

Archaeological watching brief and
building recording at
The Old Farmhouse,
Church Lane, Oddington,
Droitwich,
Worcestershire
Worcestershire Archaeology
for Vanessa Bradford and Timothy Raggatt



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OLD FARMHOUSE, CHURCH LANE, ODDINGLEY, DROITWICH, WORCESTERSHIRE

Archaeological watching brief and building recording



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SITE INFORMATION

Site name:	Old Farmhouse, Church Lane, Oddingley, Droitwich, Worcestershire
HER site reference:	WSM09038
Local planning authority:	Wychavon District Council
Planning reference:	19/00671/HP
Central NGR:	SO 91480 59022
Commissioning client:	Richard Crooke on behalf of Vanessa Bradford and Timothy Raggatt
WA project number:	P5795
WA report number:	2940
HER event reference:	WSM77495
Oasis reference:	fieldsec1-423392

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1	18/06/2021	Tim Cornah	Draft for comment	Tom Vaughan

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APPENDIX 1: SUMMARY OF PROJECT ARCHIVE (WSM77495)

Archaeological watching brief and building recording at The Old Farmhouse, Church Lane, Oddingley, Droitwich, Worcestershire

By Tim Cornah

Summary

A programme of archaeological watching brief and building recording was undertaken at The Old Farmhouse, Church Lane, Oddingley, Droitwich, Worcestershire (NGR SO 91480 59022). It was commissioned by Richard Crook on behalf of Vanessa Bradford and Timothy Raggatt, in advance of a proposed extensions and alterations to the existing dwelling, for which a planning application has been submitted.

A watching brief on the groundworks and building recording was undertaken ahead of the construction of an extension onto an existing brick element of the 17th century Old Farmhouse. The brick element is considered unlikely to predate the later 19th century, as it is not visible on the Ordnance Survey map of 1883, but is depicted on the edition of 1903. It probably relates to the house having been split into sub-lets. Its fireplace addition suggests an original service function that was remodelled in the 20th century. A three dimensional model of the northern and eastern sides of the house can be viewed here <https://skfb.ly/6TKzv>.

Substantial terracing was determined to have taken place on the northern side of the house in the 20th century, with the modern retaining garden walls cut into the hill, along with paths and a service run. It is possible that all of the deposits recorded within the watching brief element were of this date, but an earlier deposition cannot be ruled out. No deposits relating to the former medieval settlement to the north of the site were revealed, nor any other significant archaeological layers or artefacts.

Report

1 Introduction

1.1 Background to the project

A programme of archaeological watching brief and building recording was undertaken by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA) between July 2020 and April 2021 at The Old Farmhouse, Church Lane, Oddingley, Droitwich, Worcestershire (NGR SO 91480 59022). This comprised monitoring of ground reduction and building recording of an element of structure. The project was commissioned by Richard Crook on behalf of Vanessa Bradford and Timothy Raggatt, in advance of proposed extension on the rear of the house. A planning application was submitted to Wychavon District Council and was granted subject to a programme of archaeological works (planning reference 19/00671/HP).

The Archaeology and Planning Advisor to Wychavon District Council considered that the proposed development had the potential to impact upon possible and specific heritage assets, notably an area of deserted medieval settlement to the immediate north of the site (HER ref WSM 15185) and The Old Farmhouse itself (WSM 09038).

No brief was provided but the project conforms to the generality of briefs previously provided. A written scheme of investigation (WSI) was prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (2021) and approved by the Archaeology and Planning Advisor to Wychavon District Council. The project 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 2014a), *Standard and guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures* (CIfA 2014b) and the *Standards and guidelines for archaeological projects in Worcestershire* (WCC 2019).

1.2 Site location, topography and geology

The site is located c 700m south-east of the village of Oddingley, itself south of the town of Droitwich Spa. The site is bounded on most sides by farmland and a road, with Oddingley church and churchyard to the immediate north-west. The site comprises a garden plot with The Old Farmhouse at broadly within its centre. The site is situated on slightly sloping ground, sloping down to the east.

