

Archaeological evaluation of land off Mill Lane, Malvern, Worcestershire

Worcestershire Archaeology
for Orion Heritage Ltd

March 2019



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LAND OFF MILL LANE MALVERN WORCESTERSHIRE

Archaeological evaluation report



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SITE INFORMATION

Site name: Land off Mill Lane, Malvern
Site code: WSM71388
Local planning authority: Malvern Hills District Council
Planning reference: 18/01092/FUL
Central NGR: SO 7964 4507
Commissioning client: Orion Heritage Ltd
Client project reference: PN2113/1
WA project number: P5544
WA report number: 2680
HER reference: WSM71388
Oasis reference: fieldsec1-346058
Museum accession number: -

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1	20/03/2019	Richard Bradley	Draft for Client	Tom Vaughan
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Archaeological evaluation at land off Mill Lane, Malvern, Worcestershire

By Richard Bradley

With contributions by Laura Griffin

Illustrations by Carolyn Hunt

Summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Worcestershire Archaeology in February 2019 of land off Mill Lane, Malvern, Worcestershire (NGR SO 7964 4507). This involved excavation of ten trenches. It was commissioned by Orion Heritage Ltd on behalf of Countryside Properties (WPL) Ltd, in advance of a proposed residential development.

A number of linear service pipes lay across the development area, associated with a sewage treatment works adjacent to the south-east. The trenches were therefore targeted on areas outside of this activity, specifically in relation to the proposed locations of new buildings. A small number of archaeological features were identified within the trenches. These were generally very shallow and all appeared to be related to agricultural land use. The small artefact assemblage is considered to have been introduced onto the site through this agricultural activity, dating mainly to the late medieval and post-medieval period. Two Roman artefacts were of interest, though both were residual finds and were highly-abraded.

Report

1 Introduction

1.1 Background to the project

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA) in February 2019 of land off Mill Lane, Malvern, Worcestershire (NGR SO 7964 4507; Figure 1). This involved excavation of ten small trial trenches. It was commissioned by Orion Heritage Ltd on behalf of Countryside Properties (WPL) Ltd, in advance of a proposed residential development. A planning application has been submitted to Malvern Hills District Council (ref. 18/01092/FUL).

Part of the development area has been subject to disturbance associated with the insertion of services connected to a sewage treatment works adjacent to the south-east. Therefore, the trenches were targeted to provide an assessment of the archaeological potential for the site away from this disturbance, specifically in relation to the proposed locations of new buildings. This was agreed with the archaeological advisor to the local planning authority prior to commencement of site work (Orion Heritage Ltd 2019).

Previous desk-based assessment (DBA) identified a low potential for archaeological remains and concluded that the site had been agricultural land from the late medieval or early post-medieval period onwards. Furthermore it was probably forested land as part of Malvern Chase until this time. Fieldwalking informed the preparation of the DBA and recovered a sample of 206 pottery sherds (mainly post-medieval in date) and twenty pieces of clay pipe, interpreted as the result of manuring from the 17th century onwards. A single abraded sherd of Roman Severn Valley ware was recorded within this assemblage (CgMs Consulting 2013; Oxford Archaeology 2013).

The project conforms to a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by Orion Heritage Ltd (2019); approved by Aidan Smyth (Archaeology and Planning Advisor, Wychavon and Malvern Hills District Councils), and to the industry guidelines and standards set out by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists in *Standard and guidance: for archaeological field evaluation* (CIfA 2014a).

1.2 Site location, topography and geology

The site is on the south-eastern edge of Malvern and covers an area c 3.7ha in size. The ground has slightly undulating topography, changing from around 45m AOD in the north to approximately 40m AOD in the south. It has been in arable agricultural use for a considerable period. There is residential development to the north, the route of Mill Lane and access to a sewage treatment works to the east, recent and ongoing residential development to the south, and an area of scrub grassland to the west.

