Archaeological evaluation at Mill Lane, Feckenham, Worcestershire

Worcestershire Archaeology

for Kevin Baylis

October 2020

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MILL LANE
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Archaeological evaluation report

Worcestershire Archaeology
Worcestershire Archive & Archaeology Service
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SITE INFORMATION

Site name:	Mill Lane, Feckenham, Worcestershire
Local planning authority:	Redditch Borough Council
Planning reference:	19/01045/PREAPP
Central NGR:	SP 00752 61563
Commissioning client:	Richard Crook
WA project number:	P5813
WA report number:	2855
HER reference:	WSM 73344
Oasis reference:	Fieldsec1-404983
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Archaeological evaluation at Mill Lane, Feckenham, Worcestershire

By Jesse Wheeler

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Summary

An archaeological trench evaluation was undertaken by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA) in August 2020 at Mill Lane, Feckenham, Worcestershire (NGR SP 00752 61563). The project was commissioned by Richard Crook on behalf of Kevin Baylis, in advance of a proposed residential development. The evaluation results from a pre-application planning enquiry to Redditch Borough Council.

The archaeological advisor to the local planning authority considered that the proposed development has the potential to impact upon specific heritage assets, being the Scheduled Earthwork of Feckenham Court House, a medieval moated manor house site (Historic England National Heritage List Entry 1018361).

The evaluation has demonstrated the survival of the moat associated with the manor site under the cultivation soils on the site. Whilst the full depth and profile of the moat was not achieved, a machine-dug sondage allied with augering indicate that it exceeds 2m in depth and was intentionally backfilled in the late 17th to 18th centuries following a period of abandonment. This correlates with the records of deforestation and the decline of the local area during the 17th century, and the later use of the site as a tobacco plantation. The artefactual evidence was provided by four stratified fills of the moat and was represented largely by post-medieval black glazed wares with a high average weight, suggesting that they had not lain on the ground surface for any length of time before deposition in the moat. The majority of pottery finds were associated with the upper fills of the moat, whereas the lower fills, which were broadly contemporary, contained an abundance of brick fragments, suggesting that they may relate to the disuse or demolition of the manor. This presents a picture of relatively rapid demolition, discard and backfill of the moat.

It was not possible to investigate the base of the moat within the constraints of this evaluation, however the potential for in-situ and waterlogged remains is considered to be high. None of the finds identified during this investigation related to the Anglo Saxon or earlier medieval activity associated with the manor, which may also exist in basal deposits. These potential assemblages of artefactual and ecofactual evidence would be of local and regional significance.

Report

1 Introduction

1.1 Background to the project

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA) in August 2020 at Mill Lane, Feckenham, Worcestershire (NGR SP 00752 61563) This comprised one evaluation trench. The project was commissioned by Richard Crook on behalf of Kevin Baylis, in advance of a proposed residential development. The evaluation results from a pre-application enquiry to Redditch Borough Council, dated 23 July 2019 (reference number 19/01045/PREAPP).

The archaeological advisor to the local planning authority considered that the proposed development has the potential to impact upon specific heritage assets, being the Scheduled Earthwork of Feckenham Court House, a medieval moated manor house site (Historic England National Heritage List Entry 1018361).

The project conforms to a brief prepared by the Planning Advisory Section of Worcestershire County Council (WCC 2020), 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 2019).

1.2 Site location, topography and geology

The site is located on the southern side of Mill Lane, in the north-west of the village of Feckenham, approximately 185m west of the High Street. Bow Brook flows to the north and west of the site, at its closest *c* 220m away.

The site comprises an area of *c* 282m² and lies immediately to the north of the Scheduled Earthwork of Feckenham Court House, a medieval manorial moated site, with the encircling bank forming the southern limit of the plot. To the north is Mill Lane, and to the east and west are residential properties.

The northern two-thirds of the site are relatively flat at *c* 66.90-67.50m AOD, whilst the southern third slopes up steeply to the plateau of the manorial site at c 70m AOD. It is currently used as an allotment garden. The underlying geology comprises bedrock of Branscombe 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 1000m around the site. Historic maps and aerial photographs were also consulted. A summary of the results of this research are presented below.

2.2 Palaeolithic

The site is located within an identified area of Palaeolithic potential, named as Head deposits (WSM56936), which may conceal and preserve earlier land surfaces and may contain unstratified or reworked artefactual remans. The deposits are dated to Marine Isotope Stage 12 to Stage 1.

2.3 Feckenham Village and Conservation Area

The moated manor site and the development site are located within the Feckenham Conservation Area. Feckenham has seen little change in form or scale over the centuries, remaining a relatively compact settlement with a clearly defined historic street pattern. Its origins lie with the Saltway, a Roman trading route linking Droitwich with Alcester and beyond. It had become a well-established village by the Anglo-Saxon period, as evidenced by a charter dated 804AD, and its current name is considered to derive from Fecca's Ham, meaning a settlement by water that belonged to Fecca; a

name of Anglo-Saxon origin. It is recorded in the Domesday book and continued to have links with Droitwich, having special rights to the salt produced there.

