

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION
AT
LAND BETWEEN 22 & 24
THE RIDGEWAY, NEW END,
ASTWOOD BANK,
WORCESTERSHIRE



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Worcestershire Archaeology
Archive and Archaeology Service
The Hive, Sawmill Walk,
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Contents

Summary

1

Report

1 Background.....	2
1.1 Reasons for the project	2
2 Aims.....	2
3 Methods.....	2
3.1 Personnel.....	2
3.2 Documentary research	2
3.3 Fieldwork strategy	2
3.4 Structural analysis	3
3.5 Artefact methodology	3
3.5.1 Recovery policy	3
3.6 Environmental archaeology methodology.....	3
3.6.1 Sampling policy.....	3
3.7 Statement of confidence in the methods and results	3
4 The application site	3
4.1 Topography, geology and archaeological context.....	3
4.2 Current land-use	3
5 Structural analysis.....	3
5.1.1 Phase 1: Natural deposits	3
5.1.2 Phase 2: modern deposits	3
6 Synthesis	4
7 Recommendations.....	4
8 Publication summary	4
9 Acknowledgements	4
10 Bibliography	4

Archaeological evaluation at Land between 22 and 24 The Ridgeway, New End, Astwood Bank, Worcestershire

Tom Rogers and Andrew Walsh

Illustrations by Carolyn Hunt

Summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at Land Between 22 & 24 The Ridgeway, New End, Astwood Bank, Worcestershire (NGR SP0443 6131). It was undertaken on behalf of Thomas Vale Housing, who have been granted planning permission from Wychavon District Council for the construction of ten affordable homes and a new access road on the site. Planning permission was granted subject to conditions including a programme of archaeological works defined in a brief as an archaeological evaluation and fieldwalking exercise. The site, which comprised of overgrown allotments and a pasture field, was not suitable for fieldwalking, but the evaluation was carried out in June 2014. Three trenches, one 50m in length and two 25m long were excavated. No archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were recorded.

Report

1 Background

1.1 Reasons for the project

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at Land Between 22 & 24 The Ridgeway, New End, Astwood Bank, Worcestershire (NGR SP0443 6131). It was undertaken on behalf of Thomas Vale Housing, who have been granted planning permission from Wychavon District Council for the construction of ten affordable homes and a new access road on the site (reference W/13/1887).

Planning permission was granted subject to conditions including a programme of archaeological works. A brief ('the Brief') was prepared by the Planning Advisory Section of Worcestershire Archive & Archaeology Service setting out the requirement for an archaeological evaluation and fieldwalking exercise (Glyde 2013). A written scheme of investigation describing the methodology to undertake the archaeological works was produced by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2013). 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 WSM55829.

2 Aims

The aims of this evaluation were:

- 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 managed and undertaken by Tom Rogers BA MSc, assisted in the field by Graham Arnold and in producing this report by Andrew Walsh. Illustrations were prepared by Carolyn Hunt.

3.2 Documentary research

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

3.3 Fieldwork strategy

A detailed written scheme of investigation (WSI) was produced by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2013). As requested by the Brief, the WSI included a programme of fieldwalking but this stage was not undertaken as the site, which comprised of overgrown allotments and a pasture field, was not suitable for this exercise.

The evaluation was undertaken on 12th June 2014. The site reference number and site code is WSM55829. Three trenches amounting to just over 285m² in area, were excavated over the site area of 0.5ha, representing a sample of over 5%. The location of the trenches is indicated in Figure 1.

Deposits considered not to be significant were removed using a wheeled 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 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). In the event, no finds were recovered.

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 site is located on allotment plots and part of a field, and is bounded to the north and south by residential properties, to the east by the *A441 The Ridgeway*, and to the west by the remaining part of the field. The site is located on the top of a ridge, which runs approximately north to south, at a height of 135m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). The underlying geology is mapped as Mercia Mudstone, overlaid glaciofluvial deposits of sand and gravel (BGS 2014).

