

Archaeological evaluation at Parcel E, Quedgeley Framework Plan, Gloucester

Worcestershire Archaeology
for RPS Consulting on behalf of QUVL
January 2021



Find out more online:
www.explorethepast.co.uk



PARCEL E QUEDGELEY FRAMEWORK PLAN GLOUCESTER

Archaeological evaluation report



©Worcestershire County Council

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

Explore
the Past

SITE INFORMATION

Site name: Parcel E, Quedgeley Framework Plan

Local planning authority: Gloucester City Council

Planning reference: 13/00585

Central NGR: SO 81350 13360

Commissioning client: Neil Wright, RPS Consulting

WA project number: P5959

WA report number: 2879

Oasis reference: fieldsec1-411937

DOCUMENT CONTROL PANEL				
Version	Date	Author	Details	Approved by
1	08/01/2021	G Arnold	Draft for comment	T Rogers
2	13/01/2021	G Arnold	Addressing client comments	T Rogers

DOCUMENT CONTROL PANEL				
Version	Date	Author	Details	Approved by
1	08/01/2021	G Arnold	Draft for comment	T Rogers
2	13/01/2021	G Arnold	Addressing client comments	T Rogers

This report is confidential to the client. Worcestershire Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability to any third party to whom this report, or any part of it, is made known. Any such party relies upon this report entirely at their own risk. No part of this report may be reproduced by any means without permission.

CONTENTS

SUMMARY	1
REPORT	2
1 INTRODUCTION	2
1.1 Background to the project	2
1.2 Site location, topography and geology	2
2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	3
3 PROJECT AIMS	4
4 PROJECT METHODOLOGY	4
5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS	5
5.1 Introduction	5
5.2 Trench descriptions	5
5.2.1 Natural deposits	5
5.2.2 Trench 52	5
5.2.3 Trench 53	6
6 ARTEFACTUAL EVIDENCE	7
7 ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE	7
8 CONCLUSIONS	7
9 PROJECT PERSONNEL	7
10 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	7
11 BIBLIOGRAPHY	7

FIGURES

PLATES

APPENDIX 1: SUMMARY OF PROJECT ARCHIVE

APPENDIX 2: SUMMARY OF DATA FOR HER

Archaeological evaluation at Parcel E, Quedgeley Framework Plan, Gloucester

By Graham Arnold

Illustrations by Graham Arnold

Summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at Parcel E, Quedgeley Framework Plan, Gloucester (NGR SO 13/00585). It was commissioned by Neil Wright, RPS Consulting on behalf of Quedgeley Urban Village Ltd (QUVL), in advance of a proposed mixed use development. Planning permission has been granted subject to a programme of archaeological works.

The former RAF Gloucester site is located east of the village of Quedgeley and approximately 4km south of the city of Gloucester.

The site as a whole comprises an open area comprising concrete roads, areas of hard standing and grassed areas. Parcel E comprises an area of hardstanding in the area of a former factory building and car park. Parcel E covers an area of 1 ha and is bounded to the south by a road, to the west by a former RAF road and to the north and east by industrial waste ground. Parcel E had previously been subject to two phases of evaluation trenching in 2016 and 2020. During the 2020 evaluation two trenches were located within the footprint of a former RAF building which was extant during the 2016 archaeological evaluation. No archaeological features or deposits were identified within Trench 29, however, a small gully was identified in the easternmost Trench 30. The gully was located in the south of the trench and was aligned north-west to south-east. It remained unexcavated; however, a sherd of Roman Severn Valley Ware pottery was recovered from the backfill.

Following this, two further trenches to the south west of the factory, both 25m in length were excavated to establish if any further archaeological remains survived as part of this trenching evaluation. The trenches were located for best fit and as close to the proposed trench locations as possible, given service, vegetation and other obstacles.

The two trenches both had modern made ground and demolition rubble overlying the natural ground with modern truncations from building footings and services. This demonstrated that the area had been heavily truncated by modern development and the subsequent demolition activities. There was no further evidence of any significant archaeology surviving in Parcel E as part of this trenching evaluation.

Report

1 Introduction

1.1 Background to the project

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA) in November and December 2020 at Parcel E, Quedgeley Framework Plan, Gloucester (NGR SO 81350 13360).

