

HEREFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY

The archaeological supervision & recording of mitigation works associated with unauthorised activities at the site of Rotherwas House, Rotherwas, Herefordshire.

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Herefordshire Archaeology
Environment, Planning and Waste
Economy, Communities & Corporate Directorate
Herefordshire Council



**The archaeological supervision & recording of
mitigation works associated with unauthorised
activities at the site of Rotherwas House,
Rotherwas, Herefordshire.**

**Scheduled Monument No. 1014880
HER No. 9438
NGR: SO 5355 3839
Event Number: EHE 80167**

Cover Illustration: "S.W View of Rotherwas House. M.7th June 1799" by James Wathen.

Herefordshire Archaeology is Herefordshire Council's county archaeology service. It advises upon the conservation of archaeological and historic sites and landscapes, and carries out conservation and investigative field projects.

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Summary:

Considerable quantities of rubble and other material have been deposited on the site of Rotherwas House and Formal Gardens (Scheduled Monument No. 1014880), Rotherwas, Herefordshire.

During the deposition of this material, localised areas of the ground surface became rutted by machinery. These works were undertaken without Scheduled Monument Consent and therefore Historic England has instructed the property owner to put in place a methodology for the removal of the material and the reinstatement of any areas of disturbance.

Historic England requires that these works should be undertaken under archaeological supervision and that these works are documented appropriately.

The archaeological work comprised the following elements:

- The supervision of the removal of all material making up the bunds on the Scheduled Area.
- The supervision of works associated with the reinstatement of the areas of ground affected by rutting
- The production of a written and illustrated archaeological report documenting the works.

Disclaimer: It should not be assumed that land referred to in this document is accessible to the public. Location plans are indicative only. National Grid References are accurate to approximately 10m. Measured dimensions are accurate to within 1m at a scale of 1:500, 0.1m at 1:50 and 0.02m at 1:20m

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1. Introduction

This report provides an account of archaeological Watching Brief associated with the removal of unauthorised dumping of earth and rubble / building waste bunds on the site of Rotherwas House Scheduled Ancient Monument, (Monument No. 1014880) and the reinstatement of rutting caused by the transportation of the material.

Historic England were notified of the unauthorised works on 10th April 2015 and visited the site with Herefordshire Archaeology and the land owner on 13th April. On 15th April, Historic England formally contacted the land owner, informing him of the contraventions and instructing him to cease any further works.

As part of the reinstatement works, Herefordshire Archaeology was contracted by the landowner to prepare and submit a Written Scheme of Investigation to Historic England. This set out the methodology to be used and the archaeological provision in place during the removal of bundled material which was placed within the Scheduled Ancient Monument without consent. It also described the types of machinery to be employed during these works together with a description of how the reinstatement of the affected areas of the site would be achieved. This was approved by Historic England with the additional request for the preparation of a management plan for the site once the re-instatement works had been completed. The landowner then commissioned Herefordshire Archaeology to monitor and report on the re-instatement works (this document) and to produce a management plan.

2. Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of the watching brief were:

- The supervision of the removal of all material making up the bunds on the Scheduled Area. This was undertaken in order to ensure no further damage occurs to the monument. The works will be recorded by digital photograph and a commentary made.
- The supervision of works associated with the reinstatement of the areas of ground affected by rutting. The works were recorded by digital photograph and a commentary made.
- To document the works and present them in a written and illustrated archaeological report.

3. Location, Topography, Geology and Land-use

The scheduled monument that is the site of Rotherwas House (HER 9438) is situated within the north of Dinedor Parish, Herefordshire (SO 5355 3839) at approximately 45m above sea level. Some 300m to the north the site is bounded by the River Wye, to the south, east and west the site is surrounded by the Rotherwas Enterprise Zone, an

industrial estate located on the site of Rotherwas Royal Ordnance Factory established during the First World War.

