



2 Abbey Cottages

Abbey precinct, Church Street, Tewkesbury,
Gloucestershire

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Gloucestershire

Archaeological evaluation

NGR: SO 88948 32377

Site code: ACT16

Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) number 21704

OASIS ID: 110archa1-267615

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Front cover; 2 Abbey Cottages, from the east

SUMMARY

An archaeological evaluation was carried out during October 2016 at 2 Abbey Cottages, Abbey Precinct, Church Street, Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire, in predetermination of an application for Scheduled Monument Consent and planning permission for the erection of a rear extension.

The field evaluation followed an earlier desk based assessment that identified the area of the proposed development as the potential site of medieval walls and floor surfaces of former buildings associated with the abbey precinct. The excavation, which went to a depth of 1m, found no evidence for remains associated with the medieval abbey. Instead a sequence of 19th century deposits characterised the stratigraphy of the trench.

The results of the evaluation trench have shown that the development is unlikely to impact on archaeological remains associated with the abbey precinct. Excavation confirmed that the development, at a maximum depth of 0.60m below existing ground level, is unlikely to impact on anything other than 19th century building debris and modern topsoil. Below this is another thick layer of 19th century made ground providing the necessary buffer of 0.30m between the underneath of the proposed slab foundation and the top of any significant archaeological deposits that may exist beneath the bottom of the trench.

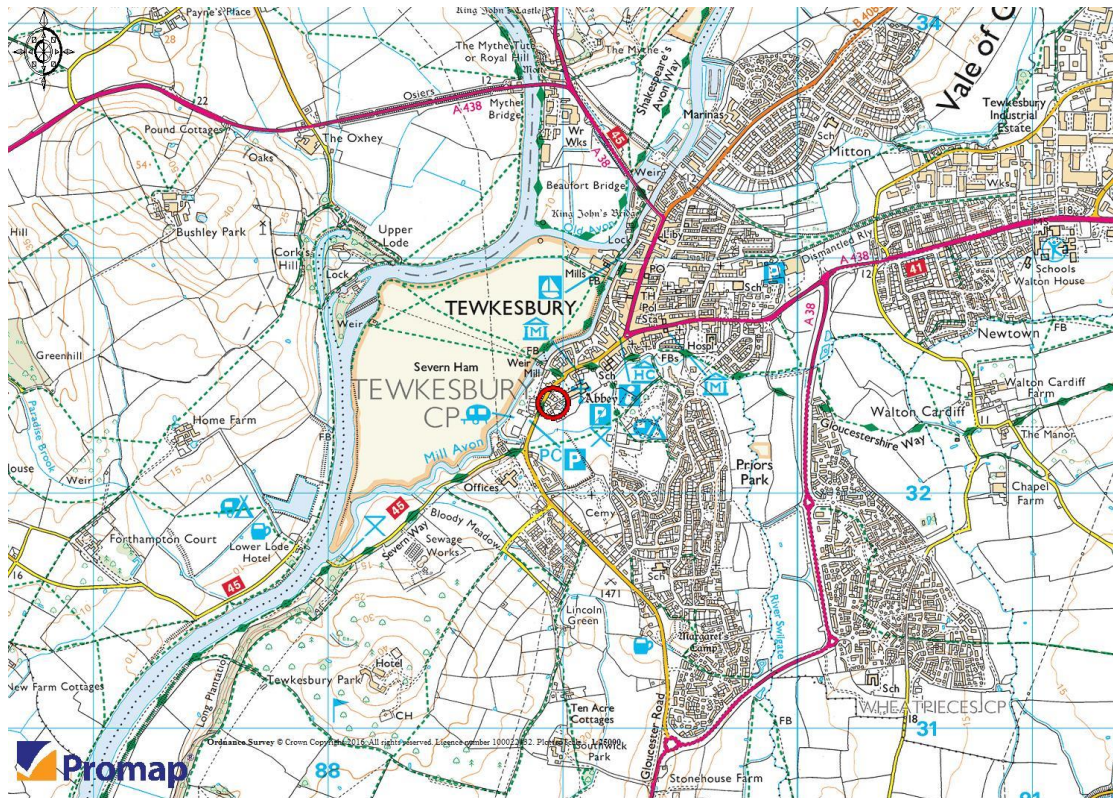


Fig.1; site location (circled in red)

