

Archaeological watching brief at 119 Greenhill, Evesham, Worcestershire



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Illustrations by Carolyn Hunt

Background information

<i>Client</i>	ADS Architects
<i>National Grid reference</i>	SP 03868 45580
<i>Historic Environment Record event reference</i>	WSM 70240
<i>Planning authority</i>	Wychavon District Council
<i>Reference</i>	17-02221/HP and 18/01214/HP
<i>Brief</i>	WCC 2014
<i>Project design</i>	WA 2018
<i>Project parameters</i>	ClfA 2014a

Location

The site lies on relatively flat land off Greenhill, at the northern edge of Evesham, and is located on superficial deposits of Pershore sand and gravel overlying Blue Lias Formation and Charmouth Mudstone (BGS 2018).

Nature of the project

The watching-brief was conducted on groundworks associated with the alteration and extension of an existing domestic dwelling. This comprised a small area of ground reduction, service connections, and the excavation of wall foundation trenches (Figure 1; Plates 1–3).

Previous archaeological work on the site

There has been no previous archaeological work undertaken on site.

Previous archaeological work on associated sites

The development site lies close to the centre of the Registered Battlefield area for the Battle of Evesham (NHLE 1000010; WSM 04386), being situated on the Greenhill ridge where Prince Edward drew up his army and the battle took place on 4th August 1265 (Burne 1950; English Heritage 1995). The battle was a significant moment in the period of civil conflict known as the Baron's Wars and saw the defeat and death of Simon De Montfort.

Just over 70m south-west of the site is Battle Well (WSM 26892), the site of a spring reputed to have been discovered by monks following the Battle of Evesham: this is visible from the development site. Some sources have suggested that the spring was the point at which Simon De Montfort was struck down and dismembered. The Battle Well is also thought to have associations with a 13th or 14th century chapel dedicated to De Montfort, believed to have been located nearby (WSM 37607).

A number of archaeological investigations have been conducted in the vicinity of the site, including field walking (WSM 38541) and geophysical survey (WSM 40617) of Battlewell Field. The site is also within the search area for a large archaeological desk based assessment undertaken on land to the north of Evesham (WSM47412). Various field walking projects were also conducted around 500m north-west of the site in the Norton and Lenchwick area (WSM 23248; WSM 23254; WSM 23255; WSM 23256). An auger survey and watching brief was conducted at Battlewell Pond

(WSM45787), which revealed shallow post-medieval and modern deposits, but no indications that the pond was of medieval origin (Daffern 2011).

Aims

The aim of the watching brief was to observe and record any archaeological deposits, and to determine their extent, state of preservation, date and type, as far as reasonably possible within the constraints of the groundworks.

Methods

<i>General specification for fieldwork</i>	WA 2018	
<i>Sources consulted</i>	Worcestershire HER	
<i>Date(s) of fieldwork</i>	18 June 2018	
<i>Area of site</i>	c 330m ²	
<i>Sampling</i>	area sampled	c 47m ²
	sample size	c 14%

Dimensions of excavated areas observed (foundations and ground reduction – see Figure 2)

Trench 1	length	8m
	width	0.65m
	depth	1.1m
Trench 2	length	7.15m
	width	4.5m
	depth	0.96m

Access to or visibility of deposits

Observation of the excavated areas was undertaken during and after machine excavation. The exposed trench sections were sufficiently clean to observe well-differentiated archaeological deposits, though any less clear may have not been identified. The spoil removed from the trenches was metal detected and checked for finds.

Statement of confidence

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

Deposit description

No significant archaeological features or deposits were identified during monitoring of the groundworks, with only a simple stratified sequence of topsoil, subsoil and the natural substrate observed (Plates 2–3). The topsoil was mixed and compacted, with modern drainage and services also present. A small number of artefacts were, however, recovered from the topsoil and subsoil (see artefacts section). The description of the deposits is provided below.

