

Archaeological watching brief at Lawnstone House, High Street, Coleford, Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire

Worcestershire Archaeology
for Forest of Dean District Council

June 2019



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LAWNSTONE HOUSE, HIGH STREET, COLEFORD, FOREST OF DEAN, GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Archaeological watching brief report



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SITE INFORMATION

Site name: Lawnstone House
Site code: P5323
Local planning authority: Forest of Dean District Council
Planning reference: P0067/18/FUL
Central NGR: NGR SO 5750 1057
Commissioning client: Sustain by Design on behalf of FoDDC
WA project number: P5323
WA report number: 2675
Oasis reference: fieldsec1-343750
Museum accession number: tbc

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Version	Date	Author	Details	Approved by
1	18/06/2019	Graham Arnold	Draft for comment	Tom Vaughan

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Archaeological watching brief at Lawnstone House, High Street, Coleford, Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire

By **Graham Arnold**

With contributions by Laura Griffin

Illustrations by Laura Templeton

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at Lawnstone House, Coleford, Gloucestershire (NGR SO 5750 1057). It was commissioned by Sustain by Design Ltd on behalf of Forest of Dean District Council (FoDDC), in association with redevelopment of the site, for which planning permission has been granted, subject to a programme of archaeological works.

The site is located on the southern edge of the centre of Coleford, bounded by the Studio Cinema to the north, High Street to the east and the offices and car park of Forest of Dean District Council to the south and west. It is within the historic core of Coleford. A previous desk based assessment highlighted the high potential for medieval and later settlement activity.

Groundworks on site including ground reduction, building footings and services were monitored. The modern footings from recently demolished buildings, a stone culvert related to the original Lawnstone House and a 20th century brick chamber were recorded. The site appeared to have been extensively disturbed during the previous development in the 20th century. One sherd of pottery recovered from the original footing of Lawnstone House, dated to the 18th century and correlates to the building's construction in this period. No medieval or post-medieval deposits or features were present, or other artefacts recovered.

Report

1 Introduction

1.1 Background to the project

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA) at Lawnstone House, High Street, Coleford, Gloucestershire (NGR SO 5750 1057). This comprised observation of ground reduction and foundation trenches during groundworks associated with the construction. The project was commissioned by Sustain by Design Ltd behalf of Forest of Dean District Council, in association with redevelopment of the site, for which planning permission has been granted, subject to a programme of archaeological works (planning reference P0067/18/FUL).

The archaeological advisor to the local planning authority considered that the development had the potential to impact upon possible heritage assets. Previous desk-based assessment of the site highlighted the potential for medieval and post-medieval remains on the site.

No brief was provided, but a WSI was prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2018) and approved by the Gloucestershire County Council Archaeologist. The watching brief also conforms to the industry guidelines and standards set out by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists in the *Standard and guidance: for an archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014a).

1.2 Site location, topography and geology

The site is located on the southern edge of the centre of Coleford, covering an area of approximately 2,000m². It is bounded by the Studio Cinema to the north, High Street to the east and the offices and car park of Forest of Dean District Council to the south and west.

The site lies on land which slopes gently from a height of c 181m AOD in the south, down to c 176m AOD to the north-east. The site was subject to a topographical survey as part of the current works.

The underlying geology is mapped as Cromhall Sandstone Foundation (BGS 2019).

The buildings of Lawnstone House in the centre of the site, the Annex to the north and a former residential property known as Lawnstone Bungalow had been demolished and areas of hardstanding removed prior to the watching brief starting. No below ground excavations had taken place prior to the watching brief.

2 Archaeological and historical background

2.1 Introduction

An archaeological desk-based assessment (DBA) of the site was undertaken by Worcestershire Archaeology (Walsh 2014) on behalf of the client. The findings presented in the DBA are summarised below.

The assessment identified there is limited potential for prehistoric, Roman and early medieval remains. The site is located adjacent to the historic core of Coleford, which has its origins in the medieval period and developed through the post-medieval period. There is a high potential that the medieval and later settlement and/or other activity extended into the proposed development area.

There is also evidence that extensive undated, but probably medieval or earlier, industrial remains exist to the south and east of the site at Cinder Hill. There is moderate potential for similar activity to have extended into the proposed development site.

The site is currently occupied by Lawnstone House and Annex. These buildings probably date to the early 19th century, although they have undergone significant alterations, both internally and externally. (Walsh 2014, 1)

3 Project 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 groundworks programme.

4 Project methodology

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2018). Fieldwork was undertaken between 22 January and 18 March 2019.

