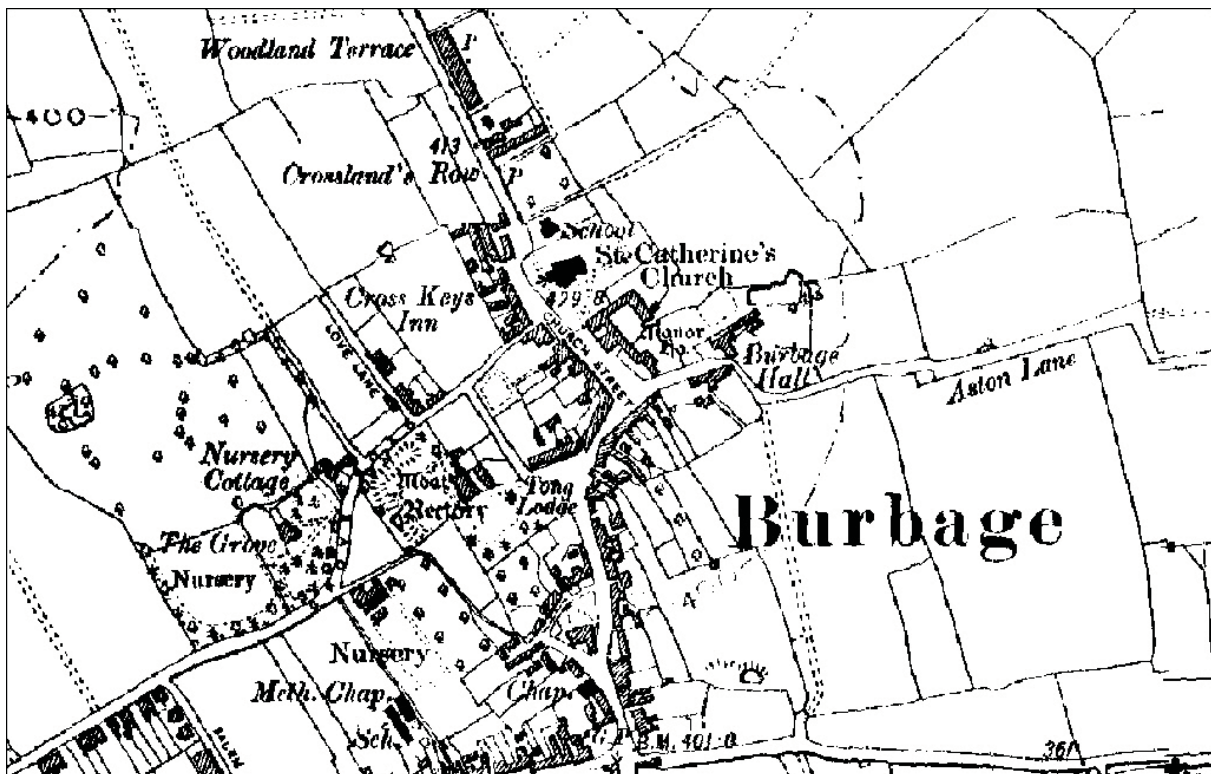


Archaeological Observation at Burbage Hall, Burbage, Leicestershire



Report 0519

June 2005

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Report 0519
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Summary

Archaeological observation of foundation trenches for a new garage at Burbage Hall, Aston Road, Burbage, revealed no evidence of medieval or early post-medieval activity despite it lying within the historic core of the settlement. Two drains, one a land-drain of horse-shoe type and one large brick-built drain, probably associated with an earlier period of Burbage Hall, were recorded in the sections. A series of 18th- to 20th-century brick walls, mostly representing outbuildings indicated on 19th and 20th century Ordnance Survey maps, were recorded below the demolished 20th-century garage.

1. Introduction

1.1 Planning permission has been granted by Hinkley and Bosworth District Council for erection of new garages and workshop/store on land formerly partly occupied by an outbuilding at Burbage Hall, Aston Lane, Burbage (Planning application No. 03/00830/LBC). Because the site lies within an area of archaeological potential, within the grounds of Burbage Hall and within the medieval historic core of Burbage, it was thought that medieval archaeological deposits might be disturbed during the work. It was therefore a condition of planning permission that the applicant should secure the implementation of a programme of archaeological work to be carried out in conjunction with the development.

