

# Archaeological evaluation at Norval Road, South Littleton, Worcestershire

Worcestershire Archaeology  
*for Charles Grant-Parkes on behalf  
of Significance Developments*

May 2019



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# LAND OFF NORVAL ROAD SOUTH LITTLETON WORCESTERSHIRE

Archaeological evaluation report

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## SITE INFORMATION

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Site name: Land off Norval Road, South Littleton, Worcestershire

Local planning authority: Wychavon District Council

Planning reference: 18/01999/FUL

Central NGR: 40940,24560

Commissioning client: Charles Grant-Parkes on behalf of Significance Developments

WA project number: P5593

WA report number: 2696

HER reference: WSM 71534

Oasis reference: fieldsec1-350762

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Version	Date	Author	Details	Approved by
1	10/05/2019	G Arnold	Draft for comment	Tom Rogers

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# Archaeological evaluation of Land off Norval Road, South Littleton, Worcestershire

**By G Arnold**

Illustrations by Carolyn Hunt

## Summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at land off Norval Road, South Littleton, Worcestershire (NGR 40940 24560). It was commissioned by Charles Grant-Parkes on behalf of the land owner Significance Developments in advance of a proposed erection of four dwellings on the site. Planning permission has been granted by Wychavon District Council subject to a programme of archaeological works.

The site is a green area surrounded by a housing estate to the west of HMP Long Lartin, east of the village of South Littleton. The area was previously the location of a Second World War army camp, depicted on the 1954-1963 edition of the Ordnance Survey map of the area.

Two trenches were excavated within the field located over the proposed footprint of the four dwellings. One single, archaeologically sterile ditch was recorded in one trench which was cut into the natural substrate. A regular soil profile was recorded on site, with a layer of a modern made ground spread recorded across the site, between the subsoil and the modern topsoil. The modern made ground is likely to relate to the modern development of the site as an army camp in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century, or from its demolition in the later part of the century. No further features were evident relating to the army camp, suggesting the site had been levelled after it was decommissioned.

# Report

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Background to the project

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA) in April 2019 at land off Norval Road, South Littleton, Worcestershire (NGR 40940 24560). This comprised 2 evaluation trenches in one field. The project was commissioned by Charles Grant-Parkes on behalf of the land owner Significance Developments in advance of a proposed erection of four dwellings on the site. Planning permission for the development was granted by Wychavon District Council subject to conditions including a programme of archaeological works (planning reference 18/01999/FUL).

The archaeological advisor to the local planning authority considered that the proposed development had the potential to impact upon possible heritage assets and that an archaeological evaluation comprising a 2% sample is an appropriate initial stage of archaeological mitigation.

No brief was provided but correspondence with Aidan Smyth, Archaeology and Planning Advisor to Wychavon District Council (the Curator) set out the parameters for the works. A Written Scheme of investigation (WSI) was prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2019) and approved by Aidan Smyth. The evaluation conforms to the industry guidelines and standards set out by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists in *Standard and guidance: for archaeological field evaluation* (CIfA 2014)

### 1.2 Site location, topography and geology

The site comprises a green space within a 1980s housing estate covering an area of approximately 1500sqm. It is located to the east of the village of South Littleton and to the west of HMP Long Lartin. The site is bounded by residential housing around Norval Road.

The underlying geology comprises bedrock of Blue Lias and Charmouth Mudstone formation with no recorded superficial deposits (BGS 2018).

## 2 Archaeological and historical background

The line of a conjectural Roman Road from South Littleton to Ryknild Street runs east-west some 300m to the north of the site (WSM23364). A small assemblage of Roman finds WSM35827 was located during WHEAS project 'Unlocking the Past at the "Cuckoo" Bretforton.

Metal detecting finds of Anglo-Saxon date including a shield boss, blade and ferrule have been found in the area (WSM42156).

The site lies within the Parish of Bretforton (WSM44971). The possible site of a Deserted Village or Shrunken Village (WSM32570) is recorded in from an aerial photograph in the vicinity of Norval Farm some 300m to the north of the site. Ridge and Furrow was recorded in various locations in the village during the Ridge and Furrow survey undertaken between 1960 and 2009 (WSM45878 WSM47160 WSM47161 WSM47162 WSM47163 WSM47164 WSM47165 WSM47166 WSM47167 WSM70229).

