



Soulton Hall

2024 Updated Project Design

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Soulton Hall

Updated Project Design

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Purpose of document

This document has been prepared as an Updated Project Design for continuing community-based research excavations at Soulton Hall, Shropshire. The purpose of the document is to provide an outline of planned fieldwork for 2024, outlining the aims and objectives of the work and methodology to be employed.

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The Project Executive for DigVentures is Lisa Westcott Wilkins and Projects Director is Brendon Wilkins, with Manda Forster as Project Manager, Maiya Pina-Dacier as Head of Community, Stephanie Duensing as Programme Manager and Site Director, Harriet Tatton as Programme Officer and much on-going support from Nat Jackson, Ben Swain, and Freddy Wannop, both behind the scenes as well as on site and in the finds room.

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Executive summary

This document has been compiled in support of further archaeological investigation at Soulton Hall to be carried out by DigVentures. In 2019 an initial season of archaeological excavation was undertaken with a series of test pits focusing on the scheduled moated site and formal garden remains (HE list entry no. 1017236). In 2021 there was a second season of excavations opening two trenches to investigate discoveries made during the test pitting. A third season of excavations took place in 2022, continuing the investigation of the moated site. A fourth season investigating within the Scheduled area, took place in 2023. This Updated Project Design supports a fifth season of fieldwork in the unscheduled area on the property which aims to extend a programme of 3D photogrammetry survey, landscape survey, archival research and trial trenching to better understand the later phases of use in the post medieval period associated with the extant hall. The approach to this work is evidenced through the following MoRPHE / PRINCE2 compliant document, outlining key archaeological research questions, roles, procedures, stages and outputs.

The overarching aim of this fieldwork continues to be to provide baseline information to contribute to the future management and research of the site, creating multiple educational and participatory learning experiences for community participants. Crucially, this season will be shifting our primary focus away from the scheduled areas on the property and will again be largely exploring the way the wider landscape has changed over time and the implications of how shifts of land use have impacted on any heritage assets which might remain in other areas of the site. This will be achieved through a community-based archaeological research project designed to understand:

- The relationship of these remains within a wider landscape settings and their ability to contribute to syntheses on the form, development and significance of the site.
- To explore the chronology of the wider site development of the house and formal gardens through targeted interventions investigating LiDAR anomalies.
- To establish if there is any surviving evidence of any garden buildings having been built on the southern side of the 16th century hall.
- Above all, this will act as a teaching exercise about how targets are chosen, how background research is performed in advance and throughout the research and excavation stages, and how our findings are written up, presented and archived.

This Updated Project Design provides an outline of methodology and planned intervention to complete:

Targeted excavation Archaeological fieldwork will focus on further characterisation of the post medieval aspects of the site, in order to better contextualise the other archaeological phases already identified at Soulton. Trench 17 (3m x 20m) is proposed to be on a northwest to southeast alignment targeting a slight rise in the ground chosen to confirm or refute the current unproven hypothesis that there are ancillary buildings located somewhere in this field associated with the 16th century Hall that were redeveloped in the later post medieval period and subsequently lost to ploughing and agricultural activities. A second trench, Trench 18 (3m x 19m N-S and 3m x 16m E-W) is proposed to be a T-shaped trench investigating a faint anomaly seen running from the southwest to



northeast in a linear alignment, possibly running under the current garden wall. This presents the possibility of archaeology predating the house's construction and may further inform the wider development of the site. A third contingency trench, Trench 19 (5m x 5m) will be placed targeting a well visible in the modern gravel drive and lawned area immediately to the west of the hall.

Public engagement The project is supported by a comprehensive learning, engagement and activity plan which aims to both raise awareness to the site and provide tangible learning outcomes. An innovative digital recording system will enable volunteers to record results from the field; specifically developed learning materials will be used to deliver training sessions, project updates on our website and newsletters, underpinned by a digital and audience building strategy, aiming to engage the local community and a global audience in the project.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project background

- 1.1.1 DigVentures are embarking on the third stage of a multi-phased research project investigating the scheduled moated site and formal gardens at Soulton Hall, Shropshire (hereafter 'the Site, Figure 1, NGR SJ 54469 30323). Soulton Hall has invited DigVentures to undertake a programme of archaeological interventions at the site as part of a community research project. The rich archaeological heritage of the site has not been subject to targeted archaeological investigation previously. The community-based research investigation will provide new knowledge about the site and contribute to the better management of the archaeology as a result.
- 1.1.2 This document provides an Updated Project Design for delivery of a community-based archaeological investigation of Soulton Hall, Shropshire. It defines how DigVentures intends to deliver this phase of the project, and outlines how research aims and participation targets will be met. The project is being managed according to Historic England's MoRPHE project model (Management of Archaeological Research Projects in the Historic Environment).
- 1.1.3 This Updated Project Design is presented in two parts; *Part 1: Description of the project* provides the project context, including a summary of proposed methodology, key sources and activities required to support the delivery of the proposal's outcomes. *Part 2: Resources and programming* identifies responsibilities of individual project staff members and outlines the tasks and programme.

Part 1: Description of the project

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Historic background

2.1.1 Soulton Hall, Wem, is an Elizabethan manor house with over four thousand years of history. The first signs of human activity at Soulton Hall date to the Neolithic with a worked flint discovered in 2017. In the Bronze Age, a barrow was built to the east of Soulton and in the Iron Age a significant settlement was established at nearby Burry Walls (<http://www.soultonhall.co.uk/page/65/history.htm>). In the Roman period the Romans constructed a road from *Uriconium* (Wroxeter) to *Mediolanum* (Whitchurch) over part of the estate. A small town called *Rutunio* was built somewhere very close to the current hall, but its exact location has been lost (*ibid.*).

2.1.2 During the early medieval period the manor occupied the frontier between Powys and Mercia and has been continuously occupied since. The site is recorded in the Domesday Book as Suletune, the first element of which probably relates to the landscape, indicating a gully. Domesday names Beorhtric as the owner of Sultune in 1086, who might be Britric the Saxon, brother of Edric, the last Ealdorman of Mercia. The Anglo-Saxon chronicle described Britric as fleeting, ambitious and proud, killed with his brother by King Cnut in London on Christmas Day 1017 (<http://avalon.law.yale.edu/medieval/ang11.asp>).

2.1.3 There is some suggestion that the remains of a deserted medieval village are located to the north of the hall along Soulton Road, although the road may have moved south at some point after the 1100s. There is a remnant of medieval ridge and furrow visible within the existing 50-acre woodland, with a mill race dating to the 1200s still obvious (<http://www.soultonhall.co.uk/page/326/archeology-lidar.html>). At this time the manor of Soulton belonged to King's Chapel at Shrewsbury Castle, granted by the Earl of Shrewsbury. The Castle Chapel transferred the manor to the Kynaston family sometime in the 11th century, and they in turn gave occupation to the de Soulton family.

2.2 Research context

2.2.1 A mound and associated moated site (Shropshire HER Ref 01015, Scheduled Monument 1017236), was originally identified at Soulton as a medieval ringwork in 1965 from aerial photographs, by one of the compilers of the Ordnance Survey. It has subsequently been identified as the site of an older manor house dating to the 13th century. The Scheduled Monument includes the earthwork, the buried remains of a medieval moated site and a post-medieval formal garden within two separate areas of protection. The moated site, situated on the western edge of the flood plain of Soulton Brook at the base of a gentle east facing slope, is considered to be the centre of the manor of Soulton. An oval shaped moat surrounds a rectangular island which displays a well-defined stepped profile on all sides believed to be the result of its later use as part of the post-medieval formal garden. On the top there are a series of slight scarps, which relate to the building or buildings that once occupied the site. Crossing the western moat arm are the slight remains of a causeway (Heritage Gateway, PRN 1015).



