



Station Garden Nurseries

Station Road, Blackminster, Badsey, Worcestershire

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Archaeological recording

NGR: SP 07231 44795

Site code: BLA17

HER activity no: WSM69385

OASIS ID: 110archa1-317869

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23rd May 2018

one ten archaeology

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Front cover; the site during development, view south-east

SUMMARY

Archaeological recording was carried out in November 2017 at Station Garden Nurseries, Station Road, Blackminster, Worcestershire, during development associated with the erection of a detached dwelling. The archaeological recording comprised observation of the excavation of the strip foundation trenches for one of two new dwellings and the associated soak-away (drainage) trench. No archaeological deposits were encountered during the excavation. Instead, the results revealed a stratigraphic sequence indicative of an open agricultural landscape with little human activity within the development site and the lack of dateable finds from the excavation supports this interpretation.

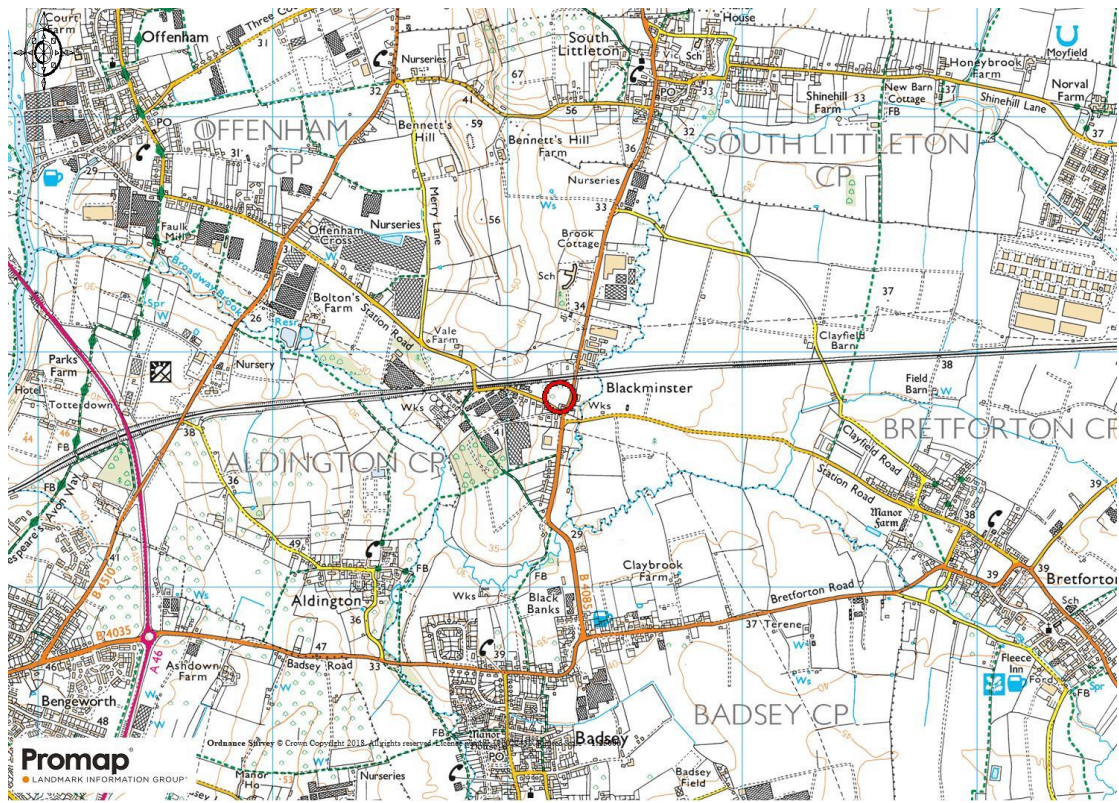


Fig. 1; site location (circled in red)



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 26th November 2017 at Station Garden Nurseries, Station Road, Blackminster, Worcestershire, WR11 7TF at the request of Ain Designs Ltd. The work was required as a condition of planning permission granted in respect of an application (Ref: W/17/01756) to Wychavon District Council for the erection of two detached dwellings and was to be undertaken in accordance with guidelines issued by Worcestershire County Council Historic Environment & Archaeology Service (Glyde, M., 14th March 2014).

