

birmingham archaeology

1-2 Stareton
Cottages, Stareton,
Warwickshire:
An Archaeological
Watching Brief

Project No. 1733
1 -2 Stareton Cottages, Stareton, Warwickshire:
An Archaeological Watching Brief

By
Erica Macey-Bracken

For
Mr. Paul Underhill

For further information please contact:

Alex Jones (Director)
Birmingham Archaeology
The University of Birmingham
Edgbaston
Birmingham B15 2TT
Tel: 0121 414 5513
Fax: 0121 414 5516
E-Mail: bham-arch@bham.ac.uk
Web Address: <http://www.barch.bham.ac.uk/bufau>

**1 -2 Stareton Cottages, Stareton, Warwickshire:
An Archaeological Watching Brief**

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	1
2	LOCATION AND GEOLOGY.....	1
3	AIMS AND OBJECTIVES.....	1
4	METHODOLOGY.....	2
5	ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT	2
6	RESULTS	3
7	THE FINDS	3
8	DISCUSSION.....	3
9	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	3

Figures

Fig.1 Site Location

Fig.2 The Site

Fig.3 Archaeological and Historic Background overlaid onto the Ordnance Survey 1st Edition

Plates

Plate.1 Machine excavation of the garage foundations

Plate 2 Section of the excavated trenches

Appendices

Appendix 1 Brief for Archaeological Watching Brief (Removed)

Appendix 2 Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Watching Brief (Removed)

SUMMARY

In October 2007 Birmingham Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief at 1-2 Stareton Cottages, Stareton, Warwickshire (NGR SP 3335 7137). The work was commissioned by Paul Underhill in advance of a proposed extension to the rear of the cottages (ref. W07/1150). The site lay within an area of significant archaeological potential, including the site of a possible deserted medieval village (Warwickshire Historic Environment Record MWA 2915) and post-medieval sites such as a quarry and possible watermill (Warwickshire Historic Environment Record MWA 2875 and 2903). No archaeological deposits or features were noted during the groundworks however, although a few pieces of animal bone and sherds of post-medieval pottery were recovered from the topsoil.

1-2 Stareton Cottages, Stareton Warwickshire: AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF, 2007.

1 INTRODUCTION

In October 2007 Birmingham Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief at 1-2 Stareton Cottages, Stareton, Warwickshire (NGR SP 3335 7137, hereafter referred to as the site). The work was commissioned by Paul Underhill in advance of a proposed extension to the rear of the cottages (ref. W07/1150).

This report outlines the results of the watching brief, which was carried out between 15th and 16th October 2007, and which was prepared in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs (IFA 1999). The assessment conformed to a brief produced by Warwick District Council (Appendix 1), and a Written Scheme of Investigation (Birmingham Archaeology 2007), which was approved by the Local Planning Authority prior to implementation, in accordance with guidelines laid down in Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (DoE 1990).

2 LOCATION AND GEOLOGY

The site is located to the rear of 1-2 Stareton Cottages, and is centred on NGR SP 3335 7137 (Fig. *). The site lies within the parish of Stoneleigh, south of the village, and east of Stoneleigh Park within the hamlet of Stareton, between the Stoneleigh Road and the Coventry Road.

The underlying geology consists of sandstone.

The site was part of the garden of the cottages, which consisted of a grassy area, surrounded by mature trees on the north and west, the neighbouring garden to the east and the cottages themselves to the south.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aims of the programme of archaeological work were to:

- to monitor all below-ground works.
- to record the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains affected by the development works.
- to identify any previously unrecorded sites in order to update the SMR.
- to preserve any archaeological deposits 'by record', and recover for long term conservation and future analysis all artefactual/ecofactual material recovered from the site.
- to provide sufficient information to enable any subsequent archaeological works or excavation to be conducted within clearly defined research aim.

The watching brief was carried out in accordance with the Institute of Archaeologists *Code of Conduct*, and in accordance with all relevant IFA Standards and Guidance documents.

4 METHODOLOGY

A search of available maps (printed and manuscript), and material held at the Warwickshire Historic Environment Record was undertaken.

