Archaeological evaluation at Land off Dunley Road, Stourport-on-Severn

Worcestershire Archaeology

for GB Partnerships

June 2020

Find out more online:
www.explorethepast.co.uk

REGISTERED ORGANISATION CIfA

worcestershire county council

LAND OFF DUNLEY ROAD STOURPORT-ON-SEVERN WORCESTERSHIRE

Archaeological evaluation report

Worcestershire Archaeology
Worcestershire Archive & Archaeology Service
The Hive
Sawmill Walk
The Butts
Worcester
WR1 3PD

SITE INFORMATION

Site name:	Land off Dunley Road, Stourport, Worcestershire
Site code:	WSM 72828
Local planning authority:	Wyre Forest District Council
Planning reference:	19/0565/FULL
Central NGR:	SO 806750 708310
Commissioning client:	GB Partnerships
WA project number:	P5798
WA report number:	2817
HER reference:	WSM 72828
Oasis reference:	fieldsec1-397056

DOCUMENT CONTROL PANEL				
Version	Date	Author	Details	Approved by
1	19/06/2020	H Whitefoot	Draft for comment	T Rogers

CONTENTS

Evaluation at Land off Dunley Road, Stourport, Worcestershire

By Hazel Whitefoot

With contributions by Jane Evans and Elizabeth Pearson

Illustrations by Laura Templeton

Summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at land of Dunley Road, Stourport-on-Severn, Worcestershire (NGR SO 806750 708310). It was commissioned by Nick Smith on behalf of GB Partnerships in advance of a proposed erection of a new medical centre. Planning permission has been granted subject to a programme of archaeological works.

A total of five trenches were excavated, totalling an area of c207m^2. The trenches were positioned to interrogate the area of proposed development whilst avoiding extant modern services and tree stumps.

Three pits and a probable corn dryer were found in the central part of the site, and a cobbled surface in the south-western part of the site. Medieval pottery was retrieved from the pits and it is thought that they may represent medieval backplot activity. Environmental evidence indicates probable cereal processing and either transportation to or from this site. The cobbled surface, however, appears to be a later feature.

Report

1 Introduction

1.1 Background to the project

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA) in May 2020 at land off Dunley Road, Stourport-on-Severn, Worcestershire (NGR SO 806750 708310). This comprised the excavation of five evaluation trenches. The project was commissioned by Nick Smith on behalf of GB Partnerships Investments Ltd in advance of the erection of a new medical centre.

The archaeological advisor to the local planning authority considered that the proposed development has the potential to impact upon possible heritage assets as the site is in an area of archaeological importance. Planning permission was granted by Wyre Forest District Council subject to conditions including the requirement for a programme of archaeological works (planning reference 19/0565/FUL).

No brief was provided but, following discussion with the archaeological advisor to the local planning authority, a standard evaluation equivalent to c4% of the area of the site through trial trenching was requested as an appropriate initial stage of works. A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2019) and approved by Emma Hancox, archaeological advisor to Wyre Forest District Council. The evaluation conforms to the industry guidelines and standards set out by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists in *Standards and guidance: for archaeological field evaluation* (CIfA 2014a) and the *Standards and guidelines for archaeological projects in Worcestershire* (WCC 2010)

1.2 Site location, topography and geology

The site is located adjacent to the A451 (Dunley Road), the main approach road to Stourport-on-Severn from the south-west, and the public right of way known as 'The Rough'.

The site is currently an undeveloped piece of green space, c5200m^2 in area, which is bounded by hedgerow on its northern and western sides. It lies immediately to the south-west of The Old Beams public house (Grade II listed) and along the south-eastern edge of the Areley Kings Conservation area. The Grade II listed Areley House is situated close by and to the east of the site is a holiday caravan park.

The site is generally flat, at 21.6m AOD to the adjacent to the road though rising gently to the outh-west. Several mature trees in the evaluation area had been cut down prior to the commencement of the evaluation leaving behind their stumps.

The underlying geology comprises bedrock of the Wildmoor Sandstone Member overlain by superficial deposits of the Power House Terrace (sand and gravel) deposits (BGS 2020).

2 Archaeological and historical background

2.1 Introduction

Documentary sources held by the Archaeology Data Service and some historic mapping available online have been consulted; also an archaeology and heritage statement produced for a proposed housing development in the locality (Lucey 2017). A summary of the results of this research are presented below.

2.2 Prehistoric

No record exists of any activity from these period in the immediate vicinity of the site, but documentary sources record the existence of three Bronze Age round barrows, plus an associated pit containing Beaker pottery, approximately 1km to the south which were destroyed by gravel extraction in the late 1950s/early 1960s (WSM08073).

Cropmark evidence and reports from salvage recording in advance of gravel extraction in the late 1950s (Walker, 1959) and along the route of an aqueduct in the 1990s (Dinn, 1992) provide information of continuing occupation in the same area through the Iron Age and into the Roman period.

2.3 Roman

No activity dating from the Roman period is noted at the site location but the post pads of a large, potentially aisled, Roman building (WSM00136) were discovered, along with scatters of Roman pottery and shallow pits, approximately 1.2km further along the Dunley Road. Cropmark evidence of rectangular field systems, pits, hearths and pottery finds including is known to have existed approximately 1.2km to the south and south-west.

2.4 Medieval

Evidence of activity during the medieval period is scarce for Stourport as a whole, however this site is located on land associated with the adjacent 16th century Walshe's Farm (WSM61611), now The Old Beams public house. The site is also approximately 1km from the small medieval settlement of Lower Mitton (sometimes Milton) which is referred to in documentary sources and of which evidence of occupation during the early medieval period was recovered by a small trial excavation in the 1970s; also approximately 1km from a medieval hermitage (WSM32712) established at Redstone Caves, this being a long-standing crossing point of the River Severn.

2.5 Post-Medieval

In the early post-medieval period settlement was focused in the hamlet of Lower Mitton, which included gardens and orchards as well as some buildings. This was added to in the late 18th century by settlement that grew up around the canal basins, creating the town of Stourport as it appears now. The joining of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire canal with the Birmingham canal, completed in 1772, resulted in Stourport becoming one of the main centres for the distribution of goods to and from the West Midlands. The town grew rapidly with the building of warehouses, boat yards, housing and the building of a new bridge over the River Severn.

The decline in the use of canals for transporting goods in the early 19th century was compensated for by a rise in industry, including tanning, founding, carpet making and vinegar production, resulting in continued expansion of the town. Although the more recent decline in industry has been only been partially compensated for by a rise in leisure tourism, steady expansion of Stourport continues.

2.6 Previous archaeological work on the site

No previous archaeological work has been undertaken on this site.

