

ARCHAEOLOGICAL
EVALUATION AT
CHAMBERLAIN NURSERIES,
ANCHOR LANE, HARVINGTON,
WORCESTERSHIRE

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Illustrations by Carolyn Hunt

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Project 2750
Report 1349
WSM 34392

Contents

Part 1 Project summary	1
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Part 2 Detailed report

1. Background	2
1.1 Reasons for the project	2
1.2 Project parameters	2
1.3 Aims	2
2. Methods	2
2.1 Documentary search	2
2.2 Fieldwork methodology	3
2.2.1 Fieldwork strategy	3
2.2.2 Structural analysis	3
2.3 Artefact methodology, by Alan Jacobs	3
2.3.1 Artefact recovery policy	3
2.3.2 Method of analysis	3
2.4 The methods in retrospect	3
3. Topographical and archaeological context	4
4. Results	5
4.1 Structural analysis	5
4.1.1 Phase 1 Natural deposits	5
4.1.2 Phase 2 Dated archaeological deposits	5
4.1.3 Undated and modern deposits	5
4.2 Artefact analysis, by Alan Jacobs	5
4.2.1 Medieval pottery	6
4.2.2 Post-medieval pottery	6
4.2.3 Modern pottery	6
4.2.4 Other finds	7
5. Synthesis and significance	7
6. Publication summary	8
7. The archive	8
8. Acknowledgements	8
9. Personnel	9
10. Bibliography	9
11. Abbreviations	9

Appendix 1 Context descriptions

Appendix 2 Plates

Appendix 3 Worcestershire Historic Environment Record

Archaeological evaluation at Chamberlain Nurseries, Anchor Lane, Harvington, Worcestershire

Tom Vaughan and Alan Jacobs

Part 1 Project summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at Chamberlain Nurseries, Anchor Lane, Harvington, Worcestershire (NGR: SP 0628 4810; Fig 1) on behalf of a client of Bridge Greenhouses Ltd, who intends to erect commercial greenhouses for which a planning application has been submitted. The project aimed to determine if any significant archaeological site was present and if so to indicate its nature, date and location.

Only a small number of residual artefacts were uncovered, all of medieval and post-medieval/modern date. No archaeological features, horizons or finds were identified which may be related to the enclosures of probable prehistoric date, identified within the immediate vicinity along the west bank of the River Avon.

The small number of artefacts, the lack of ridge and furrow and the undeveloped nature of the top and subsoil matrix indicate that the site has probably been subject to soil-stripping as well as intensive agriculture in the modern period.

Part 2 Detailed report

1. Background

1.1 Reasons for the project

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at Chamberlain Nurseries, Anchor Lane, Harvington, Worcestershire (NGR: SP 0628 4810; Fig 1), on behalf of Bridge Greenhouses Ltd. They intend to erect commercial greenhouses and have submitted a planning application to Wychavon District Council (reference W/05/0730), who consider that a site of archaeological interest may be affected (WSM 02788).

1.2 Project parameters

The project conforms to the *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (IFA 1999).

The project also conforms to a brief prepared by Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeology Service (HEAS 2005a) and for which a project proposal (including detailed specification) was produced (HEAS 2005b).

1.3 Aims

The aims of the evaluation were to locate archaeological deposits and determine, if present, their extent, state of preservation, date, type, vulnerability and documentation. The purpose of this was to establish their significance, since this would make it possible to recommend an appropriate treatment, which might then be integrated within the proposed development programme.

2. Methods

2.1 Documentary search

Prior to fieldwork commencing a search was made of the Historic Environment Record (HER). In addition the following sources were also consulted:

Cartographic sources

- Inclosure 1787 (A conjectural map to explain the award, J D Schooling, 1965) WCRO: BA 445 r 899:70 (transcribed D A Guyatt, 2000)
- 1st edition Ordnance Survey, 1887, sheet XXXIX.42 NE, scale 6":1 mile
- Ordnance Survey, 1905, sheet XXXIX.42 NE, scale 6":1 mile
- Ordnance Survey, 1930, sheet XXXIX.42 NE, scale 6":1 mile
- Ordnance Survey 2005, Superplan, scale 1:5000

Aerial photographs

- Webster and Hobley, 1964 (WSM 02785 - 02789)
- Glyde, 2003 (WSM 33756)

Documentary sources

- Place-names (Mawer and Stenton 1927).
- Site archives (from earlier excavations, evaluations etc).

