

INDEX DATA	RPS INFORMATION
Scheme Title A49-A528 Battlefield Link road.	Details Archaeological Evaluation.
Road Number A49-A528	Date February 1994.
Contractor Shropshire cc.	
County Shropshire.	
OS Reference SJ 51.	
Single sided ✓ Double sided A3 1 Colour 0	

**A49-A528 BATTLEFIELD LINK,  
SHREWSBURY (PREFERRED ROUTE):  
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

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**A REPORT FOR  
THE COUNTY SURVEYOR'S DEPARTMENT,  
SHROPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

The  
Archaeology Unit  
**SHROPSHIRE**   
**COUNTY COUNCIL**  
*Leisure Services Department*

**Report Number 44 February 1994**

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***A49-A528 Battlefield Link, Shrewsbury (Preferred Route):  
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## **1 PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

### **1.1 The Preferred Route**

- 1.1.1** The preferred route of the proposed A49-A528 Battlefield Link runs for 4km around the northern limits of Shrewsbury between the junction of the A49 with the A53 and the Junction of the A528 with Harlescott Lane. The route runs through an area of open agricultural land, consisting of a number of smallholdings. The land use is predominantly improved or permanent pasture, with a small amount of arable cultivation.
- 1.1.2** The preferred route of the proposed new road will pass about 300 metres to the south of Battlefield Church and College, which was founded in 1406 on the site of the Battle of Shrewsbury (1403). The church and its associated fishponds and earthworks are a scheduled ancient monument (Monument No.: Shropshire 357). In the fields to the south of the church there are extensive earthwork remains of medieval ridge and furrow ploughing. The proposed new road and associated screening will directly affect the best preserved area of this ridge and furrow.
- 1.1.3** Because of the archaeological significance of the area through which the proposed new road will run, it was deemed necessary to conduct an archaeological evaluation of the route corridor. Accordingly, a brief for the archaeological assessment and evaluation of the preferred route was prepared by the Senior Archaeologist of the Leisure Services Department, Shropshire County Council (Watson, 1993).
- 1.1.4** The Archaeology Unit of the Leisure Services Department, Shropshire County Council, was commissioned by the County Surveyor's Department, Shropshire County Council, to conduct this evaluation in accordance with the brief prepared by the Senior Archaeologist.

## **2 THE AIMS AND METHODOLOGY OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

### **2.1 Aims and Objectives of the Evaluation**

**2.1.1** The aim of this evaluation is to provide information enabling an informed and reasonable planning decision to be taken regarding the archaeological provision for the areas affected by the proposed road scheme.

**2.1.2** The objectives were:

- a) To locate any archaeological features and deposits likely to be affected by the preferred route.
- b) To assess their survival, quality, condition, and significance.
- c) To identify and assess the significant archaeological impacts likely to arise from the construction of the preferred route and to recommend appropriate mitigation strategies.

### **2.2 Methodology of the Evaluation**

**2.2.1** To achieve these objectives, the evaluation of the preferred route was required to comprise a number of different elements:

#### **STAGE 1: Desk Top Study**

Documentary and cartographic research would be undertaken to locate and assess previously unrecorded features within the route corridor. This research would include a survey of the aerial photographs and primary and secondary sources held at the County Sites and Monuments Record and the County Records and Research Unit.

#### **STAGE 2: Walk-over Survey and Field Walking**

A walk over survey would be undertaken along the entire route in order to locate and assess any previously unrecorded earthwork features of significance within the route corridor. This element of the evaluation would include rapid field reconnaissance and the sketch plotting to a scale of not less than 1:2500 of any surviving earthworks encountered. Areas of arable land use within the road corridor would be field walked after ploughing.

#### **STAGE 3: Field Evaluation**

Sample excavation might be required following the results of Stages 1 and 2 of the evaluation. Any such excavations would be limited to the top of significant archaeological deposits, which would then be sampled only where essential for achieving the objectives of the evaluation. A full written, graphic, and photographic record would be made of the findings.

### **3 ASSESSMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL FEATURES IN THE PREFERRED ROUTE CORRIDOR**

#### **3.1 STAGE 1: The Documentary Research**

by Dr C Phillpotts

##### **3.1.1 Introduction**

This report has been prepared as part of an archaeological evaluation of the site of the Battlefield Link Road, designed to run around the north side of Shrewsbury to join the A49 to the A528. The study area researched was the Evaluation Study Area detailed on drawing 3006/01/1A. This is an area of approximately a hundred hectares, crossed by a stream running from northwest to southeast. The research emphasis was on the main printed, manuscript, cartographic and photographic sources for the history of the site. Further work could certainly be done on both printed and manuscript sources, particularly the voluminous papers of the Corbets of Sundorne at Shropshire Record Office (see below), and references could be pursued at the Public Record Office and the British Library in London, and the Bodleian Library in Oxford. However, whereas further research would provide more detail of the tenure and occupation of the land over the centuries, it would give comparatively little information about the use of the land or the physical impact of previous generations upon it. The emphasis of the research has been topographical in accordance with the requirements of an archaeological survey.

Apart from some Bronze Age material of uncertain location, there is no evidence for the use or organisation of the land before the medieval period. The descent of the manor in the centuries following Domesday Book and the traces of some of its fields are outlined below. The most important event to take place in the vicinity was the Battle of Shrewsbury in 1403, and this led to the foundation of Battlefield College just to the north of the study area. From the dissolution of the College to the present day, the area has remained principally in agricultural use.

