SFBW19

STOCKEND FARM, BRANSFORD, WORCESTERSHIRE

TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION

SMR/HER NO. WSM 71681

commissioned by Stockend Energy Limited

July 2019

HEADLAND ARCHAEOLOGY

REGISTERED ORGANISATION CIfA

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This report adheres to the quality standard of ISO 9001:2015

PROJECT INFO:

HA Project Code **SFBW19** / HAS No. **1350** / NGR **SO 80367 51305** / Parish **Bransford** / Local Authority **Wychavon and Malvern Hills District Councils** / OASIS Ref. **headland3-356969**

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HEADLAND ARCHAEOLOGY

REGISTERED ORGANISATION CIfA

PROJECT SUMMARY

Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd undertook an archaeological investigation of land to the south of Stockend Farm, Bransford, Worcestershire ahead of a proposed development consisting of the erection of an organic free-range egg laying unit with hardstanding, feed silos and attenuation pond.

No archaeological features or deposits were encountered during the evaluation. Ceramic materials of the late medieval and post-medieval periods were recovered from plough-soil in Trench 2, indicative of manuring and general agricultural activity.

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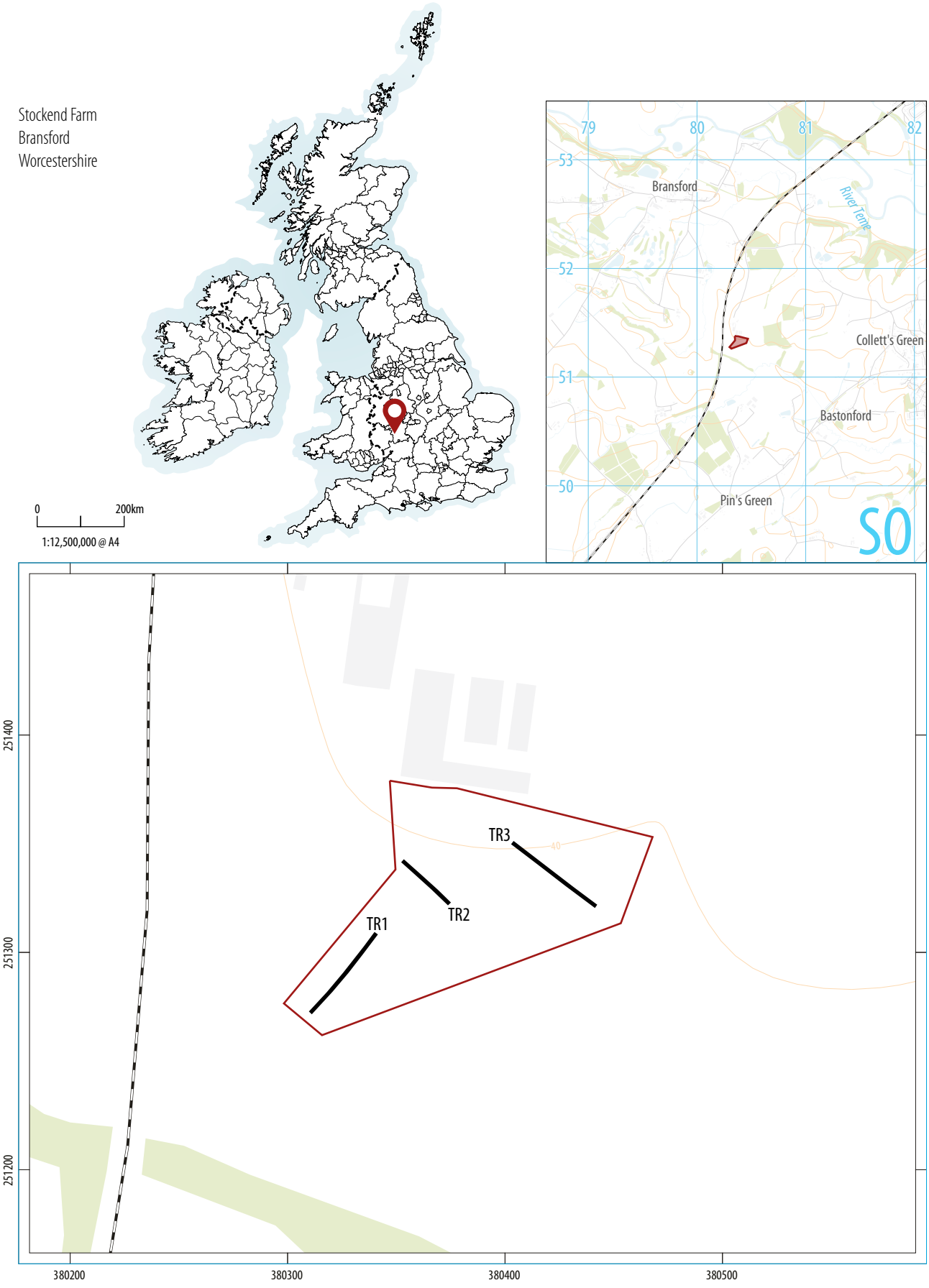
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS



