

**LAND AT BENTLEY MANOR  
UPPER BENTLEY  
WORCESTERSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

*For*

**HUNTER PAGE PLANNING**

CA PROJECT: 2554  
CA REPORT: 08121


JUNE 2008



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UPPER BENTLEY  
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CA PROJECT: 2554  
CA REPORT: 08121

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signed	
date	11 July 2008
issue	01

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## CONTENTS

SUMMARY .....	2
1. INTRODUCTION .....	3
2. RESULTS (FIGS 2-3) .....	6
3. DISCUSSION.....	7
4. CA PROJECT TEAM .....	8
5. REFERENCES .....	8
APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS .....	9
APPENDIX B: THE FINDS .....	12
APPENDIX C: OASIS REPORT FORM.....	13

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- Fig. 1 Site location plan (1:25,000)
- Fig. 2 Trench location plan (1:1250)
- Fig. 3 Wall foundations and cellars of former manor (1:200)

## SUMMARY

**Project Name:** Land at Bentley Manor  
**Location:** Upper Bentley, Worcestershire  
**NGR:** ST 9995 6536  
**Type:** Evaluation  
**Date:** 9 – 13 June 2008  
**Location of Archive:** To be deposited with Worcester County Museum  
**Site Code:** BEN 08

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in June 2008 at the request of Hunter Page Planning. Three trenches were excavated.

Two trenches were positioned to investigate the site of the former Bentley Manor, a 19th-century stately home that was demolished in 1950. These trenches identified the foundations of the former manor house and associated stable block. The manor house was found to have been vigorously demolished with the whole site being truncated to the top of the natural substrate. Two former cellars were exposed, each filled with rubble derived from the demolition of Bentley Manor. A third trench to the north of the house failed to identify evidence of the former garden features that are known from historical records to have once existed. Four shallow and broadly parallel drainage features, dating from the late 19th century, were identified.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In June 2008 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation for Hunter Page Planning at Bentley Manor, Upper Bentley, Worcestershire (centred on NGR: ST 9995 6536; Fig. 1). The evaluation was undertaken prior to the submission of a planning application to Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) for the redevelopment of the site.
- 1.2 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a brief for archaeological evaluation (WHEAS, 2008) prepared by Mr Mike Glyde, Historic Environment Planning Advisor, Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeological Service, the archaeological advisors to BDC and with a subsequent detailed Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by CA (2008b) and approved by Mike Glyde. The fieldwork also followed the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (2001), *Requirements and Guidelines for Archaeological Project in Worcestershire* (WHEAS 2003) and the *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage 1991). It was monitored by Mike Glyde, including a site visit on 13 June 2008.

### ***The site***

- 1.3 The site consists of a roughly-triangular-shaped plot of land some 500m to the south-east of the village of Upper Bentley (Fig. 1). The site is bounded to the north-east by a minor road called 'Bentley Lane', to the north-west and south by pasture fields and to the south-east by woodland. The site is currently covered with a dense undergrowth of mixed woodland and bushes with some areas of open wild grass and nettles. The site lies between 114m and 119m AOD and is mostly gently undulating with a gradual slope from north to south.
- 1.4 The underlying solid geology of the area is mapped as Mercia Mudstone Group with an overlying drift geology of Glacial Sand and Gravel of the Pleistocene Period (BGS 1989). A natural substrate comprising sandy clay and gravel was exposed during the excavation of Trenches 1 and 1a, typically at a depth of 1m below the present ground surface. A dark yellow-brown variant of the substrate was encountered in Trench 3.

