

# ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK BASED ASSESSMENT

**LAND ADJACENT TO HOME FARM  
BELMONT  
HEREFORDSHIRE  
HR2 9RX**

**NGR: SO 48554 38273  
EHE: 1963  
JOB N<sup>o</sup>: BA1125HFB**



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## 1. Non-Technical Summary

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*This archaeological desk-based assessment of the proposed residential development on land at Home Farm, Belmont has revealed that:*

- *The Herefordshire Sites and Monuments Record reveals no archaeological sites or areas of interest recorded in the immediate vicinity of the proposed development (based on a 500m radius search), apart from an 18<sup>th</sup> century farm complex at Home Farm, of which only the stables are listed (just outside the SE corner of the development area) and two post-medieval quarry sites (situated to the E of the development area); **however, no archaeological sites or areas of interest were identified within the area of the proposed development itself.***
- *Three findspots are recorded in the wider surrounding area (1km radius), and consist of two single Roman coin finds dating to the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries, and a residual Neolithic flint axe-head. Additional findspots are recorded on the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) database, the majority of which are Roman, although Medieval and Post-Medieval dates are also represented. The distribution of these findspots suggest accidental loss, rather than evidence of a settlement. One Roman settlement and two Roman roads are located within 5km of the site, suggesting there is only limited potential for Roman activity to be encountered in the vicinity of the site.*
- *The map regression shows that the land making up the proposed site originally belonged to the Belmont estate when it was created in 1788, and was landscaped in 1790 by the noted landscape architect Humphry Repton in the Picturesque Style. Surviving features associated with the landscape park include the placement of the original driveway leading to Belmont which runs the length of the site, and still exists today as a modern footpath. By 1815, it is possible that the site may have come into the possession of Broomy Hill Farm, with the original driveway possibly falling out of use at the same time due to the appearance of a shorter driveway immediately to the S of Belmont House; however, due to the relative sparseness of the documentary evidence, this is not provable, as is the exact nature of the relationship between Broomy Hill Farm and the Belmont Estate.*
- *Cartographic sources dating back to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century show very little change to the area since the landscape park attached to Belmont House was laid out c.1790; consequently, there remains potential for the survival of features associated with this phase of late 18<sup>th</sup> century landscaping activity.*

## 2. Introduction

Border Archaeology has undertaken this archaeological desk-based assessment on behalf of Lioncourt Homes Ltd to determine the nature of the archaeological resource in relation to a proposed residential development on land adjacent to Home Farm Belmont Herefordshire. The area of proposed development is situated on land to the NW of Home Farm and is bounded by a housing estate to the E, the A465 and Rickhall Lane to the S and fields to the N and W (*fig.1*).

Copies of this assessment will be supplied in the first instance to Lioncourt Homes Ltd for their consideration.