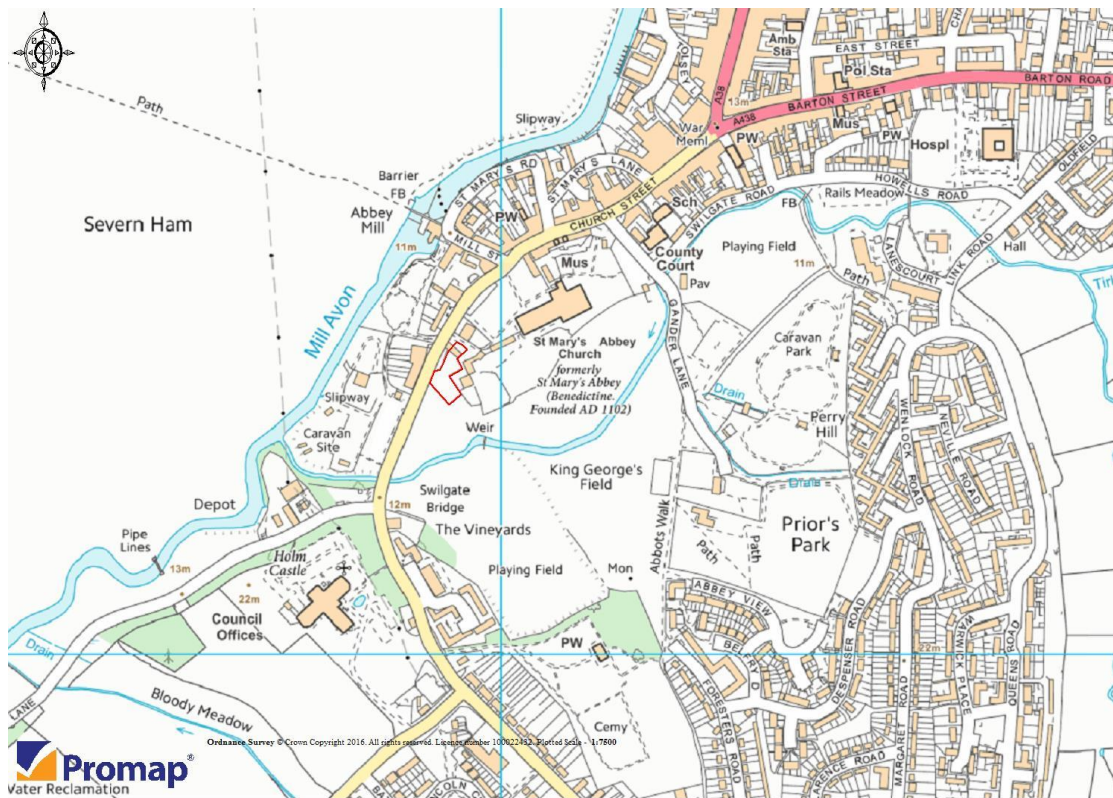


Fig. 2; study area (outlined in red)

INTRODUCTION

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

This document details the results of an archaeological evaluation during 18th-20th October at 2 Abbey Cottages, Abbey Precinct, Church Street, Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire, GL20 5SR, at the request of the owners Mr & Mrs Bellairs. The agent is George Coombey-Jones Architect.

The request for the trial trenching by the Archaeologist at Glos. CC, is a response to a proposal (planning ref; 16/00628/FUL) for the replacement of a rear existing modern utility room with the construction of a new single-storey garden room. It is recognised that there is potential within the site for the presence of highly significant archaeological remains that may be affected by proposed development and therefore an evaluation of the archaeological implications is required in advance of consideration of the proposals.

The application site is archaeologically sensitive since it is located within the precinct of the medieval Tewkesbury Abbey, an area of national archaeological importance which is designated a Scheduled Monument. Historic England have been consulted concerning this development proposal and have advise of any concerns regarding the impact of the development on the Scheduled Monument and its setting.

It was noted that the proposed development would require construction ground works and intrusions which may have an unacceptably adverse impact on archaeological remains of the highest significance. Therefore, in accordance with the NPPF, paragraph 128, it was recommended that in advance of the determination of this planning application the applicant should provide the results of a programme of desk-based assessment and field evaluation, so that the impact of the development on the significance of the archaeological remains may be understood. An historic environment desk based assessment has been completed (results outlined below) and this document outlines a proposal for the subsequent field evaluation.

