

Archaeological Watching Brief at Tansy Cottage, Hanley Swan, Worcestershire



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Worcestershire Archaeology
Archive and Archaeology Service
The Hive, Sawmill Walk,
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Archaeological watching brief at Tansy Cottage, Hanley Swan, Worcestershire

Jamie Wilkins

With a contribution from C Jane Evans

Illustrations by Carolyn Hunt

1 Background information

<i>Client</i>	Mr B Greenaway on behalf of his client Mr C Smith
<i>National Grid reference</i>	SO 81385 43061
<i>Historic Environment Record reference</i>	WSM69181
<i>Planning authority</i>	Malvern Hills District Council
<i>Reference</i>	16/00279/OUT and APP/J1860/W/16/3152030
<i>Brief</i>	None given
<i>Project design</i>	WA 2016
<i>Project parameters</i>	ClfA 2014a

1.1 Previous archaeological work on the site

There has been no previous archaeological work undertaken on site.

1.2 The Application Site

The site is located within the northern extent of the garden of Tansy Cottage, Hanley Swan, at *circa* 34m above ordnance datum (AOD). The site was formerly a garden and vegetable patch and is bounded to the north by an orchard. The western boundary comprises a private drive, and the eastern extent of the site is bounded by a garden fence.

The bedrock geology for the area is described as Sidmouth Mudstone Formation, formed approximately 250 million years ago, and is overlain by superficial head deposits comprising clay, silts, sands and gravels (BGS 2017). These head deposits accumulate via downslope movements including landslide, solifluction, and hill wash; likely originating on the Malvern Hills. More specifically, a thin glacial deposit has previously been recorded overlaying the mudstone within Hanley Swan (Hurst 1994a).

The village of Hanley Swan sits within the parish of Hanley Castle, a major medieval pottery production centre. The parish was located within the Malvern Forest (Chase), and it is likely this area was chosen by potters for its abundance of the necessary raw materials: clay, tempering, and fuel (Hurst 1994a). Investigations have identified that this area was a major pottery production centre between the 14th and early 17th centuries, but also produced significant quantities of cooking pots and tripod pitchers in the 12th and 13th centuries (Hurst 1994a).

Previous archaeological investigations have provided further evidence of pottery production. In 1991 a kiln was excavated in a field to the east of the Balcony, Hanley Swan. The typology of the kiln was consistent with producing the oxidised Malvernian pottery of the late medieval period (Hurst 1994a). More recently, three separate phases of archaeological work at Brickwalls Farmhouse, Hanley Castle, identified three substantial pits filled with kiln waste (WSM30572; WSM35961; WSM68496). The kiln waste included a high number of misfired pottery sherds of a

late medieval date, and strongly indicates the presence of a kiln within the immediate vicinity (Pearson and Griffin 2001; Hurst 2009; Arnold 2017).

2 Aims

The aims of the watching brief are 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 General specification for fieldwork

WA 2012

3.2 Sources consulted

Published and grey literature sources are listed in the bibliography.

3.3 Dates of fieldwork

7 April 2017 to 13 April 2017

3.4 Area of site

c 107.86m²

3.5 Sampling

Area sampled c 31.03m². Indicated on Fig 2

Sample size c 28%

3.6 Dimensions of excavated areas observed –

Foundations Length 12.50m

width 0.60m

depth 0.98m – 1.00m

3.7 Access to or visibility of deposits

Observation of the excavated areas was undertaken during and after machine excavation. The exposed surfaces were sufficiently clean to observe well-differentiated archaeological deposits; however, with trenching constrained to a width of 0.60m, interpretations may be limited. The depth of the trenches (0.98m – 1.00m) allowed safe access to record the deposits present.

3.8 Artefact methodology, by C Jane Evans

The finds work reported here conforms with the following guidance: for findwork by CfA (2014b), for archive creation by AAF (2011) and for museum deposition by SMA (1993).

3.8.1 Recovery policy

The artefact recovery policy conformed to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012; appendix 2).

3.8.2 Method of analysis

All hand-retrieved finds were examined. They were identified, quantified and dated to period. A *terminus post quem* date was produced for each stratified context. All information was recorded on a *pro forma* Access database.

