



Lowdens Copse extension, Brickworth Quarry, Harestock, Whiteparish, Wiltshire

Archaeological Observations and Recording



Report No. 53448/3/1

September 2016

Lowdens Copse extension, Brickworth Quarry, Harestock, Whiteparish, Wiltshire

Archaeological Observations and Recording, December 2015 –
January 2016

Report No. 53448/3/1

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Project Report Summary Page

Project Details			
OASIS Reference	terraina1-259307		
Project Title	Lowdens Copse Extension, Brickworth Quarry, Harestock, Whiteparish, Wiltshire		
Short Description of Project	<p>Terrain Archaeology carried out a programme of archaeological observations and recording during mechanical soil-stripping of approximately 1.0 ha of land, carried out as a prelude to the expansion of existing bulk sand extraction works into the area of the former Lowdens Copse plantation, RBMR Brickworth Quarry, Harestock, Whiteparish, Wiltshire.</p> <p>No features or deposits of archaeological significance were identified during this work.</p>		
Project Dates	Start: 09-12-2015	End: 20-01-2016	
Previous/Future Work	No/No		
Project Code	53448		
Monument Type and Period	None		
Significant Finds	None		
Project Location			
County/District/Parish	Wiltshire/ Salisbury/ Whiteparish		
Site Address	Lowdens Copse Extension, Brickworth Quarry, Harestock, Whiteparish, Wiltshire SP5 2QE		
Site Coordinates	SU 229 227		
Site Area	10084 m ²		
Height OD	92.6 – 96.1 m aOD		
Project Creators			
Organisation	Terrain Archaeology		
Project Brief Originator	None		
Project Design Originator	Terrain Archaeology		
Project Supervisor	Mike Trevarthen		
Project Manager	Peter Bellamy		
Sponsor or Funding Body	Raymond Brown Minerals & Recycling Ltd.		
Project Archive			
Archive Type	Physical	Digital	Paper
Location/Accession No	None	Terrain Archaeology offices, pending deposition with appropriate repository.	Terrain Archaeology offices, pending deposition with appropriate repository
Contents	None	Digital photography	Diary, report

Land to Rear of 95 to 127 Reforne, Portland, Dorset

Archaeological Observations and Recording during groundworks, October 2015 – July 2016

1. Introduction

1.1 Project introduction

Terrain Archaeology was commissioned by Raymond Brown Minerals & Recycling Ltd. to undertake a programme of archaeological observations and recording during groundworks associated with the expansion of sand extraction works into the former Lowdens Copse plantation, Brickworth Quarry, Harestock, Whiteparish, Wiltshire.

The planning application for the extraction of sand, infilling with imported inert materials and quarry waste and restoration to woodland at original ground levels (Application No. 15/07426/WCM) was granted permission on 4 December 2015. Condition No. 3 states *"The development shall be carried out in strict accordance with all recommendations and procedures set out in the submitted Written Scheme of Investigation for a Programme of Archaeological Work during Sand Extraction, Document No. 3448/0/1, prepared by Terrain Archaeology dated 17/11/2015.*

REASON: To enable sites of archaeological interest to be adequately investigated and recorded."

Fieldwork was carried out intermittently between the 9th -17th December 2015 and the 8th – 20th January 2016 by Mike Trevarthen BA (Hons.) ACIfA.

Terrain Archaeology wishes to acknowledge the continuing assistance and cooperation of Mark Renault (RBMR Site Manager) in the execution of the project.

1.2 Brief

No written brief for the scheme of works was issued by, or on behalf Wiltshire Council. The programme of archaeological works was carried out in accordance with a *Written Scheme of Investigation* (Terrain Archaeology 2015), submitted to and approved by Wiltshire Council prior to the commencement of site works.

1.3 Site Location and Topography

Brickworth quarry lies to the southeast of the A36(T) and the A27 Brickworth Corner junction, about 2km SSW of Whiteparish (Figure 1). The Lowdens Copse extraction site (Figure 2) is centred at SU 229 227 and, prior to quarrying, comprised a low knoll of sand and clay sloping gently downward to the north east and east, immediately north of the now worked-out Round Copse North extraction site (see Terrain Archaeology 2010 and Terrain Archaeology forthcoming). Land immediately to the west of Lowdens Copse has also previously been quarried and backfilled, and is currently the main permitted soil storage area for the quarry. To the north and east, separated by a quarry haul road, is commercial conifer plantation.

