

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING
BRIEF
AT
42 WORCESTER ROAD,
DROITWICH, WORCESTERSHIRE

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Illustrated by
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Archaeological Watching Brief at 42 Worcester Road, Droitwich, Worcestershire

Adam Mindykowski, Laura Griffin and Elizabeth Pearson

Part 1 Project summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken on behalf of Roflec Developments Ltd at 42 Worcester Road, Droitwich Worcestershire (NGR ref SO 8975 6293; SMR ref WSM 33557). A relatively complex medieval domestic occupation site was revealed in the north-east corner of the development area. Selected features were excavated revealing a multi-phase sequence with a date range from the 13th to 14th centuries. However, a notable quantity of residual ceramic sherds dating between 10th and 12th centuries suggests an occupation span of at least 400 years. The structural remains consisted mainly of a network of pits and gullies, with an earlier cobbled yard surface surviving in patches and a large north-south aligned boundary ditch. The site is particularly significant because it is the first recorded domestic structure associated with the medieval village of Witton; an agricultural settlement established in the hinterland of Droitwich.

The ceramic assemblage is representative of a good quality range of Worcester and Malvernian wares, which suggests the site was not simply a low status farming settlement. The large boundary ditch appears to relate to an old boundary recorded on historic Ordnance Survey maps, which can be traced to Winnetts Lane a medieval route into Middlewich. The relationship between the occupation site and the ditch suggests Winnetts Lane probably ran along this boundary to meet with the Roman road. The occupation site would have been located on, or very close to the junction.

Part 2 Detailed report

1. Background

1.1 Reasons for the project

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at 42 Worcester Road, Droitwich, Worcestershire (NGR SO 8975 6293), on behalf of Roflec Developments Ltd. The client intends to demolish the existing single property and erect three detached dwellings and has submitted a planning application to Wychavon District Council (reference W/03/1698), who consider that a site of archaeological interest may be affected (WSM 30690).

1.2 Project parameters

The project conforms to the *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (IFA 1999).

The project also conforms to a brief prepared by the Planning and Advisory Section of the Historic Environment and Archaeology Service (HEAS 2004a) and for which a project proposal (including detailed specification) was produced (HEAS 2004b).

1.3 Aims

The aims of the watching brief were to observe areas of ground disturbance associated with the construction; those being the reduction of ground level and the preparation of new foundation trenches. The observations would be carried out in order 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 if archaeological remains associated with the medieval village of Witton (WSM 30690) were present on the site, which is set within an area historically associated with the settlement, and is thus, of high significance.

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

- First Edition Ordnance Survey Map Sheet 29 NW 1889.

Documentary sources

- Place-names (Mawer and Stenton 1927).
- County histories (VCH III).
- Domesday (Thorn and Thorn 1983).

2.2 **Fieldwork**

2.2.1 **Fieldwork strategy**

Archaeological fieldwork was undertaken between 29th March 2004 and 7th April 2004. This was carried out during both the initial ground reduction stage and excavation of foundation trenches for the four new properties.

The footprint for each building was excavated by the building contractors using a 360° tracked excavator fitted with a toothless bucket. These have been split into four areas for the purposes of archaeological recording (see Figure 2), and a total area amounting to just over 1284m² was stripped over the site, which is 2 ha in area, representing a sample of 62%. A small reserve of spoil was retained on-site, however, the majority was removed from the site during the ground works. Areas 1 to 3 were observed following ground reduction, however, Area 4 was a shallow topsoil strip which was backfilled immediately with hardcore to provide an area of hard-standing for the construction team. It was not possible, therefore, to observe deposits in this area, although with such a shallow strip it is unlikely that any archaeological deposits, should they be present, would be affected by the excavation.

Following ground reduction Area 3 was cleaned by hand. Clean surfaces were inspected and selected deposits were excavated by hand to retrieve artefactual material, as well as to determine their nature. Deposits were recorded according to standard Service practice (CAS 1995). Following completion of excavations in Area 3, work resumed digging foundation trenches. These were observed both during excavation and upon completion.

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 **Artefacts**

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).

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 produced for each stratified context.

Pottery 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).

2.4 **Environment**

Full environmental sampling could not be undertaken due to the constraints of the project, however, the animal bone retrieved by hand and retained was examined in accordance with the Service manual (CAS 1995 as amended).

2.5 **The methods in retrospect**

The methods adopted allow a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved. Within the context of the watching brief, clear access to the archaeological remains and sufficient time allowed the site to be investigated and interpreted to a high standard.

