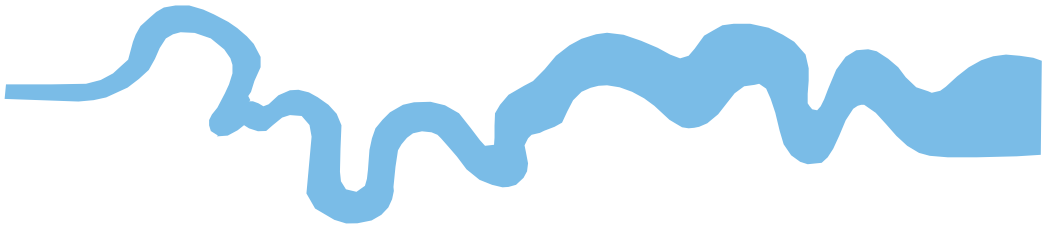
T V A S



NORTH MIDLANDS

New Barns Farm, Pearl Lane, Stourport, Worcestershire

Archaeological Evaluation

by Nikki Snape and Laura Schenck

Site Code: PLS18/144

(SO 7965 6986)

New Barns Farm, Pearl Lane, Stourport, Worcestershire

An Archaeological Evaluation

for ECUS Limited

by Nikki Snape and Laura Schenck

TVAS Normid

Site Code PLS18/144

September 2019

Summary

Site name: New Barns Farm, Pearl Lane, Stourport, Worcestershire

Grid reference: SO 7965 6986

Site activity: Evaluation trenching

Date and duration of project: 27th August–6th September 2019

Project coordinator: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Helen Daniel

Site code: PLS18/144

Area of site: 15.6ha

Summary of results: A total of 27 trenches were opened as planned, revealing six ditches, most at the north of the field. Some 35 sherds of pottery dating from the 2nd to 4th century AD were recovered from two of the ditches. All of the features correlate well with geophysical anomalies and appear to suggest the presence of a later Roman field system. The site has moderate archaeological potential in the north of the field.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at TVAS North Midlands, Stoke-on-Trent, and will be deposited at Museums Worcestershire in due course.

Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford✓ 19.09.19
	Steve Preston✓ 19.09.19

TVAS North Midlands, 2b Stanton Road, Meir, Stoke-on-Trent, ST3 6DD
tel: (01782) 595648 email: northmidlands@tvas.co.uk website: www.tvas.co.uk

New Barns Farm, Pearl Lane, Stourport, Worcestershire
An Archaeological Evaluation

by Nikki Snape and Laura Schenck

Report 18/144b

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at New Barns Farm, Pearl Lane, Stourport, Worcestershire SO 7965 6986 (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Paul White of Ecus Ltd, Unit 1 Woodlands Business Village, Coronation Road, Basingstoke, Hampshire, RG21 4JX on behalf of Barratt Homes West Midlands, 60 Whitehall Rd, Halesowen, B63 3JS.

Planning permission (pre application number 19/7031/PAE) is being sought from Wyre Forest District Council for the development of the land to incorporate a new housing estate with internal highways, open green space and soft landscaping. It is anticipated that any consent gained will be subject to a condition relating to archaeology. This is in accordance with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2019), and Wyre Forest District Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Emma Hancox, Worcestershire County Council Historic Environment Policy and Advisory Manager, the archaeological adviser to the District.

The fieldwork was undertaken by Helen Daniel, Nikki Snape and Laura Schenck, between 27th August and 6th September 2019 and the site code is PLS 18/144. The archive is presently held at TVAS North Midlands, Stoke-on-Trent, and will be deposited at Museums Worcestershire in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located in a field to the east of Astley Cross, south of Dunley Road, with access from Pearl Lane to the west (Fig. 1). The field is an irregular shape bordered by thick trees, and is currently used for arable agriculture, with woodland and agricultural fields to the south and west. The underlying geology is Wildmoor Sandstone Member (BGS 2019), with superficial deposits of sand and gravel from river deposits. The site is on a moderate slope, at a height of 55m above Ordnance Datum in the north–west corner, sloping south to a low of 38m at the in the south–east corner, but with a ridge orientated east–west in the northern half of the field at 51m aOD.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site has been detailed in a desk-based assessment produce by ECUS Environmental Consultants (Gallagher 2018). A summary is provided below. There have been six archaeological investigations undertaken within the site boundaries, including field walking, geophysical survey and excavation. An excavation took place in the north of the field ahead of the construction of Blackstone to Astley aqueduct (Hemingway and Buteux 1992) which recorded Roman settlement features at grid reference SO7952 7007. The most recent work has been a geophysical survey by TVAS (Beaverstock 2018).

Two prehistoric stone tools were found during field walking on the site, but there are no other prehistoric sites in the area. An area in the north of the field revealed Roman features dating to the 3rd to 4th century. The activity seems to have been agricultural throughout, with a possible large agricultural building, a ditch, pits and plough soil. Pottery made up the majority of the finds, and the many nearly complete examples suggest a nearby settlement. There are very few other Roman sites nearby; a Roman settlement at Larford is 1.2km away (Walker 1958) and there are two sites with circular cropmarks that suggest Roman enclosures within 2km (Dalwood *et al.* 1996; Dalwood *et al.* 1998). The site is at the edge of the village of Astley Cross which was first mentioned in 1854 in the third volume of '*The Rambler in Worcestershire'* by John Noake, but may be as early as the late 16th or early 17th century (Dinn 1992).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological deposits within the area of development.

The specific research aims of this project are:

to determine if there are buried remains of later prehistoric or Roman deposits present on the site; and

to determine if there are buried remains medieval deposits present on the site.