2.2 **Fieldwork methodology**

2.2.1 **Fieldwork strategy**

A detailed specification has been prepared by the Service (HEAS 2005b).

Fieldwork was undertaken between 14th and 15th June 2005. The site reference number and site code is WSM 34392.

Six trenches, amounting to just over 408m² in area, were excavated over the site area of 10,000 m², representing a sample of 4.08%. The trench locations are indicated in Figure 2.

Deposits considered not to be significant were removed under archaeological supervision using a 180° 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 Service practice (CAS 1995). On completion of excavation, trenches were reinstated by replacing the excavated material.

2.2.2 **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.

2.3 **Artefact methodology, by Alan Jacobs**

2.3.1 **Artefact recovery policy**

All artefacts from the area of salvage recording were retrieved by hand and retained in accordance with the service manual (CAS 1995 as amended). This in principal determines that all finds, of whatever date, must be collected. However, in this case only a sample of later material was collected from the spoil during machining. These comprised the majority of the finds recovered from the site.

2.3.2 **Method of analysis**

All hand-retrieved finds were examined and a primary record was made on a Microsoft Access 2000 database. Artefacts were identified, quantified and dated and a *terminus post quem* date produced for each stratified context.

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; Hurst 1992).

2.4 **The methods in retrospect**

The methods adopted allow a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved.

3. **Topographical and archaeological context**

The footprint of the proposed new greenhouse covers an area of 100 x 100m within an undeveloped sub-rectangular field immediately to the south of Chamberlain Nurseries existing buildings. It is at present occupied by overgrown pasture and a small dump of organic nursery waste. The site lies 1km to the south-east of Harvington and 4.5km to the north-east of Evesham, within the floodplain of the River Avon which flows southwards, 0.3km to the east. It is a largely flat area, at a height of approximately 26m AOD, with a c 7m wide raised north-south aligned bank through the middle, containing modern irrigation pipes.

The soils of the area belong to the Flint series (Fc, Subgroup 572) to the south-west and the Wick series to the north-east (wQ, Subgroup 541). The former comprises stagnogleyic argillic brown earths of slightly mottled, non-calcareous loams or loams over clays, with slowly permeable subsoil and slight seasonal waterlogging. The latter comprises typical brown earths of permeable, well-drained, non-calcareous loams or clays. The predominant soils along the River Avon belong to the Fladbury series (Fa, Subgroup 813), comprising pelo-alluvial gley soils of non-calcareous alluvial clays (Soil Survey of England and Wales 1985).

The site lies within the immediate vicinity of a number of cropmark features, of probable prehistoric or Romano-British date. The nearest, less than 0.3m to the south-east, lies within the same field and continues into the field to the south (WSM 02788 and 02789). It comprises a series of rectilinear enclosures and associated features, the northern limit of which is masked by a broad deep band of soil, possibly alluvium derived from a former channel of the River Avon. No dateable material was recovered when Evesham Historical Society sampled one ditch of the northern enclosure in 1961. A large circular enclosure or round barrow has been recorded under the existing greenhouses 150m to the north (WSM 02787). Further rectilinear and circular enclosures exist to the north (WSM 02785), north-west (WSM 02784, 02786 and 33756) and south-west (WSM 02763); one of which is a possible Neolithic mortuary enclosure (WSM 02761). In addition there is documentary evidence of a possible Bronze Age barrow west of Harvington Mill (WSM 02837) while an axe and dagger of this period have been found in fields to the north of the village (WSM 02781 and 02780).

Archaeological monitoring has been undertaken of the works associated with a car park for the golf course, 0.3km south of the present site. No archaeological features were revealed. The top and subsoil were noted to be very shallow and lay directly over natural alluvial clay which had been scored during deep ploughing. A number of pits containing sheep bones were noted but determined to be of later 20th century date (WSM 30561; Mindykowski 2001, 2-3).

The Mill Hotel, 0.25km to the south-east has also been the subject of archaeological monitoring. No features or finds predating the late 19th century were revealed, although alluvial deposits were noted toward the riverbank. It was considered that any previous remains had been disturbed during the construction of the present building (WSM 23286; Kiberd, 1997).

