
**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF ON
LAND AT THE OLD HALL,
COTTESMORE ROAD,
ASHWELL,
RUTLAND
(ASOH09)**

**Work Undertaken For
Midland HR**

June 2011

Report Compiled by
Andrew Failes BA (Hons) MA

Planning Application No: LBA/2009/0504
National Grid Reference: SK 8642 1295
City and County Museum Accession No: OAKRM: 2009.16
OASIS ID No: archaeo11- 102015

Report No: **41/11**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL
PROJECT
SERVICES**



Quality Control
The Old Hall, Cottesmore Road,
Ashwell, Rutland
(ASOH 09)

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Supervisor	Bob Garland
Illustration	Andrew Failes
Photographic Reproduction	Sue Unsworth
Post-excavation Analyst	Andrew Failes


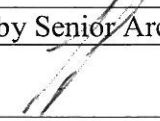
Checked by Project Manager	Approved by Senior Archaeologist
Gary Taylor 	 Tom Lane
Date: 31/5/11	Date: 31-5-11

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1. SUMMARY

A watching brief was undertaken during groundworks for a new kennel extension to outbuildings at The Old Hall, Ashwell, Rutland.

The work was required as the site was on the edge of an area of earthwork remains of medieval settlement and agriculture, and post-medieval formal gardening. Previous investigations in advance of the construction of a garage and workshop to the north, which the kennels are attached to, revealed medieval occupation remains including possible pits and ditches along with a possible well that had been backfilled in the 12th to 14th century.

However, no medieval remains were identified during the investigation. Instead a sequence of natural and subsoil was identified, with a pit of uncertain date truncating the subsoil. A modern pipe trench was recorded cut through the undated pit.

Finds retrieved during the investigation consisted of a single fragment of animal bone retrieved from the fill of the undated pit.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Definition of a Watching Brief

An archaeological watching brief is defined as “a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons. This will be within a specified area or site on land, inter-tidal zone or underwater, where there is a possibility that archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed.” (IfA 2008).

2.2 Planning Background

Planning permission (Application

No.LBA/2009/0504) for a new kennel extension to outbuildings at the Old Hall, Cottesmore Road, Ashwell, is subject to a condition requiring the implementation of a scheme of archaeological works, in this instance comprising a watching brief during development groundwork.

Archaeological Project Services (APS) was commissioned by Midland HR to undertake this work. The investigation was carried out on the 8th of March 2011 in accordance with a specification (Appendix 1) prepared by APS and approved by Rutland County Council’s archaeological advisor.

2.3 Topography and Geology

Ashwell is located 5km north of Oakham and 12km southeast of Melton Mowbray in the county of Rutland (Fig. 1).

The Old Hall is on the north side of the village, to the north of Cottesmore Road. The development area lies on fairly level ground located to the west of the hall at national grid reference SK 8642 1295 (Fig 2).

Soils of the area are Wickham 2 Association, silty over clayey soils developed over the junction of the Jurassic Middle Lias Marlstone and silts and clays (Hodge *et al.* 1984).

2.4 Archaeological Setting

Ashwell is first mentioned in the Domesday Survey of c.1086. Referred to as *Exewelle* the name derives from the Old English and means ‘ash stream’ (Ekwall 1989, 16). At the time of the Domesday Survey the land was held by Earl Hugh and contained 16 acres of meadow (Thorn 1980).

Extant remains of the medieval period comprise the church of St Mary, the earliest elements of which date to c. 1200 (Pevsner 1992, 452).

Old Hall is in an area of earthworks comprising medieval settlement, water mill, mill ponds and garden. The remains include house platforms, hollow ways, trackways, agricultural enclosures and possible garden terraces. Much of the area of these remains is protected as a nationally important scheduled ancient monument (No. 30263). The present investigation site is on the western border of these remains. Previous investigations within the Old Hall grounds have found evidence of medieval occupation and agriculture, as well as post-medieval garden terracing (Failes 2008).

A previous investigation in advance of the construction of the garage to the north (Fig 3) recorded possible pits and ditches of medieval date (Parker 2008) in which medieval pottery was moderately abundant. A subsequent investigation (Taylor 2008) monitoring the stripping of ground and digging of footings for the garage and workshop (Fig 4) identified further ditches and pits, including a possible well which had been backfilled in the 12th to 14th century.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the watching brief was to record and interpret the archaeological features exposed during groundworks.

The objectives were to determine the form and function of the archaeological features encountered, their spatial arrangement and as far as practicable, to recover dating evidence from them and to establish the sequence of the archaeological remains present on the site.

4. METHODS

The topsoil around the kennel area was removed by machine (Plate 1). Footings for the kennel structure were then excavated using a mechanical digger.

Where possible the trench sides were cleaned and rendered vertical. Each deposit was allocated a unique reference number (context number) with an individual written description. A list of all contexts and their descriptions appears as Appendix 2. A photographic record was compiled and sections were drawn at a scale of 1:10. Recording was undertaken according to standard Archaeological Project Services practice.

