

Packwood House, Fibre Optic Cable Trench Lapworth Warwickshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATION AND RECORDING



EXPERTISE WHERE YOU NEED IT

Archaeology Warwickshire Report No 1811
FEBRUARY 2018



*Working for
Warwickshire*

Project: Packwood House, Fibre Optic Cable Trench
Commissioned by: Janine Young, The National Trust
Project Report No. 1811
Site Code: LP17
Planning Reference: N/A
National Grid Reference: SP 1721 7216
Team:
Project Manager: Dr Cathy Coutts
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PROJECT DETAILS		OASIS No 310058
Project name	Packwood House: fibre optic cable installation	
Short description (250 words max)	An archaeological watching brief was carried out at Packwood House during the excavation of a narrow service trench for fibre optic cabling in the area adjacent to the lake. The cut of a possible ditch was recorded, possibly associated with water ingress into the lake.	
Project type (E.g. DBA, Eval etc.)	Watching Brief	
Site status (None, NT, SAM etc.)	Packwood House is Grade I Listed, the area investigated is part of a Registered Park	
Previous work (HER nos etc.)	Yes	
Current land use	Grassed land and pathway across causeway	
Future work (yes, no, unknown)	unknown	
Monument type / period	Ditch post-medieval	
Significant finds (artefact, type, period)	none	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Warwickshire	
Site address (inc postcode)	Packwood House, Lapworth, B94 6AT	
Study area (sq.m or ha)	c.1000 square metres	
OS E & N (inc grid sq code)	SP 1721 7216	
Height OD	unknown	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	Archaeology Warwickshire	
Project brief originator		
Project design originator	Dr Cathy Coutts	
Director/supervisor	Dr Cathy Coutts	
Manager		
Sponsor or funding body	The National Trust	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date /end date	September-October 2017	
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no)	Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone etc.)
Physical		
Paper	Warwickshire Museum	
Digital	Warwickshire Museum	
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
Title	Packwood House: Fibre Optic Cable Installation	
Serial title, volume,	1811	
Author(s)	Dr Cathy Coutts	
Page nos		
Date	February 2018	

CONTENTS

	Summary	3
1	Introduction	4
2	Site Location	5
3	Archaeological and Historical Background	6
4	Aims and Methods	8
5	Results	9
	Conclusions	10
	Acknowledgements	11
	References	12

APPENDICES

- A List of Contexts
- B List of Finds

PHOTOGRAPHS

- 1 View of service trench, looking north-east towards Packwood House
- 2 South-facing section of ditch 6 and fill 7

FIGURES

- 1 Length of fibre optic cable trench observed

SUMMARY

Archaeological recording was carried out during the excavation of service trenching to install fibre optic cabling at Packwood House, Lapworth, which is a Grade I Listed National Trust property within a Registered Park.

No significant archaeological remains were observed, although a possible former ditch was recorded, along with material making up the construction of the causeway. A few finds of later post-medieval date were recovered, but were not retained.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The National Trust is installing fibre optic cabling to their property at Packwood House, Lapworth, B94 6AT. Part of the route runs through an area of archaeological sensitivity, along the causeway alongside the lake, so the archaeological advisor to the National Trust requested a watching brief to accompany groundworks in that area.
- 1.2 Archaeology Warwickshire was commissioned to undertake the watching brief in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation approved by the National Trust.
- 1.3 The archaeological work was carried out over the course of a number of visits from the 25th September to the 23rd October 2017, in accordance with Chartered Institute for Archaeologists Standards and Guidelines (2014).
- 1.4 This report presents the results of the fieldwork. The project archive will be stored at the Warwickshire Museum under Site Code LP17. The finds have not been retained.

2 SITE LOCATION

- 2.1 The area of interest is centred on national grid reference SP 1721 7216, to the south-west of Packwood House, along the causeway on the north-west side of the lake. The full route of the fibre optic cable runs from Grove Lane to Packwood House.

- 2.2 The underlying geology of the area is Mercia Mudstone overlaid by superficial Till deposits, or Arden Sandstone (British Geological Survey 2017).

