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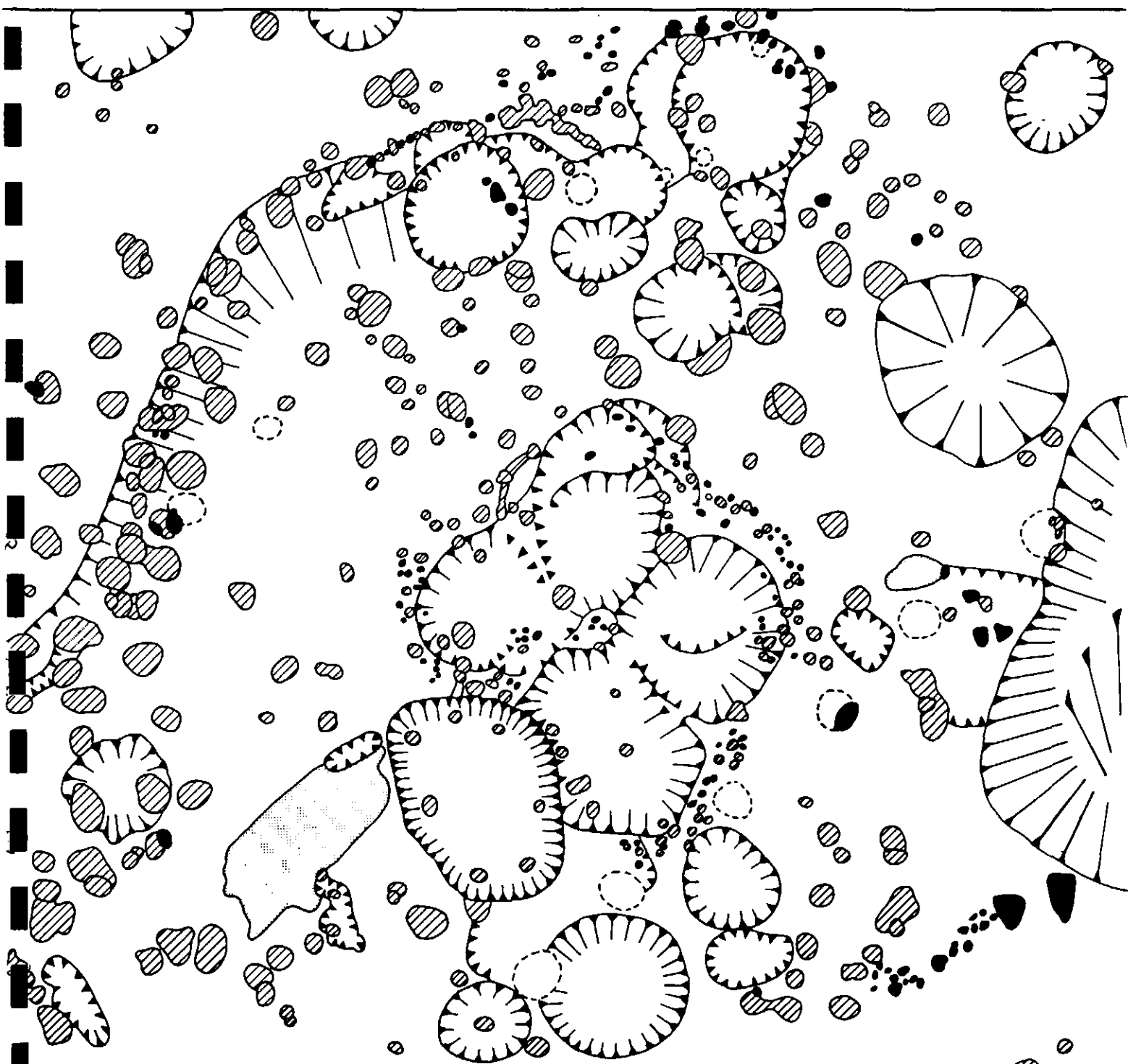
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GMS Access Project, Ware Phase II

An Archaeological Evaluation

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Hertfordshire Archaeological Trust



THE HERTFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

**GLAXO MANUFACTURING SERVICES
PARK ROAD, WARE**

PHASE II

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

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Glaxo Access Project, Ware An Archaeological Evaluation

Phase II

Introduction (Fig.1)

During late November and early December 1994 the Hertfordshire Archaeological Trust carried out an archaeological evaluation in advance of the Access Project (Phase II) on Park Road in Ware.

