

**Land adjacent to Glebe Fields
Belbroughton
Worcestershire**
Archaeological Evaluation



for
Rosconn Strategic Land

CA Project: 6665
CA Report: 18345
Site Code: GLEB 18
Event Number: WSM70498

July 2018



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SUMMARY

Project Name:	Land adjacent to Glebe Fields
Location:	Belbroughton, Worcestershire
NGR:	392051 276990
Type:	Evaluation
Date:	2–3 July 2018
Planning Reference:	17/01224/FUL
Location of Archive:	To be deposited with Museums Worcestershire
Site Code:	GLEB 18
Event No.	WSM70498

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in July 2018 on land adjacent to Glebe Fields, Belbroughton, Worcestershire. Five trenches were excavated.

No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed during the evaluation, and no artefactual material pre-dating the modern period was recovered.



1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In July 2018 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation for Rosconn Strategic Land on land adjacent to Glebe Fields, Belbroughton, Worcestershire (centred at NGR: 392051 276990; Fig. 1). Planning permission for residential development with associated access point and landscaping has been granted by Bromsgrove District Council (BDC; reference 17/01224/FUL). The evaluation was undertaken to comply with condition 15 of the planning consent, following discussions with Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service (WAAS), the archaeological advisors to BDC.
- 1.2 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a detailed *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) produced by CA (2018) and approved by Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service (WAAS). The fieldwork also followed *Standard and guidance: Archaeological field evaluation* (CIfA 2014), and *Standard and guidance for archaeological projects in Worcestershire* (WCC 2010).

The site

- 1.3 The site comprises a plot of land measuring c.0.32ha in total extent, located on the south side of the village of Belbroughton. The western boundary was formed by an allotment and the garden of The Old Rectory, the northern boundary by a vacant plot and the eastern and southern boundaries by modern housing developments fronting The Glebe and Glebe Fields. The site lies outside, but contiguous with, Belbroughton Conservation Area.
- 1.4 The underlying bedrock geology of the site comprises sandstone of the Helsby Sandstone Formation, overlain by sand and gravel deposits of the Holt Heath Sand and Gravel Member (BGS 2018). Mixed sand and gravel deposits were identified as the natural substrate in all trenches.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The archaeological and historical background of the site was documented in a *Heritage Desk-Based Assessment* (DBA) produced by Cotswold Archaeology (CA 2017). The following section is summarised from that report.

- 2.2 Glaciofluvial deposits of sand and gravel are recorded in and around Belbroughton, encroaching into the northern part of the site. The Worcestershire Historic Environment Record (HER) notes that such deposits have the potential to contain palaeoenvironmental remains of Ipswichian and Devensian date as well as unstratified Palaeolithic artefacts such as hand-axes and other stone tools redistributed by glacial processes (HER Ref. WSM56937). However, no previous such discoveries have been recorded within the site. These free-draining sand and gravel deposits would potentially have been a favoured area for settlement and land use in the prehistoric and Roman periods, particularly given the proximity to the nearby Belne Brook, although the DBA noted that there is no known evidence for prehistoric and Roman activity in the vicinity of the site.
- 2.3 Belbroughton is first documented in an early-9th century deed of gift by Coenwulf, King of the Mercians, which refers to the existence of three manors: *Beolne* (Bell End), *Broctun* (Broughton) and *Forfeld* (Fairfield). Belbroughton is subsequently recorded by the Domesday Survey of AD 1086 as *Brotune*, by this time comprising a medium-sized settlement of 20 households with land for 8 plough teams, extensive woodland, five salt-houses (at Droitwich) and a church. The extant Holy Trinity Church is of 13th century and later date, but it might occupy the same site as an early medieval predecessor. The Worcestershire HER refers to a Saxon cross within the grounds of The Old Rectory, immediately to the west of the site, but this may not have been its original location (HER Ref. WSM02435).
- 2.4 Later documentary records demonstrate that the site historically comprised part of the glebe land (land assigned by the diocese to provide an income for the parish priest) of Holy Trinity Church. During the medieval period the site was probably under pasture or cultivation but may have been divided into messuages that were leased to other individuals.
- 2.5 The 1881 (First Edition) Ordnance Survey (OS) map shows rows of trees in the northern part of the site, suggesting an orchard here, which appeared to continue in use until the mid 20th century. The 1902 OS map shows two small structures, presumably sheep shelters or storage sheds, in the north-western corner of the site and a fence demarcating the southern boundary of the orchard, broadly coincident with the southern boundary of the site.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 The objectives of the evaluation are to provide information about the archaeological resource within the site, including its presence/absence, character, extent, date, integrity, state of preservation and quality, in accordance *Standard and guidance: Archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2014). This information will enable BDC to identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset, consider the impact of the proposed development upon it, and to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the development proposal, in line with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012).

