

ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
EVALUATION  
AT  
BURFORD ROAD, LECHLADE,  
GLOUCESTERSHIRE

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Illustrations by Carolyn Hunt

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Project 2856  
Report 1360



# Contents

## Part 1 Project summary

1

## Part 2 Detailed report

1.	<b>Background.....</b>	<b>2</b>
1.1	Reasons for the project.....	2
1.2	Project parameters .....	2
1.3	Aim.....	2
2.	<b>Methods.....</b>	<b>2</b>
2.1	Documentary search.....	2
2.2	Fieldwork methodology.....	2
2.2.1	Fieldwork strategy .....	2
2.2.2	Structural analysis .....	3
2.3	Artefact methodology.....	3
2.3.1	Artefact recovery policy .....	3
2.4	Environmental archaeology methodology.....	3
2.4.1	Sampling policy.....	3
2.5	The methods in retrospect .....	3
3.	<b>Topographical and archaeological context .....</b>	<b>3</b>
4.	<b>Results .....</b>	<b>3</b>
4.1	Structural analysis .....	3
4.1.1	Phase 1 Natural deposits.....	4
4.1.2	Phase 2 Modern .....	4
5.	<b>Synthesis.....</b>	<b>4</b>
6.	<b>Significance .....</b>	<b>4</b>
7.	<b>Publication summary .....</b>	<b>4</b>
8.	<b>The archive.....</b>	<b>5</b>
9.	<b>Acknowledgements.....</b>	<b>5</b>
10.	<b>Personnel .....</b>	<b>5</b>
11.	<b>Bibliography.....</b>	<b>5</b>
	<b>Appendix 1 Trench description.....</b>	<b>8</b>



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## **Evaluation at Burford Road, Lechlade, Gloucestershire**

**Jon Milward**

### **Part 1 Project summary**

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at Burford Road, Lechlade Gloucestershire (SP 2184 0072). It was undertaken on behalf of Westbury Homes, who intend to excavate a pond on an area of land adjacent to Horseshoe Lake. The project aimed to investigate the preservation and nature of cropmarks. An evaluation trench demonstrated that gravel quarrying and associated works in the area had destroyed any pre-existing archaeological deposits.

## Part 2 Detailed report

### 1. Background

#### 1.1 Reasons for the project

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at Burford Road, Lechlade, Gloucestershire (NGR SP 2184 0072) (Fig 1) on behalf of Westbury Homes (holdings) Ltd. In response to a brief prepared by Gloucestershire County Council. The client intended to excavate a pond on an area of land between the Burford Road and Horseshoe lake. This was considered by Gloucestershire County Council to have the potential to affect deposits of archaeological interest that have been identified as cropmarks (SMR 3209).

#### 1.2 Project parameters

The project conforms to the *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (IFA 1999).

The project also conforms to a brief for archaeological field evaluation prepared by Gloucestershire County Council Archaeology Service (1996/2000) for which a project proposal (including detailed specification) was produced (HEAS 2005).

#### 1.3 Aim

The aim of the evaluation was to investigate the presence and character of archaeological deposits threatened by the construction of the pond, specifically two cropmarks located within the proposed footprint of the pond. The purpose of this was to establish their significance, since this would make it possible to recommend an appropriate treatment, which may then be integrated with the proposed development programme.

### 2. Methods

#### 2.1 Documentary search

Prior to fieldwork commencing a search was made of the Gloucestershire Sites and Monuments Record (SMR). This highlighted two cropmarks, which would be directly affected by the digging of the pond; one is circular in form with an approximate diameter of 13.5m. The other is a small undiagnostic anomaly approximately 7m in length (Fig 2). These are associated with extensive cropmarks in the area representing Prehistoric and Roman-British settlement in the locale including a second century villa preceded by enclosures at Roughground farm (SMR 3209). The close proximity of the site to this concentrated settlement which lies 200m NWW suggests a high potential for significant archaeological remains to be present on the site.

#### 2.2 Fieldwork methodology

##### 2.2.1 Fieldwork strategy

A detailed specification has been prepared by the Service (HEAS 2005).

Fieldwork was undertaken on the 13<sup>th</sup> December 2005.

A single trench amounting to just over 75m<sup>2</sup> in area, was excavated. The location of the trench is indicated in Figure 2. The trench was located to test specific cropmarks, the location

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of which had been established beforehand (Fig 2) and ran parallel to the Burford road and lake access track. Deposits considered not to be significant were removed using a 360° tracked excavator, employing a toothless bucket and under archaeological supervision. Subsequent excavation was undertaken by hand. Deposits were recorded according to standard Service practice (CAS 1995). On completion of excavation, the trench was reinstated by replacing the excavated material.

#### 2.2.2 **Structural analysis**

All fieldwork records were checked and cross-referenced. Analysis was effected through a combination of structural, artefactual and ecofactual evidence, allied to the information derived from other sources.

