

**Mill House, Winchcombe Road,  
Sedgeberrow  
Archaeological Watching Brief**



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## **Executive Summary**

*In January 2015 Archaeological Research Services Ltd (ARS Ltd.) was commissioned by Mr Andrew Thomas to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the groundworks stage of the construction of a proposed two storey extension to the rear of the existing property of traditional construction at Mill House, Winchcombe Road, Sedgeberron, Evesham, Worcestershire WR11 7UA, as required in accordance with the brief provided by Mike Glyde, Worcestershire County Council Historic Environment Planning Officer.*

*The work involved the archaeological monitoring of groundworks associated with the new extension at the rear of the pre-existing building, including excavation for the provision foundations and any groundworks associated with ground clearance.*

*The watching brief at Mill House was devoid of archaeological remains with the exception of a significantly truncated buried wall foundation comprising crushed brick and mortar. The orientation of this foundation respected the orientation of the current house which was mainly constructed over the footprint of the previously demolished property. Taking into account the orientation of the probable wall foundation and that it was buried beneath a deposit of demolition debris, this foundation has been interpreted as belonging to the since demolished house.*

*A ground-levelling event was observable which used the demolition debris from the previous structure to create a flat garden surface for the current house on the site, where the ground appears to slope away towards a now-filled bend in the river to the south-east.*

*No archaeological artefacts were recovered during the course of the works.*

## **1. Introduction**

1.1 In January 2015 Archaeological Research Services Ltd (ARS Ltd.) was commissioned by Mr Andrew Thomas to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the groundworks stage of the construction of a proposed two storey extension to the rear of the existing property of traditional construction at Mill House, Winchcombe Road, Sedgeberrow, Evesham, Worcestershire WR11 7UA, as required in accordance with the brief provided by Mike Glyde, Worcestershire County Council Historic Environment Planning Officer.

1.2 Planning permission (14/02326) was granted to Andrew Thomas for the works on condition (number 5 of the planning permission) that:

*“A) No development shall take place until a programme of archaeological work, including a Written Scheme of Investigation, has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority in writing. The scheme shall include an assessment of significance and research questions; and:*

- 1. The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording.*
- 2. The programme for post-investigation assessment.*
- 3. Provision to be made for analysis of the site investigation and recording.*
- 4. Provision to be made for publication and dissemination of the analysis and records of the site investigation.*
- 5. Provision to be made for archive deposition of the analysis and records of the site investigation.*
- 6. Nomination of a competent person or persons/organisation to undertake the works set out within the Written Scheme of Investigation.*

*B) Within a written agreed date the site investigation and post-investigation assessment shall be completed in accordance with the programme set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation approved under part A) of this condition above, and the provision made for analysis, publication and dissemination of results and archive deposition has been secured.”*

