Archaeological watching brief of the Beauchamp Lane Flood Defences, Beauchamp Court, Callow End, Worcestershire

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Contents

Archaeological watching brief on the Beauchamp Lane Flood Defences, Beauchamp Court, Callow End, Worcestershire

Graham Arnold and Tom Vaughan

With contributions by Robert Hedge

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at Beauchamp Lane, Beauchamp Court, Callow End, Worcestershire (NGR SO 842 503; WSM 67790). It was commissioned by Worcestershire County Council, on behalf of a community flood group, and involved the construction of permanent flood defences (earth bunds), for which a planning application was submitted to Malvern Hills District Council.

The investigation of the three discrete areas revealed a small number of modern pits, generally adjacent to modern housing, and residual material within the ploughsoil. The excavation depth rarely penetrated the subsoil and no significant in situ deposits, finds or features were recorded, although archaeological features may exist, below the largely undisturbed subsoil.

The artefactual material is all residual within agricultural soils. Medieval and post-medieval material is likely to have been incorporated into the site through agricultural processes such as manuring, though the notable sherd of Worcester-type sandy glazed ware is remarkably fresh and may have either been transported to the site from a primary context elsewhere, or derive from an unidentified archaeological deposit elsewhere in the near vicinity of the site.

The presence of worked flint is consistent with a pattern of prehistoric exploitation of gravel terraces either side of the River Severn in this region, especially in the Neolithic and Bronze Age, as recently attested by material recovered from Kempsey.

Report

1 Background

1.1 Reasons for the project

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken of the Beauchamp Lane Flood Defences, Beauchamp Court, Callow End, Worcestershire (NGR SO 842 503). It was commissioned by Matt Maginnis, Flood Risk and Highways Drainage Manager, Worcestershire County Council, on behalf of a community flood group, and involved the construction of permanent flood defences (earth bunds), for which a planning application has been granted by Malvern Hill District Council (reference MH/15/01060).

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 the model brief for watching briefs in Worcestershire (WCC 2014) for which a project proposal (including detailed specification) was produced (WA 2016).

The project also conforms to *Standard and guidance: Archaeological watching brief* (CIfA 2014a), and *Standards and guidelines for archaeological projects in Worcestershire* (WCC 2010).

The event reference for this project given by the HER is WSM 67790.

2 Aims

The aims of the watching brief were to observe and record archaeological deposits, and to determine their extent, state of preservation, date and type, as far as reasonably possible within the constraints of the Client's groundworks.

3 Methods

3.1 Personnel

The project was led by Graham Arnold (BA (hons.), MSc), and Jamie Wilkins (BA (hons.)). The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Tom Vaughan (BA (hons.), MA; ACIfA), Illustrations were prepared by Carolyn Hunt (BSc (hons.), PG Cert; MCIfA), and Laura Templeton (BA, PG Cert, MCIfA). Robert Hedge (MA Cantab) contributed the finds report.

3.2 Documentary research

Prior to fieldwork commencing a search was made of the Historic Environment Record (HER). A HER Report was produced by Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service (WCC 2016).

3.3 List of sources consulted

Documentary sources

Published and grey literature sources are listed in the bibliography (Section 9).

3.4 Fieldwork strategy

A detailed specification has been prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2016).

Fieldwork was undertaken between 21 March and 29 April 2016. The site reference number and site code is WSM 67790.

Three areas were stripped of topsoil, for the flood defence bunds. The areas amounted to just over 20ha in total. The location of the trenches is indicated in Figure 2.

Deposits, including topsoil and plough soil were removed using a 360º tracked 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).

3.5 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.

3.6 Artefact methodology, by Robert Hedge

The finds work reported here conforms with the relevant sections of *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (CIfA 2014b), with archive creation informed by *Archaeological archives: a guide to the best practice in the creation, compilation, transfer and curation* (AAF 2011), and museum deposition by *Selection, retention and dispersal of archaeological collections* (SMA 1993).

