

Archaeological evaluation at Knowle Barn, Cookhill, Worcestershire

Worcestershire Archaeology
for Mr R McGonigal

December 2019



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KNOWLE BARN COOKHILL WORCESTERSHIRE

Archaeological evaluation report



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SITE INFORMATION

Site name: Knowle Barn, Cookhill
Local planning authority: Wychavon
Planning reference: 19/01661/FUL
Central NGR: SP 05358 57975
Commissioning client: Mr R McGonigal
WA project number: P5767
WA report number: 2775
HER reference: WSM72513
Oasis reference: OASIS ID: fieldsec1-377213

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Version	Date	Author	Details	Approved by
1	10/12/2019	Williams, B	Draft for comment	Tom Rogers

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Archaeological Evaluation at Knowle Barn, Cookhill, Worcestershire

By Beth Williams

Illustrations by Carolyn Hunt

Summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at site Knowle Barn, Cookhill, Worcestershire. It was commissioned by Mr R McGonigal of RPS Design Group on behalf of Mrs Beverley Hamflett, in advance of a proposed stable construction. Planning permission for the development was granted by Wychavon District Council subject to a programme of archaeological works.

The site is located to the North of Cookhill Farm, which stands on the west side of the A441 (The Ridgeway), at the southern end of the village of Cookhill. Four evaluation trenches were excavated in the location of the proposed development within a single field. Apart from field drains no archaeological features or finds of interest were present.

Report

1 Introduction

1.1 Background to the project

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA) in December 2019 at Knowle Barn, Cookhill, Worcestershire (NGR SP 05358 57975). The project was commissioned by Mr R McGonigal of RPS Design Group on behalf of Mrs Beverley Hamflett, in advance of the construction of an outdoor riding arena and replacement stable block for private equestrian use (planning reference 19/01661/FUL). The development was considered by Aidan Smyth Archaeology and Planning Advisor for Wychavon and Malvern Hills District Councils to have the potential to disturb archaeological deposits (HER ref WSM35609) and permission was granted subject to conditions including a programme of archaeological works (condition 4).

A Written Scheme of Investigation was prepared by Worcester Archaeology (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) and the *Standards and guidelines for archaeological projects in Worcestershire* (WCC 2010).

1.2 Site location, topography and geology

The site is located to the north of Cookhill Farm, which stands on the west side of the A441 (The Ridgeway), at the southern end of the village of Cookhill. It is a single field bounded by a hedgerow to the north, farm buildings/yards to the east and south and fields to the west and is currently used as pasture for horses. The field is at the top of a ridge that slopes away at the western side of the field; the site itself is mostly flat rising from 113.36m AOD in the west to 115.98m AOD in the east.

The underlying geology comprises bedrock of Mercia Mudstone with no recorded superficial deposits (BGS 2019).

2 Archaeological and historical background

Prior to fieldwork commencing, a search of the Worcester Historic Environment Record was undertaken, covering a search area of 500m around the site.. A summary of the results of this research are presented below.

The HER identified a number listed and unlisted historic buildings in the surrounding area, primarily consisting of farm buildings and barns dating from the 16th century onwards. Evidence of ridge and furrow is recorded in the fields of neighbouring farms, but not within the site itself.

Finds primarily dating to the 12th to 17th century have been recorded within the wider study area, as well as two Roman finds of a brooch (WSM63695) and a silver coin (WSM65630), but no finds have been made in the immediate vicinity of the site.

Historic maps show no evidence for non-agricultural use of the land, or previous buildings.

3 Project aims

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

- determine the presence or absence of archaeological deposits beyond reasonable doubt;
- identify their location, nature date and preservation;
- assess their significance;

- assess the likely impact of the proposed development.

The evaluation only assessed heritage assets which are of archaeological interest. This project does not include consideration of Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, historic hedgerows.

4 Project methodology

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2019). Fieldwork was undertaken on 9/12/2019.

Four trenches, amounting to 108m² in area, were excavated over the 0.27ha site, representing a sample of 4%. The location of the trenches is indicated in Figure 2.

The trenches were laid out grid array, to best cover the site and locate any potential archaeology.

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

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 Worcester Museum.

5 Archaeological results

No features or deposits of archaeological interest were identified during the evaluation. Trench 1 contained two ceramic land drains running E-W, and Trench 3 contained a single, ceramic land drain that was also running E-W. The trenches contained no finds.

The natural deposits consisted of friable light (occasionally reddish) brown clayey silt (or till) topsoil measuring up to 0.32m deep, a firm mid greyish brown silty clay subsoil measuring up to 0.21m deep and a moderately compact light to mid reddish brown silty clay natural. All of the natural deposits contained moderate to frequent sub rounded pebbles and stones.

6 Conclusions

No features or finds of archaeological significance were present in the four excavated trenches and it is considered that there is a low potential for the survival of buried archaeological assets in the remainder of the site.

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.

