

Archaeological watching brief and evaluation of land off Pershore Road, Hampton, Evesham, Worcestershire (Stage 2)



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Tim Cornah

Illustrations by Carolyn Hunt

Summary

An archaeological watching brief and evaluation was undertaken land off Pershore Road, Hampton, Evesham, Worcestershire (Stage 2; NGR SP 02019 43251). It was undertaken on behalf of CgMs Consulting, whose clients, Bellway Homes and Bloor Homes, intend the residential development of the site. Planning permission has been granted.

Previous archaeological assessment of this site and neighbouring areas suggested a limited level of archaeological activity. The eleven trenches within this project themselves contained no archaeologically significant features. The features recorded related to drainage, a track surface and the site's most recent use as an orchard.

Report

1 Background

1.1 Reasons for the project

An archaeological watching brief and evaluation was undertaken at land off Pershore Road, Hampton, Evesham, Worcestershire (phase 2; NGR SP 02019 43251). It was commissioned by CgMs Consulting, whose clients, Bellway Homes and Bloor Homes, intend the residential development of the site. Planning permission has been granted by Wychavon District Council (reference number W/12/02490).

No brief has been prepared by the curator (Planning Advisory Section, Archive and Archaeology Service, Worcestershire County Council), but this project conforms to the generality of briefs prepared by the curator. The site is considered by the curator to have the potential to affect heritage assets with significant archaeological interest.

The project also conforms to the *Standard and guidance: Archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2014a), *Standard and guidance: Archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014b), the *Standards and guidelines for archaeological projects in Worcestershire* (WCC 2010), and *Requirements for an archaeological watching brief as a condition of planning consent* (WCC 2014).

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.

The aims of the evaluation were;

- to describe any heritage asset with archaeological interest;
- to assess the nature, importance and extent of any heritage asset;
- to assess the impact of the application on any heritage asset.

Previous investigations on adjacent sites indicate that significant deposits were unlikely to be revealed, but if present they may be defined as those likely to be of Prehistoric, Roman or later date.

3 Methods

3.1 Personnel

The project was led by Timothy Cornah (BA (hons), MSc); who joined Worcestershire Archaeology in 2006 and has been practicing archaeology since 2003, assisted by Graham Arnold (BA (hons), MSc), Peter Lovett (BSc (hons)) and Elspeth Iliff (MSc (hons)). The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Tom Vaughan (BA (hons)). Illustrations were prepared by Carolyn Hunt (BSc (hons); PG Cert; MCIfA), Laura Templeton (BA; PG Cert; MCIfA).

3.2 Documentary research

The archaeological background to the site is given in a number of reports (GSB Prospection Ltd 2012, Robson-Glyde 2010, Woodiwiss 2016a and b).

3.3 List of sources consulted

Cartographic sources

- 1811 Survey of the Avon Valley, Two-inch series, surveyed by Robert Dawson
- 1st edition 1886 Ordnance Survey, 1:10,560

- 1904 Ordnance Survey, 1:10,560
- 1923 Ordnance Survey, 1:10,560
- 1938 Ordnance Survey, 1:10,560

Documentary sources

Published and grey literature sources are listed in the bibliography.

3.4 Fieldwork strategy

A detailed specification has been prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2017).

Fieldwork was undertaken between 27 March and 25 April 2017. The site reference number used by the Historic Environment Record to record archaeological "events", and site code used in the archive is WSM 68497.

The first three areas observed related to the watching brief and are shown on Figure 2. The remaining eight evaluation trenches, amounting to 672m² in area, were excavated over the site area of approximately 5.1 hectares, representing a sample of 1.3% (Fig 2). The project was initially undertaken as a watching brief with Trenches 1 to 3 relating to the observation of initial groundworks. A strategy of using evaluation trenches to assess the wider site was then developed in order to better understand the impact on the rest of the area in a more cost effective way. The eight evaluation trenches were located in order to gain a representative sample of the remainder of the site, though the majority of these had to be moved to some degree in order to avoid obstructions relating to the ongoing construction works. Three further trenches were omitted due to their impracticality. As no archaeologically significant features were present, no further watching brief was undertaken. This strategy was agreed with the client and curator.

Deposits considered not to be significant were removed using a 360° tracked excavator, employing a toothless bucket and under 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).

