

An Archaeological Watching Brief  
at  
Vines Park,  
Droitwich Spa,  
Worcestershire

Graham Arnold

Illustrated by Carolyn Hunt

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Worcestershire Archaeology,  
Worcestershire Archives and Archaeology Service,  
Worcestershire County Council,  
The Hive,  
Sawmill Walk,  
The Butts,  
Worcester, WR1 3PB

Project 3579  
Report 1905  
WSM 43223



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## Archaeological watching brief at Vines Park, Droitwich, Worcestershire

### Graham Arnold

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#### Background information

<i>Client</i>	Wychavon District Council Parks Officer
<i>Site address</i>	Vines Park, Droitwich Spa, Worcestershire SO 89924 63532
<i>National Grid reference (centred on)</i>	WSM 43223
<i>Historic Environment Record reference</i>	SAM 30097
<i>Scheduled Ancient Monument reference</i>	English Heritage 20 September 2010
<i>Scheduled Monument Consent</i>	HEAS 2010
<i>Project design</i>	IfA 2008
<i>Project parameters</i>	

#### Background

Works on site included the construction of a play area and new fencing, along with the removal of old scrubs and replanting. The site lies within a designated Scheduled Ancient Monument. Scheduled Monument Consent was granted following discussions with Tony Fleming (Inspector of Ancient Monuments, English Heritage) for the works to be undertaken.

The study area was comprised of two main foci; the play area in Hill End to the east side of the park (NGR: SO 90162 63477; Figs 2 and 4) and six patches of scrub around Netherwich Basin towards the west end of the park (NGR: SO 89720 63611; Figs 2 and 3). The latter area is bounded to the south by the Droitwich canal, and to the north by the river Salwarpe. The former area of the site is immediately south of the lee at the junction of these two waterways, bounded along its southern limit by the Saltway and to the east by the B4065 road. The site lies at roughly 30m above Ordnance Datum (AOD).

#### Previous archaeological work on the site

The archaeological background to the site (centred on National Grid ref. SO 89924 63532) is given in the desk-based assessment undertaken by the Service (Webster 2010).

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#### Aims

The aim of the watching brief was to observe and record archaeological deposits, and to determine their extent, state of preservation, date and type, as far as reasonably possible.

The desk-based assessment indicated that significant deposits may be defined as those likely to be of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century date, although significant remains dating from the Late Iron Age and later have been identified at some depth within the immediate area.

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#### Methods

General specification for fieldwork	Worcestershire Archaeology 2012 EH SMC 2010
Sources consulted	Webster 2010 HER
Date(s) of fieldwork	17 January 2011 to 25 January 2012
The area of the site and groundworks are indicated on Figs 2 and 3	
Dimensions of excavated areas observed	
Play area foundations	area 125m <sup>2</sup>

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Tree and scrub clearance areas	depth 0.75m max 90m <sup>2</sup>
60 Fence post holes	depth 0.50m max diameter 0.40m depth 0.60m max

*Access to or visibility of deposits*

Observation of the excavated areas was undertaken during and after machine excavation. The exposed surfaces were sufficiently clean to observe well-differentiated archaeological deposits.

*Statement of confidence*

Access to, and visibility of, deposits allowed a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved.

**Deposit description (for all Trenches unless specified)**

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
100	Topsoil	Dark brown sandy silt with moderate inclusions of small to medium rounded stones and occasional fragments of modern cbm	0 – 0.19m
101	Made Ground	Dark orange brown sandy silt with patches of redeposited brown orange marl and clay. Moderate small to large sub rounded stones, modern cbm including brick ash and clinker and occasional modern rubbish and concrete fragments	0.20 – 0.74m
102	Made Ground	Compact dark black ash and clinker with moderate inclusions of cbm fragments	0.74m+
103	Cut of Service Pipe	Machine cut, straight sides, aligned north-west to south-east. Unexcavated; observed in Trenches 2 and 11.	0.10m+
104	Fill of Service Pipe	Modern top soil and mixed material, observed in Trenches 2 and 11.	0.10m+

**Discussion****The Scrub Clearance Areas (Figs 3 and 4)**

The programme of scrub clearance to the north of the Netherwich basin had limited impact on the ground with only topsoil revealed to a maximum of 0.15m below ground level. Tree roots were dug out to a depth of 0.50m.

