

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING
BRIEF OF
UPTON UPON SEVERN FLOOD
ALLEVIATION SCHEME,
UPTON UPON SEVERN,
WORCESTERSHIRE

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With a contribution by Dennis Williams

Illustrated by Laura Templeton

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Project 3639
Report 1848
WSM 43246

Archaeological watching brief of Upton upon Severn flood alleviation scheme, Upton upon Severn, Worcestershire

Adam Lee

Background information

<i>Client</i>	Environment Agency
<i>Site address</i>	Land south of New Street, Upton upon Severn
<i>National Grid reference</i>	SO 85030 40420
<i>Historic Environment Record reference</i>	WSM 43246
<i>Project parameters</i>	IfA 2008

Previous archaeological work on the site

Archaeological investigations were carried out along the route of the flood defences in 2008 (Hughes 2008). These ground investigations consisted of evaluation trenches, test trenches and bore holes. No significant archaeological features or deposits were identified in the land north and south of New Street.

Topographical and archaeological context

The following summary is taken from the report of the initial ground investigations carried out in 2008 (Hughes 2008) based in part on a desk based assessment of the site prepared prior to the investigations (Entec UK Ltd 2008).

Lying at a height of c15m AOD the town of Upton-on-Severn sits on a section of gravel within the second terrace of the River Severn, over argillic brown earths of the Bromyard association and over brown alluvial soils of the Lugwardine Association. In turn, these soils overly a geological sequence of Downtonian Raglan Mudstone and riverine alluvium (Dalwood 1996). The development site is to the south of New Street which lies at the edge of the south side of the river's floodplain.

Based on current knowledge Upton-on-Severn was not occupied until the 9th or 10th centuries when the church of Worcester held an estate there (VCH IV). Upton is mentioned in the Domesday survey of 1086 when it was amalgamated with Ripple (Thorn and Thorn 1982). Hooke (1990) has suggested that there was probably a church by this time and the bishops of Worcester certainly remained overlords of the estate until the 16th century (VCH IV).

The earliest settlement focus was probably around the church of St Peter and Paul, parts of which date to the 14th century (VCH IV). The medieval settlement is not well documented prior to the 15th century but there is evidence of river trade by 1307-8 (VCH IV; WSM 19748) and of a fishery by 1377 (Hurle 1988; WSM 19765).

New Street is first recorded in 1479-81 and formed an early arterial road running west from High Street (Dalwood 1996).

The first timber bridge was probably built in 1480-82 when the ferry went out of use (VCH IV). It was one of the few bridging points and was located at a central point in the local road network. The bridge was rebuilt in stone between 1606-9 (VCH IV; Hurle 1988).

The present town has a planned medieval layout and was granted a market in the early 15th century (WSM 12310; VCH IV). It was laid out along the axis of High Street and Old Street, delimited by the River Severn, the rear of the burgage plots off Backfields Lane, Church Walk, Oak Street and Severn Drive (WSM 11503; Dalwood 1996). It comprises many fine timber-framed and brick buildings of the 17th-19th centuries, for example, the Anchor Inn on the High Street (WSM 12369).

On the east side of Old Street the houses are predominantly 17th to late 18th century, two or three storey, timber-framed and brick built (WSM 12341, 12342, 12343, 12344, 12345, 12346 & 12347). The rear of 57, Old Street burgage plot is an area of archaeological interest with the potential for medieval and post-medieval archaeological deposits and structures (WSM 20071).

A watching brief to the west of the site (WSM 27004) verified the presence of an entrenchment built in 1651 in advance of a skirmish, which took place during the Civil War. This site is also close to a known Civil War fortification (WSM 11369; Hurst 1998).

Aims

The aim of the watching brief was to observe and record archaeological deposits, and to determine their extent, state of preservation, date and type, as far as reasonably possible.

Methods

General specification for fieldwork	CAS 1995
Sources consulted	HER Sources cited by the HER
Dates of fieldwork	10 th February to 18 th April 2011
Total area of site strip	c 10,590m ²
Dimensions of collection pits excavated next to but included within stripped areas	
Area 2	length 1.80m width 1.50m depth 2.00m
Area 3	length 1.60m width 1.50m depth 2.00m
Area 4	length 2.00m width 1.30m depth 2.00m

Access to or visibility of deposits

Observation of the excavated areas was undertaken during and after machine excavation. The exposed surfaces were sufficiently clean to observe well-differentiated archaeological deposits, though any less clear may have not been identified. The deeper collection pits were not entered for safety reasons.