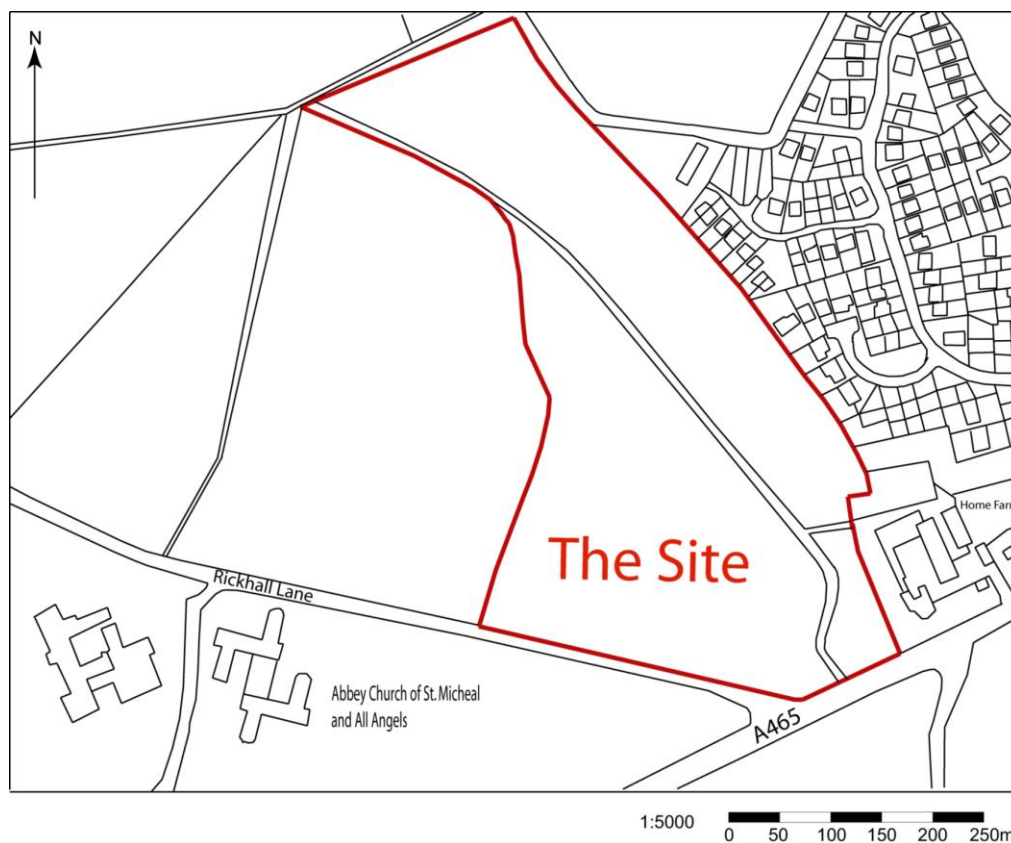


Fig 1: Site location plan showing the area of proposed development

### 2.1 Soils and Geology

The soils in the vicinity of the study area are predominantly typical argillic brown earths of the BROMYARD series (571b), comprising reddish fine silty soils over shale and siltstone, prone to slight seasonal waterlogging (SSEW, 1983).

## 3. Methodology

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### 3.1 Archaeological Assessment

#### 3.1.1 Research Aims

This archaeological desk-based assessment seeks to identify any known or potential archaeological resource within the study area and to establish its character, extent, quality and importance, within a local, regional and national context.

#### 3.1.2 Research Methods

The research carried out for this detailed archaeological assessment consisted of the following elements:

#### 3.1.3 Evaluation and study of archaeological databases

A search was made of the National Monuments Record (English Heritage), the Herefordshire Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) and the Portable Antiquities Scheme database for any sites of archaeological or historic interest in the vicinity of the study area.

#### 3.1.4 Evaluation and study of primary sources

Primary documentary sources relating to the study area, including estate maps and surveys, were consulted at Herefordshire Record Office.

#### 3.1.5 Evaluation and study of secondary sources

Secondary sources relating to the study area were consulted using the collections held at the Herefordshire Record Office and the Hereford SMR, including relevant articles in the *Transactions of the Woolhope Naturalists' Field Club* and *The Journal of Picturesque Society*, and published and unpublished reports relating to archaeological work in the vicinity of the study area.

#### 3.1.6 Evaluation and study of cartographic and other pictorial evidence

Estate plans and Ordnance Survey maps relating to the study area were consulted, including the OS surveyors' drawing of 1815 (at a scale of 1:31680) and the 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> edition maps (at scales of 1:2500 and 1:10560), using collections held at Herefordshire Record Office.



## 4. Site Specific Analysis (Including Map Regression)

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The specific study area comprises a field to the W of Home Farm, approximately 5.75ha in size (NGR SO 48554 38273).

### 4.1 Consultation of Archaeological Records

This section analyses the available information from records of archaeological work carried out in the vicinity of the proposed development site and discuss its implications for the nature of the archaeological resource within the study area and the likely depth and survival of significant archaeological deposits and features. The sites and findspots mentioned within this section are depicted in map form in Appendix 1 at the end of this report.

#### 4.1.1 Prehistoric

No Prehistoric features are recorded within the immediate vicinity of the site. A Neolithic polished axe-head (NMR 107788), which is probably residual, and a scraper (PAS: HESH-BC50F6) have been found within 500m of the site, and a Mesolithic hammer (HESH-BBD923) approximately 1km SE of the site. A number of flint scatters were recorded to the SE of the site during fieldwalking for the A49/A465 Hereford Bypass (SMR 8611, 8612, 8614) (Hurst 1995, 14).

