



The Spice House, Kimbolton, Herefordshire
archaeological monitoring

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archenfield archaeology ltd

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The Spice House, Kimbolton, Herefordshire: archaeological monitoring 2003

Client: Mr and Mrs Evans, property owners

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Cover Photograph: Gable end of the Spice House, Kimbolton



Contents

Summary	2
1.0 Introduction	3
2.0 Geological, historical and archaeological background.....	4
2.1 Geological background.....	4
2.2 Historical background	4
2.3 Archaeological background.....	6
3.0 Project aims and objectives.....	6
4.0 Methodology.....	6
4.1 Field methodology.....	6
4.2 Processing methodology.....	7
5.0 Results	8
6.0 Conclusions	10
7.0 Archive deposition.....	10
8.0 Publication and dissemination proposals	10
General bibliography	11
Cartographic material.....	11

Figures

Figure 1: Location plan.....	3
Figure 2: Tithe map of 1844	5
Figure 3: Site plan indicating area of fieldwork.....	8

Summary

Archenfield Archaeology was commissioned by Mr & Mrs H Evans to carry out a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording at Spice House, Kimbolton, Herefordshire during July 2002. All ground work was monitored, but only one feature was observed, interpreted as a cut for the footings of a timber-framed lean-to building. The fill of this feature yielded the only finds observed during excavation: these included brick, stone, tile, glass, and late post-medieval pottery.

1.0 Introduction

NGR SO 51890 61180

Herefordshire Sites and Monuments Record - Event No 32134

Hereford City Museum Accession No HFDMG2002-39

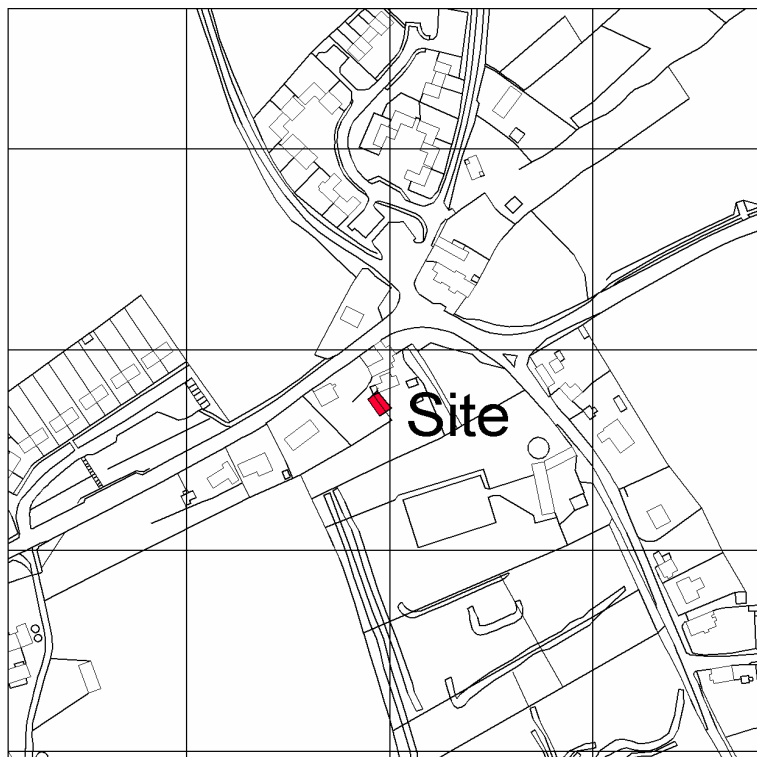
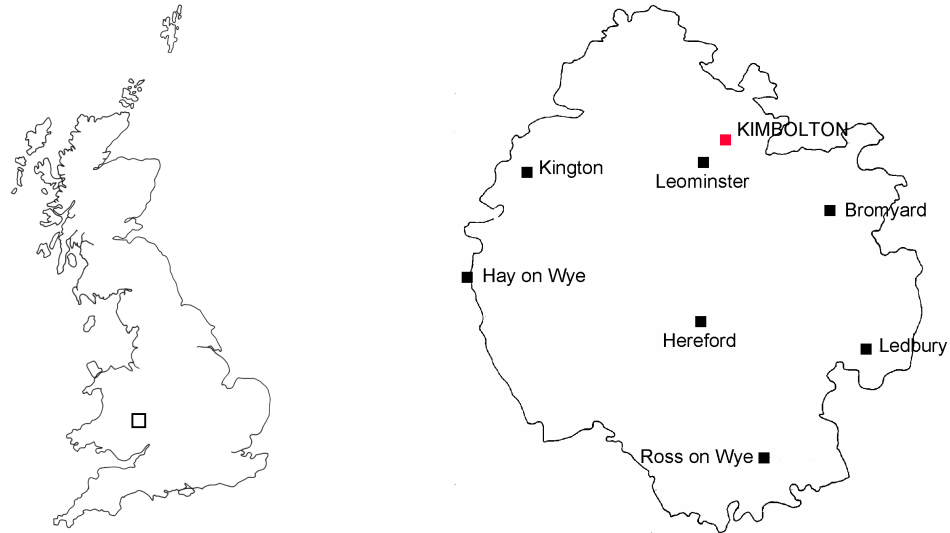