Statement of confidence

Access to, and visibility of, deposits allowed a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved.

Artefact recovery policy

The artefact recovery policy conformed to standard Service practice (CAS 1995; appendix 2).

Method of artefact analysis

All hand-retrieved finds were examined. They were identified, quantified and dated to period. A terminus post quem date was produced for each stratified context. These dates were used for determining the broad date of phases defined for the site. All information was recorded on pro forma sheets.

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).

Results

Deposit descriptions for stripped areas

Area 1: Strip for compound

Maximum dimensions: Length: 64.00m Width: 41.00m Depth: 0.40-0.55m

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
100	Topsoil	Moderately compact mid slightly orange brown sandy silt. Contains occasional small to medium stones and occasional large fragments of modern ceramic building material.	0-0.40m
101	Subsoil	Moderately compact mid orange brown sandy silt. Contains occasional small to medium stones and occasional large fragments of modern ceramic building material	0.30-0.55m

Area 2: Strip for flood bank and collection pit excavation

Maximum dimensions: Length: 117.00m Width: 13.00m Depth: 0.40m

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
200	Topsoil	Moderately compact mid slightly orange brown sandy silt. Contains occasional small to medium stones and occasional large fragments of modern ceramic building material.	0-0.25m
201	Subsoil	Moderately compact mid orange brown sandy silt. Contains occasional small to medium stones, occasional large fragments of modern ceramic building material, modern glass fragments and post medieval pottery.	0.25-0.70m
202	Made ground	Mixed deposit with hardcore and compact mid brown stony silt. Contains modern 20 th century glass, pottery, brick and mortar.	0.25-m
203	Natural	Moderately compact mid red orange silty sand and gravel	

Area 3: Strip for flood bank and collection pit excavation

Maximum dimensions: Length: 275.00m Width: 19.00m Depth: 0.40m

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
300	Topsoil	Moderately compact mid slightly orange brown sandy silt. Contains occasional small to medium stones and occasional large fragments of modern ceramic building material.	0-0.25m
301	Subsoil	Moderately compact mid-dark orange brown sandy silt. Contains occasional small to medium stones, occasional large lumps of red silt stone/marl at northwest end of trench, occasional large fragments of modern ceramic building material, occasional fragments of modern glass and moderate flecks to medium lumps of coal/fuel ash/charcoal.	0.25-1.10m
302	Natural	Loose yellow orange sand and gravel.	1.10-2.00m+

Area 4: Strip for flood bank and collection pit excavation

Maximum dimensions: Length: 206.00m Width: 19.00m Depth: 0.40m

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
400	Topsoil	Moderately compact mid slightly orange brown sandy silt. Contains occasional small to medium stones and occasional large fragments of modern ceramic building material.	0-0.25m
401	Subsoil	Moderately compact mid-dark orange brown sandy silt. Contains occasional small to medium stones, occasional large lumps of red silt stone/marl at northwest end of trench, occasional large fragments of modern ceramic building material, occasional fragments of modern glass and moderate flecks to medium lumps of coal/fuel ash/charcoal.	0.25-0.85m
402	Made Ground	Compact mid brown orange – 60% small to large orange marl/silt stone fragments 40% brown silt. Deposit only appears at southern end of stripped area.	0.20-0.35m+
403	Natural	Loose mid orange sand and gravel.	0.85-2.00m+

Artefact analysis, by Dennis Williams

The artefactual assemblage recovered is summarised in Table 1. The assemblage included material from the medieval and post-medieval periods and comprised pottery, tile and clay pipe fragments. Level of preservation was generally fair with the majority of pottery sherds displaying only moderate levels of abrasion.

period	material class	material subtype	object specific type	count	weight (g)
medieval	ceramic	earthenware	-	1	20
medieval	ceramic	earthenware	pot	4	54
post-medieval	ceramic	-	clay pipe	1	1
post-medieval	ceramic	-	roof tile(flat)	8	302
post-medieval	ceramic	earthenware	-	1	82
post-medieval	ceramic	earthenware	pot	35	642
post-medieval	ceramic	fired clay	clay pipe	1	6
post-medieval	ceramic	stoneware	pot	4	36
totals				55	1143

Table 1: Quantification of the assemblage

Pottery

All sherds have been grouped and quantified according to fabric type (Table 2). No diagnostic form sherds were present, but the remaining sherds were datable by fabric type to their general periods or production spans.

