

Archaeological evaluation at Shinehill Lane, South Littleton, Worcestershire

Worcestershire Archaeology
for RPS Group
on behalf of Owl Partnerships Ltd

June 2020



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Archaeological evaluation report



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SITE INFORMATION

Site name: Shinehill Lane, South Littleton, Worcestershire

Local planning authority: Wychavon District Council

Planning reference: 20/00518/FUL – Walworth Shinehill Lane

Central NGR: SP 08374 46278

Commissioning client: RPS Group

Client project reference: 26229

WA project number: 5830

WA report number: 2825

HER reference: WSM 72945

Oasis reference: Fieldsec1-397257

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Archaeological Evaluation at Shinehill Lane, South Littleton, Worcestershire

By Roland Tillyer

With a contribution by Rob Hedge

Illustrations by Richard Bradley

Summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at Shinehill Lane, South Littleton, Worcestershire (NGR SP 0838 4628). It was commissioned by RPS Group on behalf of Owl Partnerships Ltd, in advance of residential development.

Three trenches were excavated across the c. 0.8ha site, representing c. 4% of the development area. This revealed an undated shallow gully in one trench. No other archaeological remains were discovered.

Report

1 Introduction

1.1 Background to the project

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA) in June 2020 at Shinehill Lane, South Littleton, Worcestershire (NGR SP 08374 46278; Fig 1). This comprised three evaluation trenches across the c. 0.8ha site. The project was commissioned by RPS Group on behalf of Owl Partnerships Ltd, in advance of a residential development (Wychavon District Council application ref: 20/00518/FUL).

The archaeological advisor to the local planning authority considered that the proposed development had the potential to impact upon possible heritage assets.

No brief was provided but a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was produced by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2020) which conformed to the generality of briefs which have been previously issued by Aidan Smyth, the Archaeological Advisor for Wychavon District Council (the Curator). The evaluation conforms to this WSI and to the industry guidelines and standards set out by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists in *Standard and guidance: for archaeological field evaluation* (CIfA 2014a) 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 Shinehill Lane, on the eastern side of the village of South Littleton. It comprises 0.8ha of land surrounding Walworth bungalow. The site is bound by gardens to the east and west, fields to the north and Shinehill Lane to the south and currently comprises a former arable field, a bungalow, outbuildings and a small orchard.

The site is relatively flat at approximately 36m-37m AOD and is approximately 200m north of tributaries to Broadway Brook. The underlying geology comprises bedrock of the Blue Lias Formation and Charmouth Mudstone Formation (undifferentiated), and no superficial deposits are recorded (BGS 2020).

2 Archaeological and historical background

An archaeological desk-based assessment (DBA) of the site was undertaken prior to the evaluation by RPS Group, on behalf of Barley Developments.

The assessment established that there are no designated or non-designated heritage assets within the site. The assessment determined that there was a low potential for significant archaeological remains of all periods.

A Roman road (WSM23364) and agger are situated near to the site, and the wider landscape features earthwork ridge and furrow. The site does not contain any earthworks and was judged not to contribute to the setting or significance of any heritage assets outside it.

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; and
- assess the likely impact of the proposed development.

4 Project methodology

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2020). Fieldwork was undertaken on the 2nd-3rd June 2020.

Three trenches, amounting to 360m² in area, were excavated over the c.0.8ha site, representing a sample of 4%. The location of the trenches is indicated in Figure 2. The trench layout was constrained by obstacles such as mature trees and an overhead electricity cable.

Deposits considered not to be significant were removed under constant archaeological supervision using a JCB 3CX 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 trenches 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 with 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, Hartlebury.

5 Archaeological results

5.1 Introduction

Three trenches were excavated in one of which a small gully was revealed. This is considered likely to represent a post-medieval or modern field boundary. The other two trenches were blank.

Trench locations and the location of the gully are shown in Figure 2 and Plates 1-7. The trench and context inventory are presented in Appendix 1.

