

The Malthouse

Pleasant Harbour, Bewdley, Worcestershire DY12 1BH

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Archaeological Recording

NGR: SO 78817 75506

Activity no WSM 71791

Site code: bew19

OASIS ID: 110archa1-370249

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one ten archaeology

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Front cover; View to the west showing excavation TRENCH 1 within the proposed development site.

SUMMARY

Archaeological recording was carried out during 4th and 5th September 2019 at Pleasant Harbour, Bewdley, Worcestershire DY12 1BH during development comprising a kitchen extension. The development lies within an area of archaeological potential within the former medieval settlement. Malthouse, a timber-frame with painted brick and rendered infill (Grade II Listed Building) is described as a late C17, extended late C18, with mid-C19 and some late C20 alterations.

The existing bridge over the River Severn at Bewdley is an early C18 rebuild of an earlier structure which was located downstream. The building of the houses to the north-west of The Malthouse may be associated with improvements made due to the presence of the new bridge. Several ancient buildings survive on the river side nearby including a close-studded building, a C17 three storied brick tower with large chimney and a decorative late C16 or early C17 jettied timber-frame house with gables.

The Malthouse is formed from the central of three buildings together with a single surviving bay of an adjacent building, mostly lost but shown on an aerial photograph. The existing rear garden runs along the back of the house and continues beyond the cottage but in the late C19 extended to the south east with a formal garden. The formal garden suggests that it was laid out when a single large house was formed from two. Features dating to the C18 suggests this may also be associated with the new bridge and the glasshouse, now lost, against the north-east boundary wall indicates C19 improvements.

No archaeological features or deposits were found in the excavation, south-east of Bridgewater Cottage, the third timber-frame, however the slope of the natural substrate here suggests that laying out of the formal garden, to the north-east, included levelling.



Fig. 1; site location (circled in red)

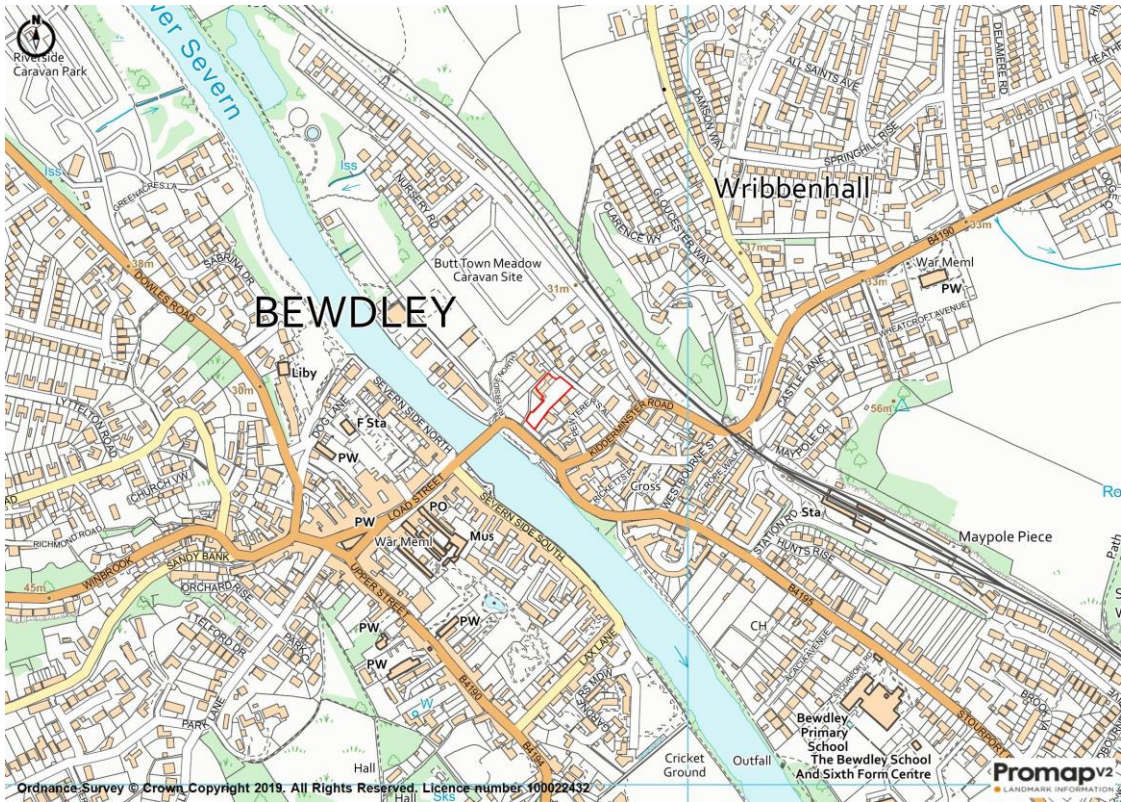


Fig. 2; study site (outlined in red)

INTRODUCTION

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

This document sets out the results for archaeological recording ('watching brief') at Malthouse, Pleasant Harbour, Bewdley, Worcs. DY12 1AE during 4th and 5th September 2019 at the request of Mixed Ventures Ltd. Planning permission had been granted (planning Ref: 19/0280) for a kitchen extension conditional on a programme of archaeological recording during groundworks in line with the guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The development lay within an area of archaeological potential within the former medieval settlement. Malthouse (Grade II Listed Building) is described as a late C17, extended late C18, with mid-C19 and some late C20 alterations. Timber-frame with painted brick and rendered infill. It was therefore recognised that any groundworks associated with the development may disturb deposits of archaeological potential.