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ILLUS 1 Site location

STOCKEND FARM, BRANSFORD, WORCESTERSHIRE

TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION

1 INTRODUCTION

Headland Archaeology Ltd was commissioned by Stockend Energy Ltd to undertake a programme of archaeological investigation of land to the south of Stockend Farm, Bransford, Worcestershire.

Planning permission was granted by Wychavon and Malvern Council (19/00201/FUL) for the erection of an organic free-range egg laying unit with hardstanding, feed silos and attenuation pond. An archaeological condition (inter alia) has been placed on the development:

Condition 14 of the planning permission states;

No development shall take place in connection with this development until an Archaeological Watching Brief, including a Written Scheme of Investigation, has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing.

The scheme includes an assessment of significance and research questions; and:

- a) The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording.
- b) The programme for post investigation assessment.
- c) Provision to be made for analysis of the site investigation and recording.
- d) Provision to be made for publication and dissemination of the analysis and records of the site investigation.
- e) Provision to be made for archive deposition of the analysis and records of the site investigation.
- e) Nomination of a competent person or persons/organisation to undertakethe works set out within the Written Scheme of Investigation.

Following contact with Aidan Smyth, Archaeology and Planning advisor to Wychavon and Malvern Hills District Council, it was determined that the required work should take the form of a trial trench evaluation amounting to a 2% sample of the proposed development area (with contingency for a further 2% if required).

Headland Archaeology Ltd prepared a Written Scheme of Investigation (Craddock-Bennett 2019) on behalf of Stockend Energy Ltd; outlining the work methodology.

The Written Scheme of Investigation was submitted to and agreed by the Archaeological Advisor to the LPA.

