

Archaeological Evaluation

**Sunnymeade
Back Lane
Weobley
Herefordshire**

NGR: SO 4010 5160
SMR 44394

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1. Non Technical Summary

Two evaluation trenches measuring 10m x 1.5m were opened at Sunnymeade Back Lane Weobley Herefordshire; the trenches were located to the north and east of The Willow Gallery.

Trench 1 was situated immediately north of the gallery building and revealed three modern features: a modern pit and two utility trenches. Two further pits containing no dating evidence were identified cutting into natural deposits at the base of the trench.

Trench 2 was located to the east of the gallery and measured 10m x 1.5m. The trench produced evidence of deposits and features that appeared to be uniformly of post-medieval date.

Natural deposits were generally encountered at about 0.5m below the present ground surface.

2. Introduction

Border Archaeology was instructed by Mr & Mrs I. Dyer of Sunnymeade Back Lane Weobley Herefordshire to undertake a programme of archaeological evaluation in regard of the proposed development of land at The Willow Gallery (Ref. DCNC2006/3067/F) (**Fig. 1**).

Copies of this report will be sent to Mr & Mrs Dyer, Herefordshire Archaeology and the county Sites & Monuments Record.

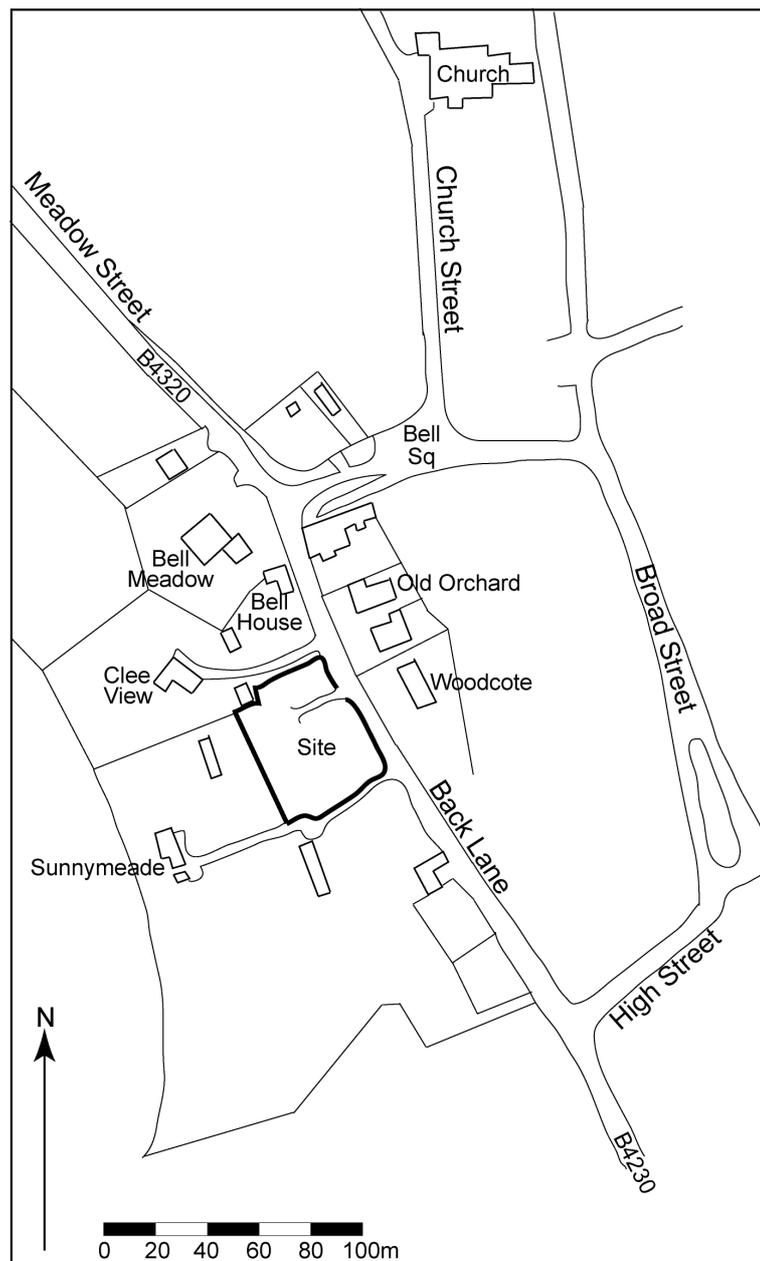


Fig. 1: Site Location Map

2.1 Soils & Geology

The site consists of typical argillic brown earths of the ESCRICK 1 series (571p), these being deep well drained reddish coarse loamy soils, some similar soils with slowly permeable subsoils & slight seasonal waterlogging and some slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged reddish fine silty soils. The underlying geology is a reddish till.

