ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION AT NEW CENTURY PARK, STOKE, COVENTRY (ATTENUATION POND)

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With contributions by Dennis Williams

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Contents

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Part 1 Project summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at New Century Park, Stoke, Coventry (NGR SP 36488 78595). The archaeological evaluation was undertaken for CgMs Consulting, on behalf of Goodman Limited who intends to construct an attenuation pond on the site, in accordance with a conditional planning permission.

This report on an archaeological evaluation describes and assesses the significance of a heritage asset with archaeological interest potentially affected by the development. The impact of the development on the significance of that asset is assessed.

The evaluation identified few archaeological remains (two ditches) thought to relate to activities and landscaping surrounding and contemporary with the nearby Copsewood Grange. Only one ditch has been dated, to the post-medieval period, however the lack of earlier stratified or redeposited artefacts, suggests that the other is of similar recent date. The remains are believed to be of limited importance and do not provide significant potential for archaeological research, and further archaeological works would not therefore be justified.

Part 2 Detailed report

1. Planning background

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at New Century Park (NGR SP 36488 78595), Coventry (Fig 1), for CgMs Consulting on behalf of Goodman Limited. The latter intends to install an attenuation pond on the site in accordance with a conditional planning permission.

The project conforms to the *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (IfA 2008). The project also conforms to the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by CgMs Consulting (2011).

2. Aims

The aims of this archaeological evaluation are:

- To clarify the presence/absence and extent of any buried archaeological remains within the site that may be impacted on by the development;
- To identify, within the constraints of the evaluation, the date, character, condition and depth of any surviving remains within the site.

3. Methods

3.1 Documentary search

Prior to fieldwork commencing a search was made of the Historic Environment Record (HER). In addition to the sources listed in the bibliography the following were also consulted:

Cartographic sources

- Binley Road, Coventry: 1st edition Ordnance Survey Map *c* 1888, County Series 25":1 mile

3.2 Fieldwork methodology

3.2.1 Fieldwork strategy

Fieldwork was undertaken between 21 and 25 November 2011.

The evaluation of the attenuation pond area was undertaken in conjunction with an evaluation of a proposed road to be constructed on the site (Mann 2011). Due to the presence of on site services, fences and Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) the original trench layout, as outlined in the WSI (CgMs Consulting 2011) was amended following discussions with the Client.

The final location of the trenches is indicated in Figure 2. The two trenches excavated for this attenuation pond evaluation are highlighted in purple (Trench 4 and the eastern third of Trench 3). Trenches 1, 2 and 5 and the western two-thirds of Trench 3 formed the evaluation of the road scheme and are reported on separately (Mann 2011). This new layout resulted in a reduction in the total length of the trenches excavated within the area of the proposed attenuation pond from 100m to 83.40m. In area they amounted to just over 150m².

Deposits considered not to be significant were removed using a 360º tracked excavator, employing a toothless bucket and under archaeological supervision. Subsequent excavation was undertaken by hand. Clean surfaces were inspected and selected deposits were excavated to retrieve artefactual material and environmental samples, as well as to determine their nature. Deposits were recorded according to standard Service practice (CAS 1995). On completion of excavation, trenches were reinstated by replacing the excavated material.

3.2.2 Structural analysis

All fieldwork records were checked and cross-referenced. Analysis was effected through a combination of structural, artefactual and ecofactual evidence, allied to the information derived from other sources.

3.3 Artefact methodology, by Dennis Williams

3.3.1 Artefact recovery policy

The artefact recovery policy conformed to standard Service practice (CAS 1995; appendix 2).

3.3.2 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 *pro forma* sheets.

The pottery and ceramic building material was examined under x20 magnification and recorded by fabric type according to the Warwickshire medieval and post-medieval pottery type series (1998).

3.4 Statement of confidence in the methods and results

The methods adopted allow a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved.

4. Topographical and archaeological context

The site lies approximately 75-80m above Ordnance Datum to the west of the River Sowe to the east of Coventry town centre. The solid geology of the development area is mostly Bromsgrove Sandstone Formation with the eastern limit underlain by Mercian Mudstone Group. The central part of the site is overlain by River Terrace Deposits (sands and gravels). The access road to the north and south extend into areas of Till and, further south, Baginton Sand and Gravel (BGS Sheet 169, Coventry).

