

# **border** archaeology

archaeology & built heritage



## **Archaeological Observation**

For

## **Cardwell Hill Developments**

Concerning

**Land adjacent to Homestead  
Half Key Road  
Malvern  
Worcestershire  
WR14 1UL**

October 2017



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## 1 Executive Summary

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*Border Archaeology Ltd was commissioned by Alex Young of Trower Davies Ltd on behalf of Cardwell Hill Developments to carry out a programme of Archaeological Observation in connection with the excavation of foundations for a development comprising four houses and associated garages at Half Key Road Malvern Worcestershire WR14 1UL.*

*The site lies close to an area known for the manufacture of Romano-British Severn Valley Ware (SVW), with kiln wasters discovered at No. 11 Half Key Road and further features possibly associated with Romano-British pottery production identified to the west of the development site.*

*No features of archaeological significance were encountered during the course of the groundworks. The majority of the site showed evidence for disturbance resulting from recent horticultural activity. However, whilst allowing for later disturbance, the fact that only two, much-abraded sherds of SVW were recovered suggests the site lay at a distance from the kilns.*

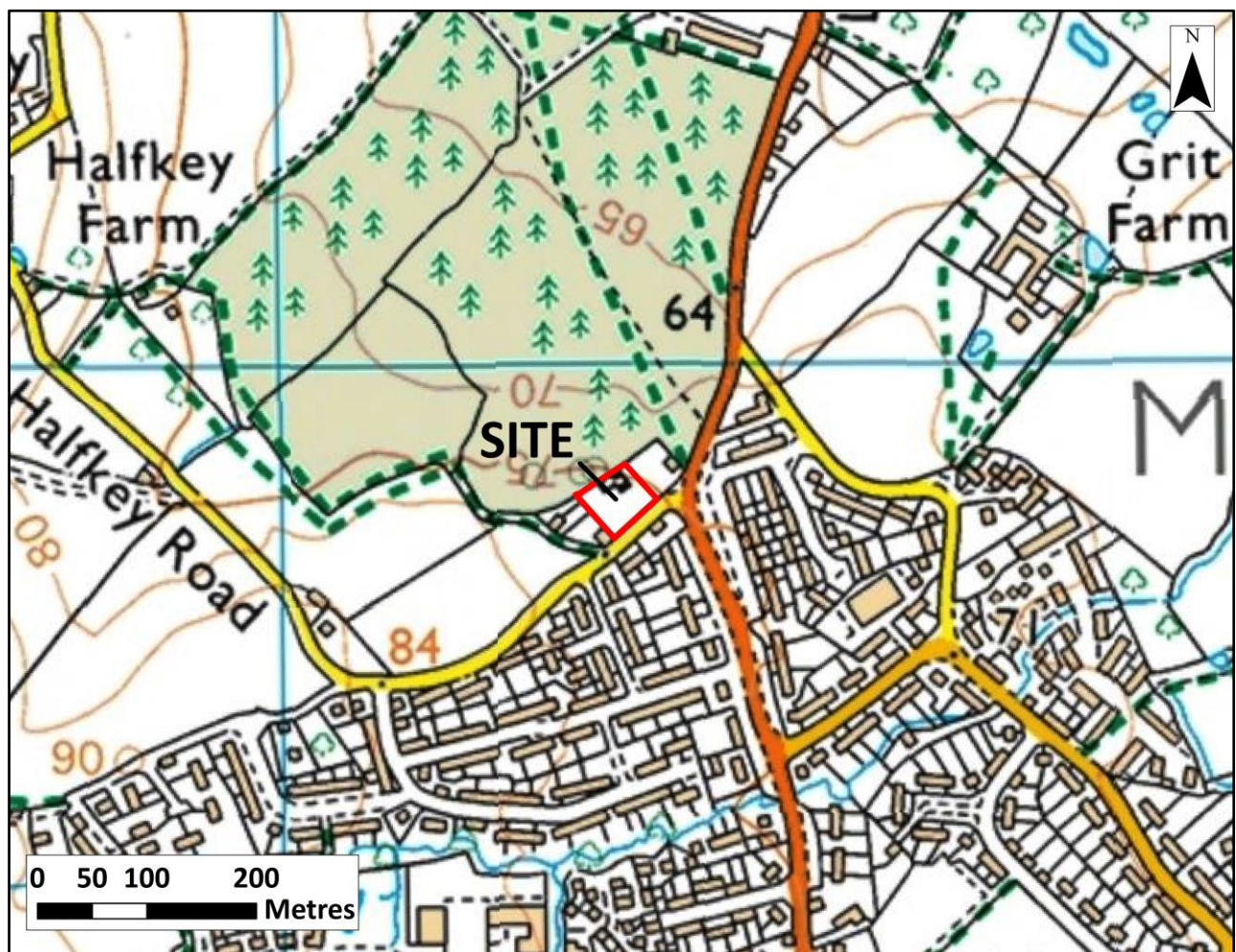


## 2 Introduction

### 2.1 Site Description

Border Archaeology Ltd (BA) was instructed by Alex Young of Trower Davies Ltd on behalf of Cardwell Hill Developments to carry out a programme of Archaeological Observation (AO) of groundworks in connection with a development comprising four houses and associated garages on the site at Half Key Road Malvern Worcestershire WR14 1UL (Planning Ref. 15/01628/FUL) (fig. 1).

The site lies at approximately 77.7m AOD to the N of Whippets Brook on the N edge of Malvern and within a largely residential area comprising a mixture of Georgian/Victorian to mid/late 20<sup>th</sup>-century housing. The site fronts onto Half Key Road to the S, with 'Homestead' to the W. It is bounded to the E and W by existing hedgerows and semirural residential development and to the N by hedgerows and farmland. The site was formerly a market garden.



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Fig. 1: Site location (shown in red).

### 2.1.1 Soils and Geology

Soils are typical argillic brown earths of the ESCRICK 1 series (571p) with a deep well-drained reddish coarse loamy composition. The underlying geology is siltstone and sandstone of the Raglan Mudstone Formation (Old Red Sandstone), generally overlain by reddish till (SSEW 1983).

