

Vines Lane Droitwich Worcestershire

Archaeological Evaluation



for
J Harper & Sons

CA Project: 5348
CA Report: 15220

WSM66614

April 2015



Vines Lane
Droitwich
Worcestershire

Archaeological Evaluation

CA Project: 5348
CA Report: 15220

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SUMMARY

Project Name:	Vines Lane
Location:	Droitwich, Worcestershire
NGR:	SO 8986 3636
Type:	Evaluation
Date:	15-16 April 2015
Planning Reference:	W/14/01428/FUL
Location of Archive:	To be deposited with Worcestershire County Museum
Site Code:	VIN 15

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in April 2015 at Vines Lane, Droitwich, Worcestershire. Out of the six proposed trenches only four were excavated due to the presence of contaminated material.

No archaeological features were identified. A hedgerow was identified within Trench 3. No artefactual material pre-dating the modern period was recovered.



1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In April 2015 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation at the request of J Harper & Sons at Vines Lane, Droitwich, Worcestershire (centred on NGR: SO 8986 3636; Fig. 1). The evaluation was undertaken as a condition (number 7) of planning permission granted by Wychavon District Council (WDC, W/14/01428/FUL) for residential development of the site.
- 1.2 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a *Brief for Archaeological Evaluation* (WCC 2014) prepared by Mike Glyde, Historic Environment Planning Officer, the archaeological advisor to WDC, and with a subsequent detailed *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) produced by CA (2015) and approved by Mike Glyde. The fieldwork also followed *Standard and guidance: archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2014), the *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage 1991) and the *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MORPHE): Project Manager's Guide* (English Heritage 2006).

The site

- 1.3 The proposed development area is approximately 0.23ha in extent, and comprises amenity grassland adjacent to Vines Lane. It is bordered to the south, east and west by residential developments and by a railway embankment to the north. The site lies at approximately 30m AOD and is flat.
- 1.4 The underlying bedrock geology of the area is mapped as sedimentary bedrock of the Triassic Period (BGS 2015). This is overlain by superficial deposits of alluvium, clay, silt, sand and gravel. A mix of mudstone bedrock and clay was observed within the trenches.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The site has previously been the focus of an Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment (CgMs 2014). The following archaeological background is a summary of this document.

- 2.2 From the Middle Iron Age (c.500-100 BC) comes the earliest definite evidence for salt production in the Droitwich area, found at Bays Meadow (WSM 21413), c. 60m to the north of the site (Buteux & Hurst 1996). Iron Age roundhouses (WSM 21414) were also found during the excavation on this site and the area may have been occupied and used for salt production only seasonally. Evidence for later Iron Age activity has been found during much of the archaeological fieldwork which has taken place in the town, including intensive salt production on the south bank of the River Salwarpe (WSM 600). A multi-period site (WSM 00605) was excavated at No. 45 Friar Street, c. 215m to the south of the study site, between 1973 and 1975. The first phase encountered comprised Iron Age salt production, brine tanks, a hearth and briquetage; this Iron Age activity continued into the 1st and 2nd centuries AD.
- 2.3 The site lies within the Roman urban form of Droitwich, as defined by Buteux and Hurst (1996). Substantial Roman deposits survive in the town, including building foundations, surfaces, hearths and brine tanks.
- 2.4 Just to the south-west of the site, the HER records that a male skeleton was found with associated Roman pottery, within a gas pipe trench (WSM 04156; WSM 41593). This was believed to be a burial associated with a Roman cemetery to the north of Vines Lane and to the immediate east of the study site (WSM 22017 and WSM 38247). Several other burials have been found in this area and may be part of a roadside cemetery.
- 2.5 The administrative centre for the Roman salt industry in the town appears to have been based at the villa complex at Bays Meadow c. 60m to the north of the site (WSM 678). The salt-making area (WSM 22023) lay on the southern banks of the River Salwarpe and evidence from excavations just south of the river suggests that salt production was being carried out at this site in the late Iron Age tradition up until the 2nd century AD, when it was reorganised (Buteux & Hurst 1996). The Bays Meadow villa complex appears to be associated with this period of reorganisation.
- 2.6 There are 7th- to 11th-century AD documentary references to salt production on the River Salwarpe, the most important brine well in this period being that at Upwich. It is considered possible that there were three settlements in this period at Upwich, Netherwich and Middlewich, focused on the main brine wells in those areas (Buteux & Hurst 1996).

