Northamptonshire County Council

Northamptonshire Archaeology

Archaeological Earthwork Survey at

Salcey Forest

Northamptonshire

April 2005

Carol Simmonds

June 2005

Report 05/84

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QUALITY CONTROL

	Print name	Signed	Date
Checked by	Andy Mudd		
Verified by			
Approved by	Andy Chapman		

OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project name	Salcey Forest Earthwork Survey	
Short description (250 words maximum)	*A measured earthwork survey in Salcey Forest was carried out by NA for the Forestry Commission. The survey was a 24 hectare area in the northern part of the forest. Under closer scrutiny was an area where the Forestry Commission planned to erect a canopy walkway. The features recorded included early banks and medieval coppice earthworks, as well as probable later ponds and earthworks It appeared that the proposed development would have an impact on the features.*	
Project type (eg DBA, evaluation etc)	Earthwork survey	
Site status (none, NT, SAM etc)		
Previous work (SMR numbers etc)	Hall, D, 1996	
Current Land use	Forest	
Future work (yes, no, unknown)	Unknown	
Monument type/ period	Unknown	
Significant finds (artefact type and period)		
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Northamptonshire	
Site address (including postcode)	Salcey Forest, Salcey, Northamptonshire	
Study area (sq.m or ha)	Circa 24 ha	
OS Easting & Northing (use grid sq. numbers)	4805 2525	
Height OD	128m	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project brief originator		
Project Design originator	Anthony Maull Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Director/Supervisor	Carol Simmonds Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project Manager	Anthony Maull Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Sponsor or funding body	Forestry Commission	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	11/4/2005	
End date	27/4/2005	
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc)
Physical		
Paper		
Digital		
BIBLIOGRAPHY	Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (NA report)	
Title		
Serial title & volume		
Author(s)		
Page numbers		
Date		

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EARTHWORK SURVEY AT SALCEY FOREST

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

APRIL 2005

Abstract

Northamptonshire Archaeology was commissioned by the Forestry Commission to carry out a measured earthwork survey in Salcey Forest, Salcey, Northamptonshire. The survey was undertaken within a 24 hectare area in the northern part of the forest. Under closer scrutiny was a smaller mitigation area where the forestry commission planned to erect a canopy walkway. The features recorded included early banks and medieval coppice earthworks, as well as probable later features such as ponds and ditches. It appeared that the proposed development would have an impact on the archaeology.

1 INTRODUCTION

Northamptonshire Archaeology was commissioned by the Forestry Commission to undertake a measured survey of a number of earthwork features at Salcey Forest, Northamptonshire (Fig 1: centred on NGR 4805 2515). The area under survey measures approximately 24 hectares in the northern part of Salcey Forest, to the north-east of the visitor centre (Figs. 2 & 3). It was at a height of 128.2m OD.

The geology of the area is predominantly glacial Boulder Clay overlying Upper and Middle Lias clays.

Within the survey area The Forestry Commission intend to erect a tree canopy walkway which will rise to a maximum height of 15m. This will take the form of a series of towers linked by a walkway above ground level. This area is within a 2 hectare zone in the north-eastern part of the development area.

2 OBJECTIVES

The overall objectives of the investigation were set out in the brief. These were:

1. To provide detailed information regarding the character and date of the features
2. To interpret these features within their local, regional and national context

Specifically the investigations had the following aims

1. Accurately map the location and extent of the remains
2. Reveal and record the character of the visible remains
3. Create detailed plans and profiles of the visible remains

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

An archaeological survey undertaken in 1996 (Hall 1996) identified a series of earthwork features initially found in the area known as Three Bridges Quarter. The features identified can be summarised as follows:

- A series of substantial pre-medieval banks
- Medieval woodland banks and ditches
- Ponds

The survey interpreted the pre-medieval banks as clearings reserved for deer dated to late Saxon to later Norman period. The later coppice banks were in existence by 1568, although a probable date of 13th century was applied. They would have been used to manage the forest for deer hunting and timber growth.

4 METHODOLOGY

Survey was undertaken by means of hand measurement using tapes offset from baselines or existing mapped features, such as rides or paths. The position of the baseline was established relative to Ordnance Survey National Grid. Tops and bottoms of slopes were measured in order to generate a series of hachure plans for each feature. These were supplemented by a series of profiles at *c*. 100m intervals along the length of each linear feature and, where necessary, at the corners of features. Each identified enclosure was given its own unique label, so coppice enclosures were labelled A-F and earlier enclosures 1-3. An earthwork record form for each identified enclosure was made, giving the measurements and nature of the features.

Overall photographs of each feature were taken using a digital camera; 35mm black and white print and colour slide film from a variety of directions. Detailed photographs of any areas of features of particular interest or note were taken. A record of photographs taken was entered on a cross-referenced index sheet.

It should be noted that the line of the enclosures beyond the site boundary was not recorded, due to the fact that they were outside the designated area. Some places were inaccessible due to heavy undergrowth, which meant that the line of the features had to be extrapolated.

5 EARTHWORK SURVEY RESULTS

5.1 Pre-Medieval Enclosures

A network of substantial banks and ditches were recorded which appeared to pre-date the medieval coppices. These created three enclosures referred to as Enclosures 1-3 and are outlined in green on the interpretive plan (Fig 4). Enclosures 1 and 2 are within Enclosure 3, indeed they share boundaries.

Enclosure 1 (Figs 2, 4-5 and 11-profile 1)
Enclosure 1 is located in Three Bridges Quarter and is a rectangular earthwork. It measures upto 210m north to south and 197m east to west. It consists of a ditch measuring 1.60m wide and 0.60m deep and a broad bank measuring 5.50m wide and 0.25m high on the inside edge. The bank and ditch are separated by a berm averaging

1.75m wide. The bank rises 0.90m from the level of the berm. The ditch is characterised by sharp break of slopes on the inside and outside edges and had a rounded base. The bank is characterised by gradual breaks of slope and a gently rounded top.

This enclosure is cut by the bank and ditch of Coppice E in the north-western corner and by several paths, including the main ride in this area. There are also the associated drainage ditches cutting through the enclosure, truncating the south-western corner quite heavily.

Enclosure 2 (Figs 2, 5-6 and 11: profile 2)
Enclosure 2 is located in Stoneway Copse and is an incomplete rectangular earthwork aligned with Enclosure 1 and shares a common boundary. It measures up to 200m east-west and is incomplete. It consists of a ditch measuring 2.20m wide and 0.40m deep and a broad bank measuring 6.75m wide and 0.22m high on the inside edge. The bank and ditch are separated by a berm averaging 1.95m wide. The bank rises 1m from the level of berm. The ditch is characterised by gradual break of slopes on the inside and outside edges and has a rounded base. The bank is characterised by gradual breaks of slope and a gentle rounded top. Of particular note is the south-eastern corner where instead of joining with the southern boundary, the bank and ditch continue further to the south, and disappear *c.* 30m north of the corner of the ride.

The north-western corner of this enclosure was not identified due to probable erosion and the task was made more difficult due to heavy undergrowth. There was also a noticeable disturbance on the eastern boundary where the bank and ditch of Coppice E had cut through the earthwork. The later drainage ditches and paths also disturbed the line of the enclosure.

Enclosure 3
Enclosure 3 is located throughout the area of survey and is a large earthwork enclosure incorporating both Enclosures 1 and 2 and sharing a common western boundary. It measures less than 750m east to west and up to 440m north to south. It consists of a ditch measuring 2.40m wide and 0.40m deep and a broad bank measuring 6m wide and 0.20m high on the inside edge. The bank and ditch are separated by a berm averaging 1.30m wide. The bank rises 1.30m from the level of berm. The ditch is characterised by sharp break of slopes inside and outside edges and has a flat base. The bank is characterised by gradual breaks of slope and a rounded top.

