

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING  
BRIEF  
AT  
NEW HOUSE, 1 ABBERTON  
ROAD, BISHAMPTON,  
WORCESTERSHIRE



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Worcestershire Archaeology  
Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service  
The Hive  
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# Contents

## Summary

1

## Report

<b>1 Background .....</b>	<b>2</b>
1.1 Reasons for the project .....	2
<b>2 Aims .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3 Methods .....</b>	<b>2</b>
3.1 Personnel .....	2
3.2 Documentary research .....	2
3.3 List of sources consulted .....	2
3.4 Fieldwork strategy .....	3
3.5 Structural analysis .....	3
<b>4 The application site .....</b>	<b>3</b>
4.1 Topography, geology and archaeological context .....	3
4.2 Current land-use .....	3
<b>5 Structural analysis .....</b>	<b>3</b>
5.1.1 Phase 1: Natural deposits .....	3
5.1.2 Phase 2: Medieval/post-medieval? .....	3
5.1.3 Phase 3: modern deposits .....	3
<b>6 Synthesis .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>7 Publication summary .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>8 Acknowledgements .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>9 Bibliography .....</b>	<b>4</b>



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## **Archaeological Watching Brief at New House, 1 Abberton Road, Bishampton, Worcestershire**

Author Andrew Walsh

### **Summary**

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at New House, 1 Abberton Road, Bishampton, Worcestershire (NGR 9907 5174). It was undertaken on behalf of Julie Wycherly, who intends to construct a two storey extension to the front of New House for which a planning permission has been granted, subject to conditions including a programme of archaeological works.

Historic maps show that two arms of a medieval moated site were located to the south and east of New House. During the excavation of the footing trench part of the moat was exposed and recorded. Given the location of trench and the position of known sections of the moat, it is likely that this was part of the western side of the moat, and that the medieval site probably measured around 70m from east to west. Fragments of brick suggest the western arm of the moat was filled in during the mid to late 18<sup>th</sup> century and certainly prior to 1795 when the area was known as 'Mud Piece' on an Inclosure map. The upper fill of the exposed moat was, however, modern in date and it is therefore probable that until 1976, the western arm of the moat survived as a slight earthwork which held no water and was backfilled to provide a level surface for construction of New House.

## **Report**

### **1 Background**

#### **1.1 Reasons for the project**

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at New House, 1 Abberton Road, Bishampton, Worcestershire (NGR 9907 5174). It was commissioned by Julie Wycherly, who intends to construct a two storey extension to the front of New House for which planning permission has been approved by Wychavon District Council (reference W/13/0245) subject to conditions including a programme of archaeological works.

The proposed development site is considered to include a heritage asset with archaeological interest, the significance of which may be affected by the application (WSM03006).

The project conforms to a brief prepared by Mike Glyde (Glyde 2013) and for which a project proposal (including detailed specification) was produced (WA 2013).

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

The event reference for this project, given by the HER is WSM48249.

### **2 Aims**

The aims of the archaeological watching brief were to:

- Observe all ground breaking activities
- Record all deposits exposed by groundworks
- Record the extent and depth of the groundworks
- Record all finds and environmental material recovered during the groundworks

### **3 Methods**

#### **3.1 Personnel**

The project was managed and undertaken by Tom Rogers BA MSc, who joined Worcestershire Archaeology in 2005 and has been practicing archaeology since 1994. The report was written by Andrew Walsh BSc MSc IfA FSA Scot, and the illustrations were prepared by Carolyn Hunt.

#### **3.2 Documentary research**

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

#### **3.3 List of sources consulted**

##### *Cartographic sources*

- 1795 Bishampton Inclosure map
- 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS map 1888 (1:10560)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> edition OS map 1905 (1:10560)
- 5th edition OS map 1954-63 (1:10560)

##### *Aerial photographs*

None consulted

##### *Documentary sources*

Published and grey literature sources are listed in the bibliography.

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### 3.4 Fieldwork strategy

A detailed specification was prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2012). The watching brief was undertaken on the 13<sup>th</sup> May 2013 and the site reference number and site code is WSM48249.

One L-shaped trench, measuring approximately 9.2m in length by 0.8m width was excavated to a depth of 1.1m to the front (southern edge) of New House to partially replace a demolished garage. The western arm of the foundation trench was not monitored as this area had been substantially disturbed by the garage foundation. The location of the trench is shown in Figure 2. The trench was excavated by mechanical excavator. Surfaces were inspected and 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 and artefactual evidence, allied to the information derived from other sources.

