

border archaeology

archaeology & built heritage



Archaeological Observation

For

Matthew Davies Esq

Concerning a proposed

**Free Range Chicken Unit
Wytheford House
Wytheford
Shawbury
Shropshire
SY4 4JJ**

June 2018

A photograph of a yellow dump truck, with the number '730' visible on its side, parked on a dirt road. The truck's bed is full of dark soil. In the background, there are several workers in high-visibility vests and a wheelbarrow, along with a line of trees and a clear sky.

borderarchaeology.com
ISO 9001 | ISO 14001 | OHSAS 18001

REPORT SPECIFICATION

Compilation:

K. H. Crooks BA(Hons)

Report Ref:

BA1839WFF

Artwork:

Owain Connors MA PhD

Grid Reference:

NGR: SJ57832 19829

Editing:

George Children MA MCI^fA

OS Licence No:

100055758

Final Edit & Approval:

Neil Shurety Dip. M G M Inst M

Date:

8th June 2018

GENERAL ENQUIRIES

e: info@borderarchaeology.com

t: 01568 610101

Administration

The Plaza, Owen Way, Leominster Enterprise Park, Leominster, HR6 0LA

Post-Ex Facility – Leominster

Telephone 01568 737 969

Email postex@borderarchaeology.com

Post-Ex Facility – Milton Keynes

Telephone 01908 467 789

Email postexmk@borderarchaeology.com

REGIONAL OFFICES

Milton Keynes

Common Farm
Calverton Lane
Milton Keynes, MK19 6EU
t: 01908 467 904

Leeds

No1 Leeds
26 Whitehall Road
Leeds, LS12 1BE
t: 0113 818 7959

Shoreditch

The Old Fire Station,
140 Tabernacle Street,
London, EC2A 4SD
t: 02033 015670

Newport

Merlin House
No1 Langstone Business Park
Newport, NP18 2HJ
t: 01633 415339

Bristol

First Floor,
Citibase Bristol Aztec West,
Aztec Centre, Aztec West
Almondsbury,
Bristol, BS32 4TD
t: 0117 911 0767

Winchester

Basepoint Business Centre,
Winnal Valley Road,
Winchester, SO23 0LD
t: 01962 832777



Contents:

1	Executive Summary	1
2	Introduction.....	2
	2.1 Site Description.....	2
	2.2 Soils and Geology.....	2
3	Historical and Archaeological Background	3
4	Methodology	3
	4.1 Paleoenvironmental/Paleoeconomic sampling.....	4
5	Results	5
6	Discussion	6
7	Conclusion	8
8	Copyright	8
9	Bibliography.....	9
10	Cartography.....	9

1 Executive Summary

Border Archaeology Ltd (BA) was instructed by Matthew Davies Esq to carry out Archaeological Observation of topsoil stripping operations for the construction of a free-range chicken shed on land at Wytheford House Wytheford Shawbury Shropshire. The site lies within an area of recorded cropmark features of probable Iron Age or Romano-British date.

No deposits or features of archaeological significance were present on the site. Removal of topsoil revealed the natural deposits, with evidence for land-drainage and plough-scars indicative of intensive cultivation.

Comparison of the present landscape with that depicted on earlier editions of the Ordnance Survey shows that the site lay at the edge of Wytheford Wood, which had been cleared by the mid-20th century, with areas of blackened soil beneath the topsoil providing evidence of clearance activity.

Heavy disturbance resulting from tree-felling and stump-clearance would almost certainly have destroyed any archaeological features or deposits which may have been present and may account for the absence of a defined subsoil.

2 Introduction

Border Archaeology Ltd (BA) was instructed by Matthew Davies Esq to carry out a programme of Archaeological Observation (AO) on land at Wytheford House Wytheford Shawbury Shropshire (NGR SJ57832 19829) (Planning Ref. 17/03868/FUL) during topsoil removal in preparation for the construction of a free-range chicken shed.

Site work took place on 22nd and 23rd May 2018.

