

Archaeological Watching Brief at the National Grid site, Gloster Ades Road, Honeybourne, Worcestershire

Worcestershire Archaeology
for Kier Major Projects

December 2019



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NATIONAL GRID SITE, GLOSTER ADES ROAD, HONEYBOURNE, WORCESTERSHIRE

Archaeological Watching Brief Report



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SITE INFORMATION

Site name: National Grid site, Gloster Ades Road, Honeybourne, Worcestershire
Local planning authority: Wychavon District Council
Central NGR: SP 10646 43561
Commissioning client: Kier Major Projects
WA project number: P5639
WA report number: 2743
HER reference: WSM 71815
Oasis reference: Fieldsec1-371196

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1	02/12/2019	Graham Arnold	Draft for comment	Tom Vaughan

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Archaeological watching brief at the National Grid site, Gloster Ades Road, Honeybourne, Worcestershire

By Graham Arnold

With contributions by Rob Hedge

Illustrations by Carolyn Hunt

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at the National Grid AGI Site, Gloster Ades Road, Honeybourne, Worcestershire (NGR SP 10646 43561). It was commissioned by Kier Major Projects, on behalf of the National Grid, in association with works at an existing National Grid site. Permission had been granted subject to a programme of archaeological works.

The site was adjacent to a Roman enclosed settlement, and the current road is conjectured to have Roman origins.

The works involved a strip map and sample of a compound and access area, followed by archaeological monitoring of works within the current National Grid AGI site. The strip map and sample areas were a maximum of 0.25m deep, into ploughsoil. A small assemblage of Roman pottery was recovered, consistent with rural occupation between the later 1st and 3rd centuries AD. Natural undisturbed deposits were not exposed in this area outside the National Grid site, such that no *in situ* archaeological features or deposits were revealed. However, the presence of the Roman pottery within the ploughsoil confirms the presence of the Roman settlement.

The groundworks monitored within the National Grid site demonstrated that the ground had been stripped of topsoil and subsoil previously, with modern made ground and redeposited topsoil directly overlying the natural grey clay.

The ground within the National Grid site had therefore clearly been truncated previously down to the natural geology, and there was no evidence of archaeological deposits, finds or features observed in this area.

Report

1 Introduction

1.1 Background to the project

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA) from July to October 2019 at the National Grid AGI Site, Gloster Ades Road, Honeybourne, Worcestershire (NGR SP 10646 43561; Figure 1). This comprised observation of a topsoil strip for the creation of a site compound and access track, adjacent to the current site, followed by monitoring of excavations to change the perimeter fence and internal foundation pads within the existing National Grid AGI site. The project was commissioned by Kier Major Projects after permission was been granted subject to a programme of archaeological works.

The Archaeology and Planning Advisor of Wychavon and Malvern Hills District Councils considered that the development had the potential to impact upon possible heritage assets. Previous archaeological work in the vicinity of the site has demonstrated the presence of Romano-British occupation (WSM36238) and a conjectured Roman road (WSM 30628).

No brief was provided but the project conforms to generic briefs and the requirements of the Archaeology and Planning Advisor set out in correspondence dated 23 May 2019. A written scheme of investigation (WSI) was prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2019) and approved by the Advisor. 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* (CIfA 2014a) and the *Standards and guidelines for archaeological projects in Worcestershire* (WCC 2010).

1.2 Site location, topography and geology

The site is located to the south-west of Honeybourne, and south-east Bretforton, on the south-east side of Gloster Ades Road. The site covers an area of 0.8 hectares.

The site is an existing National Grid gas installation, with arable fields surrounding. It is bounded by the road to the north-west and arable farmland to the south-east, which was fallow, but had previously been ploughed and planted with oil seed rape crops.

The site is on generally flat ground, at approximately 48.00m to 48.50m AOD.

The underlying geology comprises bedrock of the Blue Lias and Charmouth mudstone formation, with no superficial deposits recorded (BGS 2019).

2 Archaeological and historical background

2.1 Introduction

Prior to fieldwork commencing, a search of the Worcestershire HER was completed, covering a search area of 500m around the site. A summary of the results of this research is presented below.

