



making sense of heritage

The Mythe, Tewkesbury Gloucestershire

Archaeological Trial Trenching Report



Ref: 110780.01
September 2015



**The Mythe, Tewkesbury
Gloucestershire**

Archaeological Trial Trenching Report

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Miller Homes

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* I = Internal Draft; E = External Draft; F = Final

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The Mythe, Tewkesbury Gloucestershire

Archaeological Trial Trenching Report

Contents

Summary.....	iii
Acknowledgements.....	iv
1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Project background	1
1.2 Site location and topography	1
2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND	2
2.1 Introduction	2
2.2 Prehistoric	2
2.3 Roman to Medieval	2
2.4 Post-medieval and modern	2
2.5 Recent investigations in the area	2
3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES.....	2
3.1 Summary.....	2
4 METHODOLOGY.....	3
4.1 Introduction	3
4.2 Machine excavation	3
4.3 Hand excavation	3
4.4 Recording.....	3
4.5 Specialist strategies	3
5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS	3
5.1 Introduction	3
5.2 Geological Substrata.....	3
5.3 Geophysical anomalies	4
5.4 WWII Nissen Huts	4
5.5 Modern Disturbance.....	4
6 DISCUSSION.....	4
6.1 Summary.....	4
6.2 Conclusions	4
7 STORAGE AND CURATION.....	4
7.1 Museum	4
7.2 Preparation of archive	4



7.3	Discard policy.....	5
7.4	Security copy	5
8	REFERENCES.....	6
8.1	Bibliography	6
9	APPENDICES.....	7
9.1	Appendix 1: Context descriptions.....	7
9.2	Appendix 2: OASIS form	11

Figures

Figure 1: Site location and plan of trenches

Plates

Plate 1: General shot of mottled natural geology, Trench 17
Plate 2: General shot of typical overburden, Trench 18
Plate 3: Detail shot of variation in natural geology centred on location of geophysical anomaly within Trench 4
Plate 4: Detail shot of rubbish pit 1604, Trench 16



The Mythe, Tewkesbury Gloucestershire

Archaeological Trial Trenching Report

Summary

Wessex Archaeology has been commissioned by CgMs Consulting on behalf of Miller Homes to carry out a programme of Archaeological Trial Trenching in advance of residential development centred upon NGR 389250 234431. The trial trenching comprised the excavation of eighteen 50m by 2m trenches.

The Site was formerly subject to an archaeological Desk-based Assessment which identified a number of undated cropmarks and a WWII military camp within the site boundary. A geophysical survey identified probable WWII military structures and agricultural features dating to the Post-medieval period. No further historical features were identified.

No archaeological features were identified during the trial trenching. All of the targeted geophysical anomalies were identified as either land drains or variations in the natural geology. No structural remains for the WWII Nissen Huts were identified which is suggestive that they were built on very ephemeral, possibly timber, footings which were removed during demolition in the 1950s. Typical timber construction utilised foundations consisting of 4 × 4 inch (10 × 10 cm) wooden stumps with 15 × 9 inch (38 × 23 cm) sole plates. On these were 4 × 3 inch (10 × 8 cm) bearers and 4 × 2 inch (10 × 5 cm) joists at 2 feet 10 inch (86 cm) centre with a floor made from tongue and groove floorboards.

The trial trenching has confirmed that the Site has a low potential for archaeological remains and the proposed development is unlikely to have a negative impact upon the archaeological resource.

It is recommended that the project archive resulting from the excavation be deposited with the Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum. The Museum has agreed in principle to accept the project archive on completion of the project, under an accession number to be confirmed. Until deposition the project archive will be stored at Wessex Archaeology's Sheffield Office under project code 110780.



The Mythe, Tewkesbury Gloucestershire

Archaeological Trial Trenching Report

Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology would like to thank Chris Harrison of CgMs Consulting for commissioning this work on behalf of Miller Homes.

Chris Swales managed this project on behalf of Wessex Archaeology. All field work was carried out by Callum Bruce and Eleanor Mayer-Claxton under the supervision of Ashley Tuck between the 1st and 4th September 2015. Report compilation was undertaken by Maria-Elena Calderon and illustrations prepared by Alix Sperr.