Significantly, around 1085, the Manor of Feckenham became a possession of the Crown and was to remain so until 1558. Feckenham was located deep within the Royal Forest of the same name, covering much of Warwickshire and Worcestershire, and a Royal Lodge was constructed to provide access to the rich hunting grounds. The earliest date attributed to this lodge is associated with a re-build in 1200, and it continued in use until 1356 when it was demolished and sold to the abbot of Evesham, with various outbuildings remaining in use for meetings of the Forest Justices and the Manorial Courts, as well as a prison.

During the 16th century disafforestation reduced the Royal Forest to a fraction of its former size and, subsequently, the village and manor of Feckenham diminished in importance and wealth. Various transfers of ownership left the village and its assets finally in the hands of the Coventry family of Croome, where it remained until 1930.

Industries within the village included weaving in the 12th century, glove making from 1600 to the 1940's, and for a brief period between the 16th and early 17th century, tobacco growing. Small industries included tanning, shoemaking and some nail making. The arrival of the needle-making industry in the 18th century fuelled the greatest period of growth of the village, which is reflected in the construction of a series of needle mills and associated buildings to serve this industry, and the number of surviving houses of this date within the historic core of the village, or those with alterations and extensions dating to this period, reflecting the increased wealth enjoyed by its residents.

2.4 Feckenham Moated Manor and Courthouse

Around 6,000 moated sites are known in England. The majority of moated sites served as prestigious aristocratic and seigneurial residences with the provision of a moat intended as a status symbol rather than a practical military defence. The peak period during which moated sites were built was between about 1250 and 1350 and by far the greatest concentration lies in central and eastern parts of England. However, moated sites were built throughout the medieval period, are widely scattered throughout England and exhibit a high level of diversity in their forms and sizes.

The archaeological background to the site is summarised in the Historic England National Heritage List Entry (NHLE ref. 1018361)

> The monument includes the surviving buried and earthwork remains of Feckenham Court House, a medieval manorial moated site where the court of the Forest of Feckenham was held. Feckenham Manor, a high-status Anglo-Saxon manor from about AD 804, had passed to the Crown by the time of the Domesday survey. The manor was held by the Crown for several centuries with references made to royal buildings on the site. The manor house was repaired in 1355 but was later demolished and the buildings removed by the Abbot of Evesham. The monument became the site of the court proceedings associated with Feckenham Forest. A prison, known as Bennets' Bower, is documented at the site, where in the 16th century manorial courts were also held. The courthouse fell into disrepair following deforestation in the 17th century. During the reign of Charles II the site was planted and used to grow tobacco. The moated site, covering 1.62ha, is larger and more heavily fortified than many manorial moated sites. Its boundary takes the form of an elliptical earthwork approximately 220m by 120m, orientated east-west, consisting of an outer ditch or moat enclosing two concentric earthwork banks separated by a ditch. The moat is deepest on the northern side (2m to 3m), elsewhere it measures 1m to 2m deep. The eastern part of the moat has been largely infilled or levelled with domestic buildings being inserted into the external moat in the north east quadrant; these areas are not included in the scheduling. The double bank and ditch are clearly visible in the north west quadrant; in the south west quadrant the double bank and ditch separate creating an inner berm. In the south east quadrant, the double bank and ditch are no longer evident and the outer moat diminishes to become a boundary ditch, which continues as far as the village development

at the south east, south and north east of the monument. In 1968 the earthworks of several buildings could be discerned in the interior or island of the moat, but the interior of the monument is now largely level and is used as a sports ground. The only surviving original entrance point, partly infilled, is in the centre of the northern entrenchment. An excavation across a raised platform in the northern half of the monument revealed occupation dating from the mid-12th to mid-14th centuries, with traces of both timber and stone buildings. The modern sports changing room may obscure some of the features previously recorded near the centre of the northern earthworks. A modern breach has been made across the earthworks in the north west quadrant. All modern buildings, the sports pavilion, goal posts, garden furniture and the surface of all paths are excluded from the scheduling, although the ground beneath these features is included.

2.5 Previous archaeological investigations

Previous investigations in the immediate vicinity of the site include a series of watching briefs and the ongoing desk-based assessment of the area north of Evesham, by AMEC environment and infrastructure (WSM47412). Five metres east of the site a watching brief was conducted during the installation of the Mill Lane foul water sewer (WSM29610). Only modern deposits were recorded, indicating that the depth excavations did not reach that of the moat, or only those upper fills that were not identified at the time as anything other than general background accumulations.

To the south of the site two watching briefs were conducted during the installation of the football ground (WSM27146) and play area (WSM31649) in the area central of the moated site. The football ground investigations involved a shallow trench that did not identify any archaeological deposits, and the play area comprised 14 hand excavated holes which, although encountering well preserved archaeological deposits approximately 0.20m below the ground surface, was unable to determine their nature, function, or date with such a limited scope for visibility.

