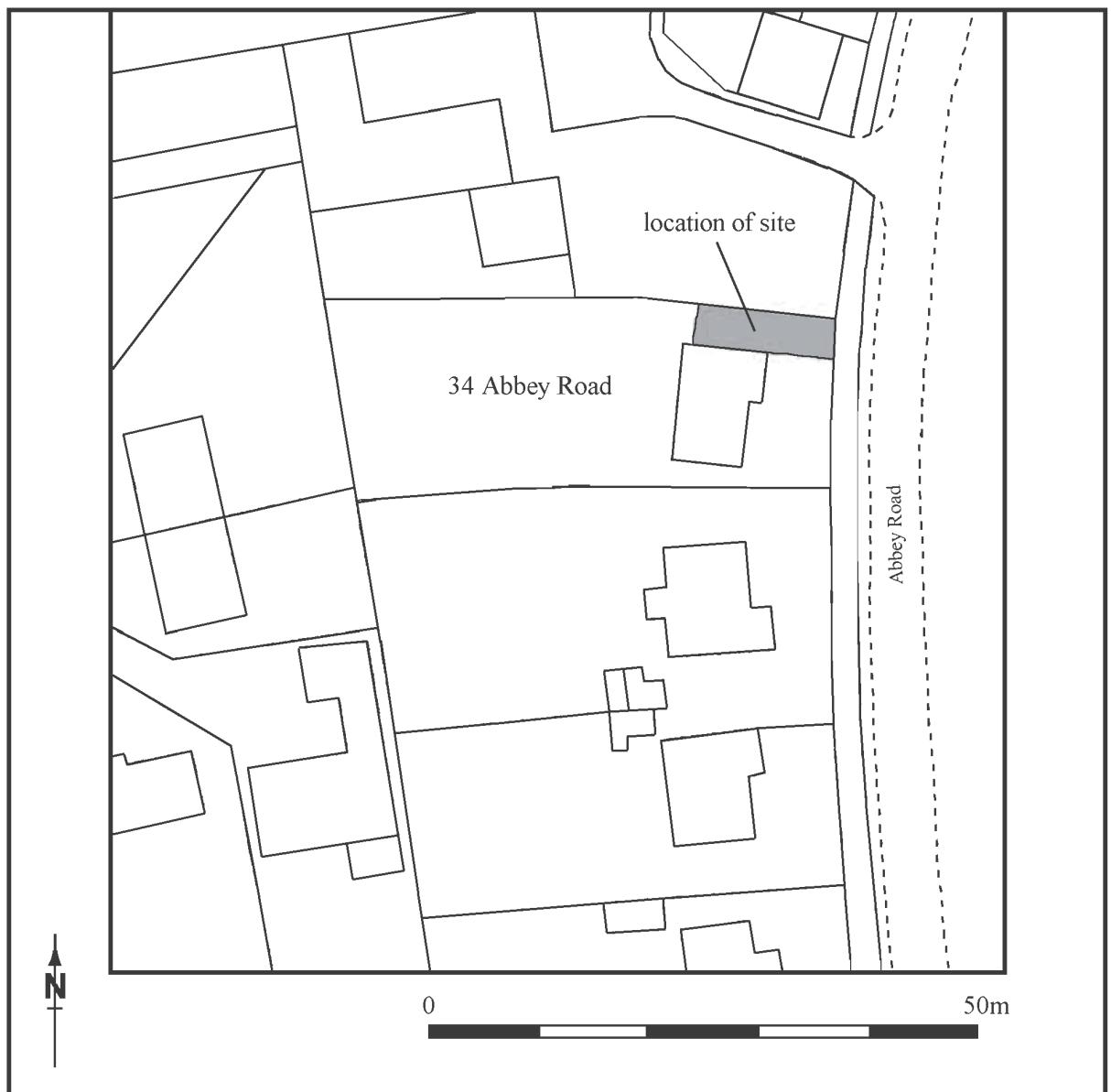
Archive

The archive consists of

- | | |
|---|-------------------------|
| 1 | Annotated scale drawing |
| 1 | CD-ROM |



