

# Archaeological watching brief at Pike's Pool, Ipsley Church Lane Redditch, Worcestershire



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## Archaeological watching brief at Pike's Pool, Ipsley Church Lane, Redditch, Worcestershire

Graham Arnold and Tom Vaughan

Illustrations by Carolyn Hunt

### Background information

<i>Client</i>	North Worcestershire Water Management
<i>National Grid reference</i>	SP 0604 6644
<i>Historic Environment Record reference</i>	WSM 68493
<i>Planning authority</i>	Wyre Forest District Council
<i>Brief</i>	WCC 2014
<i>Project design</i>	WA 2017
<i>Project parameters</i>	ClfA 2014

### Project Background

North Worcestershire Water Management were de-silting and re-profiling Pikes Pool pond, the surrounding channels and reconnecting it to the River Arrow, in order to use it as fish refuge. These works were deemed by the Historic Environment Planning Advisor, Worcestershire County Council, to require archaeological monitoring, as the works were considered to have the potential to affect heritage assets with archaeological interest, specifically the inlets and sluices at either end of the pool.

### Historical and Archaeological Background

Pikes Pool was originally a mill pond related to mills in the area, and water management around the River Arrow. Ipsley parish tithe plan of 1841 roughly indicates the water courses in this area, with a sluice or weir at the north end of an elongated channel (the pool), and the fieldnames Cod End Meadow and Mill Tail Meadow either side.

The Pool is first recorded in detail on the 1884 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map (Fig 4), with the north end identified as a sluice, and a sluice and weir on later editions. A mill leat (WSM 34454) at Ipsley Forge feeds the pool from the north, from Ipsley Mill (WSM 00057), recorded as Corn and Water mills of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century date. The mill buildings were demolished between 1962 and 1965, although the houses survive. The Old Mill House (WSM 03957) had been used as a needle mill during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Extant mill ponds (WSM 101222) have also been recorded in the vicinity, to the west of Ipsley Mill, to the east of Pikes Pool. Pikes Pool had been concrete lined during the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the other channels feeding Pikes Pool had also been recut a number of the times. This section of the River Arrow had also been canalised to improve water flow to the mills during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (Figs 1 and 4).

### Aims

The aim of the watching brief was to observe and record archaeological structures and deposits, and to determine their extent, state of preservation, date and type, as far as reasonably possible within the constraints of the Clients de-silting works.

Significant deposits were defined as those likely to be of medieval and post-medieval date relating to water control. Archaeological monitoring was undertaken on the works around the inlet and outlet of Pikes Pool, at the north and south ends (Figs 1 and 2).

## Methods

General specification for fieldwork

WA 2012

Sources consulted

HER search report

1841 Ipsley parish tithe plan (transcribed by David Guyatt)

1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map, 1884, Warwickshire sheet XXX.12, scale 25":1 mile (Fig 4)

1904 Ordnance Survey map, Warwickshire sheet XXX.12 / Worcestershire sheet XXIII.12, scale 25":1 mile

1927 Ordnance Survey map, Warwickshire sheet XXX.12 / Worcestershire sheet XXIII.12, scale 25":1 mile

1938 Ordnance Survey map, Worcestershire sheet XXIII.12, scale 25":1 mile

Date(s) of fieldwork

13 -17 February 2017

Area of site – Trenches 1 and 2 (Fig 1 and 2)

*Access to or visibility of deposits*

Observation of the excavated areas was undertaken during machine excavation. The exposed surfaces were sufficiently clean to observe well-differentiated archaeological deposits, though any less clear may have not been identified. The sluice structure at the north of Pikes Pool was cleaned by hand before photographing and drawing. Access to deep trenches was not made for safety reasons.

