

Sugarbrook Mill

Buntsford Hill, Stoke Pound, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire

Sugarbrook Mill

Buntsford Hill, Stoke Pound, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire

Archaeological evaluation and interior walkover survey

NGR: SO 95817 68180

Site code: SMB15

HER ref: WSM67188

OASIS ID: 110archa1-226250

Sean Cook BA (Hons) ACIfA

Illustrations & interior walk over survey by Jill Atherton MCIfA

October 2015

Contents	
<i>Figures</i>	4
<i>Plates</i>	4
<i>Appendices</i>	4
<i>SUMMARY</i>	5
<i>INTRODUCTION</i>	7
<i>Location and scope of work (Figs. 1 & 2)</i>	7
<i>Geology and topography</i>	7
<i>Archaeological and historical background</i>	8
<i>EXCAVATION METHODOLOGY</i>	9
<i>Aims of the work</i>	9
<i>Sample size and scope of fieldwork</i>	9
<i>Fieldwork methods and recording</i>	9
<i>RESULTS: GENERAL (Fig. 3)</i>	10
<i>Soil and ground conditions</i>	10
<i>Reliability of field investigation</i>	10
<i>Distribution of archaeological deposits</i>	10
<i>Presentation of results</i>	10
<i>RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS (Fig. 3)</i>	11
<i>FINDS</i>	12
<i>Environmental data</i>	12
<i>DISCUSSION (Fig. 4)</i>	18
<i>Summary of results</i>	20
<i>Significance</i>	20
<i>Impact of development</i>	21
<i>Archive Location</i>	21
<i>BIBLIOGRAPHY</i>	21
<i>APPENDIX 1 SUGARBROOK MILL; INTERIOR WALKOVER SURVEY (Fig. 5)</i>	22
<i>APPENDIX 2 OASIS FORM</i>	31

Figures

- 1 site location
- 2 area of study
- 3 site plan with trench location, plan & section
- 4 historic environment plan
- 5 roof trusses (see Fig. 4 for locations)

Plates

- 1 view of excavated trench, from the south-west
- 2 view of excavated trench, from the north-east
- 3 trench section, south-west end
- 4 trench section, plan view, north-east end
- 5 trench section, south-west end, detail
- 6 end of mill and existing road frontage
- 7 blocked opening in front wall
- 8 front of mill
- 9 north-east end of mill
- 10 rear wall of mill showing masonry, brickwork and blocked ?door
- 11 Chamfered beams in eastern part of mill
- 12 Timber feature in upper floor
- 13 Carpenters' numbers on roof truss B, for location see Fig. 5
- 14 Remains of hoist in central part of mill
- 15 One of a pair of cruck-blades in single storey annexe to mill
- 16 possible site of ?old mill, to south-west of Sugarbrook Mill
- 17 bridge and part of Sugarbrook Manor from north

Front cover; Sugarbrook Mill, from the south

Appendices

- Appendix 1 interior walkover survey
- Appendix 2 OASIS form

SUMMARY

In September 2015 trial trenching and an internal walkover survey was carried out at Sugarbrook Mill, Buntsford Hill, Stoke Pound, Bromsgrove, Worcs. as part of a planning application for residential development of the site.

Historic mapping has revealed that construction of the watermill was associated with harnessing the power of the Sugarbrook, one of the more important tributaries of the River Salwarp. This was achieved by diverting its original course and re-connecting with the river via a newly constructed leat and mill race.

The field evaluation revealed a sequence of layers of modern re-deposition overlying the natural clay. This activity is probably linked to expansion of the industrial premises in the early 1950s resulting in the right bank of the Salwarp being moved further to the north-east, this would have included the insertion of associated drainage as evidenced within the south-west end of the trench.

The walkover survey concluded that the building was probably constructed during the mid 18th century, perhaps replacing an earlier mill, not necessarily on the same site, but probably represented by an existing building further to the south-west. Reused cruck blades were also identified in the building.

