

**Satellite Mediaport Services,  
Lawford Heath Road,  
Long Lawford, Warwickshire**

# **Archaeological Watching Brief**



*understanding heritage matters*

Report No 1130  
October 2011



*Working for  
Warwickshire*

**Project:** Long Lawford, Satellite Media

**Commissioned by:** Satellite Mediaport Services

**Project Report No.** 1130

**Site Code:** LL11

**NGR:** SP 4555 7351

**Planning Reference:** R10/2284

**Staff:**

**Project Manager:** Stuart Palmer

**Fieldwork:** Rob Jones

**Author:** Rob Jones and Stuart Palmer

**Illustrations:** Candy Stevens

**Report checked by:** Cathy Coutts

**Date:** 14/10/11

**Report reference:** Jones, R and Palmer, S C, 2011 *Satellite Mediaport Services, Lawford Heath Road, Long Lawford, Warwickshire: Archaeological Watching Brief*, Archaeology Warwickshire Report 1130

Archaeology Warwickshire  
Historic and Natural Environment  
The Butts  
Warwick  
CV34 4SS

Tel: 01926 412278  
Fax: 01926 412974

[fieldarchaeology@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:fieldarchaeology@warwickshire.gov.uk)  
[www.warwickshire.gov.uk/archaeology](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/archaeology)



## Contents

	Summary
1	Introduction
2	Location
3	Methodology
4	Archaeological and Historical Background
5	Watching Brief
6	Conclusions
	Acknowledgements
	Bibliography

## List of Figures

1	Site location
2	Area and trenches observed
3	Area A viewed from the west
4	Area B viewed from the east
5	New fence trench from the NE
6	Old fence trench from the NE
7	New access road viewed from the SW

## Summary

**An archaeological watching brief for Satellite Mediaport Services Ltd in advance of the construction of two new satellite receivers recorded no archaeological deposits or finds, despite the site's location on the former Dunsmore Heath and within one of the region's best preserved later prehistoric and early Roman relic landscapes.**

## 1 Introduction

1.1 Planning permission has been granted by Rugby Borough Council for the erection of three new satellite receivers at Lawford Heath Road, Long Lawford, Warwickshire. The site lies on a gravel terrace alongside the River Avon, a location well-endowed with evidence for settlement in the prehistoric and Roman periods. A condition of planning permission required the applicant to secure the implementation of a programme of archaeological work to be carried out in conjunction with the development

1.2 A programme of fieldwork, consisting of archaeological observation of soil stripping and landscaping in accordance with a brief prepared by the County Planning Archaeologist on behalf of the Planning Authority (May 2011), was commissioned from Archaeology (Projects) Warwickshire and carried out between May and October 2011 and this report presents the results of that work. The project archive will be stored at the Warwickshire Museum under the site code LL11.

## 2 Location

2.1 The site is located on the north-west side of Lawford Heath Lane 2.5km south-west of Long Lawford, centred around national grid reference SP 4555 7351. The total area of the current proposal covers 2000 sq m of farm land.

2.2 The underlying geology of the site is stoneless clay and silt including Wolston Clay (British Geological Survey 1984).

## 3 Methodology

3.1 The watching brief was designed to observe any groundworks associated with the development and record as far as possible, the nature of the archaeological resource on the site.

3.2 The work undertaken involved the examination of early map evidence as well as records of archaeological remains in the area and local historical journals and other publications. Fieldwork involved an archaeologist being present during appropriate groundwork's.

## 4 Archaeological and Historical Background

### EARLIER PREHISTORIC (10,000 BC – 1500 BC)

4.1 The post-glacial colonisation of Warwickshire during the Mesolithic period is evident at a number of locations where flint tools and waste products have been found (Palmer in press a) including along the banks of the Avon at King's Newnham (Palmer 2003) and Church Lawford (Palmer 2002, forthcoming). On Dunsmore such evidence is restricted to a small Mesolithic scatter found to the east at Cawston (King 1992).

