ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION
AT
LAND OFF THREE SPRINGS ROAD, PERSHORE, WORCESTERSHIRE

Worcestershire Archaeology
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Archaeological Evaluation at Land of Three Springs Road, Pershore

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Summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken in March 2013 across approximately 12875m² of land off Three Springs Road in Pershore, Worcestershire, centred on National Grid Reference SO 9363 4540. It was commissioned by Guy Wakefield of Hunter Page Planning (the Client) acting on behalf of Bloor Homes Limited who initiated a pre-application enquiry regarding a proposed residential development with associated access roads and utilities on the site.

Six trenches of varying size, in total covering just over 411m², were excavated across the site area in order to asses the impact of the development proposals on a potential archaeological site (WSM 38434). Across the excavated trenches the archaeological remains observed suggest that this site occupies an area of Romano-British activity in close proximity to a rural settlement, with a later medieval and post-medieval agricultural landscape overlying this.

The Roman period features appeared to be focused in the eastern half of the site and a number contained a large amount of domestic pottery waste. It is therefore probable that the site is on the western edge of extensive occupational activity observed during previous work in an adjacent field. As the Roman deposits are likely to be related to nearby settlement activity these could potentially have local significance in improving the understanding of the extent and nature of Romano-British rural occupation both in the surrounding area and the county of Worcestershire.

Report

1 Background

1.1 Reasons for the project

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken across approximately 12875m² of land off Three Springs Road in Pershore, Worcestershire. This was located at the southern edge of a new housing development and was centred on National Grid Reference SO 9363 4540 (see figure 1). It was commissioned by Guy Wakefield of Hunter Page Planning (the Client) acting on behalf of Bloor Homes Limited in response to a brief (the Brief) prepared by the Planning Advisory Section of Worcestershire County Council (the Curator), dated 23rd January 2013. The Brief results from a pre-application enquiry regarding a proposed residential development with associated access roads and utilities.

The proposed development site is considered to have the potential to affect an archaeological site (WSM 38434) and previous work in the immediate vicinity, including geophysical survey (Austrums 2009), archaeological evaluations (Hughes and Vaughan 2009; Wainwright 2010) and excavation (Sworn 2011), suggested that this was likely to be of Romano-British date.

The project conforms to the Brief provided by the Curator and for which a project proposal (including detailed specification) was produced (WA 2013), as well as to the *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (IfA 2008).

The event reference for this project, provided by the Worcestershire HER is WSM 48209.

2 Aims

The aims of this evaluation are:

- to describe and assess the significance of the heritage asset with archaeological interest;
- to establish the nature, importance and extent of the archaeological site;
- to assess the impact of the application on the archaeological site.

3 Methods

3.1 Personnel

The project was undertaken by Richard Bradley (BA (hons.); MA; AIfA), who joined Worcestershire Archaeology in 2008 and has been practicing archaeology since 2005. Fieldwork assistance was provided by Tim Cornah (BA (hons.)), who joined Worcestershire Archaeology in 2006 and has been practising archaeology since 1999. The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Tom Rogers (BA; MSc). Illustrations were prepared by Carolyn Hunt. Dennis Williams contributed the finds information and Alan Clapham the environmental evidence.

3.2 Documentary research

Prior to fieldwork commencing a search was made of the Historic Environment Record (HER) within a 500m radius of the site. This included the historic mapping for the area from the 1840 Tithe map onwards.

The reports on the previous archaeological work in the vicinity were also consulted and these indicated that the proposed development is close to an extensive and complex area of Late Iron Age to early Romano-British settlement.

3.3 Fieldwork strategy

A detailed specification was prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2013) and the fieldwork was undertaken between 11th and 13th of March 2013.

Six trenches of varying size, in total covering just over 411m², were excavated over the site area of 12875m², representing a sample of around 3.20%. The location of the trenches is indicated in Figure 2. It was originally intended for eight trenches to be excavated to complete a 4% sample of the site area but due to the presence of considerable amounts of building supplies, fences, abandoned vehicles and temporary shelters contained within the northern part of the field it was not practical to do so. Due to these restrictions and the remains already encountered throughout the excavated trenches, it was agreed with the Curator that these did not need to be completed. Further limitations were encountered by the presence of a live service which crossed the site, necessitating the separation and extension of a number of the trenches. The trenches were not targeted on any specific cropmark or geophysical anomaly, but were positioned purely to provide an acceptable sample of the site area.

Deposits considered not to be significant were removed using a 13 tonne 360º tracked excavator, employing a 1.8m wide toothless bucket and under constant 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 Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012) and trench and feature locations were surveyed using a differential GPS. On completion of excavation, trenches were reinstated by replacing the excavated material.

3.4 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.

3.5 Artefact methodology, by Dennis Williams

3.5.1 Recovery policy

The artefact recovery policy conformed to standard Service practice (WA 2012a; appendix 2).

3.5.2 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. These date ranges were used for determining the broad phases defined for the site. All information was recorded on *pro forma* sheets.

The pottery and ceramic building material was examined under x20 magnification and referenced as appropriate by fabric type and form according to the fabric reference series maintained by the Service (Hurst and Rees 1992 and www.worcestershireceramics.org).

3.5.3 Discard policy

The following categories/types of material will be discarded after a period of 6 months following the submission of this report, unless there is a specific request to retain them (and subject to the collection policy of the relevant depository):

- where unstratified
- post-medieval pottery, and;
- generally where material has been assessed as having no obvious grounds for retention.

See the environmental section for other discard where appropriate.

3.6 Environmental archaeology methodology, by A J Clapham

3.6.1 Sampling policy

Samples were taken according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (2012a). A total of two samples (each of 20 litres) were taken from the site from the following contexts: see Table 1.

3.6.2 Processing and analysis

The samples were processed by flotation using a Siraf tank. The flots were collected on a 300μm sieve and the residue retained on a 1mm mesh. This allows for the recovery of items such as small animal bones, molluscs and seeds.

The residues were fully sorted by eye and the abundance of each category of environmental remains estimated. A magnet was also used to test for the presence of hammerscale. The flots were scanned using a low power MEIJI stereo light microscope and plant remains identified using modern reference collections maintained by Worcestershire Archaeology, and a seed identification manual (Cappers *et al* 2006). Nomenclature for the plant remains follows Stace (2010).

3.7 Statement of confidence in the methods and results

Although site restrictions necessitated a deviation from the original number of trenches and reduced the size of the sampled area of the site, this did not unduly impact upon the results of the project. Therefore, it is considered that the methods adopted allow a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved.

4 The application site

4.1 Topography, geology and current land-use

The site is located to the south-west corner of Pershore, positioned on a terrace above the north bank of the valley formed by the River Avon. It is currently in use as an open pasture field, with a number of temporary and permanent farm buildings in its north-east corner and is bounded by new housing development to the north, through which access is made to the current site. Domestic dwellings and Pershore cemetery bound the site to the east, open fields and residential buildings define the southern boundary and open pasture exists to the west. The site area itself is broadly flattened, being around 30m AOD, but to the immediate west the ground slopes steeply upwards to 50m AOD and to the east it gradually slopes down to around 20m AOD along Three Springs/Defford Road.

Geologically, the site is situated on bedrock geology of the Charmouth Mudstone Formation (BGS 2000). The soil type across the site is defined as clayey with some slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged non-calcareous clayey and fine loamy or fine silty soils over clay of the Evesham 2 Soil Association (Ragg *et al.* 1984).

4.2 Archaeological context

The site is outside of the main settlement of Pershore, which has Roman foundations and later contained a Benedictine abbey of Anglo-Saxon origin. The town is documented as a relatively prosperous medieval market centre before the dissolution of the monasteries in the 16th century. Historic mapping indicates that the site is likely to have been used as arable or pasture farmland outside of the settlement, located adjacent to the ancient woodland of Tiddesley Wood (WSM 31613) and a series of orchard plantations.

Archaeologically, the immediate surrounds of the site have been well explored in recent years, although the site itself has not been subject to previous archaeological work. A geophysical survey

(Austrums 2009; WSM 41495) in the field directly to the south-east and adjacent to the cemetery demonstrated a series of curved and linear anomalies interpreted as part of a group of ditched enclosures. These were investigated and shown to be accurate during a small evaluation of eleven trenches (Hughes and Vaughan 2009; WSM 40600), where up to forty linear and discrete features were identified which suggested the survival of an enclosed Late Iron Age or Early Roman rural settlement continuing in use until the 3rd century AD. This corresponded with known discoveries of Roman pottery and a brooch, mainly of early Roman date, from the adjacent cemetery during excavation of graves which had indicated a possible settlement location (WSM 38433 and 38434).

