

Archaeological watching brief at  
15/15A Tetbury Street,  
Minchinhampton,  
Gloucestershire

Worcestershire Archaeology  
*for Orion Heritage Ltd*

March 2019



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# 15/15A TETBURY STREET MINCHINHAMPTON GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Archaeological watching brief report

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## SITE INFORMATION

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Site name: 15/15A Tetbury Street, Minchinhampton, Gloucestershire  
Local planning authority: Stroud District Council  
Planning reference: 17/2382/FUL  
Central NGR: SO 87271 00661  
Commissioning client: Orion Heritage Ltd  
WA project number: P5455  
WA report number: 2676  
Oasis reference: fieldsec1-335107

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# Archaeological watching brief at 15/15A Tetbury Street, Minchinhampton, Gloucestershire

By **Graham Arnold**

Illustrations by Laura Templeton

## Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at 15/15A Tetbury Street, Minchinhampton, Gloucestershire (SO 87271 00661). It was commissioned by Orion Heritage Ltd on behalf of their client, Partridge Homes Cotswolds Ltd, who are constructing a residential development.

The site lies on sloping ground on the east side of Minchinhampton, just beyond the settlement's historic medieval core. The watching brief comprised the monitoring of the ground reduction in the garden over the footprint of the new residential development, associated car parking and the excavation of service trenches along the access road to the east of the buildings.

The watching brief followed an earlier evaluation on the site. Evidence of ground disturbance and earlier stone quarrying activity was observed but no dating evidence was retrieved.

A series of deposits relating to the 18<sup>th</sup> Century were recorded as well as later periods of the garden and disturbance and truncation from modern developments within the garden.

No evidence of any early occupational activity was observed during the works.

## Report

### 1 Introduction

#### 1.1 Background to the project

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at 15/15A Tetbury Street, Minchinhampton, Gloucestershire (SO 87271 00661). The project was commissioned by Orion Heritage Ltd on behalf of their client, Partridge Homes, who are constructing a residential development. Planning permission for the development was granted by Stroud District Council subject to a programme of archaeological works (planning reference 17/2382/FUL).

A desk-based assessment of the site was prepared by Orion Heritage Ltd (2017). This identified a moderate potential for remains dating to the Medieval period which were considered likely to be of local significance. A low potential for all other periods was identified.

Subsequently an archaeological evaluation of the site was undertaken in 2017, which comprised the excavation of three trial-trenches. A retaining wall, post-medieval rubble deposit and a small pit were recorded. A series of levelling deposits and buried soils attest to several phases of post-medieval re-landscaping within the site. A small assemblage of 13th to 19th century finds, including glazed roof tile fragments, indicative of domestic refuse were recovered from several deposits and are likely to originate from this and adjacent properties, including those fronting Tetbury Street. The site appears to have been used for small scale activities associated with neighbouring households during the post-medieval period, before becoming the current garden (Worcestershire Archaeology 2017).

Discussion between Orion Heritage and Charles Parry Archaeological Officer for Gloucestershire County Council, determined the scope of the archaeological watching brief on site. A Written Scheme of Investigation was prepared by Orion Heritage Ltd (Orion Heritage 2018), which sets out the scope and guidelines for the archaeological works and approved by Charles Parry.

The watching brief conforms to the approved WSI and to the generic briefs and the industry guidelines and standards set out by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists in *Standard and guidance: for an archaeological watching brief* (CIfA 2014).

#### 1.2 Site location, topography and geology

The site lies on sloping ground on the east side of Minchinhampton, just beyond the settlement's historic medieval core.

The site lies behind residential housing to the north of Tetbury Street, on the eastern side of Minchinhampton. To the south, west and north the site is bordered by gardens, and to the east lies a rough pasture field. The ground slopes down from the south-east to north-west, although landscaping work associated with the present garden and car park have created several terraces within the site. Houses to the south, along Tetbury Street, have been cut into the slope, meaning that the site is higher than the road and properties that front onto it.

The British Geological Survey has mapped the underlying site geology as limestone of the Athelstan Oolite Formation and no superficial deposits are recorded (BGS 2018).