The unsurveyed part of the eastern boundary is likely to be within the ‘Lawn’. Along the northern boundary a path is on top of the line of the bank indicating probable re-use of landmarks. Enclosure 3 is disturbed by coppice enclosures A, B and E, as well as by later paths and drainage ditches. Also of note was the existence of a funnel (Plate 8) cut through the western boundary of Enclosure 3 at 30m from the south-western corner. This is 10m wide funnelling down to a width of 5m. This appears to be on the same alignment as a modern drainage ditch but the funnel is too wide to have been dug specifically for the drain. The funnel may therefore have been an original entranceway.

5.2 Medieval Coppice Enclosures

Six identified coppice bank and ditch enclosures were recorded and corresponded with the current coppices such as Stoneway Copse and Hazel Copse. The coppice enclosures are outlined in brown in the interpretive plan (Fig 4).

Coppice A
Coppice A is a bank and ditch enclosure known as Shrubby Copse. It is a somewhat irregular rectangle in shape and is 450m north to south by 268m east to west. The ditch is situated outside of the bank and averages 2m wide and 0.50m deep. The ditch is characterised by a sharp break of slope on the outside edge with a rounded base. The bank averages 1.20m wide and is 0.15m high. It is characterised by a sharp break of slope rising from the ditch but a gentler, more gradual slope on the inside edge. The top of the bank is rounded. Coppice A is well defined on the eastern boundary but parts of the western edge were inaccessible due to heavy undergrowth.

It was disturbed in places by later paths and drainage ditches, in particular the north to south aligned path bisecting the enclosure. The eastern boundary is closely related to the boundary between the woodland and the Great Lawn, and is in places disturbed by the modern boundary fence and path (Fig 8)

Coppice B (Fig 11: profile 7)
Coppice B is part of a bank and ditch enclosure apparently defining Hazel Copse. It is 320m east to west and 270m north-west to south-east. The ditch is situated on the outside of the bank and averages 2.60m wide and 0.60m deep. The ditch is characterised by a sharp break of slope on the outside edge, but its base varies throughout its length. In places it is flat-bottomed particularly on the southern boundary, but on such as the northern edge it has a 'V'-shaped base. The bank averages 2.80m wide and 0.50m high. It is similar in nature to the bank in Coppice A.

This enclosure is much disturbed by the east to west path and drainage ditches, and the pond referred to above. The pond in particular is of interest as it appeared to have influenced the line of the bank and ditch which bend to follow its northern edge. It is in this area that the line and nature of the coppice is obscured by later activity.

Coppice C
Coppice C is only partially recorded as the majority of it lay outside the designated area. It appears to correspond with Wakes Coppice and is similar in nature to coppices A and B in its bank and ditch system. The south-eastern corner which was recorded was difficult to access due to undergrowth.

Coppice D (Fig 11: profile 6; Plate 4)
Coppice D is the southern part of a bank and ditch enclosure enclosing what is known as Crabtree Thick. It is nearly 400m east to west with a recorded north to south dimension of 250m. The nature of the ditch and bank is the same as Coppice A. However; the width of the ditch averages 2m and was 0.55m deep. The bank averages 1m wide and 0.30m high.

The recorded bank and ditch profile was largely complete despite being disturbed by forest paths and tracks as well as later drainage ditches such as those related to the south-west to north-east bridleway. The north-eastern edge of the enclosure is well defined and is visible from the path (see Plate 4).

Coppice E
Coppice E is an irregular enclosure defining what is known as Stoneway Copse. Its actual size was not defined in the survey. The nature of the ditch, which is on the outside of the bank, is characterised by gradual breaks of slope and by a rounded base. The width of the ditch averages 2.40m and has an average depth of 0.55m. The bank is similar in nature to that of Coppice A and averages 2.40m wide and 0.15m high.

The recorded section of Coppice E was largely complete despite being disturbed by a modern path and associated drainage ditches. An east to west aligned drainage ditch merged with the coppice ditch on the southern edge. Coppice E appears to disrupt earlier bank and ditch features, relating to Enclosures 1 and 2

Coppice F (Fig 11: profile 8; Plate 5)
Coppice F was only partially recorded as all but the north-western corner was out of the survey area. What was recorded of this bank and ditch enclosure was similar to Coppice A. The ditch has an average width of 2.50m and a depth of 0.70m. The width of the bank averages 3.50m and is 0.30m high.

5.3 Ponds and Modern features

During the process of recording numerous ponds, later ditches and disturbance were recorded. These are outlined in blue on the interpretive plan (Fig 4).

Ponds
There were five ponds recorded and these vary in size and nature.

Elephant Pond
The 'Elephant Pond' (Plate 1) is an irregular shaped feature which encompassed an area measuring 30m by 25m. It forms part of the north-western boundary of Coppice Enclosure A (see below). It lies outside of the proposed canopy walkway area.

Pond in Coppice B
This pond is a single sinuous feature, although recorded as two separate entities on the Ordnance Survey in 1880. It measures 56m by 47m. It respects the northern boundary of Coppice Enclosure B. There is a ridge of earthen material measuring 16.5m long and 5m wide on the southern bank of the pond, which presumable is upcast from either digging or dredging the pond

Pond in Enclosure 2
This pond is of an elongated sinuous shape and measured 77m long and has a maximum width of 22m. It appears to be on the same alignment (east to west) and was in the position of the ditch marking the northern boundary of Enclosure 1. It is possible that it was naturally created where water collected from the enclosure ditches.

Sub-circular ponds
There were two sub circular ponds or water filled depressions within the record area. The first is located between Stoneway Copse and Shrubby Copse and measures 10.50m in diameter. The second was located between Shrubby Copse and Hazel Copse and measures 6m in diameter.

Drainage Ditches
The features identified by Hall as 19th century drainage ditches often defined the rides which often became modern paths and track-ways. Typically the drainage ditch has a width of 1.40metres and a depth of 0.40m. In places there are the remnants of banks, which are 1m wide and 0.20m high.

Other ditches were noted in parts of the woodland away from any identifiable paths. For example the linear ditches in Hollow Quarter and Three Bridges Quarter which are on average 30m to 100m long. They appear, on occasion, to join with other ditches associated with rides. Of particular note is a north to south aligned feature linking the ditch for Enclosure 3 with a pond in the proposed canopy walkway area (Fig 10). This

consists of a substantial bank-ditch-bank system some 50m in length and 7m wide. It is probably modern in date.

Disturbance

There was also some considerable disturbance in the area of the proposed canopy walkway (Fig 10) where there were a number of hollows (Plate 3). The area of disturbance encompassed an area measuring 40m by 25m. The ground conditions in this area were wet and soft. This factor together with the undulating nature of the disturbance meant that surveying was difficult. In places the hollows distorted and disturbed the line of earlier features such as Coppice Enclosure B.

6 DISCUSSION

A relative chronology for the area was achieved, mainly through looking at the cutting and truncation of earthworks by later features. As far as dating is concerned the survey did not indicate any date for each set of features.

Despite the later disturbance, the line of the earlier enclosures can be observed. The banks themselves are broad with the edge furthest from the ditch more gradual than the other slope. The associated ditches are narrow with sharp slopes. The general state of preservation of the banks is good with clear definition of slopes. The 'funnel' referred to in the text could be some form of entry into the enclosure or a place where the later drainage ditch cuts through. Where the earlier substantial banks are concerned the ditch is proportionally too small for the amount of material which is in the bank. It is likely that the ditches are of different date to the banks as David Hall suggests. This raises the question of where the material forming the banks came from. The most likely explanation is that there are larger silted ditches beneath the present ones. The ditches respect the line of the banks but it is likely that in their current form they are later features. The fourth enclosure identified by Hall to the east of Enclosure 2 was not noted although the area where it was identified is noticeable for its heavy undergrowth.

