

Archaeological excavation at Allesborough Farm, Pershore Worcestershire

Worcestershire Archaeology
for Clive Petch Architects

June 2020



Find out more online:
www.explorethepast.co.uk



ALLESBOROUGH FARM PERSHORE WORCESTERSHIRE

Archaeological excavation report



©Worcestershire County Council

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

Explore
the Past

SITE INFORMATION

Site name: Allesborough Farm, Pershore, Worcestershire
Site code: -
Local planning authority: Wychavon District Council
Planning reference: APP/H1840/W/17/3188250
Central NGR: SO 9383 4629
Commissioning client: Clive Petch Architects
WA project number: P5657
WA report number: 2819
HER reference: WSM72799
Oasis reference: fieldsec1-396343

DOCUMENT CONTROL PANEL				
Version	Date	Author	Details	Approved by
1	19/06/2020	P Lovett	Draft for comment	T Rogers

This report is confidential to the client. Worcestershire Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability to any third party to whom this report, or any part of it, is made known. Any such party relies upon this report entirely at their own risk. No part of this report may be reproduced by any means without permission.

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	3
5.1 Introduction	3
5.2 Phasing/Trench descriptions.....	4
5.2.1 Natural deposits across the site.....	4
5.2.2 Phase 1: Post-medieval	4
5.2.3 Phase 2: Modern.....	4
6 ARTEFACTUAL EVIDENCE	4
7 ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE	4
8 DISCUSSION	4
9 CONCLUSIONS	4
10 PROJECT PERSONNEL	5
11 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	5
12 BIBLIOGRAPHY	5

FIGURES

PLATES

APPENDIX 1: TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS

APPENDIX 2: SUMMARY OF PROJECT ARCHIVE

APPENDIX 3: SUMMARY OF DATA FOR HER

Archaeological excavation at Allesborough Farm, Persnore, Worcestershire

By Peter Lovett

Illustrations by Peter Lovett and Carolyn Hunt

Summary

An archaeological excavation was undertaken by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA) in May 2020 at Allesborough Farm, Persnore, Worcestershire (NGR SO 9383 4629). The project was commissioned by Clive Petch of Clive Petch Architects, in advance of residential development. Planning permission has been granted subject to a programme of archaeological works. An initial stage of works comprising archaeological evaluation of the site was undertaken in January 2020 in which a post-medieval tile-built hearth was recorded in a trench.

In this stage of works a 190m² area was excavated around the location of the hearth to record other structures which might have survived in the vicinity. The lowest course and foundation of a wall that formed an agricultural building was recorded in the southern part of the site. A later ceramic culvert appeared to truncate the farm building, and the internal deposits of the structure were contaminated with hydrocarbons, indicating use well into the 20th century. No further archaeological features were recorded.

Report

1 Introduction

1.1 Background to the project

An archaeological excavation was undertaken by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA) in May 2020 at Allesborough Farm, Pershore, Worcestershire (NGR SO 9383 4629). This comprised the excavation of an area of 190m². The project was commissioned by Clive Petch of Clive Petch Architects, in advance of residential development. Planning permission has been granted subject to a programme of archaeological works (planning reference APP/H1840/W/17/3188250).

The archaeological advisor to the local planning authority considered that the proposed development had the potential to impact upon possible heritage assets. Previous evaluation on the site has identified a post-medieval key-hole oven. This project was designed to investigate the immediate surrounds of that feature.

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared for the project by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2020) and approved by the archaeological advisor (Aidan Smyth; Wychavon District Council).

The excavation conforms to the industry guidelines and standards set out by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists in *Standard and guidance: for archaeological excavation* (CIfA 2014) and the *Standards and guidelines for archaeological projects in Worcestershire* (WCC 2010)

1.2 Site location, topography and geology

The site is located approximately 1km to the north-west of Pershore town centre on the plateau of a ridge forming the highest of the River Avon terraces (5th Avon terrace). The ground slopes gently towards the east from a height of about 55m AOD. It is bounded by roads to the north and the south, and by farmland to the west, with much of the farm currently subject to ongoing demolition and landscaping in advance of redevelopment.