### 2 Archaeological and historical background

A detailed summary of the archaeological context is set out in the desk-based assessment (Orion Heritage 2017). This identified a moderate potential for remains dating to the medieval period which were considered likely to be of local significance. A low potential for all other periods was identified.

Archaeological evaluation of the site comprised the excavation of three trial-trenches. A retaining wall, post-medieval rubble deposit and a small pit were recorded. A series of levelling deposits and buried



soils attest to several phases of post-medieval re-landscaping within the site. A small assemblage of 13th to 19th century finds, including glazed roof tile fragments, indicative of domestic refuse were recovered from several deposits and are likely to originate from this and adjacent properties, including those fronting Tetbury Street. The site appears to have been used for small scale activities associated with neighbouring households during the post-medieval period, before becoming the current garden (Walsh & O'Hare, 2017). A geophysical survey and intrusive investigation of land immediately to the east revealed a large medieval ditch, thought to be part of a network of earthworks extending north, east and west out of Minchinhampton (GCC 1992; GHER 3493 and GHER 40098).

### 3 Project aims

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared by Orion Heritage (OH 2018). The WSI sets out the scope and aims of the project.

The principal aims of the archaeological investigation were to:

- determine the character, extent, date, complexity, integrity, state of preservation and quality of the archaeological remains present within the area impacted by foundation design and by provision of new utilities, therefore ensuring their preservation by record.

The general objectives were to ensure:

- the recording of archaeological assets discovered during the archaeological works;
- that any below-ground archaeological deposits exposed are promptly identified;

and

- the recording of archaeological remains, to place this record in its local and regional context and to make this record available.

### 4 Project methodology

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared by Orion Heritage (OH 2018). Fieldwork was undertaken between 1 October 2018 and 15 March 2019.

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

Groundworks were undertaken under constant archaeological supervision using a 360° tracked 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) 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. Analysis was undertaken through a combination of structural and artefactual evidence, allied to the information derived from other sources.

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 Museum in the Park, Stroud.

## 5 Archaeological results

### 5.1 Introduction

The features recorded in the archaeologically monitored areas are shown in Figures 2 and 3. The trench and context inventory is presented below.

## 5.2 Trench descriptions

### Trench 1 General ground reductions

Maximum dimensions: Length: 30.00m Width: 18.00m Depth: 1.00m

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
100	Topsoil	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	garden soil	Garden topsoil consisting of dark greyish brown sandy silt with frequent rounded pebbles and tree roots.	0.00 – 0.40m
102	Natural	Firm yellow white limestone brash and sandy clay with solid Oolite limestone geology at depth	0.40 – 1.20m +
103	Made ground	Clinker and rubble hardcore under concrete path along north edge of site	0.20 -.0.50m
104	Wall	19th C dry stone wall dividing garden paths and landscaping	0.00 – 1.00m
105	Wall	19 <sup>th</sup> C dry stone wall dividing garden paths and landscaping	0.00 – 1.00m
106	Wall	19 <sup>th</sup> C dry stone wall running east-west in south of the site	0.00 – 0.50m
107	Modern made ground	Demolished outhouse brick rubble spread in south west corner of site behind southern retaining wall	0.20 – 1.00m

### Trench 2 – Access area in Northeast of site

Maximum dimensions: Length: 7.00m Width: 6.50m Depth: 0.45m

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
200	Topsoil	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). Same as 100	0.0 – 0.45m
201	garden soil	Garden topsoil consisting of dark greyish brown sandy silt with frequent rounded pebbles and tree roots. Same as 101	0.45m +

Trench 3 – Service trench along road access

Maximum dimensions: Length: 35.00m Width: 1.50m Depth: 1.00m

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
300	Hardstanding for car park and access road	Concrete and tarmac with modern hardcore underlay levelling and redeposited natural	0.00 – 0.40m
201	garden soil	Garden topsoil consisting of loose dark greyish brown sandy silt with frequent ash, glass bottles, porcelain and modern refuse.	0.10 – 0.60m
302	Natural geology	Limestone brash and Oolite Limestone geology. Same as 102	0.40 -1.00m +

## 6 Artefactual evidence

Recovery of artefacts was undertaken according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012). In the event no artefacts were identified which were considered to be suitable for analysis.

