

# Archaeological watching brief at Dodford Priory, Dodford, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire



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## **Archaeological watching brief at Dodford Priory, Dodford, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire**

Graham Arnold

With contributions by Rob Hedge and Tom Vaughan

Illustrations by Carolyn Hunt

### **Summary**

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at Dodford Priory, Priory Road, Dodford, Worcestershire (NGR SO 93255 72834). It was undertaken on behalf of Ian Barnes, as required by Historic England, during excavations to install a new oil tank and pipes to the property, for which Scheduled Monument Consent was granted.

An area for a foundation pad, 2.8m x 2.8m, was excavated, along with a single trench to the south. Three sandstone wall foundations were recorded. These related to a former outbuilding, recorded on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map, dated 1883. This was extant on maps up to 1927 and had been demolished by 1949. The walls were overlaid by modern garden soil, with a layer of brick and mortar rubble to the north. A single tile of probable 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> century date was found at the base of one of the walls. Some of the stone appears to have been reused: one red sandstone noted adjacent to the southernmost wall was roughly moulded with curving chamfers and a flat top, but was worn and undiagnostic. No other significant archaeological deposits were recorded. All other deposits related to modern surfaces and garden soils.

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## Report

### 1 Background

#### 1.1 Reasons for the project

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at Dodford Priory, Priory Road, Dodford, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire (NGR SO 93255 72834; WSM 68325) on groundworks to replace and relocate an oil tank and associated oil pipes. It was commissioned by Ian Barnes, in response to correspondence from Dr Neil Rimmington, Assistant Inspector of Ancient Monuments, Historic England, detailing the Scheduled Monument Consent, dated 30 August 2016 (HE ref. S00144788).

The project follows on from an earlier stage of works undertaken by WA (Spry and Vaughan 2016).

The area is within the grounds of a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 30022; NHLE UID 1018278) and therefore potentially includes heritage assets with archaeological interest, the significance of which may be affected by the groundworks.

The project conforms to the model Worcestershire County Council Brief (WCC 2014) and the Scheduled Monument Consent (HE ref. S00144788, dated 30 August 2016), for which a project proposal (including detailed specification) was produced (WA 2016).

The project also conforms to the *Standard and guidance: Archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014a), *Standards and guidelines for archaeological projects in Worcestershire* (WCC 2010).

The event reference for this project, given by the HER is WSM 68325.

### 2 Aims

The aims and scope of the watching brief were to observe and record archaeological deposits, and to determine their extent, state of preservation, date and type, as far as reasonably possible within the constraints of the groundworks.

The previous works indicated that significant deposits may be defined as those likely to be of medieval and post-medieval date.

### 3 Methods

#### 3.1 Personnel

The project was led by Graham Arnold (BA (hons.), MSc), who joined Worcestershire Archaeology in 2009 and has been practicing archaeology since 2002. The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Tom Vaughan (BA (hons.); MA; ACIfA). Illustrations were prepared by Carolyn Hunt (BSc (hons.); PG Cert; MCIfA). Robert Hedge (MA Cantab) contributed the finds report.

#### 3.2 Documentary research

A search was made of the Historic Environment Record (HER) prior to an earlier watching brief of groundworks within the priory grounds (Lovett and Vaughan 2015).

#### 3.3 List of sources consulted

##### *Cartographic sources*

- 1<sup>st</sup> edition 1883 Ordnance Survey, 25":1 mile, Worcestershire sheet XV.11
- 1902 Ordnance Survey map, 25":1 mile, Worcestershire sheet XV.11
- 1927 Ordnance Survey map, 25":1 mile, Worcestershire sheet XV.11
- 1949 Ordnance Survey map, 6":1 mile, Worcestershire sheet XV. SE1<sup>st</sup> Edition OS Map

### *Documentary sources*

Published and grey literature sources are listed in the bibliography.

### **3.4 Fieldwork strategy**

A detailed specification has been prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2016).

Fieldwork was undertaken on 24 October 2016. The site reference number and site code is WSM 68325.

One trench, 35m long and 0.20m wide, varying from 0.45–0.60m deep, was excavated along with an area for a foundation pad, 2.80m x 2.80m and 0.20m deep, at the north end for the oil tank. The location of the trench is indicated in Figure 1.

Groundworks were undertaken under archaeological supervision using a 360° tracked excavator, employing a toothless bucket. Clean surfaces were inspected and selected deposits were excavated to retrieve artefactual material and environmental samples, as well as to determine their nature. No deposits were recorded that were deemed suitable for environmental sampling. 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 Rob Hedge**

The finds work reported here conforms with the following guidance: for findwork by CfA (2014), for archive creation by AAF (2011) and for museum deposition by SMA (1993).

