

Former Gordon Russell  
Factory Site  
Broaway  
Worcestershire



**Archaeological Investigation Report**



**Oxford Archaeology**

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**Client: Chase Holmes PLC**

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**Former Gordon Russell Factory Site  
Broadway, Worcestershire*****ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION REPORT***

NGR SP 0952 3759

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## SUMMARY

*During the period November 2003 to April 2004, Oxford Archaeology carried out a programme of archaeological investigation at the Former Gordon Russell Factory Site in Broadway (NGR SP 0952 3759) Worcestershire. The work revealed an early 19th century alignment of Back Lane and an extensive posthole site that was initially expected to represent prehistoric occupation but was shown through excavation to be evidence of post-medieval orchard cultivation.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 During November 2003 to April 2004 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a programme of archaeological investigation at the Former Gordon Russell Factory Site, Broadway, Worcestershire (Fig.1). The work was commissioned by Chase Homes & Steelcase Plc, in respect of a planning application for a mixed development of residential and commercial units (Planning Application No. WM/02/1394) The planning application was submitted to Wychavon District Council.
- 1.1.2 In line with guidance given in Planning Policy Guidance Note 16, section 30, the Planning Authority was advised that a programme of archaeological investigation would be required. The programme of archaeological work was deemed necessary to fulfil the aims of the County Structure Plan (Worcestershire County Council June 2001; policy CTC16-18) and the district local plan, Wychavon District Local Plan, 1993, policy C131 8). Mike Glyde of Worcestershire Archaeological Section, Planning Advisory Section, issued project briefs for the overall investigative works (WCC 2003) and for specific excavation with in the site (WCC 2004).
- 1.1.3 OA carried out the work in accordance with these briefs. Project Designs (OA 2003 and OA 2004) were produced detailing how OA would meet the requirements of the briefs.

### 1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The site lies on Jurassic Lower Lias Clay (British Geological Survey, 1983), with overlying calcareous periglacial gravels and colluvium. The site is located at *c* 100 m above OD, to the north, sloping notably from north to south between Back Lane and the southern boundary of the site, to a level of *c* 98 m OD. The site is situated on land formerly occupied by a disused factory and associated buildings, most of which have been demolished and is *c* 1.2 hectares in area.

### 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 Previous archaeological fieldwork has taken place within the site boundaries. Evaluation by Worcestershire County Council Archaeological Service (WCCAS) uncovered evidence for several phases of activity (WCCAS 2000, SMR WSM 30074). Flints of Neolithic/Bronze Age date were recovered, as well as a small

number of medieval pottery sherds. Structural remains, deposits and a dog burial were found, which were dated to the Post Medieval period. There have also been a number of archaeological works in the surrounding area.

- 1.3.2 A watching brief at land to the rear of Sands Meadow, approximately 200 m north of the site (WCCAS 1997, SMR WSM 24810); uncovered a flint assemblage dated to the Mesolithic or Neolithic periods.
- 1.3.3 Two distinct areas of extensive cropmarks have also been noted to the north (SMR WSM 29581) and west (SMR WSM 27758) of the development area, and have been interpreted as potentially dating from the Neolithic to Roman periods.
- 1.3.4 An estate at Broadway is known to have existed in the 10th century, and Broadway is noted in the Domesday Book (Dalwood 1996; 2). Broadway has also been identified as a medieval new town created by the Abbey of Pershore in the late 12th or mid 13th century (*ibid*). Documentary evidence exists that suggests that Broadway was thriving in the late 13th century. Burgage tenements were recorded in the early 16th century (Dalwood 1996; 2) and the development area lies within this. However, medieval evidence from archaeological investigations in the area is lacking.
- 1.3.5 An evaluation at Abbot's Grange approximately 250 m to the south-west (WCCAS 1990, SMR WSM 1292, 17728, 29557) uncovered the largest amount of medieval evidence. Medieval stone wall foundations, associated surfaces, and deposits relating to the medieval Grange were uncovered.
- 1.3.6 The settlement became more prosperous during the 17th and 18th centuries, and expanded out with the medieval core at this time. Evaluation within the development area (WCCAS 2000, SMR WSM 30074) uncovered post-medieval deposits and structures, including a possible 18th century midden and a dog burial.
- 1.3.7 An evaluation 200 m south of the site at Church Lane/High Street uncovered a layer of loose limestone rubble, dated by pottery to the 16th-18th century (OAU 1997, SMR WSM 24600). Evaluation 500 m north west of the site at the Rickground (WCCAS 1999, SMR WSM 23277) uncovered a section of post-medieval limestone foundation, possibly associated with cider production.
- 1.3.8 There are two listed buildings within the area of development (SMR WSM 01308 and 01309). These are thought to be part of the same building, and possibly date to the 17th century, although there is a possibility that it may be a re-faced medieval building. Both are Grade II listed.
- 1.3.9 A number of post-medieval buildings are present within Broadway, which reflects the expansion of Broadway at this time. Many of these are Grade II\* Listed Buildings (SMR WSM 1306, 1307, 1310, 1819, 1820, 6103, 16892). A number of Grade II Listed Buildings are present (SMR WSM 10891, 10895-10897, 10899, 10912, 10913, 10924, 10926, 10929, 10932, 16888-16891, 16894-16907, 16920-16928), as are buildings of historical interest, which are not listed (SMR WSM 1291, 1835-1837, 1841, 6102, 10892, 10911, 10914, 10925, 10927 and 10932).