The site is located to the north of the river Lea, close to the northerly and westerly boundaries of Ware Football Club, on the grassed area known as 'The Buryfields' (NGR TL 354 145).

Background

The present town of Ware is situated to the east of the original river crossing and the Roman settlement which grew up on the northern bank of the river.

The Roman site lies largely beneath the present GMS factory, on the route of the Roman Ermine Street, less than 100 m to the west. Several excavations have taken place during the 1970s and late 1980s which have revealed a number of Roman buildings and burials close to the road.

In 1977 the East Herts Archaeological Unit carried out some limited archaeological excavations in The Buryfields whilst the town's sewerage improvement scheme was in progress. A series of Roman and Iron Age features were revealed during the cutting of the new pipe trench, and several Romano-British burials were also discovered.

Two large ditches were found towards the southern end of the field, and two ditches, two cremations, and two inhumations were found to the north, with no archaeological features in-between. A bronze finger ring was recovered from the left hand of one of the skeletons, and quantities of Roman pottery, dating from the 2nd-3rd century AD, were also retrieved. Some of the pottery was almost certainly made in a kiln which was found during excavations within the GMS factory close by.

During late September 1993, the Trust conducted an archaeological evaluation within the grounds of Ware Football Club, immediately to the west of The Buryfields. Substantial deposits and features containing Roman pottery sherds, tile fragments and animal bone were revealed.

Methods of Work and Objectives (Fig.2)

The evaluation, in advance of alterations to Park Road, was designed to determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains.

Six trenches (lengths 10 m; widths 2 m) were opened using a mechanical excavator to depths of between 0.6 m and 1.7 m. The layers and features exposed were partially excavated by hand in order to achieve a reasonable definition and interpretation, without damaging the archaeological horizons.

Where appropriate, box-sections were cut into the base of some of the trenches in order to better define the archaeological and natural layers.

Description of Works

The area of investigation is currently grassed.

Trench 1 (length 10 m; width 2 m)

The principal layers (0.00 m = 36.80 m OD)

<i>Depth</i>	<i>Description</i>
0.00 - 0.10 m	Dark brown silty loam topsoil
0.10 - 0.45 m	L200 - Dark brownish-black silty loam
0.45 - 0.85 m	L201 - Mixed lenses of mid brown silty clay, dark brown sandy loam, orange sand and light brown clayey silt
0.85 - 0.90 m	L202 - Mid greyish-brown clayey silt with frequent (30-50%) small (10-50 mm) subrounded flint
0.90 - 1.20 m	L203 - 80% small - large (over 100 mm) subangular flint in a matrix of mid brown clayey silt
1.20 m +	Mid orange-brown sandy river gravel

The layers below the topsoil in the south westerly end of the trench are much disturbed by an electricity cable and were not fully excavated. Several smaller modern intrusions were also identified. Late post-medieval finds dating from the 18th-20th century, including glass, iron nails, brick and tile were retrieved from Layers 200, 201 and 202. A fragment of clay-pipe was also found within L201.

A small hand-excavated box-section (1 m square) was dug through L203, which appears to be an interface between L202 and the natural gravel subsoil.

No layers or features of archaeological interest were identified.