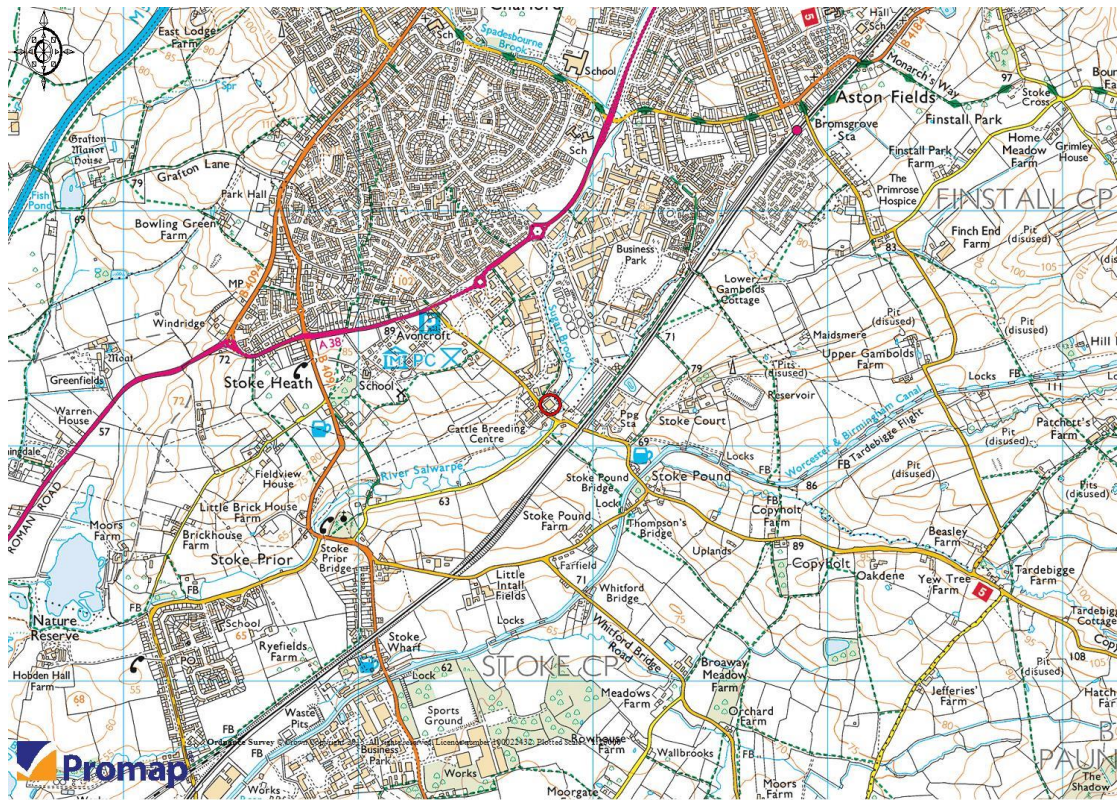


Fig.1; site location (circled in red)

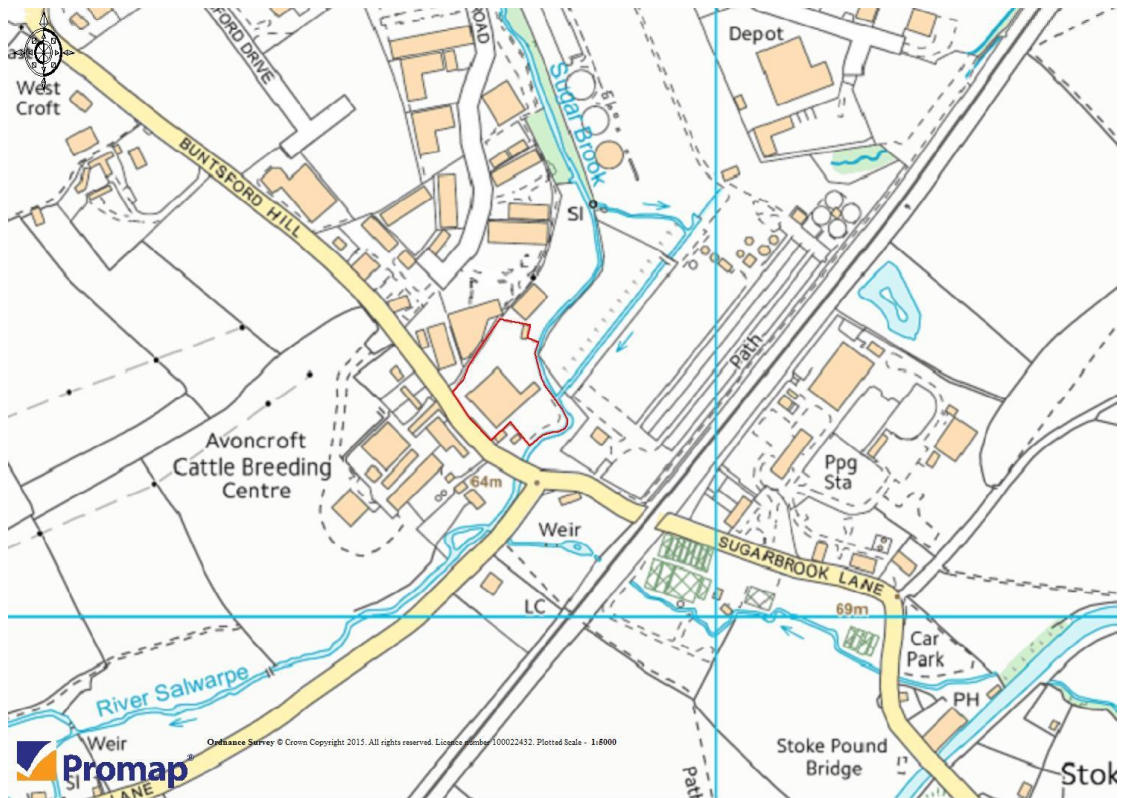


Fig. 2; application area (outlined in red)

INTRODUCTION

Location and scope of work (Figs. 1 & 2)

This document details the results of an archaeological evaluation during 21st and 22nd September 2015 at Sugarbrook Mill, Buntsford Hill, Stoke Pound, Bromsgrove, Worcs. at the request of Steve Haskey Design Ltd. and in accordance with a brief issued (6th Feb., 2015) by Worcestershire Archive & Archaeology Service. The work was being carried out as part of a planning application (Ref: B/14/0831) to Bromsgrove District Council for residential development of the site comprising 23 new dwellings. The agent is Steve Haskey Design Ltd.

The proposed development lies over the site of the 19th century SugarMill (WSM01620), and the site has the potential to contain remains of an earlier mill and/or environmental remains of an early date. The brief required an archaeological evaluation in the form of trial trenching and a walkover survey of the interior of the building to establish if any cellars or other sub-surface structures exist which may have removed archaeological remains of an earlier date.

