

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**LAND OFF CHURCH LANE,  
DEFFORD, WORCESTERSHIRE  
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

**NGR SO 91810 43380**

*On behalf of*

*Thorneloe Developments Ltd*

**OCTOBER 2016**

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**REPORT FOR** Thorneloe Developments Ltd  
c/o Stansgate Planning  
9 The Courtyard  
Timothy's Bridge Road  
Stratford-upon-Avon  
CV37 9NP

**PREPARED BY** Gavin Davis

**ILLUSTRATION BY** Autumn Robson , Gavin Davis

**EDITED BY** John Moore

**AUTHORISED BY** John Moore

**FIELDWORK** 6<sup>th</sup> October 2016  
Gavin Davis, Melanie Harvell, Sote Angeleski

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**ENQUIRES TO** John Moore Heritage Services  
Hill View  
Woodperry Road  
Beckley  
Oxfordshire OX3 9UZ

Tel: 01865 358300  
Email: [info@jmheritageservices.co.uk](mailto:info@jmheritageservices.co.uk)

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**Archive Location** The archive currently is maintained by John Moore  
Heritage Services and will be transferred to  
Worcestershire Museum

**CONTENTS**

	<b>Page</b>
<b>SUMMARY</b>	
<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Site Location	1
1.2 Planning Background	1
1.3 Archaeological Background	1
<b>2. AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3. STRATEGY</b>	<b>4</b>
3.1 Research Design	4
3.2 Methodology	4
<b>4. RESULTS</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>5. FINDS</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>6. DISCUSSION</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>7. ARCHIVE</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>8. BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>APPENDIX 1</b> Context Inventory	<b>7</b>
<b>FIGURES</b>	
Figure 1. Site location	2
Figure 2. Trench 3 plan and section	5

## **SUMMARY**

*John Moore Heritage Services carried out an archaeological evaluation on land off Church lane, Defford, Worcestershire. The evaluation revealed one undated negative feature towards the south of the site which was identified as a ditch terminus or a pit. No finds were recovered from the site.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)**

The development site is located on the east side of Church Lane, on the northern edge of the village of Defford, at NGR SO 91810 43380, and consists of a parcel of pasture/rough scrub with further pasture to the north, residential properties to the east, south and southwest, and the Millennium Green amenity space to the west. The underlying geology is the Charmouth Mudstone Formation, which outcrops to the surface without any recorded overlying superficial deposits (NERC 2016). This is overlain by lime-rich loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage (Soilscapes 2016).

### **1.2 Planning Background**

Outline planning permission has been granted by Wychavon District Council for five dwellings and new access (W/15/01502/OU) at Land of Church Lane, Defford. A condition was attached to permission saying that no development should take place until a programme of archaeological work, including a Written Scheme of Investigation, had been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing.

### **1.3 Archaeological Background**

A few areas of Palaeolithic potential (69050 BC to 55050 BC) have been identified by research on environmental remains containing significant Ipswichian organic deposits (WSM56940: SO 9718 4615), and Neanderthal and early Homo Sapien artefacts (WSM56946: SO 9843 4773), (WSM56949: SO 9457 3606), (WSM56948: SO 9124 4051).

An Iron Age to Roman settlement has been identified by artefact scatter, cropmarks and terrestrial geophysical evidence to the south of the village (WSM30225: SO 9179 4271) and a Late Iron Age sherd of pottery identified as Malvernian Tubby Cooking Pot, (WSM32183: SO 9082 4324) was found on land west of Defford village.

A Romano-British bronze coin, possibly of Marcus Aurelius (161-180 AD), was found 'in a gutter' in Birlingham (WSM02441: SO 9352 4297). Field walking opposite the Railway Inn produced Roman pottery sherds and an architectural element (WSM30370: SO 9179 4271). Subtle linear and curvilinear cropmarks partially masked by areas of deeper soil, suggest occupation of the area north of the village during the Roman period (WSM30508: SO 9184 4351). A buried Lias wall found in Defford is probably dated to Roman period (WSM30724: SO 9198 4348).

There is documentary evidence of pre-conquest settlement/occupation of Defford (WSM37450: SO 9172 4324). The OS map of 2003 suggests that the polygon boundary is subjective and based upon current and nineteenth century settlement boundary. Also according to VCH it seems that Defford formed part of the earliest endowments of Pershore Abbey, 10 manses there being confirmed to the Abbey by the so called charter of King Edgar, dated 972 (VCH 1924).