2.2 Previous archaeological work on the site

The Honeybourne National Grid site was previously subject to an archaeological evaluation in 2000 (WSM29964) and associated gas pipelines in 2006 (WSM36952; WSM 42095). There have also been watching briefs (WSM 67012; WSM 69324; WSM 69520) and desk-based assessments (WSM67942) of the area.

2.3 Roman

The evaluation in 2000 revealed evidence of a Roman settlement (WSM36238), including enclosure ditches and a series of pits. Dating evidence from the features suggested that activity started in the

late 2nd century or early 3rd century AD and continued into the late 3rd century AD (Cotswold Archaeology, 2003).

A Romano-British field system (WSM68084) was also excavated in 2006, with a series of pits and ditches, and the majority of the site was dateable to the Romano-British period (Cotswold Archaeology 2009).

It has been conjectured that the adjacent Gloster Ades Road has a Roman origin (WSM30628), running between settlement at Hinton-on-the-Green and Ryknild Street to the east (Taylor 2002).

3 Project aims

The aims and scope of the project 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.

4 Project methodology

A WSI was prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2019). Fieldwork was undertaken in two stages. Stage 1, involving a topsoil strip for the site compound adjacent to the AGI took place in July 2019, whilst Stage 2 works involving monitoring groundworks within the AGI, took place between September and October 2019.

Two areas for a site compound fell outside of the current National Grid AGI site and were subject to strip, map and sample methodology. These amounted to 0.35 hectares and were excavated in July 2019 (Trenches 1 and 2). Works observed within the AGI area, covering 0.2 hectares consisted of two internal foundation pad trenches (Trench 3 and 5) and a new perimeter fence, 3m wide and between 0.50 - 0.90m deep (Trench 4) and took place in September and October 2019. The location of the trenches is indicated in Figures 2-4.

Deposits considered not to be significant were removed under constant archaeological supervision using a 360° tracked excavator, employing a toothless bucket. Subsequent excavation was undertaken by hand.

Observation of excavated areas was undertaken during and after machine excavation. The exposed surfaces were sufficiently clean to observe well-differentiated archaeological deposits. The final ground surface and spoil were checked for finds and scanned with a metal detector. Only modern nails and iron metalwork were recovered and discarded on site as modern material.

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.

A plan of all archaeological observations during the project are illustrated in Figures 2-4, with more detail from the compound strip map and sample in Figure 3 and observations within the AGI area in Figure 4.

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 Worcestershire Museum.

5 Archaeological results

5.1 Trenches 1 and 2 (Strip, map and sample compound strip)

The compound area (Trench 1, Plates 1 and +2) and site access road (Trench 2, Plates 3 and 4) were stripped to a maximum depth of 0.25m below the current ground level across the site, with only some of the ploughsoil (100) removed. The natural deposits were not exposed during these excavation.

Modern land drains were observed cutting the ploughsoil, filled with redeposited natural (101). A modern gas pipeline trench also cut across the area. No *in situ* archaeological features or deposits were revealed.

An assemblage of abraded Roman pottery was recovered in the compound area from the ploughsoil, with better preserved pieces or unusual finds and sherds given small find numbers and located with the GPS. The majority of the finds were recovered from the south area of Trench 1. The compound (Trench 1) was set entirely within a ploughed field, whilst the access road (Trench 2) crossed a grassed area of set aside and went through a gap in the hedgerow to the existing road.

5.2 Trench 3 - 5 (Internal AGI excavations and perimeter fence)

Monitoring of the works within the National Grid site included two internal trenches for foundation pads (Trench 3 and 5 Plates 5-6) and the replacement of a perimeter fence surrounding the current site (Trench 4, Plates 7-10). These excavations revealed that the internal area contained modern made ground (300, 400, 500) of gravel and limestone hardcore overlying modern terram, to at least 0.50m depth. This overlay natural dark grey compact cohesive gleyed clay (401).

The perimeter fence excavations (Trench 4) were 0.90m in depth, with an area for an access gate excavated to 1.20m depth. This trench demonstrated that outside the AGI area, a modern heavily rooted topsoil (402), cut by a modern drainage duct (404) overlay the natural grey clay (401) seen elsewhere within the AGI, with a yellow clay (403) at a depth of 1m below ground level observed in the deeper area.