##### **3.1.2 Bronze Age finds**

In April 1863 Samuel Wood displayed some bronze implements at the Society of Antiquaries. These had been found the previous year with a large number of others during ploughing near a hedge at Battlefield. The exact location of the findspot is unknown. Most of the material had been melted down by a local scrap-dealer shortly after the discovery. The surviving pieces consisted of a palstave without a loop, a flat wedge-shaped axe-head, and three blunt sickle-shaped objects of uncertain use. They were afterwards presented to Shrewsbury Museum by T. Beacall (SMR no.: SA2595; Wood 1863, 251-2; Phillips 1903, 194).

##### **3.1.3 Medieval Manor**

At the time of the Domesday Book survey of 1086, Rainald the Sheriff had two holdings in the area, each of two hides (about 240 acres), listed as Abretone and Etbretone. Both were held before the Norman conquest by Siward; Rainald now held them from Roger Montgomery, earl of Shrewsbury. At Abretone the hides were not subject to the taxation of geld, and Rainald retained them himself. At Etbretone he had a sub-tenant called Herbert. The land of the two holdings was

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worked by villeins and bordars, and also by a radman and a Frenchman. Between them they used four and a half ploughs. The value of one of the holdings had remained static at 15 shillings since the conquest, while the other had risen from 14 to 25 shillings (Thorn 1986, 4.3.51, 4.3.57).

Rainald's two holdings are represented by the two moated enclosures at Harlescott (SJ50151605) and Albright Hussey (SJ50221758). The moat at Albright Hussey (SMR no. SA2601) was adjacent to a settlement (SMR no. SA4508) and a chapel (SMR no. SA1592). The chapel lay to the southeast of the moat. It was dedicated to John the Baptist and had a parochial function with burial rights. The deserted settlement is visible as an irregular surface in the field around the chapel and a building platform to the west of the moat. To the south of the platform is an area of ridge and furrow aligned north-south on a terraced area, marking one of the fields attached to the settlement.

Rainald Balliol was the second Norman sheriff of Shropshire. He married the widow of his predecessor, Warin the Bald, the niece of Earl Roger. His lands afterwards passed to Alan fitz Flaad, sheriff in the early twelfth century, and then to his descendants the Fitzalans, as part of their lordship of Oswestry.

The manor of Albright Hussey (including Harlescott and Battlefield) was held from the Fitzalans by their vassals, the Hussey family. The first known Hussey was Walter, who held the manor by service of one knight's fee from the Fitzalans in 1165. Most of his successors were named John or Richard. They continued to be the most prominent landowners in the area until the seventeenth century (Thorn 1986, n.4.3.51; Blakeway 1889, 105-9; 1897, 264-5; CSA p.234 no.274).

At the time of Domesday Book the manor lay in Baschurch Hundred, which was later renamed Pimhill Hundred. The manor was eventually absorbed into the Liberty of Shrewsbury. In the time of Henry III woods and meadows at Harlescott were included within the bounds of the royal forest of Haughmond. They were excluded from the forest by order of Edward I in 1301 (Thorn 1986, n.4.3.51; Blakeway 1897, 265; CSA p.250 no.279). There was woodland called Copie Wood at the eastern end of the study area in the fifteenth century, to the east of the Shrewsbury-Whitchurch road. The abbot of Lilleshall leased it out to Thomas Ponsbury as part of his manor of Albright Lee. By the eighteenth century part of this area had become Coppy Meadow (Blakeway 1889, 113-4; LSL microfilm 34).

### **3.1.4 Medieval Fields**

Parts of the common fields of the manor of Albright Hussey are still visible as patterns of ridge and furrow across the study area. They are most marked in the field to the south of the fishponds of Battlefield church (SMR no. SA4471, centred on SJ511171), where they run east-west, and perhaps also north-south up the western side of the ponds; and in the next field to the southeast adjacent to the railway embankment (centred at SJ51151675), where the ridges form a radial pattern around two or three ponds (Figs. 1 & 2, Site A) (LSL APs 7516, 7566, large series 88/171/067; SMR APs SJ5117 B-G and slide GB/90/2/05).

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These two fields were pastures at the tithe survey of Harlescott township in 1849, and the ridge and furrow has presumably survived here because they have been subjected to less modern ploughing (LSL tithe apportionment 145). Less visible ridge and furrow has been noted as extending over much of the study area from the railway in the east to the Shrewsbury-Ellesmere road in the west (SMR no. SA4471). Fig. 3 shows the extent of ridge and furrow visible from the air in August 1983 (SMR APs 7516 and 7566); much of the pastureland over the study area has been improved since this date, resulting in the loss of a substantial part of these earthworks.

The field immediately to the west of the second of the above fields, running southward to the stream, was called Wet Reans (Fig. 3). The reans refer to the drainage furrows between the ridges of a common field (LSL tithe apportionment 145). Ridge and furrow is also visible on aerial photographs just outside the study area, running east-west in a field south of the stream and west of the railway (LSL APs 7516, 7566, large series 88/171/067). To the west of the church, towards Albright Hussey, was a field called Shut Field in the eighteenth century (Fig. 3), now divided into two. "Shut" indicates the selions of a common field (LSL microfilm 34).

In c1270-1280 John Hussey granted land in the manor to a burgess of Shrewsbury called Simon Graneges. This consisted of a messuage with a curtilage and half a virgate of land (about 15 acres) belonging to it, and land called "Shutefeld" with eleven selions reaching from it to Harlescott Lane (CSA p.234 no.274). Shut Field was probably larger in extent at this time than it appears on the eighteenth-century maps. The grant suggests that the ground towards the west end of the study area was being ploughed north-south at this period. In 1309-10 Shrewsbury Abbey purchased three messuages and three virgates of land in the manor from Hussey's tenants Robert Bakenhale and his wife Cecilia. This was apparently the same holding. After the dissolution of the Abbey it was granted in 1543 to Thomas Ireland (Blakeway 1897, 265).

