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# birmingham archaeology

Land off Coppice Lane  
Hallow  
Worcestershire

Archaeological Evaluation

2007

UNIVERSITY OF  
BIRMINGHAM



## Land off Coppice Close, Hallow, Worcestershire

### AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION, 2007.

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## SUMMARY

*In May of 2007, Birmingham Archaeology undertook an evaluation in the land to the east of Coppice Lane in the village of Hallow, Worcestershire. Five trenches were excavated across the development site.*

*The natural geological substrate was identified across the site at approximately 0.50m below present ground level. The evaluation identified intense agricultural activity, with furrow ditches visible across the site on an east-west alignment. One sherd of residual Medieval pottery was recovered, perhaps indicating a probable date for this activity. The layer of slag dumped in the east end of Trench 3 appears to be recent in date.*

*No further archaeological features or deposits were encountered during the course of this evaluation.*

## **Land off Coppice Close, Hallow, Worcestershire**

### **AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION, 2007.**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background to the project**

Birmingham Archaeology was commissioned by Walker Troup Architects on behalf of West Mercia Housing Group to undertake a programme of trial trenching ahead of a residential development at land off Coppice Close, Hallow, Worcestershire (hereinafter referred to as the site, Planning Application Number MH/07/0573).

This report outlines the results of a field evaluation carried out during May of 2007, and has been prepared in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations (IFA 2001).

The evaluation conformed to a brief produced by Worcestershire County Council (HEAS 2007) and a Written Scheme of Investigation (Birmingham Archaeology 2007) which was approved by the Local Planning Authority prior to implementation in accordance with guidelines laid down in Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (DoE 1990).

### **1.2 Location and geology**

The site is located in the village of Hallow, Worcestershire with the site itself incorporating a small segment of a large ploughed field located at the end of the Coppice Close cul-de-sac which lies to the north of the village, and is centred on NGR SO 8271 5920 (Fig. 1). The underlying geology consists of Keuper Marl.

## **2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

The site lies in the vicinity of a number of previously noted monuments and areas of activity, although relatively little is known about the immediate area of study (Fig. 6). The earliest feature noted lies to the north of the study area in the fields around what is now Tinkers Coppice Farm, and has been interpreted as an early ring ditch although as with most of the features in the area this has been heavily ploughed and as a result is visible only through cropmarks (WSM21279). To the south of the farm are a series of monuments and earthworks in an area of high archaeological activity (WSM32263). Here the evidence shows activity ranging from the Bronze Age in the form of ring ditches and round barrows, through the Iron Age and Romano-British phase (field systems and earthworks, including a sub rectangular enclosure [WSM06068]) to the Medieval period where there is evidence for ridge and furrow.

More evidence for activity during the Medieval period in the surrounding area comes from fields to the south of Tinkers Coppice Farm where areas of ridge and furrow still survive (WSM36383) and from fields to the west of the study area where ridge and furrow is again still visible (WSM34431). Later activity in the study area is present in the form of a late boundary ditch to



the north of the farm (WSM31941), and from the village of Hallow itself where there are still standing buildings dating to the 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> century (WSM29514).

The village itself lies to the north-west of Worcester and, while in their possession, was one of the main retreats for the monks from this town during the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The Severn forms the eastern boundary of the parish. Laughern Brook waters the northern part, flowing in an easterly direction until it reaches Hallow Mill, where it turns to the south.

No railway lines pass through Hallow, but the main road from Stourport to Worcester enters the parish on the north, and, after passing through Hallow Heath, reaches the village which lies on either side of it. The church of St. Philip and St. James is to the south, and near it is the village pound. Behind the church is Hallow Park, an old house remodelled in the 18th century (Parishes: Hallow 1913).

### 3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The principle aim of the evaluation was to determine the character, state of preservation and the potential significance of any buried remains.

More specific aims were to:

- To locate any archaeological features and deposits within the site.
- To assess the survival, quality, condition and relative archaeological significance of any archaeological features and structures within the site.
- To identify and recommend options for the management of the archaeological resource, including any archaeological provision where necessary.

### 4. METHODOLOGY

#### Fieldwork

The proposed development area covers approximately 3585m<sup>2</sup>. A total of 5 trenches were excavated across the site totalling 143m<sup>2</sup> (four 1.6m x 20m, one 1.6m x 10m) which provided a 4% sample of the total area.

Trenches were located regularly spaced over the whole area in order to maximise the potential for locating any underlying archaeological features. Trench 3 was moved slightly east from its original position due to the presence of a water pipe in the area.

