

# ***Marches Archaeology***

## **Moat House Longnor Shropshire**

**A report on an  
archaeological watching brief**

February 2005

*Marches Archaeology Series 368*

*Archaeological Consultants and Contractors*

**This report is produced by**

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**Moat House  
Longnor  
Shropshire**

**A report on an  
archaeological watching brief**

**NGR: SJ 4935 0023**

**Report by  
Jo Wainwright**

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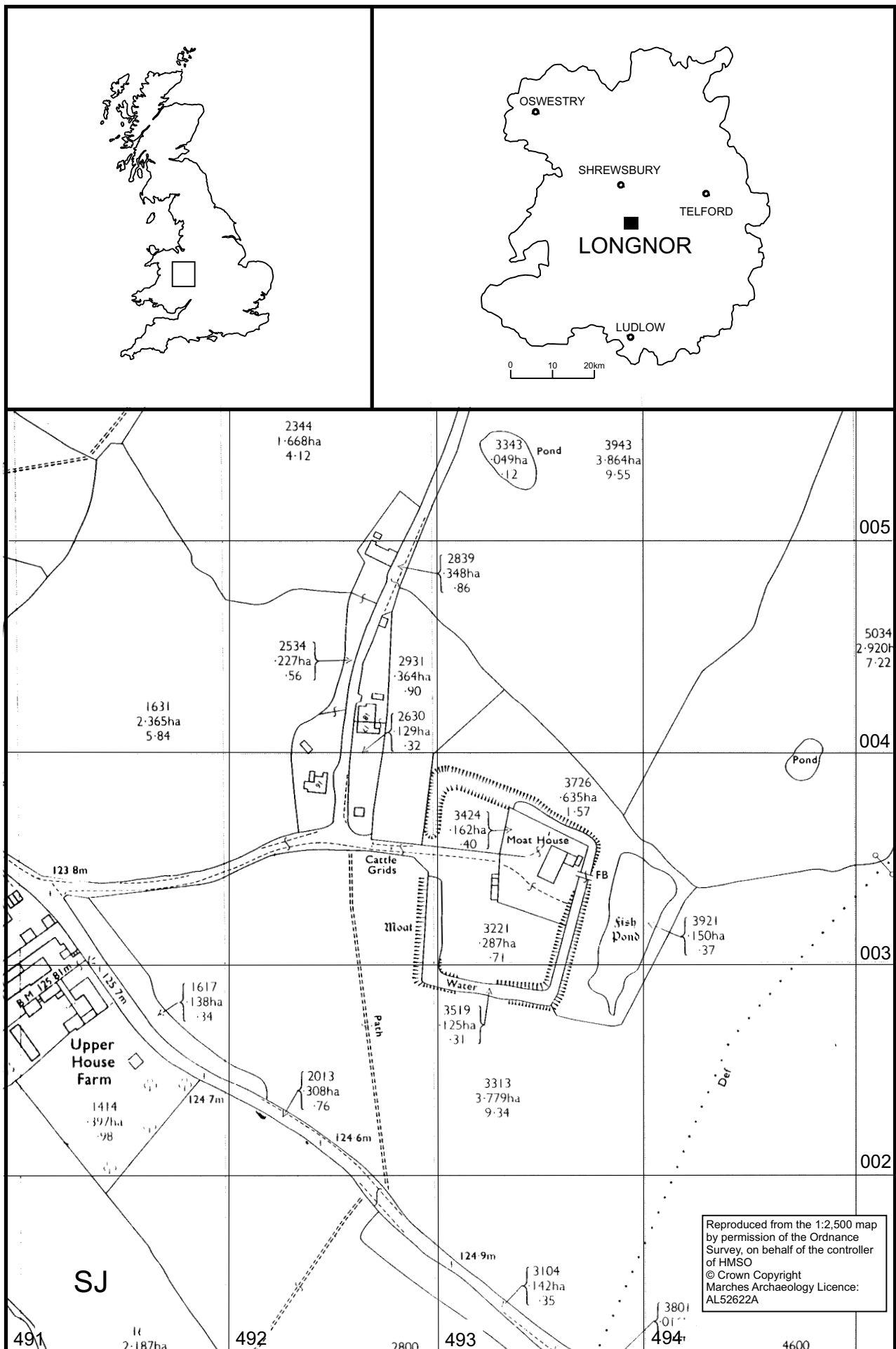


Fig. 1: Location of the site

**Moat House  
Longnor  
Shropshire**

**NGR: SJ 435 0023**

**A report on an  
archaeological watching brief**

*Summary*

*A watching brief at Moat House, Longnor, Shropshire uncovered three features of probably a medieval date. Two small pits, which were probably animal burials, and a gully.*

*From the results of the evaluation and the watching brief it can be surmised that during probably the 13<sup>th</sup> century the upcast from the excavation of the moat was spread over the study area. Therefore if earlier features and deposits exist they may be buried underneath the moat upcast. During the medieval period and early post-medieval period it seems likely that this part of the moat platform was an open area with no standing buildings within it. However, the post holes excavated in the evaluation in the west end of the area could represent an early post-medieval wall line though they may delineate a fence.*

*In the later post-medieval period a drain running east to west was excavated as were several probable garden features. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the whole area was cobbled for a yard surface.*

## **1 Introduction**

Planning consent has been granted for the construction of a garage at Moat House, Longnor, Shropshire. The site is scheduled as an Ancient Monument (ref. 33809). The site is situated at NGR: SJ 4935 0023 (Fig. 1).

