



Hunsdon Manor, Weston-under-Penyard,
Herefordshire: archaeological evaluation

Huw Sherlock and P J Pikes
2001



archenfield archaeology ltd

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Archenfield Archaeology Ltd is a multidisciplinary archaeological consultancy, offering a complete range of archaeological advice and services to the public and private sector. We specialise in giving archaeological advice to developers, housing associations and private individuals. We also undertake archaeological intervention, from monitoring to full-scale excavation; building survey; landscape and geophysical surveys and community-based historical and archaeological projects.

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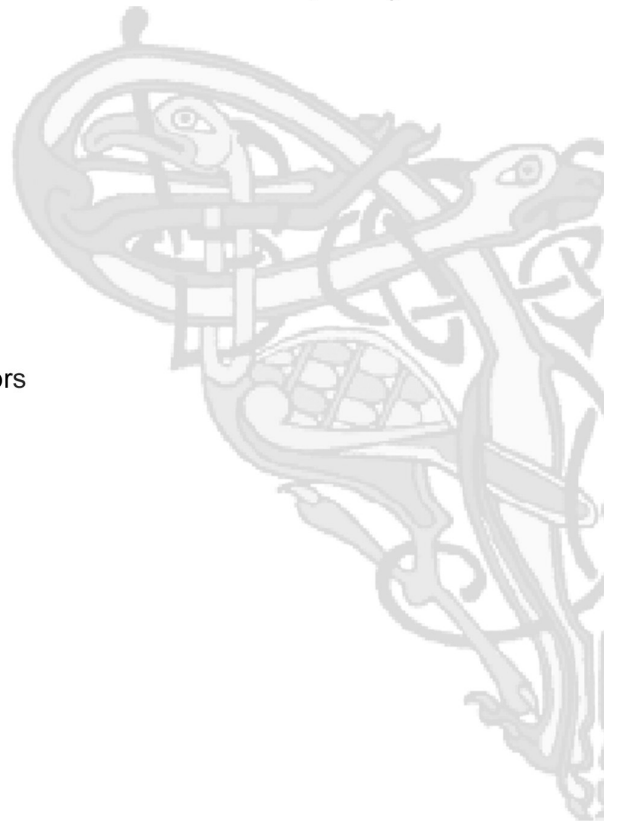
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Cover Photograph: Hunsdon Manor Hotel



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Summary

Archenfield Archaeology conducted an evaluation excavation in advance of a proposed housing development adjacent to Hunsdon Manor Hotel, Weston-under-Penyard, Herefordshire. Three trenches, each measuring 10 metres by 2 metres, were excavated by machine to an average depth of about 1 metre.

Despite the relative proximity of the Roman site of Ariconium, no features of any date earlier than the 19th century were found.

One large feature containing pot and building material of the early 19th century was observed in the southernmost of the trenches.

The excavation supported the cartographic evidence that the area under investigation was a paddock adjacent to the farmhouse in the early 18th century and had subsequently been a garden area for the house.

1.0 Introduction

NGR SO 6344 2330

Herefordshire Sites and Monuments Record - Event No 31057

Hereford City Museum Accession No 2001-5

Leila and Len Clarke (the clients) commissioned a programme of archaeological evaluation and recording at Hunsdon Manor Hotel, Weston-under-Penyard, Herefordshire.

The project was undertaken in compliance with a brief issued by the archaeological advisor to Herefordshire Council in response to an application for planning permission to construct housing on land adjacent to the hotel (application reference SE2000/1523/F).

The fieldwork took place in January 2001.