The underlying geology comprises mudstone of the Sidmouth Mudstone formation overlain by superficial Head deposits of clay, silt, sand and gravel (BGS 2019).

2 Archaeological and historical background

As noted above, a DBA of the site was originally undertaken by CgMs Consulting (2013; WSM48227). This gathered information from Worcestershire Historic Environment Record (HER; 1km search area), Worcestershire Archives, the National Monuments Record (NMR) and National Heritage List (NHL). The archaeological and historical background provided in that document is summarised as follows:

No prehistoric activity has been recorded for the site. Within the wider area, evidence is limited to unlocated Bronze Age and late Iron Age finds in the general parish of Malvern (WSM03869) and a possible late Iron Age drove road which follows the modern road alignment of Guarford Road, 200m to the north (WSM3207). Further south-west are hillforts at Midsummer Hill and British Camp, and to the north and north-west there is evidence for a well-established pottery manufacturing and distribution network in the Iron Age, which continued into the Roman period.

A single sherd of Roman period Severn Valley ware pottery was recovered from the site during fieldwalking, but this was heavily abraded (Oxford Archaeology 2013; WSM49622). The only nearby evidence for Romano-British settlement, which included metal working alongside domestic waste, was recorded at Chase High School, 900m to the west of the site (WSM15577; WSM45207).

No Saxon or early medieval activity is known on or in the surrounds of the site, and following the Norman Conquest much of the Malvern area came under forest law and remained as Malvern Chase (a large area of forest and marsh) until the 17th century. There is, however, evidence for ridge and furrow cultivation within the site itself, suggesting that perhaps it was cleared for agricultural use in the late medieval or early post-medieval period (WSM34122; WSM34121). Further areas of ridge and furrow have been mapped to the south-west (WSM34178; WSM34179).

A single post-medieval feature is known in the northern part of the site, comprising a sheep wash shown on the 1938 Ordnance Survey mapping (WSM32031). The majority of the pottery recovered during fieldwalking was post-medieval in date (Oxford Archaeology 2013).

3 Project aims

As set out in the project WSI (Orion Heritage 2019), the principal aims of the archaeological evaluation were to:

- Determine the presence or absence of archaeological remains;
- Determine the character, extent, date, complexity, integrity, state of preservation and quality of any archaeological remains present, therefore ensuring their preservation by record; and
- To provide robust baseline information to inform the scoping of a mitigation strategy, should this be required.

More generally, the project aimed to ensure:

- The protection and recording of archaeological assets discovered during the archaeological works;
- That any below-ground archaeological deposits exposed are promptly identified; and
- The recording of archaeological remains, to place this record in its local context and to make this record available.

4 Project methodology

The Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared by Orion Heritage (2019), with fieldwork undertaken between 25 and 26 February 2019.

Ten trenches were excavated across the site, each just over 20m long and 1.9m wide, amounting to 428m² in total area. The location of the trenches is indicated in Figure 2. The trenches were non-gridded and positioned to provide an assessment of the archaeological potential of the site in relation to proposed new buildings, outside of the constraints presented by the location of known services. All were excavated in their intended locations, apart from Trenches 9 and 10 which were adjusted slightly due to their proximity to a hedge line.

Deposits considered not to be significant were removed under constant 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, 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. 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 and artefactual 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 with Museums Worcestershire.

5 Archaeological results

5.1 Introduction

The trenches and features recorded are shown on Figure 2 and Plates 1-5. The trench and context inventory is presented in Appendix 1.

5.2 Site phasing

5.2.1 Natural deposits

The natural substrate was encountered in all of the trenches excavated. This was comparable across the trenches, comprising slightly variable mid pinkish-red brown or brownish-red clay with blue-grey clay and gravel patches (Plates 1 and 2). This was consistent with the mapped geology for the area.

