

Archaeological watching brief at Vine Cottage, Pewterers Alley, Bewdley, Worcestershire



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Graham Arnold

With contributions by Rob Hedge

Background information

<i>Client</i>	Mr Robert Barton
<i>National Grid reference</i>	SO 7886 7549
<i>Historic Environment Record reference</i>	WSM 57541
<i>Planning authority</i>	Wyre Forest District Council
<i>Reference</i>	WF/14/0130
<i>Brief</i>	WCC 2014
<i>Project design</i>	WA 2014
<i>Project parameters</i>	ClfA 2014

Previous archaeological work on the site

There has been no previous archaeological work undertaken on site.

Archaeological and geological background

The settlement of Bewdley developed from the village of Wribbenhall and gained borough status in the 15th century when granted a market by King Edward IV.

The geology is described as Bridgnorth Sandstone Formation with superficial deposits of Power House Terrace Deposits from the river Severn consisting of Sand and Gravel (BGS 2015).

Vine cottage is a Grade II listed building described as a Cruck House and Timber Framed (WSM 17570). It is thought to be of 18th century construction, remodelled in the early 19th century with some mid-20th century alterations. It is constructed of brick with stuccoed front and tile roof.

The HER record states that:

South-west (garden) front has two storeys, two gables with brick coped verges; two windows: timber cross-windows under segmental heads, that to left is blind; ground floor: three timber cross-windows, entrance to right of centre has a wooden architrave and a flush panelled door. The roof to the rear has a 18th century upper cruck truss.

Pewterers Alley is described as an area of possible tenement plots (WSM19342) of medieval and post-medieval date. An evaluation of the area directly south of the property in 1996 recovered three sherds of 12-13th century Worcester sandy cooking pot in the topsoil, thought to relate to a nearby property. No other features were found during the evaluation (WSM 29658; Napthan and Ratkai 1996).

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 indicated that significant deposits may be defined as those likely to be of medieval and later date.

Methods

General specification for fieldwork

WA 2012

Sources consulted

HER

See bibliography

Date(s) of fieldwork

5 September 2014 – 9 June 2015

Area of sitec 300m² (30m x 10m in east side of property)**Sampling**

area sampled Indicated on Fig 2

sample size c 100 % of groundworks were observed

Dimensions of excavated areas observed –

Foundations length 8.80m x 7.00m

including topsoil strip width 0.70

(Trench 6) depth 0.90 - 1.40m

3 gate posts length 0.40m

(Trenches 1-3) width 0.25m

depth 0.40m

2 Gate posts length 0.90m

(Trenches 4-5) width 0.70m

depth 0.60m

Access to or visibility of deposits

Observation of the excavated areas was undertaken during hand and machine excavation. The exposed surfaces were sufficiently clean to observe well-differentiated archaeological deposits.

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

The descriptions of the deposits is given in Appendix 1.

Artefacts, by Rob Hedge

A small quantity of artefactual material of post-medieval and modern date was recovered from made ground deposits (101) and (603).

Clinker-rich deposit (101) produced:

- a) 5 fragments, totalling 310g, of the base of a straight-sided free-blown green glass vessel, probably late-18th century in date;
- b) 2 sherds (16g) of late creamware (fabric 84.2), also of late-18th century date;
- c) 2 fragments (6g) of clay tobacco pipe stem of probable 19th century date, one bearing a two-line stamp reading 'SOUTHORN R. NORTH', indicating production in the Southern works at Broseley, Shropshire;
- d) 6 sherds (36g) of modern stone white china (fabric 85), of 19th century date.

Made ground deposit (603) contained three (12g) clay tobacco pipe stem fragments of 18th or 19th century date.

The finds are consistent with domestic activity on the site from the late 18th century onwards.

As the finds are of low significance it is intended that they will be discarded.

Discussion

The project involved monitoring the excavation of pits for new gate posts (Trenches 1-5; Plates 1-4) at the south-east garden entrance and the footings for the new garage (Trench 6; Plates 5-8). The ground sloped from west to east and the garden soil in Trench 6 had been made up on the west side so that the total depth of excavation in Trench 6 was 1.40m, whilst in the east side the depth was only 0.90m. Natural sandstone with occasional pockets of sand and gravel were found at between 0.40 and 0.90m below ground level. A normal soil profile of topsoil overlying subsoil was observed in Trench 6, cut by modern footings for the former garden buildings (greenhouse and garage). Trenches 4 and 5 contained the footings of the existing wall surrounding the property.