No archaeological assessment of the site was undertaken prior to the evaluation other than a search of the Historic Environment Record (HER) for Coventry City Council. The only event recorded on the HER was a negative watching brief to the south-west of the development (JSAC 2004). The historic mapping indicates that the site was fields from the medieval period onwards.

5. Results

5.1 Structural analysis

The trenches and features recorded are shown in Figures 3 and 4. The results of the structural analysis are presented in Appendix 1.

No archaeological features or finds were found in Trench 3.

5.1.1 Phase 1: Natural deposits

The natural deposits were fairly uniform throughout the evaluation trenches. These consisted of firm and cohesive light pinkish red and light yellow clayey sands. In areas there were small veins of loose small rounded gravels (Plate 1).

5.1.2 Phase 2: Post-medieval deposits

The earliest dated artefacts and features are from the post-medieval period. The only dated feature was an east to west aligned ditch [4005] which contained post-medieval ceramic building material (CBM) (Plate 2; Fig 4, Section 9). The upper homogeneous clay fill within this ditch (4003) is thought to have been deliberately backfilled.

5.1.3 **Phase 3: Modern deposits**

The topsoil was fairly uniform across the site and consisted of a medium brown, soft and moderately cohesive, loam. This contained occasional small rounded stones and frequent roots. No modern features/services were identified in Trenches 3 and 4.

5.1.4 **Phase 4: Undated deposits**

Two archaeological deposits are undated. These include layer (4008) and ditch [4007]. Layer (4008), a moderately compact and cohesive light greyish yellow silty sand was located in a natural depression within the centre of Trench 3 (Plate 3). This lay directly below the current subsoil (4001) and contained occasional small charcoal flecks and smears. The origin of this layer is not clear although it may represent former subsoil that has survived disturbance within a natural hollow.

To the east of Layer (4008) there was a slightly curved ditch [4007], which was only visible in the spur of Trench 3. It was not observed in the southern end of the trench, suggesting it terminates or turned to the east (Plate 4; Fig 4, Section 11). The interface between the fill of this ditch and the natural was diffuse and was more visible in plan than section. This may suggest that either the ditch was rapidly infilled or that a degree of natural formation processes was involved.

5.2 Artefact analysis, by Dennis Williams

The artefactual assemblage is summarised in Table 1 (Appendix 2). The finds comprised pottery and ceramic building material, which came from two stratified contexts. The level of preservation was generally good, with the most of sherds displaying only minor abrasion.

Pottery

The single sherd in the pottery assemblage was quantified according to fabric type (Appendix 2, Table 2). This was a base sherd from a Midlands Black Ware bowl, probably of 17th-18th century date, recovered from topsoil (4000).

Other artefacts

Post-medieval roof tile fragments were found in topsoil (4000) and primary ditch fill (4004). The only other finds were small, undiagnostic brick/tile fragments in fill (4004).

Overview of artefactual evidence

The very small finds assemblage from this site is consistent with post-medieval occupation and use in the vicinity. A t*erminus post quem* date range has been determined for one of the two contexts, as shown in Appendix 2, Table 3.

6. Synthesis

6.1 Post-medieval

The only dateable archaeological feature, ditch [4005], is dated to post-medieval period and only post-medieval artefacts were found within the topsoil and subsoil layers in Trench 4. No earlier remains, either structural or artefactual, were found in either of the two trenches. The ditch is likely to be a field boundary ditch that had been backfilled during remodelling of the land surrounding Copsewood Grange and is therefore likely to be contemporary with it. This ditch does not however appear on any post 1888 map so is considered to predate 1888.

6.2 Undated

The remaining ditch [4007] and layer (4008) within Trench 4 are undated. Layer (4008) and the ditch fill (4006) are similar, which may imply a degree of contemporaneity between the two. The lack of artefacts within both of these deposits does however suggest that they are unlikely to be associated with domestic settlement. The apparently rapidly backfilled ditch may therefore only represent a field boundary ditch similar to [4005] above.

