

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT:**

**TRIAL TRENCHING: LAND AT APLEY CASTLE, APLEY, TELFORD, SHROPSHIRE, TF1 6DD**

Planning Reference: TWC/2015/0920

NGR: 365229 313232

AAL Site Code: APAC 16

OASIS Reference Number: allenarc1-281700



Report prepared for Kembertons

By  
Allen Archaeology Ltd  
Report Number AAL2017057

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Allenarchaeology



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*Cover image: View across site prior to excavation, looking west*

## Executive Summary

- Allen Archaeology Limited was commissioned by Kembertons to undertake an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching at land at Apley Castle, Apley, Shropshire.
- There is no evidence for prehistoric or Roman activity in the vicinity of the site, which is within an outlying area of Wellington, a settlement founded in the 9<sup>th</sup> century AD. The first historic reference to the settlement is found within a grant by Robert de Eyton to Shrewsbury Abbey in 1170.
- There is evidence for a high status house at Apley in 1327, when Allan de Charlton was granted permission by Edward III to crenelate his dwelling. This house was remodelled in the late 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> century, with wings added to create a symmetrical mansion, and a park was added by 1610.
- In World War 2 Apley Castle was used as a military staging camp, and locals suggest a contemporary brick tunnel exists linking nearby home farm to the neighbouring estate at Dothill.
- Three trenches were excavated, each measuring 20m long by 1.8m wide. The trenches were devoid of archaeological features, exposing an earthwork that had been filled with dumped material in order to remove it from the landscape.
- The results suggest a negligible archaeological potential. The lack of archaeological features across the site suggests that the proposed development will have little impact on archaeological deposits.

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Allen Archaeology Limited (AAL) was commissioned by Kembertons to undertake an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching on land at Apley Castle, Apley, Shropshire. Three trenches were targeted on the results of a previous earth resistance and magnetometer survey (AAL 2016).
- 1.2 The site is archaeologically sensitive, lying in an area of archaeological interest and potential.
- 1.3 All fieldwork and reporting has been undertaken in line with the recommendations of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists '*Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluations*' (ClfA 2014), and the Historic England, 2015, *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The MoRPHE Project Managers' Guide*
- 1.4 Historic England guidelines on archaeological practice were also followed ([www.helm.org/server/show/nav.7740](http://www.helm.org/server/show/nav.7740)).
- 1.5 The documentary and physical archive will be submitted to the Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery that is run by Shropshire Museum Service.

## 2.0 Site Location and Description

- 2.1 Apley Castle is within the village of Wellington, off the A5523 Whitchurch Drive, 1km northeast of the centre of the village and c.5.75km northwest of the traditional core of Telford, in the administrative borough of Telford and Wrekin. The proposed development area is centred on Apley Castle Farm and comprises a sub-rectangular area surrounding the farm complex at NGR 365229 313232 (Figure 1).
- 2.2 The local bedrock geology comprises Bridgnorth Sandstone, overlain by superficial deposits of Glaciofluvial Devensian Sand and Gravel (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>).

## 3.0 Planning Background

- 3.1 A planning application has been submitted to Telford and Wrekin borough council for '*up to 12no residential dwellings with all matters reserved*' (Reference TWC/2015/0920) at Apley House Farm, Apley Castle, Apley, Telford, Shropshire. Prior to determination of the application, the Senior Archaeological Project Officer for the Historic Environment Team at Shropshire County Council (SHET) has advised that a programme of archaeological work should be undertaken. A desk-based assessment has been compiled previously (Kelleher 2015), and this stage of work comprises a geophysical survey (resistivity) followed by evaluation trenching, in order to provide further information concerning the archaeological potential of the site, in response to a brief prepared by Shropshire Council (Hannaford 2015).
- 3.2 The approach adopted is consistent with the recommendations of the current National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), with the particular chapter of relevance being 'Chapter 12: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment' (Department for Communities and Local Government 2012).

## **4.0 Archaeological and Historical Background**

- 4.1 An archaeological desk-based assessment has previously been prepared and submitted for the scheme, a summary of which is presented below (Kelleher 2015).
- 4.2 There is no evidence for prehistoric or Roman activity in the vicinity of the site.
- 4.3 The lost village of Apley, the putative location of which includes the site, is an outlying settlement of Wellington, which was founded in the 9<sup>th</sup> century AD. There is no evidence of Saxon activity at Apley however, with the first historic reference to the settlement being within a grant by Robert de Eyton to Shrewsbury Abbey in 1170.
- 4.4 Evidence for a high status house at Apley is known from 1327, when Allan de Charlton was granted permission by Edward III to crenelate his dwelling. This house was remodelled in the late 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> century, with wings added to create a symmetrical mansion. A park was added by 1610.
- 4.5 In the Second World War, Apley Castle was used as a military staging camp, and locals suggest that a contemporary brick tunnel exists linking nearby Home Farm to the neighbouring estate at Dothill.

