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**TAME VALLEY NATURE PARK
Parkhall, Water Orton
Stage 1 Archaeological Assessment 1992**

by
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1.0: INTRODUCTION

1.1: The report

This report provides a preliminary archaeological assessment of an area of overgrown pasture and woodland, located to the north of the M6 Motorway, on the south bank of the River Tame, 2km southwest of Water Orton (centred on NGR. SP 155907) proposed for the creation of a nature park (Figure 1). This desk-top study and walk-over survey were commissioned by the National Rivers Authority to provide a preliminary assessment of the archaeological potential of this area.

1.2: The aims

The aims of the present assessment were:

- (1) To identify sites of cultural or archaeological interest located within the proposed nature park development area (the site: Figure 1; Section 3.0 below), and in the immediately surrounding area (the study area: defined and discussed in Section 2.0 below), from archaeological, historical and cartographic records.
- (2) To carry out a rapid walk-over survey, to locate and sketch-plot any archaeological features visible within the site.
- (3) To propose a preliminary model of site development (Section 4.0).
- (4) To assess the implications of the proposed development on the archaeological resource and to provide recommendations for further archaeological input, if appropriate (Section 5.0).

1.3: The sources

The primary sources of archaeological information for both the site and the surrounding study area are the county Sites and Monuments Records (SMR) for the West Midlands and Warwickshire. These SMRs contain an up-to-date record of all reported archaeological sites,

details of standing buildings of national importance, and the reported find-spots of individual artifacts. This information derives from discoveries made during archaeological fieldwork, during construction, or from reports by amateur fieldworkers, and has been supplemented by information from published excavation reports. Although much of the study area has been developed, the SMR should not be taken to reflect the true archaeological potential of the undisturbed zones within the study area, and important discoveries may remain to be made here.

The primary cartographic sources consulted include antiquarian and estate maps, Tithe maps, and early editions of Ordnance Survey maps. Secondary historical sources consulted include the relevant volumes of the Victoria County History, antiquarian sources, the publications of local history groups and thematic works. A list of the relevant primary documentary sources (assessed but not consulted at this stage) has also been collated (Section 8.0 below). The photographs examined include the vertical aerial photographic coverage commissioned by the former West Midlands Metropolitan County Council, the Warwickshire Photographic Survey, the Sir Benjamin Stone Collection and the holdings of the National Buildings Record.

2.0: THE STUDY AREA (Figure 1)

2.1: Definition

The study area was defined primarily to include a zone within a 1km radius of the site boundary. The chosen study area was extended to include the historic settlement cores of Water Orton and Castle Bromwich, and to conform to the National Grid. The River Tame is the dominant feature, flowing approximately west-east across the study area. Its valley is filled with

alluvial deposits, surrounded by deposits of Keuper Marl, within which pockets of sands and gravels occur. The historic settlement cores of Castle Bromwich and Water Orton are sited on islands of the better-drained sands and gravels. Further patches of sands and gravels are located to the south of the western area of Parkhall Wood (Figure 2), and in the location of Park Hall Moat (Eastwood *et al.* 1925).

The majority of the study area lies within the West Midlands county, comprising mostly residential development to the south of the River Tame and extensive industrial development to the north of the river. By contrast, the eastern end of the study area, located to the east of the West Midlands conurbation, is formed by a belt of farmland to the south and west of Water Orton, located in Warwickshire. Within the urban area, archaeological discoveries have been largely confined to the few surviving open spaces.

2.2: The prehistoric period

Within the Birmingham area, the main evidence of prehistoric activity is provided by the discovery of stray finds of metalwork, and the identification of the sites of burnt mounds (Nixon 1980, 9). These latter comprise a mound of heat-shattered stones set in a charcoal-rich soil, and are interpreted as cooking or bathing sites (Barfield 1991, 59–68). Burnt mounds and metalwork find-spots alike appear to be found mainly along low-lying river valleys and their tributaries (Ehrenberg 1991, 49). In the absence of direct evidence of contemporary settlement patterns, this distribution may suggest that these areas were preferred for settlement. The site of a burnt mound has been located within the study area, on the north bank of the River Tame, approximately 0.5km from the west end of the site, and near to the find-spot of a bronze palstave (Ehrenberg 1991, figure 5). Further evidence of prehistoric activity within the study area is provided by the discovery of pits dating to the Bronze Age during excavations on the site of Castle Bromwich castle (Ford 1970, 215). A gold stater coin of the Brigantes (SMR 3107), found to the south of the site, is probably a stray find, lost away from major communication routes.

2.3: The Roman period

The main Roman roads in the vicinity of the study area were Watling Street, which ran on a

northwest–southeast alignment from the Roman settlement at Wall, 15km north of Birmingham, to High Cross, 10km northeast of the study area, and the Fosse Way, a major route of communication between the southwest and the northeast regions. Early Roman military activity in the 1st century, and subsequent civilian settlement, will largely have been concentrated along these two important trade routes (see Crickmore 1984, figure 1). However, some evidence of Roman activity, in the form of pits containing mortaria datable to the 2nd century, has been found during the excavation of Castle Bromwich Castle (Ford 1970, 215: SMR 4010). A stray silver coin of Faustina II (SMR 3974) has been found near Castle Bromwich Hall.

2.4: The medieval period

There is no evidence of settlement within the study area between the end of the Roman period and the Norman Conquest, nor have any artifacts dating to this period been recovered here. This negative evidence suggests that the area was not intensively settled, and it may have been covered with dense forest.

Castle Bromwich was originally a hamlet in Aston parish (Birmingham), and as such it is not separately recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086. The earliest documentary references to Castle Bromwich mention personal names: Wido de Bramewic is referred to in 1168, an Alan de Bromwych in 1185 and Henry de Chastell de Bromwych in 1287 (VCH 1947, 43). At this time land at Castle Bromwich and in the adjoining area was held as a knights fee by Roger de Somery, Earl of Dudley.

Settlement at Castle Bromwich seems to have been centred on a patch of sands and gravels which ensured good drainage and easy cultivation (VCH 1967, 194). The most tangible reminder of medieval Castle Bromwich is the castle (SMR 2012), where excavations in advance of the construction of the M6 motorway revealed evidence of a motte-and-bailey castle, dominating an important crossing of the Tame (Ford 1972, 214–215; Ford 1976.). The earliest structure identified here, cut through earlier deposits, was a palisaded enclosure, and which was, in turn, succeeded by a timber tower, built in the 11th century. The adjoining bailey was built in two phases. In the first phase an earthen rampart and

ditch enclosed an area containing rectangular timber-framed buildings. Later, in the 14th century, the area enclosed by the defences was extended, and further structures were constructed both inside and outside the defences.

The medieval village nucleus (SMR 2952) of Castle Bromwich may have been arranged in a linear pattern between the church and the ford. This settlement may have shrunk or been abandoned in the later medieval period. A chapel at Castle Bromwich is mentioned in 1347 (Morris 1935, 17), and traces of a timber-framed church of possible 15th-century date have been found beneath the fabric of the Church of St. Mary and St. Margaret, which was reconstructed in 1726–1731 (SMR 149).

The second main focus of medieval settlement in the study area was the town of Water Orton, which developed on the south bank of the River Tame, in the northeast of the study area. A bridge across the Tame here is noted as being out of repair in 1459 (VCH 1967, 364), and the present bridge, possibly built on the instructions of Bishop Vesey around 1520, is formed of six round stone arches (Warwickshire SMR 32; Pevsner and Wedgwood 1966, 466). The recorded site of the demolished medieval church of St. Peter and St. Paul (Warwickshire SMR 34), mentioned by Dugdale, has been encroached upon by the graveyard of the present parish church (Warwickshire SMR 40) built in 1879. The location of the former church is now marked by a standing 15th-century stone cross (Warwickshire SMR 35). The site of the Manor House of similar date is marked by a hall, which was refurbished in the 16th and 17th centuries (Warwickshire SMR 33).

A third village, later deserted, may have been sited at Bosworth (Beresford and Hurst 1989, 204: SMR 3105) to the southeast of the site, although no traces of such a settlement are visible on the ground or recorded in documentary sources. A fourth village, at Hodge Hill, in the southwest of the study area was focused upon a manor house and the village common.