## 3 Historical and Archaeological Background

The site is considered to occupy a resource-rich area likely to be conducive to early settlement and is specifically associated with the production of Romano-British Severn Valley Ware (SVW).

Half Key Lane (HWCM 7061) is the earliest of a number of recorded Romano-British kiln sites located in the broader vicinity of the proposed development. These kiln sites lie towards the centre of the SVW production area and represent one of the largest kiln groups found (Webster 1976, 38).

The kiln at Half Key Lane appears to have operated during the late 1<sup>st</sup> -early 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD for the production of rusticated jars (Webster 1976, 38; Swan 1984, 675; Tomber 1980, 39-40). Geophysical survey undertaken to the W of the site recorded evidence of probable medieval ridge-and-furrow cultivation within the central area overlying earlier evidence in the form of anomalies strongly suggesting burnt features such as kilns or hearth-bases, possibly indicative of Romano-British or earlier industrial activity (WSM34445). Evidence of kiln production was recovered during excavations at No. 11 Half Key Lane comprising Romano-British pottery and waste vessels (WSM40434). A watching brief carried out in 2007 during groundworks at No. 7 Halfkey Road recovered 103 sherds of 1<sup>st</sup> -2<sup>nd</sup> century AD SVW (WSM36095).

Other known kiln sites appear to have been established at a somewhat later date. Grit Farm (East - HWCM 4585 and North - HWCM 4584, HWCM 11392), a site of late 3<sup>rd</sup> or early 4<sup>th</sup> -century AD date, yielded kiln debris and large amounts of local pottery, including dumps of wasters. Vessels included oxidised mainly narrow-mouthed jars (including double-lipped jars), then wide-mouthed jars, tankards, some storage jars and bowls, together with some coarse grey wares (Tomber 1980, 37-8). The 'Hygienic Laundry' site (HWCM 6004) was recorded in 1887 and yielded an assemblage of 3<sup>rd</sup> -4<sup>th</sup> -century date AD comprising oxidised mainly wide-mouthed jars, narrow-mouthed jars, dishes, some coarse grey-ware jars and native wares, with a small number of wasters present, together with a fragment of kiln-lining. Unfortunately, whilst the finds survive, site records have been lost and the existence of a kiln remains unproven (Webster 1976, 37; Tomber 32-4).