The project was commissioned by Neil Wright of RPS Consulting on behalf of Quedgeley Urban Village Ltd, in advance of a proposed mixed-use development. Outline consent for development of the site was approved by Gloucestershire City Council in 2000 (00/00479) subject to condition 34 as follows: -

There shall be no disturbance of currently grassed areas within the former HQ site and Site 1 until such times as an archaeological field evaluation has been submitted and agreed.

A renewal of Outline Consent was submitted and approved in 2013 (13/00585) which was granted subject to the following conditions:-

Condition no.15

No development shall take place within a particular phase of development of the site until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Condition no.16

In the event that further archaeological features are discovered in a particular phase of development of the site, their archaeological excavation shall be arranged, recording, analysis and publication of such features prior to any development being carried out within an area to be agreed with the Local Planning Authority in writing in the vicinity of any such features.

No brief was provided but a Written Scheme of Investigation was prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2020) and approved by Andrew Armstrong, Archaeological Planning Advisor to Gloucester City Council.

The site as a whole was subject to archaeological evaluation in 2016 and significant archaeological remains were uncovered in other parts of the site, some of which have since been excavated. At the time of this 2016 evaluation Parcel E was occupied by a building and was not available for evaluation. During the excavation of adjacent Parcel F, two evaluation trenches were opened in Parcel E, in one of which a Roman ditch was identified. The remainder of the parcel, however, was not available for evaluation at the time.

The evaluation conforms to the industry guidelines and standards set out by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists in *Standard and guidance: for archaeological field evaluation* (CIfA 2014)

1.2 Site location, topography and geology

The former RAF Gloucester site is located east of the village of Quedgeley and approximately 4km south of the city of Gloucester.

The site as a whole comprises an open area comprising concrete roads, areas of hard standing and grassed areas. Parcel E comprises an area of hardstanding in the area of a former factory building and car park. Parcel E covers an area of 1 ha and is bounded to the south by a road, to the west by a former RAF road and to the north and east by industrial waste ground.

The site is on broadly level ground and sits approximately 23.50m *above ordnance datum* (AOD). The geology of the site is mapped as undifferentiated Blue Lias Formations and Charmouth Mudstone Formations, overlain by superficial deposits of Cheltenham Sand and Gravel (BGS 2020).

2 Archaeological and historical background

The site and surrounding area have been subject to previous desk based assessment, geophysics, evaluation and excavation phases which are summarised below.

A desk-based assessment was carried out which identified potential for the presence of archaeological remains, particularly from the Roman and Medieval periods. Following this a programme of archaeological evaluation was carried out both before and following granting of outline planning permission.

Detailed geophysical survey was completed over sample blocks within the wider site. Survey blocks were located in order to avoid areas of hardstanding, proposed open spaces and areas known to have been significantly disturbed during the twentieth century (e.g. former landfill). The survey identified a number of features thought to relate to former structures of the munitions factory, including track beds and building foundations. The survey also identified areas of apparent recent disturbance, possibly resulting from twentieth century military activity.

Earlier features were confined to evidence for ridge and furrow, underlining that the site was in agricultural use during the Medieval period.

Subsequently an archaeological evaluation was undertaken in 2016. Twenty-two trenches were excavated across the site and archaeological features relating to two distinct phases of activity were identified in eleven of the trenches. The first phase of activity was represented by a number of possible enclosure type features in the western part of the site. These features yielded a moderate quantity of Roman pottery typical of rural sites in the area. The second phase of activity was represented by a series of sterile ditches in the eastern and central part of the site. These ditches appear to correlate with field boundaries visible on historic Ordnance Survey maps and are therefore interpreted as post-medieval in date. (Walsh, A et Al. 2016).

An archaeological excavation of Parcel G was undertaken in 2017 (Walsh 2017). The investigations revealed two key phases of archaeological activity. A period of later Iron Age activity appears to be focussed in the eastern part of the site where two large pits, which may have been watering holes, and three small ditches, were identified. The two large pits yielded pottery and animal bone, a bone comb and a possible stone weight. Well preserved organic remains including a collapsed hurdle and wooden post were also identified in the pits.

A second phase of activity dating to the earlier Roman period appears to have been focused on a group of ditches which may have formed part of a drove or trackway and a ditch orientated perpendicular to the droveway. Pottery from these features dated them to the earlier Roman period. Environmental evidence from this phase of activity was limited to a small assemblage of animal bone which was dominated by the head and upper limb bones of cattle indicating that it originated as food waste.

