

Archaeological evaluation at land off Gypsy Lane, Leonard Stanley, Stonehouse, Gloucestershire



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Andrew Mann

Illustrations by Carolyn Hunt

Summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at land off Gypsy Lane, Leonard Stanley, Stonehouse, Gloucestershire (NGR ref; SO 80318 03127). It was undertaken for the Falconer Partnership, on behalf of St Swithun's Parish Church Council (the Client) who intends to extend the current cemetery for which a planning application has been submitted.

No archaeological features were identified. The absence of any obvious signs of arable cultivation suggests that its use as an orchard (within the priory precinct), which can be traced back to the late 19th century, may reflect a similar use previously over a long period.

Report

1 Background

1.1 Reasons for the project

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at land off Gypsy Lane, Leonard Stanley, Stonehouse, Gloucestershire (NGR 380318 203127) (Figure 1). It was commissioned by The Falconer Partnership, on behalf of St Swithun's Parish Church Council (the Client) who intends to extend the existing outlying cemetery for which a planning application has been submitted to Gloucestershire County Council (reference S.17/1187/FUL).

The proposed development site is considered to include heritage assets and potential heritage assets, namely medieval remains within the precinct of Leonard Stanley Priory (GSMR 303), the significance of which may be affected by the application

No specific brief has been prepared by the Curator but this proposal conforms to the model Brief for an Archaeological Field Evaluation (the Brief; Gloucestershire County Council 2015). The project conforms to a Written Scheme of Investigation produced by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2017).

The project also conforms to the *Standard and guidance: Archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2014)

2 Aims

The aims and scope of the project are to undertake sufficient fieldwork to:

- determine the presence or absence of archaeological deposits beyond reasonable doubt;
- identify their location, nature date and preservation;
- assess their significance;
- assess the likely impact of the proposed development.

Significant deposits may be defined as those likely to be of medieval date, relating to former precinct of Leonard Stanley Priory, founded in the 12th century.

3 Methods

3.1 Personnel

The project was led by Andrew Mann (BA (hons.); MSc), who joined Worcestershire Archaeology in 2004 and has been practicing archaeology since 2001, assisted by Morgan Murphy (BA (hons.)). 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.))

3.2 Documentary research

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

3.3 List of sources consulted

Cartographic sources

- OS map Gloucestershire sheet XLIX.5, 25inch, 1884
- OS map Gloucestershire sheet XLIX.5, 25inch, 1902
- OS map Gloucestershire sheet XLIX.5, 25inch, 1922

3.4 Fieldwork strategy

A detailed specification has been prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2017).

Fieldwork was undertaken on 18 July 2017. One trench, amounting to just over 23m² in area, was excavated over the site area of 621m², representing a sample of 3.7%. The location of the trench is indicated in Figure 2. The trench was located to the south of the site in order to avoid saplings and mature fruit trees.

Deposits considered not to be significant were removed under archaeological supervision using a wheeled excavator, employing a toothless bucket. Subsequent excavation was undertaken by hand. 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). On completion of excavation, trenches were reinstated by replacing the excavated material.

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

3.6.1 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 (two brick fragments from the topsoil) were identified.

3.7 Environmental archaeology methodology

3.7.1 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.

3.8 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 site lays to the immediate south of the current cemetery to the west of Gypsy Lane at around 58m AOD. The underlying geology is mudstone of the Blue Lias Formation and Charmouth Mudstone Formation (BGS 2017) and is overlain by slowly permeable, seasonally wet, slightly acid but base-rich loamy and clayey soils (Soil Survey of England and Wales, 1983).

The site lies in the precinct of Leonard Stanley Priory which was founded in the 12th century and is surrounded on the west, south and east by ridge and furrow remains mapped by the national mapping programme (NMP 2016 HER Layer). Medieval furrows were also identified during an archaeological evaluation at Priory Farm immediately west of the priory precinct (GSMR 20473).

4.2 Current land-use

The site is currently located in an orchard, underlain by pasture, which appears to have occupied the site from at least 1884.

