



2 Abbey Cottages

Abbey precinct, Church Street, Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire

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Gloucestershire

Archaeological recording

NGR: SO 88948 32377

Site code: ACT17

Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) number 21704

OASIS ID: 110archa1-300774

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18th November 2017

one ten archaeology

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Front cover; 2 Abbey Cottages, from the east

SUMMARY

Archaeological recording was carried out during August 2017 at 2 Abbey Cottages, Abbey Precinct, Church Street, Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire.

The work followed a 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. A subsequent field evaluation found no evidence for remains associated with the medieval abbey, but instead a sequence of C19 deposits.

Abbey Cottages lie within the precinct of Tewkesbury abbey, amongst numerous extant medieval buildings that include the Gate House, Abbey House (formerly the Abbot's lodgings), Monastery Cottage (?Almoner's lodgings) and possibly the Almonry Barn. These buildings represent the remains of a much larger complex that probably extended well beyond the current known precinct layout before their demolition after the dissolution. Although it remains unclear as to where some of these former buildings were located, comparisons with the plans of other contemporary monastic centres such as Gloucester, Evesham, Westminster, Durham, etc. in addition to what we already know about the abbey, provides a basis for understanding the layout of the area around the area of study that included the Almonry, Hostery and stables.

Excavation associated with the new development, did not penetrate below the modern overburden and the level of truncation of the underlying deposits was evident from the modern services and brick footings still visible within the base of the trench. Ground reduction did reveal the lower part of the north-east/south-west monastic masonry wall (103) and part of the foundation. Overlying the surface of the offset foundation where the wall terminates at the jamb of the former gateway, lies an *in-situ* fragment of original limestone flooring. Although the fragment was small, its construction from small thin fragments of limestone bedded on a mortared base suggests it was for internal use. Its position, at the south-western end of the wall may indicate the monastic footprint, perhaps part of a wing extending south-westward from the main range.