A total of 27 trenches were proposed with a width of 1.80–2.0m, twenty-five at 30m long and two at 15m long, located in a stratified random pattern across the site, except where needed to intercept geophysical anomalies. These were excavated by a machine fitted with a toothless bucket under constant archaeological supervision. All archaeological features were cleaned and excavated by hand and recorded. Environmental samples were taken and spoil heaps were monitored for finds.

Results

All 27 trenches were dug as intended (Fig. 2). They ranged in length from 14m to 30.8m and between 0.45m to 0.93m in depth. All features were initially difficult to see due to the quick drying nature of the geology. Archaeological features were scanned with the metal detector, as was the spoil of all trenches. No significant finds were recovered from metal detecting.

A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1. The stratigraphy of most trenches was identical, consisting of topsoil directly overlying natural geology. Subsoil of between 0.10m and 0.20m depth was also present in trenches 3–10, 13 and 15–17. The excavated features, with dating evidence, are summarized in Appendix 2.

Trenches 1, 2 and 18 (Fig. 2)

Trenches 1, 2 and 18 were between 27.8m–30.2m long, 1.60m wide and between 0.42m–0.60m deep. The stratigraphy of each trench was consistent throughout and comprises a soft mid greyish brown sandy silt topsoil overlying natural geology of firm mid to dark reddish brown sandy silt with frequent patches of limestone gravel and small stones. No archaeological features were identified in these trenches.

Trenches 3, 4, 6 -13, 19 -27 (Fig. 2)

Trench 7 was 14.90m long and trenches 3, 4, 6, 8–13 and 19–27 were between 25.20m–30.80m long, 1.60m wide and between 0.42m–0.60m deep. The stratigraphy of each trench consisted of a soft mid greyish brown sandy silt topsoil overlying natural geology of firm light to mid yellowish to reddish brown silty sand natural geology. Trenches 3, 4, 6–10 and 13 also had 0.10m–0.20m of a soft mid reddish brown silty sand subsoil. No archaeological features were identified in these trenches. The trenches containing archaeological features or possible features are described in more detail below.

Trench 5 (Figs 3, 4 and 5, Pl. 5)

Trench 5 was aligned NW–SE and was 30.5m long, 1.60m wide and 0.80m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m of topsoil and 0.38m subsoil overlying natural geology. At 11.80m from the south end of the trench, ditch 5 was recorded aligned roughly west–east, which was 0.78m wide and 0.24m deep and contained two fills: a firm mid pinkish brown silty sand (56) with occasional small stone, and a firm light yellowish brown silty sand (58) with occasional small stones. No finds were recovered. The location of ditch 5 corresponds with a linear geophysical anomaly (Fig 6).

Trench 14 (Figs 3, 4 and 5; Pls 1 and 6)

Trench 14 was aligned NNE–SSW and was 30.2m long, 1.60m wide and 0.65m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.45m of topsoil overlying natural geology. At 11.50m from the SSW end of the trench, ditch 6 was recorded as 1.79m wide and 0.34m deep and contained a firm mid yellowish brown silty sand fill (57) with moderate small stones. No finds were recovered. The location of ditch 6 corresponds reasonably well with a linear geophysical anomaly (Fig 6).

Trench 15 (Figs 3, 4 and 5; Pls 2 and 7)

Trench 15 was aligned WSW–ENE and was 14m long, 1.60m wide and 0.55m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.35m of topsoil and 0.13m subsoil overlying natural geology. At 5.50m from the west end of the trench, ditch 3 was recorded as 0.96m wide and 0.36m deep and contained fill 54, a firm mid yellowish brown silty sand with moderate small stones and occasional small to medium heat-affected stones. No finds were recovered. The location (though not the width) of ditch 3 corresponds with a linear geophysical anomaly (Fig 6).

Trench 16 (Figs 3, 4 and 5; Pls 3 and 8)

Trench 16 was aligned NW–SE and was 28.9m long, 1.60m wide and 0.67m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.46m of topsoil and 0.34m subsoil overlying natural geology. At 2.80m from the SE end of the trench, ditch 1 was aligned NE–SW and was 1.35m wide and 0.30m deep. It contained fill 52, a firm mid orange brown silty sand with no inclusions. No finds were recovered. At just north of this, ditch 2 was aligned closer to west–east and was recorded as 2.20m wide and 0.40m deep and contained fill 53, a firm mid orange brown silty sand with no inclusions. A single sherd of Roman pottery (not more closely datable) was recovered from the fill, and another sherd in the same fabric was found unstratified nearby. The location of ditches 1 and 2 (and the alignment of ditch 1) corresponds with a linear geophysical anomaly (Fig 6) although an expected second anomaly further north (on the orientation of ditch 2) was not apparent in the trench.

Trench 17 (Figs 3, 4 and 5; Pls 4, 9 and 10)

Trench 17 was aligned NNW–SSE and was 29.5m long, 1.60m wide and 0.53m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.40m of topsoil overlying 0.15m of subsoil, above natural geology. At 12m from the south end of the trench, ditch 4 was recorded as 0.78m wide and 0.24m deep and contained fill 55, a mid orange brown silty sand with occasional small stones. There were ten sherds of 2nd-century or later pottery and 23 sherds of 3rd–4th century pottery in fill 55. The location and alignment of ditch 4 correspond with a linear geophysical anomaly (Fig 6).

Finds

Pottery by Alice Lyons

A total of 35 sherds, weighing 206g of mid-to-late Roman pottery were recovered, from two of the twenty-seven trenches, both located in the northern part of the site (Trenches 16 and 17; Appendix 3).

The pottery was fragmentary, did not appear to have been deliberately deposited and had been subjected to significant post-depositional disturbance resulting in an average sherd weight of less than 6g. The pottery was analysed following the national guidelines (Barclay *et al.* 2016).

