

**Archaeological evaluation
at land off
Green Lane,
adjacent to Firs Farm,
Ombersley Road,
Bevere,
Worcestershire**

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Introduction

An archaeological evaluation was carried out at land off Green Lane adjacent to Firs Farm, Ombersley Road, Bevere, Worcestershire (SO 8433 5875; Fig 1) at the request of Mark Harris of MH BEVERE Ltd. This work was undertaken in compliance with a brief from Mike Glyde of Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service (dated 28th January 2015, planning ref W/13/1131) and according to a written scheme of investigation provided by Martin Cook BA MCifA and approved by Mike Glyde of Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service.

The CifA defines an evaluation as:

The definition of archaeological field evaluation is a limited programme of non-intrusive and/or intrusive fieldwork which determines the presence or absence of archaeological features, structures, deposits, artefacts or ecofacts within a specified area or site on land, inter-tidal zone or underwater. If such archaeological remains are present field evaluation defines their character, extent, quality and preservation, and enables an assessment of their worth in a local, regional, national or international context as appropriate.

The purpose of this evaluation was to identify the nature of certain anomalies identified during a preceding geophysical survey (including their presence or absence, character, extent, date, integrity, state of preservation and quality), in order to make an assessment of its merit in the appropriate context, leading to one or more of the following:

- the formulation of a strategy to ensure the recording, preservation or management of the resource
- the formulation of a strategy to mitigate a threat to the archaeological resource
- the formulation of a proposal for further archaeological investigation within a programme of research

The documentary material

Historic mapping

The earliest available map was the North Claines Parish Tithe Map of 1843 (Fig 2.1). At this time the field whose southern part is formed by the evaluation site was known as 'Far Piece', bounded to the west by 'Middle Piece', to the east by 'Field Below Road', to the north by 'Sandcroft', and to the south by a road following the path of the modern Green Lane. The 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of 1886 (Fig 2.2) shows that the rectangular field containing the evaluation site was still part of the group of enclosed fields shown on the earlier tithe map, only by now the north-eastern corner of the field contained two smaller enclosures or yards and buildings associated with the modern Firs Farm. At this time the nearest other buildings lay at least 250m to the west (for example, Hill Cottage) and to the north-west (for example, The Firs), along the road leading roughly south from the ponds west of the village of Bevere. Severn Grange lay a little further away along this road to the south-west. By the year 1928 (Fig 2.3) a few more buildings had appeared in the immediate vicinity of Firs Farm to the north-east of the evaluation site, and a couple of buildings had appeared on Green Lane on the side opposite the south-western corner of the evaluation site. By the time of the Ordnance Survey map of 1940 (Fig 2.4) several more dwellings had been added along Green Lane toward the west i.e. in a direction away from the evaluation site. In addition, high voltage electricity lines are shown on this edition, crossing the site from north-east to south-west. These were to become a factor in the decision to re-position Trench 3 (see below and Fig 3).

The Worcestershire Historic Environment Record

None of the heritage assets (apart from WSM 42811 – a desk-based assessment of a large area that includes the evaluation site) recorded by the Worcestershire Historic Environment Record are

located within the boundaries of the evaluation site. But those in the surrounding area include the following:

- WSM 51909 & WSM 59559 Firs Farm: a farmstead building and landscape asset dating from the nineteenth century to the present day period, occupying a site at the north-eastern corner of the field containing the evaluation site and visible at the crest of rising ground from the site.

HER building and landscape assets in the area but at a distance of at least 200m toward the west-through-north quadrant with respect to the evaluation site include:

- Other farmsteads WSM 53426 & WSM 61076 Bevere Green Farm and WSM 53351 & WSM 61001 Badgers Bend (both nineteenth century to present); and WSM 58670 site of a field barn south-west of Hill Cottage
- Houses WSM 20342 Beechwood House and WSM 20347 Bevere Knoll (both dating from eighteenth century to present), and WSM 20349 White Lodge (nineteenth century to present)
- WSM 45573 Railings and flanking walls in front of said Beechwood House (eighteenth century to present)
- WSM 17222 MAD Shadow factory, a twentieth century munitions factory

Other monuments in the area include:

- WSM 11379 Cropmarks of a field system of unknown date, just north-west of the evaluation site and covering an area roughly equal to the site
- Relics from World War II: WSM17104 the site of an Anderson shelter in a builder's yard at Gutter Lane, Claines within a hundred metres of the south west corner of the site; WSM 17148 a RAF barracks at 9 Colin Rd, Claines about 150m from the south-east corner of the site; WSM1732 a siren in Cornmeadow Lane, Claines about 200m from the south-east corner of the site

Also in the vicinity is WSM 29978, a place name of Stone Croft associated with the field of that name shown in the 1840 tithe map, and referring to a settlement dating from the Roman first century to eighteenth century period. This field lies to the immediate north-east of Firs Farm, itself at the north-eastern corner of the field containing the evaluation site.