3. **Topographical and archaeological context**

The site is located in what became a southern suburb of Droitwich during the later 19th and early 20th centuries. Prior to this, the immediate vicinity of the site was under agricultural land-use, although the site of the medieval St Mary's Church lies just 50m to the south-east. The location has not been surveyed by the Soil Survey of England and Wales, however, the adjacent soils belong to the Wick 1 and Whimple 3 soil groups. The soils of the Wick 1 group (541r) comprise deep well drained coarse loamy and sandy soils, locally over gravel. The soils of the Whimple 3 (572f) soil group comprise reddish fine loamy or fine silty over clayey soils with slowly permeable subsoils over drift above Permo-Triassic and Carboniferous reddish mudstone (Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983).

Droitwich has been the subject of a recent survey undertaken as part of the Central Marches Historic Towns Survey (Buteux and Hurst 1996). The survey contains a summary of previous archaeological work in the town and its hinterland. Worcester Road is Roman in origin and probably continued in use throughout the medieval period providing an important link between Worcester and Droitwich. The site of St Mary's Church (WSM 00257) and churchyard (WSM 10594) is situated across the Worcester Road just to the south-east. Demolished long ago, St Mary's was the parish church for Witton throughout the medieval and post-medieval periods. Early documentary references pertaining to the church date back to the 13th century. In 1837 a tile kiln dating approximately to the mid-15th to early 16th centuries was discovered close to the site of St Mary's (WSM 00660). On land adjacent to the south-eastern boundary of the churchyard at 36 Corbett Avenue, a collection of shallow features associated with a farming settlement dating to the 13th century was discovered during salvage recording (WSM 24148; Napthan, Ratkai and Pearson 1997). There has been no previous archaeological work on the development site, although an archaeological desk-based assessment (WSM 31560; Patrick 2002) and subsequent archaeological evaluation (WSM 31910; Vaughan 2002) was carried out on land adjacent to the south-west boundary of the site. The evaluation recovered a small assemblage of post-medieval to modern finds, although no archaeological deposits or structures were identified. The report concluded that prior to the erection of 19th and 20th century dwellings on site, land-use was limited to agricultural activities

4. **Description**

The results of the structural analysis are presented in Tables 1 to 3, with Tables 4 to 5 summarising the artefacts recovered. The excavated areas and features recorded are shown in Figures 2, 3 and 4.

4.1 **Phase 1 Natural deposits**

Natural deposits were clearly observed at a depth of between 0.46m-0.70m below ground surface in areas 1 to 3. These were compact reddish brown silty clays consistent with the soil groups described above.

4.2 **Phase 2 Roman**

Two small fragments of probable Roman tile were recovered from deposits within a large boundary ditch (326). These were found to be residual within contexts firmly dated to the 14th century, and therefore, indicate the presence of Roman activity in the area only.

4.3 **Phase 3 Early medieval**

A number of abraded ceramic sherds dating from the 10th to 11th centuries were recovered from the excavated features. Yet again these were clearly residual within firmly dated 14th century contexts, however, the amount recovered may indicate the presence of an early medieval phase of occupation in the vicinity of the excavated site.

4.4 **Phase 4 Late medieval**

All of the features revealed were concentrated in the eastern half of Area 3, and were dated to the 13th to 14th centuries (see Section 5 and Figure 3). All features were cut into natural deposits and were sealed below a layer of charcoal rich material (303; see below). Four main feature types were identified within the site: rough cobbled surfaces, various pits (some isolated and some in groups), shallow gullies and a large boundary ditch.

Two distinctive areas of fairly well sorted cobbles (316/319) were clearly observed representing the earliest structural elements in the sequence. These appeared to form part of a yard surface apparently set onto the natural clay. No other related features or structures were identified. This suggests the surface was an external yard, rather than an internal floor associated with a building.

A series of inter-cutting pits (333), the most recent element of which was a possible gully aligned east-west (314/5), clearly cut the cobbled surface. Excavation revealed a very mixed and ill-defined deposit suggesting it had been subjected to regular disturbance. This suggests a sequence of possible rubbish pits concentrated into a small area. In addition to domestic ceramic sherds and charcoal, a moderate amount of animal bone was recovered from this mixed deposit (see Section 6), which is indicative of domestic waste. This area of activity was itself cut by a large north-south aligned ditch (326). A small east-west aligned gully (322/318), which terminated at the western edge of the site, appeared on initial inspection to be contemporary with the main boundary ditch (326). Following targeted excavation it became apparent the gully post-dated the boundary, although the gully did not cut right across the ditch and so was probably cut to provide a localised method of drainage into the ditch when this was already largely silted up.

