

ARCHAEOLOGICAL
EVALUATION
AT BELL LANE, LOWER
BROADHEATH,
WORCESTERSHIRE



© Worcestershire County Council

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

Date: 4th October 2013
Author: Elizabeth Connolly econnolly1@worcestershire.gov.uk
Contributors: Elizabeth Pearson
Illustrator: Carolyn Hunt
Project reference: P3990
Report reference: 2055
HER reference: WSM 49793

Contents
Summary

1

Report

1 Background	2
1.1 Reasons for the project	2
2 Aims	2
3 Methods	2
3.1 Personnel	2
3.2 Documentary research	2
3.3 Fieldwork strategy	2
3.4 Structural analysis	3
3.5 Artefact methodology	3
3.5.1 Artefact recovery policy	3
3.6 Environmental archaeology methodology, by Elizabeth Pearson	3
3.6.1 Sampling policy	3
3.6.2 Processing and analysis	3
3.6.3 Discard policy	3
3.7 Statement of confidence in the methods and results	3
4 The application site	3
4.1 Topography, geology and archaeological context.....	3
4.2 Current land-use	4
5 Structural analysis	4
5.1.1 Phase 1: Natural deposits	4
5.1.2 Phase 2: Undated deposits	4
5.1.3 Phase 3: Modern deposits.....	4
5.2 Environmental analysis, by Elizabeth Pearson	4
6 Synthesis	5
7 Significance	5
7.1 Nature of the archaeological interest in the site	5
7.2 Relative importance of the archaeological interest in the site	5
7.3 Physical extent of the archaeological interest in the site.....	5
8 The impact of the development	5
8.1 Impacts during construction	5
8.2 Impacts on sustainability	5
9 Publication summary	6
10 Acknowledgements	6
11 Bibliography	6

Evaluation at Bell Lane, Lower Broadheath, Worcestershire

Author: Elizabeth Connolly

With contributions by Elizabeth Pearson

Summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at Bell Lane, Lower Broadheath, Worcestershire (NGR SO 81206 56836). It was undertaken on behalf of Taylor Wimpey Midlands Limited, who intend residential development on the site for which a planning application will be submitted to Malvern Hills District Council.

The site is located close to the centre of Lower Broadheath, on the corner of the B4204 and Bell Lane which leads to Upper Broadheath. The land rises very gradually to the centre of the site and then gradually slopes down to the north-west. It lies on the fifth terrace of the River Severn which overlies the Eldersfield Mudstone Formation.

Nine trenches were excavated across the development site to achieve a 4% sample. Natural deposits comprising pinkish-red clayey sand and gravel with patches of sand were recorded throughout the site at a depth of 0.44-0.58m below ground level.

No archaeological remains were recorded in seven of the trenches. However, in two trenches in the north-western part of the site a linear feature and a pit or ditch terminus were recorded. The linear feature was identified in two trenches, one of which showed the return of what appears to be an enclosing element. This linear feature appears to run NE-SW, changing orientation to NW-SE, measuring up to 2.26m wide and 0.95m deep. A pit or ditch terminus was also recorded in this area. No dateable material was recovered from these features.

It is concluded that the sharp turn on the ditch is suggestive of an enclosure ditch, possibly dug to contain livestock, though of uncertain date, although it is noted that the well drained gravels and sands in this locality are commonly associated with prehistoric or Romano-British settlement.

Report

1 Background

1.1 Reasons for the project

An evaluation was undertaken at Bell Lane, Lower Broadheath, Worcestershire (NGR SO 81206 56836). It was commissioned by Taylor Wimpey UK Limited, who intend residential development on the site for which a planning application will be submitted to Malvern Hills District Council.

The project conforms to a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2013).

The project also conforms to the *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (IfA 2009) and *Standards and guidelines for archaeological projects in Worcestershire* (WCC 2010).

The event reference for this project, given by the HER is 49793.

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 fieldwork element of the project was led by Andrew Mann MSc who joined Worcestershire Archaeology in 2001 and has been practicing archaeology since 2001. The report was written by Elizabeth Connolly, who joined Worcestershire Archaeology in 2013 and has been practising archaeology since 1999. The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Tom Rogers MSc. Illustrations were prepared by Carolyn Hunt and Elizabeth Pearson contributed the environmental assessment.

3.2 Documentary research

The desk-based assessment (DBA) carried out by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2012) on behalf of Taylor Wimpey Ltd was consulted prior to field work being carried out.

3.3 Fieldwork strategy

A detailed specification has been prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2013). Fieldwork was undertaken between 23rd and 25th September 2013. The site reference number and site code is WSM 49793.