The development lies within an area of archaeological potential (WSM12182). While there has been little archaeological fieldwork in the area, a significant number of casual finds have been recorded over the last 150 years. Of particular importance are Saxon objects that suggest a cemetery in the vicinity; however, this may have been partly disturbed during the construction of the railway. The exact location of the cemetery or any contemporary settlement is not known. In addition, the area is known for its Romano-British settlement sites, indeed the name Blackminster may be a reference to the black soils indicative of such sites. Consequently, any deposits disturbed during the course of development may be of archaeological significance.

Since planning approval was granted, one of the dwellings had been erected without an approved scheme of investigation in place raising uncertainty over the legality of the building works already carried out. In view of this the agent had been advised by the planning authority to submit another separate application proposing a change to the wording of condition no. 5 outlined in the previous application, allowing the submission of the programme of the archaeological work and WSI subsequent to the commencement of development, thereby allowing the condition to be revised with a degree of certainty over the acceptability of the archaeological programme of work. Should archaeological remains be found to survive during excavation associated with the erection of the proposed second plot, further investigative works may be required to assess the potential impact of the newly built adjacent dwelling on such deposits.

Geology and topography

Blackminster is a hamlet situated within the parish of Badsey. The development site is represented by a roughly rectangular plot of land comprising approx. 1,000m² situated between Station Road and the B4085. 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) was consulted with a 500m radial search area centred on the site. The search area is situated within a low-lying river terrace of mixed sands and gravels with lime-rich loamy and clayey soils. The field pattern is one of field amalgamation and piecemeal enclosure with small areas of industry. The dominant character of is market gardening and there are a number of associated glasshouses and nurseries throughout this area. Within this landscape, the settlement pattern is nucleated. There are 9 unlisted historic buildings, 4 of which are associated with historic farmsteads. These principally date to the C19 and C20. The former Cadbury fruit packing factory (WSM45218) is also located within the search area. The former factory, together with associated buildings (WSM45219), date to the early C20 and have subsequently been converted to commercial use. The Oxford, Worcester and Wolverhampton railway (WSM31664) dating to the mid-C19 bisects the search area. In addition to the built environment there are also monument records for a farmstead, out-farm and field barn located to the north of the site, now demolished. Within the search area, the heritage assets are principally post-medieval in date with the site of limekilns located to the east of the site together with the remains of buildings associated with the former fruit packing factory. An Anglo-Saxon burial (WSM26807) was recorded to the west of the search area in 1852 with a subsequent find of a single saucer brooch being made in 1986. This indicates that there is the potential for an Anglo-Saxon cemetery and associated deposits to survive within this area although these may have been partially truncated or disturbed during the construction of the railway in the mid-C19. A number of finds were recorded during the 'Unlocking the Past' project which potentially date to the prehistoric and Roman periods. There is also a possible Roman site outside of the search area to the south indicated by a number of finds including pottery and metalwork. There are a number of place-names recorded within the search area and to the north-west which contain the word 'black' and may be indicative of a possible site of Roman occupation. No Portable Antiquity Scheme records within the search area although there are records for unstratified

archaeological artefacts within the area which include an Anglo-Saxon saucer brooch mentioned above. There has been very little intrusive archaeological work carried out within the search area. This is reflected in the wider landscape meaning that the survival of archaeology within this search area is relatively unknown. There is however, potential for archaeological features dating to the prehistoric, Roman and Anglo-Saxon periods as indicated by the unstratified artefacts and the recorded and post medieval features aforementioned.

RESULTS (Figs. 3-5)

Method and nature of the excavation

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. It was anticipated that the development would comprise excavation of foundations and ancillary external works. Excavation was carried out by machine using a toothless grading bucket under archaeological supervision.