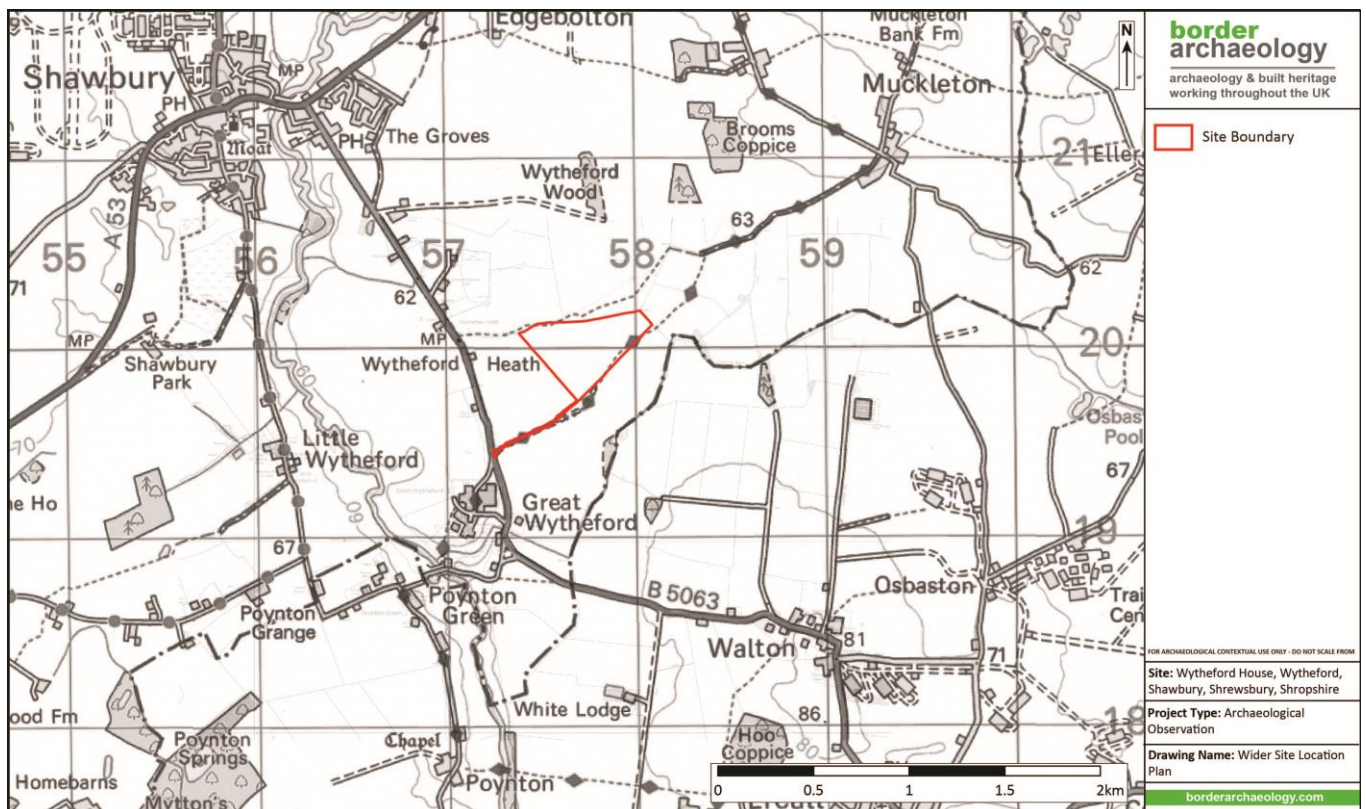


Fig. 1: Site location

2.1 Site Description

The site lies in open country adjacent to the Shropshire Way.

2.2 Soils and Geology

The area is characterized by typical brown sands of the NEWPORT 1 series (551d) composed of deep well-drained sandy and coarse loamy soils overlying glaciofluvial drift (SSEW 1983).

3 Historical and Archaeological Background

Several Iron Age/Romano-British cropmark sites are recorded in the vicinity of the proposed development.

A single ditched rectangular enclosure measuring roughly 50m × 50m (HER PRN 02233; NHRE Mon. No. 1065216) is visible as a cropmark some 450m to the SW of the site (NGR: SJ 5710 1955). An entrance gap has been noted on its NE side.

A second enclosure represented by an irregular rectilinear cropmark (HER PRN 08033) has been identified on vertical aerial photographs (APs) some 200m NW of Myrtle Cottage and c. 500 W of the site (NGR: SJ 5698 1980).

