



# Tudor Cottage

Manor Lane, Little Comberton, Worcestershire

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## Historic building & archaeological recording

SO 96630 42937

WSM 67007 (building recording)

WSM 67008 (archaeological recording)

Site code: TLC15

OASIS ID: 110archa1-283942

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7<sup>th</sup> June 2017

one ten archaeology

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## Contents

SUMMARY .....	4
INTRODUCTION (Figs. 1 & 2).....	6
ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL BACKGROUND .....	7
THE BUILDING (Figs. 3-6) .....	9
ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING .....	13
Aims of the work.....	13
Sample size and scope of fieldwork .....	13
Fieldwork methods and recording .....	13
RESULTS: GENERAL .....	13
Soil and ground conditions .....	13
Reliability of field investigation.....	13
Distribution of archaeological deposits .....	15
Presentation of results .....	15
RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS (Figs. 7 & 8) .....	15
FINDS.....	16
Environmental data .....	16
DISCUSSION (Fig. 9).....	17
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	19
METHODOLOGY.....	20
APPENDIX 1; details of timber-framed buildings a-l. (Fig. 10) .....	46
APPENDIX 2; OASIS .....	47

Frontispiece Tudor Cottage, view to the south-east

## SUMMARY

Between 2015 and 2017, historic building and archaeological recording was carried out at Tudor Cottage, Little Comberton in advance of renovation and development of the site.

Tudor Cottage is part of a 17th century range of timber framed cottages located within the historic core of the village that probably began as a farm building, possibly the stable connected to a nearby farm, one of five such farmsteads grouped around the village. A first floor and fireplaces were inserted when the building was converted for habitation, probably during the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

Two areas of excavation were located at the rear of the site. Modern features were recorded in the trench associated with the extension to the house and an undated linear gully-like feature in the foundation trench for the detached garage. The alignment of this feature did not correspond with that of a former building that formerly stood on the site in 1806.



Fig. 1; site location



Fig. 2; area of study

## INTRODUCTION (Figs. 1 & 2)

### *Location and scope of project*

This document sets out the results of a programme of archaeological work carried out at Tudor Cottage, Manor Lane, Little Comberton, Worcs., WR10 3ER on June 25<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> August 2015 and again during 4<sup>th</sup> January 2017 at the request of Mrs Janet Gunn. The development was carried out as a condition of planning permission granted in respect of an application (planning ref: W/12/2338) to by Wychavon District Council for renovation of the residential property including internal and external alterations. The work was undertaken in accordance with a brief issued by Worcestershire County Council Historic Environment & Archaeology Service (Mindykowski, A., 2014) that required the implementation of a programme of archaeological work comprising historic building recording (level 2) prior to, and a watching brief during the development.

The building is registered on the County Historic Environment Record (WSM 47960) as of historic and architectural significance. The aim of the archaeological work was to provide a descriptive account and interpretation of the building and to observe and record excavation work connected with the development.

### *Geology & topography*

The small parish of Little Comberton lies to the north of Bredon Hill, 2 miles south-east of Pershore. The ground has a steady slope from its highest point, 150m above the ordnance datum in the extreme southwest, to 20m at the north of the parish, the village standing at a height of about 30 AOD.

The village consists of one street of cottages. Opposite the church is a fair-sized timber-framed house probably of early 17<sup>th</sup>-century date. A short distance to the north is Nash's Farm, a black and white house of about the same date. The development site is represented by a roughly rectangular plot of land (approx. 250m<sup>2</sup>) situated on the south side of Little Comberton, on the south-east side of Manor Lane. The underlying geology comprises a drift deposit of Head (BGS, 1974), overlying a solid geology of Lias clay. Excavation confirmed the natural substrate as a Lias clay.

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A total of 49 monument records and 7 event records are identified from the Historic Environment Record (HER) within a 500m search area centred on the site. A summary of the more significant information is outlined below.

### *Prehistoric*

There are no records of prehistoric activity recorded within the search area.

### *Roman*

WSM34993; Romano British occupation site west of Little Comberton inferred from significant assemblage of surface artefacts (WSM36077) and coin hoard recovered during fieldwalking close to Moor Leys Farm House, Little Comberton. Finds included box tiles, tegulae, bricks, Terra Sigillata, tesserae, pottery and animal bone. Personal Comment by Victoria Bryant 2006.

WSM36078; collection of material from the bed of the brook by Old House Farm, Little Comberton. Includes Roman and medieval pottery, marine shell and animal bone.

WSM41474; Three unstratified sherds of Romano-British pottery recovered from churchyard on path and in flowerbed at St Peter's, Little Comberton.

### *Saxon/early medieval*

WSM08757; unstratified Anglo Saxon coin, Little Comberton. Coin of Edward the Elder.

### *Medieval*

WSM07683; Church of St Peter. 12th century parish church enlarged in 15th century, restored and enlarged 1886

WSM08748; Ridge and furrow observed on aerial photograph, east of Nash's Farm, Little Comberton

WSM35865; Earthworks of medieval ridge and furrow cultivation, Little Comberton

WSM48000; Possible site of medieval barn, east of Old Manor House, Little Comberton. Building shown on Inclosure map, probably a barn. Watching brief recorded possible medieval building debris. Building no longer standing by 1st Edition OS map. Watching brief (WSM26946) carried out during construction of a new garage complex at The Old Manor House recorded buried agricultural soil containing tile fragments likely to be of medieval date. This building debris may have been derived from a barn structure that was shown on the 1804 enclosure plan (Topping, 1998).

*Post-medieval*

WSM08725; Timber framed cottage. Part of a partially extant 17th century listed farmstead with converted buildings. Regular courtyard of L-plan.

WSM08752; Farmhouse. Part of Old House Farm, a partially extant 17th century listed farmstead with unconverted buildings. Regular courtyard with additional detached elements to the main plan.

WSM08753; Grade II Listed. Farmhouse 17th century. Part of Nash's Farm, Little Comberton, a partially extant 17th century listed farmstead with converted buildings. Regular courtyard of L-plan.

WSM08754; Orchard View and Tudor Cottage (formerly Post Office), Manor Lane, Little Comberton. 17th century range of timber framed cottages.

WSM08755; Tithe Barn, Little Comberton. Farmhouse: 17th century. Timber framed. HER records a tithe barn, of possible 15th century date.

WSM08756; The old manor house. 17th century timber frame.

WSM08758; Manor House, Little Comberton. Early 18th century. Associated with the partially extant 16th century listed farmstead with unconverted buildings of Manor House.

WSM57173; Farm building at Manor House, Little Comberton. Shown on the 2nd edition OS map, since lost. Partially extant 16th century listed farmstead with unconverted buildings. Loose courtyard with L-plan range plus detached buildings to the fourth side of the yard.