Description of deposits

Context 102 (natural substrate); context 101 (relict subsoil) & context 100 (topsoil)

The surface of the geological horizon (102), or the natural substrate was encountered at approx. 0.40-60m below ground level at a height varying between 104.20m and 104.80m AOD. The deposit comprised a light brown Lias clay overlying olive-brown clay and in places, this was broken by large deep lenses of fragmented sandstone within a sandy-clay matrix. No archaeological cut features or deposits were observed either cut into or overlying this context.

Sealing the natural clay was a layer of undated relict subsoil (101) consisting of a mid-greyish-brown, silty-clay varying between 0.20-30m thick. Overlying this was the modern topsoil (100) also at approx. 0.20-30m thick.

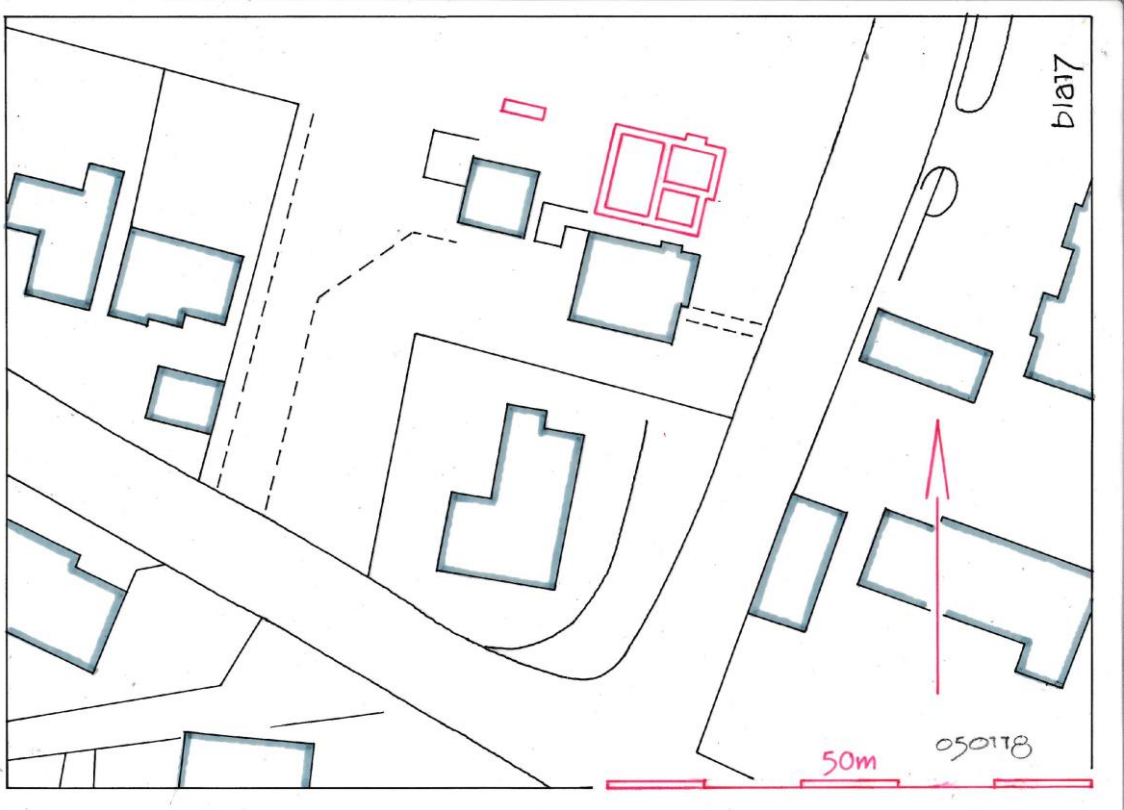


Fig. 3; site plan showing locations of the excavation (outlined in red)