A further archaeological evaluation of twenty-five trenches was undertaken in late 2009 across fields to the north-east in advance of the housing development which forms the northern boundary of the current site (Wainwright 2010; WSM 41765). This revealed a number of ditch, gully and pit features of Late Iron Age to Roman date which probably represented ancillary activity associated with the settlement identified in the earlier work. A number of medieval and post-medieval furrows were also observed. The evaluation led to the commencement of an open-area excavation across the site in order to improve understanding of the archaeological deposits encountered (Sworn 2011; WSM 44967). The excavation recorded a droveway with adjacent enclosure ditches of Late Iron and Roman date as well as undated pits and post holes, but no structural evidence. This work supported the initial conclusions of the evaluation and suggested that these remains were likely to be of an auxiliary nature alongside the identified occupation site nearby.

Within the wider landscape, Iron Age and Romano-British settlements have been recorded along the Avon Valley at Defford to the south (NMR 1053752) and at Allesborough to the north (WSM 20060). The former is defined by enclosures and trackways seen as cropmarks, the latter has been partially excavated and identified as an area of Iron Age activity with clear evidence for continued occupation into the Roman period (Hurst *et al* 1993). To the south-east of the site, across Defford Road, a cropmark suggested to represent an enclosure has been identified from an aerial photograph and is potentially Iron Age or Roman in date (WSM 40861).

It has also been noted that there is evidence for medieval or post-medieval ridge and furrow visible in the surrounds of the site, aligned north-west to south-east (WSM 02685) and an unstratified find of an 11th century Viking iron axe head was made around 480m to the south in 2001.

The HER search showed that two Grade II listed buildings exist in the vicinity of the site, one being the Victorian gothic revival cemetery chapel, the other a 17th century timber framed cottage. No designated heritage assets are present on the site itself.

5 Structural analysis

The trenches and features recorded are shown in Figures 2-5. The results of the structural analysis are presented in Appendix 1.

5.1.1 Phase 1: Natural deposits

The natural substrate was encountered in all six of the trenches excavated. This was slightly variable but generally comprised a mix of firm mid yellowish grey clays with areas of orangey sands and sub-rounded gravels. It was encountered at between 0.31-0.49m below the current ground surface across the site.

In all of the trenches this was overlain by a moderately compact mid brownish grey silty clay subsoil layer varying between 0.10-0.16m in depth, in turn sealed by an organic topsoil of between 0.18-0.33m, the upper surface of which consisted of heavily waterlogged rough grass.

5.1.2 Phase 2: Roman deposits

A number of features across the trenches were seen to be of Romano-British date and, when considered as a whole, these appeared to be restricted in location to the eastern edge of the site

area. Trench 1 contained a series of NE-SW aligned ditches, two of which, [110] and [114], included Roman period pottery fragments. A full profile across ditch [114] could not be fully excavated due to waterlogging and the fact it extended beyond the trench limits, but it was possible to identify at least two separate fills within it and to see that it was of substantial size, being at least 1.54m in width and more than 0.64m deep.

Trenches 5 and 6 were particularly abundant in features and, excluding later furrows, the majority of these were dated by finds to the Roman period. In the centre of Trench 6, a large linear ditch or perhaps a series of ditches 2.90m in width was observed but not excavated [609]. The upper fill of this included a number of Roman pottery fragments. A small oval pit [605], located next to this ditch and adjacent to undated pit [607] also contained a fragment of Roman pot. It is possible that ditch [609], or part of it if it does comprise a series of linears, continued to become ditch [516] in Trench 5, but due to truncation by furrow [520] and the position of the trench this was not clear. Ditch [516], 0.35m deep and 0.78m wide, was dated as Roman by finds within it and was demonstrated to have truncated an earlier shallow pit of unknown function [518]. Although shallow and only partly visible, the pit included abundant amounts of Roman pottery, occasional animal bone and some fired clay objects. In the centre of Trench 5, truncated by two furrows and not clearly visible, a deposit forming a possible occupation layer or part of a large pit feature was observed (511) and this included a number of fragments of Roman pottery.

5.1.3 Phase 3: Medieval/post-medieval deposits

Apart from Trench 6, all of the trenches excavated across the site contained a number of furrow features relating to Medieval and later agriculture which were broadly aligned north-west to south-east. Where excavated, these were very shallow and had gradual sloping sides with a concave base, were 0.07-0.09m in depth and seen to cut through the subsoil.

Some of the furrows (in Trench 2 and 3) contained pottery dated to the 17th-18th Centuries within their fills and one furrow, [104], truncated the series of Roman period ditches at the south-east end of Trench 1. The alignment of the furrows appears to correlate between various trenches, suggesting that the furrows survive all the way across the site and possibly beyond into surrounding fields.

5.1.4 Phase 4: Undated deposits

A selection of features across the site remain undated, though based on their location it is probable that they are of Romano-British origin. A partially visible sub-oval pit [607] was excavated in Trench 6 and contained a fragment of animal bone but no pottery. However, it was located next to pit [607] and ditch [609], both of which were identified as Roman in date. Similarly, two linear features at the south-west end of Trench 1 did not contain any finds but were orientated on the same alignment and were located close to Roman ditches [110] and [114].

5.1.5 Phase 5: Modern deposits

A number of modern land drains on various orientations were seen across the site. These were located in trenches 3, 4 and 5. Trench 4 also contained a small pit like feature that, upon excavation, was found to be the remains of a tree bole that included modern pottery combined with residual Roman finds. At the south-western end of Trench 2 three aligned post holes were observed that contained a loose, humic and topsoil rich fill and were seen to cut through the subsoil, suggesting that they were of modern origin and possibly representative of a former temporary fence line.

5.2 Artefactual analysis, by Dennis Williams

The artefactual assemblage is summarised in Table 1.The assemblage came from 14 stratified contexts and could be dated from the late Iron Age onwards. Using pottery as an index of artefact condition, this was generally fair, with the majority of sherds displaying moderate levels of

abrasion. Pottery sherd weights were assessed as above average, with a mean value of approximately 25g.

period	material class	material subtype	object specific type	count	weight (g)
late Iron Age	ceramic	-	pot	4	32
LIA/ERB	ceramic	-	pot	8	98
Roman	ceramic	-	pot	163	4247
post-medieval	ceramic	-	pot	4	71
undated	bone	animal bone	-	25	280
undated	ceramic	-	brick/tile	3	52
undated	ceramic	fired clay	-	11	252
undated	metal	iron	-	2	12
			totals:	220	5044

Table 1: Quantification of the assemblage

The pottery assemblage comprised Iron Age, Roman and post-medieval sherds, as summarised in Table 2.

period	fabric code	fabric common name	count	weight (g)
late Iron Age	3	Malvernian ware	4	32
LIA/ERB	3	Malvernian ware	8	98
Roman	12	Severn Valley ware	132	3433
Roman	12.2	Oxidised organically tempered Severn Valley ware	15	502
Roman	22	Black-burnished ware, type 1 (BB1)	14	304
Roman	43.2	Central Gaulish samian ware	2	8
post-medieval	78	Post-medieval red wares	3	70
post-medieval	84	Creamware	1	1
		totals:	179	4448

Table 2: Quantification of the pottery

Summary of artefactual evidence by period

The context finds summary is shown in Table 3.

Pottery

Iron Age

Malvernian pottery (fabric 3) with coarse inclusions was found in fill 514 (ditch 516). This material included the everted rim of a jar that probably dates from the late Iron Age. Other Malvernian pottery, including the rim of a tubby cooking pot and a possible lid sherd, was also recovered from this context, but contained fewer inclusions and may have been from a production span extending

into the early Roman period. Similar late Iron Age/Roman Malvernian material, but undiagnostic in terms of form, was recovered from fill 112 (ditch 114) and topsoil 600.

Roman

The Roman pottery was dominated by locally-made Severn Valley ware (fabrics 12 and 12.2), with substantial amounts of this material being recovered from fill 517 (pit 518). This context produced rim sherds from Webster 1, 7, 8, 23/24 and 29 jars, and from a Webster 34 bowl (Webster 1976). These forms point to a late 2nd – 3rd century date range, although later production of some of the jar types cannot be ruled out. A Webster 43 tankard rim from deposit 511 (a possible pit fill) was also late 2nd – 3rd century in date.

