An Archaeological Evaluation at Oldbury Camp, Mancetter Warwickshire

Archaeological Evaluation Report

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Client: Tarmac

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Archaeological Evaluation Report

An Archaeological Evaluation at Oldbury Camp, Mancetter, Warwickshire

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Report Date: January 2017

Report Number: 2031

Site Name: An Archaeological Evaluation at Oldbury Camp, Warwickshire

HER Event No:

Date of Works: December 2016

Client Name: Tarmac

Client Ref:

Planning Ref: NWB/14CM034

Grid Ref: SP 31340 94940

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Receiving Body: Warwickshire Museums

Accession No:

Prepared by: James Fairbairn
Position: Project Officer
Date: January 2017

Checked by: Richard Mortimer
Position: Manager
Date: January 2017
Signed: .....

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Summary

On the 22nd and 23rd of December 2016 Oxford Archaeology East were commissioned by Andrew Josephs Associates on behalf of Tarmac to carry out an archaeological evaluation on the south-eastern edge of Mancetter Quarry at the point the quarry workings abut the banks of Oldbury Camp, a scheduled ancient monument. The work was requested by Warwickshire County Council and Historic England to assess the condition of any remaining earthworks underlying the quarry spoil as an aid to inform the detail of any restoration work in the area closest to the monument. The work was carried out under a scheduled monument consent.

The archaeological evaluation revealed a bank with visible formation layers and possible consolidation and tip lines into the Monument's outer ditch. Evidence of truncation caused by remedial works undertaken in the mid to late 1980's was also noted and the edge of the quarried area located.

1 Introduction

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 An archaeological evaluation was conducted at Oldbury Camp in Warwickshire SP 31340 94940.

1.1.2 This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a brief issued by Warwickshire County Council, supplemented by a Specification prepared by OA East.

1.1.3 The work was designed to assist in defining the character and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed landscaping area between the open quarry and the standing monument. The results will enable decisions to be made by Tarmac and their consultants, Warwickshire County Council and Historic England with regard to the treatment of any archaeological remains found. The work was carried out under Scheduled Monument Consent Reference S00151254.

1.1.4 The site archive is currently held by OA East and will be deposited with the appropriate county stores in due course.

1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The site is located across two geologies, to the north is a bedrock geology of Midlands Minor Intrusive Suite – Lamprophyres, and to the south is a bedrock geology of Outwoods Shale Formation – Mudstone. There are no superficial deposits.

1.2.2 The site is located on the land between the Scheduled Monument and open quarry at a height of 170-173m OD. The topography here is fairly steep as the main bank circuit of Oldbury Camp rises up to the immediate east and to the west the land begins to drop away into the quarry.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 The site is located in an area of known archaeological remains and find spots, a summary of which is produced below.

Neolithic

1.3.2 Low level evidence for Neolithic activity is known of in the area and consist of two findspots, the first being a collection of flint axes which were found within Oldbury Camp (MWA 6050) and the second, a flint scatter (MWA 5920) 300m to the south-east.

Bronze Age

1.3.3 The only known Bronze Age remains within the area are located 100m south-east of Oldbury camp and consist of a barrow (MWA 246), which still exists as an earthwork and is a Scheduled Monument (SM number 21623). Investigations into the barrow found two associated urned cremations

Iron age

1.3.4 The site is located on the periphery of Oldbury Camp Scheduled Monument (SM number 21586). The SM encompasses the earthworks and buried remains of Oldbury Camp, a univallate hillfort. The extant earthworks consist of a bank and external ditch. The bank has a maximum width of 6.5m at its base, the majority of the ditch has been infilled but survives as a buried feature. Potentially associated with the hillfort is an Iron Age burial (MWA 6100) located 500m to the south-east.

Saxon

1.3.5 The only remains of an Anglo-Saxon date consist of a burial with associated grave goods (MWA 6001) uncovered during the excavation of the Bronze Age barrow, 100m south-east of Oldbury Camp.

Medieval

1.3.6 Documentary evidence shows that a Benedictine nunnery (MWA 256) was located to the immediate south of Oldbury Camp. No remains of this survive.

Post-Medieval and modern

1.3.7 Oldbury Camp originally extended to the south-east of the scheduled area, however this area has been extensively modified by the construction of buildings associated with the Georgian house, Oldbury Hall (MWA 258), which was demolished in 1948. The land extending north-west away from Oldbury Camp and into the area of Mancetter quarry was also originally part of Oldbury Hall park and garden (MWA 12565).

1.3.8 The interior of the hillfort has also been greatly modified by the construction of an underground reservoir in the mid-20th century.