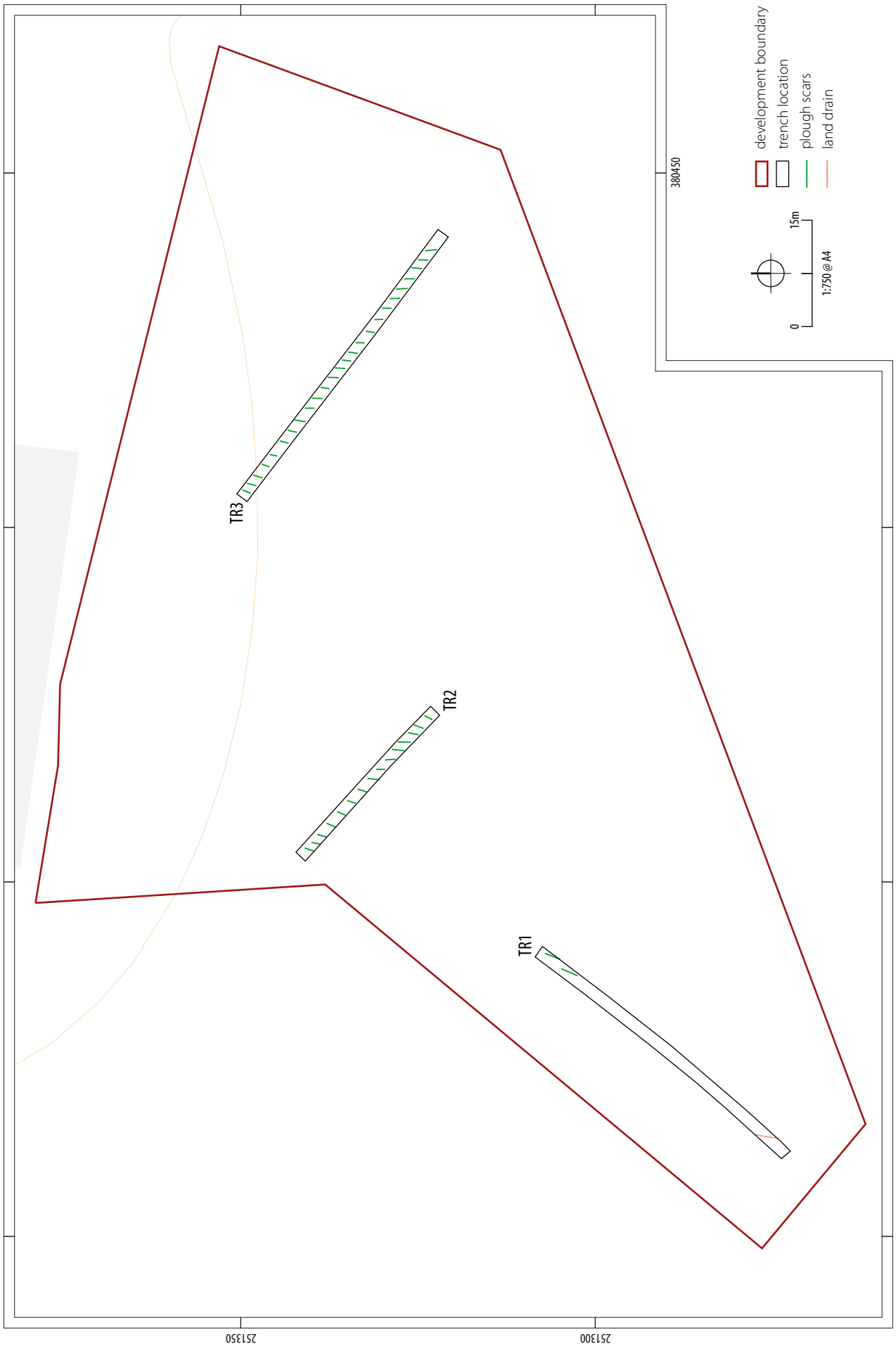
1.1 SITE DESCRIPTION

The site comprises an area of arable land to the immediate south of agricultural buildings associated with Stockend Farm (centred at NGR SO 80367 51305).

The proposed development area measures approximately c1.2ha and is bounded by farm buildings to the north, agricultural fields to the east and south and a solar farm to the west.

The site is located on a gentle slope, approximately 40m above Ordnance Datum (AOD) and is currently under pasture.

The bedrock geology comprises Dolomitic Siltstone of the Sidmouth Mudstone Formation. No superficial deposits are recorded (NERC 2019). The soils are classified in the Soilscape 8



ILLUS 2 Trench location plan

ILLUS 3 General shot of site, looking north

association, characterised as slightly acidic loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage (Cranfield University 2019).

1.2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

A HER assessment of the site has been undertaken on behalf of Headland Archaeology by Worcestershire Historic Environment Record (WSM 71681). Eight Archaeological activities and 33 HER Monuments were recorded with the 500m search area. No Scheduled or registered sites were identified.

