# EVALUATION AT BOWERY LODGE, MAIN STREET, SOUTH LITTLETON, WORCESTERSHIRE

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Illustrations by Carolyn Hunt

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Project 3777 Report 1911 WSM 46055

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# Archaeological evaluation at Bowery Lodge, Main Street, South Littleton, Worcestershire

# Jonathan Webster and Tom Vaughan

# Part 1 Project summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken on behalf of Mr and Mrs Thomassen-Telle, at Bowery Lodge, Main Street, South Littleton, Worcestershire (NGR SP 0759 4619).

Four trenches were excavated, amounting to just under 100m<sup>2</sup>. No significant archaeological features, layers, structures or deposits were identified, nor artefacts revealed. A small number of later 19th and 20th century features were recorded, including postholes which defined a fence line in the south-western part of the site; a well, pits and a concrete driveway in the north-eastern part.

The eastern part of the site had been truncated during construction of the former bungalow, into the natural lias, removing all but the deepest potential archaeological remains. No evidence was found for the Romano-British trackway, which was conjectured to cut through the south-west corner of the site. It is now considered to lie to the east of the site.

An accumulation of up to 1m of humic soils in the north-west corner is considered to be the result of deliberate dumping to level off the natural slope across the site. It is undated although probably dates to after the site was part of a larger field which contained an orchard in the later 19th century through to the 1950/60s.

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## Part 2 Detailed report

## Planning background

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at Bowery Lodge, Main Street (NGR SP 0759 4619), South Littleton, Worcestershire (Fig 1), on behalf of Mr and Mrs Thomassen-Telle. The Client intends to undertake residential redevelopment of the site with five houses and an associated access road for which two planning applications have been submitted to Wychavon District Council (reference W/10/0909 and W/10/2347).

The project conforms to the *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (IfA 2008), *Standards and guidelines for archaeological projects in Worcestershire* (HEAS 2010).

The project also conforms to a brief prepared by Mike Glyde, Historic Environment Planning Officer (HEAS 2011a) and for which a project proposal (including detailed specification) was produced (HEAS 2011b).

#### 2. Aims

The aims of this archaeological evaluation are:

- to describe and assesses the significance of the heritage asset with archaeological interest:
- to establish the nature, importance and extent of the archaeological site;
- to assess the impact of the application on the archaeological site;
- To clarify the potential alignment of the Roman Road and associated roadside activity;
- To identify Anglo-Saxon and medieval activity, including potential burials adjacent to the present churchyard boundary.

#### 3. Methods

#### 3.1 **Documentary search**

Prior to fieldwork commencing a search was made of the Historic Environment Record (HER). In addition to the sources listed in the bibliography the following were also consulted:

Cartographic sources

- 1<sup>st</sup> edition 1885 Ordnance Survey map, 25":1 mile
- 1904 Ordnance Survey map, 25":1 mile
- 1923 Ordinance Survey, 25":1 mile

#### 3.2 Fieldwork methodology

#### 3.2.1 Fieldwork strategy

A detailed specification has been prepared by the Service (HEAS 2011b).

Fieldwork was undertaken on the 15 and 19 March 2012. The site reference number and site code is WSM 46055.

Four trenches were excavated, amounting to 94.5m<sup>2</sup> in area. The location of the trenches is indicated in Figure 2. Due to practical and health and safety constraints (existing foundations, trees and site access, it was not possible to excavate the full compliment of trenching (150m<sup>2</sup>) as required in the Brief (HEAS 2011a, '4). Trench 12 was undertaken to investigate the street frontage and the potential continuation of the churchyard. Trench 2 was also located to investigate the possible continuation of the churchyard. Trench 3 was not targeted on any particular features. Trench 4 was placed as close as possible to the postulated line of a Romano-British trackway.

Deposits considered not to be significant were removed using a JCB wheeled excavator, employing a toothless bucket and under archaeological supervision. Subsequent excavation 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 Service practice (Worcestershire Archaeology 2012). On completion of excavation, trenches were reinstated by replacing the excavated material.

#### 3.2.2 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.

#### 3.3 **Artefact methodology**

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

#### 3.4 Statement of confidence in the methods and results

Although it was not possible to open approximately one third of the trenching, the results of the fieldwork allow a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved.

#### 4. Topographical and archaeological context

The site is located in the centre of the village of South Littleton, 4km north-east of Evesham. It lies at a height of roughly 39m AOD, rising gently from east to west. It is bounded to the north by St Michael's church and churchyard, to the east by Main Street, to the south and west by domestic properties. At present the site is a combination of wasteland and garden, with extensive tree cover, associated with Bowery Lodge to the south-east.

