

An archaeological watching brief at SMH Fleet Solutions, Naas Lane, Quedgeley, Gloucester



© Worcestershire County Council

Worcestershire Archaeology
Archive and Archaeology Service
The Hive, Sawmill Walk,
The Butts, Worcester
WR1 3PD

Status:
Date: 10 October 2017
Author: Andrew Walsh, Andrew Mann and Tom Vaughan
Illustrator: Carolyn Hunt
Project reference: P5027
Report reference: 2487
Oasis id fieldsec1-293048

Contents
Summary

1

Report

1 Background.....	2
1.1 Reasons for the project	2
2 Aims.....	2
Methods.....	2
2.1 Personnel.....	2
2.2 Documentary research	2
2.3 Fieldwork methodology	2
2.4 Structural analysis	2
2.5 Artefact methodology	2
2.5.1 Artefact recovery policy.....	2
2.6 Environmental archaeology methodology.....	3
2.6.1 Sampling policy.....	3
2.7 Statement of confidence in the methods and results	3
3 The application site	3
3.1 Topography, geology and archaeological context.....	3
4 Results	3
4.1 Topsoil Strip	3
4.2 Drainage trenches	4
5 Synthesis	4
6 Publication summary	4
7 Acknowledgements	4
8 Bibliography.....	5

An archaeological watching brief at SMH Fleet Solutions, Naas Lane, Quedgeley, Gloucester

Andrew Walsh, Andrew Mann and Tom Vaughan

Illustrations by Carolyn Hunt

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at SMH Fleet Solutions, Naas Lane, Quedgeley (NGR SO 81960 12550). It was commissioned by Nigel Teale, on behalf of SMH Fleet Solutions, who intends to develop the site with a new workshop building and new surfacing for parking/storage of motor vehicles for which a planning application has been granted by Gloucester City Council.

The site comprises two fields, divided by the modern route of Naas Lane. Within the larger eastern field the topsoil strip to the top of the subsoil in the north-eastern portion was monitored, along with alternate drainage trenches and the balancing ponds at the southern end. Within the smaller western field three test trenches only were observed.

No archaeological features, layers, structures or horizons were observed, nor artefacts recovered during the fieldwork. There was no evidence for the continuation of the Roman and medieval activity previously identified within the vicinity to extend within the present site. Although only a small portion of the groundworks which were monitored were excavated to the natural geology, a well-developed and undisturbed soil profile was observed in each of the deeper trenches, comprising silty clays over natural clay. The site is therefore considered not to contain any significant remains, nor to have been extensively used for anything other than agricultural activities prior to the present development.

Report

1 Background

1.1 Reasons for the project

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at SMH Fleet Solutions, Naas Lane, Quedgeley, Gloucester (NGR SO 81960 12550). It was commissioned by Nigel Teale, on behalf of SMH Fleet Solutions who intends to develop the Site with a new workshop building and new surfacing for parking/storage of motor vehicles for which a planning application has been granted by Gloucester City Council (reference 16/00100/FUL).

The development site is considered to contain potential heritage assets, the significance of which may be affected by the development.

The project conforms to the generality of briefs previously issued by Gloucester City Council. The project also conforms to a written scheme of investigation (WSI) which was approved by Gloucester City Council (WA 2017), and the *Standard and guidance: Archaeological watching brief* issued by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA 2014).

2 Aims

The aims of the watching brief, as outlined in the WSI, 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.

Methods

2.1 Personnel

The project was undertaken by Andrew Walsh (BSc (hons); MSc; ACIfA; FSA Scot) Andrew Mann (BA (hons.); MSc), and Graham Arnold (BA (hons.), MSc). The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Tom Vaughan (BA (hons. Dunelm); MA; ACIfA). Illustrations were prepared by Carolyn Hunt (BSc (hons.); PG Cert; MCIfA).

2.2 Documentary research

Prior to fieldwork commencing a search was made of the Gloucestershire Historic Environment Record (HER).

2.3 Fieldwork methodology

Fieldwork was undertaken between 23 February and 31 July 2017. Deposits were recorded according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012).

2.4 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.

2.5 Artefact methodology

2.5.1 Artefact recovery policy

Recovery of artefacts was undertaken according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012). In the event no artefacts, other than modern remains, were identified during archaeological monitoring.

2.6 Environmental archaeology methodology

2.6.1 Sampling policy

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

2.7 Statement of confidence in the methods and results

Although not all of the groundworks were made available for monitoring the methods adopted allow a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved.