Nine trenches, amounting to just over 810m² in area, were excavated over the site area of c2.1ha, representing a sample of 4%. The location of the trenches is indicated in Figure 2. 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 Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012a). 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 and ecofactual evidence, allied to the information derived from other sources.

3.5 Artefact methodology

3.5.1 Artefact recovery policy

The artefact recovery policy conformed to standard Service practice (WA 2012a; appendix 2), although in the event none were recovered from the site, the only artefacts encountered being infrequent post-medieval pottery within the topsoil likely to have been deposited through the process of manuring and therefore not directly relevant to the archaeological potential of the site.

3.6 Environmental archaeology methodology, by Elizabeth Pearson

3.6.1 Sampling policy

Samples were taken according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (2012a). A single sample from an undated basal ditch fill (504) was taken from the site.

3.6.2 Processing and analysis

The sample was processed by flotation using a Siraf tank. The flot was 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 residue was scanned by eye and the abundance of each category of environmental remains estimated. A magnet was also used to test for the presence of hammer scale. The flot was scanned using a low power MEIJI stereo light microscope.

3.6.3 Discard policy

As no identifiable material has been identified the following material has been discarded.

- Sample residue and flot

3.7 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 close to the centre of Lower Broadheath, on the corner of the B4204 and Bell Lane which leads to Upper Broadheath. The following is a summary of relevant information taken from the desk-based assessment of the site (WA 2012)

The site rises very gradually to the centre and then gradually slopes down to the north-west. The site lies on the fifth terrace of the River Severn (sand and gravel) which overlies the Eldersfield Mudstone Formation.

An unlocated prehistoric flint, possibly a scraper (WSM 42283) was found near Broadheath, possibly around 1km from the development site. Some field boundaries in the area though not of the development site, form the shape of an inverted S which is a relict of medieval strip field agriculture.

The archaeological character of Broadheath is described as dispersed 19th Century settlement with some earlier domestic buildings and late 20th Century infill and expansion, particularly at Lower Broadheath (Mindykowski et al, quoted in WA 2012).

A 1747 map of Broadheath shows the development as occupying a significant area of land known as 'The Broadheath', presumably common land. This area is shown as enclosed on the 1841 Tithe Map. The development site is shown as a single field on the first edition Ordnance Survey map (1885), The 1927-8 map shows the field divided into two with a narrow strip of woodland/orchard, which existed until fairly recently.

4.2 Current land-use

The development site is currently under crop (broccoli).

5 Structural analysis

The trenches and features recorded are shown in Figs 2-4. The results of the structural analysis are presented in Appendix 1.

5.1.1 Phase 1: Natural deposits

Natural deposits were uniform throughout the site and consisted of pinkish-red clayey sand and gravel with patches of blocky purple sandy clay and of pale yellow sand, recorded throughout the site at a depth of 0.44-0.58m below ground level. (Plate 1)

5.1.2 Phase 2: Undated deposits

In the northern half of Trench 4 the natural substrate was cut by two features. A pit or ditch terminus (404) (Plate 2) was recorded; the full extent of which was not revealed as it extended beyond the limit of excavation (width 0.56m, length 0.74m depth 0.28m) It was filled with (403) a greenish-grey sandy silt which does not resemble the geology of the area.

A linear feature (406) (Plate 3) was recorded to the north west of (404), oriented NE-SW, measuring 2.26 wide and 0.95m deep, it had a primary fill of redeposited natural material with charcoal flecking (408) as well as two secondary fills (405) and (407).

In the north-western end of Trench 5 the corner of a linear feature (505) (Plate 4) was recorded, measuring 1.17m wide and 0.55m deep. The orientation of this feature changed from NE-SW to NW-SE within the trench. This feature was filled with a primary fill (504) of light bluey grey sandy clay, similar to one of the secondary fills (407) of linear feature (406), and an upper fill (503); a redeposited mix of the sandy subsoil and a greyish clay. Features (406) and (505) could be related, and form a boundary or enclosure ditch.

5.1.3 Phase 3: Modern deposits

Topsoil throughout the site was a mid to light brown silty sand, containing frequent roots, occasional stones and occasional modern ceramic building material and china. It was recorded at a depth of from 0.25 to 0.33m below ground level.

The subsoil was a light yellowish orange gritty sand recorded to a depth of from 0.45-0.58m below ground level.

Modern land drains were recorded in Trenches 2 and 7 while at the north western end of Trench 8 a modern drain, possibly a sewer was recorded.

