

Archaeological Watching Brief at 1 Squires Walk, Kempsey Worcestershire

Worcestershire Archaeology
For Elmwood Heritage

November 2018



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1 SQUIRES WALK, KEMPSEY WORCESTERSHIRE

Archaeological Watching Brief Report



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SITE INFORMATION

Site name: St Marys Church House,
1 Squires Walk, Kempsey,
Worcestershire

Local planning authority: Malvern Hills District Council

Planning reference: 18/00105/FUL

Central NGR: SO 84961 49018

Commissioning client: Shona Robson-Glyde,
Elmwood Heritage
On behalf of Simon Scott

WA project number: P5394

WA report number: 2629

HER reference: WSM 70456

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Archaeological Watching Brief at St Mary's Church House, 1 Squires Walk, Kempsey, Worcestershire

By Graham Arnold

Illustrations by Laura Templeton

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA) in October and November 2018 at St Marys Church House, 1 Squires Walk, Kempsey, Worcestershire (NGR SO 84961 49018). The project was commissioned by Shona Robson-Glyde, of Elmwood Heritage Ltd, on behalf of her client Simon Scott, for works to demolish an existing building and construct a new bungalow on site. Planning permission has been granted subject to a programme of archaeological works (planning reference 18/00105/FUL).

The site is located in the historic core of the village of Kempsey. There is evidence of a Minster church established in the village before 799 AD and a Bishops manor house in the 9th Century AD. Previous archaeological investigations undertaken to the northwest of the current site, relating to a Flood Alleviation Scheme, had uncovered Saxon to medieval burials and evidence of occupation.

The excavations for existing services and foundation trenches for the new building were archaeologically monitored. A natural soil profile was observed although this had been heavily truncated by modern services, surfacing and landscaping within the garden of the existing house. Once it had been proved that the foundations and groundworks for the previous house had highly truncated the ground, monitoring ceased in this area.

No significant archaeological deposits, finds or features were uncovered during the works, demonstrating that the medieval occupation of Kempsey was either not present or had been removed or truncated by the construction of the bungalow.

Report

1 Introduction

1.1 Background to the project

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA) in October and November 2018 at St Marys Church House, 1 Squires Walk, Kempsey, Worcestershire (NGR SO 84961 49018, Figure 1). Planning permission has been granted by Malvern Hills District Council for the demolition of an existing bungalow and the construction of a new house on the site (planning reference 18/00105/FUL). The archaeological advisor to the District Council, considered that the proposed development had the potential to impact upon possible heritage assets and permission was granted subject to conditions including a programme of archaeological works. The project was commissioned by Shona Robson-Glyde, of Elmwood Heritage, on behalf of her client Simon Scott. Correspondence between Shona-Robson Glyde and Aidan Smyth, Archaeology and Planning Advisor to Malvern Hills District Council established that a watching brief on groundworks associated with the development was appropriate mitigation.

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2018) and approved by Aidan Smyth, prior to the works being undertaken. The watching brief conforms to the industry guidelines and standards set out by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists in *Standard and guidance: for an archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014) and the *Standards and guidelines for archaeological projects in Worcestershire* (WCC 2010).

1.2 Site location, topography and geology

The village of Kempsey is situated 5.5km south of the city of Worcester on a gravel terrace that overlooks the floodplain north-east of a bend in the River Severn.

The underlying geology comprises bedrock of the Sidmouth Mudstone formation overlain by superficial deposits of Pleistocene and recent drift deposits of Worcester Member sand and gravel of glacial origin forming the third terrace of the River Severn (BGS 2018).

St Mary's Church House, 1 Squires Walk is in a residential area located in the centre of the historic core of the village of Kempsey. The site is located to the southwest of St Marys Church. The site covers an area of 1500m² and is bounded by a road to the south and Hatfield brook to the west and north of the site. It comprises a garden with areas of hardstanding and foundations and flooring for a demolished bungalow building that was formerly St Marys Church House. The site is generally flat, at approximately 14m AOD, having been a landscaped gardens and bungalow, which was demolished as part of these current works.

