

Anne Hathaway's Cottage and Mary Arden's Farm

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

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ANNE HATHAWAY'S COTTAGE, SHOTTERY and MARY ARDEN'S FARM, WILMCOTE

Cottage Lane, Shottery, Stratford-upon-Avon, CV37 9HH Station Road, Wilmcote, Stratford-upon-Avon, CV37 9UN

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

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Archaeological Watching Brief, 12/2016

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Archaeological Watching Brief, 12/2016

SUMMARY

The Centre of Archaeology was commissioned in November 2016 by The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust to undertake archaeological watching briefs in respect of a proposed conservation works at two of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust's properties, Anne Hathaway's Cottage (NGR: SP 1854 4474) and Mary Arden's Farm (NGR: SP 16417 58114). At Anne Hathaway's Cottage visitor centre, a blocked waste water drainage run was excavated by mechanical excavator and at Mary Arden's Farm two small investigation pits were hand excavated for the purpose of identifying defects in the foundations of the barn wall.

The watching brief at Anne Hathaway's Cottage was undertaken on the 5th December 2016 and was situated adjacent to a hedge which was thought to have been the location of the historic back plot boundary. No archaeological deposits or features were encountered. Several fragments of domestic ceramics were recovered, these ranged in date from the later 17th to the 19th centuries.

The watching brief at Mary Arden's Farm was undertaken on the 7th December 2016. It was located within and adjacent to the toilet block in the central courtyard of Palmer's Farm, against the eastern elevation of the main barn. The small investigation pits found that the modern toilet block (1960's) had been built upon an earlier brick structure. This appeared to be square in shape and continued beneath the floor. The structure had been levelled and filled during the construction of the toilet block. In the intervening period the fill of the feature, which was once compacted, had begun to subside.

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Anne Hathaway's Cottage and Mary Arden's Farm

Archaeological Watching Brief, 12/2016

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The Centre of Archaeology based at Staffordshire University was commissioned by the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust to undertake archaeological watching briefs during proposed conservation works at Anne Hathaway's Cottage, Shottery and Mary Arden's Farm, Wilmcote, (hereinafter referred to as site AH and site MA).
- 1.2. This report outlines the results of the watching briefs carried out on the 5th and 7th December 2016 and has been prepared in accordance with government guidelines contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2012). The project conformed to standards and guidance issued by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA 2014).

2. LOCATION AND GEOLOGY

- 2.1. Anne Hathaway's Cottage is located in Shottery, a hamlet within the parish of Stratford-on-Avon located just over a mile west of the town centre and is centred on NGR SK 1854 4474 (Figure 1). Mary Arden's farm is located in Wilmcote, a small village located approximately 3 miles north west of the town centre of Stratford-upon-Avon (NGR SP 16417 58114) (Figure 1).
- 2.2. The underlying geology of the Stratford-upon-Avon area is mapped as bedrock consisting of West Mercian Mudstone overlaid by Wasperton 2nd terrace river gravels of the Pleistocene Warwickshire Avon Valley Formation. (British Geological Survey, 1974).
- 2.3. The present character of Anne Hathaway's Cottage consists of buildings dating from the 15th century, currently used as an historic building open to the public. The cottage itself was built over several periods and was a substantial residence Richard Hathaway, father of Anne, William Shakespeare's wife. The cottage is located in Shottery, which is made up of domestic properties and agricultural land. Cottage Lane passes by the eastern side of the property and there are wooded areas to the north-east and south of the property. Open fields are located to the west of the cottage.
- 2.4. The present character of Mary Arden's Farm consists of agricultural buildings, some of which are dated to the early 16th century. The house was constructed by Robert Arden father of Mary, William Shakespeare's mother. The house is located in Wilmcote village, which is made up of domestic properties, agricultural buildings and agricultural land. Station Road passes by the southern side of the house and there are open areas of agricultural land on all sides of the property.
- 2.5. Anne Hathaway's Cottage is a Grade I star Listed property located within the conservation area of Shottery. Mary Arden's Farm and its attached dairy is Grade I Listed.



3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1. The principal aim of the watching briefs was to record any archaeological features, structures, deposits, or horizons exposed during intrusive groundwork investigations across the two sites.
- 3.2. More specific aims were to:
- Identify, assess and record the survival of potentially unknown or obscured archaeological features
- Provide information which may enhance historical and archaeological knowledge of Anne Hathaway's Cottage and Mary Arden's farm
- Contribute information which may answer important locally, regionally and nationally important questions relating to Anne Hathaway's Cottage and Mary Arden's Farm.

4. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

4.1. Anne Hathaway's Cottage

- 4.1.1. Anne Hathaway's Cottage is a fifteenth-century house, set out on a plot with a garden and attached smallholding (toft and croft) behind the property, rising in a south easterly direction.
- 4.1.2. The cottage was the childhood home of William Shakespeare's wife Anne, the daughter of a wealthy yeoman farmer, Richard Hathaway. Richard died in September 1581, bequeathing Ann £6 13s 4d 'atte the day of her maryage'. This marriage, to William Shakespeare, took place in November of the following year. The cottage was, by the standards of the day, a substantial residence of a well-to-do yeoman farmer. The cottage is constructed of a timber frame with brick and plaster infill on a limestone plinth. It has a thatch roof which is higher on the western wing and has external brick stacks (Listed buildings 2017).
- 4.1.3. It appears to have been built in two stages. The lower part, adjoining the road, has been conclusively dated to the early 1460s and consisted of a cross passage, where the visitor enters today, with a hall to the left and kitchen to the right. The hall, when originally built, would probably have been open to the roof. On the first floor, above the cross passage is a space of matching size where the early construction of this part of the house is clearly visible. The evidence for this is a cruck, a pair of large and matching curved timbers reaching from the ground to the apex of the roof, a characteristic of medieval timber-framed buildings. On either side are bedchambers, of which the bedchamber to the west was created when a floor was inserted into the open hall. The chimney stack, which runs up through this part of the house, probably dates from the time of this alteration. Outside, this stack bears a plaque, with the date 1697 and the initials I.H. (for John Hathaway), however, this would seem rather late for the alterations to the hall and may just record repairs or rebuilding of the exterior stonework (SBT 1).
- 4.1.4. Early in the seventeenth century, when the premises were owned by Bartholomew Hathaway, Anne's brother, a taller section was added to the house at the orchard (western) end. This is now divided into three small rooms on the ground floor, with two bedchambers above.
- 4.1.5. The house remained in the Hathaway family, inherited through the Taylor line for several generations. The male Hathaway line ended in 1746 on the death of John Hathaway, but the property then passed, through his sister Susanna, to his nephew, John Hathaway Taylor, whose



son, William Taylor, lived there until his death in 1846. Financial problems had forced him to sell the house six years earlier, but he had remained in occupation as a tenant, as did his daughter, Mary, the wife of George Baker. She was still living there in 1892, when the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust purchased the property. With it came various items of family furniture, including the Hathaway Bed, dating from Anne's time (Fox 1987).

4.1.6. The cottage has remained the home of the Hathaway family from the C15 to 1892, when it was sold to the Trustees and Guardians of Shakespeare's Birthplace. It has been a place of marked literary and tourist interest from at least the mid C18, due to being associated with William Shakespeare and the place where he may well have courted Anne (Listed Buildings 2017).

4.2. Mary Arden's Farm

- 4.2.1. The site known as Mary Arden's Farm contains two farmhouses with their farmyards. Until the year 2000 Mary Arden's House was formerly known as Glebe Farmhouse and what was formerly known as Mary Arden's House is now known as Palmer's Farm.
- 4.2.2. Palmer's Farmhouse and its associated farm buildings are mid to late 16th century in origin (1560's), adjacent to these are 18th to 19th century farm buildings. The farmhouse has close studded and square-panelled timber framing and a tiled roof and has undergone a series of renovations throughout the following centuries. The main barn is an L-shaped building of stone with some timber framing. It contains big doorways with segmental brick arches on both sides. The southern timber framed gable wall probably originated in the 17th century, with the stone elements of the barn dating from the mid 18th century.
- 4.2.3. Mary Arden's home was the building which was known for two centuries as Glebe Farm. This was the home of Robert Arden, in which his daughter Mary, the mother of William Shakespeare, grew up. The building is part brick and part-timber framed, with the main range aligned east to west. The earliest part of the structure which was originally an open-hall house. Tree-ring data shows that the timbers were felled in the winters of 1512/3 and 1513/14. Mary Arden's then went through a series of redevelopments and restorations in the following centuries. Mary Arden's House stands at the south end of a farmyard which is enclosed by livestock buildings and barns of the 18th and 19th centuries (SBT 2)

5. METHODOLOGY

- 5.1. The groundworks differed on each site according to the conditions. At Anne Hathaway's Cottage the exploratory trench was excavated using a mini-digger fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. Where it was not practical to use this, excavation was completed through the use of hand tools. At Mary Arden's Farm all excavations were completed by hand. The groundworks on each site were monitored by a suitably qualified archaeologist and complemented with the salvage recording of the archaeological deposits and features revealed during works.
- 5.2. All stratigraphic sequences were recorded, even where no archaeology was present. Where necessary features were planned at a scale of 1:10, and sections were drawn of all cut features and significant vertical stratigraphy also at a scale of 1:10. A comprehensive written record was maintained using a continuous numbered context system on *pro-forma* cards. Written records and scale plans were supplemented by photographs using digital photography.



