

# Archaeological Watching Brief at Masonic Rooms, Tenbury Wells, Worcestershire

Worcestershire Archaeology  
*for Mr Rod Owens*

July 2019



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# MASONIC ROOMS, TENBURY WELLS, WORCESTERSHIRE

Archaeological watching brief report

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## SITE INFORMATION

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Site name: Masonic Rooms, Tenbury Wells

Site code: WSM71701

Local planning authority: Malvern District Council

Planning reference: 17/00240/FUL

Central NGR: SO 59461 68280

Commissioning client: Mr Rod Owens

WA project number: P5515

WA report number: 2703

Oasis reference: fieldsec1-357075

DOCUMENT CONTROL PANEL				
Version	Date	Author	Details	Approved by
1	25/06/2019	Elspeth Iliff	Draft for comment	Tom Rogers

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**SUMMARY**

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### **APPENDIX 1: SUMMARY OF PROJECT ARCHIVE (WSM71701)**

### **APPENDIX 2: SUMMARY OF DATA FOR HER**

# Archaeological Watching Brief at Masonic Rooms, Tenbury Wells, Worcestershire

By Elspeth Iliff

With a contribution by Rob Hedge

## Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at Masonic Rooms, Tenbury Wells, Worcestershire (NGR SO 59461 68280). It was commissioned by the client, Mr Rod Owens, in advance of a proposed extension to the existing building. This project was commissioned in response to a condition placed on a planning application submitted to Malvern District Council.

The site is located in the historic core of the market town of Tenbury Wells. The excavation of one area measuring c.243m<sup>2</sup> was monitored, comprising the groundworks for the proposed extension and associated car parking facilities. A number of features of post-medieval date were found in the north-east end of the site, consisting of a drain, seven postholes, and the remains of a wall. These features likely relate to 18<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century use of the land as a garden and yard area for the building, and likely relate to outbuildings and animal housing. One sherd of medieval pottery was recovered from the site, but no other evidence of medieval activity was recorded.

# Report

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Background to the project

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA) in April 2019 at the Masonic Rooms, Tenbury Wells, Worcestershire (NGR SO 59461 68280). The project was commissioned by the client, Mr Rod Owens who intends the construction of an extension to the Masonic Rooms.

The archaeological advisor to the local planning authority Malvern Hills Aidan Smyth considered that the development had the potential to impact upon heritage assets and planning permission was granted subject to conditions including a programme of archaeological works (17/00240/FUL). A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2019) and approved by Aidan Smyth.

The watching brief conforms to the guidelines and standards set out by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists in *Standard and guidance: for an archaeological watching brief* (CIfA 2014(a)) and the *Standards and guidelines for archaeological projects in Worcestershire* (WCC 2010).

### 1.2 Site location, topography and geology

The Masonic Rooms are located at 9 Market Street in the historic core of Tenbury Wells. The ground is relatively flat at c.56m AOD. The site comprises the existing building housing the Masonic Rooms with a garden area to the rear. The underlying bedrock comprises Raglan Mudstone Formation interbedded siltstone and mudstone with superficial alluvial deposits (BGS 2018).

## 2 Archaeological and historical background

### 2.1 Introduction

Prior to fieldwork commencing, a search of the Worcestershire HER was completed, covering a search area of 250m radius around the site. Documentary sources at Worcestershire Archives, historic mapping and aerial photographs were also consulted. A summary of the results of this research are presented below.

### 2.2 Historical background and previous archaeological work

The site is located on Church Street which is in the historic core of the medieval market town of Tenbury Wells. The majority of heritage assets within the search area are historic buildings, consisting of 66 listed buildings, and 15 other historic buildings included on the HER. The majority of these date from the 18<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century, with a number of buildings c.75m south-east of 17<sup>th</sup> century date, and a 16<sup>th</sup> century public house recorded c.193m south of the site. The Church of St Mary is located c.95m to the north of the site, further along Church Street (WSM05307). While the main part of the church dates to the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the minster is recorded as dating from the 5<sup>th</sup> century to the late 11<sup>th</sup> century. No historic buildings are recorded on the site itself.

An 11<sup>th</sup> century moat has been identified c.250m south-east of the site (WSM05308), and a medieval occupation site has been recorded at The Vaults, c.70m to the north-east (WSM15210). The possible site of a medieval river crossing was identified c.215m north of the site (WSM05314).

