

An archaeological evaluation at 90, Bretforton Road, Badsey, Worcestershire



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An archaeological evaluation at 90, Bretforton Road, Badsey, Worcestershire.

Michael Nicholson

With a contribution by Tom Vaughan

Summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at 90, Bretforton Road, Badsey, Worcestershire (NGR SP 0071 4376). It was commissioned by Cotswold Oak Ltd, who intends the construction of a residential development of eleven dwellings and associated works for which a planning application has been submitted.

The site lies within the boundaries of Badsey, on the eastern outskirts and covers two parcels of land, one of which is currently an orchard of various tree species and sits upon former ridge and furrow which is still visible as earthworks within the landscape. The other is abandoned wet land, overgrown with trees and scrub vegetation. Previous archaeological investigations within the village have yielded potential Iron Age and Roman remains, the extent of which remains unknown.

An earlier rapid two trench evaluation had been undertaken on site, which found no archaeological features, and one residual sherd of medieval pottery, associated with the ridge and furrow.

Five trenches were excavated during this stage of investigations, each 30m in length.. The earliest identified archaeological remains were east to west orientated ridge and furrow, which although intrinsically undated, are considered to originate from the medieval/post-medieval periods. A pit was also identified, again undated, but considered to date from the 20th century. The site appears to have been agricultural in character with no evidence for any previous occupation activity.

No artefacts or evidence for any previous use of the site was found. This suggests that there was little or no occupation of the site that pre-dates the ridge and furrow, unless the ridge and furrow were to have truncated any ephemeral remains.

Report

1 Background

1.1 Reasons for the project

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at 90, Bretforton, Badsey, Worcestershire. (NGR: SP 0071 4376). It was commissioned by Cotswold Oak Ltd, who intends the construction of a residential development of eleven dwellings with associated works for which a planning application has been submitted to Wychavon district Council (refs. W/13/00138 and W/13/01909).

The proposed development site is considered to include heritage assets and potential heritage assets, the significance of which may be affected by the application (HER ref. WSM 47978).

The project conforms to a brief prepared by Worcestershire County Council (WCC 2013) and for which a project proposal (including detailed specification) was produced (WA 2014).

The project also conforms to the *Standards and guidelines for archaeological projects in Worcestershire* (WCC 2010).

The event reference for this project, given by the HER is WSM 66253.

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 fieldwork was led by Andy Mann MSc, who joined WA in 2004 and has been practicing archaeology since 2001. The report was prepared by Michael Nicholson BSc, who joined WA in 2008, when he started practicing archaeology. The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Tom Vaughan BA MA CAIfA. Illustrations were prepared by Laura Templeton BA PG Cert CMIIfA.

3.2 Documentary research

Prior to fieldwork commencing a search was made of the Historic Environment Record (HER).

3.3 Fieldwork strategy

A detailed specification has been prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2014).

Fieldwork was undertaken between 8 and 9 of December 2014. The site reference number and site code is WSM 66253.

5 trenches, amounting to just over 270m² in area, were excavated over the site area of 8ha, this added to 2 previous trenches (WSM 57537) excavated at an earlier date (Walsh 2014; WSM 57537) and covering 90m² makes a combines total of 320 m² representing a sample of 4%. The location of the trenches is indicated in Figure 2.

Deposits considered not to be significant were removed using a 360° tracked excavator, employing a toothless bucket and under archaeological supervision. 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 2012a) and the trenches were located using a differential GPS (Leica NetRover) with an accuracy limit set

at <0.04m. 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 affected 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). In the event no artefactual evidence was recovered from site.

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.

3.8 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 Current Land-use.

The proposed development site is currently split into two separate areas of land use. The first of which is located south of, but close to, the main road through Badsey, is disused and is at present a wet land area overgrown with trees and scrub vegetation. It still has the remains of garage and shed/storage structures recently abandoned within it. The second larger area is located to the south of the development and away from the main road. Its current land use is that of an orchard which sits upon former ridge and furrow. A number of structures are still standing against the western boundary of the site. These include two concrete garages and two wooden sheds. Adjacent to these structures and located towards the south-west corner of the site is a pond, still full of water but not maintained. An overgrown gravel track runs down the eastern side of site towards the orchard.