The underlying geology comprises bedrock of Branscombe Mudstone Formation with no superficial deposits recorded (BGS 2021).

2 Archaeological and historical background

Prior to fieldwork commencing, a search of Worcestershire Historic Environment Record (HER) was completed, covering a search area of 500m around the site. Historic mapping was also consulted. A summary of the results of this research is presented below.

The present character of the area around the site developed broadly from the medieval period onwards, centred around the St James' Church (WSM03036) to the immediate north-east of the site, the earliest elements of which date to the 11th century. Associated with this is an area of deserted settlement to its immediate north (WSM15185) of a broad medieval date.

The Old Farmhouse itself (WSM09038) was constructed in the 17th century and was first illustrated in 1838 when it was an isolated farmstead next to the church. This is shown with outbuildings to its east, south-east and south-west, with a pond also to the south. Many of these were demolished by the time of the 1883 Ordnance Survey map.

The Worcester and Birmingham Canal (WSM1200) and the Bristol and Birmingham Branch railway (WSM31660) to the east of the site had been constructed by the time of the 1838 tithe map. The 19th

century generally saw increased activity in the area with clay pits and kilns to the north-east of the site dating to this time and extending into the early 20th century (WSM3600, WSM29093). The extant Church Farm (WSM46020) and outbuildings (WSM15184) were constructed by the time of the 1883 map, which also shows the plot to the north of The Old Farmhouse house split into three. This suggests its use as a working farm was over at that point. This function transferred to Church Farm, whilst The Old Farmhouse was potentially internally split into three tenanted sub-lets. The tenants may have worked within the clay pits and brick kilns.

In terms of the building itself and the rear extension to be affected by the present development, the 1838 map shows a small structure within its broad location, although it appears to be too small to be the current building. The 1883 map shows no buildings within the extant footprint, though by the time of the 1903 Ordnance Survey Map, a building in the extant footprint is present but split into two centrally. This suggests that the extant structure was extensively remodelled in the 20th century.

3 Project aims

3.1 Watching brief

The aims of the watching brief are 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.

3.2 Building recording

The 2006 edition of the English Heritage publication *Understanding historic buildings: A guide to good recording practice* identified historic buildings as 'a living record of our social, economic and artistic history, as well as being powerful contributors to our sense of place and to feelings of local, regional and national identity'.

The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists defines the aims of building recording as 'a programme of work intended to establish the character, history, dating, form and archaeological development of a specified building' (*Standard and guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures*, ClfA 2014b).

The aims and scope of the historic building recording are to create a Level 1 record, as identified in the 2016 Historic England specification *Understanding historic buildings: A guide to good recording practice*.

4 Project methodology

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2021). Fieldwork was undertaken between 7 July 2020 and 20 April 2021.

4.1 Watching brief

The excavation of one trench, amounting to 67m² in area, was observed. The location of the trench is indicated in Figure 2.

The trench was located within the impact area of the planned extension, primarily where terracing into the hill was required. The area closest to the house was not monitored due to previous truncation in the area, after discussion with the Archaeology and Planning Advisor of Wychavon District Council.

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 investigated as appropriate 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).

All fieldwork records were checked and cross-referenced. Analysis was undertaken through analysis of structural evidence, allied to the information derived from other sources.

4.2 Building recording

Building recording consisted of a photographic survey of the interior and exterior of the building within the location of the planned extension, as well as exterior photogrammetric survey of this area. All photographs were taken with photographic scales visible in each shot. The photographic survey was carried out with a Canon EOS 200D digital SLR camera. All photographs were recorded on a pro-forma Photographic Record Sheet.

The project conformed to the specification for a level 1 survey as defined in the Historic England document *Understanding historic buildings: a guide to good recording practice* (HE 2016).

A level 1 record is essentially a basic visual record supplemented by the minimum of information needed to identify the building's location, age and type.