#### 4.1.2 Roman

No Roman settlements or farmsteads are recorded within the immediate vicinity of the site, the nearest seemingly being a Romano-British settlement at Lower Bullingham, 2km away (SMR 51604). In addition, two Roman roads pass within 5km of the site (Margary, 1973, road 6c, SMR 9419; Margary, 1973, road 630); although the exact route of these roads is uncertain, road 6c (Watling Street), which Margary believes to continue S from Hereford to Monmouth, is possibly identifiable with the stretch of the modern A49 immediately S of Hereford, and so appears to be c.1.8km to the E of the site (Margary, 1973, 321-2). Road 630, which runs from Tillington towards Abergavenny via Kenchester (*Magna*), lies to the W of the site, although its exact distance from the site is difficult to determine with a great degree of accuracy (Margary, 1973, 432-3). Fieldwalking around the lines of both these roads has produced pottery scatters (Hurst, 1995, 15). Further findspots within the wider vicinity of the site include three Roman coins from the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries, all found 1km N of the site (HESH-0F3FC2; HESH-ACC5C2; HESH-A56A43).

These data therefore suggest that, although there is as yet no significant evidence for Roman activity within the immediate vicinity of the site, there is evidence for Roman activity within the wider area, including two roads passing nearby, which raises the potential for evidence of Roman activity or settlement being uncovered on the site.

#### 4.1.3 Medieval

Again, in the immediate vicinity of the site there is little evidence of Medieval activity, although Warham House (SMR 4802) at Breinton is possibly of medieval origin, and there is a deserted medieval village site recorded in the same area (NMR 107812). Cropmarks at Grafton, to the SE of the site, have been identified as the remains of a motte and bailey



castle with possible associated settlement enclosures (SMR 10467); late 12<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> century pottery has been found there (Halliwell, 1993, 376).

#### 4.1.4 Post-Medieval

The Post-Medieval period is relatively well-represented within the immediate vicinity. Adjacent to the SE corner of the site, but not located within the proposed development area, is Home Farm (SMR 47737), a Post-Medieval farm complex with Grade II listed stables dating to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. To the W of the site lies the Abbey Church of St Michael and All Angels, a Benedictine priory established in 1854.

Belmont House to the NW of the site comprises a late 18<sup>th</sup> century listed manor house (SMR 23216, 23217). The proposed site lies within the boundaries of the landscape park associated with Belmont House and laid out by the noted landscape architect Humphry Repton in c.1790 (SMR 31136). The Belmont House property was formerly known as Old Hill, an extensive landholding which belonged to the Aubrey family to the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Within the surrounding area, approximately 1km to the S of the site, is Merryhill Farmhouse and stables (SMR 9432, 9433); the existing buildings date to the 18<sup>th</sup> century, although the farmstead possibly has earlier, Medieval origins.

Evidence of Post-Medieval industrial activity in the area includes two gravel quarry pits to the E of the site (SMR 41338, 41339), railway lines to the S and a possible brick-making site to the NW (SMR 23163).

## 4.2 Documentary Study and Map Regression (including Aerial Photography)

### 4.2.1 c. 1800-1900

Documentary and cartographic sources for the area are limited until the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The earliest topographically detailed map of the site is the Ordnance Survey drawing of 1815 surveyed by Thomas Budgen (not reproduced), which shows the area of the proposed site as fields associated with Broomy Hill Farm, now called Home Farm. The land appears open with no buildings or features except a path running from the NNW corner down to the SSE corner of the field.

The 1839 Clehonger tithe map shows the proposed development site to be made up predominantly of pasture land, listed in the accompanying tithe apportionment as belonging to Broomy Hill Farm and known as Broomy Hill Lawns. The SW portion of the area is made up of a belt of trees, one of many planted to blend in with the surrounding countryside in c.1790 (see *Fig 2*; Whitehead, 1995, 366). As in the 1815 drawing, the land appears open with a path running NNW to SSE across it. From this more detailed plan it is possible to see that this is not a simple footpath but is, in fact, part of the driveway to Belmont House situated NW of the site (off-map).