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 The objectives of the evaluation are to provide information about the archaeological resource within the site, including its presence/absence, character, extent, date, integrity, state of preservation and quality, in accordance *Standard and guidance: Archaeological field evaluation* (CIfA 2014). This information will enable Wychavon District Council to identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset, consider the impact of the proposed development upon it, and to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the development proposal, in line with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012).

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The fieldwork as originally planned comprised the excavation of six trenches (Fig. 2). Due to the presence of contaminated material the number of the trenches varied from that agreed in the WSI i.e. four trenches (1, 3, 4 and 6) were excavated. The locations of the trenches were moved due to the contaminated material and possible nesting birds. Trench 1 was 7.1m in length and 1.7m in width. Trenches 3, 4 and 6 were moved to the south due to contaminated ground. Trenches were set out on OS National Grid (NGR) co-ordinates using Leica GPS and surveyed in accordance with CA Technical Manual 4 *Survey Manual*.
- 4.2 All trenches were excavated by mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless grading bucket. All machine excavation was undertaken under constant archaeological supervision to the top of the first significant archaeological horizon or the natural substrate, whichever was encountered first. Where archaeological deposits were encountered they were excavated by hand in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: *Fieldwork Recording Manual*.
- 4.3 Deposits were assessed for their palaeoenvironmental potential in accordance with CA Technical Manual 2: *The Taking and Processing of Environmental and Other Samples from Archaeological Sites*, no deposits were identified that required sampling. All artefacts recovered were processed in accordance with Technical Manual 3 *Treatment of Finds Immediately after Excavation*.

- 4.4 The archive and artefacts from the evaluation are currently held by CA at their offices in Kemble. Subject to the agreement of the legal landowner the artefacts will be deposited with Worcestershire County Museum along with the site archive. A summary of information from this project, set out within Appendix D, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

5. RESULTS (FIGS 2-4)

- 5.1 This section provides an overview of the evaluation results; detailed summaries of the recorded contexts and finds are to be found in Appendices A and B respectively. Details of the relative heights of the principal deposits and features expressed as metres Above Ordnance Datum (m AOD) appear in Appendix C.
- 5.2 The natural geological substrate, consisting of mudstone bedrock and clay, was revealed within all of the excavated trenches (Trenches 1, 3, 4 and 6) at an average depth of 0.9m below present ground level. This was overlain by alluvial clay in the east of the site (402 and 602) averaging 0.4m in thickness, and subsoil in the west of site (102) averaging 0.2m in thickness. These deposits were in turn sealed by 0.45m of modern make-up (101, 301, 401 and 601). Towards the centre of the site (Trench 3 and part of Trench 4) this make-up directly overlaid the natural substrate. Sealing the make-up deposit within all trenches was a thin layer of topsoil.
- 5.3 A hedgerow, 303, was identified within Trench 3, the edges of which were very diffuse and irregular. No artefacts were recovered from its associated fills, 304 and 305.
- 5.4 The presence of modern overburden directly overlying the natural substrate suggested that the site, at least in part, had been truncated by modern activity. Where subsoil and alluvial deposits were identified sealing the natural substrate no features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed. Despite visual scanning of spoil, no artefactual material pre-dating the modern period was recovered.



6. THE FINDS

6.1 Artefactual material recovered during the evaluation was recorded from four deposits, all of which are make-up layers. All of the recovered material dates to the post-medieval and modern periods. Quantities of the artefacts recovered are given in Appendix B. The pottery has been recorded according to sherd count/weight per fabric. Post-medieval fabrics correspond to the Droitwich pottery type series codes as defined by Hurst and Rees (1992).

Pottery: Post-medieval/modern

6.2 All of the pottery recovered is dateable to the late 18th to mid 20th centuries, although the production centres could not be identified. Six sherds of refined whiteware (Fabric 85) were recovered, including three sherds featuring transfer-printed decoration. One of these, from make-up layer 601, is a candlestick in the 'flow blue' variety, which can be dated to the mid to late 19th century. The 'late' English stoneware in layer 301 (Fabric 81.4) comprises the base of a straight-sided vessel, and the rim and neck of a bottle.

Other finds

6.3 The base of a glass 'Hamilton' mineral water bottle, retrieved from make-up layer 401, is dateable to the 19th to early 20th centuries.

6.4 Make-up layer 101 produced two fragments from the base of a vessel in opaque, pale blue-coloured glass, which is also modern in date.

6.5 A single fragment of clay tobacco pipe stem from make-up layer 301 is dateable to the late 16th to late 19th centuries.