The record will include the following elements of survey:

Photography

- General view or views of the building in its wider setting or landscape
- External appearance of the building, using oblique and right-angle shots

Drawings

- Roughly dimensioned sketched plan, section, or elevation

Written account

- A summary of the building's type or purpose, historically and at present, its materials and date (where possible)

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 Watching brief results

5.1 Introduction

The recorded trench is shown in Figure 2 and Plates 1-2.

5.2 Phasing

5.2.1 Natural deposits

Natural deposits (103) consisted of a compact red clay marl consistent with the locally recorded mudstone geology.

5.2.2 Phase 1: Post-medieval deposits

Directly above the natural deposits was a mixed dark grey brown clay silt with frequent coal and undiagnostic brick fragments that extended to a depth of 0.18m (101). This deposit was not closely dateable but is considered to be late post-medieval at the earliest.

5.2.3 Phase 2: Modern deposits

Above deposit (101) was a thin layer of mid grey brown clay silt garden topsoil (100), up to 0.12m in depth.

An area of modern truncation was present associated with the garden steps, which was in turn joined by a modern cable service trench. Further truncation was present in the form of terracing into the slope behind the modern walls.

5.3 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.

5.4 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.

6 Building recording results

A three dimensional model of the northern and eastern sides of the house is located here <https://skfb.ly/6TKzv> . The building is also illustrated on Figures 2-3 and Plates 3-10.

6.1 Building description

The house consists of a two storey largely timber framed structure aligned broadly east to west with a tile roof, although its eastern end is largely a brick rebuild. It has three external brick chimney stacks added to either side, with two further single storey brick additions on its northern side.

Of these brick extensions, the larger was the focus of the building recording. This consisted of a rectangular footprint with tiled roof and north to south aligned central ridge. It had a door and window to the east with two windows to the north flanking a chimney stack, and a further window facing west. Internally, it consisted of a single space in which all features were of modern date, excepting two reused purlins.

7 Conclusion

A watching brief on groundworks and building recording was undertaken ahead of the construction of an extension onto an existing brick element of the 17th century Old Farmhouse. The brick element is considered unlikely to predate the later 19th century, as it is not visible on the Ordnance Survey map of 1883, but is depicted on the edition of 1903. It probably relates to the house having been split into sub-lets. Its fireplace addition suggests an original service function that was remodelled in the 20th century.

A large amount of terracing took place on the northern side of the house in the 20th century, with the modern garden walls cut into the hill, along with paths and a service run. It is possible that all of the deposits recorded within the watching brief element, with the exception of the natural, were of this date but an earlier deposition cannot be ruled out. No deposits relating to the former medieval settlement to the north of the site were revealed, nor any other significant archaeological layers or artefacts.

The methods adopted allow a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved. Conditions were suitable in all the trench 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. Visibility of the building was sufficient to understand its character.

8 Project personnel

The fieldwork was led by Tim Cornah, ACIfA, who also prepared and collated the report. The project was managed by Tom Vaughan, MCIIfA. Specialist contributions and individual sections of the report are attributed to the relevant authors throughout the text as appropriate.

9 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following for the successful conclusion of the project: Vanessa Bradford and Timothy Raggatt, Richard Crook (Architect), and Aidan Smyth (Archaeology and Planning Advisor, Wychavon District Council).