1.4 Geology

Bedrock geology is mapped as Sand of the Reading Formation, with no recorded superficial deposits (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>). Previous observations at the Round Copse North quarry site have shown this to be up to c. 20 metres deep and to directly overlie weathered Chalk deposits.

1.5 Historical and Archaeological Background

There have been relatively few prehistoric finds from the area. There are scatters of prehistoric flint found in Brickworth Park and around Whelpley Farm, and some cropmarks of field systems and enclosures which may be prehistoric in date. A number of archaeological discoveries have been made within Brickworth Quarry itself (Cave Penney 2006; Terrain Archaeology 2010; Terrain Archaeology, forthcoming). No Early Prehistoric features have been found, but a very small component of the worked flint collected from Round Copse North may be Mesolithic or Neolithic in date. The majority of the flint from Round Copse North appears to be Early Bronze Age, but only a single pit of Early Bronze Age date has been found. A small urned cremation cemetery of Late Bronze Age date was discovered just to the south of the Early Bronze Age pit, comprising at least six cremation burials deposited in inverted urns (Figure 2).

On the western side of Round Copse North was a concentration of postholes and small pits and a scatter of burnt flint, which probably represents the remains of an Early-Middle Iron Age settlement (Figure 2). A number of undated ditches were also recorded.

There are a number of Roman villas and other Romano-British buildings in the wider area, but little evidence for Roman activity in the Study Area. A number of stray finds around Whiteparish suggest there may have been some late Roman occupation here. In the northern part of the quarry, a concentration of Roman pottery was found (Cave-Penney 2006).

The area appears to have been substantially wooded after the Roman period and became part of Melchet Forest. Much of the forest in this area was cleared during the Saxon period. The settlements in this area appear to have grown from two original Saxon settlements at Frustfield (now Whiteparish) and Cowesfield, with a slightly later settlement at Whelpley (Taylor 1967, 1968).

At Domesday there were five separate land holdings for Frustfield, with the largest settlement at Whelpley. A church was built by around 1190 and subsequently the name of the settlement changed to Whitechurch (first recorded in 1278). The name was changed again to Whiteparish by 1301. During the thirteenth and fourteenth century there was much clearing and enclosing of the forest and new settlements and farms were established, including Blakeswelle (now Blaxwell Farm) by 1242, Chadwell (now Chadwell Farm) by 1268, Newton by 1289 and Harestock by the early fourteenth century.

By the mid sixteenth century most of the population of the parish was concentrated in Whiteparish village. The seventeenth century saw the gradual enclosure of the open fields. Substantial farmhouses were erected and these included Morrisholt Farm (by 1675), Legges (now Chalkpit) Farm (early 17th century), Alderstone Farm (early 17th century), Dry Farm and Gill's Hole Farm (by 1689). During the 18th century many of the farms were rebuilt with bricks and tiles made locally. In 1756 the Salisbury to Romsey road was turnpiked.

1.6 Previous Archaeological fieldwork

There have been three previous episodes of archaeological fieldwork recorded in Brickworth Quarry.

An intermittent watching brief was maintained during topsoil stripping of Brickworth Quarry by the Wiltshire County Archaeology Service from 2003–2007. This revealed a small quantity of prehistoric, Roman and later finds (Cave-Penney 2006). A concentration of Roman pottery was found about 300-400 m north of Lowdens Copse. A spread of burnt flint was found about 35 m west of the southern edge of the site.

A watching brief was undertaken by Terrain Archaeology in September and October 2010, during stump clearance and soil stripping for the north east part of the Brickworth Quarry Round Copse North area. This revealed an undated ditch and a widespread but low-density scatter of flaked flint (Terrain Archaeology 2010).

Between May and December 2012 Terrain Archaeology undertook a further series of watching briefs and limited excavation at Round Copse North. An Early Bronze Age pit, a Late Bronze Age urned cremation cemetery and an

area of Iron Age pits and postholes were identified and investigated, together with a number of undated ditches (Terrain Archaeology forthcoming).

1.7 Aims and Objectives

1.7.1 Aims

- The principal aim of the Archaeological programme of works is to establish and make available information about the archaeological resource existing on the site in fulfilment of the Archaeological Planning Condition.
- The programme of works will aim to place the archaeological results within the local, regional and national context, as appropriate, and advance understanding of the archaeology of the site and its surroundings.

1.7.2 Objectives

- To investigate and record all the in situ archaeological deposits and features revealed during the programme of works to an appropriate professional standard.
- To record recovered artefacts and other materials to an appropriate standard.
- To present the results in a report to the appropriate standard.