No archaeological finds, features or deposits were revealed in the AGI area, with natural deposits visible from c 0.40m below ground level. Areas where modern gas pipelines passed across the trench were backfilled with a combination of redeposited natural and modern materials.

5.2.1 Trench description tables

Areas outside the AGI (Trenches 1 and 2)

Context	Brief description	Max depth (m)	Depth from ground surface (m)	Comments
100 / 200	Ploughsoil	0.25	0.00	Moderately compact dark brown silty clay with moderate subrounded and subangular pebbles and limestone fragments
101 / 201	Redeposited natural within land drain backfill	Unexc.	0.25	Buff yellow stoney clay with frequent limestone pieces and occasional blue grey mottling

Table 1: Summary context descriptions for Trenches 1 and 2

Areas inside the AGI (Trenches 3 – 5)

Context	Brief description	Max depth (m)	Depth from ground surface (m)	Comments
300 / 400 / 500	Modern made ground	0.50	0.00	Moderately compact dark brown silty clay with moderate subrounded and subangular pebbles and limestone fragments
301 / 401 / 501	Natural	-	0.40	Compact dark grey clay with no inclusions. Natural undisturbed clay.
402	Topsoil	0.40	0.00	Moderately compact dark grey clay silt with frequent rooting. Modern topsoil and hedgerow after AGI installed
403	Natural	0.20 +	1.00	Compact buff yellow clay with occasional limestone fragments. Yellow clay underlying 401.
404	Modern drain	0.50	0.00	Modern plastic drainage duct backfilled with type 1 gravel, running along southwest hedge line

Table 2: Summary context descriptions for trench 3, 4 and 5

6 Artefactual evidence by Rob Hedge, PCIfA

6.1 Artefact methodology

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

6.2 Recovery policy

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

6.3 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. The date was used for determining the broad date of phases defined for the site. All information was recorded on a Microsoft Access database.

The pottery and ceramic building material was examined under x20 magnification and referenced as appropriate by fabric type and form according to the fabric reference series maintained by Worcestershire Archaeology (Hurst and Rees 1992 and www.worcestershireceramics.org).

6.4 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.

6.5 Artefactual analysis

The assemblage recovered is summarised in Tables 1 and 2. It largely comprised Roman pottery, with small quantities of post-medieval material also present. All was residual within ploughsoil deposits. Using pottery as an index of artefact condition, this was generally poor. Although the mean sherd weight of the Roman pottery was 12.9g, slightly higher than average and considerably higher than the stratified material from the adjoining Honeybourne AGI (Site 504) excavation in 2006 (Hart

and McSloy 2011, WSM68084), the majority of sherds displayed levels of abrasion, and surfaces were poorly-preserved.

6.6 Pottery

All sherds have been grouped and quantified according to fabric type (Table 2). Diagnostic forms were dated accordingly; the remaining sherds were datable by fabric type to their general period or production span. Where mentioned, all specific forms are referenced to Webster's (1976) type series.

Period	Material	Object type	Count	Weight (g)
Roman	ceramic	pot	45	582
medieval	ceramic	pot	1	8
post-medieval	ceramic	brick	1	20
		clay pipe	1	3
		pot	3	45
post-medieval/modern	ceramic	bottle marble	1	8
		pipe	1	8
		pot	1	9
modern	plastic	pipe	1	7
Totals			55	690

Table 3: Quantification of the assemblage

Broad period	Fabric code	Fabric common name	count	weight (g)
Roman	12	Severn Valley ware	38	423
	12.1	Reduced Severn Valley ware	1	24
	12.2	Oxidised organically tempered Severn Valley ware	4	84
	43.1	Southern Gaulish samian ware	2	51
Medieval	69	Oxidized glazed Malvernian ware	1	8
Post-medieval	78	Post-medieval red ware	3	45
Modern	85	Modern china	1	9
Totals			50	644

Table 4: Quantification of the pottery by period and fabric-type

6.6.1 Roman

The majority of the pottery comprised Severn Valley Wares. Few diagnostic forms were present, and the degree of abrasion rendered identification problematic. The presence of reduced and organic-tempered wares in some quantity indicates at least some of the assemblage dates to the 1st or 2nd century. Identifiable forms included wide-mouthed jars of Webster's type C23 (mid 2nd to late 3rd century) and type C24 (late 2nd to late 3rd century); a type A1 jar (1st to 4th century); a type H bead-rim bowl of 1st or 2nd century date; a type G bowl with unusual exaggerated flange; and a type K dish/platter.

