

ARCHAEOLOGICAL
EVALUATION OF LAND
BETWEEN STATION ROAD
AND DUDLEY ROAD,
HONEYBOURNE,
WORCESTERSHIRE



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Darren Miller

With a contribution by Dennis Williams

Illustrations by Carolyn Hunt

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Archaeological evaluation of land between Station Road and Dudley Road, Honeybourne, Worcestershire

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With a contribution by Dennis Williams

Part 1: Summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken of land between Station Road and Dudley Road, Honeybourne, Worcestershire (NGR SP 11680 44650). It was undertaken on behalf of Lioncourt Homes to inform a planning application for a mixed residential and business development.

The archaeological implications of development had been considered in a desk-based assessment. The assessment identified heritage assets in the form of ridge and furrow earthworks, two hedgerows, and a former pond. It also identified some potential for remains of prehistoric and/or Roman activity. The evaluation aimed to investigate this potential by means of sample trenching and post-fieldwork analysis.

Twenty-five trenches were excavated across the application site. The trenches were located in a modified grid array which provided comprehensive coverage while avoiding constraints in the form of a high pressure gas main and overhead electricity cables. The trenches also followed the lines of ridge and furrow earthworks to minimise damage and facilitate re-instatement.

No significant deposits or features were found in any of the trenches. Apart from a few land drains, the trenches showed only uniform profiles of loams over clays. Thirty artefacts were recovered from these soils, including sherds of Roman, medieval, and post-medieval pottery. These artefacts represent the long-established practice of mixing domestic refuse with manure. They show that the site was cultivated in the Roman period and complement the ridge and furrow earthworks as evidence for later cultivation.

The multi-period ‘manure scatter’ can be regarded as a heritage asset alongside those identified in the desk-based assessment. It is not particularly significant, however, and the same is probably true of any pre-modern deposits in the backfilled pond. The only heritage assets worth considering as material concerns are the ridge and furrow earthworks and the two hedgerows.

The ridge and furrow earthworks are best preserved in the south and east of the application site. According to current outline plans, most of this area would be open space. The impact of the development on these heritage assets would therefore be limited. The proposed access arrangements would have some impact on the hedgerow that forms the west boundary of the site, albeit on a limited basis with most of the hedge remaining within the development and the shorter hedgerow between Dudley Road and the railway would not be affected.

Part 2: Report

1. **Planning background**

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken of land between Station Road and Dudley Road, Honeybourne, Worcestershire (NGR SP 11680 44650). It was undertaken on behalf of Lioncourt Homes to inform a planning application for a mixed residential and business development with public open space, landscaping and detailed access arrangements.

An archaeological desk-based assessment of the application site was undertaken before the application was submitted (Miller 2011). The assessment identified heritage assets in the form of ridge and furrow earthworks, two hedgerows, and a former pond. The assessment also identified some potential for remains of prehistoric and/or Roman activity, including remains of a Roman road along the west side of the application site.

The application was submitted to Wychavon District Council (ref. W/11/2531). On the advice of the Planning Advisory Service of the Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeology Service, it was suggested that more information on potential heritage assets was required by means of a field evaluation.

The evaluation conformed to a brief prepared by the Planning Advisory Service (HEAS 2011a), and to a proposal prepared by the Field Section (HEAS 2011b). It also conformed to the Institute of Archaeologists' *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (IfA 2008).

2. **Aims**

The aims of the evaluation were:

- to provide more information on potential heritage assets in the form of buried archaeological deposits
- to establish the nature, extent, and importance of such deposits

The opportunity has also been taken in this report to reassess the archaeological significance of the application site and consider the potential impact of the proposed development.

3. **Methods**

3.1 **Desk-based research**

The topography, archaeology, and history of the application site are fully covered in the desk-based assessment (Miller 2011). The assessment also describes and discusses the ridge and furrow earthworks and historic hedgerows.