5.2.2 Phase 1: late medieval to post-medieval

In the south-east part of the site, Trench 7 contained three parallel linear features aligned approximately north to south, considered to be plough furrows (Plate 3). The central example, [707], was 1.60m wide and 0.10m in depth with an irregular base, filled with mid grey silty clay (708) and including a highly abraded fragment of Roman tile and some late medieval or early post-medieval ceramic building material (CBM). The western of the three, [703], was 0.85m in width and also contained late medieval or early post-medieval tile.

Further to the north-west, in Trench 5, a 0.50m wide shallow linear feature (0.12m deep) may also have been a furrow, although its north-west to south-east alignment was slightly different from those in Trench 7 and the size was more akin to a small drainage gully [504] (Plate 4). The light grey silty clay fill (505) contained a tiny fragment of post-medieval CBM. Also in Trench 5, found below the subsoil and visible in section towards the south-western end of the trench, was a 0.09m deep layer of compact mid blueish grey silty clay with charcoal inclusions (502). This was not securely dated but the stratigraphic sequence would suggest it was of comparable date to the gully.

In Trench 10 was a wide (2.10m) but shallow (0.06m deep) linear feature aligned north-west to south-east [1005] (Plate 5). There were no finds recovered, but it is considered to be of the same broad phase as the other features on site. It may have been a small ditch or gully, although the infill and size was comparable to the probable furrows seen in Trench 7. As with the gully in Trench 5 however, the orientation was different.

The subsoil identified in all of the trenches varied between 0.10m to 0.17m thick. This sealed the features in Trench 7, Trench 5 and Trench 10 and contained late 17th to 18th century pottery and general post-medieval clay pipe.

5.2.3 Phase 2: modern

Towards the eastern end of Trench 2 was a modern land drain [204] backfilled with loose gravel. Trench 10 contained the base of a former land drain [1004], also backfilled with gravel.

The topsoil in all of the trenches was mid grey-brown clay silt, 0.15-0.26m thick, containing post-medieval tile and clay pipe, 19th to 20th century pottery, and a residual sherd of highly abraded Roman pottery.

6 Artefactual evidence by Laura Griffin

6.1 Methodology

The finds work reported here conforms to the following guidance: for finds work 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

Recovery of artefacts was undertaken according 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. 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.

The pottery 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).

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'). Large assemblages of post-medieval or modern material, unless there is some special reason to retain (such as local production), may be noted and not retained, or, if appropriate, a representative sample will be 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 Artefact analysis

period	material class	object specific type	count	weight (g)
Roman	ceramic	pot	1	13
Roman	ceramic	tile	1	98
late med/early post-med	ceramic	cbm	1	2
late med/early post-med	ceramic	tile	2	179
post-medieval	ceramic	pot	3	112
post-medieval	ceramic	tile	3	158
post-medieval	ceramic	cbm	1	1
post-medieval	ceramic	pipe	6	13
modern	ceramic	pot	2	56

Table 1: Quantification of the assemblage

The assemblage recovered from the site totalled 20 finds weighing 632g (see Tables 1 and 3). Material came largely from topsoil and subsoil and therefore was of mixed date, including Roman, but

the majority of the assemblage was post-medieval and modern. The level of preservation was poor, with finds displaying high levels of surface abrasion.

6.2.1 Summary of artefacts by period

Roman

Material of Roman date consisted of a highly abraded fragment of tile (residual in context 708) and a sherd of Oxfordshire red/brown colour-coated ware (fabric 29; Table 2). This sherd was from the topsoil in Trench 10 (context 1000) and, therefore, highly abraded, but appears to have come from a jug-type form with pinched spout. Such forms are extremely rare in this fabric type (Young 1977, 150) and date mid-3rd to 4th century.

Late medieval to early post-medieval

Material of this date consisted of three pieces of ceramic building material (contexts 704 and 800). All had Malvernian rock inclusions and two were flat roof tile fragments.

Post-medieval

Finds of post-medieval date formed the bulk of the assemblage and included pottery, ceramic building material and clay pipe (see Tables 1 and 3). Pottery all came from large flared bowl/pancheon forms with a dark brown glaze over a red iron wash, characteristic of the late 17th to 18th century.

