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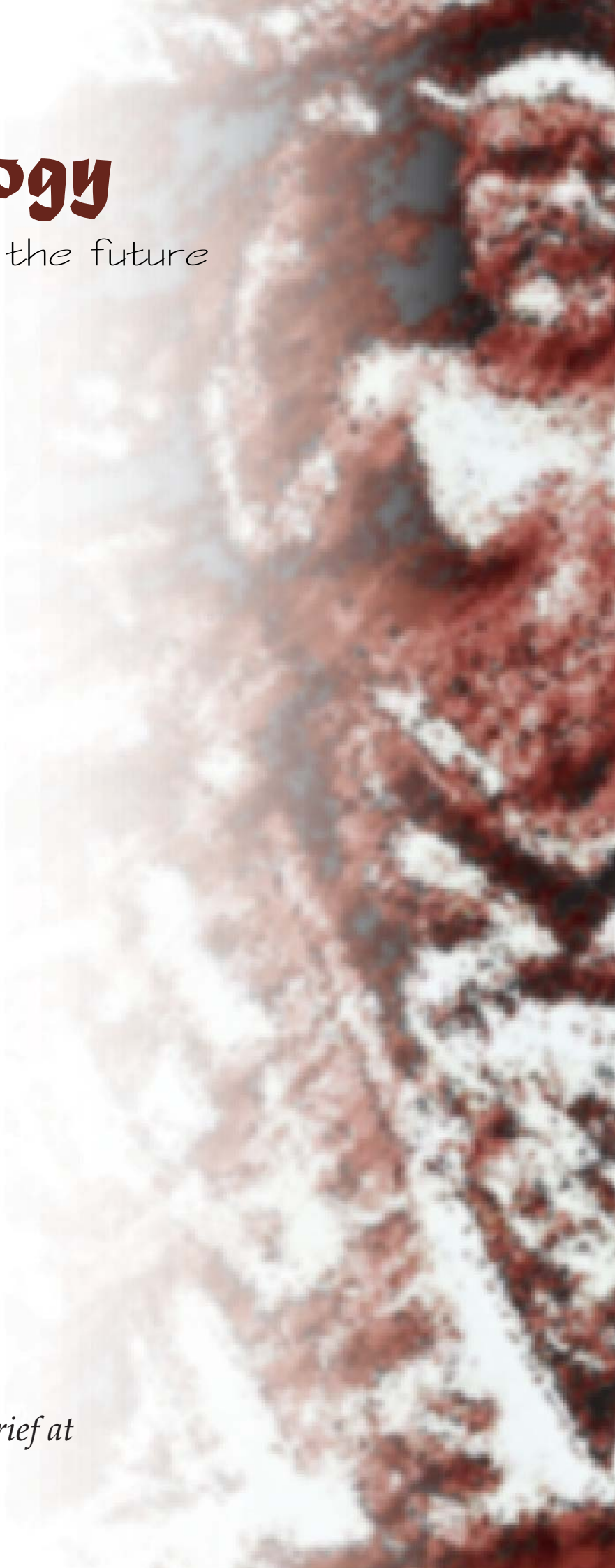
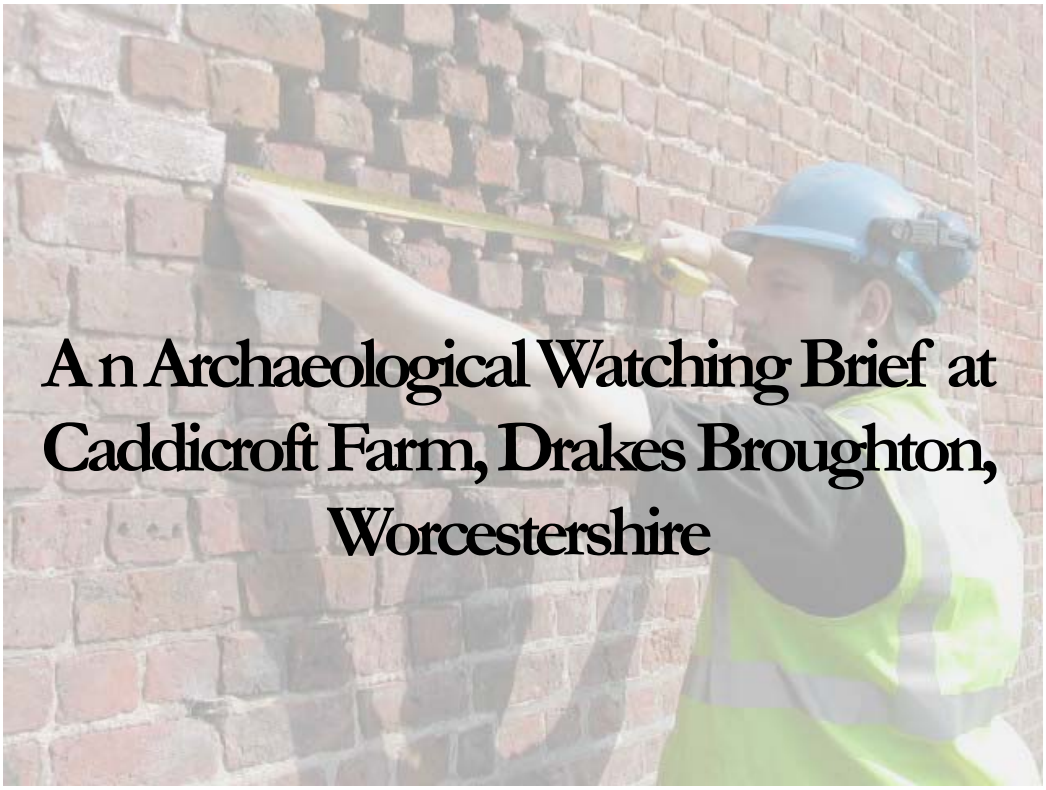


