

ARCHAEOLOGICAL
EVALUATION
AT
LAND OFF CHELTENHAM ROAD,
KINSHAM, WORCESTERSHIRE



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Worcestershire Archaeology
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Archaeological Evaluation at Land off Cheltenham Road, Kinsham, Worcestershire

Jonathan Webster (project leader)

Summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at Land off Cheltenham Road, Kinsham, Worcestershire (NGR SO 93622 35670). It was undertaken on behalf of Cathy Patrick (CgMs Consulting Ltd) at the request of their client Wychavon District Council who intend to develop the site. This document is intended to support a planning application (pre-application reference CWR9321).

The site, a small rectangle of cleared scrub to the rear of houses fronting Cheltenham Road, lies immediately to the south-west of a Scheduled Ancient Monument comprising crop marks that are thought to represent an Iron Age / Roman enclosed settlement site, with associated trackways and possible field enclosures. A linear cropmark thought to be a prehistoric trackway runs from the core of this settlement approximately in the direction of the development site.

Three trenches, each approximately 20m long were excavated across the site. The investigations demonstrated that the site had been cultivated until recently but no archaeological features were found. A single sherd of Romano-British pottery was recovered from a plough scar but is thought to be residual.

No evidence was noted of the prehistoric trackway (part of SAM 1005314) and although the underlying substrate has been truncated in places by plough action the relative depths of both topsoil and subsoil would suggest that any such feature, if present, would have survived intact.

Therefore it is concluded that the lack of archaeological features is a true representation of the site and not simply the result of later truncation.

Report

1 Background

1.1 Reasons for the project

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at Land off Cheltenham Road, Kinsham, Worcestershire (NGR SO 93622 35670). It was commissioned by Cathy Patrick (CgMs Consulting Ltd) at the request of their client, who intends to construct a residential property for which a planning application will be submitted (pre-application reference CWR9321).

The proposed development site was considered to include potential heritage assets, the significance of which may have been affected by development. A series of cropmarks thought to represent Iron Age and Roman settlement (HER ref WSM05137) lie immediately to the north-east and appear on the schedule of ancient monuments (SAM 1005314).

The project conforms to a brief prepared by the Planning Advisory Section of Worcestershire County Council (WCC 2012).

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

The event reference for this evaluation is WSM 47422.

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;
- To investigate the presence/absence and preservation of a known prehistoric trackway (part of SAM 1005314) which is thought may cross the investigation area.

3 Methods

3.1 Personnel

The project was undertaken by Jonathan Webster (BA (hons)); who joined Worcestershire Archaeology in 2009 and has been practising archaeology since 2001. Fieldwork was undertaken by Jonathan Webster and Mike Nicholson (BSc (hons)) who joined Worcestershire Archaeology in 2008 and has been practising archaeology since that time. The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Tom Rogers (BA (hons) MSc). Illustrations were prepared by Carolyn Hunt.

3.2 Documentary research

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

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 2012a).

Fieldwork was undertaken on the 16 October 2012. The site reference number and site code is WSM 47422.

Three trenches, amounting to just over 96m² in area, were excavated over the site area of c 2560m², representing a sample of c 3.7%. The location of the trenches is indicated in Figure 2.

Deposits considered not to be significant were removed using a wheeled excavator, employing a toothless bucket and under archaeological supervision. Subsequent excavation was undertaken by hand. Clean surfaces were inspected and selected deposits were excavated to retrieve artefactual material and environmental samples, as well as to determine their nature. Deposits were recorded according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012b). 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

All hand-retrieved finds were examined. They were identified, quantified and dated to period.

The pottery and ceramic building material was examined under x20 magnification and recorded by fabric type and form according to the fabric reference series maintained by the service (Hurst and Rees 1992 and www.worcestershireceramics.org).

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 bounded to the west by the B4079 (Cheltenham Road) and is limited to both the north and south by domestic gardens. To the east, the site butts a small copse of trees and open fields that were under plough at the time of investigation. It lies at 25.6m above Ordnance Datum (AOD) dropping very gradually to the west losing 0.5m across the extent of the site. The underlying geology comprises Jurassic Charmouth Mudstone overlain by Wasperton Sand and Gravel member Upper facet (Warwickshire Avon) dating to the Quaternary Period (BGS 2012).

Kinsham lies in an area characterised by extensive evidence for prehistoric and Roman settlement. The village lies to the south west of Bredon Hill and slightly north of the valley of the Carrant Brook, both of which are known as foci for prehistoric activity. Individual finds from the parish (WSM20543) demonstrate activity from the early Mesolithic period onwards. Cropmarks in the fields immediately to the north-east of the site are interpreted as enclosed Iron Age to Romano-British settlement (WSM05098) including possible pit alignments and hut circles. Potentially associated with this is a trackway (WSM05137) running through this area of settlement towards the site. The settlement and trackway have been included on the schedule of ancient monuments (SAM 1005314). Further information about this complex is provided in Miller (2010a and 2010b).

