



The Barn

Salt Way, Hanbury, Worcestershire

The Barn

Salt Way, Hanbury, B60 4DD.

Archaeological Evaluation

NGR: *SO 95617 62661*

Site code: *han22b*

HER ref: *wsm78336*

OASIS ID: *110archa1-509741*

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Front cover: View of the site from the southwest

SUMMARY

Archaeological evaluation was carried out at The Barn, Salt Way, Hanbury, Worcestershire during September 2022 in connection with the development of the site comprising construction of a menage. The site lies close to the conjectured line of the Roman road or Salt Way and Holloway Grange formerly a farmstead which was part of the Manor of Holloway in the C11 belonging to Bordesley Abbey until the Dissolution.

Although small in scope, the investigation revealed no evidence of earlier occupation or activity within the proposed development area, instead a sequence of deposits characteristic of a prolonged open rural environment was recorded indicating that the site lies outside areas of human activity and has remained part of the undeveloped historic agricultural landscape, the lack of finds supporting this hypothesis. The results of the investigation suggest that the construction of menage will have no impact on archaeological deposits.

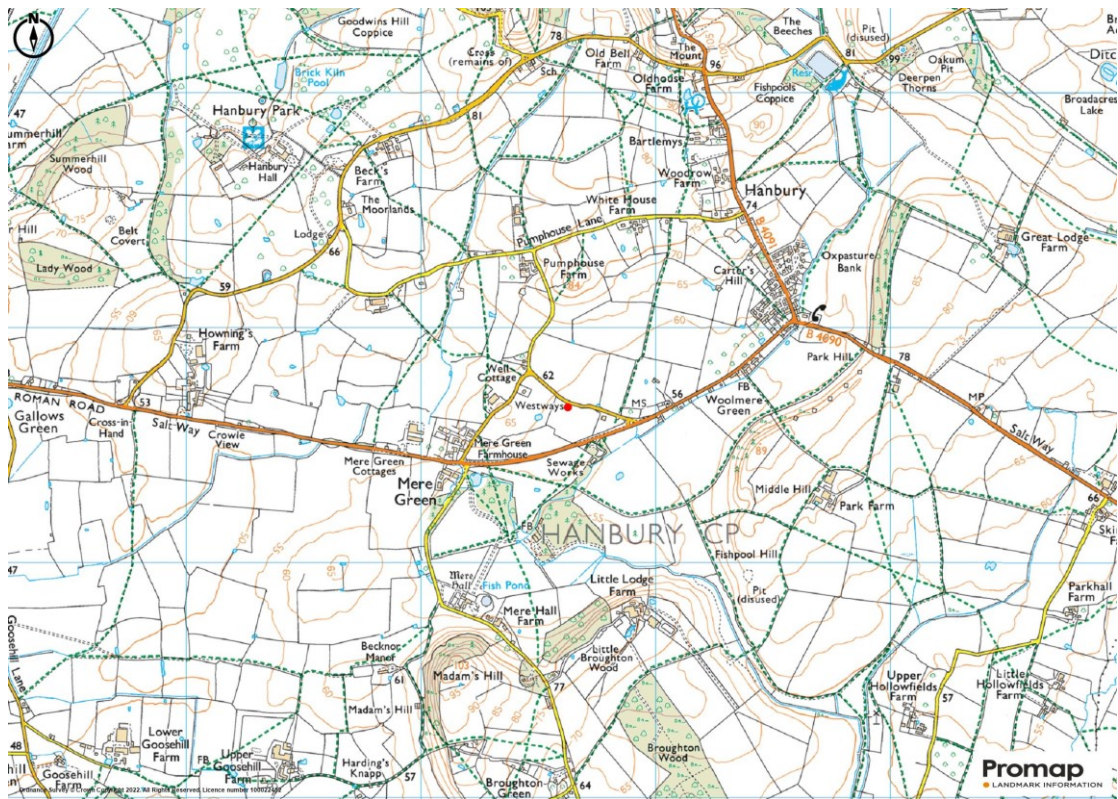


Fig. 1: Site location circled in red.



