

# Archaeological investigations at The Market Hall Site, St John Street, Bromsgrove Summary report



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

Status: draft  
Date: 31 August 2016  
Author: Richard Bradley  
rbradley1@worcestershire.gov.uk  
Contributors: Laura Griffin and Elizabeth Pearson  
Illustrator: Carolyn Hunt  
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## Summary Report

### 1 Background

#### 1.1 Reasons for the project

Two stages of archaeological investigation were undertaken on the Market Hall Site, St Johns Street, Bromsgrove (NGR SO95707055), between the 23-24 May (evaluation) and 20-22 June 2016 (excavation). This work was commissioned by Hinton Properties (the Client) in response to a brief (the Brief) prepared by Planning Advisory Section of Worcestershire County (the Curator).

The project resulted from the submission of a planning application to Bromsgrove District Council (reference number 15/0994) for a new retail unit situated in the western part of the development, on an area of car parking near the junction of Hannover Street and St John Street (Phase 1 of a multi-phase development). This was considered by the Planning Archaeologist to have the potential to affect an archaeological site, as it is located within the historic core of Bromsgrove, between St John's Church and the Spadesbourne Brook.

Following an initial site evaluation comprising three small trenches (Bradley 2016), further archaeological investigation was deemed necessary by the Planning Archaeologist and a programme of works was arranged. However, in the event, there was no archaeological condition placed on the permission granted and only a small-scale extension to the area of evaluation was undertaken, entirely at the discretion of the Client. The two stages of investigation are, therefore, reported on together as a combined project in this summary document.

The project conforms to the initial brief prepared by the Planning Advisory Section of Worcestershire County (WCC 2016) and for which a two separate project proposals (including detailed specifications) were produced (WA 2016a; 2016b).

The project also conforms to the both the *Standard and guidance: Archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2014a) and *Standard and guidance: Archaeological excavation* (ClfA 2014b), as well as *Standards and guidelines for archaeological projects in Worcestershire* (WCC 2010).

The event reference for this project, provided by Worcestershire HER, is WSM 67952.

#### 1.2 Aims

The evaluation was undertaken, in general terms, to determine the extent, state of preservation, date, type and vulnerability of any archaeological deposits. More specifically, the purpose was to identify the depth at which deposits occur in order to assess the affect the proposed development may have on any surviving archaeology, and, thereby, inform decisions on the need for and extent of any further archaeological work.

Following the identification of numerous structural remains alongside earlier phases of activity (possibly medieval), the second part of the project aimed to provide further information for dating the origins of the main phase(s) of building and to further determine the character and dating of the underlying deposits. These aims were designed to correspond with those identified in regional research frameworks, specifically in terms of exploring broad themes in medieval small towns (see Hunt 2011 179-185).

### 2 Methods

#### 2.1 Personnel

The project was led by Richard Bradley (BA (hons.), MA; ACIfA), assisted by Nina O'Hare (BA (hons.)) and Aidan Woodger (BA (hons.); MSc). The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Derek Hurst (BA (hons.); PG Dip).

Laura Griffin (BA (hons.); PG Cert; ACIfA) contributed the finds report, Elizabeth Pearson (MSc; ACIfA; MAEA) commented on the animal bone, and illustrations were prepared by Carolyn Hunt (BSc (hons.); PG Cert; MCIfA).

## **2.2 Fieldwork strategy**

Detailed specifications for the fieldwork programme were been prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2016a; 2016b).

During the initial evaluation stage, two 10m (1.6m wide) trenches were excavated (Trench 1 and 2), positioned so as to avoid numerous services within the site area but remaining within the footprint of the proposed building. These covered an area of 32m<sup>2</sup> (representing c 5% of the development site area of c 635m<sup>2</sup>). A third trench was opened as an additional contingency investigation to determine the extent and survival of structures across the site area, following consultation with the Historic Environment Planning Officer. This resulted from an observed contrast between the archaeology found in the first two trenches. Trench 3 was 5m long and rapidly cleaned and recorded so as to record features in plan, but not investigated in detail.

Trench 1 was extended to double width during the second stage of work (excavation). At this point, more recent material was immediately removed to expose structural remains; these were then subject to rapid recording by measured/annotated sketch and photos. Following this, the structures were dismantled using the machine so that the area could be cleared down to the earlier archaeological horizon, and additional features defined and recorded (Plate 3).

At all stages, deposits considered not to be significant were removed using a 180° wheeled excavator, employing a toothless bucket and under constant 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.

## **2.3 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.

## **2.4 Artefact methodology, by Laura Griffin**

### **2.4.1 Artefact recovery policy**

The artefact recovery policy conformed to standard Service practice (WA 2012, appendix 2).

### **2.4.2 Method of analysis**

All hand-retrieved finds were examined. Pottery sherds were identified, quantified and dated to period. A *terminus post quem* date was produced for each stratified context (see Table 2). The date was used for determining the broad date of phases defined for the site. All information was recorded on a pro forma Microsoft Access 2007 database.

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](http://www.worcestershireceramics.org)).

## **2.5 Environmental archaeology methodology**

### **2.5.1 Sampling policy**

Samples were undertaken according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012). In the event, although deposits were identified during the excavation stage of work as suitable for environmental analysis, it has not proved possible to assess/analyse these due to project constraints.

Animal bone was hand-collected and has been included in the artefactual data below.

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## 2.6 Statement of confidence in the methods and results

In general, the project and the results of the archaeological investigation are considered to have met the aims of the work defined at the outset. However, it should be borne in mind that due to the circumstances of the second stage of work, intervention was relatively limited in scope and extremely rapid, with only a small portion of the new building footprint explored. The results, therefore, constitute a very preliminary, but still important, indication of the earlier history of this part of Bromsgrove.

## 3 The site

### 3.1 Topography, geology and land-use

The excavation took place within a fenced compound at the south-west end of the Hanover Street/St John Street public car park, located to the south-west of the main high street of the town (Plate 1). The site was on a slightly raised plateau of land (at c 84.60m AOD) relative to some of the surrounding roads, and this has been created as a result of modern landscaping.

Geologically, the area has underlying deposits of sandstone from the Bromsgrove Formation dated to the Triassic period, which are overlain by sands and gravels of the Holt Heath Member, and, in the immediate environs of the brook, by Flandrian alluvial deposits (BGS 2016). The soils in Bromsgrove are not mapped (ie it is an urban area), but Bromsgrove lies in a known area of brown earths of the Crediton Association to the north and Bromsgrove Association to the south (Ragg *et al* 1984; Rogers *et al* 2013).

### 3.2 Archaeological context

Bromsgrove has mainly developed as a market town around a medieval and post-medieval core, focused upon the former Roman road (WSM 30529; evidenced by the line of the high street in the town) which once linked Droitwich and Wall (Staffs). The market, first recorded in 1200, was located at the south-west end of the high street and the town was a prosperous centre for the woollen trade in the medieval period (Dyer 2000, 12-19; Bienstman 2006, 173). From the 16<sup>th</sup> century until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Bromsgrove became a major centre for nail making in the county of Worcestershire, with up to 3000 nailers working here at the peak of activity (Kings and Cooper 1989; Bienstman 2006).