Finds included glass bottles, white porcelain, stoneware jars, clay pipe stems and glazed ceramic tiles, were recovered from within the garden soil (101, 201 and 301) build up and around the retaining walls. These all dated to between the 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> Centuries, and were photographed on site (Plates 11 and 12), before discarding.

## 7 Discussion and Conclusions

The natural Limestone brash substrate was observed in the central and north of the site. It was not observed in the south of the site, where a modern concrete retaining wall had been backfilled with modern made ground. The existing buildings of Tetbury Street are also cut into the natural ground, truncating any earlier archaeological deposits.

It is likely that this area was subject to repeated quarrying activity from the medieval period onwards. The site appears to have been used for small scale activities associated with neighbouring households during the post-medieval period, before becoming the current garden.

Following the reduced excavation of the garden, further geotechnical borehole testing was carried out due to the varying compaction of the natural on site. The geotechnical sampling carried out in November demonstrated that the area had been subject to quarrying activities, with redeposited natural limestone and clay found in patches over the site, particularly in the northwest (Core Geotechnics 2018; See Figure 3).

Modern made ground dating to the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century and modern road surfacing was present in the service trench monitored along the south east access to the site (Plates 13-16). This made ground lay directly over the natural limestone brash geology.

The only features that were observed related to post - 1<sup>st</sup> Edition OS map (1885) activity. These garden features and demolished outbuildings are depicted on later map editions and included Limestone dry stone retaining walls and the foundations / building platforms for outhouses. A modern concrete pond and concrete retaining walls were also removed during the works.

The methods adopted allow a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved. Conditions were suitable in all of the trenches to identify the presence or absence of archaeological features. It is considered that the nature, density and distribution of archaeological features provides an accurate characterisation of the development site as a whole.

## 8 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. The illustration of figures was completed by Laura Templeton.

## 9 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following: Cathy Patrick, Orion Heritage Ltd for commissioning the project, Will Partridge and Ian Hitchings, Partridge Homes Cotswold Ltd and the staff at Fromebridge Construction for their assistance on site.

