## Programme of archaeological work at 50 Main Street, Sedgeberrow, Evesham, Worcestershire,

Martin Cook BA MCIfA

24th August 2016

WSM 49802

Oasis ref martinco1-260669

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## Programme of archaeological work at 50 Main Street, Sedgeberrow, Evesham, Worcestershire

#### Introduction

A programme of archaeological work was carried out at 50 Main Street, Sedgeberrow, Evesham, Worcestershire (SP 0223 3842; Fig 1) at the request of Michelle Young of Berry & Young Building Consultants and Surveyors. This work was undertaken in compliance with a written scheme of investigation provided by Martin Cook BA MCIfA, based upon a brief issued by Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service, dated 17th June 2013 (planning reference W/12/2804). The written scheme of investigation was approved by Mike Glyde of Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service (site code MSS/13, event number WSM 49802).

The programme of archaeological work was to comprise documentary research, a watching brief, three days for uninterrupted access (if necessary) and a report.

#### **Summary**

A programme of archaeological work was carried out at 50 Main Street, Sedgeberrow, Evesham, Worcestershire. A boundary ditch was identified which was probably the continuation of a similar feature recorded by an earlier excavation on the adjacent site.

A summary will be published in West Midlands Archaeology.

#### The documentary material

#### Geology and topography

The site lies on flattish land, which rises gently to the north-east towards St Mary the Virgin Church, which stands as a the highest and most focal point of the village. The River Isbourne, a tributary of the Avon, flows around the eastern side of the village. The Isbourne, has in the recent past flooded the village. The local soils are of the Lodgegrove Association, made up of slightly stony calcareous clays over Lower Lias (Beard *et al*, 1986). The geology and soils are ideal for fruit growing, which has become predominant in this area of the Vale of Evesham. wheat, rye, oats and barley have also traditionally been grown in the area.

#### Historic mapping

The earliest available mapping is the Sedgeberrow enclosure map of 1813 (Figure 2.1). This shows that the development site lay within a single plot, being copyhold to John Grove. The enclosure award details refer to:

....and also all that old furlong called Weavers Close with the buildings there on. Part of a certain old enclosure called Long Close and ?two several other old enclosures called Pound Close, which said allotment contains in the whole eleven acres, three rood and twenty perch, marked on the plan as number 33

It has a boundary running along its south-eastern edge that may be a feature recorded during the watching brief (see below).

The 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of 1884 shows that the site was an orchard (Fig 2.2). The boundary that was present on the enclosure map of 1813 continued in use. The Ordnance Survey map of 1938 (Fig 2.2) shows no significant changes.

#### The Worcestershire Historic Environment Record

There are a number of landscape components or monuments nearby or adjacent to the site. By proximity to the site these are:

Immediately adjacent to the site

An excavation was carried out by Mercian Archaeology and Historic Buildings in 2004 (Mercian Archaeology 2004; WSM 33549). This determined that there were:

no archaeological deposits on the development site pre-dating the 17th century. The excavation and preceding field walking, however, identified several unstratified sherds of pottery dating from the Roman, Anglo-Saxon and medieval periods and flint flakes from the Neolithic or Bronze-Age, indicating that this material had been spread across the site during ploughing or other ground disturbance activity. The documentary research revealed that the land had been used as orchard since at least the 19th century and that a c 17th century timber-frame and thatch cottage stood on the corner of the site until the 1950s, when it was demolished and a new house built on the opposite side of the site. The evidence suggests that there was much levelling carried out at this time and it is likely that most of the post-medieval features encountered during the excavation were totally backfilled during the landscaping process. There was evidence for small-scale cottage industry on the site, probably from the 19th century when cider production was carried out in tubs held in sunken clay lined circular pits.