5.2 Trench descriptions

5.2.1 Natural deposits across the site

The natural substrate was observed across all trenches at c. 0.4-0.6m below the ground surface. It consisted of a compact, light greyish-green silty clay with frequent limestone flecks and rare small to medium mudstone fragments. This was overlain in places by moderately compact mid orangey-brown clayey sands and gravels, which became more extensive towards the south of the site.

5.2.2 Trench 1

The natural substrate in Trench 1 (102) was overlain by a moderately compact, light yellowish brown silty clay subsoil (101), which was 0.26m thick, and a moderately compact dark greyish brown clay silt topsoil (100), up to 0.14m thick. A small modern geotechnical test pit was identified in the base of the trench.

5.2.3 Trench 2

The natural substrate in Trench 2 (202) was overlain by a moderately compact, mid yellowish brown silty clay subsoil (201), ranging in thickness from 0.18m-0.38m, and a moderately compact dark greyish brown clay silt topsoil (200), 0.43m thick and featuring occasional flecks of charcoal and ceramic building material.

5.2.4 Trench 3

The natural substrate in Trench 3 (302) was overlain by a moderately compact, mid yellowish brown silty clay subsoil (301), which was 0.28m thick, and a moderately compact dark greyish brown clay silt topsoil (300), 0.16m thick and featuring occasional flecks of charcoal and ceramic building material.

The trench contained a single north-south aligned shallow gully [303] which had a U-shaped profile and measured 0.34m wide and c.0.2m deep (Plates 6 and 7). It contained a moderately compact, dark greyish brown silty clay lower fill (304) with occasional very small flecks of ceramic building material and rare flecks of charcoal. It also contained a moderately compact, dark yellowish-brown silty clay upper fill (305) with charcoal and redeposited natural. The feature is undated.

6 Artefactual evidence (by Rob Hedge)

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

This assessment/analysis aimed to identify, sort, spot date, and quantify all artefacts and describe the range of artefacts present. The information has been used to provide a preliminary assessment/analysis of the significance of the artefacts.

6.3 Methodology

6.3.1 Recovery policy

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

All artefacts collected in the field were recovered by hand.

6.3.2 Method of analysis

Reporting was undertaken under COVID-19 restrictions. Artefacts were processed, counted and weighed, then photographed by Jem Brewer. The quantifications and photographs were passed to the specialist to determine whether any were worthy of further examination. In this case, as all were residual and none were of high intrinsic significance, this brief report was undertaken remotely using photographs and measurements supplied by Jem Brewer.

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 Table 1.

The assemblage totalled 6 artefacts weighing 190g. Finds came from topsoil and subsoil deposits and could be dated from the medieval/early post-medieval period onwards.

Artefact condition was poor. All potsherds were small and abraded, typical of material incorporated into domestic or cultivated soils through processes such as manuring.

Context	count	Weight (g)	Artefact type	fabric code	period	start date	end date	context tpq date range
100	1	1	Pot	85	post-medieval/modern	1820	1950	AD 1820 - 1950
	1	10	Pot	78	post-medieval	1600	1800	
101	1	5	Pot	85	post-medieval/modern	1820	1950	AD 1820 - 1950
	1	5	Bone		undated			
201	1	31	Tile?		medieval/post-medieval	1200	1800	AD 1200 - 1800
	1	138	Fe Horseshoe		medieval/early post-medieval	1066	1700	
Totals	6	190						

Table 1: Quantification of site assemblage

6.5 Discussion

The three small sherds of abraded post-medieval pottery comprise two 19th or early 20th century pieces of white earthenware (fabric 85), and one sherd of redware (fabric 78). They are typical of background material in local domestic or cultivation soils.

A single fragment of animal bone probably represents domestic kitchen waste.

A small fragment of roof tile is not readily diagnostic and can only be ascribed a broad 13th to 18th century date.