In the south-east corner of the site, the south-west corner of Trench 6 and Trenches 1-3 (floor of the former garage) a made ground consisting of industrial waste including clinker had been brought on to site to build up the level of the garage floor and the area surrounding the garage and greenhouse (101/403) (Plates 2, 4, 7 and 8).

Conclusions

No significant archaeology was observed during the groundworks, only modern disturbance and evidence of the use of the garden in the 18th century and later. All features related to the footings of recently removed garden buildings and walls. A depth of post-medieval made ground (101) and (603) in the south-west of the site was probably imported to build up the ground levels.

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 Rob Barton at Vine Cottage, 3, Pewterers Alley, Bewdley, Worcestershire (NGR SO 7886 7549; HER ref WSM 57541). Natural sandstone was found at between 0.40 and 0.90m below ground level with post-medieval garden deposits overlying this, containing a small quantity of domestic debris of 18th century and later date. All of the features related to the modern former garden buildings. No significant archaeological remains were identified, nor artefacts recovered.

Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, Rob Barton (Client) and Aisling Nash (Historic Environment Advisor, Worcestershire County Council).

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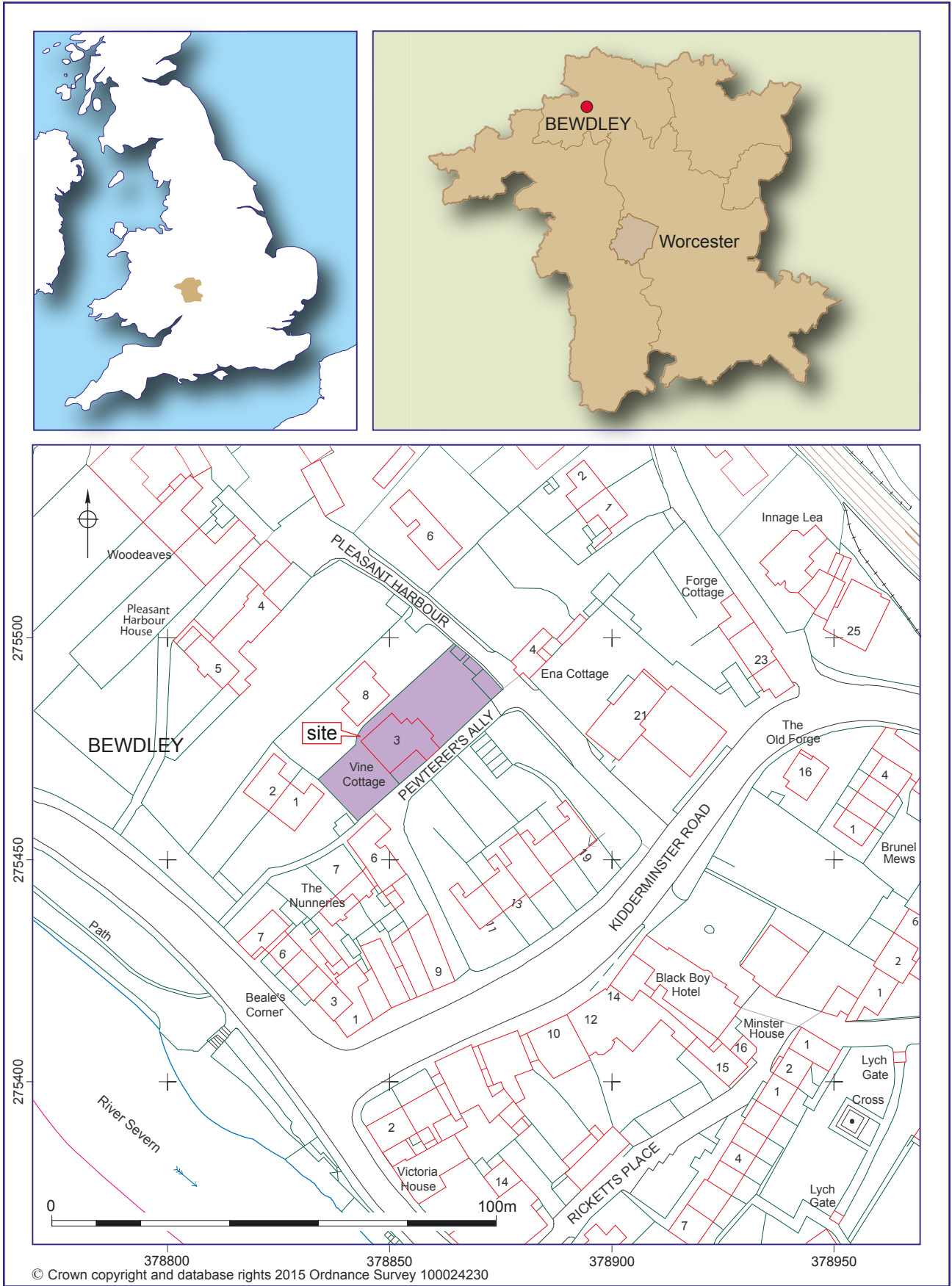
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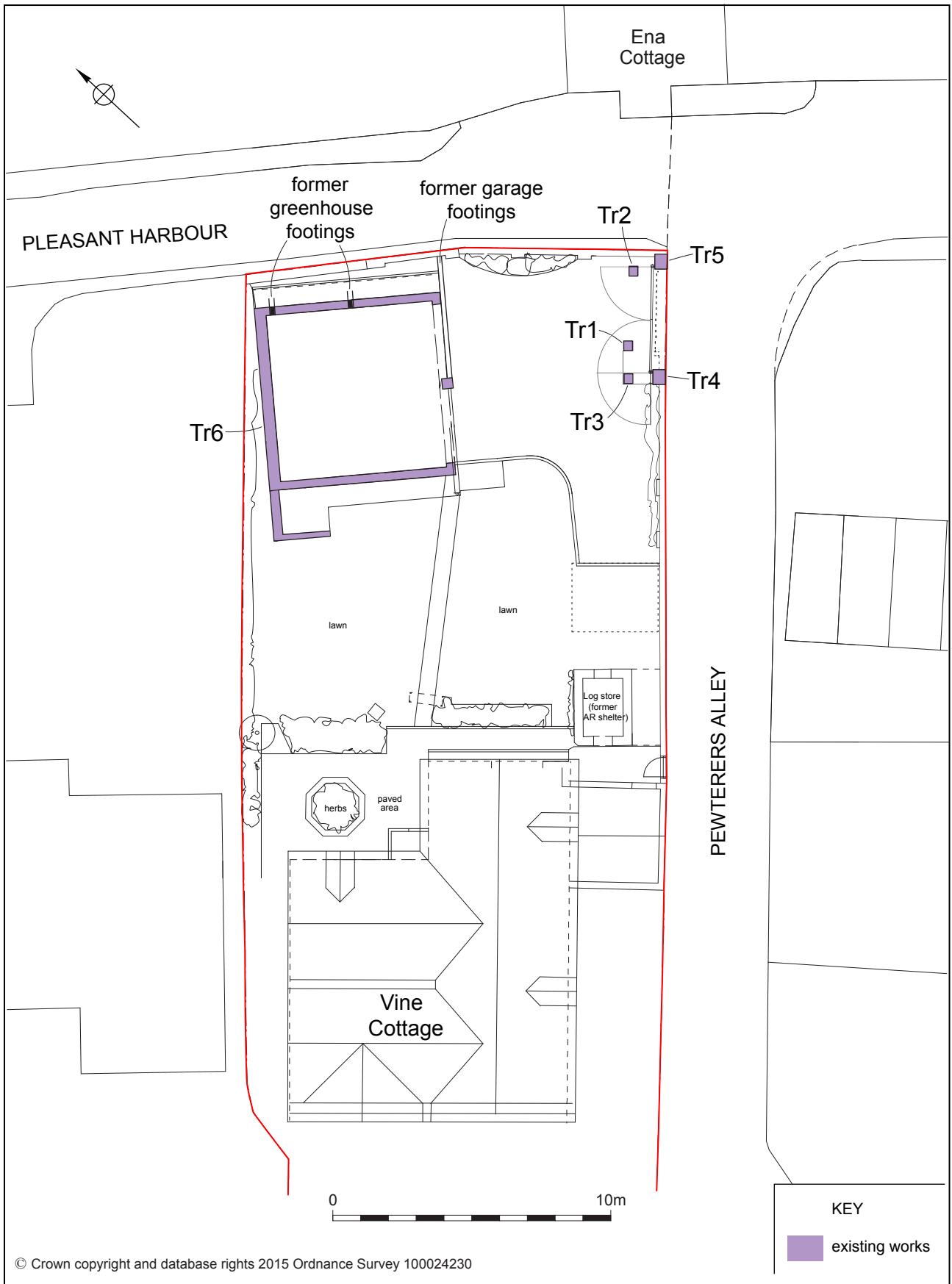
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Figures