Harvington lies within the Saxon Hundred of Oswaldslow. In the earliest documentary source of 709, the settlement was recorded as *Herverton*. Subsequent variations of the name include: *Hereford* (799), *Herefordtun* juxta Avene (964) *Herferthun* (1086), *Hervertona* (c 1086), *Herwerton* (1227), *Hervorditun* (1240), *Herfertun* (1240), *Herfortun* (1249) and *Herforton* (1508). The first recorded use of the modern form was made in the 16th century. The name is thought to derive from the Old English *here* + *ford*, meaning 'Army-ford' (even though the river is approximately 0.8km distant) with the suffix *tun* added as the settlement became established (WSM 15939; Mawer and Stenton 1927, 134). Surviving elements of medieval activity within the vicinity include the cruck construction Manor Farm to the south-west (WSM 30918); Harvington Mill to the south east, a complex of associated medieval and post-medieval industrial activity (WSM 02791 and 23815); and earthworks of ridge and furrow agriculture within surrounding fields (WSM 02763, 02785 - 02787 and 10048).

Cartographic sources indicate the character of the area over the last 218 years. A surviving map does not accompany the Inclosure Award of 1797, although one was drawn up in 1965 based on a number of sources. This indicates that the site was then part of a much larger sub-rectangular field known as Lower Field, which spanned the area between Anchor Lane to the west and the west bank of the River Avon to the east. The field was bisected by a diagonal track from the north-west corner to Mill Close at the south-east. In addition it was subdivided along the Anchor Lane frontage into small rectangular plots, one of which was an orchard. The site may straddle one of these divisions. The 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of 1887 reveals Lower Field to have been divided into two, with a north-south aligned hedge or fence (plots 166 and 167). The site occupies the narrower western side (plot 167). Subsequent editions of 1905 and 1930 reveal little difference: the north-south division was removed and the buildings within Mill Close are identified as Mill House. Otherwise the field has remained undeveloped until the construction of the nursery glasshouses on the northern side in the later 20th century.

4. Results

4.1 Structural analysis

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

4.1.1 Phase 1 Natural deposits

The natural comprised a variable matrix of brown/orange sand and pebble gravel with occasional manganese flecks, over compact river terrace gravel. Toward the south-east (Trenches 1 and 4) there was a loose fine deep sand with very little gravel. Elsewhere the matrix was more compact and contained a higher proportion of gravel and gravel outcrops.

This undisturbed deposit was generally very shallow, existing at 0.29-0.43m below the present ground surface, or *c* 25.60-25.70m AOD.

4.1.2 Phase 2 Dated archaeological deposits

No archaeological features, layers or horizons were identified within any of the six trenches.

4.1.3 Undated and modern deposits

The soils overlying the natural matrix comprised a variable silt/sand with occasional pebble gravel. An orangey brown - variably sandy - silt with extensive roots formed the shallow topsoil to a depth of 0.15-0.24m. It had a very diffuse boundary with the brownish orange silty sand subsoil below.

4.2 Artefact analysis, by Alan Jacobs

The artefactual assemblage recovered is summarised in Tables 1-5.

The pottery assemblage retrieved from the excavated area consisted of 49 sherds of pottery weighing 195g, in addition fragments of tile, brick, glass, field drain and sewer pipe were recovered. The group came from unstratified contexts and could be dated from the medieval period onwards. Level of preservation was generally fair with the majority of sherds displaying only moderate levels of abrasion.

Material	Total	Weight (g)
Medieval pottery	2	3
Post-medieval pottery	9	79
Modern pottery	38	113
Brick	11	500
Brick/tile	10	157
Tile	19	186
Field drain	2	25
Sewer pipe	6	170
Glass	4	63
Total	101	1296

Table 1: Quantification of the assemblage

All sherds have been grouped and quantified according to fabric type (see Table 2). A total of three diagnostic form sherds were present and could be dated accordingly, the remaining sherds were datable by fabric type to their general period or production span. Where mentioned, all specific forms are referenced to the type series within the report for Deansway, Worcester (Bryant 2004).

The discussion below is a summary of the finds and associated location or contexts by period. Where possible, *terminus post quem* dates have been allocated and the importance of individual finds commented upon as necessary.

4.2.1 Medieval pottery

The medieval pottery consisted of just two very abraded sherds and is quantified in Table 2. The lack of material indicates a low level of activity during this period.

Fabric number	Fabric name	Total sherds	Weight (g)
55	Worcester-type sandy ware	1	1
56/69	Malvernian oxidised ware	1	2
Total		2	3

Table 2: Quantification of the medieval pottery by fabric

4.2.2 Post-medieval pottery

The post-medieval pottery consisted of just nine sherds, all of which were very abraded. No specific forms could be defined beyond the base of a handle of a small hollow ware vessel in post-medieval red sandy ware (fabric 78). This material represents a low level of agricultural activity during this period.