5. RESULTS

Following post-excavation analysis five phases were identified;

Phase 1	Natural deposits
Phase 2	Undated deposits
Phase 3	Recent deposits

Archaeological contexts are listed below and described. The numbers in brackets are the context numbers assigned in the field.

Phase 1 Natural deposits

The earliest deposit encountered during the investigation was at least 1.30m thick and composed of firm, but slightly plastic, naturally deposited brownish grey clay (031) (Fig 5, Sections 71-19) (Plates 2-4).

Phase 2 Undated deposits

The natural was overlain by an up to 0.20m thick deposit of friable yellowish brown clayey silt (030) subsoil (Fig 5, Sections 17 & 18) (Plates 2 & 4).

Subsoil deposit (030) was truncated by a large pit of uncertain shape. The pit was not fully exposed but measured at least 1.60m wide by 2.60m long by 1.50m deep and had steep sides that appeared to be braking gradually [032] (Fig 5, Sections 18-19) (Plates 3-4). The base of the pit lay below the level of the footings and as a result, could not be recorded.

Pit [032] was filled with a deposit of friable dark brownish grey clayey silt (033) (Fig 5, Sections 18-19) (Plates 3-4). A single fragment of animal bone (sheep/goat) was retrieved from this fill.

Phase 3 Recent deposits

The large pit was truncated by a linear pipe trench [034], measuring at least 0.80m wide by 0.50m deep, with moderately steep sides breaking gradually to a flat base (Fig 5, Sections 18-19).

The base of the pipe trench was filled with a 80mm deep deposit of friable mid yellowish brown pea gravel (035). This was overlain by a second fill comprising friable dark brownish grey clayey silt (036), up to 0.42m thick.

6. DISCUSSION

The clay identified at the base of the footings represents the underlying natural drift geology of the area.

The naturally deposited clay was overlain by a subsoil which was truncated by a pit of uncertain shape and date. A single fragment of sheep/goat bone was retrieved from the fill of this pit.

A modern pipe trench was recorded cut through the undated pit.

7. CONCLUSION

A watching brief was undertaken during groundworks for a new kennel extension to outbuildings at The Old Hall, Ashwell, Rutland.

This was because the site was on the edge of an area of earthwork remains of medieval settlement and agriculture and lay adjacent to evidence of medieval occupation including possible pits and ditches, as well as a possible well which

had been backfilled in the 12th to 14th century.

However, no remains that could be dated to the medieval period were revealed during the investigation. The investigation did reveal a natural deposit overlain by subsoil, which was truncated by an undated pit. The pit was cut by a modern service trench.

A single fragment of animal bone was retrieved from the fill of the undated pit.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project Services wishes to acknowledge the assistance of Mr S Bocock of Midland HR for commissioning the fieldwork and post-excavation analysis. The work was coordinated by Gary Taylor who edited this report along with Tom Lane. Dave Start kindly allowed access to the library maintained by Heritage Lincolnshire.

9. PERSONNEL

Project Coordinator: Gary Taylor
Site Supervisor: Bob Garland
Photographic reproduction: Mark Peachey
CAD Illustration: Andrew Failes
Post-excavation analysis: Andrew Failes

10. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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11. ABBREVIATIONS

