

# Cotswold Archaeology

## Abbey Old House Winchcombe Gloucestershire Archaeological Evaluation



for Mr David Gray

CA Project: 6310 CA Report: 17574

September 2017



Andover Cirencester Exeter Milton Keynes

Abbey Old House Winchcombe Gloucestershire

## Archaeological Evaluation

CA Project: 6310 CA Report: 17574



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				Issue		

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#### SUMMARY

Project Name:	Abbey Old House		
Location:	Winchcombe, Gloucestershire		
NGR:	402357 228375		
Туре:	Evaluation		
Date:	4-8 September 2017		
Planning References:	17/00188/LBC & 17/00187/FUL		
SMC:	1305465		
Location of Archive:	To be deposited with The Wilson: Cheltenham Art Gallery and		
	Museum		
Site Code:	AOH 17		

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in September 2017 at Abbey Old House, Winchcombe, Gloucestershire. Three test pits were excavated.

One test pit contained a north-west/south-east aligned wall, interpreted as part of a medieval building most probably associated with Winchcombe Abbey. The other two test pits contained flagstone flooring associated with the medieval building. These features were covered by demolition layers, attributed to the destruction of the building.

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In September 2017 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation for Mr David Gray at Abbey Old House, Winchcombe, Gloucestershire (centred at NGR: 402357 228375; Fig. 1). The evaluation was undertaken to accompany planning applications (17/00188/LBC and 17/00187/FUL) made to Tewkesbury Borough Council (TBC) for demolition of the single storey wing and lean-to glass house on the north-east elevation of the house, to be replaced by a new single-storey extension, creating a library/study, wine room and bathroom and some minor internal alterations. The archaeological works were covered by Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) 1305465 and were recommended by Mel Barge, Inspector of Ancient Monuments, Historic England (HE), in conjunction with Charles Parry, Archaeologist, Gloucestershire County Council (GCC), archaeological advisor to TBC.
- 1.2 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a detailed *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) produced by CA (2017) and approved by Mel Barge. The fieldwork also followed *Standard and guidance: Archaeological field evaluation* (CIfA 2014).

#### The site

- 1.3 The proposed development area is less than 0.1ha, and comprises a walled garden and standing shed. The site lies at approximately 95.2m AOD, with ground sloping slightly from east to west.
- 1.4 The underlying bedrock geology of the area is mapped as Charmouth Mudstone Formation of the Jurassic Period, with superficial Alluvium deposits (BGS 2017). Where encountered on site the natural substrate consisted of blue grey alluvium.

#### 2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 An Archaeological Impact Assessment was prepared to accompany the planning application (RH 2016). The report set out the results of an archaeological desk-based assessment for the proposed extension, and included assessment of previous archaeological investigations within and adjacent to the site. It also noted the location of sixteen heritage assets dating to the medieval period, including

Abbey Old House itself, and its status as a Grade II\* listed building, in addition to the Town of Winchcombe being highly redeveloped in the period immediately following the Dissolution of the Monasteries (ibid.).

2.2 The key previous archaeological work is an evaluation by Gloucestershire County Council Archaeology Service (GCCAS) in 2002 (the results of which were set out in the aforementioned Archaeological Impact Assessment). This comprised of a total of 24 trenches excavated around Abbey Old House. The trial trenches provided detailed examination of the below-ground remains around the extant building. Remains of the former medieval buildings of the abbey were found at shallow depths (0.12m and deeper). Of most note, trial trench 13 was excavated within the area of the proposed new extension itself, and between test pits 1 and 3 from this evaluation. Trench 13 recorded a wall at a depth of 0.27m below the present ground level (95.21m AOD), assumed to be of a former medieval building. The whole of the exposed area of wall was burnt and it was interpreted as an oven, kiln or fireplace. No dating evidence was found, but it was considered likely to be of medieval date and part of an ancillary abbey building (GCCAS 2002).

