

Archaeological evaluation at 118 Kidderminster Road, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire



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Worcestershire Archaeology
Archive and Archaeology Service
The Hive, Sawmill Walk,
The Butts, Worcester
WR1 3PD

Date: 13th November 2015
Author: Tim Cornah tcornah@worcestershire.gov.uk
Illustrator: Laura Templeton ltempleton@worcestershire.gov.uk
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Tim Cornah

Summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at 118 Kidderminster Road, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire (NGR SO 94770 71061). It was undertaken on behalf of William Bedford of CgMs Consulting, whose client (Kendrick Homes) intends to construct 18 homes on the site. This report is intended to support a planning application.

Assessment of the archaeological context of the site suggested that there was some potential for prehistoric remains, whilst any features of a later date were most likely to either relate to agriculture or an earlier building on the frontage visible on the 19th century maps, neither of which would be considered to be significant.

The trenching undertaken on the site revealed only a single tree throw feature which contained a single piece of Iron Age pottery. No further archaeological features were present.

Report

1 Background

1.1 Reasons for the project

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at 118 Kidderminster Road, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire (NGR SO 94770 71061). It was undertaken on behalf of William Bedford of CgMs Consulting, whose client (Kendrick Homes) intends to construct 18 houses on the site.

The proposed development site is considered to include heritage assets and potential heritage assets, the significance of which may be affected by the application.

No brief had been prepared by the archaeological advisor to the planning authority (the Curator) but a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) I was produced (WA 2015) and validated by the curator.

The project also conforms to the *Standard and guidance: Archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2014) and the *Standards and guidelines for archaeological projects in Worcestershire* (WCC 2010).

The event reference for this project, given by the HER is WSM67395.

2 Aims

The evaluation aimed to identify any significant archaeological deposits within sample excavation trenches and assess their potential extent, nature and significance.

3 Methods

3.1 Personnel

The project was led by Timothy Cornah (BA (hons); MSc), who joined Worcestershire Archaeology in 2006 and has been practicing archaeology since 2003. The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Simon Woodiwiss (BA (hons); MCIfA). Illustrations were prepared by Laura Templeton (BA; PG Cert; MCIfA). Robert Hedge (MA Cantab; PCIfA) contributed the finds report.

3.2 Documentary research

Prior to fieldwork commencing a search was made of the Historic Environment Record (HER).

3.3 List of sources consulted

Cartographic sources

- 1840 Tithe Map
- 1883-4 Ordnance Survey Map 1:10,560
- 1902-3 Ordnance Survey Map 1:10,560
- 1925-9 Ordnance Survey map 1;10,560

Documentary sources

Published and grey literature sources are listed in the bibliography.

3.4 Fieldwork strategy

A detailed specification (WSI) has been prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2015).

Fieldwork was undertaken between the 3rd and 5th of November 2015. The site reference number and site code is WSM67395.

Three trenches, amounting to just over 72m² in area, were excavated over the site area of 0.60ha, representing a sample of 1.2%. The location of the trenches is indicated in Figure 2. The three trenches were ordered to gain as representative a sample of the site as possible and were not targeting any specific features. Trenching in the vicinity of the road at the southern end of the site was not possible due to the extant bungalow and gardens in this area, and would have been heavily disturbed by later development.

Deposits considered not to be significant were removed using a wheeled 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 Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012a). On completion of excavation, trenches were reinstated by replacing the excavated material.

The following techniques were considered for use but were not considered to be appropriate for this project; geophysical survey, fieldwalking and topographic/earthwork survey.

3.5 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.

3.6 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 The application site

4.1 Topography, geology and archaeological context

The site is located on a slight high point within the landscape, with valleys cut by streams to the west, south and east. That to the east runs through the centre of Bromsgrove. Within the vicinity of Trench 1, the ground level is about 94m AOD and at the southern end of Trench 3 it is about 96.7m AOD. The bedrock geology of the site is Bromsgrove Sandstone Formation and no superficial deposits are recorded (BGS 2015).

