

**Archaeological watching brief
at Adsett Cottage
Main Street
Beckford
GL20 7AD**

Martin Cook BA MCIfA

4th April 2019

WSM 71002

Oasis ref martinco1-345221

Sundowner
Circus Field Basin
Stocklake
Aylesbury
HP20 1 AP

07850 918755

Archaeological watching brief at Adsett Cottage, Main Street, Beckford, GL20 7AD

Introduction

An archaeological watching brief was carried out at Adsett Cottage, Main Street, Beckford, GL20 7AD (SO 97612 35725; Fig 1) at the request of Roger Zygmunt of Building Commercial Ltd on behalf of his client Mr David Good. This work was undertaken in compliance with a written scheme of investigation provided by Martin Cook BA MCIfA, (planning reference 18/01861/FUL). The written scheme of investigation was approved by Aidan Smyth, Archaeology and Planning Advisor, Wychavon District Council (activity reference WSM 71002) The programme of archaeological work was to comprise documentary research, a watching brief and a report.

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was carried out at Adsett Cottage, Main Street, Beckford, GL20 7AD. The only features encountered were horticultural features associated with a walled kitchen garden, the *terminus ante quem* of which is 1872. A brick from the wall of the garden was made at Dumbleton Hall in Gloucestershire, at the Hall's own brickworks on the estate. It dates from between 1830 and 1872. The finds were all unstratified and dated from the Roman to the modern periods.

A summary will be published in West Midlands Archaeology.

The documentary material

Geology and topography

The search area is in a low lying area crossed by the Carrant Brook, on river terrace gravels and alluvium overlying Charmouth Mudstone. The soils over the gravels are free-draining, lime rich loamy soils. Beckford is a nucleated settlement surrounded by arable fields and ponds, in former gravel extraction areas. Field amalgamation and reorganisation has removed earlier landscape character and has given rise to large fields with straight boundaries. The Carrant Brook was part of a National Mapping Programme project in 2009, where crop marks were mapped to provide a landscape overview for nationally significant later prehistoric and Roman lowland settlement at Beckford.

Historic plans

A historic plan in the possession of the client (Fig 2.3) shows a number of lots for sale in 1872. It shows that at this time the area of the current development was a walled kitchen garden and was associated with 'The Towers', a grand house at the top of a crescentic drive, opening off of the main road through Beckford. This is marked as 'Beckford Towers' on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map (see below) and is referred to as 'Beckford Grange' (WSM 23287) in the Worcestershire Historic Environment Record (see below). It is clear that, at this time, the current development site was part of the estate of this building.

Historic mapping

The earliest available mapping is the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of 1884 (Fig 2.1). This shows the area of the development as a walled garden with two principal planting areas. By the time of the Ordnance Survey map of 1902 (Fig 2.1) the eastern wall appears to have been removed. The Ordnance Survey map of 1926 shows little difference.

The Worcestershire Historic Environment Record

There are a number of buildings or monuments possibly associated with or nearby the site. These are:

Possibly associated with the site

Buildings

WSM 00319

Beckford Hall

Priory (12th century AD to 15th century AD)

Manor House (17th century AD to 21st century AD)

Dwelling (20th century AD to 21st century)

WSM 03617

Court House

Dwelling (Post Medieval to 18th century AD)

Includes a single storey 19th century kitchen wing to the north side elevation

WSM 03618

Vicarage (Dalton House)

(18th century AD)

WSM 23287

Beckford Grange

(Post Medieval - 1540 AD to 1900 AD)

WSM 71350

Former workshops/farm buildings, Main Road

Farm building? (19th century AD to 21st century AD)

Workshop? (19th century AD to 21st century AD)

Commentary on sites associated with the development site

The sales particulars describe a 'charming' freehold estate of about ten acres' which included a mansion called 'The Towers', which had 'lawn and flower gardens', kitchen gardens, cattle sheds and piggeries, stabling and loose boxes for five horses, two coach houses, two saddle rooms, corn and hay rooms with coachman's apartments.

Nearby the site

Buildings

WSM 23994

Rose Villa

(18th century AD to 21st century AD)

WSM 46579

The Old Vicarage, Main Street

(18th century AD to 20th century AD)

WSM 66725

Lychgate to St John the Baptist's Church

(20th century AD to 21st century AD)

WSM 67734

Sundial Cottage

School (19th century AD to 20th century AD)

HOUSE (20th century AD to 21st century AD)

WSM 67735

1 and 2 School Cottages

House (19th century AD to 21st century AD)

Estate cottages

WSM 00321

St John the Baptist's Church

Minster (Roman 5th century AD to Pre-Conquest)

Minster (Post Roman - 803 AD)

Alien priory (Medieval - 1066 AD to 1539 AD)

Church (Medieval - 1066 AD to 1539 AD)

Monuments

WSM 07107

House of Augustinian Canons, Beckford Priory

Abbey (12th century AD to 16th century AD)
Religious House (12th century AD to 16th century AD)

WSM 07657
Possible medieval fishpond, Beckford Hall
(Medieval - 1066 AD to 1539 AD)

WSM 29777
Area of Augustinian Priory founded 1128

WSM 66956
Land Adjacent to Dalton House, Main Street,
Burial (Medieval - 1066 AD to 1539 AD)
Building (18th century AD - 1701 AD to 1800 AD)

The fieldwork

General

Fieldwork took place on the 25th and 26th February 2019. It comprised monitoring of the excavations. A full description of the contexts is given in Appendix 1. Contexts are described in summary form below.