## 3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 The objectives of the evaluation are to provide information about the archaeological resource within the site, including its presence/absence, character, extent, date, integrity, state of preservation and quality, in accordance *Standard and guidance: Archaeological field evaluation* (CIfA 2014). This information will enable Tewkesbury Borough Council to identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset, consider the impact of the proposed development upon it, and to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the development proposal, in line with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012).

## 4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 The fieldwork comprised the excavation of three hand excavated test pits, each measuring 1.5m by 1.5m, in the locations shown on the attached plan (Fig. 2). Due to buried concrete and extant services, the size and location of all three test pits was altered slightly, with variations in alignment and size to enable full coverage of the

proposed development area to occur. The test pits were set out on OS National Grid (NGR) co-ordinates using Leica GPS and surveyed in accordance with CA Technical Manual 4 *Survey Manual*.

- 4.2 All test pits were excavated by hand to the top of the first significant archaeological horizon. Where archaeological deposits were encountered they were excavated by hand in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: *Fieldwork Recording Manual*.
- 4.3 Deposits were assessed for their palaeoenvironmental potential in accordance with CA Technical Manual 2: The Taking and Processing of Environmental and Other Samples from Archaeological Sites and one deposit was sampled and processed. All artefacts recovered were processed in accordance with Technical Manual 3 Treatment of Finds Immediately after Excavation.
- 4.4 The archive and artefacts from the evaluation are currently held by CA at their offices in Kemble. Subject to the agreement of the legal landowner the artefacts will be deposited with The Wilson: Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum, along with the site archive. A summary of information from this project, set out within Appendix D, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

## 5. RESULTS (FIGS 2–5)

5.1 This section provides an overview of the evaluation results; detailed summaries of the recorded contexts, the finds and the Palaeoenvironmental evidence are to be found in Appendices A, B and C respectively. Details of the relative heights of the principal deposits and features expressed as metres Above Ordnance Datum (m AOD) and related to the site arbitrary benchmark heights appear in Appendix D.

## Test Pit 1 (Figs 2 & 3)

5.3 Natural alluvial deposits 110 and 109 were exposed 0.52m below present ground level (bpgl). They were cut by the foundation trench for wall 105, a north-west/southeast aligned limestone wall, interpreted as a wall for an ancillary building located within the grounds of Winchcombe Abbey. The alluvium was also cut by a possible robber cut 107, which lay to the west of wall 105. Following its destruction wall 105, and the possible robber cut 107, were sealed by crushed lime mortar 103 and demolition layer 104. The demolition layer 104 was sealed by clay silt layer 102, most probably a levelling deposit following the reclamation of the land for Old Abbey House. This was cut by modern services and covered by concrete slabs and soil as 101 and 100.

## Test Pit 2 (Figs 2 & 4)

5.4 Flagstone surface 204 was revealed at 0.9m bpgl. It was directly overlain by demolition deposit 203, to a depth of 0.72m bpgl, and in turn by rubble-rich deposit 202, which began at 0.32m bpgl. Pottery dating to the 14th to 16th centuries was recovered from this deposit. Above rubble 202 was garden soil layer 201, which was truncated by services, but contained residual late medieval or early post-medieval pottery and floor tile. This soil was covered by modern garden levelling soil and gravel deposit 200.

## Test Pit 3 (Figs 2 & 5)

5.5 Further flagstone surfacing, 304, comparable to that revealed in test pit 2, was also recorded from 0.9m bpgl. It was sealed at its northern extent by a small deposit of charcoal, 305, from which a fragment of 16th to 17th century window glass and a piece of mortar were recovered. The remains within 305 were rich in grain and rachis fragments of free-threshing wheat (*Triticum turgidum/aestivum* type) and a seed of oat/brome grass (*Avena/Bromus* sp.). The presence of free-threshing wheat is suggestive of a Saxon or later date for the deposit. Charcoal deposit 305 was sealed by a 0.36m thick demolition deposit, 303. Within deposit 303, a copper alloy Jeton dated to the 16th or 17th centuries, as well as a sherd of Midlands Purple pottery, were recovered. Demolition deposit 303 was sealed by rubble rich deposit 302. As in test pit 2, rubble deposit 302 was covered by modern garden soils and concrete layers 301 and 300.