Belmont House was built in 1788 by the architect James Wyatt for Colonel John Matthews MP (d.1826), who had purchased the estate, formerly known as Old Hill, a year earlier. In c.1790, Humphry Repton, the last great landscape designer of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, was commissioned to design the setting, the results of which included the long, winding drive which can be seen in *Fig 2*. The drive leaves the Hereford Road (now the A465) opposite the turning towards Haywood, crossing the pasture land that makes up the proposed site and on to the house on a serpentine curve (Whitehead, 2001, 366-8; Murray, 1872, 303). The

transformation and embellishment of the Belmont grounds in the 1790s was widely regarded as a success, being highly praised by contemporaries including the local antiquarian writer John Price (writing in 1795), as well as being captured in a series of paintings by Hereford artist James Wathen (Price, 1795, 190-1; Murray, 1872, 303; Whitehead, 2001, 18).



Fig 2: Extract from 1839 Tithing map of Clehonger parish with the proposed site marked in red. The original driveway to Belmont House can be seen running across the site and continuing NW off-map

(Reproduced by courtesy of Herefordshire Record Office)

By combining information from both the Ordnance Survey surveyors' drawing of 1815 and the 1839 Clehonger tithe map, it is possible to suggest that the original landscaped driveway designed by Repton gradually fell out of use post c.1815, due to the presence of a shorter, more direct driveway immediately to the S of Belmont House.

The 1887 OS map (Fig 3) shows that little change had occurred to the land use or boundaries on the site since 1839, which was still largely under pasture, except for the SW corner, which contains the belt of trees planted in c.1790. The original Belmont House driveway can be clearly seen running across the map and curving to the NW.

To the W of the site, a new road (now called Ruckhall Lane) can be seen running up against the side of the proposed site. This road can be seen branching off from the Hereford Road (now the A465) and runs to Eaton Bishop. In addition to this, Belmont Abbey, called St. Michael's Priory on the 1887 map, can be seen for the first time. This abbey was commissioned in 1860 by Francis Wegg-Prosser, then owner of the Belmont estate (Whitehead, 2001, 367).



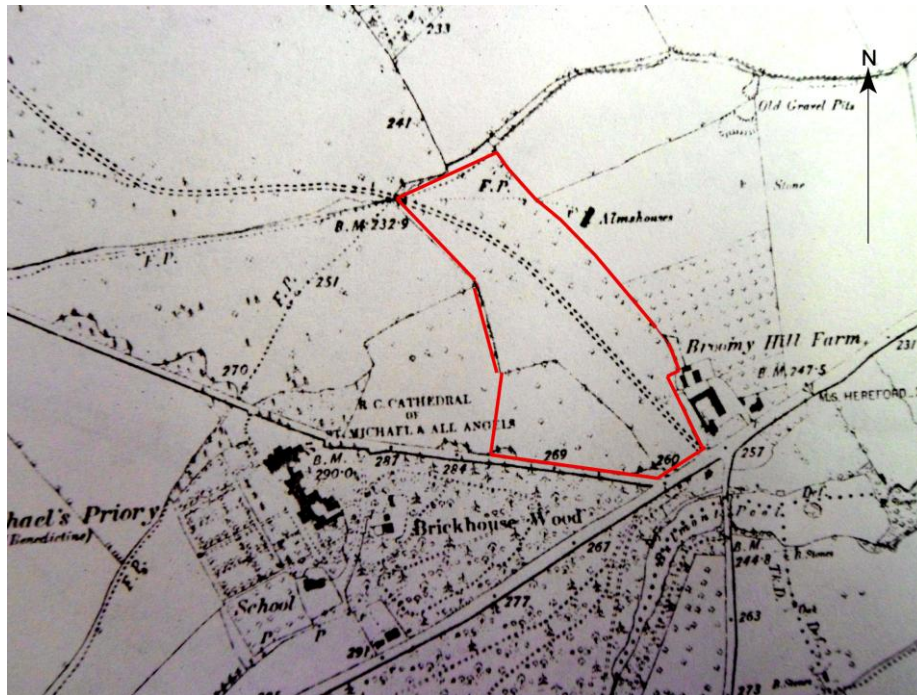


Fig 3: OS 1<sup>st</sup> edition map, 1887, with the site shown in red and the course of the old driveway running NW-SE across the site

(Reproduced by courtesy of Herefordshire Record Office)

A plan of the Belmont estate, probably drawn up c.1890 (Fig 4), demonstrates that there has been no change in field boundaries, when compared to the other maps, and also shows both the long, snaking drive and the shorter drive shown in c.1815 that joins the road running from Eaton Bishop to the Hereford Road. This suggests that the longer serpentine drive was still a feature of the landscape in c.1890 and may even still have been in use.