The Mythe, Tewkesbury Gloucestershire

Archaeological Trial Trenching Report

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology has been commissioned by CgMs Consulting (hereafter 'the Client') on behalf of Miller Homes to carry out a programme of Archaeological Trial Trenching in advance of residential development centred upon NGR 389250 234431 (hereafter 'the Site').
- 1.1.2 The Site was formerly subject to an archaeological Desk-based Assessment (DBA, CgMs, 2015a) which identified a number of undated cropmarks and a WWII military camp within the Site boundary. A geophysical survey was undertaken by Stratascan (2015) in order to investigate the potential for buried archaeological remains. The results of this survey identified probable WWII military structures and weak cropmark/agricultural features. No further historical features were identified.
- 1.1.3 Following discussions between CgMs Consulting and Gloucestershire County Council's (GCC) Planning Archaeologist a programme of archaeological trial trenching was agreed comprising the excavation of eighteen 50m by 2m trenches. CgMs Consulting produced a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) (CgMs, 2015b) outlining the methodology for the archaeological works. The WSI was submitted to Gloucestershire County Council for approval prior to archaeological works commencing.
- 1.1.4 All works undertaken conformed to current best practice and to the guidance outlined in Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment ('MoRPHE') (Historic England 2015), the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA 2014-d).

1.2 Site location and topography

- 1.2.1 The Site is located 1.8km north of the centre of Tewkesbury on a valley overlooking the River Avon floodplain, close to its confluence to the River Severn. The floodplain lies at approximately 10m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) and land within the Site rises to a small plateau just to the east of Mythe End which is at a height of c. 47m aOD. From this plateau the land falls away to the south, to the west and less steeply to the north.
- 1.2.2 The underlying superficial geology comprises River Terrace deposits of sand and gravel that were formed up to 3 million years ago. The bedrock geology below was formed by shallow seas with siliciclastic sediments that formed into mudstone, siltstone, limestone and sandstone (British Geological Survey).



2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The Site was formerly subject to an archaeological Desk-based Assessment (CgMs, 2015a), the results of which are summarised below.

2.2 Prehistoric

2.2.1 The Site was deemed to have potential for the identification of prehistoric remains due its elevated position overlooking the confluence of the Rivers Avon and Severn. However, no known prehistoric remains have been identified within the Site.

2.3 Romano-British to Medieval

2.3.1 The Site was deemed to have a low potential for the identification of archaeological remains dating from the Romano-British to medieval period. Aerial photography has identified the ploughed out remains of ridge and furrow cultivation, which may have a medieval origin.

2.4 Post-medieval and modern

2.4.1 The Site had previously housed a WWII military camp with Nissen Huts situated along the southern side of a hedge separating the two fields of the evaluation area. The majority of these structures were however, located further to the south. The Nissen Huts were demolished in the 1950s.

2.4.2 The remains of the demolished 19th century Mythe House are located within scrubland to the southeast of the Site.

2.5 Recent investigations in the area

2.5.1 A geophysical survey was undertaken by Stratascan (2015) in order to investigate the potential for buried archaeological remains. The survey revealed little in the way of archaeological remains, although features thought to relate to the former WWII military camp as well as Post-Medieval agricultural features were identified. A possible enclosure was also identified within the eastern part of the Site. Evidence of ridge and furrow across the Site and a small number of former field boundaries indicate a more recent agricultural past.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Summary

3.1.1 The aims and objectives of the trial trenching was to:

- determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of the potential archaeological remain identified in the desk-based assessment (DBA) and geophysical survey;
- assess the artefactual and environmental potential of the archaeological deposits encountered;
- inform the formulation of further measures to mitigate impacts o the proposed development on surviving archaeological remains; and



- produce a site archive for deposition with a appropriate museum and to provide information for accession to the Gloucestershire Historic Environment Record (HER)

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 Eighteen trenches measuring 50m by 2m were excavated in accordance with the agreed methodology outlined in the WSI (CgMS 2015b). The trenches were positioned to target anomalies identified in the geophysical survey (Stratascan 2015) as well as 'blank' areas not containing any identified anomalies.

