

# Archaeological evaluation at Parcel J, Kingsway, Quedgeley, Gloucestershire

*for*  
CgMs Consulting Ltd

August 2018



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# Archaeological evaluation at Parcel J, Kingsway, Quedgeley, Gloucester



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Worcestershire Archaeology  
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## **Archaeological evaluation at Parcel J, Kingsway, Quedgeley, Gloucester**

Elspeth Iliff

With contributions by Laura Griffin

Illustrations by Carolyn Hunt

### **Summary**

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at Parcel J, Kingsway, Quedgeley, Gloucester (NGR SO 81015 13316). It was undertaken on behalf of CgMs Consulting, whose client intends to develop the site.

The site is situated within the footprint of the former RAF Quedgeley Royal Air Force Station, and lies approximately 5km south of Gloucester and south-east of the historic settlement of Quedgeley. Four trenches were excavated across an area of just under 1.2ha, in order to provide the best sample of the area within the constraints of the existing buildings, trees and ongoing use of the site.

The only archaeological feature identified on the site was a ditch, containing a single sherd of abraded Roman pottery, which was interpreted as part of a possible droveway or field boundary. This feature may be connected with Roman remains identified on Parcel G, a site previously investigated in the immediate vicinity to the east of the site or widely distributed boundaries identified in an archaeological evaluation of the site as a whole. No other significant archaeological features, layers, structures, horizon or artefacts were identified.

## Report

### 1 Background

#### 1.1 Reasons for the project

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at Parcel J, Kingsway, Quedgeley, Gloucester (NGR SO 81015 13316). It was commissioned by CgMs Consulting, whose client intends to develop the site.

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

The project conforms to a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2018).

The project also conforms to the *Standard and guidance: Archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2014a).

### 2 Aims

The aims of the evaluation were;

- to determine the presence or absence of archaeological deposits beyond reasonable doubt;
- to identify their location, nature, date and preservation;
- to assess their significance;
- to assess the likely impact of the proposed development.

### 3 Methods

#### 3.1 Personnel

The project was led by Andrew Walsh (BSc (hons.); MSc; ACIfA; FSA Scot); who joined Worcestershire Archaeology in 2013 and has been practicing archaeology since 2004, assisted by Elspeth Iliff (BA (hons.); MSc; PCIfA). The report was prepared by Elspeth Iliff. The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Tom Rogers (MSc; MCIfA). Illustrations were prepared by Carolyn Hunt (BSc (hons.); PG Cert; MCIfA). Laura Griffin (BA (hons.); PG Cert; ACIfA), contributed the finds report.

#### 3.2 Fieldwork strategy

A detailed specification has been prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2018).

Fieldwork was undertaken between 23<sup>rd</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> July 2018. The Worcestershire Archaeology project number is P5388.

Four trenches, amounting to just over 125m<sup>2</sup> in area, were excavated over the site area of just under 1.2ha, representing a sample of just under 1.5%. The location of the trenches is indicated in Figure 2. The trenches were positioned to provide a representative sample, whilst avoiding the various trees, temporary buildings and piles of building materials across the site. Trench 2 had to be shortened due to access issues, and Trench 1 was extended as much as possible to compensate. As well as being shortened, Trench 2 had to be left above the level of the natural stratum at two points to avoid a concrete wall and an unmapped water pipe. Trench 4 was moved slightly north of its intended position to avoid a reinforced concrete surface and to maintain access for part of the site.

Deposits considered not to be significant were removed under archaeological supervision using a 360° 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 well as to determine their nature. Deposits were recorded



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according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012). On completion of excavation, trenches were reinstated by replacing the excavated material.

### **3.3 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.

### **3.4 Artefact methodology, by Laura Griffin**

The finds work reported here conforms to the following guidance: for finds work by ClfA (2014), for pottery analysis by PCRG/SGRP/MPRG (2016), for archive creation by AAF (2011), and for museum deposition by SMA (1993).

#### **3.4.1 Artefact recovery policy**

The artefact recovery policy conformed to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012; appendix 2).