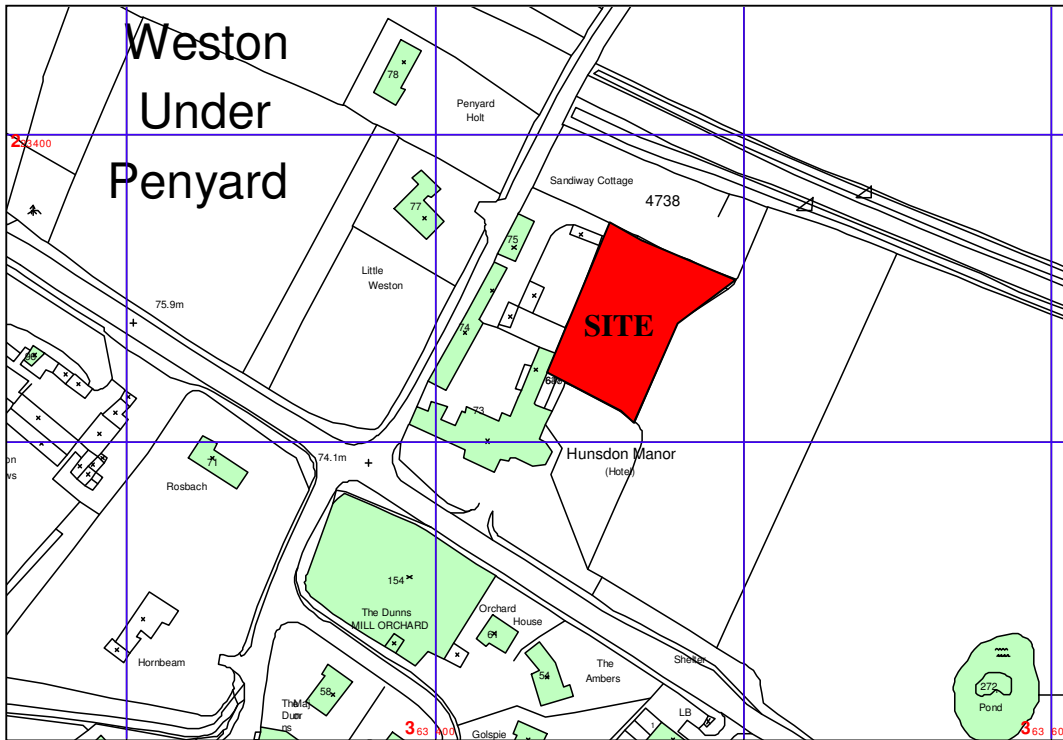
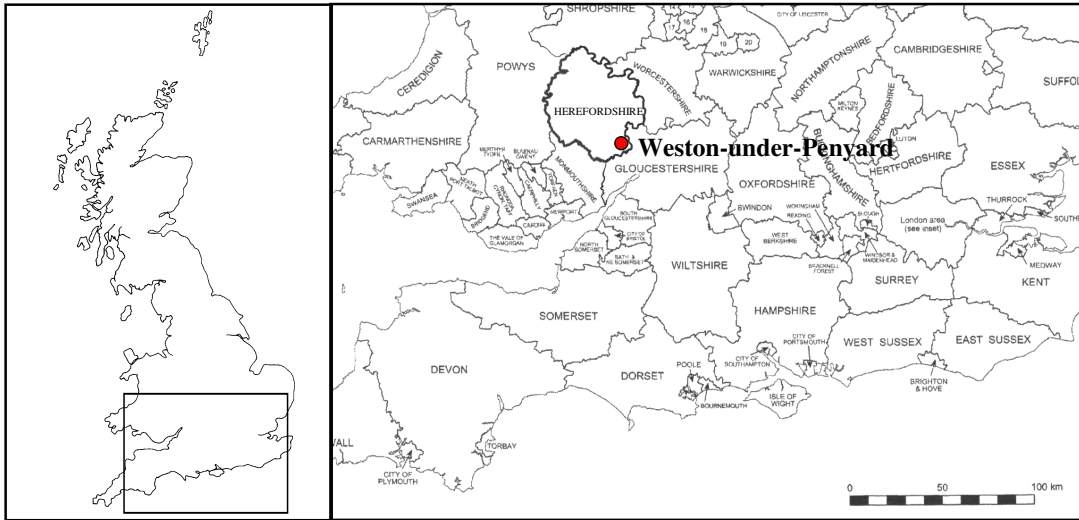


Figure 1: Location Plan (OS Superplan data reproduced under license drawing ref. Number 26103980)

2.0 Geological, historical and archaeological background

2.1 Geological background and land use

The site lies within an area which was, at the time of the excavation, mainly a vegetable garden associated with the Hunsdon Manor Hotel.