3 Project aims

The aims of the evaluation were to undertake sufficient fieldwork in order 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

4 Project methodology

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2019). Fieldwork was undertaken between 13th and 15th May 2020.

Five trenches, amounting to c207m^2 in area, were excavated over the c0.5ha site, representing a sample of 4%. The location of the trenches is indicated in Figure 2.

The trenches were laid out were non-gridded and positioned to interrogate the area of the proposed development but avoid the current services present. Trenches 1 and 2 were moved slightly from the intended location to avoid tree stumps/significant tree roots.

Deposits considered not to be significant were removed under constant archaeological supervision using a 360º 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 GNSS device 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, 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 2 and 3 and Plates 1-5. The trench and context inventory is presented in Appendix 1.

5.2 Trench descriptions

5.2.1 Natural deposits/natural deposits across site

The natural deposits for all trenches consisted of the sands and gravels of the Powerhouse Terrace Deposits (BGS 2020). In Trenches 3, 4 and 5 natural deposits were not reached for the entire length of the trench as bands of alluvium >1.35m in depth were present (as shown in Plate 5).

5.2.2 Trench 1

One feature was identified in Trench 1; A section of probable cobbled surface (103) which was visible in the south-eastern end of the trench (fig 2, pl 1). Extending beyond the trench on both sides it measured 2.6m in width and was orientated essentially north-south. The post-medieval pottery and the knife blade recovered from this trench were found on and amongst the upper stones of this surface.

A deposit of soft dark reddish-brown silty sand in the south-east corner of Trench 1, unidentified due to its proximity to the edge of the trench, contained one sherd of medieval pottery.

5.2.3 Trench 2

One feature was identified in Trench 2; ditch 203, measuring 0.88m wide and 0.17m in depth, was situated approximately 3.6m from the north-western end of the trench. The ditch showed a U-shaped profile with a rounded base and was orientated essentially north-east – south-west. No finds were recovered from this feature.

5.2.4 Trench 3

Three features were identified in Trench 3; two large, and intercutting, sub-circular pits, (303) and (305), both extended beyond the south-eastern edge of the trench. During excavation it could not be determined whether they were separate features or, in fact, one larger feature

Single fill (304) of pit (303) contained pottery of medieval date and was relatively charcoal-rich. The basal fill (308) of pit (305) was extremely charcoal-rich and would seem to represent burning in situ.

One further large pit remained unexcavated.

5.2.5 Trench 4

Two features were identified in Trench 4; ovoid pit (409), situated at the south-western end of the trench, was 1.86m in length, 0.7m wide and 0.32m in depth (Fig 2, plate 4). Pottery dating to both the Roman and medieval periods were recovered from the fill (408) of this feature; also an undated piece of iron slag.

A large pit (407) extended beyond the south-eastern edge of the trench. Measuring 1.7m long and >0.64m wide, with a depth of 0.74m, this pit contained two fills; the upper fill 405 contained pottery dating to the medieval period.

5.2.6 Trench 5

One feature was identified in Trench 5; a shallow remnant of a furrow (505) was observed cutting across the north-western corner of the trench. No finds were recovered from this feature. The alluvial layer 503 (Pl 5) prevented natural deposits being reached for approximately 9m from the south-western end.

5.2.7 Modern

The topsoil layer across the site (100), a moderately compact mid orangey brown sandy silt with moderate small-medium sub-rounded stones, occasional large sub-rounded stones and frequent fine (grass) rooting, varied from 0.3m to 0.35m in depth. This overlaid a subsoil of moderately compact mid-orangey brown silty sand with occasional small-large sub-rounded stones, varying from 0.50m to 0.53m in depth, across the south-western half of the site. The subsoil across the north-eastern half of the site, however, was a more compact clay silt likely derived from the bands of alluvium present on that side of the site.

A modern ceramic land drain was present in Trenches 1 and 2.

6 Artefactual evidence

By C Jane Evans

6.1 Introduction

The artefact report conforms to standards and guidance issued by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA 2014b), as well as further guidance on pottery analysis, archive creation and museum deposition created by various pottery study groups (PCRG/SGRP/MPRG 2016), the Archaeological Archives Forum (AAF 2011), and the Society of Museum Archaeologists (SMA 1993).

6.2 Aims

The aims of analysis, as defined in the WSI, were to date and characterise the finds and assess their significance.

This report covers artefacts of Roman, medieval and post-medieval date.

6.3 Methodology

6.3.1 Recovery policy

Artefacts were recovered according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012).

All the artefacts reported on below were recovered by hand. Very few finds were recovered from environmental samples. None of these justify detailed analysis; they are not therefore included in the tables but are referred to in the text.

6.3.2 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, with tables generated using Microsoft Excel.

The pottery was examined under x20 magnification with reference to the fabric type series maintained by Worcestershire Archaeology (WAAS 2017). The assemblage was quantified by count and weight; but did not justify quantification by rim EVE.

A single iron artefact was recovered; not radiographed for identification.

6.3.3 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.

6.4 Results

The results are summarised in Tables 1 and 2.

The assemblage totalled 42 finds weighing 513g (Table 1). Finds came from three trenches (Trenches 1, 3 and 4) and seven stratified contexts. They dated from the Roman period onwards, with an emphasis on medieval and post-medieval finds.

The results below provide a summary of the finds and their associated contexts. Dates have been allocated, where possible, and the importance of individual finds is commented upon as necessary.

Using pottery as an index of artefact condition, the single sherd of Roman pottery and the small medieval assemblage were very fragmentary, with average sherd weights of 6 and 5g respectively. The post-medieval pottery was much less fragmentary (average sherd weight 25g), though some sherds were very abraded.

period	material class	material subtype	object specific type	count	weight(g)
Roman	Ceramic	Earthenware	Pot	1	6
Medieval	Ceramic	Earthenware	Pot	24	118
Post-medieval	Ceramic	Earthenware	Pot	12	299
Post-medieval	Ceramic	Fired clay	Tile	1	31

Post-medieval	Glass	Pale green	Vessel	1	1
Post-medieval	Metal	Iron	Knife	1	44
Undated	Ceramic	Fired clay	Fragment	1	5
Undated	Slag	Slag(fe)	Fragment	1	9

Table 1: Quantification of site assemblage

6.5 Summary of artefacts by period

6.5.1 Roman pottery

A single sherd of Severn Valley ware (Table 2), from the neck of a small jar, was recovered from a pit in Trench 4 (409, fill 408). This can only be broadly dated to the Roman period.