The coppice banks and ditches reflect the form mapped by Hall. The coppice banks were probably formed from upcast from the cutting or re-cutting of the ditches and also the volume reflected the size of the ditch. Whilst it is probable that the constructors of the coppice enclosures were aware of the earlier enclosures, the landscape created appears to be very different in terms of form. It seems likely that the coppice ditches, especially the northern boundary of Coppice B, had been re-cut to provide a drainage channel for paths and rides.

The later features; such as ponds, hollows, rides and paths as well as the ditches were recorded, and these help to define the chronological framework. It is unclear as to whether ponds were formed at the time of coppice enclosures or the earlier system. The ponds were probably originally natural hollows used as an outlet for woodland drains and may contain important palaeo-environmental remains.

7 IMPACT OF CANOPY WALKWAY (Fig 10)

The area under particular consideration is where the proposed canopy walkway will be placed. This walkway will follow a route through the woodland with a path between towers rising upto 15m above ground level. The area concerned (roughly 170m by 120m) includes Coppices B and D as well as the northern boundary of Enclosure 3. It is likely that some of the towers will impact on the archaeology and information regarding

the date and precise nature of the features will be lost. Additionally the use of plant and machinery that will be needed to excavate foundations of the towers and the use of other heavy equipment may compact and potentially destroy features.

It is recommended that some tower foundations are dug under archaeological supervision and that the other foundations are monitored by an archaeologist. Care should also be taken to ensure that plant and machinery do not impact on the earthworks. Perhaps further protection could be provided by panelling laid over archaeologically sensitive areas. Precise details of archaeological work should be formulated in a written scheme of investigation once the detailed construction design has been completed.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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RCHME 1999 *Recording Archaeological Field Monuments: A Descriptive Specification*, Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England

Simco, A, 2003 *Ancient Woodland Project: Archaeology*, Forestry Commission

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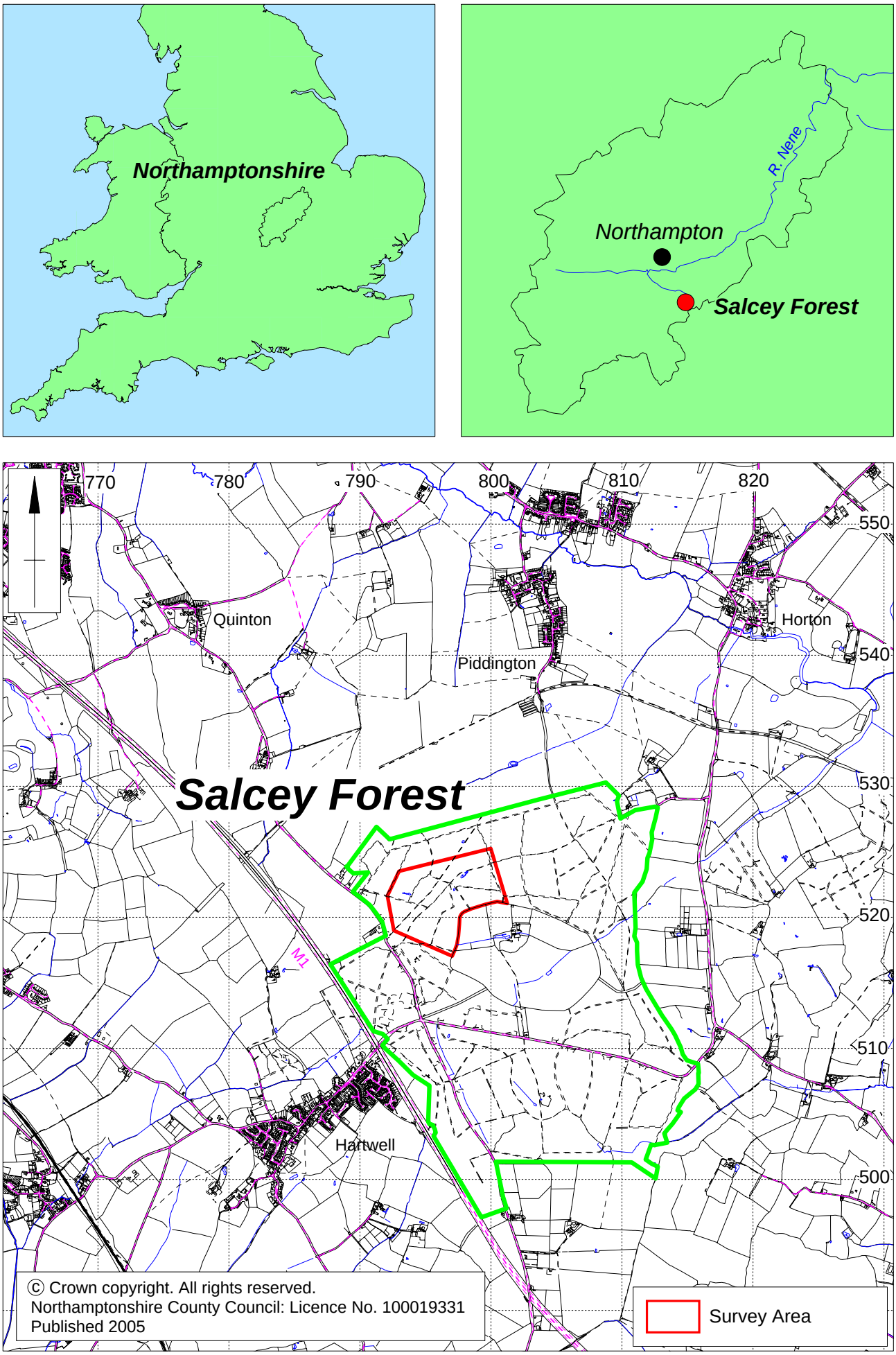