Overall, there has been limited archaeological investigation in Bromsgrove, although in recent years more work in relation to the mapped landscape and upstanding buildings has been undertaken. This has included an in-depth survey of the historic environment of Bromsgrove Town Centre as part of a Townscape Heritage Initiative scheme, which considered the historic buildings within the town and the character and land use of different areas (Rogers *et al* 2013; WSM 47446). The survey built upon a previous project on Bromsgrove as part of the Central Marches Historic Towns Survey, which restricted focus upon the pre-1800 development of the town (Buteux 1996; WSM 19704). As an additional element of the Townscape Heritage Initiative scheme a community archaeological excavation was undertaken on the north-eastern part of the car park (Bradley 2013; WSM 49636). This revealed archaeology of late 17<sup>th</sup> century date onwards and comprised the foundation remains and back-yards of former tenements that had previously existed along the frontage of St John Street until their demolition and clearance in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.

The current site is within what is probably the earliest part of historic settlement in Bromsgrove, just outside the nearby church precinct, which is thought to be the location of a Saxon Minster (WSM 19680) and may be a possible area for the location of the 'primary town' settlement (Dyer 2000, 10-11). Such a position suggests that the site has a high archaeological potential. Based on antiquarian evidence, it is also thought that the area east of the existing church may have been the site of a medieval nunnery, after a building was revealed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century during refurbishment of the Crown Inn (WSM 19678; Cook 1994, 1-2; Buteux 1996, 5).

There has been no archaeological evidence of prehistoric or Roman activity in the immediate surrounds of the site, other than the recorded presence of the Roman road. Similarly, evidence for

Anglo-Saxon activity in the locale is restricted to a reference of 'made up ground' being observed during construction of the National School, north of the site (Rogers *et al* 2013).

Potential medieval features were revealed during excavation of a manhole in 1994 during the construction of the Market Hall, just to the north (WSM 31097). Part of a mortared sandstone wall was observed and fragments of 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> century cooking pot were associated. This work preceded a larger archaeological watching brief undertaken during construction on the site, which monitored the excavation of pile caps and service trenches (WSM 20645; Cook 1994). Structural remains were encountered that indicated the survival of foundations of post-medieval tenements, some of which appeared to be formed of re-used sandstone blocks from an earlier building. Deposits from the 16<sup>th</sup> century were recorded and a layer of burnt material dating to the late 17<sup>th</sup> or early 18<sup>th</sup> century was found, suggesting destruction as a result of fire in this area in the 1700s.

Further post-medieval deposits of 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> century date have been found to the east of the site, directly across the Spadesbourne Brook, during evaluation trenching undertaken by Birmingham Archaeology in 2002 (WSM 31883; Rudge 2002). These appeared to demonstrate the presence of garden or cultivation soils associated with the clearance of earlier tenement plots.

## 4 Results

### 4.1 Structural analysis

The trenches and features recorded are shown in Figures 1-4. The results of the structural analysis are presented in Appendix 1.

#### 4.1.1 Trench 1

This trench was excavated in two stages, as the original evaluation trench was extended to provide a larger excavation area.

##### *Medieval to late medieval (12<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> century)*

Underlying later structural remains and a post-medieval garden soil, a north-west to south-east ditch [140] (2.34m wide with a maximum depth of 0.57m; Plate 4) crossed the trench. The main fill (139) included finds dated from the late-15<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. The uppermost soils in the ditch, possibly pushed in from the garden soil above and demonstrating that the feature was no longer in use, were mid-17<sup>th</sup> to early 18<sup>th</sup> century in date (138).

To the south of the ditch were two sub-circular postholes, [122] and [137] (respectively 0.70m and 0.80m diameter). Posthole [122] included a clay packing (121) with 12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> century pottery, but finds of 15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> century date were recovered from the uppermost part of the backfill, again possibly part of the garden soil above. Posthole [137] did not contain finds or any packing, and so it is not clear if these were both in contemporary use.

To the north of the ditch were two much smaller postholes, both oval in shape, [162] and [164]. Neither was dated or clearly identifiable as part of a structure but they were in close proximity to a steep-sided, 0.25m in depth, rectangular pit [148] (Plate 5). This included 12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> century pottery in the dark silty fill (147). The corners of this feature dipped down and it is possible that these marked the location of small posts associated with some form of lining.

Further north were two small circular stakeholes [146] and [154], 0.10m and 0.12m in diameter, and a short rectangular slot [156]. Like the postholes just to the south of the rectangular pit, these may relate to the presence of a small ephemeral structure or perhaps a fence line, but no clear structural arrangement was visible (Plate 6). They were adjacent to a north-west to south-east 0.27m wide, linear gully [133] crossing the trench. A small and shallow 11<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> century pit [118] possibly truncated the edge of the gully but the relationship was not entirely clear (Plate 6).

At the northern edge of excavation three similarly-sized oval postholes, in an 'L'-shape arrangement, perhaps formed two sides of a timber structure – [142], [144] and [160]. A small



stakehole sat close to one of the posts, possibly at the corner [158]. These were not dated but are thought to be of similar origin to the other post and stakeholes in this area.

All of these earlier features cut directly into the natural substrate (123; 124), a compact mid-brownish orange sandy marl.

#### *Late medieval to post-medieval (16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century)*

The main sandstone foundations (127) were 0.09-0.12m deep grey-brown and reddish-brown slabs, laid on a packing deposit (130) within construction cut [131]. The finds in the packing deposit suggest a construction date of the late-17<sup>th</sup> to mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. The foundations also turned 90° and extended to the south-west (115; 108), where they were slightly larger (up to 0.20m deep). This section was at least 4.60m in length and two courses high. The stones clearly comprised re-used substantial sandstone blocks and are likely to have been taken from the demolition of a nearby high-status property (or properties). At the south-west end of the trench, wall foundation (109), also two courses high, was built with fine, dressed sandstone blocks, which in many cases had clear tool marks visible. This stonework probably once supported a timber and brick superstructure.

Just to the north-east of the main building walls, with dumped soil of late-18<sup>th</sup> to early 19<sup>th</sup> century date filling a void in between (129), there was an earlier wall on a slightly different alignment. This survived as a small part of what was probably once a much larger, substantial and well-built structure. This wall was divided into two elements: (110) was three courses high and built with well-tooled squared sandstone blocks, while (111) continued the alignment but only as a single course of more roughly finished blocks (Plate 2). Only broad dating was available, in that it predates the late-17<sup>th</sup> century construction phase and post-dates the medieval activity below.

Excluding the main part of the earlier wall (110), all of the other structural remains of this phase had clearly been built upon a wide spread of accumulated mid-brown silty sand garden soil (deposit 112 to NE; 113 to SW) which included a range of late 17<sup>th</sup> to early 19<sup>th</sup> century finds. It is probable that these artefacts both pre-date the later buildings and are associated with their use, correlating well with the finds from construction cut [131] that suggests the properties were present from the late 17<sup>th</sup> century and 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards. Removal of this soil exposed an earlier phase of archaeological features (see above) that, although not always securely dated, probably represent 12<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> century activity on the site (Plate 3).

The latest structural element comprised a brick wall 3.90m long, up to three surviving courses with no regular bond form, aligned north-west to south-east (106; 107; 126; Plate 2). Behind the wall, loose rubble with a date range of 17<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century had been used to infill a void (103). The north-west end of the wall had been built on a further 0.39m thick sequence of horizontal lensed deposits of mixed rubble and charcoal (125); the south-east part was built on a foundation course of dressed sandstone (127) described above. Below the rubble was an irregular, uneven and unbonded layer of sandstone and limestone blocks with brick pieces (114), possibly representing a consolidation/construction horizon.

#### *Modern (20<sup>th</sup> century)*

Immediately beneath the tarmac and hardcore car park surface (100), as well as a former car park surface (101), there was a dark blackish brown silty rubble deposit, related to demolition of structures in this area during the 20<sup>th</sup> century (context 102 at NE end; 104 in centre; 105 to SW). This sealed all the structural remains and included pottery and clay pipe ranging from 17<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century in date.