4.2 There is little doubt that the Avon Valley was an important artery of communication during the Neolithic with virtually all the known monuments of this date along its banks. The most northerly complex bestrides the river in King's Newnham and Church Lawford parishes and probably represents two distinct ancient meeting places for communities living on either side of the Avon (Palmer 2010). A small group of cropmark ring-ditches identified 1km east of Wolston village may form part of a further monument complex. Evidence for contemporary activity south of the Avon Valley on Dunsmore, an area that is generally conducive to cropmark formation (Fig 1), is currently restricted to an isolated pottery bearing pit excavated within Ling Hall Quarry (Palmer in prep), a scatter of flint to the south-east of the quarry (Warwickshire Historic Environment Record No. MWA 7306; Warwickshire Museum 2002), other isolated flints to the east (MWA 7560, MWA 7561, MWA 7562; Warwickshire Museum 1995) and a flint scraper recovered from outside the north-west corner of the quarry (MWA 5421).

4.3 Earlier Bronze Age activity seems generally to have followed in locations where Neolithic monuments were created and maintained, although a profusion of barrows and ring-ditches in the north of the county outside the major river valleys suggests that new areas were being colonised at this time. In central Dunsmore very little has been identified other than a few flints and pottery sherds found residually in features of a later date during excavations in Ling Hall Quarry (Palmer 2002). A mid/late Bronze Age cremation burial was disinterred from the possible monument complex east of Wolston, but two circular cropmark enclosures 400m south of Church Lawford village are thought unlikely to be archaeological.

### LATER PREHISTORIC AND ROMAN (1500 BC – AD 400)

4.4 Current theories on early land division suggest a phase of boundary construction in the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age across much of the county. Research has also shown that natural features such as water courses were utilised in this process (Hingley 1996, 12; Palmer 2000, 217). On Dunsmore physical divisions are evident as complexes of post, pit and linear ditch alignments forming one of the most extensive surviving boundary systems in the region.

4.5 A complex of parallel post alignments dating from the earlier part of the 1st millennium BC has been examined within Ling Hall Quarry and these seem to be related to complex of pit alignments which define huge estates or land units. A number of settlement sites associated with these boundaries have also been excavated. The earliest appear to have been unenclosed and date from the later Bronze Age, whilst middle Iron Age examples were enclosed within ditches attached to the earlier pit alignments. By the late Iron Age the

settlements became more complex being arranged within multiple enclosures. A number of possible ceremonial or mortuary features dating from this period have also been excavated. This work constitutes a major research project on a landscape level (Palmer 2002, in prep).

4.6 One of the pit alignment boundaries at the south end of the quarry site extends in cropmark form for at least 2.5km to the south-west across Dunsmore. Several small enclosures can be seen to be attached to the boundary (e.g. MWA 3137) so it is entirely possible that the area to the north in which the current site lies, is within a prehistoric estate.

4.7 Two major Roman roads were constructed across the flanks of Dunsmore; the Fosse Way on the west side and Watling Street on the east side. In central Warwickshire villas evolved along the major Roman roads with a tendency to cluster around the major towns (Palmer 2000, 219-20). A roadside settlement at Princethorpe (Cutler and Evans 2000) on the very edge of Dunsmore does not yet seem to have attracted similar higher status development to the area. This may be a corollary of the political situation in the early Roman period as Warwickshire seems to have been divided into the territories of two major tribes at this time; the Dobunni to the south and the Corieltauvi to the north. The exact boundary is not known, but it seems from coin evidence to have been drawn through the middle of the county (Booth 1996, 26), possibly leaving Dunsmore in somewhat of a 'no-mans-land'. However, a double sided rectangular cropmark feature to the north of Ling Hall Quarry is thought possible to represent a Roman temple (MWA 4970) and although such a building may well have served a sizeable local community, it may also have been a regional focus. The archaeological work within the quarry also examined a small farmstead and paddock complex of early Roman date that seemed to be related to a larger field system that extended to the north-west of the quarry.

## MEDIEVAL (AD 400 – 1500)

4.8 Anglo-Saxon incursion onto Dunsmore is little understood as there are no surviving early charters and currently no evidence for their distinctive early cemeteries (Ford 1996). Place-name evidence derived from the Old English *tun* signifying village nuclei associated with an early form of open field agriculture after *c.*AD 730 (Hooke 1996, 102), would seem to suggest the main Dunsmore townships were in existence by this date. The area probably fell under the jurisdiction of Greater Mercia whilst southern Warwickshire belonged to the kingdom of the Hwicce which roughly relates to the later bishopric of Worcester (*ibid* 100). This suggests that Roman tribal boundaries were still relevant as the Hwicce kingdom is thought to cover the area of the former Dobunni tribe.