#### 6. THE FINDS

6.1 Artefactual material was hand-recovered from seven deposits (levelling layers, demolition and dump deposits). The recovered material dates to the medieval and post-medieval/modern periods. The pottery has been recorded according to sherd count/weight per fabric. Pottery fabric codes (in parenthesis in the text) are equated to the Gloucester pottery type series (Vince unpublished) where possible.

#### Pottery

## Medieval

6.2 Layer 102 produced an unfeatured bodysherd (6g) in a pale, oxidised-firing, sandy fabric (SGL) with painted decoration in a red/brown underglaze slip. Dating in the 13th or 14th centuries is most likely.

## 6.3 Post-medieval/modern

Pottery from this date range totals 17 sherds (334g). Most common is Malvernian oxidised glazed ware (TF52), of 14th to 16th century date. Other fabrics present are Midlands Purple (MP, late 14th to 18th centuries), Westerwald stoneware (TF94, late 17th to 18th centuries) and unglazed earthenware of 'flowerpot' type (TF63, 19th to 20th centuries).

## Ceramic Building Material (CBM)

6.4 A fragment of medieval floor tile (83g) was recovered from levelling layer 201. A fragment of ceramic building material (5g) from levelling layer 101 is too small for further classification but is probably post-medieval in date.

#### Other finds

- 6.5 Post-medieval/modern glass totalled three fragments (45g). Vessel glass was represented by a bottle stopper in natural (pale green coloured) glass and a fragment from a dark green wine/spirits bottle, both from levelling layer 101. Dump deposit 305 produced a fragment of window glass.
- 6.6 Levelling layer 101 produced a fragment of clay tobacco stem (1g), broadly dateable to the late 16th to late 19th centuries.
- 6.7 A copper alloy Nuremberg jeton (Ra. 1, 1g), of rose and orb type, was recovered from demolition layer 303. It dates to the 16th to 17th centuries. Jetons resemble coins and were used as reckoning counters, together with a lined board, as a means of calculating accounts.
- 6.8 An iron nail (15g) of uncertain date was recorded from levelling layer 101.
- 6.9 Two worked stone items were recovered a perforated fragment of stone roof tile (56g) from levelling layer 101 and a large fragment (6.3kg) from layer 203, which may derive from a tank or cistern.

#### 7. THE BIOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

#### Animal Bone

7.1 Fourteen fragments of animal bone (233g) were recovered from deposits 101, 102, 303 and 305 along with artefacts dating from the post-medieval to modern era. The material was well preserved making it possible to confirm the presence of cattle (*Bos taurus*), sheep/goat (*Ovis aries/Capra hircus*), pig (Sus scrofa sp.) and dog (*Canis familiaris*). Cattle, sheep/goat and pig were identified from small fragments of bone both rich and poor in meat yield, many of which showed clear cut and chop marks, suggesting an origin in butchery waste. Dog was identified from a single fragment of canine tooth.