7 Project personnel

The fieldwork was led by Andrew Walsh, assisted by Beth Williams.

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

8 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following: Mr R McGonigal for commissioning the project and Aidan Smyth for his advice while monitoring this project.

9 Bibliography

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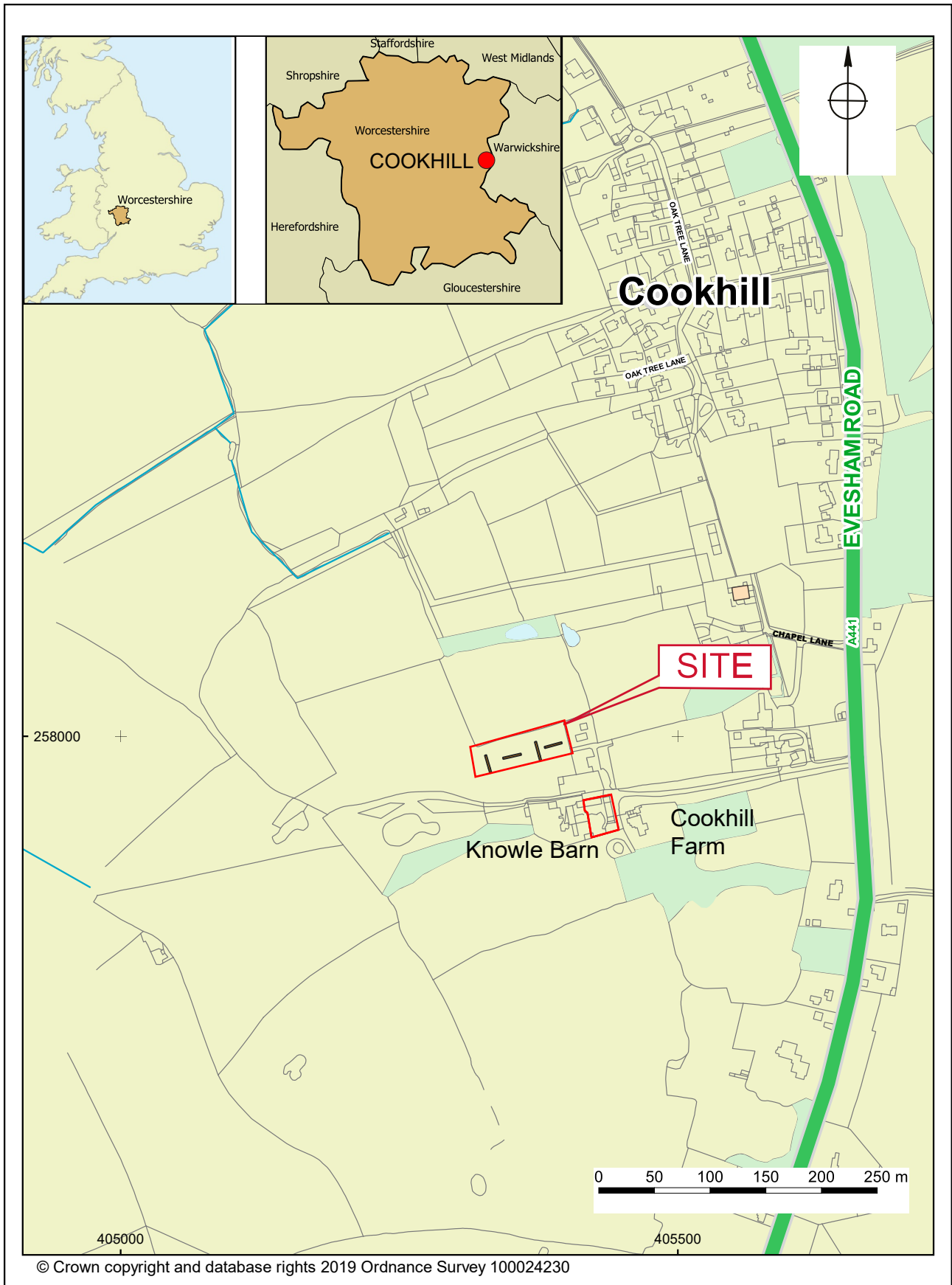
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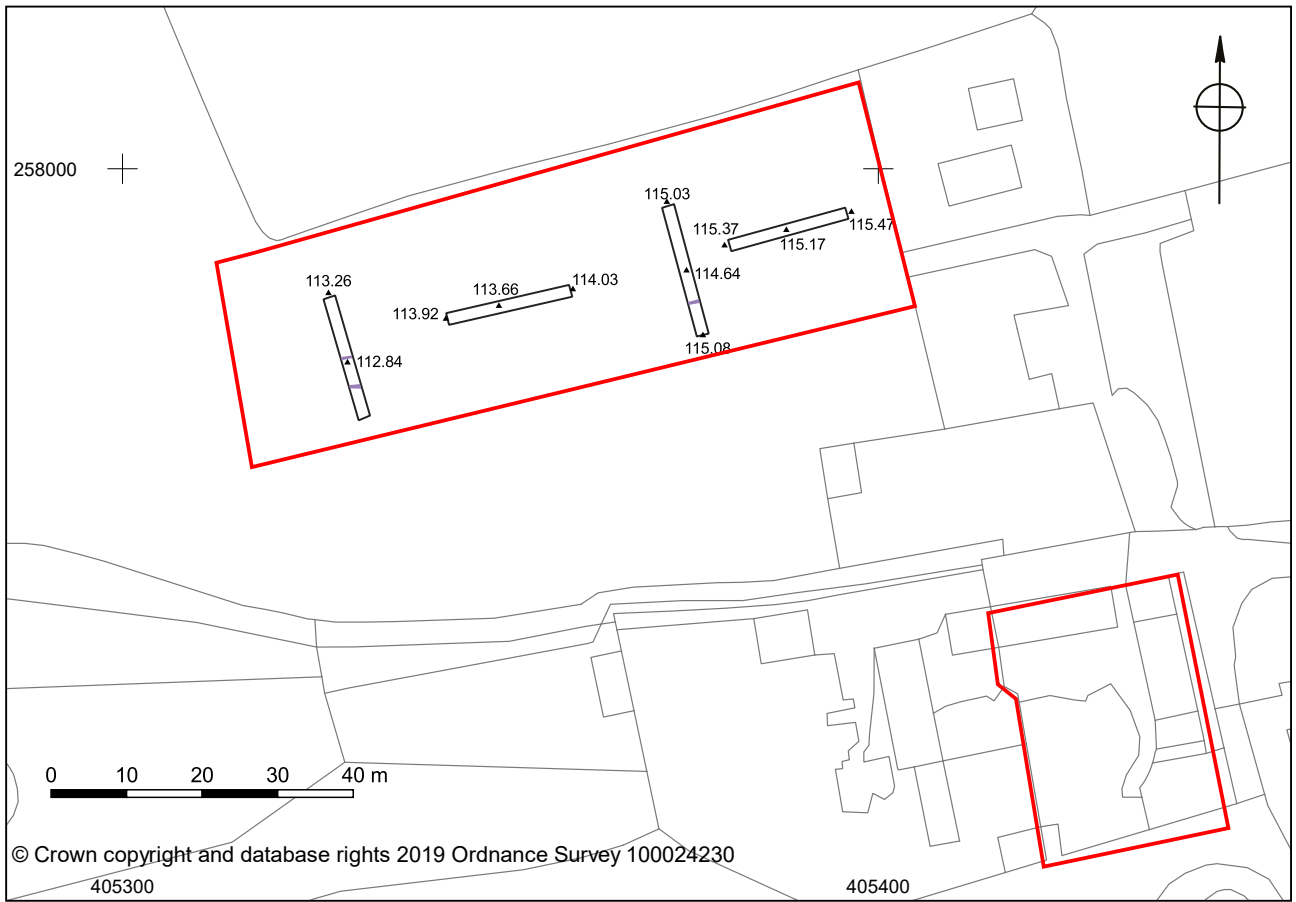
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Figures