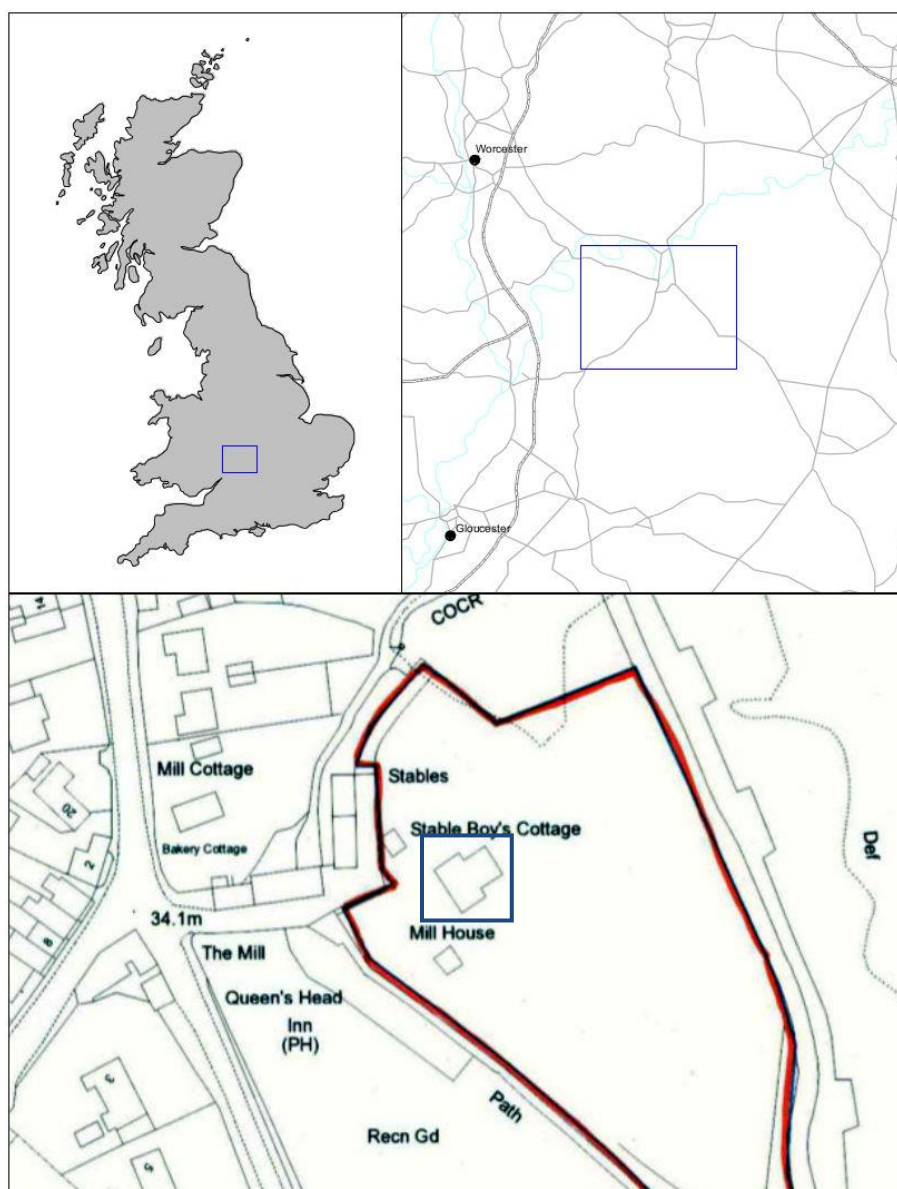


Figure 1: Site Location. (Ordnance Survey data Copyright OS, reproduced by permission, Licence No. 100045420).

## 2. Location and Geology

2.1 The building is located in the village of Sedgeberrow, Worcestershire, next to the River Isbourne. The site is centred at NGR SP 02584 38628. The solid geology of the area consists of Charmouth Mudstone Formation – Mudstone with Alluvium – Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel immediately north-east of the property (BGS 2015).

2.2 The building is not listed, but is located in close proximity to the Grade II listed Sedgeberrow Mill (1251006).

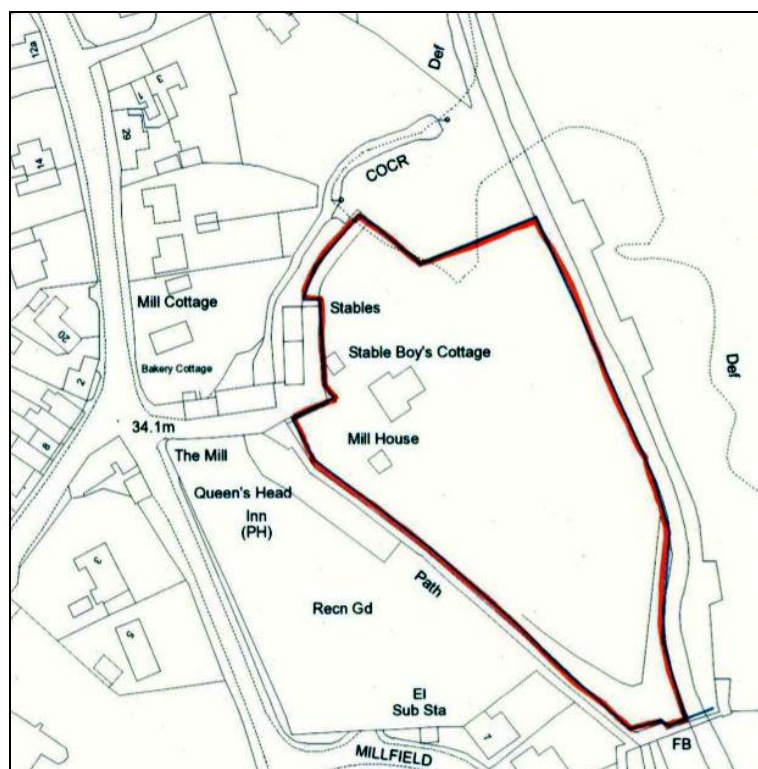


Figure 2. Detailed site location. Ordnance Survey data copyright OS, reproduced by permission.