Outside the villages of Castle Bromwich and Water Orton, the abandoned locations of outlying manors or farmsteads are marked by dry or abandoned moated sites. These sites comprised a

platform, which often contained buildings, surrounded by a moat or ditch, filled with water and crossed by a causeway. Within the study area moats are found both on the sands and gravels, and Keuper Marl alike. Surviving moated sites are recorded to the west of the village of Castle Bromwich (SMR 2923), and in the southeast of the study area (SMR 3097), although in each case the surviving earthworks are barely traceable on the ground. Other moated sites are recorded at Hodge Hill (SMR 2920), in the southwest corner of the study area, at Berwood (SMR 2951) 0.5km northwest of the site (shown on a plan of 1583 (Figure 3)), and at Hob Farm (SMR 3094) in the southeast of the study area. These latter three moated sites have been overwhelmed by development.

The site at Parkhall (SMR 3106), to the south of the proposed nature park, is perhaps the best documented moated manor site. The site is located on a high plateau (at approximately 120m AOD), and is composed of a dry moat, measuring 80m by 76m, with an entrance causeway sited to the northeast (Figure 4). Archaeological excavation here has established the moat to be 10m wide and up to 3m in depth, and lined with clay (Dutton 1976, 1). Limited investigations within the moat platform have failed to identify any structures. Documentary sources suggest that this moat was originally sited in the deer park held by Roger de Somery in 1291, in which Sir John Botetourt was charged with hunting in the free warren of the Earl of Warwick in 1366 (VCH 1947, 45). The first reference to Park Hall manor was in 1365, and it appears in 1405 as Le Logge juxta Bromwich (Dugdale 1730, 887, VCH IV, 45). Sir John Botetourt granted the estate later known as Park Hall to Henry Arden in 1373. The name 'Le Logge' has been interpreted as suggesting that the manor originated as a hunting lodge, or alternatively, as indicating the comparatively lowly status of the site (Dutton 1976, 7). The Arden family were major Warwickshire landowners and also held other manors in Birmingham, Bordesley and Saltley.

The tenure of this property by the Arden family over the following 300 years was singularly eventful, and mirrors the major historical events of that period. Robert Arden, a Yorkist, was beheaded in 1452 at the beginning

of the Wars of the Roses; the family later changed their allegiance to the Lancastrian cause and were honoured by Henry VII (Dutton 1976, 4). John Arden was charged in 1510 with having enlarged his park by emparking 10 acres of arable land (VCH 1947,45). The description of Park Hall in the will of John Arden, dated 1526, mentions a hall, a chamber, the kings chamber, the nether parlour, the chapel chamber and the white chamber. This description is significant as suggesting that Henry VII visited Park Hall, but also as the only surviving description of the interior of the manor house, although the exterior is depicted on a map of Minworth, dated 1583 (Figure 3). Although the building described as Park Hall is positioned on the south bank of the Tame, along with a barn and a dovecote (seemingly within the proposed development site), it is probable that this reflects a degree of cartographic licence, since the moated site was probably not abandoned until the early 17th century (see below). In 1583 John Somerville of Edstone was instigated by the priest of the Ardens at Park Hall to travel to London to assassinate Queen Elizabeth I (VCH 1947, 444). Following this unsuccessful attempt Edward Arden was attainted for treason and executed, and his lands were forfeited to the Crown during the life of his wife Mary.

The estates were returned to the Ardens in 1603, on the death of Mary Arden and Elizabeth I in that year, but the tenants over the previous twenty years had sacked the house and denuded the park (Dutton 1976,6). The Arden family chose to rebuild the hall at a new location, on low-lying land adjoining the Tame, on the site of the now demolished Parkhall Farm, and within the proposed development area (see Section 3.0).

Traces of the medieval open fields which will have surrounded the nucleated villages at Castle Bromwich, Water Orton, Hodge Hill and Bosworth have been found in the few remaining open spaces in the study area. These open fields may be recognised from the distinct pattern of medieval ploughing which creates a 'ridge-and-furrow' corrugated pattern on the field surface. Medieval open fields have been found on Hodge Hill Common (SMR 2874), in the southwest of the study area, where a boundary marker, the 'hoarstone' (SMR 2925) is referred to in a deed

of 1333 and later in a document of 1606 (Walker 1929,307). Traces of ridge-and-furrow have been found at Smith's Wood (SMR 1646) in the southeast of the study area, beneath woodland which was first mentioned in 1490. This may suggest that this open field, belonging to the manor of Gilson, (located beyond the eastern boundary of the survey area) may have been abandoned, possibly during the 14th century, as a result of the outbreak of the plague and a run of poor harvests, and become re-afforested.

Much of the area surrounding the cultivated open fields may have been afforested, or contained within the deer park of the Earls of Dudley, mentioned above in relation to Park Hall moat. The bounds of Park Hall park have been tentatively defined (Dutton 1976, 7). A deer park has been identified at Coleshill (Warwickshire SMR 3683), south of Water Orton, but the exact bounds of the pale have not been identified. Traces of semi-natural ancient woodland have been found to the north of the putative village at Bosworth (SMR 4564: since cleared), and at Langley Hill wood (SMR 4562), located on the southern boundary of the proposed nature park.

Watermills at Castle Bromwich and Minworth will have processed the corn from nearby farms. The mill at Castle Bromwich (SMR 3211) is well documented between the 13th–18th centuries (Booth 1978). It ceased operations around 1900 and was demolished leaving no trace. The mill at Minworth was in operation in the 14th century (Booth 1978), and was in use until the late 19th century. Other mills may have existed along the Tame; the antiquarian Dugdale records that Joan Bromwiz granted property, including three mills at Castle Bromwich and Curdworth, to Anselm Bromwiz in 1287 (Dugdale 1730,886).

2.5: Post-medieval

Dugdale in his account of Castle Bromwich in 1730 records a settlement of around 80 houses and cottages (1730, 886). The 18th century village will have been dominated by Castle Bromwich Hall. The imposing hall was originally erected for Edward Devereux in the late 16th century, and was remodelled extensively in the mid-18th century (VCH 1965, 43). The hall is of brick, arranged in an E-shape with ranges of 17th- and 18th-century stables to the rear (Pevsner and

Wedgewood 1966, 224–5). Following extensive archaeological excavations the hall gardens have been recently restored to the 18th century pattern. A number of other brick buildings of post-medieval date are recorded in Castle Bromwich (SMR 153, 159). The rebuilding of the church (SMR 149) also dates to this period. Two other buildings of this date, to the southeast of the village nucleus, have now been converted into Public Houses (SMR 157, 158).

Several interesting buildings of post-medieval date are still standing in Water Orton. These include Orton Lodge (Warwickshire SMR 36), a 17th century timber-framed building, a timber-framed building on Minworth Road (Warwickshire SMR 38), and Wakefield House (Warwickshire SMR 37). The land to the south of Water Orton formerly formed part of Coleshill Park (Warwickshire SMR 3683), which was recorded in 1496, and not disparked until around 1812.

The Park Hall estate passed out of the hands of the Arden family in 1664, after the failure of the male line in 1643, to the Price family, who in turn sold the manor to the Bridgeman family in 1704. Scatters of 16th century and later pottery found during fieldwork in the 1970s on the site of Park Hall moated site may attest continued occupation of some form here in the early post-medieval period.

3.0: THE SITE

3.1: Definition (Figures 2A and 2B)

The proposed nature park site measures 2km in length and a maximum of 0.4km in width. The northern boundary of the site is formed by the canalised course of the Tame, with the Birmingham–Derby railway line beyond; the southern boundary is defined by the northern embankment of the M6 motorway, which follows the approximate line of a steep north-facing natural scarp. The southeastern extent of the site is defined by a steep, wooded northwest-facing scarp. The geology of the majority of the site is Keuper Marl, while the southern bank of the Tame is composed of alluvium. The western end of the proposed development is sited on first terrace gravel deposits (Eastwood *et al.* 1925).

