

# Archaeological Evaluation of land off Rumbush Lane, Dickens Heath, Solihull



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## **Archaeological evaluation at Land off Rumbush Lane, Dickens Heath Solihull**

Graham Arnold and Tom Rogers

### **Summary**

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at land off Rumbush Lane, Dickens Heath, Solihull (NGR 410996 275950). It was undertaken on behalf of CgMs Consulting, acting on behalf of their client Barratt and David Wilson Homes (Mercia).

The study site comprises land between Rumbush Lane and Braggs Farm Lane which is located to the southwest of Dickens Heath. The site comprised the buildings of Brick Kiln Farm and several fields of rough pasture.

Outline permission for demolition of existing buildings and the erection of 71 dwellings served via Kiln Lane and Rumbush Lane, open space, landscaping car park balancing ponds and other ancillary works has been granted by Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (ref 2014/1066) subject to conditions including the requirement of a programme of archaeological works.

An archaeological desk-based assessment was undertaken by CgMs Consulting prior to the evaluation stage. This identified that no designated heritage assets exist within the site although Brick Kiln Farm and an area of ridge and furrow are recorded on the Historic Environment Record. It was noted that the study site, being located in an area of heavy clay soils, former woodland and away from a major water source, was not well positioned for prehistoric or historic settlement.

Twelve trenches, the majority 25m long, were excavated across the site. Topsoil and subsoil were recorded consistently overlying natural glacial deposits in all trenches except to the south-east of the site where there was a build-up of modern made ground. One undated ditch which is thought to represent a field boundary was recorded in the centre of the site. This corresponds with a boundary depicted on the tithe map of 1840 but which had been realigned by the Ordnance Survey map of 1883.

All other features recorded comprised modern services, land drains and a tree bole. No archaeologically significant assets were recorded during the evaluation, or significant artefacts recovered.

## Report

### 1 Background

#### 1.1 Reasons for the project

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at Land off Rumbush Lane, Dickens Heath Solihull (NGR 410996, 275950). It was commissioned by CgMs Consulting, acting on behalf of their client Barratt and David Wilson Homes (Mercia). Outline permission for demolition of existing buildings and the erection of 71 dwellings served via Kiln Lane and Rumbush Lane, open space, landscaping car park balancing ponds and other ancillary works has been granted by Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (ref 2014/1066) subject to conditions including the requirement for a programme of archaeological works.

The project conforms to a generalised brief for archaeological evaluations in Warwickshire and Solihull provided by Anna Stocks of Warwickshire County Council. A Written Scheme of Investigation was produced (WA 2015) and approved by Anna Stocks.

The project also conforms to the *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2014).

The event reference for this project, given by the service is P4516.

### 2 Aims

The aims of the evaluation were:

- 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 Tim Cornah who joined the service in 2006 and has been practicing archaeology since 2004 assisted by Graham Arnold (BA, MSc) who joined Worcestershire Archaeology in 2009 and has been practicing archaeology since 2002. The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Tom Rogers (MSc). Graham Arnold and Tom Rogers wrote the report. Illustrations were prepared by Steve Rigby.

#### 3.2 Documentary research

An archaeological desk-based assessment (DBA) was undertaken by CgMs Consulting prior to the evaluation stage and this was consulted prior to fieldwork.

#### 3.3 List of sources consulted

##### *Documentary sources*

Published and grey literature sources are listed in the bibliography.

#### 3.4 Fieldwork strategy

A detailed specification was prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2015) and approved by Anna Stocks, Planning Archaeologist at Warwickshire County Council.

Fieldwork was undertaken between 23 February and 25 February. Twelve trenches, amounting to just over 570m<sup>2</sup> in area, were excavated over the site area of 2.7ha. The locations of the trenches are indicated in Figure 2.

Trenches were not undertaken in the southern limit of the site due to depth of modern made ground associated with the use of the land as a farm.

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

### **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.

#### **3.5.1 Artefact recovery policy**

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

### **3.6 Statement of confidence in the methods and results**

Trenches, particularly in the north-east of the site were subject to a degree of waterlogging which prevented a good photographic record being taken but generally 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**

Information on the topography, geology and archaeological context to the site is given in the Desk Based Assessment (CgMs 2013).