### **4.1.2 Trench 2**

Trench 2 was also 10m long, located in the southern part of the site area. It did not expose any structural remains comparable with Trench 1 and appeared to have been located in a garden or yard space devoid of buildings. However, beneath the modern tarmac and hardcore car park surface (200), as well as a former car park surface (201), there was 0.40m of made ground, a silty

rubble deposit (202) representing the 20<sup>th</sup> century demolition of nearby structures. As with Trench 1, a brown silty sand garden soil was also visible beneath this which extended the length of the trench (203; 0.30m deep). The soil overlay a naturally accumulated gravel deposit, comprising abundant small and medium sub-round pebbles and cobbles in a grey-brown silty sand matrix (204), possibly alluvium relating to the nearby Spadesbourne Brook. At the base of the trench the underlying natural substrate was identified, a yellow-orange sandy marl similar to that seen in Trench 1. No earlier cut features were identified here.

#### 4.1.3 Trench 3

Trench 3 was only 5m in length and was rapidly cleaned but not investigated in detail. Following removal of the car park surfaces, a roughly constructed brick yard surface (303) was visible (Plate 9). The surface butted a single course T-shaped sandstone wall foundation built with re-used dressed blocks that exhibited some tool marks (304). This overlay a deposit of clay and rubble that acted as a bedding layer for the wall (305). No dating evidence was recovered but these remains are likely to be of similar origin to the later structural elements identified in Trench 1.

#### 4.2 Artefact analysis, by Laura Griffin

The site assemblage totalled 205 finds (weighing 5425g) from 17 contexts (Tables 1-2). The level of preservation was good, with pottery sherds displaying low levels of surface abrasion and having a notably high average weight of 26.4g. The majority of the finds assemblage recovered comprised domestic refuse dating to the post-medieval and modern periods, with 34 contexts having a *terminus post quem* of 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century on the basis of the finds retrieved. However, most significantly, the assemblage also included 15 sherds of medieval pottery which indicated activity on the site from the 12<sup>th</sup> century onwards.

period	material class	object specific type	count	weight (g)
medieval	ceramic	pot	15	156
?medieval	ceramic	fired clay	8	119
late medieval/early post-medieval	ceramic	pot	3	33
late medieval/early post-medieval	ceramic	roof tile(flat)	4	445
post-medieval	ceramic	brick	1	33
post-medieval	ceramic	pipe	25	91
post-medieval	ceramic	pot	63	2536
post-medieval	ceramic	roof tile(flat)	13	885
post-medieval	glass	vessel	2	64
post medieval/modern	metal	nail	1	18
modern	carbon	battery core	1	2
modern	ceramic	pot	55	759
modern	glass	vessel	6	95
undated	coal	-	3	70
undated	ceramic	?brick	2	51
undated	copper alloy	?button	1	4
undated	shell	oyster	1	28

Table 1: Quantification of the assemblage

#### 4.2.1 Summary artefactual evidence by period

All material has been dated and quantified. For the finds from individual features, and specific types of pottery, see Tables 2-3.

##### *Medieval*

Four contexts (116, 121, 132 and 147) could be dated to the medieval period on the basis of the finds. This assemblage was of a standard domestic nature, consisting primarily of locally produced Worcester sandy (fabric 55) and Malvernian unglazed ware (fabric 56) cooking pot sherds (see Table 2). The majority of these sherds were undiagnostic and only datable to the general period. However, a sherd from a thickened everted rim cooking pot of Worcester production (Deansway type 55.3) was identified from the fill of a pit (context 147). Typologically, this is the latest cooking pot form of Worcester production, with examples from Deansway, Worcester indicating production from the start of the 12<sup>th</sup> century until the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century, with a definite peak in supply during the 13<sup>th</sup> century (Bryant 2004, 290).

A small sherd from a 12<sup>th</sup>-early 13<sup>th</sup> century Worcester sandy glazed ware tripod pitcher with roller-stamped decoration (Deansway type 64.1.3) was residual in the later garden soil layer (context 113). Three sherds of non-local production were identified, two of an unglazed buff ware thought to be of Staffordshire production (fabric 64.4) and one of an unidentified reduced sandy fabric, possibly of Warwickshire production (fabric 99). All were residual within the fill of ditch dated to the late medieval period (context 139). The unglazed sandy buff ware has previously been identified in Worcester and dated to the 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> century (Bryant 2004, 316).

Other material of medieval date comprised eight fragments of baked or lightly fired clay with faint impressions thought to be daub. This came from the fill of a gully (context 132) adjacent to a series of postholes and may give a clue to the type of construction being used.

##### *Late medieval/early post-medieval*

Oxidised glazed Malvernian ware (fabric 69) and Cistercian ware (fabric 72) was present. Flat roof tile was all compatible with being Worcester production: in the grog/pellet type fabric (fabric 2c), a distinctive fabric are known to have been produced from the late 15<sup>th</sup> century onwards and continuing until at least the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century (*viz* kiln on the St Martin's Quarter site; Griffin 2014). Apart from the small sherd of oxidised glazed Malvernian ware from the ditch (context 139), all material of this date was residual.

##### *Modern*

All remaining finds were of late 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century date and consisted primarily of domestic pottery and bottle glass. The pottery included a variety of sherds of modern glazed wares, such as creamware (fabric 84), porcelain (fabric 83), transfer-decorated modern china (fabric 85) and mocha ware (fabric 101) decorated with engine turned bands and dendritic patterns. Where diagnostic, these sherds largely came from domestic tablewares, primarily plates, dishes and cups. In addition, a small number of later English stonewares sherds were also retrieved (fabric 81.4), primarily from bottle or jar forms. Other finds of this date consisted of fragments of flowerpot and part of a battery.

period	fabric code	fabric common name	count	weight (g)
medieval	55	Worcester-type sandy unglazed ware	8	75
medieval	56	Malvernian unglazed ware	3	27
medieval	64.1	Worcester-type sandy glazed ware	1	44
medieval	64.4	unglazed sandy white ware	2	4
medieval	99	miscellaneous medieval wares	1	6
late med/early post-med	69	oxidized glazed Malvernian ware	2	31

late med/early post-med	72	brown glazed with flecks	1	2
post-medieval	77	Midlands yellow ware	6	134
post-medieval	78	post-medieval red ware	45	2185
post-medieval	82	tin-glazed ware	1	6
post-medieval	91	post-medieval buff wares	11	324
modern	81.4	miscellaneous late stoneware	6	129
modern	81.5	white salt-glazed stoneware	3	6
modern	83	porcelain	1	3
modern	84	creamware	13	138
modern	85	modern china	19	306
modern	101	miscellaneous modern wares	13	177

Table 2: Quantification of the pottery by fabric type

#### 4.2.2 Artefact summary

The finds assemblage from this site indicates a well-stratified sequence from the medieval period onwards. The dating of diagnostic medieval pottery indicates activity on the site from the 12<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> century, which corresponds well with the date of the first recorded market in the town (see Section 3.2 above).