In the area close to the play area facing onto the Saltway (Trench 16; Plates 11 and 12) the works did not involve any excavations below ground level.

**The Play Area (Fig 4)**

The majority of the excavations had limited impact on the ground, with topsoil over modern made ground being the only deposits revealed. Works included creating steps down to the canal basin edge, safety fencing and landscaping next to the canal basin (Plates 7 and 8). Some foundations for equipment in the play area had deeper foundations, to a maximum of 1m below ground level (Plates 2, 3 and 6), where a series of modern 20<sup>th</sup> century made ground deposits were visible.

No deposits predating the 20<sup>th</sup> century made ground deposits were identified in either area.

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## Conclusions

The works did not impact on any significant archaeological deposits or structures. The works were dug to a maximum depth of 1m below ground level and revealed only modern 20<sup>th</sup> century made ground, with topsoil overlying.

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## Publication summary

The Service has a professional obligation to publish the results of archaeological projects within a reasonable period of time. To this end, the Service intends to use this summary as the basis for publication through local or regional journals. The client is requested to consider the content of this section as being acceptable for such publication.

*An archaeological watching brief was undertaken on behalf of Wychavon District Council at Vines Park, Droitwich Spa, Worcestershire (NGR ref. centred on SO 89924 63532; HER 43223; SAM 30097) to comply with Scheduled Monument Consent for the site. The works consisted of the construction of a play area at Hill End and removal of shrubs immediately north of the Netherwich Basin, with a subsequent installation of new fencing and a scheme of replanting. Only topsoil and 20<sup>th</sup> century mixed made ground deposits were observed, relating to the ground around the canal basin being built up in the modern period.*

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## Acknowledgements

The Service would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, Lynn Stevens, (Parks Officer, Wychavon District Council) and Tony Fleming (Inspector of Ancient Monuments, English Heritage).

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## Bibliography

HEAS 2008 *Standards and guidelines for archaeological projects in Worcestershire*, Historic Environment and Archaeology Service, Worcestershire County Council, unpublished document dated November 2008

HEAS 2010 *Proposal for an archaeological watching brief at Vines Park, Droitwich Spa, Worcestershire*, Historic Environment and Archaeology Service, Worcestershire County Council, unpublished document dated 23 September 2010, **P3579**

