



Dodderhill Court

Crutch Lane, Elmbridge, Droitwich Spa, Worcestershire

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Archaeological recording

SO 90058 63974

Site code: DCD15

WSM 666652

OASIS ID-110archa1-230660

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one ten archaeology

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SUMMARY

Archaeological recording was carried out at Dodderhill Court, Crutch Lane, Elmbridge, Droitwich Spa, Worcestershire during development comprising the erection of a two-storey side extension.

Historic mapping (OS 1885) shows the study site was one of two farms in the area called Hill Court each at the end of a road extending west from Crutch Lane, itself an earlier route-way. It seems likely that the study site, which by 1903 (OS Second Edition) was renamed Dodderhill Court, was a later replacement built in the style of a model farm. The architectural fabric of the building suggests it was created during the early 19th century.

The farm buildings are arranged in a south-east facing U-shaped form with threshing barn, cow-house and stables around a fold-yard. A stone wall extending from this yard is fronted on the north side by a haw-haw, this separates the farmyard from the detached farmhouse situated to the south-west with the front facing west. Later a Dutch barn was erected to cover the yard and a range added to the south-east side, thereby enclosing the yard. A number of these buildings were eventually demolished during development in the 1980s or 1990s leaving only the west and north-west ranges surviving as converted offices and dwellings.

No significant archaeological deposits were observed during the excavation, instead a sequence of three stratified homogenous layers were recorded comprising a natural clay, overlain by a relict subsoil and modern topsoil. Within the east-west arm of the excavated foundation trench were the remains of a detached former 19th century glass-house. Lead pipe work found in association with this building was probably connected to the small detached brick building a few meters to the south operating as the boiler room that heated the glass-house. The fabric of this building and its absence from the early mapping suggests this was a later, probably post-war addition.

The absence of any archaeological deposits and a lack of finds would suggest little human activity within the study site apart from that associated with occupation of the house from the 19th century.

