

Archaeological watching brief at The Malverns, Pensham Fields, Pershore, Worcestershire



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

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Author: Graham Arnold – garnold@worcestershire.gov.uk
Illustrator: Carolyn Hunt
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Watching brief at The Malverns, Pensham Fields, Pershore, Worcestershire

Graham Arnold (project leader)

Background information

<i>Client</i>	Ian Brothwood
<i>National Grid reference</i>	SO 94739 43652
<i>Historic Environment Record reference</i>	WSM 50193
<i>Planning authority reference</i>	Worcestershire County Council CC/13/00013
<i>Brief</i>	WCC 2013
<i>Project design</i>	WA 2013
<i>Project parameters</i>	IfA 2012

Previous archaeological work on the site

There has been no previous archaeological work undertaken on site.

Previous archaeological work on associated sites

The site is set within an open, flat landscape on the Avon gravel terraces, characterised by nucleated villages, surrounded by large arable fields. This is an intensively farmed area associated with fertile, free draining soils which give rise to high quality agricultural land used for growing a wide variety of crops.

The historic landscape is dominated by small nucleated settlements, linked by a network of medieval or earlier roads. These are set in a landscape derived from vast expanses of former open field, which have remained under intensive cultivation following their enclosure. There is little in the way of woodland or tree cover. Market gardening and orchards are strong features of this region, particularly close to the villages. The Historic Environment Record (HER) contains evidence of human occupation from the Bronze Age, Iron Age, Roman, medieval and post-medieval periods. Archaeological events within the search area are very few, but do include a desk-based assessment (WSM 48223) and unstratified Romano-British finds, including brooches and a silver coin (WSM 38471). Immediately to the west and north there is evidence of a Romano British settlement (WSM 30647), the full extent of which has not been determined. In the south-east there is crop-mark and find evidence of a Roman marching camp (WSM 10569). Across the area there is earthwork evidence of medieval ridge and furrow (WSM 08750, WSM 07711), which is also discernible on LiDAR imagery.

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 2012

Sources consulted

HER Search

Sources cited by the HER

Map of the Hamlet of Pensham 1812

Ordnance Survey First Edition, 1885

Ordnance Survey Second Edition, 1904

Date(s) of fieldwork

07/01/2014 – 09/01/2014

Area of site 1200m²

Sampling area sampled c 135m². Indicated on Fig 1 + 2

Dimensions of excavated areas observed –

Septic tank pit (Tr1) length 2.50m
width 2.50m
depth 2.75m (0.75m observed)

Drainage field (Tr2) length 21.00m
width 5.50m
depth 0.40m - 1.00m max

Pipe trench(Tr3) length 30.00m
width 0.40m
depth 0.60m

Access to or visibility of deposits

Observation of the excavated areas was undertaken during machine excavation. The exposed surfaces were sufficiently clean to observe well-differentiated archaeological deposits. Selected areas were cleaned by hand.

Statement of confidence

Access to, and visibility of, deposits allowed a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved. One short connecting service trench was not monitored after discussion with the curator advised monitoring for this area was no longer required given the likely recent disturbance.

Deposit description

The same stratigraphy was observed in all three trenches that were excavated

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
100	Topsoil	Friable dark brown humic sandy silt with frequent sub-rounded pebble and roots. Occasional fragments of post-medieval / modern brick and cbm (not retained). Garden soil.	0 – 0.30m
101	Subsoil / Natural	Moderately compact mid orangey brown sandy silt. Mixed topsoil and disturbed	0.30 – 0.40m

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
	Interface	natural sands and gravels. Frequent heavy root action. Worm sorting and root action present.	
102	Natural	Soft pale orange sands and gravels. Contains occasional silt channels and patches of grey silty material. Getting more sandy and darker with depth.	0.40m +

Discussion

The works involved excavation of a septic tank pit (Trench 1, Plates 1 and 2), with a drainage field (Trench 2, Plates 3-5) and associated connecting pipe trenches (Trench 3 Plate 7 and 8). In all of the areas monitored the natural sand and gravel was observed from a depth of 0.40m below ground level. This was overlain by a subsoil with frequent deep root disturbance. The topsoil was a humic garden soil, which contained fragments of post-medieval brick, that was up to 0.30m in depth. No significant archaeological features, deposits or finds was found during the works. After discussions with the curator it was agreed that the trench connecting the new and old septic tanks did not require any further archaeological monitoring.

