



Land to the south of
The Bight
Charlton, Worcestershire

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The Bight

Charlton, Worcestershire

Archaeological recording

SO 01175 45612

WSM 67798

OASIS ID: 110archa1-267059

Site code: CTB16

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one ten archaeology

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Front cover excavation in progress showing the stone footings of the former house	

SUMMARY

Archaeological recording was carried out in March 2016 at Land to the south of the Bight, Charlton, Worcestershire during excavation associated with the construction of a new dwelling, garage and access road.

A previous desk based assessment identified that the site was first developed in the 17th century with the creation of a small farmstead connected with market gardening comprising a house, cider press and small shed. Further extensions were added in the 19th century and additional buildings to the south of the site in the 20th century.

The excavation, which affected only the north and west parts of the plot revealed the stone foundations of the former 17th century house and its associated well. The timber-framing of the contemporary shed was dismantled and recorded after. The stratigraphic sequence exposed during the excavation suggests an open rural environment prior to the construction of the farmstead with little previous activity.

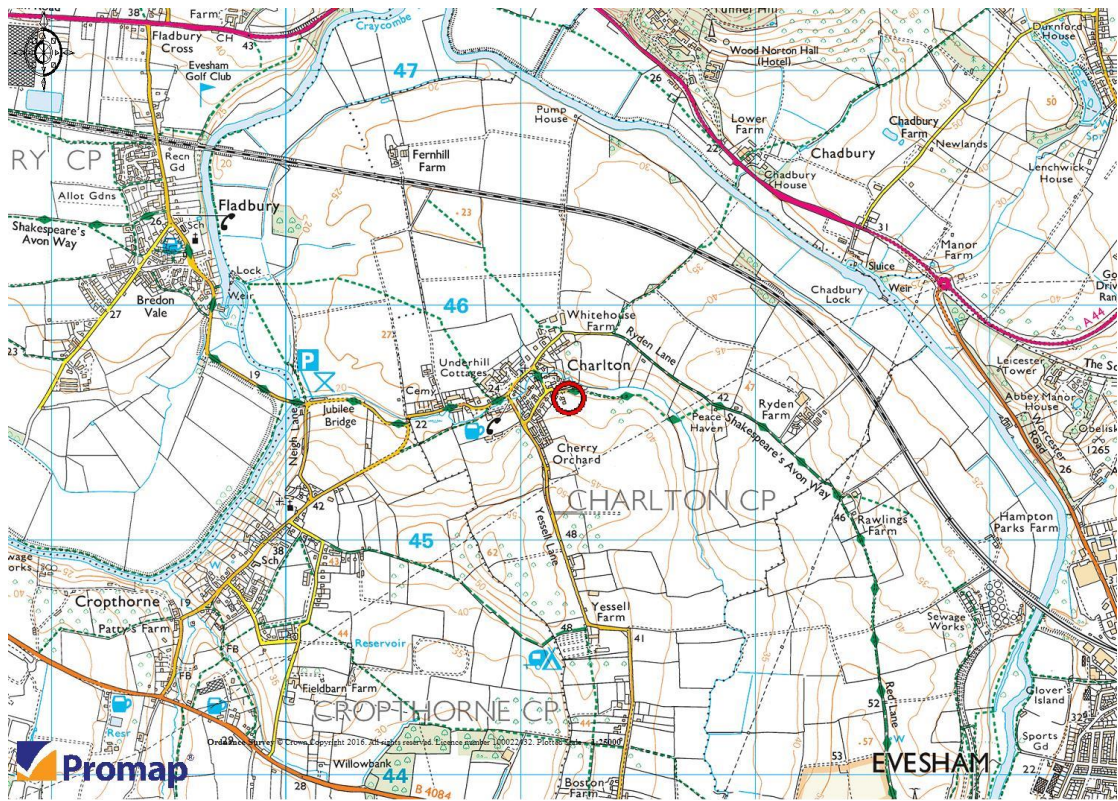


Fig. 1; site location (circled in red)