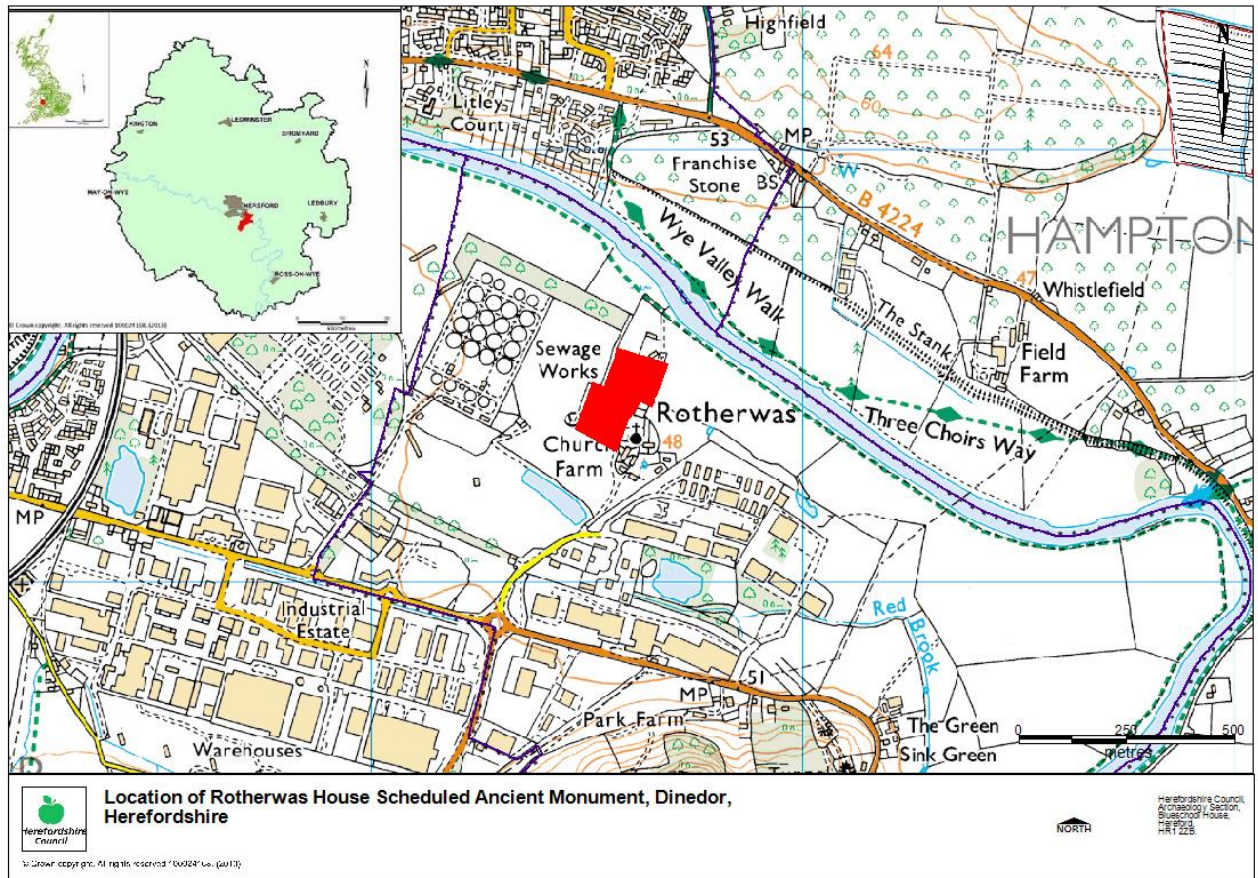


Figure 1: Site location, Dinedor Parish, Herefordshire, © Crown copyright.
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The solid geology is of Raglan Mudstone formation which is made up of interbedded siltstone and mudstone formed during the Silurian period. The site of Rotherwas House is located upon a gentle slope that extends down towards the River Wye to the north of the site.

The Scheduled Area is currently managed under permanent pasture for the most part, however a strip of the southern-most part of the Scheduled Area is currently included within a field under arable cultivation.

4. Historical and archaeological background

One of the earliest accounts of the manor of Rotherwas (Retrowas) comes from the Domesday Book which states that Rotherwas Manor was owned by Gilbert, son of Thorold (Thorn, 1983). Prior to this the manor was held by Sigeric.