Description

The general stratigraphic sequence is demonstrated by Section 1 (Fig 3). A mid grey brown sandy loam (context 001; topsoil) overlay a light grey brown sandy clay (context 002; subsoil) which in turn overlay a yellow sand and gravel (context 003; natural subsoil). The excavation in this part of the footing was taken down to a depth of about 1.5m. This demonstrated that the natural subsoil was sand and that shuttering would be needed to support the trenches.

At various places around the footings, features of an unusual character were recorded (Sections 2, 3 and 4). Their 'fills' were uniform, being a dark grey brown very humic loam (contexts 004, 006 and 008). These lay within contexts that could not truly be described as 'cuts' and have been termed 'edges' in Appendix 1 (contexts 005, 007 and 009). These edges were sometimes undercut and had sharp, well-defined boundaries only in their upper parts. A particularly good example is shown by Section 4 but all these features displayed this characteristic to a greater or lesser extent.

The finds: Appendix 2; Fig 8

Roman

A small, abraded sherd of sandy greyware (fabric 14) was the earliest material from the site. It could be identified as coming from the flange of a bowl of 2nd century date.

Post-medieval

The post-medieval assemblage consisted of a single sherd of post-medieval buff ware (fabric 91). The sherd was from a large baking plate/dish decorated with inlaid slip and could be dated late 17th-18th century.

Modern

The remaining four sherds of pottery were identified as modern china (fabric 85) of 19th-20th century date.

The only non-pottery find was an iron spike with a loop or eye, used as a tie for supporting climbing plants.

The finds were typical of a late post-medieval/modern domestic discard. The single sherd of Roman pottery is of interest but not unexpected due to the site location.

The bricks

The bricks of the kitchen garden walls (Fig 7) were made at Dumbleton Hall in Gloucestershire, at the Hall's own brickworks on the estate, This was on the western edge of Dumbleton village next to

Brickyard Cottages. Edward Holland commissioned the architect G S Repton to build the new Dumbleton Hall in 1830. The Hall is built of stone, from the Temple Guiting quarries and of brick. Edward Holland carried out many improvements to the village. He rebuilt some of the farms and constructed a number of semi-detached cottages. In order to carry out all this building work he established a brickyard to the north of the village. William Taylor arrived in 1851 and became manager in around 1860. All his children worked at the yard. James Taylor took over in the 1880s. This was a period during which operations were being wound down and it is thought that production had ceased by 1901. It is unknown why the bricks at Adsett Cottage had two piercings, approximately 12mm in diameter, in opposite corners of the frog.

Interpretation

The curious nature of these features and their location within a 19th century kitchen garden, the *terminus ante quem* of which is 1872, strongly suggests that they were horticultural in nature. The clear and sharp upper boundaries suggest excavation to a shallow depth with a spade or gardener's trowel and the rather diffuse, lower boundaries probably representing root penetration and the carrying-down into the subsoil of humic material. The smaller of these features, such as that represented by Section 4, were probably large, individual plants or small bushes and the larger examples, such as that represented by Sections 2 and 3, were planting beds.

The use of bricks from Dumbleton to construct the kitchen garden walls must reflect the underlying geology: at Beckford clay was not available, the natural subsoil being sand. The distance between Dumbleton and Beckford by road is a little over three miles. This was by no means an impossible distance for heavy loads moved by horse and cart. It is possible, however, that the services of the Midlands Railway (Aschurch, Evesham and Redditch Branch) were employed. The line passed a short distance to the north of Dumbleton and there is some evidence on the 1:2500, 1st edition map (Gloucestershire XII.2, 1883) that access to the line was available, adjacent to an overbridge. At Beckford, the station had a goods yard and it would have been a short trip from here to the centre of the village. Using the railway would have required the hiring of a 'special (goods) train' but this was a practice that was well-established in this period. 'Special' trains are frequently hired by characters in literature (eg Conan Doyle 1898 and Grahame 1908) and this must attest to the ubiquity of the activity.

Depositional and post-depositional processes

The development is situated within a kitchen garden formerly belonging to a (locally) great house. The garden, during its heyday, would have been expected to provide much of the fruit and vegetables consumed by the occupants and as such would have been dug-over regularly. This activity would probably have taken place within well-defined areas, leaving access paths for the gardeners. This was reflected within the excavated areas, as recognisably horticultural deposits were clearly discontinuous.

The scarcity of finds from the excavations probably reflects the various sources of material that would have been brought into the garden. This is likely to have been largely vegetable matter and dung from the manure heap, generated by the animals and the maintenance of the grounds. Some debris from the kitchen itself, combined with the occasional breakage of ceramic items would also have made a contribution.

Critique of the techniques employed

Garden archaeology - general

Lost Gardens, a Channel 4 series presented by Monty Don, investigated a lock-keeper's garden at Sutton Stop at the junction of the Oxford Canal (Northern Section - Main Line) and Hawkesbury Junction (Junction of the Coventry Canal - Main Line). The Sutton Stop episode was broadcast during Season 1 (21st October 2010). Archaeological excavation drew a blank but this was probably because of the inappropriate technique used. This was trenching using a micro-digger. Garden deposits are notoriously ephemeral and usually benefit from an open-area approach.

The author's experience

The open area technique was adopted by the author when he was subsequently engaged as consultant to the Chipping Campden History Society during their excavations at Old Campden House, Church Street, Chipping Campden (Gray and Cook 2018) and excellent results were obtained on a Civil War period site. The author had some peripheral involvement with the Sutton Stop project and was dismayed to see the direction that the archaeological work took.