Events in the vicinity include:

- WCM 101797 excavations on land at Gwillam's Farm (2009-10), in the north-western corner of the field containing the evaluation site
- WSM 42811 a desk-based assessment for the Northwick Manor Community Heritage Project (2011), covering a large area that includes the evaluation site
- WSM 15208 metal detecting over a number of years south-east of Bevere Knoll, North Claines; and WSM 42353 metal detecting in 2009 south of Bevere Lane, North Claines – areas lying at least 100m north-east of the evaluation site

Other work on the site

A geophysical survey was undertaken on the site by Stratascan (Smalley 2013). This identified several anomalies that were interpreted as pits or ditches of possible archaeological origin. It was noted that due to their weak and amorphous character, the anomalies might equally be of a natural origin.

The fieldwork

General

Fieldwork took place between the 16th and 17th March 2015. It comprised the excavation of four, 20m long trenches 3.0m wide in the positions shown on Fig 3, with records (drawing, written description and photographs) made as appropriate. The trenches were positioned according to the brief, except for Trench 3, which was repositioned slightly. It was moved to avoid the high voltage electricity lines and to position it at right-angles to one of the legs of the principal feature that it was

investigating. A full description of the contexts is given in Appendix 1. Contexts are described in summary form below.

Description: excavation

The recorded deposits were generally consistent across all four excavated zones at the site. These comprised a *topsoil* which consisted of a mid reddish brown to darkish reddish brown slightly to barely clayey sandy loam with occasional to virtually absent small rounded stones and very occasional small fragments of coal (contexts 001, 004, 006 and 008; Fig 4.1, sections 1 to 4). In trenches 1 to 3, the *subsoil* comprised a sand and clay composition similar to the topsoil but of a more orangey brown colour and with a greater number of both small and large rounded pebbles (contexts 002, 005, 007; Fig 4.1, sections 1 to 3). In Trench 4 (Fig 4.1, section 4), there was a layer between the topsoil and the subsoil (context 009) which was distinguished by the absence of pebbles.

The *natural subsoil* was of a similar composition in all trenches. Generally, it was a brownly orange slightly clayey sand with very common small and large rounded pebbles (context 003). The deposit sequence across most of the site is typically represented by the sections of trenches 1, 2, and 3.

No features were discovered on the site, even though a prior geophysical survey had suggested, with low confidence, a few possible pit-like features, and a possible right-angled ditch-like feature. The trenches were positioned so as to intercept these features suggested by the imaging, but revealed nothing of note.

The Finds

Results of analysis

The artefactual assemblage came from the topsoil of four trenches and totalled 49 finds weighing 1781g (see tables 1 and 3 in Appendix 2). The standard of preservation was generally fair, with finds displaying moderate levels of abrasion.

All contexts had a *terminus post quem* of the 20th century but artefacts could be dated from the late 17th century onwards.

Discussion

The discussion below is a summary of the artefacts and associated context by period. Where possible, dates have been allocated and the importance of individual finds commented upon as necessary.

Post-medieval

Post-medieval pottery consisted of 10 sherds of red sandy wares (fabric 78), the majority of which had a dark brown glaze, characteristic of this ware type. Diagnostic sherds included fragments from a large flared bowl/pancheon (trench 2) and a jar form (trench 4). In addition, a small sherd from a press-moulded dish with inlaid slip decoration was also identified (trench 4). All sherds could be dated as late 17th-18th century.

In addition to the pottery, 4 fragments of clay pipe stem and the iron horseshoe are also thought to date to this period. The horseshoes is large, measuring 16.5cm across at its widest point and 17cm in length. It has a turn up at the front and nail holes arranged in groups of four along the branches, four of which still have large square-headed nails *in situ*. There is no evidence of fullering and no calkins.

Modern

All remaining finds were of late 18th to 20th century date and included fragments of ceramic building material, domestic pottery, window and bottle glass. Ceramic building material consisted entirely of roofing tile, all well-fired.

The pottery included transfer decorated china (fabric 85), fragments of creamware (fabric 84), two porcelain handles (fabric 83) and sherds of various stoneware (fabrics 81.2, 81.3 and 81.4). Diagnostic sherds came from plate, dish and cup forms in the case of the china, porcelain and creamwares, whilst the stoneware sherds were predominantly from jar/bottle forms.

Description: walk-over survey

The whole field was inspected for evidence of earthworks. None was discovered. The land, currently in use as pasture for horses, was largely flat with any localised unevenness not suggestive of any underlying archaeological feature.

Interpretation

The site produced no archaeological deposits. This is consistent with the description of the geophysical anomalies as being of a *weak and amorphous character* which might *equally be of a natural origin*. A small quantity of finds dating from the 17th century onwards was recovered from the topsoil.

Significance

No archaeological features of any description were located during the evaluation. The finds have a *terminus post quem* of the 20th century. The significance is therefore zero.

Depositional and post-depositional processes

The site is located in the broader valley of the River Severn, which lies approximately 650m to the west. The site lies within a series of gravel terraces linked to periods of fluvial deposition and erosion, especially those associated with the end of the last ice age around 15000 years ago. In the absence of significant archaeological activities, it is these natural processes that have contributed the most to the site as it appears today (Maddy 2002).

Assessment of the need for further work

The geophysical survey (Smalley 2013), whilst identifying a number of anomalies of possible archaeological origin, acknowledged that they were equally likely to be of natural origin. This project has demonstrated that these anomalies had no archaeological basis and that the finds recovered from the topsoil and subsoil were mostly of modern date. It is therefore considered that no further archaeological investigation is required as a condition of this development.