Artefacts from environmental samples were examined.

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

3.9 Statement of confidence

Access to, and visibility of, deposits allowed a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved.

4 Deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
100	Topsoil	Friable, dark greyish-brown, clay loam. Inclusions comprise frequent sub-angular pebbles, charcoal flecking, pottery sherds, ceramic building material and rooting.	0m – 0.32m
101	Subsoil	Moderately compact, mid greyish-brown, silty clay. Inclusions comprise frequent sub-angular gravels, occasional pottery sherds, ceramic building material, and charcoal flecking.	0.32m – 0.47m
102	Glacial Gravel	Loose, light grey, sub-angular gravels in a silty sand matrix. Varies in depth from 0.10m to 0.22m, and is present above red marl clay.	0.47m – 0.69m
103	Natural	Compact, mid brownish red, sandy clay. Red marl natural, with a slight interface with gravel deposit (102) in the upper 0.10m.	0.69m +

5 Structural Analysis

The stratigraphic sequence was consistent across the site, and no features or deposits of archaeological interest were identified.

A dark clay-loam topsoil was present across the entirety of the site. This deposit had a maximum thickness of 0.32m and contained cultural material typically associated with domestic refuse. Modern refuse, including pottery and plastics, was observed but not retained, and can be attributed to the 21st century use of this area as a vegetable patch.

The topsoil sealed a thin band of subsoil, which comprised a greyish-brown silty clay, containing frequent sub-angular gravels. It appeared to suggest an interface between a glacial deposit 102 and topsoil 100. This deposit contained some cultural material, and its presence may reflect an earlier agricultural function.

A glacial fan gravel deposit 102 was observed to seal a red clay marl deposit 103. Identified at 0.47m below ground surface, it comprised grey, sub-angular gravels in a silty sand matrix. The thickness of this deposit varied between 0.10m and 0.22m. The gravels were notable for their sub-angular form. The red marl was present between 0.57m and 0.69m below ground surface. This substrate, commonly referred to as Mercian Mudstone, shared an interface with the glacial gravels, where they had become pressed into the top 0.10m of the clay.

5.1 Artefactual Analysis by C Jane Evans

The artefactual assemblage recovered is summarised in Tables 1 and 2. A small quantity of late medieval/early post medieval pottery and tile was recovered from the topsoil (100) and subsoil (101).

period	material class	material subtype	object specific type	count	weight(g)
late med/early post-med	ceramic	earthenware	pot	8	179
late med/early post-med	ceramic	fired clay	roof tile	1	65

Table 1: Quantification of the assemblage

Summary of artefactual evidence by period

Late medieval/early post-medieval pottery and tile

A small quantity of late-medieval/early post medieval pottery, dating to the late 15th to early 17th century, was recovered from the topsoil and subsoil. All the pottery was in Oxidised glazed Malvernian ware (Fabric 69) and may well have been produced in the vicinity of the site. Forms included a concave-sided flared bowl, Deansway type 9 (Bryant 2004, 304, fig 87) and a base, with a possible foot scar indicating it may have come from a bung hole jar (ibid type 8). There is known to be pottery production in the Hanley Castle area (Hurst 1994a) and the forms are similar to types found at Brickwalls Farm (Pearson and Griffin 2001, Hurst 2009, Hurst 2010, Evans 2017). The only other finds were a fragment of Malvernian roof tile, also likely to have been produced locally, and an unidentified fragment with splashes of glaze. The latter might possibly be associated with the structure of a kiln or kiln furniture.

context	material class	material subtype	object specific type	count	weight(g)	start date	end date
100	ceramic	earthenware	pot	3	80	late 15th	early 17th
101	ceramic	earthenware	pot	5	99	late 15th	early 17th
		fired clay	roof tile	1	65	late 15th?	early 17th?

Table 2: Summary of context dating based on artefacts

5.2 Synthesis

The finds add to the growing body of evidence for medieval activity in the Hanley Castle area.

5.3 Significance

5.3.1 Nature of the archaeological interest in the site

Nature of the archaeological interest in the site

The finds suggest some connection to local pottery production but are unstratified and too few in number to indicate any significant activity.

