

Archaeological Investigations at Hindlip Hall, The Drive, Hindlip Worcestershire

Worcestershire Archaeology
for Place Partnership

August 2020



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HINDLIP HALL THE DRIVE, HINDLIP WORCESTERSHIRE

Archaeological Mitigation report



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SITE INFORMATION

Site name: Hindlip Hall
Local planning authority: Wychavon District Council
Planning reference: ENF/19/0353
Central NGR: SO 8823 5885
Commissioning client: Place Partnership
WA project number: P5734
WA report number: 2838
HER reference: WSM73294
Oasis reference: fieldsec1-400662

DOCUMENT CONTROL PANEL

Version	Date	Author	Details	Approved by
1	19/08/2020	Jamie Wilkins	Draft for comment	Tom Vaughan

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Archaeological Investigations at Hindlip Hall, The Drive, Hindlip, Worcestershire

By Jamie Wilkins

With contributions by Rob Hedge

Illustrations by Jamie Wilkins

Summary

A programme of archaeological works was undertaken by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA) in July 2020 at Hindlip Hall, Hindlip, Worcestershire (NGR SO 8823 5885). The project was commissioned by Place Partnership (the Client) in response to the requirements of the Archaeology and Planning Advisor for Wychavon District Council, following unmonitored construction works associated with a new lighting array. The site is located within an archaeologically sensitive area where previous investigations had been undertaken by Worcestershire Archaeology in 2009 in preparation for a new access road and carpark. These investigations had identified the remains of a probable Iron Age pit alignment and a small to medium sized rural Roman settlement dating from the mid-2nd to 4th centuries AD.

The present archaeological investigations were originally intended to comprise the excavation of a single trench, 180m by 1.50m, as a compensatory excavation following the unmonitored construction of the lighting array. In the event the site was found to be located with an area of substantial landscaping with made-ground deposits exceeding 1.00m in depth. Following consultation with the Archaeology and Planning Advisor for Wychavon District Council, it was agreed the methodology would be adapted to the excavation of three test pits.

All three test pits recorded the presence of made-ground deposits, comprising redeposited red marl clay. The natural substrate was not encountered in any of the test pits and so the archaeological horizon exceeds 1.00m in depth along the entirety of the bund. It is therefore deemed unlikely that the unmonitored service trench, associated with the lighting array, truncated any archaeological features or deposits.

Five residual sherds of Roman pottery were recovered from the made-ground and are clearly associated with the Roman rural settlement previously excavated on the site. Pottery evidence indicates that the settlement dated from the mid-2nd to 4th centuries AD, and the sherds found in this stage of investigations fit within this date range.

Report

1 Introduction

1.1 Background to the project

A programme of archaeological works was undertaken by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA) in July 2020 at Hindlip Hall, Hindlip, Worcestershire (NGR SO 8823 5885; Fig 1). The project was commissioned by Place Partnership, in response to the requirements of the Archaeology and Planning Advisor for Wychavon District Council, identified in correspondence dated 30 August 2019, reference ENF/19/0353, as follows:

It appears to Wychavon District Council that works have commenced at Hindlip Hall without the benefit of planning permission, the works are located within an archaeologically sensitive area.

In order to regularise the situation a compensatory excavation will be required adjacent to the unauthorised works, this will consist of a watching brief which can turn into a systematic excavation upon the identification of archaeological features or remains which are associated to the significant archaeology previously discovered within the site through excavation some years ago. It should be noted that if archaeology passes through the area of unauthorised works it is likely that the lighting trench will need to be excavated to confirm truncation or survival of artefacts/features.

The archaeological works must be controlled through an agreed written scheme of investigation approved by Aidan Smyth (Wychavon District Council Archaeology and Planning Advisor) prior to the commencement of works.