3.6.1 Recovery policy

The artefact recovery policy conformed to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012; appendix 2). Only a small sample of the 20th century material identified was collected.

3.6.2 Method of analysis

All hand-retrieved finds were examined. They were identified, quantified and dated to period. A *terminus post quem* date was produced for each stratified context. The date was used for determining the broad date of phases defined for the site. All information was recorded on *pro forma* sheets.

The pottery and ceramic building material was examined under x20 magnification and referenced as appropriate by fabric type and form according to the fabric reference series maintained by Worcestershire Archaeology (Hurst and Rees 1992 and www.worcestershireceramics.org).

3.6.3 Discard policy

The following categories/types of material will be discarded after a period of 6 months following the submission of this report, unless there is a specific request to retain them (and subject to the collection policy of the relevant depository):

- where unstratified
- post-medieval material, and;
- generally where material has been specifically assessed by an appropriate specialist as having no obvious grounds for retention.

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

An HER report prepared by Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service prior to works commencing stated the following (WCC 2016, 6):

> The search area sits within the floodplain on bedrock geology of mudstone with superficial geology of alluvium that follows the course of the River Severn and is bounded on the western side by sand and gravel terraces. The settlement pattern within the region is one of low-level dispersal with some later expansion associated with mixed

farming. Larger settlement is also dispersed, although modern infill and expansion has altered this to an aggregated character. The field pattern within the region is comprised of small to medium, irregular enclosed riverside grazing pasture which contrasts with areas of larger sub-regular enclosures characterising the arable terraces. Within the search area large, amalgamated fields are interspersed with isolated farmsteads, small pockets of Parliamentary enclosure, civil and industrial centres, parkland and orchard.

Within the search area lie nine Listed Historic Buildings dating to the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries as well as twenty other unlisted historic buildings dating to the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries which include several Second World War military buildings. A Historic England project to identify the Historic Farmsteads of Worcestershire also recorded eight farmsteads within the search area dating to the 17th and 19th centuries and one out farm dating to the 19th century.

In addition to the built environment there are also monument records for the sites of several cropmarks of enclosures, settlement and field systems of unknown date, a Bronze Age ring ditch, an Iron Age enclosure, site of Roman occupation, several medieval features including a moat, ridge and furrow, water meadows and causeway. Post medieval sites include farmsteads, numerous wetland features and a cider mill.

The Portable Antiquity Scheme has recorded one find which is an early medieval copper stirrup.

There has been both intrusive and non-intrusive archaeological investigation within the search area which includes three desk based assessments, two archaeological surveys, Palaeoenvironmental sampling, three watching briefs and one evaluation. Finally, a Historic England project to identify the potential for Palaeolithic Archaeology in Worcestershire recorded two deposits within the search area with potential for archaeology dating back to 113050-12050 BC.

4.2 Current land-use

The site is currently in use as a series of arable fields, which have been heavily ploughed. The southern bunds (Areas 1 and 2) back onto existing gardens of the houses on Beauchamp Lane.

5 Structural analysis

The trenches and features recorded are shown in Figures 2 and 3 and Plates 1-12. The results of the structural analysis are presented in Appendix 1.

5.1.1 Phase 1: Natural deposits

Natural deposits of sand and gravel and red clay marl were encountered only sporadically, depending on the depth of the soil strip. It lay at 0.70-1m depth in Area 1, 0.45m in Area 2, 0.30-0.40m in Area 3. The majority of the areas were only stripped down to expose the subsoil layer, which lay at 0.35-0.70m depth in Area 1, 0.30-0.45m in Area 2 and 0.30-0.40m in Area 3. The subsoil consisted of yellowish or reddish-brown sandy clay. All finds were residual and found within the topsoil / ploughsoil (100/200/300).