### **4.2 Current land-use**

The site is a former farm, with rough pasture, marshy ground to the north and areas of made ground and dumped material towards the southern limit.

## **5 Structural analysis**

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

### **5.1.1 Phase 1: Natural deposits**

Natural deposits comprising a firm yellow to orange grey sandy clay with orange mottling and frequent pockets of gravels was recorded in all trenches and is interpreted as glacial till. This was generally present at less than 0.5m below ground surface, but was deeper in Trench 9 where it had been buried by modern dumped material (900).

### **5.1.2 Phase 2: Undated deposits.**

Subsoil was recorded in all trenches comprising a firm plastic mid orangey grey silty clay with occasional sub-rounded stones. A single abraded fragment (62g) of roof tile retrieved from context 401 was dated to post-medieval period (R. Hedge, Finds Archaeologist, Worcestershire Archaeology, pers. comm.)

A ditch 1.6m wide and 0.35m deep was recorded in Trench 6 in the centre of the site running approximately north-south. No artefacts were retrieved from the fill of the ditch.

An undated tree bole (104) was recorded in Trench 1 at the north-western corner of the site.

### **5.1.3 Phase 3: Modern deposits**

Topsoil was recorded in all trenches although in Trench 9, it had been buried beneath a layer of made ground, described below. One 66g fragment of post-medieval brick and a 54g section of 20th century tile was recovered from context 100 in Trench 1 (R. Hedge, Finds Archaeologist, Worcestershire Archaeology, pers. comm.)

A layer of made ground (900) comprising a mixed deposit of clays gravels and rubble containing modern 'LBC' (London Brick Company) bricks and other modern materials including aluminium was recorded in Trench 9 overlying the buried topsoil.

## **6 Synthesis**

The 1840 Solihull and 1842 Tanworth Tithe Map (CgMs 2014, Fig 3) depicts a slightly different field boundary layout to that depicted on the Ordnance survey map of 1883 (CgMs 2013, Fig 4). The western boundary of the eastern parcel of the site (marked as 80 on the tithe map) extended further west prior to realignment prior to 1883. Ditch 604 in the centre of the site corresponds well with this former alignment and is therefore likely to represent a field boundary which was abandoned in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century.

All other features recorded comprised modern services, land drains and a tree bole. No archaeologically significant assets were recorded during the evaluation.

## **7 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 at land off Rumbush Lane, Dickens Heath, Solihull (NGR 410996 275950). It was undertaken on behalf of CgMs Consulting, acting on behalf of their client Barratt and David Wilson Homes (Mercia).*

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*Twelve trenches, the majority 25m long, were excavated across the site. Topsoil and subsoil were recorded consistently overlying natural glacial deposits in all trenches except to the south-east of the site where there was a build-up of modern made ground. One undated ditch which is thought to represent a field boundary was recorded in the centre of the site. This corresponds with a boundary depicted on the tithe map of 1840 but which had been realigned by the Ordnance Survey map of 1883.*



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*All other features recorded comprised modern services, land drains and a tree bole. No archaeologically significant assets were recorded during the evaluation, or significant artefacts recovered.*

## **8 Acknowledgements**

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project; Cathy Patrick, CgMs Consulting and Anna Stocks, Warwickshire County Council.