Oldbury Camp

1.3.9 Historic England list the scheduled monument as Oldbury Camp univallate hillfort (Scheduled Monument No: SM 21586, HA 1018855) and describe it thus:

1.3.10 The monument is situated to the north east of Oldbury Grange and includes the earthworks and buried remains of part of Oldbury Camp, a univallate hillfort. The hillfort utilises a prominent ridge which rises to the west of the village of Hartshill and occupies an area of some 2.8ha. Oldbury Camp originally extended south east of the area of protection, but this area to the south east has been extensively modified by the construction of buildings associated with both the now demolished Georgian house, Oldbury Hall, which occupied part of the site until it was levelled in 1948, and a reservoir which was operational by 1954 and occupies the central part of the hillfort's interior.

1.3.11 Traces of the hillfort's defensive earthworks, a bank and external ditch, are visible along the north east, north west and south west sides. The best preserved section of the bank forms the north western defences to the site. It is visible as an earthwork, with a maximum width of 6.5m at its base, although its central section has been breached. In the late 1940s an excavation trench through the north eastern defences recovered evidence demonstrating that the bank was constructed of rubble held on the inside by a

line of stone packing. Much of the external ditch has been infilled. The north western section has, however for the most part, been removed by quarrying activities. A causeway across the ditch at the north west corner is believed to mark the site of an original entrance to the hillfort.

1.3.12 The central part of the hillfort's interior has been greatly modified by the construction of the underground reservoir in the mid-20th century, and this area is thus not included in the scheduling. However, those parts of the interior immediately adjacent to the hillfort's defences survive relatively undisturbed and are believed to retain buried features associated with the occupation of the site.

1.3.13 In the late 1940s K.D.M Dauncey excavated a trench through the north eastern defences recovered evidence demonstrating that the bank was constructed of rubble held on the inside by a line of stone packing. Much of the external ditch has been infilled.

1.3.14 An archaeological monitoring exercise was also carried out at Oldbury Camp in 1993 when a water pipe was installed. No archaeological deposits nor finds were recorded. (Jones A E/1993/Oldbury Camp, Near Nuneaton, Warwickshire, An Archaeological Watching Brief, 1993/Report No. 248. Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit [archaeological evaluation reports]).

1.4 Acknowledgements

1.4.1 The author would like to thank Andrew Josephs who commissioned the work on behalf of Tarmac and Ian Meadows, his representative on site. The site work and survey was carried out by James Fairbairn. Richard Mortimer managed the project. Anna Stocks of Warwickshire County Council and Neil Rimmington of Historic England visited the site and monitored the work undertaken.

2 Aims and Methodology

2.1 Aims

2.1.1 The objective of this archaeological evaluation was to determine as far as reasonably possible the presence/absence, location, nature, extent, date, quality, condition and significance of any surviving archaeological deposits within the area immediately adjacent to the western perimeter of Oldbury Camp.

2.2 Methodology

2.2.1 Scheduled monument consent was granted for up to three short trenches to be machine excavated on the earthworks located to the north western edge of Oldbury Camp on an area considered to be an outer defensive bank. In the end only one trench was required to fulfil the objectives of the evaluation.

2.2.2 The trench was excavated to the upper horizons of archaeological features relating to the original earthwork.

2.2.3 The formation of the bank was recorded taking particular note of any truncation to the feature from quarrying and the remedial works carried out in the 1980s.

2.2.4 Machine excavation was carried out under constant archaeological supervision with a tracked excavator using a toothless ditching bucket.

2.2.5 The site survey was carried out by James Fairbairn using Leica GS08 GPS equipment.

2.2.6 Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal detector. All metal-detected and hand-collected finds were retained for inspection, other than those which were obviously modern.

2.2.7 All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using OA East's *pro-forma* sheets. Trench locations, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales and colour and monochrome photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits.

2.2.8 Conditions during the archaeological evaluation were dry, cold and overcast.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 A single trench was machine excavated adjacent to the north-west boundary of Oldbury camp (Figs.2 & 3 and Plates 1 to 4). It was aligned south-east to north-west and measured 20.2m long, 3m wide and was an average of 2.2m deep. The trench was excavated to determine the presence and state of preservation of a possible counterscarp bank seen on plans and maps until the late 1980's.

3.1.2 At the south-eastern end of the trench a bank with tip lines, slumping and formation layers was noted. Evidence of modern quarry edge truncation was recorded towards the north-western end of the evaluation trench.

3.1.3 The following archaeological layers were recorded:

Bank formation

3.1.4 A total of six contexts were considered to be related to the formation of the counterscarp bank. These were layers 107, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113 and 116 (Fig 4).

Layer 116 (Fig 4 and plate 5)

3.1.5 The earliest layer encountered consisted of a compressed brown-grey sandy gravel that contained small to medium stones (Plate 5). This layer is considered to be a one of the primary layers relating to the outer bank of the fortification. Once identified and recorded it was decided not to excavate below this point.

