



**Plot 2 Upper House Farm
Lyonshall
HEREFORDSHIRE**
Archaeological Evaluation



October 2007

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EXCAVATION • RESEARCH • GEOPHYSICS • ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY

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Cover picture

Main: General shot of excavation. Inset: Evaluation trench (looking SW).

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Plot 2, Upper House Farm
Lyonshall
HEREFORDSHIRE

Archaeological Evaluation

Site Work

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Report

Luke Craddock-Bennett

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Plot 2
Upper House Farm
LYONSHALL
HEREFORDSHIRE
(NGR SO 3360 5549)

Archaeological Evaluation

1. Summary

The project was undertaken to assess the archaeological potential of the site. A planning application has been approved by Herefordshire County Council to construct a two storey residential dwelling on the site.

The project was considered likely to produce results of local significance. A number of Roman sites are present in the vicinity and Offa's Dyke lies approximately 400m to the southwest of the site.

One trench measuring 9.2 metres in length and 1.6 metres in width was excavated.

No archaeologically significant finds or deposits were encountered.

2. Introduction

Archaeological Investigations Ltd. was commissioned by Mr. G. T. Bird to undertake an archaeological evaluation on an area of land adjacent to Upper House Farm, Lyonshall (NGR SO 3360 5549) (Fig. 1).

A planning application (Ref: DCNW2006/3801/F) had been approved by Herefordshire County Council to construct a two storey residential dwelling on the site. The proposed works had the potential to affect a site of archaeological significance. In line with Planning Policy Guidelines Note 16, section 30 the Planning Authority was advised that a program of archaeological work was required, taking the form of an archaeological watching brief. Following further discussions between Herefordshire Council's Archaeological Advisor and Archaeological Investigations Ltd, the decision to undertake an archaeological evaluation was reached.

The site covers an area of approximately 416m² to the northeast of Upper House Farm on the western edge of the village of Lyonshall. The site is currently derelict land adjacent to the farmyard. To the northwest of the site is an apple orchard, and to the east the site is bound by an access road serving Lane Cottage.

The underlying geology is Old fluvio-glacial gravels overlying Old Red Sandstone.

One evaluation trench was excavated on the 21st August 2007 (Fig. 2).

3. Archaeological Background (SMR map Fig. 3)

Evidence for Bronze Age activity in the area is attested to by a dagger or knife found approximately 800m to the northwest of the site (SMR 9504).

In fields approximately 600m to the northeast of the site evidence for Romano-British settlement has been found. A rectangular double ditched enclosure measuring 50 metres by 60 metres was excavated by Cardiff University in 2004 (SMR 31126). Pottery dated to the 2nd and 3rd centuries was found within the ditches. A coin of Numerian was also found in the vicinity (SMR 1087). The fields in this area bear the names 'Chesters', 'Roman Hill' and 'Roman Wall', suggesting a Roman presence in the area.

Offas Dyke, thought to have been constructed in the late 8th century to mark the boundary of the Mercian kingdom lies 400m to the southwest of the site.

The village of Lyonshall existed before the Norman Conquest of 1066 and there is a short but detailed account of it in the Domesday Book, compiled by King William I by 1086, the entry reads as follows;

Lyonshall. Walter held it from him. Thorkell held it from Earl Harold. 5 hides which pay tax. In lordship 2 ploughs; 5 slaves, male and female.

From some men settled there 100d are given for as long as
They wish (to remain).
Value before 1066, 60s; now 50s

Lyonshall castle (SMR 355) was probably founded shortly after the Norman Conquest by the De Lacys. Later the castle became the possession of John D'Evroux and may be one of two castles that were held by him and mentioned in the Pipe Rolls of 1188, the castle is mentioned as 'Lenhaul' in 1209.

The church of St Michael and all Angels (SMR 6930) at Lyonshall has a North arcade of 5 bays dating to about 1250 with a slightly later west bay that was built after a Norman West tower was replaced by a rectangular tower a little beyond it. The original west wall of the tower still survives, with one Norman window. The original South wall stood until 1872 when Bodley added a new West bay onto the South arcade, which dates to around 1300. The chancel and North transept, as well as one of the windows in the south aisle also date to around 1300. The font is partly of the 13th century and there is a headless statue, also 13th century. The remaining windows, vestry and porch are all Victorian additions.