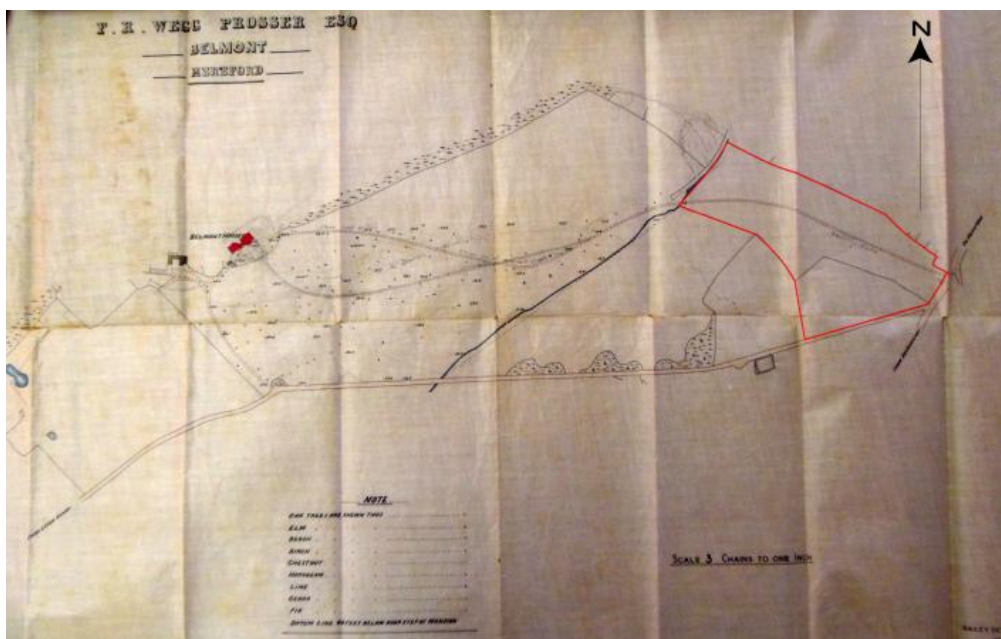
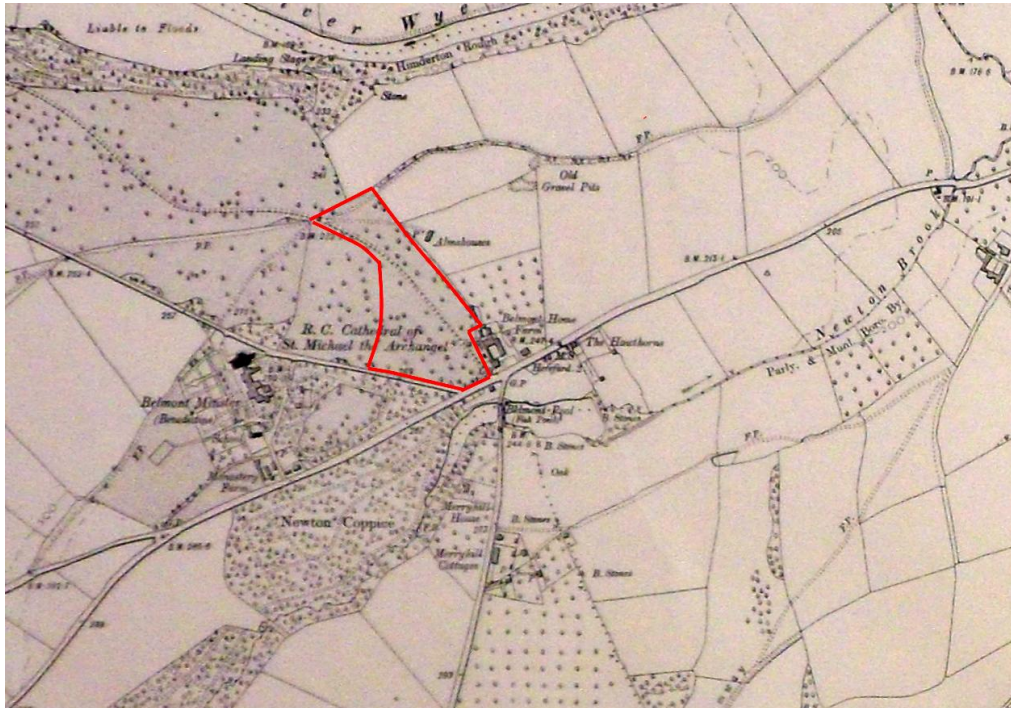