Geology and topography

Bewdley is a small town situated on the River Severn in the civil parish which forms part of the Wyre Forest District of Worcestershire on the Shropshire border, along the Severn Valley a few miles to the west of Kidderminster and 22 miles south-west of Birmingham. The main part of Bewdley town is situated on the western bank of the River Severn, including the main street—Load Street—whose name derives from *lode*, an old word for ferry. Load Street is notable for its width: this is because it once also served as the town's market place. On the eastern side of the river is the smaller part of the town which is historically referred to as Wribbenhall.

The borough of Bewdley is included with the Parish of Ribbedford which itself covers a triangular piece of land bounded on the east by the River Severn and on the south-west by Gladder Brook; it contains, including the borough of Bewdley, nearly 3,713 acres, of which 455 are arable, 1,560 under permanent grass and 1,224 woodland (VCH, 1924). The borough of Bewdley lies to the north of Ribbesford parish, on the borders of Wyre Forest, and is divided by Dowles Brook from Shropshire, in which county it was included in the C15th. The boundaries of the ancient manor which coincide with the present municipal

boundary are given in a survey of 1612, since printed in Burton's History of Bewdley.

The site lies on the east side of the river in the Wribbenhall area of Bewdley at a height of about 30m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) and is represented by a roughly rectangular plot of land extending north from the Kidderminster Road where it now runs along the river frontage. The proposed development which is situated adjacent to the house comprises an area of about 65m². The underlying geology is either First Terrace river gravels or pebble beds (BGS, 1976).

Archaeological and historical background

The Worcestershire Historic Environment Record (HER) was consulted with a search carried out over a 500m radius centred on the site in order to understand the archaeology of the locality. Significant aspects of the data within the HER that is relevant to the site, including an analysis of the results of the previous evaluation and historical mapping, will be included within the final report.

The HER search recorded 52 Archaeological activities and 419 HER Monuments. The search area sits within the Severn Valley, based on a bedrock of sandstone and mudstone with superficial deposits of alluvium and Power Terrace sand and gravels. The landscape is surrounded by low, wooded hills and the northwest is dominated by the ancient/ semi natural woodland of the Wyre Forest. Bewdley has medieval origins with significant expansion in the Post Medieval period and further large areas of modern expansion around the historic core. Settlement in the wider landscape comprises interrupted row settlement leading to an area of smallholdings in the west, and new town and modern expansion reaching to join the modern expansion of Kidderminster in the east.

Within the search area lie 267 Historic England Listed Historic Buildings and 54 other unlisted historic buildings. The earliest structures include 19 buildings with medieval origins, mainly timber framed buildings of the C14-C16. A large proportion of the buildings date to the C17 and C18 and include large terraces on Severnside and Load Street as well as pubs & inns, shops, church buildings and structures related to the River Severn, its use and crossing. C19 and C20 structures are also recorded, including buildings related to the defence of Worcestershire during the Second World War. Structures within the vicinity of the development site are principally Listed C17 and C18 dwellings. A Historic England project to identify the Historic Farmsteads of Worcestershire also recorded two out-farms dating to the C17-C19.

In addition to the built environment there are also monument records for the site of a number of buildings which are now demolished including a gasworks, rope works, chemical works, lockup, farm and mill buildings and a chocolate factory, indicating a growing industrial town during the post-medieval period. The site of additional Second World War defences for example weapon positions, bombing pits and road-block locations, are also recorded for the C20. For the medieval period there are records that indicate the tenement plots, marketplace and street system as well as records for the site of medieval chapels, town gates and other occupation sites. The earliest evidence for the search area includes a possible Roman kiln site. Six Portable Antiquity Scheme finds are recorded within the search area, principally coins, tokens and brooches dated to the medieval period but also including a Roman bead. Archaeological investigations have also recovered a quantity of artefacts including a numerous post-medieval pottery sherds and pieces of architectural material like roof tile. A small amount of Roman and medieval tile and pottery are also present and a single bronze age axe-hammer. Environmental remains of the Medieval period onwards have also been recorded.

There has been a large amount of archaeological investigations within the search area. This has included several building recordings and a series of watching briefs on small scale changes to the urban fabric of the town. The Malthouse row was also subject to dendrochronological dating in 2007. A small number of evaluations are also recorded and the most recent of these have identified walls and other remains of post-medieval buildings or structures. The Central Marches Historic Town Survey also covered Bewdley. Overall there is a good level of potential for further surviving sub-surface deposits within the search area, especially from the post-medieval period. A Historic England project to identify the potential for Palaeolithic Archaeology in Worcestershire recorded a series of deposits within the search area with potential for archaeology dating.

Unstratified Romano-British pottery and tile ([WSM41823](#)) found at Northwood Lane in the Wribbenhall area of Bewdley may indicate the location of a Roman kiln.