2.2 Historical background

The site lies on the edge of the village of Weston-under-Penyard and south-west of the core of the centre of the Roman settlement of Ariconium. Ariconium is identified from the Antonine Itinerary: '*Caerleon to Reading. Via Usk 11 miles to Monmouth - 11 to Ariconium - 15 to Gloucester*' (Taylor, 1998).

Weston-under-Penyard, *Westune* in Domesday, derives its name from being the western settlement - the west *tun* - in the old land parcel containing Ariconium (Coplestone-Crow, 1989). The eastern *tun* in the parcel is Aston Ingham, which was *Estune* in Domesday and takes its Ingham suffix from the family which owned the manor in the 13th century (*ibid.*). The Penyard element is Welsh - high hill (*ibid.*).

At Domesday Weston was held by Durand of Pîtres, constable of Gloucester Castle and Sheriff of Gloucestershire (Thorn and Thorn, 1983). *Gunnar* had held it in King Edward's time. Of Durand's eight manors in Herefordshire, all three in Bronshash Hundred had been held by Gunnar, the others being Pontshill and Coldborough.

Westune had two hides which paid tax, and two borderii had 1 plough, although three more were possible. Its value, in 1066 and in 1086 was 4 shillings.

The Parish Church of Weston-under-Penyard, St Lawrence, is a structure of sandstone rubble with ashlar dressing with a nave and a north aisle dating from the late 12th century (RCHM, 1932). Weston was legally in the Forest of Dean for most of this period, although temporarily 'de-forested' in the legal sense in 1298 (Hart, 1966, p29).

The whole site lies within the land parcel 198 on the tithe map of 1838 (figure 2), described as Sandy Way *Farm* on the accompanying apportionment. This was a farm of 85 acres, owned by William Casy Cocks and farmed by Joseph Large. The census of 1841 records Joseph, aged 30, and his 24 year old wife, Elizabeth at the farm, together with William Williams a 14 year old farm lad.

The 1876 Littlebury's Directory lists Mr James Meredith at Sandy Way. In 1905 the house, The Sandiway, was the residence of Edward William Prevost, PhD, FRSE. Dr Prevost was still resident there in 1913 but had acquired the rank of Major.

The military connection continued in 1929 when the occupier of The Sandiway was Lt-Colonel John St Clair Macmillan.¹ There were several ex service officers in the village including the, clearly socially inferior, retired Major Charles Howard Featherstonehaugh Nixon, who was not only a rank lower but had held an Indian Army Commission. Colonel Macmillan was seriously outranked in the village however. A retired Royal Navy captain, Ethelbert S Silk, lived at White Hall and a full colonel, Edward Deedes Newnham-Smith JP at Frogmore. Any social consolation that the former was an Engineer-Captain and that latter ex Indian Army could not have disguised the fact that a full colonel of the British Army, Colonel C Fairlie, lived at Wharton Lodge. But at the apex of the military and naval establishment of Preston was the occupier of Bromash House, Major-

¹ Information from Kelly's and Littlebury's Directories of various years.

General Sir Harry Christopher Tytler KCB, CMG, CIE, DSO, who stood considerable higher up the ladder.

In 1929 even General Tytler's gardener had been listed in the directory, as had several others. In 1934 Charles Reeves had an entry as Colonel Macmillan's gardener at The Cottage. Charles Reeves remained as gardener in 1941, when the occupier of The Sandiway was Philip Bartholemew Barnaby, JP.

The cartographic information suggests that the area under investigation was a paddock adjacent to the farmhouse in the early 19th century.

