ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATION

Pigeon House Farm

Eldersfield

Worcestershire

NGR: SO 8101 3120

JOB No: BA1110PHE/02

HER Ref. WSM 45758







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Contents

1.	NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY	3
2.	INTRODUCTION	4
3.	HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND	5
4.	METHODOLOGY	6
5.	RESULTS	8
6.	CONCLUSION	13
7.	COPYRIGHT	14
8.	BIBLIOGRAPHY	15
9.	CARTOGRAPHY	16
10.	CONTEXT REGISTER	17

REPORT SPECIFICATION

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Non Technical Summary 1.

The programme of archaeological observation undertaken by Border Archaeology on groundworks relating to the proposed redevelopment of two barns and a circular horse engine house at Pigeon House Farm, Eldersfield, Worcestershire, revealed very little in terms of significant archaeological deposits, features or finds. No archaeological evidence of activity predating the existing postmedieval farm outbuildings was identified.

The removal of the existing flooring within the two-storey barn (dating from c.1700 with later additions) and subsequent reduction of ground levels revealed evidence of made ground containing 18th-19th century ceramics, possibly relating to a phase of 19th century reconstruction, underlying which was a mid reddish-brown clay interpreted as a landscaping deposit associated with the formation of the low platform on which the barn stands.

Within the engine house (of probable early 19th century date), evidence of a circular slot was identified within the centre of the turning circle, which would have carried the vertical drive shaft of the engine. This slot had evidently been filled in with debris after the mechanism of the horse engine had been removed.

No archaeologically significant features, deposits or artefacts were identified within the single-storey barn (which appears to have been largely rebuilt in the late 20th century). Similarly, no significant archaeology was revealed during the external groundworks adjacent to the single-storey barn.





Introduction 2.

Border Archaeology was instructed by Mr. J. Bainbridge, Pigeon House Farm, Eldersfield, Worcestershire GL19 4NW to carry out a programme of archaeological observation of groundworks in relation to two barns and a former horse engine house situated adjacent to Pigeon House Farm (NGR SO8101 3120) prior to conversion to residential accommodation (Planning Ref. MH/10/0498 condition no. 15) (figs 1 & 2), in compliance with a brief issued on 24th March 2011 by M. Glyde Esq., Worcestershire County Council Historic Environment Officer, entitled Requirements for Historic Building Recording Work at Pigeon House Farm (Ref. MH/10/0498).

This report is part of a comprehensive programme of recording works that includes archaeological building recording, this being the subject of a separate report (BA1110PHE).

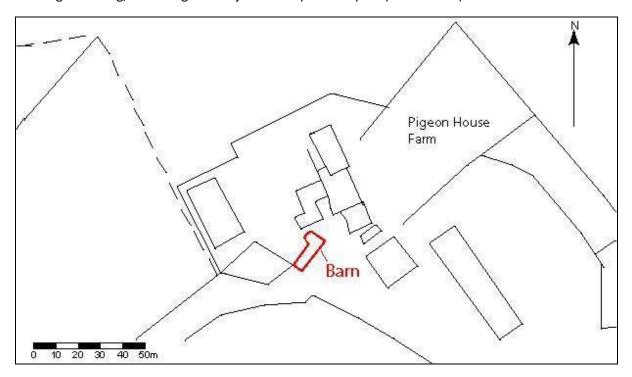


Fig. 1 Site Location Plan

Plans of the outbuildings provided to Border Archaeology by Ten Acre Services (Drawing Nos.1, 2C and 3A) have been used for reference. Copies of this report will be submitted to the client, Mike Glyde Esq. and to the Worcestershire Historic Environment Record.

2.1 **Soils and Geology**

The site is situated within an area of drift over Permo-Triassic and Carboniferous reddish mudstone of the WHIMPLE 3 series (572f), comprising reddish fine loamy over clayey soils with permeable subsoils and slight seasonal waterlogging (SSEW 1983).



Historical and Archaeological Background 3.

The complex of barns forming the subject of this programme of archaeological observation are situated on slightly raised ground immediately south of Pigeon House farmhouse and comprise a rectangular two-storey barn of early 18th century date with later 19th century additions (Barn A) with a single-storey, semicircular structure of early 19th century date (Barn B – the horse engine house) attached to the northwest and a single-storey, three-bay barn (Barn C), substantially rebuilt in the late 20th century, attached to the southwest gable end of Barn A.

