

EVALUATION
AT LAND OFF BACK LANE,
GREAT MALVERN

Hal Dalwood

Illustrated by Steve Rigby

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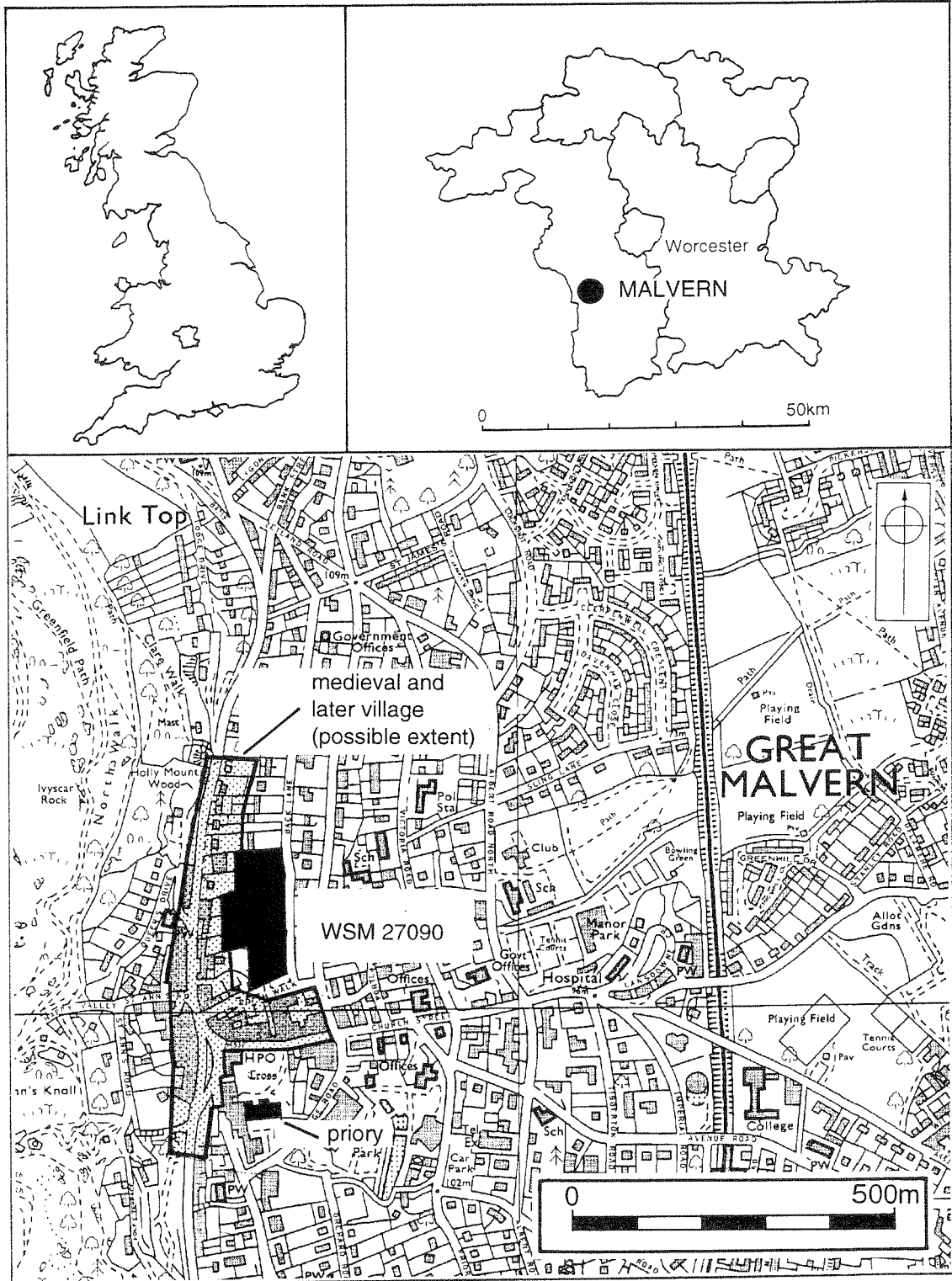


Figure 1: Location of site

Evaluation at land off Back Lane, Great Malvern

Hal Dalwood

Part 1 Project summary

1. **Reasons for the project**

An evaluation was carried out at land adjacent to Back Lane, Great Malvern, in accordance with an archaeological brief prepared by Worcestershire County Council Archaeological Service. The evaluation was undertaken at the commencement of the construction programme for a new supermarket.

2. **Outline of results and significance**

Two trenches were excavated in areas that had not been landscaped for the present municipal car park.