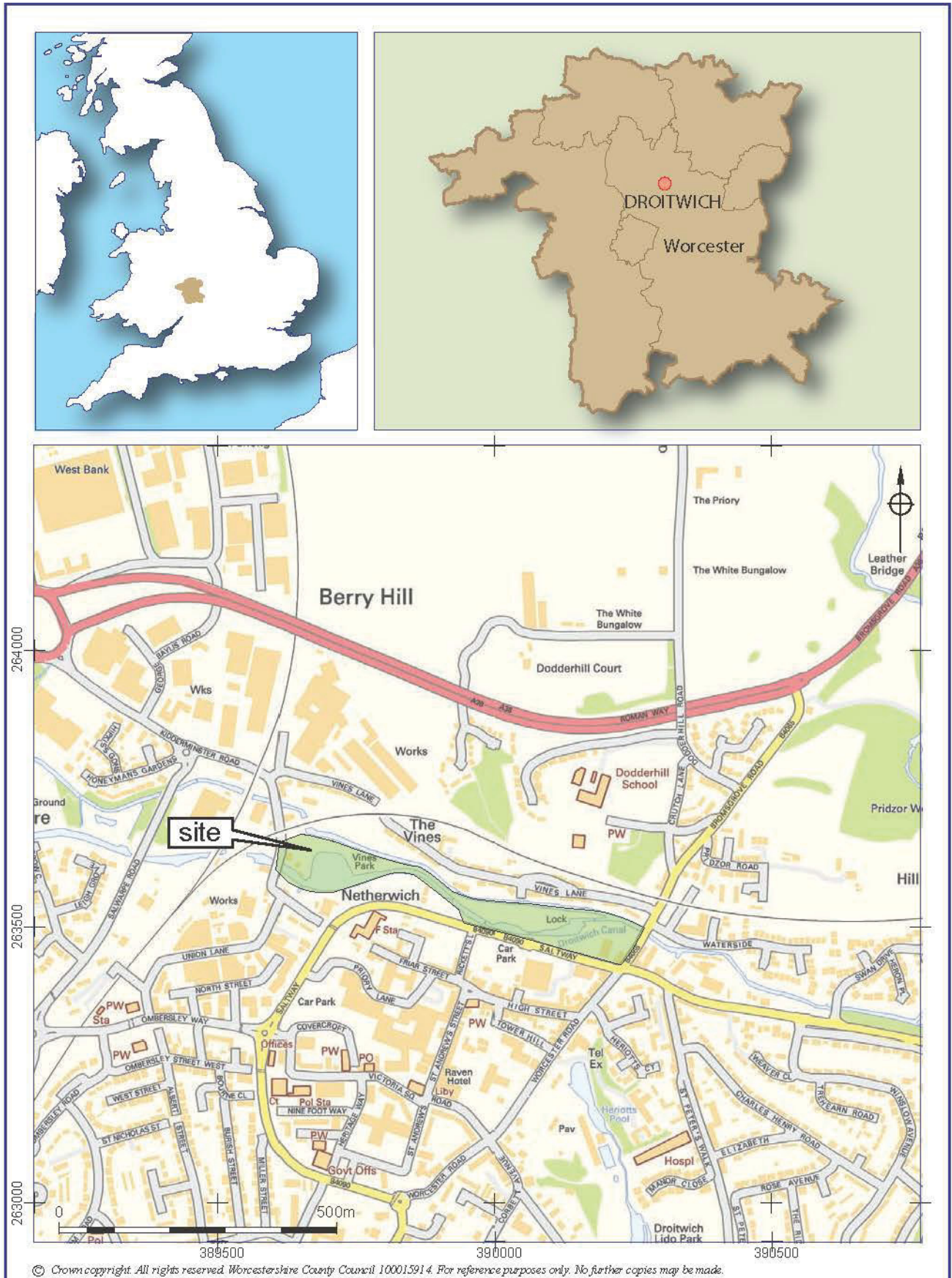
IfA 2008 *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief*, Institute for Archaeologists

Webster, J, 2010 *Desk-based assessment at Vines Park, Droitwich Spa, Worcestershire*, Historic Environment and Archaeology Service, Worcestershire County Council, report **1792**, P3569, WSM 42450, dated 15 September 2010

Worcestershire Archaeology 2012 *Manual of Service Practice: recording manual*, Worcestershire County Council, unpublished report, **1842**