Fill 514 contained Severn Valley ware (fabric 12), alongside the Malvernian late Iron Age/early Roman pottery (fabric 3), but none of these Severn Valley ware sherds was diagnostic in terms of form. It was also noted that sherds of organically-tempered Severn Valley ware were present in fills 511, 514 and 517, suggesting 1st – 2nd century activity at the site as well.

Context 112 (top fill of ditch 114) contained both Malvernian and Severn Valley wares, though these were only datable by their fabrics. Small amounts of undiagnostic Severn Valley ware were also recovered from fill 109 (ditch 110), fill 604 (pit 605) and fill 608 (ditch 609).

The only non-regional Roman coarseware pottery comprised Black burnished ware (fabric 22) found in fills 514 and 517. Type 22 jar rims from 517 were likely to be early to mid 3rd century (Gillam 1976), although part of a Type 9 or 10 bowl from the same context may have been 2nd century in date (Seager, Smith and Davies 1993).

A sherd of Samian pottery, with a 2nd century Lezoux fabric (43.2), probably from a Dr.18/31 dish, was residual in tree bole fill 403.

Post-medieval

Post-medieval red wares (fabric 78) were recovered from topsoil, and a single sherd of late 18th century creamware (fabric 84) from tree bole fill 403.

Other finds

Bone

Small fragments of animal bone, horn and were recovered from fills 112, 403, 511, 514, 604 and 608 but were not examined in detail.

Fired clay

Irregular lumps of fired clay found in fills 112, 511, 514 and 517 were presumed to be Roman. Two bore lath impressions, indicating that they may have been part of a structure, e.g. a building or oven. Fragments of brick or tile from fill 403 were probably post-medieval.

context	material class	object specific type	fabric code	count	weight (g)	start date	end date	*tpq* date range
100	bone	-	-	4	10	-	-	-
109	ceramic	pot	12	1	4	43	400	43-400
112	ceramic	pot	12	4	36	43	400	43-400
	ceramic	pot	3	1	6	-100	200	
	ceramic	pot	3	1	20	-100	200	
	ceramic	-	-	1	18	-	-	
	bone	-	-	6	46	-	-	
300	ceramic	pot	78	2	66	1600	1800	1600-1800

400	bone	-	-	1	32	-	-	1600-1800
	ceramic	pot	78	1	4	1600	1800	
403	ceramic	pot	12	3	24	43	400	1760-1790
	ceramic	pot	43.2	1	4	100	200	
	ceramic	brick/tile	-	3	52	-	-	
	bone	-	-	1	6	-	-	
	metal	-	-	2	12	-	-	
	ceramic	pot	84	1	1	1760	1790	
500	ceramic	pot	12	1	6	43	400	43-400
	ceramic	pot	43.2	1	4	100	200	
511	ceramic	pot	12.2	9	278	43	200	150-300
	ceramic	pot	12	2	6	43	400	
	ceramic	pot	12	1	14	150	300	
	ceramic	-	-	1	20	-	-	
	bone	-	-	1	6	-	-	
514	ceramic	pot	12.2	5	200	43	200	120-400
	ceramic	pot	12	2	16	43	400	
	ceramic	pot	12	1	24	43	400	
	bone	-	-	4	56	-	-	
	ceramic	-	-	8	174	-	-	
	ceramic	pot	3	2	16	-100	43	
	ceramic	pot	3	2	16	-100	43	
	ceramic	pot	3	1	18	-100	200	
	ceramic	pot	3	1	14	-100	200	
	ceramic	pot	3	3	22	-100	200	
	ceramic	pot	22	1	16	120	400	
	ceramic	pot	12	1	12	43	400	
517	ceramic	pot	12	31	517	43	400	200-300
	ceramic	pot	12	2	66	43	400	
	ceramic	pot	12	2	86	250	400	
	ceramic	pot	12	2	30	43	400	
	ceramic	-	-	1	40	-	-	
	ceramic	pot	12	2	30	100	400	
	ceramic	pot	12	1	26	100	400	
	ceramic	pot	12	10	226	43	400	
	ceramic	pot	12	3	132	43	400	
	ceramic	pot	12	15	340	43	400	
	ceramic	pot	12	7	402	150	300	
	ceramic	pot	12	12	532	43	400	
	ceramic	pot	12	2	292	200	300	
	ceramic	pot	12	1	50	43	400	
	ceramic	pot	12	1	40	43	400	
	ceramic	pot	12	1	90	250	400	
	ceramic	pot	22	1	4	120	400	

	ceramic	pot	22	1	60	200	250	
	ceramic	pot	12	17	230	43	400	
	ceramic	pot	12	1	12	43	400	
	ceramic	pot	22	3	126	200	250	
	ceramic	pot	22	6	84	120	400	
	ceramic	pot	22	1	4	43	400	
	ceramic	pot	22	1	10	43	300	
	ceramic	pot	12	1	152	100	300	
	ceramic	pot	12	1	18	43	400	
	ceramic	pot	12.2	1	24	43	200	
600	ceramic	pot	3	1	18	-100	200	-100-200
604	ceramic	pot	12	1	8	43	400	43-400
	bone	-	-	2	40	-	-	
	bone	-	-	1	2	-	-	
606	bone	-	-	1	12	-	-	-
608	bone	-	-	4	70	-	-	43-400
608	ceramic	pot	12	3	12	43	400	

Table 3: Summary of context dating based on artefacts

5.3 Environmental analysis, by A J Clapham

The environmental evidence recovered is summarised in Tables 5 and 6.

Very little in the way of charred plant remains was recovered from the two ditch samples (contexts 112 and 515). The flot of context 112 consisted mainly of modern root debris but the residue contained occasional large mammal bone fragments and charcoal fragments, both of which were too small to identify. Context 515 did contain a limited number of charred plant remains none of which were of cultivated taxa. This suggests that the assemblage reflects a 'background flora' and therefore of limited use for the interpretation of the nature of occupation of the site.

Context	Sample	Feature type	Fill of	Position of fill	Sample vol (l)	Vol processed (l)	Res assessed	Flot assessed
515	1	Ditch	516	Primary	20	10	yes	yes
112	2	Ditch	114	Secondary	20	10	yes	yes

Table 4 Samples processed and assessed from Three Springs Road, Pershore WSM 48209

Context	Sample	large mammal	small mammal	charcoal	Comment
112	2	occ		occ	occ fire-cracked stone
515	1	mod	occ	mod	occ fired clay and fire-cracked stone

Table 5 Biological and other artefactual material recovered from the samples processed from Three Springs, Road, Pershore WSM 48209

Latin name	Common name	Habitat	515
Charred			
Trifolium sp	clover	ABD	1
Chenopodium album	fat hen	AB	2
Montia fontana ssp *chondrosperma*	blinks	AE	2
Bromus sp grain	brome grass	AF	1
Poaceae sp indet grain (small)	grass	AF	3

Table 3 Charred plant remains recorded from the samples evaluated the samples processed from Three Springs Road, Peshore WSM 48209

Habitat
A= cultivated ground B= disturbed ground
C= woodlands, hedgerows, scrub etc
D = grasslands, meadows and heathland
E = aquatic/wet habitats
F = cultivar

Key to Table 3

6 Synthesis

Although the intended sample of this potential site was reduced, the archaeological remains observed across the trenches still appear to be representative of the expected archaeological signature for a site in this location. These have produced an informed characterisation of the site, with the presence of Roman-British deposits indicative of nearby settlement activity and a number of furrows seen to exist on a north-west to south-east alignment demonstrating that a medieval or post-medieval agricultural landscape previously covered this area.

Roman period remains were identified in trenches 1, 5 and 6 and undated features seen in close proximity to these are likely to be of similar origin. There were no clear structural remains observed, but the nature of the features and the amount of pottery found across the trenches would suggest that this site is close to the edge of extensive rural settlement. The position of these features in relation to the site area – noticeably within the eastern part but not in the west – implies that this focus of Roman activity was slightly to the east of the current site. This is consistent with the known occupational activity of Late Iron Age to Early Roman date identified through the geophysical survey (Austrums 2009) and evaluation (Hughes and Vaughan 2009) of the field directly to the south-east, as well as the pottery finds recovered from the cemetery. It is possible that the large ditch [114] partly excavated at the eastern limit of Trench 1 could be a demarcation of this settlement as the main western boundary, or is perhaps an external property or field division.

