

**Archaeological watching brief
at land at Weston Orchard,
Fladbury,
Worcestershire**

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WSM 68007

Oasis ref martinco1-269802

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Archaeological watching brief at land at Weston Orchard, Fladbury, Worcestershire

Introduction

An archaeological watching brief was carried out at land at Weston Orchard, Fladbury, Worcestershire (SO 9943 4650; Fig 1) at the request of Keith Cunningham. This work was undertaken in compliance with a written scheme of investigation provided by Martin Cook BA MCifA, based upon a standard brief issued by Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service (planning reference W/16/00380). The written scheme of investigation was approved by Adrian Scruby of Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service (site code WOF/16, event number WSM 68007).

The archaeological watching brief was to comprise documentary research, a watching brief, one day for uninterrupted access (if necessary) and a report.

Summary

A archaeological watching brief was carried out at land at Weston Orchard, Fladbury, Worcestershire. The fragmentary remains of ridge and furrow agriculture were identified in the excavated area. The historic mapping provided evidence for furlongs lying to the south of the site and it is believed that the remains of ridge and furrow found may be part of the same open field.

A summary will be published in West Midlands Archaeology.

The documentary material

Geology and topography

The search area sits within a low lying flat river terrace on bedrock geology made up of mudstone with a superficial geology made up of a mix of sands and gravels, with alluvium following the course of the River Avon. Specifically, this comprises glacio-fluvial or river terrace drift of the Wick 1 series (Ragg *et al* 1984) and the soil is generally light clay with a little sand. The general region is made up of large arable fields with areas of gravel extraction, light industry and intensive agriculture.

Historic mapping

The earliest available mapping is a mid-19th century copy of the Fladbury inclosure map of 1789. This is not available in the Worcestershire Archives and is known from another report (Napthan 2009). This shows the lane that was to become Weston Orchard and a field to the south of it where the current site is located. However, no detail is provided. The Ordnance Survey map of 1904 (Fig 2.1) shows that the existing site was partly orchard and partly open ground, fronting a lane. The Ordnance Survey map of 1927 (Fig 2.2) shows nothing different to this.

The Worcestershire Historic Environment Record

There are a number of historic buildings, landscape components, monuments or archaeological events (archaeological work or interventions) nearby or adjacent to the site. By proximity to the site these are:

Immediately adjacent to the site

Immediately adjacent to the site are a set of agricultural buildings (WSM 56680) associated with Weston House.

A watching brief was undertaken in 2006 in Western Orchard (WSM 35985) on the site of a small tractor store. The groundworks were minimal and were limited to the topsoil. The spoil was checked for artefacts but none were found.

Surrounding the site

Surrounding the site are a collection of historic buildings, monuments, landscape components and archaeological events. The historic buildings comprise a partially extant Manor House in Station Road (WSM 12974) of the 17th century, a tithe barn (WSM 20284) in Station Road of the 17th century and Yew Tree Cottage in Main Street (WSM 41564) also of the 17th century.

The monuments, in date order, comprise: a possible Neolithic occupation site in Station Road (WSM 68067; Cook and Buteux 1998), a Saxon road (WSM 30402; Hooke 1981) and the site of an outbuilding associated with Weston House (WSM 56666) presumed to be of the 17th century.

The landscape components, in date order, comprise: a prehistoric ritual and settlement landscape (WSM 40864) of Neolithic to Iron Age date, consisting of a series of cropmarks, unstratified finds and excavations which show that there was an extensive prehistoric settlement here and Weston House (WSM 61398) of the 17th century.

The archaeological events comprise: an evaluation on the Sports Ground, Station Road (WSM 26910; referred to above as WSM 68067) which located a possible Neolithic occupation site, the survey of a complex of Neolithic cursus type monuments (WSM 49654), a salvage recording which took place in 1953 at The Vicarage (WSM 34739) during which a skeleton and pottery of Roman date was found in the Vicarage garden. Later work revealed no further Roman deposits, however a lime kiln (WSM 26895) of post-medieval date was uncovered. Finally, an unstratified find was made in 1969, of an Anglo-Saxon Brooch (WSM 07306) in Churchlands.

