

October 2011

Evaluation Excavations at Lower Brockhampton, Bromyard, Herefordshire

Report prepared by
Tim Hoverd & David Williams



Herefordshire Archaeology Report No. 298

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

Evaluation Excavations at Lower Brockhampton, Bromyard, Herefordshire

**NGR: SO 6874 5590
EHE 1905**

Contents:-

- Summary
- Introduction
- Aims and Objectives
- Location
- Background History and Previous Archaeological Work
- Fieldwork in 2011
- Discussion
- Site Archive
- Acknowledgements
- List of Illustrations
- Bibliography

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.

***Herefordshire Archaeology
PO Box 230
Blueschool House
Blueschool Street
Hereford
HR1 2ZB***

Summary:

The National Trust wish to construct a path between the gatehouse and the mansion at Lower Brockhampton in order to protect the lawned area from erosion. An archaeological evaluation was required in order to ascertain the existence of any previous pathways, their make-up and course. The evaluation was also designed to provide information regarding the top of significant (in this case, likely late medieval) stratigraphy. Two 3m by 1m trenches were excavated by hand through the lawned area. Trench 1 was located to the south and west of the front door of the house in order to intercept any earlier surviving pathways and to test a hypothesis that an earlier door to the house was located to the west of the present door. Trench 2 was located close to the base of the ramp which leads from the gatehouse onto the lawned area. This was positioned in order to compare the results from Trench 1 and to determine the level of survival of both pathway evidence and deposits of archaeological significance.

Trench 1 revealed the presence of a lightly gravelled path immediately below the turf layer. This overlay a very well compacted layer of smashed stone roof tiles which may have been the make up for an earlier path or area of hard standing immediately in front of the present door. This overlay a layer of silty clay which contained a small quantity of medieval and Tudor pottery and possible building stone. The western end of the trench contained a plastic foul water pipe which presumably led from a former down-pipe for guttering on the south facade of the house, in order to take roof water to the moat.

Trench 2 contained the lightly gravelled path deposit which overlay a thin layer of broken ceramic roof tile. These deposits were cut into a loam rich dark earth which comprised the top fill of a linear cut. The cut was aligned roughly east – west and may represent an earlier edge of the moat or robbed out wall for an earlier building at this location.

It is suggested that the gravel path was probably constructed in the 1960's and that the stone make up within Trench 1 relates to the re-roofing of the house in the late 19th century.

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 contained within this report 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 (OS Licence 100024168). This material has been reproduced in order to locate the site in its environs.

Contact details: Herefordshire Archaeology, Blueschool House, Blueschool Street, PO Box 230, Hereford. HR1 2ZB. Copyright Herefordshire Council 2010.

Introduction

This report (EHE 1905) provides an account of small scale evaluation excavations carried out by Herefordshire Archaeology at Lower Brockhampton moated manor house. The excavation took place over three days from Monday 19th September until Wednesday 21st September 2011. Fieldwork was undertaken by Herefordshire Archaeology staff.

Aims and Objectives

The National Trust intend to construct a pathway between the gate-house and the front door of the manor house in order to minimise the amount of mud brought into the house by staff and visiting members of the public.

The evaluation trenches were required in order to provide information regarding the presence of any earlier pathways, including their approximate date and construction materials. Information regarding the top of significant archaeology was also required as this may have a bearing on the thickness / type of new path to be constructed.

Location

The National Trust's Brockhampton Estate is situated a mile to the east of Bromyard, and close to the border of Herefordshire with Worcestershire to the east. While most of the estate lies within the civil parish of Brockhampton, a detached part lies within Tedstone Delamere parish to the north. Lower Brockhampton House is situated at SO 688 560.



Figure 1: location of Lower Brockhampton within the county of Herefordshire.