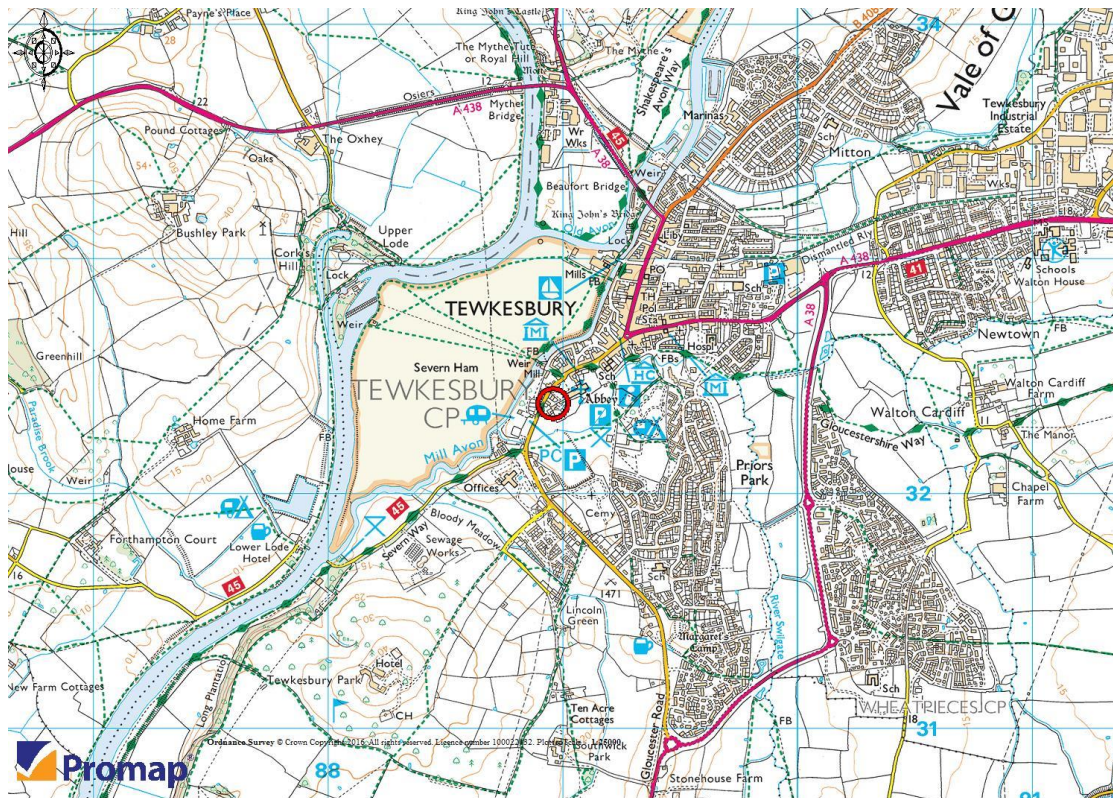


Fig. 1; site location (circled in red)

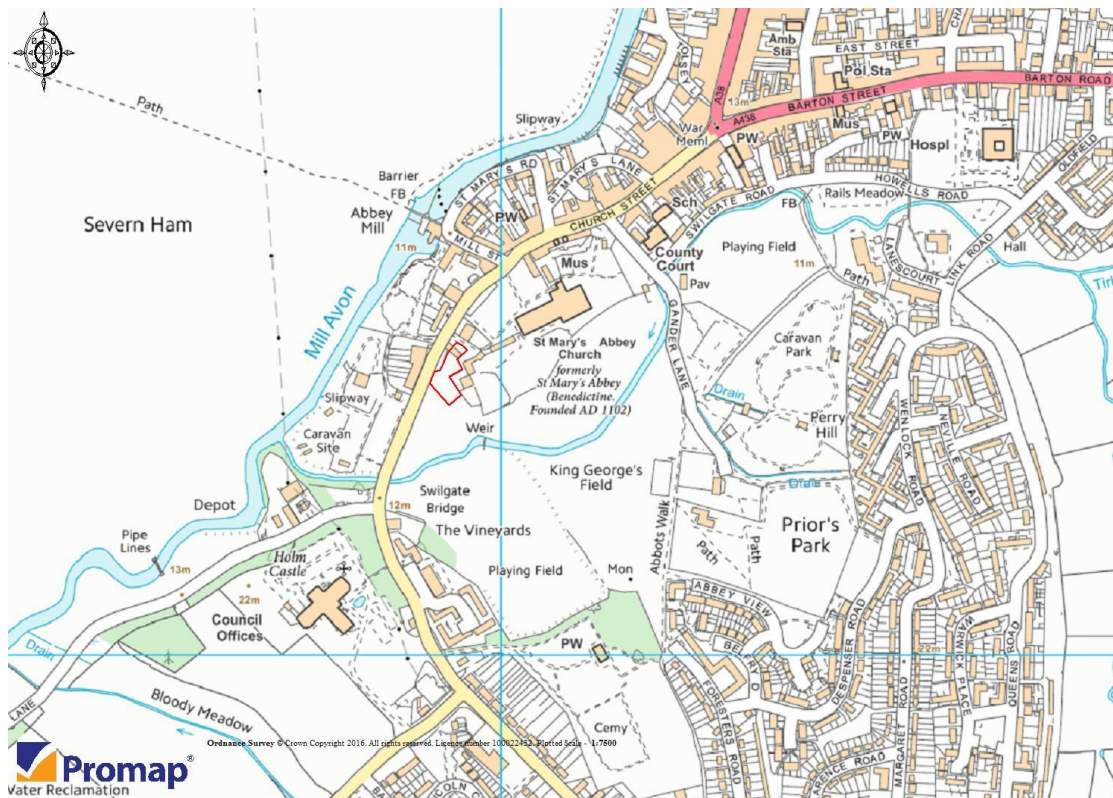


Fig. 2; study area (outlined in red)

INTRODUCTION

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

This document details the results of for archaeological recording ('watching brief') an archaeological evaluation during 8-10th August 2017 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 watching brief was required by Historic England and the Archaeological officer at Glos. CC, in 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 archaeological observation and recording is required during development.

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 advised 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 and subsequent evaluation had been completed (cook, 2016a & 2016b) and, as a result of the findings Historic England and the archaeological officer have advised that they will not object to the proposed development, conditional on a watching brief being carried out during excavation in accordance with an approved WSI, this document.