#### **3.6.1 Recovery policy**

The artefact recovery policy conformed to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012; appendix 2). 20<sup>th</sup> century material was observed and noted but not retained.

#### **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 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 material, and;
- generally where material has been specifically assessed by an appropriate specialist as having no obvious grounds for retention.

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### **3.7 Statement of confidence in the methods and results**

The methods adopted allow a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved.

## **4 The application site**

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

The background to the site is presented in the WA report on the previous stage of works (Spry and Vaughan 2016, 4-5).

### **4.2 Current land-use**

The area under investigation was within the gardens of Dodford Priory, crossing a gravelled driveway, grassed lawn areas and patios and into the corner of the current house.

## **5 Results**

### **5.1 Structural analysis**

The trenches and features recorded are shown in Figures 1 and 2. The results are overlaid onto the 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map in Figure 3. The results of the structural analysis are presented in Appendix 1. Photographs of the works are provided as Plates 1-7.

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

The natural geology consisted of a firm mid brownish red clay marl (102) which was recorded throughout the trench at a depth of 0.14–0.45m below the ground level.

#### **5.1.2 Phase 2: Post-medieval deposits, by Tom Vaughan and Graham Arnold**

Three wall foundations were recorded in the central part of the trench, between the present house and the garage, each of red and grey sandstone. Wall 105 (Plates 2 and 3) was 0.60m wide and 0.25m high and lay directly on the surface of the natural clay at a depth of 0.55m below the present ground surface. A red sandstone recovered from the rubble adjacent was roughly moulded with curving chamfered sides and a flat top. It appears to have been reused from an earlier structure, but was worn and undiagnostic (Plate 4).

Wall 108 (Plate 6), also 0.60m wide, was topped by loose red sandstone and had grey sandstone below. The base extended below the full depth of the excavation, within a trench cut into the natural clay. Rubble along its northern side extended northwards to the edge of the garden. The rubble also contained large stone cobbles and iron metal hinges (Plate 7). These are interpreted as external walls of a building recorded on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map.

Wall 106 (Plate 5) was 0.30m wide and recorded at 0.40m below the present ground level. It is interpreted as an internal wall of the building. It extended beyond the full depth of the excavation within a trench cut into the natural clay. It was overlain by redeposited natural clay, with occasional lime mortar and brick inclusions.

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

Modern garden soils 100, 104, redeposited natural 105 and type 1 gravel underlay (101) for the driveway and compact bedding for modern paving (103) were recorded in the rest of the trench. The excavation for the foundation pad for the oil tank at the north end of the trench only removed turf and topsoil from the upper garden.

## 5.2 Artefactual analysis, by Rob Hedge

The artefactual assemblage recovered is summarised in Table 1. A small quantity of material was recovered from wall foundation [105].

Context	period	material class	material class sub-type	object specific type	count	weight (g)
100	Medieval/post-medieval	Metal	Iron	Nail	1	18
105	Post/medieval	Ceramic		Roof tile	1	258
105	undated	Stone		Sandstone building material	1	208
				Totals	3	484

Table 1: Quantification of the assemblage

The nail is not closely dateable but is likely to be pre-19<sup>th</sup> century, and was residual within the topsoil close to the foundation pad. The fragment of red sandstone is likewise not diagnostic. The sole artefact that provides a firm *terminus post quem* for the wall construction is therefore the fragment of roof tile: hard fired, 14mm thick with a sanded base and sandy fabric with rounded slag-like inclusions and sparse grog and sandstone, it resembles Fabric 5, identified by Griffin (2008) at Church Farm Hallow, and subsequently elsewhere across Worcester and surrounding areas to the north. It appears to span the post-medieval period, although is most common in assemblages of 18<sup>th</sup> century date or later.

The tile is likely to have been residual or re-used within [105], suggesting that the structure is likely to date to the later part of the post-medieval period, with an 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> century date most likely.

## 5.3 Further analysis and reporting

No further work on the assemblage is required.

## 5.4 Discard and retention

The small finds assemblage is not considered worthy of retention, although the final decision rests with Museums Worcestershire.

## 6 Synthesis, by Graham Arnold and Tom Vaughan

A rectangular building is present between the current farmhouse and threshing barn on the Ordnance Survey maps from 1883 through to 1927, although it had been demolished by the edition of 1949. What remains on site is a subtle raised platform where this building once stood. The groundworks revealed the sandstone wall-footings of this building; an outbuilding of unknown function related to the farm on the Priory. Some of the stone appears to have been reused: one red sandstone noted adjacent to the southernmost wall was roughly moulded with curving chamfers and a flat top, but was worn and undiagnostic. The finds assemblage is not considered to be significant.

