

# Archaeological Watching Brief at the Angel Inn, 76 Load Street, Bewdley, Worcestershire



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## **Archaeological watching brief at the Angel Inn, 76 Load Street, Bewdley, Worcestershire**

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With contributions by Derek Hurst

### **Summary**

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken on behalf of CgMs Consulting at The Angel Inn, 76 Load Street, Bewdley, Worcestershire (NGR: SO 78671 75406; HER ref WSM 58044). The development entailed the creation of a single storey extension and a disabled access.

The former Angel Inn lies within the historic core of Bewdley on Load Street, close to the bridge over the River Severn. The present building, of mock Tudor style, was built in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, set back from the street frontage. Map evidence demonstrates that an older building, also the Angel Inn, stood on the street frontage and was demolished prior to the construction of the present building.

A single L-shaped trench was excavated in the footprint of the proposed extension to the rear of the former public house. Alluvial clay was recorded at the base of this trench. The foundation of a sandstone wall, with a dressed face to the north-west, was recorded crossing the trench. This is thought to represent the surviving back wall of the earlier inn or a related building. Two postholes, still containing posts were also recorded. The finds assemblage, comprising clay pipes and a sherd from a drinking vessel is consistent with the use of the site as a public house.

Made ground, probably imported during the construction of the present building and a surface of blue engineering bricks lay over these features. This was in turn overlaid by a tarmac surface and base.

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## Report

### 1 Background

#### 1.1 Reasons for the project

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at the Angel Inn, 76 Load Street, Bewdley, Worcestershire (NGR: SO 78671 75406, Figure 1). It was commissioned by CgMs Consulting on behalf of their client, who intends to construct a single storey extension along with a new disabled access to the public house for which planning permission has been granted by Wyre Forest District Council (reference 13/0554/FUL).

The project conforms to a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2014).

The project also conforms to the *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (IfA 2008) and the *Standards and guidelines for archaeological projects in Worcestershire* (WCC 2010).

The event reference for this project, given by the Worcestershire Historic Environment Records office (HER) is WSM 58044.

### 2 Aims

The aims of the archaeological watching brief were to locate archaeological deposits and determine, if present, their extent, state of preservation, date, type, vulnerability and documentation.

### 3 Methods

#### 3.1 Personnel

The project was undertaken by Graham Arnold (BA, MSc); who joined Worcestershire Archaeology in 2009 and has been practising archaeology since 2003, and was assisted by Tim Cornah (BA) who joined Worcestershire Archaeology in 2006 and has been practising archaeology since 2003. The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Tom Rogers (MSc). Illustrations were prepared by Carolyn Hunt (BSc MfA). Derek Hurst (BA AlfA) contributed the finds report.

#### 3.2 Documentary research

Prior to fieldwork commencing a search was made of the Historic Environment Record (HER).

#### 3.3 List of sources consulted

Published and grey literature sources are listed in the bibliography.

#### 3.4 Fieldwork strategy

A detailed specification has been prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2014).

Fieldwork was undertaken between 13 August 2014 and 20 August 2014. The site reference number and site code is WSM 58044.

The archaeological investigations comprised the monitoring of all intrusive works carried out by the client. This consisted of the excavation of a 0.60m wide L-shaped foundation trench against the rear (west) of the public house to an average depth of 1.20m below the present ground level (Figure 2).

The foundation trench was excavated using a 360° tracked excavator, employing a toothless bucket and under archaeological supervision. Subsequent excavation of archaeologically significant deposits was undertaken by hand. Clean surfaces were inspected and selected deposits were excavated to retrieve artefactual material and environmental samples, as well as to determine their nature. Deposits were recorded according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012).

### **3.5 Structural analysis**

All fieldwork records were checked and cross-referenced. Analysis was effected through a combination of structural, artefactual and ecofactual evidence, allied to the information derived from other sources.

### **3.6 Artefact methodology, by Derek Hurst**

#### **3.6.1 Recovery policy**

The artefact recovery policy conformed to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012; appendix 2).

#### **3.6.2 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 and ceramic building material 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](http://www.worcestershireceramics.org)).