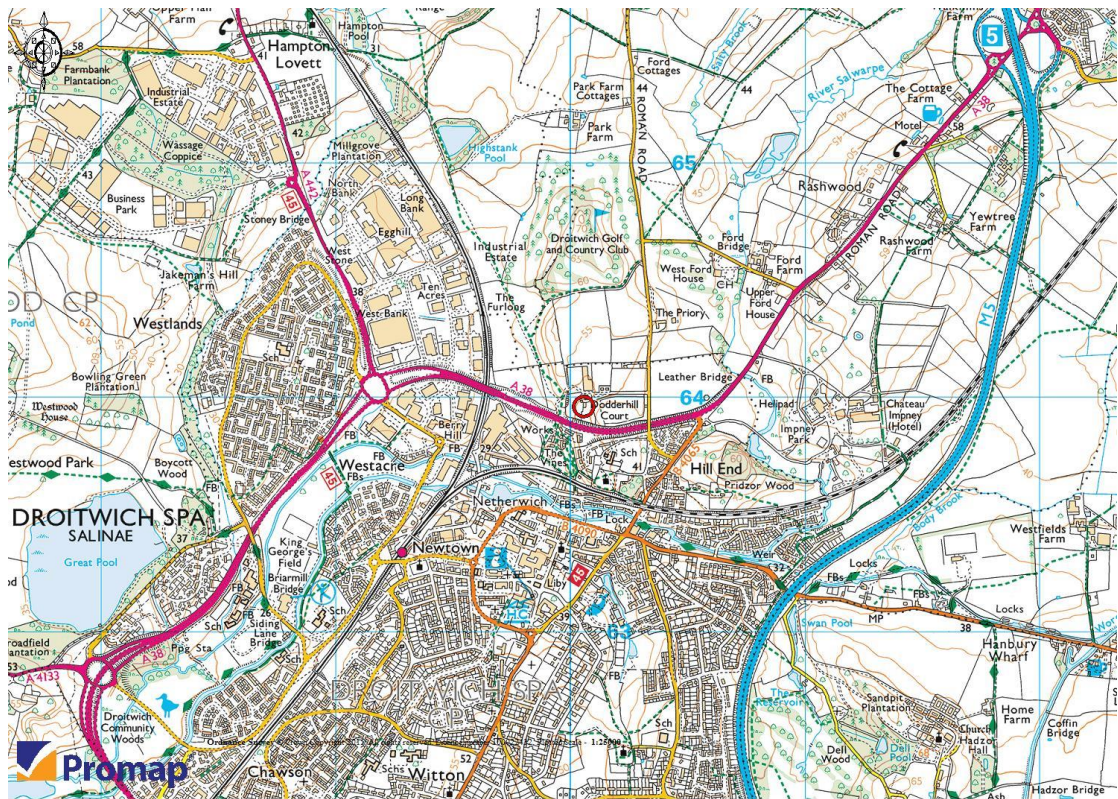


Fig. 1; site location (circled in red)



Fig. 2; area of study (site circled in red)

INTRODUCTION

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

This document sets out the results of archaeological recording 'watching brief' at Dodderhill Court, Crutch Lane, Elmbridge, Droitwich Spa, WR9 0BE during 17th July 2015. The development comprises the erection of a two-storey side extension. The archaeological recording was required as a condition of planning permission granted in respect of an application (Ref: W/14/02335/PP) to Wychavon District Council and was undertaken in accordance with a brief issued by Worcestershire County Council Historic Environment & Archaeology Service (Glyde, M., Sept., 2015). The approved development lies on the north edge of the Roman town of Droitwich Spa. To the south of the site is a Roman fort and to the east is Crutch Lane a Roman road. There was therefore potential for deposits of this date to survive within the development site.

Geology and topography

Dodderhill is a village and civil parish, located on the River Salwarpe. The parish is bisected by the M5 motorway, constructed in 1962. One of the earliest mentions of Dodderhill is of the Saxon Royal Palace recorded in the Saxon Charter of AD 692. There was once a Roman fort and later an Anglo-Saxon church. The parish church of St. Augustine's, is on the hill overlooking Droitwich Spa. It was completed in 1220 and rebuilt in the 18th century.

Dodderhill Court is situated north of Droitwich town on a hill from which the parish takes its name. It lies off a road to the west of Crutch Lane, a long established north-south route-way. The development site itself represented by a small rectangular plot adjacent to the south side of the existing house.

The site lies at a height of about 44.50m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) and the underlying geology comprises Keuper Marl (BGS, 1976). This was confirmed during excavation as a stiff clay.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Dodderhill is a village and civil parish, near Droitwich, Worcestershire, located on the River Salwarpe. The parish is bisected by the M5 motorway, constructed in 1962. One of the earliest mentions of Dodderhill is of the Saxon Royal Palace

recorded in the Saxon Charter of AD 692. There was once a Roman fort and later an Anglo-Saxon church. The parish church of St. Augustine's, is on the hill overlooking Droitwich Spa. It was completed in 1220 and rebuilt in the 18th century. A possible ley tunnel is said by archeologists to lead from St Augustine's, to Friar Street Droitwich Spa, part of a system of tunnels linking St Augustine's and St Andrew's churches.

An HER search was carried out on a 500m radius of the site. The search area sits within an open, flat low lying landscape atop Droitwich Halite Member bedrock beneath superficial deposits of Alluvium. The area is dominated by parkland to the southeast, fields and enclosures to the north and west, and modern expansion associated with Droitwich to the southwest. The field pattern is one of field reorganisation and parliamentary enclosure. The settlement pattern in this landscape is primarily modern expansion centred upon the historic town of Droitwich. Within the search area lie 11 Listed Historic Buildings dating from the 16th-19th centuries as well as 6 other unlisted historic buildings dating to the 19th and 20th centuries. An English Heritage project to identify the Historic Farmsteads of Worcestershire recorded a single partially extant 19th century farmstead at Dodderhill Court. Various monuments have also been recorded within the search area, the earliest of which is the Roman fort at Droitwich which has evidence for Iron Age activity. Monuments related to Roman occupation are present in abundance across the search area, focused primarily in the vicinity of the possible Roman road alignments. Monuments include the aforementioned Roman fort in Droitwich, a smaller fort east of Dodderhill Court Farm, two occupation sites, a burial and possible road alignments. Monuments from the medieval period are limited to a mill, a possible midden and the conjectural site of a hospital. Post-medieval monuments are better represented and include a railway and a salt works. A single monument dating to the 20th century is recorded, a bus depot that was utilised as a military depot during World War Two. The two Roman forts are Scheduled Ancient Monuments, and the fort located to the east of Dodderhill Court Farm is less than 70m west of the provided grid reference.

