MANOR FARM, LUDDINGTON, WARWICKSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

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CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION ................................................................. 4
   1.1 Introduction ............................................................... 4
   1.2 Geology and Topography ............................................. 4
   1.3 Archaeological Background ....................................... 5
   1.4 Methodology ............................................................. 5

2. EVALUATION RESULTS .................................................. 6
   2.1 General ........................................................................ 6
   2.2 Trench 1 ................................................................... 6
   2.3 Trench 2 ................................................................... 6
   2.4 Trench 3 ................................................................... 7

3. ASSESSMENT OF RESULTS .......................................... 7

4. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ............................................... 8

5. BIBLIOGRAPHY ............................................................. 8

APPENDIX 1 ....................................................................... 14

Finds List and Assessment .................................................. 14
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1 Location plan ..................................................................................................... 9
Figure 2 Study area showing trench location and cropmark site ................................. 10
Figure 3 Trench 1, plan and section ............................................................................. 11
Figure 4 Trench 2, plan and section ............................................................................. 12
Figure 5 Trench 3, plan and section ............................................................................. 13
SUMMARY

In November 1998 Cotswold Archaeological Trust undertook an archaeological evaluation on land at Manor Farm, Luddington, Warwickshire. The site lies immediately to the south-east of a large complex of cropmarks which has been interpreted as a Roman villa or sophisticated native style settlement.

Three evaluation trenches were excavated, one of which located a linear cropmark feature previously identified from aerial photographs and a further archaeological feature. The two remaining trenches were devoid of archaeological features.
1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 This report represents the results of an archaeological evaluation conducted between the 4\textsuperscript{th} and the 5\textsuperscript{th} November 1998 on land at Manor Farm, Luddington, Warwickshire (centred on NGR SP 1590 5220) (Fig. 1). The project was commissioned by Stansgate Planning Consultants on behalf of Bomford Limited and was required to provide sufficient archaeological information for the Local Planning Authority to assess the implications of the proposal to develop the site prior to determination of a planning application.

1.1.2 The archaeological evaluation sought to assess the depth and preservation of archaeological deposits within an area where it is proposed to construct a new agricultural building.

1.1.3 The evaluation was conducted in compliance with the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations* (IFA 1994), the *Management of Archaeological Projects* (MAP 2) issued by English Heritage (1991), and the *Project Design for an Archaeological Evaluation* (Cotswold Archaeological Trust 1998). A brief for archaeological work was issued by Warwickshire County Council on the 28\textsuperscript{th} September 1998 and, in response, a Project Design was submitted to Warwickshire County Council on the 26\textsuperscript{th} October 1998. It was approved by them on the 26\textsuperscript{th} October 1998.

1.2 Geology and Topography

1.2.1 The underlying geology of the study area comprises 2\textsuperscript{nd} Terrace River Gravels (BGS 1974).

1.2.2 The study area is bounded to the north, east, and west by land under horticultural usage, and to the south by the existing farm buildings and hard standing. The study area comprises 0.375ha, slopes slightly upward to the
north, and lies at a height of between 38.0m and 39.0m OD.

1.3 Archaeological Background

1.3.1 The development area comprises land immediately to the south-east of a complex of cropmarks, including enclosures and linear features (SMR WA 1796) (Fig. 2). Roman pottery, building debris, and coins have been recovered from the site, which has been interpreted as a villa or sophisticated native style settlement. Whilst the majority of the cropmarks lie outside the application area, one linear feature runs north to south through the centre of it. Consultation of the aerial photographs at the Warwickshire SMR suggested that this feature comprised two parallel linear features, possibly representing a trackway.

1.4 Methodology

1.4.1 The aim of the evaluation was to establish whether archaeological deposits lay within the study area and, if so, to establish their extent, date, character, condition, significance, and quality.

1.4.2 Three trenches were excavated in the positions shown (Fig. 2). Trenches 1 and 2 measured 20m by 1.6 m and Trench 3 10m by 1.6m. This gave a c 2% sample of the site. All recording was undertaken in accordance with the CAT Technical Manual; Site Recording Manual. All artefacts recovered were retained for processing and analysis in accordance with the CAT Technical Manual; Treatment of Finds immediately after Excavation and are listed in Appendix 1. The finds will be deposited, with the landowner’s consent, with Warwickshire Museum Service.
2. EVALUATION RESULTS

2.1 General

2.1.1 Trenches 1, 2, and 3 were excavated to the natural substrate. This comprised medium brown-red sandy gravels and was encountered at depths of between 0.30m and 0.50m.