The site has been the subject of an evaluation excavation (Wainwright, 2004). As a result of the evaluation the local English Heritage Inspector advised that in order that the archaeological resource was adequately protected an archaeological watching brief be carried out during ground works associated with the proposed development. Scheduled Monument consent was granted for these works.

Simon Corner (the client) commissioned Marches Archaeology to carry out the archaeological work.

## **2 Aims and objectives**

The scope of the project was defined in the evaluation report as:

The proposed impact levels of the development are no deeper than 950mm below ground level. Significant archaeological features and deposits were seen above this level. Although no features or deposits can be securely dated to the medieval period it seems likely that at least one feature is of a medieval date [10].

The archaeological resource is such that further archaeological provision is necessary concentrating on the remains of the medieval period. In view of the size of the proposed garage it was recommended that the build footprint be stripped under archaeological supervision and a period of up to 10 person days be allowed for investigating and recording features of archaeological interest with provision for a report on the results.

The purpose of an archaeological watching brief is defined by the Institute of Field Archaeologists as:

‘to allow, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be established (or established with sufficient accuracy) in advance of development or other potentially disruptive works’

and:

‘to provide an opportunity, if needed, for the watching archaeologist to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief itself are not sufficient to support a treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard’.

## **3 Methodology**

### *Documentary research*

No further documentary research was carried out for the project.

### *Fieldwork*

Observations and recording was undertaken of all ground breaking activity in association with the development. This included the site strip and excavations of the foundations for the garage (Fig. 2). An archaeologist was on site for 2 days in November 2004.

The recording system included written, drawn and photographic data. The primary written record was by means of site notes, accompanied by sketches. Context numbers were allocated and context record sheets completed. A multi-context plan of significant data was made. The photographic record was made using black and white negative and colour transparency film. If deposits or features had been encountered for which the resources allocated to the watching brief were not sufficient to support a treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard the client, the Local Planning Authority’s Archaeological Advisor and any other relevant parties would have been informed in order to discuss, agree and implement an appropriate response, either within a previously agreed contingency arrangement or supplemental thereto.

### *Office work*

On completion of fieldwork a site archive was prepared. The written, drawn and photographic data was catalogued and cross-referenced and a summary produced. The artefactual data was processed, catalogued and cross-referenced and summaries produced.

Assessment was based on the site archive. The one sherd of pottery, which required specialist assessment, was submitted for such work.

## **4 Site description**

The study area is situated on the outskirts of the village of the Longnor and consists of the scheduled ancient monument of Moat House moated site and fishpond (Fig. 1). The site of the garage is within the internal platform of the moated island about 15 metres south of the medieval house (Fig. 2). Several earthworks were noted within the lawned area. The underlying drift geology is boulder clay.

## **5 Archaeological and historical background**

It is believed that the moat at Moat House is of a later 13<sup>th</sup> century date and originally surrounded the homestead of Richard, son of Osbert of Diddlebury, a clerk of the lord of the manor (VCH, 1968). The present house dates from the later 14<sup>th</sup> century and it is possible that it was built by Edward de Acton as in 1370 he was given licence for a private oratory in Longnor (*op cit*). His descendants occupied it as the manor house of their half of the manor from 1377 to 1610 (*ibid*). After 1610 Moat House was a farmhouse until 1865 when it was divided into two cottages. In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century restoration work was undertaken.

The house as it stands today is all that remains of a more substantial group of buildings. Four small evaluation trenches excavated in 1987 uncovered possible evidence of an earlier structure as well as possible vestiges of a chamber block (Hislop and Horton, 1987).

A survey of the Estate of Robert Corbett in 1794 (Fig. 3) shows the study area as parts of two parcels of land, Messuage and Old Pond and Moat Yard. Unfortunately no buildings are shown on the plan. The First Edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey Plan of 1882 shows the house as it appears today and also shown is the existing pig sty (Fig. 4). Two other buildings are shown within the moated enclosure but are not in the vicinity of the area of the evaluation trench. The boundary shown to the south of the house and pig sty still exists today in the form of a flower bed between the lawn and gravelled area. Although the flower bed was overgrown several stones were identified and this suggests that this boundary was once delineated by a wall. The Second Edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey Plan of 1901 (not illustrated) shows no change from the 1882 Plan.