## **5.0 Methodology**

- 5.1 A trial trenching strategy was devised and agreed with SHET, for the site from the interpretation of the resistivity survey results. Three archaeological evaluation trenches, each measuring 20m and 1.80m wide, were located on the geophysical survey results.
- 5.2 In each trench, topsoil, subsoil and underlying non-archaeological deposits were removed by mechanical excavator with a toothless ditching bucket in spits no greater than 100mm in thickness. The process was repeated until the first archaeologically significant or natural horizon was exposed. All further excavation would then be undertaken by hand.
- 5.3 The trenches and all spoil were scanned using a metal detector, which was set to not discriminate against iron.

## **6.0 Results**

### ***Trench 1***

- 6.1 The earliest deposit encountered within Trench 1 was the natural geology, a compact light brownish red clayey sand, 104. This was overlain by 103, a buried topsoil layer that was 0.25m thick and consisted of soft very dark brown sandy silt (Figure 3). This was overlain by a modern levelling material, 101, that was 0.80m thick and was sealed by topsoil layer 100, a soft very dark brown sandy silt a maximum of 0.40m thick (Plate 1). Contexts 101 and 103 are layers within an earthwork that was present on the site. The full extent of the earthwork was not revealed because of depth issues.



*Plate 1: Southwest-facing section of Trench 1, scales 1m*

### **Trench 2 and 3**

- 6.2 Trenches 2 and 3 were devoid of archaeological remains and only two layers were identified within each trench. The natural geology, 201 and 301 a compact, light brownish red, clayey sand with very occasional clay patches and very occasional small round stones, was sealed by a layer of topsoil that was 0.20m-0.30m thick and a soft, very dark brown sandy silt 200 and 300 (Plate 2, Figure 4).



*Plate 2: Southeast-facing representative section of Trench 2, scale 1m*



## **7.0 Discussion and Conclusions**

- 7.1 The trial trenching identified only one feature of archaeological interest within the proposed development area; this comprised an earthwork bank aligned roughly north to south within Trench 1. The earthwork had been filled in recently, as demonstrated by the inclusion of modern plastic fragments within the backfill. Unfortunately the full extent of the earthwork was not fully reached due to depth issues. Trenches 2 and 3 were devoid of archaeology.
- 7.2 The proposed development is likely to have no impact on archaeological deposits, beyond a recently filled-in earthwork of unknown date.

## **8.0 Effectiveness of Methodology**

- 8.1 The trial trenching methodology employed was suited to the scale and nature of the proposed development area. The trial trenching indicates that impact on the archaeological resource will be limited.

## **9.0 Acknowledgements**

- 9.1 Allen Archaeology Limited would like to thank Kembertons for this commission.

## **10.0 References**

Allen Archaeology Limited, 2016, *Geophysical survey by magnetometry on land off Falkland Way, Barton upon Humber, North Lincolnshire* Report number AAL 2016137

CifA, 2014 Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluations, Reading: Chartered Institute for Archaeologists

Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*. London, Department for Communities and Local Government

Hannaford, H, 2015, *Land at Apley Home Farm, Apley Castle, Telford. Brief for an Archaeological Evaluation*, Shropshire Council

Historic England, 2015, *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The MoRPHE Project Managers' Guide*

Kelleher, S, *Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment of Land at Apley Home Farm, Telford, Shropshire*, Ironbridge Archaeology