4.2 Machine excavation

- 4.2.1 Topsoil was removed using a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, working under the continuous direct supervision of a suitably experienced archaeologist. Topsoil was removed in a series of level spits down to the level of the natural geology.

4.3 Hand excavation

- 4.3.1 All possible features and geophysical anomalies were investigated by hand. No archaeological features were encountered.

4.4 Recording

- 4.4.1 All deposits were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's *pro forma* recording sheets and a continuous unique numbering system. A stratigraphic matrix was compiled to record the relationships between features and deposits.
- 4.4.2 Excavated areas and deposits were located by means of an RTK GPS system and tied into the OS grid with a tolerance of better than + or - 100mm. All deposits had spot heights recorded in relation to Ordnance Datum, correct to two decimal places.
- 4.4.3 A photographic record was maintained using digital images and 35mm monochrome film.

4.5 Specialist strategies

- 4.5.1 No finds or environmental samples were recovered from Site.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 The following section provides a summary of the information held in the Site archive, with a full list of context numbers and context descriptions contained in **Appendix 1**.

5.2 Geological Substrata

- 5.2.1 The natural undisturbed geological substrate on Site was a mid-red brown silty clay with occasional patches of gravel and grey mottling (**Plate 1**). Natural was reached at a depth of between 0.35m (Trench 9) and 0.96m (Trench 1) below ground level (bgl). Overlying this was a mid-brown silty clay subsoil with occasional rounded pebble inclusions with an



average depth of 0.3m. This in turn was sealed by a dark brown silty clay topsoil with an average depth of 0.3m (**Plate 2**).

5.3 Geophysical anomalies

5.3.1 The anomalies identified during the geophysical survey were all investigated and found to be either land drains or variations in the natural geology (**Plate 3**). No evidence for ridge and furrow cultivation or the possible enclosure ditch (Trench 9) was identified.

5.4 WWII Nissen Huts

5.4.1 No structural remains were identified associated with the WWII Nissen Huts that had been demolished in the 1950s.

5.5 Modern Disturbance

5.5.1 A single pit (**1604**) measuring 1.5m by 0.5m was identified within Trench 16 (**Plate 4**). The pit contained waste and debris of a clearly late twentieth century origin.

6 DISCUSSION

6.1 Summary

6.1.1 No archaeological features were identified during the trial trenching. All of the targeted geophysical anomalies were identified as either land drains or variations in the natural geology. No structural remains for the WWII Nissen Huts were identified which is suggestive that they were built on very ephemeral, possibly timber, footings which were removed during demolition in the 1950s. Typical timber construction utilised foundations consisting of 4 × 4 inch (10 × 10 cm) wooden stumps with 15 × 9 inch (38 × 23 cm) sole plates. On these were 4 × 3 inch (10 × 8 cm) bearers and 4 × 2 inch (10 × 5 cm) joists at 2 feet 10 inch (86 cm) centre with a floor made from tongue and groove floorboards.

6.2 Conclusions

6.2.1 The trial trenching has confirmed that the Site has a low potential for archaeological remains and the proposed development is unlikely to have a negative impact upon the archaeological resource.

7 STORAGE AND CURATION

7.1 Museum

7.1.1 It is recommended that the project archive resulting from the excavation be deposited with the Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum. The Museum has agreed in principle to accept the project archive on completion of the project [under an accession number to be confirmed]. Deposition of any finds with the Museum will only be carried out with the full agreement of the landowner.

7.2 Preparation of archive

7.2.1 The complete site archive, which will include paper records, photographic records, graphics, artefacts, ecofacts and digital data, will be prepared following the standard conditions for the acceptance of excavated archaeological material by Cheltenham Art



Gallery and Museum, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; ClfA 2014c; Brown 2011; ADS 2013).

7.2.2 All archive elements will be marked with the site/accession code, and a full index will be prepared. The physical archive comprises the following:

7.2.3 1 files/document cases of paper records & A3/A4 graphics

7.3 Discard policy

7.3.1 Wessex Archaeology follows the guidelines set out in Selection, Retention and Dispersal (SMA 1993), which allows for the discard of selected artefact and ecofact categories which are not considered to warrant any future analysis. Any discard of artefacts will be fully documented in the project archive.