#### Surrounding the site

The slow flowing River Isborne has been the focus of activity in the Sedgeberrow area since prehistory. Dredging works on the river during the early 19th century produced finds from the Neolithic and Bronze Age (WSM 28760), suggesting that the river has been the focus of ritual activity. Parts of two Neolithic polished stone axes were found in the river. The workmen also discovered several 'very large' antlers, which may have been used as digging implements; two copper alloy oval spearheads, still with parts of their staves intact, were embedded in the riverbank; parts of copper alloy and iron body armour were also found. These demonstrated a great degree of craftsmanship (Buteux 2000, 111). These items appear to have been deposited rather than lost if the antiquarian accounts are to be believed. This suggests that the river was a special place, where votive offerings were made to whatever gods, supernatural forces or deity's man regarded as important over what appears to be several thousand years. It is no surprise then, that there is evidence for prehistoric activity and occupation in the immediate area.

Aerial photography around Sedgeberrow has identified cropmarks indicating archaic trackways, enclosures and field boundaries scattered across a wide area around the village (WSM 05504; 05506; 05510; 22927). Archaeological work at Trebor, Main Street, around 100 metres to the southwest of the development site, recovered dating evidence from ditches that had been noted through aerial photography, the material included Neolithic or Bronze Age flints and late Iron Age pottery from intersecting ditches (Buteux 2000).

The Roman period is also well represented in the area. There is suggestion that a Roman road (WSM 28761) runs along the higher ridge to the west of the modern village and Roman pottery has been collected during archaeological field-walking on the village perimeters (WSM 05502; 05655), Roman metalwork finds have also been found, including a second century brooch and a coin from the same period (WSM 09927).

The Anglo-Saxon period is not well represented within the archaeological data collected from within Worcestershire, or generally from the western side of Britain. Anglo Saxon finds from the Sedgeberrow area are, therefore, intriguing and important to the story of occupation and settlement at both a local and regional scale. An Anglo Saxon sceatta (coin) and pottery sherds from the same period (WSM 07518) were found during building work to the old school during the 1930s. The school stood less than 50 metres to the south of the development site. The original Anglo-Saxon estate boundary has been identified from analysis of charter documents concerning the manor of Segcesbearuue. This is almost identical to the modern parish boundary.

St Mary the Virgin Church, which stands to the north-east of the site, was dedicated in 1328-31, but may be on the site of an earlier Anglo-Saxon foundation (Buteux 2000, 112). There is much evidence of activity around Sedgeberrow during the medieval period. The plot boundaries on either side of Main Street are thought to have been laid out during the medieval period (Buteux 2000, 114). The earliest surviving buildings date from the 13th and 14th centuries, St Mary the Virgin Church, referred to above and Church House to the west of the village has 13th century fabric (WSM 09329).

There are several buildings dating from around the 17th century remaining in the village. It is likely that the post-medieval mill structure at the eastern end of Main Street has replaced an earlier medieval mill. There were two mills here at the time of the Domesday Survey. The earthworks to the north of the site represent the denuded remains of a moated site (WSM 32732), which is also likely to date from the medieval period. The Domesday Survey of 1086 shows that Sedgeberrow was held by the monks of Worcester Priory. It had been passed to the monks during the 8th century by Aldred, who was bestowed the manor by King Offa of Mercia in 777 AD. At the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1542, the manor was transferred to the Dean and Chapter of Worcester Cathedral, later confirmed by James I in 1609. The parliamentary survey of the lands of the Dean and Chapter indicates that wheat and barley were the main crops being grown in the Sedgeberrow open fields at this time. The rents payable to the Dean and Chapter were around 27 shillings (Cave and Wilson 1924). The manor was sold to Henry Sealy in 1657 by the Commissioners for the Sale of the Lands of the Dean and Chapter of the Cathedral of Worcester. The Dean and Chapter recovered the land at the restoration. The Ecclesiastical Commissioners took the manor in 1859, they remained lords of the manor into the 20th century (VCH III).

#### Commentary

The primary reasons for the archaeological investigation was that the development lay within the medieval tenement laid out either side of Main Street and that fieldwork in the adjacent plot revealed post-medieval deposits and features, and finds dating from the prehistoric, Anglo Saxon and medieval periods (Mercian Archaeology and Historic Buildings 2004; Glyde 2013).