2 Archaeological and historical background

2.1 Introduction

The site is close to the historic medieval core of the village of Kempsey, with a Minster church established before 799 AD and a Bishops manor house in the 9th Century AD. Previous archaeological investigations have taken place to the northwest of the current site with works related to a recent Flood Alleviation Scheme. This project was located to the south and west of St Marys Church and uncovered significant archaeological deposits, including 69 grave cuts. Four individuals were radiocarbon dated giving a 9th – 14th Century date. Further information can be found in the published report:

Webster, J Vaughan, T 2016 *Archaeological investigations on the Flood Alleviation Scheme, Kempsey, Worcestershire*, Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service **P3708** report **2189**

3 Project aims

The aims of the watching brief were to observe 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 Clients groundworks.

4 Project methodology

Fieldwork was undertaken between 23 October and 1 November 2018

Foundation trenches for the house were monitored, covering an area of 300m². The foundation trenches that were over the existing footing of the previously demolished house were not monitored due to the extent of disturbance in this area and substantial truncation of deposits.

A trench to facilitate connections for the existing services for site was excavated in the southwest corner of the building footings. This trench measured 3.00m x 0.70m and 0.60m deep and consisted entirely of modern made ground.

The location of the monitored groundworks is indicated in Figure 2.

Excavation took place under archaeological supervision using a 360° tracked excavator, employing a toothless bucket. Clean surfaces were inspected and photographed to determine their nature. Deposits were recorded according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012) and trench and feature locations were surveyed using a differential GPS with an accuracy limit set at 0.04m.

All fieldwork records were checked and cross-referenced.

The project archive is currently held at the offices of Worcestershire Archaeology. Subject to the agreement of the landowner it is anticipated that it will be deposited at Worcestershire Museum.

5 Archaeological results

5.1 Introduction

The stratigraphy recorded in the foundation trenches are shown in Figure 2. Photographs of the works are provided in Plates 1 - 6. The trench context inventory is presented in below:

5.2 Trench description

Maximum dimensions: Length: 20.00m Width: 15.00m Depth: 1.20m – 2.00m

Ground level 14.00m AOD

Maximum depth 12.00m AOD

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
100	Modern made ground within existing building footprint	Loose dark brownish grey silty sandy clay with frequent rooting, brick rubble, concrete slabs, clinker and type 1 gravels. Rare white porcelain and clay pipe stems (not retained).	0.00 – 0.20m
101	Topsoil	Garden topsoil consisting of dark greyish brown sandy silt with frequent rounded pebbles and tree roots.	0.00 – 0.40m
102	Subsoil	Firm yellow or reddish brown sandy clay with moderate charcoal from frequent root action disturbance.	0.20 - 0.50m
103	Natural ground	Firm brownish sandy clay and gravels	0.50 – 1.20m
104	Natural ground	Yellowish brown silty sand filling a tree throw, from tree root disturbance.	0.50 – 1.00m
105	Natural geology	Firm red sand and gravel	1.20 – 2.00m
106	Modern cut of drainage manhole	Modern cut for service trench manhole.	0.00 – 1.20m

6 Discussion and Conclusions

The stratigraphy within the site comprised a natural soil profile of topsoil, subsoil and natural sands, clays and gravels. Modern 20th Century disturbance from the existing house and garden surfacing and services was also recorded across site. No significant archaeological finds, deposits or features were present over the site. No evidence of the archaeological deposits relating to Saxon and later occupation, observed in previous works to the northwest of the site were present within the development site and it is thought likely that, although close to the historic core of the village, the site was either not occupied during these periods or evidence for occupation lies elsewhere within the plot.

Once it had been proved that the foundations and groundworks for the previous house had highly truncated the ground, monitoring ceased in this area. No significant deposits were disturbed by the groundworks.

7 Project personnel

The fieldwork was led by Graham Arnold.

The project was managed by Tom Rogers. The report was produced and collated by Graham Arnold. Illustration was undertaken by Carolyn Hunt.

8 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following: Shona Robson-Glyde of Elmwood Heritage for commissioning the project, Simon Scott, the landowner and Tom Williams who carried out the groundworks. The project was monitored by Aidan Smyth, the Archaeological planning officer for Wychavon District Council and Worcestershire Archaeology would also like to thank them for their advice.