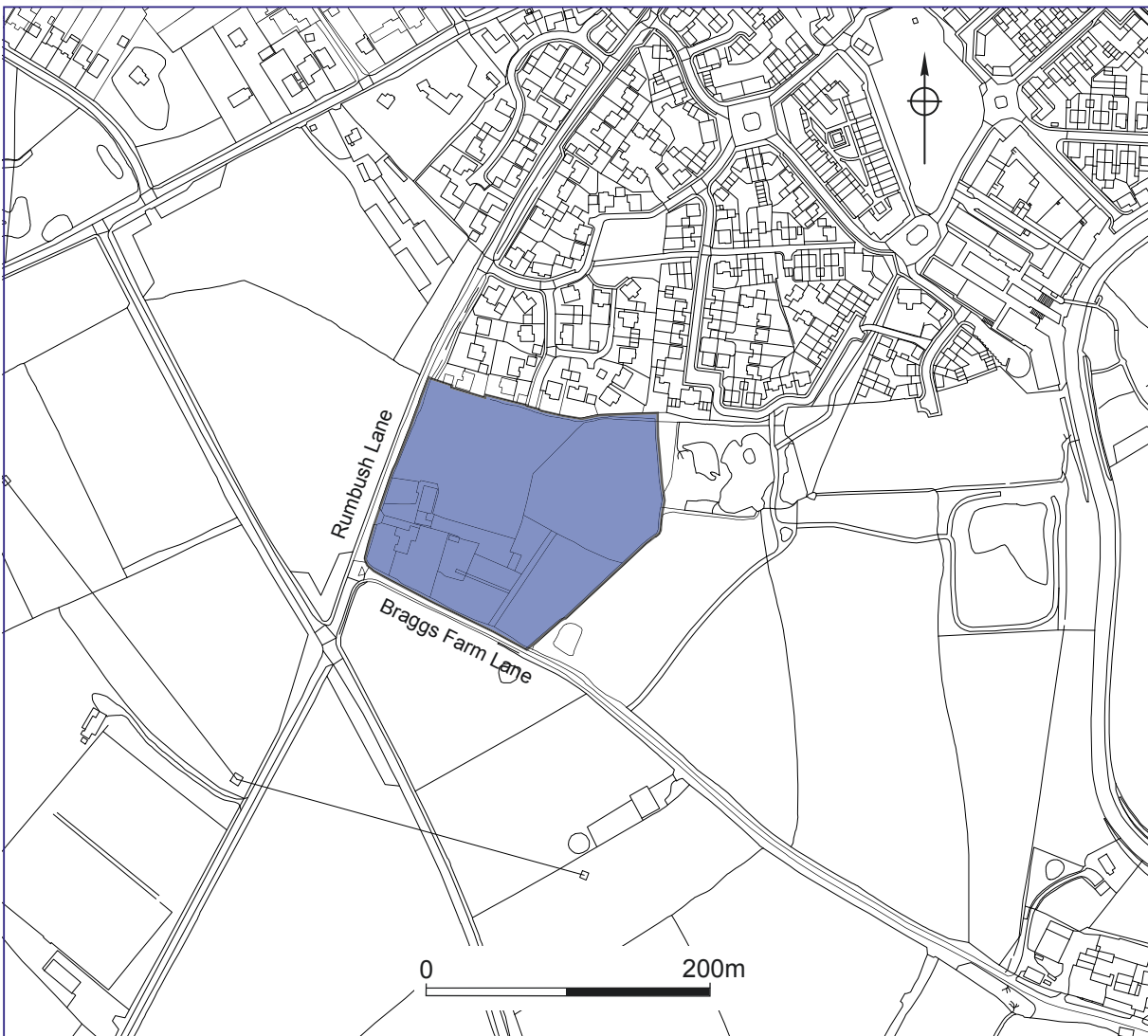
## **9 Bibliography**

CgMs 2013 *Archaeological desk-based assessment of Land off Rumbush Lane, Dickens Heath*,  
ClfA 2014 *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation*, Institute for Archaeologists  
Georisk Management 2013 *Geo-environmental Assessment, Rumbush Lane, Dickens Heath, Shirley, Solihull, B90 1RB*, unpublished report dated January 2013  
WA 2012 *Manual of service practice, recording manual*, Worcestershire Archaeology, Worcestershire County Council, report **1842**  
WA 2015 *Written Scheme of Investigation for an archaeological evaluation at Land off Rumbush Lane, Dickens Heath, Solihull*, Worcestershire Archaeology, Worcestershire County Council, unpublished document dated 29 January 2015, **P4516**



**Figures**

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Location of the site

Figure 1



Location of trenches

Figure 2

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## Plates



*Plate 1 Trench 3 in the north-west field of the site, looking west*



*Plate 2 North facing section of former hedgerow 604*

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*Plate 3 Trench 7 view south*