The following archaeological background is summarised from the Worcestershire Historic Environment Record and concerns recorded features and activities within a 500m radius of the site.

The potential for prehistoric activity within the area appears to be limited, as only one feature of this date is suggested. This is a possible ring ditch to the north-west of the site (WSM57586). A further linear anomaly to the north may also date to this period, but this has not been confirmed (WSM57593). A number of flint flakes have also been found within the area, but have not been more closely dated than a date range between the early Mesolithic and the late Iron Age periods (WSM41827).

No known use of the area is likely until the medieval period when the current alignment of Kidderminster Road is thought to have been established, along with the road pattern in the centre of Bromsgrove itself (WSM19682). The site is likely to have been part of Feckenham Forest throughout much of the medieval era (WSM42160), though use as part of a wider agricultural hinterland cannot be discounted.

This use of the site as agricultural was certainly established within the post-medieval period, as is shown on late 19th century maps. The wider field pattern is likely to have been as a result of enclosure, and this pattern largely remains. Two farms of this period are recorded within the area, Redcross Farm (WSM54920) and Cherry Orchard Farm (WSM54919). Place-name evidence does

also suggest that there was clay extraction to the east of the site at Potters Field (WSM34062). To the south of the site, Whitford Mill is considered to have origins within this period (WSM01339). Within the site itself, a building is shown alongside the road on the 1840 tithe map and the 1883-4 Ordnance Survey.

Within the 20th century, the site and its surrounds appear to have continued largely in agricultural use. Further to this, a rifle range was established to the south of the site (WSM34062) along with an air raid shelter (WSM27689). Within the later 20th a large part of the area and the site became part of the urban area of Bromsgrove.

4.2 Current land-use

The southern end of the site was used for the plot of a bungalow and its associated garden, whilst the rear was used as a field or paddock. A number of felled trees on the site suggest that the site was partially used as an orchard until recently.

5 Structural analysis

The trenches and features recorded are shown in Fig 2 and 3. The results of the structural analysis are presented in Appendix 1.

5.1.1 Phase 1: Natural deposits

The natural deposits (102, 202 and 302) primarily consisted of sands, but also had bands of weathered clay marl. These are described individually below.

5.1.2 Phase 2: Iron Age deposits

A single feature within Trench 3 (304, fill 303; Fig 3) was oval in plan with shallow, irregular and diffuse edges. This suggested that it was unlikely to be an excavated feature such as a pit, so was interpreted as resulting from a tree throw. The fill was light coloured and similar to the sub-soil deposits above, further supporting its interpretation as a natural feature. The fill, however, did contain a single piece of pottery.

5.1.3 Phase 3: Iron Age to post-medieval deposits

Subsoil deposits (101, 201 and 201) were not closely dated by artefacts, but post-date Phase 2 feature 304 and pre-date Phase 4 deposits. These deposits became deeper towards the northern end of the site; this is likely to reflect the increasing sand content within the natural substrate.

5.1.4 Phase 4: modern deposits

The modern deposits consisted of a topsoil layer (100, 200 and 300) which extended to a depth of up to 0.46m, suggesting there had been extensive agricultural use of the site until relatively recently. Within Trenches 2 and 3 there were further modern intrusions (see Fig 2). These features cut the topsoil deposits and contained material culture such as plastics, and were not recorded.

6 Artefactual Analysis

By Rob Hedge

Topsoil (100) contained a single sherd (11.5g) of late 18th century creamware (fabric 84.1), and a sherd (7.1g) of later 19th or 20th century stone china (fabric 85).

A feature fill (303) contained three small abraded conjoining sherds (5g) of Iron Age pottery. The fabric is vesicular, with frequent fine mica inclusions (<0.1mm). It is considered most likely to be Mudstone tempered ware (fabric 9), although given the similarities between this and Palaeozoic limestone tempered ware (fabric 4.1) when inclusions have dissolved, the latter cannot be ruled out. The former spans a date range of 5th century BC to mid-1st century AD, whilst the latter continues from the 5th century BC into the 2nd second century AD.

