

An archaeological watching brief at 49, High Street, Pershore, Worcestershire

Worcestershire Archaeology
for Spectrum Building and Environmental Ltd

June 2020



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49, HIGH STREET PERSHORE WORCESTERSHIRE

Archaeological watching brief report



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The Hive
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SITE INFORMATION

Site name: 49 High Street, Pershore, Worcestershire
Local planning authority: Wychavon District Council
Planning reference: 18/00921/FUL and 18/00922/LB
Central NGR: SO 94936 45965
Commissioning client: Spectrum Building and Environmental Ltd
Client project reference: -
WA project number: P5863
WA report number: 2828
HER reference: WSM 73030
Oasis reference: fieldsec1-397530
Museum accession number: -

DOCUMENT CONTROL PANEL

Version	Date	Author	Details	Approved by
1	26/06/2020	Pete Lovett	Draft for comment	Tom Vaughan

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An archaeological watching brief at 49, High Street, Pershore, Worcestershire

By Peter Lovett

Illustrations by Peter Lovett and Jamie Wilkins

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA) in June 2020 at 49, High Street, Pershore, Worcestershire (NGR SO 94936 45965). The project was commissioned by Spectrum Building and Environmental Ltd, in advance of a proposed conversion and renovation of an existing outhouse. Planning permission has been granted by Wychavon District Council, subject to a programme of archaeological works as the works were considered by the Archaeology and Planning Advisor to the council to have the potential to affect heritage assets with archaeological interest (HER ref WSM 16060).

A single trench 0.6m wide and c 20m long was excavated through the backyard of a plot that fronts on to the High Street, Pershore. Deposits indicative of made ground and garden soils were encountered, dating to the 19th and 20th centuries. A possible pit of unknown date was tentatively identified cutting through the natural gravels at the base of the excavation, but the narrow scope of the works limited understanding of the feature. The natural ground was only exposed at the northern end of the trench, 0.74m below the present ground surface, at the back of the plot, so deposits relating to the earlier post-medieval and medieval periods may survive beneath the formation level of these works and elsewhere across the site. Very little in the way of material remains were encountered, though this may just be because no rubbish pits were encountered. The results of this exercise do not conflict with the results of a 2004 watching brief that identified post-medieval remains in the same backyard plot (WSM 33590).

Report

1 Introduction

1.1 Background to the project

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA) in June 2020 at 49 High Street, Pershore, Worcestershire (NGR SO 94936 45965). This comprised observation of one trench during groundworks associated with alteration and extension of an existing building, concurrent with construction. The project was commissioned by Spectrum Building and Environmental Ltd, in advance of a proposed conversion and renovation of an existing outhouse. Planning permission has been granted by Wychavon District Council, subject to a programme of archaeological works (planning reference 18/00921/FUL and 18/00922/LB) as the works were considered by the Archaeology and Planning Advisor (APA) to the council to have the potential to affect heritage assets with archaeological interest (HER ref WSM 16060).

No brief has been prepared by the APA but the written scheme of investigation (WSI) conforms to the model brief *Requirements for an Archaeological Watching Brief as a Condition of Planning Consent* (the Brief; Version 1; dated September 2014). The WSI was prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2020) and approved by the APA. The watching brief also 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 the *Standards and guidelines for archaeological projects in Worcestershire* (WCC 2010).

1.2 Site location, topography and geology

The site is located to the rear of 49, High Street, Pershore. It is bounded to the north-east and south-east by car parks, and to the north-west by a commercial premise. It occupies a space some 420m².

A 20th century outbuilding had recently been demolished to allow for a larger extension on to the existing building, with the ground generally consisting of scrub over backyard soils.

The underlying geology comprises Wasperton Sand And Gravel Member overlying Charmouth Mudstone Formation (BGS 2020).

2 Archaeological and historical background

2.1 Introduction

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

The site lies within the historic medieval core of the town, which prospered until the dissolution of the monasteries in the mid 16th century, after which it saw a period of decline. There was urban expansion in the 19th and 20th centuries, surrounding the medieval core. The site specifically sits within an area recognised as tenement plots of potential medieval and post-medieval date, representing domestic and possible light industrial activity zones.

