

Cooper's Hill Farm  
Great Witcombe  
Gloucestershire

*Archaeological Watching Brief*



*for:*  
Jennie Staunton

CA Project: CR0586  
CA Report: Cr0586\_1

September 2021



# Cooper's Hill Farm Great Witcombe Gloucestershire

## *Archaeological Watching Brief*

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Document Control Grid						
Revision	Date	Author	Checked by	Status	Reasons for revision	Approved by
A	29 September 2021	Kinga Werner	Daniel Sausins	First Issue	–	Richard Young

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Fig. 5 Photograph: Modern deposit 103 section, looking north (scale 0.5m)

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## SUMMARY

<b>Project name:</b>	Cooper's Hill Farm
<b>Location:</b>	Great Witcombe, Gloucestershire
<b>NGR:</b>	389872 214234
<b>Type:</b>	Watching brief
<b>Date:</b>	09-12 April 2021
<b>Planning reference:</b>	Tewkesbury Borough Council ref: 20/00637/FUL
<b>Location of Archive:</b>	To be deposited with Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum
<b>Site Code:</b>	CACHFG21

In April 2021, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with construction of an outdoor manège at Cooper's Hill Farm, Great Witcombe, Gloucestershire.

No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed. Two fragments of Roman tegula tile were recovered as residual topsoil finds.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. In April 2021, Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Cooper's Hill Farm, Great Witcombe, Gloucestershire (centred at NGR: 389872 214234; Fig. 1). This watching brief was undertaken for Jennie Staunton.
- 1.2. Tewkesbury Borough Council (TBC) has granted outline planning permission for construction of an outdoor manège (TBC planning ref: 20/00637/FUL). Condition 7 of this planning permission requires the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with an approved Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI).
- 1.3. The scope of this watching brief was defined by Toby Catchpole, Heritage Team Leader, Gloucester County Council (GCC), the archaeological advisor to TBC. The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a WSI prepared by CA (2020) and approved by Toby Catchpole.
- 1.4. The watching brief was also in line with *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014; updated October 2020), *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) PPN 3: Archaeological Excavation* (Historic England 2015) and *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The MoRPHE Project Managers' Guide* (Historic England 2015).

### The site

- 1.5. The development site is approximately 0.1ha in extent. It lies approximately 1.3 km west-south-west of the village of Great Witcombe, on the east-facing slope of Cooper's Hill, up-slope of and adjacent to the Scheduled Monument of Great Witcombe Roman Villa. It is situated on a flat terrace at approximately 145m AOD.
- 1.6. The underlying bedrock geology of the site is mapped as Lias Group and Inferior Oolite Group (undifferentiated) Limestone, Argillaceous Rocks and Subordinate Sandstone (Interbedded), which formed in the Jurassic and Triassic Periods (BGS 2021).

## 2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1. Within the vicinity of Cooper's Hill Farm, approximately 340m to the west, is the Scheduled Monument of High Brotheridge camp (SAM No. Glos192). The camp

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comprises a series of earthworks representing an Iron Age hill fort across Cooper's Hill (Glos. SMR 422) and High Botheridge (Glos. SMR 420/421). Quarrying and landslips have destroyed much of the defensive earthworks along Cooper's Hill.

- 2.2. To the immediate east of the site (20m) is Great Witcombe Roman villa (NMR Ref: 1014826). Iron Age activity has also been recorded on the villa site at Great Witcombe, in the form of a single ditch, suggesting a possible settlement on the shoulder of the ridge in the area of Cooper's Hill Farm. The villa was occupied from the 3rd to 5th century AD, undergoing different phases of occupation and alterations during this time. The main building of the villa comprises two large wings connected by a corridor and a courtyard. The south-western wing comprised a bath suit with hot and cold plunge baths. Mosaics depicting fish and geometric patterns survived within this wing however these are very fragmentary. The north-eastern wing comprised a kitchen with associated oven and an adjacent latrine. The connecting corridor was a tessellated gallery with a later octagonal room along its north-western side. Parts of the structure were substantial which may suggest an upper floor over some of the rooms. The villa lay within an extensive and complex Roman landscape which has produced evidence for ancillary buildings, as well as tile manufacture or minor industrial activity, and a possible temple or shrine.
- 2.3. In March 2001 Cotswold Archaeology (then Cotswold Archaeological Trust) undertook an archaeological watching brief at Cooper's Hill Farm during groundworks associated with the construction of new stable block. No archaeological deposits were encountered during the watching brief. However, the watching brief encountered a considerable amount of dumped material had been imported to create a level terrace against the hill slope for the construction of a previous barn on the site (CAT 2001).