Adjacent to the large ditch in Trench 1 were a series of smaller parallel ditches aligned north-east to south-west. These could be drainage gullies associated with a Roman-British field system or, potentially, an external droveway that ran along the edge of the main settlement area. The ditches are 6.5m apart and it is worth noting that a droveway feature in association with a series of probable stock enclosures was uncovered during the excavation of the new housing estate to the north-east (Sworn 2011). This was aligned east to west and was 4.5m to 5m in width and it is

hypothesised that this could once have continued around the edge of the presumed main area of settlement before turning to run along its western side, where it was recorded during this evaluation. It is difficult to be certain of this due to the presence of modern domestic dwellings along the route of the possible droveway, but it could feasibly have provided a route from the settlement or surrounding fields down to the corralling area identified during the excavation.

The prevalence of discrete and linear features seen in a small area at the junction of Trench 5 and 6 may indicate that this area is closer to the main focus of Roman settlement activity. It could even be the case that these are representative of an area of occupation or craft/industrial working itself, perhaps just on the edge of the settlement. The amount of pottery seen in pit feature [518], the majority of which is dated as late 2nd – 3rd century suggests that the feature has been used for the dumping of domestic refuse. It would be unlikely that this waste is being transported long distances before being disposed of. Additionally, the truncation of part of the pit by linear ditch [516] demonstrates that stratigraphic relationships and directly associated features survive on the site, and that activity may have taken place in a number of differing phases. The finds from this ditch were dated between 120 and 400 AD.

Two unexcavated features in this area – ditch [609] and layer or pit (511) – were of considerable size, with their definitive form not clearly visible, and contained numerous pieces of Roman pottery on their surfaces. This suggests that these features could perhaps extend a long way outside of the trenches and include a large amount of artefactual evidence. Pottery finds of Roman date were also more common in the topsoil and subsoil of Trench 5 and 6. When considered alongside the excavated pits [607] and [605], this does appear to indicate that this area is one of more intensive Roman period activity than elsewhere on the site.

The furrow features seen in all trenches apart from Trench 6 were all aligned north-west to south-east and spaced roughly 7m apart. This corresponds to the known alignment of furrows throughout fields in the vicinity and also with furrows observed during the archaeological work to the north of this site. It is probable that these were part of the open field system surrounding Pershore in the medieval and post-medieval periods and the artefactual material present within them is likely to be resultant from general discard and manuring upon the surrounding fields. A number of these features, mainly in Trench 5 but also in Trench 1, truncated and masked some of the archaeological deposits of Roman date.

7 Significance

7.1 Nature of the archaeological interest in the site

The archaeological remains observed to exist on this site appear to demonstrate an area of Romano-British activity in close proximity to a rural settlement, with a later medieval and post-medieval agricultural landscape overlying this. There are a number of features of considerable size and some produced large amounts of artefactual evidence. It is likely that this area is on the western edge of occupational activity observed during previous work in an adjacent field. The site could, therefore, demonstrate the edge of Roman settlement activity in this area and was probably a favourable position to have been located, situated on a terrace overlooking the River Avon.

The finds from the evaluation are significant in that they are very similar to those in the assemblages obtained from other recent evaluations in the vicinity. The pottery demonstrates occupation of this area from the late Iron Age onwards, but with a notable lack of material from the late Roman period. The narrow range of pottery fabrics also suggests the Roman community here was low status, with the Black burnished and samian wares the only indications of traded pottery from outside the region.

The lack of charred plant remains in the two samples from Three Springs Road suggests that very little archaeological significance can be attached to them.

7.2 Relative importance of the archaeological interest in the site

The remains observed during the evaluation demonstrate an archaeological site of variable importance, with some features of limited significance and others that demonstrate a site of higher potential. The furrows observed during the evaluation suggest a site important at a local level for improving understanding of the medieval archaeological activity in the immediate area and the way land was utilized on the edge of Pershore during this period. The Roman deposits are likely to be related to nearby settlement activity and as such, have local or regional significance in potentially improving the understanding of the extent and nature of Romano-British rural occupation both in the surrounding area and the county of Worcestershire.

7.3 Physical extent of the archaeological interest in the site

The archaeological remains relating to the medieval and later agricultural activity were observed to extend across the entirety of the site and potentially beyond. In many cases these correlated between trenches. The Roman deposits appeared to be restricted to the eastern part of the site and were particularly focused around the area of the intersection between Trench 5 and 6. It was seen that a number of these features continued beyond the trench limits and some were of considerable size. It is uncertain how far to the north and north-east the Roman period archaeological remains continue due to the site restrictions preventing the excavation of Trench 7 and Trench 8, but is likely the site contains further features of Roman date. The survival of many deposits was good and indicated that archaeology survives across the area. The topsoil and subsoil across the site area was fairly extensive, but the archaeology is still likely to be vulnerable to any intrusive groundworks. A suggested zoning of High and Low significance within the site boundary is set out in Figure 6.

8 Publication summary

Worcestershire Archaeology has a professional obligation to publish the results of archaeological projects within a reasonable period of time. To this end, Worcestershire Archaeology 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 in March 2013 across approximately 12875m² of land off Three Springs Road in Pershore, Worcestershire, centred on National Grid Reference SO 9363 4540 (HER reference: WSM 48209).

Six trenches of varying size, in total covering just over 411m², were excavated across the site area in order to asses the impact of the development proposals on a potential archaeological site. Across the excavated trenches the archaeological remains observed suggest that this site occupies an area of Romano-British activity in close proximity to a rural settlement, with a later medieval and post-medieval agricultural landscape overlying this.

The Roman period features appeared to be focused in the eastern half of the site and a number contained a large amount of domestic pottery waste. It is therefore likely that the site is on the western edge of extensive settlement activity observed during previous work in an adjacent field.

9 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, Guy Wakefield, Hunter Page Planning Ltd and Mike Glyde, Historic Environment Planning Officer, Worcestershire County Council.