The site lies in an area of unknown potential. It is located next to the A441 The Ridgeway, which is probably a historic routeway, although it has not been studied in detail. The only sites recorded in vicinity of the site are a post-medieval farmstead (WSM42738 and WSM42739) located c.250m north of the site, and a medieval fish pond (WSM37383) about 500m north-west of the site.

4.2 Current land-use

The site comprised, at the time of evaluation, of former allotments on the street frontage and a pasture field behind.

5 Structural analysis

The trench locations are recorded in Figure 2. The results of the structural analysis are presented in Appendix 1.

5.1.1 Phase 1: Natural deposits

Natural deposits comprised a compact reddish clay with frequent rounded cobbles, consistent with the geological deposits recorded by the BGS (Plate 1 and 2).

5.1.2 Phase 2: modern deposits

In all trenches the natural strata was overlaid by a mid yellowish brown clay or clay sand subsoil. The subsoil was sealed by a dark brown grey sandy silt (Trench 1) or light brown silty clay (Trenches 2 and 3) topsoil. No finds were identified in any of the deposits.

6 Synthesis

No archaeological features, deposits or finds were identified during the evaluation. The paucity of finds from the three trenches, including the topsoil, implies that the site has not been occupied or subjected to cultivation and manuring which would have resulted in waste artefacts being deposited on the site. It is likely that the area was common land for grazing prior to enclosure and has been pasture land since that time.

7 Recommendations

It is recommended that no further archaeological mitigation is required for this site.

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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9 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, Mike Box and Darren Deadicoat Thomas Vale Homes, Tegan Cornah, HER Assistant and Mike Glyde Historic Environment Planning Officer Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service

10 Bibliography

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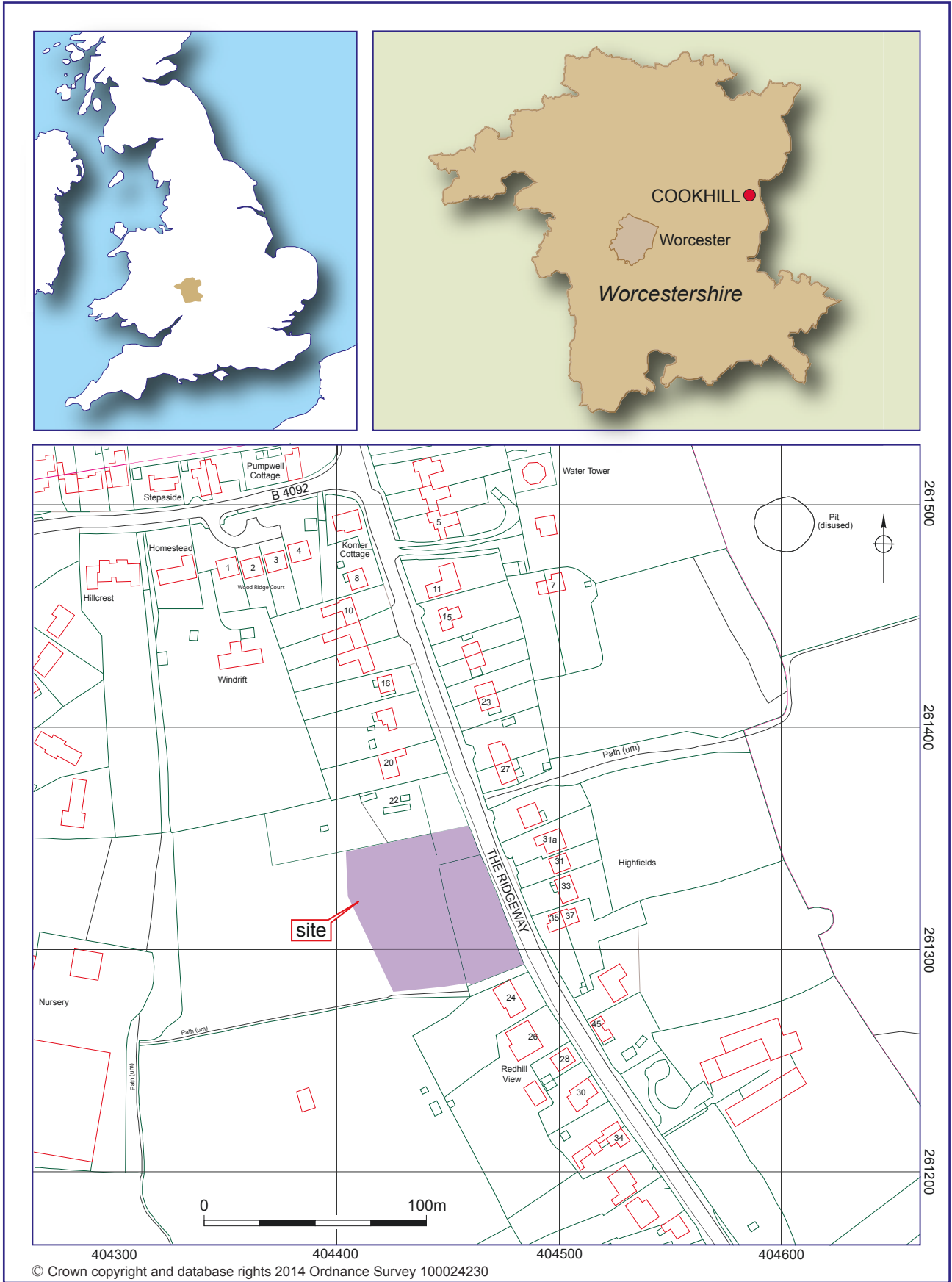
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WCC 2010 *Standards and guidelines for archaeological projects in Worcestershire*, Planning Advisory Section, Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service, Worcestershire County Council unpublished report **604**, amended July 2012

