

The Old Hall, Walton, Leicestershire

Archaeological Watching Brief



understanding heritage matters

Archaeology Warwickshire Report No 14114
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*Working for
Warwickshire*

Project: The Old Hall, Walton, WB
Commissioned by: Alana Field
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Site Code: WH13
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CONTENTS

- Summary
- 1 Introduction
- 2 Site Location
- 3 Archaeological and Historical Background
- 4 Aims and Methods
- 5 Results
- 6 The Medieval Pottery by Stephanie Ratkai
- 7 Conclusions
- Acknowledgements
- References

APPENDICES

- A List of Contexts
- B List of Finds

FIGURES

- 1 Site location
- 2 Trenches excavated
- 3 The Old Hall
- 4 Rear of the house, prior to trench excavation
- 5 Pit 6
- 6 Trenches excavated for extension

SUMMARY

An archaeological watching brief took place at The Old Hall, Walton, Leicestershire, during groundworks for an extension to the side/rear of the property. A pit containing 13th/14th- and 14th/15th-century pottery was recorded, suggesting medieval occupation of the site, possibly relating to the so-called medieval cellar below The Old Hall. The house, along with Old Hall Cottage, which was originally part of the same house, is a Grade II Listed Building dating to at least the 16th century, with timber-framing visible on the interior walls.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Planning permission has been granted by Harborough District Council and Listed Building Consent for the demolition of conservatory, erection of single storey rear/side extension and internal alterations to The Old Hall, Hall Lane, Walton, Leicestershire (Planning Refs. 13/00188 and 13/00189/LBC). Because the house is a Grade II Listed Building with its origins in the 16th century and the proposed conversions have potential to destroy, alter, damage or obscure elements of the historic building fabric and due to the potential for archaeological deposits to be disturbed or exposed by the work, it was a condition of planning permission that the applicant should secure the implementation of a programme of archaeological work, in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, approved by the Planning Authority before work commenced. The work required was an Historic Building Photographic Survey, as defined by the brief and in accordance with English Heritage Guidelines (Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Practice, 2006) before any conversion works start, and a watching brief during groundworks on the site.

1.2 A programme of photographic recording took place in August 2013 (Coutts 2013) and the watching brief in May 2014 and this report provides the result of the watching brief. The project site code is WH13 and the accession number is X/A141.2013. The archive will be deposited with Leicestershire Museums.

2 SITE LOCATION

2.1 The site is located on Hall Lane, in the village of Walton, within the parish of Kincote and Walton, at national grid reference SP 5939 8690. The underlying geology of the area is Boulder Clay (British Geological Survey 1969).

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 The earliest archaeological material in the area is probably the finds of Iron Age/Roman pottery south of Chapel Lane (Leicestershire Historic Environment number MLE6480). A possible Roman spindle whorl was also recovered at Sandylands, on Hall Lane (MLE7860). These finds suggest a Roman presence in the area but not necessarily that there was a settlement here during the Roman period.

3.2 The site lies within the historic settlement core of the village of Walton (MLE9867), within a Conservation Area (DLE625), which covers almost the whole of the village. There was a village recorded at Domesday, *Waltona*, in 1086. The shape of the village suggests there was a market square in the village, and Nichols mentions the base of a stone cross (MLE1785), however, none survives today. There is also the suggestion that the village was divided into burgage plots south of the Market Square, to the east of the present site (MLE1787).

