

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION
AT
LITTLE ACRE
WORCESTER ROAD
BROOMHALL
WORCESTERSHIRE



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Worcestershire Archaeology
Archive and Archaeology Service
The Hive, Sawmill Walk,
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An archaeological evaluation at Little Acre, Worcester Road, Broomhall, Worcestershire

Andrew Walsh

Summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken Little Acre, Worcester Road, Broomhall, Worcestershire (NGR SO 8529 5082). It was commissioned by Procuero Planning Services Ltd on behalf of their client, Mr and Mrs Malpass, in advance of a proposed residential development within existing residential curtilage for which a planning application has been submitted. The site lies on a gravel terrace above the floodplain of the River Severn, which predisposes the site to settlement during the prehistoric and Roman periods. The survival of buried archaeological remains of these periods, including an enclosure and a road had been identified in archaeological investigations in a field to the north of the proposed site.

Two trenches were excavated on the proposed development site. No significant archaeological features, structures, layers or deposits, nor artefacts were identified. A pit and garden soil were identified in the eastern part of the site but both yielded modern pottery and were probably associated with cottages along the road frontage which had been demolished between 1955 and 1970.

Report

1 Background

1.1 Reasons for the project

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken Little Acre, Worcester Road, Broomhall, Worcestershire (NGR SO 8529 5082). It was commissioned by Procu Planning Services Ltd, on behalf of their client, Mr and Mrs Malpass, in advance of a proposed residential development within existing residential curtilage for which a planning application has been submitted to Malvern Hills District Council (reference MH/14/0079).

The proposed development site is considered to include heritage assets and potential heritage assets, the significance of which may be affected by the application.

The project conforms to a brief prepared by Worcestershire County Council (WCC 2014) and for which a project proposal (including detailed specification) was produced (WA 2014). The project also conforms to the *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (IfA 2008) and the *Standards and guidelines for archaeological projects in Worcestershire* (WCC 2010). The event reference for this project, given by the HER is WSM 57122.

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.

3 Methods

3.1 Personnel

The project was undertaken by Andrew Walsh BSc MSc AlfA FSA Scot, assisted in the field by Mike Nicholson BSc. The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Tom Vaughan BA MA AlfA. The finds were assessed by Rob Hedge BA MA, and the Illustrations were prepared by Carolyn Hunt BSc PG Cert MlFA.

3.2 Documentary research

An archaeological desk-based assessment was undertaken by WA prior to the evaluation (Connolly 2013).

3.3 Fieldwork strategy

A written scheme of investigation was prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2014) proposing the excavation of two 50m evaluation trenches. As a result of the presence of a drainage system, one of the trenches was extended to 90m, and the other shortened to 15m. The trenches, amounting to around 190m² in area, were excavated over the site area of 0.4ha, representing a sample of 4.5%. The location of the trenches is indicated in Figure 2. The fieldwork was undertaken on the 8 July 2014. The site reference number and site code is WSM 57122.

Deposits considered not to be significant were removed under archaeological supervision using a tracked 360° 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 Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012). On completion of excavation, trenches were reinstated by replacing the excavated material.

3.4 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.

3.5 Artefact methodology

3.5.1 Recovery policy

The artefact recovery policy conformed to standard WA practice (2012; appendix 2). Pottery fabrics are referenced to the fabric reference series maintained by the Service (Hurst 1994).

3.6 Environmental archaeology methodology

3.6.1 Sampling policy

The sampling policy conformed to standard WA practice (2012). In the event no deposits were revealed which were considered to be suitable for environmental analysis.

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 proposed development site is located in the garden of Little Acre cottage. It is bounded to the north by Grove End and Laurel Cottage, to the east by the A38 Worcester Road, to the south by an arable field and to the east by sheds or agricultural buildings. The site is flat, lying at height of 24m AOD. The underlying geology is mapped as Sidmouth Mudstone Formation overlaid by superficial deposits of Holt Heath Sand and Gravel Member (BGS 2014).

