

ARCHAEOLOGICAL
INVESTIGATIONS
AT
BRICKWALLS FARM,
GILBERTS LANE,
HANLEY SWAN,
WORCESTERSHIRE

Tom Vaughan

Illustrations by Carolyn Hunt

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Project 3119
Report 1571
WSM 37563

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Archaeological investigations at Brickwalls Farm, Gilberts Lane, Hanley Swan, Worcestershire

Tom Vaughan

Part 1 Project summary

An archaeological investigation was undertaken at Brickwalls Farm, Gilberts Lane, Hanley Swan, Worcestershire (NGR: SO 8232 4227). It was undertaken on behalf of Mr Peter Styles, who intends to convert an existing barn for residential use and to construct a triple garage with accommodation over, for which a planning application has been submitted. The project aimed to determine if any significant archaeological remains were present and if so to indicate its date, nature and location.

Two areas of groundworks were monitored: Area 1: the removal of a concrete slab and the soil strip toward the frontage; and Area 2: narrow foundation trenches along the west boundary to the rear. No significant archaeological features, layers, structures, deposits or horizons were identified, nor artefacts recovered. The few finds retrieved, from two pits toward the frontage, were of late 19th to early 20th century date. A small number of pits and a linear ditch may be dated by association and the character of their fills.

This negative result is unexpected, especially the total lack of even residual medieval pottery or tile, given the site's location and the wealth of evidence for medieval kiln activity in the immediate vicinity. However the actual areas observed were of only small size; Area 1 had previously been occupied by a concrete slab for a modern barn, which had involved the previous removal of soils; while Area 2 comprised only narrow foundation trenches without an initial soil strip. Thus it is considered that there is still the potential for the site to contain archaeological remains, which were not exposed during this development.

Part 2 Detailed report

1. Background

1.1 Reasons for the project

An archaeological investigation was undertaken at Brickwalls Farm, Gilberts Lane, Hanley Swan (NGR: SO 8232 4227), in the parish of Hanley Castle, Worcestershire (Fig 1), on behalf of Mr Peter Styles. The client intends to convert an existing barn for residential use and to construct a triple garage with accommodation over. He has submitted a planning application to Malvern Hills District Council (ref. MH/02/0138), which considers that a site of archaeological interest may be affected (HER ref. WCM 36024).

1.2 Project parameters

The project conforms to the *Standard and guidance for archaeological excavation* (IFA 1999).

The project also conforms to a brief prepared by the Planning Advisory Section of Worcestershire County Council (HEAS 2007a) and for which a project proposal (including detailed specification) was produced (HEAS 2007b).

1.3 Aims

The aims of the investigation were to locate archaeological deposits and determine, if present, their extent, state of preservation, date, type, vulnerability and documentation.

2. Methods

2.1 Documentary search

Prior to fieldwork commencing a search was made of the County Historic Environment Record (HER). In addition to the sources listed in the bibliography the following were also consulted:

Cartographic sources

- Inclosure map, 1797, WRO ref. BA 816/2 269.81
- 1st edition Ordnance Survey, 1886, Worcestershire, sheet XLVII.4, scale 25"=1 mile

2.2 Fieldwork methodology

2.2.1 Fieldwork strategy

A detailed specification has been prepared by the Service (HEAS 2007b).

Fieldwork was undertaken between 10th October 2007 and 27th November 2007. The site reference number and site code is WSM 37563.

Observation of the excavated areas was undertaken after removal of the concrete slab foundation of the modern barn immediately to the rear of the 17th century barn and subsequent machine excavation, using a 360° tracked excavator, employing a smooth-bladed

ditching bucket. Mechanical excavation covered a total area of approximately 71.88m² for the new house on the frontage and 31.25m of trenching were excavated to the rear for the garage (Fig 2; Plates 1, 2 and 7). Subsequent excavation was undertaken by hand. Clean surfaces were inspected and selected deposits were excavated to determine their nature, to retrieve artefactual material and environmental samples. Deposits were recorded according to standard Service practice (CAS 1995).

2.2.2 **Structural analysis**

All fieldwork records were checked and cross-referenced. Analysis was effected through a combination of structural, artefactual and ecofactual evidence, allied to the information derived from other sources.

