



Land adjacent

Rye Cottage

Netherton Lane, Elmley Castle, Worcestershire

Land adjacent

Rye Cottage

Netherton Lane, Elmley Castle, Worcestershire

Archaeological recording

NGR: SO 98483 41396

Site code: ELM17

HER: WSM69472

OASIS ID: 110archa1-308260

Sean Cook BA MCIfA

Illustration by Jill Atherton MCIfA

27th July 2018

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) 4

Geology and topography 4

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND..... 5

RESULTS (Figs. 3-5) 6

Method and nature of the excavation 6

Description of deposits..... 7

FINDS..... 9

Environmental data 10

DISCUSSION 10

BIBLIOGRAPHY 11

Archive Location..... 11

APPENDIX 1: OASIS 17

Front cover; the site during development, view west

SUMMARY

Archaeological recording was carried out in November 2017 at land adjacent Rye Cottage, Netherton Lane, Elmley Castle, Worcestershire during development associated with the erection of a detached dwelling.

The Historic Environment Record (HER) has shown that the site lies within an area where undated cropmarks show the potential for both prehistoric/roman remains to survive. It also lies within the planned medieval village of Elmley. There has been little archaeological investigation previously and evidence for the extent of the medieval settlement is based mostly on mapping of the outlying ridge and furrow and cartographic sources which include the 1837 Tithe & OS 1886 surveys. These show a ribbon development of six small detached dwellings occupying mainly, long east-west plots along the south side of Netherton Lane, between the brook to the east and the junction at the village cross to the west. Rye Cottage, a C17 dwelling with outbuildings, is situated centrally along the road frontage within one of these plots. This landscape has remained largely unchanged until after the post-war period when the fields to the south were developed for residential housing. No archaeological mitigation is known to have been carried out during these developments and their impact on the historic environment is unclear.

Excavation revealed a stratigraphic sequence of layers indicating an open rural environment with little or no human activity prior to the occupation of the site in the C17 with the construction of Rye Cottage and the lack of residual finds from the excavation tends to support this interpretation.



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 20th and 21st November 2017 at land adjacent Rye Cottage, Netherton Lane, Elmley Castle, Worcestershire, WR10 3JF at the request of Mr Robin Eaton. The work was required as a condition of planning permission granted in respect of an application (Ref: W/16/01921/PN) to Wychavon District Council for the erection of a detached dwelling and was to be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of paragraph 141 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The site lies in an area of archaeological interest, the historic settlement area of Elmley Castle, a heritage asset that may hold or potentially may hold, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation. Consequently, any deposits disturbed during the course of the development may be of archaeological significance.

Since planning approval was granted, the foundations for the new dwelling had been constructed without archaeological mitigation in place. Archaeological recording was however, subsequently carried during excavation of the sewer trench and two drainage trenches located on the east, west and north sides of the existing foundations. Further investigation was anticipated in the event, that significant archaeological deposits were encountered.

Geology and topography

The parish of Elmley Castle lies in the south-east of the county. It is watered by an unnamed tributary of the Avon and has an area of 800ha. The parish lies to the north of Bredon Hill, the southern part of it being on the hill at about 270m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD). The village of Elmley Castle is situated about 5¼ miles south-west of Evesham at the foot of the northern slopes of Bredon Hill, on an outlying spur of which is the site of the ancient castle from which it takes its name. The development site, which lies at approx. 67m AOD, is represented by a roughly rectangular plot of land comprising approx. 800m² situated to the east of Rye Cottage on the south side of the Netherton Road. The underlying geology is clay, mainly Lower and Middle Lias (BGS, 1993) and this was confirmed during excavation.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Worcestershire Historic Environment Record (HER) identified 79 archaeological monument records and 8 archaeological event records were identified within a 500m radial search area centred on the site. The search area sits on the edge of an open, flat landscape on the Avon gravel terraces characterised by nucleated villages, surrounded by large arable fields.

