

Archaeological watching brief at Brickwalls Farmhouse, Gilberts End, Hanley Castle, Worcestershire



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Archaeological Watching brief at Brickwalls Farmhouse, Gilberts End, Hanley Castle, Worcestershire

Graham Arnold

With contributions by C Jane Evans

Illustrations by Carolyn Hunt

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at Brickwalls farmhouse, Gilberts End, Hanley Castle, Worcestershire (NGR SO 8231 4227). It was undertaken for Osbournes Architects (the client) on behalf of their clients, Mr and Mrs Voss.

Malvern Hills District Council have granted permission for the construction of a single storey extension on the north side of the Brickwalls Farmhouse. Permission was granted to conditions, including a programme of archaeological works and it was established that an archaeological watching brief was appropriate mitigation.

The site is in an area known for medieval pottery production and archaeological works in 2006 immediately north of the development had established the survival of archaeological features, including a large pit of wasters fragments from objects which had been improperly fired and discarded. The pit was partially excavated and a large assemblage of medieval pottery was retrieved.

Ground levelling and the foundation trenches for the extension were archaeologically monitored and in the north-western corner of the foundation trenches a further part of the large waster pit was uncovered. This was recorded and 235 sherds of pottery were retrieved comprised of two (local) Malvernian wares: Malvernian unglazed and Oxidised glazed Malvernian ware. The latter was the more common ware of which all diagnostic sherds were from rounded jugs, dating to the later 14th to 15th centuries.

No further archaeological features were observed during the works. Natural gravels and marl were recorded in the remainder of the foundation trenches.

Report

1 Background

1.1 Reasons for the project

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at Brickwalls Farmhouse, Gilberts End, Hanley Castle, Worcestershire (NGR SO 8231 4227). It was commissioned by Osbournes Architects, whose client Mr and Mrs Voss intends to construct a single storey extension on the North side of the property. for which a planning application has been submitted to Malvern Hills District Council (reference ref MH/15/0161).

The proposed development site was considered to include a heritage asset with archaeological interest, and permission was granted subject to conditions including a programme of archaeological works.

A brief was prepared by Adrian Scruby, Historic Environment Advisor, Worcestershire County Council (WCC 2015) detailing the requirement for excavation of the footprint of the proposed extension. However, following correspondence with the clients, this requirement was altered and a standard brief for watching brief on the site was issued (WCC 2014). A Written Scheme of Investigation was produced (WA 2016) and approved by the Planning Advisory Service.

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

The event reference for this project, given by the HER is WSM 68496.

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), who joined Worcestershire Archaeology in 2009 and has been practicing archaeology since 2002. The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Tom Rogers (BA (hons.); MSc). Illustrations were prepared by Carolyn Hunt (BSc (hons.); PG Cert; MCIfA). Jane Evans (BA, MA, MCIfA) contributed the finds report.

3.2 Documentary research

Previous works have taken place on site (Hurst 2008) and the archaeological background and previous archaeological interventions are recorded in the report. The site was identified as an area of significant medieval pottery production industry.

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

Documentary sources

Published and grey literature sources are listed in the bibliography.

3.3 Fieldwork strategy

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

Fieldwork was undertaken between 31 January 2017 and 1 February 2017. The unique site reference number given by Worcestershire Archaeology is P4581 and the Worcestershire HER site code is WSM 68496.

The groundworks were monitored by a suitably qualified archaeologist, following the progress of the construction team. The site foundations footprint amounting to just over 50m² in area. The location of the foundation trenches and landscaping groundworks is indicated in Figure 2.

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).

3.4 Structural analysis

All fieldwork records were checked and cross-referenced. Analysis was effected through a combination of structural, and artefactual evidence, allied to the information derived from other sources.

3.5 Artefact methodology, by C Jane Evans

The finds work reported here conforms with the relevant sections of *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (ClfA 2014; <http://www.archaeologists.net/codes/ifa>), the multi-period *A Standard for Pottery Studies in Archaeology* (<http://romanpotterystudy.org/2016/06/29/now-standard-pottery-studies-archaeology/>), Historic England guidance on archaeological and historic pottery production sites (<https://content.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/archaeological-and-historic-pottery-production-sites/heag019-pottery-production-sites.pdf/>), with archive creation informed by *Archaeological archives: a guide to the best practice in the creation, compilation, transfer and curation* (AAF 2011; <http://www.archaeologyuk.org/archives/>), and museum deposition by *Selection, retention and dispersal of archaeological collections* (SMA 1993; <http://www.socmusarch.org.uk/publica.htm>).