Geology and topography

The site is situated in the village of Stoke Prior and on the Bromsgrove and Alcester high road, which passes through the parish of Stoke from north to south. The parish is large, lying in mid-Worcestershire to the north-east of the town of Droitwich. The parish includes the settlement of Stoke Wharf and hamlet of Woodgate, along with neighbouring Stoke Heath. The Worcester and Birmingham Canal also passes through the parish. The village of Stoke Prior lies in the valley of the Salwarpe, at about 60m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD), but the land rises in the north, reaching a height of over 120m. The subsoil is Keuper Marl and the upper soil is clay. The River Salwarpe, which rises in the Lickey Hills, flows south-west through the parish. On its course through Stoke Prior it is fed by several tributaries, of which the most important is Sugar Brook (VCH, 1913) where a mill was established in the 19th century. On the banks of the Salwarpe lies the village of Stoke Prior, the inhabitants of which in 1913 were almost exclusively engaged in the manufacture of salt. The application site is irregular in shape encompassing an area of approximately 6,150m² and currently consists of a complex of

connected industrial buildings tarmac and concrete yards and parking areas. There are also a number of sheds, pre-fabricated and steel framed buildings. The buildings have grown over many decades around an existing former (corn) mill shown on the OS 1885 & 1903 maps as a working mill. The site abuts the modern purpose built industrial estate of Buntsford Park along its north eastern boundary.

Archaeological and historical background

The Worcestershire Historic Environment Record (HER) was consulted with a search carried out over a 500m radius centred on the site. The search area is located within an area of gently undulating topography. The underlying geology consists of Mercia Mudstone Group and Bromsgrove Sandstone Formation bedrock beneath superficial deposits of Holt Heath Sand and Gravel Member and Alluvium.

The search area is dominated by the settlement of Bromsgrove in the north and pastoral fields in the south. The field pattern primarily consists of field amalgamation, field reorganisation and parliamentary enclosure. The main settlement pattern is one of interrupted row and civic and commercial. Within the search area lie 5 listed historic buildings dating to the 17th and 19th centuries as well as 4 other unlisted historic buildings dating from the post-medieval period to the 19th century. In addition to the built environment, various monuments have also been recorded within the search area, the earliest of which is an area of ridge and furrow that potentially dates to the medieval period. The remaining monuments date to the post-medieval period and the 19th century and include a watermill, the site of an out-farm and the site of a farmstead.

The Sugarbrook Mill (Grade II listed) was located at the centre of the search area. No unstratified finds from within the search area have been recorded on the HER. With the exception of a salvage recording associated with the Henley to Redditch pipeline, there has been no archaeological investigation within the search area and consequently the survival of archaeology is almost entirely unknown. However, there is considered to be a moderate potential for below ground archaeology, particularly associated with 18th and 19th century manufacturing.

The investigation is centred on the former (corn) mill shown on the OS 1885 & 1903 maps as a working mill situated along Sugarbrook, the most important of several tributaries of the The River Salwarpe on its course through Stoke Prior (VCH, 1913).

EXCAVATION METHODOLOGY

Aims of the work

The objectives of the trial trenching was to determine the date, character, quality, survival and extent of the archaeological deposits within the application area likely to be threatened by the proposed development. Should significant finds or features had been identified then an appropriate excavation strategy would be implemented as a final stage of mitigation by the planning advisory service. This would be the subject of a separate brief.

The field evaluation was carried out in conjunction with an internal walkover survey of the former mill building to assess the presence of any cellars that may have disturbed archaeological deposits, the results are included in Appendix 1. Both the excavation work and the internal survey of the building was supplemented by a reconnaissance of the immediate area in order to confirm features shown on the historic mapping.

Sample size and scope of fieldwork

The evaluation comprised a single machine excavated north-east to south-west aligned trench 15m in length, positioned on the right bank of the existing course of the River Salwarp. It was originally intended that a 25m trench would be excavated, but due to the limitations of the investigative area and the presence of services currently in use and associated with the existing buildings this was reduced with the approval of the Historic Environment Advisor to about 15m. In conjunction with the excavation an internal walkover survey of the building was also carried out.

Fieldwork methods and recording

The archaeological field work and post-excavation was carried out in accordance with standards and guidance for archaeological field evaluations produced by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA, 2014). All deposits were excavated removing the overburden under close archaeological supervision and investigated for archaeological features. A plan and section of the trench was made and recorded during excavation.

RESULTS: GENERAL (Fig. 3)

Soil and ground conditions

Conditions were generally wet during excavation with significant rainfall on the first day of excavation followed by showers on the second day. The deposits showed considerable moisture retention and the nature of the underlying clayey natural substrate meant that rainwater did not permeate well beyond the base of the trench.

Reliability of field investigation

Truncation of the underlying deposits took the form of a service trench and ceramic pipe aligned east-west roughly centrally along the west half of the trench. There was no evidence of a relict soil horizon immediately overlying the surface of the natural substrate and it may be possible that there was some significant grading of these deposits when re-ordering of the site was carried out during the industrial development in the 1950s

Distribution of archaeological deposits

The Natural substrate (context 105) was exposed throughout the majority of the trench. No archaeological deposits were observed cut into the surface of or overlying this layer. Instead it was shown to be truncated by a modern service trench at the south-west end of the trial trench and falling sharply at the north-east end. The overlying layers comprised redeposited modern material associated with more recent development of the site.