This is an intensively farmed area. The historic character of the field pattern was small to medium piecemeal enclosure but much of this has now undergone field amalgamation. Villages are linked by a network of medieval or earlier lanes and there is little tree cover to the north of the search area. Conversely, to the south of the search area, the ground rises gradually towards the tree covered slopes of Bredon Hill. Within the search area lie 38 Historic England Listed Historic Buildings largely dating to the C17 century and being of timber-framed construction. A small number of listed C18 and C19 century brick buildings are also present. Seven other unlisted historic buildings were also identified. A Historic England project to identify the Historic Farmsteads of Worcestershire also recorded 4 farmsteads within the search area dating to the C17–C19. The building adjacent to the development site, Rye Cottage (WSM38910), is an Historic England Listed C17 Timber-framed building. In addition to the built environment there are also records for multiple archaeological monuments sites. These include Iron Age or Roman cropmarks related to field systems, the site of a post-medieval mill and malt house, and an observation post for the Second World War.

The main body of evidence however relates the Medieval period with a series of records for Medieval occupation (WSM01289), ridge and furrow (WSM35447, WSM35448 & WSM45449), sites of tithe barns (WSM06592) and mills and the conjectured area of the planned Medieval village of Elmley (WSM21600) which encompasses the development site. The church of St. Mary (WSM02696) dates from a very early period, the walling of the chancel, which was shorter than the present one, belonging to about the end of the C11.

Overall there has been very little investigation within the search area; a large proportion of the recorded archaeological activity has related to The Old Mill Inn. Survival of archaeological remains is however considered to be good across the area, indicated by the numerous cropmarks in the wider landscape (WSM04787 & WSM11385) and there is potential for both prehistoric/roman and medieval remains.

RESULTS (Figs. 3-5)

Method and nature of the excavation

Archaeological fieldwork and post-excitation was carried out in accordance with standards and guidance for archaeological watching briefs produced by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA, 2014).

The work itself was undertaken to obtain a record of any archaeological deposits or finds disturbed or exposed during excavation of the sewer trench (trench one) which was approx. 30m long and 0.60m wide. Excavation began at the east end to a depth of 1.50m, rising to a depth of about 0.70m at the west end. Trench two, representing new drainage, was 2m square and excavated to the surface of the natural substrate (102). and trench three about 10m long and 0.60m wide. Excavation was carried out under archaeological supervision using a machine equipped with a toothless grading bucket.

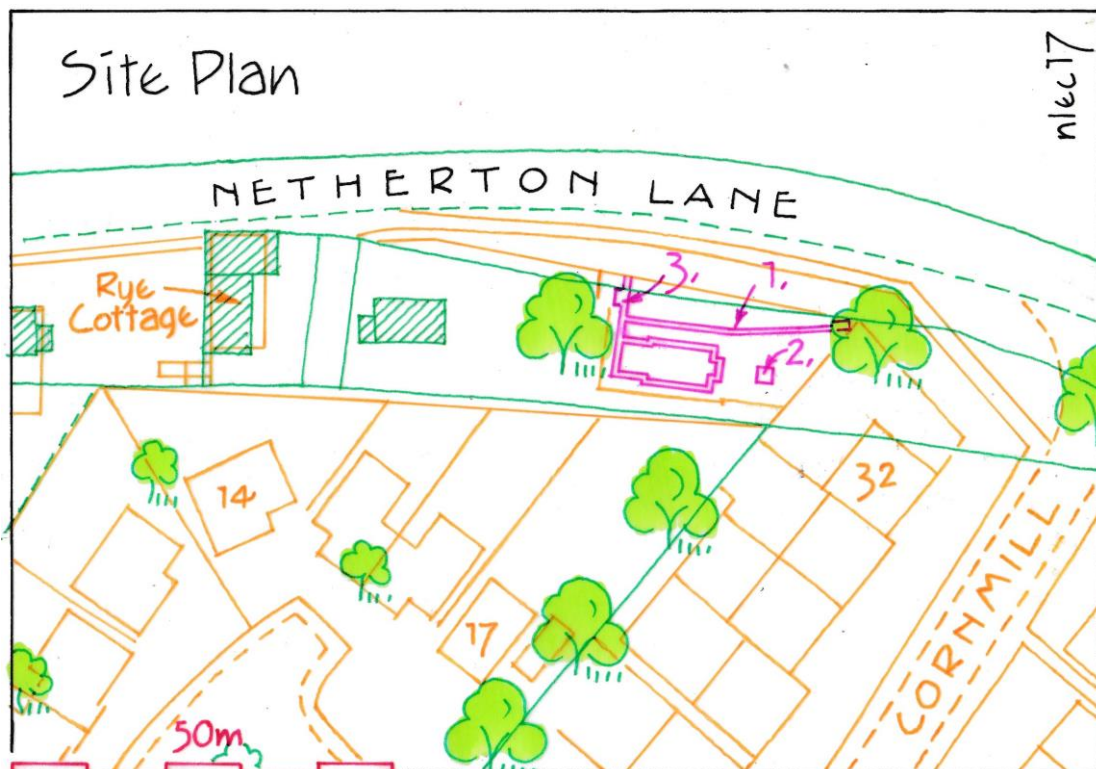


Fig. 3; site plan showing location of the development

Description of deposits

Context 102 (natural substrate); context 104 (relict alluvial deposit); context 101 (relict subsoil); context 103 (wall?) & context 100 (topsoil)

