

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION AT POTLOCK'S FARM, FINDERN, DERBYSHIRE

Andrew Mann

Illustrations by Carolyn Hunt

11th February 2011

© Historic Environment and Archaeology Service,
Worcestershire County Council



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Historic Environment and Archaeology Service,
Worcestershire County Council,
Woodbury Building,
University of Worcester,
Henwick Grove,
Worcester WR2 6AJ

Project 3610
Report 1820
DBYMU 2010-262

Contents

Part 1 Project summary	1
-------------------------------	----------

Part 2 Detailed report

Part 1 Project summary	1
1.1 Planning background	2
2. Aims	2
3. Methods	2
3.1 Fieldwork methodology	2
3.1.1 Fieldwork strategy	2
3.1.2 Structural analysis	2
3.2 Artefact methodology	3
3.2.1 Artefact recovery policy	3
3.3 Environmental archaeology methodology	3
3.3.1 Sampling policy	3
3.4 Statement of confidence in the methods and results	3
4. Topographical and archaeological context	3
5. Results	3
5.1 Structural analysis	3
5.1.1 Phase 1: Natural deposits	3
5.1.2 Phase 2: Undated deposits	4
6. Synthesis	4
7. Publication summary	5
8. Acknowledgements	5
9. Personnel	5
10. Bibliography	5

Archaeological Excavation at Potlock's Farm, Findern, Derbyshire

Andrew Mann

Part 1 Project summary

An archaeological strip, map and sample was undertaken at Potlock's Farm, Findern, Derbyshire (NGR SK315289) under the direction of Phoenix Consulting Ltd, on behalf of Hanson UK, who intend to undertake quarrying operations on the site.

A planning application had been submitted (Planning Reference: CM9/695/28); however, since Hanson UK had been granted permission to extract gravels in 1995 a subsequent Environmental Impact Assessment had identified that quarrying operations would damage known significant archaeological remains. A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was produced (Phoenix Consulting 2010) which provided a specification for the recording of archaeological remains prior to development. Initial works at the site were limited and only intended to ensure that gravel extraction had commenced no later than 15 years from the planning approval, being the 23rd November 2010.

The strip, map and sample identified little of archaeological significance other than a probable group of heavily truncated medieval furrows and a small group of undated pits. The works do, however, suggest that there was little or no prehistoric activity within this corner of the site.

Part 2 Detailed report

1.1 Planning background

An archaeological strip, map and sample was undertaken at Potlock's Farm, (NGR SK315289) Findern, Derbyshire (Fig 1), under the direction of Phoenix Consulting Ltd on behalf of Hanson UK. Hanson UK intends to extract gravel from the site for which a planning application was approved by Derbyshire County Council (Planning Reference: CM9/695/28). Consent was granted on 23rd November 1995 and Condition 1 of the permission stated that development must commence not later than the expiration of 15 years from the date of notice, this being the 23rd November 2010.

Subsequent to planning approval, an Environmental Impact Assessment was carried out which identified that the development would have an effect of the known and suspected archaeological resource of the site. Since Hanson UK wish to implement their original permission as granted in 1995 a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was created by Phoenix Consulting Ltd so that the archaeological interest of the site is recorded prior to development. The works were limited and only intended to implement the consent granted on the 23rd November 1995.

The project conforms to the Written Scheme of Investigations (including detailed specifications) prepared by Phoenix Consulting Ltd (Phoenix Consulting 2010) and to the *Standard and guidance for archaeological excavation* (IFA 2008).

2. Aims

The aims of the strip, map and sample were to

- recover a plan of the extent and structure of features and deposits of archaeological interest which are uncovered during these limited works, with especial regard to a cursus monument;
- map and investigate any aspects of the cursus, if the investigations encounter it, together with any related internal features, associated banks, and other landscape features in the vicinity etc;
- determine the orientation and spatial pattern of any early field systems, if they are encountered; and
- place the identified features within their local and regional context.

3. Methods

3.1 Fieldwork methodology

3.1.1 Fieldwork strategy

The WSI prepared by Phoenix Consulting Ltd included a detailed excavation strategy (Phoenix Consulting 2010).