1.8 Methods

All archaeological works were undertaken in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (CIfA 2014a).

Initial clearance of PAWS (Plantation on Ancient Woodland Soils) topsoil was carried out by quarry contractors using a small tracked mechanical excavator and small dumper, and had a negligible- to null impact on any buried sub-surface remains.

Removal of felled plantation conifer stumps was carried out under intermittent archaeological observation in stages using a tracked mechanical excavator, with stumps removed from site. Previous monitoring of similar stump-clearance over a much larger area at the adjacent Round Copse North site had indicated that, within the quarry, there was limited value in close archaeological monitoring of such work.

Subsequent removal of up to 0.3 metre of 'subsoil' (actually the relict pre-plantation ploughsoil horizon) was carried out under direct archaeological control using a tracked mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, supported by several 30 tonne wheeled dumpers removing the soil to a dedicated offsite store. All areas were stripped and inspected by the attending archaeologist before being released for dumper-tracking and initial sand extraction.

All deposits revealed during the groundworks, irrespective of their apparent archaeological significance, were recorded using components of the Terrain Archaeology recording system of complementary written, drawn and photographic records. These have been compiled in a stable, cross-referenced and fully indexed archive in accordance with nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; Brown 2011; CIfA 2014b). A photographic record of the work was maintained in digital format, and includes aspects of its setting, conduct and technical detail.

1.9 Archive and Dissemination

1.9.1 Paper Archive

The project archive, comprising written, graphic and photographic records, and appropriate background documentation, is currently stored by Terrain Archaeology under the project code 53448.

1.9.2 Artefacts

No artefacts or other materials were recovered from the site.

1.9.3 Report

A copy of this report will be lodged with Wiltshire Council's Historic Environment Record (HER). The HER is a publicly funded and accessible resource, and deposition of the report will place it, and the project results, in the public domain.

A digital summary of the archive will be placed with the OASIS project (www.oasis.ac.uk) under the reference code *terrains1-259307*. A digital copy of this report will be uploaded for inclusion in the Archaeological Data Service (ADS) online 'grey literature' library.

2. Results

2.1 Natural Deposits

Natural deposits comprised weathered and re-worked Reading Sands, and were noted as loose, unconsolidated sand in varied pale yellows, mid- to light browns and red/orange browns. Sporadic outcrops of pale grey- and yellow-grey pipeclay and sandy clay were present across the site, and scarce outcrops of semi-cemented carstone or heathstone were also seen in places.

2.2 Subsoil

Subsoil across the site comprised c0.3 metre thickness of homogenous mid-brown silty sand with occasional gravel clasts. Many minor localised disturbances were seen, but none were archaeologically significant; all post-dated the last agricultural use of the site and most probably represent plantation-related activity including clear-felling and mechanical removal of felled tree-stumps. A similar soil was noted across the entirety of the Round Copse North extraction zone, and the layer appears to represent a relict pre-plantation agricultural ploughsoil.

2.3 Topsoil

Topsoil across the site comprised c. 0.15 m of dark humic mulch, grading downward to a thin dark grey humic sand with occasional gravel clasts. The deposit is twentieth century in origin, probably representing soil formation during the lifetime of the current plantation, which is believed to have been planted in the 1950s or 1960s.

2.4 Archaeological Features and Deposits

No archaeologically significant features or deposits were identified. Specifically, no evidence was seen for any northerly continuation of the undated shallow linear ditch previously recorded in Phase 1A of Round Copse North, immediately to the south (Terrain Archaeology 2010).

3. Finds

3.1 Worked and Burnt Flint

A small group of flint was recovered during the observations, all residual within the subsoil/relict ploughsoil horizon. This material comprised three struck flint flakes (67g), all unmodified thick primary or secondary flakes with marked percussion points and pronounced bulbs, and five fragments of unworked calcined flint (103g). No significant patterning of find spots was noted.

3.2 Finds Discard

None of the finds recovered from the site are considered to be of greater than **negligible** archival value. None were recovered from securely stratified primary contexts, and neither individual finds nor elements of the overall finds assemblage possess sufficient intrinsic, spatial or analytical value to warrant accession for long-term archival deposition. The finds have therefore been discarded in accordance with the terms of the *Written Scheme of Investigation* (Terrain Archaeology 2015, section 9.3.4).