The origins to the name Rotherwas is likely to take its-self from the Old English “*hryther*” meaning cattle and “*waesse*”, a west-midlands place name for land by a major river (in this case the River Wye) liable to sudden flooding (Copplestone-Crow, 1989).

The house was later owned by the Walshes who preceded the Bodenhams. The Bodenhams owned the manor from about the middle of the fifteenth century, from which time it was their principal seat. Thomas Blount described the house in 1675 as “*a delicious seat, situate near the river Wye and within two myles of Hereford, abounding with store of excellent fruit rich meadows, and fertyle arable; having also a Park within less than half a myle of the House where-there is a neat Lodge, upon a Hill ...*” (Botzum). The hill in question is that of Dinedor Hill, a prominent northeast to southwest aligned ridge. Rotherwas Park Wood is located upon the eastern end of the ridge; the site of the Lodge is currently unknown. By this date however, Blount notes the building and estate to be in a state of disrepair. The reason for this appears to have been the Bodenham’s loss of wealth due in part to their support of King Charles I during the Civil War.

It was not until the 1700’s that the Bodenham family regained their wealth and in 1731 they built a new house in a different location out of red brick. The house passed through marriage to the Lubinski family and in 1907 the mansion caught fire but survived with minimal damage. In 1912 the manor was put up for auction and was tenanted, during the First World War the building as used as a barracks and was finally demolished completely in 1926.

Much of the walled garden remains to the south together with a number of related buildings. The site of the house is still visible as an area of slightly raised ground. The western drive is still visible as an earthwork as are a number of subtle earthworks relating to the south facing formal gardens.

The area was the subject of a geophysical survey (resistivity) during 2012 as part of The Dinedor Heritage Project, (Atkinson 2013). The outline of the building and its principal rooms were clearly visible as was the top terrace immediately to the south of the house.