An Archaeological Watching Brief at Caddicroft Farm, Pershore, Worcestershire



An Archaeological Watching Brief at Caddicroft Farm, Drakes Broughton, Worcestershire

A report for Alan Morris

November 2003

Project: PJ 109

WSM 32986

***Mercian Archaeology** carry out archaeological projects across the West Midlands and the Welsh Marches. We specialise in Historic Building Recording and Analysis. We also undertake archaeological watching-briefs, desk-based assessment, evaluation and historic landscape assessment.*

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1. Project Background

1.1. Location of the Site

Caddicroft Farm is located around 2.5 kilometres to the northwest of Pershore and around 1 kilometre to the southwest of Drakes Broughton, on the western side of the A44 Worcester to Evesham road (NGR SO 927 474). The site is located on the east of Caddicroft Farm adjacent to the road bridge at Ufnell Bridge (Figure 1).

1.2. Project Details

A proposal has been put forward to restore an area of earthworks at Caddicroft Farm, which has been proposed as the site of a medieval millpond or fishpond. It is intended to restore the feature(s) in order to maximise their conservation value and to provide ecologically sound habitat by restoring the sites biodiversity.

The restoration project will be managed under the Countryside Stewardship Scheme by a working partnership between Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG), Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), Environment Agency (EA) and Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeology Service (WHEAS). Mercian Archaeology have been contracted to carry out the archaeological watching brief at the site.

The earthworks are listed on the Worcestershire Sites and Monuments Record as 'The Site of a Medieval Fishpond' (WSM 02632).

A brief for the archaeological watching brief was produced by Jez Bretherton, Countryside Officer, Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeology Service (2003).

1.3. Reasons for the Watching Brief

The archaeological watching brief has been suggested as the appropriate response to the threat posed to the earthworks by the restoration processes. These involve the de-silting of the now dry pond(s), lowering the level of the base of the pond by between 0.5 and 1.0metres and remodelling profiles of the banks in various places. Other intrusive work may include removing tree stumps from the banks of the pond(s).

The watching brief at the site is proposed in order that a record of any archaeological remains or deposits encountered may be made The work is required so that important archaeological information that may be contained within the fabric of the earthworks, or their subsequent silting up after they had gone out of use, is not lost. The recorded information will be contained within an archive that will be available to future generations who may have an interest in this specific site or the monument category.

2. Methods and Process

2.1. Project Specification

- The project fieldwork conforms to the Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief (IFA 1999).
- The archive conforms to the standards and guidelines established by the Archaeological Data Service.
- The project conforms to a brief prepared by the Countryside Section, Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeology Service (WHEAS, 2003) and for which a project proposal and detailed specification was produced (Williams and Cook 2003).
- Mercian Archaeology adhere to the service practice and health and safety policy as contained within the Mercian Archaeology Service Manual (Williams 2003)

2.2. Aims of the Project

The watching brief aimed to:

- To provide on site archaeological advice to the Environment Agency contractors in order that through communication and negotiation, areas of archaeological sensitivity may be preserved or damage minimised, whilst taking into account the overall aims, objectives and interests of all the agencies involved in the project.
- To use the results of the archaeological work to produce a report highlighting: -

    1. The survival and location of any archaeological deposits.
    2. Analysis of identified natural and cultural deposits and their interpretation.

- Based on the above, establish the significance, survival, condition and period of the archaeological remains and place them within context at local, regional or national level where relevant.

3. The Documentary Research

3.1. The Archaeological and Historic Background

There is a reference to a mill and mill pool at 'Lokebrig' (Lough Bridge) belonging to Abbot Gervase during the 13th century (VCH IV, 158) and it has been suggested that the former mill site lies at Ufnell Bridge, which is a corruption of the medieval place name Lokebrig. The earthworks at Caddicroft Farm are located less than 100 metres from the location of the current Ufnell Bridge (Figure 1) adding weight to this hypothesis.

The physical appearance of the earthworks suggests that they were used as ponds. An outlet at the western end of the earthworks appears to be a drain or tailrace, from the pond to the Bowbrook, which flows to the west parallel with the pond(s). This indicates that water would have been supplied to the pond from the opposite end, via a contour leat that would have been cut from a point upstream at least the same level as the proposed water level.

If the pond were used as a mill pool, then any mill structure would be located at the western end adjacent to the tailrace. Other possible structures may have included sluice gates, hatches, fish/eel traps and associated mill structures/working areas and finds may have included broken or worn millstones.

3.2. The Documentary and Cartographic Research

Caddicroft Farm was part of the holdings of Pershore Abbey before the Dissolution of the Monasteries in the mid 16th century, when it became part of the manor of Allesborough (VCH IV, 156). The manor was extensive, with lands stretching from the edge of Pershore town to Drakes Broughton. The Manor of Allesborough first appears in text in a deed dating from the 13th century, when Roger Abbot of Pershore gave a proportion of the rent from his demesne there to the monks of Pershore (VCH VI). In 1653 Thomas Coventry was created Lord Coventry of Allesborough.

The Survey of the Manor of Allesborough dating to 1620 makes reference to Lough Mill Field. This appears to have been one of nine common fields, the others being: Evanscroft, Walcot Close Field, Hurst Field, Upper Brynholme Field, Low Brynholme Field, Pinvyn Common Field, Broughton Field and Old Hill Field in Broughton (Worcester Records Office). Lough Mill Field was first enclosed in 1762 and was recorded as being over 190 acres at this time. The field was referred to as 'Lough Mill Field', with no corruption of the name towards 'Ufnell' at this time.