- 5.3. Recovered finds were cleaned, marked and remedial conservation work undertaken as necessary. Treatment of all finds conformed to guidance contained within the Centre of Archaeology Fieldwork Manual (2013) and *First Aid for Finds* (Watkinson and Neal 1998).
- 5.4. The full site archive includes all artefactual remains recovered from the above sites. The site archive will be prepared according to guidelines set down in Planning Note 3 of the Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment Archaeology Projects (English Heritage, 2008), the Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-term Storage (UKIC, 1990) and Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological collections (Museum and Art Galleries Commission, 1992). The paper archive will be deposited with the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust library and archives.

6. RESULTS

6.1. Anne Hathaway's Cottage. (Plates 1 & 2, Figures 1 & 3)

- 6.1.1. The exploratory trench at Anne Hathaway's Cottage was excavated for the purpose of identifying the route of the foul water waste pipe associated with the south west corner of the visitor centre. The trench was excavated by mechanical excavator to a length of approximately 4 metres. As the trench was located along the side of an established hedge and trees, there were extensive root systems which prevented it from being excavated down to a uniform depth. Overall, it was excavated to a depth of approximately 0.5 to 1 metres. It was not possible for the drain route to be identified during this evaluation exercise. Across the length of trench, there was no evidence of occupation or archaeological horizons.
- 6.1.2. A mid-dark, orangey-red, clayey sand deposit with occasional inclusions of rounded pebbles (002) was identified approximately 0.3m below ground level. This subsoil deposit extended beyond the trench across the site. The presence of this layer confirmed there was minimal disturbance to the underlying layers, at this location.
- 6.1.3. Overlying this subsoil deposit was the topsoil (001). The topsoil was composed of dark-brown sandy–silt. There were occasional rounded pebbles and fragments of stone rubble included within the deposit and it was covered by turf (short cut grass). The deposit extended across the entire plot of Mary Arden's Farm and beyond. At various locations across the site there were modern tarmac paths and areas of hard-standing constructed to provide access around the property. There was evidence of minimal disturbance to the topsoil at various locations. Around these locations, several ceramic fragments were recovered, the earliest of which was late seventeenth century. Other fragments dating to the twentieth centuries were also present.
- 6.1.4. The trench was located along the location of what was thought to be the original thirteenth century plot boundary. Although no evidence was recovered to confirm the presence of this boundary. It is likely that the present hedge obscured any evidence of the existence of earlier boundaries.

6.2. Mary Arden's Farm (Figures 1, 2, 4 & 5)

6.2.1. Two small exploratory test pits (Test Pits 1 and 2) were excavated at Mary Arden's Farm (Palmer's Farm) for the purpose of identifying the cause of the subsidence present in the toilet block wall attached to the barn. The test pits were excavated at a close proximity to one another. They were located within the main courtyard of the farm buildings and within the toilet block in the courtyard at Palmer's Farm against the eastern elevation of the main barn. Both



were small exploratory test pits. Test Pit 1 was 1m in length by 0.5m in width and Test Pit 2 was 0.7m in length by 0.35m in width. Natural geology was not reached in either of the two test pits.