### 2.3 **Artefact methodology**

#### 2.3.1 **Artefact recovery policy**

The artefact recovery policy conformed to standard Service practice (CAS 1995; appendix 2). This in principal determines that all finds, of whatever date, must be collected. However, in this case due to the obviously modern nature of man-made material recovered from the features investigated no artefacts were recovered from the excavation.

### 2.4 **Environmental archaeology methodology**

#### 2.4.1 **Sampling policy**

The environmental sampling strategy conformed to standard Service practice (CAS 1995; appendix 4). It was not considered necessary to sample any of the deposits observed during the evaluation.

### 2.5 **The methods in retrospect**

The methods adopted allow a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved.

## 3. **Topographical and archaeological context**

The site lies in an area of concentrated significant archaeology on the gravel terrace between the rivers Leach and Thames. It on the west bank of Horseshoe lake, an old gravel quarry and adjacent to the A361 Burford Road (Fig 1). Extensive cropmarks in the area relate to multiperiod activity with two undated cropmarks present on the site in question. These are probably associated with the prehistoric and Romano-British settlement at Roughground farm.

## 4. **Results**

### 4.1 **Structural analysis**

The trenches and features recorded are shown in Fig 2. The results of the structural analysis are presented in Appendix 1.

#### 4.1.1 **Phase 1 Natural deposits**

An area of apparent natural gravel was observed beneath very thin topsoil in the centre of the trench. This consisted mainly slightly yellowish or white fine gravels in a sandy matrix with some small orangey gravels also present. It is feasible that this was redeposited during landscaping when the quarry was converted to a lake. The depth of this material was, however, tested by machine, which proved to be reasonably convincing as undisturbed natural gravel.

#### 4.1.2 **Phase 2 Modern**

Evidence for landscaping of the land during and prior to the gravel quarry now represented by Horseshoe Lake was evident in the trench. At the north of the trench, and in the expected location of any feature relating to the circular cropmark, an area of backfilling was encountered (Plates 1 and 2). A length of 20m of mixed waste material was present (103) which included some topsoil, a large amount of white gravelly clay and orange sub-angular gravels and some bluish clay. This was mixed with modern ceramic building material and metal and plastic refuse. The depth of this material was tested by machine to determine whether any archaeological deposits may have survived beneath. This was not the case as it extended to a greater depth than 1.2m. The southern boundary of 103 was recorded 20m into the trench (Fig 2). This feature was capped by a soil layer (101), which consisted of a light grey brown friable silty clay with abundant small-medium sub-rounded gravels. This in turn was beneath a thin redeposited topsoil approximately 0.15m deep.

At the southern end of the trench a further large feature was identified (105). This was greater than 9.8m in length as it extended beyond the trench boundary. An area of this feature was excavated by machine which proved to be 1.05m deep and contained a steel cable 1.5cm thick (Plate 3). This was filled by 106 which was very similar to 101 covering the backfill of 102.

### 5. **Synthesis**

It was evident from the evaluation that the whole of the area in the location of the proposed pond had been severely disturbed during the quarry works in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is possible that 102 reflects the original extent of the quarry and represents an area backfilled during groundworks to convert the quarry into a lake. Feature 105 is also highly likely to have been associated with quarry activity.

### 6. **Significance**

The evaluation was conclusive in that no significant archaeological deposits are present in the area designated for the excavation of a pond. The presence of extensive groundworks and dumping in the area of the cropmarks attests that any pre-existing archaeological deposits have long since been destroyed by quarrying. There is extremely low potential for any other archaeological deposits to have survived elsewhere within the footprint of the pond.

### 7. **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.

*A archaeological evaluation was undertaken on behalf of Wesbury Homes at Burford road, Lechlade, Gloucestershire prior to the intended digging of a pond. A single trench was excavated in an area with a high potential for significant archaeological deposits. This was*

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*because cropmarks on the site (SMR ref 3209) are consistent with concentrated multi-period site in the immediate vicinity. No archaeological deposits were present, however as it was evident that it had been destroyed during late 20<sup>th</sup> century quarrying and associated groundworks. The location of the cropmarks may well have been within the original boundary of the quarry.*

## 8. **The archive**

The archive consists of:

- 1 Fieldwork progress records AS2
- 1 Photographic records AS3
- 4 Abbreviated context records AS40
- 2 Scale drawings
- 1 Digital photographic archive

## 9. **Acknowledgements**

The Service would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, Jon Offer from Westby Homes and Charles Parry from Gloucestershire County Council.

## 10. **Personnel**

The fieldwork and report preparation was led by Jon Milward. The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Simon Woodiwiss. Fieldwork was also undertaken by Adam Lee. The illustrations were prepared by Carolyn Hunt.

