

**Manor Farm, Aston Botterell, Bridgnorth, WV16 6QX**

(NGR: 363217 284155)



Project Design for an Archaeological Watching Brief 2021

(Planning Ref: 21/03227/LBC)



© Benchmark Archaeology 2021

**Manor Farm, Aston Botterell, Bridgnorth, WV16 6QX**

(NGR: 363217 284155)

Project Design for an Archaeological Watching Brief 2021

(Planning Ref: 21/03227/LBC)

By:



64 Edwards Road  
Erdington  
Birmingham  
B24 9EW

Tel: 07939 066 301  
Tel/Fax: 0121 241 5771

E: [office@benchmark-archaeology.co.uk](mailto:office@benchmark-archaeology.co.uk)  
W: [www.benchmark-archaeology.co.uk](http://www.benchmark-archaeology.co.uk)

For:

***Mr. D Plank and Miss A O'Donnell***

**Reporting:** Richard Cherrington

*Benchmark Archaeology will retain the copyright of any commissioned reports, tender documents or other projected documents, under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with all rights reserved, excepting that it hereby provides an exclusive licence to the client for the use of such documents by the client in all matters directly relating to the project as described in the Project Design/Specification/Written Scheme of Investigation.*

**Cover Image:** Extract from Ordnance Survey mapping of 1884

# Contents

---

## *Summary*

1.0	INTRODUCTION
2.0	SITE LOCATION, DESCRIPTION AND GEOLOGY
3.0	ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND SUMMARY
4.0	PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY
5.0	RESOURCES AND TIMETABLE
6.0	MONITORING
7.0	REPORTING AND ARCHIVE
8.0	HEALTH AND SAFETY
9.0	INSURANCE
10.0	REFERENCES

## List of Figures

<b>Figure 1:</b>	<i>Site Location</i>
<b>Figure 2:</b>	<i>Application Site (not to scale)</i>
<b>Figure 3:</b>	<i>New Drainage Details (not to scale)</i>
<b>Figure 4:</b>	<i>Ground Floor Surfaces to be Lowered (not to scale)</i>

## **Summary**

*Benchmark Archaeology (BA) has been commissioned by Mr. D Plank and Miss A O'Donnell to undertake an Archaeological Watching Brief (AWB) at Manor Farm, Aston Botterell, Bridgnorth, WV16 6QX (NGR: 363217 284155, Figures 1 - 4).*

*Planning permission has been granted by Shropshire Council (SC) for restoration works affecting a Grade II\* Listed Building (Planning Ref: 21/03227/LBC) on the site. The site comprises an area of archaeological and architectural potential / significance.*

*Due to the archaeological and architectural potential / significance of the site, the Archaeological Advisor (AA), to SC has recommended that an AWB be undertaken during internal and external groundworks with the potential to disturb archaeological remains.*

*This document specifies the methodology to be employed during the AWB phase and is produced as a requirement of planning permission.*