## **6 The watching brief (Fig. 5)**

The area of the proposed garage was stripped down by about 400mm in the east but by about 150mm in the west. The foundation trenches within this area were excavated to a total depth



of about 950mm. In the footing trenches and over the eastern part of the site layer [14] was exposed. This was seen in the evaluation and was interpreted as probably the natural yellow clays which had been re-deposited with the excavation of the moat. Cutting [14] were two ovoid features [35] and [37]. Cut [37] was 120mm deep and was filled with mid grey brown silty clay with occasional pebbles and very frequent small mammal bone [36]. This fill produced a small abraded sherd of a sandy cooking pot dating from the 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> centuries (pers comm, Stephanie Ratkái). Cut [35] was deeper at 500mm and was filled with a deposit similar to [36] though it contained less bone [34].

In the north of the area a linear feature was excavated [8] which was seen in the evaluation. This was aligned east to west and was filled with two fills [7] and [38]. The earliest fill [38] was a beige soft waterlogged silty clay which became redder with depth. A ceramic land drain was uncovered at the base of [38]. Clay pipe stems were recovered from [38]. The later fill [7] was a dark to mid grey brown silty loamy clay with frequent roof tile, brick and ash patches.

Above the ditch fills was a c. 100mm layer of small cobbles, tile and brick [2] which was also seen in the evaluation trench and probably represents a 19<sup>th</sup> century yard surface. Overlying this was the topsoil and turf of the garden [1] which was about 300mm thick.

## **7 Discussion**

The yellow clays seen at the limit of excavation [14] are more than likely re-deposited natural clays generated from the excavation of the moat in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The small ovoid features [35] and [37] cutting [14] are probably both of a medieval date. Although only the fill of [37] produced pottery the fills were very similar and both contained animal bone. They could represent two disturbed animal burials as the bone within the fills was not articulated.

The small probable medieval gully [10] excavated in the evaluation was seen during the watching brief but the southern extent of this feature was not discernible. It is likely that the gully terminated just to the south of the area of the evaluation trench. The probable 19<sup>th</sup> century features seen in the east of the evaluation trench were machined off during the watching brief. Features seen in the west of the evaluation trench were at a depth that was not reached during the watching brief.

From the results of the evaluation and the watching brief it can be surmised that during probably the 13<sup>th</sup> century the upcast from the excavation of the moat was spread over the study area. Therefore if earlier features and deposits exist they may be buried underneath the moat upcast. Three features were excavated in the watching brief that are probably medieval in date. These were a small gully and two pits which were probably disturbed animal burials.

During the medieval period and early post-medieval period it seems likely that this part of the moat platform was an open area with no standing buildings within it. However, the post holes excavated in the evaluation in the west end of the area could represent an early post-medieval wall line though they may delineate a fence.

In the later post-medieval period a drain running east to west was excavated as were several probable garden features. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the whole area was cobbled for a yard surface.

## 8 Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Mr and Mrs Corner for their co-operation during the project.

## 9 References

### *Plans*

Survey of the Estate of Robert Corbett, 1794

First Edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey Plan, Sheet XLIX.7, 1882

Second Edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey Plan, Sheet XLIX.7, 1901

### *Unpublished reference*

Hislop, M and Horton, M, 1987, *The Moat House, Longnor, Shropshire: an archaeological evaluation*, Ironbridge institute Research Paper Number 25

Wainwright, J, 2004, *Moat House, Longnor, Shropshire: A report on an archaeological evaluation*, Marches Archaeology Series 346

### *Published reference*

VCH, 1968, *Shropshire, Vol VIII*

## 10 Archive

The archive for the evaluation and the watching brief has been combined. The site codes are MHL04A and MHL04B. The archive consists of:

