

*BIRMINGHAM UNIVERSITY  
FIELD ARCHAEOLOGY UNIT*

**An Archaeological Evaluation at  
Whitley Grange, Hook-a-Gate, Shropshire  
1997**

*B.U.F.A.U.*



Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit  
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**An Archaeological Evaluation at Whitley Grange,  
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by  
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# **An Archaeological Evaluation at Whitley Grange, Hook-a-Gate, Shropshire 1997**

## **1.0: Summary**

An archaeological evaluation was carried out by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit at Whitley Grange, Hook-a-Gate, near Shrewsbury, Shropshire, (NGR SJ 454094) in June 1997. The evaluation was conducted at the proposed site of a cellular radio base station. The site is located on the possible line of the north arm of a medieval moated site. No archaeological features or deposits were present.

## **2.0: Introduction**

This report describes the results of an archaeological evaluation carried out at Whitley Grange, Hook-a-Gate, near Shrewsbury, Shropshire. The work was undertaken by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (BUFAU) and commissioned by Cellular Design Services Ltd on behalf of Orange PCS Ltd. The evaluation fulfilled a planning condition imposed by Shropshire County Council in advance of the proposed construction of a cellular radio base station. The archaeological evaluation was conducted in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists Standards and Guidance for Field Evaluation (Institute of Field Archaeologists 1994), a brief prepared by Shropshire County Council (Watson 1997) and a specification prepared by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (BUFAU 1997). The evaluation conformed to the guidelines contained in Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (Department of Environment 1990).

## **3.0: The Site and its Location (Figures 1 and 2)**

The site consists of an area of 66 sq. m, conforming to the rectangular footprint of the proposed base station, of rough ground on a north-facing slope at the junction of three field boundaries north of Whitley Grange Farm. To the east of the site are the northern and eastern arms of a medieval moat. It was thought that the northern arm of the moat may have extended west into the development site.

## **4.0: Aims**

The objectives of the archaeological evaluation were to determine presence or absence, character, extent, preservation and date of archaeological remains within the area proposed for development. These objectives were achieved by a combination of documentary research and trial excavation. The results are to be used to recommend options for the management of the archaeological resource.

## **5.0: Method (Figure 2)**

### **5.1: Documentary Research**

An examination of available documentary and cartographic sources was undertaken, in combination with a field inspection of the immediate locality of the site and an interview with the present landowners.

### **5.2: Trial Trenching**

The trial trenching comprised of a single trench 5m x 2m. The modern overburden was removed by a JCB mechanical excavator, under archaeological supervision. The upper surface of possible archaeological features and deposits, or the natural subsoil, was then cleaned by hand and any potential archaeological features were manually excavated. Stratigraphy was recorded by means of pro-forma record cards, scale drawings and photographs, including where no archaeology was present.

## **6.0: Results**

### **6.1: Documentary Research**

Whitley Grange (Sh.SMR 13257) is an imposing three-storey brick-built house dated to 1667 by its fine timber staircase (Pevsner 1958, 316). The walled garden attached to the east side of the house is of contemporary build and clearly extends over an earlier moat which survives now only as a roughly triangular shaped pond some 40m north-east of the house. This surviving portion of the moat has a substantial bank to the north, i.e. downslope, which may represent up-cast from the ditch but which equally could be the natural slope of the land. If the latter then the moat has been terraced into the steeply sloping ground and the upcast from it has presumably been spread internally to form a platform. The proposed siting for the cellular radio base station at Whitley Grange is 50m west of the surviving section of the moat, with the southern edge of the base station platform coinciding with the bank and 10m north of a modern grain drier.

