

# Archaeological watching brief at 42, Dagtail Lane, Dagtail End, Redditch, Worcestershire



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## **Archaeological watching brief at 42, Dagtail Lane, Dagtail End, Redditch, Worcestershire**

Jem Brewer

With contributions by Laura Griffin and Elizabeth Pearson

### **Summary**

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at 42, Dagtail Lane, Dagtail End, Redditch, Worcestershire (NGR SP 03884 63546), on behalf of Mr John Bennett, who intended to construct a new dormer bungalow for which a planning application has been submitted.

Three trenches were observed across the site which was considered to have the potential to contain medieval or post-medieval remains which are present in the wider area.

The trenches revealed a full stratigraphic soil profile, and were excavated to the natural clays and gravels. No significant archaeological features, deposits, structures, horizons or layers were revealed, nor artefacts recovered. A line of postholes denoting a modern fence line, and a segmented gully were revealed. The gully was undated and of unknown function, but may relate to the modern postholes, as they were orientated perpendicular to the gully, which was parallel to the present street frontage. All finds were of modern date. A sample taken from the gully did not contain identifiable environmental remains.

## Report

### 1 Background

#### 1.1 Reasons for the project

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at 42, Dagtail Lane, Dagtail End, Redditch, Worcestershire (NGR SP 03884 63546; Fig 1). It was commissioned by Sam Bennett, who intended to construct a new dormer bungalow with associated landscaping and access for which a planning application has been submitted to Redditch Borough Council (reference 2015/108/FUL).

The proposed development site is considered to include heritage assets and potential heritage assets, the significance of which may be affected by the application (WSM 70286).

The project conforms to a brief prepared by Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service (WCC 2016) for which a project proposal (including detailed specification) was produced (WA 2018).

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

The event reference for this project, given by the HER is WSM 70286.

### 2 Aims

The aims of the archaeological 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 Andrew Mann (BA (hons.); MSc, MIfA). The report was prepared by Jem Brewer (BA (hons.), PCIfA). The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Tom Vaughan (BA (hons. Dunelm); MA ; ACIfA). Illustrations were prepared by Carolyn Hunt (BSc (hons.); PG Cert; MCIIfA). Elizabeth Pearson (MSc; ACIfA) contributed the environmental report, Laura Griffin (BA (hons.); PG Cert; ACIfA) contributed the finds report.

#### 3.2 Documentary research

Prior to fieldwork commencing a search was made of the Historic Environment Record (HER), based on a 500m radius of the grid reference noted above.

#### 3.3 List of sources consulted

##### *Cartographic sources*

- 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey Six-inch England and Wales, 1884, Warwickshire XXX.SE
- 1904 Ordnance Survey 25 inch England and Wales, Worcestershire XXIII.15
- Google Earth, Accessed 19 July 2018, Imagery Date: 8 April 2017
- Current OS Mastermap

##### *Documentary sources*

Published and grey literature sources are listed in the bibliography (Section 9).

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### **3.4 Fieldwork strategy**

A detailed specification has been prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2018).

Fieldwork was undertaken on 28 May 2016. The site reference number used by the Historic Environment Record to record archaeological "events", and site code used in the archive is WSM70286. The Worcestershire Archaeology project number is P5307.

Three trenches, amounting to just over 340m<sup>2</sup> in area, were observed over the site area of 0.925ha, representing a sample of 36.8%. The location of the trenches is indicated in Figure 2. Trenches 1 and 2 were located over the proposed soakaway and septic tanks respectively (Plates 1 and 2). Trench 3 was excavated to encompass the footprint of the proposed building and associated driveway (Plate 3). All trenches were stripped to the natural geology under archaeological supervision.

Deposits considered not to be significant were removed using a 360° tracked excavator, employing a toothless bucket. 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 Artefact methodology, by Laura Griffin**

The finds work reported here conforms to the following guidance: for finds work by ClfA (ClfAb 2014), for archive creation by AAF (2011), and for museum deposition by SMA (1993).

