

The Historical Landscape of Stourbridge's Green Belt - Addendum 1

Compiled by

K James BSc (HONS), MSc, PhD, FIAP

Covering:

Call for Sites revisions, 2020

Additional archaeological detail, 2019–20

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Cover image: An approximate representation of the residential and industrial development around Stourbridge from c.1814 to c.2008. Adapted from: Ordnance Survey surveyor's drawing of Stourbridge, Amblecote, Halesowen and Hagley (1814); Ordnance Survey 6" County Series maps (1903 and 1948); Stourbridge Planning Department's *Development of Stourbridge* map (1963), and Ordnance Survey 1:25000 Explorer sheet 219 (2008).

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This document supplements *The Historical Landscape of Stourbridge's Green Belt*, revision 01c dated 30th October 2019. The following notes should be read in conjunction with the specified pages of the original report. This addendum contains its own independently numbered reference scheme.

PAGE 1: Call for Sites

The Black Country *Call for Sites* exercise was carried out initially in 2018–9 and the resulting site map is reproduced on page 1 of revision 01c of *The Historical Landscape of Stourbridge's Green Belt* dated 30th October 2019.

The *Call for Sites* was repeated by the four Black Country local authorities during 2020 and a modified plan and list of sites/submissions was made available online¹. During this process, some of the sites which had formerly been submitted for potential development were withdrawn, and other sites added. Amongst the latter were sites that had been submitted by residents and others for potential designation as Local Green Spaces. The list of submissions employs the following colour coding:

Blue = New submission
Red = Withdrawn submission
White = Unchanged submission

In the new scheme, each site is allocated a new Identification (ID) number beginning with the digits '10'. Where a site in the new listing corresponds to a site in the original listing, its original ID number was simply appended to this '10'. Thus, for example, the Clent View Road site, which was formerly site 280, became site 10280 in the new numbering scheme. All new site submissions were allocated completely new site IDs.

The plan accompanying the list of submissions is potentially confusing as the sites depicted are not colour coded. They are all shown in the same shade of 'transparent' blue; and where two or more sites overlap a darker blue shade is produced on the plan. Neither are they labelled with their ID numbers (unless one clicks on a particular site). It is, therefore, difficult to distinguish 'building' submissions from 'green-space' submissions. Figure 1 attempts to clarify the situation for sites in the vicinity of Stourbridge by means of additional labels and colouring. It seems that the building proposal for The Three Fields site (264) has been withdrawn and replaced with a Local Green Space submission designated 10511.

PAGE 8–11, SECTION 3.1: Racecourse Lane / Worcester Lane...

Additional and revised archaeological detail, as follows:

a) Heat-cracked stones

Heat-cracked stones, which heated water for industrial process (e.g. steaming wood) or for domestic uses (cooking, brewing or bathing), have been found distributed widely over the Buckbury region², even outside the Archaeological Priority Area 39 proposed in the 2019 Historic Landscape Characterisation Study commissioned by the four Black Country Authorities.³ Heat-cracked stones and related artefacts have been conventionally assigned to Bronze Age occupation, such as that found at Treherne's Farm near the southern extremity of site (10)114, but there is a growing body of evidence to suggest that this technology was used from the Mesolithic through to the Romano-British period. Such a wide distribution of heat-cracked stones suggests equally wide-spread prehistoric, and perhaps Romano-British, land use within site (10)114.

PAGE 12–13, SECTION 3.3: Pedmore Lane on Wychbury Hill

Additional and revised archaeological detail, as follows:

a) Fogou

The two Fogou mentioned on p13 were recorded, as 'souterrains', by the Wychbury Archaeological Society in the 1980s.⁴ They are located within Roundhill Wood about 600m east of the hill fort and, thus, fall outside of Dudley Borough. Indeed, they fall outside any of Dudley MBC's or Worcestershire's *Call for Sites* submissions. Nevertheless, they do illustrate that valuable archaeological remains exist within a considerable radius of the main ramparts of the hill-fort.

b) Archaeological features surrounding the hill-fort's ramparts

It is only the very limited area defined by these ramparts which is currently afforded protection as a Scheduled Monument (NHLE 1003820); everything outside the ramparts currently has no statutory protection. Thus, a number of known archaeological features remain unprotected, including: two mounds near the fort's entrance; lynchets outside the fort's northern ramparts; several building platforms; potentially ancient ponds, and the remains of water-management structures.⁵ Several of these features lie within site (10)203 and a newly designated site 10142, which overlaps much of the former site 203, in Dudley Borough. Several heavily eroded, but potentially valuable, 'defensive' earth banks are also unprotected and are partially enveloped within sites 10142 and (10)203 (see Figure 1).

c) Yew Trees

The numerous yew trees around the fort (mainly near its southern ramparts) may also be of archaeological relevance. Yews can live an extraordinarily long time (often well in excess of 1000 years), and there is evidence that yew plantings were associated with religious or ritual activities. Specimens of post-Conquest age are found in many parish church yards, but larger and older yews often seem to reflect British Christian activity prior to the seventh and eighth centuries, perhaps marking the location of 'saints' cells'.⁷ An extremely large yew is known to have existed on the summit of Round Hill to the south-west of the fort until at least 1936. Given its location overlooking the adjacent salt-way (now the A491), this yew may have marked an important meeting place. Although the Round Hill yew falls just outside Dudley Borough, it does again suggest that a wide area around the flanks of Wychbury Hill has been occupied or intensively used since the post-Roman period.

