ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION AT NEW CENTURY PARK, STOKE, COVENTRY (ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE)

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With contributions by Dennis Williams

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Project 3797 Report 1890

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Archaeological evaluation at New Century Park, Stoke, Coventry Andrew Mann

With contributions by Dennis Williams

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 access roads and related infrastructure 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 (four ditches and a pit) thought to relate to activities and landscaping surrounding and contemporary with the nearby Copsewood Grange. Only one feature has been dated to the post-medieval period, however the lack of earlier stratified or redeposited artefacts, suggests that the other features are of similar recent date. The remains are believed to be of limited importance and do not provide significant potential for archaeological research. Further archaeological works would not therefore be justified.

Part 2 Detailed report

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 construct access roads and related infrastructure 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 Investigations (WSI) prepared by CgMs Consulting (2011).

2. Aims

The aims of this archaeological evaluation are:

- clarify the presence/absence and extent of any buried archaeological remains within the site that may be impacted on by the development;
- identify, within the constraints of the evolution, 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 proposed road was undertaken in conjunction with an evaluation of a proposed attenuation pond 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. As Trench 5 was originally located within an active car park it was agreed relocate it outside of the route of the proposed road. This 14.50m long trench was however later abandoned due to the difficulty of removing the overburden.

The final location of the trenches is indicated in Figure 2. The four trenches excavated for the proposed road are highlighted in purple (Trenches 1, 2 and 5 and the western two-thirds of Trench 3). Trench 4 and the eastern third of Trench 3 formed the evaluation of the attenuation pond and are reported on separately (Mann 2011). The new layout resulted in a reduction in total length of the evaluation trenches from 150m to 98.5m, and to just over $177m^2$ in area.

Deposits considered not to be significant were removed using a 360° 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 southwest 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.

Trench 2 was the only trench that did not contain any archaeological features (Plate 1).

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, which were more common in Trenches 1 and 2.

5.1.2 **Phase 2: Post-medieval**

The earliest dated deposits and features are from the post-medieval period. These included a pit [1010] within the eastern end of Trench 1 (Plate 2). This sub-circular pit contained three gravely fills, the upper and lower of which contained small amounts of ceramic building

material (CBM). The secondary fill of this feature was a very homogenous gravelly deposit, suggestive of a deliberate backfilling episode.

No other features contained dateable finds, although CBM was found within the topsoil and subsoils of Trenches 1 and 2. It was also found within the levelling layer (1001) in Trench 1. A horse shoe land drain, aligned approximately north to south, was also exposed within the base of Trench 1.

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, fragments of CBM and frequent roots. In the northern end of Trench 3, directly below the topsoil there were dumping/levelling layers (3003) and (3004).

Two water pipes were also exposed within Trench 1, aligned approximately north to south.

Compacted crushed modern brick rubble was exposed to a depth of 0.50m within Trench 5, at which point this trench was abandoned.

5.1.4 Phase 4: Undated

The remainder of the features are undated. These included two small north to south aligned ditches within the western ends of Trenches 1 and 3. The larger of the two [1006] in Trench 1 was almost V-shaped in profile and contained a firm sandy clay sterile fill (Fig 4, Section 6). Ditch [3006] again V-shaped in profile contained a more humic gravelly fill, more similar to the topsoil (Plate 3).

Two other ditches [3009] and [3011] within Trench 3 were aligned approximately east to west (Plate 4; Fig 4, Section 6). The earliest and smallest of the ditches [3011] again was almost V-shaped and was cut by the larger ditch [3009]. Both of these ditches contained a very sterile clayey sand fill, very similar to the surrounding natural. This implies that these features were not open for long 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, ceramic building material and glass, which came from five stratified contexts. The level of preservation was generally good, with the most of the sherds displaying only minor abrasion.

Pottery

The pottery sherds were grouped and quantified according to fabric type (Appendix 2, Table 2). Only five diagnostic form sherds were present, but all sherds were datable by fabric type to the post-medieval period.

