

**New Site Compound
Land East of Pershore Road
Eckington
Worcestershire**

Archaeological Watching Brief



for:
Spitfire Bespoke Homes Ltd

CA Project: CR0801
CA Report: CR0801_1
HER Ref: WSM77620

October 2021



New Site Compound Land East of Pershore Road Eckington Worcestershire

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Fig. 2 The site, showing location of observed groundworks, identified archaeological features and previous archaeological works (1:3000)

Fig. 3 Photographs

SUMMARY

Project name:	New Site Compound, Land East of Pershore Road
Location:	Eckington, Worcestershire
NGR:	392269 241732
Type:	Watching brief
Date:	26-30 July 2021
Planning reference:	WDC ref: 19/00535/FUL
WHER ref:	WSM77620
Location of Archive:	To be deposited with Worcestershire Museums Service and the Archaeology Data Service (ADS)
Site Code:	EPRE 21

In July 2021, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief during groundworks for the installation of a temporary site compound, associated with a residential development currently being undertaken to the north, at Land East of Pershore Road, Eckington, Worcestershire.

Evidence of medieval and/or post-medieval agricultural practice, comprising the remains of ridge and furrow cultivation, was identified within one of the areas of observed groundworks.

No further features or deposits of archaeological interest were recorded during the groundworks, and no artefactual material was recovered.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. In July 2021, Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological watching brief during the installation of a new site compound on land to the east of Pershore Road, Eckington, Worcestershire (centred at NGR: 392269 241732; Fig. 1). The watching brief was undertaken for Spitfire Bespoke Homes Ltd.
- 1.2. The watching brief was undertaken during groundworks associated with the construction of a temporary site compound required for a residential development currently being undertaken to the north of the site. Planning permission for the development of the wider site has recently been granted by Wychavon District Council (WDC; planning ref: 19/00535/FUL) and further archaeological works will be required in respect of this development in due course.
- 1.3. The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) prepared by CA (2021) and approved by Aidan Smyth, Archaeology and Planning Advisor, WDC.
- 1.4. The watching brief was also undertaken in line with Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief (ClfA 2014; updated October 2020), Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) PPN 3: Archaeological Excavation (Historic England 2015) and Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The MoRPHE Project Managers' Guide (Historic England 2015).

The site

- 1.5. The new site compound is located in the north-western part of the site, to the rear of Eckington Recreation Centre and within a field currently used for agricultural purposes. It lies at approximately 28m AOD, and is broadly level.
- 1.6. The underlying bedrock geology of the site is mapped as Charmouth Mudstone Formation of the Jurassic era (BGS 2021). Superficial deposits of sand and gravel of the New Inn Member, formed during the Quaternary Period, are also recorded throughout the site (ibid.). The natural substrate, comprising light brown-orange clay, sand, and gravels, was revealed throughout the areas of observed groundworks.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The site has previously been subject to heritage desk-based assessment (CA 2019a) and geophysical survey (Stratascan 2014). An archaeological trial-trench evaluation (CA 2019b) and a subsequent archaeological excavation (CA forthcoming) have been undertaken immediately to the north, prior to residential development being undertaken in this area. The following is a brief summary of these assessments.
- 2.2. The site lies on gravel deposits of the quaternary period which are known to have high potential to contain evidence of prehistoric (and later) activity in the vicinity of Eckington (CA 2019a). An archaeological excavation (University of Birmingham 2007), undertaken c.120m to the south-west of the site, identified prehistoric remains including a Neolithic pit and part of Late Iron Age ring gully, along with an extensive Roman remains (including a single inhumation burial).
- 2.3. Eckington is believed to have an early medieval origin, with the village's current name thought to derive from the Saxon word '*Eccyngtune*', meaning an enclosed settlement of a Saxon chieftain and his family (CA 2019a). The site is likely to have formed part of the agricultural hinterland of Eckington throughout the medieval period and ridge and furrow earthworks are recorded to the north, east and west of site (ibid.).
- 2.4. In 1813, the open field system in Eckington was abolished and the land enclosed and subdivided by hedges and fences. The 1885 First Edition Ordnance Survey map shows the site occupying part of a single large field. Both the site itself, and the surrounding field system, remain essentially unchanged on all subsequent editions of the OS mapping.
- 2.5. The geophysical survey (Stratascan 2014) identified a group of penannular, sub-circular and pit-like anomalies, suggestive of prehistoric settlement or funerary activity, c. 25m to the north-east of the new compound; however no anomalies of a clear archaeological origin were identified within the footprint of the compound itself. The subsequent archaeological trial-trench evaluation (CA 2019b) and excavation (CA forthcoming) identified three penannular features seemingly representing parts of foundation trenches or drip gullies for structures of prehistoric/Roman date and a series of broadly contemporary ditches forming enclosures or parts of a wider field system.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1. The general objectives of the watching brief were:
- to monitor the development groundworks, and to identify, investigate and record any significant buried archaeological deposits/features thus revealed;
 - at the conclusion of the project, to produce an integrated project archive and a report setting out the watching brief results and the archaeological conclusions that can be drawn from the recorded data.

