

Archaeological evaluation at Persnore Road, Hampton, Evesham, Worcestershire



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Archaeological evaluation at Pershore Road, Hampton, Evesham, Worcestershire

Simon Woodiwiss

Illustrations by Laura Templeton

Summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at Pershore Road, Hampton, Evesham, Worcestershire (NGR SP 02164 43045). It was commissioned by CgMs Consulting whose client (Bloor Homes) intends residential development for which a planning application has been approved by Wychavon District Council (reference W/12/02490).

Within the area investigated there is nothing that would indicate there is an archaeological site of any considerable interest.

Report

1 Background

1.1 Reasons for the project

An evaluation was undertaken at Pershore Road, Hampton, Evesham, Worcestershire (NGR SP 02164 43045; Fig 1). It was commissioned by CgMs Consulting whose client (Bloor Homes) intends residential development for which a planning application has been approved by Wychavon District Council (reference W/12/02490).

The proposed development site is considered to include heritage assets and potential heritage assets with archaeological interest, the significance of which may be affected by the application.

The project also conforms to the *Standard and guidance: Archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2014a), and *Standards and guidelines for archaeological projects in Worcestershire* (WCC 2010).

The event reference for this project, given by the Historic Environment Record is WSM68017.

2 Aims

The aims of the evaluation were

- to describe any heritage asset with archaeological interest;
- to assess the nature, importance and extent of any heritage asset;
- to assess the impact of the application on any heritage asset.

3 Methods

3.1 Personnel

The project was led and fieldwork undertaken by Simon Woodiwiss (BA; MCIfA). Illustrations were prepared by Laura Templeton (BA; PG Cert; MCIfA).

3.2 Documentary research

A desk-based assessment (Robson-Glyde 2010) included the area of the residential development. The assessment identified the evidence for ridge and furrow, within an area of archaeological potential (Robson-Glyde 2010, fig 7). The potential was expressed as moderate for deposits of significant deposits of Roman date and lower for deposits of prehistoric or Anglo-Saxon date (Robson-Glyde 2010, 7). A geophysical survey was also undertaken (Stephens 2012) and this identified that the area of the development was affected by magnetic disturbance (possibly affected by nightsoil deposition), agricultural cultivation (fruit trees), discrete anomalies of uncertain origin, and as being affected by ferrous material.

3.3 Fieldwork strategy

A detailed specification has been prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2016). Fieldwork was undertaken between 17th–18th October 2016. The site reference number used in the project archive is WSM 68017 and was issued by the Historic Environment Record for Worcestershire.

The evaluation consisted of three trenches (Fig 2). Two trenches (Trenches 1 and 2) were located within an area already well advanced in construction and they were placed where space permitted. The third trench was within an area where construction had not yet commenced. The original specification was for three trenches, two 50m long and one 25m long. The actual trench sizes were 38m (Trench 1), 51m (Trench 2), and 50m (Trench 3). All trenches were 1.8m wide. Trench 2 was relocated to avoid services recently installed by the construction team.

The trenches were excavated using a 360° tracked 13 tonne excavator, employing a toothless bucket and under archaeological supervision. Subsequent excavation was undertaken by hand. Clean surfaces were inspected. Deposits were recorded according to standard Worcestershire

Archaeology practice (WA 2012). The excavator operator was requested to obtain a surface that minimised the smearing, that clay soils are prone to. Careful observation was made throughout trench excavation and selected areas cleaned where considered appropriate (Plate 2).

The topsoil and often an unknown quantity of subsoil had been removed to facilitate construction, and the surface used for construction related activity. There was therefore construction rubble and materials on the surface which had also been pressed into the clay beneath. Deciding on the level for the base of the trenches was not therefore straightforward and the base of the trench was where almost all signs of construction activity had been removed. Trench 3 was located in an area which had been used as a compound. Sondages were excavated at the north end of Trench 3 and part way along Trench 2 (Figs 3 and 4), to check for the correct level for the base of the trench. Trenches 1 and 2 were located close to another area that had previously been investigated (see below), which informed the appropriate depth of excavation of these trenches.