The site lies in an area of high archaeological potential. An archaeological desk-based assessment (Connolly 2013) identified that the site lies on a gravel terrace above the floodplain of the River Severn, which predisposes the site to settlement during the prehistoric and Roman periods. The survival of buried archaeological remains of these periods, including an enclosure and a road, was demonstrated during an archaeological evaluation in the field which lies immediately north of the small settlement of which Little Acre is a part. In addition to this settlement site, the cropmark of a potentially prehistoric ring ditch was identified 150m to the south of the site and the Roman road between Worcester and Gloucester lies 400m to the east.

Two former cottages lay in the north-east corner of the site. They appear on the 1840 tithe map of Kempsey and were demolished between 1955 and 1970. The site is also recorded as having been part of a World War Two depot for the storage of tyres and inner tubes. Ten huts are shown on Ordnance Survey maps from 1955 to 1966, one of which was located within the site.

4.2 Current land-use

The site is currently part of the garden of Little Acre cottage.

5 Structural analysis

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

5.1.1 Phase 1: Natural deposits

The underlying natural strata was a dark reddish brown clay overlaid by light brown patches of sand and gravel overlying the clay in the western part of the site.

5.1.2 Phase 2: Undated deposits

In both trenches the natural strata was overlaid by a light to mid brown sandy silt which measured up to 0.6m in depth. No finds were recovered from this deposit.

5.1.3 Phase 3: Modern deposits

At the eastern end of Trench 2, pit (205) cut the subsoil. It was filled by a mid brown silty clay (206), which contained a piece of 18th century pottery. A dark brown garden soil (203), 0.3m in depth, was also visible at the eastern end of Trench 2. This deposit yielded late 20th century pottery.

Both trenches were sealed by a mid brown silty loam topsoil up to 0.26m in depth.

5.2 Artefact analysis by Rob Hedge

Context (203) contained two sherds (14g) of a later 20th century saucer (fabric 101) and a single (10g) rim sherd of a 19th/20th century bowl (fabric 101).

Context (206) contained a single large (116g) rim sherd of an 18th century buff ware (fabric 91) plate, with 'dark-on-light trailed' slip decoration and pie-crust edges.

6 Synthesis

The evaluation exposed a pit and garden soil at the eastern end of Trench 2. Both the pit and the soil were later than the subsoil recorded across the site and were probably associated with cottages fronting onto Worcester Road recorded on 19th and 20th century mapping. No other archaeological features, deposits or finds were observed during the works.

7 Significance

No significant archaeological deposits, artefacts or environmental evidence were present on site. The only observed features and deposits were associated with post-medieval cottages demolished between 1955 and 1970.

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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Two trenches were excavated on the proposed development site. No significant archaeological features, structures, layers or deposits, nor artefacts were identified during the project. A pit and garden soil were identified in the eastern part of the site but both yielded modern pottery and were probably associated with post-medieval cottages which had been demolished between 1955 and 1970.

9 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project; John Kendrick (Procuero Planning Services Ltd), Kevin and Annette Malpass (the landowners), and Mike Glyde (Historic Environment Planning officer, Worcestershire County Council).