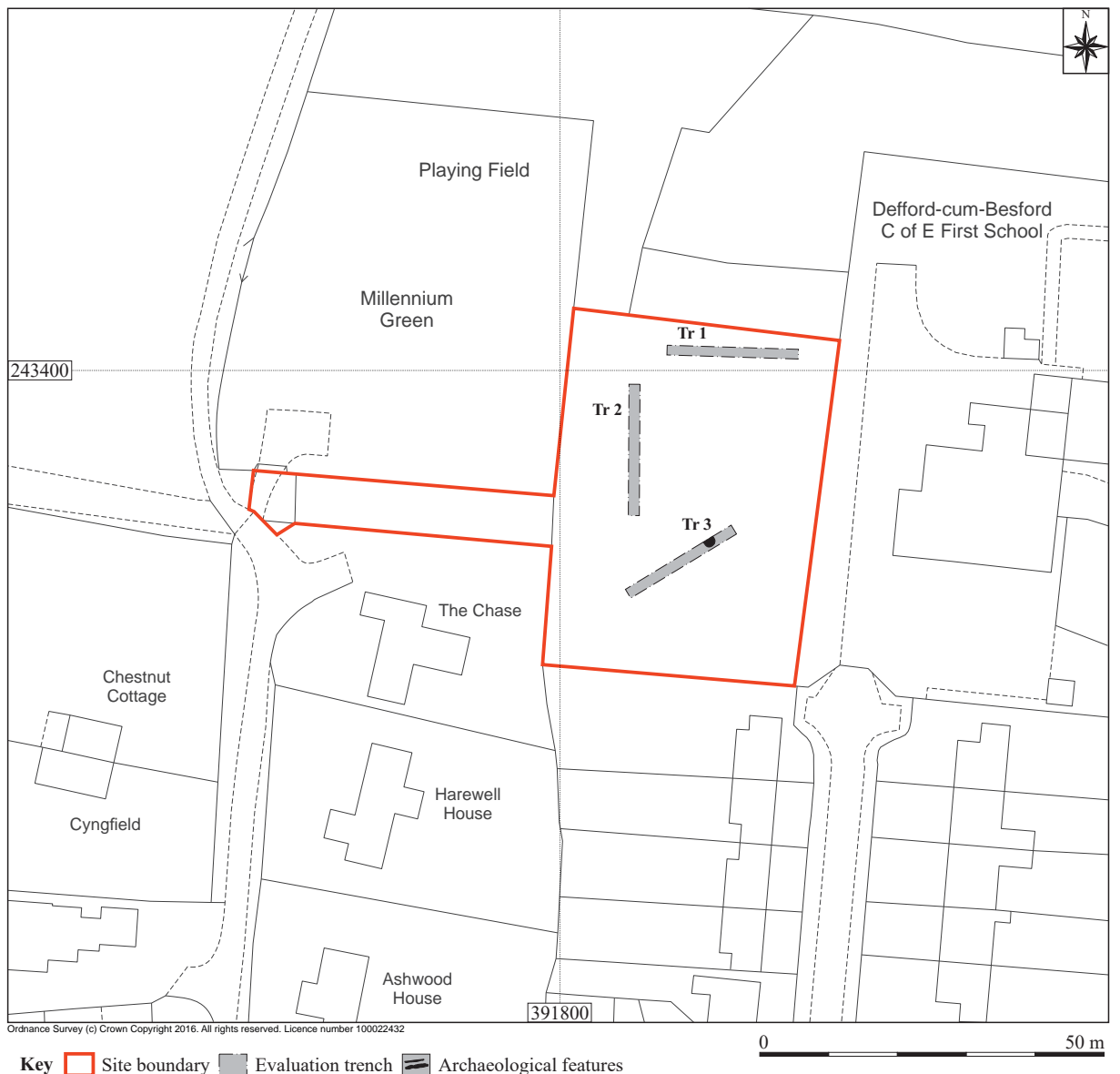
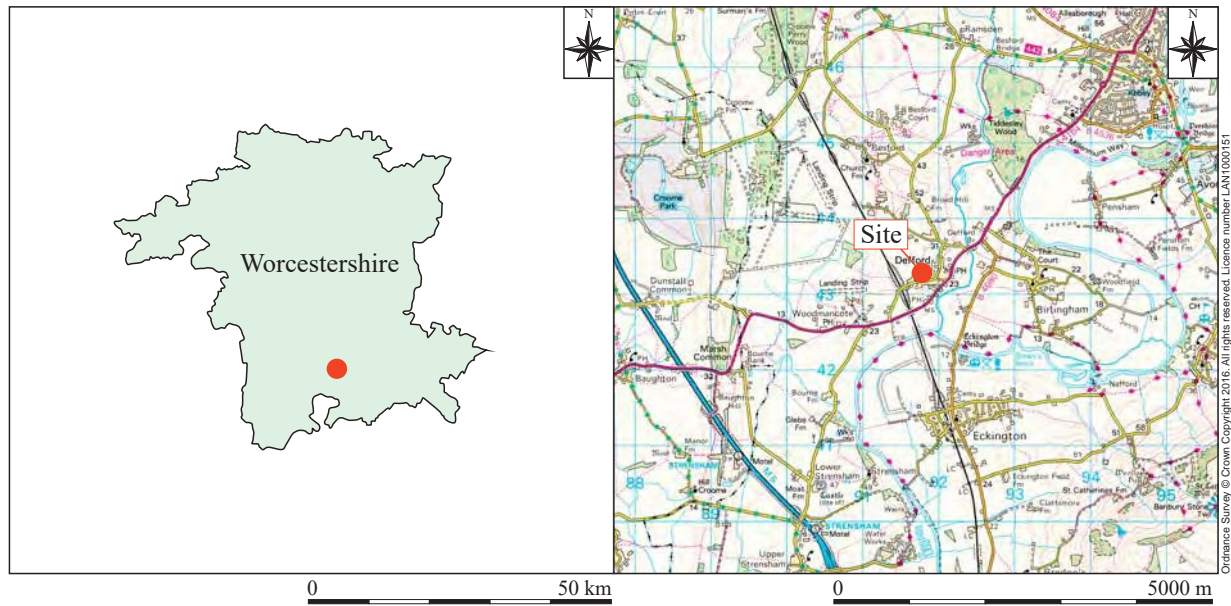


