

# Archaeological investigation at Broadfield Plantation, Ombersley Rd, Westwood, Droitwich, Worcestershire

Worcestershire Archaeology  
*for Mr and Mrs Ruane*

May 2019



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# BROADFIELD PLANTATION, OMBERSLEY RD, WESTWOOD, DROITWICH, WORCESTERSHIRE

Archaeological investigation report

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## SITE INFORMATION

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Site name: Broadfield Plantation, Ombersley Rd, Westwood, Droitwich, Worcestershire

Site code: WSM 71510

Local planning authority: Wychavon District Council

Planning reference: 18/01795/FUL

Central NGR: SO 8736 6314

Commissioning client: Mr and Mrs Ruane

Client project reference: -

WA project number: P5553

WA report number: 2695

HER reference: WSM 71510

Oasis reference: fieldsec1-349640

Museum accession number: tbc

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# CONTENTS

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<b>SUMMARY</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>REPORT</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>1 INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>2</b>
1.1 Background to the project .....	2
1.2 Site location, topography and geology.....	2
<b>2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND</b> .....	<b>2</b>
2.1 Introduction .....	2
2.2 Previous archaeological work on the site .....	3
<b>3 PROJECT AIMS</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>4 PROJECT METHODOLOGY</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS</b> .....	<b>4</b>
5.1 Introduction .....	4
5.2 Phasing/Trench descriptions.....	4
5.2.1 Natural deposits/Natural deposits across the site .....	4
5.2.2 Phase 1: Post-medieval/modern deposits .....	4
<b>6 ARTEFACTUAL EVIDENCE, BY JANE EVANS</b> .....	<b>5</b>
6.1 Artefact methodology .....	5
6.1.1 Recovery policy.....	5
6.1.2 Method of analysis.....	5
6.1.3 Discard policy .....	5
6.2 Artefactual analysis .....	5
6.3 Recommendations .....	5
6.3.1 Further analysis and reporting .....	5
6.3.2 Discard and retention .....	5
<b>7 ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>8 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>9 PROJECT PERSONNEL</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>10 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>11 BIBLIOGRAPHY</b> .....	<b>6</b>

## FIGURES

## PLATES

## APPENDIX 1: TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS

**APPENDIX 2: SUMMARY OF PROJECT ARCHIVE**

**APPENDIX 3: SUMMARY OF DATA FOR HER**

# Archaeological investigation at Broadfield Plantation, Ombersley Rd, Westwood, Droitwich, Worcestershire

By Tom Vaughan

With contributions by Jane Evans

Illustrations by Carolyn Hunt

## Summary

An archaeological investigation was undertaken at Broadfield Plantation, Ombersley Rd, Westwood, Droitwich, Worcestershire (NGR SO 8736 6314). It was commissioned by Mr and Mrs Ruane as a result of the conditioned approval of a retrospective planning application to Wychavon District Council for the change of use of woodland to mixed forestry and amenity use with associated car parking.

Two trenches were opened along the track to Broadfield Plantation immediately south-east of the new car park off the entrance to Westwood Park. A mixed plough soil was noted in both trenches, c 0.31-0.36m deep, directly over the natural geology of sandy clay with variable pebble gravel inclusions. The surface of the natural was slightly undulating, with at least one possible tree bowl, and a number of linear striations which are interpreted to be plough scars, as they were parallel with the adjacent wall along the edge of the field to the south-west.

No significant archaeological deposits, horizons, layers or structures were revealed, nor in situ artefacts recovered. There was no evidence for wooden huts used to house US military personnel during World War 2, whose locations are reported to have been adjacent to Middle Lodge. These structures may have been bedded directly on the field surface and not required foundations, due to their temporary nature, although of course they may not have been sited within the exact location of the current investigations, so traces may survive elsewhere. The residual finds assemblage comprised largely undiagnostic 19th and 20th century china, glass and building debris, although the single lead window came (a lead strip to hold small pieces of window glass) may be of earlier date.

# Report

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Background to the project

An archaeological investigation was undertaken by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA) in April 2019 at Broadfield Plantation, Ombersley Rd, Westwood, Droitwich, Worcestershire (NGR SO 8736 6314). It was commissioned by Mr and Mrs Ruane, as a result of the conditioned approval of a retrospective planning application to Wychavon District Council (reference number 18/01795/FUL; condition 2). The application was for the change of use of woodland to mixed forestry and amenity use with associated parking.