7. Recommendations

None of the deposits encountered are considered to be of any great significance and further archaeological works would not therefore be justified.

8. Publication summary

The Service has a professional obligation to publish the results of archaeological projects within a reasonable period of time. To this end, the Service intends to use this summary as the basis for publication through local or regional journals. The client is requested to consider the content of this section as being acceptable for such publication.

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken for CgMs Consulting on behalf of Goodman Limited at New Century Park, Stoke, Coventry (NGR SP 36488 78595). Limited archaeological remains were discovered and those that were identified (two ditches) are considered to be post-medieval in date. These are thought to be contemporary and associated with activity at the nearby Copsewood Grange.

9. Acknowledgements

The Service would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, James Gidman (CgMs Consulting) and Chris Patrick (Coventry City Council).

10. Personnel

The fieldwork and report preparation was led by Andrew Mann. The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Tom Vaughan. Fieldwork was undertaken by Andrew Mann and Mike Nicholls, finds analysis by Dennis Williams and illustration by Carolyn Hunt.

11. Bibliography

CAS, 1995 (as amended) *Manual of Service practice: fieldwork recording manual*, County Archaeological Service, Hereford and Worcester County Council, report **399**

CgMs Consulting, 2011 *Written scheme of investigation for archaeological evaluation, New Century Park, Attenuation Pond,* CgMs Consulting, document **PC/13307**, dated October 2011