3.2: Historical and cartographic sources

The earliest map depicting the site is the survey of Minworth, dated 1583 (Figure 3), which shows the course of the Tame adjoining the site. The earlier moated site of Park Hall is shown to lie between a River ford, called 'Mountspringe', to the west, joining Mountspringe Lane on the south bank with a second track on the north bank, and Park Hall bridge. To the north of Park Hall the course of the Tame divides into two arms, possibly as a result of diversion around a former mill site (although none is shown on the plan). The central zone of the site was within the Park Hall park, while the western end of the site may have been within the bounds of the adjoining Mountspringe Park shown on the map of 1583. The course of the Castle Bromwich–Water Orton road (possibly the road marked 'Merides' on the 1583 plan) may have crossed the former park.

Park Hall was visited in 1730 by the antiquarian Dugdale (Dugdale 1730, 887), but his account of the estate concentrates upon the history of the Arden family. The map of the Bradford estates, dated 1802 (Figure 4), provides a snapshot of the layout of the immediate surroundings of Park Hall, which became incorporated into the Bradford estates in 1704. The estate map shows the location of the Jacobean mansion of Park Hall, adjoining the Tame, flanked to the west by barns and other outbuildings, including a range of buildings sited on the south bank of the Tame. A bridge across the Tame is also shown, located in the approximate position of the bridge shown on the map of 1583. To the east of the house lies a square enclosure which may have been an ornamental garden, and, to the east, three irregularly-shaped fields, one containing two buildings forming an L-shape. To the south of the Hall is a large open area, within which traces of tree-lined avenues are visible. The southern bank of the Tame is shown as wooded to the west of the outbuildings; further woodland is shown in the approximate position now occupied by the eastern belt of woodland called Parkhall wood.

Fowler's map of Aston, dated 1833, shows a similar pattern of field boundaries to that depicted in more detail in the Aston Tithe map of 1845

(Figure 5). Although it is difficult to discern the arrangement of buildings surrounding Park Hall on the latter, it nevertheless provides details of the layout and use of the surrounding area. The earlier moated site of Park Hall remains visible as a surface feature, with a track to the east leading between the main Castle Bromwich – Water Orton road and the new site of Park Hall. The arrangement of buildings at Park Hall is similar to that depicted nearly half a century earlier (Figure 4), with the exception of the demolition of some of the buildings fronting onto the Tame, and the addition of outbuildings to the east of the Hall.

In 1845 the course of the Tame, which formed the northern boundary of Aston Parish, appears mostly unchanged from that shown on the map of 1583, with the most significant feature of the river being its northern loop west of Park Hall. The pattern of woodland is similar to that today; the only discernible difference being that the eastern area of Parkhall wood extended up to the south bank of the Tame. The map also provides information about field names, which often refer either to contemporary land use and ownership or to major landscape features. The fields to the east of Park Hall were called Big Homestead (413), The Hill (409), The Orchard (407), and The Close (408). The woodland to the west of Park Hall is called Spring Hill Wood (399), perhaps indicating this area to have been within the bounds of Mountspringe Park shown on the map of 1583 (Figure 3). The majority of the land at the western end of the site is meadow, and pasture predominates to the east.

Early 20th-century Ordnance Survey maps (1904, 1916) provide more detail of the pattern of field boundaries within the site, and provide a *terminus* for the canalisation of the Tame. The latter is shown following a meandering course partly along the southern margin of the site, which is largely coincident with the meanders visible on the ground today. An extensive area on the northern bank is noted as being liable to flooding. Around the site of Park Hall considerable changes appear to have taken place in the arrangement of outbuildings and to the Hall itself since 1845. The western range of outbuildings has gone, and may have been replaced by a long narrow building, possibly a

barn, sited on the riverbank, east of the Hall. Other western outbuildings have been replaced, and an extension appears to have been tacked onto the southwestern end of the Hall. The track leading between the Hall and the earlier moated sites remained in use.

Park Hall is illustrated in the Warwickshire Photographic Survey. Photographs taken in 1895 indicate a prosperous and well-maintained farm surrounded by ornamental lawns to the south, with a well-kept vegetable garden to the north. The occupants posing for photographs included the tenant's family and a number of domestic servants. However, by 1938 the building was mostly ruinous, and was inhabited at that time by the family of a single farm worker (VCH 1947,45). By the time of the second photographic survey (Plates 1–4) in 1959 the building appears derelict. Park Hall and all outbuildings were demolished around 1970.

3.3: Archaeological sources and walk-over survey (Figures 2A and 2B)

Introduction

There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments located within the site. Notwithstanding that the site of Park Hall is not scheduled, and that the hall has been demolished to ground-level, this area together with its immediate surrounds may be considered to be of national importance. Within the proposed site of the nature park, the West Midlands SMR records the eastern woodland named Parkhall wood (SMR 4563) to be an area of semi-natural ancient woodland. There are no other archaeological sites recorded in the SMR, nor are there any standing buildings listed. The two scarps on the southern and southeastern boundaries of the site are densely wooded; the remainder of the site forms part of the flood plain of the Tame and is mostly flat, now used as pasture. No features of archaeological interest are visible on the set of vertical aerial photographs, except for the possible ridge and furrow, discussed below. However, archaeological features buried beneath pasture are difficult to resolve from aerial photographs.

The west and centre of the site (Plate 5)

This area is liable to flooding, and now the most prominent features are the waterlogged former courses of the Tame, which may define the course of the river in the 19th century (O.S.

Map 1904); a number of ponds are also evident, near the bridge, and one of the latter may be shown on a photograph dated 1959. The hawthorn hedges west of Parkhall wood appear on the Tithe map of 1845, and are thus at least of 19th century date. The double hawthorn hedge boundary may be the trackway shown on the Ordnance Survey map of 1916, while the trackway aligned north-south is of unknown date. A shallow earthen mound in the northwest corner of the site may be man-made, possibly defining the site of a prehistoric burnt mound, or associated with the recent bridge nearby (O.S. map 1916). An area of ridge-and-furrow, aligned west-east, or possible water meadow, formed to assist drainage, is visible in the centre of the site, but is undatable.

The site of Park Hall and outbuildings

Park Hall and its outbuildings have been demolished to ground level, but the remaining hedged boundaries adhere to the pattern shown on maps of the last century (Figures 4,5). Perhaps the most notable features are the bounds of a former ?walled garden, defined on three sides by hedges, with traces of demolished brick walls running beneath the hedges and exposed above modern ground level and on the fourth, northern boundary, defined by a brick wall. To the west of the ?garden lies an overgrown orchard, flanked by ponds further to the west. The southern part of this area is very disturbed, and is now heavily overgrown.

The east of the site (Plate 6)

The pasture here is mostly dry and the main surface features visible are shallow ditches. These define the courses of boundaries recorded on the Tithe map of 1845 and since removed. The northern extent of Parkhall Wood is marked by a ditch, with an outer bank along part of its length, defining a field boundary, or the bounds of the woodland. A mortared sandstone wall, patched with brick, exposed by the erosion of the south bank of the Tame, corresponds with the approximate position of the bridge shown on the map of 1845 (Figure 5), and may be the remains of its southern abutment.

4.0: DISCUSSION

4.1: Prehistoric and Roman periods

The earliest evidence of activity in the study area, represented by the discovery of bronze

artifacts and burnt mounds in low-lying areas bordering rivers and streams, is dated to the Bronze Age. Although no burnt mounds have yet been positively identified within the site, given the preference for locations near to water, and the proximity of the identified example to the west, it is possible that one or more burnt mounds may have been located here. The form of the slight earthwork in the west of the site could suggest that it is a burnt mound.

In the Roman period the study area lay beyond the major routes, represented by Watling Street and the Fosse Way, although evidence of Roman settlement was found during the excavations at Castle Bromwich castle. Other scattered, contemporary settlements may have been limited to the better drained areas, located on sands and gravels. For the prehistoric and Roman periods alike the lack of fieldwork here necessarily restricts our ability to interpret settlement patterns.