2.2 Previous archaeological work on the site

A watching brief of previous groundworks was undertaken on the site, in 2004. This investigation identified a number of intercutting pits of post-medieval date, cutting a buried topsoil (WSM 33590).

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 developer's groundworks.

4 Project methodology

A WSI was prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2020). Fieldwork was undertaken on 4 June 2020.

One trench, amounting to 12.5m² in area, were excavated across the site. The location of the trench 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 areas was undertaken during and after machine excavation. The exposed surfaces were sufficiently clean to observe well-differentiated archaeological deposits, although any less clear may have not been identified.

Deposits were recorded according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012). Trench and feature locations were tied into scaled plans provided by the developer and georeferenced in QGIS.

All fieldwork records were checked and cross-referenced. Analysis was undertaken through 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 Museum.

5 Archaeological results

5.1 Trench descriptions

Figs 2-3; Plates 1-3

The natural gravel was encountered at the northern end of the trench, at a depth of 0.74m from the existing ground level. This comprised a yellow sandy gravel with frequent rounded cobbles. A small glimpse of the natural gravels was also observed about 3m to the south of this, and hinted at a possible old boundary but this is only conjecture from very limited evidence. Cutting this layer was a possible pit, 115, approximately 1m across and filled with a dark grey brown sandy silt. Only 0.14m of it was exposed vertically, and no datable material was recovered. It appeared to be sealed by garden soil layer 108, which was of a similar composition as the fill of the pit, and was recorded at a maximum depth of 0.5m. It was observed throughout the trench, although no dating material was recovered. To the south of the pit, and also below layer 108, was layer 117, which was a possible subsoil. This was only observed in approximately 2m of the trench, and was not seen in direct relation with the natural ground. Layer 108 was in turn covered by yellowish brown sandy silt layer 107, which contained several cow horns, mainly concentrated in the northern third of the trench. It was observed in all but the southernmost 3m of the trench, although the presence of animal bone was not consistent across it. It was probably a dumped made ground layer. Porcelain of 19th century date was observed but not retained. Above that was another made ground/garden soil layer 106. This was thickest at the southern end of the trench, where it was 0.54m thick, although it thinned to a depth of 0.1m to the north, before finally petering out. Above that was a thin layer representing modern makeup. Cut through this were three pits, all of modern origin and associated with the construction of the now demolished outbuilding.

6 Artefactual evidence

Recovery of artefacts was undertaken according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012). In the event, all artefacts were determined to be of 19th and 20th century date, and left on site. No artefacts 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

A single trench 0.6m wide and c 20m long was excavated through the backyard of a plot that fronts on to the High Street, Pershore. Deposits indicative of made ground and garden soils were encountered, dating to the 19th and 20th centuries. A possible pit of unknown date was tentatively identified cutting through the natural gravels at the base of the excavation, but the narrow scope of the works limited understanding of the feature. The natural ground was only exposed at the northern end of the trench, 0.74m below the present ground surface, at the back of the plot, so deposits relating to the earlier post-medieval and medieval periods may survive beneath the formation level of these works and elsewhere across the site. Very little in the way of material remains were encountered, though this may just be because no rubbish pits were encountered. The results of this exercise do not conflict with the results of a 2004 watching brief that identified post-medieval remains in the same backyard plot (WSM 33590).

The methods adopted allow a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved. Conditions were suitable in the trench 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 Peter Lovett, ACIfA.

The project was managed by Tom Vaughan, MCIfA. The report was produced and collated by Peter Lovett. 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: Wayne Andrews (Spectrum Building and Environmental Ltd), and Aidan Smyth (Archaeology and Planning Advisor, Wychavon District Council).

