



The Coach House & open shed

The Manor House, Snitterfield Road, Bearley, Warwickshire

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Archaeological recording

SP 18143 60632

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Sean Cook BA (Hons) ACIfA

Illustrations by Jill Atherton MCIfA

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one ten archaeology

6 Elm Close, Pebworth, Stratford upon Avon, Warwickshire., CV37 8XL

Contents

SUMMARY	2
INTRODUCTION	4
<i>Location and scope of works (Figs. 1 & 2)</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Geology and topography</i>	<i>4</i>
ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND.....	5
RESULTS (Fig. 3)	6
<i>Method and nature of the excavation</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Description of deposits.....</i>	<i>6</i>
FINDS.....	7
<i>Environmental data</i>	<i>7</i>
DISCUSSION	15
BIBLIOGRAPHY	15
<i>Archive Location.....</i>	<i>16</i>
APPENDIX 1: building survey, by Jill Atherton (Fig. 4).....	17
APPENDIX 2: Bearley; an historic landscape assessment (Fig. 5-7)	24
APPENDIX 2: OASIS RECORD	28

Front cover; The Coach House, from the north-east

SUMMARY

Archaeological recording was carried out at The Manor House, Snitterfield Road, Bearley, Warwickshire in April 2016 during alterations to the Coach House & open shed. The recording of three small trenches within the farm complex was small in scope revealing no significant archaeological deposits. Instead, a short sequence of soil layers, cobbled paving and concrete flooring associated with post-medieval and later activity overlay a natural clay. The earliest activity was reflected in the 18th/19th century pottery sherds recovered from one of the lower deposits.

As an addition to the excavations, a building survey was carried out on both the coach house and open shed and the results outlined in Appendix 1. As part of the post-excavation analysis, the significance of Bearley Manor as the potential site of an early medieval defended settlement was recognized and the results of an historic landscape assessment of Bearley is outlined in Appendix 2.



Fig. 1; site location (circled in red)

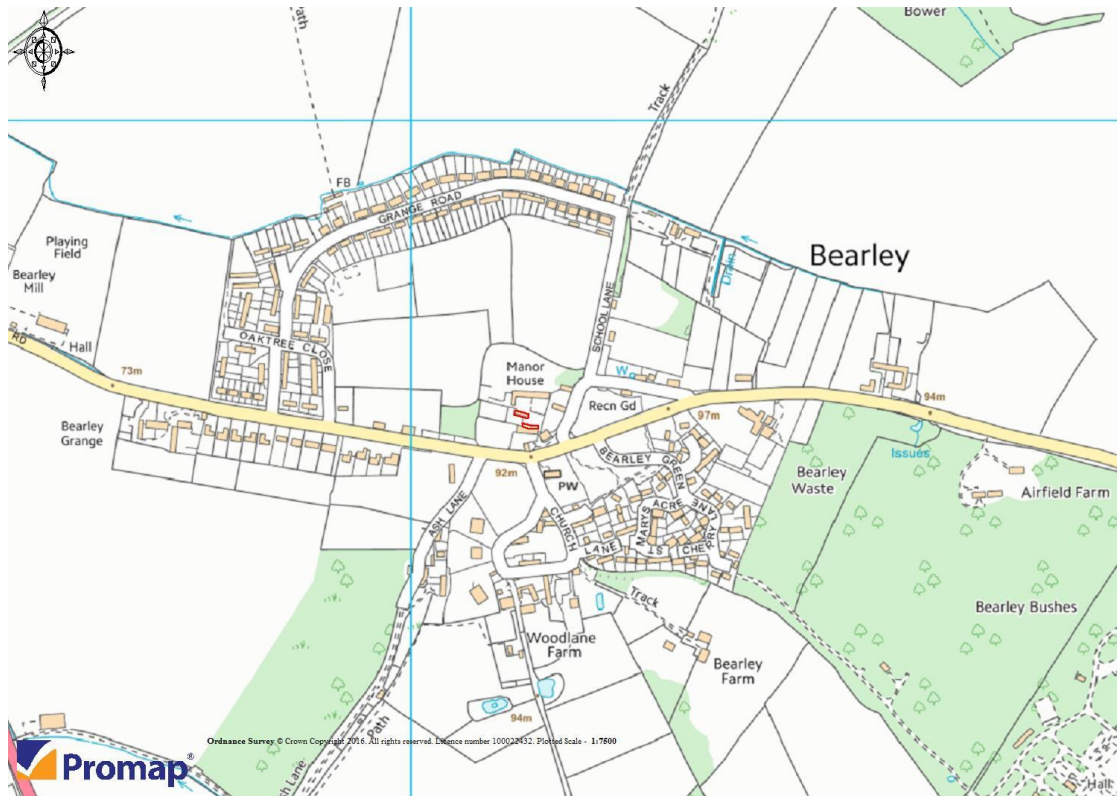


Fig. 2; areas of study (outlined in red)

INTRODUCTION

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

This document sets out the results of archaeological recording ('watching brief') carried out during 13th April 2016 at The Manor House, Snitterfield Road, Bearley, Warwickshire at the request of Martin Podd Architect on behalf of the owner Mrs Griffiths. The development comprised alterations to the Coach House & outbuilding.