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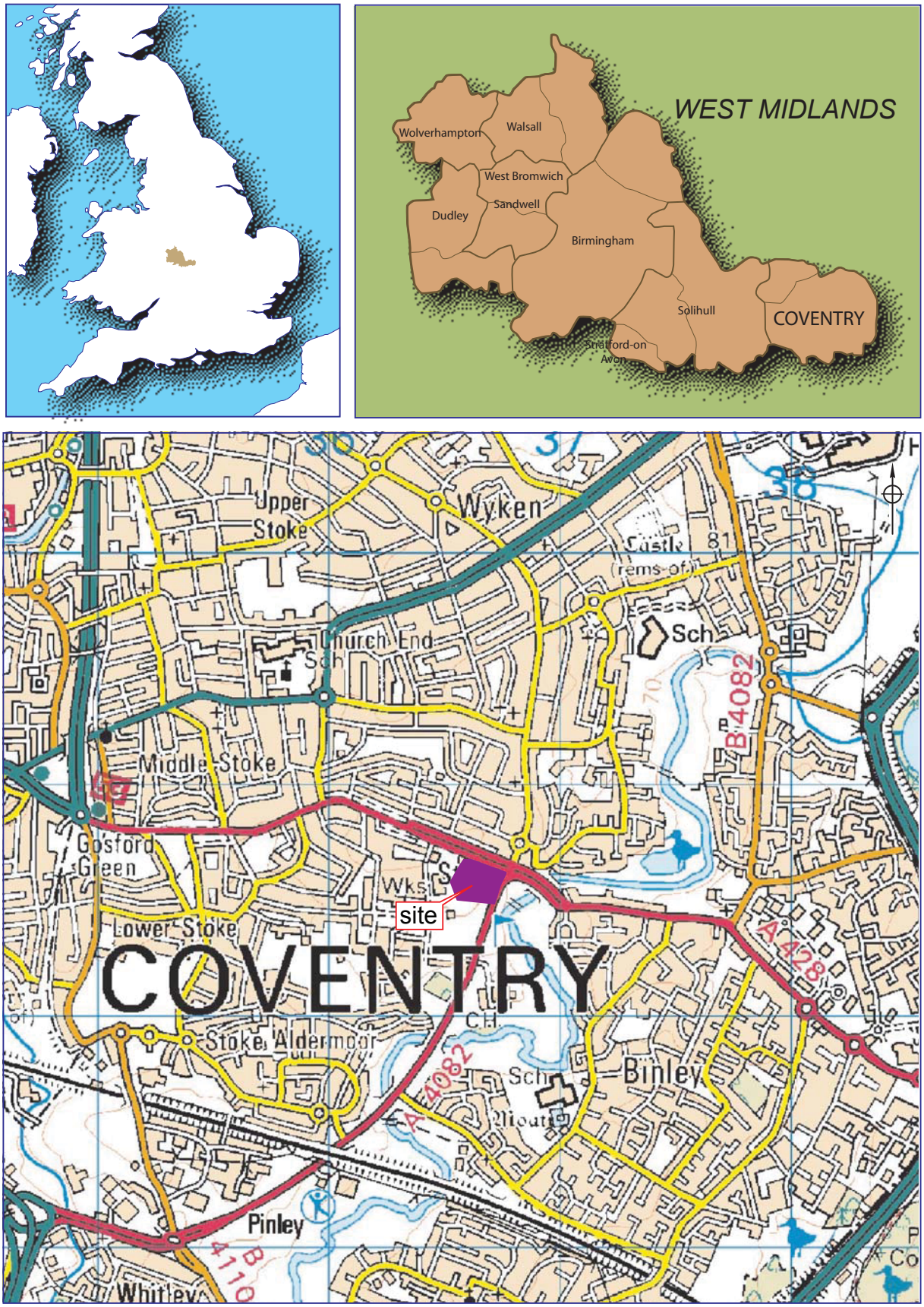
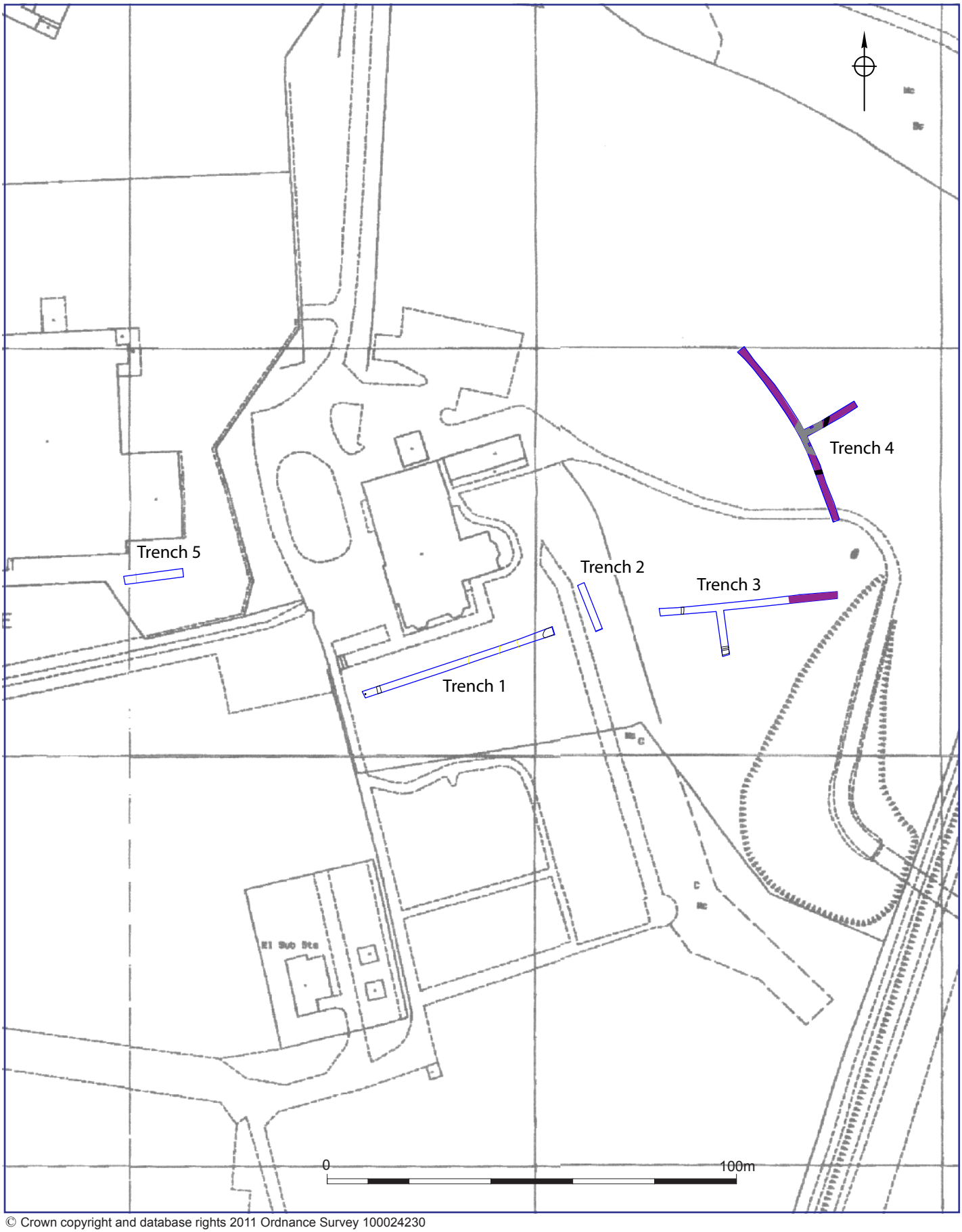
Figures