Figure 1: Location plan. OS data reproduced under licence, drawing ref 26105645

Mr & Mrs H Evans (the clients) commissioned a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording at Spice House, Kimbolton, Herefordshire, in accordance with a brief issued by the Herefordshire Council Archaeology Service. This was issued in response to planning application NC2000/1208F for permission to construct a two-storey domestic extension with a cellar.

2.0 Geological, historical and archaeological background

2.1 Geological background

The solid geology of the area consists of the Lower Old Red Sandstone (OS Geological Survey 1979).

2.2 Historical background

The Spice House is situated in Stockton which is a hamlet within the modern parish of Kimbolton. Stockton was one of the 16 members of the manor of Leominster in Domesday. The manor was in the hands of the king, having been Queen Edith's in 1066. These members were the greater part of what had been an even large block of land originally possessed by Leominster Abbey before its suppression by Edith's husband, King Edward 'the Confessor' in 1046 (Thorn and Thorn, 1983). The name, *Stoctune* in 1086, is possibly *stocc-tūn*, meaning 'farm built of logs' (Coplestone-Crow, 1989).

The church for the manor was the priory church at Leominster. Dependant chapels were established in some of the satellite settlements. Stockton itself seems not to have possessed a chapel, but the present parish church, that of Kimbolton parish, was a chapel of Leominster and Eye by the 1290s and the parish existed in 1658 (Hair, 1989, p267). Kimbolton is not recorded before 1186x99, but may mean 'Cynebald's estate' (Coplestone-Crow, 1989).

The church of Leominster is recorded as being founded by Merewalh, *sub-regulus* of the Western Hecani, in 660 after his conversion by the Northumbrian monk Etfred. Local legend records that it was at Stockton that Etfred first settled, but his attempt to build a church there was frustrated because building work done daily at Stockton was miraculously conveyed overnight to Leominster. A 17th century poem recounting this legend is printed in Reeves, 1972 (pp245-249).

'Stoctuna for it that place yielded store: wherein, it don, were found no more.'

It is possible that the area of 30 hides that this legend records as being granted to St Etfred by Merewalh was the original land of the local church and that another block was added later bringing the total to 80 hides (Coplestone-Crow, 1989, p9).

Edward the Confessor dissolved the pre-Norman abbey at Leominster following the scandal arising from seduction of the Abbess, Edgiva, by Earl Swein. Swein was the eldest of the sons of Earl Godwine and the brother-in-Law of King Edward the Confessor¹. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle text C (the Abingdon Chronicle), which tends to place the worst interpretation on the deeds of the house of Godwine, says that '*he ordered the abbess of Leominster to be brought to him and kept her as long as it suited him, and then he let her go home*'.² There are other versions, and it is also recounted that Swein abandoned his earldom because he was not permitted to marry the woman (Stenton, 1971, p429).

