

COUNTY: HEREFORD & WORCESTER SITE NAME: BECKFORD GRAVEL PIT

DISTRICT: WYCHAVON

SITE REF: 15WS5

Status: Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended

Local Planning Authority: HEREFORD & WORCESTER COUNTY COUNCIL,
Wychavon District Council

National Grid Reference: SO 977362

Area: 0.2 (ha.) 0.5 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 150

1:10,000: SO 93 NE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): –

Date of Last Revision: –

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 24.3.93

Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

New site.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

This site is part of a large complex of gravel workings near Beckford. These workings are in fan gravels associated with run-off from Bredon Hill into the valley of the Carrant Brook, grading into the 'Beckford Terrace' of that river. These gravels have yielded mammalian remains and Palaeolithic artifacts, which reinforce the correlation of the Beckford Terrace with Avon Terrace 2 and the 'Main Terrace' of the Severn. All these are generally assigned to the mid-Devensian (last glacial period), as radiocarbon dates from Beckford confirm. These dates were obtained from plant remains in silt beds within the gravel sequence, beds which also yielded beetle and mollusc remains. The Beckford site is therefore of considerable importance to the Upper Pleistocene stratigraphy and chronology of the English Midlands.

The site is also important in demonstrating inter-relationships of slope, terrace and floodplain deposits which are significant for interpreting environmental change and palaeohydrology in the Severn basin during the Late Devensian. The deposits include solifluction and slope wash sediments with reactive surfaces indicating episodic activity, and these interdigitate down valley with fluvial lithofacies. The site illustrates particularly well the contribution of slope processes to valley sedimentation and the complex interaction of slope and fluvial processes.