A network comprising two gullies and two pits (305, 307, 309, 311 and 313) appeared to represent the latest activity within this phase. Unfortunately, the relationships between all four features could not be determined due to an area of modern disturbance: the result of a network of land drains feeding into a large soak away drain at the southern end of the site. Observation of the area to the immediate west of the site showed that none of the features in this group continued beyond the area of disturbance. It can be suggested, therefore, with a high degree of confidence that all four gullies were probably linked, possibly providing drainage into the pits.

4.5 **Phase 5 post-medieval and modern**

This phase is represented by a thick layer of dark sandy charcoal rich clay (303), which appears to have developed from built-up occupation material and material from within the features that has been displaced and redistributed possibly as a result of ploughing shortly after abandonment of the occupation site. The most recent activity is a network of modern plastic pipes draining into a large rubble-filled soakaway pit. Construction of this network caused some significant localised disturbance to some of the medieval features.

5. **Artefactual analysis**

The pottery assemblage retrieved from the excavated area consisted of 53 sherds of pottery weighing 657g, two iron nails, a copper alloy buckle and three fragments of tile. The group came from eight stratified contexts and the ground surface and was primarily of medieval date, although two fragments of Roman tile were also identified (see Appendix 2, Table 4).

Level of preservation was generally fair with the majority of sherds displaying only moderate levels of abrasion.

All sherds have been grouped and quantified according to fabric type (see Appendix 2, Table 5). The deposits excavated were connected with medieval settlement on the site and therefore the finds of this date formed the primary focus for this report.

A total of 12 diagnostic form sherds were present and could be dated accordingly, the remaining undiagnostic sherds were datable by fabric type to the general period or production span. In general, the assemblage displayed a standard range of form and fabric types for a domestic site of this period in Droitwich. Where mentioned, all specific forms are referenced to the type series within the report for Deansway (Bryant 2001).

5.1 Discussion of the pottery

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

Roman

Two small fragments of abraded tile could be identified as of probable Roman date. Both were residual within contexts dated to the 14th century (contexts 328 and 330) and appeared to be from a single tile.

Medieval

All pottery retrieved from the site was of medieval date with the majority of sherds dating between the 13th and 14th centuries although a small number of residual fragments were identified as being of 10th-12th century date. The assemblage was of a domestic nature with a surprisingly wide range of forms and fabrics identified for a collection of this size.

5.2 Locally produced wares

Locally produced wares of Worcester and Malvernian origin formed the larger proportion of the assemblage. Of these, Worcester-type sandy unglazed ware (fabric 55) was the most common, totalling 19 sherds from 7 individual cooking pot vessels (contexts 306, 308, 314, 321 and 324). Diagnostic rim sherds were the 'thickened everted rim' form (Deansway type 64.1.3) and could be dated between the 12th and mid 14th centuries, although this form appears to have been most common in the 13th century (*ibid.*). Many of these sherds displayed evidence of use in the form of blackening and sooting on the exterior surface.

In addition to the unglazed sherds, eight sherds of Worcester-type sandy glazed ware were also retrieved. Diagnostic sherds came from two jugs of 13th-14th century date (contexts 314 and 328) and one tripod pitcher dating between the 12th and early 13th centuries (context 314). All sherds but one displayed a dark green lead glaze characteristic of this ware with additional decoration in the form of incised patterns, applied strips, stabbing and use of white slip underneath the glaze noted on a small number of pieces.

Malvernian wares formed a far small proportion of the locally produced assemblage consisting of just one sherd of unglazed ware (fabric 56) and eight of the oxidised glazed type (fabric 69). However, all sherds were diagnostic and could be attributed to three individual vessels. The sherd of Malvernian unglazed ware was from the rim of a cooking pot (Deansway type 56.3; context 306), which, as in the case of the Worcester cooking pots above, displayed blackening on the exterior surface. Vessels of this fabric were produced

from the late 12th century onwards although they do not appear to have reached Droitwich until the early 13th century (Lentowicz 1997).

The sherds of oxidised glazed Malvernian ware (fabric 69) consisted of six from a jug (Deansway type 69.2; context 314), which could be dated to between the mid 13th and 14th centuries and the rim and strap handle from a baluster jug (Deansway type 69.3; unstratified) of 13th to 14th century date. Both vessels were decorated with a thin, patchy green glaze and the strap handle of the latter also displayed stabbing typical of this ware.