9 Bibliography

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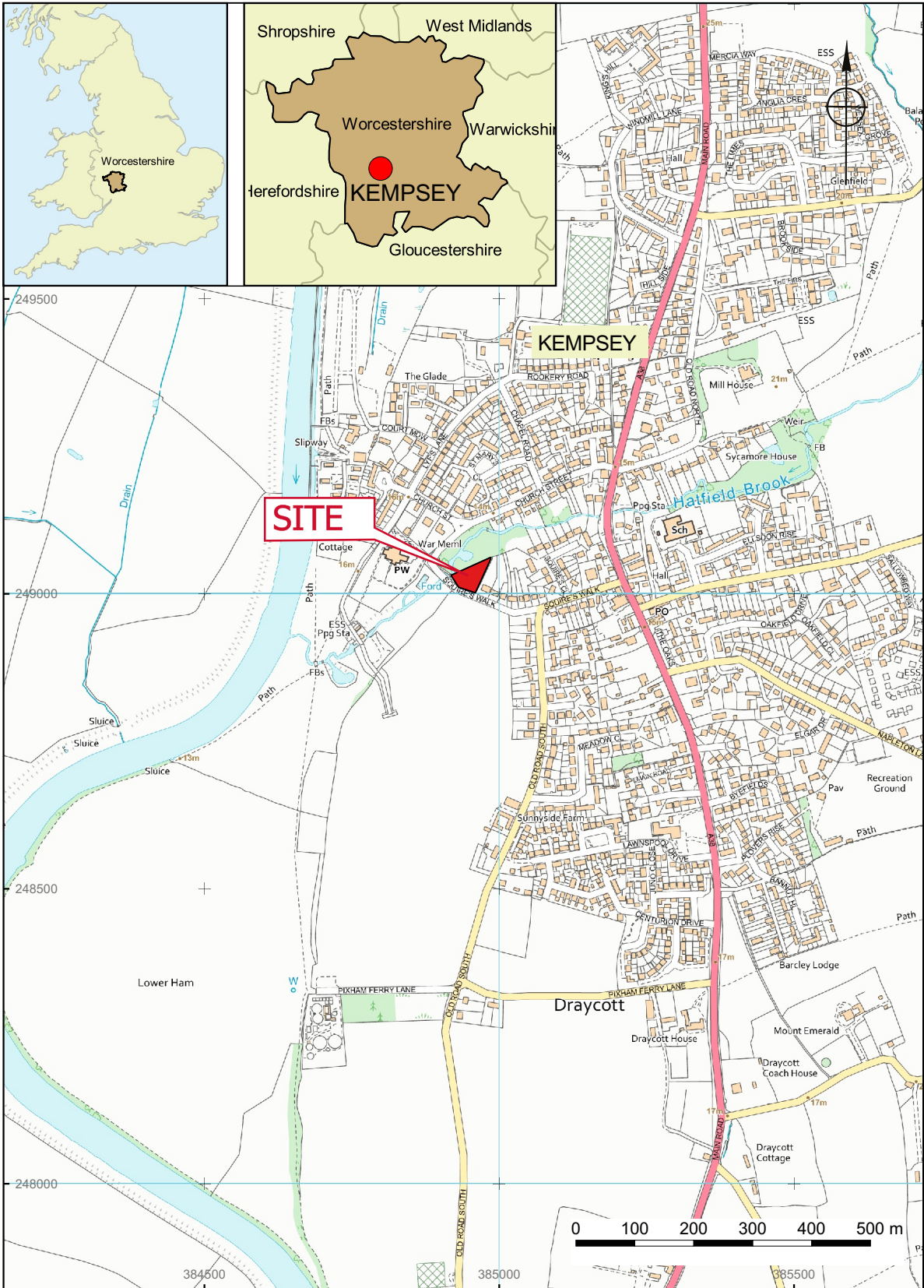
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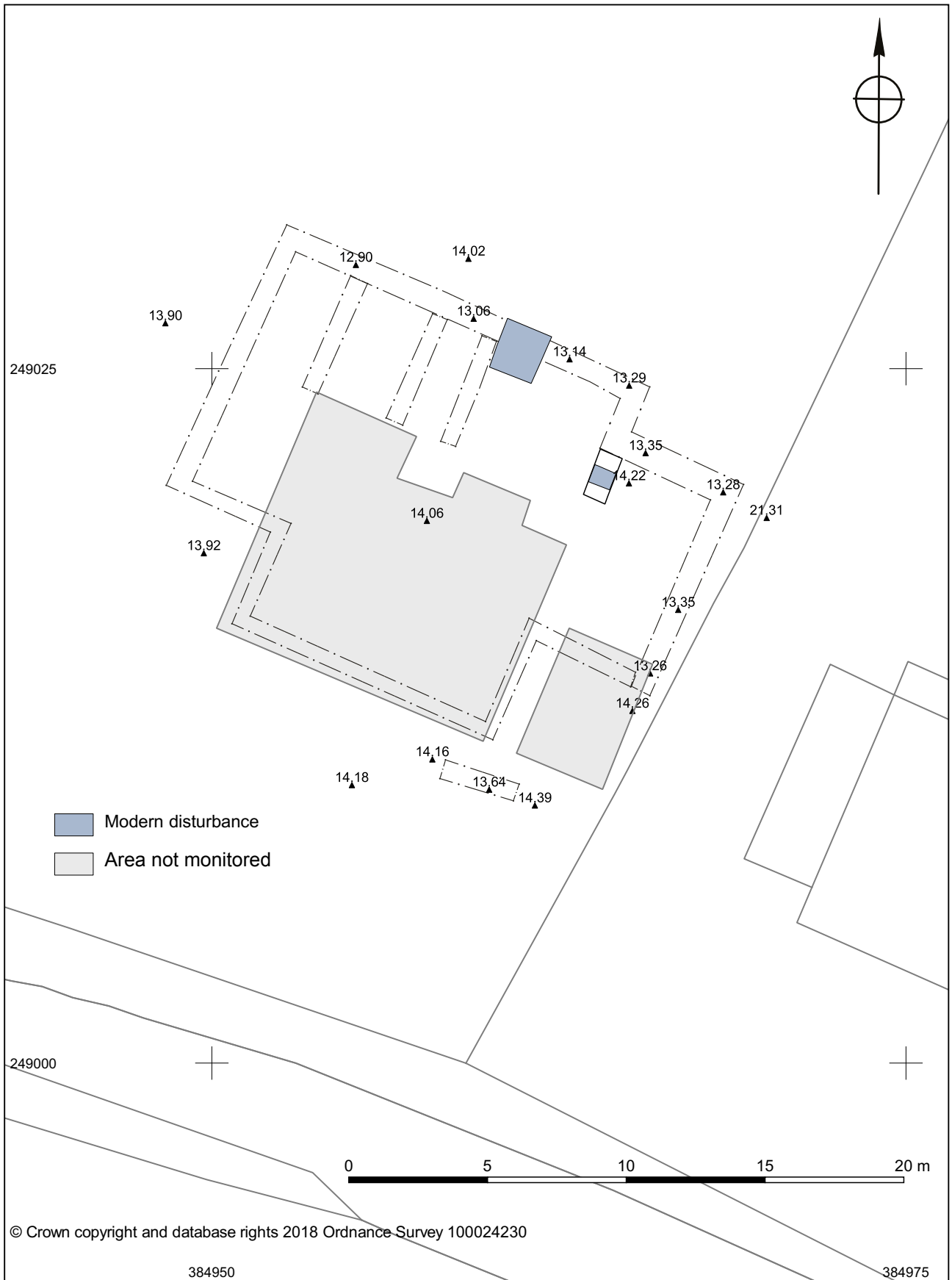
Figures



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Location of the site

Figure 1



Trench Plan

Figure 2

Plates



Plate 1: General view of site after demolition but prior to footing excavations. Looking northeast, 2 x1m scales



Plate 2: Eastern foundation trench section showing natural stratigraphy. View northeast with 2 x1m scales



Plate 3: General shot of groundworks looking southwest with 2x1m scales



Plate 4: View of northern foundation trench after excavation. 2 x 1m scales looking north



Plate 5: Northern footing trenches showing modern concrete footing and drainage manhole. View southwest



Plate 6: Example of stratigraphy in centre of site of natural sandy clay and gravels. Modern house footing to south. View west with 1m scale