Surface scatters, including wasters, are known from Half Key Lane (HWCM 7061), Lower Rowsell Road (HWCM 3700) and Leigh (HWCM 26398). At Leigh (HWCM 26398), a large group of pottery was identified during a metal-detector survey (SMR Report 1997).

The historic map evidence shows that the site remained undeveloped from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Ordnance Survey (OS) 1<sup>st</sup> edition 6-inch map of 1885 shows it forming part of a larger field enclosure that was under orchard at that time, with what appears to be a pump-house immediately outside the site boundary in the NE corner, within the area now occupied by 'Homestead'. The pump-house was accessed from the road via a pathway and was

probably associated with a well shown on the opposite side of the road. Additional features apparently representing a pump-house are shown immediately outside the site boundary in the SW corner of the larger field enclosure on the 1905 OS map, by which time the orchard was no longer present and the site had been subdivided.

## 4 Methodology

The programme of archaeological work was carried out in accordance with practices set out in *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014) and *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (ClfA 2014). BA adheres to *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The MoRPHE Project Managers' Guide* (Lee 2015).

The site covered an area of approximately 0.2ha (Trower Davies Architectural Consultants 2015) (*fig. 2*). Topsoil was removed by machine and machine excavation continued under archaeological supervision down to a depth determined by engineering requirements.

Provision was made for further investigation and recording should a significant archaeological horizon be revealed during the course of the engineering excavations. However, no deposits or features of archaeological significance were identified during the work.

### 4.1 Recording

Full written, graphic and photographic records were made in accordance with BA's *Archaeological Field Recording Manual* (2014). Separate written descriptions of each context were compiled using numbered context recording sheets.

An annotated site plan was produced on gridded, archive-stable polyester film indicating location of photographs. Representative measured sections were prepared as appropriate showing the sequence and depths of deposits, where practicable and strictly within established safety parameters. All drawings will be numbered and listed in a drawing register, these drawing numbers being cross-referenced to written site records.

Areas of excavation/investigation were labelled (*fig. 2*) and context numbers were assigned for each area. Foundation trenches were excavated to a depth exceeding 1.2m throughout.

A high-resolution digital photographic record was made and all photographs were indexed and cross-referenced to written site records. Details of subject and direction of view were recorded in a photographic register, indexed by frame number.

### 4.2 Palaeoenvironmental/palaeoeconomic sampling

No deposits suitable for palaeoenvironmental/palaeoeconomic sampling were encountered during the groundworks.





Fig. 2: Plan showing observation areas.

### 4.3 Recovery, processing and curation of artefactual data

Two sherds of Romano-British pottery were recovered from spoil on the NE part of the site. These were bagged and labelled with the site code and context number before being removed off-site.

## 5 Results

### 5.1 Area A

Item	Context No.	Matrix Phase	Type	Interpretation	Discussion	Finds					Comments
						Small Find	Pot	Bone	Misc.	Sample No.	
1	101	-	Deposit	Topsoil	Soft dark greyish-brown clay silt; 0.1m thick, trench-wide. Overlying (102).	-	-	-	-	-	Occasional modern finds (not retained).
2	102	-	Deposit	Subsoil	Compact mid-pinkish-brown very stony silt; c.0.36m thick, trench-wide. Underlying (101). Overlying (103).	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	103	-	Deposit	Natural	Very compact strongly reddish-brown clay; occasional chalk/limestone patches; >0.85m thick, trench-wide. Underlying (102).	-	-	-	-	-	-

### 5.2 Area B

Item	Context No.	Matrix Phase	Type	Interpretation	Discussion	Finds					Comments
						Small Find	Pot	Bone	Misc.	Sample No.	
1	201	-	Deposit	Topsoil	Soft dark greyish-brown clay silt; 0.1m deep, trench-wide. Overlying (202).	-	-	-	-	-	Contained plastic flower pot (not retained).