3. Historical & Archaeological Background

The site is located within the grounds of the Sunnymeade horticultural nursery on the W side of Back Lane. Back Lane appears to define the western edge of the medieval urban settlement of Weobley and could possibly mark the line of the old town ditch. The site lies within the boundary of an elongated medieval tenement plot identified as running N-S along the W side of Back Lane (Dalwood, 1996, 5)

During the laying of pipes on the site of the nursery in 1981, a significant quantity of kiln structural debris and waste, together with an assemblage of glazed pottery sherds, mostly of 13th century date, was discovered, interpreted as representing the remains of a medieval pottery kiln (SMR Ref. 1069).

A small amount of 16th-17th century sherds were also found in the same location, but these may not be associated with the active life of the kiln. Following this discovery, a magnetometer survey was carried out by English Heritage in 1982, which, however was unable to identify the precise location of the kiln in question (Bartlett, 1982). The presumed site of the kiln has been scheduled (Heref & Worcs No. 208); however, the extent of the buried remains on the site remains unknown.

4. Methodology

Full written, drawn and photographic records were made in accordance with archaeological practices set out in *Standard and Guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (Institute of Field Archaeologists 1994; rev. 2001); Border Archaeology adhered to the IFA's *Code of conduct* and *Code of approved practice for the regulation of contractual arrangements in field archaeology*.

A stratigraphic record was made using a context numbering system. Archaeological deposits, features and structures were recorded in plan & section at a scale of 1:20. Features were photographed using 4MPX digital and 35mm formats.

Two evaluation trenches oriented NW-SE were opened in specified locations, each measuring 10m x 1.5m (**Fig. 2**). Both trenches were excavated by machine to the uppermost level of archaeological deposits or to the depth at which natural soils were encountered. A 1.2m sondage was excavated at the terminus of each trench in order to confirm the presence of natural deposits.

All spoil and removed material were visually scanned for artefacts, which were recorded and, where appropriate, retained.

A temporary benchmark was established on the site with a value of 98.98m AOD.