Trench 2 (length 10 m; width 2 m)

The principal layers (0.00 m = 36.85 m OD)

<i>Depth</i>	<i>Description</i>
0.00 - 0.15 m	Topsoil
0.15 - 0.25 m	L204 - Dark brownish-black silty loam
0.25 - 0.65 m	L205 - Mid brown silty clay with moderate (15-30%) small and medium (50 mm-100 mm) flint and occasional (less than 15%) chalk and charcoal flecks.
0.65 - 0.75 m	L206 - Light orange-brown compact clayey silt
0.75 - 1.20 m +	L207 - Mid brownish-orange sandy silt brickearth and chalk.

L206 is an interface between the post-medieval overburden (Layers 204 and 205) and the natural brickearth (L207). A large natural deposit of chalk occurs within the brickearth, which appears to overlay river gravels. The natural gravel was identified within a small hand-dug section at a depth of approximately 1.2 m.

Fragments of tile and late post-medieval glass were recovered from Layers 204 and 205, but no remains of archaeological interest were identified.

Trench 3 (length 10 m; width 2 m)

The principal layers (0.00 m = 37.40 m OD)

<i>Depth</i>	<i>Description</i>
0.00 - 0.15 m	Topsoil
0.15 - 0.60 m	L208 - Mid brown sandy loam with frequent small subrounded stone and occasional chalk flecks
0.60 - 0.70 m	L209 - Dark blackish-brown loam
0.70 - 0.85 m	L210 - Mid brown clayey loam with occasional chalk and charcoal flecks
0.85 - 1.20 m	L211 - Light orange-brown clayey silt
1.20 - 1.60 m	L217 - Mid orange-red sandy silt brickearth
1.60 - 1.70 m +	Natural river gravel and chalk

Most of the trench was excavated to the top of L211, which is the interface between the overburden and the natural brickearth. A machine-cut section in the south-eastern end of the trench was dug to a depth of 1.7 m, and a hand-dug section to the north-western end was excavated to a depth of 1.2 m.

One small abraded pottery sherd of probable Roman date was recovered from L217, but this is most likely residual. Post-medieval finds, including brick, tile and animal bone, were retrieved from the layers above, but no archaeological horizons were identified.

Trench 4 (length 10 m; width 2 m)

The principal layers (0.00 m = 37.75 m OD)

<i>Depth</i>	<i>Description</i>
0.00 - 0.10 m	Topsoil
0.10 - 0.35 m	L212 - Dark brown silty loam with frequent small flint and stone and occasional mortar and chalk flecks, rubble and tile
0.35 - 0.55 m	L213 - Dark blackish-brown silty loam
0.55 - 0.80 m	L214 - Mid brown silty loam with occasional rubble, brick, tile and moderate stone inclusions
0.80 - 0.95 m	L215 - Light brown clayey silt with moderate small subrounded stone and flint
0.95 - 1.50 m +	L216 - Mid brown compact clayey silt

The trench was excavated by machine to the top of L216.

A machine-cut section through L216 was dug towards the western end, and a hand-excavated section was dug towards the eastern end of the trench to depths of 1.5 m. The base of the layer was not revealed, and appears to be greatly in excess of 0.55 m thick.

The deposit is most likely the result of natural colluvium or 'hillwash', filling a large hollow, which may represent a former river channel. The natural subsoils are significantly shallower in Trench 3 to the east, Trench 5 to the south, and in trial trenches excavated in 1993 within the grounds of the football club to the west.

Post-medieval brick and tile fragments were recovered from Layers 212, 213 and 214. Layer 215 appears to be an interface immediately above Layer 216.

No features of archaeological interest were identified.

Trench 5 (length 10 m; width 2 m)

The principal layers (0.00 m = 36.58 m OD)

<i>Depth</i>	<i>Description</i>
0.00 - 0.35 m	Topsoil
0.35 - 0.75 m	L218 - Dark brown silty loam with moderate small and medium flint and stone inclusions and occasional small fragments and flecks of charcoal
0.75 m +	L225 - Dark brownish-orange sandy silt brickearth overlying light orange-brown natural gravel

The naturally deposited brickearth (L225) was confined to the most westerly four metres of the trench. Elsewhere L218 directly overlay the natural river gravels.