Background History and Previous Archaeological Work

The place-name, which means simply 'Brook settlement', is first recorded in its present form in 1283. An earlier record of 1166 renders it *Brochant(one)*, held by one Bernard. Brockhamptons were the first recorded owners of the manor, from the 12th century, and Richard de Brockhampton passed the ownership of the manor to Robert de Furches in 1283. The manor was in the hands of Lawrence de Sollers by 1349 and Sir Thomas de Moigne was in possession from 1350. By 1383 it had in turn passed into the hands of John Domulton. Throughout the medieval period the parish church for Brockhampton was St. Peter's Bromyard although by the 17th century it appears that Whitbourne was regarded as the parish church for the area.

The earliest fabric of the chapel at Lower Brockhampton dates to the 12th Century. Meanwhile the open hall of the manor house can probably be dated to the early years of the 15th century. A deserted settlement at the Grove is thought to be the Studmarsh (or Stubmarsh) mentioned in the Red Book of the Bishop of Hereford in 1268-1275, but it is not mentioned in the Lay subsidy Rolls of 1334-6 and may have been deserted by then.

At the beginning of the sixteenth the estate passed to the Habingtons of Wichford in Worcestershire, and in 1545 Richard Habington left the property equally to his three sisters. One of these sisters, Mary, married Richard Barneby of Bockleton in Worcestershire just to the north-east of Bromyard in 1552, and lived at Brockhampton.

In 1731 a nephew of the last of the male Barnebys, Bartholomew Lutley, inherited the estate. Following a change of surname from Lutley to Barneby and his marriage to Betty Freeman of Gaines in 1756, Bartholemew Barneby began building a new house at Brockhampton Park, in an elevated position to the south of the estate near the Bromyard to Worcester road. This is thought to have been designed by the renowned architect Thomas Farnolls Pritchard.

Bartholomew's son John Barneby built a new chapel close to the house in 1799. At this point Lower Brockhampton reverted to use as a farmhouse, and the medieval chapel was no longer maintained. The restoration of Lower Brockhampton House in the Victorian image of half-timbered Gothic domestic style has been proven to be the work of J.C. Buckler from around 1871.

The estate was bequeathed to the National Trust in 1946, and it formally took possession in 1950, with a further purchase in 1968 and the sale of various lands south of the A44 soon thereafter. The house, Brockhampton Park, is rented on a long lease.

Lower Brockhampton moated manor, chapel and settlement.

The Lower Brockhampton group of structures is widely, and correctly, regarded as comprising the core group of key historic assets on the Brockhampton Estate. The moated manor and its detached ornamental gatehouse regularly feature on National Trust promotional literature. One

reason for their doing so relates to the timbered close- studding that was such a marked feature of wealth display during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in England, and that is represented both on the main building of the manor-house and on the gate-house.

Walk over surveys by Herefordshire Archaeology in 2002 and 2003 here added considerable detail to the known record of the site. The complex comprises the manor house partially surrounded by an ornamental moat with a further possible, minor moat to the north-east, the ornamental gatehouse to the south spanning one arm of the moat, the ruined medieval chapel to the west of the moated site, and a possible area of settlement earthworks to the north in the adjacent orchard.

Manor house. This comprises accommodation on two storeys through the length of the east range. A main early fifteenth century hall of two bays open to the timber roof trusses and wind-braces following J.C. Buckler's restoration is set broadly east-west with a former screens-passage to the east. The fifteenth century east range is set at the perpendicular to the eastern end of the hall. The Royal Commission on the Historic Monuments of England survey published in 1932 (Herefordshire East) noted that the house was originally arranged on an H-plan with a parallel west range, but that this was destroyed at some point, although its foundations were said to survive (RCHME 1932, 32). No trace of these foundations is visible today, but geophysical survey in 2003 may have located the footprint of this long-vanished west range.