7 Synthesis

Assessment of the archaeological context of the site suggested that there was some potential for prehistoric remains. Whilst the town of Bromsgrove developed within the medieval era, little activity of this period was suggested on the site and is most likely to relate to agriculture only. This picture of agricultural use of the site and surrounding area continued into the post-medieval period with the establishment of farms and field systems. Within the site itself, a small building is visible on the 19th century maps though its function remained unclear.

The trenching undertaken on the site revealed only a single feature resulting from a tree throw which contained a single piece of Iron Age pottery (later broken). No further archaeological features were present.

7.1 Research frameworks

The site is likely to add little to local and wider research frameworks, given that it revealed little in the way of diagnostic archaeological features and material culture.

8 Significance

Any archaeological interest in the site is likely only to be with Phase 2 deposits. These were limited in extent to a single natural feature which contained a sherd (later broken) of Iron Age pottery. Whereas the date of the sherd conforms to the potential identified prior to the evaluation commencing, this is only one sherd, from within what is considered to be a naturally occurring feature, and is not considered to indicate the presence of any significant archaeological site.

9 The impact of the development

9.1 Impacts during construction

There is likely to be no significant archaeological impact for most of the site, given the lack of archaeological features. There may be some small impact at the southern end of the site where there is a low potential for further Iron Age features, though this area is also more heavily affected by later disturbance.

10 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.

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11 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, William Bedford of CgMs Consulting and Adrian Scruby of Worcestershire County Council.

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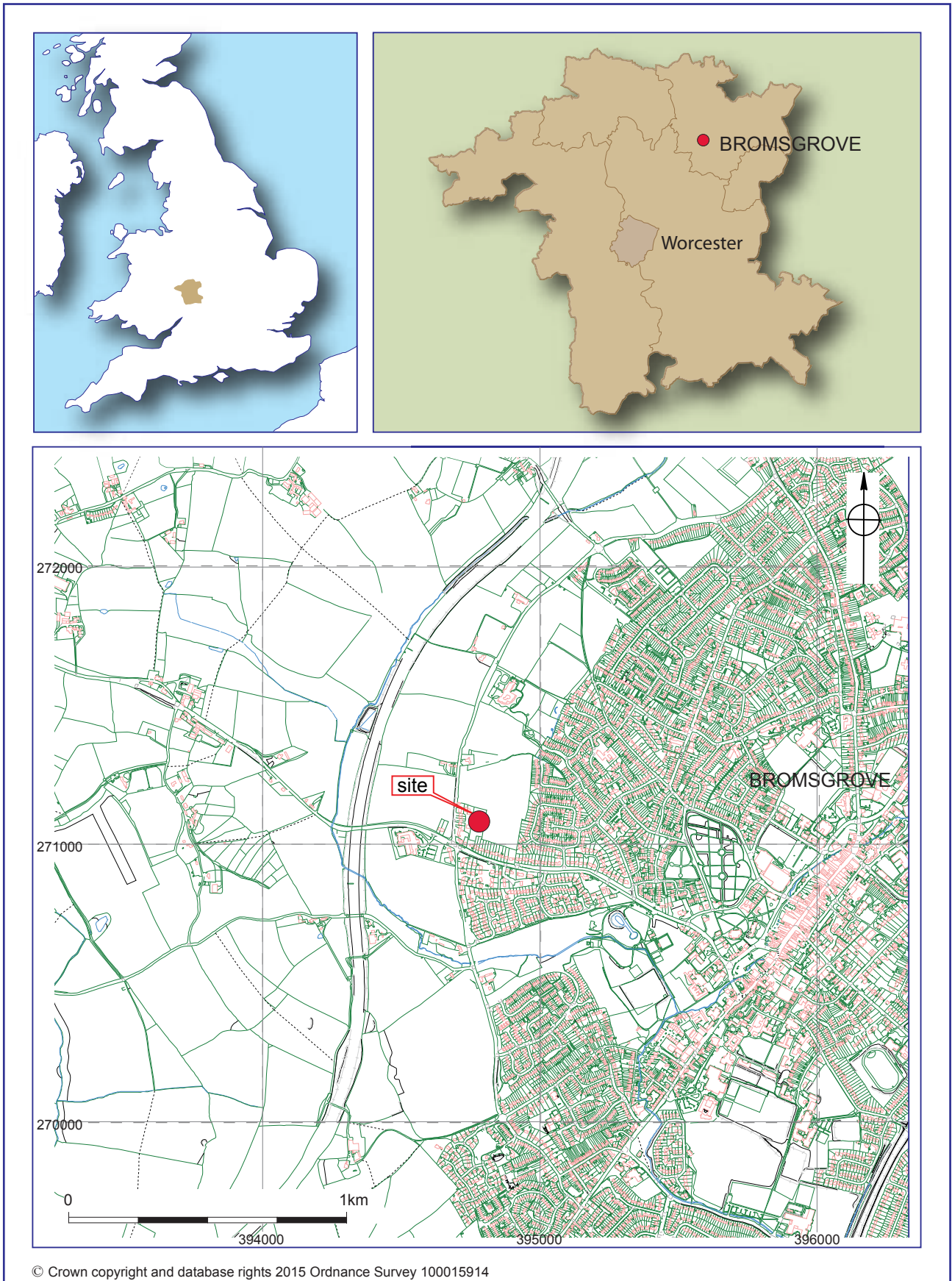
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Figures



