

*BIRMINGHAM UNIVERSITY*  
*FIELD ARCHAEOLOGY UNIT*

**An Archaeological Watching  
Brief  
at New Hall Hotel  
Walmley, Sutton Coldfield,  
West Midlands**

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



Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit  
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**An Archaeological Watching Brief at New Hall Hotel,  
Walmley, Sutton Coldfield,  
West Midlands**

by  
Gary Coates

*For further information please contact:*  
Simon Buteux, Iain Ferris or Gwilym Hughes (Directors)  
Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit  
The University of Birmingham  
Edgbaston  
Birmingham B15 2TT  
Tel: 0121 414 5513  
Fax: 0121 414 5516  
E-Mail: BUFAU@bham.ac.uk  
Web Address: <http://www.bufau.bham.ac.uk>

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## **An Archaeological Watching Brief Carried out at New Hall Hotel, Walmley, West Midlands**

### **1.0 Summary**

*An archaeological watching brief was carried out during the excavation of a trench for a drainage pipe in the car park of the New Hall Hotel, Walmley, West Midlands. New Hall is a medieval moated site in a medieval agricultural landscape and is a Grade I listed building. However, during the course of the watching brief, no significant archaeological deposits or artifacts were identified. A record of the stratigraphy was made.*

### **2.0 Introduction**

This report briefly outlines the results of a watching brief carried out on 9th July 1999, during the excavation of a pipe trench in the car park of New Hall Hotel, Walmley, West Midlands. The trench linked into the surviving moat and may have cut deposits associated with the original moat or activity to the front of it. It was carried out in accordance with a request by the City Planning Archaeologist, Dr. Mike Hodder. The groundwork was carried out by E. Monton & Son building contractors, on behalf of Baker Hall Partnership. Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit was commissioned to monitor these excavations to assess the depth, date, extent and nature of any archaeological deposits encountered.

### **3.0 The Site (NGR 413 294) (Figs. 1 & 2)**

New Hall Hotel is located to the north-west of Walmley and is set within New Hall Valley itself, which forms part of the Green Belt surrounding Birmingham. The trench was located in the hotel car park, directly north-east of the moated hall and adjacent to the surviving moat.

### **4.0 Archaeological and Historical Background**

New Hall (Birmingham Sites and Monuments Record numbers 01129 & 02249) is a medieval moated site, first mentioned in 1327, but with probable origins in the 12th and 13th centuries. It sits within a former medieval agricultural landscape, with the survival of a medieval cruck-framed barn (Birmingham Sites and Monuments Record number 01680) at nearby New Shipton Farm.

## **5.0 Objectives**

The principal objective of the watching brief was to identify and record any significant archaeological deposits prior to their destruction during the excavation of the pipe trench. Particular attention was paid to the identification of any medieval deposits associated with the moat itself or activity outside the front of the hall.

## **6.0 Method**

A pipe trench, 0.45m wide and approximately 20m long was excavated with a mini-digger, operated by the contractors and using a toothed bucket. The excavation of this trench was monitored by a suitably qualified archaeologist from Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit. Any significant archaeological deposits were excavated by hand and recorded on pro-forma record cards supplemented by scale plans, section drawings and photographs, where appropriate. Where no archaeological deposits were identified, the stratigraphy was recorded and photographed. These records comprise the site archive, which, at the time of writing, is currently stored at Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit.

## **7.0 The Results**

No archaeological deposits were identified during the course of this watching brief and no artifacts were recovered that pre-dated the twentieth century.

The stratigraphy revealed in the pipe trench, identified the natural red/brown clay subsoil at a varying depth of between 0.7 and 1.2m below the present ground level, which had a slope from north-east to south-west. Above the subsoil was a brown silty-clay deposit, which varied in depth from 0.3 to 0.7m, and contained former land drains. These deposits were sealed by the car-park deposits which were made up of 0.3m of red sand, finished with a thin layer of fine gravel. In the area between the fence and the moat wall there was a topsoil deposit to the bottom of the excavated trench, approximately 0.8m in depth.

## **8.0 Assessment of the Archaeological Importance of the Site**

The lack of archaeological deposits identified within this pipe trench does not necessarily mean that there is no surviving archaeology in the car park, as the pipe trench only had a small impact on this area. The depth of the excavations in the vicinity of the moat itself, were not deep enough to provide conclusive evidence as to the level of survival of associated deposits or to identify the original banks of the moat. However, New Hall remains an important medieval moated site and any further groundwork in the vicinity of the moat would warrant archaeological monitoring.