The site is surrounded by pasture to the west and agricultural farm land the south and east. To the north is the main road which runs east to west through Badsey and lining the northern side of the road adjacent is a row of 20th century housing. Beyond the housing is more agricultural farmland. The underlying geology of the site is mapped as Blue Lias and Charmouth mudstone formation, overlain by superficial deposits of clay, sand, silt and gravel (BGS 2014).

4.2 Archaeological background, by Michael Nicholson and Tom Vaughan

Previous archaeological investigations on a plot to the west revealed Iron Age features in the form of a shallow ditch terminus and a pit or ditch terminus, along with an undated pit/posthole and another ditch. They were interpreted tentatively to relate to settlement activity, the extent of which could not be ascertained and may extend into the proposed development area (CA 2013; WSM 48205). Unstratified Iron Age and Roman artefactual remains have been recorded around Badsey

(WSM 07207, 29151, 30329). This suggests the possibility of Iron Age and Roman activity within the area of the present site.

The 1904 Ordnance Survey map reveals the area to have been heavily involved in orchard/horticultural and agricultural activity. No earthworks or buildings are noted on the map within the site.

A previous rapid two trench evaluation was undertaken on site by WA, which revealed no significant archaeological features, and one unstratified sherd of pottery, associated with the ridge and furrow; a heavily abraded handle from an oxidised glazed Malvernian ware cup, most likely medieval in date, (Walsh 2014; WSM 57537).

5 Structural analysis

The trenches and features recorded are shown in Figure 2 and Plates 1-7. The results of the structural analysis are presented in Appendix 1.

5.1.1 Phase 1: Natural deposits

The natural substrate was seen across the investigation area at an average depth of 0.80m below the current ground surface. It was comprised of mottled mid grey blue clay with patches of light orange yellow sand and limestone gravels. However, within Trenches 1 and 5, a thin band of gravel surviving within the ridges of the ploughed furrows can be seen, (102), (104) and (505). Originally thought to be associated with plough action it now seems as though this gravel represents natural gravel capping overlying clay deposits below. This gravel appears at a depth of 0.25-0.30m, directly below sub-soils (101) and (501).

5.1.2 Phase 2: Medieval/post-medieval deposits

Surviving ridge and furrow in the form of earthworks seen across site and in the wider landscape were noted. Aligned east to west this ridge and furrow was observed and recorded within Trenches 1 and 5, trenches that were aligned north to south and roughly 90 degrees to the furrows, allowing for a complete profile to be seen. No dating evidence was recovered from the ploughed material.

5.1.3 Phase 3: Undated deposits

A large modern circular pit [508] was excavated within Trench 5; no archaeological artefacts were recovered from the fills within it (Plate 4). The primary fill (507) appeared very sterile, most likely up-cast natural material re-deposited fairly quickly after first excavation. The upper fill (506) was more mixed and organic in appearance and very similar to sub-soil (501) and appears to have been deposited within the last century.

6 Synthesis

The earliest activity for the site appears to be the ridge and furrow, of medieval or post-medieval date, associated with the sherd of abraded medieval Malvernian ware pottery, found during the earlier phase of evaluation (Walsh 2014). The results from within the investigation area suggest that there was very little, if any, activity of significance originating from an earlier date. This, of course, is unless any earlier archaeological features and deposits which may have been present have now been heavily truncated and disturbed by later ploughing action, the impact of which has been demonstrated within Trenches 1 and 5 to be substantial. No evidence for Iron Age or Roman activity which been noted elsewhere in Badsey, was seen. Modern land drains, services and general ground disturbance were observed during these works but they were not of archaeological significance.

7 Significance

No significant archaeological deposits, artefacts or environmental evidence were present within the development area. The only observed features and deposits recorded were associated with

medieval/post-medieval ridge and furrow seen across site and one undated pit, most likely modern in origin and performing an unknown function.