Other work includes archaeological works in 2009 at Wallington, Station Road (WSM 41752) where only a small number of burnt stones (possible 'potboilers') and a single small gully of probably later post medieval date were identified (Napthan 2009) and a watching brief in 2008, Lea House, Station Road (WSM 39873) which located no significant archaeological remains or deposits located within the area of the development (Williams 2008).

Commentary

The primary reasons for the archaeological investigation were that the development might affect heritage assets of below-ground archaeological interest. The development area is situated on the edge of the historic core of the village, in an area where the existing settlement part has medieval origins and was well established by the 17th century. In addition to this, the Fladbury area appears to have been a focus for settlement and ceremony from the Neolithic periods onwards. These comprise a complex of ritual and funerary monuments lying to the west of the site, elements of which extend towards and possibly into the development site. (External consultee letter from Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service to Wychavon Planning Department, 22nd March 2016).

The development site lies adjacent to areas of prehistoric, Romano-British and Anglo-Saxon activity. The gravel terraces of the River Avon have been the focus of settlement activity from the Neolithic period onwards, and the present village of Fladbury probably overlies Anglo-Saxon and medieval settlement, with the possibility that it also hides evidence of Romano-British settlement activity.

The fieldwork

General

Fieldwork took place on the 19th and 20th September 2016. It comprised monitoring of the excavations. These were for a raft foundation, rather than the more usual strip design. A broad area was therefore uncovered at a depth propitious for the exposure of archaeological deposits. A full description of the contexts is given in Appendix 1. Contexts are described in summary form below.

Description (Figs 3.1 and 3.2)

A light grey brown sandy loam with common small rounded stones (context 001; topsoil) overlay a light grey orange clayey sand with common to abundant small rounded stones (context 002; subsoil). These overlay a number of narrow, linear deposits (contexts 004, 005, 006 and 007) all of which comprised light grey brown slightly sandy clay with common small rounded stones. These

were thought to be the truncated remains of ridge and furrow. These were cut into a light buff orange clayey sand with common to abundant small rounded stones (context 003; natural subsoil).

The finds

Results of analysis

The complete finds report has been presented as Appendix 2. The artefactual assemblage was unstratified and totalled six sherds of pottery weighing 95g (see table 1). The standard of preservation was generally fair, with finds displaying moderate levels of abrasion. The assemblage could be dated from the mid-late 17th century onwards.

Interpretation

It is apparent from the historic mapping, especially the Ordnance Survey maps of 1904 and 1927, that the property boundaries to the south of the site curve gently. This characteristic is generally taken to be indicative of strip agriculture and the open field system (eg Orwin, 1954 quoting the Research Committee of the Congress of Archaeological Societies, 1938). The fragmentary remains of furrows identified during the watching brief are aligned in the same general direction as the property boundaries to the south and may be part of the same open field. Williams (2008) noted that:

the soil profile [nearby, on the opposite (east) side of Station Road] displayed no evidence of having been regularly ploughed; there was no indication of ridge and furrow and no evidence of manuring.

He went on to suggest that:

evidence of activity may well be located adjacent to the road further to the west

The results of the present project indicate that he was correct. It is notable that the field boundaries on the east side of the road are of an entirely different character from those on the west, where the present site is situated, being perfectly straight and perpendicular to Station Road. It is possible that the land on which the prehistoric activity was located (possible Neolithic occupation site identified by Cook and Buteux 1998; WSM 68067) only became attractive again for settlement, and/or activity other than pasture, in the 17th or 18th centuries and later.

Depositional and post-depositional processes

The remains of ridge and furrow suggest that the site has, historically, been agricultural in nature. That these remains are fragmentary indicate that the site has been truncated, presumably by the planting of orchards in the fairly recent past.