The Archaeological Advisor for Wychavon District Council (the local planning authority) considered that the proposed development had the potential to impact upon possible heritage assets.

The area for the new car park had been reduced and consolidated with gravel without archaeological monitoring. The Archaeological Advisor therefore required that a commensurate area along the track to the south-east be the subject of archaeological investigation.

No formal brief was provided but the requirements for this investigation were confirmed in correspondence between WA and the Archaeological Advisor dated 31 January and 20 March 2019. A WSI was prepared by WA (2019) and approved by the Archaeological Advisor. The investigation also conforms to the industry guidelines and standards set out by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists in *the Standard and guidance: for archaeological excavation* (ClfA 2014a), and the *Standards and guidelines for archaeological projects in Worcestershire* (WCC 2010).

### 1.2 Site location, topography and geology

The site comprises the car park area opposite Middle Lodge, at the south entrance to Westwood Park, off Ombersley Road, A4133 (Fig 1). The car park is at the west end of an unsurfaced track which leads to Broadfield Plantation woodland to the east. The area of intrusive groundworks associated with the planning application was solely the area of the new car park.

The site lies at c 43m AOD, within an undulating mixed landscape of fields and woodland, on the southern side of Westwood Park. It is bounded by the A4133 to the south and fields to the north.

The predominant soils of the immediate area belong to the Whimple 3 soil association (572f) comprising reddish fine loamy or fine silty over clayey soils with slowly permeable subsoils and slight seasonal waterlogging, some similar clayey soils on brows, slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged fine loamy and fine silty clayey soils on lower slopes, over parent material of drift over Permo-Triassic and carboniferous reddish mudstone. To the north-east the predominant soils belong to the Bromsgrove soil association (541b) comprising well drained reddish coarse loamy soils mainly over soft sandstone, but deep in places, associated with fine loamy soils with slowly permeable subsoils and slight seasonal waterlogging, over parent material of Permo-Triassic and carboniferous sandstone and siltstone (Soil Survey of England and Wales, 1983).

## 2 Archaeological and historical background

### 2.1 Introduction

Prior to fieldwork commencing, a search of Worcestershire HER was completed, covering a search area of 1km around the site. Historic mapping and aerial photographs were also consulted. The results are summarised below:

The historic landscape is dominated by the 17th century parkland and gardens of Westwood Park, whilst to the south, meadow and modern field reorganisation is prevalent. This is a fairly wooded



landscape with dispersed clustered settlement however to the immediate east the 20th century expansion of Droitwich covers most of the area.

25 Archaeological activities and 82 HER Monuments were recorded within the search area, including the Historic England Registered Parkland Westwood Park. Within the search area lie 13 Historic England Listed historic buildings and 11 other unlisted historic buildings. The earliest structures recorded are related to the main buildings at Westwood Park and date to the 17th century. Additional structures related to the park date to the 18th and 19th century and include garden buildings, lodges and walls. A number of farm buildings are also recorded. A Historic England project to identify the Historic Farmsteads of Worcestershire also recorded 4 farmsteads and 4 out farms within the search area dating to the 17th – 19th century.

In addition to the built environment there are also monument records for the site of a number of farm buildings that are now demolished and a series of records related to the gardens at Westwood Park. The remainder of the post-medieval records are generally associated with the Droitwich Canal and navigation of the River Salwarpe. For later periods there is evidence for the site of two World War 2 camps, including within close proximity of the development site. The medieval landscape is well preserved in the search area with records for earthworks of ridge and furrow, ponds and holloways. The site of a nunnery is recorded at Westwood and the possible site of a deserted medieval village. The extent of the medieval Salwarpe deer park may have also fallen within the search area although its boundaries are generally unknown. A medieval mill site, enclosures and possible rabbit warren are also recorded. The only earlier evidence recorded is the possible route of a Roman road.

No Portable Antiquity Scheme finds are recorded within the search area; however archaeological investigations have recovered a number of artefacts including post-medieval pottery and architectural material, a small number of Roman and medieval pottery sherds and a selection of prehistoric lithic implements. Environmental remains have also been collected.

