

Archaeological evaluation at  
Merrimans Cottage,  
Froggery Lane, Stoulton  
Worcestershire  
Worcestershire Archaeology  
*for Mr Sean Sparrey*

February 2021



Find out more online:  
[www.explorethepast.co.uk](http://www.explorethepast.co.uk)



# MERRIMANS COTTAGE FROGGERY LANE STOULTON, WORCESTERSHIRE

Archaeological evaluation 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: Merrimans Cottage, Froggery Lane, Stoulton  
Site code: -  
Local planning authority: Wychavon District Council  
Planning reference: 20/01670/FUL  
Central NGR: SO 90354 49786  
Commissioning client: Mr Sean Sparrey  
Client project reference: -  
WA project number: P6005  
WA report number: 2892  
HER reference: WSM 73797  
Oasis reference: Fieldsec1-414005  
Museum accession number: TBC

---

DOCUMENT CONTROL PANEL				
Version	Date	Author	Details	Approved by
1	01/02/2020	G Arnold	Draft for comment	A Mann

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

---

<b>SUMMARY</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>REPORT</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>1 INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>2</b>
1.1 Background to the project .....	2
1.2 Site location, topography and geology.....	2
<b>2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND</b> .....	<b>2</b>
2.1 Introduction .....	2
<b>3 PROJECT AIMS</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>4 PROJECT METHODOLOGY</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS</b> .....	<b>3</b>
5.1 Introduction .....	3
5.2 Trench description .....	3
5.2.1 Natural deposits .....	3
5.2.1 Model summary trench description table.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
<b>6 ARTEFACTUAL EVIDENCE BY ROB HEDGE MCIFA</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>7 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>8 PROJECT PERSONNEL</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>10 BIBLIOGRAPHY</b> .....	<b>6</b>

## FIGURES

## PLATES

## APPENDIX 1: SUMMARY OF PROJECT ARCHIVE

## APPENDIX 2: SUMMARY OF DATA FOR HER



# Archaeological evaluation at Merrimans Cottage, Frogger Lane, Stoulton, Worcestershire

By Graham Arnold

With contributions by Rob Hedge (MCIfA)

Illustrations by Laura Templeton

## Summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Worcestershire Archaeology on 28th January 2021 at Merrimans Cottage, Frogger Lane, Stoulton, Worcestershire (NGR SO 390354 249786). This comprised one 11-metre-long evaluation trench across the footprint of a proposed new building. The project was commissioned by Mr Sean Sparrey, in advance of a proposed construction of a three-bedroom, detached house at the site, adjacent to the existing Merrimans Cottage. Planning permission has been granted subject to a programme of archaeological works.

The archaeological advisor to the Wychavon District Council, Aidan Smyth, considered that the proposed development had the potential to impact upon specific heritage assets. Namely the medieval and post-medieval remains of the village of Stoulton (WSM 37489).

Across most of the trench modern garden soils directly overlay the sterile natural sand and gravels. No significant archaeology was recorded on site other than a single quarry pit at the southern end of the trench. This edge of this cut correlates with the northern end of an old quarry pit visible on the 1905 Ordnance Survey mapping.

The backfill of this quarry contained an artefact assemblage of domestic wares including later post-medieval pottery, glass, and ceramic building material, with a terminus post quem date of circa AD 1830-1930. It is probable that the exhausted pit became infilled with waste material from various properties in the village. Any earlier archaeological remains in the southern half of the property will have been truncated by this quarry pit.

# Report

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Background to the project

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA) on 28th January 2021 at Merrimans Cottage, Frogger Lane, Stoulton, Worcestershire (NGR SO 390354 249786). This comprised one 11 metre long evaluation trench across the footprint of a proposed new building. The project was commissioned by Mr Sean Sparrey, in advance the construction of a three-bedroom, detached house at the site, adjacent to the existing Merrimans Cottage. Planning permission has been granted by Wychavon District Council subject to a programme of archaeological works (20/01670/FUL).

The archaeological advisor to the local planning authority, Aidan Smyth considered that the proposed development had the potential to impact upon specific heritage assets. Namely the medieval and post-medieval remains of the village of Stoulton (WSM 37489).

No brief was provided but the project conforms to a WSI was prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2021) and approved by Aidan Smyth, the archaeology and planning advisor for Wychavon District Council. The evaluation also conforms to the industry guidelines and standards set out by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists in *Standard and guidance: for archaeological field evaluation* (CIfA 2014) and *Standards and guidelines for archaeological projects in Worcestershire* (WCC 2019).