Further investigations have been conducted at the perimeter of the scheduled area for the moated manor site, particularly at the southern limit of earthworks, where the Turton Gardens housing estate is located. These included an evaluation (WSM27992) and geophysical survey (WSM30096). Neither identified any features relating to the hunting lodge, or any other archaeological features, even ridge and furrow. Roman and medieval pottery were recovered from the ploughsoil, but finds were few and represented a general rural background scatter. A watching brief (WSM31915) and condition assessment (WSM70696) were conducted of the ridge and furrow earthworks immediately south of the moat. The watching brief identified a shallow negative feature, possibly the remains of a curvilinear ditch or pit. It was not considered to be the moat, or related to the moat, due to the shallowness and probable truncation. No finds were recovered although it was overlain by a former medieval or post-medieval ploughsoil, which indicate that the feature was of an earlier date. A post-medieval pit was also revealed, but deemed to be of little to no archaeological significance. A further watching brief has been undertaken by Oxford Archaeology, on land off the High Street, however the report has yet to be submitted.

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;
- assess the likely impact of the proposed development (where foundation and landscape designs have been provided).

4 Project methodology

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2020). Fieldwork was undertaken on 3 and 4 August 2020.

One trench, amounting to 27m² in area, was excavated over the 282m² site, representing a sample of 9.6%. The location of the trench is indicated in Figure 2.

The trench was positioned to investigate the potential moat associated with the adjacent moated manor house. The western end of the trench was reduced by *c* 1m to avoid a modern service pipe.

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

Auguring was undertaken at the base of the trench to determine the depth of the ditch but was halted at *c* 0.9m depth due to the compacted nature of the deposits. A machine dug sondage was also excavated within the base of the trench.

All fieldwork records were checked and cross-referenced. Analysis was undertaken through a combination of structural, artefactual and environmental evidence, as appropriate, 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 Introduction

The features recorded in the trench are shown in Figures 1 and 2 and Plates 1-5. The trench and context inventory is presented in Appendix 1.

5.2 Phasing/Trench descriptions

5.2.1 Natural deposits

The natural undisturbed geology, 102, was encountered at a depth of between 0.54-0.58m below the current ground level (*c* 66.70-66.90m AOD). It comprised a firm mid reddish-brown clay marl, with occasional lenses of blue clay. Subsoil 101, a greyish brown silty clay, some 0.36m thick, was observed at the eastern end of the trench overlying the natural.

5.2.2 Archaeological deposits

The subsoil was cut by large linear feature 103, aligned c west-north-west to east-south-east, which is considered to be the moat. It had a shallow upper edge, which became nearly vertical *c* 1m below the current ground level. The upper edge of the feature was only recorded obliquely in the section, so the gentle slope may be a distortion of the perpendicular angle. The earliest deposits identified, 110 and 109, within 103 were derived from the surrounding natural clay, presumably a result of edge destabilisation and erosion. No dating material was recovered from these deposits and they were seen only in plan within a small machine-dug sondage within the base of the trench. Above these deposits was thick gleyed blue grey clay, 108. This was encountered at *c* 1.36m below the present ground level. Pottery dating to the 17th-18th century, ceramic building material (CBM) and an iron nail were recovered from this deposit, although it was generally quite sterile and was considered to have formed from a slow accumulation of material washed in by natural processes. Above this was fill 111,

the same as 104, both being a mid pinkish red clay. Several bricks and pottery sherds were recovered from 104, of 17th century date. Further, several large pieces of building stone alongside naturally shaped cobbles were observed, indicating intentional dumping of waste material. A further pinky red clay fill overlaid 104 and 111, before successive grey brown silty clay deposits were dumped into the feature, possibly intentionally to level it. These were sealed by a topsoil, 100, 0.16-0.38m thick.

At its shallowest linear feature 103 lay *c* 0.3m (67.05m AOD) below the current ground level. The top of the cut was seen in the eastern end of the trench, but not fully reached in the northern arm, again demonstrating the gentle slope of the upper part of the feature. Auguring of the feature was undertaken within the base of the trench to understand the depth of the ditch, but was halted after *c* 0.9m due to the compaction of the deposits. A sondage was also machine dug within the base of the trench, which determined that the moat continued below 65.19m AOD.

6 Artefactual evidence

By C Jane Evans, MCIfA

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

The analysis identified, spot dated, and quantified all artefacts recovered, with a view to assessing the nature, date, preservation and significance of the deposits from which they came.

The report covers artefacts of post-medieval date.

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; no finds from environmental samples are included. It should be noted that some large fragments of building stone and shaped cobbles were noted on site but not recovered, so are not included in this report.

6.3.2 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 (Table 3). This date was used for determining the broad date of activity on the site. All information was recorded on a Microsoft Access 2007 database, with tables generated using Microsoft Excel.