The archaeological recording was required as a condition of planning permission granted in respect of an application (Ref: (15/04333/FUL) to Stratford District Council and was undertaken in accordance with a brief issued by Warwickshire Archaeological Information and Advice. The approved development lies within the historic core of Bearley village and is one of a number of buildings associated with the Manor House. There was therefore potential for deposits of medieval date to survive within the study site and be affected by the development.

Geology and topography

Bearley is a village and civil parish in the Stratford district of Warwickshire. The village is about five miles (8km) north of Stratford-upon-Avon, bounded on the north by Wootton Wawen, on the east by Snitterfield, and on the south and west by Aston Cantlow. The western boundary is formed by a stream running out of Edstone Lake. The land within the parish rises gradually from a height of 66m, in the north-west at Bearley Cross, to about 110m, at the south-east corner of the parish, and is open except along its eastern boundary, where part of the extensive wood known as Snitterfield Bushes is included in Bearley.

At Bearley Cross the road running west to Alcester and east to Warwick is crossed by the main road running north-west from Stratford-on-Avon to Henley-in-Arden. The Great Western Railway to Warwick runs through the north-west corner of the parish, the lines from Stratford and Alcester joining close to Bearley station, opened in 1860. A little south of the Cross and the station a road runs south-east from the Stratford road, passing the Grange and the Manor House, to the church.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The modern name of Bearley is first recorded in Domesday in 1086 as *Burlei* and is from Old English *burh* + *leah* 'woodland clearing near a fortified place' (Mills, 1998). In 1100 land ownership was held by the monks of Bordesley and a small church was built around this time. The possible extent of Medieval settlement at Bearley (MWA9128) as suggested by the Ordnance Survey map of 1886. The parish church of St. Mary The Virgin (MWA1102) has been largely rebuilt in modern times, but the nave dates probably from the end of the 12th century and the chancel with its thinner walls may be of the 13th or 14th century (Pevsner, 1966).

The Manor of Bearley (MWA9467) most probably dates to the late medieval period. It is situated on School Lane. The history of the manor house dates back to the 16th century. Until 1545 the manorial property in Bearley is not described in any surviving document, but a sale in 1576 shows us that the land in comprised a number of houses, seven yard lands various closes and acres. The house changed hands fairly frequently in the 17th century. Records in 1695 show that the house consisted of a hall, parlour, room over the parlour, small room over the hall, further room over the hall, a room over the entry, the men's chamber, dairy house and mill house. This shows a medieval plan with the hall and parlour at one end and the kitchen at the other.

The Manor House, north-west of the church, is a much altered and enlarged building with remains of timber-framed walls and open-timbered ceilings of the 16th or 17th century in its eastern half. One room, formerly the kitchen, has a wide fireplace. A barn east of the house is also of 17th-century framing. Three cottages between the church and Manor House have visible remains of 17th-century framing; one is thatched.

A loop-road south of the church contains several ancient buildings. Stone House on the west side of the loop is, as its name implies, partly of stone, and is without any ancient features. The deeds of the site go back to 1660, when it was known as Hall End Yard (VCH, 1945).

Medieval ridge and furrow ploughing MWA12972 survives as earthworks in Bearley Bushes (shown on lidar images surviving in the woodland). To the north of Bearley is the site of a possible medieval hollow way (MWA9335).

RESULTS (Fig. 3)

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. Excavation, which was carried out by hand, comprised three trenches. One of these (trench 1) was excavated within the Coach House to a width of 0.50m and a depth of about 0.70m whilst trenches 2 and 3 were connected with the development of the out-building. Both trenches were about 0.60m wide and 0.65m deep.

Description of deposits

TRENCH 1

The surface of the geological horizon (context 103), was reached at approx. 0.30m below the existing ground level, no archaeological features or deposits were observed cut into or overlying this layer. This was overlain by sequence of three deposits comprising initially of a thin layer of silt (context 102) containing frequent pea-grit sized fragments of mortar. Sealing this was a slightly thicker layer (context 101) at approx. 0.15m in depth consisting of a reddish-greyish-brown silty-clay with a large component of small to medium sized rounded pebble and fragments of red brick and tile. This was in turn overlain to a depth of about 0.10m by a deposit of large rounded pebbles set within a matrix of silty-sand (context 100).