Trench 1

Context	Classification	Description	Depth (top and bottom of deposits)
100	Topsoil/mixed made ground	Compacted, light brownish grey silty sand with stones, rubble, concrete, bricks, modern sewer pipe.	0.00-0.28m
101	Subsoil	Firm, light yellowish brown silty sand with occasional sub-angular gravels and flint.	0.28-0.51m
102	Natural	Firm, light brown yellow sandy gravel	0.51m-1.1m+

Trench 2

Context	Classification	Description	Depth (top and bottom of deposits)
200	Topsoil	Soft/loose mid brownish grey sandy silt with frequent rooting, small sub-rounded stones and CBM, occasional iron nails and flints, modern gas pipe.	0.00-0.44m
201	Subsoil	Firm, light yellowy brown silty sand with occasional sub-angular gravels.	0.44-0.64m
202	Natural	Soft, light yellow sand with moderate sub-rounded gravels.	0.64-0.96m+

Artefacts*Recovery policy*

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

Artefact methodology

The finds work reported here conforms with the following guidance: for findswork by ClfA (2014b), for pottery analysis by PCRG/SGRP/MPRG (2016), for archive creation by AAF (2011), and for museum deposition by SMA (1993).

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. The date was used for determining the broad date of phases defined for the site. All information was recorded on a Microsoft Access database.

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).

Classification of worked flint follows conventions outlined in Ballin (2000), Inizan *et al* (1999), and Butler (2005); the material was catalogued according to type and dated where possible. Visible retouch, edge-damage, cortex, raw material characteristics and quality, burning, and breakage were noted.

Discard policy

Artefacts from topsoil and subsoil and unstratified contexts are normally 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'). Discard of finds from post-medieval and earlier deposits is

only instituted with reference to museum collection policy and/or with agreement of the local museum.

Artefactual analysis

The artefacts recovered are summarised in Tables 1 and 3. The assemblage retrieved comprised several residual prehistoric flint flakes and a small quantity of medieval to post-medieval domestic refuse and building material, including pottery, tile, animal bone, and clay pipe stems. The group came from four stratified contexts. Using pottery as an index of artefact condition, this was generally poor. The majority of sherds displayed high levels of abrasion, and the average sherd size, at 4.8g, was substantially below average, potentially indicating a high level of residuality.

Period	Material class	Material subtype	Object specific type	Count	Weight(g)
prehistoric	stone	flint	flake	2	8
medieval/early post-medieval	ceramic		roof tile	1	10
post-medieval	ceramic		clay pipe	5	11
post-medieval	ceramic		pot	5	24
post-medieval/modern	ceramic		roof tile	2	68
post-medieval/modern	metal	iron	iron object	4	54
post-medieval/modern	metal	iron	nail	2	13
undated	bone	animal bone	cattle metapodial	1	147
Totals				22	335

Table 1: Quantification of the assemblage

Two small flint flakes, residual within topsoil (200) and subsoil (101), show attributes, such as careful platform preparation, consistent with a Mesolithic or Neolithic date (Plates 4 and 5). The raw materials are considered to have derived from local river cobbles, and comprise:

- a translucent mid-grey flint with thin orange-stained cortex (Plate 4), and;
- a honey-coloured flint with light grey patina (Plate 5).

A small fragment of sandy oxidised flat roof tile is comparable to examples dating from the 13th to 17th century.

The pottery assemblage comprised a small selection of abraded sherds, dating from the late 16th to 18th century. All were from topsoil/subsoil; their degraded condition was consistent with this context.

Abraded and undiagnostic fragments of 17th to 19th century clay tobacco pipe, 19th to 20th century roof tile, roofing nails, and undiagnostic scraps of iron were also recovered from the topsoil.

A single bone was recovered from subsoil (201). This was a cattle metacarpal, with some deterioration which may be post-depositional, resulting from the acidic soil conditions (pers comm Liz Pearson).