There has been a fair amount of archaeological investigation within the search area including a series of field walking, desk based assessments and building recording. In the 1990s a pipeline excavation passed through the search area however no features were recorded. In the wider landscape however there is considered to be high potential for below ground archaeology, especially preserved under parkland. A number of watching briefs and evaluations have also been recorded but have generally not recorded any significant features. Finally, a Historic England project to identify the potential for Palaeolithic Archaeology in Worcestershire recorded a number of deposits within the search area with potential for archaeology dating back to 113,050 BC.

The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> edition Ordnance Survey maps of the late 19th and early 20th centuries indicate that the site was undeveloped and comprised the southern edge of the wider agricultural field to the north, within occasional trees located around the periphery, especially towards the plantation to the south-east. There is oral testimony that a small encampment of wooden huts was established during World War 2 to house coloured US troops alongside the park wall near Middle Lodge (WSM 29306). The Ordnance Survey maps of the post-war period do not indicate these structures.

## 2.2 Previous archaeological work on the site

No previous archaeological investigations are recorded on the site, or in the immediate vicinity.

## 3 Project aims

The aims and scope of the project are to

- determine the presence or absence of archaeological deposits beyond reasonable doubt;
- identify their location, nature, date and state of preservation;
- hand-excavate, record and report on all archaeological remains present, and disseminate the

## 4 Project methodology

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2019). Fieldwork was undertaken on 15 April 2019.

The original scope of the investigation was to open an area commensurate with the c 280m<sup>2</sup> area reduced to create the new car park as close as possible to the new car park, along the track to the south-east. This was identified in correspondence dated 31 January 2019. However a number of practical and health and safety constraints were identified which limited the scope for such a large area of excavation, notably:

- The track averages 4m in width, between the brick wall to the south-west and the field to the north-east;
- The brick wall to the south is curtilage listed, which requires a buffer zone to be maintained;
- There are understood to be a series of water pipes along the south side of the field, potentially below the existing track.

Following discussion with the Archaeological Advisor, dated 20 March 2019, it was agreed that the scope of archaeological works be reduced to the excavation of two linear trenches, toward the north-

Deposits considered not to be significant were removed under constant archaeological supervision using a JCB 3CX type wheeled 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 according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012) and trench and feature locations were surveyed in with tapes. On completion of excavation, trenches were reinstated by replacing the excavated material.

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 with Museums Worcestershire.

## 5 Archaeological results

### 5.1 Introduction

The trenches are shown in Figure 2 and Plates 1-7. The trench and context inventory is presented in Appendix 1.

### 5.2 Phasing/Trench descriptions

#### 5.2.1 Natural deposits/Natural deposits across the site

The natural matrix comprised sandy clay with variable patches of sub-rounded stone, pebbles and cobbles, at a depth of c 0.31m in Trench 1 (c 41.50-41.80m AOD) and c 0.36m in Trench 2 (c 41.90m AOD) below the ground surface.

#### 5.2.2 Phase 1: Post-medieval/modern deposits

A single homogenous soil was recorded overlying the natural in both trenches. This comprised a sandy clay with charcoal flecks, sub-rounded stones and occasional 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century ceramic building material (CBM), bottle and window glass fragments, and china. There was no defined subsoil and the boundary with the natural was irregular. There were a few deeper patches of soil within the surface of

the natural, and a number of parallel linear marks, aligned north-west to south east which were interpreted as plough scars.

## 6 Artefactual evidence, by Jane Evans

### 6.1 Artefact methodology

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

#### 6.1.1 Recovery policy

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

#### 6.1.2 Method of analysis

The finds were scanned, quantified and dated; none justified detailed analysis. No artefacts were recovered from environmental samples. Pottery fabrics are referenced to the Worcestershire Ceramics Online Database, <https://worcestershireceramics.org/fabrics/categorized/dategenperiod>.

#### 6.1.3 Discard policy

Artefacts from topsoil and subsoil and unstratified contexts will normally be noted but not retained, unless they are of intrinsic interest (e.g. 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.

