

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL
EVALUATION
AT
HAWFORD GRANGE FARM,
CHATLEY LANE, OMBERSLEY,
WORCESTERSHIRE

Jo Wainwright

Illustrations by Tom Rogers and Carolyn Hunt

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Project 3136
Report 1568
WSM 37567

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An Archaeological Evaluation at Hawford Grange Farm, Chatley Lane, Ombersley, Worcestershire

Jo Wainwright

Part 1 Project summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at Hawford Grange Farm, Chatley Lane, Ombersley, Worcestershire (NGR: SO 8488 6028). It was undertaken on behalf of Hawford Bridge Fishing Club, who intend to construct a new fish rearing/fishing lake for which a planning application has been submitted (reference W/07/1258) to Wychavon District Council. The project aimed to determine if any significant archaeological site was present and if so to indicate what its location, date and nature were.

No features or deposits of archaeological significance were excavated on the site. It seems likely that although there is evidence for prehistoric as well as Romano-British settlement to the north of the site, the study area was not utilised for settlement. The underlying drift geology of gravels to the north of the site was more conducive to settlement than the heavier clays underlying the site itself. However, the site was under cultivation by the medieval period and it is possible that cultivation was being carried out at an earlier date.

Part 2 Detailed report

1. Background

1.1 Reasons for the project

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at Hawford Grange Farm (NGR SO 8488 6028), Chatley Lane, Ombersley, Worcestershire (Fig 1), on behalf of Hawford Bridge Fishing Club. The client intends to construct a new fish rearing/fishing lake and has submitted a planning application to Wychavon Council (reference W07/1258), who consider that a site of archaeological interest may be affected (HER ref WSM 15250).

1.2 Project parameters

The project conforms to the *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (IFA 1999). The project also conforms to a brief prepared by Worcestershire County Council Historic Environment and Archaeology Service (HEAS 2007a) and for which a project proposal (including detailed specification) was produced (HEAS 2007b).

1.3 Aims

The aims of the evaluation were to locate archaeological deposits and determine, if present, their extent, state of preservation, date, type, vulnerability and documentation. The purpose of this was to establish their significance, since this would make it possible to recommend an appropriate treatment, which may then be integrated with the proposed development programme.

2. Methods

2.1 Documentary search

Prior to fieldwork commencing a search was made of the Historic Environment Record (HER). In addition the following were also consulted:

Cartographic sources

- c. 1816 Map of Ombersley (WRO ref. X705.56 BA 1294)
- 1884-5 Ordnance Survey First Edition 25 Inch Plan

2.2 Fieldwork methodology

2.2.1 Fieldwork strategy

Four trenches, amounting to just over 330m² in area, were excavated over the site area of c 8306ha, representing a sample of c 4%. The location of the trenches is indicated in Figure 2. Fieldwork was undertaken between 1st October 2007 and 3rd October 2007. The site reference number and site code is WSM 37567.

The trenches were machined down to the natural deposits using a wheeled excavator, employing a toothless bucket and under archaeological supervision. Subsequent excavation was undertaken by hand. Deposits were recorded according to standard Service practice (CAS 1995). On completion of excavation, the trenches were left open by request of the landowner.

Prior to the evaluation a site strip along the northern boundary of the site had been carried out by the client (Fig. 2, Plate 3). This area had been stripped down to the natural subsoil with a maximum of 0.45m taken off. Over most of this area the natural was obscured by rubble and soil which had been tipped in to form the base for an access road. However, at the eastern end the natural was visible and although the area was not examined closely it appeared that there were no features cutting the natural.

The following techniques were considered for use but were not considered to be appropriate for this project; geophysical survey, fieldwalking and topographic/earthwork survey.

2.2.2 **Structural analysis**

All fieldwork records were checked and cross-referenced. Analysis was effected through the structural, allied to the information derived from other sources.

2.3 **The methods in retrospect**

The methods adopted allow a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved.