Broad period	fabric code	Fabric common name	count	weight(g)
Romano-British	12	Severn Valley ware	1	6
Medieval	55	Worcester-type sandy unglazed ware	24	118
Post-medieval	78.1	Red sandy ware	2	7
Post-medieval	90	Post-medieval orange ware	10	292
Total			37	423

Table 2: Quantification of pottery assemblage by period and fabric

6.5.2 Medieval pottery

Fragmentary sherds of medieval pottery were recovered from Trenches 1, 3 and 4, the highest concentration coming from Trench 4. All sherds were from jars in Worcester-type sandy unglazed ware (Table 2). Many sherds had sooting, confirming use for cooking. Most sherds were associated with pit fills; Pit 305 (fill 306) in Trench 3, Pit 407 (fill 405) and 409 (fill 408) in Trench 4. The other sherds came from an unidentified feature in Trench 1 (context 104) and the topsoil in Trench 3 (300). The Trench 4 assemblage included two rims; both similar to thickened, everted-rim cooking pots described from Worcester, Deansway (Bryant 2004, Type 3, 281 fig 177.3, 6). At Worcester, these were noted as an increasingly common type by the mid-12th to 13th centuries, going out of production after the mid-14th century.

Occasional fragments of hammerscale and burnt stone were noted from three environmental samples (306, 308, 405), two of which were associated with medieval pottery (contexts 306 and 405).

6.5.3 Post-medieval finds

Apart from a single sherd of medieval pottery, the finds from Trench 1 most likely date to the post-medieval period. The rest of the pottery dates to a period between c 1700-1800, including black glazed, post-medieval red and orange wares (Table 2, Fabric 78.1 and 90) and brown glazed orange ware (Fabric 90). The only identifiable form was the rim from a bowl or pancheon, the latter a common post-medieval form used for separating cream from milk, and as a general mixing bowl. Trench 1 also produced a fragmentary rim from a blown glass beaker, the iron blade and tang of a knife (Fig 4), and a fragment of ceramic tile. None of these are closely datable, but all are consistent with the date of the pottery. All these post-medieval finds were associated with the upper stones of a cobbled surface (layer 103).

context	material class	material subtype	object specific type	count	weight(g)	start date	end date	context tpq
103	ceramic	earthenware	pot	2	7	1600	1800	1700-1800
	ceramic	earthenware	pot	10	292	1700	1800	
	ceramic	fired clay	fragment	1	5			
	ceramic	fired clay	tile	1	31	1600	1800	
	glass	pale green	vessel	1	1	1600	1800	
	metal	iron	knife	1	44	1600	1800	
104	ceramic	earthenware	pot	2	13	1100	1350	1100-1350
300	ceramic	earthenware	pot	1	9	1100	1350	1100-1350
306	ceramic	earthenware	pot	4	17	1100	1350	1100-1350
405	ceramic	earthenware	pot	10	37	1100	1350	1100-1350
408	ceramic	earthenware	pot	1	6	43	410	
	ceramic	earthenware	pot	7	42	1100	1250	
	slag	Slag (Fe)	fragment	1	9			

Table 3: Summary of context dating based on artefacts

Trench 1 Post-medieval iron knife (Figure 4)

Iron knife. The blade, which is 65mm long, is V-shaped in section, with a maximum thickness of 9mm. The blade has a straight cutting edge, the thicker, upper edge curving from the knife tip to a maximum width of 25mm. The tang, set centrally in relation to the blade, has a rectangular section and is broken at the tip. Length extant 122mm, weight 45g. Cobbled surface 103

6.6 Discussion

Three of the trenches excavated produced small quantities of finds, all of only local significance. The presence of post-medieval finds is unsurprising; they date to the period when Stourport was rapidly expanding following the construction of the canal. The sherd of Roman pottery reflects the presence of Roman activity elsewhere in the vicinity. The evidence for medieval activity is of interest as little is known about the settlement at this time.

6.7 Recommendations

6.7.1 Further analysis

No further work is required.

6.7.2 Discard/retention

The finds could be considered for discard, in discussion with the receiving museum.

7 Environmental evidence

By Elizabeth Pearson

7.1 Introduction

The environmental project conforms to guidance by CIfA (2014) on archaeological evaluation, further guidance by English Heritage (2011) and the Association for Environmental Archaeology (1995).

The site is situated on freely draining floodplain soils of moderate to high fertility (Soilscape 12), which extends along the River Severn. Present day farmland on this soil type is mostly under grassland with some arable (Soilscape 10). To the south and north, soils are freely draining slightly acid soils of low fertility (Soilscape 10), where habitats are acid dry pastures, acid deciduous and coniferous woodland, with potential for lowland heath (Cranfield and Agrifood Institute 2020).

7.2 Aims

This assessment aimed to determine the state of preservation, type, and quantity of environmental remains recovered. The information has been used to assess the importance of the environmental remains.

7.3 Methodology

7.3.1 Sampling policy

Samples were taken according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (2012). A total of six samples (each of 10 litres) were taken from the site (Table 4).

7.3.2 Processing and analysis

The samples were processed by flotation using a Siraf tank. The flots were collected on a 300µm sieve and the residue retained on a 1mm mesh. This allows for the recovery of items such as small animal bones, molluscs and seeds.

The residues were scanned by eye and the abundance of each category of environmental remains estimated. A magnet was also used to test for the presence of hammerscale. The flots were scanned using a low power MEIJI stereo light microscope and plant remains identified using modern reference collections maintained by Worcestershire Archaeology, and a seed identification manual (Cappers *et al* 2012). Nomenclature for the plant remains follows Stace (2010).

Animal bone was identified with the aid of modern bone reference collections housed at the Worcestershire Archaeology offices and identification guides (Schmid 1972 and Hillson 1992). It was quantified according to weight (g) and count and tabulated by context.

Charcoal was examined under a low power MEIJI stereo light microscope in order to determine the presence of oak and non-oak charcoal. In some cases, broad species categories were recognisable using low power microscopy. Identifications were carried out using reference texts (Schweingruber 1978 and Hather 2000) and reference slides housed at Worcestershire Archaeology.

Context	Sample	Fill of	Description	Period	Phase	Sample volume (L)	Volume processed (L)	Residue assessed	Flot assessed
304	4	303	Upper (main) fill of pit [303]	medieval	0	10	10	Yes	Yes
306	1	305	Single fill of pit [305]	medieval	1100 - 1250	20	20	Yes	Yes
308	5		?colluvium	undated		10	10	Yes	Yes
405	2		Upper fill of pit [407]	medieval	1100 - 1250	10	10	Yes	Yes
406	3	407	Lower fill of pit [407]	medieval	1100- 1250	10	10	Yes	Yes

Table 4: List of bulk samples

Discard policy

Remaining soil sample and residues (post scanning) will be discarded after a period of three months following submission of this report unless there is a specific request to retain them.

7.4 Results

7.4.1 Charred plant macrofossils and charcoal

The results are summarised in Tables 5 and 6.