All topsoil and modern overburden was removed using a JCB mechanical excavator with a toothless ditching bucket, under direct archaeological supervision, down to the top of the uppermost archaeological horizon or the subsoil. Subsequent cleaning and excavation was by hand.

All stratigraphic sequences were recorded, even where no archaeology was present. Features were planned at a scale of 1:20 or 1:50, and sections were drawn through all cut features and significant vertical stratigraphy at a scale of 1:20. A comprehensive written record was maintained using a continuous numbered context system on *pro-forma* context and feature cards. Written records and scale plans were supplemented by photographs using high resolution digital photography.

## 5. RESULTS

### 5.1 Introduction

The following paragraphs represent a summary of the results of the trenches. Trench locations are shown in Fig 2

#### 5.2 Trench 1 (Fig.3)

Trench 1 was located to the far west of the site and was on a north-south alignment (Plate 1). The Natural [104] was located at 0.60m below the ground surface and consisted of red clay with patches of gravel throughout. Cut through this at the north end of the trench was the remains of a plough furrow [103] (Plate 2). This consisted of a shallow sided cut measuring 0.98m in width and 0.14m in depth and was filled by a light brown silty sand [102]. The above was sealed by 0.20m of subsoil [101] that, in turn, was overlain by 0.4m of topsoil [100].

#### 5.3 Trench 2

Trench 2 was on an east-west alignment to the south centre of the site. The Natural here was a red clay [204] and this was located at c.0.30m below the ground level. The only feature of note in this trench was a small scoop [203] measuring 0.23m in width by 0.08m in depth that was cut through the natural in the centre of the trench (Plate 3). This was filled by a black silty clay [202] which produced one small piece of residual Medieval pottery. The above was sealed by 0.20m of subsoil [201] which, in turn, was overlain by 0.10m of topsoil [200].

#### 5.4 Trench 3

Trench 3 was to the north of Trench 2, and orientated on the same alignment. The Natural was a red clay with areas of yellow clay/gravel throughout [303], and was found at a depth of 0.55m below the ground surface. To the east end of the trench was a spread of iron slag [302] that measured around 0.30m in depth and which appeared to be a dump of material from some form of industrial activity (Plate 4). Sealing this layer was 0.30m of a dark brown subsoil [301] which, in turn, was overlain by 0.25m of topsoil [300].

#### 5.5 Trench 4 (Fig.4)

Trench 4 was on a north-south alignment to the east of Trenches 2 and 3. The Natural was located at a depth of 0.44m below the ground level and consisted of a red clay [402]. The only features noticeable in the trench were a series of plough furrows orientated on an approximate east-west alignment. To the north end of the trench was one such furrow [404]. 404 measured 0.46m in width and 0.06m in depth and was filled by a dark brown silty clay [403]. Sealing these furrows was 0.18m of subsoil [401], which in turn was overlain by 0.26m of topsoil [400].

#### 5.6 Trench 5 (Fig.5)

Trench 5 was located to the east of trench 4 and was on a east-west alignment. The Natural [505] was located at a depth of 0.52m below the ground surface and consisted of a red clay with areas of gravel in places. There were no archaeological features present in this trench, but there was evidence for animal activity in the form of a series of small interconnecting gullies which probably represented the remnants of a burrow of some kind (Plate 5). Sealing these was 0.12m of subsoil [502] which, in turn, was overlain by 0.40m of topsoil [501].

## 6. DISCUSSION

The evaluation has successfully characterised the archaeological remains across the site. The natural geological substrate was identified across the site at approximately 0.50m below present ground level. The evaluation identified intense agricultural activity, with furrow ditches visible across the site on an east-west alignment. One sherd of residual Medieval pottery was recovered, perhaps indicating a probable date for this activity. The layer of slag dumped in the east end of Trench 3 appears to be recent in date and perhaps arises as a by-product of some activity from the village to the south.

## 7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The project was commissioned by Walker Troup Architects, on behalf of West Mercia Housing Group. Thanks also go to Mike Glyde who monitored the project on behalf of Worcestershire County Council, and to Amy Coomes and Mike Harding for their help and support. Work on site was undertaken by Lis Bishop, Paul Breeze and Phil Mann. Phil Mann produced the written report which was illustrated by Nigel Dodds, and edited by Kevin Colls who also managed the project for Birmingham Archaeology.