Other wares

Sixteen sherds of other wares were identified within the assemblage. The earliest of these consisted of two sherds of glazed Stamford type ware (fabric 46.2; context 314) dating to between the 10th and 11th centuries. The sherds were both highly abraded with little glaze surviving and clearly residual within the context.

Other residual sherds of earlier medieval date were of Cotswold unglazed ware (fabrics 57 and 57.1; contexts 314, 324 and 330). One small fragment was of the more common cooking pot fabric (fabric 57; context 314) and could be dated between the mid 11th and early 13th centuries. The remaining two sherds also contained rounded red iron ore inclusions and included one rim sherd (context 330) which was from a rounded jar form and could be dated to between the late 11th and early 12th centuries.

Remaining sherds were all of 13th to 14th century date, six of which were identified as being sandy white wares (fabric 64.2; contexts 304 and 314). All sherds were decorated with a patchy green speckled glaze characteristic of this fabric and although no diagnostic fragments were present, jugs are the most commonly identified form of this ware type Bryant 2001, 39). In addition, a single small sherd of the unglazed version of this fabric (fabric 64.4) was also identified (context 314). Although the source of these wares is not known, macroscopic comparison with sherds from sites in Staffordshire indicated that they might have been produced within that region. More, specifically, the products of a later medieval kiln site at the Burslem Art School, Stoke-on-Trent appear to be of a very similar fabric (J Goodwin, pers comm.).

Two sherds were identified as green glazed white ware (fabric 64.3; contexts 300 and 328). Both were decorated with a speckled green external glaze, although in the case of the smaller sherd (context 300) which had been heavily burnt, this glaze had turned dark grey-black. Neither sherd was diagnostic, but in general this ware type can be dated to between the 13th and 14th centuries.

Remaining identifiable sherds consisted of a body sherd from a Brill-Boarstall ware jug (fabric 63; context 300) and another from a Deritend-type ware vessel (fabric 62; context 328), also thought to be a jug. Brill-Boarstall wares were produced in Buckinghamshire and are often identified in small quantities on sites in this area. The above sherd was decorated with a speckled green glaze and applied strips painted with red slip both of which are characteristic of these vessels. In contrast, vessels of Deritend-type ware are only occasionally found in Droitwich. This ware is thought to have been produced at Deritend in Birmingham and is characterised by a painted white slip line pattern and a sparse speckled green glaze.

Two sherds of medieval date could not be identified as being of a specific fabric despite containing highly distinctive inclusions and were classed as miscellaneous medieval wares (fabric 99; context 314). The first was a base sherd, probably from a large jug. The fabric of this sherd was oxidised and contained frequent, well-sorted and abundant large grog inclusions. The second was a small, highly abraded sherd which was also oxidised and contained a large amount of tightly packed igneous inclusions and large, sub-rounded reddish brown lumps, possibly mudstone.

Other finds

Other finds consisted of two iron nails (contexts 314 and 330), both displaying high levels of corrosion. A well-preserved, distinctive copper alloy buckle was also retrieved from context 330 (see Appendix 3, Plate1). The form of this was identified as a square double frame with a central bar and was decorated down the two vertical sides with a rope pattern.

5.3 **Significance**

The date ranges of the forms present within this assemblage would indicate a *terminus post quem* of 14th century for contexts 304, 306, 308, 314, 321, 324, 328 and 330. However, the dominance of Worcester-type wares over those of Malvernian manufacture may indicate otherwise. The results of previous pottery analyses of Droitwich assemblages, including Friar Street (Hurst 1992) and the Upwich brine well group (Lentowicz and Hurst 1997), have indicated that by the later 13th and 14th centuries Malvernian unglazed wares are the dominant local ware. Furthermore, the pattern observed at Worcester Road conforms more to those recorded amongst groups of earlier 13th century date (Hurst 1992, 142) with a particularly low frequency of both glazed and unglazed Malvernian wares. As a result of this and the fact that all forms identified were being produced at this earlier date, the *terminus post quem* dates for this site have been pushed back to the 13th century.

The presence of earlier wares (fabrics 46.2, 57 and 57.1) is also of significance not only indicating settlement on the site pre-dating that represented by the excavated features, but also possibly representing the settlement of Witton mentioned in the Domesday Book, which lay within the borough of Droitwich and has been suggested as an agricultural centre supplying food for the salt-makers (Bond and Hunt 1992, 191).

6. **Environmental Analysis**

A total of 202g (42 fragments) of animal bone was hand-collected from contexts 306, 314, 330 and 328, the majority deriving from pit fill 314. The bone was of spongy consistency on site and generally poorly preserved, having been sealed in damp clayey deposits.

