

Archaeological evaluation at Clay Green Farm, Folly Road, Alfrick, Worcestershire



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Worcestershire Archaeology
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Status: Approved by Adrian Scruby 20 March 2017
Date: 6 March 2017
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Project reference: P5036
Report reference: 2435
HER reference: WSM68504
Oasis id: fieldsec1-278228

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6 March 2017

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom Vaughan', with a stylized flourish at the end.

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Andrew Walsh

Illustrations by Laura Templeton

Summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at Clay Green Farm, Folly Road, Alfrick, Worcestershire (NGR SO 7506 5326). It was commissioned by Kartar Consulting on behalf of Two Rivers Developments Ltd who intends to develop the site for which two planning applications have been submitted. Four trenches were excavated across the site; three in the former farmyard complex and one in an adjacent paddock.

No archaeological features or deposits were present within the excavated trenches, and no residual finds were recovered from within the subsoil or topsoil, which directly overlay the undisturbed natural mudstone and sandstone. The presence of topsoil and subsoil below modern overburden confirm that the site was previously agricultural land and only developed as a farmyard in the 20th century.

Report

1 Background

1.1 Reasons for the project

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at Clay Green Farm, Alfrick, Worcestershire (NGR SO 7506 5326). It was commissioned by Kartar Consulting on behalf of Two Rivers Developments Ltd who intends to develop the site for which two planning applications have been submitted to Malvern Hills District Council (reference 14/00894 and 15/3062074). The 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 a brief prepared by the Planning Advisory Section of Worcestershire County Council (WCC 2016) and for which a written scheme of investigation (WSI) was produced (WA 2017). The project also conforms to the *Standard and guidance: Archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2014) and the *Standards and guidelines for archaeological projects in Worcestershire* (WCC 2010). The event reference for this project, given by the HER is WSM68504.

2 Aims

The aims of the evaluation as outlined in the WSI were to;

- determine the presence or absence of archaeological deposits beyond reasonable doubt;
- identify their location, nature date and preservation;
- assess their significance;
- assess the likely impact of the proposed development (where the extent of groundworks is known).

3 Methods

3.1 Personnel

The project was led by Andrew Walsh (BSc; MSc; ACIfA; FSA Scot); who joined Worcestershire Archaeology in 2013 and has been practicing archaeology since 2004, assisted by Nina O'Hare (BA). The project managers responsible for the quality of the project were Tom Vaughan (BA (hons.); MA; ACIfA) and Tom Rogers (BA (hons.); MSc). Illustrations were prepared by Laura Templeton (BA; PG Cert; MCIfA).

3.2 Documentary research

A *Heritage Settings Assessment* was undertaken in 2014 (CA 2014), and includes a general historical background to the site.

3.3 Fieldwork strategy

A WSI was prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2017). Fieldwork was undertaken on 27 and 28 February 2017. Four trenches, amounting to approximately 280m² in area, were excavated over the site area of 7,000ha, representing a sample of 4%. Trenches 1 to 3 were located within the former farmyard complex and positioned to fit within the existing constraints of the area. Trenches 1 and 2 were split due to the presence of electric cables and a large vehicle trailer. Trench 2 was also 'stepped out' to the depth of the deposits encountered. Trench 4 was positioned to the north-east of the farmyard complex in a proposed biodiversity area. The location of the trenches is indicated in Figure 2.

Deposits considered not to be significant were removed under archaeological supervision using a 360° tracked mechanical excavator, employing a toothless bucket. Subsequent excavation was undertaken by hand. Clean surfaces were inspected to determine the nature of the deposits.

Deposits were recorded according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012). On completion of excavation, the trenches were reinstated by replacing the excavated material.

3.4 Structural analysis

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

3.5 Artefact methodology

3.5.1 Artefact recovery policy

Recovery of artefacts was undertaken according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012). In the event no artefacts pre-dating the modern period were identified.