#### The fieldwork

#### General

Fieldwork took place on the 9th and 10th October 2013. It comprised monitoring of the excavations. A full description of the contexts is given in Appendix 1. Contexts are described in summary form below.

#### **Description**

The topsoil, a very dark, grey brown sandy loam (context 001, Fig 3.2) was stripped across the site. This exposed the subsoil, a mid grey brown sandy clay (context 004, Fig 3.2) and the only feature recorded by the watching brief: a linear cut (context 003, Figs 3.1 and 3.2) running approximately south-south-west to north-north-east. It was filled with a very dark grey brown sandy clay with abundant charcoal flecks (context 002). This was cut through the subsoil (context 004) and into the natural subsoil, a mid grey tenacious clay (context 005, Fig 3.2).

#### The finds

#### Results of analysis

The complete finds report has been presented as Appendix 2. The artefactual assemblage came from a single ditch fill (context 002) and totalled eight sherds of pottery weighing 194g (see tables 1 and 2). The standard of preservation was fair, with finds displaying moderate levels of abrasion. The context had a *terminus post quem* of 19th-20th.

#### Discussion

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

#### Post-medieval

A single sherd of post-medieval buff ware (fabric 91) with a dark brown glaze could be dated to the 18th century (context 002).

#### Modern

All remaining sherds were from domestic tableware vessels of modern date. The earliest sherd was from a late 18th century creamware bowl/dish with a moulded rim decorated with green glaze and traces of gilt (fabric 84). Remaining sherds were all of 19th-20th date and included fragments of transfer decorated modern china (fabric 85), the handle of a Bristol stoneware jar (fabric 81) and the

spout of a teapot (fabric 101). This latter sherd was unusual, having a high fired red body decorated with a cream external glaze and blue painted decoration more characteristic of refined white wares.

#### Significance

The range of pottery in this assemblage is consistent with that of post-medieval and modern date retrieved from earlier investigations on the adjacent site at 50 Main Street (Mercian Archaeology and Historic Buildings 2004). However, if the ditch from which the current assemblage was retrieved is indeed a continuation of that excavated at number 50, then it would appear that it is of later date than previously thought.

#### Interpretation

The excavation of 2004 (Mercian Archaeology 2004), which identified a number of features interpreted as being associated with the small-scale production of cider, was a significant determinant of the need for further archaeological investigation when an adjacent plot was developed. The complete absence of archaeological features across the majority of this plot was therefore disappointing. The explanation, however, is a simple one.

A linear feature identified during the 2004 excavation (context 147; Fig 3.1) may be related to a comparable feature (context 003) recorded by the subsequent watching brief. If this is correct, then the two features form two sides of a ditched enclosure. Within this enclosure, the area to the south and east of the ditch contained the cider manufacturing features recorded earlier and the cottage mentioned by the Mercian Archaeology report. Beyond the ditch to the north-west was an orchard and this, unsurprisingly, had no such features.

#### Depositional and post-depositional processes

It was noted by the earlier report (Mercian Archaeology 2004) that the site to the south-east had been subject to a phase of backfilling and levelling during the 1950s when an earlier cottage was demolished. The current work can add nothing to this interpretation. The majority of the current site has been under an agricultural or market gardening regime and the soil profile reflects a straightforward topsoil, subsoil, natural subsoil progression (north-west end, Fig 3.2).

#### **Bibliography**

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#### Acknowledgements

The author would particularly like to thank Michelle Young of Berry & Young Building Consultants and Surveyors, Mike Glyde and Adrian Scruby of Worcestershire Archives and Archaeology Service, the construction contractor, Mark Young and the client, Mr and Mrs Harris for their kind cooperation.

#### **Archive**

The physical archive consists of:

- 5 Context sheets
- 2 Drawings
- 1 Hard copy of the report
- 1 Hard copy of the report illustrations
- 1 Hard copy of the brief
- 1 Hard copy of the WSI

It will be deposited at Worcestershire County Museum, Hartlebury upon approval of the report. It is anticipated that the finds, having a *tpq* of the 19th-20th century, will not be of interest to the museum. However, the museum will be consulted in this respect before disposal.