#### **3.4.2 Method of analysis**

All hand-retrieved finds were examined. They were identified, quantified and dated to period. A terminus post quem date was produced for each stratified context. This date was used for determining the broad date of phases defined for the site. All information was recorded on a Microsoft Access 2007 database.

#### **3.4.3 Discard policy**

Artefacts from topsoil and subsoil and unstratified contexts will normally be noted but not retained, unless they are of intrinsic interest (eg worked flint or flint debitage, featured pottery sherds, and other potential 'registered artefacts'). All artefacts will be collected from stratified excavated contexts, except for large assemblages of post-medieval or modern material, unless there is some special reason to retain such as local production. Such material may be noted and not retained, or, if appropriate, a representative sample may be collected and retained. Discard of finds from post-medieval and earlier deposits will only be instituted with reference to museum collection policy and/or with agreement of the local museum.

### **3.5 Environmental archaeology methodology**

#### **3.5.1 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.

### **3.6 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 Parcel J site is located within the former HQ site of RAF Quedgeley, and lies approximately 5km south of Gloucester and south-east of the historic settlement of Quedgeley. Much of the former HQ site has been redeveloped in recent years. The site is broadly level. The geology of the site is mapped as undifferentiated Blue Lias Formation and Charmouth Mudstone Formation, overlain by superficial deposits of Cheltenham Sand and Gravel (BGS 2018).

The most significant archaeological feature near the site is Manor Farm, a group of listed farm buildings and moat, which is a scheduled monument. Manor Farm is located approximately 600m to the north-east of the Parcel J area and dates to the medieval period. There is further evidence of medieval agricultural landscape within the former RAF site and in the form of both ploughed out and extant ridge and furrow, along with drainage and boundary ditches.

Geophysical survey has been undertaken within the wider RAF site although none has been conducted in the Parcel J area. This geophysical survey identified a number of features believed to be part of the former munitions base that occupied the area during the First World War, and areas of potential recent activity, most likely from military activity in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (AMEC Foster Wheeler 2016). The only earlier features identified from the survey were medieval ridge and furrow.

Previous phases of archaeological investigation have been conducted across the former RAF site consisting of multiple phases of trial trenching and excavation. To the west of Manor Farm evidence of a 1<sup>st</sup> century settlement, including a number of substantial ditches and smaller gullies was identified (AMEC Foster Wheeler 2016). Whilst fragments of tegula, suggesting a building in the area were identified, no clear evidence for structural remains was found. Further evidence of Roman activity has been identified outside of the site area, including the remains of a villa excavated at Olympus Park to the north (AMEC Foster Wheeler 2016).

A second area of features was identified comprising ditches, pits and gullies (AMEC Foster Wheeler 2016). The linear features were interpreted as eleventh century field boundary and land drainage, although the purpose of the pits was less clear. This area was excavated further in advance of development. Another group of archaeological features identified by the previous trial trenching were three possible Iron Age and/or Bronze Age enclosures (AMEC Foster Wheeler 2016).

More recently, a phase of evaluation trenching was conducted by Worcestershire Archaeology across the Framework Plan 5 area within the former HQ site of RAF Quedgeley (Walsh and Iliff 2016). This identified two distinct phases of activity. In order to further investigate the results of the evaluation trenching, an excavation was conducted by Worcestershire Archaeology at Parcel G, c. 50m to the east of Parcel J, which confirmed the two phases of activity previously identified, including a period of later Iron Age waterholes and ditches, and a group of Roman ditches which may have formed part of a drove or trackway (Walsh 2017).

Historic maps indicate the area was in agricultural use during the post-medieval period. The wider site was used as a munitions factory during the First World War, and then as an RAF supply depot until 1995. It was then sold to Quedgeley Urban Village Ltd and has been used as a commercial and light industrial estate.

## **4.2 Current land-use**

The site is currently being used for commercial purposes as part of the Quedgeley Enterprise Park. It is an enclosed site with a tarmac and concrete surface and a number of temporary structures that is being used as a storage yard for landscaping and construction materials.

