

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL
EVALUATION
AT
'CLOVER PATCH', PRIDZOR
ROAD, HILL END, DROITWICH
SPA, WORCESTERSHIRE

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Illustrated by Carolyn Hunt

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An archaeological evaluation at ‘Clover Patch’, Pridzor Road, Hill End, Droitwich Spa, Worcestershire

Tom Vaughan and Laura Griffin

Part 1 Project summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at ‘Clover Patch’, Pridzor Road, Hill End, Droitwich Spa, Worcestershire (National Grid reference: SO 9060 6364). It was undertaken on behalf of Allstar Developments Limited, who intend to develop the site with four domestic residences, for which a planning application has been submitted. The project aimed to determine if any significant archaeological site was present and if so to indicate its location, date and nature.

The site lies to the north-east of the Scheduled Ancient Monument area along the basin of the River Salwarpe, where remains of salt workings from the Iron Age onwards and the Roman town of *Salinae* have been identified previously. In addition a Roman Road and two forts have been identified adjacent.

A shallow linear hollow was identified across the northern end of the site, aligned west-north-west to east-south-east. It contained a fragmentary cobbled surface and mixed dump deposits with associated post-medieval and modern debris, and was determined to be a trackway or former field boundary. There was no defined subsoil and deposits containing post-medieval and modern material were observed to lie directly over the natural clay. The site is therefore considered to have been the subject of extensive landscaping and alteration, probably during construction of the present house and gardens in the 1970s.

Part 2 Detailed report

1. Background

1.1 Reasons for the project

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at 'Clover Patch', Pridzor Road, Hill End, Droitwich Spa, Worcestershire (National Grid reference: SO 9060 6364; Fig. 1), on behalf of Allstar Developments Limited. They intend to develop the site with four domestic residences and have submitted a planning application to Wychavon Council (reference W/03/1135), who consider that a site of archaeological interest may be affected (WSM30490).

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 prepared by Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeology Service (HEAS 2003a) and for which a project proposal (including detailed specification) was produced (HEAS 2003b).

1.3 Aims

The aims of the evaluation were to locate archaeological deposits and determine, if present, their extent, state of preservation, date, type, vulnerability and documentation. 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 county Historic Environment Record (HER). In addition the following sources were also consulted:

Cartographic sources

- 17th century. Map of the borough of Wych. Tracing of the 17th century map of the town. CRO;
- 1786 Karver *et al*, Map of the town and borough of Droitwich drawn according to a perambulation of the same taken in the year 1786. CRO;
- 1843 Dodderhill Tithe Plan, Droitwich. CRO BA 1572 X 760/51. (Transcribed to scale 1:10,000, DA Guyatt, 1999 – HER WS8882);
- 1885 Ordnance Survey, 1st edition, sheet XXII.14, 1:2,500 (25");
- 1888 Ordnance Survey, 1st edition, sheet SO96SW, 1:10,560 (6");
- 1903 Ordnance Survey, 2nd edition, sheet SO96SW, 1:10,560 (6");
- 1930 Ordnance Survey, 3rd edition, sheet SO96SW, 1:10,560 (6");

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- 1938 Ordnance Survey, provisional edition, sheet 22SW, 1:10,560 (6");
 - 1954 Ordnance Survey, provisional edition, sheet SO96SW, 1:10,560 (6");
 - 1964, Ordnance Survey, sheet SO9063-9163, 1:2,500;
 - 1967, Ordnance Survey, sheet SO96SW, 1:10,650 (6");
 - 1970, Ordnance Survey, sheet SO9063-9163, 1:2,500;
 - 1991, Ordnance Survey, plan SO 9063, 1:2,500;
 - 1997, Ordnance Survey sheet 150, 1:50,000.

Aerial photographs

- As the site lies on the outskirts of a built up area it was deemed unnecessary to refer to aerial photos.

Documentary sources

- Worcestershire County Records Office;
- Place-names (Mawer and Stenton 1927);
- County histories (VCH I);
- Domesday (Thorn and Thorn 1983);
- Site archives (from earlier excavations, evaluations etc).

2.2 **Fieldwork**

2.2.1 **Fieldwork strategy**

A detailed specification has been prepared by the Service (HEAS 2003b). As a result of on-site logistics, minor adjustments were made to the trench locations, to avoid a vegetable garden and existing trees and shrubs.

Fieldwork was undertaken between 16th and 17th October 2003.

Three trenches, amounting to >134m² in area, were excavated over the main development area of c 1225m² to the rear of the site, representing a sample of >10%. The location of the trenches is indicated in Figure 2.

After deturfing, all deposits considered not to be significant were removed using a 180° wheeled excavator, employing a toothless bucket and under archaeological supervision. Subsequent excavation was undertaken by hand. Clean surfaces were inspected and selected deposits were excavated to retrieve artefactual material and environmental samples, as well as to determine their nature. Deposits were recorded according to standard Service practice (CAS 1995). Mention any variation from standard practice. On completion of excavation, the trenches were reinstated by replacing the excavated material. Returfing was undertaken by a specialist contractor.

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 Artefacts

2.3.1 Artefact recovery policy

All artefacts from the area of salvage recording were retrieved by hand and retained in accordance with the service manual (CAS 1995 as amended). Material of clearly modern, 20th century, origin was not retained.

2.3.2 Method of analysis

All hand retrieved finds were examined. A primary record was made of all finds on a Microsoft Access 2000 database. Artefacts were identified, quantified and dated. Where possible, a *terminus post quem* was produced for each stratified context.

Pottery was examined under x20 magnification and recorded by fabric type and form according to the fabric reference series maintained by the service (Hurst and Rees 1992).

