

*BIRMINGHAM UNIVERSITY
FIELD ARCHAEOLOGY UNIT*

**An Archaeological Watching Brief
at the Site of the Bungalow,
Lower Farm, Aldersley, Wolverhampton,
West Midlands**

1999

(SMR 6710/6712)

B.U.F.A.U.



Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit
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by
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1.0 Summary

Documentary evidence suggests that there may have been a settlement at Aldersley from the medieval period onwards. However, an assessment of two buildings at Lower Farm, Aldersley, Wolverhampton (Mould 1997; SMR 6710/6712) suggested that one of the buildings belonged to the late-18th - early-19th century, whilst the other was dated to the late-19th - early-20th century. A subsequent archaeological watching brief found that post-medieval activity was centred on Lower Farm (Mould 1998a). No earlier deposits or features were recorded. A further watching brief, carried out during groundworks associated with the demolition of a bungalow, which was located to the south of Lower Farm, recorded a possible cultivation soil. The potential location of open fields to the south of Lower Farm further supports an earlier suggestion that the focus for medieval activity and settlement at Aldersley may lie to the east of the Lower Farm site (Mould 1997).

2.0 Introduction

This report describes the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out during groundworks associated with the demolition of a bungalow during the enhancement of Aldersley Stadium, Wolverhampton, West Midlands (NGR SJ 899 010). This work was carried out by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (BUFAU) on behalf of the sponsors, Tweeds Leisure Limited, in October 1998.

The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a Specification prepared by BUFAU (Mould 1998b) and approved by the West Midlands Sites and Monuments Officer. The project was carried out in accordance with guidelines set down in *Standard and guidance for archaeological watching briefs* (Institute of Field Archaeologists 1994), and conformed to requirements set down in Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (Department of Environment 1991).

An earlier assessment of two buildings at Lower Farm was undertaken in 1997, followed by a watching brief in 1998 of groundworks within the Lower Farm area. Both projects were carried out by BUFAU on behalf of Tweeds Leisure Limited. The results of the earlier projects are reported on separately (Mould 1997 and 1998a). However, the results are incorporated in this report.

3.0 Site Location (Map 1 and Figure 1)

The site lies to the northwest of Wolverhampton Town Centre within the Aldersley Stadium complex. It shares its northern boundary with the former Lower Farm, and is defined by an access road to the west and carparking areas to the south and east. The site comprises a modern brick-built bungalow and garden.

4.0 Objectives

The objectives of the watching brief were to monitor all below-ground works associated with the bungalow and to record the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any archaeological deposits or features affected by the demolition works.

5.0 Method

The objectives were achieved through two site visits during contractors' groundworks, one visit following the removal of a concrete slab foundation, and one following the removal of the concrete wall footings. All stratigraphic sequences were recorded, even where no archaeological deposits or features were present. A copy of the paper and photographic archive will be deposited with Wolverhampton Archives Service and the West Midlands Sites and Monuments Record.

6.0 Archaeological Results

The wall footings were excavated to a maximum depth of 0.85m. The red-brown clay-sand subsoil (1003) was recorded within the northern half of the site at a depth of 0.38m. The subsoil was not contacted within the southern half of the site. It was sealed partially by a layer of dirty subsoil (1002) and partially by a 0.30m-0.40m deep layer of charcoal-flecked, brown, silty clay-sand which contained occasional sub-rounded stones (1001). These layers were, in turn, sealed by a layer of topsoil (1000).

No artefacts were recovered.

7.0 Discussion

No artefacts or deposits dating to the medieval period, or to any earlier activity, were recorded.

Ordnance Survey mapping suggests that the bungalow was constructed between 1953 and 1973. The relatively shallow depth of the subsoil within the northern half of the site suggests that the ground may have been levelled prior to construction of the bungalow, erasing any potentially earlier deposits. The charcoal-flecked soil (1001) recorded within the southern half of the site may represent an earlier agricultural

cultivation soil. The possible location of open fields to the south of Lower Farm further supports an earlier suggestion that the focus for medieval activity and settlement at Aldersley may lie to the east of the Lower Farm site (Mould 1997). The scarcity of medieval documentation, and the consequent lack of understanding of the origin, location and development of settlement at Aldersley, gives value to the potential survival of these deposits.

