



Herefordshire Archaeology
Conservation and Environmental Planning
Planning Services
Environment Directorate
Herefordshire Council

Earthwork and Structural Survey at Walk Mill Farm, Ewyas Harold.

Herefordshire Archaeology Report No 5.

Report prepared by
Tim Hoverd

Contents

Summary
Introduction
Method
Results
The Building Survey
Discussion
Acknowledgements
Archive

Herefordshire Archaeology is Herefordshire Council's county archaeology service. It advises upon the conservation of archaeological and historic landscapes, maintains the county Sites and Monument Record, and carries out conservation and investigative field projects. The County Archaeologist is Dr. Keith Ray.

Earthwork and Structural Survey at Walk Mill Farm, Ewyas Harold.

Herefordshire Archaeology Report No 5, December 2000, (Revised April 2004)

Summary

In response to a Countryside Stewardship Application a site visit was made to a small farm in the Dulas valley. Many of the fields on the southern side of the valley are steeply sloping and too small for modern machinery. As a consequence they have remained under permanent Pasture and / or orchard. During the site visit a series of levelled platforms were noted (HSM 30381, 30382, 30383). These comprised three circular depressions approximately 3m in diameter and cut into the natural hillside. Recent mole activity within these depressions revealed a substantial quantity of charcoal and burned clay associated with these structures. Further examples of this monument type were identified during subsequent visits to the site. These types of structure have been identified as post-medieval field kilns and whilst once very common, now seldom survive as extant earthworks due to increased pressure on agricultural land. Evidence for the remains of a fulling mill were also noted in the bank of the Dulas Brook nearby. All features were recorded photographically and by plane table survey.

A survey of the farmhouse was carried out prior to building works (HSM 5697). The house is listed as a 18th century farmhouse. However, elements survive within the timber frame to suggest earlier origins. The northern bay contains the remains of a cruck frame, cut off at first floor height, whilst the central room comprises a 16th or early 17th century reception room with richly chamfered, heavy timbering and with a very fine fireplace. At first floor level evidence for a dormer type gable survives and is thought to be contemporary with the house frame.

Disclaimer: It should not be assumed that land referred to in this document is accessible to the public. Location plans are indicative only. NGR's are accurate to approximately 10m. Measured dimensions are accurate to within 1m at a scale of 1:500, 0.1m at 1:50, and 0.02m at 1:20.

Figures contain material from the Ordnance Survey. The grid in this material is the National Grid taken from the Ordnance Survey map with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. This material has been reproduced in order to locate the site in its environs.

Contact details: Herefordshire Archaeology, PO Box 144, Hereford, HR1 2YH

Earthwork and Structural Survey at Walk Mill Farm, Ewyas Harold.

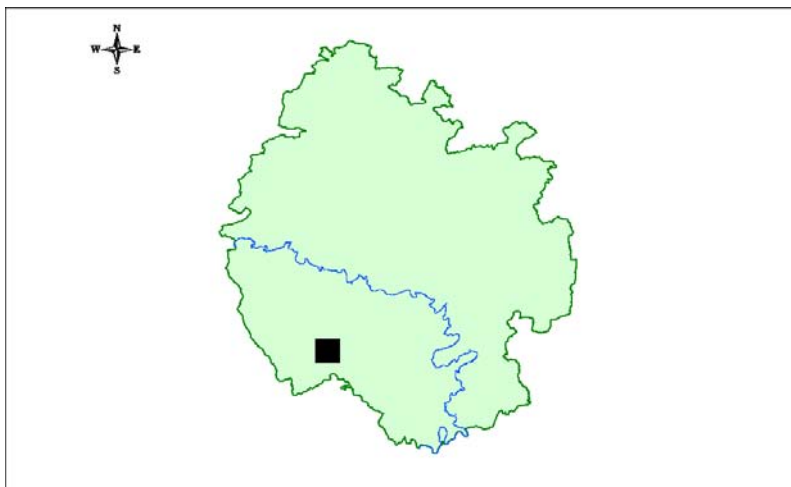
Herefordshire Archaeology Report No. 5

Herefordshire Archaeology, December 2000.

Introduction

Following a walkover survey by staff of Herefordshire Archaeology, a site visit was made by the Monument Protection Officer for English Heritage in order to assess the nature and significance of the earthworks noted. It was agreed that a detailed plan should be produced of the field kilns and any other features of interest, together with a more general site plan locating these features within the landscape.