The most significant deposit of pottery are the partial remains (upper half only) of two everted rim jars. Although similar in form one is a Black Burnished ware handmade jar traded into the region from Dorset after the mid-2nd century AD; the other is a locally produced Malvernian reduced ware product typical of the later Roman period. Both vessels have a burnished black slip but are otherwise undecorated. It is possible they are contemporary vessels deposited in the 3rd, possibly the 4th, century AD.

Due to the fragmentary and significantly abraded nature of the pots it is not possible to establish if they were carefully deposited as whole vessels or thrown away after they were broken. In addition to these reduced coarse ware vessels, two small sherds of Severn Valley oxidized ware, one from a narrow-mouthed jar, were also found. This pottery type is very common in the region and was produced in large quantities between the mid-1st to 4th centuries AD. It is noteworthy that only coarseware pottery was found; no imports from the wider Roman Empire, fine table wares or specialist vessels were recovered.

This a small, primarily stratified, assemblage of mid-to-late Roman coarseware pottery recovered within a silted-up system of field ditches. The pottery is typical for the region and is similar to a larger assemblage reported on from an adjacent site (Hemingway and Buteux 1992, 3).

Conclusion

The evaluation was completed as intended, revealing deposits of possible archaeological interest in six ditches, two of which contained Roman pottery. The majority of the features are in the north of the site, and which appear to represent components of a field system. In the main, the features correlated well with anomalies in the geophysical interpretation. The ceramic evidence suggests a 3rd to 4th century Roman date. The location the main area of archaeology and the type of pottery found is consistent with a previous excavation in 1992 (Hemingway and Buteux 1992). The northern end of the field is considered to have moderate archaeological potential, with the remainder of the field as low archaeological potential.

References

Barclay, A, Knight, D, Booth, P, Evans, J, Brown, D H, Wood, I, 2016, *A Standard for Pottery Studies in Archaeology*, Prehistoric Ceramics Research Group, Study Group for Roman Pottery (Historic England)

Beaverstock, K, 2018, 'New Barn Farm, Pearl Lane, Stourport, Worcestershire: a Geophysical Survey (Magnetic)', TVAS unpubl report 18/144, Stoke

BGS, 2019, <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html> (Accessed 19th September 2019)

Dalwood, H, Butuex, V, Hurst, D and Pearson, E, 1996, 'Salvage recording on the Astley to Worcester aqueduct: Archive report', Hereford and Worcester County Council Archaeology Service

Dalwood, H, Butuex, V, and Pearson, E, 1998, 'Archaeology on the Astley to Worcester aqueduct', *Trans Worcestershire Archaeol Soc (3rd ser)* **16**, 1–36

Dinn, 1992, *The Blackstone to Astley Aqueduct: Salvage Recording*

Gallagher, S, 2018, 'New Barns Farm, Stourport, Worcestershire: Archaeological Desk-based Assessment', ECUS Unpubl rep **11657**

Hemingway, J and Buteux, V, 1992, *A Roman Site at Dunley Road, Areley Kings*, Archaeology Section, Hereford and Worcester County Council, Report 91

NPPF, 2019*, National Planning Policy Framework*, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, London

Tomber, R, and Dore, J, 1998 *The National Roman Fabric Reference Collection; A Handbook.* Museum of London Archaeology Service

Walker, C I, 1958, 'Excavations on a Romano-British site at Astley 1956-58', *Trans Worcestershire Archaeol Soc New Series*, **35**, 29–57