5 Results

5.1 Structural analysis

The results of the structural analysis are presented in Appendix 1. No archaeological features were identified in the trench and only the natural soil profile was recorded (Plates 1 and 2).

5.1.1 Phase 1: Natural deposits

Natural deposits (102) were observed at 0.30-0.43m below ground surface at around 57.50m AOD. These consisted of a firm and cohesive, mid to light yellowish orange, silty clay with light blue mottles. This was overlain by a 0.28m thick subsoil (101) consisting of a firm and cohesive, mid-orangey brown, clayey silt with moderate iron pan staining. This was in turn overlain by a 0.15m thick, mid greyish brown, clayey silt topsoil (100).

6 Synthesis

No archaeological features were identified in the evaluation trench and the depth of the topsoil suggests that the priory precinct has rarely been under cultivation. Although frequent areas of ridge and furrow have been mapped around the priory precinct it is likely, based on the current evidence, that this area of the precinct itself was never cultivated, and that its more recent use as an orchard (from at least the later 19th century) may have been established much earlier.

7 Significance

There is no archaeological interest at the site.

8 The impact of the development

The results of the evaluation suggest that the proposed development is very unlikely to have a negative impact on any archaeological remains.

9 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 single trench archaeological evaluation was undertaken on behalf of The Falconer Partnership, on behalf of St Swithun's Parish Church Council (the Client) at land off Gypsy Lane, Leonard Stanley, Stonehouse, Gloucestershire (NGR ref; SO 80318 03127). No archaeological features were identified, and the soil profile suggested that the priory precinct is likely to have never been under cultivation, and that the use of this area as an orchard (recorded since the later 19th century) may have been established much earlier

10 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the conclusion of this project: Charles Parry (Archaeologist Gloucestershire County Council), Patricia Savage (St Swithun's Church Warden), and Steve Lacey (The Falconer Partnership)

11 Bibliography

BGS 2017 *Geology of Britain Viewer*, <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>, British Geological Survey, accessed 21/7/ 2017