APS Archaeological Project Services

IfA Institute for Archaeologists

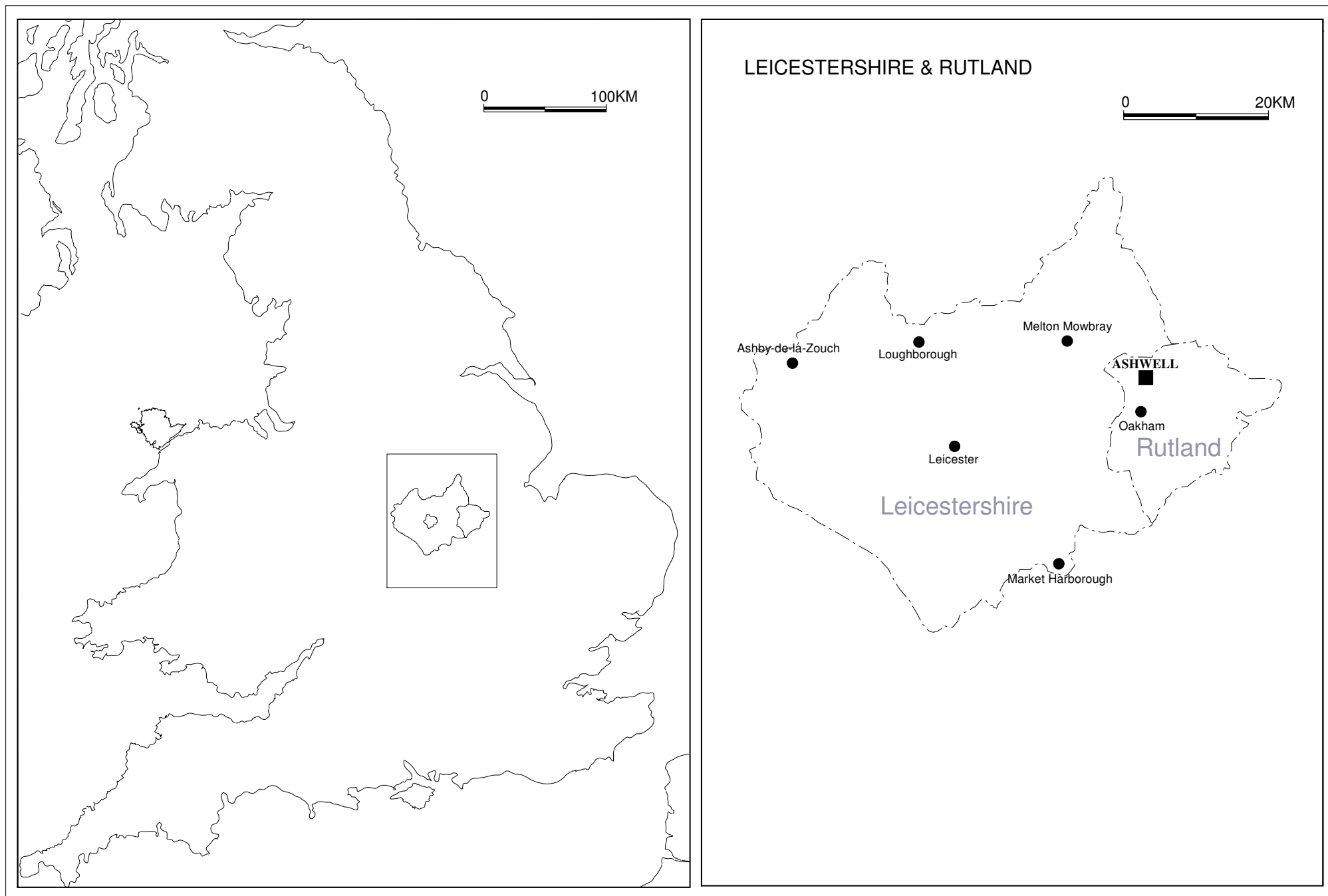


Figure 1 - General location plan



Figure 2 Site location map

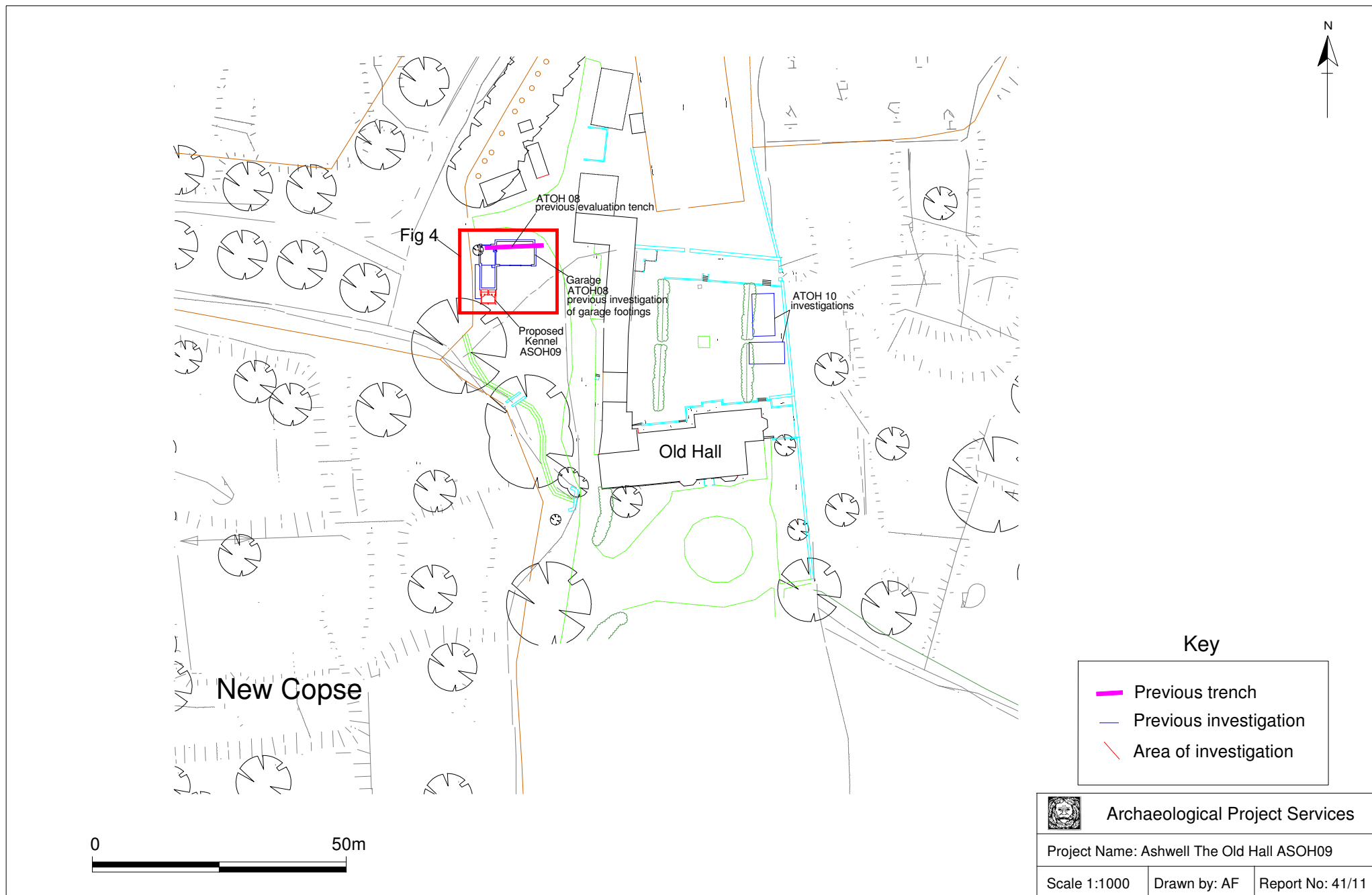


