

# Archaeological evaluation at Froxmere Road, Crowle, Worcestershire

Worcestershire Archaeology  
*for SJD Architects and Developments Ltd*

June 2020



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# FROXMERE ROAD CROWLE WORCESTERSHIRE

Archaeological evaluation report

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## SITE INFORMATION

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Site name: Froxmere Road  
Local planning authority: Wychavon District Council  
Planning reference: 20/00143/FUL  
Central NGR: SO 92937 56052  
Commissioning client: SJD Architects and Developments Ltd  
WA project number: P5850  
WA report number: 2824  
Oasis reference: fieldsec1-397368

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# Archaeological Evaluation at Froxmere Road, Crowle, Worcestershire

By Beth Williams

## Summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at Froxmere road, Crowle, Worcestershire (NGR SO 92937 56052). It was commissioned by SJD Architects and Developments, in advance of a proposed development. A planning application has been submitted (20/00143/FUL).

The site is located to the immediate north of Froxmere Road on the eastern limits of Crowle, Worcestershire. The site comprised of seven trenches excavated over one field. The trenches were positioned to target the proposed house plot locations, while avoiding a service identified by geophysical survey.

The site lies close to the earthwork remains of a moated site and in close to three known sites of medieval manors. Ridge and furrow earthworks, the remains of medieval and post medieval strip field agriculture survives within the site.

The evaluation confirmed the presence of furrow scars within the field, but no other finds or features of archaeological significance were identified.

# Report

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Background to the project

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA) in June 2020 at Froxmere Road, Crowle, Worcestershire (NGR SO 92937 56052). This comprised seven evaluation trenches across one field. The project was commissioned by SJD Architects and Developments, in advance of a proposed housing development. A planning application has been submitted to Wychavon district council (planning reference 20/00143/FUL).

The archaeological advisor to the local planning authority considered that the proposed development had the potential to impact upon possible heritage assets. A desk-based assessment (WA 2020b) identified a moderate potential for the survival of medieval remains within the site. Previous geophysical survey on the site did not identify archaeological anomalies.

A WSI was prepared by Worcester Archaeology (WA 2020a) and approved by the Archaeology and Planning Advisor to Wychavon District Council.

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 immediate north of Froxmere Road, at the eastern limits of Crowle, Worcestershire. The site covers an area of approximately 0.5ha. It forms the lower half of a larger field. The site is bounded by the road to the south, by houses to the east and west, and by fields containing a horse paddock to the north.

The site consists of a largely flat area of scrubland, with a slight slope from approximately 45m AOD in the west dropping to 40m AOD in the east. The site has formally been used as an orchard, with several pear trees recently removed and two still in-situ.

The underlying geology comprises bedrock of Wilmcote Limestone Member with no recorded superficial deposits (BGS 2020).

## 2 Archaeological and historical background

### 2.1 Introduction

An archaeological desk-based assessment (DBA) of the site was undertaken by Worcester Archaeology (2020b), on behalf of SJD Architects and Developments. The assessment researched the site area and a 500m radius around the site. The findings presented in the DBA are summarised below.

### 2.2 Pre-medieval

There were no prehistoric or Roman archaeological finds or heritage assets identified within the site area or the wider study area. However, an area of Palaeolithic potential (WSM56930) has been identified c.170m east of the site, a single pit of Iron Age date was recorded c.1km south west of the site, and the large univallate hillfort Castle Hill Camp (Scheduled Monument, List entry 1005354) is located c.500m to the south east of the study area. Additionally, Church Road, which sits just outside of the study area, has been identified as being of possible Roman date, with a number of surface finds of Roman date recovered from nearby fields.



## 2.3 Medieval

The site is located c.400m to the east of the conjectured boundary of the historic settlement of Crowle (WSM48403). A 9<sup>th</sup> century charter mentions five manors at Crowle, three of which have been located. The first is located outside of the study area, the second is located at Manor Farm c.500m north east of the site, and the third is located at Commandery Farm c.300m north east of the site.