3. **Topographical and archaeological context by Darren Miller and Jo Wainwright**

The site lies on a spur of land overlooking the River Salwarpe at the southern end of the Parish of Ombersley. The roughly rectangular block of land is bounded by a fence and overgrown hedge on the western, southern and eastern boundaries. The northern boundary is delineated by a new fence line. The land use is currently rough grazing. The northern part of the site is at about 25 metres O.D. and the land slopes down quite steeply towards the west, south and east. In the south-east of the site the land is about 15 metres O.D.

The underlying geology is Mercian Mudstone (Keuper Marl) overlaid, in places, with drift deposits (sand and gravel) of the 3rd terrace of the River Severn (British Geological Survey, 1:50000 series, Sheet 182).

The site lies close to a concentration of cropmarks, as shown on Figure 3. The cropmarks were photographed in 1954, and were thought to indicate a Roman settlement (Webster 1955). This interpretation was confirmed by sample trenching in 1955 and 1963, which established the profiles of several ditches, and recovered pottery of 2nd to 3rd century date (Webster 1956; Fennel 1964). The cropmarks have since been mapped and recorded, and one of the enclosures has been scheduled (SAM 242). In addition, the eastern ditch of the southern enclosure was exposed and during landscaping work in 1995 (WSM 23023; Topping, Buteux, and Pearson 1995). The pottery from the ditch was once again of 2nd to 3rd century date. Land to the south of the site was also investigated in 1993 but not evidence of Roman settlement was found (WSM 15250; Napthan 1993).

Most of the archaeological interest of the site derived from the adjacent cropmarks, However, the site was also of interest in being part of an historic landscape of open fields, enclosures, and woods (Fig 4, based on WRO ref. x705:56, BA 1294). According to recent research (Miller, forthcoming), the site formed part of a large holding called Hawfords between the 14th and 19th centuries (WRO ref. 705: 56, BA 3910, and BA 1630/1). The site itself lay to the south of an enclosure called The Six Acres in 1816 (Fig 4), and may have formed part of a large arable field called Brodfield in 1605 (WRO ref. 705:56, BA 3910/29). It was bordered by a coppice to the east.

4. Results

4.1 Structural analysis

The trenches and features recorded are shown in Fig. 2 and plates 4-7.

4.1.1 Phase 1 Natural deposits

The underlying natural deposits 102, 202, 301,401 and 402 comprised of reddish clays. In places these clays contained gravels and lenses of sands. In trenches 1, 3 and 4 the natural was recorded at about 0.30m below the ground surface. In Trench 2 the natural was recorded at about 0.45m below the ground surface. However, in the eastern parts of Trench 2 and 3 these clay deposits were seen much deeper at about 0.70m (area shaded on Fig. 2). Presumably these lower areas are natural depressions within the study area. These depressions were filled with yellowish brown sandy loam 204 and 302 which probably represents a natural filling in process. Several features were identified in trenches 2,3 and 4. All of these were investigated and proved to be natural features.

4.1.2 Phase 3 Post-medieval deposits

Overlying the natural and the infilled hollows was the cultivation soil which was cultivated from at least the medieval period if not earlier. Pottery, brick and tile fragments from the topsoil date from the medieval to modern period with a concentration from about the 18th century. (pers. comm. Alan Jacobs). This concentration is likely to represent an increase in manuring during this period (*op cit*).

5. Synthesis

No features or deposits of archaeological significance were excavated on the site. It seems likely that although there is evidence for prehistoric as well as Romano-British settlement to the north of the site, the study area was not utilised for settlement. The underlying geology of gravels of the land to the north of the site was more conducive to settlement than the heavier clays underlying the site itself. However, it is possible that the site was under cultivation during this period though there is no evidence to support this.

Documentary research has identified that the site was part of a large holding known as the Hawfords between the 14th and 19th centuries and part of an open arable field called Brodfield in 1605. The excavated evidence suggests that the site was cultivated from the medieval period onwards.