Geology and topography

The study site (2 Abbey Cottages) lies within the south-western area of the abbey precinct which includes the Abbot's gatehouse, the Almonry barn, the Abbey Mill, Abbey House, the present vicarage and some half-timbered dwellings in Church

Street. The building itself forms the east half of a 19th century range comprising nos.1 and 2 Abbey Cottages, formerly a house (no. 1) and associated service wing (no.2). A length of medieval wall was incorporated into the construction of these buildings. The rear of the property currently comprises stone paved area with garden extending to the south.

The underlying geology of the site comprises sand and gravel of the Third (Main) Terrace of River Severn (BGS, 1988). This was not reached during the excavation and therefore could not be confirmed. The height of ground level (brick paving) at the trench site was 10.63m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD).

Archaeological and historical background

The study site (Abbey Cottages) lies within the abbey precincts which includes the Abbot's gatehouse, the Almonry barn, the Abbey Mill, Abbey House, the present vicarage and some half-timbered dwellings in Church Street. An historic environment desk based assessment (Cook, 2016), carried out previously, found that the proposed development had potential to impact on highly significant medieval deposits comprising the walled remains or floor surfaces associated with one of these buildings.

EXCAVATION METHODOLOGY

Aims of the work

The objectives of the evaluation were 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 in order that an informed decision on their importance in a local, regional and national context can be made. This information will clarify whether any remains should be considered for preservation *in situ*, or form the basis of a mitigation strategy.

Sample size and scope of fieldwork

The evaluation comprised a single 1.5m square trench excavated within the footprint of the proposed extension. Excavation terminated at a depth of 1m below the existing ground level (brick paving).

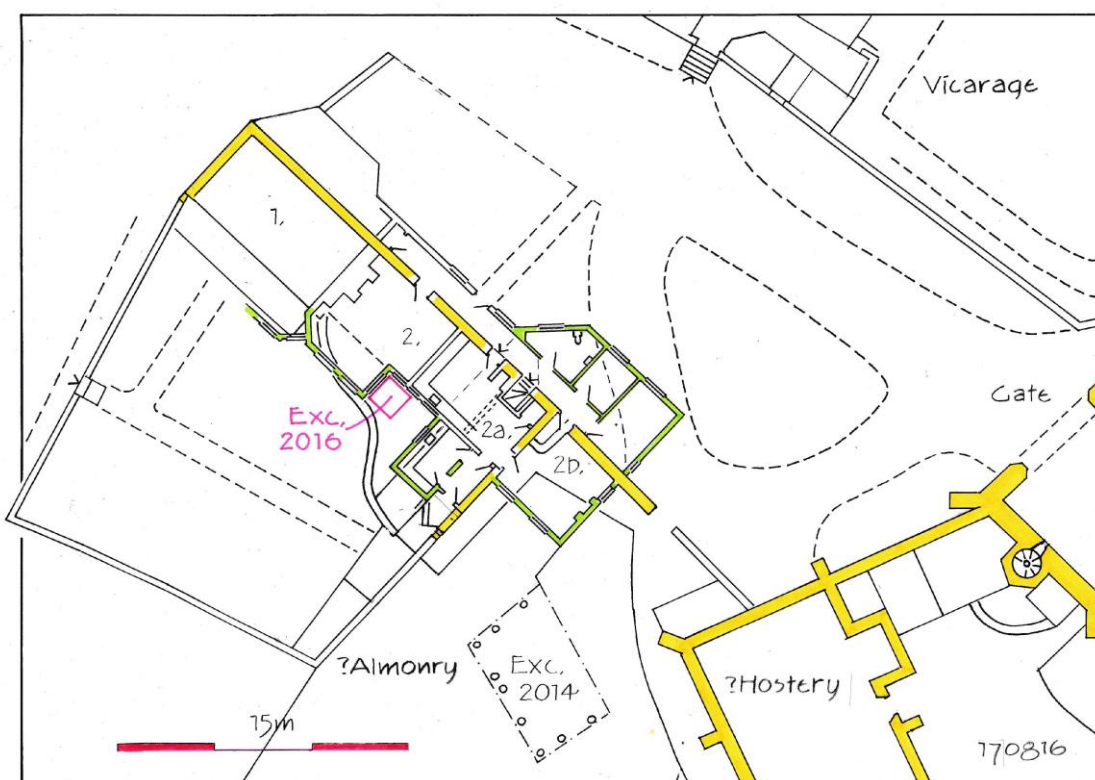


Fig. 3; trench location plan. Yellow; monastic masonry

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 by hand and investigated for archaeological features. A plan and section of the trench was made and recorded during excavation.