5.2 Environmental analysis, by Elizabeth Pearson

The sample was dominated by root fragments, and apart from unidentified small fragments of charcoal, the only environmental material noted was an insect body part. The root fragments and insect fragment are unlikely to be contemporary with the ditch deposit as they are only likely to

have survived in waterlogged or anaerobic conditions. The soils on the site were dry and sandy. The sample is undated, and no material suitable for radiocarbon dating was recovered.

6 Synthesis

The evaluation has shown that whilst the majority of the site appears to be devoid of archaeological features, an undated ditch and pit or ditch terminus survive in the north western part. No material was retrieved from sample sections excavated across these features from which a construction date could be derived. The fills of the features appeared to be archaeologically quite sterile, in that no artefacts were retrieved and there was little charcoal, suggesting that they were not associated with settlement in the immediate area.

The sharp turn on the ditch within trench 5 is suggestive of a feature dug to enclose, rather than drain an area. The ditch is reasonable large, perhaps sufficient to confine livestock, although it is possible that it survives as the truncated remains of a larger ditch more akin to the kind commonly associated with late prehistoric or Romano-British settlement in this area. The site lies on well drained sands and gravels which is known to have attracted settlement in these periods, although there is no substantial watercourse in the vicinity. A stock enclosure may equally have been constructed in later periods for example in the medieval period when such a feature may have functioned as a pound or paddock on the common field.

Further archaeological fieldwork is required before this feature can be adequately characterised and dated.

7 Significance

7.1 Nature of the archaeological interest in the site

Archaeological evidence recovered from the site comprises a ditch (406) (505) and a pit or ditch terminus (404). Due to the sterility of the fills of both features, and absence of artefactual evidence it does not appear as if they are associated with settlement, and it is not possible to date them. However the corner of ditch (406) and (505) suggests that it functioned as an enclosing element, possibly as an Iron Age, Romano-British or medieval stock enclosure.

7.2 Relative importance of the archaeological interest in the site

It is difficult to assess the relative importance of the archaeological evidence from this site as it is undated. Further investigation in this part of the site may shed more light on the nature of the possible enclosure and associated feature.

7.3 Physical extent of the archaeological interest in the site

The archaeological features recorded were concentrated in the north west of the development site where they were cut in to natural substrate at a depth of 0.45-0.58m below present ground level. They survive to a depth of approximately 1.4-1.5m below ground level. It is likely that if the features discovered relate to an enclosure, they extend north-west beyond the limit of the site.

8 The impact of the development

8.1 Impacts during construction

The archaeological features identified in the course of the evaluation are shallow (c. 0.47m-0.58m below the current ground surface) and are therefore likely to be vulnerable to construction of foundations and/or service runs associated with development.

8.2 Impacts on sustainability

The historic environment is a non-renewable resource and therefore cannot be directly replaced. However mitigation through recording and investigation also produces an important research dividend that can be used for the better understanding of the area's history and contribute to local and regional research agendas (cf NPPF, DCLG 2012, section 141).

9 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 Bell Lane, Lower Broadheath, Worcestershire (NGR SO 81206 56836). It was undertaken on behalf of Taylor Wimpey Midlands Limited, who intend residential development on the site for which a planning application will be submitted to Malvern Hills District Council.

The site is located close to the centre of Lower Broadheath, on the corner of the B4204 and Bell Lane which leads to Upper Broadheath. The land rises very gradually to the centre of the site and then gradually slopes down to the north-west. It lies on the fifth terrace of the River Severn which overlies the Eldersfield Mudstone Formation.

Nine trenches were excavated across the development site to achieve a 4% sample. Natural deposits comprising pinkish-red clayey sand and gravel with patches of sand were recorded throughout the site at a depth of 0.44-0.58m below ground level.

No archaeological remains were recorded in seven of the trenches. However, in two trenches in the NW part of the site a linear feature and a pit or ditch terminus were recorded. The linear feature was identified in two trenches, one of which showed the return of what appears to be an enclosing element. This linear feature appears to run NE-SW, changing orientation to NW-SE, measuring up to 2.26m wide and 0.95m deep. A pit or ditch terminus was also recorded in this area. No dateable material was recovered from these features.

It is concluded that the sharp turn on the ditch is suggestive of an enclosure ditch, possibly dug to contain livestock, though of uncertain date, although it is noted that the well drained gravels and sands in this locality are commonly associated with prehistoric or Romano-British settlement.

10 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, Rob Beattie, Technical Director for Taylor Wimpey West Midlands; William Brearley, Principal Planner at Cerda Planning and Mike Glyde, Historic Environment Planning Officer, Worcestershire County Council.