context	material class	material subtype	object specific type	count	weight (g)	start date	end date	spot date
0	ceramic		pot	1	8	L11C	M14C	
102	mollusca	oyster shell		1	28			
102	bone	animal bone		4	14			
102	ceramic		pipe	3	6			
102	ceramic		pot	5	56	L17C	18C	
102	ceramic		pot	2	48	19C	20C	
102	ceramic		pot	6	156	19C	20C	
102	ceramic		pot	2	55	M17C	18C	
102	ceramic		pot	3	77	L18C	19C	
102	ceramic		pot	1	24	L18C	20C	
102	ceramic		pot	3	12	L18C	E19C	
102	ceramic		roof tile(flat)	2	255			
102	glass		vessel	1	62			
103	ceramic		pot	7	132	L17C	18C	
103	ceramic		pot	1	16	19C	20C	
103	ceramic		pot	3	6	19C	20C	
103	ceramic		pot	1	6	17C	18C	
103	ceramic		pot	1	7	L18C	E19C	
103	ceramic		pot	6	85	19C	20C	
103	glass		vessel	1	2			
104	carbon		battery core	1	2			
104	ceramic		pipe	1	5			
104	ceramic		pot	11	648	18C	?E19C	
104	ceramic		pot	2	537	M17C	18C	
104	ceramic		pot	3	65	19C	E20C	
104	ceramic		pot	1	3	M18C	20C	
104	ceramic		pot	12	131	1780	1800	
104	ceramic		pot	7	65	19C	20C	
104	ceramic		pot	3	27	L18C	19C	
104	ceramic		roof tile(flat)	1	231			
104	glass		vessel	4	88	L18C	20C	
112	ceramic		pipe	4	16			

112	ceramic		pot	1	92	17C	E18C	L18(-?E19)C
112	ceramic		pot	4	497	L17C	18C	
112	ceramic		pot	1	14	L17C	18C	
112	ceramic		pot	1	14	L18C	?E19C	
112	ceramic		roof tile(flat)	2	73			
112	glass		vessel	2	7			L17-E18C
113	bone	animal bone		4	82			
113	ceramic		pipe	16	63	M17C	L17C	
113	ceramic		pot	1	19			
113	ceramic		pot	1	44	12C	E13C	
113	ceramic		pot	1	14	L15C	E17C	
113	ceramic		pot	5	42	L16C	E18C	
113	ceramic		pot	6	57	17C	E18C	
113	ceramic		pot	1	4	M17C	E18C	
113	ceramic		roof tile(flat)	8	326			
113	metal		nail	1	18			medieval
116	ceramic		pot	1	6	L11C	M14C	
119	ceramic		pipe	1	1		17C	17C
119	ceramic		roof tile(flat)	1	45	L15C+		
121	ceramic		pot	1	14	12C	14C	12-14C
125	metal	copper alloy	?button	1	4			post-medieval
128	ceramic		pot	1	1	E17C	L17C	L17-?18C
128	ceramic		pot	4	160	L17C	18C	
128	ceramic		pot	1	10	L17C	18C	
128	ceramic		pot	5	222	M17C	18C	
129	ceramic		pot	2	23	L18C	E19C	L18-E19C
130	ceramic		pot	1	24	L17C	M18C	L17-M18C
130	ceramic		pot	2	23	L17C	18C	
132	bone	animal bone		20	54			medieval
132	ceramic	fired clay		8	119			
138	ceramic		brick	1	33			M17-E18C
138	ceramic		pot	1	2	15C	E17C	
138	ceramic		pot	2	59	M17C	E18C	
138	ceramic		roof tile(flat)	2	281	L15C+		
139	ceramic		?brick	2	51			L15-16C
139	ceramic		pot	1	10	L11C	M14C	
139	ceramic		pot	2	4	13C	14C	
139	ceramic		pot	1	17	L15C	16C	
139	ceramic		pot	1	6	12C	14C	
139	ceramic		roof tile(flat)	1	23			
139	coal			3	70			12-M14C
147	bone	animal bone		6	8			
147	ceramic		pot	1	20	12C	M14C	
147	ceramic		pot	4	31	L11C	M14C	
147	ceramic		pot	2	13	12C	14C	M17-18C
202	ceramic		pot	1	10	M17C	18C	

Table 3: Summary of context dating based on artefacts

#### 4.2.3 Animal bone summary, by Elizabeth Pearson

A total of 34 fragments (158g) of animal bone were hand-collected during excavation. The preservation was poor and there were signs of waterlogging on all fragments. Cattle and pig bones and teeth were identified but, as the assemblage was small, little interpretation could be made of this material.

context	material class	material subtype	count	weight(g)	feature type	period	comments
102	bone	animal bone	4	14	Modern Layer	modern	poorly preserved, signs of waterlogging
113	bone	animal bone	4	82	Layer	late-medieval to post-medieval	poorly preserved, signs of waterlogging. Includes cattle radius epiphysis and ?cattle calcaneus fragment
132	bone	animal bone	20	54	Gully	medieval to late medieval	poorly preserved. Includes pig tooth fragments
147	bone	animal bone	6	8	Pit	medieval to late medieval	poorly preserved cattle tooth fragments, possibly all from a single tooth
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>34</b>	<b>158</b>			

Table 4: Summary of animal bones by context

## 5 Synthesis

Although only a small area of the site was investigated it was possible to identify multiple phases of activity, dating from the 12<sup>th</sup> century onwards, and to suggest that similar remains continue beyond the excavated area.

Comparison with historic mapping of the site before mid-20<sup>th</sup> century clearance shows that the latest archaeological remains revealed were walls and deposits relating to small buildings, probably built in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, on land behind the frontage of properties 11 and 12 at the junction of Hanover Street and St John Street. Associated archaeological finds suggested that these were all related to a domestic use. The wall foundations demonstrated evidence of re-use of building materials from one or more substantial structures, and some of this building material was of high quality. A small surviving stretch of well-built sandstone wall suggests that it is possible that an earlier, larger structure had once been present on the site itself, parts of which remained *in situ*, and that the stone reused in later structures elsewhere across the site may have been sourced directly from here.

The garden soil truncated and overlain by the stone/brick structures had sealed a pre-17<sup>th</sup> century phase of activity, considered to be broadly dated as 12<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> century but with a possible focus in the 12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> century. Features of this date were small scale and ephemeral but suggested the presence of timber structures and, in the case of a rectangular pit, were possibly associated with storage or processing, thereby indicating some specialised function. A wide ditch and shallow gully on a parallel alignment also suggest that there may have been a need to drain the land, probably heading down towards the Spadesbourne Brook, and that the area may, therefore, have been laid out in plots in this period.

The discovery of a range of well dated medieval archaeological features is significant in the light of the previously suggested archaeological potential of this part of the town, and lends much support to the idea that this area was the focus of early settlement in Bromsgrove. Beyond some medieval pottery from earlier fieldwork there has been little to demonstrate this potential, so the present project has made an important contribution to our understanding by revealing the first medieval urban archaeology in Bromsgrove.

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## 6 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:

*Two stages of archaeological investigation were undertaken on the Market Hall Site, St Johns Street, Bromsgrove (NGR SO95707055; HER reference 67952), commissioned by Hinton Properties. The project results from the submission of a planning application to Bromsgrove District Council for a new retail unit.*

*Although only a small area of the site was investigated it was possible to identify multiple phases of activity, dating from the 12<sup>th</sup> century onwards, and including possible timber structures of medieval date. Later development from the late 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards comprised buildings set on wall foundations of ashlar sandstone blocks, the latter suggesting re-use of building materials from a substantial building.*

## 7 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the conclusion of this project: everyone at Hinton Properties for their interest and help, and for providing funds for the work. Aisling Nash and Adrian Scruby (Historic Environment Advisors, Worcestershire County Council) monitored the project. Jenny Townshend (The Bromsgrove Society) kindly provided historic map evidence.

