

Archaeological watching brief at 81, Gloucester Street, Winchcombe, Gloucestershire



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Worcestershire Archaeology
Archive and Archaeology Service
The Hive, Sawmill Walk,
The Butts, Worcester
WR1 3PD

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Author: Graham Arnold, garnold@worcestershire.gov.uk
and Tom Vaughan, tvaughan@worcestershire.gov.uk

Contributors: Rob Hedge

Illustrator: Carolyn Hunt

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Archaeological watching brief at 81, Gloucester Street, Winchcombe, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire

Graham Arnold and Tom Vaughan

With contributions by Rob Hedge

Illustrations by Carolyn Hunt

Background information

<i>Client</i>	Mark Thompson
<i>National Grid reference</i>	SP 02025 28177
<i>Planning authority</i>	Tewkesbury Borough Council
<i>Reference</i>	17/00148/FUL
<i>Brief</i>	GCC – correspondence 23 February 2017
<i>Project design</i>	WA 2017
<i>Project parameters</i>	ClfA 2014

Archaeological Background

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Worcestershire Archaeology, at the request of Mark Thompson (the Client) in response to the requirements of the Gloucestershire County Council Archaeologist (the Curator), in correspondence dated 23 February 2017.

The project results from the submission of a planning application to Tewkesbury Borough Council (reference number 17/00148/FUL). The development involved the removal of the existing garage, alterations to provide improved vehicular access and the construction of a new garage and car port.

The proposed development is located on the alignment of the defences of Winchcombe's Anglo-Saxon town so groundworks were considered to have the potential to adversely affect significant archaeological deposits. The site of Winchcombe Abbey (SM 1019146) is located to the north-east of the site.

The underlying geology is described as the Charmouth Mudstone formation with no superficial deposits recorded in the area (BGS 2017).

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, within the constraints of the Client's groundworks.

Fieldwork Methods

General specification for fieldwork

WA 2012

Sources consulted

Gloucestershire HER

Date(s) of fieldwork

13, 14 and. 24 July 2017

Area of site

c 187.5m² - see Figure 2

Dimensions of excavated areas observed:

Ground reduction - length 25m
 width 7.50m
 depth 0.75- 1.00m

Soakaway pit length 1.60m
 width 1.60m
 depth 0.80m

Access to or visibility of deposits

Observation of the excavated areas was undertaken during machine excavation. The exposed surfaces were sufficiently clean to observe well-differentiated archaeological deposits, though any less clear may have not been identified. Selected areas were cleaned by hand to define features such as the stub wall [104] within the works area.

Statement of confidence

Access to, and visibility of, deposits allowed a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved.

Artefact methodology, by Rob Hedge

The finds work reported here conforms with the following guidance: for finds work by ClfA (2014b), for pottery analysis by PCRG/SGRP/MPRG (2016), for archive creation by AAF (2011), and for museum deposition by SMA (1993).

Recovery policy

The artefact recovery policy conformed to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012; appendix 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 a Microsoft Access database.

The pottery and ceramic building material was examined under x20 magnification and referenced as appropriate by fabric type and form according to the fabric reference series for the medieval and post-medieval pottery from Cirencester developed by C.A. Ireland (1998).

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.

Deposit description

Site area: Ground reduction works and soakaway pit

Maximum dimensions: Length: 25.00m Width: 7.50m Depth: 0.75 – 0.85m from shed slab

Orientation: NW-SE

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
100	Topsoil	Dark blackish brown humic silty loam garden topsoil with frequent rooting, modern metalwork and refuse.	0.00 – 0.30m
101	Garden soil	Moderately compact mid orangey brown silty clay with frequent rooting, moderate limestone and charcoal. Occasional deposits of larger sandstone and limestone pieces, interpreted as modern truncations.	0.30- 0.60m
102	layer	Firm mid brownish orange clay, disturbed natural / garden soil at base of trench south-east end of site	0.60 – 0.75m+
103	Stub wall footing structure	Flat limestone and sandstone pieces in a dark greyish brown silty clay matrix, containing occasional pot and glass.	0.75m
104	Cut for stub wall	Stub garden wall footing on a north-east to south-west alignment. 0.50m wide, 3.5m long cut into context 102.	0.75m
105	Redeposited natural	Crushed limestone brash, small limestone pieces within a yellow clay matrix	0.30 – 0.70m
106	Natural	Firm brownish yellow clay and limestone brash. Clean natural observed in northwest end of area and base of soakaway pit. Charmouth mudstone.	0.35-0.75m+
107	Fill	Modern backfill of existing soakaway consisting of crushed brick and concrete pieces	0.20 – 0.80m
108	Cut	Cut of modern soakaway observed in soakaway pit.	0.20 – 0.80m

