

# Archaeological evaluation of land adjacent to the Vernon Arms, Droitwich Road, Hanbury, Worcestershire



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## **Archaeological evaluation of land adjacent to the Vernon Arms, Droitwich Road, Hanbury, Worcestershire**

Tom Vaughan

### **Summary**

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken of land adjacent to the Vernon Arms, Droitwich Rd, Hanbury, Worcestershire (NGR SO 9648 6293). It was undertaken on behalf of Endine Properties Limited, who intends to develop the site for residential use, for which a planning application has been submitted.

Six trenches were excavated on a grid array across the site. The natural brownish red clay was observed at 0.26-0.45m below the present ground surface, below a shallow subsoil and topsoil. No significant archaeological deposits, structures or horizons were identified, nor finds retrieved. There was no evidence for a continuation of the Roman cropmark activity identified to the south (WSM 36236). The site appears to have remained in agricultural use, under orchard until the late 1950s or early 1960s, and then under pasture to the present day. The postholes, for a series of wooden posts, probably sub-divided the field to form paddocks, although this is not indicated on the cartographic sources.

## Report

### 1 Background

#### 1.1 Reasons for the project

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken of land adjacent to the Vernon Arms, Droitwich Road, Hanbury, Worcestershire (NGR SO 9648 6293). It was commissioned by Endine Properties Limited, who intends to develop the site for residential use, for which a planning application has been submitted to Wychavon District Council (reference W/11/00744).

The proposed development site is considered to include potential heritage assets with archaeological interest, the significance of which may be affected by the application (WSM 36236).

The project conforms to a brief prepared by Worcestershire County Council (WCC 2014) and for which a project proposal (including detailed specification) was produced (WA 2014).

The project also conforms to the *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (IfA 2008) and *Standards and guidelines for archaeological projects in Worcestershire* (WCC 2010).

The event reference for this project, given by the HER is WSM 57559.

### 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 was led by Andrew Walsh (BSc, MSc, Dip Arch, AlfA, FSA Scot); who joined Worcestershire Archaeology in 2013 and has been practicing archaeology since 2004. The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Tom Vaughan (BA, MA, AlfA), who also prepared the report. Illustrations were prepared by Laura Templeton (BA, PGCert, MIfA).

#### 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*

- 1838 Hanbury Tithe plan, transcribed by D. Guyatt, scale 1:10,000
- 1885 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map, scale 1:2,500
- 1903-04, Ordnance Survey map, scale 1:2,500
- 1928, Ordnance Survey map, scale 1:2,500
- 1954, Ordnance Survey map, scale 1:10,560
- 1964-74, Ordnance Survey map, scale 1:2,500
- 1979, Ordnance Survey map, scale 1:10,000

##### *Documentary sources*

Published and grey literature sources are listed in the bibliography.

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### **3.4 Fieldwork strategy**

A detailed specification has been prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2014).

Fieldwork was undertaken between 26 and 27 August 2014. The site reference number and site code is WSM 57559.

Six trenches, amounting to just over 140m<sup>2</sup> in area, were excavated over the site area of 3,700m<sup>2</sup>, representing a sample of 3.8%. The location of the trenches is indicated in Figure 2.

Deposits considered not to be significant were removed under archaeological supervision using a wheeled excavator, employing a toothless bucket. 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). 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.

### **3.6 Artefact methodology**

#### **3.6.1 Artefact recovery policy**

Artefacts were recovered according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012). In the event a small assemblage of residual later post-medieval and modern debris was noted, but not retained for further analysis.

### **3.7 Environmental archaeology methodology**

#### **3.7.1 Sampling policy**

Sampling was undertaken according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012). In the event no deposits were identified which were considered to be suitable for environmental analysis.

### **3.8 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. The locations of the trenches was limited slightly, due to the presence of overhead cables, however this did not prevent all areas of the site from being investigated.

## **4 The application site**

### **4.1 Topography, geology and archaeological context**

The site comprises a north-east to south-west aligned rectangular field, alongside the Saltway, B4090, Droitwich Road, to the south of the main focus of the village of Hanbury. It is bounded by residential properties to the north-east and to the south-west (the latter known as Woolmere Green). A modern brick and timber retaining wall forms the boundary to the south-east.

