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*Cover: View west showing excavation of footings*

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Contents:

1	Executive Summary .....	1
2	Introduction.....	2
	2.1 Site description .....	3
3	Historical and Archaeological Background .....	3
4	Methodology .....	4
5	Results .....	6
6	Discussion.....	7
7	Copyright .....	8
8	Bibliography .....	8

## 1 Executive Summary

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*Border Archaeology Ltd was commissioned by Professor and Dr W. B. Wilkinson to undertake archaeological observation of excavations for footings relating to the erection of a single-storey conservatory at Millfield House in Leintwardine.*

*The house lies some 25m east of the line of the defensive rampart of the Roman town of Bravinium (Branogenium) and is situated within the Scheduled Ancient Monument.*

*No features or deposits of archaeological significance were encountered during the course of the groundworks observations. No finds were present. It is possible that the absence of evidence for Roman occupation on a site so close to areas of known Roman finds and features could be attributable to the impact of truncation during the construction of Millfield House and the landscaping of its garden.*

## 2 Introduction

Border Archaeology Ltd (BAL) was instructed by Prof and Dr W.B. Wilkinson to carry out an archaeological observation (or 'watching brief') of groundworks relating to the construction of a single-storey conservatory at Millfield House Leintwardine Herefordshire SY7 0LB (NGR: SO 40339 73980) (Herefordshire Planning ref. P143341/FH) (fig. 1).

