



Land at

Back Lane House

Back Lane, Beckford, Gloucestershire

Land at

Back Lane House

Back Lane, Beckford, Gloucestershire

Archaeological recording

SP 97531 35303

Site code: BLB15

HER: WSM67026

OASIS ID: 110archa1-292094

Sean Cook BA MCIfA

Illustrations by Jill Atherton MCIfA

3rd September 2017

one ten archaeology

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

Contents

SUMMARY	2
INTRODUCTION	4
Location and scope of works (Figs. 1, 2 & 3).....	4
Geology and topography	4
ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND.....	5
RESULTS (Figs. 4 & 5)	7
Method and nature of the excavation	7
Description of deposits.....	7
FINDS.....	14
Environmental data	15
DISCUSSION (Fig. 6).....	16
BIBLIOGRAPHY	18
Archive Location.....	19
APPENDIX 1: OASIS	20

Front cover; excavated foundation trench, view south-east

SUMMARY

Archaeological recording was carried out during September 2015 at land at Back Lane House, Back Lane, Beckford, Gloucestershire during the erection of a detached dwelling.

Back Lane is important historically as a route-way across the Carrant Brook linking the village at Beckford with the main road between Teddington and Evesham (A46) and this may have been the reason for the establishment of a small outlying settlement or separate manor south of Beckford Village probably centred around the early C17 Manor House which may lie on the site of an earlier structure.

Archaeological work in 2014 at land between Sunnymead and Malthouse Cottages revealed features of indicative of occupation and of probable Late C11 date (Cook, 2014). The watching brief in 2015 further to the south on land adjacent to Back Lane House was smaller in scale. The large steep-sided pit (106), at least 1.40m deep had truncated deposits within the south-east corner of the building plot. A single, almost complete jug recovered from near to the base of the pit suggests a date for its excavation ranging from the C16 to early C20. The two large limestone quoins observed at the base within the fill (105) were clearly re-deposited. The undated limestone rubble and pebble deposit (107) that filled the upper part of the pit and was spread over a wide area to the west of the feature may be a dumped deposit or the remains of a rudimentary hardstanding or track. Stone deposit 103 may represent the remains of a former narrow wall, but this could not be confirmed given the limited scope of the excavation



Fig. 1; site location (circled in red)