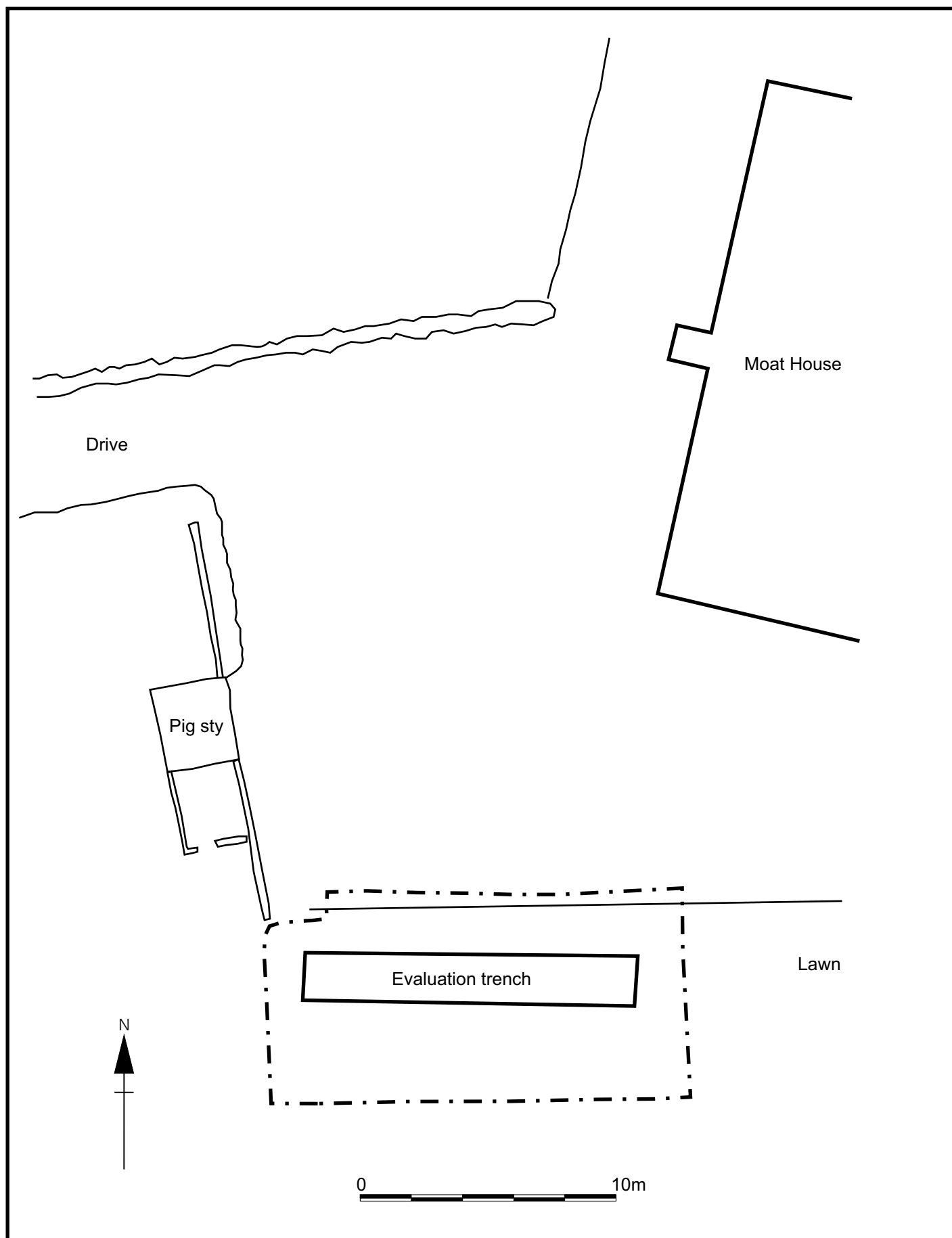
- 38 context sheets
- 1 context index sheet
- 1 drawing index sheets
- 7 field drawings on 3 sheets
- 1 sheet of levels
- 2 sheets of site diary and notes
- 12 finds recording sheets
- 4 photographic record sheets
- 2 films of black and white photographic negatives
- 2 films of colour photographic transparencies
- 1 box of finds:

The archive is currently held by Marches Archaeology awaiting transfer to Shropshire County Museum Service: accession numbers 2770 and 2771.

# Appendix I: List of contexts from the evaluation and watching brief

Context Number	Description	Interpretation
1	Mid grey brown silty clay with occasional charcoal, stone and brick. Depth about 300mm	Topsoil and turf
2	Spread of cobbles, tile and brick seen all over area. Max depth 100mm	19 <sup>th</sup> century yard surface
3	Red clay and grey brown silty clay with coal, charcoal, pebbles and brick	Fill of [4]
4	Sub-circular to sub-square in plan. Not excavated	19 <sup>th</sup> century ?garden feature
5	Red clay, ash and coal dust with pebbles and brick fragments	Fill of [6]
6	Sub-square or sub-circular in plan. Not excavated	19 <sup>th</sup> century ?garden feature
7	Dark to mid grey brown silty loamy clay with frequent roof tile, brick and ash patches.	Fill of [8]
8	Linear cut running eastish to westish filled with [7], [24], [25] and [38]	Late post-medieval land drain cut
9	Mid brown grey silty clay with occasional pebbles and charcoal	Fill of [10]
10	Linear cut running approximately north to south. North end cut by [8]. South end not discernible. Sharp to gradual break of slope top with concave sides and a dish shaped base. Depth 80mm	?Medieval gully
11	Mixture of brick, pebbles and stone in a brown clay matrix.	Fill of [12]
12	Sub-circular cut. Not excavated	19 <sup>th</sup> century ?garden feature
13	Mid yellow brown silty clay with occasional pebbles and charcoal. Depth about 120mm	Post-medieval soil
14	Yellow clays which became redder with depth	Re-deposited natural clays from upcast of moat
15	Sticky brown grey silty clay with frequent charcoal and occasional pebbles	Fill of stakeholes [16]-[22]
16	Sub-square or sub-rectangular cut tapering to a point 70mm deep	Stakehole
17	Sub-circular cut tapering to a ?rounded point. Not fully excavated 80mm deep as excavated	Stakehole
18	Ovoid cut not bottomed. 100mm deep as excavated	Stakehole
19	Sub-circular cut not bottomed. 70mm as excavated	Stakehole
20	Ovoid or sub-rectangular cut not bottomed. 90mm as excavated	Stakehole
21	Sub-rectangular cut not bottomed. 150mm as excavated	Stakehole
22	Ovoid cut not bottomed. 90mm deep as excavated	Stakehole

