Marches Archaeology

Concord College
Acton Burnell
Shropshire

A report on an archaeological evaluation

April 2004

Marches Archaeology Series 332

Archaeological Consultants and Contractors

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Concord College
Acton Burnell
Shropshire

A report on an archaeological evaluation

NGR: SJ 534 020

Report by
Jo Wainwright

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April 2004

Marches Archaeology Series 332

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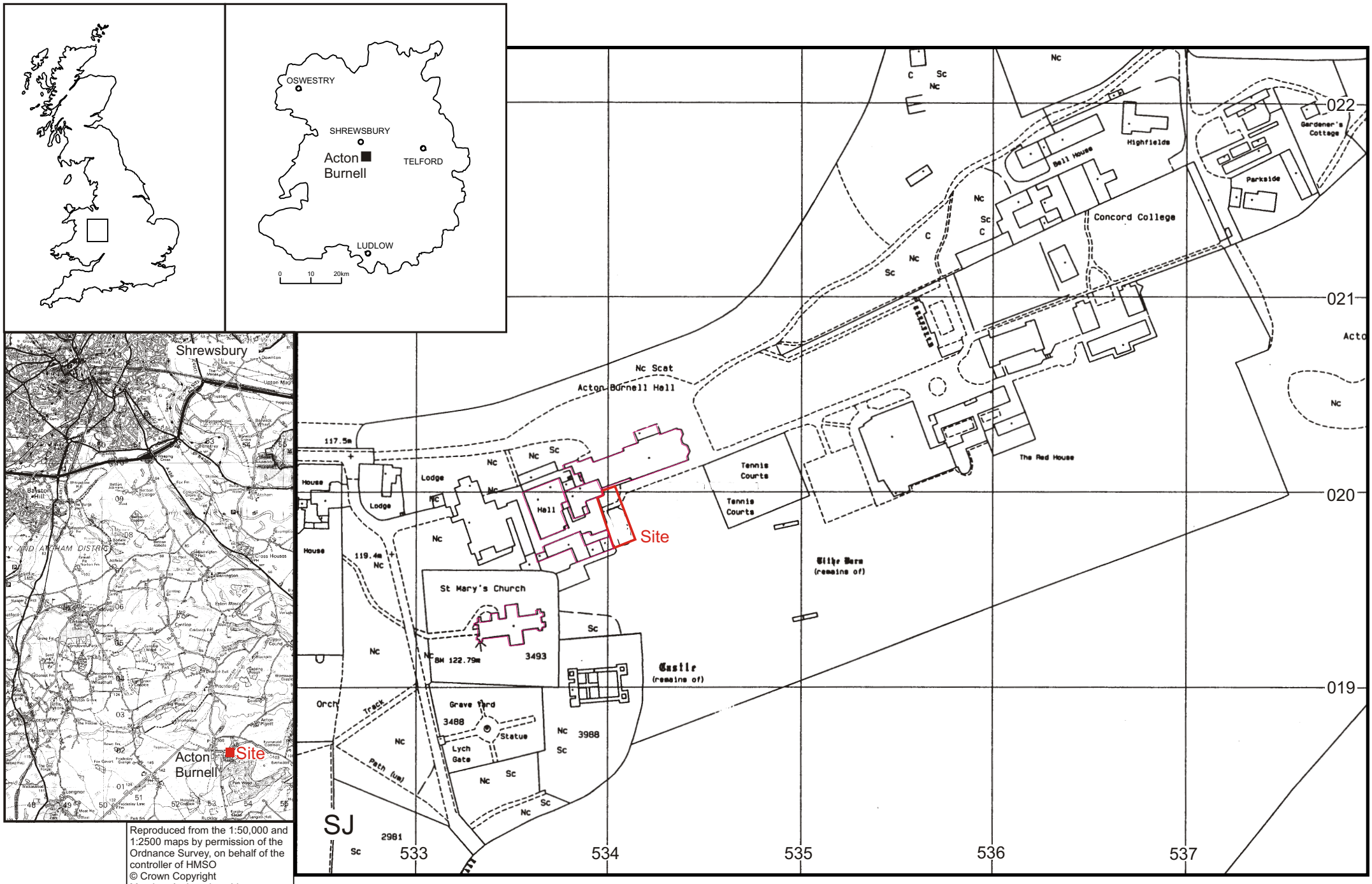


Fig. 1 Location of site

Concord College
Acton Burnell
Shropshire

A report on an archaeological evaluation

NGR: SJ 534 020

Summary

Two trenches were excavated at Concord College, Acton Burnell, Shropshire. The proposed development site lies within the designated area of the scheduled monument of Acton Burnell Castle (Mon. No 27531).

Medieval features and deposits survive on the site. It seems likely that the first phase of activity was the excavation of a pit in Trench 1. Above this was a soil layer [104] which had built up during the late 13th and early 14th centuries. A post-hole excavated in Trench 1 was probably backfilled by the late 13th or early 14th century.

In Trench 2 the area seems to have been terraced during the post-medieval period and only a small area of later medieval soil lying directly on top of the natural remained. Two slots and a post-hole are possibly associated with the post-hole in Trench 1 as they are on a similar alignment. All four features are probably of a medieval date but because the features in Trench 2 have no relationship to the medieval soil layer and produced no finds this hypothesis must be speculative. In Trench 1 a layer may be the truncated remains of a surface laid down in probably the later 13th century or early 14th century.

Therefore during the late 13th and early 14th century soil built up in the area of the site and in the 13th century it is possible that a timber building was erected. Sometime, in probably the early 14th century, this building was demolished. It can be inferred that the study area was an open area within the moated enclosure of Acton Burnell Castle when the complex was built in the late 13th century.

During the 18th century a wall was built. This was probably the return of a garden wall situated to the west of the study area. If the map evidence is correct then by the time of the Tithe Map of 1845 this wall had been demolished.

1 Introduction

There is a proposal to erect a new science building at Concord College, Acton Burnell, Shropshire. The site is situated at NGR: SJ 534 020 (Fig. 1). The proposed development site lies within the designated area of the scheduled monument of Acton Burnell Castle (Mon. No 27531).

The Local Planning Authority's Archaeology Advisor advised that an archaeological field evaluation was necessary in accordance with English Heritage guidelines in DoE Planning Policy Guidance No. 16. The Local Planning Authority's Archaeology Advisor produced a "Brief for an archaeological field evaluation". Hughes and Abbott, acting on behalf of the client, commissioned Marches Archaeology to provide the archaeological services detailed in the Brief. Scheduled Monument class consent VII was obtained by the client from English Heritage for the works.

2 Aims and objectives

The Brief stated that the aims of the archaeological project were to provide information that will enable an informed and reasonable decision to be taken regarding the archaeological provision for the areas affected by the proposed development.

An archaeological evaluation aims to "gain information about the archaeological resource within a given area or site (including presence or absence, character, extent, date, integrity, state of preservation and quality) in order to make an assessment of its merit in the appropriate context, leading to one or more of the following: the formulation of a strategy to ensure the recording, preservation or management of the resource; the formulation of a strategy to initiate a threat to the archaeological resource; the formulation of a proposal for further archaeological investigation within a programme of research" (Institute of Field Archaeologists Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations).

The objectives of this evaluation were:

To locate any archaeological features and deposits within the study area.
To assess the survival, quality, condition and relative significance of any archaeological features, deposits and structures within the study area.
To identify and recommend options for the management of the archaeological resource, including any further archaeological provision where necessary.

3 Methodology

Fieldwork

It was envisaged that a single trench 15m x 2m would be excavated. However, due to the location of service trenches within the study area two trenches were excavated. Trench 1 was 10.5m x 2m and Trench 2 was 4.5m x 2m (Fig. 2). Plant was provided by Marches Archaeology. Two archaeologists were on site from 29th March to the 31st March 2004. One archaeologist was on site for part of the morning of 1st April 2004 to supervise the backfilling of the trenches.

The upper deposits were excavated by mechanical excavator to a level determined to comprise deposits, features or horizons of archaeological significance. Further excavation was by hand. Features that were considered to be of value to the understanding and interpretation of the site were partly excavated. All artefactual material recovered from hand excavation was retained.

The recording system included written, drawn and photographic data. Context numbers were allocated and context record sheets completed. Site notes were also used. A running matrix

was maintained. Plans and sections of significant data were made. Plans were multi-context. The photographic record was made using black and white negative and colour transparency film.

Documentary research

To assist with the assessment and interpretation of the on-site investigation the Local Planning Authority's Archaeology Advisor recommended that documentary research be restricted to the consultation of any relevant maps of the study area.

Office work

On completion of fieldwork a site archive was prepared. The written, drawn and photographic data was catalogued and cross-referenced and a summary produced. The artefactual data was processed, catalogued and cross-referenced and a summary produced. The checked site matrix was produced.

Assessment was based on the site archive. The pottery which required specialist assessment was submitted for such work.

4 Site description

Concord College is situated on the east side of the village of Acton Burnell and comprises the buildings and grounds of Acton Burnell Hall, an early 19th century residence which is a grade II* listed building. The study area abuts the south side of Acton Burnell Hall and is currently a garden area (Fig. 1). The land slopes from about 120m O.D. in the north to about 118m O.D. to the south. The underlying drift geology is of boulder clay.