Summary

An archaeological evaluation was carried out at land off Green Lane, Bevere, Worcestershire. The project identified that there were no significant archaeological deposits present in the area of the proposed development.

Bibliography

Glyde, M, 2015 *Requirements for an archaeological evaluation at land off Green Lane, adjacent to Firs Farm, Ombersley Road, Bevere, Worcestershire, Archive and Archaeology Service, Worcestershire County Council*

Maddy, D, 2002 An evaluation of climate, crustal movement and base level controls on the Middle-Late Pleistocene development of the River Severn, UK, *Netherlands Journal of Geosciences*; 329-338

Smalley, R, 2013 *Geophysical Survey Report; Bevere, Worcester*; Ref: J3292

Acknowledgements

The authors would particularly like to thank Mark Harris of MH Bevere Ltd, John, the machine driver and Mr Mike Glyde of Worcestershire Archives and Archaeology Service for their kind cooperation.

Archive

The physical archive consists of:

- 10 Context sheets
- 1 Drawing
- 1 Hard copy of the report
- 1 Hard copy of the brief
- 1 Hard copy of the WSI

It has been deposited at Hartlebury Museum.

The digital archive consists of:

- 1 DVD-ROM
 - digital copy of the report
 - digital copy of the brief
 - digital copy of the WSI
 - digital copies of the report component files

It has been deposited with the Archaeology Data Service.

