

ARCHAEOLOGICAL
INVESTIGATIONS
AT
ALBION COTTAGES,
HANLEY SWAN,
WORCESTERSHIRE

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Illustrations by Carolyn Hunt

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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Part 1: Project summary

This report describes the results of sample trenching, post-fieldwork analysis, and documentary research. The aim of the project was to establish the presence or absence of significant archaeological remains. Previous research had shown that the area was a centre of pottery production between the 13th and 17th centuries. There was also a context for medieval settlement and agriculture. At the time of the fieldwork, the site contained two cottages, of probable early 19th century date, set back from the road.

Four trenches were excavated around the cottages. The earliest evidence of activity was a sherd of 10th or 11th century Stamford ware. In the absence of other evidence, the sherd suggests manuring of the site with domestic rubbish. It also implies that the medieval settlement at Hanley Swan (known as Roberts End) had Anglo-Saxon origins. No evidence of medieval settlement was found, nor any evidence of pottery production. However, field patterns shown on historic maps suggest that the area was cultivated in this period.

Evidence for post-medieval enclosure was found in the form of a roadside ditch and bank, and a ditch on a different alignment to the north-east. A pit and a gully were also found behind the cottages, near the centre of the site. All of these features pre-date Parliamentary Enclosure in 1797. The ditches were probably backfilled when the cottages were built in the early 19th century.

Part 2: Detailed report

1. Background

1.1 Planning background

The project was associated with a development by David Flanagan Homes Ltd on the north side of Roberts End Street in Hanley Swan (Fig 1; NGR SO 8176 4293). The development involved the demolition of two cottages and the construction of three detached houses (Malvern Hills District Council, ref. MH/06/1332). Records held in the Worcestershire Historic Environment Record suggested that the development might affect significant archaeological remains (HER ref. WSM 27001). A programme of work was required to establish whether such remains were present and, if so, to inform an appropriate mitigation strategy.

1.2 Archaeological background

Hanley Swan, formerly known as Roberts End, is an area of considerable archaeological significance. Previous research has established that the area was a centre of pottery production between the 13th and 17th centuries (Hurst 1994). Most evidence of this activity has come from fieldwalking, which has recovered dense scatters of pottery and ‘wasters’ (pottery damaged or deformed in the production process). Evidence of clay pits and kilns has also been obtained by augering, geophysical survey, and limited excavation. In addition, local residents have reported finds of pottery from their gardens. Sites and finds in the immediate vicinity of the site are shown on Figure 1. The distribution suggested that similar remains might exist on the site. There was also a context for remains relating to settlement of medieval and earlier date.

1.3 Project parameters

The project conforms to a brief prepared by the Planning Advisory Section of Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeological Service (HEAS 2007a) and to a detailed specification prepared by the Field Section (HEAS 2007b). The project also conforms to the Institute of Field Archaeologists’ *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (IFA 2001).

1.4 Aims

The main aim of the project was to establish the location, type, date, and significance of archaeological remains on the site. The project was also intended to improve existing knowledge in appropriate contexts.

1.5 Methods

1.5.1 Documentary research

Before the fieldwork began, records relating to the site were obtained from the Worcestershire Historic Environment Record (HER). These included summaries of previous archaeological finds and historic buildings. Other sources held by the Service were also consulted, including Ordnance Survey maps, a report on fieldwork undertaken by local volunteers between 1987 and 1992 (Hurst 1994), and a recent edition of manorial records relating to Hanley Castle (Toomey 2001). After the fieldwork, various maps and deeds were consulted at the Worcestershire Record Office, including an Inclosure map of 1797 (WRO ref

269. 81; Fig 2), and deeds relating to Roberts End (eg WRO ref 705: 690, BA 10450/1) and WRO ref x850, BA 8119/3).

1.5.2 Fieldwork

Fieldwork was undertaken on the 11th and 12th of June 2007. Four trenches were excavated in the locations shown on Figure 4. The trench distribution differs from that indicated in the brief, due largely to services and other obstructions (HEAS 2007b). However, most parts of the site were investigated, and as discussed below, it is not likely that significant remains were missed.

Modern deposits were removed under supervision by a 180° wheeled mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket. A small sample of artefacts was collected from these deposits. Several features were then cleaned and excavated by hand, with all artefacts being recovered. No deposits with significant potential for plant or animal remains were encountered. Written, drawn, and photographic records were compiled according to standard Service practice (CAS 1995).

