

Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit

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**An Archaeological Evaluation of Land at  
Windmill Lane, Posenhall,  
Broseley, Shropshire**

by

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### **1.0 Summary**

An archaeological evaluation was conducted on land at Windmill Lane, Posenhall, Broseley, Shropshire, by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit in the period 3-8 November 1995. Prior to this evaluation, aerial photographic evidence and geophysical survey suggested the presence of a number of possible archaeological features within land proposed for opencast clay and coal extraction. However, only three possible archaeological deposits survived within the five trenches investigated by this evaluation.

### **2.0 Introduction**

This report outlines the results of an archaeological evaluation carried out on land at Windmill Lane, Posenhall, Broseley, Shropshire. The work was undertaken by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit, on behalf of Wardell Armstrong, in advance of a planning application for the extraction of clay and coal by Coal Contractors Limited. The archaeological evaluation was conducted in accordance with a brief prepared by Wardell Armstrong (Coppin and Josephs 1994) and fulfilled recommendations made by Michael Watson, Head of Archaeology, Shropshire County Council.

### **3.0 The Proposed Development Site and its Location (Figure 1)**

The proposed development site is located c.1km to the southwest of Broseley, Shropshire and to the east of the B4375 Much Wenlock road (centred on NGR SJ660010). The site was under 'set aside' at the time of this archaeological evaluation.

### **4.0 Previous Archaeological Investigation (Figures 2 and 3)**

A desk-based assessment, which included the proposed development site, was completed by Wardell Armstrong in December 1994 (Coppin and Josephs 1994). This report identified, from an aerial photograph, a possible rectangular structure with yard (Figure 3). A subsequent geophysical survey was centred on the area of this feature and although the results did not correlate with the aerial photographic

information, the plots did indicate some features of archaeological potential within the immediate vicinity (Geophysical Surveys of Bradford 1995, Wardell Armstrong 1995).

## 5.0 Objective

The objective of this archaeological evaluation was to establish whether any archaeological deposits existed within the proposed development site, and if they did, to establish the extent, character, state of preservation, date and significance of those deposits. Specifically, the evaluation was to identify the nature of a possible rectangular structure identified by an aerial photographic plot, the main anomalies identified by an earlier geophysical survey (Figure 3), and to confirm that no features associated with the medieval village of Posenhall continued into the north of the proposed development area.

## 6.0 Method

The objectives outlined in Section 5.0 above were achieved through the excavation of five trial trenches, the location and dimensions of which were determined by the head of Archaeology, Shropshire County Council (Figure 3).

The topsoil horizon within each trench was removed by a mechanical excavator to expose the uppermost levels of the natural subsoil. The machined surface was then hand-cleaned to define any archaeological features present. These were sampled by hand-excavation. The stratigraphy within each trench was recorded using a continuous numbered context system and BUFAU pro-forma record cards. All deposits were photographed and, where archaeological deposits were identified, a full drawn record, at 1:20 scale, was made. All archaeological artefacts recovered were retained, and together with the paper archive will be deposited with Shropshire County Council.

## 7.0 The Archaeological Results (Figure 4)

Trench A (not illustrated)

**Dimensions:** 25m long x 2m wide

**Objective:** to intersect three geophysical anomalies (located at 5m, 16m and 18-20m).

**Results:** the natural sand-clay horizon (1001) was cut by five plough furrows, and was overlain by c.30-40cm of topsoil (1000).

Trench B

**Dimensions:** 25m long x 2m wide

**Objective:** to intersect two walls of a possible rectangular structure, identified by aerial photography (located at 1-3m and 11m), and two geophysical anomalies (located at 6m and 21m).

**Results:** an outcrop of natural sandstone and clay (2001) was contacted at the western extreme of this trench, and was partially overlain by a layer of sand (2002). The natural sand-clay horizon (2003), as seen in Trenches A, C, D and E, extended over the remainder of trench. This horizon was cut by an irregular feature (F200), which was filled with flecks of coal, clay and two sandstone "slabs", and by a series of plough furrows.

