

Bristol and Region
Archaeological
Services



WATCHING BRIEF AT
**FILWOOD PLAYING FIELDS,
HENGROVE WAY, BRISTOL.**

BARAS REPORT 296/1998

N.G.R. ST 5913 6900

Client: Crest Nicholson Properties

August, 1998.

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August, 1998.

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Bristol and Region Archaeological Services (BaRAS) on Filwood Park, Hengrove Way, Bristol during groundworks associated with the construction of an access road for the proposed Filwood Business Park. As a condition of planning consent, it was required that all groundworks be monitored by a suitably qualified archaeologist. This work was commissioned from BaRAS by Crest Nicholson Properties.
- 1.2 The watching brief was carried out by Pete Insole during April and May 1998.
- 1.3 The site archive will be deposited with Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery under the Accession Number BRSMG 42/1996.

2. THE SITE

- 2.1 The site is located approximately 6km south of the centre of Bristol at NGR ST 5913 6900 (Fig.1).
- 2.2 The site immediately prior to groundworks was open grassed parkland and lies at a height of approximately 60m aOD.
- 2.3 The underlying geology is lias clay with bands of limestone of the Jurassic period.

3. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Historical Background

- 3.1 A full history of the site can be found in BaRAS report D202, what follows is a short summary of the area's history taken from the evaluation report for this site BaRAS report BA/E271 (1996).
- 3.2 During the medieval period the site lay within the manor of Whitchurch and formed part of the estate of Keynsham Abbey, founded in c.1167. Keynsham Abbey owned two granges one of these being Filwood.
- 3.3 Following the Dissolution, the manor of Whitchurch was granted to Sir John St Loes (1549). By 1562 it was assigned to Hugh Smyth of Long Ashton.
- 3.4 The southern part of the site appears to have contained Filwood Farm from about 1730 (BRO AC/N1/32). In 1851 the farm was tenanted by one Benjamin Hall according to the census return, and occupied 250 acres.

Archaeological Background

- 3.5 The Filwood and Knowle West area of Bristol has been the subject of much archaeological interest over the last two decades with numerous pieces of work being carried out by BaRAS in the last three years.
- 3.6 In 1982 a large area in the centre of the park, immediately to the north of the access road work that is the subject of this report, was the subject of a salvage excavation and watching brief in response to the landscaping groundworks for the present Filwood Park. This archaeological work revealed evidence for 2nd-4th century Romano-British occupation of a farm complex containing stone-founded buildings, areas of cobbling and ditches (Williams 1983).
- 3.7 Similar evidence of Romano-British occupation has been excavated in 1997 at Inns Court, approximately 400m to the north west of the access road. The occupation as with the Filwood site dated to the 2nd-4th century, but with limited evidence of Iron Age occupation as well (Jackson, forthcoming).
- 3.8 More recent archaeological work in Filwood park, on the site of a housing development, within 100m to the west of the access road has revealed further evidence of 2nd-4th century occupation with a double ditch and stone bank bounding an area of stone paving. There was evidence of metal working, pottery kilns and infant burials, with the find of a small stone coffin (Cox, forthcoming).
- 3.9 It has been postulated that each of these three archaeological sites were individual farm compounds in the Romano-British period that formed a farming settlement on the scale of a large hamlet or small village (Cox, forthcoming). Romano-British finds of coins, pottery and millstones are recorded on the SMR, approximately 750m to

the south-east of the access road at Bamfield and an enclosure revealed during construction work in c.1973 (Williams 1983). It is possible that the Bamfield finds also relate to the postulated Romano-British settlement. It is also possible that a road, aligned north-west to south-east, linked the Inns Court, Filwood and Bamfield farms.

- 3.10 An archaeological evaluation in 1995 at Hengrove Park, immediately south of Hengrove Way opposite the access road, found no archaeological evidence and suggested that landscaping had removed any evidence of Romano-British occupation (BaRAS 1995).
- 3.11 An evaluation of Filwood park, including the access road site was carried out in 1996 and also found no evidence of Romano-British occupation, but, as with the Hengrove Park site there was evidence of extensive landscaping in the recent past with the levelling of the central area of the site and the deposition of material at the north-east end of the site (BaRAS 1996). It was concluded from these results that the very bottom of archaeological features might survive in the central area while any features in the north-east area might be buried by up to a metre of redeposited material (*ibid.*).