*Statement of confidence*

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

## Deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
100	Sluice structure	Brick and concrete base of sluice structure, containing slots for wooden beams and post1790 machine made bricks measuring 8.5". and 9" in length and contemporary with wall 101. Concrete and sandstone base.	0.00 – 0.15m
101	Brick wall	Brick wall bounding eastern side of Pikes Pool and contemporary with [100] sluice gate. 0.15m – 1.40m high on western profile.	N/A
102	Concrete wall	Buttressed wall constructed of brick with conglomerate concrete running east west along the northern limit of Pikes Pool. West of the sluice structure. 15m long, 2m high 1m wide at base 0.25m wide at top.	N/A
103	Topsoil	Friable dark brown silty clay topsoil with turf mat and vegetation, rooting. Observed in north and south of inlet and outlet excavations.	0.00 -0.20m

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
103	Pond infill	Dark brown silt. Silting within pond on north and south limits	0.20m
104	Natural	Firm yellowish brown clay at base of pond on north and south of pond and to the west of sluice structure [100] and at the base of Trench 2.	0.40m

## Discussion

### *Trench 1*

A brick and concrete platform [100], measuring 4m x 3m was observed at the northern end of Pikes Pool (Fig 3; Plates 2-5). Only the sluice base survived which had been previously damaged on the western side, presumably during previous works to modernise Pikes Pool. The sluice base consisted of a platform of machine made red bricks, generally 8 ½", although some were 9" in length. There were slots within the base to hold wooden beams, 0.20m wide and 1.40m in length some of which survived, but which were badly rotten in places. The bricks are of later 19<sup>th</sup> century date and contemporary with the existing surviving red brick wall curving around the pool to the east (Plates 3 and 4). The wall to the west [102] (Plates 1 and 2), contained conglomerate concrete, and is thought to have been altered at a later date.

Wooden beams, presumably structures associated with the sluice were observed in the leat area to the north of the sluice, but were not in situ (Plate 9). They were not retained.

The sluice structure was to be preserved in situ as a feature during the works to renovate Pikes Pool.

### *Trench 2*

The southern outlet de-silting and re-profiling was also monitored. No structures were observed. Only natural clay [104], was recorded below modern soils [103] and undergrowth (Fig 1; Plates 6-8).

## Conclusions

The remnants of the base of the later 19<sup>th</sup> century brick and concrete sluice, identified on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map of 1884 and later editions, was observed, cleaned and recorded. The sluice had otherwise been demolished, and the western side of the base damaged during earlier works to modernise the pool, probably when the concrete lining was installed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. No archaeological deposits or structures were revealed during the monitoring of works to the southern outlet of the pool.

## 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 watching brief was undertaken on behalf of North Worcestershire Water Management at Pike's Pool, Ipsley Church Lane, Redditch, Worcestershire (NGR SP 0604 6644; HER ref. WSM 68493). The area had been used for a number of mills and water management of the River Arrow during the post-medieval period. During works on the north side of the pool inlet, the base of a brick and concrete sluice structure was observed, cleaned and recorded. It was constructed of machine made bricks, with slots for wooden beams, which were generally rotten. The structure had been recorded as a sluice on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map of 1884 and*

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*a sluice and weir on later editions. The structure was to be preserved in situ as a feature of the renovated pond. No further archaeological features were observed during the works on the south side of the pool.*

## **Acknowledgements**

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, Thomas Curwell (Water Management Officer, North Worcestershire Water Management), Chris Hill (Ebsford Environmental), Lindsay Maguire (Wyre Forest District Council) and Adrian Scruby, (Historic Environment Advisor, Worcestershire County Council).

