



238 High Street

Welford on Avon, Warwickshire

238 High Street

Welford on Avon, Warwickshire; archaeological evaluation

NGR: SP 14933 52089

Site code: WHS16

OASIS ID: 110archa1-251388

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SUMMARY

An archaeological evaluation was carried out during March 2016 at 238 High Street, Welford on Avon, Warks. In advance of a proposal to demolish the existing building and for the erection of two detached dwellings on the site.

Historic mapping indicated little activity within the study site until the erection after 1966 of the former building. A 19th century cottage in the adjacent plot suggests some earlier sub-division of the land and a pit recorded within the site during the trial trenching is probably associated with the earlier occupation of this building.

The two drainage trenches to the west of the site revealed that the stratified deposits survive intact within the former garden area and that these comprise a sequence of natural clay overlain by a relict subsoil and garden topsoil. There was no evidence of a relict subsoil overlying the natural sand or clay within either of the two trenches located within the proposed plots and it is assumed that this had been removed during construction of the previous building.

The absence of any earlier features or deposits in addition to the lack residual finds from the excavation suggests an open rural agricultural environment with little human activity within the study site until development after 1966.

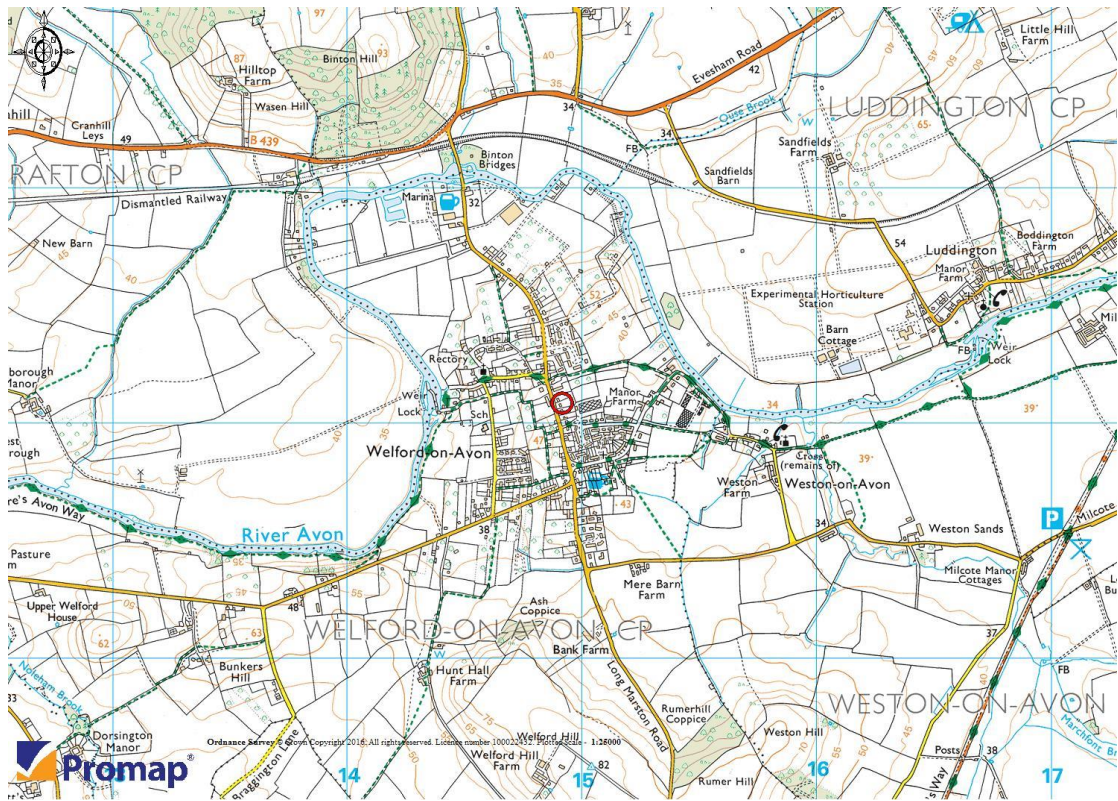


Fig. 1; site location (circled in red)

