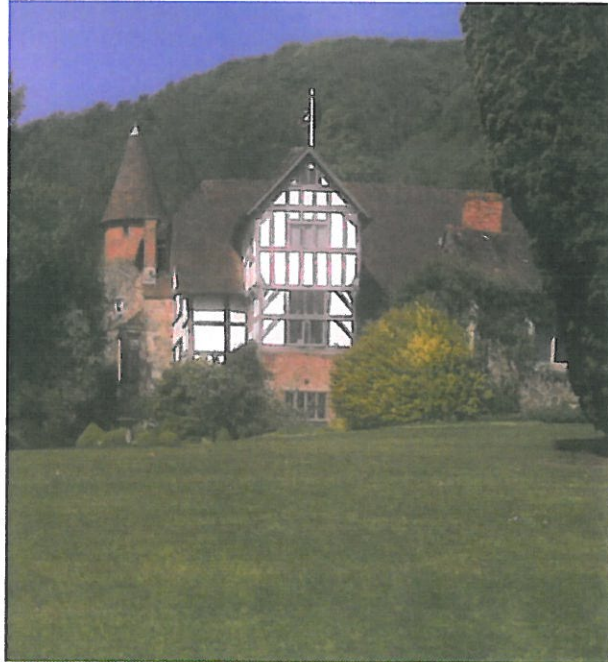


Archaeological Investigations Ltd

# Little Malvern Court WORCESTERSHIRE

*Archaeological Ground Monitoring*



**September 2010**  
*Hereford Archaeology Series 851*

## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS LTD**

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Archaeological Investigations Ltd is a trading company wholly owned by the Hereford City and County Archaeological Trust Ltd, a registered charity founded in 1997 to further the work of the City of Hereford Archaeological Committee (founded in 1974) throughout Herefordshire. The Company maintains a core staff with a broad range of expertise, whilst also making extensive use of specialist contract personnel. Besides working on the buried archaeology of Hereford and the country in general, the Company specialises in geophysical survey, historical illustration and the archaeological recording and analysis of standing buildings. Work is usually on a commission basis on behalf of organisations such as English Heritage, the National Trust, and the Landmark Trust. The Company also accepts commissions from local authorities and private developers and provides specialist consultancy advice in relation to archaeology in the planning process and general environmental issues.

### **Little Malvern Court Archaeological Ground Monitoring**

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**Little Malvern Court**

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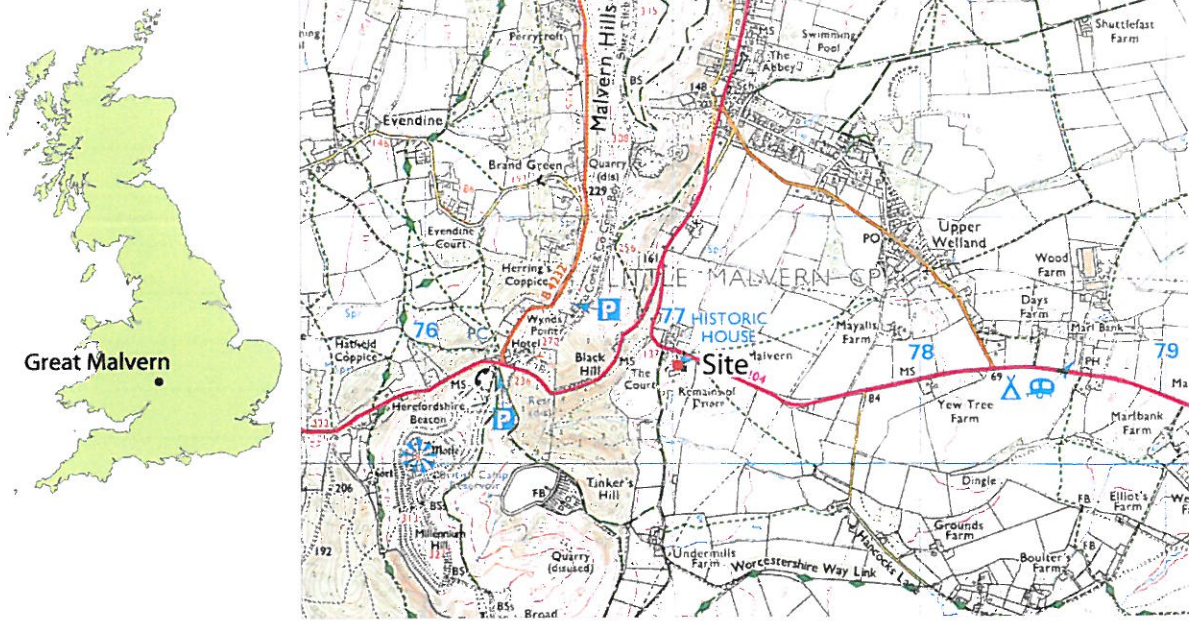