4.2: Medieval and post-medieval periods

There is no evidence of activity in the study area in the immediate post-Roman period, although it is probable that a small nucleated settlement had developed at Castle Bromwich by the early-medieval period. A castle was sited here to guard an important ford of the Tame, and a village community developed between the castle and the ford. Like the other villages located at Water Orton, Hodge Hill and possibly Bosworth, the economy of Castle Bromwich would have been dependent on agriculture. Traces of the open fields which typically surrounded medieval villages have been found at Hodge Hill and in the southeast corner of the study area at Smith's Wood. These open fields would have been carved out of the surrounding mixed woodland, parts of which had been retained within deer parks.

The area of the proposed nature park, originally within the Earl of Dudley's deer park, was gifted to the Arden family in the 14th century; the earliest Park Hall (also called La Logge) may have originated as a hunting lodge. Early-medieval settlement on the poorly drained soils adjoining the Tame is unlikely, although the location of a mill site alongside the river is possible, but not proven. The dry moats located around the village settlements, and in the surrounding countryside, were variously livestock enclosures, small impoverished

farmsteads, or, as at Park Hall, the comfortable residences of wealthy landowners. Park Hall would have been the centre of the manorial estates and the seat of the manorial court leet. Although in this instance precipitated by political events, the move from a defended moat to a more comfortable residence on low-lying land was typical of the 16th–17th century.

The brick, two-storey, mansion built adjoining the Tame (Plates 1–4), consisted of a main block of three bays with a service range to the west. The style of the building, with its ornamental ‘Dutch gables’, suggests a date in the second half of the 17th century and it has been suggested that it could have been constructed c.1685–1700 (S. Jones, Survey Notes). This building may have been the second constructed in this location, but the whereabouts of the building constructed after the Arden family moved from the moated manor site is unknown.

Park Hall lost its manorial status in 1704 upon its purchase by the Bridgeman family, and the building is recorded as tenanted in the estate survey of 1802. The 19th century cartographic sources illustrate the transition from Mansion house to tenanted working farm, and show the gradual evolution of the layout of the ancillary buildings; the Hall itself does not appear to have been altered significantly. The field boundaries and woods also represent elements of continuity in the landscape. The photographic sources graphically represent the seemingly irreversible deterioration of the Hall fabric, from well-maintained farmhouse in 1895 to a ruinous state in 1959. The unfortunate demolition of this building took place around 1970.

5.0: IMPLICATIONS AND PROPOSALS

5.1: Implications

The proposed use of the site as a nature park has implications for the surviving below-ground remains of the important site of the Jacobean mansion of Park Hall and its outbuildings; and for those traces and elements of the historic landscape visible as surface features. The proposed development will affect the below-ground archaeology and surviving landscape features in two ways. Firstly, the proposed creation of new pools, the access road and car parking may cause sub-surface intrusion.

Secondly, visitors may cause eventual problems of erosion and damage to the landscape features and to the surviving brick footings of Park Hall and its outbuildings.

These implications could be mitigated by the design options in the layout of the individual elements within the overall development and by ‘preservation by record’ of the landscape features, after any further necessary fieldwork.

The exciting discovery of the location of a demolished Jacobean mansion within the proposed development area provides an opportunity for the display of the surviving below-ground remains within their landscape setting as a second and complementary theme of the proposed nature park, and could provide an important educational and leisure resource.

5.2: Archaeological potential and survival (Figure 2B)

This preliminary study has served to highlight certain aspects in the evolution of this development site which have the potential for the recovery of important new data. The detailed study of primary documentary sources could provide more detailed information concerning the Arden estate and additional material for the study of Park Hall, while the study of the Bridgeman family papers could illuminate the occupation of the mansion as a working farm over the succeeding 150 years. For the 20th century, further photographic and documentary sources could be sought to provide information on the more recent history of the site.

Analysis of the surviving landscape features has been limited to a brief walk-over survey; further fieldwork could be undertaken to provide measured plans of the features sketched during the walk-over inspection. The extent of survival of the footings of Park Hall and its outbuildings below ground-level is not known, and if the display option, outlined below, is to be considered, some geophysical survey and limited trial-trenching could be undertaken as a preliminary means of assessing the survival of these structures.

For the purpose of detailing the proposed archaeological response to the development proposals the site has been divided into three zones, according to past and present land use,

and archaeological potential. These zones are defined as follows:

Zone A: Area of very high archaeological potential. Includes the site of Park Hall and outbuildings.

Zone B: Area of medium archaeological potential. Parkhall wood and the surviving hedged and ditched landscape features. This area contains the majority of the surviving landscape features which date from the 19th century or earlier, and the area to the south of Park Hall.

Zone C: Area of low to medium archaeological potential. This comprises the largely-waterlogged area in the west and centre of the site, including the location of the possible burnt mound and the area of ridge and furrow or water-meadow. The waterlogged conditions here may have preserved wood or other organic materials.

5.3: Proposals

(1) Survey

In the light of the probable disturbance and erosion anticipated as a result of access by visitors, and the need for detailed and accurate mapping of surface features prior to the formulation of final proposals for site development, it is recommended that all landscape features within the area of proposed public access should be surveyed and recorded with a Total Station EDM at a scale of 1:1,000.

(2) Mitigation of development elements

Because of the demonstrably very high archaeological potential of the site of Park Hall and its immediate surrounds, it is recommended that development proposals be amended to exclude any sub-surface disturbance of Zone A by the excavation of ornamental pools, drains etc.

The ideal design solution would involve the re-siting of one pool to coincide with the location of the pool shown on the photographic survey of 1959 (south of Park Hall), and the siting of the remainder in the west of Zone C (not coincident with the location of the possible burnt mound). However, given the potential of either location to contain waterlogged archaeological remains, which may provide information on the medieval environment,

the proposed locations of all pools could be assessed by archaeological evaluation before determination of their final location. These preferred locations would also minimise the impact of these pools upon the landscape setting of the former site of the hall.

The construction of the proposed access and car parking immediately south of the site of Park Hall, within Zone B, would also have a significant impact on the landscape setting of Park Hall itself, and consideration should be given to their re-siting away from this area. Disturbance of any below-ground archaeological deposits could be obviated by raising the level of the access road and car park above the modern ground surface. The preferred design option should ideally involve the siting of the access and car parking at the west end of the site, built slightly above existing ground level.

Other landscaping works, such as the infilling of dangerous holes, although conforming to health and safety guidelines, should be kept to the minimum required for visitor safety, to reduce the impact of such works upon the landscape setting, particularly in the vicinity of Park Hall. Similar considerations should apply to the siting of footpaths, and to the materials used in their construction.

(4) Protection of Park Hall and surrounding area

A watching brief should be maintained throughout any clearance operations by contractors in Zone A, to ensure these groundworks do not disturb the below-ground remains of the hall, or any associated deposits.

The below-ground remains of the hall and outbuildings may be subjected to erosion as a result of visitors on foot. Accordingly it is recommended that all of Zone A is covered by a protective layer of topsoil.

(5) Display of archaeological and historical information

The simple signing of the site with display boards highlighting the historical development of the area, and of Park Hall in particular, will provide a resource of considerable historical interest to visitors. This information will be

especially valuable given the high public awareness of local archaeology through the Castle Bromwich Hall Gardens project, and will provide an ideal complement to the development of the nature park. This could be achieved at modest cost and using much of the material already gathered for this preliminary assessment. Given the involvement of the Audley family in national political affairs, the displays could be given a national as well as a local perspective, while the family history theme will appeal to those visitors familiar with researching their own family history.

(6) Display of Park Hall

In the longer term, consideration could be given to the eventual re-excavation of the remains of the Hall and outbuildings, followed by their consolidation and display to the public. These works, although relatively costly, could provide a focal point of great historical and archaeological interest, and help to raise public

awareness of, and interest in archaeology.

If this option is to be considered, it would be necessary to undertake some limited preliminary assessment of the hall site, to assess the condition and survival of the below-ground remains, before more extensive excavation was planned.

6.0: ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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6 inch to the mile, 1925

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Poor Rate at Castle Bromwich and Water Orton, 1700
Levy for Castle Bromwich, 1729
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Castle Bromwich Court Roll 19/5/1775
Plan of Estate of T. Trehern, 1801
Castle Bromwich Court Baron Terrier, 1833.
Edith Scroggs arrangement of manuscripts belonging to the Earl of Bradford of Weston Park, n.d.