3.5 Structural analysis

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

3.6 Artefacts

No pre-modern artefacts were present, no artefacts were retained for further analysis.

3.7 Environmental archaeology

No deposits suitable for environmental analysis were present on the site.

3.8 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. However, some site constraints and conditions precluded an investigation of the site as fully intended. This included two evaluation trenches that could not be excavated due to the presence of spoil heaps and vegetation. Trench 9 was erroneously placed partially outside of the development area. One of the watching brief areas consisted of topsoil strip only.

4 The application site

4.1 Topography, geology and archaeological context

The site is located at a maximum height of approximately 52m and is on a slightly elevated position over looking both Hampton and Evesham towards the east. To the west, the site slopes down towards the Merry Brook. The geology of the site is interbedded mudstone and limestone of the Wilmcote Limestone member (BGS 2017). The soils consist of permeable clayey soils of the Evesham Association (Soil survey of England and Wales 1:50,000 map, sheet 150 and Ragg *et al* 1986).

Previous research into the site area (Robson-Glyde 2010) suggested only a moderate potential for Romano-British remains, with low to moderate potential for prehistoric and Saxon remains. Given the presence of ridge and furrow in the vicinity, the medieval activity in the area is likely to have related only to agriculture. The mapping from the 19th century onwards suggests an agricultural use, with the site having become an orchard by the early 20th century.

Three further archaeological projects within the vicinity have further confirmed a low potential for the site (*cf* GSB Prospection Ltd 2012, Woodiwiss 2016a and b) with no archaeologically significant features having been identified.

4.2 Current land-use

The development site was formerly agricultural fields, predominantly used as orchards. The works were undertaken well after development had commenced, with the trees of the orchard and much of the topsoil removal already having taken place.

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

Natural deposits (202, 302, 402, 502, 601, 702, 801, 901, 1001, and 1101) consisted of compact yellow and blue grey clays. These were present at a depth of around 0.20m (below ground surface) on the eastern side of the site, though this may in part be due to modern removal of topsoil and the absence of subsoils in this area. They were present at a maximum depth of 0.70m in Trench 4.

5.1.2 Phase 2: Undated deposits

Subsoil deposits were present along the eastern side of the site (201, 301, 401, 501, and 701). These consisted of firm greenish yellow and brown clay silts. Given that these deposits were present along the lower eastern side of the site, an element of colluvial process is likely. It is likely that these deposits have been removed by ploughing on the western side of the site.

5.1.3 Phase 3: Modern deposits

Topsoil (100, 200, 300, 400, 500, 600, 700, 800, 900, 1000, and 1100) consisted of firm mid-greyish brown clay loams. These existed to a depth of between 0.12m and 0.40m. These had been reduced across most of the site by modern soil stripping.

A number of ceramic land drains were present in both the topsoil and the natural. At the western end of Trench 8, a diffuse, shallow and heavily rooted feature was present running east to west. This aligned closely the 20th century orchard planting. Within Trench 7, a stone and hard-core deposit was present above the topsoil. This was part of a track, aligned north to south, and visible on the surface and on 20th century mapping of the site

6 Synthesis

Previous archaeological assessment of this site and neighbouring areas suggested a limited level of archaeological activity. The eleven trenches within this project themselves contained no archaeologically significant features, with the only features relating to drainage, a track surface and its modern use as an orchard.

6.1 Research frameworks

No archaeologically significant archaeological features were present on this site. It therefore does not fit into any known research frameworks.

7 Significance and impact of the development

Within the eleven trenches excavated across the site, no significant archaeological features were present. The archaeological impact of the groundworks associated with the development is therefore likely to be negligible.

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.

An archaeological watching brief and evaluation was undertaken for CgMs Consulting on behalf of Bloor Homes and Bellway Homes of land off Pershore Road, Hampton, Evesham, Worcestershire (Stage 2) (NGR SP 02019 43251; HER ref. WSM 68497).

Previous archaeological assessment of this site and neighbouring areas suggested a limited level of archaeological activity. The eleven trenches within the site themselves contained no archaeologically significant features, with the only features recorded relating to drainage, a track surface and its most recent use as an orchard.

9 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, Paul Clark (Associate Director, CgMs Consulting) and Adrian Scruby (Historic Environment Advisor; Worcestershire County Council).

