

**Archaeological watching brief  
at 4 Mill Lane,  
Feckenham,  
B96 6HY**

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10th August 2018

WSM 70509

Oasis ref martinco1-324810

Sundowner  
Circus Field Basin  
Stocklake  
Aylesbury  
HP20 1AP

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# **Archaeological watching brief at 4 Mill Lane, Feckenham, B96 6HY**

## **Introduction**

An archaeological watching brief was carried out at land at 4 Mill Lane, Feckenham, B96 6HY (SP 0086 6162; Fig 1) at the request of Mr Alan Smith of Alan Smith Associates, on behalf of his client Bradley Investments Limited. This work was undertaken in compliance with a brief issued by the Planning Advisory Section of Worcestershire Archive & Archaeology Service dated August 2017 (planning ref 17/00552/FUL). The written scheme of investigation was approved by Adrian Scruby, Archaeology and Planning Advisor.

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

## **Summary**

An archaeological watching brief was carried out at land at 4 Mill Lane, Feckenham, B96 6HY. No archaeological features were identified and a small number of finds dating to the modern period were collected from the topsoil.

A summary will be published in West Midlands Archaeology.

## **The documentary material**

### **Geology and topography**

The search location is situated within a rolling lowland pastoral landscape based on mudstone bedrock with superficial alluvium, till and head geological deposits, and relic patches of ancient woodland. The historic character of this landscape comprising small to medium parliamentary and piecemeal enclosure has largely been eroded by modern field amalgamation and the nucleated village of Feckenham has undergone some modern expansion.

### **Historic mapping**

The earliest available mapping is the Blagrave map of Feckenham. Originally produced in 1591, the surviving version is a copy by Doharty Jnr, made in 1744. This could not be reproduced for reasons of copyright. This shows the lane, now known as Mill Lane, the church and some buildings, presumably residential, to its south, fronting the lane. The inclosure map of 1817 (Fig 2.1) is at a larger scale and shows individual buildings. There are two buildings, presumably cottages, neither of which exist today, fronting Mill Lane. To the north-east of these, in their back-plots is the development site. The inclosure map of 1830 (Fig 2.1) shows a very similar situation.

The Ordnance Survey map of 1884 (Fig 2.2) shows 2 and 4 Mill Lane and what may be one of the cottages shown on the inclosure maps. The Ordnance Survey map of 1905 (Fig 2.2) shows no significant differences.

### **The Worcestershire Historic Environment Record**

There are a considerable number of entries on the Worcestershire Historic Environment Record for the area surrounding Mill Lane but as the archaeological project identified only topsoil and the natural subsoil, a brief summary has been included here.

Within the search area are fifty-three Historic England Listed Historic Buildings and a further sixty-eight unlisted historic buildings. Structures include a 12th century church, 15th century cross and a number of 16th century houses including a mill. A number of 17th century houses and farm buildings are also recorded, whilst the majority of records pertain to buildings which date to the 18th and 19th century; principally houses, inns and farm buildings. 2 and 4 Mill Street is recorded as a 19th unlisted brick cottage which underwent a large rear extension in the late 20th century. A Historic England funded project to identify the Historic Farmsteads of Worcestershire also recorded six farmsteads within the search area dating to the 16th to 19th centuries.

In addition to the built environment there are also a number of monument records for the site of buildings that are now demolished including a needle mill and village pound. The site of a garden, weir and millpond also date to the post-medieval period whilst later period records relate to two Victorian tombs and an air raid shelter. The 12th century garden and deer park at Feckenham Court and records for ridge and furrow date to the medieval period whilst the conjectured extent of Medieval Feckenham village is also recorded as covering the majority of the current village. Records for the location of the scheduled monument Feckenham Courthouse and moated site and a Holloway called Burial Lane also date to this period. The earliest evidence recorded within the search area is a conjectured Roman road and an area of Roman occupation indicated by a ditch filled with Roman pottery discovered during an excavation at 2 and 4 Mill Street during construction in the late 20th century.

### **Commentary**

The primary reason for the archaeological investigation was that the development might affect heritage assets of below-ground archaeological interest. The development area is situated in the historic core of the settlement, lying between the Scheduled Monument of Feckenham manorial moated site (also known as King John's Hunting Lodge – NHLE 1018361) and the Grade II\* Listed 12th century parish church of St John the Baptist (WSM 00071).