Archaeological deposits were recorded that were interpreted as 19th to 20th century garden soils, planting holes and garden features. The artefact assemblage consisted of pottery, clay pipe, and vessel glass, interpreted as domestic refuse, and some building rubble. The archaeological information could be related to documentary evidence which indicated that this area of Great Malvern was first laid out as private gardens of substantial villas built along Worcester Road in 1805-30. No earlier deposits or artefacts were recorded.

The deposits and the artefact assemblage are judged to be of only local interest.

3. **Conclusions**

The evaluation indicated that there was no evidence of settlement in the area of the development before the early 19th century. No significant deposits or artefacts were recorded.

Part 2 Detailed report

4. Aims

The aims of the evaluation were to locate archaeological deposits and determine, if present, their extent, state of preservation, date, type, vulnerability and documentation. The purpose of this was to establish their significance.

5. Background

An evaluation was undertaken within the construction programme for a new Waitrose supermarket, on the site of the municipal car park near the centre of Great Malvern (Fig 1: NGR SO 775460). The work was carried out on behalf of John Lewis Partnership.

The site lies near the centre of Great Malvern, north of Great Malvern Priory, and adjacent to the centre of the historic settlement (Fig 1). The topography slopes steeply down to the east, from c145m to c125m AOD. The current land use is a car park, consisting of two terraces levelled into the hillside at 131-134m AOD and 127-129m AOD, leaving some limited areas of grassed slopes with trees (Fig 2).

The geology consists of recent undifferentiated head deposits (British Geological Survey 1993). The soils are unsurveyed (Soil Survey of England and Wales 1986).

A desk-based assessment of the proposed development site was completed by the County Archaeological Service in 1996, as part of an Environmental Assessment. Archaeological, historical and cartographic sources were studied, and a report on the landscape history and archaeological potential of the development site was produced (Dalwood 1996). The desk-based assessment report drew the following conclusions:

Prehistoric and Roman occupation. Although no evidence for prehistoric or Roman occupation was identified, there remained a possibility that buried remains relating to this period existed on the site. Such remains, if present, could be judged to be of importance at a county level.

Medieval and post-medieval finds. Documentary evidence indicated that any archaeological evidence dating to the medieval or earlier post-medieval periods would probably relate to agricultural activities rather than occupation evidence. Buried remains or spreads of artefacts, if present, could be of local importance and the existing documentary evidence could be enhanced.

Nineteenth century gardens. Documentary evidence indicated that any archaeological evidence dating from the 19th century would probably relate to gardening activity or orchards. Buried remains or spreads of artefacts, if present, would probably be of local interest and the existing documentary evidence could be enhanced.

A brief for a programme of archaeological works was prepared by the Planning Advisory Section of Hereford and Worcester County Council Archaeological Service (reference HWCM 23373, dated 4 November 1997). The location of two evaluation trenches was specified in the brief, and agreed by John Lewis Partnership. A proposal for an archaeological evaluation was prepared by Worcestershire County Field Archaeology Section (reference P1641, dated 7 July 1998) and the work was subsequently commissioned by John Lewis Partnership.

The SMR reference (and site code/archive code) for this intervention is WSM 27090.

6. **Methods**

6.1 **Documentary search**

Documentary and cartographic sources were fully studied in the desk-based assessment, and reference should be made to the resulting report (Dalwood 1996). The report was drawn on in the interpretation of deposits without further research in original sources.

6.2 **Fieldwork**

6.2.1 **Fieldwork strategy**

The location of two trenches was specified in the archaeological brief. Trench 1 was 22m long and Trench 2 was 22.5m long; both were excavated in the specified locations with minor adjustments for existing planting and lamp standards (Fig 2). Topsoil and other soil deposits were mechanically excavated. The exposed surfaces were cleaned by hand and recorded using standard recording systems (County Archaeological Service 1995).

Excavation work was initiated and completed on 4 September 1998.

6.2.2 **Structural analysis**

Context records and the draw record were related to dating evidence from artefacts.

6.3 **Artefacts**

6.3.1 **Artefact recovery policy**

All observed artefacts were recovered for assessment.

6.3.2 **Method of analysis**

Artefacts were recorded on Context Finds Records and each context was spot-dated.

6.4 **Environment**

6.4.1 **Sampling policy**

No deposits earlier than 19th century were identified. The project proposal stated that only earlier deposits would be judged significant, and therefore 19th century deposits were not sampled.

7. **Analysis**

The trenches and the features recorded are shown in Figure 3.

7.1 **Phase 1 Natural deposits**

In Trench 1 geological deposits (context 104), consisting of Recent Head deposits with angular stone fragment, were encountered at *c* 135.5m OD.