10 Bibliography

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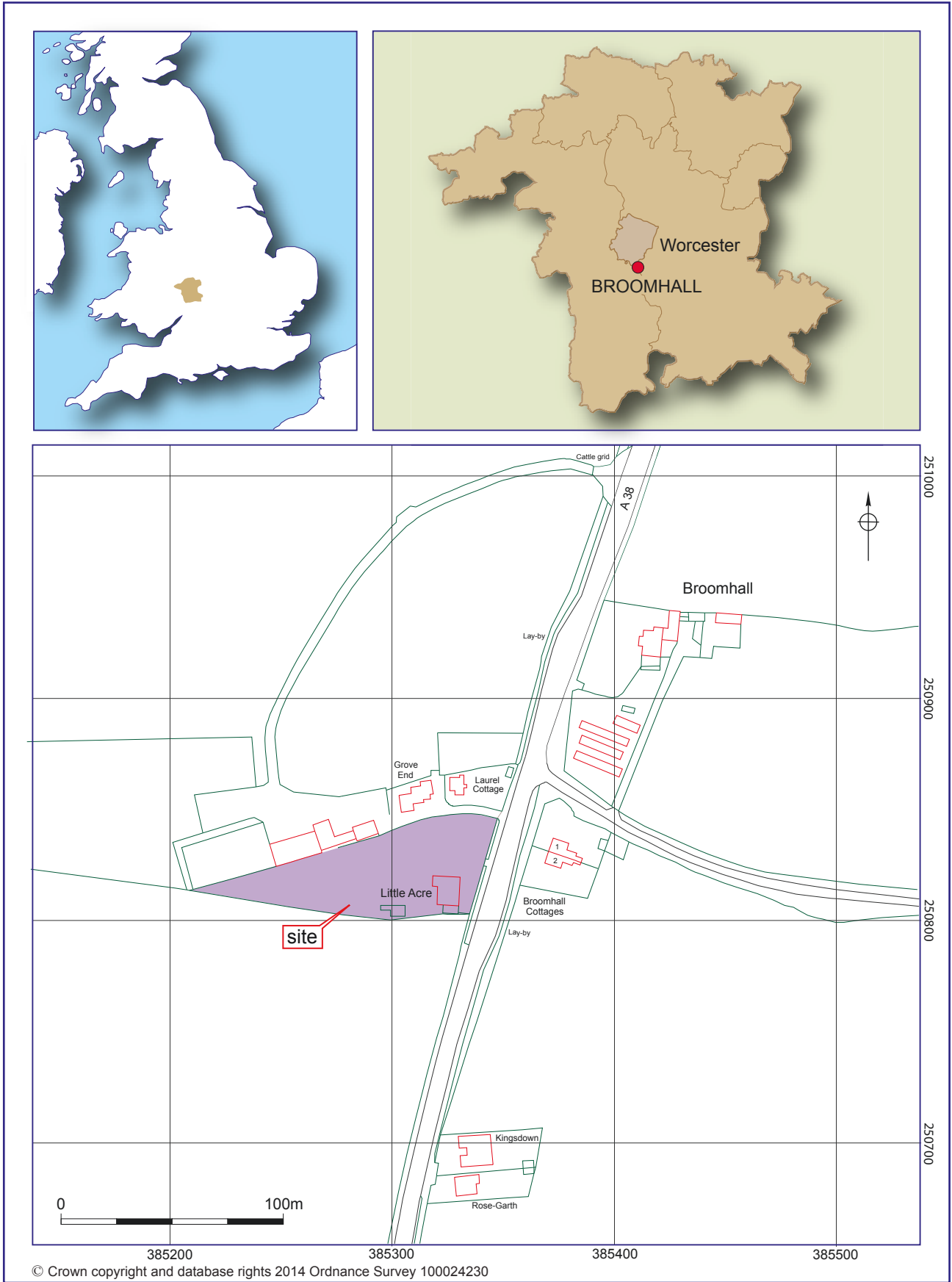
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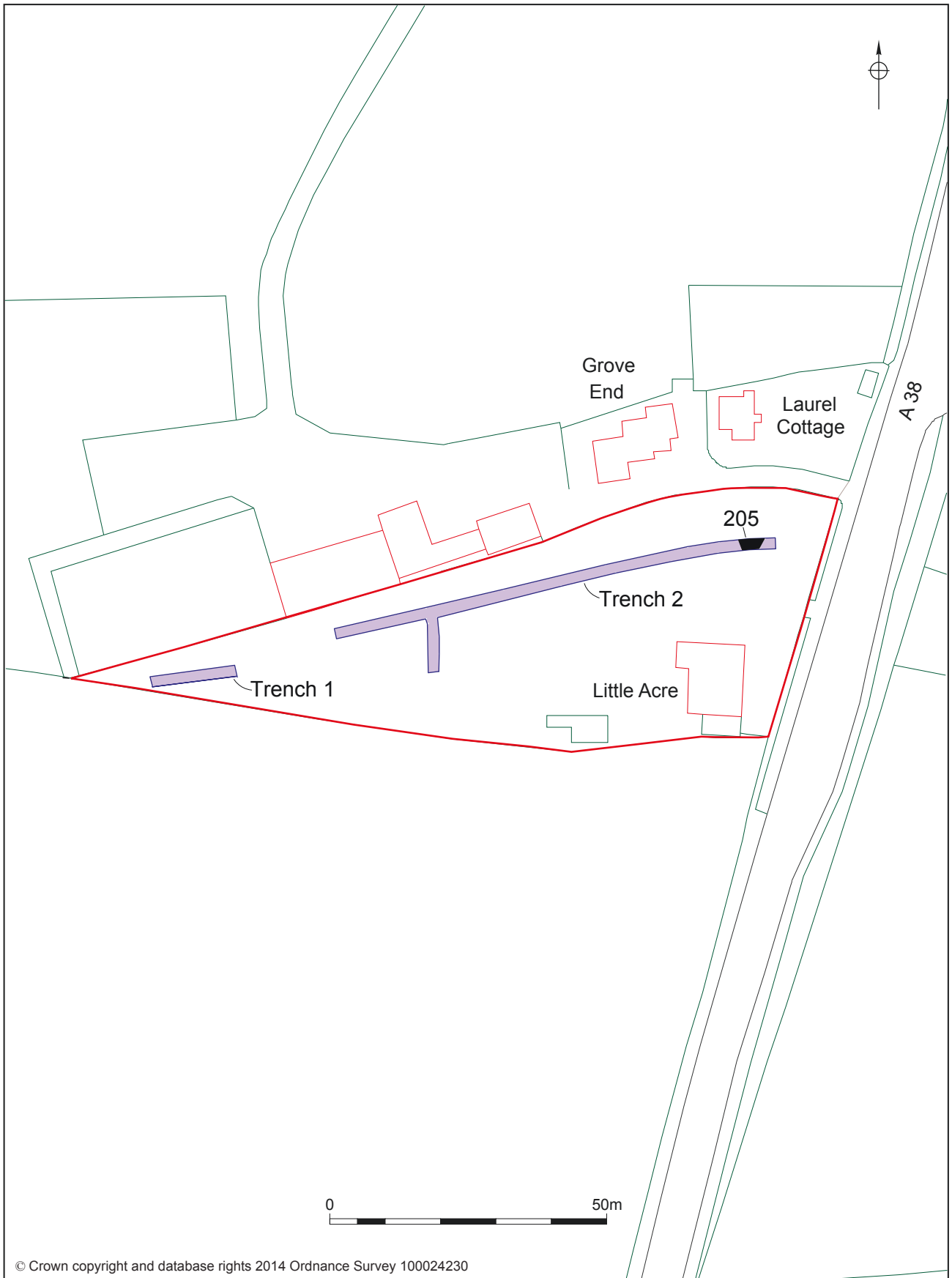
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Figures