Scale 1:4000

Fig. 1

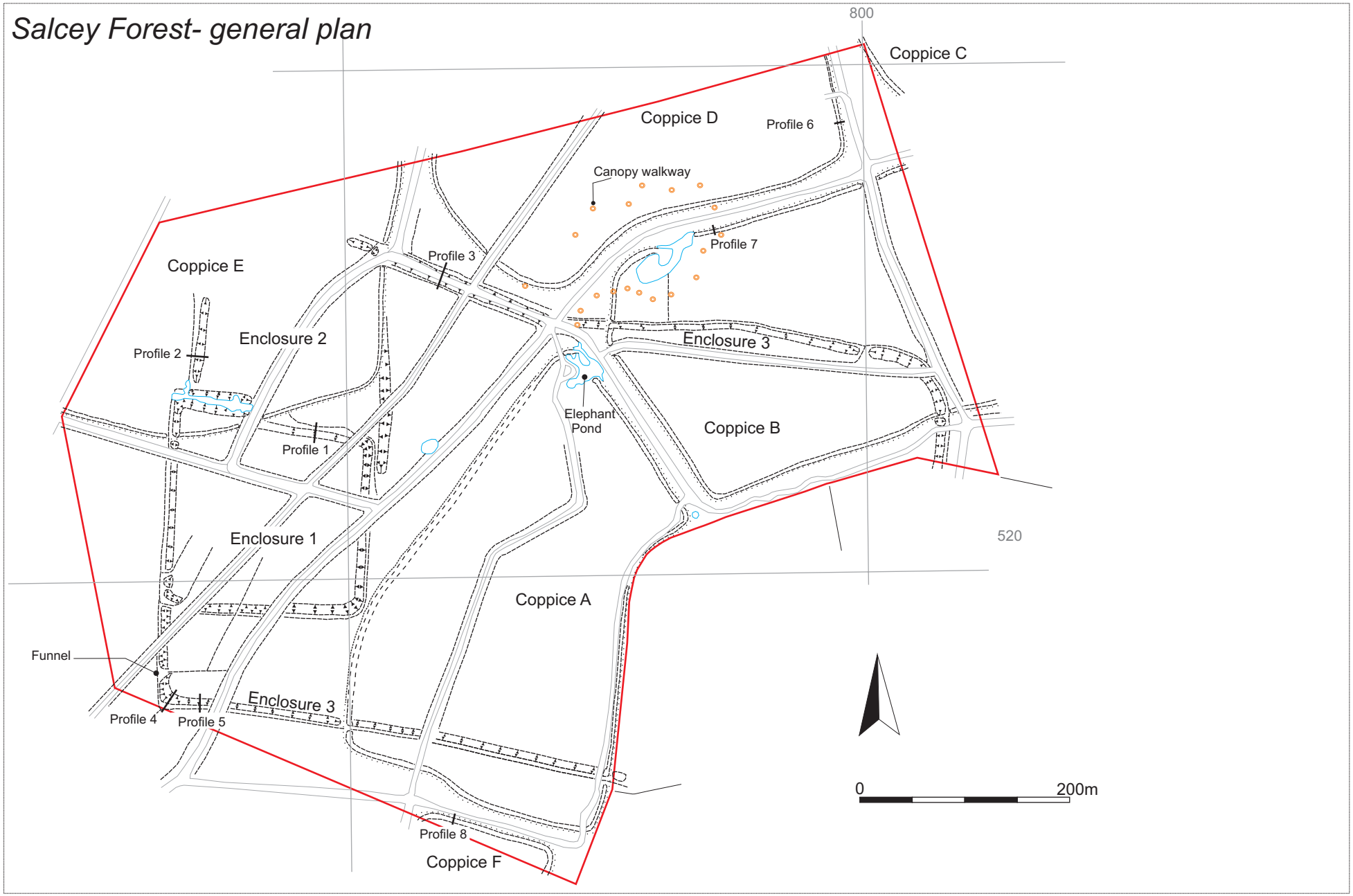

Salcey Forest- general plan
800
520
Coppice C
Coppice D
Profile 6
Canopy walkway
Profile 7
Profile 3
Coppice E
Profile 2
Enclosure 2
Enclosure 3
Elephant Pond
Coppice B
Profile 1
Enclosure 1
Coppice A
Funnel
Enclosure 3
Profile 4
Profile 5
Profile 8
Coppice F
0
200m

Fig. 2

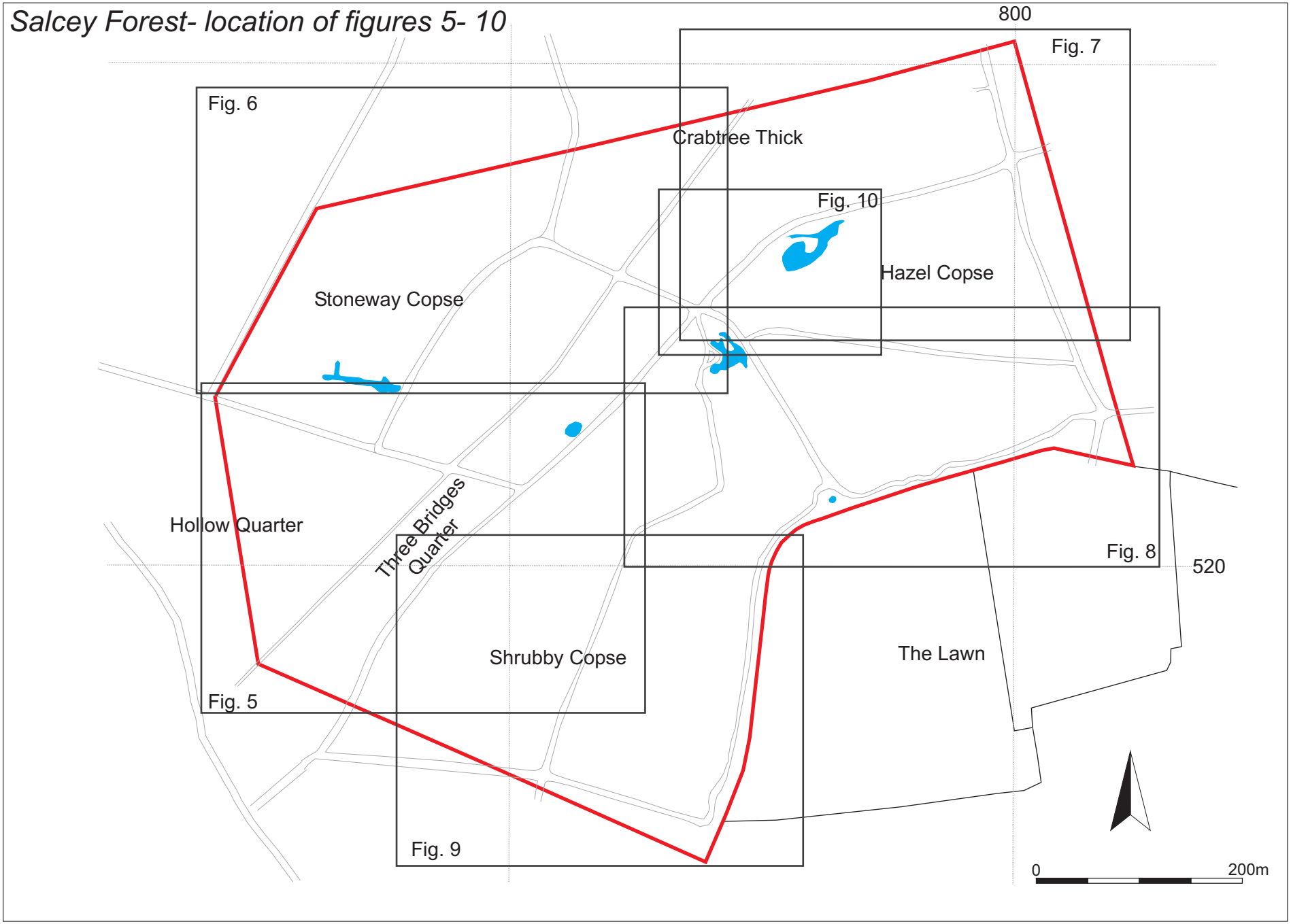

Salcey Forest- location of figures 5- 10
800
Fig. 7
Fig. 6
Crabtree Thick
Fig. 10
Hazel Copse
Stoneway Copse
Hollow Quarter
Three Bridges Quarter
Fig. 8
520
Shrubby Copse
The Lawn
Fig. 5
Fig. 9
0
200m