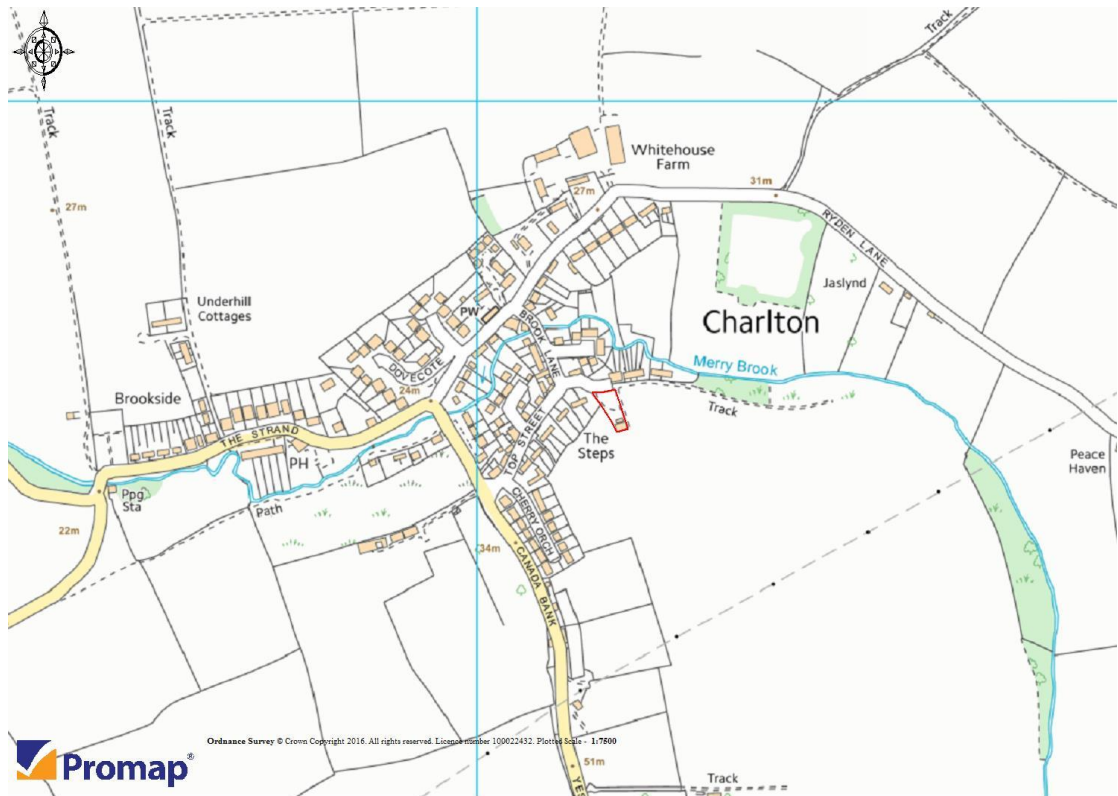


Fig. 2; area of study (outlined in red)

INTRODUCTION

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

This document sets out the results of archaeological recording ('watching brief') carried out during 23rd-24th and 29th March 2016 at Land to the south of the Bight, Charlton, Worcestershire, WR10 3LF at the request of Absolute Architecture Ltd on behalf of Tim Pretty Construction Ltd. It was proposed to demolish the existing derelict buildings and the construct a new L-shaped dwelling and garage on the site with associated new access, landscaping and services. The new dwelling would be constructed within the general footprint of the former timber-framed dwelling demolished after a fire in c. 1961 (B1, WSM 41602).

The archaeological recording was required as a condition of planning permission granted in respect of an application (Ref: W/14/02854) to Wychavon District Council and was undertaken in accordance with a brief issued by Worcestershire Archive & Archaeology Service (March 2016).

Geology and topography

Charlton is a hamlet which comprises the eastern portion of the the Parish of Cropthorne lying about a mile to the east of Cropthorne proper. It is situated on both banks of Merry Brook which runs down the centre of the street.

The site lies in the eastern half of Charlton to the south of The Bight which is an extension of Top Street. The boundaries of the site are formed by The Bight (north), agricultural land (east and south), and by residential properties and agricultural land (west). The site is roughly rectangular in plan comprising an area of about 1,100m² and was under rough grass cover prior to excavation. The land slopes down from north to south at heights of c. 32.5m–29.5m AOD. The underlying geology of the site (BGS, 1974) comprises a Lower Lias, mainly clay and this was confirmed during the excavation. The site formerly contained a number buildings which are discussed below.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

An archaeological desk based assessment (summary below) was carried out previously and included consultation of the Worcestershire Historic Environment Record (HER) with a search carried out over a 1km radius centred on the site. No additional sites have been added since this search was made. An activity number for watching brief was issued (WSM 67798) which acts as a unique reference for the work.

The results of the desk-based assessment (Cherrington, 2015) showed that the HER recorded a single Undesignated Heritage Asset as lying within the site. This comprised the former site of a two-storey timber-framed dwelling damaged by fire and demolished in c. 1961 (B1, WSM 41602). It was ascribed a Post-Medieval–Modern (1540 AD to 2050 AD) date although architectural comparisons with the remaining timber-framed building stock in Charlton suggests a c. 17th Century date for the building. The site assessment identified the footprints of three structures (B1, B2 and B4), a well and a path. To the north of the site was the rectangular footprint of the timber-framed dwelling (B1, WSM 41602). To the south were a further two rectangular building footprints corresponding with structures first shown on mapping of 1886 (B2 and B4) along with a well and a path. In addition to the building footprints are the three standing structures (B3, B5 and B6). To the far south of the site are two modern timber-framed buildings interpreted as bothies first shown on mapping of 1904 (B5 and B6). To the east of the site is a small rectangular timber-framed structure first shown on mapping of 1886 (B3). Based on the available data the potential for the survival of archaeological features and deposits dating from the c. 17th Century onwards was deemed to be medium-high. The medium-high level of potential has been ascribed due to the demonstrated survival of elements of the footprint of the former timber-framed building to the north of the site. The potential for features and deposits dating from the 19th-20th Century associated with orcharding activity is also deemed to be medium–high. The potential for the survival of archaeological remains predating the c. 17th Century is currently unknown. This is in part due to the lack of any recorded archaeological work in the village.