## 8. REFERENCES

Birmingham Archaeology (BA) 2007 *Archaeological Evaluation: Written Scheme of Investigation*

Department of the Environment (DoE) 1990 *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: Archaeology and Planning*

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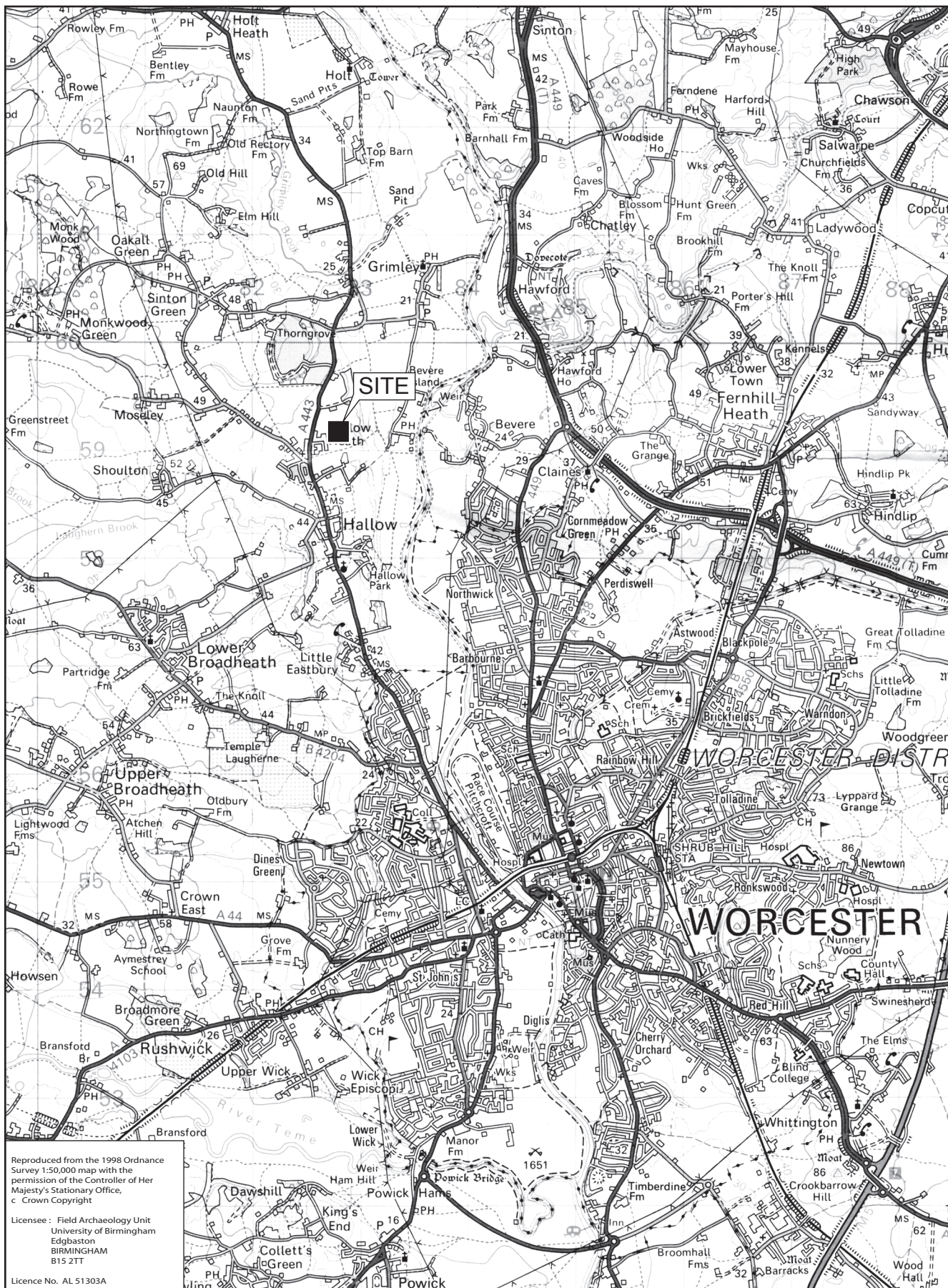