Further cropmarks in the vicinity (WSM05137, WSM09775, WSM07650) may also represent prehistoric and Romano-British archaeology and Anglo Saxon settlement (WSM20019) has been demonstrated by evaluation to the north east of the site. Later Medieval activity can be seen throughout the area in the form of ridge and furrow (WSM 20057, WSM24609, WSM46859, WSM47025) and numerous Medieval and post medieval buildings survive within the village. The Historic Environment Record contains further information continuing as far as bombing incidents in World War II (WSM37181) (WSM37183).

The site lies to the north-east of the historic core of Kinsham but within the area recorded on the Historic Environment Record as the Medieval extent of *Chelmesham*, first mentioned in 1182. The site is shown on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map as part of an orchard and this remains the case on the 1954 survey by which time houses have been built along the frontage with the Cheltenham Road.

4.2 Current land-use

The site is currently an area of cleared scrubland.

5 Structural analysis

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

The natural substrate of the site comprised a combination of fine terraced gravels with thick bands of silts and sands orientated roughly east/west that would suggest that they were deposited through fluvial activity during the decline of the ice sheets at the end of the maximum extent of the ice sheets roughly 12,000 years ago as part of a highly dynamic anastomosing system. This was overlain by an average of 0.2m of subsoil that was in turn sealed by an organic rich topsoil.

Of note was a distinct silt rich band [1004] that measured 5.18m in width and was believed at first to have been a ditch due to the recovery of Romano-British and modern material from its fill. However upon further investigation it was noted that these finds were located within later plough scars, when combined with the extremely sterile nature of the fill (1003) and uneven profile plus its similarity to other clearly geological features revealed in trenches 2 and 3 it was concluded that this feature was geological in origin.

As mentioned above trench 1 contained at least six plough scars orientated northeast/southwest that became deeper as they ran across the softer fine grained silts and sands, these had truncated the subsoil (1001) but were sealed by the overlying topsoil (1000). The finds recovered from two of these scars suggest that the area may have been under the plough as recently as the last hundred years.

5.1 Artefact analysis

The finds comprise an abraded sherd of Severn Valley ware (fabric 12) of 1st-4th century date, and a piece of brick, undiagnostic in terms of form or dimensions and therefore undateable (D Williams pers comm.)

6 Synthesis

Despite the archaeological potential of the site no archaeological features were noted other than plough scars within trench 1 which are, from a combination of documentary evidence and artefactual remains, known to be recent. The presence of residual Romano-British pottery from one of these scars would suggest that activity of that date may be taking place in proximity of the site and previous work to the northeast has already confirmed this (See historic background above). The depths of topsoil and subsoil across the site suggest that if archaeologically significant deposits or features are present that they would remain in a good state of preservation that the distinct lack is a true representation of the landscape and not the result of later truncation.

7 Significance

7.1 Nature of the archaeological interest in the site

With the exception of post-medieval plough scars revealed in trench 1 no archaeologically significant deposits or features were noted on this site.

7.2 Physical extent of the archaeological interest in the site

At present no archaeologically significant features or deposits are known on the site and as such no extent can be provided. It should be noted that the plough scars seen in trench 1 that truncated the natural substrate also truncated the subsoil but were sealed by 0.3m of topsoil suggesting that this material may have been imported onto the site in recent history.

8 Publication summary

Worcestershire Archaeology has a professional obligation to publish the results of archaeological projects within a reasonable period of time. To this end, Worcestershire Archaeology intends to use this summary as the basis for publication through local or regional journals. The client is requested to consider the content of this section as being acceptable for such publication.

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9 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, Cathy Patrick (CgMs Consulting Ltd) and Mike Glyde (Historic Environment Planning Officer, Worcestershire County Council).