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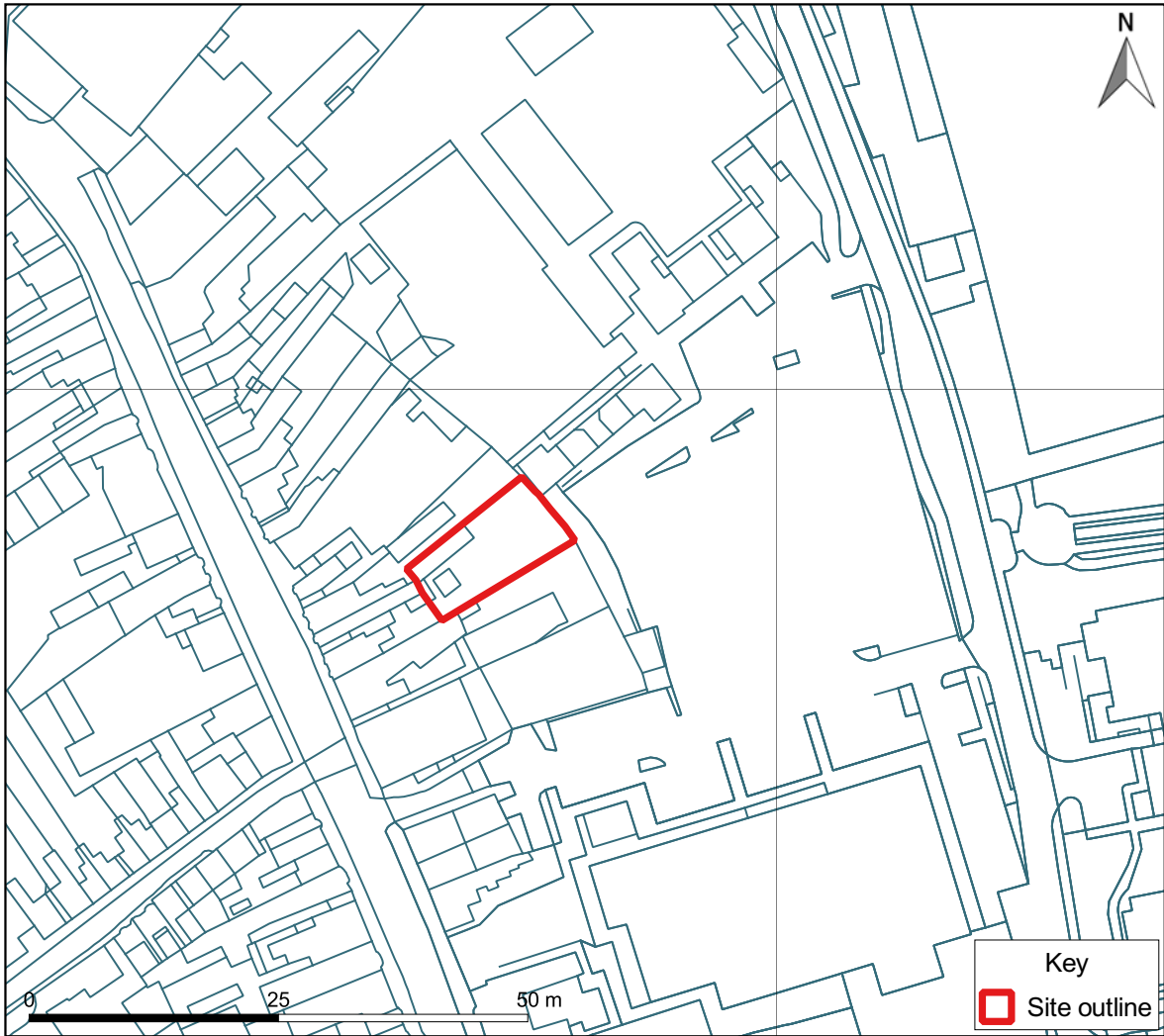