There is little indication of what crops may have been raised on these fields. In the reign of Henry III (1216-1272) the royal foresters of claimed the right to take 16 sheaves of oats and 32 of some other crop from Harlescott (Blakeway 1897, 265). The battle of Shrewsbury was fought in a field of peas in 1403 (Priestly 1979, 10). Battlefield College later leased part of its tithes of grain and hay from Harlescott township to Thomas Ireland (Fletcher 1903, 106). These references suggest the normal medieval range of crops was grown on the arable fields and meadows along the stream.

It is difficult to assign a date to this field system. The only closely datable find from the area is a coin of King John (1199-1216), discovered in the garden of Battlefield Farm (LSL MS 225). This is not noted in the Sites and Monuments Record. The fields were certainly in place by the thirteenth century and had probably been laid out since well before the Norman conquest. The system presumably continued to evolve into the early modern period.

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### **3.1.5 The Battle of Shrewsbury**

It was across this landscape of field-strips that the battle of Shrewsbury was fought. In 1403 Henry IV was suddenly faced with a rebellion by the Percy family, who had formerly been his allies when he usurped the throne from Richard II in 1399. The main Percy power base was in Northumberland (where Henry Percy the elder was earl) and Yorkshire. Henry Percy the younger (Hotspur) marched from the north to Cheshire where he had recently been Justiciar, and recruited most of his army from the fighting men of the county and the neighbouring Welshries. He then moved south towards Shrewsbury, hoping to effect a junction with the Welsh rebels under Owain Glyndwr. However, Glyndwr was still campaigning in Carmarthenshire. Hotspur was unable to gain entry to Shrewsbury town before the king arrived from the east with a hastily gathered army. Here he joined the force which his son the Prince of Wales had been leading against the Welsh. Hotspur then moved away from the town to the north, but was obliged to turn and fight the king's army at Battlefield on 21st July.

The chroniclers' accounts of the battle which followed suggest that it was a fluid fight. The advantage first went Hotspur's way, but the victory finally went to the king, after the intervention of the prince's reserve force and the death of Hotspur in the melee. All of the fighting was on foot. Both sides had large bodies of archers and many of the casualties resulted from the arrow storms they generated. The prince was wounded in the face and according to some accounts Hotspur himself was felled by an arrow in the head. The figures given for the number of dead are unreliable, but may have been several thousand. The battle is to be the subject of a full-length study by Philip Morgan of Keele University, to be published this year.

Much was written about the battle in the latter part of last century. It was normally assumed that Hotspur drew up his forces on the higher ground to the north of the site of the church, to protect his retreat along the Whitchurch road, and that the king opposed him from the ground immediately to the south of the church. This was the analysis of Richard Brooke, who visited the battle ground several times in the 1850s (Brooke 1857, 9-10). The original licence to Richard Hussey to grant land to build a chapel on the site of the church states that the battle took place in Hayteleyfeld (Fletcher 1903, 41). This was probably represented by the plots called Akeley (Fig. 3) just to the north of the church in the eighteenth century (LSL microfilm 34). The position of the king's army is usually accepted as King's Croft at SJ514171, just to the southeast of the church (SMR 1615). However, in the eighteenth century this name was applied to a field a little further south (LSL microfilm 34). The only military field-name was Trooper's Piece and Rousehill, immediately to the west of this field, the same field as contains the radial pattern of ridge and furrow around the ponds (Fig. 2, Site A) (LSL Tithe apportionment 145).

The site of the battle is by no means certain. Alfred Burne's concept of "inherent military probability" seems insufficient to settle the matter (Burne 1947-8, 148). Chroniclers variously describe the site as Old Field, Bull Field or Husifield. The first might refer to the Old Heath Pieces area on the site of the Rolls Royce

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factory near the junction of Harlescott Lane with the Whitchurch road. Husifield might be represented by Hussey's Yard towards the west end of the study area, but it seems to be a description that could have applied to any part of the manor in the fifteenth century. The traditional site of Hotspur's death was a mile to the west of the church (LSL Tithe apportionment 145; Priestly 1979, 10). Last century the discovery of arrow-heads was reported in the area, but metal-detecting to the north, east and southeast of the church has failed to find any. More recently permission was granted for metal-detecting in Trooper's Piece, but the results are not recorded (Priestly 1979, 10; SMR 4471).

It is possible that either side may have reinforced their position with small-scale defensive works. In 1958-60 excavations took place on the site of the battle of Aljubarrota in Portugal, where in 1385 the Portuguese king Joao I defeated a Castilian army with the aid of a body of 800 English and Gascon archers. These discovered defences covering the left flank of the Portuguese position. The whole system extended over an area 300m by 100m and consisted of substantial ditches, and 830 pits in 40 rows in a herring-bone pattern. The pits were up to 0.95m deep and appear originally to have been covered with foliage as traps. The upper parts of the ditches and pits had been destroyed by ploughing (Paco 1963, 264-9; Russell 1955, 371-3, 384-5, 395). Only twelve years after Shrewsbury, the prince (now Henry V) was commanding the English army at Agincourt. Here he ordered his archers to cut stakes and sharpen them at both ends in order to form an oblique defensive fence in front of them, or a belt of inclined stakes interspersed amongst them to form a defence in depth (Phillpotts 1984, 62-3; Bennett 1991, 67-8). Any discovery of a pattern of ditches, pits or stakeholes associated with the battle of Shrewsbury would be an important link in elucidating the development of English battle tactics at this period, particularly in regard to the use of the massed ranks of archers for which they became famous.

