

# Archaeological Excavation at Land at Winsmore, Powick Worcestershire

Worcestershire Archaeology  
*for CgMs Consulting*

January 2019



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# LAND AT WINSMORE POWICK WORCESTERSHIRE

## Archaeological Excavation Report

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## SITE INFORMATION

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Site name: Winsmore, Powick  
Site code: WSM 71141  
Local planning authority: Malvern Hills District Council  
Planning reference: 16/00737  
Central NGR: NGR SO 82997 51300  
Commissioning client: CgMs Consulting  
Client project reference: JAC 24990  
WA project number: P5495  
WA report number: 2650  
HER reference: WSM 71141  
Oasis reference: fieldsec1-337136

### DOCUMENT CONTROL PANEL

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# Archaeological Excavation at land at Winsmore, Powick, Worcestershire

By Andrew Mann

With contributions by Rob Hedge and Laura Griffin

Illustrations by Carolyn Hunt

## Summary

An archaeological excavation was undertaken at land at Winsmore, Powick, Worcestershire (NGR SO 82997 51300). It was commissioned by Richard Smalley of CgMs Consulting on behalf of their client, in advance of a proposed residential development. Planning permission has been granted by Malvern Hills District Council, subject to a programme of archaeological works.

The site comprised a single arable field, located to the south-west of the historic core of Powick and is situated in a landscape dominated by the River Teme, to the north, and the River Severn, to the east. Prior to this excavation, a desk-based assessment was undertaken, followed by a geophysical survey. Whilst the results of the geophysical survey were negative, the DBA identified a moderate potential for archaeological remains dating to the Palaeolithic and Iron Age. Subsequently eight evaluation trenches were excavated across the site, which identified low levels of prehistoric activity.

Two excavation areas covering c. 365m<sup>2</sup> and 490m<sup>2</sup> were opened over evaluation trenches 3 and 5 and although these only contained natural tree throws/bowls a small assemblage of prehistoric pottery and flint was recovered. The assemblage is thought to be of Neolithic date and although small does suggest that the area was at least temporarily occupied during this period. The remains are typical of those arising from small, transient occupations by mobile communities which would migrate through the landscape on a seasonal basis.

# Report

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Background to the project

An archaeological excavation was undertaken by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA) in December 2018 at land at Winsmore, Powick, Worcestershire (NGR SO 82997 51300) (Fig 1). The project was commissioned by Richard Smalley of CgMs Consulting on behalf of their client, prior to the construction of a proposed residential development. Planning permission has been granted by Malvern Hills District Council, subject to a programme of archaeological works (planning reference 16/00737). The site was considered by Aidan Smyth, Archaeology and Planning Advisor for Malvern Hills District Council to have the potential for the survival of archaeological remains and heritage assets, which may be impacted upon by the proposed development. Previous geophysical survey (Stratascan 2015) on the site produced negative archaeological results, although an evaluation identified occasional, discrete, prehistoric features (Wilkins 2018). Following the evaluation correspondence between Richard Smalley and Aidan Smyth, Malvern Hills District Council (The Curator) identified that a small excavation, was an appropriate mitigation strategy.

No specific brief was provided but this project conforms to the generality of briefs previously issued. A trench plan, incorporating two trenches, c. 365m<sup>2</sup> and 490m<sup>2</sup> in area was designed by CgMs Consulting and a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2018) which was approved by the Curator. The excavation conforms to the industry guidelines and standards set out by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists in *Standard and guidance: for archaeological excavation* (CIfA 2014a) and also conforms to the *Standards and guidelines for archaeological projects in Worcestershire* (WCC 2010).

### 1.2 Site location, topography and geology

The development site comprises a single parcel of land, measuring some 1.5ha, at Winsmore, Powick (Fig 1). The site is bounded to the north by three houses and the A449 Malvern Road. The western boundary comprises the drive to Broadfields Farm, and the eastern boundary comprises the Winsmore residential estate. To the south, the site is bounded by a field boundary hedgerow.

The site has previously been used for arable agriculture, though at the time of this project the field had not been cultivated for some time and subsequently thick scrub vegetation was well established. The site topography is generally flat though a gentle slope is present in the west of site, where the ground level is recorded at 26.87m AOD, dropping to 26.15m AOD in the east.

The wider landscape is dominated by watercourses. The biggest of these is the River Severn which is located 2km to the east. The River Teme sits 935m to the north and north-east; and the smaller Careys Brook is located 630m to the south. Both of these latter courses are tributaries of the Severn.

The underlying geology comprises bedrock of Sidmouth Mudstone formation overlain by superficial deposits of the Holt Heath sand and gravel member (BGS 2018).

## 2 Archaeological and historical background

### 2.1 Introduction

An archaeological desk-based assessment (DBA) of the site was undertaken by CgMs Consulting (CgMs 2016), on behalf of their client. A radius of 1km, centred on the site, was assessed by the DBA and the findings presented are summarised below.