1.2 A programme of fieldwork, consisting of archaeological observation of the excavation of the foundation trenches for the new garage block, was commissioned from the Warwickshire Museum Field Archaeology Projects Group and carried out in September 2004. This report presents the results of that work. The project archive will be stored at Leicestershire County Museum under accession number X.A193.2004 (the Warwickshire Museum site code was BH04).

2. Location

2.1 The site is located at national grid reference SP 444 927 in the parish of Burbage (Fig. 1). The development site was previously occupied by an outbuilding and hardstanding.

2.2 The underlying geology of the area is Dunsmore Gravel (British Geological Survey 1994).

3. Archaeological and Historical Background

3.1 Burbage is mentioned in Domesday (1086) when it was held by the Abbey of Coventry (VCH 1907, 281).

3.2 The early 13th-century *'Matriculus'* of Bishop Hugh of Wells mentions a resident chaplain at Burbage who was presumably serving a parochial chapel (VCH 1907, 359). In 1220 Burbage was a chapelry of Aston Flamville. The earliest elements of the parish church, St Catherine's (Leicestershire Sites and Monuments Records No. LE 2839), date from the late 13th century, and the church has a decorated style west tower and a late 13th/14th century chancel arch. The south door has 1633 inside. Most of the church was rebuilt in 1842.