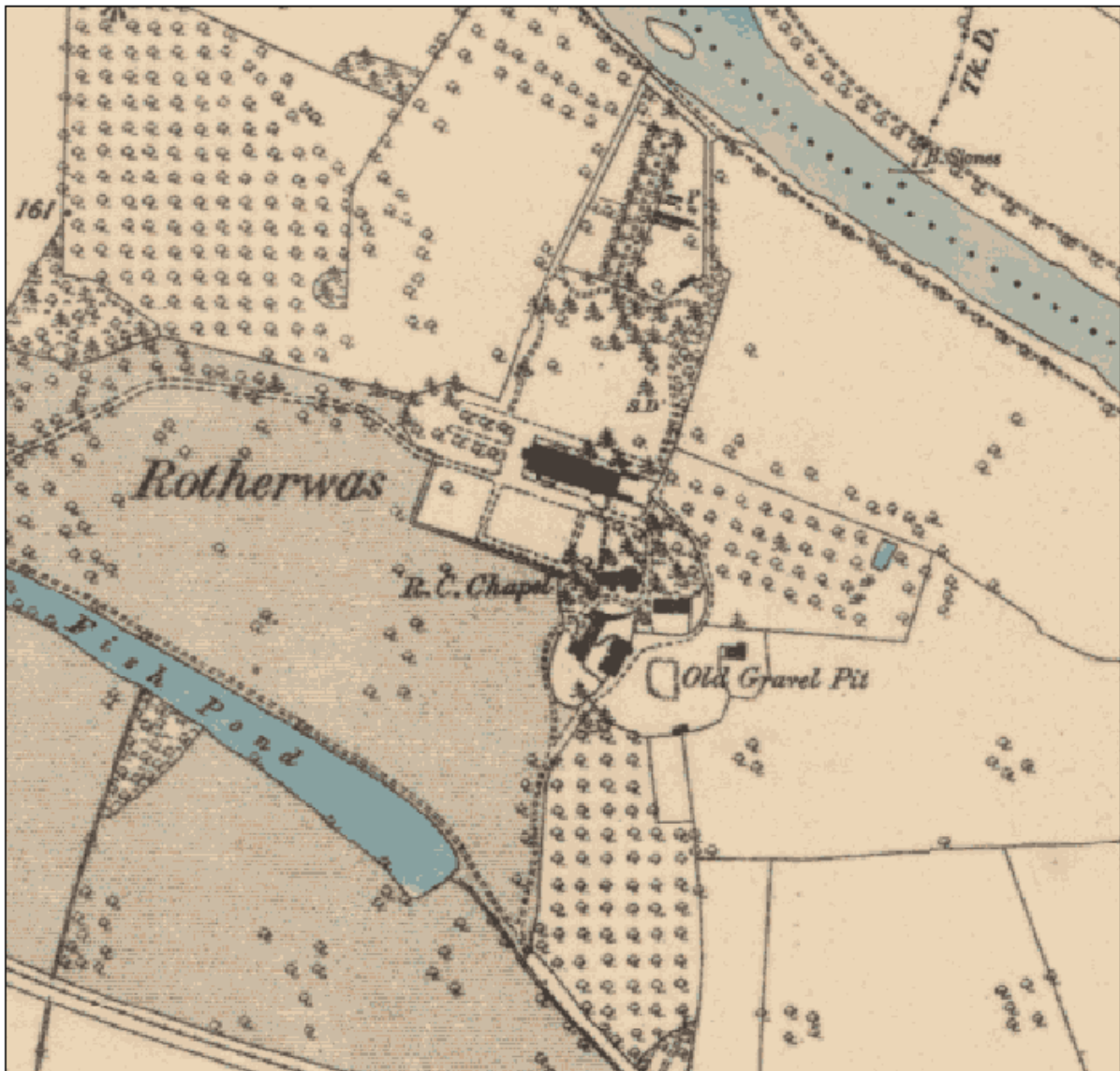


Figure 2: Extract from the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey Map 1886-7, showing Rotherwas house, gardens and setting. © Crown copyright. All rights reserved 100024168