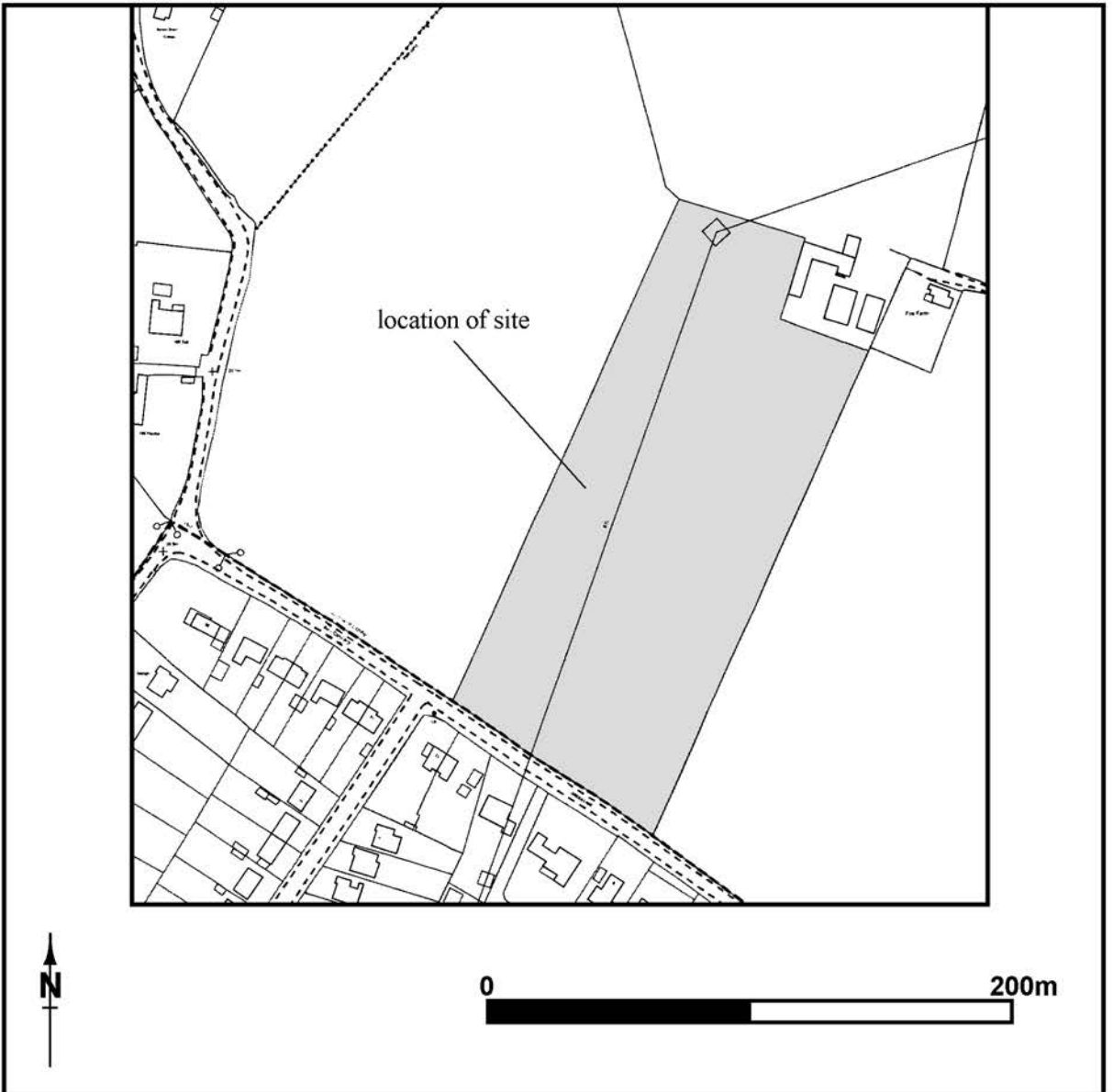
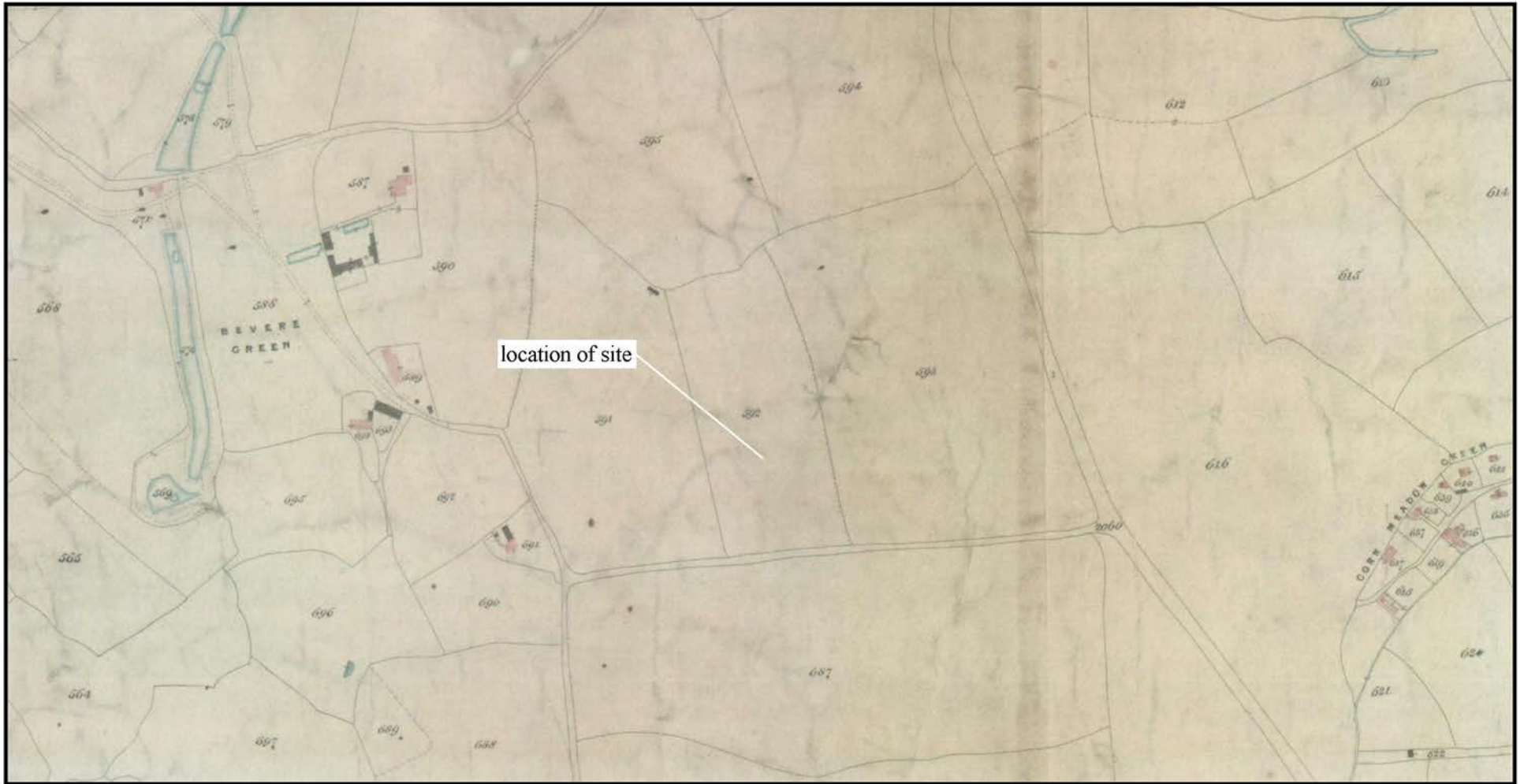