- 2.2.2 Records dating to the second half of the 13th century indicate that by that time the manor was being leased to Robert Corbet. In the 16th century it had been bought by Sir Rowland Hill, which probably led to the building of a new residence, known as Soulton Hall, 200m to the south west of the moated site (Historic England, List Entry Number 1017236). Sir Rowland Hill was the first protestant Lord Mayor of London (1549) (<http://www.soultonhall.co.uk/page/65/history.html>). In 1668, his descendant, Thomas Hill, High Sheriff of Shropshire and a friend of Samuel Pepys placed his marital coat of arms above the front door (ibid.). The exterior of the hall and the internal stud partitions are consistent with a house built in the second half of the 16th century, however the panelling surviving in one of the bedrooms and the upper staircase suggest remodelling during the later 17th century. The hall and the 17th century garden walls are Listed Grade II* and are not included in the scheduling (<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1017236>).
- 2.2.3 The second area of protection lies to the south of the mound and to the east of the 17th century walled garden of Soulton Hall. It includes the earthwork remains of a formal garden consisting of a series of well-defined terraces and raised areas, including a rectangular building platform measuring 16m by 11m (HER PRN 8247). The earthworks follow the same alignment as Soulton Hall and the walled garden, and are believed to be of the same date. It is apparent that the gardens were laid out in relation to the moated site and to provide an impressive formal setting for Soulton Hall. The spring in the north eastern part of the garden is contained and surrounded by walls of red sandstone blocks and covered by a red sandstone slab. The complex of garden earthworks opposite the walled garden continues to the north of the modern road, incorporating the existing moated site. A series of shallow channels connect with and radiate out from the northern half of the moat, some of which also connect with the ditches defining the western and northern boundaries of the field. An associated linear depression to the north of the moat appears to be the remains of a pond, and there are slight traces of terraces on the sloping ground to the west of the moated site. An early model farm was developed in the 1700s and Soulton Brook was used by the Duke of Bridgewater to trial the creation of canals in the 18th century (<http://www.soultonhall.co.uk/page/65/history.htm>).
- 2.2.4 Despite the potential and significance of the site at Soulton Hall, very little archaeological research has been undertaken at the site. Most recently, as part of the development of the Sacred Stones Barrow at Soulton Hall (see <http://www.sacredstones.co.uk/locations/shropshire-long-barrow>), a LiDAR based survey was undertaken by researchers at University of Cambridge Archaeology. This data has provided some evidence of earlier periods in the development of the history of the estate. A Roman road can be clearly seen to the east of the estate (<http://www.soultonhall.co.uk/page/326/archeology-lidar.html>), and medieval ridge and furrow survives within the 50-acre woodland. The route of a water mill race, probably dating to the 13th century, is also visible, as are later garden features relating to the 17th century formal gardens running south and east of the hall (ibid.).
- 2.2.5 Without further investigation, the exact use, date and nature of the mound situated in the north of the scheduled area cannot be fully ascertained. There has been suggestion that the monument is the remains of an anarchy motte rather than a manor house, providing protection at the site of a ford through the stream (Tim Ashton, pers

comm) although following the 2021 excavations this seems unlikely. Alternative interpretations have also included a 17th century as a civil war mound with a gun platform, or perhaps a garden feature (ibid.). Regarding the irregular field in which the mound sits, some of the ditches may also have been constructed or later reused as drainage ditches or been incorporated into the formal gardens. The opportunity to undertake a community-based research investigation at the site will provide firm evidence for the character of the extant earthworks and add new information about the nature and preservation of surviving archaeological deposits relating to the early mound and the 17th century formal gardens.

2.3 2019 fieldwork

- 2.3.1 The first season of fieldwork focused on test pit investigation of locations within the scheduled area of the moated site and formal gardens (HE List Entry No. 1017236). Test Pits 1, 2 and 3 were chosen to target earthwork features identified through LiDAR and walkover survey related to the medieval moated site. Test pit 1 was located to investigate the nature of the top of the mound. Test Pit 2 was located to investigate the construction of the ditch. Test Pit 3 was located outside the moat to investigate the activity in the area immediately adjacent to the mound. Test Pits 4, 5 and 6 were located to examine the survival of the formal gardens. The picture emerging is the development of the site as a 13th-century manor house with a moat, possibly associated industrial activity, which fell out of use in the 16th century. In the later-17th century it became the location for a formal garden associated with Soulton Hall.

2.4 2021 fieldwork

- 2.4.1 Fieldwork was undertaken in July 2021 to address a series of research questions which focused on the scheduled earthwork remains to the east of Soulton Hall, Shropshire (Historic England List No. 1017236). The scheduled area is defined as an area immediately east of the hall, comprising earthworks related to the gardens laid out from the 17th century AD, and an area to the northeast, comprising earthworks of a particularly unusual sub-circular moated site, likely of Medieval age. The investigations involved a programme of targeted interventions, including geophysical survey and excavation (Jackson et al 2022).
- 2.4.2 Trench 7, measuring 20 x 3m, investigated the southern side of the mound, targeting the mound and associated ditch. A slot excavated in at the top of the trench investigated the make-up of the mound itself, revealing that it was created by a build up of layers of clay deposits probably brought in from the construction of the moat. The mound itself may have initially been a headland in the bend of Soulton Brook and was cut off to create the moated site. In the lower half of Trench 7 another sondage was put in to investigate the moat. Within this it was discovered that the moat was cut through alluvial clay deposits and a substantial timber structure, likely a moat bridge was partially revealed. A series of masonry blocks were seen loosely forming a wall that may have shored up the mound to prevent slumping or may have been a part of the superstructure of the moat bridge. Finds recovered from this trench include pottery, animal bone and various special finds such as a pilgrim's badge, an ampulla, several jettons, and a silver penny of either Edward I or II. These all give the moat a probable date of the late 13th or 14th century.

- 2.4.3 Trench 8, measuring 12 x 4m, was positioned to the west of the mound adjacent to Test Pit 3 where metalworking debris was previously recorded. The aim of the trench was to potentially identify an area of industrial activity possibly associated with the mound. The 2021 excavations recovered a considerable quantity of material that indicated industrial activity was taking place in the area. This activity likely occurred on the site later than the occupation of the mound. It may be that this was related to the construction of the Tudor Hall, or subsequent activity in the 16th or 17th century. The most notable discovery in Trench 8 was a series of timbers discovered in the base of a ditch, these timbers likely formed a small structure such as a lean-to or shed, possibly where the industrial activity took place. Whilst the structure was still standing it burnt down, those burnt timbers were likely disposed of in the base of the ditch.
- 2.4.4 The geophysical survey in the field to the north of the road around the mound identified a number of positive anomalies which are suggestive of below ground remains, such as a possible wall or structure, a sub-circular enclosure, some pit-like anomalies and an area of thermoremanent anomalies which are suggestive of burning or firing activity. The geophysical survey on top of the mound identified some weak sub-oval trends which are suggestive of a possible structure or enclosure. The geophysical survey in the field to the south of the road revealed magnetically weak trends of an unclear origin, as well as a group of anomalies suggested to relate to the reputed location of a Roman road and a possible well.
- 2.5 **2022 fieldwork**
- 2.5.1 Between the 18th of July and 7th of August 2022 the second full season of excavations took place at Soulton Hall, Shropshire. This season of excavations built on the work of the previous two field seasons, which comprised test pitting in 2019 and excavation in 2021. In 2022, seven trenches were opened by hand, each investigating specific targets listed in the updated project design (Jackson et al. 2022).
- 2.5.2 Trench 7 continued the investigation of a moat bridge and associated features, including a potential retaining wall that was discovered during the 2021 field season. The aim for this field season was to fully characterise the moat bridge and find the bottom of the moat, and excavation revealed that the moat bridge was even more substantial than previously understood. Measuring at least six meters wide, it had two very substantial crossbeams running east to west along the northern edge of the moat ditch with supports coming off at a 45-degree angle, presumably to hold up the superstructure of the bridge itself. What had been interpreted as a retaining wall for the mound in the 2021 season now appears to be a part of the moat bridge structure, as it was not seen elsewhere in the excavations. This may be because the stone was recycled at a later date, however evidence to support this was not discovered. Whether the moat has been fully excavated remains unclear as a second crossbeam was found to be underlying the one discovered in the 2021 excavation. It appeared to be set within the base of the moat. It may be that the beam had sunk into the underlying natural deposits, however this needs further investigation.
- 2.5.3 Trench 8 was reopened in 2022 to further investigate the potential industrial activity at the site. It was opened in the area to the west of the 2021 trench with a small overlap and was targeting two large crescent shaped geophysical anomalies which could have

been associated with burning. Once the topsoil and subsoil had been removed down to the archaeological layers, two features were identified, comprising a modern field drain and a shallow gully. The field drain was investigated and then left in situ. The gully was excavated and shown to be primarily filled with burnt material (8024), (8026) and lower basal fill (8028), and within these fills a reasonable quantity of 16th/17th century pottery (N:42) was recovered. This gully was cut into a layer of silting (8022) which also yielded pottery including a bung hole from a large storage vessel and some CBM.