The archaeological works were originally intended to comprise the excavation of a single trench, 180m by 1.50m. as a compensatory excavation following the unmonitored construction of a lighting array and excavation of service trenches. In the event the site was found to be located on substantial made-ground deposits and following consultation with the Archaeology and Planning Advisor for Wychavon District Council, it was agreed that the methodology would be adapted to the excavation of three test pits.

The archaeological advisor considered that the development had the potential to impact upon specific heritage assets. Previous archaeological investigations at the site had been undertaken by Worcestershire Archaeology which identified the remains of a probable Iron Age pit alignment and a small to medium sized rural Roman settlement dating from the mid-2nd to 4th centuries AD (Wainwright 2015).

No specific brief has been prepared by the archaeological advisor, but the project aimed to conform to the generality of briefs which have been previously issued. The project also conforms to the industry guidelines and standards set out by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists in the *Standard and guidance: for an archaeological excavation* (CIfA 2014a) and the *Standards and guidelines for archaeological projects in Worcestershire* (WCC 2019).

1.2 Site location, topography and geology

Hindlip Hall is located within the parish of Hindlip, to the north-east of Worcester. The site itself is located on the north-western edge of The Drive, which provides vehicular access to Hindlip Hall from Pershore Lane (A4538) to the north-east (Fig 1). The site is bounded to the south by The Drive, and to the north by arable fields.

The area surrounding the site has been subjected to heavy landscaping following construction of The Drive and associated buildings in 2009. Subsequently, the site currently sits at 58m AOD, although

prior to redevelopment it was lower, at between 54-56m AOD. The site is part of the West Mercia Police Headquarters.

The underlying geology comprises bedrock of Sidmouth Mudstone Formation. No overlying superficial deposits are recorded (BGS 2020).

2 Archaeological and historical background

In 2009 Worcestershire Archaeology undertook a series of archaeological investigations at Hindlip Hall, prior to the construction of a new access road (The Drive), gatehouse, visitor car park and associated landscaping (Wainwright 2015). The investigation areas were located to the immediate east, south and south-west of the current site (Fig 2).

A pit alignment, comprising 22 oval pits, was located in the south of the site, in the area of the new visitor's car park (Fig 2). The pits were aligned broadly east to west and were found to demarcate a boundary between two geological zones. No dating evidence was recovered from the pits, but they are thought to be Iron Age in origin.

A small to medium sized rural Roman settlement was present in the north of the site, below parts of the new access road and gatehouse (Fig 2). The settlement comprised four ditched enclosures, three of which are considered to be associated with the keeping of livestock. A fourth, multi-ditched enclosure was possibly occupied by a single, or several, family units. The combined artefactual and environmental evidence indicates that the settlement practiced pastoral farming, and dated to between the mid-2nd and 4th centuries AD (*ibid*).

3 Project aims

3.1 Original aims

The aims of the project 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 agreed compensatory groundworks.

The project also had the potential to add to the following aims, as identified in the report on the previous investigations (Wainwright 2015, 3), from *The archaeology of the West Midlands: a framework for research* (Watt, S (ed) 2011):

- The variation in rural settlement form and material culture between southern and eastern areas of Worcestershire and those to the north and west of Worcestershire has been identified as a key research issue, and these reflect an apparent wider regional north-west to south-east division. Hindlip, located as it is on the 'interface' between these areas, has the potential to provide important new data.
- In particular the potential of the evidence to support understanding of settlement form, function and economic basis and links can be highlighted. Such analysis will potentially allow the evidence from Hindlip to contribute to the wider debate surrounding the hypothesis that the differences between these regions reflect differential agricultural economies and patterns of social organisation.
- Patterns of settlement shift and expansion are beginning to emerge with many late Iron Age and early Roman settlement sites being abandoned for new locations in the early 2nd century, many settlements flourishing and expanding in the late 2nd and 3rd centuries only to be abandoned by the mid-4th century. The establishment of firm settlement chronologies for sites such as Hindlip is therefore seen as important to enable these models to be confirmed and further refined.