Modern

Two sherds of pottery could be dated 19th to 20th century. Both were from topsoil (contexts 200 and 800) and included a fragment of transfer-decorated china (fabric 85) and a stoneware handle of possible Bristol production (fabric 81.4).

broad period	fabric number	fabric name	count	weight (g)
Roman	29	Oxfordshire red/brown colour coated ware	1	13
post-medieval	78	Post-medieval red ware	1	42
post-medieval	91	Post-medieval buff wares	1	51
post-medieval	100	Miscellaneous post-medieval wares	1	19
modern	81.4	Miscellaneous late stoneware	1	55
modern	85	Modern china	1	1

Table 2: Quantification of the pottery by fabric type

context	material class	object specific type	count	weight(g)	start date	end date	finds tpq
100	ceramic	pipe	2	3			post-med
200	ceramic	pot	1	55	19C	E20C	19-E20C
500	ceramic	pot	1	51	L17C	18C	L17-18C
505	ceramic	cbm	1	1			post-med
601	ceramic	pot	1	42	L17C	18C	L17-18C
601	ceramic	pipe	1	3			

601	ceramic	tile	2	88			
601	ceramic	pot	1	19	L17C	18C	
704	ceramic	tile	1	64			late med/early post-med
708	ceramic	tile	1	98	M1C	4C	
708	ceramic	cbm	1	2			late med/early post-med
800	ceramic	tile	1	115			
800	ceramic	pipe	2	5			
800	ceramic	pot	1	1	19C	20C	19-20C
1000	ceramic	tile	1	70			
1000	ceramic	pot	1	13	M3C	4C	post-med
1001	ceramic	pipe	1	2			post-med

Table 3: Summary of context dating based on artefacts

6.3 Recommendations

The artefacts are of limited significance and no further work on these is required.

7 Environmental evidence

Environmental 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.

8 Discussion and conclusions

A small number of archaeological features were identified within the trenches. These were generally very shallow and all appeared to be related to agricultural land use. They were dispersed, with no evidence of direct occupation. The small number of artefacts was abraded and had probably been introduced onto the site through this agricultural activity. The presence of parallel linear features in part of the field, interpreted as the base of furrows (Trench 7), is considered likely to reflect the HER information that has mapped ridge and furrow cultivation within the site area and in the surrounding fields. The dating of the majority of artefacts recovered, and the lack of any earlier features, would support previous hypotheses that the land had probably been deforested for agricultural use in the late medieval and post-medieval period (CgMs 2013).

The results support the low potential for the site identified in the desk-based assessment, and the finds assemblage is consistent with that recovered from the fieldwalking (Oxford Archaeology 2013). The features are considered to be of negligible archaeological significance and the potential for further, as yet unidentified, archaeological features to survive on the site is deemed to be low. The two Roman artefacts were of more interest, although both were residual and highly-abraded, potentially representing a background scatter of material associated with Roman activity in the wider Malvern area.

Overall, the fieldwork methods adopted allow a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved. Conditions were suitable to identify the presence or absence of archaeological

features and the nature, density and distribution of the limited archaeological evidence provides an accurate characterisation of the development site as a whole.

9 Project personnel

The fieldwork was led by Richard Bradley (MCIfA), assisted by Beth Williams.

The project was managed by Tom Vaughan (MCIfA). The report was produced and collated by Richard Bradley. Artefactual analysis was by Laura Griffin (ACIfA). Illustrations were prepared by Carolyn Hunt (MCIfA).

10 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following for their assistance during the project: Cathy Patrick (Technical Director, Orion Heritage Ltd); and Aidan Smyth (Archaeology and Planning Advisor, Wychavon and Malvern Hills District Councils).