### 3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1. The general objectives of the watching brief were:
- to monitor the development groundworks, and to identify, investigate and record any significant buried archaeological deposits/features thus revealed;
  - at the conclusion of the project, to produce an integrated project archive and a report setting out the watching brief results and the archaeological conclusions that can be drawn from the recorded data.

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- at the conclusion of the project, to compile a stable, ordered, accessible project archive (see Section 6).

3.2. A specific objective of the watching brief was to investigate and record any remains associated with the adjacent Roman villa should they be exposed during groundworks.

## 4. METHODOLOGY

4.1. The watching brief comprised the observation by a competent archaeologist of all intrusive groundworks associated with the proposed development. These works comprised the machine excavation of material to form a level area on which to construct the manège.

4.2. Records were maintained in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 1: Fieldwork Recording Manual*.

4.3. Artefacts were processed in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 3: Treatment of Finds Immediately after Excavation*.

4.4. CA will make arrangements with Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum for the deposition of the project archive and, subject to agreement with the legal landowner(s), the artefact collection. A digital archive will also be prepared and deposited with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS). The archives (museum and digital) will be prepared and deposited in accordance with *Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives* (ClfA 2014; updated October 2020).

4.5. A summary of information from this project, as set out in Appendix C will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

## 5. RESULTS

5.1. This section provides an overview of the watching brief results. Detailed summaries of the recorded contexts are given in Appendix A. Details of the artefactual material recovered from the site are given in Section 6 and Appendix B.

5.2. Natural geological substrate 102, comprised greyish yellow silty clay, was revealed in the north-western half of the site at an average depth of 0.15m below present ground level (bpgl). This was overlain by silty clay subsoil 101, averaging 0.1m in



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depth. The natural was not exposed in the south-eastern half of the site as the groundworks did not penetrate the subsoil. In the north-eastern corner of the site, subsoil 101 was overlain by made ground 103 associated with a modern terrace. The made ground and subsoil were sealed by approximately 0.05m of silty clay topsoil 100.

- 5.3. No features or deposits pre-dating the modern period were identified.

## 6. THE FINDS

- 6.1. Artefactual material of Roman date was hand-recovered from one topsoil deposit and has been quantified in Appendix B.

### *Ceramic building material*

- 6.2. Two fragments of tegula (flanged roofing tile), of broad Roman date and in a relatively unabraded condition, were retrieved from topsoil deposit 100.

## 7. DISCUSSION

- 7.1. Despite the archaeological potential of the application area (see *Archaeological background*, above), the watching brief identified no archaeological remains within the area of observed groundworks.
- 7.2. The absence of archaeological deposits may indicate that archaeological remains associated with Great Witcombe Roman villa either do not extend into the site or were not exposed by the development groundworks. Two fragments of Roman tegula tile were recovered as residual finds from the topsoil and are assumed to originate from the Great Witcombe villa site.
- 7.3. Excavation identified a large deposit of dumped material that created a level terrace against the hill slope. This made ground was also identified during the previous watching brief (CAT 2001) and was interpreted at the time as a levelling layer for a barn that has since been demolished.

## 8. CA PROJECT TEAM

- 8.1. Fieldwork was undertaken by Kinga Werner and Sian Reynish. This report was written by Kinga Werner. The finds report was written by Jacky Sommerville. The report illustrations were prepared by Krissy Moore. The project archive has been

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compiled by Kinga Werner and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neil. The project was managed for CA by Richard Young.