Fieldwork was undertaken between 17-11-10 and 19-11-10. A single trench, amounting to just over 700m² in area, was excavated. The location of the trench is indicated in Figure 1.

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).

3.1.2 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.

3.2 **Artefact methodology**

3.2.1 **Artefact recovery policy**

The artefact recovery policy conformed to standard Service practice (CAS 1995; appendix 2). However, in this case only a single modern glass bottle was identified from the topsoil (100) which was not recovered.

3.3 **Environmental archaeology methodology**

3.3.1 **Sampling policy**

The environmental sampling strategy conformed to standard Service practice (CAS 1995; appendix 4). Based on on-site observations and due to the lack of dating evidence, no contexts were thought suitable for environmental analysis.

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 despite the conditions on site which were less than ideal, as a high water table and the clay conditions made excavation extremely difficult (Plate 1).

4. **Topographical and archaeological context**

Potlock's Farm lies on a lower gravel terrace of the Middle Trent Valley at the eastern end of the Parish of Findern, South Derbyshire (NGR SK315289). The site is bounded by Frizams Lane to the east, the A5132 to the south and the former Willington Power Station to the west. The Northern boundary is formed by the limits of the decommissioned power station and Buckford Lane. The River Trent is located less than 0.5m to the south over the A5132. Currently the site is under pasture and covers an area of c.35ha, in the centre of which lies the demolished remains of Potlock's House Farm. The site lies between the 40m to 43m AOD contours.

The archaeological background to the site and its surroundings was detailed in the desk-based assessment which accompanied the Environmental Impact Assessment. The following is a summary of the main points. On either side of Frizam's Lane are a series of cropmarks relating to buried archaeological sites of prehistoric and Roman date. These comprise enclosures, ring ditches and field boundary ditches. Of most interest, however, are two parallel ditches (approximately 75m apart) that are east-north-east to west-south-west aligned and form part of the Potlock Cursus, one of only two such Neolithic ceremonial monuments known within Derbyshire. Those cropmarks on the eastern side of Frizam's Lane, and representing a continuation of this monument, have been scheduled as an ancient monument (SM 251).

5. **Results**

5.1 **Structural analysis**

The trenches and features recorded are shown in Figure 2. The results of the structural analysis are presented in Appendix 1.

5.1.1 **Phase 1: Natural deposits**

The natural deposit covering the site was a mid-light orange clayey-sand and gravel deposit, with light beige sandy-clay mottles (102). The gravels consisted of poorly sorted small to large sub-rounded and rounded stones. This moderately compact and cohesive deposit was approximately 0.40m deep and overlay looser sand and gravel deposits. In places this deposit (102) was overlain by light yellowish-brown fine sandy clay (101) of probable alluvial origin. The latter was intermittent across the site and survived better in natural undulations.

Overlaying both the natural sands and gravels (102) and the alluvial deposit (101) was the topsoil (100), a dark brown, sandy friable loam up to 0.28m thick, containing frequent roots and occasional small rounded and sub-rounded stone.

5.1.2 **Phase 2: Undated deposits**

All the archaeological remains were located in the western half of the excavation area, at a depth of approximately 0.30m below the current ground surface. All cut through the natural (102) and are all undated.

The most common features on site were shallow north-south aligned linears (105/116, 107/118, 110, 120, 122, 123). Only the bases of these features were seen as they had been heavily truncated, and no cuts were observed in the trench baulk where they extended out of the excavation limits. These features were between 0.58-1.40m wide and 0.07-0.12m deep and the majority contained a similar soft mid-light brownish-grey sandy clay fill (Plate 2).

The full width of one linear feature (110) was not observed as its western edge was not exposed within the limits of the excavation. A further unexcavated anomaly to the east of (110) may be another linear although it was not possible to excavate this feature due to flooding. Both of these features contained a similar fill (109), comparable to the alluvial subsoil (101). It is therefore possible both may be undulations within the natural that had subsequently filled with alluvium, rather than being truncated linear features.