All the necessary topsoil and natural subsoil was removed using a mechanical excavator with a toothless ditching bucket, under direct archaeological supervision, down to the required level as set out in the planning application. The exposed stratigraphy was recorded and digital photographs were taken for the purposes of illustrating the report.

All the finds recovered were washed, marked and bagged according to the current IFA Standards and Guidance document for finds, and passed to an appropriate specialist for identification.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT

5.1 Prehistoric

No evidence of prehistoric occupation is known in the area.

5.2 Roman

No evidence of Roman occupation is known in the area.

5.3 Medieval

Stareton is the possible site of a deserted medieval village. An estate map of 1597 shows around 17 houses around Stareton House and Park Farm, and possible house platform earthworks have been noted in the area (Warwickshire Historic Environment Record MWA 2915). A possible site of a medieval watermill is located 300m to the northwest of Park Farm, and the associated watercourses are still visible as earthworks (Warwickshire Historic Environment Record MWA 2903). An area of Ridge and Furrow also survives to the east of Stareton.

5.4 Post-Medieval

The Stareton Cottages themselves are Grade II listed and date to the 17th century. Several other post-medieval monuments are known in the area, including two quarries, one 250m to the west of Stareton shown on maps dating to 1597 and 1766 (Warwickshire Historic Environment Record MWA 2875) and one 500m to the south of Stareton which is also marked on an estate map of 1597 (Warwickshire Historic Environment Record MWA 2867). The site and partial remains of two post-medieval footbridges that cross the nearby River Avon are located 200m to the northwest of Stareton, and these are marked on maps of 1685 and 1749 (Warwickshire Historic Environment Record MWA 2932). The site is also very close to the southern edge of Stoneleigh Deer park, where deer were kept for hunting during the post-medieval and Imperial periods (Warwickshire Historic Environment Record MWA 2865)

The development lies within an area of significant archaeological potential, and the site therefore had potential to impact on archaeological deposits, including structural remains,

boundary features and domestic refuse pits associated with the occupation of the area from at least the early medieval period.

6 RESULTS

No archaeological features or deposits were noted in any of the groundworks, although two sherds of post-medieval pottery and three pieces of animal bone were recovered from the topsoil.

The first piece of groundwork was the footings for the extension to the rear of the existing cottages. These footings were almost all 1.20 metres deep, although patches of softer sandy natural caused a few parts of the trenches to be dug deeper, to a depth of 1.50m. In these trenches the natural sandy subsoil was overlain by the modern topsoil, which was 100 - 120mm deep.

The footings for the two double garages were excavated in the gardens of the existing cottages. As with the footings for the extension, the natural subsoil was overlain by a 100 - 120mm thick layer of topsoil and grass.

7 THE FINDS - POTTERY IDENTIFICATION BY STEPHANIE RÀTKAI

Two sherds of pottery were recovered from the topsoil during excavation of the footings for the extension. One sherd was a coarseware bowl rim of probable 18th century date (WCTS code CW), and the other sherd was identified as a coarseware jar base of 17th - 18th century date (WCTS code MPCW).

Two pieces of animal bone which were also recovered from the topsoil during the excavation of the footings for the extension were identified as vertebrae from a neonate mammal, probably a pig (D. Brown, pers. comm.)

8 DISCUSSION

The absence of archaeological features and deposits on the site suggests that the site remained unoccupied prior to the 17th century date of the construction of 1 -2 Stareton Cottages. It is possible that any evidence of archaeological features and deposits directly underneath the original footprint of the Cottages may have been obliterated during construction. The pottery is likely to have been discarded by the occupants of the Cottages in the 17th - 18th century, and the neonate bones may stem from the rural practice of keeping a pig in the garden to fatten up to provide meat for the occupants. In this case it is possible that this animal was stillborn and was therefore discarded.

9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The project was commissioned by Paul Underhill. Thanks are due to Paul Underhill and his team for their co-operation and assistance throughout the project. Thanks also go to Anna Stocks, who monitored the project on behalf of Warwick District Council. The watching brief was undertaken by Erica Macey-Bracken, who also produced the written report which was illustrated by Helen Moulden, and edited by Chris Hewitson, who also managed the project for Birmingham Archaeology.

