

**An archaeological
watching brief at Mount
Pleasant, Chesterton,
Newcastle-under-Lyme,
Staffordshire**

Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit
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Chesterton, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire**

by
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Introduction

In January/February 2000 an archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit in order to observe and record any surviving elements of Chesterton Roman fort, at Mount Pleasant, Chesterton, Newcastle-under-Lyme (SMR 1771; NGR 8309 4894; Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by the Staffordshire Housing Association and was undertaken during the construction of an access road and building footings on the site, located at the presumed southwest corner of the fort (Fig. 2). The watching brief followed on from an archaeological evaluation of the site in 1998 (Coates 1998).

Method

The excavation of an access road to the development site was observed, together with the footings for the construction of the building (Fig. 3). A southwest facing section running c.35m along the length of the site was also observed. A 6m stretch of this section, running from the northwest, was drawn at a scale of 1:20 (Figs. 3 & 4). The position of the footings was recorded and a note of the stratigraphy that they cut was made. Spoil from the excavation of the access road was looked at in order that any unstratified archaeological finds relating to the fort might be recovered.

Results

No archaeological finds relating to the Roman occupation of the fort were made. The southwest facing section (Fig. 4) revealed a deposit of possibly redeposited natural yellowish white clay with occasional charcoal flecks (1001), together with a layer of grey silty clay (1002) which contained a lens of pink clay with small sandstone fragments, c.40mm, (1003). These deposits were c.5m in length running from the north of the site and were up to 0.6m in depth, below c.0.5m of topsoil (Fig.4). The deposits were disturbed by root action. A similar deposit was recorded in the northern end of the evaluation trench (Coates 1998, Fig.6, 1001). This could be interpreted as a bank. However, the ground slopes away steeply to the south, with a difference in level of over 2m across the site. Therefore the clay deposit (1001) might rather be interpreted as natural, overlying steeply sloping sandstone bedrock, and having been truncated and disturbed to the south by the construction of housing in the nineteenth century, and subsequent activity.

No archaeological features were recorded in the trenches for the footings of the building, which appeared to disturb modern material only.

Conclusion

No firm evidence for surviving archaeological deposits relating to the southwest corner of Chesterton Roman fort was observed during the watching brief, and no finds datable to this period were recovered. The site appears to have been heavily truncated in this area by the construction of housing in the nineteenth century, and by subsequent demolition in the 1970s and work associated with the construction of Chesterton Secondary Modern School in the 1950s.

Reference

- Coates, G. 1998 *Mount Pleasant, Chesterton, Newcastle-Under-Lyme: An Archaeological Evaluation 1998*, Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit Report No. 566.