## 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 at Dodford Priory, Priory Road, Dodford, Worcestershire (NGR SO 93255 72834; WSM 68325). It was undertaken on behalf of Ian Barnes, as required by Historic England during excavations to install a new oil tank and pipes to the property, for which Scheduled Monument Consent was granted.*



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## 8 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, Ian Barnes (Dodford Priory) and Neil Rimmington (Assistant Inspector of Ancient Monuments, Historic England).

## 9 Bibliography

AAF 2011 *Archaeological archives: a guide to the best practice in the creation, compilation, transfer and curation*, Archaeological Archives Forum, <http://www.archaeologyuk.org/archives/>

ClfA 2014 *Standard and guidance: Archaeological watching brief*, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, <http://www.archaeologists.net/codes/ifa>

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

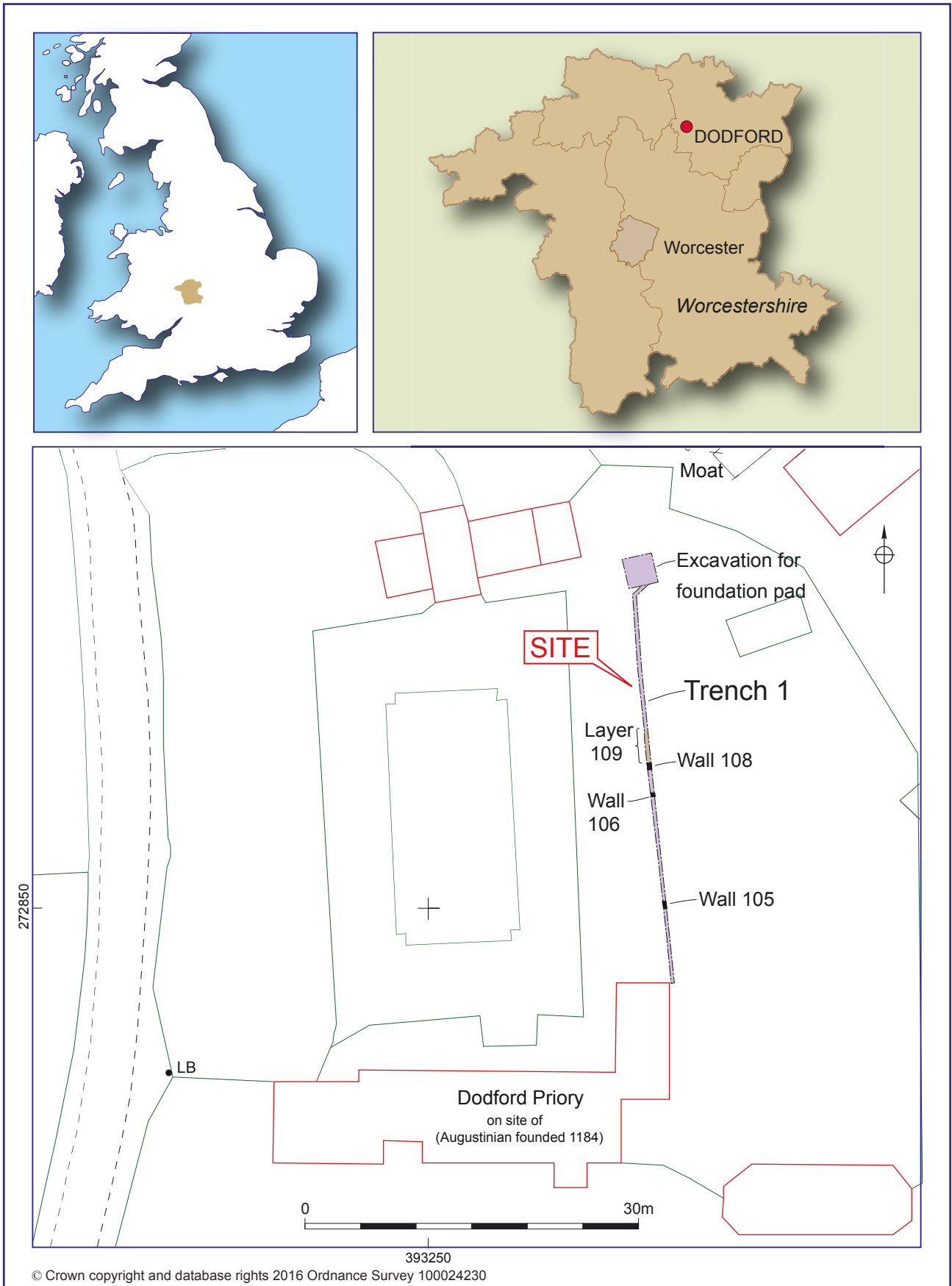
WA 2016 *Proposal for an archaeological watching brief at Dodford Priory, Priory Road, Dodford, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire*, Worcestershire Archaeology, Worcestershire County Council, unpublished document dated 3 October 2016, **P4955**