Pit fill (1009) produced a small, abraded body sherd of a slipware (fabric SLPW), with a brown glaze and traces of a lighter slip, of late 17^{th} or 18^{th} century date. A total of nine sherds of Midlands Purple Ware (fabric MP) were recovered from pit fill (1007). These were from at least two vessels, in the form of cisterns with small bungholes near the bases, presumably used for brewing. This fabric could be assigned to a wide general date range, but it is likely to be 17^{th} -18th century in this case, given the presence also in fill (1007) of a sherd of creamware (fabric CRW) of late 18th century date.

Other artefacts

Ceramic building material was recovered from five contexts (topsoil 1000, layer 1001, pit fills 1007 and 1009, and subsoil 2001). The only diagnostic items were brick fragments from pit fill (1007) and subsoil (2001), with approximate date ranges of 1650-1800 and 1850-1970 respectively.

Overview of artefactual evidence

The finds assemblage from this site is consistent with post-medieval occupation and use in the vicinity. *Terminus post quem* date ranges have been determined for the various contexts, and are shown in Appendix 2, Table 3.

6. **Synthesis**

6.1 **Post-medieval**

The only dateable archaeological feature, pit [1010], is dated to 1700-1800 AD. The purpose of this feature is unclear although the lack of domestic material within it suggests it was not simply a rubbish pit. Within Trenches 1 and 2 the natural gravel seams are more common and the pit may therefore be a quarry feature. Whatever the purpose of the pit, it is likely to be associated with the house that predates Copsewood Grange, and is depicted on the Stoke Tithe plan.

No earlier remains, either structural or artefactual, were found on site and only post-medieval artefacts were found within the topsoil and subsoil layers in Trenches 1 and 2. These are again likely to have originated from the domestic activities at Copsewood Grange. Post-medieval remains, specifically CBM, were notably absent from the features, topsoil and subsoil layers in Trench 3. This suggests that the artefactual remains are closely associated with the crest of the hill surrounding Copsewood Grange, and other similarly dated structures are unlikely to have been present further down slope to the east.

6.2 Undated

The remaining four ditches found within Trenches 1 and 3 are undated. None appear on any maps after 1888, although there is no reason to suggest they are not contemporary with Copsewood Grange. The fills of ditch [1006] are similar to those in ditch [4005], found during the evaluation of the attenuation pond (Mann 2001). This may imply a degree of contemporaneity between the two ditches. Ditch [4005] is post-medieval in date and similarly was not recorded on any map after 1888 (Mann 2011).

Some landscaping appears to have taken place around the Grange and to the east of the Haha. These layers are undated, however they are likely to be contemporary with Copsewood Grange.

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 (four ditches and a pit) are considered to be port-medieval in date. These are thought to be contemporary and associated with the domestic activities 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.