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 (Fig. 3)

The site 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. An evaluation comprising a single 1.5m square trench was excavated within the footprint of the proposed extension 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 would clarify whether any remains should be considered for preservation in situ, or form the basis of a mitigation strategy.

The results showed that there was unlikely to be any significant archaeological remains associated with the abbey precinct within the area of the proposed extension and that the underlying stratigraphy comprised 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.

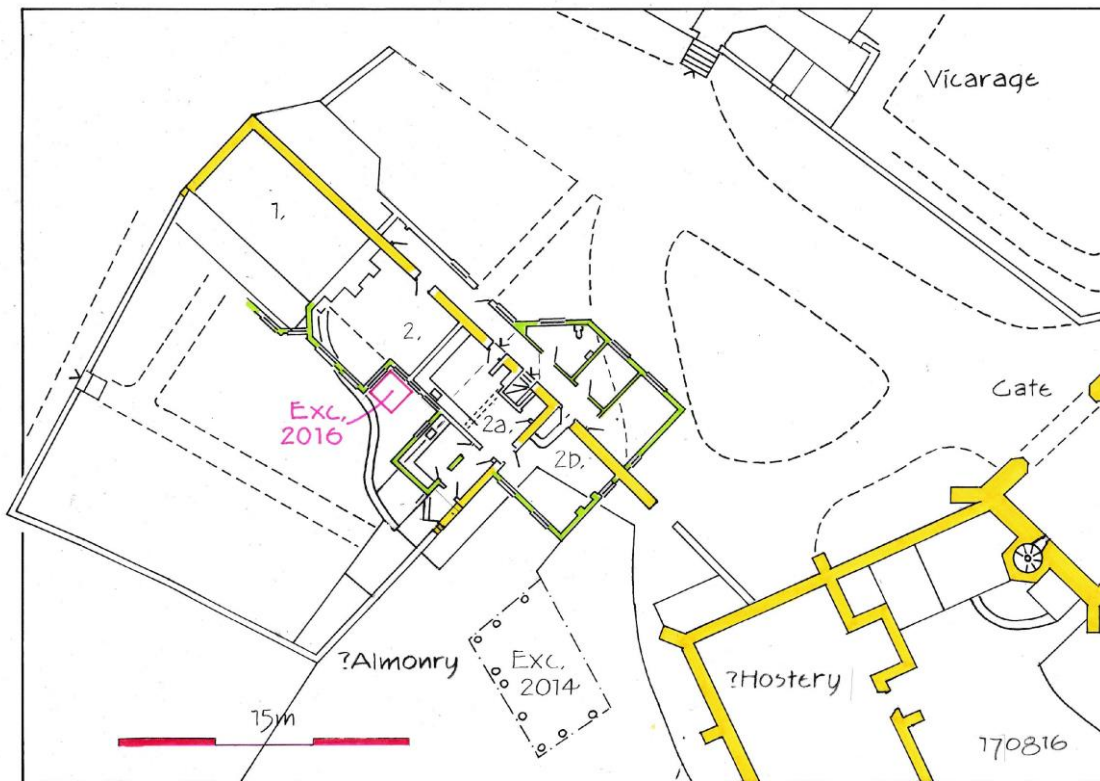


Fig. 3; trench location plan. Yellow; monastic masonry

RESULTS: GENERAL (Figs. 4-6)

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 reduction by machine of the overburden within the footprint of the proposed extension to a maximum depth of about 0.50m below the existing ground level.

Description of deposits

Contexts 104 & 105 (layers)

The natural substrate was not reached during the excavation. Instead, the earliest stratified deposit in the sequence (105), albeit undated, was observed to a depth of 0.06m within a small hand excavated sondage in the south-west

corner of the reduced dig and consisted of a grey/black soil with a large ash component and an inclusion of clinker. Sealing this context was a thin deposit (104), 0.06m thick of dark greyish-brown, sandy-silt with frequent small flecks of charcoal. Sat on top of this layer, was the end of limestone wall 103.