## **The fieldwork**

### **General**

Fieldwork took place on the 23rd July 2018. It comprised monitoring of the excavations. The ground rises significantly from the middle of the development site to the level of the churchyard and substantial ground reduction had to be undertaken to produce a level surface from which the footings could be excavated (Figs 3.1 and 4). This ground reduction reached, and significantly penetrated, the natural subsoil. 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**

A mid grey brown, sandy, slightly clayey loam (context 001; topsoil, Fig 3.2) was removed to reveal a mid reddy-brown sandy clay with common to abundant small rounded pebbles (context 002; subsoil). This in turn was removed down to a mid reddy-brown tenacious clay (context 003; natural subsoil).

## **The finds**

### **Results of analysis**

The complete finds report has been presented as Appendix 2. The artefactual assemblage recovered from the site totalled six sherds of modern pottery weighing 38g (Appendix 2, Table 1). All came from the topsoil (context 001) and were highly abraded.

All sherds were identified as modern tableware. They included three fragments of creamware (fabric 84) which could be dated mid-late 18th century and three pieces of modern china (fabric 85) of 19th-20th century date.

## **Interpretation**

The only deposits identified were a thin topsoil, a subsoil and the natural subsoil. From the first of these a small number of finds dating to the modern period was collected.

## **Depositional and post-depositional processes**

Feckenham sits on the west side of a low hill, rising to about 83m above sea level. The hill is defined by two valleys: to the north and west by the valley of the Bow Brook and to the south and east by the valley of the Brandon Brook. Mill Lane occupies what appears to be a shallow, dry valley, the ground level rising to the north-east to the level of the churchyard and to the south-west

to the level of what is now the football ground, formerly the site of a royal hunting lodge (WSM 00068, scheduled monument number 1018361). The recorded deposits lay on the side of this valley.

### **Acknowledgements**

The author would particularly like to thank Adrian Robinson of arc Surveyors Limited, the client Bradley Investments Limited, the groundworks team, and Emma Hancox, Redditch Borough Council Archaeology and Planning Advisor, for their kind cooperation.

### **Archive**

The physical archive consists of:

- 3 Context sheets
- 1 Drawing
- 1 Hard copy of the report
- 1 Hard copy of the report illustrations
- 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 small number of finds, being of post-medieval and modern date, 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.