3.5.1 Artefact recovery policy

The finds were all recovered from part of a single, densely filled pit (108, fill 106), which had been partially revealed and excavated in 2006–7 (Hurst 2008; 2010). The artefact recovery policy conformed to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012; appendix 2), except that, given the circumstances, it was not practical to recover all the pottery. Therefore, priority was given to retrieving larger and more diagnostic sherds.

3.5.2 Method of analysis

All finds were identified, quantified and dated to period, producing a *terminus post quem* date for the fill of the pit. Data were recorded on a pro forma Access database as a finds summary record.

The pottery and ceramic building material were examined macroscopically, with a sample studied under x20 magnification to confirm identification. Pottery fabrics and forms were recorded with reference to the Worcestershire reference series maintained by Worcestershire Archaeology (www.worcestershireceramics.org) and to the medieval pottery published from excavations at Deansway, Worcester (Bryant 2004). Evidence for manufacture (misfired sherds) and use (sooting) were recorded where present. The pottery was quantified by sherd count, weight and Estimated Vessel Equivalent for rims (rim EVE). Diameters and percentages were not recorded for bases.

A number of sherds had white powdery deposits thought to be unmaturing lead glaze, which necessitated the use of gloves when handled.

period	material class	material subtype	object specific type	count	weight(g)
medieval	ceramic	earthenware	pot	235	17745
		fired clay	ridge tile	3	557
			roof tile	24	3753
undated	bone	animal bone	fragment	2	41

Table 1: Quantification of the assemblage by period, material and object type

3.6 Environmental archaeology methodology

3.6.1 Sampling policy

Sampling was undertaken according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012). A total of 1 samples (of 20 litres) were taken from the site from the following contexts:

- Pit Fill (606)

In the event, after discussion with environmental specialists, it was decided that the deposits sampled were not considered to be suitable for environmental analysis and the samples were discarded. 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 solid geology is recorded as Sidmouth Mudstone with superficial head deposits of clay silts and gravels (BGS 2017).

The site is located in Gilberts End, to the south-east of the medieval focus of Hanley Swan village, within the parish of Hanley Castle (NGR: SO 8231 4227). The development area is currently a garden and is mostly flat with a gravelled with a raised patio area and raised landscaped turfed area to the north of the extension area.

Previous investigations have identified that the area was a substantial focus of pottery production between the 14th and late 16th/early 17th centuries. The early Malvern Chase pottery industry produced cooking pots and highly decorated tripod pitchers in large quantities in the 12th and 13th centuries. It is as yet unlocated, although documentary evidence suggests that the Welland area, closer to the Malvern Hills to the west, may have been its focus (Hurst 1994a; WSM 27001). Excavations undertaken in 2006 and 2007 to the rear of Brickwalls Farmhouse immediately to the west of the present site revealed a layer of 19th century bricks, a 18th/19th century garden soil with extensive residual 13th-16th century pottery, sealing a 16th century ditch and two pits, one a clay pit associated with an adjacent area of intense burning.

The brick layer was conjectured to be associated with a kiln located in the vicinity; the garden soil to be related to a large orchard recorded on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map as covering a large plot to the north and west of the farm buildings; and the pottery comprised wasters, the discarded debris from an adjacent medieval kiln (WSM 35961 and 36024). A single pit, truncated by a low wall, was full of medieval pottery, and the ceramic material is reported (Hurst 2008; WSM 35961). The same waster pit was uncovered during the present works.

A watching brief was undertaken in 2001 of groundworks to the east and west of the present development site. A large dump of pottery, brick and tile was found, of 13th to 16th century date, concentrated on the western half of the plot, close to a half-timbered late 14th-early 15th century

house (WSM 30486). Two main phases of dumping were distinguished: a small quantity of ceramic material (mostly pottery) in the 13th to 14th century; and substantial water dumps in the 15th and 16th century, which provides a strong argument for the existence of a kiln nearby. There was also evidence for clay pitting and dumping of Malvernian gravels, presumably to provide the raw material for pottery manufacture (WSM 30572).

A watching brief was also undertaken to the west of the site during the conversion of a barn and construction of a triple garage, with negative results. No medieval features were recorded with only 19th – 20th century features, due to modern usage of the area, with a concrete pad and narrow foundation trenches (Vaughan 2008; WSM 37563).