The underlying geology comprises bedrock of Charmouth Mudstone formation overlain by superficial deposits of Pershore Sand and Gravel (BGS 2020).

2 Archaeological and historical background

The following summary is derived from the recent building recording project undertaken on the site by Worcestershire Archaeology (Cornah 2019) and the evaluation report that preceded this work (Iliff and Bradley 2020), using information provided by the Worcestershire Historic Environment Record (HER), searched within a 500m radius of the site.

Nearby significant archaeological remains include an Iron Age and Romano-British settlement complex 350m west of the site (WSM36155), identified through extensive investigation involving field walking, metal detecting and evaluation trenches. This was originally located following discovery by metal detectorists of a large hoard (or hoards) of Iron Age coinage (WSM20060), eventually comprising 1494 gold and silver coins as well as a possible fragment of twisted wire gold torc. At the time of discovery in 1993, this was one of the largest caches of Iron Age coins ever found in Britain (see Hurst and Leins 2013). The objects are now in the British Museum.

In addition, around 220m to the north of the farm is a conjectured area of a deserted medieval settlement (WSM02672) that may have formed part of the manor of Pershore. Allesborough was first mentioned as a manor in mid-13th century, when Abbot Roger (1234-50) gave 10/- rent of demesnes there to monks at Pershore, and was held by the Abbots until the dissolution of Pershore Abbey in the 16th century. There is known to have been a chapel dedicated to St Giles associated with the settlement (WSM02674) though the location is speculative. The farm is surrounded to the north, west and south-east by remnants of ridge and furrow (WSM29121, WSM29116, WSM02680, WSM29117

and WSM08463) which are the result of medieval and post-medieval agricultural practice, and the wider landscape is dominated by piecemeal and parliamentary enclosure broadly typical of the post 1800 period.

It is possible that the Allesborough farmhouse itself (WSM48878) was contemporary with the latter end of the deserted medieval settlement, as it has been suggested to have 15th century elements, though this is not certain. It is clear, however, that it was a successor to Abbot's demesne farm and part of abbey estates from a 1620 survey. The building underwent various phases of significant change with the largest major addition in circa 1800.

The archaeological evaluation revealed an undated possible field boundary ditch and other features related to demolished post-medieval and modern farm buildings and drainage. However, to the west of the farmhouse was a post medieval keyhole oven. It was lined with reused late medieval to post-medieval roof tiles, with a large stone slab forming the base of the flue.

3 Project aims

- To determine whether any structures or associated activity survive in the vicinity of the oven, and
- If present, to determine the date and character of any such activity and further understand the context and function of the oven and any associated activity.

4 Project methodology

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2020). Fieldwork was undertaken on 20 May 2020.

An area, amounting to 190m² in area, was excavated around the location of the post-medieval oven recorded in the evaluation. The location of the trench is indicated in Figure 2.

Deposits considered not to be significant were intended to be removed under constant archaeological supervision using a 360° tracked excavator, employing a toothless bucket. However, the site had been stripped of topsoil to the top of the natural strata prior to the fieldwork commencing. Further deposits were removed under archaeological supervision. 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 excavation area and feature locations were surveyed using a GNSS device with an accuracy limit set at <0.04m.

All fieldwork records were checked and cross-referenced. Analysis was undertaken using 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 County Museum.

5 Archaeological results

5.1 Introduction

The features recorded in the excavation area are shown in Figure 3 and Plates 1-3.

5.2 Phasing/Trench descriptions

5.2.1 Natural deposits across the site

The natural ground consisted of a firm orange brown clay with sand and gravel patches throughout.

5.2.2 Phase 1: Post-medieval

A dressed stone wall (700), 4.75m long, 0.4m wide and 0.25m high, was built on a foundation constructed of broken brick fragments and mortar. Very little of the stone remained and never to more than a course high. It was bonded with a sandy, pinkish yellow mortar. At the western end, the wall appeared to be truncated by the cut for a brick culvert. The wall, now numbered as 701, continued beyond this truncation for at least 0.75m, just as the foundation course.