# **5 Results**

## **5.1 Structural analysis**

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

### **5.1.1 Phase 1: Natural deposits**

The underlying natural geology across the site consisted of an orange sand with occasional patches of gravels, consistent with the mapped geology.

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### 5.1.2 Phase 2: Roman deposits

A single ditch was recorded in Trench 1 [106]. This ditch was aligned north-west to south-east and measured 0.18m in depth and 0.64m wide. It contained a single, sandy fill from which one sherd of pottery was discovered, dating the feature to the Roman period. The profile and size of the feature suggested a function as a possible field boundary or the feature may have defined one side of a trackway.

### 5.1.3 Phase 3: Modern deposits

Across the Parcel J area, the natural and the features were sealed by an orangey brown sandy subsoil, up to 0.37m deep, which was overlain by a reddish brown sandy buried topsoil, up to 0.22m deep. Within Trenches 1 and 3 a greyish blue clay levelling deposit was present immediately above the topsoil, at 0.24m in depth. A thick layer of hardcore above the levelling deposit was also present within these trenches and this was also present immediately above the buried topsoil in Trenches 2 and 4. This hardcore layer contained modern building rubble and measured between 0.22m and 0.52m in depth. In Trenches 1 and 3 the hardcore underlay and also became mixed with a tarmac surface, while in Trench 2 it lay beneath a reinforced concrete surface and in Trench 4 it formed the ground surface itself.

A number of modern features were also observed in three of the trenches including two services, a concrete wall, and the remains of a brick built manhole. An irregular pit feature investigated in Trench 1 containing slag was deemed to be modern based on the high density of rooting and the very loose nature of the fill [108].

## 5.2 Artefact analysis, by Laura Griffin

The assemblage recovered from the site consisted of a single, highly abraded sherd (25g) of oxidised ware dating to the Roman period (context 105).

## 6 Synthesis

The evaluation has established the presence of a single archaeological feature within the site, a ditch dated to the Roman period. This is situated at the northern end of the site and may relate to two ditches discovered in the excavation phase of Parcel G (Walsh 2017) 50m to the east. These were of a similar profile and depth ditch 106, and were interpreted as forming a drove or trackway which would suggest that a part of the trackway from the Parcel G excavation may continue on towards the west, passing through the very northern end of Parcel J. Alternatively the ditch may represent a boundary forming part of a field system suggested by the dispersed ditches encountered during the evaluation of the site as a whole.

The lack of any other archaeological features in this evaluation indicates that apart from the possible trackway, the relatively dense area of Iron Age and Roman activity uncovered in Parcel G to the east does not continue into Parcel J. However, as a part of the wider archaeological landscape, the ditch representing either a trackway or part of a field system could be considered of local significance.

## 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.

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## **8 Acknowledgements**

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project; Richard Smalley (CgMs Consulting), and Andrew Armstrong (Archaeologist for Gloucester City Council).