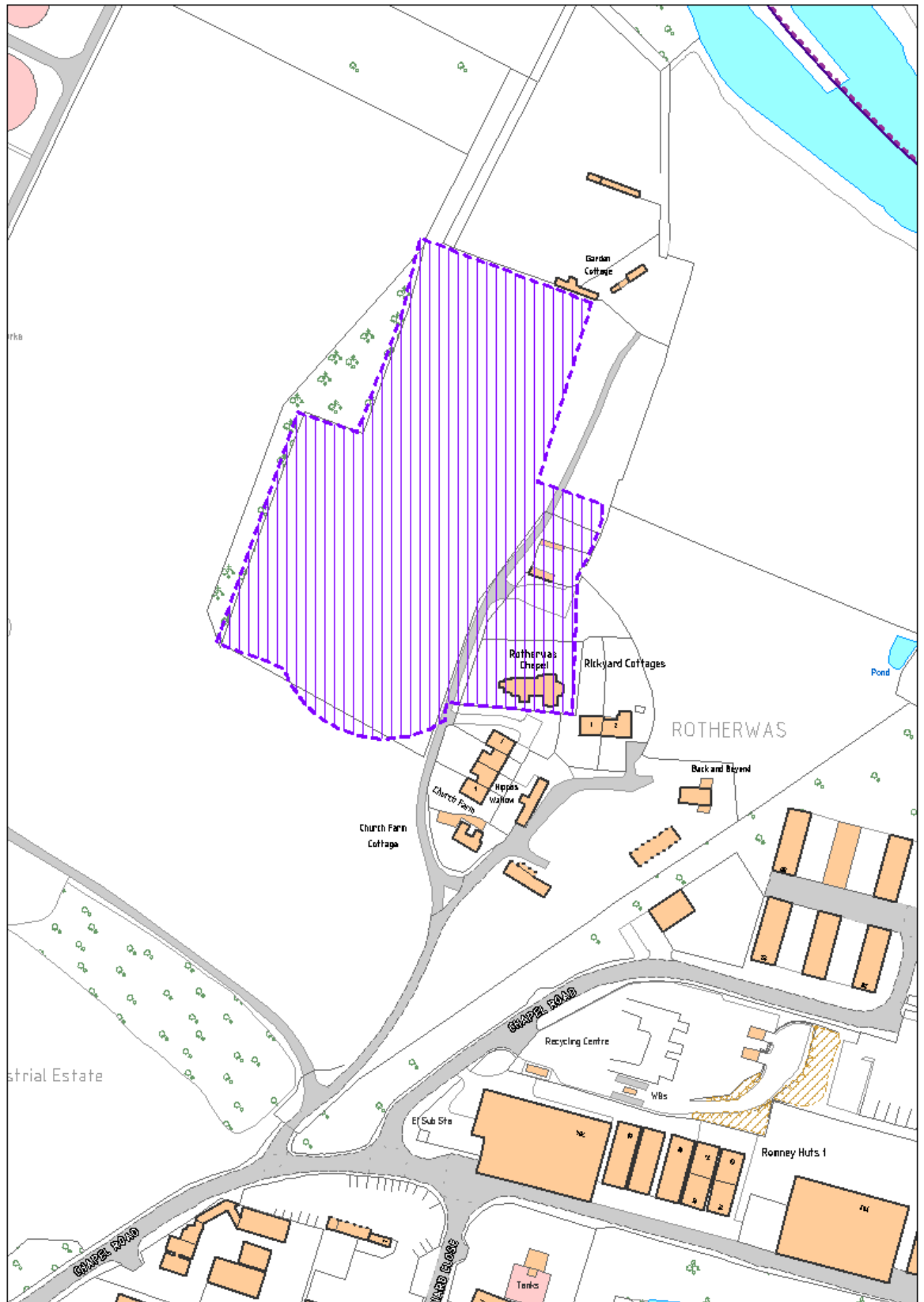


Figure 3: Area and extent of scheduled area. © Crown copyright. All rights reserved 100024168.