Unstratified finds recorded within the search area include worked flint and medieval vessels, coins and tokens. Additional unstratified finds recorded within the parishes of Droitwich and Dodderhill include an *M. primigenius* tusk, a gold coin of the Dobunni, Roman pottery and medieval coins. There has been a relatively large amount of archaeological investigation within the search area, albeit with a focus towards the south-west. The survival of below ground archaeology in the northwest half of the search area is considered to be excellent

and it is likely to also be good in the southeast. There is the potential for below ground archaeology throughout the search area, with a particularly significant potential for Roman to post-medieval features throughout the area to the east of the Roman Road.

RESULTS (Figs. 3 & 4)

Method and nature of the excavation

Archaeological recording was undertaken to obtain a record of any archaeological deposits or finds disturbed or exposed during excavation of the site. Machine excavation was only used for the removal of non-archaeologically significant material (modern deposits) and was used to excavate these layers stratigraphically. All machining was conducted under constant and close archaeological supervision at all times using a toothless bucket. The trench was 0.60m wide and approx. 1m deep throughout the excavation.

Description of deposits

TRENCH

Contexts 102 (natural geology)

The surface of the geological horizon (context 102), a natural substrate comprising a reddish-brown clay with green mottling, was exposed throughout the excavated foundation trench at a relatively level height of approx. 44.50m AOD. This layer was truncated during excavation by machine to a depth of about 0.50m.

The natural clay was also previously truncated in association with the construction of a former glass-house. Historic mapping (1885) shows this structure partially occupying (crossing) the footprint of the new development (see Fig. 5) and during excavation of the east-west arm of the foundation trench, the partial remains of the east and west sides were revealed. The construction trench for this structure (contexts 108 & 109) indicates a building approx. 6m wide. The north and south ends lie outside the excavation.

Contexts 103, 109 & 110

The west limit of the construction trench for the former glass-house is marked by context 109, a steep sided cut, 0.50m deep. The bottom is characterised by a

narrow north-south trench, approx. 0.40m wide continuing beyond the base of the foundation trench. A brick wall (context 103, see Plate 5) aligned parallel slightly further west of this narrow trench appears to represent the remains of the west side of the former structure. This was removed during the excavation.

Context (wall) 104

Crossing the foundation trench and parallel with wall 103 in the centre of the trench was another brick wall (context 104), the area between this and wall 103 was about 2m wide, and comprised truncated, but level natural clay.

Contexts 105, 106 & 108

East of wall 104 was an area of brick flooring approx. 3m wide and extending beyond the sides of the trench. The west half of this flooring comprised bricks (context 105) laid flat and aligned north-south, whilst in the eastern half, the bricks (context 106) were orientated east-west. In this part some of the flooring was made with (ceramic) land drains. A length of broken lead pipe directly overlay floor 105.

Contexts 100, 101 & 107

Sealing all of the above contexts to a depth of about 0.50m throughout the central area of the east-west arm of the foundation trench was a layer of mixed soil comprising clay, silt and loam. Finds consisted of large flecks of mortar and fragments of brick. For the remainder of the trench, where deposits remain unaffected by later disturbance the natural clay was directly overlain by a relict subsoil (context 101) comprising a mid-dark silty-clay with numerous grit-sized flecks of limestone. This was in turn sealed by the modern topsoil (context 100) a dark greyish-brown loam.

FINDS

Finds comprised fragment of brick from context 107, these were not retained.