- 2.5.4 Trench 9 targeted the top of the mound. Previous excavations on top of the mound had been inconclusive, therefore the trench opened a much larger area looking at various potential features identified in the 2021 geophysical survey. Upon excavation three features were revealed, comprising two probable post holes in the centre of the trench and a pit in the north-east corner. In the northern half of the trench, a layer (9002) containing a large amount of pottery (n:92) was excavated. It was later decided that this layer was the same as the topsoil (9001), which also contained large quantities of pottery (n:103). The recovery of any finds from this trench is important, as previously it had been thought that the top of the mound was sterile due to it being disturbed and remodelled at a later point in history. Trenches excavated on the top of the mound during previous field seasons had come down onto the mound make-up material and had not recovered any finds. The two probable post holes were very ephemeral, which is to be expected if, as previously stated, the mound had been remodelled later, as only the very base of the features would survive. In the north-east corner of the trench a small pit was excavated, which was predominantly filled with rubble which may have come from a structure, however none of the stone was worked. Finds recovered from this feature include animal bone, iron objects and pottery.
- 2.5.5 Trench 10 was located on the northern side of the moat. The trench aimed to explore the theory that the wall seen in Trench 7 was a retaining wall following the circumference of the mound, as well as investigating a pit identified in the geophysics. Features identified in the trench were a modern drainage pipe and a pit in the north of the trench. This pit was filled with modern detritus including broken up field drains and a breeze block. The field drain was excavated, weighed, quantified and subsequently discarded, the breeze block was left in situ, and the pit was not fully excavated. A further two field drains, both long out of use, were identified and removed in order to excavate the moat ditch. The southern side of the moat ditch was obscured by rubble slumping that had probably originated from the top of the mound. After this material was removed, the cut of the moat ditch was revealed. The stratigraphy within the moat ditch was very similar to that seen in the moat ditch in Trench 7 in 2021. There was a lot of well-preserved wood within the lower fills of the ditch, although these were mostly unworked pieces such twigs and branches that had accumulated in the feature. There were however several pieces of worked wood, of which two were recorded in situ and others were lifted and recorded. Of the two recorded in situ, one was a plank and the other was more interesting, comprising a long narrow piece of wood measuring at least 1m in length which carried on into the section and could not be removed. It had peg holes towards the middle containing the remains of the pegs, and it tapered in at the end as though it were a handle for something. The function of this piece is not known, but it could be any number of artefacts from part of a piece of furniture to a ladder. Another interesting piece of

wood that was lifted was a curved plank measuring only 0.61m in length that tapered to both ends, and had a notch cut out at one end and a hole drilled through at the opposite corner. Again, the function of this piece is unknown but as with the other piece it seems very likely that they are both later medieval in date.

- 2.5.6 Trench 11 targeted a large pit-like anomaly that was identified in the 2021 geophysics and was thought to potentially be associated with metalworking that is known to have been carried out on the site. Once the trench was opened, it was seen to be dominated by a large spread of material predominantly from the 19th century. This included fragments of slag, coke and other metalworking debris as well as bricks and tiles. It is probable that this material had been brought in to the site to level out the ground, or fill in a pot-hole in a track that would have crossed the field in this location. It is at one of the lowest points in the field and it is clear from the number of field drains discovered the site has been very wet, so the material may have been brought in as a counter to the bogginess of the ground. Much of the material recovered from this trench has been quantified and weighed and then discarded.
- 2.5.7 Trench 12 investigated a curvilinear anomaly seen in the geophysics carried out in 2021, and also investigated the construction of the moat ditch on the western side of the mound. Following the removal of the topsoil and subsoil in the west of the trench, in the area away from the mound, a layer of probable bank material was recovered. This was very similar to the subsoil and upon excavation a ditch was revealed, although only the very eastern edge of it was visible. It seems likely that this ditch is the same as that discovered in Trench 8 in 2021. It was not possible to excavate it to any depth due to only a small portion being in the trench and so it is not known whether the feature would have a similar stratigraphy and waterlogged deposits at the base as it did in Trench 8. A potential feature was excavated to the east of the linear ditch, but this was determined to be a natural glacial scar rather than anything anthropogenic. Following excavation, it was seen that the feature had no clear cut and had a completely sterile clay fill. At the far western end of the trench a small sondage was placed into the moat, revealing a similar blue clay deposit that had been excavated in Trench 7 in 2021 which was determined to be a natural deposit. Within this a field drain was revealed and left in situ. Only one find of note was recovered from the trench, that was a cartwheel penny of George III recovered from the topsoil.
- 2.5.8 Trench 13 targeted a large possible anomaly on the south side of the road, in the field opposite the mound. The aim of this trench was to determine if there was a pavement or surface present which had been seen by the landowners when they had done previous work. After the removal of the top soil and sub soil, various potential features were observed. These were investigated and most deemed to be natural. The large amount of iron panning and concretions in the trench were likely caused by the proximity of a spring 10 meters to the south of the trench. A solitary feature was observed in the trench, this was a small pit in the southern corner of the trench, there was a single piece of modern glass within the fill and so it is very likely the feature is modern or natural, maybe rooting.

2.6 2023 Fieldwork

- 2.6.1 Fieldwork in 2023 was comprised of three trenches. The trench opened in the mound field to the north of the B5065 was Trench 14 (2m x 6m), and was located on the northeast side of the mound to confirm or refute the unproven hypothesis that the top of the mound had been redeveloped in the early post medieval period and the earlier material was pushed off to the northeast and over the moat ditch.
- 2.6.2 A second trench, Trench 15 (4m x 6m) was located to the south of the B5065 in the area adjacent to the driveway near the entrance of the Hall. This was investigating the possibility of archaeology nearer the house to further inform the development of the site.
- 2.6.3 A third and final trench, Trench 16 (4m x 15m) was located in the scheduled formal garden field, also to the south of the B5065. This was investigating the possibility of archaeology related to the house and garden to further inform the development of the site. Evidence of late Tudor garden features were hoped to be encountered to assist the understanding of the development of the site over time. In particular, the possibility of whether evidence of an earlier approach to the manor could be recovered, potentially visible on the LiDAR and geophysical survey.

2.7 2024 Fieldwork Recommendations

- 2.7.1 Recommendations made as part of the archaeological assessment stage (Duensing et al. forthcoming) suggests that future archaeological fieldwork focus on further characterisation of the post medieval aspects of the site, in order to better contextualise the other archaeological phases already identified at Soultton. Fieldwork in 2024 will comprise the opening of two trench in the field directly south of the main Hall, both targeting anomalies identified on LiDAR (Figure 2).
- 2.7.2 Trench 17 (3m x 20m), is proposed to be on a northwest to southeast alignment targeting a slight rise in the ground. This area has been chosen to confirm or refute the current unproven hypothesis that there is a dovecot located somewhere in this field which was redeveloped in the later post medieval period and subsequently lost to ploughing and agricultural activities. This area may contain evidence of the 16th/17th century garden features and may further assist our understanding of the development of the site over time (Figure 2).
- 2.7.3 A second trench, Trench 18 (3m x 19m N-S and 3m x 16m E-W) is proposed to be a T-shaped trench. This trench is investigating another faint anomaly seen running from the southwest to northeast in a linear alignment, possibly running under the current garden wall. This presents the possibility of archaeology predating the house's construction and may further inform the wider development of the site (Figure 2).
- 2.7.4 A third contingency test pit, Trench 19 (2m x 2m) will be placed targeting a well visible in the modern gravel drive and lawned area immediately to the west of the hall. This is noted on 19th century OS maps as a pump and may inform of everyday activities in the late post medieval and Victorian period (Figure 2).

3 RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Project model

- 3.1.1 The overarching aim of the project is to define and characterise the physical extent of the site through a programme of non-intrusive investigations and intrusive excavation, obtaining baseline data that will facilitate its future management. This project model is framed as overarching aims and key questions/objectives that provide a framework for the methods, stages, products and tasks set out in Part 2 of the Updated Project Design below.

3.2 Research aims

Aim 1 – Identify the physical extent and character of the moated site and formal gardens in their environs.

- 3.2.1 This aim will entail both non-invasive archival study of the site and surrounding area, as well as continuing the invasive earthwork excavations which were undertaken in 2019, 2021 and 2022. This will add further to our understanding of the moated site by addressing the following questions:

- Q1. Can we find evidence to support the theory that there was a structure on the mound which was partially pushed into the moat to the east?
- Q2. Can we identify any references in the archival records which would help further understand the results from topographic, remote sensing and excavation which would support and illuminate extended period of use?

Aim 2 - Understand the development of the Site and place it in its multi-period landscape context

- 3.2.2 The 2019 test pitting activity has enhanced the overall interpretation of the site and has aided in the targeting of future archaeological work. In 2021 and 2022 the fieldwork focussed on further characterising the elements of the moated site to help contextualise the Medieval archaeological phase already identified at Soulton. The 2023 field season aimed to complete the work carried out in 2021 and 2022. The aim this year in 2024 is to identify and investigate any archaeological features encountered and obtain appropriate samples for archaeological and palaeoenvironmental assessment. In combination, these activities will address the following questions:

- Q3. What is the landscape setting and character of the moated site at Soulton Hall, and how did this shape its design and development?
- Q4. To what extent do the archaeological remains at the Site survive, and what is the potential of the moated site to inform a greater understanding of the landscape context including its relationship to the manor house/hall?
- Q5. Can we refine the chronological narrative for the Site, including the presence of earlier and later features and structures, as defined in Aim 1?
- Q6. Building on previous work, can we establish a fuller understanding of the historical and cultural context, and the motivation for its construction?



Aim 3 – Understand the Site’s archaeological and palaeoenvironmental conditions

3.2.3 This aim will be achieved with an assessment of the artefacts and samples recovered as defined and collected in Aim 2, using appropriate palaeoenvironmental and archaeological techniques to establish preservation and significance.

- Q7. What is the current state of the archaeological and palaeoenvironmental material across the site?
- Q8. How well do deposits and artefacts survive, and how deeply are they buried?
- Q9. What is the range and spatial patterning of artefacts recovered from the site, and can this inform our understanding of the use of the landscape and utilisation of wider resources?
- Q10. Can we increase our understanding of the structures and environment of the site at Soulton Hall?