11 Bibliography

DCLG 2012 *National Planning Policy Framework*, Department for Communities and Local Government

DCLG/DCMS/EH 2010 *PPS5 Planning for the historic environment: historic environment planning practice guide*, Department for Communities and Local Government/Department for Culture, Media and Sport/English Heritage

IfA 2012 *Standard and guidance for historic environment desk-based assessment*, Institute for Archaeologists

IfA 2009 *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation*, Institute for Archaeologists

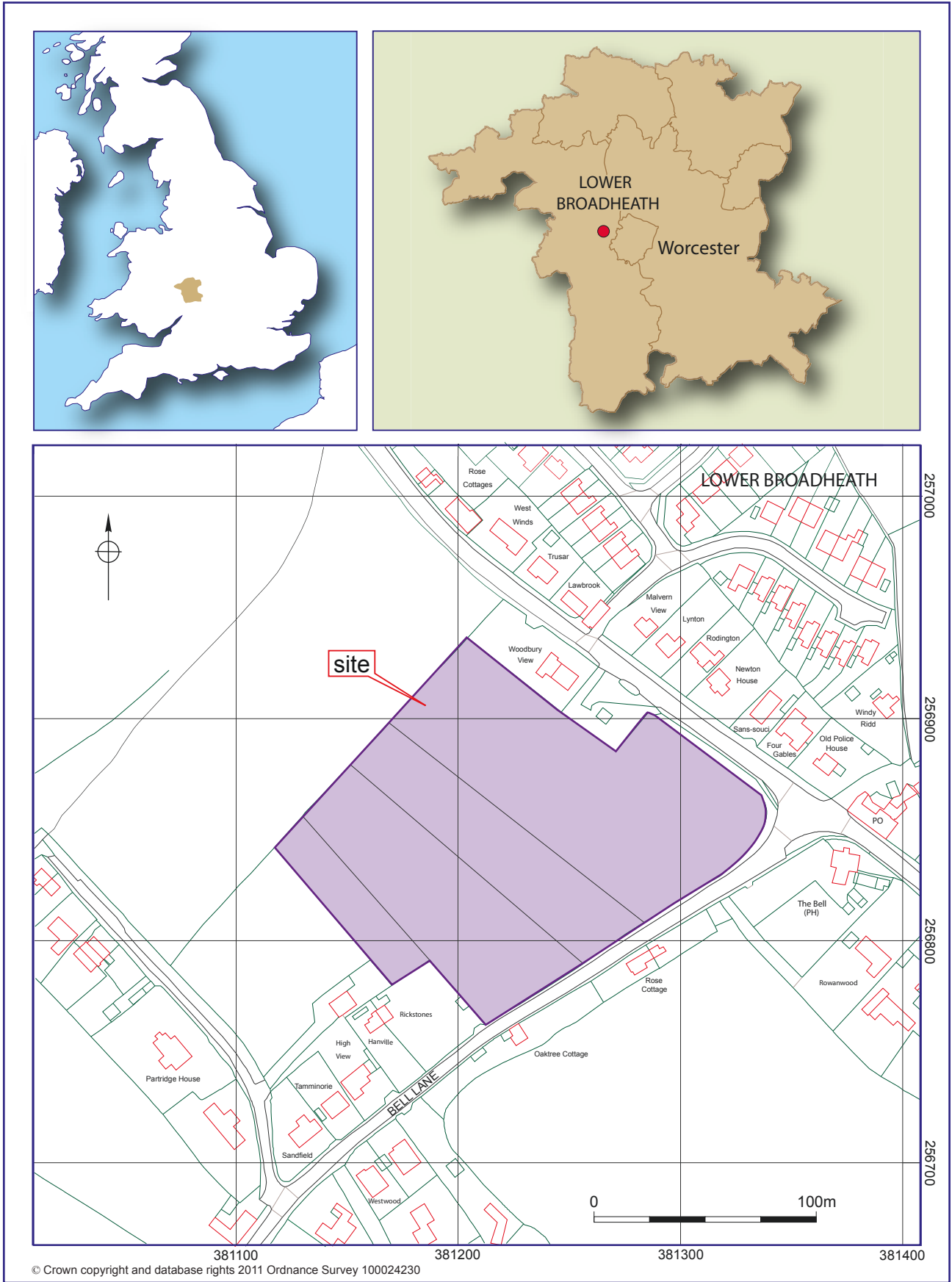
WA 2012a *Manual of service practice, recording manual*, Worcestershire Archaeology, report **1842**

WA 2013 *Proposal for an archaeological evaluation at Bell Lane, Broadheath, Worcestershire*, Worcestershire Archaeology, Worcestershire County Council, unpublished document dated 6th September 2013, P3990

WCC 2010 *Standards and guidelines for archaeological projects in Worcestershire*, Planning Advisory Section, Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service, Worcestershire County Council unpublished report **604**, amended July 2012