There are two manors of Ribbesford mentioned in 1086, both were outlying estates of Kidderminster and belonged to the Crown. The medieval settlement of Wribbenhall ([WSM15181](#)) on the eastern side of the Severn and now part of Bewdley, was probably the other of these two pre-Conquest manors, being described as extending over both banks of the Severn. After this date only one manor is documented and it may have been that both were granted together to the new tenants with Ribbesford becoming incorporated into Bewdley when the

town was granted borough status, as well as a weekly market, by King Edward IV in 1472. By the C14, the town had come to be known as *Beau lieu*, French for "Beautiful place".

The church of St. Leonard, Ribbesford was built around 1100 with a south chapel added later in the C12. The town of Bewdley, probably owing to its origin as a forest settlement, was extra-parochial and was included within the parish of Ribbesford until the reign of Henry VI. The first chapel in Wribbenhall, described as a timber building in the heart of the town, was probably built before 1472. A bridge chapel at Bewdley is mentioned in 1650. It was a small timber building on the north side of the old bridge which itself was built in 1447 and was pulled down to make room for Telford's bridge in 1798.

RESULTS (Figs. 3-6)

Method and nature of the excavation

The objective of the archaeological recording was to obtain an appropriate record of the archaeological deposits and finds disturbed or exposed during excavation of the new kitchen area. Excavation involved strip trench foundations, approx. 0.60m wide and about 0.90m deep for the new extension and was only used for the removal of non-archaeologically significant material (modern deposits) excavating these layers stratigraphically. All machining was conducted under constant and close archaeological supervision using a toothless bucket and ceased when the natural substrate was revealed, excavation continued by hand thereafter.

Description of deposits

Excavation revealed the surface of the underlying geological (natural) substrate (102) throughout the excavated trenches area at a level height of approx. 24.14m AOD and which comprised an orange sandy-gravel with pockets of sand. This deposit sloped down gradually from northeast to southwest. No archaeological deposits or features were observed overlying or cut into the surface of this gravel layer. Instead it was overlain by a homogenous layer (101) interpreted as a relict subsoil consisting of a mid-greyish-brown sandy-silt with a small pebble inclusion and varying in depth from 0.34-58m across the excavated area. This was in turn sealed by the modern topsoil, a garden deposit of dark greyish-brown silt varying in thickness from 0.14-45m.

FINDS

No finds were recovered during the excavation.

Environmental data

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

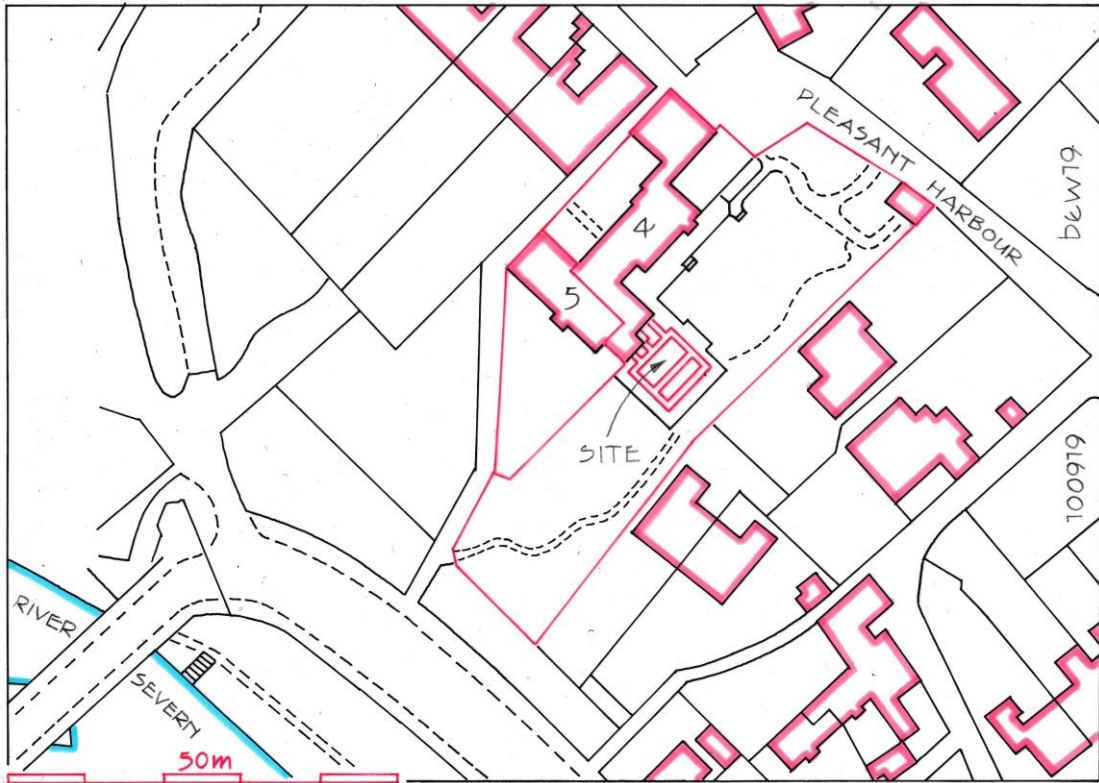


Fig. 3; Site plan 2019.