*Undated*

WSM47969; Historic Core of the village based on the 1806 Inclosure Map.

### THE BUILDING (Figs. 3-6)

The existing cottage is located at the north end of a three-bay building and includes the passage next to the middle bay. The timber-frame has square panels with short struts from the principal-posts to the wall-plates and the thatched roof is double-framed with wind-braces to the purlins and rafters which are virtually in a natural state. There are two chimneys; one inside the north end and another on the south side of the passage servicing the two-bay cottage in the south part. The roof has a later half-hip at the south end.

A notable feature on the ground floor is the doorway on the south side of the cross-passage, this has a rudimentary 'Tudor' head and no doubt has given the cottage its name. The doorway was certainly blocked during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century since the north bay is clearly shown as a separate unit (?dwelling) on the 1<sup>st</sup> Edition OS 1885. The way it is shown on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition 1904 suggests that the north-bay was once again accessible from the southern part.

The existing layout of the house suggests a reordering and modernizing in the 1960s. A new bathroom was built beyond the east end of the passage and a kitchenette was formed behind a diagonal partition between the fireplace and the winding stair in the south-east corner. The dormer at the rear was completely rebuilt and re-thatched, however the dormer window in the south-bay, and its eyebrow, appears to be of a traditional type.

The ends of the lost tie-beam over the north side of the passage survive and indicates that the passage was originally open to the roof but was incorporated into the 1<sup>st</sup> floor when the fireplaces were inserted and the building converted for habitation.

A lodging-beam reused in a partition in the 1960s work shows evidence of re-use with two differently spaced sets of joist-mortices formerly fixed to the wall-frame with face-pegs.

A pair of carpenters' numbers (II) is evident in the south roof-frame (of Tudor Cottage) and one is visible on the 'Tudor' door-head (another II).