Fig. 2: Area of study outlined in red.

INTRODUCTION

Location and scope of works

This document details the results of an archaeological evaluation during 12th September 2022 at The Barn, Salt Way, Hanbury, Worcs., B60 4DD. A planning application (*Planning ref. W22/00496/FUL*) had been approved for the development of the site comprising the construction of a menage conditional on the completion of an evaluation (trial trenching) the results of which would, if necessary, inform a mitigation strategy for further archaeological work on site prior to or during the commencement of development.

The proposed development may have affected heritage assets of known archaeological significance ([wsm72087](#), [wsm30583](#) and [wsm11428](#)). The 'historic environment' encompasses all those material remains that our ancestors have created in the landscapes of town and countryside. It includes all below and above-ground evidence including buildings of historic and architectural interest. The proposed development area (PDA) is adjacent to land known to contain a C12 grange belonging to Bordesley Abbey ([wsm72087](#)). A Roman road lies to the west and southwest of the PDA ([wsm30583](#)). The land adjacent to the northwest of the PDA was subject to archaeological field walking and finds recovery in 1979 and Roman and Medieval pottery was identified ([wsm11428](#)). LiDAR data notes some anomalies within the southeast of the land parcel. Satellite images from 2005 shows a possible very discrete rectilinear feature within the PDA.

Geology and topography

Hanbury is a rural village and largely hilly civil parish east of the town of Droitwich in Worcestershire, The proposed development site is located about 1km southwest of the village and comprises an area of approx. 800m² of pasture land on the south side of the Salt Way and is situated at approximately 58m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD). The Geological Survey of Great Britain indicates that the underlying geology is likely to be Keuper Marl (BGS, 1976).

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Historical background (Victoria County History, 1913)

Heanburg C7; Heanberi C8; Heanbyrg C9; Hambyrie, Heanbyri, Hamburyjuxta-Witham C12; Hambir C13.

Hanbury is a large hilly parish east of the town of Droitwich and the former farm sits within an intermediate, rolling topography based on bedrock geology made up of mudstone and superficial geology made up of alluvial, which follows the course of an unnamed tributary of the Dean Brook. The soil is clay with a subsoil of Keuper Marl, and the land slopes downward from the north towards the south, the highest point, about 118m (385') Above the Ordnance Datum (AOD), being on the Stoke Prior Road north of the village. The chief crops were formerly wheat, beans and barley.

The area of the parish is 7,790 acres, of which 1,661 acres are arable, 5,526 permanent grass and 251 woods. Huntingdrop Common, a detached part of the parish of Dodderhill, was annexed to Hanbury in 1880, under the Divided Parishes Act. The main road from Droitwich to Alcester runs through the parish from west to east and meets that from Bromsgrove to Alcester near Carter's Hill. From it a branch road leads past Hanbury Park to the village. This is scattered about three roads, forming a rough triangle, the base of which is the Droitwich to Alcester Road on the south. Hanbury Park occupies the whole of the western side of the triangle, and the church of St. Mary the Virgin stands at its apex near the north-east corner of the park.

The region comprises small to medium sized regular fields, which are interspersed with settlement scattered along sinuous lanes and dispersed villages at Piper's Hill, Hanbury and Woolmere Green. Patches of ancient seminatural woodland are seen in the Broughton Green area and on Piper's Hill there is a wooded area of common land adjacent to Hanbury Church which sits on a prominent rise. There is interrupted row settlement and modern expansion is surrounded by large areas of piecemeal enclosure and field amalgamation and includes the Grade II Listed Registered Garden at Hanbury Hall.

A manor at Hanbury is first mentioned in C8 documents which also indicate it was held by the church with perhaps a monastery at Hanbury in the C7.