The underlying geology is mapped as Blue Lias and Charmouth mudstones of the Jurassic era (BGS 1974).

Before fieldwork took place a search of the Worcestershire Historic Environment Record (HER) was carried out and looked in detail at a radius of 500m from the centre of the proposed development along with a more general broad brush search further afield.

The earliest evidence of activity in the area is a tanged and barbed flint arrowhead (WSM 22106) found in the garden of Bowery Cottage to the immediate west of the site. A second flint arrowhead (WSM 34639) has been found to the immediate south, near Bowery House. 500m to the west of the site an Iron Age settlement (WSM 40866) has been identified north of

Long Hyde Road. Although not excavated, a large surface scatter of material has been recovered, including pottery, spindle whorls, a saddle quern, glass beads, burnt daub and animal bone all indicative of fairly substantial settlement activity.

Whilst no Romano-British settlement activity has been identified in or around South Littleton, the village is thought to be located on the junction of Ryknild Street, which is conjectured to run roughly along the line of Shinehill Lane to the north of Bowery Lodge, and the Romano-British trackway between Bidford and Bretforton. The latter is thought to run through the south-west corner of the present site.

The settlement of South Littleton (WSM 24533) is thought to have its origins in the early medieval period and several medieval buildings and structures still survive to this day. Of particular note is the moated manor house (WSM 02802) in the north-east of the village, roughly 400m east of the investigation area, and the recreational ground to the west that contains evidence of medieval ridge and furrow. The building of most importance in relationship to the current site is St Michael's church (WSM 02801) located to the immediate north of the site. The earliest known fabric in the building dates the construction of the nave and its dedication in 1204AD. The North Transept was added around 1330. The tower and floor tiles date to the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

The development area was part of a larger field which contained an orchard from at least the later 19<sup>th</sup> century through to the late 1950/60s (Mr Thomassen-Telle pers comm). The 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map of 1885 and subsequent editions indicate that most of the fields around the village were orchards.

Few intrusive archaeological works have been undertaken in the area. An evaluation was undertaken in 1997 (WSM 25997) ahead of the construction of the domestic properties that bound the west boundary of the proposed development. This revealed a shallow irregular hollow that contained small abraded sherds of 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> century pottery, along with traces of ridge and furrow earthworks. This was concluded to represent medieval quarrying in an area of open fields. A second archaeological site of note was located further west, in the area of the current recreational grounds during the construction of the new play areas in 1999 (WSM 34309). This revealed a buried soil that contained Romano-British pottery sealed by medieval ridge and furrow that was itself covered by rubbish relating to a World War Two prisoner of war camp.

#### 5. **Results**

#### 5.1 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

The natural geology comprised silty clays that overlay a weathered blue lias, between 37.11m and 38.02m AOD.

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

The earliest features were noted in Trench 4. They comprised a line of at least three postholes that appeared to demarcate a former fence, and underlay 20<sup>th</sup> century floor surface 401 (see below; Plate 1). All of the postholes were of the same dimensions measuring 0.3m by 0.3m and descended to a depth of 36.96m AOD. Whilst the fill 404 of posthole [405] contained a large quantity of burnt material, the general make up of the fills comprised a light blue-grey clay that contained small fragments of concrete and a single piece of highly abraded transfer

print willow pattern pottery fragment (not retained). It is considered that these postholes are of later 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century origin.

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

Floor surface 401 in Trench 4 was constructed using large hand-sized sub-rounded cobbles placed in a knucklebone floor pattern to create a hard wearing tightly packed floor surface that was used as the floor to a cattle shed or barn until the late 1960s when it fell into disuse (Mr Thomassen-Telle pers comm). It was visible at the top of the trench, and was bedded into subsoil, 402.

A well [106] was revealed in the north-west end of Trench 1 (Fig 2). It measured 1.9m in diameter and was constructed using flat roughly hewn stone slabs bonded together with concrete. Filled with modern rubbish it was not excavated to its full depth, however Mr Thomassen-Telle stated that it measured 9 foot (2.74m) in depth.

It was determined that much of the area of Trench 1 had been truncated down to the level of the natural by the construction of a bungalow that was built roughly 15 years ago by the current landowners brother and recently demolished ahead of the current program of development works (Mr Thomassen-Telle pers comm). Construction cut [110] was vertical sided, machine dug and then filled with domestic waste, ceramic building material (CBM) and general building detritus. This was then sealed by an east to west aligned brick and stone wall foundation, 104, that survived to a height of 0.45m (3 courses). Two metres to the south of the well a second pit [108] was noted measuring 0.85m in diameter and to a depth of 0.24m (37.64m AOD). This pit was filled with modern material and is thought to relate to the construction of the former bungalow.