Fig.1

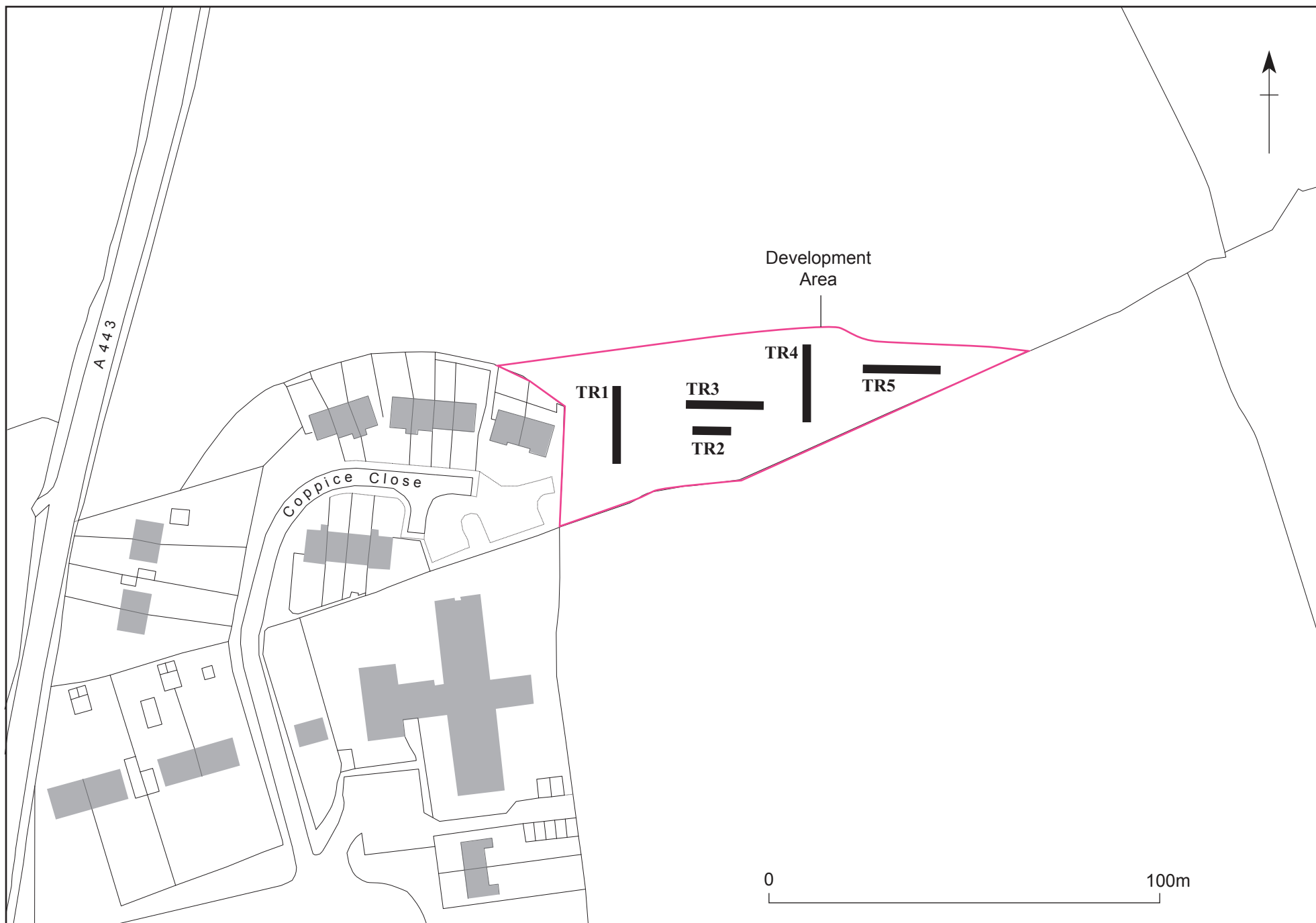
