

# Archaeological watching brief at Land at Pershore Cottage Hospital, Defford Road, Pershore, Worcestershire



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## **Archaeological watching brief at Pershore Cottage Hospital, Defford Road, Pershore, Worcestershire**

Graham Arnold

Illustrations by Carolyn Hunt

### **Summary**

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at Pershore Cottage Hospital, Defford Road, Pershore, Worcestershire (NGR SO 94856 45362). It was commissioned by CgMs Consulting Limited, whose client Planning Issues intended demolition of the hospital and residential development of the site. A planning application was submitted and approved subject to conditions including a programme of archaeological works.

Pershore Cottage Hospital is recorded in the Worcestershire HER as an undesignated heritage asset. This was constructed in the late 19th century and underwent considerable alteration throughout the 20th century.

All intrusive groundworks were monitored by an archaeologist, following the progress of the construction team. Groundworks included the excavation of building footings, a crane base and an attenuation tank which were undertaken between June 2016 and March 2017. No significant archaeological finds, features or deposits were observed during the works. Only modern 20th century made ground and natural sands and gravels were observed.

This confirms that the earlier Roman and Prehistoric settlement activity recorded to the northwest and southwest did not extend into the site.

## Report

### 1 Background

#### 1.1 Reasons for the project

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at Pershore Cottage Hospital, Defford Road, Pershore, Worcestershire (NGR SO 94856 45362). It was commissioned by CgMs Limited, whose client Planning Issues submitted an application for demolition of the existing hospital building and residential development of the site to Wychavon District Council (reference W/15/03239/PN). The application was approved subject to conditions including a programme of archaeological works.

The project conforms to a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by CgMs Consulting (CgMs 2016) and approved by the Planning Advisory Service of Worcestershire County Council.

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 58513.

### 2 Aims

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

More specifically, the WSI indicated that the aims of this project were, where possible:

- To examine any available evidence for economic activity, environmental conditions and industrial or craft activity
- To generate an archive which will allow future research of the remains to be undertaken
- To disseminate the results of the work in a format and manner proportionate to the significance of the findings
- To explore, and where possible and appropriate, implement measures to encourage public engagement with the findings.

### 3 Methods

#### 3.1 Personnel

The project was led by Timothy Cornah (BA (hons.), MSc) who joined Worcestershire Archaeology in 2006 and has been practicing archaeology since 2001, assisted by Peter Lovett (BSc (hons.)). The report was prepared by Graham Arnold (BA (hons.), MSc). The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Tom Rogers (BA (hons.); MSc). Illustrations were prepared by Carolyn Hunt (BSc (hons.); PG Cert; MCIfA).

#### 3.2 Documentary research

An archaeological desk-based assessment (DBA) by CgMs Consulting Ltd (CgMs 2015) was undertaken on behalf of Planning Issues.

List of sources consulted

*Cartographic sources listed in the DBA (CgMs 2015)*

- 1750 map of Binholme Manor
- 1842 Pershore St Andrews Tithe map
- 1885 Ordnance Survey Map
- 1904 Ordnance Survey Map

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- 1938 Ordnance Survey Map
  - 1967 Ordnance Survey Map
  - 1985 Ordnance Survey Map
  - 1994 Ordnance Survey Map

#### *Documentary sources*

Published and grey literature sources are listed in the bibliography.

### **3.3 Fieldwork strategy**

Fieldwork was undertaken in two phases. During the first phase, between 17 June – 6 July 2016, building footings (Trench 1 and 2) were monitored. The second phase monitored the excavation of an attenuation tank (Trench 3) on 9th and 10th March 2017 following the progress of the construction team. The site reference number and site code is WSM 68513.

Prior to the commencement of the watching brief, the hospital buildings were demolished, foundations removed and the area was stoned and vibro-compacted. This process involved piling of about 0.30m in diameter across the stoned area (Plate 1) at a distance of no more than 1m apart and extending to a depth greater than 0.80m. The significant impact of these works are shown in Plate 2 depicting Trench 1.

After Trenches 1 and 2 were monitored and the extent of the truncation ascertained, it was agreed between CgMs and the Curator that the potential for the survival of archaeological remains in the former hospital footprint was negligible and the remainder of this area was therefore not monitored.