Figure 3. Site plan

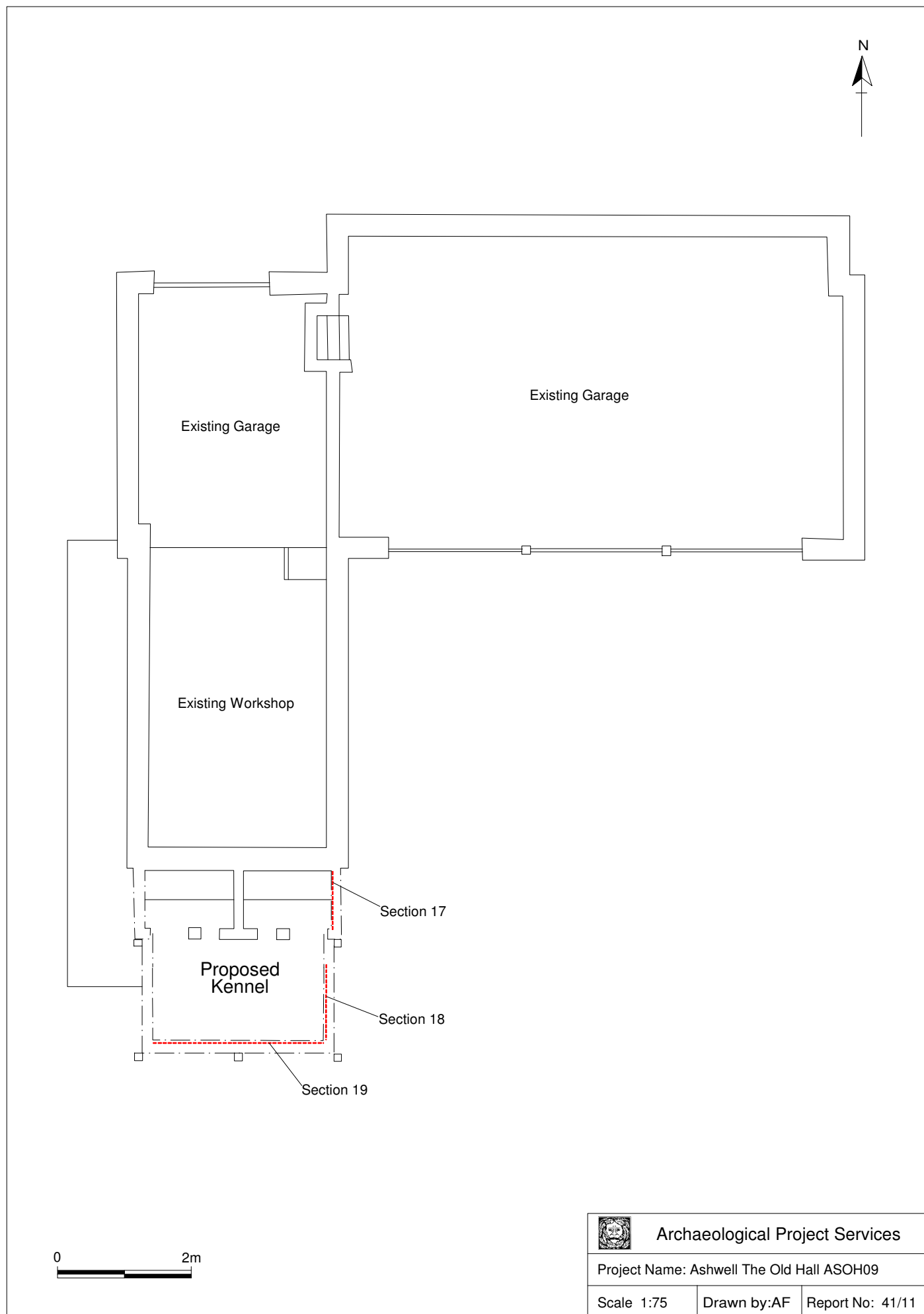


Figure 4 - Proposed kennel plan and section locations

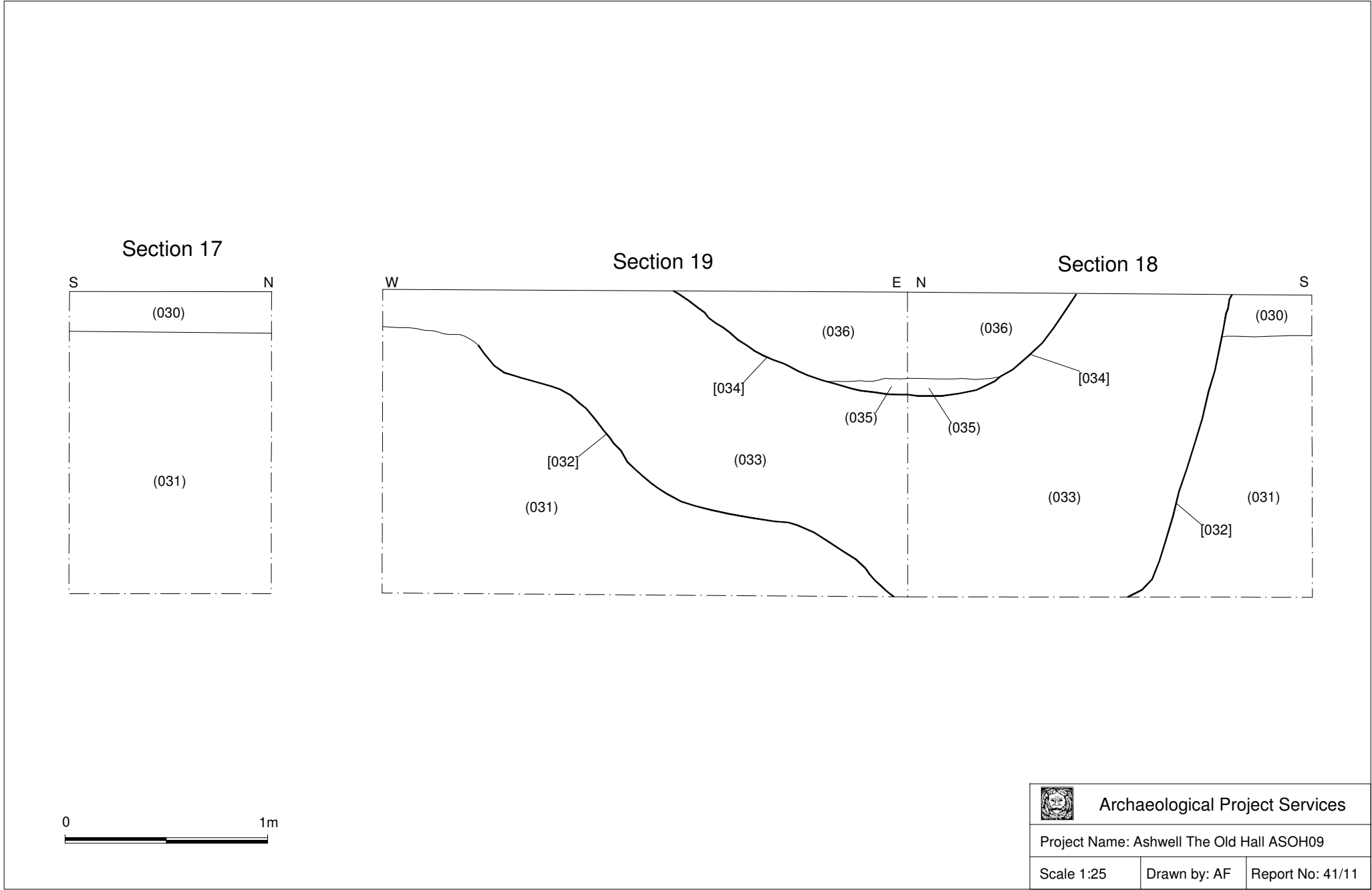


Figure 5 - Sections 17-19



Plate 1 – View of site with topsoil stripped



Plate 2 – Section 17



Plate 3 – Section 18



Plate 4 – Section 19

APPENDIX 1

SPECIFICATION FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF ON LAND AT THE OLD HALL, COTTESMORE RD, ASHWELL, RUTLAND