## **9.0 Acknowledgments**

The project was sponsored by Baker Hall Partnership, Consulting Civil and Structural Engineers, for whom Dr. Nigel Bartram liaised. The groundwork was carried out by E.Monton & Son and their sub-contractors, whose co-operation was greatly appreciated. The archaeological monitoring was carried out by Gary Coates from the Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit. Gwilym Hughes monitored the project and edited this report.

## Figures



Figure 1



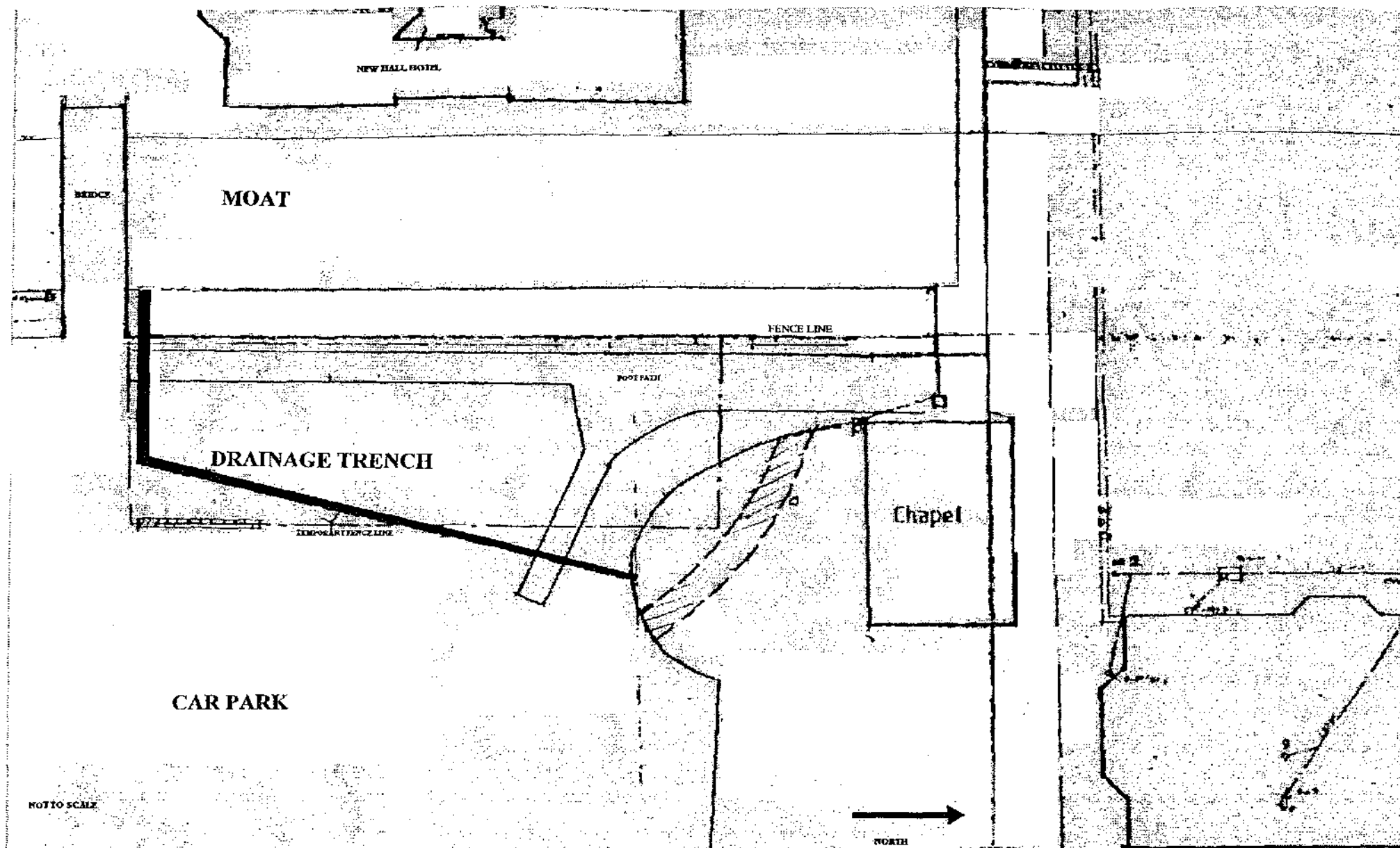


Figure 2.