

Archaeological watching brief at Winnington Gardens, Hanley Swan, Worcestershire



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An archaeological watching brief at Winnington Gardens, Hanley Swan, Worcestershire

Peter Lovett

With contributions by Laura Griffin

Illustrations by Carolyn Hunt

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at Winnington Gardens, Hanley Swan, Worcestershire (NGR SO 81538 42648; WSM 70291). It was undertaken on behalf of Nigel Teale, whose client intends residential development of the site, for which a planning application has been submitted. Permission was granted subject to conditions including a programme of archaeological works.

The site lies on the south-eastern side of the settlement. The land was previously under ridge and furrow, which can still be seen in the adjacent land to the east.

The foundation trenches for five houses and topsoil strip for the main access were observed. The presence of residual medieval pottery within the top and subsoils is testament to the area's history of pottery production, although no medieval features were identified.

A post-medieval ditch was excavated, which was probably associated with a former field boundary visible on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map. A 19th-20th century rubbish pit containing ceramic roof tile was also discovered. No other archaeological deposits, structures, layers or horizons were revealed.

Report

1 Background

1.1 Reasons for the project

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at Winnington Gardens, Hanley Swan, Worcestershire (NGR SO 81538 42648). It was commissioned by Nigel Teale, whose client intends to develop five residential properties and associated infrastructure, for which a planning application has been submitted to Malvern Hills District Council (reference 15/00388/OUT). Permission was granted subject to conditions including a programme of archaeological works.

No brief has been prepared by the Curator but this project conformed to the model brief *Requirements for an Archaeological Watching Brief as a Condition of Planning Consent* (WCC 2014), and for which a project proposal (including detailed specification) was produced (WA 2018). The project was considered by the Curator to have the potential to affect heritage assets with archaeological interest (HER ref WSM 27001).

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

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.

In particular, given the location, the project will have the following regional research aim, as identified in *The archaeology of the West Midlands: a framework for research* (Watt, S (ed) 2011) to investigate, where present:

- The Malvernian medieval pottery industry which has so far proven very elusive (*ibid* Hunt 2011, 190) - kilns, workshops, and wasters, for instance, would be normal parts of any production area.

3 Methods

3.1 Personnel

The project was led by Peter Lovett (BSc (hons.) ACIfA), who joined Worcestershire Archaeology in 2012 and has been practicing archaeology since 2004. 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; MCIfA). 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).

3.3 List of sources consulted

Cartographic sources

- 1st edition Ordnance Survey map sheet XLVII. NW, scale 6":1 mile

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 2018).

Fieldwork was undertaken between 28 June and 19 July 2018. The site reference number used by the Historic Environment Record to record archaeological "events", and site code used in the archive is WSM 70291. The Worcestershire Archaeology project number is P5102.

Five house plots and an access road were monitored during their excavation. The footings for the house plots were trenches 0.7m wide, up to 13m in length, and between 0.9m and 1.4m in depth; the road was 47m long and between 6.5m and 12m wide. It was excavated to a depth of approximately 0.5m, and as such did not reach the natural geology. 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 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.

3.1 Artefact methodology, by Laura Griffin

The finds work reported here conforms with the relevant sections of *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (ClfA 2014; <http://www.archaeologists.net/codes/ifa>), with archive creation informed by *Archaeological archives: a guide to the best practice in the creation, compilation, transfer and curation* (AAF 2011; <http://www.archaeologyuk.org/archives/>), and museum deposition by *Selection, retention and dispersal of archaeological collections* (SMA 1993; <http://www.socmusarch.org.uk/publica.htm>).

3.1.1 Artefact recovery policy

Recovery of artefacts was undertaken according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012).

3.1.2 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. The date was used for determining the broad date of phases defined for the site. All information was recorded on a *pro forma* Microsoft Access 2007 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).

3.2 Environmental archaeology methodology

3.2.1 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.

3.3 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, although the site conditions caused by high temperatures and lack of rainfall were less

than optimal for identifying archaeological features in narrow trenches, such that the ground was bleached by the sun, and dust quickly obscured cleaned areas.