The surface of the geological horizon (102), comprising an olive-brown clay was exposed throughout the three trenches at a height of about 46.85m AOD. No archaeological deposits or cut features were observed overlying or cut into this layer, although a sharp drop at the north end of trench three suggests the presence of a former ditch cut aligned east-west. This is near to and aligned with the adjacent Netherton Lane and is probably related. The clay substrate (104) was sealed throughout trench 1 (but not in trenches 2 and 3) by an undated, 0.20m deep layer (102) of yellowish-brown, gravelly-sandy-clay interpreted as a probable alluvial deposit. This was in turn sealed by a relict subsoil layer (101) comprising a mid-greyish-brown, clayey-silt at a uniform depth of about 0.30m, except in trench 2 where it was only 0.10m thick. This deposit produced pottery sherds, albeit residual, dated to the C17.

Situated within layer 101 towards the east end of trench 1 were the masonry foundation remains of a probable wall (103; see plate 3) aligned north-south. Excavation revealed a single course 0.65m wide and 0.15m deep comprising of variously sized limestones bonded with a clay matrix (plate 3). A single sherd of C16 pottery found within the fabric during excavation suggests a construction date for the feature. Overlying the subsoil layer 101 and feature 103 to a depth varying between 0.25 and 0.35m was the modern topsoil deposit (100).

