

Archaeological Watching Brief at 7 Beales Corner, Bewdley, Wyre Forest, Worcestershire



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

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Author: Andrew Mann (amann@worcestershire.gov.uk)
Contributors: Laura Griffin
Illustrator: Carolyn Hunt
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Andrew Mann

With a contribution by Laura Griffin

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at 7 Beales Corner, Bewdley, Wyre Forest, Worcestershire (NGR 378821, 275433). It was undertaken on behalf of the Environment Agency, during construction of flood defences around the property for which listed Building Consent has been granted (Application ref: 17/0788/LIST) by Wyre Forest District Council.

The only archaeological remains exposed during the preparatory groundworks were the sandstone and brick footings of mid-18th century brick cladding which once encased the 17th century timber framed building. These walls are thought to have survived until the property was reconstructed in the 1960s and 1970s.

Report

1 Background

1.1 Reasons for the project

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at 7 Beales Corner, Bewdley, Wyre Forest, (NGR 378821, 275433) (Fig 1; Plate 1). It was commissioned by Environment Agency (the Client) during works associated with construction of a flood defence barrier around the property. Listed Building Consent has been granted (Application ref: 17/0788/LIST) by Wyre Forest District Council for these works subject to a number of conditions including the completion of a programme of archaeological investigation (Condition 3).

The development site is considered to include heritage assets and potential heritage assets, namely the 17th century property itself, the significance of which may be affected by the application, (WSM 12766; National List UID 1348676).

No formal brief was provided but following discussions with Adam Mindykowski, Historic Environment Advisor, Planning Advisory Service of Worcestershire County Council (the Curator), a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was produced. This addressed the requirements of the planning condition and conformed to the generality of briefs which have been previously issued (WA 2018).

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

The event reference for this project, given by the HER is WSM 70373.

2 Aims

The aims and scope of the watching brief are to observe, investigate 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 Client's groundworks.

The Heritage, Design and Access Statement indicates that significant deposits may be defined as those likely to be of late medieval to post-medieval date associated with 7 Beales Corner which is a Grade II Listed Building understood to have been constructed in 1623 (National List UID 1348676) .

The scope of the project as required by the planning condition and further defined in discussion with the Curator is the provision of the following:

- Production of a Written Scheme of Investigation for approval by the Curator (WA 2018).
- Maintenance of a Watching Brief to observe any areas of ground disturbance arising as a result of the installation of the flood barriers.
- Production of a report describing the scope and scale of the works and archaeological results.

3 Methods

3.1 Personnel

The project was led by Andrew Mann (BA (hons.); MSc, MCIfA), who joined Worcestershire Archaeology in 2004 and has been practicing archaeology since 2001. The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Robin Jackson (BA (hons.); ACIfA). Illustrations were prepared by Carolyn Hunt (BSc (hons.) and Laura Griffin (BA (hons.) contributed the finds report.

3.2 Documentary research

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

3.3 List of sources consulted

Cartographic sources

OS Six-inch map, Worcestershire XIV.NW, 1883

OS Six-inch map, Worcestershire XIV.NW, 1903

OS Six-inch map, Worcestershire XIV.NW, 1929

OS Six-inch map, Worcestershire XIV.NW, 1947

OS 25-inch map, Worcestershire XIV.1, 1884

OS 25-inch map, Worcestershire XIV.1, 1903

OS 25-inch map, Worcestershire XIV.1, 1927

OS 25-inch map, Worcestershire XIV.1, 1938

Aerial photographs

Google Earth accessed 18-7-18, years 2013, 2011, 2006, 2005, 2004, 1999 and 1945.

Documentary sources

Published and grey literature sources are listed in the bibliography.

3.4 Fieldwork strategy

A detailed specification was prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology and approved by the Curator in advance of the commencement of site works (WA 2018).

Fieldwork was undertaken between 30-5-18 and 25-6-18. The site reference number and site code is WSM 70373.

A single trench amounting to just over 16.18² in area, was excavated around the southern, western and eastern sides of the property as shown in Figure 2 (Plates 3-6). A trench along the north western side of the property was also meant to be monitored but this had already been completed by the home owner prior to the watching brief commencing (Plate 2).

Deposits considered not to be significant were removed by hand under archaeological supervision. 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 filled with concrete and topped with blue paving bricks on a cement mortar bed.

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 Laura Griffin

The finds work reported here conforms to 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).