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The groundworks monitored for this piece of fieldwork involved the stripping of topsoil by 360 degree mechanical excavators from a c.11.5m wide area along the length of the road (Fig.2). Other areas to the south of the road were stripped of topsoil where they were to be used as storage or accommodation space, but this work revealed no significant features.
- 4.2 After stripping the topsoil the same mechanical excavators removed the central c.7.5m of the road to a depth of approximately 1m for the deposition of scalplings and make-up for the road. This second phase of excavation removed material down to the bedrock or stiff natural clays.
- 4.3 Finally, excavations by machine for the road's drainage was carried out along the central line of the road. This generally meant the re-excavation of areas previously monitored during the second phase of the groundworks. However, the drainage was also continued along the alignment of the road to the east in preparation for the future business park development, resulting in the excavation of material buried by the landscaping mentioned above.
- 4.4 A photographic and drawn record was made of all archaeological features and various sections revealed by these groundworks (Figs.2-8).

5. RESULTS OF THE WATCHING BRIEF

5.1 The groundworks for the access road generally found that 0.2m of topsoil overlay orange brown clay of various thickness that became a dark bluey grey clay at greater depths. Some sections revealed bands of limestone at various depths below the orange brown clay and, in places, running through it. The only significant archaeological features revealed during the fieldwork was a Romano-British gully in Section B and structural remains probably relating to the post-medieval Filwood Farm.

5.2 Section A (Fig.3)

Close to Hengrove Way the topsoil was stripped to a depth of 0.2m revealing orange brown clay (context 1001). This was found to be 0.1m deep overlying 0.4m of dark blue grey clay (1002) that oxidised to a mid brown colour. Beneath this layer was a 0.2-0.3m thick band of limestone (1003) that overlay a further deposit of dark grey clay (1004). This sequence was recorded to a maximum depth of 1.2m below the ground surface, approximately 58m aOD.

5.3 Section B (Fig.4, Pl.2)

Approximately 1.1m from the west end of the road, removal of 0.2m of topsoil revealed a 0.6m wide gully (1103) aligned north - south and cut into the orange brown clay (1101) beneath the topsoil. The gully contained a mid-brown silty clay (1102) that produced one sherd of Romano-British pottery, a copy of a type 37 Samian ware bowl, manufactured in the Gloucester area probably c. 2nd century. The orange brown clay (1101) was revealed to be 0.35m deep and overlying a dark blue grey clay (1104). Section B was excavated to a depth of 58.14m aOD.

5.4 Section C (Fig.5)

Topsoil stripping approximately 60m from the western end of the access road revealed the structural remains of a building with two walls perpendicular to each other joined at the eastern end. Further excavation revealed the plan of the structure shown in Figure 2. The first of these walls (1210) aligned south-west/north-east measured 8.3m in length, 0.43m wide and was constructed of limestone blocks with occasional blocks of pennant bonded with a cream coloured, lime mortar containing the occasional fleck of charcoal. This wall had been truncated by a field drain 1.4m from its western end. The second wall (1211) was similarly constructed, although only 5.4m in length and aligned approximately north-west/south east.

5.5 The clay around this structure (1202) was very mixed with demolition material, including glass, pan tiles and stonework - a result of demolition of the building and the later landscaping of the park.

5.6 Deeper excavation through this area revealed that wall 1211 continued to the north into the north section and that there was a northerly return at the western end of wall 1210 (Fig.2). These walls had not been apparent after the initial topsoil strip as they were sealed by a greater depth of the mixed clay (1202) that was revealed to be 0.1-0.2m deep and overlying orange brown clay (1203). Here, the area for the road was excavated to a depth of 1.2m below the ground surface, 58.5m aOD, but failed to reach the bottom of the walls. The area between the two walls was filled with dark black, waterlogged, clay and rubble containing much modern farm rubbish including ironwork and wood.