TRENCH 2

The trench was internal to the building. The natural substrate (context 202) comprising a reddish-brown clay was exposed throughout the trench at a depth of about 0.45m below the existing floor level, no archaeological features or deposits were observed cut into or overlying this layer. The was sealed to a depth of 0.20m by a layer of mid-greyish-brown sandy-silt with a small amount of charcoal flecking and a component of small to medium rounded pebbles and the occasional small stone fragment. A few fragments of Animal bone and some sherds of post-medieval pottery show that this deposit represents an earlier ground level. Overlying this to a depth of 0.15m and marking the upper deposit was context 100, comprising a light to mid reddish-brown silty-clay with a small pebble

component and the occasional stone fragment. Redeposited clay within the deposits suggests that this is made ground probably connected with the construction of the overlying existing concrete floor.

TRENCH 3

The natural clay (202) was recorded at approx. 0.35m below the existing tarmac surface and no archaeological features or deposits were observed cut into or overlying this layer. Instead it was sealed by a single thick deposit of mixed clay and silt with a component of stone, pebbles, brick fragments and a concrete post-pad indicating previous disturbance and re-deposition.

FINDS

A handful of post-medieval (18th/19th century) pottery sherds were retrieved from context 201 which was interpreted as an earlier ground level. The finds were not retained.

Environmental data

A few unidentifiable fragments of animal bone were recovered from context 201. These were not retained. None of the deposits exposed during the excavation proved suitable for palaeo-environmental sampling.

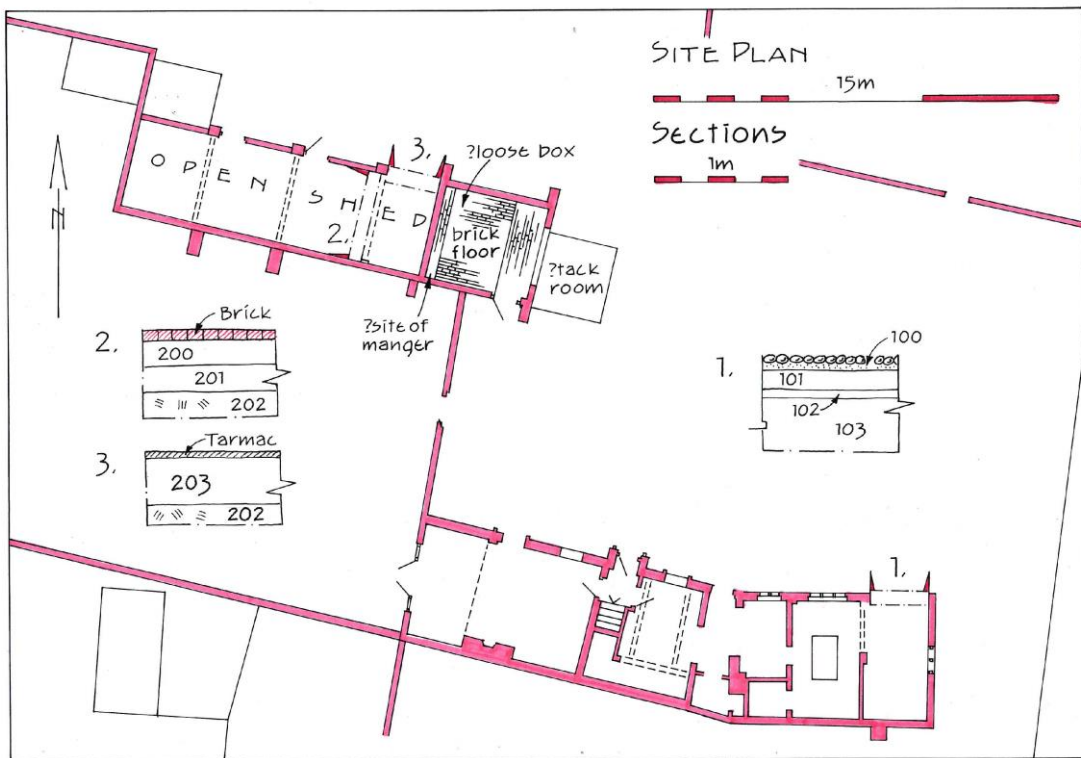


Fig. 3; site plan and sections



Plate 1;