The two or three claimed northern extensions to the east wing that are dated by RCHME to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are in need of re-assessment. The most northerly of these structures is stone-founded and its internal arrangements indicate some substantial rebuilding at some point. In view of what was observed concerning the possible succession of moats, it is proposed here instead that this most northerly structure formed part of the original stone and timber medieval manor house. This was substantially demolished and the remains altered to ancillary structures c. 1400 when the new hall and cross-wings were built and the ornamental pond/moat created. It was then re-commissioned and linked to the east wing and hall sometime after the west wing was demolished. The brickwork in this most northerly structure is most likely of late seventeenth or early eighteenth century date and this is likely to be the date of re-construction.

Moats. The literature on the site notes the existence of the moat surrounding the manor house, but does not as yet record either the character or the developmental sequence of moats at the site. The survey visit and survey of 2002 and 2003 produced a significant new perspective on these features. The moat that exists today is markedly broader on the eastern flank of the manor house than the west, and curves around with a flourish to mark out the location of the gate-house on the southern side opposite the screens passage. This is a very carefully designed position, but the plan of the moat house reveals that the house does not sit squarely within the moat, and it seems likely that the present form of the moat is, rather, designed also to enhance the prospect of the house from its principal southerly to south-

easterly approach (which is defined by a north-south aligned hollow-way recorded in the survey of 2003 in the fields to the south of the manor house and farm).

During 2002, *Herefordshire Archaeology* survey recorded the former northern arm of what may have been the moat which survives as a largely filled-in curving broad gully to the north of the present northern arm of the moat. This infilled ditch is more strictly aligned east-west than the present northern arm, and this aligns much more closely with the stance of manor house. Just as the stone-founded northern 'extension' represents the sole surviving above-ground trace of the former, pre-1400 medieval manor house, so the infilled northern arm may represent therefore the sole surviving element of the defensive moat that once surrounded that earlier manor house. Alternatively this feature could have been excavated as a feeder ditch for the decoy island and was controlled by a sluice from the moat.

The post-1400 ornamental moat is designed, then, to look most impressive from the south-east and this sense of a designed micro-landscape of the environs of the manor house is enhanced by the addition of two other elements that are probably contemporary with each other, dating to the mid-sixteenth century. The ornamental gate-house will be discussed below, but the other feature is a miniature moat with a central island that is located to the north-east of the present moat and is connected to it by a small overflow channel. This miniature moated site is presumably a folly designed as a pun on the larger moated site, and a dam in the dingle to the west would have created another watery element, perhaps of the eighteenth century, to further add to the tranquil scene. It is possible also, that the "island" in the midst of the miniature moated site once featured another timber-framed structure such as a dovecote.

The gatehouse was once thought to be of late fifteenth century date, but is now dated both stylistically and through dendro-chronology to the period 1545-50. The two-storey structure is, like the moated island to the north-east of the main moat, a miniature. It should properly also be seen also therefore as something of a visual pun, this time setting off the close-studded eastern elevation of the manor house.

The chapel is as described by the RCHME in 1932, with 12th century fabric to the undivided nave and chancel, and with traces of a contemporary south door and round-headed single-light window. In the 13th century this latter was converted into a narrow lancet and two other lancets were inserted, one in each of the south and north walls of the chancel. The south door was modified at this time. Larger and more elaborate windows were inserted into the east and west ends of the chapel in the 15th century.

The fabric is however of more complex build than described in the 1932 account, with large blocks of tufa and of dressed limestone, along with narrow carefully laid courses of almost purple red sandstone and patches of coursed limestone amid an otherwise rubble build. This complexity, and particularly a different build in the lower courses than those higher up in each elevation,

especially on the southern elevation, suggests the possibility of a pre-mid-12th century phase to the structure.