4.9 Although there is little detailed evidence for its development, the outline of the modern settlement pattern of Dunsmore was probably in existence by the late Saxon period. At the time of the Domesday Survey in 1086 the central area was open heathland divided between the nine townships that largely correspond to the modern parishes established on the margin of the heath (Hooke 1981, 112-13). Each village field system contained between two and four large fields, cultivated in rotation, each of which was sub-divided into furlongs and these into strips or 'selions' which were shared out among the villagers. The cultivation of these strips produced the characteristic ridge and furrow patterning that is widespread across the Midlands.

4.10 The almost total absence of ridge and furrow in central Dunsmore is likely to be a reflection of the poor quality of heathland soils which are generally too acidic to cultivate

crops without the aid of fertilisers. The heath had probably been in existence since pre-Roman times, developing swiftly after the original forest cover was removed. According to Gelling and Coles (2000, 58-60), Dunsmore is the Anglo-Saxon name for the district rather than a single farming settlement, that probably affixes a personal name (*Dunn*) to a topographical place (*mor*) probably meaning dry upland, despite the more frequent use of *mor* as 'boggy upland'. It appears that the authors could not envisage Dunsmore as having been boggy but this may be a result of the considerable improvements to the land since the 18th century. Surviving place-name suffixes of heath and broom(e) in particular attest to the extent of the heath and Ling itself is a reference to heather and heathland.

4.11 A windmill belonging to Pipewell Abbey (VCH 1951, 147) of probable 15th-century date is recorded to the north of the quarry in the vicinity of the fields marked Millers Ground on the Duke of Montagu's Estate map of c.1720 (MWA 3431). The presumed site of a medieval chapel lies nearby (MWA 3432). A small excavation was carried out in this area in 1962 which was able to identify an undated limestone wall and parallel trackway (Foster and Pearson 1962; MWA 5420). These deposits are potentially important but unfortunately a detailed record is not available.

### **Long Lawford Manor**

4.12 Long Lawford belonged to Geoffrey Wirce at Domesday, although at this time it was merely Lawford (*Lelleford*), the qualifier 'long' being added late to distinguish it from Church Lawford. Like Church Lawford it comprised five hides albeit within the parish of Newbold to which it belonged (VCH 1951, 188).

## **POST-MEDIEVAL AND MODERN (AD 1500 – PRESENT)**

4.14 Much of central Dunsmore was enclosed in the 18th century and many of the local farmhouses and their field systems date from this period. The agricultural quality of the land was improved by drainage, liming and tillage at this time, almost entirely removing the vestiges of the heathland environment, although the area remained predominantly in pasture until the advent of modern fertilisers.

## **5 Watching Brief**

5.1 The Written Scheme of Investigation (dated 8th June 2011) specified that the entire area of ground disturbance, including the three proposed new satellite dish footprints, the new access road, service trenching, landscaping and drainage would be stripped of topsoil down to natural geology or the top of any exposed archaeological deposits. In the event, the work programme was reduced to only two satellite dishes rather than three and no service trenches or drains were excavated. Ground reduction was carried out using a 2.5 tonne tracked excavator with a 1.20m toothless bucket and one area had been excavated and backfilled with hardcore prior to arrival on site.

## **Area A**

5.2 Topsoil stripping was observed over an area measuring 10m x 10m for the concrete base for a new 8m satellite dish. The area was excavated down to the yellowish brown natural sand and gravel (2); this was overlaid by between 0.30m and 0.35m of brown sandy loam topsoil (1).

## **Area B**

5.3 Topsoil stripping was observed over an area of 10m x 10m for the concrete base for a new 13m satellite dish. The area sloped down from north-east to the south-west, and subsequently the south-east end was only machined down 0.15m, but the north-east end was machined down 0.40m, into the yellowish brown natural sand and gravel (2), which was overlaid by .between 0.35m and 0.40m of brown sandy loam topsoil (1).