The only imported finewares were two (conjoining) sherds from a south Gaulish Samian ware (fabric 43.1) plain dish/bowl, possibly a Dragendorff type 36. South Gaulish wares reached their peak distribution in the later 1st century AD, though a later date is possible.

6.6.2 Medieval/post-medieval

Small quantities of abraded medieval and post-medieval pottery, clay pipe, and ceramic building material were present in the ploughsoil. These are likely to have been incorporated into the site soils through agricultural processes such as manuring.

6.6.3 Site dating

Context	Material class	Object specific type	Count	Weight (g)	Start date	End date	TPQ date range
100	ceramic	bottle marble	1	8	1872	1930	AD 1950 - 2000
		brick	1	20	1600	1900	
		clay pipe	1	3	1600	1900	
		pipe	1	8	1850	1950	
		pot	3	27	130	300	
			1	20	170	300	
			3	97	43	200	
			31	279	43	400	
			1	24	43	200	
			4	84	43	200	
			2	51	70	230	
			2	15	1600	1800	
		plastic	pipe	1	9	1800	
1	7			1950	2000		
200	ceramic	pot	1	8	1200	1630	AD 1600 - 1800
			1	30	1600	1800	

Table 5 Summary of context dating based on artefacts grouped in phase order

6.7 Further analysis and reporting

No further work on the artefacts is considered to be required.

6.8 Discard and retention

Although associated with known archaeological sites, the assemblage adds little to the understanding of those, and is essentially unstratified. Although the final decision rests with Museums Worcestershire, it may be suited to use as educational material.

7 Environmental evidence

Environmental sampling policy conformed 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

The Roman pottery recovered from the ploughsoil in the areas for the compound strip confirms the presence of a Roman settlement in the area, as attested to in the previous archaeological evaluations on site. The pottery assemblage is broadly comparable to that recovered from the adjoining excavation in 2006 (Hart and McSloy 2011, WSM68084), and the evaluation in 2000 (WSM29964). It is dominated by local Seven Valley Wares, with small quantities of imported fine ware. This assemblage is almost certainly related to activity on the adjoining site from the later 1st to 3rd century AD, and is likely to have been brought into the ploughsoil by truncation of underlying features in the near vicinity. However, as excavation depth and impact from the development was limited in this area, no *in situ* archaeological features or deposits were revealed.

Excavations within the AGI area demonstrated that the ground had been stripped to at least 0.50m in the previous construction, such that no subsoil survived. The area was also frequently truncated by gas pipes and the gas installations.

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 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 within the AGI area. Excavation in the areas adjacent to the AGI National Grid site was of limited depth and did not reach the natural levels, meaning that no archaeological deposits or features were revealed.

9 Project personnel

The fieldwork was led by Graham Arnold, PCIfA, and Tom Vaughan, MCIfA.

The project was managed by Tom Vaughan. The report was produced and collated by Graham Arnold. 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 for the successful conclusion of the project: Perry Dale, Neil Barber, David Harris and Shaun Francis (Kier Major Projects), and Aidan Smyth (Archaeology and Planning Advisor, Wychavon and Malvern Hills District Councils).