Conclusions

The areas observed during the watching brief demonstrated that the Romano-British activity to the north (WSM 30647) and south (WSM10569) does not extend into this area. There was also no evidence of ridge and furrow which has been observed in the wider landscape.

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 Ian Brothwood at The Malverns, Pensham Fields, Pershore, Worcestershire (NGR ref SO 94739 43652; HER ref WSM 51093). Work was taking place to install a new septic tank and drainage field with connecting service trenches. Only post-medieval topsoil, subsoil and natural ground was observed. Natural gravels were observed from a depth of 0.40m below ground level. There were no significant archaeological features, finds or deposits present. No evidence of Romano-British occupation or medieval agriculture was present, which is evident in the wider landscape.

Acknowledgements

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Bibliography

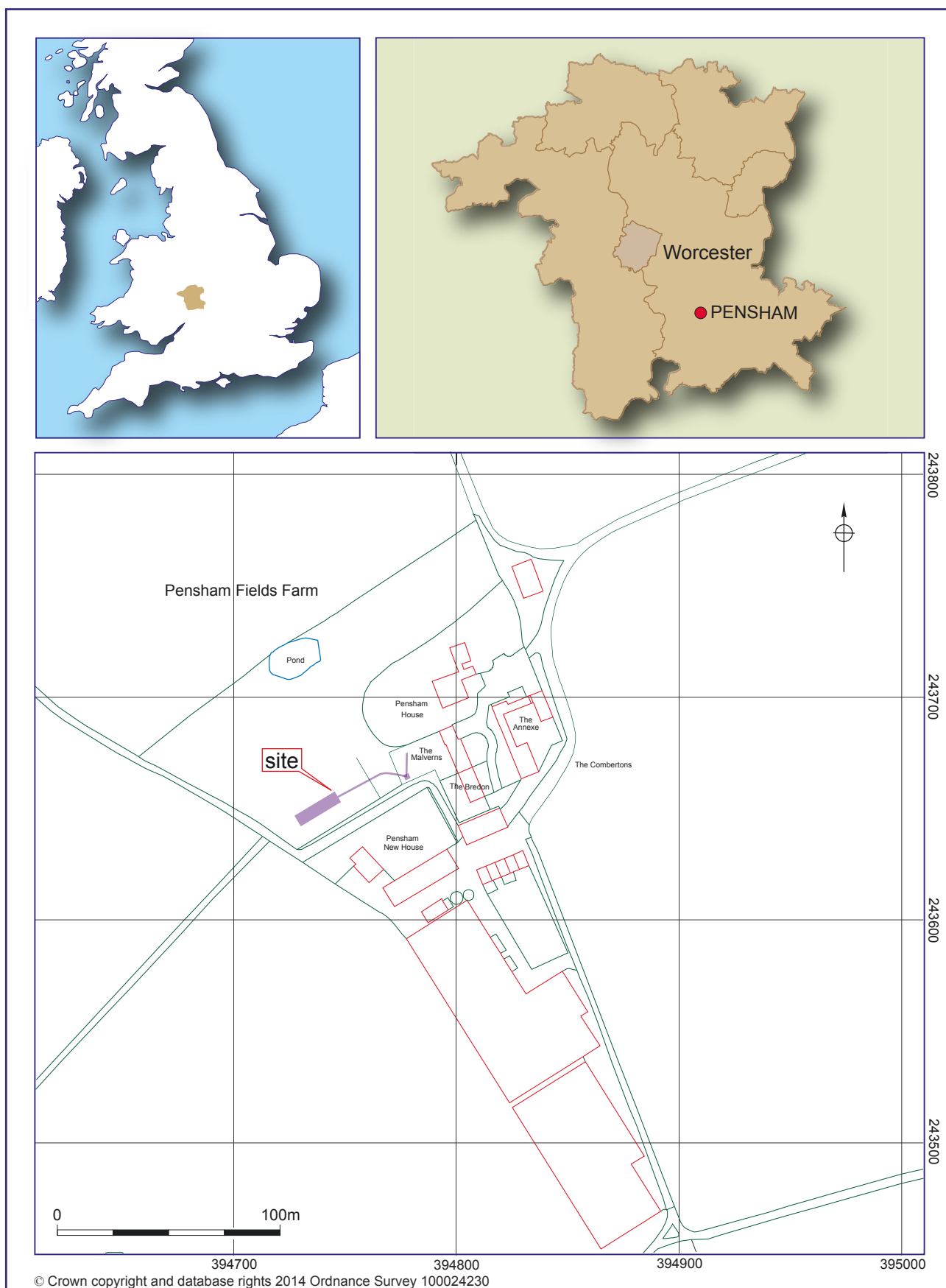
IfA 2012 *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief*, Institute for Archaeologists