The designated area of the scheduled monument of Acton Burnell Castle includes the chamber block of the castle, the remains of a tithe barn and an area believed to be the moated enclosure of the site. The study area lies about 60m north of the chamber block within the moated enclosure.

5 Archaeological and historical background

The following is a brief summary of the schedule entry for Acton Burnell Castle (Mon. No 27531).

The manor of Acton is first mentioned in Domesday and a century later it was held by William Burnell. His descendent Robert was responsible for the building of the castle which he began in about 1284 when a licence to crenellate and fortify a property was granted by the King. Robert Burnell was one of the most influential men of his time. He served as secretary to Edward I, as Chancellor of England and Bishop of Bath and Wells. In 1283 Parliament apparently sat at Acton Burnell in the tithe barn.

It is likely that work on the manor was still in progress when Robert died in 1292. The property stayed in the Burnell family but the descent of the Lordship suggests it had ceased to be used as a residence by 1420. This would explain the absence of later medieval

fortifications. In the 15th century it passed by marriage to the Lovells of Titchmarsh. In 1485 it was confiscated by Henry VII and was later given to the Earl of Surrey in return for his services at the battle of Flodden in 1513. In the later 16th century it became part of the estates of the Duke of Norfolk and by the 17th century had passed to the Smythe family. Most of the original buildings had been demolished by this time.

In the 18th century the estate was remodelled to create the parkland seen today and Acton Burnell Hall was built. The medieval chamber block was incorporated into the park as an ornamental barn. In about 1900 a fire in the hall led to the extensive re-furbishment of the hall.

The 1845 Tithe Map of Acton Burnell and Acton Pigott (Fig. 3) shows no walls or buildings within the study area. The area is shown as an open area perhaps a garden. Plot 116 was owned and occupied by Sir Joseph Edward Smythe and consisted of a mansion house, offices, pleasure gardens, buildings, fold, Stables, yards and gardens. The wall to the west of the study area is shown.

The 1882 First Edition Ordnance Survey Map, sheet XLIX.4 (Fig. 4) and the 1902 Second Edition Ordnance Survey Map, sheet XLIX. 4 (Fig. 5) show the study area as a garden with a pathway running through it.

6 The evaluation

Trench 1 (Figs 6-10)
The natural [122] was reached at about 1 metre below the present ground surface. Above this in the south of the trench was a layer of gravel [118] which was also thought to be a natural deposit. Cutting [122] were two features, a pit and a post-hole. The post-hole [106] was sub-square with near vertical sides and a flattish base. No remains of a post were seen and the shallow depth of this feature, 290mm, indicated that it was probably cut from a slightly higher level. The backfill [105] produced two sherds of pottery dating from the late 13th or the early 14th century. The pit [125] was sub-square with an uneven base. No finds were recovered from the fill [124]. Sealing fill [124] and found all over the trench was a layer of mid red brown clayey sand with occasional decayed sandstone fragments, charcoal and pebbles [104]. This layer was about 200mm thick and was interpreted as a build up of soil or a garden soil. Quantities of tap slag and pottery dating from the late 13th century to the early 14th century was recovered from [104].

A lens of dark brown sandy silt with very frequent clay fragments [123] overlay [104] in the central area of the trench. It is possible that this represents the remains of a surface. One sherd of pottery dating from the late 13th century or the early 14th century was recovered from this layer. In the north of the trench and overlying [104] was a 100mm thick layer of dark grey brown sandy silt containing frequent charcoal [117]. No finds were excavated from this layer.

Above both [117] and [123] was a layer of gravel in a light beige sandy silt matrix [103]. This varied in thickness from 200mm to a thin skim. Above this was a cultivation soil [102] which was about 300mm thick and produced finds from the 18th or 19th centuries. Cutting

this were three planting holes [108, 112 and 116], three pipe trenches [114, 119 and 121] and a cut for a land drain [110]. Above these was the topsoil [101] which was 450mm thick.

Trench 2 (Figs 11-17)
The natural decayed sandstone [221] was reached at about 1 metre below the ground surface. This equates to [122] in Trench 1. Overlying this was a layer of gravel [220] which was also thought to be a natural deposit. The gravel equates to [118] in Trench 1. Cutting the natural were three features, all probably associated with each other although none contained dating evidence. In the south-east of the trench a linear slot [215] ran north-west to south-east and was truncated at both ends by later features. This was filled with a dark brown silty sand with frequent pebbles. In the north of the trench a similar feature, orientated in a similar direction, was excavated [211]. The southern terminus of slot [211] was rounded and was shallower than the northern part. This was filled with dark brown silty sand with frequent stones [210]. These two linear cuts were interpreted as possible beam slots for a timber building. Directly to the west of slot [211] a post-hole [213] was excavated. This was sub-circular in plan with steep sides and a flat base. The fill was a dark brown sandy loam with occasional small stones [212].

In the west of the trench directly over the natural was layer [203]. This was a slightly reddish brown sandy silt with occasional small stones. This deposit was only 100mm thick and was interpreted as a garden soil which had been largely removed in the post-medieval period. One sherd of pottery dating to the 15th or 16th century was recovered from [203].

Above slot [215] in the south-east of the trench was a layer [222] of dark brown sandy silt. Overlying [211], [213] and [203] and over the rest of the trench was a layer of dark brown sandy loam with frequent stones and occasional fragments of red clay [206]. Finds from this deposit date from probably the 18th century.

Cutting both [222] and [206] was the foundation cut [209] for a sandstone footing [207]. This ran approximately west to east across the trench and was 860 mm deep. The footing was irregularly coursed and was built up against the southern edge of the foundation cut. The backfill [208] of the construction cut was a dark brown sandy loam with coal and brick fragments. Finds from the backfill date from the 18th century. A layer of dark brown sandy loam [223] seen above footing [207] is probably a disturbed area of layer [202]. Deposit [202] which was interpreted as a 19th century cultivation soil and probably equates to [102] in Trench 1.

Cutting [202] in the far south-east corner of the trench was a 19th century pit [205]. Two broad shallow cuts [217] and [219] into [202] probably represent 19th century terracing of the southern part of the site. Above these was the topsoil [201] which was 300mm thick and equates to [102] in Trench 1.

The pottery by Stephanie Ratkái

Catalogue and Spot Dating table

Context and date	**Fabric**	**Sherd count**	**Weight**
[101] later 17th c – mid 18th c	Mottled ware	1	154g
[104] late 13th c (early 14th c)	Malvernian ware	11	214g

	Worcester type ware	5	62g
	Siltstone tempered ware	1	25g
	Fabric 1	33	193g
	Fabric 2	1	9g
	Fabric 3	1	8g
	Cooking pot fabric 1	1	5g
	Cooking pot fabric 2	1	3g
[105] ?later 13th –early 14th c	Malvernian ware	1	<1g
	Fabric 4	1	2g
[123] later 13th-early 14th c	Whiteware	1	4g
[203] 15th-16th c	Late red ware	1	3g
[208] later 17th-early 18th c	Blackware/coarseware	1	13g
	Slipware (trailed)	1	12g

Discussion

Brief descriptions of the unsourced fabrics can be found in Appendix II. The largest group of pottery came from [104] and numbered 54 sherds. The pottery was abraded and consisted of small sherds, a number of which were clearly parts of the same vessels. There were three Malvernian rim sherds representing two vessels similar to Vince (1985 fig 38.4) and likely to date to the late 13th century. A fourth rim sherd was found in a siltstone tempered fabric. Other cooking pot body sherds were found in Worcester-type sandy ware and two other, reduced, sandy fabrics. The bulk of the pottery consisted of sherds in fabric 1. Some of these clearly came from jugs since traces of decayed or weathered glaze were found on some sherds and one small handle fragment was present. Three jug sherds were decorated with incised horizontal lines. Two fragmentary base sherds were present, one of which appeared to have continuous thumbing or finger impressions, the other having a single deep finger impression. Similar small jugs with three deep impressions were found at Lawn Farm, near Stoke-on-Trent (Rátkai forthcoming) which dated to the late 13th or 14th centuries.

Context [105] was the fill of a post-hole. Both sherds recovered from the fill were very small. The Malvernian sherd is most likely of 13th century date. The small sherd in Fabric 4 was from a jug with a pale olive glaze. The sherd is so small that it is difficult to date with much accuracy. The low iron content of the clay may suggest a date after the mid 13th century and the firing suggests that the sherd pre-dates 1400. If the Malvernian sherd and and the jug sherd are more or less contemporary, a *terminus post quem* for the backfilling of the post-hole would seem to lie in the later 13th or early 14th centuries. However, the backfill date could have a *terminus post quem* of anything from c. 1250-1400.