Item	Context No.	Matrix Phase	Type	Interpretation	Discussion	Finds					Comments
						Small Find	Pot	Bone	Misc.	Sample No.	
2	202	-	Deposit	Subsoil	Compact mid-reddish-brown very stony silt; 0.4m thick, trench-wide. Underlying (201). Overlying (203).	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	203	-	Deposit	Natural	Very compact strongly reddish-brown clay; occasional patches & larger irregular patches of angular stone; >0.85m thick, trench-wide. Underlying (202).	-	-	-	-	-	-

### 5.3 Area C

Item	Context No.	Matrix Phase	Type	Interpretation	Discussion	Finds					Comments
						Small Find	Pot	Bone	Misc.	Sample No.	
1	301	-	Deposit	Topsoil	Soft dark greyish-brown silt clay; 0.3m thick, trench-wide. Overlying (302).	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	302	-	Deposit	Subsoil	Compact mid-brown stony silt clay; c.0.3m thick, trench-wide. Underlying (301). Overlying (303).	-	-	-	-	-	Depth varied across the area.
3	303	-	Deposit	Natural	Firm strongly reddish-brown clay; occasional small & more substantial patches of stone; >0.6m deep, trench-wide. Underlying (302).	-	-	-	-	-	-



## 5.4 Area D

Item	Context No.	Matrix Phase	Type	Interpretation	Discussion	Finds					Comments
						Small Find	Pot	Bone	Misc.	Sample No.	
1	401	-	Deposit	Topsoil	Soft dark greyish-brown silt clay; 0.2m deep, trench-wide. Overlying (402).	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	402	-	Deposit	Subsoil	Compact mid-brownish-pink stony clay silt; c. 0.4m thick, trench-wide. Underlying (401). Overlying (403).	-	-	-	-	-	Depth varied across trench.
3	403	-	Deposit	Natural	Firm strongly reddish-brown clay; occasional small stones; >0.1m deep, trench-wide. Underlying (402).	-	-	-	-	-	-

## 6 Discussion

No evidence for Romano-British pottery production was found. The presence of two sherds of heavily abraded SVW on the NE side of the site, while suggesting Romano-British occupation in the wider vicinity, was insufficient to confirm pottery production nearby. Although considerable disturbance had taken place in recent times, most notably during use of the site as a market garden, the almost complete lack of residual Romano-British material would demonstrate that production took place at some distance from the site. Additionally, cut features such as waster pits would have been clearly visible cutting the subsoil but no such features were present.

Orchard clearance during recent times would have led to wholesale destruction/disturbance of sub-surface deposits, as would the insertion of drainage and watering during the use of the site as a market garden. However, the fact that few finds of any period were present confirms that the site had remained agricultural land until recent times.