#### Trench C

**Dimensions:** 25m long x 2m wide

**Objective:** to intersect two walls of a possible rectangular structure, identified by aerial photography (located at 9m and 13m), and two geophysical anomalies (located at 14m and 19m-24m).

**Results:** the natural sand-clay horizon (3002) was cut by a linear feature (F300), aligned northwest-southeast, and located at 4-5m. This feature, which was first identified as a clay-sand fill with a concentration of medium-large sub-rounded stones, was hand-sectioned to reveal a shallow profile (20cm). Small fragments of post-industrial tile were recovered. A discrete area of natural sandstone (3003) was contacted within the natural sand-clay horizon (3002) at 7m. One plough furrow was recorded at 14.50m. A thin, less than 1cm thick, stone layer (3005), with no distinct edges, was recorded at 20m-25m. Fragments of post-industrial tile, but no pottery, were recovered from this layer.

#### Trench D (not illustrated)

**Dimensions:** 15m long x 2m wide

**Objective:** to intersect two walls of a possible rectangular structure, identified by aerial photography (located at 7-13m), and one geophysical anomaly (located at 15m).

**Results:** the natural sand-clay horizon (4001) was cut by a number of plough furrows, and was overlain by c.30-40cm of topsoil (4000).

#### Trench E (not illustrated)

**Dimensions:** 20m long x 2m wide

**Objective:** to confirm that no features associated with the medieval village of Posenhall continued into the north of the proposed development area.

**Results:** the natural sand-clay horizon (5003) was cut by five natural features (F500-F504), all of which were identified as rootholes, and by 14 plough furrows. A c.5cm thick layer of ploughsoil overlay 5003. This was, in turn, sealed by a c.20-30cm thick layer of topsoil (5000).

The recovery of artefacts was limited to small fragments of post-industrial tile from the linear feature, F300, and the stone layer, 3005, both in Trench C. No pottery or bone was recovered during this evaluation.

### **8.0 A Discussion of the Archaeological Results**

Despite the identification, from an aerial photograph, of a possible rectangular structure with yard (Coppin and Josephs 1994), and the suggestion of some features of archaeological potential by a geophysical survey (Geophysical Surveys of Bradford 1995), only one corresponding, surviving, archaeological layer was identified during this archaeological evaluation.

The thin stone layer (3005), which was recorded at 20m-25m in Trench C, does correspond with the geophysical anomaly B (Geophysical Surveys of Bradford

1995). Although no pottery was recovered from this layer, fragments of tile do suggest that it represents post-industrial activity.

The linear feature (F300) in Trench C, initially interpreted on-site as an earlier field boundary, does not correspond with any boundaries mapped from 1618 onwards, and its function remains unidentified. However, the identification of fragments of post-industrial tile does suggest a relatively modern date. Unfortunately, no function or date can be attributed to the irregular feature (F200) in Trench B.