APPENDIX 1: Trench details

Trench	*Length (m)*	*Breadth (m)*	*Depth (m)*	*Comment*
1	30.1	1.6	0.60	0–0.32m topsoil, 0.32m+ firm mid reddish brown sandy silt with frequent patches of gravel and small stones natural geology
2	27.8	1.6	0.60	0–0.40m topsoil, 0.40+ firm mid reddish brown sandy silt with frequent gravel and small stones natural geology
3	29.4	1.6	0.45	0–0.28m topsoil, 0.28m–0.38m subsoil, 0.38+ firm mid reddish brown silty sand natural geology
4	29.9	1.6	0.52	0–0.30m topsoil, 0.30m–0.50m subsoil, 0.50m+ firm light orange brown silty sand natural geology
5	30.5	1.6	0.80	0–0.30m topsoil, 0.30m–0.68m subsoil, 0.68m+ firm light orange brown silty sand natural geology. Ditch 5 **[Pl. 5]**
6	30.1	1.6	0.60	0–0.40m topsoil, 0.40m–0.53m subsoil, 0.53m+ firm light orange brown silty sand natural geology
7	14.9	1.6	0.51	0–0.33m topsoil, 0.33m–0.50m subsoil, 0.50+ firm light yellowish brown silty sand natural geology with mid reddish brown stony silt sand natural areas to the south of the trench
8	31.1	1.6	0.55	0–0.32m topsoil, 0.32m–0.48m subsoil, 0.58+ firm mixed light yellow brown to light orange brown silty sand natural geology
9	29.9	1.6	0.45	0–0.32m topsoil, 0.32m–0.42m subsoil, 0.42m+ firm mid orange brown silty sand natural geology
10	29.7	1.6	0.55	0–0.30m topsoil, 0.30m+ firm mixed light yellow brown to light orange brown silty sand natural geology
11	29.5	1.6	0.48	0–0.33m topsoil, 0.33m+ firm mid reddish brown silty sand natural geology
12	29.6	1.6	0.50	0–0.36m topsoil, 0.36m+ firm light orange brown silty sand natural geology
13	30.1	1.6	0.70	0–0.36m topsoil, 0.36m- 0.51m subsoil, 0.51m+ firm mid orange brown silty sand natural geology
14	30.2	1.6	0.65	0–0.45m topsoil, 0.45m+ firm dark reddish brown sandy silt with frequent patches of gravel and small stones natural geology. Ditch 6 **[Pls 1 and 6]**
15	14	1.6	0.55	0–0.35m topsoil, 0.35m–0.48m subsoil, 0.48m+ firm mid reddish brown sandy silt with frequent patches of gravel and small stones natural geology. Ditch 3 [pls 2 and 7]
16	28.9	1.6	0.67	0–0.34m topsoil, 0.34m–0.52m subsoil, 0.52m+ firm mid orange brown silty sand natural geology with areas of mid reddish brown sandy silt with frequent patches of gravel and small stones natural geology. Ditches 1 and 2 [pls 3 and 8]
17	29.5	1.6	0.53	0–0.30m topsoil, 0.30m–0.45m subsoil, 0.45m+ firm light orange brown silty sand natural geology. Ditch 4 [pls 4, 9 and 10]
18	30.2	1.6	0.42	0–0.30m topsoil, 0.30m+ firm dark reddish brown sandy silt with frequent patches of gravel and small stones natural geology
19	29.6	1.6	0.55	0–0.32m topsoil, 0.32+ firm mid reddish brown silty sand natural geology
20	30.3	1.6	0.52	0–0.34m topsoil, 0.34m+ firm mid reddish brown silty sand natural geology
21	29.8	1.6	0.50	0–0.23m topsoil, 0.23m+ firm mid reddish brown silty sand natural geology
22	29.6	1.6	0.71	0–0.34m topsoil, .034m+ firm mid reddish brown silty sand natural geology
23	29.4	1.6	0.93	0–0.51m topsoil, 0.51m+ firm mid reddish brown silty sand natural geology
24	29.4	1.6	0.54	0–0.34m topsoil, 0.34m+ firm light orange brown silty sand natural geology
25	30.8	1.6	0.53	0–0.33m topsoil, 0.33m+ firm mid reddish brown silty sand natural geology with modern disturbance at south end of trench
26	29.3	1.6	0.46	0–0.34m topsoil, 0.34m+ firm mid reddish brown silty sand natural geology
27	25.2	1.6	0.52	0–0.30m topsoil, 0.30m+ firm mixed light yellow brown to light orange brown silty sand natural geology

APPENDIX 2: Feature details

Trench	*Cut*	*Fill (s)*	*Type*	*Date*	*Dating evidence*
16	1	52	Ditch	-	-
16	2	53	Ditch	Mid 1st to 4th century	pottery
15	3	54	Ditch	-	-
17	4	55	Ditch	Mid 2nd to 4th century	pottery
5	5	56, 58	Ditch	-	-
14	6	57	Ditch	-	-

APPENDIX 3: Summary of pottery

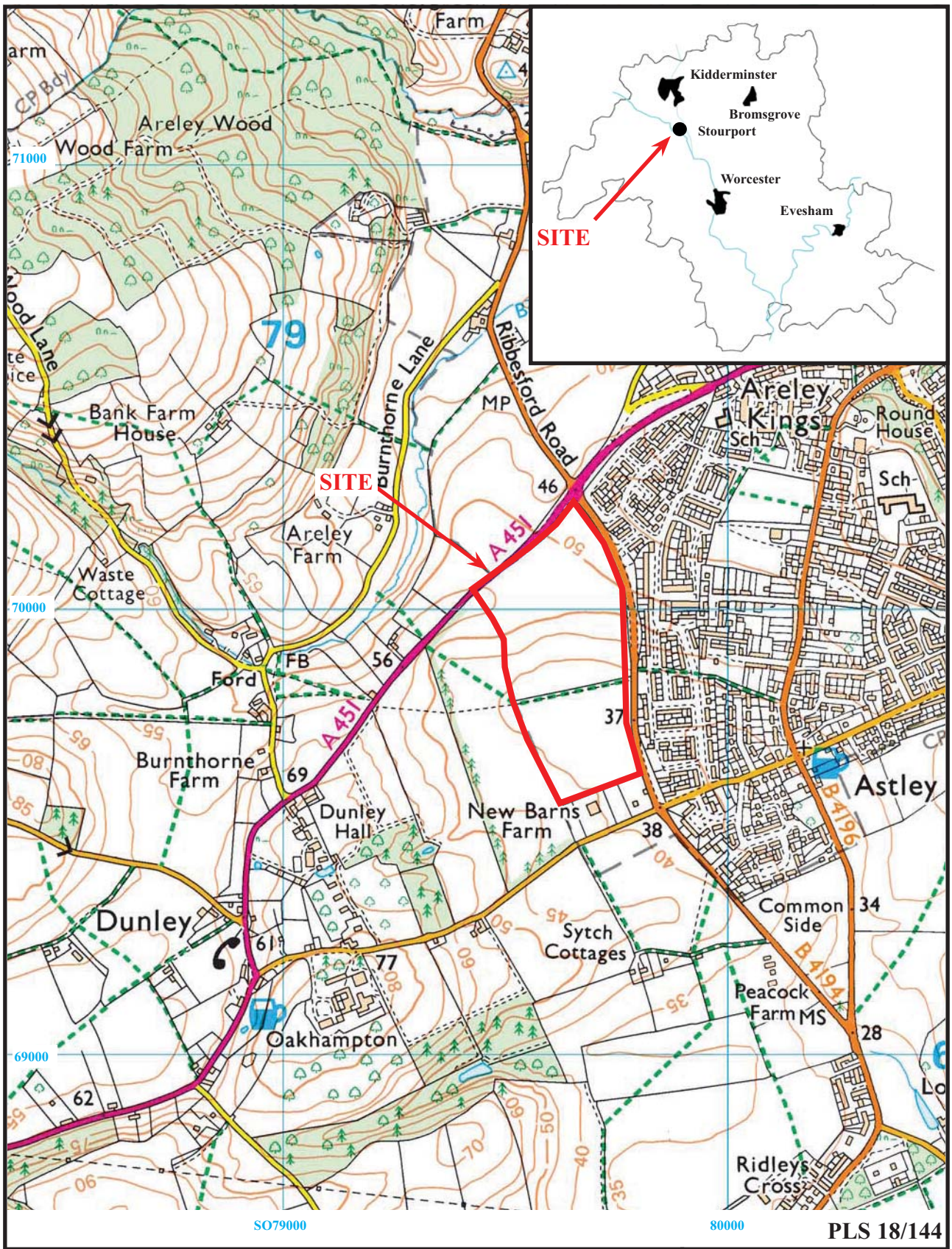
Table A3.1. Pottery quantification by fabric.