Documentary evidence for the early history of Pigeon House Farm is extremely limited. The farm itself appears to be located within a moated manorial enclosure of medieval date (WSM 42425), one of several moated sites in the locality, while the farmhouse (WSM 08626) is a Grade II listed building of timber-framed construction with brick infilling, of 17th century date with later 19th/20th century alterations.

To the southwest of the farmhouse is a Grade II listed three-storey pigeon house (WSM 06978), of brick construction on a stone masonry plinth with a construction date of 1706 inscribed on a sundial tablet attached to the southeast-facing elevation of the building (Victoria County History, 1924, 76-9). It appears that this pigeon house had given its name to the adjacent farm by no later than c.1763, which implies that the farm may have been known by another name prior to its construction, or that the pigeon house built in 1706 replaced an earlier building. The earliest documented reference to Pigeon House Farm occurs in a deed of lease and release dated 6th October 1763 by which one William Williams released his interest in the estate to Abigail Carter, the Rev. Thomas Phillips and Reginald Lygon (GRO Ref. D2079/II4/E9). The estate appears to have passed through several hands during the late 18^{th} -early 19^{th} century, before coming into the possession of William Lambe, a local farmer, in 1804.

The Pigeon House Farm and estate continued to be held by Lambe until his death in 1841, after which it passed to his son James Henry Lambe, of Montreal, Canada. By a deed of 15th February 1842, Lambe sold the Pigeon House estate and other adjacent lands in Eldersfield to his brother-inlaw, George Need Ireland, of Forthampton, for a payment of £3552 (GRO Ref. D2079/II4/E10). The deed describes the property as comprising 'all that messuage or homestead called the Pigeon House and all houses, outhouses, barns, stables, beasthouses, sheds, cider mills, buildings, yards, gardens, folds, fold yards, ponds, moats, waters etc.' George Need Ireland appears to have occupied Pigeon House Farm before that date, as he is named as both owner and occupier in the Eldersfield tithe apportionment of 1841 (NA IR 29/39/53); the farm remained in his possession until his death on 27th April 1875, aged 74.

The Eldersfield tithe map of 1843 (NA IR 30/39/53) is the earliest surviving piece of cartographic evidence to depict the layout of the barns and the attached engine house to the south of the farmhouse. The layout of the barns and engine house as delineated on the tithe map essentially differs little from the present-day, except that no internal division is shown between the large twostorey barn and the single-storey barn to the southwest. No change to the layout of the barns is shown on a plan of the farm attached to a sale catalogue of the Pigeon House Estate dated June 1875 (GRO Ref D2079/II4/E11). The catalogue described Pigeon House Farm as comprising 'underground cellaring, with kitchen, back kitchen, dairy, parlour, and 5 bedchambers, garden, detached mill house (in which is a capital cider mill), drink house, 2 warm fold yards, with 2 barns, cattle sheds, and cart stables, brick built pigeon house, piggeries etc'. It is possible that the mill house and cider mill referred to here (and in the 1842 deed) may be identified with the two-storey barn and attached horse engine house and it is worth noting that the tithe apportionment and 1875





sale catalogue indicate that many of the fields surrounding the farm were occupied by orchards, which may be indicative of cider production on a moderate scale.

It appears that Pigeon House Farm was not sold after George Ireland's death in 1875, for it was still held by his son, Charles Tom Ireland at his death on 3rd November 1884. The Pigeon House Farm estate was eventually sold by auction on 19th June 1895 (GRO Ref. D2079/II4/E16) and was acquired by Joseph Terry, a local farmer, who was listed as owner and occupier of the farm in the Land Valuation Survey of 1910 (NA IR 58/93434).