Hardly any previous finds can be securely associated with the battle. One which appears contemporary is the head of a bill or gisarme, an infantry weapon of the pole-axe type, allegedly found with a staff six feet long (illustrated Priestley 1979, 7). Cannon balls, two round shields dug up in 1823, armour at Sundorne Castle, a chain-mail coat, "Hotspur's sword", and "Hotspur's helmet" have all been dismissed as later (Southern 1903, 123-8), and the same is likely to be true of "Hotspur's shield" at Alnwick Castle (SMR 3397). However, the fighting must have left some debris and this might be found during fieldwalking or any ground disturbance in the area.

The principal burial-place of the dead from the battle was almost certainly on the site of Battlefield church. The number buried in this pit is given variously by chroniclers as 1,500, 1,847 and 2,291, and the dimensions as 160 feet by 68 feet and 60 feet deep, perhaps an error for 9 feet (Burne 1947-8, 147; Priestley 1979, 14). A large amount of bone was found during the digging of a drain from the Corbet vault on the north side of the church last century, probably indicating the position of the pit (Brooke 1857, 11). At the Aljubarrota excavations a pile of human bones was found to the south of the chapel. It represented about 400 individuals, only the long bones surviving (Paco 1963, 268). A document of 1445 granting certain privileges to Battlefield College mentions the burial of the

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dead in and around the field of battle to a distance of three miles away (Fletcher 1903, 72-3). In the 1850s a local man informed Richard Brooke that human bones had been found during ploughing (Brooke 1857, 10). Should any bodies of the battle-dead be found during excavations, their wounds will add greatly to our knowledge of the fighting of this period. The chief comparison would be with the three mass-graves for the dead of the battle of Visby in Gothland in 1361, excavated in the 1920s, containing the remains of 1,185 soldiers (Contamine 1986, 122, 258 and plates 10 and 11).

### **3.1.6 Battlefield College**

The dead of the battle were commemorated by a chapel, afterwards converted into a college of chaplains which lasted until the Reformation, whose church of St. Mary Magdalene survives today (SMR 981). In a similar way, the Dominican convent of Batalha was founded on the field of Aljubarrota. In 1406 Roger Ive, the rector of Albright Hussey chapel acquired a two-acre site in Hateleyfeld from Richard Hussey to build a chapel where daily masses could be perpetually celebrated for the battle-dead. The church was built over the next three years and roofed with lead, and the site was surrounded by a ditch, which can still be traced (SMR 2603). In 1410 the chapel was refounded as a perpetual chantry or college of six chaplains by Henry IV, and the mastership was united with the benefice of Albright Hussey. The College church eventually replaced Albright Hussey chapel as the parish church. The will of Roger Ive in 1444 mentioned other buildings in the precinct: a hall, chaplains' chambers, a dwelling-house, a kitchen, a buttery, an almshouse or hospital for the poor, and a belfry. No trace of these now remains except the scar of a three-storey building adjoining the south side of the chancel. The tower of the church was probably not completed until c1500. The College acquired pieces of land in Harlescott and Albright Hussey in 1421 and 1428, including a lease of Shut Field and the eleven selions held by Shrewsbury Abbey. Roger Phelips (master 1454-78) built six new chambers for the chaplains on two newly-purchased plots near the gateway on the Whitchurch road. Each chaplain was given the use of a garden and a fishpond, as well as a chamber. The eight interlinked fishponds can still be traced in the enclosure to the south of the churchyard. At the dissolution the College also had a dovecote, a garden and two orchards.

The Hussey family maintained a close connection with the College, two of its members serving as master in the early sixteenth century. At this time it contained a school, whose pupils included John Clarke, then aged nine. The College was dissolved in 1548 as a chantry, and the buildings other than the church were probably demolished soon afterwards. The parish was then renamed Battlefield (VCHS 128-31; Blakeway 1889, 116, 326, 334; Fletcher 1903, 41-105; Watson and Musson 1993, p.83 photo 81).

Amongst the privileges granted to the College was the holding of an annual fair at Battlefield every 22nd July, St. Mary Magdalene's feast-day, and the right to receive its tolls and profits. By the sixteenth century, it also received rents from tenements built on the Husseys' land near the College for the Keeper of the market, consisting of cottages or booths which were only let at the time of the fair (Fletcher 1903, 107, 113). The fair was held in a field to the north of the

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College, still called The Fair in 1777 (LSL microfilm 34). The rectangular ditched enclosure which appears on aerial photographs in this field presumably results from the booths or an associated animal pen (SMR 2493, APs SJ5117 E, I, M). The Battlefield Fair continued until the early eighteenth century. Richard Gough of Myddle was Steward of the Fair for 22 years in the seventeenth (LSL deed 18489).

The site of the College was sold by the Crown in April 1549 to John Cupper and Richard Trevor, two dealers in former church property. Shortly afterwards they sold it on to Richard Hussey, reuniting it with the manor of Albright Hussey (Fletcher 1903, 110, 119; Blakeway 1889, 343-4). The Husseys continued to hold the manor and the site of the College until 1638. In 1612 Sir Richard Hussey leased a messuage with lands in Albright Hussey to Richard Kilverte of Astley (SRO 1146/11) and in 1627 the landholders in Harlescott and Battlefield included Robert Hussey, Margaret Hussey (widow) and Richard Hussey, and also William Bagley, whose name was perpetuated in Bagley Bridge Farm (see below) (SRO 322 Box 62).