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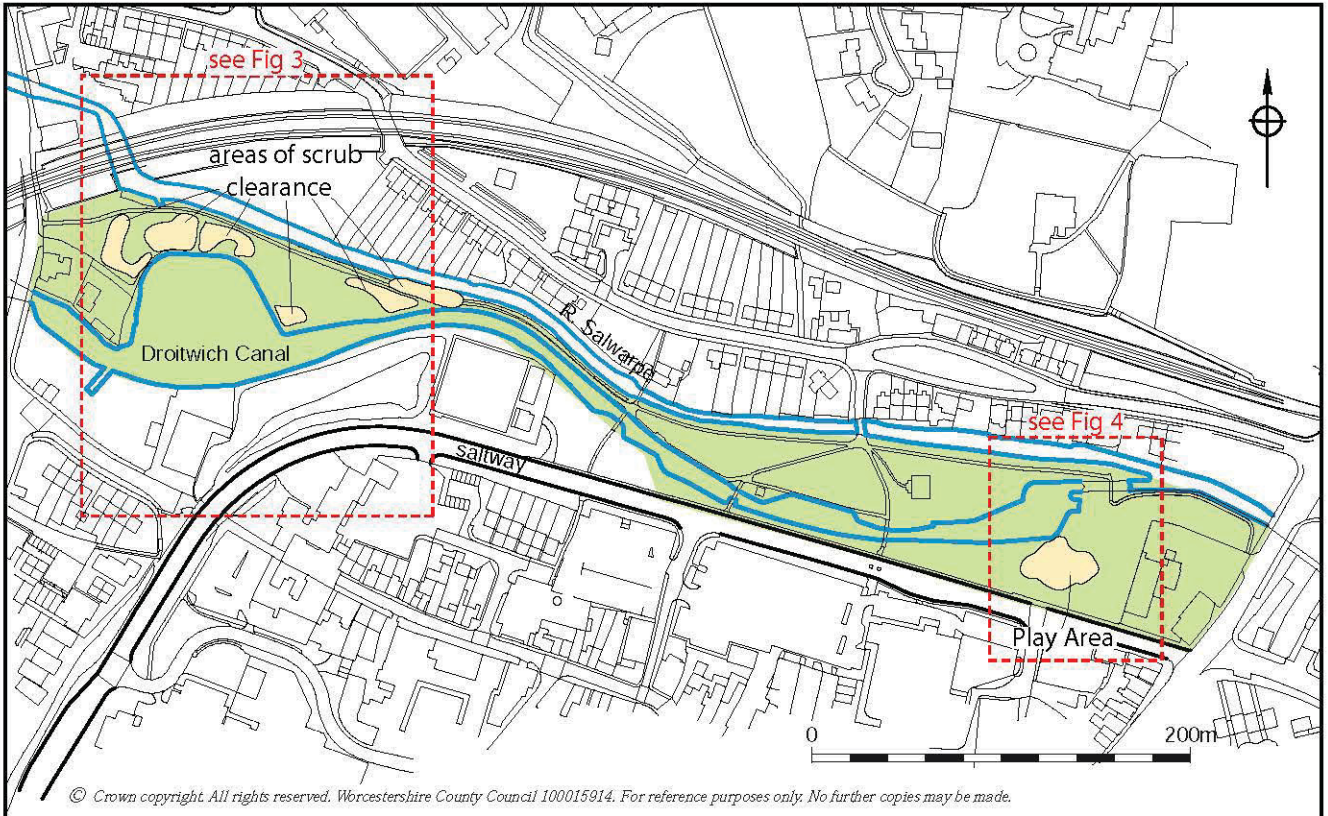
## Figures



