

Archaeological watching brief at Sandal Lodge Hanbury Road, Droitwich Worcestershire

Worcestershire Archaeology
for Elmwood Heritage

July 2020



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SANDAL LODGE DROITWICH WORCESTERSHIRE

Archaeological watching brief report



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SITE INFORMATION

Site name:	Sandal Lodge, Hanbury Road, Droitwich, Worcestershire
Local planning authority:	Wychavon District Council
Planning reference:	(18/01913/FUL)
Central NGR:	SO 92448 62830
Commissioning client:	Elmwood Heritage
WA project number:	P5537
WA report number:	2827
HER reference:	WSM71325
Oasis reference:	fieldsec1-397481

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CONTENTS

SUMMARY	1
REPORT	2
1 INTRODUCTION	2
1.1 Background to the project	2
1.2 Site location, topography and geology	2
2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	2
2.1 Introduction	2
2.2 Prehistoric	2
2.3 Roman	2
2.4 Medieval to Post-medieval	2
2.5 Previous archaeological work on the site	3
3 PROJECT AIMS	3
4 PROJECT METHODOLOGY	3
5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS	3
5.1 Trench descriptions	3
5.1.1 Trench context description table	4
6 ARTEFACTUAL EVIDENCE	4
7 ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE	4
8 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS	5
9 PROJECT PERSONNEL	5
10 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	5
11 BIBLIOGRAPHY	5

FIGURES

PLATES

APPENDIX 1: SUMMARY OF PROJECT ARCHIVE

An archaeological watching brief at Sandal Lodge, Hanbury Road, Droitwich, Worcestershire

By Jamie Wilkins

Illustrations by Jamie Wilkins

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA) in May 2020 at Sandal Lodge, Hanbury Road, Droitwich, Worcestershire (NGR SO 92448 62830). The project was commissioned by Shona Robson-Glyde of Elmwood Heritage (the Client) on behalf of their client, in advance of a proposed barn conversion, replacement of an existing agricultural barn with a new floristry workshop and demolition of an annexe to the existing dwelling. A planning application has been submitted to Wychavon District Council district, which was granted subject to a programme of archaeological works

The site is located approximately 2.40km east of the historic core of Droitwich and c 50m south of the known Roman road, The Salt Way, now known as the Hanbury Road (B4090). Archaeological and historical evidence indicates the site was located in the agricultural hinterland of Droitwich during the medieval period.

Two foundation trenches, amounting to some 45m² in area, were excavated at the site. Parts of the trenches were located within the footprints of former buildings associated with both the agricultural and domestic character of the site. The trenches were narrow and excavated to a maximum of 1.00m below ground surface.

No archaeological features or deposits were encountered in either of the trenches. The natural substrate was observed at between 0.52m-0.68m below ground surface, with some evidence of modern truncation within Trench 2. The truncation appeared to originate from the construction of the former agricultural building and may have obscured any more slight features or deposits. Despite the close proximity to the Roman road, The Salt Way, no features or residual artefacts of Roman origin were encountered.

Report

1 Introduction

1.1 Background to the project

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA) in May 2020 at Sandal Lodge, Hanbury Road, Droitwich, Worcestershire (NGR SO 92448 62830). This comprised observation of groundworks associated with the development. The project was commissioned by Shona Robson-Glyde of Elmwood Heritage (the Client) on behalf of their client, in advance of a proposed barn conversion, replacement of an existing agricultural barn with a new floristry workshop and demolition of an annexe to the existing dwelling. A planning application has been submitted to Wychavon District Council district, which was granted subject to a programme of archaeological works (planning reference 18/01913/FUL).

The archaeological advisor to the local planning authority considered that the development had the potential to impact upon possible heritage assets. A desk-based assessment (DBA) of the site was produced by Elmwood Heritage (2018) and identified that possible heritage assets within the site were likely to be Roman in date.

No brief was provided but this project aims to conform to the generality of briefs previously issued. A WSI was prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (2019) and approved by Aidan Smyth, Archaeology and Planning Advisor to Wychavon District Council.