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1. The watching brief comprised the observation by a competent archaeologist of all soil stripping undertaken across the footprint of the new compound to the top of the underlying natural substrate.
- 4.2. Archaeological features/deposits were investigated, planned and recorded 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. CA will make arrangements with Worcestershire Museums Service for the deposition of the project archive. A digital archive will also be prepared and deposited with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS). The archive (museum and digital) will be prepared and deposited in accordance with *Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives* (ClfA 2014; updated October 2020).
- 4.5. A summary of information from this project, as set out in Appendix B, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

5. RESULTS

- 5.1. This section provides an overview of the watching brief results. Detailed summaries of the recorded contexts are given in Appendix A.

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- 5.2. The natural substrate, 102, comprising light brown-orange clay, sand and gravels and was revealed at an average depth of 0.7m below present ground level (bpgl). This was overlain by silt sand subsoil 101, which averaged 0.4m in thickness. The subsoil was cut by two north-east/south-west aligned plough furrows, both of which correlated to faint negative earthworks still visible in this part of the site. The furrows measured up to 1.5m in width and, where investigated, had a maximum depth of 0.16m. Both contained quantities of modern artefactual material including metal fragments and plastic, which was not retained. The fills of the furrows were subsequently sealed by 0.3m of topsoil.
- 5.3. No further features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed and no artefactual material was recovered.

6. DISCUSSION

- 6.1. Evidence of medieval and/or post-medieval agricultural practice, comprising the remains of a ridge and furrow field system, was identified in the northern part of the area of observed groundworks. These furrows are similarly aligned to those previously identified during archaeological works undertaken immediately to the north of the current site (CA 2019 and CA forthcoming) and therefore appear to form part of a wider open field system.
- 6.2. Despite the archaeological potential of the site (see *Archaeological Background*, above), the watching brief identified no further archaeological remains of interest within the areas of observed groundworks. The absence of archaeological deposits indicates that the archaeological remains associated with the prehistoric/Roman structures and ditches recorded c. 25m to the north-east of the current site do not extend into the area of the new compound.

7. CA PROJECT TEAM

- 7.1. Fieldwork was undertaken by Sara-Jayne Boughton. This report was written Sara-Jayne Boughton. The report illustrations were prepared by Helena Munoz-Mojado. The project archive has been compiled and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neil. The project was managed for CA by Steven Sheldon.