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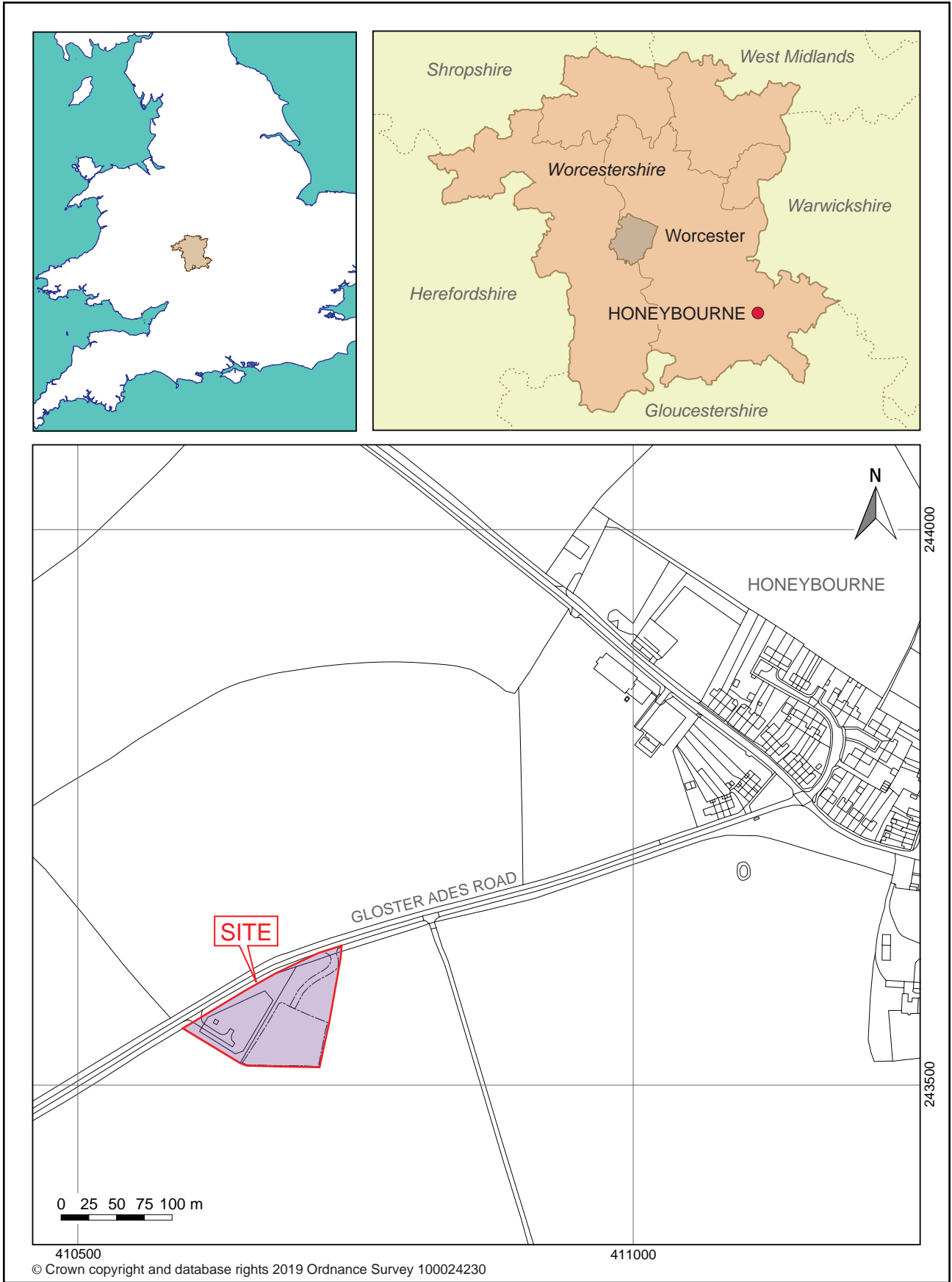