The site is largely flat, and the predominant soils belong to the Brockhurst 2 soil association (711c), comprising slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged reddish fine loamy over clayey and clayey soils, over Permo-Triassic reddish mudstone and alluvium. The predominant soils to the north-west belong to the Whimple 3 soil association (572f), comprising reddish fine loamy or fine silty over clayey soils with slowly permeable subsoils and slight seasonal waterlogging; some similar clayey soils on brows; slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged fine loamy and fine silty clay soils on

lower slopes; over drift, over Permo-Triassic and carboniferous reddish mudstone (Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983).

The Saltway, B4090, has been identified as the route of a Roman road, between Droitwich Spa and Alcester (Margary 56B; WSM 30583). Hanbury Road, B4091, has been identified as the possible alignment of a Roman road from Bromsgrove to the south-east (WSM30612). Cropmarks in the field to the south-east of Woolmere Green have been interpreted to represent a small fort of farmstead of Roman date (WSM 36236). It is understood that archaeological works comprising a desk-based assessment, geophysical survey and evaluation trenches have been undertaken within this field in late 2013 and early 2014, although the results are as yet unavailable (WSM 49640, 57022 and 57023).

The cartographic sources from the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century indicate that the site formed part of a slightly larger field alongside the road, which lay under orchards until the late 1950s or early 1960s when it was put to pasture. The tithe plan of 1840 shows the field to have been unnamed, alongside a much larger field to the south-east known as 'Big Diggin'. The Vernon Arms buildings (WSM 02195) are noted to the north-east. The Ordnance Survey map of 1903-4 denotes the area to the north-west as 'Allotment Gardens'.

## **4.2 Current land-use**

The site is currently under rough grass.

## **5 Structural analysis**

The trenches are shown in Figure 2 and Plates 1-8. The results of the structural analysis are presented in Appendix 1.

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

The natural matrix comprised brownish red clay (weathered mudstone) with occasional blue grey patches of degraded blue lias. It lay at a depth of between 0.26-0.45m below the present ground level, and was overlain by a uniform sequence of silty clay subsoil and clayey silt topsoil.

### **5.1.2 Phase 2: modern deposits**

The topsoil and subsoil contained modern debris – fragments of charcoal, coal, ceramic building material (CBM), occasional stone and plastic, and had been cut through by a number of postholes and a pit or ditch, of modern date (Plates 7 and 8).

## **6 Synthesis and significance**

No significant archaeological deposits, structures or horizons were identified, nor finds retrieved. There was no evidence for a continuation of the Roman cropmark activity identified to the south (WSM 36236). The site appears to have remained in agricultural use, under orchard until the late 1950s or early 1960s, and then under pasture to the present day. The postholes, for a series of wooden posts, probably sub-divided the field to form paddocks, although this is not indicated on the cartographic sources.

## **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 on behalf of Endine Properties Limited of land adjacent to the Vernon Arms, Droitwich Rd, Hanbury, Worcestershire (NGR SO 9648 6293; WSM 57559).*



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## **8 Acknowledgements**

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, Endine Properties Limited, David Holland and Bruce Frizzell (David Edwards Partnership), Mike Glyde (Historic Environment and Archaeology Service, Worcestershire County Council).

## **9 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

English Heritage 2011 *The setting of heritage assets*, English Heritage

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

IfA 2008 *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation*, Institute for Archaeologists

Soil Survey of England and Wales, 1983 *Midland and Western England*, sheet 3, scale 1:250,000 + Legend for the 1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales (A brief explanation of the constituent soil associations)

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

WA 2014 *Proposal for an archaeological type of project of land adjacent to the Vernon Arms, Droitwich Road, Hanbury, Worcestershire*, Worcestershire Archaeology, Worcestershire County Council, unpublished document, revision 1 dated 17 July 2014, **P4003**