A description of the farm buildings is included in the Land Valuation Survey, which lists 'a brick timber and tile barn, 2 bay cart house, 4 bay open cattle shed, tool shed, brick half timbered and slate barn, cow stable for 3, stone and tile cart-shed, stable for 6, brick and tile 3 bay cart shed, stone and slate cider mill and granary, brick and tile pigeon house, lower part used for fowls, brick and tile shed.' The stone and slate cider mill presumably refers to the existing engine house, while the granary may refer to the two-storey barn attached to the engine house. The 'stone and tile cartshed' may refer to the single-storey barn attached to the southwest of the two-storey barn. The OS 2nd and 3rd edition maps of 1903 and 1923, respectively, show little change to the extent of the barns and engine house as shown on the OS 1st edition map. Later OS mapping of the area dated 1954, 1969 and 1974 shows the layout of the outbuildings as having changed little during the second half of the 20th century.

Methodology 4.

The programme of archaeological observation was carried out in accordance with practices detailed by the Institute for Archaeologists in Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief (2008). Border Archaeology adheres to the IfA Code of conduct (2010) and Code of approved practice for the regulation of contractual arrangements in field archaeology (2008) and to Standards and *Guidelines for Archaeological Projects in Worcestershire* (WHEAS 2008).

The groundworks, undertaken in June 2011, comprised the following components (fig. 2):

1/The reduction of ground levels within a two-storey gabled barn of brick-and-rubble masonry construction, a single-storey stone-built barn attached to the southwest and a circular masonry structure (formerly a horse engine house) to the northwest, to depths of 0.45m, 0.50m and 0.25m, respectively.

2/The reduction of levels within a rectangular strip of land immediately northwest of the singlestorey barn (measuring approximately 10.5m × 2.00m × 0.30m) and the excavation of a narrow service trench to the southwest of the single-storey barn (measuring $18m \times 0.30m \times 1.20m$).

Full written, graphic and photographic records of any surviving deposits, features or structures of archaeological significance were made in accordance with Border Archaeology's Field Recording Manual. Plans and sections were produced on gridded, archivally stable polyester film at an appropriate scale and all drawings are numbered and listed in a drawing register, these numbers being cross-referenced to written site records. A temporary bench mark was established with a value of 18m AOD.

The photographic record comprises high-resolution digital images indexed by frame number and cross-referenced to the written record. Other than general shots of work in progress, all photographs contain a scale.





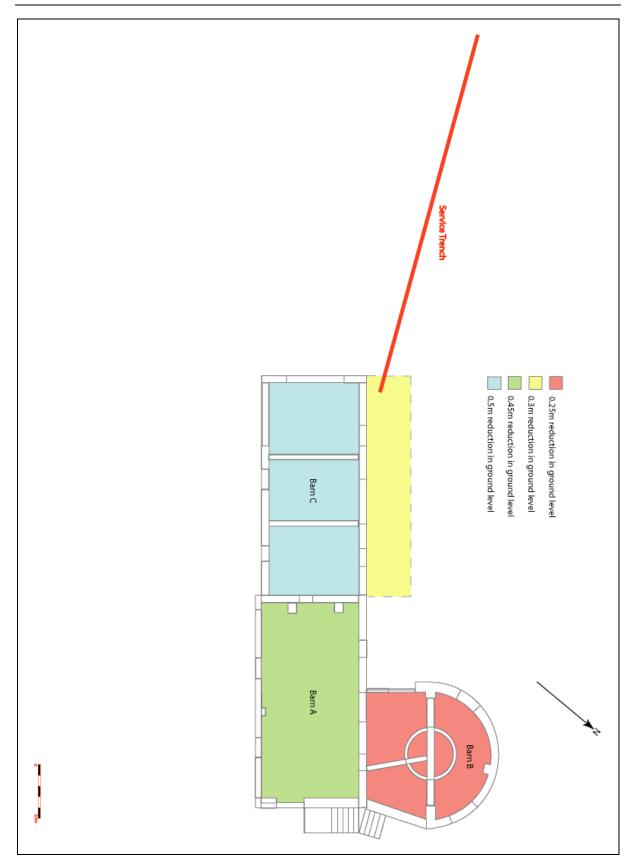


Fig. 2: Plan showing extent of groundworks at Pigeon House Farm (and depth of reduction in ground levels)





5. Results

5.1 Interior Groundworks

The initial phase of groundworks comprised the removal of existing flooring and reduction of ground levels within Barn A, the large two-storey barn of brick-and-rubble masonry construction (dated to c.1700 with later 19th-20th century additions) located immediately south of the farmhouse, to an approximate depth of 0.45m across the entire area. Within the northeast half of the barn, the majority of the existing floor surface consisted of heavily truncated flagstone flooring made up of large, irregular-sized rectangular stone slabs (001), approximately 0.07m thick, with the exception of an area of concrete hardstanding for a goat stall in the northwest corner, while the two southwestern-most bays were occupied by a modern screed concrete floor (002), about 0.05m thick (most of which had been already been removed prior to recording), with a raised concrete trough at the far end.