Norval Farm some 300m to the north of the site (WSM59385), is a partially extant 19th century unlisted farmstead with unconverted buildings comprising a regular courtyard of L-plan with additional, prominent detached elements to the main plan.

The site lies on the edge the footprint of a group of demolished buildings associated with Honeybourne Sub Depot. (WSM45440). This was part of the US Medical Storage Depot that was in use during and until the end of the Second World War and a Military Camp for the Pioneer Corps, that was in use on the same site from 1949 to 1960. During WW2 this facility was one of the army's sub-depots for the extensive Long Marston Engineer Stores Depot in Warwickshire and featured extensive railway yards from the Worcester, Oxford and Wolverhampton GWR line. The sub-depot played a



large role in supporting Operation Overlord and Operation Bolero (the pre D-Day build-up of American forces in the UK), and was handed over to the Americans to become the main US medical stores depot. Although controlled by the Americans, the locomotives were supplied and serviced by the main British depot at Long Marston, but were coaled and watered on site and only returned to Long Marston for maintenance. The site was occupied by the US 271st and 534th Quartermaster Service Battalion, both of which were units of black troops.

Other parts of this complex are recorded on the HER as include US Medical Stores and Military Camp (WSM27609) and Military Buildings of the Honeybourne Sub Depot (WSM45439).

After the war parts of the site were used as a Prisoner of War camp (WSM27610) before the site was developed into Long Lartin Prison.

### 3 Project aims

The aims and scope of the project are to undertake sufficient fieldwork to:

- Determine the presence or absence of archaeological deposits
- Identify their location, nature, date and preservation
- Assess their significance;
- Assess the likely impact of the proposed development.

### 4 Project methodology

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2019). Fieldwork was undertaken between 11th and 12th April 2019.

Two trenches, amounting to 32m<sup>2</sup> in area, were excavated over the site area of 1500m<sup>2</sup>, representing a sample of 2%. The location of the trenches is indicated in Figure 2.

The trenches were laid out to target the footprint of the proposed buildings in the development.

Deposits considered not to be significant were removed under constant archaeological supervision using a JCB 3CX wheeled 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. 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 structural 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 trench location and features recorded in the trenches are shown in Figure 2. The trench and context inventory is presented in Appendix 1.

## 5.2 Trench descriptions

### 5.2.1 Natural deposits

The natural substrate lies at a depth of between 0.70 and 1.00m depth from the surface. This is overlain by the subsoil,

### 5.2.2 Modern deposits

A modern made ground layer (101/201) likely to be related to landscaping and levelling during the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century developments was observed in both trenches overlain by a thin modern topsoil (100/200). All finds were modern in date and were not retained.

### 5.2.3 Undated

One single shallow, archaeologically sterile ditch was recorded in Trench 1, backfilled with redeposited natural substrate. This was 1.30m wide and 0.22m deep, backfilled with material that is similar to the natural and subsoil, so is likely to be redeposited material within a drainage ditch.

## 6 Artefactual evidence

Recovery of artefacts was undertaken according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012). In the event no artefacts were identified which were considered to be suitable for analysis.

## 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

No significant deposits, features or finds were revealed during the evaluation. The undated, sterile ditch within trench 1 is likely to be related to site drainage or the remains of a former field boundary. The made ground (201) is likely to derive from the former WW2 camp which was demolished prior to the construction of the housing estate and was likely used to level the green area.

The methods adopted allow a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved. Conditions were suitable in all of the trenches to identify the presence or absence of archaeological features. It is considered that the nature, density and distribution of archaeological features provides an accurate characterisation of the development site as a whole.

## 9 Project personnel

The fieldwork was led by Andy Walsh, assisted by Jane Brewer.

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

## 10 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank Charles Grant-Parkes, the land owner for providing access and their help during the fieldwork. The project was monitored by the Archaeological Planning Officer for Wychavon District Council Aidan Smyth and Worcestershire Archaeology would also like to thank him for his advice.

