

ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
WATCHING BRIEF AT  
CHURCH FARM,  
CHURCH STREET,  
LITTLEDEAN,  
GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Graham Arnold

Illustrated by Carolyn Hunt

30 August 2012

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Worcester, WR1 3PB

Project P3386  
Report 1942



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## Archaeological watching brief at Church Farm, Church Street, Littledean, Gloucestershire

**Graham Arnold**

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### Background information

<i>Client</i>	Beth and James Boughton
<i>Site address</i>	Church Farm, Church Street, Littledean, Gloucestershire, GL14 3NL
<i>National Grid reference</i>	SO 67140 13358
<i>Planning authority</i>	Forest of Dean District Council
<i>reference</i>	P0510/09/FUL
<i>Brief</i>	GCC 2009
<i>Project design</i>	HEAS 2011
<i>Project parameters</i>	IfA 2008

### Archaeological and historical background

The archaeological and historical background is given in the brief (GCC 2009) and a summary is provided here:

The site is located within Littledean's probable medieval settlement focus, lying 230m south of St. Ethelbert's Church (GSMR 21733). It was archaeologically evaluated as part of a previous planning application (Wright 2005). The evaluation found a probable medieval pit and several other features at depths of between 1.05m and 0.76m below ground level. The evidence indicates that the site is likely to contain sparsely-distributed features relating to medieval and post-medieval activity.

Church Farm House and the attached Maltings are Grade II Listed buildings (GSMR 13816). The following is a summary from the HER listing: A farmhouse, dating from the late 17<sup>th</sup> or early 18<sup>th</sup> century, with attached malting ranges. The house is of squared, coursed local stone, with a slate roof and ashlar gable stacks. The house is L-shaped on plan, the front range of single depth, with the earliest of the maltings adjoining the rear range and extending it eastwards.

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### Aims

The aim of the watching brief was to observe and record archaeological deposits, and to determine their extent, state of preservation, date and type, as far as reasonably possible. The brief states that 'In principle the aim of the archaeological work should be to monitor ground works required for the development and to record any archaeological deposits and/or finds exposed during this work (GCC 2009).

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### Methods

General specification for fieldwork	HEAS 2011 GCC 2009
Sources consulted	Wright 2005 Gloucestershire County Council HER
Date(s) of fieldwork	28 July 2011 to 10 August 2012
Dimensions of excavated areas observed	
Trench 1 Building footprint	length 24.20m width 7.00 – 9.00m depth 0.06 – 1.65m
Trench 2 Foundation for path and steps	length 20.00m

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Trench 3 Electricity and Gas Services	width 1.60m depth 0.80 – 1.10m length 55.00m
Trench 4 Temporary water pipe	width 0.35m depth 0.60 – 0.80m length 20.00m width 0.35m depth 0.60m

*Access to or visibility of deposits*

Observation of the excavated areas was undertaken during and after machine excavation. The exposed surfaces were sufficiently clean to observe well-differentiated archaeological deposits, though any less clear may have not been identified.

*Statement of confidence*

Access to, and visibility of, deposits allowed a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved.

**Deposit description****Trench 1**

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
1000	Surface	Mid grey brown stoney gravel aggregate for farmyard road surfacing	0.00 – 0.16m
1001	Topsoil	Moderately compact coarse mid grey brown sandy clay with occasional small rounded stones	0 – 0.40m
1002	Natural	Moderately compact mid light orangey grey brown silty clay subsoil	0.20 – 0.40m
1003	Natural	Compact reddish orange silty clay natural substrate	0.06 – 1.60m
1004	Layer	Very dark greyish black coarse silty loam with rare rounded stone. Modern made ground topsoil. No finds. Seals 1003.	0 - 1.40m

**Trenches 2, 3 and 4**

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
2000	Topsoil	Very dark greyish black silty loam with rare rounded stones and modern material including plastic and occasional modern pottery. Same as 1004.	0.00 – 0.80m
2001	Natural	Compact reddish orange silty clay natural substrate	0.60 – 1.10m

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## Discussion

### Trench 1

On the east side of the building foundation the natural clay (1003) was overlain by a subsoil (1002) and a shallow topsoil (1001). On the west side of the building and below the garden wall, a very dark greyish black topsoil was recorded (1004). This area had been used as a vegetable garden for a long period of time, with the depth being built up every season with compost and manure and continuously rotovated. The variable depth of the natural matrix within this area was due to the slope, the build up of made ground and previous landscaping activities.

