

Archaeological watching brief of land rear of 14, Horsbere Road, Hucclecote, Gloucester

for Miranda Hobbs

October 2018



Worcestershire Archaeology

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Archaeological watching brief of land rear of 14, Horsbere Road, Hucclecote, Gloucestershire



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Worcestershire Archaeology
Archive and Archaeology Service
The Hive, Sawmill Walk,
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An archaeological watching brief of land rear of 14, Horsbere Road, Hucclecote, Gloucester

Andrew Walsh

Illustrations by Carolyn Hunt

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken of land rear of 14, Horsbere Road, Hucclecote, Gloucester, during the groundworks associated with the construction of a single residential building. It was commissioned by Miranda Hobbs. The site was located approximately 150m north-west of Hucclecote Roman Villa.

The footprint of the new building measured 12.5m by 7m (Figure 2; Plate 1). The excavation of the footing trench for the external wall was observed. The trench typically measured 0.6m in width and 1.1m in depth.

No significant archaeological features, deposits or finds were identified during the course of the watching brief. A sequence of historic deposits were identified in the footing trench (natural, subsoil/alluvium, and topsoil) which all appeared to slope gently to the north-west, indicating that this was the original profile of the site, which had later been levelled by dumping rubble and clay on top of the original topsoil. This presumably occurred c 1950s or early 1960s when the surrounding housing estate was built. The historic subsoil was a very fine silty clay which may have been alluvial in origin, possibly the result of historic flooding of Horsbere Brook, located immediately north of the site.

Report

1 Background

1.1 Reasons for the project

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken of land rear of 14, Horsbere Road, Hucclecote, Gloucester, during groundworks associated with the construction of a single residential building. It was commissioned by Miranda Hobbs, who had been granted planning permission for the development by Gloucester City Council (ref 17/00359/FUL), subject to conditions including a programme of archaeological works.

The site was located approximately 150m north-west of Hucclecote Roman Villa (NHLE1003529), the significance of which may have been affected by the application.

No brief was issued by the Curator but the project conformed to the generality of briefs which have been issued previously and to specific requirements identified by the Curator in correspondence dated 24 April 2017. The project also conformed to a written scheme of investigation (WSI) prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2017) and the *Standard and guidance: Archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014).

2 Aims

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

3 Methods

3.1 Personnel

The project was undertaken by Andrew Walsh (BSc; MSc; ACIfA; FSA Scot). The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Tom Vaughan (BA; MA; ACIfA). Illustrations were prepared by Carolyn Hunt (BSc (hons.); PG Cert; MCIfA).

3.2 Fieldwork strategy

A written scheme of investigation was prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2017). The watching brief was undertaken on the 22 August 2018. The site code and Worcestershire Archaeology project number is P5149.

The deposits were removed under archaeological supervision using a 360° tracked excavator. 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).

3.3 Structural analysis

All fieldwork records were checked and cross-referenced.

3.4 Artefact methodology

3.4.1 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.

3.5 Environmental archaeology methodology

3.5.1 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.

3.6 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 is located approximately 4.5km south-east of Gloucester (NGR SO 8757 1772; Figure 1) and covers an area of approximately 600m². It is located to the rear of residential properties off Horsbere Road, and is bound by Horsbere Brook to the north-east and private gardens on all other sides. The site is broadly level, although there is a steep drop at the property boundary towards Horsbere Brook. The underlying geology of the site is mapped by the British Geological Survey as Charmouth Mudstone Formation (BGS 2018). Superficial deposits are not mapped.

Hucclecote Roman Villa is located c 150m south-east of the site. It was excavated in 1911 and 1933 revealing a corridor plan with bath buildings and mosaic pavements. It dates from approximately 150 AD to the 5th century, although evidence for later Bronze Age and Iron Age occupation were also identified during the investigations. More recently investigations at the Hucclecote Centre, which was located immediately south of the villa site, identified two phases of coaxial field system, one pre-dating the villa, the other, incorporating a metalled road or trackway apparently leading towards the villa, contemporary with it.

