

Archaeological watching brief at Peter Scott House Heathville Road, Gloucester

Worcestershire Archaeology
For Brodie Planning Associates

February 2021



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PETER SCOTT HOUSE, HEATHVILLE ROAD, KINGSHOLM, GLOUCESTER

Archaeological watching brief report



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SITE INFORMATION

Site name: Peter Scott House, Heathville Road, Kingsholm, Gloucester
Local planning authority: Gloucester City
Planning reference: 19/01179/FUL
Central NGR: SO 83961891
Commissioning client: Brodie Planning Associates
WA project number: P5871
WA report number: 2881
HER reference: -
Oasis reference: fieldsec1-411940

DOCUMENT CONTROL PANEL

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1	23/02/2021	Graham Arnold	Draft for comment	Tom Vaughan

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An archaeological watching brief at Peter Scott House, Heathville Road, Gloucester

By Graham Arnold

With contributions by Rob Hedge

Illustrations by Graham Arnold

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA) in December 2021 at Peter Scott House, Heathville Road, Gloucester (NGR SO 83961891). This comprised observation of the reduced dig and foundation trenches, concurrent with construction for the new extension to the rear of the current property. The project was commissioned by Brodie Planning Associates on behalf of Goodwins Funeral Directors. Planning permission had been granted by Gloucester City Council, subject to a programme of archaeological works.

Peter Scott House is located in an area of known Roman activity. Roman deposits were found in the immediate vicinity of the site in the 1970s, and the site is located next to London Road, which is on the alignment of Ermin Street, the Roman Road between Gloucester and Cirencester. The site is also located within the recorded extent of Wotton Roman Cemetery.

The foundation trenches and groundworks within the footprint of the building extension were monitored across the overall site.

The watching brief demonstrated a high level of activity on site from the Victorian period onwards, with a series of demolition deposits, cellar wall foundations and a well in the centre of the site which dated to the Victorian period and is evident on the 1902 Ordnance Survey map, when the property was St Catherine's Vicarage. Only residual Roman finds were recovered, consisting of one sherd of Severn Valley Ware, dating from the mid-1st to the 4th century AD within a 19th century relict soil, together with other typical domestic wares that had a *terminus post quem* of c AD 1830. There was no evidence of any pre-19th century archaeological deposits or evidence of any *in situ* Roman activity exposed within the observed groundworks.

Report

1 Introduction

1.1 Background to the project

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA) in December 2020 at Peter Scott House, Heathville Road, Gloucester (NGR SO 83961891). This comprised observation of the reduced dig and foundation trenches concurrent with construction for the new extension to the rear of the current property. The project was commissioned by Brodie Planning Associates on behalf of Goodwins Funeral Directors. Planning permission had been granted by Gloucester City Council, subject to a programme of archaeological works (planning reference 19/01179/FUL).

The Gloucester City Council Archaeologist considered that the development had the potential to impact upon possible heritage assets. Previous evaluation on the site had identified Victorian cellars and other modern disturbance.

No brief was provided but a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA2020) and approved by the Gloucester City Council Archaeologist. 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* (CIfA 2014).

1.2 Site location, topography and geology

The site is located at Peter Scott House, about 850m north-east of the centre of Gloucester. The site is 650m² in area, situated on the corner of the B4063 London Road and Heathville Road. Residential properties are located on the other two sides of the site.

Peter Scott House is located in the south-western part of the site, and there is a small garden to the south and west of the house. The former gardens to the north and west of the house have been tarmacked to provide carparking. The tarmac surface was removed prior to archaeological monitoring.

The site slopes slightly down towards the north, and the underlying geology is mapped as undifferentiated Blue Lias Formation and Charmouth Mudstone Formation (BGS 2020). No superficial deposits are mapped on the site, although superficial deposits of Cheltenham Sand and Gravel are mapped in the immediate vicinity.

2 Archaeological and historical background

2.1 Introduction

The site was subject to an archaeological evaluation and the results and the site background are summarised below.

2.2 Previous archaeological work on the site

An archaeological evaluation carried out in January 2020 by Worcestershire Archaeology involved the excavation of two trenches, 8m and 6m in length by 1.5m in width, which revealed natural deposits, an undated relict soil, a 19th century cellar wall and modern deposits. No Roman or other archaeological activity of significance was identified.