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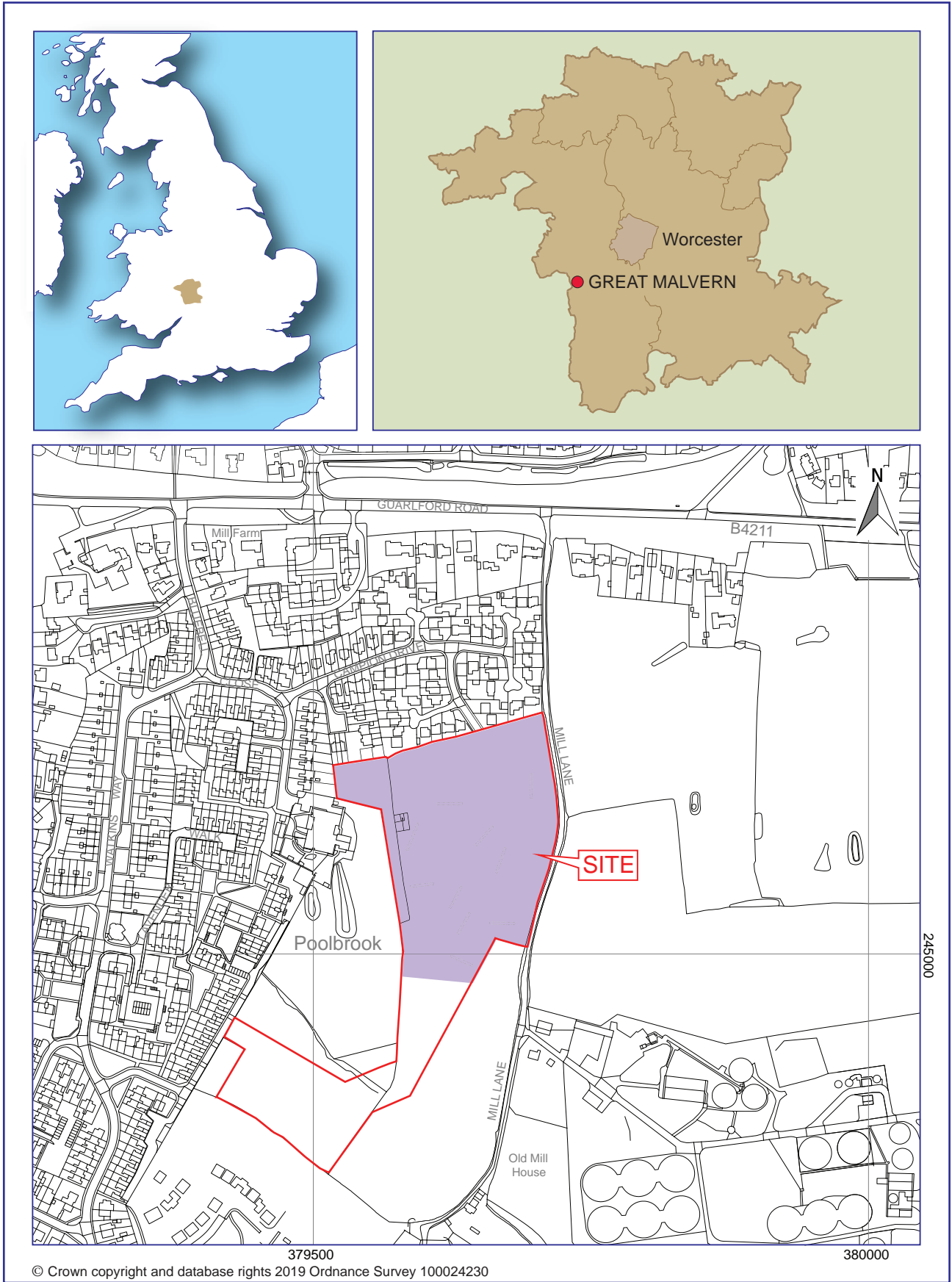
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