Later activity on the site, including a post-medieval to modern field boundary, and 20th century pits, were not deemed to be archaeologically significant.

An archaeological excavation was undertaken in Parcel F immediately to the west of Parcel E (Wilkins 2020). Here the remains predominantly dated from the late Iron Age and Romano-British periods. Prehistoric activity pre-dating the Iron Age was represented by residual flint artefacts, though a crouched inhumation could date from this period.

Later Iron Age activity was characterised by several large pits, similar to those in Parcel G, likely functioning as waterholes. Two of the pits contained organic-rich deposits and a section of preserved wattle hurdle survived within one such deposit. Dating evidence from the pottery assemblage

indicated a later Iron Age date, which was confirmed by radiocarbon dating undertaken on the wattle hurdle. The animal bone assemblage was dominated by cattle and environmental evidence indicated the surrounding landscape was predominantly a pastoral one.

Romano-British activity could tentatively be split into two separate phases, with some evidence of early (1st to mid-2nd century AD) land-use which continued through to the early 4th century AD. The Romano-British element appeared agrarian in character, predominantly comprising small boundary ditches, with no direct evidence of settlement identified within the site. Two inhumations and a cremation deposit, which produced a radiocarbon date of 30-210 cal AD, were located adjacent to a boundary ditch. The crouched inhumation and associated calf burial are also likely to be early Roman in date and could represent a continuation of later prehistoric funerary activity.

The finds assemblage suggested that the site lay within the vicinity of settlement, probably a small, rural farmstead. The presence of some high-status pottery, dating from the 1st and 2nd centuries and including an exceptional sherd of mortarium, indicated some level of wealth.

Archaeology post-dating the Roman period was confined to a large post-medieval boundary ditch and modern truncation associated with 20th century military use of the site, initially as a munitions factory, and later an RAF base.

During this exercise two trenches were excavated in Parcel E. The trenches measured between 25m-33m long and were located within the footprint of a former RAF building which was extant during the 2016 archaeological evaluation (Figure 2).

No archaeological features or deposits were identified within Trench 29, however, a small gully was identified in the easternmost Trench 30. The gully was located in the south of the trench and was aligned north-west to south-east. It remained unexcavated; however, a sherd of Roman Severn valley ware pottery was recovered from the backfill.

3 Project aims

The aims and scope of the project are to undertake sufficient fieldwork to:

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

4 Project methodology

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2020) which was approved by Andrew Armstrong Archaeological Planning Advisor to Gloucester City Council. Fieldwork was undertaken between 30 November and 2 December 2020.

Two trenches, amounting to 75m² in area, were excavated over the parcel (Trenches 52 and 53). The area was also subject to archaeological evaluation in 2016, when the factory was still extant with blank trenches to the north and south of the former factory. Following demolition of the building, the area was subject to archaeological evaluation in 2019, during the Parcel F archaeological excavation, with one trench located within the centre of the former building, away from any footings. Within this trench a Roman gully was recorded, possibly related to the Roman activity reported in Parcel F adjacent to the west of the site. The location of the trenches is indicated in Figure 1.

With the approval of the Archaeological Planning Advisor, the trenches were repositioned from the proposed locations to avoid trees, hedgerows, services and hardstanding areas. Trench 52 was

orientated east-west, rather than southwest-northeast due to the presence of services and hardstanding, whilst Trench 53 was moved due east due to the presence of vegetation and scrub.

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 to determine their nature. Deposits were recorded according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012) and trench and feature locations were surveyed using a GNSS device with an accuracy limit set at <0.04m. 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 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 Gloucester Museum.

5 Archaeological results

5.1 Introduction

The features recorded in the trenches are shown in Figure 2 and Plates 1-8. The trench and context inventory are presented below.

5.2 Trench descriptions

5.2.1 Natural deposits

The natural yellow and blue of Blue Lias and Charmouth mudstone clay, with areas of orange Cheltenham Sand and Gravels and was observed at 0.80m below the ground level in both trenches (22.70m AOD).