3.2 Amended aims

During the course of the fieldwork, the methodology was adapted to comprise the excavation of three test pits along the route of the proposed trench. The aims of the test pits were to identify whether made-ground deposits were present across the entire route of the proposed compensatory trench and if the natural ground level had been disturbed by the landscaping.

4 Project methodology

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2020). Fieldwork was undertaken on 17 July 2020.

Fieldwork was initially intended to comprise the excavation of a single trench, 180m by 1.50m along the north-western edge of a footpath running adjacent to The Drive access road. This was to act as compensatory works following the unmonitored construction of a lighting array and associated service trenches.

Following onsite observations the location of the proposed trench was found to be within the area of a raised earthen bund which was instated during works for the new access road. Following consultation with the Archaeology and Planning Advisor for Wychavon District Council it was agreed that the methodology would be adapted to comprise the excavation of three test pits (not exceeding 1.00m in depth), rather than the originally agreed trench.

The test pits each measured between 2.00m-3.50m long, 1.50m wide and were excavated to 1.00m below ground surface. The test pits were located to test the deposits in the north-east, centre, and south-west of the proposed trench. Test Pit 3 could not be excavated further south-west due to the sharp rise of the earthen bund in this location. The location of the test pits 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 test pits 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) and trench and feature locations were surveyed using a GNSS device with an accuracy limit set at <0.04m, or tied into scaled plans provided by developer and georeferenced in QGIS/CAD, or hand planned and tied into fixed objects recorded on OS MasterMap.

All fieldwork records were checked and cross-referenced. Analysis was undertaken through a combination of structural and artefactual 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 Museums Worcestershire.

5 Archaeological results

5.1 Test Pit descriptions

No archaeological features or deposits were observed within any of the three test pits. All three test pits were located in an area of substantial made-ground build up. The deposit sequence was similar in all three test pits with the made-ground found to comprise mixed redeposited red marl clay. Sherds of Roman pottery were recovered from the bund/made-ground material (1002 and 2002) in Test Pits 1 and 2.

The natural substrate was not observed in any of the test pits, however a probable buried topsoil was present. It was located between 0.67-1.00m below ground surface and may represent the former ground surface prior to landscaping.

5.1.1 Test Pit context description table

Test Pit	Context	Brief description	Max depth (m)	Depth from ground surface (m)	Comments
1	1000	Topsoil	0.23	0.00	Moderately compact, mid greyish-brown, sandy-clay, occasional small to medium pebbles.
1	1001	Made-ground	0.20.	0.23	Moderately compact, reddish-brown, sandy-clay, occasional small to medium pebbles.
1	1002	Made-ground	0.53	0.43	Compact, mid reddish-brown, clay. Redeposited natural. Contains occasional roman pottery sherds and small pebbles.
1	1003	Buried topsoil / made-ground	0.14	0.96	Moderately compact, dark greyish-brown, sandy-clay. Buried topsoil?
1	1004	Subsoil?	N/A	1.00-1.10	Compact, reddish-brown, sandy-clay. Possibly a subsoil or continuation of made-ground.
2	2000	Topsoil	0.37	0.00	Moderately compact, mid greyish-brown, sandy-clay, occasional small to medium pebbles.
2	2001	Made-ground	0.40	0.37	Compact, mid reddish-brown, clay. Redeposited natural. Contains occasional small pebbles.
2	2002	Buried topsoil / made-ground	0.30	0.80	Compact, dark greyish-brown, sandy-clay. Contains occasional flecks of orange soil, medium pebbles and pottery sherds.
3	3000	Topsoil	0.36	0.00	Moderately compact, mid greyish-brown, sandy-clay, occasional small to medium pebbles.
3	3001	Made-ground	0.30	0.36	Compact, mid reddish-brown, clay. Redeposited natural. Contains occasional small pebbles.
3	3002	Buried topsoil / made-ground	0.32	0.66	Compact, dark greyish-brown, sandy-clay. Contains occasional flecks of orange / yellowish-brown soil and small to large pebbles.