Worcestershire



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Fig 1: Location of site

1883

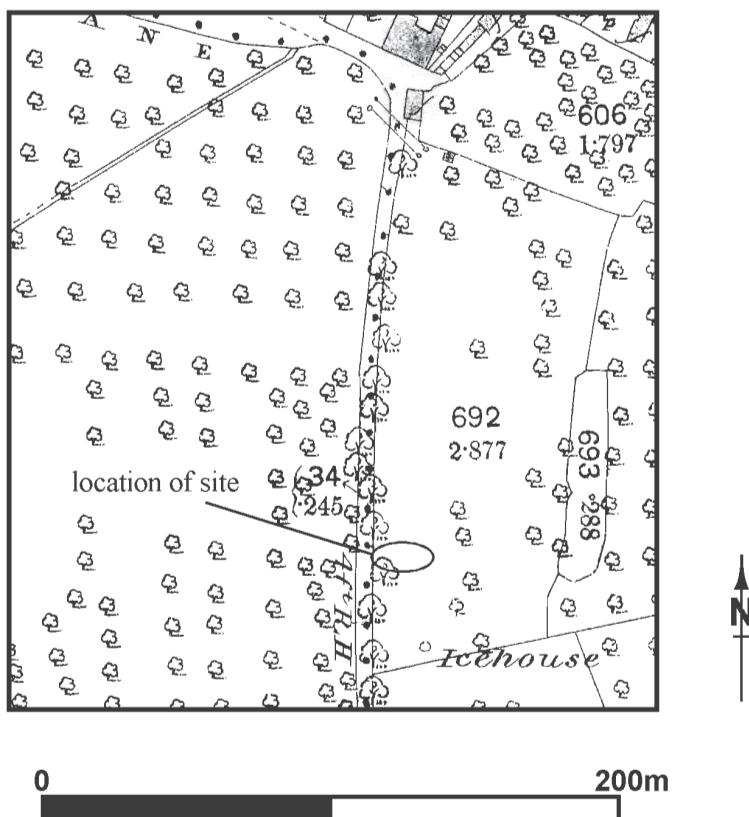
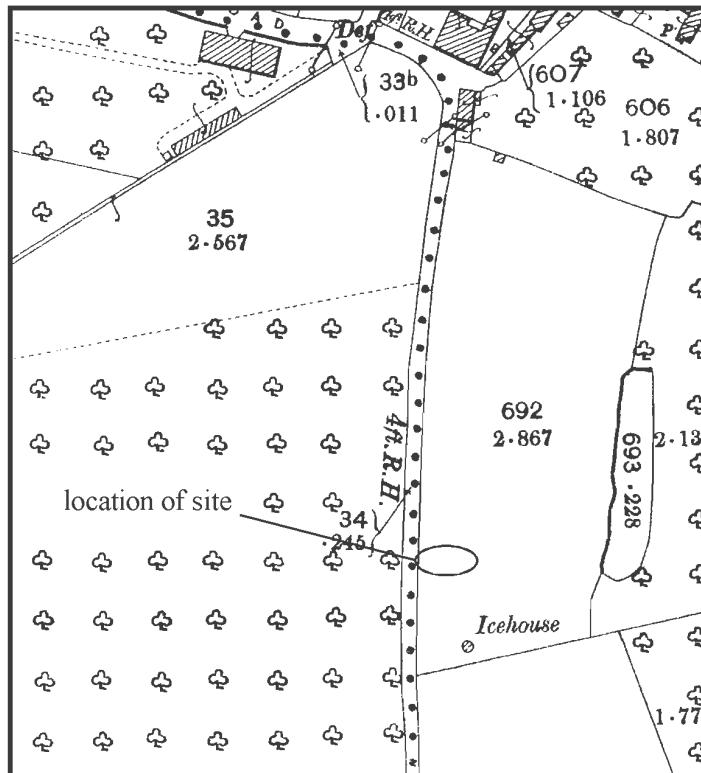
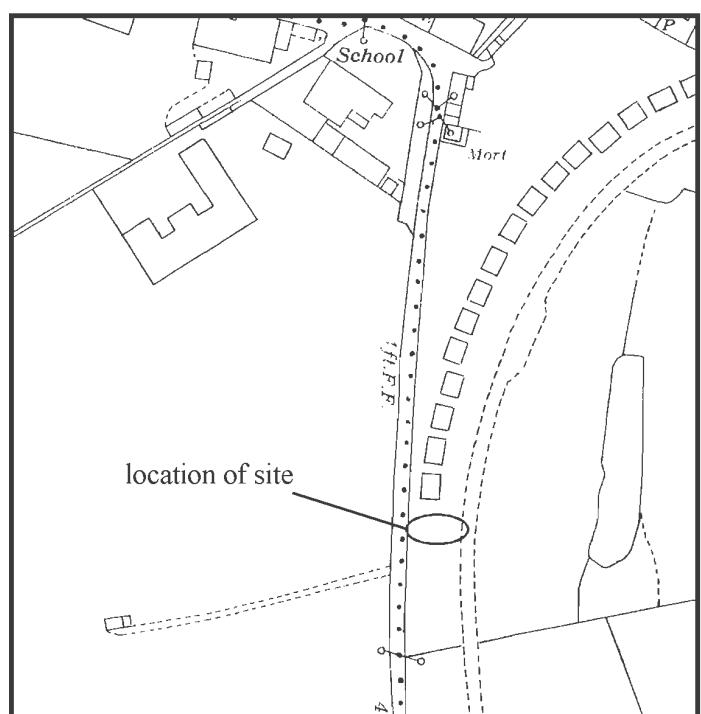