3 The application site

3.1 Topography, geology and archaeological context

The site lies approximately 6km south of Gloucester and 2km south-east of the historic settlement of Quedgeley. It comprises two fields, divided by Naas Lane. The larger eastern field is approximately 3.5 hectares, bounded by a hedge along the former course of Naas Lane to the north, the Gloucester to Bristol railway line to the east, a small paddock to the south and the present alignment of Naas Lane to the west. The smaller western field is approximately 0.7 hectares, bounded by a modern wire fence to the north and west, Naas Lane to the east and a hedge to the south (Fig 1).

The site slopes gently from north to south and the underlying geology is mapped as undifferentiated Blue Lias Formation and Charmouth Mudstone Formation (BGS 2017). The site was formally agricultural land.

The surrounding landscape contains a number of settlements of Roman date, including the sites at Hunts Grove (GSMR 20712), Brook Farm (GSMR 47672), Brookthorpe-with-Whaddon (GSMR 3852) and Haresfield (GSMR 3849). Some later medieval remains are located in the vicinity of the site including the moated settlement at Pool Farm, Haresfield (GSMR 4423) and ridge and furrow at Brook Farm (GSMR 47672). The surrounding landscape is dominated by the 20th century RAF base at Quedgeley (GSMR 27500, 48407 and 48436).

4 Results

4.1 Topsoil Strip

The majority of the eastern field had been stripped of topsoil using a bulldozer prior to the start of archaeological monitoring. Following consultation with the curator (Andrew Armstrong, Gloucester City Council Archaeologist) it was agreed that the stripped area would be cleaned using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket. An area measuring roughly 85m by 65m in the north-east part of the site was cleaned revealing that only topsoil had been bulldozed and that c 0.30m thickness of subsoil survived in-situ and was largely undisturbed. As originally planned by the client's groundworks contractor and with the agreement of the curator the topsoil was then reinstated across the whole site and compacted using a heavy roller.

In the western field, three test trenches were excavated within the north, centre and south of the field to assess the depth of the topsoil and subsoil, and to establish if there would be any impact on archaeological deposits during topsoil stripping (Fig 2; Plate 1). The test trenches each measured approximately 15m in length, 1.8m in width and were excavated to the required depth (c 0.4m bgs) removing only topsoil and exposing the top of the subsoil (Plate 1). Test slots excavated in each trench revealed the natural level to be at 0.2m – 0.4m below the impact depth of the soil strip. Natural and any archaeological deposits would therefore not be visible during the rest of the topsoil strip and would be preserved in-situ. Therefore with the agreement of the curator, no further monitoring of the topsoil strip on the western field was undertaken.

4.2 Drainage trenches

A series of trenches for a storm water drainage system were excavated across both the eastern and western fields (Fig 2; Plate 2). The drains for the eastern field fed into a new pond, which in turn fed into a swale ditch, which were also monitored. The latter was also widened along its length across the southern end of the site. The drainage trenches measured 0.6m in width and between 0.6m to 0.9m in depth (below the present ground level).

Following initial monitoring, as no archaeological remains had been encountered it was agreed with the curator that only alternate drainage cuts would need to be monitored. These, the ponds and the re-cutting of the swale ditch in the eastern field were all completed with archaeological observation. The works within the western field however were not made available for archaeological monitoring.

No archaeological features were identified during the works and no finds were recovered from the topsoil or subsoil. The topsoil consisted of friable greyish-brown silty clay between 0.30-0.40m thick. This overlay a compact and cohesive mid orangey-brown silty clay subsoil, between 0.20-0.30m thick. The natural consisted of a firm and cohesive, light yellow clay with greyish-blue mottling at an average depth of 0.50-0.70m below the ground surface (Plate 3).

5 Synthesis

No archaeological features, layers, structures or horizons were observed, nor artefacts recovered during the fieldwork. There was no evidence for the continuation of the Roman and medieval activity previously identified within the vicinity to extend within the present site. Although only a small portion of the groundworks which were monitored were excavated to the natural geology, a well-developed and undisturbed soil profile was observed in each of the deeper trenches. The site is therefore considered not to contain any significant remains, nor to have been extensively used for anything other than agricultural activities prior to the present development.

6 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 commissioned by Nigel Teale on behalf of SMH Fleet Solutions at Naas Lane, Quedgeley, Gloucester (NGR SO 81960 12550).

The site comprises two fields, divided by the modern route of Naas Lane. Within the larger eastern field the topsoil strip to the top of the subsoil in the north-eastern portion was monitored, along with alternate drainage trenches and the balancing ponds at the southern end. Within the smaller western field three test trenches only were observed.

No archaeological features, layers, structures or horizons were observed, nor artefacts recovered during the fieldwork. There was no evidence for the continuation of the Roman and medieval activity previously identified within the vicinity to extend within the present site. Although only a small portion of the groundworks which were monitored were excavated to the natural geology, a well-developed and undisturbed soil profile was observed in each of the deeper trenches, comprising silty clays over natural clay. The site is therefore considered not to contain any significant remains, nor to have been extensively used for anything other than agricultural activities prior to the present development.