#### Plant Macrofossils

- 7.2 An environmental sample (two litres of soil) was taken from burnt deposit 305 within test pit 3 to evaluate the preservation of palaeoenvironmental remains in the area and with the intention of recovering environmental evidence of domestic or industrial activity on the site. The burnt deposit 305 overlay flagstone floor 304 and was covered by demolition related rubble layer 303. The sample was processed by standard flotation procedures (CA Technical Manual No. 2).
- 7.3 Preliminary identifications of plant macrofossils are noted in Table 1 in Appendix C, following nomenclature of Stace (1997) for wild plants, and traditional nomenclature, as provided by Zohary *et al* (2012) for cereals. The presence of mollusc shells has also been recorded. Nomenclature is according to Anderson (2005) and habitat preferences according to Kerney (1999) and Davies (2008).
- 7.4 The flot was large for the size of sample with around 35% of rooty material and modern seeds. The charred material comprised varying levels of preservation.
- 7.5 A small charred plant assemblage was recovered from post-medieval deposit 305 (sample 1). These remains included grain and rachis fragments of free-threshing wheat (*Triticum turgidum/aestivum* type) and a seed of oat/brome grass (*Avena/Bromus* sp.). A moderate number of charcoal fragments greater than 2mm were noted within the sample. These included mature and round/twig wood fragments.

- 7.6 The few mollusc shells present in the sample included those of the open country species *Helicella itala*, the intermediate species *Trochulus hispidus* and the shade-loving species *Oxychilus cellarius*.
- 7.7 There were also a few bone fragments within the sample, including those of fish.
- 7.8 This assemblage is likely to be representative of a dump of domestic settlement waste and is compatible with a late medieval or early post-medieval date, as free-threshing wheat became the predominant wheat in Southern Britain from the Saxon period (Greig 1991).

## 8. DISCUSSION

- 8.1 The evaluation has identified features probably associated with medieval Winchcombe Abbey, as well as evidence for their subsequent removal and later landscaping following the dissolution of the Abbey in 1539.
- 8.2 In test pit 1 wall 105 was encountered on a broadly north-west/south-east alignment. The size of the wall suggests that it was part of a substantial structure, although given its alignment it is probable that it formed part of an ancillary building or boundary wall, rather than being part of the main Abbey building. Flagstone surfacing revealed to the east of the wall in test pits 2 and 3 was probably a contemporary surface, although from the limited scope of the evaluation it was unclear whether this was an interior or exterior surface.
- 8.3 If the flagstone surface was related to wall 105, then it is probable that the small section of possible oven or kiln identified in Trench 13 of the previous evaluation of the site was also related to this space, and was possibly constructed on top of the floor (GCC 2002). Charcoal deposit 305, directly overlying floor 304, may have been derived from this feature. The recovery of charred grain and fish bones from the charcoal is perhaps indicative that the structure was part of food preparation, rather than more industrial activities, such as brewing.
- 8.4 There was no evidence for any floor surfaces to the west of wall 105, although a large part of this area was truncated by large vertical sided cut 107. The function of this cut was unclear; however the profile of the cut and the composition of the fill,

being largely redeposited excavated natural, are suggestive of a robber cut, possibly pertaining to an earlier phase of building.

8.5 The Abbey deposits were sealed by layers of demolition deposits 104/202/203/302/303. These deposits contained artefacts dating to the earlier postmedieval period, including window glass, Midlands Purple pottery and a copper alloy Jeton, which suggests that these deposits were directly related to the dissolution of the Abbey. The demolition debris was sealed by a make-up layer for the construction of Abbey Old House and subsequent landscaping deposits.

## 9. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Michael Joyce, assisted by Jess Stevens. The report was written by Michael Joyce. The finds and biological evidence reports were written by Jacky Sommerville and Sarah F. Wyles respectively. The illustrations were prepared by Esther Escudero. The archive has been compiled by Michael Joyce, and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neill. The project was managed for CA by Richard Young.