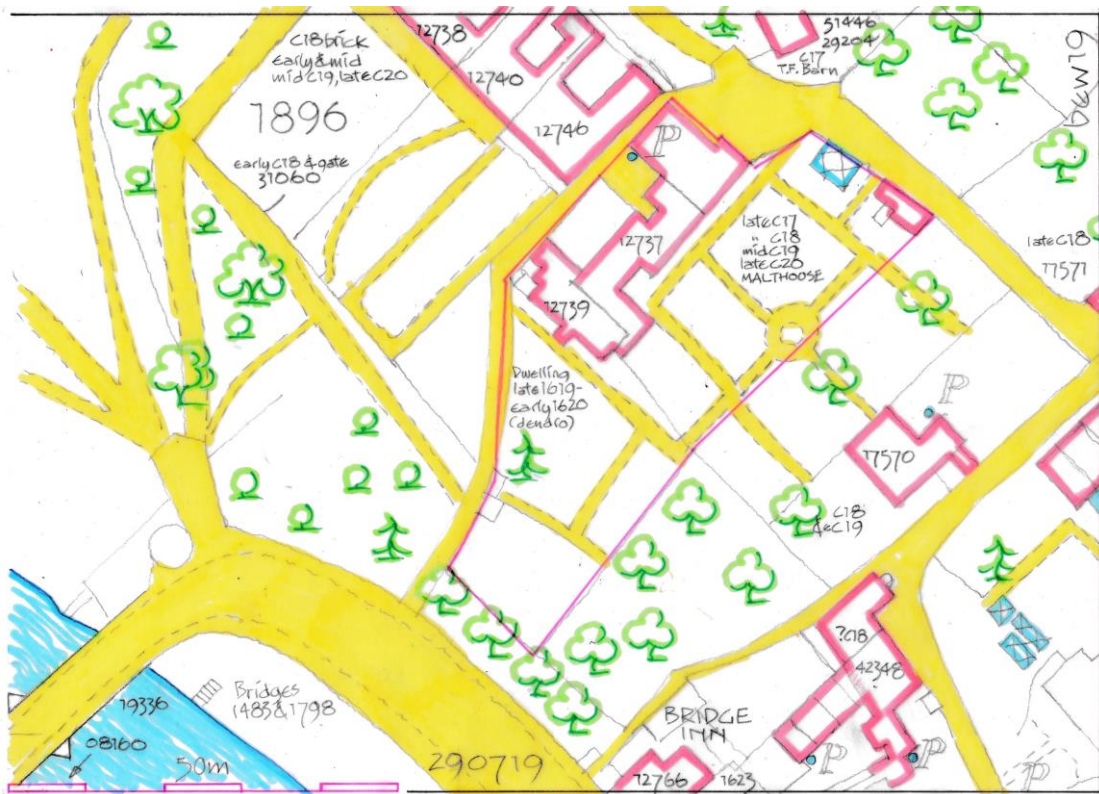


Fig. 4; Site plan 1896.