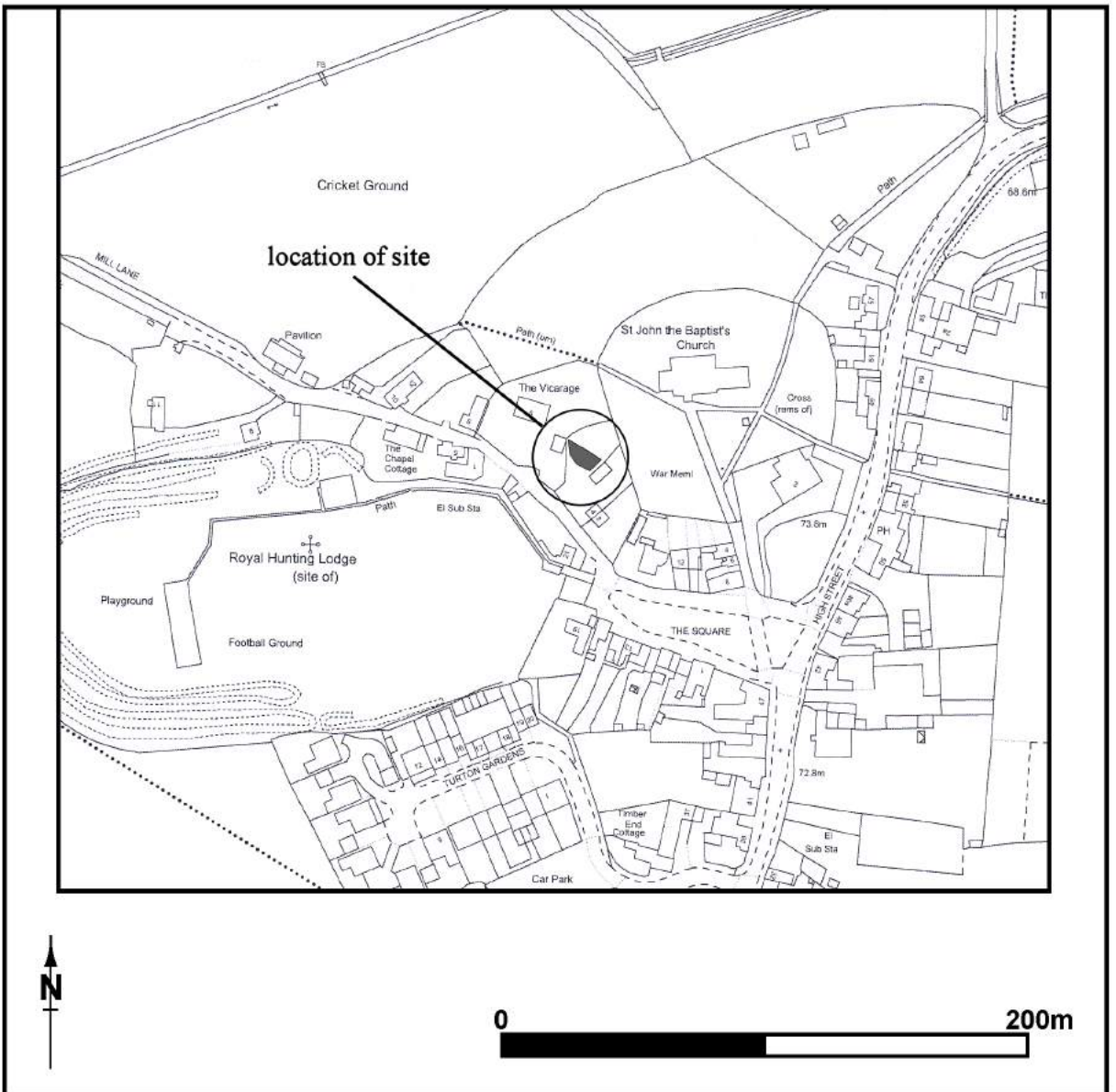
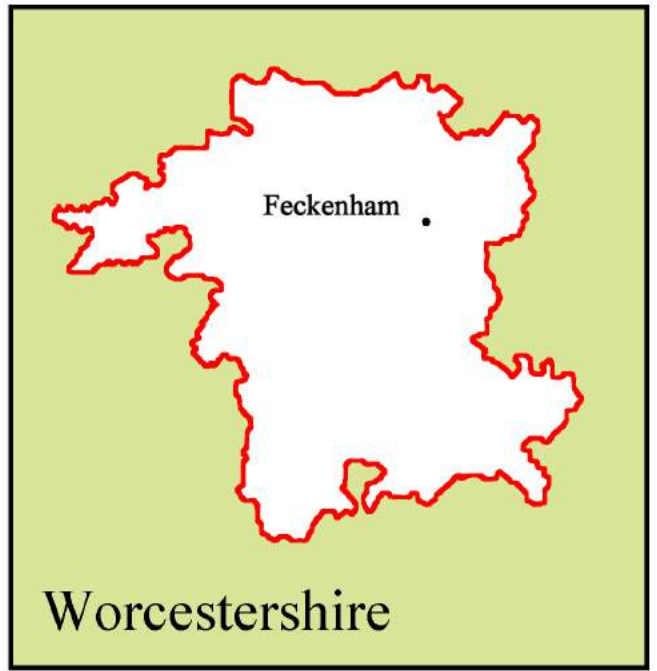