Bibliography

Cook, M, and Buteux, V, 1998 *Evaluation of land at the Sports Ground, Station Road, Fladbury*, Archaeological Service -Worcestershire County Council

Hooke, D, 1981 *Anglo-Saxon West Midlands*, BAR

Napthan, M, 2009 *Archaeological works at Station Cottage, Station Road, Fladbury, Worcestershire*, Mike Napthan Archaeology

Orwin, C S, 1954 *The open fields*, 2ed

Ragg, J M, Beard, G R, George, H, Heaven, F W, Hollis, J M, Jones, R J A, Palmer, R C, Reeve, M J, Robson, J D, and Whitfield, W A D, 1984 *Soils and their Use in Midland and Western England*, Soil Survey of England and Wales 12

Research Committee of the Congress of Archaeological Societies, 1938 *Report on lynchets and grass ridges*, pp 32-5

Williams, P, 2008 *Archaeological watching brief at land adjacent to Lea House, Fladbury, Worcestershire*, Mercian Archaeology.

Acknowledgements

The author would particularly like to thank Mr and Mrs Keith Cunningham, the groundworks team - A G Redman and Son and Adrian Scruby of Worcestershire Archives and Archaeology Service for their kind cooperation.

Archive

The physical archive consists of:

- 7 Context sheets
- 1 Drawing
- 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, being unstratified, 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.