5.4 Recommendations

5.4.1 Further analysis and reporting

No further analysis is required

5.4.2 Discard and retention

The finds could be considered for discard, in consultation with the receiving museum.

6 Conclusions

No significant archaeological features or deposits were present within the foundation trenches excavated during this project. Artefacts recovered from the topsoil and subsoil comprises local Malvernian fabrics and provides a date ranging from the late 15th to early 17th century. This is consistent with the tail end of pottery production in this area, and indicates activity from this date within the vicinity. The assemblage is typical of late medieval and post-medieval domestic refuse.

Of particular note, and to be discussed briefly here, is the presence of the glacial fan gravels observed in this project. These gravels, first referred to as Malvernian gravels (Wills 1938), are fluvio-glacial in origin, but little else is known about them (James *et al* 1983). Indeed they are not even recorded on the British Geological Survey *Geology of Britain Viewer*. However, Hurst (1994a; pers. comm. 2017) argues that the presence of the gravels helps to explain why the parish of Hanley Castle became a major medieval pottery production centre. The gravels were included as tempering in the pottery fabric, and Hurst believes the small and sub-angular form of the gravel provided increased strength to the ceramic. This is supported by the results of a watching brief at Hanley Castle (Pearson and Griffin 2001). This project identified clay pitting and deliberate dumping of Malvernian gravels, interpreted as stockpiling of raw materials for pottery production. It

therefore appears likely that the Malvernian gravels can be included in a number of factors which contributed to the development of pottery manufacture in this area.

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 the request of Mr B Greenaway, on behalf of his client Mr C Smith, at Tansy Cottage, Hanley Swan, Worcestershire (NGR SO 81385 43061; HER ref WSM69181). The proposed development comprised a single story home, and is situated within an area of high archaeological potential.

Groundworks comprised a topsoil strip, and the excavation of foundation trenches. No significant archaeological features or deposits were observed within the development area. Ceramic material dating from the late 15th to early 17th centuries was recovered from the topsoil and subsoil, and indicates activity of this date within the vicinity. It also remains consistent with the tail end of pottery production within this area.

Of particular note was the presence of Malvernian gravels; a drift geology with fluvio-glacial origins. This substrate reflects glacial activity associated with the Malvern Hills, and may have been a key factor in the production of Malvernian ware pottery within the parish of Hanley Castle.

8 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, Mr B Greenaway (client), Mr C Smith (client), David Cale (D C Building Developments Ltd), Mark Grizzell (Grizzell Groundworks), and Adiran Scruby (Curator).