In addition to the north-south aligned features there was also a single linear cut running in an approximate east to west direction (126/133). This was again heavily truncated and measured 0.45m wide and 0.18m deep, with a U-shaped profile. Its length was not established as its eastern end was truncated, presumably through ploughing. The western end was cut by pit (128). At the mid-point of this was a further north-south aligned feature (131) that did not appear to cross the other linear feature (126/133), although the relationship between the two could not be established. The fills of these two features (126/133 and 131) were, however, very similar to the majority of the north-south aligned linears (105/118, 107/116, 120, 122, 123) suggesting they may be contemporary.

The remaining features included five small sub-oval pits. One of these, although not excavated due to flooding, was observed to have been cut by a furrow (120). Another feature (130) that appeared to be a right angled linear in plan is also thought to be two inter-cutting oval pits, although the relationship between them could not be established due to the similarity of their fills (Plate 3). It is thought they represent two intercutting pits as it explains the discrepancy between the heights of the features opposing sides from 0.42m deep to 0.12m deep. All of these sub-oval pits had steep, well defined edges and were filled with very compact and cohesive dark greyish-black sandy clay, again possibly suggesting they were contemporary (Plate 4). The largest, the north-east to south-west arm of (130) measured 1.86m long, 0.62m wide and 0.42m deep.

The final excavated feature was also a pit (128), but was larger than the rest, being 1.85m long, 1.70m wide and 0.35m deep. This cut two of the linear features (122 and 126/133). This pit was sub-circular in plan, with steep sides and a flattish base. Again there was a clear interface with the natural, although there was some irregular root damage on the eastern edge suggesting it may have been a tree bole/throw. The fill was similar to the other pits although it contained more stone. One large tree throw was partially excavated on the west of the site although this was abandoned due to the high water table.

6. **Synthesis**

The majority of the north-south linear features are believed to be remains of furrows and are therefore thought to be broadly medieval in origin. Other extant but heavily eroded ridge and furrow remains were also seen aligned north-south to the east of the excavation area. All of the mapped ridge and furrow within the Derbyshire and Peak District Aggregates Assessment Project (Phoenix Consulting 2010; Fig 2) surrounding the site is also aligned north-south, adding weight to the assumption that most, if not all of the linear features in the excavation area are furrows.

The similarity of the pit fills may suggest they were contemporary and if so are likely to pre-date the furrows as one unexcavated example was cut by a linear. Very little else can be said about these features although the fills do not sound similar to any of the prehistoric pits fills recorded at the Mercian Marina to the north-east (Brightman 2008) or during previous works to assess the Potlock Cursus (Guilbert and Malone 1994). In fact there is no evidence that the prehistoric activity to the east of the site or surrounding the cursus extended into the north-west corner of the application area.

7. **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.

A strip, map and sample excavation was undertaken on behalf of Hanson UK, under the direction of Phoenix Consulting Ltd, Potlock's Farm, Findern, Derbyshire (NGR SK315289).

This identified a number of north-south linear features that although are undated are thought to be the remains of medieval furrows. Some extant north-south aligned furrows to the east of the excavation area have also been mapped previously. Five small sub-oval pits, which possibly pre-date the furrows were also identified; however, their specific date or function could not be established. One, possibly two undated tree throws were also identified on the site. The excavation implies that little or no prehistoric activity, common within the surrounding landscape and within the application area extended into the excavation area.

8. **Acknowledgements**

The Service would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, Hanson UK, Gary Coates and Andy Richmond (Phoenix Consulting Ltd), and David Barrett (Derbyshire County Council).

9. **Personnel**

The fieldwork and report preparation was led by Andrew Mann. The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Robin Jackson. Fieldwork was undertaken by Andrew Mann, Steve Woodhouse and Richard Bradley. Illustration by Carolyn Hunt.

10. **Bibliography**

Brightman, J 2008, *Mercia Marina, Findern Lane Willington Derbyshire; Report on an Archaeological Excavation*, Archaeological Research Services Ltd, Unpublished Internal Report **2008/43**