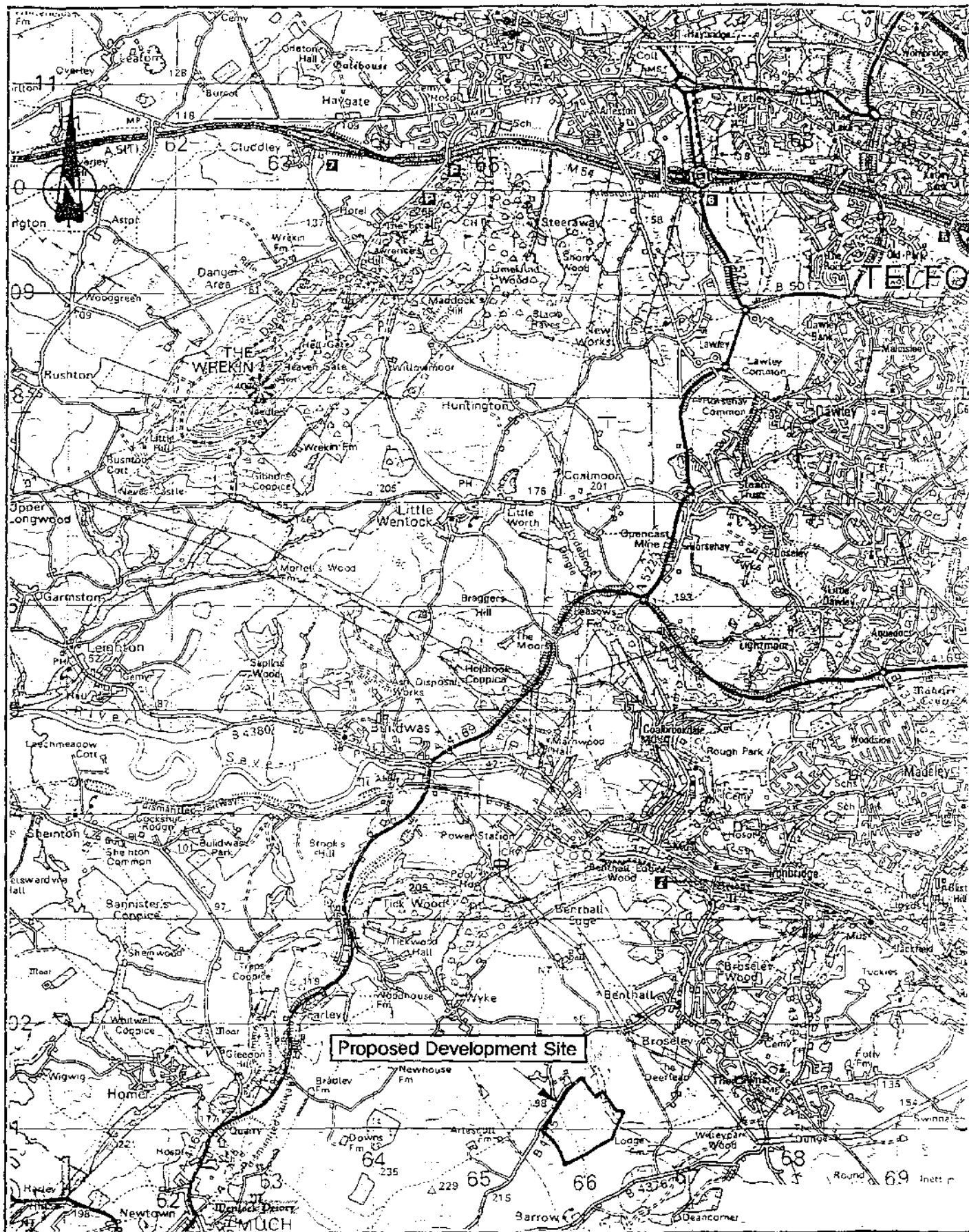
This archaeological evaluation has confirmed that no features associated with the medieval village of Posenhall continue into the north of the proposed development area. It has also confirmed that the rectangular structure and yard shown on a 1971 aerial photograph and the main anomalies identified by a geophysical survey have not survived as archaeological features within the trial trenches of this evaluation. In these circumstances it would appear that there is no requirement for further archaeological intervention.

## **9.0 Acknowledgements**

The archaeological evaluation was supervised by Catharine Mould, with the assistance of E. Newton, C. Winter and M. Campbell. Roger White monitored the project and also edited this report with Peter Leach. We are grateful to Andy Josephs (Wardell Armstrong) and Mike Watson (Shropshire County Council) for advice given on-site, and to Wardell Armstrong for permission to use Figures 2 and 3.

## **10.0 References**

- Coppin, N.J. and Josephs, A. 1994 *Archaeological Evaluation of Land near Broseley, Shropshire*. Reference AJ/CC/SJ/3161/87.
- Geophysical Surveys of Bradford 1995 *Report on Geophysical Survey at Windmill Lane, Broseley, Shropshire*. Report 95/101.
- Wardell Armstrong 1995 *Coal Contractors Limited, Land at Windmill Lane Posenhall, Broseley, Shropshire. Archaeological Tender Brief*. Reference AJ/CC/3161/87.