A probable moated site has also been identified c.100m to the north west of the site at Mordaunts Farm. These earthworks comprise a platform, trackways, ponds and a probable moat (WSM49937).

Several areas of ridge and furrow are recorded within the study area, and the site is located within the area of ridge and furrow to the south of Rectory Farm (WSM07878) which has been described as some of the best preserved encountered by the survey team.

## 2.4 Post medieval

There are several farmsteads recorded within the study area. The closest to the site are located within a loose farmstead cluster. This form of cluster is unusual and may have grown out of a medieval settlement (Robson-Glyde 2018, 10).

The site is located in a parcel of land which belonged to the second manor of Crowle in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Historic mapping and aerial photographs demonstrate the field containing the site was in use as an orchard as recently as the 1950s.

# 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.

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

# 4 Project methodology

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2020). Fieldwork was undertaken between 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

Seven trenches, amounting to 270m<sup>2</sup> in area, were excavated over the 0.5ha site, representing a sample of 5.4%. The location of the trenches is indicated in Figure 2.

The trenches were non-gridded and were positioned to target the proposed house plot locations, while avoiding a service identified by geophysical survey. The trenches were 20m in length and on a variety of alignments. The planned location of the trenches was altered slightly during the evaluation due to substantial scrub and to allow the plant on site to manoeuvre safely. Trench 3 was T-shaped, with one east to west 20m strip and a second north east to south west 20m strip extending from the centre of its southern side.

Deposits considered not to be significant were removed under constant archaeological supervision using a 360° 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 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 Worcester Museum.

## 5 Archaeological results

### 5.1 Introduction

The features recorded in the trenches are shown in Figure 2, and Plates 1 and 2. The trench and context inventory is presented in Appendix 1.

### 5.2 Phasing/Trench descriptions

#### 5.2.1 Natural deposits across the site

The natural substrate was reached and observed in each of the trenches. It presented as a light greenish yellow silty clay with patches of reddish pink clay. It was very compact and cohesive.

#### 5.2.2 Archaeological deposits

The scars of the base of three furrows were identified, one in Trench 2 and two in Trench 5. They lay on an east to west alignment and had an average width of 1.5m. While no finds were recovered, these features are believed to be of medieval or post medieval date and are consistent with the patterning and alignment of ridge and furrow identified by LiDAR survey.

#### 5.2.3 Modern deposits

Subsoil across the site was observed to be broadly consistent in material and depth. They presented as light reddish brown sandy clay, that was very compact, cohesive and sterile.

Topsoil was also consistent and presented as a light brown sandy clay that was moderately compact but friable.

## 6 Artefactual evidence

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

## 7 Discussion and Conclusions

The evaluation confirmed the presence of occasional ridge and furrow within the site area but did not identify any additional features of archaeological interest. Considering the sterile nature of both the subsoil and the furrows it seems unlikely that the site has previously been used for anything over than agricultural purposes.

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.

## 8 Project personnel

The fieldwork was led by Andy Mann assisted by Chris Crump.

The project was managed by Tom Rogers, MCIfA. 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.

## 9 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following for the successful conclusion of the project: Stuart Dudley (SJD Architects and Developments Ltd), and Aidan Smyth (Archaeology and Planning Advisor to Wychavon District Council).