5.1.2 Phase 3: Modern deposits

A series of modern dump deposits, burnt spreads and apparently machine dug pits were observed in Areas 1 and 2 (Figure 2, Plates 3 and 7). These features were located close to the gardens of the modern houses backing onto the arable fields. Given the modern waste identified in these pits and their location, it is probable that they relate to the construction of the houses. Modern drainage was also observed crossing the western edge of Area 1. A drainage run with a manhole cover (Plate 10) and a modern machine dug trail pit (Plate 11) were noted cut into the natural within Area 3. Modern plough soil covered the whole site in Areas 1, 2 and 3, and was found to contain residual prehistoric and medieval artefacts.

5.2 Artefactual analysis, by Robert Hedge

The artefactual assemblage recovered is summarised in Tables 1 and 2. The pottery assemblage retrieved from the excavated area consisted of 24 sherds of pottery weighing 552g. In addition, fragments of tile, clay pipe, glass vessels and worked flint were recovered. The assemblage came from six stratified contexts and could be dated from the prehistoric period onwards (see Table 1). Using pottery as an index of artefact condition, this was generally fair with the majority of sherds displaying moderate levels of abrasion. At 23g, the average sherd size was above average, reflecting the robust nature of the post-medieval and modern wares present.

period	material class	material subtype	object specific type	count	weight(g)
prehistoric	stone	flint	core	1	16.7
prehistoric	stone	flint	notch	1	5.3
prehistoric	stone	flint	retouched flake	1	3.9
medieval	ceramic		pot	4	60
medieval	ceramic		roof tile	1	36
post-medieval	ceramic		clay pipe	1	2
post-medieval	ceramic		pot	8	179
modern	ceramic		pot	12	313
modern	ceramic		roof tile	1	45
modern	glass		vessel	6	1503
undated	bone	animal bone	mammal bone	2	28
			Totals:	38	2191.9

Table 1: Quantification of the assemblage

5.2.1 Pottery

All sherds have been grouped and quantified according to fabric type (Table 2). A total of three diagnostic form sherds were present and could be dated accordingly, the remaining sherds were datable by fabric type to their general period or production span.

Broad period	fabric code	Fabric common name	count	weight(g)
Medieval	55	Worcester-type sandy unglazed ware	1	3
Medieval	56	Malvernian unglazed ware	2	22
Medieval	64.1	Worcester-type sandy glazed ware	1	35
Post-medieval	78	Post-medieval red ware	3	81
Post-medieval	78.1	Red sandy ware	2	27
Post-medieval	91	Post-medieval buff wares	3	71
Modern	81.4	Miscellaneous late stoneware	4	128
Modern	85	Modern china	5	65
Modern	101	Miscellaneous modern wares	3	120
		Totals	24	552

Table 2: Quantification of the pottery by period and fabric-type

Medieval

A small assemblage of local medieval pottery from Area 2 attests to medieval activity in the vicinity of the site. Three sherds of unglazed cooking pots of 11th to 14th (Worcester, fabric 55) and 12th to

14th century (Malvernian, fabric 56) date were recovered. A very well-preserved sherd from a Worcester-type sandy glazed ware pinch-spouted jug (fabric 64.1, type 4.1), unusually exhibiting glaze on the underside and with a well-worn foot ring indicative of heavy use, is of 13th to 14th century date.

Post-medieval

Typical domestic post-medieval fabrics were well-represented within Area 2, comprising 17th and 18th century slip-decorated buff wares (fabric 91) and redwares (fabrics 78 and 78.1). A single sherd of redware (fabric 78) was recovered from Area 1.

Modern

Sherds of late stoneware (fabric 81.4), transfer-printed china (fabric 85) and other typical domestic wares of the 19th and early 20th century were noted from Area 2. Modern pit fill (206) contained a complete late 19th century 'Carboline' toothpaste jar lid from a local Worcester chemist, George & Welch's.