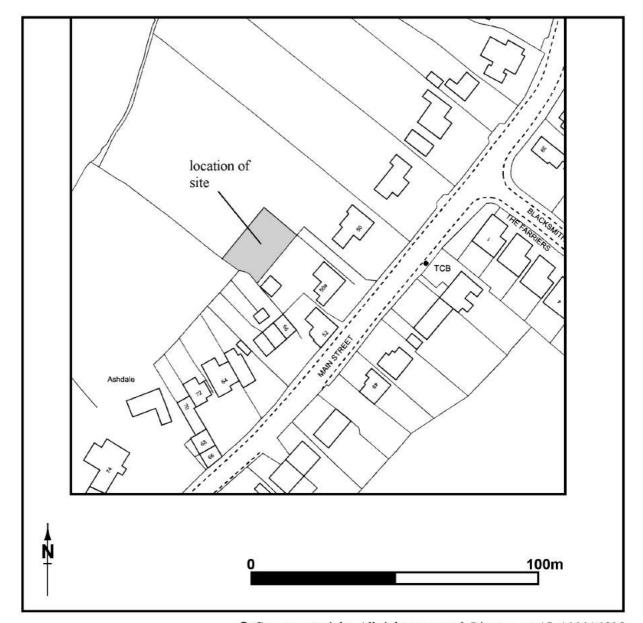
The digital archive consists of:

- 1 Digital copy of the report (.doc format)
- 6 Illustrations (.bmp format)

It will be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service upon approval of the report.