The sources for the pottery are intriguing. Both Malvernian and Worcester-type cooking pots are commonly found in Shrewsbury and seem to have been regularly transported along the River Severn into Shropshire. Their presence at Acton Burnell need, therefore, come as no surprise. However, most of the other fabrics present have little in common with the pottery found in Shrewsbury. This is odd, since not only is Shrewsbury only about six miles from Acton Burnell but it was a major market throughout the medieval period. The siltstone tempered sherd may have come from further south in Shropshire but the two other cooking pot fabrics are difficult to source. Fabric 1, had no particular distinguishing traits, other than not being like pottery found in Shrewsbury or elsewhere in Shropshire (Rátkai forthcoming).

It is possible that pots in this fabric had travelled a long way from their source of manufacture as part of the household's baggage.

The metalworking debris

A total of 45 fragments of tap slag weighing 1.605kg were recovered from context [104]. This suggests that primary working/smelting was taking place in the vicinity of the study area. No secondary working waste or smithing debris was recovered. This is not definite proof that smithing was not taking place somewhere close by. The most likely source of the iron ore could be Ironbridge which is about 10 or so kilometres to the east.

7 Discussion

Medieval features and deposits survive on the site (Fig. 2). It seems likely that the first phase of activity was the excavation of pit [125] in Trench 1. Although no finds were recovered from this feature it was sealed by a soil layer [104] which built up during the late 13th and early 14th centuries. The post-hole [106] excavated in Trench 1 probably cut through [104]. The post had been removed and the cut backfilled by the late 13th century or early 14th century.

In Trench 2 the area seems to have been terraced or scarped during the post-medieval period and only a skim of a later medieval deposit [203] directly on top of natural remained. The slots [211] and [215], and post-hole [213] are possibly associated with post-hole [106] as they are on a similar alignment (Fig. 2). Although only the backfilling of [106] can be securely dated to the late 13th century or early 14th century it can be suggested that the other three features were also backfilled at this time. However, this hypothesis must be treated speculatively. In Trench 1 layer [123] may be the truncated remains of a surface laid down in probably the later 13th century or early 14th century.

Therefore during the late 13th and early 14th century soil built up in the area of the site and in the 13th century it is possible that a timber building was erected. Sometime, in probably the early 14th century, this building was demolished. It can be inferred that the study area was an open area within the moated enclosure of Acton Burnell Castle when the castle was built in the late 13th century. The pottery recovered from [104] was abraded suggesting that the soil was ploughed or turned over but it is unlikely that the soil was intensively worked. The quantities of tap slag recovered implies that primary metalworking/smelting was taking place in the vicinity of the study area though there is an absence of secondary workings i.e. smithy waste.

If a building was erected in the study area sometime in the 13th century then it must be associated with the castle complex. However, there were no deposits that could be definitely associated with internal or external surfaces of a building and only one of the post-holes can be dated. The presence of unsourced pottery may reflect the importation of pottery from other parts of the country as the Burnell family moved around.

There is little evidence of occupation apart from soil build up during the late medieval or early post-medieval period. The documentary evidence suggests that many of the main buildings of Acton Burnell Castle were demolished by the 17th century.

During the 18th century, probably when Acton Burnell Hall was built, the area of Trench 2 appears to have been either terraced or scarped and foundation [207] was built. This foundation runs at right angles to a garden wall running north to south to the west of the trenches. A break in the build pattern occurs along this wall at about the position where foundation [207] can be projected to. Therefore [207] was probably a return to this garden wall. If the map evidence is correct then by the time of the Tithe Map of 1845 this wall had been demolished.

8 Recommendations

The proposed development site lies within the designated area of the scheduled monument of Acton Burnell Castle (Mon. No 27531). Significant archaeological features and deposits survive at a depth of about 550mm below the present ground level. The features cannot be proven to be of a structural nature but it is likely that they are part of a building. However, the archaeological resource is significant enough to warrant either preservation *in situ* or preservation by record.

9 Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank the staff at Concord College, especially Bob Marston, for their co-operation on site. Thanks must also go to Jane Kenney who helped with the site work and illustrations.

10 References

Maps
1845 Tithe Map of the townships of Acton Burnell and Acton Pigott

1882 First Edition Ordnance Survey Map, sheet XLIX.4

1902 Second Edition Ordnance Survey Map, sheet XLIX. 4

Unpublished references
Schedule Entry Copy of Acton Burnell Castle, Monument Number 27531

Tithe Apportionment of the townships of Acton Burnell and Acton Pigott, 1843

Published references
Ratkai S forthcoming The post-Roman pottery in V Gaffney, R White and S Buteux *Wroxeter, Rome and the Urban Process. Final Report on the Work of the Wroxeter Hinterlands Project and the Wroxeter Hinterlands Survey 1994-99*

Vince A G 1985 The Ceramic Finds in R Shoesmith *Hereford City Excavations vol 3 The Finds* CBA Res Rep 56 1985 pp36-78

11 Archive

The site code is CCAB04A. The archive consists of:

29 context sheets
2 trench sheets
1 drawing index sheet
13 field drawings on 3 sheets
2 sheets of levels
1 sheet of site diary and notes
9 finds sheets
3 photo record sheets
2 films of black and white photographic negatives
1 film of colour photographic transparencies
1 box of finds:

The archive is currently held by Marches Archaeology awaiting transfer to Shropshire County Museum Service.

Appendix I: List of contexts

Context	Description	Interpretation
101	Dark brown sandy loam with occasional pebbles, root action, charcoal, brick. About 450mm thick.	Topsoil same as [201]
102	As [101] except occasional lenses pink clay	19th century garden soil. As [202]
103	Gravel in a light beige sandy silt matrix. Maximum depth 200mm	Gravel spread
104	Mid red brown clayey sand with occasional decayed sandstone fragments, charcoal and pebbles. Maximum depth 400mm	Late 13th – early 14th century build up of soil or garden soil
105	Mid grey brown sandy silt with frequent charcoal, occasional pebbles and clay fragments	Backfill of post-hole [106]
106	Sub-square cut 290mm deep. Vertical sides and flattish base	Medieval post-hole
107	As [101] except darker and more humic	Fill of [108]
108	Sub-circular cut with flattish base	19th or 20th century planting hole or root bole
109	Ceramic land drain and backfill of dark brown sandy loam	Fill of [110]. 19th or 20th land drain
110	Linear cut running N to S. Base is dish shaped	Cut for land drain
111	As [101] except darker and more humic	Fill of [112]
112	Sub-circular cut with flattish base	19th or 20th century planting hole or root bole
113	As [101] with two water pipes	Water pipes and backfill of [114]
114	Linear cut running NW-SE	Water pipe trench
115	As [101] except more pebbles	Fill of [116]
116	Sub-circular with steep sides and V shaped base	19th or 20th century planting hole or root bole
117	Dark grey brown sandy silt with very frequent charcoal, occasional pebbles and decayed	Layer

	sandstone	
118	Gravel and decayed sandstone in a red beige sandy matrix	Natural gravel. As [220]
119	Water pipe, backfill and cut	Pipe trench
120	As [101] with lead water pipe	Water pipe and backfill of [121]
121	Linear cut running NW-SE	Water pipe trench
122	Natural decayed sandstone	Natural. Same as [221]
123	Dark brown sandy silt with very frequent pink clay fragments, sandstone fragments and mortar fragments. Depth 80mm	Late 13th – early 14th century layer. Possibly remains of a surface
124	Light beige brown sandy silt with occasional charcoal and red sandstone fragments	Fill of [125]
125	Sub-square cut with irregular sides and base. Depth about 400mm	Medieval pit cut
201	As [101]	Topsoil same as [101]
202	As [201] except occasional lenses pink clay	19th century garden soil. As [102]
203	Slightly reddish brown silty sand with occasional small stones. Depth maximum 100mm	Medieval layer. Directly above natural [221]
204	Dark brown silty sand with reddish brown clay and stones	Fill of [205]
205	Steep sided cut which was not bottomed. Mainly seen in section	19th century pit
206	Dark brown sandy loam with frequent stones and occasional fragments red clay	18th or 19th century general make-up deposit
207	Irregularly coursed foundation of irregular shaped yellow sandstone. Depth 860mm. Foundation built up against southern edge of construction cut [209]. Wall above has been robbed out	18th century foundation for probable garden wall
208	Dark brown sandy loam with coal and brick fragments	Backfill of construction cut [209] for foundation [207]
209	Linear cut with vertical sides and flat base	Foundation trench for footing [207]

		[207]
210	Dark brown silty sand with frequent stones	Fill of [211]
211	Linear cut with a rounded end running NW-SE. Steep sided with a flat base. At northern end cut becomes shallower	Possible beam slot for timber building
212	Dark brown sandy loam with occasional small stones	Fill of [213]
213	Circular cut 140mm deep. Steep sides and a flat base	Post-hole cut
214	Dark brown silty sand with frequent pebbles	Fill of [215]
215	Linear cut along east side of trench. West side steep, east side more gradual. Base fairly flat	Possible beam slot
216	Dark brown sandy loam with very occasional stones and brick fragments	Fill of [217]
217	Broad shallow hollow seen in east facing section	19th century cut
218	As [202] except contains brick, yellow sandstone fragments towards the base	Fill of [219]
219	Broad cut with steep west side and flat base. Seen in north of trench	19th century cut for terracing
220	Yellow brown sand and gravel	Natural gravel deposit. As [118]
221	Natural decayed sandstone	Natural same as [122]
222	Dark brown sandy silt	Layer
223	Dark brown sandy loam with mortar fragments	19th century layer

Appendix II: Description of unsourced pottery fabrics

Fabric 1 Oxidised pale brown, mid grey core. Moderate well sorted rounded quartz c 0.25mm, sparse rounded fe inclusions.