While no previous archaeological work has been carried out on the site itself, a number of investigations have happened throughout the search area. Watching briefs and archaeological evaluations have been undertaken at The Vaults, Teme Street, and at Cross Street (WSM30167, WSM30168, WSM37313, and WSM66550). A series of archaeological investigations including evaluation and watching brief were undertaken c.150m further north along Church Street. These



works revealed a medieval ditch and road dated to the 13<sup>th</sup> to early 14<sup>th</sup> century (WSM30166). The area has also been recorded in the Central Marches Historic Town Survey of Tenbury.

### 3 Project aims

The aims of the watching brief were 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.

### 4 Project methodology

The watching brief was undertaken on 8<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> April 2019.

A single area, amounting to approximately 243m<sup>2</sup> in area, was excavated. The location of the trench is indicated in Figure 2.

Deposits considered not to be significant were removed under constant archaeological supervision using a JCB 3CX type 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, as well as to determine their nature. Deposits were recorded according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012) and the trench location was planned and tied to fixed objects recorded on OS MasterMap. 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 at Worcestershire County Museum.

### 5 Archaeological results

#### 5.1 Introduction

The features recorded in the excavation area are shown in Figure 3.

#### 5.2 Phasing

##### 5.2.1 Natural deposits

An orangey red clay natural was encountered across most of the site, although it was somewhat obscured by subsoil deposits (101) in the south-west half of the site due to the depth of the excavation and an apparent drop in the level of the natural substrate towards the west.

##### 5.2.2 Phase 1: Post-medieval deposits

A number of features of post-medieval date were identified in the north-east end of the site. A partially surviving brick built drain was encountered at the far north-east edge of the excavation area (119), measuring 0.62m by 0.89m. About a metre to the south-west was a cluster of seven postholes, all filled with loose, dark brown silty clay ([104] to [117] inclusive). Many of these post-holes contained finds dating to the 18<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century. They were of similar sizes, measuring between 0.13m and 0.35m in depth, and between 0.3m and 0.54m in width/diameter. As a group they indicate a possible four-post structure with potential later changes or other associated posts. The remnants of a brick wall were observed at the south-east edge of the site (122) running from south-east to north-west, the turning towards south-west. This is likely of post-medieval to modern date and may be the remnants of a former outbuilding.

### 5.2.3 Phase 2: Modern deposits

The natural substrate and archaeological deposits were overlain by a greyish brown silty clay subsoil (101) measuring 0.4m in depth, which is itself overlain by a dark brown silty clay topsoil (100) measuring 0.32m in depth. Modern land drains were also recorded crossing the site.

## 6 Artefactual evidence

### Summary

One sherd of medieval pottery was recovered, but the majority of the finds relate to 18th and 19th century occupation.

### 6.1 Artefact methodology, by Rob Hedge

The finds work reported here conforms with the following guidance: for findwork by ClfA (2014(b)), 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 a Microsoft Access database.

The pottery and ceramic building material was examined under x20 magnification and referenced as appropriate by fabric type and form according to the fabric reference series maintained by Worcestershire Archaeology (Hurst and Rees 1992 and [www.worcestershireceramics.org](http://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 (eg 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.

See the environmental section for other discard where appropriate.

### 6.2 Artefactual analysis, by Rob Hedge

The artefactual assemblage recovered is summarised in Tables 1 and 2. There was a single residual sherd of medieval pottery, but the rest of the artefacts were post-medieval in date. Artefact condition was generally poor; the majority of potsherds were abraded, and the mean sherd size of 7.5g was well below average.

Period	Material class	Object specific type	Count	Weight(g)
medieval	ceramic	pot	1	15
post-medieval	ceramic	brick	3	107
post-medieval	ceramic	clay pipe	6	8

Period	Material class	Object specific type	Count	Weight(g)
post-medieval	ceramic	pot	10	67
post-medieval	ceramic	roof tile	3	86
post-medieval	glass	vessel	1	6
undated	animal bone	mammal bone	2	19
<b>Totals</b>			<b>26</b>	<b>308</b>

Table 1: Quantification of the assemblage

Broad period	Fabric code	Fabric common name	Count	Weight (g)
Medieval	66	Herefordshire glazed fine micaceous ware	1	15
Post-medieval	78	Post-medieval red ware	5	13
Modern	85	Modern china	4	40
Post-medieval	91	Post-medieval buff wares	1	14
<b>Totals</b>			<b>11</b>	<b>82</b>

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

## Discussion of finds by period

### Medieval

The single artefact of medieval date was an abraded body sherd, residual within fill (111) of posthole [113]. It had a sandy, micaceous fabric with traces of a white slip and speckled green glaze. Although the condition renders identification difficult, it closely resembles Herefordshire glazed fine micaceous ware (fabric 66), most common in the 13th and 14th centuries.