Plate 2; west end of trench 1, from the south-east

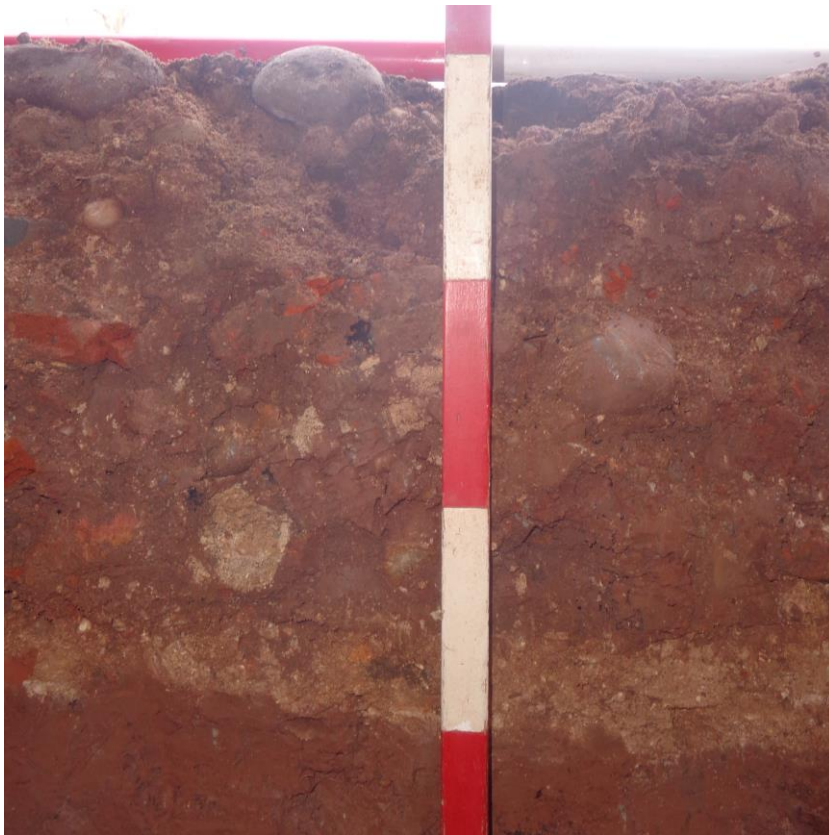


Plate 3; section 1a, detail



Plate 4; the outbuilding, from the



Plate 5; the outbuilding, from the



Plate 6; section 1b, detail



Plate 7; section 1c, detail



Plate 8; east end of trench 1, from the south-east



Plate 9; trench 1, from the south-west

DISCUSSION

The results outlined in this document represents one of two archaeological investigations carried in Bearley to date. Archaeological; observation and recording (watching brief) was previously carried out Scroobys, Church Lane (Flavell, 2014) revealing an 18th century well and demolished building.

Archaeological recording of three small trenches at Bearley Manor in 2016 was small in scope, and although within the farm complex revealed no significant archaeological deposits. Instead, deposits comprised a natural clay overlain by a short sequence of soil layers, cobbled paving and concrete flooring associated with post-medieval and later activity connected with Bearley Manor. The earliest activity was reflected in the 18th/19th century pottery sherds recovered from one of the lower deposits.

As an addition to the excavations, a building survey was carried out on both the coach house and open shed and the results are outlined in Appendix 1. As part of the post-excavation analysis, the significance of Bearley Manor as the potential site of an early medieval defended settlement was recognized and the results our outlined in Appendix 2.

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- Victoria County History, Styles, P (ed.), 1945. 'Parishes: Bearley', in *A History of the County of Warwick*, vol.3, 43-4, London.

Archive Location

A digital (pdf) copy of the report (referenced with OASIS) will be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service. A pdf copy of the report will also be deposited with the Historic Environment Record (HER).

APPENDIX 1: building survey, by Jill Atherton (Fig. 4)