The current project

It was clear from the sections of the footings trenches at Beckford that evidence exists for a kitchen garden planting arrangement dating to the mid-19th century. However, this could not be adequately recovered by examining the sides of the footings trenches, especially as the natural subsoil was sand and gravel and the trenches had to be closely shuttered as the excavation progressed (Fig 6) in order to prevent collapse. It is possible that the overall planting arrangement might have been recovered if the site had been stripped to the natural subsoil over the area of the development. Due to the nature of the subsoil it was not possible to excavate strip foundations to the required depth and a raft arrangement was adopted instead. Thus, it is likely that the majority of the garden deposits have survived and could be recovered during the course of a future redevelopment.

Bibliography

AAF, 2011 *Archaeological archives: a guide to the best practice in the creation, compilation, transfer and curation*. Available at <http://www.archaeologyuk.org/archives/>

CIfA, 2014 *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials*. Available at <http://www.archaeologists.net/codes/ifa>

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Grahame, K, 1908 *The wind in the willows*

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Hurst, J D, and Rees, H, 1992 Pottery fabrics; a multi-period series for the County of Hereford and Worcester, in Woodiwiss, S G (ed), *Iron Age and Roman salt production and the medieval town of Droitwich*, CBA Res Rep, **81**, 200-9

PCRG/SGRP/MPRG, 2016 *A standard for pottery studies in archaeology*

SMA 1993 *Selection, retention and dispersal of archaeological collections*. Available at <http://www.swfed.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/selectionretentiondispersalofcollections1-SMA.pdf>

Internet sources

<https://episodecalendar.com/en/show/lost-gardens/season/1>

<https://uknamedbricks.blogspot.com/2014/12/>

<http://www.hawkerntaylors.moonfruit.com/the-brickyard/4569296696>

Acknowledgements

The author would particularly like to thank Roger Zygmunt of Building Commercial Ltd, his client Mr David Good and Aidan Smyth, Archaeology and Planning Advisor, Wychavon District Council for their kind cooperation.

Archive

The physical archive consists of:

- 9 Context sheets
- 1 Drawing
- 1 Hard copy of the report
- 1 Hard copy of the report illustrations
- 1 Hard copy of the brief

It will be deposited at Worcestershire County Museum, Hartlebury upon approval of the report. It is anticipated that the finds, being unstratified and having a late post-medieval/modern date, will not be of interest to the museum. However, the museum will be consulted in this respect before disposal.

The digital archive consists of:

- 1 Digital copy of the report (.doc format)
- 7 Illustrations (.bmp format)

It will be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service upon approval of the report.

