

Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit

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CASTLE OLD FORT, STONNALL, WALSALL
An Archaeological Watching Brief, March 1996

by

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1.0: INTRODUCTION

This short report outlines the results of an archaeological watching brief, carried out during the excavation of a service trench within the scheduled area of Castle Old Fort, Stonnall (NGR SK 062 033, SAM No.2613) (Figure 1). A description of the hillfort appears in a report of a small evaluation at the site conducted by the Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (BUFAU) in 1991 (Hughes, March 1991). The work was commissioned by Mr.K.D. Jones and undertaken by BUFAU on the 28th March 1996.

2.0: THE SERVICE TRENCH

The trench was located in a birchwood plantation on ground sloping gradually from east to west. It was aligned on an east-west axis, and was 65m. in length, 1.0m. deep, and 0.5m. wide. Its purpose was to house the services to a recently transplanted, timber-framed building situated on the north-western side of the hillfort. A track leading to the re-located building ran roughly parallel to the trench on its southern side.

3.0: RESULTS (Figure 2)

The topsoil (1000) consisted of a thin layer of humic soil and leaf mould (0.10m. deep) which was visible throughout most of the trench. In the western half of the trench it was underlain by a probable hillwash deposit of light orangey brown, slightly silty clay (1002), 0.40m. in depth. Heavy root disturbance had been caused to this deposit by the surrounding trees. A natural light brown clay (1003), which extended below the limit of excavation, was encountered under context 1002. Contexts 1000 and 1002 were truncated for a short distance to the west of the centre of the trench by a 0.20m.-0.30m. by a feature represented by a deep deposit of silty soil and brick rubble (1004) associated with the track immediately to the south. A dark grey-brown sandy clayey silt containing modern demolition debris (1001) was encountered at the western end of the trench.

Over the eastern half of the trench the sequence of deposits was very different. Underlying the topsoil was a clean, natural reddish-brown sand (1006). This context was underlain for a short distance (29.5m. to 31.5m. from the western end of the trench) by a natural deposit of light brown sand (1005) which extended below the limit of excavation. A further deposit of the natural light brown clay 1003, also underlying context 1006, extended for 1.5m. to the east of context 1005. The natural reddish-brown sand 1006 was seen to extend below the limit of excavation throughout the remainder of the trench.

4.0: DISCUSSION

The modern soil and rubble deposit 1001 encountered at the western end of the trench probably represent the recent infilling of this part of the defensive ditch of the hillfort. This appears to have been carried out to accommodate the track leading to the reconstructed timber-framed building. The variation in the natural deposits observed in the trench is probably due to the geological formation of the hill on which the fort was sited.

5.0: CONCLUSION

No significant archaeological deposits were encountered during the excavation of the service trench.

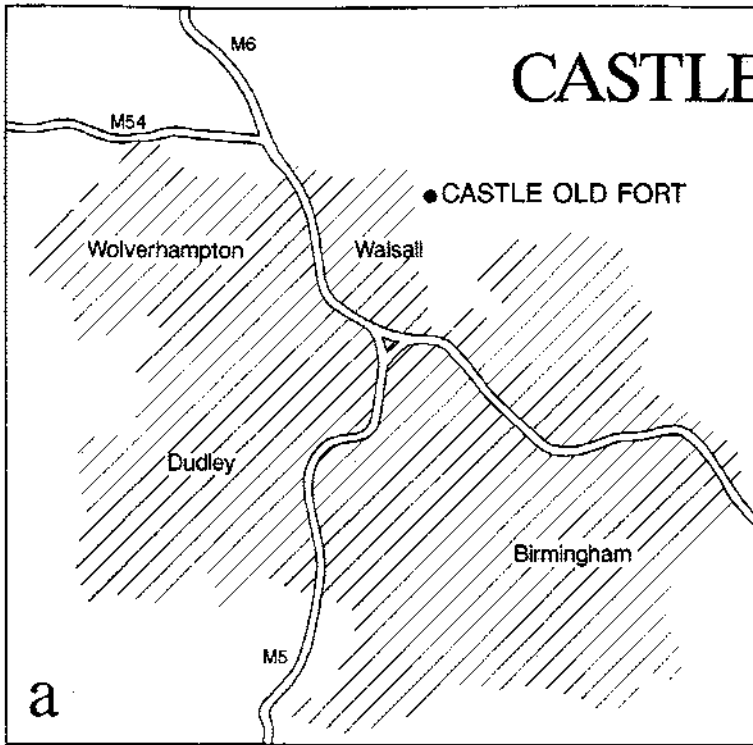
6.0: ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The watching brief was carried out by Derek Moscrop who also produced this report. Mark Breedon prepared the illustrations and the report was edited by Iain Ferris. The co-operation of Mr. K.D. Jones and the contractors is gratefully acknowledged.