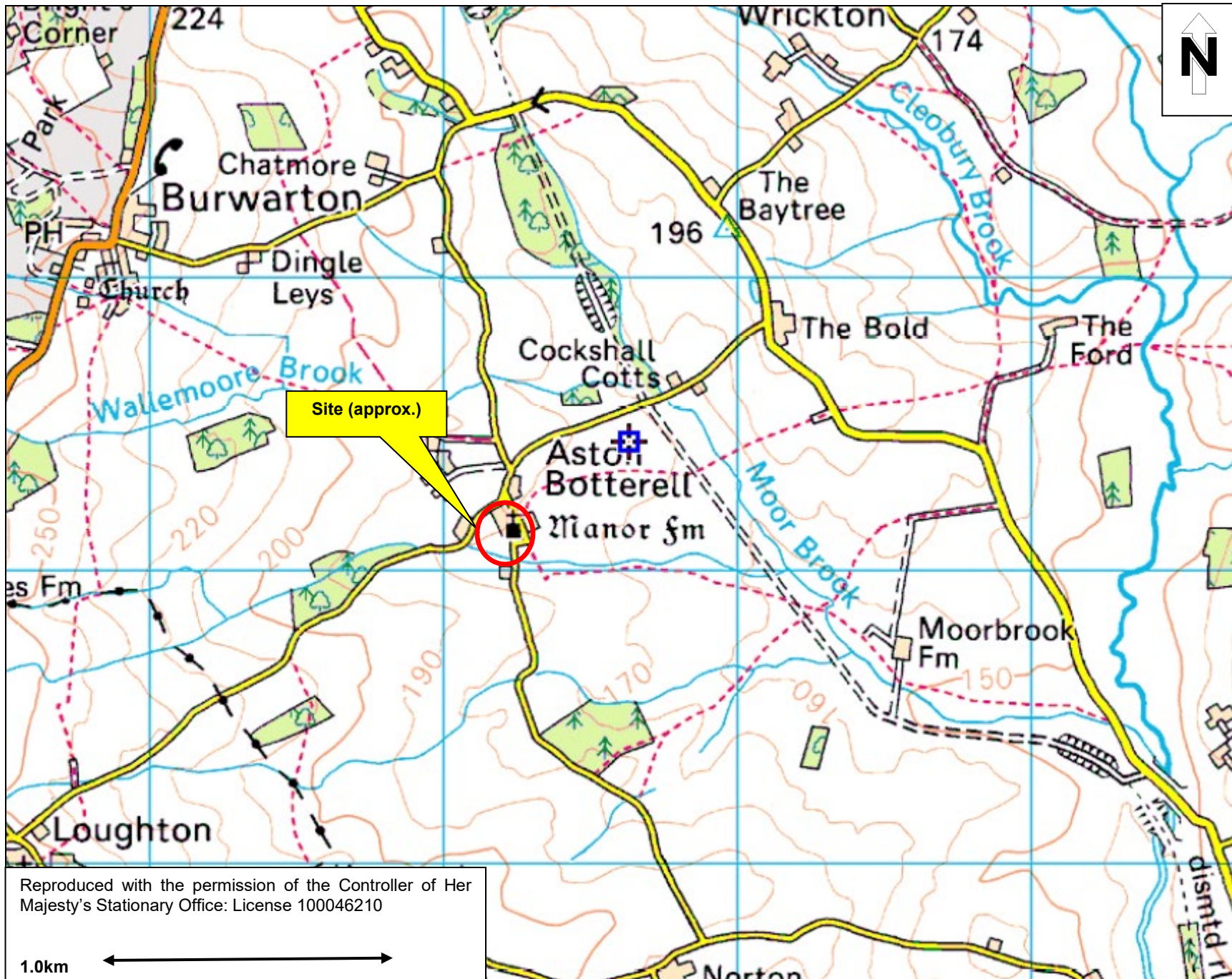
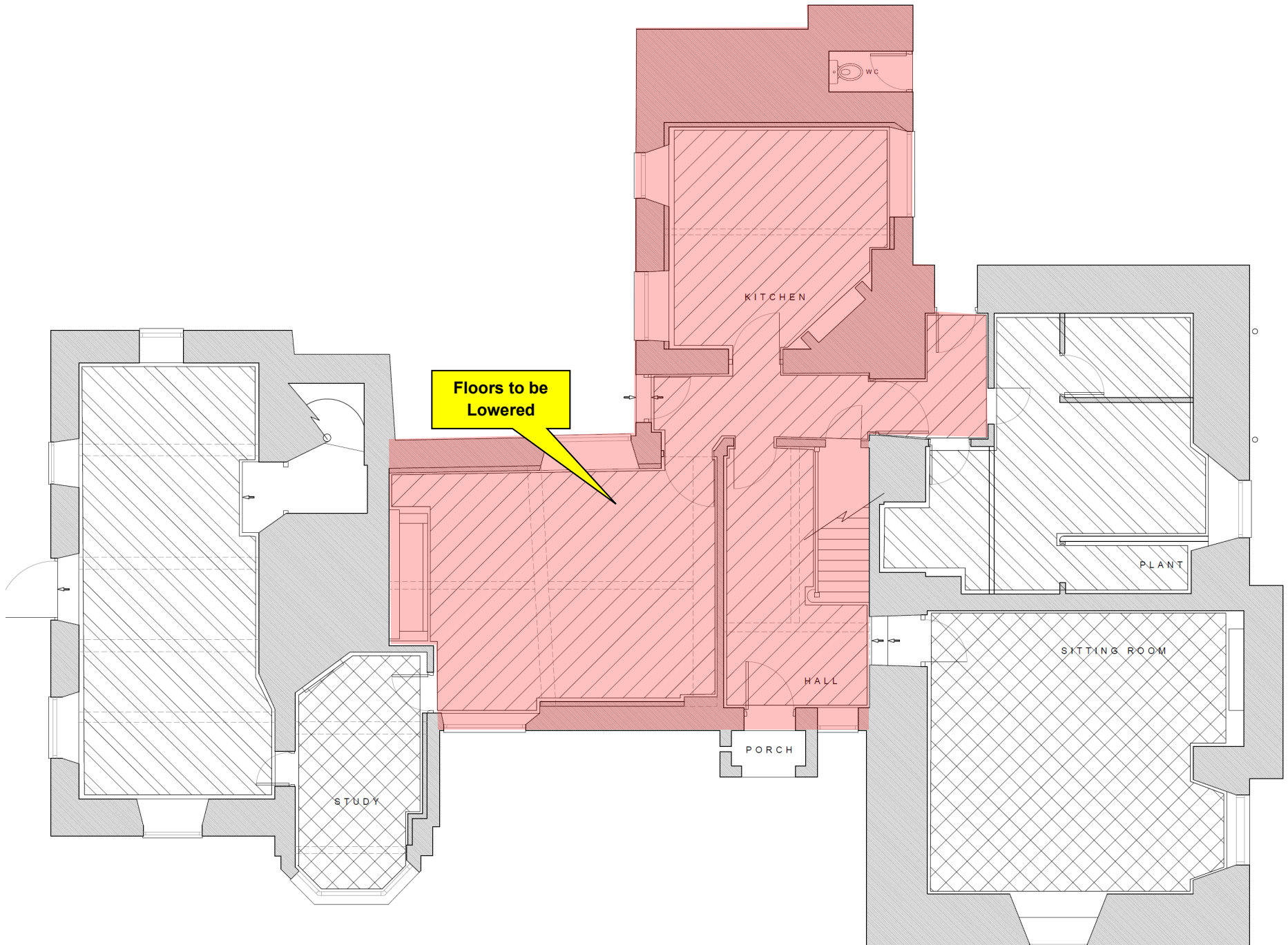