Location of the site

Figure 1



Location of new works (based upon Graham Luxford drg no P3)

Figure 2

Plates



Plate 1 The site from the south-east looking at the existing garage whilst excavating Trench 1



Plate 2 Trench 2 with concrete and brick floor and metal service pipe



Plate 3 Trench 4 south facing section down to natural sand and sandstone; scale 1m



Plate 4 Trench 5 showing metal service pipe, wall footing and made ground; view north, scale 1m



Plate 5 General view of Trench 6 following excavation; view north-east



Plate 6 South facing sample section of Trench 6 demonstrating soil profile, scales 1m



Plate 7 Modern footing of greenhouse in Trench 6 section; view east; scale 1m



Plate 8 Footing for modern brick wall and made ground in trench 6 that contained clay pipe stems; view south; scales 1m

Appendix 1 Trench descriptions

Main deposit descriptions

Trench 1

Site area: Gate post 1

Maximum dimensions: Length: 0.40m Width: 0.25m Depth: 0.40m

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
100	Floor of garage	Concrete and brick floor of existing garage. Engineering Bricks measure 9 1/2" x 5" x 3"	0.00 - 0.08m
101	Made ground	Blackish brown sandy silt and clinker with frequent mortar, cbm fragments and occasional 19 th Century porcelain fragments, bottle glass.	0.08 – 0.40m

Trench 2

Site area: Gate post 2

Maximum dimensions: Length: 0.40m Width: 0.25m Depth: 0.40m

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
100	Floor of garage	Concrete and brick floor of existing garage. Engineering Bricks measure 9 1/2" x 5" x 3"	0.00 - 0.08m
101	Made ground	Blackish brown sandy silt and clinker with frequent mortar, cbm fragments and occasional 19 th Century porcelain fragments, bottle glass.	0.08 – 0.40m

Trench 3

Site area: Gate post 3

Maximum dimensions: Length: 0.40m Width: 0.25m Depth: 0.60m

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
300	Modern surfacing	Concrete and brick floor in garden	0.00 - 0.18m
301	Made ground	Blackish brown sandy silt with clinker and topsoil cut by modern services and tree roots.	0.18 – 0.60m
302	Natural	Firm orange clay and solid sandstone geology	0.60m +

Trench 4

Site area: Gate post 4

Maximum dimensions: Length: 0.90m Width: 0.80m Depth: 1.00m

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
400	Topsoil	Friable dark brown humic rich sandy silt. Garden soil containing brick fragments, glass and tree roots	0.00 - 0.30m
401	Footpath	Tarmac footpath of Pewterers Alley on South side of hole	0 -0.05m
402	Existing wall footing	footings for brick wall that surrounds property with sandstone blocks used in lower footings	0.30 – 0.40m
403	Natural	Solid red sandstone geology	0.40 – 1.00m +

Trench 5

Site area: Gate post 5

Maximum dimensions: Length: 0.90m Width: 0.80m Depth: 1.00m

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
500	Modern surface	Brick floor and Friable dark brown humic rich sandy silt. Garden soil containing brick fragments, glass and tree roots	0.00 - 0.08m
501	Made ground	Friable blackish brown sandy silt and clinker with frequent mortar, cbm fragments and occasional 19th Century porcelain fragments, bottle glass. Cut by metal pipe.	0.08 – 0.60m
502	Existing wall footing	footings for brick wall that surrounds property with sandstone blocks used in lower footings	0.00 – 0.60m
503	Natural	Solid red sandstone geology	0.55m – 1.00m +

Trench 6

Site area: Footing for new garage

Maximum dimensions: Length: 8.80m Width: 7.00m Depth: 1.40m (west) / 0.90m (east)

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
600	Topsoil	Friable dark brown sandy silt with frequent small rounded stones and rooting.	0.00 – 0.50m
601	Subsoil	Moderately compact light greyish brown clayey silt and frequent gravels	0.50 – 0.90m
602	Natural	Red sand and sandstone geology with frequent gravels	0.60m +
603	Made ground	Friable blackish brown sandy silt and clinker with frequent mortar, cbm fragments and clay pipe stems	0.00 – 0.60m

Appendix 2 Technical information

The archive (site code: WSM 57541)

The archive consists of:

- 2 Field progress reports AS2
- 1 Photographic records AS3
- 54 Digital photographs
- 1 Scale drawings
- 6 Trench record sheets AS41
- 1 Computer disk
- 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