8.0 References

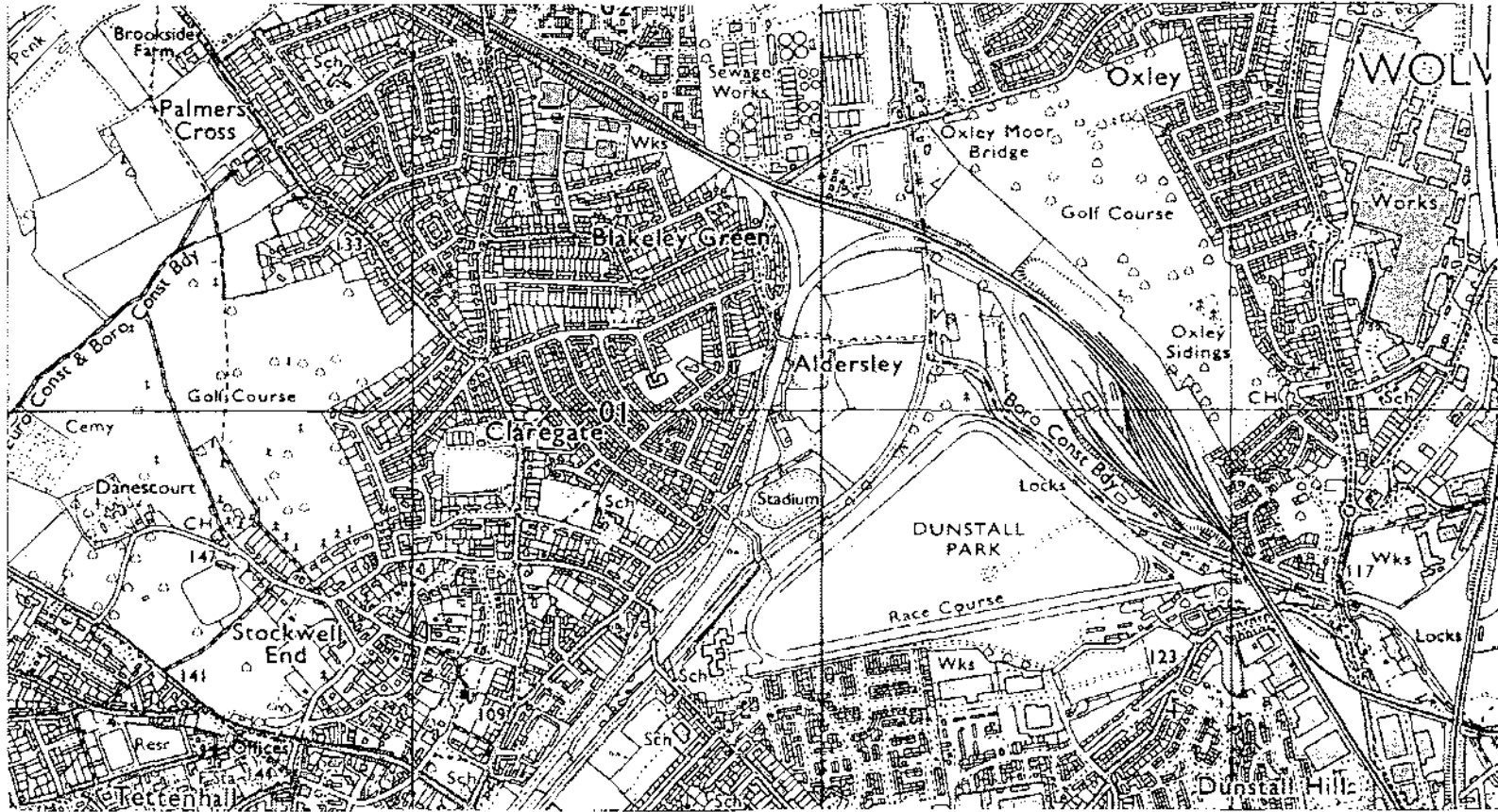
Mould, C.A. 1997 *Building Recording at Lower Farm, Aldersley, Wolverhampton, West Midlands*. SMR 6710/6712. BUFAU Report No. 477.

Mould, C.A. 1998a *An Archaeological Watching Brief at Lower Farm, Aldersley, Wolverhampton, West Midlands*. SMR 6710/6712. BUFAU Report No. 477.01.