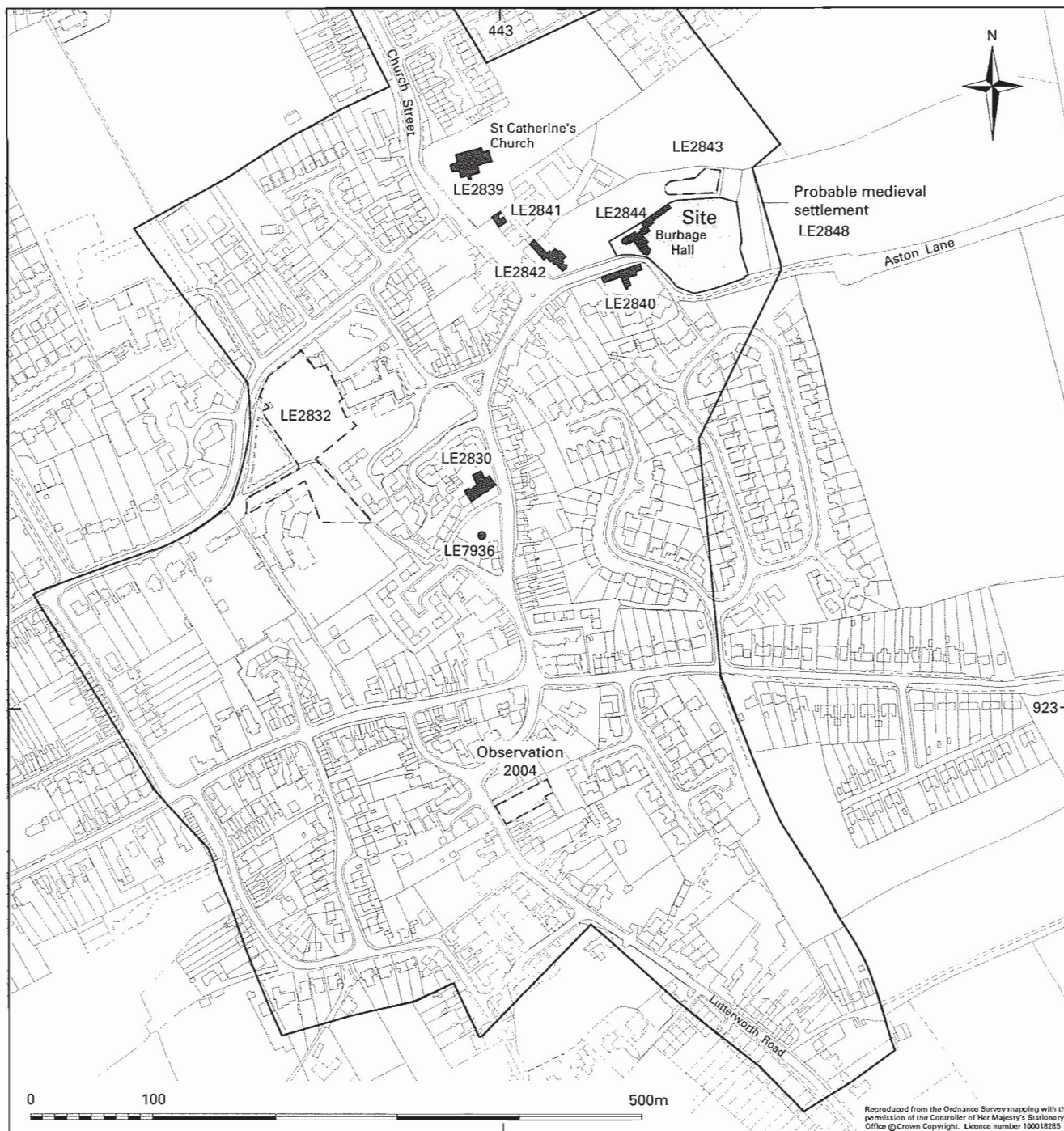


Fig. 1: Site location

3.3 Other sites of archaeological interest lie in the vicinity of the site, which itself lies within the limits of medieval settlement of Burbage (SMR LE 2848). The manor house lies immediately to the west (SMR LE 2842) with its fishpond to the north-east (SMR LE 2843). The manor house appears to be 18th century in date but probably has an earlier core. 'Archer Cottage' (SMR LE 2841) is a 16th-century timber-framed cottage to the north of the manor house. 'Old Grange Farm' (SMR LE 2840), a timber-framed house of early 17th-century date notable for its fine interior, lies to the south-west. 'The Croft', a house of possible 16th or 17th century date (SMR LE 2830) lies further to the south-west. To the south-west is a pond or canal forming part of an 18th-century pleasure garden for the rectory (SMR LE 2832). Archaeological observation at 23 Lutterworth Road in 2004 did not reveal any medieval archaeological remains although a post-medieval brick-built well was recorded (Warwickshire Museum 2004).

3.4 Burbage Hall was first built in the 16th century and extended in the following centuries (SMR LE 2844). The SMR states that most of the exterior appears to be late 17th century in date but this is apparently largely a casing for the earlier, substantial timber-framed building. It also notes a claim by Pevsner that the earlier core is a hunting lodge for the Duke of Gainsborough. The hall is a Grade II Listed Building and the Listing description (which records the house as 18th-century) is as follows:

House. Early C18. red brick with moulded wooden eaves cornice with modillions to bell cast hipped plain tile roof. Brick stacks to right on ridge, behind ridge to left, and to left of left hand projecting wing. L-shaped plan, main house facing south-west with service wing to the rear behind left hand wing. 2 storeys and attics; 2:1:2:1 window rhythm. All segmental-headed, the pair to the left wider 4-pane sashes, the rest boxed glazing bar sashes; 3 hipped dormers to the right, one on end of left wing and one in re-entrant angle. Half-glazed door in re-entrant angle of left wing with window flanking to left. Wide 2-storey early C20 canted bay at end of right hand wing with cornice carried over it. Interior: 2 early C18 staircases with turned balusters and re-used C17 panelling in 2 rooms.

3.5 Although the main focus of the present work was on the medieval and later periods, earlier remains have been found in the wider area. Roman pottery and possible hearths, and a Neolithic / Bronze Age scraper were recovered from Burbage sand pit (LE 2828, 2829, 7560), and prehistoric flintwork has been found north of Aston Lane (LE 9344); none of these are shown on Fig. 1. The SMR also records the alleged finding of a Roman mosaic (LE 7936), but states that apart from a letter to that effect there is no evidence to confirm the find.