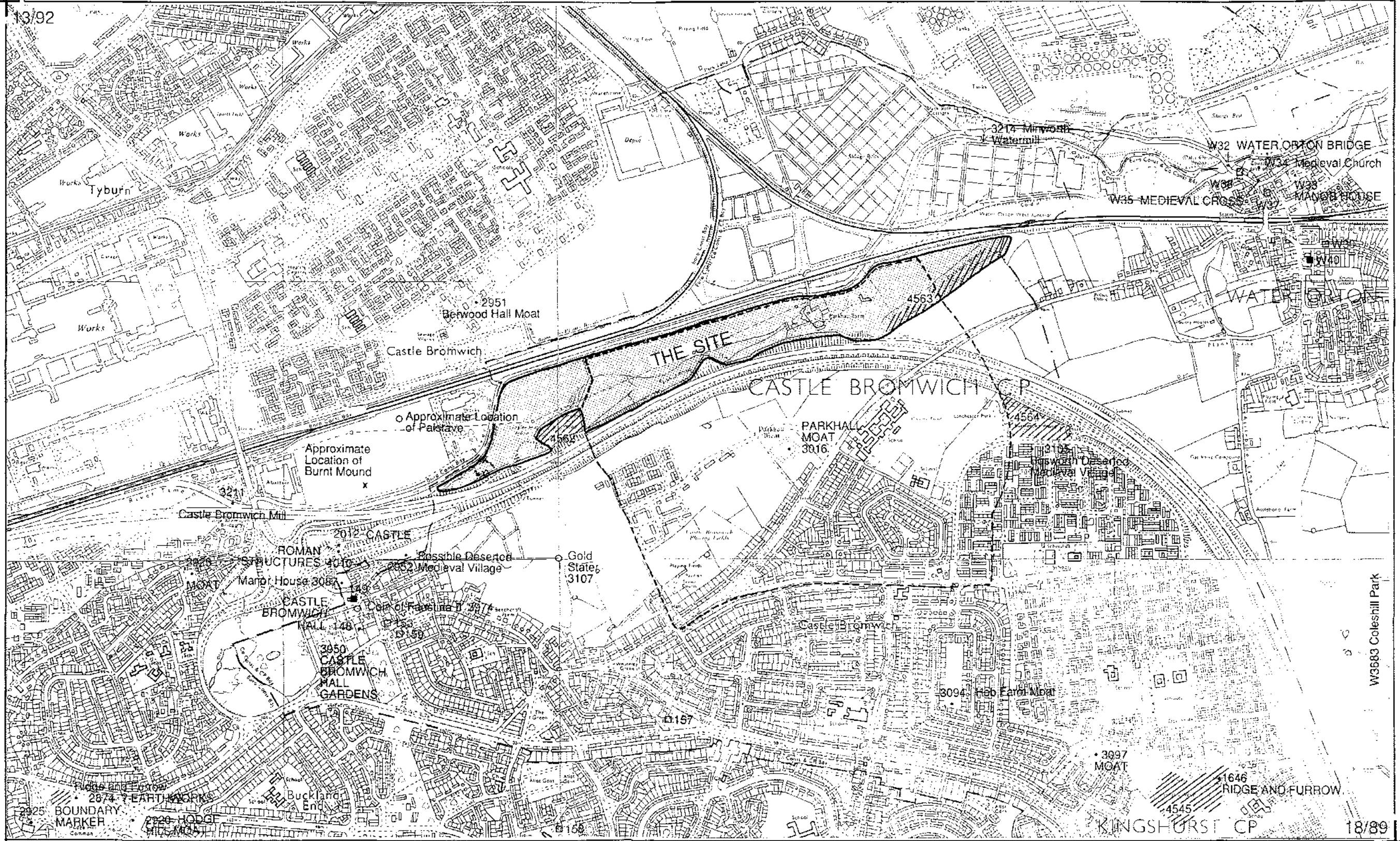
In Stafford County Record Office:

Castle Bromwich Land Accounts, 1769-80
Castle Bromwich Hall Household Accounts, 1775-77 Castle Bromwich rentals, 1786-1800







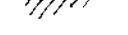
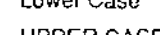
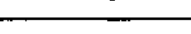
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TAME VALLEY PARK 1992 The archaeological setting



KEY

-  Possible boundary of Park Hall park
-  3097 West Midland SMR No.
-  W32 Warwickshire SMR No.
-  Artifact Find
-  C17 - C19 BUILDING
-  POST-MEDIEVAL CHURCH
-  Semi-Natural Ancient Woodland (Cleared)
-  Lower Case Site of
-  UPPER CASE Existing Monument

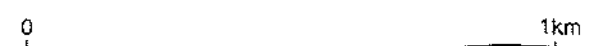
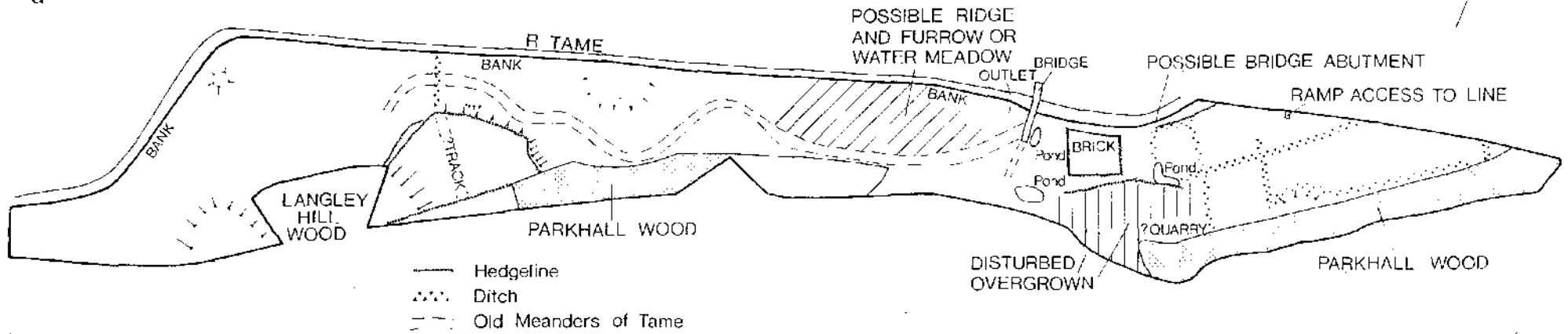