- 1.3.10 There are a number of other archaeological sites outside the development area, but which lie within a 500 m radius:
- WSM 17727 refers to the site of a Market Place at Broadway.
  - WSM 29579 relates to building recording of the Lygon Arms Hotel
  - WSM 1305 is the Lygon Arms, at 28-30 High Street, and believed to be medieval in date.
  - WSM 17733 relates to an identified medieval street system
  - WSM 17729 and 17730 are noted as tenement plots, deduced from the Ordnance Survey 1884 map.
- 1.3.11 The earliest map, the enclosure map of 1771, shows the presence of the two listed buildings on the front of the High Street (SMR WSM 01308 and 01309); an L-shaped strip of buildings are also noted to extend as far as Back Lane.
- 1.3.12 The first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1883 shows a similar outline, although a large L-shaped building is depicted just to the north east, within the same plot. The OS edition of 1923 shows a similar arrangement of buildings, with the addition of a small number of ancillary buildings to the west and north.
- 1.3.13 The greatest changes at the site occurred between 1923 and 1975, with the construction of the furniture works to the north of Back Lane, and associated buildings. Russell Cottages at the north end of the site were also built at this time.

## 2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 To identify and record the presence/absence, extent, condition, quality and date of archaeological remains in the areas affected by the development.
- 2.1.2 To identify the existence of any occupation evidence on site, with particular reference to the period indicated by the flint assemblage recovered in the 2000 WCCAS evaluation (Neolithic – Bronze Age).
- 2.1.3 To identify the character/potential of any such occupation with provision for the examination of eco-factual/environmental remains.
- 2.1.4 To make available the results of the archaeological investigation.

### 2.2 Methodology

#### *Machine excavation*

- 2.2.1 Investigation areas were machine excavated to the potential archaeological horizon under archaeological supervision. The area to the north of the site was initially machine excavated to 5 cm above the probable archaeological horizon allowing for sieving for artefacts from this layer. The work was carried out by a 360° tracked excavator equipped with toothless ditching bucket.



### ***Cleaning, excavation and recording***

- 2.2.2 Exposed surfaces were cleaned and features where present planned. The depth and complexity of the deposits across the sites was recorded. Written and drawn records were made of the stratigraphy of all trenches, even where no archaeological deposits were identified.
- 2.2.3 All excavation and recording was carried out in accordance with the IFA *Standard and Guidance for Field Evaluations*, and as set out in Appendix 2 and 3 and the *OA Field Manual* Wilkinson, D 1992.
- 2.2.4 Recording, cleaning and conservation of finds followed the IFA *Guidelines for Finds Work*.