WA 2012 Manual of service practice, recording manual, Worcestershire Archaeology, Worcestershire County Council, report **1842**

WA 2013 *Proposal for an archaeological watching brief at The Malverns, Pensham Fields, Pershore, Worcestershire*, Worcestershire County Council, unpublished document dated 29 October 2013, **P4200**

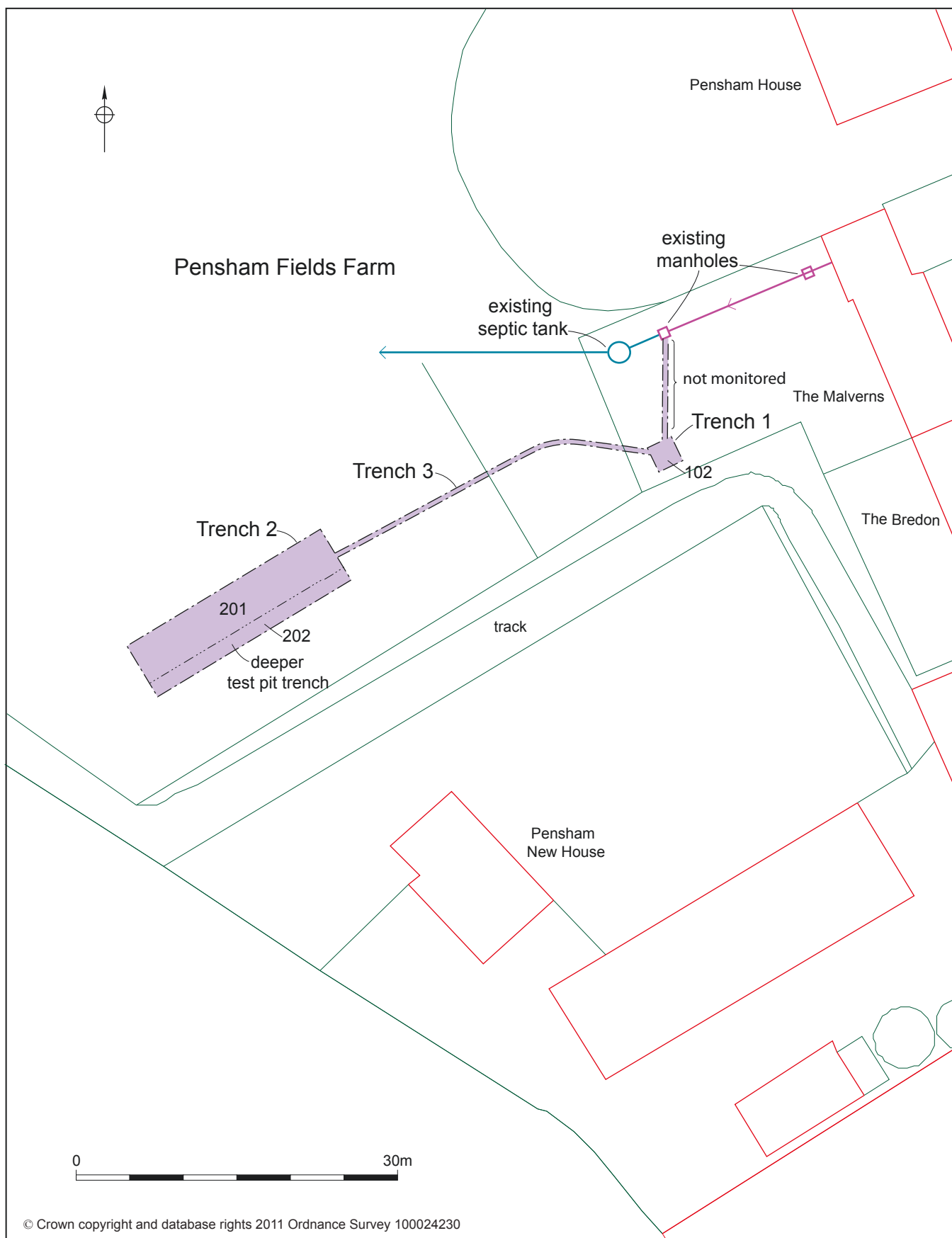
WCC 2013 *Requirements for a programme of archaeological work at The Malverns, Pensham Fields, Pershore WR10 3HD Worcestershire*, Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service, Worcestershire County Council, unpublished document dated 31 July 2013

