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Mytton Antiques
Attingham Estate
Shropshire
Archaeological Watching Brief
2010

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Mytton Antiques

Attingham Estate, Shropshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

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Mytton Antiques, Attingham Estate, Shropshire

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Mytton Antiques, Attingham Estate, Shropshire

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SUMMARY

Birmingham Archaeology was commissioned by the National Trust to undertake an archaeological watching brief in respect of a new drainage system at Mytton Antiques, Attingham Estate, Shropshire, NGR SJ 565096.

The watching brief took place during the excavation of drainage trenches and drainage ditches by a JCB fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. The site work was undertaken during June 2010.

No archaeological features, structures, deposits or horizons were identified during the course of the groundworks. No artefactual material predating the modern period was recovered.

Possible reasons for the absence of archaeological evidence include recent landscaping activity within the area.

Mytton Antiques, Attingham Estate, Shropshire

Archaeological Watching Brief, [06/2010]

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.1 Birmingham Archaeology was commissioned by The National Trust to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the drainage groundworks at Mytton Antiques, Attingham Estate, Shropshire (hereinafter referred to as the site).
- 1.1.2 This report outlines the results of the watching brief carried out during June 2010, and has been prepared in accordance the brief produced by The National Trust (Appendix 1), and a Written Scheme of Investigation (Birmingham Archaeology 2010, Appendix 2) which was approved by the National Trust prior to implementation, in accordance with guidelines laid down in Planning Policy Schedule 5 and associated guidance (DCMS 2010; English Heritage 2010). The project conformed to the Institute for Archaeologists Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs (IFA 2001)

2 LOCATION AND GEOLOGY

- 2.1.1 The site is located within the curtilage of 2/3 Norton a Grade II Listed Building (centred on NGR SJ 565096). (Fig. 1)
- 2.1.2 The underlying drift geology consists of sands and clays of Eocene or interglacial origin within the Severn/Tern valley.
- 2.1.3 The present character of the site is garden surrounded by arable farmland with pasture to the south.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1.1 The principal aim of the watching brief was to record any archaeological features, structures, deposits, or horizons exposed during intrusive groundworks across the site during the excavation of drain and pipe trenches.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 4.1.1 The majority of the archaeological evidence dates to the post-medieval period with standing buildings of the early 17th century at Norton, a small hamlet on the old A5 north of Wroxeter. There are however significant deposits of Roman date known in the area from work carried out over the years mainly by the University of Birmingham. Investigations of the Roman archaeology of the Wroxeter hinterland are well known and stand to provide a clear context for any remains of Roman date which may be encountered at the site (Gaffney *et al* 2003).
- 4.1.2 Full details of the archaeological and historical background to the work are contained within the brief (Appendix 1).

5 METHODOLOGY

- 5.1.1 Groundworks comprised the excavation of ground for a septic tank and 8 associated drainage trenches of varying lengths dug in a 'dog-legged' pattern (Plate 1). Also excavated were two pipe trenches to the south of the existing Mytton antiques building. The excavation of the ground in the area of the new septic tank took place prior to involvement by Birmingham Archaeology, however all subsequent work was monitored by a suitably qualified archaeologist and complemented with the salvage recording of any archaeological deposits and features revealed during works.
- 5.1.2 All stratigraphic sequences were recorded, even where no archaeology was present. Features were planned at a scale of 1:50, and sections were drawn of all cut features and significant vertical stratigraphy at a scale of 1:20. A comprehensive written record was maintained using a continuous numbered context system on *pro-forma* cards. Written records and scale plans were supplemented by photographs using black and white monochrome, colour slide and digital photography.
- 5.1.3 The full site archive includes all artefactual remains recovered from the site. The site archive will be prepared according to guidelines set down in Appendix 3 of the Management of Archaeology Projects (English Heritage, 1991), the Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-term Storage (UKIC, 1990) and Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological collections (Museum and Art Galleries Commission, 1992). The paper archive will be deposited with the appropriate repository subject to permission from the landowner.