2.4 Environment

2.4.1 Sampling policy

No dated deposits were identified which were considered to have a potential to yield meaningful environmental data.

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 at Pridzor Road comprises a sub-rectangular area of *c* 0.2ha, aligned north-south, off Bromsgrove Road. It lies less than 1km to the north-east of Droitwich Spa town centre within the parish of Dodderhill in an area known as Hill End (Fig. 1). It is on high ground, overlooking the canalised River Salwarpe to the south.

It is presently occupied by a 1970s red brick house and garage on the frontage, with associated gardens to the rear. The site slopes from a maximum of *c* 43.50m AOD at the rear, down to *c* 37m AOD on the frontage. The garden (the main development area) comprises well maintained lawns, with trees, borders and a vegetable patch. It is bounded by fields laid to pasture to the east, gardens to the north and houses to the west.

The study area lies in an area of the Whimple 3 soil series (572/f). This comprises stagnogleyic argillic brown earths developed in thin loamy or silty drift over reddish clayey mudstone parent material (Soil Survey of England and Wales, 1983; Soil Survey of England and Wales 1986).

Impney Farm lies to the east of the site. It has been defined as an Area of Archaeological Potential with material spanning the early Neolithic through to the post-medieval period. In

addition peat deposits of Mesolithic date have been identified to the north of the farm, although no artefacts have been recovered in association (WSM 27908; pers comm Derek Hurst). However investigations at 14, Church Road, to the west, have uncovered worked flint of early-late Mesolithic date (WSM 23176; Vaughan and Darch 2003, 5).

Droitwich is of course famous for salt. The earliest known salt production in the area has been identified from the Middle Iron Age, at Bays Meadow to the west (WSM 21413), although it expanded in the Late Iron Age to cover large areas of the later town (Buteux and Hurst 1996, 9).

The Roman settlement of *Salinae* lies to the south-west of the study area (VCH I, 208-9). A Roman Road lies under the present A38 and Queen Street, aligned north-east to south-west (WSM 03317), linking with the settlement at Worcester to the south-west. It was constructed in the mid 1st century AD, the same time as the town is thought to have been developed (Buteux and Hurst 1996, 2). The town was an important centre for the salt production and many saltworks of the period have been identified west of Queen Street (WSM 04575, 31174 and 31184). The basin of the River Salwarpe, comprising Vines Park and adjacent plots is a protected Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 30097).

A Roman fort lay to the north of the study area, along the Roman Road at Dodderhill, under the present school (WSM29108; SAM339a/b). A 1st century temporary camp or auxiliary fort has also been identified at Crutch Lane further to the north (WSM 10571). A parcel of land east of the road and north of the site has been defined as an Area of Archaeological Interest (WSM 30490), with the potential for further Roman activity.

In the early medieval period the site was part of Dodderhill/Wychbold manor (which lies to the north), a royal estate of the 7th-9th centuries which Offa visited regularly and indicates the importance of neighbouring Droitwich as a salt production centre. It lay in the Saxon Hundred of Clent and is first referred to in a document of 716 AD as *Wiccium emporium* (Mawer and Stenton 1927, 285-6).

The Domesday Survey of 1086 recorded 5 mills in the estate of Dodderhill. This is a relatively high number, and gives an indication of the 'industrial' character and economic importance of the area (Thorn and Thorn 1983; pers comm Derek Hurst).

The earliest small-scale map of map of Droitwich, from the 17th century, unfortunately does not extend to encompass the present site. Karver's detailed map of 1786 reveals the site to have lain immediately outside the boundary of the borough and comprised undeveloped - presumably agricultural - land. The 1843 Dodderhill Tithe Plan indicates the site to have occupied the south-west corner of Barn Close field and an adjacent strip of woodland.

The 1885 1st edition Ordnance Survey confirms the site to have been divided diagonally into two parcels: the south-west comprising part of a swath of woodland which continued to the north-west and south; and the north-east as part of a much larger field to the west of Pridzor Wood. Subsequent editions show no change until the construction of the present house in the mid 1970s.

4. Description

The full sequence and deposit description is recorded in Appendix 1. The trench locations are shown in Fig. 2.

4.1 Artefactual Analysis

A summary of the artefacts recovered can be seen in table 01. The assemblage retrieved from the excavated area came from two stratified contexts and the surface of three trenches. The group ranged from the post-medieval to modern periods, with the earliest material dating to

the mid 17th century. The level of preservation was generally poor with high levels of abrasion reflecting the high proportion of unstratified material.

Pottery formed the largest material group accounting for 75% of the assemblage. Sherds were identified and grouped by fabric (see table 02). The majority of sherds were undiagnostic but could be dated to between the mid 17th–21st centuries on the basis of fabric type. The earliest pottery consisted of six sherds of post-medieval red ware (fabric 78; context 303 and unstratified from trenches 1 and 2) and two sherds of post-medieval buff ware (fabric 91; unstratified from trenches 1 and 2). Vessels of both fabrics could be dated to between the mid-late 17th and 18th centuries. Diagnostic sherds within these fabric types consisted of rim fragments from a pancheon and two large flat baking dishes. Both forms are of domestic types commonly seen from sites of this date in the region.

Ceramic building material accounted for 15% of the assemblage. All was of late post-medieval or modern date and identifiable fragments comprised two fragments of flat roof tile (context 303 and unstratified trench 2), one floor tile (unstratified trench 1) and four fragments of brick (contexts 203 and 303).

Other finds consisted of two clay pipe stem fragments (unstratified trench 1), a piece of modern ceramic drain (unstratified trench 1) and four fragments of animal bone (unstratified trenches 1 and 2).