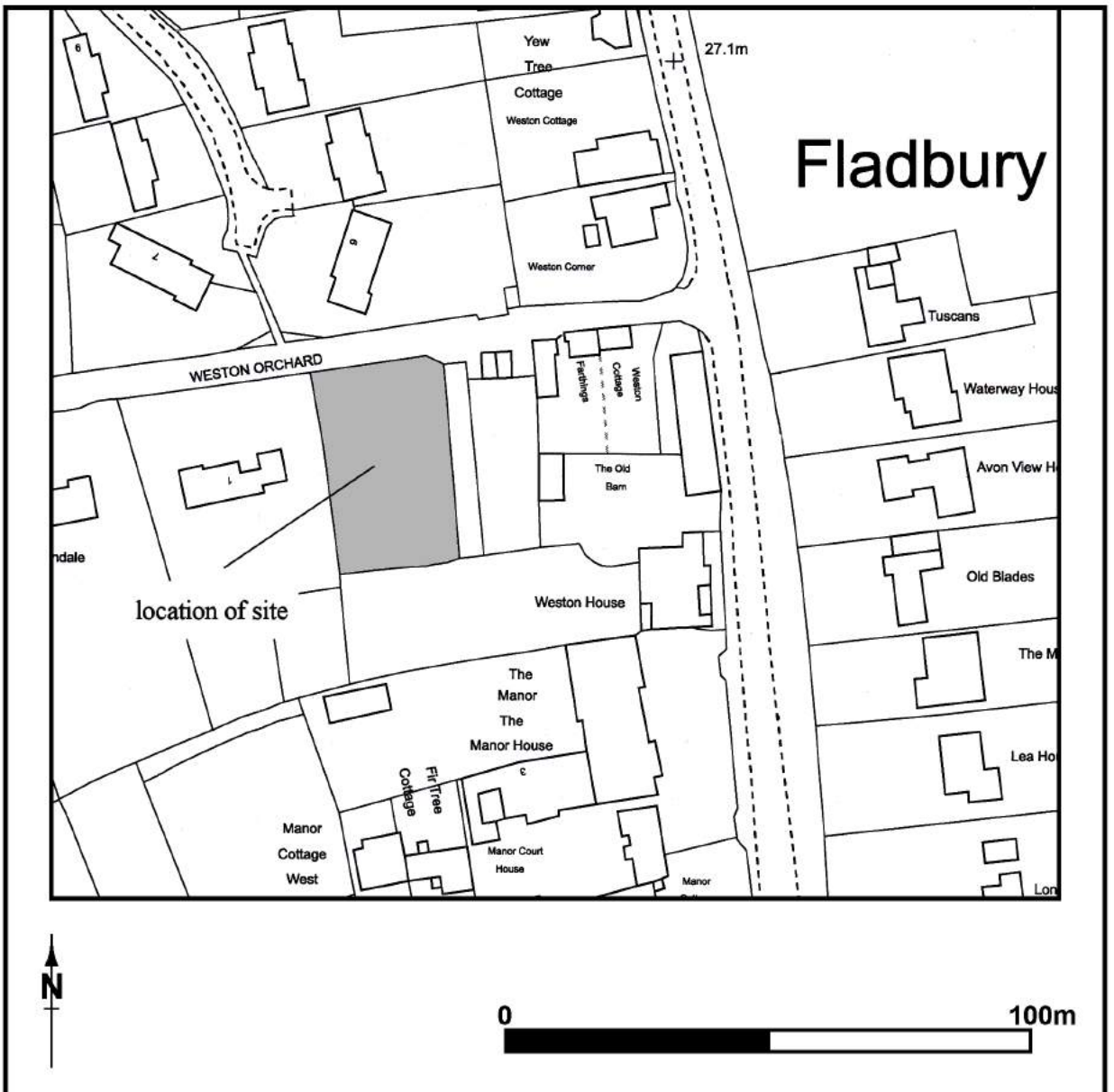


Fig 1: Location of site

1904



Fig 2.1: Historic mapping

1927



Fig 2.2: Historic mapping

Weston Orchard

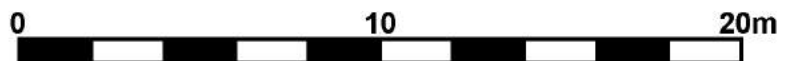
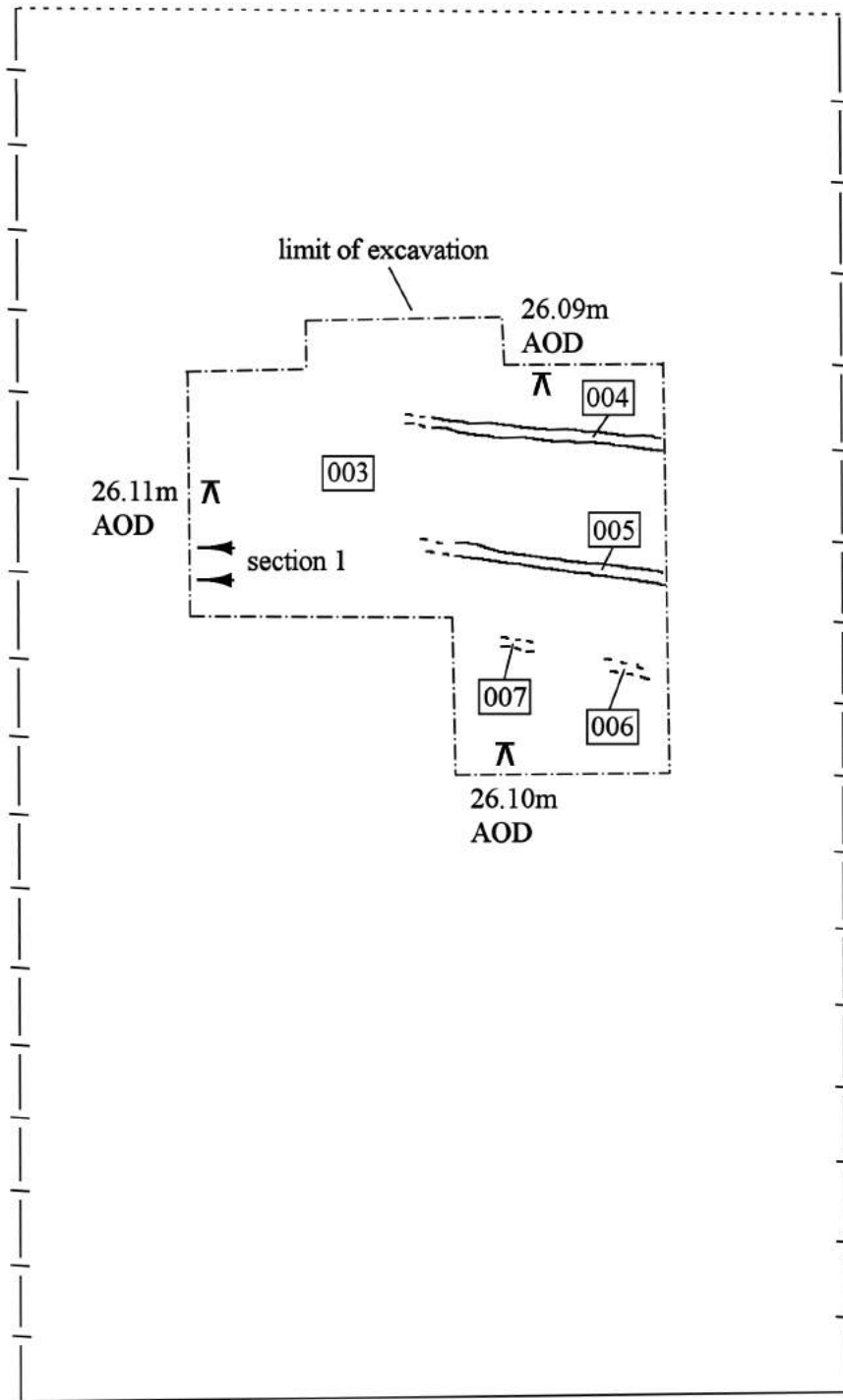
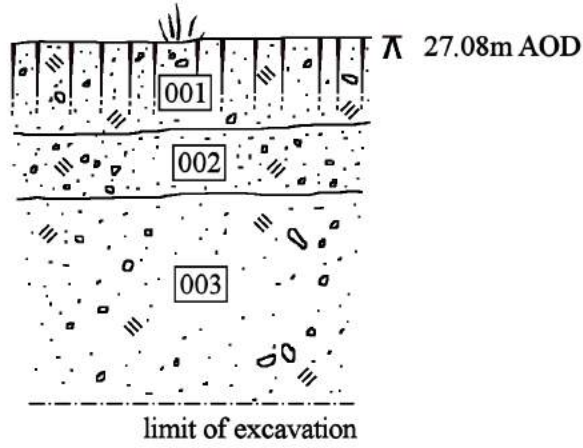