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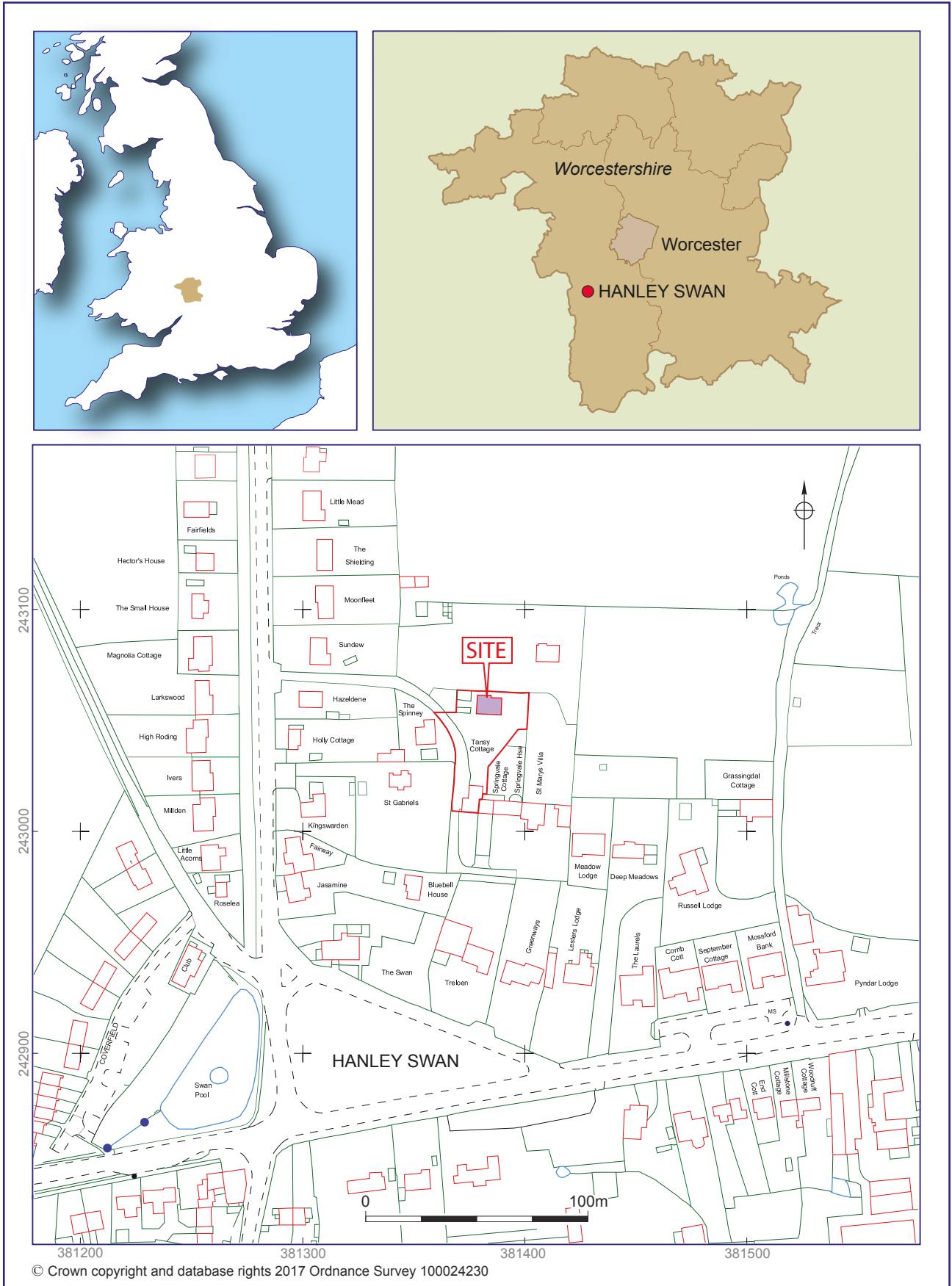
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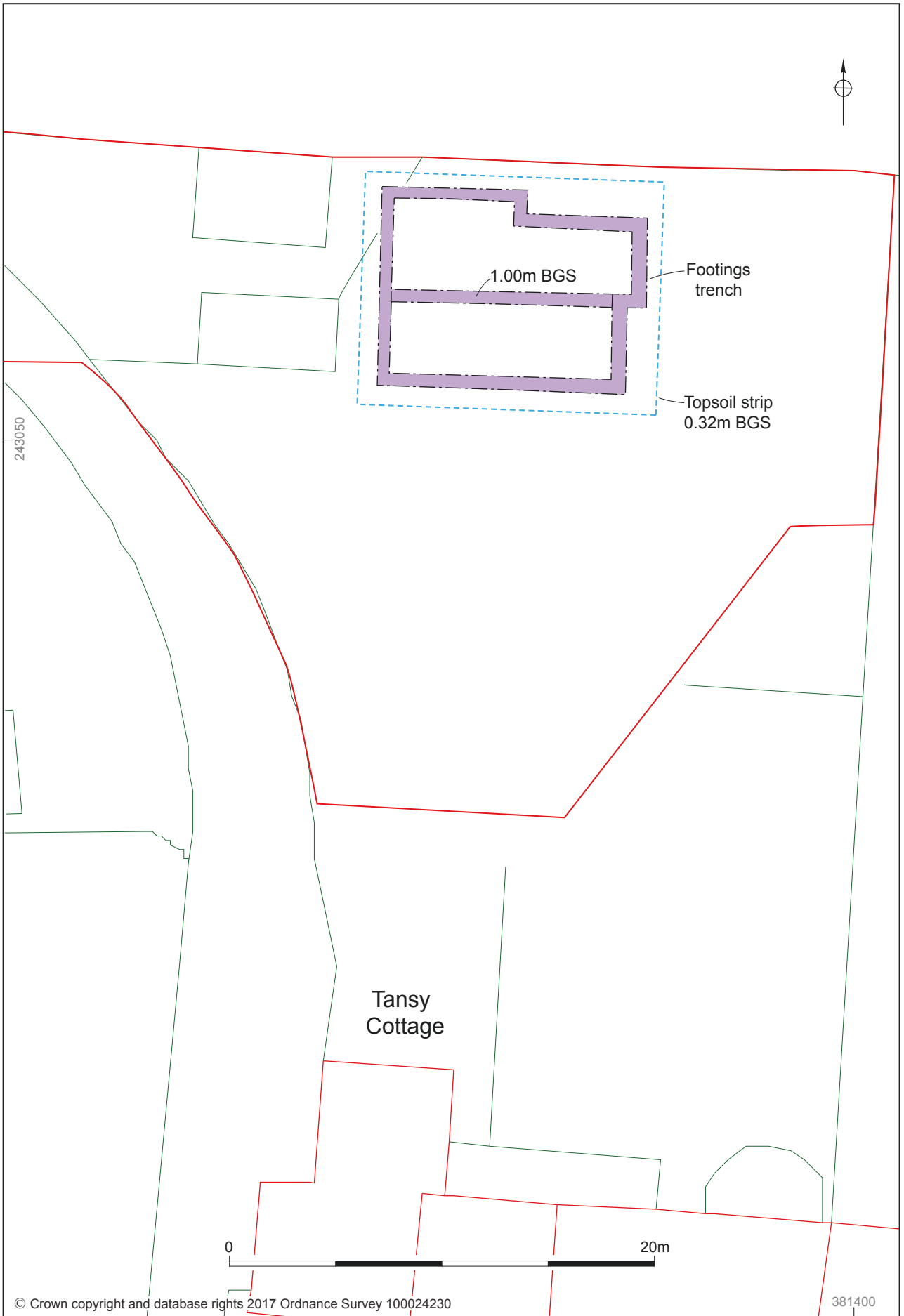
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Figures