Cartographic evidence from the early nineteenth century shows little change in the siting of field boundaries in the immediate vicinity of the farm and demonstrates that the infilling of the moat had certainly occurred earlier than the production of the maps. The most recent map, the 1:2500 of 1972, is substantially identical to that of the 1882 survey, with the only addition being the grain drier constructed in 1963 (R Davies, pers comm). The only reference to the form of the moat prior to modern times comes from H Forrest who describes it as 'about half of a large square moat...the other half has been filled up, and the present house built over that side of it' (1924, 37). The north-western corner of the moat is now no longer visible, having been filled in since the 1950s by rubble (Mr G Davies, pers comm) but it is known to have turned south before reaching the grain drier (*idem.*). Both Mr G Davies and his son recalled a small pit at the north-west corner of the moat, a 'soak-hole', which perhaps acted as the overflow to the moat. This was filled in when the grain drier was constructed. It is not recorded on any of the maps.

## 6.2: Trial Trenching (Figure 3)

The trench was located on a north facing slope. The natural subsoil (1001) was a reddish brown clay which was disturbed by roots from an adjacent tree. Cutting this subsoil was an irregular pit (F1), of modern date, extending beyond the eastern edge of the trench. This pit was at least 2.60m x 1.20m x 0.40m deep and was filled with a dark brown silty sandy clay (1002) containing large amounts of modern brick rubble, sandstone fragments and modern pottery. The natural subsoil 1001 and F1 were sealed by 0.30m of topsoil (1000) containing large amounts of brick rubble, sandstone fragments and modern pottery.

## 7.0: Discussion

No archaeological features or deposits were located by the trial trenching. The northern arm of the moat may either be located south of the development site, or it may have turned southwards to the east of the development site.

## 8.0: References

BUFAU 1997 *Specification of Works for an Archaeological Evaluation, Whitley Grange, Hook-a-Gate, Shropshire.*

Forrest, H. E. 1924 *Some Old Shropshire Houses and Their Owners* (Shrewsbury, privately printed).

Pevsner, N. 1958 *The Buildings of England. Shropshire.*

Watson, M. 1997 *Brief for Archaeological Field Evaluation at Whitley Grange, Hook-a-Gate, Shropshire.* Archaeology Service, Shropshire County Council.

### Maps

1827 Ordnance Survey map (SII320)

1839 Tithe map and apportionment for Shrewsbury St Chad (Whitley & Welbatch township) (consulted as Foxall's 1977 field-name map)

1882 OS 6" map, 1st edition

## 9.0: Figures

Figure 1 Location of Whitley Grange

Figure 2 Trial trench location

Figure 3 Trench plan and section

Figure 4 Extract from 1882 OS 6" map, 1st edition

## **10.0: Acknowledgements**

The fieldwork was carried out by Derek Moscrop and Laurence Jones under the overall supervision of Dr. Roger White. The illustrations are by Nigel Dodds. The report was edited by Simon Buteux. We are grateful to Mr G. Davies and Mr R. Davies, the landowners, for information on the site.