3.6 Environmental archaeology methodology

3.6.1 Sampling policy

Sampling was undertaken according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012). In the event no deposits were identified which were considered to be suitable for environmental analysis.

3.7 Statement of confidence in the methods and results

The methods adopted allow a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved.

4 The application site

4.1 Topography, geology and archaeological context

The site is located off Folly Road on the northern edge of the village of Alfrick. It is comprised of an irregular shaped parcel of land, which slopes gradually from south-west to north-east, from c 65 to 57mAOD.

The predominant soils on site belong to the Whimple 3 Soil Association (572f), comprised of Reddish fine loamy or fine silty over clayey soils with slowly permeable subsoils and slight seasonal waterlogging; some similar clayey soils on brows, slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged fine loamy and fine silty over clay soils on lower slopes; over drift, over Permo-Triassic and Carboniferous reddish mudstone (Soil Survey of England and Wales, 1983), the Sidmouth Mudstone Formation (BGS 2017).

There is some limited evidence for occupation within the vicinity of the site from the Palaeolithic period onwards. A Palaeolithic flint scatter has been recorded within the parish of Leigh to the east and scatters from the Mesolithic and Neolithic are recorded within Alfrick parish. Some flints have also been recovered, dated to the Bronze Age. There are a number of findspots of pottery, metallic artefacts and coins from the Iron Age and Roman periods recorded in the area, indicative of settlement somewhere in the surrounding landscape (CA 2014).

The medieval village of Alfrick was focused c 400m to the south of the site, centred around the 12th century church of St Mary Magdalen. The site lies on the northern edge of the village outside the historic settlement core. There have been finds of medieval coins and artefacts in the vicinity of Alfrick and the village has continued to expand northwards in recent centuries. A number of post-medieval buildings, dating from the 17th or 18th centuries survive, including Clay Green Farm, which dates from the 17th century (CA 2014). Historic mapping indicates that the farmyard complex, which is located to the north of the historic farmhouse, was in use as an orchard during the late 19th and early 20th century (OS 1885 and OS 1904).

4.2 Current land-use

The site was formerly a farmyard complex although most of the buildings had been abandoned when the evaluation was undertaken (Plate 1). Trench 4 was located in an equine paddock adjacent (Plate 2).

5 Results

5.1 Structural analysis

5.1.1 Phase 1: Natural deposits

A brownish red silty clay, consistent with the Sidmouth mudstone formation recorded by the BGS, was identified in all trenches (Plate 3). In Trenches 3 and 4 a blue grey sandstone bedrock was also identified underlying the mudstone (Plate 4).

5.1.2 Phase 2: Modern deposits

In all trenches a clay silt or silty clay subsoil was identified, 0.18m to 0.30m in depth, overlying the natural deposits. In Trenches 2-4 the subsoil was sealed by a clay silt topsoil, 0.20-0.44m in depth. No topsoil was identified in Trench 1.

Trenches 1 to 3, within the farmyard complex, were sealed by modern levelling and/or hardcore deposits consisting of broken tarmac, clinker, brick rubble and mineral stone, and measuring up to 0.7m in depth.

6 Synthesis

No archaeological features or deposits were present within the four trenches, and no residual finds were recovered from within the subsoil or topsoil, which directly overlay the undisturbed natural mudstone and sandstone. The presence of topsoil and subsoil below modern overburden confirm that the site was previously agricultural land and only developed as a farmyard in the 20th century.

7 Significance and the impact of the development

No archaeological features were present within the excavated trenches. If the trench sample is representative of the wider site then there will be no impact by the development on archaeological deposits of any significance.

8 Publication summary

Worcestershire Archaeology has a professional obligation to publish the results of archaeological projects within a reasonable period of time. To this end, Worcestershire Archaeology intends to use this summary as the basis for publication through local or regional journals. The client is requested to consider the content of this section as being acceptable for such publication.