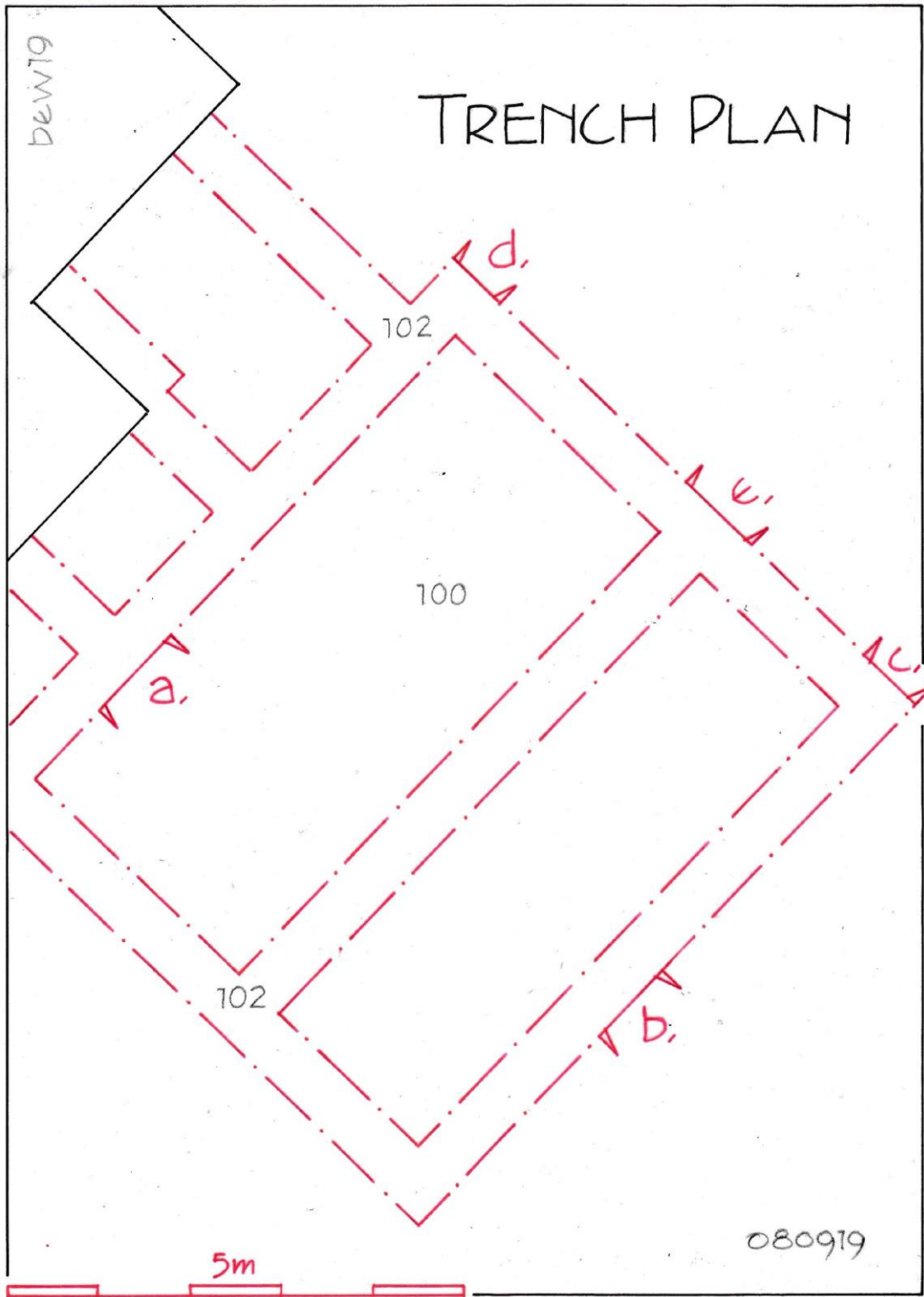


Fig. 5; Trench Plan.

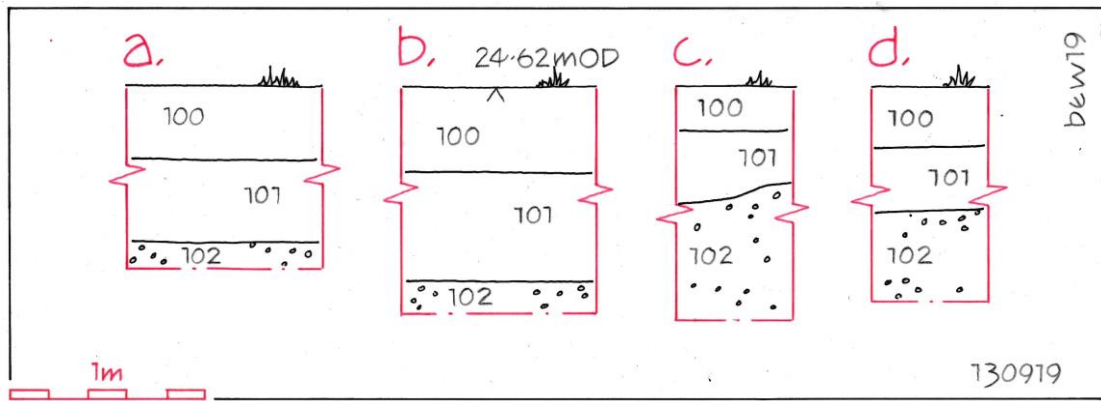


Fig. 6; Sections.

DISCUSSION (Figs. 7 & 8)

The existing bridge over the River Severn at Bewdley is an early C18 rebuild of an earlier structure, there are views of the old bridge together with the gatehouse sited just south-west of the middle and according to the 1st Edition OS it was located downstream, to the south-east, meeting the left bank at the Kidderminster Road. At a short distance from the river this road is diverted southward due to the construction in the C19 of the Severn Valley Branch railway which crosses it here. The building of the houses to the north-west of The Malthouse may be associated with improvements made due to the presence of the new bridge and the gardens would provide fine views over the new bridge, Load Street and the town beyond. Several ancient buildings survive on the river side near the Kidderminster Road including a close-studded building and a C17 three storied brick tower with a large chimney. There is a particularly decorative late C16 or early C17 jettied timber-frame house with gables to the garret chambers around the corner on Kidderminster Road.

The Malthouse is presently formed from the central of three buildings together with a single surviving bay of the building doglegged to the north-east, the lost bays and the end frame of which are clearly shown on an aerial photograph. The third dwelling, Bridgewater Cottage, crosses the other end. Each storey of the central building is three square timber-framed panels tall and those of the other structures are only two and appears to incorporate its end walls. The north-eastern building doglegs with the central one to the south-east. The existing rear garden runs along the back of the house and continues beyond the cottage but formerly extended to the south east with a formal garden shown on the 1st Edition OS. The formal garden suggests that it was laid out when a single large house was formed from two. Features dating to the C18 suggests this may also be associated with the new bridge and the glasshouse, now lost, against the north-east boundary wall indicates C19 improvements. No archaeological features or deposits were found in the excavation, south-east of Bridgewater Cottage, indicating little or no activity connected with the medieval occupation of the area, however the slope of the natural substrate here suggests that laying out of the formal garden, to the north-east, included some levelling of the ground during the C18.