The culvert, 703, ran roughly north to south obliquely to the wall, making a 0.5m wide cut through walls 700 and 701. Above the backfill of the culvert was a rubble deposit 706, that contained stone, brick and tile, along with a strong smell of hydrocarbons. This material was contained within the interior of the stone structure, and was approximately 0.4m thick.

5.2.3 Phase 2: Modern

Modern deposits consisted of topsoil, though this had been removed prior to the excavation. Further deposits were limited to footings identified in the previous evaluation phase and backfilling associated with the evaluation.

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.

7 Environmental evidence

Environmental 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.

8 Discussion

The archaeological features recorded demonstrate that the agricultural buildings within the farm complex were in use over a prolonged period of time, and suffered a high level of truncation following their obsolescence. The walls of the farm building were constructed of dressed stone on brick fragment and mortar foundations. No internal floor level remained, and the depression within the structure was filled with dark soil heavily contaminated with hydrocarbons, suggesting it had been in use well into the 20th century before demolition.

A brick culvert appeared to truncate the western end of the farm building, though whether this coincided with the demise of the structure is unclear but unlikely. It may be that the wall where the culvert was placed was bridged over the new cut and that evidence for that has been lost, or that it was built through the doorway.

The hearth recorded in the evaluation seems to have been a standalone feature, with no evidence for further features surviving within the excavation area.

9 Conclusions

A 190m² area was excavated around the location of a previously recorded post-medieval tile-built hearth. The lowest course and foundation of a wall that formed an agricultural building was recorded in the southern part of the site. A later ceramic culvert appeared to truncate the farm building, and the

internal deposits of the structure were contaminated with hydrocarbons, indicating use well into the 20th century. No further archaeological features were recorded.

The methods adopted allow a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved. Conditions were suitable in 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.

10 Project personnel

The fieldwork was led by Peter Lovett, ACIfA, assisted by Chris Crump.

The project was managed by Tom Rogers, MCIfA. The report was produced and collated by Peter Lovett. Specialist contributions and individual sections of the report are attributed to the relevant authors throughout the text.

11 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following for the successful conclusion of the project: Clive Petch for commissioning the project, as well as Declan Vaughan for his assistance throughout.

The project was monitored by Aidan Smyth of Wychavon District Council and Worcestershire Archaeology would also like to thank him for his advice.

12 Bibliography

BGS, 2020 Geology of Britain viewer. Available: <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>
Accessed: 1 June 2020

ClfA, 2014 *Standard and guidance: for archaeological excavation*. Reading: Chartered Institute for Archaeologists