Several fragments of horse tooth were recovered from pit fill 314, including one pre-molar, a molar and 3 lower incisors. These were all well-worn (approximately to the same degree) indicating that these are likely to derive from a single elderly animal. They were found in association with fragments of large ungulate bone (horse, cattle, or red deer size), which may also be from the above animal. The remaining bone was largely unidentifiable, although one pig incisor was noted in context 328 and a cattle radius fragment from context 306 showed signs of pathology.

As this is a small, poorly-preserved assemblage, it was not considered to be suitable for further detailed recording.

7. **Discussion**

7.1 **Phase 2 Roman**

The results of the watching brief combined with those from previous projects indicate that construction of the Roman Road represents the first significant activity in the locality of the site. The small assemblage of Roman roof tile probably represents the remains of high status settlement in the area, however, the abraded condition of the fragments points to their deposition as part of a manuring process. If a settlement lay close to the site then this type of material would be present in much greater abundance.

7.2 Phases 3 and 4 medieval occupation

The key significance of this site is clearly defined by both its location and status. Taken in context with the site of St Mary's Church, the 15th to 16th century tile kiln and the 13th century features found 120m to the south-east, the site has provided further tangible evidence of medieval domestic settlement within Witton. The settlement's location can now be mapped with more certainty, and therefore, it must be assumed that any further future developments in the vicinity carry a high probability of revealing additional sites.

The range of features observed appeared to be representative of a domestic dwelling's back-plot, however, the ceramic assemblage suggests the site may not have been a typically low status farm dwelling. Although not necessarily high status, the ceramic assemblage is representative of a higher quality, and therefore, more expensive range of domestic wares.

The relationship between the occupation evidence and boundary ditch (326), set into the local historic landscape context, further supports the presence of a medieval lane or track linking the Roman road with Winnetts Lane, which formed part of the medieval road network for Droitwich. Figure 5 shows how the ditch relates to an old boundary recorded the First Edition OS map. More significantly, the boundary appears to be a continuation of Winnetts Lane. It has been suggested the lane continued south as far as the Roman road (Hurst 1997, 2). The location of this site would appear to support the interpretation, for the occupation site would have been situated along or close to a road or track for ease of access. Significantly, the majority of later features observed clearly respect the alignment of the ditch rather than the north-east/south-west aligned Roman road. The ditch, therefore, may indeed be a boundary associated with the road postulated by Hurst. Following the apparent abandonment of the occupation site after the 14th century it is likely the section of road south of Ombersley Street gradually fell out of use. It may have been maintained as a footpath up to the 19th century, thus ensuring the survival of the boundary, which the historic maps show was used as a later field boundary and was consequently retained when the field to the east was subdivided to provide house plots.

7.3 Phase 5 Post-medieval and modern

Following abandonment of the site between the 15th and later 19th centuries the land-use was agricultural, although there was little evidence of prolonged plough disturbance suggesting the land was managed as pasture for much of this time. This, perhaps, only occurred for a relatively short time before the field was reverted to pasture. The charcoal rich layer that has developed over the medieval features was heavily truncated by landscaping activities associated with the construction of the Victorian house, however, the house did not extend across the site of medieval activity, which ensured the post-medieval layer remained largely undisturbed, thus preserving the archaeology.

8. Conclusions

In terms of future preservation, there is a high probability that additional features and deposits associated with the site will be located to the immediate north and east of the site. The relationship between the large boundary ditch and all other features suggests a localised shift may have taken place, most likely in the location of the settlement throughout different phases of occupation, although a shift in the course of the track should not be ruled out. The presence of residual 10th and 11th century ceramic sherds is an indicator of early medieval occupation on the site, and therefore, a shift in the location of the site may have taken place during the 12th or 13th centuries, perhaps resulting from a redevelopment of the settlement. The features observed during the watching brief can, however, all be attributed to the latter phase of occupation. No evidence of a house was uncovered, assuming one has survived, with all the features recorded indicative of back plot activities. In conclusion, it should be considered likely that both a house structure and features dating to earlier phases of occupation may be

located between the site and the cutting for Worcester Road, and also extending north into the garden of number 40.

8.1 **Research frameworks**

The Central Marches Historic Towns Survey for Droitwich notes that little is known about Witton and its relationship with Droitwich. (Buteux and Hurst 1996, 33). The Domesday entry for Witton is comprehensive and does suggest the settlement was already a well established and important village by the 11th century. Building on this, the site at 42 Worcester road, although limited in area, has clearly added further depth to the broad historical model of later medieval Witton. The 13th to 14th century dating from the site correlates with both the dates for features recorded at Corbett Avenue and documentary records concerning the (then) poor condition of St Mary's church. Taken all together, it might be suggested that Witton had reached a peak by the 14th century, perhaps, then followed by a period of decline at, which might explain the lack of post-15th century archaeology recorded on this site and at Corbett Avenue (WSM 24148; Napthan, Ratkai and Pearson 1997).