### 6.2 Artefactual analysis

A small assemblage of modern finds was recovered from context 200. These included an iron bolt, a strip of lead window came, two fragments of clear window glass, a fragment of clear vessel glass, and a sherd of modern china (Worcestershire Fabric Reference Collection fabric 85), the latter broadly datable to the 19th or 20th century. Additional finds of modern china and vessel glass were noted on site but not retained (Plate 8).

### 6.3 Recommendations

#### 6.3.1 Further analysis and reporting

No further analysis required.

#### 6.3.2 Discard and retention

The finds can be discarded, with agreement from the receiving museum.

## 7 Environmental evidence

Environmental 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.

## 8 Discussion and conclusions

Two trenches were opened along the track to Broadfield Plantation immediately south-east of the new car park off the entrance to Westwood Park. A mixed plough soil was noted in both trenches, c 0.31-0.36m deep, directly over the natural geology of sandy clay with variable pebble gravel inclusions. The surface of the natural was slightly undulating, with at least one possible tree bowl, and a number

of linear striations which are interpreted to be plough scars, as they were parallel with the adjacent wall along the edge of the field to the south-west. No significant archaeological deposits, horizons, layers or structures were revealed, nor in situ artefacts recovered. There was no evidence for the wooden huts used to house US military personnel during World War 2. These structures may have been bedded directly on the field surface and not required foundations, due to their temporary nature, although of course they may not have been sited within the exact location of the current investigations, so traces may survive elsewhere. The residual finds assemblage comprised largely undiagnostic 19th and 20th century china, glass and building debris, although the single lead window came (a lead strip to hold small pieces of window glass) may be of earlier date.

The methods adopted allow a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved. Conditions were suitable in both of the trenches 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 project was managed and led by Tom Vaughan, MClfA, assisted by Gwyneth Thomas. Specialist contributions and individual sections of the report are attributed to the relevant authors throughout the text.

## 10 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following: Kirstie and Julian Ruane and Jason Field (Halford Associates Ltd), and Aidan Smyth (Archaeological Advisor, Wychavon District Council).