Archaeological background (Historic Environment Record)

An HER search was carried out on a 500m radius of the provided grid reference on 08/08/2022, as specified in the search request. 5 Archaeological activities and 26 HER Monuments were recorded within the search area which sits within an intermediate, rolling landscape based on Mercia Mudstone bedrock geology with superficial deposits of Alluvium. The field pattern is one of small to medium sized fields characterised by parliamentary enclosure with evidence for Medieval field systems widely visible, however there has also been a high degree of modern field amalgamation. Tree cover includes small, dispersed parcels of Ancient Semi-Natural woodland as well as areas of parkland and a nature reserve.

The settlement pattern is scattered along the main routeways, considered to be Roman in origin, and sinuous connecting lanes. There are 3 Historic England Listed and 4 unlisted, historic buildings. The earliest structures include a C17 timber-framed cottage ([wsm31517](#)) as well as an C18 farmstead ([wsm52805](#), [wsm45392](#), [wsm45392](#)), an C18 milestone ([wsm56952](#)) and an undated chapel ([wsm01314](#)). The Historic Farmsteads of Worcestershire project recorded one C18–C19 farmstead ([wsm60455](#)) and one C19 outfarm ([wsm50859](#)). There are monument records for the sites of farm buildings that are now demolished.

Numerous records are present for ridge and furrow earthworks ([wsm11654](#), [wsm11699](#), [wsm45344](#)), records for the possible site of a deserted medieval village ([wsm05801](#)) and the site of a Grange belonging to Bordesley Abbey ([wsm72087](#)). Later records include the site of parkland at Hanbury and the site of a brickworks, whilst a single earlier record indicates the conjectured alignment of a Roman Road ([wsm30583](#)) between Droitwich and Alcester.

Extensive survey and landscape research ([wsm72165](#)) revealed a total of 48 medieval and post medieval settlements marked by earthworks in Hanbury parish. Other abandoned medieval settlements are known from pottery scatters and documentary evidence, these varied in size from single houses to hamlets of up to six houses. The more concentrated settlements were found in the parts of the parish known from documentary evidence to have been areas of relatively late (C12 and C13) colonization. The pattern of now disused roads and field systems extend across the entire parish. There is extensive evidence for use of the land in the pre-Roman periods.

A single Portable Antiquity Scheme find records a Roman finger-ring.