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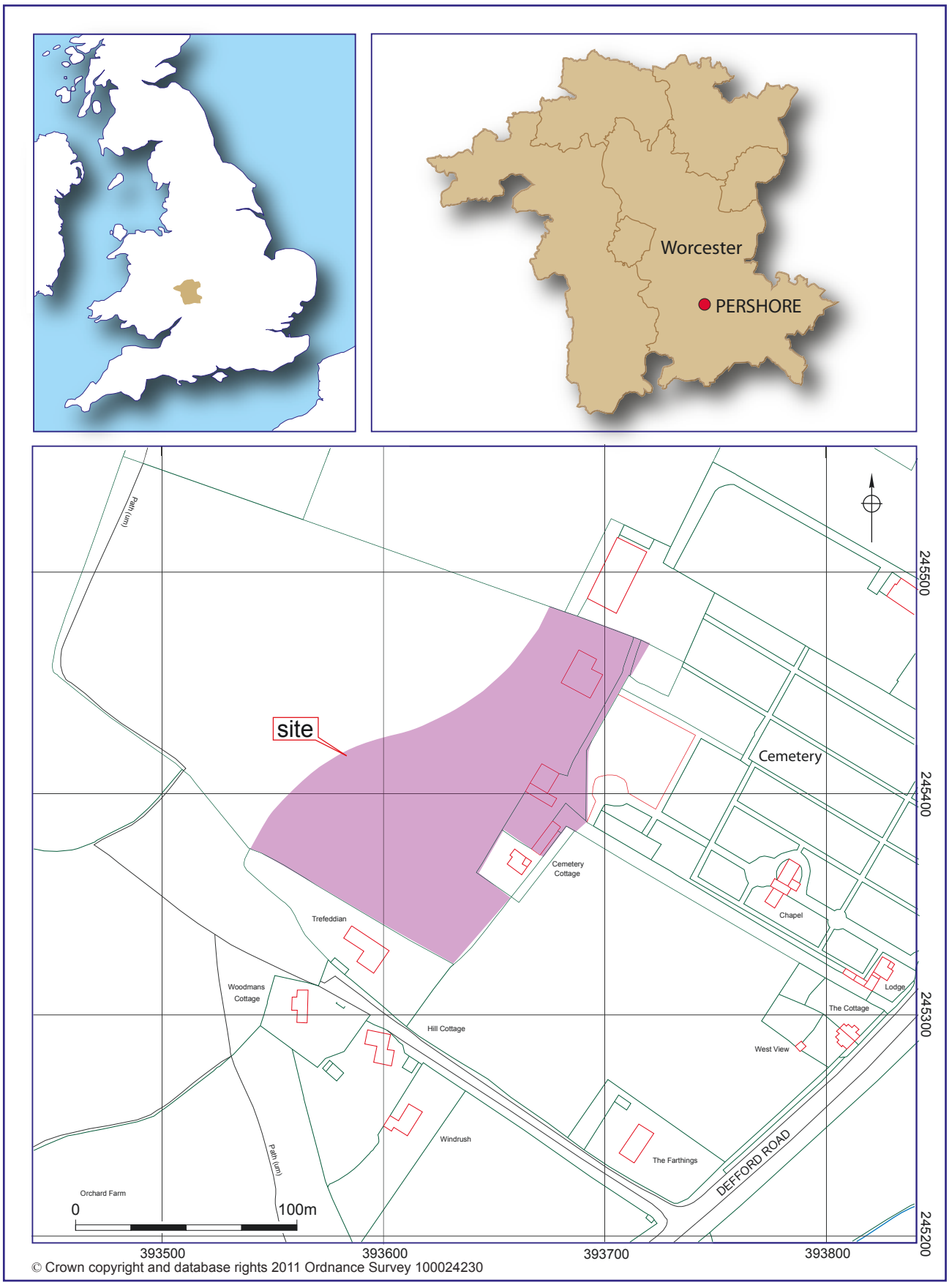
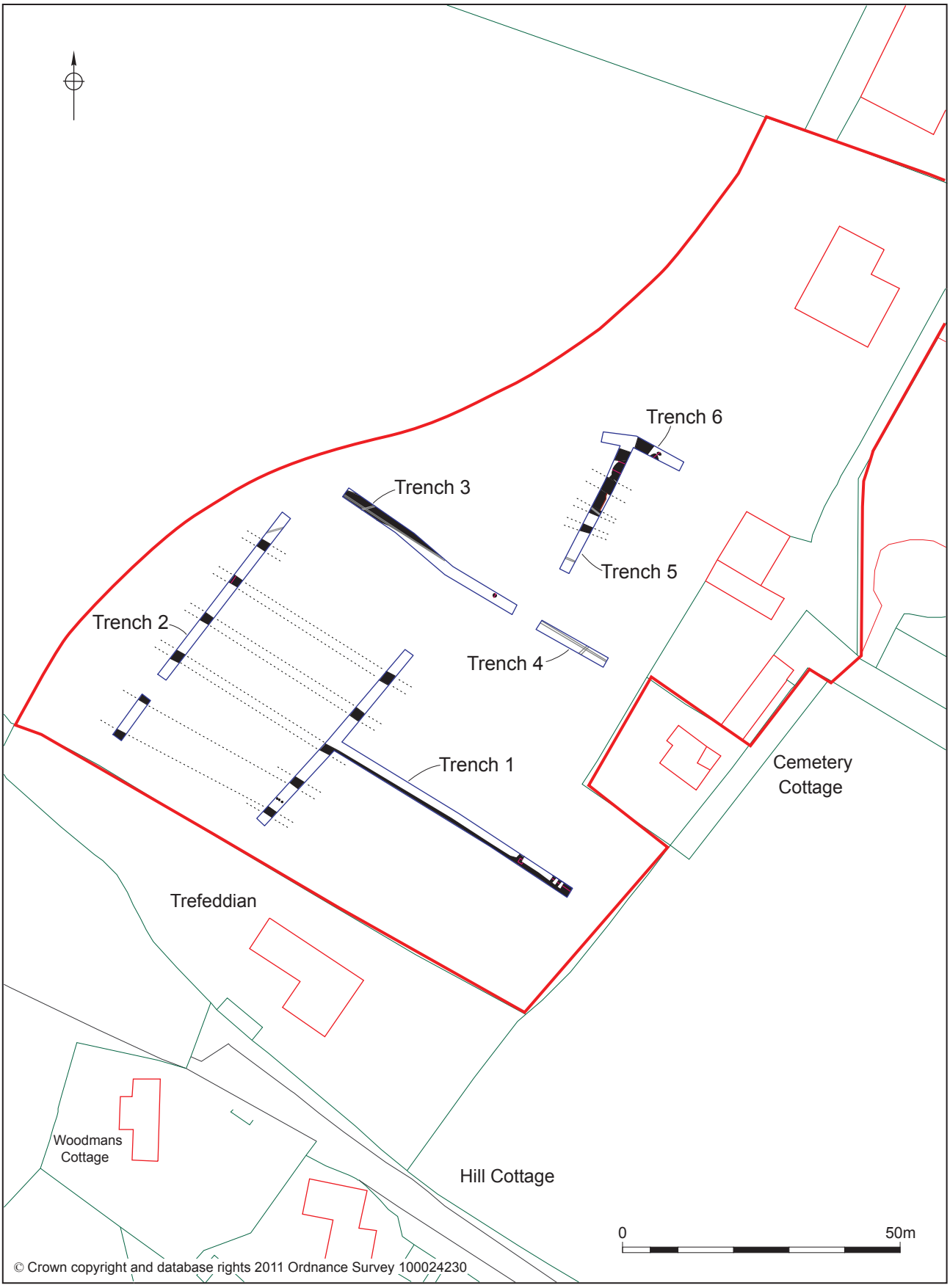
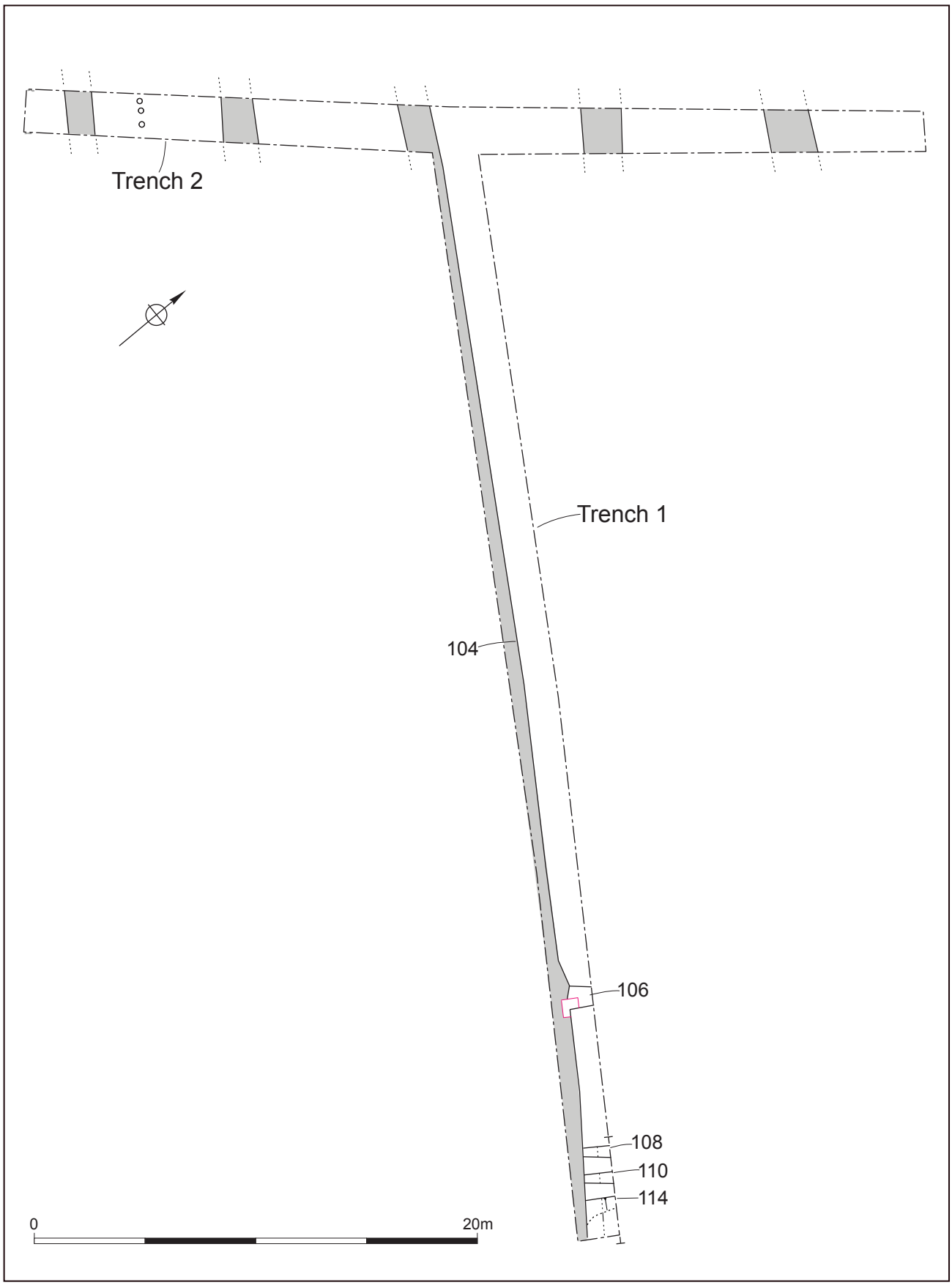
Figures



