

BRTG18



# LAND NORTH OF BLUEBELL ROAD, TEWKESBURY, GLOUCESTERSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

commissioned by Gloucestershire County Council (GCC)

July 2018



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#### PROJECT INFO:

HA Project Code **BRTG18** / HAS No. **1305** / NGR **SO 90435 31199** / Parish **Wheatpieces** /  
Local Authority **Tewkesbury District Council** / OASIS Ref. **headland3-322656** /  
Archive Repository **Tewkesbury Museum (Acc. 2018.013)**

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## PROJECT SUMMARY

An archaeological field evaluation, via trial trenching, was undertaken by Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd on land to the north of Bluebell Road Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire. The evaluation identified a total of seven plough furrows believed to be of post-medieval date. No deposits, finds or features of archaeological significance were identified during the works.

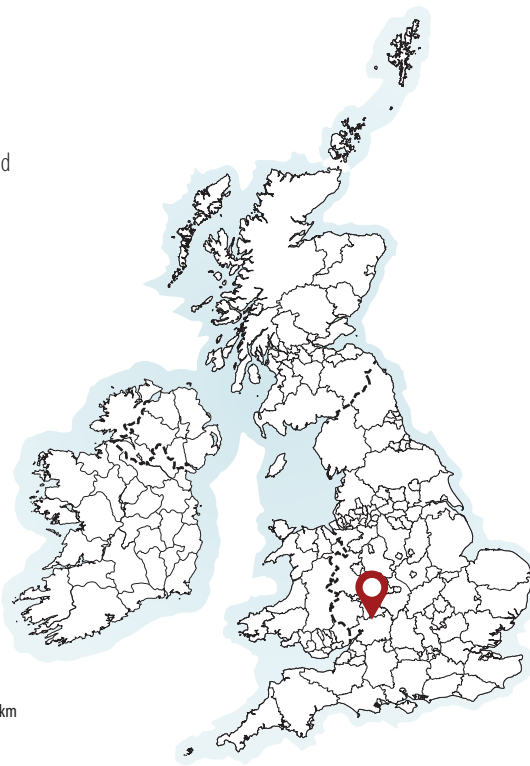
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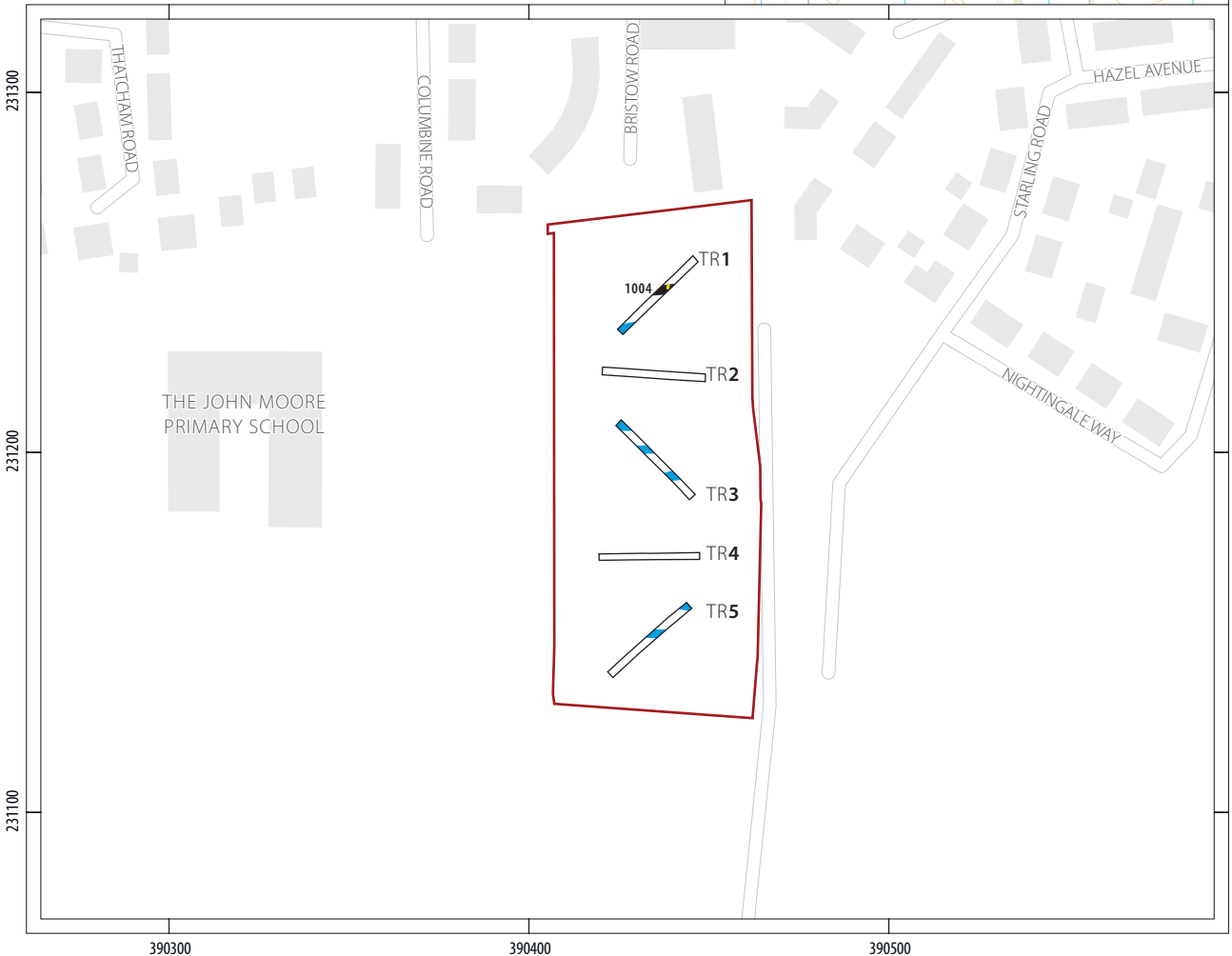
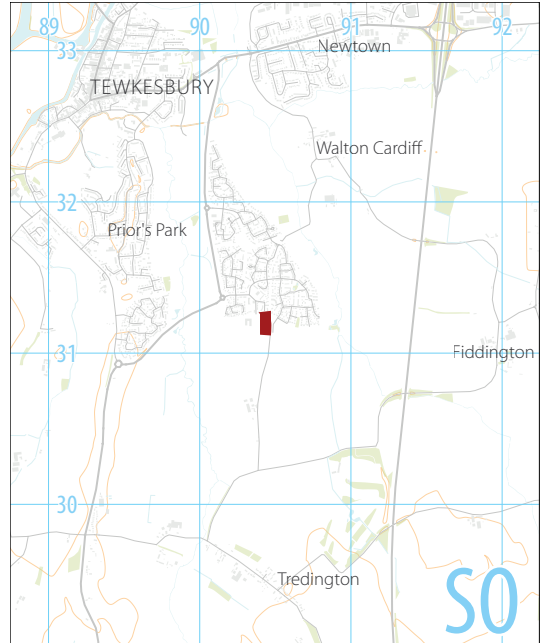
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Land off Bluebell Road  
Tewkesbury  
Gloucestershire



0 200km  
1:12,500,000 @ A4



0 40m  
1:2,000 @ A4

- development boundary
- trench location
- archaeological feature
- furrow
- sondage



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# LAND NORTH OF BLUEBELL ROAD, TEWKESBURY, GLOUCESTERSHIRE

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

### 1 INTRODUCTION

Headland Archaeology was commissioned by Gloucestershire County Council to undertake a trial trench evaluation on land to the north of Bluebell Road, Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire.