Peter Scott House is located in an area of known Roman activity. Roman deposits were found in the immediate vicinity of the site in the 1970s, and the site is located next to London Road, which is on the alignment of Ermin Street, the Roman Road between Gloucester and Cirencester. The site is also located within the recorded extent of Wotton Roman Cemetery.

2.1 Prehistoric

The Gloucestershire County Council Historic Environment Record (HER) does not record any prehistoric activity on or in the immediate vicinity of the site.

2.2 Roman

The site is located in a known area of Roman activity. London Road is on the course of Ermin Street which ran between Gloucester and Cirencester and is understood to have been built in the late AD40s (HER 7542). The metalled surface of this road was thought to have been found at the junction of London Road and Heathville Road in 1976 during sewerage work (HER 1597 and 14466, Trench II). During rescue excavations in 1973 at 69 London Road, located approximately 35m west of the site, a number of large Roman ditches and gullies were identified (HER 42925 and HER 42926). The site is also located within the recorded extent of Wotton Roman Cemetery (HER 14096), which is known to have extended for at least 500m along London Road from Number 65 to St Catherine's Church. Most of the cremations from the cemetery have been located towards the eastern end of the mapped area, and it is thought that it started as a cremation cemetery during the 1st century AD. Later inhumations have been found along the road to the southwest, indicating later expansion of the cemetery towards the town during the Roman period.

2.3 Medieval and post-medieval

During the medieval period the site was located just outside the boundary of the city, which crossed London Road about 100m to the west. This boundary may have been identified as a large ditch (HER 42927) during the rescue excavations in 1973 at 69 London Road (HER 42925). Post-medieval maps available online on the *Know Your Place* website indicate two fairly large buildings were located on the site during the late 18th and early 19th centuries (KYP 2020). These buildings are visible on both the '1780 City of Gloucester' layer and the '1840-pre Gloucestershire Enclosures' layer. They also appear to be shown on a plan dated 1843.

Peter Scott House was built c 1869 (BHO 2020b) and originally called St Catherine's Vicarage. Historic Ordnance Survey mapping, ranging from the 1884 1:500 scale town plan through to c.1970 1:1250 scale mapping, indicates that the vicarage was originally larger than the surviving building, and that it extended to the east into an area of the garden that is now car parking. Evidence of this significant change to the fabric of the building is visible in the brickwork of the house. (Walsh 2020).

3 Project aims

The aims of the watching brief were to observe, investigate 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.

Previous investigations within the immediate vicinity indicated that significant deposits may be defined as those likely to be of Roman date, relating to a Roman road along the course of the present London Road to the south, a roadside cemetery, and Roman occupation activity, which either pre- and post-dates the cemetery.

4 Project methodology

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2020). Fieldwork was undertaken between 7 and 10 December 2020.

The foundation trenches and groundworks within the footprint of the building extension, amounting to 170m² in area, were monitored across the overall site which measures 650m². The locations of the foundation trenches are indicated in Figure 2.

Deposits considered not to be significant were removed under constant archaeological supervision using a 360° tracked excavator, employing a toothless bucket. Subsequent excavation was undertaken by hand.

Observation of excavated areas was undertaken during and after machine excavation. The spoil was checked for finds. The exposed surfaces were sufficiently clean to observe well-differentiated

archaeological deposits, although any less clear may have not been identified. Selected areas were cleaned by hand. 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 GNSS device 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 Gloucester Museum.

5 Archaeological results

The results from the watching brief are shown in Plates 1 -8 and Figure 2. The 1902 historic OS County series map of the site is shown in Figure 3. The trench description table is below.