Figure 1: Site location

An evaluation at Harpley Road produced medieval and post-medieval pottery (14<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> century) (FWR5886: SO 9171 4316) and another evaluation to the south of Harpley Road also produced pottery (15<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> century AD), brick and tile (16<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century) and animal bones (WSM57448: SO 9163 4309).

Agricultural features (ridge and furrow) depicted on aerial photos of 1945 are located south-east of Defford Airfield (WSM31128: SO 9165 4377), (WSM31129: SO 9196 365), (WSM31130: SO 9155 4338) (WSM31134: SO 9131 4327).

There is a bibliographic reference of a site of post medieval stocks near the church in Defford, (WSM07701: SO 9172 4324) dated 1540-1900 AD. A cobbled surface, adjacent to Church Road (WSM58279: SO 9169 4321) is dated between 17th to 18th century.

There is a site of a Post-medieval Farm, identified to the east of Church Lane in Defford (WSM27246: SO 9177 4332). An archaeological evaluation revealed cut features, building remains, and pottery consistent with occupation and use of the site from the 16th to 20th centuries. These features and finds probably relate to farm buildings shown on the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey map. Also a farmyard is visible on the Ordnance Survey mapping up to 1953-64 (WSM46178: SO 9177 4332).

An evaluation on land of The Villa, Harpley Road produced Post-medieval (17th to 18th century and 16th to 17th century) pottery (FWR2755, FWR2756: SO 9169 4320).

There are some sites of farmsteads around the church of Saint James in Defford dated from 19th century and onwards (WSM61247: NGR not recorded) (WSM60209: NGR not recorded), (WSM52559: NGR not recorded), (WSM53597: NGR not recorded).

A possible settlement site of unknown date has been identified to the north of the village (WSM30508: SO 9184 4351). A milestone heavily weathered with no mileage visible (18th to 21st century) is located beside the A4014 west of the Railway Inn (WSM56969: SO 9180 4287).

A metal detecting survey, southeast of Harpley Road, produced two coins (2<sup>nd</sup> c. to 117 AD and 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> c. AD), and more than 20 unidentified metal objects dated between the late Iron Age to late 14<sup>th</sup> century (WSM40461: SO 9146 4283).

The aerial photographs appear to show surviving ridge and furrow running roughly east to west on the site and that of the neighbouring school. This information would suggest that the medieval and Post-medieval village or hamlet of Defford did not extend this far north. There is also evidence that the site was used as an orchard, with some of the plum trees surviving.

## **2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION**

The aims of the investigation as laid out in the Written Scheme of Investigation were as follows:

- To establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the site.

- To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains encountered.
- To assess the ecofactual and environmental potential of the archaeological features and deposits.
- To determine the impact of the proposed development on any remains present.

### **3 STRATEGY**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation (JMHS 2016) agreed with Worcestershire Archaeology and Archive Service, the archaeological advisors to Wychavon District Council.

The recording was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2014).

#### **3.2 Methodology**

An evaluation was carried out comprising three trenches that were slightly under 20m in length and between 1.5 and 1.65m wide.

Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each deposit encountered, with scale plans and section drawings compiled where appropriate. A photographic record was also produced.

### **4 RESULTS (Figure 2)**

All the trenches were blank with the exception of Trench 3 towards the south of the site.

