



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING

AT

FORMER BRETFORTON POST OFFICE,

82 MAIN STREET, BRETFORTON, EVESHAM,

WORCESTERSHIRE

NGR SP 09414 43786

MARCH 2020

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SUMMARY

John Moore Heritage Services carried out an archaeological watching brief at the former Post Office, Main Street, Bretforton, Worcestershire (NGR SP 09414 43786). As a result of the archaeological monitoring three features were recorded that may pre-date the construction of the post office in the late 19th century; two of these were interpreted as possible boundary or drainage ditches, while the third was a rubbish pit containing a range of domestic rubbish dating to the early 18th century. All other archaeological deposits and features were thought to relate to the construction of the post office building.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The development site is located on the north-east side of Main Street, Bretforton (NGR SP 09414 43786 centred).

The site lies at approximately 39m AOD. The bedrock geology is Lias Formation and Charmouth Mudstone Formation, a mudstone; this is overlain by head deposits consisting of clay, silt, sand and gravel (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain>).

1.2 Planning Background

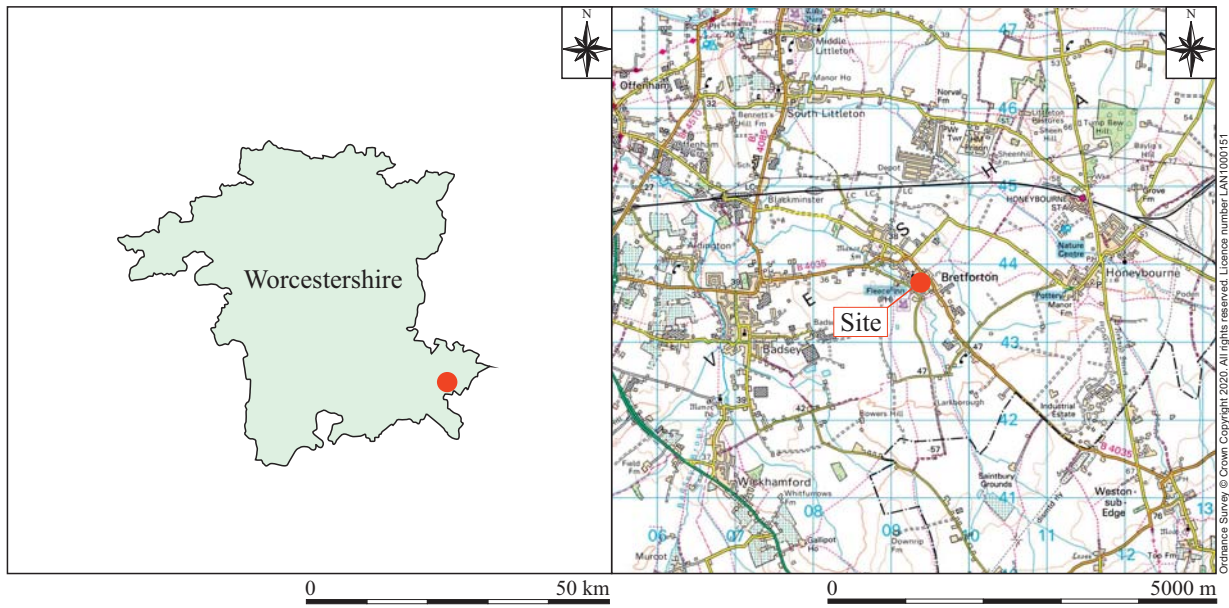
Wychavon District Council had granted planning permission for the proposed change of use of from existing post office to a dwelling, demolition of store and offices and two storey rear extension to Bretforton Post Office (W/15/02253). A condition was attached to the permission requiring a programme of archaeological works; this was in line with current NPPF and Local Plan policies and a brief produced by the Worcestershire Archives and Archaeology Service (WAAS).

1.3 Archaeological Background

There are no known prehistoric sites within the area. However, a site has been identified as potentially being of Palaeolithic date, based on the environmental remains (Worcestershire HER Number WSM56936).