A significant discovery made as a result of the *Herefordshire Archaeology* survey of the area around the manor house and chapel in 2003, however, concerned the environs of the chapel rather than the structure itself. The chapel has been supposed to have served primarily as a private chapel for the inhabitants of the manor house. While it was known that some family members had been interred within the chapel, and that a settlement had probably existed close by before c.1500 (see below), it had been assumed that most of the local deceased had been buried either in the churchyard of St. Peter's Bromyard or St. John the Baptist in Whitbourne. Geophysical (resistivity) survey undertaken to the north of the chapel in 2003, however, appears to indicate the presence of possible burials across at least all of the area south of the orchard and with a marked concentration towards the north-eastern part of the area.

The orchard to the north of the manor house was found in the survey to contain a marked concentration of subtle earthworks. The latest of these are a series of north-south aligned broad ridges that represent at least two phases of orchard creation. A more pronounced feature is a hollow representing a track or former ditch that crosses the orchard from east to west around 50m north of the boundary fence with the manor, and parallel with it. Intercepted by, (and stratigraphically earlier than), all these features are a series of levelled areas and rectangular platforms that approximate the form of building and yard locations within deserted medieval and later settlements. An area of mole-heap activity close to one such level area within the orchard but just to the north-east of the chapel was found to have revealed an area of brick foundations and floor levels from an eighteenth century barn which itself may have disturbed earlier settlement activity.

Fieldwork in 2011

Two 3m by 1m trenches were excavated by hand within the lawned area, between the gatehouse and the house. The trenches were located and excavated in accordance with a method statement (6th September 2011). The turf was stripped by hand and stored in the order that it was stripped. The spoil arising from the excavations was placed on a tarpaulin. Backfilling and re-instatement was undertaken by hand.

Trench 1 was located approximately 3m to the south and west of the present entrance to the house, on an east / west axis. It was located so as to continue to afford access to the house for visitors whilst hopefully intercepting half the width of any former pathways. It was also located in order to test the hypothesis (Campbell 2011), that an earlier doorway existed to the west of the present door. The trench was therefore located in order to pick up any pathways etc. associated with this doorway.

Trench 2 was located approximately 3m to the north of the gatehouse and was aligned east / west. This was located in order to intercept any surviving pathways running from the gatehouse northwards to the house.