## Appendix 1: Context Summary List

### Trench 1

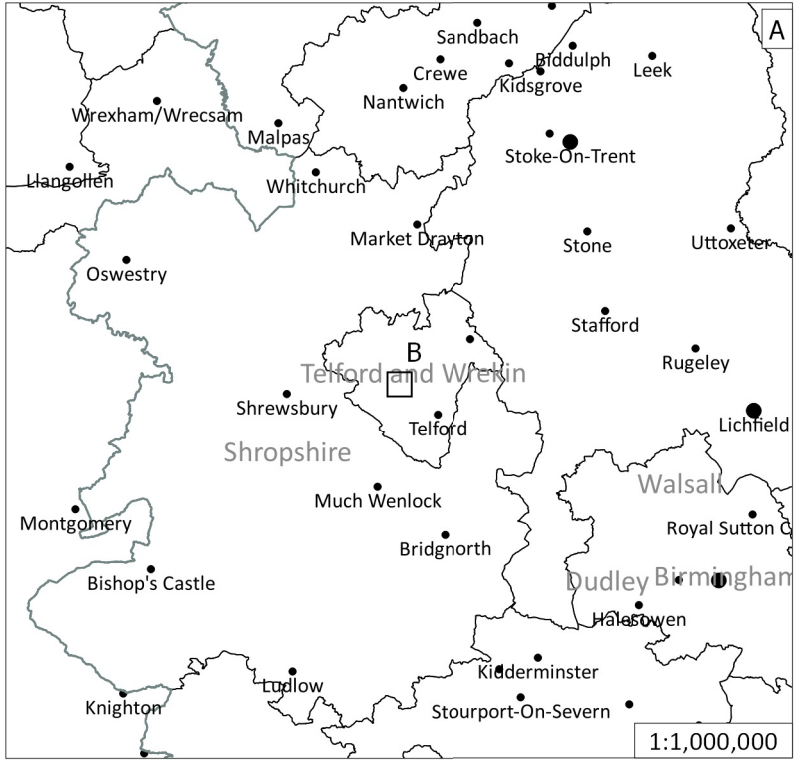
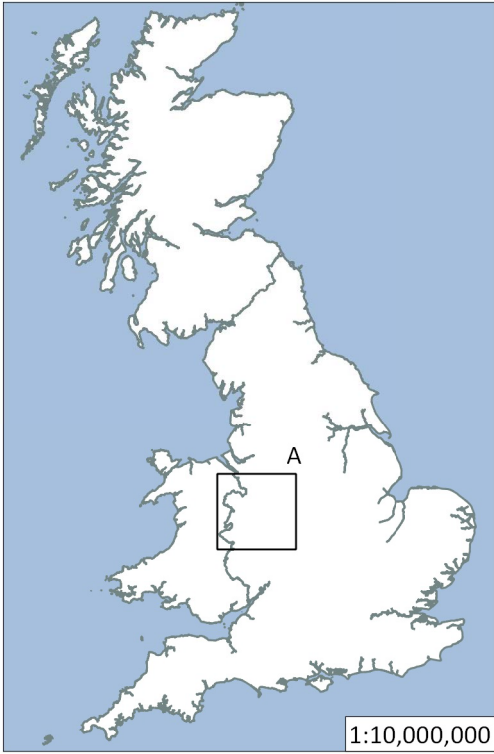
Context	Type	Description	Dimensions	Interpretation
100	Layer	Soft very dark brown sandy silt	0.2–0.4m	Topsoil
101	Layer	Mixed soft mid orange sand and compact mid brownish red clay with frequent small to medium rounded stone and moderate chalk flecks	12.75m wide x 0.8m thick	Modern levelling material
102	Void	-	-	-
103	Layer	Soft very dark brown sandy silt	0.15–0.25m	Buried topsoil
104	Layer	Compact light brownish re clayey sand with very rare clay flecks	>0.1m	Natural geology

### Trench 2

Context	Type	Description	Dimensions	Interpretation
200	Layer	Soft very dark brown sandy silt	0.15–0.2m	Topsoil
201	Layer	Compact light brownish red clayey sand with very occasional clay flecks very occasional small round stones	>0.3m	Natural geology

Context	Type	Description	Dimensions	Interpretation
300	Layer	Soft very dark brown sandy silt	0.3m	Topsoil
301	Layer	Compact light brownish red clayey sand with occasional bands of gravel and occasional small round stones	>0.3m	Natural geology