6.3. Test Pit 1 (Plates 3 & 5 Figures 1, 2 and 4)

- 6.3.1. Test pit 1 was located within the toilet block against the barn wall. The floor the toilet block was composed of ceramic tiles, which had been removed by hand prior to the excavation.
- 6.3.2. A dark brown, silty-sand deposit with frequent fragments of stone and brick rubble (103) was reached at a depth approximately 0.5m below ground level. This layer was partially exposed to a thickness of 0.2m, although it continued beneath this. The deposit had been used to level the area prior to the construction of the modern toilet block. The stone rubble contained within consisted of locally sourced Wilmcote limestone, the same used in the foundations of the farm buildings.
- 6.3.3. The foundations of the barn (102) were stepped (pad-stone) and were set upon a lime mortar bedding layer. The blocks were made up of rough-cut irregularly laid, Wilmcote stones. The wall of the modern toilet block had been attached to the earlier barn wall making it double skinned, although it remained untied to the barn wall. They differed considerably as the modern toilet block wall was made of brick. Deposit 103 had been placed up against the foundations.
- 6.3.4. A 0.3m thick layer surrounded the foundations and was located above layer 103. This layer (101) was similar in nature to the deposit beneath (103) and was a mixed rubble layer used to level the area prior to the construction of the modern toilet block. The colour of this deposit was slightly lighter than 103, but it contained the same inclusions, such as frequent fragments of stone and brick rubble, tile fragments and lime mortar.
- 6.3.5. A large brick structure was identified directly beneath the floor surface of the toilet block (104). The majority of this structure continued beneath the floor surface and appeared to have survived for up to 1m in both an easterly and southerly direction. The structure itself was constructed of red-orange hand-made bricks and had survived to a depth of at least 3-4 courses. The internal face of the walled structure had been lined using slate, presumably as a means to waterproof and damp proof the structure. Although it was not possible to record the exact dimensions of the structure, it was likely to have been large (a least 1.5m) and square or rectangular in plan. This feature could have been used as a sort of settling tank, storage or slurry pit for use on the 19th century farm.
- 6.3.6. The structure had been filled with a loose reddish-brown, silty-sand deposit containing brick rubble, mortar and clinker (105). There was a void between this deposit and the tiled floor above, presumably as a result of settlement and reduction of the filled brick structure.
- 6.3.7. The test pit was sealed by a sandy cement based mortar bedding layer (100) upon which the tiled floor and toilet block foundation had been built. The layer was yellow/cream in colour and composed primarily of sandy–cement based mortar with frequent inclusions of small rounded pebbles. The toilet block, along with its associated floor surface was laid around the 1960's, when Mary Arden's Farm was redeveloped as a museum for public use.

6.4. Test Pit 2 (Plate 4 & 5, Figures 1, 2 and 5)

6.4.1. Test pit 2 was located within the toilet block against the barn wall. The flagstone pathway was removed by hand prior to the excavation. The stratigraphy of the test pit was very similar to that



of test pit 1. There was less of disturbance of the area as a result of the construction of the toilet block as it was a short distance away to the north.

- 6.4.2. A dark brown, silty-sand deposit with frequent fragments of stone and brick rubble (202) was reached at a depth approximately 0.7m below ground level. This deposit was partially exposed to a thickness of 0.2m, although it continued beneath this to an unknown depth. The stone rubble contained within the layer consisted of locally sourced Wilmcote limestone, the same used in the foundations of the farm buildings.
- 6.4.3. Like test pit 1, the foundations of the barn (201) were stepped (pad-stone) and were set upon a lime mortar bedding layer. The blocks were made up of rough-cut irregularly laid, Wilmcote stones. Deposit 202 had been placed up against the foundations.
- 6.4.4. Deposit **202** was overlain by a mid-brownish red, sandy gravel bedding layer (**200**). This layer contained a high percentage of small (5mm+) pea gravels and it was used to provide the foundation for the flagstone pathway which ran between various different buildings on the property.

7. FINDS

- 7.1. Few artefacts were recovered from the watching brief trench and test pits. This is due to the size and location of the excavated pits. No artefacts were recovered from Mary Arden's Farm test pits. The trench at Anne Hathaway's Cottage contained artefacts including modern white-ware ceramics, trailed slipware, window glass and animal bone.
- 7.2. The slipware recovered from Anne Hathaway's Cottage was of two types. Both were earthenwares, once of these was from a dish which was a trailed and combed with a thin brown slip on a yellow/cream glaze, the second, also from a dish, had a yellow trailed slip on a reddish brown glazed background. These slipwares were dated to the later 18th century.
- 7.3. The white-wares recovered from the site were utilitarian wares such as marmalade jars and cups usual for a domestic site.

8. CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1. The watching briefs at Anne Hathaway's Cottage and Mary Arden's Farm (Palmers' Farm) investigated and assessed the potential for unknown or obscured archaeological features. These were small investigations located in relatively sensitive areas within the confines of the properties.
- 8.2. At Anne Hathaway's Cottage, no evidence in the form of deposits or structures was encountered. Several artefacts were recovered, none of which predated the later 18th century. No other evidence was identified within the trenches. It appears likely that the area has been used for agricultural purposes for the period of its existence. The trench was located against what was thought to have been the historic boundary of the property in the area, no evidence was identified to support this, although the trench did not extend beneath the current boundary hedge.
- 8.3. At Mary Arden's Farm (Palmer's Farm), minimal evidence of earlier features was identified. In test pit 1, directly beneath the tiled floor there was a brick built structure. The purpose of this



structure can only be speculated but it may have used as storage as a settling tank or a slurry pit. An agricultural use appears most likely due to its location and setting. The abandonment and in-filling of this feature probably occurred around the time the toilet block was constructed. In the period since, the infill has reduced leaving a gap underneath the floor.

8.4. Any additional work on or around these properties may result in the exposure of buried features. This becomes increasingly likely when work is proposed near to the historic core of the house. Any further work in or around the toilet block at Mary Arden's Farm (Palmer's Farm) is likely to expose buried features relating to now lost agricultural buildings.

9. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

9.1. The project was commissioned by Mark Ratcliffe assistant building conservation manager, on behalf of The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust. Thanks are also due to Chris Barons, conservation builder for their co-operation and assistance throughout the project. The assessment was undertaken by William Mitchell who produced and illustrated the written report. It was edited by Kevin Colls who also monitored the project for the Centre of Archaeology.

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PLATES AND FIGURES



Plate 1: Anne Hathaway's Cottage. Trench facing south west.





Plate 2: Anne Hathaway's Cottage. Trench facing north east.







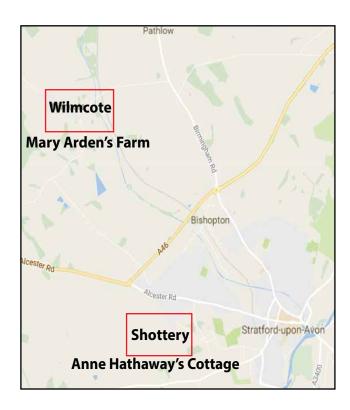


Plate 4: Mary Arden's Farm. Test Pit 2 facing south west.



Plate 5: Mary Arden's Farm. Test Pits 1, 2 and toilet block facing south.