2.3 **Artefact methodology, by Angus Crawford**

2.3.1 **Artefact recovery policy**

All artefacts from the area of excavation were retrieved by hand and retained in accordance with the service manual (CAS 1995 as amended). This in principal determines that all finds, of whatever date, must be collected. However, in this case only a sample of later material was collected. These comprised the entire assemblage of the finds recovered from the site (Section 4.2 below).

2.3.2 **Method of analysis**

All hand-retrieved finds were examined and a primary record was made on a Microsoft Access 2000 database.

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 1994b).

2.4 **Environmental archaeology methodology**

2.4.1 **Sampling policy**

The environmental sampling strategy conformed to standard Service practice (CAS 1995; appendix 4). In the event no deposits were identified which were considered to be suitable for environmental analysis.

2.5 **The methods in retrospect**

The methods adopted allow a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved.

3. **Topographical and archaeological context**

The site is located in Gilberts End, to the south-east of the medieval focus of Hanley Swan village, within the parish of Hanley Castle (NGR: SO 8232 4227). It is a largely flat area, at just over 20m AOD, comprising a sub-rectangular area, recessed from Gilberts Lane, bounded by Brickwalls Farm farmhouse to the west, a large field to the north and a residential property to the east. Previous to the commencement of construction it was occupied by two barns, one timber framed and of 17th century date (WSM 30486) which is to be incorporated as part of the new building ; the other of modern construction which was removed.

The predominant soils within the site belong to the Brockhurst 2 Soil Association (711c), comprising slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged reddish fine loamy soils over clay and clayey soils, some reddish clayey alluvial soils affected by groundwater, over parent material of Permo-Triassic reddish mudstone and alluvium (Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983).

The village, which lay within the medieval Royal Forest and later the Chase of Malvern, and was thus subject to the harsh forest laws, is an area of considerable archaeological significance. Previous investigations have identified that the area was a substantial focus of pottery production between the 14th and late 16th/early 17th centuries. The early Malvern Chase pottery industry produced cooking pots and highly decorated tripod pitchers in large quantities in the 12th and 13th centuries. It is as yet unlocated, although documentary evidence suggests that the Welland area, closer to the Malvern Hills to the west, may have been its focus (Hurst 1994a; WSM 27001).

Excavations undertaken in 2006 and 2007 to the rear of Brickwalls Farm farmhouse immediately to the west of the present study area revealed a layer of 19th century bricks, a 18th/19th century garden soil with extensive residual 13th-16th century pottery, sealing a 16th century ditch and two pits, one a clay pit associated with an adjacent area of intense burning. The brick layer were conjectured to come from a kiln located in the vicinity; the garden soil to be related to a large orchard recorded on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map as covering a large plot to the north and west of the farm buildings; and the pottery comprised wasters, the discarded debris from an adjacent medieval kiln (WSM 35961 and 36024).

A watching brief was undertaken in 2001 of groundworks to the east and west of the present development site. A large dump of pottery, brick and tile was found, of 13th to 16th century date, concentrated on the western half of the plot, close to a half-timbered late 14th-early 15th century house (WSM 30486). Two main phases of dumping were distinguished: a small quantity of ceramic material (mostly pottery) in the 13th to 14th century; and substantial water dumps in the 15th and 16th century, which provides a strong argument for the existence of a kiln nearby. There was also evidence for clay pitting and dumping of Malvernian gravels, presumably to provide the raw material for pottery manufacture (WSM 30572).

There is a record of an earlier watching brief having been undertaken at Brickwalls Farm in 1994, during which no archaeology was recorded. Unfortunately the record is incomplete, so it is unclear exactly what area was observed or the depth of the investigations (WSM 21521). A watching brief of groundworks associated with the construction of a conservatory at the Coach House, to the east of the site, was recommended in 1994. However this sadly appears to have been ignored and the site developed without archaeological observation (WSM 21921).

Other evidence of ceramic production on this side of the village includes: a large pit, conjectured to be for clay extraction and backfilled in the 19th-20th centuries at Chestnut Cottage to the west (WSM 31911 and 37239); 'Clay Pits Field' is marked on an estate plan, to the north-east (WSM 23725), probably associated with the kiln identified to the west (WSM 09685); a 15th-16th century pottery kiln at Balcony Orchard, Robert's End (WSM 09685, 29935 and 29939);

The importance of agriculture to the local economy is also evident from the cropmark traces of ridge and furrow – the remains of the medieval practice of strip farming within large communally held fields – which survive around the village (WSM 15103). A large number of scatters of medieval and post-medieval pottery have been recorded around the periphery of the village. It is unclear if these relate to waster dumps or simply were deposited during manuring (WSM 08514, 08515, 08517, 20977, 20978, 25880 and 34760).

