

Little Orchards, Great Wolford, Warwickshire

Archaeological Watching Brief



understanding heritage matters

Report No 1211
March 2012



*Working for
Warwickshire*

Project: Little Orchards, Great Wolford

Commissioned by: Jeremy Swift of John Bradley Associates Ltd.

Project Report No. 1211

Site Code: GL11

NGR: SP 2481 3459

Planning Reference: 08/02840/FUL

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Summary

An archaeological watching brief at Little Orchards, Great Wolford, Warwickshire, exposed no archaeological remains associated with the surrounding medieval settlement. The footprint and foundations of the previous house may have caused some truncation or disturbance of topsoil and other deposits. However, it is possible that potential medieval settlement remains may survive on or near the site.

1. Introduction

1.1 Planning permission has been granted by Stratford on Avon District Council for the construction of a replacement dwelling at Little Orchards, Great Wolford, Warwickshire (Planning Ref. 08/02840/FUL). The site lies within the limits of the medieval settlement of Great Wolford and therefore a condition of planning permission required the applicant to secure the implementation of a programme of archaeological work to be carried out in conjunction with the development.

1.2 A programme of fieldwork, consisting of archaeological observation of soil stripping in accordance with a brief prepared by the County Planning Archaeologist on behalf of the Planning Authority (October 2010), was commissioned from Archaeology (Projects) Warwickshire and carried out in July 2011. This report presents the results of that work. The project archive will be stored at the Warwickshire Museum under the site code GL11.

2. Location

2.1 The development site is located west of the in the parish of at map reference SP 2481 3459. The existing house was demolished before the development took place and the area around it is currently garden.

2.2 The underlying geology of the area is Boulder Clay (British Geological Survey 1968).

3. Methodology

3.1 The watching brief was designed to observe any groundworks associated with the development and record as far as possible, the nature of the archaeological resource on the site.

3.2 The work undertaken involved the examination of early map evidence as well as records of archaeological remains in the area and local historical journals and other publications. Fieldwork involved an archaeologist being present during some groundworks.

4. Archaeological and historical background

4.1 No prehistoric sites or finds are known within the immediate vicinity and only a single Roman coin is recorded on the Warwickshire County Historic Environment record as a metal detector find (HER MWA 3831).

4.2 Great Wolford is medieval in origin and is now somewhat smaller than its largest medieval extent (Fig 1, MWA 8967). On the east side of the village is a large ditch (MWA 1837) which in the past has been interpreted as a defensive ditch. It is now thought more likely to represent a boundary between the village and fields but looks remarkably like a large medieval hollow way, particularly as there is a continuation eastwards (not on HER), towards the main lane into the village. Just to the west of this is an area of earthworks which represents a deserted part of the village (MWA 5448). This area of earthworks and the large ditch are protected as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 114). The current parish church of St Michael (MWA 5551) was built in 1833 and replaced a large medieval church (MWA 3822). To the west of the village is the site of a water mill (MWA 3824) which is likely to be on the site of one of two mills mentioned in 1226 (VCH 1949, 213). Two medieval silver pennies (MWA 9280) have been found between the site of the mill and the village.

4.3 The site is within the extent of the medieval settlement and is shown on the First Edition Ordnance Survey Map of 1885 as being an orchard with no buildings.

5. Watching brief

5.1 On visiting the site it was found that a large hole had also been excavated for a new swimming pool and basement foundations. This was up to 2.8m deep and was excavated 1.8m to 2m into geological natural sand and gravel (3). This was overlain by between 0.7 and 0.9m of greyish brown sandy loam (2) which was covered by up to 0.2m of dark greyish brown sandy loam topsoil (1). Along the western edge of the site there was no topsoil, the area being covered by up to 0.4m of demolition rubble (5) which lay beneath 0.1m of modern hardcore (4).

6. Conclusions

6.1 No archaeological remains were recorded in the observed area. The site certainly lies within the heart of the medieval village of Great Wolford but is set back from the main village street. This is perhaps the most likely location for any medieval houses. The geological natural for the site was noted to be a type of sand and gravel and not the boulder clay indicated on by the British Geological Survey.