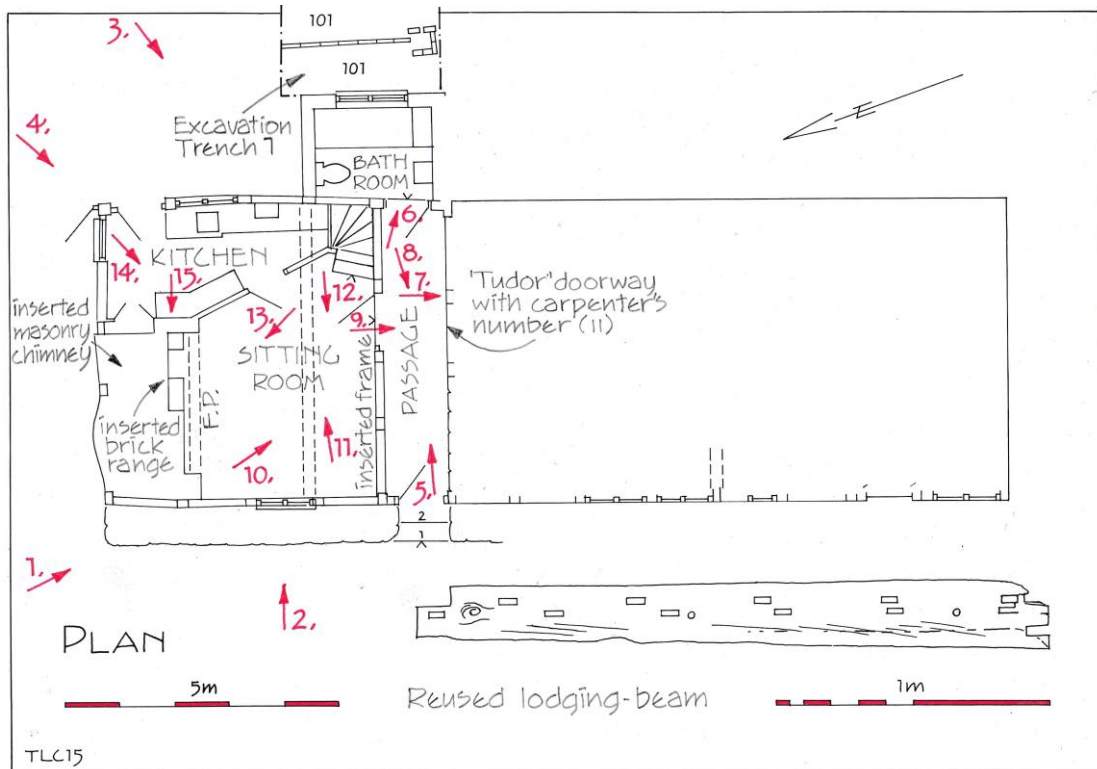


Fig. 3; ground plan with plate locations shown in red

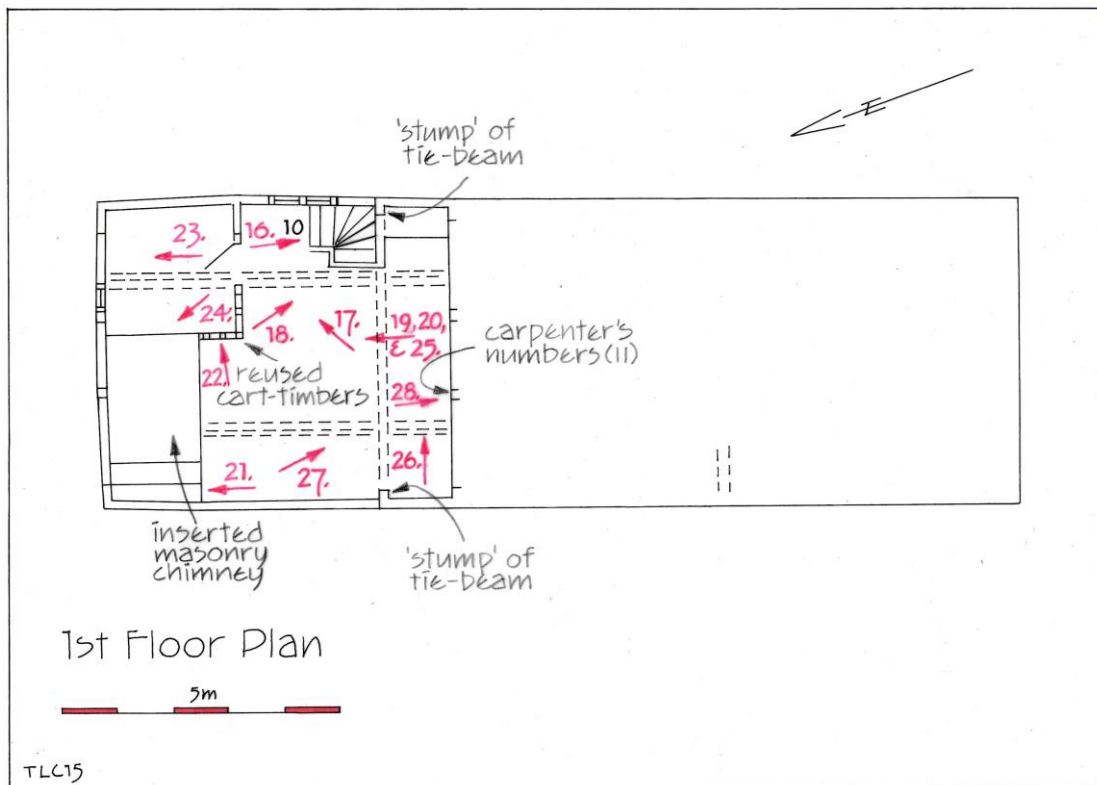


Fig. 4; 1<sup>st</sup> floor plan with plate locations shown in red

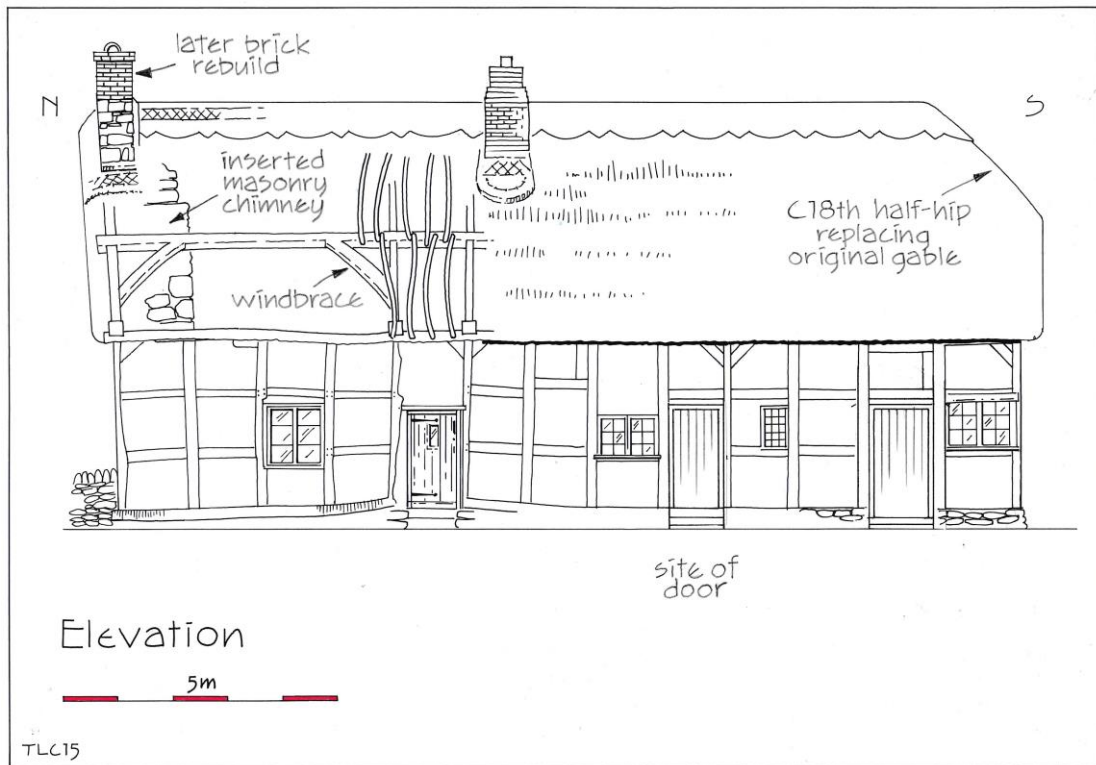


Fig. 5; front elevation

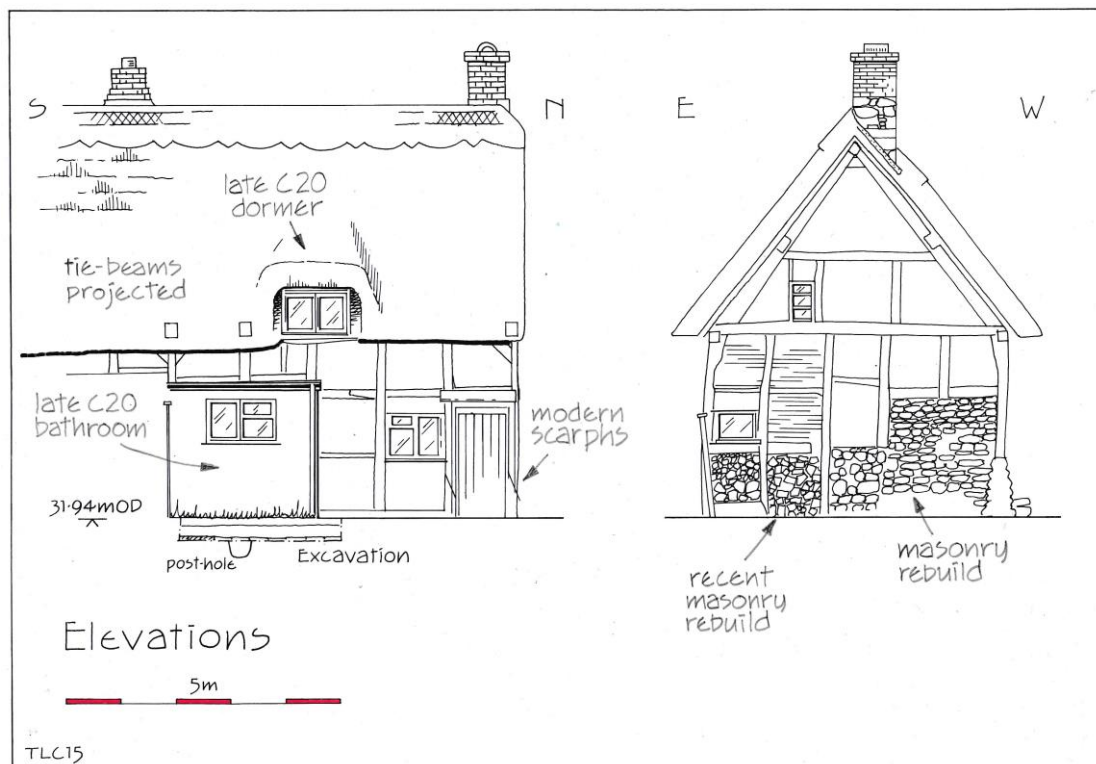


Fig. 6; rear and side elevations

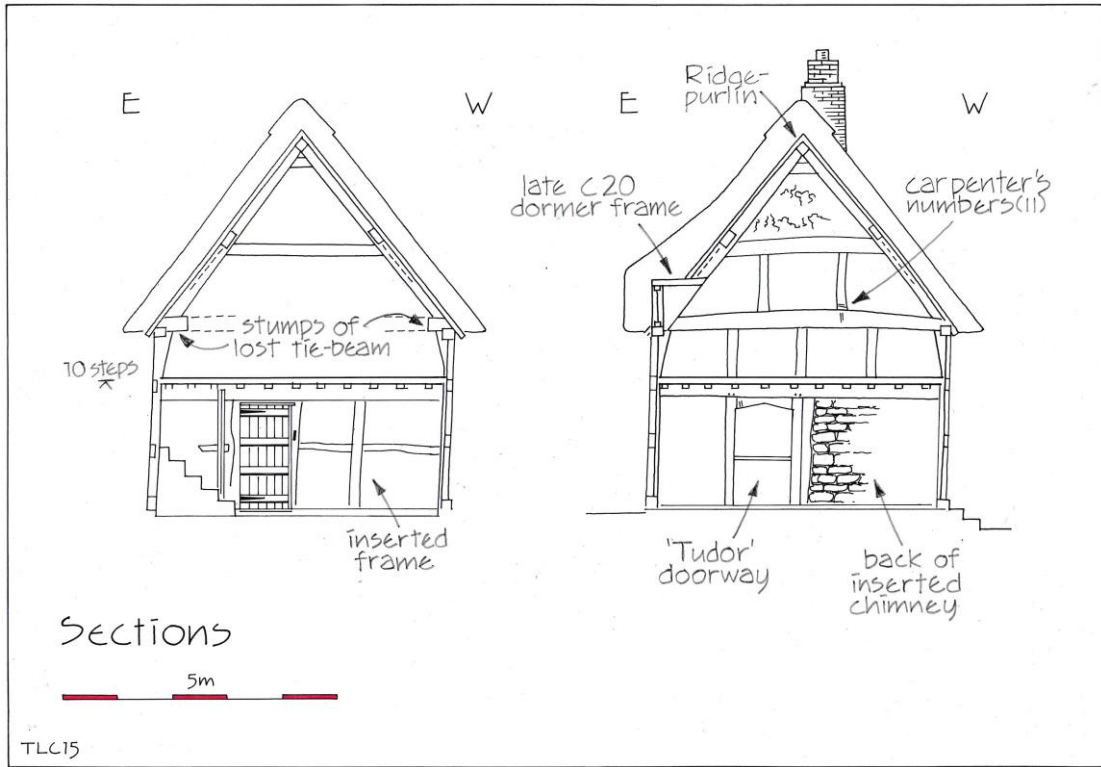


Fig 7; sections

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING

### *Aims of the work*

The objective of the archaeological recording was to obtain an appropriate record of any archaeological deposits or finds disturbed or exposed during excavation of the site.

### *Sample size and scope of fieldwork*

Excavation was carried out over two areas, one at the rear of the site (trench 1) amounting to an area of about 50m<sup>2</sup> and the other in the footprint of the proposed extension (trench 2) approx. 15m<sup>2</sup>.