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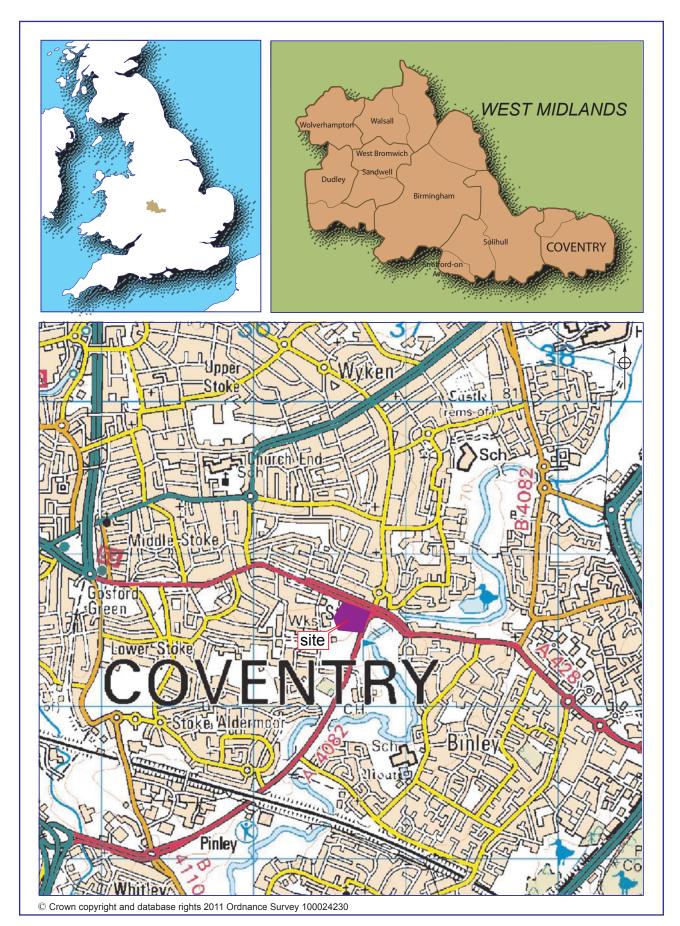
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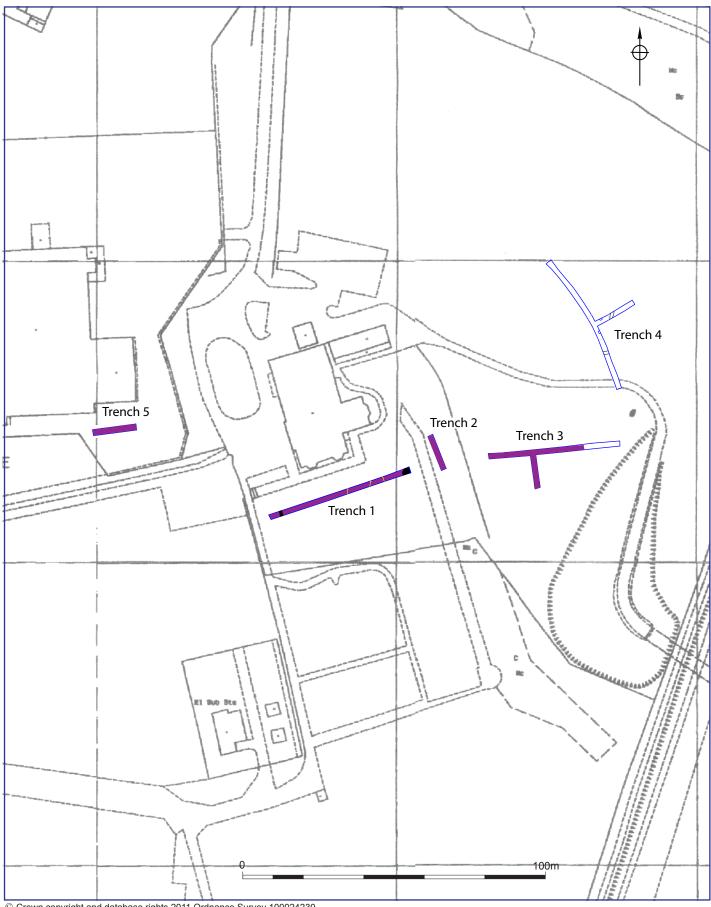
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Figures