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

1.2 Site location, topography and geology

The site is located immediately south of Hanbury Road (B4090), approximately 2.40km east of the historic core of Droitwich. It is near to the Worcester and Birmingham Canal and Hanbury Wharf (Fig 1). The site measures approximately 1.98ha and is located within the compound of Sandal Lodge, which includes agricultural barns, a dwelling and hardstanding.

The site is generally flat at c 56m *above ordnance datum* (AOD). The underlying bedrock geology is mapped as Branscombe Mudstone Formation. No overlying superficial deposits are recorded (BGS 2020).

2 Archaeological and historical background

2.1 Introduction

An archaeological desk-based assessment (DBA) of the site was undertaken by Elmwood Heritage (2018), on behalf of their client. The findings presented in the DBA are summarised below.

2.2 Prehistoric

No prehistoric activity has of yet been recorded in the area surrounding the site.

2.3 Roman

The site is located immediately south of a known Roman road, The Salt Way, which connected the Roman towns of Droitwich and Alcester (WSM30583). A possible site of Roman occupation is located north-west of the site and east of Brickyard Cottages (WSM30846; Fig 1). The fieldname of Blackmore Meadow may have derived from the presence of *dark-earth*, a dark soil deposit often associated with Roman occupation.

2.4 Medieval to Post-medieval

Ridge and furrow has been recorded to both the north and east of Sandal Lodge indicating the site was agricultural farmland during the medieval period (WSM11665, WSM11669, WSM45294). The site is also included within the boundary of Feckenham Forest in the 13th century (WSM42160).

Post-medieval heritage assets include the nearby 17th century farmstead Huntingdrop Farm (WSM60428) and the Worcester and Birmingham Canal (WSM12000), constructed between 1792 and 1815.

2.5 Previous archaeological work on the site

Prior to the watching brief a building record of the affected structures was carried out by Elmwood Heritage in order to meet the planning conditions (WSM71324).

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

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2019). Fieldwork was undertaken between 7 and 12 May 2020.

Two foundation trenches, amounting to some 45m² in area, were excavated across the site. The location of the trenches is indicated in Figure 2.

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.

Observation of excavated trenches was undertaken during and after machine excavation. The exposed surfaces were sufficiently clean to observe well-differentiated archaeological deposits, though any less clear may have not been identified.

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.

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 Worcestershire County Museum.

5 Archaeological results

5.1 Trench descriptions

No archaeological features or deposits were observed in either of the trenches excavated. Both trenches comprised narrow foundation trenches, measuring between 0.56m-0.70m wide. They were excavated to a maximum depth of 1.00m below ground surface (*bgs*).

Trench 1 was located in the south of the site (Fig 2; Plates 1-3). The natural substrate was observed at 0.52m *bgs* and comprised a compacted, pinkish-red clay with silt-stone patches (Plate 4). This was overlain by a thin band of silty-clay subsoil (101). The south of the trench was overlain by a dark topsoil, which became a rubble and sand deposit in the north, within the footprint of the demolished building.

Trench 2 was located approximately 10m north of Trench 1, within the footprint of a former agricultural building (Fig 2; Plates 5-6). The natural substrate was consistent with that in Trench 1 but was located slightly deeper at 0.68m bgs having been truncated by the modern building. The trench was overlain by a mixed deposit (200) comprising rubble and redeposited natural clay in a sandy-silt matrix (Plate 7). No subsoil was present within the confines of Trench 2, likely following truncation during construction of the former agricultural building present in this area.

The deposits observed within the trenches are presented in Table 1 below.