7.4 Security copy

7.4.1 In line with current best practice (e.g. Brown 2011), on completion of the project a security copy of the written records will be prepared, in the form of a digital PDF/A file. PDF/A is an ISO-standardised version of the Portable Document Format (PDF) designed for the digital preservation of electronic documents through omission of features ill-suited to long-term archiving.



8 REFERENCES

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9 APPENDICES

9.1 Appendix 1: Context descriptions

Trench No. 1	50m by 2m	Max depth: 0.96m bgl
Context	Description	Depth (m)
101	Topsoil: Dark brown silty clay	0 – 0.34m
102	Subsoil: Mid brown silty clay with occasional inclusions of rounded pebbles	0.34 – 0.66m
103	Natural: Mid red brown silty clay with occasional gravel and grey mottled patches	0.66 – 0.96m

Trench No. 2	50m by 2m	Max depth: 0.86m bgl
Context	Description	Depth (m)
201	Topsoil: Dark brown silty clay	0 – 0.34m
202	Subsoil: Mid brown silty clay with occasional inclusions of rounded pebbles	0.34 – 0.72m
203	Natural: Mid red brown silty clay with occasional gravel and grey mottled patches	0.72 – 0.86m

Trench No. 3	50m by 2m	Max depth: 0.52m bgl
Context	Description	Depth (m)
301	Topsoil: Dark brown silty clay	0 – 0.26m
302	Subsoil: Mid brown silty clay with occasional inclusions of rounded pebbles	0.26 – 0.4m
303	Natural: Mid red brown silty clay with occasional gravel and grey mottled patches	0.4 – 0.52m

Trench No. 4	50m by 2m	Max depth: 0.76m bgl
Context	Description	Depth (m)
401	Topsoil: Dark brown silty clay	0 – 0.35m
402	Subsoil: Mid brown silty clay with occasional inclusions of rounded pebbles	0.35 – 0.62m
403	Natural: Mid red brown silty clay with occasional gravel and grey mottled patches	0.62 – 0.76m

Trench No. 5	50m by 2m	Max depth: 0.8m bgl
Context	Description	Depth (m)
501	Topsoil: Dark brown silty clay	0 – 0.42m
502	Subsoil: Mid brown silty clay with occasional inclusions of rounded pebbles	0.42 – 0.7m
503	Natural: Mid red brown silty clay with occasional gravel and grey mottled patches	0.7m+



Trench No. 6	50m by 2m	Max depth: 0.46m bgl
Context	Description	Depth (m)
601	Topsoil: Dark brown silty clay	0 – 0.27m
602	Subsoil: Mid brown silty clay with occasional inclusions of rounded pebbles	0.27 – 0.46m
603	Natural: Mid red brown silty clay with occasional gravel and grey mottled patches	0.46m+

Trench No. 7	50m by 2m	Max depth: 0.63m bgl
Context	Description	Depth (m)
701	Topsoil: Dark brown silty clay	0 – 0.37m
702	Subsoil: Mid brown silty clay with occasional inclusions of rounded pebbles	0.37 – 0.54m
703	Natural: Mid red brown silty clay with occasional gravel and grey mottled patches	0.54-0.63m

Trench No. 8	50m by 2m	Max depth: 0.6m bgl
Context	Description	Depth (m)
801	Topsoil: Dark brown silty clay	0 – 0.25m
802	Subsoil: Mid brown silty clay with occasional inclusions of rounded pebbles	0.25 – 0.6m
803	Natural: Mid red brown silty clay with occasional gravel and grey mottled patches	0.6m+

Trench No. 9	50m by 2m	Max depth: 0.35m bgl
Context	Description	Depth (m)
901	Topsoil: Dark brown silty clay	0 – 0.25m
902	Subsoil: Mid brown silty clay with occasional inclusions of rounded pebbles	0.25 – 0.35m
903	Natural: Mid red brown silty clay with occasional gravel and grey mottled patches	0.35m+

Trench No. 10	50m by 2m	Max depth: 0.5m bgl
Context	Description	Depth (m)
1001	Topsoil: Dark brown silty clay	0 – 0.25m
1002	Subsoil: Mid brown silty clay with occasional inclusions of rounded pebbles	0.25 – 0.5m
1003	Natural: Mid red brown silty clay with occasional gravel and grey mottled patches	0.5m+