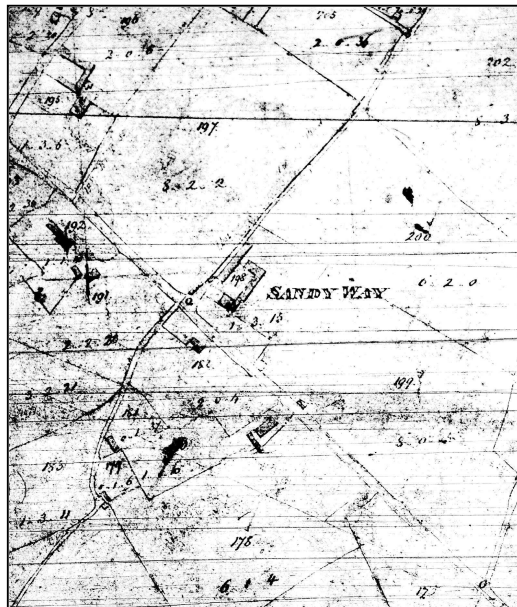


Figure 2: Extract from the 1838 tithe map of Weston under Penyard.

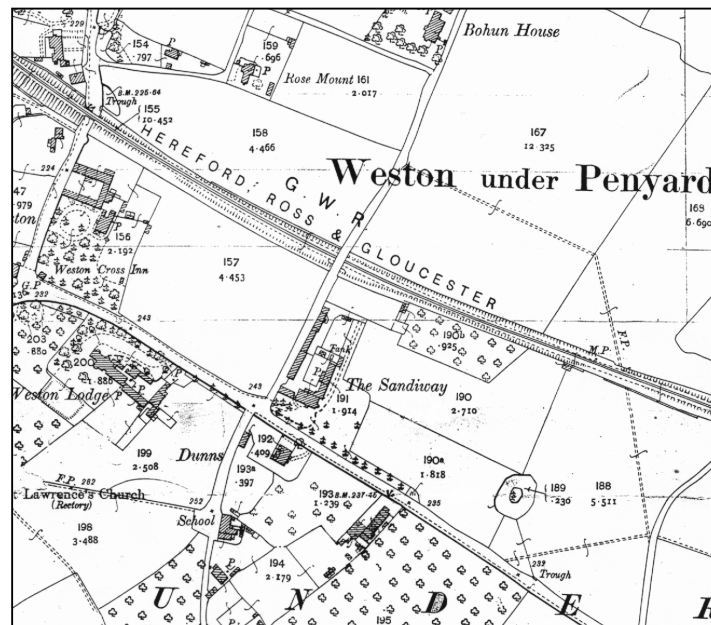


Figure 3: Extract from the 1903 2nd edition 1:2500 Ordnance Survey plan. By this time Sandy Ways had become *The Sandiway*