Layer 112 (Fig 4 and plate 6)

3.1.6 Above the compressed (layer 116) another thin band of material (112) was noted(Fig 4). This material consisted of a mid grey silty sand that contained frequent small stones and gravel. The layer had a maximum thickness of 0.20m at the southern end of the bank where a small construction cut or slump of material had occurred.

Layer 113 (Fig 4 and plate 8)

3.1.7 A redeposited band of natural material (113) was noted at the northern end of the bank (Fig 4). This consisted of a light brown gravel that contained frequent small stones (Plate 8). It had a maximum thickness of 0.22m and was truncated by the edge of the quarry workings (**115**). It is thought that this redeposited material may constitute repair or consolidation of the bank on its northern side.

Layer 111 (Fig 4 and plates 6 and 7)

3.1.8 A build up or slump of a mid brown silty clay sand (111) was recorded on the southern side of the bank (Fig 4 and plate 6). The deposit had a maximum thickness of 0.50m and a width of 2.5m The material contained many small and medium sized stones and could have been considered to be another area of consolidation to the bank if it were not for the fact that the material was moderately loose (Plate 7). It may represent infilling of a potential construction cut related to the ditch to the south-east.

Layer 110 (Fig 4 and plate 6)

3.1.9 A thin layer of mid grey sandy silt (110) sealed layer 112 and partially sealed layer 111 (Fig 4). The material consisted of a mid grey brown silty sand that had a width of 4.6m and a depth of 0.20m. The deposit contained frequent small and occasional medium stones (Plate 6). As this layer only partial sealed layer 111 and there is a possibility that the two contexts could represent the same material.

Layer 109 (Fig 4 and plate 6)

3.1.10 Another moderately compacted but much thicker layer (109) sealed context 110 (Fig 4 and plate 6). This had a width of 8.3m and a depth of 0.60m. The material consisted of a brown-grey sandy silt that contained occasional small stones. It is thought that this deposit is one of the upper formation layers of the bank.

Layer 107 (Fig 4 and plates 5, 6 and 9)

3.1.11 Layer 107 sealed layer 110 (Fig 4 and plates 5 and 6). It consisted of a mid grey sandy clay silt that contained frequent small and occasional medium sized stones. The layer had a length of 13.2m and a maximum depth of 1.20m. Truncation by modern quarrying (**114**) had occurred at the northern end of the deposit (Plate 9) and the upper levels of the deposit had also been subject to modern disturbance most probably caused by quarrying practises. This layer represents the uppermost surviving level of bank construction material.

Tip lines

Three layers were recorded that were considered to represent tip lines of material coming off the counterscarp bank into the associated inner ditch. These were contexts 104, 105 and 106.

Layer 106 (Fig 4 and plate 6)

3.1.12 This thin layer consisted of a dark grey sandy clay silt which contained occasional small stones (fig 4 and plate 6). The material was moderately loose had a maximum thickness of 0.15m. The angle of slope and the silty consistency of the material suggests that this deposit may have once been open to the elements and may constitute a surface of the bank.

Layer 105 (Fig 4 and plate 6)

3.1.13 Layer 106 was sealed by a reddish brown silty sand deposit (105) that was moderately loose and contained frequent small and occasional small stones. This layer, considered to be a wash or slump of bank material had a maximum thickness of 0.40m (Fig 4 and plate 6).

Layer 104 (Fig 4 and plates 5 and 6)

3.1.14 Layer 104 was very similar in characteristics to layer 106. It consisted of of a dark grey silty grey material that contained occasional small stones. The maximum thickness of the deposit was 0.20m. This layer may also represent a period of consolidation and turf growth on the southern bank of the counterscarp (Fig 4 and plates 5 and 6).

Layer 103 (Fig 4 and plates 6, 7 and 8)

3.1.15 This deposit (103) is considered to be the infill of the ditch between the inner bank of the fortifications and the counterscarp (Fig 4 and plate 5). It was excavated to a depth of 1.6m but due to health and safety considerations it was not possible to excavate below this point. The fill consisted of a reddish brown silty sand material that contained thin lenses of a grey silt material (Plates 6 and 7). The fill was moderately compacted and contained frequent to medium small stones.

Layer 102 (Fig 4 and plates 5 and 6)

3.1.16 The whole area of the counterscarp was sealed by a modern layer of material (102), (Fig 4). This consisted of a mixture of a mid to light grey clay silt that probably originated on the site of the quarry mixed with organic material from the trees and vegetation growing on the bank (Plates 5 and 6). The maximum depth of the layer was 0.80m.

3.1.17 At the southern end of layer 102 an area of root disturbance was recorded (101), (Fig 4 and plate 6).

Quarry truncation:

Cut 114 (Fig 4)

3.1.18 The quarry edge could be seen at the northern end of the counterscarp where a rough cut (**114**) was noted (Fig 4) truncating layers 113 and 107. The recorded depth of truncation was 1.70m but this would only be the upper limits.