### *Fieldwork methods and recording*

The archaeological field work and post-excavation was carried out in accordance with standards and guidance for archaeological watching briefs produced by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA, 2014). Excavation, was carried out by machine using a toothless grading bucket under archaeological supervision. 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. Excavation was relatively smooth being made through alternate layers of topsoil and underlying subsoil leaving a clean and visible surface on the natural substrate.

### *Reliability of field investigation*

Excavation revealed little evidence of previous truncation to the underlying deposits. The surface of the geological horizon was truncated, albeit slightly in both areas of excavation. In trench 1 this has resulted from the construction of a drain and a vertical post and in trench 2 by a possible post-hole (203) and a narrow linear gully (205).

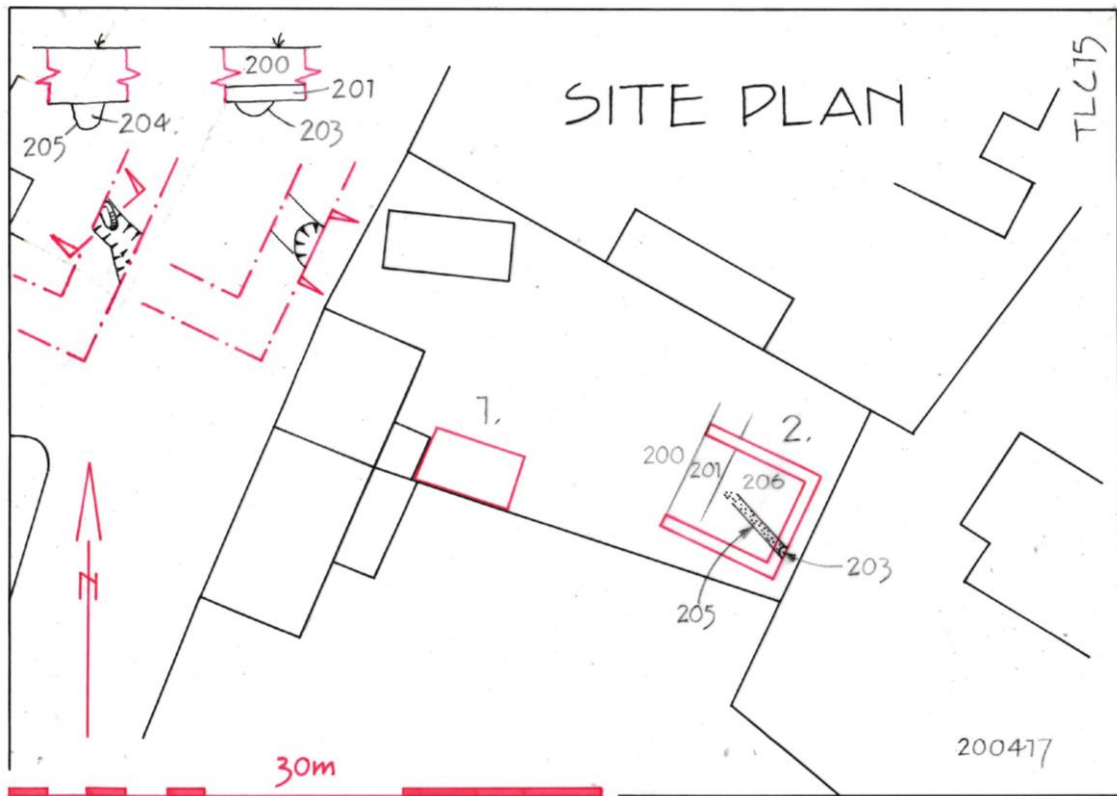


Fig. 8; main areas of excavation and archaeological features in trench 2 with detailed plans & sections inset.