#### **3.6.1 Artefact recovery policy**

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

#### **3.6.2 Method of analysis**

All hand-retrieved finds were examined. They were identified, quantified and dated to period (see table 1). This date was used for determining the broad date of phases defined for the site. All information was recorded on a Microsoft Access 2007 database.

#### **3.6.3 Discard policy**

Artefacts from topsoil and subsoil and unstratified contexts will normally be noted but not retained, unless they are of intrinsic interest (e.g. worked flint or flint debitage, featured pottery sherds, and other potential 'registered artefacts'). All artefacts will be collected from stratified excavated contexts, except for large assemblages of post-medieval or modern material, unless there is some special reason to retain such as local production. Such material may be noted and not retained, or, if appropriate, a representative sample may be collected and retained. Discard of finds from post-medieval and earlier deposits will only be instituted with reference to museum collection policy and/or with agreement of the local museum.

### **3.7 Environmental archaeology methodology, by Elizabeth Pearson**

#### **3.7.1 Sampling policy**

Samples were taken according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (2012). A single sample of 10 litres from an undated gully was taken from the site (Table 1).

#### **3.7.2 Processing and analysis**

The sample was processed by flotation using a Siraf tank. The flot was collected on a 300µm sieve and the residue retained on a 1mm mesh. This allows for the recovery of items such as small animal bones, molluscs and seeds.

The residue was scanned by eye and the abundance of each category of environmental remains estimated. A magnet was also used to test for the presence of hammer scale. The flot was scanned using a low power MEIJI stereo light microscope and plant remains identified using modern reference collections maintained by Worcestershire Archaeology, and a seed identification manual (Cappers *et al* 2012). Nomenclature for the plant remains follows the New Flora of the British Isles, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (Stace 2010).

#### **3.7.3 Discard policy**

Remaining sample material and scanned residues will be discarded after a period of three months following submission of this report unless there is a specific request to retain them.

### **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.

## **4 The application site**

### **4.1 Topography, geology and archaeological context**

The site is located on Mercian Mudstone geology with superficial deposits of Till and glaciofluvial sediments (BGS 2018). These glaciofluvial deposits have the potential to contain palaeo-environmental remains associated with glacial environments, particularly periods of deglaciation and glacial retreat. In addition, they have some potential to contain unstratified or reworked Palaeolithic artefactual remains.

The site is located on the northern side of a hill and slopes from 147m AOD in the south to 140m AOD in the north. It is bounded immediately to the north by modern woodland, to the south, by Dagtail Lane, and to east and west by residential properties and their gardens. To the south, on the opposite side of Dagtail Lane, there are large fields under arable cultivation. The wider area is predominantly intensive arable agricultural land, with the outskirts of the town of Redditch to the north.

The brief prepared for the archaeological watching brief highlights both nearby 17<sup>th</sup> century buildings at Dagtail End, and the medieval origins of Hunts End, to the east. In addition, there are extensive blocks of ridge and furrow earthworks in the area. Accordingly, it was considered that there was potential for the development site to contain archaeological remains of medieval and post-medieval date (WCC 2016).

Within the HER search area, there have been very few unstratified finds or finds reported to the Portable Antiquities Scheme. There has also been very little previous archaeological investigation carried out.

## 4.2 Current land-use

The site was formerly part of the gardens associated with the existing property at 42, Dagtail Lane.

## 5 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 was observed in all three trenches and consisted of mid-yellow sandy clays and gravels. This was overlain by a mid-reddish brown, clayey sand and gravel subsoil between 0.15-0.20m thick, and a dark greyish brown clayey sand topsoil between 0.23-0.25m thick. Throughout Trench 3, across the higher ground, the topsoil (300) sat directly on the natural (301).

### 5.1.2 Phase 2: Modern deposits

A line of postholes were observed running approximately north to south through Trench 3. Posthole [306] was excavated but contained modern organic remains and ceramic building material (CBM). The remaining postholes were observed to contain plastic and other modern debris and therefore were not excavated. Other areas of modern disturbance were also observed on the eastern limits of Trench 3, along the edge of the current fence line.