Fig 3.1: Recorded features

Section 1

south

north



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

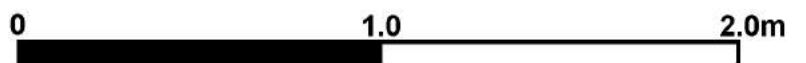


Fig 3.2: Section 1



Fig 4: General view of the site from the south

Appendix 1: List of the contexts

Context number	Description	Interpretation
001	Light grey brown sandy loam with common small rounded stones	Topsoil
002	Light grey orange clayey sand with common to abundant small rounded stones	Subsoil
003	Light buff orange clayey sand with common to abundant small rounded stones	Natural subsoil
004	Light grey brown slightly sandy clay with common small rounded stones	Bottom of furrow
005	Light grey brown slightly sandy clay with common small rounded stones	Bottom of furrow
006	Light grey brown slightly sandy clay with common small rounded stones	Discontinuous bottom of furrow; same as 007
007	Light grey brown slightly sandy clay with common small rounded stones	Discontinuous bottom of furrow; same as 006

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 (see table 2) 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 was unstratified and totalled six sherds of pottery weighing 95g (see table 1). The standard of preservation was generally fair, with finds displaying moderate levels of abrasion. The assemblage could be dated from the mid-late 17th century onwards.

Material	Total	Weight (g)
Post-medieval pottery	1	65
Modern pottery	5	30

Table 1: Quantification of the assemblage

Discussion

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

Post-medieval

Post-medieval material consisted of a single sherd of post-medieval red sandy ware (fabric 78). The sherd was high fired with a thick, purplish black internal glaze typical of mid-late 17th century production.

Modern

All remaining finds were of late 18th to 20th century date and consisted of four sherds modern china (fabric 85) and one of creamware (fabric 84). All came from domestic tablewares and one was transfer decorated.