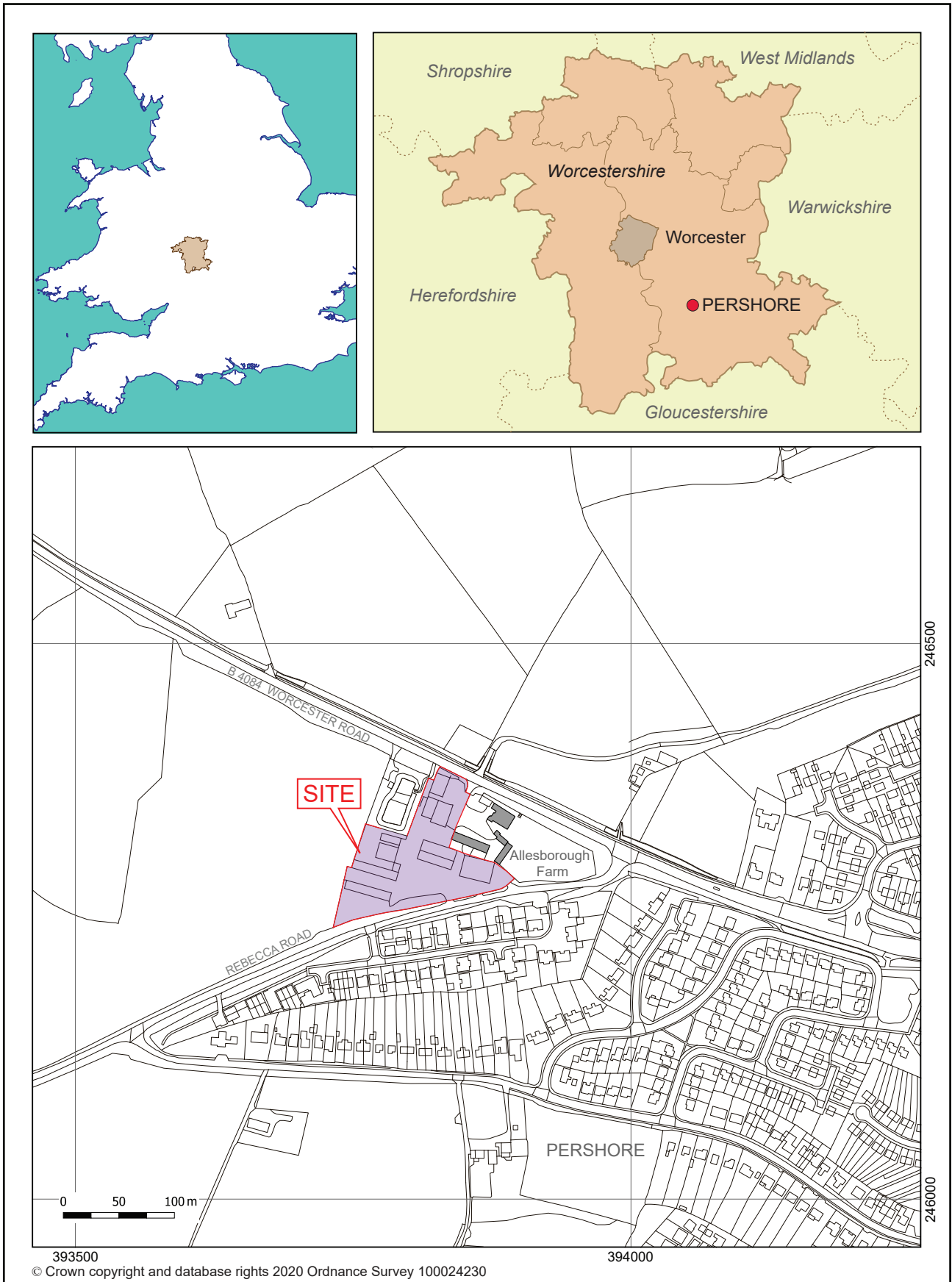
Iliff, E and Bradley, R 2020 Archaeological Evaluation at Allesborough Farm, Pershore, Worcestershire. Worcestershire Archaeology Unpubl report **2779**. Worcestershire County Council

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

WA, 2020 Written Scheme of Investigation for archaeological strip, map and sample excavation of land at Allesborough Farm, Pershore, Worcestershire. Worcestershire Archaeology Unpubl document dated 4 March 2020, Worcestershire County Council