In Trench 2, the geological deposits (context 204) consisted of orange brown sandy silt, identified as Recent Head, its surface sloping between 128.10m AOD and 125.02m AOD. Groundwater flowed from the sides of the trench at the mid-point and a soakaway was mechanically excavated through geological deposits. A small trial pit (1.0m) deep was excavated at the north end of Trench 2 to test the nature of the deposits, which were found to be consistent.

7.2

Phase 2 Nineteenth century and modern deposits

In Trench 1 a number of sub-circular features were recorded, each of which contained plant roots (Fig 3: Trench 1, contexts 103, 105, 106, 107). Only one was excavated, and found to be 0.05m deep (context 103); the fill contained an oyster shell fragment and a small piece of coal (context 102). These features were identified as planting holes related to the use of this area as gardens in the 19th and 20th century.

A linear structure was recorded (Fig 3: Trench 1, context 108), consisting of angular stone blocks 0.10m to 0.15m across vertically set into the geological deposits. The structure was somewhat disturbed through machining and its form was not clear. However it is provisionally identified as the edge of a garden bed.

In Trench 1 the topsoil (context 101) was between 0.30m and 0.40m thick and contained 13 sherds of 19th century pottery, including fragments of flower pot, together with small quantities of clay pipe, brick and roof tile fragments, glass, and oyster shell.

In Trench 2, a single linear cut was recorded (Fig 3: Trench 2, context 203). The fill contained a single fragment of brick. The function of this linear feature was not certain as the flow of water precluded full excavation. However it is probably a drainage feature of 19th or 20th century date.

The topsoil and underlying soil deposits were between 0.40m and 0.50m thick (context 201). This deposit contained 11 sherds of 19th century pottery, including flower pot, and small quantities of brick, drainpipe, glass, animal bone and oyster shell.

8.

Discussion

The recorded archaeological deposits were all dated to the 19th century or later. No earlier artefacts were recovered. This was consistent with the desk-based assessment which produced no strong evidence for earlier occupation in this area. The documentary and archaeological evidence both suggest that the area was in agricultural use from at least the medieval period up to the early 19th century.

The site lies within an area that was first laid out as private gardens in the 19th century (Dalwood 1996, fig 3). Substantial villas were built along the east side of Worcester Road between 1805 and 1830 (Dalwood 1996, 8).

The recorded deposits consisted of planting holes and garden features. The artefact assemblage was largely of 19th century date. Fragments of flower pot can be related to the documented use of the site as gardens. Other artefacts included domestic pottery, vessel glass and clay pipe, which originated as domestic refuse and was presumably accidentally incorporated into garden soils. The assemblage also includes window glass, brick and tile, which probably derive from construction work on the houses to the west of the garden areas.

The archaeological evidence is consistent with the information from the desk-based assessment.

9. **Significance**

In considering significance, the Secretary of State's criteria for the scheduling of ancient monuments (DoE 1990, annex 4), have been used as a guide.

The recorded deposits consisted of garden soils and planting holes dated to the 19th to 20th century, and are judged to be of very low archaeological research potential.

10. **Academic summary**

The Service has a professional obligation to publish the results of archaeological projects within a reasonable period of time. To this end, the Service intends to use this summary as the basis for publication through local or regional journals. The Client is requested to consider the content of this section as being acceptable for such publication.

Two trenches were excavated in the present municipal car park in Great Malvern, adjacent to Back Lane and Edith Walk. Archaeological deposits were interpreted as 19th to 20th century garden soils, planting holes and garden features. The artefact assemblage consisted of pottery, clay pipe, and vessel glass, interpreted as domestic refuse, and some building rubble. The archaeological evidence could be related to documentary evidence which indicated that this area of Great Malvern was laid out as the private gardens of substantial villas built in 1805-30, and was previously agricultural land including orchards.

11. **The archive**

The archive consists of:

- 13 Context records AS1
- 1 Fieldwork progress records AS2
- 2 Photographic records AS3
 - 1 Colour transparency film
 - 1 Black and white photographic film
- 4 Context finds records AS8
- 3 Scale drawings
- 1 Box of finds
- 1 Computer disk

The project archive is intended to be placed at:

Worcestershire County Museum

Hartlebury Castle

Hartlebury

Near Kidderminster

Worcestershire DY11 7XZ

Tel Hartlebury (01299) 250416

12. **Acknowledgements**

The Service would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project: Mr Gino Daurat of John Lewis Partnership, and Gary Chamberlain, Simon Clancy and David Kirby of Costain Construction Ltd.

13. **Personnel**

The project was managed and led by Hal Dalwood (Project Officer). Shona Robson and Jeremy Bretherton (Archaeological Assistants) assisted on site during the evaluation. The artefacts were assessed by Victoria Buteux (Assistant Project Officer). The illustrations were prepared by Steve Rigby.