Fabric 2. Oxidised orange. Moderate-abundant quartz generally <0.25mm but with occasional larger grains up to c 0.5mm, moderate-abundant fe inclusions. Similar sandy fabrics with frequent fe inclusions are known from Shrewsbury.

Fabric 3 Oxidised orange with ill-defined, buff–pale grey core. Abundant fine quartz <0.25mm which occasional larger grains.

Fabric 4 Iron-poor fabric. Pale orange surfaces and internal margin, pale grey external margin and dark blue-grey core. Sparse-moderate, ill-sorted quartz 0.01-0.75mm.

Cooking pot fabric 1 Reduced black throughout. Sparse ill-sorted, sub-angular quartz, up to 0.5mm sparse organic voids.

Cooking pot fabric 2 Reduced black throughout. Abundant fine angular quartz <0.25mm.

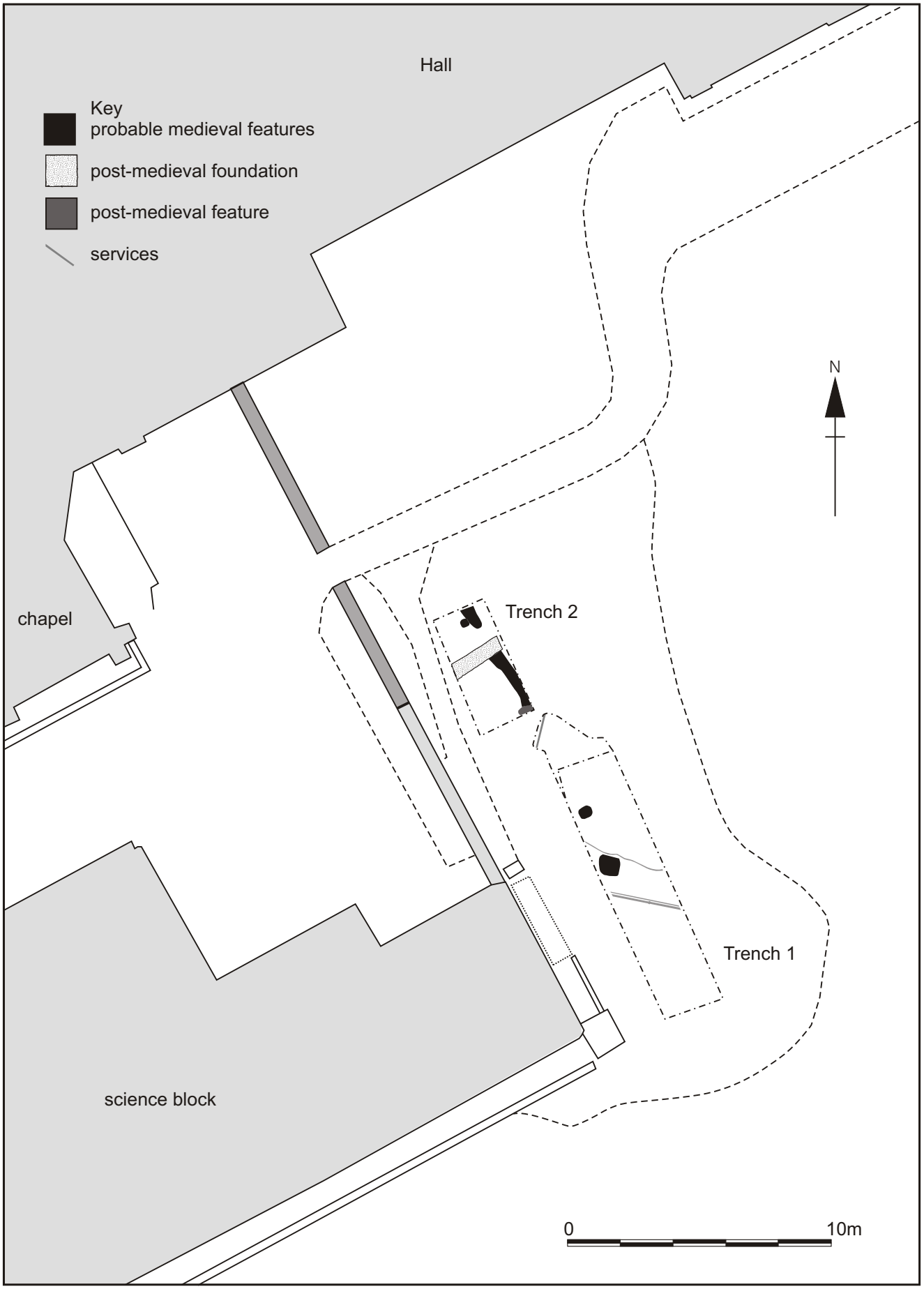


Fig. 2 Location of trenches showing features cut into natural and services

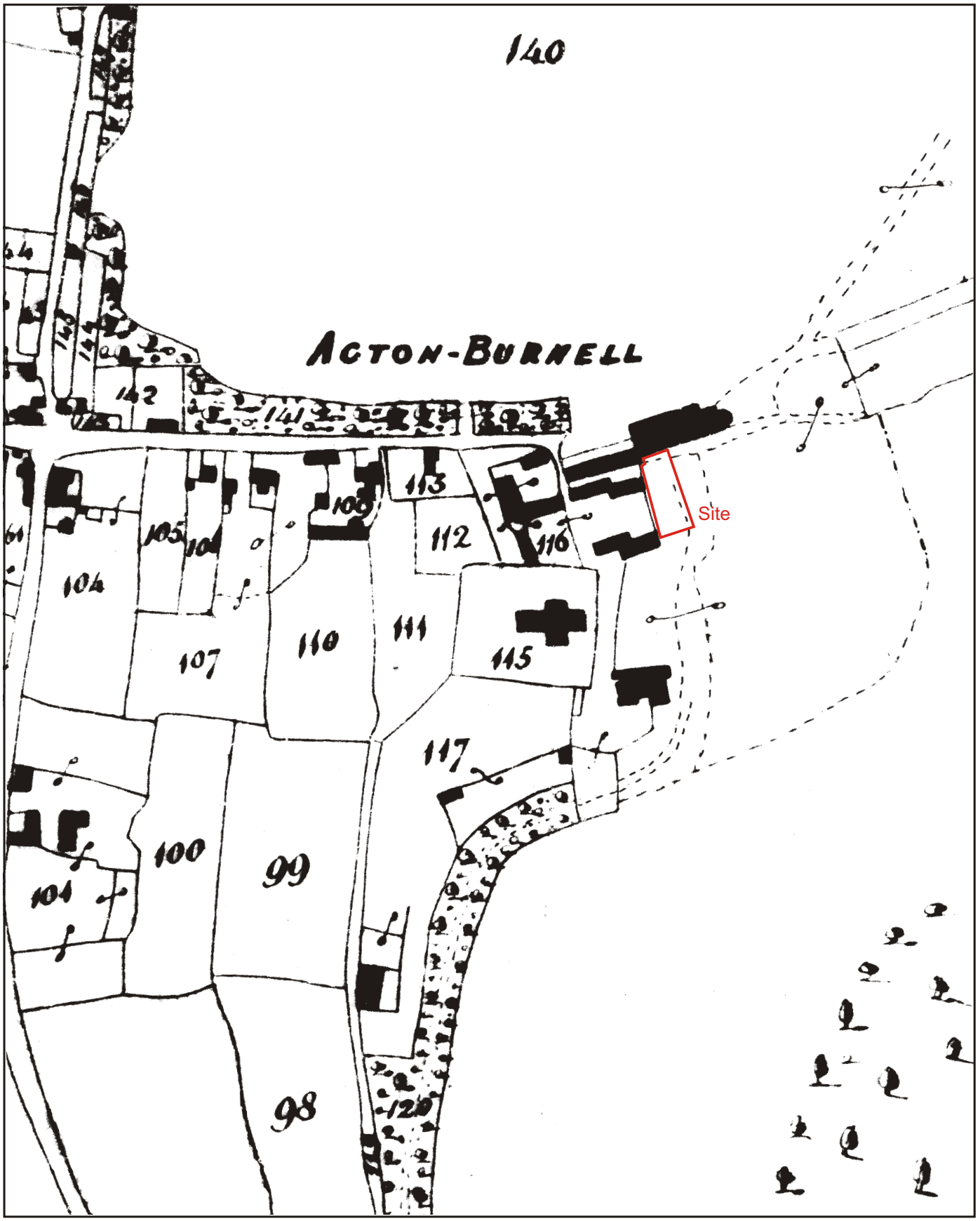


Fig. 3 Detail from Tithe Map, 1845

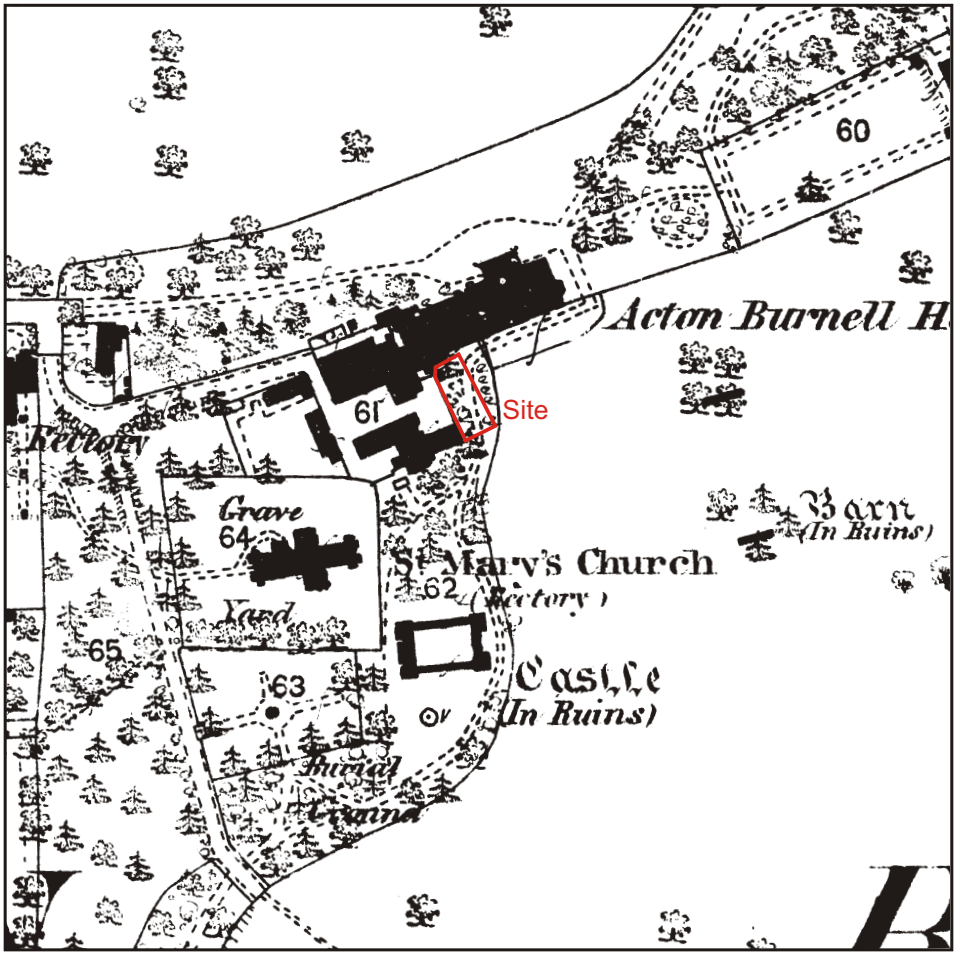


Fig. 4 Detail from the First Edition 25" County Series Map sheet XLIX.4, surveyed 1882

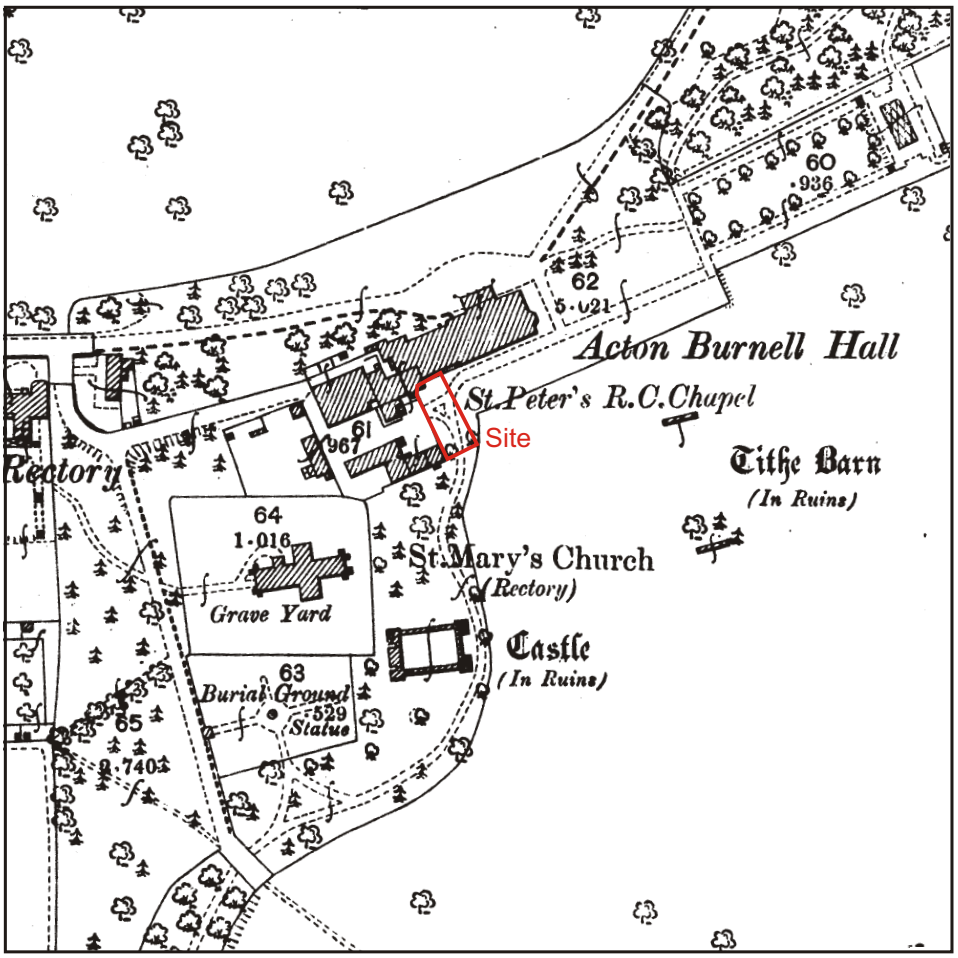
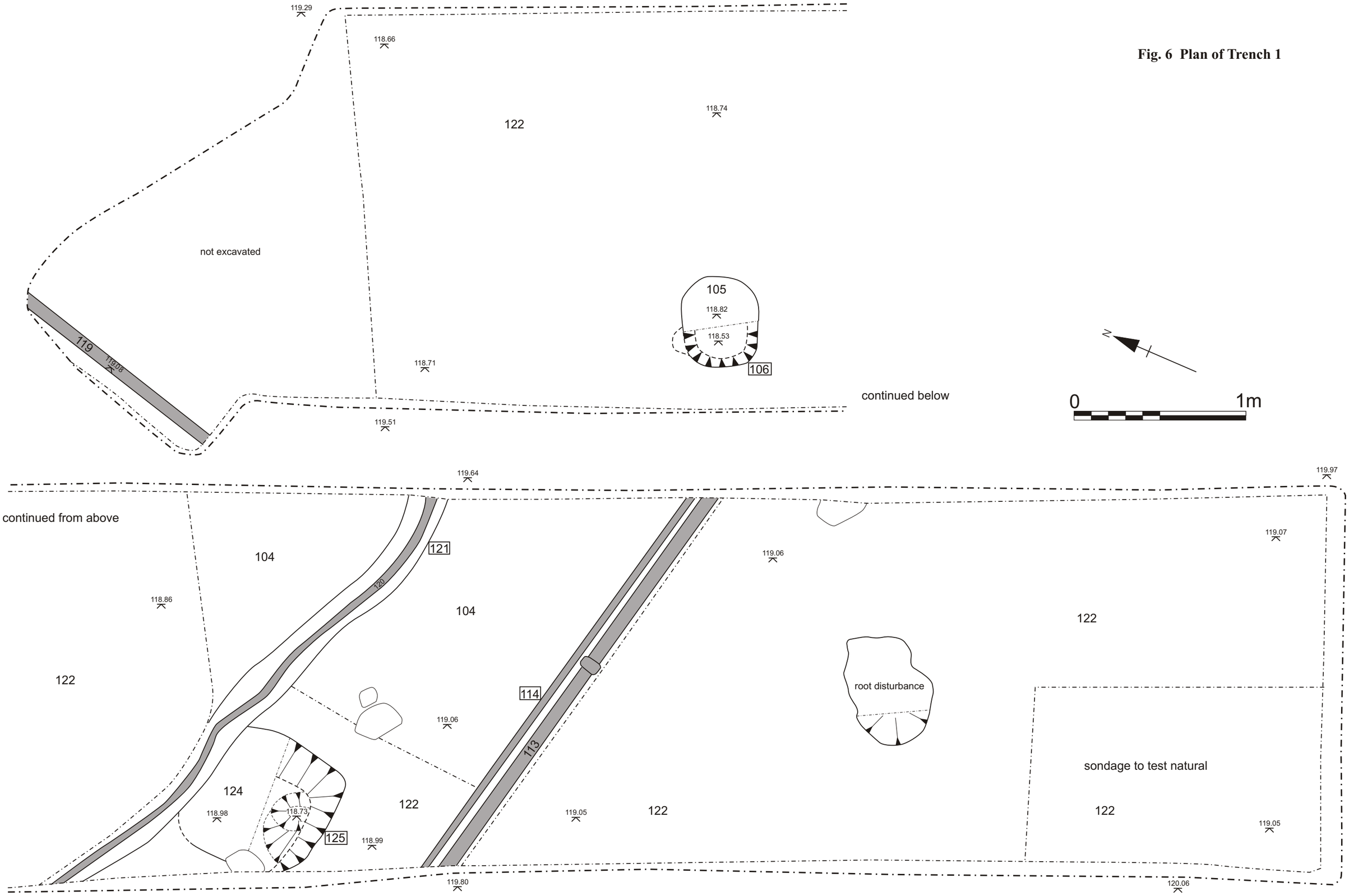