### 2.2 Earlier Prehistoric (Palaeolithic – Neolithic)

The site sits within an area of Palaeolithic potential (WSM56937). This is attributed to the presence of Holt Heath sand and gravel member which has the potential to contain preserved palaeoenvironmental remains. Elsewhere in the county this superficial deposit has produced Hippopotamus remains (WSM56937).

No archaeological deposits of Mesolithic or Neolithic date are recorded within the study area.

### **2.3 Later Prehistoric (Bronze Age – Iron Age)**

Evidence of Bronze Age activity within the study area is limited and comprises cropmarks of a potential ring ditch located c 725m to the southeast of the site (WSM30643).

Recorded Iron Age activity is more extensive and is evidenced by excavations west of Hospital Lane c 895m southwest of site (WSM57107). Investigations recorded the presence of a Middle Iron Age palisaded farmstead with associated evidence for sheep farming.

Further Iron Age activity is recorded c 90m to the south of site. Features including a ring ditch, field system, pit alignments (WSM05742) and an undated enclosure (WSM05741) were identified via aerial photographs.

### **2.4 Roman**

A Romano-British settlement is recorded c 190m east of the site (WSM06066). Subsequent evaluation trenching (WSM34499) identified a substantial settlement dating from between the 1st and 3rd centuries AD. The settlement comprised numerous enclosures relating to animal husbandry and domestic occupation. Cropmarks in an adjoining field indicate that the settlement may continue east. There is no evidence that the settlement or associated field systems extend west towards the study site.

Additional Roman activity is recorded c 180m to the west of the study site in the presence of two unstratified Romano-British urns (WSM00991). The DBA posits that these burials may be associated with the settlement discussed above.

### **2.5 Medieval**

The site is located south-west of the medieval historic core of Powick and thus is likely to have been part of the agricultural hinterland surrounding the village at this time. There is no archaeological evidence for the presence of medieval remains within the study site.

Within the wider landscape archaeological evidence further indicates that the study site is likely to have sat within an undeveloped agricultural landscape. Extant ridge and furrow is recorded to the north-west (WSM11910, 41189, 41191, 41192, 41193, 41194) along with possible fishponds (WSM01032, 03936).

### **2.6 Post-medieval and Modern**

There are no heritage assets dating to this period within the study site. Within the wider landscape, Post-medieval assets are typified by a series of farmsteads, outbuildings and ponds. Aircraft landing obstacles, erected in 1940, are recorded in the field immediately south of the study site (WSM31417). There is no evidence that remains associated with these features extend into the study site.

Cartographic evidence indicates that by 1904 part of the study site had been turned over to 'Allotment Gardens' and an L-shaped track was present, extending south from the Malvern Road. The site continued to be used as allotments until at least 1994, before it was then returned to agriculture at some point after this date. By the time of the site visit for the DBA, the site was wholly arable with no visible remnants of the trackway or former use as allotment gardens.



## 2.7 Geophysical Survey

In preparation for the development, a geophysical survey, comprising gradiometry, was undertaken across the study site (Stratascan 2015). The results of the survey were negative and failed to identify any possible archaeological remains.

Anomalies included closely spaced parallel linear responses in the centre of site which were interpreted as agricultural evidence (ploughing or drainage). Additionally, a further positive linear response is likely to relate a former trackway, and numerous ferrous spikes are interpreted as modern rubbish within the soils, likely relating to former use of the site as allotment gardens.

## 2.8 Archaeological Evaluation

Following the geophysical survey eight evaluation trenches, amounting to 430m<sup>2</sup> in area, were excavated over the 1.5ha site, representing a sample of 3%. The trenches were non-gridded and mostly positioned to interrogate the areas potentially affected by the development, in this instance, below proposed housing plots. Few archaeological features were identified during the evaluation but included a small pit in Trench 5 which contained a small lithic and pottery assemblage of probable Bronze Age date. Two small undated ditches were also identified in Trenches 3 and 5, which were thought to be potential prehistoric field boundaries (Wilkins 2018).

## 3 Project aims

The aims and scope of the project were to locate and sample further prehistoric archaeological features in the vicinity of evaluation Trenches 3 and 5 and to record their nature, extent and date with the aim of preserving these assets by record to mitigate the effects of the proposed development.

## 4 Project methodology

Fieldwork was undertaken between 10th and 14th December 2018. Two excavation areas, measuring 365m<sup>2</sup> and 490m<sup>2</sup> in size were opened over evaluation Trenches 3 and 5 respectively (Fig 2, Plates 1-2).

Deposits considered not to be significant were removed under constant archaeological supervision using a 360<sup>o</sup> 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) and trench and feature locations were surveyed using a differential GPS with an accuracy limit set at 0.04m.