1.5.3 Post-fieldwork analysis

Stratigraphy

Stratigraphic relationships noted in the field were checked and Harris matrices were constructed for each trench. Some deposits and features were correlated on the basis of shared properties or characteristics.

Artefacts

All artefacts from the area of evaluation were retrieved by hand and retained in accordance with the service manual (CAS 1995 as amended).

All hand-retrieved finds were examined and a primary record was made on a Microsoft Access 2000 database. Artefacts were identified, quantified and dated and a *terminus post quem* date produced for each stratified context.

The pottery and ceramic building material was examined under x20 magnification and recorded by fabric type and form according to the fabric reference series maintained by the service (Hurst and Rees 1992; Hurst 1994).

2. Results

2.1 Stratigraphy

2.1.1 Natural deposits

Natural marl was encountered in each of the four trenches, at an average depth of 30.17m AOD.

2.1.2 Phase 1: 17th to late 18th century

The earliest deposits and features on the site were of 17th to late 18th century date. These included a ditch and bank in Trench 1, the same ditch in Trench 2, another ditch in Trench 3, and two features in Trench 4.

In Trench 1, the ditch was 1.8m wide and 0.6m wide, and filled with mid greyish brown clay silt (Fig 5, contexts 1002 and 1003; Photo 1). In Trench 2, the ditch was deeper and wider but

had a similar fill (Fig 6, contexts 2003 and 2004; Photo 2). The artefacts recovered from the fills show that the ditch was backfilled in the 18th century. The bank in Trench 1 consisted of redeposited marl, including some light grey marl from deeper deposits (Fig 5, context 1005; Photo 1). It was apparently intact, and the fill of the ditch abutted its south-facing side. The absence of the bank in Trench 2 can be explained by modern truncation (context 2007).

The ditch in Trench 3 was on a different alignment, and probably enclosed a different area. It was almost as wide as the ditch described above, but it was deeper and had more steeply-sloping sides (Fig 7, context 3005; Photos 3 and 4). Also, unlike the other ditch, it had been recut after a period of silting (Fig 7, context 3004; Photos 3 and 4). Unfortunately, the recut was not observed during excavation, and the artefacts from the earlier and later fills were not recovered separately. However, the combined assemblage suggests that the recut ditch was backfilled in the late 18th century. There was some evidence of an associated bank in the form of redeposited soils outside the line of the ditch to the north.

The features in Trench 4 comprised a pit, and a gully on an east-west alignment (Fig 8, contexts 4005 and 4007; Photos 5-7). The pit was only partially exposed, but was at least 2.20m in diameter and 0.45m deep. It was filled with greyish and reddish brown loam including pottery of 15th to 18th century date and a pipe stem of 17th or 18th century date. It was probably dug to bury organic rubbish, which has since decayed. It is unlikely to have been dug to extract marl for potting in view of its small size and relatively recent date.

2.1.3 **Phase 2: 19th and 20th century**

All other deposits and features were of 19th or 20th century date. The deposits comprised the topsoil and some redeposited marl (contexts 1000, 2000, 2002, 3000, and 4000). The features comprised a 19th century drain trench in Trench 4 (Fig 8, context 4003; Photo 5), and a later service in Trench 2 (Fig 6, context 2006).

2.2 **Artefacts, by Angus Crawford**

The pottery assemblage retrieved from the excavated area consisted of 95 sherds of pottery weighing 1818g. In addition fragments of roof tile, brick, bottle glass, undiagnostic animal bone and clay pipe stems were recovered. The group came from eight stratified contexts and could be dated from the late Anglo-Saxon period onwards (see Table 1). Level of preservation was generally fair with the majority of sherds displaying only moderate levels of abrasion.

All sherds have been grouped and quantified according to fabric type (see Table 2) and to their general period or production span.

Where mentioned, all specific forms are referenced to the type series within the report for Deansway, Worcester (Bryant 2004).

The discussion below is a summary of the finds and associated location or contexts by period. Where possible, *terminus post quem* dates have been allocated and the importance of individual finds commented upon as necessary.