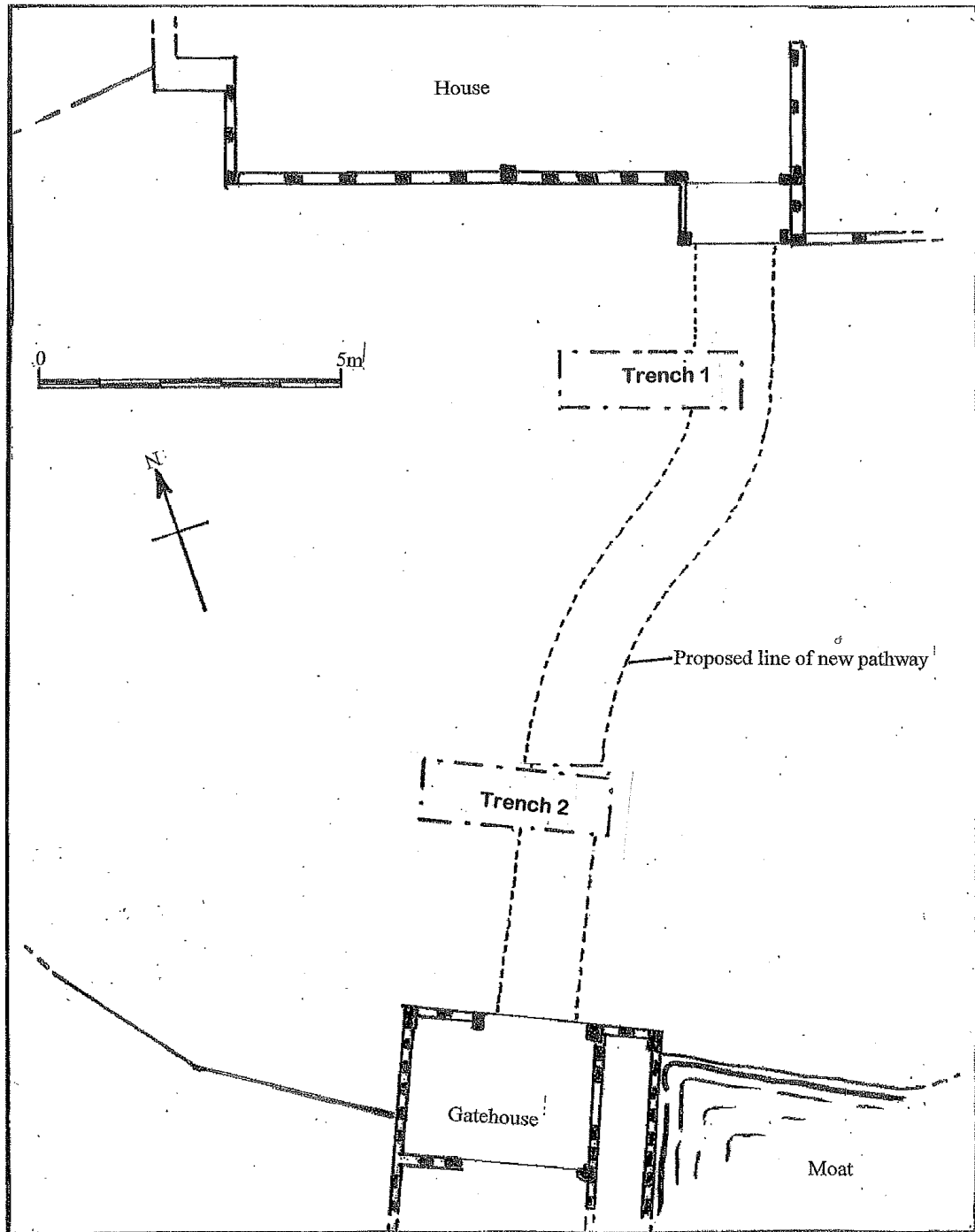


Figure 2: Plan showing locations of Trenches 1 & 2 in relation to the gatehouse and house.

Trench 1:

Upon removal of the 8cm turf layer a lens of small / pea gravel (101) was evident at the eastern end of the trench. This was pushed into a dark earth soil (105) which contained fragments of stone, brick and degraded mortar and covered the entire trench, which extended to a maximum depth of 0.3m at the western end of the trench. Close to the western end of the trench layer (105) was cut by a 0.3m wide pipe trench (103), which contained a plastic foul water pipe laid on pea gravel (104). The pipe was aligned on a north-west / south-east axis and presumably took water from a gutter down pipe to the moat at one time.

The gravel layer (101) appears to represent the surface of a lightly gravelled path and covered an area approximately 1m wide at the eastern end of the trench. Immediately below (101) was a very thin (1-3cm thick) deposit of (105) which in-turn overlay a 0.10m thick layer of well compacted, smashed stone roof tiles, (106). Again these were only evident within the eastern third of the trench. The vast majority of the tiles which made up (106) were laid flat in order to form a firm base for a path of area of hard-standing. Below (106) and below soil layer (105) was a hard, silty, clay layer (107). This covered the entire trench and had been cut into by the pipe trench (103). Fragments of building stone were apparent, particularly in the western third of the trench, – some of which appear to have been disturbed by the insertion of the pipe trench. A small amount of medieval and Tudor pottery was recovered from both the material disturbed by the pipe trench and during cleaning of the *in-situ* deposit (107). This deposit was cleaned but not excavated.