4.2 Current land-use

The site was originally intended to be private garages for local residents although the garages were never built and the site subsequently became overgrown. The site had been cleared prior to construction beginning.

5 Results

The footprint of the new building measured 12.5m by 7m (Figure 2 and Plate 1). The excavation of the footing trench for the external wall was observed. The trench typically measured 0.6m in width, and 1.1m in depth. After discussion with the Curator in correspondence dated 24 August 2018, it was agreed that monitoring of further works (e.g. service trenches) was not required.

The natural undisturbed geology, a blue grey clay (104), was identified within the base of the eastern arm of the trench, approximately 1.1m below ground level. This was overlain by a light yellowish brown sandy silty clay subsoil or alluvial layer (103) which was visible throughout the footing trench, including in the base of the rest of the trench. This in turn was overlain by a mid brown sandy silt clay topsoil (102). These deposits all appeared to slope downwards towards the north-west.

Sealing the historic deposits were alternating and mixed layers of clay soil with occasional stone and brick rubble (101; Plate 2), measuring up to 0.4m thick. This material appeared to have been used to level the site. It was overlain by a mid grey brown sandy silt topsoil (100).

6 Synthesis

No significant archaeological features, deposits or finds were identified during the course of the watching brief. The historic deposits identified in the footing trench (natural 104, subsoil/alluvium 103, and topsoil 102) all appeared to slope gently to the north-west, indicating this was the original profile of the site, which had later been levelled by dumping rubble and clay (101) on top of the topsoil. This presumably occurred c 1950s or early 1960s when the housing estate was built. Subsoil layer 102 was a very fine silty clay which may have been alluvial in origin, possibly the result of historic flooding of Horsbere Brook, located immediately north of the site.

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 Miranda Hobbs of land rear of 14, Horsbere Road, Hucclecote, Gloucester (NGR SO 8757 1772).

The footprint of the new building measured 12.5m by 7m (Figure 2 and Plate 1). The excavation of the footing trench for the external wall was observed. The trench typically measured 0.6m in width and 1.1m in depth.

No significant archaeological features, deposits or finds were identified during the course of the watching brief. A sequence of historic deposits were identified in the footing trench (natural, subsoil/alluvium, and topsoil) which all appeared to slope gently to the north-west, indicating that this was the original profile of the site, which had later been levelled by dumping rubble and clay on top of the original topsoil. This presumably occurred c 1950s or early 1960s when the surrounding housing estate was built. The historic subsoil was a very fine silty clay which may have been alluvial in origin, possibly the result of historic flooding of Horsbere Brook, located immediately north of the site.

8 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following for their assistance in the successful conclusion of this project; Miranda Hobbs (the client), and Andrew Armstrong (Archaeologist, Gloucester City Council).