10 References

Birmingham Archaeology 2007 *Written Scheme of Investigation for a Watching Brief at 1 & 2 Stareton, Warwickshire*

Department of the Environment (DoE) 1990 *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: Archaeology and Planning*

Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) 1999 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment*, rev. edn.

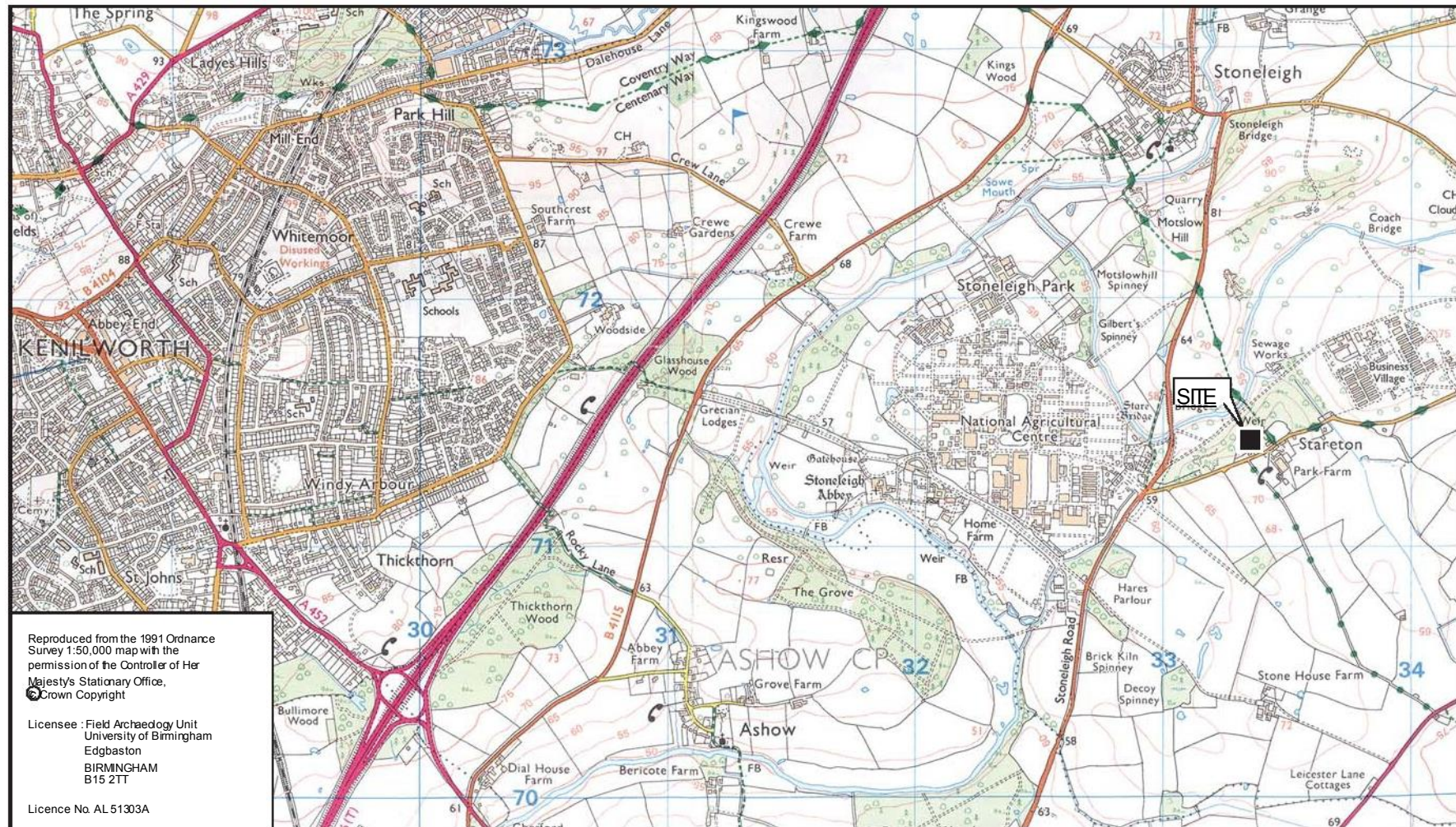


Fig.1

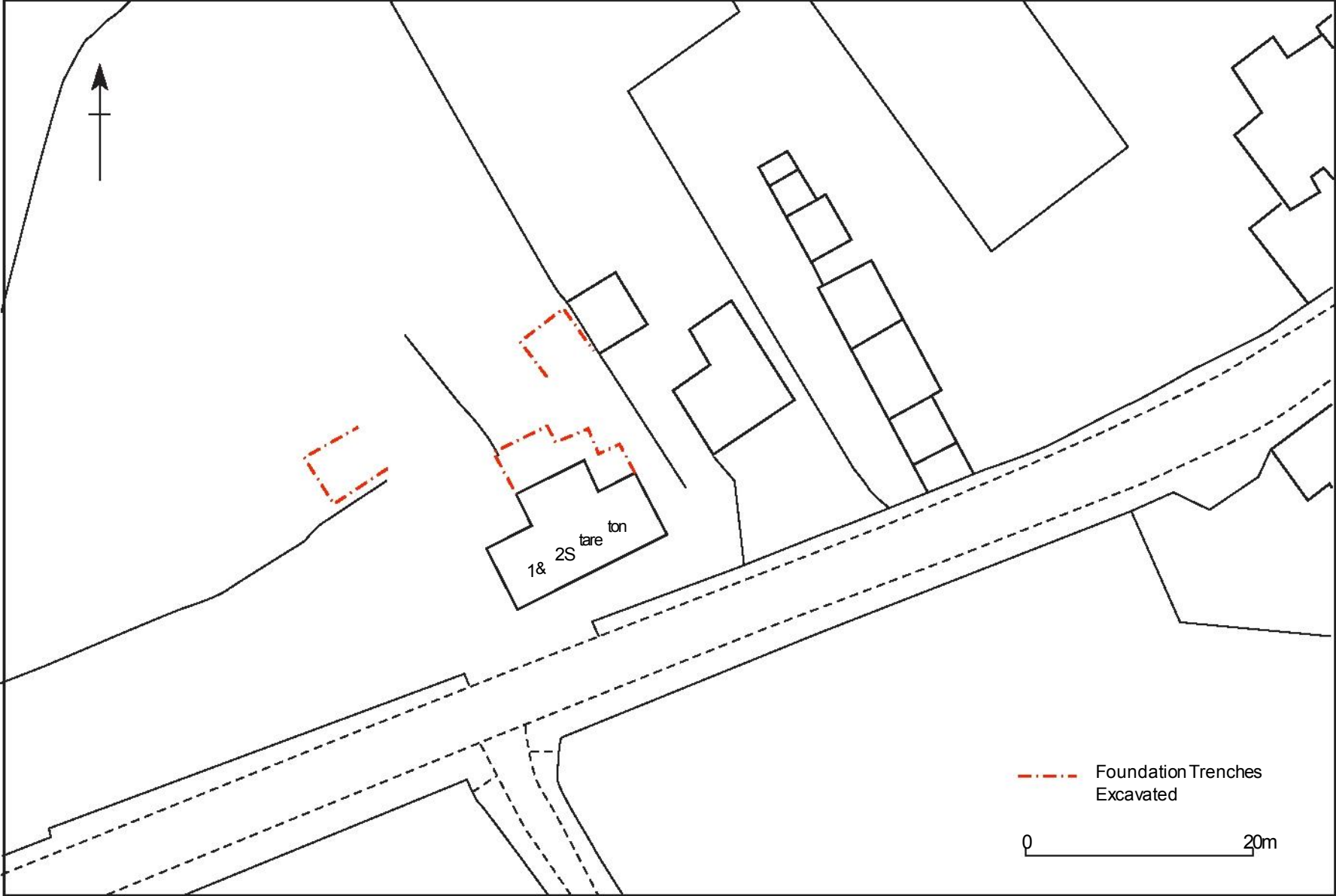


Fig.2



Plate 1



Plate 2