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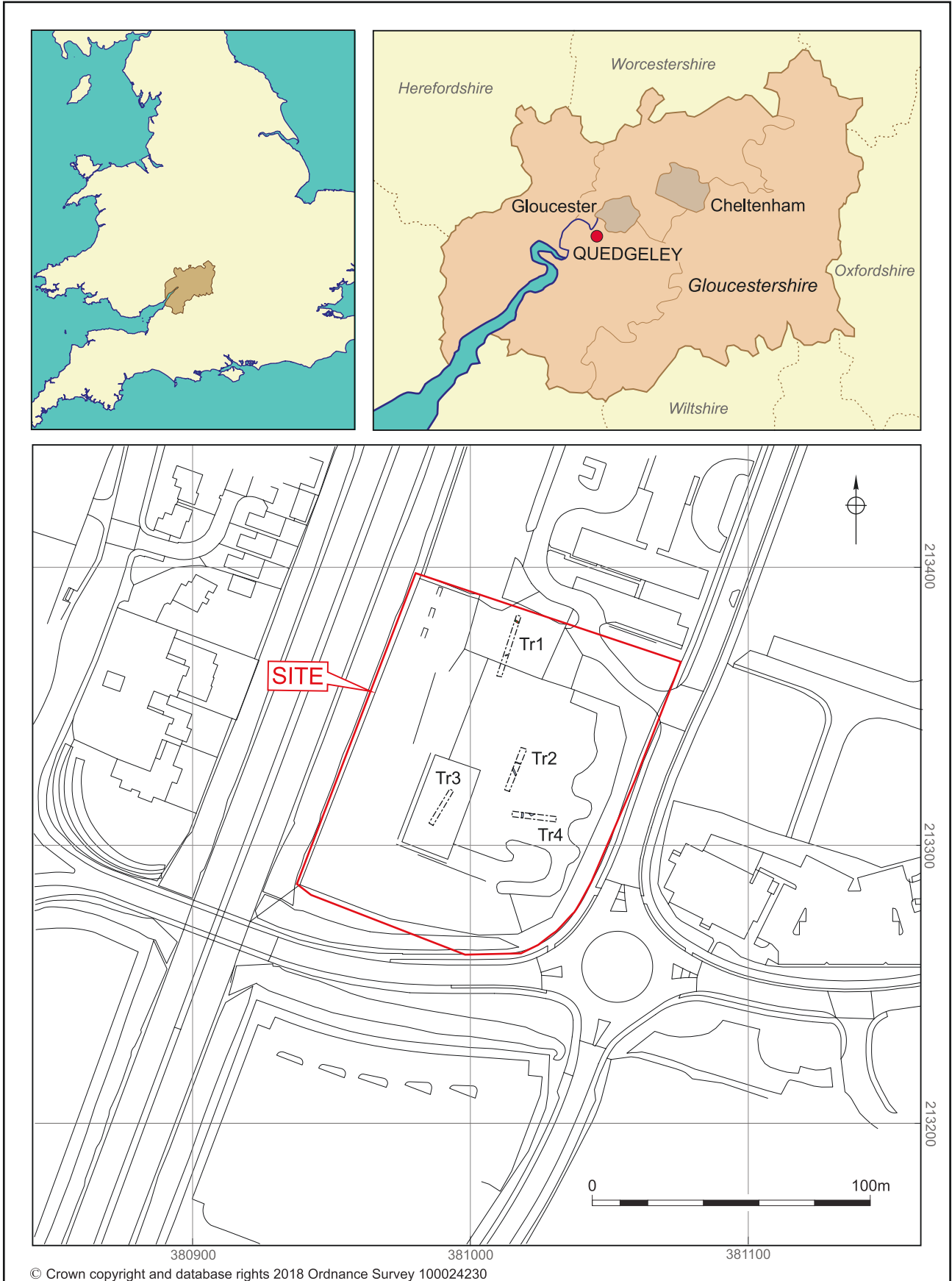
Walsh, A 2017 *Archaeological Investigations at Quedgeley Framework Plan 5, Gloucester, Gloucestershire*, Worcestershire Archaeology, Worcestershire County Council, unpublished report **2489**, dated 22 September 2017

Walsh, A, and Iiff, E 2016 *Archaeological evaluation at Quedgeley Framework Plan 5, Gloucester*, Worcestershire Archaeology, Worcestershire County Council, unpublished report **2360**, revision 1, dated 1 August 2016