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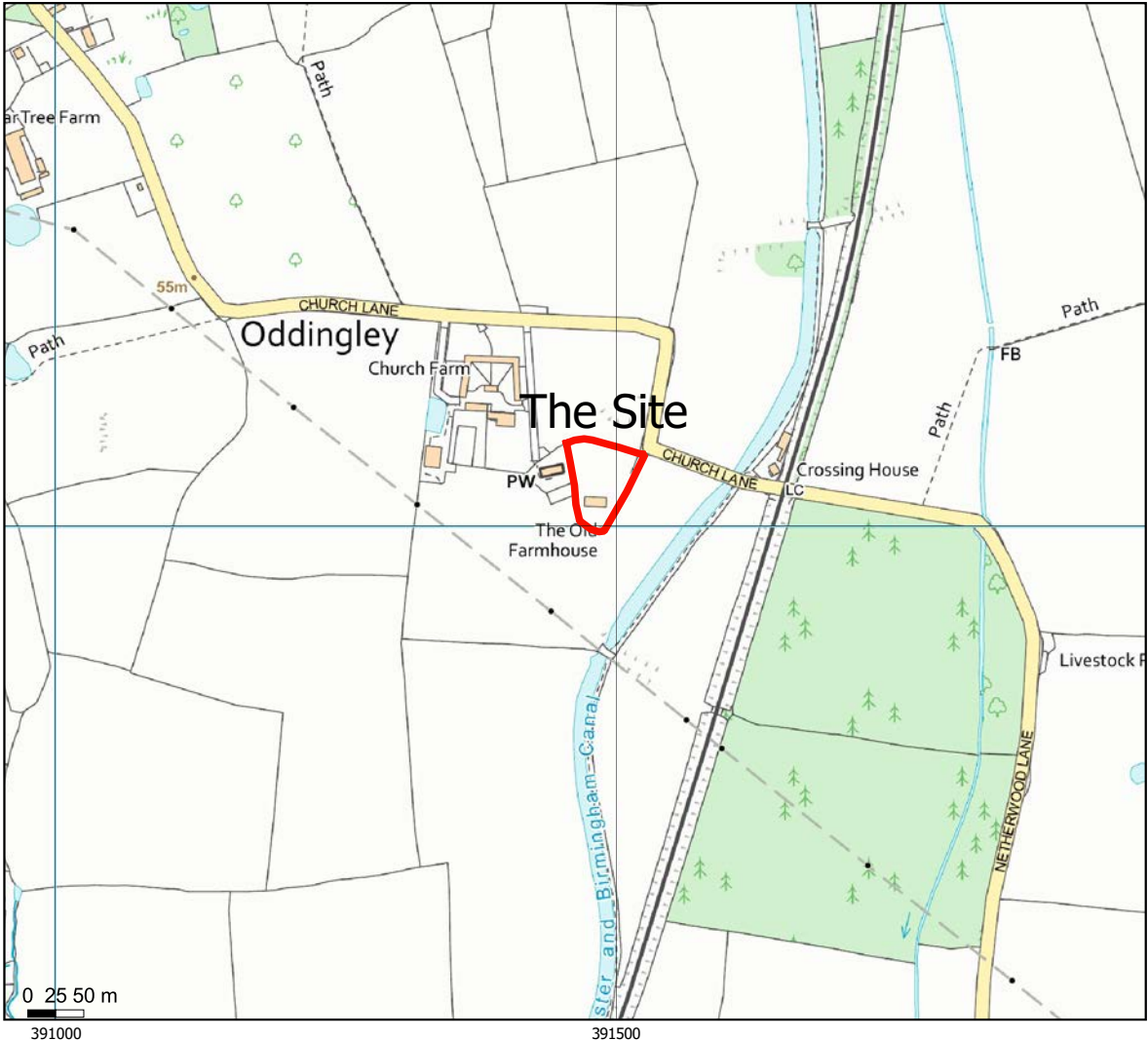
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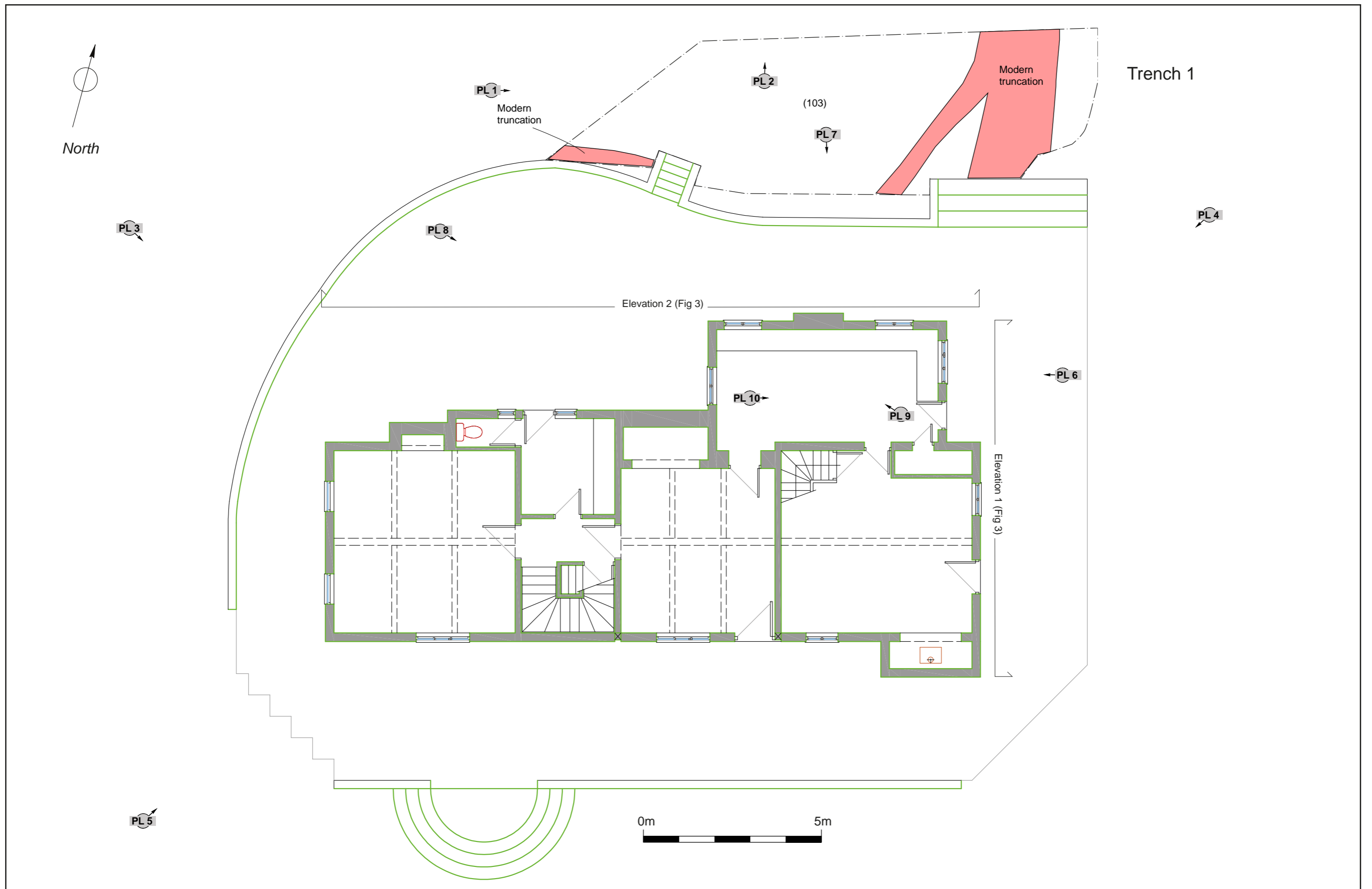
Figures



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Location of the site

Figure 1



Groundfloor plan of the building with the watching brief trench and plate locations
 (after Richard Crook Architect, drawing number RC508/02)

Figure 2

SE

Elevation 1

NW



NE

Elevation 2

SW



Photogrammetric elevations of the house

Figure 3

Plates



Plate 1 The watching brief trench, looking east, scale 1m



Plate 2 The watching brief trench section, looking north, scale 1m



Plate 3 The house, looking south-east



Plate 4 The house, looking south-west, scale 1m



Plate 5 The house, looking north-east, scale 1m



Plate 6 The rear extension exterior, looking west, scale 1m



Plate 7 The rear extension exterior, looking south, scale 1m



Plate 8 The rear extension exterior, looking south-east, scale 1m



Plate 9 The rear extension interior, looking west, scale 1m



Plate 10 The rear extension interior, looking east, scale 1m

Appendix 1: Summary of project archive (WSM77495)

TYPE	DETAILS*
Paper	Context sheet, Diary (Field progress form) Report
Digital	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 Worcestershire County Museum.