## **Bibliography**

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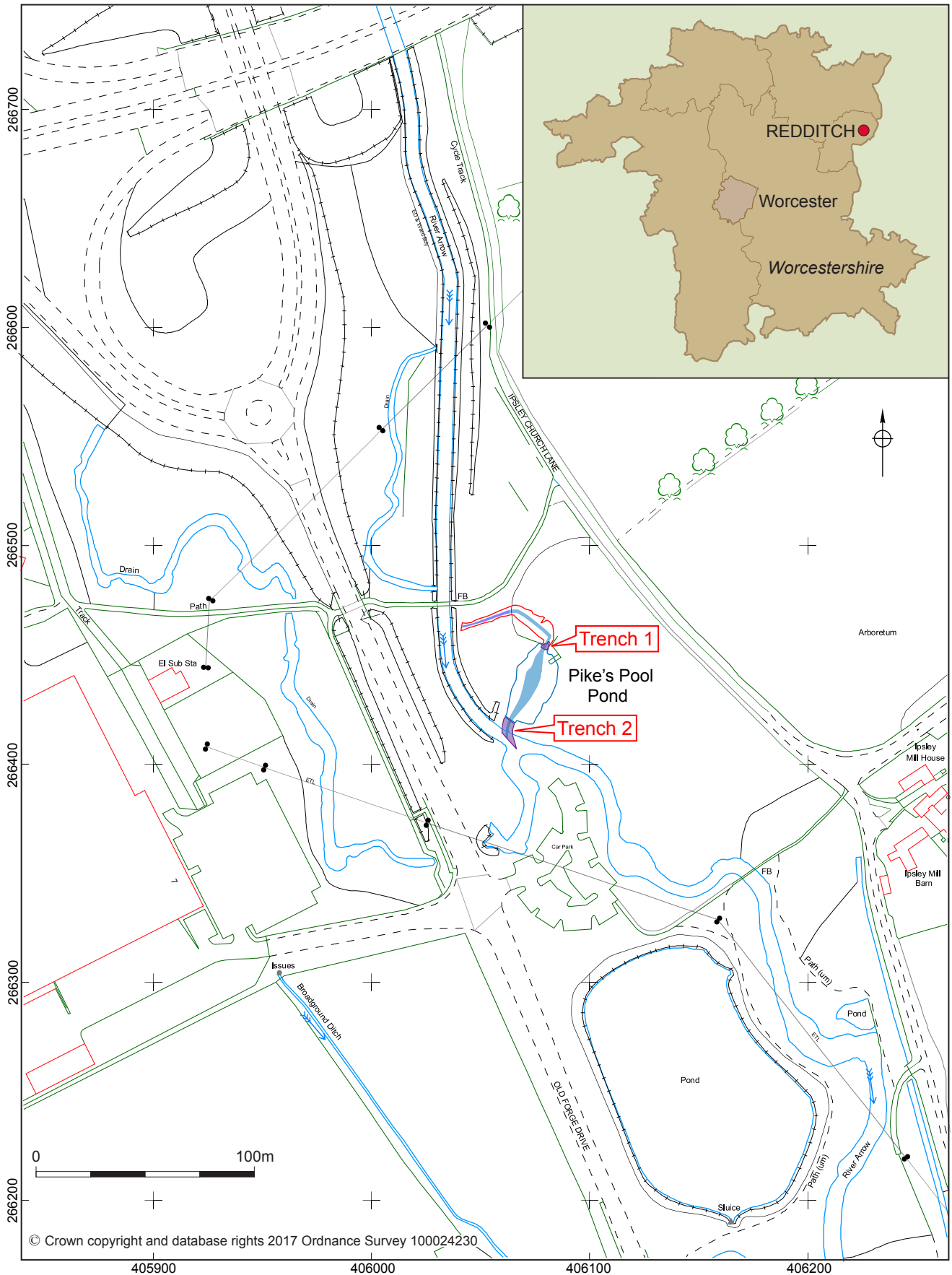