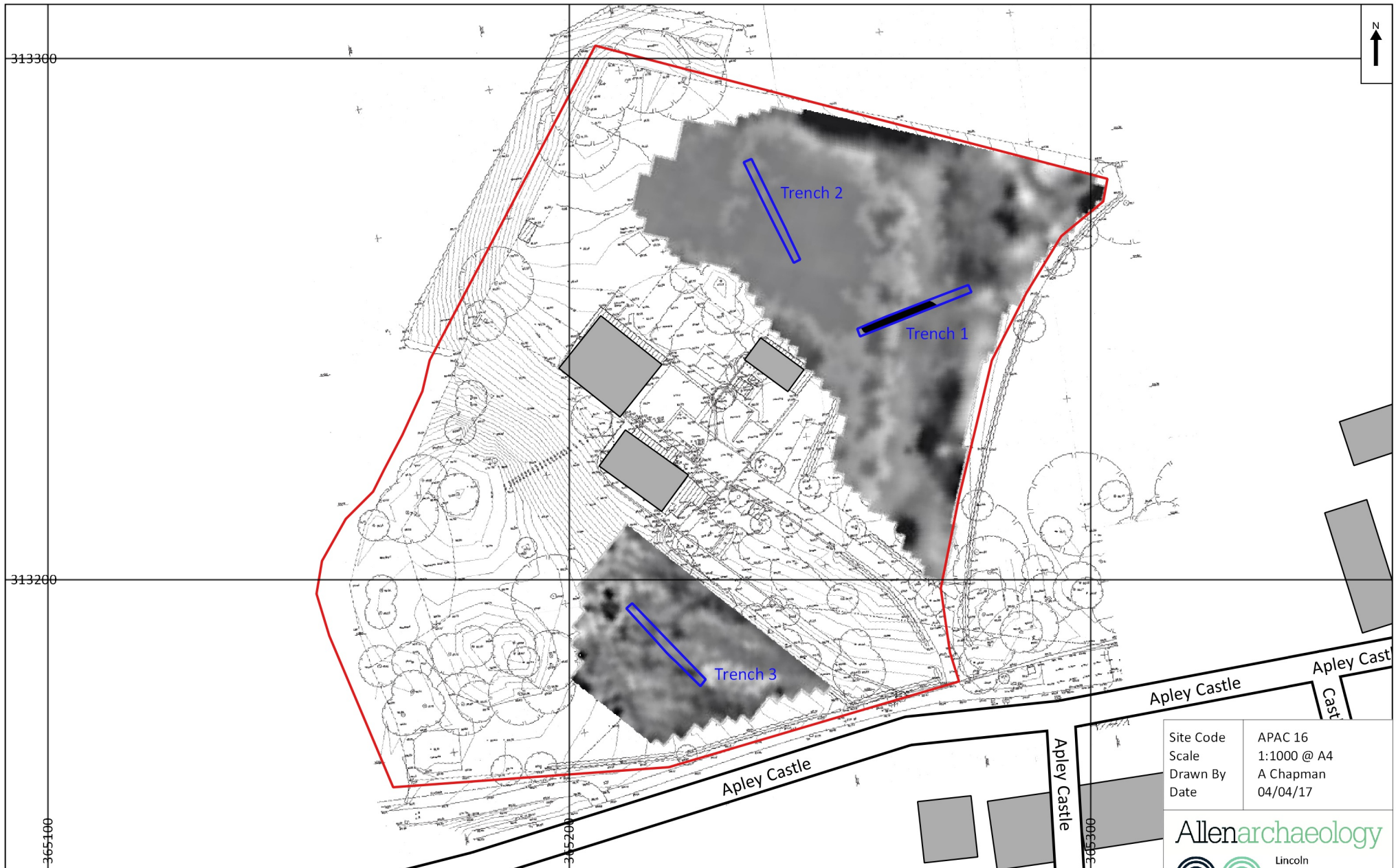


**Figure 1:** Site location outlined in red

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Site Code	APAC 16
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Drawn by	A Chapman
Date	03/04/17

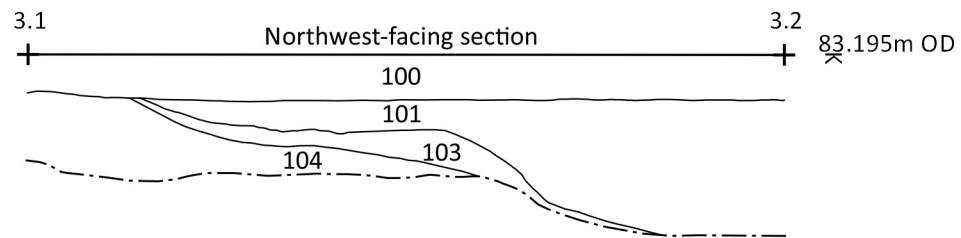
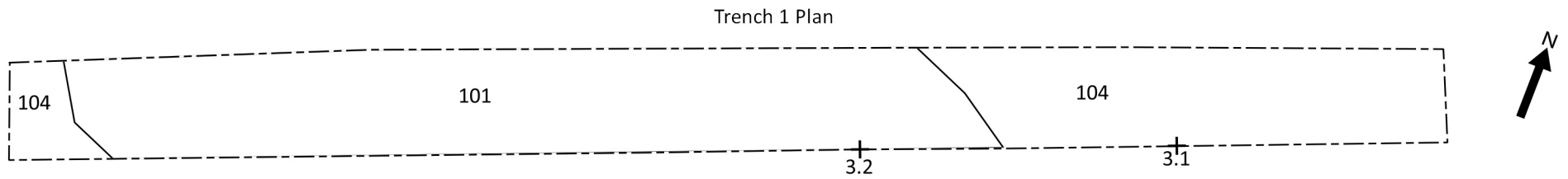
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**Figure 2:** Site boundary outlined in red with the trench locations in blue, and potential archaeological deposits in black

Site Code	APAC 16
Scale	1:1000 @ A4
Drawn By	A Chapman
Date	04/04/17

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Site Code	APAC 16
Scale	1:100 & 1:50 @ A4
Drawn By	A Chapman
Date	04/04/17

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Figure 3: Trench 1 plan and section





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