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.

An Archaeological evaluation was undertaken on behalf of Cotswold Oak Ltd at 90, Bretforton Road, Badsey, Worcestershire (NGR SP 0071 4376; HER ref. WSM 66253). The site lies on the eastern outskirts of the village of Badsey, upon a rolling lowland of rich clay soils and underlying mudstone. Previous archaeological investigations within Badsey have revealed the potential for both Iron Age and Roman remains (WSM 48205).

An earlier rapid two trench evaluation had been undertaken on site, which found no archaeological features, and one residual sherd of medieval pottery, associated with the ridge and furrow (WSM 57537).

Five trenches were excavated during this stage of investigations. The earliest identified archaeological remains were east to west orientated ridge and furrow, which although intrinsically undated, are considered to originate from the medieval/post-medieval periods. A pit was also identified, again undated, but considered to date from the 20th century. The site appears to have been agricultural in character with no evidence for any previous occupation activity.

No artefacts or evidence for any previous use of the site was found. This suggests that there was little or no occupation of the site that pre-dates the ridge and furrow, unless the ridge and furrow were to have truncated any ephemeral remains.

9 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, Russell Thompson (Cotswold Oak Ltd), and Mike Glyde (Historic Environment Planning Officer, Worcestershire County Council).

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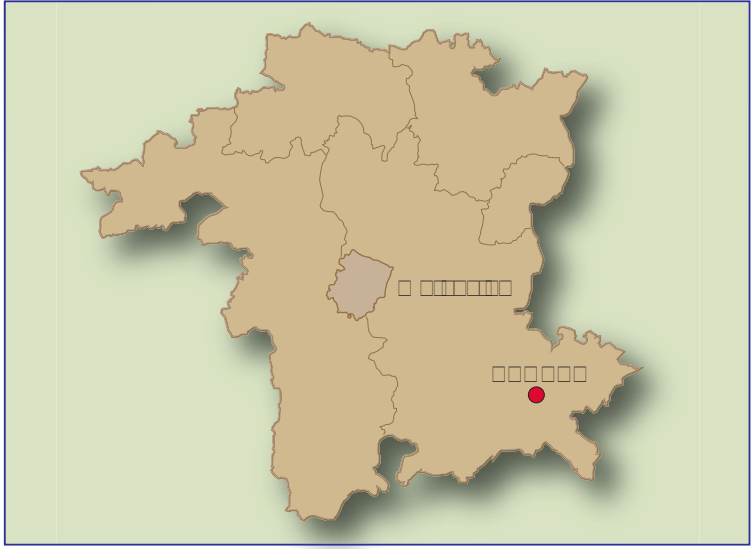
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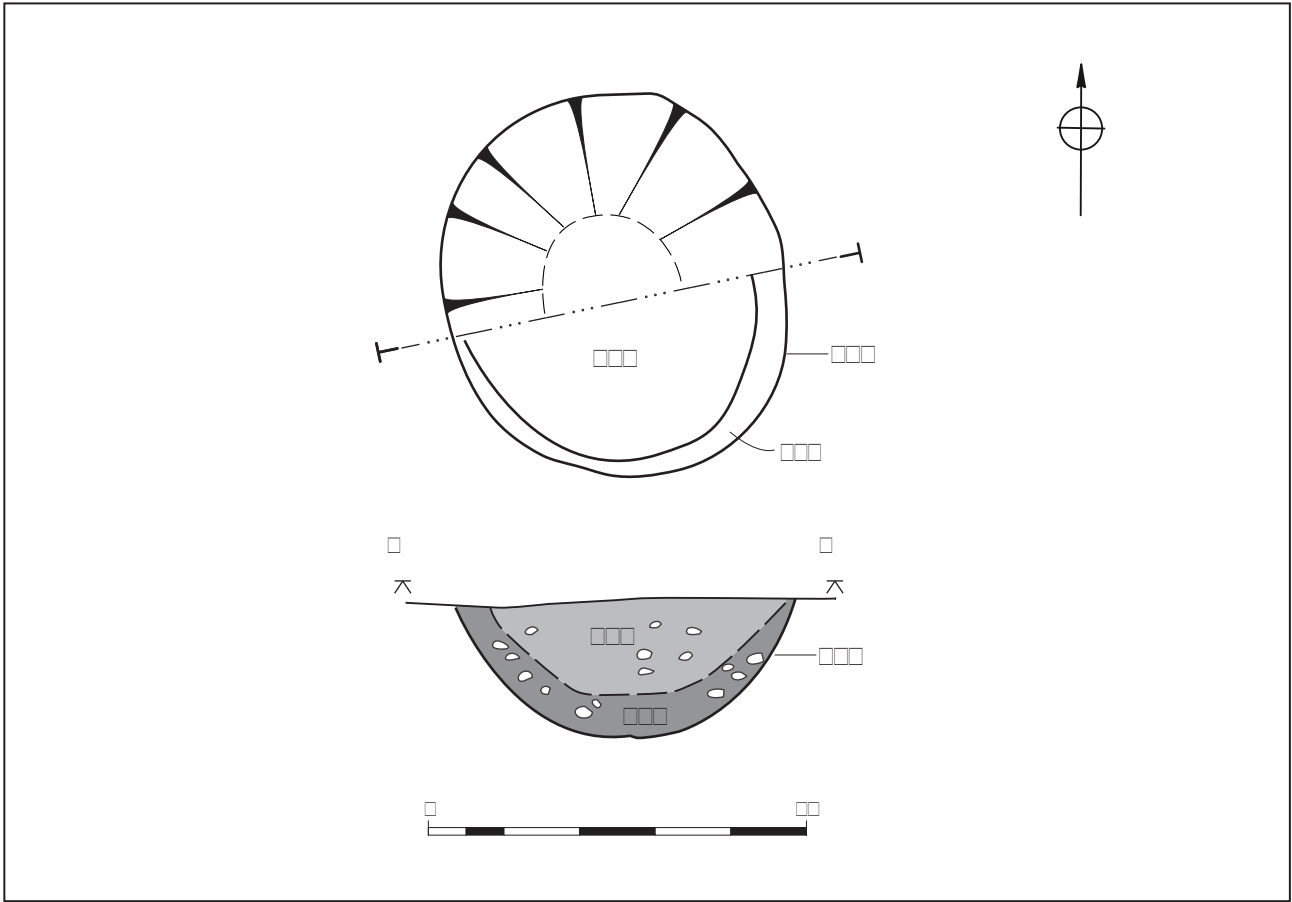
Figures