6 RESULTS

- 1.1.1. In the majority of the area excavated for the drainage trenches of the septic tank, natural geology [102], consisting of orange sandy gravel was identified at a depth of 0.75m below the current ground level. This was sealed by 0.3m of a light brown stony silt subsoil [101] which was overlain by 0.4m of a dark brown topsoil [100].
- 1.1.2. One of the branches of the drainage trenches (Section 1, Fig.3) contained two possible features, a small posthole [103] and, partially revealed to the far eastern end of the trench, a small pit [104] (Plate 2). However, these features contained no datable evidence and are likely to represent modern disturbance in the ground in this area. A similar pit [105] was also noted in another of the drainage trenches (Section 2, Fig.3) but was also undated (Plate 3).
- 1.1.3. The two pipe trenches excavated towards the standing building were excavated to a depth of 0.6m below the current ground level, with the earliest deposit encountered consisting of a light brown silty clay that contained fragments of brick rubble throughout [201] (Plate 4). Overlying this was a layer of dark brown topsoil [200] 0.45m in depth (Section 4, Fig. 3). No evidence of surviving archaeological features were located.

7 CONCLUSION

- 7.1.1 Map regression of the site shows very little activity has taken place around the village of Norton since its earliest origins. In his 1752 map (Map 1), Rocque defines Norton within a distinct and sub circular enclosure surrounded by lane, which had, by the date of an 1807 estate map (Map 2), been reduced to a boundary on the southern and western sides (the northern and eastern sides being formed by the London A5 and the Wroxeter - Whitchurch Roman road).

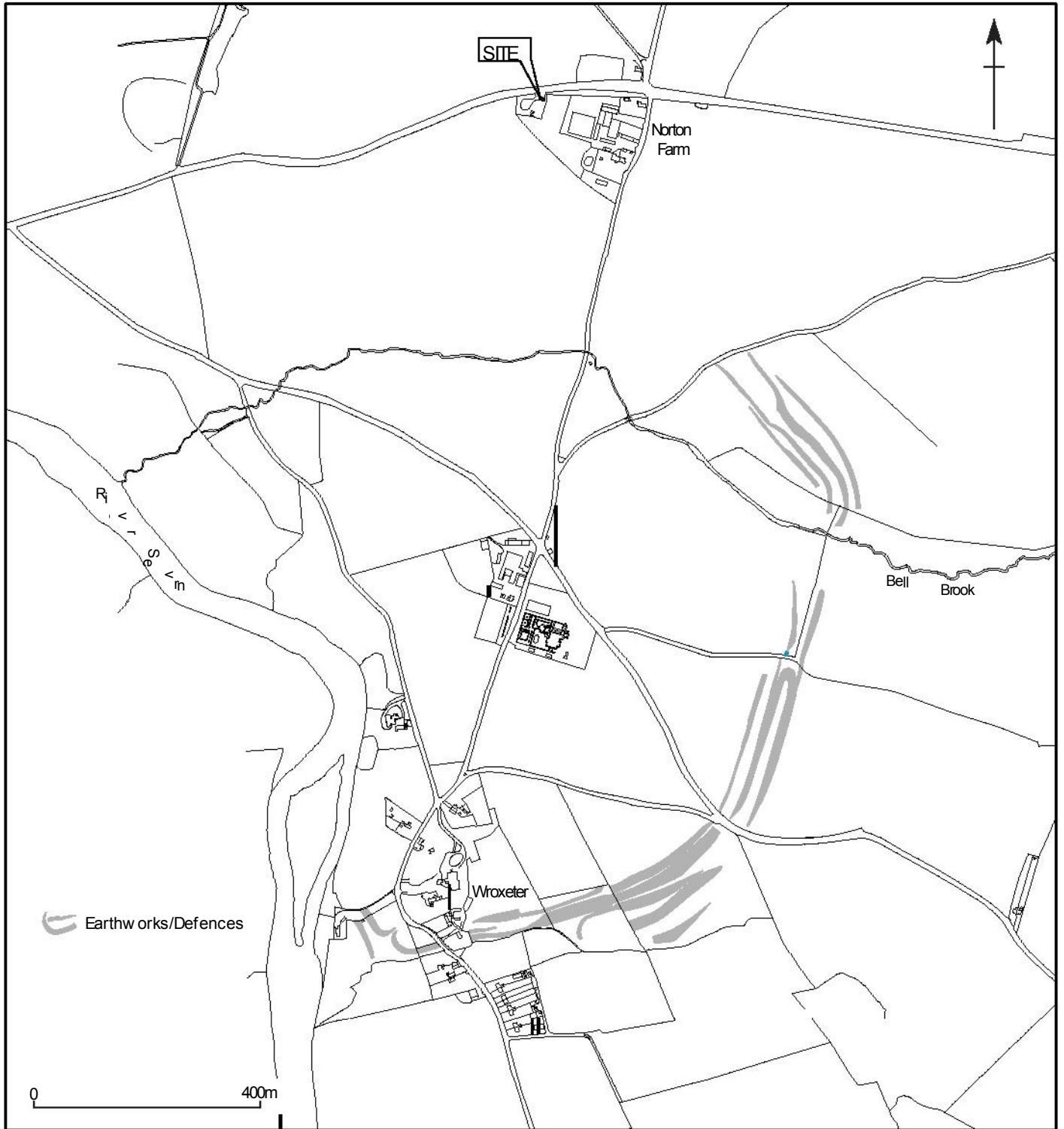
- 7.1.2 Early re-used Roman masonry, most likely robbed from nearby Wroxeter, is evident at places in Norton, however, despite the potential of the development site, the watching brief identified no archaeological remains within the area of any date.
- 7.1.3 One possible reason for this is the recent landscaping done at the site during the construction of the currently existing parking area. Bunds around the eastern and southern ends of the site were formed using excess material removed during the levelling of the area, and this may explain the lack of modern pottery within the existing topsoil, with the previous upper layers of topsoil removed to form the bunds.