Fabric name; abbreviation	*Vessel*	*No.*	*Wt (g)*
Malvernian Reduced ware: MAL RE (Tomber and Dore 1998, 148)	Medium mouthed jar with everted rim	23	88
Black Burnished Ware: BB1 (Tomber and Dore 1998, 127)	Medium mouthed jar with everted rim	10	82
Severn Valley Oxidised ware: SVW OX 2 (Tomber and Dore 1998, 149)	Narrow mouthed jar with gently curving rim	2	36

Table A3.2. Catalogue by context

Trench	*Cut*	*Fill*	*Feature*	*Fabric*	*Worcestershire Fabric*	*Type*	*Form*	*No.*	*Wt (g)*	*Century AD*
16	2	53	Ditch	SVW OX 2	12	U	JAR	1	18	Mid 1-4
17	4	55	Ditch	BB2	22	RU	JAR	10	82	Mid 2+
17	4	55	Ditch	MAL RE	19	RU	JAR	23	88	3-4
16	Unstratified			SVW OX 2	12	R	JAR	1	18	Mid 1-4

Key: Type – R – rim; U – undecorated body sherd

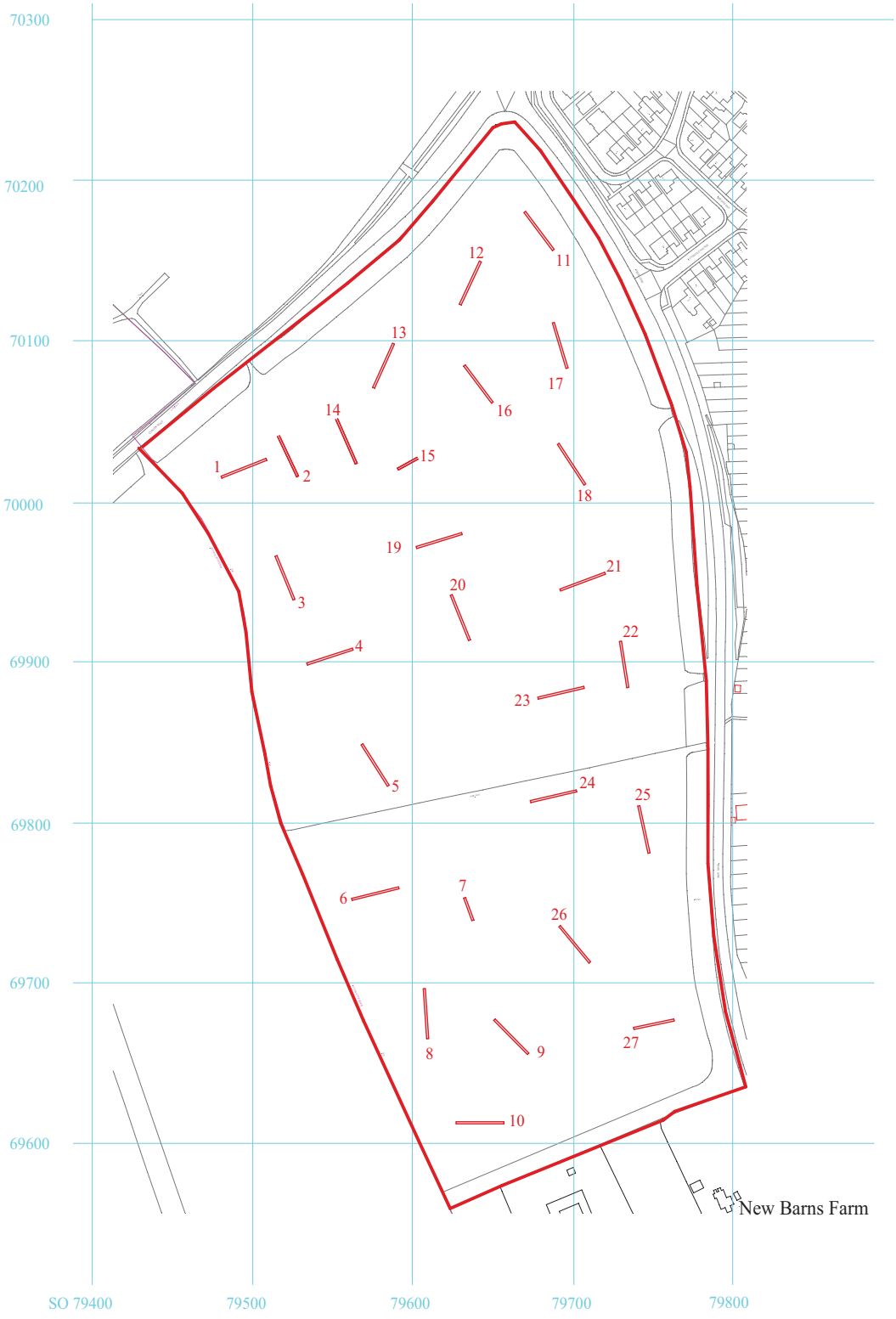


PLS 18/144

New Barns Farm, Pearl Lane, Stourport, Worcestershire, 2019
Archaeological Evaluation

Figure 1. Location of site within Stourport and Worcestershire.