The earliest available map of the area was from 'A Survey of the Lands of the Right Honourable Earl of Coventry' dating from 1812 (Croome Estate Trust). This was an extremely detailed plan. The field that now contains the earthworks was called Hare Meadow (Figure 2), indicating its use at this time. The map shows no sign of the earthworks, although it does show other smaller sand, clay pits and areas of wetland in the vicinity.

The 1st edition 6" Ordnance Survey map of 1891 also does not show any pond or earthworks in this location, although it should be highlighted that this may be due to an anomaly within the survey (Figure 3). The later 2nd edition 25" Ordnance Survey map of 1903 shows a rectangular area of wetland on the western half of the field, about half the size of the proposed millpond and without an inlet or outlet at either end (Figure 4).

The mid 19th century Tithe Apportionment Map for the area was not available at Worcester Records Office, but it is unlikely that the map would shed any more light on the subject.

Cartographic Sources Used

Source	Reference Number
Survey of the Lands of the Rt. Honourable Earl of Coventry. Surveyed in 1812 by J.W.Osborne	Croome Estate Trust
Ordnance Survey 1st Edition 6". Worcestershire Sheet XLI N.W (1891)	Worcester Records Office
Ordnance Survey 2nd Edition 25". Worcestershire Sheet XLI.7 (1903)	Worcester Records Office

Other Sources Consulted and Used

Source	Reference Number
A Survey of The Manor of Allesborough (1620)	WRO 10,110 x970s11,803 899:1196
Inclosure Award Handlist (1803)	WRO AS/43/38(307)
Inclosure Act for Broughton, Otherwise Drake's Broughton (1802)	WRO 5357/7

Other sources used are referenced within the report.

3.4. The Fieldwork Methodology

The watching brief was undertaken between September 25th and October 5th 2003.

The photographic survey was carried out using monochrome, colour print film and medium density format. A scale was used where possible.

Proforma Record Forms were used to record the site stratigraphy in tandem with site notes to produce the final record contained within this report.

The methodology adopted and the favourable working conditions meant that the aims and objectives of the brief could be fully met and the fieldwork was successfully concluded.

4. The Watching Brief

Prior to the commencement of excavation work, various trees had to be either cut back or pulled out. Two 10 metre archeologically sensitive zones were set aside and the intent was to use minimal intrusive methods across these zones (Figure 5). The western zone was potentially the location of any mill structures, the eastern zone was at the interface proposed as a dam between two pools, one to the east and the other slightly lower to the west.

The tree stumps to be removed were grubbed out with a hydraulic grab attached to the arm of the mechanical excavator. It was impossible to see any coherent stratigraphy during this process, as remnants of earth fell back into the void after the tree stumps were raised.

Prior to the de-silting operation, the contractors kindly agreed to excavate two trial trenches across the proposed ponds. One was excavated at the far eastern side of the site (Trench A, Figure 5) in an attempt to locate the leat, or inlet into the pool area, which can only have entered the site from this direction, as the natural scarp on the south is over 2 metres higher. No leat or defined inlet was apparent either in plan or section of the excavated trial trench. The deposits suggested a gradual silting within a hollow at the base of the gravel scarp on the south, rather than the silting-up of a man made feature. The alluvial deposits were seen to a depth of around 2 metres. There were no archaeological deposits or finds within the trench.

The second trench was cut across the middle of the hollow on the eastern side of the field in order to formulate a profile of the proposed pond (Trench B, Figure 5). The profile was natural in appearance with no definite cut edges or bottom to the proposed pond. Humic silty-clay topsoil [200] had accumulated to a depth of around 0.20 metres; below this there was a 60 centimetre deep deposit of a mottled greyish orange alluvium [201]. There were 19th century land-drains running through this deposit, showing attempts to drain the site at this time. Less blocky alluvial clay [202] was noted below; this was very similar to the layer above, although wetter. Bluish-black alluvial clay [203] was identified at around 1 metre below the surface on the south, dropping away and seen at about 1.40 metres below the surface on the north of the trench. This clay was laminated and contained patches of gravel and some iron panning.

The watching brief on the rest of the earth moving operation concluded that a de-silting operation on the western end of the proposed millpond carried out during the 1970’s had removed any evidence of a possible man made cut. The topsoil at this end overlay thick greyish orange clay with occasional sands and gravel. This was excavated by a further metre with no visible change in stratigraphy. The eastern end of the site was only excavated to a depth of 50 centimetres and it was graded down to meet the lower level. The edges of the new pond area were scalloped to allow marginal planting and provide watering platforms for wildlife (Figure 5).

A 2 metre long log was pulled from the clay in this area. The log was pulled from an almost vertical position within the clay. There was no cut for the log and close inspection revealed no tooling marks, suggesting that the log was a natural element of the pond fill.

Based on the results of the trial trenching it was suggested that the archaeologically sensitive zones could be excavated under watching brief conditions. No archaeological deposits or features were observed during this operation apart from a land-drain running east-west towards the outlet channel.

Excavation of a new outlet drain (Figure 5) from the remodelled pond area to the Bow Brook to the north revealed further gravel ridges running east to west, buried below alluvial sediments.

5. Discussion of the Physical and Documentary Evidence

5.1. Was it a Millpond?

The watching brief produced no evidence for any excavated edges or a base to the proposed pond(s) or any inlet to allow water into the area. The lack of an inlet dismisses the millpond hypothesis.