No previous archaeological work has been carried out on the site adjacent to Upper House farm.

4. Aims and objectives

The project was considered likely to produce results of local archaeological importance.

The aim of the project was to enable archaeological features to be identified in the areas affected by the proposal.

The objectives were to:

- Excavate an area of 10m² equivalent to 1% of the site by means of one trench measuring 10m in length situated on the site of the proposed building.
- Identify the date and nature of features being investigated.
- Assess survival, quality, condition and relative significance of any archaeological features, deposits and structures within the study area.
- Produce a record of the features.
- Produce a report on the findings.
- Deposit the archive.

5. Method

One trench measuring 9.2 metres in length and 1.6 metres in width was excavated.

The excavation was carried out using a mechanical digger using a 0.6m wide toothless bucket. The excavation area was dug to the top of natural deposits as no archaeological features were identified in the overlying deposits.

Features were identified cutting into the natural deposits. These features were cleaned and then photographed using 35mm colour and black and white film. Digital photographs were taken at a resolution of 5mp. A plan was made of the features at a scale of 1:50.

All features were half sectioned. Deposits were removed until the nature of each feature could be established.

Archaeological contexts were recorded using a continuous numbered context system using *pro-forma* recording sheets. Registers were maintained for photographs, drawings and contexts.

A two metre sample section of the trench was drawn at a scale of 1:20

The position of the trench was tied into the OS grid using identifiable features in the landscape.

A local OS benchmark could not be located. Levels were taken and relate to the floor level of a nearby barn.

6. Results (Fig. 2)

The results of the excavation are summarised in Table 1

| Context | Type | Description | L(m) | W | D | Finds |
|---------|---------|---|------|------|---------|----------|
| 100 | Layer | Orange silty clay, very firm, coal flecking and brick rubble present. Farmyard surface spread. | 9.2+ | 1.6+ | 0.18 | None |
| 101 | Layer | Mid-dark brown silty clay, firm, small angular and sub-angular stones and root action present. Topsoil. | 9.2+ | 1.6+ | 0.18 | Post-med |
| 102 | Natural | Red silty clay, firm, light blue sandstone, glacial stone present. Natural | 9.2+ | 1.6+ | 0.2+ | None |
| 103 | Deposit | Light-mid brown silty clay, firm. Small rounded and sub-rounded stones. | 9.2+ | 1.6+ | 0.3-0.4 | None |
| 104 | Feature | Pit or linear feature in western corner of trench. Orientated E-W. 30° Break Of Slope to flat base. Filled by light brown sandy clay containing large angular stones. | 2.3+ | 0.9+ | 0.16 | None |

| | | | | | | |
|-----|-----------|---|------|------|------|------|
| 105 | Feature | Semi circular cut running into northeastern trench edge. 10° BOS to irregular base. Filled by light brown sandy clay containing large angular stones. Tree Bole | 1.3 | 0.6+ | 0.07 | None |
| 106 | Feature | Modern sheep burial | 0.75 | 0.5 | NFE | None |
| 107 | Post Hole | Square in plan. Fill contains post-med pot and coal. | 0.25 | 0.25 | NFE | None |
| 108 | Feature | Semi-circular cut running into section. Shallow scoop, 30° sides to irregular base. Filled by sandy clay with large angular stones. Tree Bole. | 1.7 | 0.9+ | 0.15 | None |

Table 1

Cut into the natural subsoil were a number of features.

Contained within the fill of a square post hole (107) in the east of the trench was post-medieval pottery and coal fragments. A small pit in the west of the trench (106) contained a modern sheep burial.

Two semi-circular features heading into the northeastern trench edge (105 & 108) had very irregular profiles and contained deposits of light brown sandy clay very similar to the overlying subsoil (103).