23	Mid brown grey silty clay with occasional charcoal, pebbles and brick fragments. Depth 200mm	Post-medieval soil
24	Firm reddish brown silty clay with occasional brick and tile fragments and stone roofing material	Fill of [8]
25	Loose to firm mid reddish brown slightly loamy clay with brick fragments	Fill of [8]
26	mid reddish brown silty clay with frequent gravel filling a small scoop	Fill and cut
27	Sub-circular cut with near vertical sides	Post hole
28	Fine light grey to light grey brown silty clay	Fill of [27]. Post pipe fill
29	Loose yellowish brown silty clay	Fill of [30]. Post packing
30	Sub-circular cut with sharp break of slope top and near vertical sides	Post hole
31	Soft mid brown silty loam to hard yellowish red brown clay fragments	Fill of [30]. Post pipe fill
32	Firm brownish yellow silty clay and clay fragments	Fill of [27]. Post packing
33	Firm reddish brown silty clay	Layer
34	Mid grey brown silty clay with occasional pebbles. Occasional animal bone	Fill of [35]
35	Sub-rectangular to ovoid cut with concave sides and a flat base. Depth 500mm	?Medieval pit cut
36	Mid grey brown silty clay with occasional pebbles. Contained very frequent small mammal bone	Fill of [37]
37	Sub-rectangular to ovoid cut with concave sides and a flat to concave base. Depth 120mm	Medieval pit cut
38	Soft and waterlogged beige silty clay which became redder with depth. At the base was a ceramic land drain	Fill of [8]