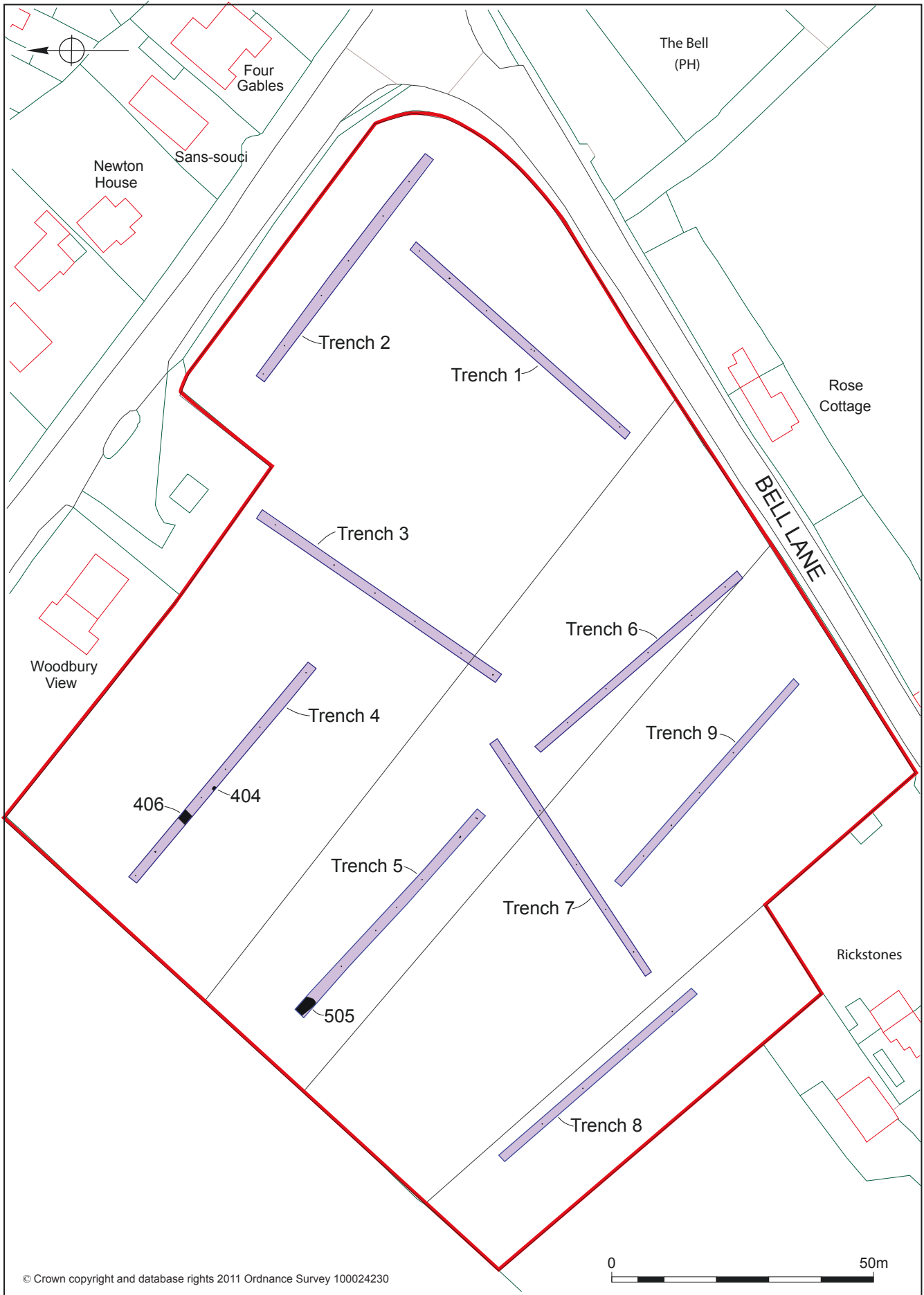
WA 2012, *Desk-based Assessment at Bell Lane, Lower Broadheath Worcestershire*, Simon Woodiwiss, Worcestershire Archaeology unpublished report **1957**