3.2 **Fieldwork methodology**

A detailed specification was prepared by the Field Section (HEAS 2011b). The proposal envisaged the excavation of 28 trenches, arranged in a modified grid array which provided comprehensive coverage while avoiding constraints in the form of a high pressure gas main crossing the south of the application site and overhead electricity cables crossing the south-west corner (Fig 2). The layout also followed the lines of ridge and furrow earthworks to minimise damage and facilitate re-instatement.

The fieldwork was undertaken between 16 and 20 December 2011, though backfilling continued until 21 December. The site reference number and site code is WSM 46073.

In the event, only 25 trenches were excavated (Fig 2). Fourteen trenches were excavated as planned and eleven were moved slightly to lie along ridges rather than furrows. One trench was shortened due to an unmapped fence (Trench 1) and another trench was shortened to avoid blocking a gate at the end of a garden on Dudley Street (Trench 22). All excavation was undertaken by a 360° tracked excavator fitted with a 2.1m wide ditching bucket.

Two trenches were to have been excavated in a stoned area along the west side of the application site but in the light of the negative results from adjacent trenches, it was decided to leave this useful feature intact. Another trench was to have been excavated in the south-west of the site but adjustments to adjacent trenches left only a small area between the last trench and the buffer along the south side of the gas main.

All machine excavation took place under the supervision of the Project Leader. The trenches were located and surveyed using a Leica Net rover GPS. Written and photographic records were made according to standard Field Section practice (HEAS 2012). Artefacts were recovered from spoil heaps (contexts 1000, 2000, 3000 etc) and, where possible, from stratified soils (see below). Once recorded, the trenches were backfilled with the excavated spoil and the profiles of ridges were reformed as far as possible.

3.3 **Artefact methodology, by Dennis Williams**

The artefact recovery policy conformed to standard Service practice (CAS 1995; appendix 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. This was used for determining the broad date of each phase defined for the site. All information was recorded on *pro forma* sheets.

The pottery and ceramic building material was examined under $\times 20$ magnification and recorded by fabric type and form according to the fabric reference series maintained by the service (Hurst and Rees 1992 and online at www.worcestershireceramics.org).

3.4 **Statement of confidence in methods and results**

The Project Team are confident that the method of evaluation was appropriate to the aims of the project and the nature of the site. We are also confident that the application site contains no concentrations of buried archaeological deposits. At all events, all parts of the application site were investigated and the results were emphatically negative. Moreover, each trench was excavated slightly deeper than necessary, to ensure that no features were missed. And finally, although three trenches could not be excavated, and two were shortened, the use of a wider ditching bucket than usual meant that the total excavated area was slightly larger than anticipated (some 1543m², or 4% of the application site).

4. **Results**

4.1 **Stratigraphy**

The trenches all showed uniform profiles of loamy over clayey soils (Plates 5 and 6). The topsoil was a soft day greyish brown clay loam with common fine roots, a strong blocky structure and clear lower boundary (context 1001, 2001, 3001 etc). Beneath this were two units of subsoil: an upper unit of mid olive brown silty clay (contexts 1002, 2002, 3002 etc) and a lower unit that was slightly finer and paler (context 1002, 2002, 3002 etc). Both units had a weak blocky structure. At the base of the profile was the parent material: a structureless light olive to light grey clay with occasional limestone gravel inclusions (context 103, 203, 303 etc). The topsoil was typically 0.20m deep, the upper subsoil 0.10m deep and the lower subsoil either 0.10m or 0.15m deep. The whole profile was much as mapped and described by the Soil Survey of England and Wales (SSEW 1983; Ragg *et al* 1984)

The only features noted were narrow ceramic land drains in Trenches 2 and 25 and a larger land drain crossing Trench 14 on a north-east to south-west alignment.

4.2 **Artefact analysis, by Dennis Williams**

The artefactual assemblage recovered is summarised in Table 1. The finds came from 17 contexts and could be dated from the Roman period onwards. The level of preservation was variable, with the Roman and medieval pottery sherds being particularly abraded.

