

Archaeological Watching Brief at Corner House, Longdon, Worcestershire

Worcestershire Archaeology
for Duro Builders

December 2019



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CORNER HOUSE, LONGDON, WORCESTERSHIRE

Archaeological watching brief report



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SITE INFORMATION

Site name: Corner House Longdon Worcestershire
Local planning authority: Malvern Hills
Planning reference: 17/01921/FUL
Central NGR: SO 383638 236433
Commissioning client: Duro Builders
Client project reference: -
WA project number: P5691
WA report number: 2753
HER reference: WSM 72335
Oasis reference: fieldsec1-372989
Museum accession number: -

DOCUMENT CONTROL PANEL

Version	Date	Author	Details	Approved by
1	03/12/2019	Graham Arnold	Draft for comment	Tom Vaughan

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CONTENTS

SUMMARY	1
REPORT	2
1 INTRODUCTION	2
1.1 Background to the project	2
1.2 Site location, topography and geology.....	2
2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	2
3 PROJECT AIMS	3
4 PROJECT METHODOLOGY	3
5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS	4
5.1 Trench descriptions.....	4
6 ARTEFACTUAL EVIDENCE	5
7 ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE	5
8 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS	6
9 PROJECT PERSONNEL	6
10 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	6
11 BIBLIOGRAPHY	6

FIGURES

PLATES

APPENDIX 1: SUMMARY OF PROJECT ARCHIVE

APPENDIX 2: SUMMARY OF DATA FOR HER

Archaeological Watching Brief at Corner House, Longdon, Worcestershire

By Graham Arnold

Illustrations by Carolyn Hunt

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at Corner House, Longdon, Worcestershire (NGR SO 383638 236433). It was commissioned by Duro Builders, in association with a proposed new detached house and garage. Planning permission had been granted subject to a programme of archaeological works.

The archaeological advisor to the local planning authority considered that the development had the potential to impact upon possible heritage assets.

The site is within the garden of Corner House, a Grade II listed 17th century timber-framed building and there was potential for significant deposits of prehistoric, Roman, medieval or post-medieval date.

Groundworks were observed by an archaeologist and consisted of foundations trenches for the new house and garage and associated drainage including a soakaway chamber.

Only natural and modern deposits relating to the cultivation of the garden and driveway surfacing were observed within the groundworks. The natural geology of Arden formation sandstone and siltstone was observed in the foundation trenches, with natural sands and clays seen in the drainage soakaway works to the north-east.

No significant archaeological features, deposits or finds were recorded. All finds were from topsoil and service truncations and related to 19th and 20th century activities. There was no surviving subsoil evident due to the modern surfacing in the driveway area and agricultural use and cultivation within the garden, with the previous usage as an orchard and small holding in the 19th and 20th centuries. The extensive brick hardcore under the driveway surfacing probably relates to the earlier farm outbuildings on the property to the north of the current works.

Report

1 Introduction

1.1 Background to the project

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA) in November 2019 at Corner House, Longdon, Worcestershire (NGR SO 383638 236433). This comprised observation of groundworks associated with the construction of a detached property, garden and associated drainage. The project was commissioned by Duro Builders. Planning permission has been granted subject to a programme of archaeological works (planning reference 17/01921/FUL).

The archaeological advisor to the local planning authority considered that the development had the potential to impact upon possible heritage assets.

No brief was provided but a written scheme of investigation (WSI) was prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2019) and approved by the Archaeology and Planning Advisor to Wychavon and Malvern Hills District Councils. The watching brief also conforms to the industry guidelines and standards set out by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists in the *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 site is located on the north-west edge of the village of Longdon, between Upton-upon-Severn and Tewkesbury. The site covers an area of 0.4 hectares.

It is situated on the driveway access to the north of the current Corner House property, bounded by gardens to the north, a garden hedgerow separates the property from pastoral fields to the east, and the B2411 road to the west. An existing garage lies to the west of the new house area and will be demolished as part of these works. The site is currently a modern driveway and garage, with a grassed garden to the north.

The site is situated on sloping ground, from 22m AOD in south to around 18m AOD to the north boundary. The driveway had previously been levelled, whilst the garden slopes away to the north.

