Archaeological watching brief at Littlefield, Hawling, Gloucestershire

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Contents

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With a contribution by Tom Vaughan

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at Littlefield, Hawling, Gloucestershire (NGR SP 06337 23206). It was undertaken on behalf of Western Power Distribution, who intends to lay new, high voltage electricity cables through the village.

The excavation of a 261m long trench was monitored, 200m north of the village and *c* 30m to the north of the Hawling medieval village Scheduled Monument (UID 1405912). One undated ditch was recorded, which appears to correspond to a previously recorded earthwork. Otherwise there were no significant archaeological features, layers structures or deposits. No stray finds were recovered during the works. It appears that a large bank, defining the northern limits of the deserted settlement acted as a boundary to the medieval settlement activity, which lay to the south of the present investigations. The lack of finds retrieved when so close to the village is surprising, as stray finds deposited accidentally during manuring of agricultural fields would be expected. The reason for this is unclear, although the trench was very narrow, so it could be argued not to provide a meaningful sample of the two wider fields through which it was excavated.

Report

1 Background

1.1 Reasons for the project

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at Littlefield, Hawling, Gloucestershire (NGR 406337 223206; Fig 1). It was commissioned by Western Power Distribution who intends to bury electricity cables across this side of the village. The site is considered to include heritage assets and potential heritage assets, namely Hawling deserted medieval village Scheduled Monument (UID 1405912), the significance of which may be affected by the application. No brief has been prepared by the Curator but the project aimed to conform to the generality of briefs which have been previously issued. The project conforms to a written scheme of investigation produced by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2017).

The project also conforms to the *Standard and guidance: Archaeological watching brief* (CIfA 2014).

The event reference for this project will be assigned by the HER after the submission of this report.

2 Aims

The aims of the watching brief were to observe and record archaeological deposits, and to determine their extent, state of preservation, date and type, as far as reasonably possible within the constraints of the Client's groundworks.

3 Methods

3.1 Personnel

The project was led by Andrew Mann (BA (hons.) who joined Worcestershire Archaeology in 2004 and has been practicing archaeology since 2001. The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Tom Vaughan (BA (hons.); MA; ACIfA). Illustrations were prepared by Laura Templeton (BA; PG Cert; MCIfA).

3.2 Documentary research

An archaeological desk-based assessment (DBA) was undertaken by Worcestershire Archaeology (Connolly 2014).

3.3 List of sources consulted

Cartographic sources

- 1748 Map of the estate of William Whyndham, Gloucestershire Record Office; D363/P4
- 1755 Map of the estate of William Whyndham, Gloucestershire Record Office; D363/P5
- 1821 Map of the estate of Thomas Hope, Gloucestershire Record Office; D363/P6
- 1842 Tithe map of part of the parish of Hawling, Gloucestershire Record Office; D363/P

3.4 Fieldwork strategy

A detailed specification has been prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2017).

Fieldwork was undertaken between 23 and 27 February 2017.

One trench, 0.40m wide and 261m long, was excavated across the two fields, the location of which is indicated in Figure 1.

Deposits considered not to be significant were removed under archaeological supervision using a 360º tracked excavator employing a toothless bucket. Subsequent excavation was undertaken by hand. Clean surfaces were inspected and selected deposits were excavated to retrieve artefactual

material and environmental samples as appropriate, as well as to determine their nature. Deposits were recorded according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012). On completion of the excavation, a service duct was laid in the base of the trench and they were reinstated by replacing the excavated material.

3.5 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.

3.6 Artefact methodology

3.6.1 Artefact recovery policy

The artefact recovery policy conformed to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012; appendix 2). This states that all finds of any date shall be collected during the works. However no finds were identified during the watching brief.

3.7 Environmental archaeology methodology

3.7.1 Sampling policy

Sampling was undertaken in accordance with standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012). However in the event no deposits were identified which were considered to be suitable for environmental analysis.

3.8 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.

4 The application site

4.1 Topography, geology and archaeological context

The village of Hawling lies in the north Cotswold Hills in rolling country, in an area of outstanding natural beauty, approximately 11km east of Cheltenham. The village is small, laid out largely along a quiet east to west road on a slight northward facing slope. Buildings within the village are largely built from Cotswold limestone with stone-tiled roofs. The underlying geology is the Hampden Limestone formation and the Taynton limestone formation, both formed in the Jurassic period (BGS 2017).

The site incorporates two fields *c* 200m to the north of the village, at around 305m AOD.

The DBA (Connolly 2014) indicates that significant deposits may be defined as those likely to be of medieval date, relating to the medieval settlements of Hawling and Roelside, particularly earthworks of deserted village elements to the south-east of the current investigations.

4.2 Current land-use

The fields are currently under rough pasture.