4 The application site

4.1 Topography, geology and archaeological context

The site lies on level ground, at c 34m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD). It is bounded to the north and east by agricultural land and to the south and west by residential properties.

The natural geology of the site comprises Sidmouth Mudstone Formation, with overlying superficial deposits of Head-Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel (BGS 2018).

The village of Hanley Swan is a small nucleated settlement, surrounded by enclosed fields, and occasional medieval strip fields. The site itself is listed as having ridge and furrow (WSM 15101), though this is only visible in the part of the field immediately to the east of the development site (Plate 7). The site has been landscaped in the recent past, and no sign of furrows could be seen on the surface. There are four timber framed listed buildings dating to the 17th century, as well as 14 unlisted historic buildings from the 17th to 19th centuries.

Medieval pottery production is evident in the area (WSM 27001), with pottery kilns recorded at Roberts End (WSM 38070) and Catterall Cottages (WSM 47337) 380m and 260m north-east of the site respectively. Large quantities of medieval and post-medieval pottery have been recovered from the wider area, often as unstratified finds, but also from archaeological investigations.

4.2 Current land-use

The site was laid to grass, and had most recently been a paddock.

5 Results

5.1 Structural analysis

The trenches and features recorded are shown in Figure 2 and Plates 1-7. The results of the structural analysis are presented in Appendix 1.

5.1.1 Phase 1: Natural deposits

The natural geology consisted predominantly of loose mid orange sands and gravels, with occasional patches of firm pinky brown clay. This was observed between 0.5m and 0.6m below the current ground surface.

The subsoil was present in all trenches, and consisted of a moderately compacted mid yellow brown silty sand. It was 0.22m to 0.3m thick. In Trench 1 a large amount of pottery was recovered from this layer.

5.1.2 Phase 2: Post-medieval deposits

A linear feature was observed in Trenches 1 and 2, running roughly north to south (104; 204) (Fig 2; Plate 4). It measured 1.4m wide and 0.5m wide. It was filled with a moderately compact mid to dark grey brown silty sand. Medieval and post-medieval pottery was recovered from the top of the feature, as well as pieces of ironwork. This ditch was sealed by the topsoil, but cut through the subsoil.

In Trench 4 a large pit (405), measuring at least 2.9m by 2.7m, was observed in the north-west corner (Plates 2-3). It was backfilled with a dump of roof tiles, brick, and china. This was sealed by a fill of redeposited reddish brown clay. The pit was 1.1m deep in total, and cut through the subsoil.

5.1.3 Phase 3: Modern deposits

A topsoil of greyish brown silty sandy loam overlay the whole site. This was between 0.21m and 0.3m thick. A number of pottery sherds were recovered from it.

5.2 Artefact analysis, by Laura Griffin

The artefactual assemblage recovered is summarised in Tables 1-3.

The assemblage recovered from the site totalled 92 finds weighing 4194g (see Tables 1 and 3). Material came from just four contexts (100, 101, 103 and 404) and was largely of late medieval/early post-medieval date, with earlier and later material retrieved only in small quantities. The level of preservation was generally good, with finds displaying low levels of surface abrasion and an exceptional high average pottery sherd weight of 36.8g, all suggesting a general pattern of relatively little disturbance since deposition.

period	material class	material subtype	object specific type	count	weight (g)
Roman	ceramic		pot	1	13
medieval	ceramic		pot	2	42
medieval/early post-medieval	ceramic		?tile	1	61
medieval/early post-medieval	ceramic		roof tile	20	920
late medieval/early post-medieval	ceramic		pot	42	674
post-medieval	ceramic		cbm	2	75
post-medieval	ceramic		pot	10	129
post-medieval	ceramic		tile	1	581
post-medieval	glass		vessel	1	50
post-medieval	metal	iron	sickle	1	105
modern	ceramic		pot	10	1532
undated	metal	iron	nail	1	12

Table 1: Quantification of the assemblage

5.2.1 Summary of artefactual evidence by period

The discussion below is a summary of the finds and of their associated location or contexts by period. Where possible, dates have been allocated, and the importance of individual finds commented upon as necessary.