Figure 1: Site Location



Figure 2: Application Site (not to scale)





**Figure 4:** *Ground Floor Surfaces to be Lowered (not to scale)*



## **1.0 INTRODUCTION** (Figures 1 - 4)

### **1.1 Project Background**

1.1.1 Benchmark Archaeology (BA) has been commissioned by Mr. D Plank and Miss A O'Donnell to undertake an Archaeological Watching Brief (AWB) at Manor Farm, Aston Botterell, Bridgnorth, WV16 6QX (NGR: 363217 284155, Figures 1 - 4).

1.1.2 Planning permission has been granted by Shropshire Council (SC) for restoration works affecting a Grade II\* Listed Building (Planning Ref: 21/03227/LBC) on the site. The site comprises an area of archaeological and architectural potential / significance.

1.1.3 Due to the archaeological and architectural potential / significance of the site, the Archaeological Advisor (AA), to SC has recommended that an AWB be undertaken during internal and external groundworks with the potential to disturb archaeological remains.

1.1.4 This document specifies the methodology to be employed during the AWB phase and is produced as a requirement of planning permission.

### **1.2 Benchmark Archaeology**

1.2.1 Benchmark Archaeology (BA) is an independent archaeological organisation providing a wide range of archaeological services carried out to the highest professional standards. They carry out watching briefs, evaluations, excavations, surveys, desk-based assessments, historic building recording and church archaeology, in addition to other specialist and logistical services. BA offers a cost-effective service, whilst itself maintaining the highest professional standards, and enhancing the archaeological record. All projects are carried out in accordance with NPPF (2019), the guidance of the Treasure Act (1996), and the guidelines and recommendations issued by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) and Historic England.

1.2.2 Richard Cherrington is Principal Archaeologist at BA. He has 20 years' experience as a commercial archaeologist working independently and for university and local authority archaeological units in the UK and overseas. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Ancient History & Archaeology, a PG Cert in Environmental Management, and a PG Diploma in Practical Archaeology. Richard is an Associate of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (ACIfA), a member of the Council for British Archaeology (CBA), Vernacular Architecture Group (VAG), and the British Brick Society (BBS).