#### **3.6.3 Discard policy**

The following categories/types of material will be discarded after a period of 6 months following the submission of this report, unless there is a specific request to retain them (and subject to the collection policy of the relevant depository): where unstratified

- post-medieval pottery, and;
- generally where material has been assessed as having no obvious grounds for retention.

See the environmental section for other discard where appropriate.

## **4 The application site**

### **4.1 Topography, geology and archaeological context**

The site lies on the north-western side of Load Street (the B4190) on the western bank of the Severn and close to the town bridge. The former Angel Inn lies set back from the street frontage, bounded to the northeast and southwest by commercial properties. It is limited to the northwest and west by gardens and car parking areas.

The underlying geology is mapped as being part of the Bridgnorth Sandstone formation, a sedimentary bedrock formed between approximately 271 to 299 million years ago during the Permian period overlain by mixed alluviums of clay, silt, sands and gravels formed up to 2 million years ago in the Quaternary Period (BGS 2014). The site lies within an area mapped on the HER as being of Palaeolithic potential; the Power House Terrace deposits (WSM56943).

The study area (100m radius from the development site) lies in the historic core of Bewdley (WSM41593), and numerous listed and unlisted historic buildings stand in the vicinity.

Finds recorded in the region indicate that there has been human occupation here from the Bronze Age, Iron Age and Post Medieval periods (WSM40397).

Documentary evidence of a succession of bridges and crossing points and a gatehouse from the 15<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> centuries is recorded on the HER (WSM08161). The development site lies within an area of tenement plots fronting Load Street (WSM19351). It is within Bewdley conservation area and forms part of both the medieval (WSM19331) and post-medieval

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(WSM17642) street layouts. Bewdley Bridge (WSM11174) some 30m to the east was designed by Thomas Telford.

The site is marked as the Angel Inn on the OS 1<sup>st</sup> Edition map. Two long irregular rectangular buildings are shown fronting onto Load Street with a narrow passageway to the south west. It is not clear exactly which building is the Angel Inn, but the current development site is generally indicated.

On the 1903 map, several buildings are depicted irregularly clustered around a yard. Two buildings are shown to the north west of the site. A long narrow rectangular building abutted by a shorter one, front onto Load Street, with a passageway is shown to the south west.

## **4.2 Current land-use**

The Angel Inn is a former public house built in mock Tudor style. A tarmac area at the front was formerly a beer garden. The area to the rear of the building was formerly a yard.

## **5 Structural analysis**

The trenches and features recorded are shown in Fig 2. The results of the structural analysis are presented in Appendix 1.

### **5.1.1 Phase 1: Natural deposits**

A soft grey- green clay interpreted as natural alluvium (104) lay at the base of the foundation trench.

### **5.1.2 Phase 2: Post-Medieval deposits**

A wall foundation (105) was recorded c 3.5m south east of the return of the trench. The wall measured c 0.66m wide at the base and survived to a height of 0.44m. It was constructed of roughly hewn sandstone blocks/rubble, and bound with lime mortar with no tool marks evident on the blocks. The wall was oriented north east by south west, with a finer face to the north-west.

A later, rebuilding phase of the wall was also recorded (106) comprising bricks, tiles and rubble. This wall also had its finer face towards the north-west.

Two post holes with wooden posts (109 and 112) were recorded in the northern arm of the trench.

A later deposit of made ground (103) overlay the wall and constituted the majority of the sequence; it was comprised of dark grey-black ashy material containing oyster shells and clay pipe.

### **5.1.3 Phase 3: Modern deposits**

A surface of blue engineering bricks (102) was present at a depth of 0.24m across the trench. This was overlain by a layer of sand and hardcore which was in turn overlain by a layer of tarmac.

## **6 Artefactual analysis, by Derek Hurst**

The artefactual assemblage recovered is summarised in Tables 1 and 2.

The assemblage came from three stratified contexts and could be dated from the early post-medieval period onwards (see Table 1). Using pottery as an index of artefact condition, this was generally good with the only sherd showing a low level of abrasion.

period	material class	material class sub-type	object specific type	count
post-medieval	ceramic		pottery	1
post-medieval	ceramic		clay pipe	8
post-medieval	ceramic		brick	5
undated	shell			3
Totals				17

Table 1: Quantification of the assemblage

period	fabric code	fabric common name	count	weight(g)
post-medieval	78	Post-medieval red ware	1	2

Table 2 Quantification of the pottery by fabric

### Summary artefactual evidence by period

For the finds from individual features, including specific types of pottery, consult Tables 3 and 2 in that order and in combination.