The extent and location of the trenches is indicated in Figure 2.

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 Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012).

### **3.4 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.

### **3.5 Artefact methodology**

#### **3.5.1 Artefact recovery policy**

Recovery of artefacts was undertaken according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012). In the event no artefacts pre-dating the modern period were identified.

### **3.6 Environmental archaeology methodology,**

#### **3.6.1 Sampling policy**

Sampling was undertaken according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012). In the event no deposits were identified which were considered to be suitable for environmental analysis .

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

The construction and removal of the footings of the former hospital building along with the subsequent piling, meant that the footprint of the former hospital had been truncated prior to the commencement of the watching brief. However the partial monitoring of these areas allows a moderate level of confidence of minimal archaeological survival.

A high degree of confidence can also be assigned to the remaining areas monitored.

## **4 The application site**

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

A DBA was produced by CgMs Consulting prior to works (CgMs 2015). The relevant sections are summarised below:

Wasperton Sand and Gravel river terrace deposits are mapped with the site (HER WSM56946). These have the potential to contain Palaeolithic faunal and artefactual remains including Neanderthal and early Homo Sapien artefacts. Geotechnical works carried out within the site suggest that these deposits are located below the Made Ground from 0.4m below ground level.

The topography of the site is relatively flat at 20m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD). The landscape to the east is also relatively flat, forming a plain along the River Avon. The landscape slopes gradually up to the west, away from the River Avon, reaching c.55m AOD just over 1km northwest of the site.

The site's location on river terrace deposits and within close proximity to the River Avon means that it could have provided a favourable location for early settlement activity (i.e. Prehistoric and Roman). Prehistoric and Roman settlement has been identified within the north-western and south-western parts of the wider search area. There is no evidence to suggest any such remains extend into the site and a low potential for the proposed development to impact Prehistoric or Roman remains was identified in the DBA.

The site is likely to have formed the agricultural hinterland surrounding the Early Medieval, Medieval and Post-Medieval settlement of Pershore. Historic mapping demonstrates that the site continued to be used as agricultural land (most likely pasture) throughout the Post-Medieval period until it was developed in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Geotechnical works carried out across the site suggest that any deposits dating to these periods have been removed.

It was concluded that there was a limited potential for the survival of archaeological remains within the site and that 19<sup>th</sup>/ 20<sup>th</sup> development across the site is likely to have disturbed or destroyed any earlier archaeological remains (i.e. Prehistoric, Roman, Early-Medieval, Medieval and Post-Medieval).

The DBA highlighted the presence of one undesignated heritage asset, the Pershore Cottage Hospital (HER WSM45705) within the site. This building was constructed in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and underwent considerable alteration throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The HER records that the Pershore Cottage Hospital was originally erected in 1895 following local fundraising initiatives and encouragement from Florence Nightingale (HER WSM45705). It is believed that she had a role in designing part of the original Cottage Hospital. It was extended during the early 1900s. A new wing for an operating theatre, rooms for anaesthetics, sterilising and x-ray equipment was erected in 1937.

In 1948 the hospital became part of the National Health Service. From historical plans, the building annexed to the south was seen in 1967 as a separate building and since that date became linked to the hospital as part of the development. A further extension in 1976 for a Physiotherapy Department was added.

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

The site was formerly a cottage hospital, whose buildings have been demolished and most hardstanding has been broken up and replaced with a hardcore piling mat prior to ground works.



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## 5 Results

### 5.1 Structural analysis

The trenches and features recorded are shown in Figure 2.

The results of the structural analysis presented in Appendix 1.

Photos of the works are presented in Plates 1 -6.

#### 5.1.1 Phase 1: Natural deposits

Firm yellow sands and gravels of the Wasperton Sand and Gravel member were observed at a depth of 0.70m - 1.00m below the existing ground level and were recorded in all of the trenches (101/204/304).

#### 5.1.2 Phase 2: modern deposits

A series of modern 20th century made ground deposits (100/202/203/302) were recorded, together with hardcore levelling deposits and modern hardstanding (200/300/301) relating to the hospital and 20th century development. A modern topsoil (201) and subsoils (202/303) were observed in Trenches 2 and 3.