5.2.2 Other artefacts

Prehistoric worked flint

Three pieces of worked flint were recovered, residual within topsoil and subsoil in Area 2: a notch, flake core and retouched flake. All were of a light to mid mottled grey medium-grained flint, and are likely to be from the same source; the presence of a chalky cortex on one piece indicating an origin in chalk.

The retouched flake exhibits ventral lipping characteristic of soft-hammer percussion (Butler 2005, 39). Together with the small size and extensive working of the multi-platform flake core, this may suggest a date of Early Neolithic or earlier, though notches are frequently found in later assemblages and a later date for the group cannot be ruled out.

Medieval

An abraded fragment of 13th to 15th century roof tile (fabric 2b) was residual within topsoil in Area 2.

Post-medieval

A single undiagnostic piece of clay tobacco pipe was found in the subsoil of Area 2.

Modern

A range of modern glass vessels were present within modern pit fills within Area 2.

5.2.3 Site dating

context	material class	material subtype	object specific type	count	weight(g)	start date	end date	TPQ date range
100	ceramic		pot	1	16	1600	1800	1600-1800
200	ceramic		roof tile	1	36	1200	1500	1905-1960
	ceramic		pot	1	3	1075	1400	
	glass		vessel	4	1312	1905	1960	
	stone	flint	retouched flake	1	3.9	-10,000	-700	
	stone	flint	notch	1	5.3	-10,000	-700	
201	ceramic		pot	1	4	1200	1400	1700-1910
	ceramic		pot	1	18	1200	1400	
	ceramic		pot	1	35	1200	1400	

	ceramic		pot	3	81	1700	1800	
	ceramic		pot	1	11	1600	1800	
	ceramic		clay pipe	1	2	1600	1910	
	stone	flint	core	1	16.7	-10,000	-700	
204	bone	animal bone	mammal bone	2	28			1905-2000
	ceramic		pot	4	128	1800	1950	
	ceramic		pot	3	44	1800	1950	
	ceramic		pot	1	18	1630	1800	
	glass		vessel	1	57	1905	2000	
206	glass		vessel	1	134	1800	1950	1850-2000
	ceramic		pot	1	75	1850	1900	
	ceramic		pot	2	21	1800	1950	
	ceramic		pot	2	45	1800	2000	
	ceramic		roof tile	1	45	1900	2000	
208	ceramic		pot	2	53	1630	1800	1630-1800

Table 3 Summary of context dating based on artefacts grouped in phase order

6 Synthesis, by Graham Arnold, Robert Hedge and Tom Vaughan

The investigations revealed a small number of modern pits, generally adjacent to modern housing, and residual material within the ploughsoil. The excavation depth rarely penetrated the subsoil and no significant in situ deposits, finds or features were recorded, although archaeological features may exist, below the largely undisturbed subsoil.

The artefactual material is all residual within agricultural soils. Medieval and post-medieval material is likely to have been incorporated into the site through agricultural processes such as manuring, though the notable sherd of Worcester-type sandy glazed ware is remarkably fresh and may have either been transported to the site from a primary context elsewhere, or derive from an unidentified archaeological deposit elsewhere in the near vicinity of the site.

The presence of worked flint is consistent with a pattern of prehistoric exploitation of gravel terraces either side of the River Severn in this region, especially in the Neolithic and Bronze Age, as recently attested by material recovered from Kempsey (e.g. Lovett 2015, 13).

7 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 at Beauchamp Lane, Beauchamp Court, Callow End, Worcestershire (NGR SO 842 503; WSM 67790), for Worcestershire County Council, on behalf of a community flood group, during the excavations for the construction of flood defences (earth bunds).

The investigation of the three discrete areas revealed a small number of modern pits, generally adjacent to modern housing, and residual material within the ploughsoil. The excavation depth rarely penetrated the subsoil and no significant in situ deposits, finds or features were recorded, although archaeological features may exist, below the largely undisturbed subsoil.