Aim 4 – Making recommendations, undertaking analysis and publication

3.2.4 This aim will require all data from Aims 1-3 to be collated, with an integrated analysis of the archaeological and palaeoenvironmental resource at Soulton Hall making recommendations to conserve, enhance and interpret the heritage significance of the site.

- Q11. What can an integrated synthesis of the results of this work with previous studies of contemporary regional sites tell us about the Site and its setting?
- Q12. What recommendations can be made to protect, conserve and enhance the site?

Aim 5 – Creating opportunities for people and communities

3.2.5 This aim runs throughout the whole programme, from the initial project set up through to dissemination and beyond. The project will offer a range of opportunities for local community members, students, school children and visitors to the area to get involved and learn more about the archaeology of Soulton Hall. Working closely with the wider project team and the estate staff, participation opportunities will include excavation, finds processing, photogrammetry and guided visits. Our programme of participation will include

- train community volunteers and students in excavation and post excavation tasks
- engaging people with our education sessions
- taking part in the project Open Day, guiding visitors around the archaeological trenches and introducing the importance of the site
- co-producing a digital archive and resource for the project website with community participants
- posting updates about the archaeology and our finds on social media so everyone can follow the excavations as they progress

3.2.6 Volunteers will be invited to join the excavations and will be trained in archaeological skills, co-producing the archaeological archive using DigVentures’ DiggIt software. Reports produced following the excavations will be hosted on the website, providing a research resource for anyone interested in the region’s prehistoric archaeology.



4 BUSINESS CASE

4.1 Historic England Research Agenda

- 4.1.1 The project has been designed in accordance with priorities articulated in the Historic England Research Strategy (2017). The Research Strategy defines nine broad themes that describe Historic England's research interests to ensure that any proposed work is aligned with HE's mission. The Gatehouse Project drivers can therefore be articulated within the fundamental theme to #understand (rural landscapes; archaeology of the deeper past in addition to other research outcomes that will address other Historic England and sector priorities, delivering significant value-added benefit. As a consequence of the innovative digital and multi-partner collaborative approach, there is a significant 'value added' dimension to this project, encompassing research themes including #adapt (land management, societal change); #conserve (buildings and landscapes, collections and archives; preserving archaeological remains); #inform (information systems and services); #skill (developing the workforce; working more effectively); #inspire (audience research, research media); #innovate (materials; human environment; dating and chronology; measuring and sensing).

4.2 Research frameworks

- 4.2.1 Themes identified in the West Midlands research framework for archaeology (Watt 2011) includes a number of avenues of research relevant to this project. Moated sites are widely regarded as one of the classic field monuments of the medieval period and are characteristic of much of the West Midland's region, being particularly associated with woodland landscapes. Moated sites have attracted the attention of historians, geographers and archaeologists, and are often perceived as having been intensively researched and the distribution of such sites across the region is generally well known with many sites listed in the 1990s and even well before. However, fundamental though such mapping is, it is generally the case that this dot on the map is the full extent of our knowledge of the site (*ibid.*,196). Moated and non-moated sites are simply sub-groups of what might be described as manorial complexes, with several sites having been surveyed, but fewer excavated. Manorial complexes represent a neglected theme in the medieval archaeology of the West Midland's region. In particular, further research would enhance understanding of the chronology and development of earthwork castle sites, addressing the relative 'imbalance' within the region that has seen most work conducted on large, stone-built castle sites (*ibid.*,195).
- 4.2.2 Soulton Hall gardens are registered under the Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953 within the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens by Historic England for its special historic interest (List Entry Number: 1017236). The 16th and 17th century witnessed significant changes in the relationship between houses and their surrounding landscapes when Italian renaissance influences began to infiltrate with ideals of controlling and improving nature replaced the naturalistic medieval approach. Ornamental gardens were a symbol of status reflecting a new culture of bending nature to useful production with the garden being a symbol of control and purity in a wild and disordered world. This can be seen in the greater regularity of design and relationship between the garden and façade of the house. The 16th and

17th centuries covered a period of intense development of garden forms with residences marking the transition from small, enclosed, relatively private gardens to larger areas designed to impress through elaborate display. The inward-looking gardens of the medieval period gave way to more grandiose layouts with open and interlinked designs becoming a means of public advertisement. The fashion for garden buildings began post the 1530s and persisted into the 17th century (Fradley et al. 2009, 26).

- 4.2.3 Some of the most stimulating and innovative of recent castle studies have taken place in Shropshire and the March, particularly in relationship to designed landscapes, already familiar at sites like Kenilworth and Bodiam (Watt 2011, 194). However, designed landscapes relating to manorial estates remain understudied. The themes that relate to castles and their designed landscapes can also be related to manorial estates and their designed landscapes in terms of gardens. While there are no specific research frameworks that relate to the investigation of 17th century gardens, the importance of understanding the development of these gardens is a significant element in understanding the history of the gardens at Soulton and the development of 16th and 17th century gardens at status residences across the country. Little is known about the development, form, chronology and landscape context of these gardens and the significance and importance of this transitional period from out of the medieval and into the post-medieval period is often overlooked. These gardens consciously reflect the owners social and political status as well as philosophical leanings and a great deal can be learnt about the motivations behind and aspirations within society from the design and layout of the formal gardens. In particular, these investigations will attempt to contribute to understanding the historical and cultural development of 16th and 17th century gardens.

5 INTERFACES

This project will interface with a series of other projects, stakeholders, and initiatives, summarised in the table below:

Interfaces	Description
<i>Academic Advisory Board</i>	An advisory group of subject experts will be formed to ensure that the project remains pertinent to relevant research questions and agendas as it progresses, interfacing with other teams working in similar landscapes in the UK.
<i>Core Project Team</i>	The core project team and specialist staff have consulted widely during the project planning and will continue to build on this as the project develops, forging strong links with local, national and international professionals and institutions actively engaged in a broad range of multi-period sites.
<i>Local Stakeholders</i>	The key local stakeholders are Soulton Hall. The project will showcase the archaeology from Soulton Hall, and offer skills-based learning opportunities focused on teaching digital heritage skills to engage as broad a group as possible in the local heritage. A recent survey undertaken by DigVentures has identified that key issues preventing people engaging with their local heritage are based on access and financial concerns. The project will offer free enjoyable learning opportunities, both online and across multiple accessible locations, to help address the strong social and educational needs of the surrounding communities.

Project interfaces



6 COMMUNICATIONS

6.1 Project team

- 6.1.1 The following section details specific staff responsibilities, drawing on terminology devised by Historic England for the MoRPHE project management framework. The overarching project is crowdfunded and overseen by DigVentures. Project Assurance will be undertaken by the Lisa Westcott Wilkins (Project Executive), who will monitor compliance against the deliverables detailed in this document. Manda Forster (Director of Operations) will act as the primary contact point for the project and ensure that stakeholders and clients are regularly updated as to progress. Nat Jackson (Project Officer) will oversee the archaeological strategy and delivery.
- 6.1.2 The project team have all worked closely together over a number of research projects, including Leiston Abbey (2013-2016), Lindisfarne (a joint project with the University of Durham, 2016) and Barrowed Time (community investigation of a Bronze Age hoard site, 2016). Dr Manda Forster (Director of Operations) will undertake day-to-day management of the project, with fieldwork coordinated and directed by Dr. Stephanie Duensing (Programme Manager) with Ben Swain (Project Officer), and Freddy Wannop (Community Archaeologists) will liaise with and coordinate volunteer and visitors to the site with supported provided by Maiya Pina-Dacier (Director of Community). All core staff are employed in line with ClfA guidelines and are practicing field archaeologists at PCIfA level or above. Senior project staff are Members of ClfA in good standing.

6.2 Project management

- 6.2.1 The Project Manager will provide Monthly Status Reports for the Project Executive and Project Team throughout this Execution Stage up to the review of the Assessment Report/UPD. This will present an overview of progress, list tasks completed or part completed, including any on-going work and issues affecting progress. The Project Manager will also be responsible for ensuring that the project runs to schedule, and ensure that all major tasks are briefed/debriefed as necessary. Provision will be made for the project in 'Basecamp', which is a web-based project communication package used by DigVentures, enabling project participants to generate and record notes, tasks, milestones and other project-related communication.
- 6.2.2 DigVentures operates a computer-assisted project management system. Projects are undertaken under the direction of the Project Director who is responsible for the successful completion of all aspects of the project. All work is monitored and checked whilst in progress on a regular basis, and the Project Director/Managing Director checks all reports and other documents before being issued. A series of guideline documents or manuals form the basis for all work.
- 6.2.3 The Project Manager and Site Director, Stephanie Duensing, is a full member of the Institute for Archaeologists (MCIfA). DigVentures is a ClfA Registered Organisation (No. 102), and fully endorses the Code of Conduct, the Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology, and the Standards and Guidance documents of the Institute for Archaeologists. All DigVentures staff are employed in line with the Institute's Codes and will usually be members of the Institute.