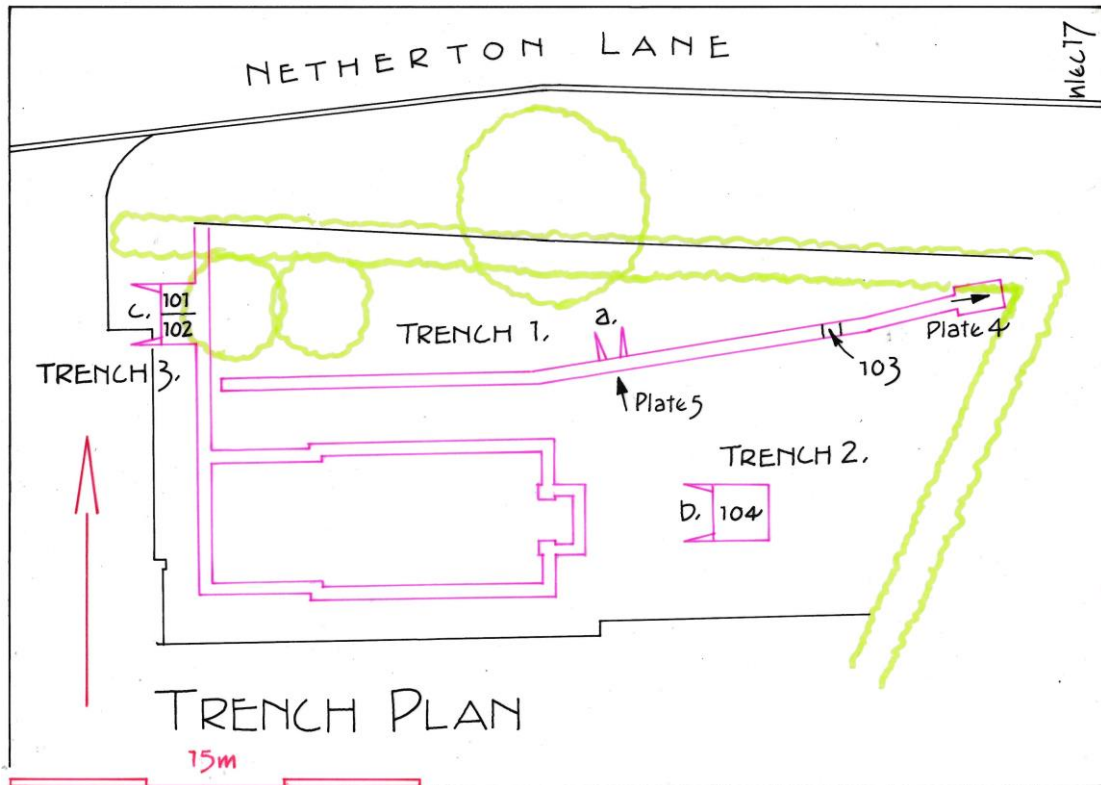


Fig. 4; trench plan with section locations

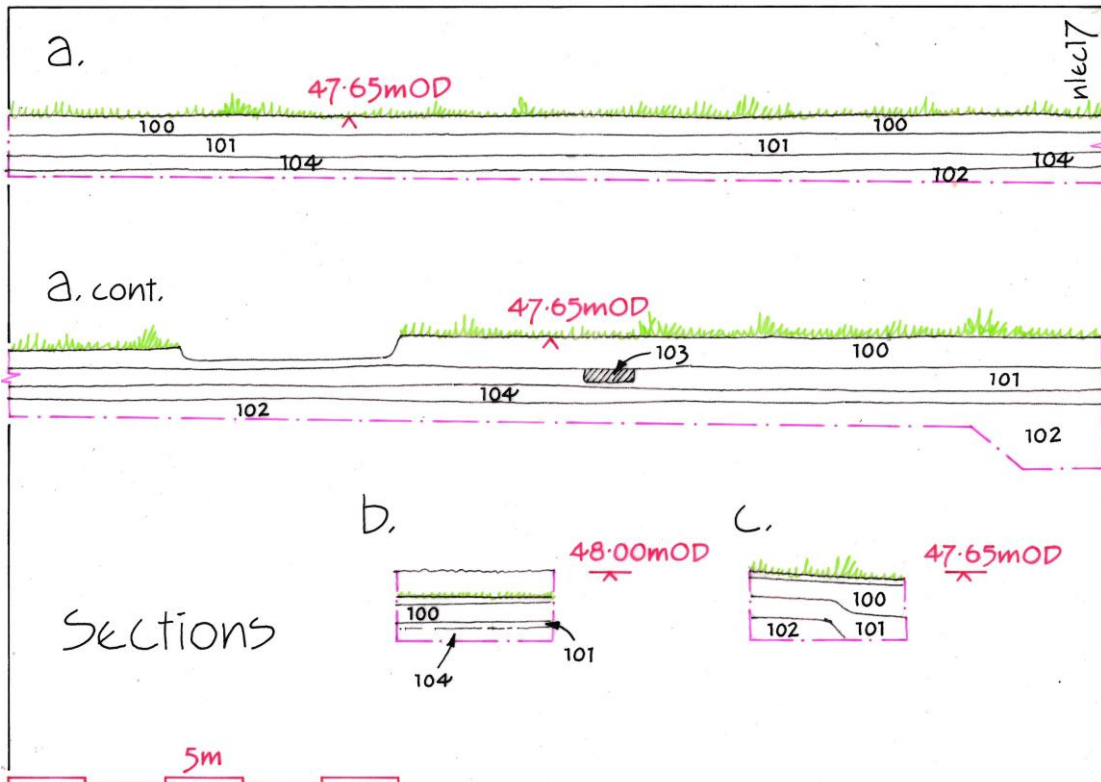


Fig. 5; trench sections

FINDS

Pottery and ceramic building material (CBM) by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 9 sherds with a total weight of 201g. It is all post-medieval, and was recorded using the conventions of the Worcestershire county type-series (eg. Bryant and Evans 2004) as follows:

F69: Oxidized Late Malvernian Ware, late 13th – 17th century. 6 sherds, 145g.

F82: Tin-glazed Earthenware, 17th -18th century. 1 sherd, 33g.

F90: Post-medieval Orange Ware, 17th - 18th century. 1 sherd, 9g.

F91: Post-medieval Buff Ware, 17th - 18th century. 1 sherd, 14g.

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 1. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*. The range of fabric types is typical of sites in the region.

The sherds of F69 from context 101 are all from internally glazed jars or bowls, and include the full profile of a small bowl. This is typical of the post-medieval products of the industry. The sherd of F82 is fairly large fragment of the base and lower body of a bowl with blue-painted lines on the outer surface. The same context produced a fragment of late 16th – 17th century unglazed Malvernian flat roof-tile (Vince 1977, 275) weighing 57g and 15mm thick, and a small fragment (15g) of brick of uncertain date.