5.1.1 Trench context description table

Trench	Context	Brief description	Max depth (m)	Depth from ground surface (m)	Comments
1	100	Topsoil and rubble	0.40	0.00	Topsoil in the south; a recent garden soil comprising soft dark brown silty-loam, with frequent rooting and moderate sub-rounded pebbles. This becomes a rubble and sand deposit in the north of the trench, within the location of the former building.
1	101	Subsoil	0.12	0.40	Subsoil or natural interface, comprising firm, light yellowish-brown silty-clay with occasional sub-rounded pebbles.
1	102	Natural substrate	0.48 +	0.52	Natural geology comprising firm, mid pinkish-red clay with frequent patches of blue-grey siltstone.
2	200	Made ground	0.68	0.00	Modern made ground deposit comprising brick rubble in a sandy-silt matrix. Contained abundant modern refuse such as glass and pipework. Located within footprint of former agricultural building.
2	201	Natural substrate	0.32 +	0.68	Natural geology comprising firm, mid pinkish-red clay with frequent patches of blue-grey siltstone.

Table 1: Summary context descriptions

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 Environmental evidence

Environmental sampling was approached using standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012). In the event, no deposits were excavated which were considered to be suitable for environmental analysis.

8 Discussion and conclusions

No archaeological features or deposits were identified within the confines of the trenches excavated at Sandal Lodge. There was some evidence within Trench 2 that the natural substrate had been truncated following the construction of the former agricultural building which may have removed any shallower features or deposits. However, there was no evidence for truncation within Trench 1, despite the fact part of the trench was also situated within the footprint of a former building.

Although the site is located c50m south of the known Roman road, The Salt Way, no features or residual artefacts of Roman origin were encountered. Additionally, the lack of any features or finds of medieval origin may be accounted for by archaeological and historical evidence which suggests that the site was situated in agricultural farmland during this period.

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.

9 Project personnel

The fieldwork was led by Richard Bradley, MCIfA. The project was managed by Tom Rogers, MCIfA. The report was produced and collated by Jamie Wilkins, ACIfA. 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 this project: Shona Robson-Glyde of Elmwood Heritage (the Client) for commissioning the project, Aidan Smyth (Archaeology and Planning Advisor to Wychavon District Council) for monitoring the project, and Rob Densley of Total Build for his help and co-operation on site.