6.3 Outreach and engagement

- 6.3.1 As a social business every aspect of the DigVentures approach is cognisant of a wider outreach agenda. Running alongside the Soulton Hall community archaeology project, DigVentures will include a dedicated engagement programme for volunteers offering opportunities for individuals to get involved. The programme will increase local awareness of the area's archaeology and heritage, and amplify this with a coordinated digital and social media strategy. All major social media channels will be used to promote daily blog content.
- 6.3.2 The impact of this outreach work will be measured with a quantitative and qualitative evaluation of all participants to establish baseline audience awareness data and assist with future management strategies and promotion. This will be undertaken with a visitor survey conducted throughout the field season, targeting both excavation participants and casual visitors, and critically assessing the breadth, depth and diversity of engagement.

6.4 Dissemination and reporting

- 6.4.1 Rapid dissemination of the results to, and involvement of, stakeholders of the project is vital throughout. This will take place through multiple channels, addressing a multitude of established and new audiences. Dissemination outlined below will all be undertaken during 2023, and will include, but not be limited to;
- dedicated website with daily news updates on a blog and all major social media channels (Facebook, Twitter, Google+, Flickr and Instagram) amplified through third-party coverage by the networked blogging community: <https://digventures.com/soulton-hall/>
 - dedicated interactive digital archive of the excavation data.
 - wide circulation of the Post-Excavation Assessments, Final Report, Updated Project Design and links to the OASIS record digventu1-500585 and the final report.
 - site publication in an appropriate local/national journal commensurate with the results.
 - deposition of the Post-Excavation Assessment and Final Report with Shropshire Historic Environment Record.

6.5 Project archive

- 6.5.1 The project archive will be prepared in accordance DigVentures guidelines for Archive Preparation, following Appendix 1, P1 of MoRPHE PPN 3 (English Heritage 2011), fulfilling the Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long term storage (UKIC 1990). All reports produced by the project will be openly and freely disseminated through Historic Environment Record, Archaeological Data Service, OASIS portal and DigVentures website. Copyright on all reports submitted will reside with DigVentures, although a third party in-perpetuity licence will automatically be given for reproduction of the works by the originator, subject to agreement in writing with DigVentures.



7 PROJECT REVIEW

7.1.1 The project will be continually reviewed by the Project Executive and Project Manager, with a formal review undertaken at the end of each Stage as follows:

Stage	Description	Review Point	Completion Date
Initiation	Consideration of Project Proposal	RV1 – Assemble Project Team and liaise with stakeholders	Completed February 2019
Stage 1	Project Start-up, finalizing Project Design and definition of scope	RV2 – Sign-off on MoRPHE Project Design, and liaison with stakeholders and landowners	Completed April 2019
Stage 2	Archaeological Fieldwork – First Season	RV3 – assemble site archive and distribute pertinent data to specialists	Completed June 2019
Stage 3	Assessment Report & Updated Project Design	RV4 – critically review findings, making recommendations for further work or closure	Completed January 2021
Stage 4	Archaeological Fieldwork – Second Season	RV5 – assemble site archive and distribute pertinent data to specialists	Completed July 2021
Stage 5	Assessment Report & Updated Project Design	RV6 – critically review findings, making recommendations for further work or closure	Completed May 2022
Stage 6	Archaeological Fieldwork – Third Season	RV7 – assemble site archive and distribute pertinent data to specialists	Completed July - August 2022
Stage 7	Assessment Report & Updated Project Design	RV8 – critically review findings, making recommendations for further work or closure	Proposed Spring 2023
Stage 8	Archaeological Fieldwork (Fourth Season)	RV9 – assemble site archive and distribute pertinent data to specialists	Proposed May – June 2023
Stage 9	Assessment Report & Updated Project Design	RV10 – critically review findings, making recommendations for further work or closure	Proposed Spring 2024
Stage 10	Archaeological Fieldwork (Fourth Season)	RV11 – assemble site archive and distribute pertinent data to specialists	June 2024
Stage 11	Assessment Report & Updated Project Design	RV12 – critically review findings, making recommendations for further work or closure	Proposed Spring 2025
Stage 12	Analysis & Publication (<i>where no further execution stage is undertaken</i>)	RV13 – final publication sign-off, and prepare archive for accession	Proposed Summer 2025
Stage 13	Final publication sign-off, and prepare archive for accession		Summer/Autumn 2025
Closure			Summer/Autumn 2025

Project review stages

8 HEALTH AND SAFETY

DigVentures will undertake the works in accordance with Health and Safety requirements and a Health and Safety Plan. This document will take account of any design information pertaining to above and below ground hazards. DigVentures will ensure that all work is carried out in accordance with its company Health and Safety Policy, to standards defined in *The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974*, and *The Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1992*, and in accordance with the SCAUM (Standing Conference of Archaeological Unit Managers) health and safety manual *Health and Safety in Field Archaeology* (1996).



Part Two: Resources and Programming

9 PROJECT TEAM STRUCTURE

9.1 Team and responsibilities

9.1.1 DigVentures' Project Team is presented in Table 3. A summary CV, setting out the skills and expertise of DigVentures core team members is set out in Appendix 2, with CVs for the wider specialist team available on request.

Name	Initials	Project Role	Key Responsibility
Lisa Westcott Wilkins	LWW	Project Executive	Overall project responsibility, budget responsibility and project assurance, liaison with project team, partners and Stakeholders
Brendon Wilkins	BW	Projects Director	Oversight of archaeological strategy and quality assurance
Manda Forster	MF	Director of Operations	Archaeological co-direction (on and off-site), liaison with project team, partners and Stakeholders
Stephanie Duensing	SD	Programme Manager and Site Director	Coordination of programme, post-excavation assessment and reporting, excavation strategy and site direction, day to day management of field team and quality assurance of site archive
Maiya Pina-Dacier	MPD	Director of Community	Community development, on-site fieldwork, and post-excavation assessment
Ben Swain	BS	Project officer	On-site fieldwork, responsible for supporting participant field training
Harriet Tatton	HT	Community Archaeologist	On-site fieldwork, responsible for supporting participant field training
Dr Stephanie Duensing	SD	Research	Wider cultural and landscape contextual research and map regressions

Core team and responsibilities

10 METHODOLOGY

10.1 Introduction

10.1.1 The methods reflect the Project Stages set out in Section 7 above. A task list, with allocation of staff time and team members in Section 12 below. Detailed method statements relating the specific techniques or approaches included below can be found in Appendix 1 at the end of this document.

10.2 Stage 8 – Archaeological fieldwork – Fifth season

10.2.1 A fifth season of project fieldwork (scheduled to run from 14h June – 26th June 2024) will comprise an evaluation trenching exercise on the field south of the main Hall to



meet aspects of Aims 1 and 2 (see Section 7 above). It will aim to inform the following research questions:

- Q3. What is the landscape setting and character of the moated site at Soulton Hall, and how did this shape its design and development?
- Q4. To what extent do the archaeological remains at the Site survive, and what is the potential of the moated site to inform a greater understanding of the landscape context including its relationship to the manor house/hall?
- Q5. Can we refine the chronological narrative for the Site, including the presence of earlier and later features and structures, as defined in Aim 1?
- Q6. Building on previous work, can we establish a fuller understanding of the historical and cultural context, and the motivation for its construction?

10.2.2 Specific archaeological interventions will include three trenches over extant earthworks, LiDAR and geophysical anomalies (Figure 2). Trench locations have been designed to target the moat ditch to the east of the mound and a possible continuation of the 16th and 17th century gardens in the fields to the south of the B5065. The nature and targets for evaluation trenches are further detailed in the methodological statements included in Appendix 1 (see Table 7).

10.2.3 Finally it is intended that archival research is carried out to investigate the history of Soulton Hall, discover if there are any records surviving that could suggest anything about the origins of the moated site, whether it was a moated manor house or castle.

10.3 Stage 9 – Assessment report and updated project design

10.3.1 This Stage will address Aim 3, focusing on answering the following research questions:

- Q7. What is the current state of the archaeological and palaeoenvironmental material across the site?
- Q8. How well do deposits and artefacts survive, and how deeply are they buried?
- Q9. What is the range and spatial patterning of artefacts recovered from the moated site, and can this inform our understanding of the use of the landscape and utilisation of wider resources?
- Q10. Can we increase our understanding of the structures and environment of the moated site at Soulton Hall?

10.4 Stage 10 – Further work, analysis and publication

10.4.1 Addressing Aim 4, this is the main reporting and recommendation stage of the project, focusing on the following research questions.

- Q11. What can an integrated synthesis of the results of this work with previous studies of contemporary regional sites tell us about the Site and its setting?
- Q12. What recommendations can be made to protect, conserve and enhance the site?

11 STAGES, PRODUCTS AND TASKS

11.1 Methodological Linkages

11.1.1 It is anticipated that the 2024 work will be undertaken in three stages (see Table 2). These are set out in the table below and are set against the project aims and questions that will be met at each stage, the products that will be produced and the tasks undertaken.