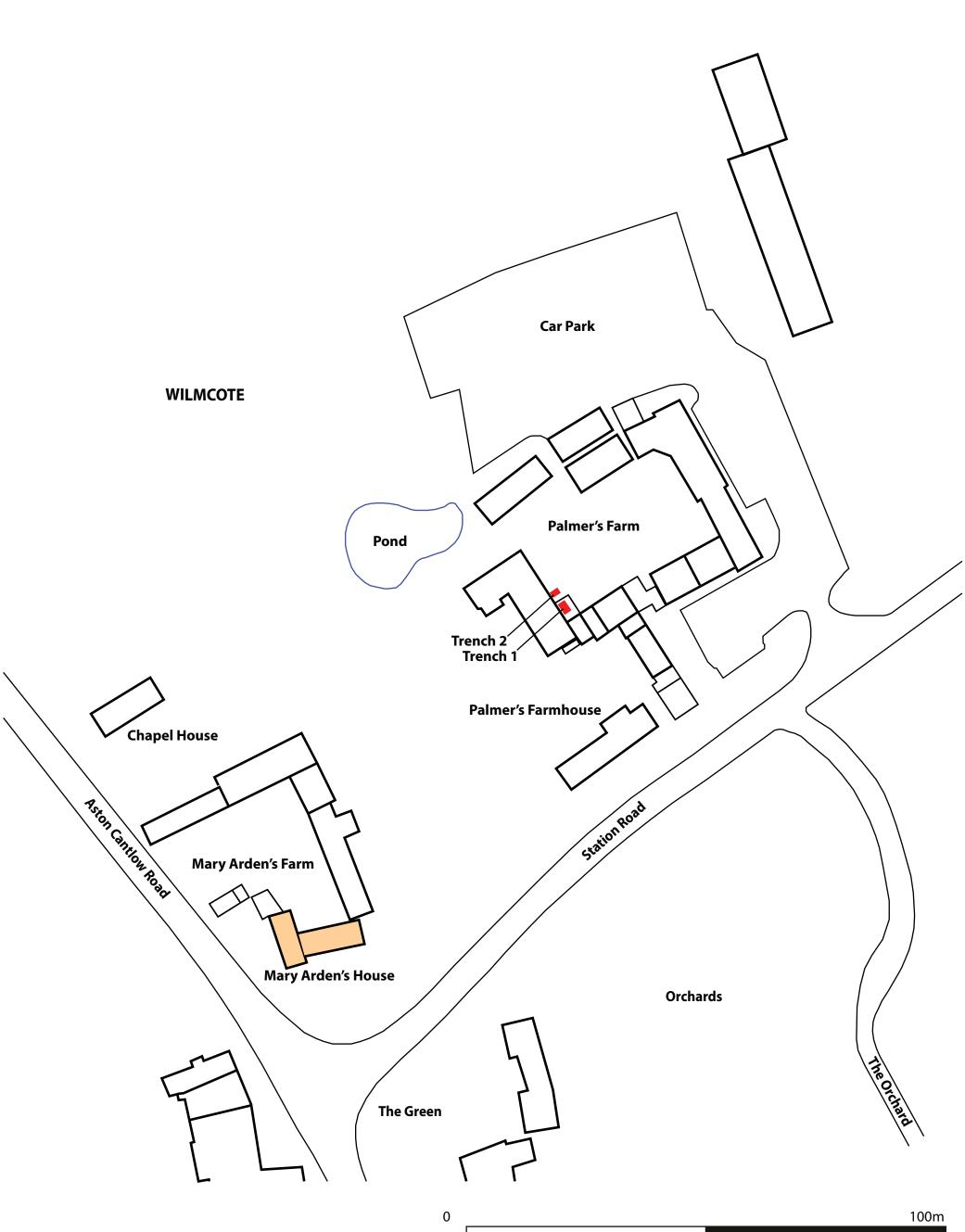
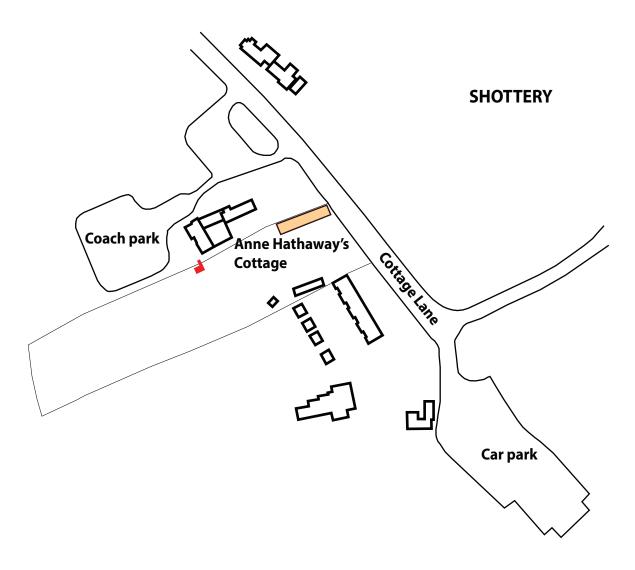






Figure 2 - Mary Arden's Farm Trench Location Plan

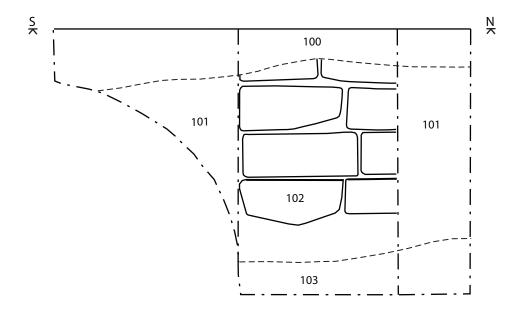




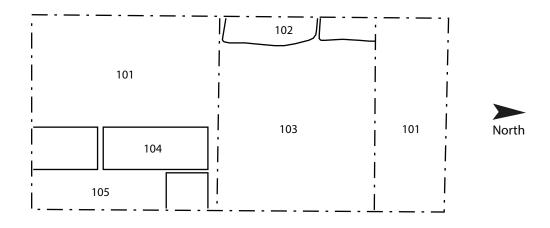




100m



East facing section of Test Pit 1

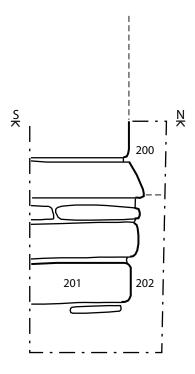


Plan of Test Pit 1

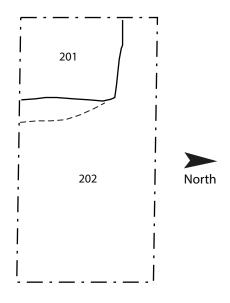








East facing section of Test Pit 2



Plan of Test Pit 2





______1m