### Trench 2

This trench was excavated following the removal of a garden wall. The natural clay (2001) was recorded at 0.80m below ground level, directly below a very dark modern topsoil (2000), similar to that which was recorded in Trench 1.

### Trench 3

This trench did not exceed the depth of the topsoil (2000) and there were multiple modern intrusions in the topsoil.

### Trench 4

The natural reddish orange silty clay was recorded at a depth of 0.50m with the topsoil (2000) directly above this. Modern pipework for an old outhouse in the south-west corner of the garden was uncovered whilst was being excavated cut into the topsoil, but no cut was visible in section.

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## Conclusions

No significant archaeological finds, features, structures or layers were recorded during the works. In the areas where the previous evaluation trenches had revealed archaeological features, the present Trenches 3 and 4 were not excavated to as great a depth. Trench 1, the area where the house was built, included a lot of made ground as it lay on a slope.

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## Publication summary

The Service has a professional obligation to publish the results of archaeological projects within a reasonable period of time. To this end, the Service intends to use this summary as the basis for publication through local or regional journals. The client is requested to consider the content of this section as being acceptable for such publication.

*An archaeological watching brief was undertaken on behalf of Beth and James Boughton at Church Farm, Church Street, Littledean, Gloucestershire (NGR ref SO 67140 13358). A previous evaluation had found sporadic post-medieval features including a pit and possible hedgerow or furrow. During the watching brief only modern made ground and rich deep topsoil were encountered. No significant archaeological finds, features, structures or layers were found. The trenches observed within the areas where the previous evaluation had identified features, were not dug to the same depth as the evaluation trenches.*

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## Acknowledgements

The Service would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, Beth and James Boughton, and Charles Parry (Senior Archaeological Officer, Gloucestershire County Council).

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## **Bibliography**

IfA 2008 *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief*, Institute for Archaeologists

GCC 2009 *Church Farm, Church Street, Littledean; erection of four detached dwellings: Brief for archaeological mitigation*, Gloucestershire County Council unpublished document dated 24 June 2009

HEAS 2011 *Proposal for an archaeological watching brief at Church Farm, Church Street, Littledean, Gloucestershire*, Historic Environment and Archaeology service, Worcestershire County Council, unpublished document dated 20 July 2009, updated 20 June 2011, **P3386**

Worcestershire Archaeology 2012 *Manual of Service Practice: recording manual*, Worcestershire County Council, unpublished report, **1842**