**Figures**

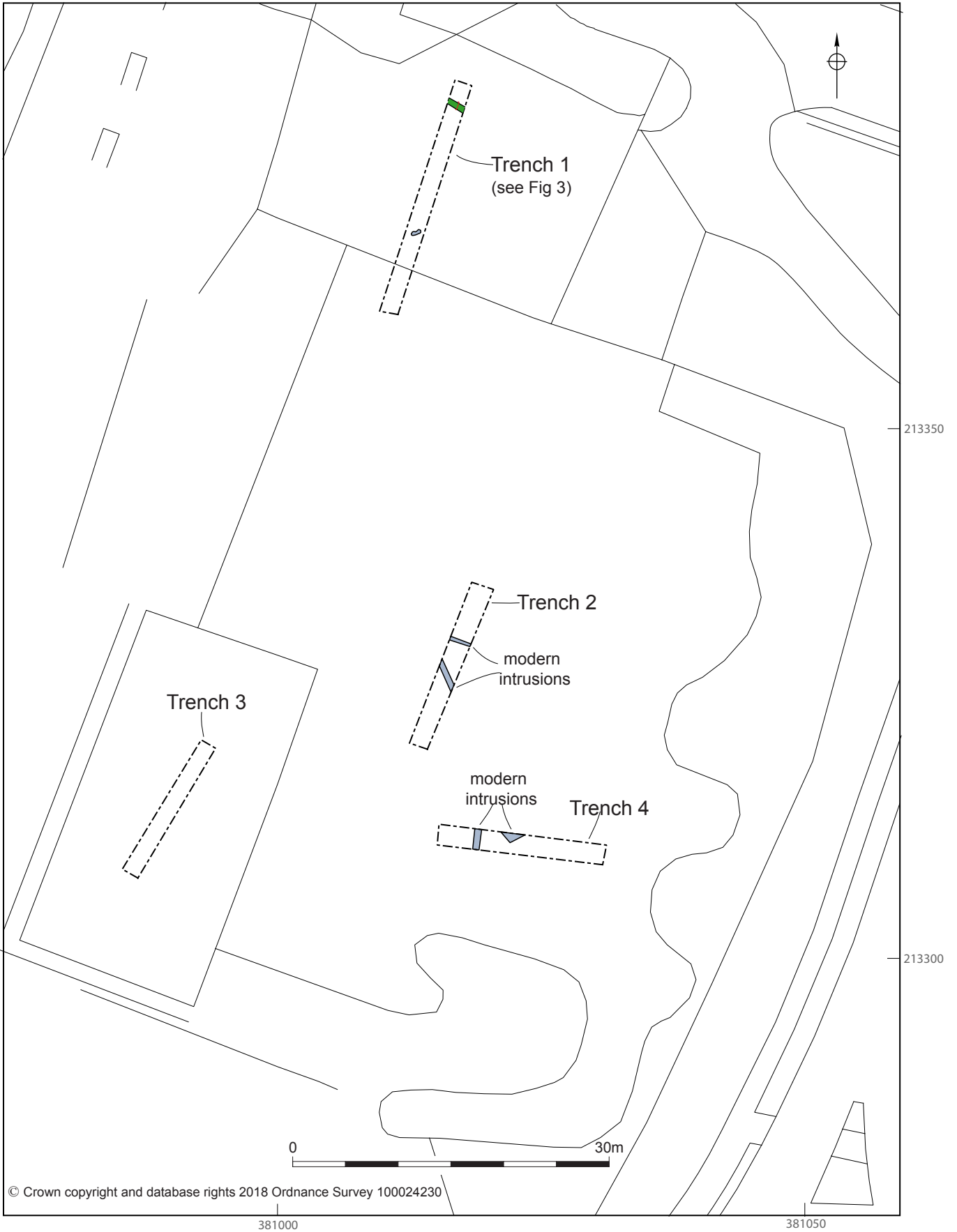


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Location of the site

Figure 1





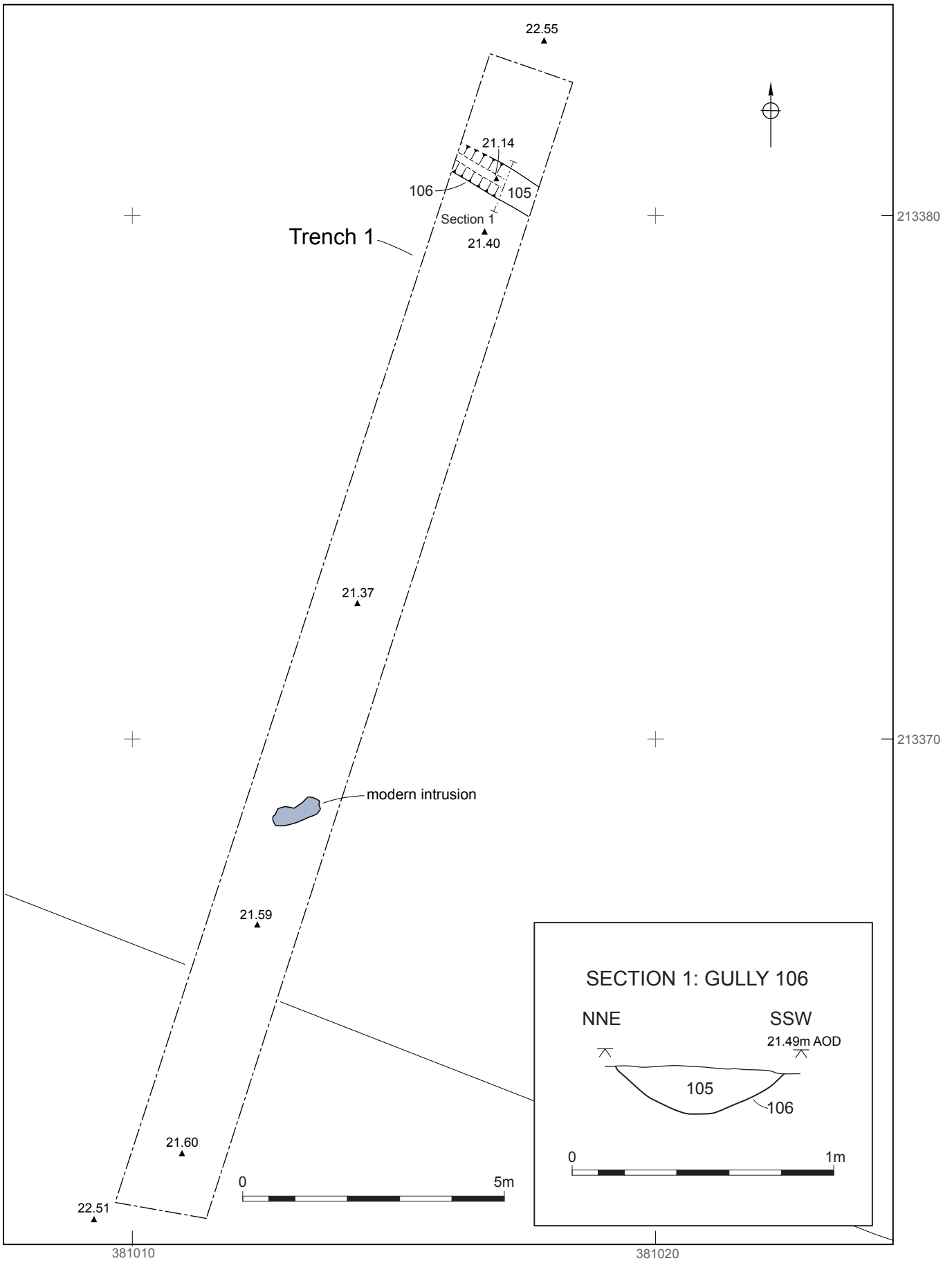
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381000

381050

Plan of trenches

Figure 2



Trench 1: plan and section of gully 106

Figure 3

## Plates



*Plate 1: General site conditions before excavation of Trench 3, facing south-west*



*Plate 2: Trench 2, facing north-west (scales 1m)*

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*Plate 3: Trench 4, facing west (scales 1m)*



*Plate 4: Section of Trench 1, facing west-north-west (scales 1m)*



*Plate 5: Section of ditch [106], facing east-south-east (scale 0.5m)*

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## Appendix 1 Trench descriptions