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. Excavation, was carried out by machine using a toothless grading bucket under archaeological supervision. Excavation comprised the three main areas of the development all of which were joined as the development progressed. The first part of excavation was for the new access road. This was followed by the excavation of the footprint of the new garage area whilst the larger part comprised the footprint of the new dwelling.

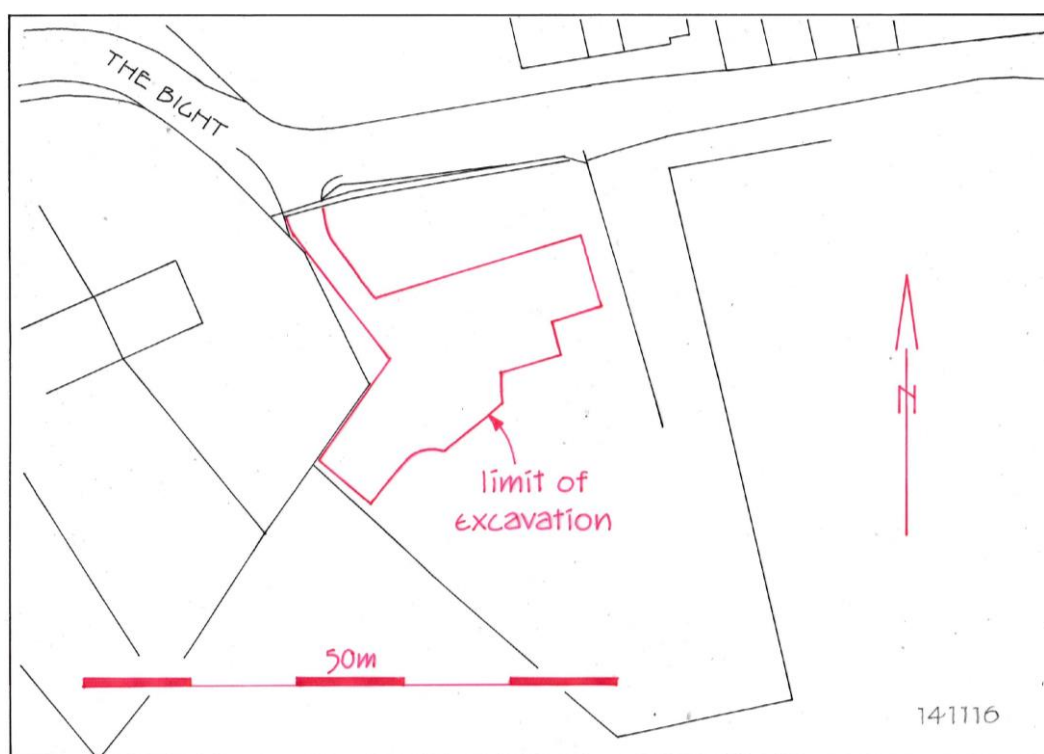


Figure 3; outline of the excavation area

Description of deposits; general stratigraphy

Context 102 (Natural substrate)

The surface of the geological horizon (context 102), comprising a light yellowish-brown clay Lias clay, was exposed throughout the three areas of excavation. It sloped down from 29.95m AOD at the south end to 29.10m AOD along the north

edge of the excavation, whilst within the area of the proposed garage it sat at a level height of about 29.95m AOD. Only two features, comprising the remains of the masonry walls of the former house and its associated well (see below) truncated this deposit.

