

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING
BRIEF
AT
MANOR LANE, BRETORTON,
WORCESTERSHIRE

James Goad BA AIFA

Illustrated by Carloyn Hunt

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Worcestershire County Council

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Project 2590
Report 1259
WSM 33612

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Background information

<i>Client</i>	Mr J Hettich
<i>Site address</i>	No 5 Manor Lane, Bretforton
<i>National Grid reference</i>	SO 409115 243857
<i>Sites and Monuments Record reference</i>	WCM 29827
<i>Planning authority</i>	Wychavon District Council
<i>reference</i>	W/04/0401
<i>Brief</i>	HEAS 2004a
<i>Project design</i>	HEAS 2004b
<i>Project parameters</i>	IFA 1999

Previous archaeological work on the site

There has been no previous archaeological work undertaken on site.

Topographical, historical and archaeological background on associated sites

The soils of the area have been classified as well-drained calcereous and non-calcereous fine loamy soils over limestone gravel, of the Badsey 1 Association, some of which may be affected by groundwater (Beard *et al* 1986).

The village of Bretforton lies some four kilometres to the east of Evesham. The place name Bretforton – “the tun at bred-ford” is Old English or Anglo-Saxon meaning the farmstead, estate or settlement (tun) by the planked ford or planked bridge (bred-ford; Watson 1990).

There have been a number of surface finds of Roman pottery and coins in the fields around the village, indicating settlements existed in the Roman period and farming took place here (Watson 1990).

Bretforton is first documented as an estate in the Vale of Evesham given to the newly founded Benedictine monastery there in around 705. The village became properly established during the late Anglo-Saxon period (850-1066), when rural populations became more concentrated in villages rather than scattered farmsteads (Watson 1990). There is some mention of a Saxon church on the site of St Leonards Church, which is believed to have been erected in the mid 8th century (St Leonards Church pamphlet). This was obviously built to serve an existing community. Bretforton is mentioned in the Domesday Book as a sub-unit to the manors of Offenham and Wickhamford, and belonging to the Abbey of Evesham (VCH II, 360). The present church is first mentioned as a chapel in 1206 in the *Chronicles of Evesham*, and in the *Lay Subsidy Roll* as a church (VCH II, 364).

The area has been subject to limited archaeological investigation in the past in the form of an evaluation along with building recording on Main Street and St Leonards Church. An evaluation (WSM 30162) to the north of the village in 2000 identified archaeological remains of an agricultural nature in the form of ridge and furrow. These potentially date to the late medieval or early post-medieval periods. A pit or hollow was also found containing wood fragments and a corroded sickle (Lockett 2000). A building recording survey was undertaken at 27, Main Street in 2003. This survey discovered that a cruck structure originally stood on the site in the early 14th century. This appears to have been partially demolished and replaced by a timber-framed structure comprising, originally, three separate cottages of a one-up-one-down pattern. These were subsequently remodelled and rebuilt over the centuries until the mid 19th century when they were joined to form a single unit (Cook 2003). The watching brief at St Leonard’s Church did not reveal deposits of any

significance. The building recording allowed elements of the structure to be recorded prior to a repair programme (Godbehere and Hunt 1995).

Aims

The aim of the building recording was to observe and record archaeological deposits, and to determine their extent, state of preservation, date and type, as far as reasonably possible.

Methods

General specification for watching briefs	CAS 1995
Sources consulted	SMR Sources cited by the SMR List maps, air photos, bibliographic references
Date(s) of fieldwork	21 st June 2004
Area of deposits observed	c 28m ² . Indicated on Figure 2
Dimensions of excavated areas observed	Foundations length 6.50m width 0.55m depth 0.90m

Access to or visibility of structure

Observation of the excavated area was possible after machine excavation. The machining was undertaken using a tracked 360 degree mini-digger with a 0.55m toothed bucket. A small area earmarked for the house extension was stripped of topsoil and a semi-rectangular footing trench excavated. 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 descriptions

Context	Description	Date	Interpretation	Depth (below ground level)
1	Mid grey loose silty sand, of variable depth throughout the area. Occasional small rounded stone inclusions		Topsoil	0-0.40m
2	Dark grey silty sand	Modern	Backfilled topsoil within cut 3. Modern in date as had supporting plank for strut of neighbouring telegraph pole	0.30-1.20m

3	BST-Sharp Sides-Straight BSB-Sharp Base-Flat Located adjacent to wall of cottage	Modern	Pit filled by context 2. Possibly association with telegraph pole	0.30-1.20m
4	Loose light brown sand		Layer of natural material	0.20-0.57m
5	Loose light brown sandy gravels		Layer of natural	0.57m-
6	Mixed redeposited material		Partly topsoil mixed with churned up material from building side	0-0.10m
7	Sticky mid grey clay with occasional charcoal lumps		Fill of pit 8	0.10-0.54m
8	BST-Gradual Sides-Concave BSB-Gradual Base-Concave	Post-med/modern	Pit filled by fill 7. Quite defined in section. Not visible in opposing section. Not dateable	0.10-0.54m
9	Sticky blue grey clay		Layer, natural seam of clay?	0.56-0.72m
10	Loose light brown sandy gravels		Natural layer	0.05m-
11	Light brown friable sandy clay		Natural layer	0.10m-

Discussion

The groundworks excavated for the extension to the cottages revealed mostly a series of natural layers underneath the topsoil, which was itself variable in depth across the area. The layers of natural deposits were cut into by two pits. The first pit was adjacent to the location of a telegraph pole on the property and included a wooden board with supporting strut. This was clearly a pit for telegraph pole stay line. The second pit (8) was located on the southern side of the extension. The pit was filled with a charcoally clay deposit but unfortunately no dateable artefacts were recovered from the fill to date the pit. The feature only appeared in one section of the footing trench.

Given the area of the cottage extension the groundworks seem to have had a minimal impact on the site as a whole.

Conclusions

The trench footprints for the cottage extension did not reveal any definite significant archaeological deposits. Two areas of intrusion were noted in the groundworks, one of them clearly modern given the material within it. The other was undated but was probably a pit.

There does not appear to be a significant site on this area of land, but this conclusion must be tempered by the fact that the scale of the groundworks were minimal and could have missed deposits of significance slightly outside the affected area.

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.

A watching brief project was undertaken on behalf of Mr J Hettich at Manor Lane, Bretforton, Worcestershire (NGR SO 409115 243857: WSM 33612). The project aimed to cover the groundworks necessary for a cottage extension for its impact upon any buried archaeological deposits. The trenching revealed a couple of intrusive features, probably pits, in the footing trenches. One of these pits contained clearly identifiable modern material and was probably related to the erection of an adjacent telegraph pole, whilst the other pit went undated.

There were no significant archaeological features found during the course of the groundworks.

Archive

Fieldwork progress records AS2	1
Photographic records AS3	1
Digital photographs	15
Drawings	1

The project archive is intended to be placed at:	Worcestershire County Museum Hartlebury Castle, Hartlebury Near Kidderminster Worcestershire DY11 7XZ
telephone	01299 250416

Acknowledgements

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