Due to imminent building works it was agreed between the property owners and



Herefordshire Archaeology that the farmhouse at Great Walk Mill Farm, (NGR: SO 3788 2955; HSM 5697), should be subject to a drawn and photographic survey in order to record and better understand certain elements and constructional phases contained within the present structure.

Figure 1: Site Location

Method

A total of four field kilns were identified within the study area, a group of three at NGR. SO: 33837 22906 and the fourth at NGR. SO: 33820 22918. These were planned by plane table and allidade at a scale of 1:20. A mill leat and remains of a weir NGR. SO: were noted. The leat was planned at a scale of 1:500 on a general site plan whilst the weir remains were drawn in section at a scale of 1:20. A photographic record was made of all features.

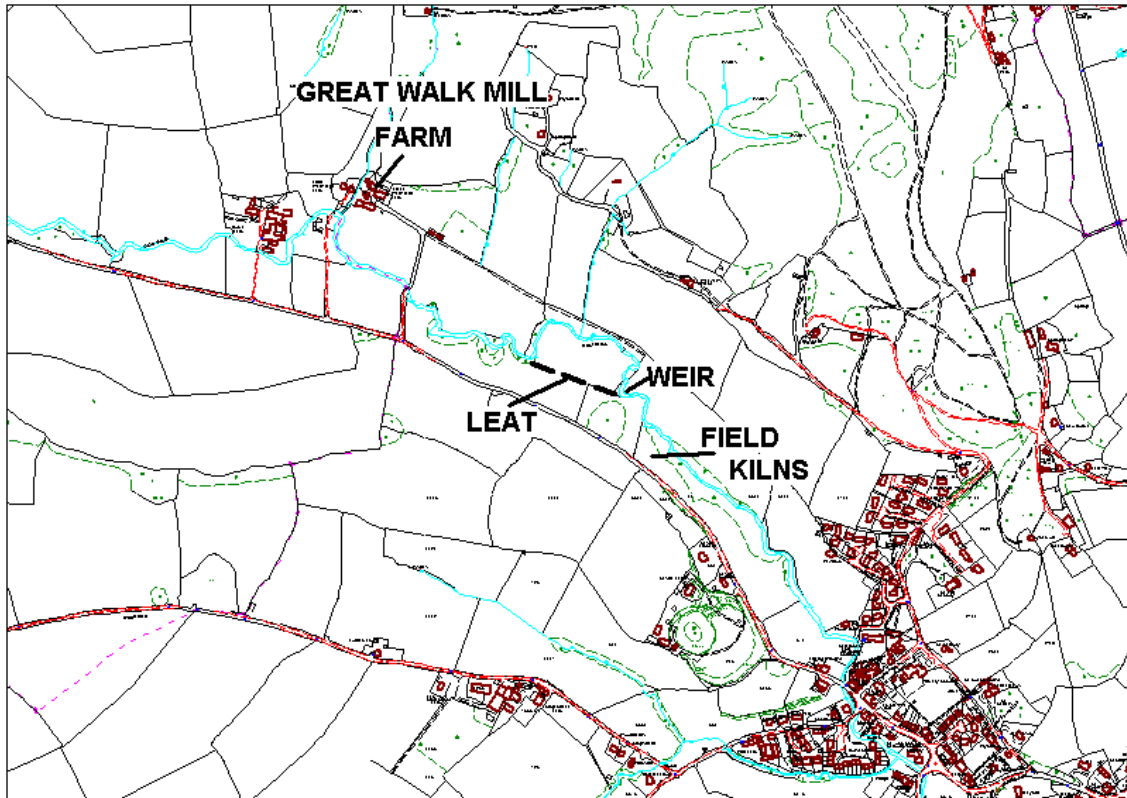


Figure 2: Site and feature location plan.

Results

The field Kilns:

Although common until recent times this class of monument is now rare in pasture and arable environments. This is largely due to the nature of the earthwork remains and the increase in intensive agricultural practices. Field kilns were used to locally produce bricks and tiles, by stacking the material to be fired and constructing a bonfire around it and within it. This was then lit and more fuel supplied as necessary until the material had been satisfactorily reduced.

A field kiln is typically 3 – 3.5m in diameter and comprises a level area cut into the natural slope with the spoil arranged on its down – slope side in a semi-circle. This is to ensure an even firing. There is often a small rise in the centre of the levelled area indicating the centre of the bonfire.