Period	Material class	Material subtype	Object specific type	Count	Weight (g)
medieval	ceramic	earthenware	pot	7	100
post-medieval/ modern	ceramic	earthenware	pot	1	12
post-medieval	ceramic	-	clay pipe	1	4
post-medieval	ceramic	earthenware	pot	9	84
post-medieval	ceramic	stoneware	pot	1	70
Roman	ceramic	earthenware	pot	3	22
undated	ceramic	-	brick/tile	5	36
undated	ceramic	-	land drain	1	12
undated	metal	iron	nail	1	1
undated	stone	limestone	-	1	764
			Totals:	30	1105

Table 1: Quantification of the assemblage

Pottery

All sherds were grouped and quantified according to fabric type (Table 2). Only two diagnostic form sherds were present and could be dated accordingly, but the remaining sherds were datable by fabric type to their general periods or production spans. Where mentioned, all specific forms are referenced to the type series within the report for Deansway, Worcester (Bryant 2004).

Period	Fabric code	Fabric common name	Count	Weight (g)
medieval	69	Oxidized glazed Malvernian ware	9	107
post-medieval/ modern	85	Modern china	1	12
post-medieval	78	Post-medieval red wares	5	29
post-medieval	81	Stonewares	1	70
post-medieval	91	Post-medieval buff wares	1	6
post-medieval	100	Miscellaneous post-medieval wares	1	42
Roman	12	Severn Valley ware	3	22
		Totals:	21	288

Table 2: Quantification of the pottery by period and fabric-type

The pottery from this site was characterised by a very narrow range of fabrics. Roman pottery was present as Severn Valley ware (fabric 12), in contexts 3002, 23000 and 23001. This was typical of material manufactured in Worcestershire, but all the sherds were small and undiagnostic in terms of form and could only be assigned to a general 1st-4th century date range.

Medieval pottery was confined to oxidized, glazed Malvernian ware (fabric 69), also produced within the county, and recovered from contexts 2002, 3001, 4002, 5001, 19000, 21001, 22000 and 23000. All these medieval sherds were undiagnostic in terms of form, except for a strap handle with a distinct external groove, found in topsoil 5001. This was

possibly from a large jar, similar to the Deansway form Fig.186:7, late 14th to 15th century in date (Bryant 2004).

Post-medieval pottery comprised black-glazed red wares (fabric 78), buff ware with slip-trailed decoration (fabric 91) and white-glazed stoneware (fabric 81) recovered from surface and topsoil contexts (9001, 11000, 21001, 23000, 24001 and 25001). All of this material was likely to have been manufactured within a 17th-18th century date range.

Modern china with a blue willow pattern (fabric 85), and part of a terra cotta bowl (fabric 100), both of 19th or early 20th century date, were recovered from topsoils 10001 and 25001 respectively.

Other artefacts

A single fragment of clay pipe stem, from a broad 16th-19th century date range, was found in topsoil 10001. An iron fragment recovered from subsoil 4002 was possibly a hobnail. Ceramic building material, consisting of brick, tile, or land drains, from contexts 22000, 25001 and 27002, was probably post-medieval or modern but too fragmentary to provide precise dating evidence. A single piece of limestone slab, found in topsoil 4001, was very abraded, so it was unclear whether this had been used as building material or alternatively shaped by accidental or natural processes.

Overview of artefactual evidence

The pottery finds from this site were indicative of Roman and medieval occupation in the area, although much, if not all of this material may have been residual, since it was recovered from surface, topsoil or shallow sub-soil contexts at scattered locations across the site. Post-medieval finds were also of a domestic nature, while it was noted that the ceramic building materials were all from trenches close to modern housing situated on the south side of the site. *Terminus post quem* date ranges for the various contexts are shown in Table 3.