A small number of sherds of glazed Malvernian ware (fabric 69) were recovered. These would have been manufactured nearby, in the Hanley Castle area, during the 13th-16th centuries.

A common range of post-medieval earthenwares, consisting of black and brown glazed red wares (fabric 78), yellow wares (fabric 77), and buff wares (fabric 91) were recovered. These dated from the 17th and 18th centuries, with two bases from jars or jugs being represented among the red wares. There were also two substantial sherds, one from a bowl, and the other from a jar or jug, with a fine orange-red matrix, tentatively identified as fabric 78. Both exhibited a thin brownish-black slip. In

one instance (the bowl) a brownish green glaze had been applied over white slip-trailed decoration. On the other, white slip-trailed had been applied to the external surface, but not overglazed. These examples are likely to have been produced in the very early, i.e. late 16th, or early 17th century, part of the post-medieval period.

19th century pottery was present as stoneware (fabric 81) and china (fabric 85) sherds, all white glazed. A stoneware sherd from a straight-sided jar was noted.

fabric code	period	fabric common name	count	weight (g)
69	medieval	Oxidized glazed Malvernian ware	4	54
77	post-medieval	Midlands yellow ware	2	12
78	post-medieval	Post-medieval red wares	18	498
81	post-medieval	Stonewares	4	36
85	post-medieval	China	4	20
91	post-medieval	Post-medieval buff wares	11	112
totals:			43	732

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

Other artefacts

Non-pottery artefacts included fragments of flat roof tile, all except one of which were post-medieval. The remaining one was thin, with a hard Malvernian fabric that indicated local manufacture, within the 13th-16th century period.

There were two clay pipe fragments, both from stems, and therefore undiagnostic in terms of date, apart from a broad 17th-19th century range.

Overview of artefactual evidence

The artefacts from this site were all typical of those expected from an area of domestic occupation and use.

Discussion and Conclusions

Four areas were stripped using a tracked excavator prior to the construction of a new flood bank through fields south of New Street (Figure 2, Plates 1-6). The majority of the excavations only revealed topsoil, subsoil and areas of modern made ground. The collection pits excavated along the route of the flood bank were excavated to a depth of 2m and revealed natural sand and gravel deposits at 0.70-1.10m depth below the ground surface (Figure 2, Plate 7). No significant archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were identified within the development site. As stated above the artefacts recovered were typical of those expected from an area of domestic occupation but are likely to have been distributed over the fields site by manuring.

Apart from the collection pits the majority of the excavations on the site only revealed subsoil and made ground and it is therefore possible that archaeological features may survive cut in to natural deposits below the impact of the development. It is therefore not possible to make a definitive statement as to the presence or absence of archaeological features or deposits within the development area.

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 watching brief was undertaken on behalf of the Environment Agency through fields south of New Street, Upton upon Severn, Worcestershire (NGR ref SO 85030 40420; HER ref WSM 43246). Four areas were stripped using a tracked excavator prior to the construction of a new flood bank through fields south of New Street. The majority of the excavations only revealed topsoil, subsoil and areas of modern made ground. The collection pits excavated along the route of the flood bank were excavated to a depth of 2m and revealed natural sand and gravel deposits at 0.70-1.10m depth below the ground surface. No significant archaeological features or deposits were identified. The artefacts recovered from this site were typical of those expected from an area of domestic occupation but are likely to have been distributed by manuring.