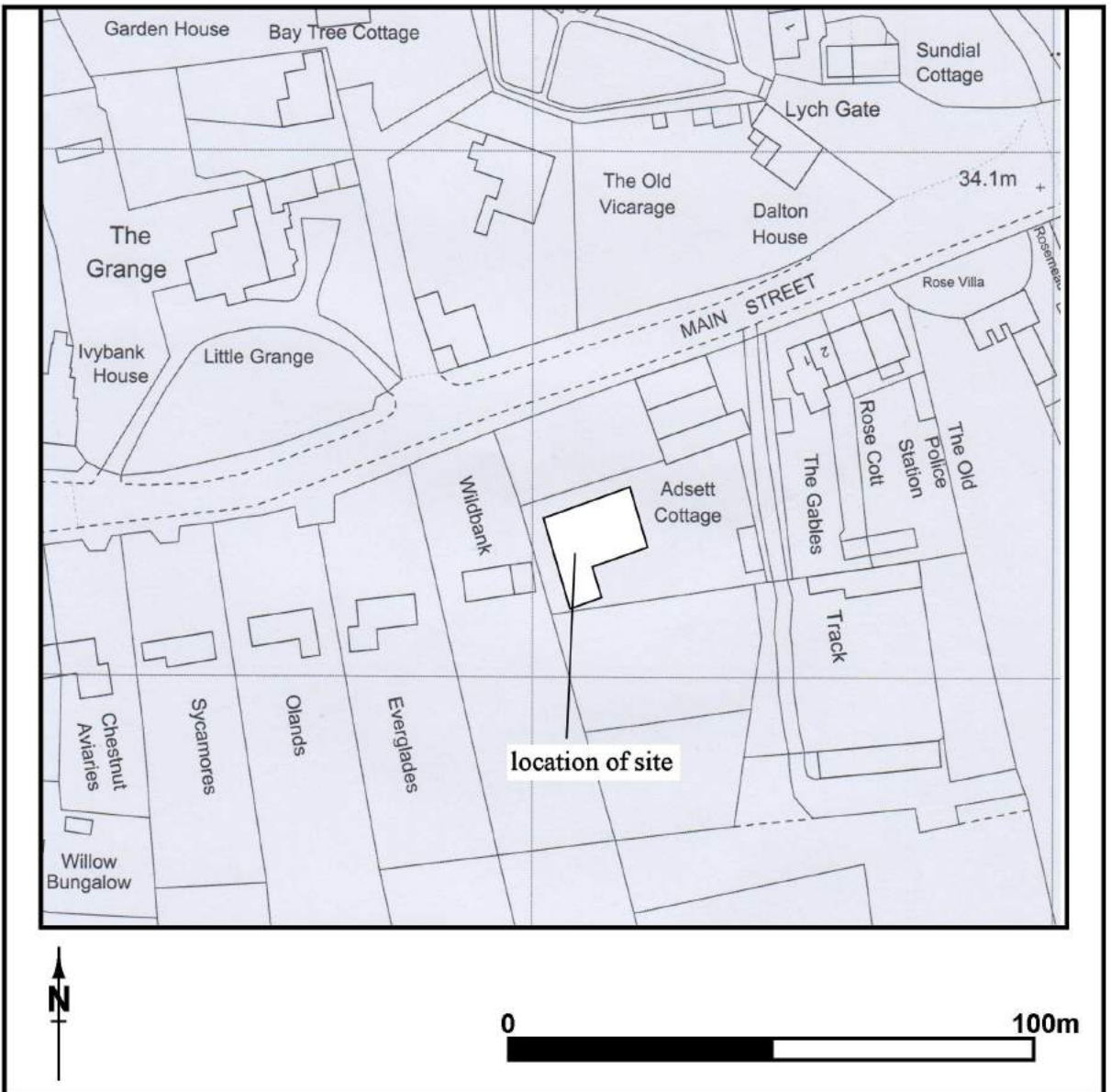
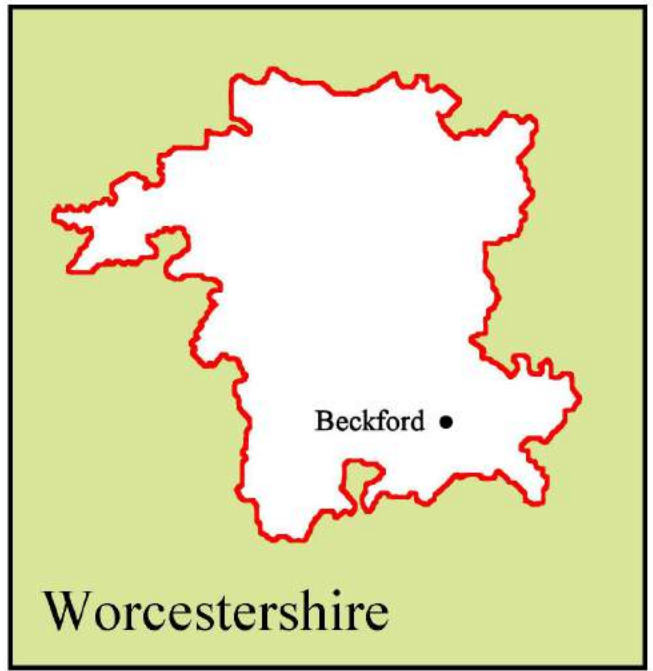
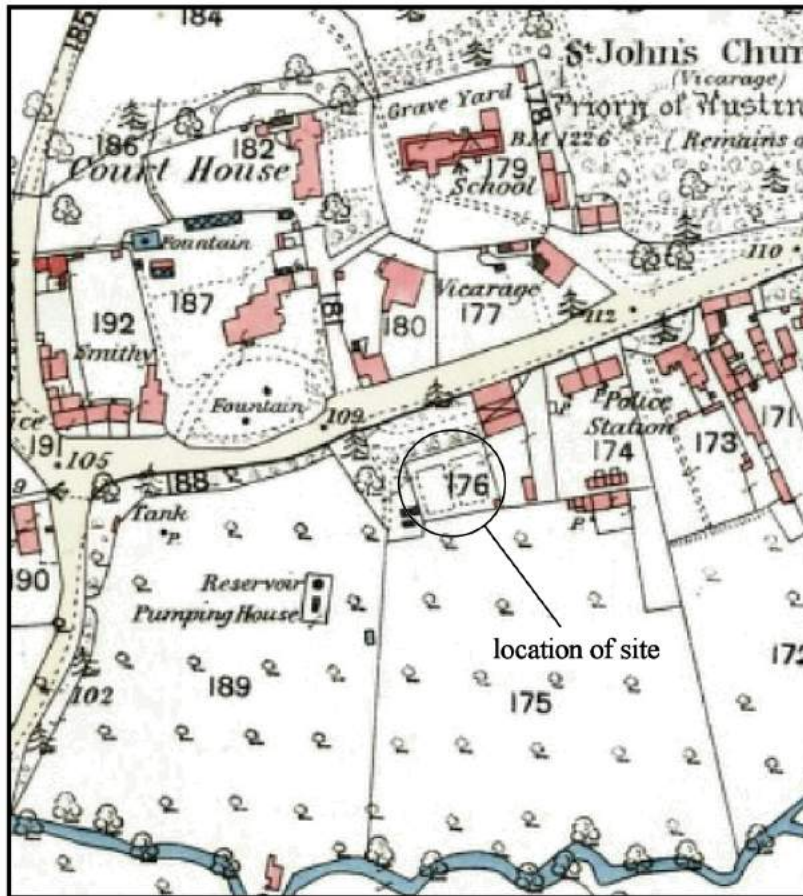