Shortly before this evaluation a watching brief was undertaken on the adjacent construction site operated by Bellway Homes (Woodiwiss 2016). Individual reports were prepared for each client.

No artefacts were collected from the surface as no provenance for any material could be assumed. No artefacts were observed from the trenches and no environmental samples taken.

3.4 Structural analysis

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

3.5 Statement of confidence in the methods and results

The methods adopted allow a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved. The trench sides and base were carefully observed during excavation, however soon after excavation had been completed, there was heavy rain which partially filled the trenches. Especial care taken to identify indicators such as artefacts and charcoal (though the presence of manganese made the identification of charcoal less straightforward), which aimed to minimise missing anything of importance. Areas where there may potentially be archaeological deposits were not identified before the rain. A small area (1x2m) was cleaned by hand in Trench 1 (Plate 2). A site visit by Adrian Scuby (WCC) and Paul Clark (CgMs) was made on 18 October 2016. Given the initial careful observation and absence of indicators of archaeological deposits it was considered that further investigation would not be worthwhile.

4 The application site

4.1 Topography, geology and archaeological context

The geology of the site is interbedded mudstone and limestone of the Wilmcote Limestone member (BGS 2016). The soils consist of permeable clayey soils of the Evesham Association (Soil survey of England and Wales 1:50,000 map, sheet 150 and Ragg *et al* 1986).

4.2 Current land-use

The development site was formerly agricultural fields. The evaluation was undertaken well after construction had commenced. The whole site had been subject to the removal of soils, which was understood to be aiming at removal of topsoil. The depth of soils removed was uncertain but the site manager at the Bellway site reported this to be c 0.3m (Rob Gardiner pers comm).

5 Results

5.1 Structural analysis

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

5.1.1 Natural

The observed natural consisted of a grey/brown clay in Trenches 1 and 2 (102 and 202; Plates 1 and 2) and a medium brown clay in Trench 3. Other inclusions for Trenches 1 and 2 were rare pebbles, manganese flecks, and areas with moderate concentrations of red stone was present (the latter could be mistaken for ceramic building material, but close inspection concluded that this was an iron rich stone). Other inclusions for Trench 3 were fragments of lias, which were dense in patches (eg east end of the trench (Plate 4). Taken with the results from the watching brief on the Bellway site (light brown clay), there is variation in the natural deposits across the development site.

5.1.2 Post-medieval fields

Land drains were observed in Trenches 2 and 3. In Trench 2 an unglazed red ceramic pipe was observed at a depth of 0.6m (in the sondage) and ran approximately east to west. In Trench 3 (again in the sondage) there were two drains at depths of 0.3m (unglazed red ceramic pipe) and 0.6m (an inverted "horseshoe" red ceramic drain). The latter drain type may be quite early and this indicates that active drainage management was important in the past and has at least two phases in this area. It is likely that further drains exist below the base of each trench, but only in one instance in Trench 1 was a possible cut for a drain identified.

No remains of topsoil was observed in any of the trenches.

5.1.3 Construction deposits

The upper level of the site (100, 200, 300) consisted of subsoil mixed with construction related materials (hardcore, rubble etc).

6 Synthesis

Aside from the land drains indicating that drainage was important on these clay soils and there are at least two phases of historic drainage activity, nothing of note was identified in the evaluation trenches. Within the area investigated there is nothing that would indicate there is an archaeological site of any considerable interest.

7 Publication summary

Worcestershire Archaeology has a professional obligation to publish the results of archaeological projects within a reasonable period of time. To this end, Worcestershire Archaeology 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 at Pershore Road, Hampton, Evesham, Worcestershire (NGR SP 02164 43045). It was commissioned by CgMs Consulting whose client (Bloor Homes) intends residential development.

Within the area investigated there is nothing that would indicate there is an archaeological site of any considerable interest.

8 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, Bloor Homes and particularly their staff and sub-contractors (Ian Huxstep site manager, Jake the foreman and Igor the machine operator), Paul Clark of CgMs, and Adrian Scruby of WCC.