In the western corner of the trench was a feature continuing beyond the area of excavation (104). The feature was very regular in profile and appeared to be linear in plan on a north-south orientation. The fill was similar in nature to the overlying subsoil (103).

No other archaeological finds or features were present within the evaluation trench.

7. Discussion

The semi-circular features present in the north of the evaluation trench (105 & 108) contained no finds and were irregular in form. It seems likely that the features were tree boles and this could suggest that the orchard occupying the area to the northwest of the trench once covered the area of evaluation.

The linear feature (104) in the southwest corner of the trench is of uncertain function. The cut appears too regular to be a natural feature, although no evidence was found within the feature to suggest human activity.

8. Conclusion

No archaeologically significant finds or features were encountered.

The aims of the project have been satisfied and the methods used were appropriate in this case.

9. Bibliography

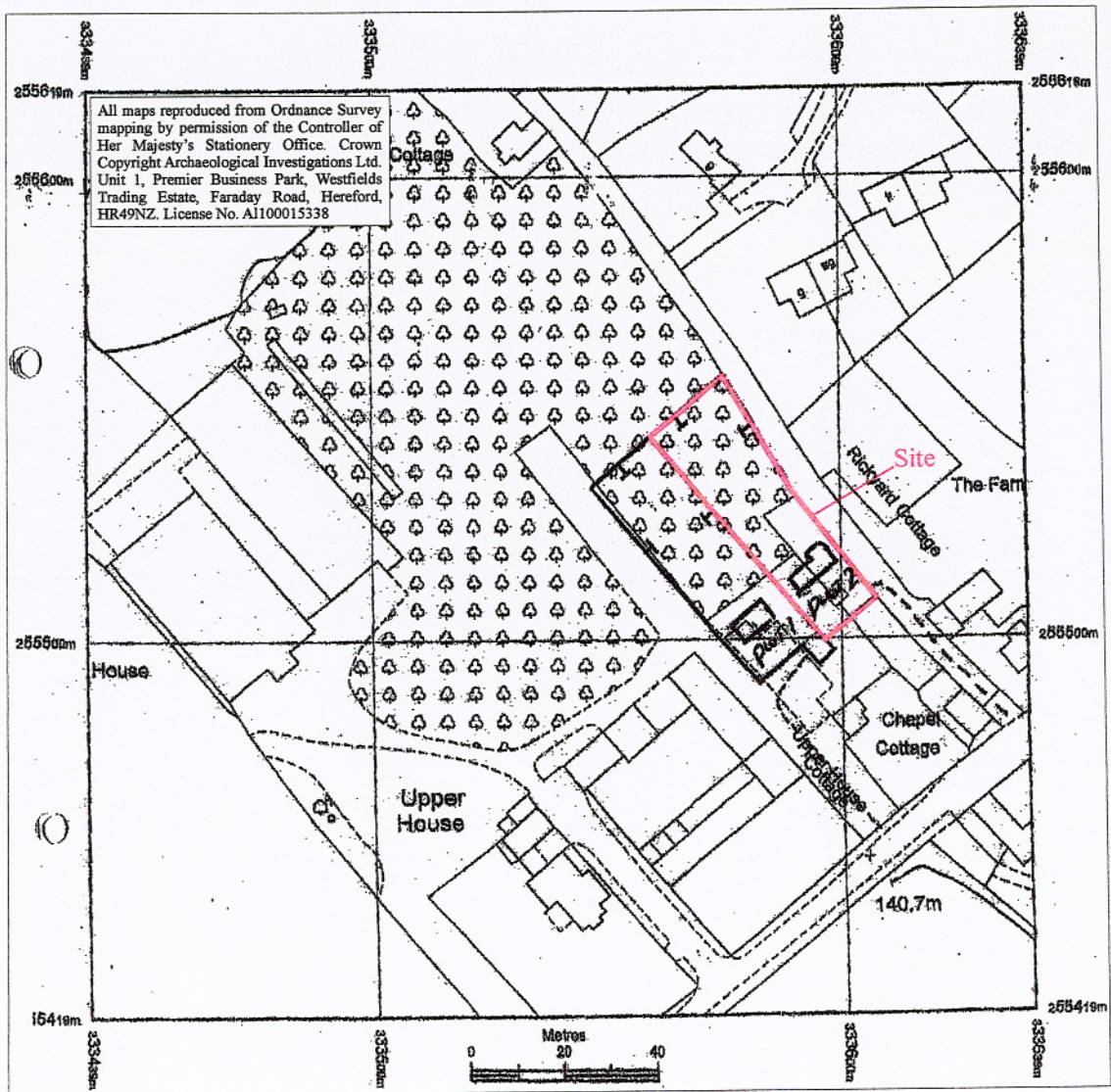
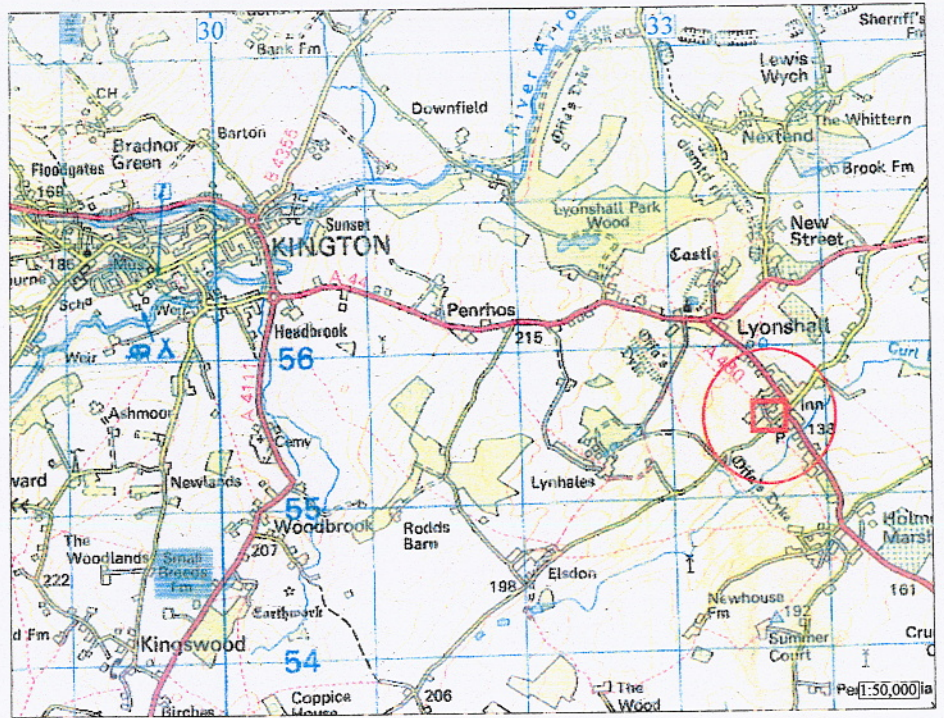
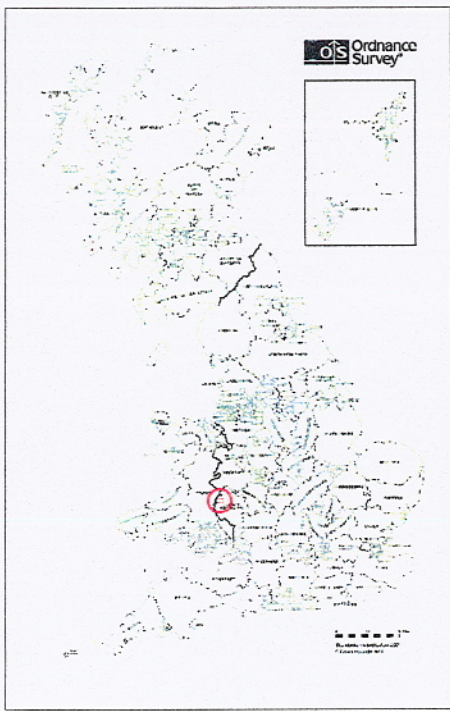
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Appendix 1 – Site Archive