Presentation of results

The results of the excavation (below) are described from the earliest to the latest deposits. The trench was attributed context numbers with a numerical value equivalent to the number of the trench.

RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS (Fig. 3)

THE TRENCH

Context 105 (layer) and pea gravel

The surface of the geological horizon or natural substrate was exposed throughout the majority of the trench. This comprised a stiff brown clay with green clay mottling. No archaeological deposits were observed cut into or overlying the surface of this layer which was recorded at a level height of about 64.30m AOD, falling sharply at the north-east end of the trench where it was recorded at the bottom of this slope at approx. 63.80m AOD before continuing beyond the base of the trench. Overlying the downward slope of the natural clay at the north-east end of the trench was a layer of pea gravel which also continues beyond the base of the excavated trench.

Context 104

Overlying the natural clay throughout the majority of the trench was a yellowish-brown sandy-clay with a small component of small rounded pebbles. This was about 0.25-30m in thickness increasing to 1m on the downward slope of the underlying clay at the north-east end of the trench. Fragments of red brick and pieces of scrap metal were observed within the deposit.

Context 103

Overlying context 104 at the north-east end of the trench was a deposit of greyish-brown silty-clay mottled with reddish-brown clay and a component of small rounded pebbles. It was about 0.20m thick at the top increasing to 0.75m at the bottom where it continued beyond the base of the trench. Finds comprised re-deposited building material consisting of concrete rubble.

Context 102

Overlying context 103 was a deposit of greyish-black sandy-silt mottled with light brown clay about 0.30m thick with a component of large rounded pebbles and concrete rubble, crushed red brick and fragments of Lias stone. The deposit also continued beyond the bottom of the trench.

Context 101

Overlying context 102 at the north-east end of the trench and continuing beyond was a deposit of yellowish-brown sandy-clay with light brown clay with a component of pebbles and red brick fragments.

Context 100

Sealing all of the underlying deposits and stretching the length of the trench to a depth varying between 0.40-40m was a layer of Reddish-brown clayey-sand. Large component of red brick, cobbled size pebbles, pieces of wire and metal.

FINDS

Finds comprising pieces of metal, fragments of ceramic pipe and building material consisting of fragments of concrete and red brick were observed with the layers of modern redeposition.

Environmental data

No animal bone was recovered and none of the deposits exposed during the excavation proved suitable for palaeo-environmental sampling.