Stage	Description	Project Aims/ Questions	Products	Task & ID Number
Stage 8	Archaeological Fieldwork	Aim 1: Q1-3 Aim 2 Q4-8 Aim 5	6. Field Archive	8. Site Preparation 9. Fieldwork (remote sensing, survey & excavation) 10. Assemble site archive & distribute to specialists
Stage 9	Assessment Report & Updated Project Design	Aim 3 Q9-12	7. Stratigraphic & Assessment Report	13. Specialist finds and palaeoenvironmental assessments 14. Integrated assessment report 15. Recommendations for further work
Stage 10	Analysis and Publication (where no further execution stage is undertaken)	Aim 1-4 Q1-14	10. Final report 11. Publication 12. Completed and accessioned archive	18. Specialist analysis 19. Finalise report and publication 20. Prepare data and archive for deposition 21. Final sign-off 22. Closure

Stages, Products and Tasks

11.2 Task list by person days and team member

11.2.1 DigVentures projects are managed according to Historic England's MoRPHE project model (Management of Archaeological Research Projects in the Historic Environment) based on a PRINCE2 framework.

Task ID Number	Aims	Task Description	Performed by:	Start (no later than)
Stage 8: Fieldwork				
5	1 & 2	Site Preparation	MF, NJ, SD, MPD, BS, HT	May 2023
6	1 & 2	Fieldwork (trenches)	SD, BS, HT, JH, FW, TD	May – June 2023
7	1 & 2	Assemble site archive & distribute to specialists	Project Team	October 2023
Stage 9: Assessment and recommendations				
8	3	Specialist finds and palaeoenvironmental assessments	Expert Team	October 2023 - December 2023



Task ID Number	Aims	Task Description	Performed by:	Start (no later than)
9	3	Integrated Report	ESC & Project Team	February 2024
10	4	Recommendations for further work	Project Team	February 2024
Stage 10: Analysis and publication (<i>where no further execution stage is undertaken</i>)				
11	4	Specialist analysis	Project Team	March 2024
12	4	Finalise report and publication	Project Team	July 2024
13	4	Prepare data and archive for deposition.	Project Team	July 2024
14	4	Final sign-off	Project Team	July 2024
15	4	Closure	Project Team	July 2024

Project Task List

12 OWNERSHIP

12.1.1 The Copyright on all reports submitted will reside with DigVentures and Soulton Hall. The original copyright holder will retain copyright in pre-existing data.

13 RISK LOG

Risk	Description	Probability	Impact	Counter measures	Estimated time/cost	Owner
1	Inclement weather - prolonged periods of rain	Medium	Delay work programme	Provision of site hut, and planned indoor archiving tasks with flexible programme	3 Days	BW / SD
2	Exceptional weather (drying exposed archaeology)	Medium-Low	Slow progress	Provision of water bowser + spray	None	BW / SD
3	Absence of core team member	Low	Delay work programme	Reallocate responsibilities or appointment of alternative	Minimal if done by adjustment	BW / SD
4	Absence of specialist team member	Low	Delay work programme	Reallocate responsibilities or appointment of alternative	Minimal if done by adjustment	BW / SD
5	Equipment theft/breakages	Medium	Delay work programme	Removal of finds material and digital equipment from site	3 days	BW / SD
6	Serious site injury	Medium	Delay work programme	Detailed H&S Risk Assessment + daily safety briefing	3 days	BW / SD
7	COVID-19	Medium	Delay work programme	Reallocate responsibilities or appointment of alternative	Minimal if done by adjustment	BW / SD



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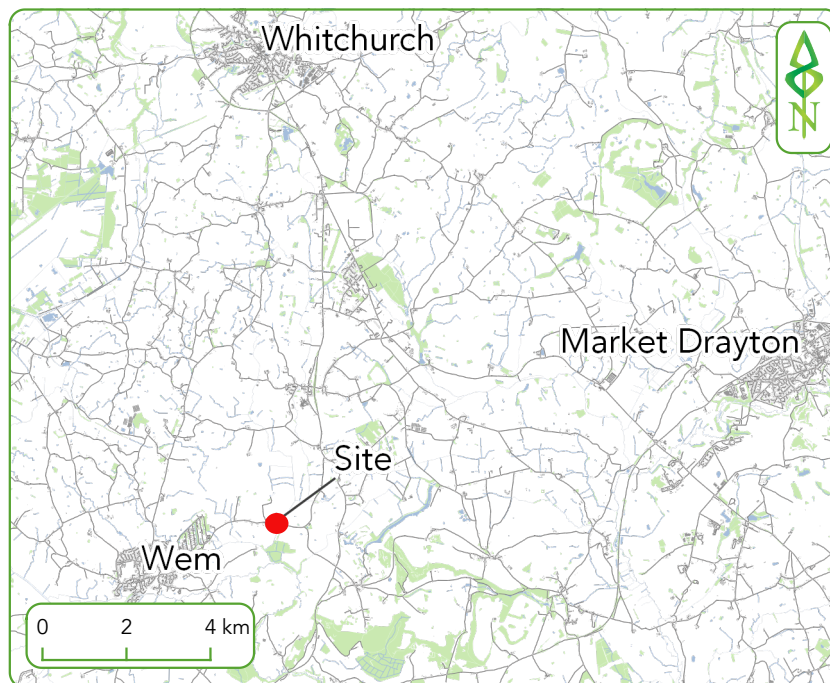


Figure 1. Site location

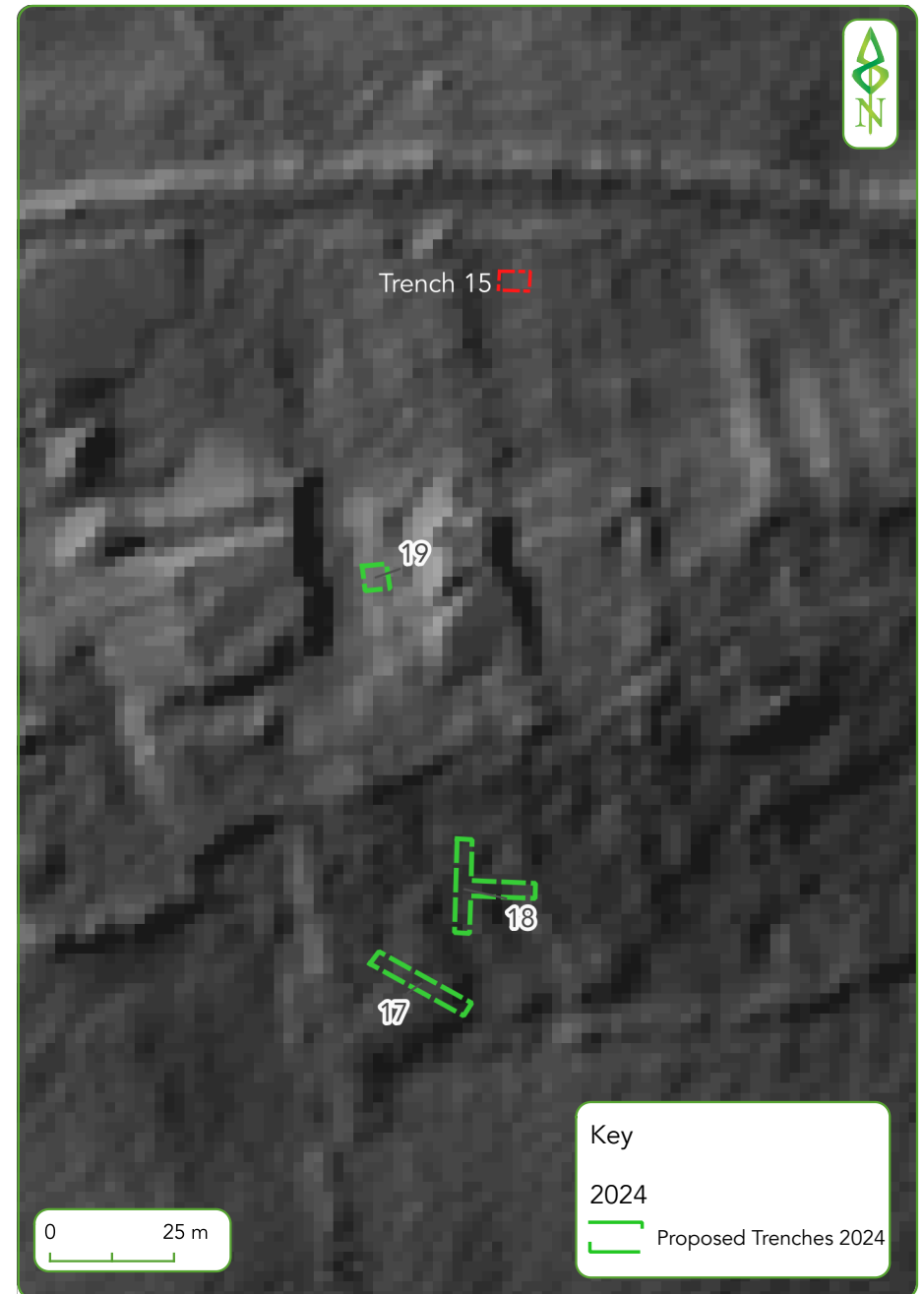


Figure 2. Proposed Trench locations 2024

Appendices

Appendix 1 Method statements

The methods for the proposed project cover all stages of work and may involve a combination of Lidar survey, GIS modelling, archaeological excavation, sampling, palaeoenvironmental sampling and assessment. The methods are linked directly to the project aims and objectives (see Table 1) and detailed below.