A fragmentary cropmark enclosure, again of probable Iron Age to Roman date, (HER PRN 02274; NHRE Mon. No. 70784), has been identified from oblique aerial reconnaissance photographs c. 850 NE of site (NGR: SJ 5844 2030) located on a gradual E-facing slope, just below a low ridge. Its N, W and S sides are visible, the W side possibly being double-ditched, with further fragmentary elements within the field presumed to be associated with the main enclosure. A substantial distribution of 'pits' within and outside the enclosure are considered to be of geological origin.

Located roughly 900m NW of the development site (NGR: SJ 5699 2037), a large curvilinear cropmark enclosure (HER PRN 04934) visible on the aerial photography extends across fields to the W and E of Wytheford Heath Farm and is partially overlain by the farm itself.

4 Methodology

The programme of archaeological work was carried out in accordance with *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (MoRPHE) (Lee 2015) and practices set out by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) in *Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (CIfA 2014) and *Standard and Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (CIfA 2014).

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

- 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
- 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

Observation took place during topsoil-stripping operations for the larger of the two proposed buildings (*fig. 2*). A proposed egg-store was not due to be constructed during the phase of the work described herein. Soil was removed using a mechanical excavator fitted with flat-bladed bucket.

A high-resolution digital photographic record was made during the work. Details concerning subject and direction of view were maintained in a photographic register, indexed by frame number.

A drawn record was produced on gridded, archive-stable polyester film.