The pottery was examined macroscopically and recorded with reference to the fabric reference series maintained by Worcestershire Archaeology (WAAS 2017). The ceramic building material was not studied by fabric, but dimensions were recorded for the purpose of dating the assemblage. Clay pipes were recorded with reference to guidelines produced by the National Pipe Archive (Higgins 2017).

The only metal find was an iron horse-shoe nail, which was not radiographed.

The assemblage is compared to material from other Worcestershire sites, to support dating.

None of the finds are illustrated.

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 Tables 1 to 3.

The assemblage totalled 46 finds weighing 13,268g (Table 1). Finds came from four stratified contexts, all fills of the moat, and dated from the mid-17th to mid-18th century. They included pottery, ceramic building material and plaster, bottle glass and an iron nail.

The results below summarise the finds and their associated contexts. Dates have been allocated, where possible, and the importance of individual finds is commented upon as necessary.

Using pottery as an index of artefact condition this was generally good (Table 2), reflected in a high average weight, suggesting that the finds had not lain around on the ground surface for any length of time before being deposited in the moat.

Period	Material class	Material subtype	Object specific type	Count	Weight(g)
Post-medieval	Ceramic	Earthenware	Clay pipe	8	33
Post-medieval	Ceramic	Earthenware	Pot	16	831
Post-medieval	Ceramic	Fired clay	Brick	8	10229
Post-medieval	Ceramic	Fired clay	Tile	9	1503
Post-medieval	Glass	Green	Bottle	1	439
Undated	Metal	Iron	Nail	1	2
Undated	Plaster	Plaster	Fragment	2	170
Undated	Stone	Lias	Tile?	1	61
Total				46	13268

Table 1: Quantification of site assemblage by period and material class

6.4.1 Post-medieval pottery

Broad period	Fabric code	Fabric common name	Count	Weight(g)	Average sherd weight (g)
Post-medieval	77	Midlands yellow ware	4	43	11
Post-medieval	78	Post-medieval red ware	2	14	7
Post-medieval	90	Post-medieval orange ware	9	753	84
Post-medieval	91	Post-medieval buff ware	1	21	21
Total			16	831	52

Table 2: Quantification of pottery assemblage by period and fabric

The pottery comprised mainly Post-medieval black-glazed wares, in red ware, orange ware and buff ware (Table 2). The Post-medieval red ware included rims from two separate tygs or cups, from contexts 104 and 105. Both had a glossy, black glazes with a slightly metallic sheen, suggesting a 17th century date rather than later. They are similar to forms noted in 17th to 18th century pits excavated at Newport Street, Worcester (Jacobs 2015). The other black-glazed wares were all from large bowls or pancheons, with internal glaze. The only other fabric represented was Midlands Yellow ware. Sherds in this fabric included a rim from a tyg or cup (fill 104) and three joining sherds, including the handle, from a cup (fill 106). The latter is similar to an example illustrated from Newport Street, Worcester (ibid fig 5.8.1). Midlands Yellow ware dates from the late 16th to 18th century.

6.4.2 Ceramic and other building material

A number of fragments of ceramic building material were recovered; brick and roof tile (Table 1). The roof tile comprised undiagnostic fragments of flat tile, sanded on the underside and with no evidence of glaze. Only one complete brick was present, from fill 104. This was 9 6/8 inches long (250mm), 5 inches wide (123mm) and 2 inches thick (54mm). The other fragments were incomplete. The other two bricks with complete widths were 4 ½ inches wide. Of the five other bricks for which thickness could be measured, three were 2 inches, one 1 6/8 inch (43mm) and the other 1 7/8 inch (48mm). All the bricks were fired orange.

The thickness of the bricks provides some useful dating evidence. After 1784, when the brick tax was imposed, bricks were at least 3 inches thick (Brunskill 1997, 192). These bricks clearly pre-date this. The thickness of these bricks is consistent with the other dated finds from this assemblage; at Newport Street, Worcester, for example, it was noted that 2 inch bricks continued in use throughout the 17th century (Crawford 2015). None of the bricks was a red or purplish red, the colour of the later 17th and 18th century bricks recorded from Newport Street (ibid).

Two fragments of plaster were recovered from fill 104. These both had smooth surfaces on one side, and lath impressions on the other. The use of lath and plaster is also consistent with the general date of the assemblage. A fragment of lias was included in the finds from fill 104, described as a ‘lower stony fill’ of the moat. This might have been used as building material, perhaps tile, but this is not certain.