### ***Extent of investigations***

- 2.2.5 The southern half of the site (south of Back Lane) was investigated through eleven machine stripped areas covering a 17% sample of the site (Fig. 3) over and above the evaluation trenches (2, 4, 6 and 7) carried out by WCCAS.
- 2.2.6 Following the results of the evaluation carried out by WCCAS (2000), Area 1 at the northern end of the site was targeted for excavation and was initially investigated by three 5 m square trenches over the location of WCCAS Trench 1. These trenches were subsequently expanded to an a 1700m<sup>2</sup> area after the discovery of postholes and flints in the trenches. This was stripped using a 360° tracked mechanical excavator with ditching bucket. In accordance with the brief from Worcestershire County Council, sieving was initially undertaken within 2 m<sup>2</sup> grids and was carried out using a 10 mm mesh.
- 2.2.7 Following a revised interpretative strategy supported by the client and WCC, the area was not stripped further and full excavation procedures and sieving were halted after *c* 2 weeks.

## **3 RESULTS**

### **3.1 Description of deposits**

#### *Northern area*

- 3.1.1 The primary deposit identified within Area 1 at the northern end of the site was 1005, described as natural. This was a periglacial sand silt base deposit with cryoturbation upcast and mixing through calcareous gravel. This has been interpreted as being part of a Pleistocene head deposit over the Lias clays. All features were recorded as cutting this natural deposit.
- 3.1.2 A wide spread of natural bioturbation was identified within this northern area. A mixing of material through natural deposits and the overlying 1004. This was colluvial sub-soil silt that was *c* 0.20 m thick.
- 3.1.3 More than 150 postholes were identified during the excavation of Area 1, and *c* 100 of these were subjected to a 50% sampling strategy. These posts formed no coherent

pattern. The postholes were, on the whole, filled with a single fill derived from the overlying soil (1004). The postholes generally had moderate to steep edges with narrow concave bases. The widths vary slightly between 0.15 and 0.30 m with depth averaging at *c* 0.25 m.

- 3.1.4 These deposits were overlain by 1003, a buried topsoil horizon *c* 0.40 m thick sealed by a rubble dump of make-up material (1002). Above this lay the modern topsoil layer (1000).

#### *Southern Area*

- 3.1.5 Natural (103) at this southern point of site was as described for Area 1. Cutting this deposit were four ditch cuts (105, 107, 109, 126 – Fig.3), all of which were aligned east-west. Ditches 105 and 107 were located within the northern end of Trench 1. Ditch 105 was the northern most cut and was reasonably regular with moderate sloping edges and a flat base. This was 0.70 m wide and 0.12 m, deep. It was filled by 104, a clay silt derived from the surrounding sub-soil layer 102. No finds were recovered. Ditch 107 was slightly irregular in profile with undulating edges and base and an inconsistent width. Several 19th-20th century sherds of pottery were recovered. The third ditch (109) was located within Trench 11. This had a flat base but inconsistent edges with a width of *c* 0.40 m. This was filled by a brown grey clay loam, not dissimilar from fill 106 (ditch 107), from which a single sherd of 19th-20th century pottery was recovered. The fourth ditch (126) was located within Trench 10 and was recorded as terminating against the western baulk of the trench. This had a regular profile with a flatish base and steep straight edges. It was 2.5 m wide and was filled by a mixed grey clay and natural gravel.
- 3.1.6 Ditch 126 was cut by three postholes (112, 114, 116) situated along the inner northern edge of the ditch, with three more (118, 120, 122) situated along the outer southern edge of the ditch. A seventh posthole was recorded *c* 1.50 m to the south of 118 (Fig.3). All postholes contained similar single fills of brown clay loam. No finds were recovered from these postholes.
- 3.1.7 Trenches 1 to 7 contained a probable plough/cultivation-soils that overlay the archaeology (102) which was in turn overlain by a mixed rubble and soil make-up / levelling layer (101). These had a combined thickness of *c* 0.60 m. Trenches 8 to 11 contained made ground directly over the natural (and ditch 126 and associated postholes) showing potentially heavy truncation.
- 3.1.8 Trenches 1, 6, 7 and 9 contained demolished wall footings that can be tied into the previous above ground building layout. This can be seen quite clearly when comparing Fig. 2 with Fig. 3.