Three substantial archaeological features were identified at a depth of 0.75 m (35.83 m OD).

F219 is a large subvoid pit, over 0.35 m deep, which truncates the brickearth (L225). Its full dimensions are unknown as it continues beyond the limits of the trench to the south and west. The fill comprises mid brown clayey silt (L220), and is probably the result of deliberate backfilling.

Several sherds of Roman pottery were found, including abraded fragments of 'Hadham ware'. The Hadham kilns were an important centre of pottery production during the Roman period. A cut tile disc was also recovered which was probably used as a lid for a jar, and two iron nails were found, including a hobnail from a shoe or boot. Of particular interest is a delicate copper-alloy bracelet dating from the Roman period. This is complete and in very good condition.

Around 50 fragments of animal bone, mainly cow or horse, and including the jaw bone of a dog, were also recovered during the excavation of the pit. This suggests the presence of domestic activity, and probably represents a rubbish deposit.

F221 is a straight-sided shallow linear ditch, aligned NNW/SSE, which extends beyond the limits of the trench to the east and west and truncates the natural river gravel. It has been backfilled with dark brown clayey silt (L222), and a high proportion of flint inclusions are probably derived from the natural subsoil. One small sherd of Roman pottery and some small fragments of animal bone were recovered during excavation.

The ditch is too small to represent the boundary of a settlement, and was probably as a drain or a field boundary.

F223 is a small but substantial pit, continuing beyond the northern and eastern boundaries of the trench. It is subvoid, measuring over of 1.2 m in length and 0.38 m deep. Four sherds of Roman greyware pottery, probably part of a cooking vessel, were retrieved from the mid brown sandy silt fill (L224).

Trench 6 (length 10 m; width 2 m)

The principal layers (0.00 m = 35.45 m OD)

<i>Depth</i>	<i>Description</i>
0.00 - 0.15 m	Topsoil
0.15 - 0.75 m	L226 - Dark brown silty loam with moderate small flint
0.75 - 1.00 m	L227 - Mid yellow-orange sandy silt brickearth
1.00 m +	Natural river gravel

L227 is only found towards the northern end of the trench. Elsewhere, L226 directly overlays the natural river gravel. Two small box-sections were hand-excavated at either end of the trench.

Two small crumbs of flint-tempered prehistoric pottery were retrieved from L227, and several post-medieval tile fragments were found in L226, but no features of archaeological interest were identified.

Conclusions

Approximately 0.7 - 1.2 m of overburden, comprising contaminated loams and post-medieval levelling material, was found to overlay the natural brick earth and/or gravels. The exception to this was Trench 4, which was not fully excavated due to the great depth of the basal deposits.

The natural subsoils into which the archaeological features are cut comprise late Devensian (late glacial) fluvial gravels, overlain by occasional layers of brickearth of loessic (wind blown) origin, which fill the gaps in a highly undulating surface.

No dark earth layers such as those found during Phase I (GMS Access Project Evaluation Report, Phase I, December 1994) have survived. The contaminated soil profile means a low potential exists for the survival of environmental data, in all but the primary fills of features that are rich in organic remains.

Trenches 1, 2, 3 and 6 contained no archaeological remains.

Trench 4 also contained no archaeological features, but of interest is a large natural hollow, possibly a former river channel, which has been naturally infilled by colluvium or 'hillwash'.

Trench 5 contained three substantial archaeological features dating from the Romano-British period, contemporary with the Roman settlement identified within the GMS factory. The finds comprise mainly Roman greyware pottery and animal bone, but of particular interest is a complete copper alloy bracelet, found in the backfill of a probable rubbish pit.

Acknowledgements

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The Trust would also like to thank Dr Rob Scaife for his comments regarding the environmental data.