### **Archaeological background**

- 1.5 The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a Desk-Based Assessment (DBA) carried out by Cotswold Archaeology in 2008. The following information is reproduced from the DBA (CA 2008a). The estate of Bentley Manor dates from the early medieval period. The focus of the estate in the pre-modern period is unknown but a rectangular wet moat 1.3km to the north-west of site is potentially the site of the medieval manor house. The earliest building recorded within the current site is Bentley Lodge, shown on the Tithe Map of 1838. The Manor recorded within the current application area was constructed in the 19th century and demolished in 1950.
- 1.6 Three extant buildings survive within the site. These comprise a single-storey building at the centre of the site and two single-storey buildings at the northern end of site. The remains of buildings shown on the 19th- and early 20th-century cartographic sources have also been identified in the northern and eastern area of site. The historic maps also indicate the potential for the remains of a circular building, first shown on a later 19th-century map, to survive in the central area of site.
- 1.7 Historic landscape and park features associated with Bentley Manor and Bentley Lodge survive within the application area. The open space bounded by trees at the north of site is first recorded on a map of 1838 associated with Bentley Lodge. Landscape features associated with Bentley Manor include established woodland in the central and northern areas of site and mature trees in the south. Extant structural features include the eastern entrance wall, the western and southern boundary walls, the iron frame remains of a garden walkway and wooden gate posts. There is potential for the remains of the formal gardens to survive below-ground in the northern part of the site.
- 1.8 An undated banked linear depression and rectangular mound, potentially associated with a dammed pond shown on a map of 1838, have been identified within the south-eastern area of site. The origin of these features is uncertain.
- 1.9 Field name evidence indicates some archaeological potential in the south-eastern area of site where the name *Brick Kiln Close* is recorded on an early 19th-century source.

### **Archaeological objectives**

- 1.10 The objectives of the evaluation are to provide data on the date, character, quality, survival and extent of the archaeological deposits within the application area in order that an informed decision on their importance in a local, regional or national context can be made. This information will clarify whether any remains are of sufficient importance to warrant consideration for preservation *in situ*, or alternatively form the basis of mitigation measures that may seek to limit damage to significant remains.

### **Methodology**

- 1.11 The evaluation comprised the excavation of three trenches; Trench 1 measured 65m by 1.8m; Trench 1a measured 54m by 1.8m; and Trench 3 measured 60m by 1.8m. Trenches 1 and 1a targeted the sites of the former Bentley Lodge and Bentley Manor whilst Trench 3 targeted historic garden features recorded on the First Edition OS mapping (see Fig. 2 for locations).
- 1.12 All trenches were excavated by mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless grading bucket. All machine excavation was undertaken under constant archaeological supervision to the top of the first significant archaeological horizon or the natural substrate, whichever was encountered first. Where archaeological deposits were encountered they were excavated by hand in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: *Fieldwork Recording Manual* (2007).
- 1.13 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* (2003) and no deposits were identified that required sampling. All artefacts recovered were processed in accordance with CA Technical Manual 3: *Treatment of Finds Immediately After Excavation* (1995).
- 1.14 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 Worcester County, along with the site archive. A summary of information from this project, set out within Appendix C, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

## 2. RESULTS (FIGS 2-3)

- 2.1 This section provides an overview of the evaluation results; detailed summaries of the recorded contexts and finds are to be found in Appendices A and B respectively. Details of the relative heights of the remaining foundations of Bentley Manor are expressed as metres Above Ordnance Datum (m AOD) appear in Appendix A.
- 2.2 The evaluation uncovered wall foundations, drains, a stable yard surface and cellars from the former Bentley Manor in Trenches 1 and 1a along with some shallow field drains associated with garden construction dating from the late 19th century in Trench 3. The manor house was found to have been vigorously demolished with the whole site being truncated to the top of the natural substrate.

### ***Trenches 1 and 1a (Fig 3)***

- 2.3 Trenches 1 and 1a formed a cruciform patterned trench across the site of the now demolished Bentley Manor. Trenching exposed natural sandy clay substrate 118 sealed by demolition overburden 100, that in turn was sealed by thin topsoil 117.
- 2.4 A total of fifteen brick wall foundations were exposed cutting natural substrate 118 and sealed by the demolition overburden 100 (see Fig. 2 for locations and extent). All were constructed from the same mass-produced 19th-century red bricks and were bonded by a white lime mortar. Five brick-lined culverts (103, 113, 116, 122 and 123) were also exposed along with two brick-lined cellars (120 and 129) and small brick-lined chamber 127 (see Fig.2). The cellar structures showed evidence of once having vaulted brick ceilings. An area of hard standing, 110, created from a series of moulded bricks was exposed close to the junction of the two trenches. This surface was exposed 0.05m below the current ground level and appeared to continue to the north beyond Trench 1 (see Fig.2). Mortar spread 111, revealed immediately south of the hard standing, showed evidence of once having been covered by large square tiles.