Broad period	Fabric code	Fabric common name	Count	Weight(g)
Post-medieval	78	Post-medieval red ware	2	6
Post-medieval	90	Post-medieval orange ware	1	8
Post-medieval	91	Post-medieval buff wares	1	4
Modern	81.4	Miscellaneous late stoneware	1	6
Totals			5	24

Table 2: Quantification of the pottery by period and fabric-type

Context	Material class	Material subtype	Object specific type	Count	Weight(g)	Start date	End date	TPQ date range	
100	ceramic		clay pipe	4	10	1600	1910	A.D 1800 - 2000	
			roof tile	2	68	1800	2000		
		pot			1	1	1550		1800
					1	4	1600		1800
					1	8	1600		1800
					1	6	1750		1900
101	stone	flint	flake	1	5	-10000	43	10000 B.C. - A.D. 43	
200	metal	iron	nail	2	13	1600	2000	A.D. 1600 - 2000	
	metal	iron	iron object	4	54	1600	2000		
	ceramic		clay pipe	1	1	1600	1910		
			pot	1	5	1550	1800		
			roof tile	1	10	1200	1700		
stone	flint	flake	1	3	-10000	43			
201	bone	animal bone	cattle metapodial	1	147			undated	

Table 3: Summary of context dating based on artefacts

Recommendations and discard/retention

No further work on the assemblage is required. The prehistoric material should be retained. The remainder is not considered worthy of retention, although the final decision rests with Museums Worcestershire.

Discussion

The watching brief was undertaken on a small area of ground reduction and foundation trench excavation in advance of the alteration and extension of an existing house. Topsoil and subsoil deposits overlying a natural substrate consisting of light yellowish brown sandy gravel were visible. The natural material was observed to a depth of 1.10m below the ground surface before excavation ceased.

There were no significant archaeological features or deposits identified and no indication that there was preservation of a historic topsoil deposit that could include medieval material associated with the Battle of Evesham. The site had clearly been subject to reworking and disturbance prior to the construction of the house in the 20th century, including the insertion of drainage and other services.

The limited assemblage of finds did, however, reflect a long history of human occupation in the area, with prehistoric flint flakes (Plates 4 and 5) being enduring echoes of prehistoric activity in the vicinity. Later finds include domestic debris typical of sites around the fringes of medieval and post-medieval settlements. Much of the assemblage pre-dates the current property, and is likely to have been incorporated into the soil through agricultural activity such as manuring and then redeposited during site construction works. Despite the close proximity of the site to the medieval battlefield, none of the artefacts could be attributed to the medieval period.

Conclusions

No significant archaeological features, deposits or structures were identified during the works. Development of the site for the current property and garden space had evidently disturbed the soils and any historical topsoils appear to have been reworked. Given the overall small scale of the development, however, it is still possible that intact soil sequences with battle-related artefacts could potentially survive in the vicinity. The finds assemblage has provided some limited information with regard to the range and chronological sequence of previous activity upon the site.

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 groundworks associated with the alteration and extension of an existing domestic dwelling at 119 Greenhill, Evesham (HER ref. WSM 70240; NGR SP 03868 45580). The development site lies close to the centre of the Registered Battlefield area for the Battle of Evesham. No significant archaeological features, deposits or structures were identified during the works. Development of the site for the current property and garden space had evidently disturbed the soils and any historical topsoils appear to have been disturbed and reworked. The limited assemblage of finds did, however, reflect a long history of human occupation in the area, with prehistoric flint flakes reflecting nearby prehistoric activity.