3.6 The tithe map of 1841 shows a T-shaped Hall with a long outbuilding to its north-east (LRO TI 54/1). The 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of 1888 shows the Hall as a roughly T-shaped building with a linear range of outbuildings to its north-east. The range of outbuildings is longer than the arrangement as it stood earlier in 2004 and there is a further structure shown in the area covered by the southern part of the present garage development (Ordnance Survey 1888). A pump is shown in the yard in front of the outbuilding range and the drive in front of the house is shown as circular (Fig. 2). There do not appear to have been any significant changes to the buildings between 1887 and 1903 although one of the outbuildings is shown enlarged slightly on the 2nd edition map (Ordnance Survey 1903).

3.7 The 3rd edition Ordnance Survey map (1925) shows slight alterations to north-eastern end of the range of outbuildings and the individual structure just to the south, and a fence or wall enclosing the whole area of the outbuildings, including an enlarged area with two small buildings at the north-east. The 1947 Ordnance Survey map shows a sub-division of the open enclosures at the north-east of the main range of outbuildings. The two small buildings at the extreme north-east corner, which first appeared on the 1925 map are no longer shown; nor is the single outbuilding to the south of the main range.

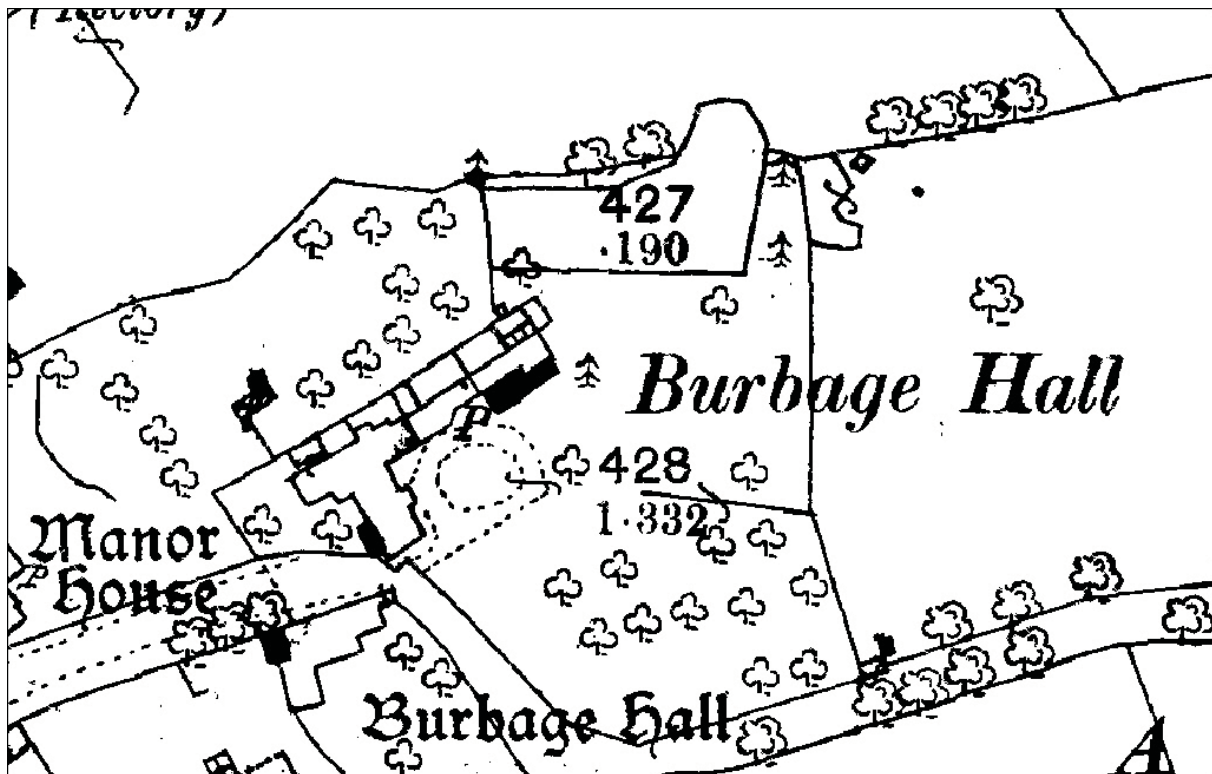


Fig. 2: Detail from 1st Edition 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map of 1888

4. Observation

4.1 The site had formerly been occupied by a garage outbuilding which had been constructed in the 20th century. After its demolition the concrete slab footings (100) of its former floor were removed by JCB using a toothed bucket and the trenches for the new garage were excavated using a toothless bucket. The areas observed are shown on Figs. 3 and 4.