Fig 1: Location of site



not to scale



Fig 2.1: Claines title map; 1843

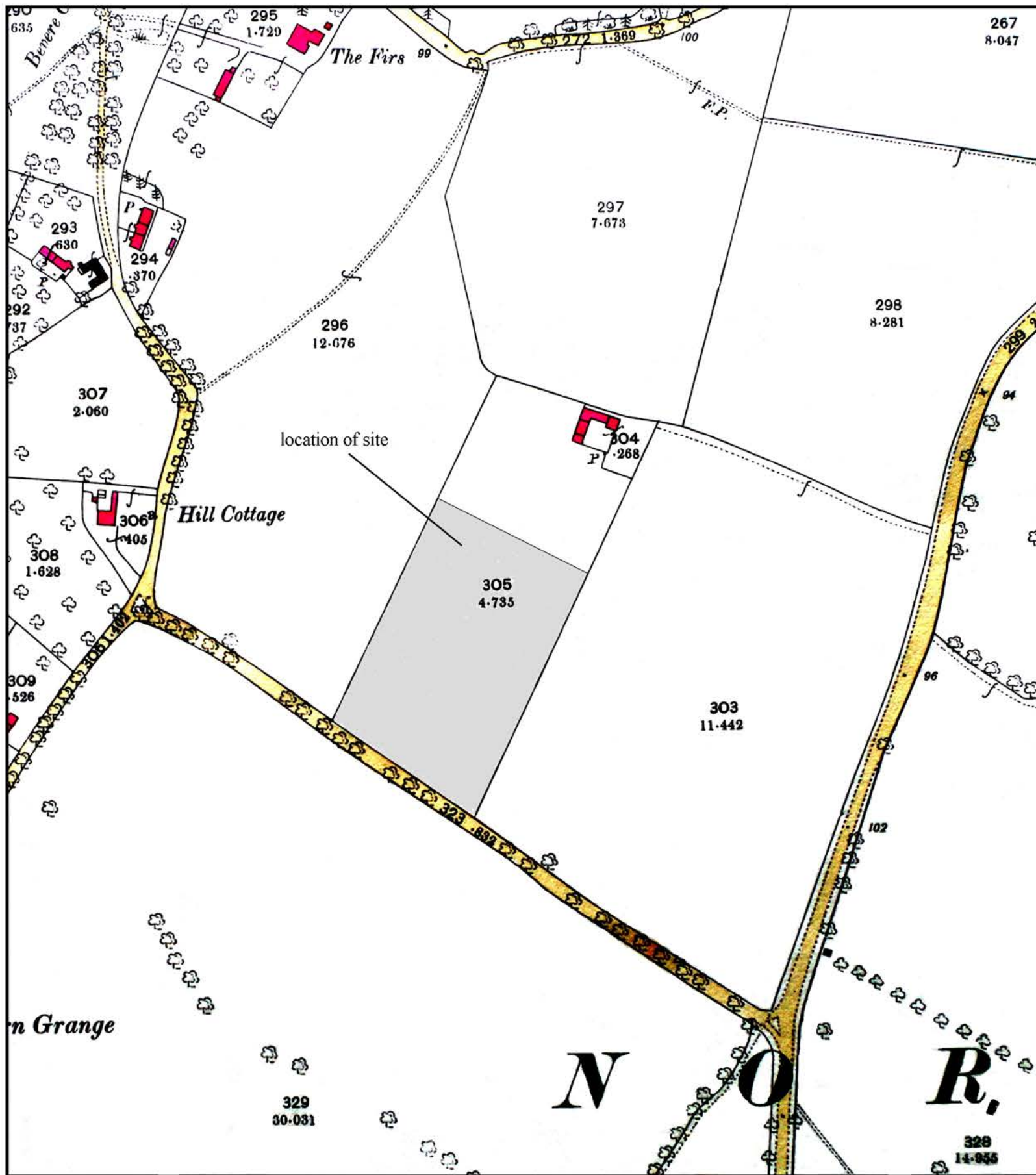


Fig 2.2: Ordnance Survey mapping; 1886