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The fieldwork comprised the excavation of 5 trenches, all of which were 15m long and 1.6m wide, in the locations shown on the attached plan (Fig. 2). Trench 3 was moved slightly west of its original location to avoid a modern fence line. The trenches were set out on OS National Grid (NGR) co-ordinates using Leica GPS and surveyed in accordance with CA Technical Manual 4 *Survey Manual*.
- 4.2 All trenches were excavated by mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless grading bucket. All machine excavation was undertaken under constant archaeological supervision to the top of the natural substrate. Where archaeological deposits were encountered they were excavated by hand in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: *Fieldwork Recording Manual*.
- 4.3 Deposits were assessed for their palaeoenvironmental potential in accordance with CA Technical Manual 2: *The Taking and Processing of Environmental and Other Samples from Archaeological Sites*; no deposits were identified that required sampling.
- 4.4 The site archive from the evaluation is currently held by CA at their offices in Kemble and will be deposited with Museums Worcestershire. A summary of information from this project, set out within Appendix B, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

5. RESULTS (FIGS 2–4)

- 5.1 This section provides an overview of the evaluation results; detailed summaries of the recorded contexts are to be found in Appendix A.
- 5.2 All of the excavated trenches exposed a broadly similar sequence of deposits. The natural geological substrate was encountered at a typical depth of 0.85m below present ground level (bpgl) and comprised mixed orange, pink and yellow sands, with patches of gravel in the northern part of Trench 2 and in Trench 4. This was overlain by 0.18m–0.26m of silty sand colluvium, which contained occasional small, rounded stones but no other inclusions.
- 5.3 The colluvium was sealed by 0.2m–0.52m of subsoil, which was generally a mid grey colour, except in Trench 1, where it was notably darker. In all trenches the subsoil contained a large amount of charcoal and burnt clay flecks in addition to modern pottery, which was noted but not retained. The subsoil was in turn covered by up to 0.37m of topsoil.

6. DISCUSSION

- 6.1 Despite the archaeological potential of the site noted in the Archaeological Background, above, no features or deposits of archaeological interest were identified during the evaluation. It is likely that the site lay outside the early medieval settlement and remained as agricultural land throughout the medieval and post-medieval periods before being utilised as an orchard.
- 6.2 It is, however, possible that the long term use of the site as an orchard may have been a factor in the lack of surviving archaeology. No individual tree root pits were visible in the evaluation trenches, and it is possible that the layer interpreted on site as a colluvial deposit may instead be a layer formed by generalised disturbance of the soft natural sands by deep tree roots over a long period of time, or by the subsequent removal of the trees. If this was the case then this activity may have truncated any archaeological remains from earlier periods.

7. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Christopher Leonard and Kinga Werner. The report was written by Christopher Leonard. The illustrations were prepared by Rosanna Price. The archive has been compiled and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neill. The project was managed for CA by Cliff Bateman.

8. REFERENCES

BGS (British Geological Survey) 2018 *Geology of Britain Viewer*
<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html> Accessed 4 July 2018

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2017 *Land adjacent to Glebe Fields, Belbroughton, Worcestershire: Heritage Desk-Based Assessment*. CA Report No. **17553**

CA 2018 *Land adjacent to Glebe Fields, Belbroughton, Worcestershire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation*

DCLG (Department of Communities and Local Government) 2012 *National Planning Policy Framework*