6.4.3 Clay pipes

Two clay pipe bowls and six stem fragments were recovered. All the evidence points to a later 17th to early 18th century date for the small assemblage; *c* 1650-1730. The more complete bowl (from fill 105) is similar in form, size and finish to Pipe Aston types illustrated from Newport Street, Worcester

(Peacey2015, fig 5.38, 31-34). It has a relatively small, flat heel, which stands well out from the stem, and like the Newport Street examples is quite an open form. In terms of finish, it is unburnished and milled around the bowl mouth. The heel is stamped 'IP' in upper case, probably read as 'JP.' No one with these initials is included in Oswald's list of Worcestershire potters (Oswald 1975, 199) or Peacey's more recent review (Peacey 2015, 182-188), but an 'IP' stamp was noted at Droitwich Bays Meadow, where it was dated to the 17th century (Hurst 1992, 66). Marks on heels and milling round the rim are both characteristic of forms produced up to c 1730. The other bowl (fill 106) is incomplete, with the rim missing. The stems also have larger bore holes, ranging between 7/64th and 9/64th of an inch, which is also consistent with a 17th to early 18th century date (Higgins 2017, 4.1). One stem fragment had a spur.

6.4.4 Glass and iron artefacts

The other finds comprised the base of a green glass 'onion' bottle (fill 104), dating broadly to the late 17th to mid-18th century, and an iron horseshoe nail or 'calkin' (fill 108). The latter is not closely datable, but for comparison, a similar example is illustrated from late 15th to late 17th century deposits in London (Egan 2005, 1037).

Context	Material class	Material subtype	Object specific type	Count	Weight(g)	Start date	End date	Context tpq
104	Ceramic	Earthenware	Clay pipe	2	6	1650	1730	1700
	Ceramic	Earthenware	Pot	1	15	late 16th	18th	
	Ceramic	Earthenware	Pot	1	10	late 16th	17th	
	Ceramic	Earthenware	Pot	8	673	1700	19th	
	Ceramic	Fired clay	Brick	8	10229			
	Ceramic	Fired clay	Tile	3	642			
	Glass	Green	Bottle	1	439	1650	1750	
	Plaster	Plaster	Fragment	2	170	17th-early 18th	mid 20th	
	Stone	Lias	Tile?	1	61			
105	Ceramic	Earthenware	Clay pipe	3	8	1650	1730	1650
	Ceramic	Earthenware	Pot	1	4	Late 16th	17th	
	Ceramic	Fired clay	Tile	1	361			
106	Ceramic	Earthenware	Clay pipe	3	19	1650	1730	1700
	Ceramic	Earthenware	Pot	3	28	Late 16th	18th	
	Ceramic	Earthenware	Pot	1	80	1700	19th	
	Ceramic	Fired clay	Tile	3	343			

108	Ceramic	Earthenware	Pot	1	21	17th	18th	17th
	Ceramic	Fired clay	Tile	2	157			
	Metal	Iron	Nail	1	2			

Table 3: Summary of context dating based on artefacts

6.5 Discussion

This is a small but seemingly relatively closely-dated assemblage providing evidence for the end use of the moat; the best dating comes from the clay pipes, which indicate a period from c 1650-1730. Many of the finds are associated with upper fills, representing material dumped in the moat, following its' abandonment (105, 106, 108). The other finds are from a lower fill of the moat (104) but appear to be broadly contemporary with finds from the later fills. This lower fill is recorded as containing an abundance of brick fragments, suggesting it may also relate to disuse and demolition on the site. The finds are relatively well preserved. The small pottery assemblage includes a number of rims, allowing forms to be determined.

None of the finds relate to the earlier Anglo-Saxon or medieval use of the manor.

6.6 Significance

The finds are well preserved and provide dating evidence for disuse of the site. It indicates that, should further fieldwork be undertaken, there is potential for a larger assemblage to provide sufficient evidence to characterise the final occupation of the site, perhaps through analysis of vessel forms in relation to associated documentary evidence. The small assemblage from the evaluation therefore suggests that, should further fieldwork be recommended the resulting assemblage would certainly be of local significance, and potentially of regional significance.

Significance	Types of Heritage Asset
International	World Heritage Sites Assets of recognised international importance **Artefact that contribute to international research objectives**
National	Scheduled Monuments Grade I and Grade II* Listed Buildings Grade I and Grade II* Registered Parks and Gardens Undesignated assets of the quality and importance to be designated **Artefacts that contribute to national research objectives**
Regional	Grade II Listed Buildings Grade II Registered Parks and Gardens Conservation Areas **Artefact remains that contribute to regional research objectives**
Local	Locally listed buildings Artefacts compromised by poor preservation and/or poor contextual associations Artefacts with importance to local interest groups **Artefacts that contribute to local research objectives**
Negligible	Artefacts with little or no archaeological/historical interest

Significance	Types of Heritage Asset
Unknown	The importance of the artefacts has not been ascertained from available evidence

6.7 Recommendations

6.7.1 Further analysis

The finds from the evaluation should be included in any future analysis and reporting, should further work be undertaken on the site.

6.7.2 Discard/retention

The pottery, clay pipe, glass and iron should be retained. A sample of the building material could be retained.

7 Environmental evidence

Environmental sampling was undertaken according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012). In the event the auger survey was curtailed at *c* 0.90m depth, and no deposits were identified which were considered to be suitable for environmental analysis during the evaluation.