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Plates



Plate 1: General view of Trench 5, facing north



Plate 2: Oblique view of furrow [504] in Trench 5, facing south east



Plate 3: West facing section of Trench 1, furrow [105], fill (104)



Plate 4: North facing section of pit [508] in Trench 5



Plate 5: General view of Trench 2, facing east



Plate 6: Oblique view of furrow [105], in Trench 1, facing north east



Plate 7: West facing section of Trench 1

Appendix 1 Trench descriptions

Main deposit descriptions

Trench 1

Maximum dimensions: Length: 30m Width: 1.8m Depth: 0.60m

Orientation: N-S

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
100	Topsoil	Soft to moderate dark brown loam with rare small sub-rounded stones, charcoal flecks and occasional root disturbance.	0m
101	Subsoil	Moderately compact light grey brown clay with rare sandstone and charcoal fleck inclusions and occasional root disturbance.	0.10-0.20m
102	Subsoil	Compact light orange yellow with reddish mottling sandstone gravel. Only present within surviving ridges of associated ridge and furrows.	0.20m
103	Natural	Compact mid grey blue clay with light blue mottling and latches of light orange yellow sand and gravels.	0.45-0.60m
104	Subsoil	Compact light orange yellow with reddish mottling sandstone gravel. Only present within surviving ridges of associated ridge and furrows.	0.35m
105	Cut	E-W aligned Furrow	0.20m
106	Cut	E-W aligned Furrow	0.42m