Medieval

Upper fill (304) of pit 303

This was rich in charred cereal crop remains and was dominated by grains of free-threshing wheat (including club wheat; *Triticum aestivo-compactum*), rye (*Secale cereale*), with occasional grains of hulled barley (*Hordeum vulgare*). Preservation was very variable, with many unidentified wheat grains being badly popped and warped. However, rye grains were generally well preserved and barley, moderately so. This suggests that crop waste from different sources were disposed of in this pit.

Chaff remains included rye and possible barley rachis nodes and a single spikelet fork of a glume wheat (*Triticum dicoccum/spelta*). Unidentified grass grains (Poaceae sp indet), some of which were quite small were also recorded, alongside weed seeds assumed to have been crop contaminants. The latter included sheep's sorrel (*Rumex acetosella*), unidentified Fabaceae, stinking chamomile (*Anthemis cotula*) and corn marigold (*Glebionis segetum*).

A domesticated plum/bullace/damson (*Prunus domestica*) stone and occasional elderberry (*Sambucus nigra*) seeds suggest waste from other sources, potentially domestic fires.

These remains could represent unprocessed cereal crop remains, given the survival of small chaff and weed seeds. However, the variable preservation of charred remains suggests this material is of mixed origin (at least different episodes of crop processing), but the density suggest bulk processing of cereals in the vicinity of the pit. It is most likely to be the waste of more than one crop from a corn drying kiln or oven; perhaps the rakings from the flue.

As the local soils in the vicinity of the site are typically freely draining floodplain soils, the presence of stinking chamomile (common on heavy clay soils) suggests that some of the crop material originated

at least a mile to the south on loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage (Soilscape 8), or several miles north west on the same soil type.

Fill (306) of pit 305

This was dominated by a moderately abundant assemblage of well-preserved charcoal fragments, which appeared to be mainly non-oak species. Brief examination under low-power microscopy suggested the presence of alder/hornbeam/hazel species (*Alnus*/*Carpinus*/*Corylus* sp) and possibly lime (cf *Tilia* sp). However, examination under a high power dark-illumination microscope would be necessary to confirm identifications of these and other non-oak fragments.

Fills (405) and (406) of pit 407

Both fills were dominated by small, unidentifiable fragments of charcoal, and therefore little interpretation could be made of these deposits.

Context	Sample	Mollusc	Charcoal	Charred plant	Unch*	Artefacts
304	4		occ	abt	occ	
306	1		mod			occ heat-cracked stone
308	5		abt	mod		occ heat-cracked stone.
405	2	occ	occ			occ chert (residual?)
406	3		occ		occ	

*Table 5: Summary of environmental remains; occ = occasional, mod = moderate, abt = abundant, * = probably modern and intrusive*

Undated

Colluvium deposit (308)

This was similar to the fill (304) of medieval pit 303, in that charred cereal remains were moderately abundant, with the same cereal crops being recorded, and similarly, a number of weed seeds, presumably contaminants of cereal crops.

Uncharred remains from all samples, consisting of mainly root fragments are assumed to be modern and intrusive as they are unlikely to have survived in the soils on site for long without charring or waterlogging.

Context	Sample	Preservation type	Species diversity	Category remains	Quantity/diversity	Comment
304	4	ch	*Triticum aestivo-compactum* grain, *Triticum* sp (free-threshing) grain, *Hordeum vulgare* grain (hulled), *Secale cereale* grain, Cereal sp indet grain, Cereal sp indet grain (fragment), Poaceae sp indet grain, Poaceae sp indet grain (small)	grain	+++/low	mostly free-threshing wheat, with rye and occasional barley. Very variable preservation
304	4	ch	Fabaceae sp indet, *Prunus spinosa* (fragment), *Rumex acetosella*, *Chenopodium album*, *Anthemis cotula*, *Glebionis segetum*, *Sambucus nigra*	seed	++/medium	

304	4	ch	*Hordeum vulgare* rachis, *Secale cereale* rachis	chaff	+/++/low	
304		ch	unidentified wood fragments	misc	+++/low	mostly small fragments
304	2	ch	Poaceae sp indet grain (small)	grain	+/low	
304	2	unch*	*Taraxacum* sp	seed	+/low	
308	1	ch	cf *Tilia* sp wood*, Alnus*/*Carpinus*/*Corylus* sp wood, non-oak wood	misc	++/low	well preserved charcoal
308	5	ch	*Vicia*/*Lathyrus* sp, *Vicia*/*Lathyrus* sp (fragment), *Prunus domestica*, *Galium aparine*, *Glebionis segetum*, *Sambucus nigra*, *Berula erecta*	seed	+/low	
308	5	ch	*Triticum aestivo-compactum* grain, *Triticum* sp (free-threshing) grain, *Triticum* sp grain, *Hordeum vulgare* grain (hulled), *Secale cereale* grain, Cereal sp indet grain, *Avena* sp grain	grain	++/low	
307	5	ch	unidentified wood fragments, non-oak wood	misc	+++/low	
405	2	ch	unidentified wood fragments	misc	+++/low	
405	2	unch*	*Taraxacum* sp	seed	+/low	
406	3	ch	Poaceae sp indet grain	grain	+/low	
406	3	ch	unidentified fungal sclerotia	misc	+/low	
406	3	unch*	unidentified root fragments (herbaceous)	misc	+/low	

Table 6: Plant remains from bulk samples

Key:

preservation	quantity
ch = charred	+ = 1 - 10
?wa = waterlogged or uncharred	++ = 11- 50
	+++ = 51 - 100
	++++ = 101+
	* = probably modern and intrusive

Key:

habitat	quantity
A= cultivated ground	+ = 1 - 10
B= disturbed ground	++ = 11- 50
C= woodlands, hedgerows, scrub etc	+++ = 51 - 100
D = grasslands, meadows and heathland	++++ = 101+
E = aquatic/wet habitats	* = fragments
F = cultivar	

7.5 Discussion

The good preservation of a rich assemblage of charred cereal crop remains and charcoal from a pit indicates good potential for preservation of these remains, should further field work be carried out on the site.

It is possible that the site was at, or close to, a collection point for cereal crops and other bulk produce for transport along the river, particularly as it is close to the conference of the River Severn and Stour.

7.6 Significance

The environmental remains are of local significance, but the charred cereal crop remains may be an indication of collection and distribution of cereal crops, and other bulk products, along the river.

8 Discussion and Conclusions

Five trenches were excavated within the development area. The earliest evidence found dates from the Roman period. A known area of fairly extensive occupation existed approximately 1.6km to the south and south-west of this site, so it is likely that this sherd originated from activities relating to this settlement.

The larger number of artefacts recovered, however, date from the medieval period. The pottery is particularly indicative of cooking activities, suggesting that there was settlement along Dunley Road during that period and that the pits are the remains of backplot activity.