Fig 4: Belmont Estate map, c.1890, showing both driveways

(Reproduced by courtesy of Herefordshire Record Office)

4.2.2 c. 1900 to present

By 1905 the woodland area in the SW corner has been amalgamated into the larger field and the boundary had disappeared. The old driveway is, however, still clearly marked and flanked by trees (*Fig 5*).



*Fig 5: OS 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 1905 with site marked in red, showing the late 18<sup>th</sup> century serpentine driveway to Belmont House flanked by trees*

*(Reproduced by courtesy of Herefordshire Record Office)*

No appreciable change to the field boundaries and land use in the vicinity of the site can be perceived on the OS 6-inch map of 1952 (*Fig 6*), and the site boundaries have remained largely unaltered up to the present day, although there has been gradual encroachment by suburban housing development from Hereford along the eastern edge of the site (*Plate 1*).

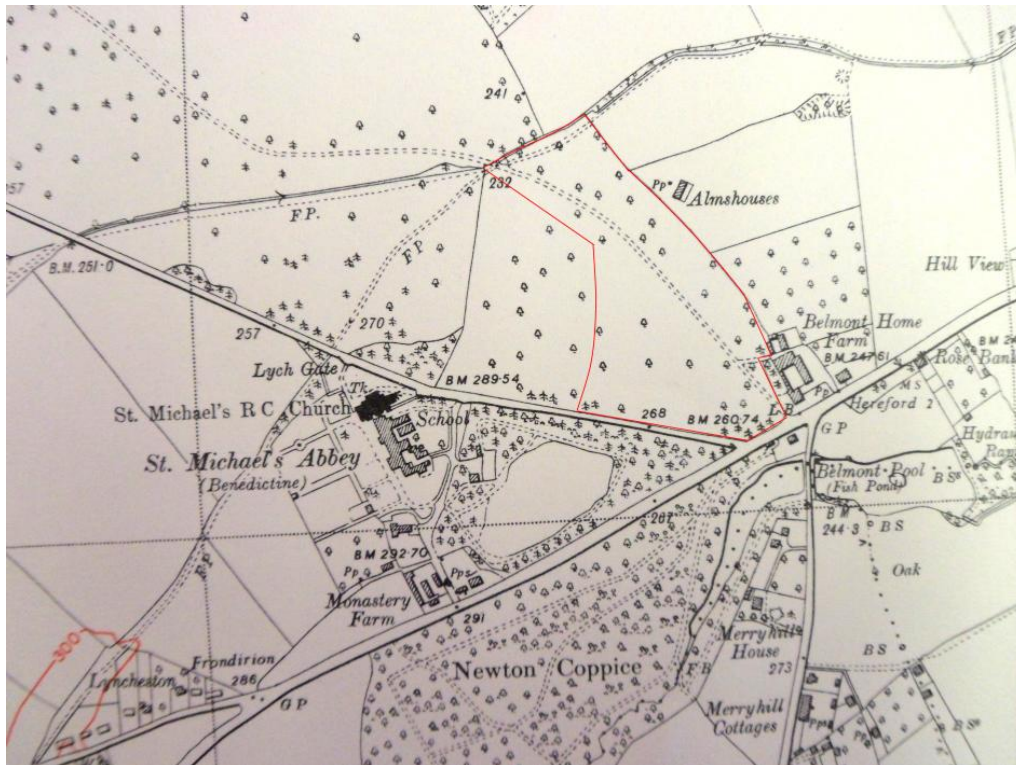


Fig 6: 1952 OS map showing continuing land use and the old drive running NW-SE through the proposed site

(Reproduced by courtesy of Herefordshire Record Office)



Plate 1: View S of the proposed site showing the old Belmont drive and its surrounding landscape.