Following removal of the flagstones and the screed concrete flooring, the uppermost deposit identified was a moderately compact dark greyish-brown silty clay (003), extending to an approximate depth of 0.20m across the entire area, with moderate root action and frequent small to medium rounded and subangular stones, containing moderate quantities of bottle glass, CBM (roof tile), mortar flecking and pottery sherds (chiefly 18^{th} - 19^{th} century blue-and-white transfer ware) and occasional animal bone. (003) was interpreted as made-up ground associated with a phase of rebuilding activity, possibly of 19^{th} century date (plate 1).



Plate 1: Internal view looking NW showing the foundation courses of the NW wall of the two-storey barn and the deposits revealed in section beneath the wall

Underlying (003) and extending to a maximum visible depth of 0.20m was a firm mid reddish-brown sandy clay (004), exhibiting moderate root action, with lenses of friable bluish-grey stone visible towards the base of the deposit (*plate 2*). This deposit appeared to be devoid of pottery or CBM, although the evidence of root action suggested that it probably did not represent natural deposition.





It is possible that (004) represents a landscaping deposit associated with the formation of the low platform on which the barn stands.



Plate 2: View looking S showing mid reddish-brown sandy clay with evidence of root activity (004) following reduction of ground levels at the SW end of the two-storey barn

The next phase of groundworks consisted of the reduction of the floor-level within the former horse engine house (Barn B), a circular structure attached to the northwest of the two-storey barn, to an approximate depth of 0.25m across the entire area. A total of five contexts were identified, the uppermost being a loose light greyish-brown sandy silt (101), approximately 0.10m thick, with frequent inclusions of CBM, gravel and stone rubble, interpreted as a compacted layer of modern debris relating to the use of the engine house as a store for agricultural machinery and implements. Underlying this was a firm mid reddish-brown sandy clay (102) with small to medium subangular stones and occasional CBM and slate fragments, extending to a maximum visible depth of 0.15m.

Located in the centre of the engine house and overlaid by (101) were the partially truncated remains of the turning circle for the horse engine, consisting of a low stone plinth (103), 2.45m in diameter and 0.10m high, with partially intact kerbing (106) approximately 0.25m wide around the edge of the plinth consisting of a single course of unfrogged orangey-red brick (average brick dimensions 0.25m \times 0.05m \times 0.10m). Within the centre of the plinth was a circular slot [104], 0.50m in diameter and 0.25m deep, which would have carried the vertical drive shaft of the horse engine (*plate 3*). Filling the slot was moderately compact, dark reddish-brown silty clay (105), 0.25m in depth, with frequent inclusions of CBM, sandy gravel and mortar flecking, interpreted as material used to backfill the slot following removal of the drive shaft. No evidence for a brick or stone paved floor surface contemporary with the turning circle was identified; an area of irregular brick and stone cobbling (107) situated just within the entrance to the engine house, measuring approximately 2.25m (NW-SE) \times 0.94m (NE-SW), appears to be a later addition.

The last phase of internal groundworks comprised the reduction of ground levels to an approximate depth of 0.50m within the single-storey, stone-built barn (Barn C), attached to the southwest gable end of the two-storey barn, which was extensively rebuilt and converted into a garage in the late 20th century (*plate 4*). Within this structure, the uppermost context consisted of loose light greyish-brown sandy silt (201), 0.08m thick, with frequent inclusions of CBM, gravel and stone rubble, interpreted as a compacted layer of modern detritus. (201) in turn overlaid firm mid reddish-brown





sandy clay (202), approximately 0.40m in thickness, which appeared to represent redeposited material possibly associated with the reconstruction of the barn in the late 20th century.