The abbess herself seems to be pensioned off with one of the abbey's other manors, Fencote, which she held of the king in 1086 (Thorn and Thorn, 1983). There is an irony in the properties of the abbey being in the hands of the Queen

¹ Swein was the first of Godwine's sons to die, on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem in 1052 in expiation of his sins. Three other sons died at Hastings, Harold, then king, and his younger brothers Gyrf and Leofwine. By then another son, Tosti, was already dead, having been killed at Stamford Bridge fighting against Harold.

² In English Historical Documents, Volume II, 1042-1189, edited by David C Douglas and George W Greenaway.

Edith as a result of misconduct by her brother, but the dissolution of a religious house because of the behaviour of its head seems a somewhat severe reaction.¹

In 1123 Henry I re-founded Reading Abbey, and at this time Leominster too was re-established, this time as a priory and a daughter house to Reading (Reeves, 1972). Manors which had previously been confiscated were returned, and among them was Stockton – *Stocktuna* - (Townsend, 1863, p12).

In 1122/3 we have the record - 'Precept by Henry I to all who have lands in the hundred of Leominster: To attend the hundred-court at the summons of the Abbot of Reading and his ministers as fully as they attended when the hundred was in the King's demesne. If they do not attend the abbot may constrain them by the judgement of the hundred-court.'² Stockton was then held as a grange of Leominster and was the site of a Court Baron (George, 1911).

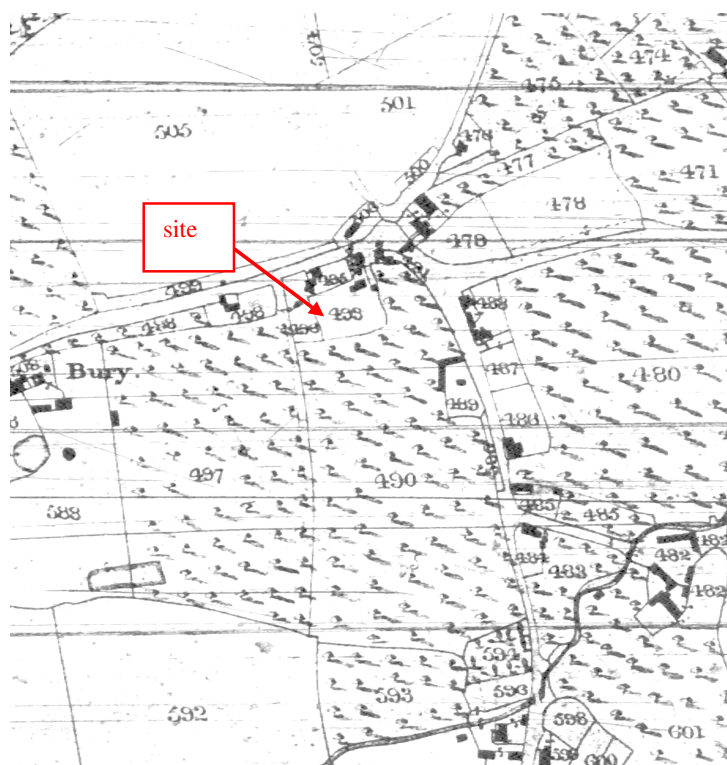


Figure 2: Tithe map of 1844. The Spice House property is marked number 499

The Spice House property is number 499 on the Kimbolton tithe map (1844). The apportionment describes it as a house and garden (unnamed), and records the occupier as Elizabeth Powell. The owner of the property, and the area around, was Lord Rodney Spencer.

Spencer's property included the land to the south – number 490 - which is Spice House Orchard; and the group of buildings on the roadside to the east – number 489 - Spice House fold and buildings. These have a different occupier from the Spice House property.

¹ See Horace Round's section on the Domesday Survey in the Victoria County History (Herefordshire) Vol 1.

² Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum 1066-1154, Volume II, edited by Johnson and Cronne, p282 – (No. 1865) [1123-33] Reading

2.3 Archaeological background

The property is within a known shrunken medieval settlement.¹ Another settlement is sited in the north of the parish at SO 526622 (Hickling, 1970). There are well marked house platforms either side of the valley and northwards from Lower Kimbolton Farm on either side of the road. Ridge and furrow can clearly be seen in a field north of the site.²

3.0 Project aims and objectives

The aims of the project were: -

- to monitor all groundwork undertaken by the contractor.
- to make a record of the extent and depth of all such groundwork.
- to make a record of any archaeological features or deposits exposed.
- to record the presence of archaeological material within the trenches and in the spoil removed during excavation, and to retrieve any potential dating evidence.
- to make a record of all finds and any environmental material recovered.
- to ensure that if any environmental evidence was preserved, that a sufficient sample be retained to allow for further analysis.
- to ensure that the location and of the area excavated was accurately recorded on a suitably scaled plan.
- to record negative evidence and to consider its implications.

4.0 Methodology

4.1 Field methodology

The following methodology was employed: -

- Suitably qualified archaeologists monitored all activity that involved disturbance of the ground surface.
- An assessment of the archaeological significance of finds and a cut feature was made and appropriate action taken.
- Stratigraphic sequences observed were recorded on scaled drawings and the position of all work disturbing the ground, and the archaeological feature, was located on them.
- The presence of artefacts and was recorded with a description of their type, quantity and original location. The spoil was scanned for significant finds but in fact none were observed.

¹ Herefordshire SMR number 7014
² Herefordshire SMR number 11158

- The description of the cut feature, and all photographic records and drawing numbers were recorded on the relevant data capture documents in accordance with Archenfield Archaeology's standard site recording procedures.
- The feature was photographed next to an appropriate scale rule, and a board displaying a unique context number. Each photographic exposure was recorded in the photographic log.
- Staff carrying out the monitoring of the groundwork followed the guidelines laid down in the Archenfield Archaeology Health and Safety Policy
- Archenfield Archaeology conforms to the Institute of Field Archaeologists' Code of Conduct and code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual arrangements in Field Archaeology. All projects are, where applicable, carried out in accordance with IFA Standards and Guidance or Draft Standards and Guidance.

4.2 Processing methodology

- All retained artefacts and ecofacts were subjected to further analysis.
- All data were entered into a Microsoft ©Access relational database.