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The name Packwood may well have Saxon origins, being derived from 'Pacca's Wood' (Wallace 1973, 5). However, there is currently no evidence for any occupation on the site preceding the current house.
- 3.2 Packwood House is a Grade I Listed Building (Warwickshire Historic Environment Record Number MWA 7156). The surrounding gardens and parkland are Registered (National Heritage List for England no 1001194). The main part of the house dates to between 1556 and 1560 and is likely to have been built for William Fetherston. This block is timber-framed with grey rendering. An engraving of 1756 shows the decorative timber framing before it was rendered. The original windows have been replaced with the exception of one surviving Elizabethan example. This is now in the interior of the house, suggesting that the original plan was L-shaped (VCH 1949, 129).
- 3.3 During the reign of Charles II a long red brick range was added to the north-east side of the house. Its south elevation has a series of pilasters dividing it into bays, which together with other architectural features such as cornices, ovals and roundels (Wallace 1973, 7).
- 3.4 Some of the formal garden features at Packwood date back to the 17th century (MWA 6953) such as the north-east gazebo in the south garden as well as the layout of some of the yew topiary (Wallace 1973, 7-8).
- 3.5 The former barn, now the great hall, has some 18th-century brickwork at the north end (VCH 1949, 130). It was converted in the early 20th century by the then owner, Mr Baron Ash, who also built the long gallery to connect the barn to the rest of the house (Wallace 1973, 11). He appears to have been responsible for removing many 18th- and 19th-century alterations to the house and returning it to the more medieval appearance that it has today. In June 1941 he presented the house to the National Trust.
- 3.6 Archaeological recording was carried out during three separate sets of groundworks at Packwood House in 2005 and 2009, during which several archaeological features were recorded (Gethin and Rann 2010). In 2005 a series of drains associated with

an earlier, probably 19th-century, arrangement of the gardens, was uncovered to the south of the house. In January 2009 a brick drain with limestone capping was exposed on the west side of the house. Finds recovered from the thin build-up of silt within the drain dated from the mid-19th century. In October 2009 work on the south side of the house exposed a further stretch of brick drain, this time with both capping and base made of limestone. No dating evidence was found with the drain but it seems likely that it had been constructed at a similar time to the other. The brick footing of a former bay window, apparently of late 18th- or early 19th-century date was also exposed.

4 AIMS AND METHODS

- 4.1 The main aim of the work was to record any archaeological remains revealed or 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. 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. The objective of the work was a programme of observation and recording during ground reduction to development formation levels.

- 4.2 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.

- 4.3 An experienced archaeologist was made available for each day of ground disturbance when notified by the client in accordance with WSI. Where potential archaeological deposits were encountered, the supervising archaeologist assessed or recorded these before they were disturbed by the machine.

5 RESULTS

- 5.1 The ground disturbance associated with the development was undertaken in several stages. Trenching was undertaken over a period of three weeks with the trench being excavated by mini-excavator to a depth of 0.45-0.65m deep and up to 0.23m wide, with a narrow toothless bucket. Observation proper began when the contractors reached the area by the lake. A small trench was excavated for a service box measuring 0.60m x 0.80m prior to the main run of fibre optic cabling by the lake and across the causeway.

Deposit sequence

- 5.2 A very simple sequence of deposits was recorded during the observations. Along the south-west side of the lake the trench cut only into a mixed topsoil layer (1), here 0.45m deep. Along the causeway the lowest part of the trench cut c.0.20m into a layer of compact, dark brown silty clay (5), overlain by c.0.20 of red silty clay (4), itself overlain by 0.08-0.20m of yellowish brown sandy clay (3) with overlying topsoil. The path makeup was a thin, 40mm layer of modern pea gravel (2) overlying the topsoil layer. The topsoil contained fragments of brick and is likely to be the source of the other unstratified finds.
- 5.3 The excavation on the causeway revealed the remains of ditch (6) cutting into the red clay (4), filled with a layer of dark brown silty clay (7), sloping towards the lake. This is likely to represent a relict drainage ditch, possibly associated with a field boundary to the north-west. No artefacts were found in the fill. Also noted were two land drains near the north-west corner of the lake.
- 5.4 No significant finds were recovered during the excavations, a single sherd of Creamware pottery and four sherds of black-glazed ware were found, all of later post-medieval date. More modern artefacts included four sherds of modern glazed ware, a pair of pliers and a 2008 Spanish euro. All artefacts were unstratified but are likely to have derived from the topsoil.

7 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The causeway on the north-west side of the lake is raised above the level of the field to its north-west, suggesting that lies above a dam created to allow the road to run in a direct line from the house, along the avenue, to the road to the south-west. The two lower levels of clay are likely to have been materials brought in to create the upper part of this dam. The cut of a possible drainage ditch was recorded which may have been associated with a field boundary on the north-west side of the causeway and was post-medieval in date.

- 6.2 A small number of finds of later post-medieval date were recovered but were not retained.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeology Warwickshire would like to thank Janine Young of The National Trust for commissioning the work, to Matt Faber and Gary Holland of Kelly Comms for their help on site.

REFERENCES

BGS British Geological Survey 2018 *Geology of Britain Viewer*
<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html> Accessed February 2018.

Gethin, B. and Rann, C. 2010 *Archaeological Recording at Packwood House, Lapworth, Warwickshire, in 2005 and 2009*, Warwickshire Museum Report 1037.

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

Wallace, C. 1973 *Packwood House, Warwickshire*, National Trust Guide Book.