During the excavation only natural tree throws and tree bowls were identified the majority of which were sterile. Therefore after ten had been excavated and recorded it was decided, after discussions with Richard Smalley (CgMs) to only test the remaining features to see if they contained archaeological material. Only those which produced either artefacts or environmental remains would then be excavated and recorded fully. As a result only one more feature was fully excavated and recorded.

On completion of excavation, trenches were reinstated by replacing the excavated material.

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

The project archive is currently held at the offices of Worcestershire Archaeology. Subject to the agreement of the landowner it is anticipated that it will be deposited at Worcestershire County Museum.

## 5 Archaeological results

### 5.1 Introduction

The features recorded in the trenches are shown in Figures 3-4.

### 5.2 Phasing

#### 5.2.1 Natural deposits

Natural geology was observed in both trenches between 0.52m and 0.80m below the ground surface. This comprised compacted reddish-orange sand and gravels with frequent patches of reddish sandy-clay. This was overlain by a moderately compact, yellowish brown silty sand subsoil up to 0.45m thick and a soft, dark greyish brown sandy silt topsoil up to 0.40m thick.

#### 5.2.2 Phase 1: Prehistoric and undated

No features of anthropogenic origin were identified in either trench and only natural tree throws or tree bowls were identified, although it is impossible to confirm if these trees had been cleared through human action. A total of 18 tree throws/bowls were identified across both excavation areas including the three features excavated during the evaluation, which now fully exposed also appeared to be of natural origin.

These included a possible pit [505], which in the evaluation trench appeared to have a regular bowl shaped profile 0.42m wide and 0.31m deep (Plate 3). When fully exposed the eastern side, previously beneath the evaluation trench baulk, was very irregular and root damaged and it is now thought this feature was of natural origin. Feature [503] was originally thought to be a ditch as it ran on a north-east to south-west alignment through the northern end of Trench 5. It measured 0.72m deep and 1.40m wide and had a slightly irregular profile with convex sides leading into a rounded, wide concave base. However when fully exposed in the excavation this was shown to be an irregular oval in plan and is now thought to be a tree throw. A second possible ditch [304] was located in evaluation Trench 3. This ran on a north-west to south-east alignment, through the centre of the evaluation trench but was difficult to define once fully exposed in the excavation. An irregular, linear, pinkish-red band of clay was seen at this location but this just appeared to be a natural band in the geology, comparable to the mixed, striated sandy clay geology in this part of the site. To the north this band became very irregular and dissipated and although another slot was excavated across this anomaly no ditch cut was observed. This anomaly is now thought to be a natural geological feature, although the presence of fire-cracked stone in its fill during the evaluation is difficult to explain.

The excavation identified a further 16 tree throws/bowls that either had the classic crescent shape in plan, near vertical internal and shallower external edges or had obvious root damage along the edge or base of the feature. The smallest of the these was 1.10m long, 0.84m wide and 0.21m deep the largest being 2.45m long, 1.22m wide and 0.32m deep. All had been filled with a mid-yellowish brown sandy clay that other than very occasional small charcoal flecks and very occasional pottery and flint fragments were very sterile.

Prehistoric pottery and or flint fragments were found in three of these features [505] excavated during the evaluation, [529] in excavation Trench 5 (Fig 4, Plate 4) and [308] in excavation Trench 3 (Fig 3, Plate 5). Although these finds suggest a prehistoric date for these features it is impossible to confirm the age of the other features, although it is possible they are all of a comparable age.

#### 5.2.3 Phase 2: Post-medieval and Modern

A ceramic, circular, land drain running north to south and three rectangular geotechnical test pits were observed in excavation Trench 3.

## 6 Artefactual evidence by Rob Hedge and Laura Griffin

A very small assemblage of prehistoric pottery and flint was recovered from Trenches 3 and 5.

### 6.1 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).

#### 6.1.1 Recovery policy

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

#### 6.1.2 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 Microsoft Access database.

Artefacts from environmental samples were examined and included in the assessment.

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](http://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.

#### 6.1.3 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.

## 6.2 Artefactual analysis

The assemblage came from four stratified contexts (305, 309, 506 and 530).

Period	Material class	Material subtype	Object specific type	Count	Weight (g)
prehistoric	stone	flint	flake	1	0.2
prehistoric	stone	flint	burnt chip	1	0.1
Neolithic	stone	flint	backed knife/piercer	1	13
prehistoric	ceramic	earthenware	pot	12	25.4
undated	stone	?dolerite	burnt stone	3	77
Totals				18	115.7

Table 1: Quantification of the assemblage

### 6.2.1 Summary artefactual evidence by period

#### *Prehistoric*

Datable material consisted of three pieces of worked flint and 12 sherds of pottery from contexts in trenches 3 and 5.