Figure 1 Site location

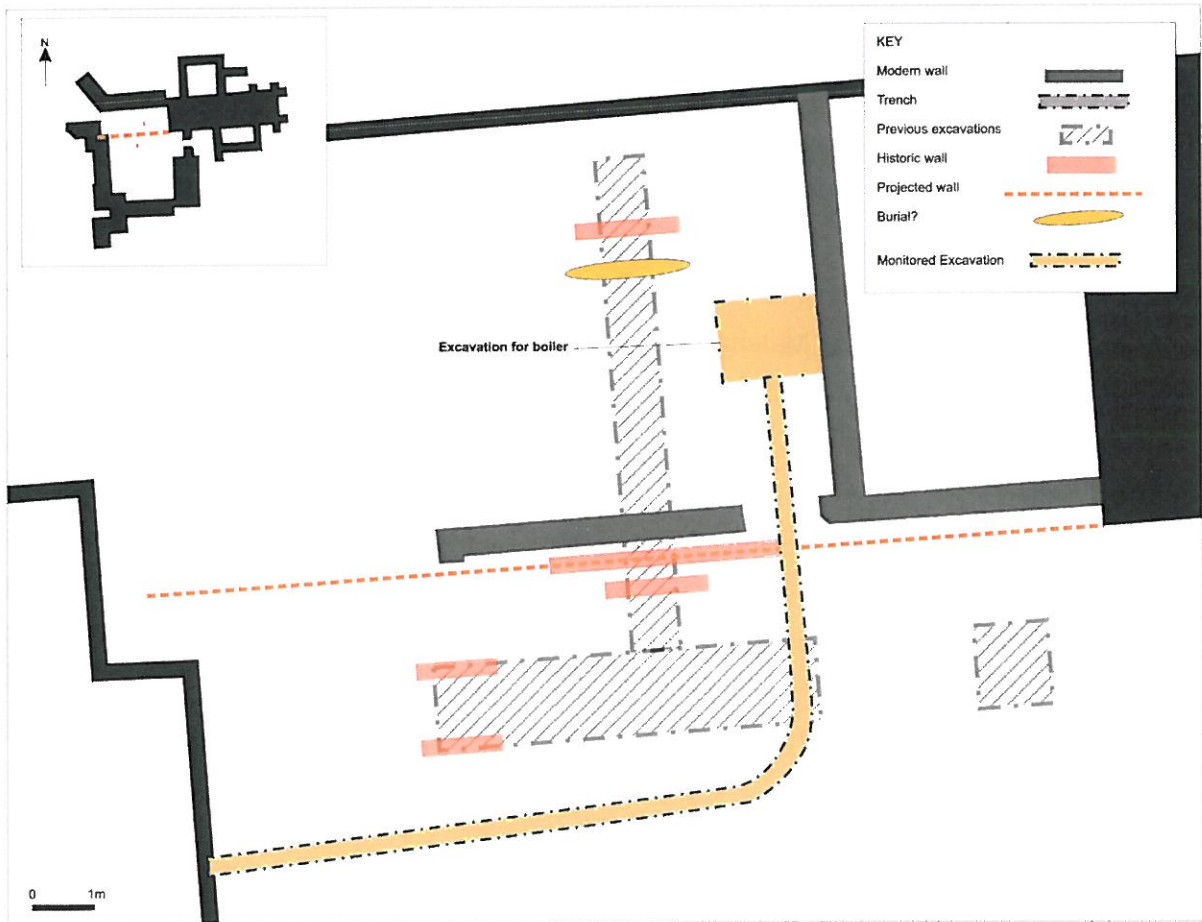


Figure 2 Plan showing the location of the monitored excavations and previous excavations on the site