Roman

A single, highly abraded sherd of Roman pottery was retrieved from the topsoil (context 100). The sherd was of locally produced oxidised Severn Valley ware (fabric 12) and had faint incised lattice decoration, indicating it to come from a jar dated 2nd-4th century.

Medieval

Two rim sherds of Malvernian unglazed ware (fabric 56) were identified in the subsoil (context 101). Both were of an everted, folded rim form most commonly seen on cooking pots of 13th-14th century date (form 56/2-4).

Late medieval/early post-medieval

Material of this period formed the bulk of the assemblage and consisted exclusively of pottery and roof tile of Malvernian production. The finds formed a distinctive, tightly dated group, which included a number of sherds or fragments which were very highly fired.

All pottery was of oxidised glazed Malvernian ware (fabric 69), with diagnostic sherds coming from bung-hole jar (form 69/8), skillet (form 69/6), flared bowl (form 69/9) and cauldron (form 69/14) forms. This range of form types is typical of the 15th-early 17th centuries.

In contrast to the pottery, the roof tile could not be closely dated, with known production spanning the 13th-16th centuries. However, a lack of earlier Malvernian pottery in any meaningful quantity, along with the presence of highly fired fragments akin to that seen in the later Malvernian pottery, would suggest the tile to be of a similar late medieval/early-post-medieval date.

Pottery and roof tile production in the Hanley Castle and Hanley Swan area is well documented (Hurst 1994) and this assemblage has strong similarities to others from sites thought to be connected with pottery and tile production, such as Brickwalls Farm, Hanley Castle (Pearson and Griffin 2001; Hurst 2008; Hurst 2010; Evans 2017a) and Tansy Cottage, Hanley Swan (Evans 2017b).

Post-medieval

Post-medieval material consisted of ten sherds of pottery (contexts 100 and 101), two fragments of abraded ceramic building material (context 100), a piece of perforated hop-kiln tile (context 404), a shard of bottle glass and a small iron sickle with a snapped blade (context 103).

The pottery was all of black and brown glazed post-medieval red ware (fabric 78; contexts 100 and 101) and included the handle of a small cup/tyg of early/mid-17th century date and sherds from jar and large pancheon/bowl forms dated mid-17th-18th century. The bottle glass was thought to be of similar date, coming from the base of an onion wine bottle form.

Modern

Material of modern date comprised various tablewares such as creamware (fabric 84; context 100), modern china (fabric 85; contexts 100, 103 and 404) and two miscellaneous late stoneware bottles (fabric 81.4; context 404).

Undated

Undated material consisted of a single, handmade nail (context 100).

period	fabric code	fabric name	count	weight (g)
Romano-British	12	Severn Valley ware	1	13
medieval	56	Malvernian unglazed ware	2	42
late medieval/post-medieval	69	Oxidized glazed Malvernian ware	42	674
post-medieval	78	Post-medieval red ware	10	129
modern	81.4	Miscellaneous late stoneware	2	930
modern	84	Creamware	2	5
modern	85	Modern china	6	597

Table 2: Quantification of the pottery by fabric type

Significance

The finds add to the growing body of evidence for medieval activity in the Hanley Castle area. The late medieval/early post-medieval ceramic assemblage suggests some connection to local pottery and tile production, but are largely unstratified and too few in number to indicate any significant activity at this immediate location.

context	material class	material subtype	object specific type	count	weight (g)	start date	end date	finds tpq
100	ceramic		roof tile	10	394	13C	16C	Late 19th-20th century
100	ceramic		cbm	2	75			
100	ceramic		pot	1	13	2C	4C	
100	ceramic		pot	24	268	L15C	E17C	
100	ceramic		pot	2	20	L19C	20C	
100	ceramic		pot	2	5	M18C	L18C	
100	ceramic		pot	7	117	M17C	18C	
100	glass		vessel	1	50	17C	M18C	
100	metal	iron	nail	1	12			
101	ceramic		pot	7	123	L15C	E17C	17th century
101	ceramic		roof tile	2	40	13C	16C	
101	ceramic		pot	11	283	15C	16C	
101	ceramic		pot	2	42	13C	14C	
101	ceramic		roof tile	6	328	13C	16C	
101	ceramic		?tile	1	61			
101	ceramic		pot	3	12	17C		
103	metal	iron	sickle	1	105			Late 18th-20th century
103	ceramic		roof tile	2	158	13C	16C	
103	ceramic		pot	1	13	L18C	20C	
404	ceramic		tile	1	581			19th-early 20th century
404	ceramic		pot	3	564	L18C	20C	
404	ceramic		pot	2	930	19C	E20C	