## 6 Synthesis

The archaeological watching brief monitored all intrusive groundworks. Only modern made ground and levelling deposits were observed overlying the natural sand and gravel superficial geology. No significant archaeological finds, features or deposits were observed during the works. This confirms the findings of the geotechnical report prior to groundworks that earlier deposits had been removed by modern development. It also suggests that the land was in agricultural usage for a long period of time and that the earlier Roman and Prehistoric settlement activity recorded to the northwest and southwest did not extend into this area.

## 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.

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*This confirms that the earlier Roman and Prehistoric settlement activity recorded to the northwest and southwest did not extend into the site.*

## 8 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, Planning Issues, Cathy Patrick (CgMs Consulting Limited), Adrian Scruby, Historic Environment Advisor, Worcestershire County Council.

## 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/>

BGS 2016 *Geology of Britain Viewer*, <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>  
British Geological Survey, accessed 14 March 2017

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

CgMs 2015 *Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment – land at Pershore Cottage Hospital, Defford Road, Pershore, Worcestershire*, CgMs Consulting Limited, unpublished report dated February 2016

CgMs 2016 *Written Scheme of Investigation in respect of Land at Pershore Cottage Hospital, Defford Road, Pershore, Worcestershire*, CgMs Consulting Limited, unpublished report dated February 2016

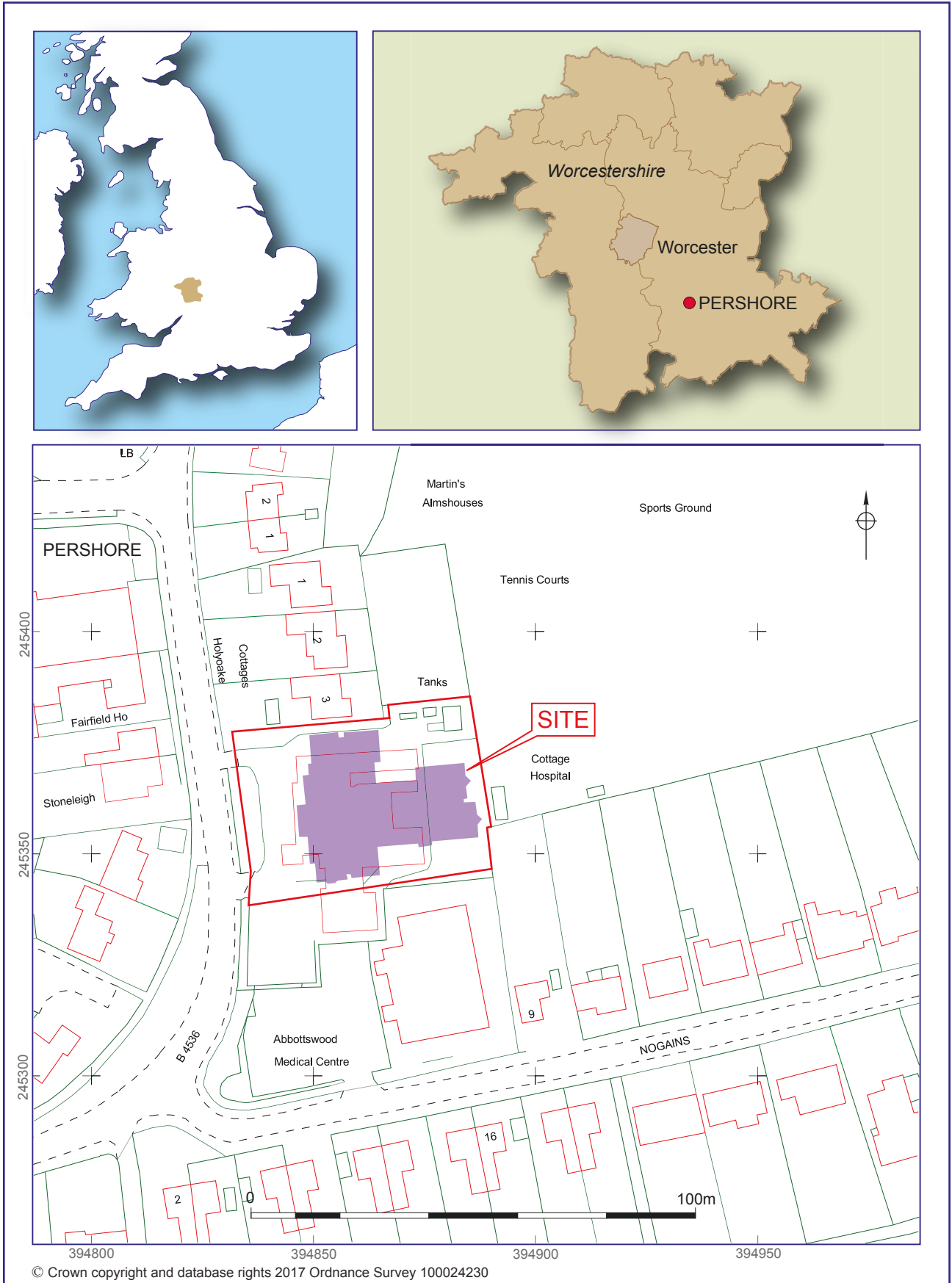
WCC 2014 Requirements for an archaeological watching brief in Worcestershire for planning