- 1x Context Register
- 9x Context Sheets
- 2x Photographic Register
- 1x Set of colour negatives and photos
- 1x Set of black and white negatives and photos
- 1x Sheet of permatrace with site plan and section
- 1x Levels register
- 1x Copy of this report



Site location map

Figure 1

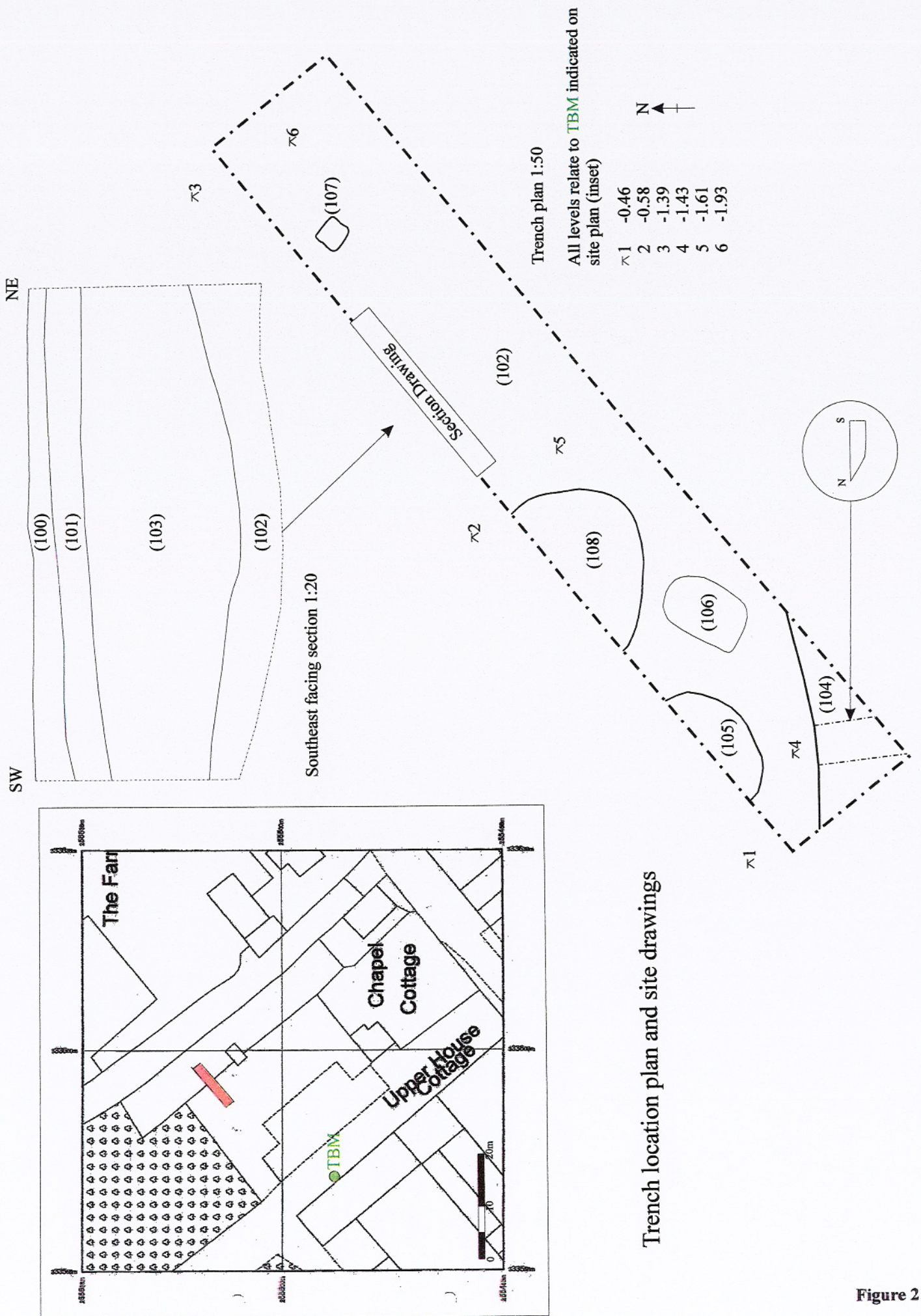
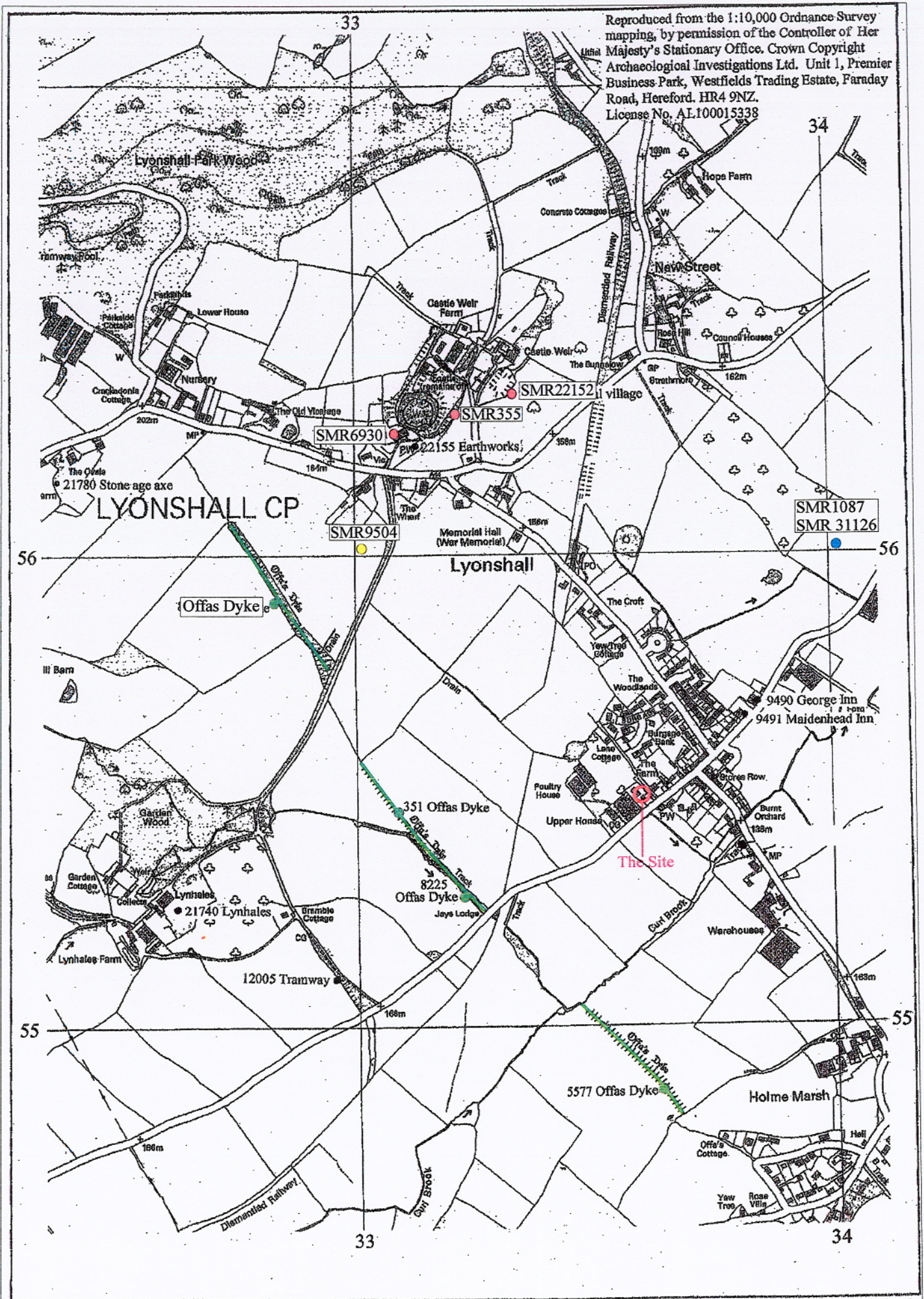


Figure 2

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Lyonshall with Sites and Monuments located

Figure 3