Plate 3: View looking NW showing interior of engine house following reduction of ground levels, with circular slot for the horse engine drive shaft in the centre of the turning circle



Plate 4: View looking SW showing deposits in section revealed following reduction of ground levels at the SW gable end of the single-storey barn (currently used as a garage)





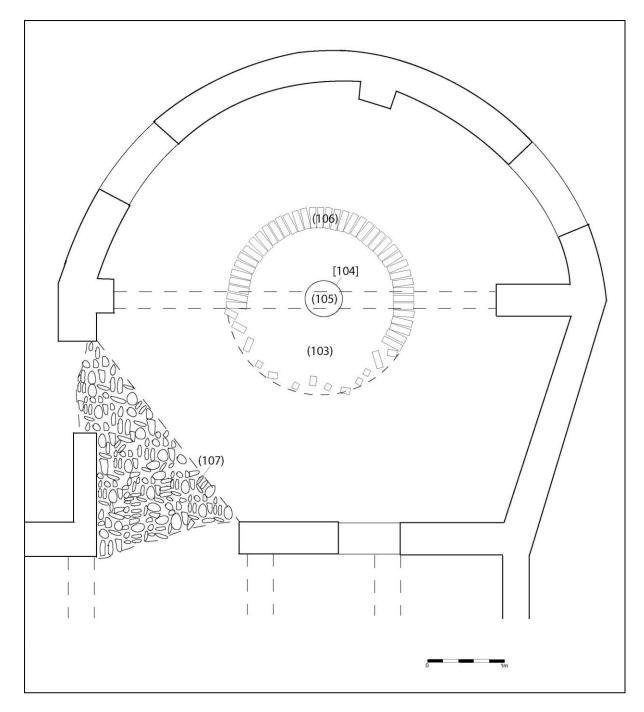


Fig. 3 Plan showing extent of groundworks and remains of turning circle within engine house (Barn B)





External Groundworks

The external groundworks consisted of the reduction of ground levels to a depth of 0.30m within a rectangular strip measuring approximately 10.50m (NE-SW) × 2.00m (NW-SE), immediately in front of the NW facing elevation of the single storey barn (Plate 5).

The uppermost context identified consisted of a moderately compacted dark greyish brown silty clay topsoil (301), 0.26m thick, with frequent root disturbance, moderate small to medium sub angular stones and occasional 19th-20th century pottery and CBM fragments. This in turn overlaid a firm midreddish brown sandy clay subsoil (302) with moderate root action and small to medium sub-angular stones, 0.05m in thickness (max visible).



Plate 5: View looking SE showing reduction of ground levels immediately adjacent to the NW facing elevation of single storey barn structure (Barn C)

The final phase of groundworks comprised the excavation of a narrow service trench extending to the SW of the single storey barn, measuring 18m (NE-SW) × 0.30m wide × 1.20m (max depth). A total of three contexts were identified within the trench (Plate 6), the uppermost consisting of a loosely compacted dark greyish brown silty clay topsoil (401), 0.25-0.30m thick, underlying which was a firm mid-reddish brown sandy clay with lenses of friable, heavily degraded bluish grey stone (402) and moderate root action, 0.50m thick, which in turn overlaid a firm, dark reddish brown sandy clay (403) with frequent small to medium sub angular and rounded stones, which extended to the base of the trench (0.40m max visible thickness).







Plate 6: View looking SE showing deposits in NW facing section of service trench excavated to SW of single storey barn

Conclusion 6.

The archaeological observation undertaken at Pigeon House Farm revealed little in terms of significant archaeological deposits, features or finds. No archaeological evidence of activity associated with occupation predating the existing post-medieval farm outbuildings was identified.

Following the removal of the existing flooring within the two-storey barn (dating from c.1700 with later additions) and subsequent reduction of ground levels, evidence was identified of made-up ground containing 18th-19th century ceramics, possibly relating to a phase of extensive rebuilding activity (possibly of 19th century date), underlying which was a mid-reddish brown clay interpreted as a landscaping deposit associated with the formation of the low platform on which the barn stands.