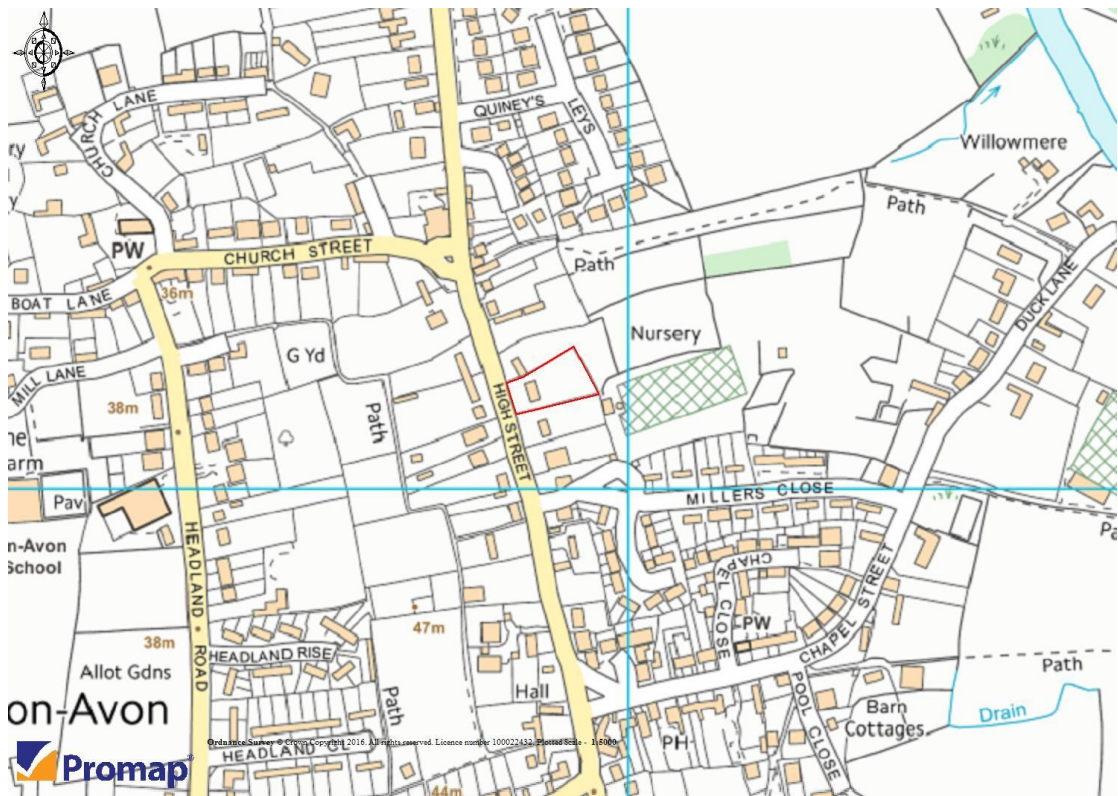


Fig. 2; study site (outlined in red)

INTRODUCTION

Location and scope of work (Figs. 1 & 2)

This document details the results of an archaeological evaluation during 11th, 12th and 13th March 2016 at 238 High Street, Welford on Avon, Warks., CV378EA at the request of Design Visual Ltd on behalf of the owner. The evaluation was required by the Warwickshire County Council Archaeological Information and Advice Team as a condition of planning permission granted on appeal (Appeal Ref: APP/J3720/W/15/3133509) for a proposal to demolish the existing building and for the erection of two detached dwellings on the site.