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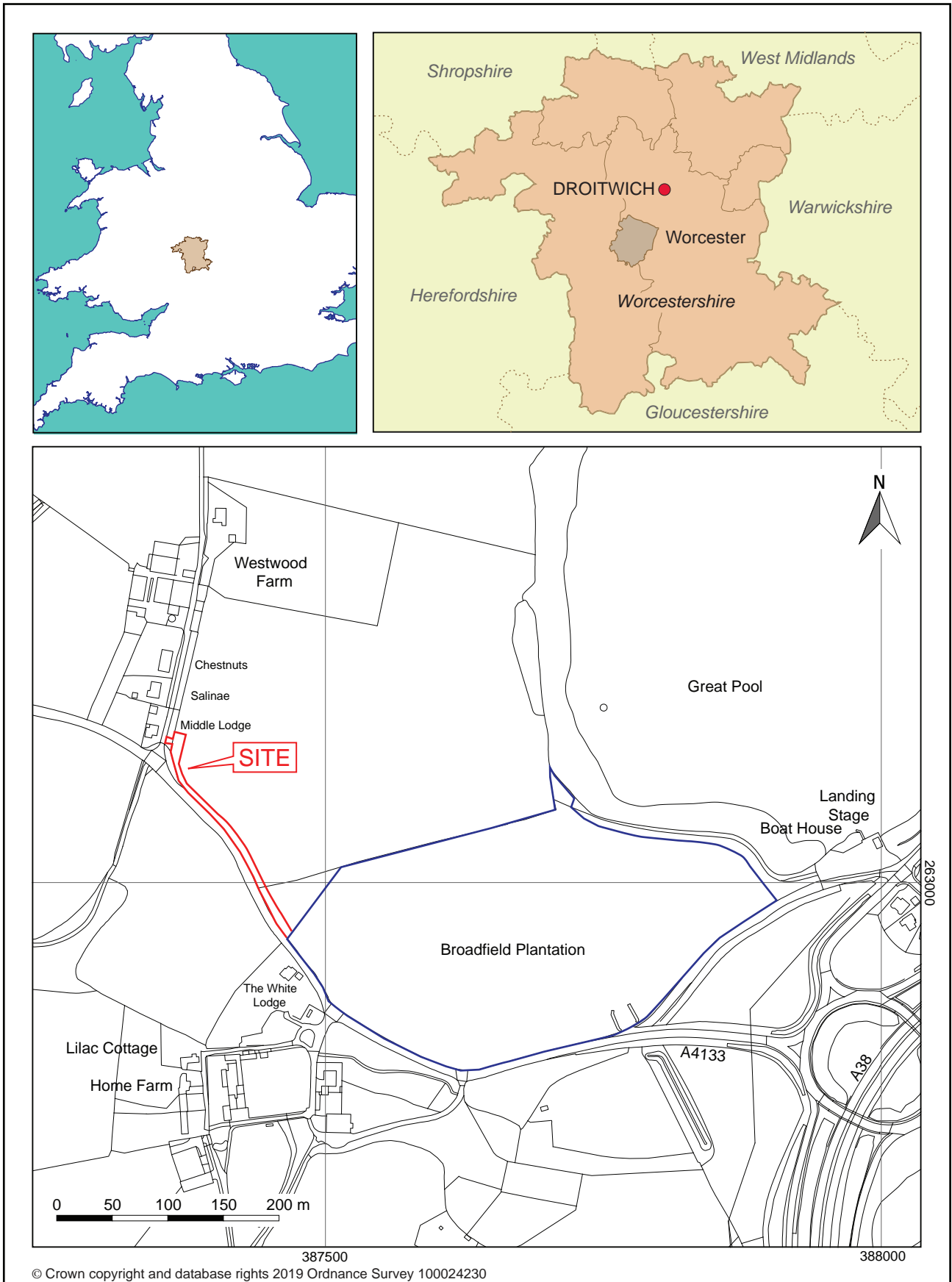
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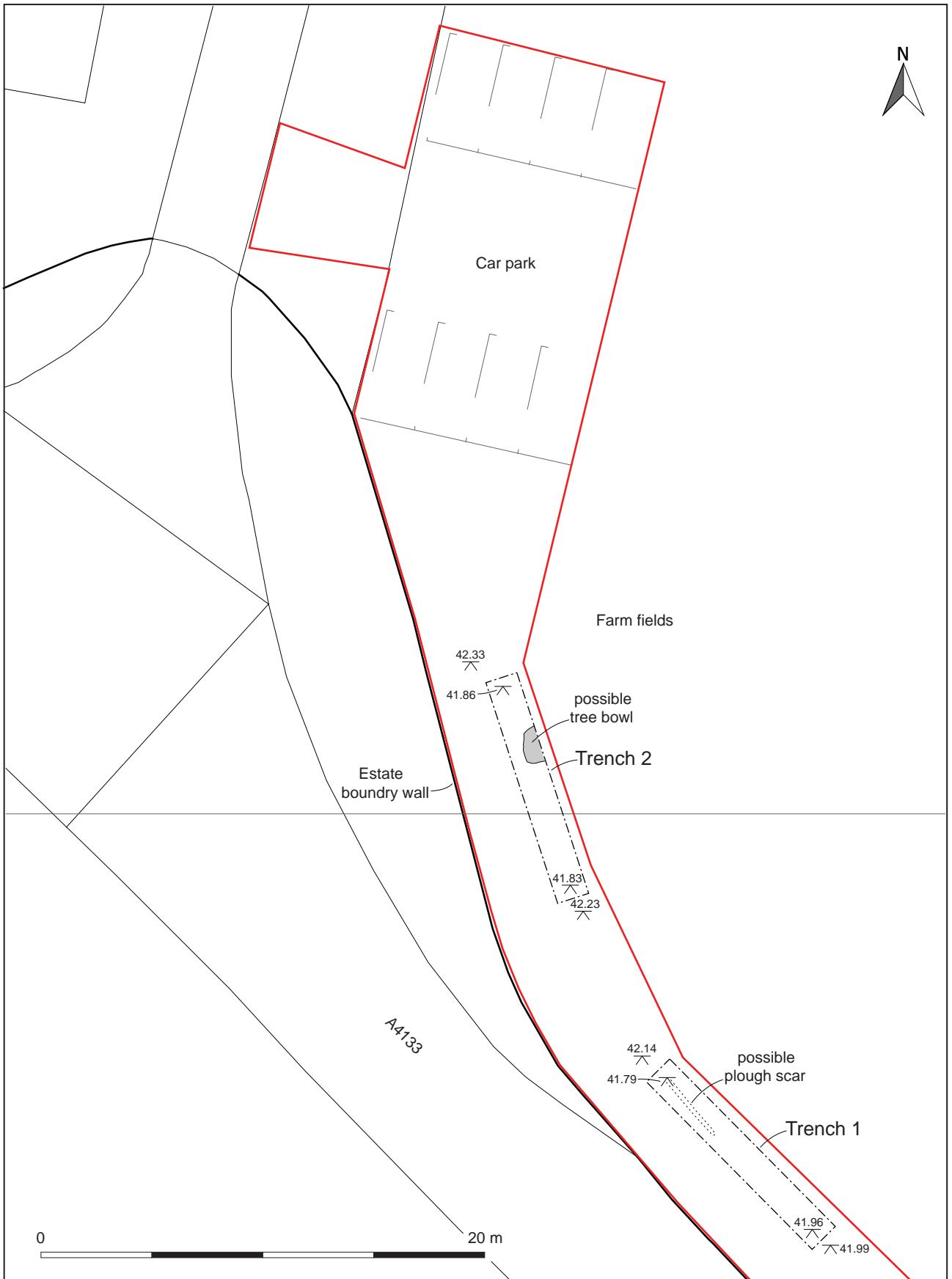
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## Figures