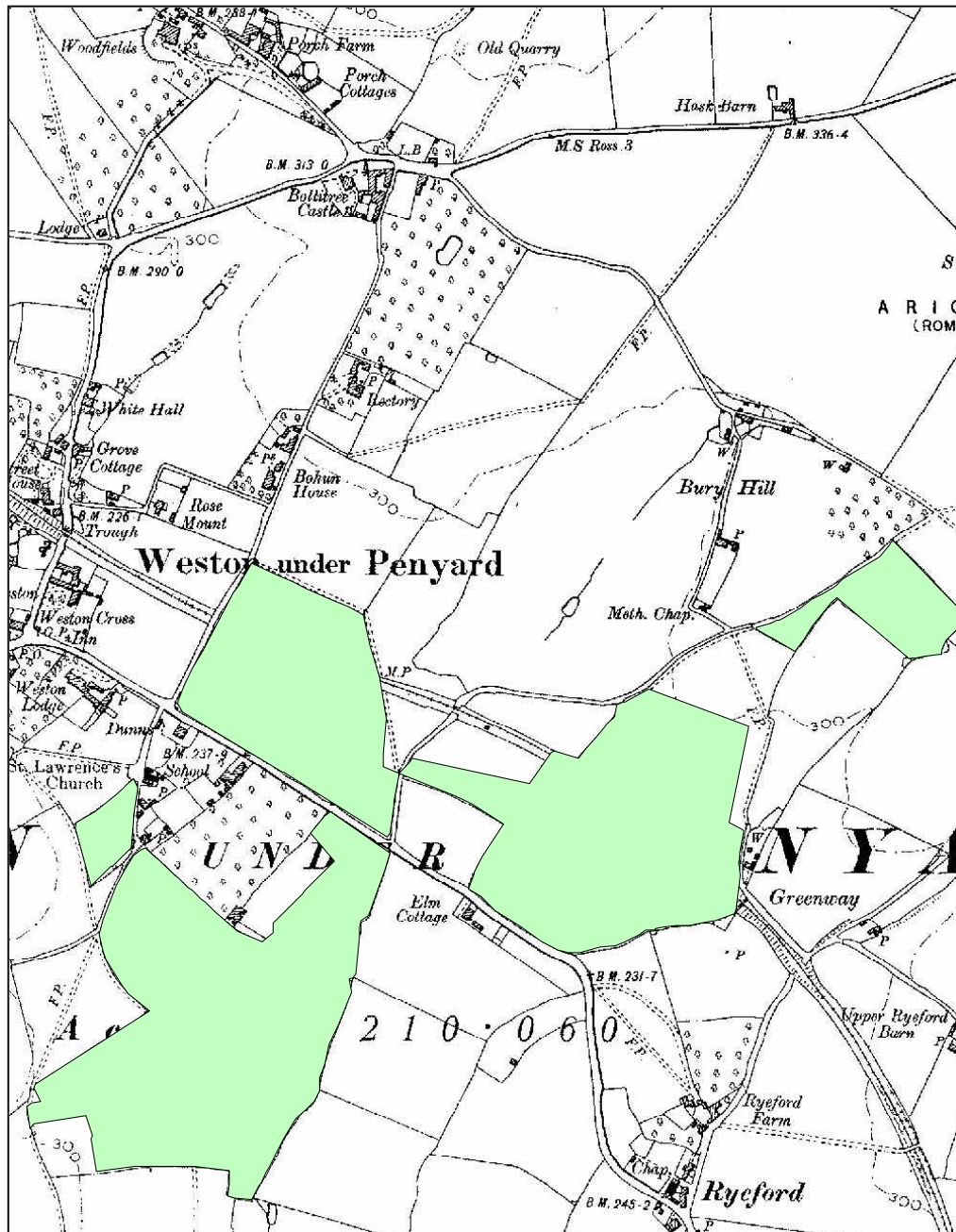


Figure 4: The fields of Sandy Ways Farm in the 1838 tithe survey. The tenant farmer was Joseph Large and the landowner was William Casy Cocks. The base map here is the 1905 Ordnance survey six inch to one mile - the railway was of course not present in 1838.

2.3 Archaeological background

The site lies very near to the Roman industrial settlement at Ariconium. This settlement was the subject of a survey in 1996, as part of the Central Marches Historic Towns Project (Dalwood, 1996). Ariconium will also be the subject of a forthcoming English Heritage desk-based survey. In the interim, the late Elizabeth Taylor, produced a fieldwork summary which was published in the Herefordshire Archaeological Newsletter (Taylor, 1998).

Ariconium has produced large quantities of ancient finds including pre-Roman coins, 13 of which were recovered from an excavation in the 1920s (Hayter, 1923).

Reports date from 1785 when Thomas Hopkins reported that '*where the streets stood might almost be traced by the colour of the soil*' (ibid.).

3.0 Project aims and objectives

The aims of the project were: -

- To examine, by means of suitably positioned trenches, the area of the proposed development for evidence of human activity. Particular attention was to be paid to evidence that might be associated with the nearby Roman town of Ariconium.
- A smooth bucket was to be used to remove the overburden in successive spits of soil, allowing the examination of the spoil for diagnostic artefacts and the recognition of *in situ* deposits and features.
- To clean the area of the trenches using archaeological techniques and to remove rubble and other fill from underground structures. A contextual, photographic and drawn record of such features was to be made.
- All work was to be carried out following standard Institute of Field Archaeologists guidelines for archaeological excavation, and the methodology laid out in the Archenfield Archaeology Site Recording Manual.
- To make a record of all finds and any environmental material recovered.
- To ensure that if any environmental evidence was preserved, that a sufficient sample be retained to allow for further analysis (normally at least a 10L sample was to be taken and stored in a thick gauge polythene bag, labelled both inside and outside with a permanent marker using a waterproof label).
- To ensure that the location and of the area excavated was accurately recorded on a suitably scaled plan.
- To record negative evidence and to consider its implications.
- To ensure that where important archaeological remains existed, plans for the preservation *in-situ* of such remains was discussed with the archaeological adviser to Herefordshire Council and the client.
- To ensure that a recording strategy was adopted that allowed for the production of a stratigraphic record of the deposits encountered, and a record of the extent and depth of the excavations.