### ***Trench 3 (Fig 2)***

- 2.4 Trenching exposed gravelly clay substrate 303 sealed by subsoil 302 which in turn was overlain by topsoil 301. Four linear features (304, 306, 308 and 310) were exposed at the south-west end of the trench cutting subsoil 302. Two of these



features (304 and 308) were excavated and found to be shallow ditches that were rectangular in profile and filled with brick and stone rubble. A substantial quantity of 18th to 20th-century pottery was recovered from ditch 308.

### ***The Finds Evidence***

- 2.6 Quantities of pottery, ceramic building material, slate roof tile, glass, clay tobacco pipe, ceramic drain pipe and oyster shells were recovered from two ditch fills. A total of 170 sherds of post-medieval and later pottery types weighing 3.8kg were recovered from the fill of ditch 308. This assemblage comprised examples of hand painted china, mocha ware, Nottingham stoneware, English stoneware, transfer printed china and Staffordshire black glazed earthenware. These pottery types are consistent with 19th century or later dating.
- 2.7 Also recovered from the ditch fill were fragments of post-medieval glass, five pieces of unmarked clay tobacco pipe stem, and oyster shell.

## **3. DISCUSSION**

- 3.1 The results of the evaluation have established that the foundations of the former Bentley Manor have survived but that the demolition of the house in the 1950s was far more extensive than previously thought. No internal floor surfaces, wall plaster or fittings survive and the whole footprint of the house appears to have been truncated with ground levels reduced to the top of the underlying substrate. The one exception being stable floor 110 that survived immediately below the current ground surface. The pre-existing cellars had been in-filled with rubble from the demolition process, with the remainder of the demolition material having been utilised to cover and seal the site.
- 3.2 Despite this wholesale demolition, the former walls and footings identified within Trenches 1 and 1a correlate closely with the footprint of the former Manor House as depicted on cartographic records (see Fig. 2). Walls 101 and 102 very probably represent the remains of the west wing to the rear of the former house, with walls 124 to 128 being representative of the former south wing.

- 3.3 Wall 104/107 represents the south-west corner of the former courtyard and stable block. Associated walls 105, 106 and 109 appear to be internal divisions within the stables themselves, whose surface, 110, was also exposed. The moulded nature of the bricks used in surface 110 suggests that it was part of the extensive stables known to have been attached to the house in the 19th century when Bentley Manor was home to the Bentley Harriers Hunt.
- 3.4 No remains of any historic formal garden features were identified within Trench 3. Four shallow linear features revealed within the trench were all located in the south-east corner of the former garden. This plot of land slopes gently to the south-east where these features were found and it is possible that this area had problems with surface drainage prior to the construction of the gardens in the late 19th century. It seems highly likely therefore that these features are former land drains designed to improve drainage in this lower part of the field.

#### **4. CA PROJECT TEAM**

Fieldwork was undertaken by Neil J. Adam, assisted by Heather Griggs and Eloise Metson. The report was written by Neil J. Adam. The illustrations were prepared by Lorna Gray. The archive has been compiled by Neil J. Adam and prepared for deposition by Kathryn Price. The project was managed for CA by Richard Young.

#### **5. REFERENCES**

BGS (British Geological Survey) 1974, Sheet 183

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2008a *Land at Bentley Manor, Upper Bentley, Worcestershire: Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment*

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2008b *Land at Bentley Manor, Upper Bentley, Worcestershire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*

WHEAS (Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeological Service) 2008 *Requirements for Archaeological Field Evaluation at Bentley Manor, Bentley Pauncefoot, Worcestershire*

## APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

### Trenches 1 and 1a

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Height/Depth (m)	Level
100	Deposit	Light brown silty sand with inclusions of rounded gravel, demolition rubble and charcoal fragments. Modern overburden dating from house demolition in 1950.	65+	1.8+	0.45	-
101	Wall	A north/south aligned red brick wall with lime mortar bonding located some 6m from the western end of the trench.	1.8+	0.40	0.44+	116.03
102	Wall	A north/south aligned red brick wall with lime mortar bonding located some 7.5m from the western end of the trench.	1.8+	0.50	0.28+	115.72
103	Drain	A north-west/south east aligned red brick culvert containing an iron pipe.	2+	0.50	0.35	116.16
104	Wall	A red brick wall that runs north/south along Trench 1a before turning a right angle and running eastwards along trench 1. Probably originally formed the outer south-west corner of the former courtyard and stables.	25.3 (n-s) 15.5 (e-w)	0.23	0.20+	115.48
105	Wall	A north/south aligned red brick wall butting the eastern end of wall 104.	0.77+	0.30	0.20+	115.88
106	Wall	A north/south aligned red brick wall butting wall 104.	0.77+	0.30	0.20+	116.39
107	Wall	An east/west aligned red brick wall located some 7m to the east of the junction between trenches 1 and 1a.	2.6	0.50	0.20+	116.41
108	Gutter	A gutter made from pitched dark bluish grey bricks within a rectangular-shaped casing. Butts walls 104 and 107.	0.60+	0.30	0.14	116.40
109	Wall	A north/south aligned red brick wall that divides floor surface 110 into two areas. Probably a partition wall within the stable block area.	1.70+	0.24	0.07+	116.44
110	Floor	Floor surface formed from bluish grey machine made moulded bricks that are each divided into 6 rectangular shapes to form a 'non-slip' surface. Probably the surface of the former stable yard. It extends beyond trench 1 to the north. Butts walls 104 and 109.	3.60+	1.37+	0.20	116.36
111	Deposit	Layer of mortar between walls 104, 108 and 112. Possibly a foundation layer for a tiles floor as some tiles impressions could be seen in its surface.	0.79+	0.32+	0.05+	116.36
112	Wall	An L-shaped wall red brick wall butting wall 107.	1.8 (n-s) 2.5 (e-w)	0.30	0.20+	116.36
113	Drain	A red brick-lined drain. Aligned north/south.	1.5+	0.75	0.20+	115.90
114	Wall	A north/south aligned red brick wall. The former west wall of cellar 120. It was once bonded to a vaulted red brick ceiling but this vaulting has been removed.	1.5+	1.04	2.00	116.02
115	Wall	A north/south aligned red brick wall. The former east wall of cellar 120. This also shows evidence for a brick-built vaulted ceiling that has been removed. The cellar appears to have been filled with demolition rubble, probably when the house was demolished in 1950.	1.5+	1.04	2.00	116.13
116	Drain	Red brick housing for a large iron pipe, possibly a former drain or sewer.	1.5+	0.42	0.40	-
117	Deposit	Mid brown silty sand with occasional rounded	65+	1.8+	0.23	116.29

		pebbles and demolition rubble fragments. Thin topsoil created since the demolition of the house in 1950.				
118	Natural	Brownish red sandy clay with pockets of loose rounded pebbles. Natural deposit. Seals glacial sand deposits.	65+	1.8+	1.00	115.47
119	Deposit	Loose demolition rubble formed from brick, mortar and stone. This material was used to back-fill cellar 120 when the house was demolished in 1950.	4.00	1.8+	2.00	115.40
120	Structure	Former cellar associated with Bentley Manor. Formed by walls 114 and 115 and filled with demolition rubble 119. Its red brick vaulted ceiling had been removed when the house was demolished so that it could be filled with rubble. Removal of rubble exposed a red brick floor at a depth of 2m below current ground level.	4.00	1.8+	2.00	114.10
121	Wall	An east/ west aligned wall bonded to wall 104 and located in the northern part of Trench 1a.	0.95+	0.24	0.10+	115.61
122	Drain	An east/west aligned brick-line culvert located some 3m to the south of the former manor. Capped with a red brick arched roof.	1.5+	0.45	0.10+	115.60
123	Drain	A north-east /south-west aligned brick-line culvert located some 3m to the south of the former manor. Capped with a red brick arched roof (123).	1.5+	0.48	0.24	115.65
124	Wall	A red brick east/west aligned wall. Probably represents southern limit of former manor house.	1.8+	0.37	0.10+	115.63
125	Wall	A red brick east/west aligned wall. Located just over a metre to the north of wall 124 which it runs in parallel with.	1.8+	0.33	0.10+	115.67
126	Wall	A broad red brick wall, aligned east/west. This could represent the southern structural wall of cellar 129.	1.8+	0.69	0.10+	115.71
127	Structure	A square red brick built chamber	1.8+	1.95	0.74m	114.98
128	Wall	An L-shaped red brick wall with the north – south element visible in part of the west facing section of Trench 1a.	4.00 (n-s) 1.8+ (e-w)	0.65	0.70+	116.32
129	Structure	Red brick cellar constructed from walls 126 and the southern wall of soakaway 127.	1.8+	6.5	0.50+	115.68