Table 3: Summary of context dating based on artefacts

Recommendations

No further work on the artefactual assemblage is required.

6 Synthesis

The ditch that was observed in Trenches 1 and 2 was initially thought to be the field boundary ditch seen on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map. However, when overlaid with the site survey, it was determined to be approximately 4.5m to the west of this field boundary. It may be that the field boundary was marked by a hedge line instead, and that this ditch was created for drainage around the edge of the field. The artefactual assemblage dates to the late 18th to 20th century.

The pit seen in Trench 4 was a rubbish dump for the disposal of building material. It was predominantly comprised of ceramic roof tiles, with some bricks and occasional domestic ceramic waste. It dated to the 19th to early 20th century.

The amount of pottery recovered from the top and subsoils was greater than would generally be expected as a result of manuring a field on the edge of a small rural settlement. It is evidence of the pottery industry in Hanley Swan that so much ceramic material is present *ex situ*.

The ridge and furrow that is identified on the HER within the site was not visible either in plan or section. This could partly be due to the weather conditions, which had dried and bleached the ground, coupled with the narrow trenches being excavated, and the fact of the site having been landscaped and flattened at some recent point.

A resident of one of the houses that borders the southern edge of the site, a Mr Thorpe, showed the author a collection of pottery sherds that he had collected from the northern edge of his garden during recent landscaping. They were generally unabraded, large pieces of medieval pottery, in better condition than the material that was being recovered from the top and subsoils of the current watching brief site. This may indicate that there are archaeological features toward the southern edge of the site, although none were identified during these present works.

6.1 Research frameworks

As noted in Section 2 above, the regional research aim was to investigate, where present:

- The Malvernian medieval pottery industry which has so far proven very elusive (*ibid* Hunt 2011, 190) - kilns, workshops, and wasters, for instance, would be normal parts of any production area (Watt, S (ed) 2011).

Beyond the increased presence of pottery within the top and subsoils, no evidence for the medieval pottery industry was identified on site.

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 Nigel Teale at Winnington Gardens, Hanley Swan, Worcestershire (NGR SO 81538 42648; HER WSM 70291), during residential development.

The site lies on the south-eastern side of the settlement. The land was previously under ridge and furrow, which can still be seen in the adjacent land to the east.

The foundation trenches for five houses and topsoil strip for the main access were observed. The presence of residual medieval pottery within the top and subsoils is testament to the area's history of pottery production, although no medieval features were identified.

A post-medieval ditch was excavated, which was probably associated with a former field boundary visible on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map. A 19th-20th century rubbish pit containing ceramic roof tile was also discovered. No other archaeological deposits, structures, layers or horizons were revealed.

8 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, Nigel Teale (the client), and Aiden Smyth (Archaeology and Planning Advisor, Wychavon and Malvern Hills District Councils).