The earliest sites currently known within the area of Bretforton are of Roman date and consist of features and finds which demonstrate an established settlement. In the southeast area of Bretforton a Roman settlement was identified during an archaeological evaluation (Worcestershire HER Event Number WSM29964), which consisted of enclosure ditches and a series of pits (WSM36238: SP 0963 4365). Pottery sherds recovered from the features during the evaluation revealed that the settlement was occupied from late 2nd century to late 3rd century.

Additional Roman finds have been recovered from the area, including an assemblage to the northwest of the project site (WSM35827: SP 0912 4388) during the WHEAS project P2896 'Unlocking the Past'. Another collection of finds were recorded to the northeast of the project site during an archaeological evaluation (Event WSM30162) and consisted of a human burial, pottery and dressed stone (WSM37533: SP 0949 4390: Event WSM02743). It should also be noted that documentary evidence has



Key Site boundary Monitored area Archaeological features
 Demolished building

Figure 1: Site location

stated the presence of a Roman Road within the area (WSM31682). However, the location of the road is unknown, with conflicting records.

Due to the lack of records relating to early medieval activity within the area, it appears as though the area was abandoned from the 3rd century until after 1066. However, this could be due to the fact that the sites have been completely removed by later activity, or has not yet been found. Evidence for the theory that there was activity during this period can be found in the 1086 Domesday Book which records the presence of two estates at modern Bretforton (WSM24413: SP 0929 4400). Additional documentary evidence indicates that the name Bretforton was first used in AD709 and cartographic records indicate the presence of earthworks for the earlier buildings to the northwest of the project site (WSM29872: SP 0915 4392).

The earliest buildings and structures within Bretforton have been dated to the medieval period and are based around and include St. Leonard's Church (WSM02849: SP 0930 4381), which is located to the northwest of the project site. St. Leonard's Church was consecrated in 1295, but contains building features of late 12th to early 13th century date, therefore providing an earlier date for the establishment of the building.

A building associated with the church was located at the west end of the churchyard and was originally a church and court house (WSM02478: SP 0927 4383). In 1826 the building was converted into 3 cottages to house the poor, before being demolished in 1887. Another building was located on the south side of the churchyard and used as a prison (WSM02477: SP 0929 4379). It appears that the building was removed between 1991 and 2005 as the records state that footings for a building was found in this area during a watching brief (Event WSM34276). Another medieval feature, which has been removed, was a cross that was indicated to have been on the east side of the Fleece Inn (WSM02479: SP 0933 4378).

Within the surrounding area of Bretforton several sites have been identified as having ridge and furrow which date back to medieval agricultural activity (WESM30231: SP 1182 4405; WSM66529: SP 0900 4373; WSM67330: SP 0891 4341).

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The aims of the investigation as laid out in the Written Scheme of Investigation were as follows:

- To make a record of any significant remains revealed during the course of any operations that may disturb or destroy archaeological remains.

In particular:

- Establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains
- Determine the extent, condition, nature, character, date and significance of any archaeological remains encountered
- To establish the nature of the activity on the site
- To identify any artefacts relating to the occupation or use of the site
- To provide information on any archaeological remains encountered

- To record any evidence relating to medieval and/or post-medieval village activity

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with the Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service, the archaeological advisors to Wychavon District Council.

The recording was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2014).

3.2 Methodology

Monitored groundworks comprised:

- A footing trench 4.7m in length, 0.5m in width and 1m in depth, excavated along the front of the building
- Two pits, each 0.8m in length, 0.5m in width and up to 0.85m in depth, excavated on either side of the above trench
- Two linked footings trenches excavated at the rear of the building for the proposed kitchen and study, covering an area of 9m by 7m with a width of 0.6m and a depth of 1.2m

Prior to excavation in both areas the modern concrete slab was removed; following removal the footings were excavated by hand under archaeological supervision.