Acknowledgements

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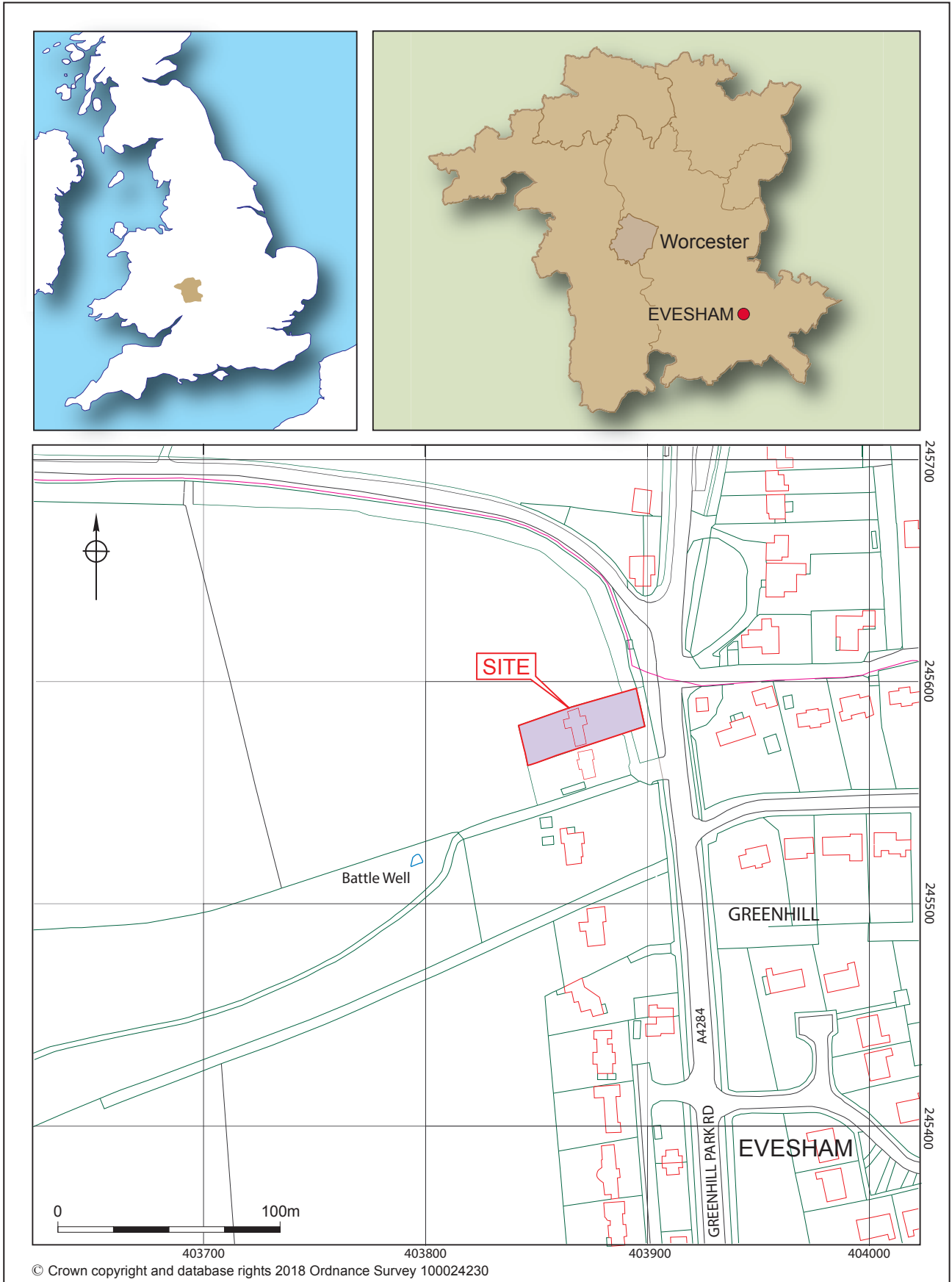