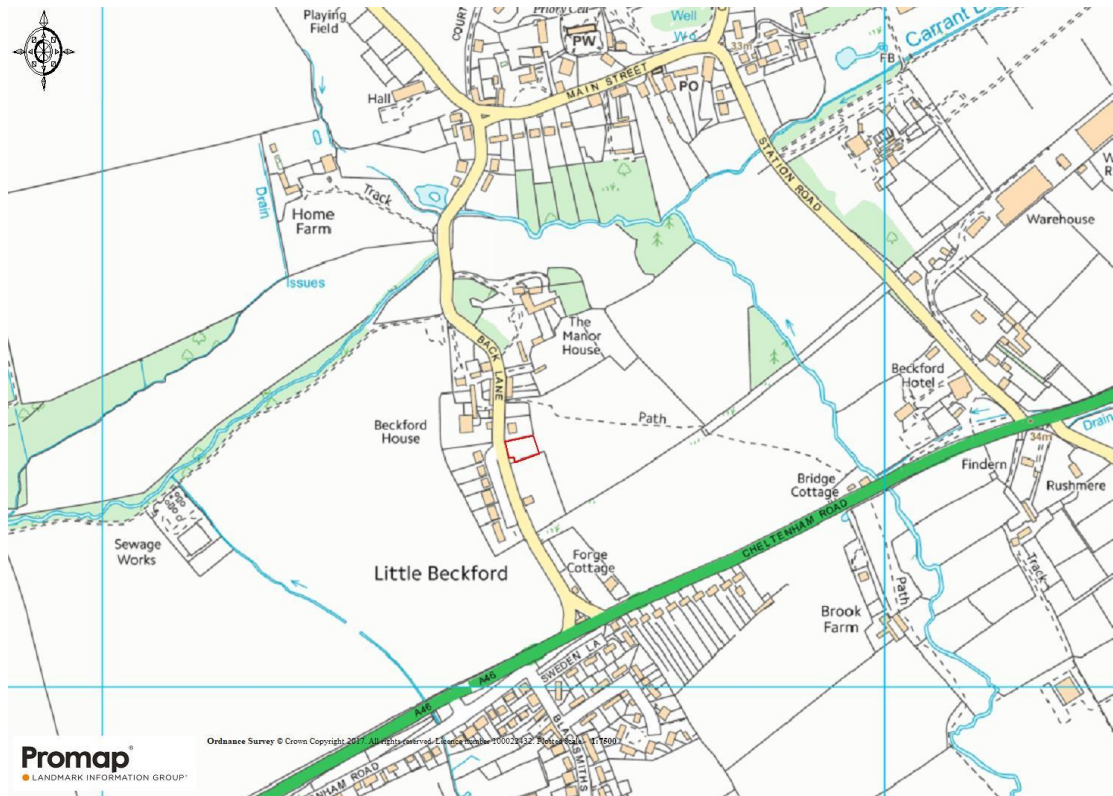


Fig. 2; area of study (outlined in red)

INTRODUCTION

Location and scope of works (Figs. 1, 2 & 3)

This document sets out the results of archaeological recording ('watching brief') carried out during 28rd-30th September 2015 at land at Back Lane House, Back Lane Beckford, Gloucestershire, GL20 7AF. at the request of the owner Mr C Barnett. There was no agent. The development comprised the erection of a single detached dwelling.

The archaeological work was required as a condition of planning permission granted in respect of an application (Ref: W/12/02566) to Wychavon District Council and was undertaken in accordance with a brief issued by Worcestershire Archive & Archaeology Service (Sept. 2014). The development is located within an area which is known to be rich in prehistoric and Romano-British remains and so there was a moderate potential for archaeological remains to be present. Consequently, any deposits disturbed may have been impacted on during the development.

Geology and topography

Beckford lies six miles east of Tewkesbury, on the south side of Bredon Hill which dominates the landscape. The ancient parish, formerly in Gloucestershire included the hamlets of Grafton, Bengrove, and Didcot and stretched across the wide valley of the Carrant between Bredon Hill, Oxenton Hill, Dumbleton Hill. The western boundary was marked by a stream running down Bredon Hill, the Carrant Brook, the road from Overbury to Teddington Hands, and a stream running down Oxenton Hill. The southern and eastern boundaries mainly followed field boundaries. The parish lies mainly on the Lower Lias; there are large patches of river gravel around Beckford village, a stretch of boulder clay between Beckford and Grafton, and alluvium along the banks of the Carrant. The parish is well supplied with springs.

The parish of Beckford was crossed at its widest point by the road from Teddington Hands to Evesham. Two lanes linked it to Beckford village, one running north from Beckford Cross (formerly New Inn Green) and the other (Back Lane) running north from what in 1774 was called Pinson's Cross, at Little Beckford (VCH, 1968).

The development site itself was represented by a rectangular strip of land situated on the east side of Back Lane between Sunnymead and Back Lane House. The new dwelling is called Lily House. The land is relatively level lying at a height of about 31m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) and the underlying geology is at the cusp of the Charmouth Mudstone Formation and First Terrace deposits of the River Avon/Carrant Brook, sand and limestone gravel (BGS, 2000). Both deposits appear to have been represented at various levels within the excavation.



Fig. 3; location and extent of the new plot and dwelling

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Worcestershire Historic Environment Record (HER) was consulted in 2014 in connection with the adjacent site and a search was carried out over a 500m radius, an area which included the area covered by the application associated with this development. A summary of the more significant information is outlined below.