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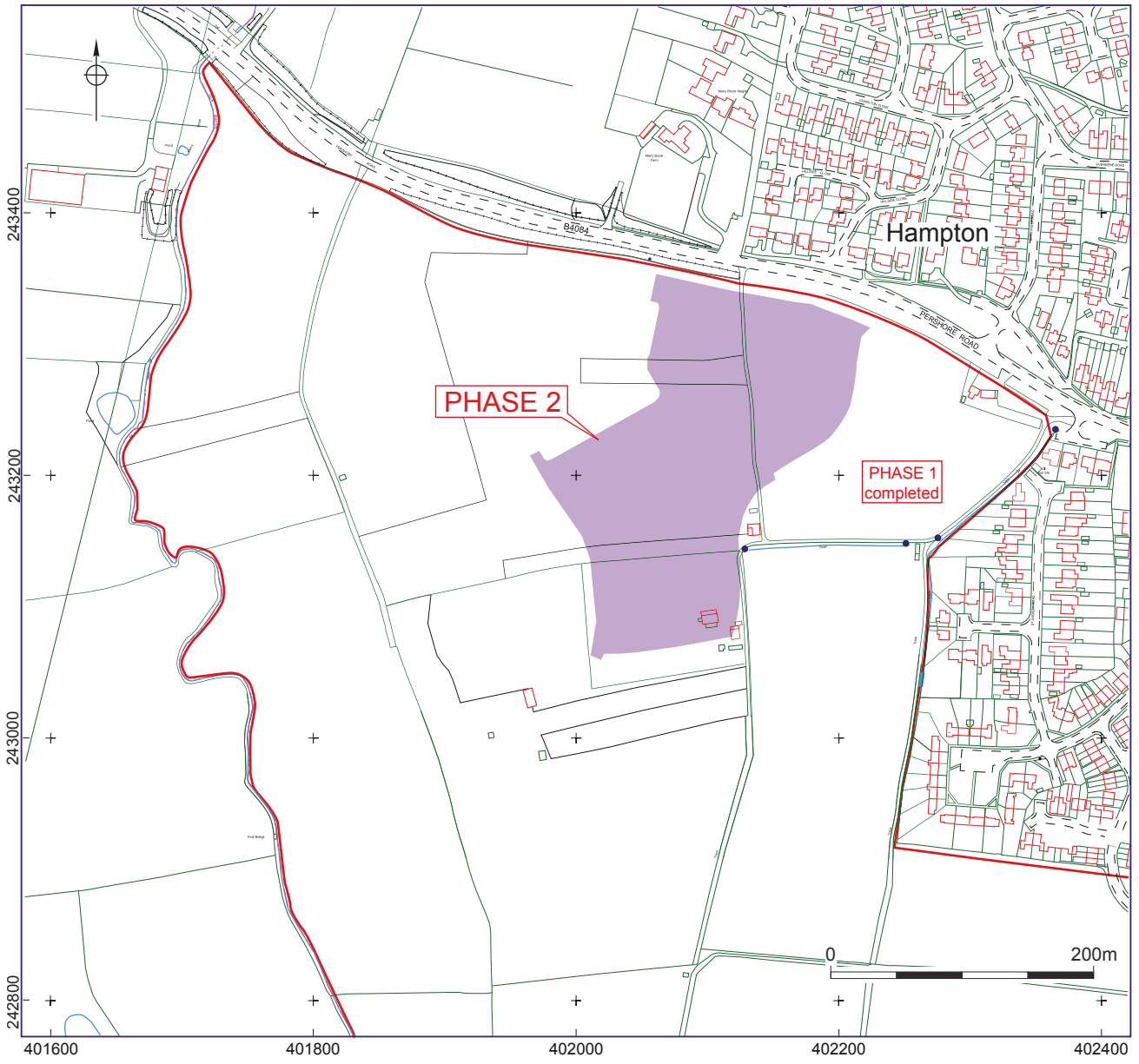