Context	Material class	Object specific type	Fabric code	Count	Weight (g)	Start date	End date	<i>Terminus post quem</i> range
2002	ceramic	pot	69	1	1	1200	1620	1200-1620
3001	ceramic	pot	69	1	6	1200	1620	1200-1620
3002	ceramic	pot	12	1	16	43	400	43-400
4001	stone	-	-	1	764	-	-	-
4002	ceramic	pot	69	1	4	1200	1620	1200-1620
	metal	nail	-	1	1	-	-	
5001	ceramic	pot	69	1	66	1350	1500	1350-1500
9001	ceramic	pot	78	1	4	1600	1800	1600-1800
10001	ceramic	pot	85	1	12	1800	1950	1800-1950
	ceramic	clay pipe	-	1	4	1600	1900	
11000	ceramic	pot	78	1	4	1600	1800	1600-1800
19000	ceramic	pot	69	1	12	1200	1620	1200-1620
21001	ceramic	pot	69	2	4	1200	1620	1600-1800
	ceramic	pot	78	1	1	1600	1800	
22000	ceramic	brick/tile	-	1	10	-	-	1200-1620

Context	Material class	Object specific type	Fabric code	Count	Weight (g)	Start date	End date	<i>Terminus post quem</i> range
22000	ceramic	pot	69	1	8	1200	1620	1200-1620
23000	ceramic	pot	78	1	8	1600	1800	1700-1800
	ceramic	pot	91	1	6	1700	1800	
	ceramic	pot	12	1	2	43	400	
	ceramic	pot	69	1	6	1200	1620	
23001	ceramic	pot	12	1	4	43	400	43-400
24001	ceramic	pot	81	1	70	1700	1900	1600-1900
2500	ceramic	pot	100	1	42	1800	1900	1800-1900
2501	ceramic	brick/tile	-	3	18	-	-	1800-1900
	ceramic	land drain	-	1	12	-	-	
	ceramic	pot	78	1	12	1600	1800	1600-1800
27002	ceramic	brick/tile	-	1	8	-	-	-

Table 3: Summary of context dating based on artefacts

5. Synthesis

5.1 Roman cultivation

Roman cultivation was indicated by three sherds of Roman pottery: one from Trench 3 and two from Trench 23. The sherds probably represent a thin scatter of Roman pottery across the application site. Such scatters are generally interpreted as the product of manuring with farmyard manure, i.e. a mixture of muck and domestic refuse. Previous work suggests that such manuring was infrequent and generally restricted to core arable land. It is therefore likely that the scatter represents more than one application of manure, and that a farmstead or hamlet stood within easy carting distance of the application site.

5.2 Medieval and post-medieval cultivation

Later cultivation was indicated by sherds of medieval and post-medieval pottery. Nine sherds of medieval pottery were recovered: two from Trench 21 and one each from Trenches 1-4, 19, 22, and 23. Single sherds of post-medieval pottery were recovered from Trenches 9, 11, 21, 24, and 25 and two sherds came from Trench 23. The date ranges of the earlier and later sherds overlap, however, so they probably represent a scatter formed by continuous cultivation and occasional manuring. During this period, the application site lay within one of four large open fields in Honeybourne (Miller 2011, 4). The ridge and furrow earthworks will have been created and maintained throughout this period, in line with established practice across the region. Although difficult to maintain, they served at once to drain the land and define individual shares and cropping units.

5.3 Modern land-use

In the 18th century, the application site and several acres to the north were taken out of open field cultivation, defined by newly-laid hedges, and converted from arable to pasture. This typical example of enclosure is attested by the surviving hedgerows and the absence of 19th century pottery. It is also confirmed by the evidence of the Honeybourne tithe map and award of 1841-2, as described in the desk-based assessment (Miller 2011, 4). For most of the 19th and 20th centuries, it appears that the field was managed as pasture, with the only change being the construction of the railway in the 1850s, which gave the application site its present boundaries. However, the condition of the ridge and furrow earthworks and their absence in

the west of the site suggest that the site was cultivated occasionally during this period, or that some effort was made to reduce the ridges.