## **2.0 SITE LOCATION, DESCRIPTION AND GEOLOGY** (Figures 1 - 4)

### **2.1 Location**

2.1.1 The site comprises buildings and land at Manor Farm, Aston Botterell, Bridgnorth, WV16 6QX (NGR: 363217 284155, Figures 1 - 4). Aston

Botterell is a village and small civil parish in the county of Shropshire. The village lies 8 miles (13 km) south-west of the market town of Bridgnorth and 10 miles (16 km) north-east of the town of Ludlow. The nearest main roads are the B4364 and the A4117.

## 2.2 Description

2.2.1 The site is occupied by the Grade II\* building of the Manor House at Aston Botterell which has a 13<sup>th</sup> Century core with later additions. The internal works will take place at ground floor level. External drainage works will largely take place in areas under grass cover.

## 2.3 Geology

2.3.1 The underlying solid geology of the site comprises Argillaceous Rocks and [subequal/subordinate] Sandstone (interbedded) overlain by superficial Head deposits of Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel. ([www.bgs.ac.uk](http://www.bgs.ac.uk)).

2.3.2 The local soilscape is described as freely draining slightly acid loamy soils of low fertility. The soilscape supports neutral and acid pastures and deciduous woodlands; acid communities such as bracken and gorse in the uplands. Landcover is largely arable and grassland. General cropping is suitable for range of spring and autumn sown crops; under grass the soils have a long grazing season. Free drainage reduces the risk of soil damage from grazing animals or farm machinery. Shortage of soil moisture most likely limiting factor on yields, particularly where stony or shallow ([www.landis.org.uk](http://www.landis.org.uk)).

## 3.0 **ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND SUMMARY**

### 3.1 Previous Archaeological Work

3.1.1 It is understood that no previous formal intrusive archaeological work has been undertaken on the site.

3.1.2 A comprehensive Architectural and Archaeological Analysis and Heritage Impact Assessment (Richard K Morriss & Associates 2021) for the site has been undertaken and should be read in conjunction with this document. A summary of the findings appears below:

- *Proposals have been developed for a major refurbishment of Aston Manor, Aston Botterell in south-eastern Shropshire. The former farmhouse is Grade II\* listed and has medieval origins, a very fine later-medieval roof and the earliest dated plaster ceiling in Shropshire. This report was commissioned, under the guidelines of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), to assess the heritage value of the building and the potential impact of the proposals on its character, setting and significance and that of any adjacent heritage assets.*
- *It concludes that the proposals are well-designed and proportionate – and indeed vital to ensure the long-term future of the property. Although comprehensive in scope they are light-touch in impact and it is considered that whilst there will be a degree of change to the property, this will not equate to any harm, substantial or otherwise, to the character, setting or*

*significance of the listed building or on any other adjacent designated or non-designated heritage assets. It therefore concludes that paragraphs 195 to 197 of the NPPF would not be engaged.*

### 3.2 Archaeological Background Summary (with Shropshire Council, undated)

3.2.1 The proposed development involves works to Manor Farm, Aston Botterell, a Grade II\* Listed Building (National Ref. 1176724). The farm is adjacent to the Scheduled Monument of a Norman ring-work castle (Ringwork and former field boundary banks 110m west of St Michael's Church, National Ref. 1020145) and the Grade II\* Listed Church of St Michael (National Ref. 1053203). The earthwork remains of a medieval settlement and field system (Shropshire Historic Environment Record [HER] No. PRN 00971) lie to the north and east of the farm. Manor Farm has a core of 13th century date, evident from the solar wing, and was refashioned in the 16th century and later. The proposed development site therefore has some archaeological and historical interest. We note that the application includes an Architectural & Archaeological Analysis and Heritage Impact Assessment (Morriss R K, July 2021, Mercian Heritage Series No.1757). The proposed works to Manor Farm include some alterations to the fabric of the house and groundworks, including ground/floor reduction and trenches for drainage and services etc. Recommend WSI in accordance with paragraph 205 of the NPPF Page 3 of 10 (July 2021) and Policy MD13 of the SAMDev component of the Shropshire Local Plan.