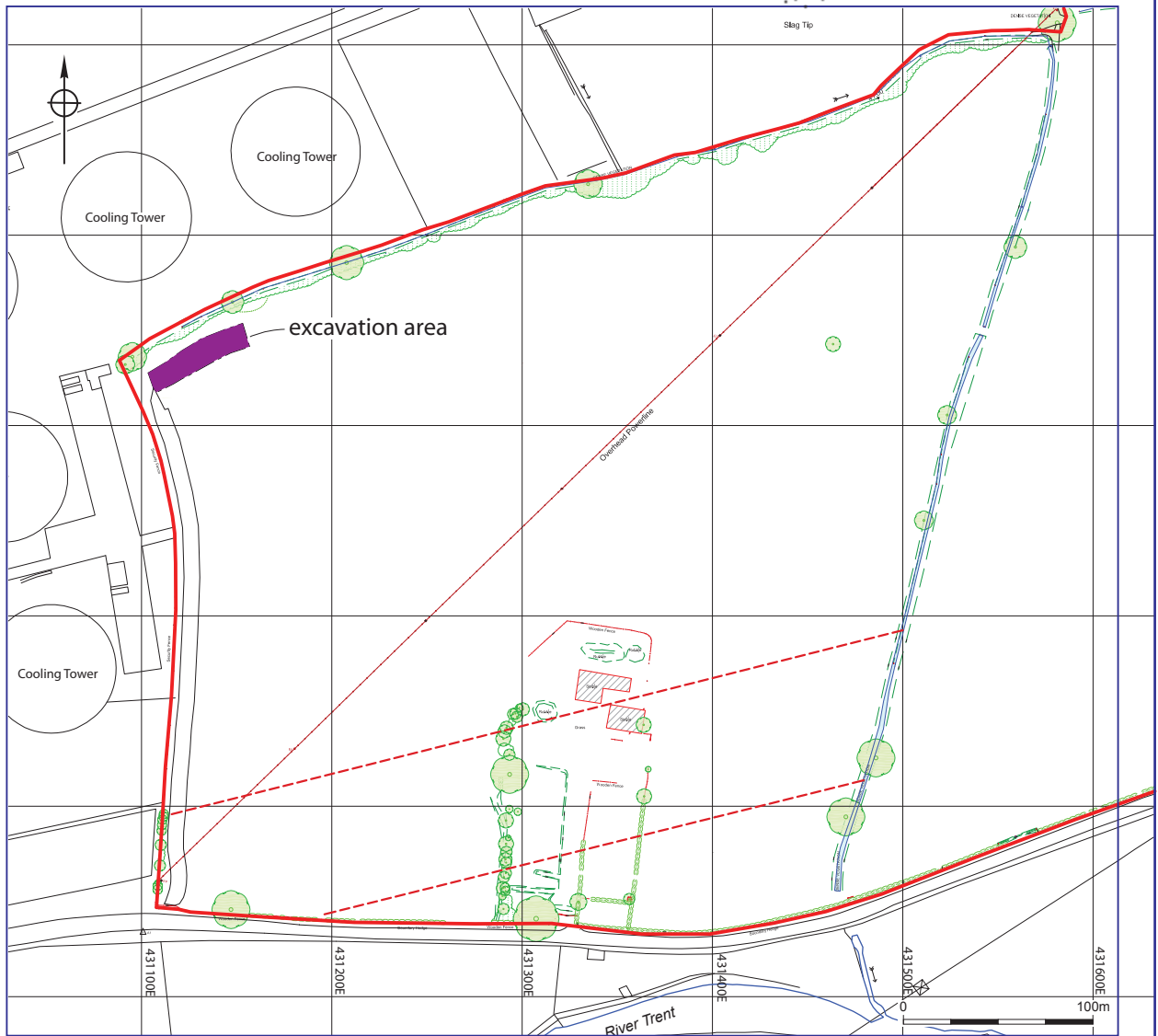
CAS 1995 (as amended) *Manual of Service practice: fieldwork recording manual*, County Archaeological Service, Hereford and Worcester County Council, report, **399**

Guilbert, G, and Malone, S 1994 *An excavation across the Potlock cursus*, Trent and Peak Archaeological Trust, unpublished internal report.