Environmental evidence from this site indicates that it is likely, also, that cereal crops were collected and/or processed at this location during the medieval period, with the charred cereals present in fill (304) seeming to support the idea that the two pits in Trench 3 are, in fact, one larger feature and that it represents a corn drying kiln.

The cobbled surface in Trench 1 hints at continued usage of at least the northern end of this site into the post-medieval period, but it could not be determined from this evaluation what the precise function of this surface was.

The results of this evaluation are significant on a local scale as almost no archaeological evidence of medieval Stourport has been found to date, with documentary sources providing the vast majority of what is currently known about the town. Little excavation has occurred within the town to date and the only surviving evidence of this is anecdotal. The survival of pits and a possible corn dryer demonstrates that there was medieval activity in this location, and this was likely to be settlement, perhaps houses focussed close to a crossing point of the River Severn.

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.

9 Project personnel

The fieldwork was led by Tim Cornah ACIfA, assisted by Hazel Whitefoot PCifa.

The project was managed by Tom Rogers MCIfA. The report was produced and collated by Hazel Whitefoot. 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 for the successful conclusion of the project: Nick Smith (Senior Development Manager, GB Partnerships) for commissioning the project. The project was monitored by Emma Hancox, archaeological planning advisor, and Worcestershire Archaeology would also like to thank them for their advice.

11 Bibliography

AAF, 2011 *Archaeological archives: a guide to the best practice in the creation, compilation, transfer and curation*. Archaeological Archives Forum

Association for Environmental Archaeology, 1995 Environmental archaeology and archaeological evaluations: recommendations concerning the environmental component of archaeological evaluations in England. Working Papers of the Association for Environmental Archaeology **2**

BGS, 2020 Geology of Britain viewer. Available: http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html Accessed: 23 May 2020

Bryant, V, 2004 Medieval and early post-medieval pottery, in H Dalwood & R Edwards, *Excavations at Deansway, Worcester, 1988-89: Romano-British small town to late medieval city*. York: CBA Research Report, **139**, 281–339

Cappers, T R J, Bekker, R M, & Jans, J E A, 2012 *Digitale Zadenatlas van Nederland: Digital seed atlas of the Netherlands*. Groningen Archaeological Studies, **4**, Barkhuis Publishing and Groningen University Library: Groningen

CIfA, 2014a *Standard and guidance: for archaeological field evaluation*. Reading: Chartered Institute for Archaeologists

CIfA, 2014b *Standard and guidance: for collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials*. Reading: Chartered Institute for Archaeologists

CIfA, 2014c *Standard and guidance: for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives*. Reading: Chartered Institute for Archaeologists

Cranfield Soil and AgriFood Institute 2020 LANDIS (Land Information System) Soilscapes Soil type viewer, available at http://www.landis.org.uk/soilscapes/ . Accessed 5th June 2020

English Heritage, 2011 *Environmental archaeology: a guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation*. English Heritage, Centre for Archaeology Guidelines

Hather, J G, 2000 *The identification of the northern European hardwoods: a guide for archaeologists and conservators.* London: Archetype Publications Ltd

Lucey, D, 2017 Land at Areley Common, Astley Cross, Stourport-on-Severn Archaeology and Built Heritage Statement , available at http://npa.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/AnitePublicDocs/00157085.pdf accessed 26 June 2020

PCRG/SGRP/MPRG, 2016 *A standard for pottery studies in archaeology*. Prehistoric Ceramics Research Group, Study Group for Roman Pottery, Medieval Pottery Research Group

SMA, 1993 *Selection, retention and dispersal of archaeological collections*. Society of Museum Archaeologists

Schweingruber, F H, 1978 *Microscopic wood anatomy: structural variability of stems and twigs in recent and subfossil woods from central Europe*. Swiss Federal Institute of Forestry Research

Stace, C, 2010 *New flora of the British Isles* (3rd edition). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

WA, *2012 Manual of service practice, recording manual*, Worcestershire Archaeology Unpubl report **1842**. Worcestershire County Council

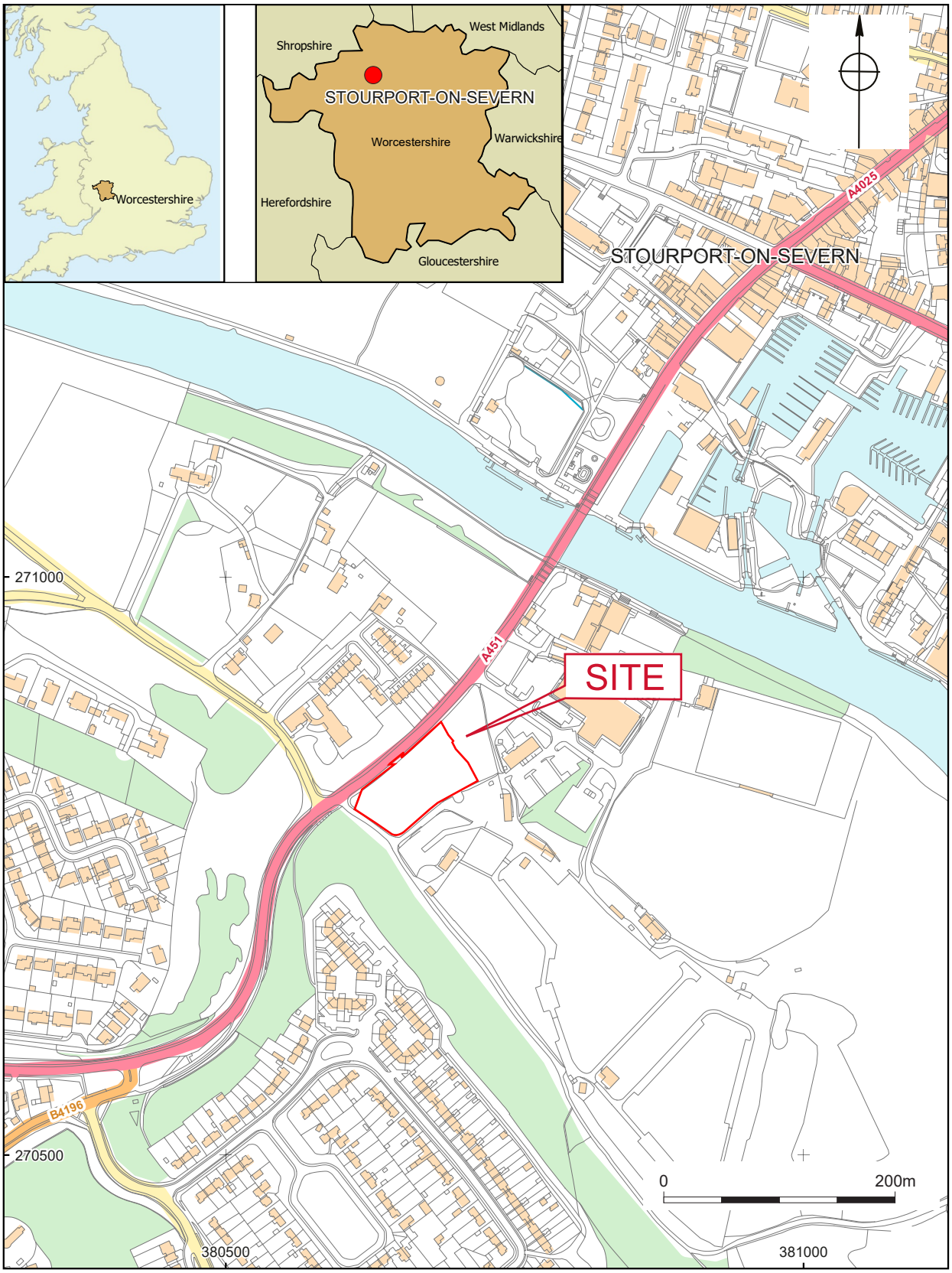
WA, 2020 *Written Scheme of Investigation for Land off Dunley Road, Stourport, Worcestershire* Archaeology Unpubl document dated March 2020.Worcestershire County Council