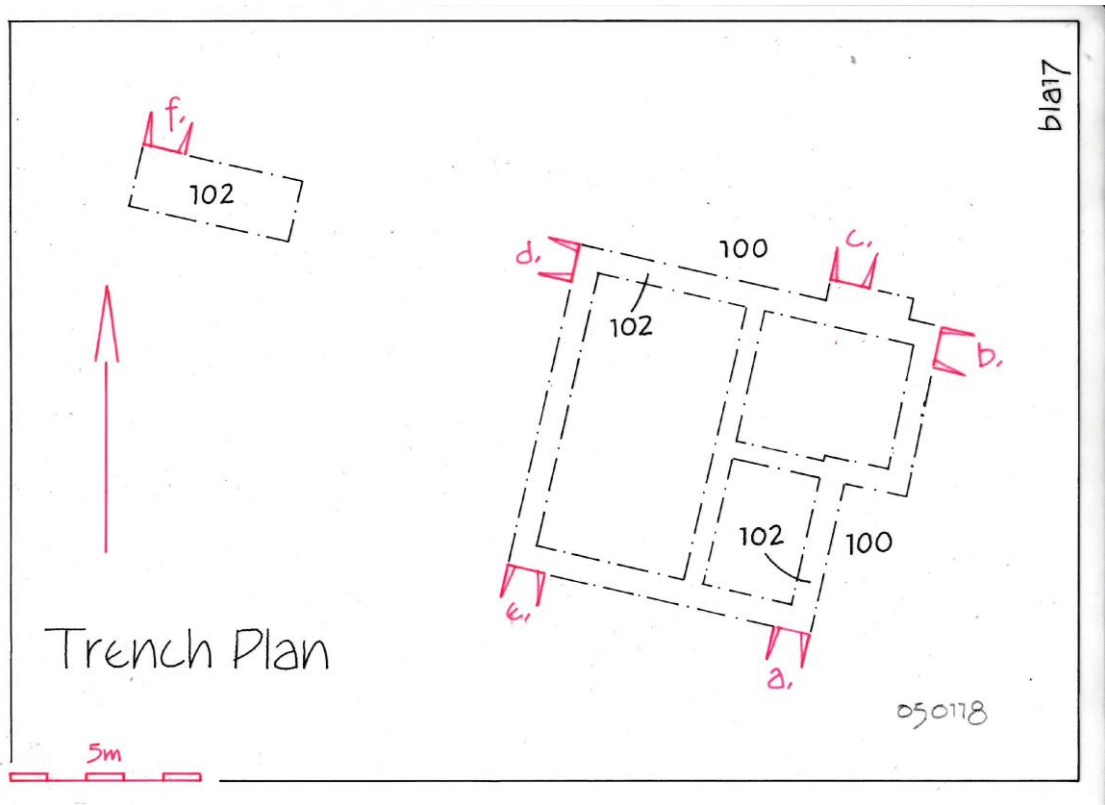


Fig.4; trench plan with section locations

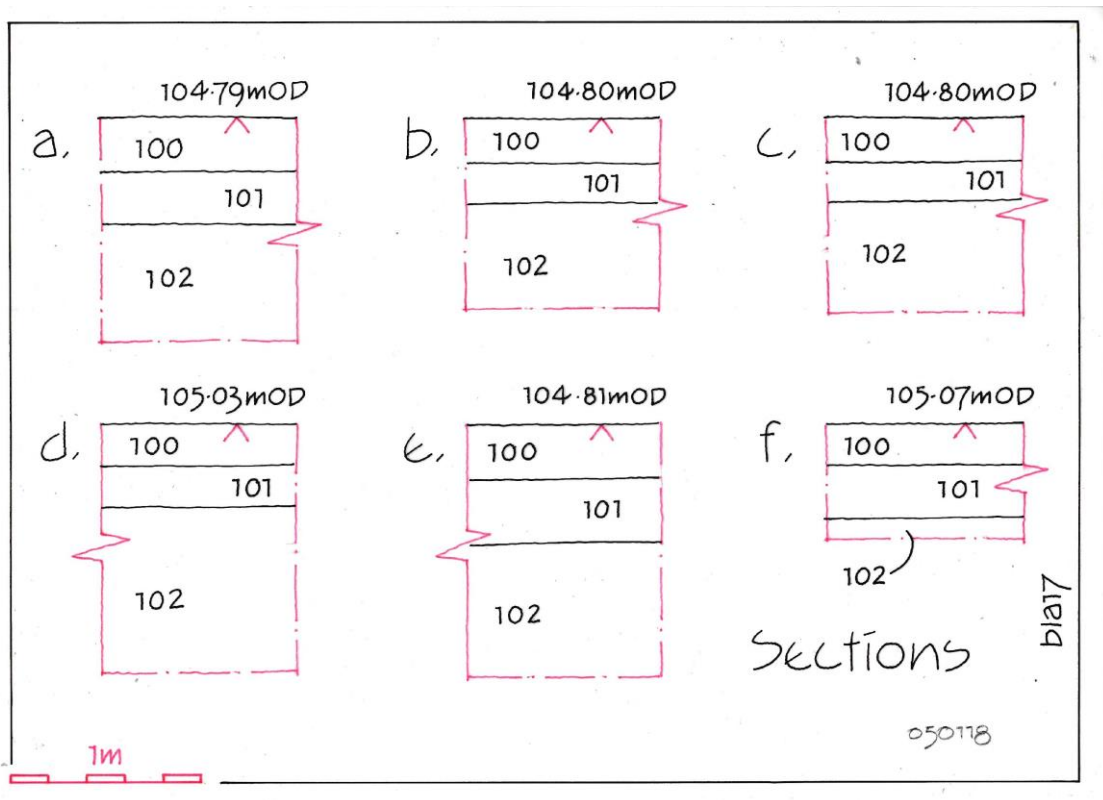


Fig. 5; trench sections

FINDS

No finds were recovered during the excavation.

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 historically in an area where there is potential for significant archaeological deposits associated with the Anglo-Saxon period, a burial (WSM25807) was discovered approx. 450m to the northwest of the site along Station Road including numerous finds over previous years. Roman activity is also recorded to the south just outside the search area. Historically Blackminster developed as a Hamlet within the Parish of Badsey, possibly as a nucleus centred on the crossroads where an ancient east-west route-way links Offenham with Bretforton. Historic mapping (OS 1886) suggests the site has remained largely as open agricultural land probably from at least the early C19 and by the late C19 was being used as an orchard.

The archaeological recording comprised observation of the excavation of the strip foundation trenches for one of the two new dwellings and the associated soak-away (drainage) trench. The natural clay was encountered throughout the excavation of the trenches but revealed no archaeological cut features, truncated or other wise and no overlying deposits. Instead this clay was sealed throughout by an undated layer of homogenous relict subsoil which was in turn sealed by the modern topsoil. The evidence suggests a stratigraphic sequence within the development site indicative of an open agricultural landscape with little human activity and the lack of finds from the excavation supports this interpretation.

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Archive Location

A digital (pdf) copy of the report (referenced with OASIS) will be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service.



Plate 1; overall view to the east of the excavation



Plate 2; view north of the soak-away trench



Plate 3; section 1a



Plate 4; section 1b



Plate 5; section 1c



Plate 6; section 1d

APPENDIX 1: OASIS

Project name	Station Garden Nurseries Station Road, Blackminster, Badsey, Worcestershire;archaeological recording
Project dates	Start: 26-11-2017 End: 26-11-2017
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	BLA17 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	WSM69385 - HER event no.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 10 - Orchard
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	Planning condition
Country	England
Site location	WORCESTERSHIRE WYCHAVON BADSEY Station Garden Nurseries Station Road, Blackminster
Postcode	WR11 7TF
Study area	1000 Square metres
Site coordinates	SP 07231 44795 52.10103043022 -1.894421462831 52 06 03 N 001 53 39 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 104.2m Max: 104.8m
Name of Organisation	one ten archaeology
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	Jill Atherton
Project director/manager	sean cook
Project supervisor	sean cook
Type of sponsor/funding body	Landowner
Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	report
Paper Archive Exists?	No

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Station Garden Nurseries Station Road, Blackminster, Badsey, 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	22 May 2018