This document presents the background to and results of the archaeological evaluation.

#### 1.1 PLANNING BACKGROUND

At the time of writing, Gloucestershire County Council were preparing to submit an outline planning application for the construction of up to 30 homes on land to the north of Bluebell Road, Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire.

In accordance with local and national planning policy the archaeological advisor to the LPA has requested that information on the archaeological potential of the site be submitted as part of the application.

In addition to a desk-based assessment of the site, the archaeological advisor recommended that a trial trench evaluation of the site be undertaken.

The fieldwork was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) that defined the scope of the investigation and was submitted for agreement from the archaeological advisor (Craddock-Bennett 2018).

#### 1.2 SITE LOCATION, DESCRIPTION AND SETTING

The proposed application area (PDA) (NGR SO 90435 31199) measuring 0.68ha was bounded to the East by an unclassified country lane and to the south by land under development (Illus 1 and 2). To the west was the playing field of John Moore Primary School. To the north was the built-up Wheatpieces suburb of Tewkesbury.

The bedrock geology comprised interbedded mudstone and limestone of the Rugby Limestone Member. No superficial deposits were recorded (NERC 2018). The soils were classified in the Soilscape 9 association, characterised as lime rich loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage (Cranfield University 2018).

#### 1.3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Excavations in advance of the Rudgeway Fields development (200m east of the PDA) revealed settlement, ritual and funerary activity dating to the Middle Bronze Age, and Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age, including two substantial parallel ditches of Middle Bronze Age date. Recent excavations by Headland Archaeology approximately 375m to the south of the PDA have revealed an isolated penannular enclosure of probable Iron Age date, the original function of which is not clear.

The Rudgeway Fields excavations also revealed evidence of Iron Age or Romano-British settlement. The southern end of the Gloucester Road originated as a Roman road which continued due north through Tewkesbury and is likely to have been a focus of activity although only a stray find is recorded from land adjacent to the road. Two other Roman sites are recorded in the HER within the study area, both relating to activity. A Roman coin dating to AD330-340 was discovered within the PDA in 2017. Recent excavations to the south



**ILLUS 2** Site looking north    **ILLUS 3** Trench 4 looking east    **ILLUS 4** Trench 1 looking north–east

of the PDA have revealed a field system of Roman date, however no features of this field system appear to extend into the PDA.

Remains of medieval field system have been found to the south of the PDA during recent excavations and have been dated to the 12th century.

A desk-based assessment undertaken by Headland Archaeology (Richards 2018) concluded that below ground remains of ridge and furrow will be impacted by the proposed development. The assessment also concluded that there is a low potential for heritage assets of prehistoric or Roman date to survive within the proposed development area.

## 2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of the evaluation was to assess the site for previously unrecorded archaeological remains and record the location, extent, date, nature, character and relationships of any surviving archaeological remains uncovered ahead of development works. The results of the evaluation are to be used to establish the potential impacts of the development scheme upon any archaeological features uncovered and determine the need for further mitigation.

Specifically, the evaluation sought to:

- › excavate archaeological evaluation trenches as identified within the WSI;



**ILLUS 5** Trench 3 section looking north–east    **ILLUS 6** Sondage into furrow (1004) looking west

- › identify archaeological features and deposits of interest;
- › excavate and record any identified archaeological features and deposits to a level to enable their nature and significance to be identified;
- › undertake sufficient post–excavation analysis to confidently interpret archaeological features identified during site works;
- › undertake sufficient post–excavation analysis of artefacts and samples to identify the potential scope for detailed analysis in future mitigation;
- › report the results of the investigation in the field and subsequent post–excavation analysis and place these results within their local and regional context;
- › compile and deposit a site archive at a suitable repository; and
- › identify areas with significant archaeological potential and areas where archaeological potential is considered non–significant.