8 Significance

Moated sites form a significant class of medieval monument and are important for the understanding of the distribution of wealth and status in the countryside, and as such, both they, and any archaeological features directly associated with them, are considered to be of national significance.

Hunt (2011), in the West Midlands Regional Research Framework, identifies moated sites for further research- with a focus on their relationships with wider landscapes and tenurial patterns. Their suitability for the preservation of in-situ organic remains, and their links within the wider framework of rural resource management and exploitation and the subsequent population and settlement changes relating to them, make them a priority for research and investigation. The association of Feckenham moated manor to the Royal Forest and its status as a royal hunting lodge only enhance this.

It was not possible to investigate the base of the moat within the constraints of this evaluation, however the potential for in-situ and waterlogged remains is considered to be high. None of the finds identified during this investigation related to the Anglo Saxon or earlier medieval activity associated with the manor, which may also exist in basal deposits. These potential assemblages of artefactual and ecofactual evidence would be of local and regional significance.

The abandonment and subsequent reuse of the site as the location for the gaol and Courthouse, an administration and justice centre for its district in Feckenham Forest, would make any post-manorial archaeological remains of local and, possibly, regional significance also.

9 Conclusions

The methods adopted allow a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved. The evaluation has demonstrated the survival of the moat associated with the manorial site at a depth of *c* 0.30m (67.05m AOD) below the present ground surface, *c* 10m beyond the limit of the Scheduling Monument. Whilst a full profile of the moat was not achieved, a machine-dug sondage allied with augering demonstrate that it exceeds 2m in depth (beyond 65.19m AOD) and was intentionally backfilled in the late 17th to 18th centuries following a period of abandonment. This correlates with the records of deforestation and the decline of the local area during the 17th century, and the later use of the site as a tobacco plantation. The artefactual evidence was provided by four stratified fills of the moat and was represented largely by post-medieval black glazed wares with a high average weight, suggesting that they had not lain on the ground surface for any length of time

before deposition in the moat. The majority of pottery finds were associated with the upper fills of the moat, whereas the lower fills, which were broadly contemporary, were recorded as containing an abundance of brick fragments, suggesting that they may relate to the disuse or demolition of the site. This presents a picture of relatively rapid demolition, discard and backfill of the site, before its abandonment.

10 Project personnel

The fieldwork was led by Peter Lovett, ACIfA, assisted by Roland Tillyer.

The project was managed by Tom Vaughan, MCIfA. The report was produced and collated by Jesse Wheeler (ACIfA). Specialist contributions and individual sections of the report are attributed to the relevant authors throughout the text.