There are two basic types of water mill, the horizontal and vertical. This refers to the axis of revolution of the waterwheel. The vertical mill is of three forms, undershot (where the wheel is pushed by the current, usually in its own channel), overshot (where the water hits the top of the wheel) and breast-fed (where the water hits the wheel about half way up). Horizontal mills generally relied on a greater pressure of water striking the paddles to turn the millstones, which were directly above the wheel and needed no gearing. Such mills appear to have been common during the Anglo-Saxon period. Horizontal mills have recently been excavated at Tamworth, dating from the 9th century (Welch 1992, 109) and another at Wellington, Herefordshire, excavated by Worcestershire Archaeological Service (forthcoming).

By around 1200 the vast majority of watermills appear to have been of the vertical type (Watts, 2002). The simplest of these, the undershot wheel, would not have required such an extensive millpool as that proposed at Caddicroft. Instead, the wheel would have relied on a narrow channel funnelling a rapid flow of water against the paddles of the wheel. Such large expanses of water appear to have been reserved for overshot and brest-fed wheels. However, there is an apparent water level fall of less than 50 centimetres from the proposed millpond to the Bow Brook, which would have took the outflow. This slight head of water would have ruled out utilisation of these types of mill.

5.2. Was it a Fish Pond?

Another alternative would be that the pond represents a medieval fishpond. Fishponds were common during the medieval period as fish provided an important dietary element and was a profitable source of manorial and monastic income. Such ponds were fed by a source of running water and usually existed as series' of ponds, as water filtered through from pond to pond preventing stagnation. Different ponds were also stocked and managed differently. There is a suggestion that there were two ponds at the site (see above), with a dam between the east and the western areas. The physical evidence, however, suggests that the scouring of the wet

area at the western end of the site during the 1970's created an exaggerated difference in levels between the western and eastern sides. The 2nd edition Ordnance Survey map shows only a single rectangular wet area on the western side of the site.

The fishpond theory may be disproved on two fronts. Firstly, there is no water inlet, secondly, the area is prone to seasonal and episodic flooding, which would destroy fish stock and water balance.

5.3. The Evidence

The watching brief determined that there was a slight gravel scarp to the north of the well-defined southern scarp that forms the southern perimeter of the site. This had created a natural hollow, completing a bowl effect that was able to retain water, thus forming a natural pond / wet area between the scarps. Further gravel scarps running east to west and parallel to the Bow Brook were noted in the excavation of the new drain outlet on the east of the site. This indicates that the flattish valley between the scarp to the south and the rise to the north of Bow Brook had been cut, re-cut and modelled by palaeochannels, possibly braided, of which the Bow Brook is a modern remnant; the gravel scarps represent former watercourse banks of a relict landscape, which has been covered with alluvial silts and clay from episodic and seasonal flooding.

Human intervention in the modelling of the landscape may be ascertained from the 1812 map of Lord Coventry's land, which shows brickworks on the opposite side of the road (Figure 2). There are also clay and sand pits marked on the Ordnance Survey Maps within the area and so another hypothesis may be, that the rectangular area represented on the 1903-second edition map was a former clay pit, probably dating from the late 19th century, which had silted up by this time. The outlet, or drain, at the western end of the wet area is not shown on this map, although it is shown as a field boundary on the 1812 map and the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of 1891. It may be that the outlet represents an attempt at draining the area, possibly during clay extraction. Further attempts had obviously been made to drain the area in the 19th century with a grid of ceramic field drains, which were noted during the watching brief.

There is no definitive evidence for clay extraction on the site, as small-scale extraction would not be noticeable in the archaeological record and is unlikely to be documented unless identified by the Ordnance Survey. From the overall evidence it seems likely that the pond area is totally natural, lying in a hollow created by a former river, a predecessor of the now denuded Bow Brook. This may have been modified by some clay extraction and attempts to drain the area during the late 19th or early 20th century. The de-silting operation in the 1970's may have created false perspective of the profile of the site.

5.4. Lough Mill

As outlined above it has been projected that the place name Ufnell Bridge is a corruption of Lough Mill. The field name 'Lough Mill Field' appears in documents of 1620 (Survey of the Manor of Allesborough), and 1762 (Inclosure Award). This suggests that the place name 'Ufnell', which appears on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of 1891, derived from 'Lough Mill' in just over a century. This must be questionable and further research may provide clues.

If it is to be accepted that the proposed millpond is natural, or a clay pit, then the former location of Lough Mill must lie elsewhere. As highlighted, Lough Mill Field was an open field of 190 acres, although its exact location could not be determined as any surviving inclosure maps were not available as a resource. However, the 1812 estate map shows an area that may have been the location of the mill. There is a circular anomaly on the Bow Brook just to the east of Ufnell Bridge that may represent the remains of a pounded back area of brook that may have been channelled to power an adjacent undershot wheel. Although this is hypothetical, the unusual form of the brook at this juncture, which warranted accurate survey, suggests this is a possibility.

6. Conclusion

The results of the archaeological watching brief demonstrated that the proposed millpond / fishpond at Caddicroft Farm is likely to have been a natural feature that may have been modified by small scale clay extraction and attempts to drain the area during the 19th century. Further de-silting in the 1970's appears to have created the appearance that there were two ponds, a deeper one to the west and a shallow one to the east. The documentary and cartographic evidence indicates that only by 1903 was the proposed pond recognised as a feature, this was a rectangular area of wetland approximating to the same expanse as the proposed western pond shown on the 2nd edition Ordnance Survey map. The Survey of Allesborough Estate and an Inclosure Award, demonstrate that the place name 'Lough Mill' was still in use as late as the middle of the 18th century, making the hypothesis that the name had corrupted to 'Ufnell' by the late 19th century questionable. Analysis of the 1812 map of the area suggests a possible site for the former Lough Mill as being on the Bow Brook on the opposite side of Ufnell Bridge.

7. Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank the client Mr Alan Morris of Caddicroft Farm. Thanks are also extended to Jez Bretherton, Countryside Officer, Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeology Service and Paul Hoban of The Environment Agency. The author would also like to thank Martin Cook of Mercian Archaeology for his work on site, the plant operators of The Environment Agency, Jill Tovey of Croome Estate Trust and the staff of Worcester Records Office.

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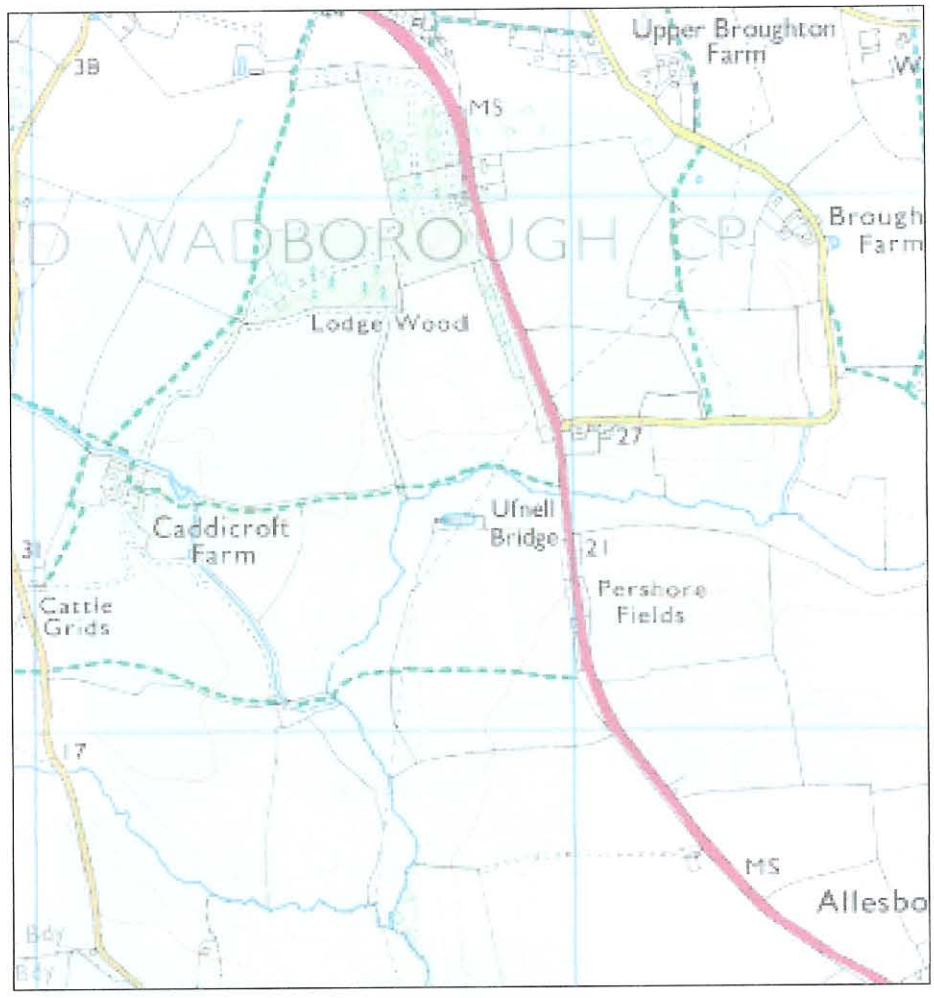
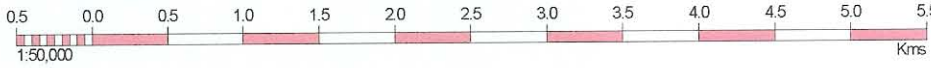
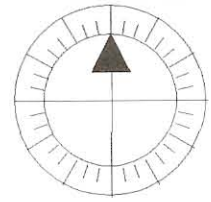
Figure 1: Location of Site







Location of Caddicroft Farm,
Drake's Broughton, Worcestershire

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Figure 3. Ordnance Survey 1st Edition (1891)