5.2.2 Trench 52

Context	Brief description	Max depth (m)	Depth from ground surface (m)	Comments
5200	Tarmac	0.10	0.00	Tarmac and hardcore from hardstanding at north end of trench.
5201	Concrete hardstanding	0.30	0.40	Concrete underlying tarmac as hardstanding at north end of trench
5202	Layer	0.40	0.00	Moderately compact dark greyish brown clay with moderate humic material and brick rubble. Mixed topsoil and made ground levelling layer sealing demolition layer 5203
5203	Disturbed, redeposited made ground	0.40	0.40	Modern demolition material of rubble, metal wok and redeposited clay. Cut by modern services and concrete footings, previously demolished / removed wall foundations

Context	Brief description	Max depth (m)	Depth from ground surface (m)	Comments
5204	Natural	0.20	0.80	Firm blue grey clay with frequent limestone flecking and occasional bands of orangey brown sands. Natural material.

Trench 52 (Figure 3 and Plates 1-4) was 25m in length, orientated East – West in order to avoid modern services and hardstanding and a maximum of 1.00m deep. The natural ground was overlain by redeposited demolition material and truncated by modern brick and concrete foundations and services. There were no significant archaeological deposits or finds within the trench.

5.2.3 Trench 53

Context	Brief description	Max depth (m)	Depth from ground surface (m)	Comments
5300	Concrete slab	0.10	0.00	Concrete slabs, kerbing forming level hardstanding area
5301	Hardcore Layer	0.15	0.15	Pea gravel underlying concrete hardstanding
5302	Redeposited natural layer	0.30	0.25	Levelling for hardstanding consisting of firm yellow clay in South area of trench
5303	Made ground	0.30	0.00	Moderately compact dark greyish brown clay with moderate humic material and brick rubble. Mixed topsoil and made ground levelling layer sealing demolition layer 5204 at north end
5303	Made ground	0.50	0.30 at north end 0.55 at south end	Mixed loose dark brown silty clay and demolition rubble, cut by foundation pads of former building which are heavily waterlogged
5304	Natural	0.40	0.80	Firm yellow and blue clay and orange sands and gravels. Truncated by modern footings of walls and foundation pads of former building. Natural material.

Trench 53 (Figure 3 and Plates 4-8) was placed as close to its original location as possible and was moved slightly north and east to avoid an area of hedgerows, trees and undergrowth, on waste ground between the old factory car park hardstanding. The trench was 25m in length and crossed a demolished outbuilding to the former factory or RAF base. Only modern hardstanding levelling deposits and made ground from former demolition activity was present, and the ground was heavily waterlogged by footings holding water. There were no significant archaeological deposits or finds within the trench.

6 Artefactual evidence

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.

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 Conclusions

Within the two trenches, only modern truncations and deposits were present. No finds or significant features were recorded within the area in the centre of the former building where a Roman gully was recorded in Trench 30.

This demonstrates either that this area lay on the periphery of the activity recorded in the adjacent parcel or was heavily truncated, if not completely removed, by modern development and demolition.

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.

9 Project personnel

The fieldwork was led by Graham Arnold, PCIfA, assisted by Elspeth Illiff, ACIfA.

The project was managed by Tom Rogers, MCIfA. 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: Neil Wright (Associate Director, RPS Consulting), and Andrew Armstrong (Archaeological Planning Advisor to Gloucester City Council).

11 Bibliography

BGS, 2020 Geology of Britain viewer. Available: <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>

Accessed: 30 November 2020

ClfA, 2014 Standard and guidance: for archaeological field evaluation. Reading: Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, published December 2014, updated 5 June 2020

ClfA, 2014 Standard and guidance: for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives. Reading: Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, published December 2014, updated 5 June 2020