TVAS NORTH MIDLANDS



PLS 18/144

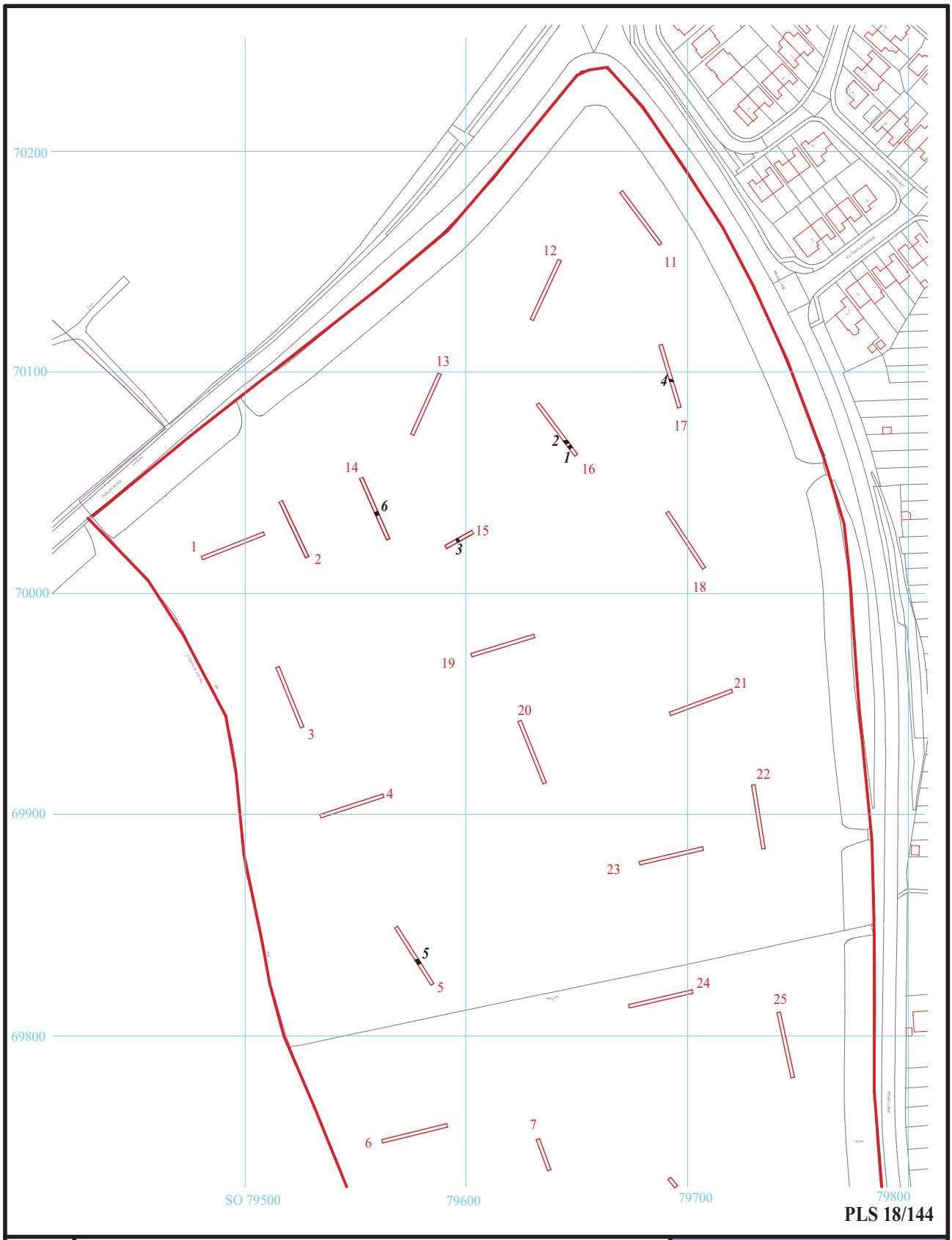
N

Land at New Barns Farm, Pearl Lane, Stourport, Worcestershire, 2019 Archaeological Excavation