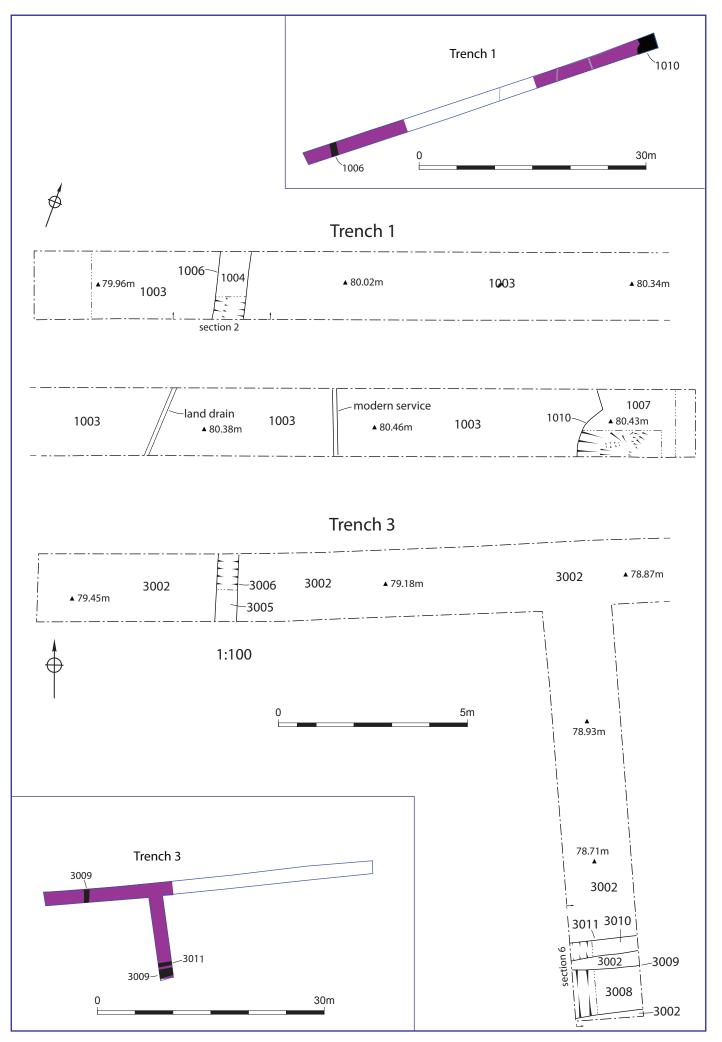


Location of the site

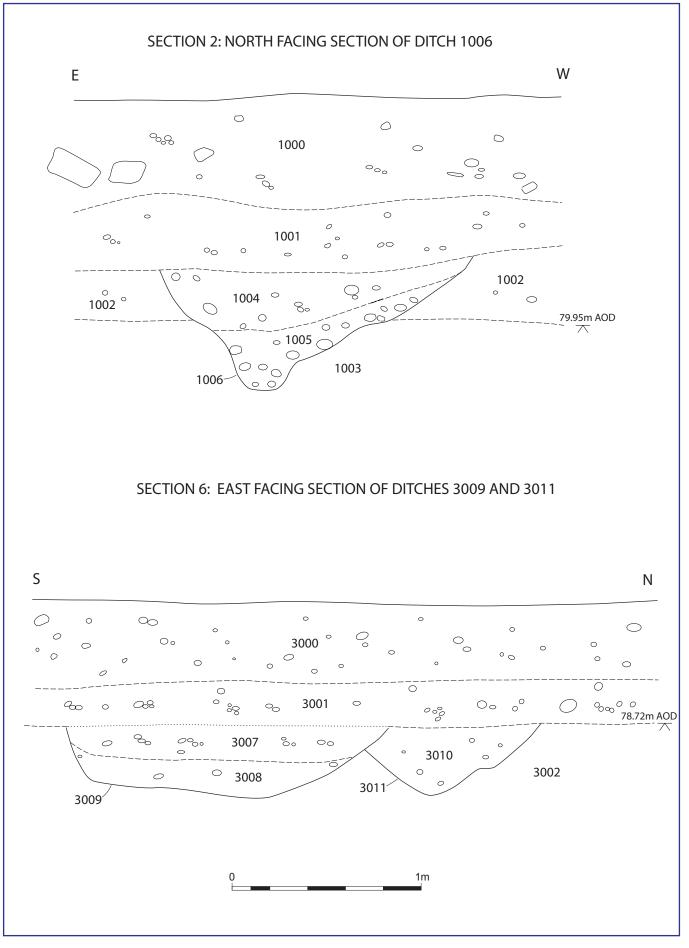


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Trench location plan



Trenches 1 and 3 plans



Trenches 1 and 2: sections

Plates



Plate 1; Trench 2, facing north, 2 x 1m scale



Plate 2; pit [1010] facing south, 1m scale



Plate 3; ditch [3006] and levelling layers (3003) and (3004), facing north, 1m scale