5.0 Results

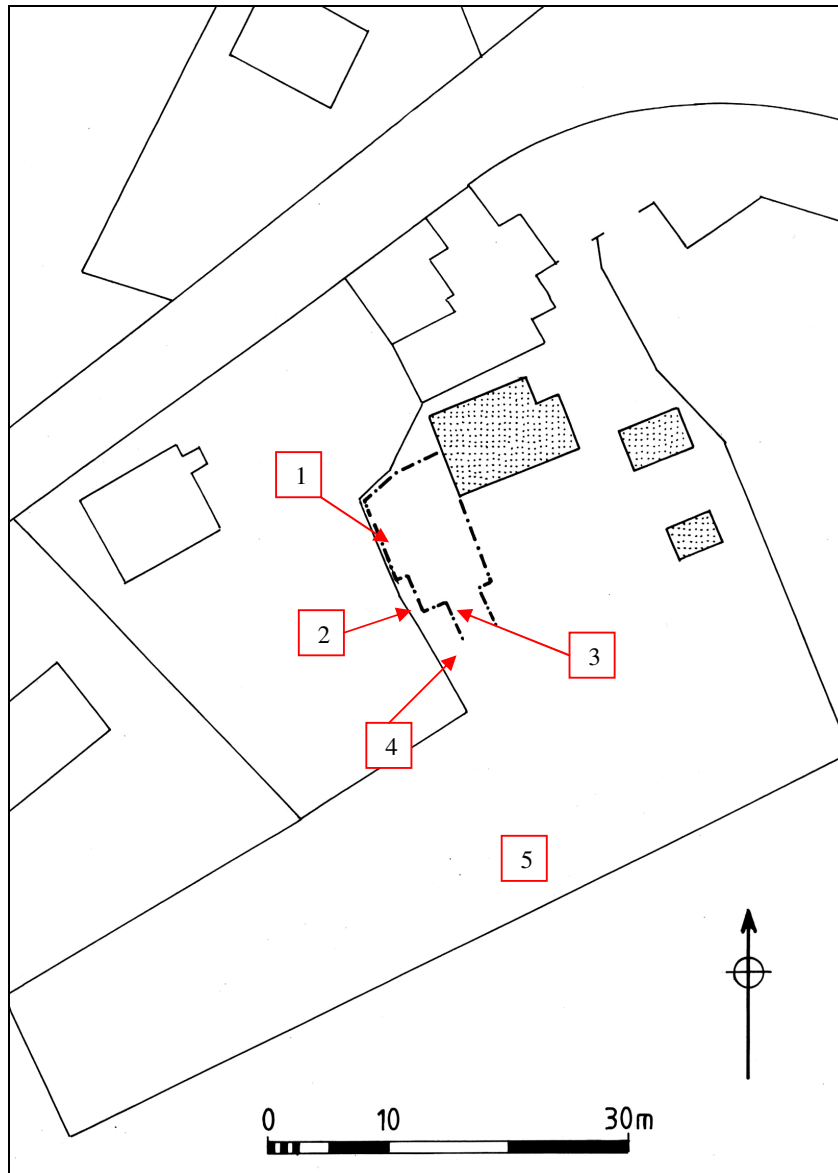


Figure 3: Site plan indicating area of fieldwork

The excavation of the cellar by machine was monitored, but no significant finds or features were observed. An area of approximately 5 x 15 metres, to west of the existing building, was stripped by machine, and the west gable-end wall of the house was taken down. The stratigraphy of the excavated area consisted of a dark, humic 'garden' soil (up to 600mm where the boundary was occupied by a hedge/fence line on a raised bank; on average 200mm) which overlay a mid red-brown clay. A feature within this layer – approximately 300mm wide x 200mm deep running east-west in line with the south-west corner of the house – was interpreted as a cut for the footings of a timber-framed lean-to, which had been demolished before clearance began. This feature was filled with dark, humic soil with frequent inclusions of brick, stone, tile, glass, and late post-medieval pottery.

Levels were taken and are shown on figure 3 above: 1 = 103.44 OD, 2 = 102.94 OD, 3 = 100.29 OD, 4 = 102.62 OD, 5 = 101.40 OD.



Plate 1: West gable-end of the house with wall removed



Plate 2: Cut feature thought to have been made for the footings of a lean-to building

6.0 Conclusions

All ground work was monitored, but only one feature was observed, interpreted as a cut for the footings of a timber-framed lean-to building, near to the house. The fill of this feature yielded the only finds observed during excavation: these included brick, stone, tile, glass, and late post-medieval pottery. As the site lies within the area of a known shrunken medieval settlement, it is surprising no features were uncovered that represented this. It may be that the garden had been landscaped previously, destroying any such features; evidence for medieval settlement may still lie preserved beneath Spice House.

7.0 Archive deposition

The primary project archive, consisting of the excavated material and any original paper records, will be prepared and stored in accordance with the guidelines laid down in the Institute of Field Archaeologists' guidelines for the preparation and storage of archives. The primary archive will be stored with Herefordshire Museum Services.

A copy of the digital archive, stored on CD and consisting of context and artefact data, together with the site plan and selected photographs, will accompany the primary archive.

The client, in consultation with the project manager, will make provision for the deposition of all finds from the excavation with Herefordshire Museum Services. On completion of the fieldwork and the processing, collation, recording and analysis of the finds from the excavation all finds will be handed over to the museum staff, along with the project archive. Arrangements will be made with the museum for the transfer of title.

8.0 Publication and dissemination proposals

Paper copies of this report will be lodged with the Archaeological Adviser to Herefordshire Council, Herefordshire Sites and Monuments Record and Hereford City Library. A short note on the project will be prepared for publication in the Transactions of the Woolhope Naturalists Field Club.

CDs of this report, together with the supporting archival material will be available from Archenfield Archaeology.

Archenfield Archaeology will retain the complete photographic record, including the negatives.

General bibliography

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Cartographic material

- Tithe Commissioners, 1844 Kimbolton Parish Tithe Map

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