RESULTS: GENERAL

Soil and ground conditions

Conditions were generally dry during excavation, the deposits showing little moisture retention. The lower deposits (contexts 103 & 104) were well compacted requiring heavy hand excavation.

Reliability of field investigation

Truncation of the underlying deposits was observed by the later intrusion (102) and the more recent foundation trench (106) associated with the construction of the adjacent extension.

Distribution of archaeological deposits

The natural substrate was not reached during the excavation. Instead a sequence of 19th century deposits characterised the stratigraphy of the trench. The earliest deposit comprised a thick layer of soil and masonry rubble that appears to have formed some form of ground consolidation. This was subsequently sealed by a thinner deposit of construction debris which was in turn sealed by a thick layer of garden topsoil.

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 103 (ground consolidation)

The earliest deposit encountered during excavation was 103 comprising a compacted, but friable brown sandy-silt small fragments of lias and limestone representing a large component of the deposit. It was excavated by hand to a depth of 0.50, but the bottom was not reached. It was partially truncated by a later intrusion (102; see below). Finds comprised late medieval pottery, some glazed; fragments of 19th century roof tile and numerous fragments of animal bone. A large number of broken slate roof tile was also recorded.

Context 104 (construction debris)

Overlying deposit 103 to a depth varying between 0.16-18m was a layer of construction debris comprising mostly white crushed stone with fragments of mortar. Within this were two small lens deposits of ash and soot.

Context 102 (modern trench?) filled by context 101

Truncating the surface of deposit 104 was a partially exposed linear trench aligned north-east, south-west with at least one vertical side to a depth of 0.34m. The north-east end of the trench also terminated with a vertical side within the underlying deposit (103). The remainder of the feature continued beyond the edge of the trench and the bottom slightly penetrating the surface of 103. It was filled by a single deposit (101) of soft-friable, dark greyish-brown, sandy-silt (similar to 100), with charcoal flecking and frequent small fragments of lias and limestone. Finds comprised fragments of 20th century roof tile.

Context 100 (modern topsoil)

Overlying layer 104 and sealing the fill (101) of feature 102 to a depth of 0.40m was layer 100. This was similar in colour and texture to the fill deposit 101. Finds comprised a few sherds of post-medieval pottery, a clay pipe, 20th century roof tile and fragments of animal bone.

Context 106 (foundation trench) backfilled by context 105

Truncating the surface of deposit 100 was a modern linear trench aligned north-east, south-west constructed for the concrete footings associated with the

adjacent extension. This was backfilled with deposit 105, similar in colour and texture to context 100.

