

WATCHING BRIEF
AT LAND OFF
OLD WORCESTER ROAD,
HARTLEBURY,
WORCESTERSHIRE



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Worcestershire Archaeology
Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service
The Hive
Sawmill Walk
The Butts
Worcester
WR1 3PB

Date:	6 th August 2013
Author:	Tim Cornah tcornah@worcestershire.gov.uk
Illustrator:	Carolyn Hunt
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Report reference:	2040
HER reference:	WSM 49634

Watching brief at Old Worcester Road, Hartlebury, Worcestershire

Tim Cornah

Background information

<i>Client</i>	Lovell Partnerships Limited, Unit E Pinewood, Bell Heath Way, Woodgate Business Park, Woodgate Valley, Birmingham B32 3BZ
<i>National Grid reference</i>	SO 84525 71261
<i>Historic Environment Record reference</i>	WSM 49634
<i>Planning authority</i>	Wychavon District Council
<i>reference</i>	W/12/1611
<i>Brief</i>	WCC 2012
<i>Project parameters</i>	IfA 2012

Previous archaeological work on the site

There has been no previous archaeological work undertaken within the site.

Previous archaeological work on associated sites

There is evidence of prehistoric, Romano-British and medieval activity in the vicinity of the proposed development, principally from the collection of surface artefacts (WSM41444, WSM41445). They have not been found in sufficient densities to indicate that a major site is present, but their presence implies activity in the area.

Within a 500m radius of the site are a conjectural edge to the medieval park associated with Hartlebury Castle (WSM47926), a conjectural track way of potential medieval date (WSM31170) and a fishpond also potentially of Medieval date (WSM07074). Also in this area from the post-medieval period is the site of a former malt house (WSM20412), an 18th century rectory and a potential quarry (WSM30276). In the 19th century, the Oxford to Wolverhampton railway was built within the eastern edge of the search area (WSM31370) and a detached house of 20th century date is also registered as a World War One military hospital (WSM31370).

Ordnance Survey maps from 1884 onwards depict the site as a field.

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 :	WA 2012a
Sources consulted	HER Search
Dates of fieldwork	14 – 21 May 2013
Area of site	c 2,240m ²
Dimensions of excavated areas observed –	
	Site strip length 80m
	width 28m

depth 0.55m

Access to or visibility of deposits

Observation of the excavated areas was undertaken during machine excavation. All excavation was undertaken with a toothless bucket so the exposed surfaces were sufficiently clean to observe well-differentiated archaeological deposits. The level of excavation was determined and maintained whilst under archaeological supervision. Movement of site traffic was limited to areas not stripped so any potential archaeological features had sufficient time to weather out.

Statement of confidence

Access to, and visibility of, deposits allowed a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved. Any potential archaeological deposits would have been clearly visible therefore the aim to observe and record archaeological deposits, and to determine their extent, state of preservation, date and type were clearly met.

Deposit description

Context	Interpretation	Description	Depth (top and bottom of deposits; below ground surface)
100	Modern Topsoil	Mid reddish brown sandy silt with frequent rooting and rare small rounded and sub rounded stones.	0.32-0.41m
102	Natural	Red sand with some areas of red sandstone solid geology present below the topsoil. Also some areas of compact red clay.	0.41m+

Discussion

The watching brief demonstrated topsoil consistently overlying the natural substrate across the site and no features or finds of archaeological significance were recorded. Some plough scars were cut into the natural substrate. Topsoil was relatively shallow recorded and no subsoil survived suggesting that there has been some degree of truncation by the plough within the site.

Conclusions

Although some Prehistoric and Roman surface artefacts have found within the vicinity of this site, it is clear that the source of these finds was not within the excavated area. The deposits were clearly visible during excavation so a high degree of confidence can be assigned to this conclusion. The shallow depth of natural deposits does imply that some truncation by the plough has occurred, but it is unlikely that all archaeological deposits (such as for example deep pits or enclosure ditches) would have been removed comprehensively. A lack of material culture found whilst excavating also suggests that the focus of activity is not in the immediate vicinity of the site.

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 watching brief was undertaken on behalf of Lovell Partnerships Limited during topsoil stripping prior to development of land off Old Worcester Road, Hartlebury, Worcestershire (SO 84525 71261) (HER ref WSM 49634). Surface finds of Prehistoric and Romano-British date within the vicinity of the site had suggested the potential presence of an archaeological site. Prior to development, the site was arable fields.