5.1 Trench and context descriptions

Context	Brief description	Max depth (m)	Depth from ground surface (m)	Comments
300	Tarmac	0.15	0.00	Modern car park surface
301	Hardcore	0.15	0.15	Hardcore type 1 stone chippings and brick rubble levelling
302	Modern made ground	0.50	0.30	Mixed loose demolition rubble including brick and concrete in a silty clay matrix
303	Relict Soil	0.40	0.80	Firm mid-grey brown sandy silty clay with 19 th Century waste material and residual Roman pottery
304	Natural substrate	0.20	1.00	Firm orangey brown sandy gravel – Cheltenham Sand and Gravel
305	Natural substrate	0.40	1.20	Firm blue grey and yellow clay – Blue Lias and Charmouth Mudstone visible in north trenches and southeast of site adjacent to current Peter Scott House building footings
306	Capped well	0.70	0.30	Concrete-capped well underlying tarmac and hardcore, 1.2m diameter (0.70m internal) with 9" x 4"x3" bricks. Backfilled with early 20 th C waste materials – not retained

Table 1: Summary context descriptions

The natural substrate of Blue Lias and Charmouth mudstone was recorded in the south-western corner adjacent to the current building and the foundation trenches in the north-east of the site, at a depth of 1.20m below the ground level (Plate 3). This was overlain with a relict soil, and a series of made ground deposits, including demolition rubble for the previous buildings that used to stand there. The demolition rubble also covered modern wall foundations and a capped well in the centre of the site. A well was revealed, (Plates 4-6), which was constructed of machine-made bricks measuring 9" x 4" x 3". This is visible on the OS County Series Gloucestershire 1902 map, indicated by 'P' on the site of the St Catherine's Vicarage (Figure 3). The well measured 1.20m in diameter externally, with a 0.70m internal diameter. It had been backfilled with waste materials and capped with concrete mortar, presumably when the modern buildings were constructed. The well was overlain in the eastern section with modern brick wall foundations (Plate 4).

6 Artefactual evidence

Recovery of artefacts was undertaken according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012). White porcelain, clay pipe were recovered from the relict soil with some residual animal bone, oyster shell and a single sherd of Roman pottery.

6.1 Pottery Analysis by Rob Hedge

The small artefactual assemblage recovered from a 19th century relict soil was examined from photographs and discussions with the excavator. One small, abraded body sherd of Roman Severn Valley ware (Glos fabric TF11B) comprised the rounded shoulder of a small jar. These wares were produced locally from the mid-1st to the 4th century AD. The sherd was not sufficiently diagnostic to refine the dating further. The remainder of the material comprised later post-medieval pottery and clay pipe; the presence of typical 19th century domestic wares including transfer-printed whiteware and yellowware indicates a *terminus post quem* date of c AD 1830.

No further analysis is recommended, and the material is not considered to warrant museum accession.

7 Environmental evidence

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

8 Discussion and conclusions

The watching brief demonstrated a high level of activity on site from the Victorian period onwards, with a series of demolition deposits, cellar wall foundations and a well in the centre of the site which dated to the Victorian period and is evident on the 1902 OS map of the site, when the property was St Catherine's Vicarage. Only residual Roman finds, including a single sherd of Severn Valley Ware dating from the mid-1st to the 4th century AD were recovered within a 19th century relict soil, containing typical domestic wares, with a *terminus post quem* of c AD 1830. This indicates the presence of Roman activity within the vicinity, but there was no evidence of pre-19th century in situ archaeological deposits or structures on the site.

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 monitored areas 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. Finds analysis was by Rob Hedge, PCIfA.

10 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following for the successful conclusion of this project: Wendy Hopkins (Brodie Planning Associates), Rob Tyler (Goodwins Funeral Directors), Simon Walker (LNU Ltd), and Andrew Armstrong (Gloucester City Council Archaeologist).