Figures



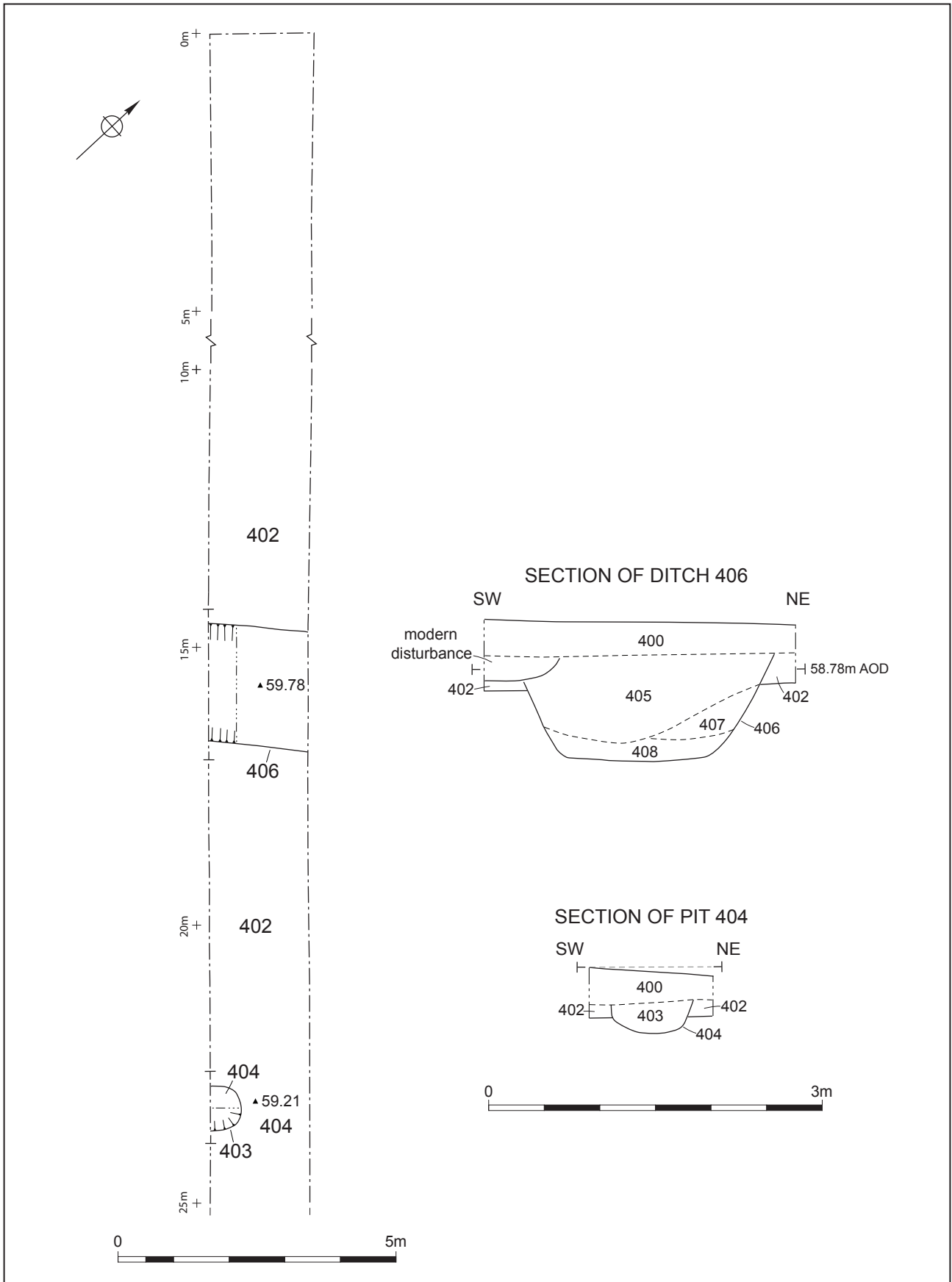
Location of the site

Figure 1



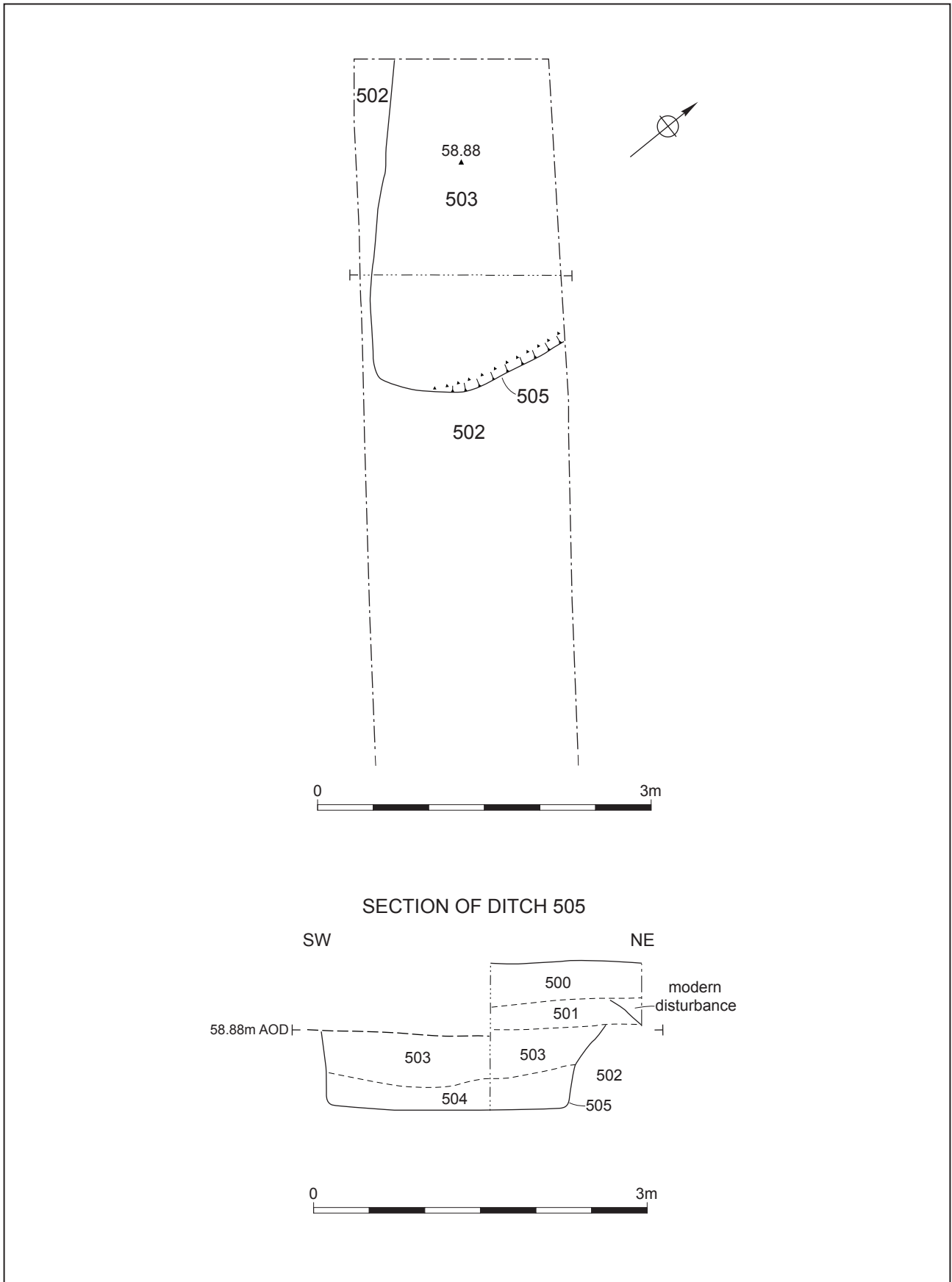
Trench location plan

Figure 2



Trench 4: plan and sections

Figure 3



Trench 5: plan and sections

Figure 4

Plates



Plate 1. Trench 2 facing NW



Plate 2. Pit or ditch terminus (404), facing NW



Plate 3. Ditch (406), facing NW



Plate 4 Ditch (505) facing NW

Appendix 1 Trench descriptions

Trench 1

Maximum dimensions: Length: 54.75m Width: 1.80m Depth: 0-0.55m

Orientation: NE-SW

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
100	Topsoil	Mid-light brown silty sand, soft and friable. Contains frequent roots and occasional modern ceramic building material and china (not collected). Occasional to moderate small to medium sub rounded to rounded stones; 10-15%	0-0.25m
101	Subsoil	Light pale yellowish-orange, gritty, coarse sand. Firm and cohesive. Very sterile. Moderate small sub angular stone, 10%. Medium rounded stone, 10%.	0.25m-0.50m
102	Natural	Light pinkish-red clayey sand and gravel. Very firm and cohesive. Contains patches of firm, blocky purple sandy clay, or patches of light pale yellow sand. Very sterile.	0.50m +

Trench 2

Maximum dimensions: Length: 53.33m Width: 1.80m Depth: 0-0.52m

Orientation: NW/SE

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
200	Topsoil	Same as (100)	0-0.26m
201	Subsoil	Same as (200)	0.26-0.52m
203	Natural	Same as (102)	0.52m +

Trench 3

Maximum dimensions: Length: 55.46m Width: 1.85m Depth: 0-0.52m

Orientation: NE/SW

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
300	Topsoil	Same as (100)	0-0.33m
301	Subsoil	Same as (101)	0.33-0.58m
302	Natural	Same as (102)	0.58m +