8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The project was commissioned by The National Trust and thanks go to Jeremy Milln who monitored the project on behalf of this organisation. The fieldwork was undertaken by Phil Mann, who also produced the written report which was illustrated by Nigel Dodds and edited by Chris Hewitson who managed the project for Birmingham Archaeology.

9 REFERENCES

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Old A5



Mytton
Antiques

Pipe
Trench

Tank

Tank

Tank

Section 2

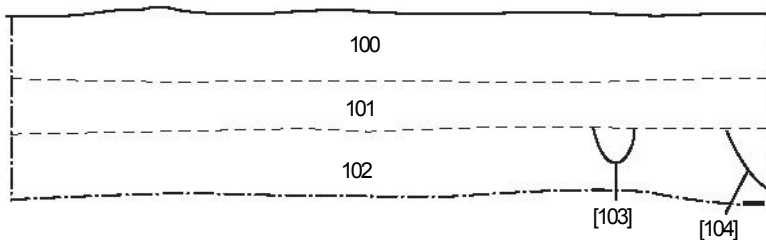
Section 3

Section

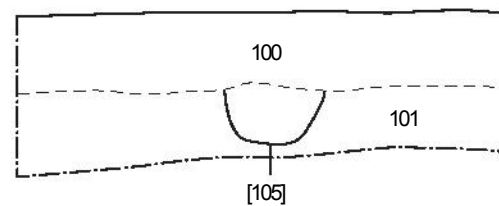
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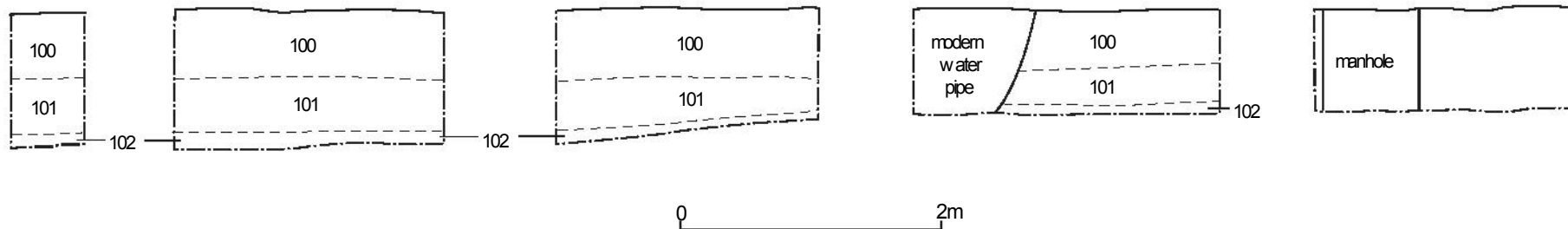
Section 1



Section 2



Section 3



Section 4

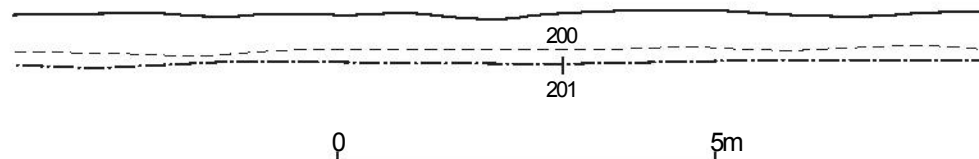








Plate 1



Plate 2



Plate 3



Plate 4