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

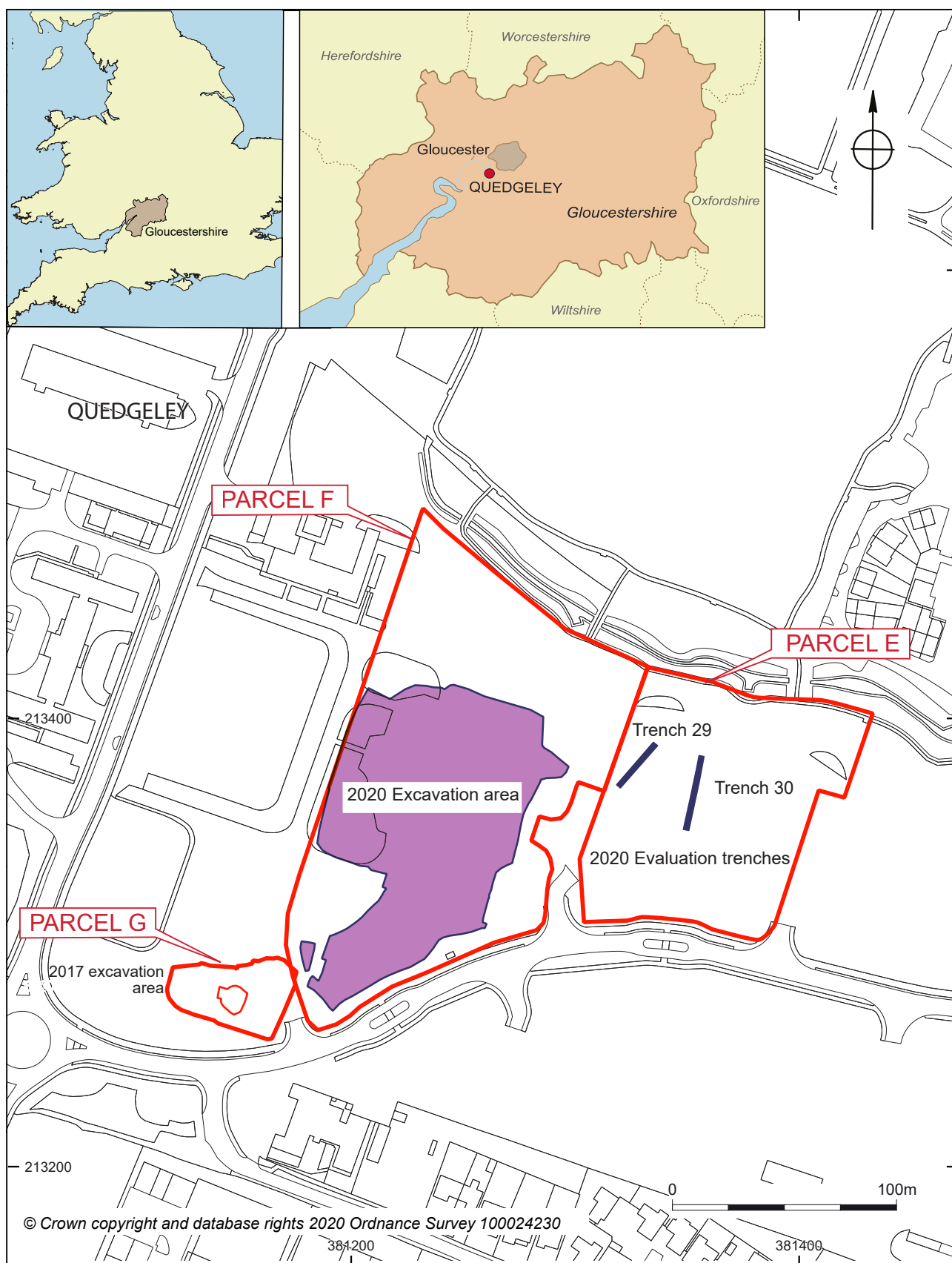
Walsh, A, 2017 *Archaeological Investigations at Quedgeley Framework Plan 5, Gloucester, Gloucestershire*. Worcestershire Archaeology Unpubl report **2489**. Worcestershire County Council

Wilkins, J, 2020 *Archaeological excavation at Parcel F, Framework Plan 5, Quedgeley Urban Village, Gloucester*, Worcestershire Archaeology, Unpubl report **2813**, Worcestershire County Council

WA, 2012 Manual of service practice, recording manual, Worcestershire Archaeology Unpubl report 1842. Worcestershire County Council