Corrosion and use-wear render the horseshoe difficult to date: it is notably small, thin, and relatively light, characteristics typical of examples classified by Clark (1986) as Type 1. These are typically mid-11th to mid-13th century in date. However, the extent of wear and corrosion, especially around the nail-holes, precludes a confident identification; it may be a well-worn later medieval or early post-medieval type, but the absence of a fuller suggests it probably pre-dates the 18th century.

6.6 Significance

The artefactual remains are of negligible significance.

6.7 Recommendations

6.7.1 Further analysis

No further analysis is required.

6.7.2 Discard/retention

The assemblage does not warrant retention, though the final decision rests with Museums Worcestershire.

7 Environmental evidence

Environmental sampling followed standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012). In the event no deposits were identified which were considered to be suitable for environmental analysis.

8 Conclusions

The only feature present, the undated gully in Trench 3, is of negligible significance and probably represents the base of a former field boundary of post-medieval or modern date. Other than this, no features or finds of archaeological significance were present and it is considered that there is a very 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 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 Andrew Mann, MCIfA, assisted by Jem Brewer, PCIfA.

The project was managed by Robin Jackson, ACIfA. The report was produced and collated by Roland Tillyer, ClfA Affiliate. 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: Simon Mortimer and Alexandra Thornton (RPS Group) and Aidan Smyth (Archaeology and Planning Advisor, Wychavon District Council).