*Plate 4 Trench 9 contaminated ground oblique angle view of section. View southeast*

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## Appendix 1 Trench descriptions

### Trench 1

Maximum dimensions: Length: 25.00m Width: 1.80m Depth: 0.50m

Orientation: E - W

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
100	Topsoil	Firm dark blackish brown clayey silt with turf and frequent rooting. Unclear definition / clarity with subsoil. Occasional cbm inclusions in buried topsoil near surface.	0.00m - 0.25m
101	Subsoil	Firm plastic mid orangey grey silty clay with occasional sub-rounded stones.	0.25 – 0.35m
102	Natural	Firm yellow grey sandy clay with orange mottling and frequent pockets of gravels.	0.35 – 0.50m +
103	Fill of tree bole	Friable dark blackish grey clay silt with high humic content, roots and occasional stones. Similar to topsoil. Natural vegetational rooting	0.50 – 0.70m
104	Cut of tree bole	Irregular natural rooting with rounded edges.	0.50 – 0.70m

### Trench 2

Maximum dimensions: Length: 25.00m Width: 1.80m Depth: 0.60m

Orientation: N - S

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
200	Topsoil	Firm dark blackish brown clayey silt with turf and frequent rooting. Unclear definition / clarity with subsoil.	0 – 0.25m
201	Subsoil	Firm plastic mid orangey grey silty clay with occasional sub-rounded stones	0.25 – 0.50m
202	Natural	Firm yellow grey sandy clay with orange	0.50m +



Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
		mottling and frequent pockets of gravels. Cut by a modern ceramic land drain orientated east west at southern end.	

### Trench 3

Maximum dimensions: Length: 25.00m Width: 1.80m Depth: 0.50m

Orientation: E - W

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
300	Topsoil	Firm dark blackish brown clayey silt with turf and frequent rooting. Unclear definition / clarity with subsoil. Occasional cbm inclusions	0.00 - 0.25m
301	Subsoil	Firm plastic mid grey silty clay with occasional sub-rounded stones and gravel inclusions	0.25 – 0.45m
302	Natural	Firm yellow grey sandy clay with orange mottling and frequent pockets of gravels. Cut by a modern ceramic land drain orientated north-south at western end.	0.45m +

### Trench 4

Maximum dimensions: Length: 25.00m Width: 1.80m Depth: 0.70m

Orientation: N - S

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
400	Topsoil	Soft dark blackish grey clayey silt with high humic content. Made ground, dumping of material makes topsoil in this area thicker, particularly at the southern end. Frequent rooting. Occasional cbm inclusions in upper parts.	0.00 – 0.40m

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
401	Subsoil	Firm plastic light blueish grey silty clay with frequent sub-rounded pebbles.	0.40 – 0.60m
402	Natural	Compact, firm orangey yellow clay with occasional grey silt mottling / staining. Frequent patches of gravel.	0.50m +

**Trench 5**

Maximum dimensions: Length: 25.00m Width: 1.80m Depth: 0.50m

Orientation: E - W

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
500	Topsoil	Firm dark blackish brown clayey silt.	0.00 – 0.40m
501	Subsoil	Firm plastic mid orangey grey silty clay with frequent sub-rounded pebbles.	0.40 – 0.60m
502	Natural	Compact, firm orangey yellow clay with occasional grey silt mottling / staining. Frequent patches of gravel.	0.50m +

**Trench 6**

Maximum dimensions: Length: 25.00m Width: 1.80m Depth: 0.50m

Orientation: E - W

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
600	Topsoil	Friable dark brown clayey silt with occasional cbm	0.00 – 0.40m
601	Subsoil	Firm plastic mid grey brown silty clay with frequent sub-rounded pebbles.	0.25 – 0.45m

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
602	Natural	Compact, firm orangey yellow clay with occasional grey silt mottling / staining. Frequent patches of gravel.	0.45m +
603	Fill of ditch	Mid blueish grey clayey silt with moderate cobbles and frequent pebbles and frequent rooting. 1.60m wide and 0.35m deep.	0.50 – 0.85m
604	Cut of ditch	Undated drainage ditch or former field boundary with sloping sides and a concave base.	0.50 – 0.85m