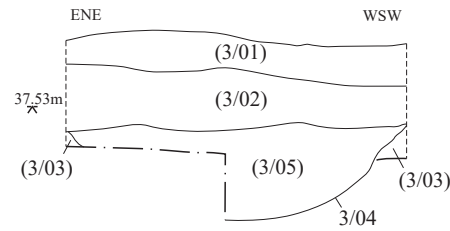
The lowest layer identified in Trench 1 was a hard and compacted red sandy clay with gravel patches (1/03) overlain by a 0.1-0.2m thick red-brown clay loam subsoil with occasional pebble inclusions (1/02). The topsoil was a 0.2-0.35m thick layer of dark brown, friable sandy-loam (1/01).

The lowest layer in Trench 2 was a red-brown sandy clay (2/05). Above this was a, 0.26m thick, dark brown sandy silt loam subsoil with frequent sub rounded pebbles (2/04). Deposited above (2/04) was a 0.26m thick, mid-brown loamy sand old topsoil layer (2/03). Overlying this was a 0.12m thick layer of mid grey-brown clay loam topsoil (2/02). The uppermost layer was a 0.19 thick layer of dark brown sandy loam with frequent rooting and vegetation (2/01).





Trench 3



Section 3.01

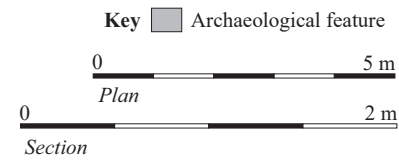


Figure 2: Trench 3 and section

The lowest layer in Trench 3 was a red sandy natural clay with gravel inclusions (3/03). Cut into this was large pit or a terminus to a ditch 3/04. The cut was sub-rounded with concave sides and a flattish base. It was 0.49m deep, and its known dimensions were 1.76m by greater than 1.15m. The features contained a single fill of dark brown clay that was very hard and compacted and contained no inclusions (3/05). Above this was a 0.28m thick layer of brown sandy loam with frequent gravel inclusions (3/02) and deposited above that layer was a 0.2m thick layer of dark brown sandy loam with frequent rooting (3/01).

## **5 FINDS**

No finds were recovered from the site.

## **6 DISCUSSION**

The subsoil deposits on the site were very hard and compacted suggesting that the area had been under pasture for a long period of time. There was only one feature identified during the evaluation. This was either a pit or the terminus to a ditch. The fill of the feature contained no finds and no other finds were recovered from the site

## **7 ARCHIVE**

### **Archive Contents**

The archive consists of the following:

#### Paper record

The project brief  
Written scheme of investigation  
The project report  
The primary site record

#### Physical record

None

The archive currently is maintained by John Moore Heritage Services and will be transferred to Worcestershire Museum.

## **8 BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists 2014 *Standards and Guidance for an archaeological field evaluation*

Context	Type	Description	Depth	Width	Length	Finds	Interpretation	Date
<b>Trench 1</b>								
1/01	Deposit	Dark brown sandy loam	0.2-0.35m	> 1.6m	>19m	None	Topsoil	Modern
1/02	Deposit	Mid red brown clay loam with occasional pebbles	0.1-0.2m	> 1.6m	>19m	None	Subsoil	Undated
1/03	Deposit	Hard red brown sandy clay with gravel patches	>0.1m	> 1.6m	>19m	None	Natural	Undated
<b>Trench 2</b>								
2/01	Deposit	Dark brown sandy loam	0.16m	> 1.6m	>19m	None	Topsoil	Modern
2/02	Deposit	Mid greyish Brown sandy clay loam with rare pebbles	0.12m	> 1.6m	>19m	None	Topsoil	Modern
2/03	Deposit	Brown Loamy sand with rare stone	0.26m	> 1.6m	>19m	None	Topsoil A horizon	Modern
2/04	Deposit	Dark brown sandy slit loam with frequent rounded pebbles	0.26m	> 1.6m	>19m	None	Subsoil B horizon	Undated
2/05	Deposit	Hard red brown sandy clay with gravel patches	>0.1m	> 1.6m	>19m	=	Natural	-
<b>Trench 3</b>								
3/01	Deposit	Dark brown sandy loam.	0.1m	> 1.6m	>19m	None	Topsoil	Modern
3/02	Deposit	Brown sandy loam with frequent pebbles	0.28m	> 1.6m	>19m	None	Subsoil	
3/03	Deposit	Hard red brown sandy clay with gravel patches	>0.1m	> 1.6m	>19m	-	Natural	-
3/04	Cut	Sub rounded with concave sides and flattish base	0.49	1.76m	>1.15m	-	Pit or ditch terminus	Undated
3/05	Fill	Hard very dark brown clay	0.49m	1.76m	>1.15m	None	Fill of ditch terminus or pit	Undated