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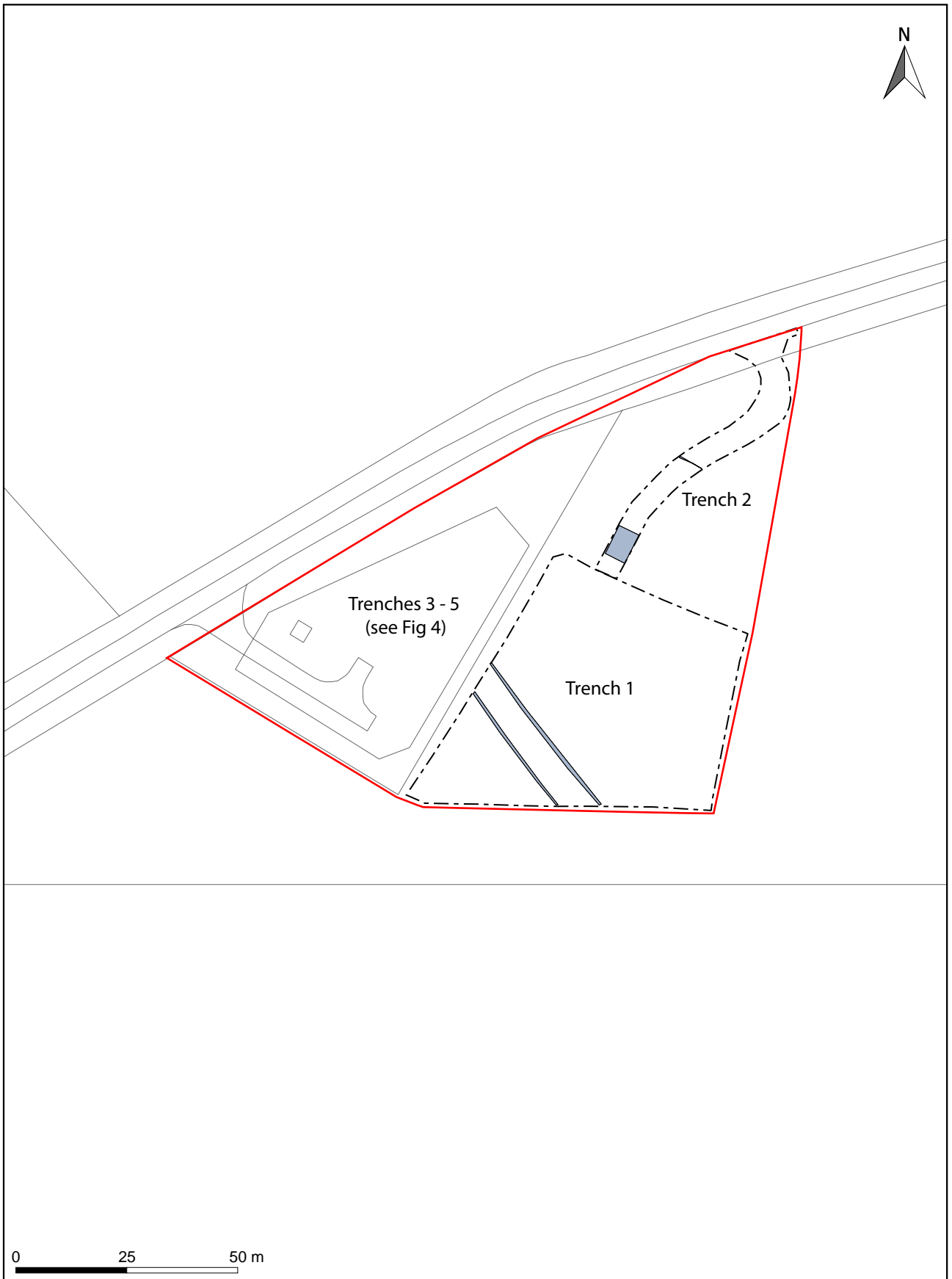