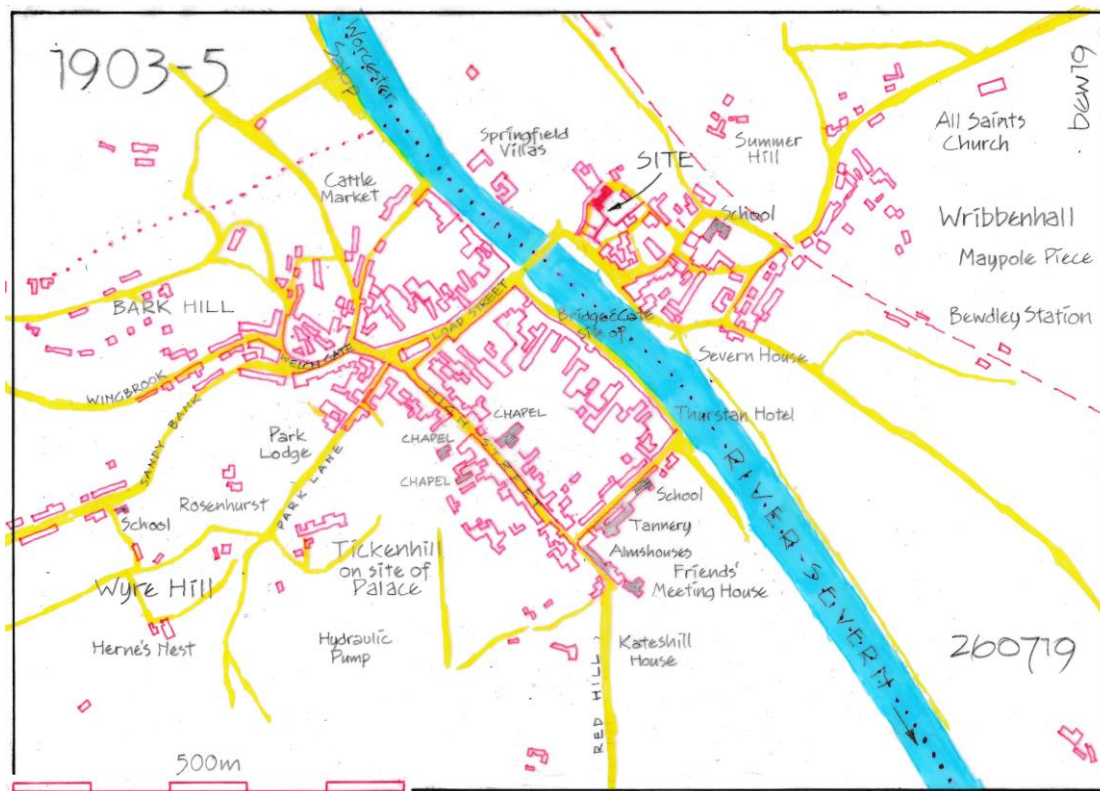


Fig. 7; Bewdley historic environment

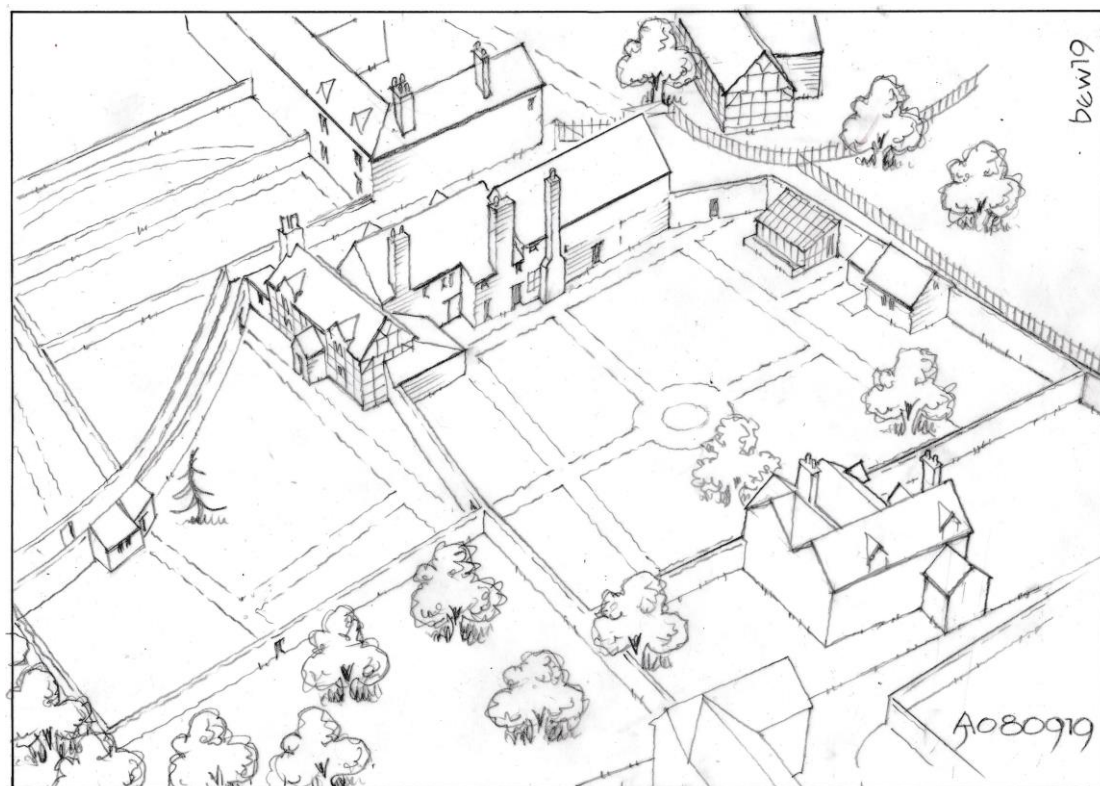


Fig. 8; Reconstructed view 1896 from south-east.