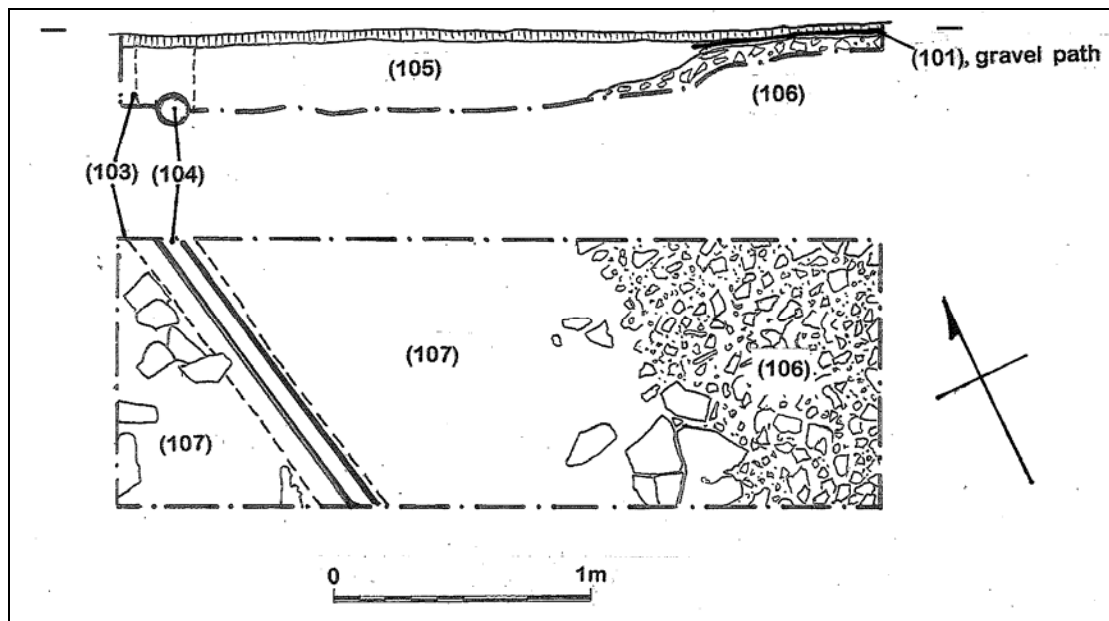


Figure 3: Northern section and plan of Trench 1.



Plate 1: General view of Trench 1 upon completion of the excavation.

Trench 2:

As in Trench 1, the removal of the turf and topsoil revealed a thin layer of pea gravel, (201), covering the eastern third of the trench. The gravel layer directly overlay a layer of crushed ceramic roof tile (202) which was between 5cms and 15cms thick. This was cut into the top of a loose dark earth soil (204) which covered the entire trench. This contained some well squared building stone and ceramics of late 19th century date. Below layer (204) was a hard silty clay (207) which contained a small number of relatively large (>15cm square) stones and some charcoal flecks. No dateable material was recovered from this later. In the north eastern corner of the trench layer (207) was cut by a sub-angular feature (cut (205)). This contained 19th century building rubble and ash, (206).

Layer (207) was also cut by a linear feature (cut (203) which ran on a roughly east / west axis along the entire trench. This feature was filled with a loose, humic, loam (208) containing large quantities of ash and 19th century domestic refuse. This feature was excavated to a depth of 0.5m at which point it still appeared to be dipping to the south without reaching the base of layer (207). The excavation was terminated at this point.