Fabric number	Fabric name	Total sherds	Weight (g)
78	Post-medieval red sandy ware	8	77
91	Post-medieval buff ware	1	10
Total		9	87

Table 3: Quantification of the post-medieval pottery by fabric

4.2.3 Modern pottery

The modern pottery recovered consisted of thirty-eight sherds and is quantified in Table 4. This assemblage consisted of a single sherd of modern stone china (fabric 85) and a large number of fragments of modern plant pot. The balance of fabrics clearly indicates horticultural activity in this area during the modern period

Fabric number	Fabric name	Total sherds	Weight (g)
85	Modern stone china	1	1
101	Miscellaneous modern wares	37	112
Total		38	113

Table 4: Quantification of the modern pottery by fabric

4.2.4 Other finds

All other finds are of post-medieval or modern date and are quantified in Table 5. A number of fragments of tile (fabric 2a) of a long-lived type in production from the 13th-18th century were recovered from contexts 103, 203 and 503. However, these seem most likely to be of post-medieval date. Modern examples of fragments of brick, sewer pipe, land drain and tile were also present as were fragments of modern glass bottles. This would indicate a general 19th-20th century date range for all contexts.

Context	Period	Type	Total	Weight (g)
103	Modern	Pottery (fabric 101)	17	57
103	Modern	Sewer pipe	6	170
103	Modern	Tile	6	82
203	Modern	Brick	6	46
203	Modern	Bottle fragments	3	11
203	Post-medieval	Pottery (fabric 78)	4	29
203	Post-medieval	Tile	3	24
303	Post-medieval	Pottery (fabric 91)	1	10
303	Post-medieval/Modern	Brick	3	373
403	Modern	Tile	1	26
403	Medieval	Pottery (fabric 55)	1	1
403	Modern	Glass bottle	1	52
403	Modern	Pottery (fabric 101)	20	52
403	Post-medieval/Modern	Brick/Tile	10	157
503	Medieval	Pottery (fabric 56/69)	1	2
503	Medieval/post-medieval	Tile	6	48
503	Medieval/post-medieval	Tile	7	37
503	Modern	Brick	2	81
503	Modern	Field drain	2	25
503	Modern	Pottery (fabric 85)	1	4
503	Post-medieval	Pottery (fabric 78)	4	40
603	Modern	Tile	2	17

Table 5: Quantification of material by context

5. Synthesis and significance

No archaeological features or horizons and comparatively few artefacts were recovered during the evaluation. The finds from the site are of little archaeological interest; only very residual amounts of medieval and post-medieval pottery were recovered, all in association with fragments of modern plant pot. The ceramic building material is all of post-medieval or modern date, representing general rubbish deposition relating to agricultural activity.

Therefore it is considered that the activity of probable prehistoric date, which centred on the enclosures to the south-east and further to the north-east, did not continue to any intensive degree within the present site.

However the lack of a developed or substantial top and subsoil matrix was unexpected given the site's location within a floodplain, which is regularly inundated in the winter, and the previous identification of a band of 'deep soil' to the east, which was interpreted to represent

a former water course. In addition the lack of any trace of ridge and furrow, which has been noted in adjacent fields indicates that the site has probably been the subject of soil-stripping and intensive agricultural activity in the modern period.

6. **Publication summary**

The Service has a professional obligation to publish the results of archaeological projects within a reasonable period of time. To this end, the Service 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 Bridge Greenhouses Ltd at Chamberlain Nurseries, Anchor Lane, Harvington, Worcestershire (NGR: SP 0628 4810; HER: WSM 34392). No archaeological features or horizons and comparatively few artefacts were recovered. All finds were residual and of medieval and post-medieval/modern date. Thus no site of archaeological significance was identified, suggesting that the probable prehistoric activity noted adjacent did not continue into the present area. However due to the lack of a developed soil profile or any trace of ridge and furrow as identified in fields adjacent it is conjectured that the site has been subject of soil stripping and intensive agricultural activity in the modern period.

7. **The archive**

The archive consists of:

- 2 Fieldwork progress records AS2
- 1 Photographic records AS3
- 12 Digital photographs
- 1 Context number catalogues AS5
- 6 Trench records AS41
- 1 Scale drawings
- 1 Box of finds
- 1 Computer disk

The project archive is intended to be placed at:

Worcestershire County Museum
Hartlebury Castle
Hartlebury
Near Kidderminster
Worcestershire DY11 7XZ
Tel Hartlebury (01299) 250416

8. **Acknowledgements**

The Service would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, Mr L C Macrae (Bridge Greenhouses Ltd) and Mike Glyde (WCC Historic Environment Planning Advisor).