### 5.1.3 Phase 3: Undated deposits

At the northern end of Trench 3, a small segmented gully, aligned east to west, was excavated (302 and 304) (Fig 2, Plates 4 and 5). The segments were separated by a gap of 2.60m and did not appear to continue to the east, beyond [302]. These gullies were between 0.30-0.40m wide and 0.12-1.4m deep with 45° straight sides breaking sharply to a flat base. They were both filled with soft but cohesive, light greyish brown, sandy clays. Their similarity suggests that they were contemporary. Fill (303) of gully [302] also contained moderate charcoal fragments and clinker/ash material.

## 5.2 Artefact analysis, by Laura Griffin

The hand-retrieved assemblage recovered from the site totalled just four finds weighing 71g (see Table 1). All came from the single fill (307) of posthole [306] and could be dated to the late post-medieval/ modern period.

In addition, a small amount of clinker and slag-like material was retrieved from the environmental sample taken from fill (303) of gully [302]. This material was too small and fragmentary to be accurately quantified and therefore is not included in the tables below.

Level of preservation was poor with finds displaying high levels of surface abrasion.

period	material class	material subtype	object specific type	count	weight (g)
undated	fired clay			1	15
late post-medieval/modern	ceramic		cbm	2	21
modern	metal	iron	object	1	35

Table 1: Quantification of the assemblage

### 5.2.1 Summary of artefactual evidence

Material consisted of two pieces of ceramic building material (CBM), most likely highly abraded brick fragments, a highly abraded piece of fired clay and a corroded iron fitting. All was of late post-medieval/modern date.

### 5.3 Environmental analysis, by Elizabeth Pearson

The environmental evidence recovered is summarised in Tables 2, 3 and 4 below.

Uncharred remains, consisting of mainly root and/or fungal hyphae fragments are assumed to be modern and intrusive as they are unlikely to have survived in the soils on site for long without charring or waterlogging.

No identifiable environmental remains were recorded and hence no interpretation could be made of the activities carried out on site or the date of the feature.

Context	Sample	Feature type	Fill of	Period	Sample volume (L)	Volume processed (L)	Residue assessed	Flot assessed
303	1	gully	302	undated	10	10	Yes	Yes

Table 2: List of bulk samples

context	sample	charcoal	uncharred plant	artefacts
303	1	abt	abt*	occ coal, Fe slag (?), clinker, mod Fe objects,

Table 3: Summary of environmental samples; occ = occasional, mod = moderate, abt = abundant, \* = probably modern and intrusive, \*\* = oyster shell/fragments

context	sample	preservation type	species detail	category remains	quantity/diversity
303	1	?wa*	unidentified herbaceous root fragments, unidentified woody root fragments, unidentified fungal fragments	misc	+++/low

Table 4: Plant remains from bulk samples

#### Key:

preservation	quantity
ch = charred	+++ = 51 - 100
?wa = waterlogged or uncharred	* = probably modern and intrusive

## 6 Synthesis

The finds suggest that the posthole [306] is most likely of late post-medieval / modern date. This is also consistent with the post medieval / modern date suggested by the clinker ash material found in the fill of [302], part of the segmented gully. The gully and the fence line may therefore be recent garden partitions and be of little archaeological interest. No other significant archaeological features, deposits, structures, horizons or layers were revealed, nor artefacts recovered.

## 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 on behalf of Mr John Bennett at 42, Dagtail Lane, Dagtail End, Redditch, Worcestershire (NGR SP 03884 63546, HER ref WSM70286). The site lies on the outer limits of the Redditch, in an area with several historic buildings (17<sup>th</sup> Century onwards), and evidence for a working agricultural landscape during the Medieval and post Medieval period.*



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*The three trenches observed revealed a full stratigraphic soil profile, and were excavated to the natural clays and gravels. No significant archaeological features, deposits, structures, horizons or layers were revealed, nor artefacts recovered. A line of postholes denoting a modern fence line, and a segmented gully were revealed. The gully was undated and of unknown function, but may relate to the modern postholes, as they were orientated perpendicular to the gully, which was parallel to the present street frontage. All finds were of modern date. A sample taken from the gully did not contain identifiable environmental remains.*

## 8 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, John Bennett, Sam Bennett, John Bennett, and Adrian Scruby (Historic Environment Planning Advisor, Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service, Worcestershire County Council).