**Fig. 2 Location of the areas of excavation**

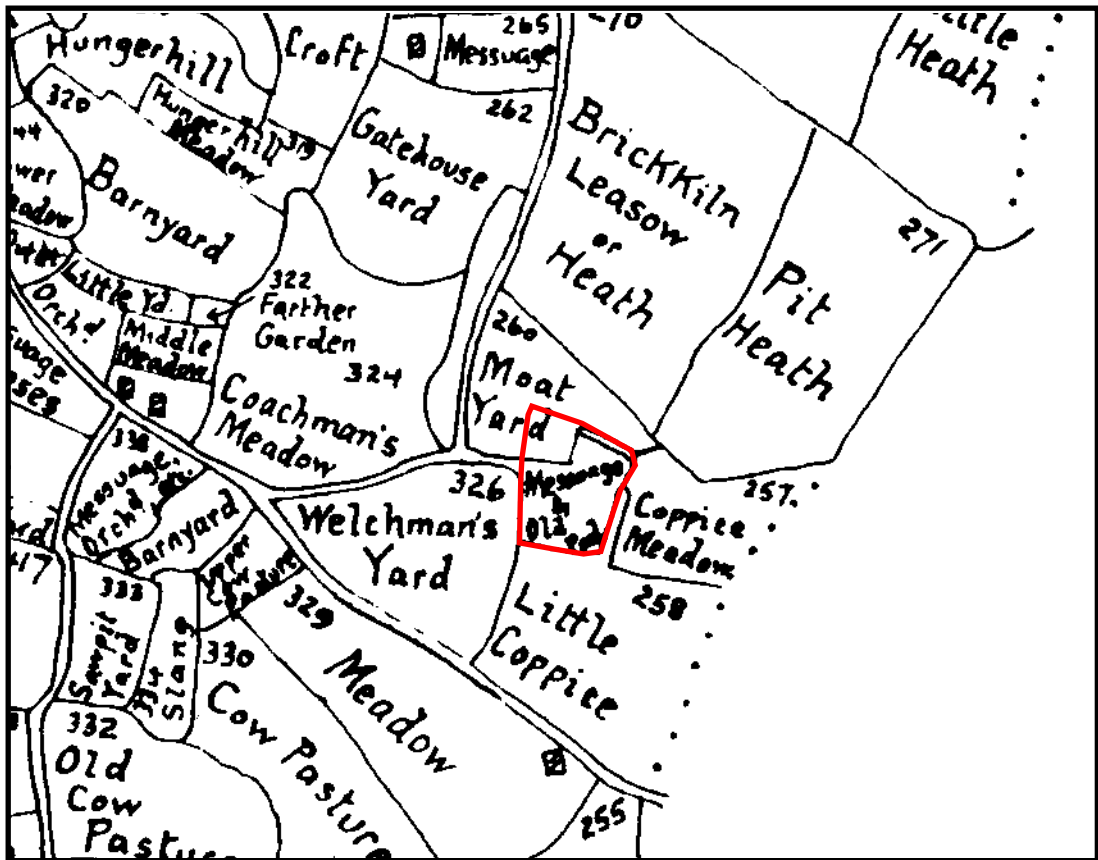


Fig. 3 Detail from a Survey of the Estate of Robert Corbett, 1794

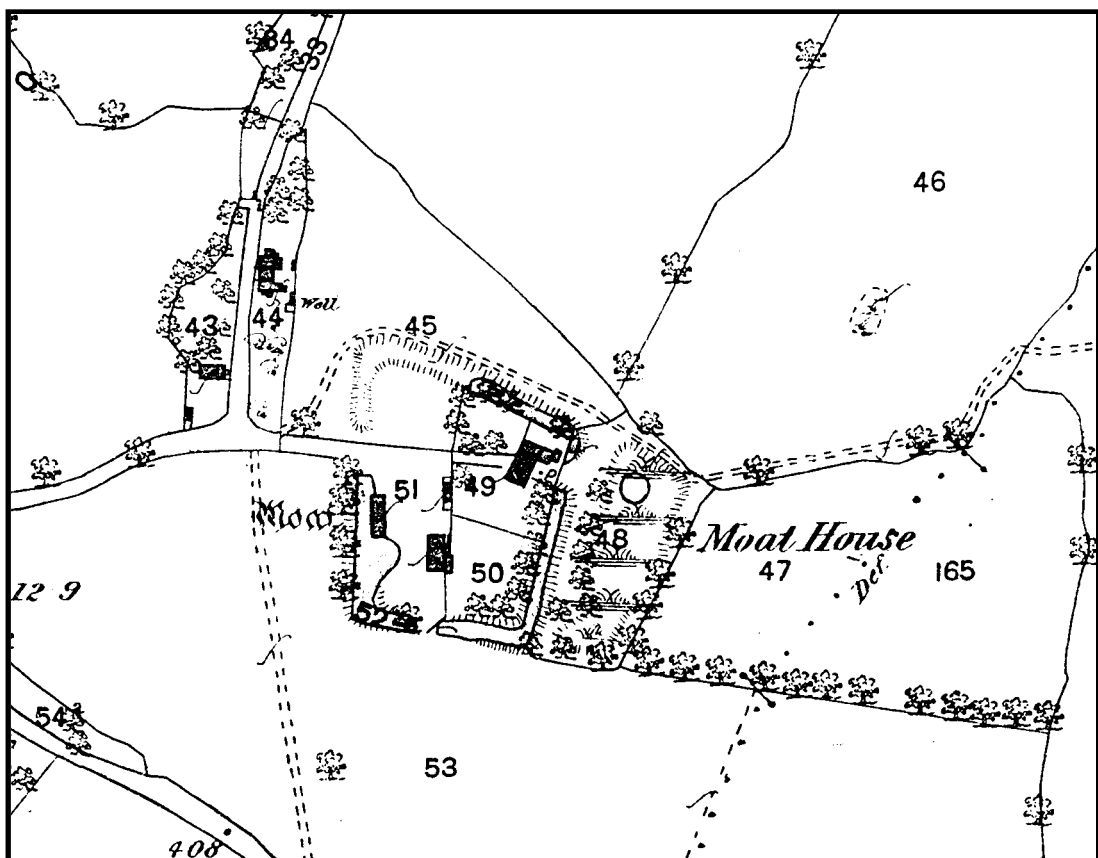
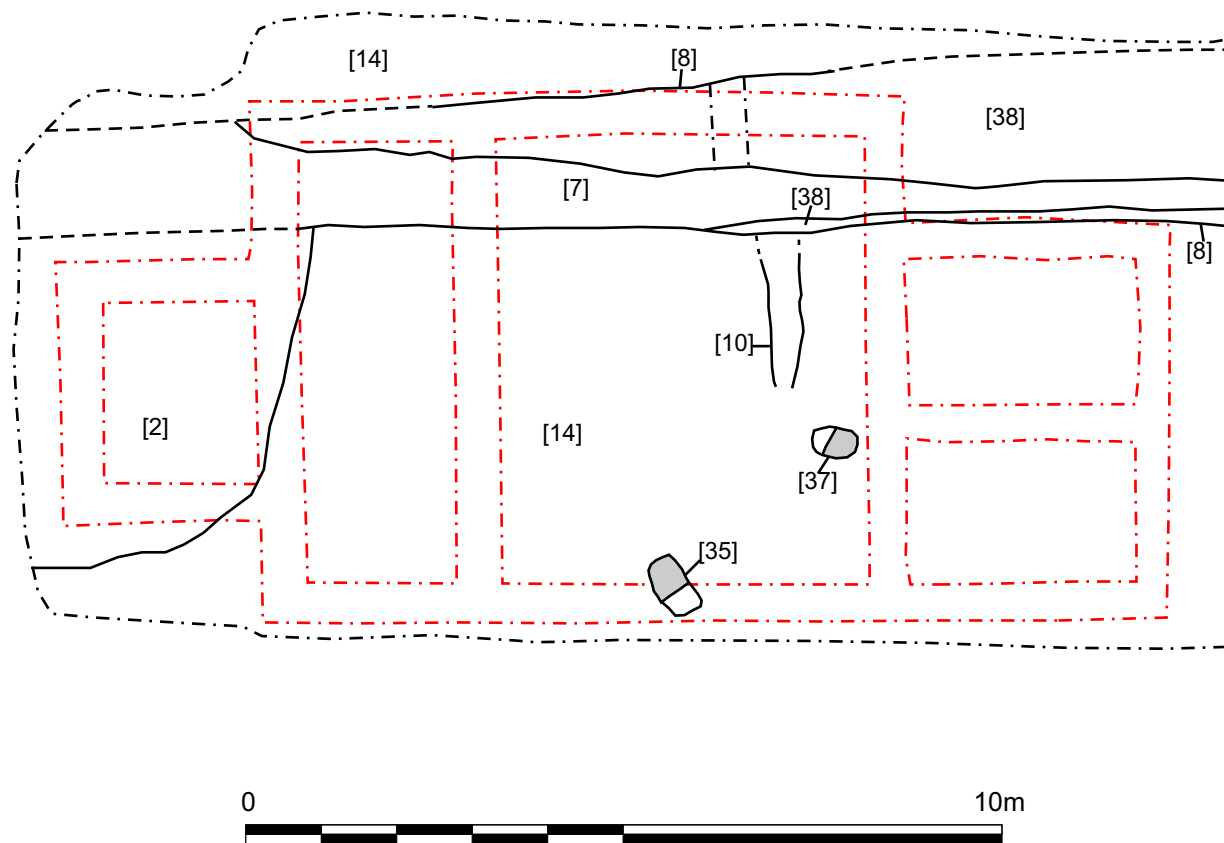