The development lay within an area of significant archaeological potential, within the probable extent of the medieval settlement at Barton (Warwickshire Historic Environment Record MWA 590). Archaeological fieldwork to the south-west has also recently identified Iron Age features including a pit alignment and an enclosure. There is therefore a potential for the proposed development to impact upon archaeological features associated with the use of this area from the later prehistoric period onwards.

The results of the evaluation would be used to determine the likely nature, extent, preservation and importance of archaeological remains, and how these may have been affected by development of the site so that appropriate mitigation strategies could be devised. The evaluation represented an initial investigation and in the event that archaeological deposits are encountered during the trial trenching then an approved programme of archaeological work would be required in order to record the deposits prior to development.

Geology and topography

The study site (approx. 2400m²) lies within the centre of the village of Welford on Avon and currently comprises a small strip of land extending north-east to south-west from the north-east side of the High Street. The site lies at approximately 45m AOD (Above Ordnance Datum) and preliminary investigations show that the underlying geology comprises Second Terrace river gravels of the River Avon (BGS, 1974).

Archaeological and historical background

Historic mapping shows that in 1884 (OS First Edition) the site comprised the west half of a larger field, partly orchard, that extends further to the north-east. The site is bounded to the south by a smaller field also partly orchard, whilst a building (Rose Cottage) and well lies in the adjacent property to the north. By 1901 (Second Edition) a small building occupies part of the site frontage.

The village, one of the largest in the parish, is situated at the base of the deep bend in the river and comprises about 30 timber-framed buildings, apparently none earlier than the 17th century (VCH, 1949). About two-thirds of them have thatched roofs, the others are tiled. The main village street forms part of the main road from Binton Bridge southwards to Long Marston and has a maypole at the south end in a small triangular green.

The church (MWA1805) is mid to late 12th century. It stands on the north side of a road, running west from the north end of the village street, which ends at the river by the mill where there was the ancient ford. About a third of the houses are grouped near the church. Another third or more are scattered along the village street, and others in a side road that runs eastward from the maypole to end at the river on the east side of the deep bend.

The Warwickshire Historic Environment Record (HER) was consulted in 2016 with a search carried out over a 500m radius centred on the site.

Monuments

A total of 21 monuments are recorded within the search area. The earliest of these relate to prehistoric activity. Various flint artefacts of Neolithic and Bronze Age date have been found at a number of locations. Two find spots have been made on the west (MWA4412) and east (MWA5312) side of Headland Road which lies on the west side of the village. Similar finds (MWA4423 & MWA5190) were also found east of the High Street.

Roman

The remains of a Roman pot and other fragments of pottery (MWA3750) were found west of Headland Road in 1978 beneath a glasshouse, Almost complete 2nd century pot of Severn Valley ware, portion of a coarse-ware cooking pot.

The potential for the site of a possible Roman villa (MWA1344) located 200m west of the village is suggested by finds made in 1958 and again in 1988 including coins and building material such as roof tile. It is.

An undated V-shaped ditch (MWA9833) which may have belonged to a Romano-British field system indicated by cropmarks immediately west of the development site. The site is located at Welford-on-Avon Primary School. A single undated V-shaped ditch was observed during archaeological observation of the construction of a three-classroom extension. This feature may have belonged to a Romano-British field system indicated by cropmarks immediately west of the development site (MWA 1815). No finds were recovered from the section examined or from the surrounding soils, possibly reflecting its distance from the focal point of the associated settlement (Palmer & Coutts, 2004).

Medieval

documentary sources place the study site within the possible extent of the suggested medieval settlement (MWA9022). This is based on the historic mapping (OS 1887); the pattern ridge and furrow within of the parish and Domesday lists (Welford under Gloucestershire).

The 1887 map shows a large, dispersed village with numerous small fields planted as orchards, and a few empty plots. It is hard to tell which of these orchards, if any, overlie earlier settlement. There is a winding lane near the church, and other lanes off the main north/south street. The ridge and furrow plotting of the parish shows some survival to the south and the northwest, but none that helps to clarify the village boundary. The church [MWA1805] dates from the C12th.