A COSMIC+ risk assessment (WSM44952) in 2009-10 considered the risk of cultivation and related factors to known archaeological sites on Overbury Farms, Worcestershire with the intention to inform a management plan. The assessment covered twenty-six fields in which archaeological sites were known from cropmarks or other evidence. Most of the sites were considered to be at risk

of erosion (truncation of archaeological deposits). The main aims of the project were to define the risk, in each case; to identify the factors that cause and prevent erosion; and to recommend appropriate management options (Miller, 2010).

An enclosure visible as a crop mark (WSM03625) situated west of Beckford House, Little Beckford is possibly Iron Age.

Ridge and Furrow (WSM04135) has been identified west of Court Farm, Beckford.

Fieldwalking in 1982 (WSM04134) in the south east of village of Beckford produced a few sherds of medieval pottery. A collection of unstratified Roman Pottery (WSM22160), was found on property of Galthorpes at Main Street, Beckford Village. Salvage Recording in 1996, Land Adjacent to Rocklands, Beckford (WSM29662) revealed deposits associated with medieval ridge and furrow and the backfill or silting up of a probable former stream course. The few Roman finds retrieved probably result from manuring in this period. The site therefore has probably been under agricultural use from at least the Roman period (Wichbold, 1996). Unstratified find of Saxon brooches said to be held by a lady in the village (WSM10865). The number and style are unknown and reputed to derive from gravel used for laying a path. They may therefore have a local provenance.

Investigation of documentary evidence in 2000 suggested the presence of an Augustinian Priory within the search area founded in 1128 (WSM29777) although there is no physical evidence for this monument.

Archaeological recording (WSM 58037) was carried out during November 2014 on land between Sunnymead and Malthouse Cottages, Back Lane, Beckford. Excavation revealed an undated limestone well and four pits, three of which were similarly shaped. Three sherds of late 11th century pottery were recovered from two of the pits and in one of these, a single sherd was securely stratified within the primary fill. Interestingly, one of these pits was by contrast to the other three, roughly rectangular and much shallower. Some fragments of iron slag recovered from the fill indicate a possible industrial function. These features suggest the former presence of a contemporary late 11th century dwelling within the vicinity (Cook, 2015).

RESULTS (Figs. 4 & 5)

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 comprised 0.60m wide strip foundations within an L-area of about 160m² and was carried out by machine using a toothless grading bucket under archaeological supervision. The depth of trenching varied between 1.30-1.60m throughout the excavation; deposits within the west side of the plot were relatively compacted, whilst those in the eastern half were unstable resulting from re-deposition associated with a seemingly large pit-like feature (106) and the upper sides of the trench more prone to collapse.

Description of deposits

Contexts 102 & 104 (natural substrate); context 101 (relict subsoil layer) & context 100 (topsoil layer)

The surface of the geological horizon, comprising a yellow and orange sand (102) and an olive and blue Lias clay (104) was exposed throughout the excavation at a level height of approx. 30.45m AOD. Overlying these deposits within the western side of the trenching was a layer of undated relict subsoil (101) consisting of a mid-orangey-brown, sandy-silt 0.25-30m thick throughout the trenching. This was in turn sealed by the existing topsoil, a dark greyish-brown loam also varying between 0.25-30m thick.

Context 103 (stone deposit)

Directly overlying the natural clay within part of the trenching was an undated seemingly linear Lias limestone deposit approx. 0.40m wide and 0.08m deep. At first this appeared to be the remains of a small thin wall, but excavation was inconclusive, and it may formed part of stone deposit 107.

Context 107 (stone deposit).

Overlying the relict subsoil deposit 101 was an undated rubble-like spread of small fragmented limestones forming a layer about 0.20m thick overall, albeit deeper in the area of Pit 106 where it forms the upper fill of the feature.

Context 106 (pit), filled by contexts 105 and 107

Truncating the natural sand and clay deposits within the eastern end of the trenching was a large deep pit (106). Although evidence of the pit was only partially revealed during the excavation, it was at least 4m wide and 6m long with steep sides and continued beyond the base of the trench which was excavated at this point to a depth of about 1.50m. Thrown in at the base of the pit were two large roughly dressed limestone quoins and near these an almost complete post-medieval pot and a similarly dated single bodysherd from another vessel.