The farmhouse has been extensively restored. It was originally thought to be of 17th century date. Earlier investigations revealed a waster heap of tiles possibly contemporary with tiles still on the building. Further work found a brick similar to those used in the construction of the house in a 16th century waster pit. This indicates either that the building is of 16th century origin, with later remodelling in the 18th century, or simply that 16th century material was reused in its construction in the 17th century. The presence of 13th century pottery has been argued to indicate that the farmhouse is built on or close to an earlier building on the site (WSM 30486).

4.2 Current land-use

The site was currently use as a private garden, with a raised patio area at the centre, surrounded by gravelled surfacing and with a raised lawn in the north extent of the extension area. All of these were removed under archaeological supervision, prior to marking out and excavating the foundation trenches.

5 Results

5.1 Structural analysis

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

5.1.1 Phase 1: Natural deposits

The natural geology consisted of a red clay marl with blue grey silt mottling (103) was observed throughout the foundations, overlain by grey gravel (102) (Plates 4-7) and cut in the northeast corner of the foundations by the medieval waster pit [108].

5.1.2 Phase 2: Medieval deposits

A waster pit [108] was recorded in the northwest corner of the extension foundation trenches. About a quarter of the pit was uncovered. It measured a total of 2.20m in length in the east facing section, 1.50m in length in the south facing section and was a maximum of 1.20m in depth below the existing ground surface. Medieval ceramics were recovered from the main upper fill, a virtually solid mass of ceramics, within dark brownish grey ashy, clayey silt (106) up to 1.20m deep. This was underlain by a mid-brown silty clay, up to 0.50m in depth. This pit had previously been partially excavated, recorded and sampled during archaeological works by the Worcestershire Young Archaeologists Club in 2006 with the ceramic assemblage (Hurst 2008).

5.1.3 Phase 3: modern deposits

The topsoil (100) to the north of the extension area was a modern addition and contained plastics and metalwork. Modern garden surfacing including patios and gravels (101) were observed and recorded in the extension area (Plate 1 and 2). Modern services and drains cut the natural deposits close to the existing property. Concrete foundations for a former brick wall (109) cut pit [108] and the natural deposits (102).

5.2 Artefact analysis, by C Jane Evans

The assemblage contained pottery, roof tile and two fragments of animal bone (see Table 1). The high average sherd weight (76g) and the good condition of the sherds, together with their density in the pit fill and evidence for mis-firing, suggested that this was a primary dump of wasters from a pottery kiln presumably situated nearby.

5.3 Artefactual analysis by C Jane Evans

The assemblage contained pottery, roof tile and two fragments of animal bone (see Table 1). The high average sherd weight (76g) and the good condition of the sherds, together with their density in the pit fill and evidence for mis-firing, suggested that this was a primary dump of wasters from a pottery kiln presumably situated nearby.

5.3.1 The Medieval pottery

A total of 235 sherds of pottery were recovered, in two (local) Malvernian wares: Malvernian unglazed (Fabric 56) and Oxidised glazed Malvernian ware (Fabric 69).

fabric code	fabric common name	count	% count	Weight (g)	% weight	rim %	% rim EVE	average sherd wt (g)
56	Malvernian unglazed ware	30	13%	1440	8%	2.04	31%	48
69	Oxidized glazed Malvernian ware	205	87%	16305	92%	4.57	69%	80
totals		235		17745		6.61	100%	76

Table 2: Quantification of the medieval pottery by fabric

fabric code	fabric common name	form class	form type	rim %	% rim EVE
56	Malvernian unglazed ware	cooking pot	56/03	2.04	31%
69	Oxidized glazed Malvernian ware	jug	69/?	0.6	9%
		jug - rounded	69/04	1.46	22%
		bunghole jar	69/08	0.21	3%
		jar - rounded	69/13	0.8	12%
		bowl - flared	69/01	0.51	8%
		skillet	69/06	0.79	12%
		dripping dish*	69/05	-	-
		industrial base	69/17	0.2	3%
total				6.61	100%

Table 3: Quantification of the medieval pottery by fabric and form (% rim EVE; *not recorded as oval vessels)

Fabric 56 Malvernian unglazed ware

This was by far the less common of the two fabrics represented (Table 2). The proportion, however, is higher than noted at sites investigated as part of a Leverhulme study project surveying the Hanley Castle area, where the highest proportion was 5.6% from a field opposite Ivy House (Hurst 1994, 125). All sherds came from cooking pots or 'straight-sided bowls' (Table 2), generally assigned an earlier medieval date (ie 13th to 14th century). They were recorded as Deansway type 3, dating to the 13th century, based on the rim form (Bryant 2004,

298–300, fig 184.5). However, there were no complete profiles, and it is possible that some shallower form 4 types datable to the 14th century (*ibid*, fig 184.6) were present but not identified. A range of sizes was represented, with rim diameters ranging between 200–390mm. The majority of sherds (19) had external sooting, indicating that this type of pottery had been used for cooking in a domestic context, rather than dumped as wasters (ie in an industrial context).