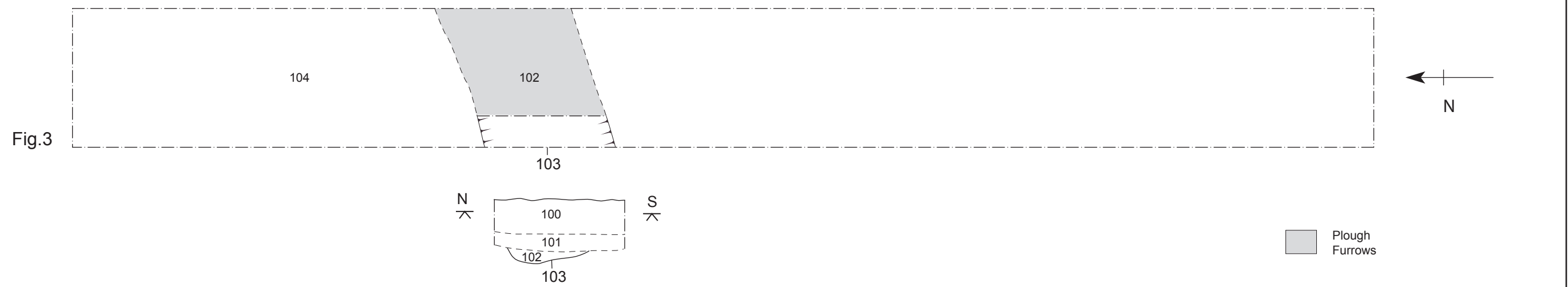
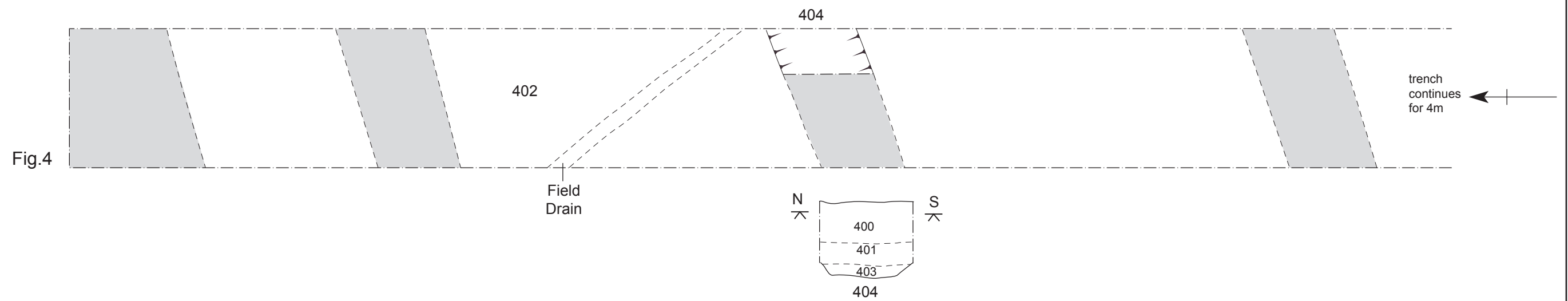