**PREPARED FOR
MIDLAND HR**

NOVEMBER 2009

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL
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1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 *An archaeological watching brief is required during development on land at the Old Hall, Ashwell, Rutland.*
- 1.2 *The site is in an area of earthwork remains of medieval settlement and agriculture, and post-medieval formal gardening. Previous investigations immediately adjacent revealed medieval pits, ditches and a well backfilled in the 12th-14th centuries*
- 1.3 *The archaeological work will comprise a watching brief during development groundwork.*
- 1.4 *On completion of the fieldwork a report will be prepared detailing the results of the watching brief. The report will consist of a narrative supported by illustrations and photographs.*

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This document comprises a specification for archaeological watching brief during development on land at the Old Hall, Cottesmore Road, Ashwell, Rutland.
- 2.2 This document contains the following parts:
 - 2.2.1 Overview.
 - 2.2.2 Stages of work and methodologies.
 - 2.2.3 List of specialists.
 - 2.2.4 Programme of works and staffing structure of the project

3 SITE LOCATION

- 3.1 Ashwell is located 5km north of Oakham in the county of Rutland. The Old Hall is on the north side of the village, to the north of Cottesmore Road. The development area is on the northwest side of the hall at national grid reference SK 8654 1292.

4 PLANNING BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Planning permission (Application No. LBA/2009/0504) for the construction of a ground floor kennel extension to garages/workshop outbuildings, at the Old Hall, Ashwell, is subject to a condition requiring the implementation of a scheme of archaeological works, in this instance comprising a watching brief during development groundwork.

5 SOILS AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 5.1 The investigation site is on a north-facing slope of a minor stream valley at c. 102m OD. Soils of the area are Wickham 2 Association silty over clayey soils developed over the junction of the Jurassic Middle Lias Marlstone and silts and clays (Hodge *et al.* 1984).

6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL OVERVIEW

- 6.1 Ashwell Old Hall is in an area of earthworks comprising medieval settlement, water mill, mill ponds and garden. The remains include house platforms, hollow ways, trackways, agricultural enclosures and possible garden terraces. Much of the area of these remains is protected as a nationally-important scheduled ancient monument (No 30263). The present investigation site is outside the scheduled area. Previous investigations on the adjacent garage building found evidence of medieval occupation, including ditches, pits and a well that was backfilled in the 12th-14th centuries (APS 2008).

7 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 7.1 The aims of the watching brief will be:
- 7.1.1 To record and interpret the archaeological features exposed during the excavation of the foundation trenches and other areas of ground disturbance.
- 7.2 The objectives of the watching brief will be to:
- 7.2.1 Determine the form and function of the archaeological features encountered;
 - 7.2.2 Determine the spatial arrangement of the archaeological features encountered;
 - 7.2.3 As far as practicable, recover dating evidence from the archaeological features, and
 - 7.2.4 Establish the sequence of the archaeological remains present on the site.

8 SITE OPERATIONS

8.1 General considerations

- 8.1.1 All work will be undertaken following statutory Health and Safety requirements in operation at the time of the watching brief.

8.1.2 The work will be undertaken according to the relevant codes of practise issued by the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA), under the management of a Member of the institute (MIfA). Archaeological Project Services is IfA registered organisation no. 21.

8.1.3 Any and all artefacts found during the investigation and thought to be 'treasure', as defined by the Treasure Act 1996, will be removed from site to a secure store and promptly reported to the appropriate coroner's office.

8.2 Methodology

8.2.1 The archaeological monitoring will be undertaken during the ground works phase of development, and will comprise a watching brief of all groundworks.

8.2.2 Stripped areas and trench sections will be observed regularly to identify and record archaeological features that are exposed and to record changes in the geological conditions. The section drawings of the trenches will be recorded at a scale of 1:10. Should features be recorded in plan these will be drawn at a scale of 1:20. Written descriptions detailing the nature of the deposits, features and fills encountered will be compiled on Archaeological Project Services pro-forma record sheets.

8.2.3 Any finds recovered will be bagged and labelled for later analysis.

8.2.4 Throughout the watching brief a photographic record will be compiled. The photographic record will consist of:

- the site during work to show specific stages, and the layout of the archaeology within the trench.
- groups of features where their relationship is important

8.2.5 Should human remains be located the appropriate Home Office licence will be obtained before their removal. In addition, the Local Environmental Health Department and the police will be informed.

9 POST-EXCAVATION

9.1 Stage 1

9.1.1 On completion of site operations, the records and schedules produced during the watching brief will be checked and ordered to ensure that they form a uniform sequence forming a level II archive. A stratigraphic

matrix of the archaeological deposits and features present on the site will be prepared. All photographic material will be catalogued and labelled, the labelling referring to schedules identifying the subject/s photographed.

- 9.1.2 All finds recovered during the field work will be washed, marked and packaged according to the deposit from which they were recovered. Any finds requiring specialist treatment and conservation will be sent to the Conservation Laboratory at the City and County Museum, Lincoln.