The results of the evaluation will be used to describe the significance of heritage assets potentially affected by the development allowing the planning authority to make an informed assessment of any potential impacts on the historic environment in line with Paragraph 128 of the National Planning Policy Framework. The local and regional research contexts are provided by the South West Archaeological Research Framework. Any evidence retrieved during the works will be analysed in light of the objectives contained in this framework.

The resulting archive (finds and records) will be organised and deposited with Tewkesbury Museum (Acc No. 2018.013) to facilitate access for future research and interpretation for public benefit.

### 3 METHOD

The fieldwork was conducted in accordance with the above mentioned WSI and in accordance with the following documents:

- › Code of Conduct (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014a)

- › Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014b)

A total of five evaluation trenches were located across the site. All five of these trenches measured 30m x 1.80m in plan, this being equivalent to 4% of the proposed development area.

The archaeological works were carried out on the 28th June 2018. Prior to excavation, utility plans were consulted and a cable avoidance tool was used to check for the presence of potential buried services.

Trenches were excavated using a 13.5 tonne, tracked 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a bladed bucket, to depths where archaeological features were identified, or geological deposits encountered. Topsoil and subsoil deposits were separated and banded to either side of the trenches awaiting reinstatement.

All recording followed standard archaeological guidelines as set out by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA). The recorded contexts were assigned unique numbers and recording was undertaken on Headland Archaeology pro forma trench and context record sheets. Digital and black and white photographs were taken of all trenches and identified features, with a graduated metric scale clearly visible. An overall site plan of the trenches and recorded features was digitally produced. Digital planning and surveying was undertaken using a Trimble dGPS system.

## 4 RESULTS

The results of the evaluation are summarised below, with a complete context register supplied in Appendix 1. A trench location plan is presented as Illustration 1.

### 4.1 GENERAL STRATIGRAPHY AND TOPOGRAPHY

The stratigraphy across the site appeared to be consistent throughout all five of the evaluation trenches (Illus 5). The topsoil consisted of a mid greyish black, slightly stoney silty loam (0101, 0201, 0301, 0401, 0501) measuring between 0.12m and 0.20m in depth. This

appears to be a levelled deposit, most likely due to the field being used for recreational purposes prior to the evaluation.

The subsoil across the site consisted of a greyish brown silty loam (0102, 0202, 0302, 0402, 0502). It does not appear to have been ploughed through at any stage.

The geology across the site was a yellowish grey silty clay (0103, 0203, 0303, 0403, 0503) present at a depth of between 0.30m and 0.40m below ground level. The fine-grained sediments accord with the mudstone geology recorded by the British Geological Survey (NERC 2018).

## 4.2 TRENCHES CONTAINING AGRICULTURAL FEATURES

Evidence for a truncated ridge and furrow field system was identified in Trenches 1 (Illus 4 and 6), 3 and 5. All furrows were orientated E–W and consistently spaced at approximately 5m intervals. Following an on-site discussion with the archaeological advisor, Charles Parry, it was determined that a single intervention would be sufficient to characterise the furrows. A slot measuring 0.65m x 1.30m was excavated across the north-easternmost edge of one of the exposed furrows [0104] to determine its form. The fill of the furrow consisted of a dark brown silty clay surviving to a maximum depth of 0.07m. No dateable material was recovered from the furrow.

## 4.3 BLANK TRENCHES

No archaeological finds, features or deposits were identified within Trenches 2 and 4 (Illus 3).

## 5 DISCUSSION

The identification of the ridge and furrow field system appears to be dependent on the orientation of the trenches; the absence of furrows within Trenches 2 and 4 reflecting their east–west orientation which accords with the furrows themselves.

The ridge and furrow system appears to be a continuation of the system identified during the excavation of the Wheatpieces site to the south and west (Cochrane 2018). Although no dating evidence was recovered during the current evaluation, material dating the system to the post-medieval/modern period was recovered during the previous excavations.