3.6.1 Artefact recovery policy

The artefact recovery policy conformed to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012; appendix 2).

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. This date was used for determining the broad date of phases defined for the site. All information was recorded on a Microsoft Access 2007 database.

For the purposes of this report, pottery has not been quantified according to specific fabric type. However, where mentioned, fabric types are classified according to the fabric reference series maintained by Worcestershire Archaeology (Hurst and Rees 1992 and www.worcestershireceramics.org).

3.6.3 Discard policy

Artefacts from topsoil and subsoil and unstratified contexts will normally be noted but not retained, unless they are of intrinsic interest (eg worked flint or flint debitage, featured pottery sherds, and other potential 'registered artefacts'). All artefacts will be collected from stratified excavated contexts, except for large assemblages of post-medieval or modern material, unless there is some special reason to retain such as local production. Such material may be noted and not retained, or, if appropriate, a representative sample may be collected and retained. Discard of finds from post-medieval and earlier deposits will only be instituted with reference to museum collection policy and/or with agreement of the local museum.

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 property is located on the eastern bank of the River Severn in the Bewdley Conservation Area and is Grade II listed (National List UID 1348676). The property has previously been assessed in the application for listed building consent (Environment Agency 2017) and its description is as follows:

Timber framed house dating to 1623, restored late C20. Close studded timber frame without braces. Timber infill is boards with render applied. Much of the internal timberwork and joinery at ground floor level is C20, but some original work is retained. An Archive photo from 1952 shows the building with a brick gable and a further brick extension to the north. The building was the Bridge Inn from 1840 to 1968. (Robert Kilgour Architects Ltd, 2015). The property is a three storey, detached building originally constructed in 1623 from a timber frame and infilled panels. During the 18th century, the walls of the property were encased with brickwork and the building is reported to have taken on a variety of different uses, such as a public house and also at one time it is reported to have been a shop. In the 1960s and 70s, the property was demolished and sympathetically reconstructed, bringing it back in line with its original

construction. The walls of the property are now constructed from a timber frame, infilled with a single layer of celcon block covered externally with render and plastered internally. Two brick walls were reinstated, one at the front of the property, to the left of the front door which currently contains two low airbricks and the other along the alleyway running to the side of the property. The walls of the property appear sound, however they are considered to be very porous. The floors of the property are constructed from a concrete slab with a damp proof course, overlain with quarry tiles. There is a cellar beneath the property approximately 3 metres deep. Stone steps lead down into the cellar from the front room and it is reported that a well is present within the cellar, which regularly fills with water. The floor level of the ground floor remains constant throughout and the gas and electric meters are located in the side alleyway, recessed to the wall. The alleyway, located along the south easterly side of the property is a shared access point providing access to the rear of all the Beales Corner properties.

5 Structural analysis

The trenches and features recorded are shown in Figure 2.

5.1.1 Phase 1: 18th Century

The earliest structures on site were two brick walls (contexts 3 and 5) running across the southern and gable (western) ends of the property (Plates 5 and 6). The walls were constructed of orange, handmade bricks measuring 24cm x 11cm x 6cm and bonded with a creamy yellow gritty lime mortar. The bricks were in English bond and sat on large, unbonded, blocks of red sandstone. Three courses of brick survived which measured 0.35m high and 0.50m wide. The depth of the sandstone blocks foundations were not established as they were located at the impact level of the footings for the new flood barrier.

5.1.2 Phase 2: Modern

Surrounding the building and visible in all monitored trenches was a compact garden soil consisting of dark reddish brown silty sands containing frequent ceramic building material (CBM) fragments, charcoal flecks and late post-medieval and modern ceramic fragments. The soil had been heavily reworked recently by numerous services (gas, water, electric and drainage) and presumably during the reconstruction of the property in the 1960s and 1970s as frequent cement and lime mortar fragments were also identified. The soil was a minimum of 0.50m deep but its full depth was not established before the impact level of new footings was reached. Although the trench along the northern side of the property was not monitored photographs taken at the time of show the continuation of this soil and do not show any other archaeological features (Plate 2).

Around the rear of the property modern concrete foundations were also exposed (context 2) which presumably relate to the reconstruction of the property in the 1960s and 1970s.

Above this soil was a path of blue pavements (context 8), which at the eastern end of the property sat directly on the soil and in the southern side passage and around the entrance to the property were laid onto a bed of cement mortar.