6. Publication summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at Hawford Grange Farm, Chatley Lane, Ombersley, Worcestershire (NGR: SO 8488 6028, SMR ref 37567). It was undertaken on behalf of Hawford Bridge Fishing Club, who intend to construct a new fish rearing/fishing lake for which a planning application has been submitted. The project aimed to determine if any significant archaeological site was present and if so to indicate what its location, date and nature were.

No features or deposits of archaeological significance were excavated on the site. It seems likely that although there is evidence for prehistoric as well as Romano-British settlement to the north of the site, the study area was not utilised for settlement. The underlying drift geology of gravels to the north of the site was more conducive to settlement than the heavier clays underlying the site itself. However, the site was under cultivation by the medieval period and it is possible that cultivation was being carried out at an earlier date.

Documentary research has identified that the site was part of a large holding known as the Hawfords between the 14th and 19th centuries and part of an open arable field called Brodfield in 1605.

7. **Acknowledgements**

The Service would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project Trevor Smith (the landowner) and Mike Glyde (Worcestershire County Council Historic Environment Planning Advisor),

8. **Personnel**

The fieldwork and report preparation was led by Jo Wainwright. The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Tom Rogers. Fieldwork was undertaken by Jo Wainwright and Stephen Potten, finds analysis by Alan Jacobs and illustration by Tom Rogers and Carolyn Hunt. Darren Miller undertook the documentary research.

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Figures

Plates



Plate 1 Trench 1 in background and Trench 2 to the left and Trench 3 in the centre. View south-west



Plate 2 Trench 4 on the left and Trench 2 in the background. View south.



Plate 3 View of trackway strip showing natural in foreground



Plate 4 Trench 1. View south



Plate 5 Trench 2. View west



Plate 6 Trench 3. View west



Plate 7 Trench 4. View south

Appendix 1 Trench descriptions

Trench 1

Maximum dimensions: Length: 50m Width: 1.55m Depth: 0.45m

Orientation: North-south

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
100	Topsoil	Moderately compact mid dark brown silty clay with occasional small rounded pebbles and rare charcoal flecks. Deeper in south end of trench.	0-0.24m
101	Cultivation horizon	As 100 except more compact. Below 100 and above 102.	0.24-0.40m
102	Natural	Compact cohesive light reddish brown silty clay. Towards south end of trench becomes pebbly in places	0.30m+

Trench 2

Maximum dimensions: Length: 55m Width: 1.55m Depth: 0.45- 0.85m

Orientation: East-west

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
200	Topsoil	Moderately compact mid dark brown silty clay with occasional small rounded pebbles and rare charcoal flecks. Some root disturbance.	0-0.35m
201	Cultivation horizon	As 100 except more compact. Below 200 and above 202 in west of trench.	0.35-0.45m
202	Natural	Compact cohesive mid purplish brown silty/sandy clay with frequent small to large sub-rounded stones. In west natural was 0.45m below ground surface in the east natural was 0.69m.	0.45m+
203	Layer	Moderately compact mid brown sandy loam with occasional small to medium sub-rounded stones. Interface between topsoil 200 and layer 204 in east of trench.	0.40-0.49m
204	Layer	Quite loose light yellowish brown sandy loam with moderately small to large pebbles. Seen in eastern part of trench. Below 203 and above natural 202	0.49-0.69m

Trench 3

Maximum dimensions: Length: 57m Width: 1.55m Depth: 0.40-0.70m

Orientation: East-west

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
300	Topsoil	Moderately compact mid dark brown silty clay with occasional small rounded pebbles and rare charcoal flecks. Becomes lighter with depth.	0-0.35m
301	Natural	Compact light orangey/pinkish brown silty clay with occasional lenses of clean sand and sub-rounded pebbles. Mottling in places.	0.35m+
302	Layer	Quite loose light yellowish brown sandy loam with moderately small to large pebbles. Seen in eastern part of trench. Below 300 and above natural 302	0.35-0.55m