4.0 Methodology

4.1 Field Methodology

The following methodology was employed: -

- Suitably qualified archaeologists monitored all activity that involved disturbance of the ground surface.
- An assessment of the archaeological significance of finds, structures and deposits was made and appropriate action taken.
- Structures and stratigraphic sequences observed were recorded on scaled drawings and the position of all work disturbing the ground, and any archaeological features, was located on them.
- The presence of artefacts and was recorded with a description of their type, quantity and original location.

- All descriptions of structures and deposits, photographic records and drawing numbers were recorded on the relevant data capture documents in accordance with Archenfield Archaeology's standard site recording procedures.
- Significant features were, where possible, photographed next to an appropriate scale. Each photographic exposure was recorded in the photographic log.
- Staff carrying out the fieldwork followed the guidelines laid down in the Archenfield Archaeology Health and Safety Policy
- Archenfield Archaeology conforms to the Institute of Field Archaeologists' Code of Conduct and code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual arrangements in Field Archaeology. All projects are, where applicable, carried out in accordance with IFA Standards and Guidance or Draft Standards and Guidance.

4.2 Processing methodology

- All retained artefacts were subjected to further analysis.
- Laura Jones (of the Worcestershire Archaeological Service), a recognised specialist in Roman pottery analysed the ceramic material recovered and has provided spot dates.
- All data were entered into a Microsoft Access relational database