Fig 1: Location of site

1884



1902

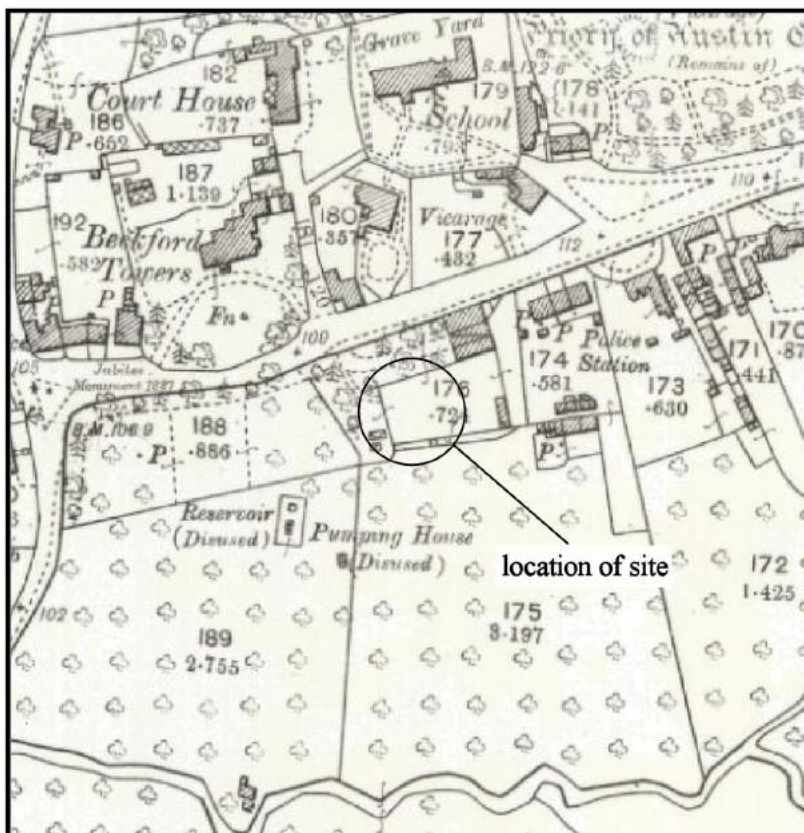


Fig 2.1: Historic mapping

0

200m



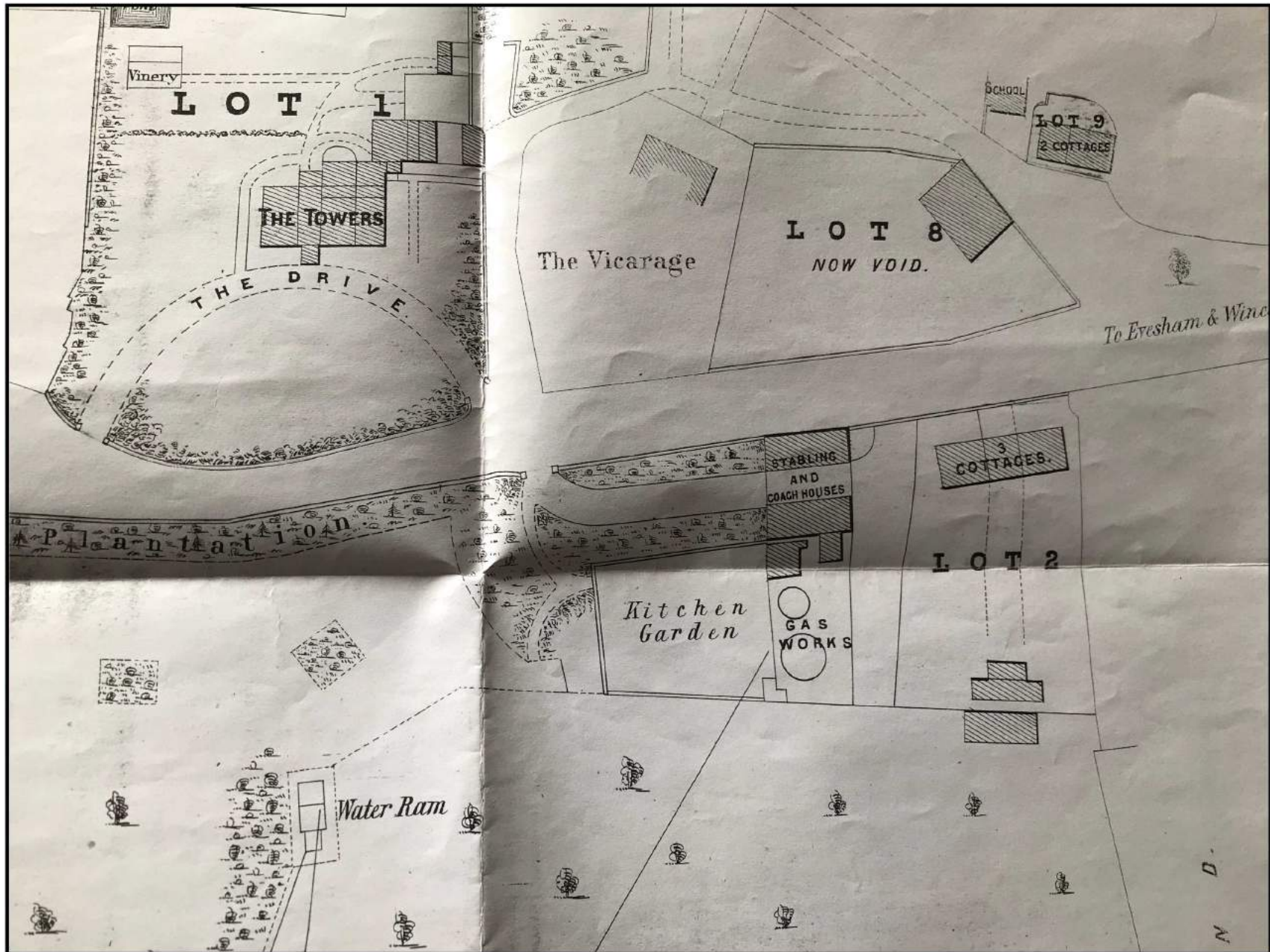
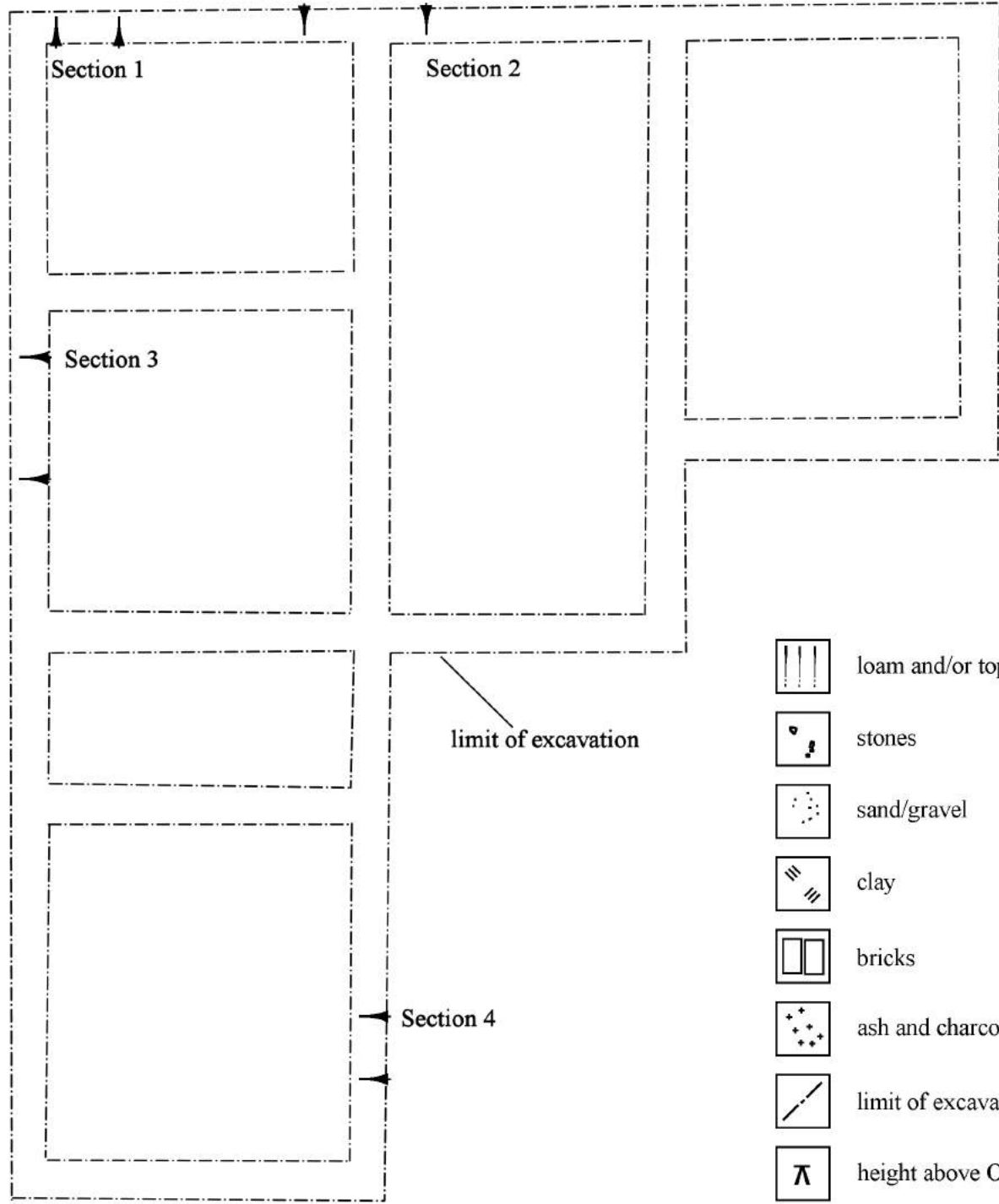