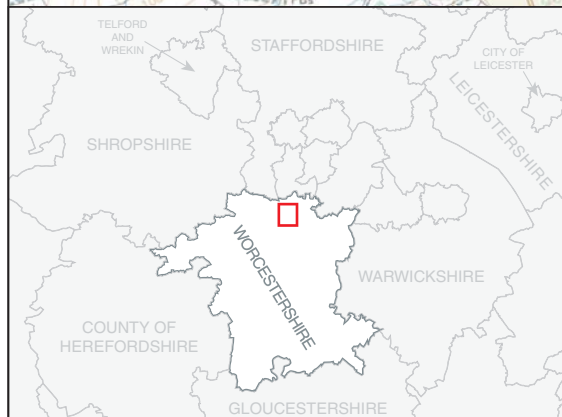
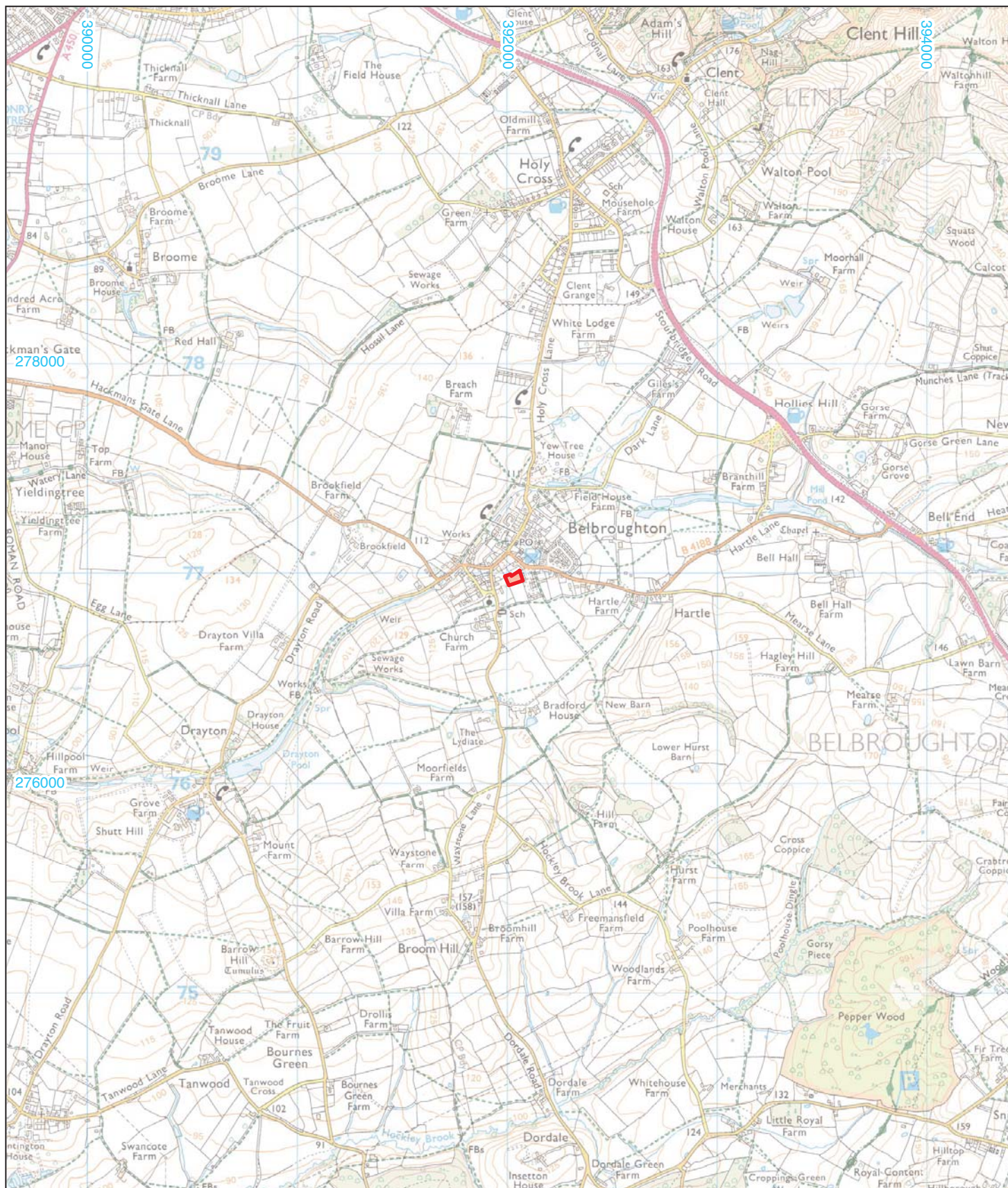


APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench	Context	Type	Context interpretation	Description	Thickness (m)
1	1001	Layer	Topsoil	Mid brown grey silty sand. Occasional small stone inclusions	0.35
1	1002	Layer	Subsoil	Dark brown grey silty sand. Frequent charcoal and burnt clay flecks. Occasional small stones	0.2
1	1003	Layer	Colluvium	Mid pink brown silty sand. Occasional small stones	0.22
1	1004	Layer	Natural	Pink and orange sand	
2	2001	Layer	Topsoil	Mid brown grey silty sand. Occasional small stone inclusions	0.3
2	2002	Layer	Subsoil	Mid yellow grey silty sand. Frequent charcoal and burnt clay flecks. Occasional small stones	0.44
2	2003	Layer	Colluvium	Mid pink brown silty sand. Occasional small stones	0.26
2	2004	Layer	Natural	Pink, orange and yellow sand with gravel patches at northern end	
3	3001	Layer	Topsoil	Mid brown grey silty sand. Occasional small stone inclusions	0.29
3	3002	Layer	Subsoil	Mid yellow grey silty sand. Frequent charcoal and burnt clay flecks. Occasional small stones	0.52
3	3003	Layer	Colluvium	Mid pink grey silty sand. Occasional small stones	0.19
3	3004	Layer	Natural	Orange and pink sand	
4	4001	Layer	Topsoil	Mid brown grey silty sand. Occasional small stone inclusions	0.34
4	4002	Layer	Subsoil	Mid brown grey sandy silt. Common charcoal and burnt clay flecks. Occasional small stones	0.23
4	4003	Layer	Colluvium	Mid orange brown silty sand. Occasional small stones	0.23
4	4004	Layer	Natural	Yellow, orange and grey sand. Patches of gravel in dark pink sand	
5	5001	Layer	Topsoil	Mid brown grey silty sand. Occasional small stone inclusions	0.37
5	5002	Layer	Subsoil	Mid yellow grey silty sand. Frequent charcoal and CBM flecks. Occasional small stones	0.32
5	5003	Layer	Colluvium	Mid pink grey silty sand. Occasional small stones	0.18
5	5004	Layer	Natural	Orange and pink sand	

APPENDIX B: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project Name	Land adjacent to Glebe Fields	
Short description	<p>An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in July 2018 at land adjacent to Glebe Fields, Belbroughton, Worcestershire. Five trenches were excavated.</p> <p>No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed during the evaluation, and no artefactual material pre-dating the modern period was recovered.</p>	
Project dates	2–3 July 2018	
Project type	Evaluation	
Previous work	Desk Based Assessment (CA 2017)	
Future work	Unknown	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site Location	Belbroughton, Worcestershire	
Study area	0.32ha	
Site co-ordinates	392051 276990 SO 92051 76990	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Brief originator	Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service	
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Cliff Bateman	
Project Supervisor	Christopher Leonard	
MONUMENT TYPE	None	
SIGNIFICANT FINDS	None	
PROJECT ARCHIVES	Intended final location of archive (museum/Accession no.)	Content
Physical	-	-
Paper	Museums Worcestershire	Trench recording sheets, photo register
Digital	Museums Worcestershire	Database, digital photos
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2018 <i>Land adjacent to Glebe Fields, Belbroughton, Worcestershire: Archaeological Evaluation</i> . CA typescript report 18345		



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PROJECT TITLE
Land adjacent to Glebe Fields,
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FIGURE TITLE
Site location plan

0 1km

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DRAWN BY RP
CHECKED BY DJB
APPROVED BY CMB
PROJECT NO. 6665
DATE 04.07.18
SCALE @A4 1:25,000

FIGURE NO.

1



P:\6665 Glebe Fields, Belbroughton, Worcs EVAL Illustration\Drawings\6665 Belbroughton EVAL Fig 02.dwg

- Site boundary
- Evaluation trench
- Tree root protection area



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PROJECT TITLE
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FIGURE TITLE
Trench location plan

DRAWN BY	RP	PROJECT NO.	6665	FIGURE NO.
CHECKED BY	DJB	DATE	04.07.18	2
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Trench 1 post-excavation, looking south-west (1m scales)



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Land adjacent to Glebe Fields,
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FIGURE TITLE

Photograph

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FIGURE NO.

3



Backfilled Trench 2, looking north-east



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PROJECT TITLE

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FIGURE TITLE

Photograph

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