Where archaeological horizons were encountered they were cleaned by hand and excavated appropriately. Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each deposit encountered, with scale plans and section drawings compiled where appropriate. A photographic record was also produced.

The resultant spoil from the works was visually scanned, especially for finds relating to medieval and post-medieval activity.

4 RESULTS

All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers without brackets indicate features i.e. pit cuts, numbers in () show feature fills or deposits of material, while numbers in bold indicate structural features.

Front façade footing and test pits (Figure 2)

The lowest deposit encountered was natural head deposit (04), a soft light brownish yellow sandy gravel; this was seen in all and was at least 0.6m in thickness, extending beyond and below the limit of excavation (l.o.e.). In the trench the natural horizon (04) was truncated by a sub-circular feature 07, >0.8m in length by >0.7m in width and 0.7m in depth with irregular concave sides.

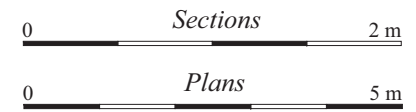
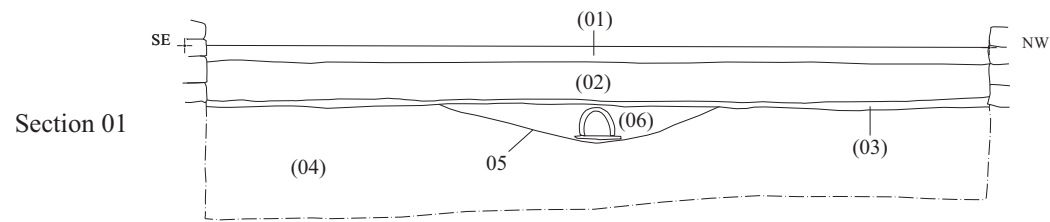
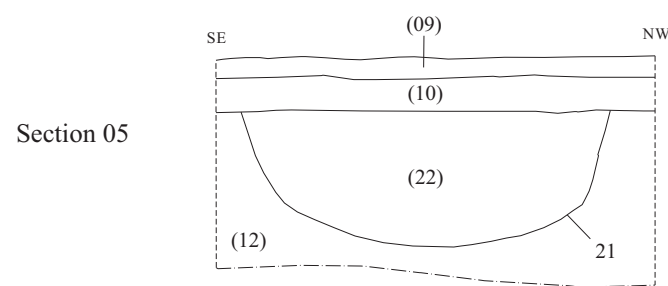
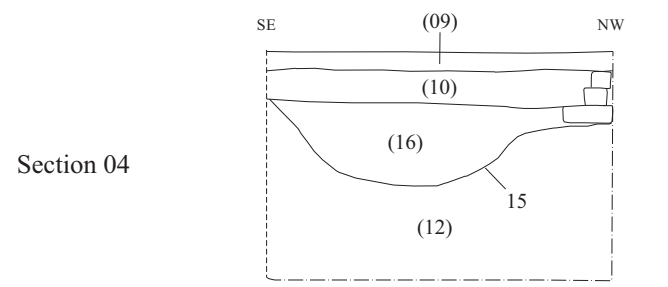
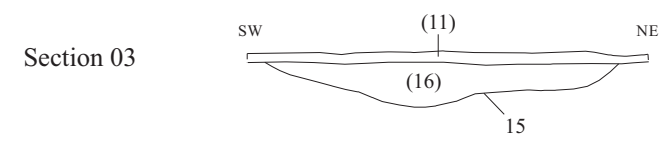
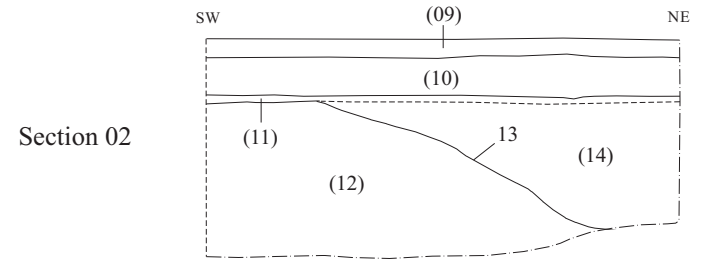
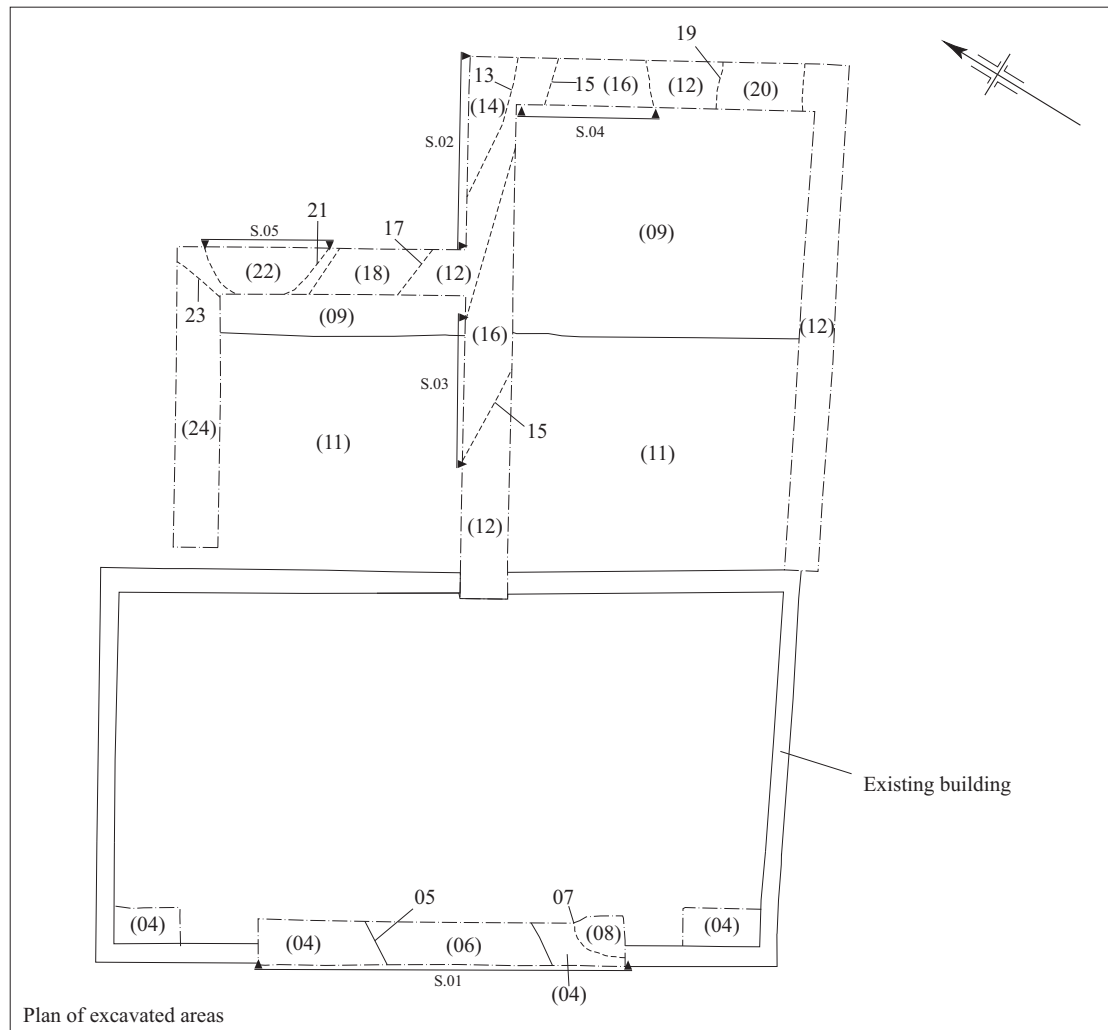