Deposits 101 & 102 (stone floor) & Wall 103 (monastic building)

Placed on top of layer 104 was the limestone wall (103), this the lower course, forming the foundation was offset from the overlying wall 103. Placed over the surface of the offset and abutting the bottom face of the second course of masonry was a small fragment of undated flooring associated with the earlier masonry building. This comprised a thin layer of small flat fragments of limestone (101) 0.04m thick, bedded on an equally thin layer of mortar (102) consisting of a light-yellowish-brown and white silty-sand with frequent grit-sized fragments of limestone.

Context 100 (modern overburden)

Both deposits 104 and 105 were truncated by a trench (106) for services constructed in the C20. Filling this trench, but also overlying layers 104, 105, wall 103 and the stone floor (101 & 102) was the modern overburden (100).

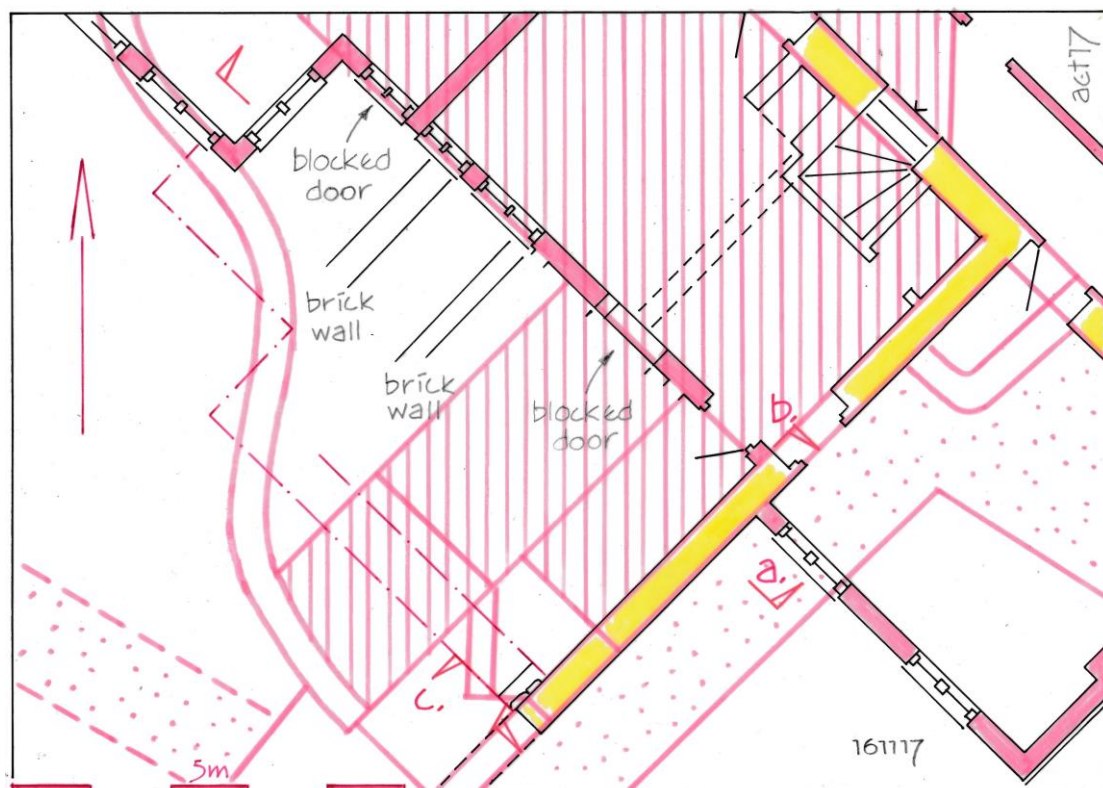


Fig. 4; trench plan; 1st Ed. OS details shown in thick pink lines, masonry walls shown in yellow