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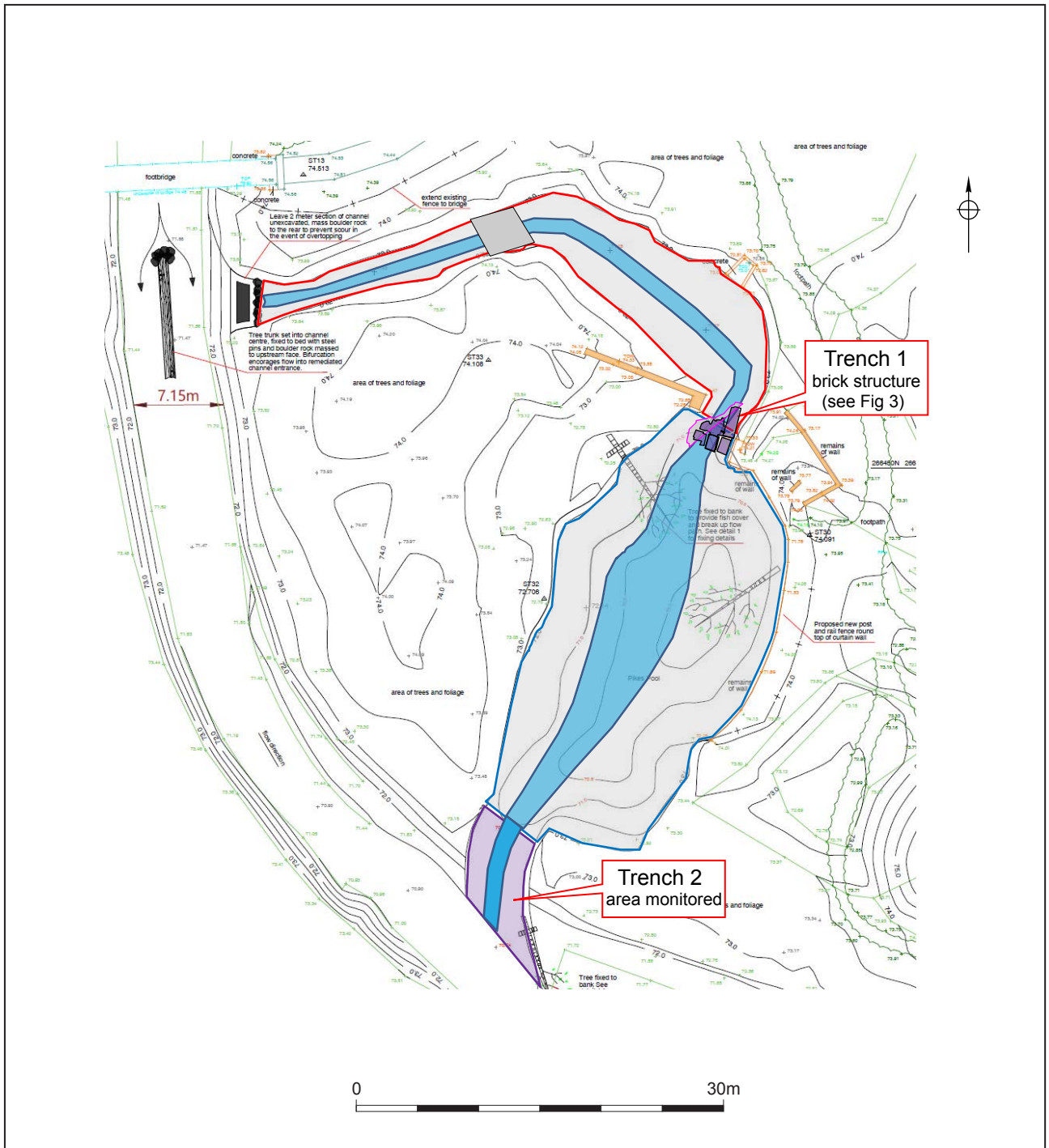
**Figures**