All intrusive groundworks were monitored. Modern and post-medieval garden soils, (100 and 101), were observed, with frequent modern truncations relating to the former garage, retaining wall and modern garden activity. The natural limestone brash, (106), was observed in the northern part of the site where it lay at a depth of between 0.35m and 0.75m below ground level. In the southern half the natural was not observed, and the excavation exposed mixed garden soils and disturbed natural deposits, (102).

The footing for a small stub wall [103] was recorded in the centre of the site on a north-east to south-west alignment (Plate 3). It comprised flat limestone and sandstone in a dark greyish brown silty clay matrix, cut through layer (102). The former garden lay at a higher level than the existing ground surface of the adjacent properties, with a limestone wall bounding the north-west side of the property (Plates 2 and 5). The new soakaway pit excavated in the north-west of the site revealed an existing soakaway thought to have been put in when the retaining wall and former garage were built (Plates 6 and 7). Modern redeposited natural material consisting of crushed limestone brash (105) was also observed in the centre of the area (Plate 4), thought to related to modern levelling when the former retaining wall and garage were constructed.

Artefactual analysis, by Rob Hedge

The artefactual assemblage recovered is summarised in Tables 1 and 2. The pottery assemblage retrieved from the excavated area consisted of 10 sherds of pottery weighing 307g; in addition, fragments of brick and clay pipe stems were recovered. The group came from three stratified contexts and could be dated from the late medieval period onwards (see Table 1). Using pottery as an index of artefact condition, this was generally fair with the majority of sherds displaying moderate levels of abrasion. The mean sherd size was, at 30.7g, considerably above average. However, this reflects the robust nature of the post-medieval wares present rather than their being in a primary deposition.

period	material class	material subtype	object specific type	count	weight(g)
late med/early post-med	ceramic		pot	1	3
early post-medieval	ceramic		pot	1	26
post-medieval	ceramic		pot	8	278
post-medieval	ceramic		brick	1	9
post-medieval	ceramic		clay pipe	2	3
undated	bone	animal bone	mammal bone	1	1
			Totals	14	320

Table 1 Quantification of the assemblage

Pottery

All sherds have been grouped and quantified according to fabric type (Table 2). Where mentioned, all specific forms are referenced to the type series within the report for Cirencester Excavations Vol IV (Ireland 1998).

Broad period	fabric code	Fabric common name	count	weight(g)
late medieval/early post-medieval	208	Cistercian ware	1	3
early post-medieval	201	Ashton Keynes wares	1	26
post-medieval	201	Ashton Keynes wares	6	160
later post-medieval	?259	Cream-bodied kitchen ware	2	118
		Totals	10	307

Table 2 Quantification of the pottery by period and fabric-type

Within topsoil (100) and garden soil (101), a typical range of post-medieval pottery reflected domestic occupation in the area from the 16th century onwards. Ashton Keynes-type red-bodied glazed earthenwares (fabric 201) were well represented. A single sherd of very dark-glazed pottery of this type is typical of the mid-16th to late 17th centuries (Ireland 1998, 108). The remainder fall within a broad later 16th to 18th century date range. Forms represented include a pipkin handle, the base of a large bowl, and several conjoining rim sherds from a jar in a relatively fine fabric.

Also present within garden soil (101) were several conjoining base sherds of a jar in a buff fabric with frequent small black/red ironstone inclusions. With a clear glaze internally and externally, but a white slip on the internal surface only, it is quite distinctive and bears some resemblance to variants on the Midlands Yellow ware type. It best fits Ireland's fabric 259 and is likely to be late 18th to 19th century. It is possibly a local product, possibly from the nearby 19th century Greet Pottery.