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### 3. Historical and Archaeological Background

3.1 The parish of Sedgeberrow is located to the south of the county and is mostly bordered by Gloucestershire. A multiphase Late Prehistoric/Roman settlement (1056297) is known towards the south-east of the village which is visible as cropmarks on aerial photographs. The site comprises a trackway of parallel ditches orientated in a north-east to south-west direction with a complex of conjoined rectilinear enclosures to the south. This settlement is overlain by medieval ridge and furrow (NMR number SP 03 NW 77). Another Late Prehistoric/Roman settlement site (328114) lies further to the south-east and comprises a triple-ditched rectangular enclosure with curved corners (Pastscape 2015).

3.2 In 777 AD Sedgeberrow was given to the Bishop of Worcester by under-king Aldred, ealdorman of the Hwiccas, to whom it was granted by Offa, King of Mercia. By the date of the Domesday survey, Sedgeberrow was held by the monks of Worcester where two mills were recorded in their manor. By 1240 AD there appears to have been only one mill which was not recorded after 1535 AD (BHO 2015). Remains of a 13<sup>th</sup> century chapel are visible within the remodelled cottage Church House, and the 14<sup>th</sup> century church of St Marys is still extant within the village. A number of areas of medieval and post-medieval ridge and furrow plough marks are visible around the village (1393953, 1434998, 1435008) attesting to the local economy (Pastscape 2015).

3.3 The current mill building on the site dates to around the early-mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, with the machinery having probably been refitted in the later part of the century. The building appears to have been constructed in phases with the main building at the centre. The internal machinery remains almost complete (Heritage Gateway 2015).

3.4. A World War II gun emplacement or searchlight battery (1387988) is visible to the north-west of the village, as an earthwork on aerial photographs. The site is situated within an area of ploughed-out ridge and furrow (SP 03 NW 77) (Pastscape 2015).

3.5 The development site has the potential to impact upon remains of medieval date. The most likely remains to be encountered would be medieval traces of medieval mill buildings. To date, no other potential archaeological remains have been recorded in the Worcestershire Historic Environment Record.

## **4. Aims**

4.1 The aim of the programme of work is, in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 141 (CLG 2012), to record and enhance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost during the proposed development in a manner proportionate to their importance, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publically accessible.

## **5. Methodology**

5.1 The watching brief area comprised a reversed 'C-shaped' wall foundation trench measuring a total length of 21.557m by 0.55m in width and a maximum depth of 1m. The internal footprint created by this trench was lowered in height by a depth of 0.30m (Figure 3).

5.2 All relevant groundworks were undertaken with a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket and, where necessary, hand dug by the onsite contractors. All digging was carried out under archaeological supervision.

5.3 The deposits were recorded according to the normal principles of stratigraphic excavation. Each context was recorded on pro-forma records which included the following: character and contextual relationships; detailed description (dimensions and shape; soil components, colour, texture and consistency); interpretation and phasing as well as cross-references to the drawn, photographic and finds registers.

5.4 The trench was planned at 1:20. Trench sides were also drawn in section at a scale of 1:10 where applicable. A colour digital photographic record was maintained including photographs of the trench.

5.5 A risk assessment complying with the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) was undertaken before commencement of the work and health and safety regulations were adhered to at all times.

5.6 The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) *Code of Conduct* (2014a) and *Standards and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (2014b) were adhered to at all times.

## **6. Results**

6.1 The reverse 'C-shaped' trench measured at total length of 21.557m by 0.55m in width and had a maximum depth of 1m. It was dug on a north-west to south-east orientation adjacent to the rear of the existing property. The trench was dug in order to



facilitate the installation of wall foundations for the two storey extension being constructed. The internal space created by the foundation trench was lowered by 0.30m in depth to allow for the installation of underfloor foundation material and drainage.