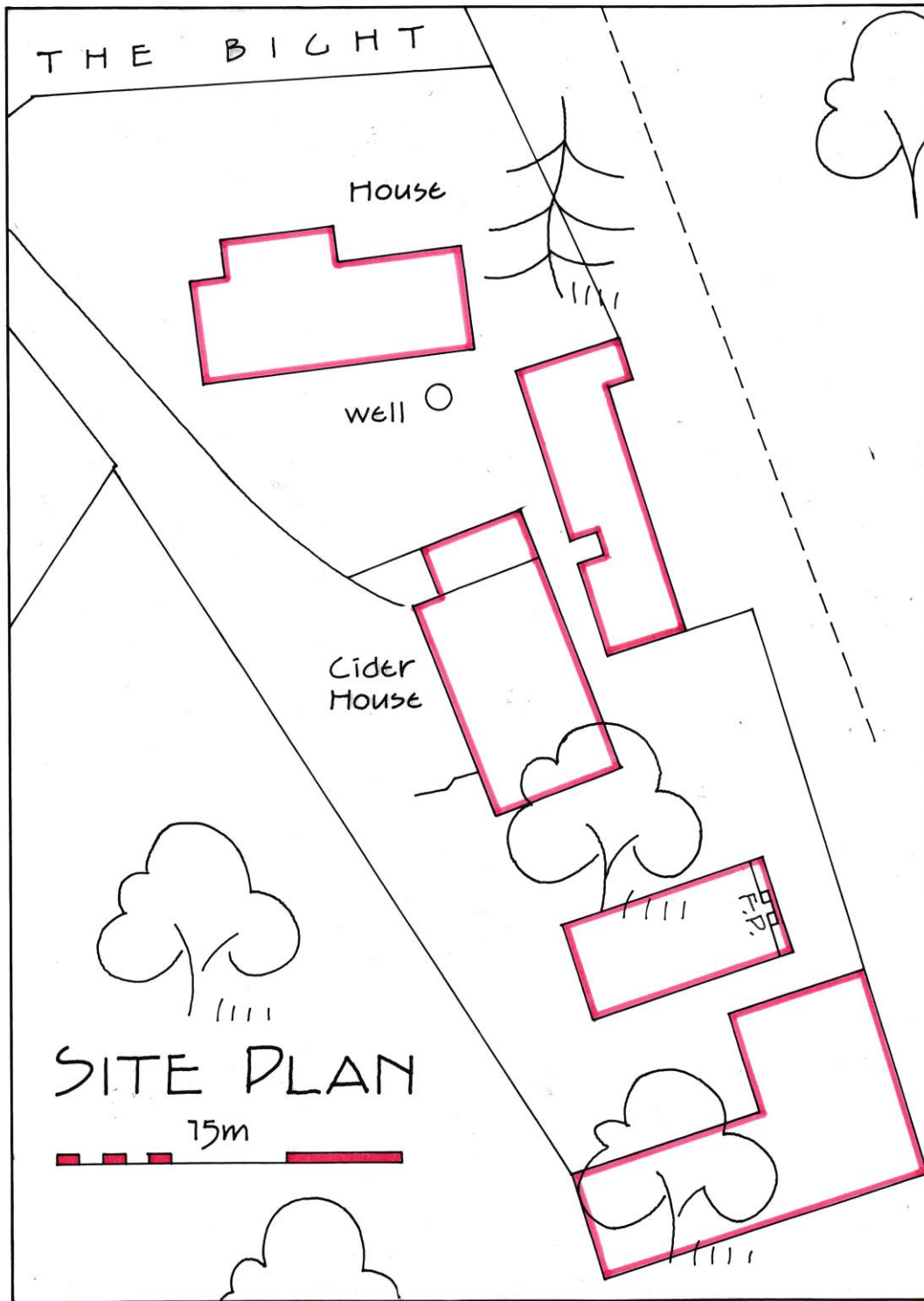


Fig. 3; site plan showing location of former buildings

Context 101 (relict subsoil layer)

Overlying the natural clay to varying degrees of thickness throughout the excavation was the undated relict subsoil layer (101) comprising a mid-brown clayey-silt. It was thicker at the south end of the site where it was up to 0.30m deep, but tapering to about 0.10-15m thick at the north end of the excavation.

Context 100 (topsoil layer)

Sealing the subsoil deposit throughout the excavation was the existing topsoil layer. It was also thicker at the south end of the site, up to 0.30m deep, tapering to about 0.10-15m thick at the north end of the excavation.

Description of deposits; main archaeological features

Contexts 103, 105 & 106

Aligned north-east to south-west along the northern edge of trench 1 for about 16.50m was a brick and masonry wall which represented the front north-west side of the former house. It comprised three courses of brick (106) overlying a single line of Lias stones in two courses (103) approx. 0.35m wide and 0.25-28m deep. The north-west face of this masonry wall was exposed after excavation of the foundation trench (plate 8). At each end of this wall was a limestone quoin.

Aligned parallel with wall 103, at about 5.0m to the south-east were the remains of wall 105 which represented the south-east rear side of the former house. At the time of the excavation this comprised a single course of approx. half dozen Lias stones similar in size and shape to those in wall 103. One large fragment of brick was observed between two of the stones.

Context 104 (stone well)

Situated approx. 2.0m to the south of wall 105 was the Lias stone well 104, with an internal diameter of 0.80m and an external diameter of 1.20m. This was truncated during excavation of the foundation trench to a depth of about 1.0m.