Material	Total	Weight (g)
Post-medieval pottery	12	663
Modern pottery	38	2220
Clay pipe stem	2	3
Floor tile	1	748
Flat roof tile	2	173
Undiagnostic tile	2	199
Tile/brick	1	237
Brick	4	272
Ceramic drain	1	17
Bone	4	286

Table 01: Quantification of the assemblage

Fabric number	Trench	Context	Total	Weight (g)
78	TT1	0	4	315
81.4	TT1	0	11	1176
85	TT1	0	9	174
90	TT1	0	3	285
91	TT1	0	1	27
100	TT1	0	6	514
78	TT2	0	1	13
83	TT2	0	1	8
81.4	TT2	0	4	162
85	TT2	0	1	10
91	TT2	0	1	4
81.4	TT3	0	2	138
85	TT3	0	4	43
100	TT3	0	1	3
78	TT3	303	1	11

Table 02: Quantification of pottery fabrics by trench and context

4.2 **Phase 1 Natural deposits**

The natural matrix comprised a dark red clay, known as Mercian mudstone or Keuper marl. It was directly overlain by deposits of post-medieval and modern date.

4.3 **Phase 2 Post-medieval and modern deposits**

Deposits containing post-medieval and modern debris were identified directly overlying the natural matrix. This generally comprised a shallow turfed topsoil, although it lay to a much greater depth on the west side of the site where the natural sloped down steeply.

Within the northern half of Trenches 2 and 3 a narrow shallow linear hollow [205 and 307] was recorded. It was aligned approximately west-north-west to east-south-east, and was 0.08-0.16m deep and 3.45-4.10m wide. This was filled by levelling deposits [301, 305 and 306] over a thin band of chalk [203 and 302] or irregular cobbles [303].

5. **Discussion**

5.1 **Discussion of the Artefacts**

The discussion below is a summary of the finds and associated location or contexts by period. Where possible, *terminus post quem* dates have been allocated based on the evidence recorded and the importance of individual finds commented upon as necessary.

Post medieval

The two stratified contexts from the site were identified as being of probable late post-medieval date. The first, context 203 contained only two fragments of brick. However, context 303 contained a single sherd of post-medieval red sandy ware (fabric 78.1), which could be dated to between the late 17th and 18th centuries. Additional material within this context was of a similar date and consisted of a single piece of flat roof tile and two fragments of brick of the same fabric as that within context 203.

Modern

Modern material was identified within the unstratified assemblage only.

5.2 **Discussion of the Deposits**

The linear hollow identified in Trenches 2 and 3 is considered to be of late post-medieval date, either a backfilled field boundary or a trackway, on the basis of the thin chalk and irregular cobble surface at the base. The cartographic sources from the late 18th century onwards do not indicate any clear boundary or trackway on this alignment. Therefore this interpretation is not definitive.

The feature has been heavily truncated, and the entire development area has been landscaped, as evidenced by the lack of any subsoil, and the existence of topsoil with post-medieval and modern debris directly overlying the natural clay matrix. This was probably undertaken during construction of the present house in the 1970's.

6. **Significance**

In considering significance, the Secretary of State's criteria for the scheduling of ancient monuments (DoE 1990, annex 4), have been used as a guide.

The results indicate that the site has been heavily landscaped in the late 20th century, such that almost all earlier deposits have been removed down to the level of the natural clay. Thus there is considered to be very little potential for the survival of significant archaeology within the development area.

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.

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken on behalf of Allstar Developments Ltd at 'Clover Patch', Pridzor Road, Hill End, Droitwich Spa, Worcestershire (NGR. SO 9060 6364; HER ref WSM 32984). Three trenches were excavated revealing a shallow linear hollow aligned west-north-west to east-south-east across the north end of the site. It contained a fragmentary cobbled surface and mixed dump deposits with associated post-medieval and modern debris, and was determined to be a trackway or former field boundary. There was no defined subsoil and deposits containing post-medieval and modern material were observed to lie directly over the natural clay. The site is therefore considered to have been the subject of extensive landscaping and alteration, probably during construction of the present house and gardens in the 1970s.

8. **The archive**

The archive consists of:

- 2 Fieldwork progress records AS2
- 1 Photographic records AS3
- 1 Context number catalogues AS5
- 1 Levels record sheets AS19
- 5 Trench record sheets AS41
- 21 Digital photographs
- 1 Scale drawings
- 1 Box of finds
- 1 Computer disk
- 1 Report

The project archive is intended to be placed at:

Worcestershire County Museum

Hartlebury Castle

Hartlebury

Near Kidderminster

Worcestershire DY11 7XZ

Tel Hartlebury (01299) 250416

9. Acknowledgements

The Service would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, Mr Stitson (the owner), Stuart Harper (Allstar developments Ltd), John Parry (agent), Mike Glyde (HEAS Planning Archaeologist).

10. Personnel

The fieldwork and report preparation was led by Tom Vaughan. The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Robin Jackson. Fieldwork was undertaken by Andy Brown, finds analysis by Laura Griffin and illustration by Carolyn Hunt.

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12. **Abbreviations**

NMR	National Monuments Record.
SMR	Sites and Monuments Record.
WCRO	Worcestershire County Records Office.
WSM	Numbers prefixed with 'WSM' are the primary reference numbers used by the Worcestershire County Sites and Monuments Record.