Find spots of medieval pottery have been found at sites east (MWA1803) and west (MWA2751) of Headland Road and coins and pottery found 500m west of the church (MWA5191).

Undated

The site of a which is visible as a cropmark on aerial photographs, together with. A complex of cropmarks (MWA1815) identified from aerial photographs indicate segments of enclosure ditches and a possible trackway located to the west of Headland Road.

Events

A total of 12 archaeological interventions consisting of mostly watching briefs and some evaluations have been carried out within 500m of the site. Most have produced negative results, but an archaeological evaluation (EWA10395) at Laurel House, Church Street, produced two sherds of Medieval pottery (Rann, 2014).

Trial trenching (EWA9155) at Orchard Lodge, Duck Lane in advance of construction of replacement dwelling recorded a few undated gullies which probably align with boundaries depicted on 19th century maps. A residual prehistoric flint flake and a small sherd of medieval pottery were also found (Palmer, 2008).

EXCAVATION METHODOLOGY

Aims of the work

The objective of the trial trenching was to determine the date, character, quality, survival and extent of the archaeological deposits within the application area likely to be threatened by the proposed development. Should significant finds or features had been identified then an appropriate excavation strategy would be implemented as a final stage of mitigation by the planning advisory service. This would be the subject of a separate brief.

Sample size and scope of fieldwork

The evaluation comprised four trenches. Trenches 1 & 2 were each 15m long and 1.80m wide and located within the proposed building plots. Trenches 3 & 4 were each approx. 1.80m square and located in the position of proposed soakaways (drainage trenches).

Fieldwork methods and recording

The archaeological field work and post-excavation was carried out in accordance with standards and guidance for archaeological field evaluations produced by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA, 2014). All deposits were excavated removing the overburden under close archaeological supervision and investigated for archaeological features. A plans and sample sections of the trenches were made and recorded during excavation.

RESULTS: GENERAL

Soil and ground conditions

Conditions were generally dry during excavation, the deposits showing some moisture retention. Excavation was relatively smooth being made through alternate layers of topsoil and underlying subsoil leaving a clean and visible surface on the natural substrate.

Reliability of field investigation

Truncation of the underlying deposits comprising foundations and services connected with the construction of the previous dwelling was observed in trenches 1 & 2. Excavation of the drainage trenches in the former garden area showed that deposits are likely to survive intact within the west half of the study site.

Distribution of archaeological deposits

A single pit (context 102), probably connected with the adjacent brick built cottage represented the only archaeological feature recorded during the excavation and was dated to the late 19th/20th century. Two drainage trenches (2 & 3) west of the new building provided evidence for a former relict subsoil layer surviving across the west half of the study site. An absence of residual finds suggests little activity before the 19th century other than that associated with agricultural use of the land.

Presentation of results

The results of the excavation (below) are described from the earliest to the latest deposits. The trench was attributed context numbers with a numerical value equivalent to the number of the trench.

RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS (Figs. 3 & 4)

TRENCHES 1 & 2

Contexts 103, 201 & 202 (natural substrate)

The natural substrate comprised two geological deposits. In trench 1 this was an orange sand throughout the excavation, the surface of the deposit recorded at level height of 42.25m AOD. In the north-west corner of the trench this deposit was truncated during machining to a depth of about 0.75m revealing a number of stratified sand layers in various shades of orange. The sand in trench 1 had been subjected to earlier truncation during construction of the concrete foundations and associated services for the previous dwelling that was demolished before the evaluation. Apart from the more recent truncation, a single pit-like feature (context 102) pre-dating the earlier dwelling was also observed cut into this layer.

In trench 2 the natural substrate consisted of a stiff light brown Lias clay (context 201) overlying orange sand (context 202), the same sand as that recorded in trench 1. The surface of these deposits in trench 2 was situated at 42.34m AOD. There were no archaeological deposits within the trench overlying or cut into these two deposits.