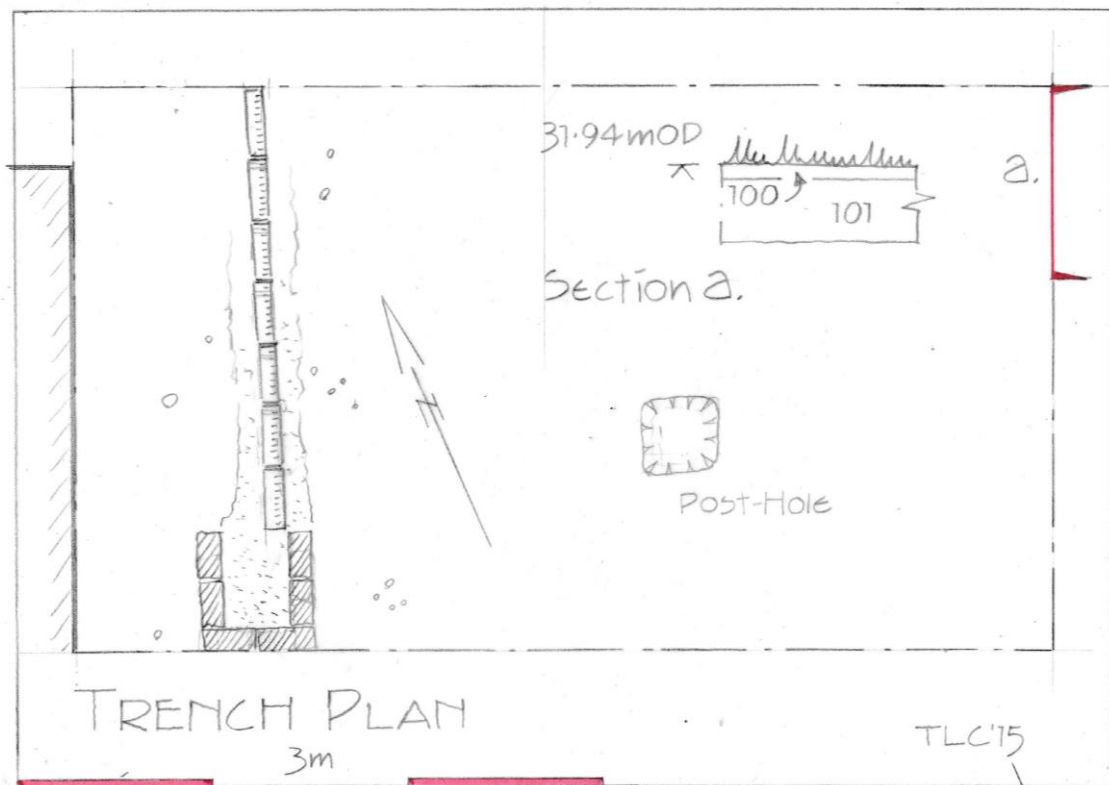


Fig. 9; trench 1; plan and section

### *Distribution of archaeological deposits*

In general, the stratigraphy of the site was comprised of a natural clay overlain by a relict subsoil deposit which was in turn sealed by the existing topsoil. Two modern features comprising a drain and probable post-hole were recorded cut into the natural clay in trench 1 whilst in trench 2 a single undated linear feature was partially exposed

### *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 (Figs. 7 & 8)

### *Contexts 102 & 206 (natural substrate)*

The surface of the natural geology, comprising a stiff yellowish-brown Lias clay (102 & 206), was encountered during the excavation of trench 1 at approx. 0.40m below the existing ground level at about 31.55m AOD. Truncating this deposit in trench 1 were two modern features. The first was a linear drain comprising short lengths of ceramic pipe connecting to a small square brick feature. There were also the remains within the centre of the trench (see Plates 10 & 11) of a square post hole, probably associated with an earlier fence or lean-to structure. Excavation of trench 2 partially revealed a possible circular post-hole and a linear trench feature (see below).

### *Context 205 (?ditch/trench), filled by 204 & context 203 (?post-hole), filled by 202*

Cut within the surface of the natural clay (206) which was situated at approx. 31.60m AOD was a linear trench aligned north-west to south-east. The fill of the feature, which comprised an undated light-mid greyish-brown silty-clay, was partially excavated where it was exposed within the foundation trench for the new detached garage. This revealed a narrow linear trench 0.40m wide and 0.35m deep with steeply sloping sides and a rounded base. The fill of the feature (204) was recorded continuing to south-east beyond the edge of the trench. It also

continued north-west for a short distance after which it was obscured by the unexcavated subsoil deposit.

A small semi-circular undated deposit of mid-dark, greyish-brown, silty-clay (202) was excavated within the surface of fill deposit 204. Its excavation revealed an irregular bowl-shaped feature approx. 0.55m wide on the north-east, south-west axis and about 0.20m deep. This was interpreted as a possible post-hole.

#### *Contexts 101 & 201 (relict subsoil) & contexts 100 & 200 (topsoil)*

The clay and these modern features were sealed by a layer of relict subsoil (101) comprising a greyish-brown clayey-silt, to a depth of about 0.30m. Finds from this deposit consisted of bottle glass and a handful of 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> century pottery fragments. Sealing the subsoil layer was a 0.10m thick deposit of modern topsoil (100).

The surface of the relict subsoil (101) was exposed throughout trench 2, but not excavated. It was overlain by the topsoil (100) to a depth of 0.30m. No finds were recovered from the deposit.

#### FINDS

Finds were recovered from the subsoil layer (101) in trench 1. The assemblage is represented by a several residually deposited 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> century pottery fragments comprising glazed earthenware and decorated porcelain. The finds will not be retained.

#### *Environmental data*

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



## DISCUSSION (Fig. 9)

The Historic Environment Record (HER) shows that the earliest evidence of occupation at Little Comberton is west of village where a Romano British settlement site (WSM34993) is inferred from significant assemblage of surface artefacts (WSM36077) and coin hoard recovered during fieldwalking close to Moor Leys Farm House. Unstratified sherds of Romano-British pottery have also been recovered from the churchyard at St Peter's Church (WSM41474) and from the bed of the brook by Old House Farm (WSM36078).

The village is referenced in Domesday indicating that a settlement is likely to have been established within the village before the Norman conquest. The historic core of the early settlement (WSM47969) can be traced from the 1806 Inclosure Map. The only archaeological evidence of early medieval activity is an unstratified Anglo Saxon coin (WSM08757).

The existing Church of St Peter (WSM07683) is 12th century, enlarged in 15th century. The extent of the medieval village can be defined by the ridge and furrow earthworks which are recorded from aerial photographs east of Nash's Farm (WSM08748) and also on the west side of the village (WSM35865). A watching brief (WSM26946) carried out at the Old Manor House produced tile fragments likely to be of medieval date whilst the possible site of a medieval barn (WSM48000) lies east of the Old Manor House. The former Tithe barn may have 15<sup>th</sup> century origins.