Archive Location

The digital archive arising from the work will be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS). The physical archive will be deposited with the Worcestershire Museum Service.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Worcestershire County Historic Environment Service 2019. *Historic Environment Record.*

OS 1896, First Edition

OS 1903, Second Edition

PLATES



Plate 1; View of house from east.



Plate 2; View of site from south-east just prior to excavation.



Plate 3; View of site from east during excavation.



Plate 4; View of excavation from north-east.



Fig 5; Section a.



Fig 6; Section c.



Plate 7; Section d.



Plate 8; Section e.



Plate 9; Malhouse, front elevation, view from the northwest



Plate 10; Bridgewater Cottage, view from the southeast



Plate 11; north side of Malthouse, view from the north



Plate 12; a glimpse of the fine C18 houses north-west of Malthouse from south.

APPENDIX 1; OASIS

Project name	The Malthouse, Pleasant Harbour, Bewdley
Short description of the project	<p>An archaeological Watching Brief was carried out in September 2019 at Pleasant Harbour, Bewdley, Worcestershire DY12 1BH in advance of a new extension. The site lies within the former medieval settlement and The Malthouse, a timber-frame with painted brick and rendered infill (Grade II Listed Building) is described as a late C17, extended late C18, with mid-C19 and some late C20 alterations. The existing bridge over the River Severn at Bewdley is an C18 rebuild of an earlier structure which was located downstream. The building of the houses to the north-west of The Malthouse may be associated with improvements made due to the presence of the new bridge. Several ancient buildings survive on the river side nearby including a close-studded building, a C17 three storied brick tower with large chimney and a decorative late C16 or early C17 jettied timber-frame house with gables. The Malthouse is formed from the central of three buildings together with a part of an adjacent building, mostly lost but shown on an aerial photograph. The garden which runs along the back of the house continues beyond the cottage but in the late C19 extended to the south east with a formal garden, suggesting that it was laid out when a single large house was formed from two. Features dating to the C18 indicate this may also be associated with the new bridge. The glasshouse, now lost, against the north-east boundary wall indicates C19 improvements. No archaeological features or deposits were found in the excavation, south-east of Bridgewater Cottage, the third timber-frame, however the slope of the natural substrate here suggests that laying out of the formal garden, to the north-east, included levelling.</p>

Project dates Start: 04-09-2019 End: 05-09-2019

Previous/future work No / Not known

Any project codes associated bew19 – Site code reference

Type of project Recording project

Site status Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area

Current Land use Other 13 - Waste ground

Monument type TIMBER-FRAMES Post Medieval

Significant Finds NONE None

Investigation type ""Watching Brief""

Prompt Listed Building Consent

Project location

Country England

Site location WORCESTERSHIRE WYRE FOREST BEWDLEY The Malthouse

Postcode DY12 1BH

Study area 8 Square metres

Site coordinates SO 78817 75506 52.376802114013 -2.311212522317
52 22 36 N 002 18 40 W Point

Height OD / Depth Min: 23.63m Max: 24.13m

Project creators

Name of one ten archaeology
Organisation

Project brief Local Planning Authority (with/without advice from
originator County/District Archaeologist)

Project design one ten archaeology
originator

Project sean cook
director/manager

Project supervisor sean cook

Type of Developer
sponsor/funding
body

Name of Mixed Ventures Ltd.
sponsor/funding
body

Project archives

Digital Archive OASIS
recipient

Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

Title The Malthouse, Pleasant Harbour, Worcestershire DY12
1BH

Author(s)/Editor(s) Cook, S

Date 2019

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Place of issue or Warwickshire
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Entered by Jill Atherton (jillatherton.mcifa@btinternet.com)