The barn toward the site frontage is timber-framed, of three bays, with brick nogging, partly weatherboarded and with corrugated-iron gable-ended roof. The wall-framing is complete except for east end wall; with straight tension-braces and jowled posts. At the west end are the original tie-beam and collar truss with queen-posts and V-struts. The braces below tie-

beams of the other trusses have been removed and above replaced by later king-post trusses. The floor is of stone flags (WSM 30486).

The farmhouse to the west has recently been extensively restored. It was originally thought to be of 17th century date. Earlier investigations revealed a waster heap of tiles possibly contemporary with tiles still on the building. Further work found a brick similar to those used in the construction of the house in a 16th century waster pit. This indicates either that the building is of 16th century origin, with later remodelling in the 18th century, or simply that 16th century material was reused in its construction in the 17th century. The presence of 13th century pottery has been argued to indicate that the farmhouse is built on or close to an earlier building on the site (WSM 30486).

4. Results

4.1 Structural analysis

The trenches and features recorded are shown in Figs 2-4. The results of the structural analysis are presented in Appendix 1.

4.1.1 Phase 1 Natural deposits

The natural matrix consisted of sub-angular and angular yellowish grey gravel and clay, with frequent patches of blue-grey clay, observed at a shallow depth toward the frontage (Plate 2) and at 0.60m below the present ground surface, toward the rear of the plot (Plate 8).

The overlying soil sequence was identified in Area 2 to the rear of the site (Plate 8). It comprised a shallow dark grey gravelly silt topsoil, with frequent brick and mortar inclusions, over mid brown clayey silt with moderate angular stones. The soil sequence was not visible toward the frontage, within Area 1, where a modern barn with a concrete floor slab had previously existed.

4.1.2 Phase 2 Post-medieval and modern deposits

The only features identified, consisted of a small number of pits, within Area 1 toward the frontage: two shallow oval pits, 102 and 110 (Plate 6); a deeper sub-oval pit, 106; a sub-rectangular vertical sided cess pit, 108 (Plate 3); and a shallow linear ditch, aligned west-north-west to east-south-east (in parallel with the road), with a deeper gulley to its north side, 104 (Plates 4 and 5).

Two further modern features were observed along the frontage, aligned approximately parallel with the road. They comprised a 20th century drainage trench with associated brick manhole and an adjacent brick footing, both of which were cut into the natural, 100.

4.2 Artefact analysis, by Angus Crawford

The pottery assemblage retrieved from the excavated area consisted of three sherds of pottery weighing 351g. In addition a near-intact porcelain novelty jug and a small blue glass inkbottle were recovered. The group came from two stratified contexts and could be dated to the modern period onwards (see Table 1). The level of preservation was generally good.

Context	Material	Type	Total	Weight (g)
105	Pottery	Modern	1	62
101	Glass	Vessel	1	43
101	Pottery	modern	1	287
105	Pottery	Modern	2	64

Table 1: Quantification of the assemblage

All sherds have been grouped and quantified according to fabric type (see Table 2). A total of three diagnostic form sherds were present and could be dated accordingly.

Context	Fabric	Fabric common name	Total	Weight
101	81.4	Miscellaneous late stoneware	1	287
105	81.4	Miscellaneous late stoneware	1	22
105	83	Porcelain	1	62
105	85	Stone china	1	42

Table 2: Quantification of the pottery by fabric

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.

All of the finds could be dated to the late 19th to early 20th century. The small range of finds included a blue glass inkwell from context 101, a portion of a stoneware Kieller marmalade jar (fabric 81.4, context 105), a rim sherd from a modern stone china cup (fabric 85, context 105) and the base of a stoneware jar (fabric 81.4, context 101). A well-preserved miniature novelty jug, similar to larger 'Toby' types, was made of porcelain (fabric 83) and recovered from context 105. No finds were retained at the completion of the project.

5. Synthesis

No significant archaeological features, layers, structures, deposits or horizons were identified, nor artefacts recovered. A small number of pits and a linear ditch were recorded toward the frontage (Area 1). No features were identified along the west boundary to the rear (Area 2). The few finds retrieved, from two pits toward the frontage, were of late 19th to early 20th century date. A small number of pits and a linear ditch may be dated by association and the character of their fills.