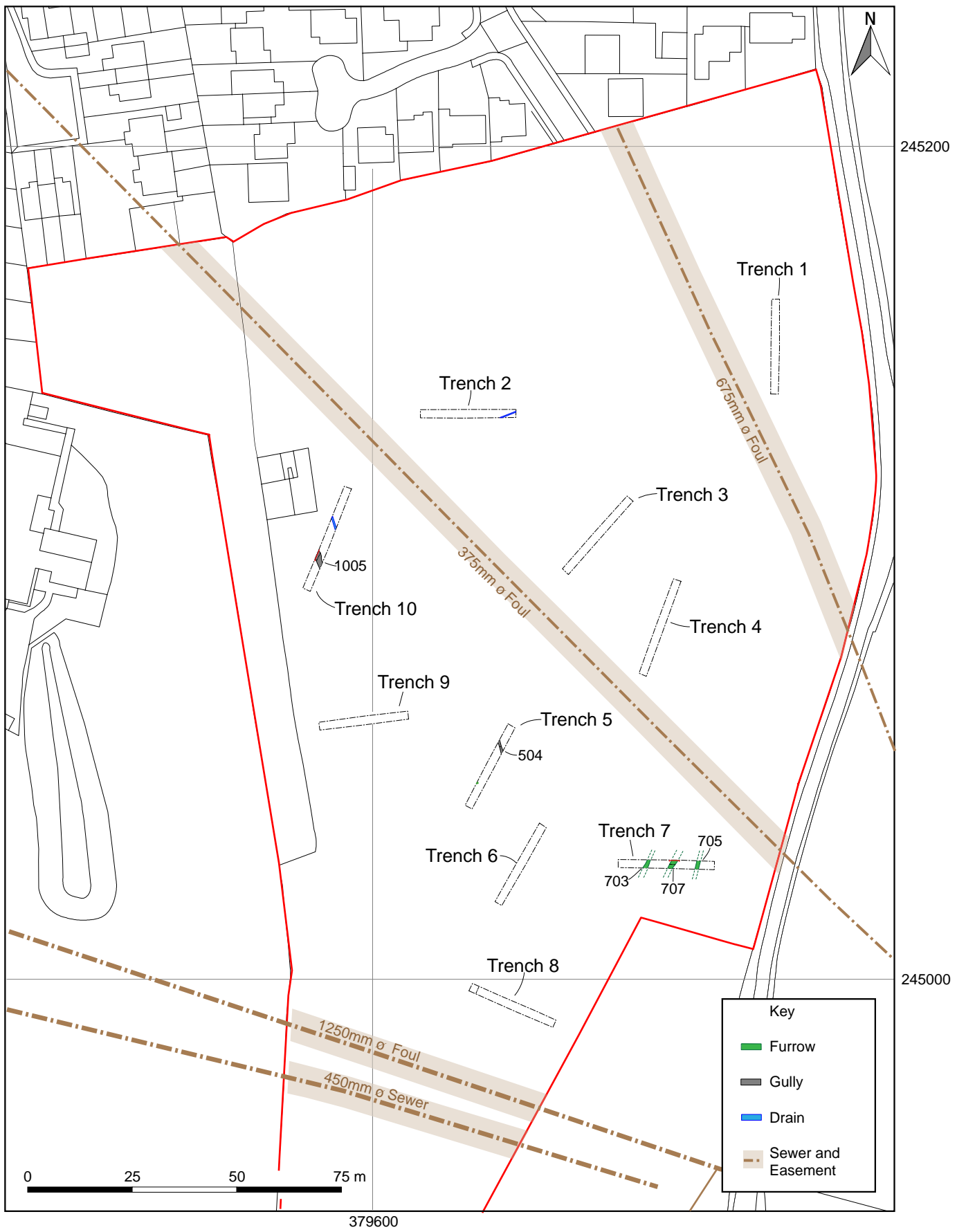
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Figures