The underlying geology comprises bedrock of the Arden formation, consisting of sandstone and siltstone, with no superficial deposits recorded (BGS 2019).

2 Archaeological and historical background

Prior to fieldwork commencing, a search of the HER was undertaken in May 2014. for a desk-based assessment for a previous proposed development of the site, which was not completed (WSM 507109). The HER search covered an area of 500m around the site. A summary of the results of this research is presented below.

The search area is set within a region of mixed rolling arable and pastoral fields with isolated farms and hamlets. Fields are medium to large in size in the Longdon area but smaller and less regular to the south where settlement is more scattered.

The historic landscape is set within an area of large and regularly shaped fields, which contrasts with the long, thin fields characteristic of piecemeal enclosure to the south of Longdon. The settlement pattern of Longdon is almost entirely concentrated within the village.

The parish records have evidence of human occupation within this region from the Bronze Age, Roman, Medieval and Post Medieval periods through finds evidence. There are a few archaeological events within the search area, but these do include finds retrieval (WSM 15469,

WSM 39864), metal-detecting (WSM26287) and a (negative) watching brief (Longdon churchyard WSM 45400).

In the north and southwest of the area there are several features of unknown date that are evident through cropmarks. Just south, west and north of the centre of the search area there is evidence of earthwork evidence of Medieval ridge and furrow, which is also just discernable on LiDAR imagery. In the north there is documentary evidence of a site of a Medieval bridge. In the south east there is earthwork evidence of a Medieval moated site, that is also a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 1017345). There are several 17th and 19th Century sites of outbuildings associated with historic farmsteads.

There could be some potential for below ground archaeological features and deposits within this vicinity from the Prehistoric periods onwards. Above ground archaeology is confined to the listed and unlisted buildings seen within the village core.

The garden to the north of the existing property was indicated as in agricultural use on the 1904 Ordnance Survey map as an orchard and later in the 20th century as a small holding for pigs and other livestock, with associated outbuildings, which were demolished in the later 20th Century. Corner cottage (WSM 35137) is a Grade II listed building (1238865) which is described in HER records as a 17th century timber-framed possible Cruck House with modern extensions.

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 Client's groundworks.

4 Project methodology

A WSI was prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2019). Fieldwork was undertaken on 5 and 6 November 2019.

Groundworks consisted of foundation trenches for the new house (Trench 1) and garage (Trench 2) and associated drainage including a soakaway chamber (Trench 3). The intrusive groundworks amounted to approximately 200m² in area and the location of the monitored groundworks is indicated on Figure 2.

Deposits considered not to be significant were removed under constant archaeological supervision using a 360° tracked excavator. Observation of excavated areas was undertaken during and after machine excavation. The exposed surfaces were sufficiently clean to observe well-differentiated archaeological deposits. Sample sections were cleaned by hand to show the stratigraphy on site. Access to deep trenches was not made for safety reasons.

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 structural 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 Worcestershire Museum.

5 Archaeological results

5.1 Trench descriptions

Natural deposits were observed in all the excavated areas. The natural sandstone and siltstone solid geology was observed in foundation Trenches 1 and 2 (Plates 1-5) at depth of 0.60m below ground level. This was overlain by the natural clay, humic garden soils and modern surfacing. The soakaway chamber and drainage Trench 3 were situated down slope, adjacent to the hedgerow boundary to the north-east of the site. The chamber was a total of 1.00m deep where natural sands and clays were observed, overlain by garden soils and turf. The connecting drainage trench (Plate 9) was 0.50m deep with the garden topsoil directly overlying the natural firm reddish-brown clay. A modern ceramic land drain, running north to south, was recorded in the foundations of the garage (Trench 2; Plate 6) and the soakaway chamber (Trench 3; Plate 8). There was no surviving subsoil evident in the areas observed.

No significant archaeological features, deposits or finds were identified during the works. Tables showing the deposits recorded in the observed intrusive groundworks are listed below.

Trench 1 – House foundations

Max depth - 1.00 (west) - 1.40 (east)

Context	Brief description	Max depth (m)	Depth from ground surface (m)	Comments
100	Modern levelling and surfacing	0.20	0.00	Compact yellow Stone gravel ballast overlying loose brick hardcore, modern rubble and a dark blackish grey silt topsoil. Frequent brick rubble,
101	Natural garden soil	0.40	0.20	Mid reddish brown silty clay, cut by services for garage. Occasionally cut by tree rooting, particularly on east side.
102	Natural geological substrate	-	0.60	Firm grey and white sandstone and siltstone. Arden formation geology.