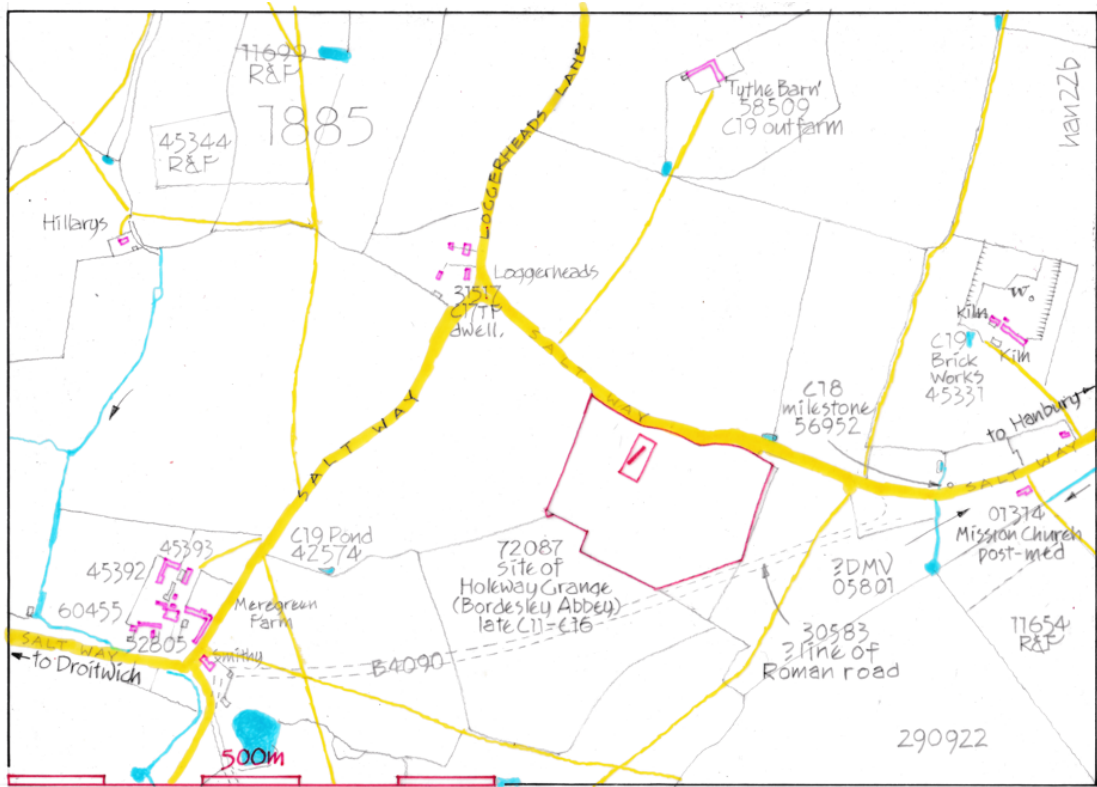


Fig. 3: Historic environment plan.

EXCAVATION METHODOLOGY

Aims of the work

The objectives of the evaluation were 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 in order that an informed decision on their importance in a local, regional and national context can be made. This information would clarify whether any remains should be considered for preservation *in situ* or form the basis of a mitigation strategy.

In general, the aims of the investigation will include:

- i) establishing the date, nature and extent of activity or occupation on the development site.
- ii) recovering artefacts to assist in the development of type series within the region.
- iii) recovering palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions.

Sample size and scope of fieldwork

The evaluation comprised a single trench approx. 25m long and a minimum of 1.50m wide.

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, 2020). All deposits were excavated removing the overburden under close archaeological supervision and investigated for archaeological features. Plans and sample sections of the trenches were made and recorded during excavation.

RESULTS: GENERAL

Soil and ground conditions

Conditions were generally dry during the excavation, the soil layers showing some moisture retention. Excavation was relatively smooth throughout the trench being made through alternate layers comprising of topsoil and an underlying subsoil, leaving a clean and visible surface within the natural substrate, a stiff clay.

Reliability of field investigation

There was no evidence of previous truncation of the underlying deposits in the trench with the underlying deposits remaining intact.

Distribution of archaeological deposits

No significant archaeological deposits were revealed during the investigation, instead a sequence of stratified soil layers indicate little human activity other than that associated with agricultural practices.

Presentation of results

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

RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS

The trench

The surface of the natural clay substrate (context 102) comprised a stiff light yellowish-brown stiff clay was exposed throughout the length of the trench at a level height of about 57.15m AOD. No archaeological deposits or cut features were observed overlying or within the surface of the clay which itself was overlain by a 0.24m thick layer of silty-clay (101) interpreted as a relict subsoil deposit. This was in turn sealed by a 0.16m thick deposit of modern topsoil (100) consisting of a dark greyish-brown, clayey-silt.

FINDS

No finds were recovered from the excavation.

Environmental data

None of the deposits identified during excavation proved suitable for palaeo-environmental sampling.