5.2 Artefact analysis, by Laura Griffin

The assemblage recovered from the site totalled nine finds weighing 237g (Table 1).

Material came exclusively from garden topsoil (context 1) and all was of late post-medieval or modern date. Level of preservation was good with finds displaying low levels of surface abrasion.

period	material class	material subtype	object specific type	count	weight (g)
late post-medieval/modern	metal	copper alloy	coin	1	3
modern	ceramic		pot	6	229
modern	slag		blast	1	4
modern	rubber		washer	1	1

Table 1: Quantification of the assemblage

5.2.1 Summary of artefactual evidence

The pottery assemblage consisted of one sherd of engine-turned dipped earthenware (fabric 85) dated late 18th – 19th century, and five sherds from a 19th – early 20th century stoneware jar (fabric 81.4). Other finds consisted of a small fragment of green blast furnace slag, a rubber washer and a highly corroded, illegible copper alloy coin.

broad period	fabric number	fabric name	count	weight (g)
modern	81.4	miscellaneous late stoneware	5	222
modern	85	modern china	1	7

Table 2: Quantification of the pottery by fabric type

6 Synthesis

The brick walls recorded to the front of the property represent the remains of the brick cladding which had once encased the timber building (Plates 7 and 8). The timber house was probably encased when the three cottages to the south (Numbers 4, 5 and 6 Beales Corner) were erected in the mid-18th Century. The brick cladding is visible in a number of photographs of the property and is thought to have been removed when the house was rebuilt in the 1960s and 1970s. The walls and photographs indicate that the covered porch, currently present at the entrance to the property was once enclosed and formed part of the original internal space to the property.

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 on behalf of the Environment Agency at 7 Beales Corner, Bewdley, Worcestershire (NGR ref (SO788754); HER ref WSM 70373). No archaeological features or finds relating to the original (1623) date of the property were observed. The only archaeological remains, two brick walls, were of 18th century date and would have originally clad the timber building. This cladding is thought to have survived until the property was reconstructed in the 1960s and 1970s.

8 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, Dan Wilkinson (Environment Agency), Gareth Boyd (Water Tight flood protection) and Adam Mindykowski, Historic Environment Advisor, Planning Advisory Service of Worcestershire County Council.

9 Bibliography

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CIfA 2014a 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 2018 Written Scheme of investigation for an archaeological watching brief at 7 Beales Corner, Bewdley, Worcestershire. Worcestershire Archaeology, Worcestershire County Council, unpublished document dated 29 May 2018, **P5324**