### 1.2 Site location, topography and geology

The site occupies the western half of the garden previously belonging to Merrimans Cottage which lies immediately to the east. The site is located on the western half of the village, which is bisected by the B4084 and is approximately 270m from the church of St Edmund in the eastern half of the village. On the opposite side of Frogger Lane is the "Old Forge", a Grade II listed building (Listing Entry No. 1258630, Listing date 3/08/1972). The name 'Frogger Lane' is possibly an evolution of the name over time from 'Forgery Lane', due to the presence of the 'The Old Forge' at the site in Stoulton.

The site is reasonably flat, at approximately 46m AOD. The footprint of the proposed building measures just over 58m<sup>2</sup>, within a property boundary of just over 610m<sup>2</sup> (Figure 1).

The underlying geology comprises bedrock of Charmouth Mudstone and Rugby Limestone formations overlain by superficial deposits of the Pershore Sand and Gravel Member (BGS 2021).

## 2 Archaeological and historical background

### 2.1 Introduction

A brief archaeological Heritage Statement of the site was prepared by Andy Cunningham of Design and Construction in correspondence with Wychavon District Council Planning Department (Cunningham 2019). The Heritage Statement recorded that the site was not considered to contain any features of archaeological significance. It suggested that although the "Old Forge" opposite was a "significant historic and architectural asset" the development would not harm its setting. It concluded by saying that the site is not considered to contain any features of archaeological significance. (Cunningham 2019).

The settlement was first mentioned in the Anglo-Saxon Charters as 'Stoltun' around 840AD and that Stoulton was recorded in the Domesday book as one of three estates held by Urse the Sheriff (WA 2021). The site lies in the conjectural boundary of the medieval village (WSM 37489) based on cartographic evidence, earthworks and extant buildings.



### 3 Project aims

The aims and scope of the project are to undertake sufficient fieldwork to:

- determine the presence or absence of archaeological deposits beyond reasonable doubt;
- identify their location, nature date and preservation;
- assess their significance;
- assess the likely impact of the proposed development.

The heritage consultation response to the planning application indicated that significant deposits may be defined as those likely to be of medieval and or post-medieval in date (WSM 37489). As a result, the project had potential to address the following aims, as identified in *The archaeology of the West Midlands: a framework for research* (Watt, S (ed) 2011)

- 6.2.1 What evidence is there for, how widespread and when did the re-planning of medieval rural settlements take place.
- 6.2.1 there is a need to identify and investigate the desertion/shrinkage of medieval rural settlements in Worcestershire.

### 4 Project methodology

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2021). Fieldwork was undertaken on 28th January 2021.

One trench, amounting to 22m<sup>2</sup> in area, was excavated over the footprint of the proposed dwelling, which measures just over 58m<sup>2</sup> in total (figs 1 and 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. 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 GNSS device with an accuracy limit set at <0.04m. The spoil was checked for finds and scanned with a metal detector. On completion of excavation, trenches were reinstated by replacing the excavated material.

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 Worcestershire Museum.

### 5 Archaeological results

#### 5.1 Introduction

The features recorded in the trench are shown in Figure 2. General photographs of the works are shown in Plates 1-7. The trench context inventory is presented in Table 1.

#### 5.2 Trench description

##### 5.2.1 Natural deposits

The natural orangey brown sands and gravels (103) were recorded at between 0.50 and 0.70m below the ground level. These were overlain by with garden soils (100 and 101), containing 19th Century and modern finds (not collected). At the southern end of the trench there were re-deposited cohesive

blue clays (102), which appeared to seal the fills (105) of a pit (104). Ground water was recorded at 0.70m below ground level (Plate 2 and 3).

### 5.2.2 Post-medieval

The northern edge of a large pit (104) was observed at the southern end of the trench (Plates 2-4). Pit 104 was sealed with a layer of redeposited blue clay, 0.20m thick, which in turn was overlain by the garden topsoil at the southern end of the trench (Plate 5). A 1m wide slot was excavated across the feature, which began to gradually slop down towards the south. The pit contained a small assemblage of post-medieval pottery, glass, ceramic building material and occasional animal bone fragments (Plate 6).

### 5.2.3 Modern

The spoil was scanned with a metal detector, but only modern nails and refuse material were found within the garden topsoil layers and discarded on site.

On completion of excavation the trench was reinstated by replacing the excavated material (Plate 7).