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8 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, Matt Maginnis (Flood Risk and Highways Drainage Manager, Worcestershire County Council), Dr Michael Briggs (the community flood group), and Adrian Scruby (Historic Environment Planning Advisor, Worcestershire County Council).

9 Bibliography

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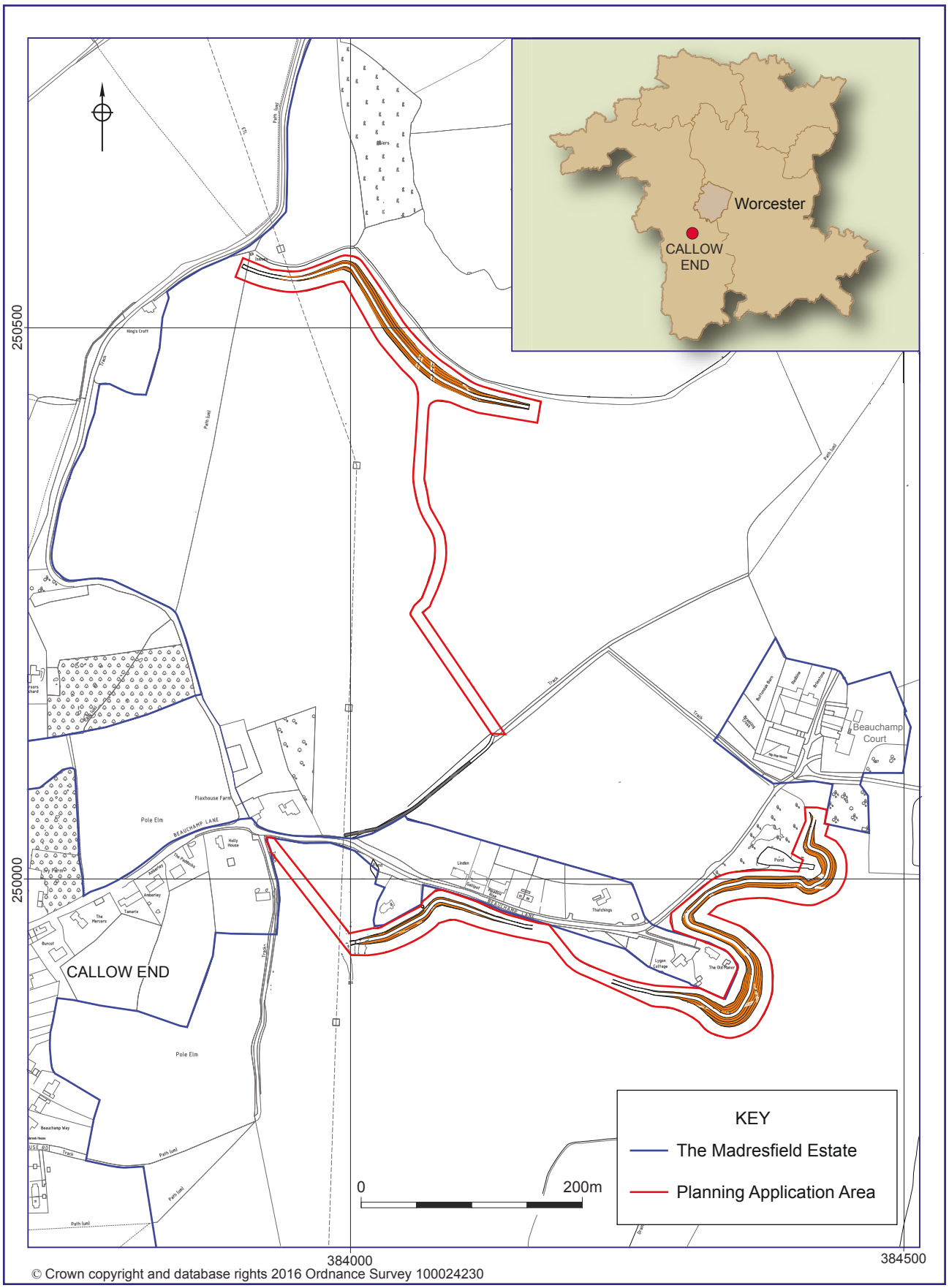
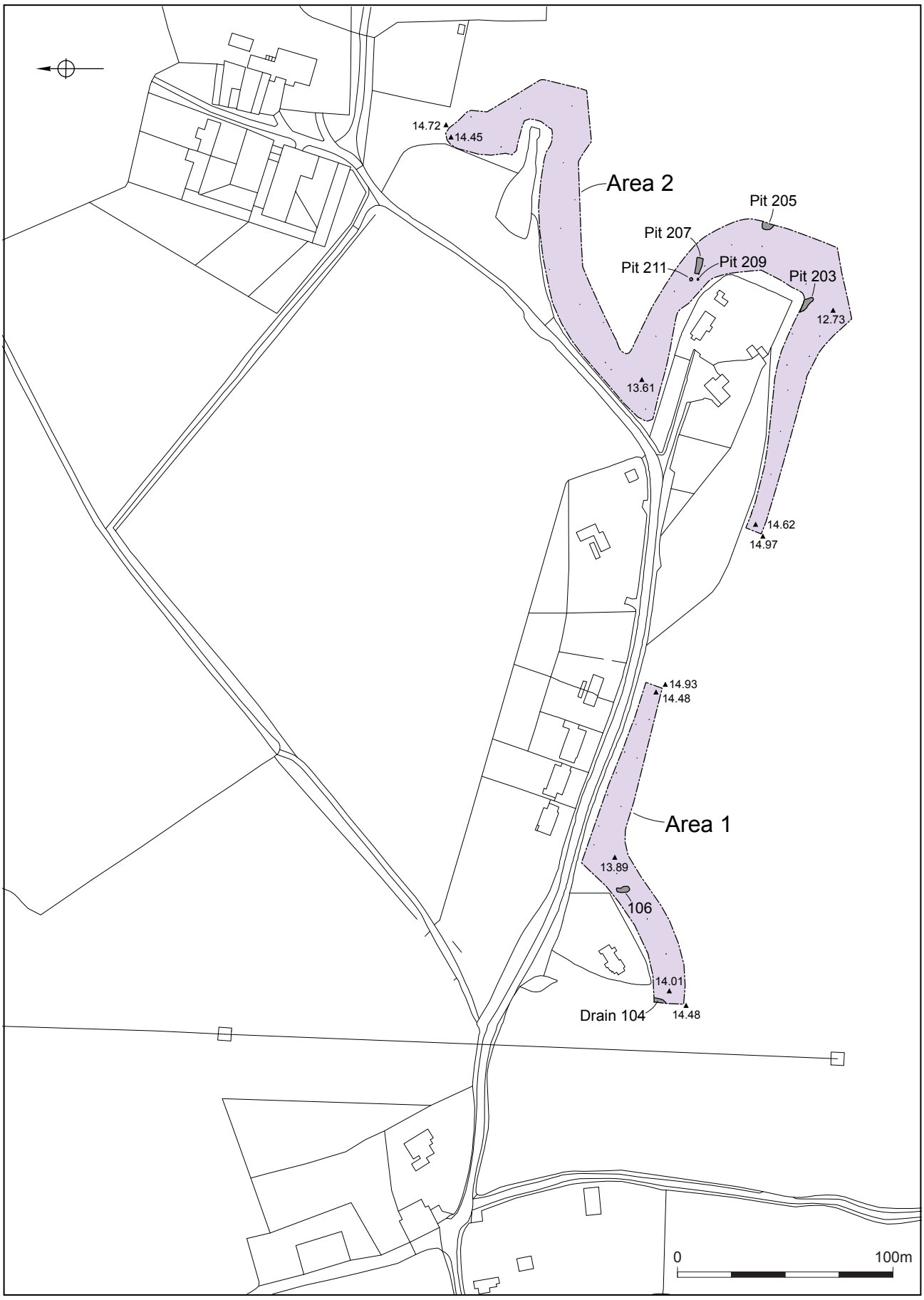
Figures