Fig.1

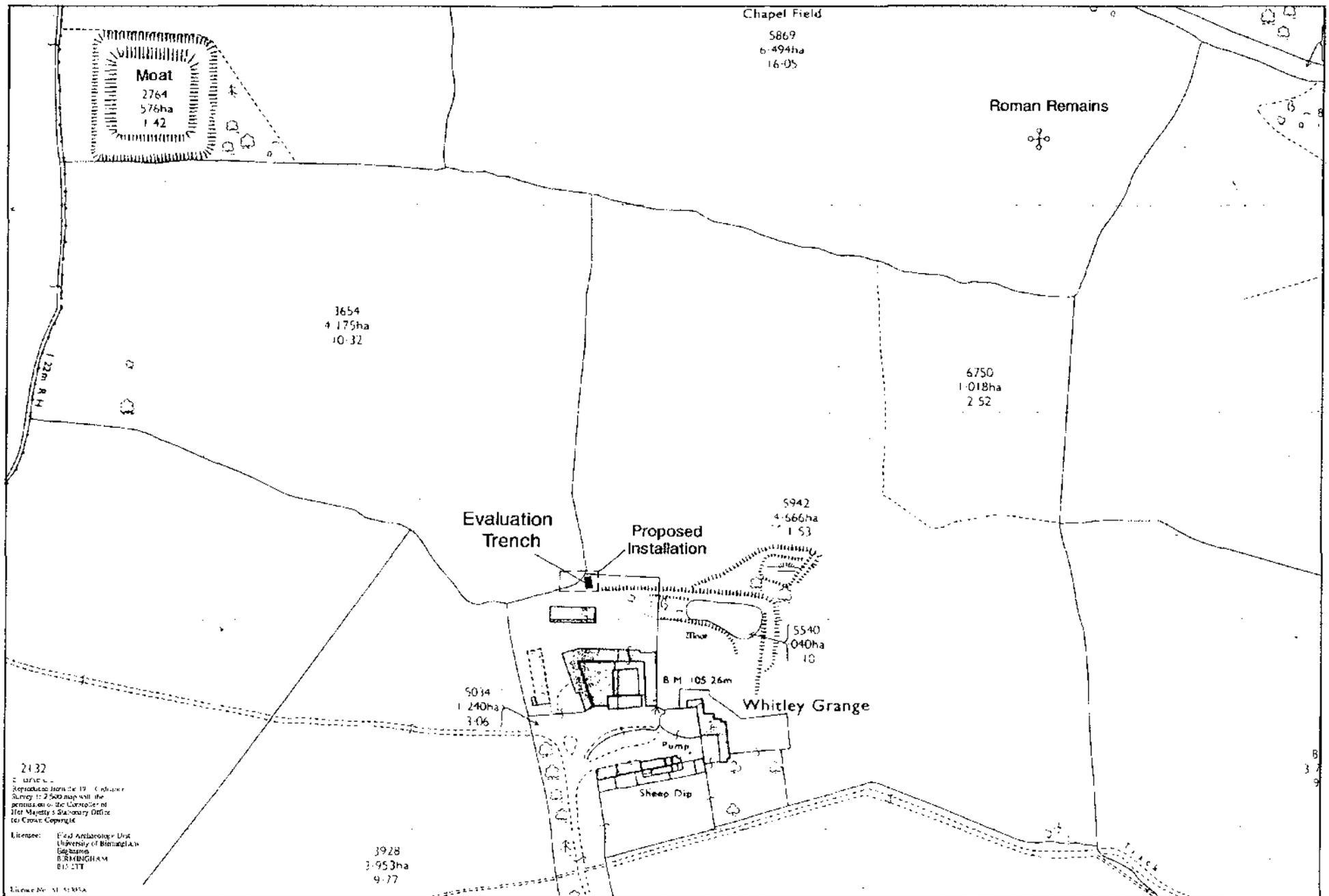