Well [106] and pit [108] were sealed by deposit 102, a modern make up deposit that contained building debris, CBM, concrete, metal and part of an old bicycle (Plate 3). This deposit butted wall 104 and was sealed by a modern concrete driveway surface, 103, that was 0.2m thick and was constructed at the same time as the former bungalow.

#### 5.1.4 Phase 4: Undated deposits

A thick humic 'garden' soil was noted in Trenches 2 and 3, becoming progressively shallower to the south from a thickness of 0.98m at the north end of Trench 2, to 0.65m at the south of Trench 3 (Plate 2). The varying depth of this deposit is considered to be the result of deliberate landscaping to reduce the original gradient of the underlying natural that was noted directly underlying this deposit and was seen to be sloping to both the west and south (see above). Unfortunately no dating evidence was recovered to help date the accumulation of this material.

#### 6. **Synthesis**

No significant archaeological features, layers, structures or deposits were revealed, nor artefacts recovered. There was no evidence for the continuation of prehistoric activity identified elsewhere to extend within the development site, nor for the Romano-British trackway postulated to cross the south-west corner. Although located within the centre of the village which is thought to have Anglo-Saxon origins, there was no evidence of Anglo-Saxon or medieval activity.

All the dateable activity that was observed dated to the 19<sup>th</sup> century or later. Within Trench 4 the postholes may relate to the fence, and the cobble floor appears to relate to the building (a barn or cow shed), indicated on the early Ordnance Survey maps.

The construction of a previous bungalow in the eastern half of the site involved truncation down into the natural. This would have removed all but the deepest archaeological deposits.

In contrast, in the west and south of the site an undisturbed sequence of topsoil, subsoil and natural was observed, indicating that very little activity has occurred. It would appear that either the Romano-British trackway was very ephemeral, or that the route did not in fact cross the site at all, but lies elsewhere. As no trace of it was revealed during previous archaeological investigations on the plot to the west, the track may lie to the east of the present site.

Although no dateable material was recovered within it, the accumulation of deep 'garden' soils in Trenches 2 and 3 is conjectured to represent post-medieval activity to raise the ground surface level.

# 7. **Significance**

#### Significance of a heritage asset with archaeological interest

The aim of an archaeological evaluation is to provide the client and the planning authority (and its advisors) with sufficient information to assess the significance of a heritage asset with archaeological interest, in line with *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment* (DCLG 2010: Policy HE6). More detailed guidance on assessing the significance of site with archaeological interest is set out in the *Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide*, which advises that an on-site evaluation should establish the nature, importance and extent of the archaeological interest in order to provide sufficient evidence for confident prediction of the impact of the proposal (DCLG/DCMS/EH 2010: Section 5, Development Management).

#### 7.2 **Assessment of significance**

The on-site evaluation has provided new evidence on a site with archaeological interest. As a result, an assessment of the significance of this site can be made in terms of the nature, importance and extent of the archaeological interest.

Nature of the archaeological interest in the site

Archaeological remains of later post-medieval to modern date were revealed, relating to agricultural and domestic use of the site from the later 19<sup>th</sup> century and later.

Relative importance of the archaeological interest in the site

No significant archaeological remains were revealed, nor artefacts recovered.

Physical extent of the archaeological interest in the site

Much of the eastern part of the site had been truncated during the construction of a bungalow in the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and as such all but the deepest potential archaeological remains in this area will have been lost. All features observed in this area were of later 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century date.

Within the north-west area a deep 'garden' soil was present, which overlay a largely undisturbed sequence of topsoil and subsoil, over the natural across the western half generally. There does not appear to have been any substantial disturbance of this part of the site, although the only feature identified are of later 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century date.

#### 7.3 Assessment of the impact of the proposal

The on-site evaluation, and the information provided by the Client, allows an assessment to be made of the potential impact of the proposed development on the archaeological interest in the site

Given the results of the evaluation trenches as described above, it is considered that there is a very low potential for significant archaeological remains to exist on the site. Therefore the groundworks associated with the development are not considered to be likely to have a negative impact on any remains of significance.

## 8. **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.

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## 9. Acknowledgements

The Service would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, Mr and Mrs Thomassen-Telle, Neil Shepherd, (Neil Shepherd Design Ltd), and Mike Glyde (Historic Environment Planning Officer, Worcestershire County Council).

#### 10. **Personnel**

The fieldwork and report preparation was led by Jonathan Webster. The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Tom Vaughan. Fieldwork was undertaken by Jonathan Webster and illustration by Carolyn Hunt.