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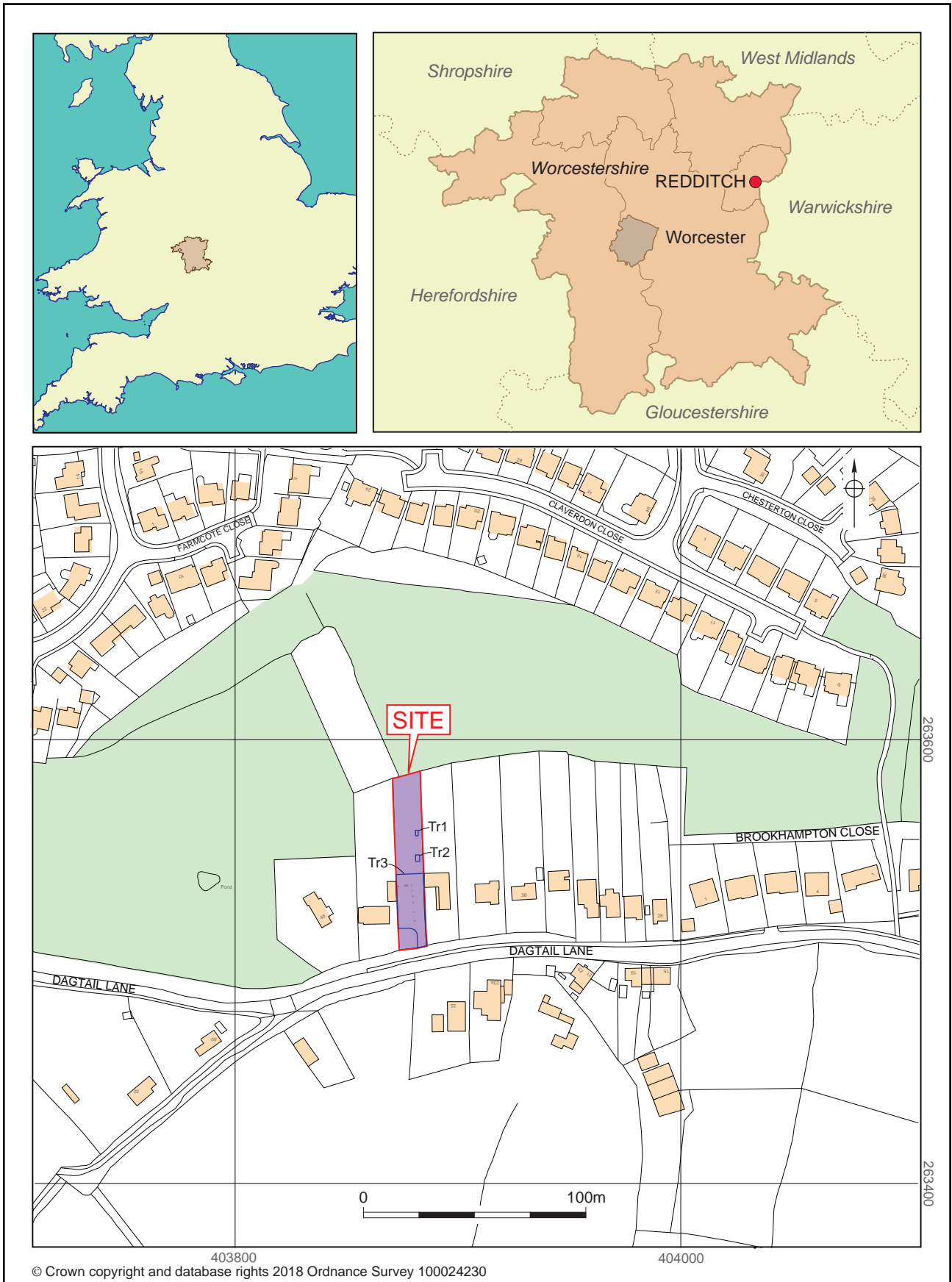
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