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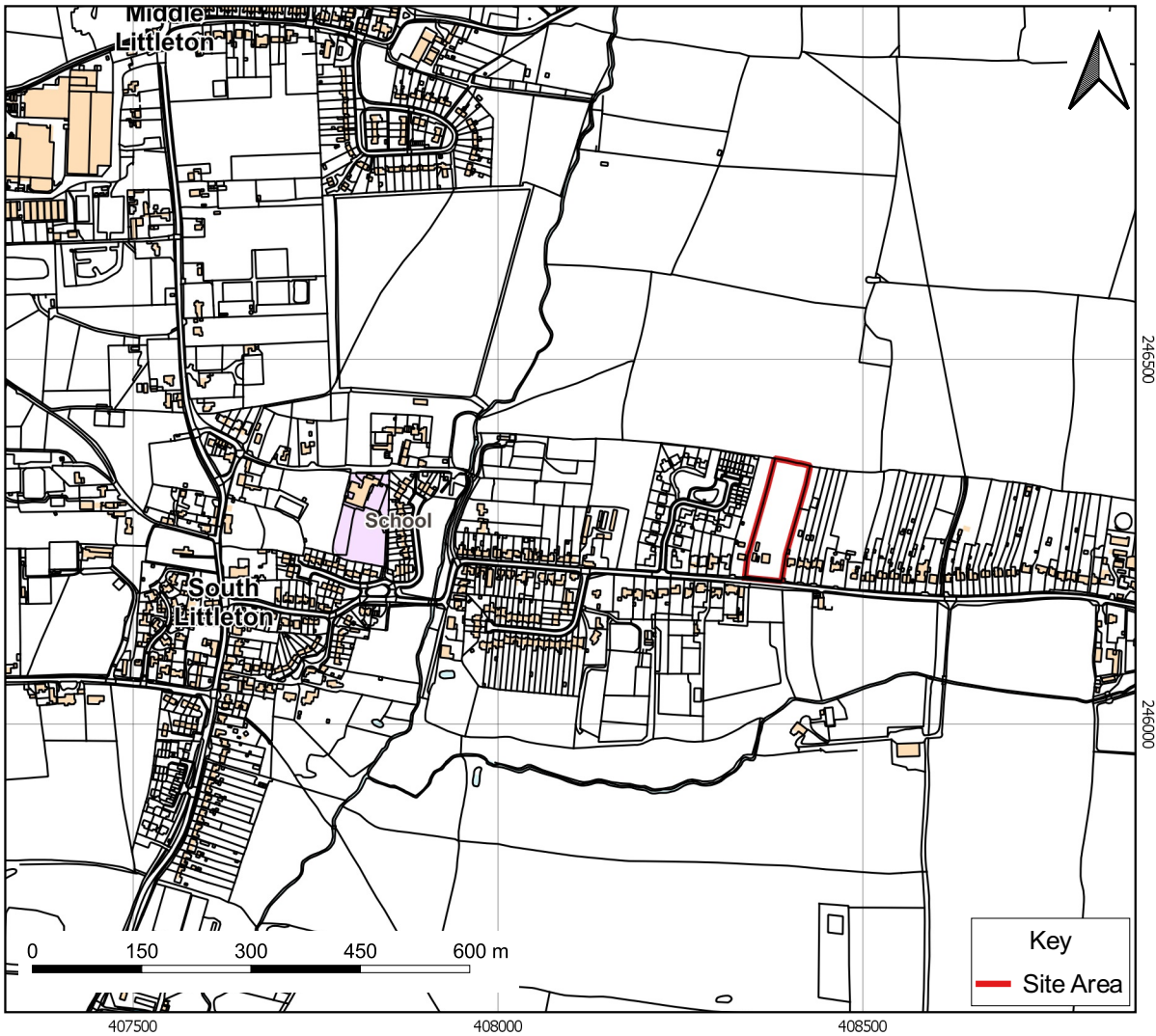
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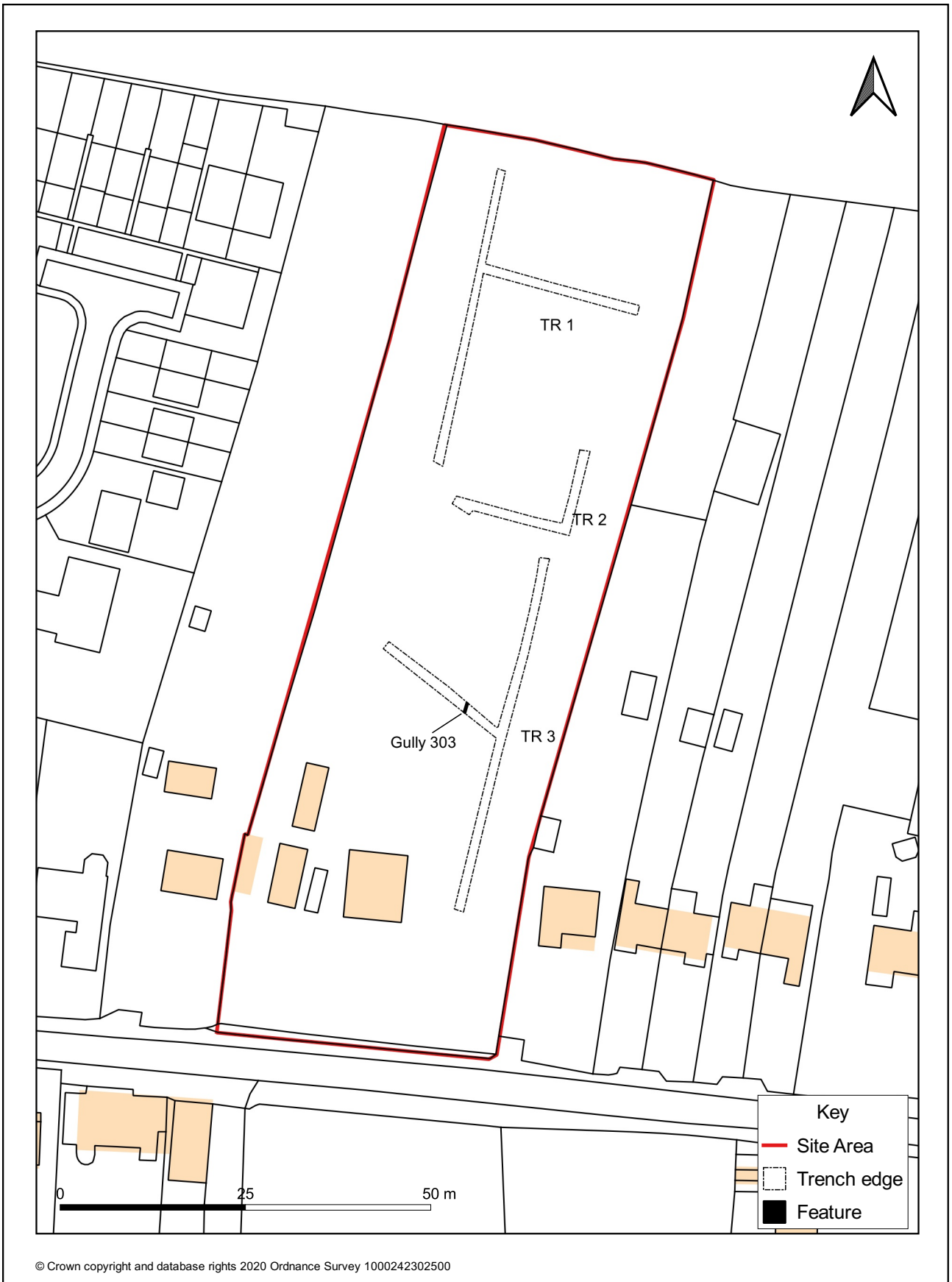
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Figures