Fill 115 (Fig 4 and plates 8 and 9)

3.1.19 The back fill of the quarry consisted of a mid to light grey silty clay material which contained a mixture of shale and small to medium stones (Plates 8 and 9). Modern plastic was noted within the backfill. This was not retained.

4 Discussion and Conclusions

4.1 Discussion

4.1.1 The evaluation of the bank adjacent to the fortifications at Oldbury camp has shown that the counterscarp which is visible on both historic and relatively modern maps (Figs 2 and 3) survives well beneath the material deposited when the remedial works were carried out on this part of the quarry.

4.1.2 Minor truncation and damage to the bank seems to have occurred to the upper limits (Fig 4 and plates 5 and 6), with more significant damage being visible at the northern end of the bank (Plate 9)

4.1.3 The ditch between the two banks also remains intact (Plate 3) although it was not possible to excavate to any great depth due to health and safety concerns.

4.1.4 Practically no finds were recorded from the evaluation other than the very modern. One small piece of ceramic building material was found at the upper limits of the bank but this could not be associated with any secure context. Metal detecting also failed to locate any metallic objects from either the layers or spoil.

4.2 Significance

4.2.1 The archaeological evaluation at Oldbury Camp has shown that the counterscarp bank which was thought to be lost or damaged by quarring still survives relatively intact under modern remedial works. The evaluation has shown that the northern end of the fortification is more complete than was first thought.

4.3 Recommendations

4.3.1 Recommendations for any future work based upon this report will be made by the County Archaeology Office and representatives of Historic England.

Appendix A. Trench Descriptions and Context Inventory

Trench 1						
General description					**Orientation**	NW-SE
Trench 1 was located the edge of the quarry workings adjacent to the north-west bank of Oldbury Camp.					**Avg. depth (m)**	2.20m
					Width (m)	3.0m
					Length (m)	22.00m
Contexts						
context no	**type**	**Length (m)**	**Depth (m)**	**comment**	**finds**	**date**
101	Layer	1.30	0.40	Disturbed soil	none	
102	Layer	14.60	0.80	Organic topsoil	none	
103	Layer		1.50	Ditch fill between banks	none	
104	Layer	3.40	0.20	Silty tipline on counterscarp - turf	none	
105	Layer	4.80	0.40	Tip line on counterscarp - slump	none	
106	Layer	4.18	0.15	Silty tip line on counterscarp - turf	none	
107	Layer	13.2	1.20	Tip line on counterscarp	none	
109	Layer	8.30	1.60	Formation layer	none	
110	Layer	4.60	0.20	Formation layer	none	
111	Layer	2.15	0.50	Slump on counterscarp	none	
112	Layer	2.80	0.20	Formation layer	none	
113	Layer	0.80	0.22	Gravel formation layer of counterscarp	none	
114	Cut		1.40	Truncation of quarry edge	none	
115	Layer		1.40	Backfill of material	none	
116	Layer			Bank material	none	

Appendix B. Bibliography

Dauncy, K.D.M.	1949	Oldbury, Excavations 1949: Advanced summary (unpublished)
Jones, A. E.	1993	Oldbury Camp, Near Nuneaton, Warwickshire, An Archaeological Watching Brief, 1993/Report No. 248. Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit
Josephs, A.	2014	Mancetter Quarry, Atherstone, Warwickshire. Cultural Heritage Assessment.

Electronic sources consulted:

https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1018855

Appendix C. OASIS Report Form

All fields are required unless they are not applicable.

Project Details

OASIS Number	oxfordar3-272658		
Project Name	An Archaeological Evaluation at Oldbury Camp, Warwickshire		
Project Dates (fieldwork) Start	22-12-2016	Finish	23-12-2016
Previous Work (by OA East)	No	Future Work	Unknown

Project Reference Codes

Site Code	XWAOCA16	Planning App. No.	NWB/14CM034
HER No.		Related HER/OASIS No.	

Type of Project/Techniques Used

Prompt	SMR enhancement
Development Type	Other

Please select all techniques used:

☐ Aerial Photography - interpretation	☐ Grab-Sampling	☐ Remote Operated Vehicle Survey
☐ Aerial Photography - new	☐ Gravity-Core	☐ Sample Trenches
☐ Annotated Sketch	☐ Laser Scanning	☐ Survey/Recording Of Fabric/Structure
☐ Augering	☐ Measured Survey	☒ Targeted Trenches
☐ Dendrochronological Survey	☐ Metal Detectors	☐ Test Pits
☐ Documentary Search	☐ Phosphate Survey	☐ Topographic Survey
☐ Environmental Sampling	☐ Photogrammetric Survey	☐ Vibro-core
☐ Fieldwalking	☐ Photographic Survey	☐ Visual Inspection (Initial Site Visit)
☐ Geophysical Survey	☐ Rectified Photography	

Monument Types/Significant Finds & Their Periods

List feature types using the NMR Monument Type Thesaurus and significant finds using the MDA Object type Thesaurus together with their respective periods. If no features/finds were found, please state "none".