### **3.1.7 The Corbet Estate**

In 1638 the manor was sold to Pelham Corbet of Leigh (Fletcher 1903, 119). It had a court baron but no court leet; the tenants had to appear at the Corporation of Shrewsbury's Leet. The right to present curates to the church was also attached to the manor. The manor and the parish covered exactly the same ground (LSL microfilm 34 pp.I, VII, VIII; Blakeway 1889, 339). In 1668 when the manor was conveyed in trust for Robert Corbet, there were thirteen messuages in Battlefield and Harlescott, besides the Hall at Albright Hussey (SRO 1431 Box 8). When the Hearth Tax was assessed in 1674 there were only eleven houses left in Albright Hussey and Battlefield (Fletcher 1903, 122). In 1740 the land passed by inheritance to the Corbets of Sundorne Castle (Blakeway 1889, 117).

It was probably under the Corbets that the old pattern of common fields preserved in the ridge and furrow traces was divided into smaller enclosed fields. One of those fields at the west end of the study area was called Corbet's Croft (LSL Tithe apportionment 145). Many of the enclosed pieces were called "leasow", implying their initial use as pasture. The names of the fields, their condition and use are recorded in a survey of the estate of John Corbet of Sundorne in 1777 (LSL microfilm 34). The land was divided into three farms: Albright Hussey Demesne to the west, let to John Moreton; Battlefield Farm in the centre, let to Samuel Salter; and Bagley Bridge Farm to the east, let to John Bagley. To the south lay Harlescott Farm. Some land along the north side of the stream was still meadow, but the most of the fields were arable land. The slope down from the road to the church southward to the stream was noted as containing gravelly clay over marl, used partly for arable and partly for pasture. The picture is completed by the tithe survey for Harlescott township in 1849 (LSL Tithe apportionment 145), in which most of the study area was under arable cultivation, with the exception of some pasture land at the west and east ends. Some fields are noted as containing pits, presumably dug for marl. The township of Harlescott now lay in the Shrewsbury parishes of St. Alkmund and

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St. Mary. The boundary between them ran across the study area and back again, and was indicated by marker stones and trees, some of which are shown on the tithe map and a map to settle a boundary dispute between St. Mary's and St. Alkmund's in 1845 (SRO 1049/4833).

The main roads to Ellesmere and Whitchurch at either end of the study area became Turnpike roads charging tolls in the eighteenth century. On the south side of the junction of Harlescott Lane with the Ellesmere road was the Harlescott toll-house, still standing in 1881, but now demolished (SMR 15406). On the north side of the junction of the Whitchurch and Market Drayton roads was Fingerpost Field, recording the presence of a signpost. Nearby a bag of old guineas was buried in the ditch bank, and discovered in 1865 (SMR 1614).

Across the eastern end of the study area, the Shrewsbury-Crewe branch of the London and North Western Railway was built on an embankment between 1853 and 1858. This was initially single-tracked, but had become double-tracked by 1862 (Morris 1991, 27). It appears on the Ordnance Survey map surveyed in 1881.

The same pattern of fields persisted across the study area into the twentieth century. Some fields were amalgamated and some were sub-divided, but the use of the land remained essentially the same (OS maps 1:2500 sheet XXVIII.15, first edition 1881; sheet XXVIII.15, second edition 1902).

### **3.1.8 Conclusion**

The history of the study area is therefore almost entirely agricultural, firstly in the framework of the open fields of Albright Hussey manor, and then in the enclosed fields of the Corbet estate. The ridge and furrow evidence for the former will be partially destroyed by the construction of the new road. The single important event which gives this part of the landscape such significance was the battle of Shrewsbury in 1403. Any evidence of this event in the form of cut features, finds and burials should be carefully sought. The religious foundation of Battlefield College which followed the battle is unlikely to have had a discernible impact on the study area. The College buildings and the structures associated with its annual fair appear to have lain beyond its limits to the north.

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**3.2 STAGE 2: The Walk-over Survey and Field Walking**

**3.2.1** Initially, a walk-over survey was made of the entire study area, to include the corridors of all three possible route options for the new road (Corridors A, B, and C). This initial survey noted current land use and identified areas of surviving earthworks. Following the selection of Corridor C as the preferred route, a more detailed walk-over survey was undertaken, and areas of earthworks affected by the preferred route were sketch plotted at a scale of 1:2500. At this stage, areas of arable cultivation which had been ploughed were field walked.

**3.2.2** About 250m south of Battlefield Church, centred on SJ511168 is a field containing the well preserved earthwork remains of medieval ridge and furrow ploughing (Fig. 1, Site A). The earthworks cover an area of about 6ha, and radiate from a group of ponds in the centre and east of the field. The centres of the ridges are spaced at between 10m and 20m apart. A plot was made of these earthwork remains at a scale of 1: 2500 (Fig. 2). The proposed new road will cut a swathe 300m long by 50m wide through these earthworks. This area of ridge and furrow is a remnant of a former more extensive area of surviving ridge and furrow earthworks (Fig. 3) extant in 1983 but which has subsequently been largely ploughed out.

**3.2.3** At the extreme western end of the preferred route, a circular earthwork feature (Fig. 1, Site B) approximately 30m in diameter by about 1m in height was seen to lie on the site of a proposed satellite roundabout of the new A528/Harlescott Lane junction. The form and size of this feature suggested the possibility that it might represent the earthwork remains of a barrow. It was therefore proposed to further investigate this feature by means of trial excavation (see below, para 3.3).