This negative result is unexpected, especially the total lack of even residual medieval pottery or tile, given the site's location and the wealth of evidence for medieval kiln activity in the immediate vicinity (Section 3 above). However the actual area observed was of only small size; Area 1 had previously been occupied by a concrete slab for a modern barn, which had involved the previous removal of soils (Plate 1); while Area 2 comprised only narrow foundation trenches without an initial soil strip (Plate 7). Thus it is considered that there is still the potential for the site to contain archaeological remains, which were not exposed during this development.

6. Publication summary

The Service has a professional obligation to publish the results of archaeological projects within a reasonable period of time. To this end, the Service intends to use this summary as the basis for publication through local or regional journals. The client is requested to consider the content of this section as being acceptable for such publication.

Archaeological investigations were undertaken on behalf of Mr Peter Styles client at Brickwalls Farm, Gilberts Lane, Hanley Swan, Worcestershire (NGR: SO 8232 4227; HER ref. WSM 37563). Two areas of groundworks were monitored: Area 1: the removal of a concrete slab and the soil strip toward the frontage; and Area 2: narrow foundation trenches along the west boundary to the rear. No significant archaeological features, layers, structures, deposits or horizons were identified, nor artefacts recovered. The few finds retrieved, from two pits toward the frontage, were of late 19th to early 20th century date. A small number of pits and a linear ditch may be dated by association and the character of their fills.

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7. Acknowledgements

The Service would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, Mr Peter Styles, Chris Bradshaw, and Mike Glyde (Worcestershire County Council Historic Environment Planning Advisor).

8. Personnel

The report preparation was led by Tom Vaughan. The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Tom Rogers. Fieldwork was undertaken by Tom Rogers and Adam Lee, finds analysis by Angus Crawford and illustration by Tom Rogers and Tom Vaughan.