8. REFERENCES

British Geological Survey 2021 *Geology of Britain*

Viewer <https://www.bgs.ac.uk/map-viewers/geology-of-britain-viewer/>

Accessed 2 August 2021

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2019a *Land off Pershore Road, Eckington,*

Worcestershire: Desk Based Assessment. CA Report No. **18762**

CA 2019b *Land off Pershore Road, Eckington, Worcestershire: Archaeological*

Evaluation. CA Report No. **CR0116_1**

Stratascan 2014 *Geophysical Survey Report for Land at Pershore Road, Eckington*

University of Birmingham 2007 *Land off Pershore Road, Eckington, Worcestershire:*

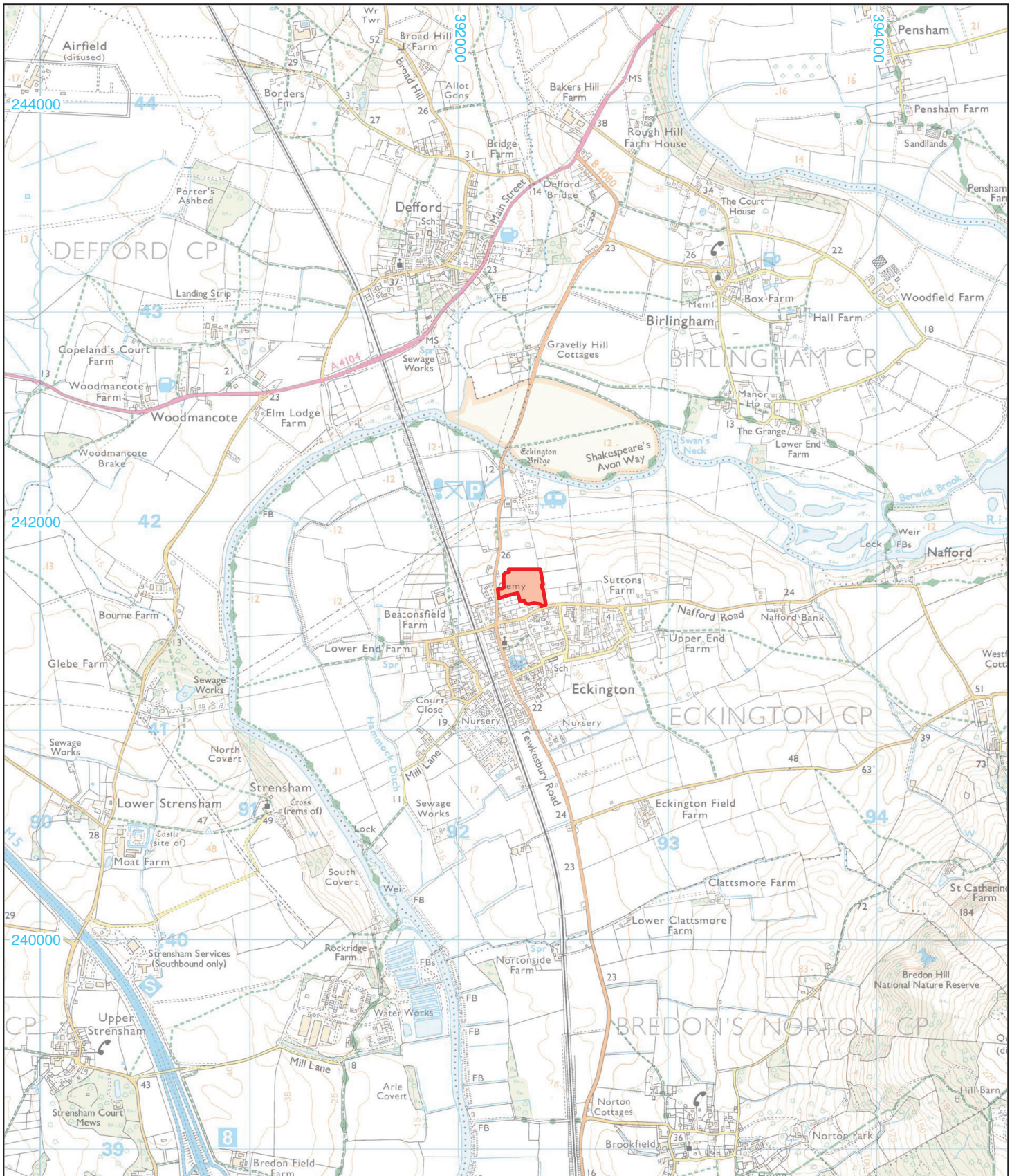
Archaeological Excavation, Project no. **1676**

APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Area	Context No.	Type	Fill of	Interpretation	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth/thickness (m)
1	100	Layer		Topsoil	Dark brown-grey sand-silt, compact with occasional small pebbles	>63	>39	0.3
1	101	Layer		Subsoil	Mid orange-brown silt-sand, compact with frequent sub-rounded stones	>63	>39	0.4
1	102	Layer		Natural Substrate	Light brown-orange clay, sand and gravels	>63	>39	N/A

APPENDIX B: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project name	New Compound, Land East of Pershore Road	
Short description	<p>In July 2021, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief during groundworks for the installation of a temporary site compound, associated with a residential development currently being undertaken to the north, at Land East of Pershore Road, Eckington, Worcestershire.</p> <p>Evidence of medieval and/or post-medieval agricultural practice, comprising the remains of ridge and furrow cultivation, was identified within one of the areas of observed groundworks.</p> <p>No further features or deposits of archaeological interest were recorded during the groundworks, and no artefactual material was recovered.</p>	
Project dates	26-30 July 2021	
Project type	Watching Brief	
Previous work	Heritage Desk-Based Assessment (CA 2019) Geophysical survey (Stratascan 2014).	
Future work	Unknown	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site location	Eckington, Worcestershire	
Study area (m ² /ha)	0.18ha	
Site co-ordinates	392269 241732	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Steven Sheldon	
Project Supervisor	Sara-Jayne Boughton	
MONUMENT TYPE	None	
SIGNIFICANT FINDS	None	
PROJECT ARCHIVES		
	Intended final location of archive (museum/Accession no.)	Content:
Physical	N/A	N/A
Paper	Worcestershire Museum Services	Trench recording forms, photographic registers
Digital	Worcestershire Museum Services	Digital photographs
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
Cotswold Archaeology 2021 <i>New Site Compound, Land East of Pershore Road, Eckington, Worcestershire: Archaeological Watching Brief</i> CA typescript report CR0801_1		



 Site boundary



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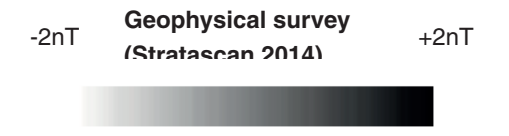
PROJECT TITLE
 New Site Compound, Land East of
 Pershore Road

FIGURE TITLE
 Site location plan

DRAWN BY	HMM	PROJECT NO.	XXXX	FIGURE NO.
CHECKED BY	DJB	DATE	XXXXXX	1
APPROVED BY	SS	SCALE@A4	1:25,000	



- Site boundary
- Areas of observed groundworks
- Previous site boundary (CA 2019b)
- Previous excavation area (CA 2019b)
- Previous evaluation trench (CA 2019b)
- Archaeological feature (CA forthcoming)
- Furrow



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PROJECT TITLE
 New Site Compound, Land East of Pershore Road, Eckington

FIGURE TITLE
 The site plan, showing location of observed groundworks, identified archaeological features and previous archaeological works

DRAWN BY	HMM	PROJECT NO.	CR0801	FIGURE NO.
CHECKED BY	DJB	DATE	02/08/21	2
APPROVED BY	SS	SCALE@A3	1:3000	



General view, eastern area, looking north-east (1m scales)



General view, western area, looking north-west (1m scales)



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PROJECT TITLE

**New Site Compound, Land East of
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FIGURE TITLE

Photographs

DRAWN BY **HMM** PROJECT NO. **CR0801**
 CHECKED BY **DJB** DATE **02/08/21**
 APPROVED BY **SS** SCALE@A4 **NA**

FIGURE NO.

3

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