### Trench 3

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
301	Deposit	Dark greyish brown silty clay with rare rounded gravel and root inclusions. Garden topsoil.	60	1.8	0.23	
302	Deposit	Dark yellowish brown slightly silty clay with occasional rounded stone inclusions. Subsoil.	60	1.8	0.39	
303	Natural	Yellowish brown slightly silty clay with pockets of rounded and sub angular gravel. Natural deposit.	60	1.8	n/k	
304	Cut	Shallow, rectangular-sectioned and south-west / north-east aligned ditch.	2+	1.3	0.16	
305	Deposit	Mid brown silty clay with frequent inclusions of brick, mortar and stone. Fill of ditch 304.	2+	1.3	0.16	
306	Cut	Shallow, rectangular sectioned and south-west / north-east aligned ditch. Runs in parallel with 304 and some 2m further to the north-east. Not excavated.	2+	1.1	n/k	
307	Deposit	Mid brown silty clay with frequent inclusions of rounded stone and brick. Fill of ditch 306, not excavated.	2+	1.1	n/k	
308	Cut	Shallow, rectangular sectioned and south-west / north-east aligned ditch. Runs in parallel with 304 and 306; some 3m further to the north-east	2+	1.12	0.28	

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309	Deposit	Dark brown silty clay with frequent inclusions of rounded stone, brick and pottery from the post-medieval and modern periods.	2+	1.12	0.28	
310	Cut	Shallow, rectangular sectioned and south-west / north-east aligned ditch. Runs in parallel with 308; some 2.2m further to the north-east. Not excavated.	2+	1.1	n/k	
311	Deposit	Mid brown silty clay with frequent rounded gravel and brick inclusions. Fill of ditch 310. Not excavated.	2+	1.1	n/k	

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## APPENDIX B: THE FINDS

### Finds Concordance

Context	Artefact type	Count	Weight (g)	Spot-date
305	Post-medieval ceramic building material: brick	3	562	PMED
	Slate roof tile	1	98	
309	Post-medieval/modern pottery: hand painted china, transfer print china, stoneware, black glazed ware, Nottingham stoneware, mocha ware	170	3794	C19-C20
	Post-medieval/modern glass: bottle, window	25	254	
	Clay tobacco pipe: stem	5	7	
	Ceramic drain pipe	4	316	
	Oyster shell	6	22	