Context	Material	Type	Total	Weight (g)
1000	Pottery	Medieval to early post-medieval	2	30
1000	Pottery	Post-medieval	2	42
1000	Tile	Roof	1	24
1002	Tile	Roof	3	240
1003	Pottery	Medieval to early post-medieval	5	15
2001	Brick	Post-medieval	8	1562
2001	Tile	Roof	1	190
2003	Bone	Animal	1	6
2003	Pottery	Medieval to early post-medieval	6	64
2003	Pottery	Post-medieval	3	39
2003	Tile	Roof	17	468
3003	Brick	Post-medieval	3	570
3003	Claypipe	Stem	1	4
3003	Glass	Bottle	3	31
3003	Pottery	Med	1	30
3003	Pottery	Medieval to early post-medieval	56	1243
3003	Pottery	Post-medieval	14	260
3003	Tile	Ridge	4	459
3003	Tile	Roof	24	840
4004	Claypipe	Stem	1	4
4004	Pottery	Medieval to early post-medieval	2	56.5
4004	Tile	Roof	2	247
4006	Brick	Post-medieval	7	507
4006	Pottery	Post-medieval	3	33
4006	Pottery	Anglo-Saxon to Medieval	1	5
4006	Tile	Roof	10	471

Table 1: Quantification of the assemblage

Context	Fabric name	Fabric number	Total	Weight (g)	Date range
1000	Oxidized glazed Malvernian ware	69	2	30	Late 15 th to early 17 th century
1000	Post-medieval buff ware	91	2	42	18 th century
1003	Oxidized glazed Malvernian ware	69	5	15	Late 15 th to early 17 th century
2003	Oxidized glazed Malvernian ware	69	6	64	Late 15 th to early 17 th century
2003	Post-medieval red sandy ware	78	2	23	17 th to 18 th century
2003	Post-medieval buff ware	91	1	16	18 th century
3003	Oxidized glazed Malvernian ware	69	57	1273	15 th to early 17 th century
3003	Midlands yellow ware	77	1	66	17 th century
3003	Post-medieval red sandy ware	78	3	111	18 th century
3003	Creamware	84	4	23	1760-90
3003	Post-medieval buff ware	91	6	60	18 th century
4004	Oxidized glazed Malvernian ware	69	2	56.5	Late 15 th to early 17 th century
4006	Stamford ware (glazed)	64.2	1	5	10 th to 11 th century
4006	Oxidized glazed Malvernian ware	69	3	33	Late 15 th to early 17 th century

Table 2: Quantification of the pottery by fabric*Saxon to early medieval pottery*

A single sherd of glazed Stamford ware (fabric 46.2) was recovered from context 4006. Stamford ware was produced in Lincolnshire from c 850 to 1250, and was distributed throughout the Midlands (Kilmurry, 1980). The sherd probably dates to the 10th or 11th century, as it lacked the type of glaze found on later products. However, the sherd had unusual rouletting, and until a parallel is found, it's date is uncertain. As noted above, context 4006 also contained material of 17th to 19th century date. The sherd was therefore clearly residual, (i.e. derived from an earlier deposit).

Medieval to post-medieval pottery

The dominant pottery fabric for this period was oxidised glazed Malvernian ware (fabric 69) with 75 sherds weighing 1472 g. All sherds were identified as being of 15th to early 17th century date with 57 sherds from context 3003, six sherds from context 2003, five sherds from context 1003, three sherds from context 4006 and two sherds each from contexts 1000 and 4004.

Only two forms could be identified: a dripping dish (Deansway type 69.5, context 3003) of early 15th to late 16th century date; and a flared bowl (Deansway type 69.9, context 4004) of 16th to 17th century date.

The second most dominant fabric type was post-medieval buff ware (fabric 91) with six sherds weighing 118g. All sherds could be dated to the 18th century with six sherds from context 3003, two sherds from context 1000 and a single sherd from context 2003. Sherds from pressed moulded platters, with typical slip-trailed and feathered decoration, were identified from contexts 1000 and 2003. The remaining sherds were typical of general tablewares produce in this fabric.

Five sherds of post-medieval red sandy ware (fabric 78) were identified with three sherds from context 3003, and two from context 2003. The sherds from context 2003 could only be broadly dated to the 17th to 18th century, however the sherds from context 3003 contained buff clay inclusions, which are more typical of 18th century date.

Creamware (fabric 84) was identified from context 3003 and could be specifically dated as being produced between 1760-90 when this fabric was at it's most dominant. All of the sherds appear to originate from a single shallow dinner service soup bowl.

The remaining sherd within the pottery assemblage was that of Midlands yellow ware (fabric 77, context 3003) base sherd from a jar of typical 17th century production date.

Other finds

Fifty-eight fragments of flat roof tile were identified as Malvernian produced products (fabric 3 contexts 100, 1002, 2001, 2003, 3003, 4004 and 4006) and could only be broadly dated to the date range indicated by the pottery of 15th to early 17th century. A further two ridge tile fragments (context 3003) were of similar fabric type and were datable to the same period span.