On a regional level, a 14th century phase of settlement decline and partial abandonment in medieval rural areas pre-dating the Black Death has been noted in other research (Derek Hurst pers. comm.). The evidence at Witton may suggest it is a typical example representing the regional trend. Caution must be exercised, however, due to the limited exposure of archaeological deposits in the Witton area to date. Future archaeological work may reinforce the rural decline model, or may indicate other possible interpretations, such as a shift in the location of the later medieval and post-medieval settlement. In addition, the presence of the 15th to 16th century tile kiln close to St Mary's does indicate there was still activity in the area during the post-medieval period.

9. **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 Roflec Developments Ltd at 42 Worcester Road, Droitwich Worcestershire (NGR ref SO 8975 6293; SMR ref WSM 33557). A relatively complex medieval domestic occupation site was revealed in the north-east corner of the development area. Selected features were excavated dating to the 13th and 14th centuries. However, a quantity of residual ceramic sherds dating between 10th and 12th centuries suggests an occupation span of at least 400 years. The structural remains consisted mainly of a network of pits and gullies, with an earlier cobbled yard surface surviving in patches and a large north-south aligned boundary ditch. The site is particularly significant because it is the first recorded domestic structure associated with the medieval village of Witton: an agricultural settlement established in the hinterland of Droitwich. The ceramic assemblage is representative of a good quality range of Worcester and Malvernian wares, which perhaps, suggests the site was not simply a low status farmstead. The large boundary ditch appears to relate to an old boundary recorded on historic Ordnance Survey maps. The boundary can be traced to Winnetts Lane, a medieval route into Middlewich. The relationship between the occupation site and the ditch suggests Winnetts Lane probably ran along this boundary to meet with the Roman road. The settlement would have been located on, or very close to the junction. Previous archaeological work in the Witton area has been limited, however, the site chronology does compare with similar deposits recorded elsewhere in the area. In addition, all medieval archaeological structures and deposits recorded to date suggest the core of the settlement was tightly focused around the church and not apparently dispersed.

10. **The archive**

The archive consists of:

- 4 Fieldwork progress records AS2
- 1 Photographic records AS3
- 2 Context number catalogue AS5
- 4 Trench record sheet AS41
- 11 Abbreviated context records AS40
- 1 Drawing number catalogue AS4
- 4 Scale drawings
- 1 Box of finds
- 1 Computer disk (CD)

The project archive is intended to be placed at:

Worcestershire County Museum

Hartlebury Castle

Hartlebury

Near Kidderminster

Worcestershire DY11 7XZ

Tel Hartlebury (01299) 250416

11. **Acknowledgements**

The Service would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, Roflec Developments Ltd, Simon Holdsworth (Site Manager), Mike Glyde (WCC).

12. **Personnel**

The fieldwork and report preparation was led by Adam Mindykowski. The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Simon Griffin. Fieldwork was undertaken by Adam Mindykowski with James Goad, Laura Griffin and Marc Steinmtezer. Artefact analysis was carried out by Laura Griffin and the environmental analysis by Liz Pearson. The illustrations were prepared by Carolyn Hunt and Adam Mindykowski.

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14. **Abbreviations**

HER	Historic Environment Record.
WCC	Worcestershire County Council.
WSM	Numbers prefixed with 'WSM' are the primary reference numbers used by the Worcestershire County Sites and Monuments Record.

Appendix 1 Trench descriptions

Area 1

Area: 340 square metres

Maximum dimensions: Length: 21.0m Width: 16.0m Depth: 0.66m

Orientation: NE-SW

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
101	Topsoil	Soft dark reddish brown sandy loam. Some pockets of mixed reddish brown clay (re-deposited natural). Contains moderate small to medium sub-rounded stones and is affected by heavy rooting.	Depth up to 0.35m
102	Subsoil	Firm mid reddish brown sandy clay loam. Contains frequent charcoal flecks and moderate medium sub-rounded stones. Affected by heavy rooting.	Up to 0.35m b.g.s 0.31m deep
103	Natural	Soft medium orange sandy clay. Contains medium sub rounded stones. Heavy contamination from subsoil and topsoil transported by root action.	0.66m b.g.s