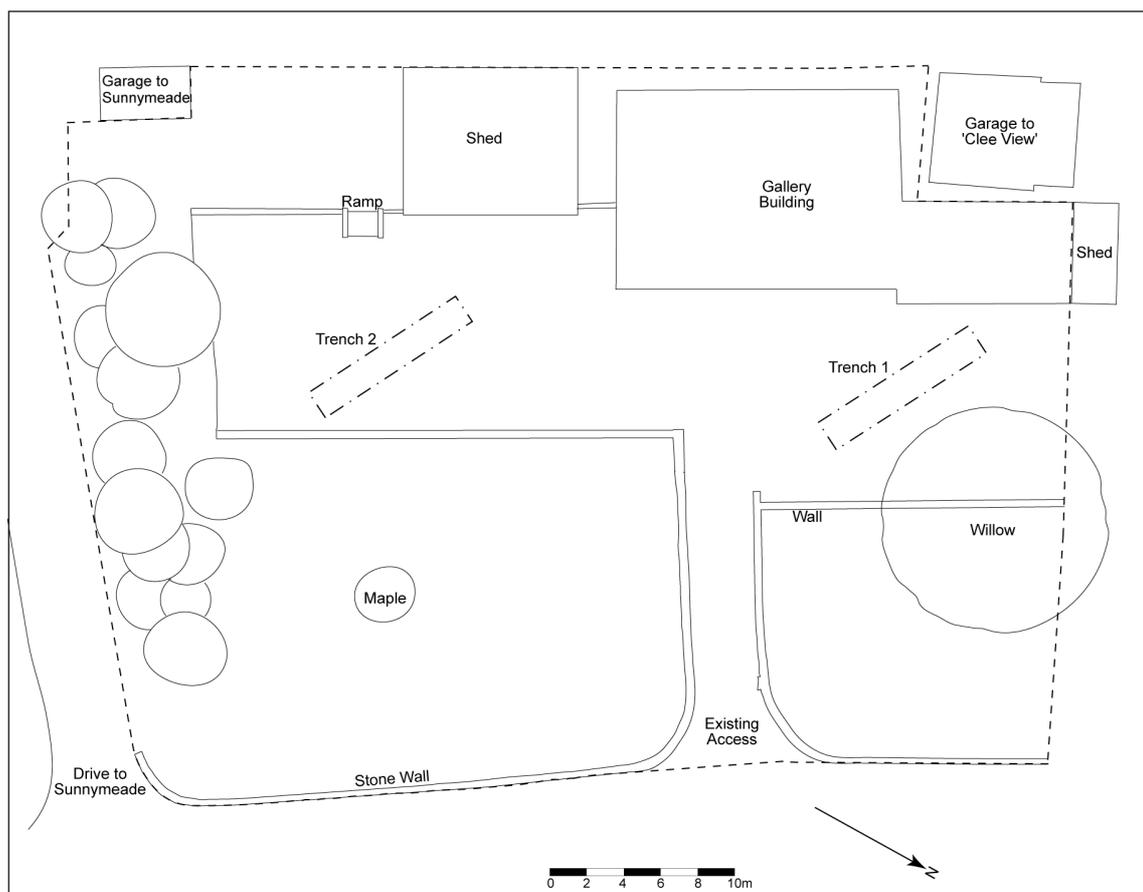


Fig. 2: Trench location plan

5. Evaluation results

5.1 Trench 1

Trench 1 was located immediately E of the gallery building and measured 10m × 1.5m (Figs. 2 & 3). The trench revealed 14 contexts, the uppermost of which (101) was a compact bluish-grey stone and gravel deposit extending trench wide to a maximum depth of 0.08m and containing frequent CBM fragments. This deposit is likely to have formed part of a hard-standing surface laid after construction of the gallery building in the 1970s

Underlying (101) was a compact reddish-brown sandy gravel with frequent post-medieval CBM fragments and ceramic sherds and small to medium subangular stones (102). This deposit appeared to extend trench wide to a depth of 0.07m and formed a sub-base for (101).

Cutting through (102) were a series of linear features ([103], [105] & [107]). Linear [103] was located at the NW end of the trench; the feature was oriented E-W and measured >1.5m E-W × 0.55m N-S × 0.38m (Plate 1; Fig. 4). It was filled by (104), a friable mid brown silty clay with moderate post-medieval CBM fragments, occasional ceramic

sherds and c.2% charcoal flecking. Feature [105] appeared as a rectilinear cut aligned NE-SW across the centre of the trench, measuring >1.5m NE-SW x 0.22m NW-SE x 0.4m and filled by a friable mid brown silty clay (106) (**Fig. 4**). Also contained within the cut was a 4-inch ceramic drain, which seems likely to have been laid during or shortly after construction of the gallery building. On a similar alignment as [105] was a rectilinear trench, measuring >1.5m ENE-WSW x 0.06m NNW-SSE x 0.4m [107] (**Fig. 4**). Filling [107] was a friable reddish-brown silty clay (108). Also contained within the cut was a 2-inch electricity cable, again probably associated with construction of gallery building.