Pottery (contexts 309, 506 and 530) was highly abraded and fragmentary but all sherds were of the same angular quartz tempered fabric (cf fabrics 5.8, 5.4), a type commonly associated with Earlier Prehistoric assemblages from South Worcestershire and Herefordshire (Plate 6).

Flint consisted of a small flake of translucent light grey flint (14mm x 11mm x 2mm), and a very small heat-affected chip (10mm x 6mm x 1mm) from fill (506) of pit [505] and a knife/piercer (42mm x 34mm x 11mm) from fill (309) of tree-throw [308] (Plate 6).

The only diagnostic piece is the backed knife/piercer, fashioned from good quality mottled grey semi-translucent flint, it is in very fresh condition and is therefore, likely to have been undisturbed since the moment of deposition. Small abrasions along the cutting edge of the right lateral margin are probably the result of use-wear. The knife is semi-abruptly backed along the left lateral margin, and in form the piece has a 'D-shaped' appearance typical of Early Neolithic backed knives. The distal end of the cutting edge appears to have been lightly modified, ending in a point suggestive of a piercer. The tool was fashioned on a soft-hammer flake with evidence of careful platform preparation, detached from a core with at least two platforms at 90° to one another. These characteristics are most suggestive of an Early Neolithic date, though with just a single diagnostic artefact, a later Neolithic or Early Bronze Age date cannot be ruled out.

#### *Undated*

A small quantity of heat-cracked stone was recovered from basal fill (305) of feature [304].

## 6.3 Recommendations

### 6.3.1 Further analysis and reporting

No further work on the assemblage is required.

### 6.3.2 Discard and retention

It is recommended that the assemblage be retained, though the final decision rests with Museums Worcestershire.

## 7 Discussion

The pottery fragments recovered from tree throws [308], [505] and [529] were identified as containing sub-angular quartz tempering. Although this assemblage did not contain more diagnostic rims to provide a more specific date than early prehistoric, the associated worked flint indicates that a Neolithic date seems likely.

The sterile nature of the tree throw fills and the limited artefactual assemblage recovered suggests the prehistoric occupation of the site was only small and probably transient. No prehistoric features of anthropogenic origin were identified and it is therefore possible the tree throws and the associated uprooted root bowls had been used as temporary shelters. The results of the excavation correspond with the evaluation which suggested the site had been the location of a small, temporary camp. These finds are characteristic of the remains left by dispersed mobile communities which leave little evidence of their occupation. By the Late Neolithic the practice of depositing cultural material, resulting from temporary occupation, into both tree throws and pits within densely wooded landscapes was a well-established tradition, which had its origins in the Late Mesolithic/Early Neolithic (Evans et al 1999). The site is located on an island of higher ground within a landscape dominated by river terraces, with the River Teme to the north, River Severn to the east, and the Carey Brook to the south. This would have made it a prime position to overlook and exploit the low-lying, fertile river valleys rich in fauna by mobile communities which would have navigated these valleys at different times throughout the year.

## 8 Project personnel

The fieldwork was led by Andrew Mann, assisted by Jem Brewer and Beth Williams.

The project was managed by Tom Rogers. The report was produced and collated by Andrew Mann. Specialist contributions and individual sections of the report are attributed to the relevant authors throughout the text.

## 9 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following: Richard Smalley of CgMs Consulting for commissioning the project, Aidan Smyth, Archaeology and Planning Advisor for Malvern Hills DC (The Curator), the landowner for providing access, and A.G. Redman & Son Ltd for providing the plant and their help during the fieldwork.