## 4.0 **PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY**

### 4.1 Archaeological Watching Brief

#### 4.1.1 *Introduction*

4.1.1.1 The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) defines an Archaeological Watching Brief (AWB) as: *"A formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons. This will be within a specified area or site on land, inter-tidal zone or underwater, where there is a possibility that archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed. The programme will result in the preparation of a report and ordered archive"* (CIfA 2020).

4.1.1.2 The purpose of an AWB, as described by the CIfA, is to:

- *Allow, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be established (or established with sufficient accuracy) in advance of development or other potentially disruptive works*
- *Provide an opportunity, if needed, for the watching archaeologist to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to*

*the watching brief itself are not sufficient to support treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard*

4.1.1.3 An AWB is not intended to reduce the requirement for excavation or preservation of known or inferred deposits, and it is intended to guide, not replace, any requirement for contingent excavation or preservation of possible deposits. The objective of an AWB is to establish and make available information about the archaeological resource existing on a site.

#### 4.1.2 *Aims and Methodology*

4.1.2.1 The objective of the work is to obtain a record of significant archaeological features, deposits and artefacts and to record their levels, extent, date and character.

4.1.2.2 To achieve this objective an AWB will be maintained by a suitably qualified archaeologist during internal / external groundworks with the potential to expose, truncate or destroy features and deposits of archaeological significance. The following methodology will be adopted during the work as appropriate:

##### Excavation

- *Mechanical excavators will be fitted with toothless buckets.*
- *Mechanical and manual excavations will take place to the depth of the groundwork contractors design plan. If archaeological deposits are encountered further excavations will be carried out manually.*
- *All site staff will wear relevant Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)*

##### Recording

- *Plans will be drawn at scale 1:50 and 1:20 as appropriate and located on an overall site plan. Sections will be drawn at a scale 1:20 or 1:10 as appropriate.*
- *A context record will be maintained on pro-forma record cards. Each context will be allocated a unique number and will be subject to a written description.*
- *An index of all features, contexts, levels, photographs, plans, sections, samples and finds will be maintained.*
- *Photography will be carried out using 35mm SLR cameras, supplemented by digital images. Archaeological deposits and features will be photographed on both colour slide and monochrome film.*
- *All finds will be exposed, lifted, cleaned, conserved, marked, bagged and boxed in accordance with the guidelines of the United Kingdom Institute for Conservation (UKIC)*
- *Where appropriate, provision will be made for the bulk sampling of dateable deposits for environmental and technological evidence.*

##### General

- *All human remains will initially be left in situ. Where it is necessary to remove human remains, then this will be carried out in accordance with the relevant Ministry of Justice regulations. It will also be carried out in accordance with*

relevant health and safety legislation pertaining to the removal of human remains.

- *If appropriate, environmental and technological samples will be taken from features to enable their date, nature, extant and condition to be described and analysed. Environmental sampling guidelines provided by English Heritage will be adhered to.*
- *All archaeological work will follow SCAUM guidelines and relevant Health and Safety legislation.*
- *All work will be carried out in accordance with relevant ClfA standards and guidance.*
- *All stages of the project will be carried out in accordance with the requirements established in the English Heritage volume entitled 'Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The MoRPHE Project Managers' Guide'.*
- *The project will be carried out in accordance with recommendations made by the following Chartered Institute for Archaeologists documents: "Standard and guidance for archaeological watching brief" (2020), 'Code of Conduct' (2019) and Standard and Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological material' (2014).*

## **5.0 MONITORING**

- 5.1 The work will be monitored by the AA, SC on behalf of the local planning authority. Curatorial monitoring will include reviewing of fieldwork, progress of excavation reports, archive preparation and final deposition.
- 5.2 The AA, SC will be given due notice of the commencement of the archaeological programme. The AA, SC will be informed of any significant variation to the agreed programme of works and will be supplied with appropriate justification or explanation for doing so. The AA, SC will be kept updated on project progress by the submission of fieldwork / reporting progress documents at appropriate points during the project.