7. DISCUSSION

7.1 Despite the archaeological potential of the application area (see archaeological background above), no archaeological remains were identified during the course of the evaluation.



- 7.2 The substantial depths of modern make-up encountered during the evaluation, along with the sporadic presence of *in situ* subsoil and alluvial deposits suggest that the ground level across the proposed development area has previously been reduced, although the exact cause of the truncation remains unclear. However, the raised railway line along the northern boundary of the site, which is first depicted on the 1885 Ordnance Survey map, may have required the site to be levelled. Also by the time the 1938 Ordnance Survey map was surveyed a children's playground with a paddling pool at the centre is depicted on the site, which may have also required another phase of development and landscaping (after the demolition of the former salt works to the east of the site). A boundary visible on the 1885 Ordnance Survey map may be represented by the hedgerow identified in Trench 3.
- 7.3 The absence of archaeological deposits may indicate that structural remains associated with Iron Age salt production and the Roman settlement of Droitwich either do not extend as far as the site (where subsoil and alluvial deposits sealing the natural substrate were identified), or that they may have been removed during the previous reduction of the ground level within the site.
- 7.4 The contamination identified in the northern portion of the site consisted of arsenic and lead within the modern made-ground identified in the evaluation trenches to the south (CSG 2014, 19-20). The contaminated material was of a similar depth to the made-ground deposit to the south. It also appeared to directly overlay the natural substrate, suggesting that the ground level across these areas had previously been reduced, as it appears to have been to the south, and that any archaeological deposits which may have once been present have been removed.

8. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Sian Reynish, assisted by Christopher Watts. The report was written by Sian Reynish. The finds report was written by Jacky Sommerville. The illustrations were prepared by Rosanna Price. The archive has been compiled by Sian Reynish, and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neill. The project was managed for CA by Richard Young.



9. REFERENCES

- BGS (British Geological Survey) 2015 *Geology of Britain Viewer* <http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home/html> Accessed 27 March 2015
- CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2015 *Vines Lane, Droitwich, Worcestershire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation*
- CgMs Consulting 2014 *Land at Vines Lane, Droitwich, Worcestershire: Archaeological Desk Based Assessment*
- CSG (CSG Consulting Engineers Ltd) 2014 *Vines Lane: Geoenvironmental Report*
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- Hurst, D. and Rees, H. 1992 *Pottery fabrics; a multi-period series for the County of Hereford and Worcester*, in Woodiwiss, E. (ed.), 200–9.
- WCC (Worcester County Council) 2014 *Vines Lane, Droitwich Spa: Brief for Archaeological Evaluation*
- WCC (Worcester County Council) 2015 *Play Area, Vines Lane, Droitwich Spa WSM66614: Historic Environment Record Search*
- Woodiwiss, E. (ed.) 1992 *Iron Age and Roman Salt Production and The Medieval Town of Droitwich*. CBA Research Report **No 81**. London. Hereford and Worcester County Council

APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench No.	Context No.	Type	Fill of	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	D (m)	Spot-date
1	100	Layer		topsoil	dark brownish grey clayey silt	7.1	1.7	0.12	
1	101	Layer		make-up	dark brownish grey clayey silt with abundant modern brick, china, glass, etc.	7.1	1.7	0.35	C19-C20
1	102	Layer		subsoil	mid-light yellowish/grey brown clayey silt	7.1	1.7	0.22	
1	103	Layer		natural substrate	mixed natural comprising a mid reddish brown silty clay with greenish grey mottling and a mid reddish brown clay with common rounded stone inclusions	7.1	1.7	>0.15	
3	300	Layer		topsoil	dark brownish grey clayey silt	4	4	0.2	
3	301	Layer		make-up	dark brownish grey clayey silt with abundant modern brick, china, glass, etc.	4	4	0.6	MC19-MC20
3	302	Layer		natural substrate	mid reddish brown silty clay with greenish grey mottling	4	4		
3	303	Cut		hedgerow	orientated east/west sides and base are diffuse and irregular	>4	2.31	0.45	
3	304	Fill	303	1st fill of hedgerow	mid brownish grey silty clay	>4	1.81	0.19	
3	305	Fill	303	2nd fill of hedgerow	mixed reddish brown and brownish grey silty clay	>4	2.31	0.26	
4	400	Layer		topsoil	dark brownish grey clayey silt	4	4	0.21	
4	401	Layer		make-up	dark brownish grey clayey silt with abundant modern brick, china, glass, etc.	4	4	0.45	C19-EC20
4	402	Layer		alluvium	mid greyish brown silty clay	4	4	0.4	
4	403	Layer		natural substrate	mid reddish brown silty clay with greenish grey mottling	4	4	>0.12	
6	600	Layer		topsoil	dark brownish grey clayey silt	4	4	0.13	
6	601	Layer		make-up	dark brownish grey clayey silt with abundant modern brick, china, glass, etc.	4	4	0.49	MC19-LC19
6	602	Layer		alluvium	mid greyish brown silty clay	4	4	0.58	
6	603	Layer		natural substrate	mid reddish brown silty clay with greenish grey mottling	4	4		