Glyde, M., 2013, "Requirements for a Programme of Archaeological Work at Land Between 22 & 24, The Ridgeway, New End, Astwood Bank, Worcestershire." Archive and Archaeology Service, Worcestershire County Council,

Figures



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Location of the site

Figure 1



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Trench location plan

Figure 2

Plates



Plate 1: Trench 1, looking south



Plate 2: Trench 2, looking east

Appendix 1 Trench descriptions

Trench 1

Length: 45m Width: 3m Orientation: North-west to south-

Context summary:

Context	Feature	Context	Description	Height/ depth	Interpretation
100	Topsoil	Layer	Friable dark brownish grey sandy silt	0.30m	
101	Subsoil	Layer	Soft mid yellowish brown clayey sand	0.10m	
102	Natural	Layer	Compact mid orangey red sandy clay		
103	Field drain	Fill			Ceramic land drain
104	Field drain	Cut			Cut for ceramic land drain 103
105	Posthole	Fill	Friable dark brownish grey sandy silt	0.09m	Fill of modern posthole 106
106	Posthole	Cut		0.09m	Modern posthole

Trench 2

Length: 25m Width: 3m Orientation: East to west

Context summary:

Context	Feature	Context	Description	Height/ depth	Interpretation
200	Topsoil	Layer	Compact light brown silty clay	0.25m	
201	Subsoil	Layer	Firm mid yellowish brown clay	0.35m	
203	Natural	Layer	Compact mid orangey red sandy clay		

Trench 3

Length: 25m Width: 3m Orientation: East to west

Context summary:

Context	Feature	Context	Description	Height/ depth	Interpretation
300	Topsoil	Layer	Compact light brown silty clay	0.25m	
301	Subsoil	Layer	Firm mid yellowish brown clay	0.25m	
302	Natural	Layer	Compact mid orangey red sandy clay		

Appendix 2 Technical information

The archive (site code: WSM55829)

The archive consists of:

- 1 Field progress reports AS2
- 1 Photographic records AS3
- 19 Digital photographs
- 3 Trench record sheets AS41
- 1 CD-Rom/DVDs
- 1 Copy of this report

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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