Trench No. 11	50m by 2m	Max depth: 0.57m bgl
Context	Description	Depth (m)
1101	Topsoil: Dark brown silty clay	0 – 0.21m
1102	Subsoil: Mid brown silty clay with occasional inclusions of rounded pebbles	0.21 – 0.38m
1103	Natural: Mid red brown silty clay with occasional gravel and grey mottled patches	0.38m+

Trench No. 12	50m by 2m	Max depth: 0.48m bgl
Context	Description	Depth (m)
1201	Topsoil: Dark brown silty clay	0 – 0.14m
1202	Subsoil: Mid brown silty clay with occasional inclusions of rounded pebbles	0.14 – 0.48m
1203	Natural: Mid red brown silty clay with occasional gravel and grey mottled patches	0.48m+

Trench No. 13	50m by 2m	Max depth: 0.7m bgl
Context	Description	Depth (m)
1301	Topsoil: Dark brown silty clay	0 – 0.25m
1302	Subsoil: Mid brown silty clay with occasional inclusions of rounded pebbles	0.25 – 0.7m
1303	Natural: Mid red brown silty clay with occasional gravel and grey mottled patches	0.7m+

Trench No. 14	50m by 2m	Max depth: 0.66m bgl
Context	Description	Depth (m)
1401	Topsoil: Dark brown silty clay	0 – 0.24m
1402	Subsoil: Mid brown silty clay with occasional inclusions of rounded pebbles	0.24 – 0.46m
1403	Natural: Mid red brown silty clay with occasional gravel and grey mottled patches	0.46 – 0.66m

Trench No. 15	50m by 2m	Max depth: 0.72m bgl
Context	Description	Depth (m)
1501	Topsoil: Dark brown silty clay	0 – 0.23m
1502	Subsoil: Mid brown silty clay with occasional inclusions of rounded pebbles	0.23 – 0.51m
1503	Natural: Mid red brown silty clay with occasional gravel and grey mottled patches	0.51 – 0.72m



Trench No. 16	50m by 2m	Max depth: 0.48m bgl
Context	Description	Depth (m)
1601	Topsoil: Dark brown silty clay	0 – 0.34m
1602	Subsoil: Mid brown silty clay with occasional inclusions of rounded pebbles	0.34 – 0.48m
1603	Natural: Mid red brown silty clay with occasional gravel and grey mottled patches	0.48m+
1604	Cut: Modern rubbish pit	0.48m-0.68m
1605	Fill: Modern rubbish pit	0.48m-0.68m

Trench No. 17	50m by 2m	Max depth: 0.59m bgl
Context	Description	Depth (m)
1701	Topsoil: Dark brown silty clay	0 – 0.21m
1702	Subsoil: Mid brown silty clay with occasional inclusions of rounded pebbles	0.21 – 0.37m
1703	Natural: Mid red brown silty clay with occasional gravel and grey mottled patches	0.51 – 0.59m

Trench No. 18	50m by 2m	Max depth: 0.66m bgl
Context	Description	Depth (m)
1801	Topsoil: Dark brown silty clay	0 – 0.41m
1802	Subsoil: Mid brown silty clay with occasional inclusions of rounded pebbles	0.41 – 0.59m
1803	Natural: Mid red brown silty clay with occasional gravel and grey mottled patches	0.59 – 0.66m