Appendix 1 Trench descriptions

Trench 1

Maximum dimensions: Length: 27m Width: 1.50-1.60m Depth: 0.35-0.98m

Orientation: North-south

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
100	Topsoil	Turfed mid greyish brown slightly silty clay soil. Contains occasional china, pot, and glass. Moderately compact and cohesive. Well-defined boundary. Overlies [101].	0.00-0.14m
101	Dump deposit	Mixed mid orange clay and mid greyish brown silty clay soil. Contains frequent glass, china, pot, metal, occasional asbestos, clay pipe, butchered animal bone, wood and plastic. Moderately compact and cohesive. Well-defined boundary. Deeper to west. Underlies [100]. Overlies [102].	0.12-0.98m
102	Natural matrix	Dark orange clay. Desiccated. Compact and cohesive. Well-defined boundary. Underlies [101].	0.32m+

Feature/deposit description

The dump deposit [101] was noted to be uniformly deeper to the west and shallower to the east, as the surface of the natural clay [102] sloped down from east to west. This did not reflect the present ground surface, which is level to the north, sloping down to the south in the southern half of the trench.

There were no defined features or archaeological layers identified within this trench. Neither was there a defined subsoil overlying the natural clay matrix.

All residual finds were of post-medieval and modern date.

Trench 2

Maximum dimensions: Length: 30m Width: 1.50-1.60m Depth: 0.34-0.40m

Orientation: North-south

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
200	Topsoil	Turfed mid greyish brown slightly silty clay soil. Contains occasional china, pot, and glass. Moderately compact and cohesive. Cut by one plastic water pipe trench to south. Well-defined boundary. Overlies [201].	0.00-0.13m
201	Redeposited clay	Dark orange clay. Desiccated. Compact and cohesive. Only in middle of trench. Well-defined boundary. Underlies [201]. Overlies [202]. As [301].	0.11-0.24m
202	Dump deposit	Mixed dark grey slightly silty clay soil with occasional dark orange clay patches. Moderately compact and cohesive. Contains occasional china, pot, glass, plastic and wood. Only in middle of trench. Well-defined boundary. Underlies [201]. Overlies [203 and 204].	0.11-0.46m
203	Chalk layer	Band of off-white chalk. Contains flecks and small angular fragments, with occasional large charcoal fragments, brick and tile. Only in middle of trench. Maximum 3.5m wide north-south. Well-defined boundary. Underlies [202]. Fill of [205]. As [302].	0.46-0.54m
204	Natural matrix	Dark orange clay. Desiccated. Compact and cohesive. Patches of fine powdery clay with light grey streaks to south. Well-defined boundary. Underlies [200, 202 and 203].	0.13m+
205	Linear hollow	Shallow break of slope, sub-concave sides, curving to a flat base. Max 3.45m width. Aligned WNW/ESE. Filled by [203]. Sealed by [201 and 202].	0.46-0.54m

Feature/deposit description

The band of chalk [203] occupied a shallow ill-defined hollow, [205], aligned approximately WNW/ESE within the northern half of the trench. This was overlain by dumped/levelling layers [201 and 202]. They are considered to be related to the redeposited layers [301, 302, 305 and 306] and cobbles [303] identified in Trench 3, within a similar hollow, [307], on a similar alignment. Finds recovered were of post-medieval and modern origin.

There were no archaeological features or layers identified within this trench. Neither was there a defined subsoil overlying the natural clay matrix. All residual finds were of post-medieval and modern date.

Trench 3

Maximum dimensions: Length: 30m Width: 1.50-1.60m Depth: 0.30-0.45m

Orientation: North-south

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
300	Topsoil	Turfed mid greyish brown slightly silty clay soil. Contains very occasional china, pot, glass, plastic and asbestos. Moderately compact and cohesive. Shallow to north and south, deeper to middle of trench. Well-defined boundary. Overlies [304 and 305].	0.00-0.32m
301	Redeposited clay	Dark orange clay. Desiccated. Compact and cohesive. Only in middle of trench. Well-defined boundary with [300] above. Slightly diffuse boundary with [302] below. Fill of [307]. As [201].	0.23-0.42m
302	Chalk layer	Band of off-white chalk. Contains flecks and small angular fragments, with occasional large charcoal fragments, brick and tile. Only in middle of trench. Maximum 2.4m wide north-south. Well-defined boundary. Underlies [302]. Overlies [304]. Fill of [307]. As [203].	0.42-0.45m
303	Cobble layer	Irregular ill-defined band of small-medium pebble cobbles. Contains very occasional pot and tile. Only in middle of trench. Aligned ?east-west. Within and below [306]. Above [304]. Fill of [307].	0.33–0.46m
304	Natural	Dark orange clay. Desiccated. Compact and cohesive. Fine powdery light bands to south with occasional small-medium rounded pebbles. Well-defined boundary. Underlies [300 and 303].	0.12m+
305	Burnt/soil layer	Dark brownish grey slightly silty clay soil. Contains frequent charcoal. Diffuse boundary with [300] above. Well defined boundary with [306] below. Fill of [307].	0.20-0.40m
306	Redeposited clay	Dark orange clay. Desiccated. Compact and cohesive. Only in middle of trench. Well-defined boundary. Underlies	0.28-0.43m