Location of the site

Figure 1



Trench location plan

Figure 2

Plates



Plate 1. Topsoil strip of the development area. View west. Scales 1m.



Plate 2. Strip foundation trench in south-east corner. View west. Scales 1m.



Plate 3. Strip foundation trench in the north-east of site. View north. Scale 1m.



Plate 4. North facing baulk of the foundation trench. A thin band of subsoil 101 can be seen above grey, glacial fan gravels 102, which sit above red marl clay natural 103. View south. Scale 0.5m.



Plate 5. Strip foundation trenches at western end of site. View north. Scales 1m.



Plate 6. Strip foundation trench in the north of site. Trenching in the rear of shot has been concreted. View east. Scale 1m.

Appendix 1 Technical information

The archive (site code: WSM 69181)

The archive consists of:

- 1 Field progress reports AS2
- 1 Photographic records AS3
- 31 Digital photographs
- 1 Trench record sheets AS41
- 1 Box of finds
- 1 Computer disk
- 1 Copy of this report (bound hard copy)

The project archive is intended to be placed at:

Worcestershire County Museum
Museums Worcestershire
Hartlebury Castle
Hartlebury
Near Kidderminster
Worcestershire DY11 7XZ
Tel Hartlebury (01299) 250416

Summary of data for Worcestershire HER

WSM 69181 (event HER number)

P4978

There was no key material or groups from this site.

Artefacts

period (note 1)	material class	object specific type	start date	end date	count	weight(g)	specialist report (note 2)
late med/early post-med	ceramic	pot	late 15th	early 17th	8	179	yes
late med/early post-med	ceramic	roof tile	late 15th?	early 17th?	1	65	yes

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. If you have more specific dates, such as 13th to 14th century, please use these instead. Specific date ranges which cross general period boundaries can also be used, for example 15th to 17th century.

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
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	

2. Not all evaluations of small excavation assemblages have specialist reports on all classes of objects. An identification (eg clay pipe) and a 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.