Fig. 3

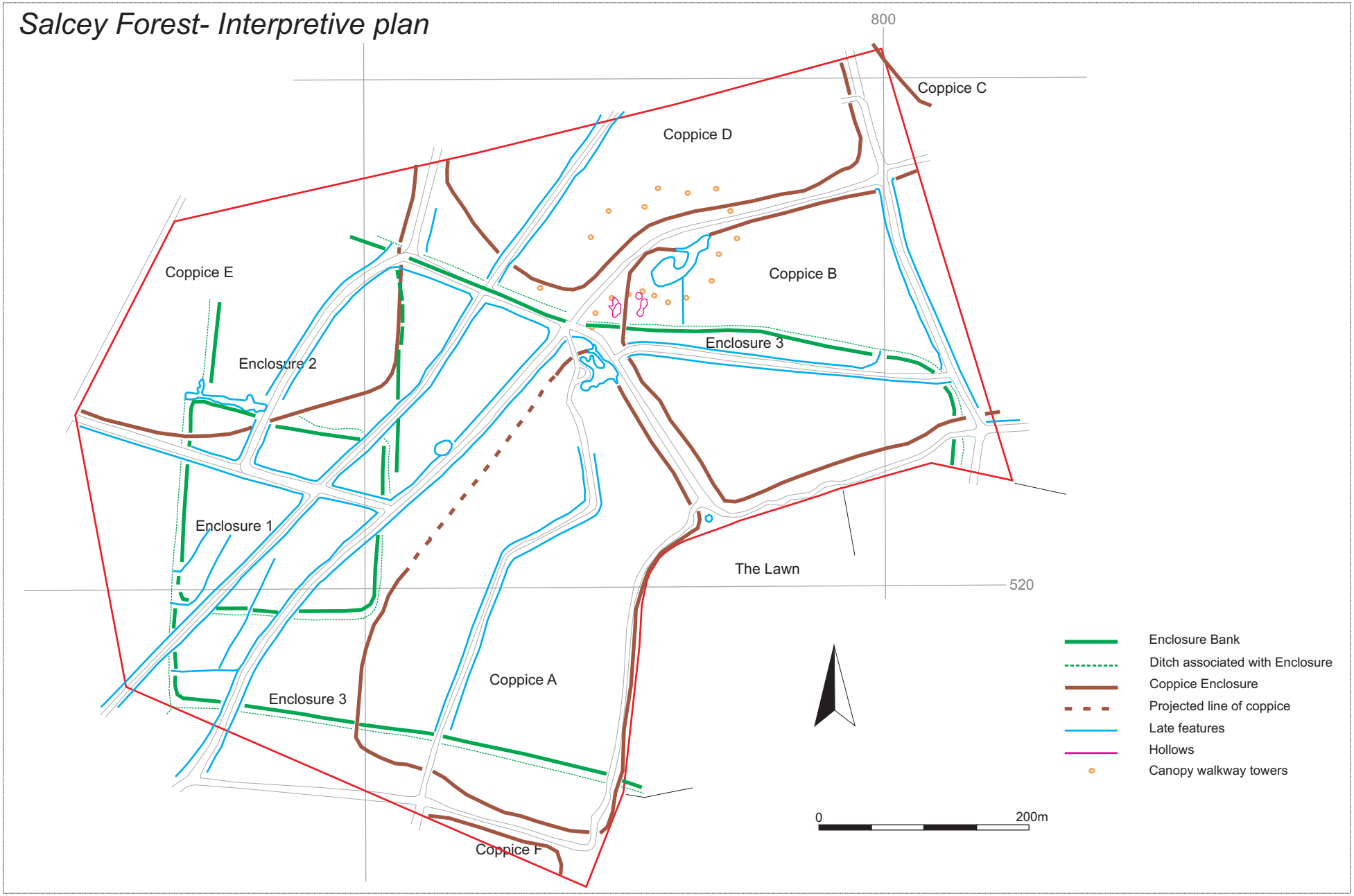

Salcey Forest- Interpretive plan
800
520
Coppice C
Coppice D
Coppice E
Coppice B
Enclosure 2
Enclosure 3
Enclosure 1
The Lawn
Coppice A
Enclosure 3
Coppice F
Enclosure Bank
Ditch associated with Enclosure
Coppice Enclosure
Projected line of coppice
Late features
Hollows
Canopy walkway towers
0
200m

Fig. 4

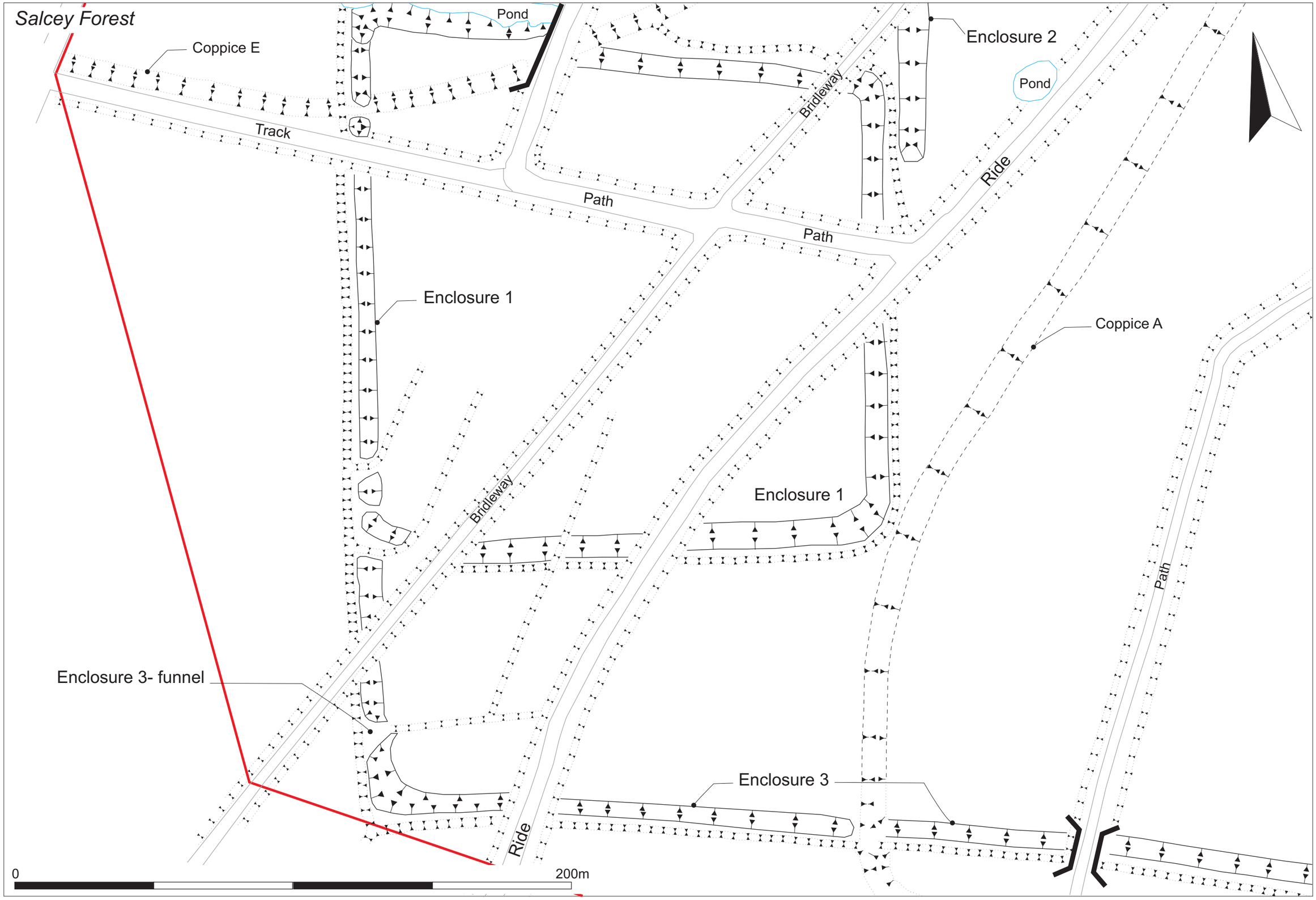

Salcey Forest
Coppice E
Pond
Track
Path
Bridleway
Enclosure 2
Pond
Ride
Path
Enclosure 1
Coppice A
Bridleway
Enclosure 1
Path
Enclosure 3- funnel
Ride
Enclosure 3
0
200m