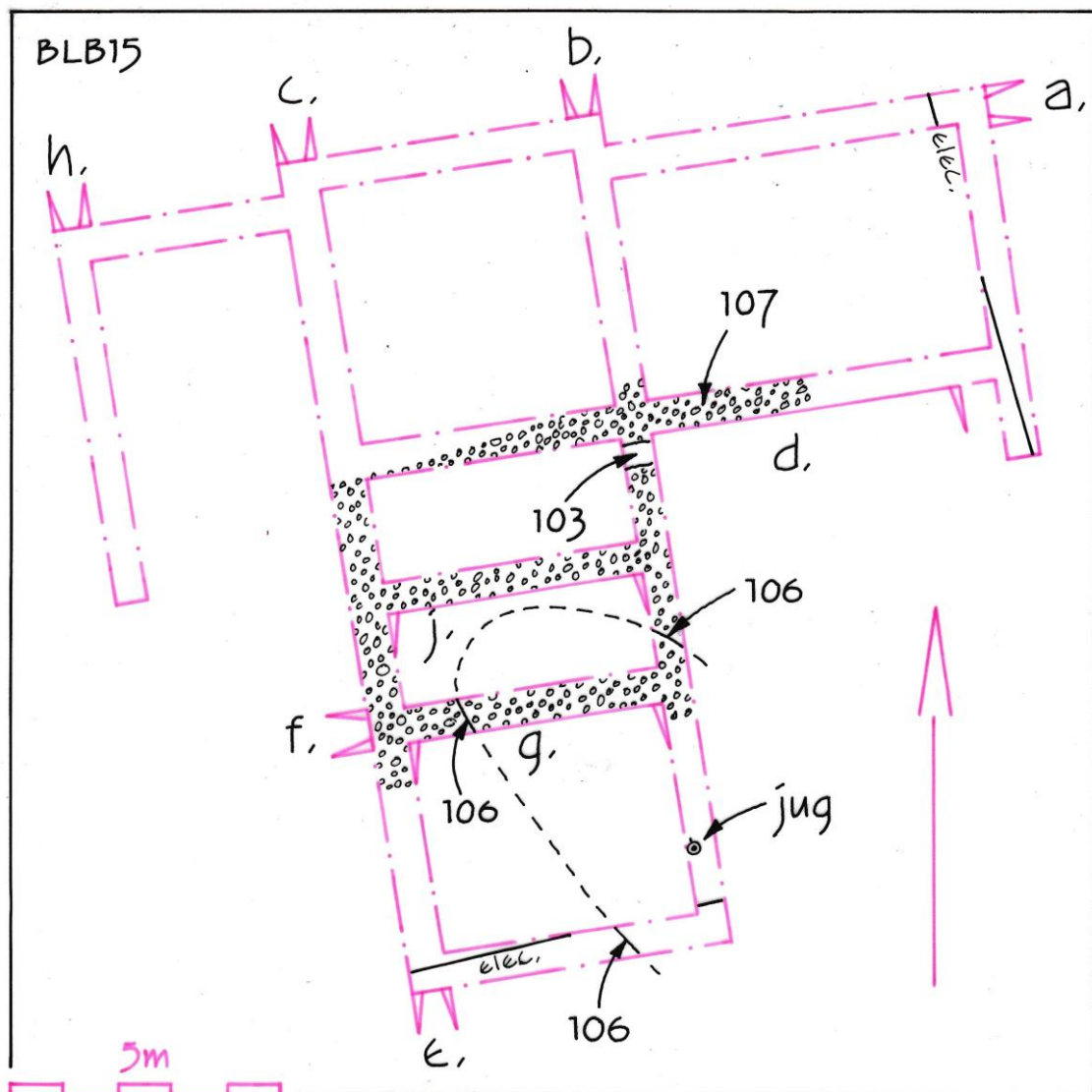


Fig. 4; trench plan and section locations

BLB15

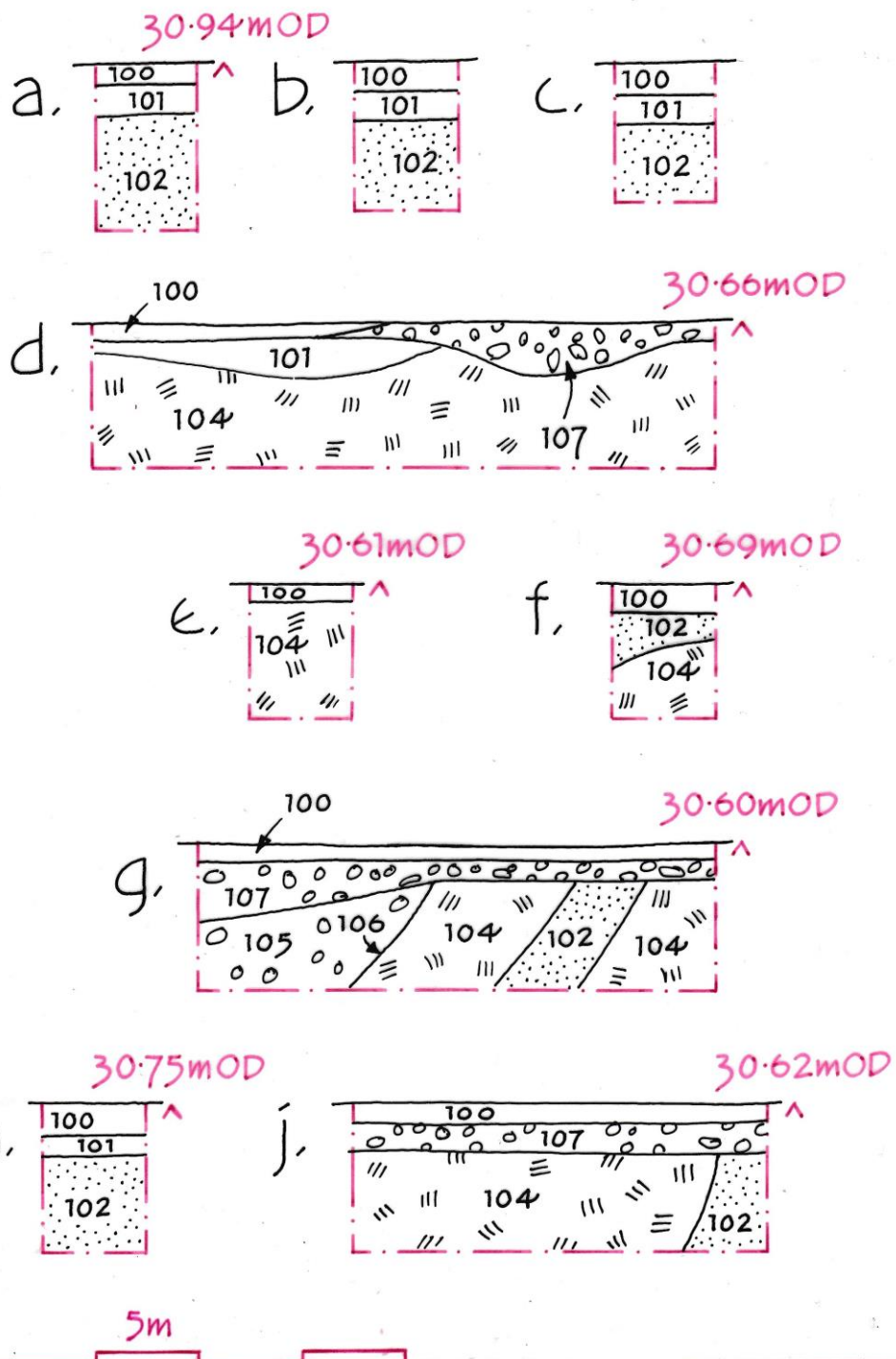


Fig.5; trench sections



Plate 1; overall view of the excavation to the south-west



Plate 2; section a



Plate 3; section b



Plate 4; section c



Plate 5; stone deposit 103



Plate 6; section e



Plate 7; section f



Plate 8; section h

FINDS

Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

A near-complete jug and a single bodysherd from another vessel (weight = 27g) occurred in context 105. Both are wares of the generic Post-medieval Redware types (Brears 1969), a post-medieval tradition first made in the 16th century, and, in some areas, continued to be made right through to the early 20th century.



Plate 9; near complete post-medieval jug

The jug is nearly complete, in an orange, sandy, iron-rich fabric and with a glossy, manganese-rich lead glaze covering the entire inner surface. It has a low-waisted form which is fairly typical of the post-medieval tradition (eg. Vince 1977 pl. 6 no. 1). The outer surface is unglazed, but has a darker red surface. The post-medieval redware industries of the region are somewhat under-researched, but pottery of this general type replaced the Malvernian Ware tradition of the area from around the