Figure 2. Location of trenches

0 100m

TVAS NORTH MIDLANDS



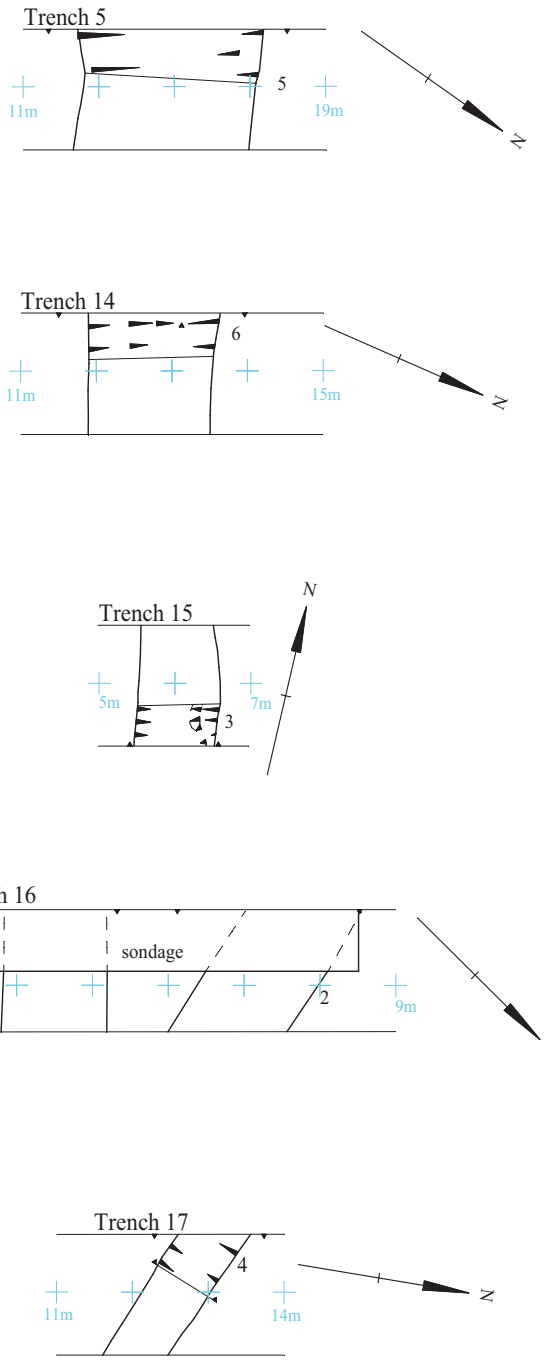
N

Land at New Barns Farm, Pearl Lane, Stourport, Worcestershire, 2019 Archaeological Excavation

Figure 3. Location of features.

0 100m

TVAS NORTH MIDLANDS



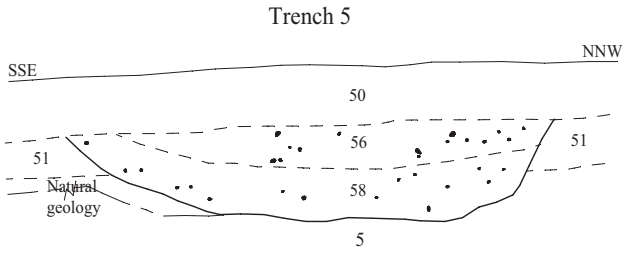
PLS 18/144

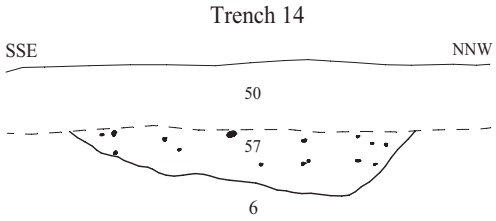
Land at New Barns Farm, Pearl Lane Stourport, Worcestershire, 2019 Archaeological Evaluation