The fragment of F90 from context 101 is from a dish or plate with interior glazing and yellow slip dot decoration similar to Metropolitan-type Slipware (Davey and Walker 2009).

Table 1: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type

Cntxt	F69		F82		F90		F91		Date
	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
101	5	140	1	33	1	9	1	14	17thC
103	1	5							16thC
Total	6	145	1	33	1	9	1	14	

Environmental data

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

DISCUSSION

The Historic Environment Record (HER) has shown that the site lies within an area where undated cropmarks show the potential for both prehistoric and roman remains to survive. It also lies within the planned medieval village of Elmley Castle. There has been little archaeological investigation previously and evidence for the extent of the medieval settlement is based mostly on mapping of the outlying ridge and furrow and cartographic sources from the 1837 Tithe & OS 1886 surveys. These show a ribbon development of six small detached dwellings occupying mainly, long east-west plots along the south side of Netherton Lane between the brook to the east and the junction at the village cross to the west. Rye Cottage, which is a C17 timber-framed dwelling with outbuildings, is situated centrally along the road frontage within one of these plots. This landscape has remained largely unchanged until the post-war period. Fields to the south between Mill Lane and the site became partly developed by 1970 with residential housing at Millfield, more recently the entire area has been built on with further housing at Mill End and Cornmill Close. No archaeological mitigation is known to have been carried out during these recent developments and their impact on the historic environment is unclear.

The 2018 watching brief on the land east of Ryfield revealed a stratigraphic sequence of layers indicating a previously open rural environment. A thin layer of gravelly clay (104) overlying the geological clay (102) appears to represent an early period of alluvial deposition, perhaps associated with the brook to the east. The overlying relict subsoil deposit (101), which prior to development formed part of the garden of Rye Cottage, is likely to have been partly cultivated at various periods and this activity is evidenced by the C17 pottery finds recovered from this layer and which are consistent with the occupation of the cottage.

Sat within the subsoil layer towards the east end of the site on a north-south alignment were the remains of a probable C16 masonry wall (103). The absence of a parallel wall within the trench suggests that feature 103 represents the remains of a former boundary rather than a building.

The results of the watching brief during excavation of the drainage trenches suggests that the excavation of the foundations associated with the construction of the new dwelling (small in scope) which were unobserved are unlikely to have impacted on archaeological deposits.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

British Geological Survey, 1993. *Geological Survey of England and Wales, Worcester, sheet 199, solid and drift geology, 1:50,000.*

Bryant, V, and Evans, J, 2004. *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 Briefs*, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists.

Davey, W and Walker, H, 2009 *The Harlow Pottery Industries* Medieval Pottery Research Group Occasional Paper 3

Historic Environment Record, 2017. *Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeology Service*, Worcs. CC

VCH, 1913. *Parishes; Elmley Castle in A History of the County of Worcester: Victoria County History*. Vol. 3, 338-346

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

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).



Plate 1; overall view to the east of the development site



Plate 2; main sewer trench (section 1a), view east



Plate 3; context 103 (wall?)



Plate 4; stratigraphy at east end of sewer trench, view east



Plate 5; section a (centre)



Plate 6; trench 2, section b



Plate 7; trench 3, section c



Plate 8; Rye Cottage (east elevation)

APPENDIX 1: OASIS

Project name	Land adjacent Rye Cottage, Netherton Lane, Elmley Castle, Worcestershire; archaeological recording
Project dates	Start: 20-11-2017 End: 21-11-2017
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	ELM17 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	WSM69472 - HER event no.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	""Watching Brief""
Prompt	Planning condition
Country	England
Site location	WORCESTERSHIRE WYCHAVON ELMLEY CASTLE Land adjacent Rye Cottage, Netherton Lane
Postcode	WR10 3JF
Study area	800 Square metres
Site coordinates	SO 98483 41396 52.070513142564 - 2.022134339419 52 04 13 N 002 01 19 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 46.85m Max: 46.85m
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
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Land adjacent Rye Cottage, Netherton Lane, Elmley Castle, Worcestershire; archaeological recording

Author(s)/Editor(s)	Cook, S
Date	2018
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	6 February 2018