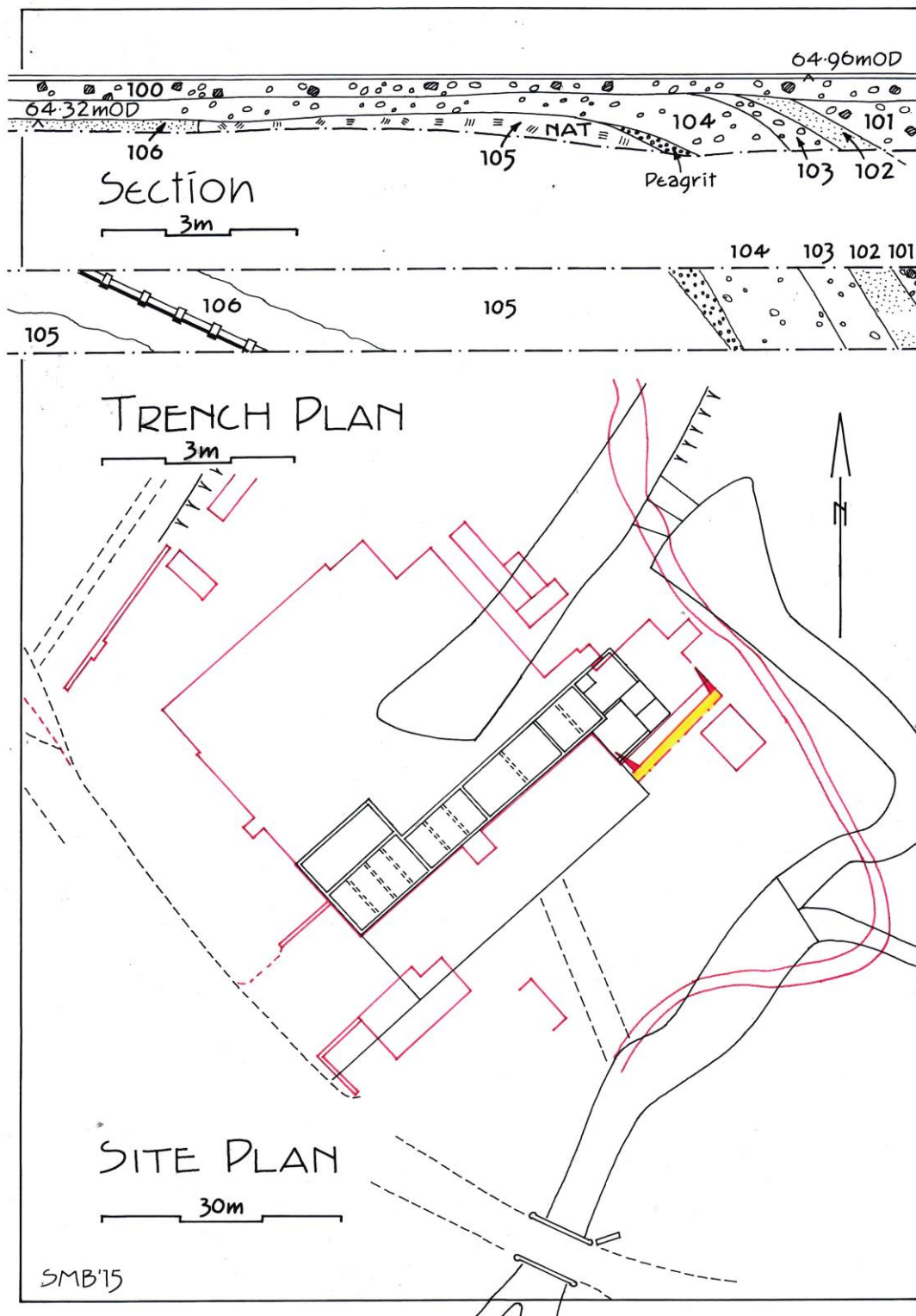


Fig. 3; site plan with trench location (in yellow), plan and section of trench (top). OS 1886 (black lines); modern features (red lines).



Plate 1; view of excavated trench, from the south-west



Plate 2; view of excavated trench, from the north-east



Plate 3; trench section, south-west end



Plate 4; trench section, plan view, north-east end



Plate 5; trench section, south-west end, detail



Plate 6; trench section, north-east end, detail

DISCUSSION (Fig. 4)

The Historic Environment Record (HER) search has shown that there has been little archaeological work within 500m of the mill. Analysis of the historic mapping (OS 1886 & 1904) in conjunction with a reconnaissance of the immediate environment carried out during the field survey, has revealed a number of interesting features, the results are illustrated in the historic environment reconstruction. It was previously thought that Sugarbrook Manor (WSM01635) was a late 15th-early 16th century construction, however, an internal inspection of the house carried out in conjunction with the survey of the mill across the road observed architectural features in the timber-framing that could be attributed to the mid. 15th century.

Construction of the corn mill is generally dated to the 19th century (VCH, 1913), but the walkover survey suggests that this is more likely to be around the mid 18th century. Its construction involved restructuring of the Sugar Brook, this was diverted to create a mill pond to feed the mill race whilst a leat connected to the River Salwarp further upstream. The mill race (now in-filled and under the existing yard) connected with the Salwarp downstream, it was noted that this channel was at a lower level than the pond at the rear (north) side of the mill indicating an overshot wheel design. A millstone is currently located in the adjacent property where it is being used as a garden feature.

The survey also revealed two re-used cruck blades within the mill building and these may have originated from the former ?mill, now a brick dwelling (denticulated cornice) situated on the opposite side of the road where a probable leat (OS 1886) which formerly connected with the Salwarp, now lies beneath the lawn. Not far down stream there are two more mills, one for corn and another to grind needles.

The original site of the junction of the Sugarbook and Salwarp is indicated by a row of trees further to the south west on the First Edition.

Excavation revealed no significant archaeological deposits, the natural substrate comprising a light brown sandy-clay was exposed throughout the trench and was partially truncated by modern drainage trenching. The absence of any relict deposits overlying this clay suggests previous truncation perhaps as a result of activities associated with development of the site during the early 1950s.