Figure 2: Plans and sections

This cut was interpreted as an area of bioturbation or a possible tree throw and was filled by (08) a soft dark brown greyish silty sand. Geological horizon (04) was also truncated by modern drain 05; this measured at least 0.5m in length by 0.7m in width and 0.2m in depth, extending beyond the l.o.e. to the northeast and southwest (Section 01). Drain cut 05 contained a ceramic drain structure and fill (06), a loose dark blackish brown silty sand. Drain fill (06) was overlain by a thin layer of cement (03), 50mm in thickness, interpreted as a bedding layer for the overlying deposit of made ground (02); this deposit was a firm dark brownish grey silty sand with occasional stone, 0.2m in thickness. Made ground (02) was in turn overlain externally by the pavement and internally by the concrete floor of the post office.

Rear kitchen and study extension (Figure 2)

The lowest deposit encountered here was natural head deposit (12), a soft light brownish yellow sandy gravel; this was seen throughout the footings trenches and was at least 0.8m in thickness, extending beyond and below the limit of excavation (l.o.e.).

The geological horizon was truncated by a series of features. Possible ditch 13 (also recorded as 17) was at least 7m in length, c.1m in width and 0.7m in depth; the feature was aligned northeast – southwest and extended beyond the l.o.e. to the northeast and southwest (Section 02). Fill 14 (also recorded as 18) was a firm dark brown grey silty sand containing occasional small stones, fine gravel and a fragment of modern brick. To the south of ditch 13 was another ditch, 15 (Fig. 2, Section 03, 04). This was linear, >6m in length by 1.8m in width and 0.4m in depth; fill (16) was a firm dark brown grey silty sand with occasional gravel, small stone and modern brick. Pit 21, located on the northern side of the study footing, was sub-circular in plan, 2.2m in diameter and 0.7m in depth; this was filled by a firm dark brown grey silty sand (22) containing poorly mixed stone, occasional gravel. Notable finds from this fill included 22 sherds of early 18th century pottery and a large quantity of cow bone (Fig. 2, Section 05).

Two features possibly associated with the recently demolished modern buildings were seen within the footings trench. On the eastern side of the trench was cut 19 - a feature at least 0.6m in length, 1.15m in width and 1.2m in depth, extending both below and beyond the l.o.e. to the east; the form of the feature was uncertain due to the narrow area of excavation, however it appears to have been linear and aligned northeast – southwest. This was filled by (20) a firm dark brown grey silty clay with occasional gravel, small stone and modern brick fragments. At the western side of the trench was a large cut 23; this measured >3.7m in length, >0.6m in width and >1m in depth, extending beyond and below the l.o.e. to the west. Fill (24) was a firm dark brown grey silty sand with frequent stone, gravel and fragments of modern brick. Sherds of pottery from this deposit were dated to the 19th or 20th century.

Ditches 13 and 15 were overlain by a thin levelling deposit (11); this was a firm dark brownish grey silty sand, >5.5m in length by 2.5m in width and 0.1m in thickness, extending beyond the l.o.e. to the north and south (Fig. 2, Sections 02 &, 03). This deposit was located centrally within the trench, and was not seen towards the eastern or western edges. This layer was overlain by a friable light brown yellowish sand (10) with frequent stone and gravel that was present throughout the trench and had a thickness of 0.18m. This was overlain in turn by concrete (09), a concrete floor 0.08m in thickness associated with the former building (Sections 04, 05).

Reliability of Results

The archaeological investigation was carried out in fair conditions with good cooperation from site staff; as such the results are considered to be accurate.

5 FINDS

5.1 Pottery by Stephanie Duensing

Post-Medieval

A small assemblage of 27 sherds of pottery was recovered from three contexts and were all post-medieval. The majority belong to the late post-medieval period, from between the late 18th and early 19th century. These early post-medieval wares provide the sole dating evidence for contexts (11), (22) and (24), with the majority of sherds occurring in context (22).