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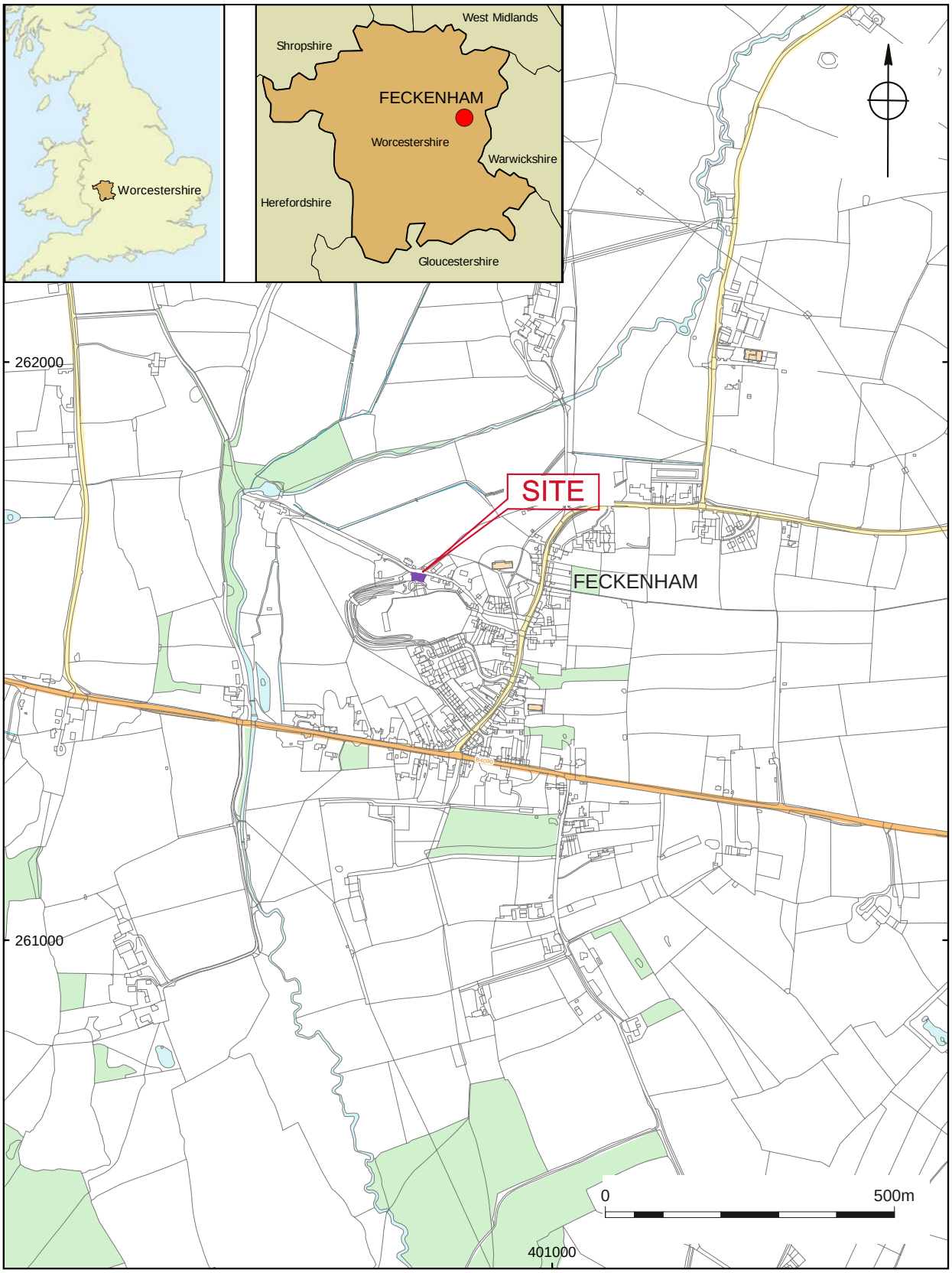
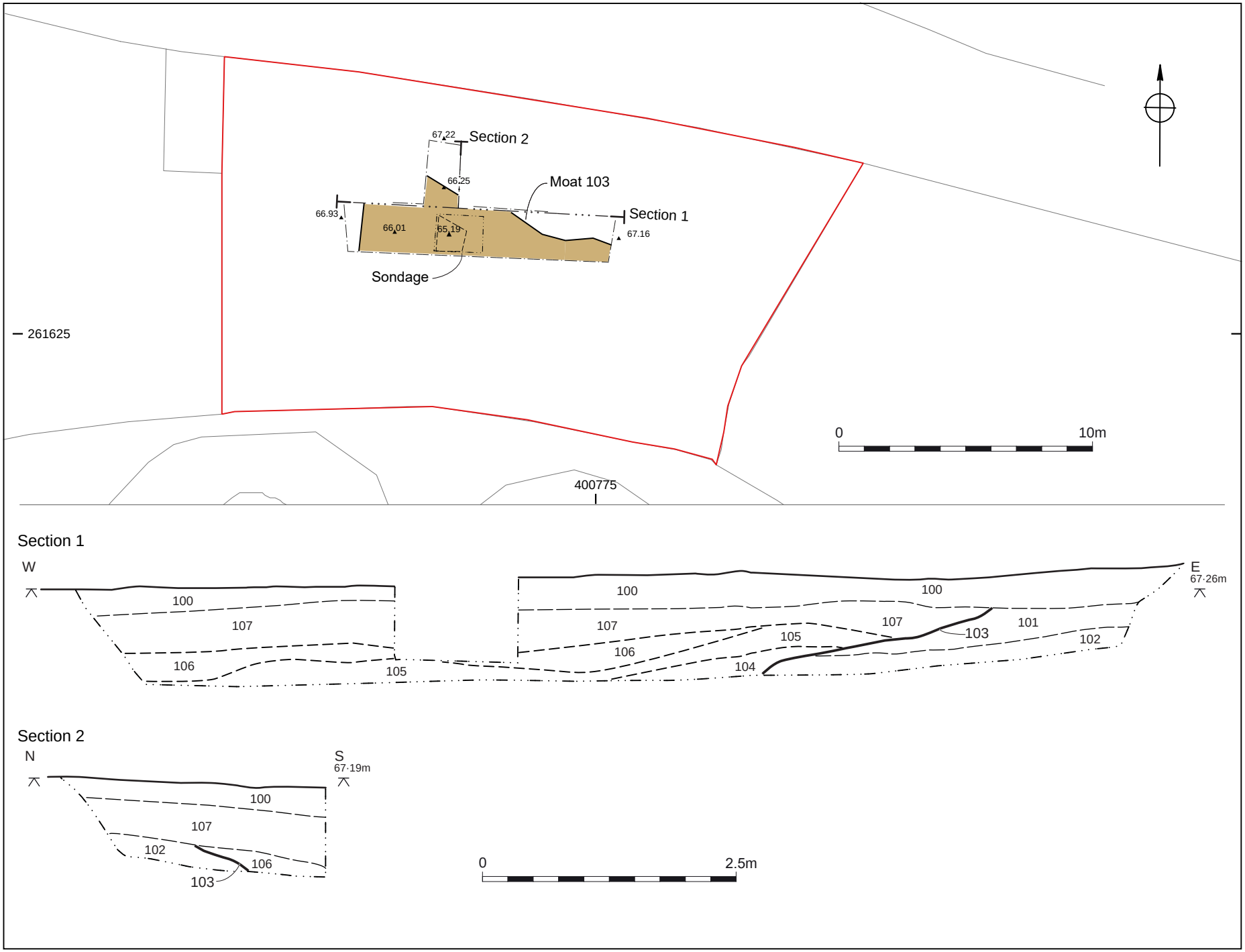
Figures