APPENDIX B: THE FINDS

Context	Category	Fabric Code	Description	Count	Weight (g)	Spot-date
101	Post-medieval/modern pottery Modern glass	TRPRW	Transfer-printed refined whiteware	1	32	C19-C20
			Vessel base	2	19	
301	Post-medieval/modern pottery Clay tobacco pipe	LESW	'Late' English stoneware	2	177	MC19-MC20
			Stem	1	4	
401	Post-medieval/modern pottery Post-medieval/modern pottery Modern glass	TRPRW	Transfer-printed refined whiteware	1	11	C19-EC20
		REFW	Refined whiteware	1	11	
			'Hamilton soda water' bottle base	1	58	
601	Post-medieval/modern pottery Post-medieval/modern pottery	REFW	Refined whiteware	2	6	MC19-LC19
		TRPFL	'Flow blue' Transfer-printed refined whiteware	1	71	

APPENDIX C: LEVELS OF PRINCIPAL DEPOSITS AND STRUCTURES

Levels are expressed as metres below current ground level and as metres Above Ordnance Datum (AOD), calculated using a Leica GPS.

	Trench 1	Trench 3	Trench 4	Trench 6
Current ground level	0.00m (30.5m)	0.00m (29.7m)	0.00m (29.6m)	0.00m (29.5m)
base of make-up deposits	0.47m (30.03m)	0.80m (28.9m)	0.46m (29.14m)	0.62m (28.88m)
Limit of excavation	0.84m (29.66m)	0.80m (28.9m)	1.18m (28.42m)	1.2m (28.3m)

Upper figures are depth below modern ground level; lower figures in parentheses are metres AOD.

APPENDIX D: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project Name	Vines Lane, Droitwich, Worcestershire	
Short description	An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in April 2015 at Vines Lane, Droitwich, Worcestershire. Out of the six proposed trenches only four were excavated due to the presence of contaminated material. No archaeological features were identified. A hedgerow was identified within Trench 3. No artefactual material pre-dating the modern period was recovered.	
Project dates	15-16 April 2015	
Project type	Evaluation	
Previous work	None	
Future work	Unknown	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site Location	Vines Lane, Droitwich, Worcestershire	
Study area (M ² /ha)	0.23ha	
Site co-ordinates	SO 8986 3636	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Brief originator	Wychavon District Council	
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Richard Young	
Project Supervisor	Sian Reynish	
MONUMENT TYPE	None	
SIGNIFICANT FINDS	None	
PROJECT ARCHIVES		
	Intended final location of archive	Content
Physical	Worcestershire County Museum	Pottery, glass and clay pipe
Paper	Worcestershire County Museum	Trench sheets, context sheets, section drawing, photographic register.
Digital	Worcestershire County Museum	Digital plan and digital photographs
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2015 <i>Vines Lane, Droitwich, Worcestershire: Archaeological Evaluation</i> . CA typescript report 152208		