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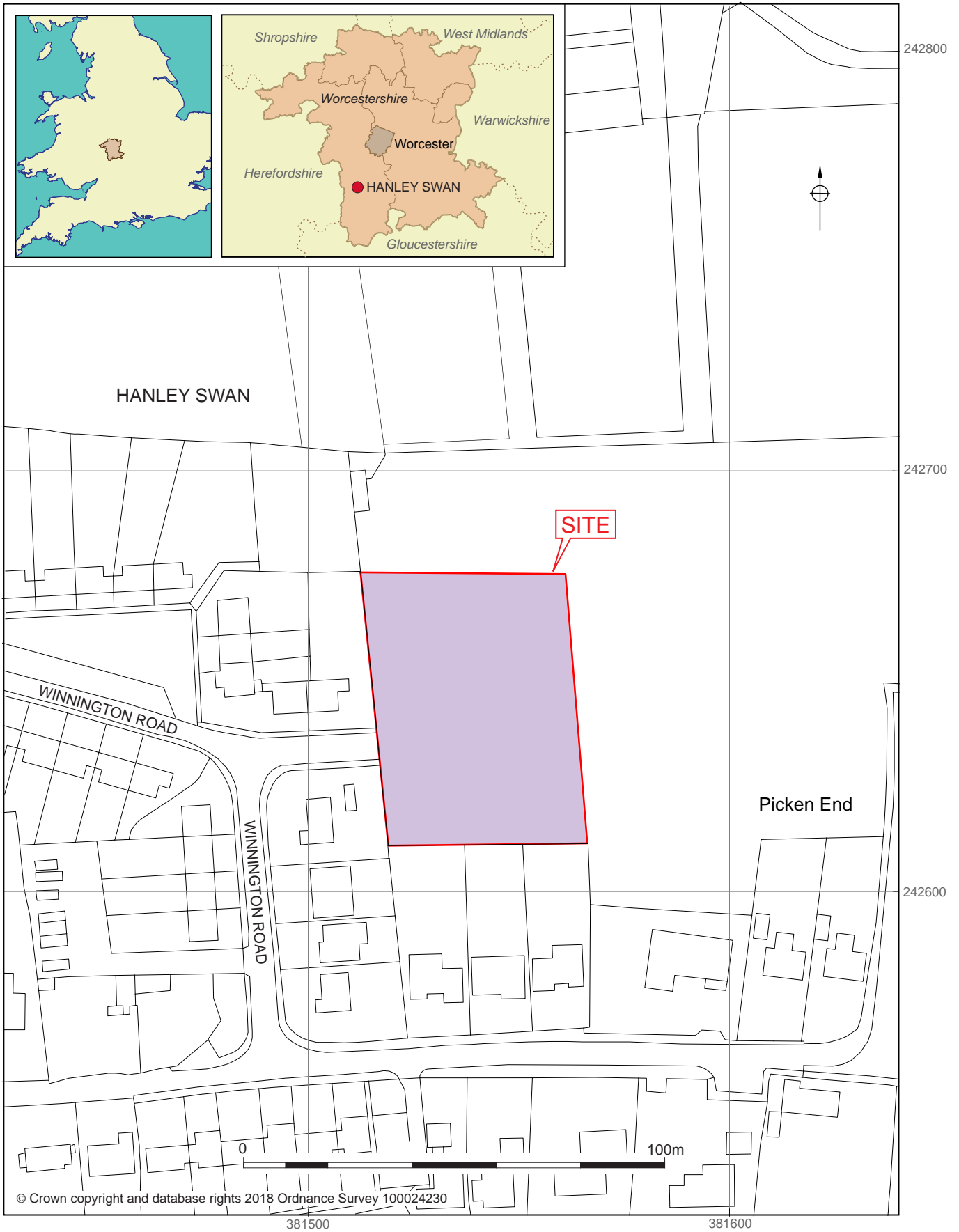
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Figures



Location of the site

Figure 1



1st edition OS map with trenches overlaid

Figure 2

Plates



Plate 1 Trench 1, looking east (1m scales)



Plate 2 Pit 405, looking north (2m scale)



Plate 3 Tiles in pit 405, looking south (1m scale)



Plate 4 Ditch 204, looking north (1m scales)



Plate 5 Trench 2, looking south-east (1m scales)



Plate 6 Trench 5, looking south-east (1m scales)



Plate 7 Ridge and furrow in field immediately east of site, looking north (no scale)

Appendix 1 Trench descriptions

Main deposit descriptions

Trench 1

Length: 47m Width: 47m Orientation: East to west

Context summary:

Context	Feature	Context	Description	Height/ depth	Deposit description
100	Topsoil	Layer	Topsoil	0.21m	
101	Subsoil	Layer	Subsoil	0.3m	
102	Natural	Layer	Natural		
103	Ditch	Fill	Fill of post-med ditch 104. Not excavated		
104	Ditch	Cut	Unexcavated post-med boundary ditch		