The natural substrate was also exposed throughout both trenches 3 and 4 (contexts 302 & 402) comprising an orange sand and recorded at a level height of 42.60m AOD. No archaeological deposits were recorded overlying or cut into the surface of this layer within either of these trenches.

Context (pit) 102 & contexts (fill deposits) 101 & 105

Cut into the natural sand within the centre of the trench was a seemingly square-shaped, vertically-sided pit-like feature (context 102). About a quarter of the pit was partially exposed which equated to an area about 1m square, the remainder continuing beyond the trench edge. The east side had been truncated by the existing concrete foundations. Sample hand excavation was limited to a depth of about 0.85m due to inundation from ground water, although the increasing sand component of the fill towards the base of the pit suggested that excavation was nearing the bottom. It was initially filled by an undated light greyish-brown sandy-clay (context 105) with a small component of charcoal flecking, producing 3 large fragments of animal bone. Two small fragments of red brick were observed towards the upper part of the fill. Overlying this to a depth of 0.30m

and filling the upper part of the feature was a deposit (context 101) of dark greyish-brown sandy-silt. Frequent charcoal flecking was observed and there was also a component of small fragments of brick, grit-sized limestone throughout and the occasional Lias stone fragment. A single sherd of white porcelain (19th/20th century) was recovered from the fill.

Context (layer) 100

Sealing the pit fill (context 101) and the underlying natural sand in trench 1 to a depth of 0.20m was an undated layer of greyish-brown sandy silt (context 100). This deposit was exposed following removal of the concrete floor associated with the former building.

Context (layer) 200

Overlying the natural clay and sand deposits in trench 2 to a depth of about 0.15m was an undated layer of greyish-brown sandy silt (context 200).

Contexts (layers) 301 & 401

Overlying the natural clay in both trenches 3 and 4 to an equal depth of about 0.20-5m was an equivalent deposit of yellowish-brown clayey-silt. This was interpreted as a relict subsoil and was undated.

Contexts (layers) 300 & 400

Overlying the subsoil layers in both trenches to a depth of about 0.20-5m was the existing garden topsoil deposit comprising a dark-greyish brown loam.

FINDS

Pottery

A single sherd of white porcelain (late 19th/20th century), weighing approx. 8g was recovered from the upper fill (context 101) of the pit feature (context 102) in trench 1. The sherd will not be retained.

Environmental data

Animal bone

Three fragments of animal bone weighing 550g were recovered from pit fill deposit (context 105). These will not be retained.

Palaeo-environmental evidence

none of the deposits exposed during the excavation proved suitable for palaeo-environmental sampling.