9. Personnel

The fieldwork and report preparation was led by Tom Vaughan. The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Simon Woodiwiss. Fieldwork was undertaken by Angus Crawford, finds analysis by Alan Jacobs and illustration by Carolyn Hunt.

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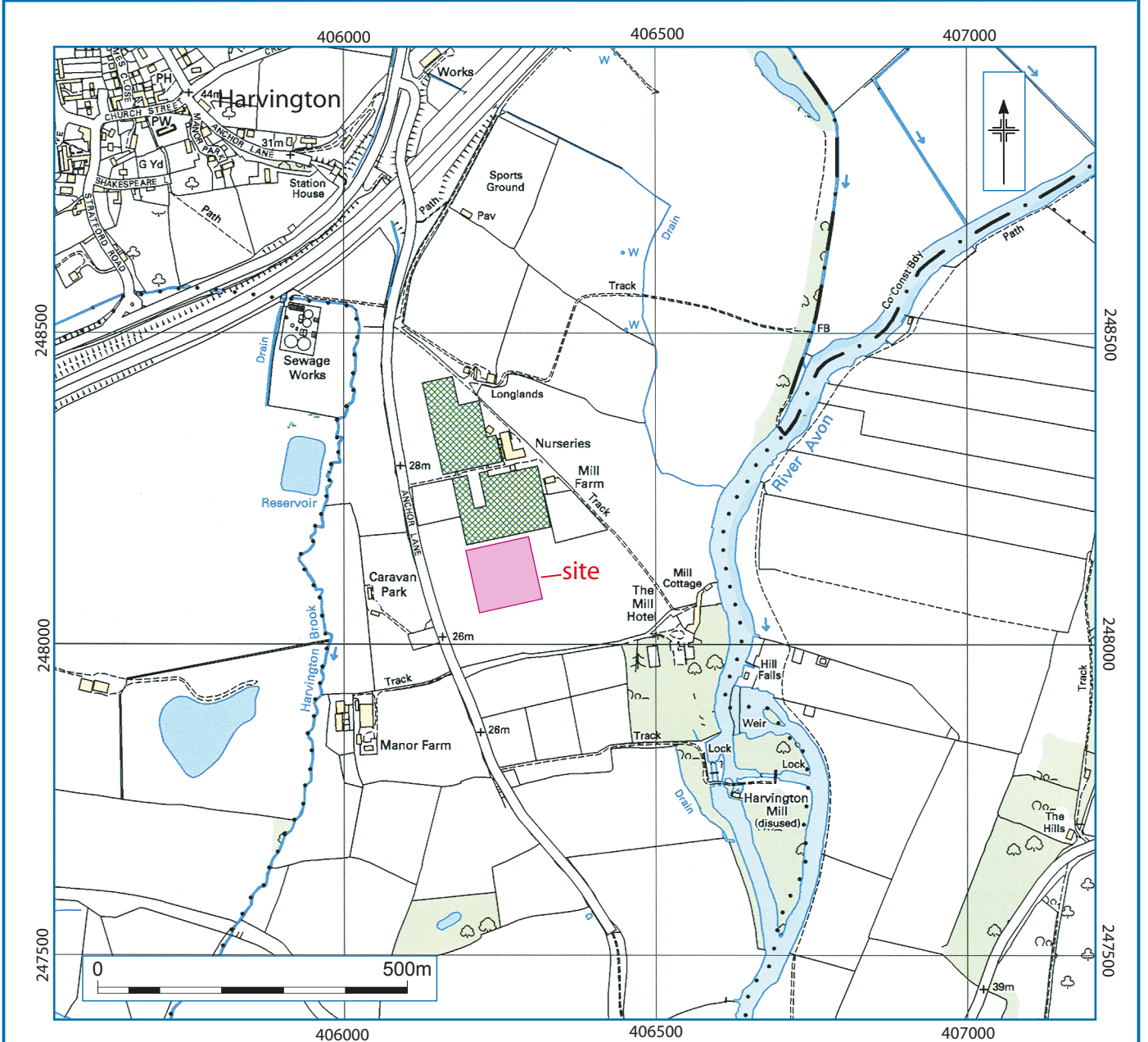
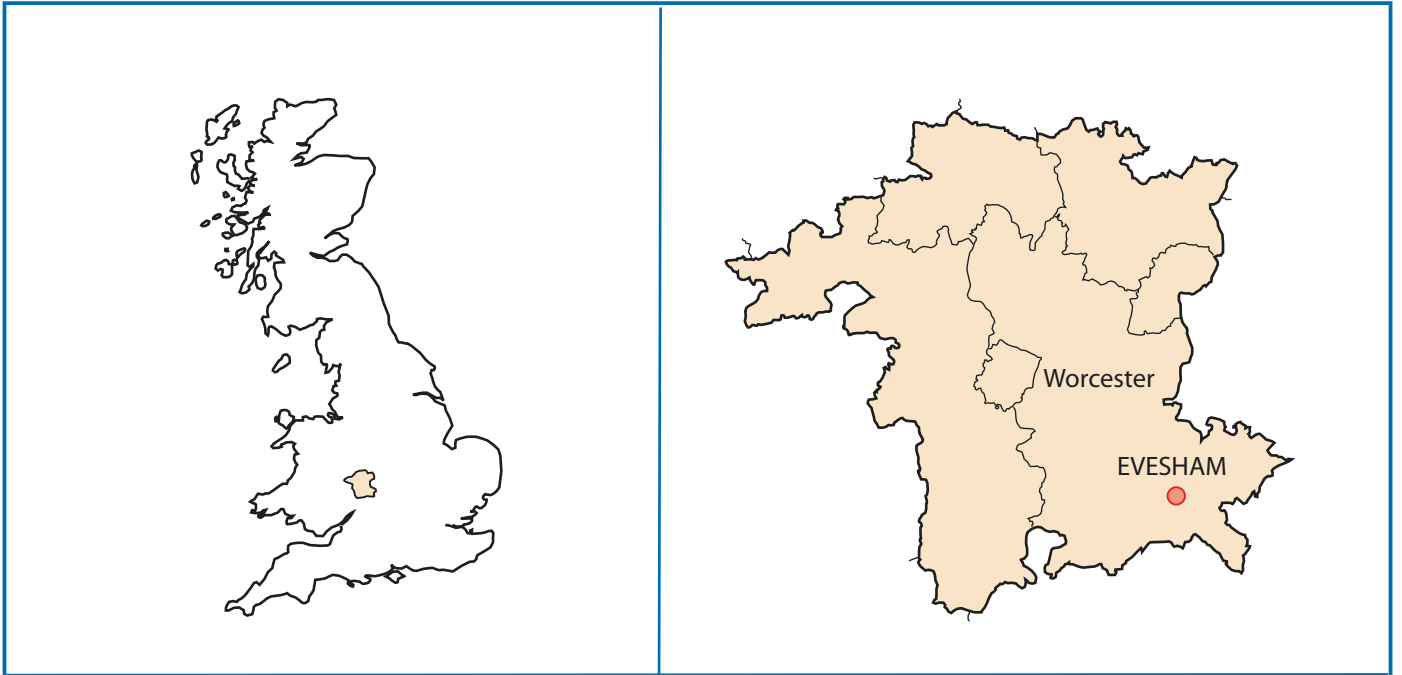
11. Abbreviations