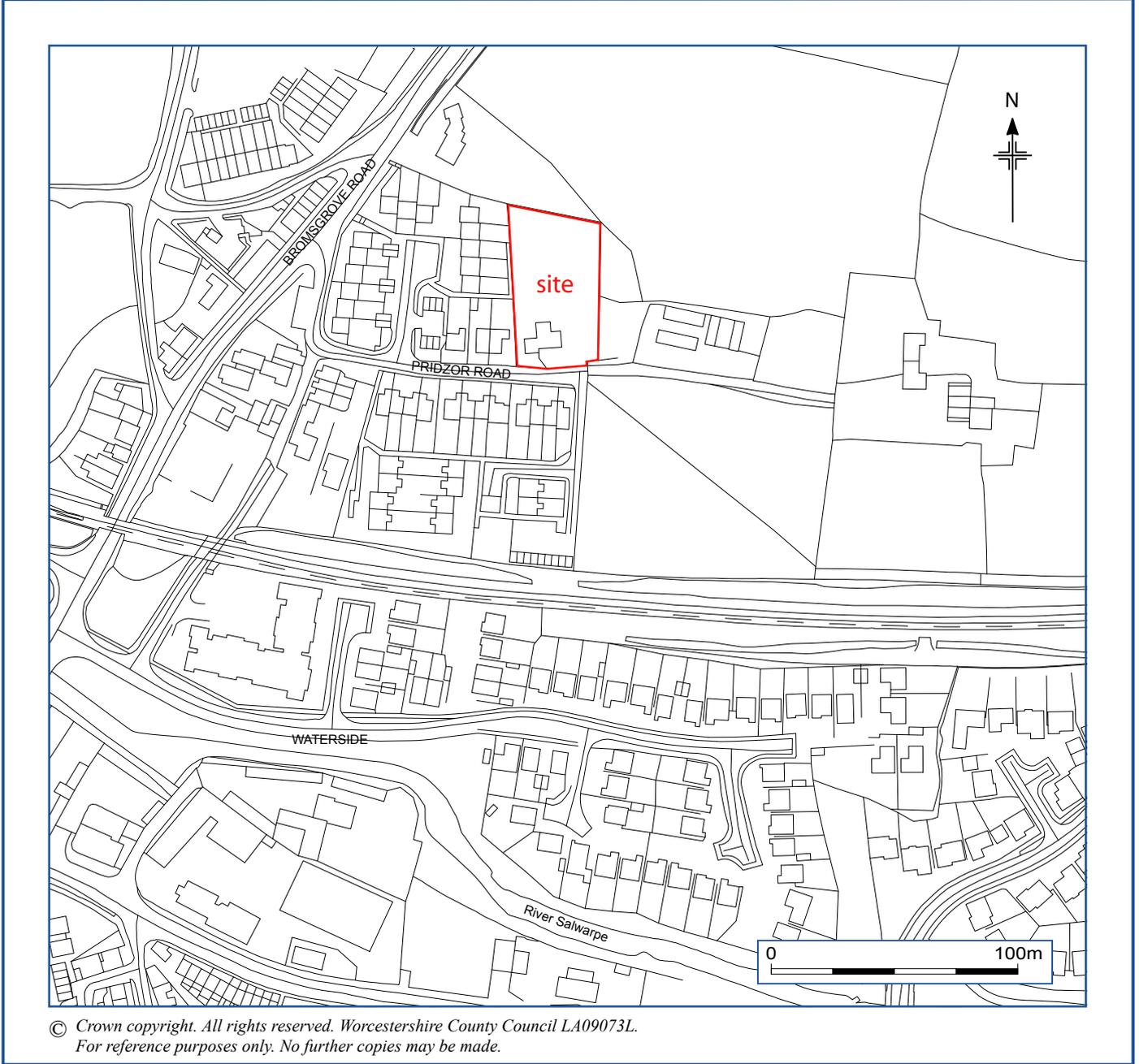
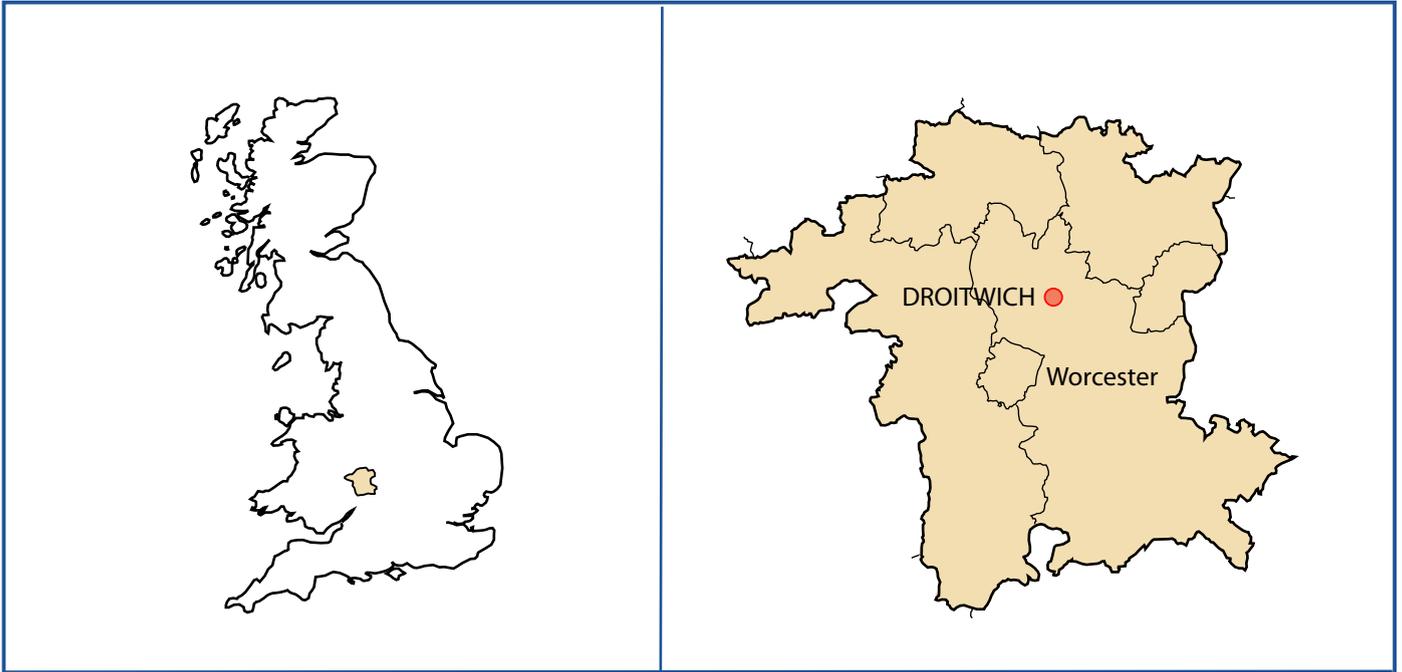
		[305]. Overlies [303]. Fill of [307].	
307	Linear hollow	Shallow break of slope, sub-concave sides, curving to a flat base. Max 3.45m width. Aligned WNW/ESE. Filled by [305].	0.29-0.45m