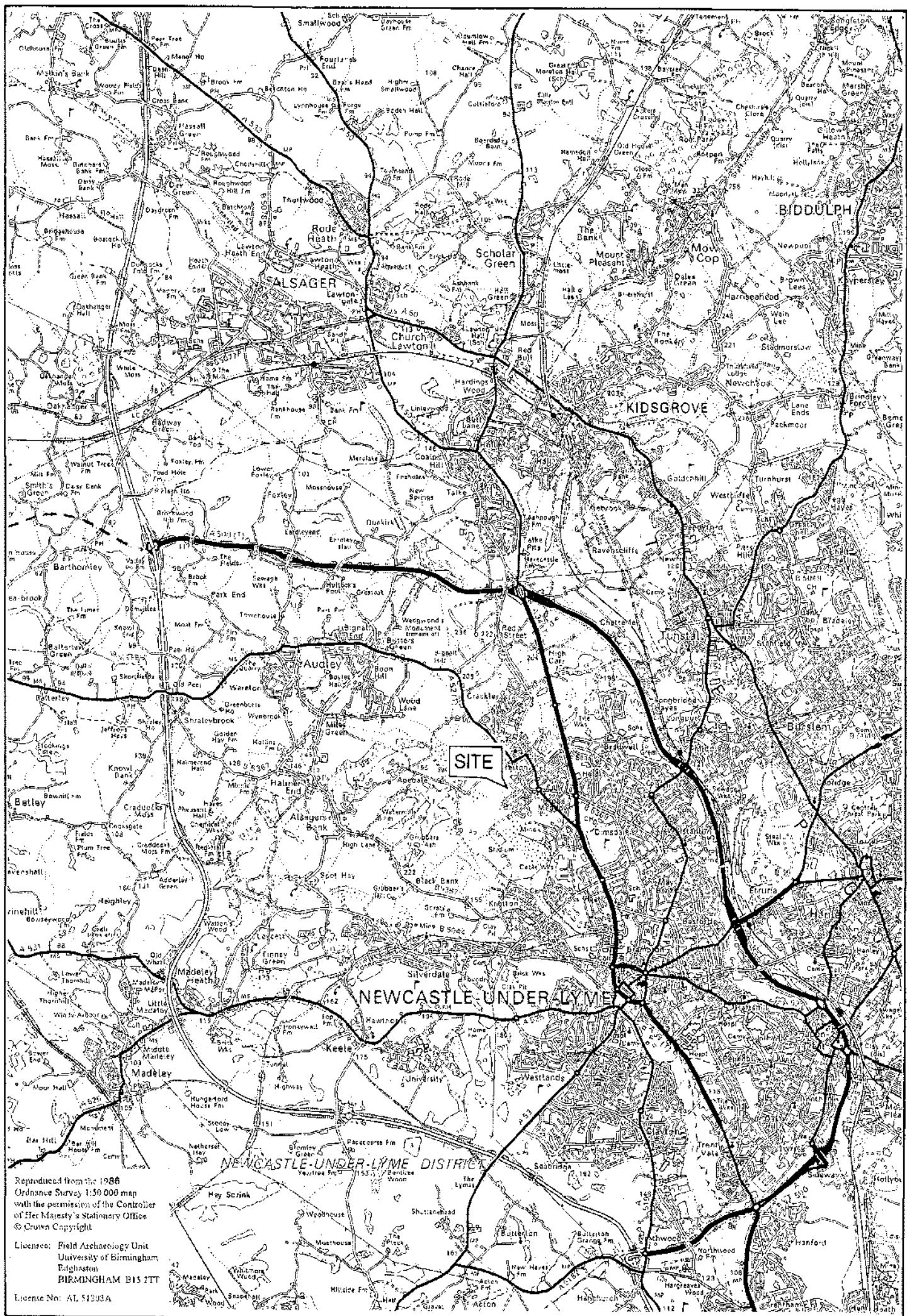


Fig. 1