4. Discussion and Conclusions

4.1 Discussion

No archaeological features or deposits were identified during the fieldwork programme. In particular, no northerly continuation was seen for a shallow, undated ditch (Ditch 107) recorded immediately to the south in 2010 (Terrain Archaeology 2010). It is likely that this feature had been eroded away in this part of the site. There were relatively few finds recovered, confirming a lack of intensive activity in this specific area in the past.

4.2 Conclusions

Although the programme of archaeological observations and recording at Lowdens Copse produced negative results, it has been successful in offsetting the impact of the development on the site's potential heritage value, and has contributed towards our understanding of the past development of the wider Brickworth Quarry landscape. Notwithstanding the high mobility of local soils and the possibility that archaeological remains may have been eroded or truncated as a result, the absence of archaeological features or deposits within the site suggests it was not directly occupied in the past, and this view is re-enforced by a general paucity of residual artefacts.

5. References

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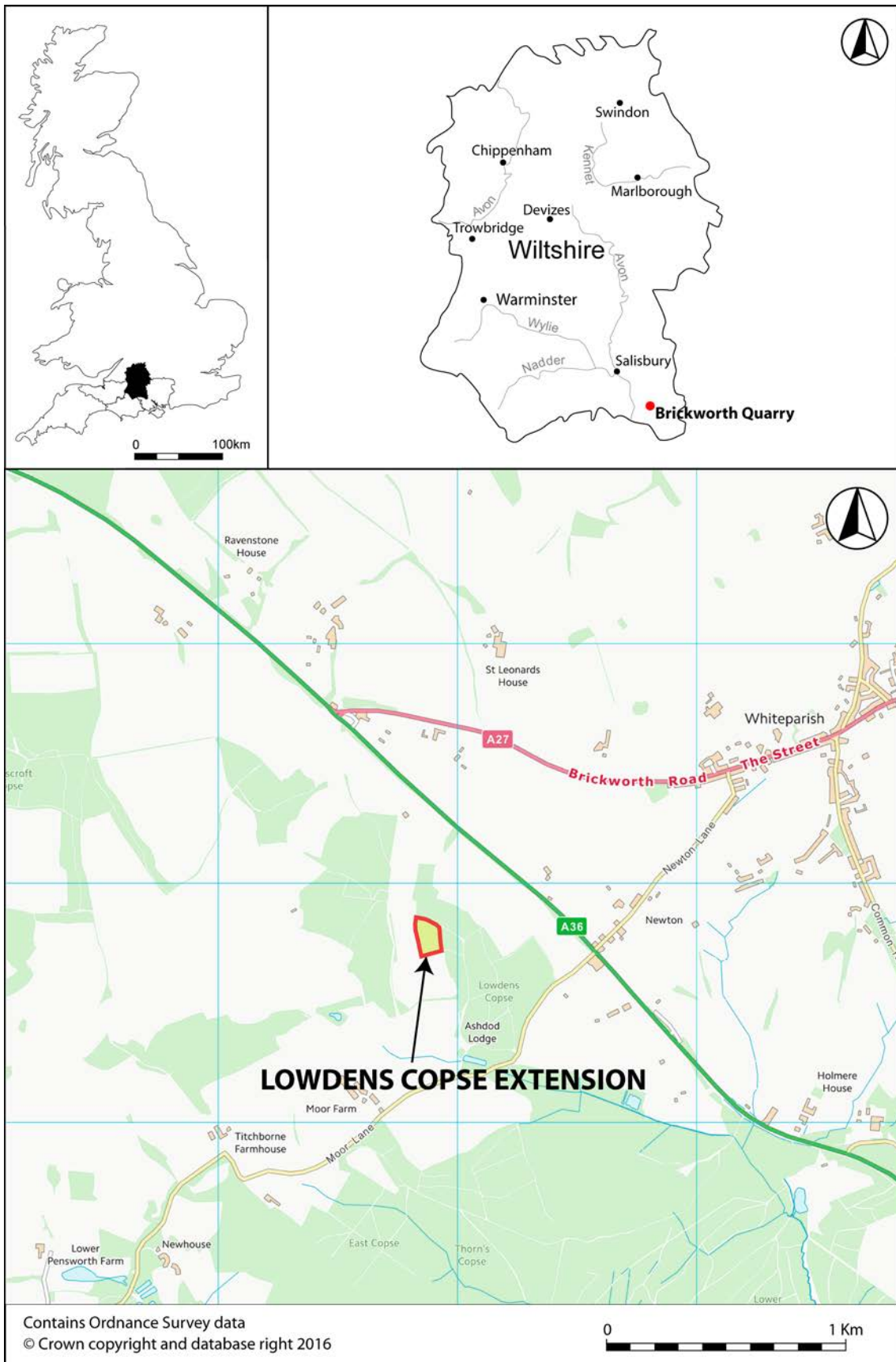


Figure 1: Location map.