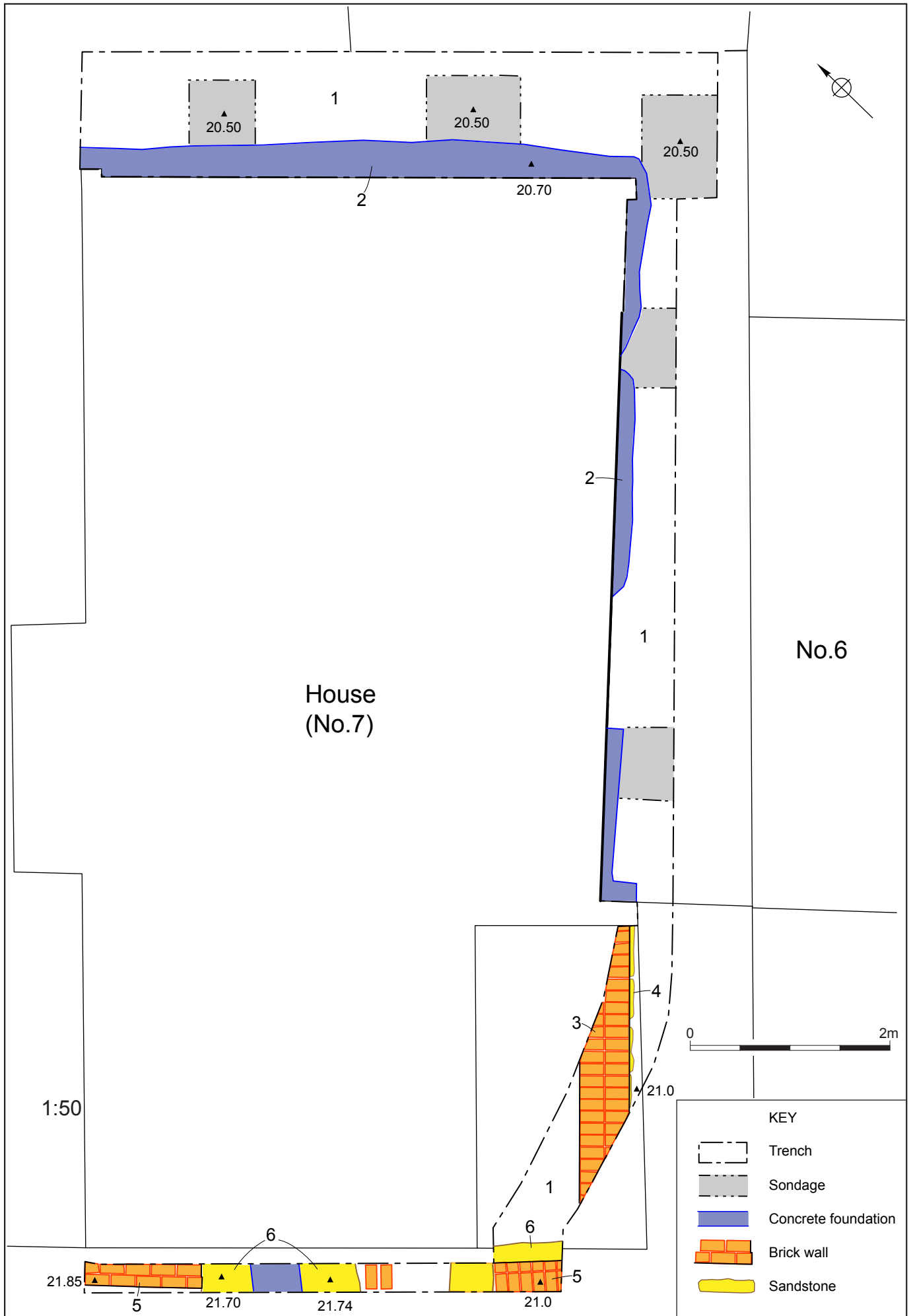
WCC 2010 Standards and guidelines for archaeological projects in Worcestershire, Planning Advisory Section, Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service, Worcestershire County Council unpublished report **604**, amended July 2012

Figures



Location of the site

Figure 1



Plan of trench

Figure 2

Plates



Plate 1: 7 Beales Corner, timber framed property to the left. Facing north.



Plate 2: North-western side of the property during groundworks (left) and as seen during the archaeological watching brief (right). Facing south-west.



Plate 3: Trench dug to the rear of the property, 0.5m scale, facing north-west.



Plate 4: Trench dug along the side corridor of the property, 0.5m scale, facing south-west.



Plate 5: Brick wall (3) on the south-east corner of the property, 0.5m scale, facing north-east.



Plate 6: Brick wall (3) and sandstone footing (4) on the south-east corner of the property, 0.5m scale, facing north-east.



Plate 7: Undated photograph showing the property encased in brick walls. Facing north.