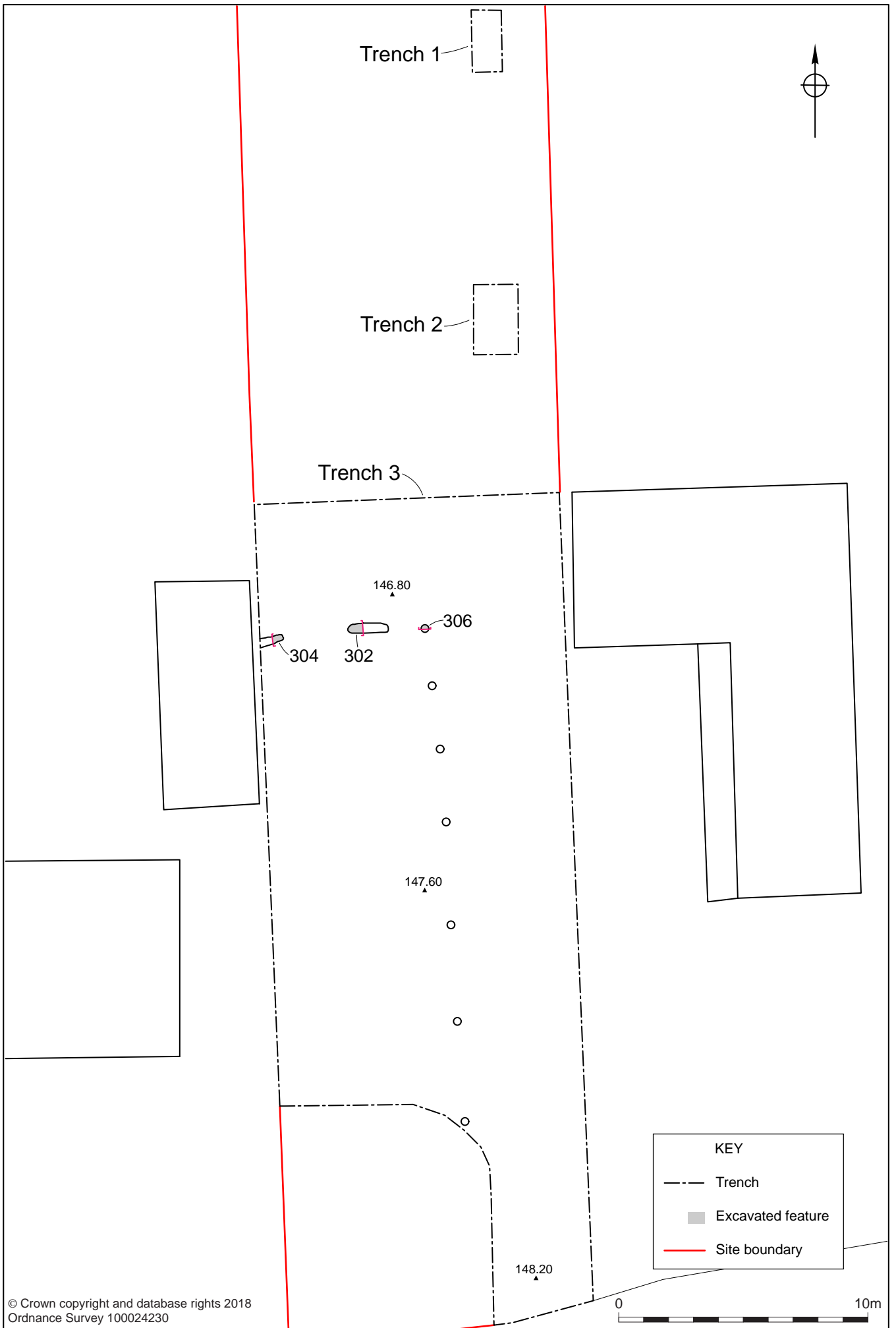
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**Figures**