The footing (103) for wall stub [104] contained a single sherd of a Cistercian-type ware (fabric 208) tankard/cup with sizeable inclusions resulting in a 'lumpy' feel. It gives a *terminus post quem* date range of early 16th to mid-17th century for the construction of the wall.

Other artefacts

Small fragments of post-medieval brick and clay pipe were recovered from (100) and (101), along with a single small undiagnostic fragment of animal bone.

Site dating

context	material class	material subtype	object specific type	count	weight(g)	start date	end date	TPQ date range
100	ceramic		pot	1	26	1525	1700	1600 - 1910
	ceramic		pot	1	48	1550	1800	
	ceramic		clay pipe	2	3	1600	1910	
101	ceramic		brick	1	9	1600	1900	1775 - 1900
	ceramic		pot	1	80	1550	1800	
	ceramic		pot	2	118	1775	1900	
	ceramic		pot	4	32	1550	1800	
	bone	animal bone	mammal bone	1	1			
103	ceramic		pot	1	3	1500	1675	1500 - 1675

Table 3 Summary of context dating based on artefacts

Further analysis and reporting

No further analysis is recommended for the purposes of this project; however, a comparison of the later post-medieval pottery to local production centres would be of interest.

Discard and retention

The assemblage is small and of limited, local significance, and the decision on whether to retain it rests with Tewkesbury Museum, the receiving institution.

Conclusions

No archaeological deposits or features were observed, nor artefacts recovered relating to Anglo-Saxon activity. A short limestone and sandstone wall footing contained a single sherd of a Cistercian type ware, providing a *terminus post quem* date range of early 16th to mid-17th century for its construction, although this may have been residual from the surrounding garden soils. Otherwise no significant archaeological features, layers, structure horizons or artefacts were recorded. Garden soils and garden walls were observed with areas of modern truncation relating to the former garage and associated groundworks in the north-west of the site. A typical range of post-medieval pottery was present within the soils, reflecting the recent history of domestic occupation. Clean natural limestone brash deposits were only observed toward the north-west end of the site, from 0.35-0.75m depth below ground level.

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 Mark Thompson of groundworks at 81, Gloucester Street, Winchcombe, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire (NGR SP 02025 28177). The site was located on the alignment of the defences of Winchcombe's Anglo-Saxon town, so was considered to have the potential to disturb significant archaeological deposits.

No archaeological deposits or features were observed, nor finds recovered relating to Anglo-Saxon activity. A short limestone and sandstone wall footing contained a single sherd of a Cistercian type

ware, providing a *terminus post quem* date range of early 16th to mid-17th century for its construction, although this may have been residual from the surrounding garden soils. Otherwise no significant archaeological features, layers, structure horizons or artefacts were recorded. Garden soils and garden walls were observed with areas of modern truncation relating to the former garage and associated groundworks in the north-west of the site. A typical range of post-medieval pottery was present within the soils, reflecting the recent history of domestic occupation. Clean natural limestone brash deposits were only observed toward the north-west end of the site, from 0.35-0.75m depth below ground level.