Trench 2

Length: 11m Width: 11m Orientation:

Context summary:

Context	Feature	Context	Description	Height/ depth	Deposit description
200	Topsoil	Layer	Topsoil	0.3m	
201	Subsoil	Layer	Subsoil	0.22m	
202	Natural	Layer	Natural		
203	Ditch	Fill	Fill of boundary ditch 204	0.5m	
204	Ditch	Cut	Post-med boundary ditch	0.5m	

Trench 3

Length: 11m Width: 11m Orientation:

Context summary:

Context	Feature	Context	Description	Height/ depth	Deposit description
300	Topsoil	Layer	Topsoil	0.25m	
301	Subsoil	Layer	Subsoil	0.28m	
302	Natural	Layer	Natural		

Trench 4

Length: 13m

Width: 13m

Orientation:

Context summary:

Context	Feature	Context	Description	Height/ depth	Deposit description
400	Topsoil	Layer	Topsoil	0.3m	
401	Subsoil	Layer	Subsoil	0.28m	
402	Natural	Layer	Natural		
403	Pit	Fill	Sealing fill of post-med rubble pit	0.4m	
404	Pit	Fill	Roof tile dump in pit	0.7m	
405	Pit	Cut	Pit for dumping of building material	1.1m	

Trench 5

Length: 13m

Width: 13m

Orientation:

Context summary:

Context	Feature	Context	Description	Height/ depth	Deposit description
500	Topsoil	Layer	Topsoil	0.26m	
501	Subsoil	Layer	Subsoil	0.3m	
502	Natural	Layer	Natural		

Appendix 2 Technical information

The archive (site code: WSM 70291)

The archive consists of:

- 1 Field progress reports AS2
- 1 Photographic records AS3
- 51 Digital photographs
- 6 Trench record sheets AS41
- 1 Box of finds
- 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

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

period	material class	material subtype	object specific type	count	weight (g)
Roman	ceramic		pot	1	13
medieval	ceramic		pot	2	42
medieval/early post-medieval	ceramic		?tile	1	61
medieval/early post-medieval	ceramic		roof tile	20	920
late medieval/early post-medieval	ceramic		pot	42	674
post-medieval	ceramic		cbm	2	75
post-medieval	ceramic		pot	10	129
post-medieval	ceramic		tile	1	581
post-medieval	glass		vessel	1	50
post-medieval	metal	iron	sickle	1	105
modern	ceramic		pot	10	1532
undated	metal	iron	nail	1	12

Table 1: Quantification of the assemblage

period	fabric code	fabric name	count	weight (g)
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Table 2: Quantification of the pottery by fabric type

context	material class	material subtype	object specific type	count	weight (g)	start date	end date	finds tpq
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100	ceramic		cbm	2	75			

Winnington Gardens, Hanley Swan, Worcestershire

100	ceramic		pot	1	13	2C	4C	century
100	ceramic		pot	24	268	L15C	E17C	
100	ceramic		pot	2	20	L19C	20C	
100	ceramic		pot	2	5	M18C	L18C	
100	ceramic		pot	7	117	M17C	18C	
100	glass		vessel	1	50	17C	M18C	
100	metal	iron	nail	1	12			
101	ceramic		pot	7	123	L15C	E17C	17th century
101	ceramic		roof tile	2	40	13C	16C	
101	ceramic		pot	11	283	15C	16C	
101	ceramic		pot	2	42	13C	14C	
101	ceramic		roof tile	6	328	13C	16C	
101	ceramic		?tile	1	61			
101	ceramic		pot	3	12	17C		
103	metal	iron	sickle	1	105			Late 18th- 20th century
103	ceramic		roof tile	2	158	13C	16C	
103	ceramic		pot	1	13	L18C	20C	
404	ceramic		tile	1	581			19th-early 20th century
404	ceramic		pot	3	564	L18C	20C	
404	ceramic		pot	2	930	19C	E20C	

Table 3: Summary of context dating based on artefacts