Location of the site

Figure 1



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Trench location plan

Figure 2



## Plates



*Plate 1, Trench 1 general view north-west, 2x 1m scales*





*Plate 2, Trench 1 general view south-east, 2x 1m scales*





*Plate 3, Trench 1, sample section, 1m scale*





*Plate 4, Trench 2, general view north-north-west, 2x 1m scales*





*Plate 5, Trench 2, general view south-south-east, 2x 1m scales*





*Plate 6, general view south-south-east of both trenches, 2x 1m scales*



*Plate 7, general view north-north-west after backfilling of trenches, 2x 1m scales*





*Plate 8, residual finds recovered from the soils during fieldwork but not retained*

## Appendix 1: Trench descriptions

### Main deposit descriptions

#### Trench 1

Maximum dimensions: Length: 10.70m Width: 1.50m Depth: 0.42m

Orientation: NW-SE

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
100	Topsoil	Mid grey brown sandy clay, loose and pliable, occasional flecks of charcoal, glass and CBM, rare sub-rounded stone; irregular boundary with 101 below; a single latticed lead window came; no defined subsoil.	0.00-0.31m
101	Natural	Light reddish brown sandy clay; soft and pliable; frequent patches of sub-rounded stone, pebbles and cobbles; irregular boundary with 100 above	0.31m+

#### Trench 2

Maximum dimensions: Length: 10.05m Width: 1.50m Depth: 0.44m

Orientation: NNW-SSE

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
200	Topsoil	Mid grey brown sandy clay, loose and pliable, occasional flecks of charcoal, glass, CBM and china; rare sub-rounded stone; irregular boundary with 201 below; no defined subsoil.	0.00-0.36m
201	Natural	Light reddish brown sandy clay; soft and pliable; frequent sub-rounded stone, pebbles and cobbles; irregular boundary with 200 above	0.36m+



## Appendix 2: Summary of project archive (WSM 71510)

TYPE	DETAILS*
Artefacts and Environmental	Animal bones, Ceramics, Environmental, Glass, Human bones, Industrial, Leather, Metal, Textiles, Wood, Worked bone, Worked stone/lithics, other
Paper	Context sheet, Correspondence, Diary (Field progress form), Drawing, Photograph, Plan, Report
Digital	Images raster/digital photography, Text

\*OASIS terminology

## Appendix 3: Summary of data for HER

WSM 71510

A small assemblage of modern finds was recovered from context 200. These included an iron bolt, a strip of lead window came, two fragments of clear window glass, a fragment of clear vessel glass, and a sherd of modern china (Worcestershire Fabric Reference Collection fabric 85), the latter broadly datable to the 19th or 20th century. Additional finds of modern china and vessel glass were noted on site but not retained (Plate 8).