6.2 The excavation was part of the rear garden of the property and therefore was overlain by topsoil (001) which had a maximum depth of 0.20m.

6.3 Directly below (001) was a mixture of soil and debris (002) comprising mortar, brick waste, plastic, coal, metal and, fragments of garden paving slabs. This deposit measured no greater than 0.30m in depth at the south-east end becoming thinner towards the north-west. Within and underlying this deposit were a number of drainage pipes relating to the current structure. This deposit has been interpreted as representing the debris resulting from the demolition of the previous structure which has been reused to level-up the ground surface which appears to slope down towards the south-east heading and the river.

6.4 Below (002) in the south-eastern corner of the trench was a heavily truncated deposit of crushed mortar and brick (003) orientated along a south-east to north-west direction which respected the alignment of the current structure. This feature has been interpreted as being a probable wall foundation associated with the previous structure demolished in c.1993.

6.5 Immediately below (002) was a discontinuous deposit of dark-grey clayey silt (006) which measured no greater in depth than 0.18m. This deposit was less evident towards the south-east of the excavation and more defined towards the north-west. This deposit has been interpreted as a buried topsoil relating to the ground-level upon which the previous structure was constructed.

6.6 Directly below (006) was a fine green-brown clay substrate (005) which continued beyond the excavated depth.

6.7 No archaeological artefacts were recovered during the course of the works.

Figure 3. Groundworks plan including section of F003.



Figure 4. Excavation trench south-eastern corner. Scale = 0.5m graduations.





Figure 5. Excavation trench south-eastern side. Scale = 0.5m graduations.



Figure 6. Probable wall foundation (003). Scale = 0.5m graduations.





Figure 7. Excavation trench eastern side, with modern drainage and oil pipes visible.

Scale = 0.5m graduations.



Figure 8. Excavation trench north-western side. Scale = 0.5m graduations.





Figure 9. Excavation trench north-western corner. Scale = 0.5m graduations.



Figure 10. Representative section. Scale = 0.5m graduations.

## **7. Discussion**

7.1. The modern construction Mill House is situated approximately 25m to the east of the c.19<sup>th</sup> century mill on ground which has been much disturbed by previous construction and ground levelling. The watching brief during the groundworks for the proposed extension was devoid of archaeological remains with the exception of a significantly truncated buried wall foundation comprising crushed brick and mortar. The orientation of this foundation respected the orientation of the current house which was mainly constructed over the footprint of the previously demolished property. Taking into account the orientation of the probable wall foundation and, that it was truncated by and buried beneath a deposit of demolition debris, this foundation has been interpreted as belonging to the previous house.

7.2. The current owner of the property related to the on-site archaeologist how the old course of the river was filled in and a new channel was cut further to the east to reduce the risk of nearby flooding. The old riverbed was backfilled and a raised above ground level to create a flood defence. This may have occurred sometime during the last decade (Andrew Thomas pers. comm.). A ground-levelling event was observable which used the demolition debris from the previous structure to create a flat garden surface for the current house on the site, where the ground appears to slope away towards a now-filled bend in the river to the south-east. This demolition deposit sealed the previous topsoil layer which related to the ground level upon which the earlier structure was constructed.

## **8. Archive**

8.1. The archive which, consists of a copy of this report, context sheets, photographic register, and a disc of digital photographs and CAD plans, will be deposited with Archaeology Data Service, and a paper copy deposited with Worcestershire County Museum.

## **9. Publicity, Confidentiality and Copyright**

9.1. Any publicity will be handled by the client.

9.2. Archaeological Research Services Ltd will retain the copyright of all documentary and photographic material under the Copyright, Designs and Patent Act (1988).

## **10. Statement of Indemnity**

10.1. Statements and opinions contained within this report arising from the works undertaken are offered in good faith and compiled according to professional standards. No responsibility can be accepted by the author/s of the report for any errors of fact or opinion resulting from data supplied by any third party, or for loss or other consequence arising from decisions or actions made upon the basis of facts or opinions expressed in any such report(s), howsoever such facts and opinions may have been derived.



## 11. Acknowledgements

11.1 Archaeological Research Services Ltd would like to thank all those involved with this work, in particular Andrew Thomas for commissioning the work and Mike Glyde, County Archaeologist for Worcestershire, for his advice throughout the project.

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