Location of the site

Figure 1



Plan of Trenches 1, 2 and 3

Figure 2

## Plates



*Plate 1: Trench 1 facing south-east, 1m and 0.5m scales*



*Plate 2: Trench 2 facing east, 1m and 0.5m scales*



*Plate 3: General site strip facing south-east, no scales*



*Plate 4: Gully terminus [302] facing east, 0.3m scale*



*Plate 5: Gully terminus [304] facing west, 0.3m scale*



## Appendix 1 Trench descriptions

### Main deposit descriptions

#### Trench 1

Maximum dimensions: Length: 2.5m    Width: 1.2m    Depth: 0.0-0.60m

Orientation:        N-S

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
100	Topsoil	Dark greyish brown soft clayey sand, containing frequent roots.	0.0-0.25m
101	Subsoil	Mid reddish brown soft clayey sand and gravel, containing frequent roots.	0.25-0.45m
102	Natural	Mid yellow with patches of light blue mottles, moderately compact and cohesive sandy clay and gravel. Very sterile.	0.45m+

#### Trench 2

Maximum dimensions: Length: 2.8m    Width: 1.8m    Depth: 0.0-0.40m

Orientation:        N-S

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
200	Topsoil	Dark greyish brown soft clayey sand, containing frequent roots.	0.0-0.23m
201	Subsoil	Medium reddish brown soft sandy clay and gravel, containing frequent roots.	0.23-0.38m
202	Natural	Mid – light yellow with light blue mottles, moderately compact, sandy clay and gravel.	0.38m+

**Trench 3**

Maximum dimensions: Length:33.0m    Width: 12.3m    Depth: 0.0-0.25m

Orientation:                    N-S

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
300	Topsoil	Dark greyish brown soft sandy clay, containing frequent roots.	0.0-0.25m
301	Natural	Light orangey yellow firm clayey sand and gravel. Sterile fill with frequent roots.	0.25m+

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## Appendix 2 Technical information

### The archive (site code: WSM70286)

The archive consists of:

- 6 Context records AS1
- 1 Field progress reports AS2
- 1 Photographic records AS3
- 27 Digital photographs
- 1 Drawing number catalogues AS4
- 4 Scale drawings
- 1 Sample number catalogues AS18
- 3 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

A copy of the report will be deposited with the Historic Environment Record (HER) and the National Monuments Record (NMR) as appropriate.

## Summary of data for Worcestershire HER

WSM 70286

P5307

### Environmental tables

Context	Sample	Feature type	Fill of	Period	Sample volume (L)	Volume processed (L)	Residue assessed	Flot assessed
303	1	gully	302	undated	10	10	Yes	Yes

Env Table 1: List of bulk samples

context	sample	charcoal	uncharred plant	artefacts
303	1	abt	abt*	occ coal, Fe slag (?), clinker, mod Fe objects,

Env Table 2: Summary of environmental samples; occ = occasional, mod = moderate, abt = abundant, \* = probably modern and intrusive, \*\* = oyster shell/fragments

context	sample	preservation type	species detail	category remains	quantity/diversity
303	1	?wa*	unidentified herbaceous root fragments, unidentified woody root fragments, unidentified fungal fragments	misc	+++/low

Env Table 3: Plant remains from bulk samples

### Key:

preservation	quantity
ch = charred	+++ = 51 - 100
?wa = waterlogged or uncharred	* = probably modern and intrusive

### Artefacts

period - note 1	material class	object specific type	count	Weight (g)	start date	end date	specialist report? (note 2)	key assemblage? (note 3)
late post-medieval/modern	ceramic	cbm	2	21			N	N
modern	metal	iron object	1	35			N	N
undated	fired clay		1	15			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. 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.

<b>period</b>	<b>from</b>	<b>to</b>
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

<b>period specific</b>	<b>from</b>	<b>to</b>
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	