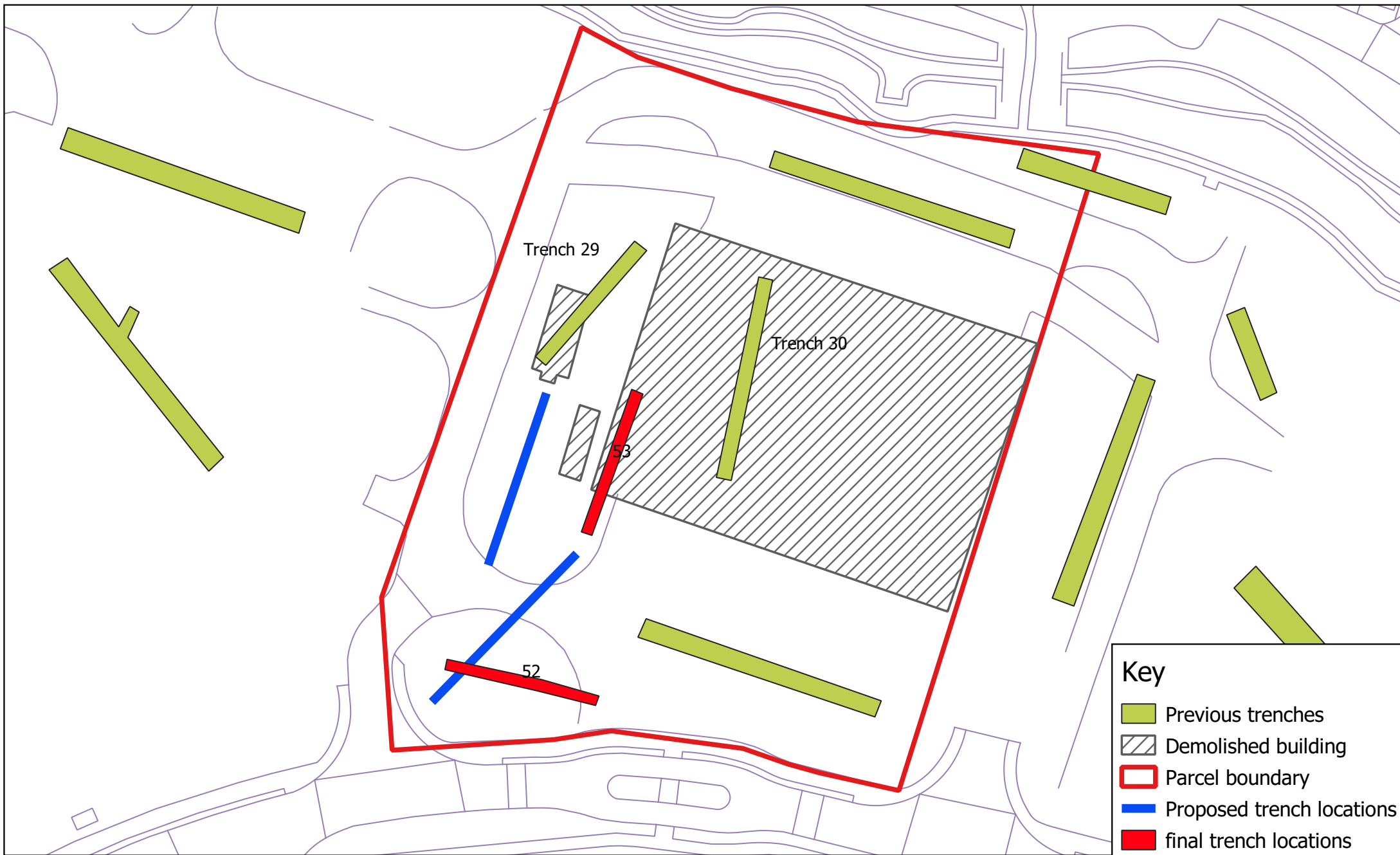
WA, 2020 Written Scheme of Investigation for an archaeological evaluation at Parcel E, Quedgeley, Gloucester, Worcestershire Archaeology Unpubl document dated 23 November 2020. Worcestershire County Council