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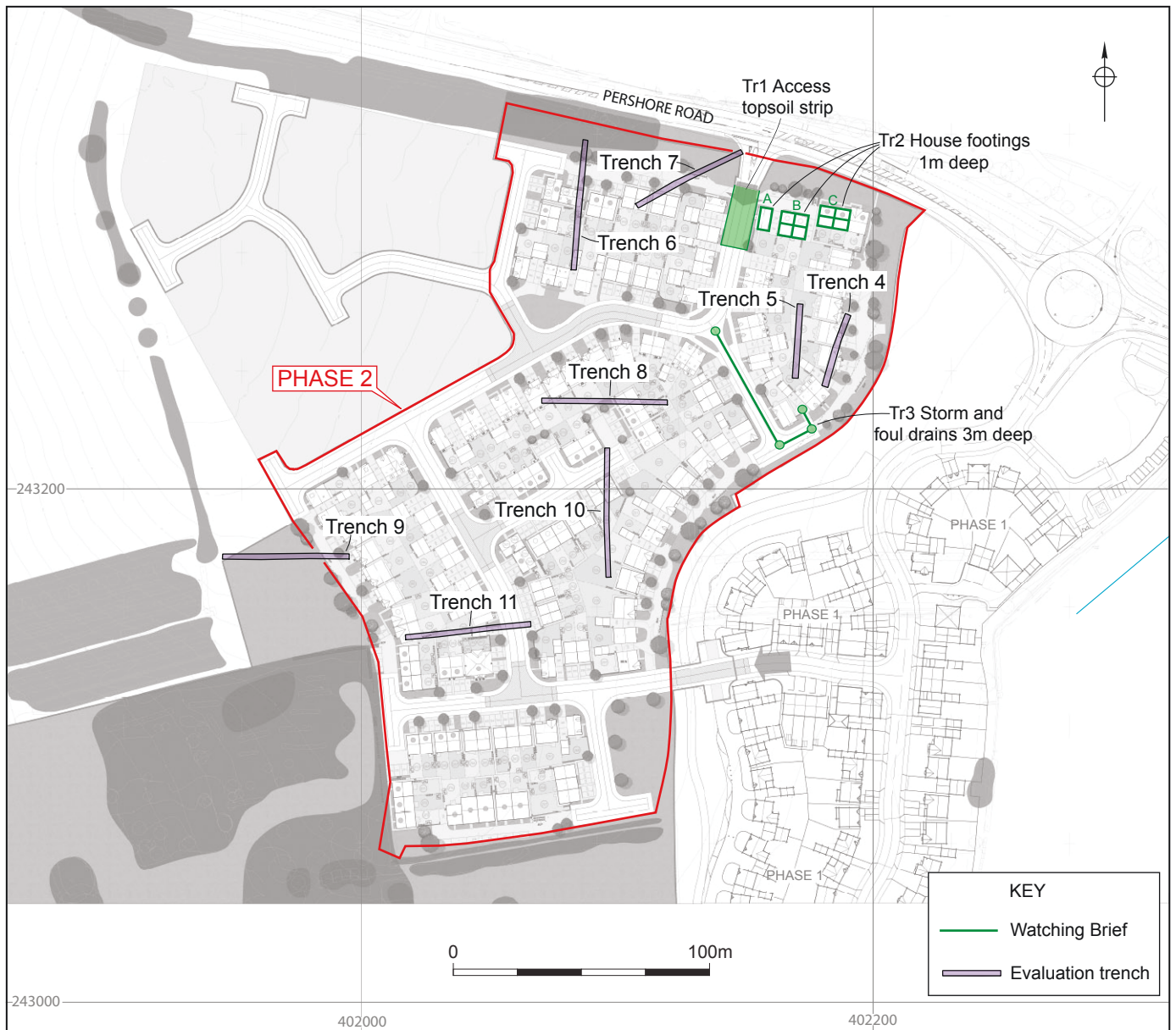
Figures