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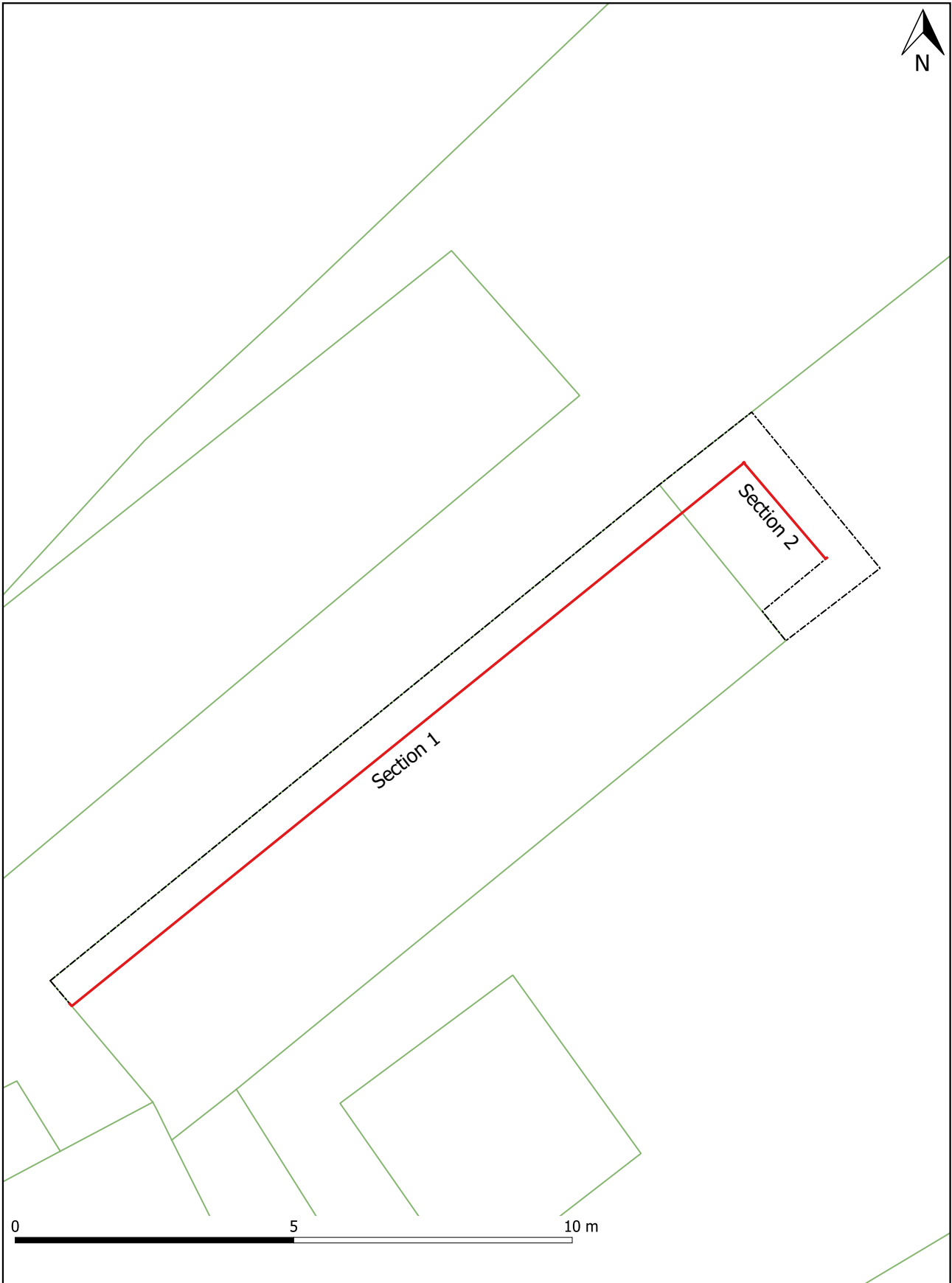
Figures