5.0 The results

5.1 The stratigraphy

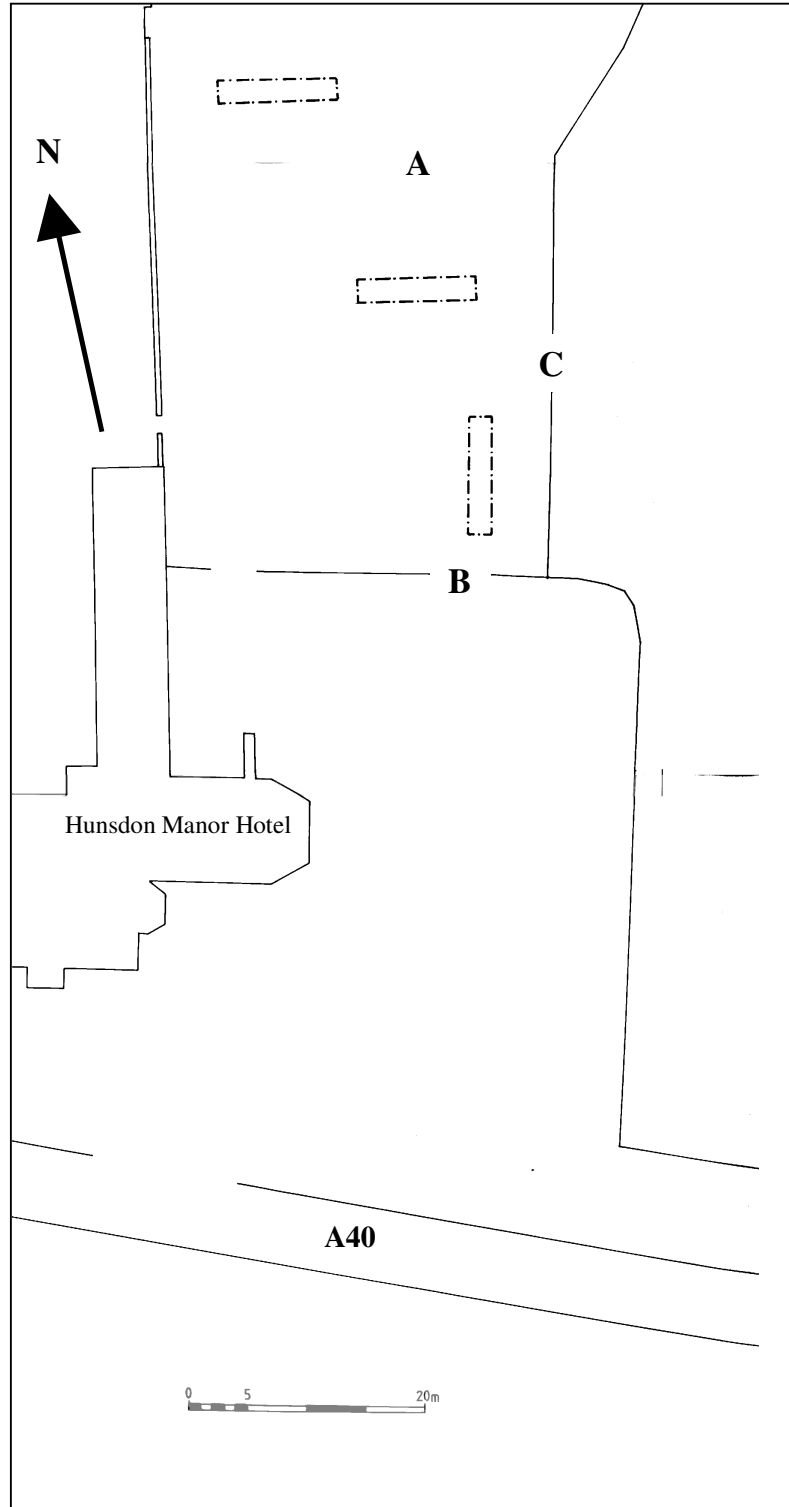


Figure 5: Trench location plan

Trench A

Trench A measured 10 metres by 2 metres and was aligned east to west in the north-west corner of the area of the proposed development. The western end of this trench was positioned to cut the eastern edge of a track-way, which crossed the site from north to south.

The edge of the trackway was found to be defined by vertically placed concrete blocks, which projected from the contemporary ground surface. They were aligned north to south, at a distance of 1.1 metres to the east of the western edge of the cutting. These were butted to the west by a layer of gravel approximately 0.2 metres in thickness. Here the soil was removed to a depth of 0.5 metre, the last 0.3 metre being a very clean sandy clay loam with no sign of disturbance of any kind apart from occasional root and worm activity.

To the east of this area there was an increasing density of roots and the depth of mechanical excavation was increased to 0.7 to 0.8 metre. No evidence of human activity was found apart from a few sherds of pottery in the topsoil (see below).

Trench B

Trench B measured 10 metres by 2 metres and was aligned north to south in the south-east corner of the area of the proposed development. This trench was mechanically excavated to a depth of 1.1 metres. A large post-medieval pit (5) was present in this trench which produced pottery from the early 19th century. This feature contains quantities of building material - broken brick, slate and plaster.