Figure 1

TAME VALLEY PARK 1992

Surface features

a



Historic features: Preliminary assessment of archaeological potential

b

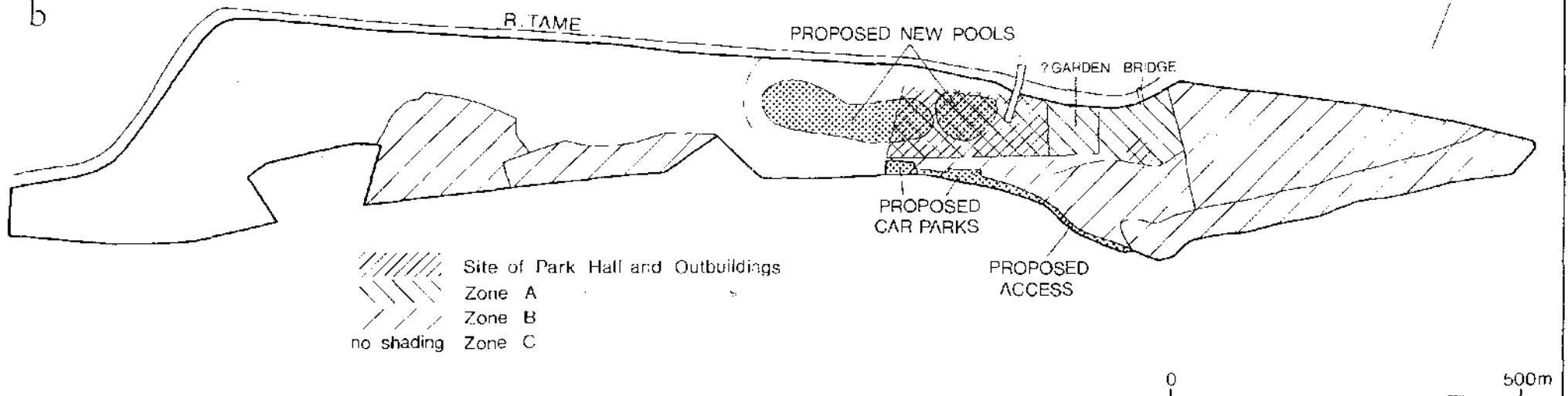


Figure 2

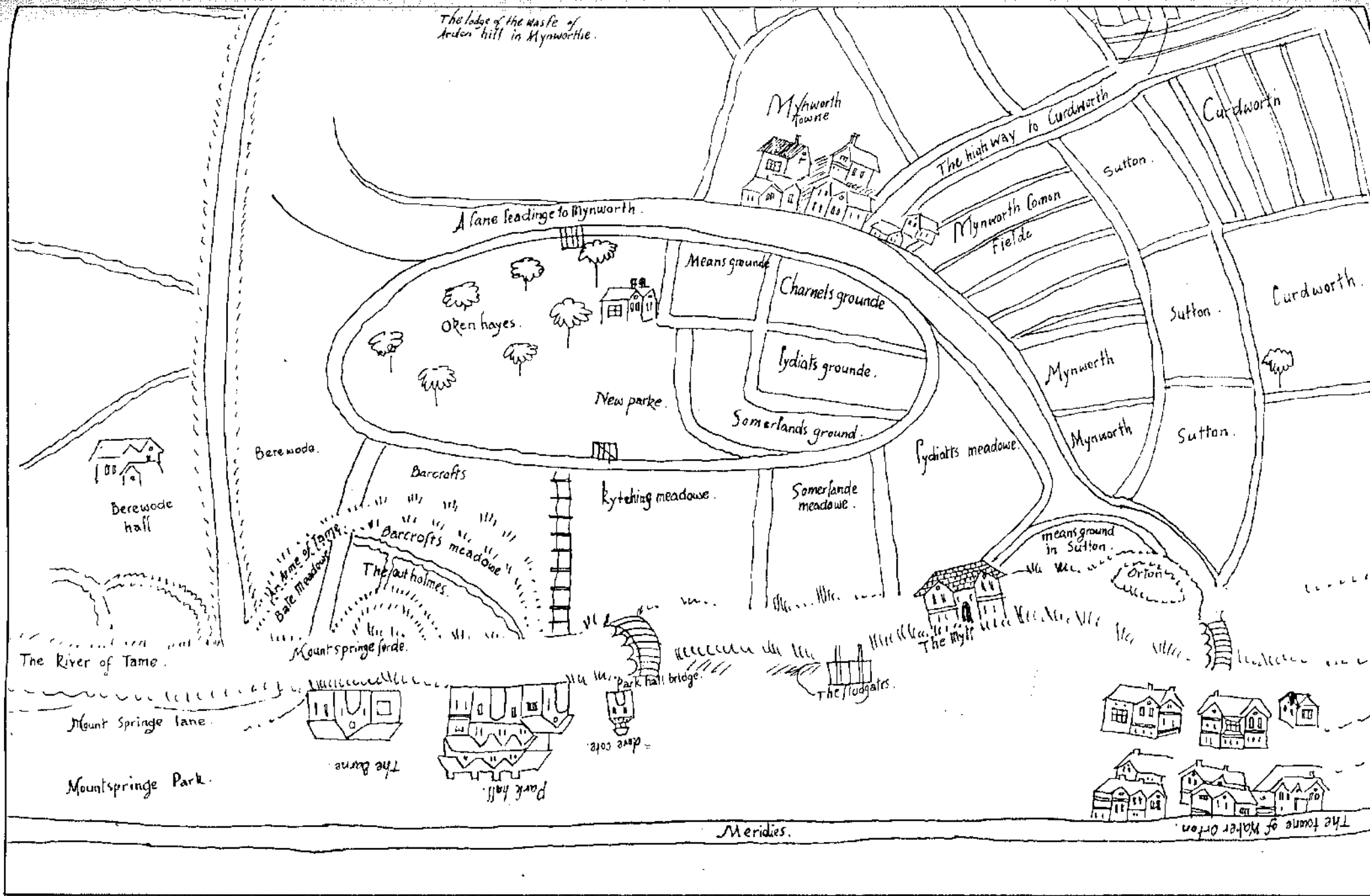


Figure 3

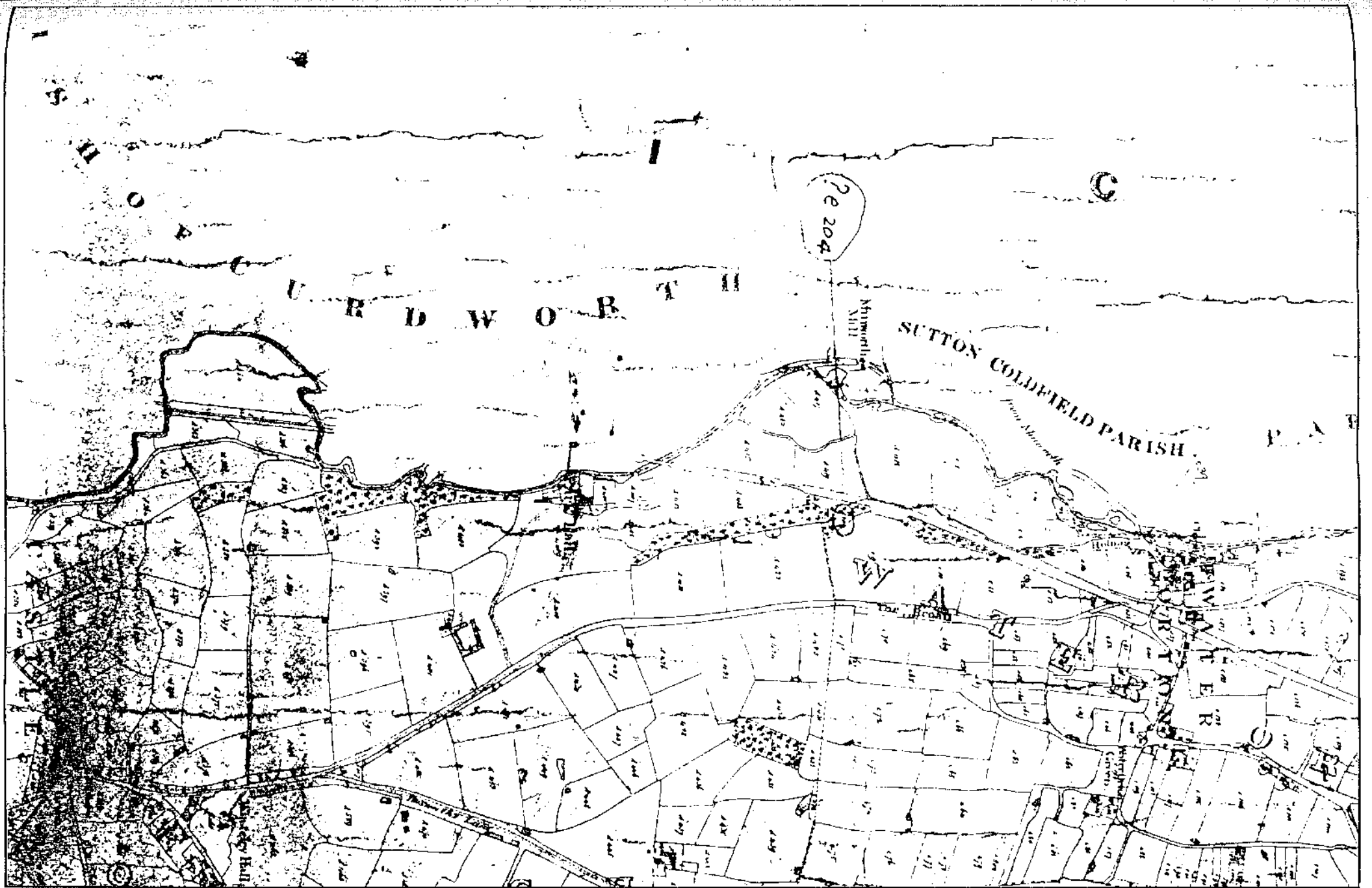


