

STMH/02



ST MARY'S FARM, KINGSLAND

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

commissioned by GPT Properties Ltd

N120678/F

August 2016

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project info

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PROJECT SUMMARY

A programme of archaeological evaluation was implemented, in advance of the conversion of six existing farm buildings and the construction of eleven new units, on land at St Marys Farm, Kingsland, Leominster, Herefordshire. The works were carried out in accordance with Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) agreed by the archaeological advisor to Herefordshire County Council and entailed the excavation of eight evaluation trenches over the area of the development footprint. The natural geology was identified in all trenches and appeared to change from silt clay toward the southwestern extreme of the site, to a more gravelly matrix, rising up slightly, across the remainder of the development area. The remains of a single undated small pit were identified in the south-eastern corner of Trench 1, in the south-western corner of the site, sealed by a layer of subsoil associated with garden deposits. No dateable artefacts were recovered from within the feature but it seems likely that it may have been associated with activities within the backplot or garden of the original farm building. Evidence of modern activity, associated with the former farm yard and its recently demolished buildings was present in all of the remaining trenches.

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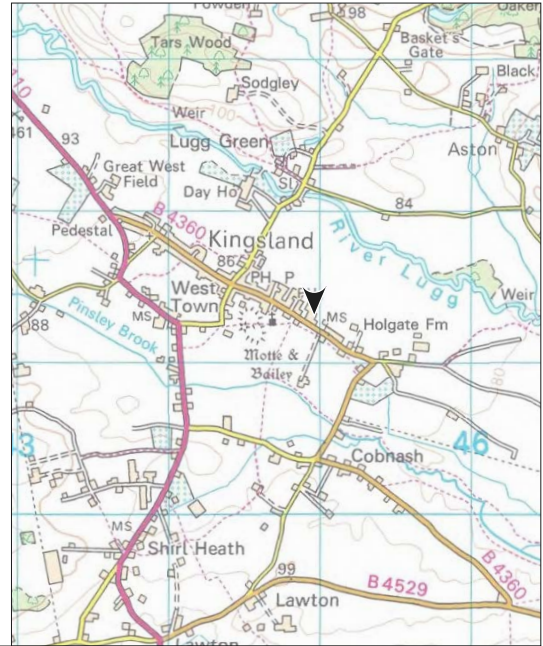
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STMH/01

St Mary's Farm
North Road
Kingsland
Herefordshire

0 200km
1:10,000,000 @ A4

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0 20m
1:1,000 @ A4

KEY
 development boundary
 trench location
 archaeological features
 former farm buildings
 proposed building

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ST MARY'S FARM, KINGSLAND

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

1 INTRODUCTION

Planning permission was granted, subject to conditions, for the conversion of six existing farm buildings and the construction of 11 new units on land at St Marys Farm, Kingsland, Leominster, Herefordshire (N120678/F). The conditions included the undertaking of a programme of archaeological work, prior to any demolition works or alterations (Condition 8).

The archaeological works were detailed as the undertaking of a programme of Historic Building Recording (HBR), followed by monitoring of groundworks in the form of a Watching Brief. This scheme was submitted in a WSI, issued by Allen Archaeology (2016) and agreed with Julian Cotton, the archaeological advisor to the planning authority. The building recording work was subsequently completed by Allen Archaeology (Cooper 2016).

However, given the previous disturbance of the site from building demolition and the anticipated length of the ground works programme, a further WSI (Headland Archaeology 2016), for limited pre-development trial trenching, was submitted and agreed as an amendment to the original scheme. The intention of the trenching was to help focus any subsequent mitigation work on the most appropriate areas (if any). The results of the trial trenching are summarised in this document.

1.1 SITE DESCRIPTION

The proposed development site comprises a plot of land at St Mary's Farm, off Longford Road, to the southeast of the village of Kingsland, near Leominster (site centre SO 44950 61363). Formerly occupied by modern farm buildings, by the time of the trenching work the site had been cleared of structures.

The solid geology of the site is represented by the siltstone and mudstone deposits of the Raglan Mudstone Formation. This is overlain by fluvial deposits of sands and gravels and over-bank deposits of alluvial silts and clays (NERC 2016).

1.2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

St Marys Farm is located to the southeast of the medieval village of Kingsland. Within the village itself, a church, dating to the 14th

Century and the remains of a Motte and Bailey castle are recorded (HSMR's 8184 & 340). To the south of the village, earthworks suggest the presence of further medieval settlement and agricultural activity (HSMR 7278 & 21595).