## 5. Site Visit

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A site visit was undertaken on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2011 to assess, wherever accessible, the survival of any above-ground archaeological features. The field was traversed and examined and features linked to Repton's landscaping of the area in c.1790 were identified, specifically the remains of the original Belmont House driveway. The trees within the site may also have been planted at this time, as the majority appear to line the driveway, and there are four to the SW that appear to be deliberately planted to form a square, which may once have been part of a larger decorative feature.

Aside from the trees and driveway, it appears the rest of the landscape within the site and its vicinity is naturally formed. For example, the land rises to the W, which would have accentuated the sweep of the driveway and created a picturesque view and sense of grandeur to the entrance of the estate; however, it is likely that, in this instance, Repton took advantage of the natural geography of the area when designing the driveway and scenery, rather than actually re-modelling the landscape.

Further evidence of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century landscaping and building activity can still be made out in the vicinity of the site, including an E-W footpath that is present on the 1839 tithe map (*Fig 2*) and may well have originated as a road into Hereford, and a set of almshouses built in 1852, situated to the E of the site. The landscaping activities within the Belmont estate (SMR 31136) are deemed important due to their connection with the Picturesque movement and an advisory note on the SMR entry for this area suggests further damage to this 18<sup>th</sup> century landscape should be avoided (SMR 31136; Whitehead, 2001).



*Plate 2: View showing rising ground to the NW of the old driveway to Belmont House*

## 6. Conclusion

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**This archaeological desk-based assessment, based on a detailed consultation of available sources of archaeological and historical information, has determined that the proposed development site does not lie near any known Prehistoric, Roman or Medieval sites, nor do the findspots within the immediate vicinity (500m) or wider area (1km) suggest the presence of significant archaeological activity upon the site.** However, the location of the site near two Roman roads slightly increases the potential for, as yet unknown, activity in the area (See Appendix 1).

The map regression has shown that the site once belonged to the Belmont estate, which was heavily landscaped in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century by Humphry Repton. It is evident also that much of the landscaping and original field boundaries still survive in the study area, including part of the original serpentine driveway. There is, therefore, potential for further evidence of this 18<sup>th</sup> century landscaping activity to be encountered within the proposed site. Documentary and cartographic research suggests that the site became the property of Broomy Hill Farm (now Home Farm) by 1815, although the exact relationship between Broomy Hill Farm and the Belmont Estate at this time remains unclear.

It must also be noted that the site has not been affected by modern development or ploughing since c.1790. This raises two points: first, that there is potential for hitherto unknown archaeology to be present due to the preservation of the site as an open landscape and, second, any extant archaeology within the site is likely to be reasonably well preserved, again due to the land having been kept open and unploughed.

## 7. Copyright

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Border Archaeology shall retain full copyright of any commissioned reports, tender documents or other project documents, under the Copyright, Designs & Patents Act 1988 with all rights reserved; excepting that it hereby provides an exclusive licence to the client for the use of the report by the client in all matters directly relating to the project as described in the Project Specification.



## 8. Bibliography

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### 8.1 Primary Sources

#### Herefordshire Record Office

Belmont Estate Papers - 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century

Clelonger parish tithe apportionment - 1839

### 8.2 Secondary Sources

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## 9. Cartography

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(All maps were obtained from the Herefordshire Record Office unless otherwise stated)

OS surveyors' drawing (at a scale of 2 inches to the mile) by Thomas Budgen - 1815