5 Structural analysis

The trench and feature recorded are shown in Figures 1-3 and Plates 1-4. The results of the structural analysis are presented in Appendix 1.

5.1.1 Phase 1: Natural deposits

Natural deposits (102) were observed along the entire length of the trench. These consisted of laminated limestone blocks and firm yellow clays (Plates 1-4) at 0.25-0.70m below the ground surface. They were deepest towards the eastern end of the trench where the hill slope was greatest.

Above this lay a subsoil (101), consisting of mid orangey brown silty clays, containing frequent small angular limestone fragments. The subsoil was intermittent but when present it varied between 0.10-0.40m thick. This was overlain by topsoil (100), a soft but cohesive dark brown clay loam, which varied between 0.15-0.34m thick (Plates 2 and 3). The subsoil and topsoil layers were remarkably sterile with no finds of any date recovered.

5.1.2 Phase 2: Undated deposits

One archaeological feature was recorded: a shallow ditch aligned north-east to south-west, toward the east end of the trench (103) (Fig 2; Plate 4). It was only identified in section and measured 3.32m wide and 0.30m deep, with shallow sloping sides at 10º-20º to horizontal, breaking gradually to a flat base. The ditch cut through the subsoil (101) and was filled with a mid-greyish brown friable clay loam (104), similar to the topsoil which sealed it above. No finds were recovered from the fill, which was sterile.

6 Synthesis, by Andrew Mann and Tom Vaughan

The ditch (103) recorded towards the east of the trench is undated. However it appears to line up with an earthwork to the south previously recorded during a survey of the area (Aldred and Dyer 1991; Fig 3). The lack of finds from the feature does not preclude it from being of medieval date as only a small portion was investigated, and no medieval finds were recovered during the watching brief at all.

It is thought that a north-east to south-west aligned earthwork bank previously identified (*ibid*) acted as a northern boundary between the village and the hinterland. The lack of features bears out the interpretation that settlement activity did not extend north of the bank, although the lack of finds retrieved when so close to the village is surprising, as stray finds deposited accidentally during manuring of agricultural fields would be expected. The reason for this is unclear, although the trench was very narrow, so it could be argued not to provide a meaningful sample of the two wider fields through which it was excavated.

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.

The excavation of a 261m long trench was monitored, 200m north of the village and c *30m to the north of the Hawling medieval village Scheduled Monument (UID 1405912). One undated ditch was recorded, which appears to correspond to a previously recorded earthwork. Otherwise there were no significant archaeological features, layers structures or deposits. No stray finds were recovered during the works. It appears that a large bank, defining the northern limits of the deserted settlement acted as a boundary to the medieval settlement activity, which lay to the south of the present investigations. The lack of finds retrieved when so close to the village is surprising, as stray finds deposited accidentally during manuring of agricultural fields would be expected. The reason for this is unclear, although the trench was very narrow, so it could be argued not to provide a meaningful sample of the two wider fields through which it was excavated.*

8 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, Marco Williams (Evesham Team Technician, Western Power Distribution), Helen Alcock (Evesham Wayleave Officer, Western Power Distribution), Jo Spencer (Morgan Sindall Group) and Charles Parry (Archaeologist, Gloucestershire County Council).

9 Bibliography

Aldred, D, and Dyer, C, 1991 A Medieval Cotswold Village: Roel, Gloucestershire, with a note on the earthworks by James Bond and Carenza Lewis, in *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society*, Vol **109**

BGS 2017 *Geology of Britain Viewer*, http://www.bgs.ac.uk/discoveringGeology/geologyOfBritain/viewer.html , British Geological Survey, accessed 15 March 2017

CIfA 2014 *Standard and guidance: Archaeological watching brief,* Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, http://www.archaeologists.net/codes/ifa