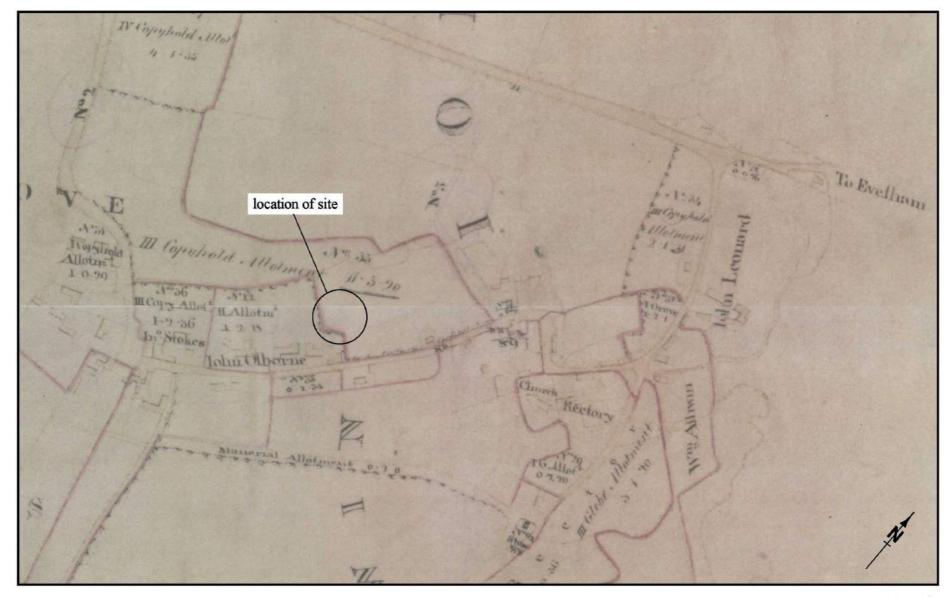




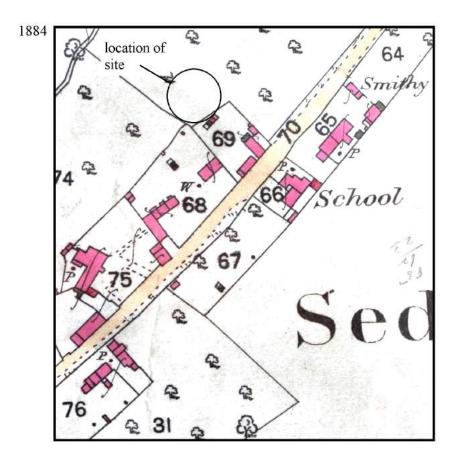


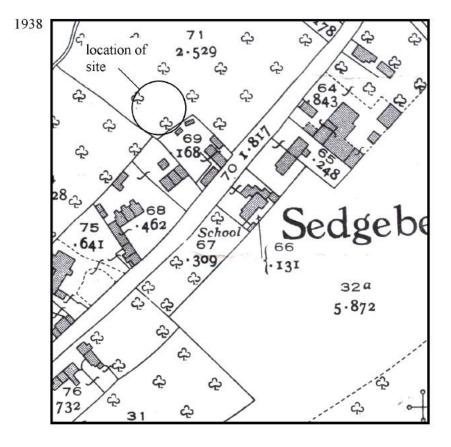
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Fig 1: Location of site