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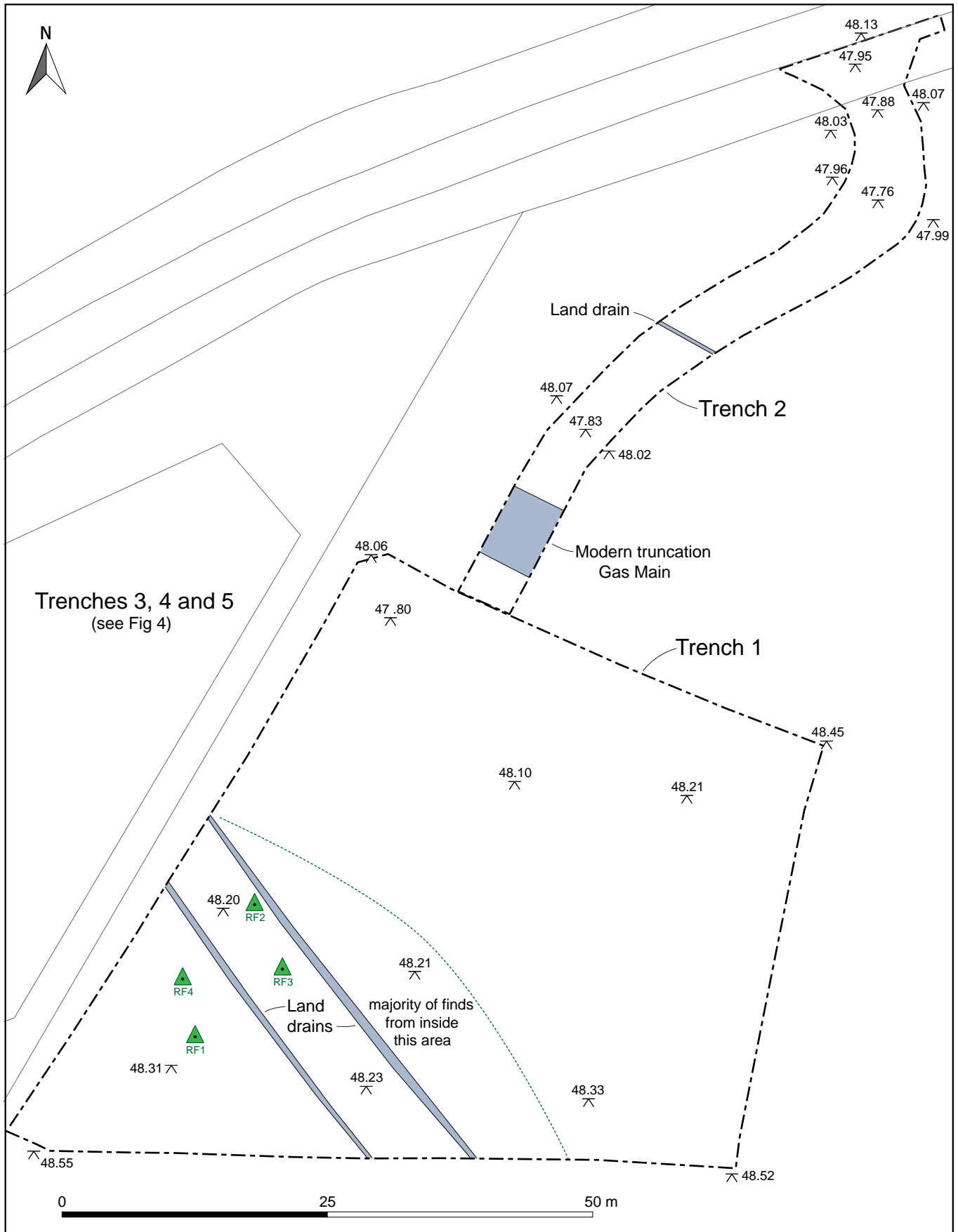
Figures