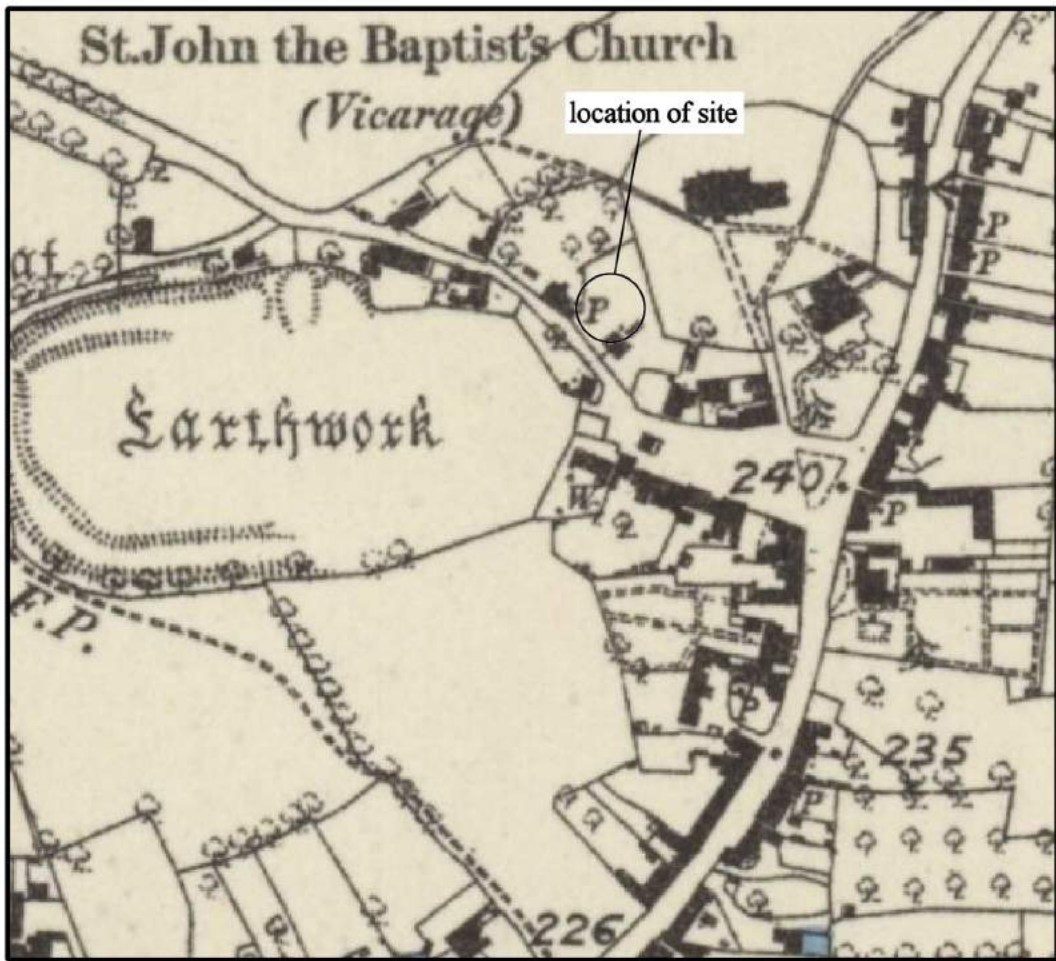