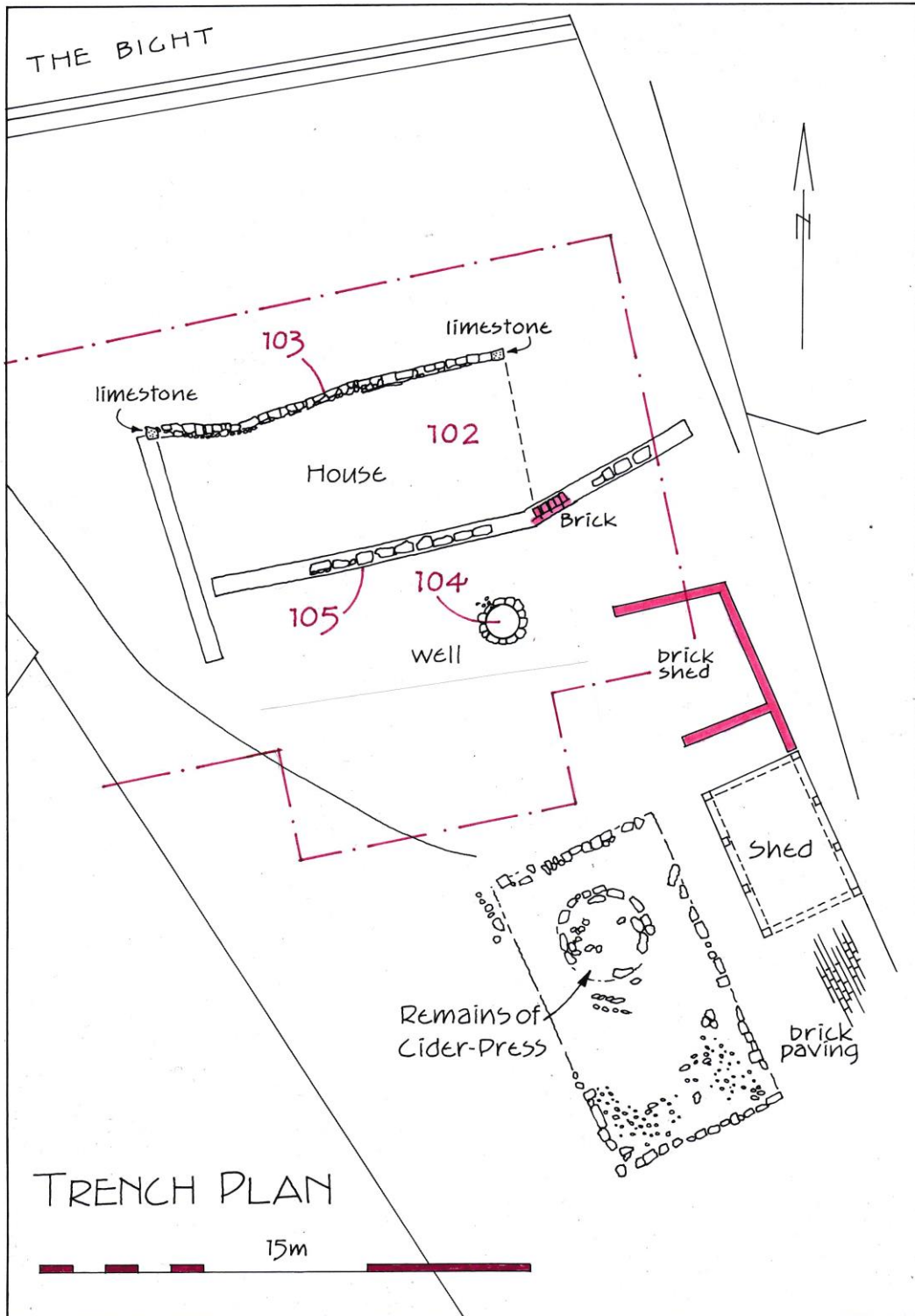


Fig. 4; trench 3; plan showing main archaeological features and outline (dashed red line) of excavation area.



Plate 1; trench 1 section (driveway), from the south-east



Plate 2; trench 2 excavated; from the south-west



Plate 3; trench 2, detail of section showing general stratigraphy



Plate 4; detail of stone wall 103 overlain by brick wall 106.



Plate 5; wall 103, from the east



Plate 6; trench 3, from the north-east



Plate 7; trench 3, from the west



Plate 8; detail of bottom two masonry courses of wall 103, from the north-east



Plate 9; stone well 104 (truncated by the foundation trench), from the south-west



Plate 10; Section 1a, (showing the site general stratigraphy), from the north-east

FINDS

Finds were scarce comprising the occasional residual sherd of 19th/20th century pottery recovered from the topsoil. These were not retained.

Environmental data

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

DISCUSSION Figs. 5 & 6)