**APPENDIX C: OASIS REPORT FORM**

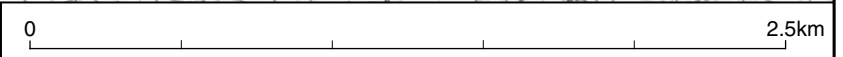
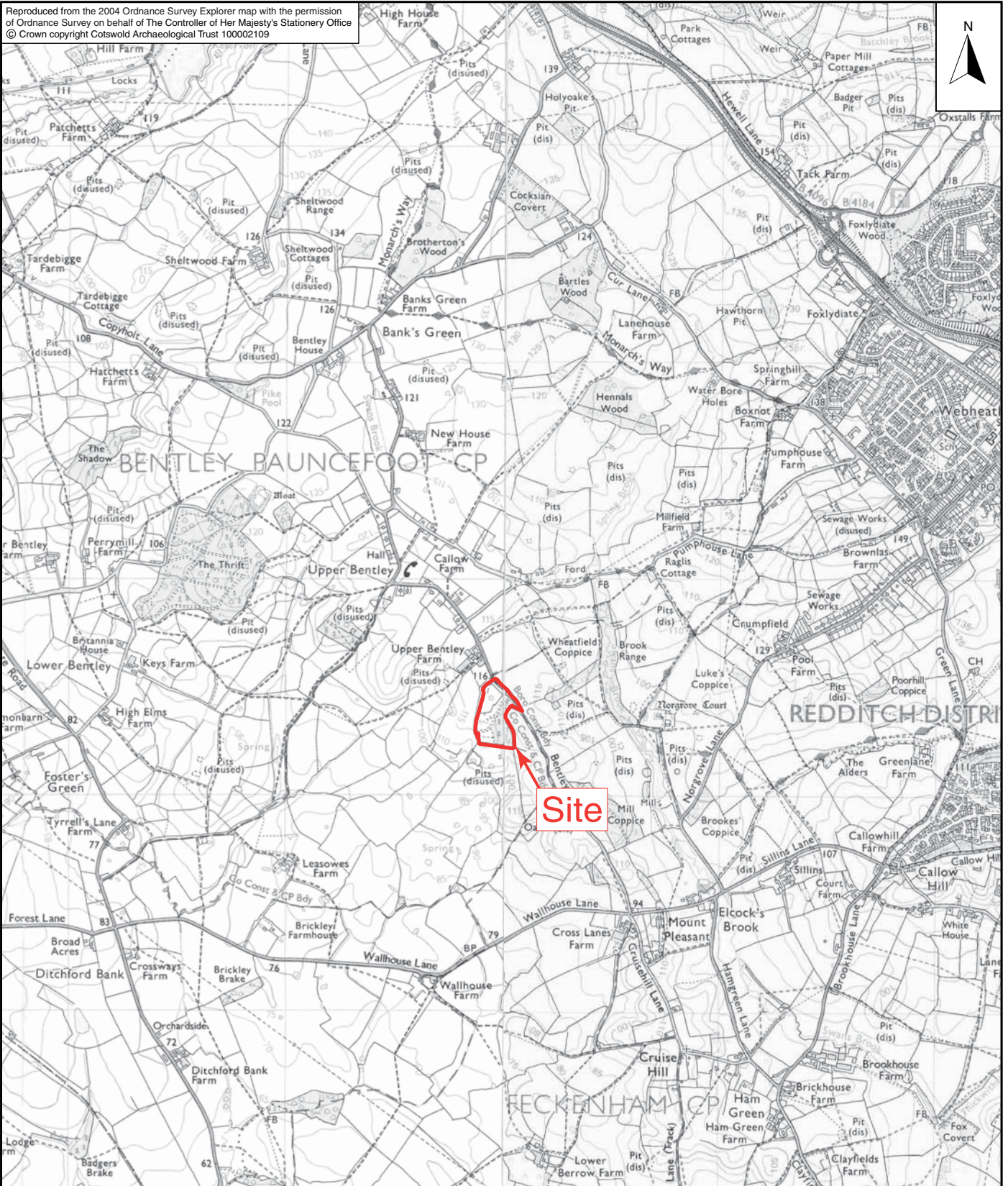
<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>		
Project Name	Land at Bentley Manor, Upper Bentley, Worcestershire	
Short description (250 words maximum)	<p>An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in June 2008 at the request of hunter Page Planning. Three trenches were excavated.</p> <p>Two trenches were positioned to investigate the site of the former Bentley Manor, a 19th- century stately home that was demolished in 1950. These trenches identified the foundations of the former manor house and associated stable block. The manor house was found to have been vigorously demolished with the whole site being truncated to the top of the natural substrate. Two former cellars were exposed, each filled with rubble derived from the demolition of Bentley Manor. A third trench to the north of the house failed to uncover any of the former garden features that are known from historical records to have once existed. Four shallow and broadly parallel drainage features, dating from the late 19th century, were identified however.</p>	
Project dates	9 – 13 June 2008	
Project type (e.g. desk-based, field evaluation etc)	Field Evaluation	
Previous work (reference to organisation or SMR numbers etc)	Desk-Based Assessment: CA, 2008, CA typescript report 08046	
Future work	Unknown	
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>		
Site Location	Bentley Manor, Upper Bentley, Bentley Pouncefoot, Worcestershire	
Study area (M <sup>2</sup> /ha)	324m <sup>2</sup>	
Site co-ordinates (8 Fig Grid Reference)	ST 9995 6536	
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Brief originator	Mr Mike Glyde, WCC	
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Richard Young	
Project Supervisor	Neil J. Adam	
<b>PROJECT ARCHIVES</b>		
	Intended final location of archive:	Content:
Physical	Worcester County Museum	Ceramics
Paper	Worcester County Museum	Context sheets, Trench record sheets, Levels register, Drawing register, field drawings
Digital		Digital photographs x30
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>		

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CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2008 *Land at Bentley Manor, Upper Bentley, Worcestershire: Archaeological Evaluation*. CA typescript report 08121