5.7 Section D (Fig.6)

Seventy metres from the eastern end of the road 0.3m of orange brown clay (1302) lay beneath the topsoil. Below the orange brown clay was a 0.2m thick band of limestone (1303) that overlay a further deposit of orange brown clay (1304) to a depth of 59.1m aOD, 1m below the surface.

5.8 Section E (Fig.7)

In the eastern 'hammerhead' for the road 0.2-0.3m of topsoil overlay orange brown clay (1402) that was 0.6-0.7m thick. Beneath context 1402 was a band of limestone which lay at a depth of 59.88m aOD.

5.9 Section F (Fig.8)

Close to the eastern end of the access road 0.2m of topsoil overlay a mixed mid-brown clay (1502) containing brick fragments, lime, asphalt and charcoal. This was revealed to be 0.25m deep and overlying orange brown clay that was excavated to a depth of 59.8m aOD, 0.9m below the ground surface.

5.10 Other Observations

In the junction area of the access road a considerable amount of rubble was noted in the position marked on Fig.2. This was possibly demolition material from a second building as the rubble contained pan tiles, worked stone and mortar.

5.11 The drainage works to the east of the access road revealed a similar sequence of deposits to that in Section F, with a slight increase in the depth of the mixed clay. No archaeologically significant finds were made during the course of this work.

6. CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The structure in the Section C area of the access road is evidently one of the Filwood Farm buildings. It is not possible to establish which of the buildings of Filwood Farm shown on the 19th century maps relates to the structure revealed during the watching brief. The tithe map (BRO 24537 (1 + 2)) shows several buildings in the area but none of the 19th century field boundaries survive to the present day making exact location very difficult.
- 6.2 The Romano-British gully revealed towards the western end of the road could be the bottom of a larger feature truncated by the landscaping in the early 80's. It is likely that this feature relates to the evidence of occupation investigated in 1982. It is also possible that this feature was recorded in 1982 as it approximately coincides with this area of the access road.
- 6.3 The watching brief has revealed further evidence of the landscaping that has taken place on the site since the 1982 excavation with the mixed clays overlying the Filwood Farm structure and those lying to the eastern end of the road.
- 6.4 The gully revealed by the monitoring of these groundworks suggests that Romano-British features may have survived the landscaping of the park. However, no evidence of Romano-British occupation was recovered at the eastern end of the park where it is likely to survive buried beneath redeposited clay.

7. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- BaRAS 1996 Archaeological Evaluation of Filwood Park, Knowle West, Bristol, Bristol and Region Archaeological Services report BA/E271.
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8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Bristol and Region Archaeological Services would like to thank Phil Bayliss (Bideem Construction Ltd.) and Rod Burchill (pottery identification) for their assistance during the course of this project.

Appendix 1: Policy Statement

This report is the result of work carried out in the light of national and local authority policies.

NATIONAL POLICIES

Statutory protection for archaeology is enshrined in the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979), amended by the National Heritage Act, 1983. Nationally important sites are listed in the Schedule of Ancient Monuments (SAM). Scheduled Monument consent is required for any work which would affect a SAM.

DOE PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE

The Planning Policy Guidance of Archaeology and Planning (PPG 16) consolidates advice to planning authorities. The Guidance stresses the non-renewable nature of the archaeological resource, details the role of the County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), encourages early consultation with county and district archaeological officers and sets out the requirement for developers to provide sufficient information on the archaeological impact of development to enable a reasonable planning decision to be made.

PPG 16 also indicates the circumstances where further work would be necessary and outlines the use of agreements and conditions to protect the archaeological resource.

DISTRICT POLICY

Bristol City Council Deposit Local Plan Written Statement (1993) states (policy B27):

There will be a presumption in favour of preserving any archaeological features or sites of national importance, whether scheduled or not.

Development which could adversely affect sites, structures, landscapes, buildings or areas of local archaeological interest and their settings will require an assessment of the archaeological resource through a desktop study, and where appropriate a field evaluation. Where there is evidence of archaeological remains, development will not be permitted except where it can be demonstrated that:-

- (i) the archaeological features of the site will be satisfactorily preserved in situ, or a suitable strategy has been put forward to mitigate the impact of development proposals upon important archaeological remains and their settings, or, if this is not possible and the sites are not scheduled or of national importance;
- (ii) provision for adequately recording the site prior to destruction is made, preferably by negotiating a planning agreement to ensure that access, time and financial resources are available to allow essential recording and publication to take place.