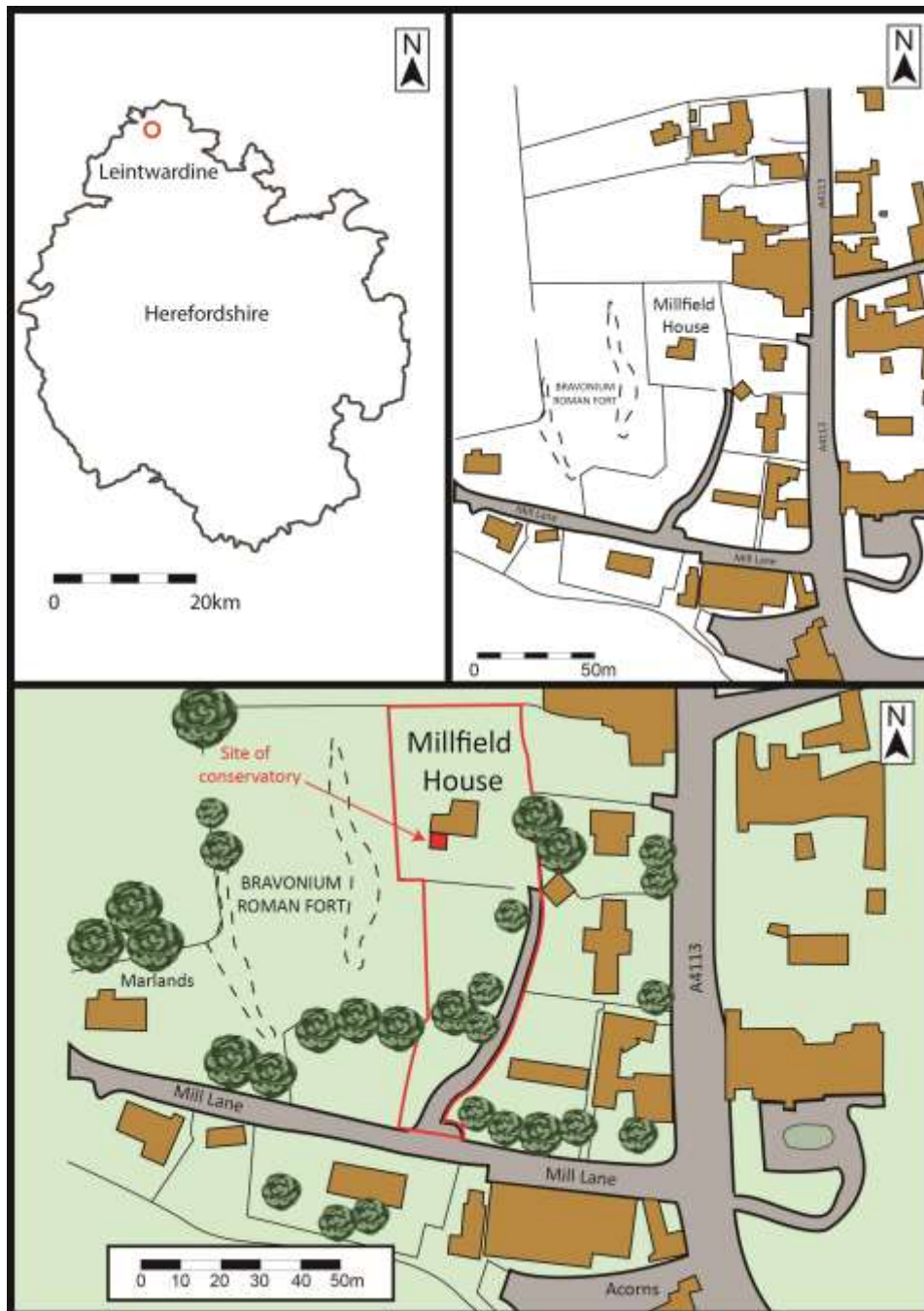


Fig. 1: Plan showing location of groundworks

The works took place on June 22<sup>nd</sup> 2015 and involved removal of a living-room bay window and erection of a timber-and-glass construction above a dwarf cavity wall. Scheduled Monument Consent was issued by DCMS London with the approval of Bill Klemperer Esq Principal Inspector of Ancient Monuments Historic England West Midlands.

## 2.1 Site description

The site lies at approximately 128m AOD within the Scheduled Ancient Monument (No. 1005522) of Leintwardine. The garden area attached to Millfield House slopes steeply to the S in the direction of Mill Lane.

The solid geology of the surrounding area is of [Silurian] Pridoli Series mudstones and siltstones which directly relate to the Old Red Sandstone formation [massif] series. The related drift geology consists of glaciofluvial or riverine terrace gravels and till. The drift geology is made up of typical argillic brown earths of the ROWTON series (571A), comprising well-drained fine silty and fine loamy soils, locally over gravel, with some fine silty soils overlying clayey soils with slowly permeable sub-soils and seasonal waterlogging and some slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged fine silty soils over clayey soils.

## 3 Historical and Archaeological Background

The site falls within the western section of the Roman town of *Bravinium* (*Branogenium*). This area has received considerable archaeological interest. A bathhouse excavated by Dr S. Stanford was located some 25m to the S of the site and extensive rampart defences lie 25m to the W; the original line of Watling Street runs to the E.

It was originally accepted that *Bravinium* (*Branogenium*) was a military fort/garrison town (Stanford 1986). However, it is now considered (Brown 1996) that, rather than a military site, Leintwardine was a civilian town with a *mansio* situated on the principal road between the legionary fortresses of Caerleon and Chester. The settlement, and military elements, date from the mid-1<sup>st</sup> century AD and, similar to other large settlements in the area, flourished until the mid-4<sup>th</sup> century and the demise of strong Roman administration and civil organisation.

Evidence is lacking for the post-Roman and early medieval period from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> centuries; however, the Domesday survey of 1086 shows Leintwardine was established at that time as the centre of an important royal manor, presumed to be of long standing, although there is no clear evidence of political continuity throughout this period (Dorling 2014).

A programme of work comprising the excavation of 14 test pits, limited open-area excavation and archaeological observation was carried out by Border Archaeology on land adjacent to Millfield House (NGR SO 40370 73980) in 2000/1. Evidence of a post-medieval boundary wall and the foundations of a farm building (also located on the 1847 tithe map) were revealed within three of the test pits. Both structures were located within the S and E areas of the site.