Contexts 2001, 3003 and 4006 contained fragments of fired bricks exhibiting no significant dating identifiers, though all are of a consistent deep red colouring usually observed in bricks produce from the second half of the 17th century through to the 19th century.

Fragments of clay pipe stems, from contexts 3003 and 4004, were also fairly undiagnostic and were dated to the 17th to 18th century.

The remaining finds within the site assemblage consisted of three shards of bottle glass from context 3003, which appear to be of mid 19th to early 20th century date. However, in view of the other pottery from this context, and other evidence discussed below, it is possible that these sherds are earlier, or came from the overlying subsoil.

3. Discussion

3.1 Late Anglo-Saxon agriculture

The sherd of Stamford ware from Trench 4 is a significant indicator of late Anglo-Saxon activity. Pottery of this period is rarely found in Worcestershire outside major towns, and its presence in a rural context is likely to represent either settlement or cultivation around a settlement, with pottery and other domestic rubbish being mixed and spread with farmyard manure. In the present case, the pottery suggests that the site was farmed from a nearby settlement.

This is significant, as Roberts End is not documented before the late 13th century (Toomey 2001, 7-8), while settlements with *-end* and *-green* place-names are usually seen as post-Conquest foundations (Dyer 1998 and 1990). More evidence will be needed to confirm the Anglo-Saxon origins of Roberts End, but it is likely that one or more farmsteads existed for several centuries before the Norman Conquest.

3.2 Medieval and post-medieval farming

Some of the pottery found on the site may represent medieval and post-medieval cultivation. It is likely that the area was cultivated in these periods, as the field pattern shown on an Inclosure map of 1797 suggests the enclosure of furlongs and consolidated strips (Fig 2). However, most of the artefacts were probably deposited as rubbish after the land was enclosed and converted to pasture. Most of the pottery was made in or around Roberts End, but there was no evidence that it was made on the site, or had been dumped as waste from a nearby kiln.

The Inclosure map shows that the site was divided between two small closes (Fig 2, nos. 162 and 464). A summary award at the foot of the map shows that both closes belonged to the Churchwardens, representing the parish church. The earthworks in Trenches 1 and 2 may have formed the southern boundary of these closes, but they are more likely to represent an earlier boundary on a similar line. The ditch in Trench 3 is not shown on the Inclosure map, nor on later Ordnance Survey maps. It must therefore be an earlier boundary, although it probably survived until 1797.

3.3 Modern development

The first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1886 (surveyed in 1883; Fig 3) shows the buildings and boundaries as they existed at the time of the fieldwork. The date of this development is uncertain, as the cottages themselves were not investigated, and no earlier 19th century maps were found. However, from a superficial survey, the cottages seem to date to the early 19th century, and it is reasonable to assume that the gardens were laid out at the same time. According to later maps, and field observations, later changes were limited to minor landscaping. The cottages themselves were extended to the rear, re-roofed, and provided with new chimneys.

4. Research frameworks

The most relevant research frameworks are provided by the work of Hurst (2004), and Toomey (2001). To this body of knowledge, the project has added important evidence for late Anglo-Saxon agriculture and circumstantial evidence for contemporary settlement. Until now, Roberts End has been regarded as a 'new' settlement of post-Conquest date. The project has also produced some evidence for later agriculture and enclosure. This is consistent with existing information, although the topic has not been fully explored.

5. Publication summary

The Service has a professional obligation to publish the results of archaeological projects within a reasonable period of time. To this end, and unless directed otherwise, the Service intends to place the following summary in an appropriate local or regional journal.

A programme of work was undertaken at Albion Cottages on the north side of Roberts End Street in Hanley Swan (NGR SO 8176 4293). The project was associated with a housing development, and aimed to establish whether significant remains were present. Previous research had shown that the area was a centre of pottery production between the 13th and 17th centuries. There was also a context for medieval settlement and agriculture.

Four trenches were excavated around the cottages. The earliest evidence of activity was a sherd of 10th or 11th century Stamford ware. In the absence of other evidence, the sherd suggests manuring with domestic rubbish. It also implies that the medieval settlement at Hanley Swan (known as Roberts End) had Anglo-Saxon origins. No evidence of medieval settlement was found, nor any evidence of pottery production. However, field patterns shown on historic maps suggest that the area was cultivated in this period.

Evidence for post-medieval enclosure was found in the form of a roadside ditch and bank, and a ditch on a different alignment to the north-east. A pit and a gully were also found behind the cottages, near the centre of the site. All of these features pre-date Parliamentary Enclosure in 1797. The ditches were probably backfilled when the cottages were built in the early 19th century.