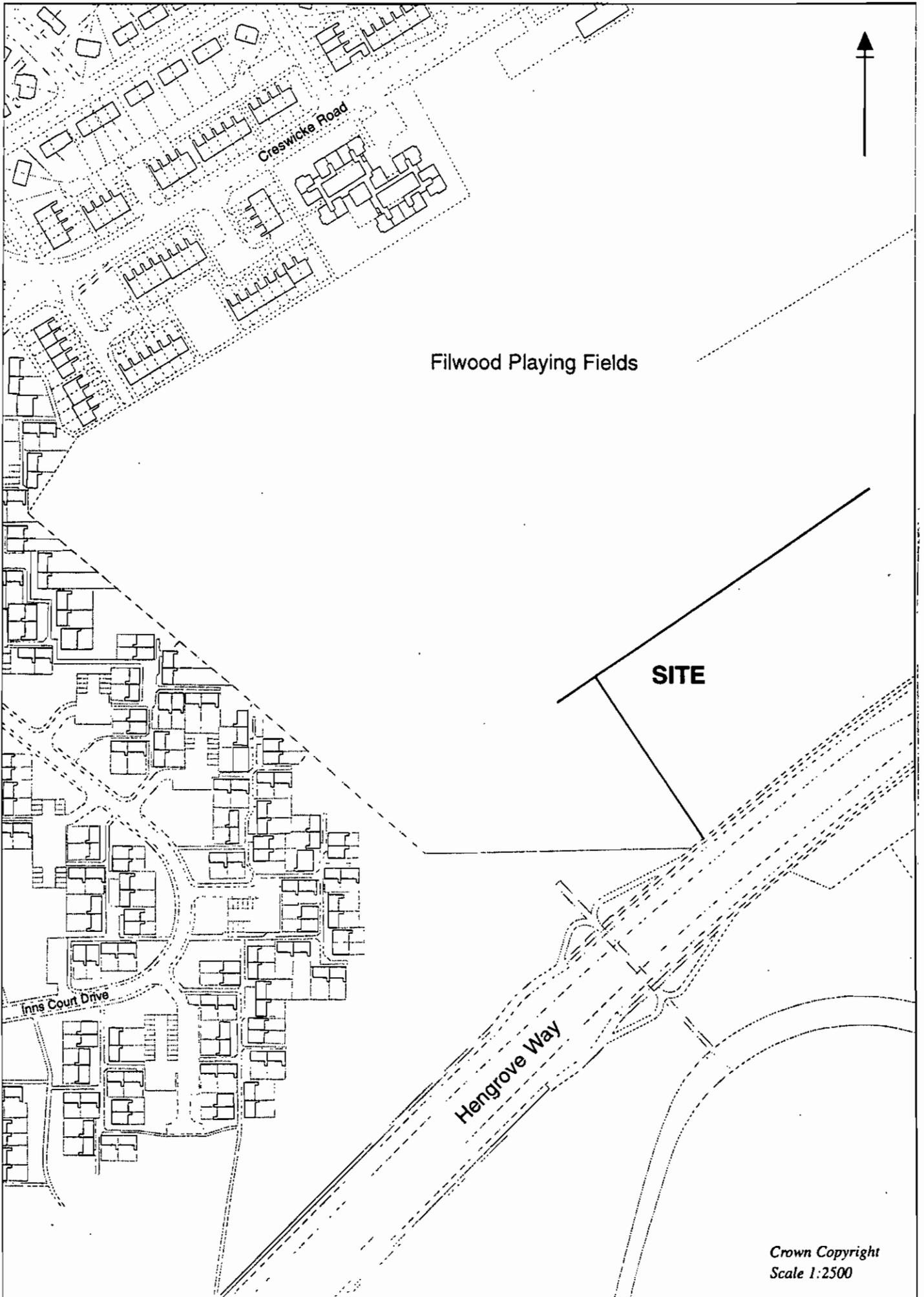


Fig.1 Site location plan

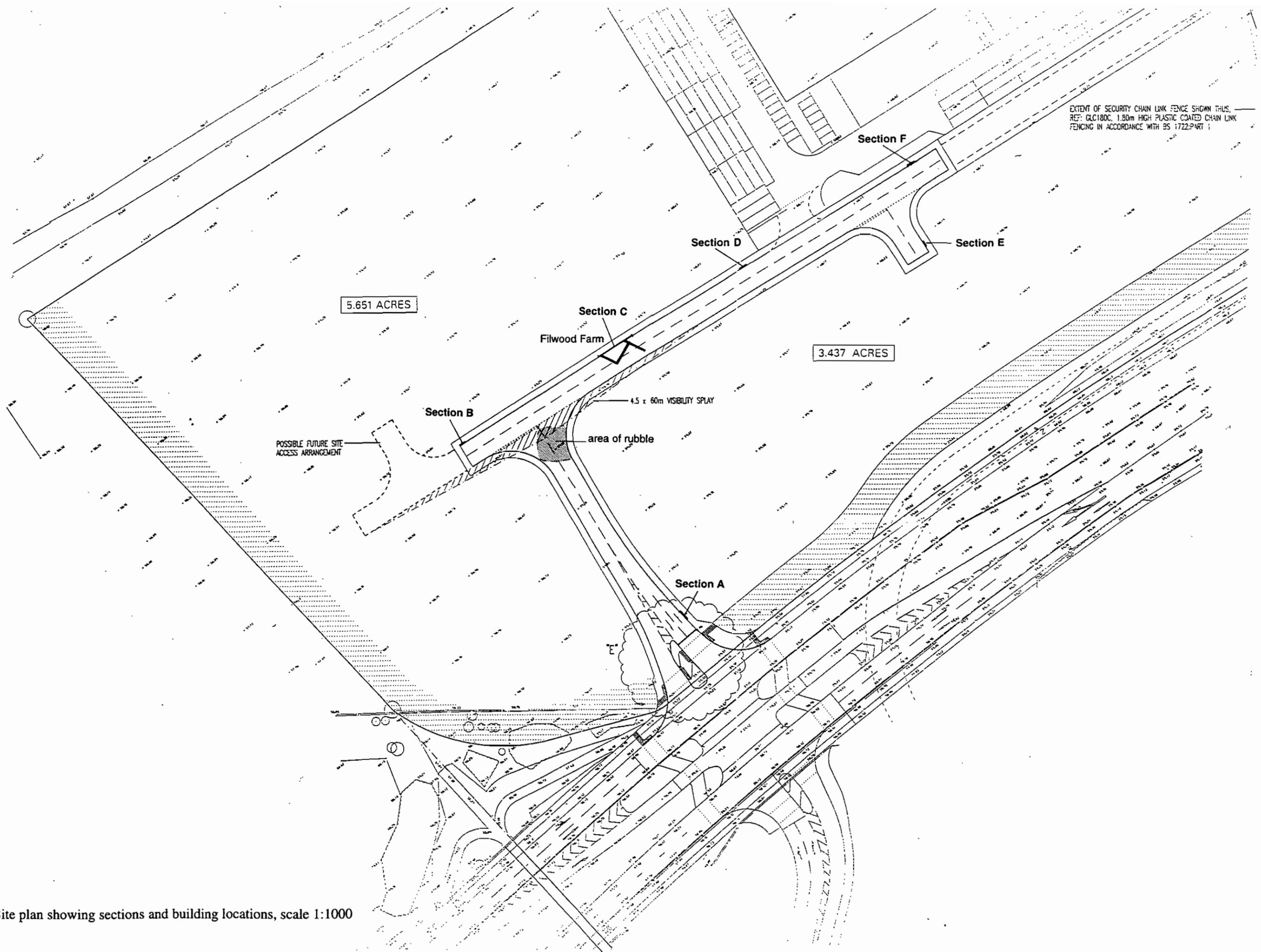


Fig.2 Site plan showing sections and building locations, scale 1:1000