## 4 The application site

### 4.1 Topography, geology and archaeological context

New House is located on the east side of the village of Bishampton, at a height of approximately 40m AOD. Geologically, the site is situated on Wasperton sand and gavel member overlying Charmouth mudstone (BGS 2013).

The site lies to the east of the medieval core of Bishampton and immediately northwest of the remains of a medieval moated site (WSM03006), which survived as an earthwork until 1976 (fig. 3). The field on which the site is located is called 'Mud Piece' on the Inclosure map of 1795. The conjectured route of a Saxon road (WSM30402) has been identified immediately east of the site.

### 4.2 Current land-use

The site lay in the garden to the front of New House, a residential property.

## 5 Structural analysis

The trench location is shown in Figure 2. The results of the structural analysis are presented in Appendix 1.

### 5.1.1 Phase 1: Natural deposits

The earliest deposit identified during the works was a mid-brown sandy gravel (106) with frequent large river rolled cobbles, which was visible in patches at the base of the trench (c. 1.1m below the ground surface).

### 5.1.2 Phase 2: Medieval/post-medieval?

Above (106) was a homogenous blue grey clay (105) with occasional ceramic inclusions. This deposit was only visible in the south east corner of the trench and was interpreted as either the silting of the moat or possibly a clay lining. Above (105) was a dark grey to black silty clay (104) with brick fragments, which had a distinctive organic odour. Two of the fragments were of unfrogged brick measuring 4 inches in width by 2½ inches in thick, typical of stock bricks from the mid to late 18<sup>th</sup> century (D. Williams pers comm). Other fragments were small and undiagnostic but a small section of land drain was also noted. This deposit was interpreted as moat infill.

### 5.1.3 Phase 3: modern deposits

Above (104) was a dark grey to black silty clay (103) with brick, tile, rounded cobbles and modern material including a brush, which was visible across the entire trench at a depth of 0.12m-0.6m

below the present ground surface. This was interpreted as modern moat backfill, probably dating to 1976 when the remainder of the moat was backfilled. Above deposit (103) was a layer of imported sand (101) measuring 0.04m in depth, overlaid by a concrete slab (101) measuring 0.08m in depth.

## 6 Synthesis

Historic mapping indicates that two elongated ponds, which survived until 1976, formed the southern and eastern arms of a medieval moated site. The watching brief at New House identified a sequence of deposits which appear consistent with the infill of a moat or ditch. Given the location of the site it would appear that the works exposed part of the western arm of the moat, which runs under New House on a north-south alignment. This would give an east to west width for the moat of approximately 70m. The upper fill of the moat was clearly modern in date and it is therefore probable that until 1976, the western arm of the moat survived as a slight earthwork which held no water and was backfilled to provide a level surface for construction of New House.

No earlier activity was identified during the watching brief.

## 7 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.

*An archaeological watching brief was undertaken on behalf of Julie Wycherly at New House, 1 Abberton Road, Bishampton, Worcestershire (NGR SO 9907 5174; HER ref WSM48249) during the excavation of a footing trench. Historic mapping recorded that two arms of a medieval moated site were located to the south and east of New House. During the excavation of the footing trench part of the moat was exposed and recorded. Given the location of trench and the position of known sections of the moat, it is likely that this was part of the western side of the moat, and that the medieval site probably measured around 70m from east to west. Fragments of brick suggest the western arm of the moat was filled in during the mid to late 18<sup>th</sup> century and certainly prior to 1795 when the area was known as 'Mud Piece' on an Inclosure map. The upper fill of the moat was however modern in date and it is therefore probable that until 1976, the western arm of the moat survived as a slight earthwork which held no water and was backfilled to provide a level surface for construction of New House.*

## 8 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, Julie Wycherly (the client) for commissioning this work, Aisling Nash of Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service for undertaking the HER search and the curator, Mike Glyde.