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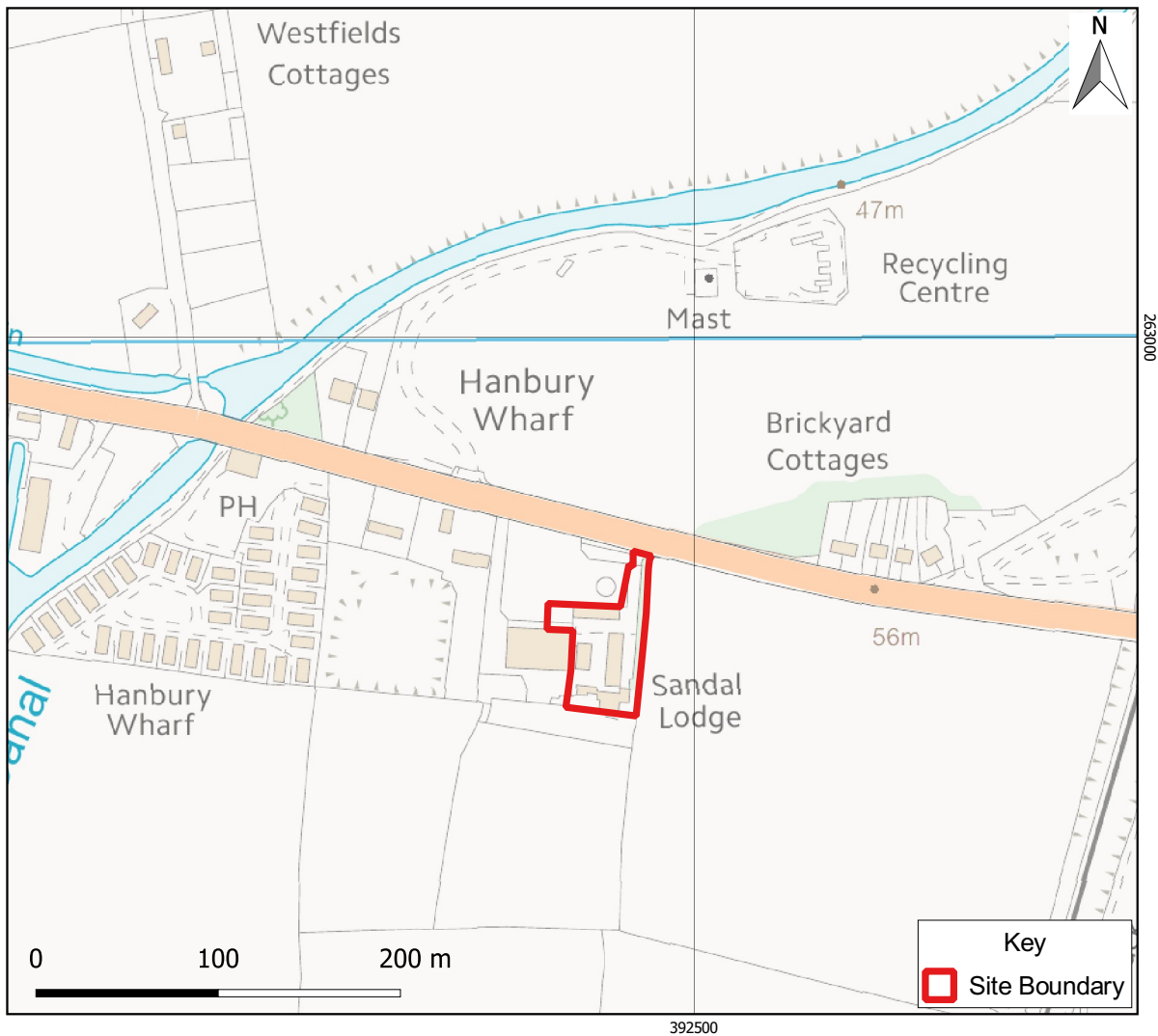
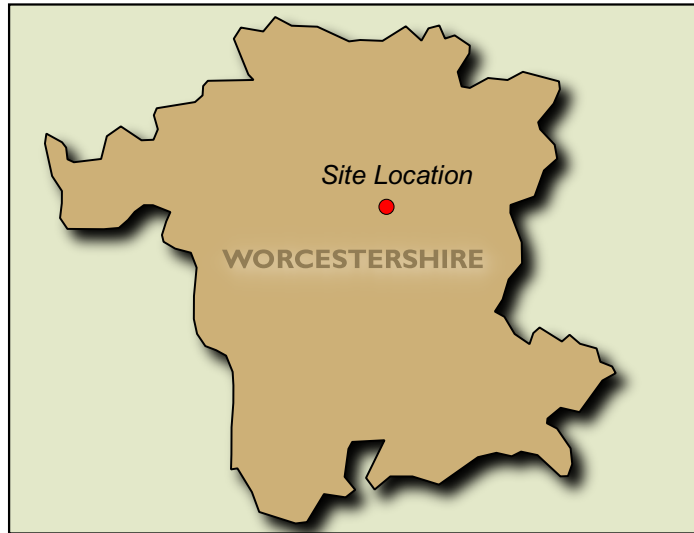
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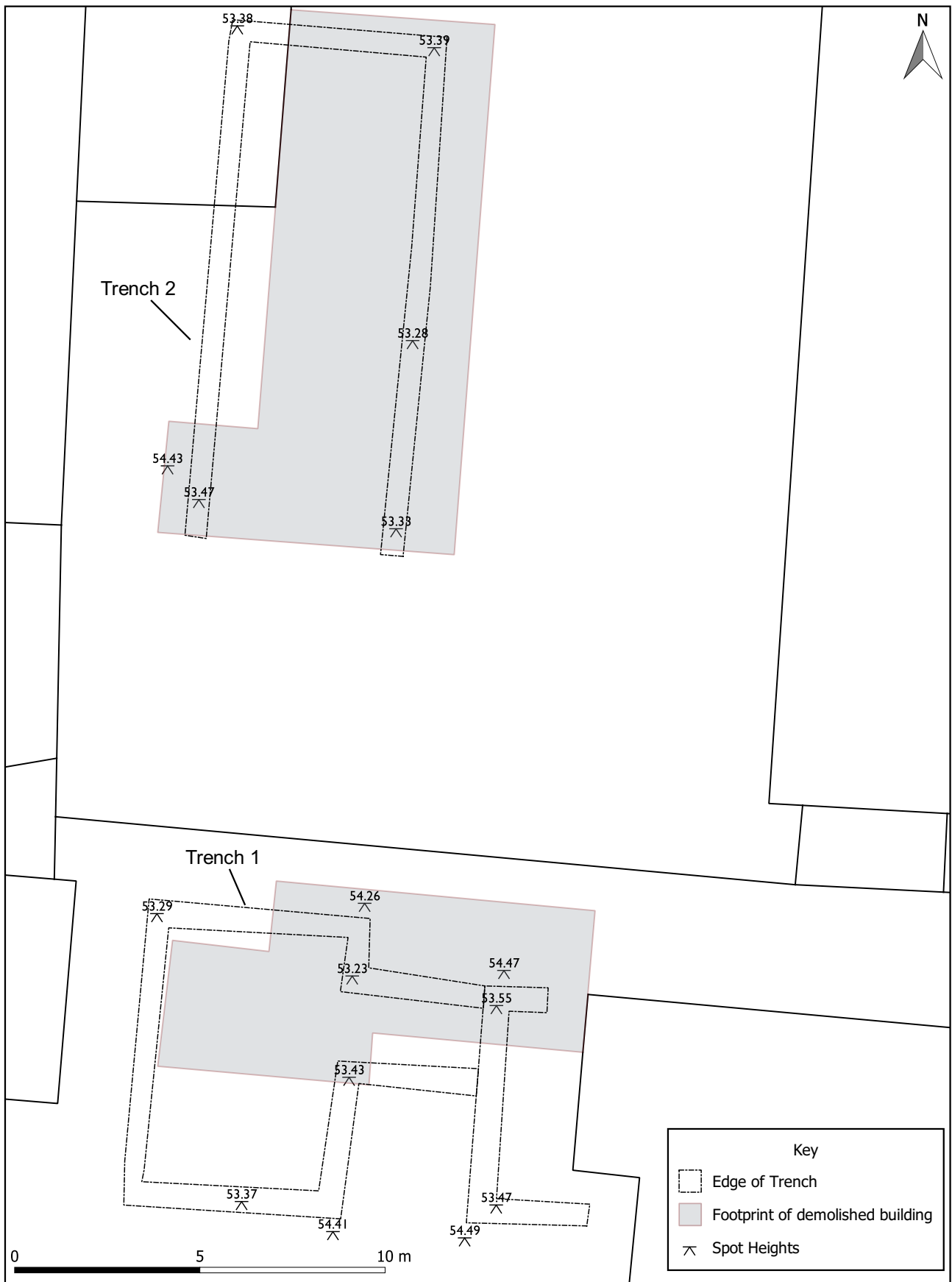
Figures



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Location of the site

Figure 1



Plates



Plate 1: View north across the area of Trench 1, 1m scale.



Plate 2: Excavation of Trench 1 in progress. View north-west.



Plate 3: View south-east across the excavated foundation Trench 1, 1m scale.



Plate 4: Deposits within Trench 1. Topsoil (100) can be seen to overlay a yellowish subsoil deposit (101), which in turn overlies the natural clay substrate (102). 1m scale.



Plate 5: Looking north across the location of Trench 2, prior to excavation.



Plate 6: Sample of excavated foundation Trench 2, view north-west, 1m scale.



Plate 7: Deposits within Trench 2. Made-ground deposit (200) can be seen to overlie the natural substrate (201), 1m scale.

Appendix 1: Summary of project archive

TYPE	DETAILS*
Artefacts and Environmental	N/A
Paper	Context sheet, Diary (Field progress form), Report
Digital	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 Worcestershire County Museum.