Area 2

Area: 338 square metres

Maximum dimensions: Length: 24.0m Width: 18.0m Depth: 0.70m

Orientation: NW-SE

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
201	Topsoil	Soft dark reddish brown sandy loam. Some pockets of mixed reddish brown clay (re-deposited natural). Contains moderate small to medium sub-rounded stones and is affected by heavy rooting.	Depth 0.20 – 0.25m deep
202	Subsoil	Moderately compact mid yellowish brown sandy clay. Contains moderate small to medium sub rounded stones and is affected by heavy rooting.	0.20m b.g.s 0.15m deep
203	Weathered natural	Soft medium orange sandy clay. Contains medium sub rounded stones. Heavy contamination from	0.35m b.g.s

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
		subsoil and topsoil transported by root action.	0.35m deep
204	Natural	Very compact medium reddish brown silty clay. Contains occasional small sub rounded stones. Affected by light rooting.	0.70m b.g.s

Area 3

Area: 413 square metres

Maximum dimensions: Length: 30.0m Width: 14.0m Depth: 0.55m

Orientation: NW-SE

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
301	Topsoil	Soft dark reddish brown sandy loam. Some pockets of mixed reddish brown clay (re-deposited natural). Contains moderate small to medium sub-rounded stones and is affected by heavy rooting.	Depth 0.20 deep
302	Subsoil	Moderately compact dark brown sandy clay loam. Contains moderate small to medium sub rounded stones and is affected by heavy rooting.	0.20m – 0.53m b.g.s
303	Buried subsoil	Compact very dark greyish brown silty clay loam. Contains frequent charcoal flecks and moderate small sub rounded stones.	0.30 - 0.35m b.g.s 0.25 - 0.35m deep
304	Fill of 305	Compact dark greyish brown compact silty clay. Contains abundant charcoal flecks and moderate small sub rounded stones. Also contains medieval pottery sherds.	0.05 – 0.27m deep 0.55 – 0.70m b.g.s
305	Gully	Linear cut with a sharp break of surface, steep sloping concave sides gently breaking to a concave base. Measures 6.50m in length by 0.30 – 0.50m in width. The gully deepens towards its southern end.	0.05 – 0.27m deep 0.55 – 0.70m b.g.s
306	Primary fill of 307	Compact dark greyish brown silty clay. Contains abundant charcoal flecks, moderate small sub rounded stones and occasional medieval pottery sherds.	0.44 – 0.60m b.g.s

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
307	Gully	Cut of an east/west aligned linear gully with a sharp break of surface, steep sloping concave sides breaking to a concave base. Measures 4.75m in length by 0.40m wide. The gully increases in depth towards its eastern end.	0.44 – 0.60m b.g.s
308	Upper fill of 309	Compact dark greyish brown silty clay. Contains frequent charcoal flecks, moderate small sub rounded stones, occasional medium sub rectangular sandstone fragments and occasional medieval pottery sherds.	0.37 – 0.98m b.g.s
309	Pit	Cut of sub circular pit with a sharp break of surface, steep sloping sides breaking to a narrow concave base. Measures 2.50m by 1.50m.	0.37 – 0.98m b.g.s
310	Fill of 311	Compact dark greyish brown silty clay. Contains frequent charcoal flecks, moderate small sub rounded stones and occasional large sub rectangular sandstone.	0.39m b.g.s (to top of deposit only)
311	Pit	Cut of square pit measuring 1.30m by 1.00m. Not excavated.	0.39m b.g.s (to top of deposit only)
312	Fill of 313	Compact dark reddish brown silty clay. Contains occasional sub-rounded stones and occasional charcoal flecks.	0.41m b.g.s (to top of deposit only)
313	Curvilinear gully	Cut of curvilinear gully apparently associated with pit 311, possibly also associated with pit 309. Measures 3.30m in length, ranging from between 0.30m to 1.10m wide. Not excavated.	0.41m b.g.s (to top of deposit only)
314	Fill of 315	Very compact dark brown to black silty clay. Contains fragments of medieval pottery, stone cobbles and occasional flecks of charcoal.	0.53 – 0.93m b.g.s
315	Undefined pit or linear	Partially defined cut that may be one element within the area of intercutting pits immediately situated to the north. Only the southern edge, truncated by 307, could be identified suggesting this feature may mark the southern limit of the pit group.	0.53 – 0.93m b.g.s
316	Surface	Layer of moderately well-sorted small to medium sub-round stone cobbles forming a relatively well consolidated surface. Measures 4.30m in length by 2.50m in width. Equivalent to 319.	0.64m b.g.s
317	Upper fill of 318	Compact mid to dark grey silty clay. Contains occasional charcoal flecks.	0.56 - 0.73m b.g.s