Feature/deposit description

Layers [301,302, 303, 305 and 306] occupied a shallow ill-defined hollow, [307], aligned approximately WNW/ESE within the northern half of the trench. Layers [301 and 302] were noted to lie on the north side and [303, 305 and 306] on the south. They are considered to be related to the redeposited layers [201-203] identified within Trench 2, within a similar hollow, [205,] on a similar alignment. Finds recovered from these layers were of post-medieval and modern origin.

There were no archaeological features or layers identified within this trench. Neither was there a defined subsoil overlying the natural clay matrix.

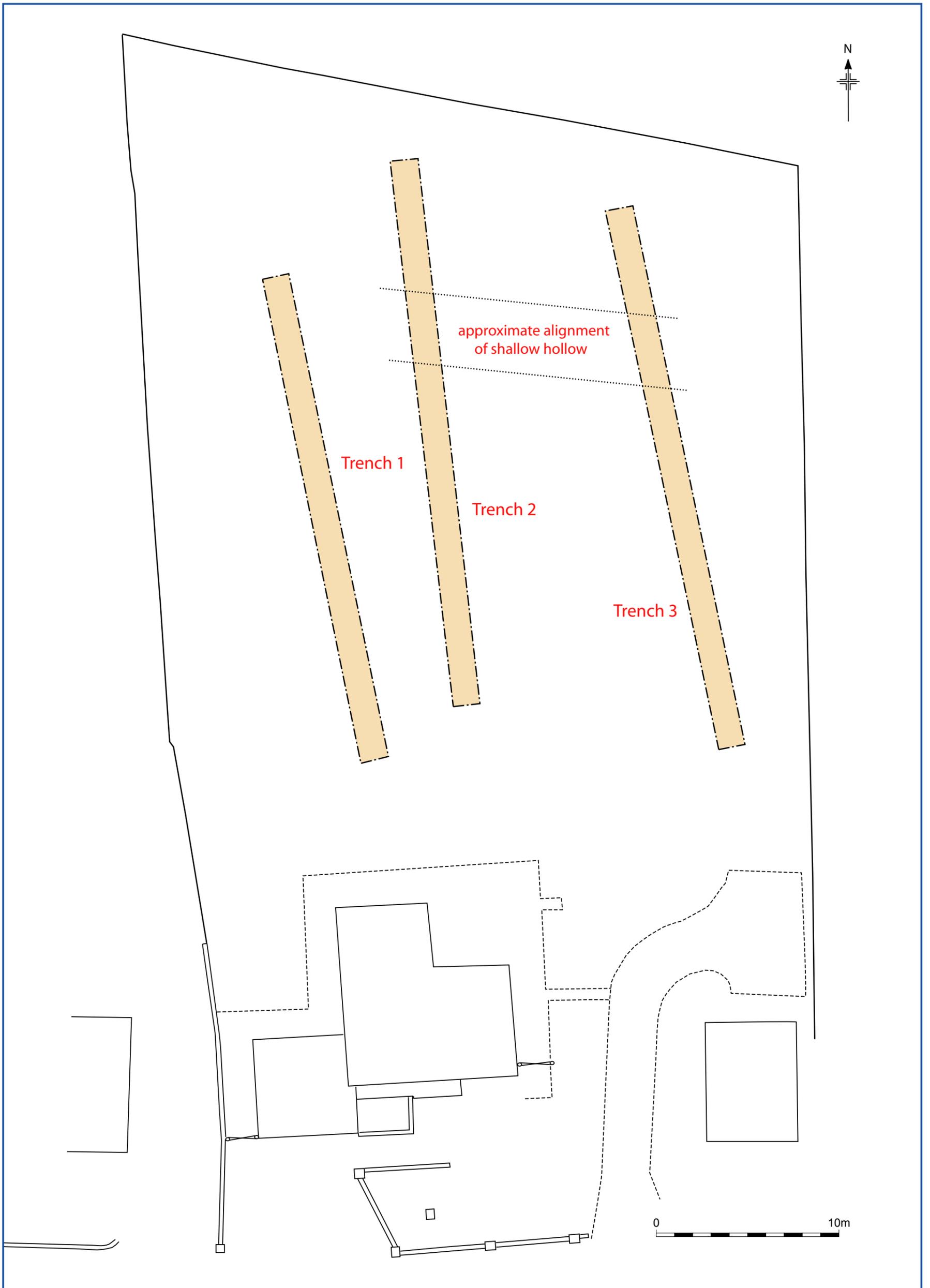
All residual finds were of post-medieval and modern date.



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Location of the site.