Fig 1: Location of site



1884



1905



0

200m

Fig 2.2: Ordnance Survey mapping

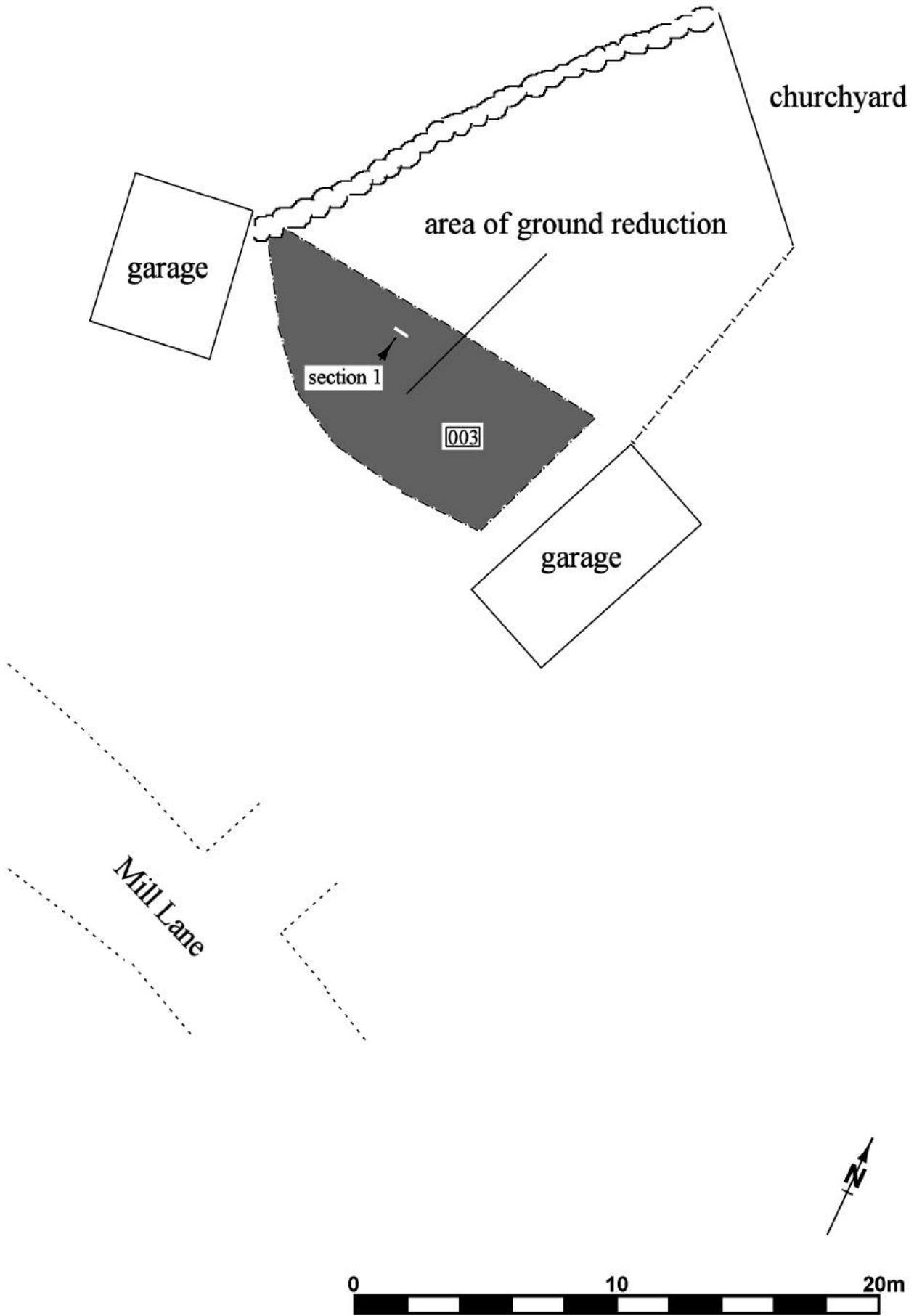


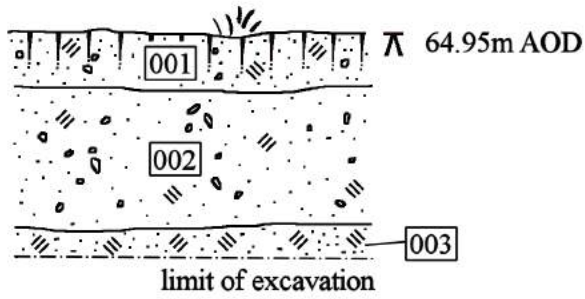
Fig 3.1: Location of area of ground reduction



# Section 1

west

east











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



Fig 3.2: Typical section



Fig 4: General view of area of ground reduction

## Appendix 1: List of the contexts

<b>Context number</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
001	Mid grey brown, sandy, slightly clayey loam	Topsoil
002	Mid reddy-brown sandy clay with common to abundant small rounded pebbles	Subsoil
003	Mid reddy-brown tenacious clay	Natural subsoil

## **Appendix 2: Finds report**

## Artefactual analysis by Laura Griffin

The finds work reported here conforms to the following guidance: for finds work by ClfA (2014), for pottery analysis by PCRG/SGRP/MPRG (2016), for archive creation by AAF (2011), and for museum deposition by SMA (1993).

### Aims

- To identify, sort, spot date, and quantify all artefacts;
- To describe the range of artefacts present;
- 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 was produced for each stratified context. All information was recorded on a *pro forma* Microsoft Access 2007 database.

The pottery was examined under x20 magnification and referenced as appropriate by fabric type and form according to the fabric reference series maintained by Worcestershire Archaeology (Hurst and Rees 1992 and [www.worcestershireceramics.org](http://www.worcestershireceramics.org)).

### Results

The assemblage recovered from the site totalled just six sherds of modern pottery weighing 38g (see Table 1). All came from the topsoil (context 001) and were highly abraded.

### Summary artefactual evidence by period

All pottery has been grouped and quantified according to general fabric class (Table 1). Sherds were datable by fabric type to their general period or production span.

#### **Modern**

All sherds were identified as modern tableware. They included three fragments of creamware (fabric 84) which could be dated mid-late 18th century and three pieces of modern china (fabric 85) of 19th-20th century date.

period	fabric code	fabric common name	count	weight (g)
Modern	84	Post-medieval red ware	3	20
Modern	85	Modern china	3	18

Table 1: Quantification of the pottery by fabric type

### Significance

The assemblage was typical of topsoil finds.