Environmental data

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

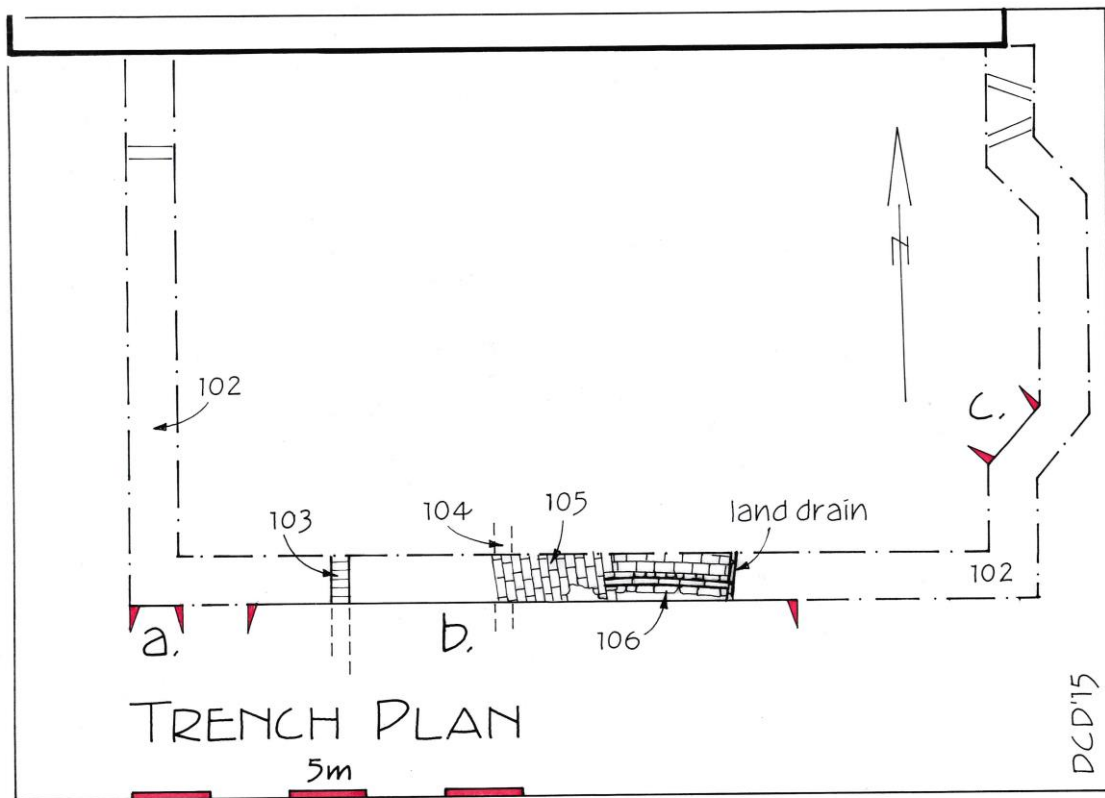


Fig. 3; trench plan

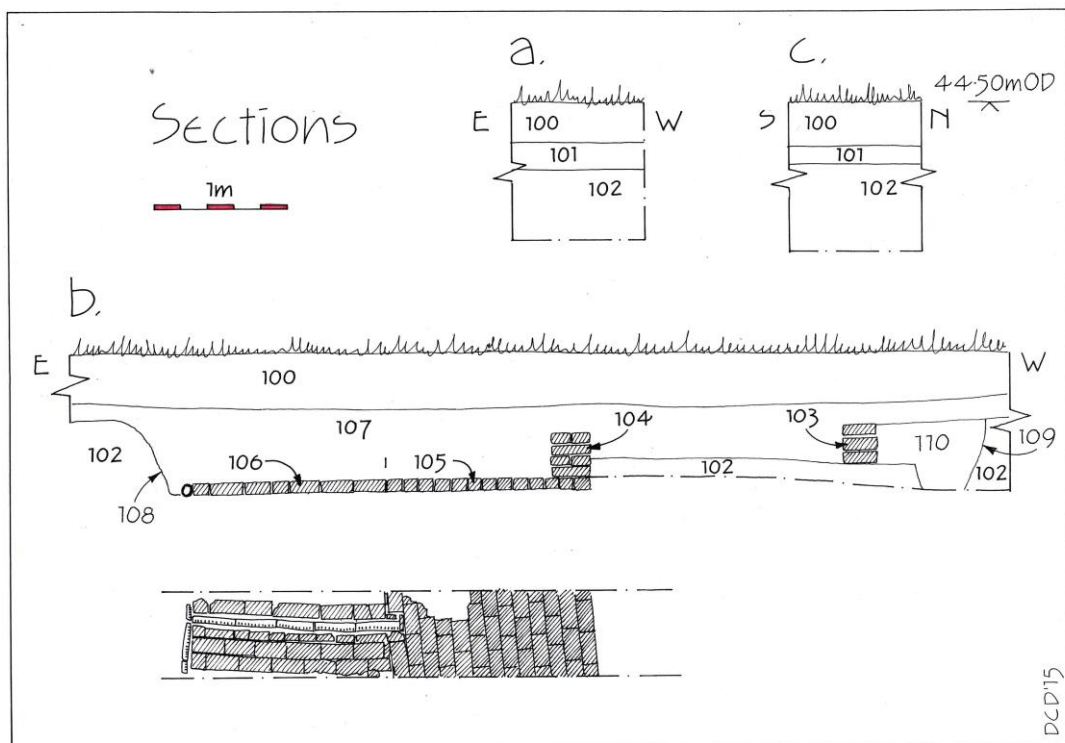


Fig. 4; sections & detailed plan of contexts 105 & 106



Plate 1; house, south elevation



Plate 2; overall view of trench from the south-west



Plate 3; section 1a



Plate 4; section 1c



Plate 5; wall 103, from the west



Plate 6; wall 104, from the north



Plate 7; contexts 105 & 106, from the west



Plate 8; contexts 105 & 106, from the east

DISCUSSION (Figs. 5 & 6)

Historic mapping (OS 1885) shows the study site (WSM60555) was one of two farms in the area called Hill Court each at the end of a road extending west from Crutch Lane, itself an earlier route-way. The second Hill Court (WSM00696) currently lies further south next to the Saxon church of St. Augustine's. It seems likely that the study site, which by 1902 (OS Second Edition) was renamed Dodderhill Court, was a later replacement built in the style of a model farm. The architectural fabric of the building (Plate 9) suggests it was created during the early 19th century.

Much information about the lost elements of the farm can be gleaned from early OS maps (1885 & 1902) and photographs; one of the house front (plate 9) and an aerial (plate 11) view showing the working farm in its final form.

The fold-yard, to the north-east of the house is defined by buildings on the west, north and east sides. A south range, under a shed roof, was added in the 20th century, together with a large Dutch-barn in the middle of the yard.