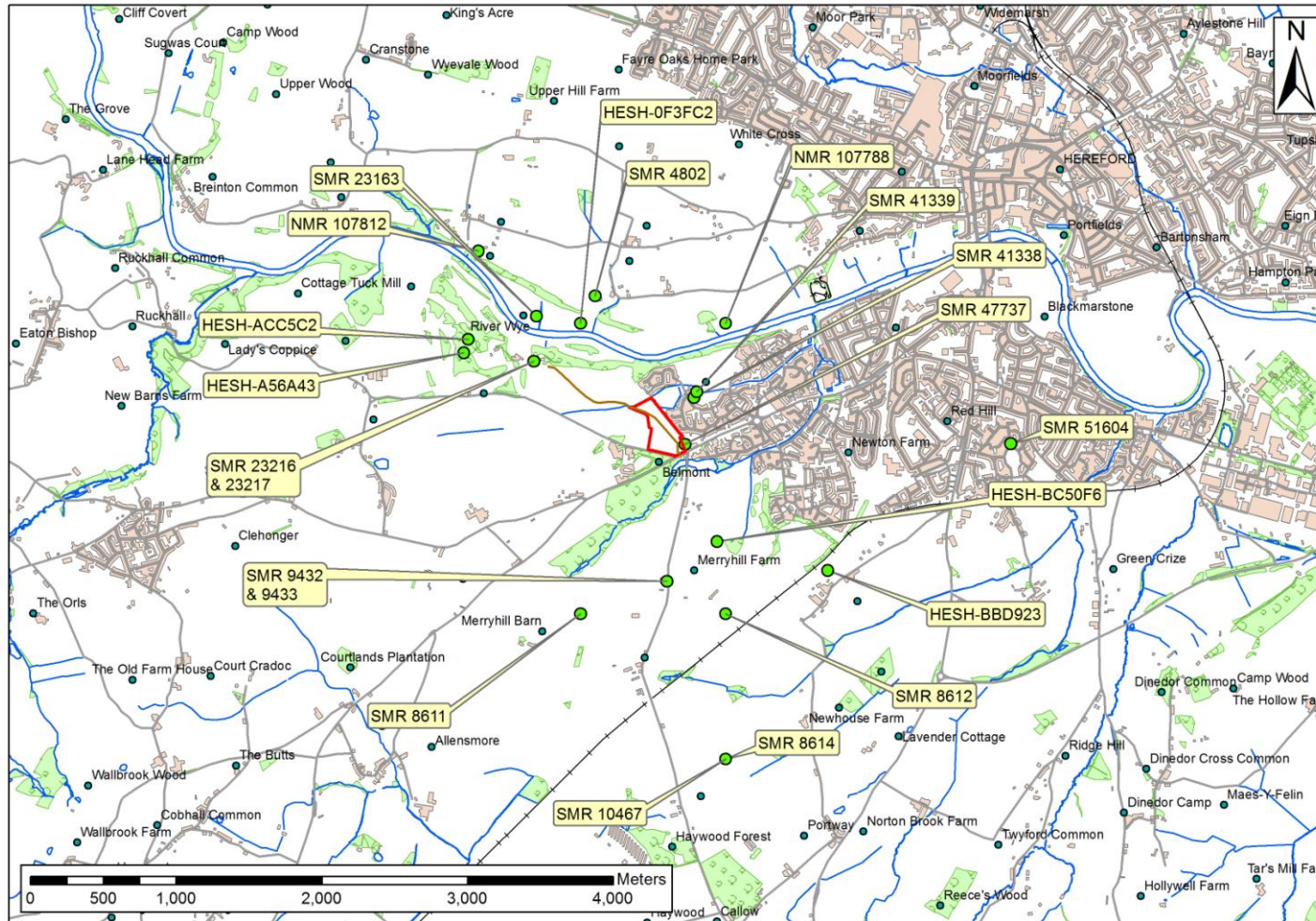
Clehonger Tithe Map - 1839

OS 1<sup>st</sup> Edition 25-inch map - 1887

OS 2nd edition 25-inch map - 1905

OS provisional edition 6-inch map - 1960

## 10. Appendix 1: Gazetteer of Archaeological Sites in the vicinity of the site (NGR SO 48554 38273)







## Key

### Prehistoric

NMR 107788: A Neolithic polished axe-head, probably residual

HESH-BC50F6: Neolithic scraper

HESH-BBD923: Mesolithic hammer

SMR 8611, 8612, 8614: Flint scatters

### Roman

SMR 51604: Romano British settlement

HESH-0F3FC2: Roman Coin, 300-370 AD

HESH-ACC5C2: Roman Coin, 260-269 AD

HESH-A56A43: Roman Coin, post 270 AD

### Medieval

SMR 4802: Warham House, Breinton

NMR 107812: Deserted Medieval Village (DMV)

SMR 10467: Motte and bailey castle, Grafton

### Post Medieval

SMR 47737: Home Farm, Belmont

SMR 23216: Belmont House

SMR 23217: Belmont House Stables

SMR 31136: Belmont Estate

SMR 9432: Merryhill Farm

SMR 9433: Merryhill Farm Stables

SMR 41338: Gravel quarry pit

SMR 41339: Gravel quarry pit

SMR 23163: Brick making site



## Document Control

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