Wares represented include coarse redwares (Fabric 78), North Devon gravel free ware milk pan (fabric 75.1) and several sherds of post-medieval buff ware, also known as Staffordshire-type marbled slipware or manganese mottled ware (fabric 91). Diagnostic sherds include nearly half a fragmented porringer or small bowl and a base and handle fragment from a mug (both in Fabric 91), a wide aperture pan (likely a milk pan) profile (Fabric 75.1), and a nearly (80%) complete but fragmented chamber pot (Fabric 90).

Context 22 produced post-medieval wares almost exclusively dating to the earlier 18th century, with one white salt-glazed stoneware sherd (Fabric 81.5), a number of redwares, some black-glazed (Fabric 78), but most in manganese mottled glaze, including fragments of a mug and a half profile of a porringer or small bowl. The peak of popularity for Manganese Mottled appears to have been during the late 17th century and the early decades of the 18th century (Philpott 1985:52-53; Elliott 1998:30).

Sherds from (11) and (24) are later in date (19th/20th century), and contained pearlware, including two transfer-printed sherds and a hand painted sherd (Fabric 85), as well as a single sherd of both red and orange ware (Fabric 78 and Fabric 90).

Context	Period	Ware	Fabric	No.	Wt.(g)	Comments
11	Post-med	Modern China (Pearlware)	85	1	1.6	Blue on white hand painted
24	Modern	Modern China (Pearlware)	85	2	14	Blue on white transferprint
24	Modern	PM red ware	78	1	12	Black-glazed
24	Post-med	PM orange ware	90	1	11	orange lead-glazed
22	Post-med	PM orange ware	90	4	929	orange lead-glazed
22	Post-med	North Devon gravel-free ware	75.1	2	493	Milk pan, large shallow bowl
22	Post-med	Post-medieval buff ware	91	2	34	Manganese mottled glaze, mug
22	Post-med	white salt-glazed stoneware	81.5	1	5	basket weave moulded rim
22	Post-med	PM redware	78	3	79	Black-glazed
22	Post-med	PM redware	78	1	14	Metropolitan slip

						(raised) decoration
22	Post-med	Post-medieval buff ware	91	8	155	Manganese mottled glaze, bowl or porringer
22	Post-med	Post-medieval buff ware	91	1	24	Slip decorated with red slip under a pale yellow glaze, with combing and feathering

5.2 Ceramic Building Material by Simona Denis

Brick

Two fragments of ceramic building material, of a combined weight of 184g were collected from deposit (22), fill of rubbish pit 21. None of the dimensions were completely preserved. The items were positively identified as brick, and tentatively dated to the Post-medieval to Modern period.

No further analysis nor retention are recommended for the brick fragments.

5.3 Animal Bone by Simona Denis

A very limited assemblage of 7 animal bone fragments, weighing 500g combined, were recovered from deposit (22), fill of rubbish pit 21.

Two different *taxa* were identified. *Bos* was the most represented, with one fragment of distal humerus, two vertebrae and one rib fragment comprising the head. *Sus* was represented by one complete mandibular canine and a partial maxilla, which showed an unerupted third molar, indicating the individual was *ca.* one year old. The remaining fragment was too small to be identified.

A single possible butchering mark was observed on the cow rib, and tentatively identified as a point insertion mark.

No further analysis nor retention are recommended for the animal bone fragments.

5.4 Other Finds by Simona Denis

Clay Tobacco Pipe

Deposit (22), the fill of rubbish pit 21, contained two conjoining fragments of clay tobacco pipe stem, measuring 50mm and weighing 2g in total. No decorations or marks were observed, and the mouthpiece was not preserved; furthermore, the fragmentary state of the object precludes any attempt to reconstruct the original overall length or attempt a dating. Unmarked stem fragments without diagnostic features or decorations have very little dating value, and can only generally be assigned to the Post-Medieval period.

The clay tobacco pipe stem is not recommended for retention, due to its extremely limited potential for further analysis.