#### Post-medieval

The finds assemblage was small and this limited its use for interpretation and dating of the site. However the three were broadly consistent in date as 17th–18th century. Though composed of ordinary domestic items the clay pipe was notable for all having makers' marks, of which three were legible as follows:

'BI'

'TH' (2 examples)

The pipe was very well made being well burnished and was most likely from Broseley in Shropshire (cf Higgins 1987), though Bewdley also had its own makers. The only pottery was a possible sherd from a tyg (small drinking vessel). The composition of the assemblage was particularly apt for a public house in the early 18th century, though whether this was the case was not ascertained in the course of this project.

context	material class	material subtype	object specific type	fabric code	count	start date	end date	tpq date range
103	ceramic		clay pipe		- 3	1690	1720	1690–1720
					- 1	1660	1680	
106	ceramic		brick		- 1	1700	1800	18thc
111	ceramic		brick		- 4	-	-	
111	ceramic		pottery	78	1	1500	1700	1500–1700

Table 3: Summary of context dating based on artefacts



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## 7 Synthesis

It is clear from map evidence that the former inn which stood on the street frontage was demolished in the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century and replaced by a building set back from the street. The sandstone wall and a later replacement may have formed a part of the original inn or a building related to it. The wall appeared to have been built to be viewed from the north-west and is therefore likely to have been the rear wall of the building,

Finds recovered from the site included fragments of clay pipe bowls as well as a possible sherd from a tyg, a small drinking vessel, which is consistent with the site's historic function as an inn.

## 8 Publication summary

Worcestershire Archaeology has a professional obligation to publish the results of archaeological projects within a reasonable period of time. To this end, Worcestershire Archaeology 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.

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## 9 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, Caroline Butler, CgMs Consulting and Mike Glyde, Historic Environment Planning Archaeologist with Worcestershire County Council.