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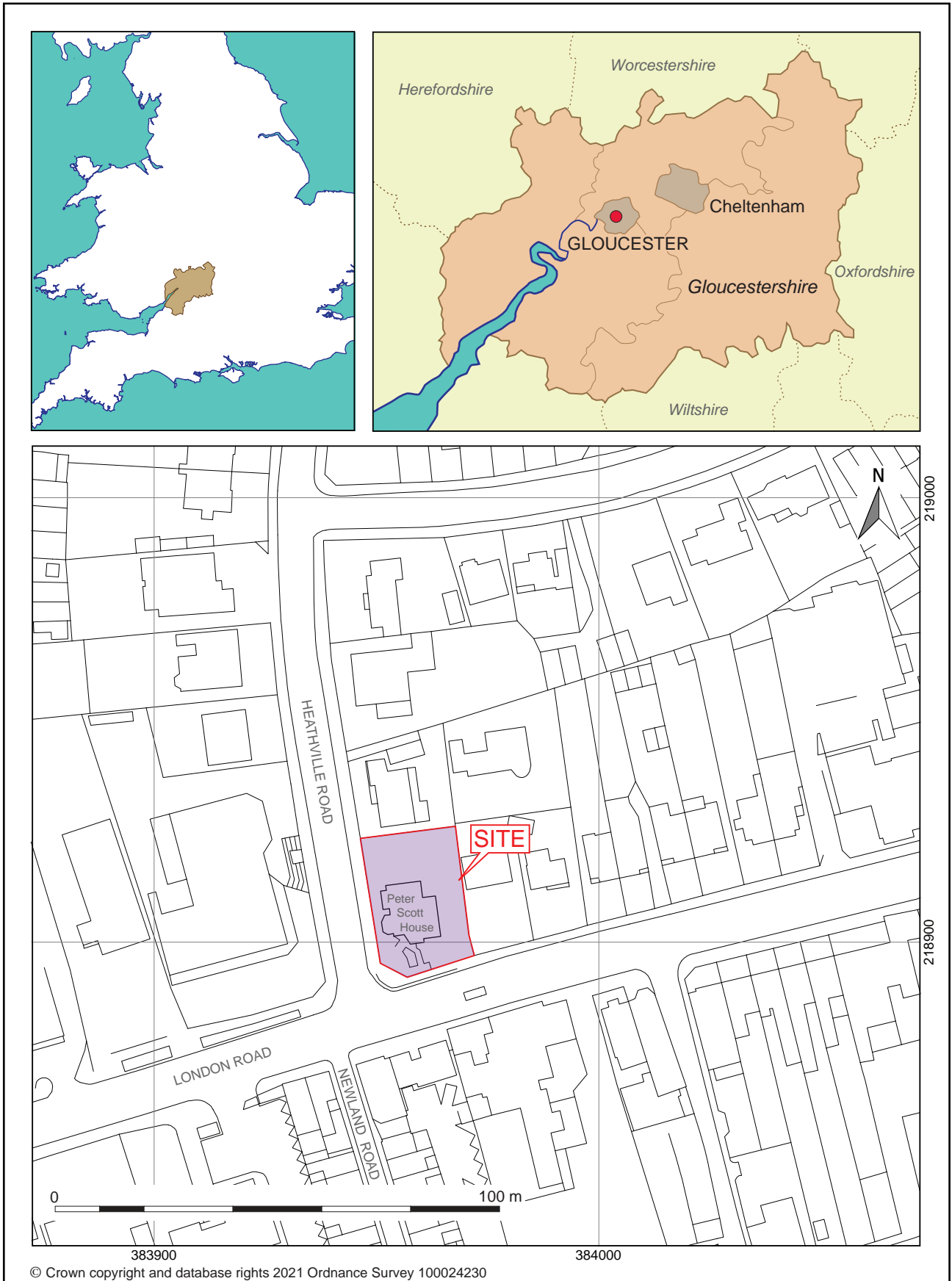
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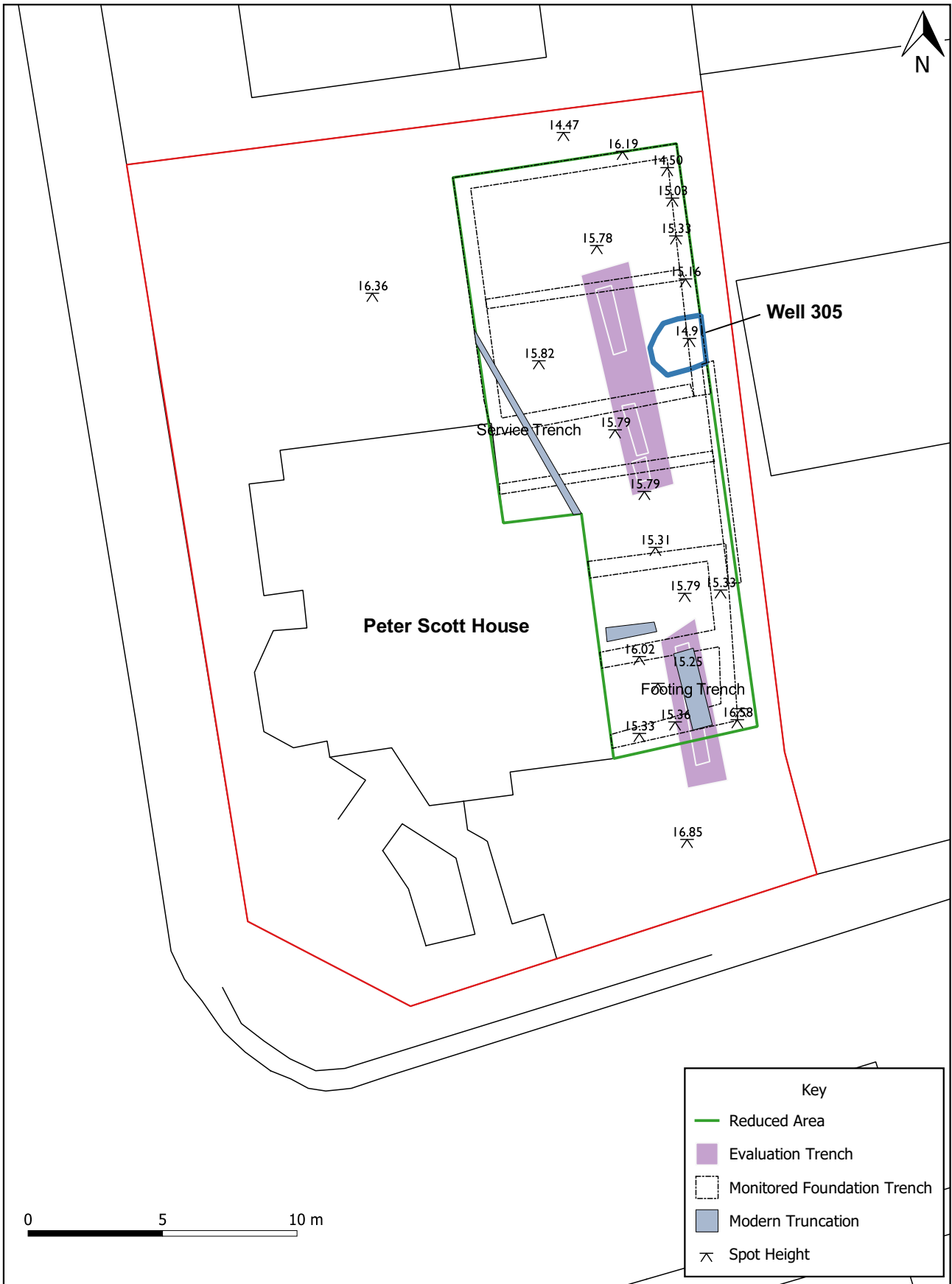
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Figures



Location of the site

Figure 1



Trench foundation location plan and features

Figure 2



219000

384000

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OS County Series 1902 25 inch (1:2500) map of site

Figure 3

Plates



Plate 1: Setting up on site after removal of car park surface, view south; 2x 1m scales



Plate 2: Position of previous evaluation trench 1 with made ground and relict soil, view south; 2x 1m scales



Plate 3: Soils in north end of trench over Cheltenham sand and gravel and Charmouth mudstone; 1m scale



Plate 4: North-east part of site showing modern build up and walls over well 305, view north-east; 2x 1m scales



Plate 5: Concrete-capped well, view north, 2x 1m scales



Plate 6: Close up of concrete capped and backfilled brick well, view west; 2x 1m scales



Plate 7: Southern trench after removing car park surfacing, view south; 2x 1m scales



Plate 8: Foundation trenches excavated and concreted; view north, 2x 1m scales



Plate 9: Bone and oyster shell found in relict soil 303 and retained on site; 0.40m scale



Plate 10: Residual sherd of Roman pottery (top left) with other 19th century finds within relict soil 303; 5cm scale

Appendix 1: Summary of project archive

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

*OASIS terminology

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 Gloucester Museum.