IfA 2008 *Standard and guidance for archaeological excavation*, Institute for Archaeologists

Phoenix Consulting Limited 2010, *Specification to implement permission; Potlock's Farm, Frizam's Lane, Finder, Derbyshire*, unpublished document dated 7th September, 2010, **PC339b**

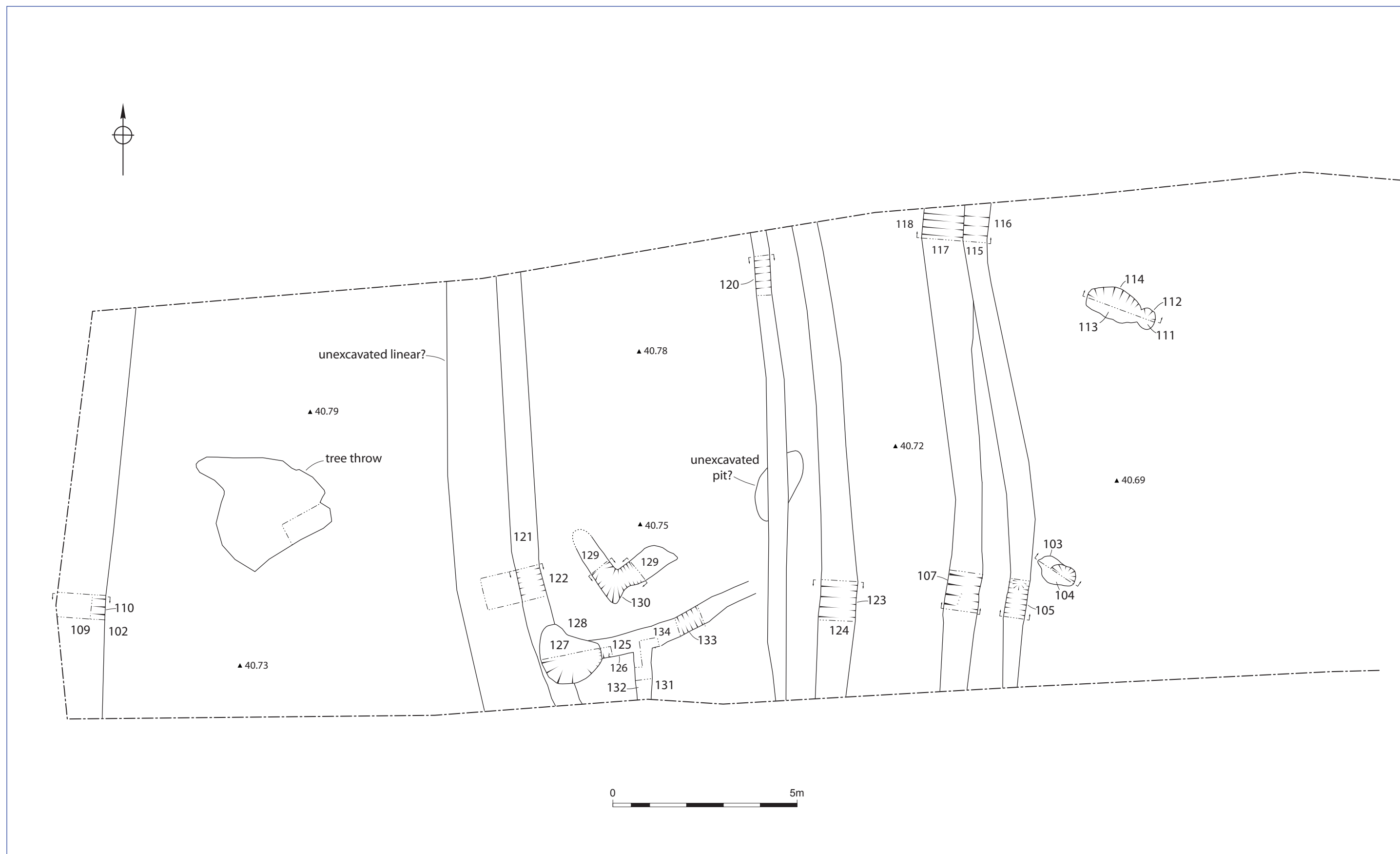
Figures



© Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Worcestershire County Council 100015914. For reference purposes only. No further copies may be made.