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

WCC 2014 *Requirements for an Archaeological Watching Brief as a Condition of Planning Consent*, Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service, Worcestershire County Council, unpublished document, Version 1, dated September 2014



# Figures

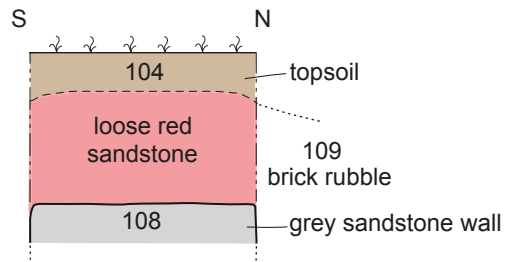


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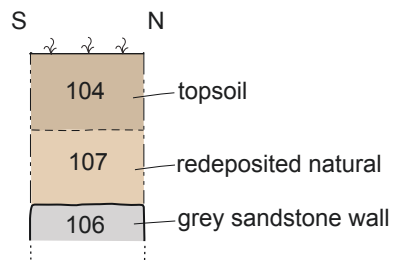
Location of the site and trench

Figure 1

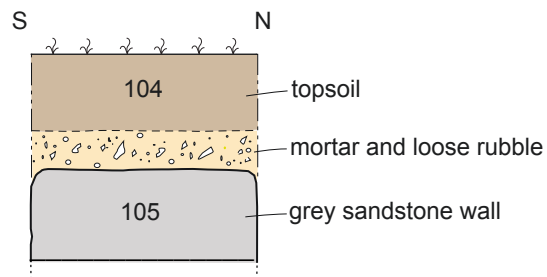
### WALL 108: SECTION



### WALL 106: SECTION

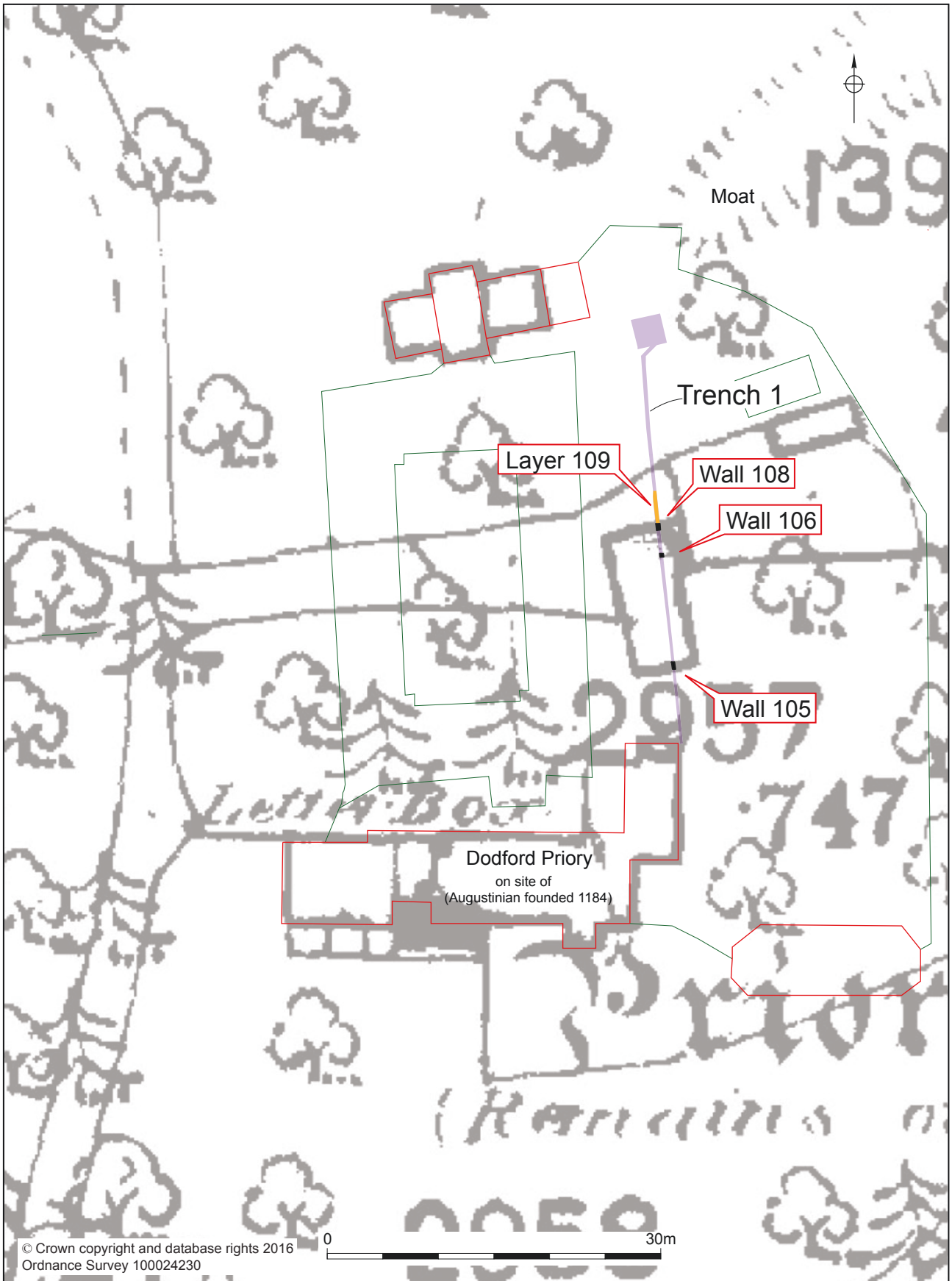


### WALL 105: SECTION



Walls 105, 106 and 108: profiles

Figure 2



Extract of modern OS over 1st edition OS, showing location of walls 105, 106 and 108

Figure 3

## Plates



*Plate 1 The site prior to excavation commencing, looking south-west*



*Plate 2 The excavation for the foundation pad, looking south*

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*Plate 3 Wall foundation 105, south wall footing of building, view west*



*Plate 4 Sandstone masonry block from 105*





*Plate 5 Sandstone wall footing 106, view west*



*Plate 6 Sandstone wall footing 108, showing red sandstone upper and grey sandstone base, looking west*

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*Plate 7 Demolition deposit 109 to the north of wall 108 and trench across driveway*

## Appendix 1 Trench descriptions

### Trench 1

Maximum dimensions: Length: 35.00m Width: 0.20m Depth: 0.45-0.60m

And 2.80m x 2.80m x 0.20m foundation pad at North end

Orientation: North - south

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
100	Topsoil	Friable dark greyish brown clayey silt with occasional brick fragments, large rounded cobbles and frequent large roots near bushes. North of driveway and retaining wall.	0.00-0.30m