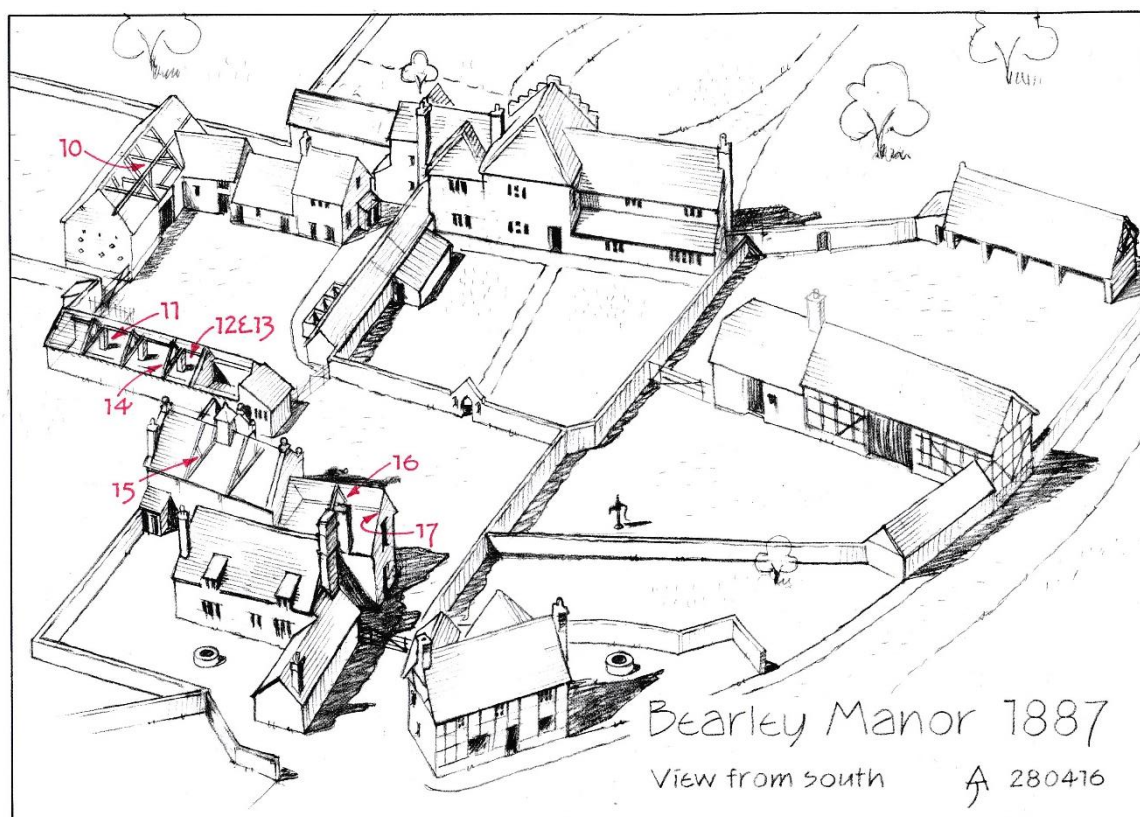


Fig. 4; The Manor Buildings. Plate locations shown in red

The Manor Buildings

During the course of excavations the opportunity was taken to examine the buildings. The earliest part of the house is at the east end: two bays of timber-framing with square panels and corner-struts. The remainder of the house consists of more than one phase of brick rebuilds including the cross-wing next to the frame, this has a crow-step gable at the north end. There is a brick vaulted (segmental) cellar.

To the south of the west end are two brick buildings which appear to have been a wash house, near the house, and attached westward a stable. The latter joins with the north bay of a three-bay threshing-barn. The barn is brick-built, with small and modest ventilation-panels in the south wall, the double-frame roof has collars, raking struts to the principal-rafters and long struts in the frames below which sit on low walls flanking the threshing-floor. There are wind-braces in the centre bay only and a bridle-scarph in the eastern wall-plate has small and neat carpenters' numbers.

Small buildings formerly southward of the wash-house, forming the east side of the old farm-yard, are lost, but the 1st Ed OS suggests the range included three pig-houses.

The south range of this yard consists of an open-shed (the subject of below-ground investigation) with brick-piers. The building is brick-built and the brick floor of the loose-box at the east end survives, beyond this is a small lean-to structure, probably a tack-room. The roof is built of rudely-worked trees but two of the tie-beams have been re-used from a single, chamfered, principal-joist. The centrally-placed mortices have housings for diminished-haunches which are consistent with a 16th century date.

The roof-frames of the main-range of the coach-house are like those in the brick-barn, and one of the raking-struts is a re-used length of window-mullion, this has narrow scroll-mouldings.

The attached two-bay east wing has a single re-used roof-frame, cut off above the collar. The northern wall-plate of this roof has been re-used, from a halved beam and displays a broad-chamfer and bar-stop, this detail suggests a date no later than the early 16th century.

To the east of the house is another barn, the square panels of the frame and the long struts to the cill-beam indicate a 17th century date, late in the timber-frame tradition. The yard to the north of this barn is bounded, on the north by an open brick shed and the 19th century king-post roof is visible in the existing east end of the shortened building. The yard is accessed on the east side directly from the road.