Fig. 5

Salcey Forest

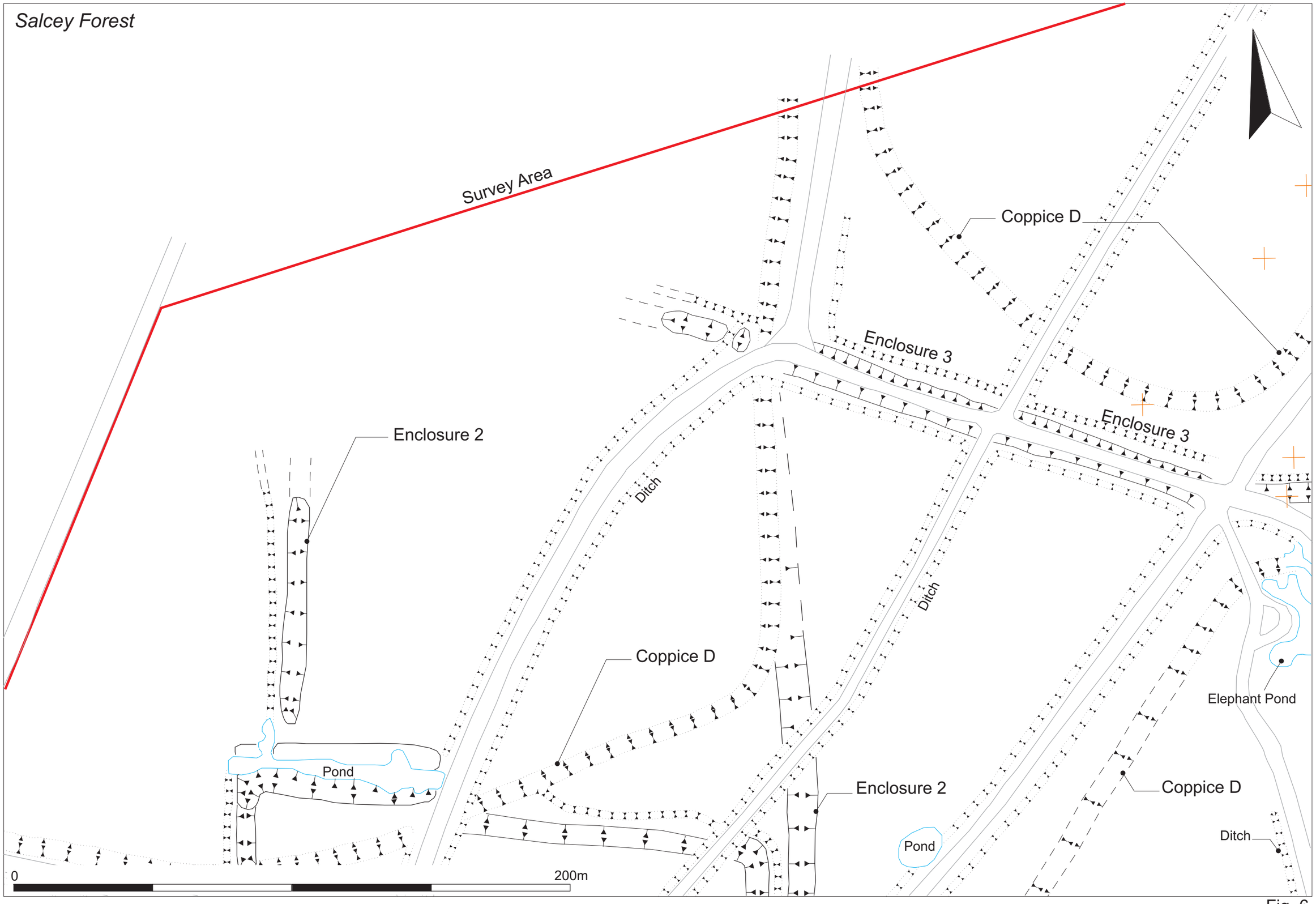


Fig. 6

Salcey Forest

0 200m

Coppice C

Path

Coppice D

Ride

Ditch

Bridleway

Ride

Coppice B

Ditch

pond

Coppice D

Path

Coppice B

Enclosure 3- northern boundary

Path

Ditch

Ditch

Ride

Track

Fig. 7

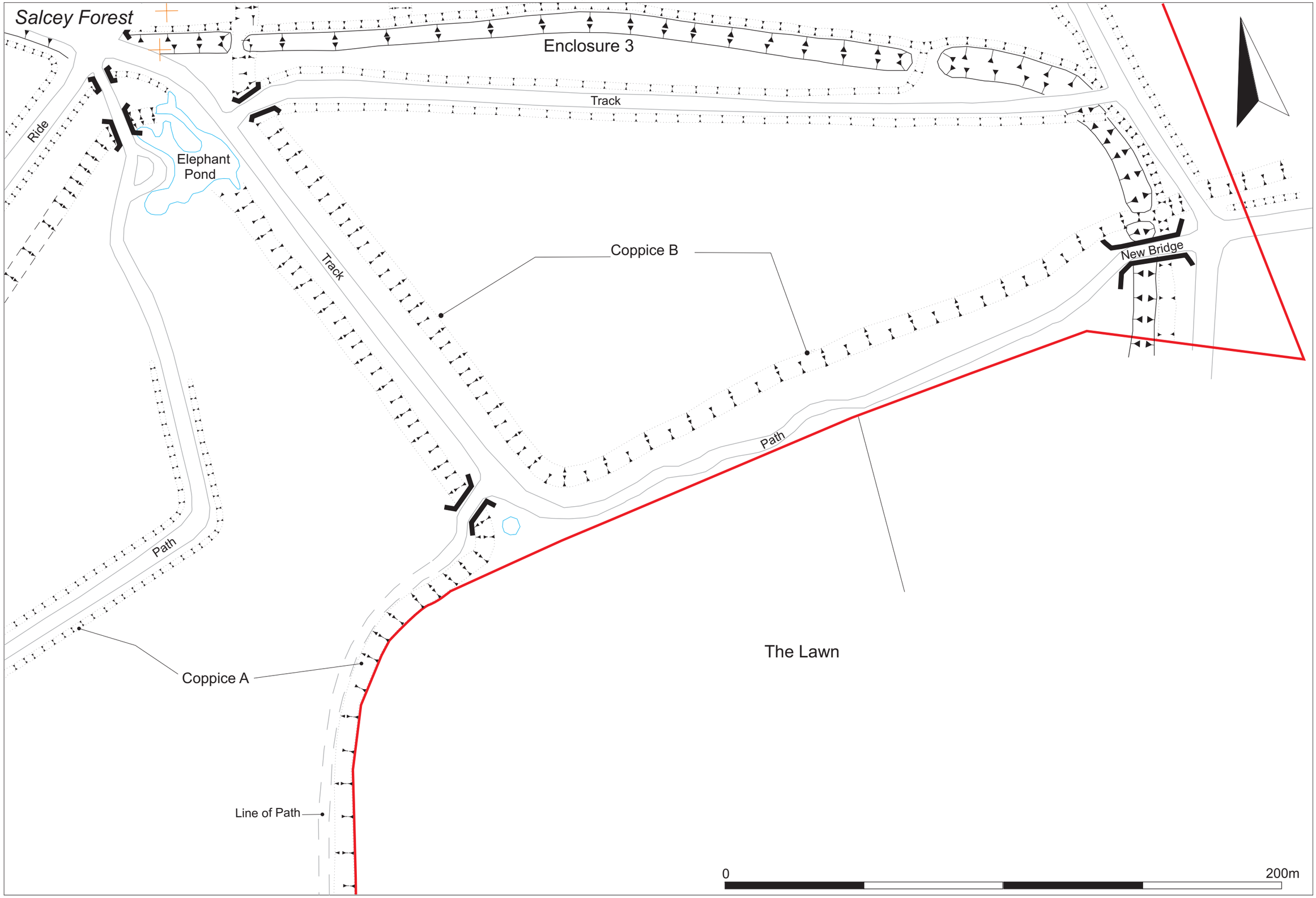

Salcey Forest
Enclosure 3
Track
Ride
Elephant Pond
Track
Coppice B
New Bridge
Path
Path
Coppice A
The Lawn
Line of Path
0
200m