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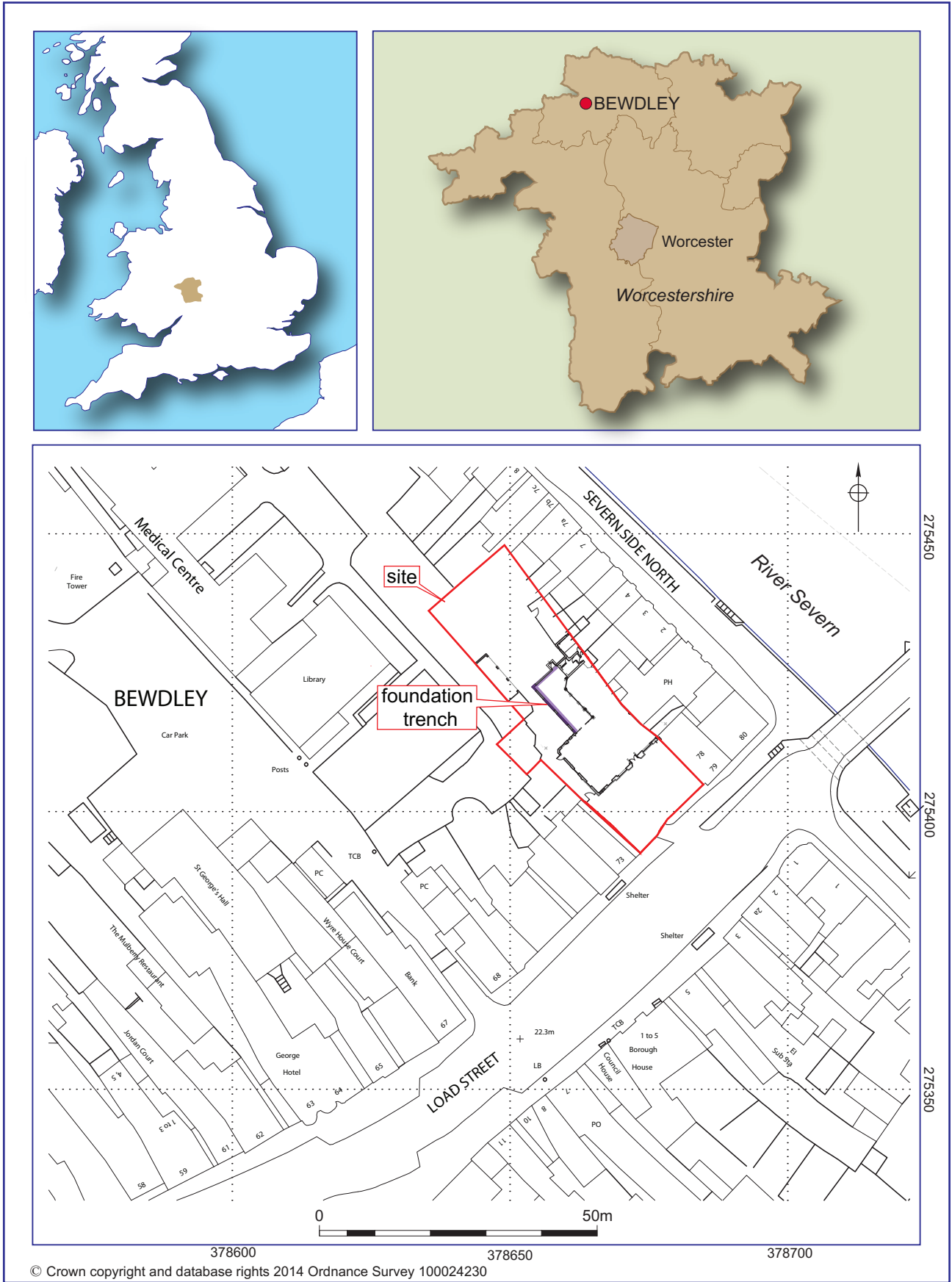
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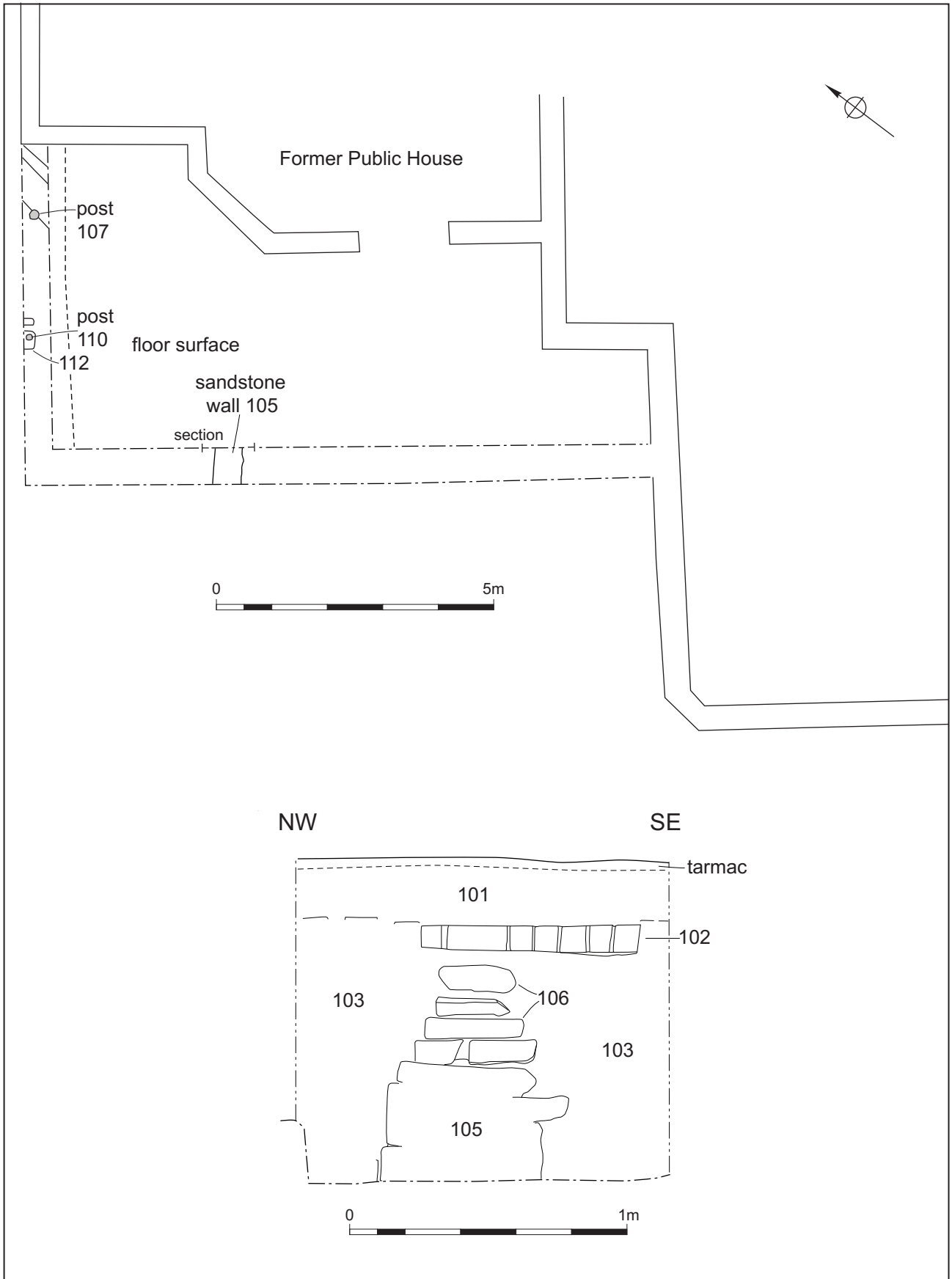