9. Bibliography

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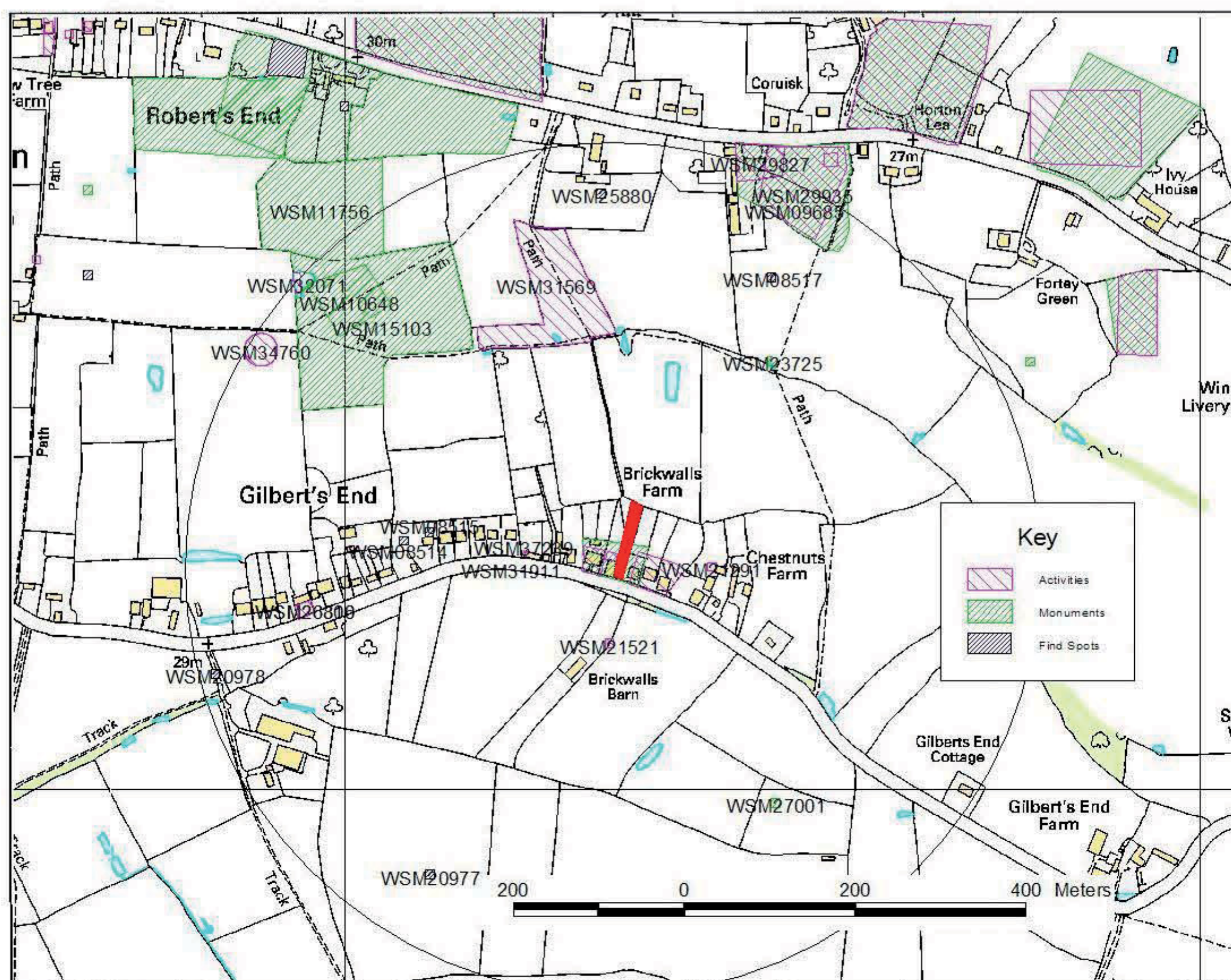
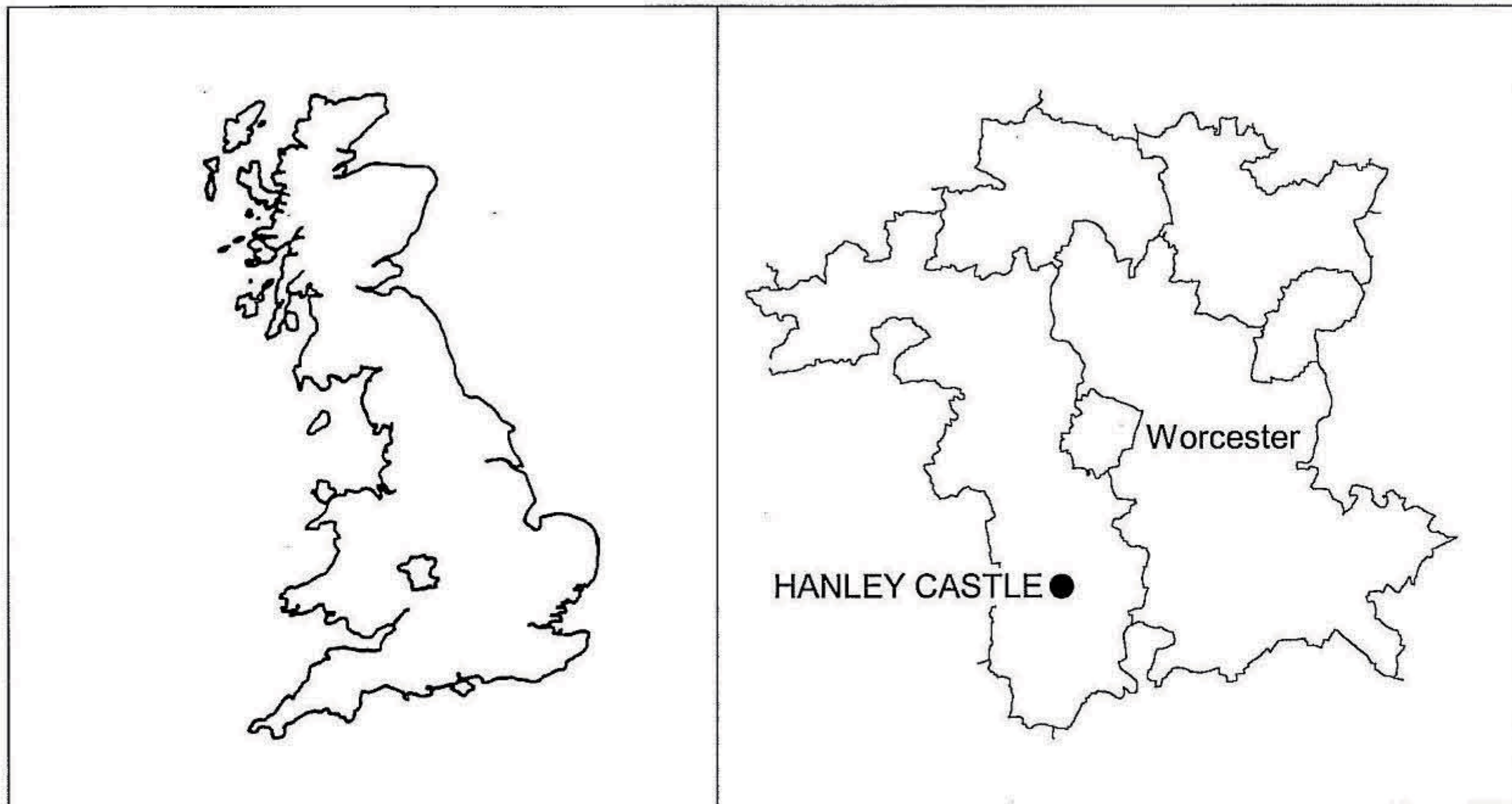
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Soil Survey of England and Wales, 1983 Midland and Western England, sheet 3, scale 1:250,000 + *Legend for the 1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales (A brief explanation of the constituent soil associations)*