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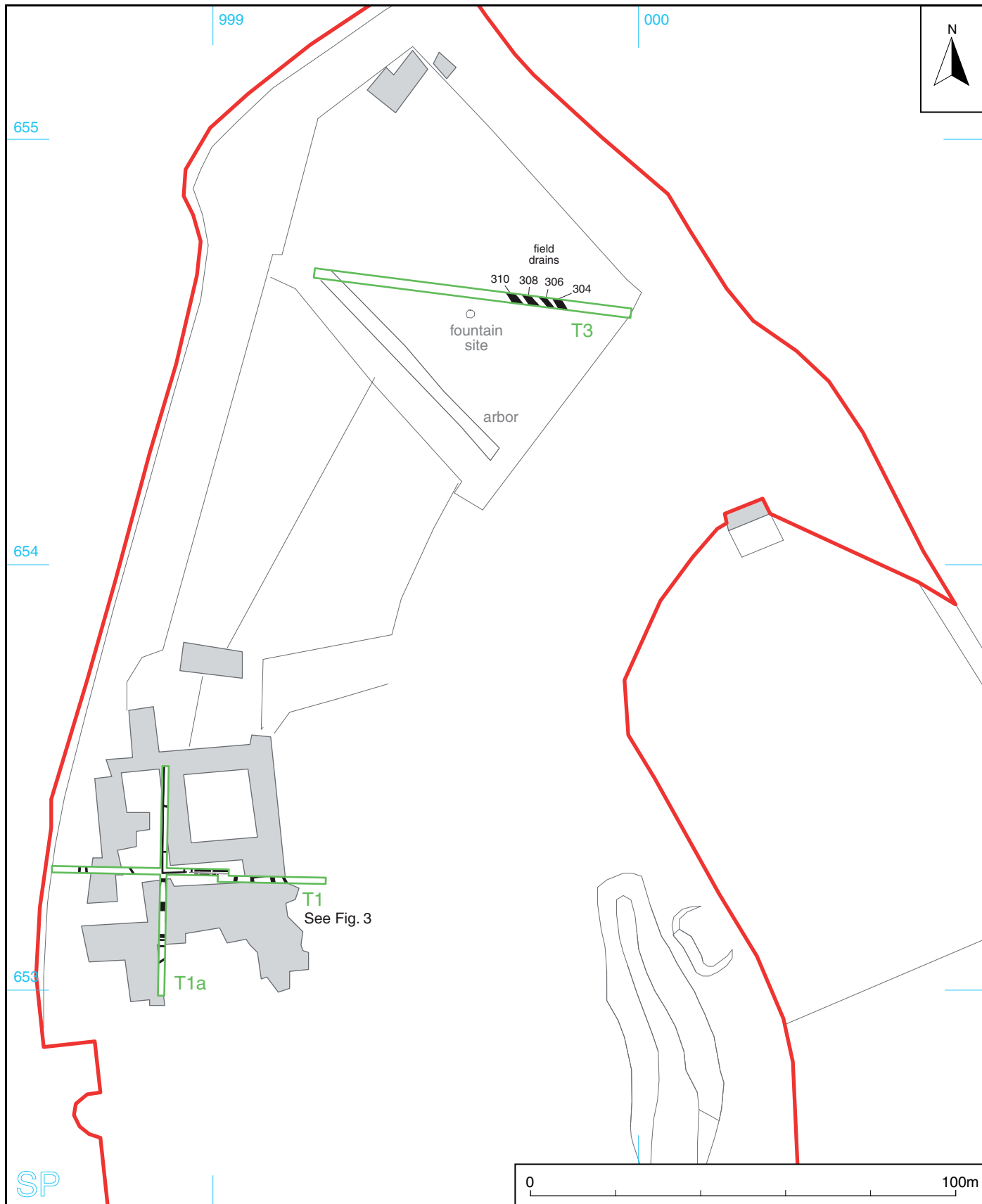


 **COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY**

PROJECT TITLE  
**Land at Bentley Manor  
 Upper Bentley, Worcestershire**

FIGURE TITLE  
**Site location plan**

DRAWN BY	SCALE	PROJECT NO.	FIGURE NO.
LG	1:25,000@A4	2554	<b>1</b>



- site
- evaluation trench showing archaeological feature



**COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY**

PROJECT TITLE

**Land at Bentley Manor  
Upper Brentley, Worcestershire**

FIGURE TITLE

**Trench location plan, showing  
archaeological features**

DRAWN BY

LG

SCALE

1:1250@A4

PROJECT NO.