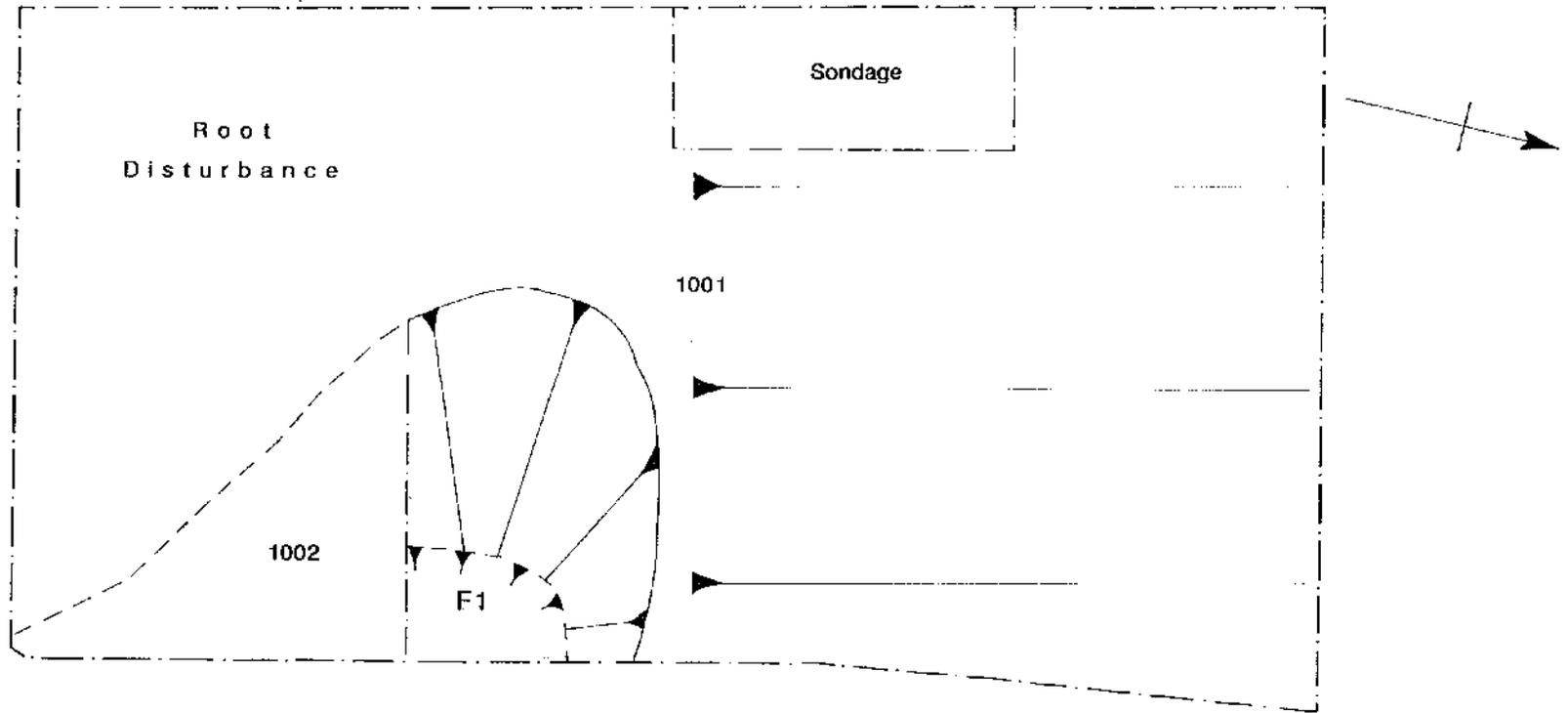