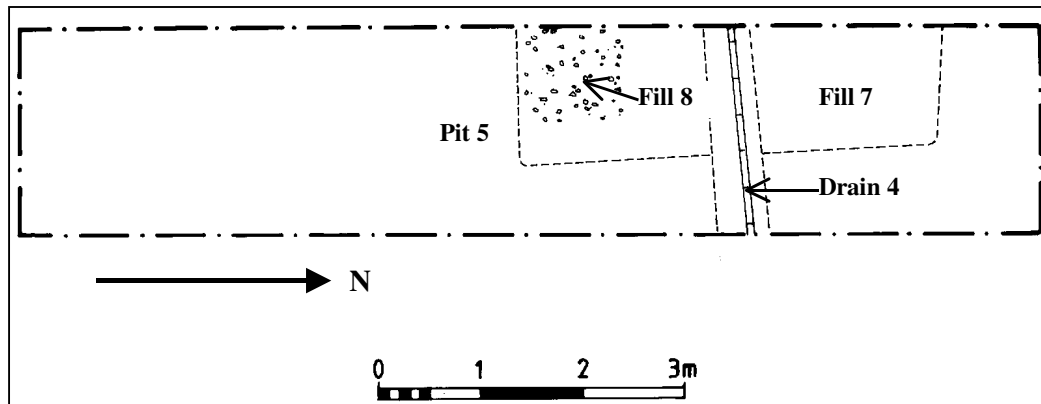


Figure 6: Plan of Trench B

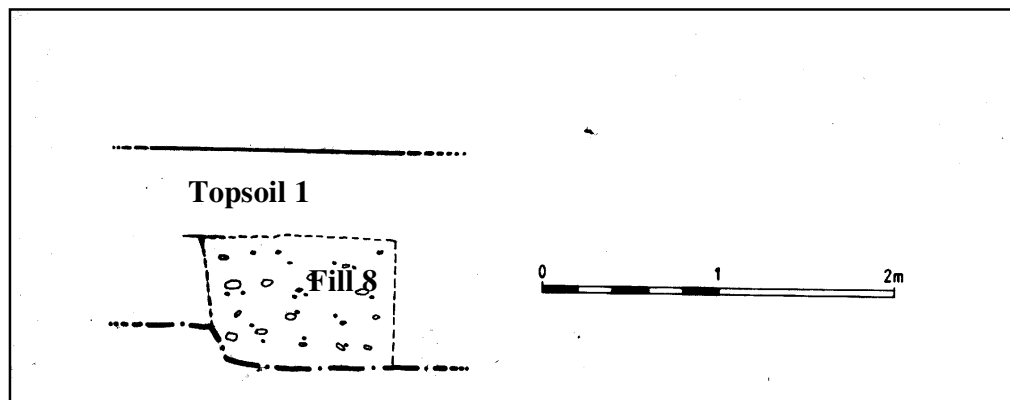


Figure 7: Section of Trench B

Trench C

Trench C also measured 10 metres by 2 metres. This trench was aligned east to west in the centre of the area of the proposed development.

This trench was mechanically excavated throughout to a depth of 0.7 metre. A few sherds of pottery were recovered from the upper levels but otherwise no evidence of human activity was found.

5.2 The finds

One sherd of a Severn Valley Ware bowl of an Antonine date (138 AD to 180 AD)¹ was recovered from the topsoil (context 9) in Trench A.

Other sherds, recovered from the fills of pit 5, were of an early 19th century date.

6.0 Conclusions

With the exception of some abraded sherds of pottery, no trace at all of any Roman activity was found during the excavation. The clear inference is that the area of the site was at some distance from Roman Ariconium and its industry.

The site seems to have been part of a paddock or small enclosure to the east of the farmstead in the early 19th century. Sometime in the middle of the century it became merged with the field to the east until it was again enclosed to form part of the garden to the house.

¹

The Antonine period encompasses the reigns of the emperor Antoninus Pius (138-161) and his adopted son Marcus Aurelius (161-180). It also covers Lucius Verus, another adopted son of Antoninus Pius and co-emperor with Marcus Aurelius in 161 to 169. The emperor Commodus (176-192) is also sometimes included.

7.0 Archive deposition

The primary project archive, consisting of the excavated material and any original paper records, will be prepared and stored in accordance with the guidelines laid down in the Institute of Field Archaeologists' guidelines for the preparation and storage of archives. The primary archive will be stored with Hereford City Museum.

A copy of the digital archive, stored on CD and consisting of context, artefact and ecofact data, together with the site plan and selected photographs, will accompany the primary archive.

The client, in consultation with the project manager, will make provision for the deposition of all finds from the excavation with the Hereford City Museum. On completion of the fieldwork and the processing, collation, recording and analysis of the finds from the excavation all finds will be handed over to the museum staff, along with the project archive. Arrangements will be made with the museum for the transfer of title.

8.0 Publication and dissemination proposals

Paper copies of this report will be lodged with the Archaeological Adviser to Herefordshire Council, Herefordshire Sites and Monuments Record and Hereford City Library. A short note on the project will be prepared for publication in Transactions of the Woolhope Naturalists Field Club.

Copies of this report on CD, including the supporting archival material will be available from Archenfield Archaeology.

The complete photographic record, including the negatives, will be retained by Archenfield Archaeology.

General bibliography

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- Tithe Commissioners, 1838 Weston-under-Penyard Parish Tithe Map
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- Ordnance Survey, 1970 1:2500 plan. Sheets SO6223 and SO6323

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