Plate 4; ditches [3009] and [3011], facing west, 1m and 2 x 0.30m scales

Appendix 1 Trench descriptions

E-W

Trench 1

Maximum dimensions:

Length: 50.00m Width: 1.80m

Depth: 0.70m-1.40m

Orientation:

	posit descriptio					
Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits			
1000	Topsoil	Medium brown soft and moderately cohesive loam. Contains occasional small rounded 0.00-0.52m stones, occasional fragments of CBM and frequent roots.				
1001	Layer	Light-medium greyish brown moderately compact sandy silt. Contains occasional small-medium rounded stones, occasional charcoal flecks, occasional CBM and occasional roots. Mostly seen towards the western end of the trench.	0.52-0.87m			
1002	Subsoil	Light brown, moderately compact and cohesive sandy silt. Contains occasional small- large rounded stones and occasional CBM fragments.	0.87-1.31m			
1003	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.	1.31-1.40m+			
1004	Ditch fill	Upper fill of ditch [1006]. Mid pinkish brown moderately compact and cohesive silty clay. Contains occasional large rounded and sub-rounded stone. 0.26m thick.				
1005	Ditch fill	Primary fill of ditch [1006]. Mid-light grey moderately compact and cohesive silty loam. Frequent medium to large rounded stone. 0.57m thick.				
1006	Ditch cut	Ditch cut aligned approximately N-S. Cuts subsoil (1002). Has moderately steep, approx 45° - 60° , angled undulating sides, breaking sharply to a flat base. Filled by (1004) and (1005), 1.59m wide and 0.70m deep.				
1007	Pit fill	Upper fill of pit [1010]. Mid-dark brown soft and friable sandy silt. Contains occasional small-medium rounded and sub-rounded stones, occasional small CBM flecks, occasional charcoal flecks and occasional roots. 0.30m thick.				
1008	Pit fill	Secondary fill of pit [1010]. Light brown moderately compact and cohesive sandy silt. Contains occasional small-large rounded stone. 0.66m thick.				
1009	Pit fill	Primary fill of pit [1010]. Medium-dark greyish brown moderately compact and cohesive sandy silt. Contains occasional charcoal flecks and occasional small rounded stones. 0.31m thick.				
1010	Pit cut	Circular in plan with slightly irregular sides. Not fully exposed and only the western edge seen. Has a shallow, approximately 30°, concave side, braking sharply to a near vertical side. Base is slightly sloping west to east. Filled by (1009), (1008) and (1007). 2.00m+ wide and 0.94m deep.				

Trench 2

Maximum dimensions: Length: 12.0m Width: 1.80m

N-S

Depth: 0.61m

Orientation:

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
2000	Topsoil	Medium brown soft and moderately cohesive loam. Contains occasional small rounded stones, occasional fragments of CBM and frequent roots.	0.00-0.32m
2001	Subsoil	Mid –dark brownish orange. Firm and moderately cohesive. Contains frequent small- medium rounded and sub-rounded stones.	0.32-0.61m
2003	Natural	Light pinkish orange and light yellow sandy clay. Firm and cohesive with patches of light blue sandy silt and veins of loose small rounded stone/gravels. Contains moderate amounts of manganese flecking.	0.61m+

Trench 3 (western two-thirds)

Maximum dimensions:	Length: 25.50m + 11.00m (spur)	Width: 1.80m	Depth: 0.45-0.75m
Orientation:	E-W and N-S (spur)		