2554

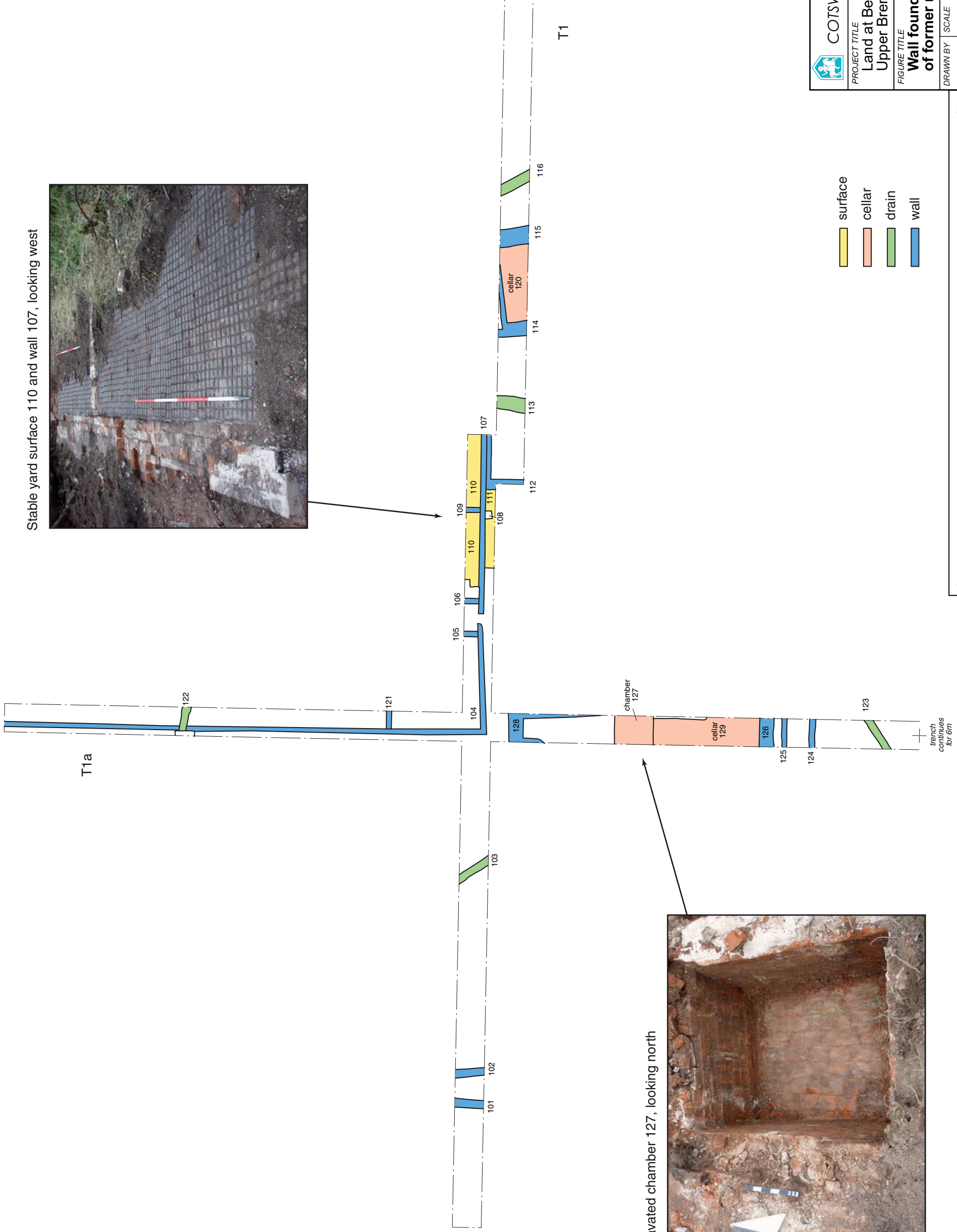
FIGURE NO.

**2**





Stable yard surface 110 and wall 107, looking west



Excavated chamber 127, looking north



PROJECT TITLE Land at Bentley Manor Upper Brentley, Worcestershire	
FIGURE TITLE <b>Wall foundations and cellars of former manor</b>	
DRAWN BY LG	SCALE 1:200@A3
PROJECT NO. 2554	FIGURE NO. <b>3</b>