# Figures



Location of the site

Figure 1



Trench plan and section of wall 105

Figure 2

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## Plates



*Plate 1 Excavated trench viewed from the north west*



*Plate 2 Sandstone wall 105 viewed from the south west*

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*Plate 3 Sandstone wall 105 viewed from the north-east*



*Plate 4 Posthole 107 with packing viewed from the north west*

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## Appendix 1 Trench descriptions

### Trench 1

Maximum dimensions: L-shaped; Length: 11m north west by south east; 6m north east by south west Width: 0.60m Depth: 1.2m

#### Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
100	Tarmac	Hardstanding, parking surface.	0-0.08m
101	Sand and hardcore	Levelling layer beneath tarmac.	0.08-0.16m
102	Brick yard surface	Blue engineering bricks laid header to header. Brick dimensions 9" by 4.5" by 3".	0.24-0.32m
103	Made ground surface	Dark grey-black ashy made ground containing oyster shells and clay pipe.	0.32-0.90m
104	Natural	Soft grey-green clay; interpreted as natural alluvium.	0.90-1.2m
105	Stone wall	Wall constructed of roughly squared siltstone or red sandstone blocks (up to 0.40m long and 0.15m deep). Best face to north west. Light grey lime mortar bond	
106	Rebuilt wall	Brick, stone and tile rebuild of wall 105. Light grey soft lime mortar with white flecks. Best face to north west.	
107	Post	Wooden round post	
108	Fill; post packing	Fill around post, 107, very similar to 103, but contained clear post packing of brick.	
109	Cut for post 107		
110	Post		
111	Backfill of 112		
112	Cut for post 110	Appears to cut 104 but may have been cut from higher in the sequence.	



## **Appendix 2 Technical information**

### **The archive (site code: WSM 58044)**

The archive consists of:

- 2 Context records AS1
  - 3 Field progress reports AS2
  - 1 Photographic records AS3
  - 58 Digital photographs
  - 2 Scale drawings
  - 2 Trench record sheets AS41
  - 1 Box of finds
  - 1 CD-Rom/DVD
- 1 Copy of this report (bound hard copy)

The project archive is intended to be placed at:

Worcestershire County Museum  
Museums Worcestershire  
Hartlebury Castle  
Hartlebury  
Near Kidderminster  
Worcestershire DY11 7XZ  
Tel Hartlebury (01299) 250416

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