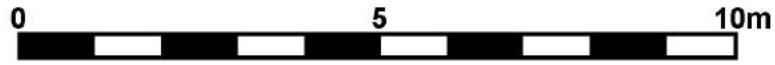
Fig 2.3: Plan associated with sale particulars - 1872

not to scale

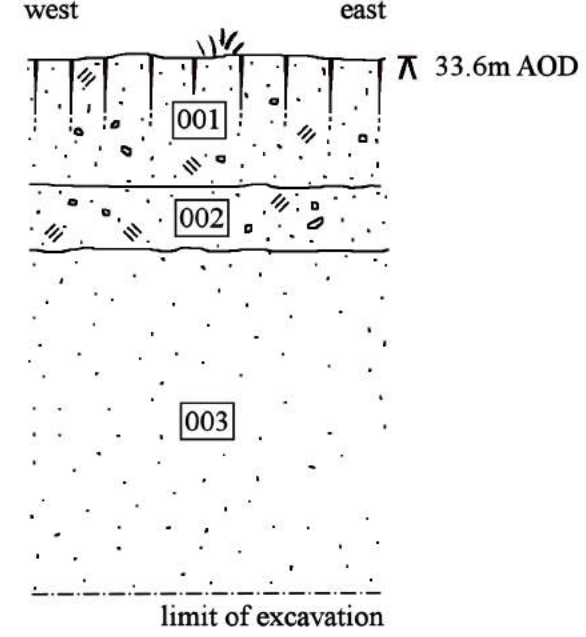
Trench plan



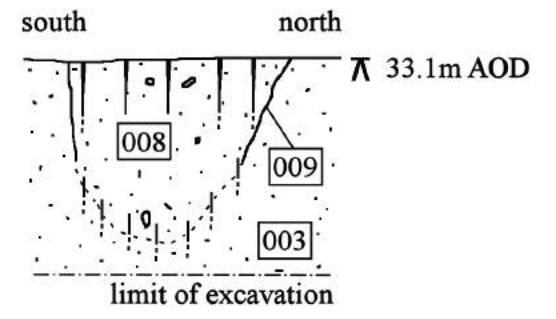
-  loam and/or topsoil
-  stones
-  sand/gravel
-  clay
-  bricks
-  ash and charcoal
-  limit of excavation
-  height above Ordnance Datum