Figure 4

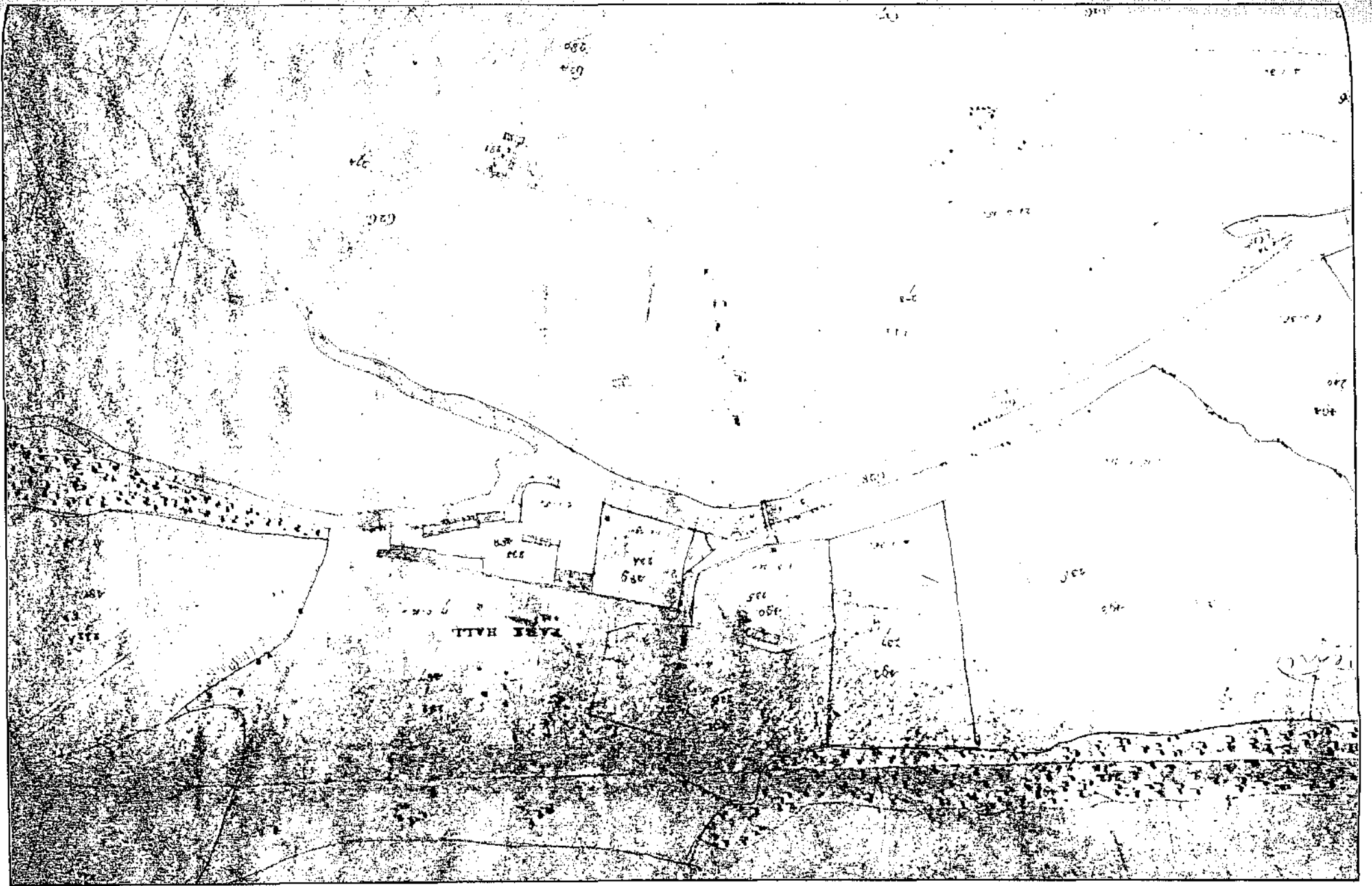
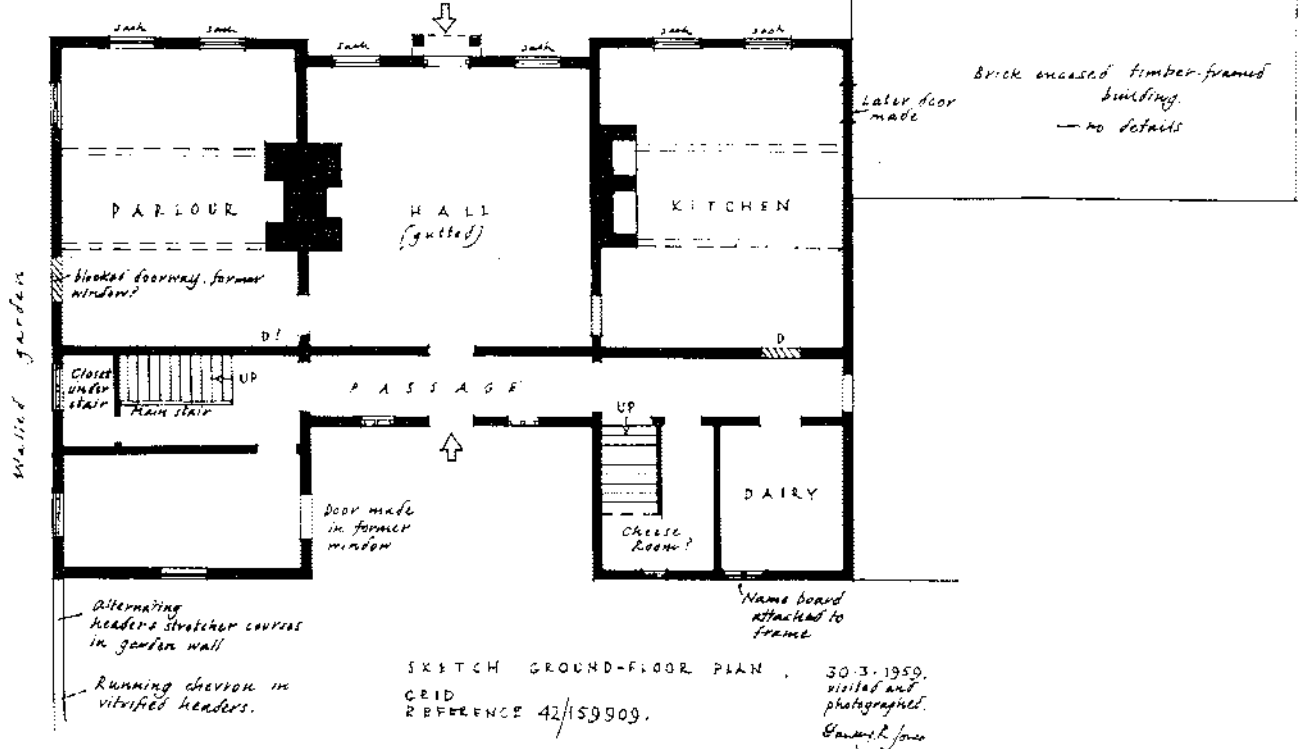


Figure 5

PARKHALL FARM, CASTLE BROMWICH, WARWICKS
 a two-storey wattle brick house c.1685-1700 demolished 1970.



PARKHALL FARM, CASTLE BROMWICH, WARWICKS.