Figures



Site location: Parcel E with previous archaeological interventions

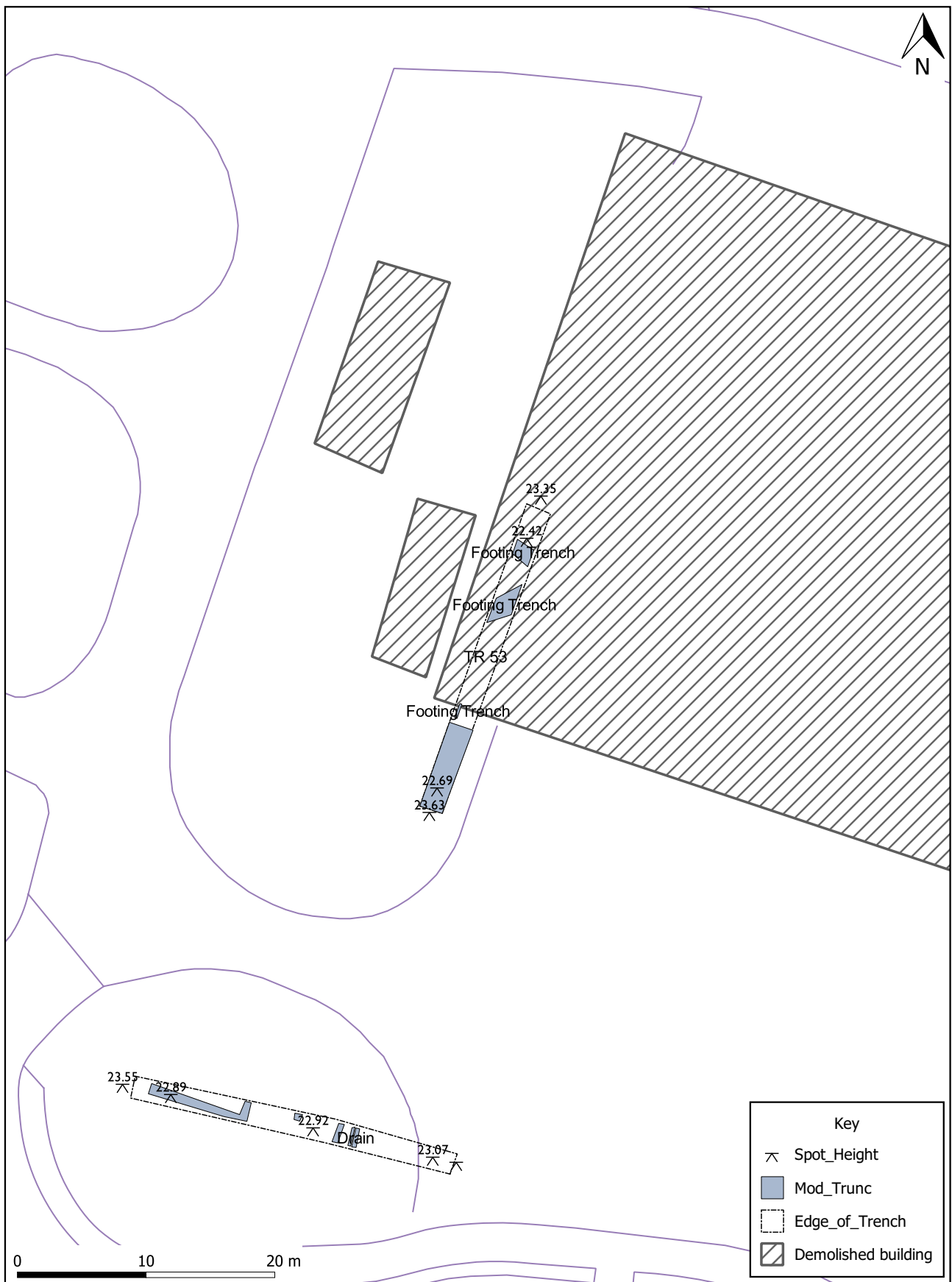
Figure 1



0 10 20 30 40 m

Proposed and actual trench locations Parcel E

figure 2



Parcel E Trench 52 and 53 plans showing modern truncations

Figure 3

Plates



Plate 1: The location of trench 52 prior to excavation, looking east with 2 x 1m scales



Plate 2: Tr 52, View west with 1m scales showing natural ground, hardstanding and made ground



Plate 3: Tr 52, View northwest with 1m scales showing natural and depth of made ground deposits



Plate 4: Tr 52, View northeast with 1m scales showing natural, made ground and hardstanding deposits



Plate 5: Tr 53 location prior to excavation, view south with 1m scales with rough ground and vegetation to west.



Plate 6: Tr 53 general trench shot looking north with 1m scales, concrete kerbs and made ground deposits



Plate 7: Tr 53, South end of the trench showing made ground levelling deposits for area of hardstanding view northwest



Plate 8: Tr 53, north end of trench showing frequent modern footing disturbance through made ground and waterlogging, view south east with 1m scales

Appendix 1: Summary of project archive

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, Matrices, Photograph, Plan, Report, Section, Survey
Digital	Database, GIS, Geophysics, Images raster/digital photography, Spreadsheets, Survey, Text

**OASIS terminology*

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 Gloucester Museum.

Appendix 2: Summary of data for HER

No finds or environmental samples