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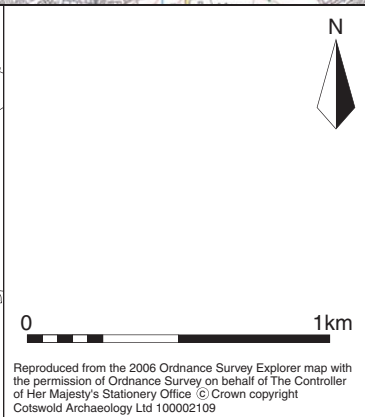
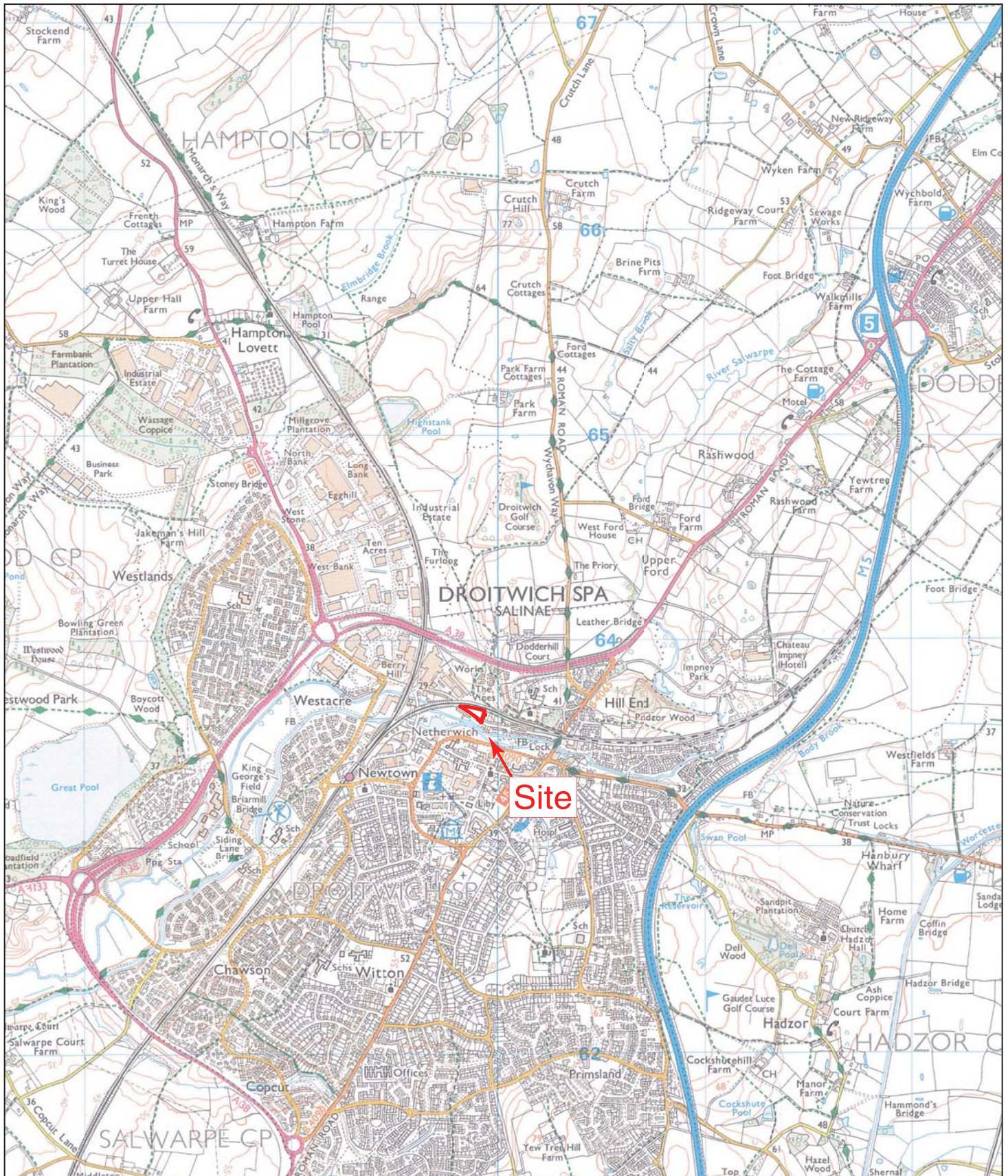
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PROJECT TITLE
 Vines Lane, Droitwich, Worcestershire

FIGURE TITLE
 Site location plan

DRAWN BY	RP	PROJECT NO.	5348	FIGURE NO.
CHECKED BY	JB	DATE	21.04.15	1
APPROVED BY	REY	SCALE	@A4 1:25,000	



- site boundary
- evaluation trench
- contaminated trench
- modern hedgerow
- field drain
- geotechnical trench
- ⓐ ⓑ section location



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PROJECT TITLE
Vines Lane, Droitwich, Worcestershire

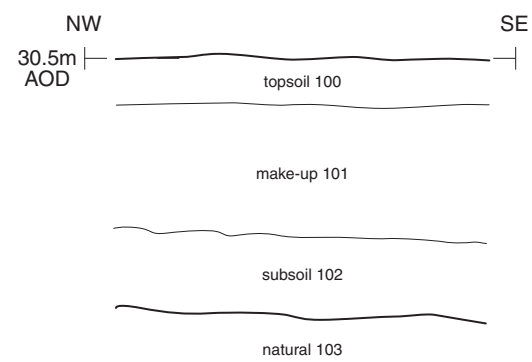
FIGURE TITLE
Trench location plan

DRAWN BY	RP	PROJECT NO.	5348	FIGURE NO.
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APPROVED BY	REY	SCALE@A3	1:300	