Monument	Period	Object	Period
Bank	Late Prehistoric -4k to 43		None
	None		None
	None		None

Project Location

County	Warwickhshire	Site Address (including postcode if possible)	
District	North Warwickshire	Quarry Lane, Mancetter, Atherstone, Warwickshire, CV9 2RF	
Parish	Hartshill		
HER	Warwickshire		
Study Area	0.1	National Grid Reference	SP 31340 94940

Project Originators

Organisation	OA EAST
Project Brief Originator	Warwickshire County Council
Project Design Originator	OA EAst
Project Manager	Richard Mortimer
Supervisor	James Fairbairn

Project Archives

Physical Archive	Digital Archive	Paper Archive
none	OA East	OAEast
	XWAOCA16	XWAOCA16

Archive Contents/Media

	Physical Contents	Digital Contents	Paper Contents
Animal Bones	☐	☐	☐
Ceramics	☐	☐	☐
Environmental	☐	☐	☐
Glass	☐	☐	☐
Human Bones	☐	☐	☐
Industrial	☐	☐	☐
Leather	☐	☐	☐
Metal	☐	☐	☐
Stratigraphic		☐	☒
Survey		☒	☐
Textiles	☐	☐	☐
Wood	☐	☐	☐
Worked Bone	☐	☐	☐
Worked Stone/Lithic	☐	☐	☐
None	☐	☐	☐
Other	☐	☐	☐

Digital Media	**Paper Media**
☐ Database	☐ Aerial Photos
☐ GIS	☒ Context Sheet
☐ Geophysics	☐ Correspondence
☒ Images	☐ Diary
☒ Illustrations	☒ Drawing
☐ Moving Image	☐ Manuscript
☐ Spreadsheets	☐ Map
☒ Survey	☐ Matrices
☒ Text	☐ Microfilm
☐ Virtual Reality	☐ Misc.
	☐ Research/Notes
	☒ Photos
	☒ Plans
	☒ Report
	☒ Sections
	☐ Survey

Notes:

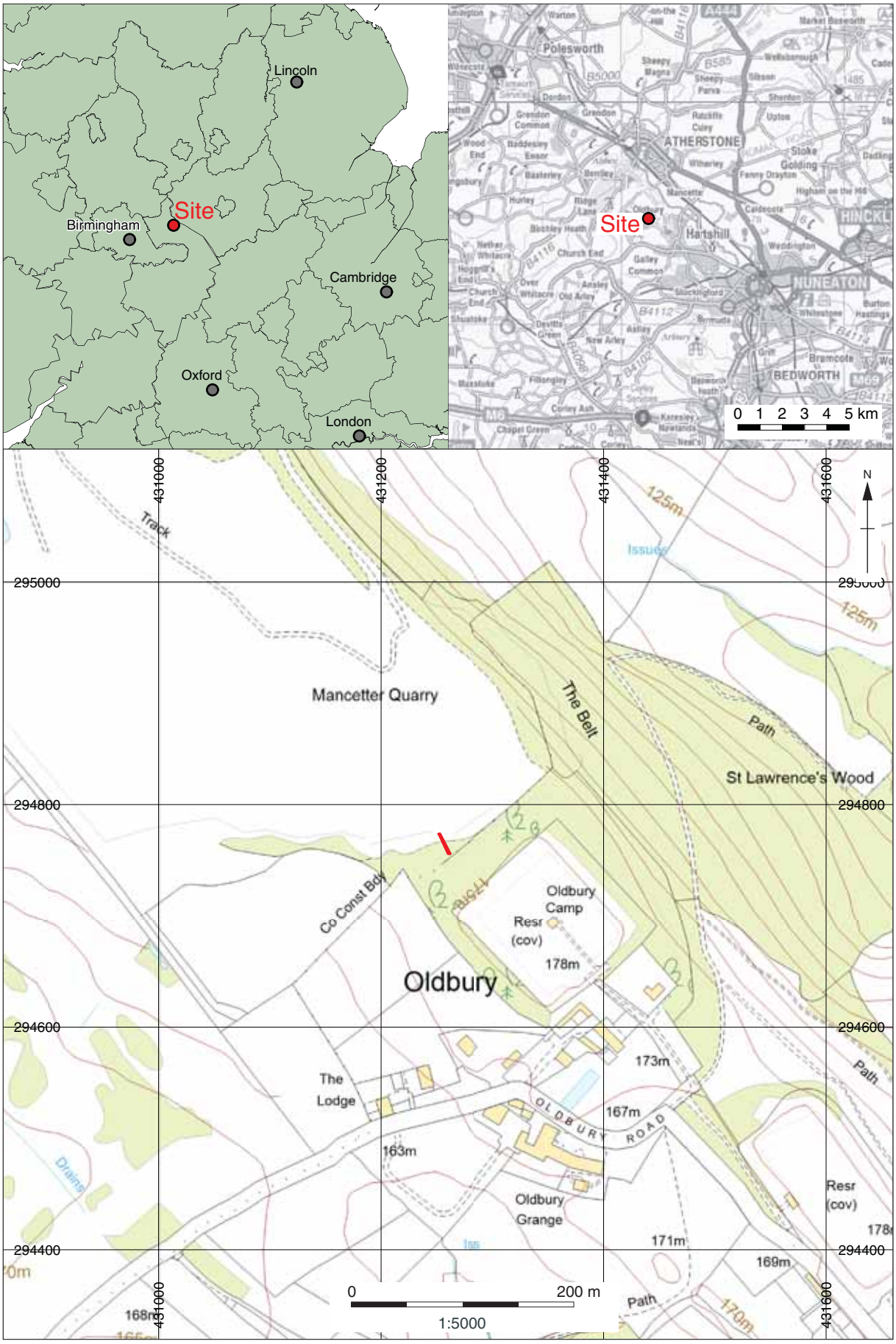


Figure 1: Site location showing archaeological trench (red)

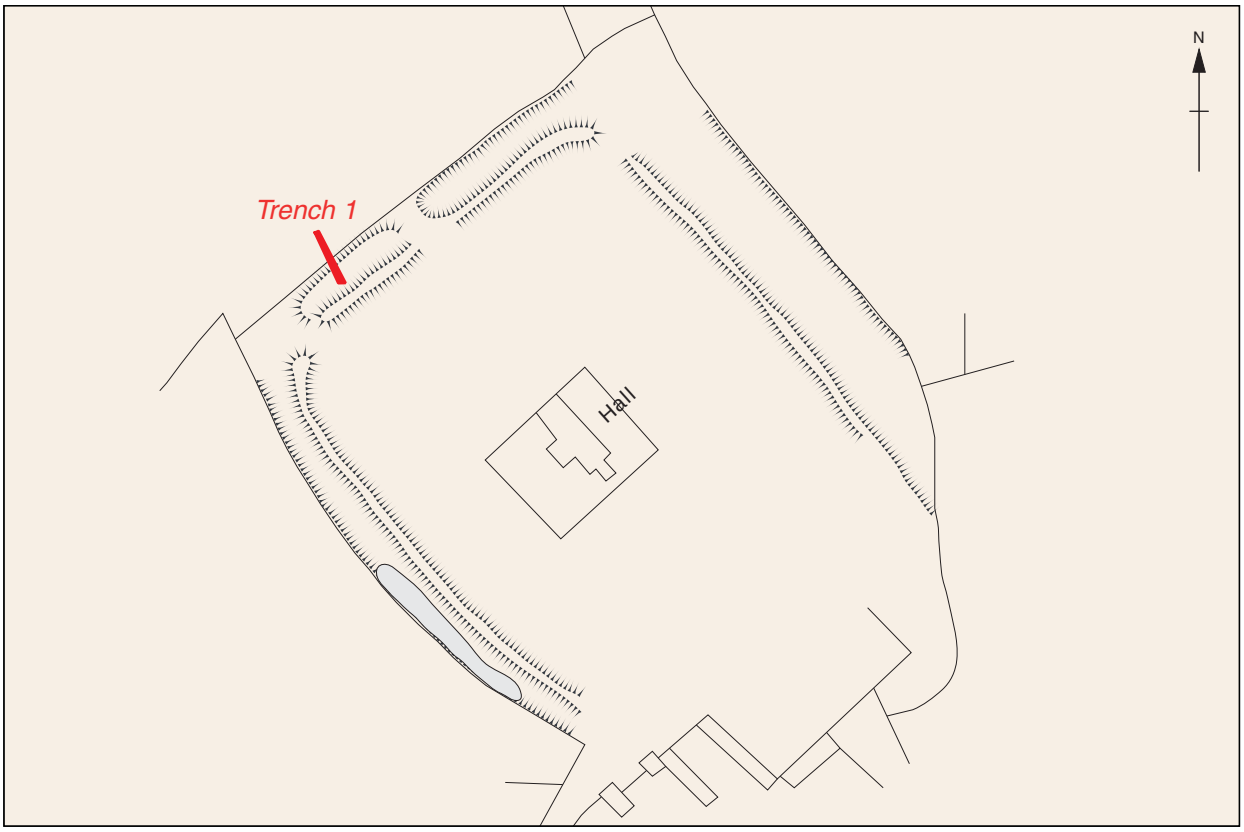


Figure 2: Late 19th century plan of Oldbury Camp (after Doubleday H A & Page W (eds), 1904, sheet 1)