## **New fence trench**

5.4 The trench for the new fence started at the south-south-west end of the site and ran for 26m north-north-east, then the trench turned 90°and proceeded north-east for 96m to join up to the existing fence line. The trench was 1.20m wide and between 0.30m and 0.35m in depth, down to the yellowish brown natural sand and gravel (2), this also was overlaid by 0.35m of brown sandy loam topsoil (1).

## **Old fence trench**

5.5 A shallow trench was excavated along the line of the existing fence so the buried chain link could be easily removed. The trench was aligned north-east/south-west and ran for 58m along the site's former perimeter. It was 1.00m wide and between 0.05m and 0.25m in depth. The excavation did not reach natural sand and gravel, being confined to the topsoil.

## **New access road**

5.6 The new access road started to the east of area A and ran for 70m down the middle of the site, then turned 90° south-east for another 10m. The trench was 4.60m wide and between 0.30m and 0.40m in depth, down to the yellowish brown natural sand and gravel (2), this was overlaid by 0.35m of brown sandy loam topsoil (1).

## **6. Conclusions**

6.1 In the majority of the areas stripped the underlying natural sand and gravel was reached. However, no archaeological features were noted cutting into this. Occasional fragments of charcoal were noted in the topsoil, along with fragments of flint. None of the flint displayed evidence of having been worked.



## Acknowledgements

Archaeology (Projects) Warwickshire would like to thank Satellite Mediaport Services Ltd for commissioning the work and the County Planning Archaeologist for preparing the brief.

## Bibliography

British Geological Survey 1984 *England and Wales, 1:50,000 Sheet 184*.

Booth, P, 1996 Warwickshire in the Roman period: a review of recent work, *Transactions of the Birmingham and Warwickshire Archaeological Society* 100, 25-58.

Cuttler, R. and Evans, J, 2000 A section through the Fosse Way and the excavation of Romano-British features at Princethorpe, Warwickshire, 1994, *Transactions of the Birmingham and Warwickshire Archaeological Society* 102 (1998) 57-72.

Ford, W J, 1996 Anglo-Saxon cemeteries along the Avon Valley, *Transactions of the Birmingham and Warwickshire Archaeological Society* 100, 59-98.

Gelling, M, and Coles, A, 2000 *The landscape of place-names*, Shaun Tyas Stamford, Lincoln.

Foster, J R, and Pearson, A G, 1962 Note on an excavation at Church Lawford by the Rugby Percival Guildhouse Archaeology Group, *Transactions of the Birmingham and Warwickshire Archaeological Society* 80, 78-9.

Hingley, R, 1996 Prehistoric Warwickshire: a review of the evidence, *Transactions of the Birmingham and Warwickshire Archaeological Society* 100, 1-24.

Hooke, D, 1981 *Anglo-Saxon landscapes of the West Midlands: the charter evidence*, British Archaeological Reports, British Series 95.

Hooke, D, 1996 Reconstructing Anglo-Saxon landscapes in Warwickshire, *Transactions of the Birmingham and Warwickshire Archaeological Society* 100, 99-116.

King, R, 1992 *Cawston Grange, fieldwalking report*, Cotswold Archaeol Trust 92103, Cirencester.

Mawer, A, and Stenton, F M, eds, 1932 *The place-names of Warwickshire*, Cambridge University Press.

Ordnance Survey 1834 *First Edition one inch to one mile map*, Sheet 51, Worcester

Ordnance Survey 1887 *First Edition 1:2500 map*, Warwickshire Sheet 44.9

Ordnance Survey 1905 *Second Edition 1:2500 map*, Warwickshire Sheet 44.9

Ordnance Survey 1938 *Revised Edition 1:2500 map*, Warwickshire Sheet 44.9

Palmer, S C, 2000 Archaeological excavations in the Arrow Valley, Warwickshire, *Transactions of the Birmingham and Warwickshire Archaeological Society* 103 (1999).

Palmer, S C, 2002 *Ling Hall Quarry, Church Lawford, Warwickshire, Archaeological Excavations 1989-1999*, Warwickshire Museum Report 0210.

Palmer, S C, 2003 King's Newnham, Warwickshire: Neolithic, Bronze Age and Iron Age excavations along a gas pipeline in 1990, *Transactions of the Birmingham and Warwickshire Archaeological Society*, 107, 41-74.