The extant buildings at St Marys Farm comprise the Grade II listed (List Entry No. 1081832) farm house, originating in the 16th Century and subsequently remodelled in the 18th century. Immediately to the west are a group of later, 19th – 20th century farm buildings, two of which are proposed for conversion as part of the development, the remainder have been demolished following completion of historic building recording work.

2 METHOD

The work was undertaken between 16th and 17th May 2016. Trenches were targeted on the locations of the proposed new building footprints, in order to assess the impact of construction on any potential archaeological features or deposits associated with them. The exact location of the trenches was constrained, in part, by a number of physical factors of the site, such as the location of services, access routes and other obstacles.

The trenches varied in length between 7 and 20m long × 1.6m wide, and were opened with a mechanical excavator, equipped with a toothless ditching bucket under direct archaeological supervision. Machine excavation was taken down in spits to the natural geological horizon, with the spoil being stored beside the trench.

On completion of the machine excavation, all faces of the trenches that required examination or recording were cleaned using appropriate hand tools where required. The stratigraphic sequence was recorded in full in each of the trenches, even where no archaeological deposits were identified.

All recording followed ClfA and County Standards and Guidance, using pro forma record cards. The photographic record comprised 35mm monochrome negatives, supplemented by a full digital photographic record of the work using a minimum 7.2mp camera. The digital photography was carried out for illustrative purposes only, and does not form part of the site archive.



ILLUS 2 Trench 1 looking south-west **ILLUS 3** Trench 2 looking north-west **ILLUS 4** Trench 3 looking north-east **ILLUS 5** Trench 4 looking north-east

Plans of all the trenches excavated during the evaluation were drawn on pro-forma Trench record sheets at an appropriate scale, and surveyed using a Trimble dGPS. All plans and drawings were related to the National Grid and Ordnance Datum.

3 RESULTS

Trench 1 measured 15m long and 1.6m wide and was the most south-westerly of the trenches, located just to the west of one of the farms buildings scheduled for conversion as part of the redevelopment. The natural geology was represented by compact, yellowish buff silt clay, encountered at a depth of 0.90m below the current ground surface (BGS). This deposit became progressively more gravelly toward the northern end of the trench and rose gradually to a depth of only 0.40m BGS. Part of a shallow, sub-circular pit [0105], 0.70m wide and

0.25m deep was revealed in the north-eastern corner of the trench. It was infilled with a single deposit of dark brown silty-clay with frequent charcoal flecking (0106). No artefacts were found in association with this deposit. The feature was sealed by a layer of brownish yellow silt-clay subsoil (0101), which became more gravelly toward the northern part of the trench. A small terminating linear feature [0107] was encountered at the southern end of the trench, truncating the subsoil deposit. It was infilled with dark brown silty, sandy clay (0108) containing fragments of sandstone. Given its morphology and position in the stratigraphic matrix, it was deemed fairly likely that the feature represented relatively recent garden activity. The surface deposit was represented by a 0.35m deep deposit of dark brown, friable clay-silt topsoil.

Trench 2 was located to the north of Trench 1, across the footprint of a proposed new unit toward the western edge of the site. The trench measured 15m long and 1.6m wide; it was moved slightly to the

north of its original planned position to avoid impinging of the site access road. The gravelly natural deposit encountered toward the northern end of Trench 1 was reached at a depth of 0.60m BGS and was sealed by a 0.20m thick deposit of fairly sterile, mid-light brown silt clay subsoil (0201). Roughly half way along the trench, breeze block foundations, associated with recently demolished, modern farm buildings, were encountered (0203). The uppermost horizon in the trench was represented by a 0.40m thick layer of mixed building rubble and other detritus (0200) associated with the demolition of former farm structures.

To the northwest of Trench 2, Trench 3 was positioned across a proposed new build footprint which, again, coincided with the position of a former farm building. The trench was moved to the north and west of its planned position to avoid a large tip of building rubble. It measured 15m x 1.6m and was aligned roughly northwest-southeast. Its stratigraphic sequence remained the same as in Trench 2, with the exception of a partial concrete footing toward the northern end of the trench.

Trench 4 was located to the east of Trench 3 and was aligned roughly north-south. It measured 20m in length and 1.6m wide. It was located partially within the footprint of a proposed new unit and just to the western side of the position of a former large agricultural barn. Again, the stratigraphic sequence was generally unchanged compared with Trenches 2 and 3, the natural clay and gravels being encountered at a depth of 0.62m BGS. The southern end of the trench was truncated by modern water pipes. The only significant change in the stratigraphy of the trench was in association with a large pit-like feature [0403] toward the northern end of the trench in which the articulated and partially burnt remains of numerous cattle were identified (0404). No further investigation of this deposit was made.