Figures



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Figure 1: Site location and HER data



Figure 2 Location of areas

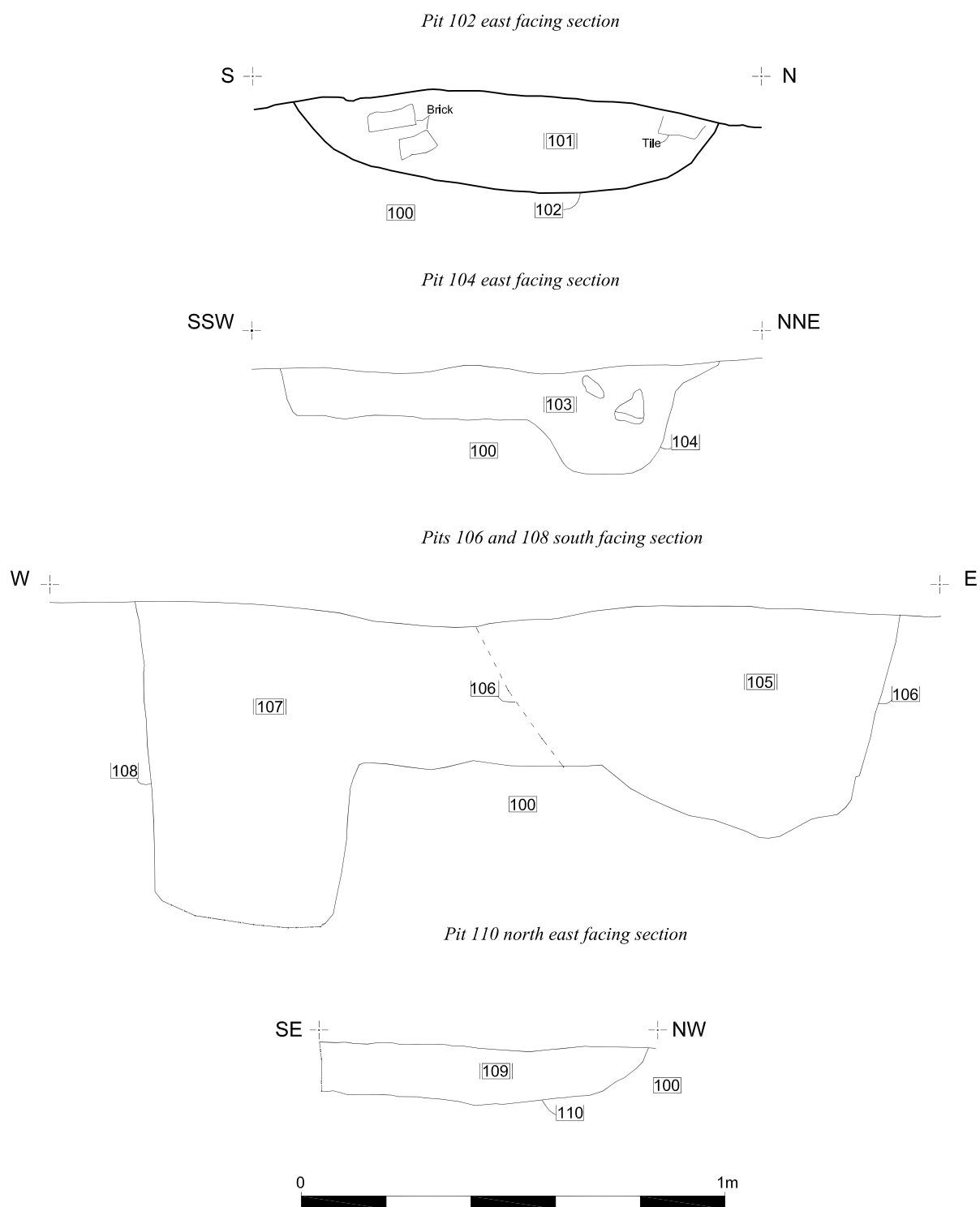


Figure 4 Area 1 sections

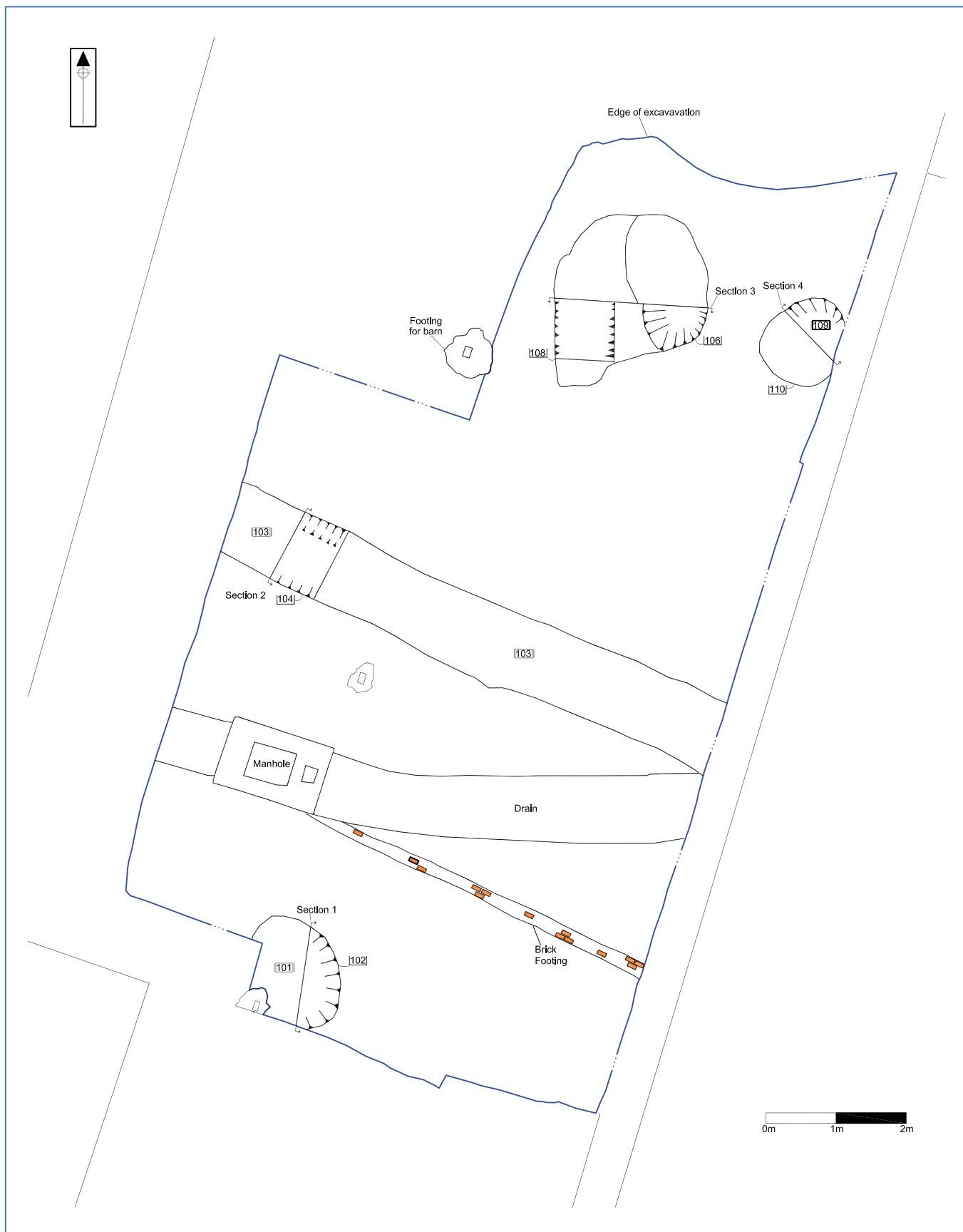


Figure 3 Plan of Area 1

Plates



Plate 1: Area 1, general shot after breaking up of concrete slab, view south-south-west