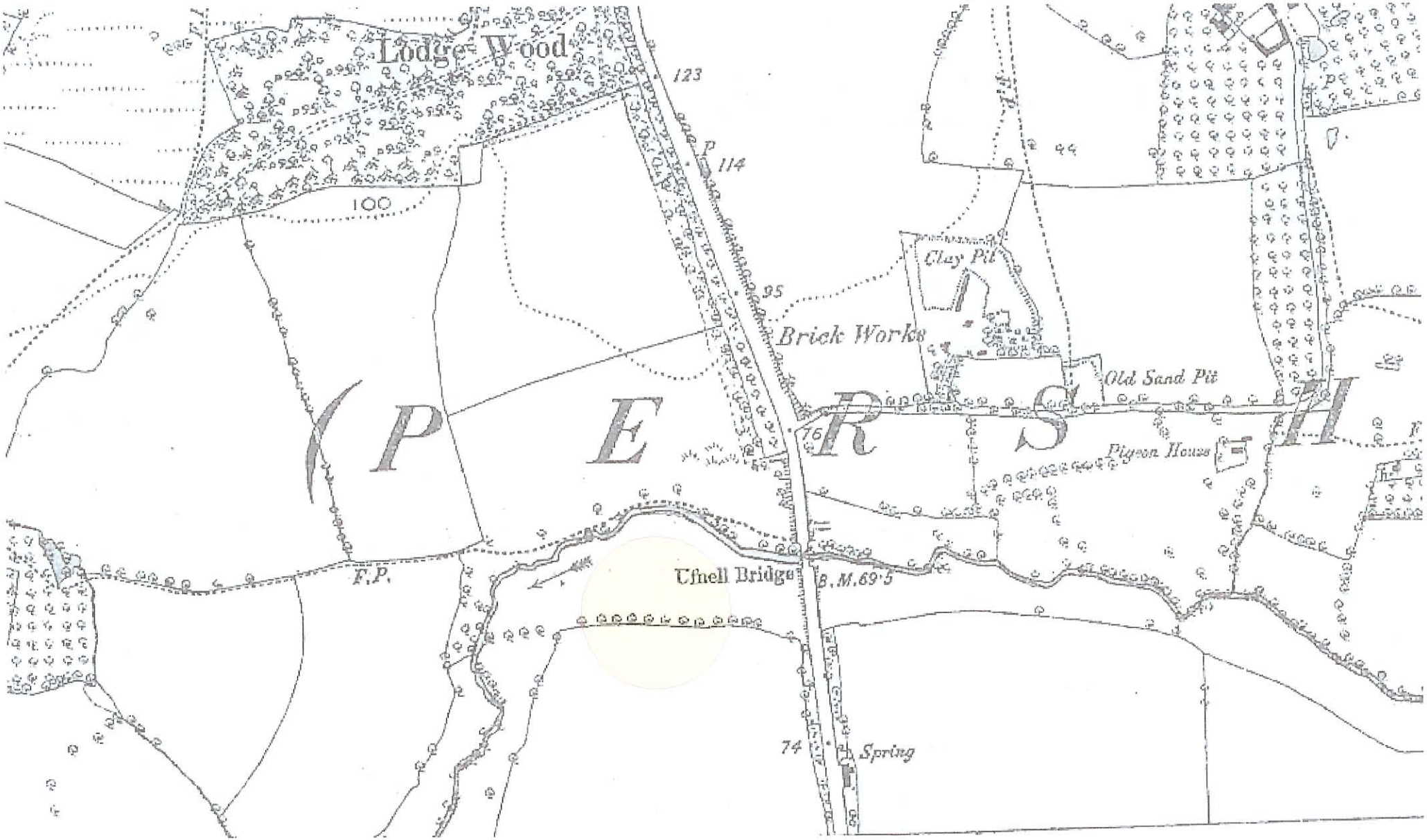

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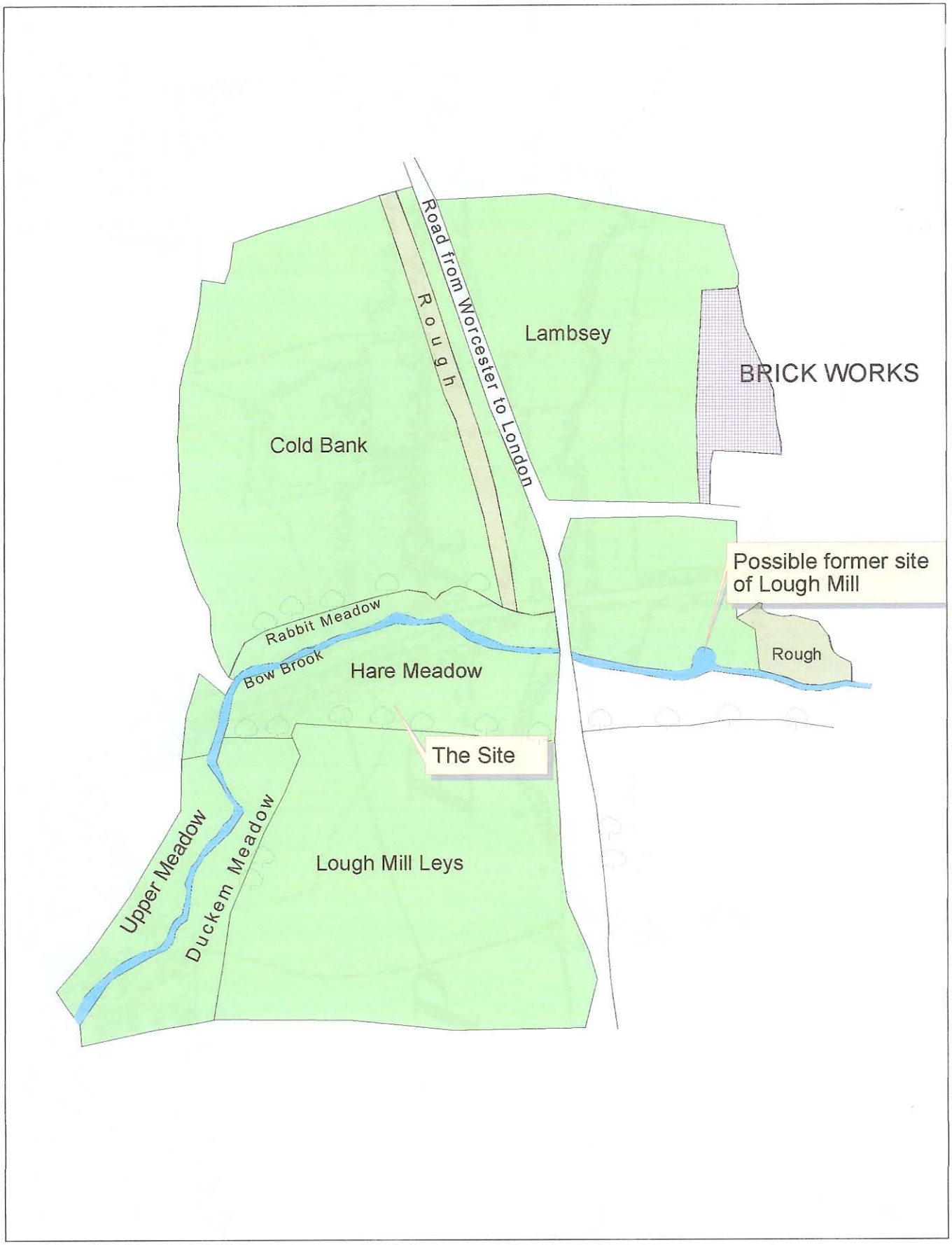
Figure 2. Annotated extract of The 1812 Survey of the Land of Lord Coventry