Fig.2

Plan



East Facing Section

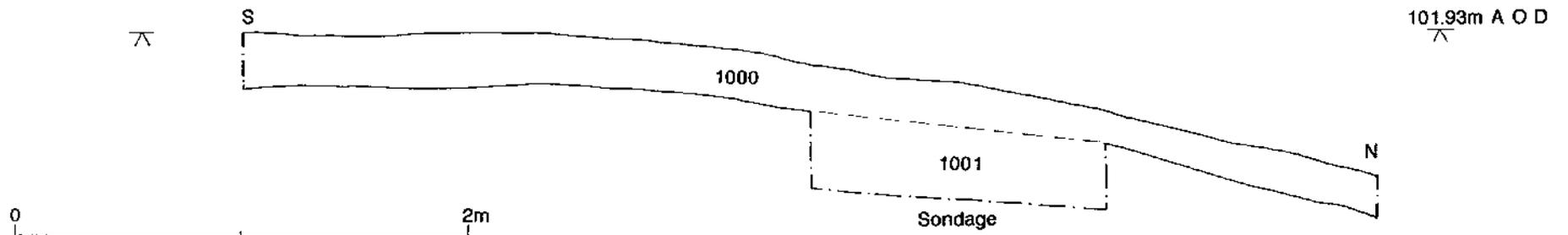


Fig.3

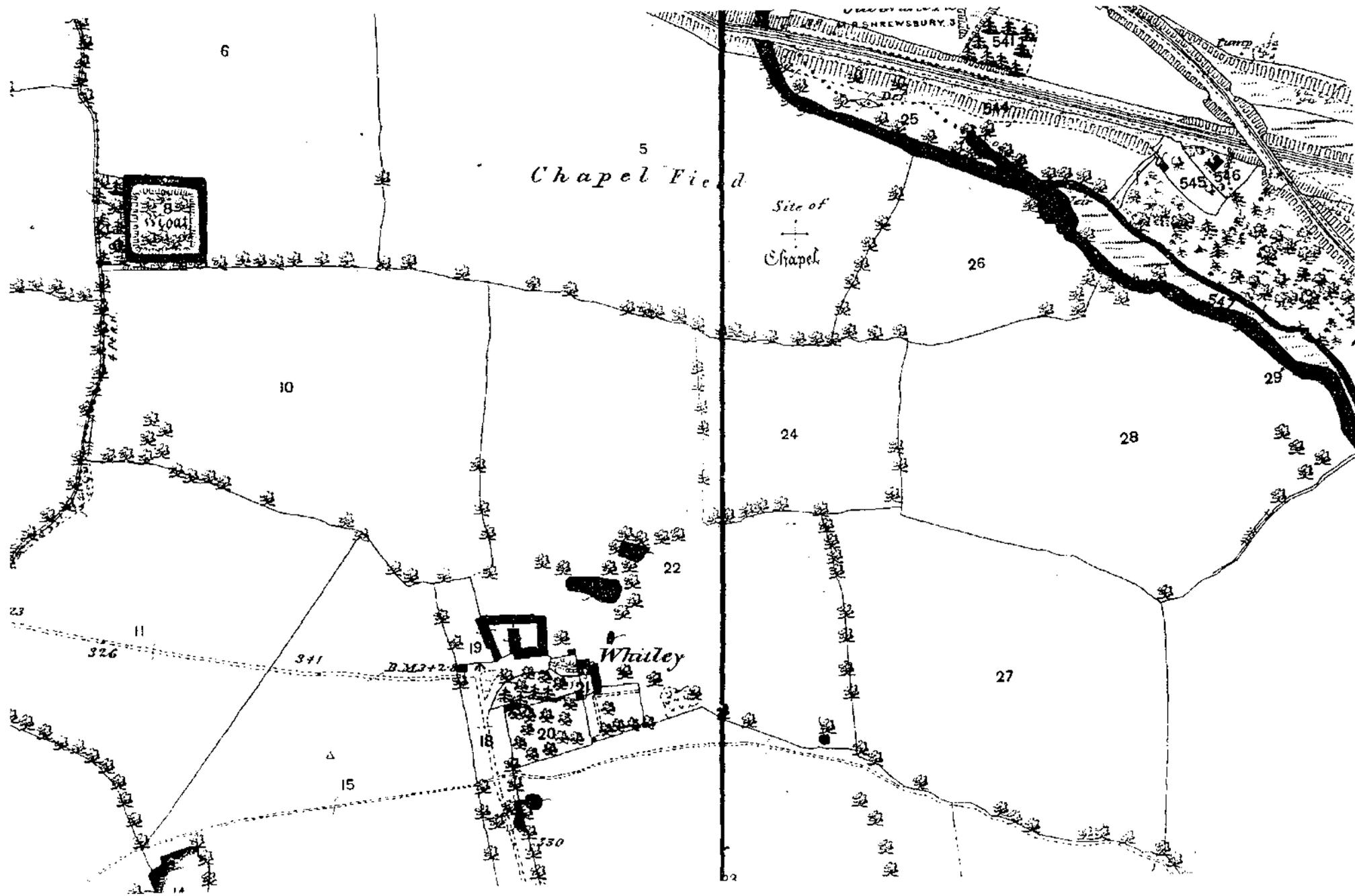


Fig.4