APPENDICES

A List of contexts

Context	Description	Width (m)	Thickness (m)	Comment
1	Dark brown silty loam with clay and gravel and occasional pebbles		0.17-0.2m	Topsoil
2	Grey gravel		0.04m	Modern gravel path surface
3	Yellow brown sandy clay		0.08-0.2m	Layer, possibly backfilling of old pipe cut
4	Red silty clay		0.17-0.2m	Layer
5	Dark brown silty clay, compact		0.18-0.21m	Layer
6	NW-SE aligned, moderately sloping sides with rounded base sloping down towards lake	1.2m	0.59m	Cut of ditch
7	Dark brown silty clay, fairly compact	1.2m	0.59m	Fill of ditch (6)

A List of Finds

Context	Material	No	Comment
U/S	Animal bone	1	Fragment of large mammal bone
U/S	Pottery	5	1 sherd Creamware (CRW), 1 sherd black-glazed (PMCW), 4 sherds of modern glazed ware (MGW)
U/S	Ceramic tile	6	
U/S	Glass	2	modern
U/S	Stone	1	Worked possibly tile
U/S	FE	1	Pliers
U/S	Cu alloy	1	2008 Spanish euro

None of these finds were retained.



1. View of service trench alongside lake, looking north-east towards Packwood House



2. South-facing section of ditch 6 and fill 7

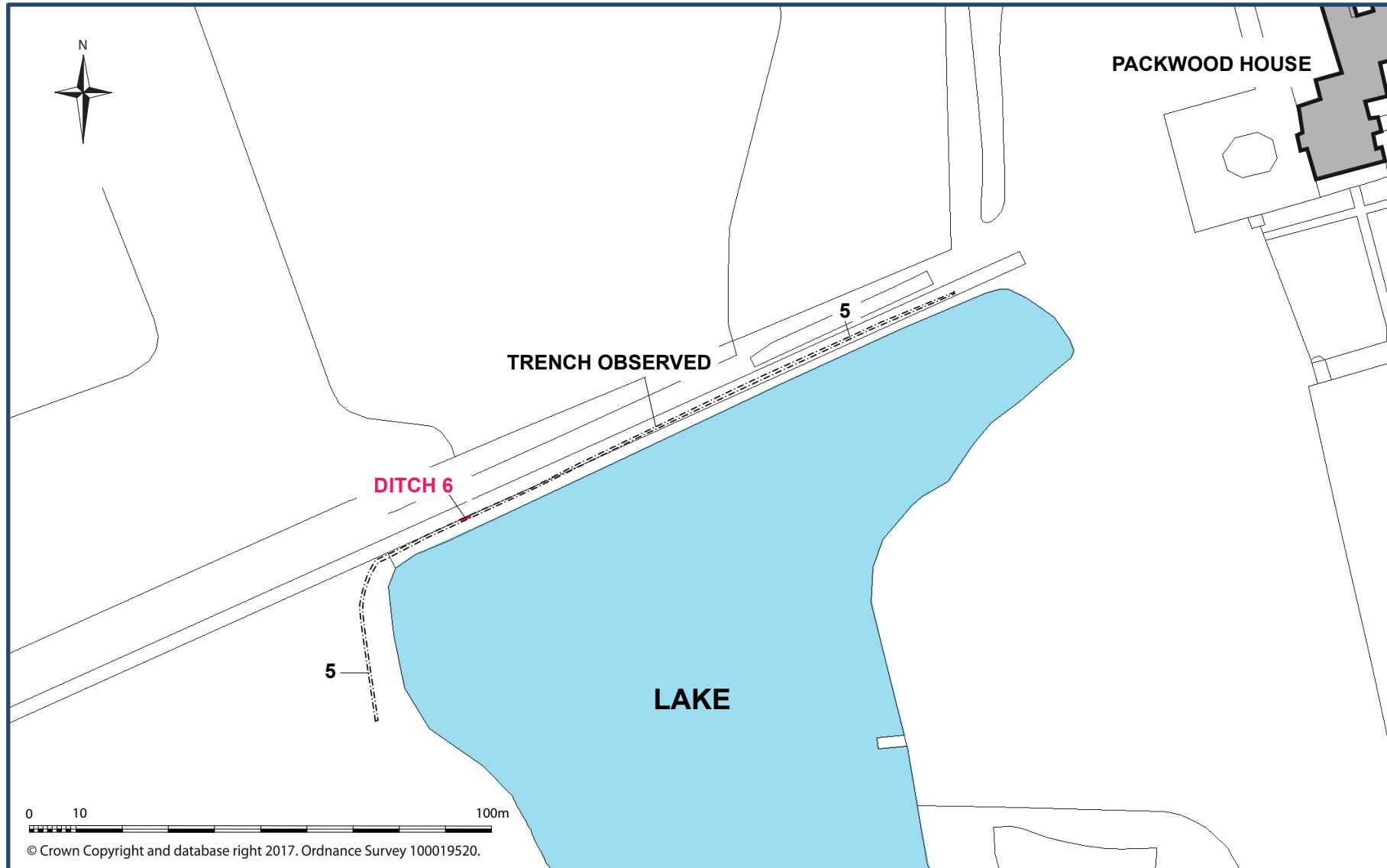


Fig 1: Length of fibre optic cable trench observed