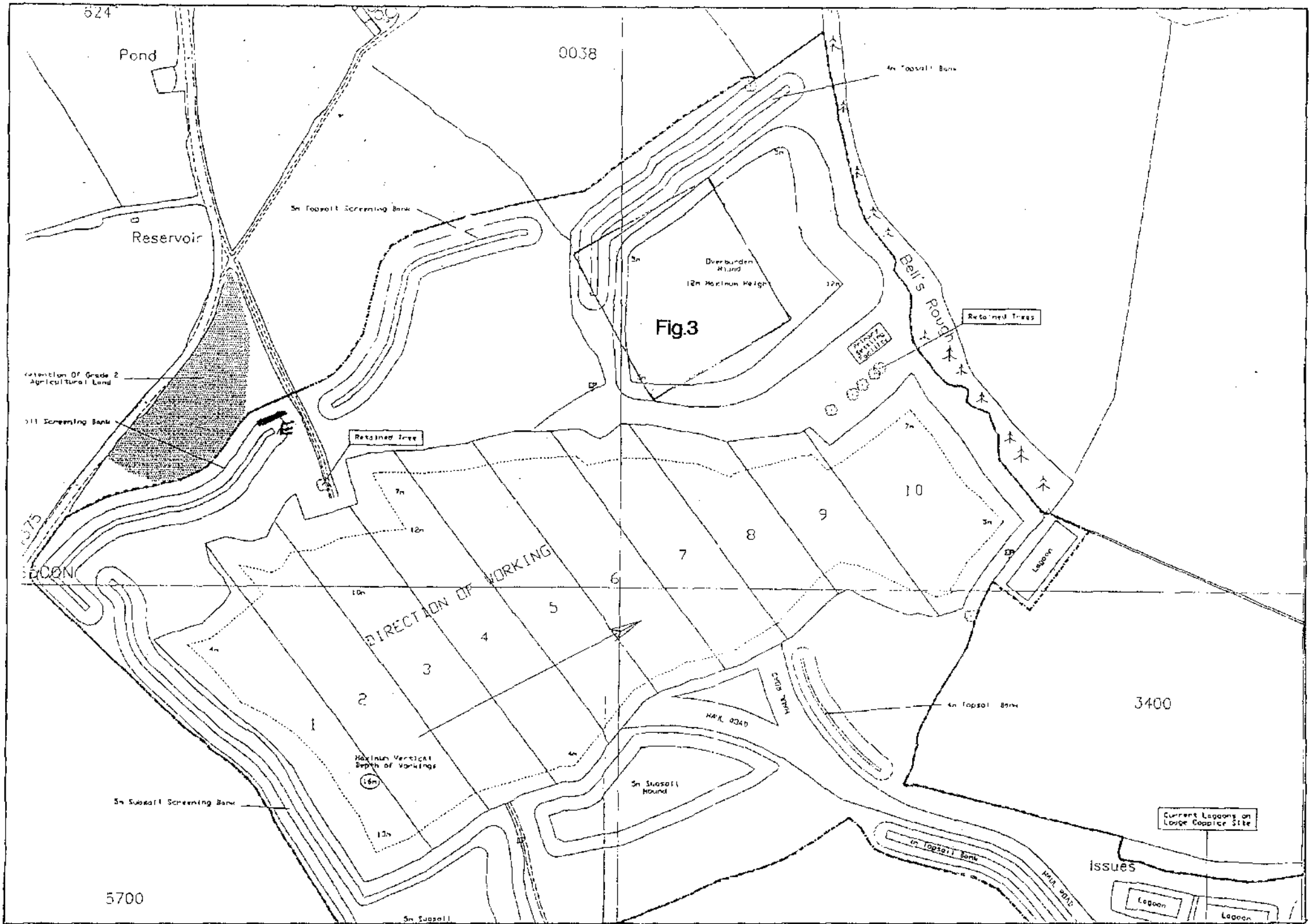


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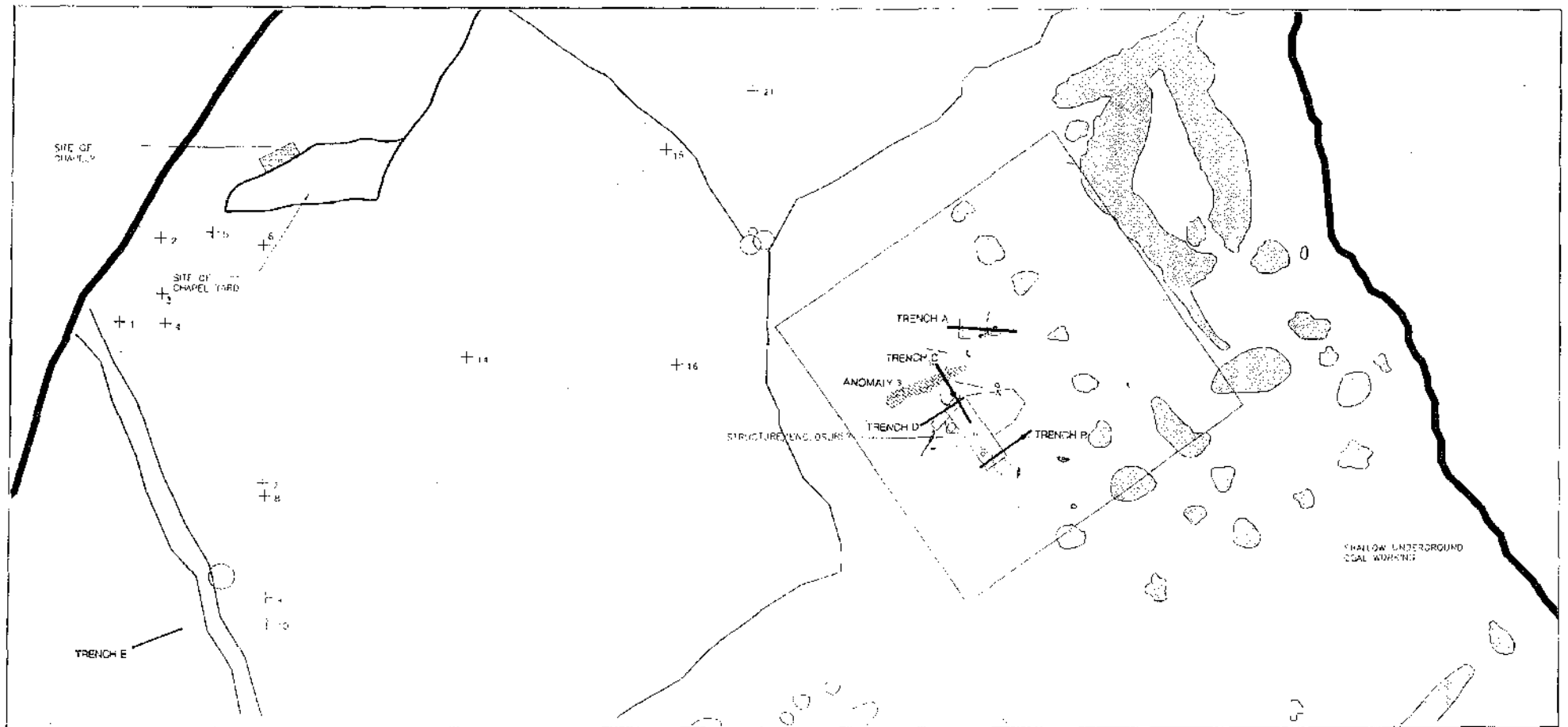
Fig.1

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Based on a plan supplied by Messrs. [unreadable]