HER Historic Environment Record.

NMR National Monuments Record.

WCRO Worcestershire County Records Office.

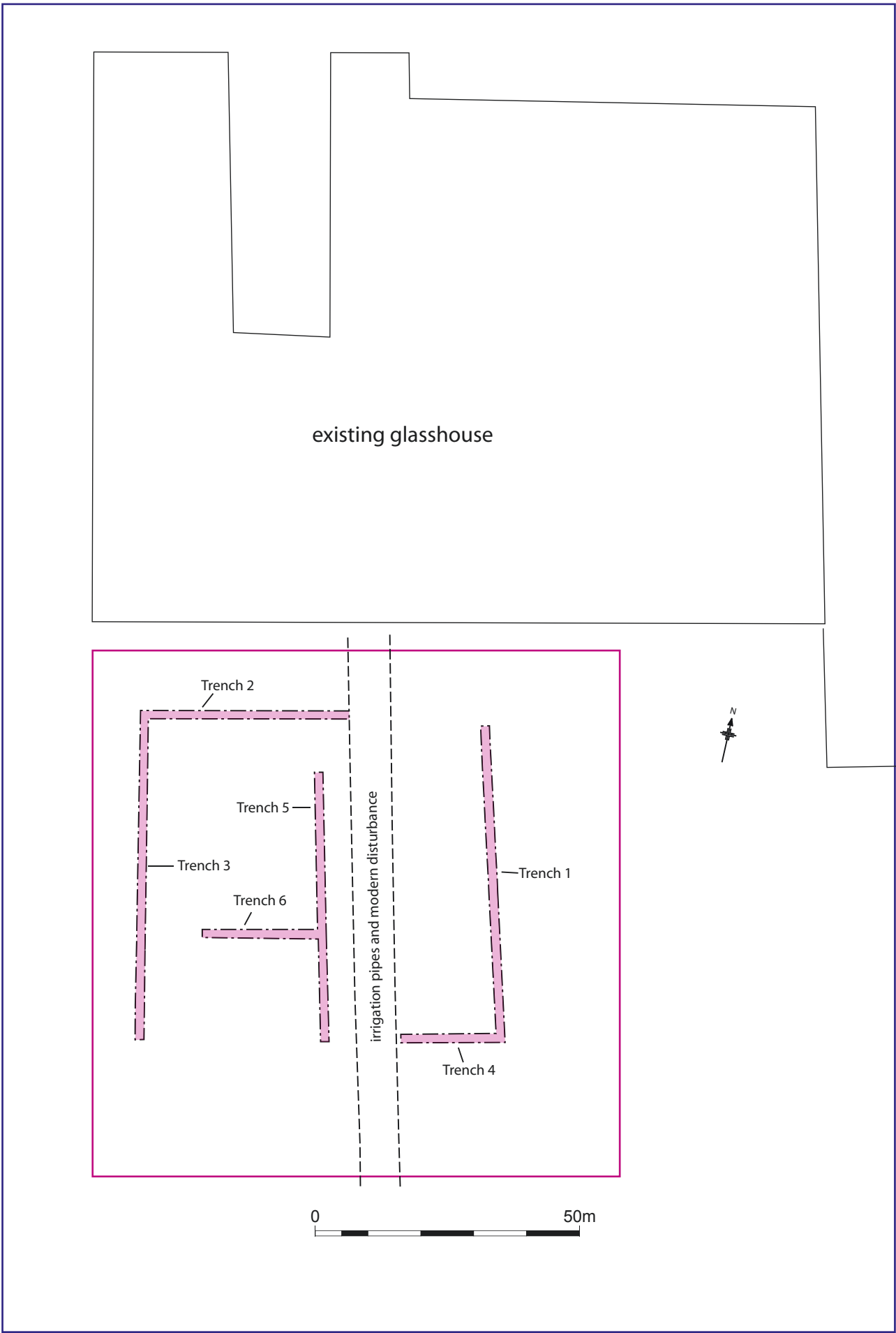
WSM Numbers prefixed with 'WSM' are the primary reference numbers used by the Worcestershire County Historic Environment Record.



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Location of the site.

Figure 1



Trench location plan

Figure 2

Appendix 2 Plates



Plate 1: Trench 1, view north



Plate 2: Trench 2, view east



Plate 3: Trench 3, view north



Plate 4: Trench 4, view east



Plate 5: Trench 5, view north



Plate 6: Trench 6, view east

Appendix 1 Context descriptions

Context_Register

<i>Context_No</i>	<i>Context_type</i>	<i>Feature_type</i>	<i>Colour</i>	<i>Texture</i>	<i>Consistency</i>	<i>Fill_of_(I)</i>	<i>Primary_Fill</i>	<i>Notes</i>
100	Layer	Topsoil	Mid orangey brown	Sandy silt	Firm	0	0	turfed, occ small/medium pebble gravel, poorly sorted, very diffuse boundary, 0.00-0.24m bgs.
101	Layer	Subsoil	Mid-Brownish orange	Silty sand	Compact	0	0	occ small/medium pebbles and manganese, poorly sorted, very diffuse boundaries, 0.20-0.46m bgs
102	Layer	Natural	Brownish orange	fine sand	Firm/compact	0	0	occ silty patches, occ small pebble gravel patches, esp with depth, >0.43m bgs
103	Arbitrary number	Arbitrary	n/a	n/a	n/a	0	0	residual and machine cut finds
200	Layer	Topsoil	Mid orangey brown	Very sandy silt	Firm	0	0	turfed, occ small/medium pebble gravel, poorly sorted, very diffuse boundary, 0.00-0.19m bgs