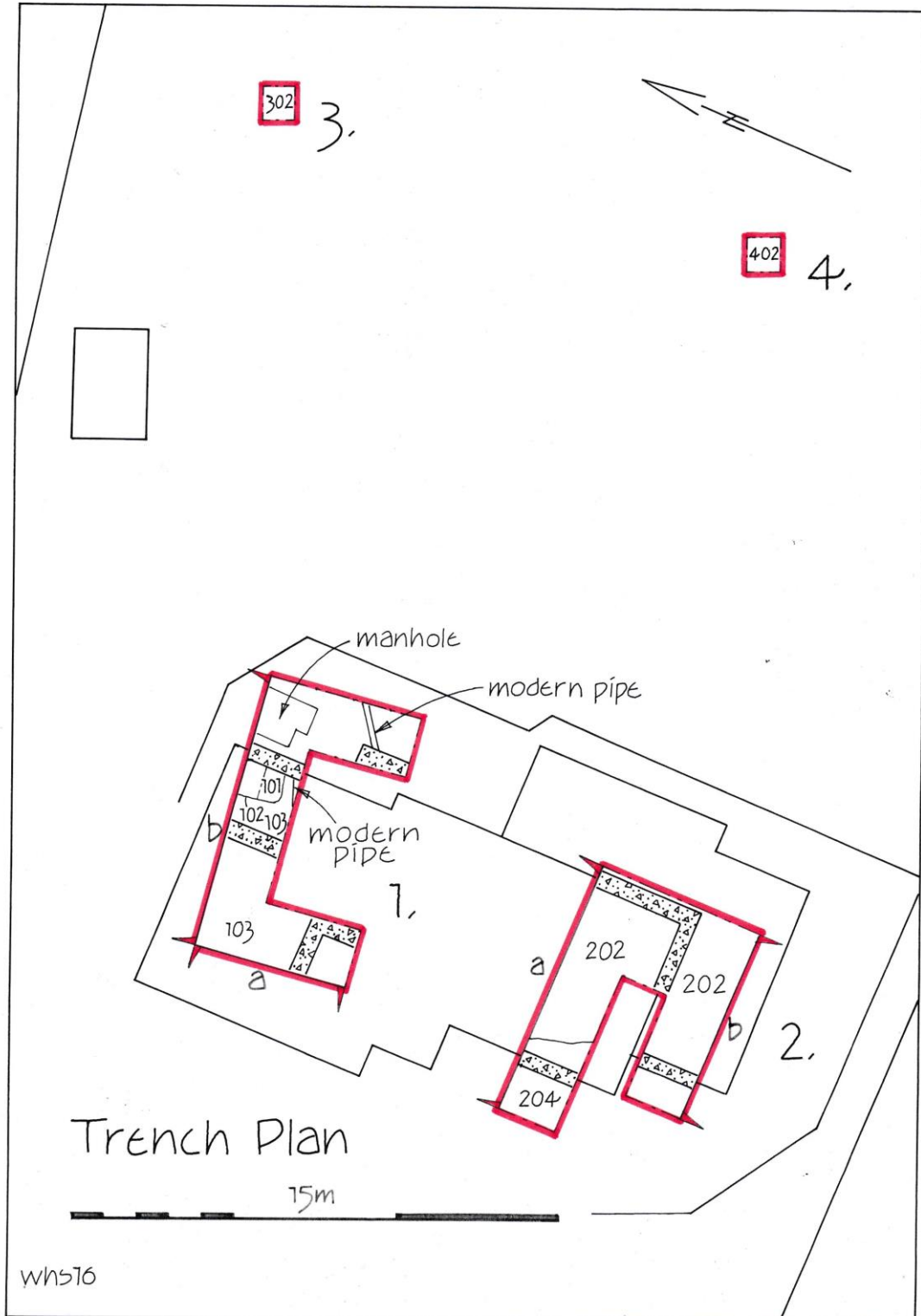


Fig. 3; Trench plan with outline of the demolished dwelling

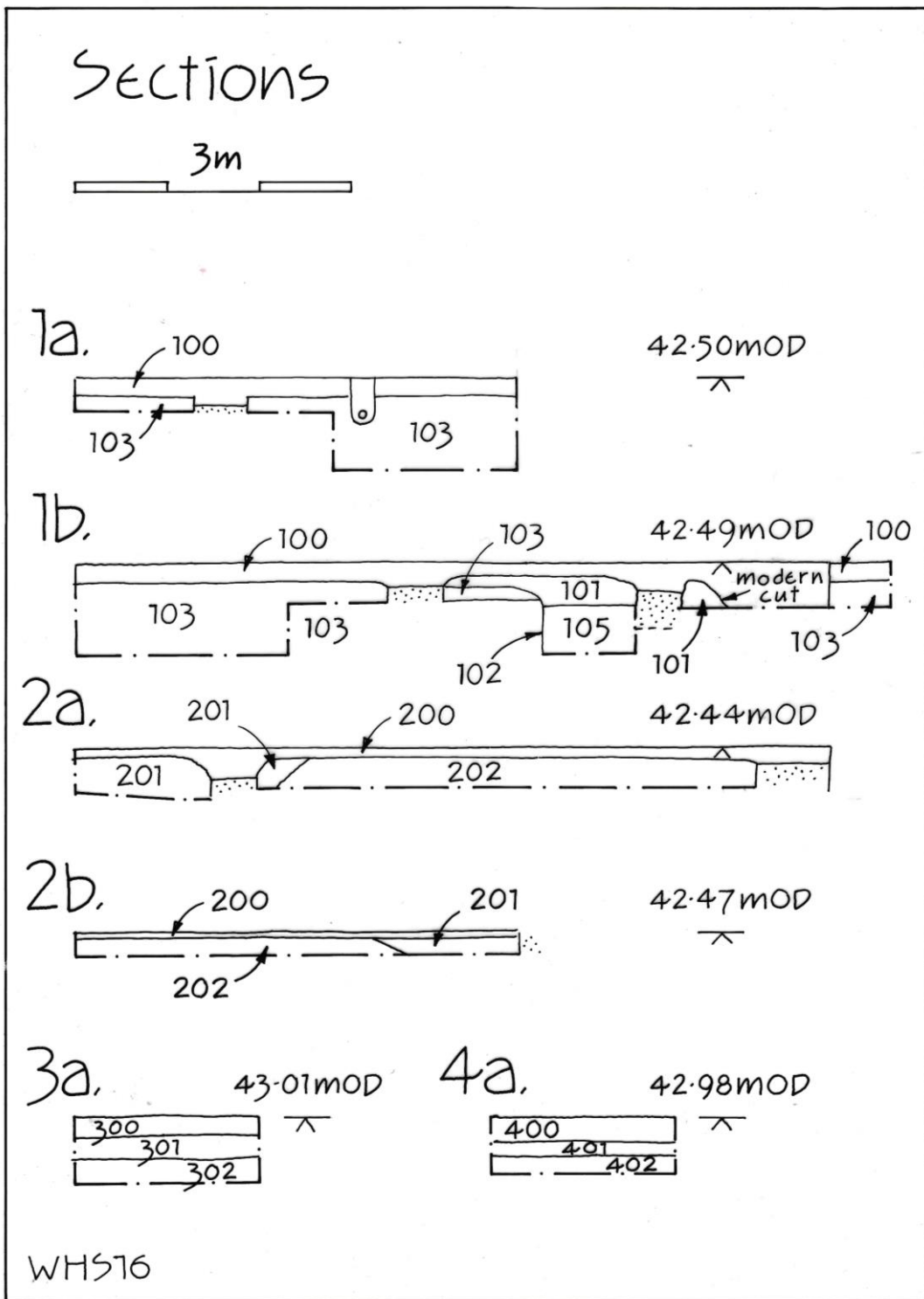


Fig. 4; trenches 1 & 2, sample sections



Plate 1; trench 1, from the west



Plate 2; section 1a, from the east



Plate 3; section 1b, west half, from the south-west



Plate 4; section 1b, east half, from the south



Plate 5; context (pit) 102 & context (fill deposits) 101 & 105



Plate 6; south-east corner of trench 2, from the west



Plate 7; trench 2, from the west



Plate 8; section 2b, detail, from the north



Plate 9; section 2a, from the south-east



Plate 10; trench 3, from the south



Plate 11; trench 4, from the south

DISCUSSION

Historic mapping (OS 1884) shows the study site was formerly the south-west corner of a large rectangular open field extending north-east to south-west from the High Street. A brick built dwelling (Rose Cottage) and well occupying a separate plot in the north-west corner suggests that some sub-division of the land had already been carried out. By 1901 (Second Edition) a small building has been erected on the site frontage, perhaps a small cottage. Further sub-division of the land occurs again between 1966 and 1979 when the former house (no. 238 High Street) was built. Demolition of this structure was undertaken in 2016 by which time the small building on the frontage had disappeared.