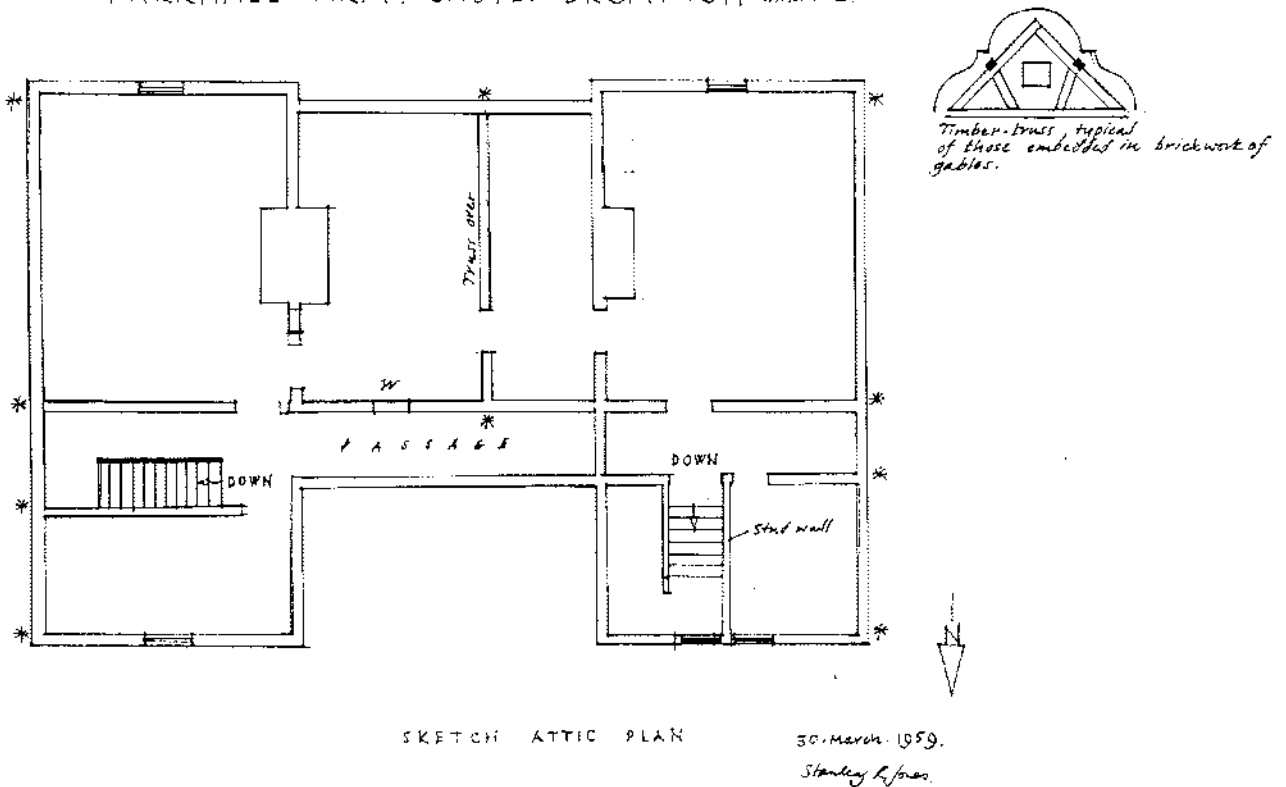


Figure 6



Plate 1



Plate 2



Plate 3



Plate 4

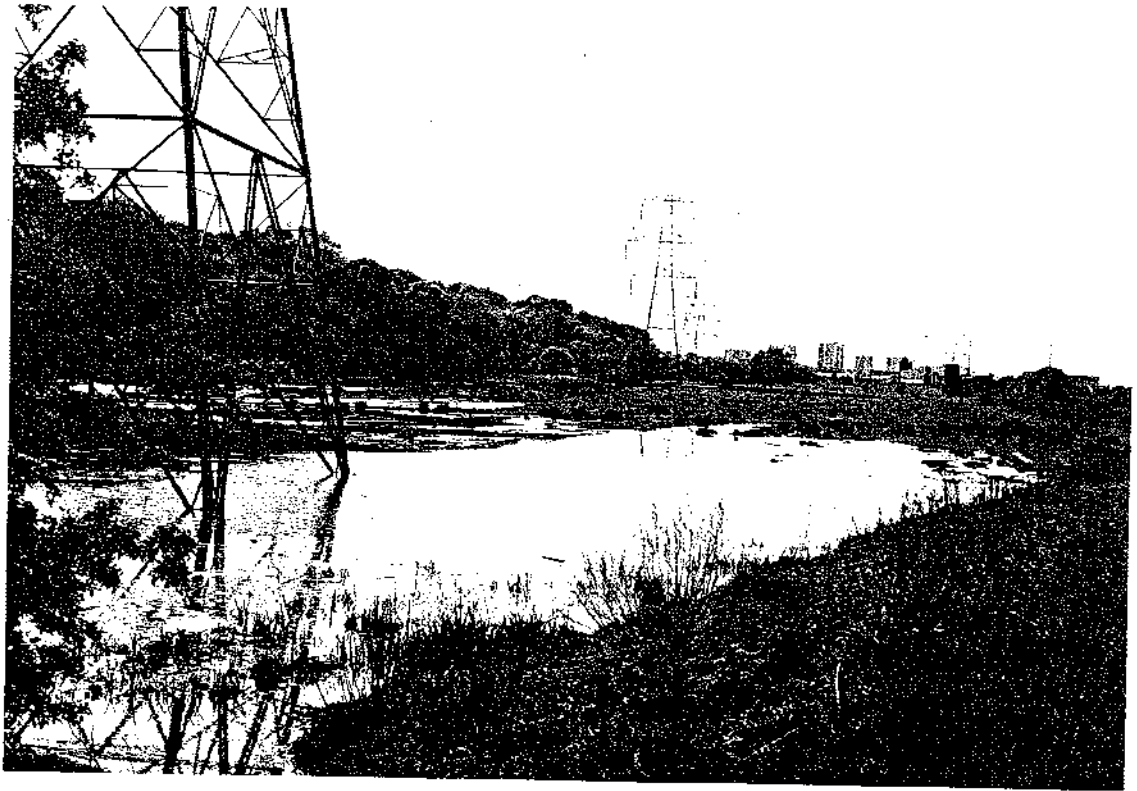


Plate 5

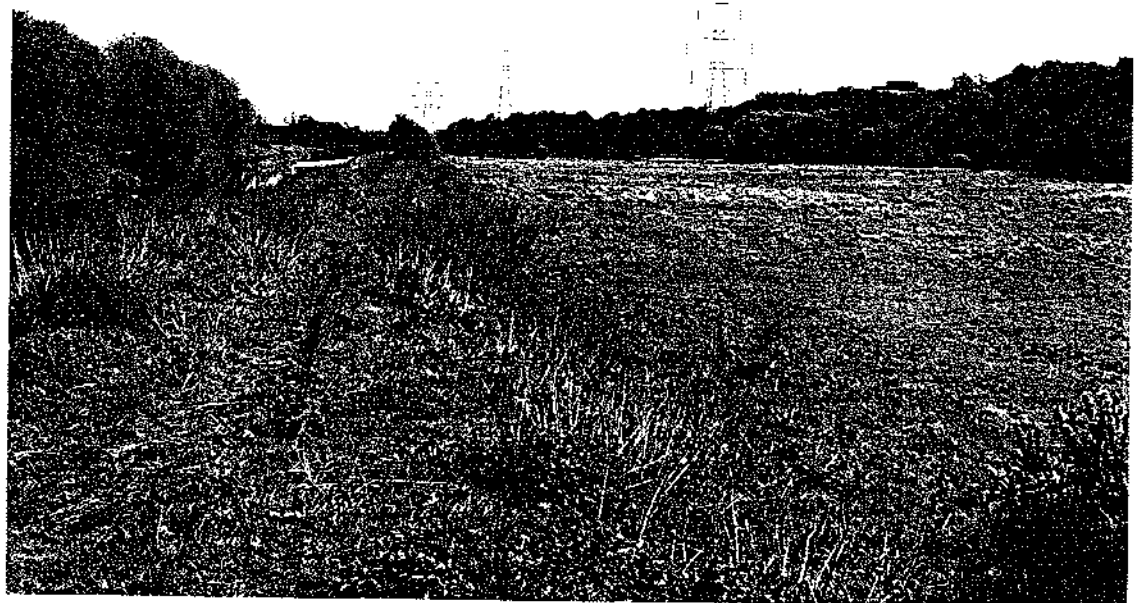


Plate 6