### Recommendations

No further work required.

## Bibliography

AAF 2011 *Archaeological archives: a guide to the best practice in the creation, compilation, transfer and curation*. Available at <http://www.archaeologyuk.org/archives/>

ClfA 2014 *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials*. Available at <http://www.archaeologists.net/codes/ifa>

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

PCRG/SGRP/MPRG, 2016 *A standard for pottery studies in archaeology*

SMA 1993 *Selection, retention and dispersal of archaeological collections*. Available at <http://www.swfed.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/selectionretentiondispersalofcollections1-SMA.pdf>

## Summary of data for Worcestershire HER

**WSM 70509 (event HER number)**

**MLF/18**

**Artefacts**

period - note 1	material class	object specific type	count	weight	start date	end date	specialist report? (note 2)	key assemblage? (note 3)
modern	ceramic	pot	6	38	M18C	20C	N	N

## Notes

- 1) In some cases the date will be "Undated". In most cases, especially if there is not a specialist report, the information entered in the Date field will be a general period such as Neolithic, Roman, medieval etc (see below for a list of periods used in the Worcestershire HER). Very broad date ranges such as late Medieval to Post-medieval are acceptable for artefacts which can be hard to date for example roof tiles. If you have more specific dates, such as 13th to 14th century, please use these instead. Specific date ranges which cross general period boundaries can also be used, for example 15th to 17th century.

period	from	to
Palaeolithic	500000 BC	10001 BC
Mesolithic	10000 BC	4001 BC
Neolithic	4000 BC	2351 BC
Bronze Age	2350 BC	801 BC

Iron Age	800 BC	42 AD
Roman	43	409
Post-Roman	410	1065
Medieval	1066	1539
Post-medieval	1540	1900
Modern	1901	2050

<b>period specific</b>	<b>from</b>	<b>to</b>
Lower Paleolithic	500000 BC	150001
Middle Palaeolithic	150000	40001
Upper Palaeolithic	40000	10001
Early Mesolithic	10000	7001
Late Mesolithic	7000	4001
Early Neolithic	4000	3501
Middle Neolithic	3500	2701
Late Neolithic	2700	2351
Early Bronze Age	2350	1601
Middle Bronze Age	1600	1001
Late Bronze Age	1000	801
Early Iron Age	800	401
Middle Iron Age	400	101
Late Iron Age	100 BC	42 AD
Roman 1st century AD	43	100
2nd century	101	200
3rd century	201	300
4th century	301	400
Roman 5th century	401	410
Post roman	411	849
Pre conquest	850	1065
Late 11th century	1066	1100
12th century	1101	1200
13th century	1201	1300
14th century	1301	1400
15th century	1401	1500
16th century	1501	1600
17th century	1601	1700
18th century	1701	1800
19th century	1801	1900
20th century	1901	2000
21st century	2001	

2. Not all evaluations of small excavation assemblages have specialist reports on all classes of objects. An identification (eg clay pipe) and a quantification is not a specialist report. A short discussion or a more detailed record identifying types and dates is a specialist report. This field is designed to point researchers to reports where they will find out more than merely the presence or absence of material of a particular type and date.

3. This field should be used with care. It is designed to point researchers to reports where they will be able to locate the most important assemblages for any given material for any given date.





## **Appendix 3: OASIS**

# 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: martinco1-324810**

### Project details

Project name	4 Mill Lane Feckenham
Short description of the project	Watching brief at 4 Mill Lane Feckenham
Project dates	Start: 23-07-2018 End: 15-08-2018
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	WSM 70509 - HER event no.
Any associated project reference codes	17/00552/FUL - Planning Application No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	POTTERY Post Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Modern
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	WORCESTERSHIRE REDDITCH FECKENHAM 4 Mill Lane Feckenham
Postcode	B96 6HY
Study area	112 Square metres
Site coordinates	SP 0086 6162 52.252358516082 -1.98740061132 52 15 08 N 001 59 14 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 64.35m Max: 64.35m

### Project creators

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 recipient	Worcestershire County Museum
Physical Contents	"Ceramics"
Digital Archive recipient	ADS
Digital Contents	"none"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography", "Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Worcestershire County Museum
Paper Contents	"Ceramics"
Paper Media available	"Report"

### Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
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