## 9 Bibliography

BGS 2013 Geology of Britain viewer, British Geological Survey, <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html> (accessed 30/05/13)

IfA 2008 *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief*, Institute for Archaeologists  
Glyde, M 2013 *Requirements for a programme of archaeological work at New House, 1 Abberton Road, Bishampton, Worcestershire*, Archive and Archaeology Service, Worcestershire County Council

WA 2012 *Manual of service practice, recording manual*, Worcestershire Archaeology, Worcestershire County Council, report **1842**



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WA 2013 *Proposal for an archaeological watching brief at New House, 1 Abberton Road, Bishampton, Worcestershire*, Worcestershire Archaeology, Worcestershire County Council, unpublished document dated 30<sup>th</sup> April 2013, P4126

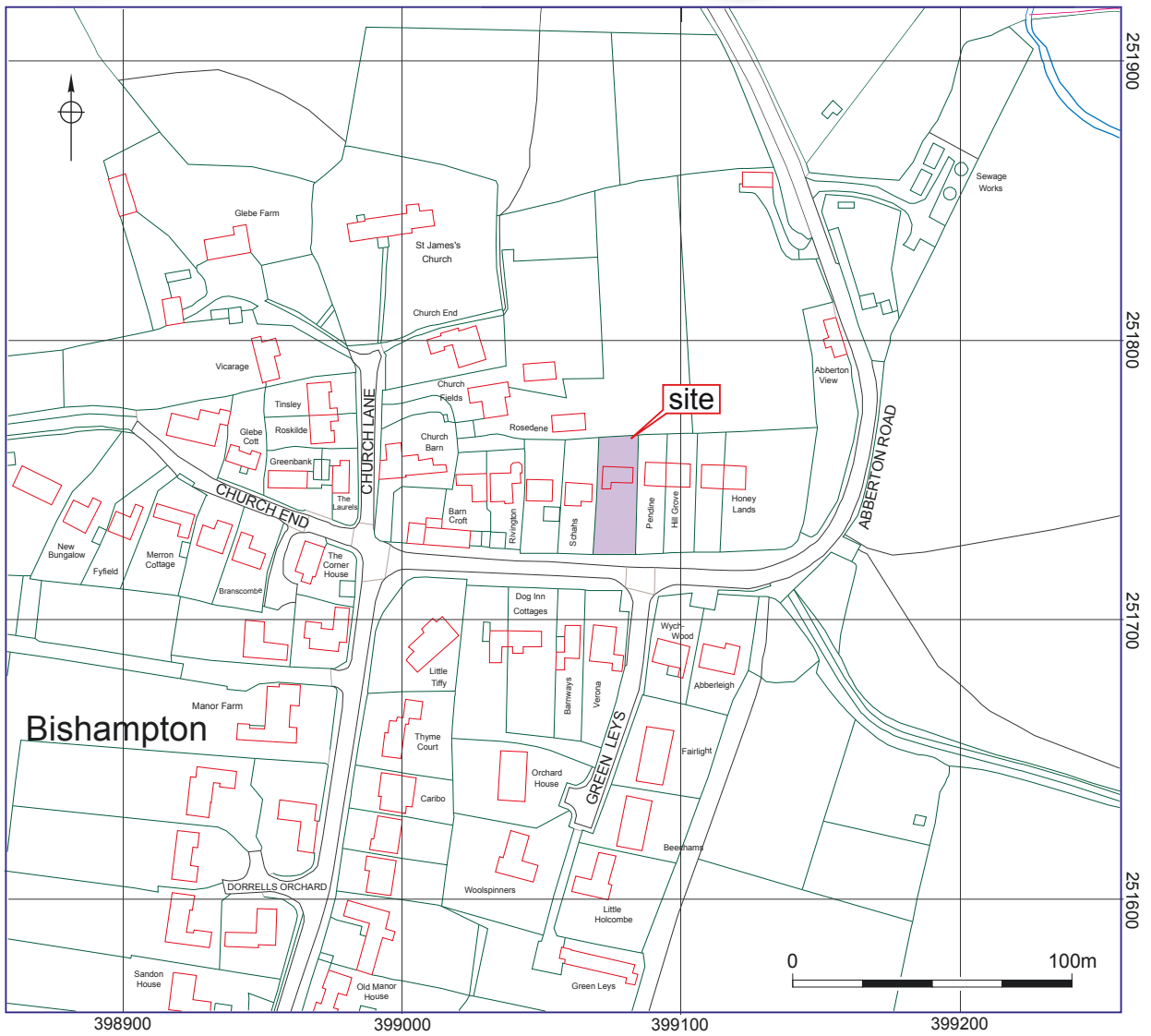
WCC 2010 *Standards and guidelines for archaeological projects in Worcestershire*, Planning Advisory Section, Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service, Worcestershire County Council unpublished report **604**, amended July 2012