Table 1: Summary context descriptions

6 Artefactual evidence by Rob Hedge, PCIfA

The artefact report conforms to standards and guidance issued by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA 2014c), 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).

This analysis aimed to identify, sort, spot date, and quantify all artefacts and describe the range of artefacts present.

Artefacts were recovered according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012). All artefacts collected in the field were recovered by hand.

6.1 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 and referenced as appropriate by fabric type and form according to the fabric reference series maintained by Worcestershire Archaeology (Hurst and Rees 1992; WAAS 2017).

6.2 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.

6.3 Results

The assemblage totalled 5 pieces of Roman pottery weighing 50g (see Table 2). All were residual within made ground deposits 1002 and 2002.

context	period	object type	fabric number	count	weight (g)	start date	end date
1002	Roman	pot	12	3	34	130	200
2002	Roman	pot	29	2	16	240	400
Totals				5	50		

Table 2: Quantification of site assemblage

Three conjoining sherds of Severn Valley Ware (fabric 12) from 1002 are from a wide-mouthed jar with a short neck; the form resembles Webster's type C21, of mid to late-2nd century date.

Two abraded sherds from 2002 are in a sandy micaceous fabric with faint traces of an reddish-orange slip coating; their poor condition renders identification problematic, but they are thought to be Oxfordshire red and brown colour-coated ware (fabric 29) of mid-3rd to 4th century date.

6.4 Discussion

This small assemblage of residual material is consistent with the assemblage recorded by Griffin (2015), originating from the Roman activity on the site (WSM40548, WSM40549), reflecting activity on the site from the mid-2nd to the 4th century AD.

6.5 Recommendations

6.5.1 Discard/retention

As residual material derived from a site with an extensive pottery assemblage, these finds are not thought to warrant retention, and could usefully be incorporated into a teaching collection. However, the final decision rests with Museums Worcestershire.

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

The site was located entirely within an area of substantial made-ground build up and landscaping following construction of The Drive and associated buildings in 2009. Consequently, no archaeological features or deposits were identified within the excavated test pits. The made-ground deposits of the landscaped 'bund' comprised redeposited red marl clay, extracted from the previous excavation areas (Fig 2). The natural substrate was not encountered in any of the test pits and so the archaeological horizon exceeds 1.00m in depth a long the entirety of the bund. It is therefore deemed unlikely that the unmonitored service trench, associated with the lighting array, truncated any archaeological features or deposits.

The sherds of Roman pottery recovered from the made-ground can be associated with the Roman rural settlement previously excavated on the site (Fig 2). Pottery evidence indicates that the settlement dated from the mid-2nd to 4th centuries AD, and the sherds found in this stage of investigations fit within this date range.

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 test pits to identify the presence or absence of archaeological features, up to 1.00m below ground surface. The archaeological horizon exceeded this depth and so any features located at this depth were not encountered.

9 Project personnel

The fieldwork was led by Jamie Wilkins, ACIfA, assisted by Roland Tillyer.

The project was managed by Tom Vaughan, MCIfA. The report was produced and collated by Jamie Wilkins. 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: Lisa Rowlands (Project Manager, Place Partnership), Steve Westwood (CSA Site Security, West Mercia Police), and Aidan Smyth (Archaeology and Planning Advisor, Wychavon District Council).