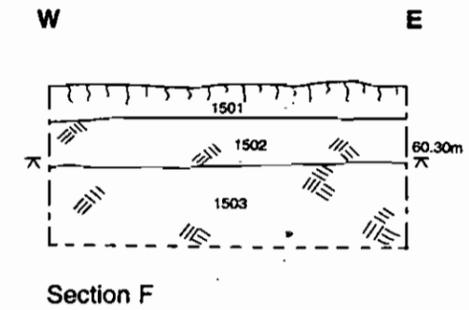
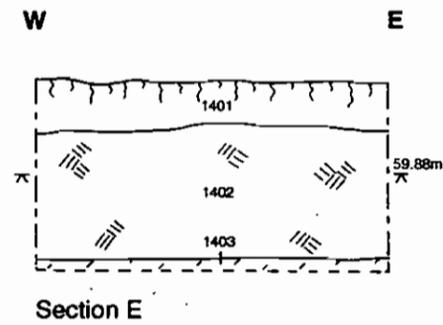
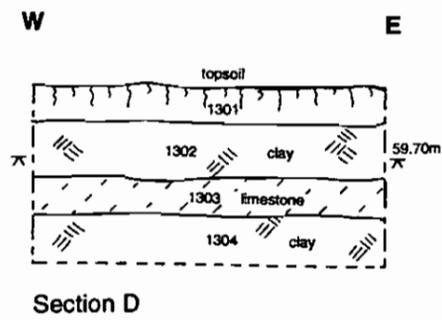
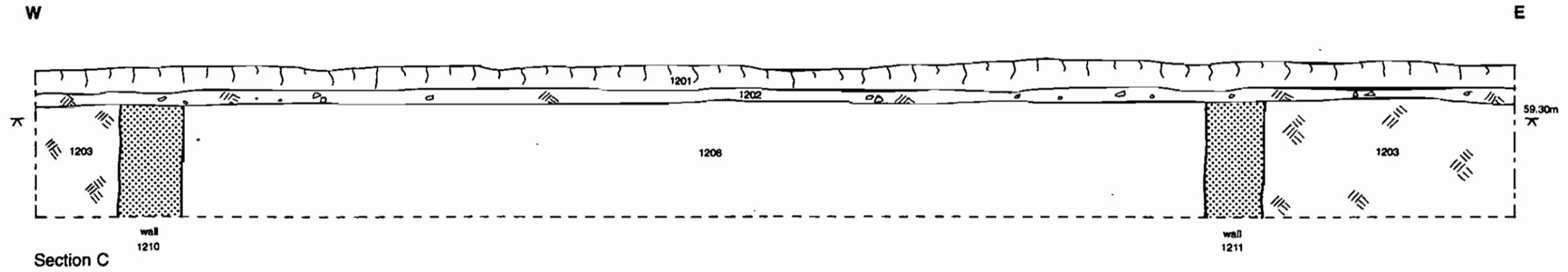
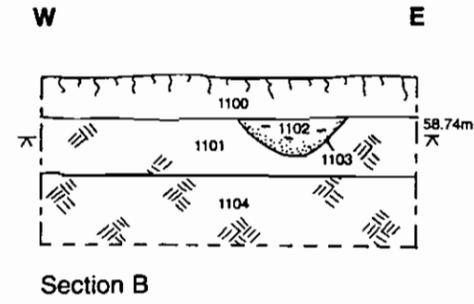
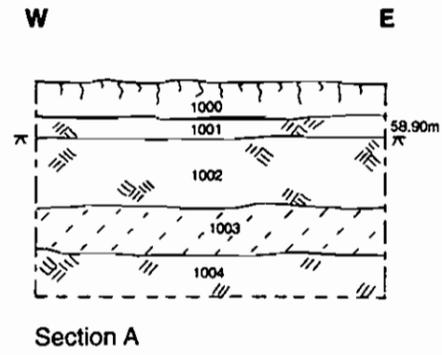


Fig.3 - Fig.8 Sections A-F, scale 1:40



Plate 1 View of Filwood Park, from the east



Plate 2 Romano-British gully (1102/1103). viewed from the south