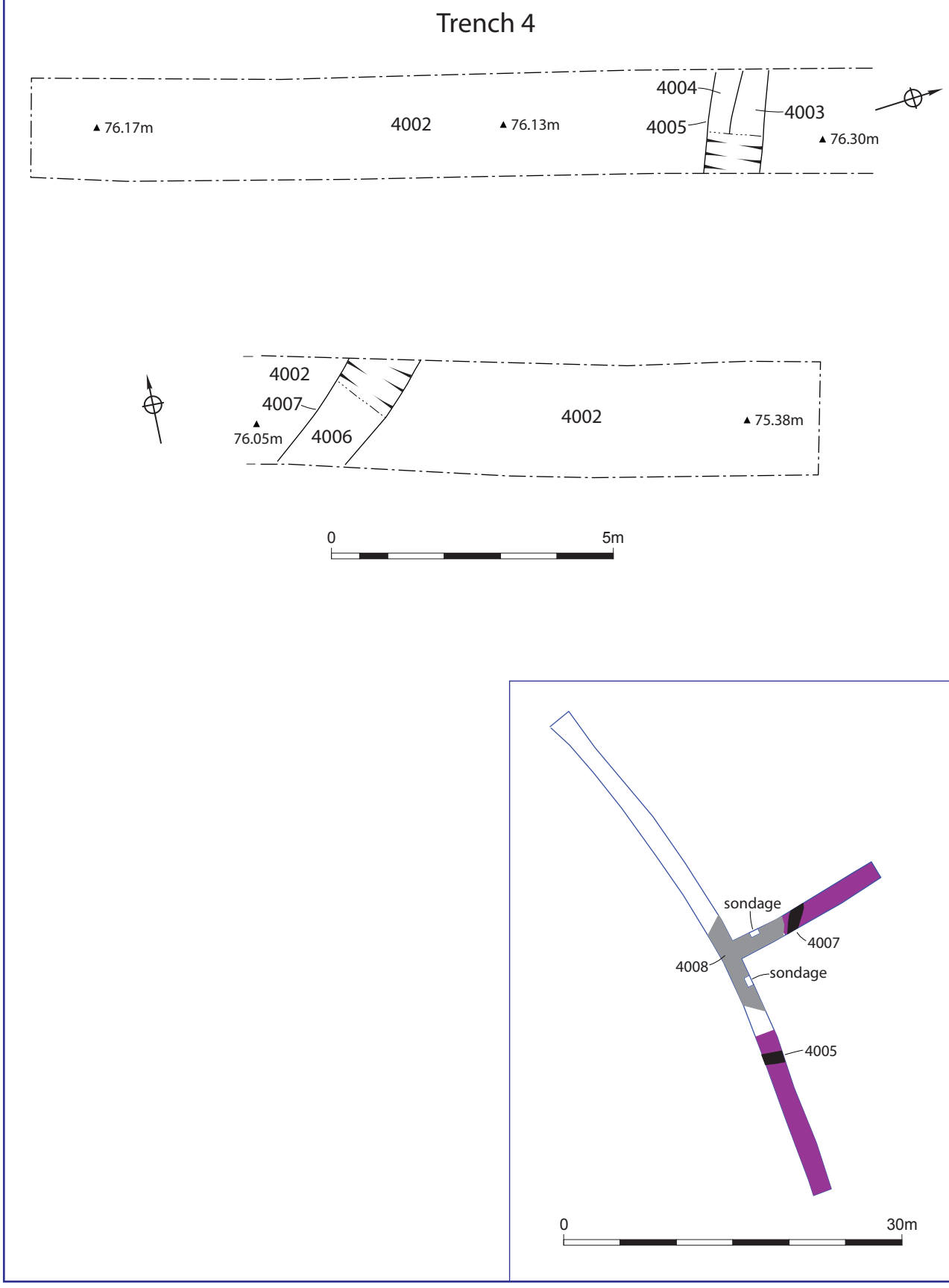
Location of the site

Figure 1



Trench location plan

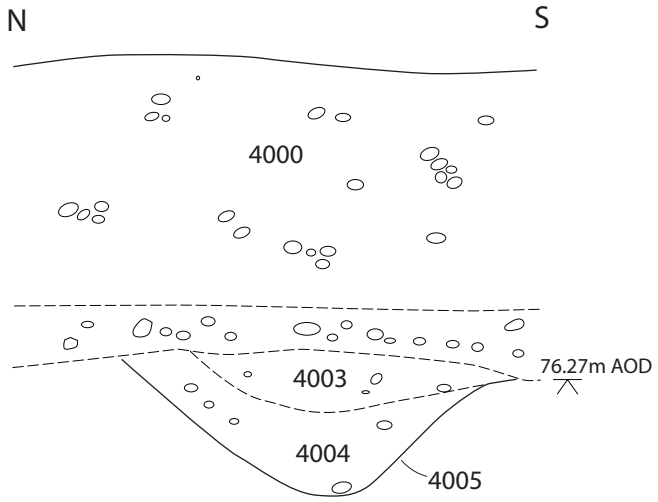
Figure 2



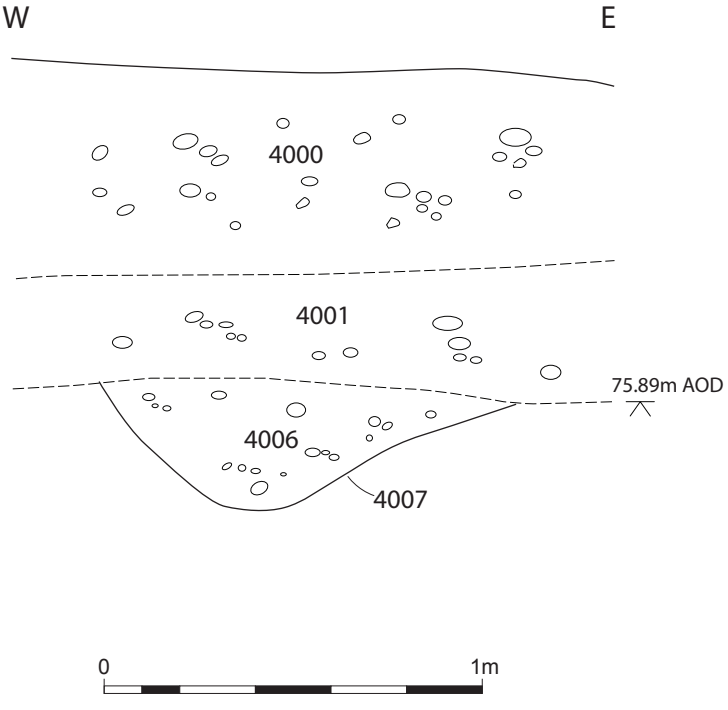
Trench 4 plans

Figure 3

SECTION 9: WEST FACING SECTION OF DITCH 4008



SECTION 11: SOUTH FACING SECTION OF DITCH 4007



Trench 4: sections

Figure 4

Plates

Plate 1; Trench 3 facing west, 2 x 1m scale

Plate 2; ditch [4005], facing east, 0.30m and 1m scales

Plate 3; sondage through layer (4008), facing north-north-east, 1m scale

Plate 4; ditch [4007] facing north, 0.30m and 1m scales

Appendix 1 Trench descriptions

Trench 3 (eastern third)