*Plate 1: View of the site looking W.*



*Plate 2: View NE of NW trench Area A*





*Plate 3: View NW of SW trench Area A.*



*Plate 4: View SW of SE trench Area B.*





*Plate 5: View SE of SW trench Area B.*



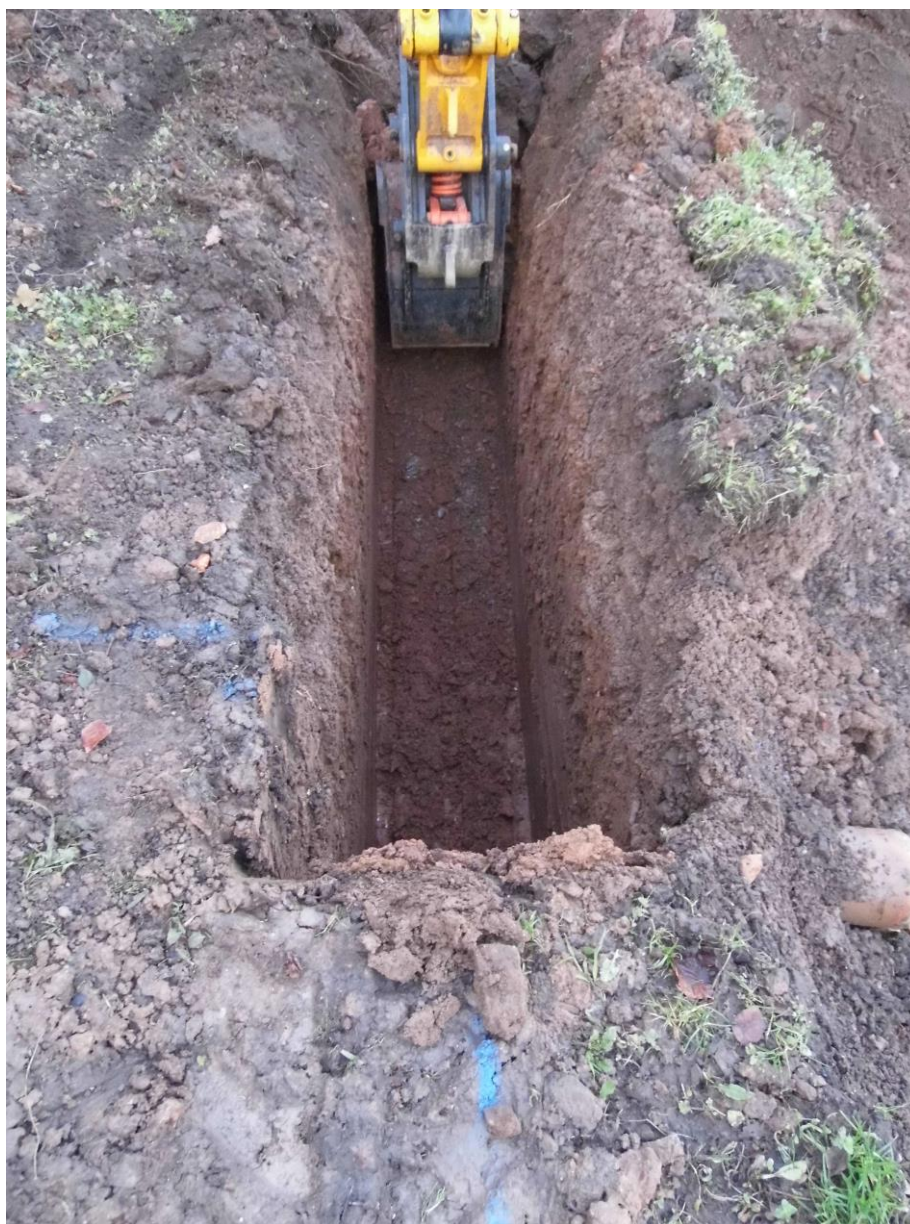


*Plate 6: NW/SE trench Area C.*



*Plate 7: View NW of centre trench Area C.*





*Plate 8: View NE of centre trench Area D.*



*Plate 9: View W of completed foundation trenching.*

## 6.1 The Romano-British pottery from the site

The two sherds of Romano-British SVW pottery totalling 9.8g were recovered from the subsoil on the NE extent of the site, in an area disturbed by the installation and subsequent repair of a drain. Both were, unfortunately, undifferentiated body sherds. The smaller sherd (3.4g) was oxidised throughout, the larger had a reduced core. Both sherds were heavily abraded with no surface treatment surviving.



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### 7.1 Cartography

1885 OS 1<sup>st</sup> Edition 6-inch County Series Map (Worcestershire XXXIX.NE).

1905 (Revised 1902) OS 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition 6-inch County Series Map (Worcestershire XXXIX.NE).

1931 (Revised 1926) OS 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition 6-inch County Series Map (Worcestershire XXXIX.NE).

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