Also uncovered was a large quantity of late 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup>-century Roman pottery and ceramic building material (CBM), as well as numerous sherds of 19<sup>th</sup>- and 20<sup>th</sup>-century pottery. The uniform spread of (Roman) pottery and CBM across the site suggested that significant structures, possibly relating to the nearby bathhouse, may exist below the limit of excavation. The limited open excavation, located within the NE and SE areas of the site incorporated a number of previously excavated test pits. The depth, extending to 0.50m, did not expose any significant archaeology. Within the SE corner of the excavation area, and incorporating Test Pit 13, further foundations of the farm building (recorded on the 1847 tithe map) were exposed.

Archaeological observation revealed a number of significant archaeological features or structures of 18<sup>th</sup>-century date. These were associated with agricultural activity in and around the site and were identified as the foundations of a farm outbuilding belonging to Mill Lane Farm. Also uncovered was a small quantity of residual Roman pottery and CBM, including several ridge tiles. The three elements of the archaeological programme revealed a large quantity of Roman material, residual in context; the spread of Roman material across the site suggested that probable significant remains existed below 0.50m, with the highest concentrations found within the extreme S and W of the site.

## 4 Methodology

All archaeological site works within the study area were undertaken in accordance with accepted standards of professional and ethical guidance, including *Management of Projects in the Historic Environment* (EH 2009) and *Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (CIfA 2014). Border Archaeology adheres to the CIfA *Code of conduct* (2014) and *Regulations for professional conduct* (2015).

The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2014, 4) states that the purpose of a watching brief (archaeological observation) is:

- 1) To allow, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be established (or established with sufficient accuracy) in advance of development or other potentially disruptive works;
- 2) To provide an opportunity, if needed, for the watching archaeologist to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief itself are not sufficient to support treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard

All excavations were carried out under archaeological supervision down to the determined depth. Full written, graphic and photographic records were made in accordance with Border Archaeology's *Archaeological Field Recording Manual* (2014). The written record comprised a *pro-forma* context sheet for each stratigraphic unit.

A photographic record of all stratigraphic units was made using a high-resolution digital camera, comprising photographs of archaeological features and appropriate groups of features and structures. All photographic records were indexed and cross-referenced to written site records. Details concerning subject and direction of

view were maintained in a photographic register, indexed by frame number. A representative photographic record of the progress of the archaeological work was also made.

The three foundation trenches were excavated by hand by the contractors under archaeological supervision throughout. All three trenches measured 4.40m in length. They were 0.30m deep and 0.55m wide.

Copies of this report will be sent to Prof and Dr Wilkinson, Mr Klemperer and to Julian Cotton Esq Archaeological Advisor Herefordshire Council.



## 5 Results

Context No.	Matrix Phase	Type	Interpretation	Discussion	Finds					Comments
					Small Find	Pot	Bone	Misc.	Sample No.	
(101)		Deposit	Topsoil (garden soil) between sewer cut [102] & wall of house	Firm/moderately compact mid brown silty clay, frequent gravel; extended 1.2m × >0.5m × 0.2m.	-	-	-	-	-	
[102]		Cut	Cut for sewer observed in E & W foundation trench	Linear; aligned E/W; measured >0.5m × 0.50m × >0.30m. Cut (103), (101)	-	-	-	-	-	
(103)		Deposit	Levelling for flagged area	Firm/friable mid brown sandy silt, patches of red sand & rounded pebbles; extended 4.40m × 4.40m × 0.30m.	-	-	-	-	-	
(104)		Layer	Natural deposition observed largely on W side of site	Firm pink & yellow mottled clay.	-	-	-	-	-	

## 6 Discussion

No evidence for the Roman settlement of *Bravinium* (*Branogenium*) was observed during the work at Millfield House, despite the presence of Roman pottery found in the adjoining field (BA 2001). The site was also close to the site of the bathhouse. It would seem probable that the paucity of evidence recovered during the present programme of work reflects the extent of landscaping activity carried out during the construction of the house in the 1920s.



*Plate 1: View S showing natural deposition (104) beneath levelling layer (103)*

This is supported by the shallow depth at which natural deposition was observed during work on the conservatory extension with natural deposits lying beneath a comparatively shallow depth of disturbed topsoil and red sand levelling material underlying a paved area (*Plate 2*).



*Plate 2: View W of site towards line of Roman defences*

## 7 Copyright

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