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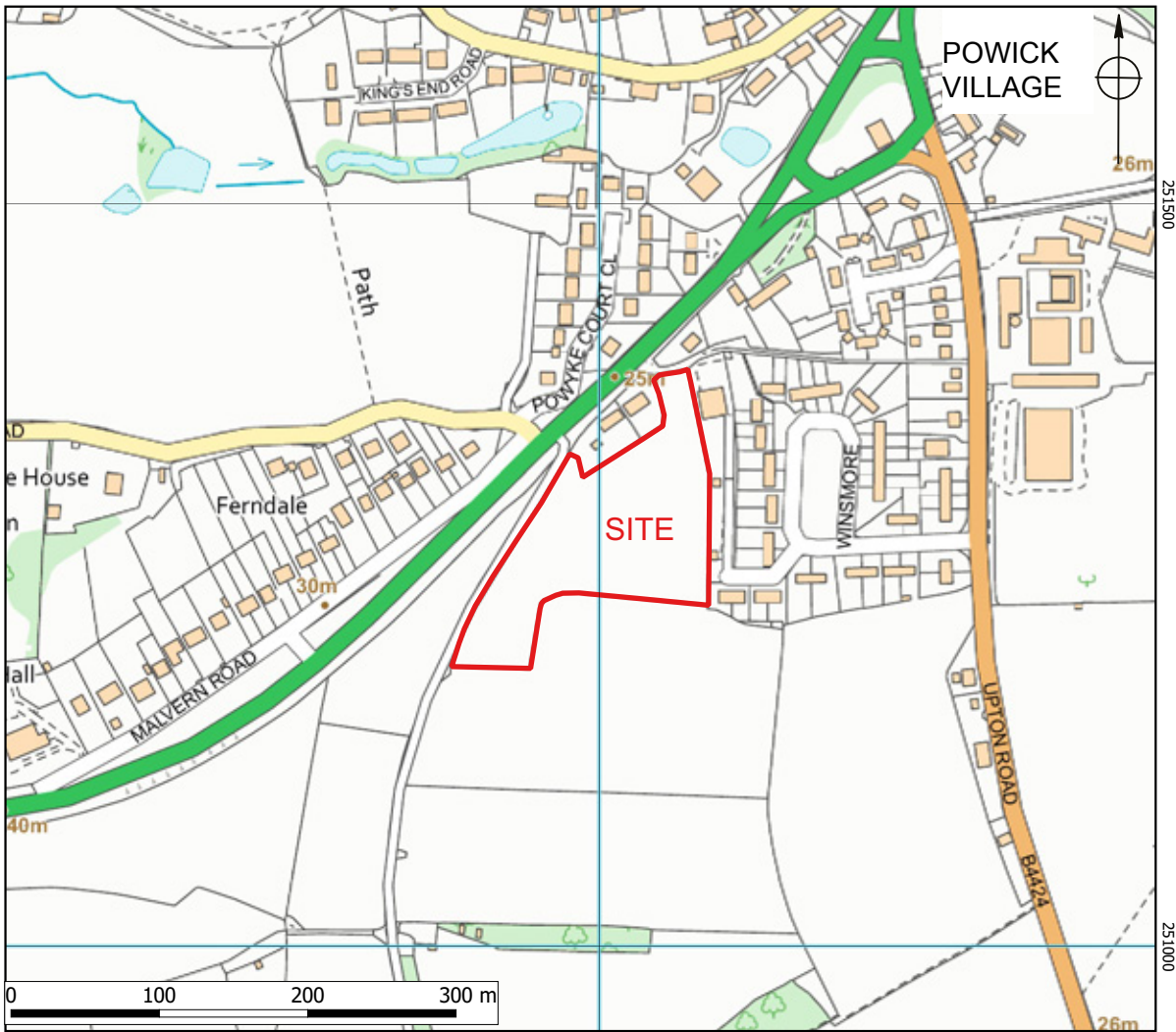
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## Figures