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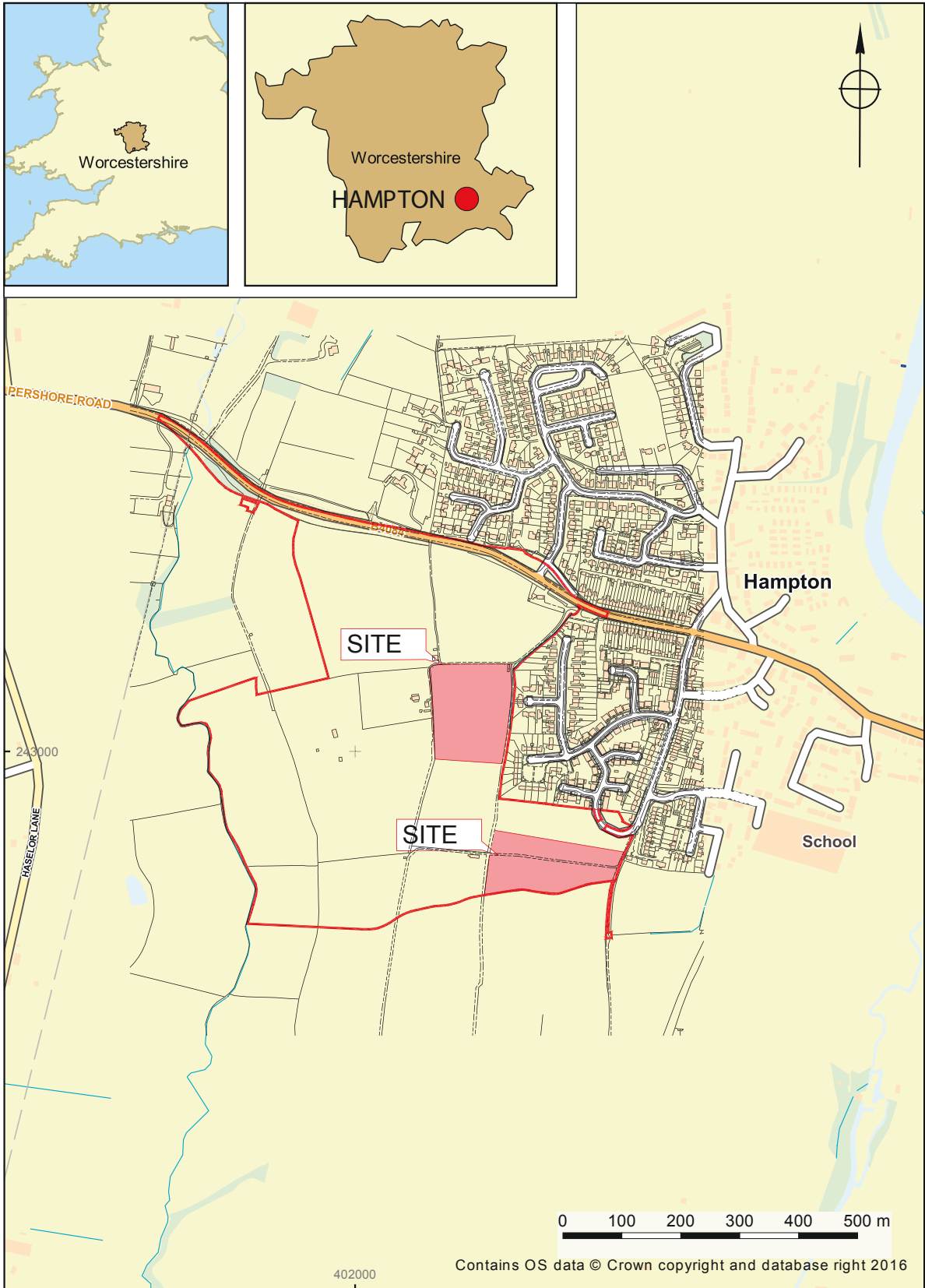