WAAS 2017 Worcestershire Ceramics Online Database. Available: https://www.worcestershireceramics.org/ Accessed: 01 June 2020

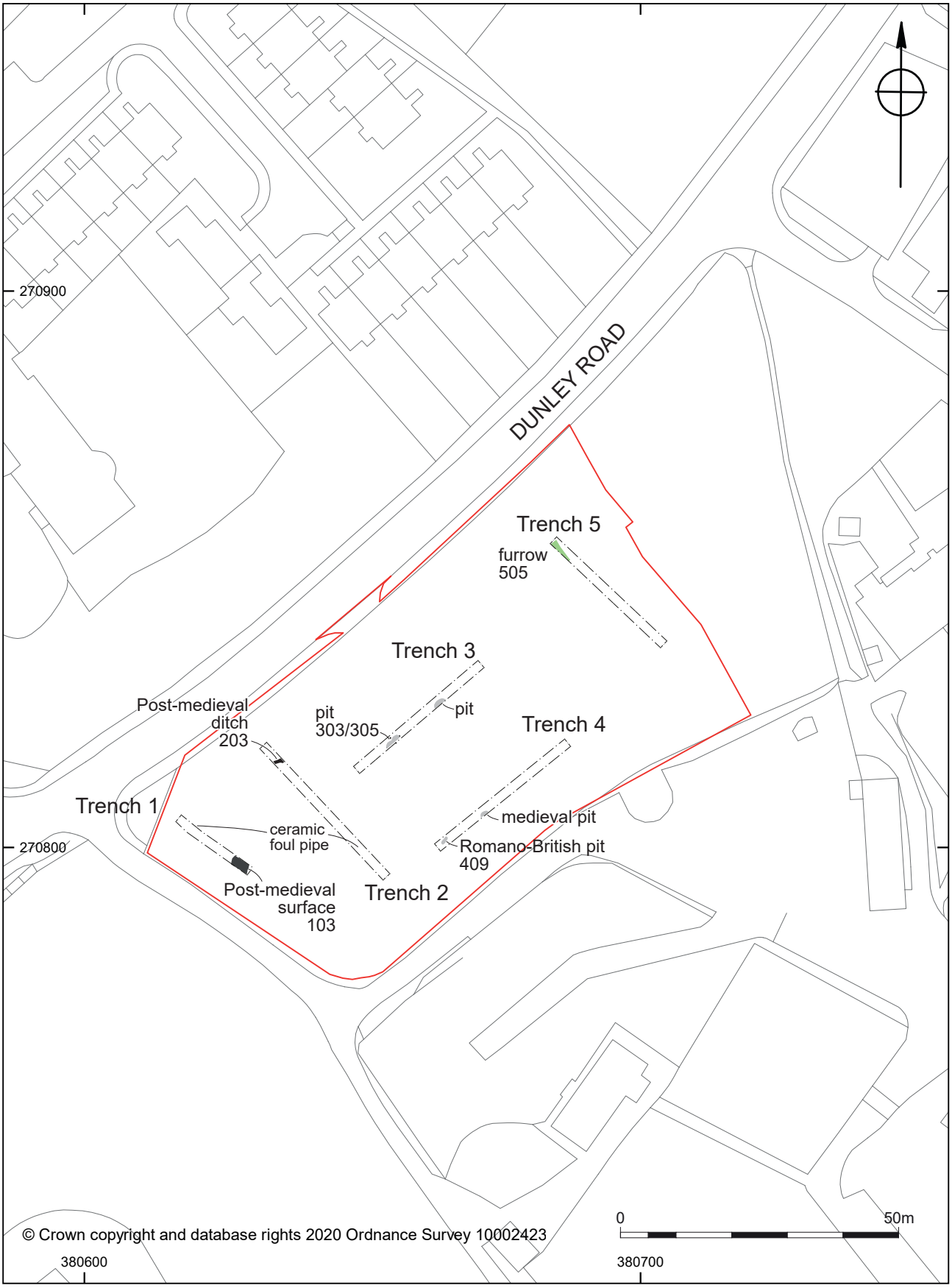
Walker, I, 1959 *Excavations on a Second Romano-British Site at Astley*, and Reports from the First, Transactions of the Worcestershire Archaeological Society Vol XXXVI

WCC 2010 (amended March 2016) *Standards and guidelines for archaeological projects in Worcestershire*, Planning Advisory Section, Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service Unpubl report **604**. Worcestershire County Council