Four areas, identified as Trenches 1-4, including service trenching, reduced dig areas, attenuation tanks and foundation footings were excavated across the site. The whole site amounted to 2,000m² in area. The location of the trenches observed is indicated in Figure 2.

Deposits considered not to be significant were removed under constant archaeological monitoring using a 360° tracked excavator, employing a toothless bucket. Observation of excavated areas was undertaken during machine excavation. The exposed surfaces were sufficiently clean to observe well-differentiated archaeological deposits. Access to deep trenches was not made for safety reasons.

Deposits were recorded according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012) and trench and feature locations were surveyed using a differential GPS with an accuracy limit set at <0.04m, or tied into scaled plans provided by developer and georeferenced in QGIS. All fieldwork records were checked and cross-referenced. Analysis was undertaken through a combination of structural and artefactual evidence, allied to the information derived from other sources.

The project archive is currently held at the offices of Worcestershire Archaeology. Subject to the agreement of the landowner it is anticipated that it will be deposited at Dean Heritage Centre Museum.

5 Archaeological results

The trenches observed and the features recorded are illustrated in Figure 2.

Trench 1 – Electric cable trench

Maximum dimensions – length – 50.00m width – 1.00m depth – 0.70m

Context	Brief description	Depth from ground surface	Comments
100	Hardstanding	0.00-0.15m	Stone paving slabs on top of mixed loose light orange-grey gravelly sand and topsoil. Brick surfacing and reinforced concrete slab. Frequent rubble, with previous drainage visible.
101	Topsoil	0.00-0.40m	Firm, mixed dark grey brown silty clay with rubble and sub-round stones.
102	Made ground	0.30-0.70m	Type 1 gravels and modern levelling material below hardstanding and within service trenches
103	Soil	0.40-0.70m+	Dark greyish brown silty clay with occasional pot
104	Fill of wall foundation	0.00-0.70m	Dark greyish brown silty clay within construction cut 105

Context	Brief description	Depth from ground surface	Comments
105	Wall foundation	0.00-0.70m	Footing of Lawnstone House North wing made of limestone and green sandstone, with lime mortar bonding
106	Natural substrate	0.70m+	Firm red and yellow clay, with large angular limestone boulders and occasional patches of red gravels. White, yellow and red with depth. Limestone brash and clay geology.

Trench 2 – South area reduced dig

Maximum dimensions – length – 30.00m width – 15.00m depth – 1.00m

Context	Brief description	Depth from ground surface	Comments
200	Topsoil	0.00-0.40m	Humic dark greyish brown clay silt turf in west to a depth of 0.10m and frequent tree rooting in the east to a depth of 0.40m
201	Made ground	0.00-0.60m+	Hardstanding concrete slabs and brick walls of previous bungalow on sitefootings and
202	Subsoil	0.60-0.80m	Reddish brown clayey sand in Eastern area of south block
203	Wall foundation	0.23-0.63m	Brick wall foundation with modern polystyrene insulation
204	Natural substrate	0.80-1.10m+	Firm red and yellow clay, with large angular limestone boulders and occasional patches of red gravels. White, yellow and red with depth. Limestone brash and clay geology.
205	Stone Drainage culvert	0.60-1.00m	Green sandstone slab constructed drainage culvert with lime mortar bonding related to Lawnstone House. Running north south through centre of area. 0.60m wide and 9 m in length. Sealed with a 0.03m red clay,

Trench 3 – North block foundation trenches

Maximum dimensions – length – 22.00m width – 13.50m depth – 1.20 – 1.50m

Context	Brief description	Depth from ground surface	Comments
300	Modern made ground	0.00-0.50m	Modern stone hardcore, concrete slabs, tarmac and stone and mortar
301	Relict garden soil	0.50-1.50m+	Dark greyish brown clay silt with occasional patches of black clinker, bricks, porcelain black glass bottles and rare stoneware jars
302	Natural substrate	1.00-3.20m+	Firm red and yellow clay, with large angular limestone boulders and occasional patches of red gravels. White, yellow and red with depth. Limestone brash and clay geology
303	Wall foundation	0.00-0.70m	Modern stone footing of building
304	Fill of cut	0.00-0.70m	Construction cut for wall 303