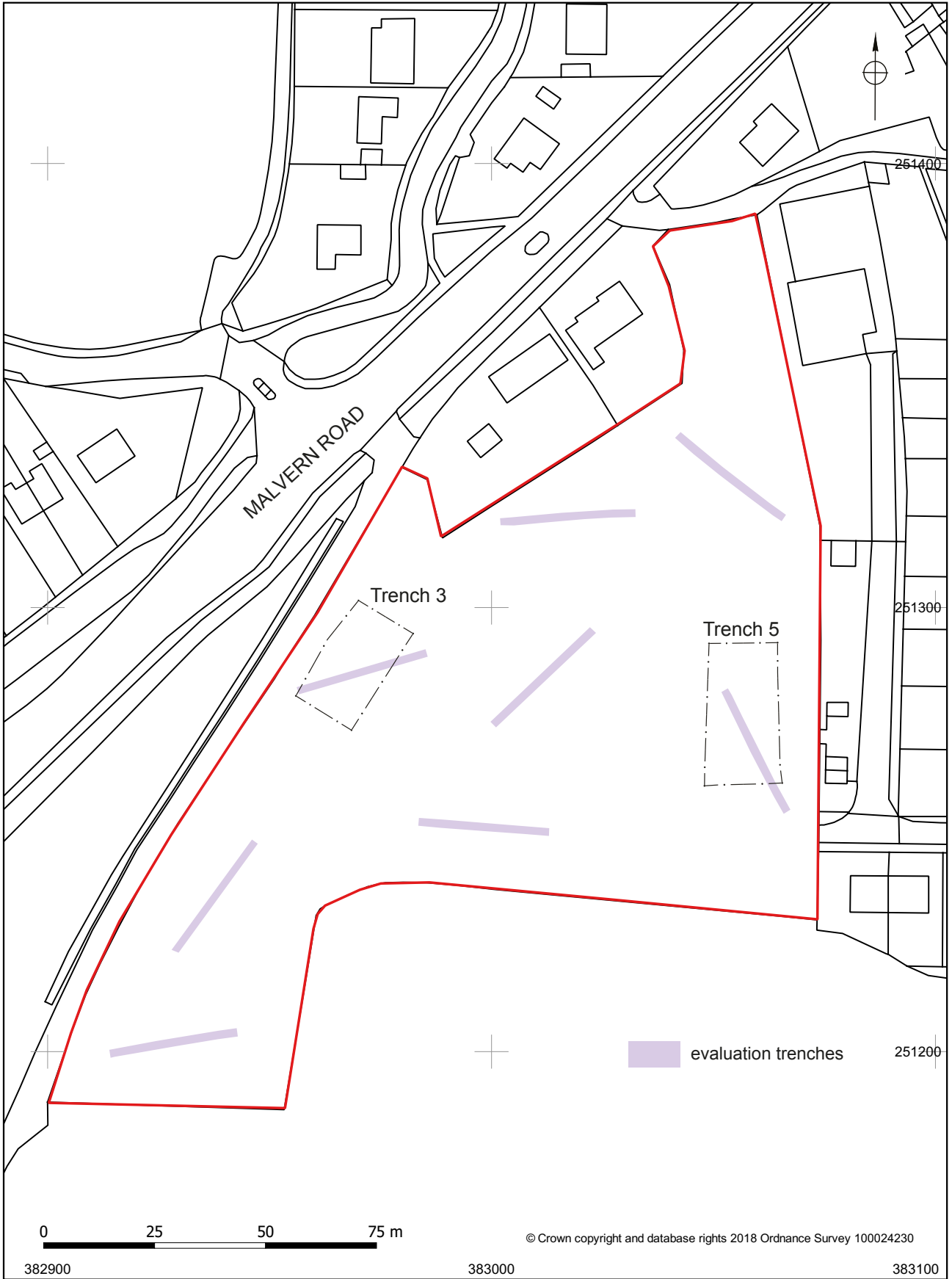


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Location of the site

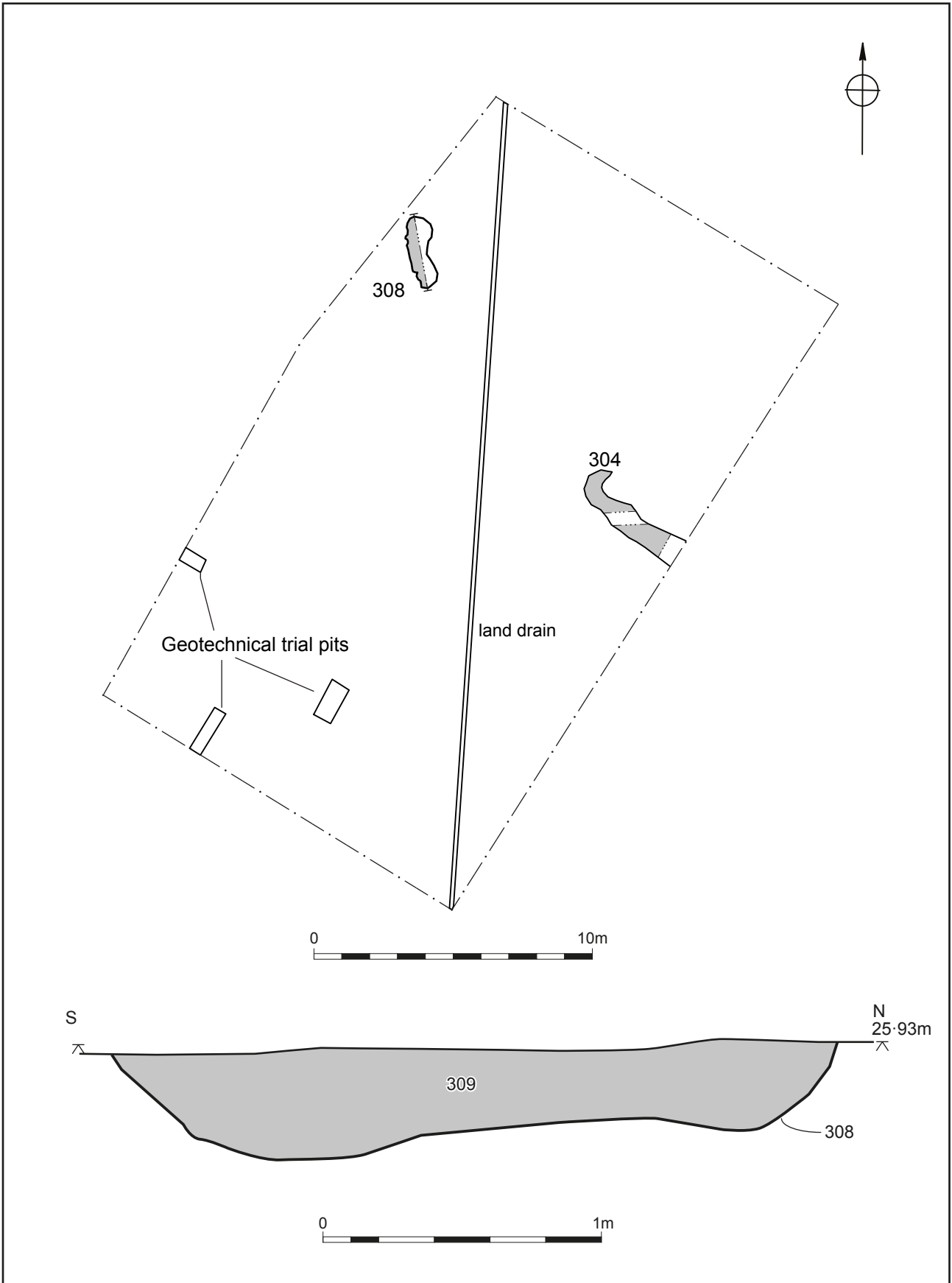
Figure 1





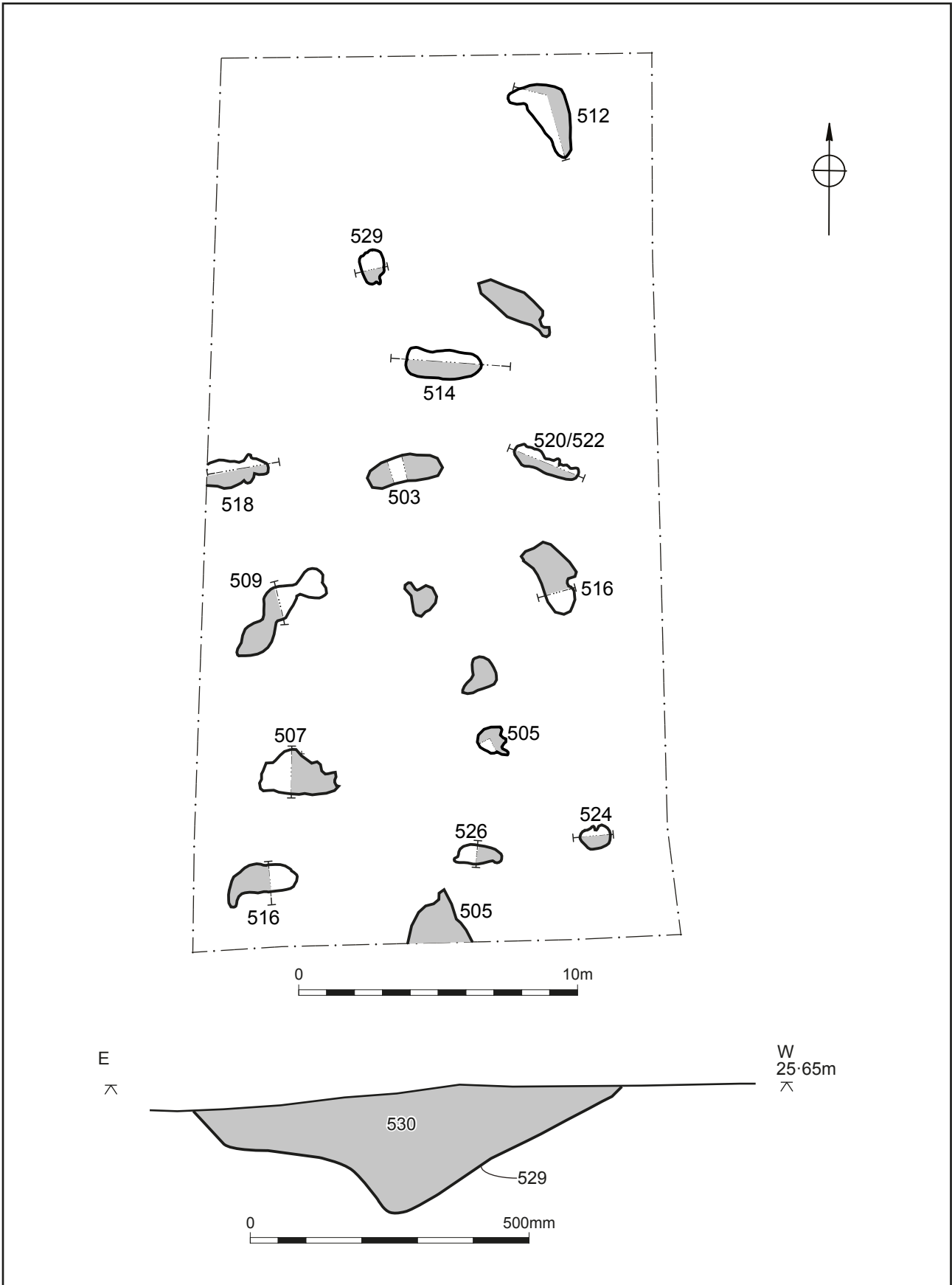
Excavation trench locations

Figure 2



Trench 3 excavation area and section of feature 308

Figure 3



Trench 3 excavation area and section of feature 529

Figure 4

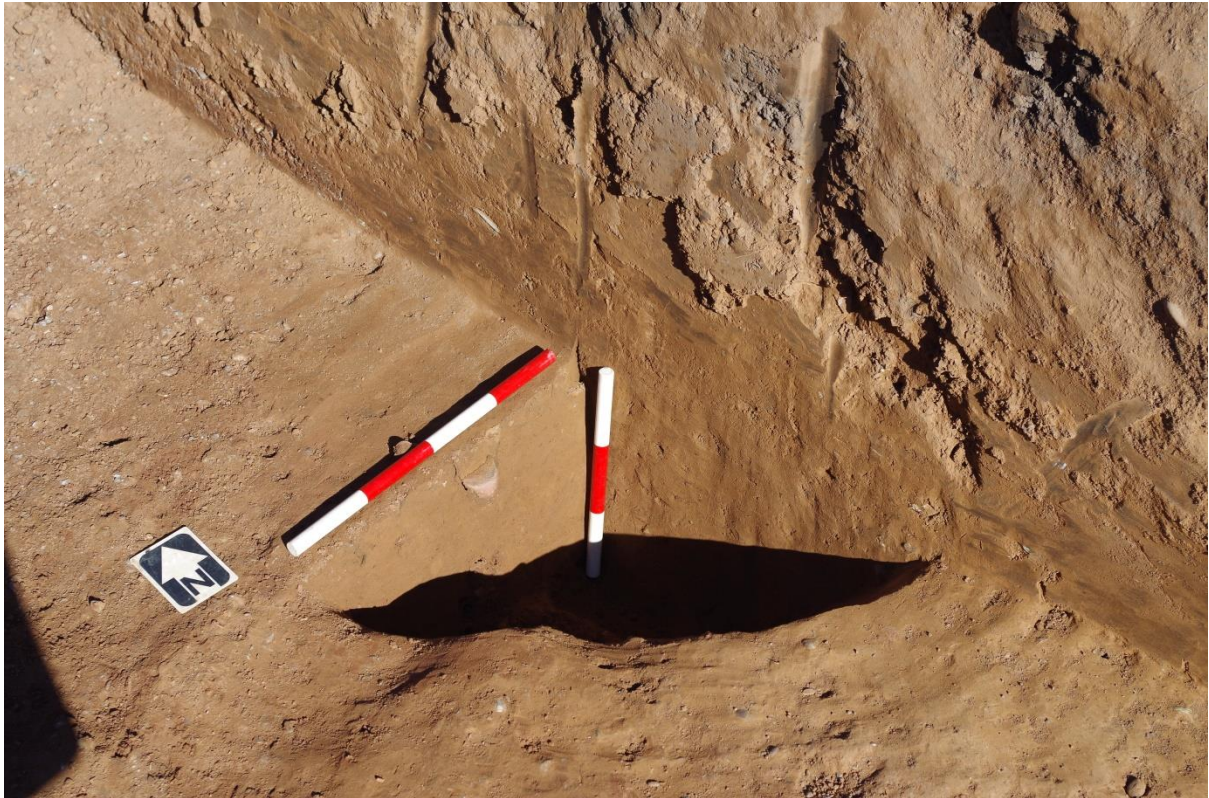
## Plates



*Plate 1: Trench 3 looking south west. 2x 1m scales.*



*Plate 2: Trench 5 looking south. 2x 1m scales.*



*Plate 3: Tree bowl [505] looking north east. 0.40m and 0.30m scales.*



*Plate 4. Tree bowl [529] facing south. 0.50m scale.*



Plate 5: Three throw [308] facing west. 2x 1.0m scales.



Plate 6: Flint knife from fill (309) and larger pieces of prehistoric pottery from (530)

## Appendix 1: Summary of project archive

TYPE	DETAILS*
Artefacts and Environmental	Ceramics, Worked stone/lithics
Paper	Context sheet, Diary (Field progress form), Drawing, Plan, Report, Section
Digital	Database, AutoCad dwg, Images raster/digital photography , Survey, Text

\*OASIS terminology



## Appendix 2: Summary of data for HER

WSM 71141 (event HER number)

P5495

### Artefacts

period - note 1	material class	object specific type	start date	end date	Count	weight (g)	specialist report?	key assemblage? (note 3)
prehistoric	flint	flake	-10000	43	1	0.2	Y	N
prehistoric	ceramic	Pot	-4000	43	4	0.4	y	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.

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.