## 3.2 Finds

- 3.2.1 Only modern pottery was observed on the site, this was noted but not retained. These comprised modern white glazed porcelain, 20th century brown glazed stoneware and early 20th century willow pattern china. These were recovered from the probable hedge line 107 (fill 106).



3.2.2 A total of 8 pieces of worked flint were recovered from site. These were from the plough/cultivation deposit identified across site except for one which was located within the top fill of a posthole (1022). Only the two flakes from 1004 were diagnostic, indicating a likely date range between the Mesolithic and the early Neolithic. The assemblage is discussed in Appendix 1.

### 3.3 Palaeo-environmental remains

3.3.1 Although environmental samples were taken during initial recording and excavation, these were considered unsuitable for further processing and analysis given the final interpretation of the site.

### 3.4 Discussion and Conclusions

3.4.1 The Brief for excavation was issued after c 150 postholes had been revealed during a programme of investigative archaeological work. The investigation was intended to reveal any remains that may be associated with eight pieces of prehistoric worked flint that had been retrieved from an evaluation trench carried out by WCC Archaeological Service (Report 860, Oct 2000). The postholes were in and around root disturbance features, which also ran across the whole site.

3.4.2 It was assumed that the posthole features were associated with the prehistoric flints, therefore providing evidence of associated occupation that had been indicated by cropmarks to the north (WSM29581) and a further flint assemblage found c 50 m to the north east (WSM 24810). Further machine stripping and cleaning of an area of 1700 m<sup>2</sup> in this area of the development revealed approximately another 400 postholes.

3.4.3 After two weeks of sieving, planning and excavation, it became clear that the area was not in fact the site of Neolithic settlement area.

3.4.4 No spatially coherent alignments or arrangements of features could be identified, either in direct association or through extrapolation of alignment. While many prehistoric sites exhibit areas where structures are difficult to interpret due to their density, it is unusual not to see any structural form of feature groups (such as four posters, fence lines, roundhouse, porches etc) at all over an area this size. The evidence of root disturbance has continued throughout the site with equal consistency to the posthole features (Fig.3).

3.4.5 On a prehistoric site, the intensity of activity associated with c 400 tightly grouped postholes should reasonably be expected to be reflected with further evidence of human occupation through artefact distribution, representative of the utility and function of the site or area. Despite excavation (half-sectioning) of over 100 postholes, no finds have been recovered from these features. From this investigation the total finds assemblage consists of five worked flints which were recovered from the subsoil and one from a spread slumped into the top of a posthole (1022). No other traces of human activity, such as evidence of burning, or other human made features synonymous with prehistoric sites (pits, ditches, gullies, etc.), were revealed.