# 1 Summary

**Site name:** Little Malvern Priory

**Grid reference:** NGR SO 77042 40356

Archaeological Investigations Ltd. was commissioned through S. T. Walker & Duckham Architects of Worcester on behalf of the Trustees of the Late T. M. Berington's Estate to undertake a watching brief during the installation of ducts for heating on the site at Little Malvern Court in Worcestershire. Trial trenches had previously revealed a substantial depth of made up ground beneath the existing aggregate and flagstone surface. In the area of the garage the post-medieval levelling deposit was found to lie above a very compact stony layer.

During the watching brief a single skeleton associated with the priory church was partially revealed at a depth of 1.2m beneath the existing surface. The burial was sealed by the compact stony layer encountered during the evaluation (108). The grave was not cut through this layer which must therefore have been used to raise the surface at a later date. The skeleton lay immediately beneath this layer suggesting that priory levels had been removed at some point. The area in which the burial lay would have been within the nave of the priory church.

## 2 Introduction

### 2.1 Client

Archaeological Investigations Ltd. was commissioned through S. T. Walker & Duckham Architects of Worcester on behalf of the Trustees of the Late T. M. Berington's Estate to undertake a watching brief during the excavation of ducts and a boiler for a new heating system on the site at Little Malvern Court in Worcestershire.

### 2.2 Location

Little Malvern Court lies on the eastern side of the Malvern Hills south of the A4104 to Upton on Severn.

### 2.3 Topography and geology

The site lies at approximately 125mOD on a slope down to the flood plain of the River Severn to the east (Fig. 1). The site contains the remains of a 12<sup>th</sup> century Benedictine priory, 14<sup>th</sup> century Priors' hall and Victorian manor. With the exception of the standing remains of the house and church the remainder of the area of the site is scheduled (Worcester County Monument 218).

The area of the site affected by the proposals lies within the former nave of the priory church although no historic features survive above ground. Comparison of the levels with the original medieval levels would imply that the present ground level is approximately 400-500mm higher. Therefore *in situ* medieval remains, with the possible exception of structural elements of the priory, would only be encountered below this depth.

The underlying geology is Mercia Mudstone.

## **2.4 Reason for project**

The boilers to the court were being moved from their existing location beneath the house to the rear of an adjacent garage. To facilitate this a slab was cast for the boiler to stand on, a manhole was excavated to receive incoming services, and a service trench was dug to take fuel and water to the boilers and hot water back to the house. Due to the need for insulation the trenches for the water pipes were excavated to 950mm deep and a width of 300mm. Other services were laid in the trench above this at the shallower depth of 510mm – although at this point it was necessary to widen the trench a further 225mm.

The route for the service run passed under paving slabs within the garage, through the threshold of a side door and beneath more paving slabs in the paved area to the south of the garage.

It was thought possible that either walls or burials could lie within the area of the trenching or slab, though evidence for these was not found during the evaluation.

## **2.5 Dates of fieldwork**

Fieldwork was conducted during September 2009

# **3 Aims and objectives**

## **3.1 Significance**

The project was thought likely to produce results of regional archaeological importance.

## **3.2 Aims**

The aim was to enable archaeological features to be identified in the areas affected by the proposals.

## **3.3 Objectives**

The objectives were to report on findings and deposit the archive.

# **4 Method**

## **4.3.1 Fieldwork**

Trenches were excavated by the contractors with an archaeologist present throughout, as a result of the hard ground a jackhammer was used to remove the existing flagged surface and to excavate the trench for the boiler through the hard stony layer in the garage.