7 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, Nigel Teale (on behalf of SMH Fleet Solutions), Andy Phillips (Walsh Construction), and Andrew Armstrong (Gloucester City Council Archaeologist).

8 Bibliography

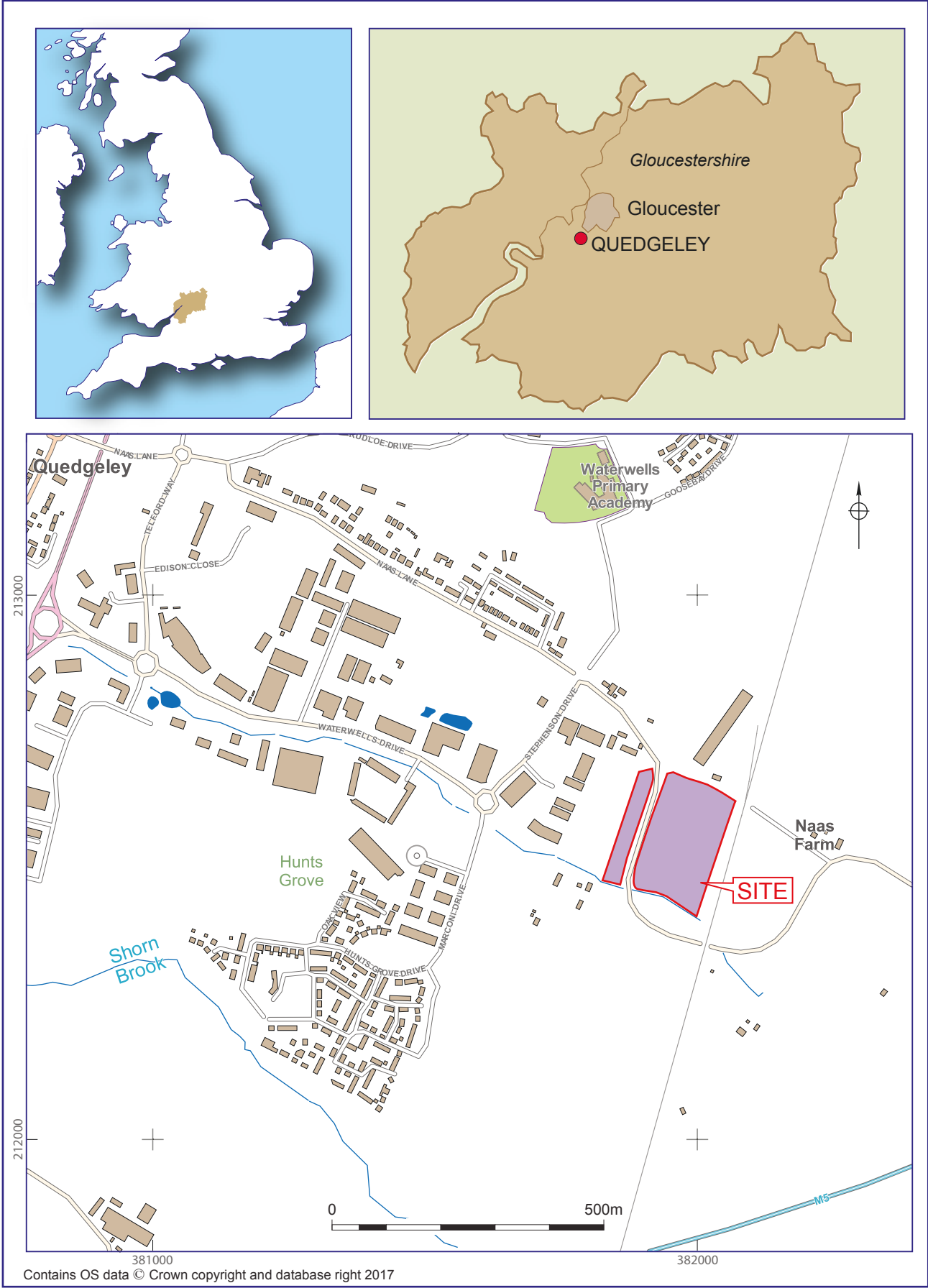
BGS 2017 *Geology of Britain Viewer*, <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>, British Geological Survey, accessed 24 February 2017