Many of the monuments identified relate to extant buildings and are not of direct relevance to the archaeological potential of the site. The location of the 'shrunken' Medieval Village of Bransford resides 500m to the west of the proposed development site (WSM 07912), and a possible medieval Holloway (WSM 32076) immediately to the east of the development area. This suggests the potential for medieval remains within the site boundary.

The assessment concluded that there is a potential for prehistoric settlement in the wider landscape and good potential for below ground medieval archaeology around settlements. A Historic England project to identify the potential for Palaeolithic Archaeology in Worcestershire recorded several deposits within the search area with potential for archaeology of this period.

1.3 OBJECTIVES

The methodology was outlined in the Written Scheme of Investigation (Craddock-Bennett 2019).

In general, the archaeological investigations were undertaken in order to:

- Assess the extent, structure, and date of any archaeological features and deposits of archaeological interest;
- To assess the artefactual and ecofactual potential of archaeological deposits;
- To assess the impact of previous land use on the site;
- To inform the formulation of further measures, if required, to mitigate impacts of the proposed development on surviving archaeological remains;

The local and regional research contexts are provided by the Archaeological Research Framework for the West Midlands.

The results of the evaluation will be used to describe the significance of heritage assets potentially affected by the development.

The resulting archive (finds and records) will be prepared in accordance with the requirements of Worcestershire Museum Service and organised and deposited with the local museum to facilitate access for future research and interpretation for public benefit.

2 METHOD

An archaeological investigation was undertaken on 20th June. This comprised the mechanical excavation of three trial trenches (two measuring 50m and one 30m in length) of a combined 130 linear metres (2% sample) of the proposed development area.

Prior to breaking ground, all trenches were located by a differential GPS. Utility plans were consulted, and all trenches were scanned

ILLUS 4 Shot of Trench 1, looking south-west

using a Cable Avoidance Tool (CAT) to detect any services that could potentially impede the excavation of the proposed trench location.

Overburden was removed by mechanical excavator under constant archaeological supervision. Excavation ceased when the natural substrate or archaeological horizon was exposed.

All recording followed CIfA Standards and guidance. All deposits identified during the excavation were given unique numbers and recorded on pro-forma record sheets, recording the level at which deposits were encountered below ground level (bgl). 35mm black-and-white prints and digital photographs were taken of the excavation and any archaeologically significant features and deposits.

A plan of the excavation and features across the site was recorded digitally with a Trimble dGPS using standard Headland Archaeology methodology.

3 RESULTS (ILLUS 4–6)

Full context descriptions, including dimensions, depths and orientations, are presented in Appendix 1. Contexts are identified numerically with cuts indicated by square brackets and deposits by rounded brackets. Selected technical detail is utilised below in order to describe the remains found and to inform the interpretation and dating presented in this report.

3.1 TRENCH 1 (ILLUS 4)

The natural substrate comprised of medium red brown fine sandy clay with moderate light grey sandy clay mottling and concentrations of sub-rounded gravel flint (0103). A variation of this substrate was noted comprising of compact medium red brown clayey sand (0104). This was exposed at a depth of 0.46m (bgl) below ground level.

A deposit of subsoil (0102) measuring between 0.10–0.12m in depth overlay the geological horizon. This was in-turn sealed by medium grey brown sandy clay plough-soil with occasional sub-rounded gravel flint measuring between 0.30–0.35m in depth.

Agricultural plough scars on a north-south alignment were observed at the northern end of the trench. A single ceramic land drain was observed at the southern end of the trench, aligned north to south respecting the land gradient.

3.2 TRENCH 2 (ILLUS 5)

The natural substrate comprised of medium red brown sandy clay with moderate sub-rounded gravel flint and occasional quartz and iron stone (0202). This was identified at a depth between 0.32–0.38m below ground level (bgl). Regularly spaced, parallel plough scars cut into the geological horizon on a north-south alignment. These were sealed by medium red brown sandy clay plough-soil (0201) measuring between 0.32–0.34m in depth. A few abraded fragments of late medieval/post-medieval pottery, ceramic building material and clap pipe were recovered from the plough-soil.