## **4.3.2 Recording**

Trench plans were produced at 1:50 and are shown as a reduced composite in Figure 2, and in Figure 3. Trench sections were produced at a scale of 1:20 (reduced in Figure 4). Photographs were taken of archaeological features and deposits using 35mm monochrome and colour film (7mmp digital photographs were also taken).

A system of context records was kept and numbered independently by trench. Recording was in accordance with Archaeological Investigations Ltd.'s site manual. Details of recent deposits were annotated on site drawings.

Registers were kept for all context records, photographs, drawings, small finds and samples.

Trench positions were tied into features shown on the 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map.

#### **4.3.3 Sampling**

As a result of the comparatively late date of the deposits encountered a representative sample of finds was retained. The single inhumation encountered was not disturbed.

## **5 Historical and archaeological background**

Knowledge of the below ground archaeology in this area is limited. There are, however, a number of pieces of information worthy of note:

Excavations undertaken in 1960's identified foundations of the nave and cloister (Cotswold Report 1.3.7). Unfortunately no reference was associated with this statement. However, a document was provided by David Duckham – project architect – entitled 'Record of old foundations excavated in 1969' on a drawing by Bellamy and Harker (the then site Architects). This identifies a wall (possibly the north wall of the nave) and to its south what is described as "body" possibly referring to a burial. Also just south of the line of the south wall of the nave are two other features shown at right angles to the trench, one of these falls onto the projected continuation of the south nave wall line. Two features are marked in a similar fashion to these at the east end of the east-west trench. They do not appear to continue the whole length of the trench from the note and a small trench to the east of the end of this trench is recorded as "nil" suggesting that no discoveries were made there.

Observations to the south of the area of interest in 1997 (Cotswold Archaeology 97439) identified footings of buildings and features of late medieval/post dissolution date with fragments of floor tile in some of the deposits studied.

Deposits to a depth of 500mm were investigated during a watching brief undertaken in 2005 (Mercian Archaeology PJ150). Some stones were present - possibly associated with the nave wall. To the north of the nave a fragment of medieval floor tile was found in the surface of a silt deposit. Otherwise there was only a topsoil-like deposit emphasising the made up nature of this part of the site in relation to original medieval levels.

Three small evaluation trenches were undertaken in the summer of 2009 (Crooks 2009). The trenches in the yard area demonstrated a depth of made up ground of some 500-600mm. Associated finds included pottery and glass dating to the 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> centuries with occasional fragments of medieval roof tile. The tile may relate to the priory and its demolition or to reroofing the existing house, though it is also possible that the levelling deposit was imported from elsewhere.

The trench in the garage encountered a very hard, clean stony material at a depth of some 350mm beneath the existing surface. The deposit was so compact it could not be dug by hand. It was tentatively identified as a natural deposit.

## **6 Results**

The results of the work have been separated into two sections. The first relates to the site of the new boiler in the car-port where a burial was discovered (Figure 3). The second is the new trench for services connecting this to the house. Sections of both are shown in Figure 4.

The following deposits were present in the trench in the carport.

Context	Thick	Description	Interpretation
101	0.08m	concrete	Existing surface
102	0.08m	tarmac	Existing surface
103	0.10m	aggregate	Consolidation beneath tarmac surface
104	0.40m	Silt clay with brick rubble	Fill of previous excavation trench
105	0.28m	Grey brown silt clay with building rubble	Topsoil
106			Fill of previous service trench
107			Fill of previous service trench
108	0.80m	Hard packed stony reddish rubble	Made up ground – possible previous surface
109		concrete	foundation

Deposit 108 is identified as the material thought to have been a natural deposit during the evaluation. It is now apparent that this very stony hard packed layer was a previous surface, probably post dating the priory as it was not cut by the burial. The single burial encountered during the excavation lay beneath the hard rubble layer (108) now thought to have been a previous surface possibly associated with the priory nave.

### The burial

A single grave cut was visible at the edge of the trench beneath the rubble layer 108. The burial was recorded *in situ* but, as it lay beneath the required depth of the excavation and extended outside the limit of the excavation to the west and north it was not removed. The supine burial was of an adult with the hands crossed on the chest. The right arm, left hand and right ribs were visible in the trench. The grave would have originally been located in the nave of the priory church.