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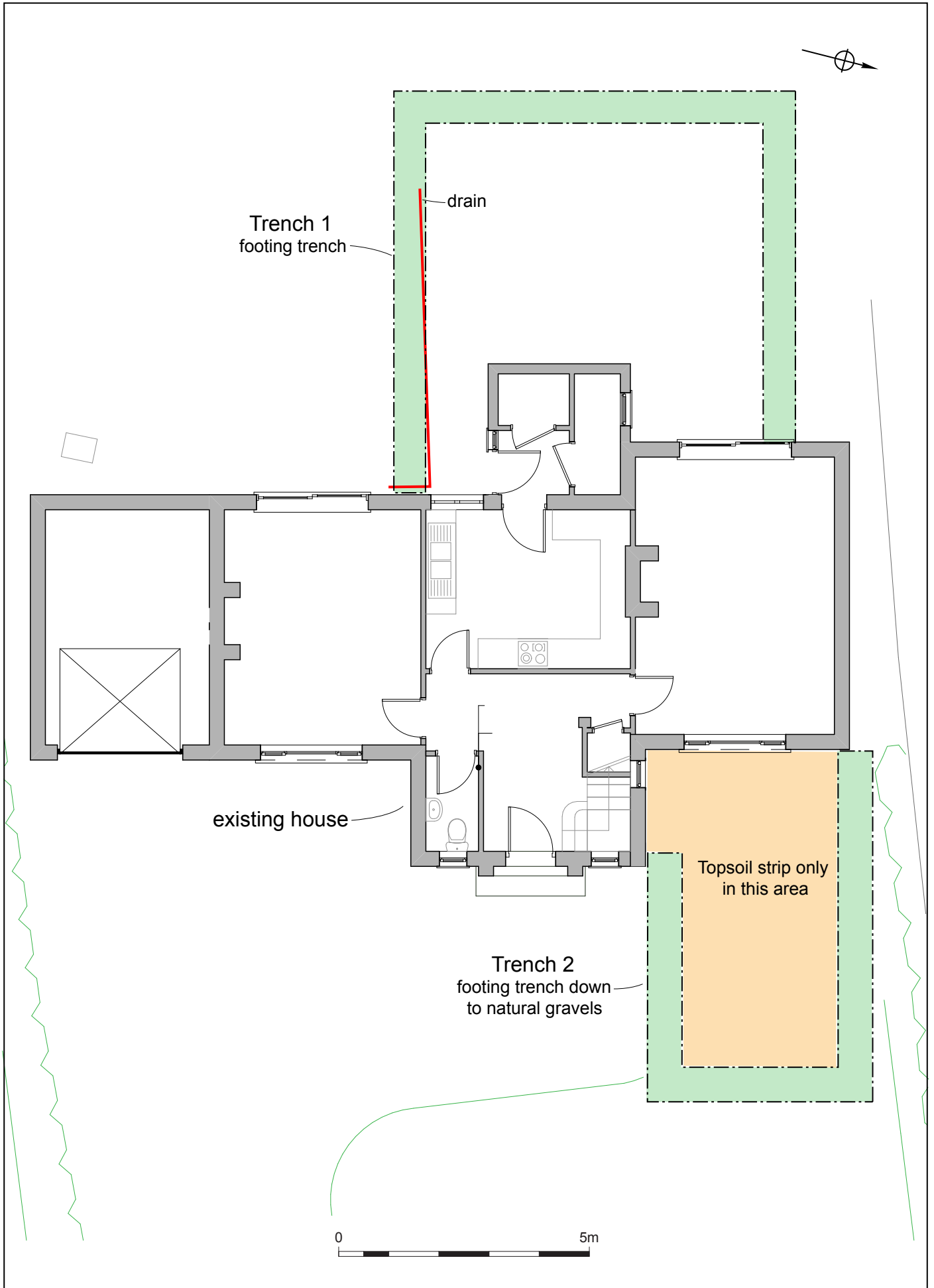
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Figures