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



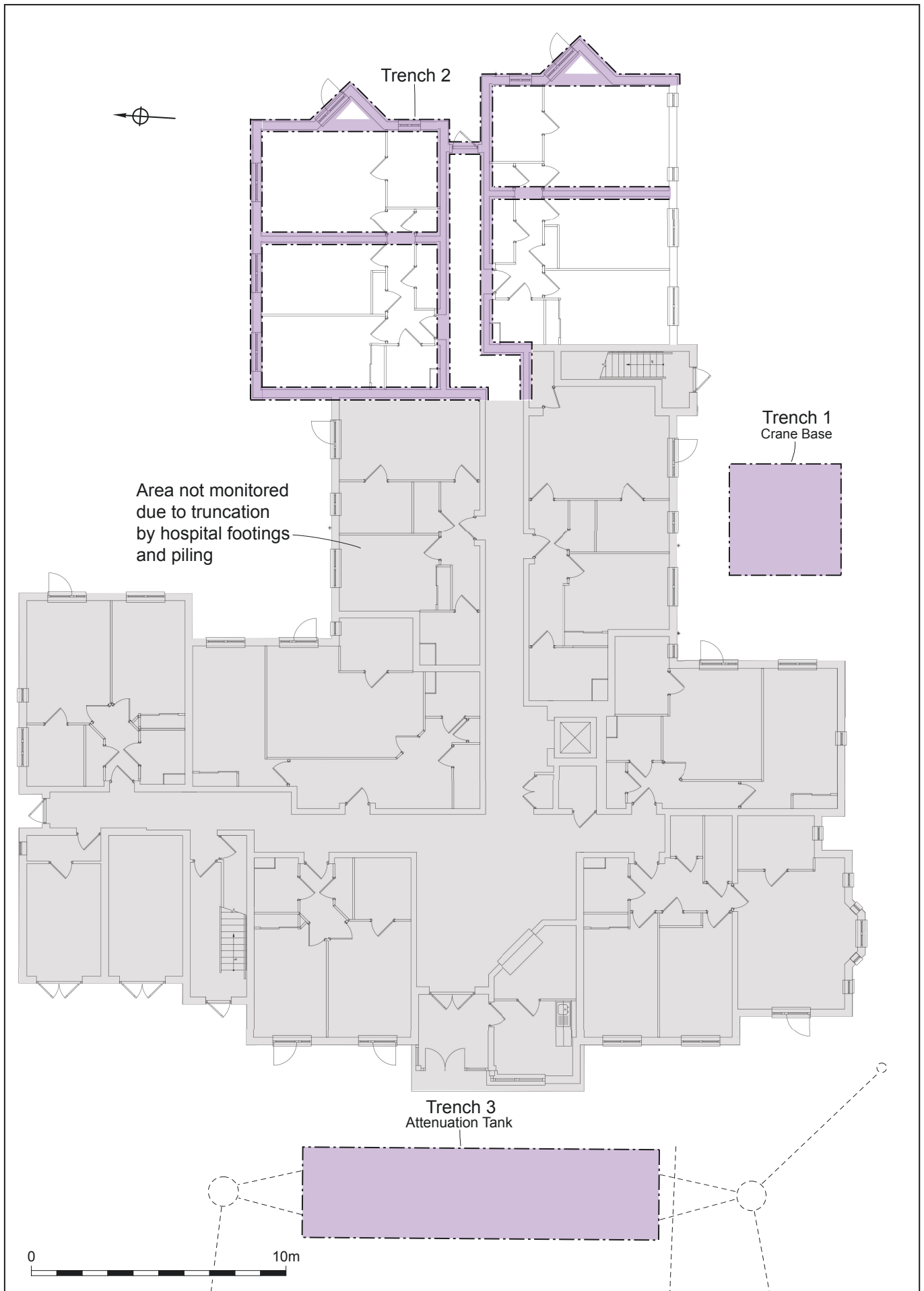
## Figures

- \* Figure 1 – Site location
- \* Figure 2 – Plan of trenches



Location of the site

Figure 1



Plan of trenches (baed upon Churchill Ground Floor Drg No 30026PS/PL 003

Figure 2



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## Plates



*Plate 1 The site after demolition works, prior to groundworks, with a piling mat hardcore surface. View west*



*Plate 2 Trench 1 showing purple gravel filled piles and natural sand at base of trench. View west*

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*Plate 3 Trench 2 showing modern made ground and natural sands. View southwest*



*Plate 4 Trench 2 footings showing natural sand and gravel. 1m scale, view south*

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*Plate 5 The attenuation tank (trench 3) view northeast*



*Plate 6 West facing section of Trench 3 attenuation tank showing general stratigraphy. 2 x 1m scales. View east*

## Appendix 1 Trench descriptions

### Trench 1

Site area: Crane foundation pit

Maximum dimensions: Length: 4.50m Width: 4.50m Depth: 0.70m

Orientation: Square pit in southeast corner of site

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
100	Modern hardcore made ground	Mixed stone, topsoil, rubble and sand from demolition levelling. Piles filled with purple gravel	0.00m - 0.70m
101	Natural	Compact yellow sands with sub-rounded gravels.	0.60 – 0.80m

### Trench 2

Site area: Building footings

Maximum dimensions: Length: m Width: 15.00m Depth: 0.90m

Orientation: E-W