9.2 Appendix 2: OASIS form

OASIS ID: wessexar1-224510

Project details

Project name	The Mythe, Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire Trial Trenching
Short description of the project	Wessex Archaeology has been commissioned by CgMs Consulting on behalf of Miller Homes to carry out a programme of Archaeological Trial Trenching in advance of residential development centred upon NGR 389250 234431. The trial trenching comprised the excavation of eighteen 50m by 2m trenches. The Site was formerly subject to an archaeological Desk-based Assessment which identified a number of undated cropmarks and a WWII military camp within the site boundary. A geophysical survey identified probable WWII military structures and agricultural features dating to the Post-medieval period. No further historical features were identified. No archaeological features were identified during the trial trenching. All of the targeted geophysical anomalies were identified as either land drains or variations in the natural geology. No structural remains for the WWII Nissen Huts were identified which is suggestive that they were built on very ephemeral, possibly timber, footings which were removed during demolition in the 1950s. Typical timber construction utilised foundations consisting of 4 x 4 inch (10 x 10 cm) wooden stumps with 15 x 9 inch (38 x 23 cm) sole plates. On these were 4 x 3 inch (10 x 8 cm) bearers and 4 x 2 inch (10 x 5 cm) joists at 2 feet 10 inch (86 cm) centre with a floor made from tongue and groove floorboards. The trial trenching has confirmed that the Site has a low potential for archaeological remains and the proposed development is unlikely to have a negative impact upon the archaeological resource.
Project dates	Start: 01-09-2015 End: 04-09-2015
Previous/future work	Yes / No
Any associated project reference codes	110780 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 13 - Waste ground
Current Land use	Vacant Land 1 - Vacant land previously developed
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Methods & techniques	"Sample Trenches"
Development type	Housing estate
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF
Position in the planning process	Not known / Not recorded

Project location

Country	England
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Site location	GLOUCESTERSHIRE TEWKESBURY TEWKESBURY The Mythe, Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire
Postcode	GL20 6EB
Study area	1800 Square metres
Site coordinates	SO 89250 34431 52.007784039416 -2.156632427802 52 00 28 N 002 09 23 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 0.4m Max: 0.96m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Wessex Archaeology
Project brief originator	CgMs Consulting Ltd.
Project design originator	Wessex Archaeology
Project director/manager	Chris Swales
Project supervisor	Ashley Tuck
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	Miller Homes

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Tewkesbury Museum
Digital Contents	"none"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography", "Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Tewkesbury Museum
Paper Contents	"none"
Paper Media available	"Diary", "Photograph", "Report"