5.4 **Research frameworks**

The largely negative results of the evaluation contribute little to current research frameworks. 'Manure scatters' of the kind described above are ubiquitous and do not provide useful information unless they are studied extensively, alongside other archaeological and historical evidence (*cf* Gaffney and Tingle 1989; Jones 1999; Gerrard, Aston and Reynolds 2007). However, the slight evidence for Roman cultivation is the first of its kind from Honeybourne and has clear implications for settlement nearby.

6. **Significance**

6.1 **Significance of a site with archaeological interest**

The aim of an archaeological evaluation is to provide the client and the planning authority (and its advisors) with sufficient information to assess the significance of a site or heritage asset with archaeological interest, in line with *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment* (DCLG 2010: Policy HE6). More detailed guidance on assessing the significance of a site with archaeological interest is set out in the *Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide* (DCLG/DCMS/EH 2010: Section 5, Development Management). This advises that an evaluation should establish the nature, importance and extent of the archaeological interest in order to provide sufficient evidence for confident prediction of the impact of the proposal.

6.2 **Assessment of significance**

The archaeological significance of the application site was assessed on the basis of limited evidence in the desk-based assessment (Miller 2011, 5-6). This assessment can now be updated in the light of the evidence from the evaluation.

Nature of the archaeological interest

The heritage assets identified in the desk-based assessment comprised ridge and furrow earthworks, a former historic pond, and two hedgerows. The evaluation has identified another heritage asset in the form of the multi-period 'manure scatter' described above.

The ridge and furrow earthworks were described and illustrated in the desk-based assessment (Miller 2010, 4-5; fig 4). In summary, they comprise one group of earthworks in the centre and south of the site, aligned approximately north-east to south-west, and another group of earthworks in the east on a perpendicular north-west to south-east alignment. The ridges are convex, up to 0.40m high, and about 10m apart, from top to top.

The relict pond lies near the west boundary of the site, between Trenches 15 and 16 on Figure 2. As shown on historic maps, it measured approximately 26m east-west by 20m north-south. It was probably dug for clay extraction or to create a dew-pond for watering livestock.

The longer of the two historic hedgerows forms the west boundary of the application site. It is dense but untrimmed and overgrown. The shorter hedgerow forms the boundary of the site between Dudley road and the railway to the north. It is in better condition than the hedgerow to the west, but only a fraction of its original length.

Relative importance of the archaeological interest

The multi-period manure scatter identified in the evaluation is relatively unimportant as such scatters are ubiquitous and often more dense and informative (*cf* Evans *et al* 2008).

The ridge and furrow earthworks are important in local terms, as only eight other fields in Honeybourne still contain such remains. However, ridge and furrow earthworks are common throughout Wychavon and very common across a large area extending eastwards into Gloucestershire and Warwickshire (Hall 2001, fig 13). Moreover, as noted above, the ridge

and furrow earthworks in the west of the site have been truncated and denuded by modern land use.

The relict pond was one of ten similar ponds shown on the Honeybourne tithe map of 1841. Few of these ponds have survived modern agricultural improvements, although by their nature, and because of their location in farmland, none of them are likely to preserve significant archaeological remains.

The historic hedgerows are locally and regionally typical in terms of their date, composition, and condition. However, both hedgerows are 'important', according to the criteria set out in the statutory *Hedgerow Regulations 1997* (online at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1997/1160/introduction/made>). The hedgerow along the west boundary of the application site is particularly important in marking an ancient parish and estate boundary.

Physical extent of the archaeological interest

The manure scatter can be assumed to extend across the application site. The ridge and furrow earthworks cover most of the site apart but are absent or slight in the west. The relict pond lies within this denuded area, while the hedgerows hardly impinge upon the site.