Location of the site

Figure 1



Trench plan (based upon ADS Dwg 17986-12)

Figure 2

Plates



Plate 1: The area to the rear of the property, prior to Trench 1 excavation, facing north (no scale)



Plate 2: Trench 1 deposits, facing west, 0.50m scale



Plate 3: Trench 2 deposits, facing north, 1m scale

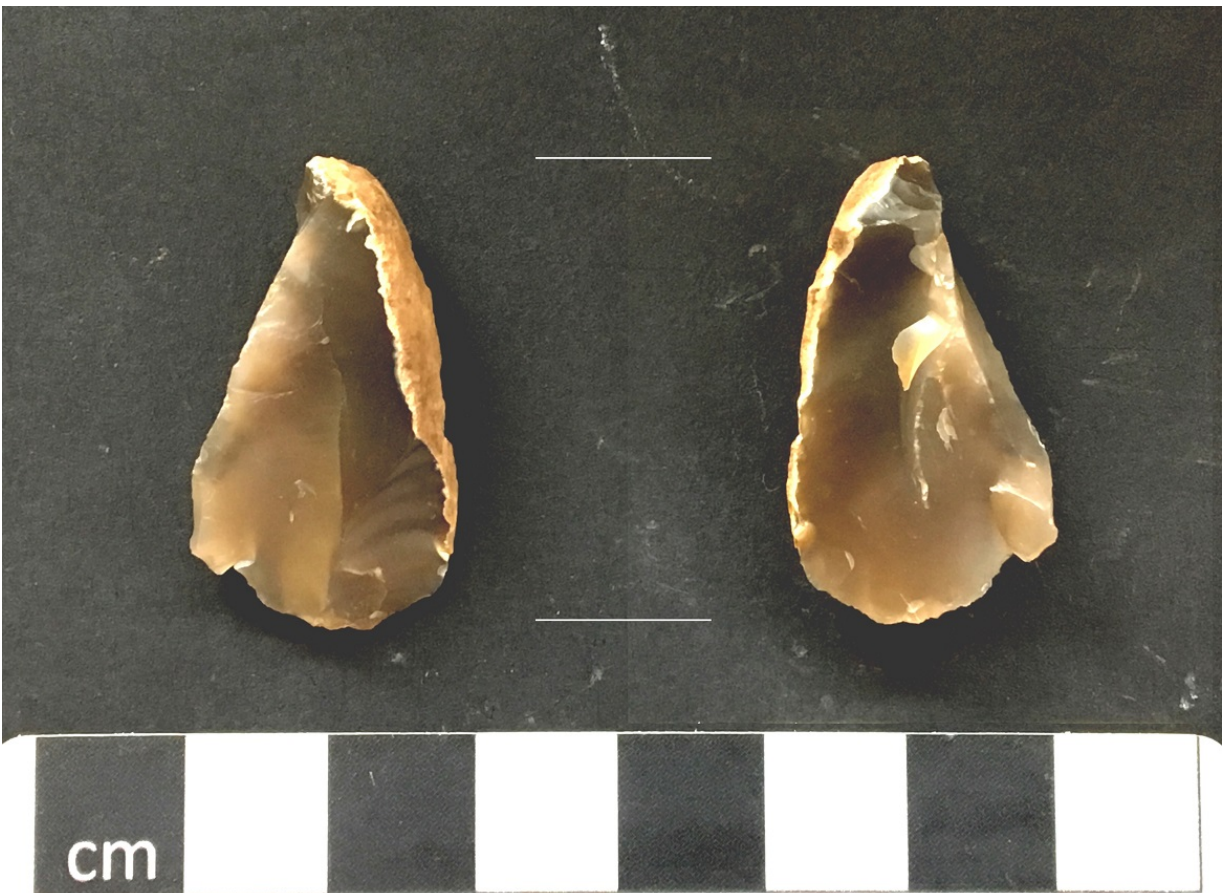


Plate 4: Flint from subsoil (101), 8cm scale

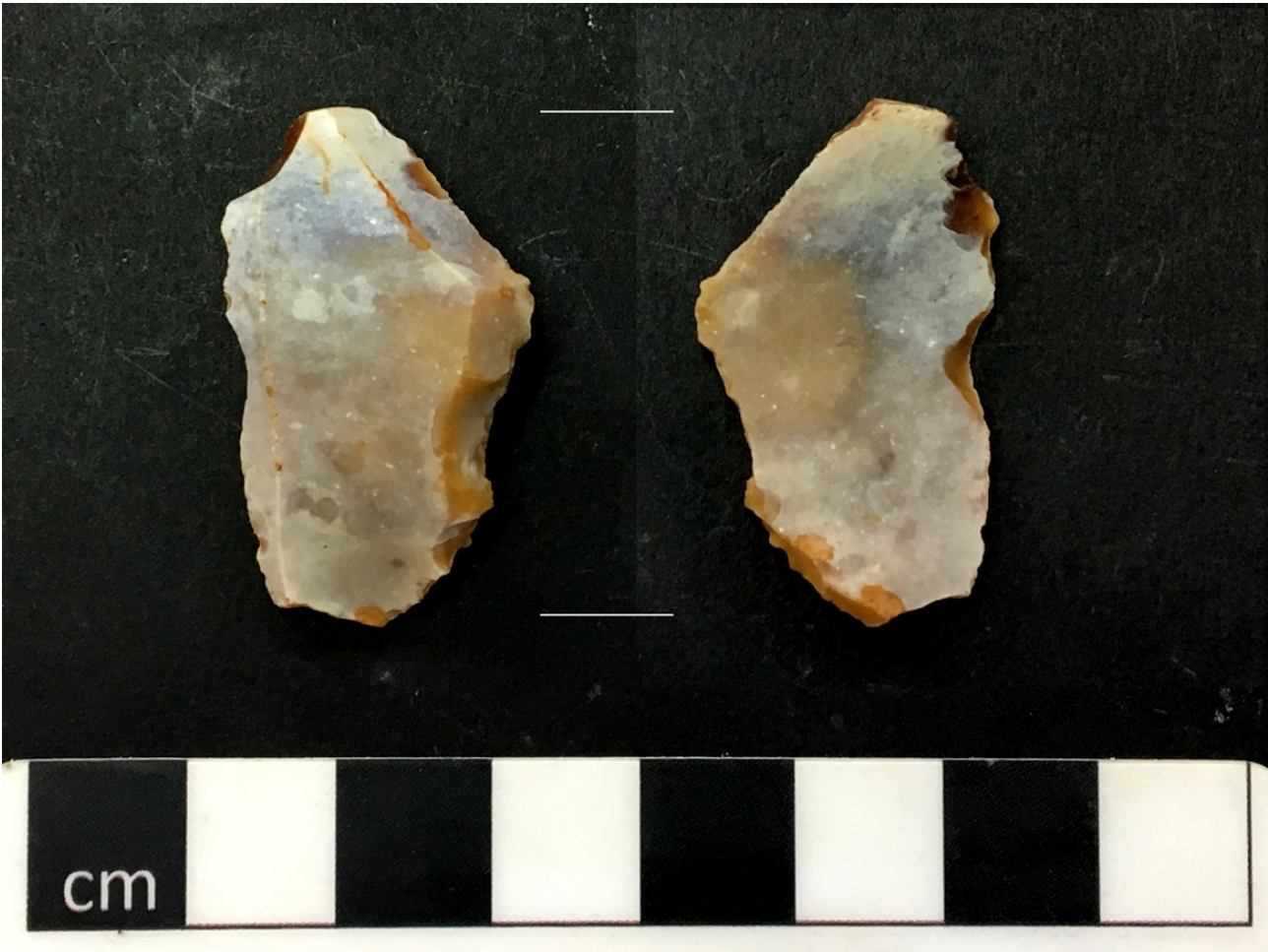


Plate 5: Flint from topsoil (200), 8cm scale

Appendix 1 Technical information

The archive (site code: WSM 70240)

The archive consists of:

- 1 Field progress reports AS2
- 1 Photographic records AS3
- 32 Digital photographs
- 2 Trench record sheets AS41
- 1 Box of finds
- 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 appropriate Historic Environment Record (HER).

Appendix 2 Summary of data for Worcestershire HER/OASIS

WSM 70240 (event HER number)

P5275

Artefacts

Period	Material class	Object specific type	Start date	End date	Count	Weight(g)	Specialist report? (note 2)	Key assemblage (note 3)
prehistoric	flint	flake	-10000	43	2	8	Y	N
medieval/early post-medieval	ceramic	roof tile	1200	1700	1	10	Y	N
post-medieval	ceramic	clay pipe	1600	1910	1	1	Y	N
post-medieval	ceramic	clay pipe	1600	1910	4	10	Y	N
post-medieval	ceramic	pot	1750	1900	1	6	Y	N
post-medieval	ceramic	pot	1600	1800	2	12	Y	N
post-medieval	ceramic	pot	1550	1800	2	6	Y	N
post-medieval/modern	iron	iron object	1600	2000	4	54	N	N
post-medieval/modern	iron	nail	1600	2000	2	13	N	N
post-medieval/modern	ceramic	roof tile	1800	2000	2	68	N	N
undated	bone	cattle metapodial			1	147	Y	N