9 Bibliography

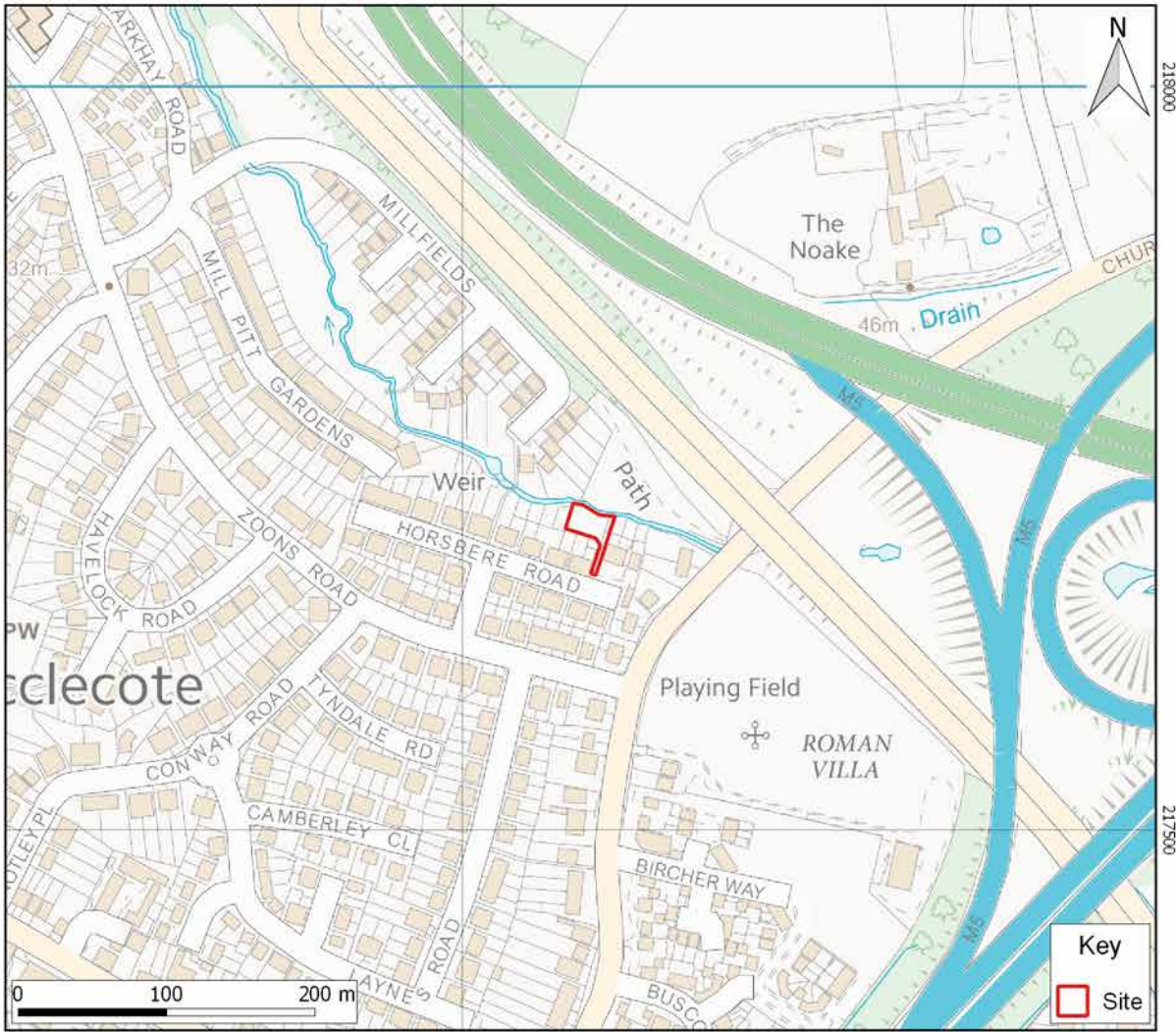
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ClfA 2014 *Standard and guidance: Archaeological watching brief*, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists

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

WA 2017 *Written Scheme of Investigation for an archaeological watching brief of land rear of Horsbere Road, Hucclecote, Gloucestershire*, Worcestershire Archaeology, Worcestershire County Council, unpublished document dated 4 August 2017, revised 20 September 2017, **P5149**