Scale unknown

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Figure 4. Ordnance Survey 2nd edition (1903)

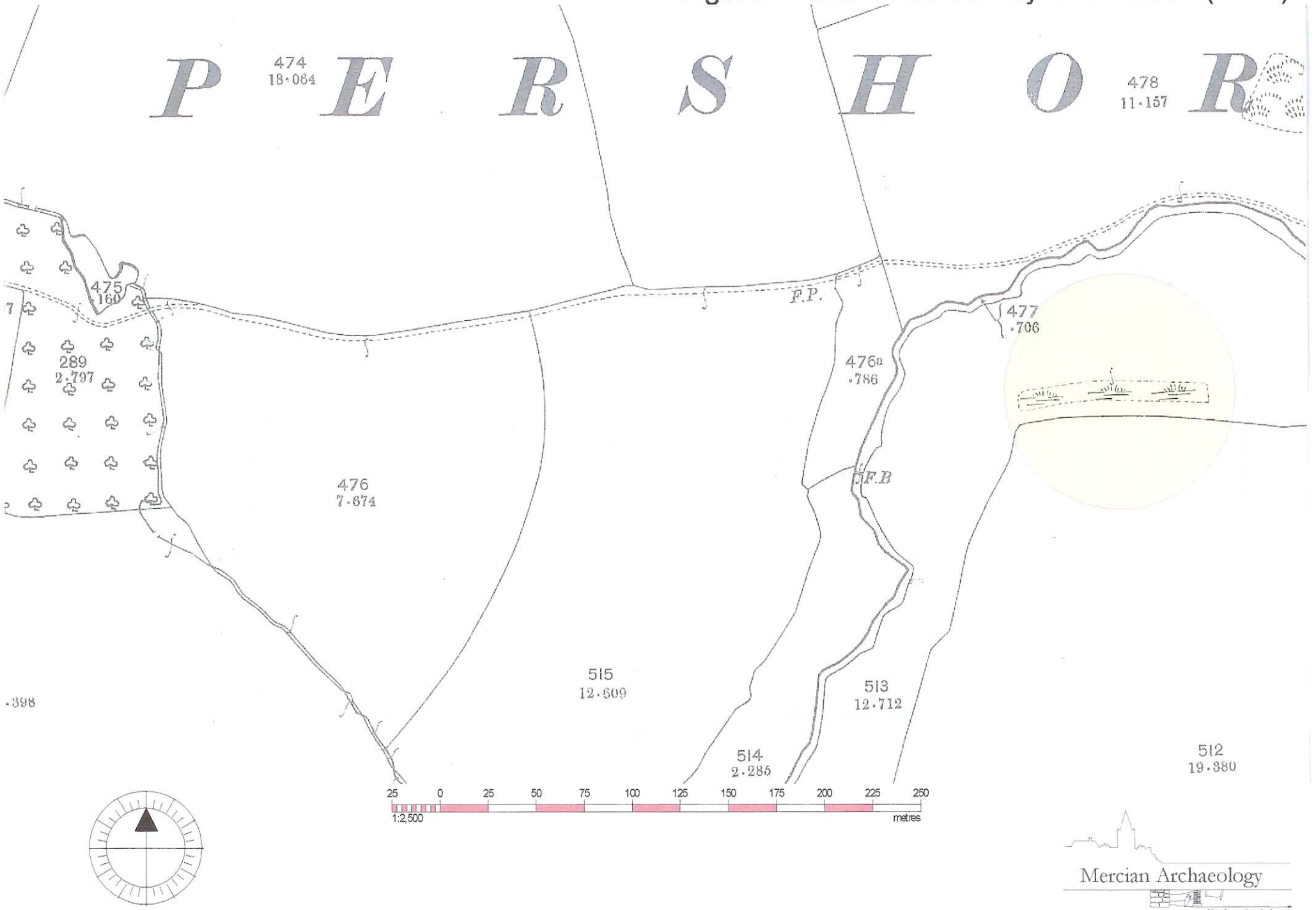

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Figure 5: Plan of the area of restoration work