Fig. 4 First Edition Ordnance Survey 25 inch Plan, 1882



**Fig. 5 Plan of the areas of excavation with the deeper foundation trenches shown in red**

# *Marches Archaeology*

Moat House  
Longnor

## Project Proposal for a programme of archaeological works

### **Introduction**

Planning consent has been given for the construction of a garage at the above scheduled site. The site is situated at NGR: SJ 4935 0023.

The site has been the subject of an evaluation excavation (Wainwright, 2004). As a result of the evaluation the local English Heritage Inspector has advised that in order that the archaeological resource is adequately protected an archaeological watching brief be carried out during ground works associated with the proposed development.

It was proposed in the evaluation report that a contingency for up to ten days excavation time be included in the project if significant archaeology was found.

This proposal forms a written scheme of investigation for the archaeological works. Any subsequent alterations to the project will be agreed in writing between Marches Archaeology and the local English Heritage Inspector.

### **Archaeological and historical background**

It is believed that the moat at Moat House is of a later 13<sup>th</sup> century date and originally surrounded the homestead of Richard, son of Osbert of Diddlebury, a clerk of the lord of the manor (VCH, 1968). The present house dates from the later 14<sup>th</sup> century and it is possible that it was built by Edward de Acton as in 1370 he was given licence for a private oratory in Longnor (*op cit*). His descendants occupied it as the manor house of their half of the manor from 1377 to 1610 (*ibid*). After 1610 Moat House was a farmhouse until 1865 when it was divided into two cottages. In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century restoration work was undertaken.

The house as it stands today is all that remains of a more substantial group of buildings. Four small evaluation trenches excavated in 1987 uncovered possible evidence of an earlier structure as well as possible vestiges of a chamber block (Hislop and Horton, 1987).

A survey of the Estate of Robert Corbett in 1794 (Fig. 3) shows the study area as parts of two parcels of land, Messuage and Old Pond and Moat Yard. Unfortunately no buildings are shown on the plan. The First Edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey Plan of 1882 shows the house as it appears today and also shown is the existing pig sty (Fig. 4). Two other buildings are shown within the moated enclosure but are not in the vicinity of the area of the evaluation



trench. The boundary shown to the south of the house and pig sty still exists today in the form of a flower bed between the lawn and gravelled area. Although the flower bed was overgrown several stones were identified and this suggests that this boundary was once delineated by a wall. The Second Edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey Plan of 1901 (not illustrated) shows no change from the 1882 Plan.

### **Scope and aims of the project**

The scope of the project was defined in the evaluation report as:

The proposed impact levels of the development are no deeper than 650mm, approximately 200mm below ground level. Significant archaeological features and deposits were seen above this level. Although no features or deposits can be securely dated to the medieval period it seems likely that at least one feature is of a medieval date [10]. There are structural remains that survive in the development area and these could be medieval in date.

The archaeological resource is such that further archaeological provision is necessary emphasizing on the remains of the medieval period. In view of the size of the proposed garage it is recommended that the build footprint be stripped under archaeological supervision and a period of up to 10 person days be allowed for investigating and recording features of archaeological interest with provision for a report on the results.

The purpose of an archaeological watching brief is defined by the Institute of Field Archaeologists as:

‘to allow, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be established (or established with sufficient accuracy) in advance of development or other potentially disruptive works’

and:

‘to provide an opportunity, if needed, for the watching archaeologist to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief itself are not sufficient to support a treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard’.

### **Methodology**

#### *Fieldwork*

Observations and appropriate recording will be undertaken of all ground breaking activity in association with this proposed development will be made, unless otherwise prior agreement is made between Marches Archaeology, the Local Planning Authority’s Archaeological Advisor and the client.