Fabric 69 Oxidised glazed Malvernian ware

Most of the assemblage was in this glazed Malvernian fabric. Jugs were the most common vessel class (Table 2), as was the case with the previously reported assemblage from the same pit (Hurst 2008; 2010). All diagnostic sherds were from rounded jugs, dating to the later 14th to 15th centuries (Bryant 2004, 300-307, fig 186, 1-7). Most had strap handles, but one rod handle from a smaller jug was noted. Two examples were overfired and reduced/slightly warped, while one had underfired lead glaze. Variation in firing colour on the base of one jug indicated that another vessel had been stacked on top of it in the kiln. Similar colouration was noted on bases from the previous excavation on the site (Hurst 2008), leading to the suggestion that smaller vessels such as cups would have been stacked on upturned larger vessels. Other forms included rounded and bunghole jars, flared bowls, skillets, dripping dishes and an industrial base. The rounded jars (type 69/13) date broadly to the 15th to 16th century, or later 14th to 15th century at Deansway. Diameters ranged between 15 and 20cm; none showed evidence for mis-firing or of use (*ibid*, fig 187, 1-3). Bunghole jars are dated at Deansway to the late 15th to early to mid 16th century (*ibid*, type 8, fig 187, 4-10). These were represented by a rim (diameter 210mm) with finger impressed decoration below the rim, a tripod foot and two handles. Both the foot and the handles had under fired lead glaze. Flared bowls date from the later 15th to 17th century (*ibid* type 9, fig 187, 11–14). All examples were fairly large, with diameters ranging from 310–400mm, but far from the largest recorded, with a diameter of a metre. One example had sooting externally and another underfired glaze; a third had both characteristics suggesting that it had been both underfired and used for cooking. A similar pattern of use was noted on the skillets (*ibid*, type 6, fig 186, 11-12), represented by rims and handles, which also date to the 15th to 16th centuries. The diameter of these ranged between 190–250mm. Four sherds from oval dripping dishes were recorded, including an end fragment with a pronounced lip (*ibid*, type 5, fig 186.8-9). Three of these had underfired glaze but there was no evidence for use. Again these can be assigned a 15th to 16th century date. The final form represented was the base of an alembic or still (*ibid*, type 17, fig 188.18), with a horizontal strap handle; datable to the 16th century.

5.3.2 Other ceramic finds

A small quantity of ceramic building material was also recorded (Table 1). This included part of a crested ridge tile with a handmade 'knob' and another curving ridge tile fragment, a nibbed tile, and less diagnostic fragments of flat tile. These are likely to have also been produced nearby. Tiles are included in most of the waster assemblages excavated in this area, and previous excavation immediately to the west of Brickwalls farmhouse has produced significant evidence for roof tile production (Pearson and Griffin 2001).

5.3.3 Animal bone

Two fragments of animal bone were recorded, but not analysed.

5.4 Discussion

The finds add to the growing body of evidence for medieval pottery and tile production in the Hanley Castle area generally (Hurst 1994), and at Brickwalls Farm specifically (Pearson and Griffin 2001; Hurst 2009; Hurst 2010). This is much smaller than the assemblage recovered from previous excavation of the pit (Hurst 2008; 2010), which produced 5247 sherds of

medieval pottery (86, 987g), 762 fragments of Malvernian roof tile (37, 759g) and a range of other finds. The range of forms and their dating is, however, consistent with these finds. There is a mix of earlier (13th–14th century) medieval cooking pots, in an unglazed fabric, and a range of glazed forms dating to the later medieval period, broadly the 15th to 16th centuries. The cooking pots, and some of the glazed forms, showed clear evidence of domestic use. Where there was evidence for mis-firing this more often seemed to be under-firing, resulting in sherds with an unmaturing lead glaze, than overfiring, resulting in hard, warped and reduced sherds. Most sherds, however, showed no evidence for mis-firing, and may, therefore, have just been broken during firing (eg stack collapse) or perhaps when unloading from the kiln. The pit in which the pottery was found is likely to have been used for some purpose relating to production, but was too small for a clay extraction pit (D Hurst, pers comm). The two assemblages from this pit differ from the finds recovered nearer the house (Pearson and Griffin 2001), which was dominated by tile (541 fragments, 3545g) rather than pottery (307 sherds, 382g).