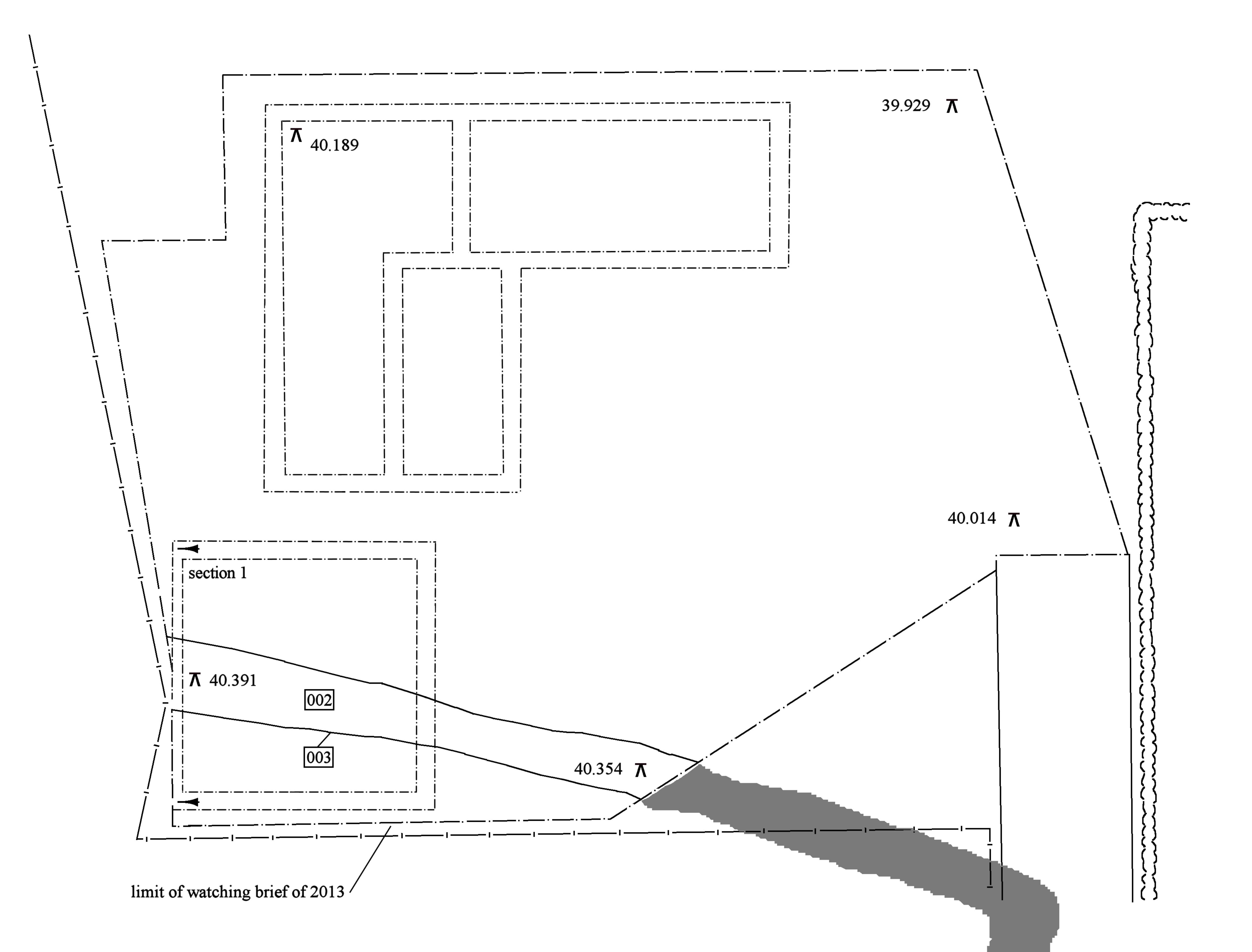


not to scale

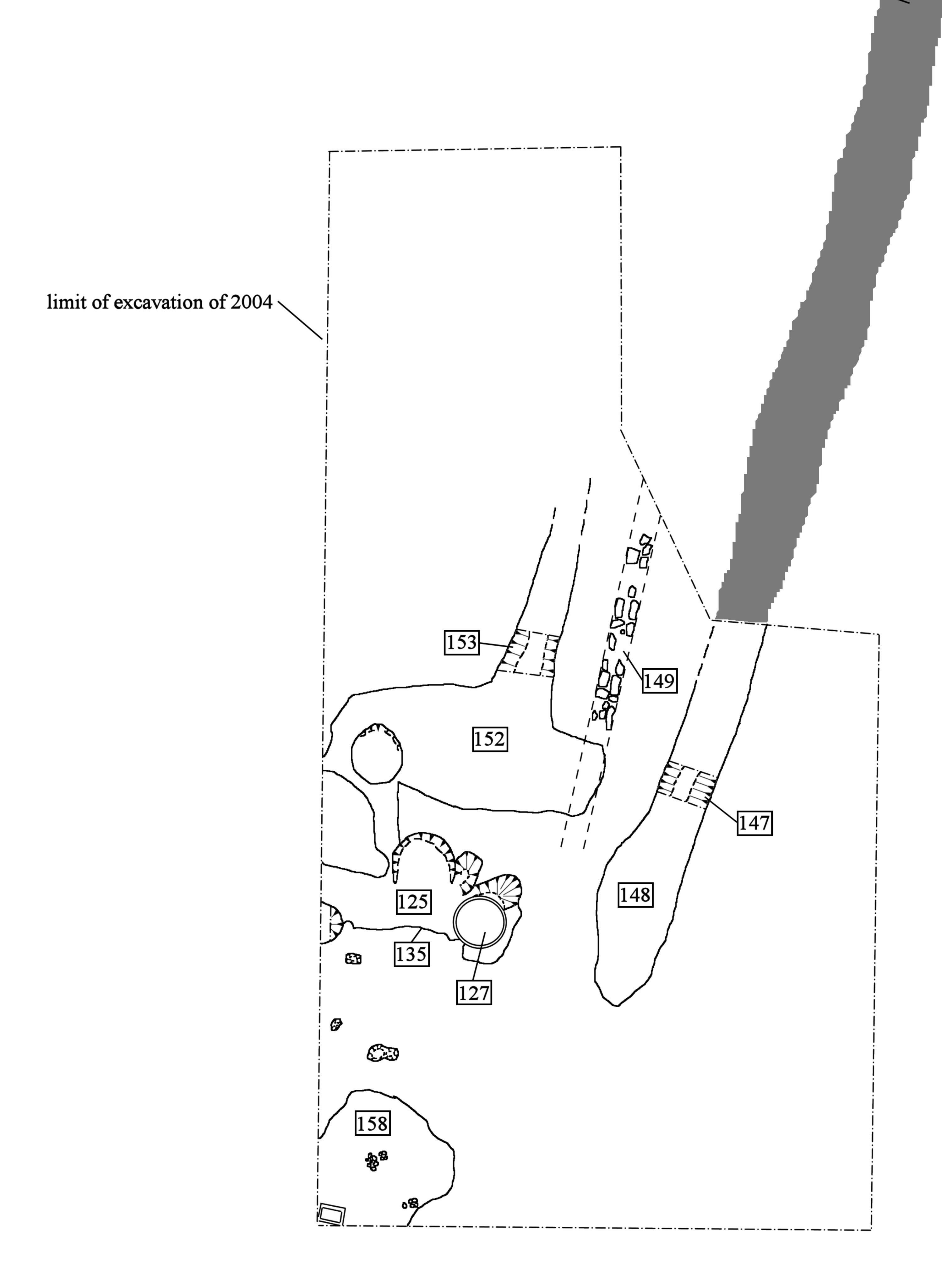






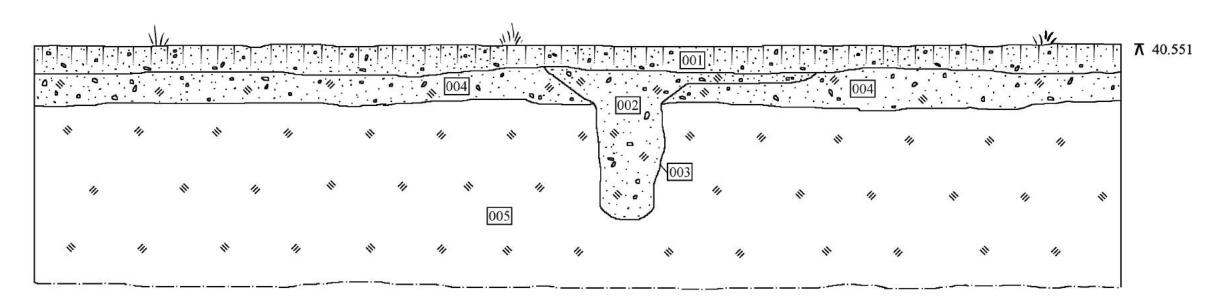


postulated position of boundary ditch <



## Section 1

south-east north-west



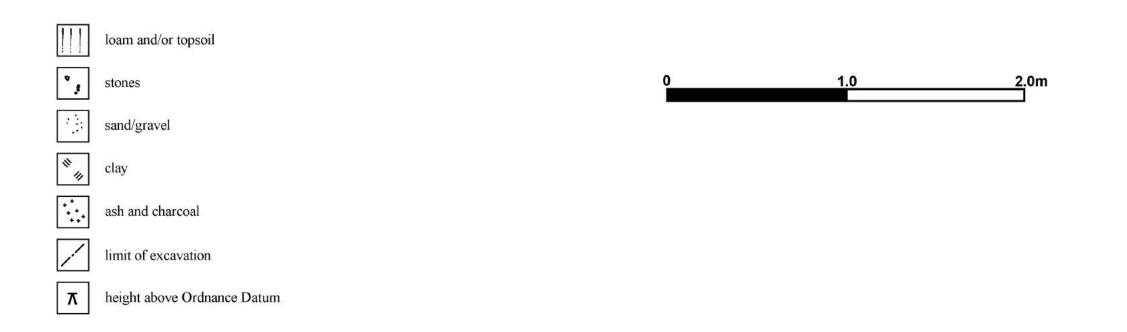




Fig 4: Context 002, fill of ditch, context 003



Fig 5: General view of site from north

## **Appendix 1: List of the contexts**

| Context number | Description  | Interpretation                  |
|----------------|--|---------------------------------|
| 001            | Very dark grey brown sandy loam with occasional small angular stones   | Topsoil                         |
| 002            | Very dark grey brown sandy clay with abundant charcoal and pottery   | Fill of 003                     |
| 003            | Steep, nearly vertically sided, cut  | Boundary ditch, filled with 002 |
| 004            | Mid grey brown sandy clay with abundant small angular stones and ocasional small fragments of brick and tile | Subsoil                         |
| 005            | Mid grey tenacious clay  | Natural 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 <a href="https://www.worcestershireceramics.org">www.worcestershireceramics.org</a>).