middle of the 17th century (ibid., 288), with the glaze on this vessel suggesting that a date of the late 17th – 18th century is probably appropriate, although a 19th century date cannot be ruled out. In Bristol, the main source of Redwares of this period was North Devon and South Somerset, but numerous other sources of Redware in Herefordshire and West Gloucestershire also came into being around this time (ibid.).

The small bodysherd is somewhat abraded, and is in a similar fabric, although with a lead glaze, suggesting that is probably of 16th -17th century date

Environmental data

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

DISCUSSION (Fig. 6)

The earliest known settlement in the parish was on gravel east of Beckford village, where there were many inclosures used for stock-raising. The site went out of use c. A.D. 70, perhaps because the arrival of the Romans caused a change to arable cultivation (VCH, 1968). Aerial photographic sources have also revealed some cropmarks (WSM03625) to the west of Back Lane that may be related to prehistoric activity. The remains of what may have been a corn-drying building and of C2 and C3 pottery have been found on Bredon Hill suggesting it was used for corn-growing. On the gravel west of Beckford village, just outside the parish boundary, there was a cemetery, dating largely from the 6th century, containing at least 107 graves. By the late 8th century there was a minster church at Beckford which presumably stood in or near Beckford village, which stands on sand and gravel on the north bank of the Carrant. Documentary evidence suggest that an Augustinian Priory (WSM29777) was founded at Beckford in 1128. In 2014 the Worcestershire Historic Environment Record (HER) showed that there is currently limited archaeological evidence for early activity or occupation within the search area (500m radius of the site). Most of the evidence comprises either chance finds of Saxon brooches and Roman or medieval pottery

Back Lane is important historically as a route-way across the Carrant Brook linking the village at Beckford with the main road between Teddington and Evesham (A46) and this may have been the reason for the establishment of a small outlying settlement or separate manor south of Beckford Village. Near to where Back Lane crosses the Carrant Brook there is a large square water-filled earthwork with a central mound (WSM07656; pond) which is connected to the brook via a sluice and may be a medieval fish-pond. East of the crossing, a small structure situated within the loop of the watercourse could be the site of a mill.