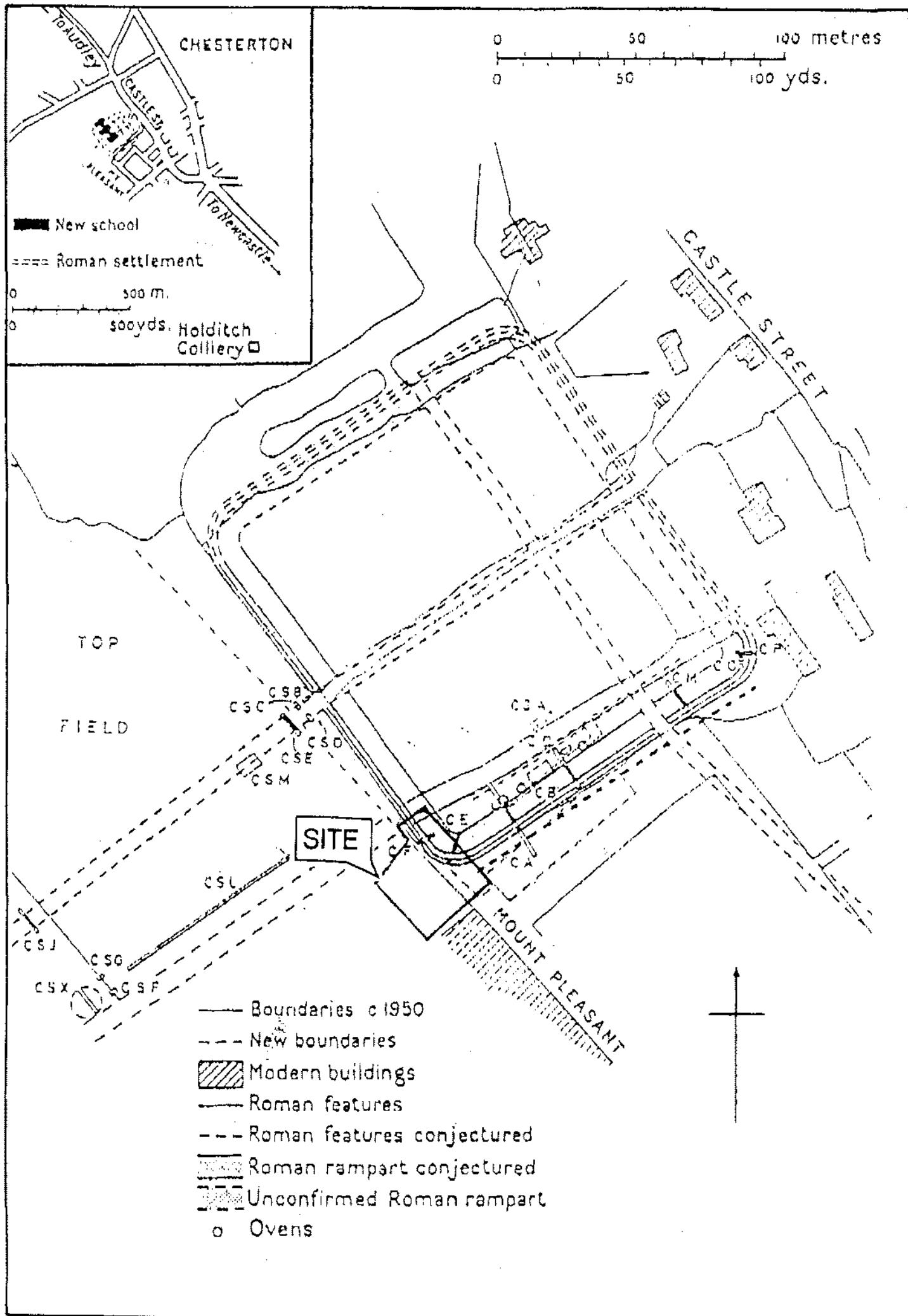


Fig. 2

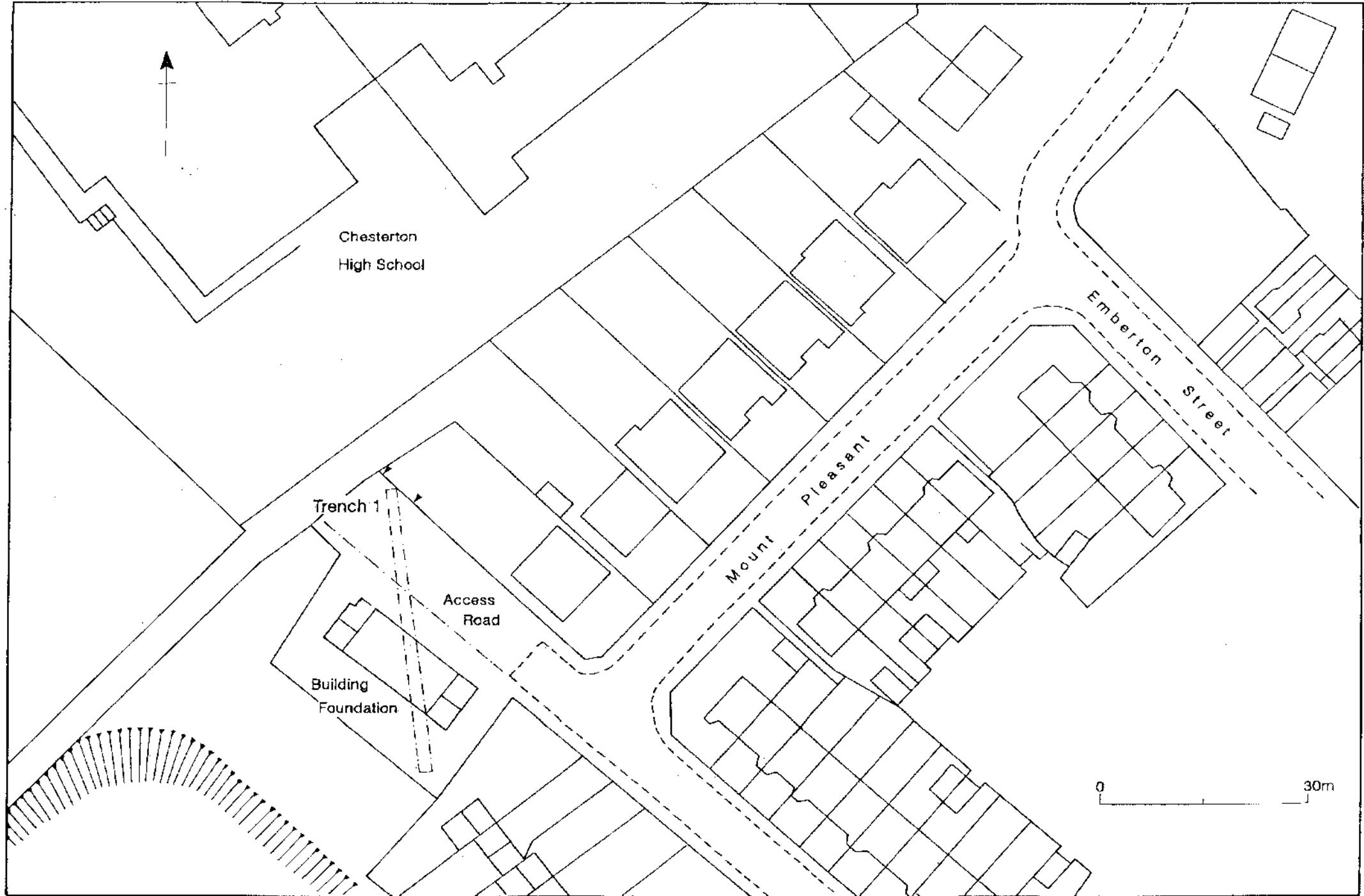