Figure 1



Trench location plan

Figure 2

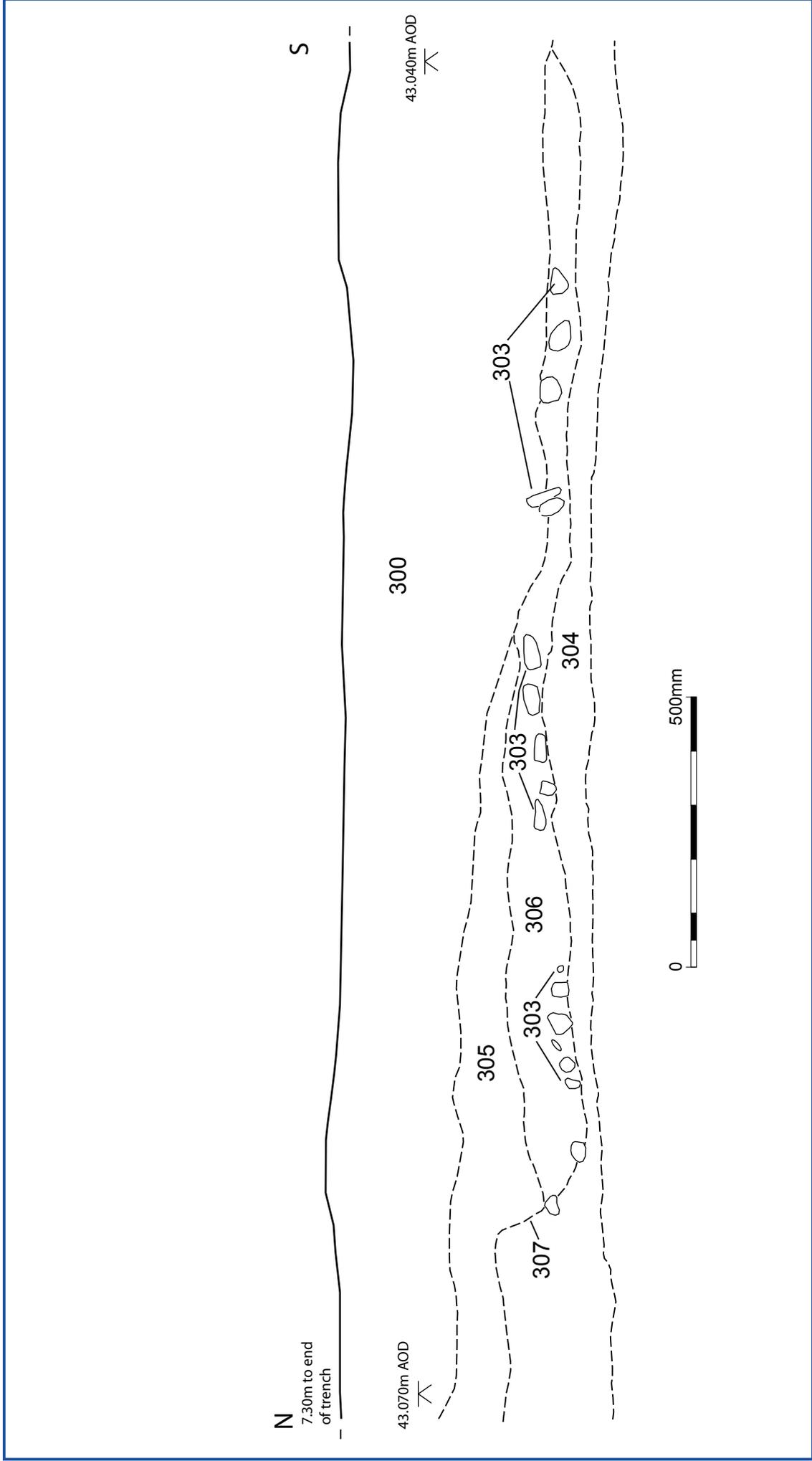
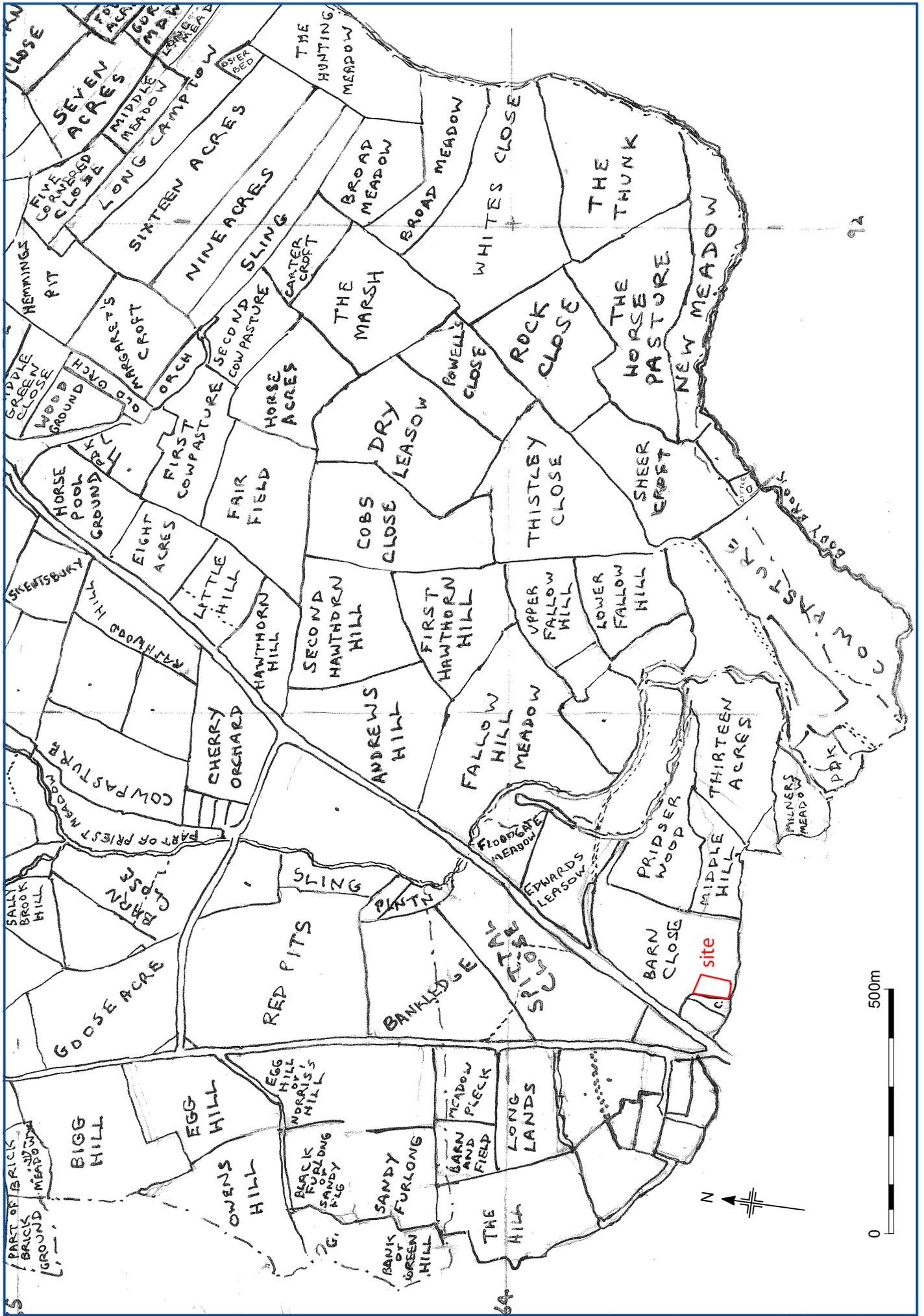