Plate 2: Area 1, general shot after soil strip, view south



Plate 3: Area 1, pits 106 and 108, view north



Plate 4: Area 1 linear 104, view west-north-west



Plate 5: Area 1, linear 104, view east-south-east



Plate 6: Area 1, pit 102, view west



Plate 7: Area 2, general shot, view west-south-west



Plate 8: Area 2, sample section

Appendix 1 Context descriptions

Area 1

Site area: strip for house foundations; along the street frontage

Maximum dimensions: Length: 12.85m Width: 6.95m

Orientation: approx. north-south

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
100	Natural	Yellowish grey sub-angular & angular gravel within clay matrix; frequent patches of bluish grey clay.	0m+
101	Fill	Dark brownish grey silty gravel; not compact or cohesive; extensive post-medieval/19 th -20 th century ceramic, glass, tile, brick and bottle debris. Fill of 102.	0m – 0.22m
102	Pit	Sub-oval cut, shallow, gentle break of slope and concave sides to a flat base. Diameter 0.96; depth 0.22m. Partly excavated – continues under south trench baulk. Filled by 101.	0m – 0.22m
103	Fill	Light grey gravel and clay; Moderately compact; Occasional charcoal flecks, brick and tile, post-medieval pottery. Fill of 104.	0m-0.28m
104	Ditch	Shallow linear ditch with deeper gully along north edge; Sharp break of slope; steep sides to flat bottom; base rounded to north edge; aligned west-north-west to east-south-east. Filled by 103. 1.03m wide; 0.10-0.25m deep.	0m-0.28m
105	Fill	Dark greyish brown silty clay; frequent charcoal, brick and tile, rounded stones and china. Moderately compact. Fill of 106.	0m – 0.55m
106	Pit	Oval cut; steep/near vertical sharp break of slope; ill defined to west; rounded base. Filled by 105. Cuts 107/108. Approx. 1m wide; 1.30m long; 0.54m deep.	0m – 0.55m
107	Fill	Light greyish brown silty clay with frequent small subangular stones, charcoal and china frags. Compact. Fill of 108. Cut by 106.	0m – 0.7m
108	Pit	Irregular shaped cut. Very steep sided, machine cut? Not fully excavated due to water/cess at base. Filled by 107. Adjacent to 106. 0.49m wide; approx. 2.15m long; >0.75m deep.	0m – 0.7m
109	Fill	Light grey brown silty clay with frequent small subangular stones, charcoal and china frags. Compact. Fill of 110.	0m – 0.13m
110	Pit	Sub-oval shallow cut, with gradually sloping sides to a flat base. Filled by 109. >0.77m diameter.	0m – 0.13m

Area 2

Site area: foundations for new garage; along west side of site

Maximum dimensions: Length: 31.25m Width: 0.45-0.55m Depth: 1m

Orientation: approx. north-south

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
111	Topsoil	Dark grey gravely silt; frequent mortar and brick fragments; mot compact or cohesive.	0.00-0.30m
112	Subsoil	Mid brown clayey silt; moderate angular stones; compact.	0.30-0.60m
100	Natural	Yellowish grey sub-angular & angular gravel within clay matrix; frequent patches of bluish grey clay.	0.60m +

Appendix 2 Technical information

The archive

The archive consists of:

3	Fieldwork progress records AS2
1	Photographic records AS3
19	Digital photographs
1	Drawing number catalogues AS4
1	Context number catalogues AS5
4	Abbreviated context records AS40
2	Trench record sheets AS41
6	Scale drawings
1	Computer disk

The project archive is intended to be placed at:

Worcestershire County Museum
Hartlebury Castle
Hartlebury
Near Kidderminster
Worcestershire DY11 7XZ
Tel Hartlebury (01299) 250416

Summary of data for Worcestershire HER

Date range	Material	Type	Total	Weight	Specialist report?	Important research assemblage ?
L19-E20thC	Glass	Vessel	1	43	N	N
L19-E20thC	Pottery	Moderm	3	126	N	N
L19-E20thC	Pottery	modern	1	287	N	N

Table 3: Summary of the assemblage