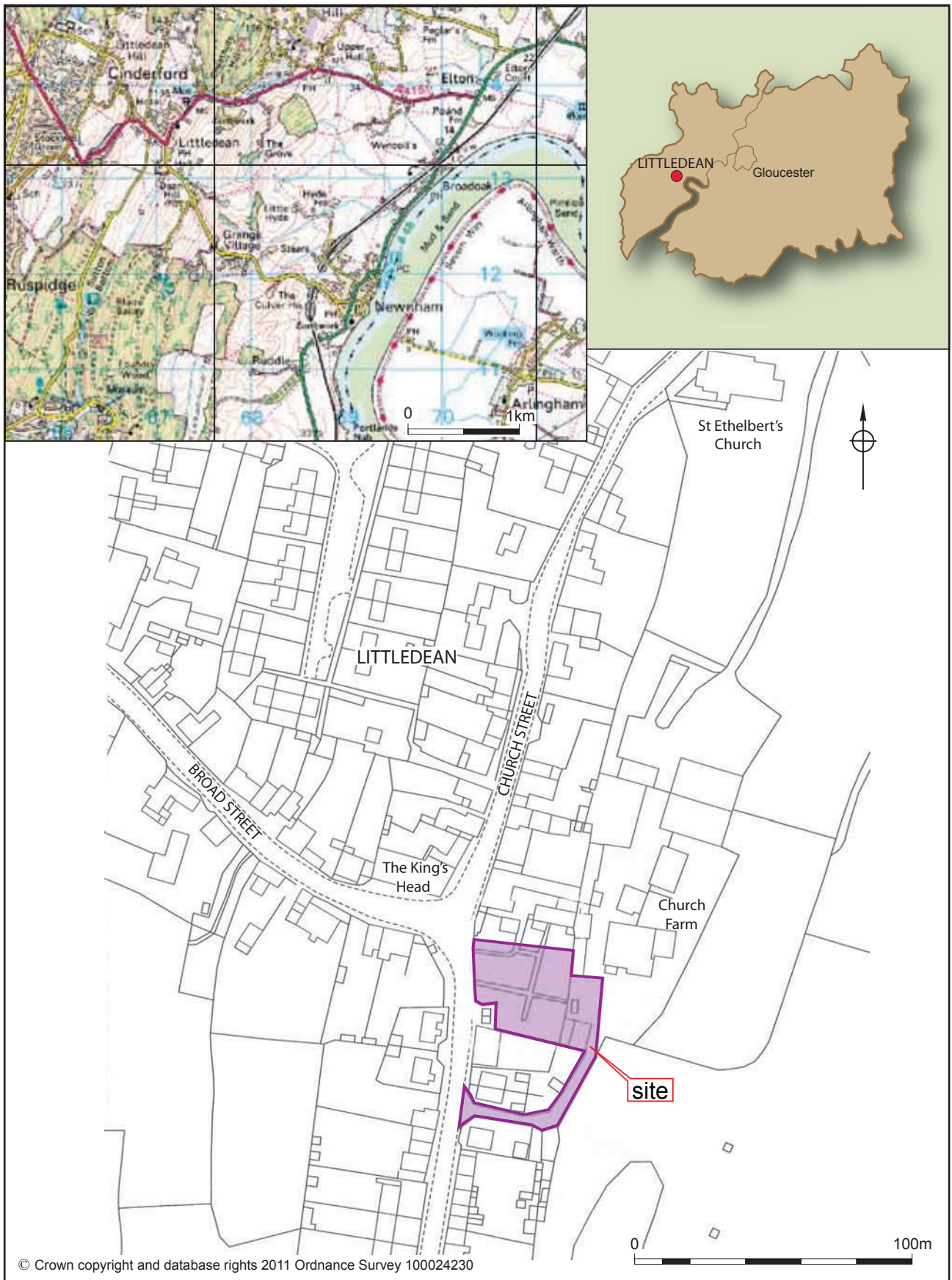
Wright, N, 2005 *An archaeological evaluation at Church Farm, Littledean, Gloucestershire* Gloucestershire County Council, unpublished report, dated 12 August 2005, GSMR 27934