A settlement off Back Lane, south of the brook, was probably centred around the early C17 Manor House which may lie on the site of an earlier structure. Back Lane dog-legs around the north and east side of Beckford House, yet the more direct southerly route lies to the west of the house as suggested by footpath and field boundary alignments which may mark the route of an earlier road linking Beckford with the Cheltenham Road. A reconfiguration of Back Lane between Beckford House and the A46 may be attributed to significant developments in the mid-C19 comprising the construction of Beckford House which also included a range of farm buildings and the Midland Railway (WSM31671) which lead to the building of an embankment and bridge along the stretch of Back Lane between Beckford House

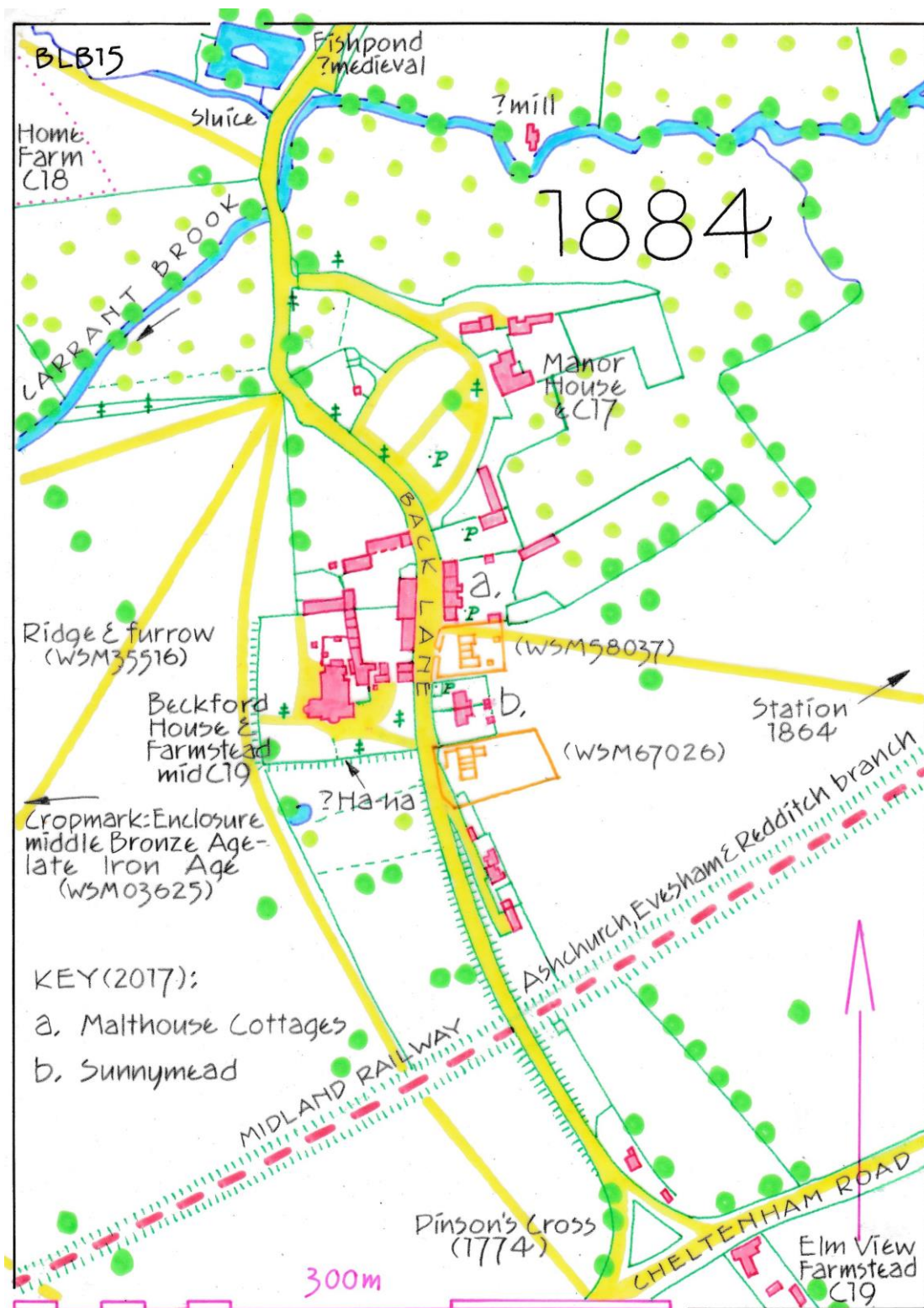


Fig. 6; historic environment plan for the area Back Lane (south), Beckford.

and the A46. A watching brief (WSM 58037) later that year at land between Sunnymead and Malthouse Cottages, situated south of the Manor House revealed features of indicative of occupation and of probable Late C11 date (Cook, 2014).