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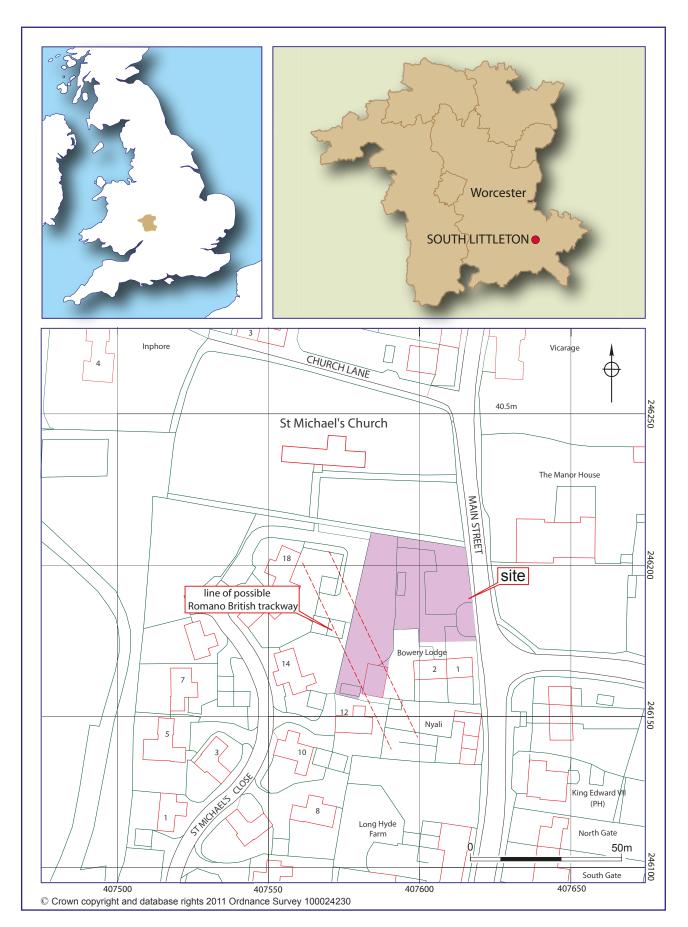
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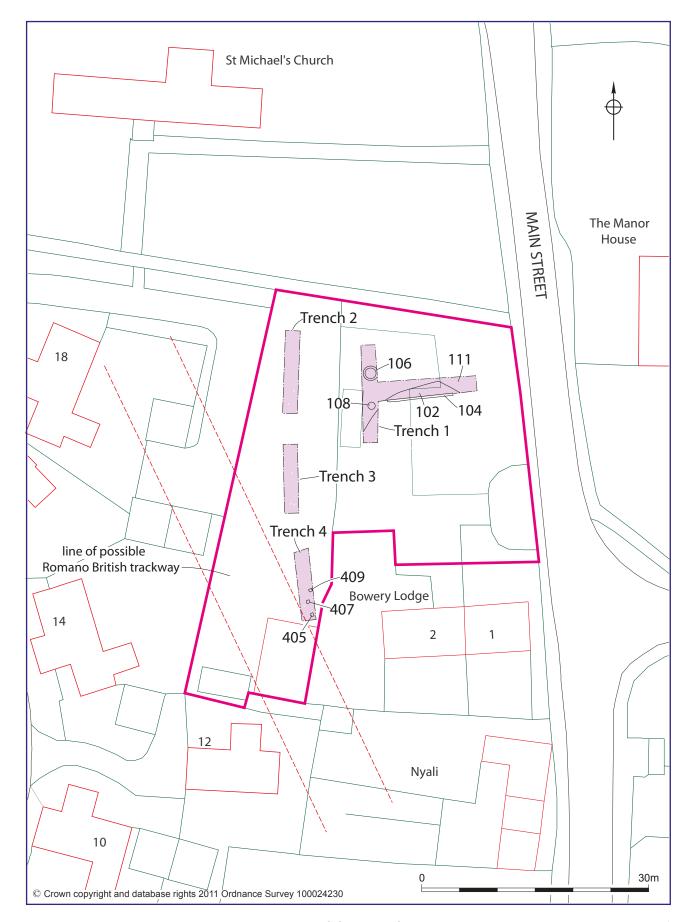
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# **Figures**