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#### APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Test Pit No	Context No.	Туре	Fill of	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	D (m)	Spot-date
1	100	Layer		Gravel & bedding layer	Silt and gravel from garden	>1.8	>1.2	0.1	
1	101	Layer		Garden levelling layer	Dark brown grey clay silt	>1.8	>1.2	0.17	C19-C20
1	102	Layer		Clay silt levelling deposit	Mid yellow brown clay silt	>1.8	>0.8	0.22	C13-C14
1	103	Deposit		Crushed Lime Mortar	Mid yellow grey building	0.32	0.22	0.1	
1	104	Layer		Demolition rubble	Rubble from wall 105	>1.8	>1.2	0.16	
1	105	Wall		Wall	NW-SE stonewall abbey building	>1.2	0.55	>0.22	
1	106	Cut		Construction cut	Construction cut for 105	>1.2	>0.6	>0.22	
1	107	Cut		Robber cut	NW-SE robber cut	>1.5	0.65	0.45	
1	108	Fill	107	Fill of robber cut	Stone rich clay backfill of 107	>1.5	0.65	0.45	
1	109	Layer		Redeposited/ disturbed clay	Altered clay from wall build	>1.04	0.25	NFE	
1	110	Layer		Natural substrate	Mid blue grey clay				
2	200	Layer		Gravel & bedding layer	Silt and gravel from garden	>1.5	>1.5	0.12	
2	201	Layer		Garden levelling layer	Dark brown grey clay silt	>1.5	>1.5	0.20	C14-C16
2	202	Layer		Destruction deposit	Rubble rich clay silt	>1.5	>1.5	0.40	C14-C16
2	203	Layer		Destruction deposit	Common rubble clay silt	>1.5	>1.5	0.18	
2	204	Floor		Flagstone flooring	Floor level beneath demo	>0.32	>0.5	-	
3	300	Layer		Gravel & bedding layer	Silt and gravel from garden	>1.5	>1.5	0.12	
3	301	Layer		Garden levelling layer	Dark brown grey clay silt	>1.5	>1.5	0.32	
3	302	Layer		Destruction deposit	Rubble rich clay silt	>1.5	>1.5	0.30	
3	303	Layer		Destruction deposit	Common rubble clay silt	>1.5	>0.6	0.36	LC14-C18
3	304	Floor		Flagstone flooring	Floor level beneath demo	>1.5	>0.6	-	
3	305	Layer		Charcoal deposit	Burnt layer atop floor 304	0.32	0.38	0.08	C16-C17

#### APPENDIX B: THE FINDS

Context	Category	Description	Fabric Code	Count	Weight	Spot-date
101	Post-medieval pottery	Malvernian oxidised glazed ware	TF52	1	4	C19-C20
	Post-medieval pottery	Westerwald stoneware	TF94	1	8	
	Modern pottery	Unglazed earthenware 'flowerpot'	TF63	3	10	
	Post-medieval ceramic building material	Fragment		1	5	
	Post-medieval/modern glass	Bottle, bottle stopper		2	43	
	Clay tobacco pipe	Stem		1	1	
	Worked stone	Roof tile		1	56	
	Iron	Nail		1	15	
102	Medieval pottery	Glazed sandy oxidised fabric	SGL	1	6	C13-C14
201	Post-medieval pottery	Malvernian oxidised glazed ware	TF52	6	88	C14-C16
	Medieval ceramic building material	Floor tile		1	83	
	Stone	Burnt?		1	141	
202	Post-medieval pottery	Malvernian oxidised glazed ware	TF52	5	220	C14-C16
203	Worked stone			1	6300	-
303	Post-medieval pottery	Midlands Purple	MP	1	4	LC14-C18
	Copper alloy	Jeton		1	1	
305	Post-medieval glass	Window		1	2	C16-C17
305 <1>	Mortar			2	80	

#### APPENDIX C: THE PALAEOENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

Tables: Identified animal species by fragment count (NISP) and weight and context.

Context	BOS	O/C	SUS	Canid	LM	Ind	Total	Weight (g)
101	2		1			3	6	65
202	1	2					3	67
303					2		2	80
305	1			1	1		3	21
Total	4	2	1	1	3	3	14	
Weight	89	34	4	1	92	13	233	

BOS = cattle; O/C = sheep/goat; SUS = pig; Canid = dog; LM = cow size mammal; Ind = indeterminate

#### APPENDIX D: LEVELS OF PRINCIPAL DEPOSITS AND STRUCTURES

The levels below show the levels of the current ground level, the top of the *in situ* surviving archaeological deposits and the maximum depth reached for each test pit. Heights are given according to the arbitrary site benchmark value and finished floor level of 99.97m shown on Yiangou Architects drawing 2085.011, metres Above Ordnance Datum (AOD; calculated using Leica GPS and checked with the benchmark located at an Ordnance Survey spot height within site boundary (95.50m AOD)) and relative depths below the existing ground level (bpgl).