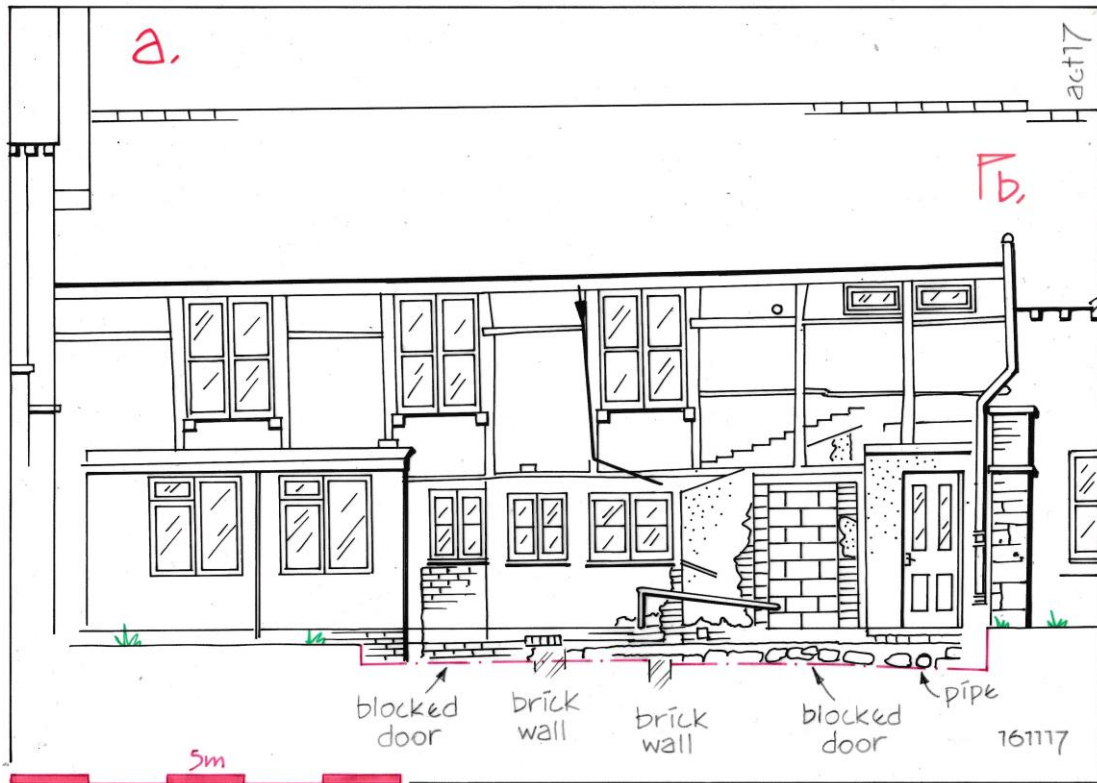


Fig. 5; rear elevation with section a

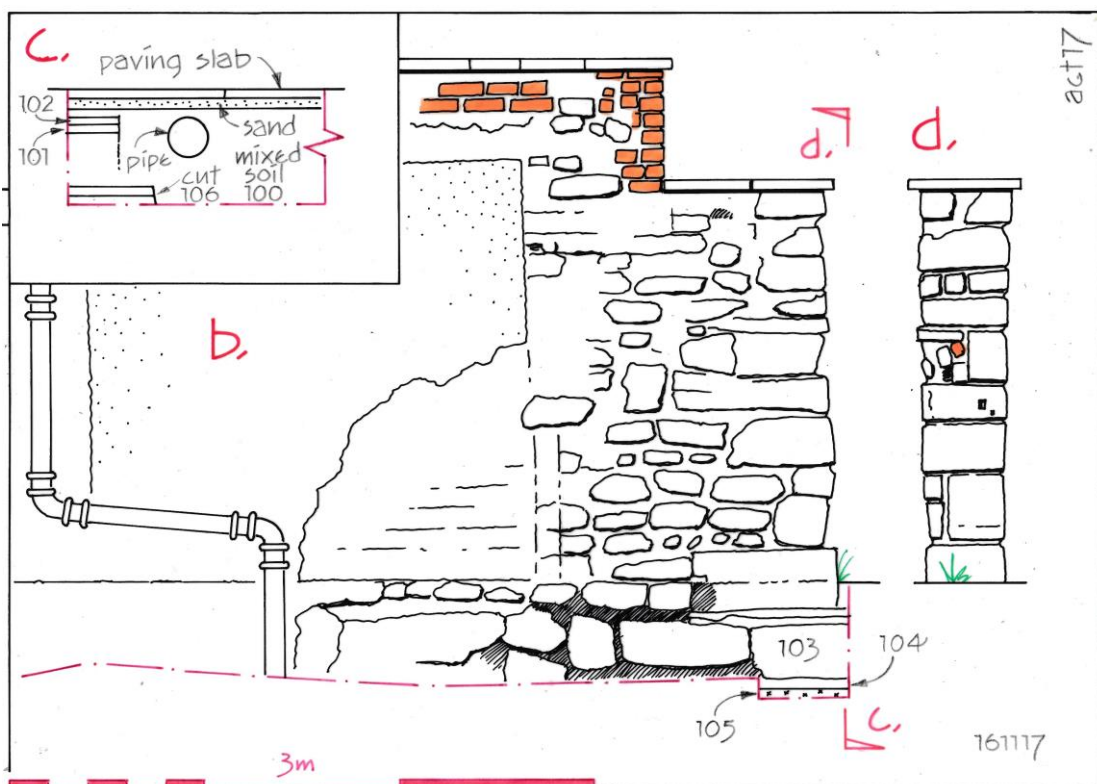


Fig. 6; Sections b, c and d



Plate 1; View of no1 Abbey Cottages from the west



Plate 2; View of no1 Abbey Cottages from the south



Plate 3; overall view of excavation from south



Plate 4; overall view of excavation from west



Plate 5; walls 103 & 104, north-west elevation



Plate 6; sondage detail from north-west



Plate 7; detail of limestone flooring, view to south



Plate 8; detail of door jamb (south-west end of wall 103)

FINDS

Finds comprised a handful of C19 pottery sherds. These were not retained.

Environmental data

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

DISCUSSION

Abbey Cottages lie within the precinct of Tewkesbury abbey, amongst numerous extant medieval buildings that include the Gate House, Abbey House (formerly the Abbot's lodgings), Monastery Cottage (?Almoner's lodgings) and possibly the Almonry Barn. These buildings represent the remains of a much larger complex that probably extended well beyond the current known precinct layout before their demolition after the dissolution. Although it remains unclear as to where some of these former buildings were located, comparisons with the plans of other contemporary monastic centres such as Gloucester, Evesham, Westminster, Durham, etc. in addition to what we already know about the abbey, provides a basis for understanding the layout of the area around the area of study that included the Almonry, Hostery and stables.

We know from documentary sources that the range of buildings running west from the church were listed for retention after the dissolution of the Abbey. Of these, the former abbot's lodging or abbey guest house, the Gate House and the Almonry survive. Missing buildings include the hostery, stables, and offices.