**3.2.4** Two fields were available for field walking at the time of the evaluation; these two fields represented the only areas of arable cultivation within the preferred route corridor. The first of these fields, centred on SJ502170, was under stubble, and produced a single flint flake of dubious manufacture from SJ50131684. The second field, centred on SJ505164 was partly under crop, although the preferred route corridor here lay largely in a ploughed but unprepared and unseeded portion of the field. A strip 175m long by 50m wide was systematically field walked. Apart from late post medieval pottery (which was discarded) the only artefact recovered was a single sherd of unglazed and abraded medieval pottery at SJ50611687.

**3.3 STAGE 3: The Trial Excavation of Site B**

As the end of the walk-over survey coincided with the beginning of the excavation of test pits along the route corridor by the County Surveyor's Department, the opportunity was taken to excavate a trial trench across the raised circular feature at Site B. A trench 17m long by 0.6m wide was excavated across the break of slope on the northeast side of this feature in order to attempt to discern the nature of the mound, and to see whether, if it was indeed a man made feature, there was any evidence for a quarry ditch or a buried turf horizon. On excavation, however, the mound was seen to consist of a capping of mixed red and yellow silty sand lying immediately over the yellow boulder clay subsoil, and was clearly a feature of natural glacial or periglacial origin.

## **4 THE IMPACT OF THE PREFERRED ROUTE ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE**

### **4.1 The Impact of Road Construction Methods**

The methods employed in road construction will inevitably involve the destruction of all earthwork remains and all but the deepest archaeological features within the road corridor. Most of the damage is done during the early stages of construction with the removal of topsoil from the road corridor, and the subsequent disturbance of the subsoil by heavy plant. The cutting of roadside drains, service trenches, and other ancillary works will further damage any surviving archaeological deposits. Even where the finished road is to be embanked, the initial site preparation is likely to involve the removal of topsoil and other unsuitable material from the road corridor. Any deposits surviving road construction will be sealed beneath a permanent structure and will be unavailable for future study and research.

### **4.2 The Impact on Specific Sites**

**4.2.1** The only known site which will be directly affected by the preferred route is the area of medieval ridge and furrow ploughing to the south of Battlefield Church (Site A). The new road will cut a swathe 300m long by 50m wide through the middle of these earthworks. A further c0.9ha of these earthworks will be destroyed by proposed tree planting on the northern side of the new road at this point.

**4.2.2** The precise site of the Battle of Shrewsbury is not known, and it is possible that the preferred route corridor may cut across part of the battlefield. If so, any buried archaeological features associated with the battle, such as those described in section 3.1.5 (above), are likely to be destroyed during road construction. The documentary research has indicated that the traditional location for the position of the King's army was in the field known as "King's Croft". The 1st edition Ordnance Survey 1:2500 locates this field immediately to the southeast of the church at SJ514171, and thus outside the preferred route corridor. However, the documentary research suggests that in the 18th century this name was applied to a field further to the south (centred on SJ514167); the preferred route corridor cuts through what was the northwest corner of this field (Figs 1 & 2, Site C). The field immediately to the west (Site A), which contains the well preserved ridge and furrow, was also known as "Troopers' Piece and Roushill" (see above, section 3.1.5).

**4.2.3** The setting of Battlefield Church and the site of the Battle of Shrewsbury would inevitably be affected by the new road. Of the three routes initially proposed for the new road, Corridor A passes through the fields immediately to the south of the church at a distance of approximately 250m and would have an unacceptable visual impact on the monument. Both Corridor B and Corridor C (the preferred route) cross the area at distances of 550m and 400m respectively from the church; the view from the church towards these route options would be broken to some extent by existing field boundaries and an electricity transmission line (Fig. 1, ETL). Proposed tree planting along the northern side of the new road would provide further screening from the church. The views from the church

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towards these two options would be screened to the southwest by existing thick hedgelines, and to the southeast by the embanked Shrewsbury to Crewe railway line. Therefore it is considered that the preferred route will not seriously adversely affect the setting of the Battlefield Church scheduled monument.

**4.3 Associated Ancillary Works**

**4.3.1 Contractors' compounds, spoil dumps, and borrow pits:** The siting of contractors' compounds, spoil dumps, and borrow pits can also adversely affect archaeological features and deposits lying outside the road corridor.

**4.3.2 Landscaping and tree planting:** Landscaping and tree planting may also have a detrimental effect on archaeological features and deposits outside the road corridor.

## **5 MITIGATING EFFECTS: RECOMMENDED ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROVISION FOR THE AFFECTED SITES**

### **5.1 Grading of Affected Sites.**

**5.1.1** The archaeological provision recommended for the various sites affected by the proposed new road will depend upon their status, and may range from preservation *in situ* to the maintenance of a watching brief during the destructive phases of road construction.

#### **5.1.2 Criteria employed for grading:**

(i) In grading the sites affected by the preferred route, the same criteria have been used as those employed by English Heritage to evaluate a monument's status in terms of national importance for the purposes of scheduling.

(ii) In the light of the data accumulated by this evaluation, consideration has been given to the following criteria for each of the sites to be affected by the construction of the proposed new road: **survival/condition; period; rarity; fragility/vulnerability; documentation; group value; diversity; potential; amenity value.**

**5.1.3** The known sites which will be affected by the construction of the proposed new road have thus been categorised into the following grades :

**GRADE A:** These sites are of such importance as to require preservation by record. This can involve the excavation of below ground remains and the recording of above ground features. Sufficient funding for this should be allocated within the construction budget, and time for the completion of such recording should be built into the pre-construction timetable.