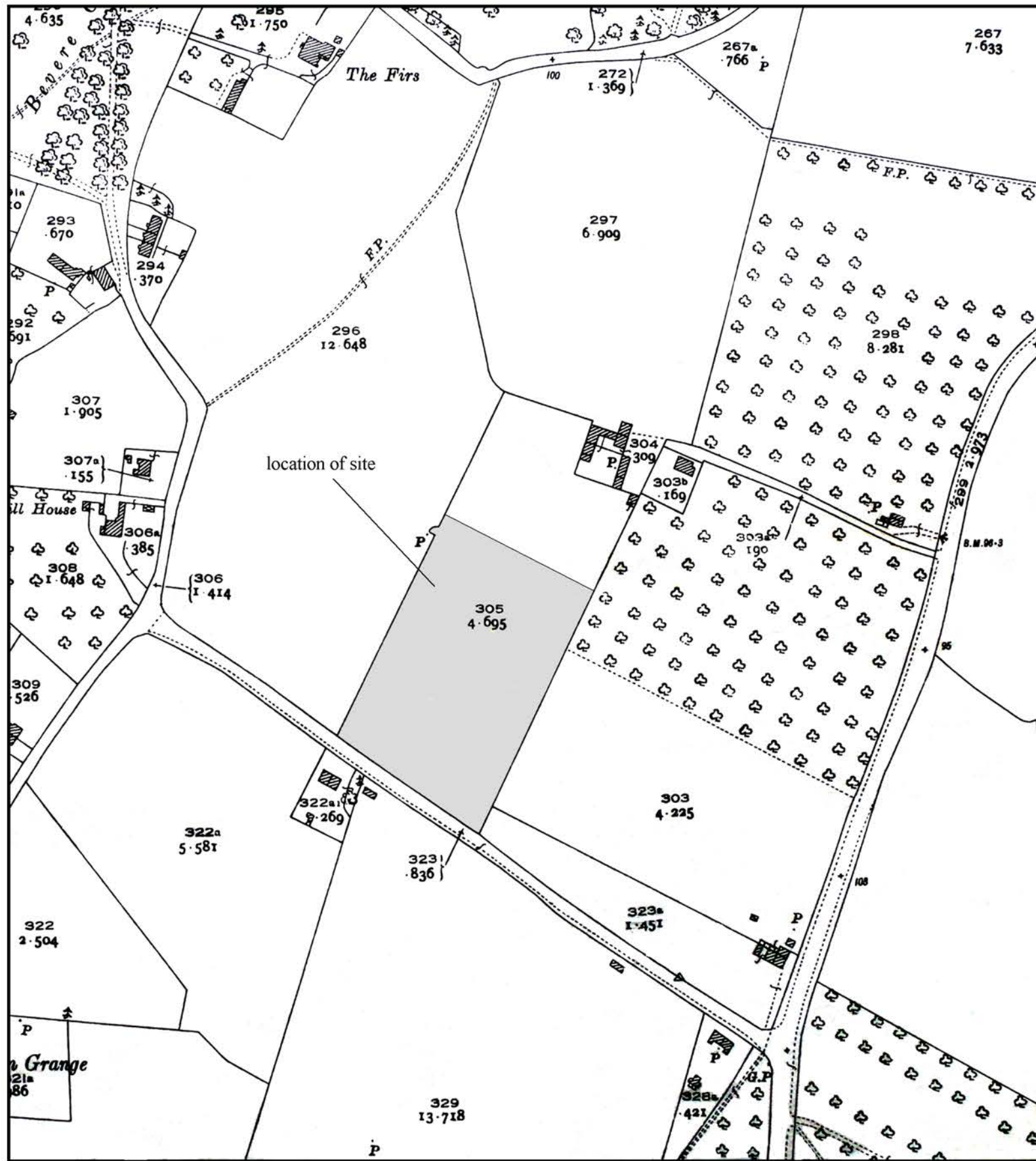


Fig 2.3: Ordnance Survey mapping; 1928

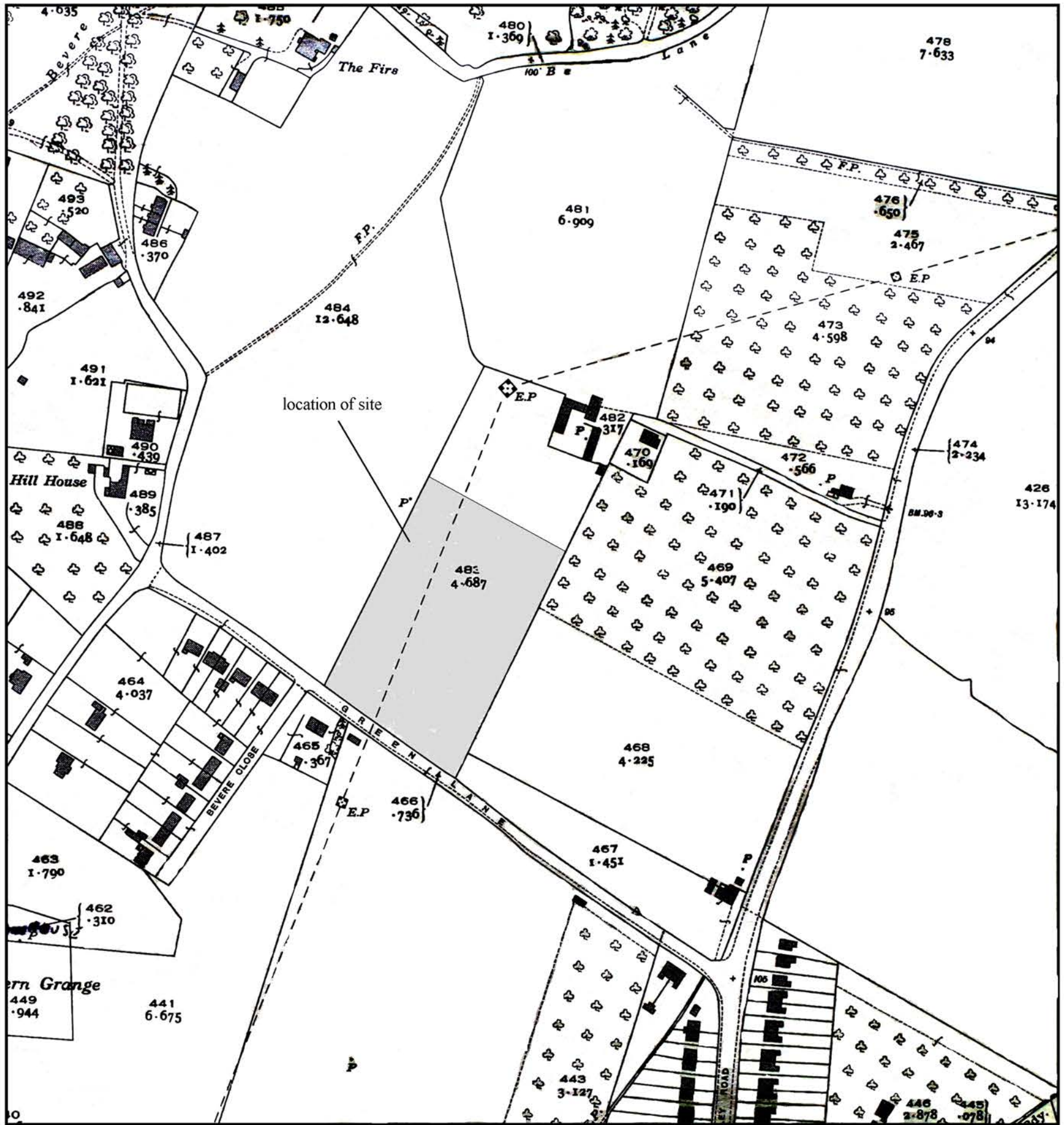
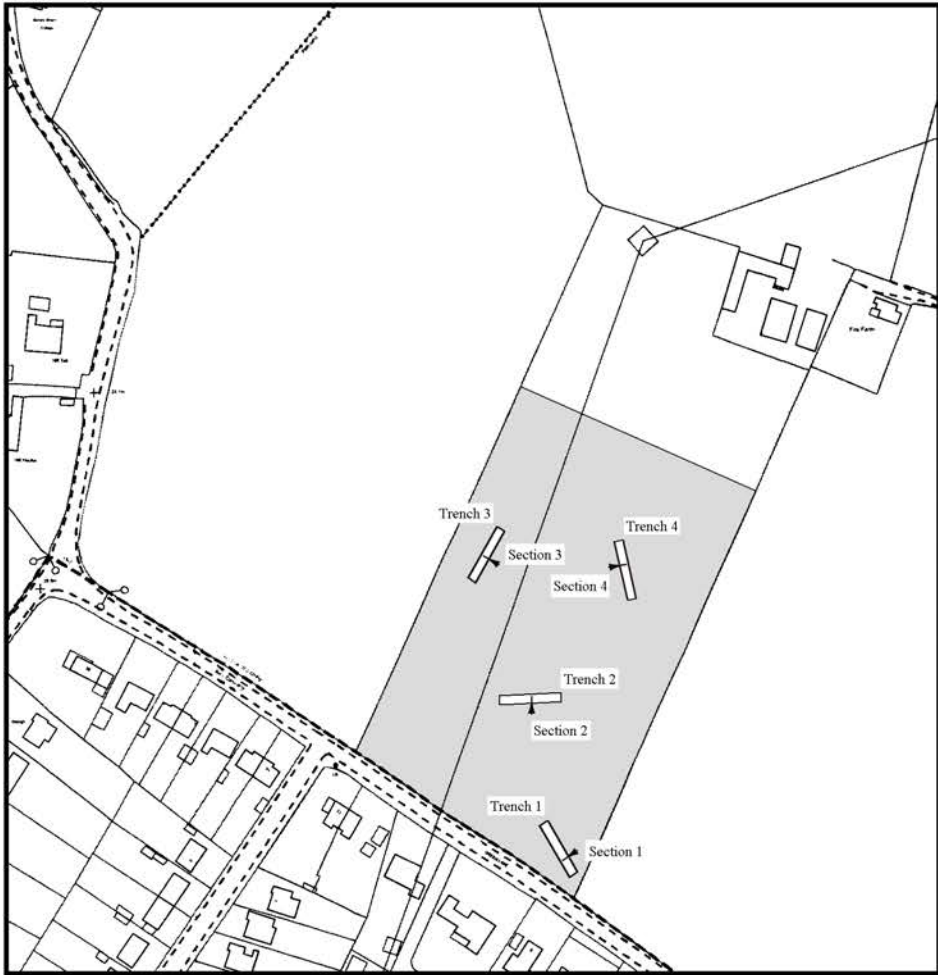