Location of the site

Figure 1

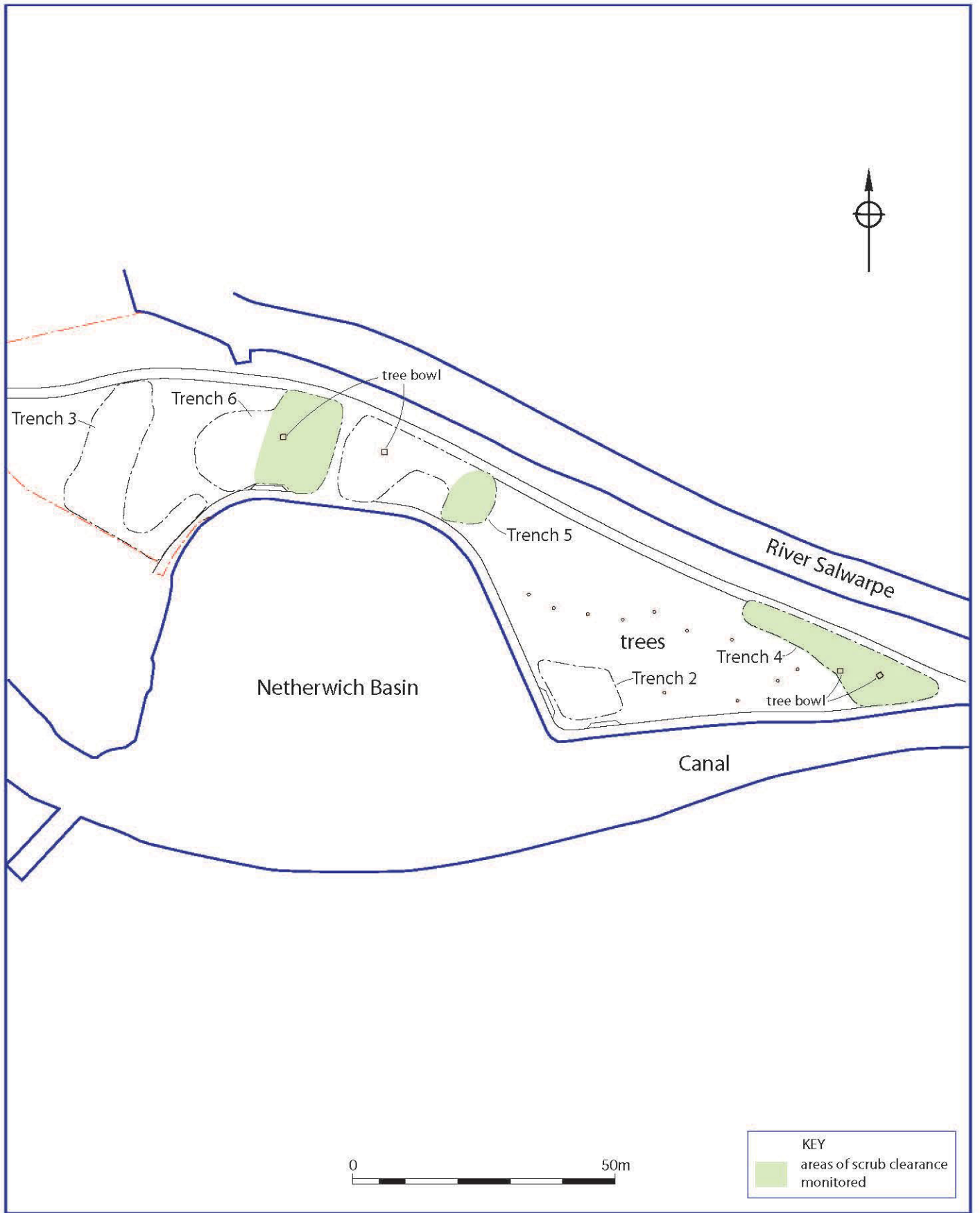




*Location of the proposed development*

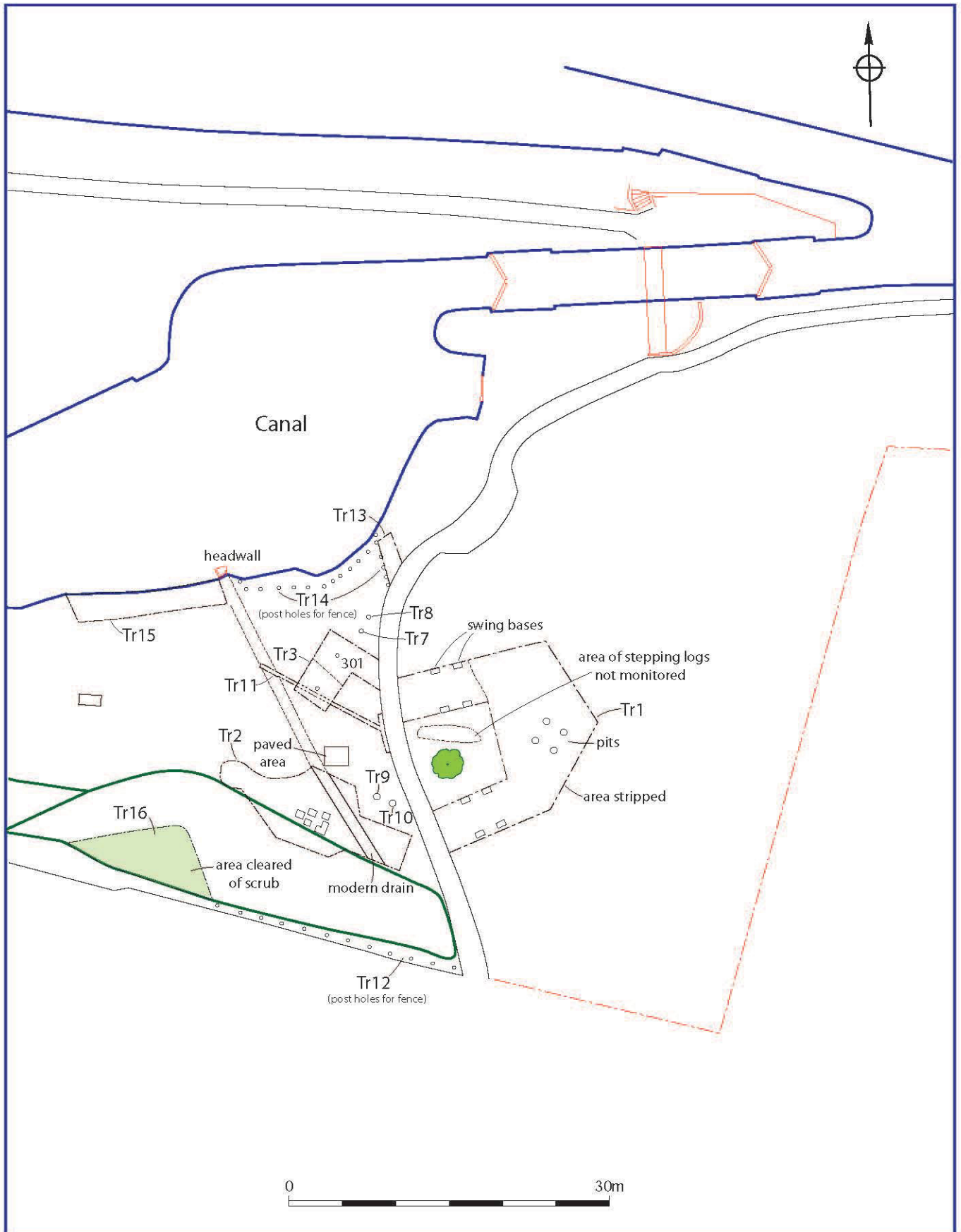
*Figure 2*





Areas of scrub clearance monitored (based upon Wychavon District Council drg No. W813/14)

Figure 3



Play Area (based upon Wychavon District Council Drg. No. W813/14)

Figure 4

## Plates



*Plate 1: Trench 1, play area, looking east*



*Plate 2: Post holes for climbing frames in Trench 1, play area, looking north-west*





*Plate 3: Foundations for swings in Trench 1, play area*



*Plate 4: Trench 2, play area, showing modern service trench, looking west*





*Plate 5: Trench 3, play area, looking north-east*



*Plate 6: Trench 11, play area drainage channel, looking north-west*





*Plate 7: Steps and fencing Trenches 13 and 14, play area, looking west*



*Plate 8: Trench 15, landscaping ground next to canal basin, looking west*



*Plate 9: Post holes for fencing facing onto the Saltway (Trench 12) , play area, looking west*



*Plate 10: Scrub clearance in Area 6 showing topsoil, looking north-west*





*Plate 11: Scrub clearance, Trench 16 in progress, play area, looking east*



*Plate 12: Scrub clearance, Trench 16 in progress, looking south*



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## Appendix 1 Technical information

### The archive (site code: WSM 43223)

The archive consists of:

13	Field progress reports AS2
2	Photographic records AS3
94	Digital photographs
1	Drawing number catalogues AS4
2	Scale drawings
16	Trench record sheets AS41
1	Computer disk
1	Copy of this report (bound hard copy)

The project archive is intended to be placed at:

Worcestershire County Museum  
Museums Worcestershire  
Hartlebury Castle  
Hartlebury  
Near Kidderminster  
Worcestershire DY11 7XZ  
Tel Hartlebury (01299) 250416