Context	Brief description	Max depth (m)	Depth from ground surface (m)	Comments
100	Topsoil	0.30	0.00	Friable dark blackish brown sandy silt with frequent small sub-rounded pebbles and occasional modern porcelain and bricks. Humic garden topsoil
101	Topsoil / Natural Interface	0.20	0.30	Mixed topsoil and sand and gravel substrate due to mixing of garden soils
102	Layer	0.20	0.30	Redeposited natural firm cohesive blue clay sealing pit 104
103	Natural substrate	-	0.50-0.70	Firm orangey brown sands and gravels with seams of blue clay clays at the south east end of the trench. Natural geology
104	Cut of pit	0.25	0.70	Elongated pit orientated north-south, 0.25m deep and 1m wide, with steep angular sides, sloping north to south
105	Fill of pit 104	0.30	0.70	Moderately compact greyish brown silty sand with frequent glass and ceramics and mixed silty clay layers.

Table 1: Summary context descriptions

## 6 Artefactual evidence by Rob Hedge MCIfA

Recovery of artefacts was undertaken according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012). A sample of finds from pit 104 was photographed for further analysis.

To minimise handling and travel in accordance with COVID-19 protocols, the small artefactual assemblage recovered from pit 104 was examined from photographs and discussions with the excavator. The artefacts comprised later post-medieval pottery, glass, and ceramic building material (CBM). The CBM, a buff-coloured brick in a coarse, poorly-mixed fabric, was not closely dateable, but is unlikely to pre-date the 19th century. Earlier activity is attested by the presence of a sherd of Staffordshire combed slipware (fabric 91): this was produced between the late-17th and late-18th centuries, but it is not uncommon to find large dishes surviving as heirloom pieces in otherwise 19th century assemblages. The remainder of the pottery comprised 19th or early 20th century yellowwares and whitewares; the presence of transfer-printed whiteware (fabric 85) and factory blue-slipped yellowware indicates a terminus post quem date of circa AD 1830 - 1930.

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

## 7 Discussion and conclusions

No significant archaeological remains were observed during the evaluation and a cross most of the trench modern garden soils directly overlay natural sand and gravels. Pit 104 visible in the southern end of the trench appears to correlate well with the northern end of a quarry pit visible on the 1905 Ordnance Survey mapping (Worcestershire XLI.NW). As this was not visible on the 1884 Ordnance Survey mapping (Worcestershire XLI.NW) it will have been excavated between 1884 and 1905 and as the 1905 mapping records the pit as old it suggests it was exhausted relatively quickly. The mapping evidence and the gradual slope of the cut in the southern end of the trench also suggest that this marks the entrance to the quarry pit. It is therefore probably that sand and gravel was removed from the pit along Frogger Lane.

The backfill of this quarry contained an artefact assemblage of domestic wares including later post-medieval pottery, glass, and ceramic building material, with a terminus post quem date of circa AD 1830-1930. It is probable that the exhausted pit became infilled with domestic waste material from various properties in the village. Any earlier archaeological remains in the southern half of the property will have been truncated by this quarry pit.

The methods adopted allow a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved and conditions were suitable 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, PCIfA.

The project was managed by Andrew Mann, MCIfA. The report was produced and collated by Graham Arnold. Specialist contributions and individual sections of the report are attributed to the relevant authors throughout the text.

## 9 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following for the successful conclusion of the project: Mr Sean Sparrey (Client), and Aidan Smyth (Archaeology and Planning Advisor to Wychavon District Council).

## 10 Bibliography

BGS, 2021 Geology of Britain viewer. Available: <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>  
Accessed: 1 February 2021

ClfA, 2014 *Standard and guidance: for archaeological field evaluation*. Reading: Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, published December 2014, updated 5 June 2020

Cunningham, A, 2019 *Heritage Statement for 18/02607/OUT Proposed erection of three-bedroom detached dwelling: Merrimans Cottage, Frogger Lane, Stoulton WR7 4RQ*, Unpubl doc in correspondence to Wychavon District Council Planning department dated 9 January 2019, Cunningham Design and Construction Ltd