Trench 4

Maximum dimensions: Length: 47m Width: 1.55m Depth: 0.30-0.42m

Orientation: North-south

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
400	Topsoil	Moderately compact mid dark brown silty clay with occasional small rounded pebbles and rare charcoal flecks. Becomes compacter with depth. Above 401.	0-0.28m
401	Natural	Compact light orangey/pinkish brown silty clay with occasional sub-rounded pebbles. Mottling in places. Seen in northern part of trench.	0.28m+
402	Natural	Compact mid purplish brown silty clay with moderate to frequent small to medium sub-rounded stones and lenses of yellowish brown sandy loam. Seen in south of the trench.	0.34m+
403	Layer	Moderately compact yellowish brown sandy loam with occasional small to medium sub-rounded stones. Below 400 and above 402 in south of the trench. Interface between topsoil 400 and natural 402.	0.28-0.34m

Appendix 2 Technical information

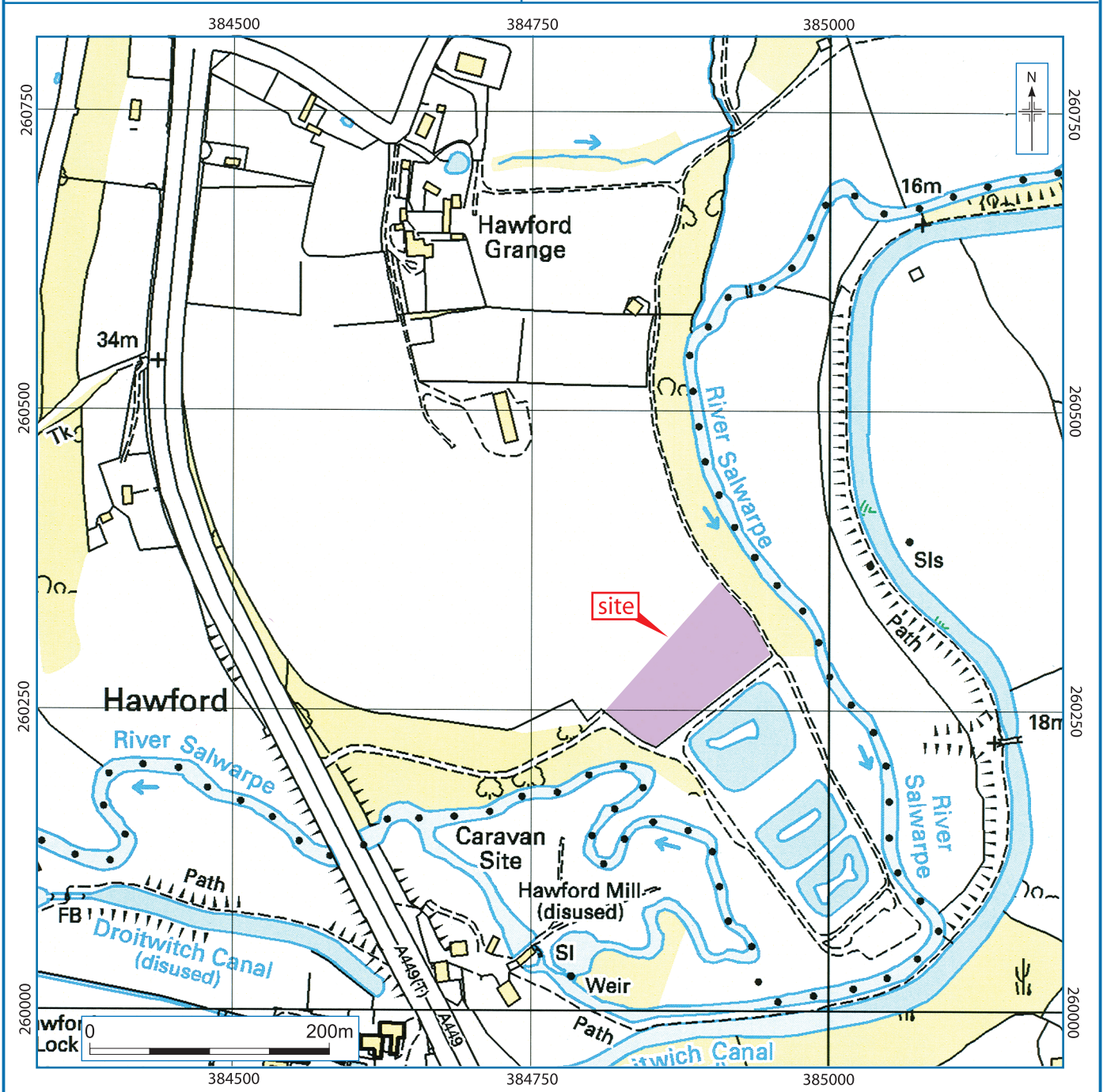
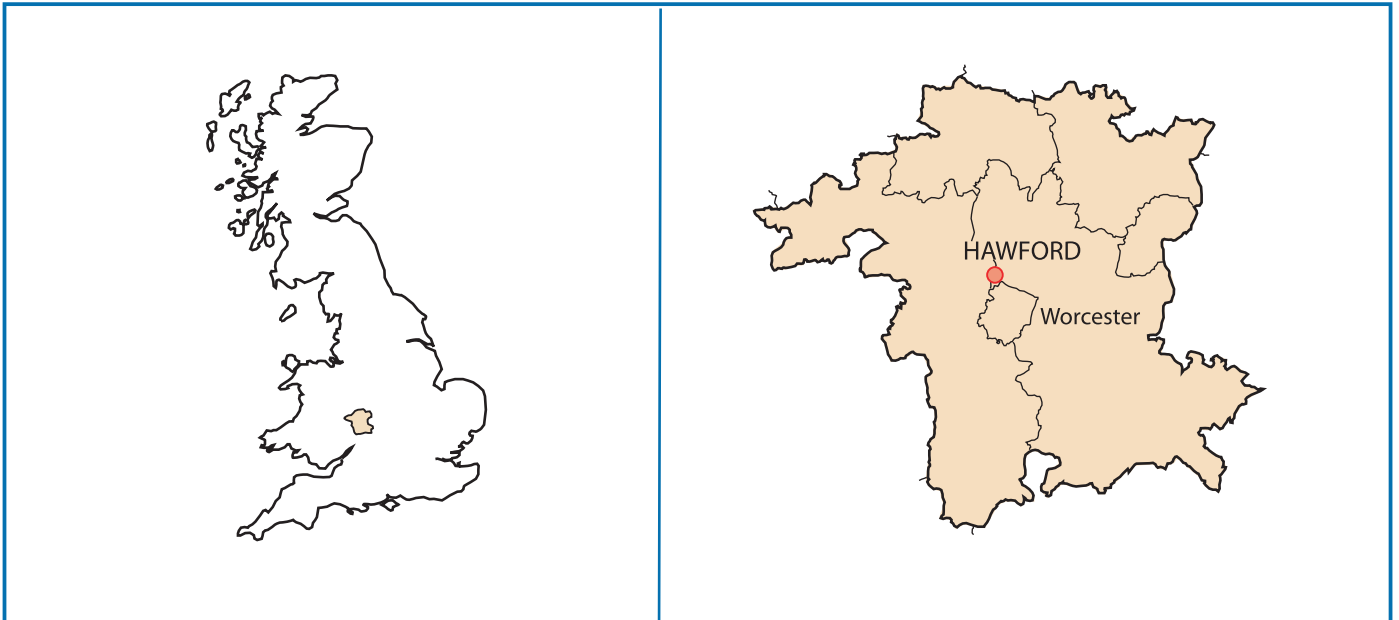
The archive

The archive consists of:

- 3 Fieldwork progress records AS2
- 1 Photographic records AS3
- 54 Digital photographs
- 5. Trench record sheets AS41
- 1 Box of finds
- 1 Computer disk

The project archive is intended to be placed at:

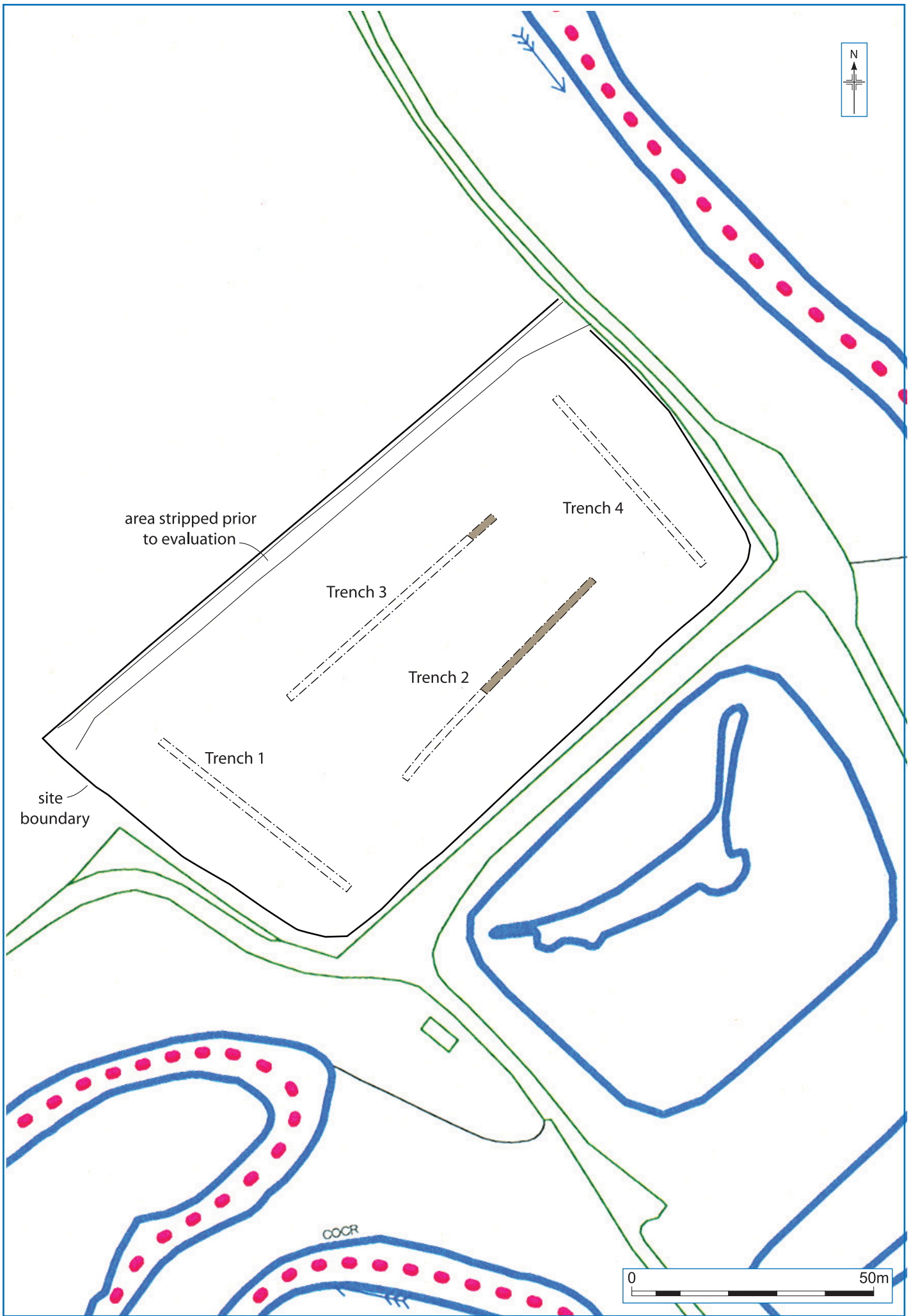
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Worcestershire DY11 7XZ
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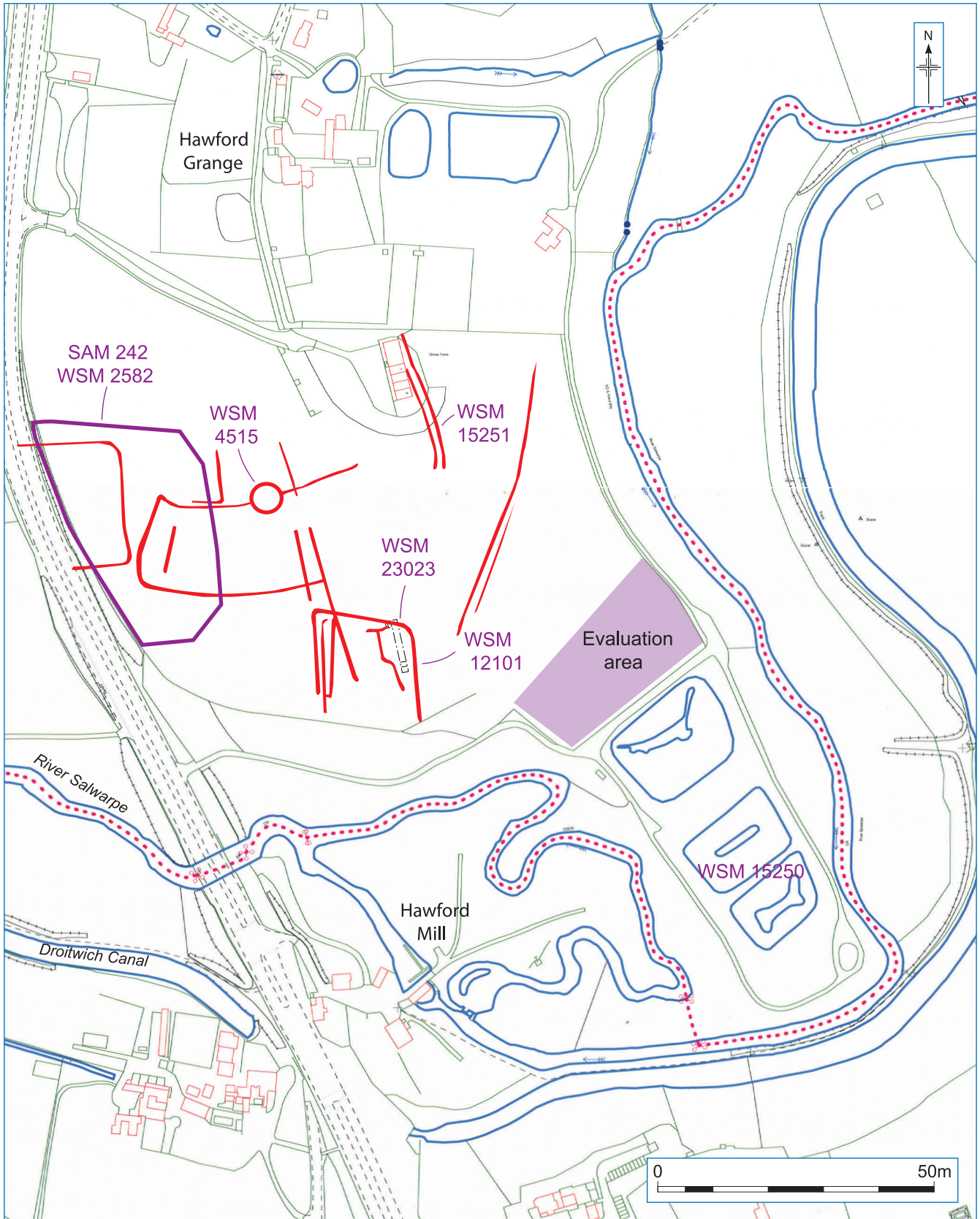
Location of the site.

Figure 1



Trench location plan

Figure 2



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WSM sites in the vicinity

Figure 3



Tracing of Tythe Map of Ombersley c.1816 (WRO Ref x 705.56 BA 1294)

Figure 4