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9 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project; Ebony Rose (Kartar Consulting), Stephen Ingram (Two

Rivers Developments Ltd), David Hughes (landowner of field) and Adrian Scruby (Historic Environment Planning Advisor, Worcestershire County Council).

10 Bibliography

BGS 2017 *Geology of Britain Viewer*, <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>, British Geological Survey, accessed 3 March 2017

CA 2014 *Clay Green Farm, Folly Road, Alfrick, Worcestershire: Heritage Settings Assessment*, Cotswold Archaeology, unpublished report 14239

CIfA 2014 *Standard and guidance: Archaeological field evaluation*, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists

OS 1885 *Worcestershire XXXII.11*, Ordnance Survey 1:2,500 scale map

OS 1904 *Worcestershire XXXII.11*, Ordnance Survey 1:2,500 scale map

Soil Survey of England and Wales, 1983 *Midland and Western England*, sheet 3, scale 1:250,000 + Legend for the 1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales (A brief explanation of the constituent soil associations)

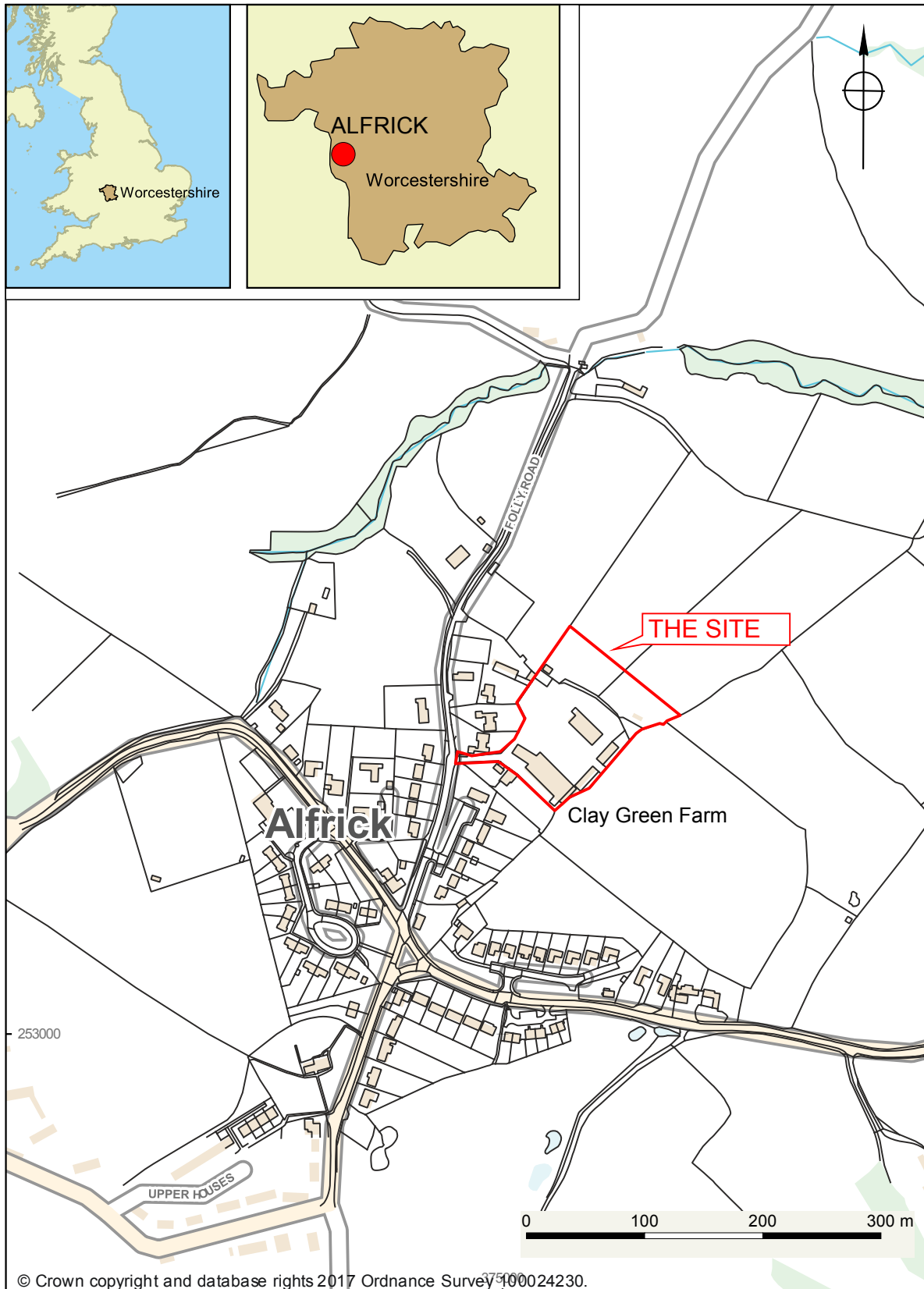
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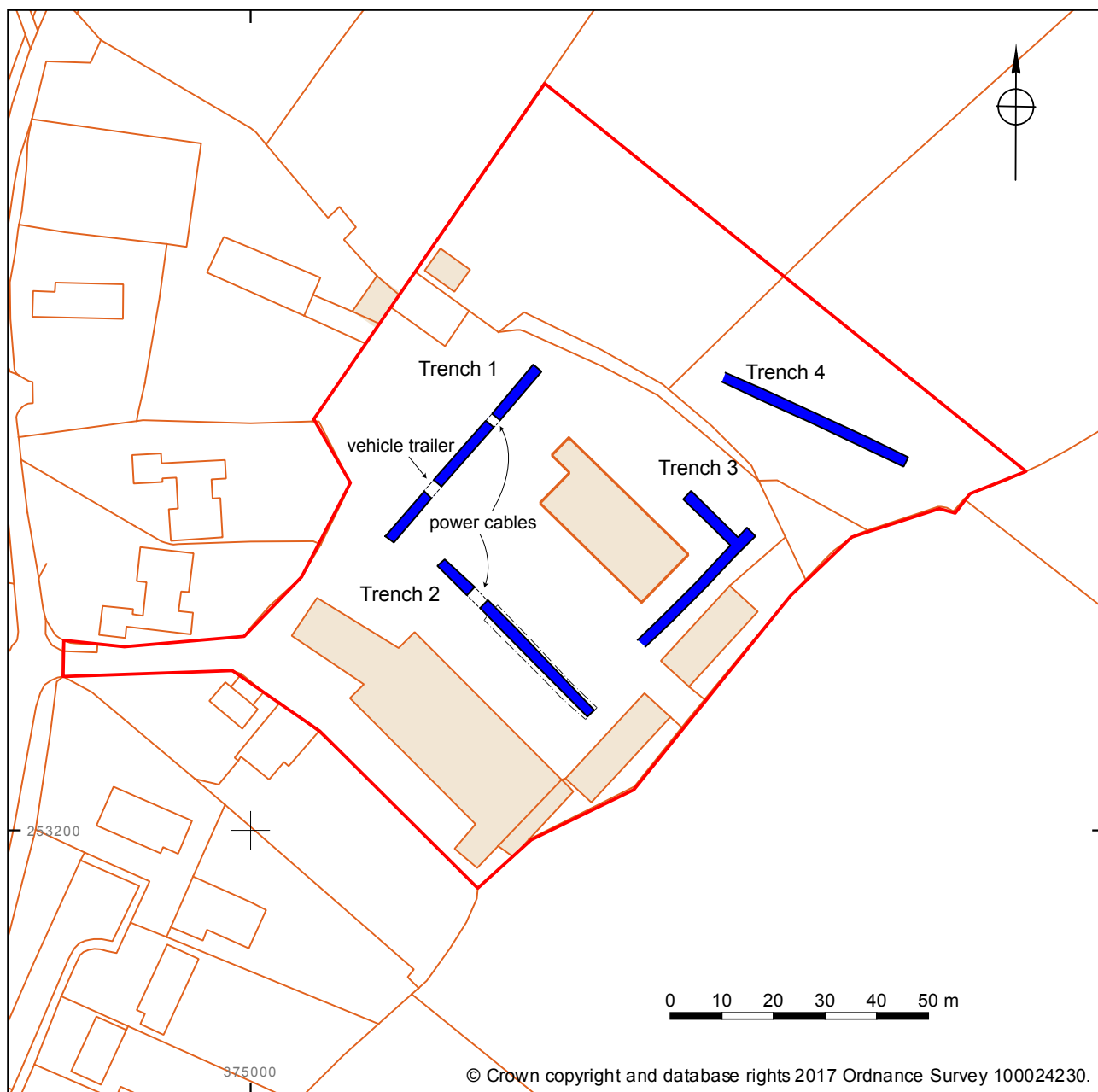
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Figures