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Location of the site

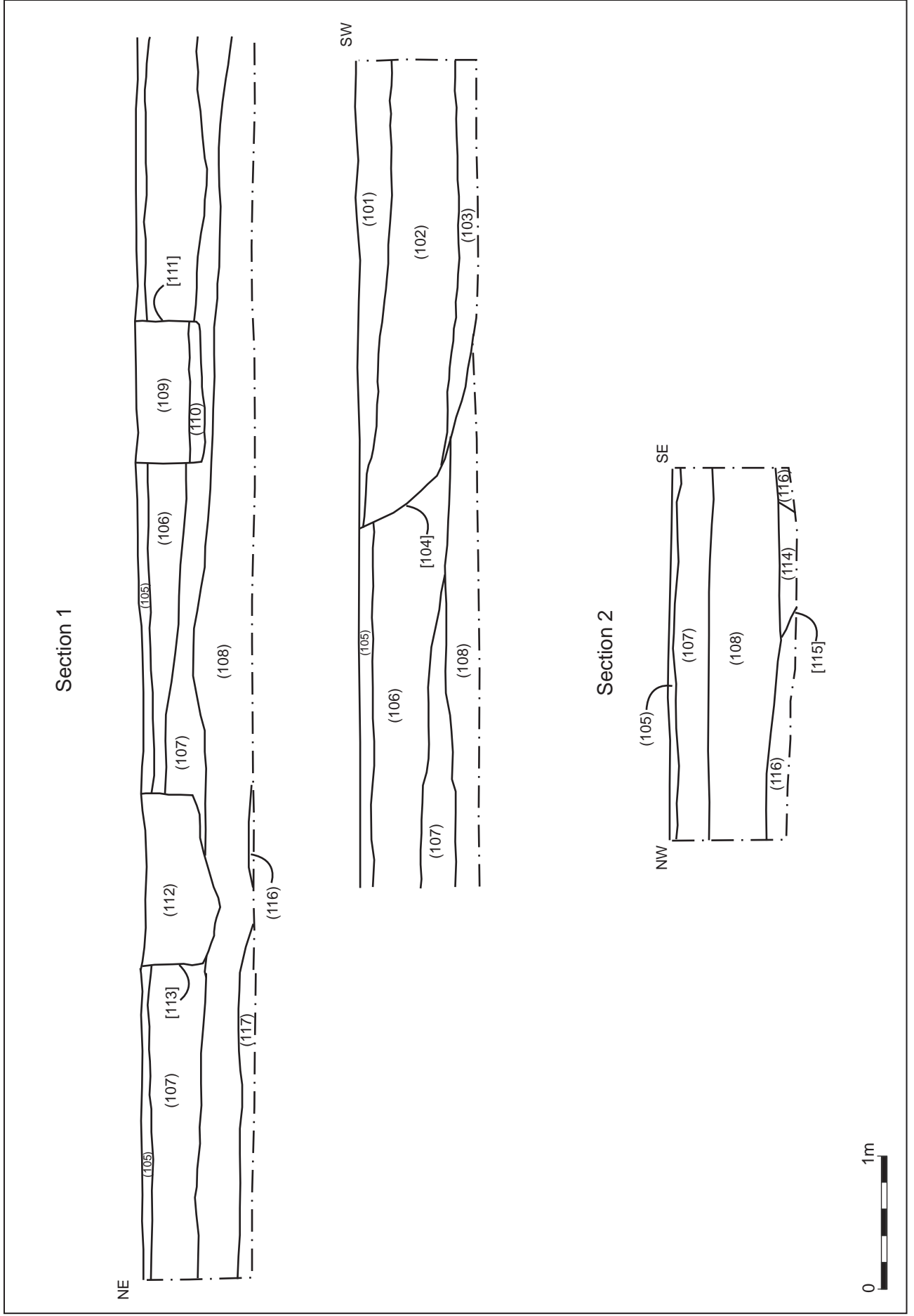
Figure 1



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Plan of Trench 1 showing section locations

Figure 2



Sections 1 & 2

Fig 3

Plates



Plate 1 Trench 1 looking north (1m scales)



Plate 2 Trench 1 looking north-west (1m scales)



Plate 3 Trench 1 at northern end, showing natural gravels in base of trench; looking west (1m scales)

Appendix 1: Summary of project archive

TYPE	DETAILS*
Paper	Context sheet, Drawing, Report, Section,
Digital	GIS, Images raster/digital photography , 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 Museum.