Fig 2.1 Historic mapping

1904



1938



0

200m



Fig 2.2 Historic mapping

Abbey Road

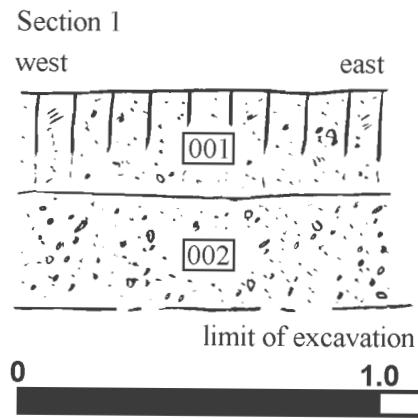
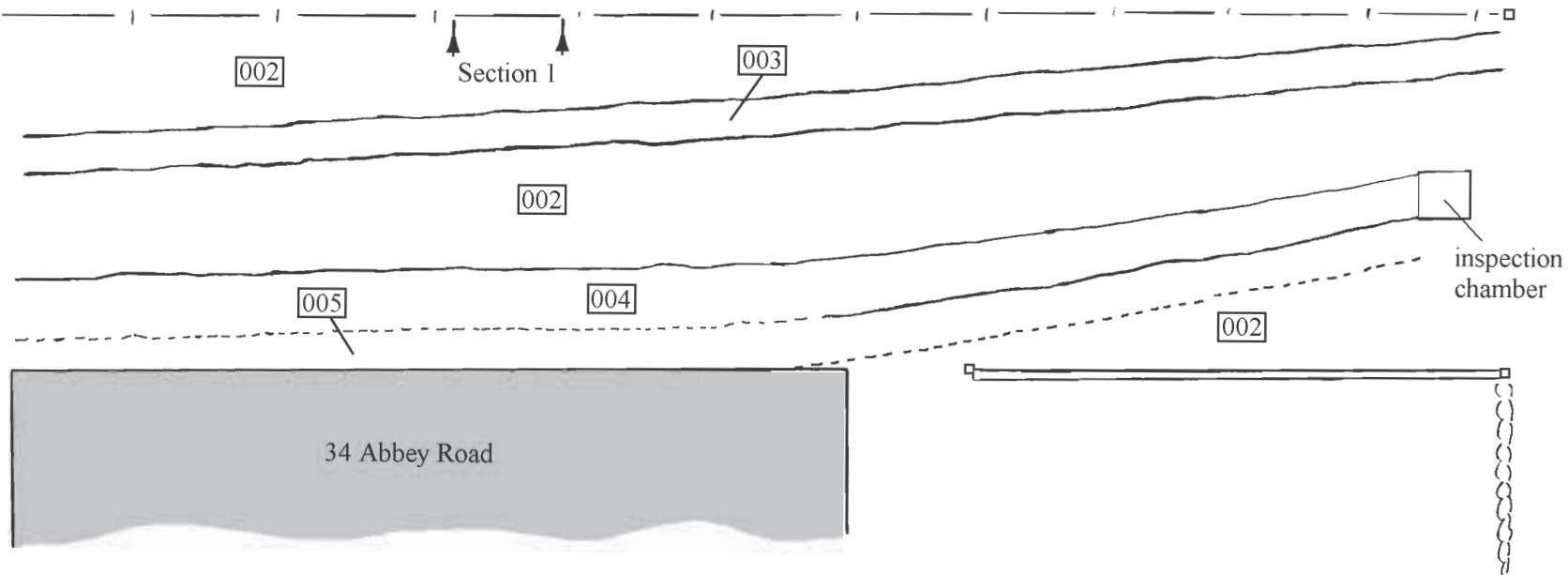


Fig 3: Trench plan and section



Fig 4: General view of the excavations

Appendix 1 List of the contexts

Context number	Description	Interpretation
001	Dark grey brown sandy loam	Topsoil
002	Mid orange brown sandy gravel	Natural subsoil
003	Light to mid grey clayey loam	Fill of electricity service trench
004	Light to mid grey clayey loam	Fill of foul sewer service trench
005	Mid grey clayey loam	Fill of combined gas and surface water service trench