## **6.0 REPORTING AND ARCHIVE**

- 6.1 An illustrated report summarising the findings of the AWB will be submitted to the AA, SC upon the completion of the project. One digital copy of the report will be presented to the Shropshire HER. A further copy of the report will be presented to the relevant Local Planning Authority Planning Officer. A summary of the findings will be submitted to relevant journals. On the completion of the fieldwork, an online OASIS form will be completed.
- 6.2 The results of the AWB will be presented as a fully illustrated report produced in accordance with the ClfA documents entitled '*Standard and Guidance Archaeological Watching Brief (2020).*'
- 6.3 The site archive will be deposited with an appropriate institution. The site archive will be compiled and deposited in accordance with the

document entitled '*Standard and Guidance for the Creation, Compilation, Transfer and Deposition of Archaeological Archives*' (ClfA 2014).

## **7.0 RESOURCES AND TIMETABLE**

7.1 The project will be under the management of Richard Cherrington BA, PG Cert, PG Dip Archaeol., ACIfA, Principal Archaeologist, Benchmark Archaeology, who will also supervise and carry out the AWB.

7.2 At present no firm timetable for the site works has been agreed although the client wishes to commence works at the earliest opportunity subject to agreement with the AA, SC.

## **8.0 HEALTH AND SAFETY**

8.1 BA operates to the highest professional standards, in keeping with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (ClfA) codes of conduct, adhering to Health and Safety legislation and also following the Standing Conference of Archaeological Unit Managers (SCAUM) guidelines on health and safety in archaeology. All archaeological staff are CSCS qualified and have ClfA membership.

8.2 BA will follow any proper instruction given by the Site Foreman, Clerk of Works, Site Manager, security personnel or advisors to the client, for the purposes of project health and safety.

8.3 All site staff and visitors will follow current government guidelines (and as updated) and best practice with the regard to Coronavirus / COVID-19.

## **9.0 INSURANCE**

9.1 Richard Cherrington T/A Benchmark Archaeology holds Public Liability Insurance to a limit of £2,000,000, Employers Liability Insurance to a limit of £10,000,000, and Professional Indemnity Insurance to a limit of £250, 000.

9.2 No claims have been made or are pending against these policies.

## **10.0 REFERENCES**

### **10.1 Bibliographic**

**Allen, J.L. and St. John Holt, A,** (1986) '*Health and Safety in Field Archaeology*' published by the Standing Conference of Archaeological Unit Managers (SCAUM).

**Brown, D H, for Archaeological Archives Forum** (2007) '*Archaeological Archives. A guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation*'.

**Chartered Institute for Archaeologists** (2020) '*Standard and Guidance Archaeological Watching Brief.*'

**Chartered Institute for Archaeologists** (2019) '*Code of Conduct.*'

**Chartered Institute for Archaeologists** (2014) '*Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials.*'

**Dept. for Culture, Media and Sport**, (1996) '*The Treasure Act.*'

**Historic England** (2015) '*Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The MoRPHE Project Managers' Guide.*'

**Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government** (2019) '*National Planning Policy Framework.*'

**Richard K Morriss & Associates** (2021) '*Aston Manor Aston Botterell Shropshire: An Architectural & Archaeological Analysis & Heritage Impact Assessment.*'

**Shropshire Council** (undated) '*Development Management Report.*'

**Society of Museum Archaeologists** (1993) '*Selection, Retention and Dispersal of Archaeological Collections.*'

## 10.2 Internet

**www.bgs.ac.uk** (accessed 28.09.2021) '*A world-leading geoscience centre for survey and monitoring; modelling and research; data and knowledge.*'

**www.landis.org.uk** (accessed 28.09.2021) '*LandIS - Land Information System- A soils-focussed information system for England and Wales.*'

Benchmark Archaeology is an independent archaeological organisation providing a wide range of commercial archaeological services. We are committed to ensuring that the client receives a cost-effective service, whilst maintaining the highest professional standards in archaeology.

Our archaeological services include:

- Watching Briefs
- Field Evaluation
- Excavation
- Formal Garden Archaeology
- Church Archaeology
- Historic Building Recording
- Surveys
- Desk-Based Assessments
- Consultancy
- EIA's
- Heritage Statements

*For further information please contact:*  
Richard Cherrington (Principal Archaeologist)  
Benchmark Archaeology  
64 Edwards Road, Erdington  
Birmingham  
B24 9EW  
Tel: 07939066301  
Tel/Fax: 0121 241 5771

**E-Mail: [office@benchmark-archaeology.co.uk](mailto:office@benchmark-archaeology.co.uk)**  
**Web Address: <http://www.benchmark-archaeology.co.uk>**