3.3 The Old Hall is one of a number of Grade II Listed Buildings in the village (MLE11971). The house is located on Hall Lane, in the western part of Walton, and Old Hall Cottage was originally part of the same house (MLE11972). The Listed Building citation is as follows:

List Entry Summary

Name: THE OLD HALL THE OLD HALL COTTAGE

List Entry Number: 1295078 **UID:** 191417

Location

THE OLD HALL COTTAGE, HALL LANE, THE OLD HALL, HALL LANE

County: Leicestershire **District:** Harborough

District Type: District Authority **Parish:** Kimcote and Walton

Grade: II

Date first listed: 07-Dec-1976

List Entry Description

SP 58 NE KIMCOTE & WALTON HALL LANE, Walton (south side)

The Old Hall and The Old Hall Cottage

House, now two dwellings. C16, C17, C20 alterations. Timber-framing and brick, partly rendered. Steeply pitched plain tile roof with 2 ridge stacks and 1 gable stack. 2 storeys, cellar and attic. Medieval cellar said to be unrelated to the present building, beneath centre

bay. North front: 3 bays, left bay clad in brick, centre and right bays rendered. From left to right: a 2-light casement, then a 3-light casement, then a single light window, then a doorway with C20 gabled hood on brackets, and part-glazed door, followed by a 2-light casement. Above from left to right: a 2-light mullion and transom casement, then 2, small 2-light windows, then a 2-light casement. All C20 windows, with flat arches. East gable end wall has C20 porch and casements, and shuttered access to attic.

INTERIOR: heavy main beams and joists, close studding. Re-used early C17 dogleg staircase with closed string, turned balusters, moulded newel with finial and moulded handrail. Earlier survey description refers to roof having substantial collars, tie beams and purlins, 1 truss with plastered infill and doorway.

Listing NGR: SP5939986902

3.4 At some time in the later 20th century a programme of renovation work took place at The Old Hall and an essay describing the building and various historic elements visible at the time, was recorded by Stanley Palmer (see Appendix in Coutts 2013).

3.5 There are a number of other Listed Buildings in the village (all are coloured blue on Fig 1). One of the oldest is Toad Hall, a timber-framed building also thought to be of 16th-century date (MLE11970). Scott's House, on the High Street, dates to the 17th-century (MLE11986), while Walton Hall (MLE 11981), New Farmhouse (MLE11984) and Home Farmhouse (MLE11989) are of 18th-century date. Talbot House dates to the late 18th/19th century (MLE11969). The outbuildings to the rear of Home Farmhouses are unlisted, but date to the 18th/19th century (MLE20754). Manor farmhouse is of 19th-century date (MLE11985). The unlisted Mission Chapel dates to 1886 (MLE20937), while the Listed Grade II K9 telephone box was designed in 1935 (MLE11982).

3.6 Several small-scale archaeological interventions have taken place in the village. These include a watching brief at Rylands Farm, where an undated pit was recorded and post-medieval pottery collected (ELE7029). A watching brief was also carried out at Old Forge Cottage, where a linear feature containing 13th/14th-century and 15th-century pottery was recorded, as well as a pit with 18th-century pottery (ELE5490). An archaeological 'strip, plan and record' exercise was carried out adjacent to 1 Park Lane, however, no significant archaeological finds or features were encountered (ELE5239). A watching brief at Brooke Lodge did not record anything of archaeological significance (ELE6440).

4 AIMS AND METHODS

4.1 The main aim of the work was to record any archaeological remains disturbed by the development, to collate the records in an archaeological archive and present the significant aspects of the archive in a report for dissemination.

4.2 The secondary aim was to form an understanding of the remains recorded in terms of their character and date, and to place the evidence in its local and regional context.

4.3 The objective of the work was a programme of controlled excavation to development formation levels, or the geological natural, whichever the higher.

4.4 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.

4.5 An experienced archaeologist was made available for each day of ground disturbance when notified by the client in accordance with WSI/Brief planning condition.

5 WATCHING BRIEF

5.1 Foundation trenches for the new extension were excavated following the demolition of the old conservatory. The trenches were 0.60m wide and 1.00m deep and were excavated using a mini-excavator. Geological natural yellowish brown sandy clay (5) was reached at a depth of 0.20m.