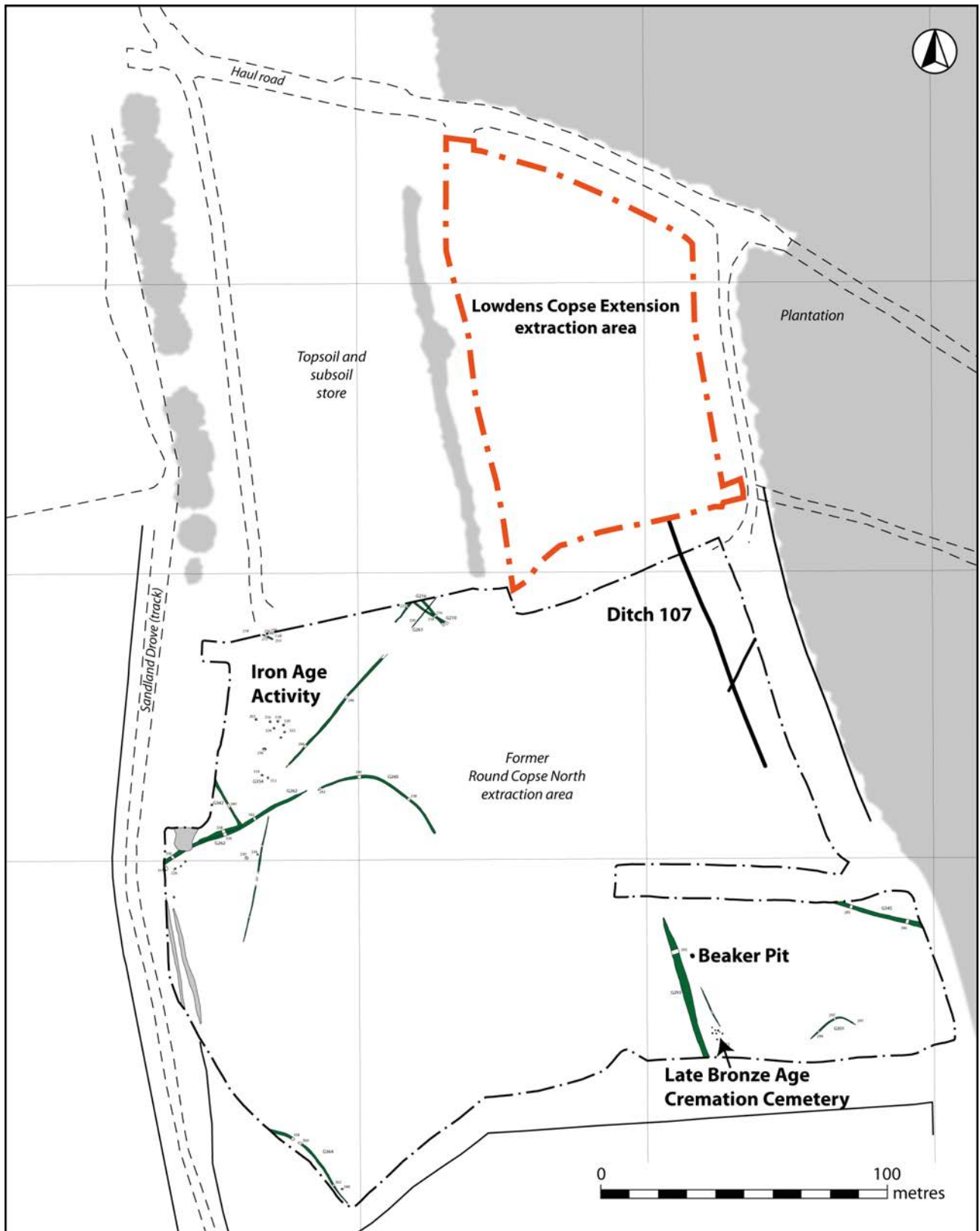


Figure 2: Plan of Observations and previous archaeology in quarry.



Plate 1: Overview of Lowdens Copse during stripping of PAWS topsoil. View from the south east.



Plate 2: Initial stages of subsoil strip. View from south.