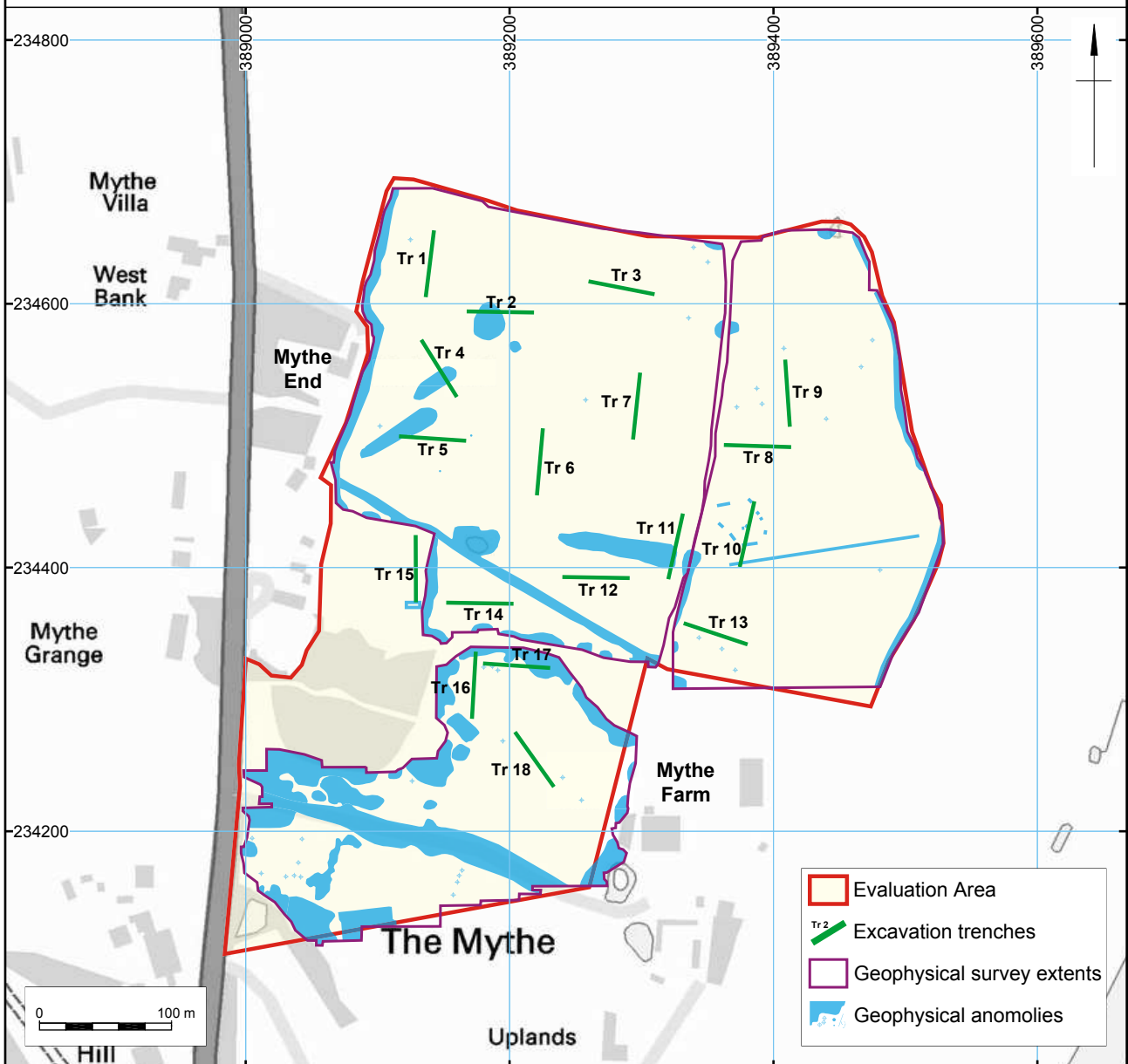
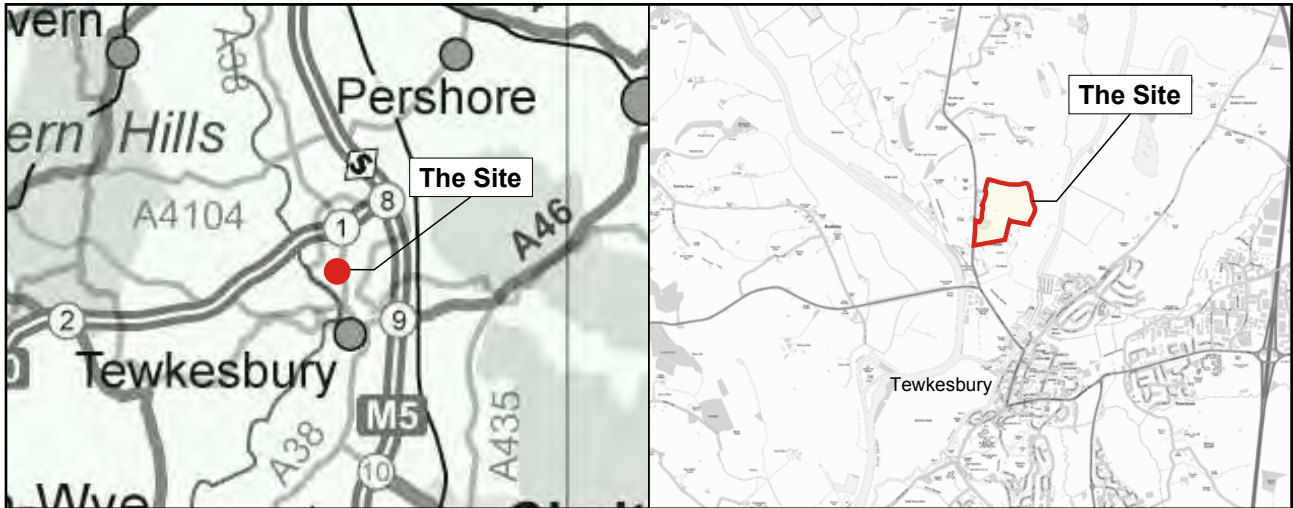
Project bibliography 1

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Site location and plan of trenches

Figure 1



Plate 1: General shot of mottled natural geology, Trench 17



Plate 2: General shot of typical overburden, Trench 18



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Plate 3: Detail shot of variation in natural geology centred on location of geophysical anomaly within Trench 4



Plate 4: Detail shot of rubbish pit 1604, Trench 16

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