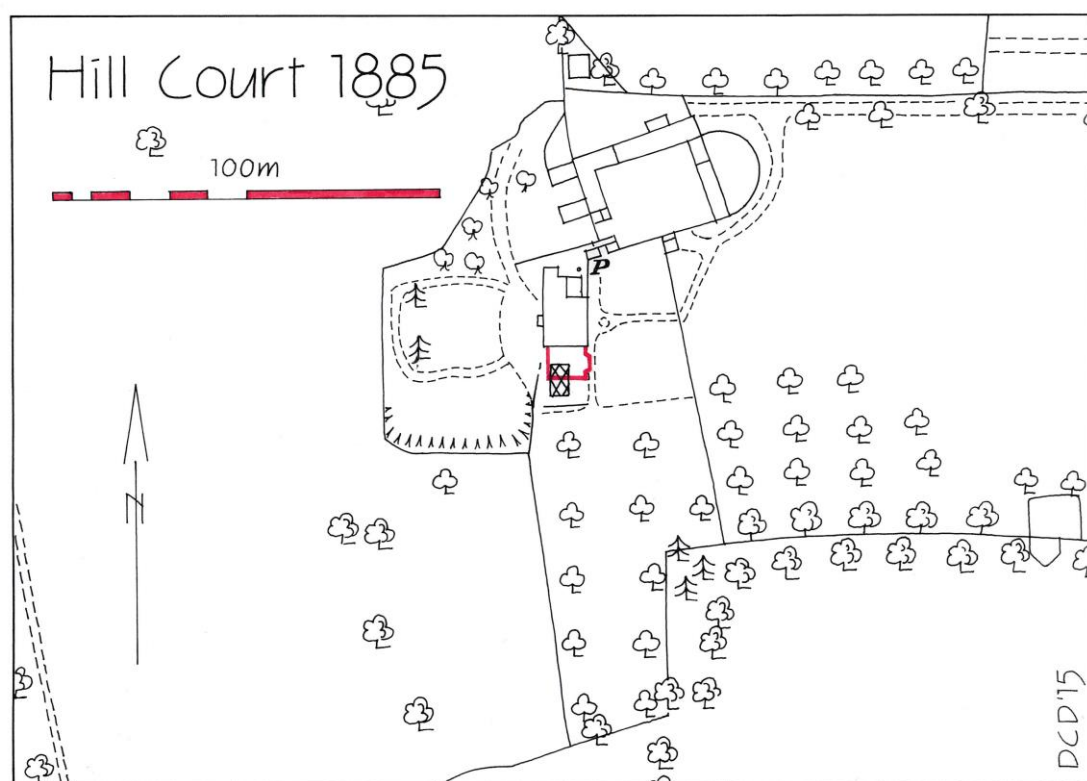


Fig. 5; Historic environment plan showing Hill Court and farm buildings with location of extension (in red). Note the glass-house (hatched), the remains of which were exposed within the east-west arm of the foundation trench.

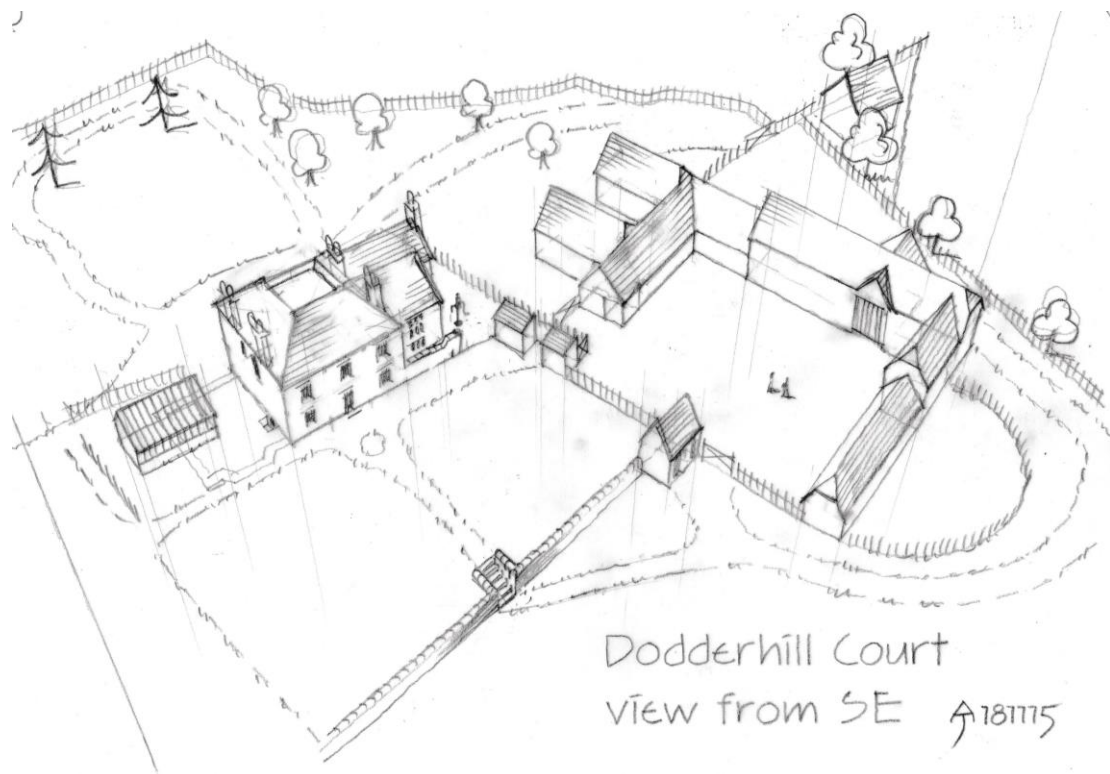


Fig. 6; Hill Court (1885), from the south-east

(see Plate 10). A number of these buildings were eventually demolished during development in the 1980s leaving only the west and north-west ranges surviving as converted dwellings and offices (see Plate 11).