The shallow depth of the excavated furrow (0.07m) suggests that the site has been truncated by previous activity, quite possibly relating to the levelling of the site for use as a recreation area.

It is noted that the Roman and Medieval field systems recorded during the excavations to the south of the site were not observed during the current evaluation. Assessment of site drawings from the earlier excavation suggest that the field systems do not continue beyond the site boundary and into the current evaluation area.

## 6 CONCLUSION

Archaeological evaluation of land north of Bluebell Road, Tewksbury, Gloucestershire has revealed a post-medieval ridge and furrow field system of limited archaeological significance. The system has previously been observed and recorded over a large area to the south of the current works.

Due to the relatively high 4% trenching sample which achieved even coverage of the site and the evidence for truncation identified during the works, the land parcel is considered to be of low archaeological potential.

## 7 REFERENCES

- Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) 2014a *Code of Conduct* (Reading) <http://http.www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/CodesofConduct.pdf> accessed July 2018
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- Cochrane T 2018 *Wheatpieces, Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire – Phase 1: Archaeological excavation report* [unpublished client document] Headland Archaeology (HAS 1275)
- Craddock-Bennett L 2018 *Land to the north of Bluebell Road, Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire: Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for Archaeological Evaluation* [unpublished client document] Headland Archaeology
- Cranfield University 2018 *Cranfield Soil and Agrifood Institute Soilscales* <http://www.landis.org.uk/soilscales/> accessed July 2018
- Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) 2018 *British Geological Survey* <http://www.bgs.ac.uk/> accessed July 2018

## 8 APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1 TRENCH AND CONTEXT REGISTER

DBGL = Depth below ground level

LOE = Limit of excavation

TR01	Orientation	L (m)	W (m)	Av. D (m)
	NE-SW	30	1.80	0.35
Context	Description			DBGL (m)
0101	Topsoil: Mid greyish black, Slightly stoney silty loam			0-0.13
0102	Subsoil: Greyish brown, silty loam			0.13-0.35
0103	Geology: Yellowish grey silty clay			0.35-0.40+
0104	Cut for furrow running E-W orientation			0.35-0.42
0105	Fill of [0104] - Dark brown silty clay.			0.35-0.42
Summary	Two furrows 2.4m wide and 0.07m deep E-W orientation			
TR02	Orientation	L (m)	W (m)	Av. D (m)
	E-W	30	1.80	0.36
Context	Description			DBGL (m)
0201	Topsoil: Mid greyish black, Slightly stoney silty loam			0-0.20
0202	Subsoil: Greyish brown, silty loam			0.20-0.30
0203	Geology: Yellowish grey silty clay			0.30+
Summary	No archaeological deposits			

TR03	Orientation	L (m)	W (m)	Av. D (m)
	NW-SE	30	1.80	0.40
Context	Description			DBGL (m)
0301	Topsoil: Mid greyish black, Slightly stoney silty loam			0-0.15
0302	Subsoil: Greyish brown, silty loam			0.15-0.30
0303	Geology: Yellowish grey silty clay			0.30-0.40+
Summary:	Three furrows at c 2m wide. E-W orientated			
TR04	Orientation	L (m)	W (m)	Av. D (m)
	E-W	30	1.80	0.40
Context	Description			DBGL (m)
0401	Topsoil: Mid greyish black, Slightly stoney silty loam			0-0.12
0402	Subsoil: Greyish brown, silty loam			0.12-0.40
0403	Geology: Yellowish grey silty clay			0.40+
Summary	No Archaeological deposits			
TR05	Orientation	L (m)	W (m)	Av. D (m)
	NE-SW	30	1.80	0.30
Context	Description			DBGL (m)
0501	Topsoil: Mid greyish black, Slightly stoney silty loam			0-0.12
0502	Subsoil: Greyish brown, silty loam			0.12-0.32
0503	Geology: Yellowish grey silty clay			0.32+
Summary	Two E-W furrows c 2m wide.			







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