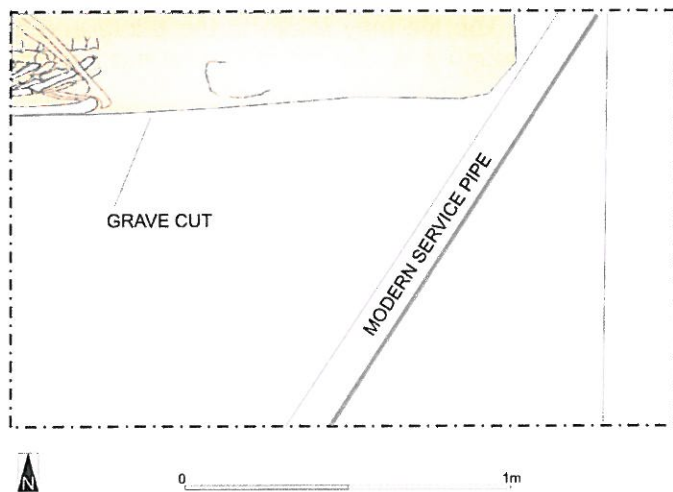


Fig 3. Grave cut location.



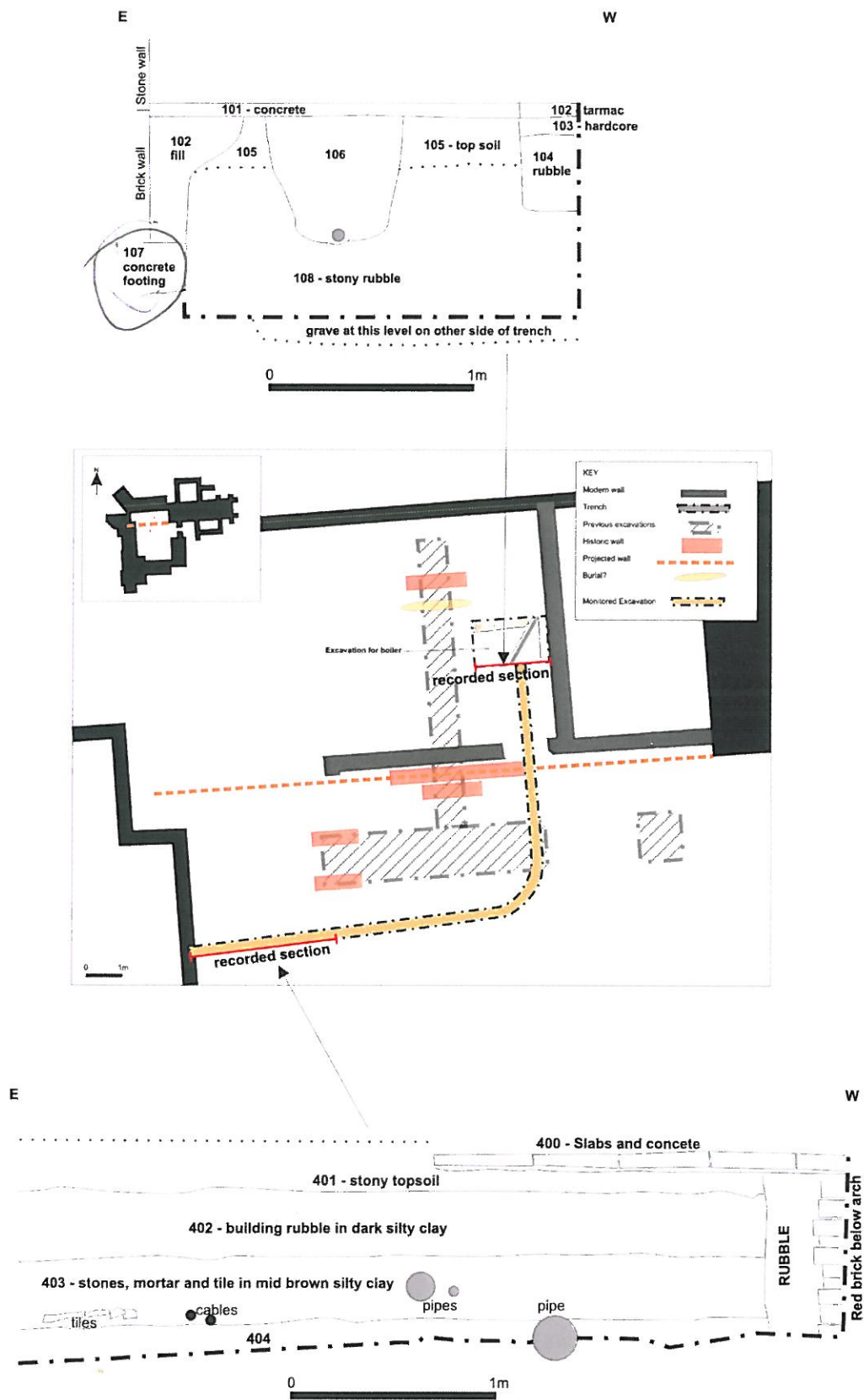


Figure 4

The new service trench measured a total of 17.2m in length and was 0.54m wide. It was excavated to a total depth of 0.9m. From the house it ran towards the east for 8.2m, before turning northwards to the car port. The following deposits were present in the trench.

Context	Thick	Description	Interpretation
400	0.10m	Flagstones and concrete	Existing surface
401	0.10m	Dark grey topsoil; large stones	Leveling
402	0.30m	Dark brown silt clay with black and white flecks, patches of building rubble	Leveling deposit
403	0.30m	Mid brown silt clay with building rubble, animal bone etc	Leveling/dumping
404	0.10m	Loose light brown gravel silt	Possible natural

Building material present in the deposits was of late medieval and post-medieval date. Medieval roof tile presumably originated from the demolition of the priory.

## 7 Finds

### 7.1 Ceramic Building Material

A number of fragments of ceramic roof tile of post-medieval date were found in the levelling deposit beneath the existing yard surface (contexts 402, 403). These were not retained.

### 7.2 Animal Bone

Animal bone was found in the levelling deposits beneath the existing yard surface (contexts 402, 403). It appeared to be normal domestic waste.

### 7.3 Human remains

Although human remains were uncovered these lay below the level required for the insertion of the slab for the boiler. Their presence was recorded but they were not disturbed.

## 10 Discussion

The site is discussed by period

### 10.1 Medieval

The only feature of medieval date was the burial beneath the consolidated surface (108) in the garage. The grave lay immediately beneath this layer and the fact that there was no evidence that the grave was cut through it suggested that the priory levels had been removed before layer 108 was deposited.

It is apparent that the surface across the yard had been raised in comparatively recent times. Any surviving medieval deposits, therefore, almost certainly lie at or beneath the

depth required for the duct trench. The only finds of medieval date recovered from the site were fragments of roof tile found in the mixed levelling deposit during excavation of the test pits. Roof tile was frequently reused; this may have come from the priory buildings or the levelling deposits could have been brought from elsewhere.

### **10.2 Post-Medieval**

The landscaping of the area during the post-medieval period was represented by the layer of made up ground encountered during the evaluation and during the excavation of the trenches. Ceramic material from this deposit suggested a date in the 18<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries thought it is possible that the material was moved from elsewhere at a later date.

## **11 Conclusion**

The aims of the project have been satisfied, and the methods employed were appropriate in recording archaeology on the site.