Trench 2 – Garage foundations

Max depth – 1.40m

Context	Brief description	Max depth (m)	Depth from ground surface (m)	Comments
200	Topsoil	0.60	0.00	Friable dark blackish brown humic topsoil from flower beds and turfed area, with abundant rooting from the adjacent hedgerow.
201	Natural clay	0.20	0.60	Firm red-brown silty clay with occasional tree rooting. Only visible in North trench. Same as (101)
202	Natural substrate	-	0.60	Firm grey and white sandstone and siltstone, with some orange mottling. Arden formation geology.

Context	Brief description	Max depth (m)	Depth from ground surface (m)	Comments
203	Fill of modern land drain	0.40	0.23	Loose topsoil, ash and redeposited natural material backfilling land drain trench.
204	Cut of modern land drain	0.40	0.63	0.50m wide and 1.20m deep trench for 5" ceramic land drain

Trench 3 – Soakaway chamber and drainage trench

Max depth - 1.00m (Chamber) 0.50m (drainage channel)

Context	Brief description	Max depth (m)	Depth from ground surface (m)	Comments
300	Topsoil	0.50	0.00	Friable humic rooty dark blackish brown sandy silt with moderate white china. Cut by land drain 304
301	Garden soil from vegetable plot	0.30	0.50	Moderately compact mixed mid grey brown sandy silt with moderate charcoal flecking, modern cbm and sub-round stones.
302	Natural substrate	-	0.80	Firm light orangey yellow silty sand within soakaway chamber
303	Fill of modern land drain	0.40	0.23	Loose ashy backfill of land drain including porcelain and cbm fragments.
304	Cut of modern land drain	0.50	0.00	0.30m wide trench for 5" modern intact ceramic land drain
305	Natural substrate	-	0.40	Firm red-brown clay. Directly below topsoil 300 within drainage channel. Same as 102 and 202.

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 necessary for analysis, as all were of later post-medieval and modern date. A sample of the finds recovered from the groundworks were photographed prior to discard on site (Plate 10).

7 Environmental evidence

Environmental sampling was approached according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012). In the event, no deposits were excavated which were considered to be suitable for environmental analysis.

8 Discussion and conclusions

Only natural and modern deposits relating to the cultivation of the garden and driveway surfacing were observed within the groundworks. The natural geology of Arden formation sandstone and siltstone was observed in the foundation trenches, with natural sands and clays seen in the soakaway works to the north.

No significant archaeological features, deposits or finds were recorded. All finds were from topsoil and service truncations and related to 19th and 20th century activities. There was no surviving subsoil evident due to the modern surfacing in the driveway area and agricultural use and cultivation within the garden, with the previous usage as an orchard and small holding in the 19th and 20th centuries. The extensive brick hardcore under the driveway surfacing probably relates to the earlier farm outbuildings on the property to the north of the current 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.

9 Project personnel

The fieldwork was led by Graham Arnold, PCIfA.

The project was managed by Tom Vaughan, MCIfA. The report was produced and collated by Graham Arnold. Illustrations were completed by Carolyn Hunt, MCIfA.

10 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following for the successful conclusion of this project: Flynn Costello (Duro Builders), and Aidan Smyth (Archaeology and Planning Advisor, Wychavon and Malvern Hills District Councils).