Trench 4

Maximum dimensions: Length: 53.44m Width: 1.85m Depth: 0-0.55m

Orientation: NW-SE

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
400	Topsoil	Same as (100)	0-0.27m
401	Subsoil	Same as (101). Intermittent across the trench, visible at end of trench and in patches across extent.	0.27-0.47m
402	Natural	Same as (102). Becoming much sandier 15m from the NW end of the trench.	0.47m +
403	Fill of (404)	Soft light greenish-grey sandy silt. Visible in section. The fill does not resemble the natural geology of the area. Depth 0.28m.	0.47m-0.75m
404	Small pit or ditch terminus	Sub-circular in plan. The full extent of the feature was not revealed, as it extended beyond the limit of excavation. The cut is sharp in section, but the top of the feature has been truncated by ploughing. The sides of the cut slope gradually, with no clear break of angle into the base. The base is rounded, a continuation of the slope from the sides. Width 0.56m +; Length 0.74m, Depth 0.28m.	0.47m-0.75m

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
405	Upper fill of(406)	Friable to soft mid-brownish yellow clayey sand with small patches of blueish grey clay. Top of fill lost to ploughing or landscaping. Occasional sub-rounded pebbles (medium). Depth 0.7m; Width 2.26m.	0.47m-1.17m
406	Cut of ditch, possibly the same as (505)	Linear U-shaped ditch, with a mostly flat base, running NE-SW. Some truncation to NW of cut. Possibly the same as ditch cut (505). Possibly a boundary or enclosure ditch. Depth 0.95m; Width 2.26m.	0.47m-1.42m
407	Secondary fill of (406) (lense within (405))	Soft to plastic light blueish grey sandy clay. Possibly a water deposited fill equivalent to (504). It is mixed with (405) and does not fully seal the ditch. Depth 0.38m; Width 0.8m.	0.79m-1.17m
408	Primary fill of (406)	Very soft mid-pinkish red sandy clay with occasional flecks of charcoal. Redeposited natural as the primary fill of (406). Depth 0.39m; Width 1.89m.	1.03-1.42m

Trench 5

Maximum dimensions: Length: 52m Width: 1.85m Depth: 0-0.50m

Orientation: NW-SE

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
500	Topsoil	Same as (100)	0-0.24m
501	Subsoil	Same as (101)	0.24-0.44m
502	Natural	Same as (102)	0.44m +
503	Top fill of (505)	Plastic to soft mid-greyish yellow sandy clay, with lenses of light-pinkish red sandy clay, containing occasional rounded	0.44m-0.8m

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
		pebbles. Fill of (505); it is a redeposited mix of the sandy subsoil and a greyish clay. Depth 0.36m; width 1.17m +; L 1.78m +	
504	Primary fill of (505)	Plastic light bluey grey sandy clay, possibly a water deposited fill, equivalent to (407). Depth 0.22m; Width 1.17m +, length 1.78m +	0.8-0.99m
505	Cut of ditch	Ditch cut, orientation turns from NE-SW to NW-SE within the trench. Depth 0.55m; Width 1.17m +; L 1.78m+	0.44-0.99m

Trench 6

Maximum dimensions: Length: 52m Width: 1.85m Depth: 0-0.49m

Orientation: NW-SE

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
600	Topsoil	Same as (100)	0-0.29m
601	Subsoil	Same as (101)	0.29-0.44m
602	Natural	Same as (102)	0.44m +

Trench 7

Maximum dimensions: Length: 53.5m Width: 1.85m Depth: 0-0.60m

Orientation: NE-SW

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
700	Topsoil	Same as (100)	0-.27m
701	Subsoil	Same as (101)	0.27-0.57m
702	Natural	Same as (102)	0.57m +

Trench 8

Maximum dimensions: Length: 50m Width: 1.85m Depth: 0-0.44m

Orientation: NW-SE

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
800	Topsoil	Same as (100)	0-0.23m
801	Subsoil	Same as (101)	0.23-0.39m
802	Natural	Same as (102)	0.39m +

Trench 9

Maximum dimensions: Length: 52m Width: 1.85m Depth: 0-0.54m

Orientation: NW-SE

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
900	Topsoil	Same as (100)	0-0.28m
901	Subsoil	Same as (101)	0.28-0.45m
902	Natural	Same as (102)	0.45m +

Appendix 2 Technical information

The archive (site code: WSM 49793)

The archive consists of:

- 1 Photographic records AS3
- 52 Digital photographs
- 1 Drawing number catalogues AS4
- 4 Scale drawings
- 1 Context number catalogues AS5
- 1 Sample records AS17
- 1 Sample number catalogues AS18
- 9 Trench record sheets AS41
- 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