At NGR SO: 33833 22906 there are two field kilns comprising two circular platforms c. 3m in diameter cut back into the hill slope, with intermediate earthworks between them, and a short arc of bank descending the hill-slope for approximately 7m below them. Next to the western most kiln a mole hill was found to contain burned clay and charcoal. Documentary evidence would support this interpretation, in that there is an enclosure near to the farmhouse called “Kiln Field” on the Tithe map and this field contained “Brick Acre” and “Brick Road”.

At NGR SO: 33820 22918 there is a single field kiln approximately 5m north of the Ewyas Harold road.

At NGR SO: 33850 22924 there is a single field kiln to the south of the leat.

Figure 3: Earthwork plan of field kiln complex at NGR SO: 33833 22906.

The Mill Leat and Weir.

The 1844 Tithe Award identifies the area of land within a natural meander of the Dulas as “Weir Piece”. An earthwork, comprising a silted up ditch approximately 2m wide, has been identified running from NGR SO: 33818 22925 in an easterly direction for approximately 140m to NGR SO: 33834 22918. The purpose of this leat would seem to be to channel surplus water from the weir pool. This would have been controlled by a sluice at its western end.

In the northern bank of the Dulas brook are the remains of the western arm of a stone-built retaining wall for a weir. Immediately downstream from this are the remains of the western retaining wall of an outshot for a simple sluice. These represent the last surviving vestiges of a mill. The location of the mill, on the main course of the brook rather than on the leat, suggest the likelihood that these remains formed part of a small fulling mill. This is supported by the existence of a nearby cottage (NGR SO: 33832 22935), which overlooks “Weir Piece” called “Weavers Place”.

The Building Survey

Introduction

Due to imminent building works Herefordshire Archaeology undertook a basic survey of the farmhouse at Great Walk Mill Farm, (NGR: SO 3788 2955; HSM 5697). This included a drawn and photographic survey in order to record and better understand certain elements and constructional phases contained within the present structure.

The survey took place on 18th August 1999 and comprised a plan at ground floor level and a cross-section to include the central stack. The cross-section was produced at a scale of 1:20, whilst the plan was produced at a scale of 1: 50.

These enabled a brief assessment of the elements of the farmhouse, on which a basic analysis has been based.

A photographic record was made using black and white film.

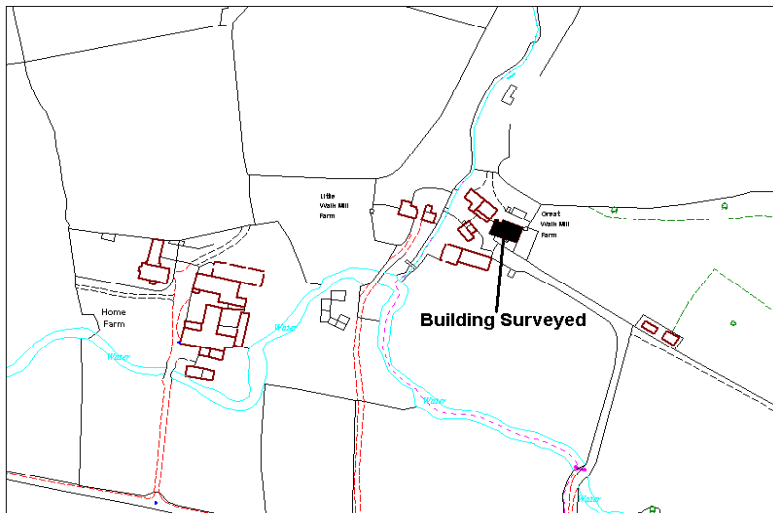


Figure 4: Location of building survey



Figure 5: Photograph of Great Walk Mill Farm at the time of the survey, looking north.

Assessment of the building

The present building is made up of three main elements; a timber framed, 3 bay house, a stone built barn attached to the western end of the house and a stone extension running along the northern side of the house. These elements make up the present house, barn, kitchen and store room.

It is suggested that the barn and house are roughly contemporary and thus formed a single structure in the long-house tradition. This is supported by the location of the central stack and the presence of the original south doorway (now blocked) immediately to the west of the stack. This would have formed a cross-passage, leading to a similar doorway in the northern wall, (now lost).