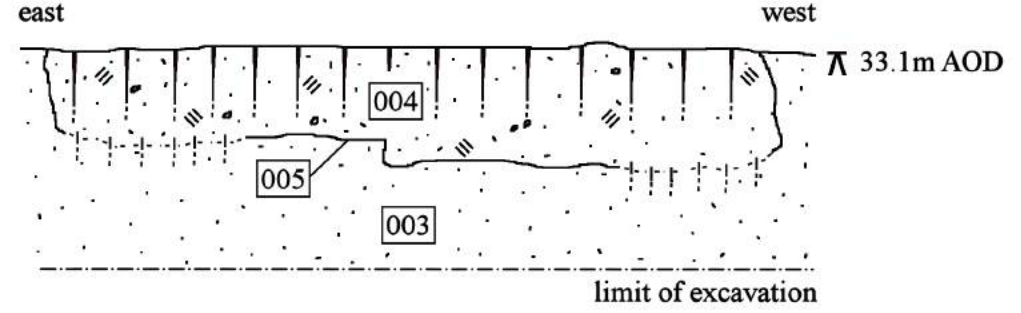
Section 1



Section 4



Section 2



Section 3

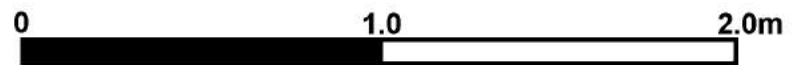
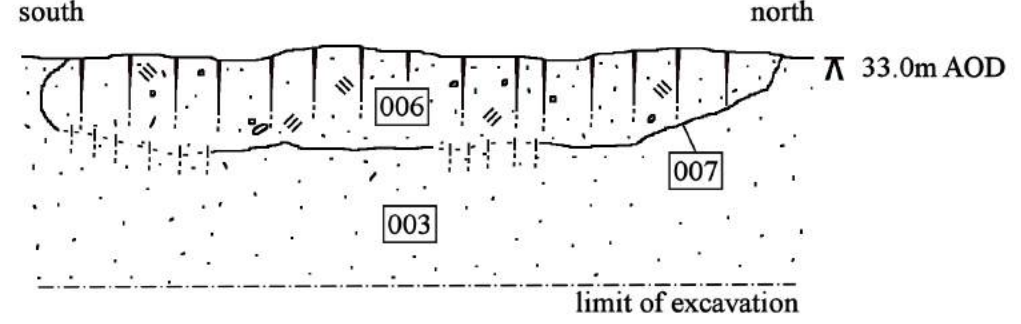


Fig 3.1: Trench plan and sections



Fig 4: View of site from south-east showing kitchen garden wall



Fig 5: View of site from south showing kitchen garden wall and Adsett Cottage



Fig 6: View of site from north-west showing shuttering to trenches



Fig 7: Brick from the kitchen garden wall stamped 'DUMBLETON'



Fig 8: The finds

Appendix 1: List of the contexts

Context number	Description	Interpretation
001	Mid grey brown sandy loam	Topsoil
002	Light grey brown sandy clay	Subsoil
003	Yellow sand and gravel	Natural subsoil
004	Dark grey brown very humic loam	Planting border
005	Edge	Limiting of planting border - not really a cut
006	Dark grey brown very humic loam	Planting border
007	Edge	Limiting of planting border - not really a cut
008	Dark grey brown very humic loam	Planting border
009	Edge	Limiting of planting border - not really a cut

Appendix 2: The finds

Artefactual analysis by Laura Griffin

The finds work reported here conforms to the following guidance: for finds work by ClfA (2014), for pottery analysis by PCRG/SGRP/MPRG (2016), for archive creation by AAF (2011), and for museum deposition by SMA (1993).

Aims

- To identify, sort, spot date, and quantify all artefacts;
- To describe the range of artefacts present;
- To preliminarily assess the significance of the artefacts.

Method of analysis

All hand-retrieved finds were examined. They were identified, quantified and dated to period. A terminus post quem date was produced for each stratified context. The date was used for determining the broad date of phases defined for the site. All information was recorded on pro forma sheets.

The pottery was examined under x20 magnification and referenced as appropriate by fabric type and form according to the fabric reference series maintained by Worcestershire Archaeology (Hurst and Rees 1992 and www.worcestershireceramics.org).

Results

The discussion below is a summary of the finds and of their associated location or contexts by period. Where possible, dates have been allocated and the importance of individual finds commented upon as necessary.

The assemblage recovered from the site totalled seven finds weighing 118g (see Table 1). All were unstratified but despite this displayed low levels of surface abrasion.

period	material type	class	total	weight (g)
Roman	ceramic	pot	1	5
post-medieval	ceramic	pot	1	36
modern	ceramic	pot	4	37
modern	iron	object	1	40

Table 1: Quantification of the artefactual assemblage

Summary artefactual evidence by period

All material has been dated and quantified (see Table 1). Pottery has been grouped and quantified according to general fabric class (Table 2). Sherds were datable by fabric type to their general period or production span.

Roman

A small, abraded sherd of sandy greyware (fabric 14) was the earliest material from the site. It could be identified as coming from the flange of a bowl of 2nd century date.

Post-medieval

The post-medieval assemblage consisted of a single sherd of post-medieval buff ware (fabric 91). The sherd was from a large baking plate/dish decorated with inlaid slip and could be dated late 17th-18th century.

Modern

The remaining four sherds of pottery were identified as modern china (fabric 85) of 19th-20th century date.

The only non-pottery find was an iron spike with a loop or eye, used as a tie for supporting climbing plants.

period	fabric code	fabric common name	count	weight (g)
Roman	14	Fine sandy greyware	1	5
post-medieval	91	Post-medieval red ware	1	36
modern	85	Modern china	4	37

Table 2: Quantification of the pottery by fabric type

Significance

The finds were typical of a late post-medieval/modern domestic discard. The single sherd of Roman pottery is of interest but not unexpected due to the site location.