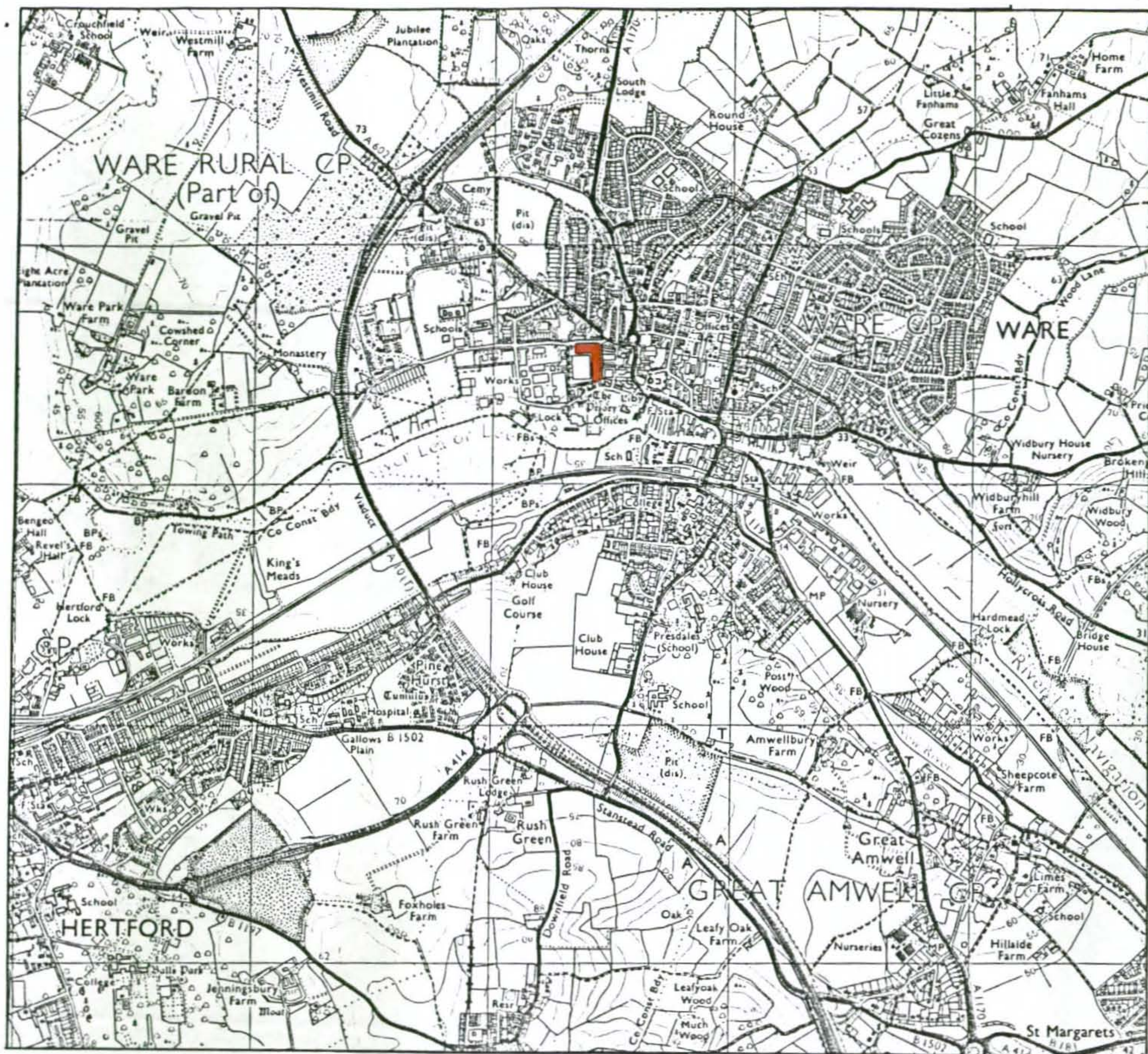


Fig.1 Site Location Plan