Much of the contemporary archaeological material collected to date in this area has been from fieldwalking and there has been very little in the way of formal excavation given the scale and significance of this industry (D Hurst, pers comm). There is also little quantified data or illustration from the assemblages recovered previously, which limits detailed comparison. More detailed publication would be helpful for characterising the main kiln products and comparing these with assemblages used and discarded at other settlements. More detailed analysis and publication of these assemblages would make a useful research project in the future.

5.5 Discard/retention

Since a larger assemblage from the same feature has already been collected (representing about 50% of the original pit), it is suggested only forms that are particularly complete or interesting, or (less likely) forms not already identified, should be retained, if a selection is made for museum deposition.

6 Synthesis

The watching brief on the groundworks established the survival of further part of a medieval pottery waster pit excavated in 2006. The range of forms and dating of the assemblage is consistent with that recorded previously, but nonetheless the watching brief contributes to a growing body of evidence for medieval pottery and tile production in the Hanley Castle area generally and at Brickwalls Farm specifically.

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 Brickwalls farmhouse, Gilberts End, Hanley Castle, Worcestershire (NGR SO 8231 4227). It was undertaken for Osbournes Architects (the client) on behalf of their clients, Mr and Mrs Voss.

Malvern Hills District Council have granted permission for the construction of a single storey extension on the north side of the Brickwalls Farmhouse. Permission was granted to conditions, including a programme of archaeological works and it was established that an archaeological watching brief was appropriate mitigation.

The site is in an area known for medieval pottery production and archaeological works in 2006 immediately north of the development had established the survival of archaeological features, including a large pit of wasters fragments from objects which had been improperly fired and

discarded. The pit was partially excavated and a large assemblage of medieval pottery was retrieved.

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No further archaeological features were observed during the works. Natural gravels and marl were recorded in the remainder of the foundation trenches.

8 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, Mr Graeme Voss and Mrs Michelle Voss, Louisa Osbourne (Osbourne Architects) and Adrian Scruby (Historic Environment Advisor, Worcestershire County Council) and Aisling Nash (Historic Environment Advisor, Worcestershire County Council). Jane Evans would like to thank Laura Griffin and Derek Hurst for their advice on the pottery and tile.