Key Questions and Objectives	Earthwork survey	Photogrammetry	Archaeological Excavation	Sampling	Environmental Assessment	Findings Assessment	Synthesis and Data integration
Q1	✓	✓					
Q2	✓	✓					
Q3			✓				
Q4		✓	✓				
Q5			✓		✓	✓	
Q6		✓	✓	✓			
Q7			✓	✓	✓	✓	
Q8				✓	✓	✓	
Q9				✓	✓	✓	
Q10			✓	✓	✓	✓	
Q11			✓	✓	✓	✓	
Q12			✓		✓	✓	✓
Q13		✓	✓			✓	✓

Linking methods with objectives

Photogrammetry survey

Photogrammetry survey will utilise Agisoft PhotoScan 3D Modelling software to detect the feature points of the structure, and match these in different images to create a point cloud. The camera positions will be calculated automatically by the software and a dense reconstruction or geometric model will be built to create a DSM and orthomosaic plans.

Images will be captured perpendicular to the recorded areas using telescopic mounted cameras, to deliver optimum results requiring little or no rectification. All images are taken with DSLR camera with a variety of standard and other lenses, captured in RAW format for later processing into high resolution JPG and TIF files.

Where vehicular access is possible Aerial-Cam can be used to record the larger areas of a structure using perpendicular positioning, as well as going to a greater height to provide general overview and context aerial perspectives. Surface boards will be laid down where necessary to minimise surface impact. Where access is restricted the Pole-Cam operated in the space of a single person, can be used for perpendicular positioning and for close up detailed images of masonry features etc. The methods used to generate raw data in advance of DSM processing are detailed below.

Archaeological excavation (trenches)

In total, three trenches will be excavated, Table 7 below:

Trench	Dimensions	Target	Description
TR 17	20m x 3m	Possible garden and house feature	Trench 17 (20m x 3m) is proposed to be on a northwest to southeast alignment targeting a slight rise in the ground chosen to confirm or refute the current unproven hypothesis that there are ancillary buildings located somewhere in this field associated with the 16th century Hall which were redeveloped in the later post medieval period and subsequently lost to ploughing and agricultural activities.
TR 18	19m x 3m (N-S); 16m x 3m (E-W)	Possible garden and house feature	Trench 18 (19m x 3m N-S and 16m x 3m E-W) is proposed to be a T-shaped trench. Investigating a faint anomaly seen running from the southwest to northeast in a linear alignment, possibly running under the current garden wall. This presents the possibility of archaeology predating the house's construction and may further inform the wider development of the site.
TR 19	5m x 5m	Contingency: well feature	A third contingency trench, Trench 19 (5m x 5m) will be placed targeting a well visible in the modern gravel drive and lawned area immediately to the west of the hall.

Trench target, location and description

Interventions

Topsoil will then be removed by machine and all trenches will then be cleaned by hand, planned and photographed prior to any further excavation. A representative section, not less than 1m in width, of the entire deposit sequence encountered will be recorded. If complex stratigraphy and/or significant remains (e.g. structural remains, artefact scatters, remains clearly of a funerary nature etc.) are encountered, these may only be excavated to the minimum requirement in order to satisfy the project objective, to avoid compromising the integrity of remains that may be either (a) preserved in situ, or (b) excavated in detail during any next phase of research excavation. Interventions will focus on feature intersections in order to establish relative chronologies, and 'clean' sections to maximise retrieval of stratigraphically secure dating evidence and environmental samples.

Full written, drawn and photographic records will be made of each trench even where no archaeological remains are identified. A plan at an appropriate scale (1:50 or 1:100) will be prepared, showing the areas investigated and their relation to more permanent topographical features, and the location of contexts observed and recorded in the course of the investigation. Plans, sections and elevations of archaeological features and deposits will be drawn as necessary at an appropriate scale (normally 1:20, or 1:10 for complex features). Drawings will be made in pencil on permanent drafting film.

Each trench, will be recorded using the DiggIt recording system. Digital photography will be used for all photography of significant features, finds, deposits and general site working. The photographic record will illustrate both the detail and the general context of the principal features and finds excavated, and the Site as a whole.

Backfilling and reinstatement

Where turf is removed it will be stacked away from the trench edge, maintaining their integrity by ensuring that the turves are placed in a correct position (turf side up) and are watered frequently and monitored daily. Topsoil and subsoil will be removed and retained separately for reinstatement.

Palaeoenvironmental sampling

All deposits with good palaeoenvironmental potential will be sampled; bulk samples shall be taken from the section as appropriate, under advisement from the project specialist. Context specific samples will be taken by the most appropriate means (kubiena tins, contiguous columns, incremental block, bulk etc.) for multi-disciplinary analysis. All aspects of the collection, selection, processing, assessment and reporting on the environmental archaeology component of the evaluation shall be undertaken in accordance with the principles set out in *Environmental Archaeology: a guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation* (English Heritage 2011) and with reference to the *Association for Environmental Archaeology's Working Paper No. 2, Environmental Archaeology and Archaeological Evaluations* (1995).

Metal working debris sampling

If significant quantities of metalworking debris are encountered, an on-site reference collection will be assemblage under the supervision of an experienced archeometallurgist. This will provide on-site monitoring of the metalworking debris recovered to flag up if evidence for processes other than iron smithing was emerging and the excavation strategy adapted to optimise the recovery of the evidence. It would facilitate post-excavation processing and also



provide a training and information resource for volunteers and visitors. Magnets will be available on-site to assess the presence of hammerscale and other micro-residues in contexts containing slag or other evidence for ironworking.

Bulk sampling strategy

Bulk samples will usually be 40 litres in size, depending on the likely density of macrofossils. Ten litre samples will only be used for the recovery of plant macrofossils from waterlogged contexts. Samples will be stored in ten litre plastic buckets with lids and handles. A waterproof label will be fixed to the bucket and will record site code, context number and sample number and number of buckets in comprising the sample. A duplicate label will be retained inside the bucket. Samples will be protected from temperatures below 5° and above 25° Celsius and will be prevented from either wetting or drying out.

- Bulk samples selected for processing shall be wet-sieved/floated and washed over a mesh size of 250 microns for the recovery of palaeobotanical and other organic remains, and refloated to maximise recovery;
- Non-organic residues shall be washed through a nest of sieves of 10mm, 5mm, 2mm, 1mm and 250 micron mesh to maximise finds recovery;
- Both organic and non-organic residues shall be dried under controlled conditions;
- The dried inorganic fractions shall be sorted for small finds or any non- buoyant palaeoenvironmental remains, and scanned with a magnet to pick up ferrous debris such as hammerscale;
- The dried organic fractions shall be sorted under a light microscope to identify the range of species or other material on a presence/absence basis, the degree of preservation of the bio-archaeological material and the rough proportions of different categories of material present;
- In the event that waterlogged deposits are identified and sampled, further processing shall be undertaken as appropriate and agreed, including paraffin flotation to recover insect remains. Any such remains shall be scanned to identify and assess their potential;
- Selection of other types of sample for processing and the methods to be used for processing and assessment shall be undertaken on the advice of the relevant specialist and shall be agreed with the Consultant before implementation.

Contexts that are well stratified and potentially datable are all of value, so a systematic approach to selecting samples for processing and assessment will be taken. These will be divided into three categories:

- Category A (always sampled): contexts where the composition of the sediments are likely to inform us of the use of a particular structure or feature or if the deposits are waterlogged. These will include: *in situ* occupation deposits and fills/layers associated with particular activities; hearths; destruction deposits; basal pit/slot trench fills; waterlogged deposits, cesspits or latrines.
- Category B (always sampled, though discretion should be exercised): deposits identified as containing material that could yield information regarding their origin or the process that produced them. These will include: dumps, middens, upper pit fills with evidence for charred material, shell, bone and industrial waste.
- Category C: deposits containing material which is not necessarily related to the function of the feature to which they are related, but which can characterise

deposits from different areas of the site. These will include: secondary and tertiary fills, postholes, levelling deposits, spreads etc.

Category A and B deposits should always be sampled, and Category C deposits sampled on a random basis (such as 1 in 5). These samples can help to characterise the background noise of a site, so as to highlight spatial or temporal trends and provide material that can be directly compared with those from Category A and B. All samples will be taken in large white 10 litre tubs, with labels placed inside with the deposit and attached to the bucket. All samples will be processed on site in a dedicated floatation and wet sieving area.

Zooarchaeology

If large deposits of bone or marine shell are encountered advice of the project zooarchaeologist (Matilda Holmes) will be sought as regards further sampling. If large deposits of bone or marine shell are encountered the project zooarchaeologist advice will be sought as regards further sampling. If articulated groups of bones are encountered, they will be surveyed, recorded in situ, (including digital photography and planning), and then excavated to retain the group's integrity. Bones from each articulated limb will be bagged separately. If inhumations or cremation burials are encountered and excavated the surrounding soil will be sampled to retrieve any loose teeth or bone fragments.