Fig. 8

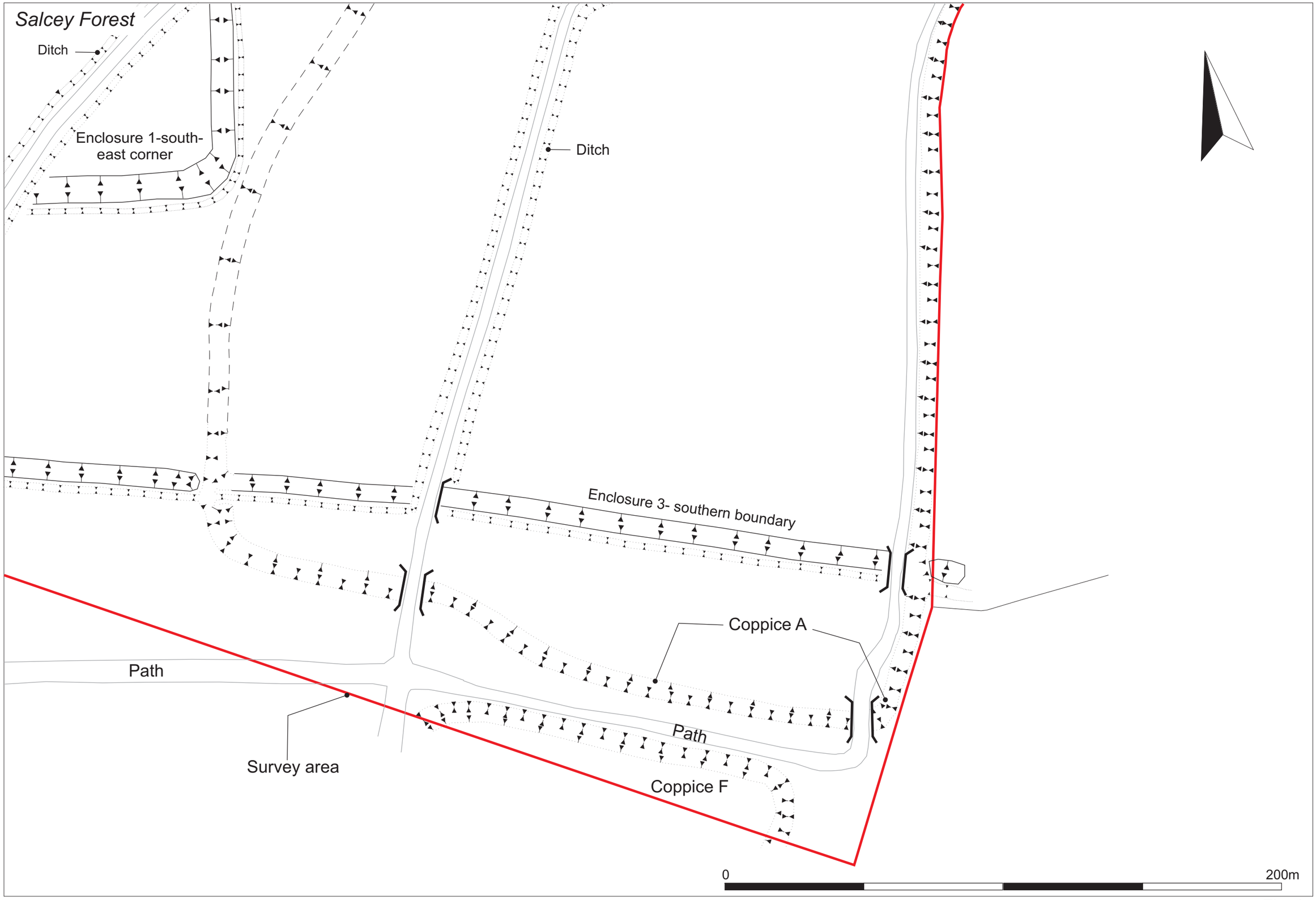

Salcey Forest
Ditch
Enclosure 1-south-east corner
Ditch
Enclosure 3- southern boundary
Coppice A
Path
Path
Survey area
Coppice F
0
200m

Fig. 9

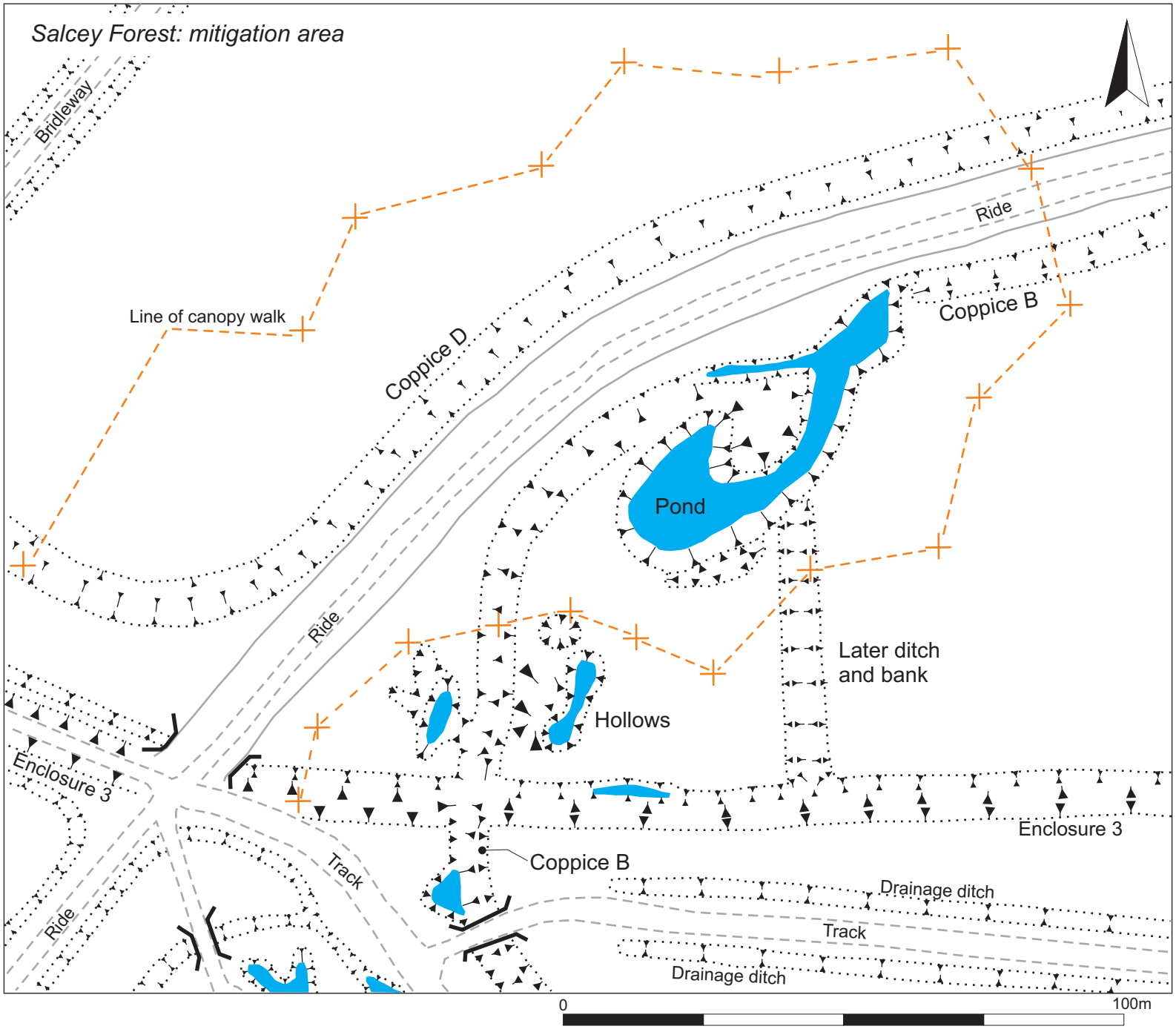
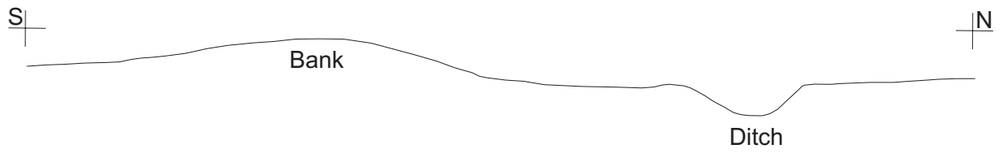