ILLUS 5 Shot of Trench 2, looking south-east

3.3 TRENCH 3 (ILLUS 6)

The natural substrate comprised of medium red brown sandy clay with few sub-rounded gravel flint and occasional quartz (0302). North-south aligned plough scars were observed throughout the length of the trench. These were sealed by a medium red/brown sandy clay plough-soil measuring between 0.30–0.32m in depth.

4 DISCUSSION

The natural substrate was variable across the trenches excavated, comprising predominantly of red brown sandy clay with variations of more compacted clays (0104) recorded in trench 1. Subsoil was only present in Trench 1; this is likely due to the topographical setting where the trench was located lower down the slope and the build-up of material had formed likely through a combination of soil-creep and ploughing.

The depths of the plough-soil were consistent across the excavated trenches, with extensive plough scaring evident. Artefactual materials were recovered in Trench 2, contained within the overlying plough-soil. This is likely related to manuring and general agricultural activity that had been ploughed into the soil.

No archaeological deposits or features were observed during fieldwork.

5 CONCLUSION

The archaeological investigation suggests the development site resides in an area predominantly used as arable land during the post-medieval period. This corroborates with historical mapping and preliminary HER assessment.

No features or deposits were identified and no materials pre-dating the late medieval/post-medieval agricultural landscape were recorded or observed during archaeological investigation. No evidence for medieval settlement activity was recorded however the presence of abraded late medieval / post-medieval pottery within the plough soil suggests that the site was in agricultural use during this period.

Based on the absence of in-situ archaeological activity, no further archaeological mitigation measures are considered appropriate in this instance. The site archive will be compiled and deposited with Worcestershire Museums Service.

ILLUS 6 Shot of Trench 3, looking south-east

6 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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7 APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 TRENCH AND CONTEXT REGISTER

*D BGL = Depth below ground level

TR1	L (M)	W (M)	MIN. D (M)	MAX. D (M)
	50	2	0.46	0.87
CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION			*D BGL (M)
0101	Topsoil – Medium red brown sandy clay loam with occasional sub-rounded gravel flint (0–0.07m). Clean plough soil.			0.35
0102	Subsoil – Light red brown sandy clay with few sub-rounded sandstone and ironstone (0–0.12m).			0.47
0103	Natural – Medium red brown sandy clay with moderate light grey clay mottling and concentrations of sub-rounded gravel flint (0–0.12m).			N/A
0104	Natural – Medium red brown clayey sand.			N/A

SUMMARY: 1X CERAMIC LAND DRAIN, ALIGNED N/S AND PLOUGH SCARS NOTED.

NO ARCHAEOLOGICAL FEATURES ENCOUNTERED

TR2	L (M)	W (M)	MIN. D (M)	MAX. D (M)
	50	2	0.32	0.38
CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION			*D BGL (M)
0201	Topsoil – Medium red brown sandy clay loam with occasional sub-rounded gravel flint (0–0.07m). Few flecks of charcoal, manganese, medieval/post-medieval pottery, CBM fragments and clay pipe.			0.32
0202	Natural – Medium red brown sandy clay with moderate sub-rounded gravel flint (0–0.07m) and manganese.			N/A

SUMMARY: PLOUGH SCARS NOTED. ARTEFACTUAL MATERIALS RECOVERED FROM PLOUGH-SOIL, LIKELY AS A RESULT OF MANURING.

NO ARCHAEOLOGICAL FEATURES ENCOUNTERED.

TR3	L (M)	W (M)	MIN. D (M)	MAX. D (M)
	50	2	0.32	0.34
CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION			*D BGL (M)
0301	Topsoil – Medium red brown sandy silty loam with few sub-rounded gravel flint and occasional quartz (0–0.04). Clean plough soil.			0.30
0302	Natural – Medium red brown sandy clay 'brash' Iron stone.			N/A

SUMMARY: PLOUGH SCARRING NOTED.

NO ARCHAEOLOGICAL FEATURES ENCOUNTERED

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