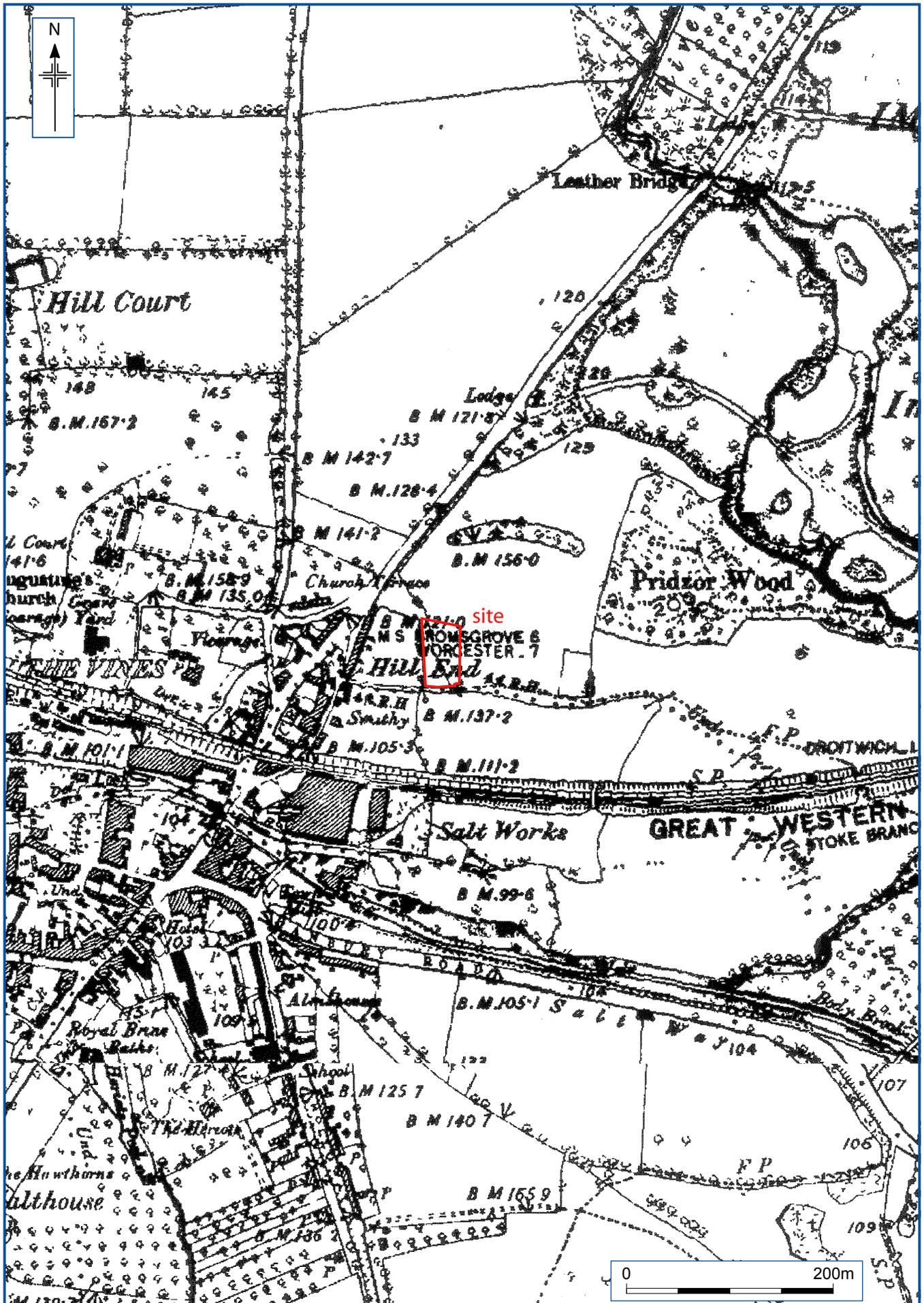
Figure 3

East section of Trench 3



Extract from Dodderhill Tithe Plan, 1843 (transcribed by D. Guyatt).

Figure 5



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Figure 6

Extract from 1st edition Ordnance Survey map (1885)