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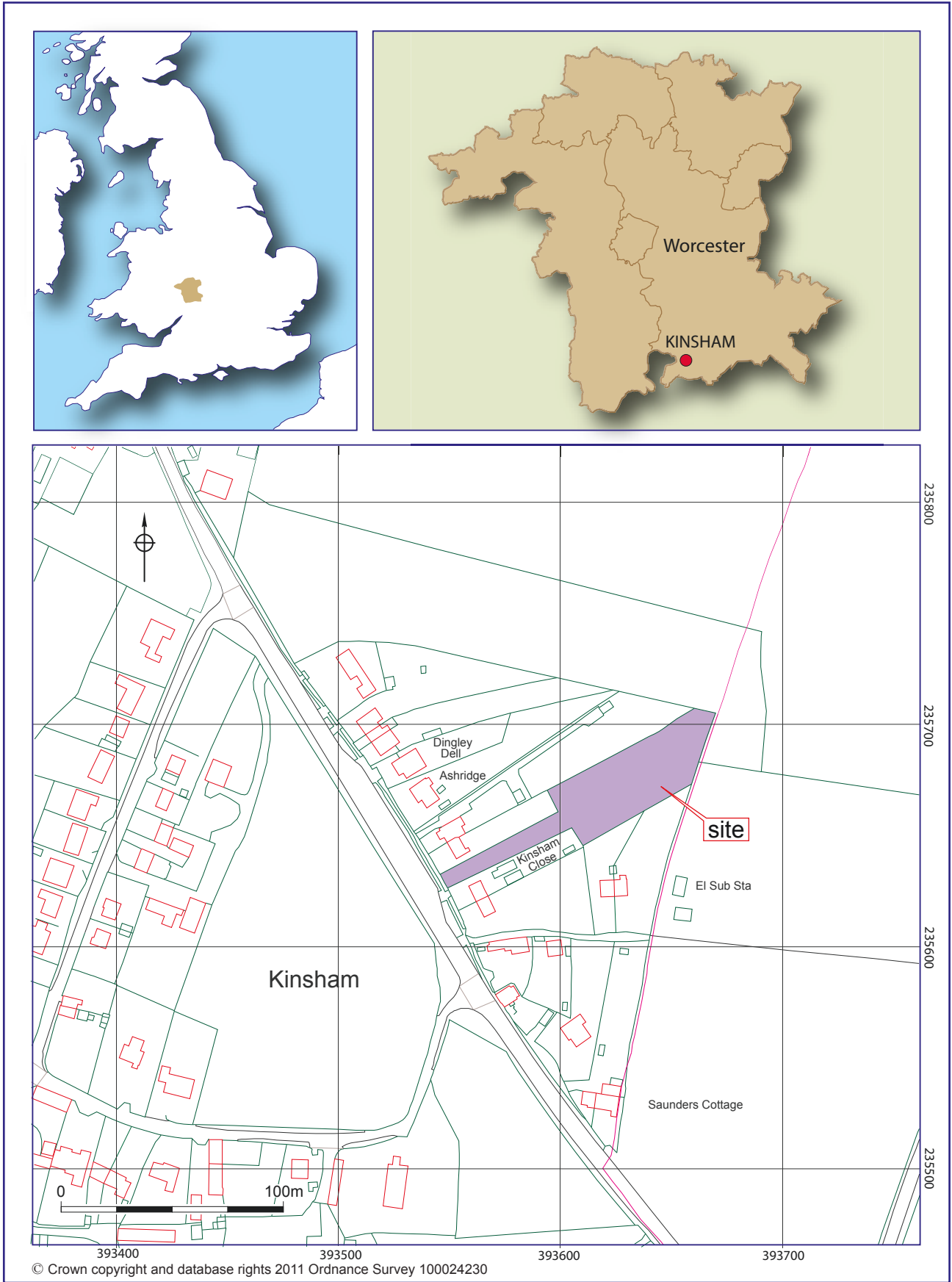
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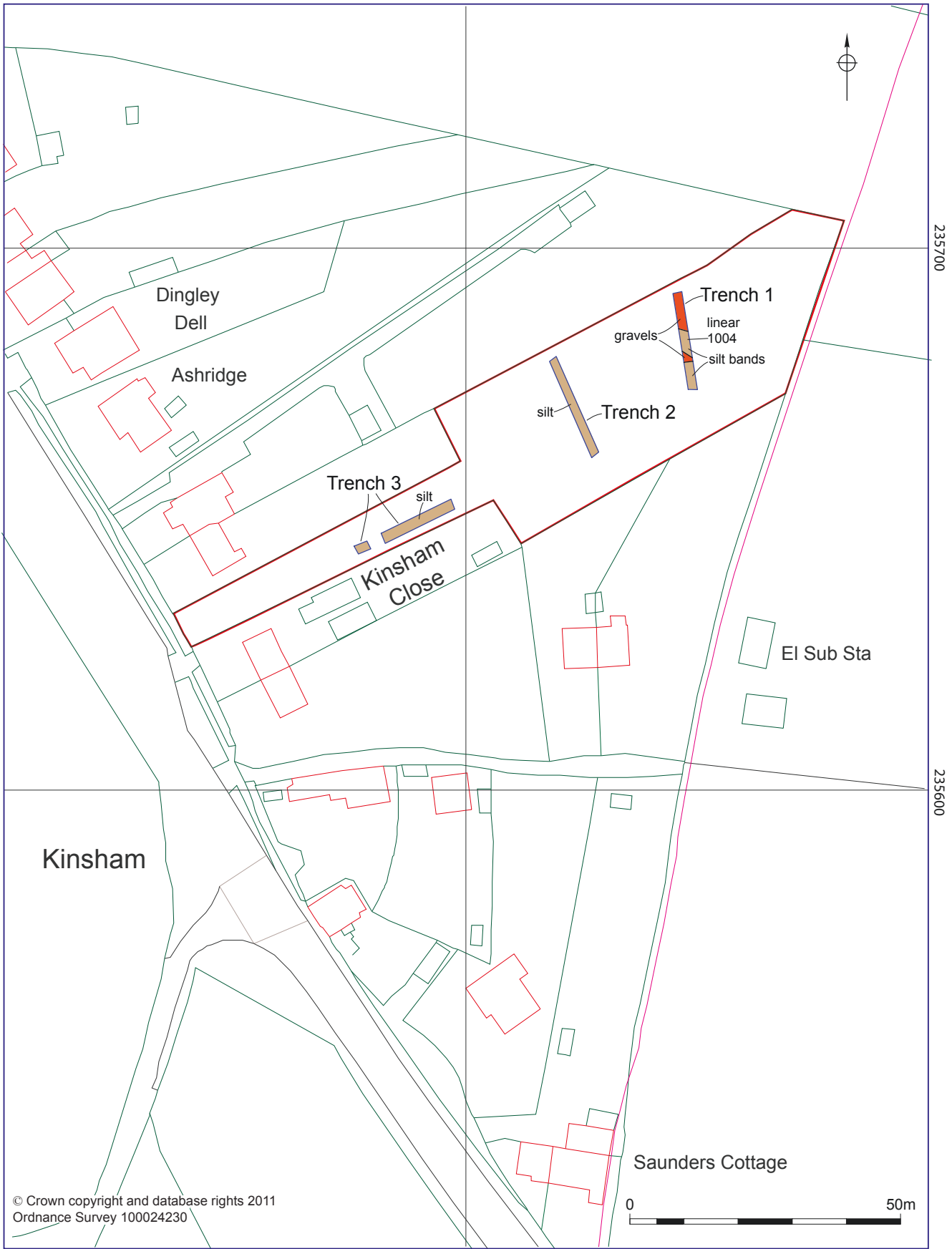
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Figures