Plate 10; Brick barn, internal view to north



Plate 11; Open-shed, internal view to west, west end



Plate 12; Open-shed, internal view to west, showing split and re-used principal joist



Plate 13; Open-shed, detail of re-used principal-joist



Plate 14; Open-shed, mortice with housing for diminished haunch in re-used joist



Plate 15; Re-used mullion, with scroll-moulds, in main roof of coach-house



Plate 16; Roof-frame in east wing of coach-house to west



Plate17; Split and re-used beam, with bar-stop, as wall-plate in east-wing of coach-house

APPENDIX 2: Bearley; an historic landscape assessment (Fig. 5-7)

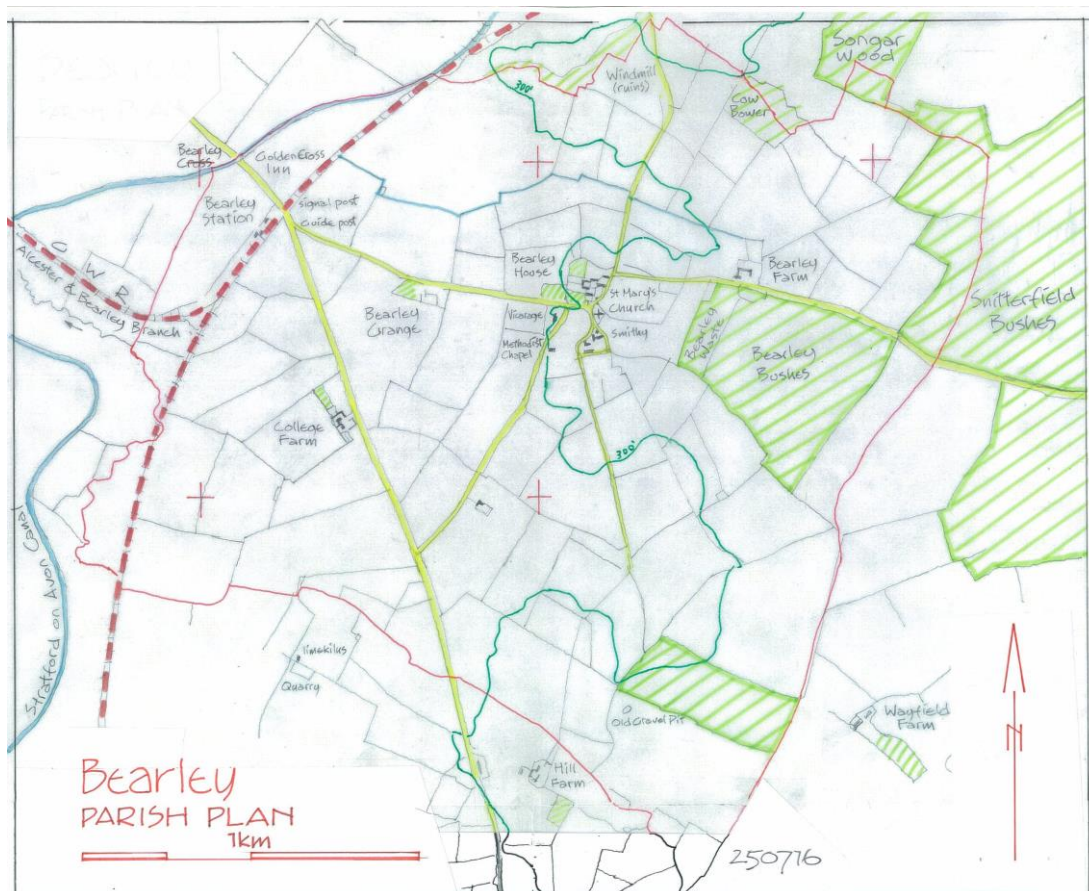


Fig. 5; Bearley parish plan

Bearley Manor

The earliest reference to Bearley is from Domesday clearly indicating that a manorial settlement had already been established there by 1086. There is currently no archaeological evidence to suggest that the area was occupied before this date.

The place name, cartographic and topographical evidence, indicate that Bearley originated as a defended settlement. It was probably sited on what is now Bearley Manor, an existing 17th century house with farm buildings. The manorial complex lies on an elevated position in a spur of the higher contour that crosses the parish from north-south. Historically, it would have commanded views to the north and west and control of the main east-west and north-south route-ways. The parish church of St. Mary probably dates from the end of the 12th century and its remains represent the only standing medieval monument in the village. The remainder of the village to the south probably represents expansion of the settlement during the 12 and 13th centuries.

The extent of the settlement is based on the OS First Edition (1886-7) which shows the study site as part of the Manor of Bearley. The map also shows significant landscape features that place the manor house and farm buildings centrally within a large, almost square-like, enclosure area. It is this area that appears to form the focal point or administrative centre of the early settlement.