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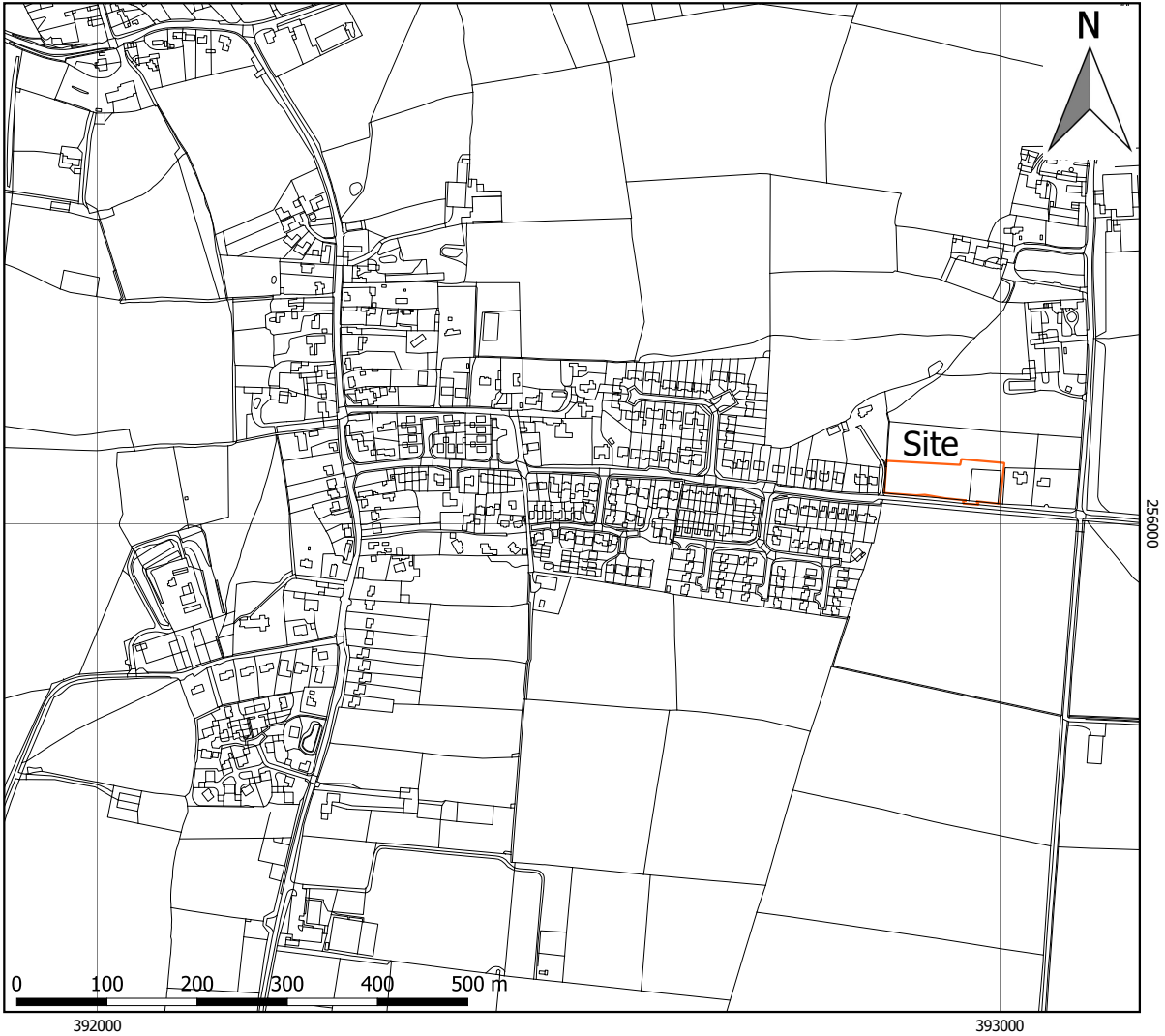
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## Figures



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Location of the site

Figure 1



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Trench Locations

Figure 2

## Plates



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



*Plate 2: South facing view of Trench 5, 2x1m scales*



## Appendix 1: Trench descriptions

### Trench 1

Length: 21.30m

Width: 1.60m

Orientation: NW-SE

#### Context summary:

Context	Feature type	Context type	Interpretation	Height/depth (m)	Deposit description
100	Topsoil	Layer	Topsoil	0.25	Light brown, sandy clay. Moderately compact but friable. Frequent roots.
101	Subsoil	Layer	Subsoil	0.37	Light reddish-brown sandy clay. Very compact and cohesive. Very sterile
102	Natural	Layer	Natural	0.62+	Light greenish-yellow, silty clay with patches of reddish-pink clay. Very compact and cohesive.