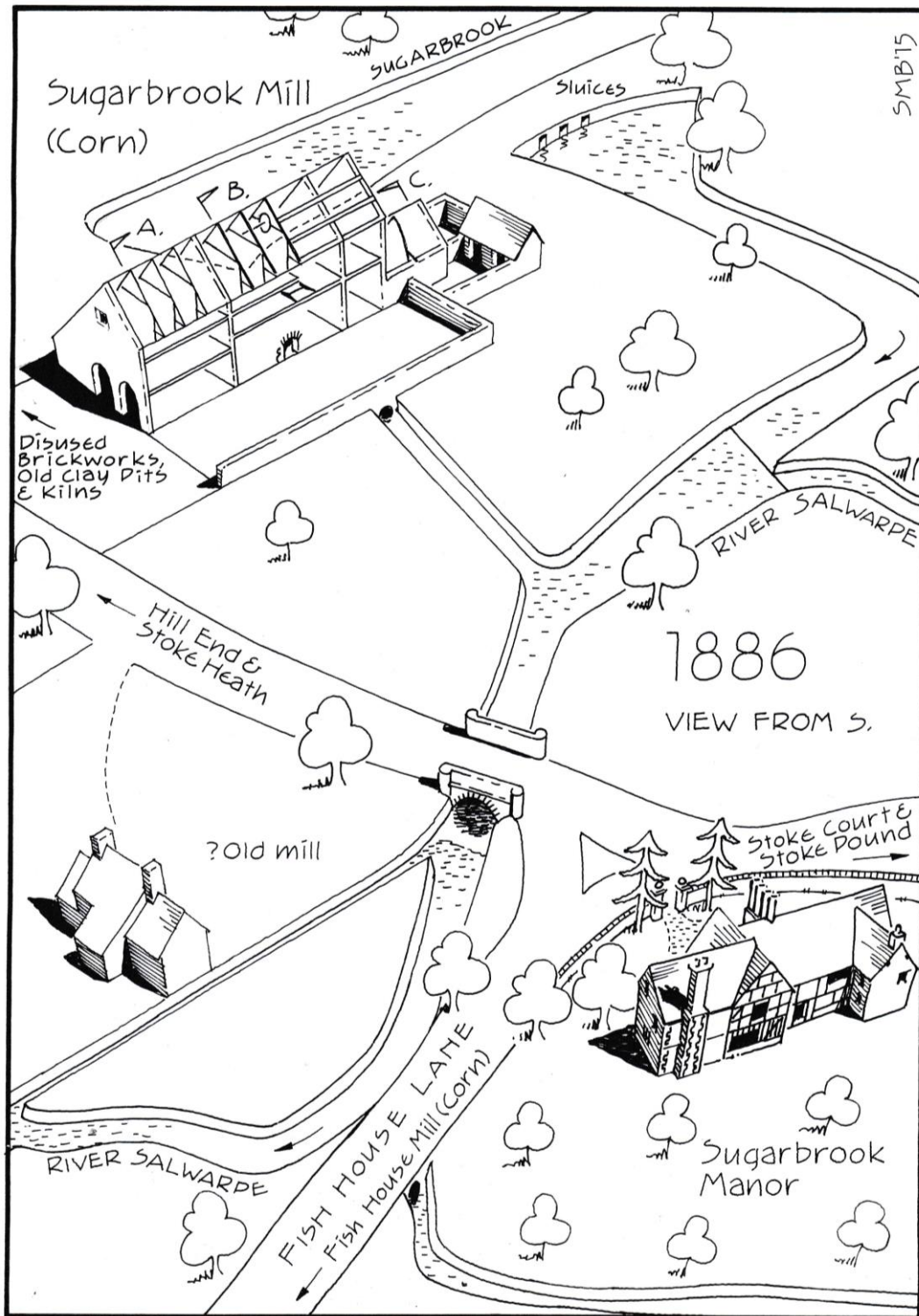


Fig. 4; historic environment plan (based on OS 1886) showing Sugarbrook Mill, Sugarbrook manor and the ?old mill.

Continued from page 18

This activity is demonstrated at the north-east end of the trench where there are a number of tip deposits (pea gravel & contexts 101, 102, 103 & 104) overlying the downward slope of the natural clay. This slope must surely represent the original right bank of the Salwarp and is evidence of more recent manipulation of the watercourse. By 1954 (Ordnance Survey) the water courses to the south-east had been pushed further to the south-east to provide a working yard for the new industrial development at the rear of the mill. It was probably during this period that the working parts of the old mill were removed. In addition to a lack of archaeological deposits there were no significant finds suggesting that there has been little or no activity within this part of the application site pre-dating construction of the corn mill.

Summary of results

Historic mapping has revealed that construction of the watermill was associated with harnessing the power of the Sugarbrook, one of the more important tributaries of the River Salwarp. This was achieved by diverting its original course and re-connecting with the river via a newly constructed leat and mill race.

The field evaluation revealed a sequence of layers of modern re-deposition overlying the natural clay. This activity is probably linked to expansion of the industrial premises in the early 1950s resulting in the right bank of the Salwarp being moved further to the north-east, this would have included the insertion of associated drainage as evidenced within the south-west end of the trench.

The walkover survey concluded that the building was probably constructed during the mid 18th century, perhaps replacing an earlier mill, not necessarily on the same site, but probably represented by an existing brick building further to the south-west. Reused cruck blades were also identified in the mill building.

Significance

The results of the trial trenching have shown that in the south-east area of the application site there were no recorded significant archaeological deposits and no finds suggesting there has been little or no activity before construction of the corn mill. The architectural fabric of the building suggests a construction date around the mid 18th century. The internal walkover survey did not observe any cellars, but did identify re-used cruck blades from an earlier timber-framed building.

Impact of development

The trial trenching has indicated that development within the south-east part of the application site will affect re-deposited soils associated with 1950s expansion of the site. As part of the development it is proposed to demolish the mill building. The results of the internal walkover survey have shown that substantial repairs have been previously undertaken on the building and that the working parts of the mill have been removed. The hoist was a later insertion. Re-used cruck blades currently exist inside.

Archive Location

The archaeological documentary archive arising from the work will be appropriately conserved and deposited with the Worcestershire County Museum. The digital archive arising from the work will be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS)

Documentary archive:

X1 hard (unbound) copy of the report

Digital archive:

Pdf report

X17 digital images

BIBLIOGRAPHY

CIfA, 2014. *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Evaluations*, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists.

Ordnance Survey 1885

Victoria County History, 1913. 'Parishes: Stoke Prior', in *A History of the County of Worcester: Volume 3* (London, 1913), pp. 528-532

Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service 2014. *Requirements for an evaluation at Sugarbrook Mill, Buntsford Hill, Stoke Pound, Worcs.*

Historic Environment Record 2015, Worcs. C.C.

APPENDIX 1 SUGARBROOK MILL; INTERIOR WALKOVER SURVEY (Fig. 5)

Both the mill-pond and tail-race have been infilled, the former presently beneath the modern industrial buildings to the north-west and the latter beneath a busy yard. Between 1886 (1st Ed. OS) and 1938 (a later edition OS) the industrial complex changed little and remained essentially as it had from the time of its construction. By 1954 however, the water courses to the south-east had been pushed further to the south-east to provide a working yard for the new industrial development at the rear of the mill, and the working parts of the old mill were probably removed. These new buildings have been further reordered or rebuilt but retains much of the brick road frontage; the arcade with decorative hood moulds of roof-tiles clearly in mimicry of the semi-circular arches under the gable end of the mill.