6.3 **Potential impact of the development**

The potential impact of the proposed development can be assessed on the basis of the evidence presented above and an outline layout plan provided by the client (Cadsquare Midlands, Development Framework, Drawing no. 11-030-DF01).

According to the plan, residential development would be restricted to the north of the application site, apart from a single plot in the far south-west. And apart from a business development beside this plot, the rest of the application site would be public open space. The plan shows three entrances from Station Road and one entrance from Dudley Road.

The proposed residential and business developments would require the levelling of ridge and furrow earthworks and the removal of soils containing artefacts of Roman and later date. However, the best-preserved ridge and furrow earthworks lie in the east and south of the site, and most of them would be preserved in the proposed open space.

The access arrangements would involve removing three relatively small lengths of the western hedgerow and filling in parts of an internal ditch. They may also require some landscaping across the footprint of the backfilled pond. However, the rest of the hedgerow would be preserved and it seems that the eastern hedgerow would be retained. It is also unlikely that any landscaping would be deep enough to affect pre-modern pond deposits.

7. **Publication summary**

The Service has a professional obligation to publish the results of archaeological projects within a reasonable period of time. To this end, and unless directed otherwise the Service intends to publish the following summary in the most appropriate journal or journals.

In December 2011, the Field Section undertook an archaeological evaluation of land between Station Road and Dudley Road, Honeybourne, Worcestershire (NGR SP 11680 44650). It was undertaken on behalf of Lioncourt Homes to inform a planning application for a mixed residential and business development.

The archaeological implications of development had been considered in a desk-based assessment. The assessment identified heritage assets in the form of ridge and furrow earthworks, two hedgerows, and a former pond. It also identified some potential for remains of prehistoric and/or Roman activity. The evaluation aimed to investigate this potential by means of sample trenching and post-fieldwork analysis.

Twenty-five trenches were excavated across the application site. The trenches were located in a modified grid array which provided comprehensive coverage while avoiding constraints in the form of a high pressure gas main and overhead electricity cables. The trenches also

followed the lines of ridge and furrow earthworks to minimise damage and facilitate re-instatement.

No significant deposits or features were found in any of the trenches. Apart from a few land drains, the trenches showed only uniform profiles of loams over clays. Thirty artefacts were recovered from these soils, including sherds of Roman, medieval, and post-medieval pottery. These artefacts represent the long-established practice of mixing domestic refuse with manure. They show that the site was cultivated in the Roman period and complement the ridge and furrow earthworks as evidence for later cultivation.

8. **Acknowledgements**

The Service would like to thank Andy Faizey of Lioncourt Homes, Ben Hudson of Greenhill and Brownfield, and Mike Glyde of Worcestershire County Council for their kind assistance.

9. **Personnel**

The fieldwork and report preparation was led by Darren Miller. The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Tom Rogers. Fieldwork was undertaken by Darren Miller and Chris Gibbs, finds analysis by Dennis Williams, and illustration by Carolyn Hunt.