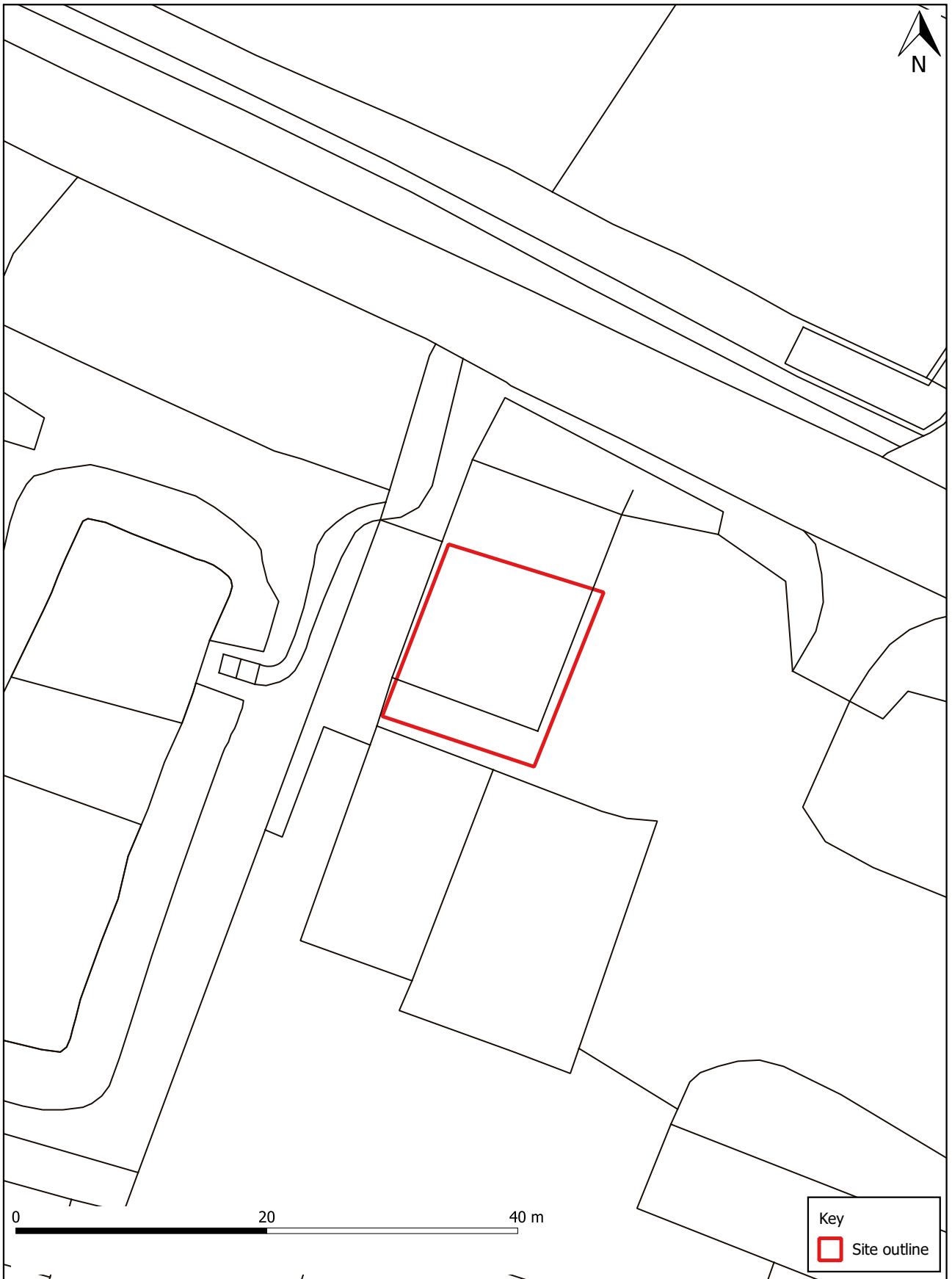
WCC 2010 (amended March 2016) Standards and guidelines for archaeological projects in Worcestershire, Planning Advisory Section, Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service Unpubl report **604**. Worcestershire County Council

Figures



Location of the site (based upon Clive Petch Architects Dwg No.27)

Figure 1



© Crown copyright and database rights 2020 Ordnance Survey 100024230

Location of Trench 7

Figure 2



Plates



Plate 1 View of agricultural building 700, looking north (1m scales)



Plate 2 Sondage through interior deposits of agricultural building 700, looking south-west (1m scales)



Plate 3 Wall 700 overlying natural ground, looking west (0.3m scale)

Appendix 1: Summary of project archive (WSM72799)

TYPE	DETAILS*
Paper	Context sheet
Digital	GIS, Images raster/digital photography, Survey, Text

*OASIS terminology