In the C18 the masonry shell of a monastic building (Abbey Cottages) was incorporated into a new (two-storey, garrets and cellar) three-bay brick house at the north-west end with a denticulated cornice, facing south-west. There is a timber framed upper storey to what was presumably a service wing to the south-east. The masonry wall at this end continues south-westward beyond the service wing to currently terminate at the jamb of a gateway shown on the 1st Ed. OS, the wall defines the south-eastern limit of the present excavation. Also shown on the 1st Ed. OS is a wall, uncovered in the excavation, from the corner of the house which separated the garden from the service yard, the wall, of brick construction, is wavy in plan presumably for aesthetic reasons.

By the middle of the C19 the ruinous Abbey Gatehouse had been restored and a new Vicarage built to the west of it, opposite Abbey Cottages. This programme of works may have been the reason behind improvements to the Georgian house (Abbey Cottages) which consisted of brick extensions to the rear of the house and a corridor along the service wing. The extension along the front of the house and the surviving bay-windows on the first-floor probably date from this time, before 1885.

A new block had been added at the south-east end by 1902, and another block was added to the north-east of it by 1923. This last addition was also enhanced with decorative 'black and white' Tudorbethan framing as was the north-west end on the street frontage.

By 1986 the property had been divided into several dwellings; the house being no. 1, the service-wing no. 2, and the blocks at the south-east end accommodating nos. 2a and 2b. Nos. 2a and 2b are now (2017) part of no.2.