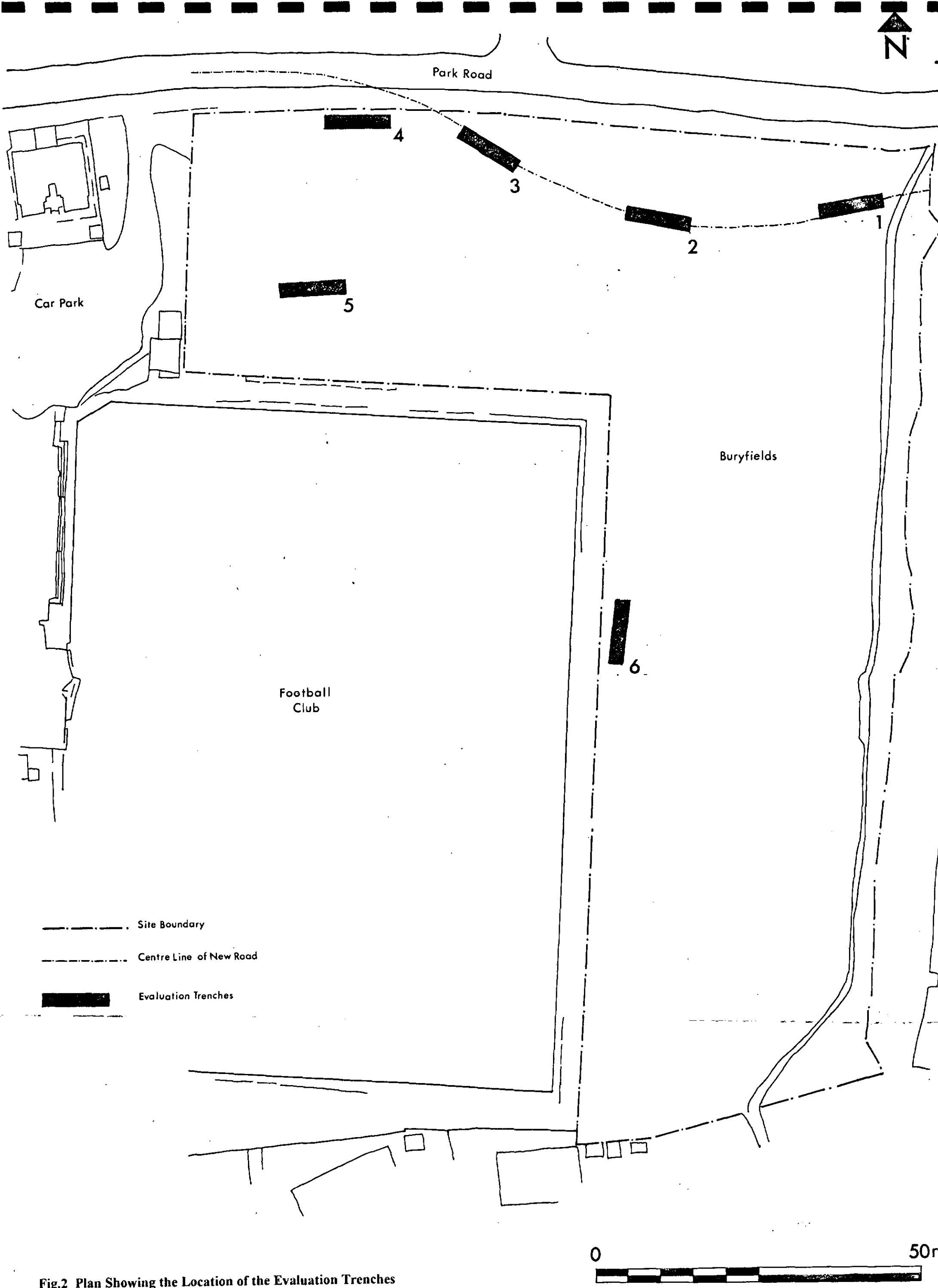


Fig.2 Plan Showing the Location of the Evaluation Trenches