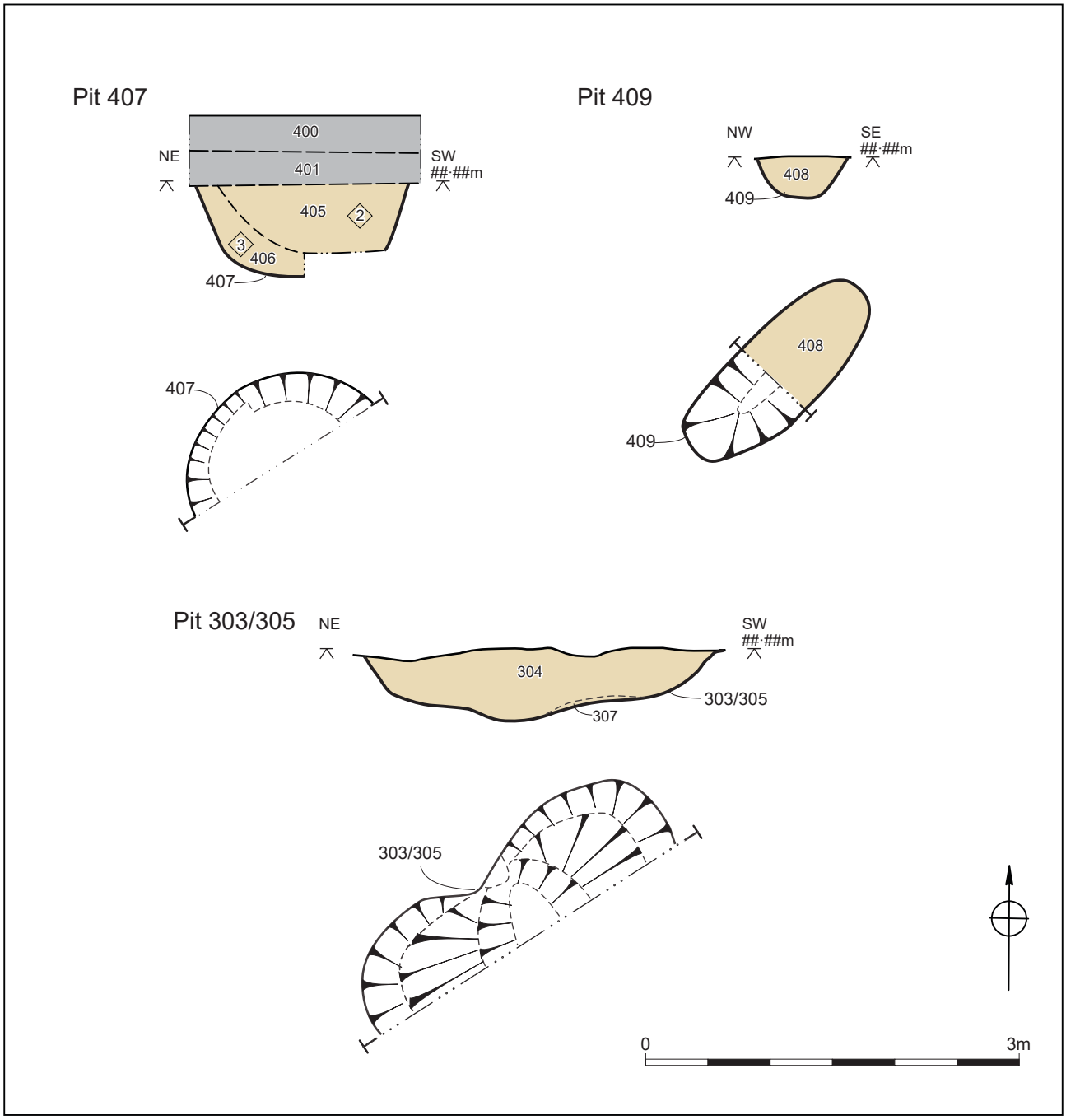
Figures



Location of the site *Figure 1*



Trench Plan and features *Figure 2*



Pit plans and sections *Figure 6*

The Post-medieval knife *Figure 4*

Plates

Plate 1: Tr 1, surface 103, view NE, 2 x 1m scales

Plate 2: Tr 4, pit 407, view SE, 2 x 1m scales

Plate 3: Tr 4, pit 409, view NE, 0.5m scale

Plate 4: Tr 3, pits 303 and 305, view NE, 0.5m scalePlate 5: Tr 5, band of alluvium , view N, 2 x 1m scales

Appendix 1: Trench descriptions

Trench 1

Length: 10 Width: 10 Orientation: North-east to south-west

Context summary:

Context	Feature	Context	Description	Height/ depth	Deposit description
100	Topsoil	Layer	Topsoil	0.33m	Moderately Compact orangey brown sandy silt
101	Subsoil	Layer	Subsoil	0.50m	Soft orangey brown silty sand
102	Natural	Layer	Natural	0.07m	Soft orangey brown sand
103	Surface	Structure	Cobbled surface		Moderately Compact brown silty sand
104	Unknown	Fill	Deposit abutting SE edge of surface (103).		Soft reddish brown silty sand

Trench 2

Length: 30 Width: 30 Orientation: North-east to south-west

Context summary:

Context	Feature	Context	Description	Height/ depth	Deposit description
200	Topsoil	Layer	Topsoil	0.53m	Moderately Compact orangey brown sandy silt
201	Subsoil	Layer	Subsoil	0.53m	Soft orangey brown silty sand
202	Natural	Layer	Natural	0.10m	Soft orangey brown sand
203	Ditch	Cut	Ditch		
204	Ditch	Fill	Fill of ditch [203]	0.17m	Soft reddish brown sand

Trench 3

Length: 30 Width: 30 Orientation: North-west to south-east

Context summary:

Context	Feature	Context	Description	Height/ depth	Deposit description
300	Topsoil	Layer	Topsoil	0.34m	Moderately Compact orangey brown sandy silt
301	Subsidence	Layer	Subsoil	0.54m	Moderately Compact orangey brown silty sand
302	Natural	Layer	Natural		Compact pinky yellow silty clay
303	Pit	Cut	Cut of pit	0.40m	

304	Pit	Fill	Upper (main) fill of pit [303]	0.39m	Moderately Compact greyish yellow silty clay
305	Pit	Cut	Cut of pit	0.58m	
306	Pit	Fill	Single fill of pit [305]	0.58m	Compact greyish yellow clay silt
307	Pit	Fill	Basal fill of pit [303]	0.05m	Moderately Compact greyish black silty clay
308	Colluvium?	Layer	?colluvium	0.30m	Soft yellowish brown silty clay

Trench 4

Length: 30 Width: 30 Orientation: North-west to south-east

Context summary:

Context	Feature	Context	Description	Height/ depth	Deposit description
400	Topsoil	Layer	Topsoil	0.30m	Moderately Compact orangey brown sandy silt
401	Subsoil	Layer	Subsoil	0.37m	Moderately Compact yellowish grey clay silt
402	Colluvium?	Layer	?colluvium. ? Channel	0-0.80m	yellowish brown clay silt
403	Natural	Layer	Natural		Compact pinky yellow clay silt
404					
405	Pit	Fill	Upper fill of pit [407]	0.52m	Compact yellowish grey clay silt
406	Pit	Fill	Lower fill of pit [407]	0.40m max	Compact yellowish brown clay silt
407	Pit	Cut	Cut of pit.	0.74m	
408	Pit	Fill	Fill of pit [409]	0.34m	Compact yellowish brown clay silt
409	Pit	Cut	Cut of pit.	0.34m	

Trench 5

Length: 30 Width: 30 Orientation: North-east to south-west

Context summary:

Context	Feature	Context	Description	Height/ depth	Deposit description
500	Topsoil	Layer	Topsoil	0.30m	Moderately Compact orangey brown silty sand
501	Subsoil	Layer	Subsoil	0.15m-0.25m	Moderately Compact yellowish grey clay silt
502	Colluvium?	Layer	?Channeling. Far from clear	0-0.85m	yellowish black clay silt

503	Natural	Layer	Natural	Compact pinky yellow clay silt
504	Furrow	Fill	Fill of furrow [505]	
505	Furrow	Cut	Cut of furrow	

Appendix 2: Summary of project archive (WSM72828)

TYPE	DETAILS*
Artefacts and Environmental	Ceramics, Environmental, Glass, Metal,
Paper	Context sheet, Correspondence, Drawing, Matrices, Photograph, Plan, Report, Section, Survey
Digital	Database, GIS, Images raster/digital photography, Spreadsheets, Survey, Text

**OASIS terminology*

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.