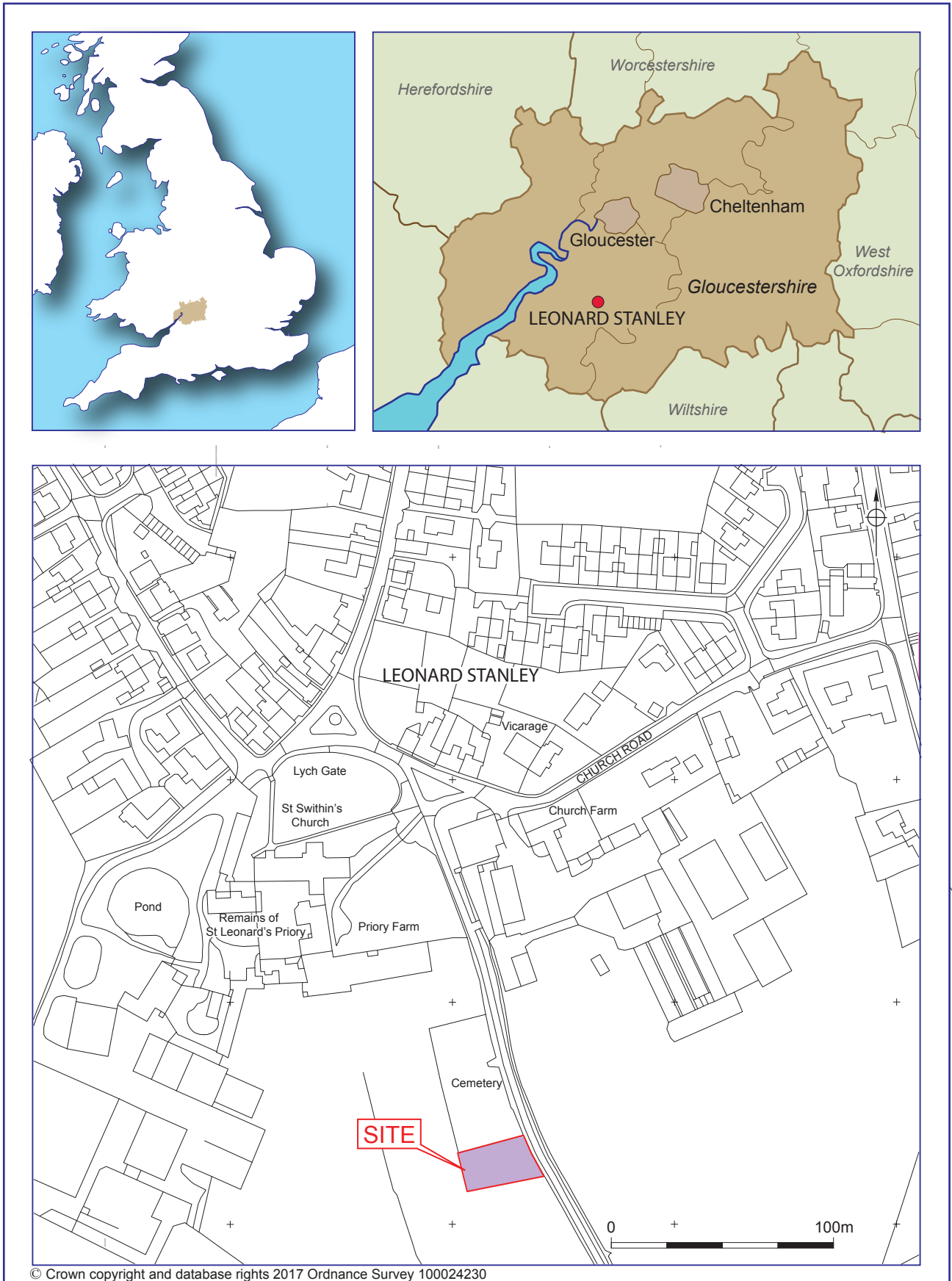
CIfA 2014 *Standard and guidance: Archaeological field evaluation*, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, <http://www.archaeologists.net/codes/ifa>

Soil Survey of England and Wales, 1983 *Midland and Western England*, sheet 3, scale 1:250,000 and Legend for the 1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales (A brief explanation of the constituent soil associations)

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

WA 2017 *Written Scheme of Investigation for an archaeological evaluation at St Swithun's cemetery extension, Gypsy Lane, Leonard Stanley, Stonehouse, Gloucestershire*, Worcestershire Archaeology, Worcestershire County Council, unpublished document dated 26 June 2017, **P5141**

Figures



Location of the site

Figure 1



Trench location plan

Figure 2

Plates



Plate 1: trench 1 soil profile facing NNW, 1.0m and 0.5m scales



Plate 2: trench 1 facing NNE, 2x 1.0m scales

Appendix 1 Trench descriptions

Trench 1

Maximum dimensions: Length: 15.60m; Width: 1.50m; Depth: 0.30-0.54m

Orientation: NE-SW

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
100	Topsoil	Mid greyish brown, firm but friable, clayey silt. Occasional small charcoal flecks and occasional small rounded stones. Frequent roots.	0.0–0.15m
101	Subsoil	Mid orangey brown, firm and moderately cohesive, clayey silt. Moderate iron pan staining.	0.15–0.43m
102	Natural	Mid to light yellowish orange with light blue mottles. Firm and cohesive silty clay. Sterile.	0.43m+

Appendix 2 Technical information

The archive

The archive consists of:

- 1 Field progress reports AS2
- 1 Photographic records AS3
- 19 Digital photographs
- 1 Trench record sheets AS41
- 1 CD-Rom/DVDs
- 1 Copy of this report (bound hard copy)

The project archive (where appropriate) is intended to be placed at:

Museum in the Park,

Stratford Park,

Stratford Road, Stroud,

Gloucestershire, GL5 4AF.

Telephone 01453 763394

A copy of the report will be deposited with the Historic Environment Record (HER) and OASIS.