		Trench 1	Trench 2	Trench 3
Current ground level	YA arbitrary value	100.05m	100.15m	100.15m
	Metres AOD	95.10m	95.20m	95.20m
	Depth bpgl	0.00m	0.00m	0.00m
Top of medieval deposits	YA arbitrary value	99.53m	99.25m	99.25m
	Metres AOD	94.58m	94.30m	94.30m
	Depth bpgl	(0.52m)	(0.90m)	(0.90m)
Limit of excavation	YA arbitrary value	99.25m	99.25m	99.25m
	Metres AOD	94.30m	94.30m	94.30m
	Depth bpgl	(0.80m)	(0.90m)	(0.90m)

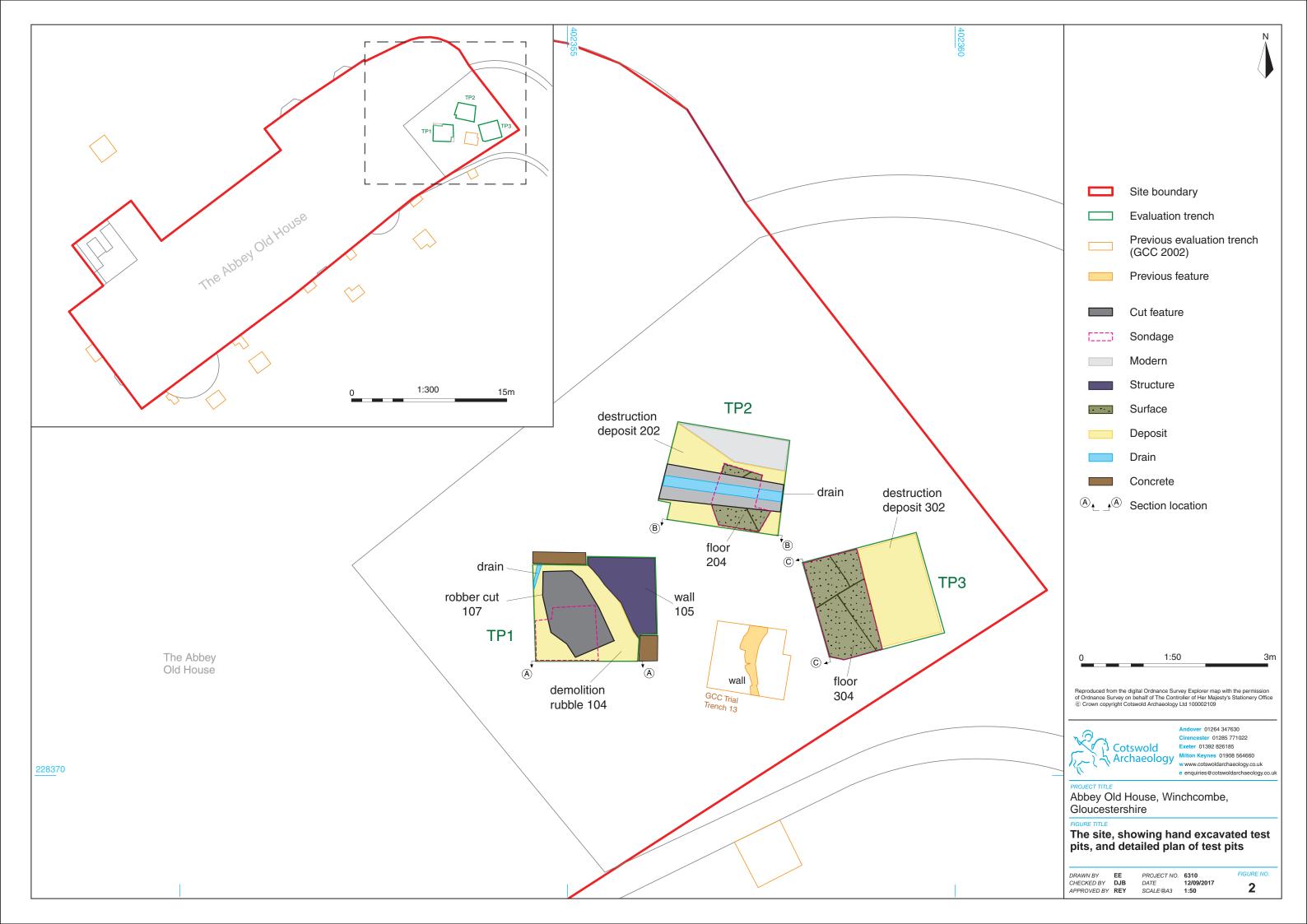
#### APPENDIX E: OASIS REPORT FORM

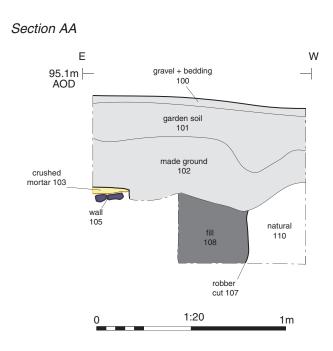
#### PROJECT DETAILS

Project Name	Abbey Old House, Winchcombe, Glouce	estershire				
Short description	Archaeology in September 2017 Winchcombe, Gloucestershire. Three te One test pit contained a north-west interpreted as part of a medieval buildin with Winchcombe Abbey. The other flagstone flooring associated with the features were covered by demolition destruction of the building.	An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in September 2017 at Abbey Old House, Winchcombe, Gloucestershire. Three test pits were excavated. One test pit contained a north-west/south-east aligned wall, interpreted as part of a medieval building most probably associated with Winchcombe Abbey. The other two test pits contained flagstone flooring associated with the medieval building. These features were covered by demolition layers, attributed to the destruction of the building.				
Project dates	4-8 September 2017					