Trench 5 was 15m long and located roughly at the centre of the site, it was positioned on an approximate east-west alignment. The natural gravels (0502) were encountered at a depth of between 0.50 and 0.80m BGS and were sealed by subsoil, followed by the same rubble and hard-core surface as seen across the majority of the site. No archaeological features or deposits were encountered within this trench.

Due to the presence of a large concrete plinth, associated a demolished structure, and to accommodate the presence of live services, Trench 6 was moved from its planned location and reduced in length to 11m. It was moved several metres to the north and re-aligned on a northwest-southeast orientation; partially across the footprint of a recently demolished farm structure. The natural gravels were encountered at a depth of 0.60m BGS, truncated by at least three rectangular post-holes [0603a–c], each containing the partial remains of wooden posts. The subsoil deposit (0601), seen elsewhere across the site was only present toward the northerly part of the trench, having been apparently entirely removed as a result of the construction and removal of the former structure. No features or deposits of an archaeological nature were encountered.

Trench 7 was located just to the west the farm access track, toward the eastern side of the site, on an approximate northeast-southwest alignment. It displayed the same stratigraphic sequence as the other nearby trenches and the natural gravels were reached at a depth of 0.54m BGS.

Trench 8 was located to the eastern side of the same access track, toward the north-eastern corner of the site. The northern end of the trench almost immediately encountered a pair of modern water pipes, presumably associated with the remaining farm structure just beyond the northern site boundary. As the pipes had to be avoided, the natural gravels were not accessible until beyond the pipes incursion into the footprint of the trench, approximately 2m from its northern end. The gravels were identified at a depth of 0.8m BGS and were sealed by a very gravelly, rubbly deposit (0803). At a distance of approximately 4.1m from the northern end of the trench, a large dump of rubble replaced the rubbly gravel. Excavations of the trench were forced to halt at this point due to the presence of a large quantity of asbestos within the rubble. No archaeological features or deposits were identified in association with either Trenches 7 or 8.

4 CONCLUSIONS

The only archaeological feature identified on the site was the partial pit, revealed in Trench 1. Unfortunately, no artefacts were identified in association with its fill, and thus a firm date or function for the feature is not known. Given its location and stratigraphic position, it seems likely that it may have been associated with activities linked to the former back plot or garden of the listed building to the south of the development boundary, the presence of charred and abraded cereal grains in the feature (Appendix 2) tends to support an agricultural association. The evaluation also appeared to confirm evidence of alluvial clays toward the southern end of the site, rising up to become gravel deposits to the north, the division, perhaps an indicator of the position of a former watercourse. The lack of buried soil horizons or topsoil across the remainder of the site appeared to be as a result of the demolition and levelling of the site associated with the construction and subsequent demolition of former agricultural buildings. With the exception of pit [0105], no features or deposits of archaeological significance were encountered.

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ILLUS 6 Trench 5 looking east-south-east **ILLUS 7** Trench 6 looking south-east
ILLUS 8 Trench 7 looking north-west **ILLUS 9** Trench 8 looking south-west

6 APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 SITE REGISTERS

Appendix 1.1 Trench and context register

D BGL = Depth Below Ground Level

TR01	ORIENTATION	L (M)	W (M)	AV. D (M)
	NE – SW	15.00	1.60	0.75
CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION	D BGL (M)		
0100	Topsoil – Dark brown friable but compact sandy clay silt	0.00 – 0.40		
0101	Brownish yellow silty clay with sand, charcoal fleck, brick	0.35 – 0.70		
0102	Yellow brown silt sand and gravel replacing 0101 for N part	0.40 – 0.90		
0103	Compact clay sand at S end of trench (Natural) S.	0.90 +		
0104	Mixed sandy gravels in sand clay matrix (Natural) N.	0.90 +		
0105	Cut of possible pit in SE corner of trench	0.90 – 1.15		
0106	Upper fill of [0105]	0.90 – 1.15		
0107	Cut of possible linear, stony feature in SW corner	0.90 – 1.18		
0108	Upper fill of [0107]	0.90 – 1.18		
0109	Cut of geotech hole			
0110	Fill of geotech hole [0109]			

Summary: Trench contains evidence for possible back-plot activity of post-medieval date.