## 9. REFERENCES

British Geological Survey 2020 *Geology of Britain Viewer*

<https://www.bgs.ac.uk/map-viewers/geology-of-britain-viewer/> Accessed 13 April 2021

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2020 *Cooper's Hill Farm, Great Witcombe, Gloucestershire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*

CAT (Cotswold Archaeological Trust) 2001 *Coopers Hill farm, Great Witcombe, Gloucestershire: Archaeological Watching Brief CA Report No. 01058*

## APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Area	Context No.	Type	Fill of	Interpretation	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth/thickness (m)	Spot-date
1	100	Layer		topsoil	Dark blackish brown silty clay with limestone fragments			0.05	
1	101	Layer		subsoil	Mid brown silty clay occasionally contains demolition material			0.1	
1	102	Layer		natural	Mid greyish yellow silty clay with dark patches of rooting and fragments of limestone			>0.15	
1	103	deposit		Made ground	Dumped material mixed stone slabs, mortar and bricks	> 10	> 5	>0.3	

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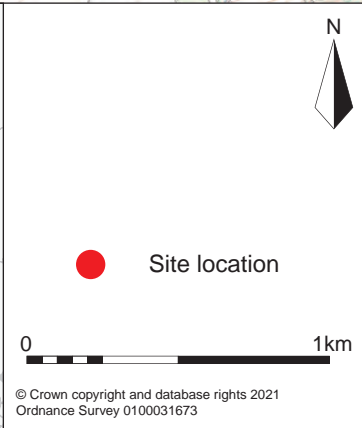
## APPENDIX B: THE FINDS

Table 1: Finds concordance

<b>Context</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Weight (g)</b>	<b>Spot-date</b>
100	Roman ceramic building material	Tegula	2	1118	RB

## APPENDIX C: OASIS REPORT FORM

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>		
Project name	Cooper's Hill Farm,	
Short description	In April 2021, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with construction of an outdoor manège at Cooper's Hill Farm, Great Witcombe, Gloucestershire.  No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed. Two fragments of Roman tegula tile were recovered as residual topsoil finds.	
Project dates	09 – 12 April 2021	
Project type	Watching brief	
Previous work	Watching brief (CA,2001)	
Future work	Unknown	
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>		
Site location	Cooper's Hill Farm, Great Witcombe, Gloucestershire	
Study area (m <sup>2</sup> /ha)	0.1ha	
Site co-ordinates	389872 214234	
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project brief originator	Tewkesbury Borough Council	
Project design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Richard Young	
Project Supervisor	Kinga Werner and Sian Reynish	
<b>MONUMENT TYPE</b>	None	
<b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS</b>	None	
<b>PROJECT ARCHIVES</b>		
	<b>Intended final location of archive (museum/Accession no.)</b>	<b>Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone etc)</b>
Physical	Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum	Roof tile
Paper	Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum	Trench sheets
Digital	Archaeology Data Service	Database, digital photos etc
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>		
Cotswold Archaeology 2001 <i>Coopers Hill farm, Great Witcombe, Gloucestershire: Archaeological Watching Brief</i> CA Report No. <b>01058</b>		



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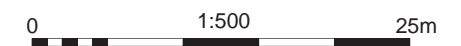
**PROJECT TITLE**  
 Cooper's Hill Farm, Great Witcombe,  
 Gloucestershire

**FIGURE TITLE**  
 Site location plan

<b>DRAWN BY</b>	<b>KM</b>	<b>PROJECT NO.</b>	<b>CR0586</b>	<b>FIGURE NO.</b>
<b>CHECKED BY</b>	<b>RP</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>09/06/2021</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>APPROVED BY</b>	<b>RY</b>	<b>SCALE@A4</b>	<b>1:25,000</b>	



- Trench - limit of excavation top
- Trench - limit of excavation bottom
- Deposit
- Field drain



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**PROJECT TITLE**  
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**FIGURE TITLE**  
 Site plan

<small>DRAWN BY</small> KM	<small>PROJECT NO.</small> CR0586	<small>FIGURE NO.</small>
<small>CHECKED BY</small> RP	<small>DATE</small> 17/09/21	<b>2</b>
<small>APPROVED BY</small> RY	<small>SCALE@A3</small> 1:500	



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Post-excavation view of the area, looking south-west



4

Post-excavation view of the area, looking south-east



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PROJECT TITLE

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FIGURE TITLE

Photographs of area

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FIGURE NO.

3 & 4





Modern deposit 103 section, looking north (scale 0.5m)



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FIGURE TITLE

Photograph

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FIGURE NO.

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