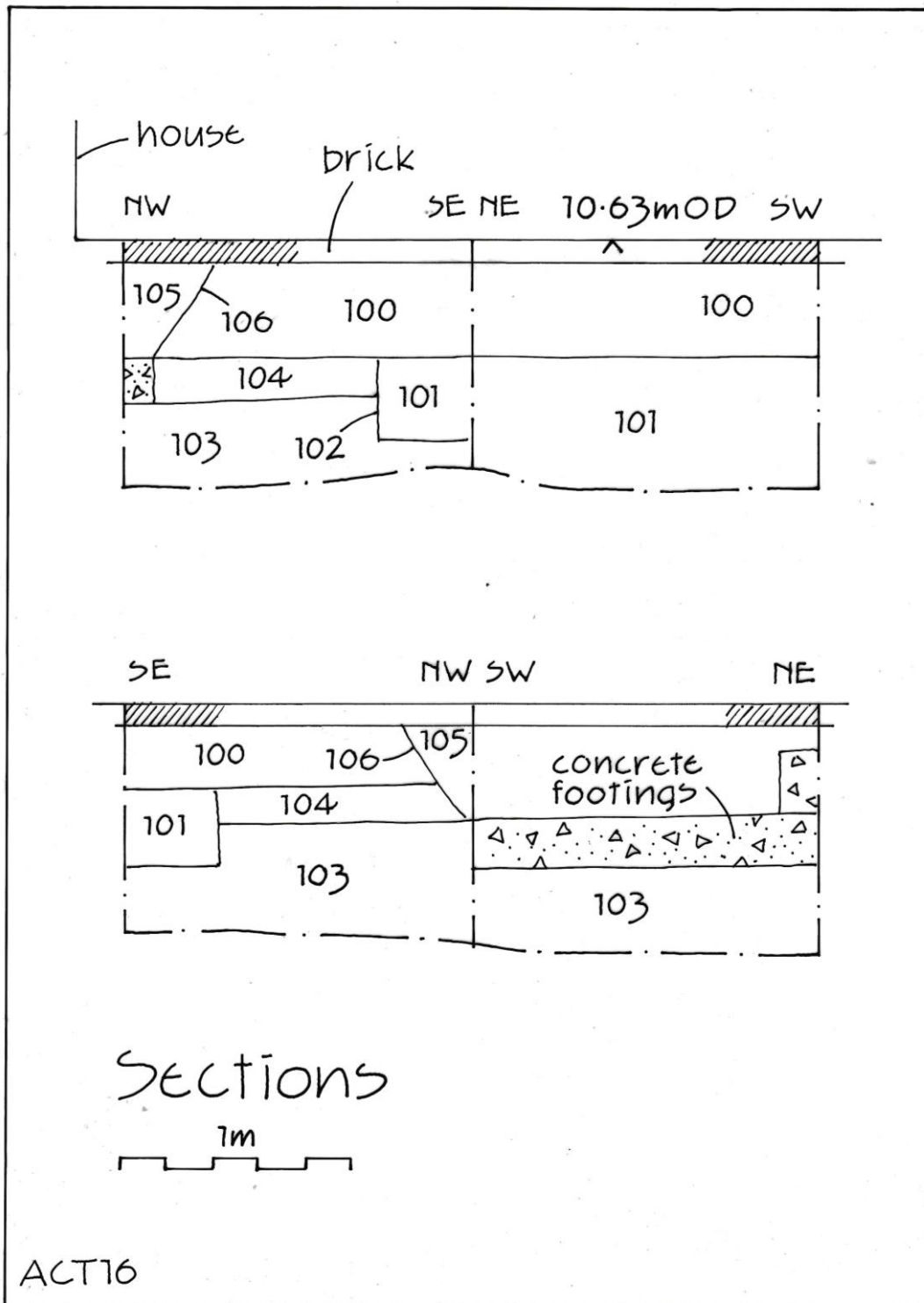


Fig. 4; trench sections



Plate 1; trench showing later intrusion 102 (right side) through the surface of deposit 103, from the south



Plate 2; bottom of excavated trench showing truncated deposit 103, from the south-west



Plate 3; north-west section



Plate 4; north-east section



Plate 5; south-west section

FINDS

Hand excavation meant conditions for finds retrieval were good. The earliest deposit (context 103) produced a range of ceramics comprising 17 sherds of late medieval pottery, some glazed, and one fragment of contemporary ceramic glazed roof tile. In addition, there were 11 fragments, weighing 843g of 19th century ceramic roof tile and a total of 52 fragments, amounting to 1.98kg of animal bone. Frequent fragments of slate roof tile were observed within the deposit, but only a small sample was retained for assessment.

Context 101 (fill of feature 102) produced six fragments (all from one tile) weighing 243g of a 20th century roof tile.

Context 100 produced three sherds of glazed pot-medieval pottery weighing 34g; five fragments of 20th century roof tile weighing 545g; a 19th century clay pipe bowl and stem at 16g and nine fragments of animal bone weighing 201g. None of the finds were retained.

Environmental data

None of the deposits exposed during the excavation proved suitable for palaeo-environmental sampling.