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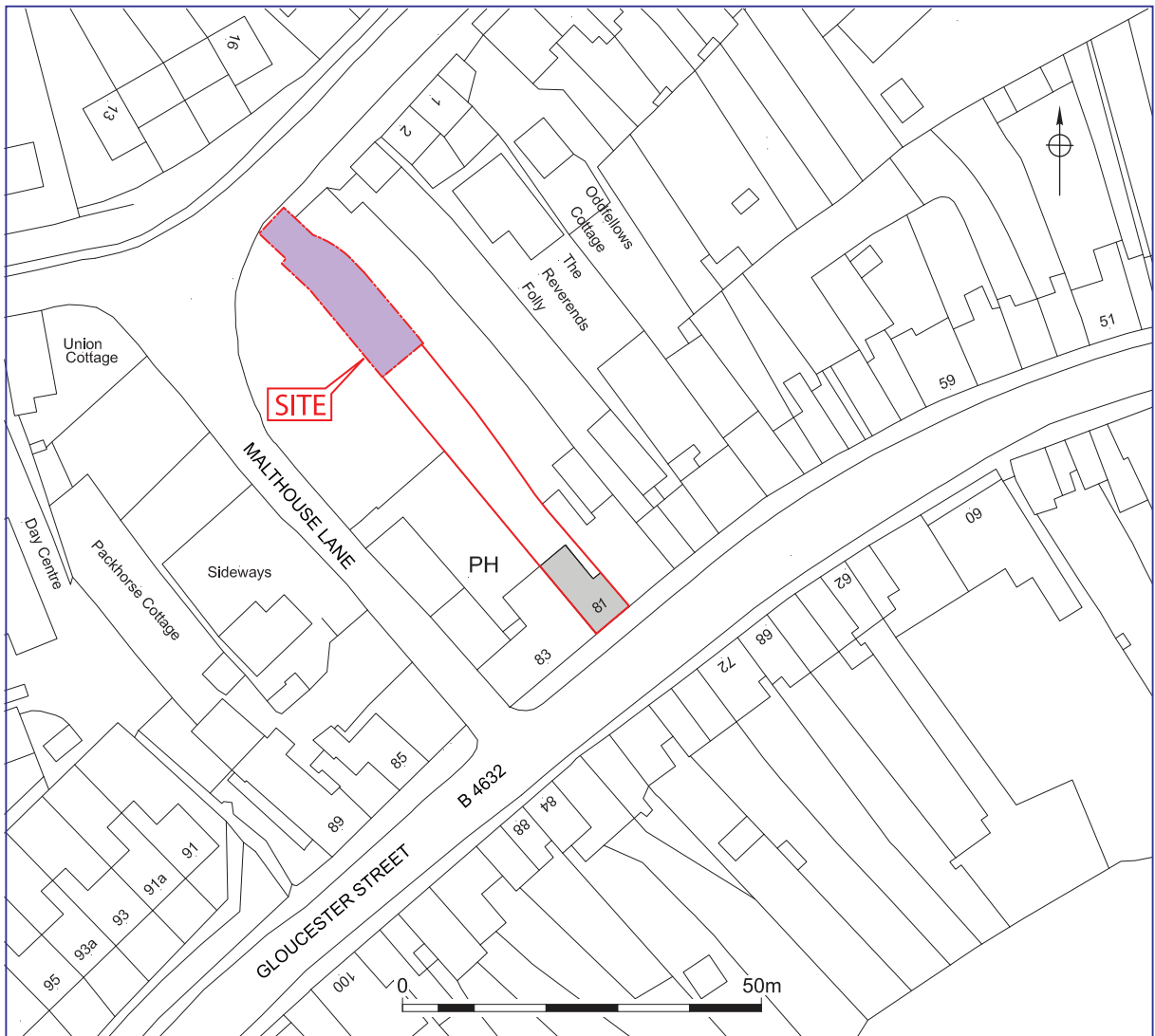
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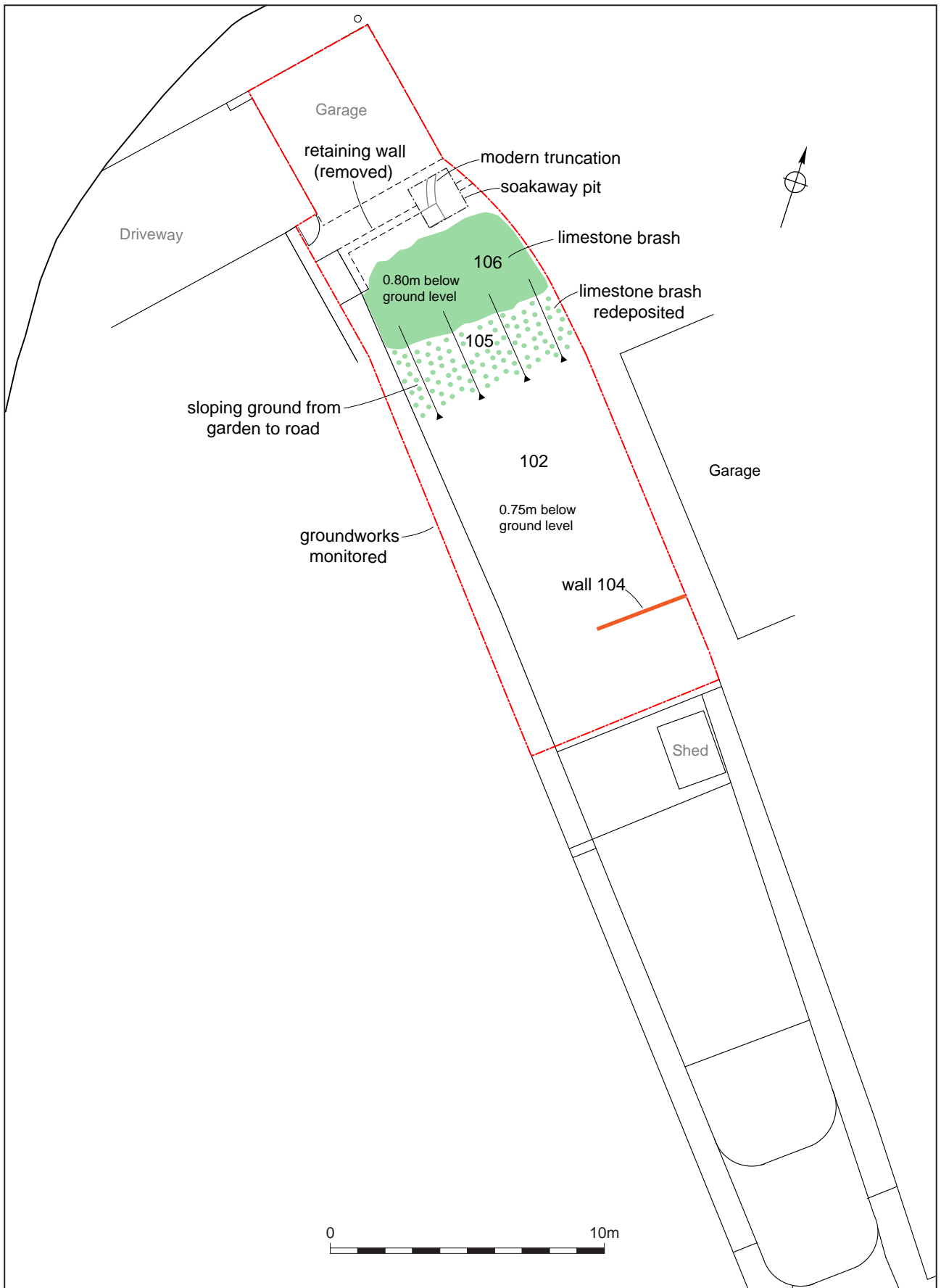
Figures



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Location of the site

Figure 1



Groundworks monitored

Figure 2

Plates



Plate 1 The site as works started, showing slope of ground, view south, no scales



Plate 2 South-east end of site ground reduction, 2x 1m scales



Plate 3 Limestone stub wall 104, view north, 2x 1m scales



Plate 4 Redeposited crushed limestone brash (105) in section, view north-east, 1m scale



Plate 5 Limestone wall bounding south-west side of site and section showing ground reduction depth, 1m scale



Plate 6 Soakaway pit with modern truncation from an existing soakaway, 2x 1m scales



Plate 7 Location of soakaway pit, view south-east, 2x 1m scales



Plate 8: Ground reduction in area of former garage, view north-east, 2x 1m scales

Appendix 1 Technical information

The archive (WA site code: P5105)

The archive consists of:

- 1 Field progress reports AS2
- 1 Photographic records AS3
- 43 Digital photographs
- 1 Trench record sheets AS41
- 1 Box of finds
- 1 Copy of this report (bound hard copy)

The project archive is intended to be placed at:

Tewkesbury Museum,
64 Barton Street,
Tewkesbury
Gloucestershire, GL20 5PX
Tel. 01684 292901

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