4.2 The trenches were excavated to a depth of c.1m cutting into natural yellow brown clay and sand (105) at a depth of 0.30-0.40m below present ground level (Fig. 5). The natural clay was cut by a ceramic horse-shoe land drain (107), only visible in the northern section of the north-west trench. A brick-built drain (111) was visible cutting natural in the south-western trench (Fig. 6). The natural clay was overlain by a 0.30m deep layer of old topsoil (104) and this layer had been cut by the insertion of a series of brick walls (109, 110, 113, 114, 116, 117, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125) which had been demolished to below present ground level before the former garage had been built. The ground was also disturbed by two ceramic drains (119 and 126) and a metal pipe (118).

4.3 Of the brick walls identified in the south-east of the area observed, one (116) belonged to the north-east side of a former outbuilding shown on Ordnance Survey maps of 1888, 1903 and 1925, but which had been demolished by 1947. A second wall (125), 0.75m to the north-east, was the remains of a boundary wall shown slightly detached from the building on the Ordnance Survey map of 1925.

4.4 Of the brick walls identified further north at least three (109, 113, and 114) appear to pre-date the configuration of buildings shown on the 1888 Ordnance Survey map. Wall 109 runs beyond the extent of the north-western boundary wall. Wall 113 runs below the floor (128) of the present (?18th-century) outbuilding. Wall