Salcey Forest: mitigation area
Bridleway
Line of canopy walk
Coppice D
Ride
Coppice B
Pond
Ride
Later ditch
and bank
Hollows
Enclosure 3
Enclosure 3
Coppice B
Track
Drainage ditch
Track
Drainage ditch
Ride
0
100m

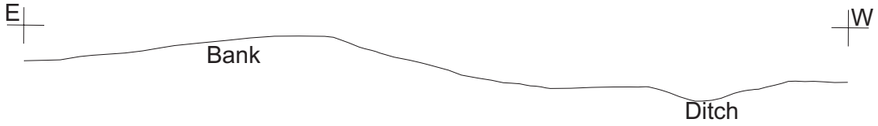
Fig. 10

Salcey Forest- Profiles

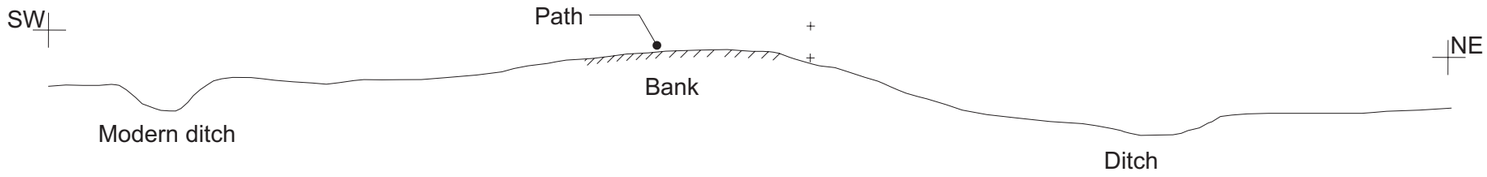
Profile 1- Enclosure 1



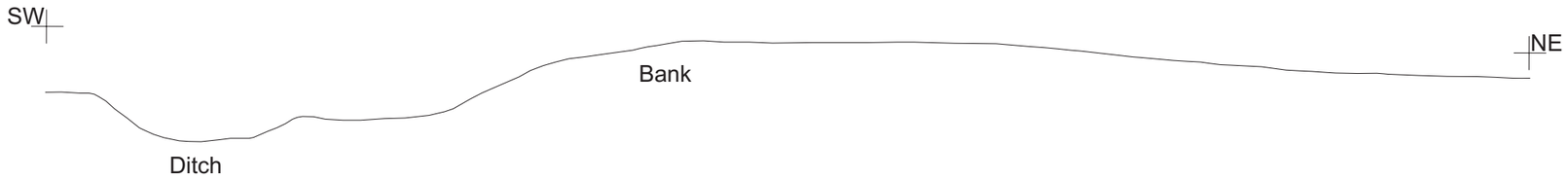
Profile 2- Enclosure 2



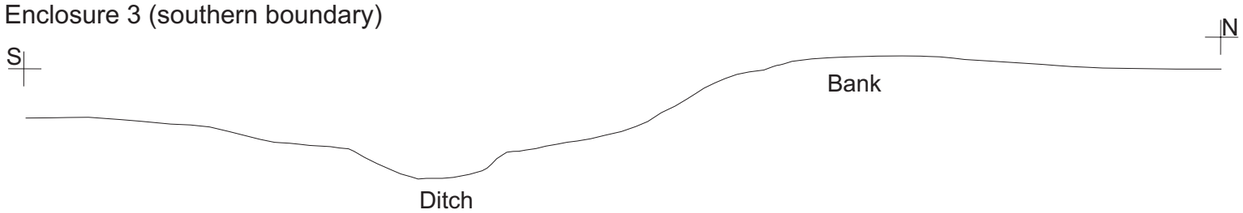
Profile 3- Enclosure 3 (northern boundary)



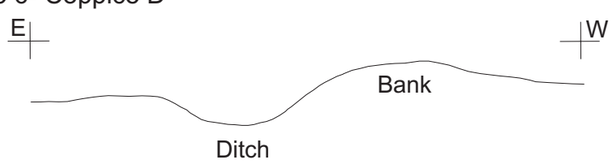
Profile 4- Enclosure 3 (south-western corner)



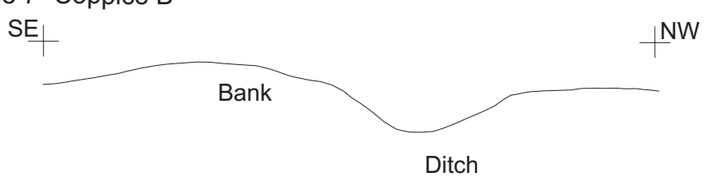
Profile 5- Enclosure 3 (southern boundary)



Profile 6- Coppice D



Profile 7- Coppice B



Profile 8- Coppice F

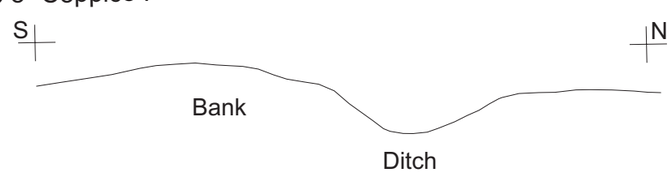


Fig. 11

Plate 1: Elephant Pond. Looking north.

Plate 2: Woodland path adjacent to 'Lawn' boundary and Coppice A. Looking north.

Plate 3: Hollows in mitigation canopy walkway area

Plate 4: Bank and Ditch
Coppice D

Plate 5: Bank and
Ditch Coppice F

Plate 6: Enclosure 2/3
View along bank
covered by path.
Looking north-west

Plate 7: Enclosure 3 Bank and
Ditch,
Looking east

Plate 8: Enclosure 3. Funnel cut
through the bank.
Looking west