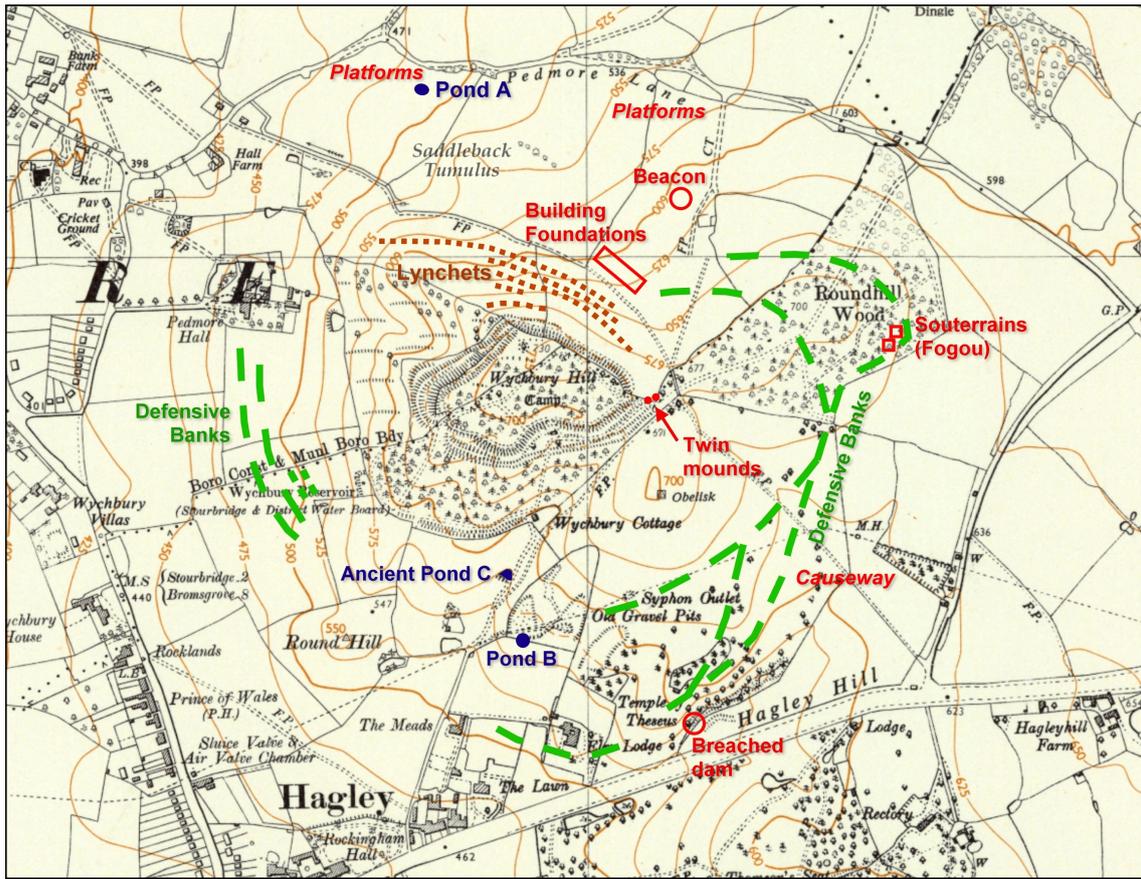


Figure 2 Archaeological features identified by The Wychbury Archaeological Society in 1986 replotted onto the 1:25000 Ordnance Survey base map of 1953⁶.

d) Bronze Terrets

The two bronze terrets (horse-harness fittings) noted on page 13 as being found during the 1884 excavation, are recorded in some sources as one terret plus one bronze ring (presumably a finger ring). Both items are believed to have been recovered from a pit of contemporary date. Burial of horse harness fittings may be related to the Iron Age Dubunnic culture's reverence for the horse, which seems to have been expressed by the deposition in pits of horse-related artefacts and bone fragments at several defended sites within the former territory of the Dobunni.⁸

e) Bronze-Age flint scraper (field-walking find)

Finally, in 2020, a Bronze-Age scraper produced from high-quality black flint — probably mined a considerable distance from Wychbury, near the south or east coast — was discovered, as a surface find, upon one of the aforementioned defensive earth banks near the Hagley Monument obelisk (Figure 3).⁹ This is, again, suggestive of long-standing human activity around the flanks of Wychbury hill and, indeed, wide-spread trading networks up to about 4500 years ago.



Figure 3 (opposite). Bronze Age flint scraper discovered on the flank of Wychbury Hill, 2020. Photograph courtesy of Martyn Cole.

References

1. Black Country *Call for Sites* Plan (2020) <<https://bluefoxtech.co.uk/demos/blackcountry-published-sites/#/center/-2.0952,52.4425/zoom/12.9>>; Black Country *Call for Sites* List of Submissions (2020) <<https://blackcountryplan.dudley.gov.uk/media/16994/call-for-sites-submissions-011220.pdf>>
2. Cole, M. (2020) *Pers. comm.*
3. Oxford Archaeology Ltd. (2020) *Black Country Historic Landscape Characterisation Study, Final Report, Issue 2*, <https://blackcountryplan.dudley.gov.uk/media/13895/comp_black-country-hlc-final-report-30-10-2019-lr_redacted.pdf>.
4. Calder, G. (1986) 'Wychbury Hill', *Wychbury Archaeological Society Transactions*, Wychbury Archaeological Society (Unpublished). 12-24; References 24-30 in Worcestershire HER WSM 00339 <heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/Results_Single.aspx?uid=MWR121&resourceID=1035>
5. Calder, *op. cit.* in note 3
6. Ordnance Survey (1953) *Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 sheet SO98*, <<https://maps.nls.uk/geo/explore/#zoom=16.323333333333334&lat=52.43377&lon=-2.11843&layers=193&b=1>>
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9. Cole, M. (2020) *Pers. comm.*