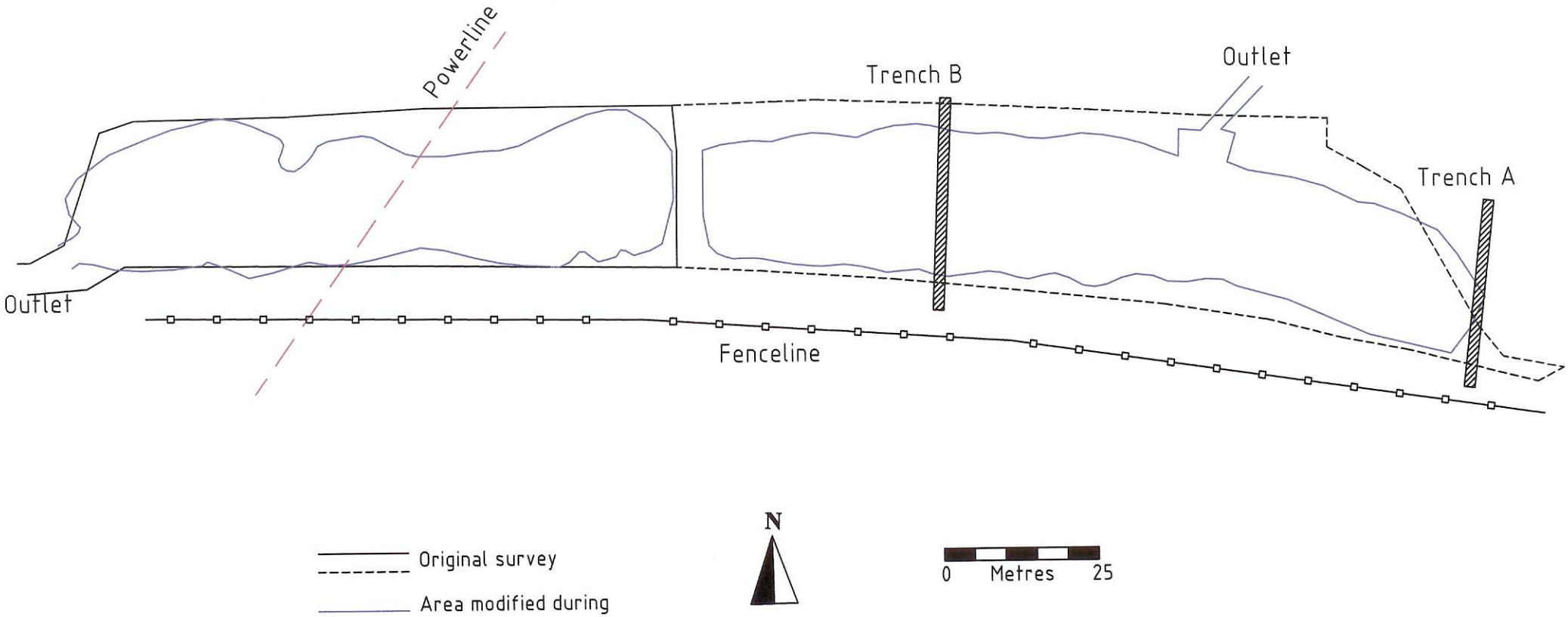
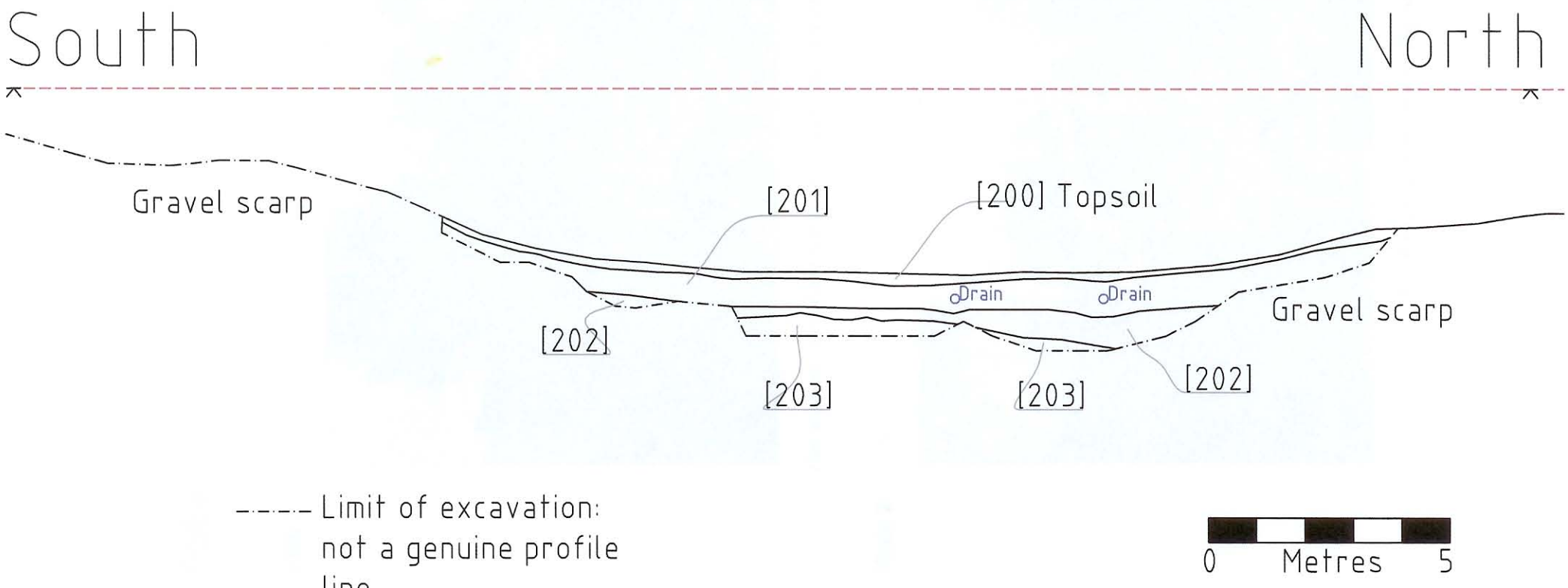


Figure 6: East facing section of Trench B



Plates

Plate 1

The western end of the site prior to the commencement of excavation work

Plate 2

Work in progress, view to the west

Plates

Plate 3

Newly excavated profile at the western end of the site (Scale 2 metres)

Plate 4

The completed project,, view to the eastt