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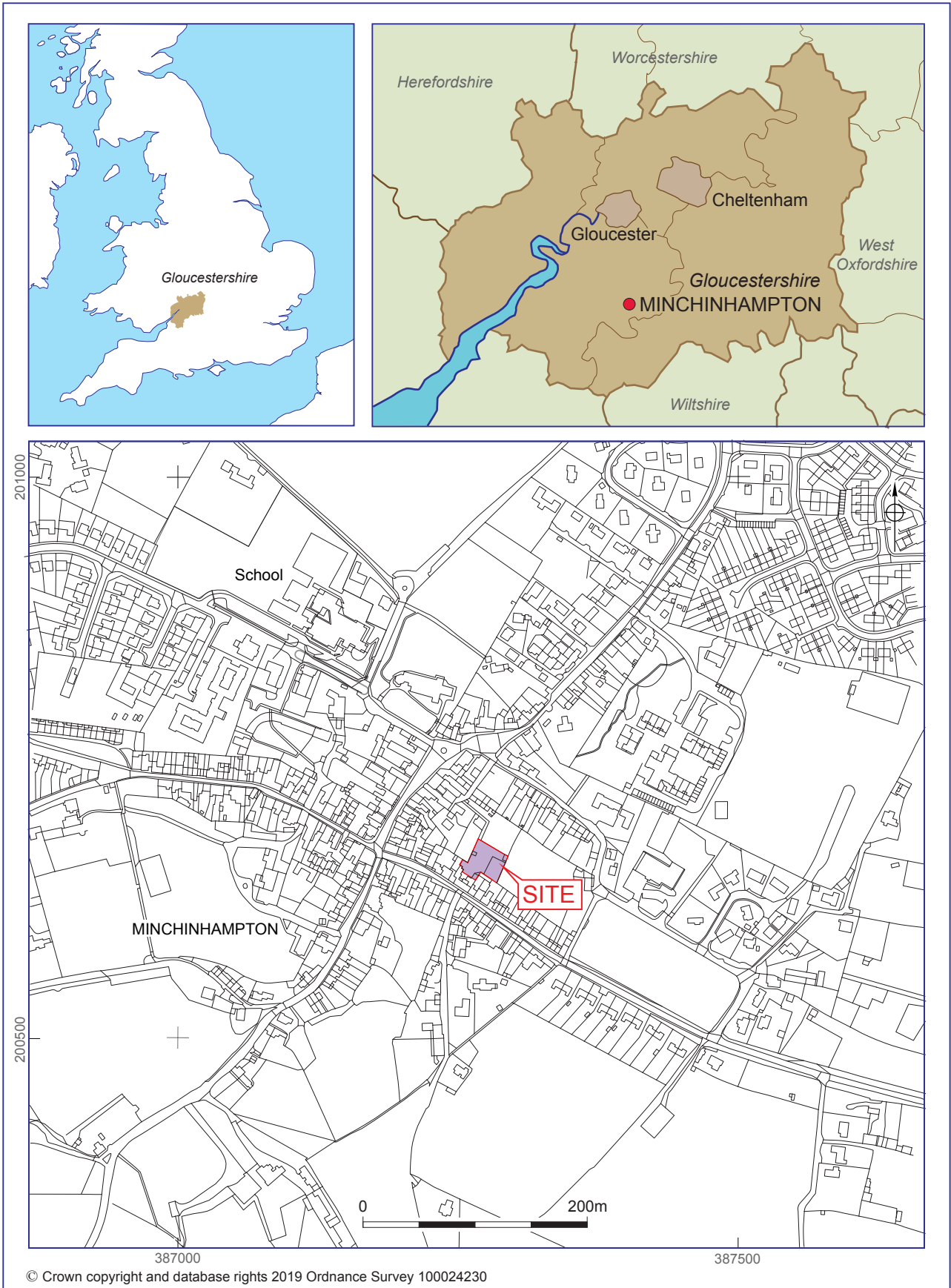
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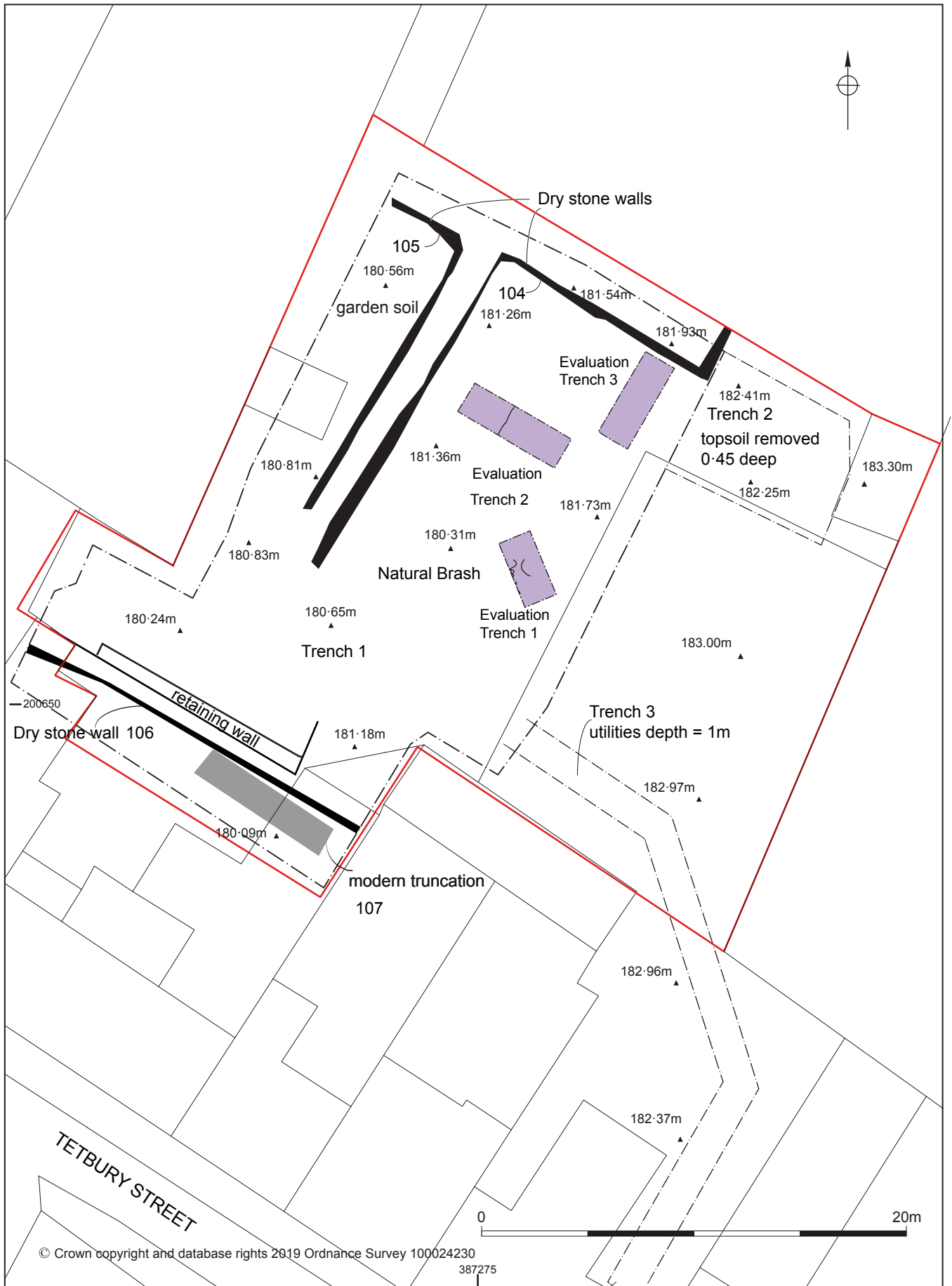
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## Figures