Location of the site

Figure 1



Plan of all features

Figure 2

Plates



Plate 1: General site photograph showing the conditions on site, facing east



Plate 2: Representative site linear, furrow (123) facing south (0.50m scale)



Plate 3: NE-SW arm of (130), facing NE (0.30m scale)



Plate 4: Representative site pit (114) facing south (1.00m scale)

Appendix 1 Trench descriptions

Trench 1

Site area: 700.1210 m²

Maximum dimensions: Length: 55.44m Width: 13.50m Depth: 0.25-0.35m

Orientation: ENE-WSW

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description
100	Topsoil	Dark brown, sandy loam. Moderately compact but friable. Contains frequent roots and occasional small rounded and sub-rounded stone <5%. Up to 0.28m thick.
101	Subsoil	Light yellowish brown fine sandy clay. Moderately firm and cohesive. Contains occasional small rounded stones <2%. The deposit is intermittent across the site and survives better in the undulations of the natural (102). May be alluvial in origin?. Up to 0.10m thick.
102	Natural	Mid-light orange clayey sand and gravels with light beige sandy clay mottles. The deposit is moderately compact and cohesive. The gravels are small to large, sub-rounded and rounded stone, which is poorly sorted.
103	Pit	Small, sub-oval pit aligned E-W. Is slightly irregular in plan, but has well defined edges and a clear interface with the natural (102). The edges are approx 50°, although stepped on the western edge and are flat. They gradually break to a concave base. Filled by (104). 1.15m long, 0.64m wide and 0.26m deep.
104	Fill	Fill of pit (103). Dark brown/black sandy clay, with light sandy clay mottles. Very compact and cohesive. Very sterile. 0.26m thick.
105	Furrow	Shallow linear running approximately N-S. Is heavily truncated and only the base remains. Has shallow 40° concave sides', gradually breaking to a flat base. Filled by (106). 0.58m wide and 0.08m deep.
106	Fill	Fill of furrow (105). Mid-light grey sandy clay. Soft and malleable. Contains mottles of natural (102) and contains occasional small rounded and sub-rounded stone <5%. 0.08m thick.
107	Furrow	Shallow linear running approximately N-S. Is heavily truncated and only the base remains. Has shallow 40° concave sides', gradually breaking to a flat base. Filled by (108). 0.87m wide and 0.12m deep.
108	Fill	Fill of furrow (107). Mid-light grey sandy clay. Soft and malleable. Contains mottles of natural (102) and contains occasional small rounded and sub-rounded stone <5%. 0.08m thick.
109	Fill	Light yellowish brown fine sandy clay. Moderately firm and cohesive. Contains occasional small rounded stones <2%. May be the same as 101 and is alluvial in origin? 0.12m thick.
110	Linear	Possibly heavily truncated linear aligned N-S, only partially exposed during the strip and may just be a natural depression filled by (101). Has a gradual break of slope to a flat base. Filled by (109). Min 1.40m wide, 0.12m deep.
111	Fill	Fill of posthole (112). Dark brown/black sandy clay, with light sandy clay mottles. Very compact and cohesive. Very sterile. 0.10m thick.
112	posthole	Sub-circular in plan, heavily truncated posthole. Only break to base (45°) and flat base seen. Filled by (111) and cut by pit (114). 0.54m long, 0.38m wide and 0.10m long.
113	Fill	Fill of pit (114). Dark brown/black sandy clay, with light sandy clay mottles. Very compact and cohesive. Very sterile. 0.24m thick.