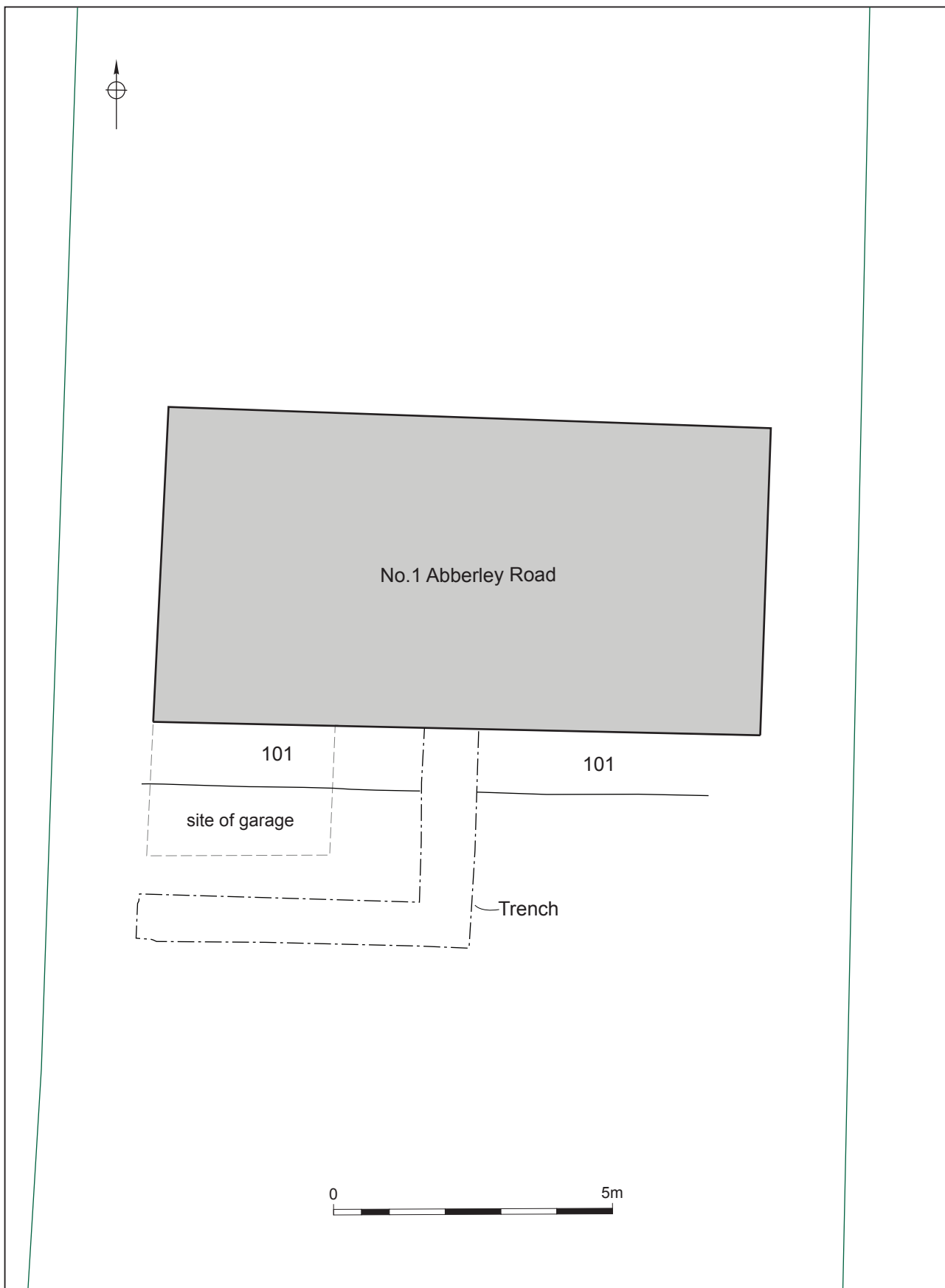
**Figures**

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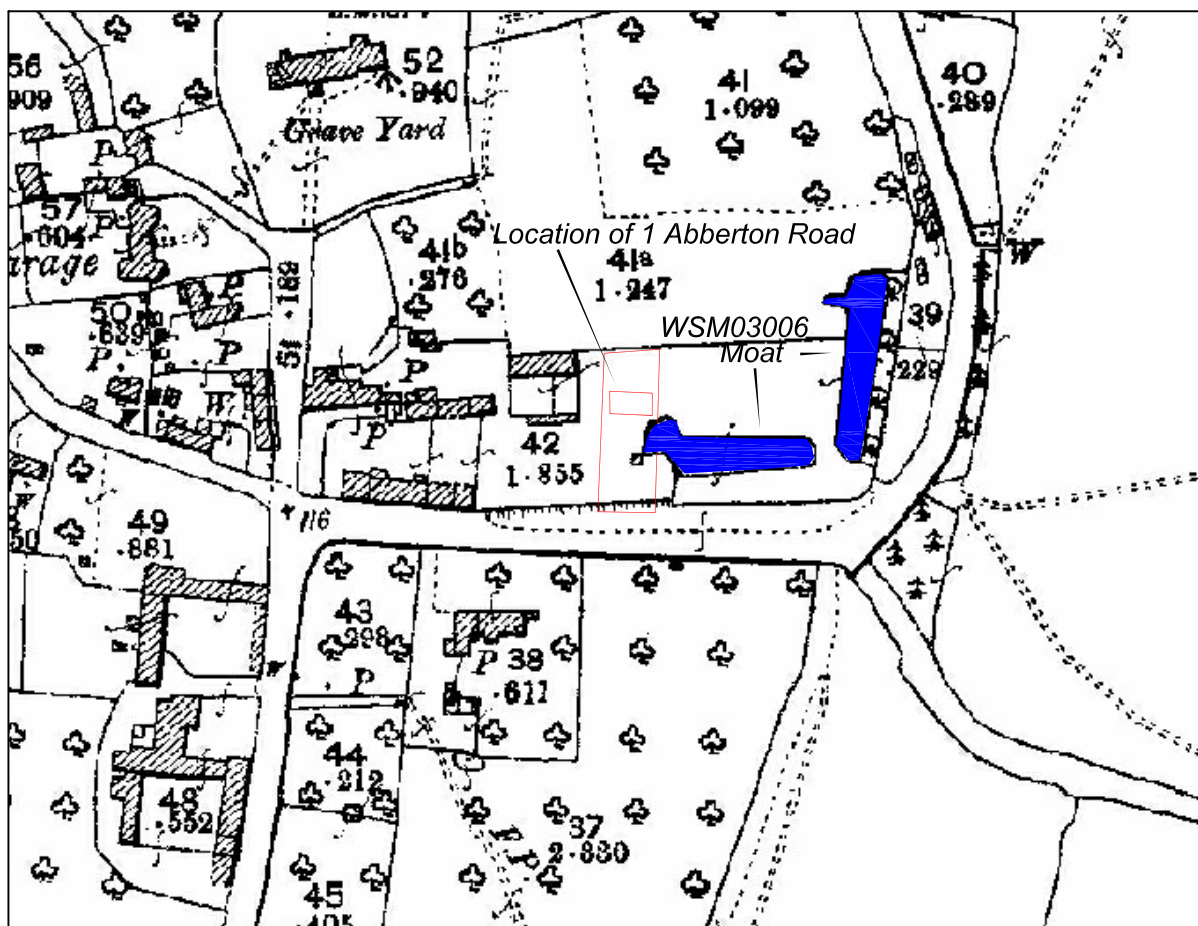
Location of the site

Figure 1



*Location of the trench*

*Figure 2*



Annotated 2nd edition OS map (1905)

Figure 3

## Plates



Plate 1 the site from the south-east



Plate 2, Eastern arm of foundation trench, facing north





Plate 4, West facing section of  
foundation trench

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## Appendix 1 Trench description

Maximum dimensions: Length: 9.2m Width: 0.8m Depth: 1.1m

Orientation: East-west/north-south (L-shaped trench)

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
101	Concrete	Concrete	0-0.08m
102	Layer	Imported sand	0.08m-0.12m
103	Layer/fill?	Dark grey to black silty clay, with fragments of brick, tile and rounded cobbles	0.12m-0.60m
104	Fill	Dark grey to black silty clay with brick fragments. Distinctive organic odour.	0.60m-1.10m
105	Fill?	Blue grey clay with occasional inclusions visible in SE corner of the trench	1.10m
106	Natural?	Mid-brown sandy gravel with frequent large river worn cobbles	1.10m

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## **Appendix 2 Technical information**

The archive (site code: WSM 48249)

The archive consists of:

- 1 Field progress reports AS2
- 1 Photographic records AS3
- 1 Site drawing sheet AS34
- 2 Trench record sheets AS41
- 1 Box of finds
- 1 CD-Rom/DVDs
- 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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