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
200	Modern hardcore layer	Modern hardcore below topsoil at east end of trench	0.00 – 0.30m
201	Topsoil	Dark grey brown silty sand with frequent round and sub-rounded stones and rooting. Both this and (202) only seen in one area to the east end of trench.	0.00 – 0.25m
202	Subsoil	Mid orangey brown silty sand with frequent sub-rounded stones.	0.25m - 0.55m
203	Mixed made ground	Mixed modern deposit such as topsoil and rubble depth below surface 0.30 – 0.60m.	0.30 – 0.60m
204	Natural	Yellow sand and sub-rounded gravels seen throughout trench.	0.60m +

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**Trench 3**

Site area: Attenuation Tank

Maximum dimensions: Length: 14.00m Width: 4.00m Depth: 0.90m

Orientation: North - South

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
300	Tarmac surface	Hardstanding of existing car park	0.00 – 0.10m
301	Hardcore	Modern red pink gravel levelling make up for car park	0.10 – 0.52m
302	Made ground	20th Century made ground of moderately compacted mid grey brown silty sand with frequent brick rubble.	0.35 – 0.95m
303	Former subsoil	Firm mid orange brown silty sand with gravels and pebbles. Heavily truncated former subsoil	0.60 – 0.92m
304	Natural	Compact yellow sand and sub-rounded gravels	0.92 – 1.50m

## **Appendix 2 Technical information**

### **The archive (site code: WSM 68513)**

The archive consists of:

- 2 Field progress reports AS2
- 1 Photographic records AS3
- 29 Digital photographs
- 1 Drawing number catalogues AS4
- 2 Scale drawings
- 3 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  
Tel Hartlebury (01299) 250416