#### **Results of analysis**

The artefactual assemblage came from a single ditch fill (context 002) and totalled eight sherds of pottery weighing 194g (see tables 1 and 2). The standard of preservation was fair, with finds displaying moderate levels of abrasion. The context had a *terminus post quem* of 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Discussion**

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

#### Post-medieval

A single sherd of post-medieval buff ware (fabric 91) with a dark brown glaze could be dated to the 18<sup>th</sup> century (context 002).

#### Modern

All remaining sherds were from domestic tableware vessels of modern date. The earliest sherd was from a late 18<sup>th</sup> century creamware bowl/dish with a moulded rim decorated with green glaze and traces of gilt (fabric 84). Remaining sherds were all of 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> date and included fragments of transfer decorated modern china (fabric 85), the handle of a Bristol stoneware jar (fabric 81) and the spout of a teapot (fabric 101). This latter sherd was unusual, having a high fired red body decorated with a cream external glaze and blue painted decoration more characteristic of refined white wares.

#### Significance

The range of pottery in this assemblage is consistent with that of post-medieval and modern date retrieved from earlier investigations on the adjacent site at 50 Main Street (Williams 2004). However, if the ditch from which the current assemblage was retrieved is indeed a continuation of that excavated at number 50, then it would appear that it is of later date than previously thought (*ibid.*, 15).

#### 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

Williams, P, 2004 An archaeological excavation at land adjacent to 50 Main Street, Sedgeberrow, Worcestershire. Mercian Archaeology and Historic Buildings

| Material              | Total | Weight (g) |
|-----------------------|-------|------------|
| Modern pottery        | 7     | 179        |
| Post-medieval pottery | 1     | 15         |

Table 1: Quantification of the assemblage

| Fabric no. | Fabric name                | Total | Weight (g) |
|------------|----------------------------|-------|------------|
| 91         | Post-medieval buff ware    | 1     | 15         |
| 81         | Bristol stoneware          | 1     | 21         |
| 84         | Creamware                  | 1     | 19         |
| 85         | Modern china               | 4     | 59         |
| 101        | Miscellaneous modern wares | 1     | 80         |

Table 2: Quantification of the pottery by fabric type

## **Appendix 3: The OASIS form**

# OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

List of Projects | Manage Projects | Search Projects | New project | Change your details | HER coverage | Change country | Log out

#### Printable version

### OASIS ID: martinco1-260669

**Project details** 

Project name 50 Main Street Sedgeberrow

Short description of the Programme of archaeological work at 50 Main Street

project Sedgeberrow

Project dates Start: 09-10-2013 End: 21-08-2016

Previous/future work Yes / No

Any associated project

reference codes MSS/13 - Contracting Unit No.

Any associated project

reference codes WSM 49802 - HER event no.

Type of project Recording project

Site status Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area

Current Land use Other 5 - Garden

Monument type ENCLOSURE DITCH Post Medieval

Significant Finds POTTERY Post Medieval

Investigation type "Watching Brief"

Prompt National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF

**Project location** 

Country England

Site location WORCESTERSHIRE WYCHAVON SEDGEBERROW

50 Main Street Sedgeberrow

Study area 400 Square metres

SP 0223 3842 52.043751574744 -1.967481811812 52

02 37 N 001 58 02 W Point

Height OD / Depth Min: 40.1m Max: 40.1m

**Project creators** 

Site coordinates

Name of Organisation Martin Cook BA MCIfA

Project brief originator

Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning

Authority/advisory body

Project design originator Martin Cook BA MCIfA
Project director/manager Martin Cook BA MCIfA
Project supervisor Martin Cook BA MCIfA

Type of sponsor/funding

body

Developer

#### **Project archives**

Physical Archive Exists? No
Digital Archive recipient ADS
Digital Contents "none"

Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography", "Text"

Paper Archive recipient Worcestershire County Museum

Paper Contents "none"

Paper Media available "Context sheet", "Drawing", "Report"

#### **Project bibliography 1**

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

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Sedgeberrow, Evesham, Worcestershire

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Issuer or publisher Martin Cook BA MCIfA

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