9.2 Stage 2

- 9.2.1 Detailed examination of the stratigraphic matrix to enable the determination of the various phases of activity on the site.

- 9.2.2 Finds will be sent to specialists for identification and dating.

9.3 Stage 3

- 9.3.1 On completion of stage 2, a report detailing the findings of the watching brief will be prepared.

- 9.3.2 This will consist of:

- A non-technical summary of the results of the investigation.
- A description of the archaeological setting of the watching brief.
- Description of the topography of the site.
- Description of the methodologies used during the watching brief.
- A text describing the findings of the watching brief.
- A consideration of the local, regional and national context of the watching brief findings.
- Plans of the archaeological features exposed. If a sequence of archaeological deposits is encountered, separate plans for each phase will be produced.
- Sections of the trenches and archaeological features.
- Interpretation of the archaeological features exposed, and their chronology and setting within the surrounding landscape.

- Specialist reports on the finds from the site.
- Appropriate photographs of the site and specific archaeological features.

10 REPORT DEPOSITION

- 10.1 Copies of the report will be sent to the Client; the Senior Planning Archaeologist, Leicestershire County Council; and to the Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record.

11 ARCHIVE

- 11.1 The documentation and records generated during the investigation will be sorted and ordered into the format acceptable to Rutland County Museum, sorted and ordered into the format acceptable to the Museum. This will be undertaken following the requirements of the documents titled *Acquisition and Disposal Policy*, prepared by Rutland County Museum. This sorting will be undertaken according to the guidelines and conditions stipulated by the museum, and appropriate national guidelines, for long-term storage and curation.

12 PUBLICATION

- 12.1 Details of the project will be entered into the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) database.
- 12.2 A report of the findings of the fieldwork will be submitted to the journals: *Rutland Record* and the *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society*.
- 12.3 If appropriate notes or articles describing the results of the investigation will also be submitted for publication in the appropriate national journals: *Medieval Archaeology* and *Journal of the Medieval Settlement Research Group* for medieval and later remains, and *Britannia* for discoveries of Roman date.

13 CURATORIAL RESPONSIBILITY

- 13.1 Curatorial responsibility for the archaeological work undertaken on the site lies with the Senior Planning Archaeologist, Leicestershire County Council. They will be given written notice of the commencement of the project.

14 VARIATIONS AND CONTINGENCIES

- 14.1 Variations to the proposed scheme of works will only be made following written confirmation of acceptance from the archaeological curator.

- 14.2 In the event of the discovery of any unexpected remains of archaeological importance, or of any changed circumstances, it is the responsibility of the archaeological contractor to inform the archaeological curator.
- 14.3 Where important archaeological remains are discovered and deemed to merit further investigation additional resources may be required to provide an appropriate level of investigation, recording and analysis.
- 14.4 Any contingency requirement for additional fieldwork or post-excavation analysis outside the scope of the proposed scheme of works will only be activated following full consultation with the archaeological curator and the client.

15 PROGRAMME OF WORKS AND STAFFING LEVELS

- 15.1 The monitoring will be integrated with the programme of construction and is dependent on the developers' work programme. It is therefore not possible to specify the person-hours for the archaeological site work.
- 15.2 An archaeological supervisor with experience of watching briefs will undertake the work.
- 15.3 Post-excavation analysis and report production will be undertaken by the archaeological supervisor, or a post-excavation analyst as appropriate, with assistance from a finds supervisor, illustrator and external specialists. It is expected that each fieldwork day (equal to one person-day) will require a post- excavation day (equal to one-and-a-half person-days) for completion of the analysis and report. If the fieldwork lasts longer than about four days then there will be an economy of scale with the post-excavation analysis.

16 SPECIALISTS TO BE USED DURING THE PROJECT

- 16.1 The following organisations/persons will, in principle and if necessary, be used as subcontractors to provide the relevant specialist work and reports in respect of any objects or material recovered during the investigation that require their expert knowledge and input. Engagement of any particular specialist subcontractor is also dependent on their availability and ability to meet programming requirements.

<u>Task</u>	<u>Body to be undertaking the work</u>
Conservation	Conservation Laboratory, City and County Museum, Lincoln
Pottery Analysis	Prehistoric – D Trimble, APS/Trent & Peak Archaeological Trust

	Roman – A Beeby, APS/B Precious, Independent Specialist
	Post-Roman – A Boyle, APS
Non-pottery Artefacts	G Taylor, APS/J Cowgill, Independent Specialist
Animal Bones	P Cope-Faulkner, APS
Environmental Analysis	J Rackham, Independent Specialist
Human Remains Analysis	R Gowland, Independent Specialist

17 INSURANCES

- 17.1 Archaeological Project Services, as part of the Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire, maintains Employers Liability Insurance of £10,000,000, together with Public and Products Liability insurances, each with indemnity of £5,000,000. Copies of insurance documentation can be supplied on request.