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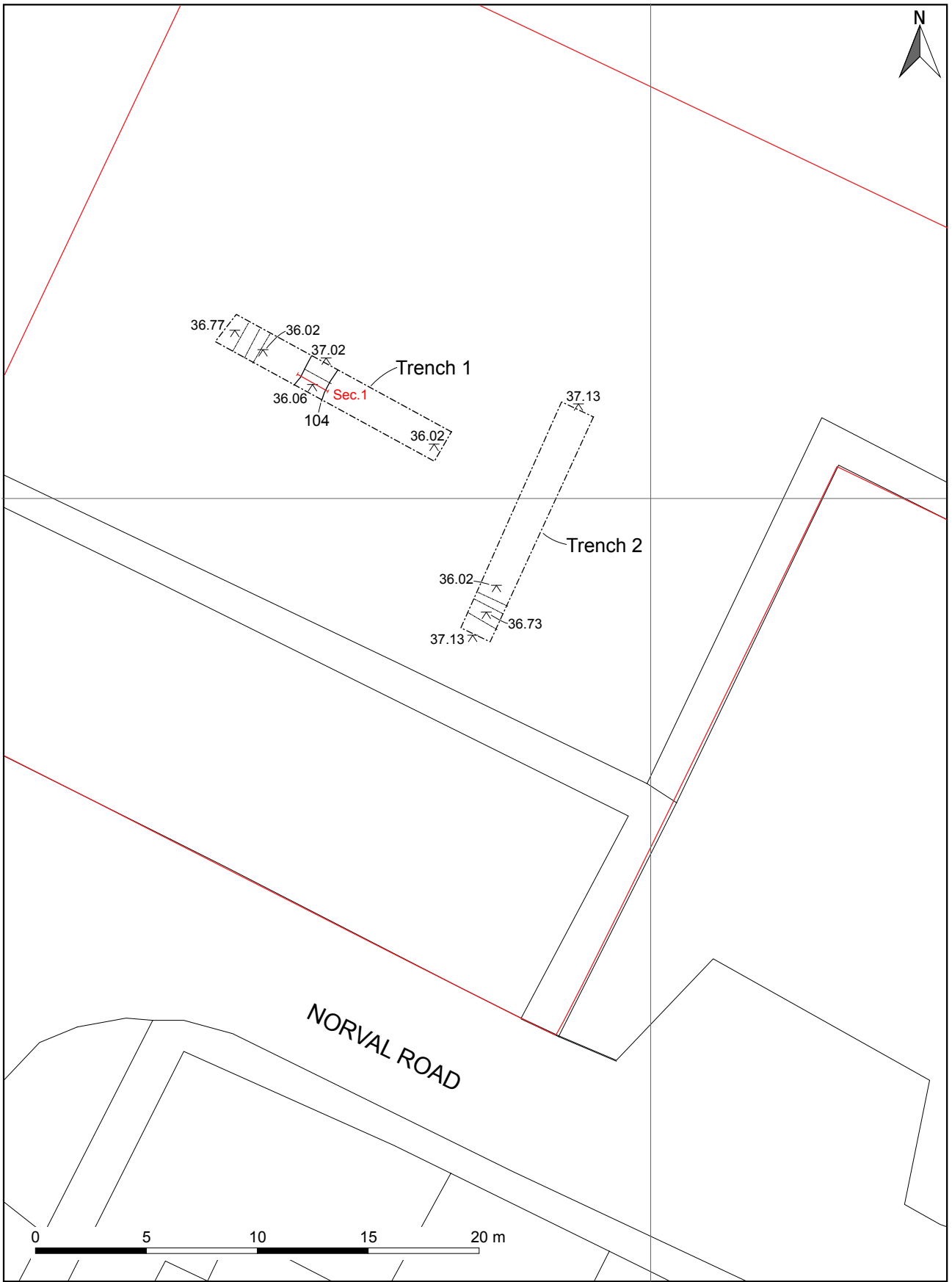