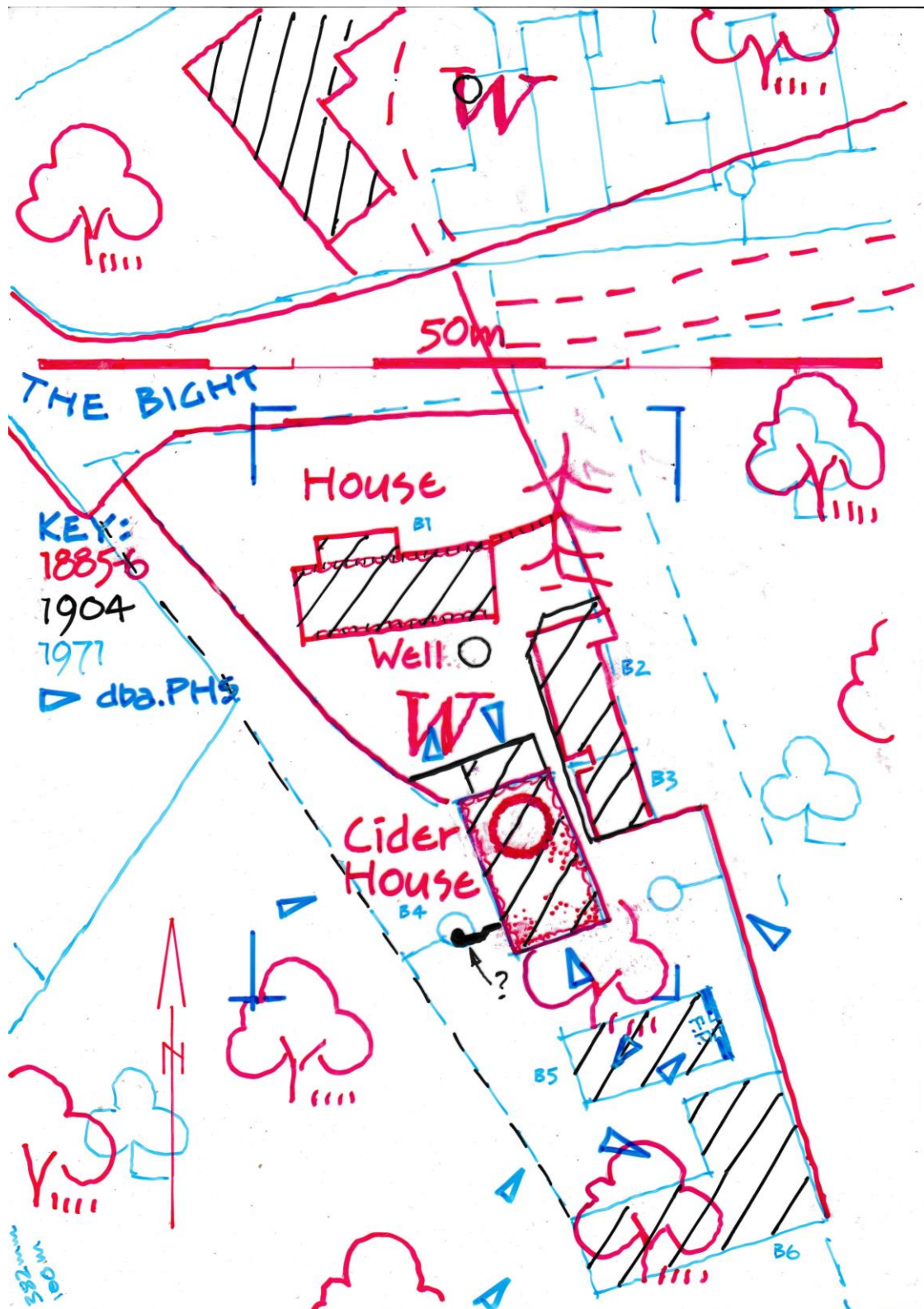


Fig. 5; phasing of buildings (hatched), based on historic mapping

The buildings

The buildings that formerly stood on the site were recorded in an earlier assessment (Cherrington, 2015) and appear to have comprised a small farmstead, not one in usual sense with a threshing barn, grain store, cow shed etc., but instead a place that seems to have focused on market gardening with an emphasis on fruit and cider production. The two buildings (B6 & B6) at the south end of the plot were post war constructions.

The house (B1)

The house formerly comprised a one and half-storey timber-framed dwelling (WSM 41602) which was damaged by fire and demolished in c. 1961. A photograph of the east end of the back wall was taken at the time of the fire, with fireman. The square panels in the timber-framing (architecturally comparable with the remaining timber-framed building stock in Charlton), indicate a late 16th century–early 17th century date and some rafters and battens are visible where the thatch has been pulled away. The position of the roof plate suggests eyebrow windows on the front.

The excavation revealed footings (103 & 105) of both the front (north) and back walls surviving below demolition level, at the front these are at a lower level, due to the natural slope of the ground, and the Lias blocks terminate in Limestone quoins. Brick walling (106) above the footings along the north side of the building suggests that the cill-beam was replaced, the photograph of the fire which shows timber-framing infilled with brick suggests that the house underwent a major refurbishment.

Brickwork extending eastward from the south-east corner is what remains of a boundary wall defining the back-yard and shown on the 1st Ed OS. The well (104) on the south side of the house is masonry built.

The cider house (B4)

South of the house, only some footings of marking the outline of a building survive, the original purpose of this structure can be ascertained from the circular stone footings at the north end which indicate the location of a former cider-press. Although undated, this building is likely to be contemporary with the house and the small shed (see below).