The watching brief in 2015 further to the south on land adjacent to Back Lane House was smaller in scale. The large steep-sided pit (106), at least 1.40m deep had truncated deposits within the south-east corner of the building plot. A single, almost complete jug recovered from near to the base of the pit suggests a date ranging from the C16 to early C20. The two large limestone quoins observed at the base within the fill (105) were clearly re-deposited. The undated limestone rubble and pebble deposit (107) that filled the upper part of the pit and was spread over a wide area to the west of the feature may be a dumped deposit or the remains of a rudimentary hardstanding or track. Stone deposit 103 may represent the remains of a former narrow wall, but this could not be confirmed given the limited scope of the excavation.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Brears, P C D, 1969, *The English Country Pottery. Its History and Techniques*
- Bryant, V, and Evans, J, 2002 The Pottery in H Dalwood, and R Edwards, *Excavations at Deansway, Worcester, 1988-89: Romano-British small town to late medieval city* CBA Research Report, 139
- CIfA, 2014. *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief*, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists.
- Cook, S., 2015. *Land between Sunnymead & Malthouse Cottages, Back Lane, Beckford, Worcestershire; programme of archaeological work, one ten archaeology report.*
- British Geological Survey, 2000. *Geological Survey of England and Wales, Moreton-in-Marsh, sheet 217, solid and drift geology, 1:50,000.*
- Historic Environment Record 2014, Worcs. Archive and Archaeology Service, Worcs. C.C.
- Miller, D. 2010. *COSMIC+ Risk Assessment of Archaeological Sites on Overbury Farms, Worcestershire. Archaeological Service, Worcestershire County Council.*
- OS 1884
- VCH, 1968. *Parishes; Beckford, in A History of the County of Worcester: Victoria County History. Vol. 8, 250-62.*
- Vince, AG, 1977. The Medieval and Post-Medieval Ceramic Industry of the Malvern Region: The Study of a Ware and its Distribution in DPS Peacock (ed.), *Pottery and Early Commerce. Characterization and Trade in Roman and Later Ceramics*, Academic Press, London
- Wichbold, D., 1996. *Salvage Recording at land adjacent to Rocklands, Beckford, Archaeological Service, Worcestershire County Council.*

Worcs. Archive and Archaeology Service, 2014. *Requirements for a watching brief*, Worcs. Archive and Archaeology Service, Worcs. C. C.

Archive Location

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

APPENDIX 1: OASIS

Project name	Land off Back Lane, Beckford, Gloucestershire; archaeological recording
Project dates	Start: 28-09-2015 End: 30-09-2015
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	BLB15 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	WSM67026 - HER event no.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Vacant Land 2 - Vacant land not previously developed
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	""Watching Brief""
Prompt	Planning condition
Country	England
Site location	WORCESTERSHIRE WYCHAVON BECKFORD land at Back Lane House, Back Lane
Postcode	GL20 7AF
Study area	140 Square metres
Site coordinates	SP 97531 35303 52.007152336401 -0.578913517452 52 00 25 N 000 34 44 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 30.45m Max: 30.45m
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 Contents	"Ceramics"
Digital Archive recipient	OASIS
Paper Contents	"none"
Paper Media available	"Notebook - Excavation',' Research',' General Notes","Plan","Report","Section"

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Land at Back Lane House, Back Lane, Beckford, Worcestershire; archaeological recording
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Cook, S
Date	2017
Issuer or publisher	one ten archaeology
Place of issue or publication	Warks.
URL	http://www.oasis.ac.uk
Entered by	sean cook (sean@onetenarchaeology.co.uk)
Entered on	3 September 2017