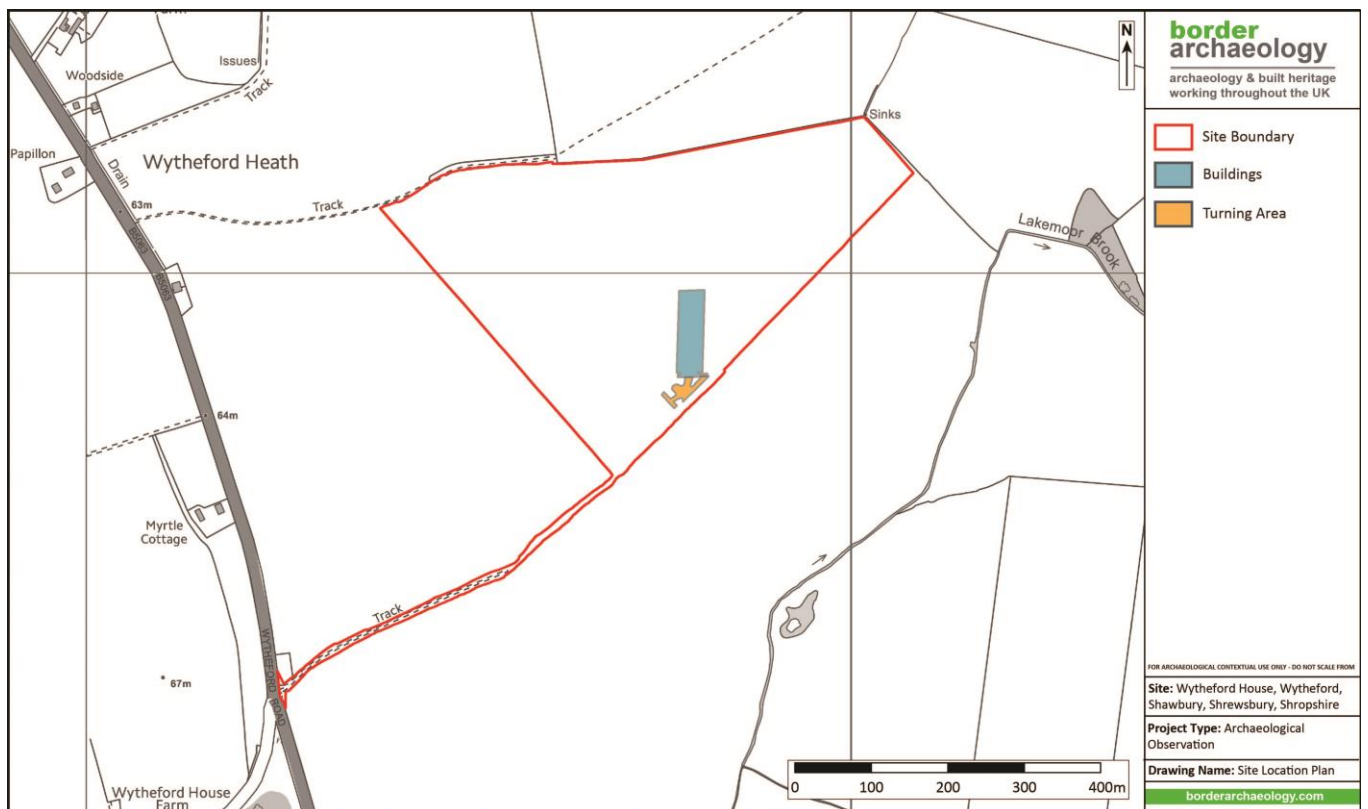


Fig. 2: Plan showing site location of groundworks

4.1 Paleoenvironmental/Paleoeconomic sampling

No features or deposits suitable for palaeoenvironmental/palaeoeconomic sampling purposes were identified during the course of the works.

5 Results

Item	Context No.	Matrix Phase	Type	Interpretation	Discussion	Finds					Comments
						Small Find	Pot	Bone	Misc.	Sample No.	
1	101		Deposit	Topsoil	Friable dark greyish-brown sandy silt; 0.30m thick, site-wide. Overlying (102).	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	102		Deposit	Natural	Brown/orange-brown sand; occasional rounded gravel & patches of greenish clay. Underlying (101).	-	-	-	-	-	Present over entire area of topsoil strip.

6 Discussion

There was no evidence for a subsoil, with plough-marks visible in the natural sandy deposits (*Plate 3*). There was also evidence for woodland clearance in the form of blackened areas, apparently the result of stump-burning (*Plate 1*).