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
318	Terminus of Gully 322	Cut for terminus of a linear gully with a sharp break of slope from surface to shallow sides, breaking to a concave base. Has been cut by 305. Measures 0.60m in width.	0.56 - 0.73m b.g.s
319	Surface	Layer of moderately well-sorted small to medium sub-round stone cobbles forming a relatively well consolidated surface. Measures 2.60m in length by 1.10m in width. Equivalent to 316.	0.44m b.g.s
320	Upper fill of 307	Limited deposit of medium sub-rounded stone cobbles covering an area of 1.00 by 0.40m within gully 307. Appears to be a patch of consolidation to provide a surface over 307.	0.47m – 0.54m b.g.s
321	Primary fill of 309	Compact mid reddish brown silty clay. Containing occasional charcoal flecks and small sub-rounded stones.	0.37 – 0.98m b.g.s
322	Gully	Cut of linear gully with a sharp break of slope and gradual sides braking to a concave base. Measures approximately 3.50m in length by 0.70m in width. Same as 318.	0.56 - 0.82m b.g.s
323	Primary fill of 322	Compact dark grey silty clay. Contains occasional gravel and rare charcoal flecks.	0.64 – 0.82m b.g.s
324	Secondary fill of 322	Compact mid greyish brown silty clay. Contains occasional gravel and rare charcoal flecks.	0.64 – 0.82m b.g.s
325	Upper fill of 322	Compact mid to dark grey silty clay. Contains occasional gravel and rare charcoal flecks.	0.64 – 0.73m b.g.s
326	Boundary ditch	Cut of large north-south linear with a gradual break from surface, steep sloping sides and a gentle break to a concave base. Measures 12.0m in length by 2.30 m in width. Same as 335.	0.64 – 1.30m b.g.s
327	Primary fill of 326	Compact mid to dark grey silty clay. Contains occasional small stone and rare charcoal flecks,	0.64 – 1.30m b.g.s
328	Secondary fill of 326	Compact mid grey silty clay. Contains occasional small stones and rare charcoal flecks.	0.64 – 1.30m b.g.s
329	Third fill of 326	Compact mid yellowish brown silty clay. Contains occasional small stones and rare charcoal flecks.	0.64 – 1.19m b.g.s
330	Upper fill of 326	Compact dark grey silty clay. Contains rare small stones and charcoal flecks.	0.64 – 1.12m b.g.s

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
331	Natural	Very compact medium reddish brown silty clay. Contains occasional small sub rounded stones. Affected by light rooting.	0.46 – 0.55m b.g.s
332	Primary fill of 318	Compact mid brown silty clay. Contains occasional small stones, rare CBM fragments and rare charcoal flecks.	0.56 - 0.73m b.g.s
333	Layer	Compact mixed mid brown silty clay with mottled red and grey silty clay. Contains occasional charcoal flecks and animal bone. Re-deposited natural mixed with material from pit group.	0.47m b.g.s to top of deposit (not bottomed)

Area 4

Area: c 192 square metres

Maximum dimensions: Length: 22.0m Width: 15.0m Depth: not recorded, only topsoil stripped

Orientation: NE-SE

Main deposit description : No observations were made of deposits in this area due to the immediate laying of stone following excavation.

Appendix 2 Artefact tables

Appendix 1: Tables

Material	Total	Weight (g)
Medieval pottery	54	664
Roman tile	2	35
Medieval roof tile	1	7
Copper alloy buckle	1	14
Iron nails	2	22

Table 1: Quantification of the assemblage

Fabric number	Fabric name	Total sherds	Weight (g)
46.2	Glazed Stamford-type ware	2	4
55	Worcester-type unglazed ware	19	171
56	Malvernian unglazed ware	1	8
57	Cotswolds unglazed ware	1	2
57.1	Cotswolds unglazed ware	2	18
62	Deritend-type ware	1	4
63	Brill-Boarstall ware	1	3
64.1	Worcester-type sandy glazed ware	8	51
64.2	Glazed sandy white ware	6	31
64.3	Green glazed white ware	2	10
64.4	Unglazed sandy white ware	1	3
69	Oxidised glazed Malvernian ware	8	317
99	Miscellaneous medieval wares	2	42

Table 2: Quantification of the pottery by fabric

Appendix 3 : Plates



Plate 1 The 14th century copper alloy buckle.



Plate 2 The north facing section of the substantial boundary ditch (326).

Appendix 4: Illustrations