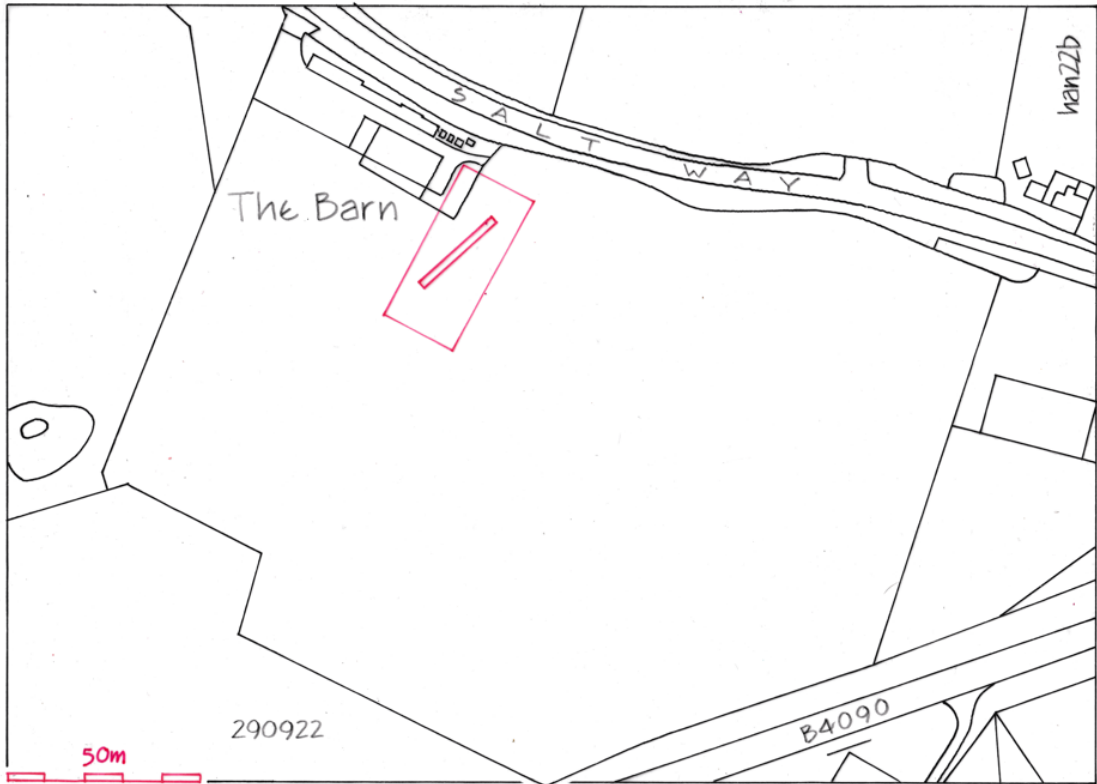


Fig.4: site of proposed menage outlined in red, with trench location .