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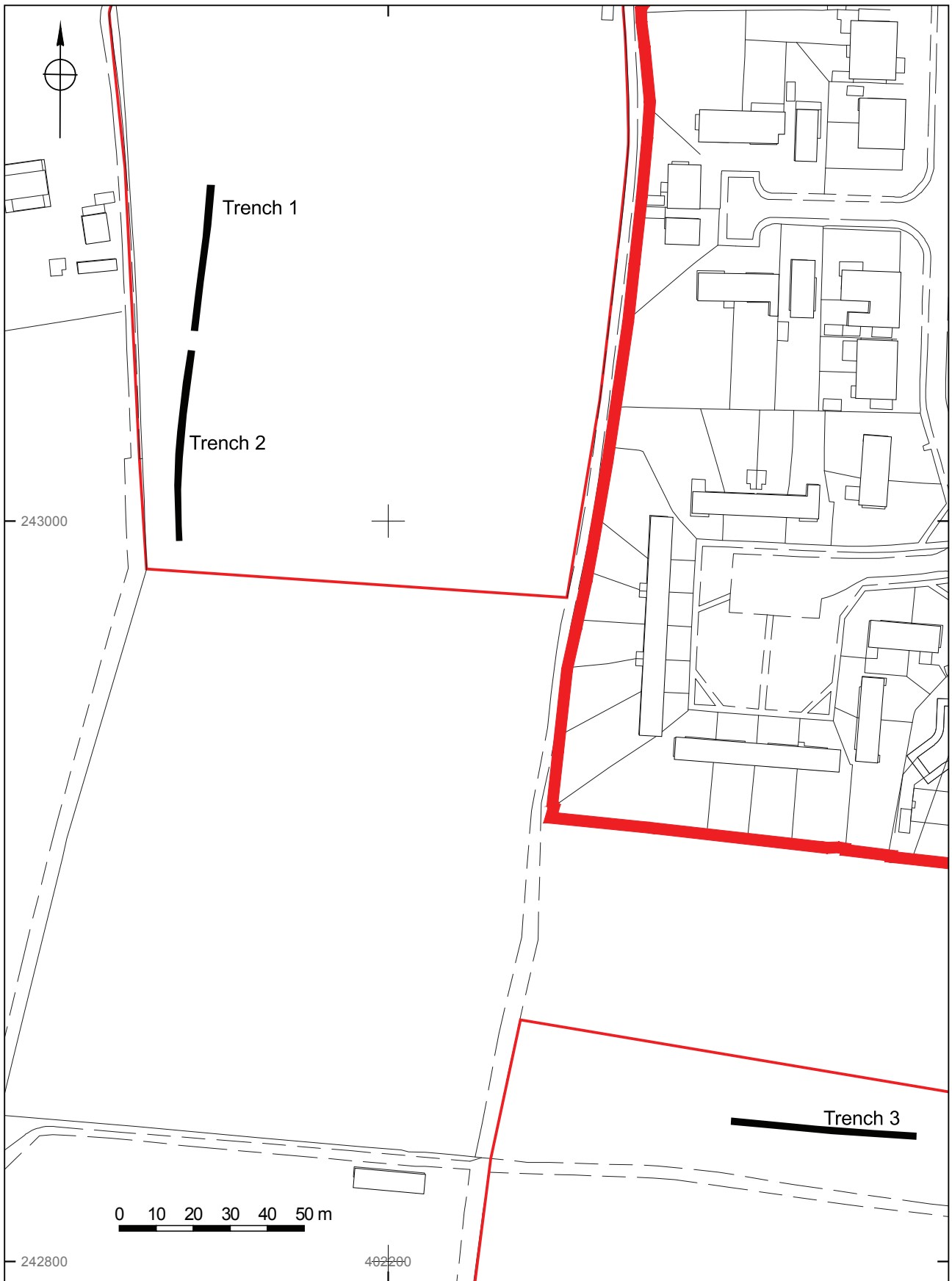
Figures