All hand collected animal bones and bones from processed samples will be assessed, following English Heritage Environmental Archaeology guidelines (2002). If warranted by the size of the recovered assemblage, it will be assessed using two different quantification methods to determine the most suitable for full analysis, taking into account methods used in comparative assemblages. The assessment will not distinguish between certain taxonomic groups, for example equids (horse and donkey); full speciation should be carried out as part of any recommended analysis, using a vertebrate comparative collection. In addition to quantification of domestic species and occurrence of wild species, the assessment will consider the number of articulated bone groups, and the prevalence of aging, sexing and osteometric data available for full analysis, following standard published conventions. The assessment report will comment on the potential of the assemblage, particularly in the context of the excavation's research questions and current understanding of comparative assemblages. It will also provide recommendations for any necessary future analysis.

Human osteoarchaeology

In the event of the discovery of human remains (inhumations, cremations and disarticulated fragments) they should be left in situ, covered and protected, until the English Heritage Inspector of Ancient Monuments has been informed. If a decision is taken to remove them, they will be fully recorded and excavated in compliance with the relevant Ministry of Justice Licence. The excavation of human remains will be carried out in accordance with the procedures detailed in the document Excavation and post-excavation treatment of cremated and inhumed human remains (McKinley and Roberts 1993, IFA Technical Paper 13). Significant assemblages of human remains will be subject to an assessment of DNA preservation to establish potential familial relationships.

Inhumations will be scanned with a metal detector prior to excavation, and the position of possible metallic grave goods will be noted. Wherever possible, each burial will be excavated within a single working day, particularly with regard to visible grave goods. To minimise

unauthorised disturbance of human remains, partially exposed remains will be covered overnight, though in such a way as to not draw undue attention, using loose excavated spoil.

Excavation of inhumations will be undertaken using a trowel, plasterer's leaf, plastic spoon and paintbrush as appropriate depending on the condition of the bones. When lifted the bones will be bagged by skeletal area (skull, axial, upper and lower limbs) with separate bags for the left and right side. A standard series of samples will be taken from each inhumation burial to ensure full recovery of any remaining osseous tissues or small artefacts. Once human remains are removed from inhumation graves, any soil residue remaining at the base of the grave will be retrieved for bulk processing.

Inhumations and cremations will be drawn at a scale of 1:10 and photographed prior to lifting. They will be recorded on Skeleton Record Sheets that form an integral part of the site pro forma recording system. The recording will include condition, completeness, articulation, orientation and posture. Fragile objects found within graves will be lifted with appropriate care and handling to minimise breakage. This may include subsequent controlled excavation under laboratory conditions. A trained conservator will be employed on the site if necessary.

All cremation burials and cremation-related contexts will be excavated and sampled in quadrants to ascertain the distribution of any archaeological components within the fills, with division into spit also if appropriate. Cremation-related features other than burials may be subject to more detailed sub-divisions, the appropriate strategy being developed by a specialist as the size and nature of the remains becomes clear. Undisturbed and slightly disturbed, but largely intact, urned cremation burials will be lifted *en masse* for excavation under laboratory conditions. The urns will be wrapped in crepe bandages and securely boxed for transportation. Where a vessel has been crushed, thereby disrupting any original internal deposition of the cremated remains, it will be lifted *en masse* after separate recovery of displaced sherds. All cremation-related contexts will be subject to whole-earth recovery from the point at which any cremated bone or other pyre debris is observed. If deposits of placed human bone are encountered in features, these may be excavated in spits if appropriate. The soils from these features will be bulk sampled.

Finds

Finds will be treated in accordance with the relevant guidance given in the *Chartered Institute for Archaeologist's Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation* (2008), excepting where statements made below supersede them. All artefacts will be retained from excavated contexts, except features or deposits undoubtedly of modern date. In these circumstances sufficient artefacts will only be retained to elucidate the date and function of the feature or deposit. All artefacts from the evaluation works will, as a minimum, be washed, marked, counted, weighed and identified.

Conservation

Artefacts will be recovered as a matter of routine during the excavation. When retrieved from the ground finds will be kept in a finds tray or appropriate bags in accordance with First Aid for Finds (Walker 1990). Where necessary, a conservator may be required to recover fragile finds from the ground depending upon circumstances.

After the completion of the fieldwork stage, a conservation assessment will be undertaken which will include the X-radiography of all the ironwork (after initial screening to separate obviously modern debris), and a selection of the non-ferrous finds (including all coins). A



sample of slag may also be X-rayed to assist with identification and interpretation. Wet-packed material, including glass, bone and leather will be stabilised and consolidated to ensure their long-term preservation. All finds will be stored in optimum conditions in accordance with First Aid for Finds and Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-Term Storage (Walker, 1990).

The conservation assessment report will include statements on condition, stability and potential for further investigation (with conservation costs) for all material groups. The conservation report will be included in the updated project design prepared for the analysis stage of the project.

Scientific dating

Where uncontaminated deposits are recorded which are able to inform understanding of the research aims (in particular, relating to the construction of the banks and ditches), appropriate samples will be taken. Radiocarbon dating will be appropriate for clarifying and linking aspects of archaeological and environmental chronologies, and a strategy for this will be agreed following discussion with HE Science Advisor and the relevant specialists.

Synthesis and data integration

The results of the project will be integrated and synthesised with those from the previous investigations and other relevant work within the region and further afield (see Section 1 and 2 above). This will include a literature review of other pertinent sites.

Geophysical Survey

The geophysical surveys undertaken at the site comprised a magnetometer survey and an earth resistance survey. All geophysical survey work was carried out in accordance with recommended good practice specified in the EAC guideline documents published by Historic England (Schmidt et al. 2016) and the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists Standard and Guidance for archaeological geophysical survey (2014).

Both survey methodologies were conducted across a set of grids measuring 30m by 30m. The survey grids were set out using a Trimble R10 GPS using real time corrections to an accuracy of <0.10m. The survey grid was established using a baseline methodology and all grid corners were recorded using the GPS. Control points were also recorded at adjacent buildings and stationary features by way of assessing the accuracy of the GPS in post-processing. The survey grid was demarcated using bamboo canes as temporary markers which were removed following completion of the survey.

Magnetometer Survey

A magnetometer survey was conducted across the field to the north of the road surrounding the mound, as well as a small area on top of the mound, which measured approximately 0.81Ha. A strip in the field to the south of the road was also surveyed by the University students as part of their field school which measured approximately 0.32Ha.

The magnetometer survey was undertaken using a Bartington Grad601-2 magnetic gradiometer. The Bartington Grad601-2 is a dual sensor instrument, incorporating two Grad-01-1000 sensors set at 1m apart. The sites were surveyed in a grid-like pattern within 30m-by-30m grid squares. Recordings were taken every 0.25m along traverses set 1m apart in a zig-zag patterning resulting in 3600 readings per full 30m grid. The gradiometer was zeroed on a

magnetically quiet point within the site before survey commenced and again before the afternoon's survey. If significant drift occurred, the machine was re-balanced.

The data was downloaded using Bartington's Grad601 download software and then imported into Geoplot v4.0 (Geoscan Research) for data processing. The gradiometer data was combined with the GPS points and georeferenced in QGIS and is presented in this report as greyscale data plots. Interpretations of the data have also been created in QGIS as line and polygon data and these interpretative figures are presented alongside the data.

Earth Resistance Survey

An earth resistance survey was conducted on top of the mound to clarify the magnetometer survey results, over an area measuring approximately 0.03Ha. A single grid of earth resistance survey was also undertaken in the field to the south of the road by the University students as part of their field school.

An RM85 resistivity meter (Geoscan Research) was used to undertake the earth resistance survey. The RM85 earth resistance meter consisted of three probes in a parallel twin electrode configuration, which is capable of detecting archaeological remains to a depth of 1m below the surface. The survey was conducted along an east-west alignment in a zig-zag fashion across 30m grid squares, utilising a sample interval of 0.5m with a traverse interval of 0.5m.

The earth resistance data were downloaded and processed using Geoplot v4.0 (Geoscan Research) in order to produce greyscale plots of the data. The data was georeferenced in QGIS and presented in this report alongside interpretations of the data, created as lines and polygons in QGIS.

Topographic survey and GIS modelling

Topographical survey work was carried out using a Trimble Real Time Differential GPS survey system. The Trimble VRS system is used in conjunction with a GPS Rover unit. It allows for surveying without the use of a site specific fixed base station. This is achieved by connecting to Trimble's network of fixed base stations by means of mobile phone communication. This method is highly efficient and accurate (± 2 cm) when good signal is available. The survey data is exported from the data logger as a comma delimited file (csv) and a Trimble data collector file (dc). Either of these files can be imported into Trimble GeoSite Communicator, which recognises the feature code library and plots all strings, polygons and labels as intended. All survey and excavation data was stored within a GIS environment, which will remain the principle conduit for all spatial data throughout the project. Survey was undertaken to standards identified in best practice guidance, including HE Traversing the Past 2016 and HE Understanding the archaeology of landscapes 2017.