Project type	Archaeological Evaluation					
Previous work		Evaluation of ground surrounding Abbey Old House, Gloucestershire County Council Archaeology Service (GCCAS), 2002				
Future work	Unknown					
PROJECT LOCATION						
Site Location	Abbey Old House, Winchcombe, Glouce	estershire				
Study area (M <sup>2</sup> /ha)	20 m <sup>2</sup>					
Site co-ordinates	SP 0235 2837	SP 0235 2837				
PROJECT CREATORS						
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology					
Project Brief originator	Not applicable					
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology					
Project Manager	Richard Young					
Project Supervisor	Michael Joyce					
MONUMENT TYPE	Abbey Old House, grade II listed	Abbey Old House, grade II listed				
SIGNIFICANT FINDS	None					
PROJECT ARCHIVES	Intended final location of archive	Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone etc)				
Physical	Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum	Ceramics, animal bone, Copper alloy, CBM				
Paper	Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum	Context sheets, registers				
Digital	Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum	Database, digital photos				
BIBLIOGRAPHY	· · · ·	· · · ·				

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2017 Abbey Old House, Winchcombe, Gloucestershire: Archaeological Evaluation. CA typescript report **17574** 



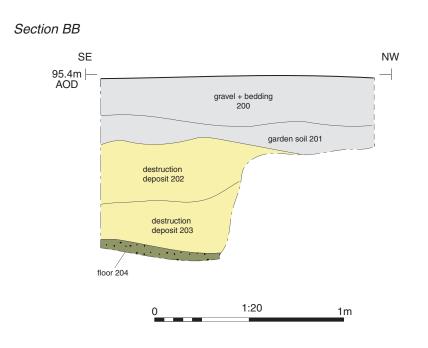






Test Pit 1: north facing section with wall 105 at left (1m scale)