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

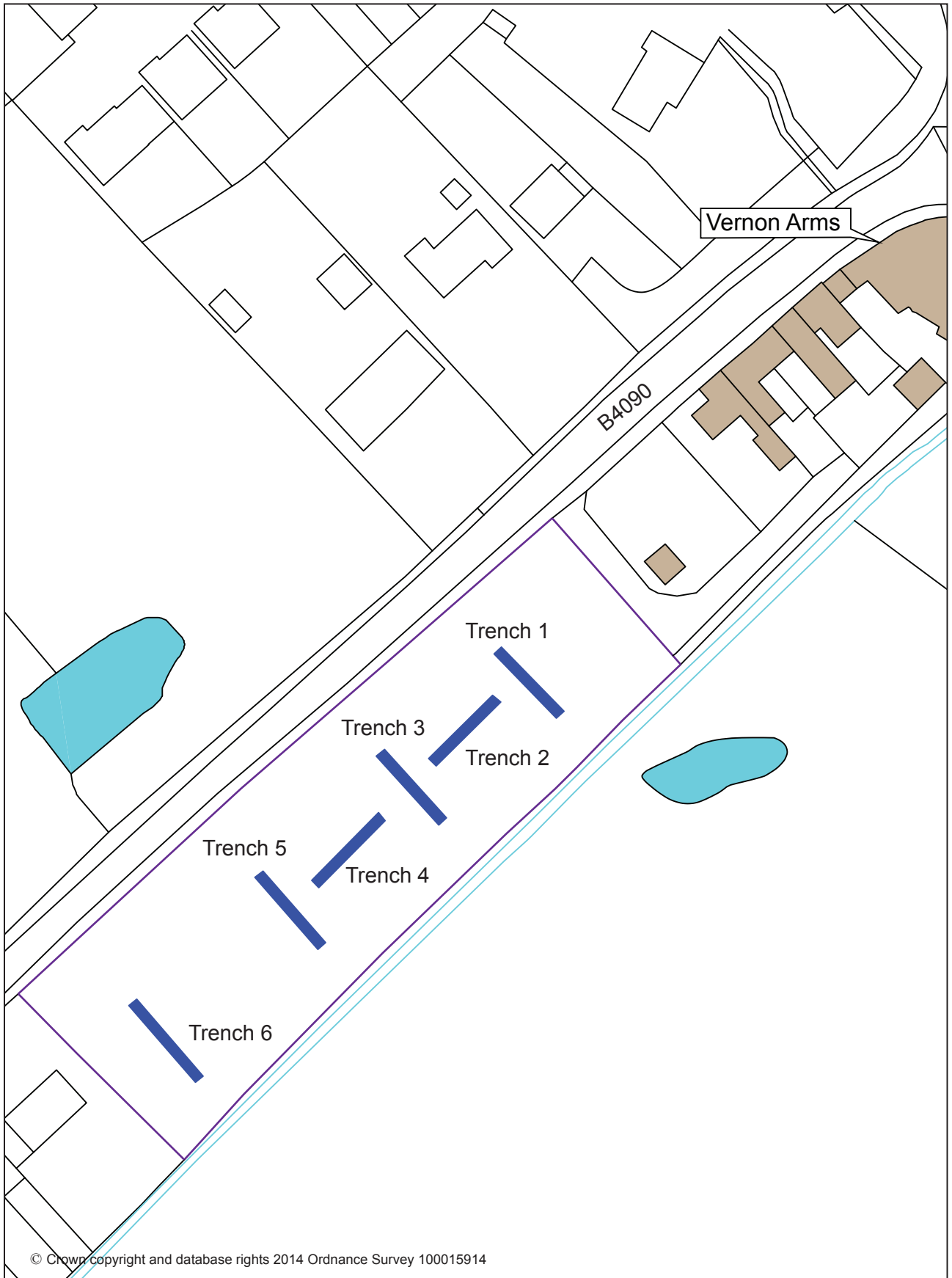
WCC 2014 *Requirements for a staged programme of archaeological work at land adjacent, Vernon Arms, Droitwich Road, Hanbury*, Information and Advisory Section, Archive and Archaeology Service, Worcestershire County Council unpublished document dated 9 November 2012

**Figures**



Location of the site

Figure 1



Trench locations

Figure 2

## Plates



*Plate 1 Trench 1, general view north-west*



*Plate 2 Trench 2, general view south-west*

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*Plate 3 Trench 3, general view north-west*



*Plate 4 Trench 4, general view south-west*



*Plate 5 Trench 5, general view north-west*



*Plate 6 Trench 6, general view north-west*

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*Plate 7 Trench 2, modern posthole, view north-west*