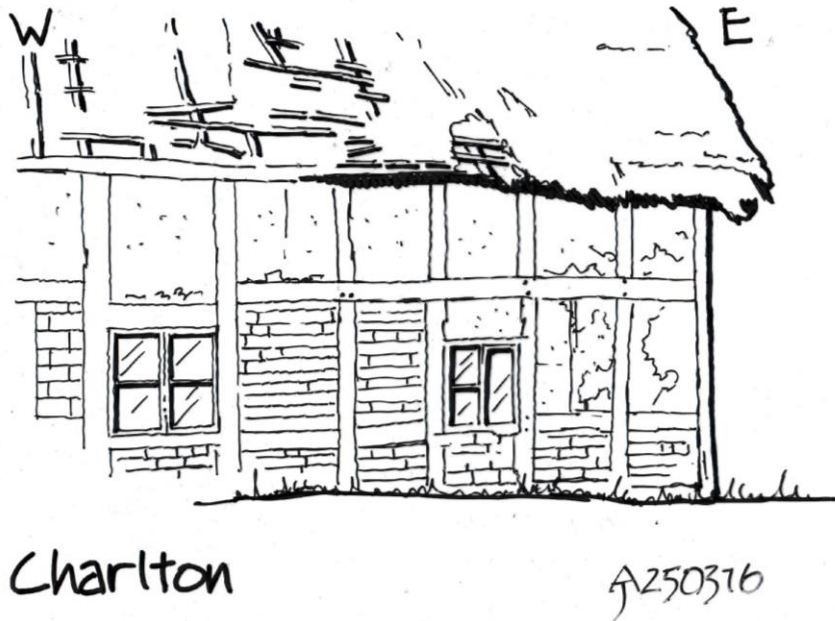


Fig. 6; east end of back wall of the former house

The small shed

A narrow range of buildings (B2 & B3) to the east of the cider-house form part of the eastern boundary of the plot. The northern end (B2), brick-built, is of little interest, however the south end (B3) is a lapped-boarded (hand wrought nails) timber-frame. After demolition, it was found that the frame, with numerous carpenters' numbers, was contemporary with the house. Lathe-holes and grooves indicate that the square panels had originally been filled with wattle and daub. A short length of original principal-rafter survives attached to a tie-beam providing evidence for the original roof pitch. The timbers were recorded individually (Appendix 1). This timber-framed out-building is contemporary with the house. Its size and location, next to the cider house, suggests that it may have been used for storing barrels.

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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 (Figs. 7 & 8)