Tudor Cottage is part of a Grade II Listed (formerly listed as a Post Office) 17th century range of timber framed cottages with painted brick or plaster infilling; thatched roof with half hipped end. The cottage is located within the historic core of Little Comberton.

The existing cottage is located at the north end of a long timber-framed range (three-bay building) that probably began as a farm building, possibly the stable connected to a nearby farm, which may be represented by the buildings opposite across the road and one of five such farmsteads grouped around the village. A first floor and fireplaces were inserted when the building was converted for habitation, probably during the 17<sup>th</sup> century. A parallel range to the rear of the existing house is now lost. No evidence for this structure, including a potential dwarf wall, was found during excavation of trench 2 suggesting that it was probably entirely timber-framed.

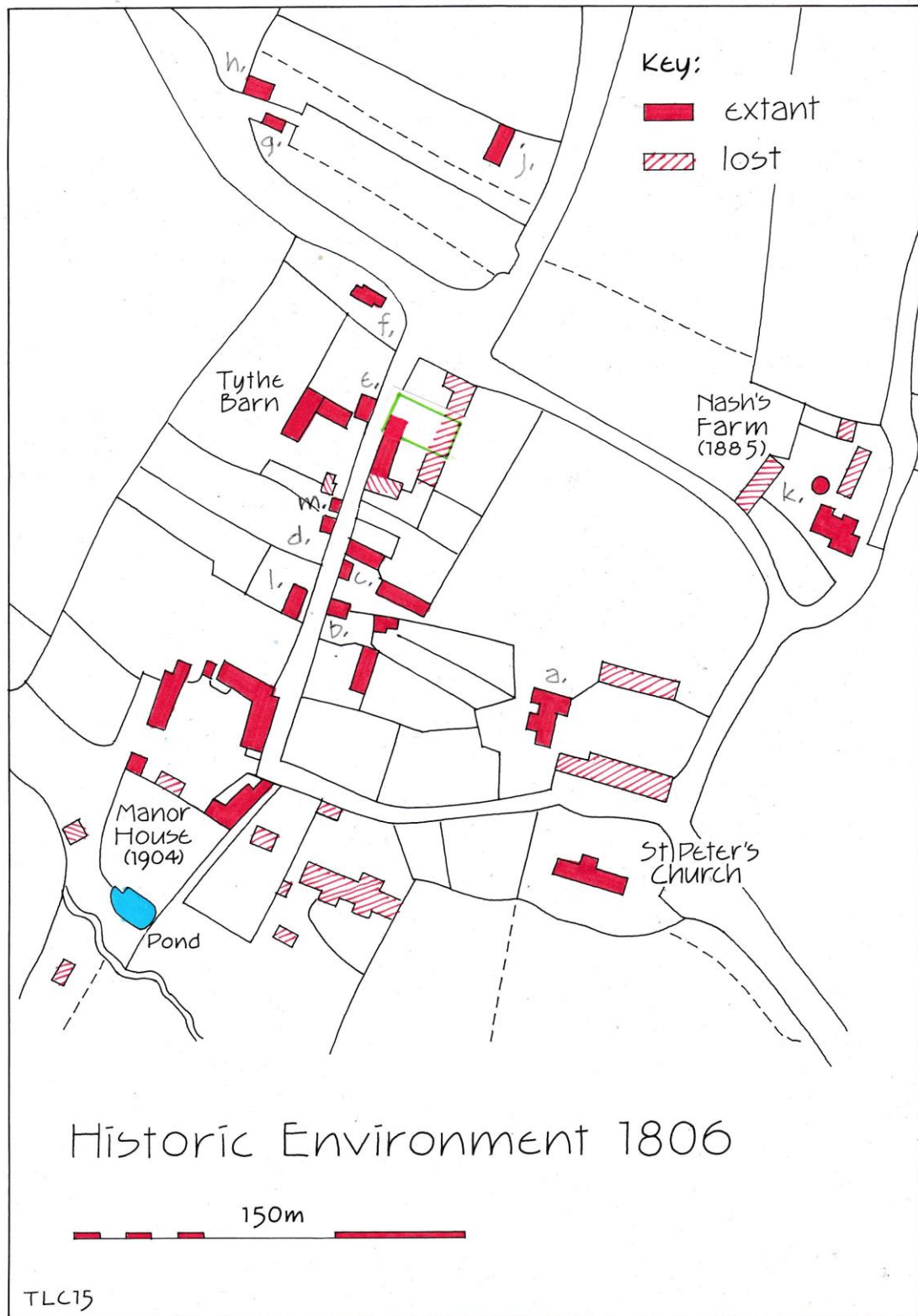


Fig. 10; historic environment plan showing farms and their existing and lost buildings. 1806 Tithe map; hatched red buildings. OS 1885; solid red buildings. See Appendix 1 for details of buildings a-l.

Two features were recorded in trench 1. Of these, one was clearly a modern drain formed by the remains of a small square brick structure connected to a line of short ceramic pipes (?re-used land drains). The other feature, although undated, appeared to represent the remains of a vertical post, possibly part of a former lean-to structure or fence. Residual pottery finds from an homogenous subsoil layer were all of post-medieval date. Excavation of trench 2 revealed a single undated narrow linear north-west to south-east trench cut (205) that appears to continue either side of the excavation for the garage. The fill of this feature appears to have been truncated by a possible post-hole (203), also undated. Interestingly the alignment of feature 205 does not correspond with the lost north-east, south-west range recorded in 1805 at the rear of the site indicating perhaps a feature of an earlier date located beneath the former structure.

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## METHODOLOGY

### *Aims and objectives*

The objective of the historic building recording was to obtain a detailed analysis and description of the history, character, and date, techniques of construction, phasing and significance of the structures. Primary and secondary sources relating to the building were consulted and relevant information included in this report.

The objective of the archaeological recording was to obtain an appropriate record of any archaeological deposits or finds disturbed or exposed during excavation of the site.

### *Documentary search, fieldwork & recording*

The Worcestershire Historic Environment Record (HER) was consulted with a search carried out over a 500m radius centred on the site. Significant aspects of the data within the HER that is relevant to the site, including an analysis of historical mapping was used in this report.

The site survey comprised a systematic internal floor by floor and external perambulation of the property, observing, discussing and noting features including structural, functional and chronological aspects, which was accompanied by the creation of a photographic record. Measured drawings provided by the agent were checked during the survey and annotated accordingly. This was followed by a subsequent visit to answer questions and resolve anomalies identified following the initial investigation.