The archaeologist(s) shall have the power to suspend work on the excavation of material for short periods of time for the purpose of investigating areas of potential archaeological interest. If an area is deemed to require more detailed recording the archaeologist(s) shall have the power to suspend work in that area for the purpose of small scale excavation and recording of archaeological data in order to fulfil the requirements of the Brief.

The recording system will include written, drawn and photographic data. The primary written record will be by means of site notes, accompanied by sketches. Context numbers will be allocated and context record sheets completed as appropriate. A running matrix will be maintained as appropriate. Plans (normally 1:20), sections (normally 1:10) and other appropriate drawings of significant data will be made. Plans will normally be multi-context, but certain features may require single context planning. The photographic record will be made using black and white negative and colour transparency film. Samples will be taken of deposits considered to have environmental, technological or scientific dating potential.

If deposits or features are encountered for which the resources allocated to the watching brief are not sufficient to support a treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard the client, the Local Planning Authority's Archaeological Advisor and any other relevant parties will be informed in order to discuss, agree and implement an appropriate response, either within a previously agreed contingency arrangement or supplemental thereto.

This project proposal does not cover the eventuality that there are human remains within the area to be investigated as additional legal requirements then come into force.

#### *Office work*

On completion of fieldwork a site archive will be prepared. The written, drawn and photographic data will be catalogued and cross-referenced and a summary produced. The artefactual and ecofactual data will be processed, catalogued and cross-referenced and summaries produced. After an initial assessment any unstratified non-diagnostic artefacts and ecofacts and non-diagnostic samples will be discarded. Further dispersal of artefacts and ecofacts will be in line with the collection policy of the recipient repository and will be documented in the archive. The checked site matrix will be produced if appropriate.

The freeholder(s) of the land to which this document relates has title to all objects (unless within the jurisdiction of the Treasure Act 1996) recovered from the land. The freeholder(s) shall agree to donate in perpetuity the archive, together with any artefacts and ecofacts recovered during the fieldwork, to an appropriate repository. Marches Archaeology will arrange for such deposition.

Assessment will be based on the site archive. Any artefacts and ecofacts which require specialist assessment will be submitted for such work.

An illustrated client report will be produced which will detail the aims, methods, and results of the project. A non-technical summary and details of the location and size of the archive will be included. Copyright of any reports is vested in Marches Archaeology.

The client will be provided with two copies of the report. Further copies will be deposited with English Heritage, the local Sites and Monuments Record, the Local Authority's archaeological service and the National Archaeological Record (one copy each).

If the project reveals that the quality and potential of the information resulting from the fieldwork is such that further analysis and/or formal publication is required the level of such work will be determined in discussions between the client, Marches Archaeology and the

local English Heritage Inspector. Such works would be subject to a further Project Proposal which would be separately costed.

## **Management of the project**

Marches Archaeology recognises the Code of Conduct, Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology, By-Laws, Standards and other documents produced by the Institute of Field Archaeologists. The project will be managed by a Member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists.

The Safety Policy and General Risk Assessment operated by Marches Archaeology will be implemented. Copies of these documents are available on request. A risk assessment specific to this project will be carried out before commencement of fieldwork to identify any risks not noted in the General Risk Assessment. If another body is responsible for Health and Safety on the site Marches Archaeology will conform to any policy which may be in force. If costs accrue due to Health and Safety issues not made apparent to Marches Archaeology by the time of submission of this Project Proposal these costs will be additional to any costs identified in the estimate. The requirements of Health and Safety legislation are deemed to take precedence over archaeological requirements.

Appropriate insurance cover will be held throughout the project.

The Local Planning Authority's Archaeology Advisor shall at any reasonable time be granted access to the site, with prior notice, for the purpose of monitoring the fieldwork.

## **Timetable**

The timetable has not yet been finalised. The report will be presented to the client within one month of the completion of the fieldwork, unless otherwise agreed. The results will be reported to English Heritage, the Local Planning Authority's Archaeology Advisor and the local Sites and Monuments Record within one month of presentation, unless otherwise agreed. A summary report will be submitted for publication in an appropriate medium within one year of completion of all fieldwork.

## **Resources**

The project will be managed by either Richard Stone or Nic Appleton-Fox, both of whom are Members of the Institute of Field Archaeologists with a registered Area of Competence in Archaeological Field Practice. Other field and post-excavation staff will be appropriately experienced. Where trainees are used they will be closely supervised by senior members of the project team. Normal working hours are Mon-Thurs 8.30-4.30 and Fri 8.30-4.00. Additional hours constitute overtime.

Specialist sub-contractors will be used as appropriate. Specialists will normally be people approved by English Heritage Ancient Monuments Laboratory. Those who might be expected to be called upon (dependent upon availability) include:

Jeremy Evans (Rátkai and Evans PX Partners) Roman ceramics

Stephanie Rátkai (Rátkai and Evans PX Partners) medieval ceramics

David Barker (Stoke on Trent Museum) post-medieval ceramics

Liz Pearson (Worcestershire Archaeological Service) environmental remains  
Ian Baxter (Freelance) animal bone  
Megan Brickley (Birmingham Univ Field Archaeology Unit) human bone

7th September 2004