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits		
3000	Topsoil	Medium brown soft and moderately cohesive loam. Contains occasional small rounded 0.00-0.32m stones, occasional fragments of CBM and frequent roots.			
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.			
3003	Layer	Make up/dumping layer in western 10m of trench. Dark brown silty loam soft and moderately cohesive. Contains occasional small rounded stone. Very sterile. 0.31m thick.			
3004	Layer	Make up/dumping layer in western 10m of trench. Light orangey brown sand, soft and uncohesive. Very sterile. 0.26m thick.			
3005	Ditch fill	Fill of ditch [3006]. Light-mid greyish brown silty loam. Moderately compact and cohesive. Contains moderate small-medium rounded and sub-rounded stones. 0.34m thick.			
3006	Ditch cut	North-south aligned ditch with V-shaped profile. Filled by (3005). 0.89m wide and 0.34m deep.			
3007	Ditch fill	Upper fill of ditch [3009]. Mid brown sandy silt soft and moderately compact. Contains frequent small-medium rounded stones. Very sterile. 0.16m thick.			
3008	Ditch fill	Primary fill of ditch [3009]. Light-medium yellowish brown silty sand. Contains occasional small rounded stones. Very sterile. 0.18m thick.			
3009	Ditch cut	East-west aligned ditch with shallow slightly concave sides and an imperceptible break to a flattish base. Cuts ditch [3011], filled by (3007) and (3008). 1.66m wide and 0.38m deep.			

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
3010	Ditch fill	Fill of ditch [3011]. Mid pinkish/yellowish brown clayey sand. Moderately compact and cohesive. Contains occasional small rounded stones. Very sterile. 0.38m deep.	
3011	Ditch cut	East-west aligned ditch parallel to and cut by ditch [3009]. Has moderately steep, approx 45°, flat sides. Has a V-shaped profile. Filled by (3010). 0.42m wide and 0.38m deep.	

Trench 5

Maximum dimensions:	Length: 14.50m	Width: 1.80m	Depth: 0.50m
Orientation:	E-W		

Orientation:

Main deposit description Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits Context Classification Description 5000 Tarmac Current Tarmac surface. 0.00-0.20m 5001 Concrete 0.20-0.40m Crushed concrete rubble, compact and cohesive. 5002 Tarmac Lower tarmac surface. 0.40-0.50m 5003 Brick rubble Crushed brick rubble hardcore. 0.50m+

Appendix 2 Specialist tables

period	material class	material subtype	object specific type	count	weight(g)
post-medieval	ceramic	-	brick	2	416
post-medieval	ceramic	-	roof tile(flat)	1	140
post-medieval	ceramic	earthenware	pot	11	690
post-medieval	glass	-	window	2	4
undated	ceramic	-	brick	4	326
undated	ceramic	-	brick/tile	13	102
undated	ceramic		floor tile	1	130
undated	composite	-	mortar	1	34
undated	ceramic	-	roof tile(flat)	2	62
	totals:				

Table 1: Quantification of the assemblage

period	fabric code	fabric common name	count	weight(g)
post-medieval	SLPW	Slipware	1	8
post-medieval	CRW	Creamware	1	28
post-medieval	MP	Midlands purple ware	9	654
	to	11	690	

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	<i>terminus post quem</i> date range
	ceramic	brick/tile	-	1	42	-	-	
	ceramic	brick	-	2	234	-	-	
1000	ceramic	floor tile	-	1	130	-	-	1850-1920
	mortar	-	-	1	34	-	-	
	glass	window	-	2	4	1850	1920	
1001	ceramic	brick	-	2	92	-	-	
1001	ceramic	brick/tile	-	2	20	-	-	-
	ceramic	brick	-	1	240	1650	1800	
	ceramic	roof tile(flat)	-	1	140	1700	1800	
1007	ceramic	roof tile(flat)	-	1	50	-	-	1760-1790
	ceramic	pot	CRW	1	28	1760	1790	
	ceramic	pot	MP	9	654	1600	1800	
	ceramic	roof tile(flat)	-	1	12	-	-	
1009	ceramic	brick/tile	-	8	40	-	-	1700-1800
	ceramic	pot	SLPW	1	8	1700	1800	
2001	ceramic	brick	-	1	176	1850	1970	1850-1970

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