The mill can be conveniently divided for description into four parts defined by roof construction. The north-western end of four-bays, wider than the rest, has three asymmetric interrupted frames with threaded-bolts and stapled-straps. The associated joists (of the top floor) can be seen from below, in the existing reception area. The lowest storey of the wall originally separating this part from the rest has been removed together with all those to the south-east including the end wall; they have replaced with steel-framing.

The adjacent roof consists of three pegged frame of interrupted truss, clearly earlier than the other and defining the position of the ridge, the numerous carpenters' numbers are small and neatly chiselled. The inserted hoist and wheel survive at the south-eastern end of this part.

The third section of two-bays has no loft and the re-used purlins are supported on walls. The diagonal trenches on one purlin suggests wind-braces, not synchronised with the present positions, and another purlin exhibits a sequence of empty (pegged) mortices, the scantling is neither massive nor spindly. The last section is a single storey annexe and the two bays are defined by a massive pair of ancient cruck-blades; the carpenters' numbers for spur and collar are large, cursive and scratched. These are clearly re-used but are likely to have come from the site.

The position of the mill-wheel can be ascertained from the 1st Edition OS between a point on the pond and the line of the tail-race, this is consistent with the form of this end of the building and helps to suggest the possible positions of lost working elements.

In recent decades the road end of the building has been provided with a new stair to the reception area. Beyond the reception there are two more stairs and the site of another, now lost. There is also an external iron stair to the south-east.