**GRADE B:** Sites on which an archaeological watching brief should be maintained. Provision of time and resources should be made for the adequate recording of any archaeological features revealed during the course of road construction and associated ancillary works.

**GRADE C:** Sites requiring no further archaeological provision.

### **5.2 Recommended Archaeological Provision**

**GRADE A: Site A** - a full measured topographical survey should be made to an appropriate scale of these earthwork remains of ridge and furrow ploughing. This survey should include those portions of the earthworks in this field which lie outside the road corridor.

**GRADE B: Sites A and C** - a watching brief should be maintained here during road construction to record any buried remains associated with the battlefield and any other archaeological features. To facilitate this, all initial topsoil stripping should be carried out under direct archaeological supervision, followed by a subsurface examination and assessment.

**GRADE C: Site B** - No further archaeological provision required.

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**5.3 Further Recommendations**

- 5.3.1** A controlled metal detecting survey should be undertaken of the entire route corridor prior to construction with a particular view towards locating debris from the fighting associated with the Battle of Shrewsbury. This metal detecting survey should be carried out under strict archaeological supervision; it should be strictly confined to the route corridor, and artefacts should only be recovered from the top 0.15m depth of topsoil. Any finds made during this survey will remain the property of the landowner, and should be retained by the archaeological body supervising the survey until their disposal or deposition is agreed.
- 5.3.2** The proposed road scheme crosses a landscape predominated by permanent or improved pasture. Such land use is not conducive to the production of cropmarks visible from the air or to the detection of sites through fieldwalking. There must remain a distinct possibility that there will be other, as yet unrecorded, sites that will only be revealed once construction work on the road has been started.
- 5.3.3** It is therefore further recommended that an archaeological watching brief be maintained along the entire road corridor during the destructive phases of road construction in order to record any such sites. Provision of time and resources should be made for the recording of any archaeological features revealed during the course of road construction. The watching brief should be extended to cover groundworks associated with the siting of contractors' compounds, spoil dumps, and borrow pits, and areas affected by landscaping and tree planting associated with road construction.
- 5.3.4** In order to minimise the impact on the earthwork ridge and furrow remains at Site A, it is recommended that the proposed tree planting for screening purposes along the north side of the road corridor be kept to a minimum. Likewise it is recommended that every effort be made to restrict all ground disturbing ancillary works to within the road corridor.
- 5.3.5** It is also recommended that construction companies and sub-contractors inform their employees of the need to report as soon as possible any archaeological finds and features discovered during works.

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### **Abbreviations:**

- APs** Aerial Photographs  
**CSA** The Cartulary of Shrewsbury Abbey ed U Rees, 1975  
**DB** Domesday Book xxv Shropshire ed F and C Thorn, 1986  
**LSL** Local Studies Library, Castle Gates, Shrewsbury  
**OS** Ordnance Survey  
**SMR** Sites and Monuments Record, Shire Hall, Shrewsbury  
**SRO** Shropshire Record Office, Shire Hall, Shrewsbury  
**TSAS** Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological Society  
**VCHS** Victoria County History of Shropshire

## **7 Acknowledgments**

The writer would like to thank Doug Murphy and Nat Davies for their assistance with the field evaluation. Thanks also to Jim Hughes and Graham Horsewood for facilitating the trial excavation at Site B.