Within the engine house (of probable early 19th century date), evidence of a circular slot was identified within the centre of the turning circle, which would have carried the vertical drive shaft of the engine. This slot had evidently been filled in with debris after the mechanism of the horse engine had been removed.

No archaeologically significant features, deposits or artefacts were identified within the single-storey barn (which appears to have been largely rebuilt in the late 20th century). Similarly, no significant archaeology was revealed during the external groundworks adjacent to the single-storey barn.





7. Copyright

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.





Bibliography 8.

Primary Sources

Gloucestershire Records Office

D2079/II4/E9 Schedules of deeds relating to the Pigeon House Estate, 1763-1842

D2079/II4/E10 Schedule of deeds relating to property in Eldersfield including Hardwick Hay Estate, Parsonage Farm and Pigeon House Farm, 1829-1874

D2079/II4/E11 Printed sale particulars (plans) of The Werth, c. 100 acres of land in Chaceley and Hillfield and Pigeon House Farms in Eldersfield, c. 240 acres (field names) - 1875

D2079/II4/E12 Abstracts of title reciting deeds relating to the estate of Mr. G.N. Ireland, deceased in Eldersfield and including Hillfield and Pigeon House Estates and sheep pastures on Eldersfield Marsh (plans) - 1829-75

D2079/II4/E16 Printed sale particulars (plans) of Hillfield, Rue Green and Pigeon House Farms, Eldersfield, c. 300 acres of land (field names), sheep pastures on Eldersfield Marsh, the Werth, c. 100 acres of land in Chaceley and cottages and c. 10 acres of land (field names) in Eldersfield - 1895

National Archives

IR29/39/53 Eldersfield Tithe Apportionment, 1841

IR58/93434 Eldersfield Land Valuation Survey, 1910

Secondary Sources

Worcestershire County Council Historic Environment Record: HER Search Data & Digital Mapping

DCLG, 2010, Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment

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SSEW, 1983, Soil Map of England and Wales Scale 1:250,000, Silsoe

Victoria County History, 1924, A History of the County of Worcestershire Vol 4, 76-83

Worcestershire Historic Environment & Archaeology Service, 2008, *Standards and Guidelines for Archaeological Projects in Worcestershire*

9. Cartography

(All historic mapping was consulted using the collections held at the National Archives unless otherwise stated)

IR 30/39/53 Eldersfield tithe map - 1843

GRO Ref. D2079/II4/E11 Sale catalogue plan of the Pigeon House Estate - 1875

OS 1st edition 25 inch map - 1884

GRO Ref. D2079/II4/E16 Sale catalogue plan of the Pigeon House Estate - 1895

OS 2nd edition 25 inch map - 1903

OS 3rd edition 25 inch map - 1923

OS provisional edition 6 inch map – 1954

OS 1:2500 map - 1969

BA1110PHE/02 July 2011





10. Context register

Context	Description		
(001)	Well cemented, irregularly sized rectangular limestone slabs, approximate visible extent 5.40m (NE-SW) × 2.50m (NW-SE) × 0.07m depth. Overlies (003)		
INTERPRETATION	Heavily truncated remains of flagstone floor in central and NE two bays of two storey barn, probably of 19^{th} or 20^{th} century date.		
(002)	Indurated concrete floor, approximate extent 3.8m (NE-SW) × 4.50m (NW-SE)× 0.05m depth. Overlies (003)		
INTERPRETATION	Truncated remains of modern screed concrete floor at SW end of barn		
(003)	Moderately compacted dark greyish brown silty clay, with moderate root action and frequent small to medium rounded and sub-angular stones, containing moderate quantities of bottle glass, CBM, (roof tile) mortar flecking and pottery sherds (chiefly 18 th -19 th century blue and white transfer ware) and occasional animal bone. Visible extent 9.00m (NE-SW) × 4.50m (NW-SE) × 0.20m (max depth). Underlies (001) and (002). Overlies (004).		
INTERPRETATION	Made-up ground associated with a phase of extensive rebuilding activity, possibly 19 th century in date.		
(004)	Firm, mid-reddish brown sandy clay exhibiting moderate root action with lenses of friable bluish grey stone visible towards the base of the deposit. No artefacts recovered. Visible extent 9.00m × 4.50m × 0.20m (max visible depth). Underlies (003).		
INTERPRETATION	Landscaping deposit (possibly redeposited natural) associated with the formation of the low platform on which the two storey barn stands.		