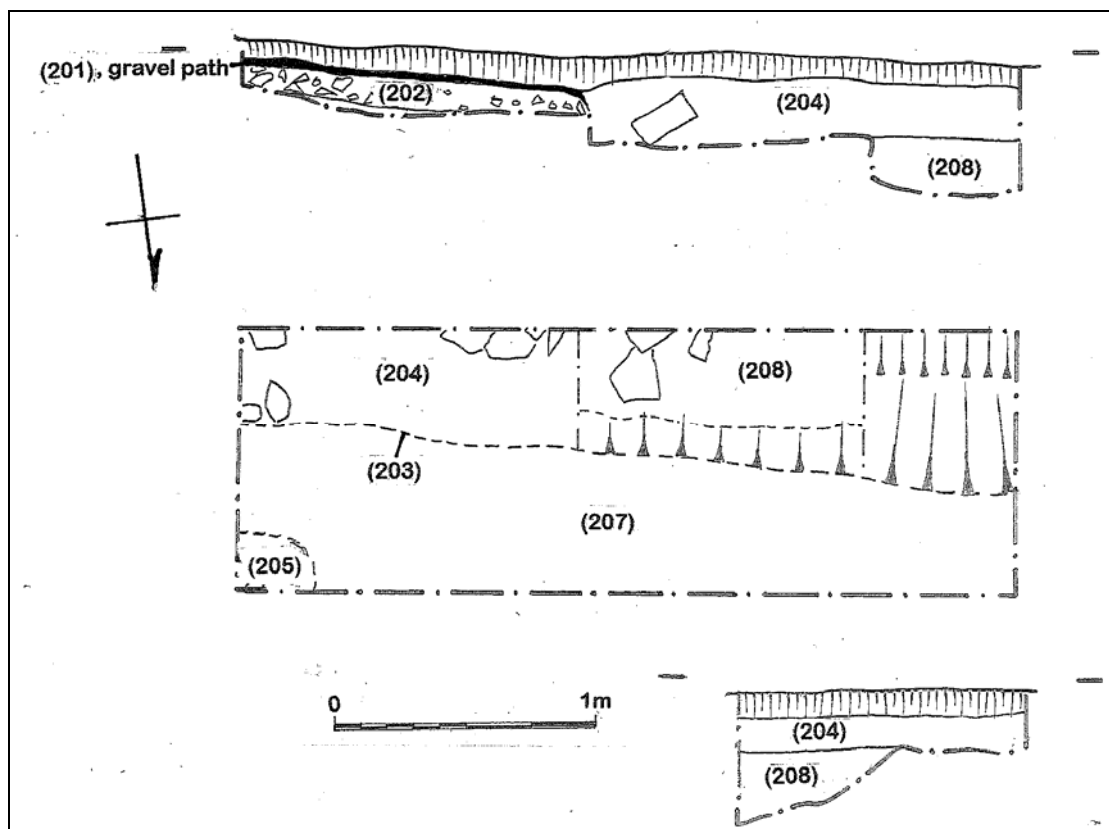


Figure 4: Southern and Western sections and plan of Trench 2.



Plate 2: General view of Trench 2 upon completion of the excavation.

Discussion

It can be concluded that there was a lightly gravelled path which ran from the gatehouse to the entrance in the southern façade of the house. The date for this would appear to be post 1961 (artefactual evidence in the form of a 1961 penny). It would appear that this (within Trench 2) was laid almost directly over a dense layer of crushed stone roof tiles, (102) which may well have been put there after the restoration work by Buckler in the 1870's, if not to form the base for a path then as a base for a yard or some other hard-standing immediately outside the main entrance. Similar tile spreads were revealed during drainage works on the eastern side of the house, (Morriss, R. K., and Hoverd, T. (1994)). The same gravel surface is apparent within Trench 2, but here it lies directly over a less well compacted layer of mainly ceramic roof tile, (202). Whilst this makes a suitable base for a light gravel path it is not nearly as substantial as the material within Trench 1, suggesting that the material in Trench 2, (202) was purposefully laid to take the gravel path; whilst the stone layer within Trench 1 was laid at an earlier date.

Linear cut (203), is clearly of some significance. It is cut into medieval deposit (207) which appears to equate to the medieval deposit encountered in Trench 1, (107). Its orientation would suggest that it either relates to a robbed out wall which may have pre-dated the gatehouse or, the cut for the moat. The fact that squared building rubble was apparent in the fills (204) and (208) may support the former.

Significant archaeology, (deposits containing medieval material), was apparent in both trenches at approximately 0.3m below the present ground level.