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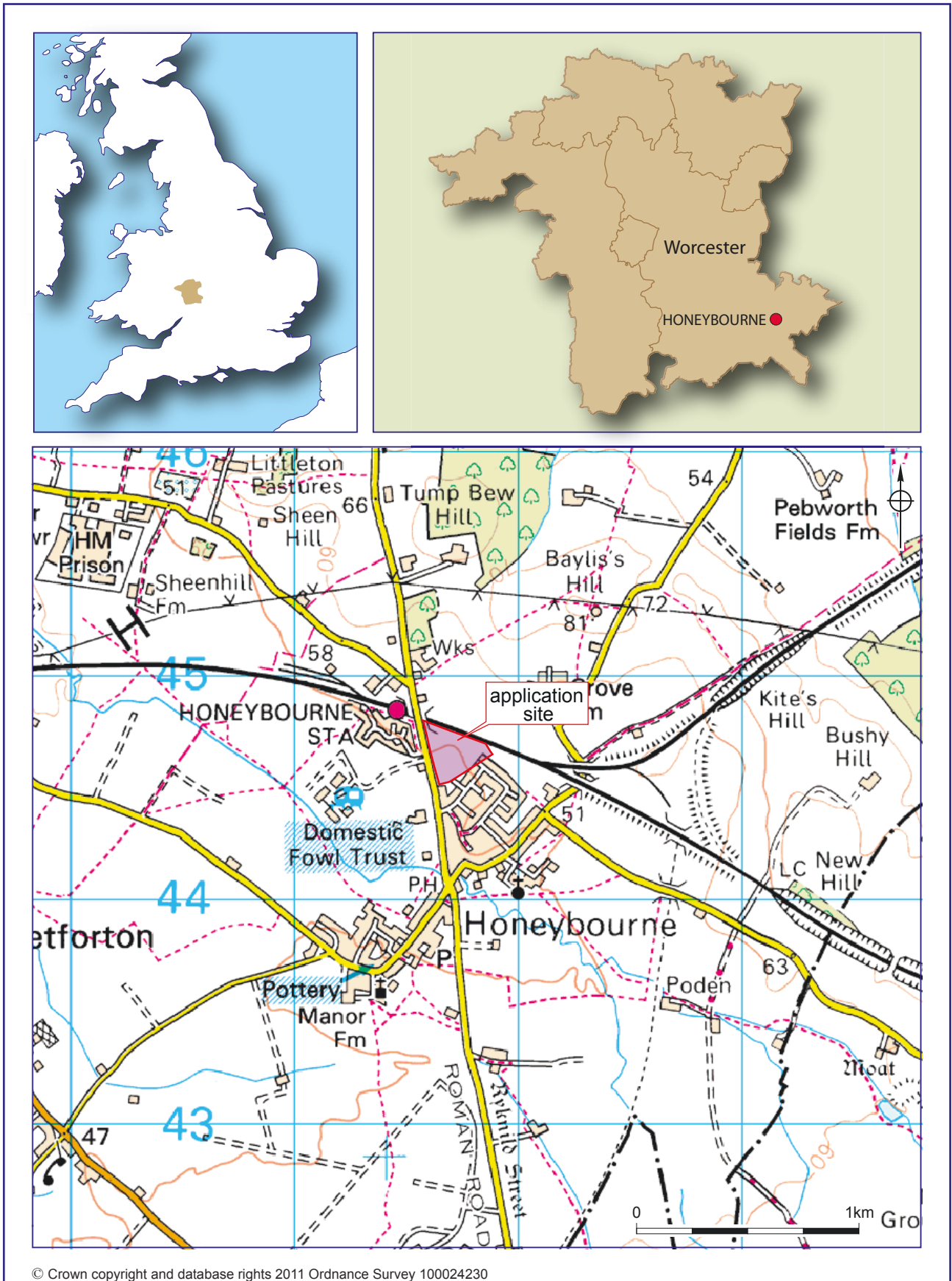
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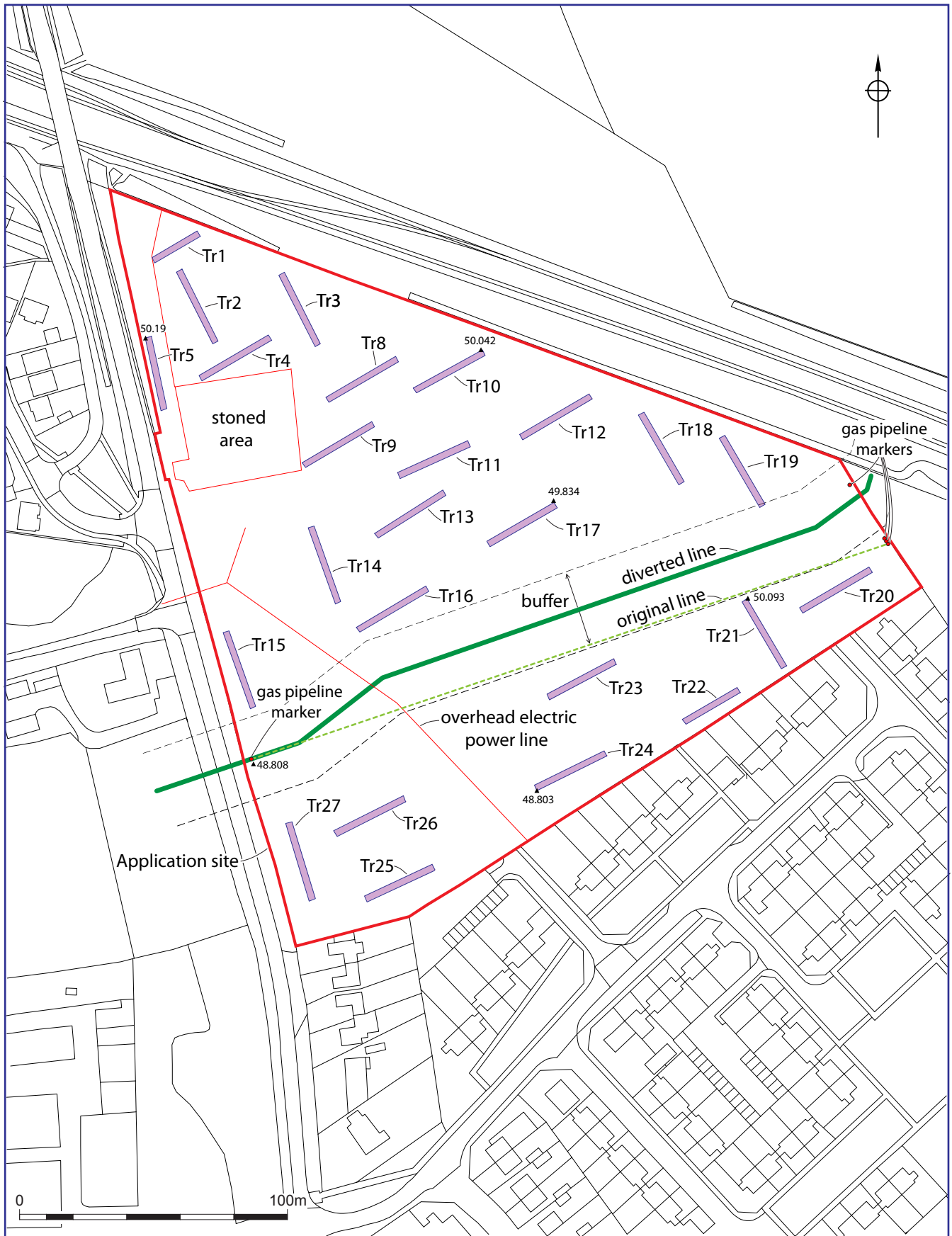
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Figures



Location of the application site

Figure 1



Location of trenches (and constraints).

Figure 2

Plates



Plate 1: General view of sample trenches facing south across Trench 1



Plate 2: General view of sample trenches facing north across Trenches 25 and 26



Plate 3: Representative sample trench (Trench 9, facing north-east)



Plate 4: Representative sample trench (Trench 24 facing north-east)



Plate 5: Representative section (Trench 14, facing west)



Plate 6: Representative section (Trench 25, facing north)



Plate 7: Backfilled trenches (Trenches 2, 3, and 4 facing south)



Plate 8: Reinstated trenches (Trenches 23 and 24, facing north-west)

Appendix 1: The archive (side code WSM 46073)

The archive consists of:

5	Field progress reports AS2
2	Photographic records AS3
96	Digital photographs
27	Trench record sheets AS41
1	Box of finds
1	CD
1	Bound copy of report

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