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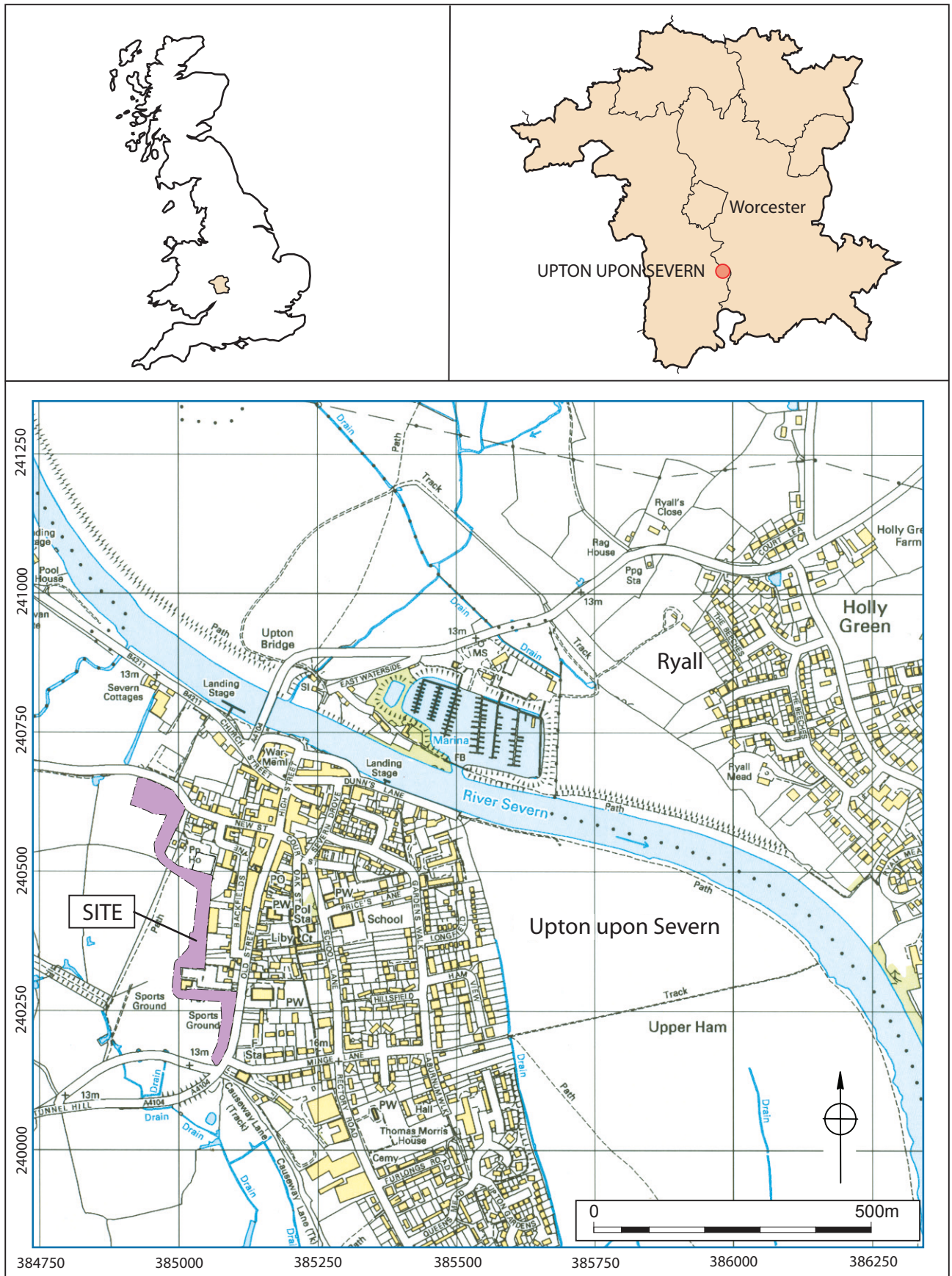
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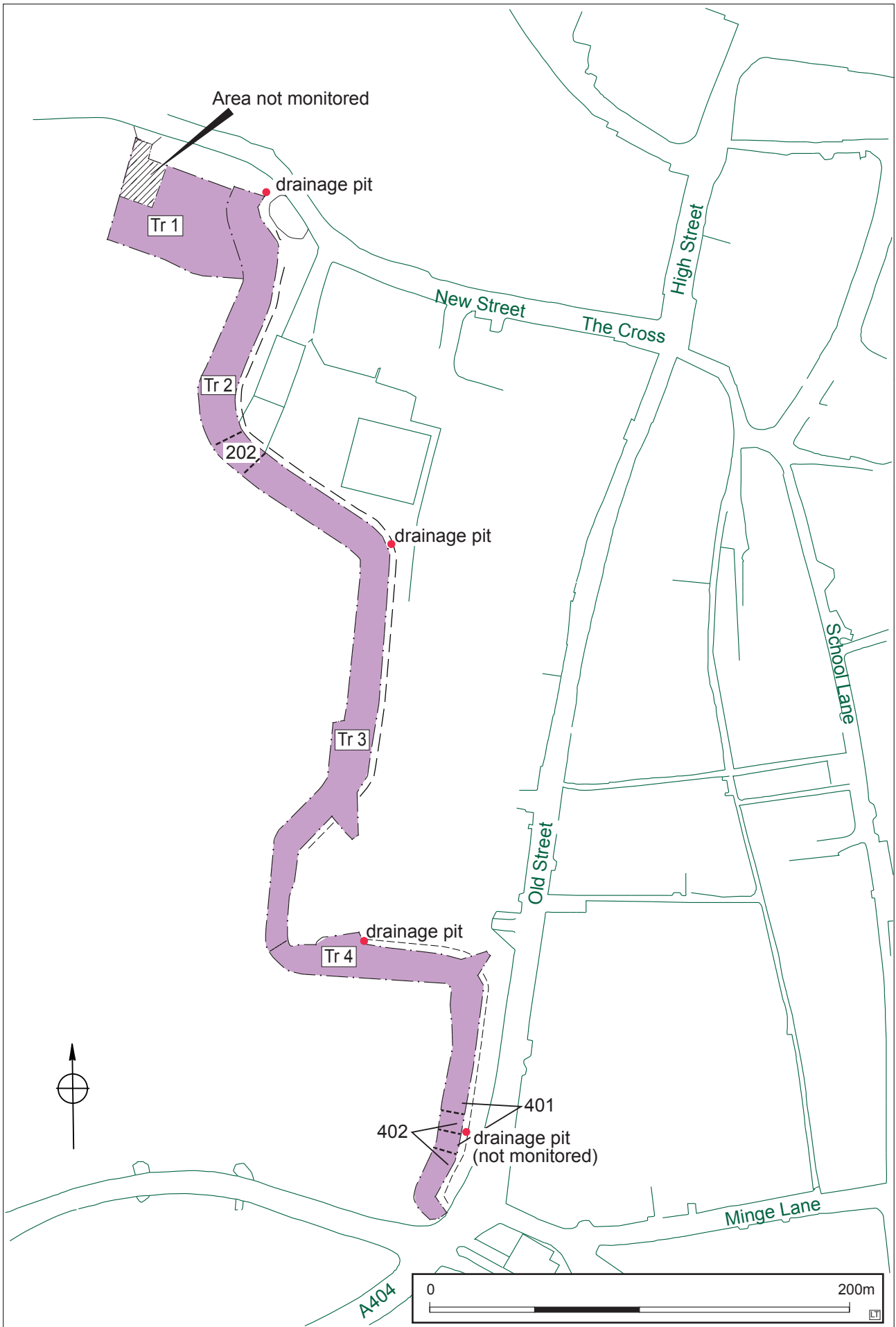
Figures



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Location of site

Figure 1



Archaeological investigations

Figure 2

Plates



Plate 1: Area 1, the compound during stripping, looking southeast.



Plate 2: The north end of Area 2, looking north.



Plate 3: The northwest end of Area 3, looking northwest.



Plate 4: Area 3 during stripping, looking north.



Plate 5: Area 4 looking north, deposit 401(made ground) is visible in the foreground.



Plate 6: Area 4 looking west.



Plate 7: The collection pit within area 4 looking south.

Appendix 1 Technical information

The archive (site code: WSM 43246)

The archive consists of:

6	Field progress reports AS2
1	Photographic records AS3
33	Digital photographs
1	Drawing number catalogues AS4
2	Scale drawings
4	Trench record sheets AS41
1	Box of finds
1	Copy of this report (bound hard copy)

The project archive is intended to be placed at:

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

Summary of data for Worcestershire HER

period	material class	material subtype	object specific type	count	weight (g)
medieval	ceramic	earthenware	-	1	20
medieval	ceramic	earthenware	pot	4	54
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post-medieval	ceramic	-	roof tile(flat)	8	302
post-medieval	ceramic	earthenware	-	1	82
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totals:			43	732

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