Fig 2.4: Ordnance Survey mapping, 1940

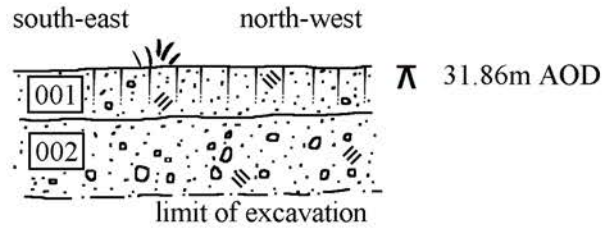


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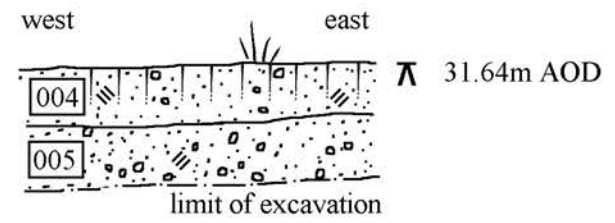


Fig 3: Location of trenches and recorded sections

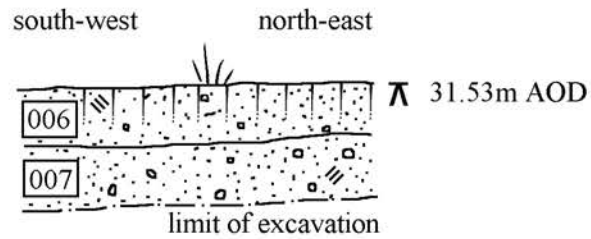
Section 1



Section 2



Section 3



Section 4

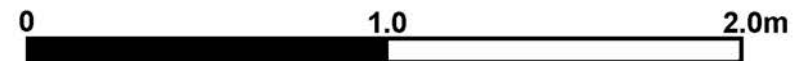
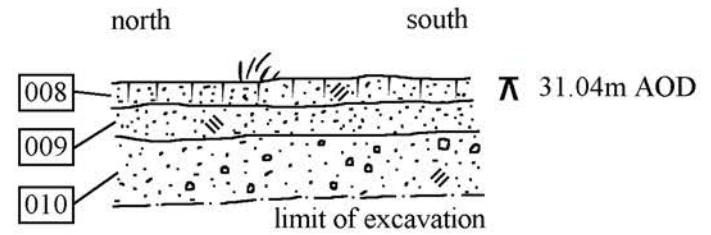