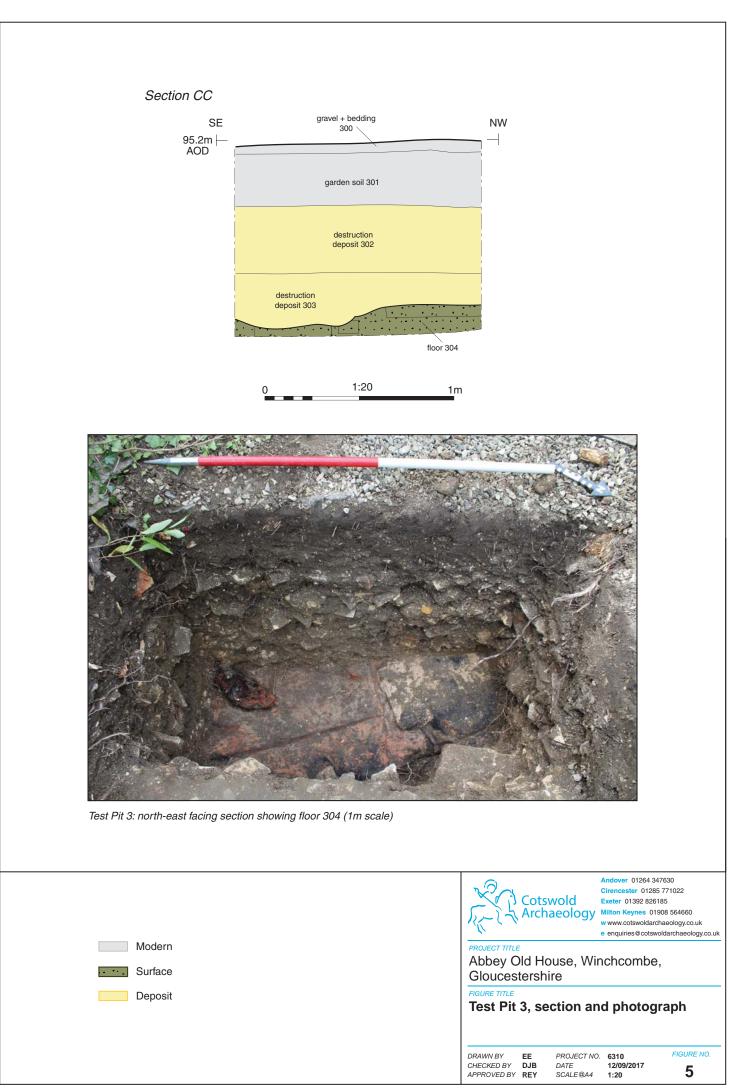
Cut feature	Andover 01264 347630 Cirencester 01265 771022 Exeter 01392 826185 Miton Keynes 01908 564660 w www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk e enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk
Modern	Abbey Old House, Winchcombe, Gloucestershire
Deposit	FIGURE TITLE Test Pit 1, section and photograph
	DRAWN BYEEPROJECT NO.6310FIGURE NO.CHECKED BYDJBDATE12/09/20173APPROVED BYREYSCALE@A41:203





Test Pit 2: north-east facing section (1m scale)

Modern	Andover 01264 347630 Cirencester 01285 771022 Exeter 01392 826185 Mitton Keynes 01908 564660 w www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk e enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk
Surface	Abbey Old House, Winchcombe, Gloucestershire
Deposit	Test Pit 2, section and photograph
	DRAWN BY EE PROJECT NO. 6310 FIGURE NO. CHECKED BY DJB DATE 12/09/2017 4 PPROVED BY REY SCALE@A4 1:20 4





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