Based on a plan supplied by Wardell Armstrong

Fig.3

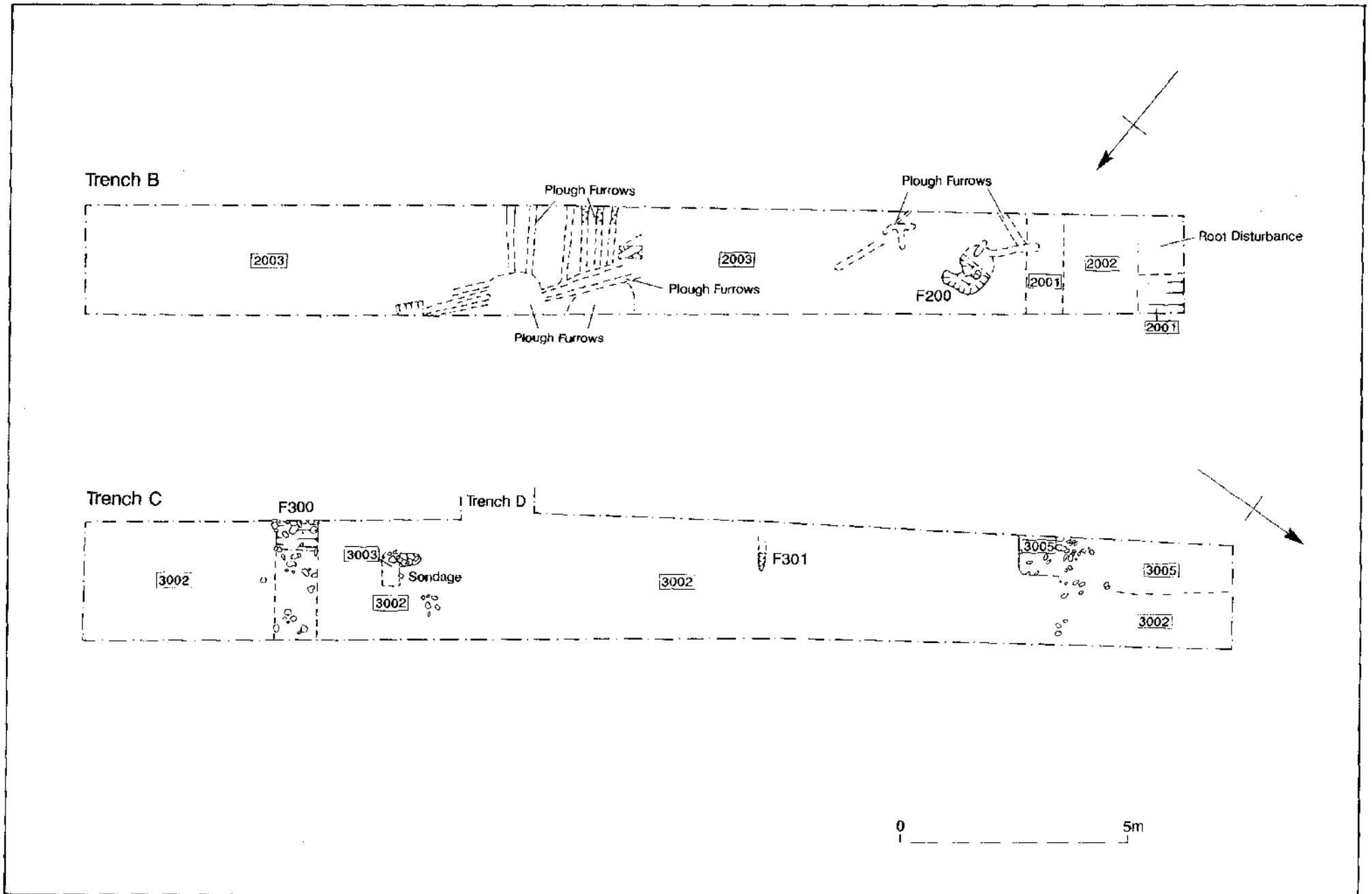


Fig.4