Location of the site (based upon Robert West Drg No 107) *Figure 1*



Location of bund areas and modern pits

Figure 2

Location of bund area 3 (based upon Robert West Drg No 107)

Figure 3

Plates

Plate 1: Area 1 looking east prior to excavation (no scales)

Plate 2: Area 1; western extent stripped to subsoil; view east (no scales)

Plate 3: Area 1; a modern pit or spread [104] in containing brick and metal wire; view north-west (2x 1m scales)

Plate 4: Area 1; deeper section on the northern edge stripped to natural (2x 1m scales)

Plate 5: Area 1; eastern extent after soil strip; view west (2x 1m scales)

Plate 6: Area 2; western extent after soil strip; view east (2x 1m scales)

Plate 7: Area 2; modern pit [209] with clinker, brick and modern china (0.50m scale)

Plate 8: Area 2; eastern extent; view west (2x 1m scales)

Plate 9: Area 3; eastern extent; view west (2x 1m scales)

Plate 10: Area 3 with modern manhole in centre of strip; view east (2x 1m scales)

Plate 11: Area 3 north-west corner; view south-east, showing modern trial hole (304) to north (2x 1m scales)

Plate 12: Area 3 western extent, view east (2x 1m scales)

Appendix 1 Trench descriptions

Main deposit descriptions

Trench 1

Site area: South west bund

Maximum dimensions: Length: 200m Width: 15.00m Depth: 0.35 – 1.00m

Orientation: East –West (see figure 2)

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
100	Topsoil	Friable mid greyish brown clayey silt with frequent rooting and occasional charcoal flecking and residual pottery. Moderate inclusions of small sub-rounded pebbles.	0.00 – 0.35m
101	Subsoil	Firm light yellowish brown sandy clay, becoming more orangey to the east and with occasional large rounded river cobbles.	0.35 – 0.70m
102	Natural	Soft red sands and gravels only exposed on the northeast section, with frequent patches of rounded pebbles. Occasional rooting from the trees and hedgerow to the northern edge of the field	0.70 – 1.00m
103	Modern fill of drain	Mixed redeposited backfill of drain containing topsoil, red clay and sand, frequent charcoal, coal, mortar and brick rubble. Unexcavated.	0.35m
104	Cut	Modern drain / soak away running northeast-southwest. 1.00m maximum width. Unexcavated.	
105	Layer	Modern spread / dump deposit of modern brick and refuse, including wire. Fills 106.	0.35 – 0.50m
106	Cut for dump deposit	Amorphous spread. Excavated on the north side and shown to be 0.20m in depth.	0.35-0.50m

Trench 2

Site area: South east bund

Maximum dimensions: Length: 550m Width: 15.00m Depth: 0.45m

Orientation: East – West (See figure 2)

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
200	Topsoil	Friable mid greyish brown clayey silt with frequent rooting and occasional charcoal flecking and residual pottery and flint. Moderate inclusions of small sub-rounded pebbles.	0.00 – 0.45m
201	Subsoil	Firm light yellowish brown sandy clay, becoming more orangey to the east and with occasional large rounded river cobbles.	0.30 – 0.45m
202	Natural	Soft red sands and gravels and clay marl, with frequent patches of rounded pebbles.	0.45m
203	Pit Cut	Modern machine cut pit	Unexc
204	Pit fill	Fill of pit containing modern waste	Unexc
205	Pit cut	Modern machine cut pit	Unexc
206	Pit fill	Fill of pit containing modern waste	Unexc
207	Pit cut	Machine dug rectangular pit cutting subsoil> Filled with building rubble modern rubbish and post med pottery.	Unexc
208	Pit fill	Grey clayey rubble filled pit> Containing modern waste and post medieval pottery	Unexc
209	Pit cut	Small oval waste pit filled with clinker, charcoal and modern china.	Unexc
210	Pit fill	Clinker fill of pit with modern china cbm, and glass.	Unexc
211	Pit cut	Circular pit 1.50m in diameter filled with modern refuse.	Unexc
212	Pit fill	Circular pit containing modern waste	Unexc