Entered on 16 October 2019

APPENDIX 2; The House

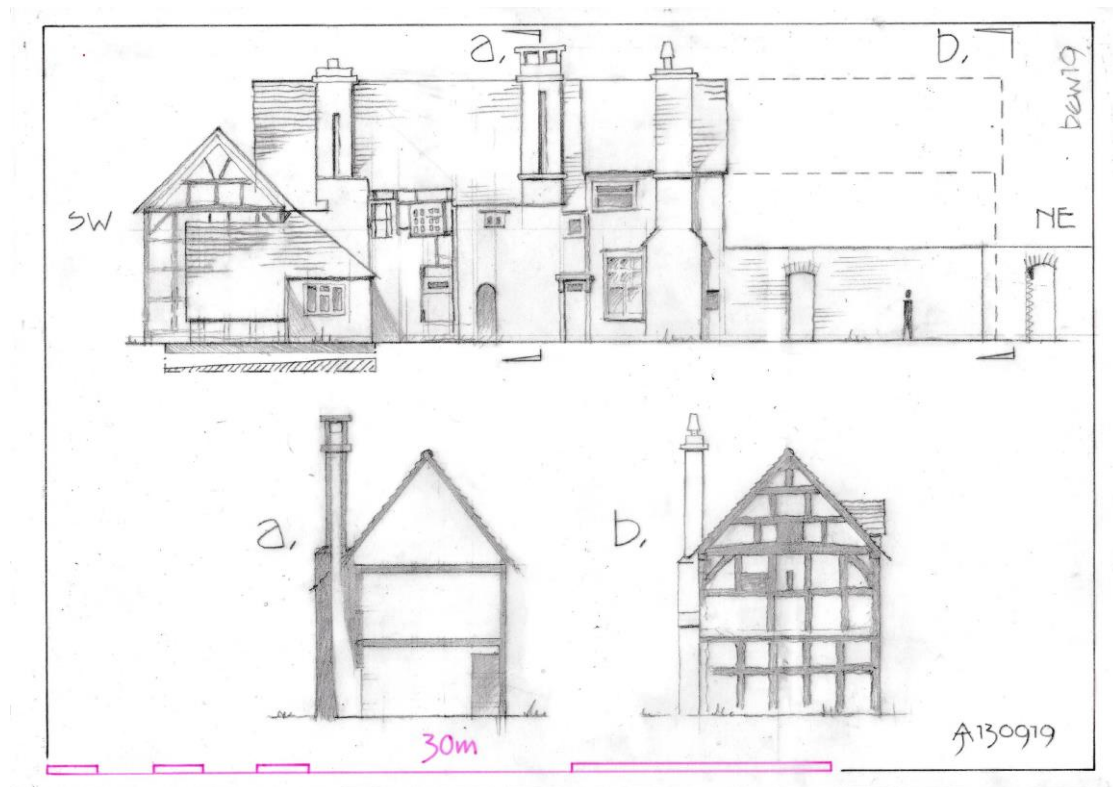


Fig 1; Sketch elevations.

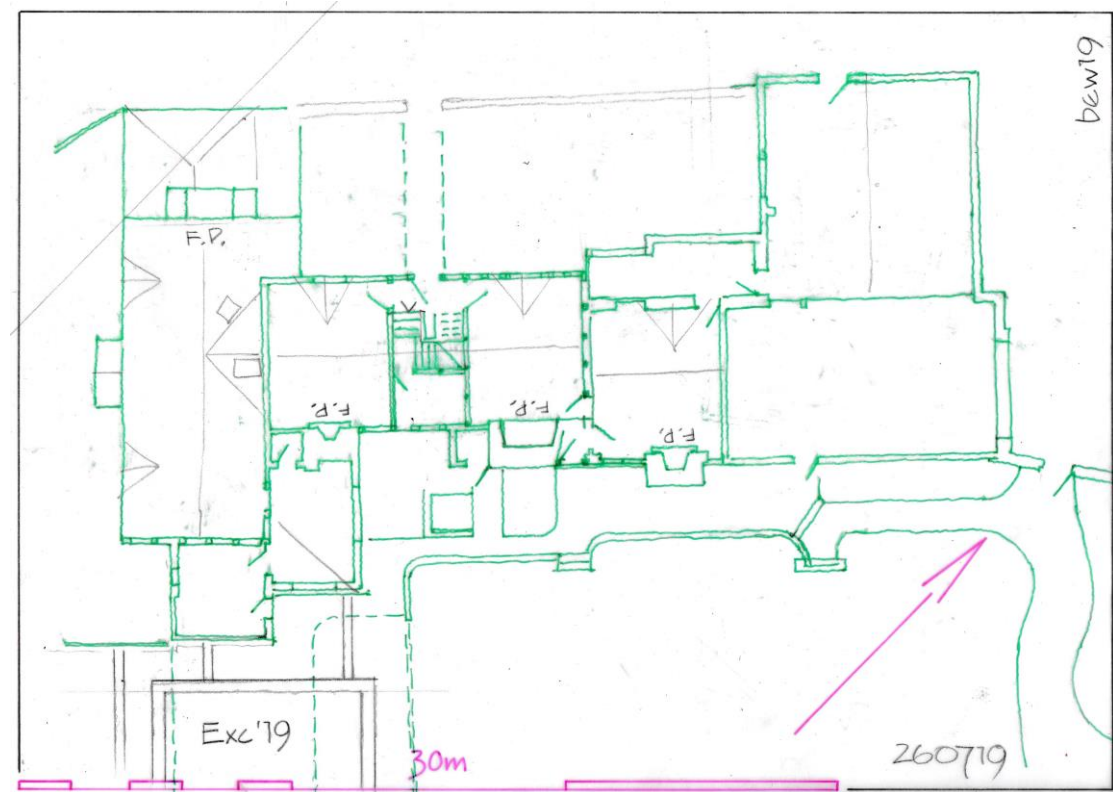


Fig 2; Sketch plan.



Plate 1; Aerial photo showing the two lost north-east bays.