Context	Classification	Description
114	pit	Sub-oval pit aligned NW-SE. Has well defined edges and a clear interface with the natural (102). Sides are steep, approx 55°, breaking to a flat base that slopes west to east. Filled by (113), cuts posthole (112). 1.54m long, 0.86m wide and 0.24m deep.
115	Fill	Fill of probable furrow (116). Mid-light brownish grey sandy clay. Soft and malleable. Contains mottles of natural (102) and contains occasional small rounded and sub-rounded stone <5%. 0.08m thick.
116	Furrow	Heavily truncated linear, probable linear, running approximately N-S. Only the gradual break to base and flattish base seen. Relationship with linear (118) unclear. 0.74m wide, 0.06m deep.
117	Fill	Fill of probable furrow (118). Mid-light brownish grey sandy clay. Soft and malleable. Contains mottles of natural (102) and contains occasional small rounded and sub-rounded stone <5%. 0.08m thick.
118	Furrow	Heavily truncated linear, probable linear running approximately N-S. Only the gradual break to base and flattish base seen. Relationship with linear (116) unclear. 1.20m wide, 0.10m deep.
119	Fill	Fill of probable furrow (120). Mid-light brownish grey sandy clay. Soft and malleable. Contains mottles of natural (102) and contains occasional small rounded and sub-rounded stone <5%. 0.08m thick.
120	Furrow	Heavily truncated linear, probable linear running approximately N-S. Only the gradual break to base and concave base seen. 0.50m wide, 0.08m deep.
121	Fill	Fill of probable furrow (122). Mid-light brownish grey sandy clay. Soft and malleable. Contains mottles of natural (102) and contains occasional small rounded and sub-rounded stone <5%. 0.08m thick.
122	Furrow	Heavily truncated linear, probable linear running approximately N-S. Only the gradual break to base and flattish base seen. Cut by pit (128). 0.70m wide, 0.08m deep.
123	Furrow	Heavily truncated linear, probable linear running approximately N-S. Only the gradual break to base and flattish base seen. Filled by (124) 1.03m wide, 0.07m deep.
124	Fill	Fill of probable furrow (123). Mid-light brownish grey sandy clay. Soft and malleable. Contains mottles of natural (102) and contains occasional small rounded and sub-rounded stone <5%. 0.07m thick.
125	Fill	Fill of linear (124). Light blue/grey sandy clay. Soft and malleable. Is mottled with orange natural (102) and light brown sub-soil (101). Contains moderate rounded and sub-rounded stone 15%. 0.19m thick.
126	Linear	Linear running approximately NE-SW, same as (133). Has a shallow U-shaped profile but is heavily truncated. Is cut by pit (128), its relationship with linear (131) is unclear due to the similarity of the fills. Filled by (134). 0.27m wide, 0.19m deep.
127	Fill	Fill of pit (128). Dark brown/black sandy clay, with light orange sandy clay mottles. Very compact and cohesive. Very sterile. 0.35m thick.
128	Pit	Sub oval in plan with, well defined edges and a clear interface with the natural (102). Some evidence of root disturbance on the eastern edge. Has moderately steep 50°, flat sides that break sharply to a flat base. Cuts furrow (122) and linear (126). Filled by (127). 1.85m long, 1.70m wide and 0.35m deep.
129	Fill	Fill of pit (130). Dark blackish grey with occasional sandy clay mottling. Contains occasional small and medium sub-rounded stone and occasional angular medium stone. 0.64m thick.
130	Pit	Right angled feature that may be two inter-cutting sub-oval pits. The NE-SW aligned arm is deepest and has a steep V-shaped profile. 1.86m long, 0.62m wide and 0.42m

Context	Classification	Description
		deep. The NW-SE aligned arm is shallower with a U-shaped profile. 1.66m long, 0.54m wide, 0.12m deep.
131	Linear	Short length of linear running N-S, Heavily truncated and only the gradual sloping sides and flattish base seen. Its relationship with linear (126) is unclear due to the similarity of the fills. 0.66m long, 0.47m wide and 0.08m deep.
132	Fill	Fill of linear of (131). Light blue/grey sandy clay. Soft and malleable. Is mottled with orange natural (102) and light brown sub-soil (101). Contains moderate rounded and sub-rounded stone 15%. 0.08m thick.
133	Linear	Linear running approximately NE-SW, same as (126). Has a steep sided U-shaped profile but is heavily truncated and disappears approximately 2.0m to the east. Filled by (134) 0.45m wide, 0.18m deep.
134	Fill	Fill of linear of (133). Light blue/grey sandy clay. Soft and malleable. Is mottled with orange natural (102) and light brown sub-soil (101). Contains moderate rounded and sub-rounded stone 15%. 0.18m thick.

Appendix 2 Technical information

The archive

The archive consists of:

- 34 Context records AS1
- 1 Field progress reports AS2
- 1 Photographic records AS3
- 76 Digital photographs
- 1 Drawing number catalogues AS4
- 25 Scale drawings
- 1 Context number catalogues AS5

The project archive is intended to be placed at:

Derby Museum and Art Gallery
The Strand
Derby, Derbyshire
DE1 1BR