Context	Description		
(101)	Loosely compacted light greyish brown sandy silt, approximate extent		
	5.70m (NW-SE) × 6.00m (NE-SW) × 0.10m depth, with frequent		
	inclusions of CBM, gravel and stone rubble. Overlies (102)		
INTERPRETATION	Compacted layer of modern debris relating to the use of the engine		
	house as a storehouse for agricultural machinery and implements		
(102)	Firm mid-reddish brown sandy clay with small to medium sub-angular		
	stones and occasional CBM and slate fragments, extending to a		
	maximum visible depth of 0.15m. Underlies (101)		
INTERPRETATION	Made up ground associated with original construction of engine house		
(103)	Circular stone plinth, 2.45m in diameter and 0.10m high. Underlies		
	(101). Cut by [104]		
INTERPRETATION	Turning circle for early 19 th century horse engine house		
[104]	Cut, circular in plan, with a sharp break of slope at the top, vertical		
	sides & flat base. Extent 0.50m diameter × 0.25m depth. Cuts (103).		
	Filled by (105).		
INTERPRETATION	Circular slot in plinth for drive shaft of horse engine		
(105)	Moderately compacted dark reddish brown silty clay, 0.25m in depth,		
	with frequent inclusions of CBM, gravel and mortar flecking. Fills [104]		
INTERPRETATION	Backfill of [104]		
(106)	Brick kerbing around circular plinth, consisting of a single course of		





	unfrogged orange-red brick, bonded with a white gravelly lime mortar, $0.25m$ wide \times $0.10m$ high. Average dimensions of bricks $0.25m \times 0.05m \times 0.10m$. Abuts (103)
INTERPRETATION	Kerbing for circular plinth (103)
(107)	Area of stone and brick cobbling, approximate extent 2.25m NW-SE ×
	0.94m (NE-SW).
INTERPRETATION	Cobbled surface of probable 20 th century date

Context	Description
(201)	Loosely compacted light greyish brown sandy silt with frequent
	inclusions of CBM, gravel and stone rubble visible extent 10m (NE-SW)
	× 4.20m × 0.08m thick. Overlies (202)
INTERPRETATION	Compacted layer of modern detritus forming ground surface for present
	barn.
(202)	Firm mid-reddish brown sandy clay (202) with mortar flecking, CBM,
	gravel and stone inclusions, visible extent 10.00m (NE-SW) × 4.20m ×
	0.42m in thickness.
INTERPRETATION	Redeposited material associated with reconstruction of present barn

Context	Description
(301)	Moderately compacted dark greyish brown silty clay topsoil (301),
	visible extent $10.5m \times 2.00m \times 0.26m$ thick, with frequent root
	disturbance, moderate small to medium sub angular stones and
	occasional 19 th -20 th century pottery and CBM fragments. Overlies (302)
INTERPRETATION	Topsoil
(302)	Firm mid-reddish brown sandy clay subsoil (302) with moderate root
	action and small to medium sub-angular stones, 0.05m in thickness
	(max visible). Underlies (301)
INTERPRETATION	Subsoil

Context	Description	
(401)	Loosely compacted dark greyish brown silty clay with very occasional pottery and CBM, extending trench wide to a maximum thickness of 0.30m. Overlies (402), which in turn overlaid a firm, dark reddish brown sandy clay (403) with frequent small to medium sub angular and rounded stones, which extended to the base of the trench (0.40m max visible thickness).	
INTERPRETATION	Topsoil	
(402)	Firm mid-reddish brown sandy clay with lenses of friable, heavily degraded bluish grey stone, moderate root action and occasional late post-medieval pottery extending trenchwide to a maximum depth of 0.50m.	
INTERPRETATION	Subsoil	
(403)	Firm, dark reddish brown sandy clay with frequent small to medium sub angular and rounded stones, which extended to the base of the trench (0.40m max visible thickness). No artefacts recovered.	
INTERPRETATION	Possible redeposited natural	





Document Control

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