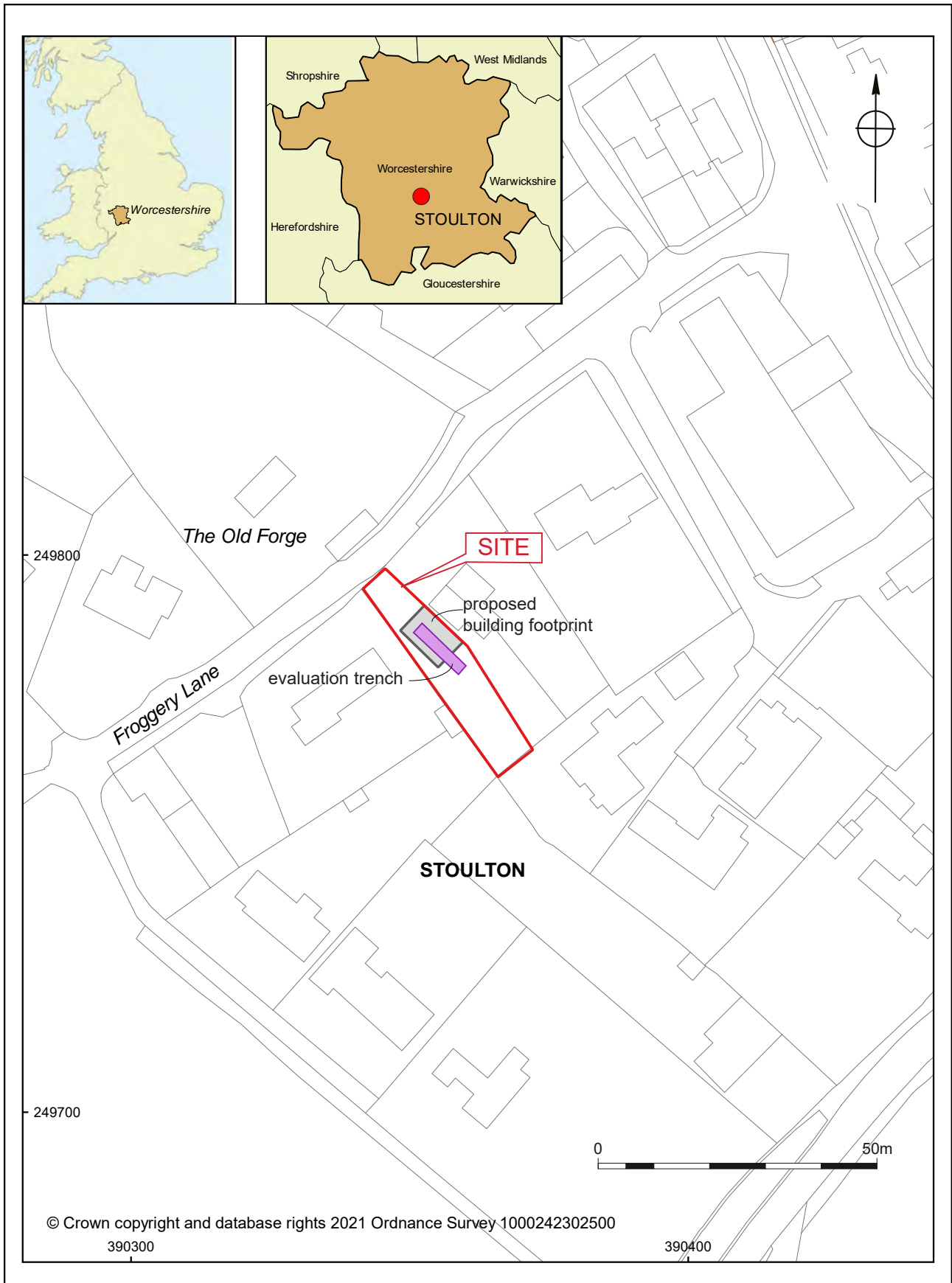
Watt, S (ed) 2011 *The archaeology of the West Midlands: a framework for research* Oxford: Oxbow Books

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

WA, 2021 *Written Scheme of Investigation for an archaeological evaluation at Merrimans Cottage, Frogger Lane, Stoulton, Worcestershire, Worcestershire Archaeology*. Unpubl document dated 18 January 2021. Worcestershire County Council