### Trench 2

Length: 19.70m

Width: 1.60m

Orientation: E-W

#### Context summary:

Context	Feature type	Context type	Interpretation	Height/depth (m)	Deposit description
200	Topsoil	Layer	Topsoil	0.50	Light brown, sandy clay. Moderately compact but friable. Frequent roots.
201	Subsoil	Layer	Subsoil	0.27	Light reddish-brown sandy clay. Very compact and cohesive. Very sterile
202	Natural	Layer	Natural	0.77+	Light greenish-yellow, silty clay with patches of reddish-pink clay. Very compact and cohesive.

### Trench 3

Length: 18.50m and  
19.50m

Width: 1.60m

Orientation: T shaped N-S and E-W

#### Context summary:

Context	Feature type	Context type	Interpretation	Height/depth (m)	Deposit description
300	Topsoil	Layer	Topsoil	0.25	Light brown, sandy clay. Moderately compact but friable. Frequent roots.
301	Subsoil	Layer	Subsoil	0.37	Light reddish-brown sandy clay. Very compact and cohesive. Very sterile
302	Natural	Layer	Natural	0.62+	Light greenish-yellow, silty clay with patches of

reddish-pink clay. Very compact and cohesive.

#### Trench 4

Length: 21.00m

Width: 1.60m

Orientation: E-W

##### Context summary:

Context	Feature type	Context type	Interpretation	Height/depth (m)	Deposit description
400	Topsoil	Layer	Topsoil	0.25	Light brown, sandy clay. Moderately compact but friable. Frequent roots.
401	Subsoil	Layer	Subsoil	0.37	Light reddish-brown sandy clay. Very compact and cohesive. Very sterile
402	Natural	Layer	Natural	0.62+	Light greenish-yellow, silty clay with patches of reddish-pink clay. Very compact and cohesive.

#### Trench 5

Length: 18.55m

Width: 1.60m

Orientation: N-S

##### Context summary:

Context	Feature type	Context type	Interpretation	Height/depth (m)	Deposit description
500	Topsoil	Layer	Topsoil	0.25	Light brown, sandy clay. Moderately compact but friable. Frequent roots.
501	Subsoil	Layer	Subsoil	0.37	Light reddish-brown sandy clay. Very compact and cohesive. Very sterile
502	Natural	Layer	Natural	0.62+	Light greenish-yellow, silty clay with patches of reddish-pink clay. Very compact and cohesive.

#### Trench 6

Length: 19.10m

Width: 1.60m

Orientation: NE-SW

##### Context summary:

Context	Feature type	Context type	Interpretation	Height/depth (m)	Deposit description
600	Topsoil	Layer	Topsoil	0.25	Light brown, sandy clay. Moderately compact but friable. Frequent roots.
601	Subsoil	Layer	Subsoil	0.37	Light reddish-brown sandy clay. Very compact and cohesive. Very sterile
602	Natural	Layer	Natural	0.62+	Light greenish-yellow, silty clay with patches of reddish-pink clay. Very compact and cohesive.

#### Trench 7

Length: 21.30m

Width: 1.60m

Orientation: NE-SW

**Context summary:**

<b>Context</b>	<b>Feature type</b>	<b>Context type</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>	<b>Height/depth (m)</b>	<b>Deposit description</b>
700	Topsoil	Layer	Topsoil	0.25	Light brown, sandy clay. Moderately compact but friable. Frequent roots.
701	Subsoil	Layer	Subsoil	0.37	Light reddish-brown sandy clay. Very compact and cohesive. Very sterile
702	Natural	Layer	Natural	0.62+	Light greenish-yellow, silty clay with patches of reddish-pink clay. Very compact and cohesive.

## Appendix 2: Summary of project archive (WSM73209)

TYPE	DETAILS*
Artefacts and Environmental	None
Paper	Context sheet, Diary (Field progress form), Drawing, Matrices, Report, Section
Digital	Database, GIS, Images raster/digital photography, 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 Worcester Museum.