2.2 Trench 1

2.2.1 In trench 1 the natural substrate (103) was exposed at a depth of 0.40m (Fig. 3). At the south end of the trench the natural substrate was of a slightly different character, being a red-grey gravelly sand. The natural substrate was overlaid by 0.10m of a dark red-brown sand silt (102) which appeared to be an interface layer derived from the mixing of ploughsoil (101) and natural substrate (103). The interface layer was overlain by 0.30m of a dark grey-brown clay silt ploughsoil (101).

2.3 Trench 2

2.3.1 In this trench the natural substrate (203) was exposed at a depth of 0.40m (Fig. 4). The natural substrate was uniform across the trench and was overlain by interface layer (202) a dark red-brown sand silt 0.10m in thickness. At the west end of the trench a feature of indeterminate character cut the natural substrate and the interface layer. It was at least 0.70m in width and 0.20m in depth and was interpreted either as the terminus of a linear feature orientated north-south or a large pit. It was filled by (213) a dark red-brown silty sand from which no finds were recovered.

2.2.2 Both the interface layer and the natural substrate were cut by two parallel ditches running north to south through the trench. Ditch [206] was 2.80m in width and 0.30m in depth with gently sloping sides and a flat base. At the centre of the base there was a narrow channel 0.20m in width and 0.05 m in depth. The fill of the ditch (207) comprised a medium grey-brown clay silt.
and appeared to be derived from the re-deposition of the natural substrate. This fill had then been cut by ditch [204] which was 1.38m in width and 0.20m in depth. The fill (205) was a dark red-brown silty sand. Ditch [210] 7.5m to the east exhibited a similar pattern to the above. The feature was 2.00m in width and 0.24m deep it had gently sloping sides and a v-shaped form, with no central gully. The fill (211) was the same as (207). Again a later ditch [208] had been recut on the eastern side of the feature. This was 1.10m in width and 0.10m in depth and the fill (209) was the same as that of (205). The interface layer was overlain by 0.30m of a dark grey-brown clay silt ploughsoil (201). Unfortunately no dating evidence was recovered during the excavation of the above features.

2.4 Trench 3

2.4.1 In this trench the natural substrate (303) was exposed at a depth of between 0.30m at the north and 0.50m at the south end of the trench. (Fig. 5). The natural substrate was uniform across the trench and was overlain by interface layer (302) a dark red-brown sand silt 0.10m in thickness. The interface layer was overlain by between 0.20m and 0.40m of ploughsoil (301). A field drain running north-west to south-east was the only feature identified in the trench.

3. ASSESSMENT OF RESULTS

3.1 The linear feature identified as a cropmark in aerial photographs running from the settlement to the study area was identified in evaluation Trench 2 as the double ditch feature comprising of [206] and [210]. The fact that the feature has been found to comprise two ditches is likely to support the argument that the feature is a trackway rather than an enclosure ditch. The re-cutting of the earlier ditches by [204] and [208] demonstrates that the trackway was in use for a substantial period of time allowing natural silting of the ditches followed by re-cutting and more deliberate back filling at a later date. It is unfortunate that no dating evidence was recovered from any of the above features but, given their co-relation with the aerial photographic evidence, a Roman date seem certain.
3.2 Identification of a feature in close proximity to the trackway indicates that there was further archaeological activity within the study area, although this does not appear to have been particularly intensive given the lack of other archaeological evidence in Trenches 1 and 3.

3.3 The archaeological evaluation has broadly achieved the aims set out in the project design. The extent and character of the archaeological deposits have been assessed and this information will now allow the impact of the proposed development to be gauged by the archaeological advisors to the Local Planning Authority.

4. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Cotswold Archaeological Trust would like to thank Mr Keith Williams of Stansgate Planning Consultants and Mr Douglas Moir of Warwickshire County Council for their assistance during the course of this project.

Fieldwork was carried out by Laurent Coleman and Vannessa Clarke. This report was compiled by Laurent Coleman and the illustrations prepared by Rick Morton.

5. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Warwickshire County Council, 1998 Brief for Archaeological Field Evaluation
Figure 1 Location plan
Figure 2 Study area showing trench location and cropmark site
Figure 3 Trench 1, plan and section
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Figure 5 Trench 3, plan and section
APPENDIX 1

Finds List and Assessment

(208) 3 bone fragments 4g
      4 cinder fragments 1g

(211) 3 coal fragments 1g
Fig. 1 Location plan