*Plate 8 Trench 5, modern posthole, view north-east*



## Appendix 1 Trench descriptions

### Main deposit descriptions

#### Trench 1

Maximum dimensions: Length: 14.00m Width: 1.60m Depth: 0.51m

Orientation: north-west to south-east

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
100	Topsoil	Light greyish brown clayey silt with frequent fragments of coal, charcoal, moderate fragments of ceramic building material (CBM), roots, occasional stone, plastic	0.00-0.25m
101	Subsoil	Light slightly orangey yellow brown silty clay with moderate charcoal, coal, occasional roots. Cut through by three modern postholes filled with pot, clay pipe, CVBM, slag and slate	0.20-0.45m
102	Natural	Brownish red clay (weathered mudstone) with occasional blue grey patches (blue lias stone); cut by the three postholes	0.45m+

#### Trench 2

Maximum dimensions: Length: 14.00m Width: 1.60m Depth: 0.43m

Orientation: north-east to south-west

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
200	Topsoil	Light greyish brown clayey silt with frequent fragments of coal, charcoal, moderate fragments of ceramic building material (CBM), roots, occasional stone, plastic	0.00-0.12m
201	Subsoil	Light slightly orangey yellow brown silty clay with moderate charcoal, coal, occasional roots. Cut through by three modern postholes filled with CBM, slag and clinker	0.12-0.32m
202	Natural	Brownish red clay (weathered mudstone) with occasional blue grey patches (blue lias stone); cut by the three postholes	0.32m+

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**Trench 3**

Maximum dimensions: Length: 14.40m Width: 1.60m Depth: 0.39m

Orientation: north-west to south-east

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
300	Topsoil	Light greyish brown clayey silt with frequent fragments of coal, charcoal, moderate fragments of ceramic building material (CBM), roots, occasional stone, plastic	0.00-0.12m
301	Subsoil	Light slightly orangey yellow brown silty clay with moderate charcoal, coal, occasional roots. Cut through by two modern postholes	0.12-0.31m
302	Natural	Brownish red clay (weathered mudstone) with occasional blue grey patches (blue lias stone); cut by the three postholes	0.31m+

**Trench 4**

Maximum dimensions: Length: 14.75m Width: 1.60m Depth: 0.35m

Orientation: north-east to south-west

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
400	Topsoil	Light greyish brown clayey silt with frequent fragments of coal, charcoal, moderate fragments of ceramic building material (CBM), roots, occasional stone, plastic	0.00-0.10m
401	Subsoil	Light slightly orangey yellow brown silty clay with moderate charcoal, coal, occasional roots. Cut through by six modern postholes	0.10-0.26m
402	Natural	Brownish red clay (weathered mudstone) with occasional blue grey patches (blue lias stone); cut by the six postholes	0.26m+

### Trench 5

Maximum dimensions: Length: 14.80m Width: 1.60m Depth: 0.42m

Orientation: north-west to south-east

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
500	Topsoil	Light greyish brown clayey silt with frequent fragments of coal, charcoal, moderate fragments of ceramic building material (CBM), roots, occasional stone, plastic	0.00-0.12m
501	Subsoil	Light slightly orangey yellow brown silty clay with moderate charcoal, coal, occasional roots. Cut through by one modern posthole and one pit or ditch, filled with coal, charcoal, china, CBM	0.12-0.30m
502	Natural	Brownish red clay (weathered mudstone) with occasional blue grey patches (blue lias stone); cut by the posthole and pit or ditch	0.30m+

### Trench 6

Maximum dimensions: Length: 15.90m Width: 1.60m Depth: 0.35m

Orientation: north-west to south-east

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
600	Topsoil	Light greyish brown clayey silt with frequent fragments of coal, charcoal, moderate fragments of ceramic building material (CBM), roots, occasional stone, plastic	0.00-0.10m
601	Subsoil	Light slightly orangey yellow brown silty clay with moderate charcoal, coal, occasional roots	0.10-0.28m
602	Natural	Brownish red clay (weathered mudstone) with occasional blue grey patches (blue lias stone)	0.28m+

## **Appendix 2 Technical information**

### **The archive (site code: WSM 57559)**

The archive consists of:

- 1 Field progress reports AS2
- 1 Photographic records AS3
- 39 Digital photographs
- 6 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

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