TR02	ORIENTATION	L (M)	W (M)	AV. D (M)
	NE – SW	15.00	1.60	0.60
CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION	D BGL (M)		
0200	Mixed brick rubble and silt sand + concrete	0.00 – 0.40		
0201	Mid/light brown sandy silt clay with charcoal flecks (Sub)	0.40 – 0.60		
0202	Patchy poorly sorted gravels in yellow buff sand clay (Nat)	0.60 +		
0203	Breeze block foundations near approximate centre of trench	0.00 – 1.06		

Summary: Trench cut through grassy scrub patch. Approx. halfway along trench = breeze block foundation – quite narrow with diagonal slope cut to N side. Natural varies from clayey to gravels, becoming more gravel to South. No archaeological features.

Lack of topsoil implies earlier levelling of site.

TR03	ORIENTATION	L (M)	W (M)	AV. D (M)
	N – S	15.00	1.60	0.83
CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION	D BGL (M)		
0300	Topsoil/rubble – Dark greyish brown sandy clay with coarse gravel hardcore – loose/friable	0.00 – 0.35		
0301	Subsoil – Mid yellowish brown sandy clay silt	0.35 – 0.81		
0302	Natural – Light yellowish brown sandy clay and gravels	0.81 +		

Summary: Very gravelly upper surface with mixed brick (low conc.) Part of concrete footing in the NE corner of trench. Subsoil is mixed compact clay sand with coal/charcoal flecks onto Patchy gravels and yellow clay.

No archaeology present

TR04	ORIENTATION	L (M)	W (M)	AV. D (M)
	NE – SW	20.00	1.60	0.60
CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION	D BGL (M)		
0400	Overburden – hardcore + building rubble	0.00 – 0.28		
0401	Subsoil – Light yellowish brown sandy clay	0.28 – 0.62		
0402	Natural – Light yellowish orange sandy clay and gravels	0.62 +		
0403	Cut of large feature – Prob. Modern	0.28 +		
0404	Fill of [0403] – containing burnt cow bones	0.28 +		

Summary: 2 X water pipes in south end of trench, large pit containing modern burnt cow bones in Northern end of trench.

TR05	ORIENTATION	L (M)	W (M)	AV. D (M)
	WNW – ESE	15.00	1.60	0.60
CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION	D BGL (M)		
0500	Rubble and hardcore surface	0.00 – 0.30 (up to 0.45 @ N)		
0501	Mid/light yellow brown silty sandy clay (Sub) – some occasional rubble	0.30 – 0.50 (0.45 – 0.80 @ N)		
0502	Gravelly (poorly sorted) yellow brown silt clay matrix	0.50 +		

Summary: Trench cut into mixed matrix of clean yellow sandy clay and gravels. Overburden is rubble/gravel/hardcore over yellow silty clay subsoil. No topsoil present indicative of site levelling – prob as construction and demolition of former farm buildings/yard. Subsoil is distinctly 'stone free' although occ. Rubble/charcoal has been worked in, probably by root action. Gently slopes to 0.80m @W end.

TR06	ORIENTATION	L (M)	W (M)	AV. D (M)
	NNE – SSW	11.00	1.60	0.60
CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION	D BGL (M)		
0600	Rubble, hardcore + part brick floor @ ground surface	0.00 – 0.40 (S) 0.00 – 0.20 (N)		
0601	Mixed yellow brown silt clay with occ. Rubble, coal frags @ northern end of trench	0.20 – 0.60		
0602	Poorly sorted gravels in yellow sand clay patches/ matrix	0.60 +		
0603	Post-holes relating to former structure (recently demolished). Rectangular approx. 0.4 X 0.5 with stone pads	0.60 +		

Summary: Quite shallow trench with evidence of former buildings @ Southern end. Upper horizon is part brick surface + part hardcore + rubble (including smashed wooden posts) V. disturbed. Subsoil only appears toward N end – Presumed beyond limit of former structure. Natural is V. grey in hue and 'damp' @ S end.

TR07	ORIENTATION	L (M)	W (M)	AV. D (M)
	NE – SW	15.00	1.60	0.54
CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION	D BGL (M)		
0700	Topsoil/overburden – Mid greyish brown silty sandy clay + hardcore. Loose/friable. Hardcore/rubble more concentrated nearer surface.	0.00 – 0.30		
0701	Subsoil – Mid yellowish brown sandy clay. Friable + slightly plastic in consistency	0.30 – 0.54		
0702	Natural – Mid yellowish brown sandy clay and poorly sorted gravels	0.54 +		

Summary: West of road/trackway to East of site. Situated in area of building rubble. No archaeology present.