Trench 2

Maximum dimensions: Length: 30m Width: 1.8m Depth: 0.71m

Orientation: E-W

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
200	Topsoil	Soft to moderate dark brown loam with rare small sub-rounded stones, charcoal flecks and occasional root disturbance.	0m
201	Subsoil	Moderately compact light grey brown silty clay with rare sandstone inclusions and frequent root disturbance.	0.15-0.16m
202	Subsoil	Compact light grey blue clay with rare charcoal flecks and rare small sub-angular stones.	0.54-0.58m
203	Natural	Compact mid grey blue clay with light blue mottling and patches of white degraded stone throughout.	0.66-0.71m

Trench 3

Maximum dimensions: Length: 30m Width: 1.8m Depth: 0.72m

Orientation: E-W

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
300	Topsoil	Soft to moderate dark brown loam with occasional charcoal flecks and occasional root disturbance.	0m
301	Subsoil	Moderately compact light grey brown clay with rare small degraded sandstone fragments and charcoal fleck inclusions and occasional root disturbance.	0.20-0.24m
302	Subsoil	Compact light grey brown with rare degraded sandstone fragments.	0.50-0.62m
303	Natural	Compact mid grey blue clay with light blue mottling and latches of light orange yellow sand and gravels.	0.62-0.72m

Trench 4

Maximum dimensions: Length: 30m Width: 1.8m Depth: 0.82m

Orientation: N-S

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
400	Topsoil	Soft to moderate dark brown silty loam with rare small sub-rounded stones, charcoal flecks and occasional root disturbance.	0m
401	Subsoil	Moderately compact mid yellow brown clay with occasional small sub-rounded stones.	0.20-0.22m
402	Subsoil	Compact light grey blue clay with rare root disturbance, small sub-rounded stones and occasional decomposing vegetation.	0.62m
403	Natural	Compact mid grey blue clay with light blue mottling and latches of light orange yellow sand and gravels.	0.66-0.82m

Trench 5

Maximum dimensions: Length: 30m Width: 1.8m Depth: 0.60m

Orientation: N-S

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
500	Topsoil	Soft to moderate dark brown silty loam with frequent root disturbance and occasional small to medium rounded stones.	0m
501	Subsoil	Compact mid yellow brown cohesive clay with occasional root disturbance and small rounded stones.	0.15m
502	Natural	Firm light grey blue silty clay with frequent pea grit and limestone inclusions.	0.50-0.75m
503	Cut	E-W aligned Furrow.	0.25m
504	Cut	E-W aligned Furrow.	0.30m
505	Cut	Compact light orange yellow with reddish mottling sandstone gravel. Only present within surviving ridges of associated ridge and furrows.	0.25m
506	Fill	Upper fill of [508]	0.65m
507	Fill	Primary fill of [508]	0.65m
508	Cut	Cut of large circular pit.	0.65m

Two trenches were excavated in July 2014 during an earlier phase of work; HER ref WSM 57537
The results are as follows;

Trench 1

Maximum dimensions: Length: 30m Width: 1.5m Depth: 0.99m

Orientation: NE-SW

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
100	Topsoil	Moderately compact dark brown clayey loam.	0-0.2m
101	Subsoil	Compact light brown silty clay.	0.2-0.99m
102	Natural	Compact mid bluish grey clay with light brown silty clay mottling and flecks of whitish grey clay.	0.99m+

Trench 2

Maximum dimensions: Length: 30m Width: 1.5m Depth: 1m

Orientation: NE-SW

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
200	Topsoil	Moderately compact dark brown clayey loam	0-0.14m
201	Subsoil	Compact light brown silty clay	0.14-1.0m
202	Natural	Compact mid grey brown clay with light yellowish brown silty clay mottling and some sand and sandstone inclusions	1.0m+

Appendix 2 Technical information

The archive (site code: WSM 66253)

The archive consists of:

- 7 Context records AS1
- 1 Field progress reports AS2
- 1 Photographic records AS3
- 34 Digital photographs
- 1 Drawing number catalogues AS4
- 4 Scale drawings
- 5 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
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