6. Acknowledgements

The Service would like to thank Mr Flanagan for his assistance throughout the project; also Mike Glyde, Worcestershire County Council Historic Environment Planning Advisor.

7. Personnel

The project was undertaken by Darren Miller and Angus Crawford. Steve Rigby produced the illustrations. The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Tom Vaughan.

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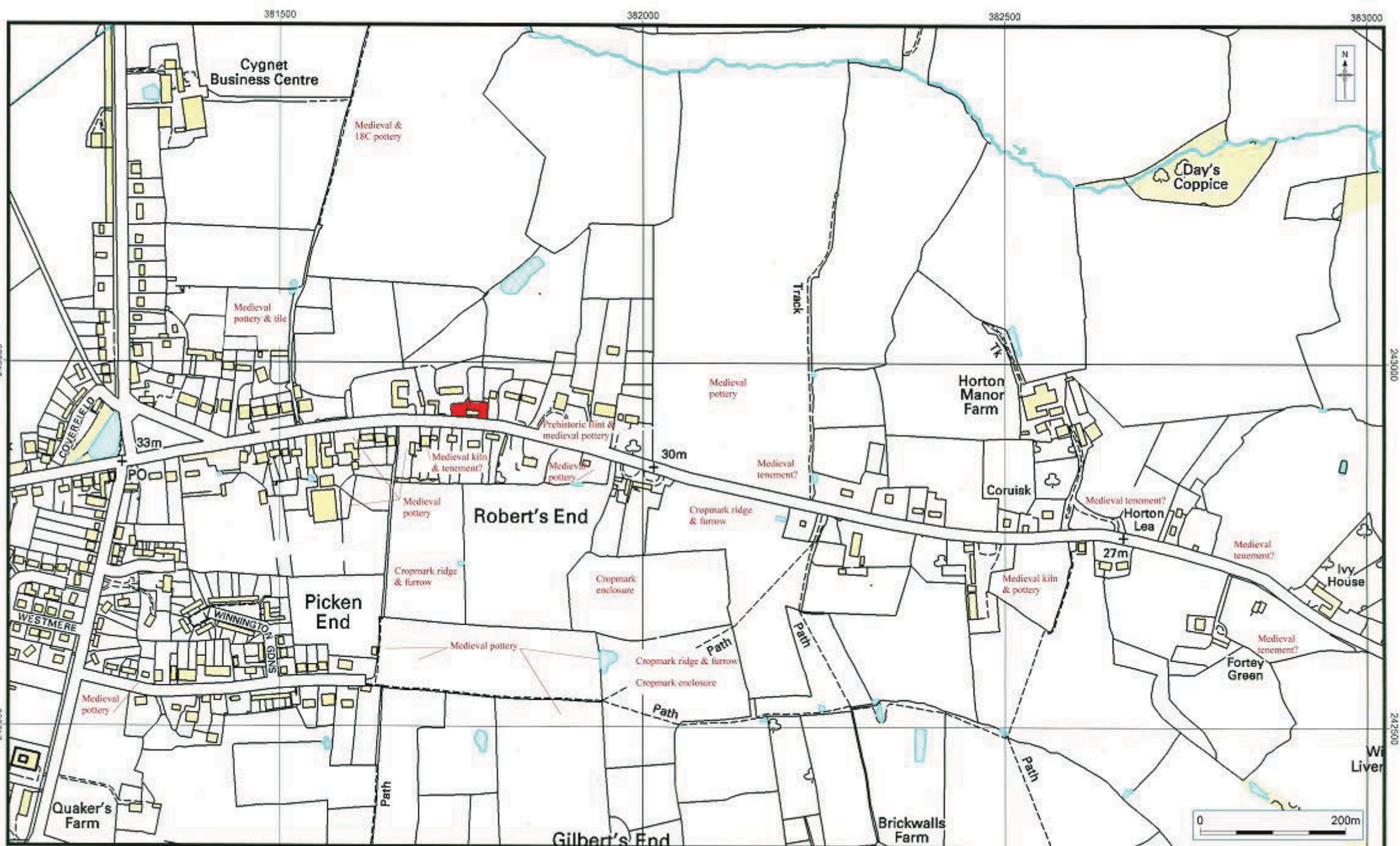
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Figures



Location of site (toned red, left of centre) and results of previous fieldwork and reconnaissance

Figure 1