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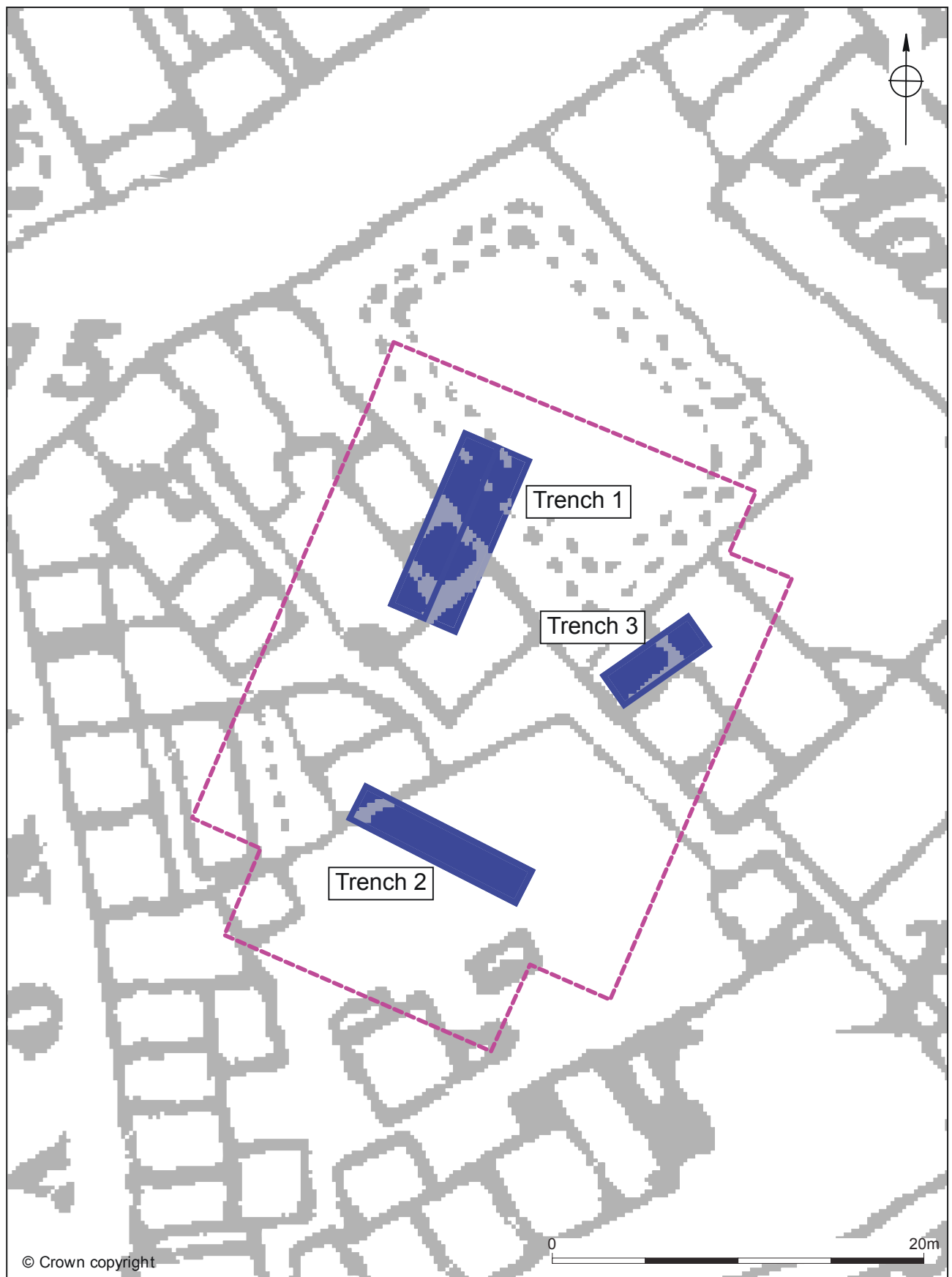
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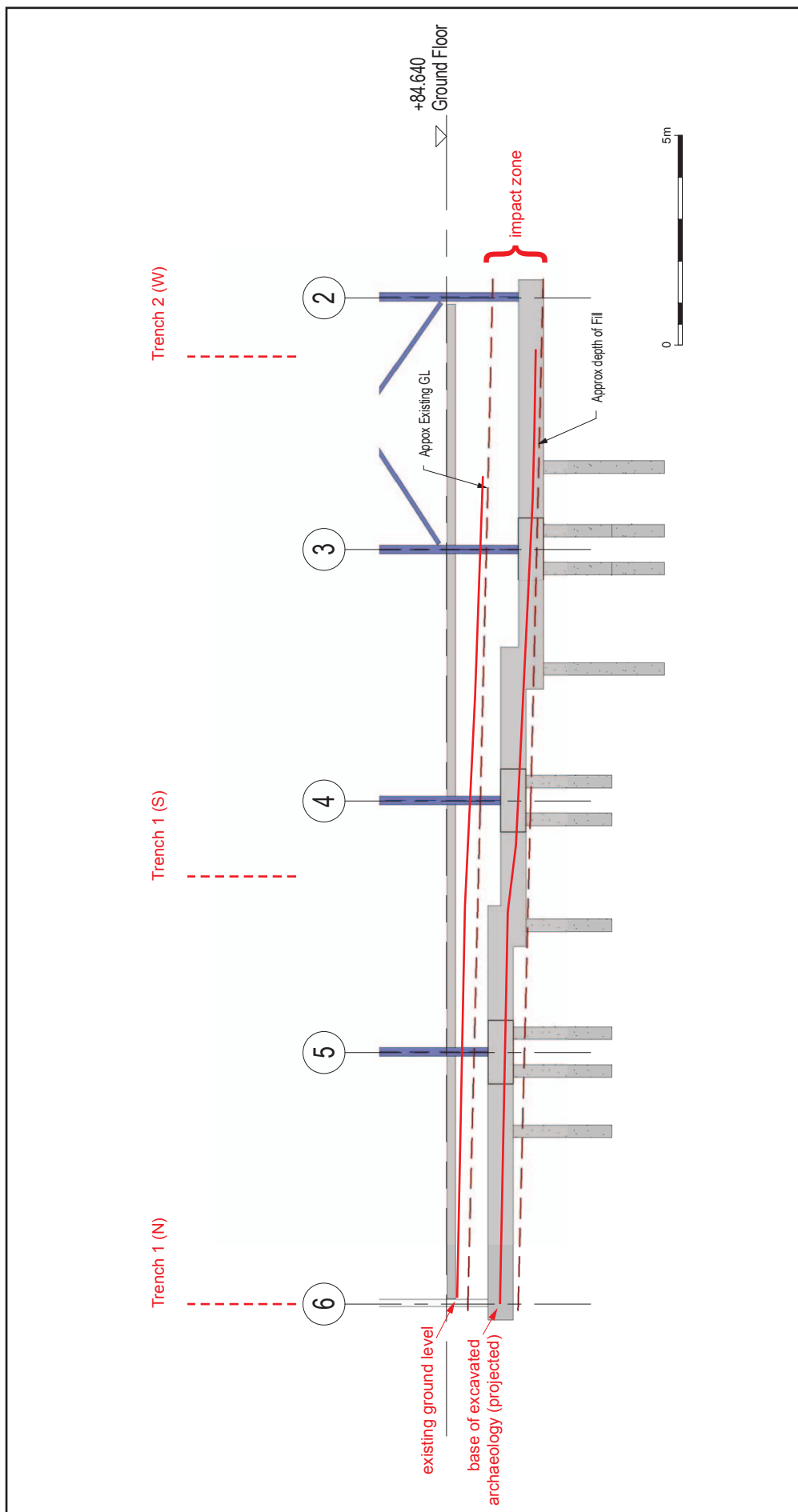
**Figures**