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**

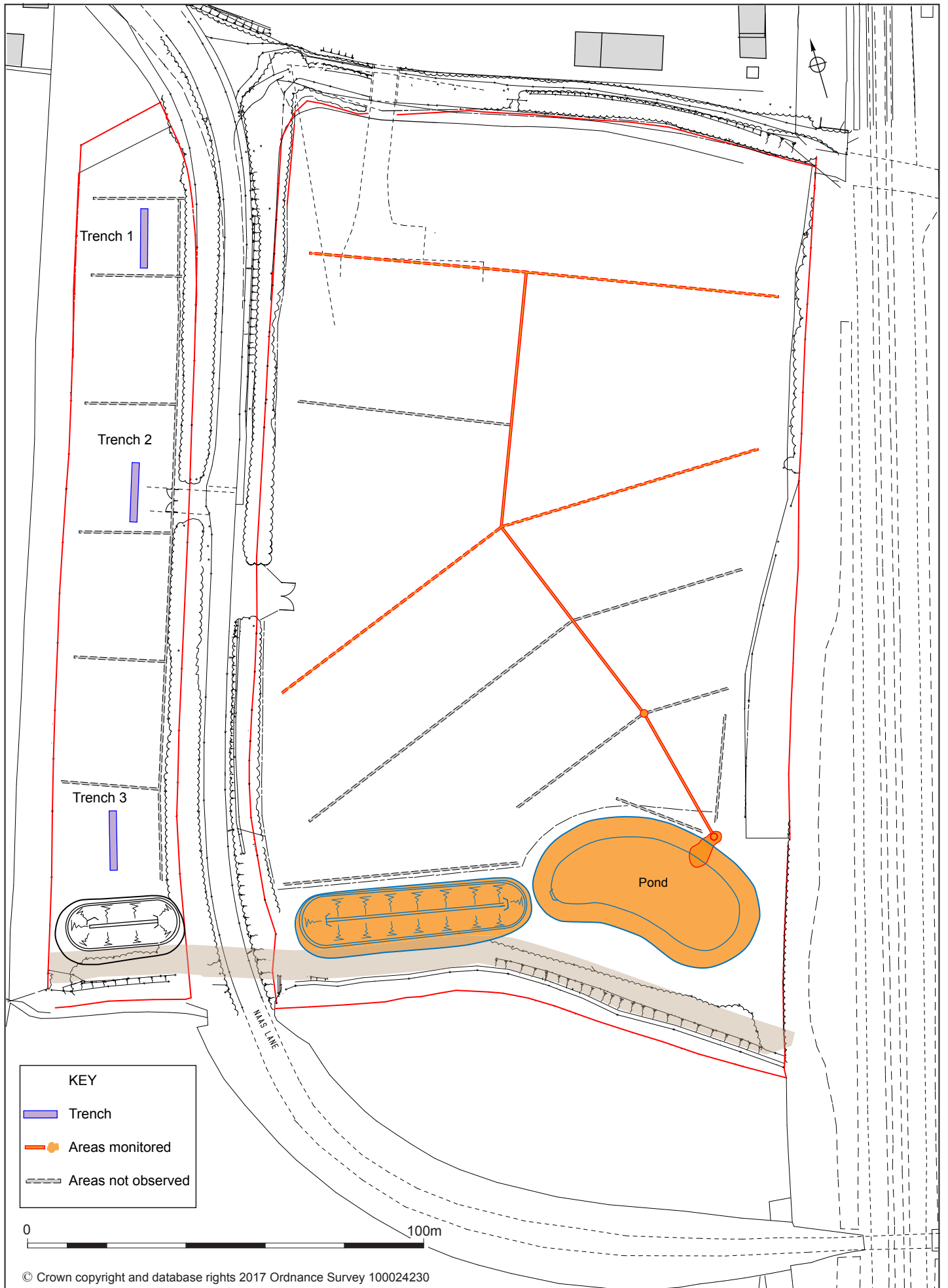
WA 2017 *Proposal for an archaeological watching brief at SMH Fleet Services, Naas Lane, Quedgeley, Gloucester*, Worcestershire Archaeology, Worcestershire County Council, unpublished document, revision dated 30 January 2017, **P5027**

Figures



Location of the site

Figure 1



Location of trenches and archaeological monitoring

Figure 2

Plates



Plate 1: Test Trench 1 in the western field



Plate 2: typical drainage pipe cut in eastern field



Plate 3: typical soil profile seen in the western field

Appendix 1 Deposit descriptions

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
100	Topsoil	Friable, dark greyish-brown silty clay.	0.0-0.40m
101	Subsoil	Mid orangey-brown, compact and cohesive silty clay.	0.30-0.70m
102	Natural	Firm and cohesive, light yellowish clay with blueish-grey mottles.	0.50m+

Appendix 2 Technical information

The archive consists of:

- 5 Field progress reports AS2
- 2 Photographic records AS3
- 135 Digital photographs
- 2 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:

Gloucester City Museum & Art Gallery
Brunswick Road,
Gloucester, GL1 1HP
Tel. 01452 396 131