- 3.4.6 The sections surrounding the excavation area were highly disturbed. They show upcast mixing of natural calcareous gravel and soils, with no clearly defined horizontal banding. The postholes themselves were filled with material derived from the sub-soil material. This can be interpreted by two explanations. The first being that the posts, having been inserted through the natural, were later sealed with calcareous soils and thereby filling the voids. This would then infer that no surface soil existed at the time of their construction with the glacial sub-soil arriving much later. This would not seem plausible as not only would the archaeology then be interpreted as Palaeolithic but also that the anthropogenic impact on the landscape pre-dated the last iceage. The second explanation is that the posts were actually cut through the sub-soil material, being filled by the same deposit and are contemporary with the tree disturbance. This latter interpretation seems the more plausible and shows that the activity indicated by the posthole features and tree disturbance has never been truncated by ploughing. It seems more likely that that this area has been preserved from the plough since the 18th-19th century, rather than since the prehistoric period.
- 3.4.7 Several linear features were planned in Area 1 and were shown to be land drains. These can be seen (Fig. 3) to be clearly associated with the root disturbance left by the removed trees. The drains did not cut the postholes which supports their not being associated with Neolithic inhabitation.
- 3.4.8 A trench was dug under archaeological supervision immediately south of Russell Cottages, which revealed a continuation of the tree disturbance identified within the Area 1 investigation (location shown in Fig.3).
- 3.4.9 The southern part of the site (Area 2) showed a distinct lack of the plough/cultivation deposit in the four southern most trenches (8, 9, 10 & 11), and this indicated a severe amount of truncation at this end of site. It is most likely that this truncation occurred during the construction of the 19th century factory building. The ditch and postholes encountered in Trench 10 were probably associated with this phase. If not, then they were likely to be recent, as some surviving timber was recorded within the fills of several of the posts. The deposits of these features were not of such a structural typology that would enable the preservation of more historic organic material. Therefore, although no artefacts were recovered from these features it is reasonably certain that these contexts fall into a modern chronology.
- 3.4.10 Ditch 105 (Area 2) appears to follow the alignment of Back Lane (Figs. 2 & 3) and therefore may be confidently interpreted as an original 19th century boundary of the access road to the buildings shown in Fig. 2. Ditch 107 c 5 m to the south of 105 seems likely to be a hedge line following the alignment of the edge of the track that was to become Back Lane. It seems more than likely that the ditch identified within Trench 11 (109) is a continuation of the hedge line 107, showing more of the same sinuous nature. The pottery recovered from the fill of the hedge line (106) were all of 19th / 20th century date, and were probably deposited when the hedge was uprooted during the construction of the Gordon Russell Factory Complex.
- 3.4.11 Historic maps have been consulted. These are the 1888 OS 1st Edition and the 1923, 1924, and 1955 OS editions. All these maps show orchards on either side of the

investigation area as well as extensively in and around the town of Broadway. It therefore seems very likely that this area was also once a part of this orchard. As Broadway is located on the edge of the Cotswolds, and even today the area is prolific with fruit farms (to the extent that the area has earned the affectionate title of the Orchard of England), the sites interpretation as an orchard does fit in both with the areas past and present topographic land use.

*Note on occurrence of posthole features in orchard sites*

3.4.12 Posthole, stake-hole features associated with orchards and general ground disturbance can be caused in a variety of ways;

- The excavation for the planting of the actual trees, then post supports which are set out adjacent to newly planted trees.
- Stake fences which are often erected around a young tree to protect it from wildlife and scaffold supports, which are commonly erected to support the main fruit bearing lower branches of (for instance) apple trees.
- While a full grown apple tree may have a life of up to 50 years, commonly used semi-dwarf varieties have significantly less longevity. Therefore continual replanting and extraction of trees and associated posts would be necessary.

## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1 FINDS ASSESSMENTS

**The flint****Kate Cramp**

A total of eight struck flints were recovered from the site (Table 1). The material is in variable condition, with signs of rolling and edge damage present on several pieces. Most of the flints are chronologically undiagnostic, although the unstratified blade and the blade-like flake (context 1004) can be tentatively dated to the Mesolithic or early Neolithic. These pieces were probably struck using soft-hammer percussion and possess dorsal blade scars, traits consistent with the blade-based industries of this date.

*Table 1: Flint by type and by context*

Category:	Context:				Total:
	U/S	1004	1022	1203	
Flake	1	2	1	1	5
Blade	1				1
Blade-like		1			1
Irregular waste		1			1
Total:	2	4	1	1	8

**APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES**

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- WCCAS 1997, *Watching brief at land to the rear of Sands Meadow, Broadway* (Unpublished client report, Worcestershire County Council Archaeological Service)
- WCCAS 1994, *Salvage Recording at 96 High Street, Broadway* (Unpublished client report, Worcestershire County Council Archaeological Service)
- WCCAS 1990, *Evaluation at Abbot's Grange, Broadway* (Unpublished client report, Worcestershire County Council Archaeological Service)

**APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS**

**Site name:** Former Gordon Russell Factory Site, Broadway, Worcestershire

**Site code:** BRFGR 03

**Grid reference:** SP 0952 3759

**Type of watching brief:** Watching Brief & Excavation

**Date and duration of project:** November 2003 – March 2004

**Area of site:** 1.2 ha

**Summary of results:** The work revealed an early (19th century) alignment of Back Lane and an extensive posthole site that was initially expected to represent prehistoric occupation but was shown through excavation to be evidence of post-medieval orchard cultivation.