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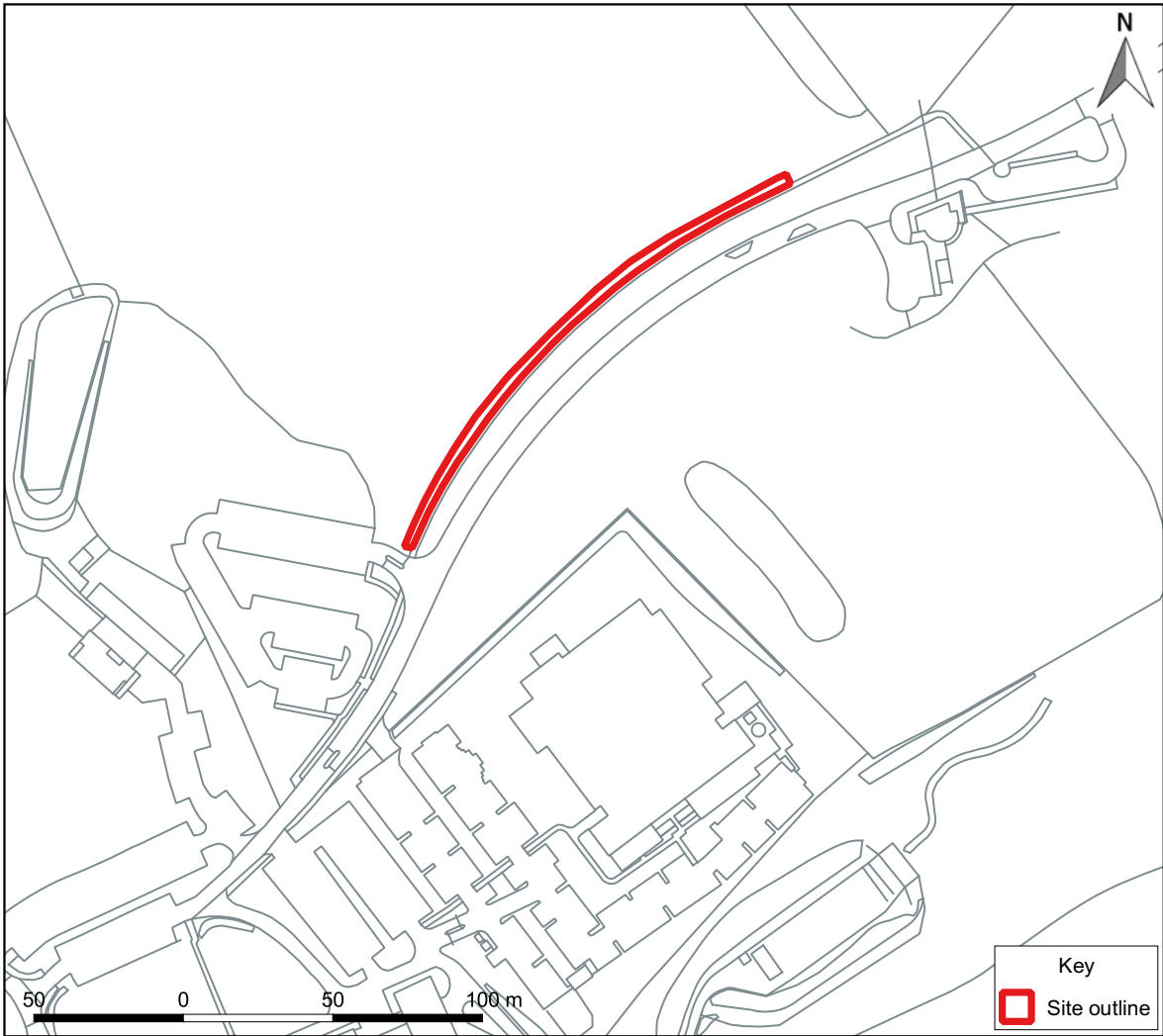