5.2 The natural clay was cut by a sub-circular feature, 1.6m in diameter, probably a pit (6), filled with brown sandy clay loam (7) containing occasional small pebbles and large fragments of two medieval pots. The pit fill and the natural clay were overlain by 0.20m of brown sandy loam topsoil (3). Around the side of the house the natural clay was overlain by a layer 0.10m thick of hardcore (4), overlain by 0.10m of bedding sand (2), which was the base for the modern patio setts (1). A modern inspection chamber (8) and an electricity cable (9) were also recorded.

6 THE MEDIEVAL POTTERY *by Stephanie Ratkai*

6.1 Fragments of two vessels were recovered from the fill of pit 6, with two distinct fabrics. All the sherds were large, with clean breaks, suggesting the deposition in the pit was

contemporary, and they had not been subject to abrasion by ploughing. The vessels identified were of a globular, handled, jug from a pottery kiln in Northamptonshire and a jug from a kiln site in north Warwickshire.

6.2 Globular jug with handle: General Description: Crude, hand-formed jug ('globular' or possibly 'rounded' form, see MPRG 1998) with solid ovoid handle, with shallow external groove. Patchy external olive glaze, possibly a splash glaze. There are areas of 'blow-out' on the interior caused by the expansion of some of the larger red inclusions during firing. Calcareous fabric containing rounded limestone fragments and ooliths and large red or reddish inclusions that are probably haematite, and a minor component that is probably a fine-grained red sandstone. The ooliths suggest the clay source is in the area of the Jurassic limestone ridge that runs through the East Midlands. The combination of haematite and limestone/ooliths suggests a source in Northamptonshire (a Lyvedon-Stanion B variant; thanks to Debbie Sawday and Paul Blinkhorn for their input on sourcing this pottery).

Fabric: Lyvedon Stanion B variant (**LY1**)

Source: Lyvedon and Stanion kilns (Northamptonshire)

Date: 13th-14th century

6.3 Base sherds and lower part of vessel: General Description: Wheel-thrown jug (or possibly bung-hole jar), with heavy internal light-coloured deposit, that reacts with HCl and is likely to be limescale. Thin brownish glaze on upper section of jug.

Fabric: Chilvers Coton C fabric (**CC2**)

Source: Chilvers Coton/Nuneaton area (Warwickshire)

Date: 14th-15th century

7 CONCLUSIONS

7.1 The watching brief was able to demonstrate that medieval activity has taken place close to The Old Hall, supporting the suggestion that the stone cellar below the house is of medieval date, and pre-dates the timber-framed building.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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REFERENCES

British Geological Survey 1969 *Geological Survey of Great Britain (England and Wales) Solid and Drift geology 1:50,000 Series, Market Harborough, Sheet 170.*

Coutts, C. M. 2013 *The Old Hall, Walton, Leicestershire, Photographic Recording,* Archaeology Warwickshire Report 1348.

MPRG 1998 *A Guide to the Classification of Medieval Ceramic Forms,* Medieval Pottery Research Group Occasional Paper No. 1

APPENDICES

Appendix A: List of Contexts

- 1 Modern patio setts
- 2 Layer of bedding sand
- 3 Topsoil
- 4 Hardcore layer
- 5 Natural clay
- 6 Pit cut
- 7 Pit fill
- 8 Electric cable
- 9 Brick inspection chamber

Appendix B: List of Finds

<i>Context</i>	<i>Material</i>	<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Date/Comments</i>
3	Pottery	12	late 18th-early 20th century, including white salt-glazed stoneware (SW4), manganese mottled ware (EA3), hand-painted pearlware (EA9), creamware (EA8), Nottingham stoneware (SW5), black-glazed coarseware (MB), spongeware and transfer-decorated china (EA10)
3	Clay pipe	2	stems
7	Pottery	14	From two vessels, one Chilvers Coton C (CC2) and other a coarse variant of Lyvedon Stanion B (LY1)