Location of the site *Figure 1*



Trench location and Sections 1 and 2 *Figure 2*

Plates

Plate 1: General shot of Trench, facing east, 2x 1m scales

Plate 2: Western end of south facing Section 1, facing north-west, 2x 1m scales

Plate 3: Eastern end of south facing Section 1, facing north-east, 2x 1m scales

Plate 4: West facing Section 2, looking north-east, 1m scale

Plate 5: Machine dug sondage in centre of Trench, showing gleyed deposits at edge of moat

Appendix 1: Trench and context descriptions

Trench

Length: 13m Width: 1.8m Orientation: east-west and north-south

Context summary:

Context	Feature type	Context type	Interpretation	Height/ depth	Deposit description
100		Layer	Topsoil	0.4	Loose Dark greyish brown sandy silt
101		Layer	Subsoil	0.38	Moderately compact Dark greyish brown silty clay
102		Layer	Natural		Compact Mid pinkish red clay marl
103		Cut	Cut of moat		
104		Fill	Lower stoney fill of moat	0.22	Compact Mid pinkish red clay
105		Fill	Moat fill	0.3	Compact Mid pinkish red clay
106		Fill	Moat fill	0.28	Moderately compact Mid brown clay
107		Fill	Upper moat fill	0.46	Moderately compact Dark brown silty clay
108		Fill	Clay moat fill	0.26	Plastic Mid blue grey silty clay
109		Fill	Moat fill	0.22	Friable Light grey blue clay silt
110		Fill	Moat fill		Soft Mid orange brown with blue lenses silty clay
111		Fill	Moat fill	0.52	Compact mid pinkish red clay

Appendix 2: Summary of project archive (WSM73344)

TYPE	DETAILS*
Artefacts and Environmental	Ceramics, Glass, Metal
Paper	Drawing, Matrices, Plan, 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 Museums Worcestershire.

Appendix 3: Summary of data for HER

Period	Material class	Material subtype	Object specific type	Count	Weight(g)
Post-medieval	Ceramic	Earthenware	Clay pipe	8	33
Post-medieval	Ceramic	Earthenware	Pot	16	831
Post-medieval	Ceramic	Fired clay	Brick	8	10229
Post-medieval	Ceramic	Fired clay	Tile	9	1503
Post-medieval	Glass	Green	Bottle	1	439
Undated	Metal	Iron	Nail	1	2
Undated	Plaster	Plaster	Fragment	2	170
Undated	Stone	Lias	Tile?	1	61
Total				46	13268

Table 1: Quantification of site assemblage by period and material class

Broad period	Fabric code	Fabric common name	Count	Weight(g)	Average sherd weight (g)
Post-medieval	77	Midlands yellow ware	4	43	11
Post-medieval	78	Post-medieval red ware	2	14	7
Post-medieval	90	Post-medieval orange ware	9	753	84
Post-medieval	91	Post-medieval buff ware	1	21	21
Total			16	831	52

Table 2: Quantification of pottery assemblage by period and fabric

Context	Material class	Material subtype	Object specific type	Count	Weight(g)	Start date	End date	Context tpq
104	Ceramic	Earthenware	Clay pipe	2	6	1650	1730	1700
	Ceramic	Earthenware	Pot	1	15	late 16th	18th	
	Ceramic	Earthenware	Pot	1	10	late 16th	17th	
	Ceramic	Earthenware	Pot	8	673	1700	19th	
	Ceramic	Fired clay	Brick	8	10229			
	Ceramic	Fired clay	Tile	3	642			
	Glass	Green	Bottle	1	439	1650	1750	
	Plaster	Plaster	Fragment	2	170	17th-early 18th	mid 20th	
	Stone	Lias	Tile?	1	61			
105	Ceramic	Earthenware	Clay pipe	3	8	1650	1730	1650
	Ceramic	Earthenware	Pot	1	4	Late 16th	17th	
	Ceramic	Fired clay	Tile	1	361			
106	Ceramic	Earthenware	Clay pipe	3	19	1650	1730	1700
	Ceramic	Earthenware	Pot	3	28	Late 16th	18th	
	Ceramic	Earthenware	Pot	1	80	1700	19th	
	Ceramic	Fired clay	Tile	3	343			
108	Ceramic	Earthenware	Pot	1	21	17th	18th	17th
	Ceramic	Fired clay	Tile	2	157			
	Metal	Iron	Nail	1	2			

Table 3: Summary of context dating based on artefacts