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SO

Trench 1, section AA

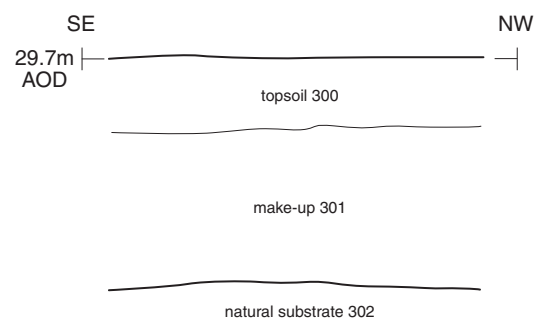


General shot of trench 1 (scales 1m)



South-west facing section of trench 1 (scale 1m)

Trench 3, section BB



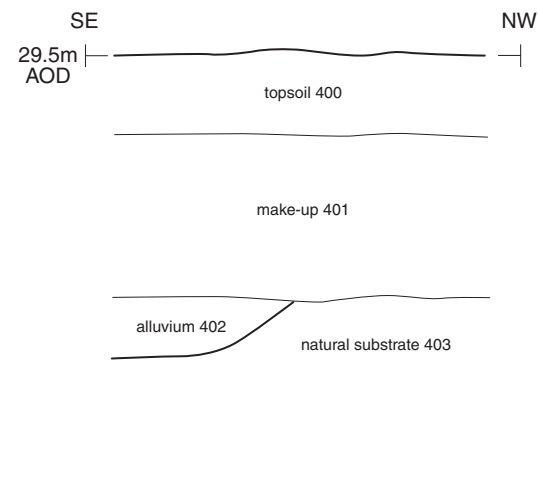
General shot of trench 3 (scales 1m)



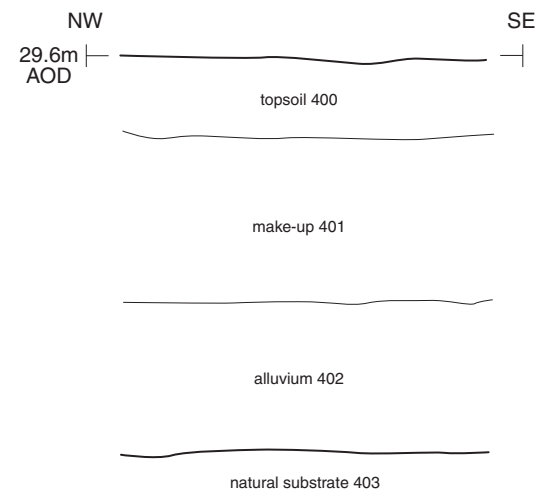
North-east facing section of trench 3 (scale 1m)



Trench 4, section CC



Trench 4, section DD



General shot of trench 4 (scales 1m)

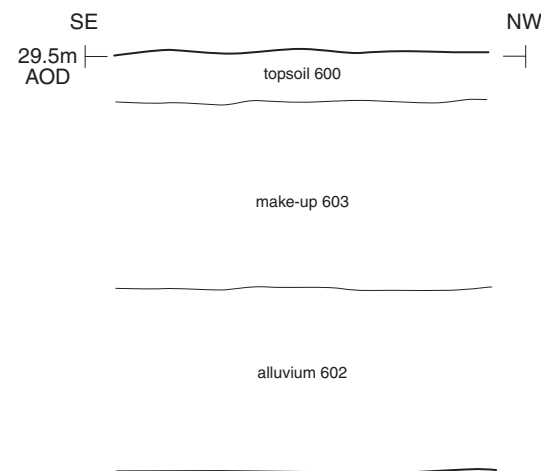


South-west facing section of trench 4 (scale 1m)



North-east facing section of trench 4 (scale 1m)

Trench 6, section EE



General shot of trench 6 (scale 1m)



North-east facing section of trench 6 (scale 1m)




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PROJECT TITLE
 Vines Lane, Droitwich, Worcestershire

FIGURE TITLE
Trenches 4 & 6; sections and photographs

DRAWN BY	RP	PROJECT NO.	5348	FIGURE NO.
CHECKED BY	JB	DATE	21.04.15	
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