### Post-medieval

A typical range of domestic post-medieval wares were present across the site, including 17th to 18th century redwares (fabric 78), late-17th to 18th century buff ware, and 19th-century whiteware (fabric 85). The presence of sponge-decorated whiteware indicates that infilling of the postholes took place after 1820. Clay pipe stems and small fragments of 17th to 19th century brick and tile were also present.

The poor condition is likely due to the artefacts being incorporated into the backfill of the postholes from domestic yard soils.

## 6.2.1 Site dating

Context	Material class	Object specific type	Count	Weight(g)	Start date	End date	TPQ date
101	ceramic	pot	2	38	1800	1900	AD 1800 - 1910
	ceramic	clay pipe	1	1	1600	1910	

Context	Material class	Object specific type	Count	Weight(g)	Start date	End date	TPQ date
103	ceramic	pot	1	6	1700	1800	AD 1700 - 1800
105	ceramic	pot	2	2	1700	1800	AD 1700 - 1800
	animal bone	mammal bone	1	2			
107	ceramic	brick	1	62	1600	1800	AD 1840 - 1900
		roof tile	1	40	1650	1800	
		pot	1	1	1820	1900	
			1	14	1670	1795	
109	ceramic	clay pipe	4	6	1600	1910	AD 1750 - 1910
		roof tile	1	10	1750	1900	
			1	36	1600	1800	
	animal bone	mammal bone	1	17			
111	ceramic	brick	2	45	1600	1900	AD 1840 - 1900
		pot	1	4	1600	1800	
			1	1	1700	1800	
			1	1	1820	1900	
	glass	vessel	1	6	1600	1800	
	ceramic	pot	1	15	1200	1400	
114	ceramic	clay pipe	1	1	1600	1910	AD 1600 - 1910

Table 3 Summary of context dating based on artefacts grouped in phase order

## 6.3 Synthesis

The small quantity of domestic pottery and building material is typical of a backyard scatter within the historic core of a medieval market town; the majority reflects domestic rubbish disposal relating to 18th and 19th century occupation.

## 6.4 Recommendations

### 6.4.1 Further analysis and reporting

No further analysis is required.

### 6.4.2 Discard and retention

The assemblage is not considered worthy of retention, according to the criteria set by Museums Worcestershire, although the final decision rests with the museum curator.

## 7 Environmental evidence

Environmental sampling was approached 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

The watching brief observations covered groundworks across the entirety of the garden area to the rear of the existing property.

A number of features of a post-medieval date were identified in the north-east half of the site, consisting of the remains of a wall, a brick drain, and a small cluster of postholes. These features relate to post-medieval to modern use of the garden area, probably the remains of outbuildings and animal housing. This could be linked with a description of the land given on an advert for the auction of the property in 1907, which describes a dwelling complete with wash-house, pig-stye and stabling. Although one sherd of medieval pottery was recovered, no other evidence was found of medieval activity within the site.

Overall, the methods adopted allow for 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 remains across the majority of the site, and these were reflective of the general site character.

## 9 Project personnel

The fieldwork was led by Elspeth Iliff.

The project was managed by Tom Rogers. The report was produced and collated by Elspeth Iliff. 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 the following: the client, Rod Owens and the Planning and Archaeology Advisor for Malvern Hills, Aidan Smyth.