Location of the site

Figure 1



Trench location plan

Figure 2

Plates



Plate 1: Trench 1 facing west



Plate 2: Trench 2 facing west

Appendix 1 Trench descriptions

Trench 1

Length: 90.5m Width: 1.8m Orientation: North-east to south-west

Context summary:

Context no.	Feature	Context	Description	Height/depth	Interpretation
100	Topsoil	Layer	Moderately compact mid brown sandy loam		
101	Subsoil	Layer	Compact light brown sandy silt		
102	Natural	Layer	Compact dark reddish brown clay		

Trench 2

Length: 15.3m Width: 1.8m Orientation: North-east to south-west

Context summary:

Context no.	Feature	Context	Description	Height/depth	Interpretation
200	Topsoil	Layer	Moderately compact mid brown sandy loam		
201	Subsoil	Layer	Compact light brown sandy silt		
202	Natural	Layer	Compact dark reddish brown clay		
203	Modern Layer	Layer	Friable dark brown loam		Buried garden soil
204	Topsoil	Layer	Moderately compact mid brown sandy loam		Same as topsoil 200
205	Pit	Layer			Cut of pit
206	Pit	Layer	Moderately compact light brown silty clay		Fill of pit 205

Appendix 2 Technical information

The archive (site code: WSM57122)

The archive consists of:

- 1 Field progress reports AS2
- 1 Photographic records AS3
- 19 Digital photographs
- 2 Trench record sheets AS41
- 1 CD-Rom/DVDs
- 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
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