6.2 The footprint and foundations of the previous house may have caused some truncation or disturbance of topsoil and other deposits. However, it is possible that potential medieval settlement remains may survive on or near the site.

Acknowledgements

Archaeology (Projects) Warwickshire would like to thank Jeremy Swift of John Bradley Associates Ltd for commissioning the work on behalf of Ms F Brockwell and the County Planning Archaeologist for preparing the brief.

Bibliography

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Ordnance Survey 1885 *First Edition 1:2500 map*, Warwickshire Sheet 56.12

VCH 1949 *The Victoria History of the County of Warwickshire, Vol. V, Kington Hundred*, London

Appendix List of Contexts

<i>Context</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Comments</i>
1	Topsoil layer	
2	Greyish brown sandy loam	
3	Yellowish brown sand and gravel	Natural geology
4	Modern hardcore	
5	Modern demolition rubble	

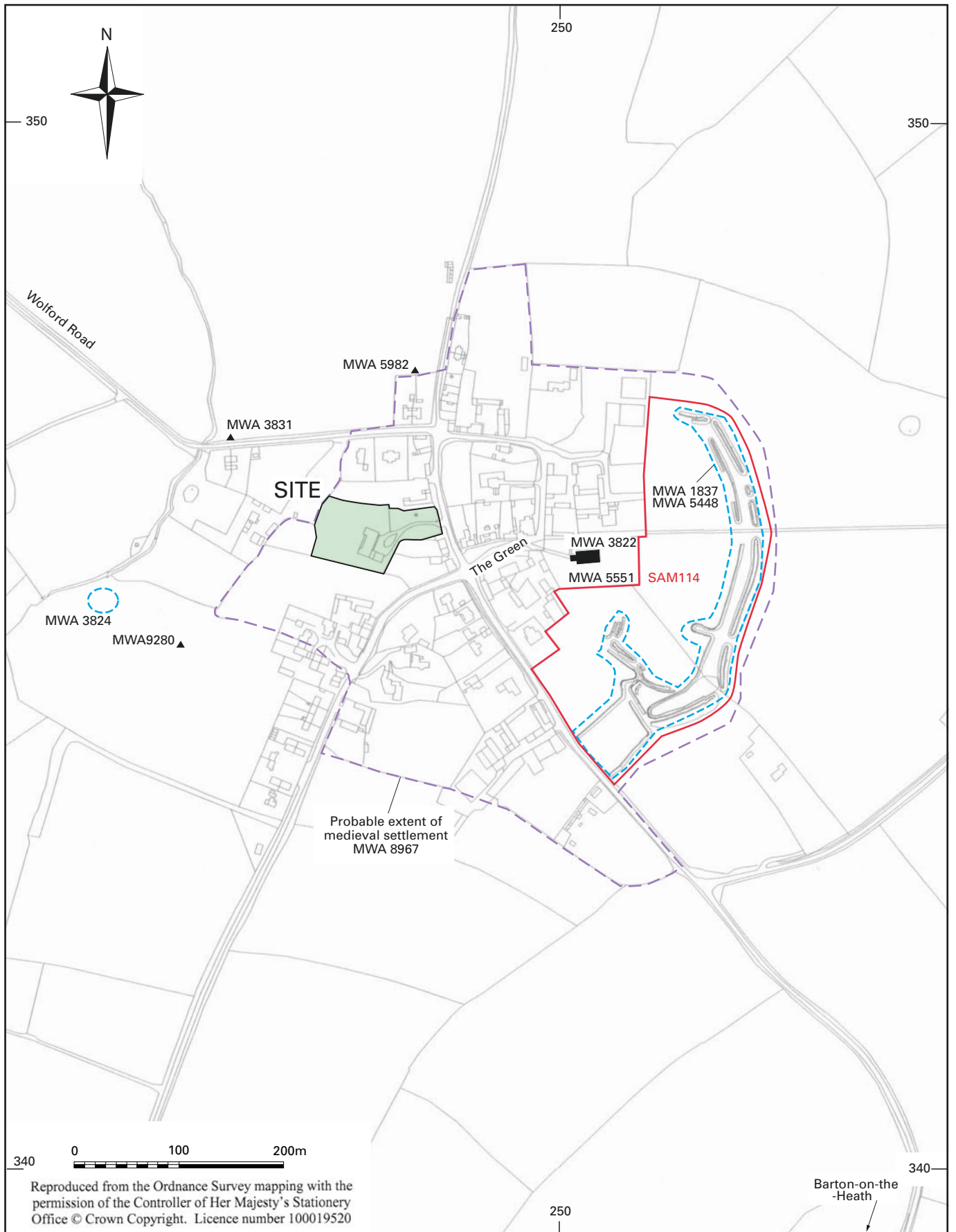


Fig 1: Site location

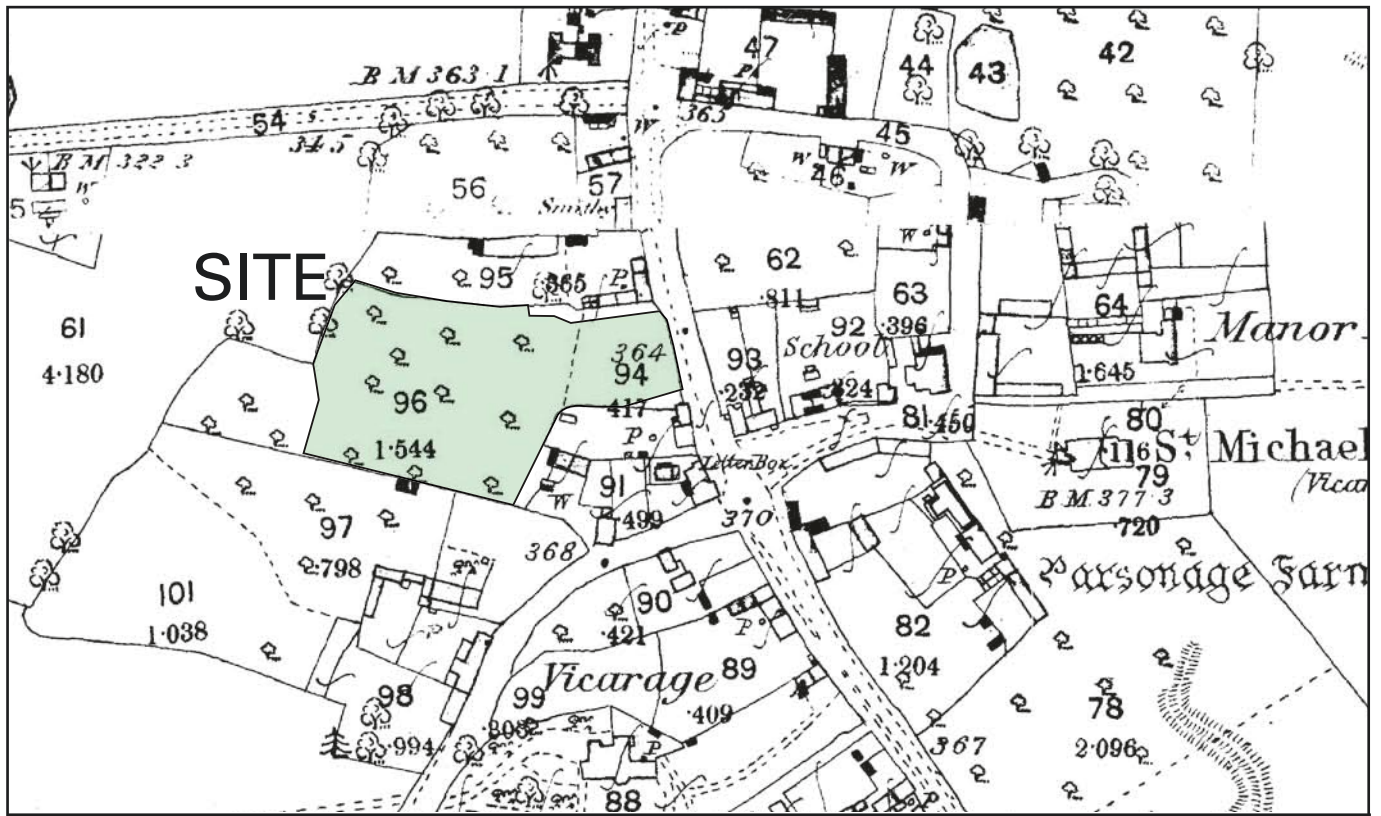


Fig 2: Detail from First Edition Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map of 1885