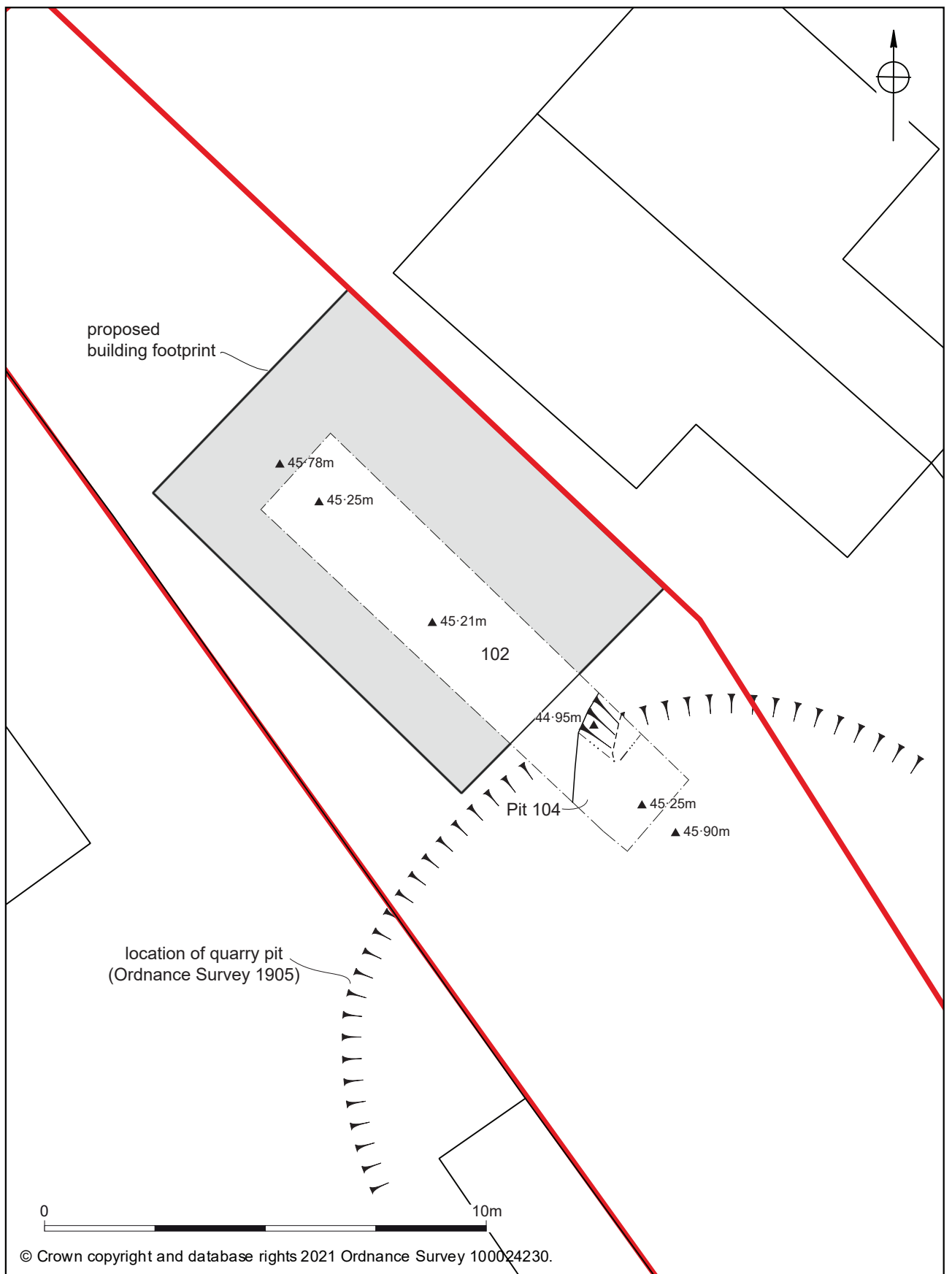
WCC 2019 *Standards and guidelines for archaeological projects in Worcestershire, Planning Advisory Section, Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service*. Unpubl report **604**. Worcestershire County Council, updated November 2019

## Figures



Location of the site

Figure 1



Trench location and features

Figure 2

## Plates





*Plate 1: Trench location prior to excavations, view north with 1m scales*



*Plate 2: Trench fully excavated with quarry pit edge 104 in foreground. View northwest with 1m scales*



*Plate 3: Trench fully excavated with groundwater and, quarry pit 104 in distance. View southeast with 1m scales*



*Plate 4: Northern edge of quarry pit 104, view north with 1m and 0.5m scales*



*Plate 5: Northeast facing section of southern end of trench showing blue clay 103 sealing quarry pit 104. View west with 0.5m and 1m scales*



*Plate 6: Sample of finds from quarry pit fill 105, including bottle glass, CBM and ceramics with a tpq dating to c. 1830 -1930. 0.5m scale*



*Plate 7: Trench backfilled following metal detecting of spoil and completion of works. View southeast*

## Appendix 1: Summary of project archive (WSM73797)

TYPE	DETAILS*
Artefacts and Environmental	None retained – discarded on site
Paper	Context sheet, Correspondence, Diary (Field progress form), Report
Digital	GIS, Images raster/digital photography

*\*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 Worcestershire Museum.

## **Appendix 3: Summary of data for HER**

No significant finds or environmental samples from site.