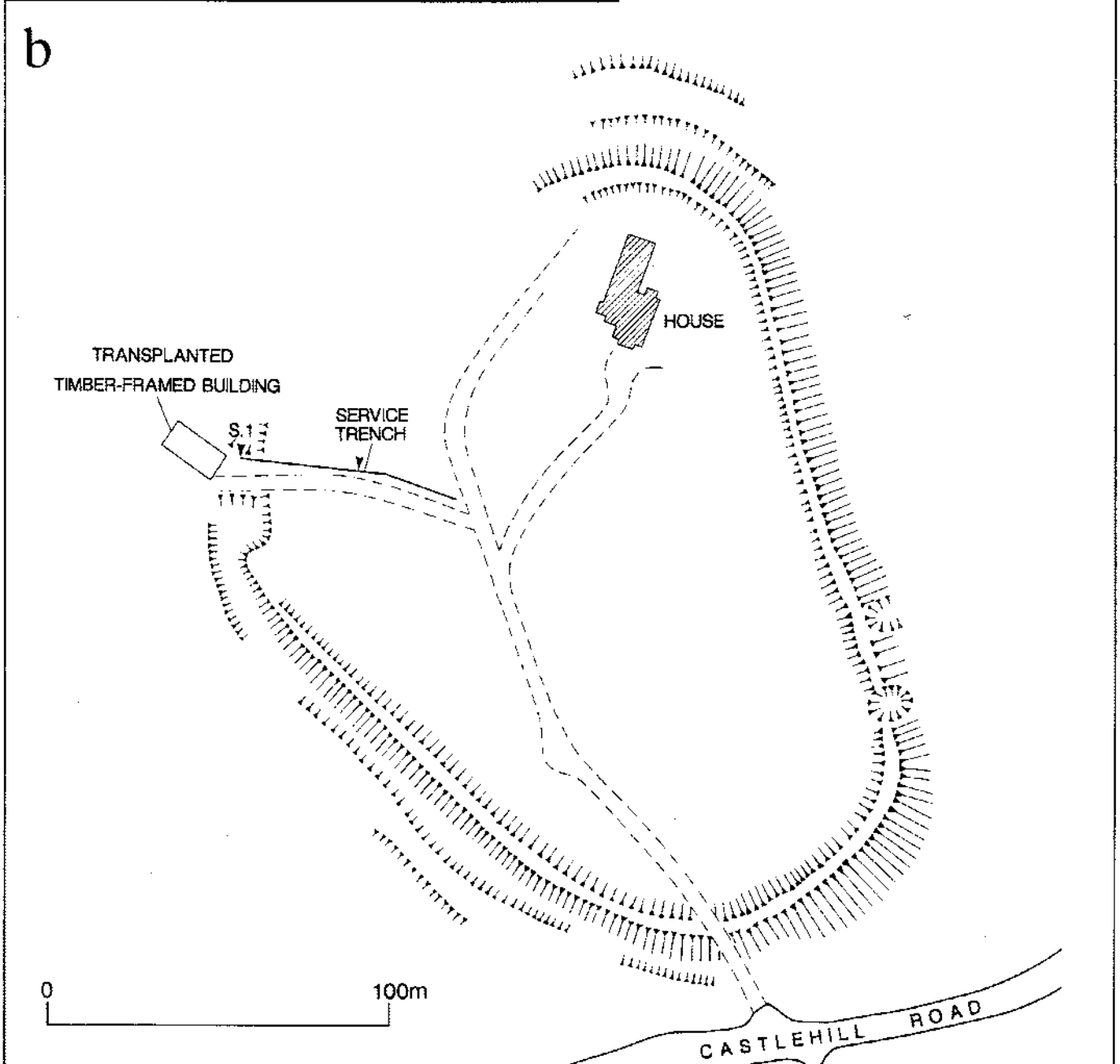
7.0: REFERENCES

- Hughes E,G. March 1991 *An Archaeological Evaluation at Castle Old Fort, Stonnall, Walsall, 1991*. Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit Report No.150.
- Hughes E,G. August 1991 *An Excavation and Watching