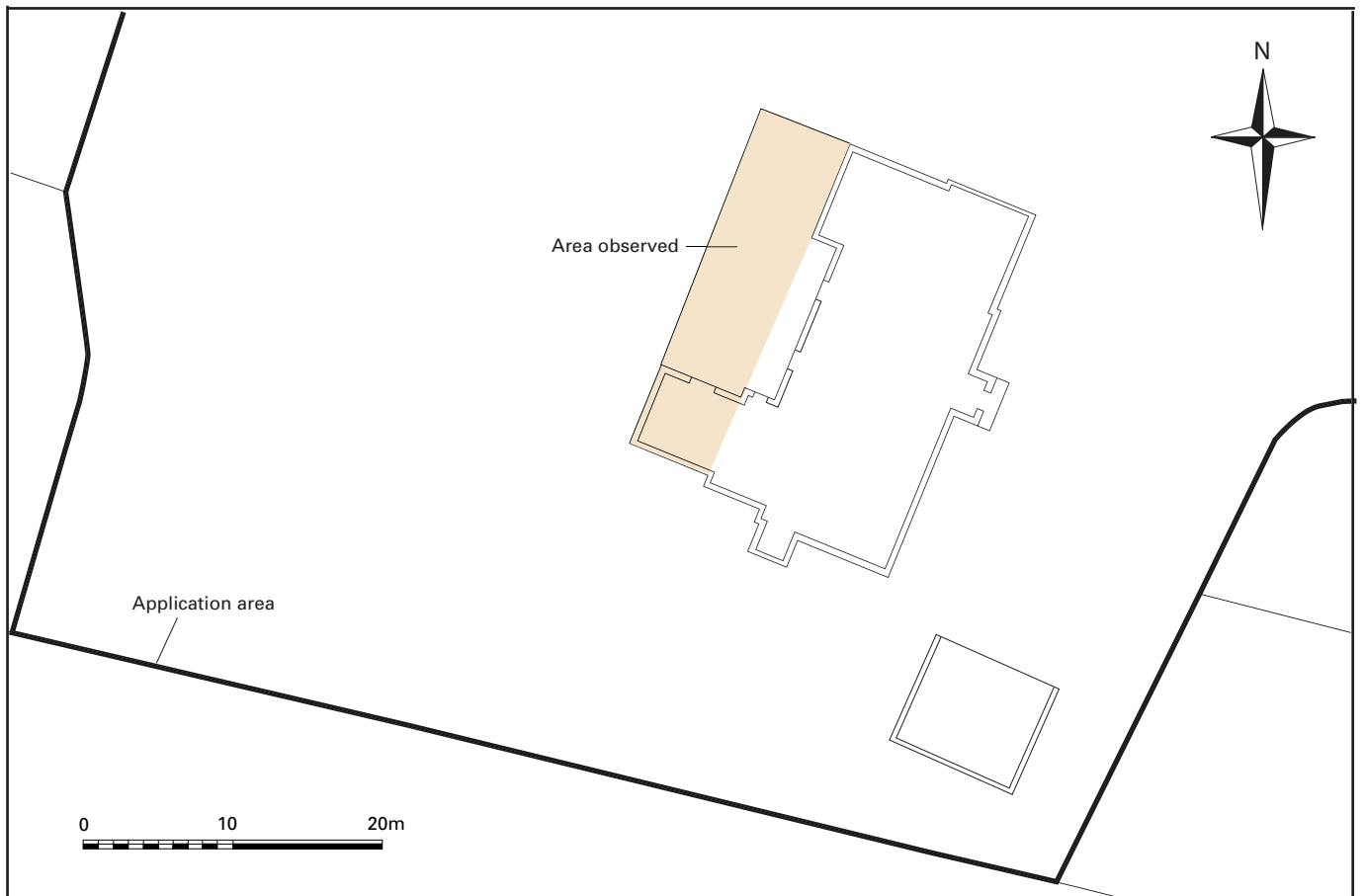


Fig 3: Area observed