Plate 1; view from north-west



Plate 2; west elevation



Plate 3; view from east



Plate 4; view from north-east



Plate 5; passage from west



Plate 6; Detail of floor over rear of passage



Plate 7; Detail of 'Tudor' doorway and carpenter's number (II)





Plate 8; passage from east



Plate 9; 'Tudor' doorway



Plate 10; Ground floor room and passage-frame from north

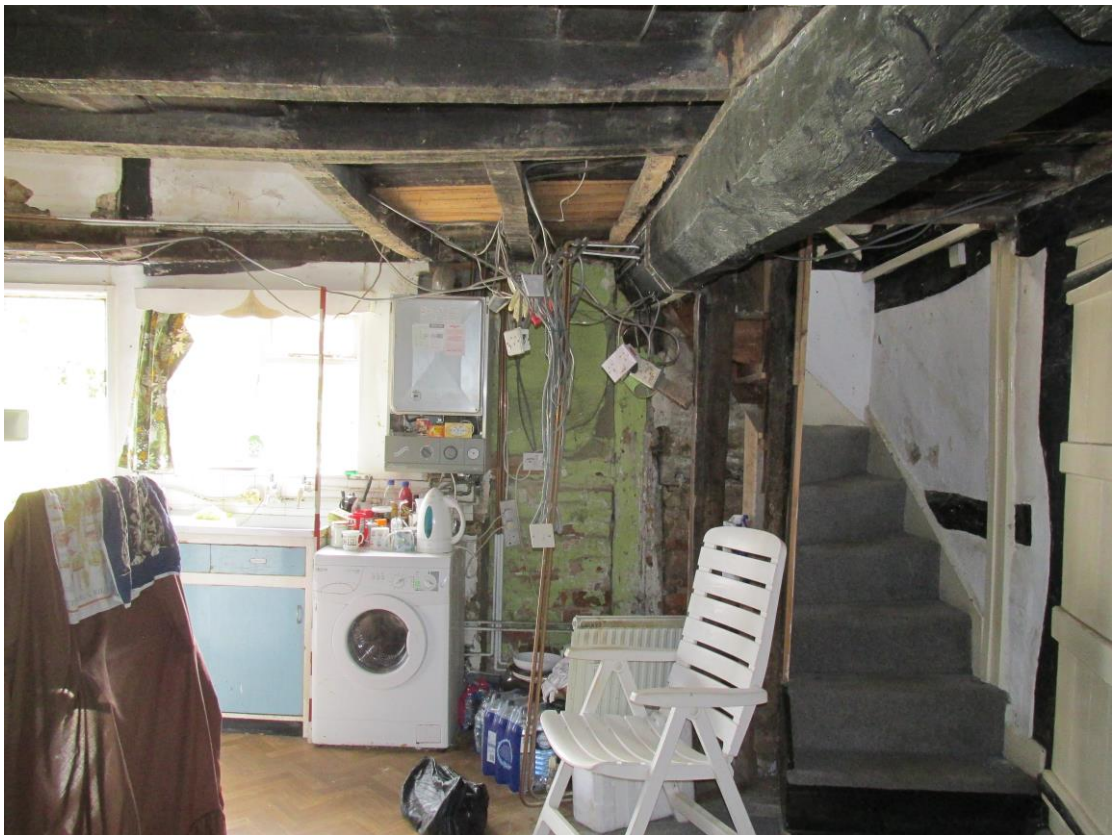


Plate.11; Ground floor room and stair from west



Plate 12; Floor over ground floor room adjacent to passage from east



Plate 13; View of fire-place from south-east showing inserted brick range



Plate 14; View of framing from the north-east corner of the dwelling



Plate 15; Detail of 1<sup>st</sup> floor partition and old floor at corner of chimney from east



Plate 16; View down stairs from north



Plate 17; Upper storey interior from south-west



Plate 18; Upper storey interior from north-west



Plate 19; Roof interior over the north end



Plate 20; North end of the upper storey





Plate 21; Interior of north wall to west of chimney



Plate 22; Re-used cart-timbers in 1<sup>st</sup> floor partition from west



Plate 23; Interior of north wall to east of chimney

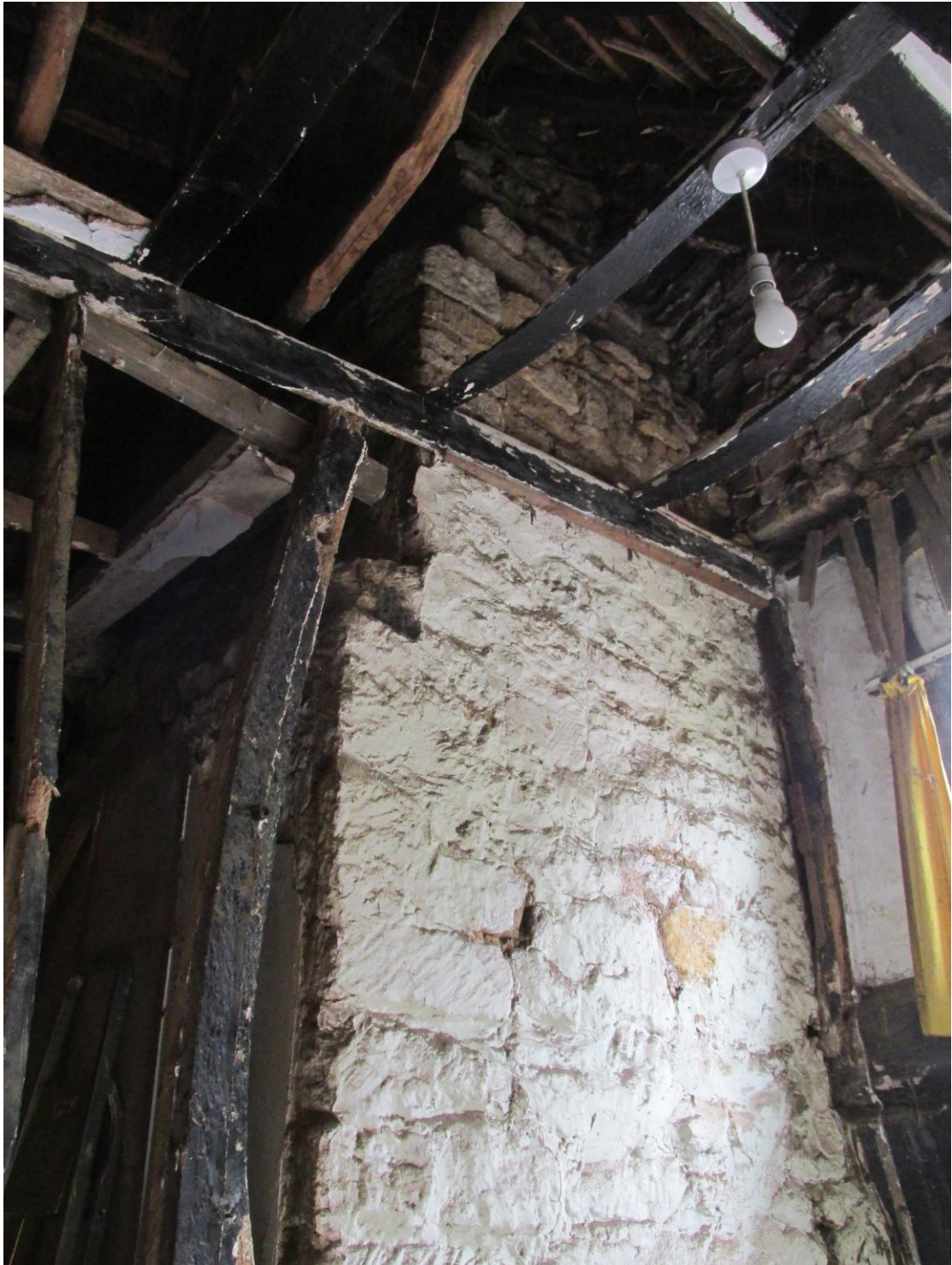


Plate 24; East side of chimney-stack and re-used cart-timbers in 1<sup>st</sup> floor partition