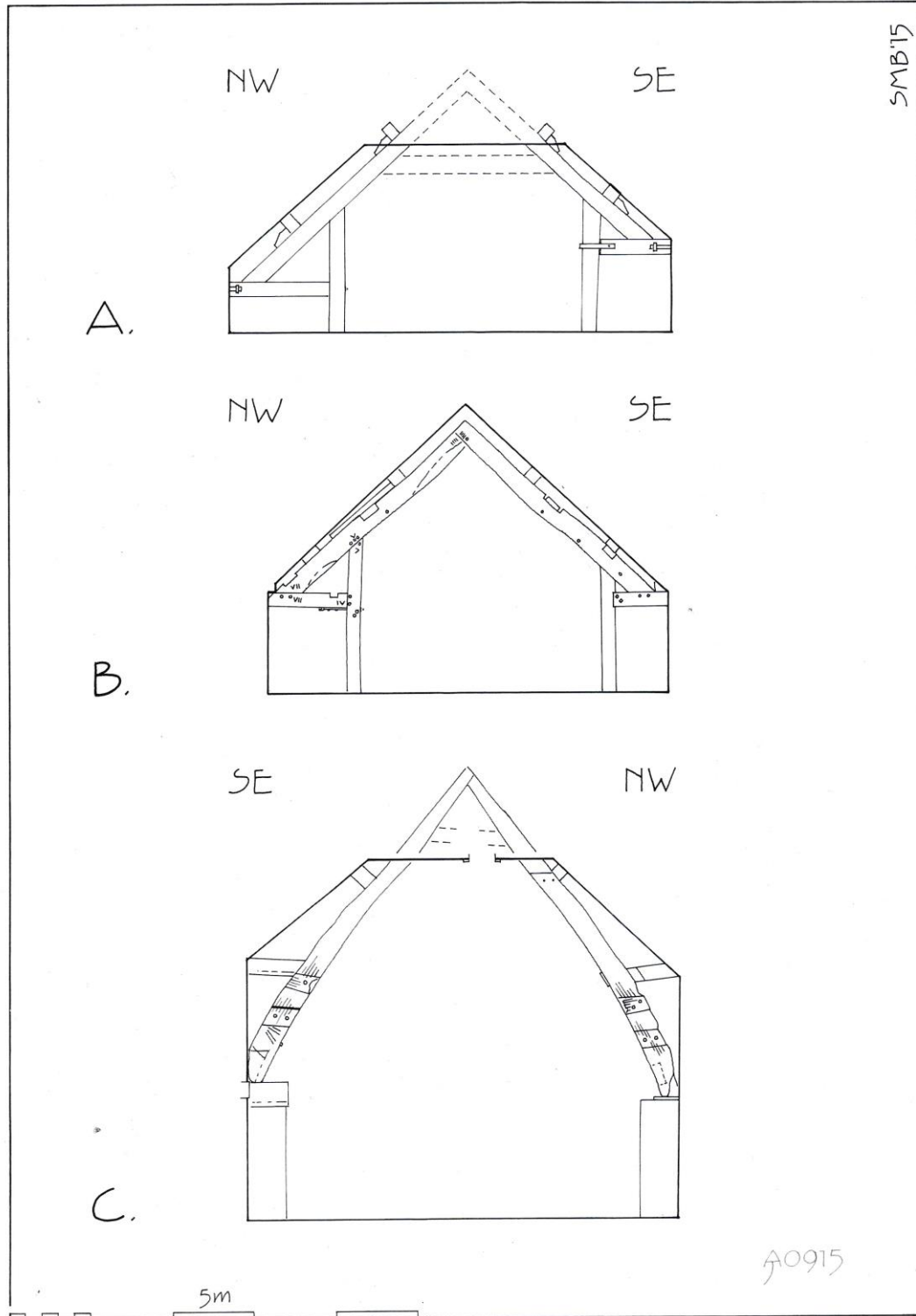


Fig. 5; Roof trusses, for locations see Fig. 4



Plate 6; End of mill and existing road frontage



Plate 7; Blocked opening in front wall



Plate 8; Front of mill



Plate 9; North-east end of mill

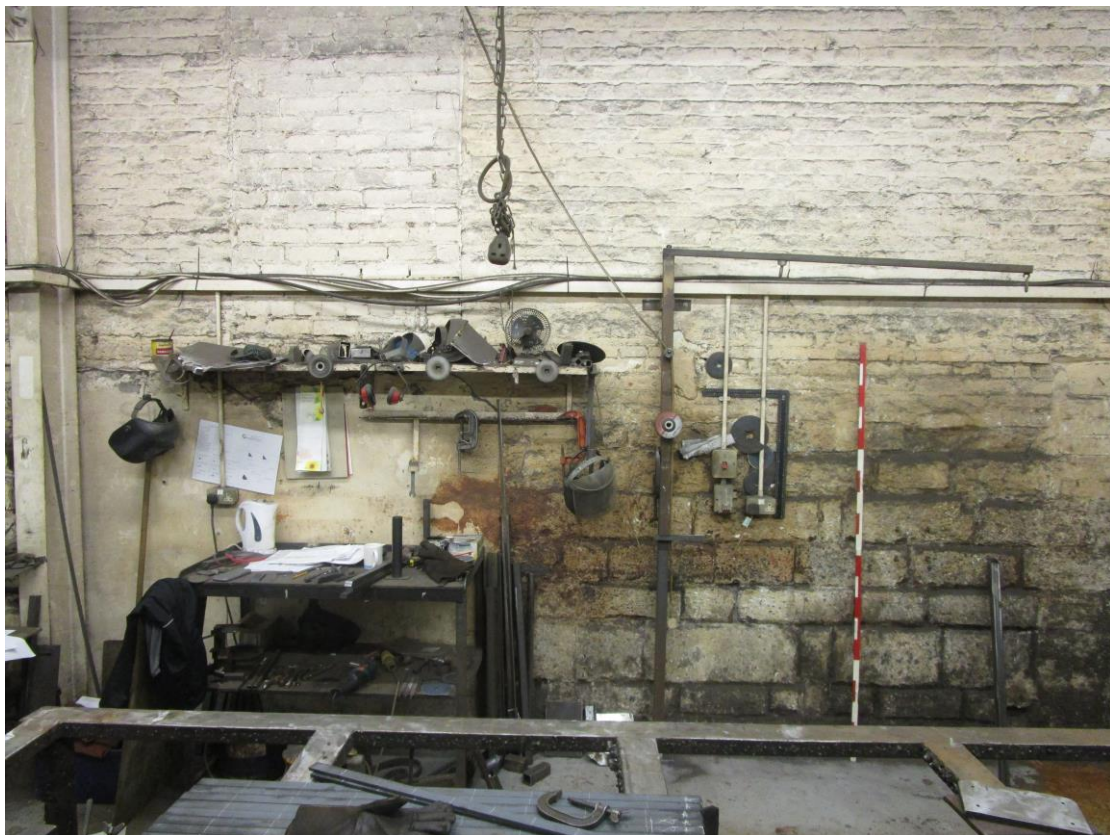


Plate 10; Rear wall of mill showing masonry, brickwork and blocked ?door



Plate 11; Chamfered beams in eastern part of mill



Plate 12; Timber feature in upper floor



Plate 13; Carpenters' numbers on roof truss B, for location see Fig 5



Plate 14; Remains of hoist in central part of mill



Plate 15; One of a pair of cruck-blades in single storey annexe to mill



Plate 16; Possible site of ?old mill, to south-west of Sugarbrook Mill



Plate 17; Bridge and part of Sugarbrook Manor from north

APPENDIX 2 OASIS FORM

Project name	Archaeological evaluation and interior walkover survey
Short description of the project	In September 2015 trial trenching was carried at Sugarbrook Mill, Buntsford Hill, Stoke Pound, Bromsgrove, Worcs. as part of a planning application for residential development of the site.
Project dates	Start: 21-09-2015 End: 22-09-2015
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	WSM67188 - HER event no.
Any associated project reference codes	SMB15 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 1 - Industrial
Monument type	None
Significant Finds	None
Methods & techniques	""Targeted Trenches""
Development type	Rural commercial
Prompt	Planning condition
Position in the planning process	Between deposition of an application and determination
Country	England
Site location	WORCESTERSHIRE BROMSGROVE STOKE PRIOR Sugarbrook Mill, Buntsford Hill, Stoke Pound
Postcode	B60 3AR
Study area	6150 Square metres
Site coordinates	SO 95817 68180 52.311326242301 -2.061364244034 52 18 40 N 002 03 40 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 64.3m Max: 64.3m
Name of Organisation	one ten archaeology
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body

Project design originator	one ten archaeology
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Physical Archive Exists?	No
Paper Archive Exists?	No
Paper Archive recipient	county museum
Paper Contents	"none"
Paper Media available	"Report"
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Archaeological evaluation and interior walkover survey
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Cook, S.
Date	2015
Issuer or publisher	one ten archaeology
Place of issue or publication	Warks.
URL	http://www.oasis.ac.uk
Entered by	sean cook (seancook@btinternet.com)
Entered on	16 October 2015