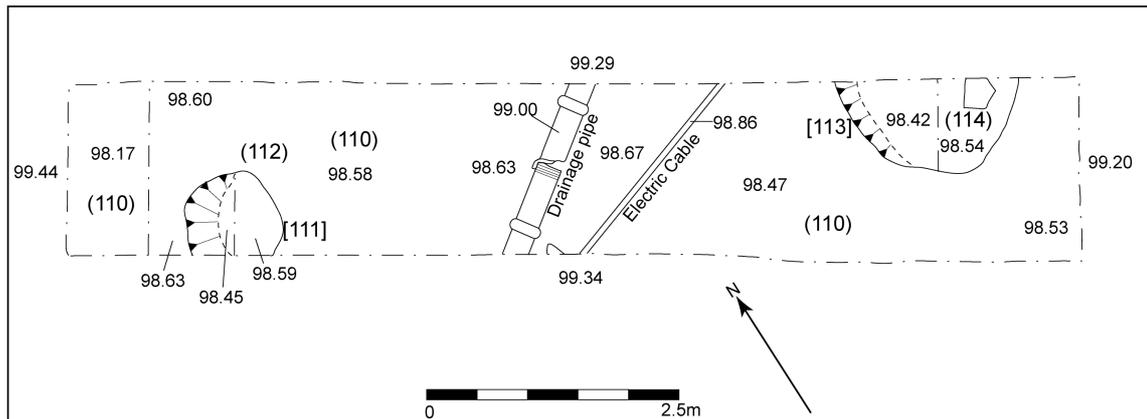


Fig. 3: Plan of Trench 1

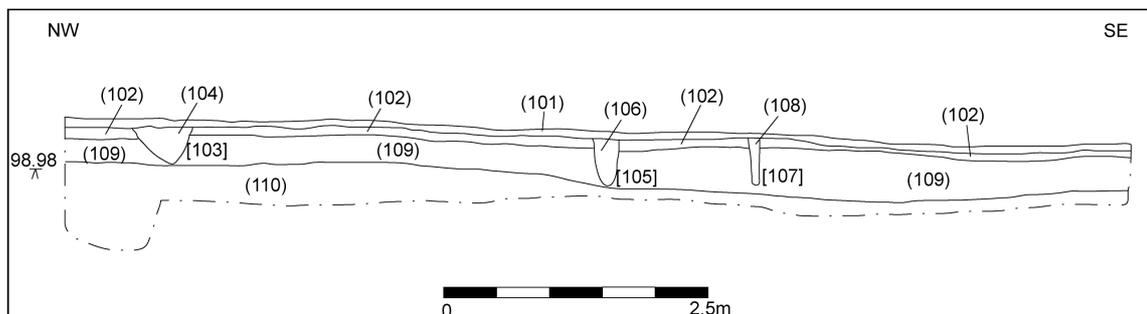


Fig 4: SW-facing section of Trench 1

Underlying (102) was friable reddish-brown silty clay with c.2% charcoal flecking and moderate small rounded pebbles (109). Beneath this, throughout the trench, was a natural deposit consisting of firm pinkish-brown silty clay with occasional large subangular stones and moderate small rounded pebbles (110), measuring >0.87m deep.

Cutting (110) were two small pits ([111] & [113]). Pit [111] (**Plate 2; Fig. 5**) was located at the NW end of the trench and appeared sub-circular in plan, with a diameter of >0.86m and a depth of 0.16m. Filling [111] was a friable dark greyish-brown silty clay with occasional small rounded pebbles and c.10% charcoal flecking (112). The date and function of pit [111] were unclear owing to a lack of finds from (112). Pit [113] (**Fig. 6**) was located at the SE end of the trench and again appeared sub-circular in plan, with a maximum visible diameter of 1.8m and a depth of 0.12m. Only part of the feature appeared in the trench, the remainder extending beyond the SW-facing section. Filling [113] was a friable dark brown silty clay with occasional small rounded pebbles, c.10%

charcoal flecking and one large flat sandstone fragment (114). Again, the absence of any finds makes an accurate interpretation of the feature difficult.



Plate 1: Trench 1 looking SE



Plate 2: Pit [111] looking E

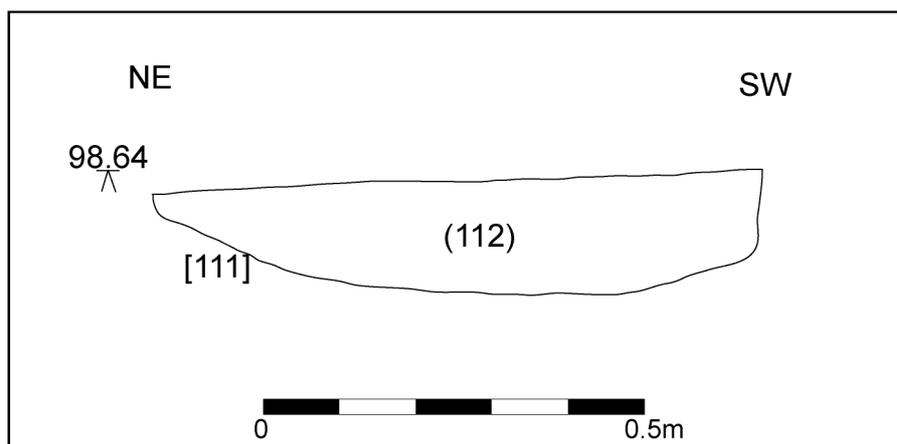


Fig. 5: Profile of Pit [111]