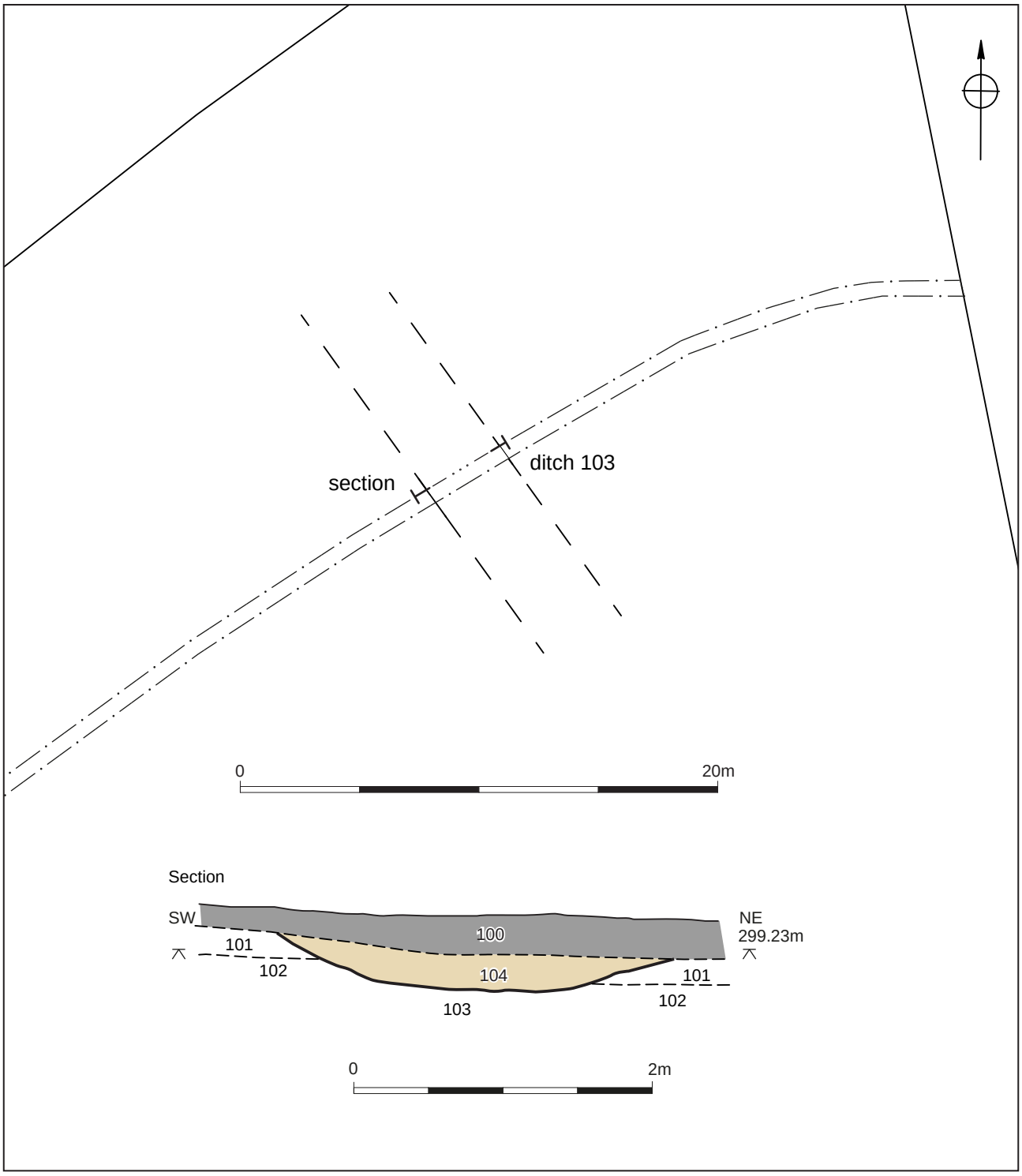
WA 2012 *Manual of service practice, recording manual*, Worcestershire Archaeology, Worcestershire County Council, report **1842**

WA 2017 *Written scheme of investigation for an archaeological watching brief at Littlefield, Hawling, Gloucestershire*, Worcestershire Archaeology, Worcestershire County Council, unpublished document dated 24 January 2017, **P5025**