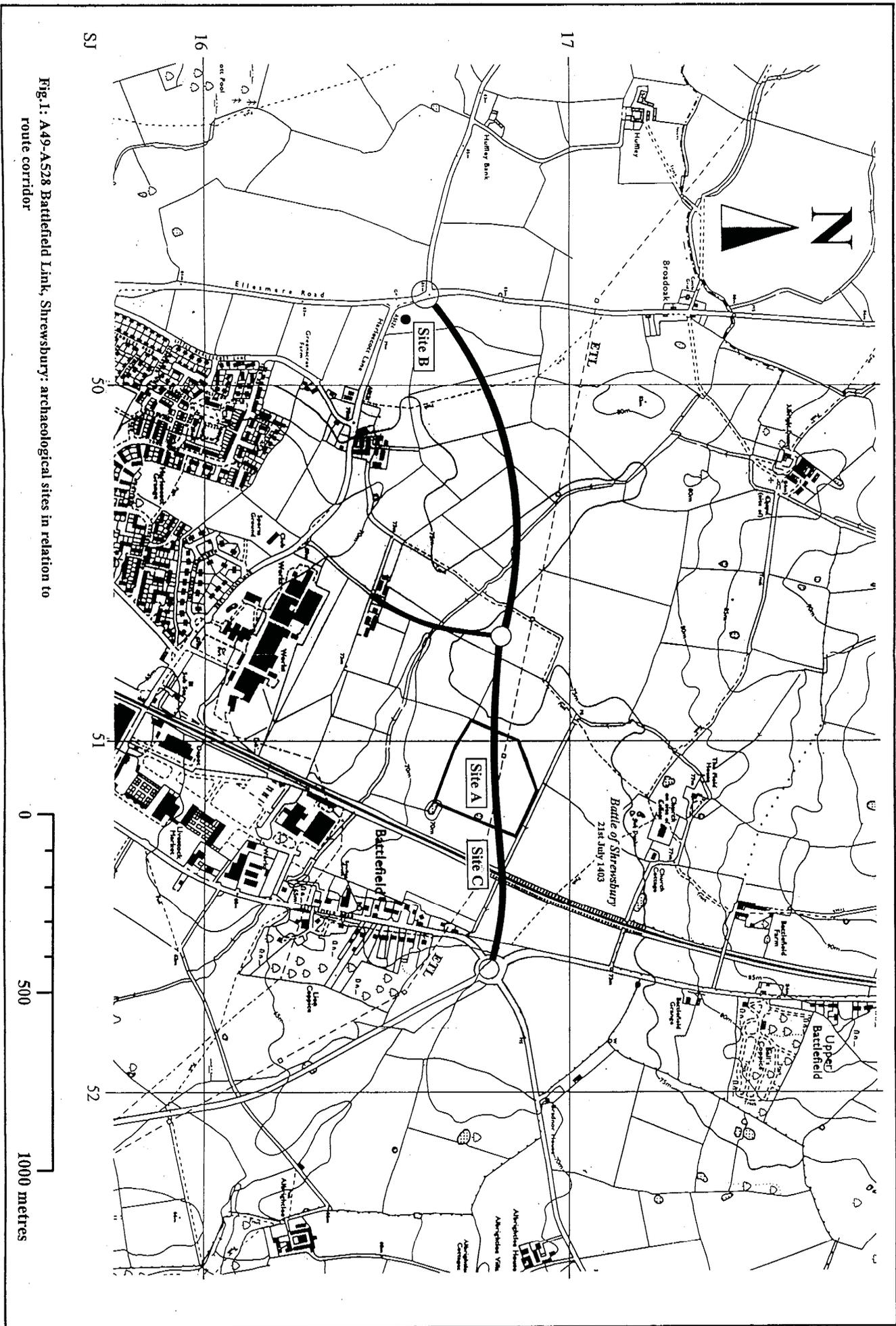


Fig. 1: A49-A528 Battelfield Link, Shrewsbury: archaeological sites in relation to route corridor

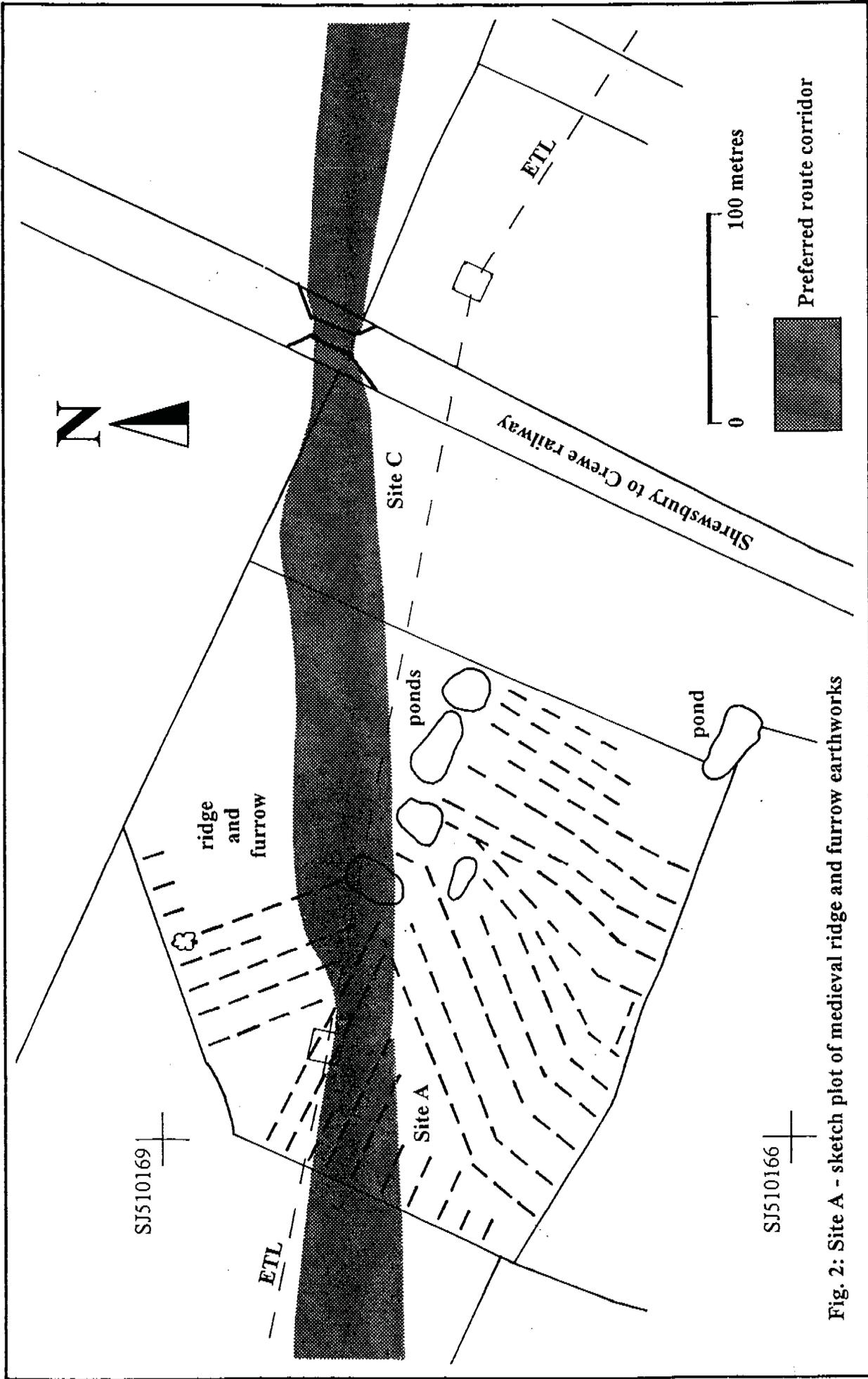


Fig. 2: Site A - sketch plot of medieval ridge and furrow earthworks