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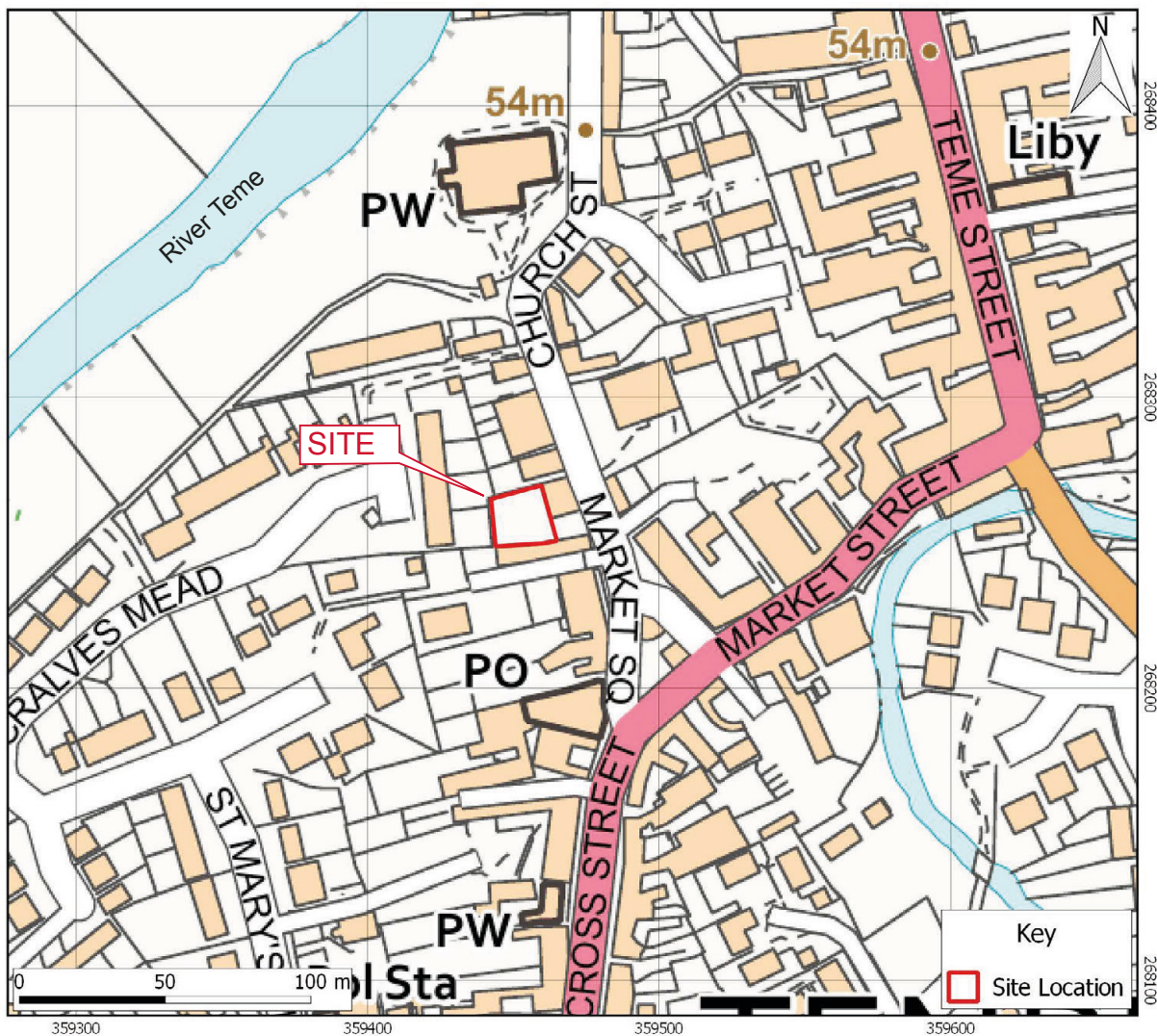
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## Figures