Fabric no.	Fabric name	Total	Weight (g)
78	Post-medieval red ware	1	65
84	Creamware	1	1
85	Modern china	4	29

Table 2: Quantification of the pottery by fabric type

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

Trench	Context	Material	Type	Fabric	Total	Weight (g)	Start Date	End date	Finds <i>tpq</i>	
1	1	pottery	modern	85	6	21	L19C	20C	20C	
1	1	pottery	modern	83	3	8	L19C	20C		
1	1	glass	bottle		2	20	18C	20C		
1	1	pottery	modern	101	8	38	L18C	20C		
1	1	pottery	post-medieval	78	1	27	M17C	18C		
1	2	tile	roof		2	189			20C	
1	2	brick			2	19				
1	2	pottery	modern	85	1	1	19C	20C		
1	2	pottery	modern	101	1	42	L18C	20C		
2	4	pottery	post-medieval	78	1	64	18C		20C	
2	4	pottery	post-medieval	101	1	19	18C	20C		
2	4	pottery	modern	83	1	16	L18C	20C		
2	4	pottery	modern	85	1	33	19C	20C		
2	4	brick			1	63				
2	4	tile	roof		1	171	19C	20C		
2	5	glass	bottle		3	280	L19C	20C	20C	
2	5	glass	bottle		5	427	L19C	20C		
2	5	glass	bottle		1	218	L19C	20C		
2	6	pottery	roman	22	1	90	E2C	L2C	L2-4C	
2	6	pottery	roman	19	2	54	L2C	4C		
3	10	pottery	post-medieval	101	3	86	18C	20C	20C	
3	10	tile	ridge		1	25	18C			
3	10	plastic			1	1		20C		
3	10	pottery	modern	85	3	21	L19C	20C		
3	10	pottery	modern	84	3	23	L18C			
3	10	pottery	modern	83	1	5	L18C	20C		
3	10	pottery	modern	81.4	1	27	19C	20C		
3	10	pottery	post-medieval	78	1	21	18C			
3	10	tile	roof		1	31	19C	20C		
3	10	pottery	modern	101	13	278	L18C	20C		
3	10	glass	vessel		2	212	19C	20C		
3	10	pipe	stem		1	3				
3	11	glass	bottle		23	929	L19C	20C		20C
3	11	pottery	modern	85	3	43		20C		
3	11	pottery	modern	84	1	4	L18C			
4	16	pottery	modern	84	1	1	L18C		20C	
4	16	pottery	modern	85	1	1	L19C	20C		
4	16	glass	window		2	1			L18C	
4	17	pottery	roman	12.2	1	29	M1C	2C		
4	17	pottery	roman	12	1	38	M1C	4C		
4	17	pottery	post-medieval	78	3	161	L17C	18C		
4	17	pottery	modern	84	2	6	L18C			
4	17	pipe	stem		1	1				
4	17	pottery	modern	84	2	6	L18C			
5	19	glass	bottle		2	460	L19C	20C	20C	
5	20	glass	bottle		2	319		20C		
5	20	pottery	modern	85	1	68	L19C	20C		
5	20	glass	bottle		3	217	19C	20C		
5	20	pottery	modern	85	5	135	L19C	20C		

5	20	pottery	modern	83	2	10	L19C	20C	
5	21	pottery	modern	85	1	39	L19C	20C	
5	21	tile	roof		1	61	19C	20C	20C
5	22	pottery	modern	85	1	1	L19C	20C	20C
5	27	pottery	modern	85	2	13	L19C	20C	20C

Table 3: Summary of context dating based on artefacts

Appendix 3: The OASIS form

OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

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OASIS ID: martinco1-269802

Project details

Project name	Watching brief at Weston Orchard, Fladbury, Worcestershire
Short description of the project	Watching brief at Weston Orchard, Fladbury, Worcestershire, found fragmentary remains of ridge and furrow.
Project dates	Start: 19-09-2016 End: 31-10-2016
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	WSM 68007 - HER event no.
Any associated project reference codes	WOF/16 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area
Current Land use	Other 13 - Waste ground
Monument type	RIDGE AND FURROW Uncertain
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF

Project location

Country	England
Site location	WORCESTERSHIRE WYCHAVON FLADBURY Land at Weston Orchard, Fladbury, Worcestershire
Study area	200 Square metres
Site coordinates	SO 9943 4650 52.116408040599 -2.008325330273 52 06 59 N 002 00 29 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 26.68m Max: 26.68m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Martin Cook BA MCIfA
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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", "Survey", "Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Worcestershire County Museum
Paper Contents	"none"
Paper Media available	"Drawing", "Map", "Photograph", "Plan", "Report", "Section", "Unpublished Text"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
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