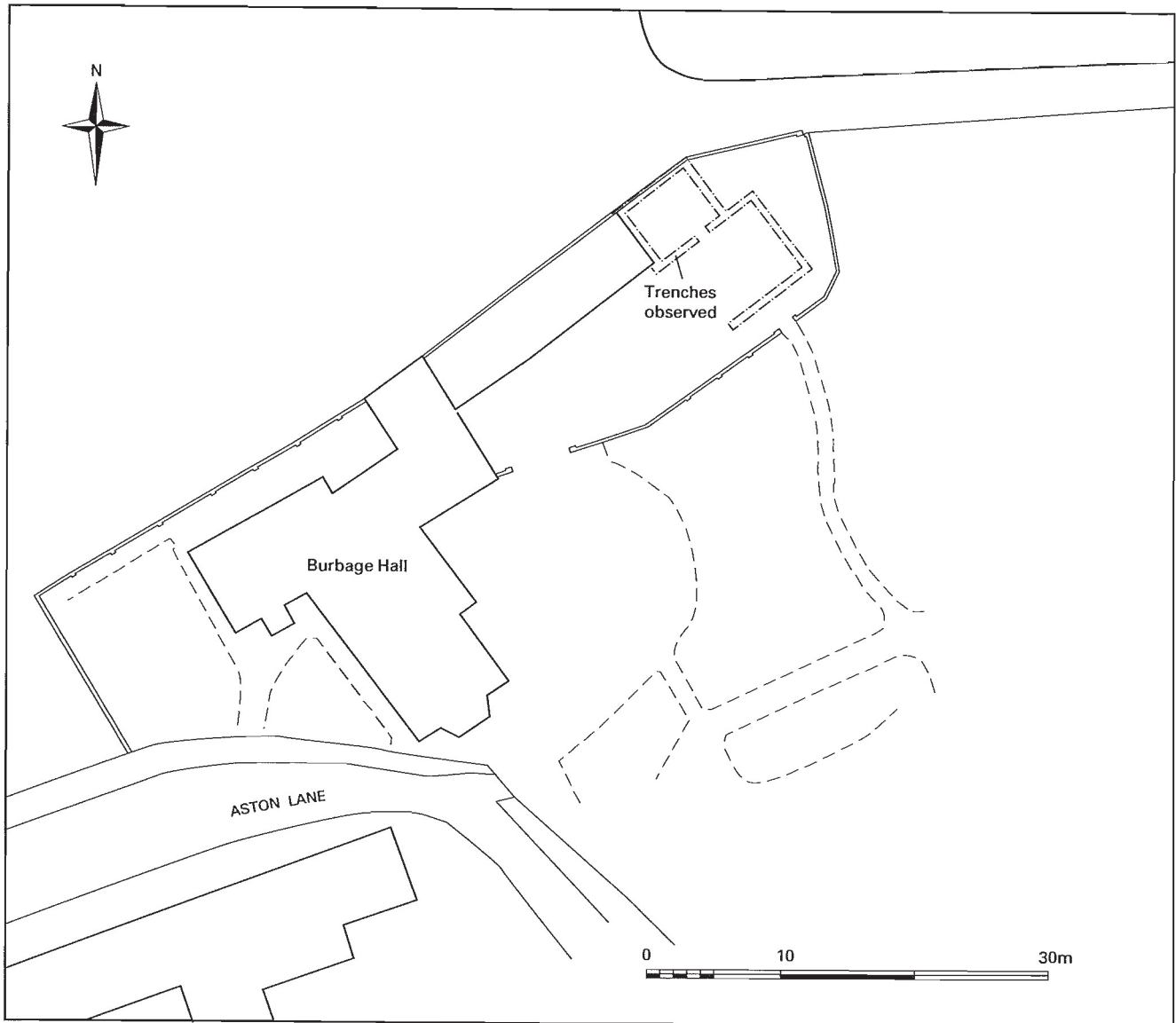


Fig. 3: Areas observed

114 was five courses deep with its lowest course resting on natural clay, 0.80m below ground level. It is possible that wall 122 and the adjoining walls 123 and 124 are contemporary with wall 114. Between walls 114 and 122 and overlying the natural clay was a 0.30m dump of 19th- or 20th-century rubbish (115; not on plan), which included large quantities of glass (including Marston beer bottles and medicine bottles), pottery (including stoneware and creamery jugs) and a quantity of enamelled pans.

4.5 Two brick walls (110 and 121) appeared just below the level of the concrete slab with a paved floor (108) running between them and these walls and floor, and wall 114, were overlain by a layer of ash (101), up to 0.30m thick to the north-east (not on plan). These latter walls and floor appear to relate to buildings on the 1888 and 1903 maps.

4.6 Contexts 106 and 127-130 (see Appendix for brief details) refer to the standing and/or recently demolished structure.