Other observations

- 1) An area of erosion on the inner lip of the moat to the south-east of the manor house was inspected to see if there had been any former length of re-instatement in either timber or stone. Conditions did not permit the reaching of any definite conclusions as to the form of any revetment, but the existence of rubble in the moat probably deriving from such a revetment wall indicates the possibility that it may have extended around to a point half-way along the inner eastern edge of the moat. The erosion appears to have been caused by the creation of flower beds extending into the moat itself that have subsequently been eroded by waterfowl. The line of the revetment wall westwards is picked up by an extant wall, the stones of which are evident at grass level. These appear to approach the gatehouse at an odd angle, raising the possibility that the stone piers supporting the gatehouse / moat bridge were a later insertion, and that that the original revetment could pre-date the early 16th century. This could simply and effectively be tested by further, minor evaluation trenching.
- 2) The wall footings of the east range were closely (if briefly) examined during the works. It would appear that the close-studded "middle"

section of the range pre-dates the foundation of the box framed “front” section of the east range. This was not noted in the recent survey of the structure and if correct would call into question the assumed construction sequence of the house. This too, could be explored and more closely defined in limited, targeted future work.

Conclusions

The archaeological field evaluation exercise has demonstrated the following:

- A pathway has previously existed between the gatehouse and Lower Brockhampton manor-house, but dates only to 1961 or later.
- Parts of the area have been disturbed in recent years by the insertion of plastic foul-water drains.
- Notwithstanding this, archaeological preservation is good within the areas concerned.
- Three phases of these preserved deposits were identified in the field evaluation trenches:
 - 1) A probable 19th century back-fill of an excavated east / west hollow, ditch or robber trench near to the gatehouse.
 - 2) A likely 19th century dump, or levelling deposit of broken and crushed stone roof tiles immediately outside the main doorway into the manor house. This could relate to the Buckler restoration when it is likely that the manor was re-roofed in clay tiles.
 - 3) A 16th century and possibly earlier series of stratified deposits constitute the bulk of the observed surviving *in-situ* archaeological deposits. These represent an important historic resource on the site. Further targeted but small scale investigation could help clarify the early sequence of medieval activity on the site.
- A new path could be constructed across the area of the site concerned without damaging the archaeological deposits but a “strip and record” method of prior archaeological examination is recommended as the best means to avoid damage.
- The observations relating to the moat retaining wall and foundation builds of the east range merit further investigation and close consideration of the way in which the bank erosion is dealt with.

Site Archive

46 digital photographs
2 sheets of field drawings
1 site notebook entry
15 context sheets
2 sheets of inked drawings
1 box of finds
Method statement
This document

Acknowledgements

Herefordshire Archaeology would like to acknowledge the help and co-operation of the National Trust staff at Lower Brockhampton and Janine Young, Consultant Archaeologist for the National Trust.

List of Illustrations

Figure 1: location of Lower Brockhampton within the county of Herefordshire.

Figure 2: Plan showing locations of Trenches 1 & 2 in relation to the gatehouse and house.

Figure 3: Northern section and plan of Trench 1.

Plate 1: General view of Trench 1 upon completion of the excavation.

Figure 4: Southern and Western sections and plan of Trench 2.

Plate 2: General view of Trench 2 upon completion of the excavation.

Bibliography

Ray, K. (2003), "An Archaeological Reconnaissance Survey of The Brockhampton Estate, Bromyard", Herefordshire Archaeology Report 71

Lello, R. and Williams, D. (2003), "Lower Brockhampton: A Survey of the Moated Site Complex", Herefordshire Archaeology Report 99

Campbell, J. (2011) A comprehensive survey of Lower Brockhampton, Herefordshire. Report for the Vernacular Architecture Group

Morriss, R. K., and Hoverd, T. (1994) Lower Brockhampton near Bromyard, Herefordshire: an Outline analysis. Hereford Archaeology Series 201

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. Keith Ray, County Archaeologist