Maximum dimensions: Length: 19.00m Width: 1.80m Depth: 0.60m

Orientation: E-W

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface – top and bottom of deposits
3000	Topsoil	Medium brown soft and moderately cohesive loam. Contains occasional small rounded stones, occasional fragments of CBM and frequent roots.	0.00-0.32m
3001	Subsoil	Mid –dark brownish orange. Firm and moderately cohesive. Contains frequent small-medium rounded and sub-rounded stones.	0.32-0.60m
3002	Natural	Light pinkish red and light yellow sandy clay. Firm and cohesive with patches of light yellowish brown sandy silt and veins of loose small rounded stone/gravels. Contains moderate amounts of manganese flecking.	0.60m+

Trench 4

Maximum dimensions: Length: 50.00m + 14.40m (spur) Width: 1.8m Depth: 0.58-0.90m

Orientation: NE-SW and E-W (spur)

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface – top and bottom of deposits
4000	Topsoil	Medium brown soft and moderately cohesive loam. Contains occasional small rounded stones, occasional fragments of CBM and frequent roots.	0.00-0.50m
4001	Subsoil	Mid –dark brownish orange. Firm and moderately cohesive. Contains frequent small-medium rounded and sub-rounded stones.	0.50-0.90mm
4002	Natural	Light pinkish red and light yellow sandy clay. Firm and cohesive with patches of light yellowish brown sandy silt and veins of loose small rounded stone/gravels. Contains moderate amounts of manganese flecking.	0.90m+
4003	Ditch fill	Upper fill of ditch [4005]. Medium reddish brown compact and cohesive silty clay. Contains occasional small rounded stones and occasional roots. 0.16m deep.	
4004	Ditch fill	Primary fill of ditch [4005]. Mid greyish brown moderately compact and cohesive sandy silt. Occasional small rounded stones and charcoal flecks. 0.39m wide.	
4005	Ditch cut	Ditch aligned east-west. Moderate, approximately 45º, slightly concave sides, breaking gradually to a rounded base. Filled by (4003) and (4004). 1.04m wide and 0.39m deep.	
4006	Ditch fill	Fill of ditch [4007]. Medium-light greyish brown. Slightly silty sand. Contains occasional small rounded stones and manganese flecks. Poor clarity of edge with natural (4002). 0.34m thick.	
4007	Ditch cut	North-south aligned ditch slightly curved. Has moderately steep, approx 45º-50º slightly concave sides gradually breaking to a rounded base. Filled by (4006). 1.08m wide and 0.34m deep.	
4008	Layer	Light greyish yellow slightly silty sand. Moderately compact and cohesive. Contains occasional small rounded stones and occasional small charcoal flecks. 0.20m deep.	

Appendix 2 Specialist tables

period	material class	material subtype	object specific type	count	weight(g)
post-medieval	ceramic	-	roof tile	1	30
post-medieval	ceramic	earthenware	pot	1	96
undated	ceramic	-	brick/tile	4	14
undated	ceramic	-	roof tile(flat)	2	104
			totals:	8	244

Table 1: Quantification of the assemblage

period	fabric code	fabric common name	count	weight(g)
post-medieval	MB	Midlands Black Ware	1	96

Table 2: Quantification of the pottery by period and fabric-type

context	material class	object specific type	fabric code	count	weight(g)	start date	end date	*terminus post quem* date range
4000	ceramic	roof tile	-	1	30	-	-	1600-1800
	ceramic	pot	MB	1	96	1600	1800	
4004	ceramic	roof tile(flat)	-	2	104	-	-	-
	ceramic	brick/tile	-	4	14	-	-	

Table 3: Summary of context dating based on artefacts

Appendix 3 The archive

The archive consists of:

22	Context records AS1
2	Field progress reports AS2
1	Photographic records AS3
72	Digital photographs
1	Drawing number catalogues AS4
12	Scale drawings
4	Trench record sheets AS41
1	Box of finds
1	CD-Rom/DVDs
1	Copy of this report (bound hard copy)

The project archive is intended to be placed at:

Herbert Art Gallery and Museum
Jordan Well
Coventry
CV1 5QP
Tel 024 76294733