101	Modern Layer	Loose, grey type 1 gravel, bedding underlying gravel driveway.	0.00-0.10m
102	Natural	Firm mid brownish red clay marl found throughout Trench 1	0.14–0.45m
103	Modern Layer	Compact mid brownish grey clay and gravels, bedding for paving slabs. In south part of trench, close to existing house.	0.00-0.10m
104	Topsoil	Compact dark greyish brown clayey silt and turf mat of grassed lawn garden in central part of trench.	0.00-0.20m
105	Wall foundation	Grey sandstone wall 0.60m wide with a sandstone capping stone 0.25m x 0.15m x 0.13m and orange and white sandy lime mortar.	0.20-0.55m
106	Wall	Grey sandstone wall orientated east-west across trench. 0.30m wide. Internal wall of outbuilding.	0.40-0.45m
107	Layer	Redeposited natural clay with frequent lime mortar, red sandstone and charcoal, demolition deposit or levelling.	0.20–0.40m
108	Wall foundation	Grey Sandstone wall foundation 0.60m wide, 0.10m high, with loose red sandstone blocks and mortar above	0.10-0.45m
109	Layer	Bricks (9" x 4 ½" x 2 ½"), mortar, cbm, large cobbles and iron hinges. Rubble demolition deposit on Northern side of wall 108, probably related to building on 1 <sup>st</sup> edition OS map.	0.20–0.45m

## **Appendix 2 Technical information**

### **The archive (site code: WSM 68325)**

The archive consists of:

- 3 Context records AS1
- 1 Field progress reports AS2
- 1 Photographic records AS3
- 58 Digital photographs
- 1 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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## Summary of data for Worcestershire HER

Context	period	material class	material class sub-type	object specific type	count	weight (g)
100	Medieval/post-medieval	Metal	Iron	Nail	1	18
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*Table 1: Quantification of the assemblage*

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