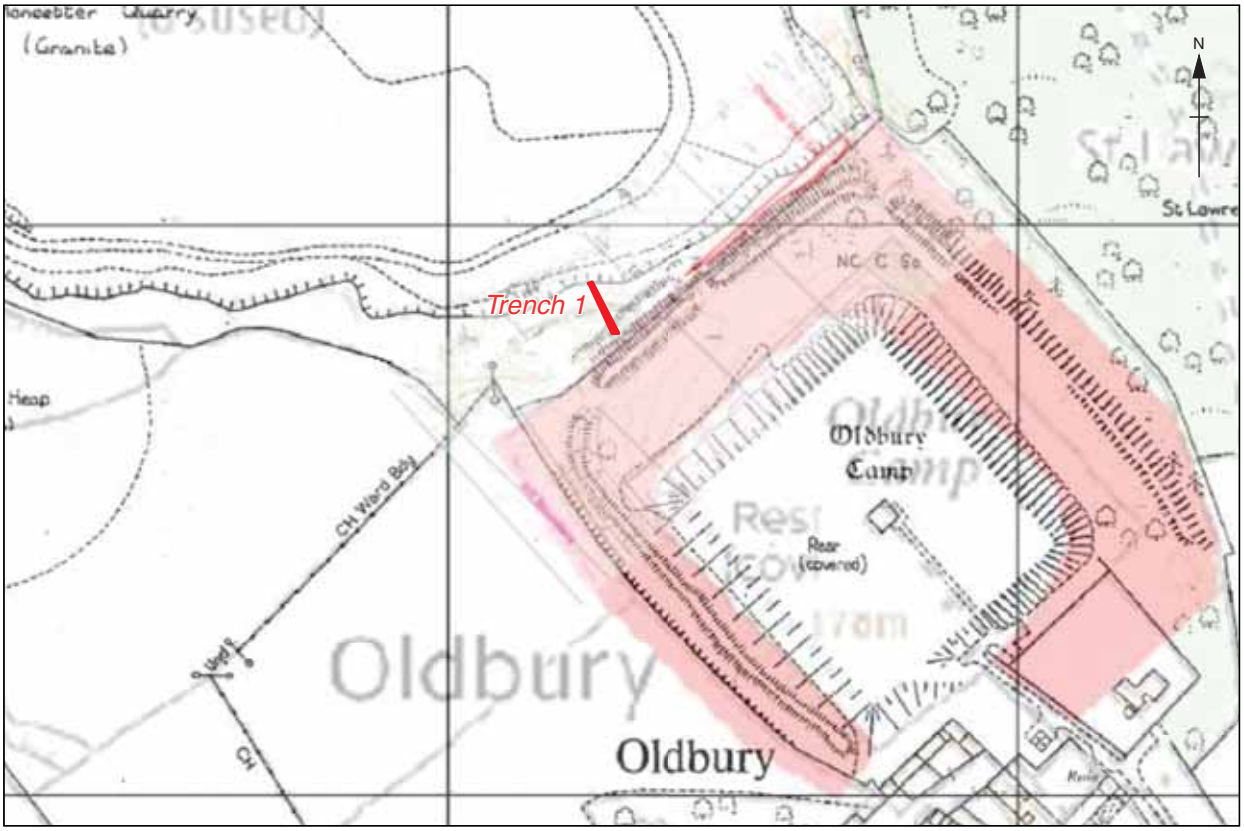
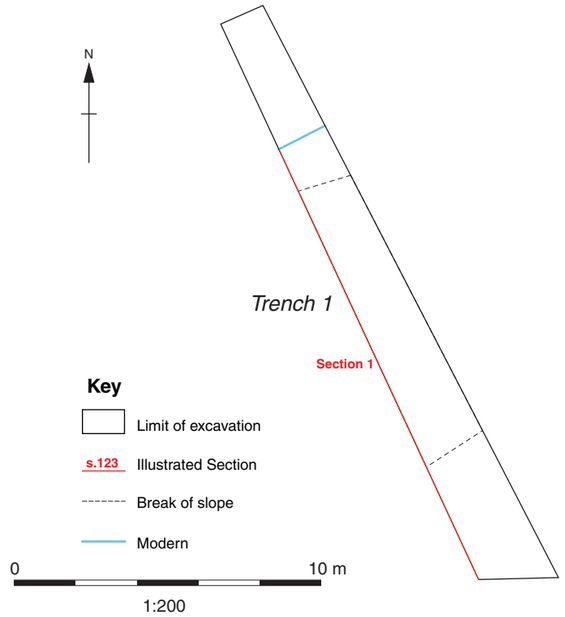