The excavation, limited in scope, did not penetrate below the modern overburden and the level of truncation of the underlying deposits was evident from the modern services and brick footings still visible within the base of the trench. Ground reduction did reveal the lower part of the north-east/south-west monastic masonry wall (103) and part of the foundation. Overlying the surface of the offset foundation where the wall terminates at the jamb of the former gateway, lies an *in-situ* fragment of original limestone flooring. Although the fragment was small, its construction from small thin fragments of limestone bedded on a mortared base suggests it was for internal use. Its position, at the south-western end of the wall may indicate the monastic footprint, perhaps part of a wing extending south-westward from the main range.

Archive Location

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

BIBLIOGRAPHY

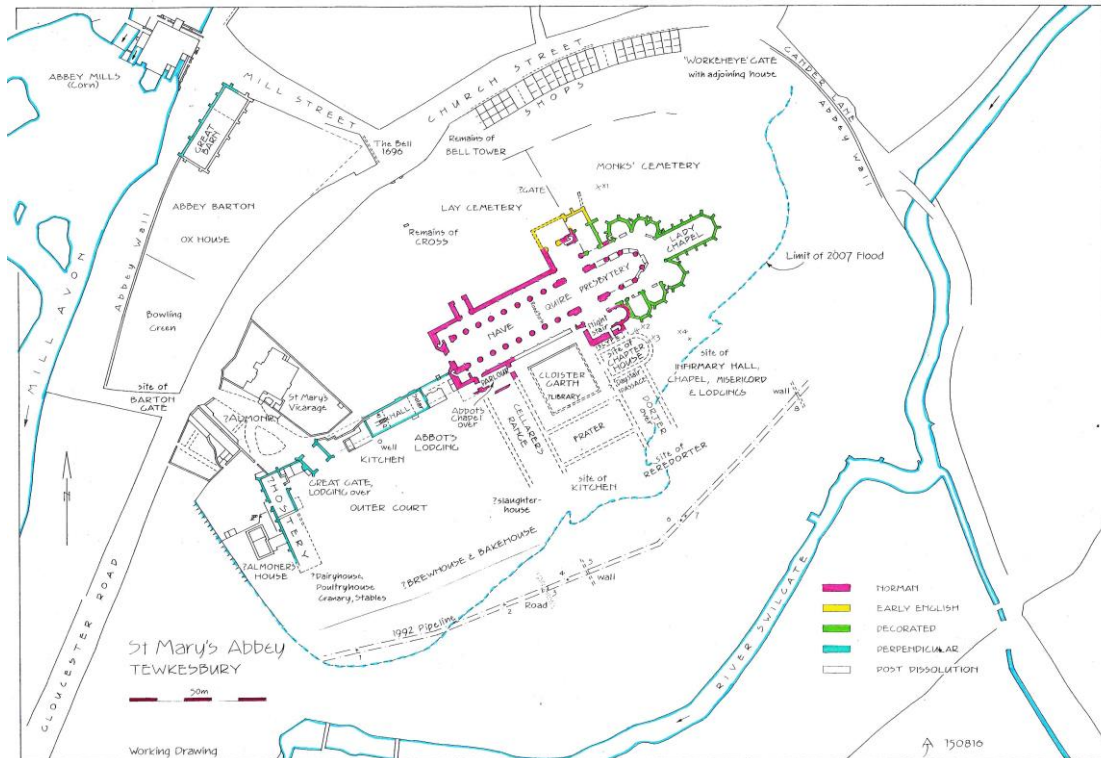
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CiFA, 2014. *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief,* Chartered Institute for Archaeologists.

APPENDIX 1 Abbey Plan



APPENDIX 2 OASIS

Project name	2 Abbey Cottages, Abbey Precinct, Church Street, Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire; archaeological recording
Project dates	Start: 08-08-2017 End: 10-08-2017
Previous/future work	Yes / No
Any associated project reference codes	ACT17 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Scheduled Monument (SM)
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Monument type	ABBEY Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Modern
Investigation type	""Watching Brief""
Prompt	Scheduled Monument Consent

Country	England
Site location	GLOUCESTERSHIRE TEWKESBURY TEWKESBURY 2 Abbey Cottages, Abbey Precinct, Church Street
Postcode	GL20 5SR
Study area	35 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
Paper Archive Exists?	No
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	2 Abbey Cottages Abbey precinct, Church Street, Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire; archaeological recording
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Cook, S. and Atherton, J.
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	10 November 2017