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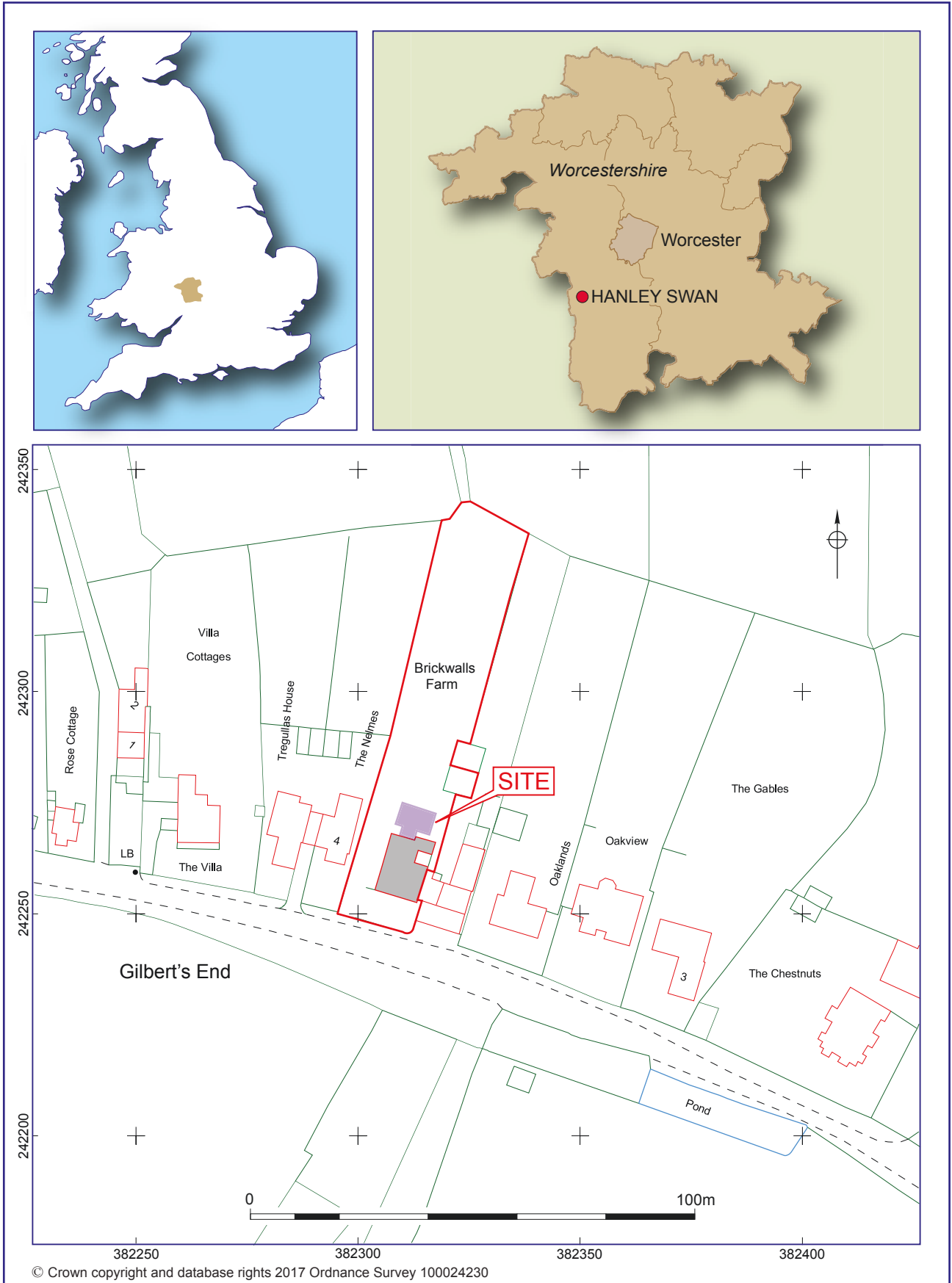
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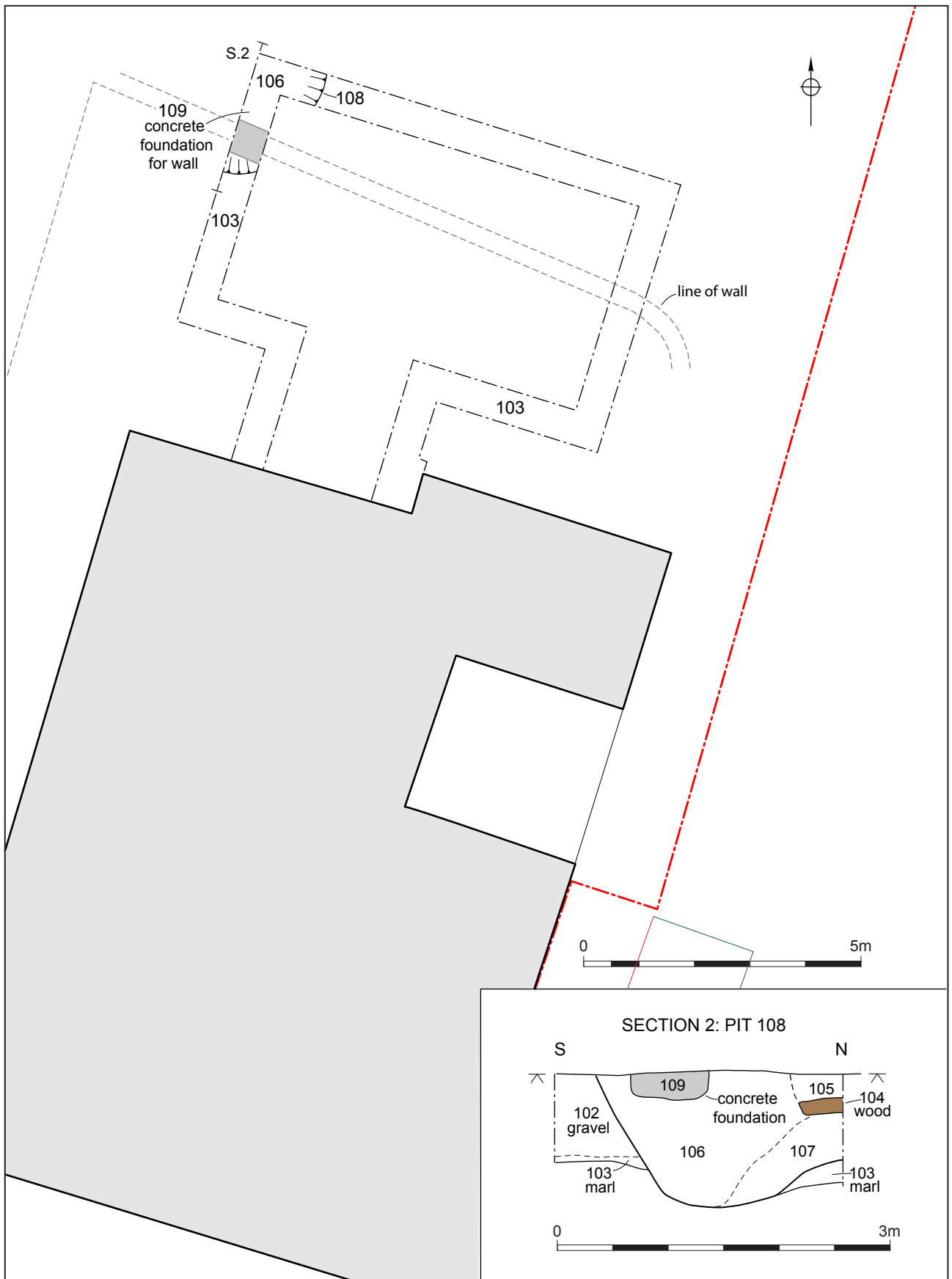
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Figures