Location of the site

Figure 1



Results of observations

Figure 2





## Plates



*Plate 1: The garden area prior to reduced groundwork excavations. Looking northwest towards church*



*Plate 2: Example of made ground bank in the garden, looking northwest with 2 x 1m scales*



*Plate 3: Dry stone wall 104 in north of garden and clinker deposit 103. Looking east with a 0.5m scale*



*Plate 4: Close up cleaned section of dry stone wall 104. 0.5m and 0.30m scales view north*



*Plate 5: Area of dry stone wall and garden soil material in east of site. View east with 1m and 0.30m scales*



*Plate 6: Maximum ground reduction area looking south, showing evaluation Trench 1 in foreground and Trench 2 to west of 1m scales*



*Plate 7: Modern made ground and demolished outbuildings in south of site. View west with 2 x 1 scales*



*Plate 8: Area of garden following excavation, showing dry stone wall footings [104] and footpath. View southwest*



*Plate 9: South facing section of garden bank following excavations, showing bank gradient. 1m scales*



*Plate 10: Area of car park showing removal of topsoil and made ground to maximum depth. 1m scales looking northeast*



Plate 11: Example of finds from site from reduced dig area



Plate 12: Stoneware jars, and glass bottles from modern made ground in Service trench dating to early 20<sup>th</sup> Century



*Plate 13: Service trench showing 20<sup>th</sup> Century made ground deposit looking southwest, with 2x1m scales*



*Plate 14: Service trench showing 20<sup>th</sup> Century made ground deposit looking northwest, with 2x1 m scales*



*Plate 15: Service trench (Trench 3) looking northwest, with 2 x1m scales*



*Plate 16: Service trench in progress looking south, with 2x1m scales*



## Appendix 1: Summary of project archive (P5455)

TYPE	DETAILS*
Artefacts and Environmental	None retained
Paper	Context sheet, Diary (Field progress form), Plan, Report, Section, Survey
Digital	GIS, Images raster/digital photography , Survey, Text

\*OASIS terminology