Location of the site

Figure 1



Trench Plan

Figure 2

Plates



Plate 1: West facing view of Trench 2, 2x1m scales



Plate 2: West facing section of Tr 1, 1x0.5m scale

Appendix 1: Trench descriptions

Trench 1

Length: 15m Width: 1.8m Orientation: N-S

Context summary:

Context	Feature type	Context type	Interpretation	Height/ depth	Deposit description
100	Topsoil	Layer	Topsoil	0.32m	
101	Subsoil	Layer	Subsoil	0.16m	
102	Natural	Layer	Natural		

Trench 2

Length: 15m Width: 1.8m Orientation: E-W

Context summary:

Context	Feature type	Context type	Interpretation	Height/ depth	Deposit description
200	Topsoil	Layer	Topsoil	0.32m	
201	Subsoil	Layer	Subsoil	0.12m	
202	Natural	Layer	Natural		

Trench 3

Length: 15m Width: 1.8m Orientation: N-S

Context summary:

Context	Feature type	Context type	Interpretation	Height/ depth	Deposit description
300	Topsoil	Layer	Topsoil	0.31m	
301	Subsoil	Layer	Subsoil	0.21m	
302	Natural	Layer	Natural		

Trench 4

Length: 15m Width: 1.8m Orientation: E-W

Context summary:

Context	Feature type	Context type	Interpretation	Height/ depth	Deposit description
400	Topsoil	Layer	Topsoil	0.22m	
401	Subsoil	Layer	Subsoil	0.11m	
402	Natural	Layer	Natural		

Appendix 2: Summary of project archive (WSM72513)

TYPE	DETAILS*
Artefacts and Environmental	None
Paper	Report
Digital	Database, GIS, Images raster/digital photography, Survey, Text

*OASIS terminology