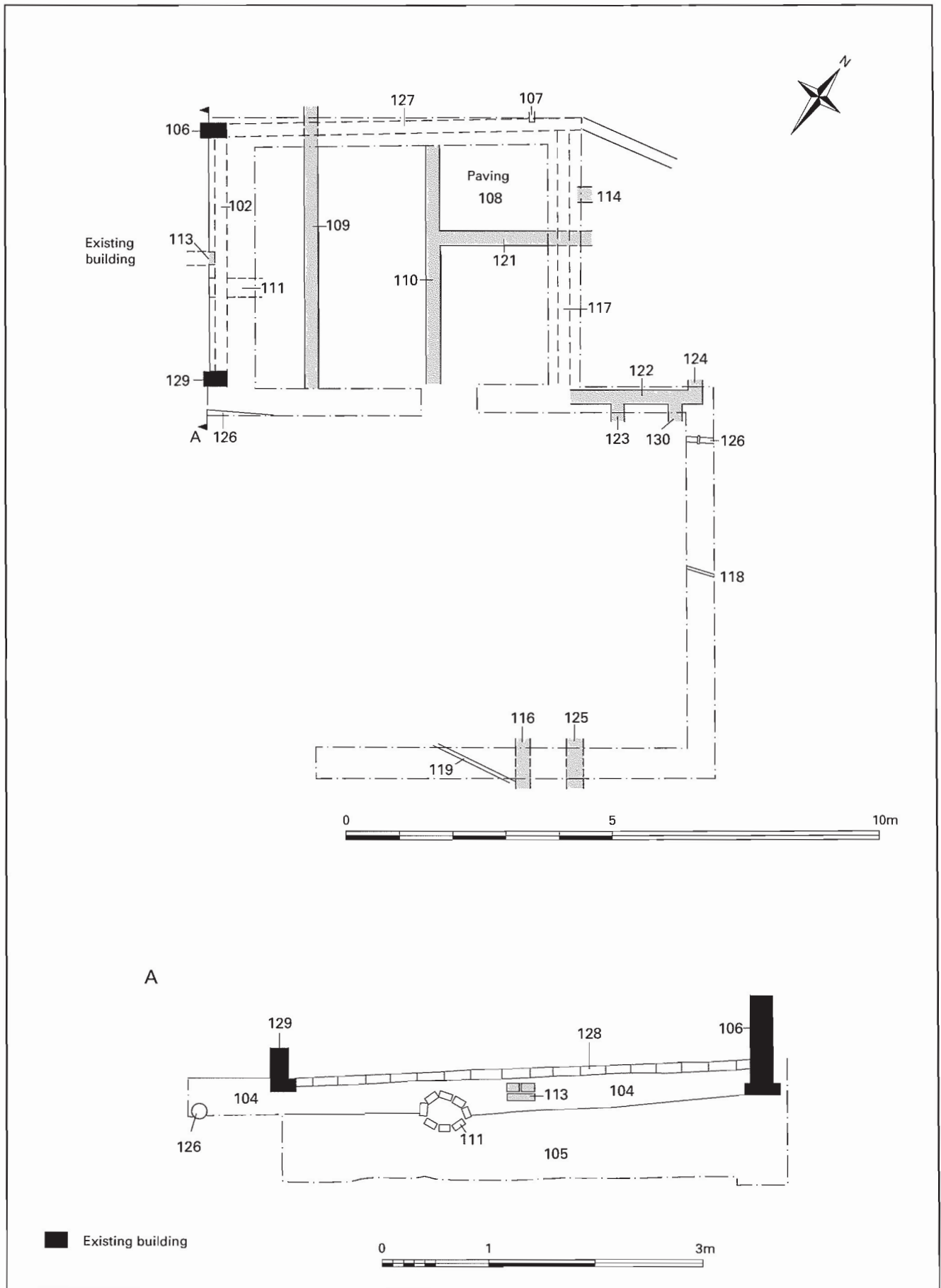


Fig. 4: Trench plans and sections



Fig. 5: Overall view of site looking west



Fig. 6: Brick drain (111)

5. Conclusions

5.1 No evidence for medieval or early post-medieval activity was recorded during the groundworks for the new buildings. A large brick-built drain (111), ovoid in section, was recorded running below the still-standing outbuilding. A brick wall (113) was also recorded to its north-west. While it is possible that the wall was an internal wall within the outbuilding and was subsequently demolished and floored over, it seems more likely that the wall belongs to a structure which pre-dates the outbuilding. The bricks that made up the remains of the wall were hand-made but their size suggests 18th century rather than early post-medieval. A large number of brick walls were recorded below ground level in the area of the new garage and outbuilding. Most can be reasonably confidently related to walls shown on the historic maps but some may be earlier – possibly from structures that were partially demolished and adapted to the form shown on the maps.

Acknowledgements

The Warwickshire Museum would like to thank Mark Kelly of Stephen George and Partners (Architects and Planners) for commissioning the work. Work on site was carried out by the author of this report, Catherine Coutts, with illustrations by Andy Isham. It was checked by Nicholas Palmer.

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Appendix: List of Contexts

<i>Context No.</i>	<i>Description</i>
100	Concrete slabs of former garage floor
101	Ash layer
102	Brick wall
103	Concrete footings for wall 102
104	Former topsoil layer
105	Natural yellow brown clay and sand
106	Brick wall of standing building
107	Horse-shoe land drain
108	Brick floor
109	Brick wall
110	Brick wall
111	Brick-built drain
112	Tarmac yard surface
113	Brick wall
114	Brick wall
115	Rubbish dump north of wall 114
116	Brick wall
117	Brick wall
118	Metal pipe
119	Ceramic drain
120	Topsoil build-up
121	Brick wall
122	Brick wall
123	Brick wall
124	Brick wall
125	Brick wall
126	Ceramic drain
127	Brick wall (recently demolished rear garage/boundary wall)
128	Paved floor in outbuilding
129	Standing brick wall of outbuilding
130	Brick wall