Fig.2

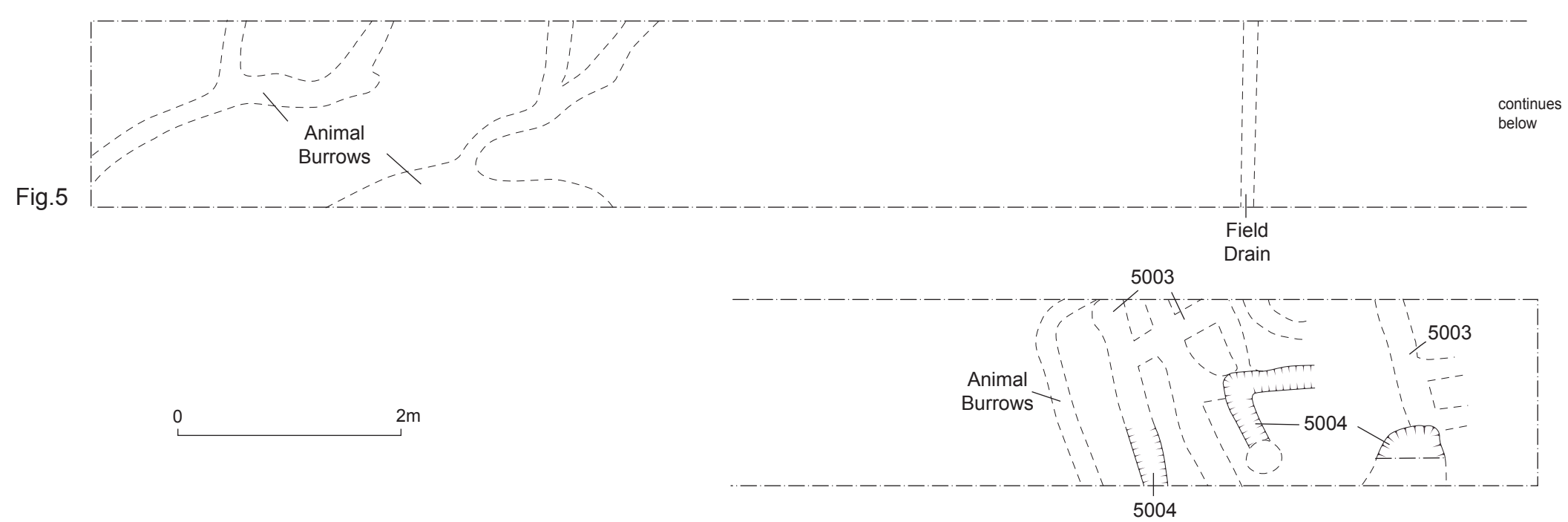
Trench 1



Trench 4



Trench 5





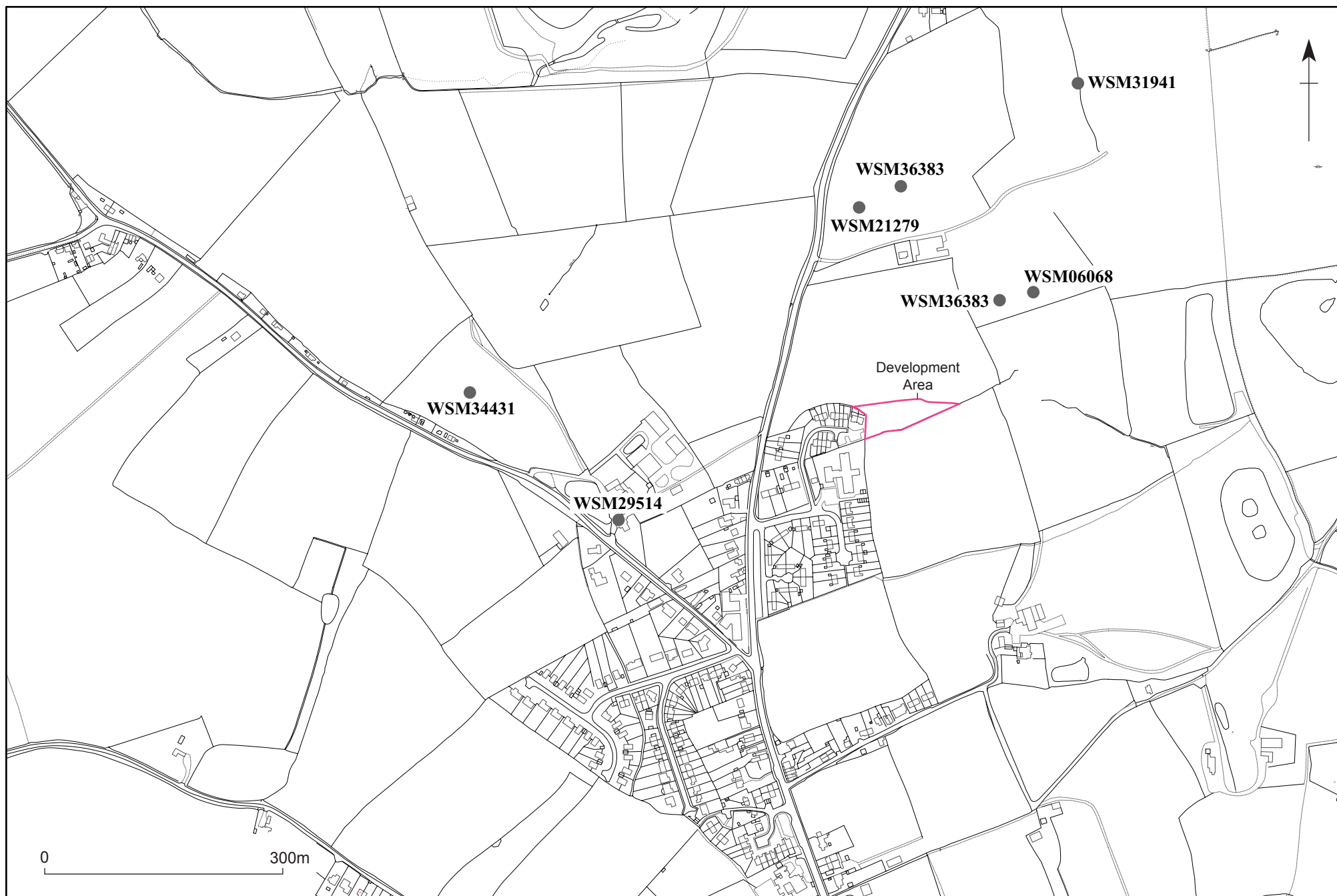


Fig.6



Plate 1



Plate 2



Plate 3





Plate 4



Plate 5