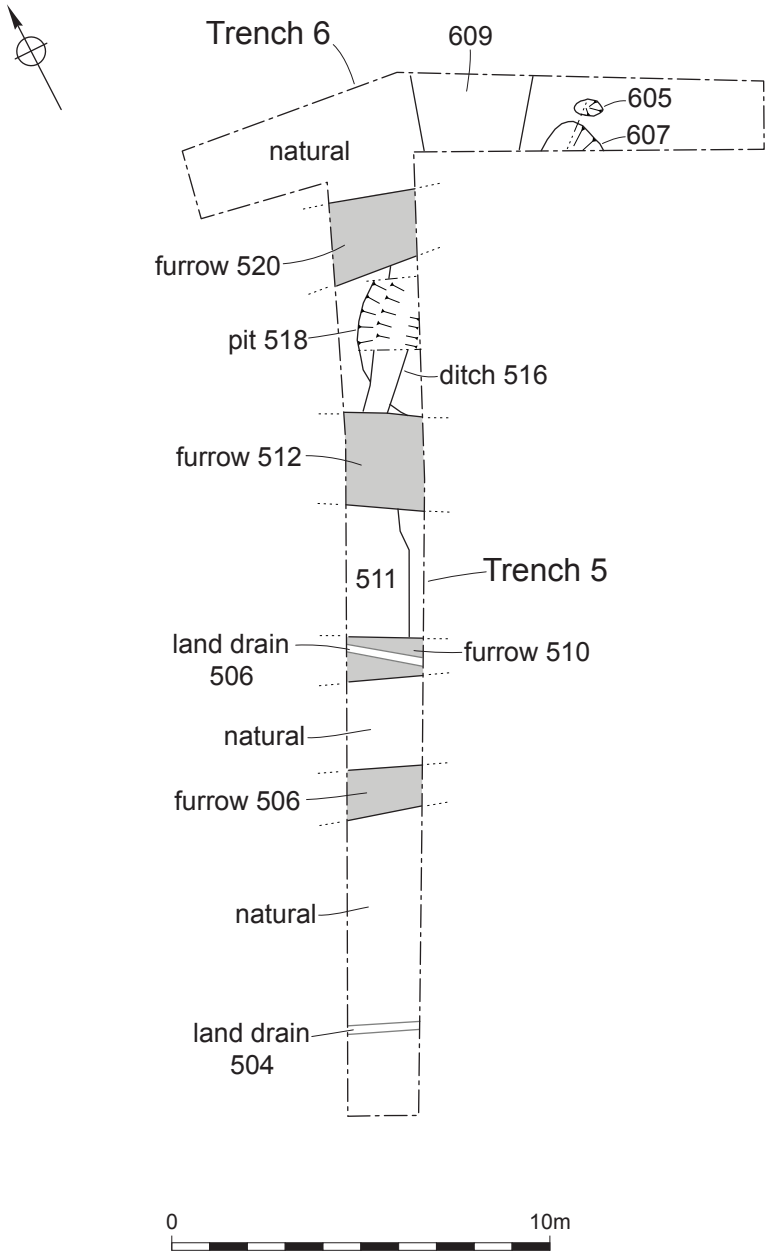
Location of the site *Figure 1*



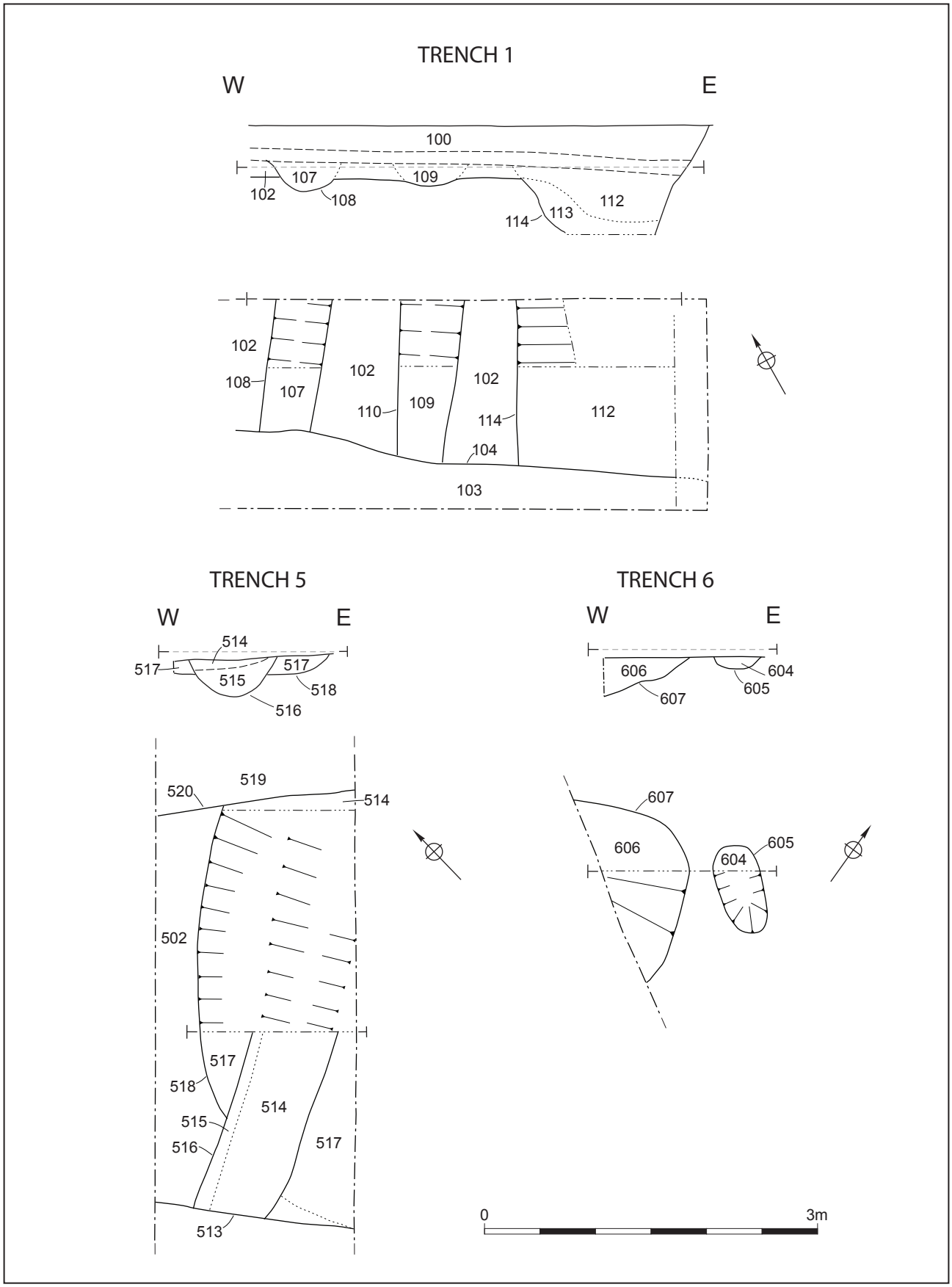
Trench location plan *Figure 2*



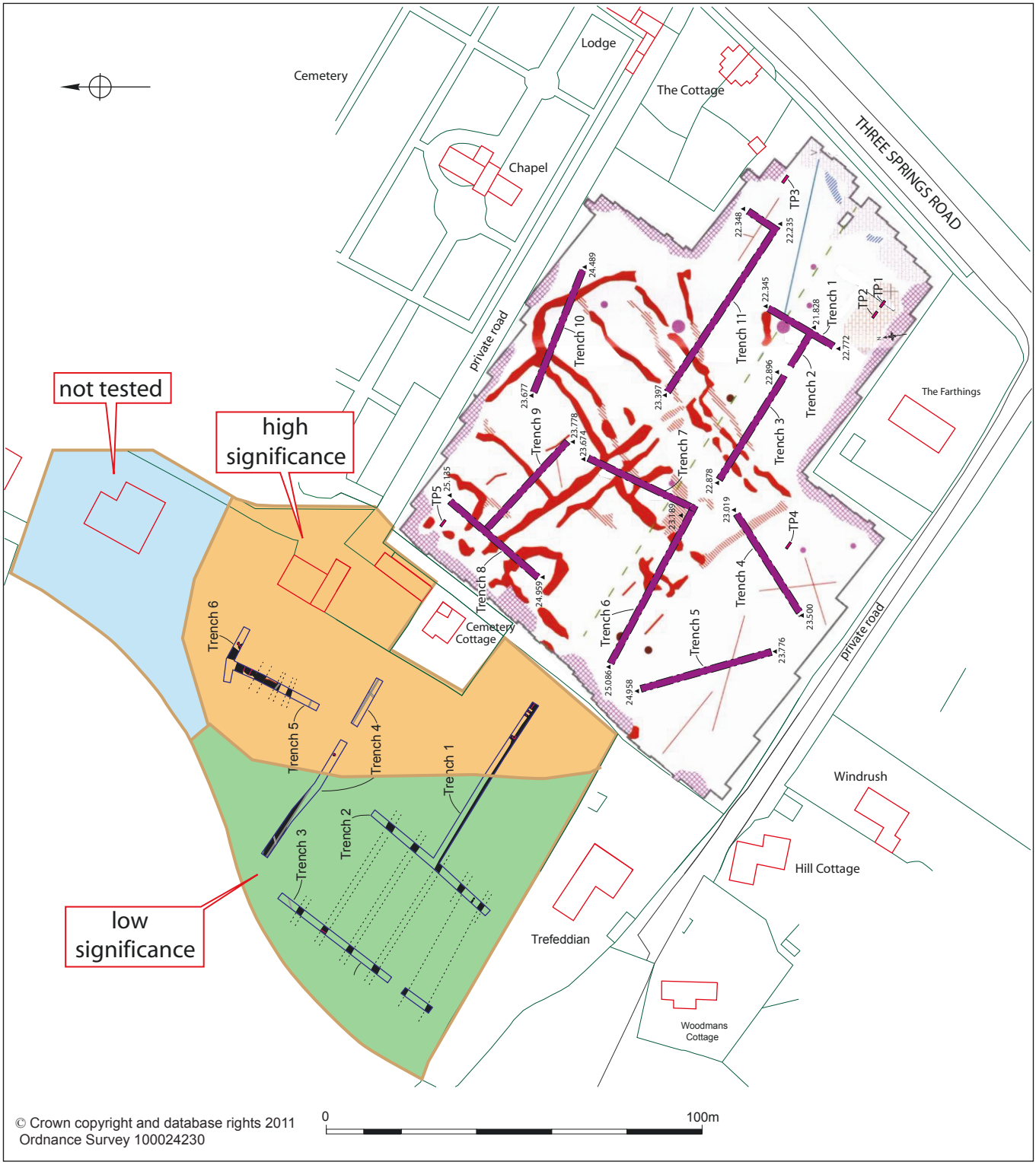
Plan of Trenches 1 and 2 *Figure 3*



Plan of Trenches 5 and 6 *Figure 4*



Trenches 1, 5 and 6: plans and sections of features *Figure 5*



Zones of significance within site boundary in relation to geophysical anomalies identified in the adjacent field

Figure 6

Plates

Plate 1. The site, looking south

Plate 2. Various debris in the intended location of Trench 7

Plate 3. Probable boundary ditch [114] at the eastern end of Trench 1

Plate 4 Ditch [516] cutting pit [518] in Trench 5

Plate 6. Pits [605] and [607] in Trench 6

Appendix 1 Trench descriptions

Trench 1

Maximum dimensions: Length: 50m Width: 1.80m Depth: 0.39m

Orientation: NW to SE

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
100	Topsoil	Moderately compact mid to light grey brown sandy silty clay with occasional sub-rounded pebbles.	0.00-0.23m
101	Subsoil	Moderately compact mid to light brownish grey sandy silty clay with occasional sub-rounded pebbles.	0.23-0.39m
102	Natural	Compact yellow clays with orange sand and gravel patches.	0.39-1.01m+
103	Fill	Fill of 104. Moderately compact mid yellowish brown sandy clay silt.	0.39-0.48m
104	Cut	Post Medieval furrow	0.39-0.48m
105	Fill	Fill of 108. Moderately compact mid brownish grey sandy silty clay.	0.39-0.52m
106	Cut	Small ditch of unknown function, probably Roman in date.	0.39-0.52m
107	Fill	Fill of 108. Moderately compact mid greyish brown clayey silt with some sand.	0.39-0.67m
108	Cut	Small ditch of unknown function, probably Roman in date.	0.39-0.67m
109	Fill	Fill of 110. Moderately compact mid greyish brown sandy clayey silt.	0.39-0.59m
110	Cut	Small ditch of unknown function, probably Roman in date.	0.39-0.59m
112	Fill	Secondary fill of 114. Moderately compact mid grey sandy clayey silt.	0.39-0.90m
113	Fill	Primary fill of 114. Moderately compact mid orangey grey brown sandy silty clay.	0.49-1.01m+
114	Cut	Large boundary ditch of Roman date.	0.39-1.01m+

Trench 2

Maximum dimensions: Length: 41m Width: 1.80m Depth: 0.36m

Orientation: NE to SW

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
200	Topsoil	Moderately compact mid to light grey brown sandy silty clay with occasional sub-rounded pebbles.	0.00-0.25m
201	Subsoil	Moderately compact mid to light brownish grey sandy silty clay with occasional sub-rounded pebbles.	0.25-0.36m
202	Natural	Compact yellow clays with orange sand and gravel patches.	0.36m+
203	Fill	Fill of 204, unexcavated.	0.25m+