Palmer, S C, 2010 Neolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age, Romano-British and Anglo-Saxon sites excavated on the Transco Churchover to Newbold Pacey gas pipeline in 1999, *Transactions Birmingham Warwickshire Archaeological Society* 113, 1-174.

Palmer, S C, in prep *Ling Hall Quarry, Church Lawford, Warwickshire: further archaeological excavations in a later prehistoric landscape 2000-2007*.

VCH 1951 *The Victoria History of the County of Warwick*, Vol. 6 Knightlow Hundred, ed. L F Salzman.

Warwickshire Museum 1990 *Ling Hall, Church Lawford: an archaeological evaluation*, Warwickshire Museum Report.

Warwickshire Museum 1991 *Broomhill Farm, Bourton Heath, Warwickshire: archaeological evaluation*, Warwickshire Museum Report.

Warwickshire Museum 1995 *A426 Rugby Western Bypass southern end: environmental assessment (Stage 2) cultural heritage*, unpublished draft report.

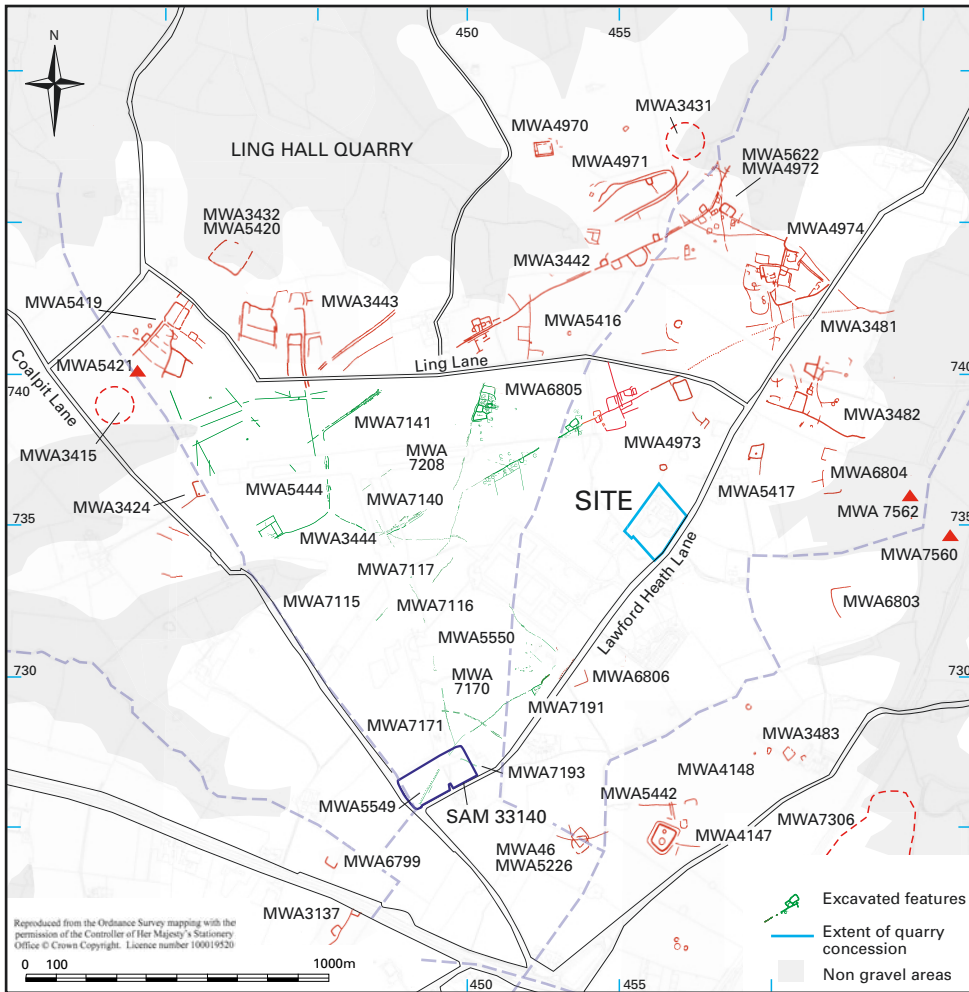


Fig. 1: Site location

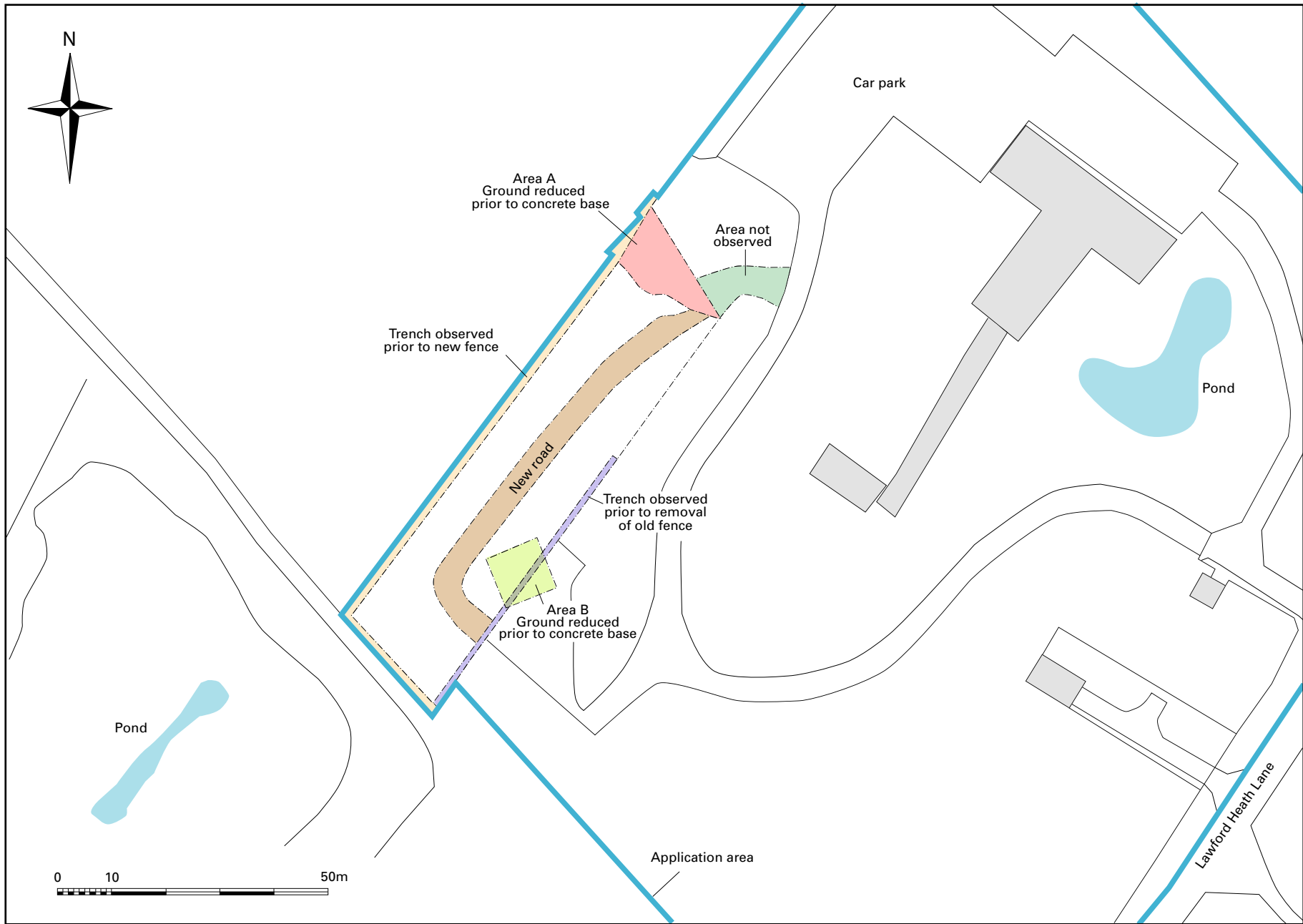


Fig. 2: Area and trenches observed



Fig 3: Area A viewed from the west



Fig 4: Area B viewed from the east





Fig 5: New fence trench from the NE



Fig 6: Old fence trench from the NE



Fig 7: New access road viewed from the SW