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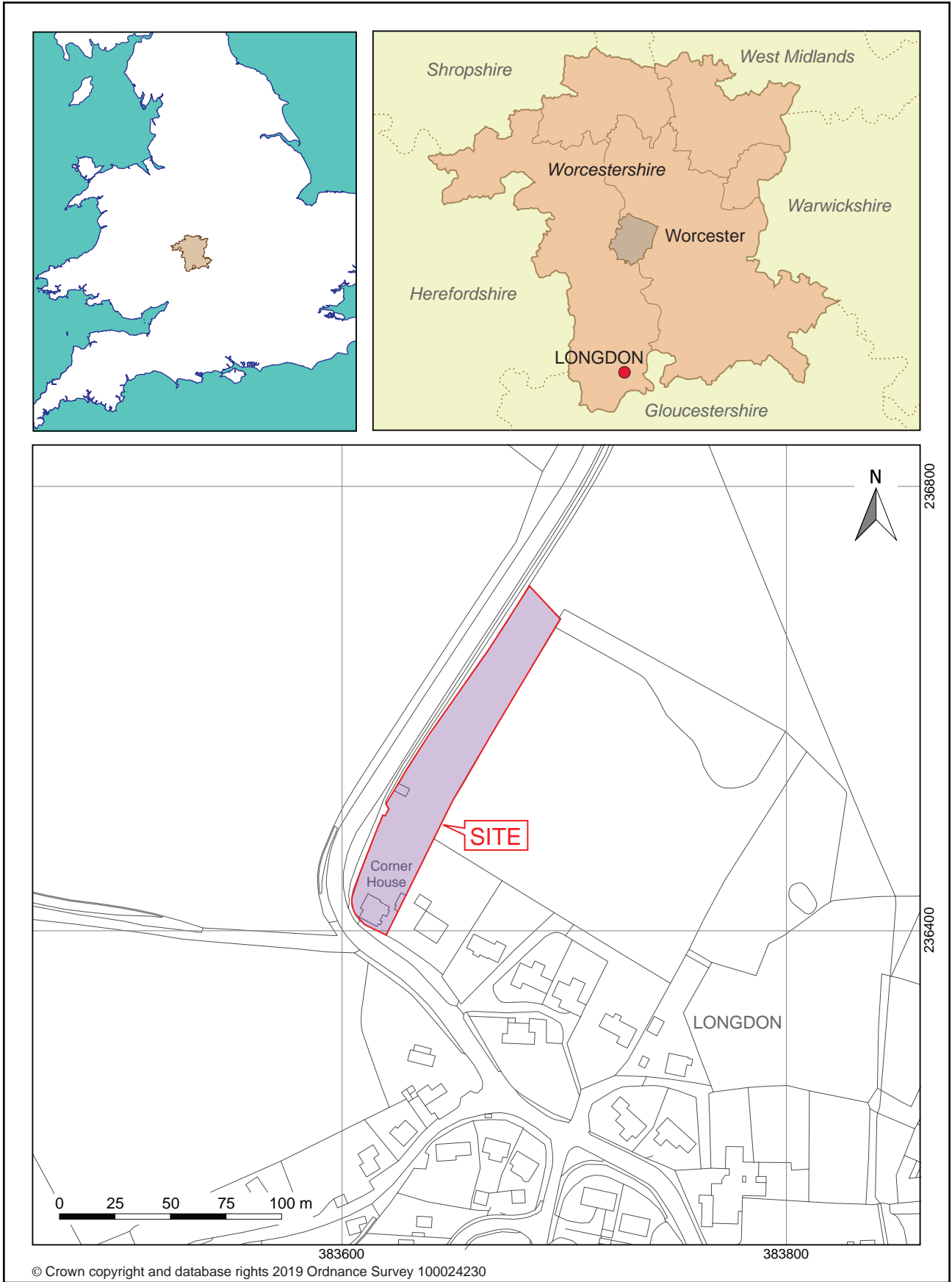
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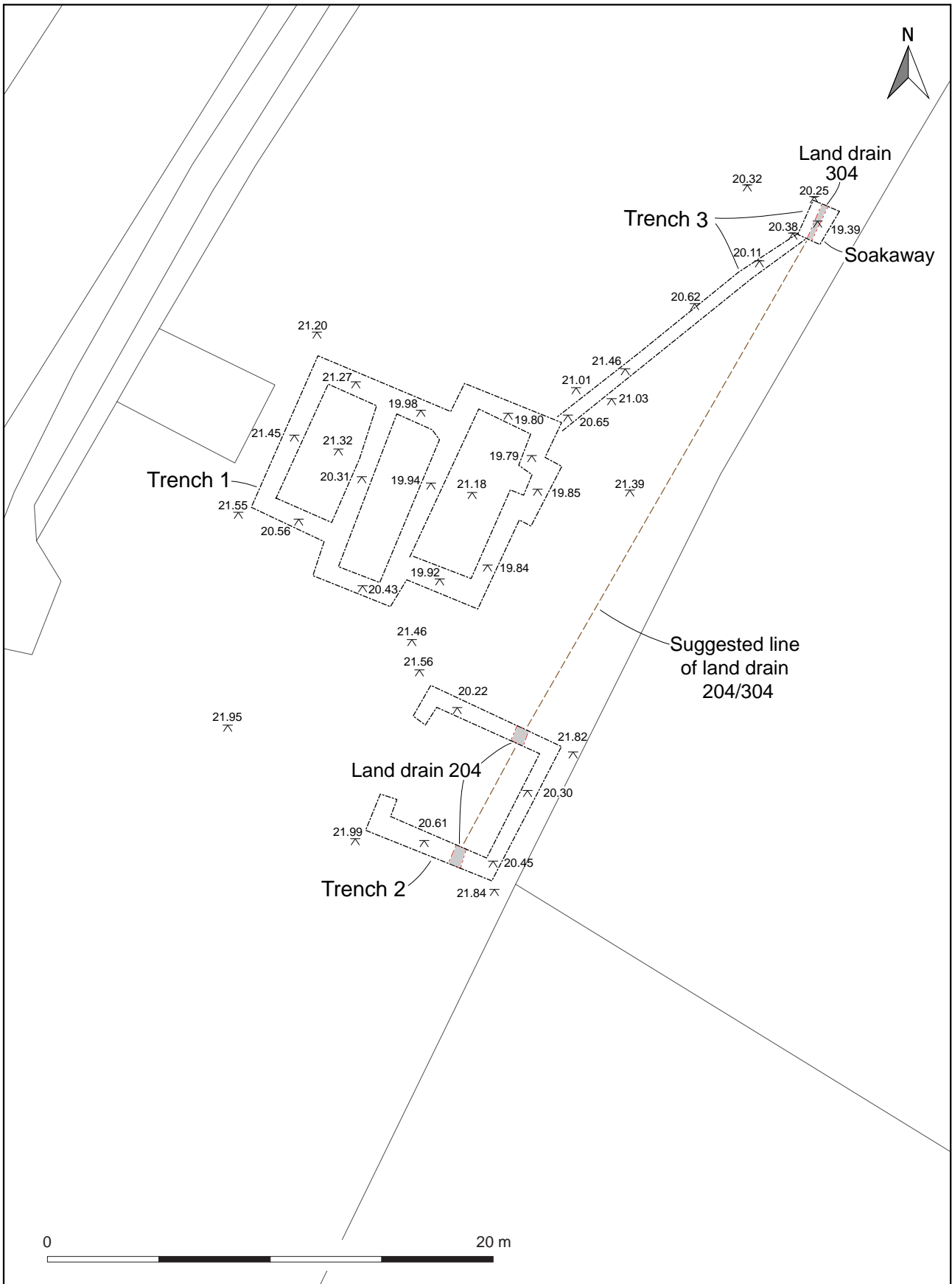
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Figures



Location of the site

Figure 1



Trench location plan

Figure 2

Plates



Plate 1: Area of new house foundations prior to excavation (Trench 1), view north, no scales



Plate 2: Area of garage foundations at start of excavation (Trench 2), view south-east, no scales



Plate 3: House footings following excavation (Trench 1), view south, 2x 1m scales



Plate 3: Sample section of Trench 1, view north, 1m scales



Plate 5: Garage foundations following excavation (Trench 2), view south-west, 1m scales



Plate 6: Modern ceramic land drain [204] cutting natural siltstone in Trench 2, view south-west, 2x 1m scales



Plate 7: Drainage run and soakaway chamber (Trench 3), view north-east, 0.5m and 2x 1m scales



Plate 8: General stratigraphy in west facing section of soakaway chamber (Trench 3), view east, 2x 1m scales



Plate 9: Sample stratigraphy of drainage run within Trench 3, view north-west, 0.5m scale



Plate 10: Sample of porcelain, glazed ware and ceramic building material recovered and left on site, 0.3m scale

Appendix 1: Summary of project archive

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

*OASIS terminology

Appendix 2: Summary of data for HER

WSM 72335

No artefacts were recovered from site, nor environmental samples taken.