Location of the site

Figure 1



Trench plan and section of pit 108

Figure 2

Plates



Plate 1 The site prior to excavation works, view east



Plate 2 The site stripped of modern surfacing and topsoil, view east



Plate 3 The southeastern corner of the foundations, showing natural gravels and marl. View west



Plate 4 The waster pit [108] when initially uncovered. View north



Plate 5 Waster pit [108] east facing section within trench after excavation. View west.



Plate 6 South facing section of waster pit [108]. View north.



Plate 7 Full extent of pit exposed in Northwestern corner of site foundations.



Plate 8 Foundation trenches after excavation. View southwest.



Plate 9 The rear of Brickwalls farmhouse following excavation of the foundations. View south.

Appendix 1 Trench descriptions

Trench 1

Maximum dimensions: Length: 10.00m Width: 6.00m Depth: 0.80 – 1.20m

Orientation: See figure 2

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
100	Topsoil	Modern garden topsoil and turf in raised landscaped garden area, containing modern brick, plastic, wood and metalwork	0.00 – +0.30m
101	Modern surfacing	Patio slabs, bricks and gravel surfacing laid over modern terram.	0.00m-+0.10m
102	Natural	Loose light grey silty gravels, natural deposit	0.00 – 0.60m
103	Natural	Natural firm red clay marl, mudstone with occasional greyish blue and yellow silt mottling.	0.30 – 1.20m+
104	Wooden boards	Modern wooden boards overlaying pit fill 106	0.00 – 0,30m
105	Cut for boarding	Modern intrusion cutting pit 108.	0.00 – 0.30m
106	Fill of pit	A virtually solid mass of ceramics within a matrix of soft dark brownish grey ashy silty clay with abundant pottery and tile. dimensions measure 2.20m North south and 1.50m E-W. about one quarter of pit uncovered in foundation trench footprint.	0.00 – 1.20m
107	Fill of pit	Moderately compact mid brown silty clay underlying pottery fill 106.	0.50 – 1.20m
108	Cut of Pit	SE quadrant of ovoid pit with steeply sloping sides. Truncated by modern brick wall concrete foundations and wooden panelling.	0.00 -1.20m
109	Concrete wall foundation	Concrete base for old brick wall, 0.50m wide and running E-W across northern side of foundation trench.	0.00m - 0.20m

Appendix 2 Technical information

The archive (site code: WSM 68496)

The archive consists of:

- 5 Context records AS1
- 1 Field progress reports AS2
- 1 Photographic records AS3
- 42 Digital photographs
- 1 Drawing number catalogues AS4
- 4 Scale drawings
- 1 Sample number catalogues AS18
- 1 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