Location of the site

Figure 1



Trench Plan

Figure 2

Plates



Plate 1: Trench 2, looking south-east, 2x 1m scales



Plate 2: Trench 4, looking north-west, 2x 1m scales



Plate 3: Trench 2: natural red mudstone, buried subsoil, topsoil, and modern overburden, 1m scale



Plate 4: Trench 4: natural grey blue sandstone (also in Trench 3), 1m scale

Appendix 1 Trench descriptions

Main deposit descriptions

Trench 1 - farmyard

Maximum dimensions: Length: 39m Width: 1.8m Depth: 0.64-1.02m

Orientation: North-east to south-west

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
100	Overburden	Broken tarmac, clinker, brick rubble and mineral stone; 0.32-0.72m thick	0.00-0.72m
101	Subsoil	Mid orangey brown clayey silt; 0.18m thick	0.32-1m
102	Natural	Mid brownish red silty clay mudstone	0.50m+

Trench 2 - farmyard

Maximum dimensions: Length: 38m Width: 1.8m (3.7m inc step) Depth: 0.62-1.76m

Orientation: North-west to south-east

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
200	Overburden	Broken tarmac, clinker, brick rubble and mineral stone; 0.34-1.06m thick	0.00-1.06m
201	Topsoil	Mid greyish brown clayey silt; 0.20-0.44m thick	0.34-1.50m
202	Subsoil	Mid orangey brown clayey silt; 0.22-0.30m thick	0.54-1.70m
203	Natural	Mid brownish red silty clay mudstone	0.62m+

Trench 3 - farmyard

Maximum dimensions: Length: 42m Width: 1.8m Depth: 0.6-0.8m

Orientation: North-east to south-west/ north-west to south-east

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
300	Overburden	Broken tarmac, clinker, brick rubble and mineral stone; 0.25-0.45m thick	0.00-0.45m
301	Topsoil	Mid greyish brown clayey silt; 0.10m thick	0.25-0.55m
302	Subsoil	Mid orangey brown clayey silt; 0.25m thick	0.35-0.80m
303	Natural	Mid brownish red silty clay mudstone; Light blue grey sandstone	0.60m+

Trench 4 - paddock

Maximum dimensions: Length: 39m Width: 1.8m Depth: 0.5m

Orientation: North-west to south-east

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
400	Topsoil	Mid greyish brown clayey silt; 0.25m thick	0.00-0.25m
401	Subsoil	Mid orangey brown clayey silt; 0.20m thick	0.25-0.45m
402	Natural	Mid brownish red silty clay mudstone; Light blue grey sandstone	0.45m+

Appendix 2 Technical information

The archive (site code: WSM68504)

The archive consists of:

- | | |
|-----|---------------------------------------|
| 1 | Field progress reports AS2 |
| 1 | Photographic records AS3 |
| 106 | Digital photographs |
| 4 | Trench record sheets AS41 |
| 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