The Service would like to thank Jon Offer (Westbury Homes) and Charles Parry, Tim Grubb and Anna Morris (Gloucestershire County Council).

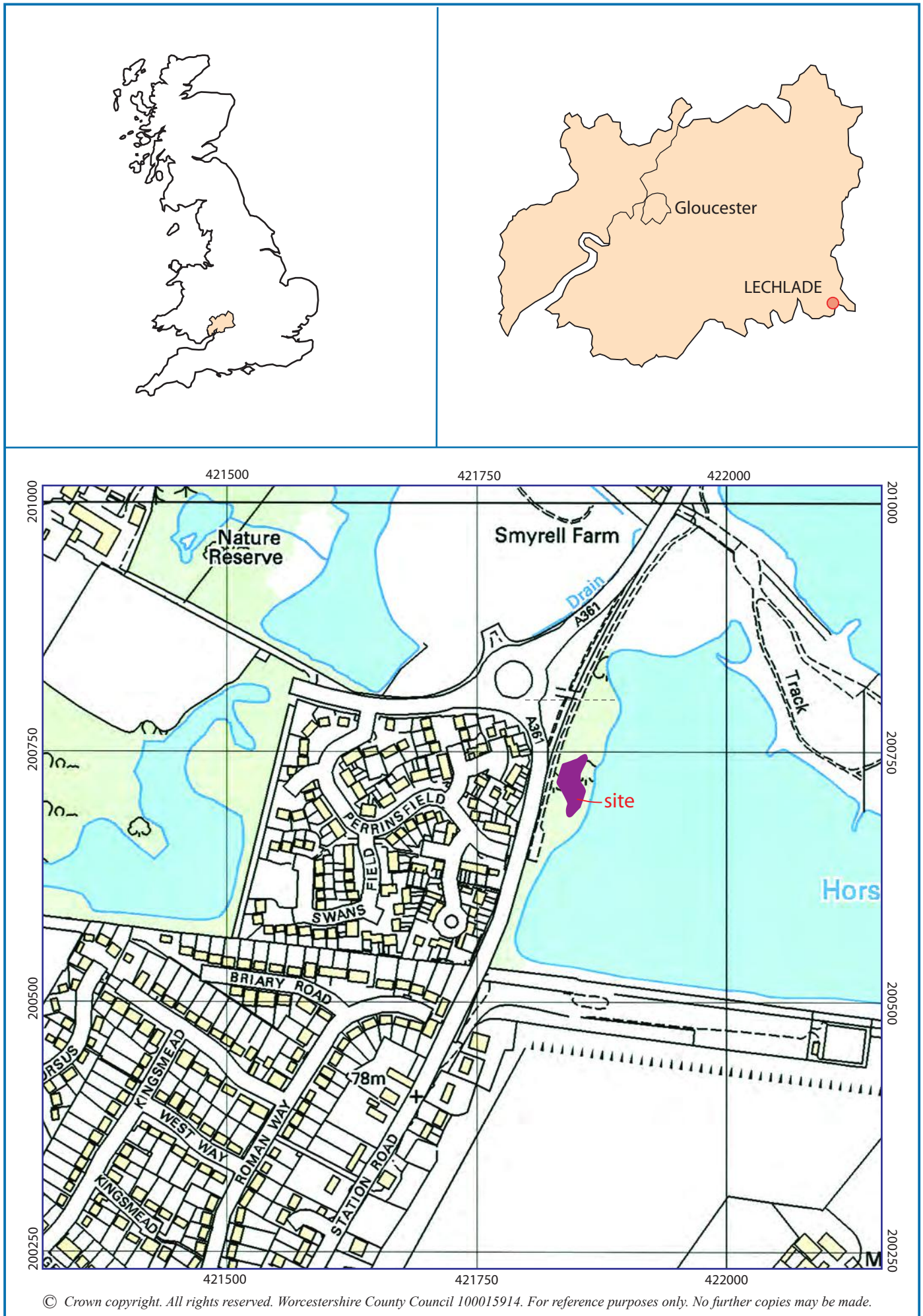
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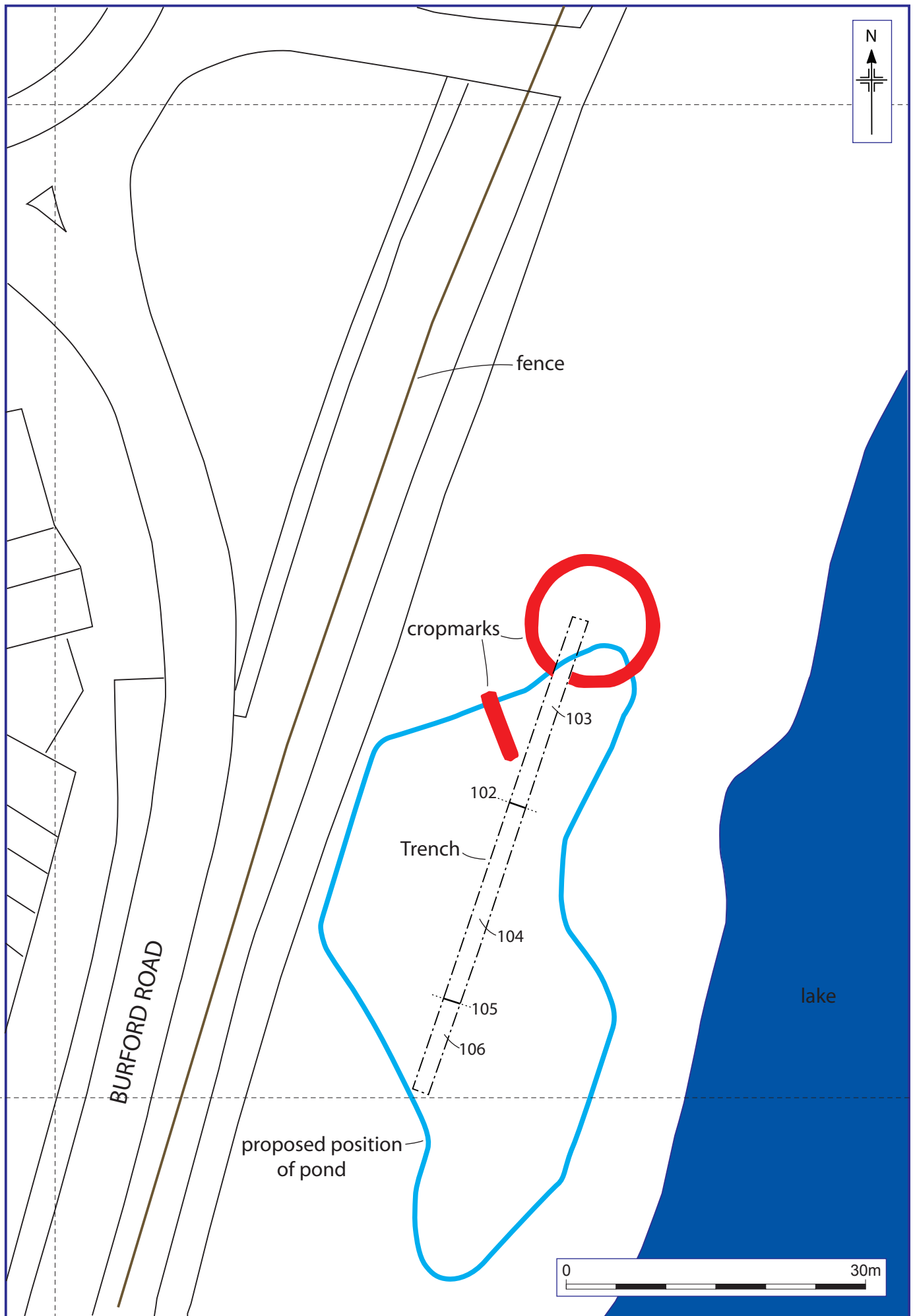
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Location of the site.