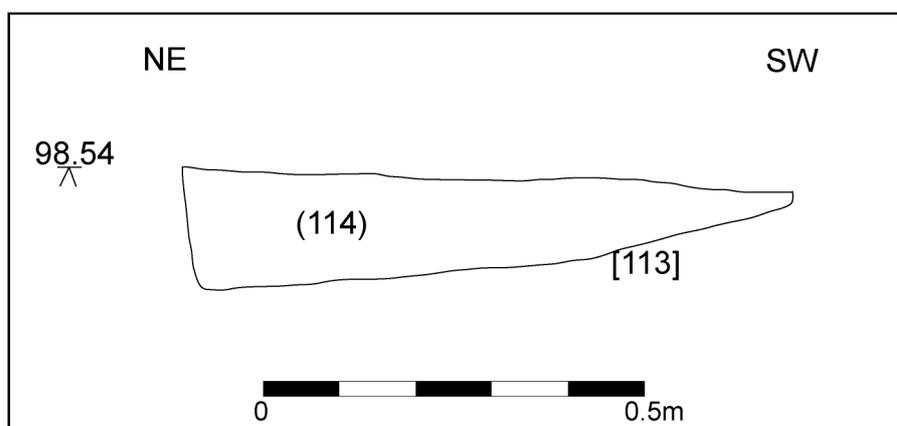


Fig. 6: Profile of Pit [113]

5.2 Trench 2

The trench revealed eight contexts, the uppermost of which (201) was a compact bluish-grey stone and gravel hard-standing deposit containing frequent CBM fragments and extending trench wide to a maximum depth of 0.08m.

Underlying (201) was a friable orangey-brown aggregate with frequent CBM fragments and small subangular stones (202). This measured 2.5m NW-SE x >1.5m NE-SW x 0.12m and formed an aggregate sub-base for surface (201). Cutting (202) was a rectilinear cut measuring >1.5m NE-SW x 0.82m NW-SE x 0.35m [205] (**Plate 4**). This was filled by (206), a compact concrete and aggregate deposit forming part of a foundation, possibly associated with a greenhouse previously standing in this location.

A probable post-medieval garden soil consisting of friable dark greyish-brown silty clay with c.5% charcoal flecking (203) extended across the trench and measured 0.26m in thickness. Underlying this was a natural deposit (204), consisting of friable pinkish-brown silty clay with frequent small rounded pebbles.