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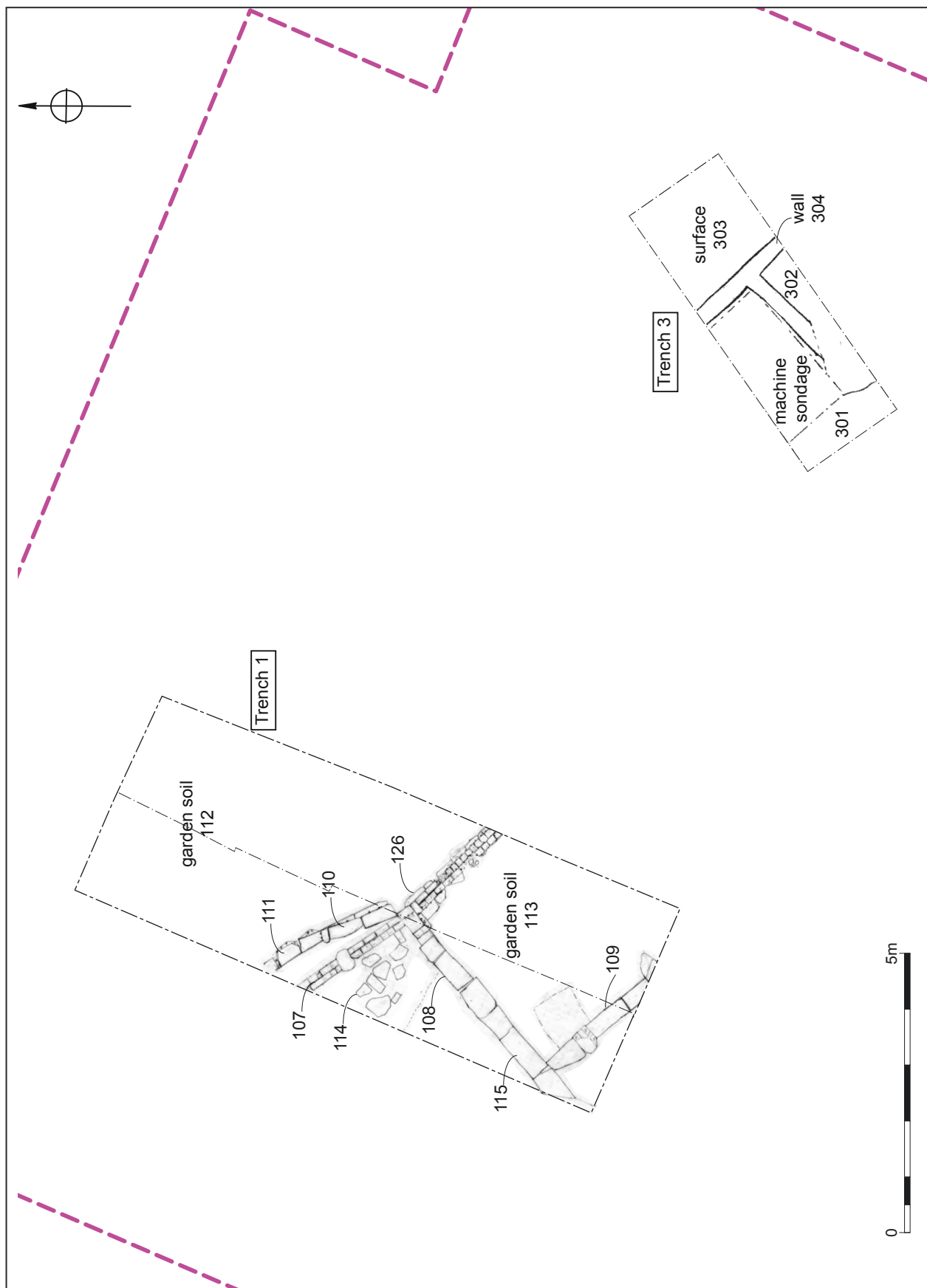
Trenches located on 1st edition Ordnance Survey with footprint of proposed new building showing Trench 1 as extended during excavation stage.

Figure 1



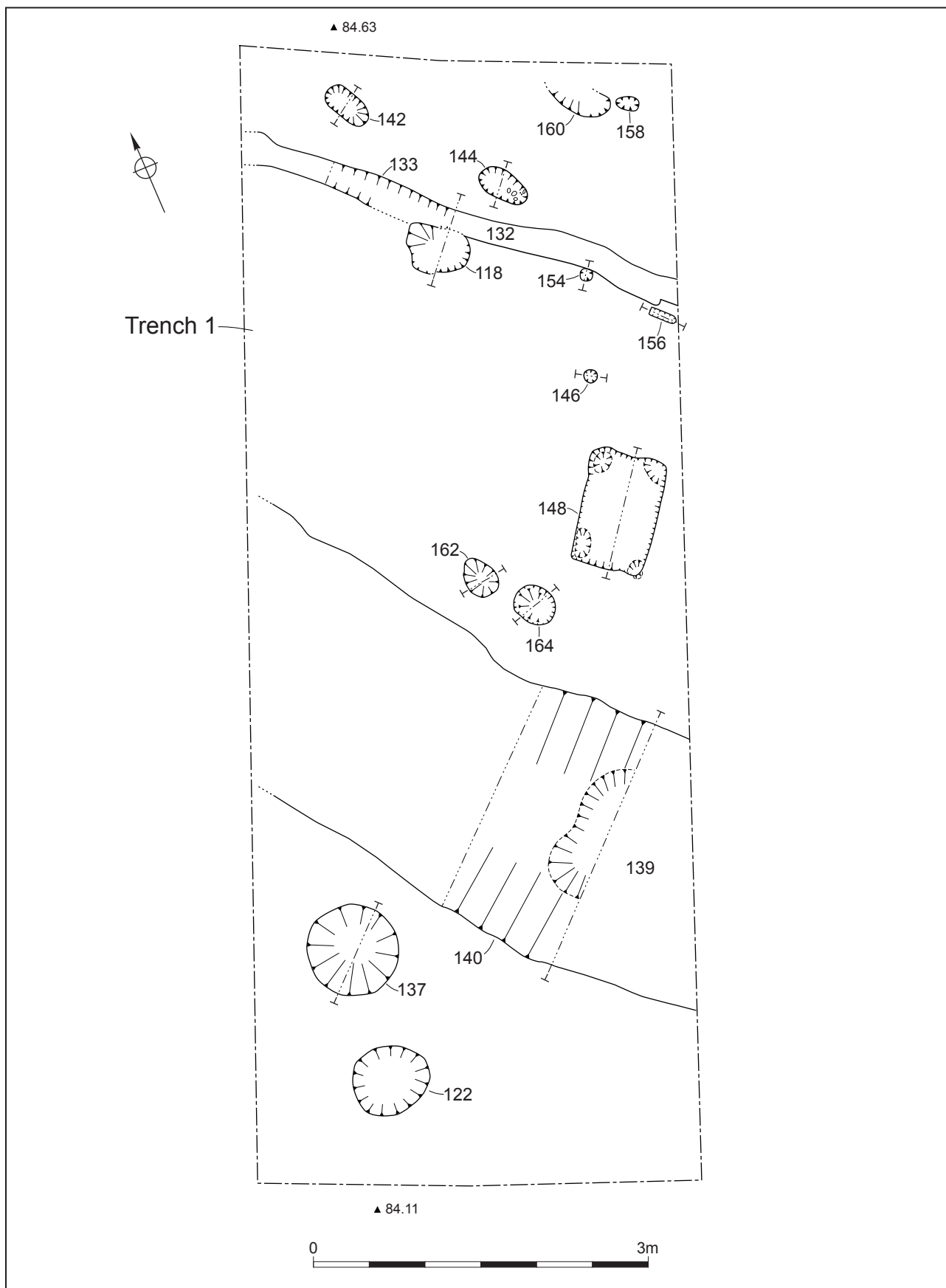
North elevation view of foundation combined with archaeological deposits in section as observed in evaluation trenches 1 and 2