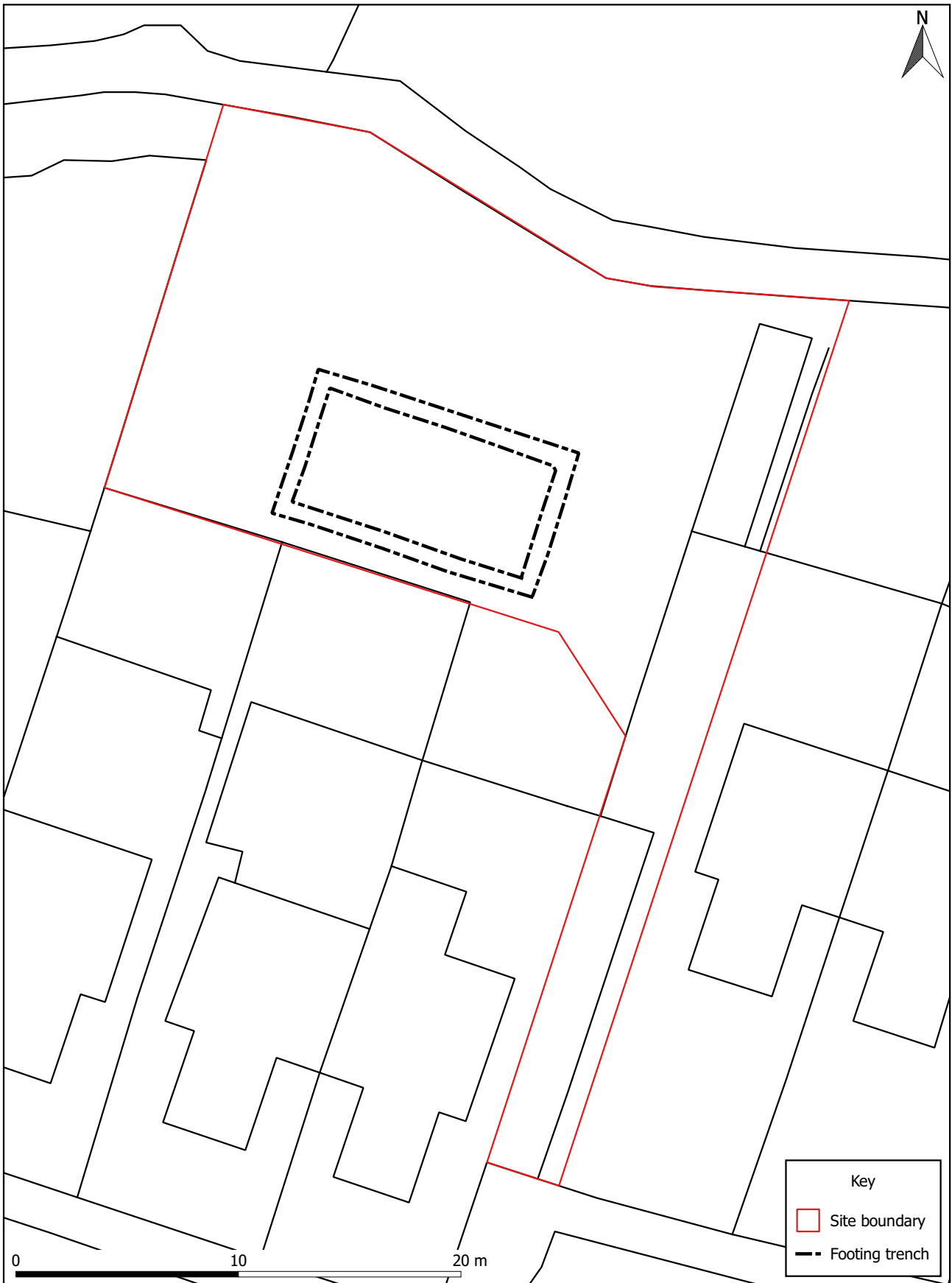
Figures



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Location of the site

Figure 1



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Location of footing trench

Figure 2

Plates



Plate 1: The excavated footing trench; view west; no scales



Plate 2: The northern corner of the footing trench; note the modern topsoil (100) and bands of modern clay rubble (101) sealing an earlier topsoil (102) and subsoil/alluvium (103); view south-west; 0.50m scale

Appendix 1 Technical information

The archive (site code: P5149)

The archive consists of:

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

The project archive is intended to be placed at:

Museum of Gloucester
Brunswick Road
Gloucester
Gloucestershire
GL1 1HP
Tel 01452 396131

A copy of the report will be deposited with the Historic Environment Record (HER) and the National Monuments Record (NMR) as appropriate.