14. **Bibliography**

British Geological Survey 1993 *England and Wales sheet 199: Worcester*

CAS 1995 *Manual of Service practice: fieldwork recording manual*, County Archaeological Service, Hereford and Worcester County Council, internal report, **399**

Dalwood, H, 1996 *Desk-based survey of land off Back Lane, Great Malvern*, County Archaeological Service, Hereford and Worcester County Council, internal report, **492**

Soil Survey of England and Wales 1986 *Soils of Worcester and the Malvern district. Sheet 150*

15. **Abbreviations**

WSM Numbers prefixed with 'WSM' are the primary reference numbers used by the Worcestershire County Sites and Monuments Record.

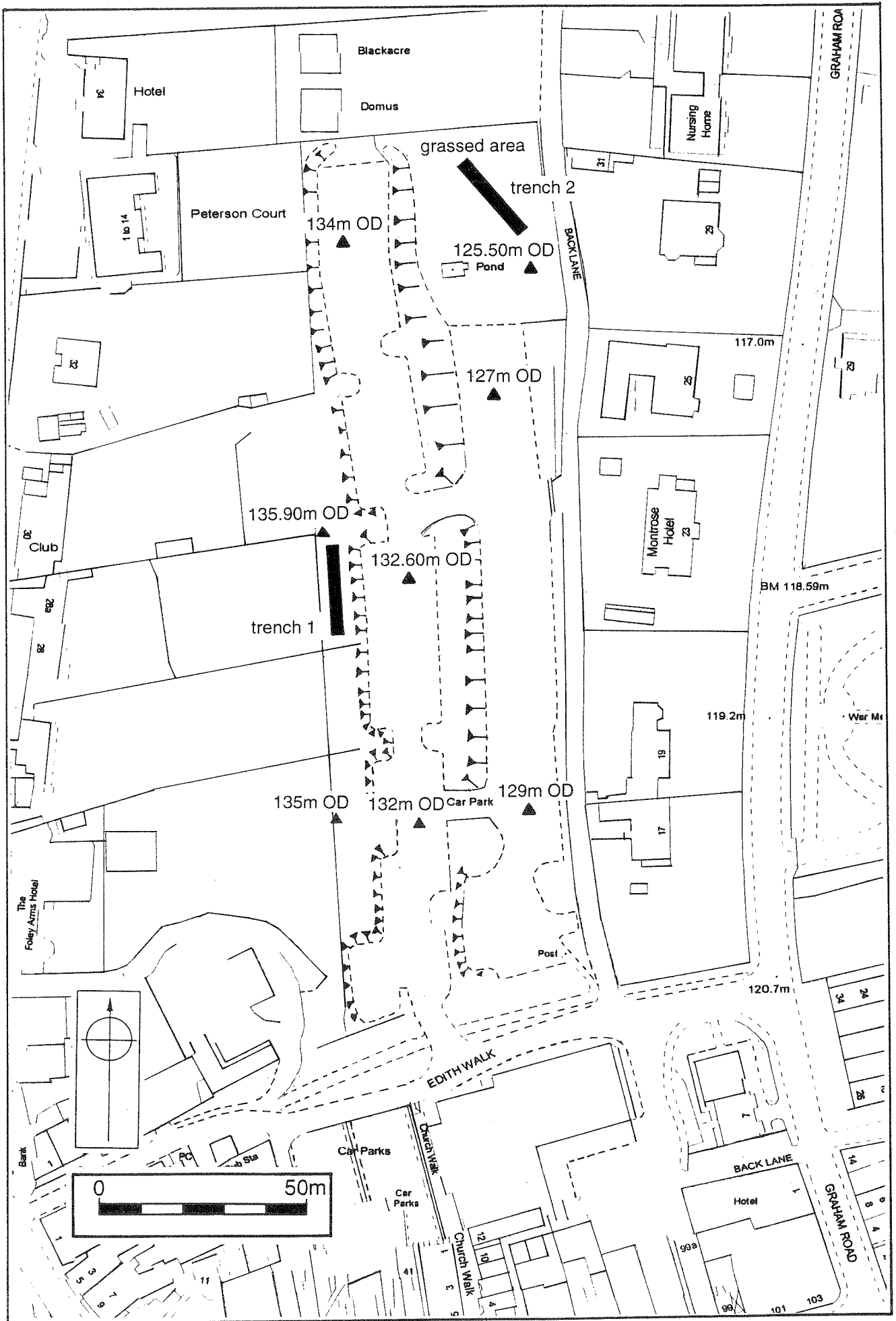


Figure 2: Location of trenches

Figure 3: Plan of trenches 1 and 2