The central stack was clearly the main focus of the building. Its size and decoration instantly suggest a fairly high status building. This comprises a stone built stack with spiral stone steps on it's southern side affording access to the first floor. Built into the south side of the stack is a brick lined bread oven. The fireplace has a large timber lintel, chamfered and stopped. The stone jambs are also chamfered and stopped. It is clear that the current size of the room in which the fireplace is situated is far too small to justify such a substantial feature. This is due to a later, north/south, partition being inserted and splitting the original room in two. This probably coincided with the insertion of a second

fireplace and chimney in the north-eastern corner of the house and the replacement of the eastern gable wall with stone. At first floor level there is a second fireplace in the central stack, although smaller this is also very well built and finished with a chamfered and stopped lintel.

Figure 6: Great Walk Mill Farm ground floor plan.

The ceiling timbers in the principal room, immediately to the north-east of the ground floor fireplace again suggest high status. These consist of approx. 15cm square timbers running east west approx. 20cm apart, all are chamfered and stopped on their soffit edges. The construction of the ground floor ceiling / first floor floor, is also unusual and would have involved unnecessary expenditure. The ceiling boards run on a north / south axis, over these is a 4cm thick layer of plaster which in-turn is overlain by the floor boards of the first floor which run on an east / west axis. This provides insulation from both noise and heat.

The north-western corner post in the principal room is jowled and chamfered.

The north-western and south-western corner posts of the western-most truss for the house appear to be cut down cruck posts. These are the only posts of this type in the structure

and suggest that they were either re-used from an earlier building close by or that they are the last surviving timbers of a cruck long-house and that everything to the east is a later re-build.

Figure 7: Cross Section A-A, looking west.

At first floor level, over the principal room, there is a chamfer on the soffit of the lowest purlin on the southern side. The chamfer runs for approximately 1.8m and the stops run out. Cutting the top edge of the purlin are two mortices (each coinciding with each end of the chamfer), still pegged and retaining the ends of rails. These appear to have projected horizontally in a southerly direction. The principal rafters apparent between the two mortices are unusual in that they run out on the top of the purlin and do not, (like all the other rafters), continue over the wall plate. Upon closer inspection the principal rafter central to the two mortices, also has an empty mortice, between the lower and upper purlins, suggesting a third rail extending to the south. If these three mortices are contemporary they would have formed a feature very similar to but slightly larger than the present dormer window in the room. This type of structure may represent the roof of an external stair tower, (although in this instance it would be unlikely as there is a

internal stair in close proximity), or more likely a garde robe suggesting a high status building. The problem with having a garde robe at this location is that it is in close proximity to the original front door. This would not be an ideal welcome to visitors !

Initial Phasing

15th - 16th century

Long house with cross passage and cruck frames

16th - 17th century

Massive rebuild of all but the barn and end cruck frame. A ground floor hall was added with chamber above which included a possible first floor garde robe.

18th - 19th century

Addition of new kitchen and store along the northern wall. The rebuilding of the eastern gable wall in stone rather than timber frame.

19th - 20th century

The partitioning of the ground floor hall, the insertion of a fireplace and chimney in the newly created end room.

Discussion

From this brief survey and analysis it may be concluded that the 16th or 17th century elements of the building suggest a relatively high status house. The presence of a small dormer is intriguing and at this point in time problematical. The ceiling timbers in the front room are unnecessarily large and close together indicating that the hall, although small, was a costly and well executed building.

The addition of the kitchen and store along the northern wall of the timber framed building in the 18th or 19th century has helped protect and preserve this side of the house. The eastern gable wall, rebuilt in stone possibly at the same time has incorporated the two corner posts and may contain other timbers relating to the 16th or 17th century building. I am not quite sure how this wall is held up, as it does not seem to be tied in to either the northern or southern walls, and would therefore, suggest a structural survey be undertaken.

Acknowledgements

Herefordshire Archaeology would like to thank: Nigel Reade, Steven Yates and Helen Mathews for their assistance during this project.

Archive

- 5 Sheets of site drawings
- 5 Sheets of inked drawings
- 2 Colour print films
- 1 Colour slide film
- 1 Black and white film
- 1 Site note book
- 4 Sites and Monuments Record cards (HSM 30381, 30382, 30383, 5697)
- 1 Correspondence file

This document

Validation

Herefordshire Archaeology operates a validation system for its reports, to provide quality assurance and to comply with Best Value procedures.

This report has been checked for accuracy and clarity of statements of procedure and results.

Dr. K. Ray County Archaeologist.