<i>Context_No</i>	<i>Context_type</i>	<i>Feature_type</i>	<i>Colour</i>	<i>Texture</i>	<i>Consistency</i>	<i>Fill_of_(1)</i>	<i>Primary_Fill</i>	<i>Notes</i>
201	Layer	Subsoil	Mid-Brownish orange	Silty sand	Compact	0	0	occ small/medium pebbles and manganese, poorly sorted, very diffuse boundaries, 0.15-0.40m bgs
202	Layer	Natural	Slightly brownish	Sand and gravel	Compact	0	0	very diffuse boundary, >0.36m bgs
203	Arbitrary number	Arbitrary	n/a	n/a	n/a	0	0	residual and machine cut finds
300	Layer	Topsoil	Orangey brown	Very sandy silt	Firm	0	0	turfed, occ small/medium pebble gravel, poorly sorted, very diffuse boundary, 0.00-0.18m bgs
301	Layer	Subsoil	Brownish orange	Silty sand	Compact	0	0	occ small/medium pebbles and manganese, poorly sorted, very diffuse boundaries, 0.17-0.50m bgs

<i>Context_No</i>	<i>Context_type</i>	<i>Feature_type</i>	<i>Colour</i>	<i>Texture</i>	<i>Consistency</i>	<i>Fill_of_(1)</i>	<i>Primary_Fill</i>	<i>Notes</i>
302	Layer	Natural	Light brownish	fine sand	Firm/compact	0	0	occ pebble gravel & patches to north, very diffuse boundary, >0.35m bgs
303	Arbitrary number	Arbitrary	n/a	n/a	n/a	0	0	residual and machine cut finds
400	Layer	Topsoil	Mid orangey brown	Sandy silt	Firm	0	0	turfed, occ small/medium pebble gravel, poorly sorted, very diffuse boundary, 0.00-0.24m bgs
401	Layer	Subsoil	Mid-Brownish orange	Silty sand	Compact	0	0	occ small/medium pebbles and manganese, poorly sorted, very diffuse boundaries, 0.18-0.46m bgs
402	Layer	Natural	Brownish orange	fine sand	Firm	0	0	occ pebble gravel, very diffuse boundary, >0.42m bgs

<i>Context_No</i>	<i>Context_type</i>	<i>Feature_type</i>	<i>Colour</i>	<i>Texture</i>	<i>Consistency</i>	<i>Fill_of_(1)</i>	<i>Primary_Fill</i>	<i>Notes</i>
403	Arbitrary number	Arbitrary	n/a	n/a	n/a	0	0	residual and machine cut finds
500	Layer	Topsoil	Mid orangey brown	Sandy silt	Firm	0	0	turfed, occ small/medium pebble gravel, poorly sorted, very diffuse boundary, 0.00-0.20m bgs
501	Layer	Subsoil	Mid-Brownish orange	Silty sand	Compact	0	0	occ small/medium pebbles and manganese, poorly sorted, very diffuse boundaries, 0.20-0.40m bgs
502	Layer	Natural	Brownish orange	fine sand	Firm/compact	0	0	frequent pebble gravel, very diffuse boundary, >0.38m bgs
503	Arbitrary number	Arbitrary	n/a	n/a	n/a	0	0	residual and machine cut finds

<i>Context_No</i>	<i>Context_type</i>	<i>Feature_type</i>	<i>Colour</i>	<i>Texture</i>	<i>Consistency</i>	<i>Fill_of_(1)</i>	<i>Primary_Fill</i>	<i>Notes</i>
600	Layer	Topsoil	Orangey brown	Very sandy silt	Firm	0	0	turfed, occ small/medium pebble gravel, poorly sorted, very diffuse boundary, 0.00-0.15m bgs
601	Layer	Subsoil	Brownish orange	Silty sand	Compact	0	0	occ small/medium pebbles and manganese, poorly sorted, very diffuse boundaries, 0.15-0.35m bgs
602	Layer	Natural	Mid brownish	fine sand	Compact	0	0	occ pebble gravel & manganese, very diffuse boundary, >0.29m bgs
603	Arbitrary number	Arbitrary	n/a	n/a	n/a	0	0	residual and machine cut finds

Appendix 3 Worcestershire Historic Environment Record

Summary of the artefactual assemblage

Date	Artefact type	Total	Weight (g)	Specialist report?	Important research assemblage?
Medieval	pottery	2	3	N	N
Post-medieval	pottery	9	79	N	N
Modern	pottery	38	113	N	N
Post-medieval/Modern	Brick	11	500	N	N
Modern	Brick/tile	10	157	N	N
Medieval	Tile	19	186	N	N
Modern	Field drain	2	25	N	N
Modern	Sewer pipe	6	170	N	N
Modern	Glass	4	63	N	N