Mould, C.A. 1998b *Lower Farm, Aldersley, Wolverhampton, West Midlands*. SMR 6710/6712. *Specification for Watching Brief at the Site of the Bungalow*.

9.0 Acknowledgements

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Map 1

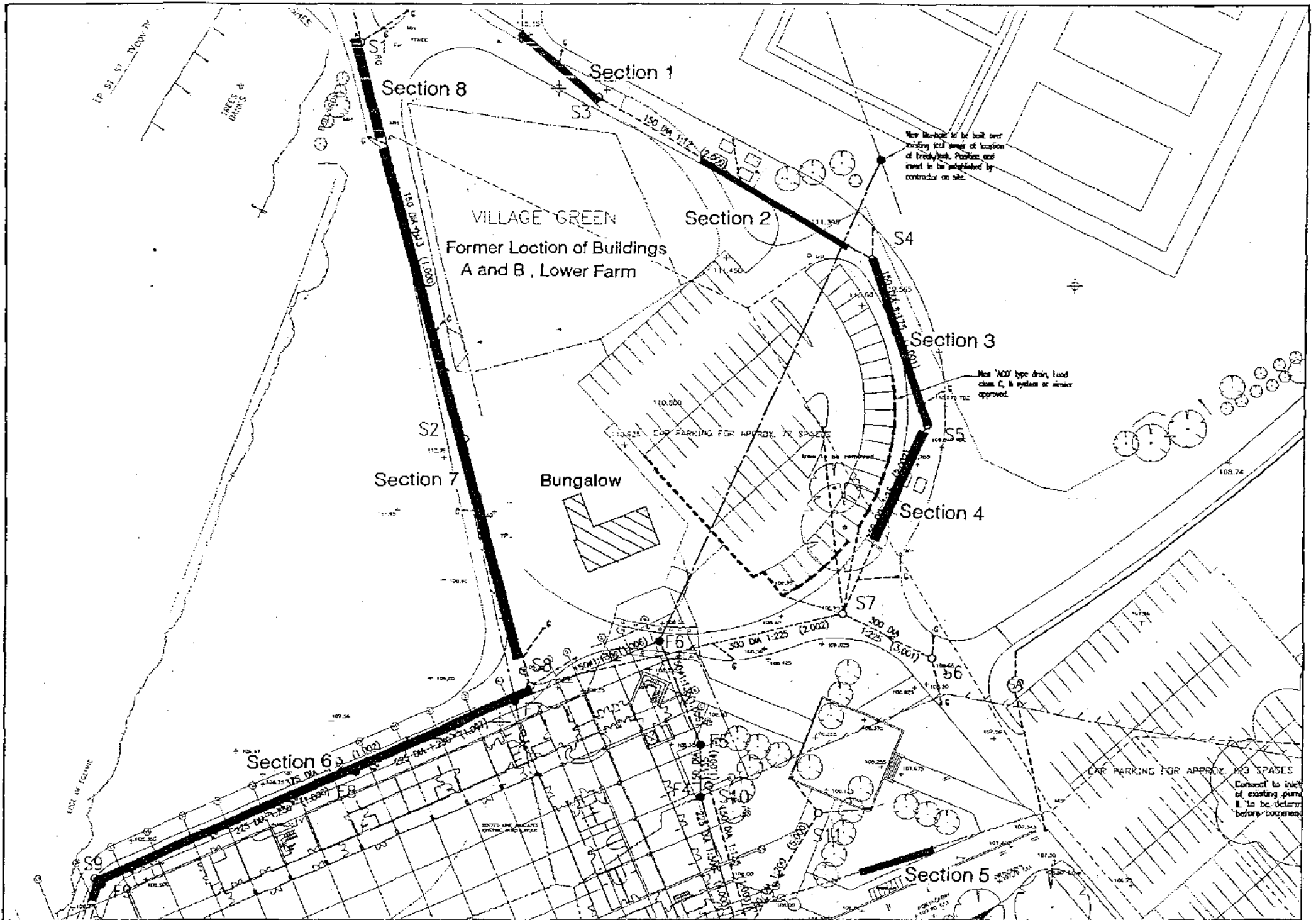


Fig.1