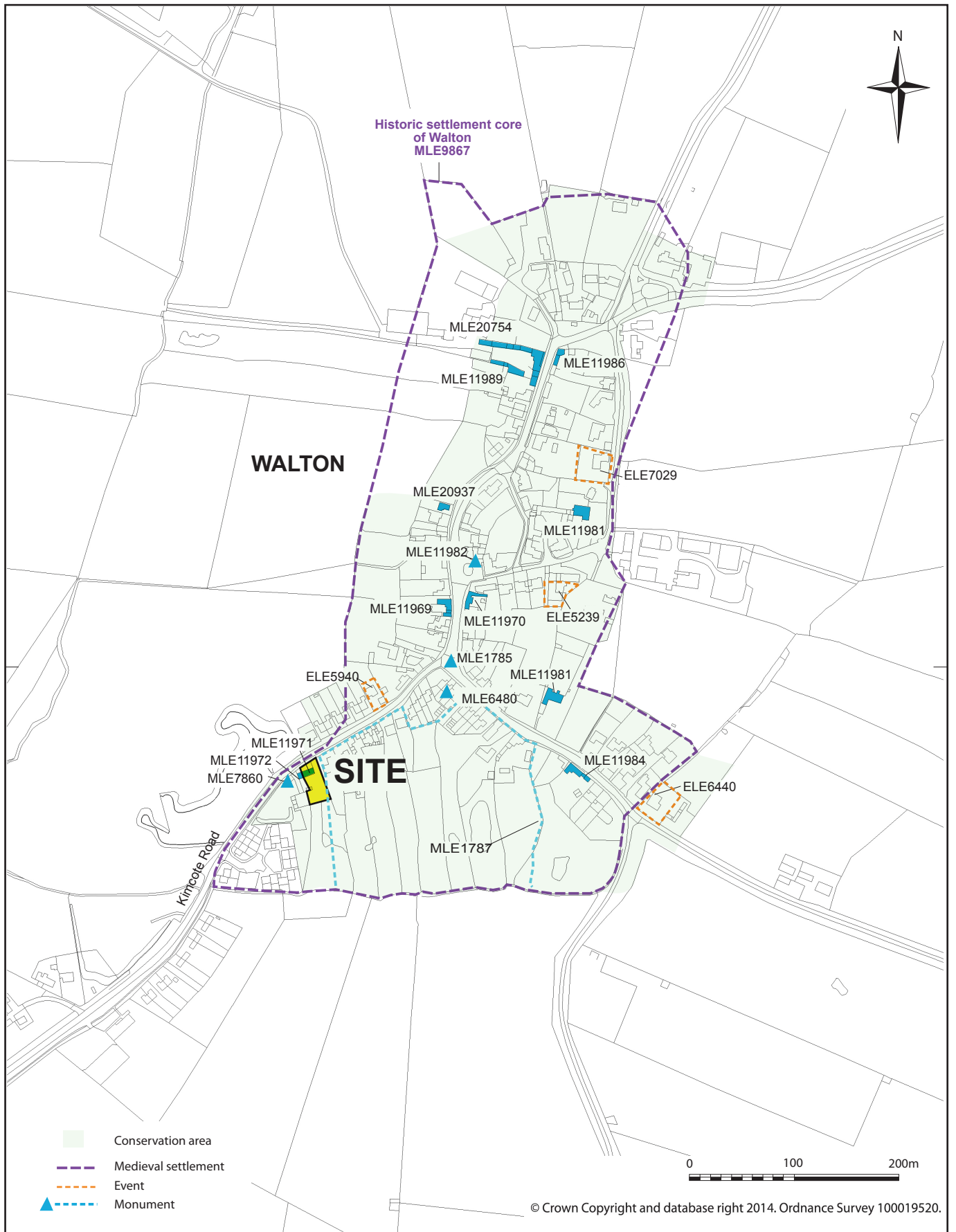


Fig 1: Site location



Fig 2: Trenches excavated



Fig 3: The Old Hall



Fig 4: Rear of the house, prior to trench excavation



Fig 5: Pit 6



Fig 6: Trenches excavated for extension