Appendix 3: Summary of data for HER

period	material class	material subtype	object specific type	count	weight(g)
Roman	Ceramic	Earthenware	Pot	1	6
Medieval	Ceramic	Earthenware	Pot	24	118
Post-medieval	Ceramic	Earthenware	Pot	12	299
Post-medieval	Ceramic	Fired clay	Tile	1	31
Post-medieval	Glass	Pale green	Vessel	1	1
Post-medieval	Metal	Iron	Knife	1	44
Undated	Ceramic	Fired clay	Fragment	1	5
Undated	Slag	Slag(fe)	Fragment	1	9

Table 1: Quantification of site assemblage

Broad period	fabric code	Fabric common name	count	weight(g)
Romano-British	12	Severn Valley ware	1	6
Medieval	55	Worcester-type sandy unglazed ware	24	118
Post-medieval	78.1	Red sandy ware	2	7
Post-medieval	90	Post-medieval orange ware	10	292
Total			37	423

Table 2: Quantification of pottery assemblage by period and fabric

context	material class	material subtype	object specific type	count	weight(g)	start date	end date	context tpq
103	ceramic	earthenware	pot	2	7	1600	1800	1700-1800
	ceramic	earthenware	pot	10	292	1700	1800	
	ceramic	fired clay	fragment	1	5			
	ceramic	fired clay	tile	1	31	1600	1800	
	glass	pale green	vessel	1	1	1600	1800	
	metal	iron	knife	1	44	1600	1800	

104	ceramic	earthenware	pot	2	13	1100	1350	1100-1350
300	ceramic	earthenware	pot	1	9	1100	1350	1100-1350
306	ceramic	earthenware	pot	4	17	1100	1350	1100-1350
405	ceramic	earthenware	pot	10	37	1100	1350	1100-1350
408	ceramic	earthenware	pot	1	6	43	410	
	ceramic	earthenware	pot	7	42	1100	1250	
	slag	Slag (Fe)	fragment	1	9			

Table 3: Summary of context dating based on artefacts

Context	Sample	Fill of	Description	Period	Phase	Sample volume (L)	Volume processed (L)	Residue assessed	Flot assessed
304	4	303	Upper (main) fill of pit [303]	medieval	0	10	10	Yes	Yes
306	1	305	Single fill of pit [305]	medieval	1100 - 1250	20	20	Yes	Yes
308	5		?colluvium	undated		10	10	Yes	Yes
405	2		Upper fill of pit [407]	medieval	1100 - 1250	10	10	Yes	Yes
406	3	407	Lower fill of pit [407]	medieval	1100- 1250	10	10	Yes	Yes

Table 4: List of bulk samples

Context	Sample	Mollusc	Charcoal	Charred plant	Unch*	Artefacts
304	4		occ	abt	occ	
306	1		mod			occ heat-cracked stone
308	5		abt	mod		occ heat-cracked stone.
405	2	occ	occ			occ chert (residual?)
406	3		occ		occ	

*Table 5: Summary of environmental remains; occ = occasional, mod = moderate, abt = abundant, * = probably modern and intrusive*

Context	Sample	Preservation type	Species diversity	Category remains	Quantity/diversity	Comment
304	4	ch	*Triticum aestivo-compactum* grain, *Triticum* sp (free-threshing) grain, *Hordeum vulgare* grain (hulled), *Secale cereale* grain, Cereal sp indet grain, Cereal sp indet grain (fragment), Poaceae sp indet grain, Poaceae sp indet grain (small)	grain	+++/low	mostly free-threshing wheat, with rye and occasional barley. Very variable preservation
304	4	ch	Fabaceae sp indet, *Prunus spinosa* (fragment), *Rumex acetosella*, *Chenopodium album*, *Anthemis cotula*, *Glebionis segetum*, *Sambucus nigra*	seed	++/medium	
304	4	ch	*Hordeum vulgare* rachis, *Secale cereale* rachis	chaff	+/++/low	
304		ch	unidentified wood fragments	misc	+++/low	mostly small fragments
304	2	ch	Poaceae sp indet grain (small)	grain	+/low	
304	2	unch*	*Taraxacum* sp	seed	+/low	
308	1	ch	cf *Tilia* sp wood*, Alnus*/*Carpinus*/*Corylus* sp wood, non-oak wood	misc	++/low	well preserved charcoal
308	5	ch	*Vicia*/*Lathyrus* sp, *Vicia*/*Lathyrus* sp (fragment), *Prunus domestica*, *Galium aparine*, *Glebionis segetum*, *Sambucus nigra*, *Berula erecta*	seed	+/low	
308	5	ch	*Triticum aestivo-compactum* grain, *Triticum* sp (free-threshing) grain, *Triticum* sp grain, *Hordeum vulgare* grain (hulled), *Secale cereale* grain, Cereal sp indet grain, *Avena* sp grain	grain	++/low	
307	5	ch	unidentified wood fragments, non-oak wood	misc	+++/low	
405	2	ch	unidentified wood fragments	misc	+++/low	
405	2	unch*	*Taraxacum* sp	seed	+/low	
406	3	ch	Poaceae sp indet grain	grain	+/low	
406	3	ch	unidentified fungal sclerotia	misc	+/low	
406	3	unch*	unidentified root fragments (herbaceous)	misc	+/low	

Table 6: Plant remains from bulk samples

Key:

preservation	quantity
ch = charred	+ = 1 - 10
?wa = waterlogged or uncharred	++ = 11- 50
	+++ = 51 - 100
	++++ = 101+
	* = probably modern and intrusive

Key:

habitat	quantity
A= cultivated ground	+ = 1 - 10
B= disturbed ground	++ = 11- 50
C= woodlands, hedgerows, scrub etc	+++ = 51 - 100
D = grasslands, meadows and heathland	++++ = 101+
E = aquatic/wet habitats	* = fragments
F = cultivar	