204	Cut	Post Medieval furrow, unexcavated.	0.25m+
205	Fill	Fill of 206, unexcavated.	0.25m+
206	Cut	Post Medieval furrow, unexcavated.	0.25m+
207	Fill	Fill of 208, unexcavated.	0.25m+
208	Cut	Post Medieval furrow, unexcavated.	0.25m+
209	Fill	Fill of 210, unexcavated.	0.25m+
210	Cut	Post Medieval furrow, unexcavated.	0.25m+
211	Fill	Fill of 212, dark humic topsoil fill.	0.25m+
212	Cut	Cut of post hole	0.25m+
213	Fill	Fill of 214, dark humic topsoil fill.	0.25m+
214	Cut	Cut of post hole	0.25m+
215	Fill	Fill of 216, dark humic topsoil fill.	0.25m+
216	Cut	Cut of possible post hole	0.25m+

Trench 3

Maximum dimensions: Length: 50.50m Width: 1.80m Depth: 0.33m

Orientation: NE to SW

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
300	Topsoil	Moderately compact mid to light grey brown sandy silty clay with occasional sub-rounded pebbles.	0.00-0.21m
301	Subsoil	Moderately compact mid to light brownish grey sandy silty clay with occasional sub-rounded pebbles.	0.21-0.34m
301	Natural	Compact yellow clays with orange sand and gravel patches.	0.34m+
303	Fill	Fill of 304, unexcavated.	0.21m+
304	Cut	Post Medieval furrow, unexcavated.	0.21m+
305	Fill	Fill of 306, unexcavated.	0.21m+
306	Cut	Post Medieval furrow, unexcavated.	0.21m+
307	Fill	Fill of 308. Moderately compact mid brownish grey silty clay, unexcavated.	0.21m+
308	Cut	Post Medieval furrow, unexcavated.	0.21m+
309	Fill	Fill of 310, unexcavated.	0.21m+
310	Cut	Post Medieval furrow, unexcavated.	0.21m+
311	Fill	Fill of 312, unexcavated.	0.21m+
312	Cut	Land drain, unexcavated.	0.21m+
313	Fill	Fill of 314, unexcavated.	0.21m+
314	Cut	Post Medieval furrow, unexcavated.	0.21m+
315	Fill	Fill of 316, unexcavated.	0.21m+
316	Cut	Post Medieval furrow, unexcavated.	0.21m+

Trench 4

Maximum dimensions: Length: 56m Width: 1.80m Depth: 0.54m

Orientation: NW to SE

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
400	Topsoil	Friable dark grey brown clayey silt with frequent rooting and moderate small sub-rounded stones.	0.00-0.33m
401	Subsoil	Friable mid brown clayey silt. Occasional small and medium sub rounded stones.	0.33-0.49m
402	Natural	Compact light grey clays with sub rounded gravel patches.	0.49-0.54m+
403	Fill	Fill of 404. Compact dark grey brown clay silt with occasional stones, CBM and porcelain	0.33-0.63m
404	Cut	Tree bole.	0.33-0.63m
405	Fill	Fill of 406, unexcavated.	0.33m+
406	Cut	Post Medieval furrow.	0.33m+
407	Fill	Fill of 408, unexcavated.	0.33m+
408	Cut	Land drain.	0.33m+
409	Fill	Fill of 410, unexcavated.	0.33m+
410	Cut	Land drain	0.33m+
411	Fill	Fill of 412, unexcavated.	0.33m+
412	Cut	Land drain.	0.33m+