The lost barn occupied the eastern part of the north-range and appears to be of four bays, and a rear gabled projection at the rear may suggest the position of the threshing floor. An external stair provides access to the upper floor of the east end of this building, the small gable in this area, shown on the aerial view, may be associated with the door at the top of the stair. A two-bay building as tall as the barn extends southward from the east end of it and beyond that a long open-fronted shed. The roofs of these buildings terminate in half-hips. The single-storey building to the west of the barn is L shaped and continues as part of the west range and terminated in two small rooms each accessed from outside only. A pair of matching buildings, slightly taller, extend westward and between them there is gable on the back wall of the west-range. Some small buildings along the south side of the yard are not shown on the photograph but the small building with small attached yard may suggest a single pig-house, and as usual not too far from the house. A square building to the north of the fold-yard (beyond the ?rick-yard) still standing in 1885 may be the cart-shed.

The three-bay house is built of brick (Flemish-bond) and two ranges deep, the roof slopes back from each side and may originally have been provided with a roof light over the middle, there are a pair of tall chimneys at each end. The vaulted brick basement under the rear part of the house is accessed from the service-yard (with pump) by an external stair along the back of the service wing and formerly another door, now blocked, at the south-west corner. It is lit by a window in the south wall and a wine-cellar is constructed in the north-west corner.

The door, with fanlight, placed centrally in the façade is approached through a simple but well-proportioned classical portico. The sixteen-pane sash-windows have flat-arches (brick) and stone cills. The service-wing is shorter than the main house but the upper front window is clearly shown with a segmental-arch, its form reflecting its status, this front part of the service wing has a chimney against its gable-end. Both parts of the house have denticulated-cornices.

Only the west-range of the farm buildings survive, and those have been reordered as a dwelling. The old farmhouse has had two-storey bay-windows added to the front and a conservatory along the back. The old service wing, to the north, has been rebuilt and the glass-house (encountered in the excavation), has been removed, but the ha-ha and the steps, to the east, survive.

No significant archaeological deposits were observed during the excavation, instead a sequence of three stratified homogenous layers were recorded comprising a natural clay, overlain by a relict subsoil and modern topsoil.

Within the east-west arm of the excavated foundation trench the remains of the former glass-house were recorded its location coinciding with the structure mapped in 1885 & 1902 indicating a glass-house constructed sometime in the 19th century. Lead pipe work found in association with this building was probably connected to the small detached brick building a few meters to the south operating as the boiler room that heated the glass-house. This building was a later post-war addition.

The absence of any archaeological deposits and a lack of finds would suggest little human activity within the study site apart from that associated with occupation of the house from the 19th century.



Plate 9; Hill Court in the late 19th century, from the south-west



Plate 10; Dodderhill Court from the south-east with stone wall and haw-haw in the foreground



Plate 11; Dodderhill Court in the ?1970s, from the west. Note the farms buildings still surviving with Dutch Barn and range added to the south-east closing off the yard. The 19th century glass-house also survives to the south of the house



Plate 12; Dodderhill Court in the ?1990s following a reordering of the farm and construction of the new bypass

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APPENDIX 1: Dodderhill Court; basement photographic survey