18 COPYRIGHT

- 18.1 Archaeological Project Services shall retain full copyright of any commissioned reports under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with all rights reserved; excepting that it hereby provides an exclusive licence to the client for the use of such documents by the client in all matters directly relating to the project as described in the Project Specification.
- 18.2 In the case of non-satisfactory settlement of account then copyright will remain fully and exclusively with Archaeological Project Services. In these circumstances it will be an infringement under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 for the client to pass any report, partial report, or copy of same, to any third party. Reports submitted in good faith by Archaeological Project Services to any Planning Authority or archaeological curator will be removed from said planning Authority and/or archaeological curator. The Planning Authority and/or archaeological curator will be notified by Archaeological Project Services that the use of any such information previously supplied constitutes an infringement under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 and may result in legal action.
- 18.3 The author of any report or specialist contribution to a report shall retain intellectual copyright of their work and may make use of their work for educational or research purposes or for further publication. Licence will also be given to the archaeological curators to use the documentary archive for educational, public and research purposes.

19 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Archaeological Project Services, 2008 *Archaeological Strip, Map and Sample Investigation on land at the Old Hall, Ashwell, Rutland (ATOH08)*, APS Report **102/08**

Hodge, CAH, Burton, RGO, Corbett, WM, Evans, R, and Seale, RS, 1984 *Soils and their use in Eastern England*, Soil Survey of England and Wales **13**

Specification: Version 1, 17th November 2009

APPENDIX 2

Context Descriptions

No.	Description	Interpretation
030	Friable yellowish brown clayey silt, up to 0.20m thick	Subsoil
031	Firm and slightly plastic brownish grey clay, at least 1.30m thick	Natural clay
032	Large pit cut, not fully exposed measuring at least 2.60m long x 1.60m wide x 1.50m deep with steep sides that look to break gradually	Pit cut
033	Friable dark brownish grey clayey silt, up to 1.50m thick	Fill of [032]
034	Linear cut oriented east-northeast to west-southwest and measuring at least 0.80m wide x 0.50. deep with moderately steep sides breaking gradually to a flat base	Modern pipe trench
035	Friable mid yellowish brown pea gravel, up to 0.08m deep	Fill of [034]
036	Friable dark brownish grey clayey silt, up to 0.42m thick	Fill of [034]

Appendix 3

THE FINDS

FAUNAL REMAINS

By Paul Cope-Faulkner

Introduction

A single fragment of animal bone was retrieved from the fill of a pit (033).

Condition

The overall condition of the bone was good.

Results

Table 1, Fragment Identified to Taxa

Cxt	Taxon	Element	Side	Number	W (g)	Comments
033	Sheep/goat	metacarpus		1	27	

Summary

As a single animal bone, it is uninformative other than to say sheep/goat were present at the site. It should be retained as part of the site archive.

Appendix 4

GLOSSARY

Context	An archaeological context represents a distinct archaeological event or process. For example, the action of digging a pit creates a context (the cut) as does the process of its subsequent backfill (the fill). Each context encountered during an archaeological investigation is allocated a unique number by the archaeologist and a record sheet detailing the description and interpretation of the context (the context sheet) is created and placed in the site archive. Context numbers are identified within the report text by brackets, e.g. [004].
Cut	A cut refers to the physical action of digging a posthole, pit, ditch, foundation trench, etc. Once the fills of these features are removed during an archaeological investigation the original 'cut' is therefore exposed and subsequently recorded.
Domesday Survey	A survey of property ownership in England compiled on the instruction of William I for taxation purposes in 1086 AD.
Fill	Once a feature has been dug it begins to silt up (either slowly or rapidly) or it can be back-filled manually. The soil(s) that become contained by the 'cut' are referred to as its fill(s).
Layer	A layer is a term used to describe an accumulation of soil or other material that is not contained within a cut.
Medieval	The Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1066-1500.
Natural	Undisturbed deposit(s) of soil or rock which have accumulated without the influence of human activity
Post-medieval	The period following the Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1500-1800.

Appendix 5

THE ARCHIVE

The archive consists of:

7	Context records
1	Photographic record sheet
1	Section record sheet
1	Plan record sheet
1	Daily record sheet
3	Sheets of scale drawings
1	Stratigraphic matrix

All primary records are currently kept at:

Archaeological Project Services
The Old School
Cameron Street
Heckington
Sleaford
Lincolnshire
NG34 9RW

The ultimate destination of the project archive is:

Rutland County Museum
Catmose Street
Oakham
Rutland
LE15 6HW

Accession Number: OAKRM:2009.16

Archaeological Project Services Site Code: ASOH 09

The discussion and comments provided in this report are based on the archaeology revealed during the site investigations. Other archaeological finds and features may exist on the development site but away from the areas exposed during the course of this fieldwork. *Archaeological Project Services* cannot confirm that those areas unexposed are free from archaeology nor that any archaeology present there is of a similar character to that revealed during the current investigation.

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