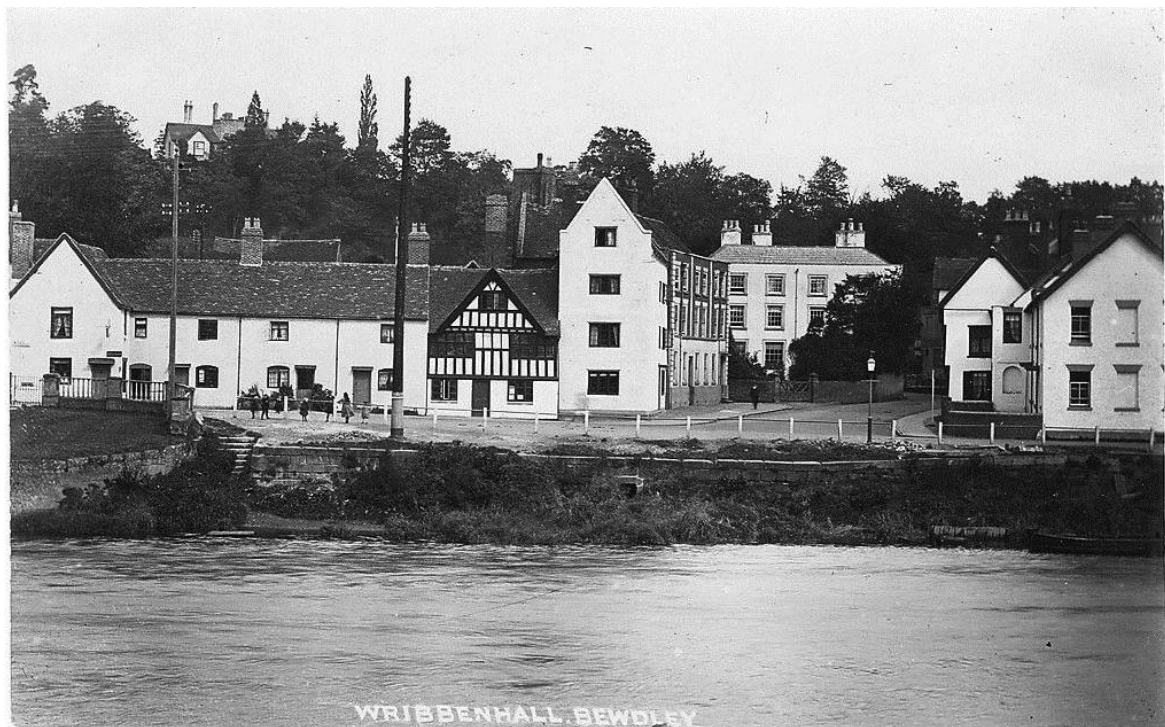


Plate 8: Undated postcard c.1910 of the brick clad property (far left). Facing north-east.

Appendix 1 Technical information

The archive (site code: WSM 70373)

The archive consists of:

- 9 Context records AS1
- 1 Field progress reports AS2
- 1 Photographic records AS3
- 28 Digital photographs
- 1 Drawing number catalogues AS4
- 1 Scale drawings
- 1 Context number catalogues AS5
- 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

Summary of data for Worcestershire HER

WSM 70373 (event HER number)

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Artefacts

period - note 1	material class	object specific type	start date	end date	Count	weight (g)	specialist report? (note 2)	key assemblage? (note 3)
late post- medieval/modern	copper alloy	coin	1	3			N	N
modern	ceramic	pot	6	229	L18C	E20C	Y	N
modern	rubber	washer	1	1			N	N
modern	slag	blast furnace	1	4			N	N

Notes

- 1) In some cases the date will be "Undated". In most cases, especially if there is not a specialist report, the information entered in the Date field will be a general period such as Neolithic, Roman, medieval etc (see below for a list of periods used in the Worcestershire HER). Very broad date ranges such as late Medieval to Post-medieval are acceptable for artefacts which can be hard to date for example roof tiles. If you have more specific dates, such as 13th to 14th century, please use these instead. Specific date ranges which cross general period boundaries can also be used, for example 15th to 17th century.

period	from	to
Palaeolithic	500000 BC	10001 BC
Mesolithic	10000 BC	4001 BC
Neolithic	4000 BC	2351 BC
Bronze Age	2350 BC	801 BC
Iron Age	800 BC	42 AD
Roman	43	409
Post-Roman	410	1065
Medieval	1066	1539
Post-medieval	1540	1900
Modern	1901	2050

period specific	from	to
Lower Paleolithic	500000 BC	150001
Middle Palaeolithic	150000	40001
Upper Palaeolithic	40000	10001
Early Mesolithic	10000	7001
Late Mesolithic	7000	4001

Early Neolithic	4000	3501
Middle Neolithic	3500	2701
Late Neolithic	2700	2351
Early Bronze Age	2350	1601
Middle Bronze Age	1600	1001
Late Bronze Age	1000	801
Early Iron Age	800	401
Middle Iron Age	400	101
Late Iron Age	100 BC	42 AD
Roman 1st century AD	43	100
2nd century	101	200
3rd century	201	300
4th century	301	400
Roman 5th century	401	410
Post roman	411	849
Pre conquest	850	1065
Late 11th century	1066	1100
12th century	1101	1200
13th century	1201	1300
14th century	1301	1400
15th century	1401	1500
16th century	1501	1600
17th century	1601	1700
18th century	1701	1800
19th century	1801	1900
20th century	1901	2000
21st century	2001	

2. Not all evaluations of small excavation assemblages have specialist reports on all classes of objects. An identification (eg clay pipe) and a quantification is not a specialist report. A short discussion or a more detailed record identifying types and dates is a specialist report. This field is designed to point researchers to reports where they will find out more than merely the presence or absence of material of a particular type and date.

3. This field should be used with care. It is designed to point researchers to reports where they will be able to locate the most important assemblages for any given material for any given date.