Plate 13; external steps to basement



Plate 14; basement from the north



Plate 15; blocked doorway in south-west corner

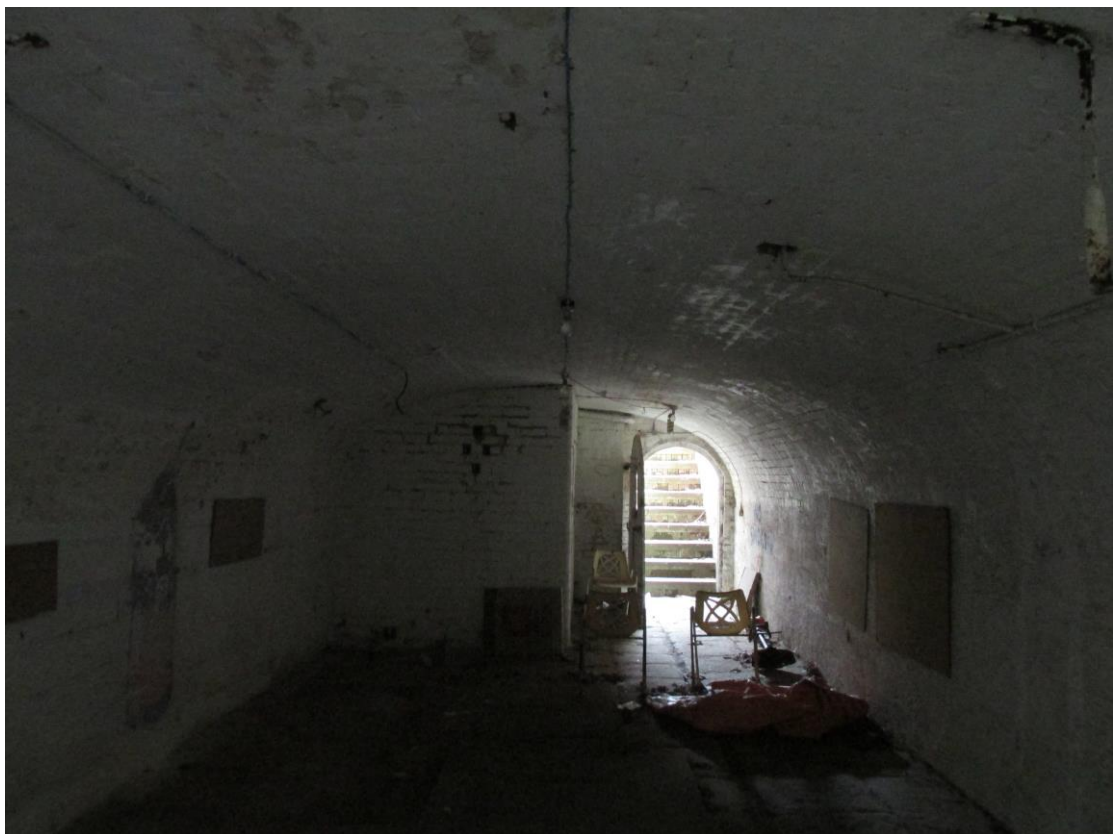


Plate 16; basement, from the south



Plate 17; wine cellar, from the south-east



Plate 18; wine cellar shelving

APPENDIX 2: OASIS

Project name	Dodderhill Court, Crutch Lane, Elmbridge, Droitwich; archaeological recording
Short description of the project	Archaeological recording was carried out at Dodderhill Court, Crutch Lane, Elmbridge, Droitwich Spa, Worcestershire during development comprising the erection of a two-storey side extension. associated with occupation of the house from the 19th century.
Project dates	Start: 17-07-2015 End: 17-07-2015
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	WSM666652 - HER event no.
Any associated project reference codes	DCD15 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	""Watching Brief""
Prompt	Planning condition
Country	England
Site location	WORCESTERSHIRE WYCHAVON DODDERHILL Dodderhill Court
Postcode	WR9 0BE
Study area	36 Square metres
Site coordinates	SO 90058 63974 52.273434886567 -2.145723906218 52 16 24 N 002 08 44 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 44.5m Max: 44.5m
Name of Organisation	one ten archaeology
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	one ten archaeology
Project director/manager	sean cook
Project supervisor	sean cook
Type of sponsor/funding body	Landowner
Physical Exists?	Archive No
Digital recipient	Archive pdf report
Digital Contents	"none"

Paper Archive Exists?	No
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Dodderhill Court, Crutch Lane, Elmbridge, Droitwich, Worcestershire; archaeological recording
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Cook, S.
Date	2015
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