Trench 3

Site area: Northwest bund

Maximum dimensions: Length: 300m Width 14.00 - 16.50m Depth: 0.30 - 0.40m

Orientation: East – West (see figure 2)

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
300	Topsoil	Loose grey brown silty sand with occasional rooting and small pebbles. Occasional modern brick fragments and undiagnostic cbm sherds. Not retained.	0.00 – 0.30m
301	Subsoil	Dark reddish brown silty sand.	0.30 – 0.40m
302	Natural	Compact orangeish red sand clay gravel with frequent large rounded cobbles.	0.30 - 40m
303	Fill	Redeposited natural in modern machine dug trial hole. Unexcavated	0.30m
304	Cut	Rectangular cut with straight edges measuring 0.70m x 2.50m	0.30m

Appendix 2 Technical information

The archive (site code: WSM 67790)

The archive consists of:

9	Context sheets AS1
4	Field progress reports AS2
2	Photographic records AS3
64	Digital photographs
3	Trench record sheets AS41
1	Box of finds
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
Tel Hartlebury (01299) 250416

Summary of data for Worcestershire HER

period	material class	material subtype	object specific type	count	weight(g)
prehistoric	stone	flint	core	1	16.7
prehistoric	stone	flint	notch	1	5.3
prehistoric	stone	flint	retouched flake	1	3.9
medieval	ceramic		pot	4	60
medieval	ceramic		roof tile	1	36
post-medieval	ceramic		clay pipe	1	2
post-medieval	ceramic		pot	8	179
modern	ceramic		pot	12	313
modern	ceramic		roof tile	1	45
modern	glass		vessel	6	1503
undated	bone	animal bone	mammal bone	2	28
			Totals:	38	2191.9

Table 1: Quantification of the assemblage

Broad period	fabric code	Fabric common name	count	weight(g)
Medieval	55	Worcester-type sandy unglazed ware	1	3
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Modern	85	Modern china	5	65
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Table 2: Quantification of the pottery by period and fabric-type

context	material class	material subtype	object specific type	count	weight(g)	start date	end date	TPQ date range
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200	ceramic		roof tile	1	36	1200	1500	1905-1960
	ceramic		pot	1	3	1075	1400	
	glass		vessel	4	1312	1905	1960	
	stone	flint	retouched flake	1	3.9	-10,000	-700	
	stone	flint	notch	1	5.3	-10,000	-700	
201	ceramic		pot	1	4	1200	1400	1700-1910
	ceramic		pot	1	18	1200	1400	
	ceramic		pot	1	35	1200	1400	
	ceramic		pot	3	81	1700	1800	
	ceramic		pot	1	11	1600	1800	
	ceramic		clay pipe	1	2	1600	1910	
	stone	flint	core	1	16.7	-10,000	-700	
204	bone	animal bone	mammal bone	2	28			1905-2000
	ceramic		pot	4	128	1800	1950	
	ceramic		pot	3	44	1800	1950	
	ceramic		pot	1	18	1630	1800	
	glass		vessel	1	57	1905	2000	
206	glass		vessel	1	134	1800	1950	1850-2000
	ceramic		pot	1	75	1850	1900	
	ceramic		pot	2	21	1800	1950	
	ceramic		pot	2	45	1800	2000	
	ceramic		roof tile	1	45	1900	2000	
208	ceramic		pot	2	53	1630	1800	1630-1800

Table 3 Summary of context dating based on artefacts grouped in phase order