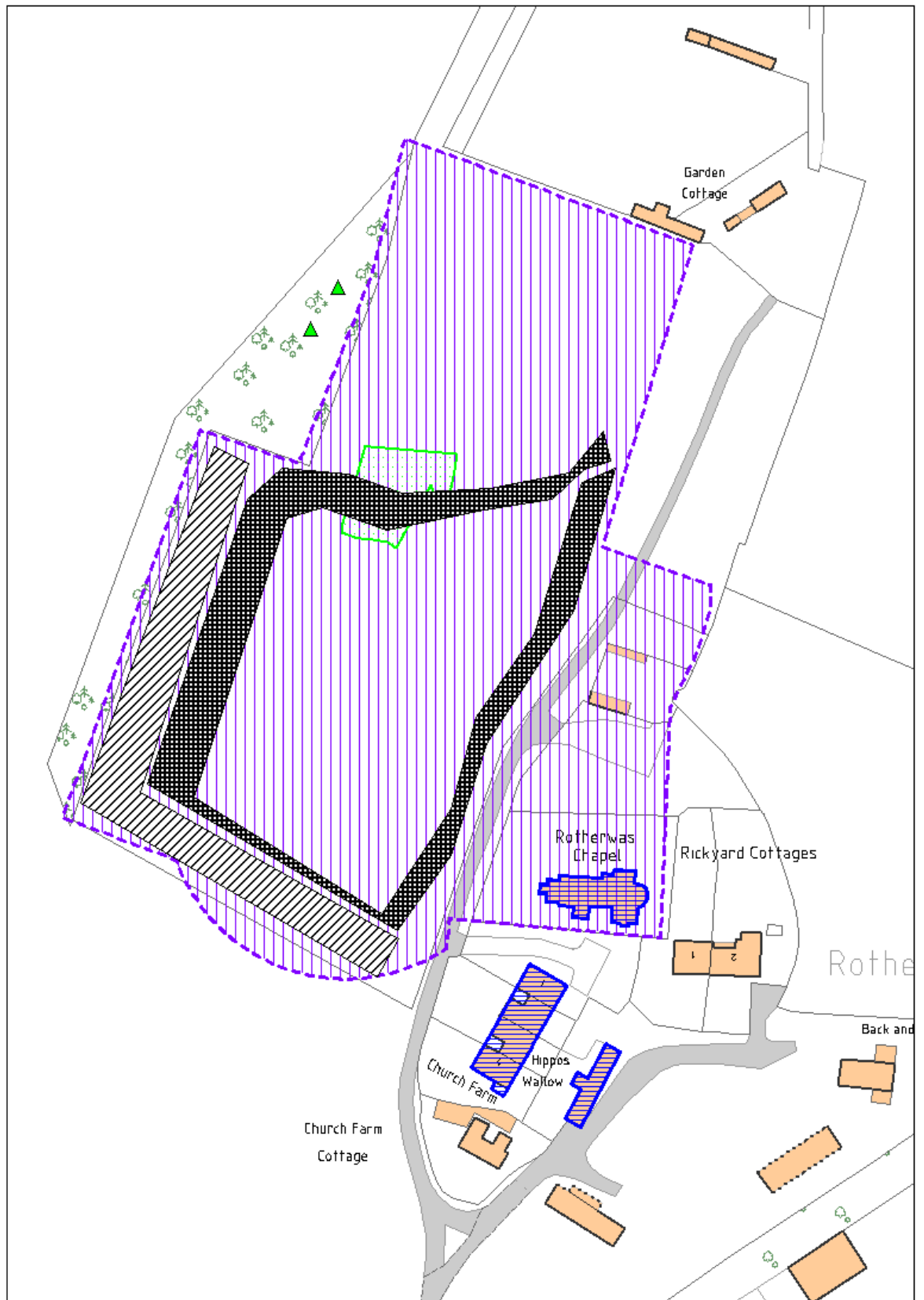


Figure 4: Area and extent of dumping (cross-hatch) and rutting / tracking (black with white dots). © Crown copyright. All rights reserved 100024168

5. Archaeological Monitoring.

A series of six site visits were made between August 26th and August 31st 2015. This enabled the removal of the bunded material and the subsequent reinstatement works to be monitored and recorded.

A mix of rubble and earth had been dumped along the southern and western boundaries of the site. (Plates 1 & 2). This had been done, it is understood, in as a precursor to the material being covered in earth and a hedge planted along its top in order to mask recent and future development within the Enterprise Zone from local residents. During the dumping of this material, localised areas within the Scheduled Area were affected by rutting, (Plates 2 & 3).



Plate 1: View looking to the west showing extent of dumped material.



Plate 2: Close up of western dump of material and associated rutting.



Plate 3: View to the south looking along the western boundary.



Plate 4: Machinery used in the removal of dumped material.

Material was removed from site after sustained dry weather in order to mitigate further rutting. All machinery used for the transportation of material had flotation type tyres in order to spread load and minimise impact on the ground surface, (Plates 4 & 5). The weather during the works was mostly fine and no further intrusion / damage occurred during the works.



Plate 5: Material along southern boundary being removed.

Upon removal of material, topsoil from a local source was thinly spread over areas damaged / affected by rutting prior to being harrowed to remove any upstanding ridges. (Plates 6 & 7). The areas were then sown with the same seed mix as the rest of the field, prior to being disc harrowed, (Plate 8).



Plate 6: Removal of material along western boundary after initial harrowing / topsoil spreading.



Plate 7: Southern boundary after removal of dumped material and prior to harrowing

and seeding.



Plate 8: final harrowing after seeding.

6. Discussion

The removal and re-instatement works did no further damage to the site. Grass re-growth was quick and no bare patches are visible. The earthworks affected by the dumping are still visible. During initial site visits associated with these works it was noted that a plastic water main has been put into the site. This was done in 2009 by Welsh Water and is believed to replace an pre-existing service.

7. Acknowledgements

Herefordshire Archaeology would like to acknowledge the assistance of Bill Klemperer and Alison MacDonald (Historic England) and the co-operation of the landowner.

8. Bibliography

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9. List of Figures and Plates

Figure 1: Site location, Dinedor Parish, Herefordshire, © Crown copyright.
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Figure 3: Area and extent of scheduled area. © Crown copyright. All rights reserved 100024168.

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Plate 7: Southern boundary after removal of dumped material and prior to harrowing and seeding.

Plate 8: final harrowing after seeding.

10. Archive

5 site notebook entries

32 digital images

1 correspondence file

4 Mapinfo GIS tables.

This document