Location of the site

Figure 1



Trench location plan showing constraints

Figure 2

Plates



Plate 1: General view of Trench 4, facing north-west, 2x 1m scales



Plate 2: General view of Trench 9, facing west, 2x 1m scales



Plate 3: Irregular base of probable furrow 707, Trench 7, facing north, 1m scale



Plate 4: Base of shallow gully feature 504, Trench 5, facing north-west, 0.4m scale



Plate 5: Irregular base of possible furrow or ditch 1005, Trench 10, facing north-west, 2x 1m scales

Appendix 1: Trench descriptions

Trench 1

Length: 22m Width: 1.9m Orientation: N-S

Context summary:

Context	Feature type	Context type	Interpretation	Height/ depth	Deposit description
100	Topsoil	Layer	Topsoil	0.25	Mod compact mid greyish brown clay silt
101	Subsoil	Layer	Subsoil	0.15	Mod compact mid brown clay silt
102	Natural	Layer	Natural	0.10+	Firm mid reddish brown and blue grey clay

Trench 2

Length: 22.8m Width: 2m Orientation: E-W

Context summary:

Context	Feature type	Context type	Interpretation	Height/ depth	Deposit description
200	Topsoil	Layer	Topsoil	0.26	Mod compact mid grey brown clay silt
201	Natural	Layer	Subsoil	0.16	Mod compact mid brown clay silt
202	Natural	Layer	Natural	0.03+	Firm mid brownish red and grey blue clay
203	Field drain	Fill	Fill in land drain [204]	Unexc	Loose light to mid grey clay with gravel
204	Field drain	Cut	Land drain	Unexc	

Trench 3

Length: 23m Width: 1.9m Orientation: NE-SW

Context summary:

Context	Feature type	Context type	Interpretation	Height/ depth	Deposit description
300	Topsoil	Layer	Topsoil	0.26	Mod compact mid grey brown clay silt
301	Subsoil	Layer	Subsoil	0.16	Mod compact mid reddish brown clay silt
302	Natural	Layer	Natural	0.05+	Firm mid pinkish brownish red clay with grey blue patches

Trench 4

Length: 24m Width: 1.9m Orientation: NNE-SSW

Context summary:

Context	Feature type	Context type	Interpretation	Height/ depth	Deposit description
400	Topsoil	Layer	Topsoil	0.24	Mod compact mid greyish brown clay silt
401	Subsoil	Layer	Subsoil	0.11	Mod compact mid reddish brown clay silt
402	Natural	Layer	Natural	0.07+	Firm mid brown red clay with blue grey patches

Trench 5

Length: 22.5m Width: 1.9m Orientation: NE-SW

Context summary:

Context	Feature type	Context type	Interpretation	Height/ depth	Deposit description
500	Topsoil	Layer	Topsoil	0.16	Loose mid greyish brown silty clay
501	Subsoil	Layer	Subsoil	0.13	Moderately compact light greyish brown silty clay
502	Layer	Layer	Patchy layer in section	0.09	Compact mid blueish grey silty clay
503	Natural	Layer	Natural		Compact mid brownish red clay
504	Gully	Cut	Cut of gully	0.12	
505	Gully	Fill	Fill of [504]	0.12	Moderately compact light brownish grey silty clay with gravel

Trench 6

Length: 20m Width: 1.9m Orientation: NE-SW

Context summary:

Context	Feature type	Context type	Interpretation	Height/ depth	Deposit description
600	Topsoil	Layer	Topsoil	0.15	Loose mid greyish brown silty clay
601	Subsoil	Layer	Subsoil	0.17	Moderately compact light brownish grey silty clay
602	Natural	Layer	Natural		Compact mid brownish red silty clay

Trench 7

Length: 23.5m

Width: 1.9m

Orientation: E-W

Context summary:

Context	Feature type	Context type	Interpretation	Height/ depth	Deposit description
700	Topsoil	Layer	Topsoil	0.19	Loose mid greyish brown silty clay
701	Subsoil	Layer	Subsoil	0.10	Moderately compact light brownish grey silty clay
702	Natural	Layer	Natural		Compact mid brownish red clay
703	Furrow	Cut	Cut of furrow		
704	Furrow	Fill	Fill of furrow [703]		Compact mid grey silty clay with gravel
705	Furrow	Cut	Cut of furrow		
706	Furrow	Fill	Fill of furrow [705]		Compact mid grey silty clay with gravel
707	Furrow	Cut	Cut of furrow	0.10	
708	Furrow	Fill	Fill of furrow [707]	0.10	Compact mid grey silty clay with gravel

Trench 8

Length: 20m

Width: 1.8m

Orientation: E-W

Context summary:

Context	Feature type	Context type	Interpretation	Height/ depth	Deposit description
800	Topsoil	Layer	Topsoil	0.15	Mid-loose mid greyish brown silty clay
801	Subsoil	Layer	Subsoil	0.15	Moderately compact light brownish grey silty clay
802	Natural	Layer	Natural		Compact mid brownish red clay

Trench 9

Length: 21.5m Width: 1.9m Orientation: E-W

Context summary:

Context	Feature type	Context type	Interpretation	Height/ depth	Deposit description
900	Topsoil	Layer	Topsoil	0.24	Mod compact mid greyish brown clay silt
901	Subsoil	Layer	Subsoil	0.11	Mod compact light reddish brown clay silt
902	Natural	Layer	Natural	0.12+	Firm mid pinkish brown with blue grey patches clay

Trench 10

Length: 26m Width: 1.9m Orientation: NNE-SSW

Context summary:

Context	Feature type	Context type	Interpretation	Height/ depth	Deposit description
1000	Topsoil	Layer	Topsoil	0.26	Mod compact mid greyish brown clay silt
1001	Subsoil	Layer	Subsoil	0.10	Mod compact light greyish reddish brown clay silt
1002	Natural	Layer	Natural	0.05+	Firm mid reddish brown with blue grey patches clay
1003	Field drain	Fill	Gravel base in land drain [1004]	0.04	Mod compact light grey brown silty clay
1004	Field drain	Cut	Land drain, very shallow	0.04	
1005	Ditch/furrow	Cut	Cut of ditch/furrow	0.06	
1006	Ditch/furrow	Fill	Fill of [1005]	0.06	Moderately compact light greyish brown silty clay with gravel

Appendix 2: Summary of project archive (WSM71388)

TYPE	DETAILS*
Artefacts and Environmental	Ceramics
Paper	Diary (Field progress form), Drawing, Plan, Report, Section
Digital	Database, GIS, Images raster/digital photography, Survey, Text

*OASIS terminology

Appendix 3: Summary of data for HER

WSM71388

P5544

Artefacts

period	material class	object specific type	start date	end date	count	weight (g)	specialist report?	key assemblage?
Roman	ceramic	pot	M3C	4C	1	13	N	N
Roman	ceramic	tile			1	98	N	N
late med/early post-med	ceramic	tile			1	115	N	N
late med/early post-med	ceramic	tile			1	64	N	N
late med/early post-med	ceramic	cbm			1	2	N	N
post-medieval	ceramic	cbm			1	1	N	N
post-medieval	ceramic	pipe			1	2	N	N
post-medieval	ceramic	pot	L17C	18C	1	42	N	N
post-medieval	ceramic	pipe			1	3	N	N
post-medieval	ceramic	tile			2	88	N	N
post-medieval	ceramic	pipe			2	3	N	N
post-medieval	ceramic	pot	L17C	18C	1	51	N	N
post-medieval	ceramic	pipe			2	5	N	N
post-medieval	ceramic	tile			1	70	N	N
post-medieval	ceramic	pot	L17C	18C	1	19	N	N
modern	ceramic	pot	19C	E20C	1	55	N	N
modern	ceramic	pot	19C	20C	1	1	N	N