Trench 5

Maximum dimensions: Length: 25m Width: 1.80m Depth: 0.36m

Orientation: NE to SW

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
500	Topsoil	Firm mid to dark grey brown clayey silt with frequent rooting and moderate small sub-rounded stones.	0.00-0.24m

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
501	Subsoil	Friable mid brown clayey silt. Occasional small and medium sub rounded stones.	0.24-0.34m
502	Natural	Compact mid yellowish grey clays with sub rounded gravel patches.	0.34-0.36m+
503	Fill	Fill of 504, unexcavated.	0.24m+
504	Cut	Land drain unexcavated.	0.24m+
505	Fill	Fill of 506, unexcavated.	0.24m+
506	Cut	Post Medieval furrow.	0.24m+
507	Fill	Fill of 508, unexcavated.	0.24m+
508	Cut	Land drain unexcavated.	0.24m+
509	Fill	Fill of 5010, unexcavated.	0.24m+
510	Cut	Post Medieval furrow.	0.24m+
511	Layer	Moderately compact mid greyish brown silty clay, unexcavated.	0.34m+
512	Fill	Fill of 513, unexcavated	0.24m+
513	Cut	Post Medieval furrow.	0.24m+
514	Fill	Secondary fill of 516, moderately compact mid yellowish grey slitly clay.	0.34-0.43m
515	Fill	Primary fill of 516, moderately compact mid grey silty clay.	0.34-0.69m
516	Cut	Small early Roman period ditch.	0.34-0.69m
517	Fill	Fill of 518, moderately compact mid orangey grey brown silty clay.	0.34-0.53m
518	Cut	Roman period pit.	0.34-0.53m
519	Fill	Fill of 520, unexcavated.	0.24m+
520	Cut	Post Medieval furrow.	0.24m+

Trench 6

Maximum dimensions: Length: 15.80m Width: 1.80mm Depth: 0.36m

Orientation: NW to SE

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
600	Topsoil	Firm mid to dark grey brown clayey silt with frequent rooting and moderate small sub-rounded stones.	0.00-0.18m
601	Subsoil	Friable mid brown clayey silt. Occasional small and medium sub rounded stones.	0.18-0.31m
603	Natural	Compact mid yellowish grey clays with sub rounded gravel patches.	0.31-0.36m+
604	Fill	Fill of 605, firm mid grey silty clay	0.31-0.43m
605	Cut	Possible post hole or pit, probably Roman in date.	0.31-0.43m
606	Fill	Fill of 607, firm mid grey silty clay.	0.31-0.65m
607	Cut	Pit probably of a Roman date.	0.31-0.65m
608	Fill	Fill of 609, unexcavated.	0.31m+
609	Cut	Probable Roman ditch, unexcavated.	0.31m+

Trench 7

Unexcavated

Trench 8

Unexcavated

Appendix 2 Technical information

The archive (site code: WSM 48209)

The archive consists of:

22	Context records AS1
2	Field progress reports AS2
1	Photographic records AS3
77	Digital photographs
1	Drawing number catalogues AS4
4	Scale drawings
2	Sample records AS17
1	Sample number catalogues AS18
2	Flot records AS21
6	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:

Worcestershire County Museum
Museums Worcestershire
Hartlebury Castle
Hartlebury
Near Kidderminster
Worcestershire DY11 7XZ
Tel Hartlebury (01299) 250416

Summary of data for Worcestershire HER

WSM 48209 (event HER number)

P4069

Artefacts

HER summary data						
period	material class	object specific type	count	weight(g)	start date	end date
late Iron Age	ceramic	pot	2	16	-100	43
late Iron Age	ceramic	pot	2	16	-100	43
LIA/ERB	ceramic	pot	1	20	-100	200
LIA/ERB	ceramic	pot	3	22	-100	200
LIA/ERB	ceramic	pot	1	14	-100	200
LIA/ERB	ceramic	pot	1	18	-100	200
LIA/ERB	ceramic	pot	1	6	-100	200
LIA/ERB	ceramic	pot	1	18	-100	200
post-medieval	ceramic	pot	1	1	1760	1790
post-medieval	ceramic	pot	1	4	1600	1800
post-medieval	ceramic	pot	2	66	1600	1800
Roman	ceramic	pot	2	30	43	400
Roman	ceramic	pot	2	30	100	400
Roman	ceramic	pot	1	26	100	400
Roman	ceramic	pot	2	86	250	400
Roman	ceramic	pot	1	6	43	400
Roman	ceramic	pot	15	340	43	400
Roman	ceramic	pot	1	12	43	400
Roman	ceramic	pot	12	532	43	400
Roman	ceramic	pot	10	226	43	400
Roman	ceramic	pot	2	66	43	400
Roman	ceramic	pot	31	517	43	400
Roman	ceramic	pot	2	292	200	300
Roman	ceramic	pot	1	4	43	400
Roman	ceramic	pot	7	402	150	300
Roman	ceramic	pot	3	12	43	400
Roman	ceramic	pot	1	4	100	200
Roman	ceramic	pot	3	24	43	400
Roman	ceramic	pot	1	8	43	400
Roman	ceramic	pot	1	4	100	200
Roman	ceramic	pot	4	36	43	400
Roman	ceramic	pot	1	10	43	300
Roman	ceramic	pot	1	16	120	400
Roman	ceramic	pot	1	24	43	400
Roman	ceramic	pot	2	16	43	400
Roman	ceramic	pot	5	200	43	200
Roman	ceramic	pot	1	24	43	200
Roman	ceramic	pot	1	18	43	400
Roman	ceramic	pot	3	132	43	400

HER summary data						
period	**material class**	**object specific type**	**count**	**weight(g)**	**start date**	**end date**
Roman	ceramic	pot	1	152	100	300
Roman	ceramic	pot	1	50	43	400
Roman	ceramic	pot	1	4	43	400
Roman	ceramic	pot	6	84	120	400
Roman	ceramic	pot	3	126	200	250
Roman	ceramic	pot	17	230	43	400
Roman	ceramic	pot	1	40	43	400
Roman	ceramic	pot	1	90	250	400
Roman	ceramic	pot	1	4	120	400
Roman	ceramic	pot	1	60	200	250
Roman	ceramic	pot	9	278	43	200
Roman	ceramic	pot	2	6	43	400
Roman	ceramic	pot	1	14	150	300
Roman	ceramic	pot	1	12	43	400
undated	bone		1	6		
undated	bone		1	12		
undated	bone		4	10		
undated	bone		6	46		
undated	bone		2	40		
undated	bone		1	32		
undated	bone		1	6		
undated	bone		1	2		
undated	bone		4	56		
undated	bone		4	70		
undated	ceramic		8	174		
undated	ceramic		1	40		
undated	ceramic		1	20		
undated	ceramic		1	18		
undated	ceramic	brick/tile	3	52		
undated	metal		2	12		

Environmental material

Methods of retrieval	**Yes/No**
Hand retrieval	
Bulk sample	Yes
Spot sample	
Auger	
Monolith	
Observed	

Type	**Preservation**	**Date (note 1)**	**Specialist report?**	**Key assemblage?**

			Y/N (note 2)	**Y/N (note 3)**
Bone – amphibian	Not decayed Dessication Charring Mineralisation Anaerobic/anoxic - waterlogged Anaerobic/anoxic - not waterlogged			
Bone – bird				
Bone – fish				
Bone - human				
Bone – large mammal	Anaerobic/anoxic – not waterlogged	?	N	N
Bone – small mammal	Anaerobic/anoxic – not waterlogged	?	N	N
Coprolite				
Environmental deposit – ash				
Environmental deposit – peat				
Environmental deposit – phosphate				
Environmental deposit – soil				
Environmental deposit - turf				
Feathers				
Food remains				
Hair – human				
Hair – large mammal				
Hair – small mammal				
Horn/antler – large mammal				
Horn/antler – small mammal				
Insect remains				
Invertebrate remains				
Other micro-fauna				
Parasites				
Plant remains – diatoms				
Plant remains –				

fibre				
Plant remains – macrofossils	Charred	?	Y	N
Plant remains – pollen				
Plant remains – wood				
Shell – egg				
Shell – mollusc				
Skin – amphibian				
Skin – fish				
Skin – human				
Skin – large mammal				
Skin – small mammal				
Skin – reptile				
Teeth – human				
Teeth – large mammal				
Teeth – small mammal				
Teeth – reptile				