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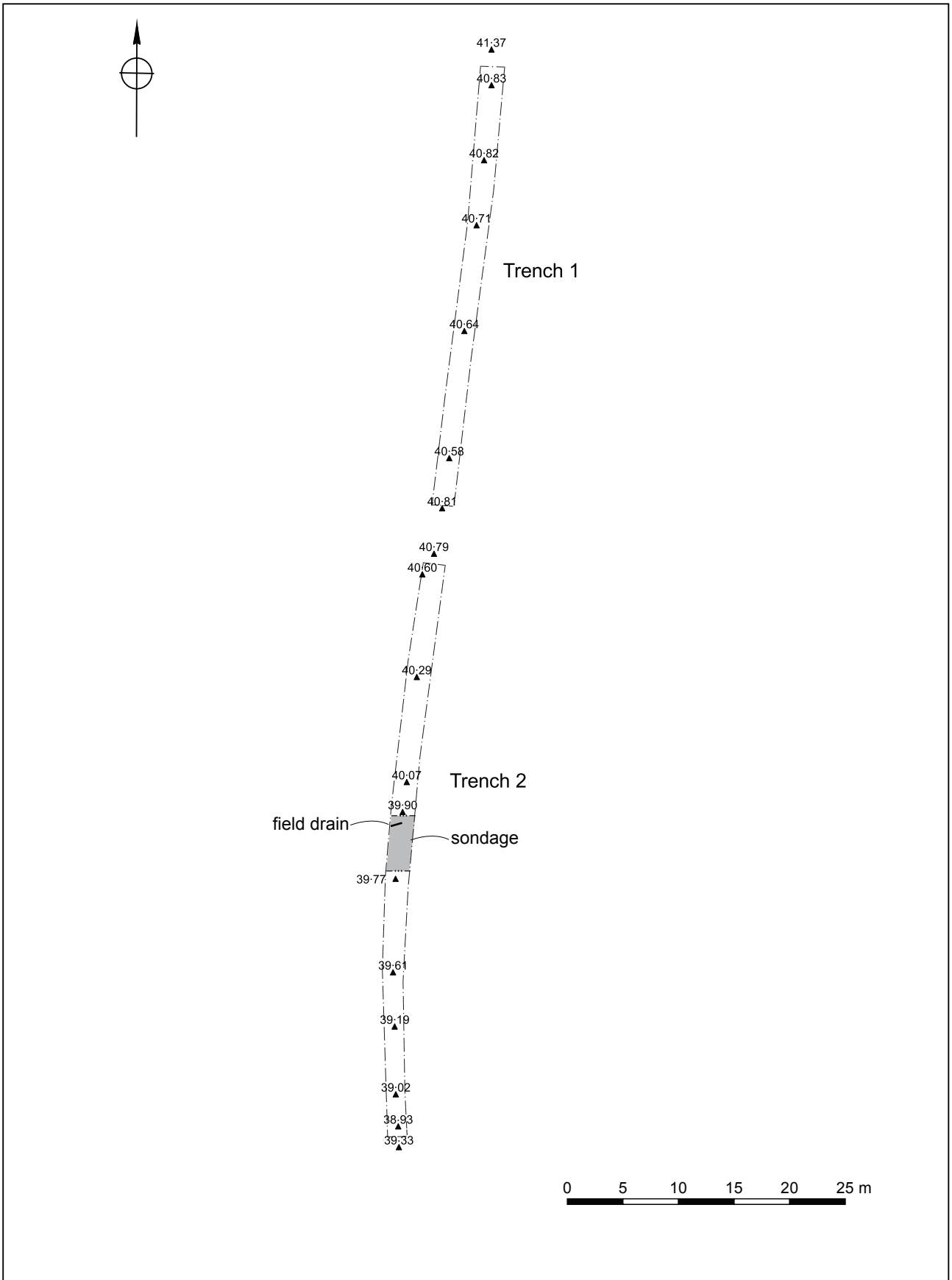
Location of the site