Context	Brief description	Depth from ground surface	Comments
305	Construction cut of 303	0.00-0.70m	Made ground fill of construction cut for wall 303
306	Brick wall footing	0.00-0.70m	Footing of modern brick annex building
307	Limestone footing	0.00-0.70m	Same as 105 and other limestone footings of Lawnstone House and annex
308	Limestone footing	0.00-0.70m	Same as wall 303, wall foundation for original Lawnstone House building
309	Limestone footing	0.00-0.70m	Same as wall 303, wall foundation for original Lawnstone House building
310	Fill of service trench	0.30-2.30m	Modern type 1 gravels underneath modern hardstanding
311	Service trench	0.30-2.30m	Large service trench running east –west truncating site
312	Brick drainage chamber	0.50-3.00m	c. 1890 - 1922 brick chamber from water drainage storage. Cut by modern sewer. Brick walls with concrete base and brick arch. 2.50m x 1.50m, 2.50m deep. In eastern extent of footings

Trench 4 – Attenuation tank

Maximum dimensions – length - 9.00m width – 3.00m depth – 2.00m

Context	Brief description	Depth from ground surface	Comments
400	Modern hardstanding	0.00-0.50m	Concrete footings and hardstanding in central area
401	19 th C made ground	0.00-0.70m	Dark blackish brown sandy silty clay with frequent mortar, clinker and brick rubble, cut by modern drainage
402	Natural	0.70-2.70m+	Firm yellow and orange clay with frequent angular limestone boulders. Solid bedrock

The natural undisturbed clay with limestone and sandstone boulders was recorded at an average of c1.00m below the present ground level. This was overlaid by a series of soils and made ground. These included finds of 19th century and later date, including glass bottles, stoneware jars and fragments of porcelain.

The brick and limestone foundations of Lawnstone House and the adjacent Annex were visible on site prior to excavations taking place. These were recorded in Trench 1 (Plates 3 and 4) and the Trench 3 foundation trenches for the north block, and consisted of limestone blocks with lime mortar bonding and some later brick built foundations.

In the south block a reduced dig was monitored down to the natural substrates (Trench 2; Plate 5). The strip in the east showed that modern hardstanding, made ground and foundations from the modern bungalow had truncated the ground down to the natural firm clay (Plate 6). In the centre of the area, a limestone slab drainage culvert was recorded, (205), with lime mortar bonding, similar to the foundations for Lawnstones house (Plates 7 and 8). This indicates that it is likely to be

contemporary with the Lawnstone House building. No dating evidence was otherwise found within the culvert.

A brick chamber observed within the western side of Trench 3 in the north block is thought to be related to the building that was in this location in the early 20th century and had been cut by later services for the council buildings to the west of the site (Plate 10). The northern area of site (Trench 3) had been heavily truncated by a variety of modern utility services and drainage (Plate 11).

Monitoring of the area for an attenuation tank (Trench 4; Plate 12) located at the centre of the site only recorded modern made ground and natural deposits.

6 Artefactual evidence, by Laura Griffin

Recovery of artefacts was undertaken according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012). In the event, no artefacts were identified which were considered to be suitable for analysis. All finds recovered from the made ground dated to the 19th century and later. A single sherd of pottery recovered from Trench 1, foundation cut (104), was a locally produced glazed earthenware rim of domestic use, dating to the 18th century.

7 Environmental evidence

Environmental sampling was approached using standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012). In the event, no deposits were excavated which were considered to be suitable for environmental analysis.

8 Discussion and conclusions

The archaeological watching brief revealed deposits and features related to the original Lawnstone House, later structures and areas of truncation. These included the limestone wall foundations, where a single 18th century pot sherd was recovered, and a stone culvert was recording in the south end of site, of similar construction.

A brick chamber in the north of the site dated to the early 20th century, together with further wall foundations and modern disturbance for services and drainage.

No medieval or post-medieval deposits or features were present, or other artefacts recovered. The site appeared to have been extensively disturbed during the previous development in the 20th century.

The methods adopted allow a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved. Conditions were suitable in all of the areas to identify the presence or absence of archaeological features. It is considered that the nature, density and distribution of archaeological features provides an accurate characterisation of the development site as a whole.

9 Project personnel

The fieldwork was led by Graham Arnold PCIfA. The project was managed by Tom Vaughan, MCIfA. The report was produced and collated by Graham Arnold. Laura Templeton, MCIfA, provided the illustrations and Laura Griffin, ACIfA, provided a spot date on the sherd of pottery recovered from the base of the wall foundation.

10 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following: Simon Brown (Sustain by Design Ltd), Mark Eaton, Nobby McBride, Garry Godsall and Lee Holmes (Speller Metcalfe) and Charles Parry (Archaeologist, Gloucestershire County Council).