### Main deposit descriptions

#### Trench 1

Maximum dimensions: Length: 22m      Width: 1.8m      Depth: 1.34m

Orientation:                      NNE-SSW

Context	Context Type	Feature Type	Description	Interpretation	Depth
100	Layer	Tarmac surface	Tarmac and hardcore containing modern rubble.	Surface	0.46m
101	Layer	Made ground/levelling deposit	Compact, dark greyish blue sandy clay.	Made ground/levelling deposit	0.23m
102	Layer	Buried topsoil	Moderately compact and soft, mid reddish brown clayey sand.	Buried topsoil	0.22m
103	Layer	Subsoil	Moderately compact, mid orangey brown clayey sand.	Subsoil	0.37m
104	Layer	Natural	Compact, mid brownish orange silty sand.	Natural	
105	Fill	Ditch	Moderately compact and soft, mid brownish green, silty sand containing 1 sherd of pot.	Fill of ditch [106].	0.18m
106	Cut	Ditch		Cut of ditch.	0.18m
107	Fill	Pit	Loose, mid greyish brown sandy silt containing occasional slag.	Fill of pit [108]. Very loose with lots of rooting. Interpreted as modern.	0.32m
108	Cut	Pit		Cut of irregular modern pit.	0.32m

## Trench 2

Maximum dimensions: Length: 16.3m Width: 1.8m Depth: 0.98m

Orientation: NNE-SSW

Context	Context Type	Feature Type	Description	Interpretation	Depth
200	Layer	Surface	Reinforced concrete	Surface	0.18m
201	Layer	Made ground/levelling deposit	Hardcore containing modern rubble.	Made ground/levelling deposit	0.32m
202	Layer	Buried topsoil	Moderately compact, mid reddish brown clayey sand.	Buried topsoil	0.19m
203	Layer	Subsoil	Moderately compact, mid orangey brown clayey sand.	Subsoil	0.28m
204	Layer	Natural	Firm, mid brownish orange silty sand.	Natural	
205	Fill	Modern service	Hardcore and water pipe	Fill of modern service cut [206].	
206	Cut	Modern service		Cut for modern service.	
207	Structure	Wall	Concrete	Modern wall in cut [208].	
208	Cut	Wall		Cut for modern wall (207).	

## Trench 3

Maximum dimensions: Length: 15m Width: 1.8m Depth: 0.84m

Orientation: NE-SW

Context	Context Type	Feature Type	Description	Interpretation	Depth
300	Layer	Tarmac surface	Tarmac and hardcore containing modern rubble.	Surface	0.22m
301	Layer	Made ground/levelling deposit	Compact, dark greyish blue sandy clay.	Made ground/levelling deposit	0.24m
302	Layer	Buried topsoil	Moderately compact, mid brown, clayey sand.	Buried topsoil	0.16m

Context	Context Type	Feature Type	Description	Interpretation	Depth
303	Layer	Subsoil	Moderately compact, mid orangey brown clayey sand.	Subsoil	0.20m
304	Layer	Natural	Compact, mid brownish orange silty sand.	Natural	

**Trench 4**

Maximum dimensions: Length: 16m      Width: 1.8m      Depth: 0.88m

Orientation:                      E-W

Context	Context Type	Feature Type	Description	Interpretation	Depth
400	Layer	Surface	Hardcore containing modern rubble,	Surface	0.52m
401	Layer	Buried topsoil	Moderately compact, mid orangey brown silty sand.	Buried topsoil	0.16m
402	Layer	Subsoil	Moderately compact mid brownish orange silty sand.	Subsoil	0.20m
403	Layer	Natural	Compact, light brownish orange silty sand with occasional gravel patches.	Natural	
404	Fill	Service	Stone rubble	Fill of modern service [405].	
405	Cut	Service		Cut for modern service.	
406	Structure	Manhole		Modern brick manhole structure.	



## **Appendix 2 Technical information**

### **The archive**

The archive consists of:

- 2 Context records AS1
- 1 Photographic records AS3
- 25 Digital photographs
- 1 Drawing number catalogues AS4
- 2 Scale drawings
- 4 Trench record sheets AS41
- 1 Box of finds
- 1 Copy of this report (bound hard copy)

The project archive is intended to be placed at:

Museum of Gloucester  
Brunswick Road  
Gloucester  
Gloucestershire GL1 1HP  
Tel 01452 396131

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