Figure 1



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Trench location plan

Figure 2



*Plate 1 North end of trench showing backfill material 103, facing NE.*



*Plate 2 Showing extent of backfilled material 103 (from white line in foreground to end of trench.), facing north.*



*Plate 3 Feature 105 at southern end of trench, facing north west.*



*Plate 4 Facing south.*

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**Appendix 1   Trench description**

**Trench 1**

Maximum dimensions: Length: 50m Width: 1.5m Depth: 0.25 – 0.1m

Orientation: N - S

## Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
100	Topsoil	Topsoil. Loose mid greyish brown silty loam containing frequent small sub-rounded gravels.	0 – 0.15m
101	Redeposited soil	Friable light grey-brown silty loam with abundant small-medium sub-rounded gravels. Has been used to cap modern waste material 103.	0.15 - 0.40
102	Feature	Possible original boundary of quarry, now backfilled with 103. Edge of feature runs on an E-W orientation, small area at edge excavated, not vertical but c. 45 degrees.	0.4 – 1.1m
103	Fill	Fill of 102. Comprises some topsoil, a large amount of white gravelly clay, orange medium sized sub-angular gravels, some bluish clay mixed with a moderate amount of modern CBM with some metal and plastic.	0.4 – 1.1m
104	Natural	Natural Gravels. Comprise slightly yellowish or white fine gravels in a sandy matrix with some small-scale orangey gravels also present.	>0.15m
105	Feature	Large undiagnostic feature containing a 1.5cm steel cable.	0.15 – 1.05m
106	Fill	As 101.	0.15 – 1.05m