Figure 3: OS map of 1988 showing plan of Oldbury Camp



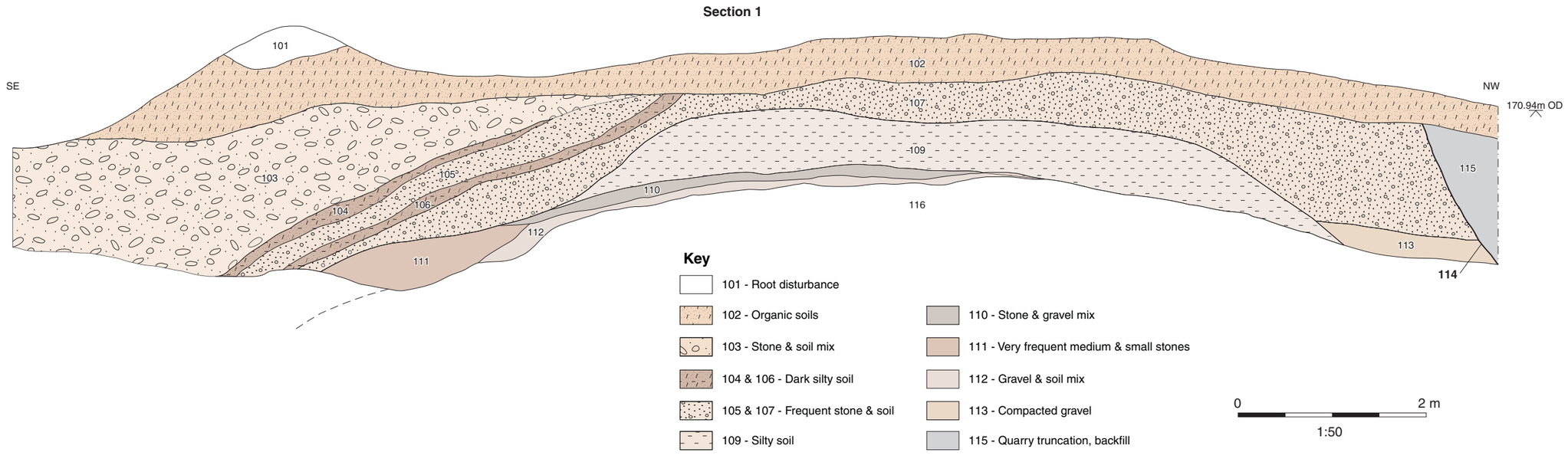


Figure 4: Plan of evaluation trenches and associated section

Plate 1: Trench viewed from the north-west

Plate 2: Trench showing Iron age bank and counterscarp, viewed from the north-west

Plate 3: Counterscarp bank, viewed from the south-east

Plate 4: Modern quarry truncation, viewed from the north-west.

Plate 5: Oblique view of bank, viewed from the north.

Plate 6: Upper formation of bank, viewed from the north-east.

Plate 7: Stony material on the slope of the counterscarp, viewed from the north-east.

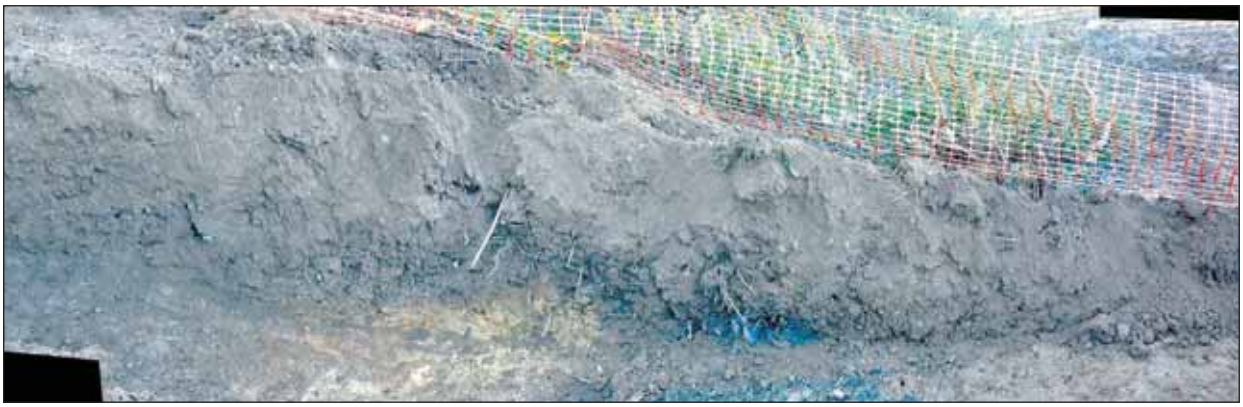


Plate 8: Quarry edge truncation, viewed from the north-east.

Plate 9: Detail of truncation from quarry, viewed from the north-east.

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