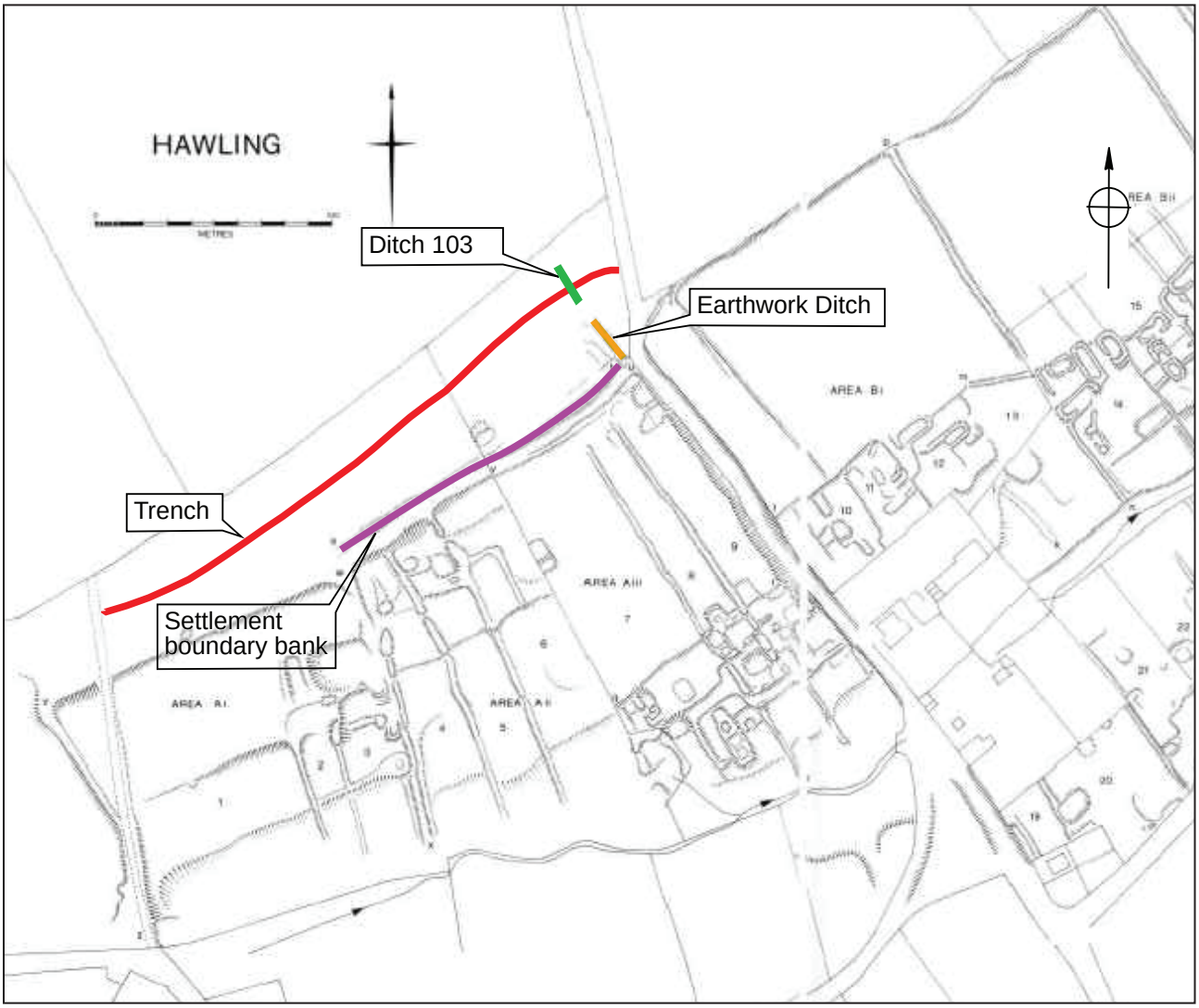
Connolly, E, 2014 *Desk-based assessment of the route of a proposed buried electric cable at Littlefield, Hawling, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire*, Worcestershire Archaeology, Worcestershire County Council, unpublished report **2122**, P4352, dated 13 June 2014

Figures

Location of the site *Figure 1*



Ditch 103 location at eastern end of trench and section *Figure 2*



New service trench and ditch (103) in relation to mapped earthworks *Figure 3*
(based upon Bond and Lewis earthwork survey (figure in Aldred and Dyer 1991)

Plates

Plate 1: west end of trench looking north-east; 0.40m wide; no scale

Plate 2: typical soil profile at western end of trench, 0.50m scale

Plate 3: typical soil profile in the middle of the trench, 0.50m scale

Plate 4: ditch (103) facing west, 2x 1m scales

Appendix 1 Trench descriptions

Trench 1

Maximum dimensions: Length: 261m Width: 0.40m Depth: 1.00m

Orientation: NE-SW

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
100	Topsoil	Mid-dark brown clay loam. Soft but cohesive. Frequent roots. 0.15-0.34m thick	0.00-0.34m
101	Subsoil	Medium orangey brown soft but moderately cohesive silty clay. Frequent small to medium, angular, limestone fragments. 0.10-0.40m thick	0.15-0.55m
102	Natural	Laminated limestone blocks and firm yellow clay.	0.25-0.70m+
103	Ditch Cut	Ditch aligned north west to south east. Shallow (10^{o}-20^{o} sloping) sides, gradually breaking to a flat base. 3.32m wide and 0.30m deep. Filled by (104). Cut through (101). Sealed by (100).	0.32-0.62m
104	Ditch Fill	Mid-greyish brown friable clay loam. Very sterile. Fill of ditch (103); max 0.30m thick	0.32-0.62m

Appendix 2 Technical information

The archive

The archive consists of:

2	Context records AS1
1	Field progress reports AS2
1	Photographic records AS3
18	Digital photographs
1	Drawing number catalogues AS4
1	Scale drawings
1	Trench record sheets AS41
1	CD-Rom/DVDs
1	Copy of this report (bound hard copy)

The project archive is intended to be placed at:

Cheltenham Art gallery and Museum: The Wilson
Clarence Street
Cheltenham
GL50 3JT
Tel: 01242 237 431