Across the site, topsoil consistently directly overlay natural substrate and no archaeological features or finds were recorded. Although some truncation by the plough is likely to have occurred, it unlikely that it was sufficient to remove all archaeological features. A lack of material culture suggests that the remains of settlement or other intensive activity does not survive in the immediate vicinity of the site.

Acknowledgements

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Bibliography

IfA 2008 *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief*, Institute for Archaeologists

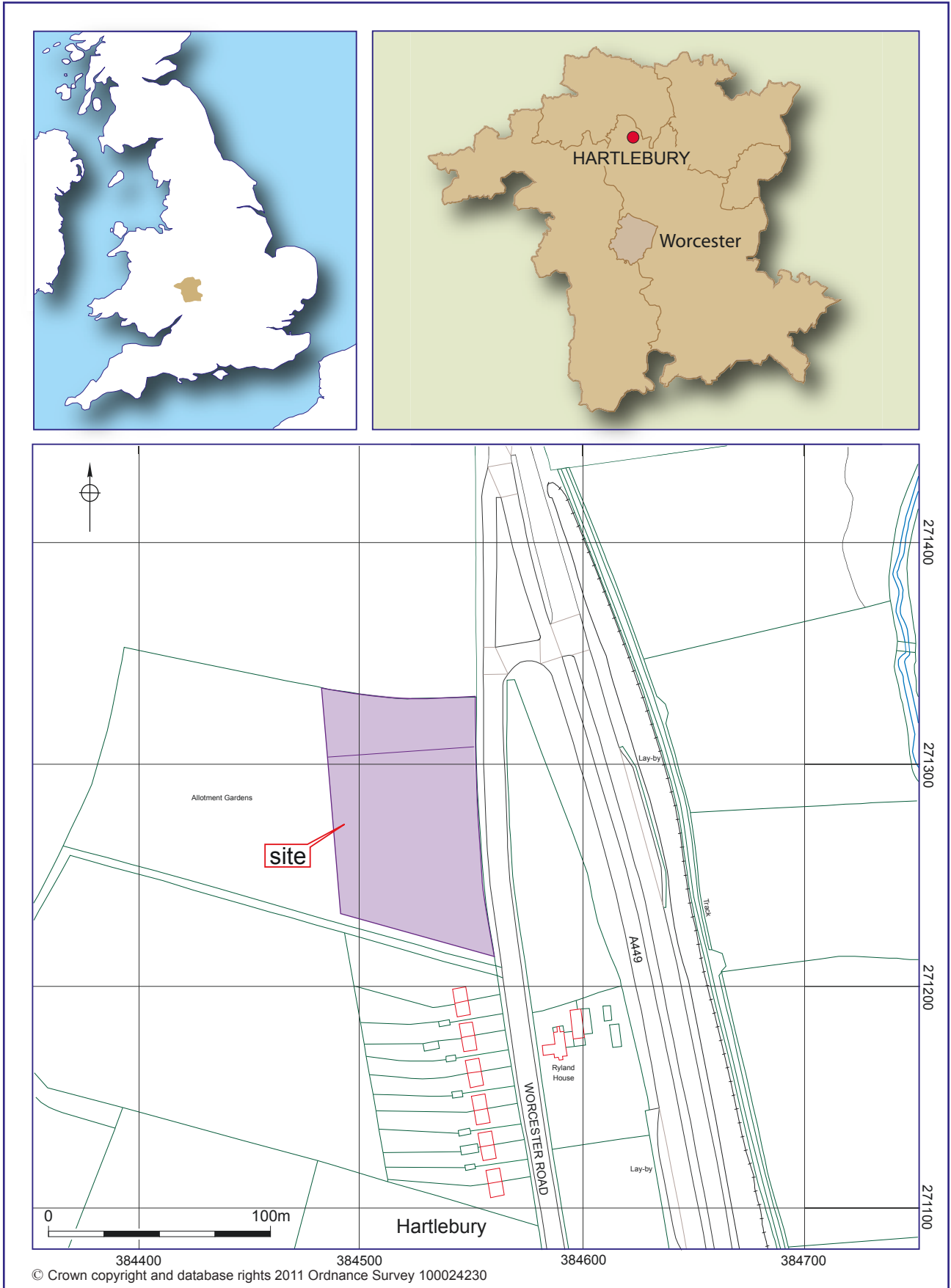
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WA 2013 *Proposal for an archaeological watching brief at Land off Old Worcester Road, Hartlebury, Worcestershire*. Worcestershire County Council, unpublished document dated 7 February 2013, **P3959**

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

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Figures



Location of the site

Figure 1



Area stripped to natural

Figure 2

Plates



Plate 1 The site looking south.