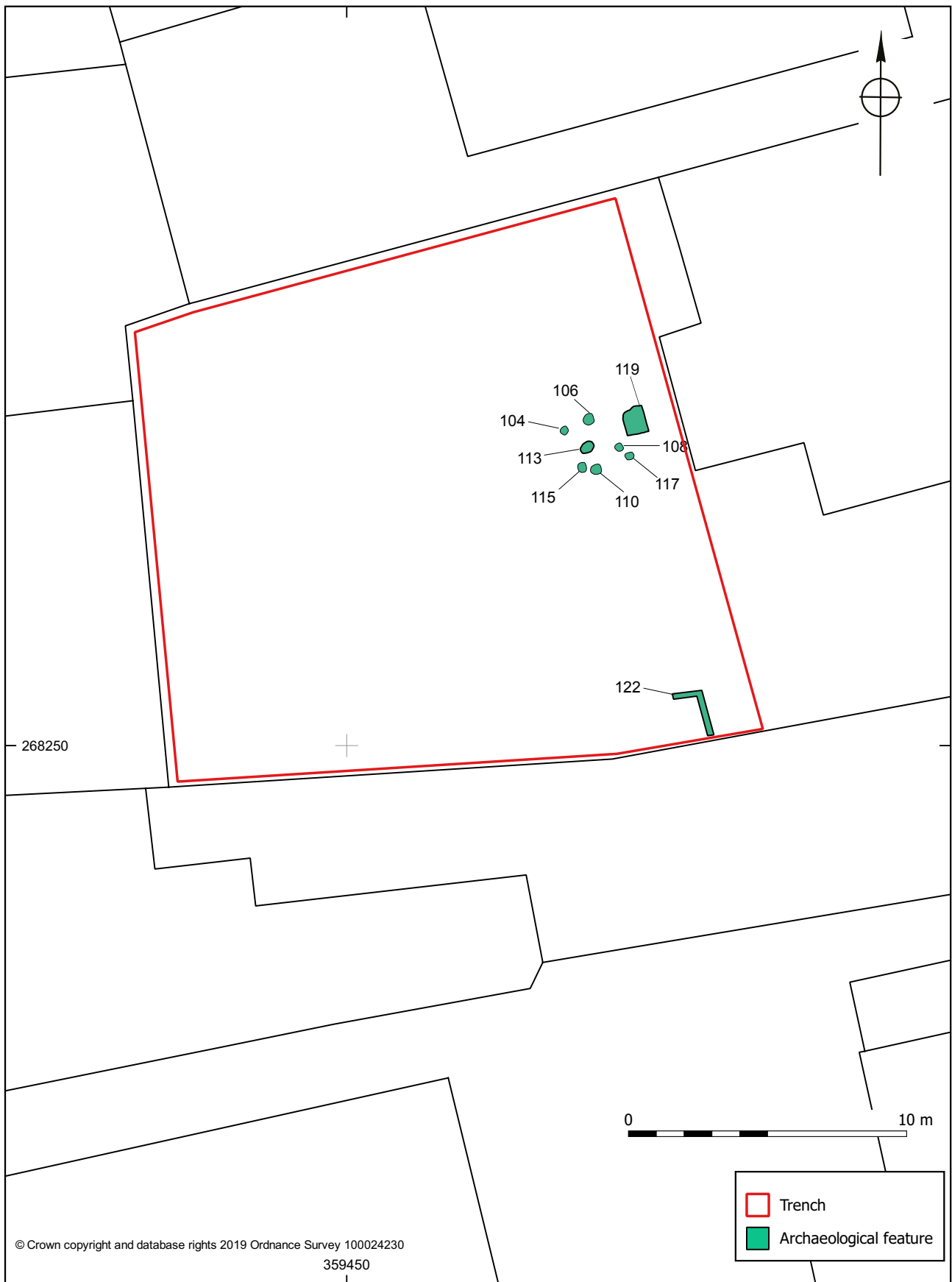


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Location of the site

Figure 1





*Location of Trench and archaeological features*

*Figure 2*

## Plates



*Plate 1: south-west corner of the site, looking south-west*



*Plate 2: North-east end of the site, looking south-east*





*Plate 3: Posthole cluster, looking south-east (scales 2x1m)*



*Plate 4: Brick built drain (119), looking north-east (scale 0.5m)*

## Appendix 1: Summary of project archive (WSM71701)

TYPE	DETAILS*
Artefacts and Environmental	Animal bones, Ceramics
Paper	Context sheet, Correspondence, Diary (Field progress form), Drawing, Photograph, Plan, Report, Section,
Digital	Images raster/digital photography, Text

*\*OASIS terminology*



## Appendix 2: Summary of data for HER

WSM71701 (event HER number)

P5515

### Artefacts

period	material class	object specific type	start date	end date	Count	weight(g)	specialist report? (note 2)	key assemblage? (note 3)
medieval	ceramic	pot	1200	1400	1	15	Y	N
post-medieval	ceramic	brick	1600	1800	1	62	Y	N
post-medieval	ceramic	brick	1600	1900	2	45	Y	N
post-medieval	ceramic	clay pipe	1600	1910	6	8	Y	N
post-medieval	ceramic	pot	1600	1800	1	4	Y	N
post-medieval	ceramic	pot	1670	1795	1	14	Y	N
post-medieval	ceramic	pot	1700	1800	4	9	Y	N
post-medieval	ceramic	pot	1800	1900	2	38	Y	N
post-medieval	ceramic	pot	1840	1900	2	2	Y	N
post-medieval	ceramic	roof tile	1600	1800	1	36	Y	N
post-medieval	ceramic	roof tile	1650	1800	1	40	Y	N
post-medieval	ceramic	roof tile	1750	1900	1	10	Y	N
post-medieval	glass	vessel	1600	1800	1	6	Y	N
undated	animal bone	mammal bone			2	19	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.

<b>period</b>	<b>from</b>	<b>to</b>
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

<b>period specific</b>	<b>from</b>	<b>to</b>
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.