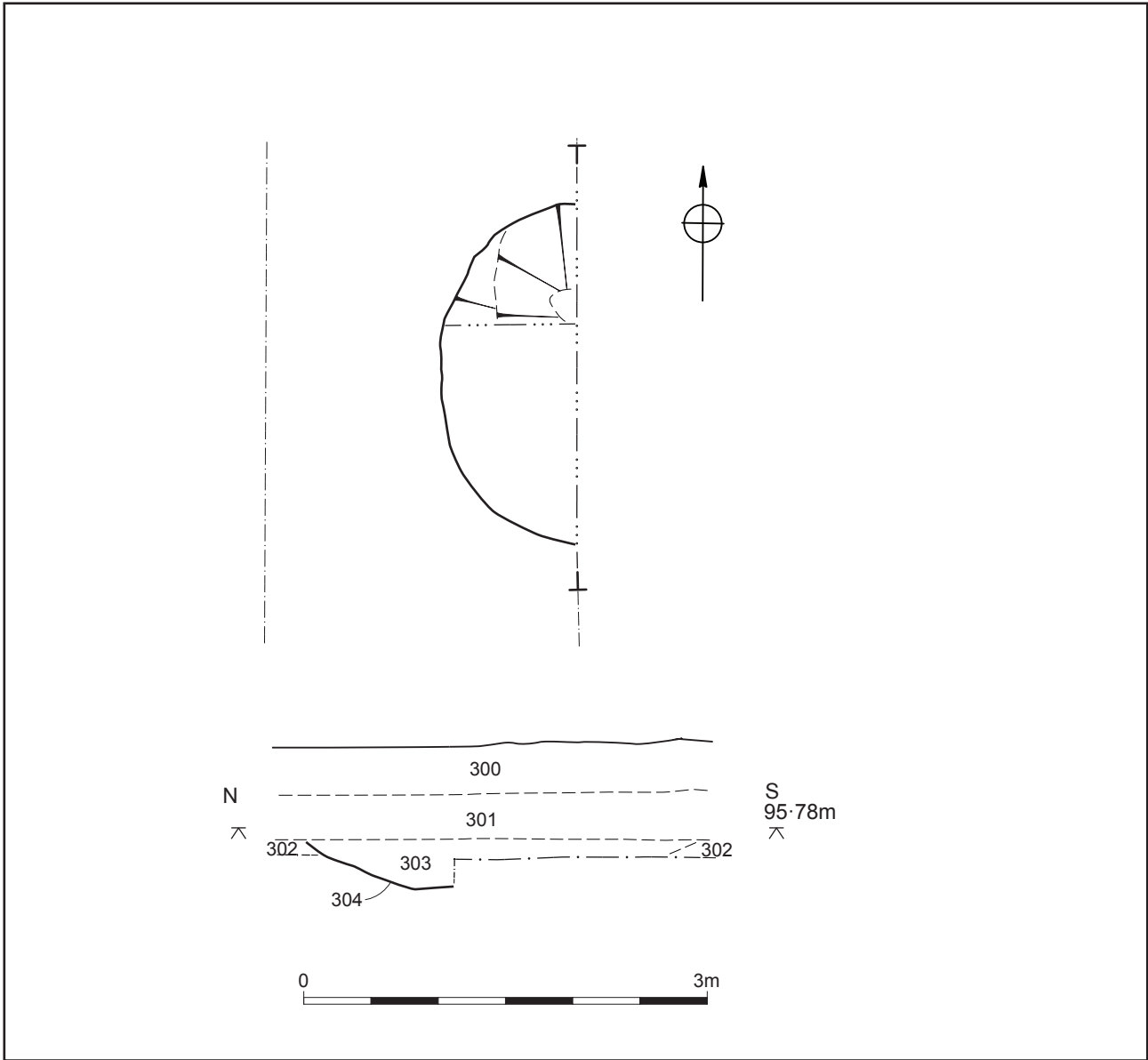
Location of the site

Figure 1



Trench locations and features

Figure 2



Pit 304, plan and section

Figure 3

Plates



Plate 1 The site looking south



Plate 2 Trench 1 looking west



Plate 3 Trench 2 looking north west



Plate 4 Trench 3 looking north



Plate 5 Tree throw [304] looking east.

Appendix 1 Trench descriptions

Trench 1

Maximum dimensions: Length: 30m Width: 2.4m Depth: 1.10m

Orientation: E-W

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
100	Topsoil	Mid grey brown silty sand with frequent rooting and occasional sub-angular stones	0-0.46m
101	Subsoil	Mid orangey brown silty sand with occasional rooting and frequent rounded and sub-rounded stones.	0.46-0.83m
102	Natural	Soft light greyish yellow sand with some red sand patches	0.83->1.10m

Trench 2

Maximum dimensions: Length: 30m Width: 2.40m Depth: 0.80-1.05m

Orientation: NW-SE

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
200	Topsoil	Mid grey brown silty sand with frequent rooting and occasional sub-angular stones	0-0.39m
201	Subsoil	Mid orangey brown silty sand with occasional rooting and frequent rounded and sub-rounded stones.	0.39-0.77m
202	Natural	Soft greyish yellow sand at the NW end but with red sand and clay marl banding within the remainder of the trench.	0.77->1.05m

Trench 3

Maximum dimensions: Length: 30m Width: 2.3m Depth: 0.79m

Orientation: E-W

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
300	Topsoil	Mid grey brown silty sand with frequent rooting and occasional sub-angular stones	0-0.33m
301	Subsoil	Mid orangey brown silty sand with occasional rooting and frequent rounded and sub-rounded stones.	0.33-0.63m
302	Natural	Soft greyish yellow sand at the southern end but with red sand and clay marl banding within the remainder of the trench.	0.63->0.79m
303	Fill of 304	Light orangey brown silty sand with occasional medium sub-rounded stones	0.63-1.01m
304	Tree throw cut	Oval feature with shallow irregular sides and diffuse edges.	0.63-1.01m

Appendix 2 Technical information

The archive (site code: WSM 67395)

The archive consists of:

- 1 Field progress reports AS2
- 1 Photographic records AS3
- 1 Drawing number catalogues AS4
- 1 Scale drawings
- 3 Trench record sheets AS41
- 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