Fig. 5 Detail from the Second Edition 25" County Series Map sheet XLIX.4, 1902

Fig. 6 Plan of Trench 1



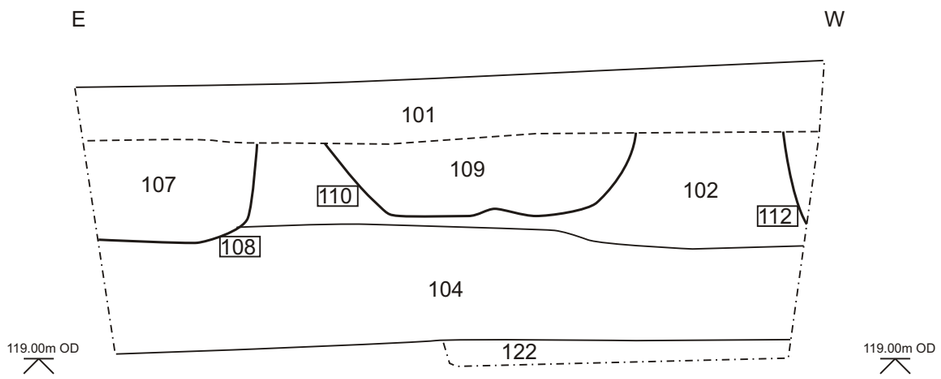


Fig. 7 North facing section of Trench 1

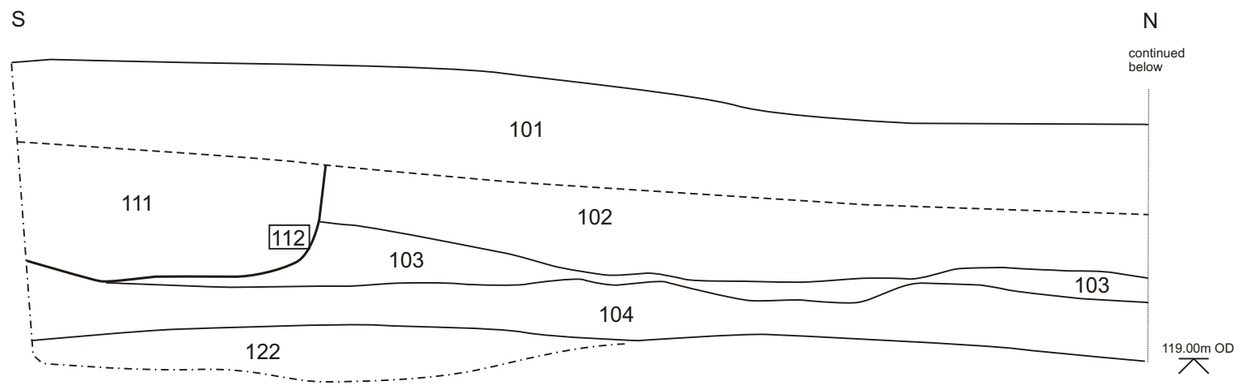


Fig. 8 East facing section of Trench 1

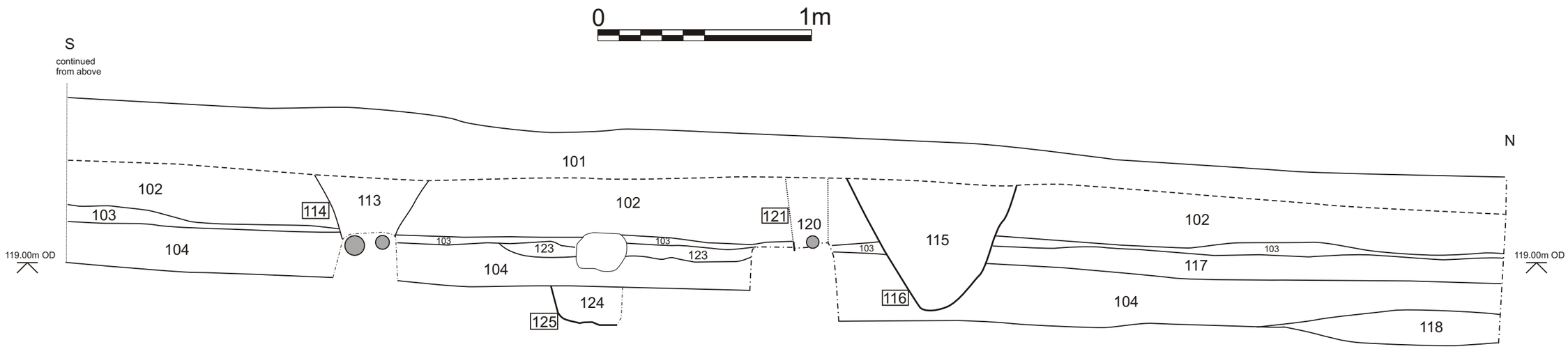


Fig. 8 continued: East facing section of Trench 1

Fig. 9 Profile of cut [106]

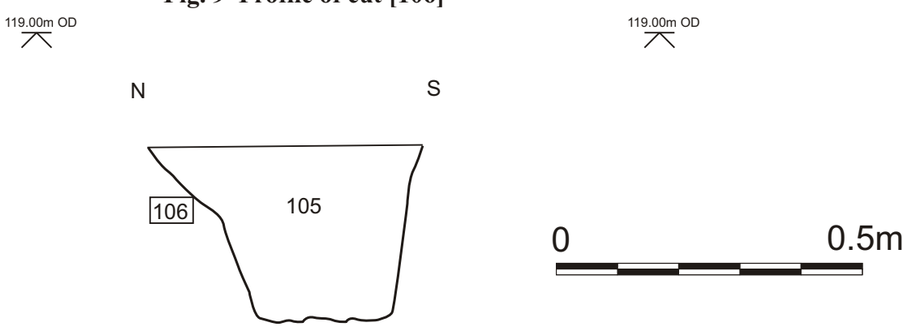


Fig. 10 Profile of cut [125]