Glass

Two fragments of glass bottles were found in deposit (22), the fill of rubbish pit 21. Both objects, weighing 708g in total, were positively identified as Post-medieval wine bottle push-up bases. A pontil scar was observed on one of the examples; the other fragment showed extensive patination.

The glass bottle fragments are not recommended for retention, due to their poor state of preservation and limited potential for further analysis.

Iron

A single, extremely oxidised iron object was recovered from deposit (18), the fill of linear feature 17. The item, weighing 7.6g and measuring 3.2mm in length, appears to be part of a nail or fitting with a square cross-section.

The iron object is not recommended for retention due to its instable conditions and extremely limited potential for further analysis.

6 DISCUSSION

The watching brief was successful in meeting the aims set out in the WSI, though the archaeological evidence encountered was limited. Prior to the late 19th century the plot was undeveloped, as depicted on the First Edition OS 25" map of 1883 (<https://maps.nls.uk/view/109722750> accessed 09/03/2020); the post office building is first depicted on the second edition map, dating to 1900. Based on this it is likely that features 13, 15 and 21 pre-date the construction of the building, as they were located within the footprint of the building, sealed by the levelling deposits and concrete associated with its construction. The alignment of ditches 13 and 15 suggest they may be former property boundaries or drainage ditches, extending roughly at 90° from Main Street. The ceramic assemblage from pit 21 suggests that it was in use during the early 18th century, perhaps associated with the nearby properties. The other features encountered were all associated with the construction and use of the post office building and thus of late 19th and 20th century date.

7 ARCHIVE

Archive Contents

The archive consists of the following:

Paper record

The project brief
Written scheme of investigation
The project report
The primary site record

Physical record

Finds

The archive currently is maintained by John Moore Heritage Services and will be transferred to the Worcestershire Museums Service under accession number WSM67203.

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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OASIS ID: johnmoor1-388173

Project details

Project name	An Archaeological Watching Brief at Former Bertforton Post Office, Main Street, Bretforton, Worcestershire
Short description of the project	John Moore Heritage Services carried out an archaeological watching brief at the Old Post Office, Main Street, Bretforton, Worcestershire (NGR SP 09414 43786). As a result of the groundworks three features were recorded that may pre-date the construction of the post office in the late 19th century; two of these were interpreted as possible boundary or drainage ditches, while the third was a rubbish pit containing a range of domestic rubbish. All other archaeological deposits and features were thought to relate to the construction of the post office building.
Project dates	Start: 04-07-2016 End: 16-02-2017
Previous/future work	Not known / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	BFMS 15 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	3373 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	W/13/02253 - Planning Application No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 2 - In use as a building
Monument type	BOUNDARY DITCH Post Medieval
Monument type	RUBBISH PIT Post Medieval
Monument type	DRAIN Post Medieval
Significant Finds	ANIMAL REMAINS Post Medieval
Significant Finds	BRICK Post Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Post Medieval
Investigation type	""Watching Brief""
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF

Project location

Country	England
Site location	WORCESTERSHIRE WYCHAVON BRETFORTON 82 Main Street

Postcode WR11 7JJ
 Study area 150 Square metres
 Site coordinates SP 09414 43786 52.091925089413 -1.862575839252 52 05 30 N 001 51 45 W Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation John Moore Heritage Services
 Project brief originator Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service
 Project design originator JMHS
 Project director/manager John Moore
 Project supervisor Simona Denis
 Type of sponsor/funding body client

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient Worcestershire County Museum
 Physical Archive ID WSM67203
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 Digital Contents "Animal Bones","Ceramics","Glass","Metal","Stratigraphic","other"
 Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography","Images vector","Text"
 Paper Archive recipient Worcestershire County Museum
 Paper Archive ID WSM67203
 Paper Contents "Animal Bones","Ceramics","Glass","Metal","Stratigraphic","other"
 Paper Media available "Context sheet","Microfilm","Miscellaneous Material","Photograph","Plan","Report","Section"

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