Location of the site

Figure 1



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Trench plan with archaeological features

Figure 2

Plates



Plate 1: North facing view of Tr 1 north-south arm, 2x1m scales



Plate 2: West facing view of Tr 1 east-west arm, 2x1m scales



Plate 3: West facing view of Tr 2, 2x1m scales



Plate 4: South facing view of Tr 3 north-south arm, 2x1m scales



Plate 5: East facing view of Tr 3 east-west arm, 2x1m scales



Plate 6: Tr 3, shallow gully [303], view south, 0.4m scale



Plate 7: Tr 3, shallow gully [303], view north, 0.5m scale

Appendix 1: Trench descriptions

Trench 1

Length: 81m Width: 1.8m Orientation: N-S & E-W

Context summary:

Context	Feature	Context	Description	Height/ depth	Deposit description
100	Topsoil	Layer	Topsoil	0.14m	Moderately Compact greyish brown clay silt
101	Subsoil	Layer	Subsoil	0.26m	Moderately Compact yellowish brown silty clay
102	Natural	Layer	Natural		Moderately Compact blueish brown silty clay

Trench 2

Length: 20m Width: 1.5m Orientation: E-W

Context summary:

Context	Feature	Context	Description	Height/ depth	Deposit description
200	Topsoil	Layer	Topsoil	0.43m	Moderately Compact greyish brown clay silt
201	Subsoil	Layer	Subsoil	0.38m	Moderately Compact yellowish brown silty clay
202	Natural	Layer	Natural		Moderately Compact greyish brown silty clay

Trench 3

Length: 83.7m

Width: 1.5m

Orientation: N-S & E-W

Context summary:

Context	Feature	Context	Description	Height/ depth	Deposit description
300	Topsoil	Layer	Topsoil	0.16m	Moderately Compact greyish brown clay silt
301	Subsoil	Layer	Subsoil	0.28m	Moderately Compact yellowish brown silty clay
302	Natural	Layer	Natural		Moderately Compact greyish brown silty clay
303	Gully	Cut	N-S orientated linear feature with concave sides and base. Top break of slope: sharp to E, rounded to W. Base break of slope: sharp to E, rounded to W	0.2m	
304	Gully	Fill	Silty clay with occasional small flecks of ceramic building material, rare charcoal flecks		Moderately Compact greyish brown silty clay
305	Gully	Fill	Silty clay, charcoal flecks, redeposited natural		Moderately Compact yellowish brown silty clay

Appendix 2: Summary of project archive (WSM 72945)

TYPE	DETAILS*
Artefacts and Environmental	Animal bone, Ceramics, Metal
Paper	Context sheet, Correspondence, Diary (Field progress form), Drawing, Photograph, Plan, Report, 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 (Hartlebury).