DISCUSSION

The field evaluation followed an earlier desk based assessment that identified the area of the proposed development as the potential site of medieval walls and floor surfaces of former buildings associated with the abbey precinct. Excavation was to a depth of 1m, but found no evidence for remains associated with the medieval abbey. Instead a sequence of 19th century deposits characterised the stratigraphy of the trench. The earliest of these comprised a thick layer of soil and masonry rubble (103) that appears to have acted as some form of ground consolidation and the finds, ranging from medieval to 19th century date, appear to reflect the residual nature of the deposit. Although no direct relationship could be established it seems probable that the material is associated with raising the ground level during construction of the existing Georgian house. This notion of ground consolidation is supported by the topographical evidence shown as a marked drop in ground level within the rear garden along a line running parallel with the house. Beyond this slope, the garden is prone to flooding suggesting that the ground was raised during construction of the existing house. This made ground was subsequently sealed by a thinner deposit of construction debris which is interpreted as material associated with the substantial late 19th century (Tudor-Bethan) modifications particularly evident along the front of Abbey Gardens. The purpose of the vertically sided linear trench (102) truncating this deposit is unclear. The remaining upper half of the trench comprised a thick layer of garden topsoil situated beneath the existing brick paving. This was truncated following construction of a foundation trench (106) for the adjacent extension.

Summary of results

The results of the evaluation trench have shown that there are unlikely to be any significant archaeological remains associated with the abbey precinct within the area of the proposed extension. It was shown that the underlying stratigraphy comprises at least three 19th century deposits of varying thickness amounting to a depth of at least 1m below the existing ground level. The lowest of these was consolidated ground comprising soil and masonry rubble with residual finds ranging in date from the medieval period to the 19th century. This deposit was overlain by another layer of construction debris associated with late 19th century modifications and this was in turn sealed by a thick layer of topsoil below the existing brick paving.

Significance

The evaluation has shown the deposits within the area of the proposed extension comprise 19th century deposits to a depth of at least 1m below the existing ground level and that the proposed development is unlikely to impact on significant remains associated with the abbey precinct.

Impact of development

The results of the trial trenching suggest that the development, anticipated at a maximum depth of 0.60m below existing ground level, will impact on 19th century building debris and modern topsoil. Below this is another thick layer of 19th century consolidation material providing the necessary buffer of 0.30m between the underneath of the slab foundation and the top of any significant archaeological deposits that may exist beneath the bottom of the trench.

Archive Location

The digital archive arising from the work will be deposited with OASIS at the Archaeology Data Service (ADS).

Digital archive:

Pdf report

X5 digital images

BIBLIOGRAPHY

British Geological Survey, 1988. *Geological Survey of England and Wales, Tewkesbury, sheet 216, solid and drift geology, 1:50,000.*

Cook, S., 2016. *2 Abbey Cottages, Abbey Precincts, Church Street, Tewkesbury; historic environment desk based assessment, one ten archaeology.*

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

APPENDIX 1 OASIS

Project name	2 Abbey Cottages, Abbey Precinct, Church Street, Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire; archaeological evaluation
Project dates	Start: 18-10-2016 End: 20-10-2016
Previous/future work	Yes / Yes
Any associated project reference codes	ACT16 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	110archa1-267615 - OASIS form ID
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	Scheduled Monument (SM)
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Monument type	ABBHEY Early Medieval
Monument type	ABBHEY Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Post Medieval
Significant Finds	TILE Post Medieval
Methods & techniques	"Targeted Trenches"
Development type	Small-scale (e.g. single house, etc.)
Prompt	Scheduled Monument Consent
Position in the planning process	Pre-application
Country	England
Site location	GLOUCESTERSHIRE TEWKESBURY TEWKESBURY 2 Abbey Cottages, Abbey Precinct, Church Street
Postcode	GL20 5SR
Study area	20 Square metres
Site coordinates	SO 88948 32377 51.989309140265 -2.160966434178 51 59 21 N 002 09 39 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 0m Max: 0m
Name of Organisation	one ten archaeology
Project brief originator	English Heritage/Department of Environment
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
Digital Contents	"none"
Paper Archive Exists?	No
Paper Contents	"none"
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	2 Abbey Cottages, Abbey Precinct, Church Street, Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire; archaeological evaluation
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Cook, S
Date	2016
Issuer or publisher	one ten archaeology
Place of issue or publication	Warks.
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