### Trench 7

Maximum dimensions: Length: 25.00m Width: 1.80m Depth: 0.70m

Orientation: N - S

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
700	Topsoil	Dark blackish grey clayey silt.	0.00 – 0.25m
701	Subsoil	Firm plastic light blueish grey silty clay with frequent sub-rounded pebbles.	0.25 – 0.50m
702	Natural	Compact, firm orangey yellow clay with occasional grey silt mottling / staining. Frequent patches of gravel. Cut by geotechnical pit at southern end. Backfilled with mixed, redeposited natural.	0.50m +

### Trench 8

Maximum dimensions: Length: 10.00m Width: 1.80m Depth: 0.50m

Orientation: NW - SE

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
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Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
800	Topsoil	Dark greyish brown clayey silt with occasional sub-rounded gravels. Cut by plastic old disused water pipe	0.00 – 0.26m
801	Subsoil	Firm plastic mid orangey grey silty clay with frequent sub-rounded pebbles.	0.26 – 0.38m
802	Natural	Compact, firm orangey yellow clay with occasional grey silt mottling / staining from tree roots and water pipe service trench. Frequent patches of gravel.	0.38m +

**Trench 9**

Maximum dimensions: Length: 25.00m Width: 1.80m Depth: 0.70m

Orientation: N - S

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
900	Made ground	Very mixed deposit of clays gravels and rubble containing modern 'LBC' (London Brick Company) bricks and other modern materials such as aluminium.	0.00 – 1.10m
901	Former topsoil	Dark grey silty clay – contaminated so not inspected. Trench too unstable.	0.60 – 1.10m
902	Natural	Yellow clay with some gravel patches, some darker grey-blue staining from contaminants above.	0.90 – 1.20m +

**Trench 10**

Maximum dimensions: Length: 25.00m Width: 1.80m Depth: 0.70m

Orientation: N - S

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
1000	Topsoil	dark grey clayey silt with occasional small rounded stones and frequent rooting.	0.00 – 0.20m
1001	Subsoil	Firm mid orangey grey silty clay with frequent sub-rounded pebbles.	0.20– 0.38m
1002	Natural	Firm mid yellow orange sandy clay with grey mottling and frequent small and medium rounded stones	0.38m +

### Trench 11

Maximum dimensions: Length: 25.00m Width: 1.80m Depth: 0.50m

Orientation: E - W

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
1100	Topsoil	dark blackish grey clayey silt.	0.00 – 0.25m
1101	Subsoil	Firm dark orangey grey silty clay occasional sub-rounded pebbles.	0.25 – 0.50m
1102	Natural	Firm mid yellow orange sandy clay with grey mottling and frequent small and medium rounded stones	0.50m +

### Trench 12

Maximum dimensions: Length: 24.00m Width: 1.80m Depth: 0.60m

Orientation: E - W

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
1200	Topsoil	dark blackish grey clayey silt.	0.00 – 0.25m
1201	Subsoil	Firm mid orangey grey silty clay occasional	0.25 – 0.50m

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Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
		sub-rounded pebbles and some rooting.	
1202	Natural	Firm mid yellow orange sandy clay with grey mottling and frequent small and medium rounded stones.	0.50m +

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## **Appendix 2 Technical information**

### **The archive (site code: P4516)**

The archive consists of:

- |    |                                       |
|----|---------------------------------------|
| 2  | Context records AS1                   |
| 1  | Field progress reports AS2            |
| 2  | Photographic records AS3              |
| 65 | Digital photographs                   |
| 1  | Drawing number catalogues AS4         |
| 2  | Scale drawings                        |
| 12 | Trench record sheets AS41             |
| 1  | Copy of this report (bound hard copy) |

The project archive is intended to be placed at:

Warwickshire Museum

The Butts

Warwick Warwickshire, CV34 4SS

Tel. Warwick (01926) 412500

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