Figure 1



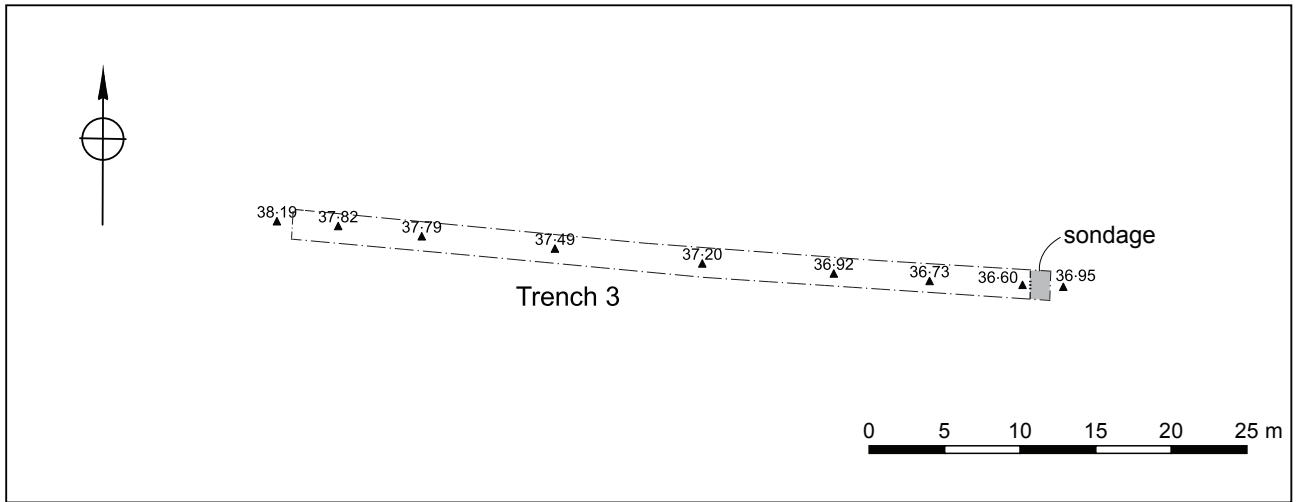
Trench locations

Figure 2



Trenches 1 and 2

Figure 3



Trench 3

Figure 4

Plates



Plate 1: Trench 1. Facing south



Plate 2: Trench 1 cleaned area at northern end. Facing west



Plate 3: Trench 2. Facing south



Plate 4: Trench 3 showing greater quantity of lias at eastern end. Facing west

Appendix 1 Trench descriptions

Trench 1

Dimensions: Trench width: 1.8m. Length 38.2m. Depth: 0.5m

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
100	Construction rubble	Construction rubble in grey clay	0-0.2m (south end) 0.4m (north end)
101	Subsoil	Grey brown clay with construction rubble pressed into it	0.2-0.3m (south end), 0.4-0.5m (north end)
102	Natural	Grey/brown clay with very occasional pebbles, manganese flecks, and patches where red rock is present (looks like ceramic building material but is natural)	0.3 (south end) – 0.5m (north end)

Trench 2

Dimensions: Trench width: 1.8m. Length 50.7m. Depth: 0.3m

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
200	Construction rubble	Construction rubble in grey clay	0-0.15m (south end) 0.2 (north end)
201	Subsoil	Grey brown clay with construction rubble pressed into it	0.15-0.25m (south end) 0.2-0.3m (north end)
202	Natural	Grey/brown clay with very occasional pebbles, manganese flecks, and patches where red rock is present (looks like ceramic building material but is natural)	0.25-0.3m
Note		Sondage in central section (depth 0.6m). Field drain at depth of 0.6m (could not detect cut for drain).	

Trench 3

Dimensions: Trench width: 1.8m. Length: 50m. Depth: 0.2m (east end) 0.4m (east end)

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
300	Construction	Roadstone and rubble. At lower depth this was pressed into clay	0.2m
301	Subsoil	Brown/grey clay with occasional pebbles, some rubble pressed in from 300	0.2-0.3 (min) 0.4m (max)
302	Natural	Medium brown clay, with flecks of decayed lias	0.2/0.3m-0.4m
Note		Sondage at eastern end. Ceramic field drain and "horseshoe" drain under it.	0.6m

Appendix 2 Technical information

The archive (site code: WSM68017)

The archive consists of:

- 1 Field progress reports AS2
- 1 Photographic records AS3
- 11 Digital photographs
- 3 Trench record sheets AS41
- 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