Plate 25; Roof interior from south



Plate 26; Upper storey over passage from west showing 'stump' of lost tie-beam



Plate 27; South wall on upper floor from north



Plate 28; Carpenter's numbers on tie-beam and post of south wall



Plate 29; Fragment of lodging-beam, showing two phases of joist-mortices, reused in north-east corner of dwelling



Plate 30; House, m. on Historic Environment plan, showing C15 jettied-framing and C16 fabric beyond





Plate 31; area 1, from the north-west



Plate 32; trench 2, foundation trench for proposed garage, from the south-east



Plate 33; fill deposit 204, from the south-east



Plate 34; fill deposit 202



Plate 35; cut feature 203



Plate 36; cut feature 205, from the south-west



Plate 37; cut feature 205



Plate 38; trench 2, south-west corner, detail of stratigraphy

APPENDIX 1; details of timber-framed buildings a-l. (Fig. 10)

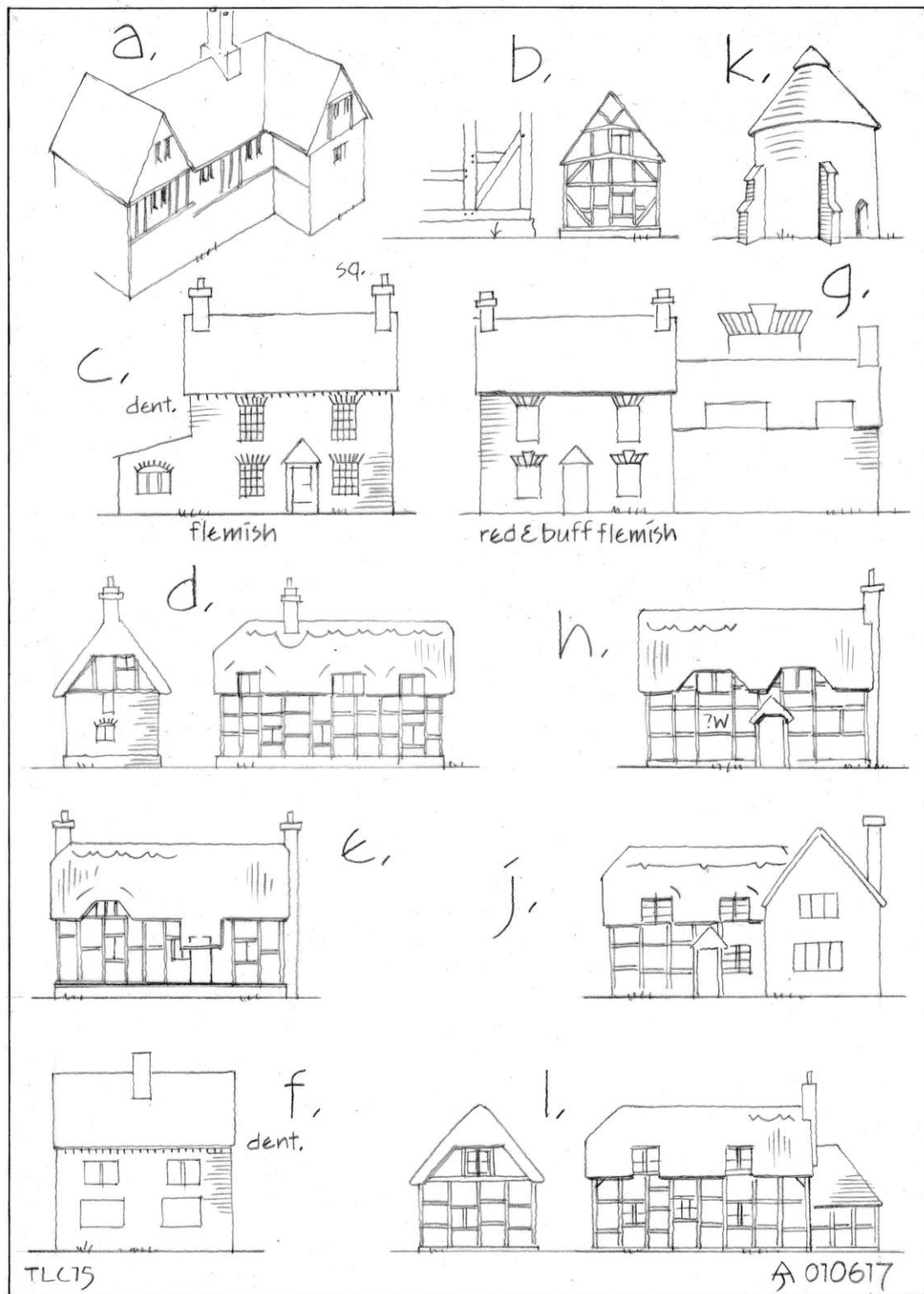


Fig 11; Architectural Context; see HE plan for locations of buildings a-l

## APPENDIX 2; OASIS

Project name	Tudor Cottage, Manor Lane, Little Comberton, Worcestershire; historic building and archaeological recording
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	TLC15 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	WSM 67007 - Related HER No.
Any associated project reference codes	WSM 67008 - Related HER No.
Type of project	Building Recording
Site status	Listed Building
Site status (other)	area of archeological interest
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Monument type	BUILDING Post Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Post Medieval
Country	England
Site location	WORCESTERSHIRE WYCHAVON LITTLE COMBERTON Tudor Cottage, Manor Lane
Postcode	WR10 3ER
Study area	250 Square metres
Site coordinates	SO 96630 42937 52.084361049232 -2.04918642742 52 05 03 N 002 02 57 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 31.55m Max: 31.6m
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	OASIS

recipient	
Paper Archive recipient	county museum
Paper Contents	"none"
Paper Media available	"Plan","Report","Section","Photograph"
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
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