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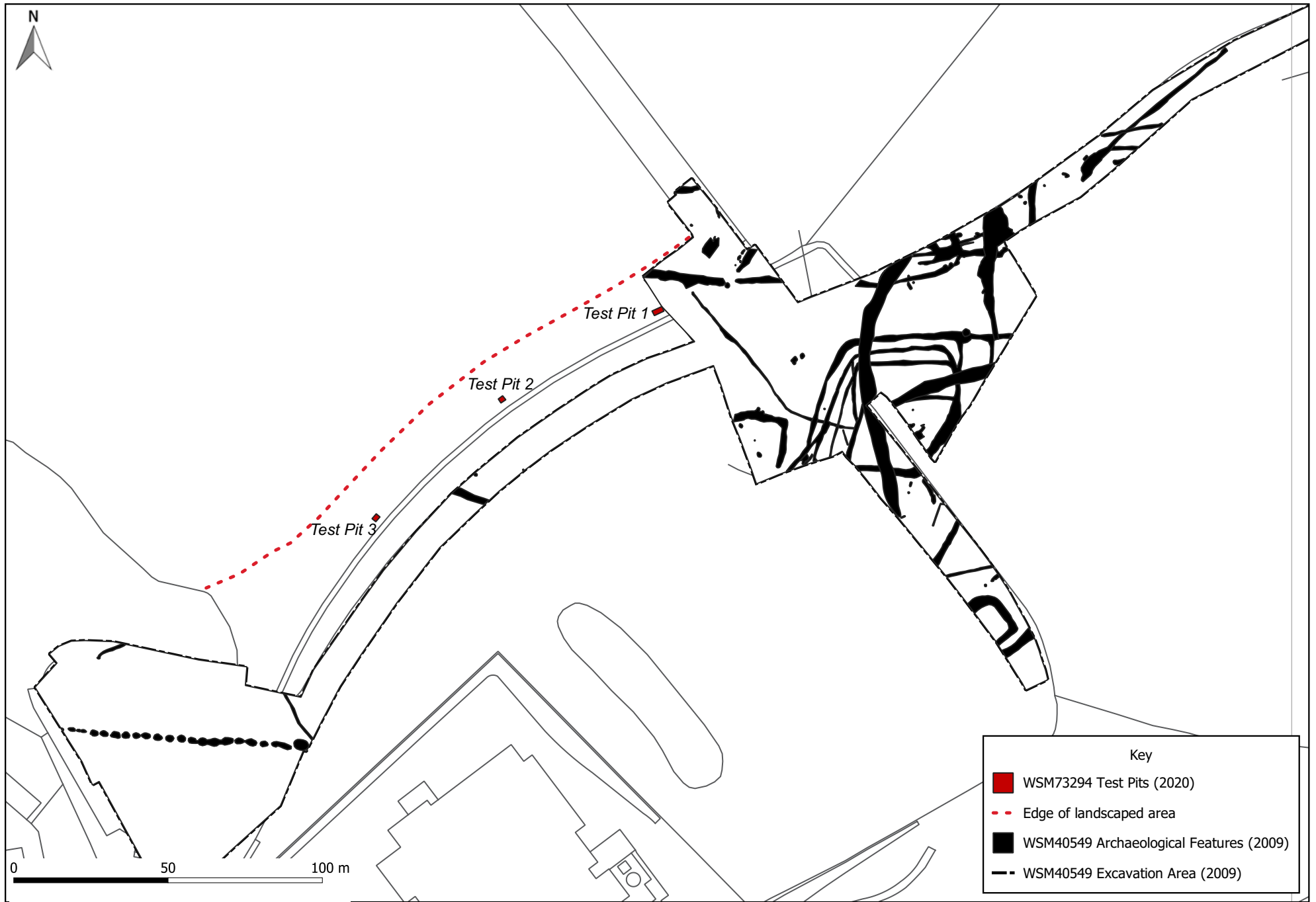
Figures