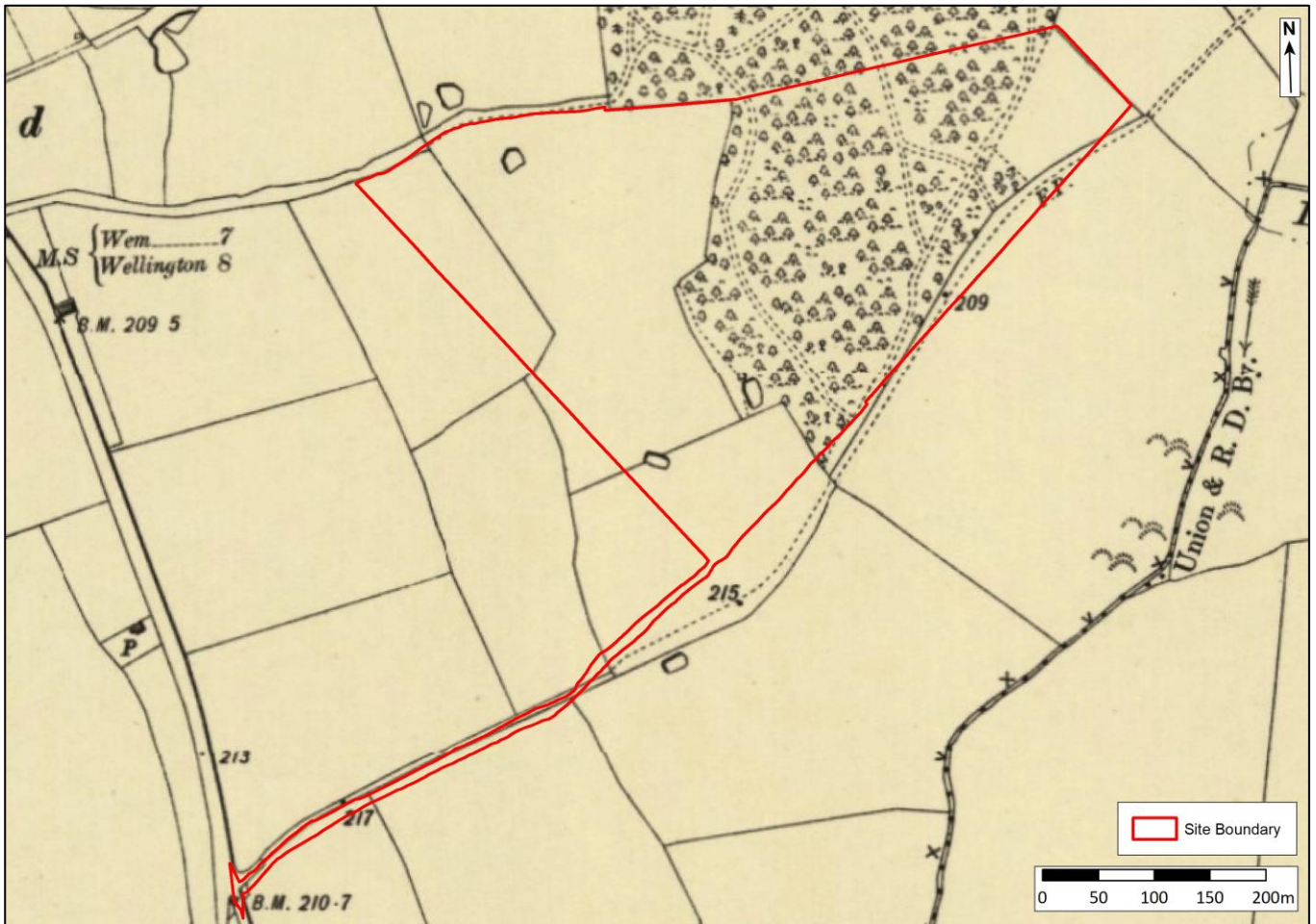


Fig 3: Site boundary as shown on the Ordnance Survey 2nd Edition 6-Inch map of 1902

The 1902 Ordnance Survey map indicates that, in the early part of the 20th century, the site lay at the margin of Wytheford Wood (*fig. 3*). As the woodland is shown as having been cleared by 1954, this process must have taken place in the early to middle part of the 20th century. The process of felling and stump-clearance would almost certainly have destroyed any archaeological features or deposits which may have been present. This process may also account for the absence of a defined subsoil.



Plate 1: View N showing burning, probably associated with woodland clearance on the NW part of the site.



Plate 2: SW extent of topsoil strip



Plate 3: Evidence of plough-scars

7 Conclusion

Whilst the site occupies an area an area containing cropmark evidence of Iron Age/Romano-British features, no deposits or features of archaeological significance were present. Topsoil removal revealed natural deposits, with evidence for intensive cultivation in the form of plough-scars. Evidence for land drainage and woodland/scrub removal were also present.

8 Copyright

Border Archaeology Ltd shall retain full copyright of any commissioned reports, tender documents or other project documents, under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, with all rights reserved, excepting that it hereby provides a licence to the Client and the Council for the use of the report by the Client and the Council in all matters directly relating to the project as described in the Project Specification to use the documentation for their statutory functions and to provide copies of it to third parties as an incidental to such functions.

9 Bibliography

Border Archaeology, 2017, *Archaeological Field Recording Manual*.

Campbell, G., Moffet, L. and Straker, V., 2011, *Environmental Archaeology: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Methods, from Sampling and Recovery to Post-excavation* (2nd Edition). Historic England.

ClfA, 2014, *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials*.

ClfA, 2014, *Code of conduct*.

ClfA, 2014, *Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief*.

Lee, E., 2006, *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The MoRPHE Project Managers' Guide*. Historic England.

Soil Survey of England and Wales, 1983, *Soil Map of England and Wales (1:250,000)*. Harpenden.

Watkinson, D. & Neal, V., 2001, *First Aid for Finds*.

Watt, S., 2011, *The Archaeology of the West Midlands: A Framework for Research*. Oxford.

10 Cartography

1902 Ordnance Survey 2nd Edition 6-Inch Map of Shropshire (Shropshire XXIX.NW).

1954 Ordnance Survey 1:10560 Map of Shropshire.

Report Title		Ref	
Archaeological Observation for Matthew Davies Esq concerning a proposed Free-Range Chicken Unit Wytheford House Wytheford Shawbury Shropshire SY4 4JJ		BA1839WFF	
Compilation	K. H. Crooks BA (Hons)		
Editing	George Children MA MCI fA		
Issue No.	Status	Date	Approved for issue
1	Final	June 2018	Neil Shurety Dip. M G M Inst M