Brief at Castle Old Fort, Stonnall, Walsall, 1991*. Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit Report No.175.

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a



b

FIG.1

Service Trench ; North-Facing Section

S.1

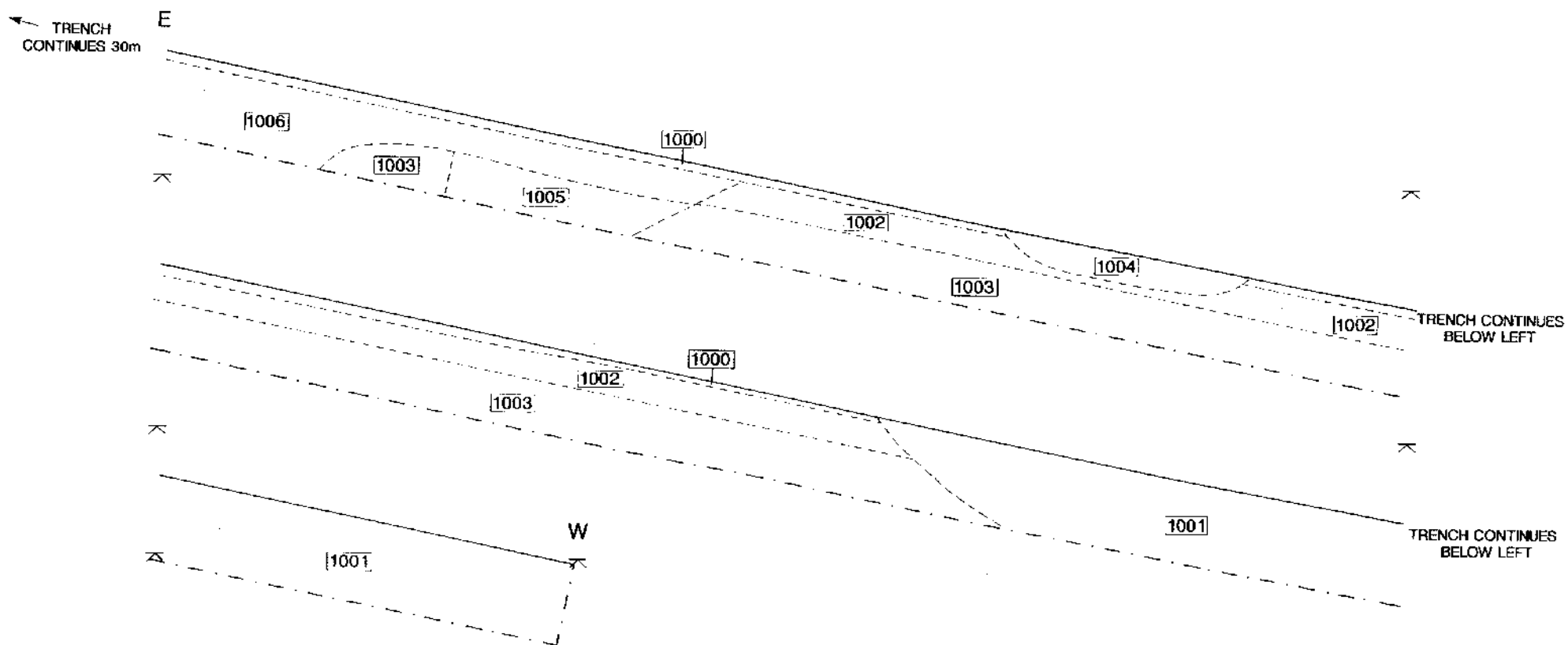


FIG.2