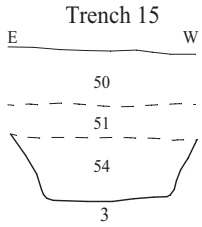
Figure 4. Plan of features in trenches

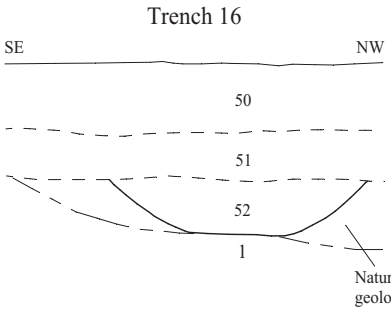
0 5m

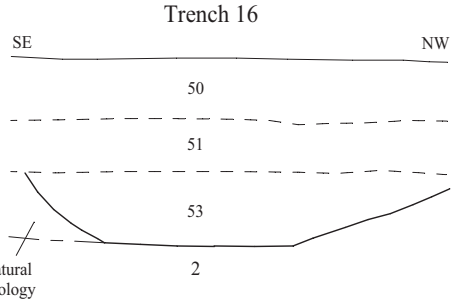
TVAS NORTH MIDLANDS

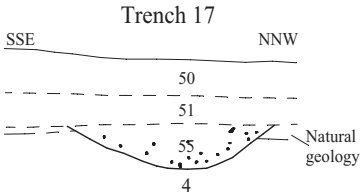


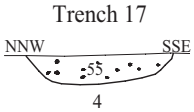












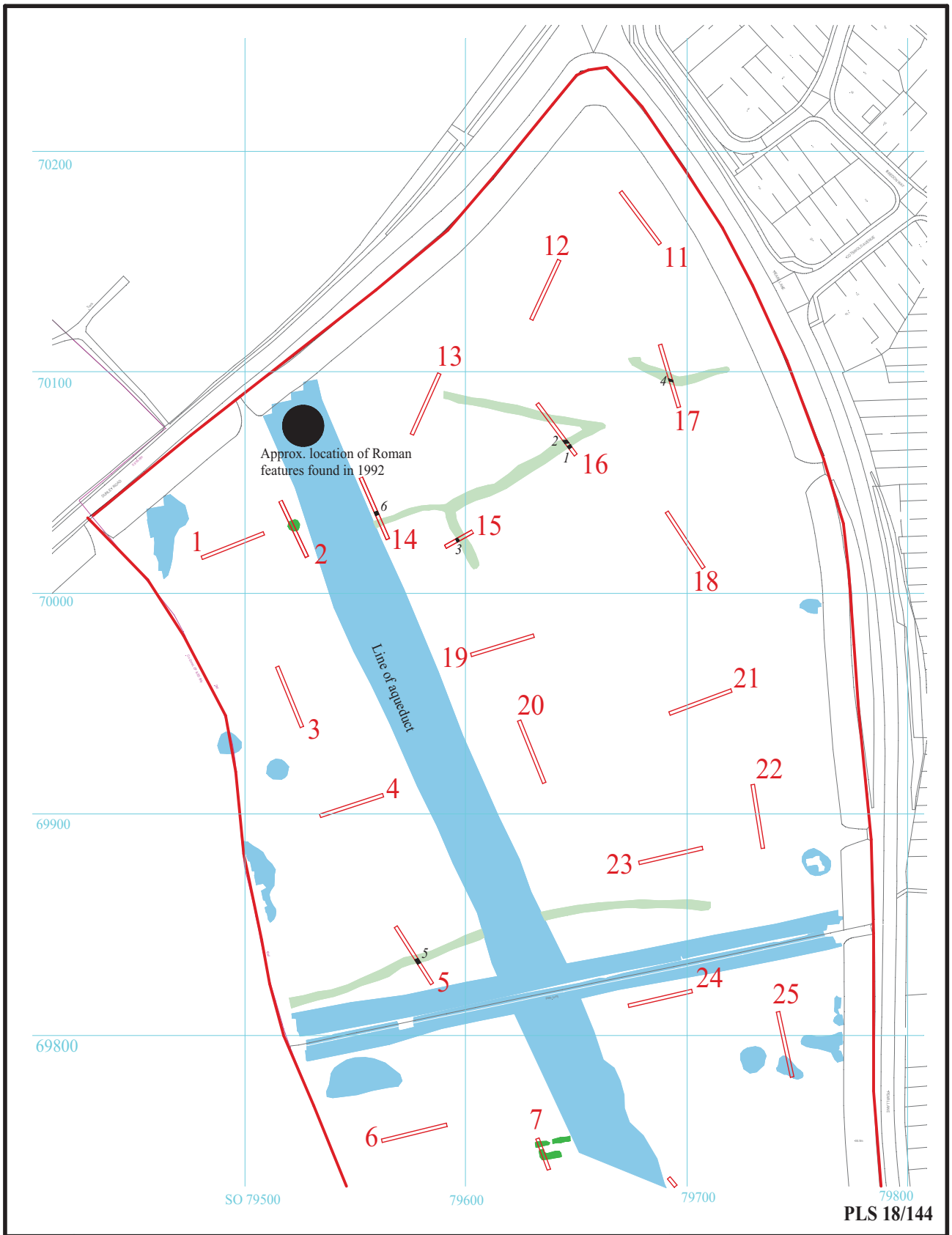
PLS 18/144

Land at New Barns Farm, Pearl Lane Stourport, Worcestershire, 2019 Archaeological Evaluation

Figure 5. Sections

0 1m

TVAS NORTH MIDLANDS



N

Land at New Barns Farm, Pearl Lane, Stourport, Worcestershire, 2019
Archaeological Excavation

Figure 6. Location of features in relation to geophysical anomalies (after Beaverstock 2018) and previous observations.

0 100m

TVAS NORTH MIDLANDS

Plate 1. Trench 14, looking NW,
Scales: 2m,1m and 0.5m

Plate 2. Trench 15, looking E,
Scales: 2m,1m and 0.5m

Plate 3. Trench 16, looking N,
Scales: 2m,1m and 0.5m

Plate 4. Trench 17, looking NE,
Scales: 2m,1m and 0.5m

PLS 18/144

New Barns Farm, Pearl Lane, Stourport,
Worcestershire, 2019
Archaeological Evaluation
Plates 1 to 4.

TVAS
NORTH MIDLANDS

Plate 5. Trench 5, ditch 5,
looking W, Scales: 2m.

Plate 6. Trench 14, ditch 6,
looking W, Scales: 2m and 0.50m

Plate 7. Trench 15, ditch 3, looking S, Scales: 1m.

Plate 8. Trench 16, ditches 1 and 2,
looking W, Scales: 1m.

PLS 18/144

New Barns Farm, Pearl Lane, Stourport,
Worcestershire, 2019
Archaeological Evaluation
Plates 5 to 8.

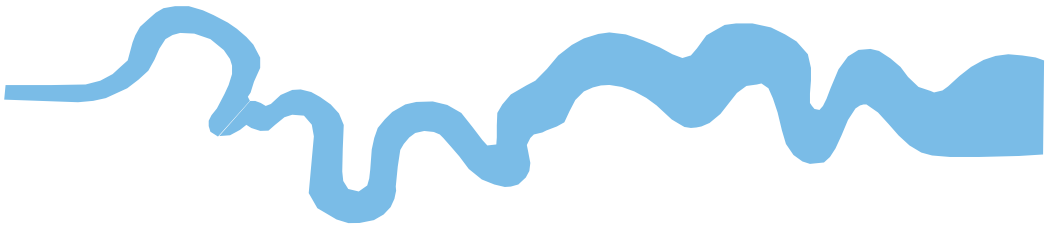
TVAS
NORTH MIDLANDS

Plate 9. Trench 17, ditch 4, looking SW, Scales: 1m.

Plate 10. Trench 17, ditch 4, looking E, Scales: 1m.

TIME CHART

	Calendar Years
Modern	AD 1901
Victorian	AD 1837
Post Medieval	AD 1500
Medieval	AD 1066
Saxon	AD 410
Roman	AD 43
	AD 0 BC
Iron Age	750 BC
Bronze Age: Late	1300 BC
Bronze Age: Middle	1700 BC
Bronze Age: Early	2100 BC
Neolithic: Late	3300 BC
Neolithic: Early	4300 BC
Mesolithic: Late	6000 BC
Mesolithic: Early	10000 BC
Palaeolithic: Upper	30000 BC
Palaeolithic: Middle	70000 BC
Palaeolithic: Lower	2,000,000 BC



TVAS (North Midlands),
2b Stanton Road, Meir,
Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, ST3 6DD

Tel: 01782 595648
Email: northmidlands@tvas.co.uk
Web: www.tvas.co.uk/northmidlands

Offices in:
Reading, Brighton, Taunton, Wellingborough
and Ennis (Ireland)