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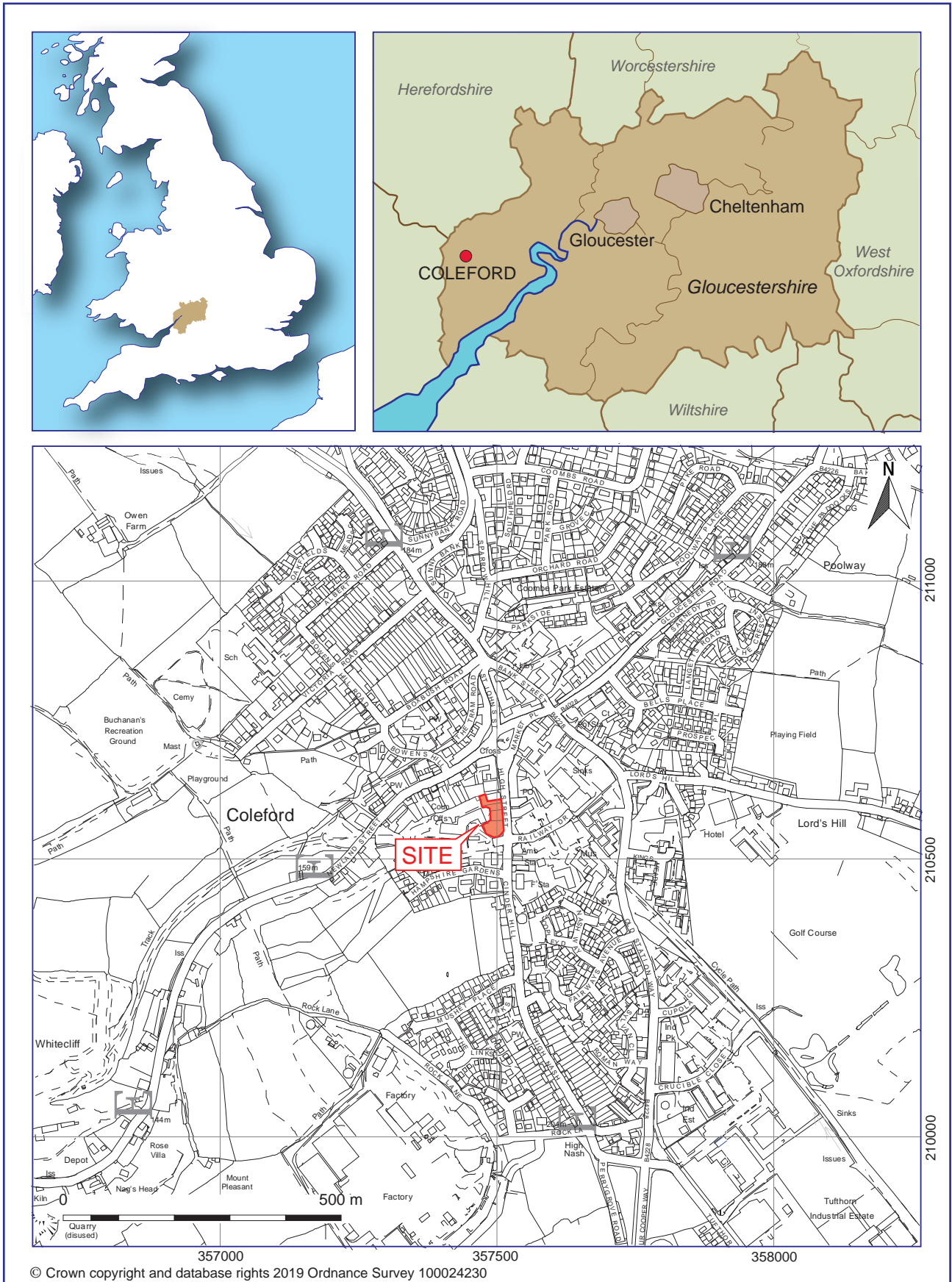
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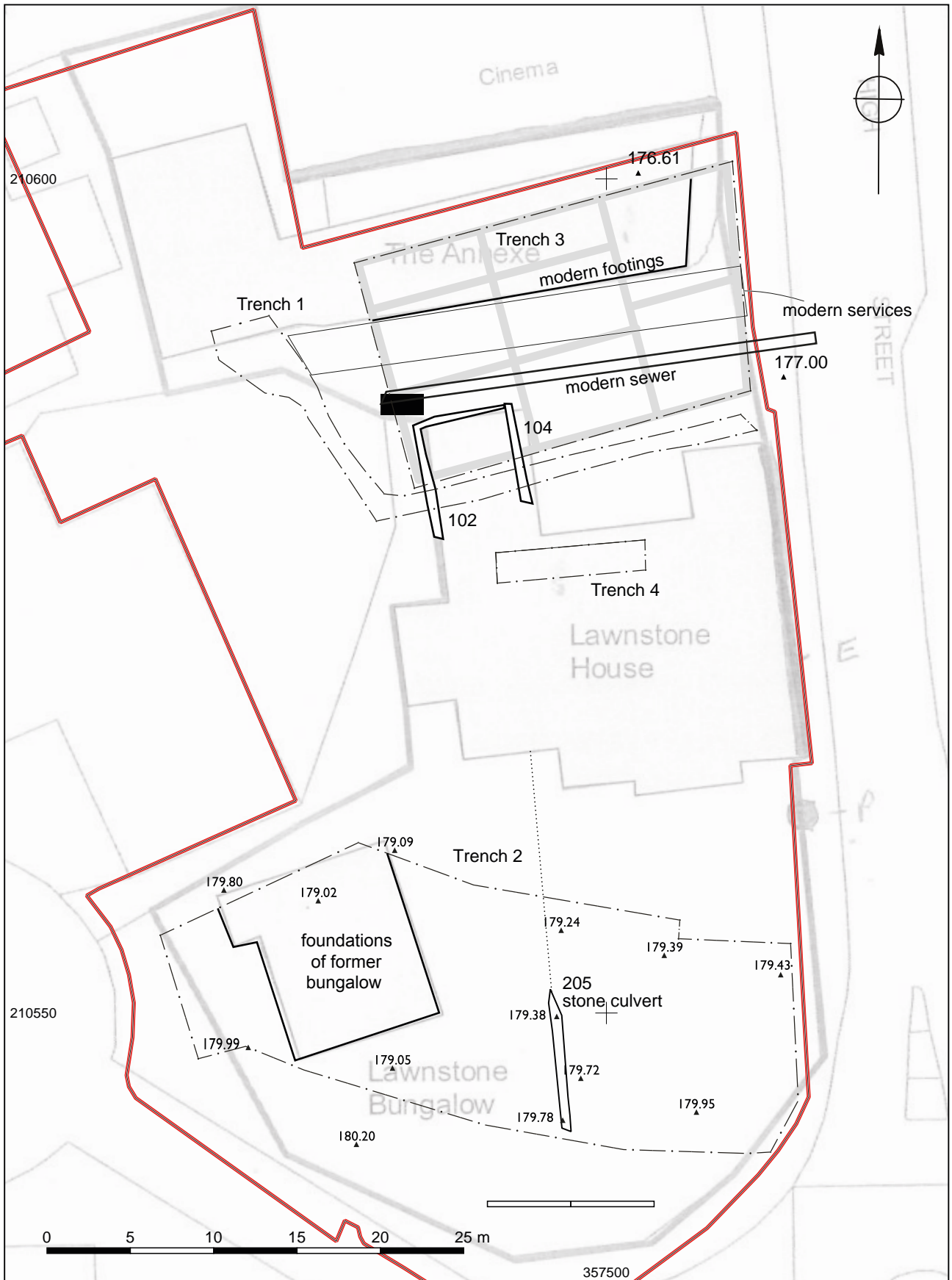
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Figures