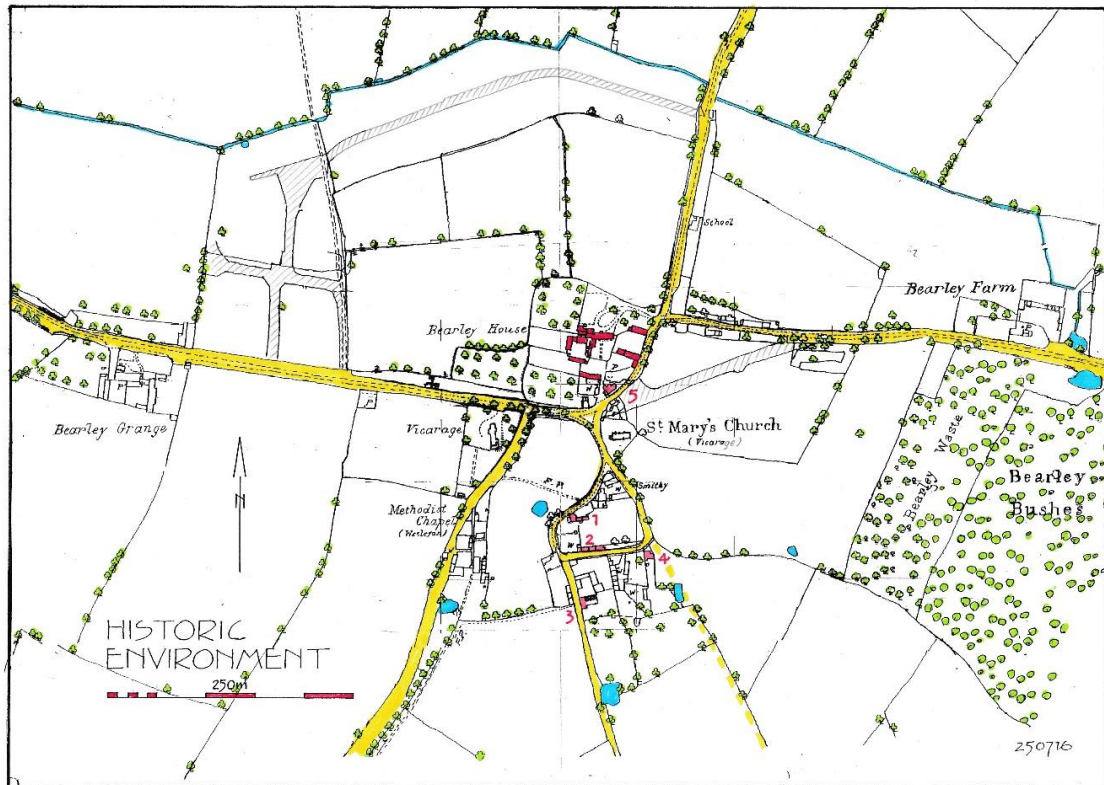


Fig. 6; Bearley Historic Environment, based on OS 1st Edition 1886-7. Modern roads shown hatched.

The early settlement seems to be defined by two principal features; the main thoroughfare (Old Snitterfield Road) that originally dog-legged along the east and west sides of the manor (replaced by a modern road, the hatched area in the figs. 6 & 7), and an almost right-angled land boundary marking the north and western edges. It seems quite probable that these features are the ghost outline of a former defended manorial enclosure, or 'woodland clearing near a fortified place' as the early village name 'Byrlei' implies.

Beyond this, the outlying field pattern is formed by two sort of rectangular outlines. The northern extremity is marked by an east-west water course and a similarly aligned inner field boundary, the narrow area between the two perhaps representing a flood plain.

The inner southern boundary appears to follow Snitterfield Road and the field line extending east from the church. An outer boundary can be traced from a line extending west from Bearley Bushes, broken partly by the village that develops south of the church. These features could be the remnants of a former feudal landscape centred on the manorial lordship of Bearley.