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Location of Phase 2 area

Figure 1



Trench location plan (based upon Pegasus Design Drg BIR5158_004-1-Planning Layout-04-07-16) Figure 2

Plates



Plate 1 Trench 1 access strip, looking south



Plate 2 Trench 2 house foundations, looking south-east



Plate 3 Trench 2 house foundations, looking north



Plate 4 Trench 3, looking north-west



Plate 5 Trench 5, looking north



Plate 6 Trench 6, looking north



Plate 7 Trench 10, looking north



Plate 8 Trench 9, showing some modern vehicle scarring, looking west

Appendix 1 Trench descriptions

Main deposit descriptions

Trench 1

Site area: Phase 2

Maximum dimensions: Length: 24m Width: 10m Depth: 0.20m

Orientation: N-S

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
100	Topsoil	Firm mid greyish brown silty clay loam	0->0.20m

Trench 2

Site area: Phase 2

Maximum dimensions: Length: up to 11m Width: up to 5m Depth: 1m

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
200	Topsoil	Firm mid greyish brown silty clay loam	0-0.20m
201	Subsoil	Compact mid brown silty clay	0.20-0.58m
202	Natural	Firm brownish yellow clay with blue grey mottling	0.58-m

Trench 3

Site area: Phase 2

Maximum dimensions: Length: 52m Width: 0.80m Depth: 3m

Orientation: NW-SE

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
300	Topsoil	Firm mid greyish brown silty clay loam	0-0.20m
301	Subsoil	Compact mid brown silty clay	0.20-0.80m
302	Natural	Firm brownish yellow clay with blue grey mottling	0.80-3m

Trench 4

Site area: Phase 2

Maximum dimensions: Length: 30m Width: 2.20m Depth: 0.82m

Orientation: NE-SW

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
400	Topsoil	Firm mid greyish brown silty clay loam	0-0.13m
401	Subsoil	Compact mid brownish yellow silty clay with occasional rooting	0.13-0.73
402	Natural	Firm mid blue clay with degraded limestone fragments	0.73-0.83m

Trench 5

Site area: Phase 2

Maximum dimensions: Length: 30m Width: 2.2m Depth: 0.84m

Orientation: N-S

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
500	Topsoil	Firm mid greyish brown silty clay loam	0-0.12m
501	Subsoil	Compact mid brownish yellow silty clay with occasional rooting	0.12-0.65m
502	Natural	Firm mid blue and yellow clay with degraded limestone fragments	0.57-0.84m

Trench 6

Site area: Phase 2

Maximum dimensions: Length: 50m Width: 1.8m Depth: 0.30m

Orientation: N-S

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
600	Topsoil	Firm mid greyish brown silty clay loam	0-0.25m
601	Natural	Firm yellow grey clay with some limestone flecking	0.25-0.30m

Trench 7

Site area: Phase 2

Maximum dimensions: Length: 50m Width: 1.8m Depth: 0.65m

Orientation: NE-SW

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
700	Topsoil	Firm mid greyish brown silty clay loam	0-0.40m
701	Subsoil	Firm mid greyish green clay silt	0.40-0.60m
702	Natural	Firm yellow grey clay with some limestone flecking	0.60-0.65m
703	Surface	Lias stone and rubble modern track surface	0-0.15m

Trench 8

Site area: Phase 2

Maximum dimensions: Length: 50m Width: 1.8m Depth: 0.40m

Orientation: NE-SW

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
800	Topsoil	Firm mid greyish brown silty clay loam	0-0.25m
801	Natural	Firm yellow grey clay with some limestone flecking	0.25-0.40m
803	Rooting	E-W aligned rooting disturbance, part of a former orchard row	Not excavated

Trench 9

Site area: Phase 2

Maximum dimensions: Length: 50m Width: 1.8m Depth: 0.30m

Orientation: E-W

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
900	Topsoil	Firm mid greyish brown silty clay loam	0-0.20m
901	Natural	Firm yellow grey clay with some limestone flecking	0.20-0.30m

Trench 10

Site area: Phase 2

Maximum dimensions: Length: 50m Width: 1.8m Depth: 0.25m

Orientation: N-S

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
1000	Topsoil	Firm mid greyish brown silty clay loam	0-0.16m
1001	Natural	Firm yellow grey clay with some limestone flecking	0.16-0.25m

Trench 11

Site area: Phase 2

Maximum dimensions: Length: 50m Width: 1.80m Depth: 0.36m

Orientation: E-W

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
1100	Topsoil	Firm mid greyish brown silty clay loam	0-0.25m
1101	Natural	Firm yellow grey clay with some limestone flecking	0.25-0.36m

Appendix 2 Technical information

The archive (site code: WSM 68497)

The archive consists of:

- 3 Field progress reports AS2
- 1 Photographic records AS3
- 207 Digital photographs
- 9 Trench record sheets AS41
- 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