Location of the site

Figure 1

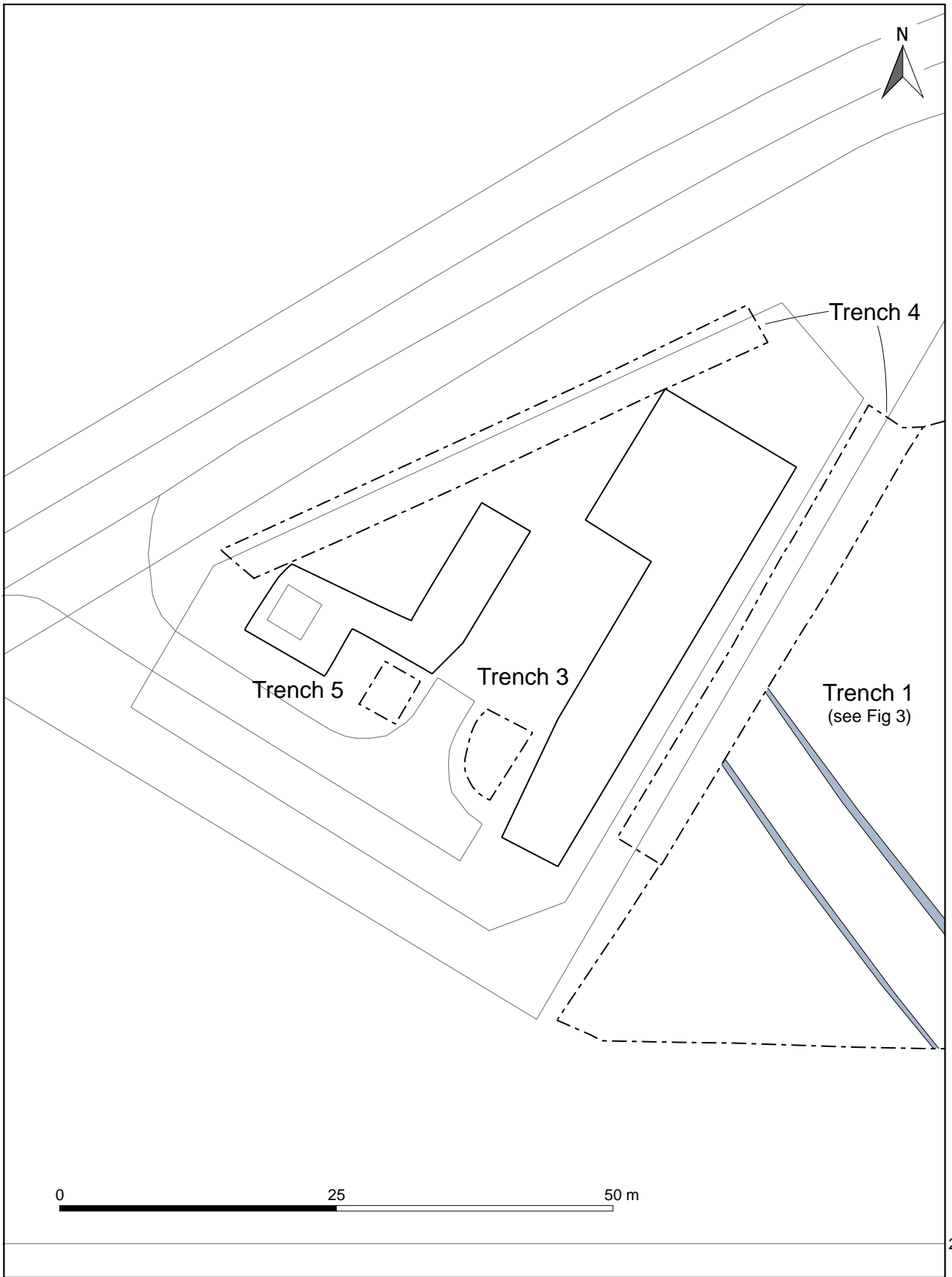




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Plan of Trenches 1 and 2

Figure 3



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Plan of Trenches 3, 4 and 5

Figure 4

Plates



Plate 1: Trench 1 with vegetation stripped, prior to excavations, view south-west, no scales



Plate 2: Trench 1 following topsoil strip, view south-east, 1m scales



Plate 3: Trench 2 following topsoil strip, view south-west, 1m scales



Plate 4: Trench 2 following topsoil strip, view north-east, 1m scales



Plate 5: Trench 3 showing modern made ground and natural grey clay, view north, 2m scale



Plate 6: Trench 5 foundation pad showing overburden and grey clay, view north-west, 1m scales



Plate 7: Existing perimeter fence removal, showing extent of concrete foundations, view north-east, no scales



Plate 8: Trench 4 perimeter fence excavations, view north-west, 1m scales



Plate 9: Trench 4 perimeter fence gate excavations showing hedgerow topsoil and clays,, view south, 1m scales



Plate 10: Trench 4 perimeter fence, view south-west, 1m scales

Appendix 1: Summary of project archive

TYPE	DETAILS*
Artefacts and Environmental	Ceramics – unstratified and not for deposition
Paper	Context sheet, Diary (Field progress form), Report
Digital	GIS, Images raster/digital photography, Text

*OASIS terminology

Appendix 2: Summary of data for HER

WSM 71815

period	material	object type	count	weight (g)
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		clay pipe	1	3
		pot	3	45
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		pipe	1	8
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			31	279	43	400	
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