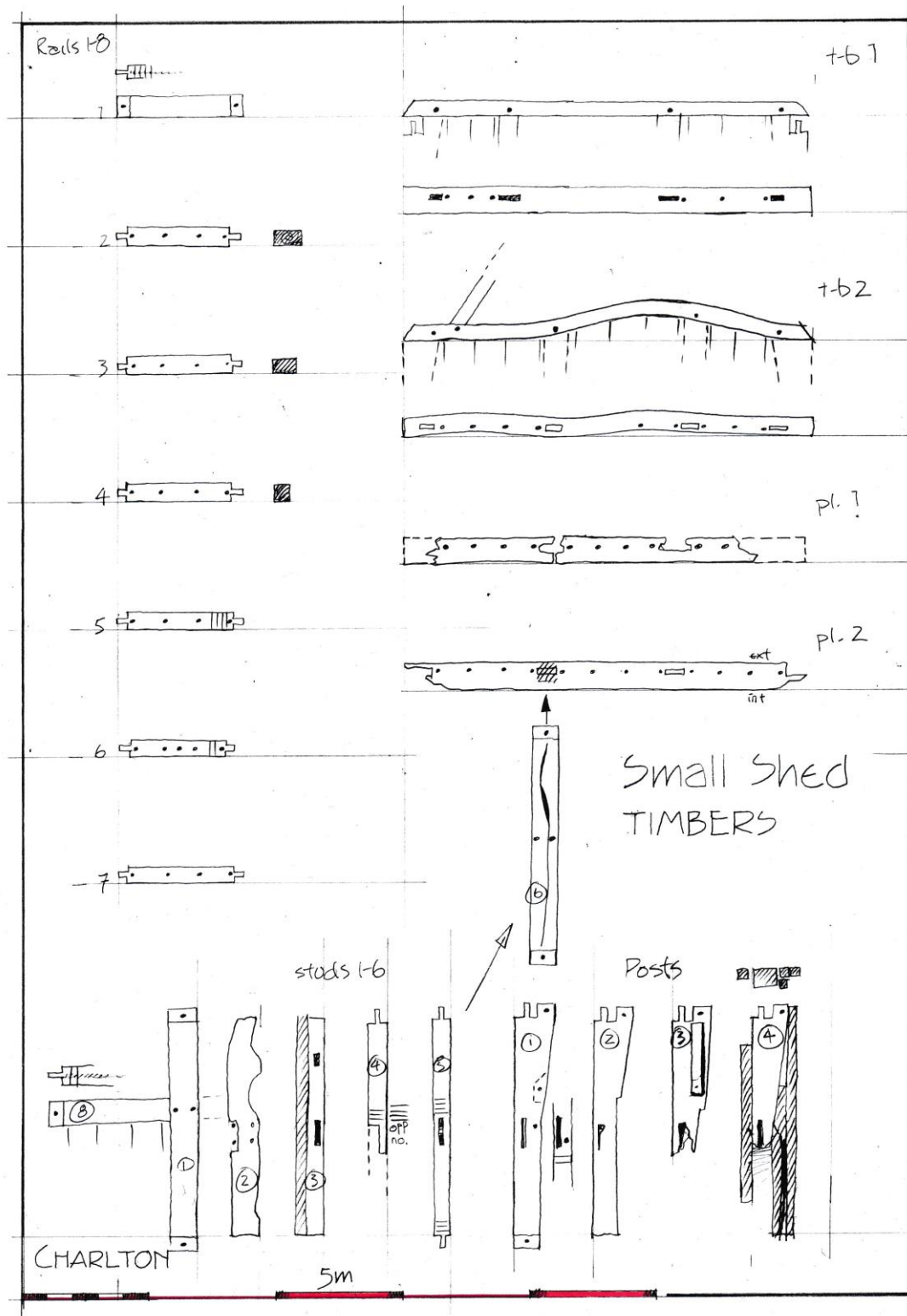


Fig. 7; small shed timbers

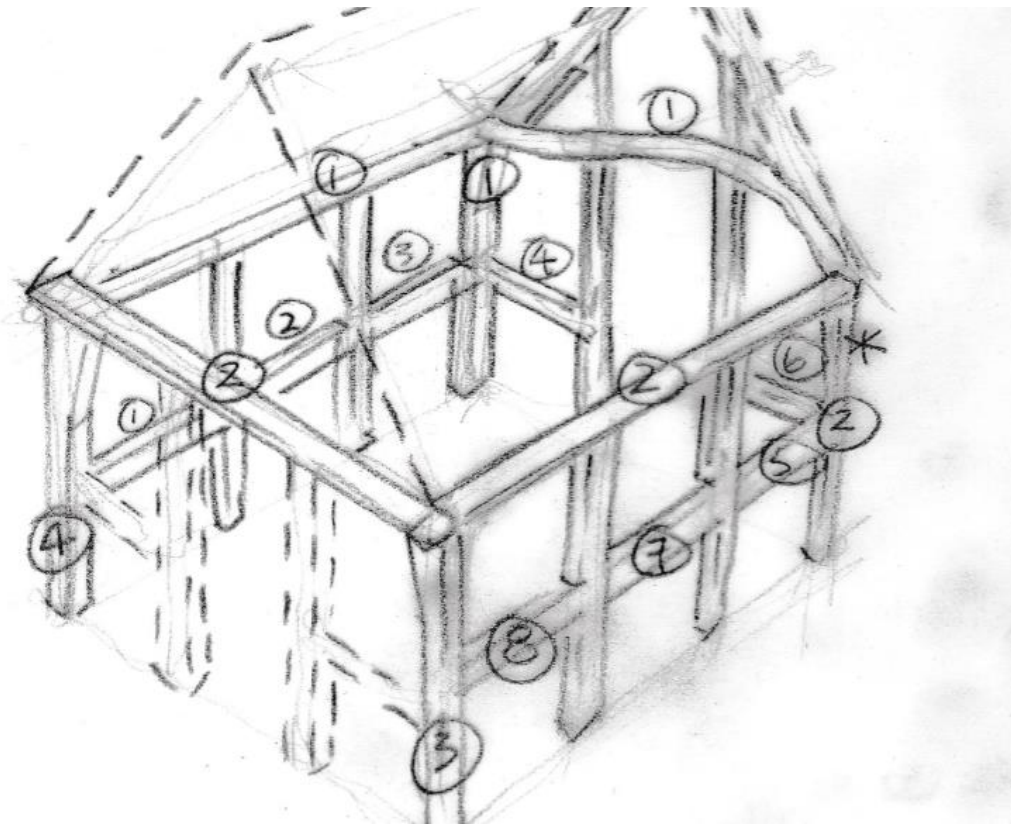


Figure 8; location of the small shed timbers

APPENDIX 2: OASIS

Project name	Land to the south of the Bight, Charlton, Worcestershire; archaeological recording
Project dates	Start: 23-03-2016 End: 29-03-2016
Previous/future work	Yes / No
Any associated project reference codes	WSM 67798 - HER event no.
Any associated project reference codes	CTB16 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Monument type	BUILDING Post Medieval
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	Planning condition
Country	England
Site location	WORCESTERSHIRE WYCHAVON CROPTHORNE Land to the south of The Bight, Charlton
Postcode	WR10 3LF
Study area	1100 Square metres
Site coordinates	SO 01175 45612 52.099588755984 - 3.442917111429 52 05 58 N 003 26 34 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 29.1m Max: 29.95m
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 Archive recipient	OASIS
Paper Archive Exists?	No
Paper Contents	"none"
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Land to the south of The Bight, Charlton, Worcestershire; 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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