Location of the site

Figure 1



Trench locations and observations

Figure 2

Plates



Plate 1: View of southern area prior to groundworks taking place; view west, no scales



Plate 2: View north of site prior to excavations; machine removing hardstanding in background; no scales



Plate 3: Trench 1 electricity cable, aligned east to west across site; view east; 2x 1m scales



Plate 4: Trench 1, limestone footings from Lawnstone house; view north-west 2x 1m scales



Plate 5: Trench 2, natural substrate in the southern part of site, following reduced dig; view east; 2x 1m scales



Plate 6: Trench 2, natural substrate in southern area; site of previous bungalow; view north, 2x 1m scales



Plate 7: Trench2 stone culvert (205) relating to original Lawnstone building; view north; 0.4m and 1m scales



Plate 8: Trench 2, close up of stone culvert (205); view south; 0.4 and 0.5m scales



Plate 9: Trench 3, north block footings in progress; view west; 2x 1m scales



Plate 10: Trench 3, brick water storage drainage chamber structure (312); cut by modern sewer; view west; no scales



Plate 11: Trench 2 modern service trench, drainage and sewer truncations; view east; 1m scale



Plate 12: Attenuation tank excavated showing made ground and natural deposits; view south-west; no scales

Appendix 1: Summary of project archive

TYPE	DETAILS*
Artefacts and Environmental	None retained
Paper	Context sheet, Diary (Field progress form), Report, Plan
Digital	GIS, Images raster/digital photography

*OASIS terminology