Location of the site

Figure 1



Trench location plan

Figure 2

# **Plates**



Plate 1: Post-medieval postholes in Trench 4, looking north



Plate 2: Trench 2 showing thick subsoil, looking north



Plate 3: Section through layer 102, looking east

# Appendix 1 Trench descriptions

#### Trench 1

Maximum dimensions: Length: 29m Width: 1.60m Depth: 0.74-1.04m

Orientation: T-shaped north to south and east to west

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
101	Topsoil/ demolition	Modern demolition and topsoil mix. CBM, concrete fragments, metal and plastic throughout with occasional rounded to angular cobbles	0.00-0.40m
102	Layer	Modern demolition mixed in a silt rich sand. Contains modern refuse and building materials	0.40-0.95m+
103	Concrete driveway	Modern concrete driveway	0.00-0.20m
104	Wall	Brick and stone wall orientated east/west. Foundation course for bungalow built in 1997 and demolished ahead of current development	0.00-0.45m
105	Fill of [106]	Dark blue-brown silty sand with very frequent CBM, concrete fragments and general modern refuse throughout. Well structure built from roughly hewn stone blocks bonded with a light grey concrete bonding	0.74m+
[106]	Cut of well	1.9m in diameter, circular with vertical sides. Known to descend roughly 9ft (2.74m)	0.74-3.48m
107	Fill of [108]	Dark blue-brown silty sand with frequent charcoal flecks, CBM, concrete fragments and modern refuse throughout.	0.76-1.00m
[108]	Cut of pit	Regular rounded feature 0.85m in diameter with vertical sides dropping onto a slightly concaved base.	0.76-1.00m
109	Void	Void	n/a
[110]	Cut for bungalow	Large vertical sided machine cut area filled by layer 102	0.41-0.95m+
111	Natural substrate	Mid reddish yellow silty clays on top of a degraded blue lias that appears to have been subjected to weathering.	0.74m+ (east end) 0.95m+ (elsewhere)

Trench 2

Maximum dimensions: Length: 11m Width: 1.60m Depth: 1.04m

Orientation: north to south

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
201	Topsoil	Dark bluish brown humic soils with frequent gravel inclusions throughout. Becoming shallower to the south	0.00-0.56m (north) 0.00-0.48m (south)
202	Subsoil	Mid yellowish red silty clays with occasional charcoal flecks throughout along with occasional root action and angular to sub rounded cobbles throughout.	0.56-0.98m
203	Natural substrate	Mid reddish yellow silty clays on top of a degraded blue lias that appears to have been subjected to weathering.	0.98m+

#### Trench 3

Maximum dimensions: Length: 9m Width: 1.60m Depth: 0.70m

Orientation: north to south

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
301	Demolition layer	Modern reclamation layer filled with concrete fragments, CBM, domestic rubbish and metal fragments throughout.	0.00-0.21m
302	Subsoil	Mid yellowish red silty clays with occasional charcoal flecks throughout along with occasional root action and angular to sub rounded cobbles throughout.	0.21-0.66m
303	Natural substrate	Mid reddish yellow silty clays on top of a degraded blue lias that appears to have been subjected to weathering.	0.66m+

#### Trench 4

Maximum dimensions: Length: 10m Width: 1.60m Depth: 0.64-0.85m

Orientation: north to south

Main deposit description

Main deposit description				
Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits	
401	Surface	Former barn surface constructed using hand sized cobbles placed end on to produce a substantial well wearing surface. Part of building that was upstanding till the latter part of the 20 <sup>th</sup> century	0.00-0.22m	
402	Subsoil	Mid yellowish red silty clays with occasional charcoal flecks throughout along with occasional root action and angular to sub rounded cobbles throughout.	0.22-0.64m	
403	Natural	Mid reddish yellow silty clays on top of a degraded blue lias that appears to have been subjected to weathering.	0.64m+	
404	Fill of [405]	Mid greyish brown silty clay with high percentage of charcoal fragments and flecks throughout	0.64-0.85m	
[405]	Cut of posthole	Regular squared posthole measuring 0.30m by 0.30m with vertical sides coming down to a steep sided V shaped base	0.64-0.85m	
406	Fill of [407]	Light blue-grey clay and silt mix with occasional charcoal inclusions throughout	0.64-0.85m	
[407]	Cut of posthole	Regular squared posthole measuring 0.30m by 0.30m with vertical sides coming down to a steep sided V shaped base	0.64-0.85m	
408	Fill of [409]	Light blue-grey clay and silt mix with occasional charcoal inclusions throughout	0.64-0.85m	
[409]	Cut of posthole	Regular squared posthole measuring 0.30m by 0.30m with vertical sides coming down to a steep sided V shaped base	0.64-0.85m	

# Appendix 2 Technical information

# The archive (site code: WSM 46055)

The archive consists of:

- 2 Field progress reports AS2
- 1 Photographic records AS3
- 59 Digital photographs
- 2 Scale drawings
- 4 Trench record sheets AS41
- 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

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