Figure 2



*Trenches 1 and 3 with field drawings showing post-medieval structural remains*

**Figure 3**



*Trench 1: medieval to late-medieval features*

*Figure 4*

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## Plates



*Plate 1: General view of the site before trenching, facing north-east*



*Plate 2: General view of walls in Trench 1, facing south-west – the three courses of earlier wall 110 are visible in the centre of the image*

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*Plate 3: Working shot of machining to earlier archaeological phase, Trench 1*



*Plate 4: Section of ditch 140, below garden soil*

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*Plate 5: Pit 148, dated to the medieval period*



*Plate 6: Small medieval features in Trench 1, including gully 133 and stakeholes*





*Plate 7: Section of Trench 2*



*Plate 8: General view, Trench 3*

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## Appendix 1 Trench descriptions

### Trench 1

Length: 10m

Width: 4m

Orientation: north-east to south-west

#### Context summary:

Context	Feature	Context	Description	Height/ depth	Interpretation
100	Modern Layer	Layer	tarmac	0.09m	Tarmac carpark
101	Modern Layer	Layer	rubble	0.13m	Indurated bitumen, rubble and tarmacadam - former car park surface
102	Modern Layer	Layer	rubble	0.48m	Rubble demolition
103	Modern Layer	Layer	rubble		Infill of space between sandstone wall and brick insert.
104		Fill	Loose dark grey sandy silt	0.45m	Backfill of cellar/outbuilding.
105	Modern Layer	Layer	Compact dark grey silty		Modern demolition levelling
106	Wall	Structure		0.17m	Wall of cellar/building. Overlies sequence of horizontal strat.
107	Wall	Structure		0.17m	Northern continuation of bricks 106
108	Wall	Structure		>0.5m	Dividing wall of property. May be foundation levelling for wall
109	Wall	Structure		0.45m	Boundary wall
110	Wall	Structure		0.80m	Large sandstone block wall.
111	Wall	Structure		0.16m	Sandstone wall foundation blocks.
112	Layer	Layer	Moderately compact mid orangey brown silty sand	0.2-0.4m	Garden soil
113	Layer	Layer			Garden soil
114	Floor	Layer		0.1m	Consolidation attempt
115	Wall	Structure		0.2m	E-W property or internal sandstone wall
116	Pit	Fill	Moderately compact mid orangey brown silty sand	0.12m	Upper fill of pit
117	Pit	Fill	Moderately compact mid brownish grey silty sand	0.1m	Fill of pit
118	Pit	Cut		0.22m	Small pit of unknown extent. Too small for domestic waste.
119	Posthole	Fill	Compact dark greyish brown silty sand	0.12m	Backfill above posthole

## Market Hall Site, St John Street, Bromsgrove

120	Posthole	Fill	Compact mid grey silty sand	0.1m	Backfill of removed post
121	Posthole	Fill	Firm light grey silty clay	0.28m	Clay packing for earth-fast post.
122	Posthole	Cut		0.4m	Posthole
123	Natural	Layer	Compact mid brownish orange silty sand		
124	Natural	Layer	Compact mid brownish orange silty sand		
125	Modern Layer	Layer	Moderately compact rubble	0.39m	Lensed layers of rubble and demolition material
126	Wall	Structure		0.2m	Brick foundation wall on top of layer of sandstones 127
127	Wall	Structure		0.12m	Single course of sandstone foundation for wall 126
128	Layer	Layer	Firm mid brownish grey sandy silt	0.2m	Soil beneath wall footings 127/126.
129		Layer	Loose dark grey sandy silt	0.5m	Soil and rubbish dropped into space created by construction cut
130	Construction Cut	Fill	Firm mid greyish Brown sandy silt	0.1m	Packing deposit in base of construction below 115 and 108 - seen in section
131	Construction Cut	Cut		0.1m	Construction cut for wall Packed with 130. Cuts garden soil. Only seen in section so full form etc not visible
132	Ditch	Fill	Soft mid greyish brown silty sand	0.08m	Fill of small ditch/gully 133
133	Ditch	Cut		0.08m+	NW-SE aligned gully or small ditch. Small land boundary ditch or drainage gully.
134	Pit	Fill	Loose mid grey sandy silt	0.1m	Fill of pit
135	Pit	Fill		0.2m	Possible redeposited natural fill of pit from removal of stake or post
136	Pit	Fill	Friable mid grey silty sand	0.18m	Filling/packing around post
137	Pit	Cut		0.2m	Posthole. Adjacent to ditch and post-pit 122. Smaller post judging by fills. No stiff clay packing.
138		Layer			Finds reference. Finds kept separate as they were recovered from the very top of (139) fill of ditch [140]. Upper 5cm of fill
139	Ditch	Fill	Loose dark greyish brown sandy silt	0.57m	Fill of ditch [140].
140	Ditch	Cut		0.57m	Linear ditch running downslope. Possibly drainage. Below garden soil. Irregular base and depth in places, possibly truncated

141	Posthole	Fill	Soft dark greyish brown silty sand	0.05m	Fill of truncated posthole [142]
142	Posthole	Cut		0.05m+	Cut of truncated posthole. Similar to [144] - spacing between two may suggest that they form part of a structure
143	Posthole	Fill	Moderately compact dark greyish brown silty sand	0.07m	Fill of posthole containing charcoal and dried/fired clay similar to posthole fill (141)
144	Posthole	Cut		0.07m	Cut of a truncated posthole the same size and shape as [142]
145	Stakehole	Fill	Soft mid greyish brown silty sand	0.18m	Fill of small stakehole
146	Stakehole	Cut		0.18m	Small stakehole to south of gully [133]
147	Pit	Fill	Soft mid brownish grey sandy silt	0.25m	Single fill in pit [148].
148	Pit	Cut		0.25m	Rectangular pit, dated as medieval. Shape and regular sides are unusual - possibly for specific purpose (industrial?)
149		Layer	dark grey silty sand	0.25m	Possible construction rubble associated with post/trench [152]
150	Posthole	Fill	Friable mid greyish brown sand	0.45m	Backfill/disuse of post or trench [152]
151	Posthole	Fill	dark greyish black charcoal	0.02m	Charcoal could relate to the base of a charred post since removed
152	Posthole	Cut		0.5m	Post-pit or possible wall trench
153	Stakehole	Fill	Soft mid greyish brown silty sand	0.27m	Fill of small stakehole [154], similar to stakehole [146] but deeper
154	Stakehole	Cut		0.27m+	Cut of small stakehole NE of stakehole [146]
155	Beam slot	Fill	Soft mid greyish brown silty sand	0.07m	Fill of small rectangular slot adjacent to gully [133]
156	Beam slot	Cut		0.07m	Cut of a small slot
157	Stakehole	Fill	Firm mid greyish brown silty sand	0.1m +	Fill of stakehole [158], containing a single large pebble in the base.
158	Stakehole	Cut		0.1m+	Cut of stakehole, probably underneath garden soil (112), although feature continues into trench section so extent unclear
159	Posthole	Fill	Firm mid greyish brown silty sand	0.13m+	Fill of [160]