Figures



Location of the site

Figure 1



Trench location plan

Figure 2

Plates



Plate 1 Trench 1 hole to install septic tank



Plate 2 Septic tank installed in Trench 1



Plate 3 Trench 2 with soak-away trench excavated, demonstrating high water table and gravels. View south-west.



Plate 4 Trench 2 topsoil stripped before soak-away pit. View west.



Plate 5 North-west facing section of Trench 2 showing topsoil and gravels.



Plate 6 Trench 3 showing heavy rooting due to trees in this area and gravel removed from trench. View south-east.



Plate 7 Trench 3, connecting septic tank to drainage field, looking north-east.

Appendix 1 Trench descriptions

Trench 1

Site area: Septic tank pit

Maximum dimensions: Length: 2.50m Width: 2.50m Depth: 0.75m observed

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
100	Topsoil	Friable dark brown humic sandy silt with frequent sub-rounded pebble and roots. Occasional fragments of post-medieval / modern brick and cbm (not retained). Garden soil.	0 – 0.30m
101	Subsoil / Natural Interface	Moderately compact mid orangey brown sandy silt. Mixed topsoil and disturbed natural sands and gravels. Frequent heavy root action. Worm sorting and root action present.	0.30 – 0.40m
102	Natural	Soft pale orange sands and gravels. Contains occasional silt channels and patches of grey silty material. Getting more sandy and darker with depth.	0.40m +

Trench 2

Site area: Drainage field

Maximum dimensions: Length: 21.00m Width: 5.50m Depth: 1.00m maximum

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
100	Topsoil	Medium orange/brown fine soft sandy silt with frequent root action and worm sorting. Contains occasional medium flecks of charcoal, rare tile and rare clay pipe. Cut by one modern water pipe trench.	0.0 – 0.30m
101	Subsoil / Natural Interface	Medium orange friable silty sand with worm sorting and root action present in upper 0.10m. Also cut by water pipe trench.	0.30 – 0.40m

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
102	Natural	Pale orange to pink/orange with patches of grey compact bedded sand and soft sandstone. Contains occasional silt channels and patches of grey silty material. Cut by water pipe trench and modern posthole.	0.40m +

Trench 3

Site area: Drainage field

Maximum dimensions: Length: 30.00m Width: 0.40m Depth: 0.60m maximum

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
100	Topsoil	Medium orange/brown fine soft sandy silt with frequent root action and worm sorting. Contains occasional medium flecks of charcoal, rare tile and rare clay pipe. Cut by one modern water pipe trench.	1.0 0.30m
101	Subsoil/ Natural Interface	Medium orange friable silty sand with worm sorting and root action present in upper 0.10m. Also cut by water pipe trench.	0.30 – 0.40m
102	Natural	Pale orange to pink/orange with patches of grey compact bedded sand and soft sandstone. Contains occasional silt channels and patches of grey silty material. Cut by water pipe trench and modern posthole.	0.40m +

Appendix 2 Technical information

The archive (site code: WSM 50193)

The archive consists of:

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|----|----------------------------|
| 2 | Field progress reports AS2 |
| 1 | Photographic records AS3 |
| 30 | Digital photographs |
| 1 | Scale drawings |
| 3 | Trench record sheets AS41 |

The project archive is intended to be held digitally and retained by Worcestershire County Council.