## Figures



Location of the site

Figure 1

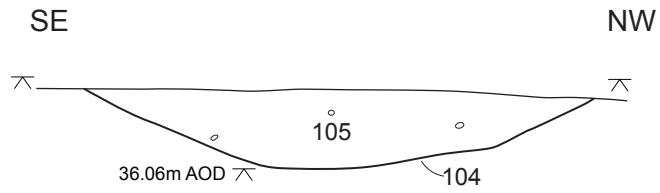


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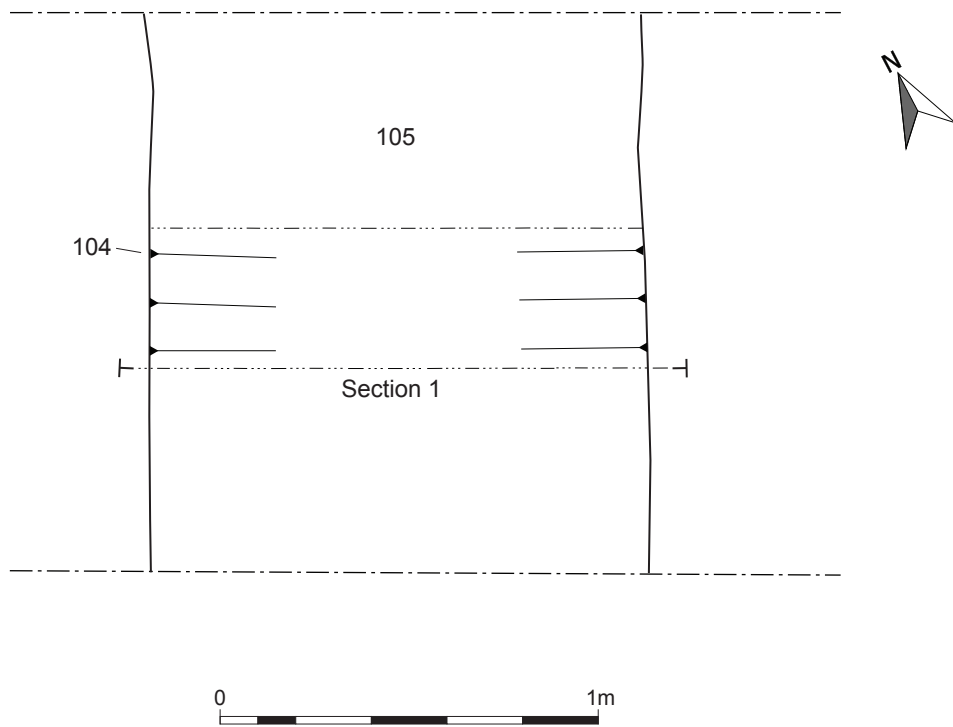
Trench location plan

Figure 2

SECTION 1: DITCH 104



PLAN OF DITCH 104



Plan and section of Ditch 104

Figure 3



## Plates



*Plate 1: Trench 1, view southwest with 1m scales*



*Plate 2: Trench 2, view southeast with 1m scales*





*Plate 3: Trench 2, sample section with 1m scale*



*Plate 4: Trench 2, feature [203] ditch in plan, view southwest with 1m scale*



## Appendix 1: Trench descriptions

### Trench 1

Maximum dimensions: Length: 10.00m Width: 1.60m Depth: 1.03m

Orientation: NW - SE

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
100	Topsoil	Soft and friable dark blackish brown sandy silt with rare sub-angular stones, occasional brick and frequent rooting.	0.00 – 0.15m
101	Made ground	Moderately compact mid blueish grey silty clay with occasional fragments of modern brick and sandstone and limestone fragments and charcoal flecks	0.15 - 0.56m
102	Subsoil	Moderately compact mid brownish yellow silty clay with rare sub-rounded stones and occasional charcoal flecks.	0.36 – 0.70m
103	Natural	Orangey brown gravelly silt on compact grey blue clay	0.70 – 1.03m+
104	Cut of ditch	Shallow linear U-shaped ditch with shallow smooth sides, and a concave base. Orientated NE-SW, perpendicular to trench. 1.36m wide.	-
105	Fill of ditch	Very compacted light yellowish brown silty clay with occasional blue mottling and occasional small rounded pebbles. Redeposited natural. Sterile.	-

### Trench 2

Maximum dimensions: Length: 10.00m Width: 1.60m Depth: 1.10m

Orientation: NNE - SSW

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
200	Topsoil	Soft and friable dark blackish brown sandy silt with rare sub-angular stones, occasional brick and frequent rooting.	0.00 – 0.18m
201	Made Ground	Moderately compact mid blueish grey silty clay with occasional fragments of modern brick and sandstone and limestone fragments and charcoal flecks	0.18 -0.55m
202	Subsoil	Moderately compact mid brownish yellow silty clay with rare sub-rounded stones and occasional charcoal flecks.	0.55-1.02m
203	Natural	Soft friable light yellowish grey clay silt with patches of dark yellow mottling	1.02 – 1.10m +

## Appendix 2: Summary of project archive (WSM 71534)

TYPE	DETAILS*
Artefacts and Environmental	None
Paper	Context sheet, Correspondence, Drawing, Report, Section, Survey
Digital	GIS, Images raster/digital photography

\*OASIS terminology