Figs 7 to 10

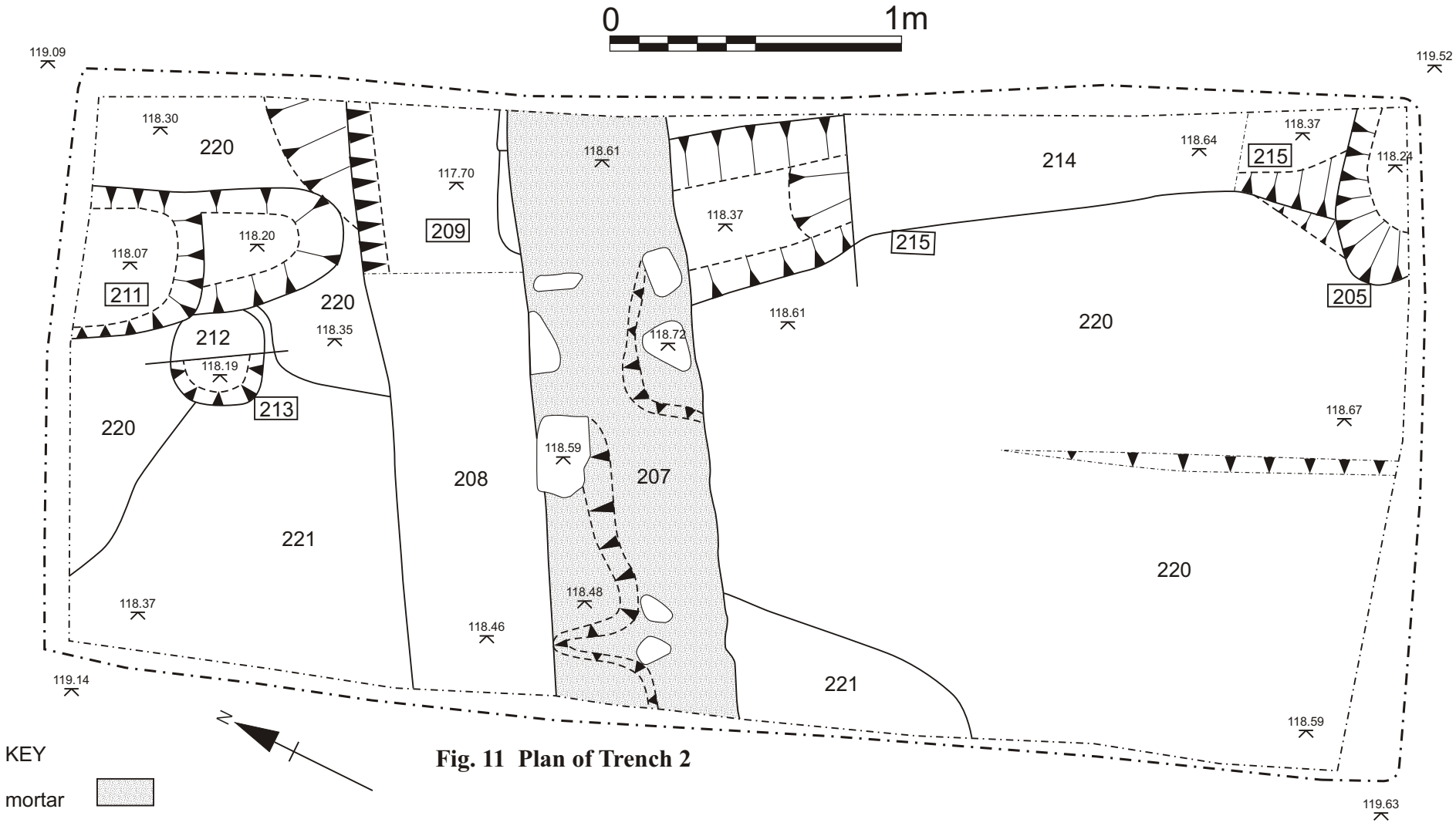


Fig. 11 Plan of Trench 2

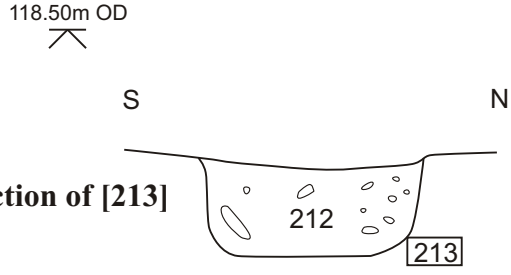


Fig. 12 West facing section of [213]

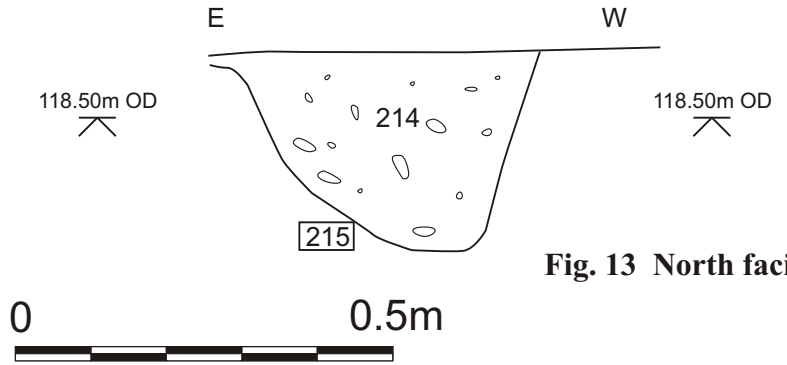


Fig. 13 North facing section of [215]

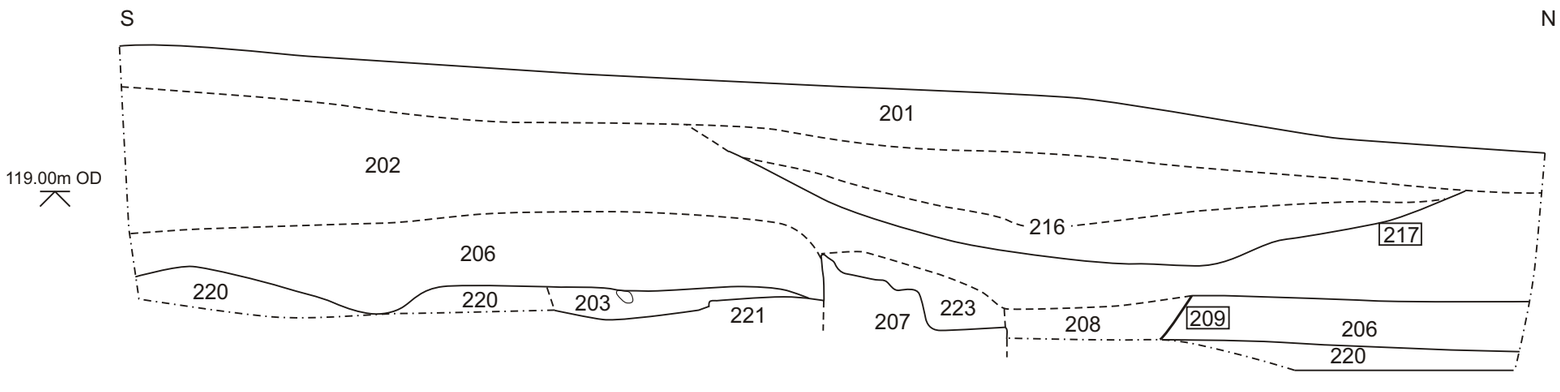


Fig. 14 East facing section of Trench 2

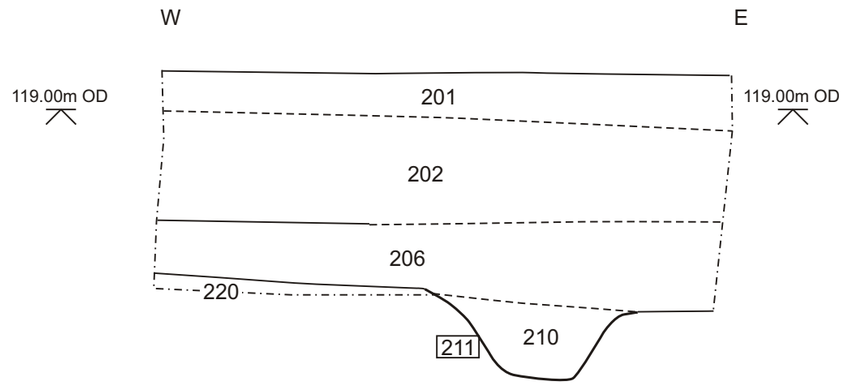


Fig. 15 South facing section of Trench 2

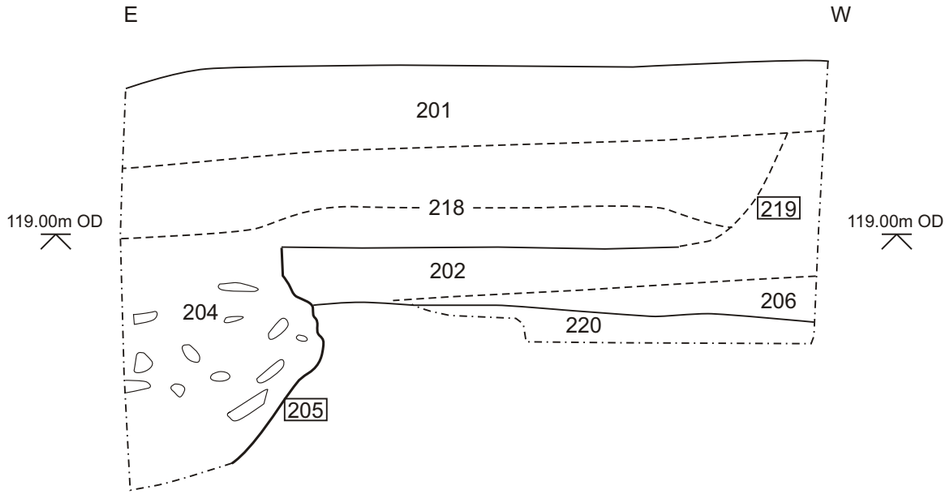


Fig. 16 North facing section of Trench 2

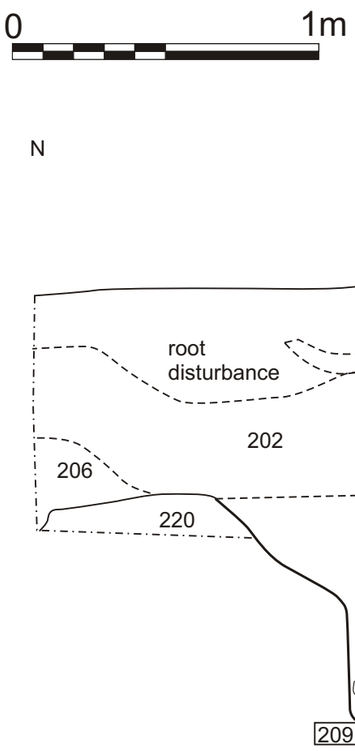


Fig. 17 West facing section of Trench 2

Figs 14 to 17

Marches Archaeology

Concord College
Acton Burnell
Shropshire

Project Proposal for an Archaeological Evaluation

Introduction

There is a proposal to erect a new science building at Concord College, Acton Burnell. The site is situated at NGR: SJ 534 019). The site lies within a Scheduled Ancient Monument. It is understood that Concord College or their agents will assume full responsibility for obtaining any necessary consents relating to the Scheduled status of the site. Marches Archaeology will require to see any consents prior to carrying out works on the site.