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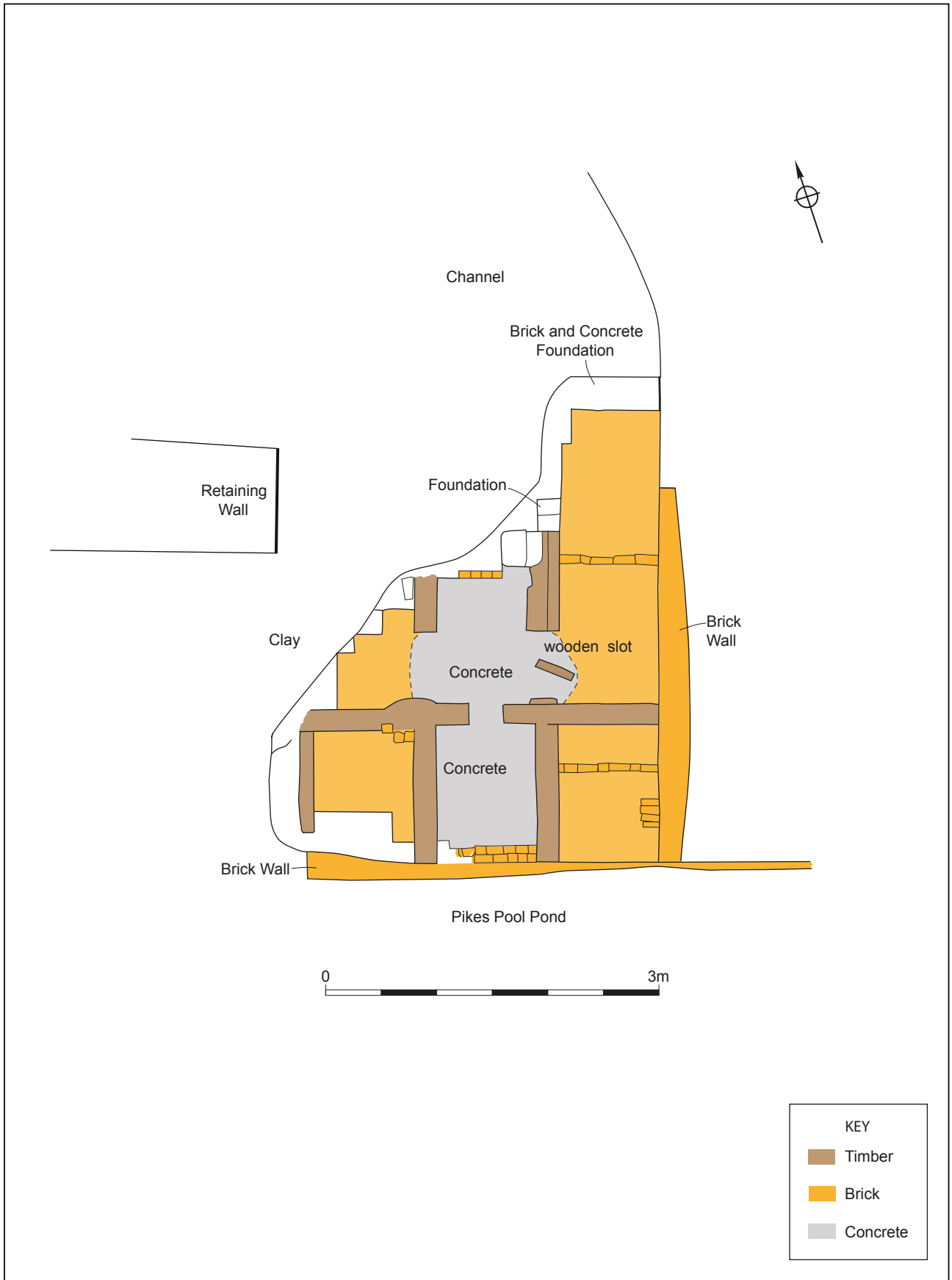
Location of the site