TR08	ORIENTATION	L (M)	W (M)	AV. D (M)
	NE – SW	7.70	1.60	-
CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION	D BGL (M)		
0800	Mixed gravel and concrete rubble overburden	0.00 – 0.20		
0801	Mixed rubble incl. asbestos @ 4.1 m from N end	0.20 + (N. end)		
0802	Natural gravels	0.80 +		
0803	Mixed silty gravels and rubble	0.20 – 0.80		
0804	Modern plastic pipes	0.20 +		

Summary: Trench abandoned @ 4.1m due to discovery of asbestos. 1st 2m of trench not to depth due to modern pipework. Only 2.1m to natural @ 0.80m before asbestos encountered in massive dump under concrete rubble

APPENDIX 2 ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Introduction

A single sample of 20 litres was recovered during archaeological works in relation to residential development at St Mary's Farm, Kingsland, Leominster, Herefordshire. The sample was taken from the fill of a small linear feature of an undetermined date. The aims of the assessment were to assess the presence, preservation and abundance of any environmental remains in the sample.

Method

The bulk sample was subjected to flotation and wet sieving in a Siraf-style flotation machine. The floating debris (the flot) was collected in a 250 µm sieve and once dry, scanned using a binocular microscope. Any material remaining in the flotation tank (retent) was wet-sieved through a 1mm mesh and air-dried. The sample was scanned using a stereomicroscope at magnifications of x10 and up to x100. Identifications, where provided, were confirmed using modern reference material and seed atlases including Cappers et al (2006) and Zohary et al (2012).

Results

Results of the assessment are presented in Tables 1 (Retent samples) and 2 (Flot samples). Material suitable for AMS (Accelerated Mass Spectrometry) radiocarbon dating is shown in the tables. The sample contained a proportion of modern roots and occasional intrusive uncharred seeds. These were determined to be a modern intrusive component and were therefore not considered further.

Cereal remains

A small number of cereal grains including bread/club wheat (*Triticum cf aestivo-compactum*), hulled barley (*Hordeum vulgare*) and oat (*Avena sp.*) were present in the sample (Table 2). The grains exhibited mixed levels of preservation ranging from moderately well preserved to poor. In addition to the grains 2 poorly preserved free threshing wheat rachis internodes (chaff) were also recorded.

Charred plant remains

A fragment of a pea (*Pisum sp.*) was also recovered.

Discussion

The small charred plant assemblage offers limited evidence for agricultural practices at the site other than possible crop choices. Hulled barley, bread/club wheat and oat are commonly found on sites across a range of periods and so are unable to be used to provide a date for the feature sampled, though the grains themselves are suitable for AMS dating. The paucity and heavily abraded nature of the charred plant remains suggests that they probably spent some time close to the surface before being incidentally incorporated into the backfill of negative features. The most common causes of grain becoming charred are during a conflagration event or during processing.

Dating potential of the remains

The sample contained material suitable for AMS dating the samples and material type are listed in Table 2.

Recommendations

Given the small size of the cereal assemblage, further analysis would provide little additional information on the nature of the agrarian economy practiced at the site. The cereal remains could be used for AMS dating in order to provide a date for the feature located in this area of the site. In the event that further archaeological works are required it is recommended that a full program of sampling be developed in collaboration with the Environmental department. This should enable the environmental data to be used to its full potential in contributing to the understanding the site and in creating a detailed site narrative.

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CONTEXT	SAMPLE	FEATURE	SAMPLE VOL (L)	INDUSTRIAL WASTE	MATERIAL AVAILABLE FOR AMS DATING	COMMENTS
0108	001	Upper fill of linear feature [0107]	20	+	No	—

TABLE 1 retent sample results

CONTEXT	SAMPLE	FEATURE	TOTAL FLOT VOL (ML)	BARLEY	WHEAT	OAT	CEREAL CHAFF	OTHER CHARRED PLANT REMAINS	CHARCOAL		MATERIAL AVAILABLE FOR AMS	COMMENTS
									QTY	MAX SIZE (MM)		
0108	001	Upper fill of linear feature [0107]	10	+	++	+	+	+	+++	17	Yes	grains of hulled barley and bread/club wheat. Free threshing wheat rachis internodes, charred Pea fragment.

TABLE 2 flotation sample results

Key: + = rare (0-5), ++ = occasional (6-15), +++ = common (15-50) and ++++ = abundant (>50) NB charcoal over 1cm is suitable for identification and AMS dating



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