**Location of archive:** The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Worcestershire County Museums Service in due course, an accession number will be issued by the museum on submission of the archive.





Scale 1:50,000

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Figure 1: Site location



Figure 2: Evaluation trench location

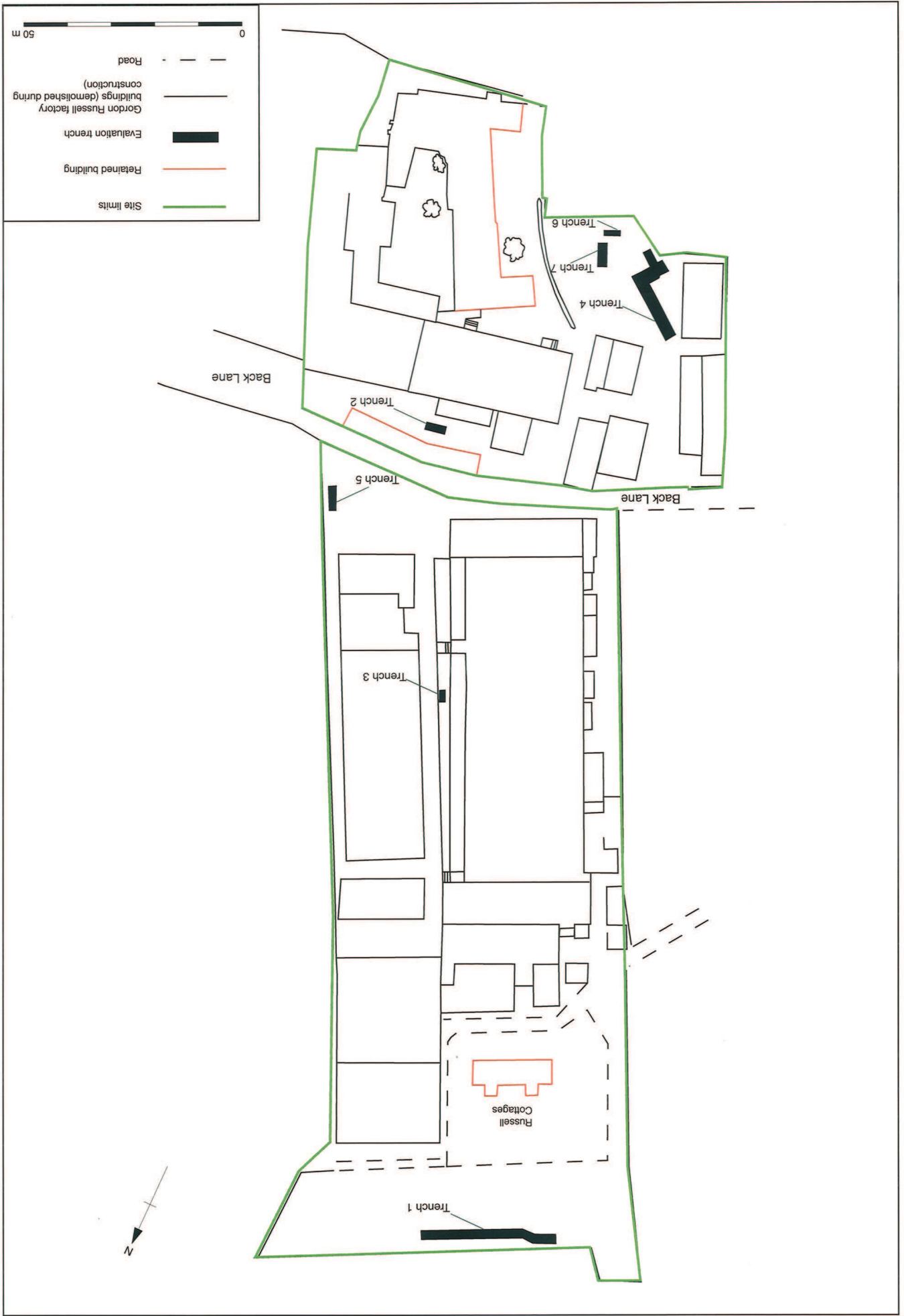
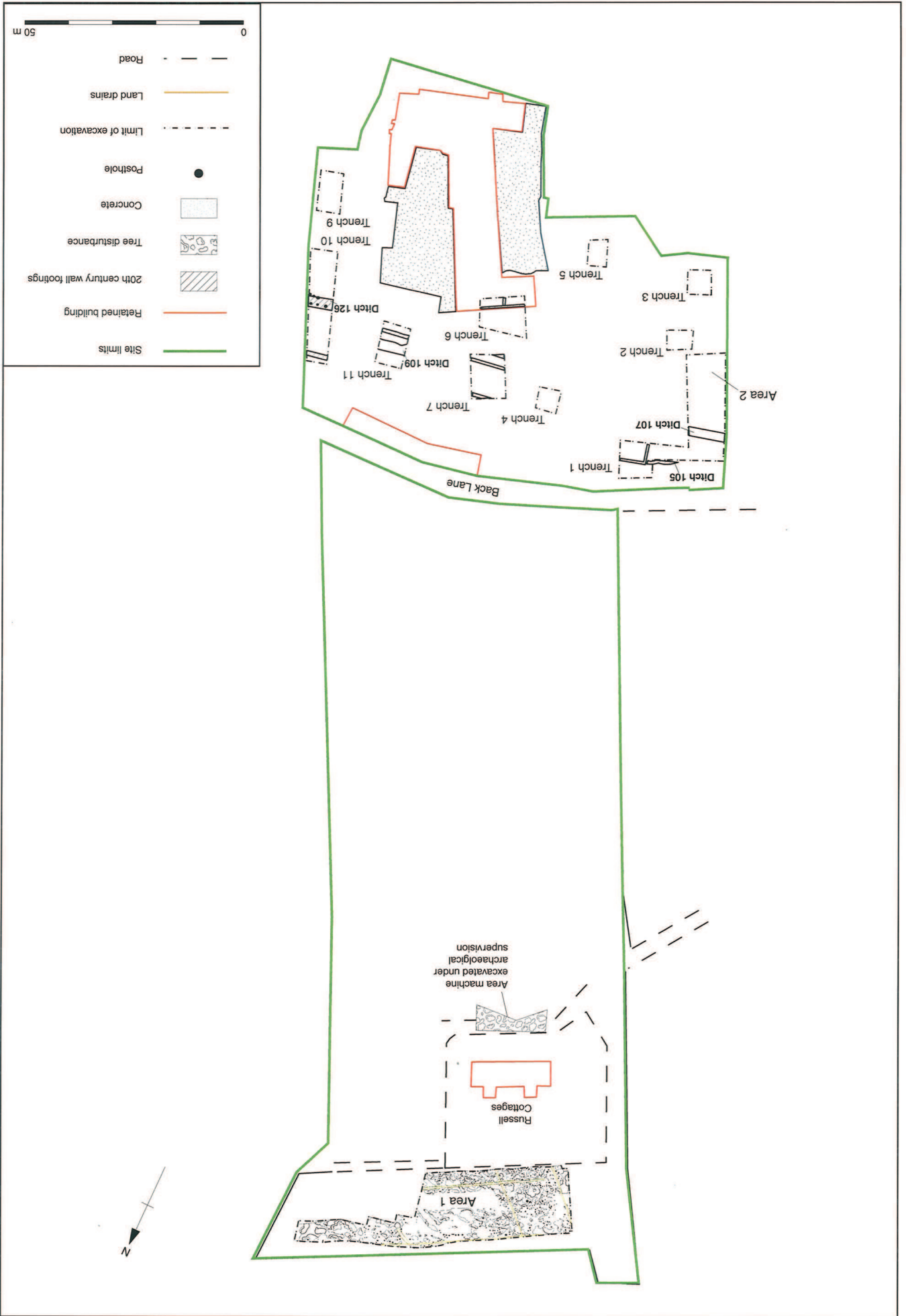


Figure 3: Location of Investigations





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