## Market Hall Site, St John Street, Bromsgrove

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160	Posthole	Cut		0.13m+	Cut of a feature extending beyond NE end of TR1
161	Posthole	Fill	Soft light greyish brown sandy silt	0.15m	Fill of possible posthole [162]
162	Posthole	Cut		0.15m	Possible feature - shallow posthole. Slightly irregular and not well-defined so unclear if real. Adjacent to obvious posthole [164]. No dating. Unsure of strat.
163	Posthole	Fill	Soft mid greyish Brown sandy silt	0.26m	Clear, homogenous, single fill in posthole [164]. No finds, undated.
164	Posthole	Cut		0.26m	Cut of clearly defined posthole, undated. No clear structure arrangement and unsure from which level this was cut. Could be associated with [162] to north but very different profiles.
165	Pit	Fill	Friable black charcoal	0.1m	Upper fill disuse/discard or fire debris
166	Pit	Fill	Friable dark Brown silty sand	0.2m	Backfill/disuse or post hole or small pit?
167	Pit	Cut		0.3m	

### Trench 2

Length: 10m

Width: 2m

Orientation: north-west to south-east

#### Context summary:

Context	Feature	Context	Description	Height/ depth	Interpretation
200	Modern Layer	Layer	Tarmac	0.09m	Same as 100 - car park surface
201	Modern Layer	Layer	rubble	0.18m	Brick, bitumen and tarmacadam - former car park
202	Modern Layer	Layer	dark blackish brown silty sand	0.4m	Modern made ground
203	Layer	Layer	dark greyish brown silty sand	0.3m	Garden soil
204	Layer	Layer	mid greyish brown silty	0.3m	River deposit
205	Natural	Layer	mid yellowish brown silty sand		

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Trench 3

Length: 5m                      Width: 2m                      Orientation: south-west to north-east

Context summary:

Context	Feature	Context	Description	Height/ depth	Interpretation
300	Modern Layer	Layer		0.1m	Car park surface same as 100
301	Modern Layer	Layer		0.4m	Same as 101
302			Moderately compact rubble	0.4m	Modern infill/demolition
303	Layer	Layer			Irregular brick surface
304	Layer	Layer			T-shaped sandstone foundations, butted by surface (302)
305	Layer	Layer			Clay and rubble bedding for sandstone (304)

## **Appendix 2 Technical information**

### **The archive (site code: WSM 67952)**

The archive consists of:

63	Context records AS1
4	Field progress reports AS2
3	Photographic records AS3
182	Digital photographs
1	Drawing number catalogues AS4
24	Scale drawings
1	Context number catalogues AS5
1	Sample number catalogues AS18
1	Levels records AS19
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) 250 416

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## Summary of data for Worcestershire HER

WSM 67952 (HER number)

P4776

period (see note 1)	material class	object specific type	count	weight (g)	start date	end date	specialist report? (note 2)	key assemblage? (note 3)
medieval	ceramic	fired clay	8	119			N	N
medieval	ceramic	roof tile(flat)	1	23			Y	N
medieval	ceramic	pot	4	33	12C	14C	Y	Y
medieval	ceramic	pot	1	44	12C	E13C	Y	Y
medieval	ceramic	pot	1	20	12C	M14C	Y	Y
medieval	ceramic	pot	2	4	13C	14C	Y	Y
medieval	ceramic	pot	7	55	L11C	M14C	Y	Y
late med/early post-med	ceramic	pot	1	2	15C	E17C	Y	Y
late med/early post-med	ceramic	pot	2	31	L15C	E17C	Y	Y
late med/early post-med	ceramic	roof tile(flat)	3	326	L15C+		Y	Y
post-medieval	ceramic	brick	1	33			N	N
post-medieval	ceramic	pipe	9	28			N	N
post-medieval	ceramic	pipe	16	63	M17C	L17C	N	N
post-medieval	ceramic	pot	1	19			Y	N
post-medieval	ceramic	pot	1	6	17C	18C	Y	N
post-medieval	ceramic	pot	7	149	17C	E18C	Y	N
post-medieval	ceramic	pot	11	648	18C	?E19C	Y	N
post-medieval	ceramic	pot	1	1	E17C	L17C	Y	N
post-medieval	ceramic	pot	5	42	L16C	E18C	Y	N
post-medieval	ceramic	pot	24	892	L17C	18C	Y	N
post-medieval	ceramic	pot	1	24	L17C	M18C	Y	N
post-medieval	ceramic	pot	10	824	M17C	18C	Y	N
post-medieval	ceramic	pot	3	63	M17C	E18C	Y	N
post-medieval	ceramic	roof tile(flat)	13	885			N	N
post- medieval	copper alloy	?button	1	4			N	N
post-medieval	glass	vessel	2	64			N	N
post med/modern	metal	nail	1	18			N	N
modern	carbon	battery core	1	2			N	N
modern	ceramic	pot	12	131	1780	1800	Y	N
modern	ceramic	pot	25	376	19C	20C	Y	N
modern	ceramic	pot	3	65	19C	E20C	Y	N
modern	ceramic	pot	1	14	L18C	?E19C	Y	N
modern	ceramic	pot	6	104	L18C	19C	Y	N
modern	ceramic	pot	1	24	L18C	20C	Y	N



modern	ceramic	pot	6	42	L18C	E19C	Y	N
modern	ceramic	pot	1	3	M18C	20C	Y	N
modern	glass	vessel	2	7			N	N
modern	glass	vessel	4	88	L18C	20C	N	N
undated		oyster	1	28			N	N
undated	ceramic	?brick	2	51			N	N
undated	coal		3	70			N	N

### Notes

- 1) In some cases the date will be "Undated". In most cases, especially if there is not a specialist report, the information entered in the Date field will be a general period such as Neolithic, Roman, medieval etc (see below for a list of periods used in the Worcestershire HER). Very broad date ranges such as late Medieval to Post-medieval are acceptable for artefacts which can be hard to date, for example roof tiles. Specific date ranges which cross general period boundaries can also be used, for example 15th to 17th century.
- 2) Not all evaluations of small excavation assemblages have specialist reports on all classes of objects. An identification (eg clay pipe) and quantification is not a specialist report. A short discussion or a more detailed record identifying types and dates is a specialist report. This field is designed to point researchers to reports where they will find out more than merely the presence or absence of material of a particular type and date.
- 3) This field should be used with care. It is designed to point researchers to reports where they will be able to locate the most important assemblages for any given material for any given date.

period	from	to
Palaeolithic	500000 BC	10001 BC
Mesolithic	10000 BC	4001 BC
Neolithic	4000 BC	2351 BC
Bronze Age	2350 BC	801 BC
Iron Age	800 BC	42 AD
Roman	43	409
Post-Roman	410	1065
Medieval	1066	1539
Post-medieval	1540	1900
Modern	1901	2050

period specific	from	to
Lower Paleolithic	500000 BC	150001
Middle Palaeolithic	150000	40001
Upper Palaeolithic	40000	10001
Early Mesolithic	10000	7001
Late Mesolithic	7000	4001
Early Neolithic	4000	3501
Middle Neolithic	3500	2701
Late Neolithic	2700	2351

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Early Bronze Age	2350	1601
Middle Bronze Age	1600	1001
Late Bronze Age	1000	801
Early Iron Age	800	401
Middle Iron Age	400	101
Late Iron Age	100 BC	42 AD
Roman 1st century AD	43	100
2nd century	101	200
3rd century	201	300
4th century	301	400
Roman 5th century	401	410
Post roman	411	849
Pre conquest	850	1065
Late 11th century	1066	1100
12th century	1101	1200
13th century	1201	1300
14th century	1301	1400
15th century	1401	1500
16th century	1501	1600
17th century	1601	1700
18th century	1701	1800
19th century	1801	1900
20th century	1901	2000
21st century	2001	

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