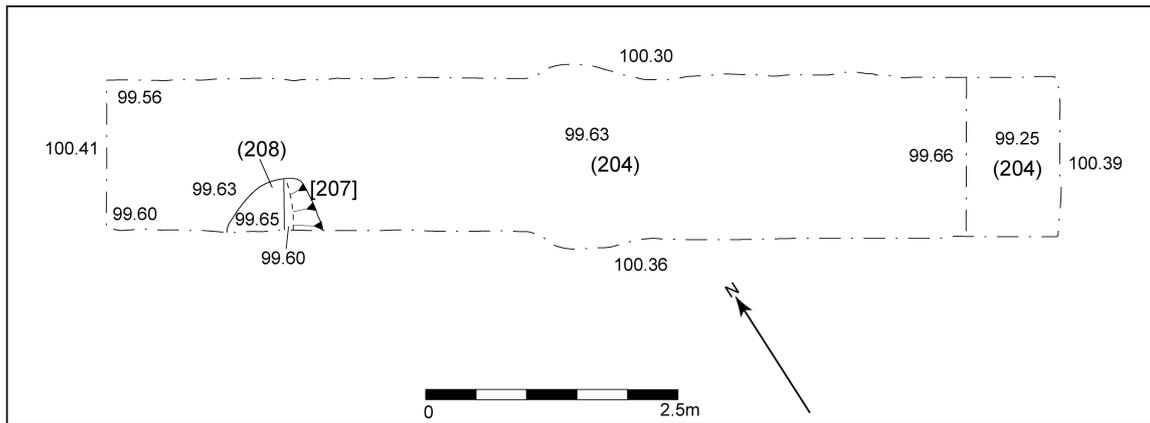


Fig. 7: Plan of Trench 2

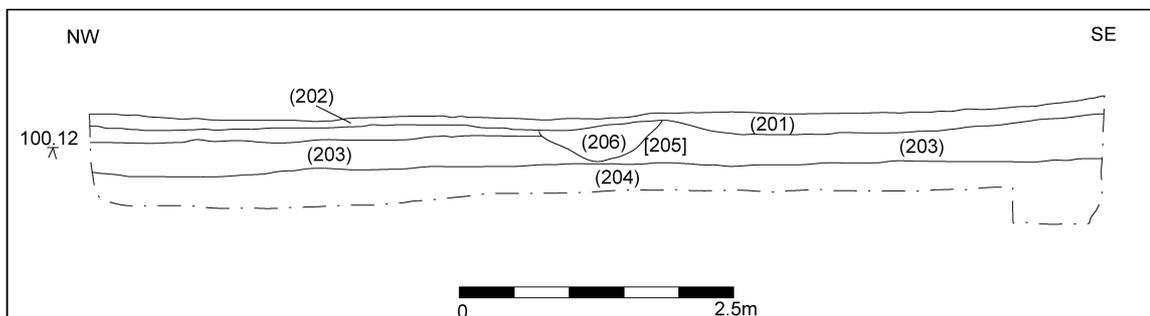


Fig. 8: SW-facing section of Trench 2



Plate 3: Trench 2 looking SE



Plate 4: Pit [205] looking SW

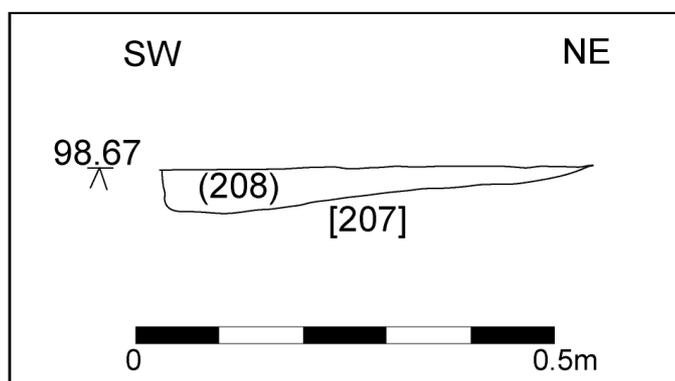


Fig. 9: Profile of Pit [207]

Partially revealed cutting (204) at the NW end of the trench was an elongated post-medieval pit measuring 0.86m NE-SW x 1m NW-SE x 0.07m [207] (Figs. 7 & 9). Filling [207] was (208), a friable greyish-brown silty clay with c.10% charcoal flecking, occasional small subangular stones and one sherd of post-medieval pottery.

6. Conclusion

The evaluation comprised two trenches measuring 10m x 1.5m located to the N and E of the gallery building.

Trench 1 produced no conclusive evidence of activity predating the post-medieval period. Three modern features were identified: a modern pit [103] and two utility



trenches, [105] and [107], both relating to the gallery. Two further pits were identified cutting into natural ([111] & [113]). These contained no dating evidence.

Trench 2 produced evidence of deposits and features that appeared to be uniformly of post-medieval date. A concrete foundation [205] relating to a 1970s greenhouse was identified cutting the uppermost deposits in the centre of the trench. A post-medieval sub-circular pit was also identified in the NW end of the trench.

Natural deposits were generally encountered at about 0.5m below the present ground surface.

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8. Bibliography

Herefordshire Archaeology Sites and Monuments Record: SMR Printout

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

SITE SUMMARY

Report Name & Title	Archaeological Evaluation at Sunnymeade Back Lane Weobley Herefordshire
Contractor's Name and Address	Border Archaeology, PO Box 36, Leominster, Herefordshire, HR6 OYQ
Site Name	Sunnymeade Back Lane Weobley Herefordshire
Grid Reference (8 fig)	SO 4010 5160 Planning Application Number: DCNC2006/3067/F
SMR number/s of site	44394
Date of Field Work	December 2006
Date of Report	December 2006
	NUMBER AND TYPE OF FINDS
Pottery	Period: Medieval Number of sherds: 1 Post-med 5
Other	Period: CBM Quantity: 5
	NUMBER AND TYPE OF SAMPLES COLLECTED
Sieving for charred plant remains	No of features sampled N/A No of buckets N/A
C¹⁴/scientific dates	No and Type N/A Result N/A
Pollen	No of columns/spot samples N/A Name of pollen specialist N/A
Bone	Number of buckets sieved for bone N/A Quantity Recovered N/A Period N/A
Other	Type and specialist N/A
Summary of the report	<p>The evaluation comprised two trenches located to the N (Trench 1: 10m × 1.5m) and E (Trench 2: 10m × 1.5m) of the gallery building.</p> <p>Trench 1 produced no conclusive evidence of activity predating the post-medieval period. Three modern features were identified: a modern pit [103] and two utility trenches, [105] and [107], both relating to the gallery. Two further pits were identified cutting into natural ([111] & [113]). These contained no dating evidence.</p> <p>Trench 2 produced evidence of deposits and features that appeared to be uniformly of post-medieval date. A concrete foundation [205] relating to a 1970s greenhouse was identified cutting the uppermost deposits in the centre of the trench. A post-medieval sub-circular pit was also identified in the NW end of the trench.</p> <p>Natural deposits were generally encountered at about 0.5m below the present ground surface.</p>