Recommendations

No further work required.

Bibliography

AAF 2011 *Archaeological archives: a guide to the best practice in the creation, compilation, transfer and curation*. Available at <http://www.archaeologyuk.org/archives/>

ClfA 2014 *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials*. Available at <http://www.archaeologists.net/codes/ifa>

Hurst, J D, and Rees, H, 1992 Pottery fabrics; a multi-period series for the County of Hereford and Worcester, in Woodiwiss, S G (ed), *Iron Age and Roman salt production and the medieval town of Droitwich*, CBA Res Rep, **81**, 200-9

PCRG/SGRP/MPRG, 2016 *A standard for pottery studies in archaeology*

SMA 1993 *Selection, retention and dispersal of archaeological collections*. Available at <http://www.swfed.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/selectionretentiondispersalofcollections1-SMA.pdf>

Summary of data for Worcestershire HER

WSM 71002 (event HER number)

TB/19

Artefacts

period - note 1	material class	object specific type	count	weight	start date	end date	specialist report? (note 2)	key assemblage? (note 3)
Roman	ceramic	pot	1	5		2C	N	N
post-medieval	ceramic	pot	1	36	L17C	18C	N	N
modern	ceramic	pot	4	37	19C	20C	N	N
modern	iron	object	1	40	19C	20C	N	N

Notes

- 1) In some cases the date will be "Undated". In most cases, especially if there is not a specialist report, the information entered in the Date field will be a general period such as Neolithic, Roman, medieval etc (see below for a list of periods used in the Worcestershire HER). Very broad date ranges such as late Medieval to Post-medieval are acceptable for artefacts which can be hard to date for example roof tiles. If you have more specific dates, such as 13th to 14th century, please use these instead. Specific date ranges which cross general period boundaries can also be used, for example 15th to 17th century.

period	from	to
Palaeolithic	500000 BC	10001 BC
Mesolithic	10000 BC	4001 BC
Neolithic	4000 BC	2351 BC
Bronze Age	2350 BC	801 BC
Iron Age	800 BC	42 AD
Roman	43	409
Post-Roman	410	1065
Medieval	1066	1539
Post-medieval	1540	1900
Modern	1901	2050

period specific	from	to
Lower Paleolithic	500000 BC	150001
Middle Palaeolithic	150000	40001
Upper Palaeolithic	40000	10001
Early Mesolithic	10000	7001
Late Mesolithic	7000	4001
Early Neolithic	4000	3501
Middle Neolithic	3500	2701
Late Neolithic	2700	2351
Early Bronze Age	2350	1601
Middle Bronze Age	1600	1001
Late Bronze Age	1000	801
Early Iron Age	800	401

Middle Iron Age	400	101
Late Iron Age	100 BC	42 AD
Roman 1st century AD	43	100
2nd century	101	200
3rd century	201	300
4th century	301	400
Roman 5th century	401	410
Post roman	411	849
Pre conquest	850	1065
Late 11th century	1066	1100
12th century	1101	1200
13th century	1201	1300
14th century	1301	1400
15th century	1401	1500
16th century	1501	1600
17th century	1601	1700
18th century	1701	1800
19th century	1801	1900
20th century	1901	2000
21st century	2001	

2. Not all evaluations of small excavation assemblages have specialist reports on all classes of objects. An identification (eg clay pipe) and a quantification is not a specialist report. A short discussion or a more detailed record identifying types and dates is a specialist report. This field is designed to point researchers to reports where they will find out more than merely the presence or absence of material of a particular type and date.
3. This field should be used with care. It is designed to point researchers to reports where they will be able to locate the most important assemblages for any given material for any given date.

Appendix 3: The OASIS form

OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

[List of Projects](#) | [Manage Projects](#) | [Search Projects](#) | [New project](#) | [Change your details](#) | [HER coverage](#) | [Change country](#) | [Log out](#)

Printable version

OASIS ID: martinco1-345221

Project details

Project name	Adsett Cottage, Main Street, Beckford
Short description of the project	Watching brief at Adsett Cottage, Main Street, Beckford
Project dates	Start: 25-02-2019 End: 20-03-2019
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	WSM 71002 - HER event no.
Any associated project reference codes	18/01861/FUL - Planning Application No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Monument type	KITCHEN GARDEN Post Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Post Medieval
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF

Project location

Country	England
Site location	WORCESTERSHIRE WYCHAVON BECKFORD Adsett Cottage, Main Street, Beckford, GL20 7AD
Postcode	GL20 7AD
Study area	300 Square metres
Site coordinates	SO 97612 35725 52.019518310849 -2.034803347936 52 01 10 N 002 02 05 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 33.1m Max: 33.1m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Martin Cook BA MCIfA
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body

Project design originator	Martin Cook BA MCIfA
Project director/manager	Martin Cook BA MCIfA
Project supervisor	Martin Cook BA MCIfA
Type of sponsor/funding body	Landowner

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	Worcestershire County Museum
Physical Contents	"Ceramics"
Digital Archive recipient	ADS
Digital Contents	"none"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Worcestershire County Museum
Paper Contents	"Ceramics"
Paper Media available	"Report"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Archaeological watching brief at Adsett Cottage, Main Street, Beckford, GL20 7AD
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Cook, M.
Date	2019
Issuer or publisher	Martin Cook MCIfA
Place of issue or publication	Aylesbury
Description	A4 blue card cover with transparent front cover

Entered by	Martin Cook (office@martinjcook.com)
Entered on	8 March 2019