The Local Planning Authority's Archaeology Advisor has advised that an archaeological field evaluation is necessary in accordance with English Heritage guidelines in DoE Planning Policy Guidance No. 16. The Local Planning Authority's Archaeology Advisor has produced a "Brief for an archaeological field evaluation". Baart Harries Newall, acting on behalf of the client, has requested Marches Archaeology to quote for providing the archaeological services detailed in the Brief.

This project proposal is based on the Brief and will follow its stipulations, unless specified below. This proposal forms a written scheme of investigation for the archaeological works and should be read in conjunction with the Brief and its attached plan(s). Any subsequent alterations to the brief will be agreed in writing between Marches Archaeology and the Local Planning Authority's Archaeology Advisor.

Archaeological and Historical Background

The Brief summarises the interest of the site, which lies within the probable extent of the medieval castle of Acton Burnell. The site is also within the grounds of Acton Burnell Hall, a Grade II* listed early 19th century residence.

Further study will, if necessary, be undertaken as part of a documentary study as required by the Brief.

Scope and aims of the project

The Brief states that the archaeological project will consist of several elements, which can be summarised as follows:

The excavation of a sample area 15m x 2m
Appropriate recording, treatment of material and reporting
Documentary research if necessary

An archaeological evaluation aims to "gain information about the archaeological resource within a given area or site (including presence or absence, character, extent, date, integrity, state of preservation and quality) in order to make an assessment of its merit in the appropriate context, leading to one or more of the following: the formulation of a strategy to ensure the recording, preservation or management of the resource; the formulation of a strategy to initiate a threat to the archaeological resource; the formulation of a proposal for further archaeological investigation within a programme of research" (Institute of Field Archaeologists Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations).

The objectives of this evaluation, based on the above stated aim, are stated in the Brief and will be followed.

Methodology

Before the project commences two full sets of any existing relevant drawings (plans, elevations, sections etc.) including the development site and any building(s) as existing and as proposed will be provided to Marches Archaeology by the client. Two copies of any amendments or revisions to such drawings and of any additional drawings will be provided as the project continues. Copies will also be provided to Marches Archaeology of any additional relevant historical, archaeological, structural or other information is held by the client.

Fieldwork

Before fieldwork commences the Local Planning Authority's Archaeology Advisor will be consulted to determine an appropriate repository for the archive.

It is presumed that there are no service trenches, hedges or other impediments either above or below ground in the area of the proposed archaeological ground works. It is the responsibility of the client to inform Marches Archaeology if there are any such impediments. Any costs to the project, whether archaeological or other, incurred by the presence of such impediments will not be borne by Marches Archaeology. It is specifically presumed that any plants or other vegetation in the area of the proposed trench, where there is understood to be a shrubbery, will have been removed prior to the site works. It must be noted that an area at least 20m x 7m must be cleared to allow for spoil arising from the trench to be stockpiled adjacent to the trench.

A single trench 15m x 2m will be excavated. Plant and machinery will be provided by Marches Archaeology. It is assumed that there is free access for a JCB and that reinstatement of ground surfaces will not be required.

The upper deposits will be excavated by mechanical excavator to a level determined to comprise deposits, features or horizons of archaeological significance. Further excavation will normally be by hand. Selected sampling may be continued by use of mechanical excavator to test deeper stratification, the level of natural deposits or other information required for the fulfilment of the aims and objectives of the Brief. Such features as are considered to be of value to the understanding and interpretation of the site may be selectively excavated, either in part or in full. All artefactual and ecofactual material recovered from hand excavation will initially be retained.

The recording system will include written, drawn and photographic data. Context numbers will be allocated and context record sheets completed. Site notebooks may also be used. A running matrix will be maintained if appropriate. Plans (normally 1:20), sections (normally 1:10) and other appropriate drawings of significant data will be made. Plans will normally be multi-context, but certain features may require single context planning. The photographic record will be made using black and white negative and colour transparency film. Samples will be taken of deposits considered to have environmental, technological or scientific dating potential.

On completion of the fieldwork the trenches will be backfilled.

This project proposal does not cover the eventuality that there are human remains within the area to be investigated as additional legal requirements then come into force.

Documentary research

If significant remains are encountered primary and secondary sources will be consulted. Principal repositories will include the Sites and Monuments Record, the Shropshire Records and Research Centre and English Heritage archives. The following sources will be considered, as appropriate and subject to availability:

> Ordnance Survey maps; Tithe maps; Estate maps and other historical maps; Previous published and unpublished archaeological reports and archive work; Written non-archaeological sources; Air photographs; Geological maps; Borehole and other engineering data.

Office work

On completion of fieldwork a site archive will be prepared. The written, drawn and photographic data will be catalogued and cross-referenced and a summary produced. The artefactual and ecofactual data will be processed, catalogued and cross-referenced and summaries produced. After an initial assessment any unstratified non-diagnostic artefacts and ecofacts and non-diagnostic samples will be discarded. Further dispersal of artefacts and ecofacts will be in line with the collection policy of the recipient repository and will be documented in the archive. The checked site matrix will be produced if appropriate.

The freeholder(s) of the land to which this document relates has title to all objects (unless within the jurisdiction of the Treasure Act 1996) recovered from the land. The client shall secure the agreement of the freeholder(s) to donate the archive, together with any artefacts and ecofacts recovered during the fieldwork, to an appropriate repository. Marches Archaeology will arrange for such deposition.

Assessment will be based on the site archive. Any artefacts and ecofacts which require specialist assessment will be submitted for such work.

An illustrated client report will be produced which will detail the aims, methods, and results of the project A non-technical summary and details of the location and size of the archive will be included.

The client will be provided with two copies of the report. Further copies will be deposited with the local Sites and Monuments Record, the Local Authority's archaeological service and the National Archaeological Record (one copy each).

If the project reveals that the quality and potential of the information resulting from the fieldwork is such that further analysis and/or formal publication is required the level of such work will be determined in discussions between the client, Marches Archaeology and the Local Planning Authority's Archaeological Advisor. Such works would be subject to a further Project Proposal which would be separately costed.

Management of the Project

Marches Archaeology recognises the Code of Conduct, Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology, By-Laws, Standards and other documents produced by the Institute of Field Archaeologists. The project will be managed by a Member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists.

The Safety Policy and General Risk Assessment operated by Marches Archaeology will be implemented. Copies of these documents are available on request. A risk assessment specific to this project will be carried out before commencement of fieldwork to identify any risks not noted in the General Risk Assessment. If another body is responsible for Health and Safety on the site Marches Archaeology will conform to any policy which may be in force. If costs accrue due to Health and Safety issues not made apparent to Marches Archaeology by the time of submission of this Project Proposal these costs will be additional to any costs identified in the estimate. The requirements of Health and Safety legislation are deemed to take precedence over archaeological requirements.

Appropriate insurance cover will be held throughout the project.

The Local Planning Authority's Archaeology Advisor shall at any reasonable time be granted access to the site, with prior notice, for the purpose of monitoring the fieldwork.

Timetable

The timetable has not yet been finalised. This Proposal will be submitted for approval by the Local Planning Authority's Archaeology Advisor, who will be given at least one week's notice (or such shorter period as agreed between Marches Archaeology and the Local Planning Authority's Archaeology Advisor) of the commencement of the fieldwork. Due notice may also be required under the terms of Scheduled Monument Consent. The report will be presented to the client within three months of completion of the fieldwork, unless otherwise agreed. The results will be reported to the Local Planning Authority's Archaeology Advisor, English Heritage and the local Sites and Monuments Record within one month of presentation, unless otherwise agreed. A summary report will be submitted for publication in an appropriate medium within one year of completion of all fieldwork.

Resources

The project will be managed by either Richard Stone or Nic Appleton-Fox, both of whom are Members of the Institute of Field Archaeologists with a registered Area of Competence in Archaeological Field Practice. Other field and post-excavation staff will be appropriately experienced. Where trainees are used they will be closely supervised by senior members of the project team.

The Project Director will supervise or carry out any documentary study, the majority of which will normally be completed before commencement of fieldwork.

Specialist sub-contractors will be used as appropriate. Specialists will normally be people approved by English Heritage Ancient Monuments Laboratory. Those who might be expected to be called upon (dependent upon availability) include:

Jeremy Evans (Rátkai and Evans PX Partners)	Roman ceramics
Stephanie Rátkai (Rátkai and Evans PX Partners)	medieval ceramics
David Barker (Stoke on Trent Museum)	post-medieval ceramics
Liz Pearson (Worcestershire Archaeological Service)	environmental remains
Ian Baxter (freelance)	animal bone
Megan Brickley (Birmingham Univ. Field Archaeology Unit)	human bone

Field evaluation	Project director	3 days
	Project assistant	3 days
Desk based assessment	Project director	up to 3 days (if required)*
Archive completion	Project assistant	1 day
Finds processing	Project assistant	1 day
Report text	Project director	2 day
Report illustration	Project assistant	2 days
Report collation/production	Project assistant	1 day

Note: time for desk based assessment includes incorporation of results into the report.

29 January 2004