Figure 1



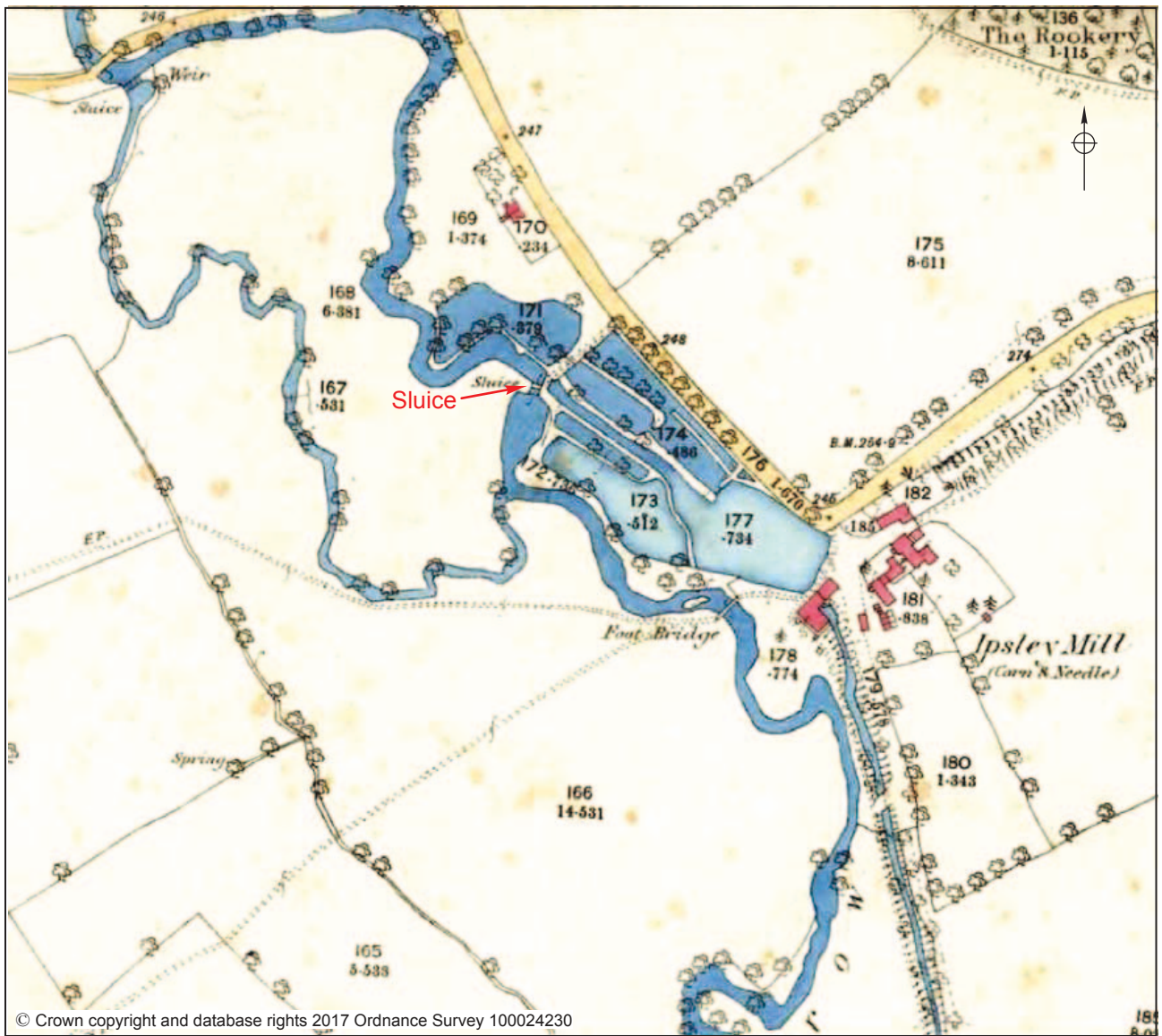
Areas of archaeological monitoring (based upon Ebsford Environmental AR edit v2 17/8/2016 p.8) Figure 2





Sketch Plan of Sluice Structure

Figure 3



Extract of 1st edition OS 25" map of Warwickshire, 1884

Figure 4

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## Plates



*Plate 1 Pike's Pool prior to works de-silting the pond; view south; no scale*



*Plate 2 Sluice [100] after cleaning, with concrete wall [102] to west; view south-west; 1m scale*



*Plate 3 Sluice [100], with slots for wooden beams; view east; 2x 1m scales*



*Plate 4 Sluice [100], with slots for wooden beams; view east; 2x 1m scales*



*Plate 5 Sluice [100], with slots for wooden beams; view south; 2x 1m scales*



*Plate 6 South outlet, silted up and overgrown, prior to works; view north-east; no scales*



*Plate 7 South outlet after de-silting and re-profiling; view south; no scales*



*Plate 8 The re-profiled south outlet; view north; 2x 1m scales*



*Plate 9: Wooden beams retrieved during re-profiling of channels (not in situ); 1m scale*



*Plate 10: Re-profiled leat to west of Pike's pool; view south-west; no scales (beyond the scope of the formal watching brief)*

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## **Appendix 1 Technical information**

### **The archive (site code: WSM 68493)**

The archive consists of:

- 1 Context records AS1
- 1 Field progress reports AS2
- 1 Photographic records AS3
- 82 Digital photographs
- 1 Scale drawings
- 1 Trench record sheets AS41
- 1 CD-rom
- 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