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## Figures

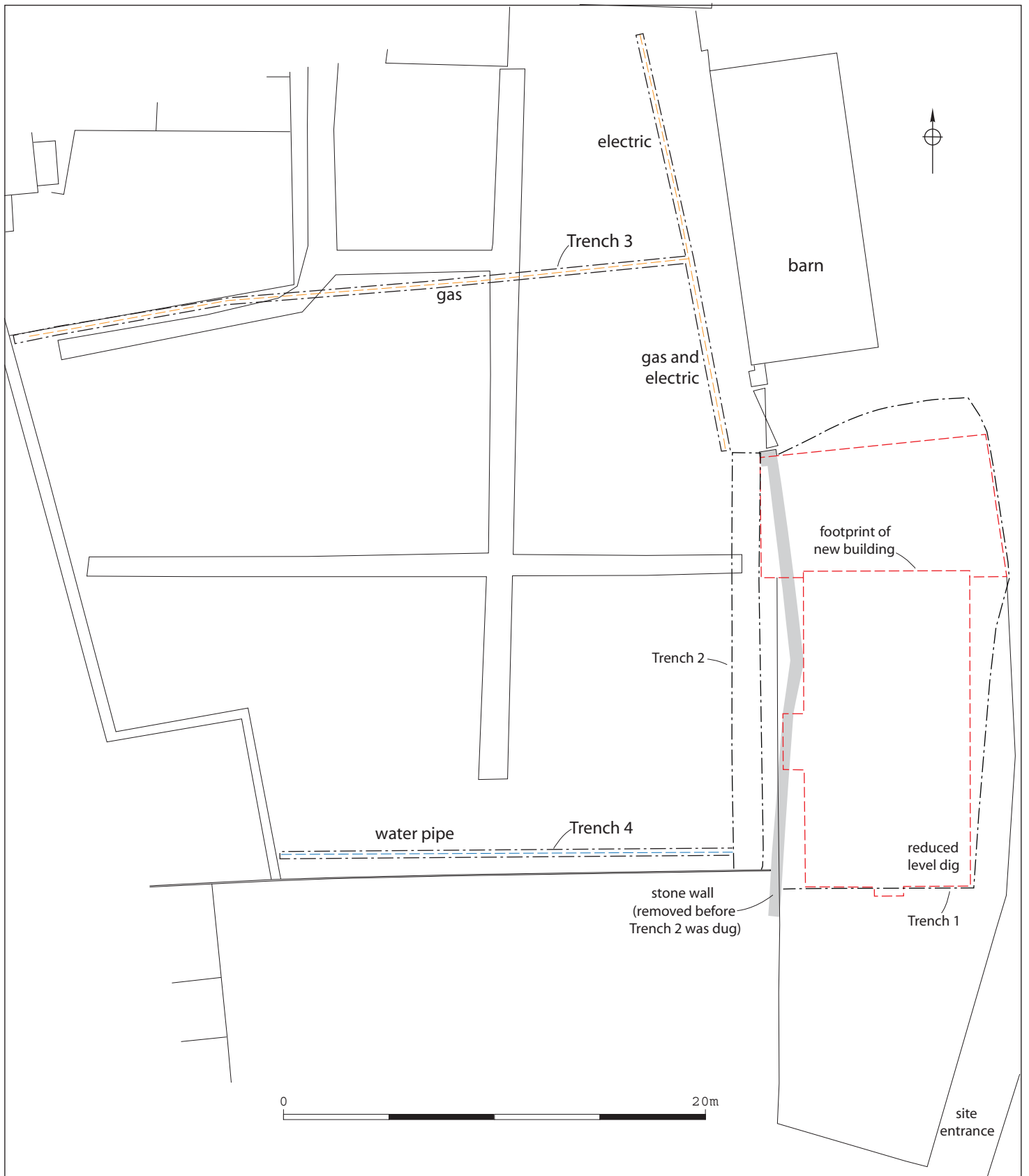






Location of the site

Figure 1



Location of trenches

Figure 2



## Plates



*Plate 1 General view of Trench 1 location before excavation, view south-west*



*Plate 2 View of Trench 1 after excavation and stone wall, looking east*





*Plate 3 Trench 1 natural red clay looking north towards barns*



*Plate 4 Trench 1 natural red clay looking south demonstrating slope and made ground*





*Plate 5 East facing section in Trench 1 showing stratigraphy of dark topsoil and rubble overlying the natural clay*



*Plate 6 Trench 1 west facing section showing modern made ground, topsoil and natural red clay*





*Plate 7 Trench 2 location starting excavation, view south-east*



*Plate 7 Trench 2 after excavation showing natural red clay and topsoil looking north*





*Plate 8 East facing section in Trench 2 demonstrating thick dark topsoil with frequent roots and reddish brown clay natural at base*



*Plate 9 View of garden looking north-east prior to excavation of Trench 3 gas and electricity services*





*Plate 10 Trench for gas being excavated looking north-west*



*Plate 11 Trench 3 looking west with topsoil removed on the side*





*Plate 12 Trench 3 extent looking south, with topsoil spoil on the side*



*Plate 13 Sample section of trench 3 gas and electric services looking east*





*Plate 14 Sample north facing section in Trench 4 for water pipe, showing topsoil and natural clay*



*Plate 15 Trench 4 for water pipe following excavation with topsoil spoil to one side*

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## Appendix 1 Technical information

### The archive

The archive consists of:

2	Field progress reports AS2
1	Photographic records AS3
38	Digital photographs
1	Drawing number catalogues AS4
2	Scale drawings
4	Trench record sheets AS41
1	Computer disk
1	Copy of this report (bound hard copy)

The project archive is intended to be placed at:

Dean Heritage Centre  
Camp Mill,  
Soudley,  
Forest of Dean,  
Gloucestershire  
GL14 2UB

Tel: 01594 822170