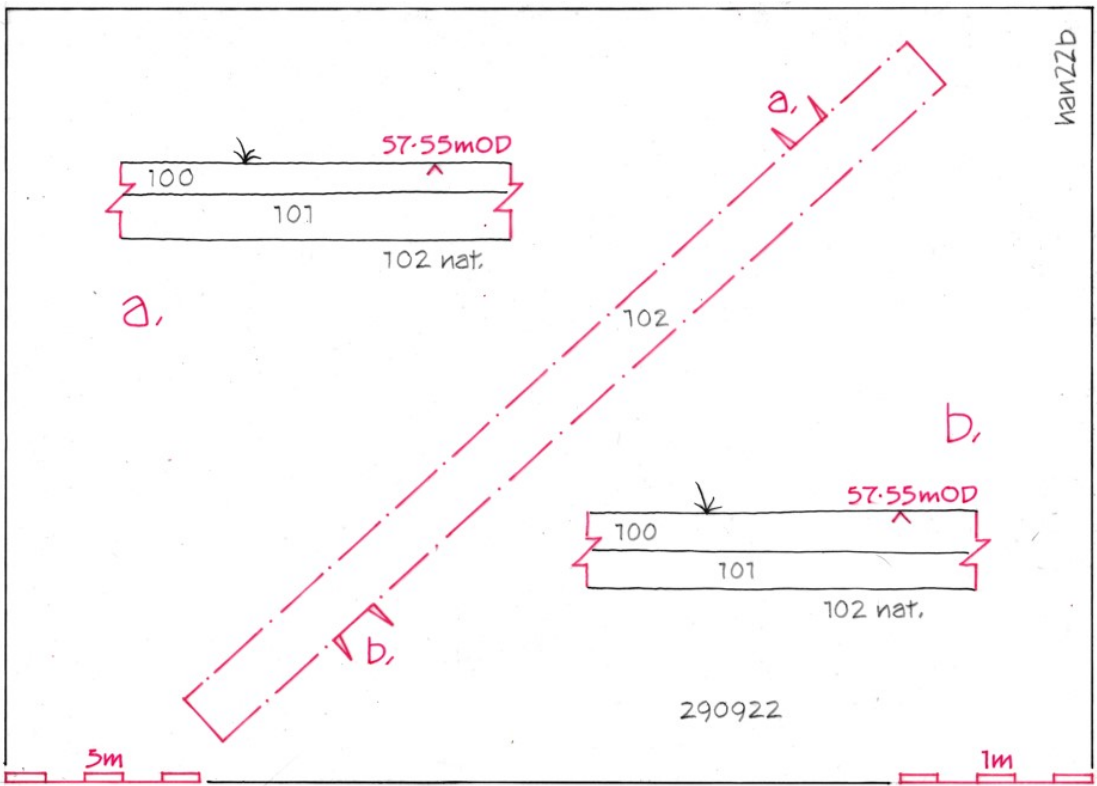


Fig.5: trench plan & sections.

DISCUSSION

The HER records a series of monuments within the search area including more significantly the conjectured line of the Roman road ([wsm30583](#)) or Salt Way between Droitwich and Alcester, this is currently unclear as there are two possibilities presented in this part of the historic landscape. According to the OS 1885 the Salt Way diverts from its more regular westerly course at the site of a deserted medieval village ([wsm05801](#)) leading northwest towards Loggerheads (a C17 dwelling) before diverting again in a south-westerly direction and linking with the Salt Way at Meregreen. This appears an unusual deviation in what is otherwise a straight east-west route between Alcester and Droitwich and suggests that the route may have been altered before 1885 for reasons yet unknown. Loggerheads is in an important location situated on a main north-south routeway which joins with the Salt Way at Meregreen and it may be that the site was occupied when the Roman road was diverted.

The more convincing route postulated for the Salt Way passes in an arc to the south of the site on the current line of the B4090 road. Holloway Grange ([wsm72087](#)) is recorded about mid-way along this stretch of the modern road, it was an C11 farm formerly part of the manor of Holloway and remained with the abbey of Bordesley until the Dissolution. Significantly the location of the grange supports the conjectured alignment of the Roman road along this stretch of the historic landscape as it is likely that proximity to reliable communications will have been taken into consideration when the farm was first established. The proposed development site itself, which lies close to the former grange, is likely to have formed part of the outlying agricultural land connected with the medieval farm.

Although small in scope, the investigation revealed no evidence of earlier occupation or activity within the proposed development area, instead a sequence of deposits characteristic of a prolonged open rural environment was recorded indicating little historic human activity within the site. The lack of residual finds from the excavation supports this hypothesis.

Summary of results

Although small in scope, the investigation revealed no evidence of earlier occupation within the proposed development area, instead a sequence of deposits

characteristic of a prolonged open rural environment was recorded indicating little historic human activity within the site. the lack of residual finds from the excavation supports this hypothesis.

Significance

The negative result of the investigation suggests that the site lies outside areas of human activity the evidence suggesting that it has remained part of the undeveloped historic agricultural landscape probably connected with the former Holloway Grange and the lack of residual finds supports this hypothesis.

Impact of development

The results of the investigation suggest that the construction of menage will have no impact on archaeological deposits.

Archive Location

The digital archive arising from the work will be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS) via the online portal OASIS.

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PLATES



Plate 1: trench, view southwest



Plate 2: section 1a



Plate 3: section 1b