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Location of the site

Figure 1



Test Pit locations (WSM73294) shown against the 2009 archaeological excavation areas (WSM4059)

Figure 2

Plates

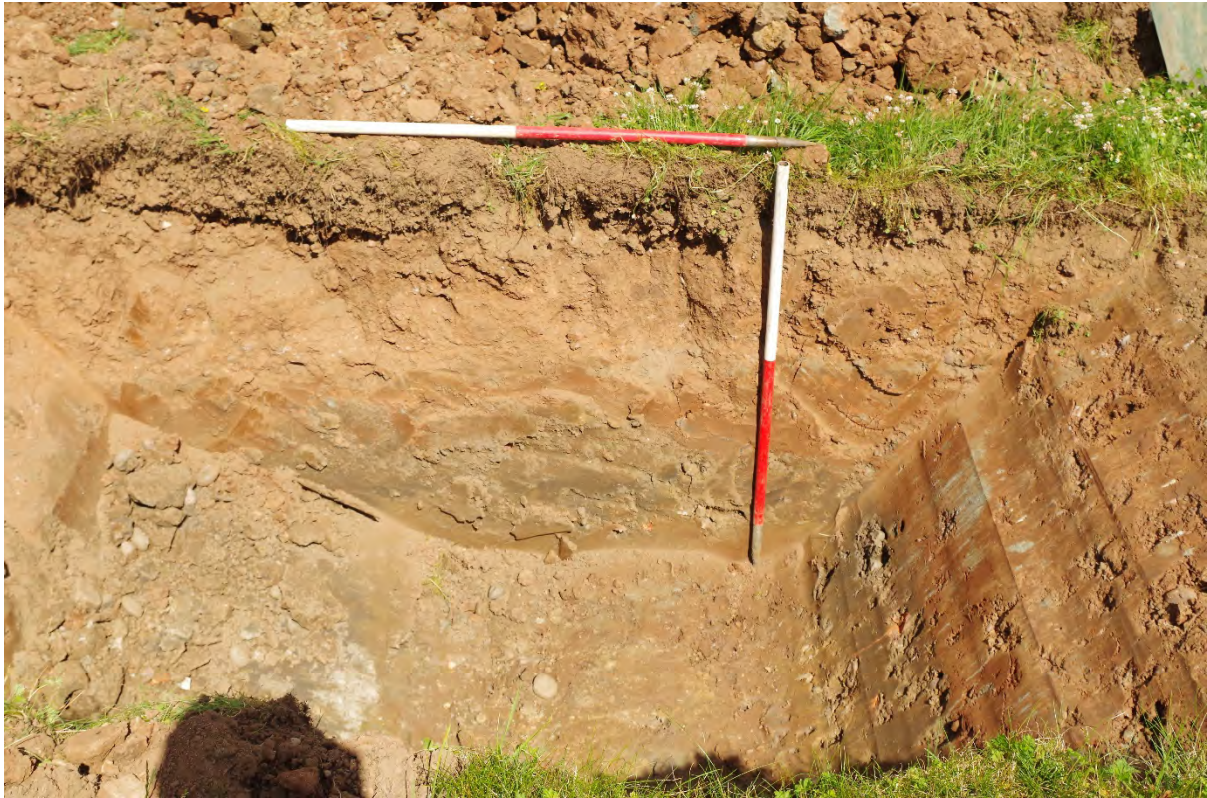


Plate 1: North-west facing section of Test Pit 1 showing the made-ground deposits of the bund, Scales 1m



Plate 2: South-east facing section of Test Pit 2, showing made-ground deposit (red marl) above a possible buried grey topsoil, Scales 1m



Plate 3: South-east facing section of Test Pit 3, showing the familiar sequence of made-ground above a possible buried topsoil, scales 1m



Plate 4: Looking north-east across the landscaped area with substantial made-ground deposits north-west of The Drive.



Plate 5: Looking south-west across the landscaped area located north-west of The Drive

Appendix 1: Summary of project archive (WSM 73294)

TYPE	DETAILS*
Artefacts and Environmental	Ceramics
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.

Appendix 2: Summary of data for HER

WSM73294

period	material class	object type	start date	end date	Count	weight (g)	Specialist report?	Key assemblage?
Roman	ceramic	pot	240	400	2	16	y	n
Roman	ceramic	pot	130	200	3	34	y	n