Fig.3

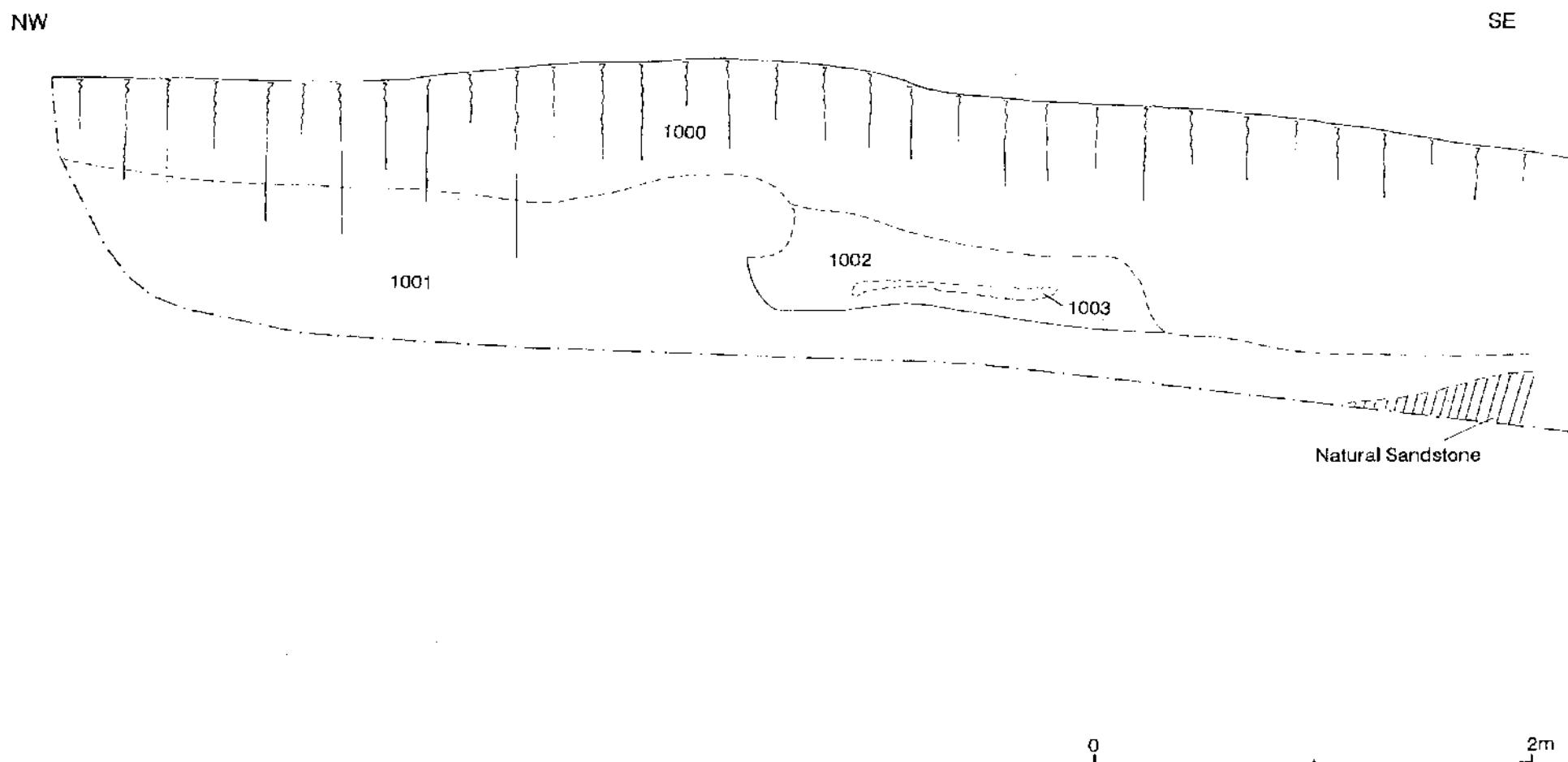


Fig.4