Fig 4.1: Sections









	loam and/or topsoil
	stones
	sand/gravel
	clay
	bricks
	ash and charcoal
	limit of excavation
	height above Ordnance Datum

Fig 4.2: Key to sections



Fig 5: Trench 1



Fig 6: Trench 2



Fig 7: Trench 3



Fig 8: Trench 4

Appendix 1: List of the contexts

Context number	Description	Interpretation
001	Mid reddish brown slightly clayey sandy loam with occasional small rounded pebbles	Topsoil
002	Orangey brown slightly clayey sand with common small rounded pebbles, very occasional large rounded pebbles, and very occasional small fragments of coal	Subsoil
003	Browney orange slightly clayey sand with very common small and large rounded pebbles	Natural subsoil
004	Mid reddish brown slightly clayey sandy loam with occasional small rounded pebbles	Topsoil
005	Orangey brown slightly clayey sand with common small rounded pebbles, very occasional large rounded pebbles, and very occasional small fragments of coal	Subsoil
006	Mid reddish brown slightly clayey sandy loam with very occasional small rounded pebbles	Topsoil
007	Orangey brown slightly clayey sand with occasional small rounded pebbles, practically no large rounded pebbles, and very occasional small fragments of coal	Subsoil
008	Darkish reddish brown barely clayey sandy loam (pebbles absent)	Topsoil
009	Mid reddish brown slightly clayey sandy loam (pebbles absent)	Uncertain – may relate to local variations in sand and gravel deposition patterns when the area was laid down
010	Orangey brown slightly clayey sand with common small rounded pebbles, very occasional large rounded pebbles, and very occasional small fragments of coal	Subsoil

Appendix 2: The finds report

The Artefacts by Laura Griffin

Aims

The brief required an assessment of the quantity, range and potential of artefacts from the excavation.

The aims of the finds assessment were:

- a) to identify, sort, spot date, and quantify all artefacts
- b) to describe the range of artefacts present
- c) to preliminarily assess the significance of the artefacts

Method of analysis

All hand-retrieved finds were examined. They were identified, quantified and dated to period. A *terminus post quem* date range was produced for each stratified context. All information was recorded on a Microsoft Access 2007 database.

The pottery was examined under x20 magnification and recorded by fabric type and form according to the fabric reference series maintained by the Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service (Hurst and Rees 1992 and www.worcestershireceramics.org).

Results of analysis

The artefactual assemblage came from the topsoil of four trenches and totalled 49 finds weighing 1781g (see tables 1 and 3). The standard of preservation was generally fair, with finds displaying moderate levels of abrasion.

All contexts had a terminus post quem of 20th century but artefacts could be dated from the late 17th century onwards.

Discussion

The discussion below is a summary of the artefacts and associated context by period. Where possible, dates have been allocated and the importance of individual finds commented upon as necessary.

Post-medieval

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References

Hurst, J D, and Rees, H, 1992 Pottery fabrics; a multi-period series for the County of Hereford and Worcester, in S G Woodiwiss (ed), Iron Age and Roman salt production and the medieval town of Droitwich, CBA Res Rep, 81, 200-9

Material	Total	Weight (g)
Post-medieval pottery	10	193
Modern pottery	21	128
Vessel glass	1	46
Window glass	1	1
Roof tile	10	575
Clay pipe	4	7
Copper alloy	1	1
Iron horseshoe	1	830

Table 1: Quantification of the assemblage

Fabric no.	Fabric name	Total	Weight (g)
78	Post-medieval red ware	10	193
81.2	White salt-glazed stoneware	1	1
81.3	Nottingham stoneware	1	3
81.4	Miscellaneous late stoneware	1	1
83	Porcelain	2	8
84	Creamware	3	33
85	Modern china	12	66
101	Miscellaneous modern wares	1	16

Table 2: Quantification of the pottery by fabric type

Trench	Material	Total	Weight (g)	Date range	TPQ
1	pot	5	44	19-20C	20C
1	pot	1	1	M18-19C	
1	pot	1	11	L17-18C	

1	clay pipe	1	1	Post-medieval	
1	copper alloy	1	1	undated	
2	pot	2	61	L17-18C	20C
2	pot	1	3	19-20C	
3	pot	3	33	L18C	20C
3	pot	1	6	19-20C	
3	pot	2	24	L17-18C	
3	clay pipe	2	2	Post-medieval	
3	vessel glass	1	46	L19-20C	
3	roof tile	2	125	18-20C	
4	roof tile	8	450	18-20C	20C
4	pot	5	97	L17-18C	
4	pot	1	3	M18-19C	
4	pot	5	13	L19-20C	
4	pot	2	8	18-19C	
4	pot	1	1	19-20C	
4	window glass	1	1	19-20C	
4	clay pipe	1	3	Post-medieval	
4	pot	1	16	L18-20C	
	iron horseshoe	1	830	Post-medieval	

Table 3: Summary of context dating based on artefacts