Location of the site

Figure 1



Trench location plan

Figure 2

Plates



Plate 1. Trench 2 looking north



Plate 2. Trench 1, Detail of linear [1004], looking north

Appendix 1 Trench descriptions

Trench 1

Maximum dimensions: Length: 20m Width: 1.60m Depth: 0.48m

Orientation: North-South

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
1000	Topsoil	Dark grey/brown soft loam with frequent root action. Contains rare small rounded stones and occasional medium flecks of charcoal.	0-0.30m
1001	Subsoil	Mid brown soft/moderate sandy loam with frequent root action.	0.30-0.48m
1002	Natural	Mid yellowish brown sandy gravel with pockets of brown loam material (the result of plough scaring and root disturbance).	0.48m+
1003	Fill of [1004]	Mid brown very soft silty/sandy loam with pockets of dark brown humic material (caused by root disturbance).	0.42-0.66m
1004	cut of feature	Appears amorphous in both plan and profile with no evidence of deliberate human interaction. The northern edge is steep while the southern side has a very gently slope. Both edges and the base are very irregular in shape.	0.42-0.66m

Trench 2

Maximum dimensions: Length: 20m Width: 1.60m Depth: 0.49m

Orientation: North-South

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
2000	Topsoil	Loose mid grey blue humeric topsoil disturbed by root action which is moderate throughout.	0-0.27m
2001	Subsoil	Light brownish grey silty sand. Moderately compact with occasional round to sub-rounded gravels throughout. Moderate disturbance.	0.27-0.48m
2002	Natural	Mid orange red silty sands, firm compaction with no visible inclusions but occasional bands of gravels and moderate root action throughout.	0.48m+

Trench 3

Maximum dimensions: Length: 18m Width: 1.60m Depth: 0.52m

Orientation: South West-North East

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
3000	Topsoil	Mid grey blue humeric topsoil highly disturbed by root action. Loose compaction.	0-0.32m
3001	Subsoil	Light brownish grey silty sand of moderate compaction. Occasional round to sub-rounded gravels throughout.	0.32-0.52m
3002	Natural	Mid orange silty sands. Firm compaction with no visible inclusions but with occasional bands of round to sub-rounded gravels and moderate root disturbance throughout.	0.52m+

Appendix 2 Technical information

The archive (site code: WSM 47422)

The archive consists of:

- 2 Context records AS1
- 1 Field progress reports AS2
- 1 Photographic records AS3
- 32 Digital photographs
- 2 Scale drawings
- 3 Matrix sheets AS7
- 3 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