## 12 Bibliography

- AIL 2009 Heritage Statement
- Cotswold Archaeological Trust, 1997 Little Malvern Court, Near Malvern, Hereford and Worcester, C A T Report No 97439
- Mercian Archaeology, 2005 An Archaeological Watching Brief at Little Malvern Court, Little Malvern, Worcestershire
- Crooks, K. 2009 Little Malvern Court, Little Malvern, Worcestershire, Archaeological Test Pits, HAS833

## Appendix

Photographic register

Digital

exp	dir	scale	c/bw	Context/subject
✓ 1	w	1m	c	Start of trench at the house
2	s	1m	c	0-1m n facing trench side
3	s	1m	c	0-1m n facing trench side
✓ 4	s	1m	c	1-2m n facing trench side, showing pipes
5	s	1m	c	1-2m n facing trench side, showing pipes
6	s	1m	c	1-2m n facing trench side, showing pipes
7	s	1m	c	1-2m n facing trench side, showing pipes
8	s	1m	c	3-4m n facing trench side
✓ 9	s	1m	c	3-4m n facing trench side
✓ 10	s	1m	c	3-4m n facing trench side
✓ 11	s	1m	c	3-4m n facing trench side
12	e		c	From above, w side of trench
13	e	1m	c	From above, w side of trench
14	e	1m	c	From above, w side of trench
15	s	1m	c	N facing section – scale at 7m
16	s	1m	c	N facing section – scale at 7m
17	se	1m	c	Nw facing section – scale at 8m
18	se	1m	c	Nw facing section – scale at 8m
19	e	1m	c	W facing section to 1m from bend
20	e	1m	c	W facing section to 1m from bend
21	e	1m	c	End of trench from e to n
22	e	1m	c	End of trench from e to n
23	e	1m	c	End of trench – showing part of <u>n trench</u>
24	e	1m	c	End of trench – showing part of n trench
✓ 25	n	1m	c	From trench bend to door
✓ 26	n	1m	c	From trench bend to door
✓ 27	e	1m	c	Trench from above
✓ 28	e	1m	c	Trench from above
29	e	1m	c	Trench from above
30	e	1m	c	Trench from above
✓ 31	n	1m	c	Through door of car port

Film 246				
no	dir	scale	C/b+w	Context/subject
1	s	1m	B+w	W end of trench – n facing trench side
2	s	1m	B+w	2 <sup>nd</sup> metre section – n facing trench side
3	s	1m	B+w	1m to 3m section – n facing section showing pipes
4	e		B+w	Trench in progress from above
5	s	1m	B+w	Scale at 7m n facing trench side
6	s	1m	B+w	Scale at 7m n facing trench side
7	se	1m	B+w	Scale at 8m – nw facing section
8	se	1m	B+w	Scale at 8m – nw facing section
9	e	1m	B+w	1m from bend, w facing section
10	e	1m	B+w	1m from bend, w facing section
11	e	1m	B+w	Bend in trench from e to n
12	e	1m	B+w	Bend in trench from e to n
13	e	1m	B+w	Bend in trench from e to n – showing part of n trench
14	e	1m	B+w	Bend in trench from e to n – showing part of n trench
15	n	1m	B+w	From bend to door at north
16	n	1m	B+w	From bend to door at north
17	e	1m	B+w	Trench from above
18	e	1m	B+w	Trench from above
19	n	1m	B+w	Through car port door
20	n	1m	B+w	Through car port door

## Carport area – digital shots

exp	dir	scale	c/b+w	Context/subject
1	s		c	N facing section
2	s		c	N facing section and base of trench
3	s		c	N facing section and base of trench
4	s		c	N facing section and base of trench
5	s		c	N facing section and base of trench
6	e		c	W facing section shows construction of carport wall
7	s		c	W end of n facing section and base of trench
8	s		c	W end of n facing section and base of trench
9	s		c	N facing section
10	s		c	N facing section

11	n		c	Burial and grave cut showing in base of trench
12	n		c	Burial and grave cut showing in base of trench
13	n		c	Burial and grave cut showing in base of trench
14	n		c	Burial and grave cut showing in base of trench
15	n	1m	c	Burial and grave cut showing in base of trench
16	n	1m	c	Burial and grave cut showing in base of trench
17	n	1m	c	Burial and grave cut showing in base of trench
18	s	1m	c	Burial and grave cut showing in base of trench
20	s	1m	c	Burial and grave cut showing in base of trench
21	s	1m	c	Burial and grave cut showing in base of trench