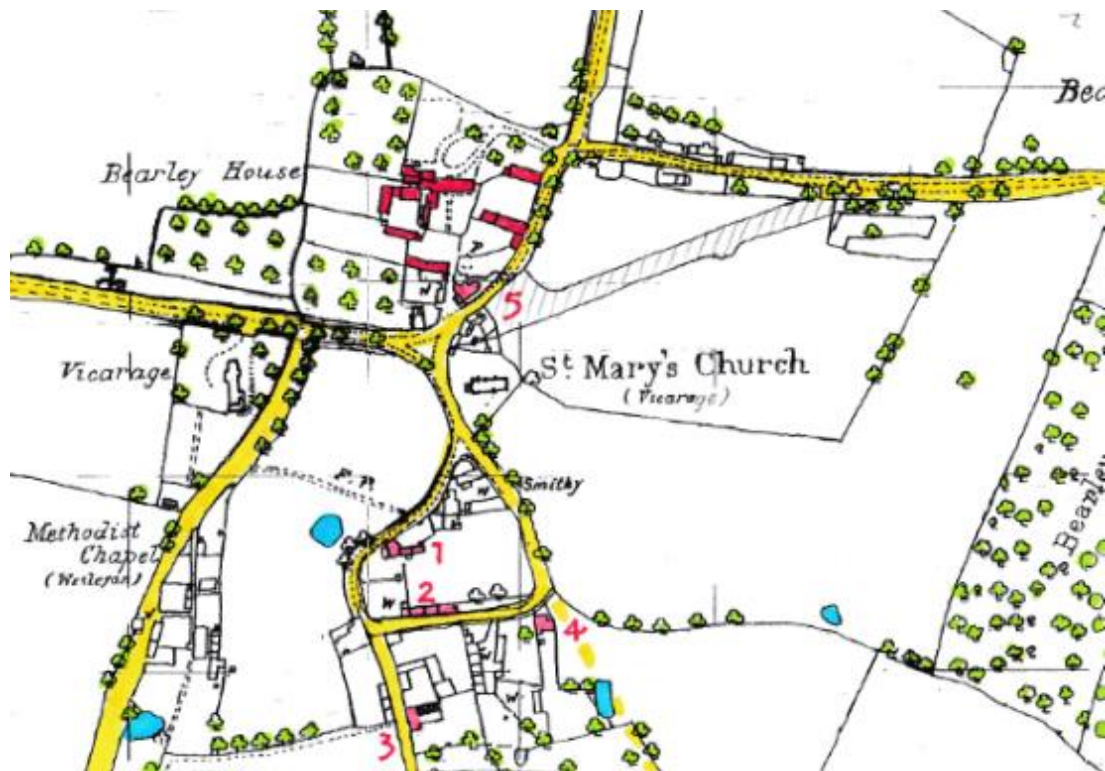


Fig. 7; Bearley Manor 1886-7. Surviving timber-frames; 1-C15th (close-studding), 2-C17th, 3 & 5-late C16th-early C17th (square-panels), 4-C17th-?C18th

Some previous documentary research on Bearley Manor (by Christine Hodgetts) has shown that Bearley does not have a history of a strong well-defined manor, but was largely, a tithing, of the manor of Snitterfield. This suggested that in the later middle ages there was not likely to have been a manor house in the strict sense of the word, a settlement that was not large enough to warrant full manorial status, but still sizeable enough to continue in a manorial role.

The existing manor house is a much altered and enlarged building with remains of timber-framed walls and open-timbered ceilings of the 16th or 17th century in its eastern half. probably middle of the 17th century, but may stand within the footprint of an earlier medieval building. A sale of the property in 1576 clearly shows Tudor house already in existence before this date. A barn east of the house is also of 17th-century framing.

Bearley Grange

A second 'manor' in the village consisted of the grange of Bordesley Abbey, a 12th-century Cistercian abbey near the town of Redditch, whose principal house might also loosely be described as a manor house. Towards the end of the 12th century William de Burle (VCH, 1945) gave to Bordesley Abbey, 20 acres. Bordesley's estates were compact and were located within 35km of the precinct; they were grouped around 20 granges, a pattern that was established by the early thirteenth century.

Bearley Grange was surveyed in 1886-7, situated west of the village along the Snitterfield Road and is now separate dwellings and outbuildings. Further investigation of these buildings may uncover within the fabric remnants of the medieval grange.

APPENDIX 2: OASIS RECORD

Project name	The Coach House and outbuilding, The Manor House, Snitterfield Road, Bearley, Warwickshire; archaeological recording
Project dates	Start: 13-04-2016 End: 13-04-2016
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	CHB16 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 2 - In use as a building
Monument type	GROUND SURFACE Post Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Post Medieval
Investigation type	""Watching Brief""
Prompt	Planning condition
Country	England
Site location	WARWICKSHIRE STRATFORD ON AVON BEARLEY Coach House, The Manor House, Bearley
Postcode	CV37 0SJ
Study area	0 Square metres
Site coordinates	SP 18143 60632 52.243176614317 - 1.734251477197 52 14 35 N 001 44 03 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 0m Max: 0m
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 Archive Exists?	No

Digital Contents	"none"
Digital Media available	"Text"
Paper Archive Exists?	No
Paper Contents	"none"
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	The Coach House and outbuilding, The Manor House, Snitterfield Road, Bearley, Warwickshire; archaeological recording
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Cook, S
Date	2016
Issuer or publisher	one ten archaeology
Place of issue or publication	Warks.
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