Excavation revealed a natural substrate throughout all four trenches varying between orange sand and a light brown Lias clay. Excavation was made deliberately deeper in the north-east corner of trench 1 (see plate 1) confirming that the sand deposit recorded throughout the trench was geological rather than a floor membrane used in the construction of the previous building.

A single square-shaped pit like feature (context 102) was recorded during the trial trenching. Sample excavation, produced animal bone, small fragments of brick and a sherd of white porcelain pottery (late 19th/20th century). It is likely that the pit feature, probably a former cesspit is associated with occupation of the adjacent Rose cottage clearly built in the 19th century.

The two drainage trenches (3 & 4) to the west of the main development revealed that the stratified deposits survive intact within the former garden area and that these comprise a sequence of natural clay overlain by relict subsoil and garden topsoil.

There was no evidence of a relict subsoil overlying the natural sand or clay within either of the two trenches located within the proposed plots and it is assumed that this had been removed during construction of the previous building. Instead the natural sand was directly overlain by a thin layer of soil and rubble associated with its recent demolition.

The absence of any earlier features or deposits in addition to the lack residual finds from the trenching suggests an open rural agricultural environment with little human activity within the study site until development in the 19th century and again after 1966.

Summary of results

Historic mapping indicates little activity within the study site until the erection after 1966 of the former building. A 19th century cottage in the adjacent plot suggests some earlier sub-division of the land and a pit recorded within the site during the trial trenching is probably associated with the earlier occupation of this building.

The two drainage trenches (3 & 4) revealed that the stratified deposits survive intact within the former garden area and that these comprise a sequence of natural clay overlain by relict subsoil and garden topsoil deposits.

There was no evidence of a relict subsoil overlying the natural sand or clay within either of the two trenches located within the proposed plots and it is assumed that this had been removed during construction of the previous building.

The absence of any earlier features or deposits in addition to the lack residual finds from the trenching suggests an open rural agricultural environment with little human activity within the study site until development in the 19th century and again after 1966.

Significance

The results of the evaluation suggest that there is unlikely to be any settlement activity within the study site before the 19th century and a lack of residual finds would tend to support this interpretation. The evidence indicates an open rural agricultural environment with little human activity until the erection of Rose Cottage to the north in the 19th century and again after 1966 following the construction of building that was demolished prior to the excavation.

Impact of development

The results of the trial trenching suggest that no significant archaeological deposits are present within the areas of proposed development and that further excavation will have no impact.

Archive Location

The archaeological documentary archive arising from the work will be appropriately conserved and deposited with the Warwickshire County Museum.

The digital archive arising from the work will be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS)

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APPENDIX 1 OASIS

Project name	238 High Street, Welford on Avon, Warks.; archaeological evaluation
Short description of the project	An archaeological evaluation was carried out during March 2016 at 238 High Street, Welford on Avon, Warks. In advance of a proposal to demolish the existing building and for the erection of two detached dwellings on the site.
Project dates	Start: 11-03-2016 End: 13-03-2016
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	WHS16 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Residential 1 - General Residential
Monument type	PIT Modern
Significant Finds	SN Modern
Methods & techniques	"Sample Trenches"
Development type	Rural residential
Prompt	Planning condition
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)
Country	England
Site location	WARWICKSHIRE STRATFORD ON AVON WELFORD ON AVON 238 High Street
Postcode	CV378EA
Study area	2400 Square metres
Site coordinates	SP 14933 52089 52.166459889269 -1.781646186549 52 09 59 N 001 46 53 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 42.25m Max: 42.6m
Name of Organisation	one ten archaeology
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	one ten archaeology
Project director/manager	sean cook
Project supervisor	sean cook

Type of sponsor/funding body	Landowner
Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	OASIS
Digital Contents	"none"
Digital Media available	"Text"
Paper Archive recipient	county museum
Paper Contents	"none"
Paper Media available	"Report"
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
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