

**The Coach House
Astwood Lane, Hanbury
Worcestershire**

**An Archaeological Watching Brief
2000**

WSM 29946

Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit
Project No. 744
October 2000

The Coach House, Astwood Lane, Hanbury, Worcestershire
An Archaeological Watching Brief

WSM 29946

by
Chris Patrick

For further information please contact:
Simon Buteux or Iain Ferris (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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Contents

	Page
1.0: Summary	1
2.0: Introduction	1
3.0: Site Location	2
4.0: Objective	2
5.0: Method	2
6.0: Archaeological Results	2
7.0: Acknowledgments	3
Appendix 1	

List of Figures

Fig. 1: Site Location
Fig. 2: Hanbury Hillfort
Fig. 3: Location of Trenches

List of Plates

Plate 1: General view of site
Plate 2: West-facing section of Trench B

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1.0 Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit between 5th and 8th September 2000 on behalf of Mr Roger Weaving. The work was carried out during the construction of an extension to The Coach House, Astwood Lane, Hanbury, Worcestershire (NGR SO 9532 6436, WSM 29946). The development site lay within an Iron Age hillfort and it was thought that groundworks may reveal evidence of prehistoric occupation. However, due to 20th-century landscaping, no archaeological features or deposits survived and the only artifacts that were recovered were post-medieval in date.

2.0 Introduction (Figs. 1 and 2)

This report describes the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out during groundworks associated with the construction of an extension to The Coach House, Astwood Lane, Hanbury, Worcestershire (NGR SO 9532 6436, Planning Application Ref: W98/1662, Archaeological Planning Ref: WSM 814; WSM 29946) (Fig. 1). The archaeological fieldwork was carried out by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (BUFAU) on behalf of Mr Roger Weaving.

The Coach House is situated within the site of an Iron Age hillfort and is registered on the County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR 814) as a site of archaeological interest (Fig. 2). The hillfort defences are visible as earthworks around the site. There is a gap in the earthworks which may represent an entrance to the hillfort. Alternatively, it may be due to later landscaping. The Coach House is located within this gap. A recent evaluation near St. Mary's Church revealed well-preserved Iron Age deposits, including evidence for roundhouses and there was a strong potential for the survival of buried archaeological deposits.

The watching brief was necessary to fulfil the aims of the County Structure Plan (Hereford and Worcester County Council 1993; policy CTC5) and the district local plan, Wychavon District Local Plan, 1993, policy CB18). The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a Specification prepared by BUFAU (Mould 2000) and a Design Brief prepared by Malcolm Atkin, County Archaeological Officer for Worcestershire County Council (Atkin 1999, Appendix 1). The guidelines set down in the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (Institute of Field Archaeologists 1999) and in the *Requirements and Guidelines for Archaeological Projects in the County of Worcestershire* were followed.

3.0 Site Location (Fig. 2)

The site is located immediately to the west of The Coach House, Astwood Lane, Hanbury, Worcestershire (Fig. 2) and forms part of the property situated on the southern side of Hanbury hillfort, close to St. Mary's Church.

4.0 Objective

The objective of the watching brief was to monitor all below-ground works associated with the housing development. Any archaeological remains uncovered during the course of the groundworks were to be recorded to an appropriate level. Sampling and recovery of any contextual evidence which may contribute to an understanding of the archaeological remains within the area was also to take place.

5.0 Method

The objective was achieved through a series of site visits during the groundworks between 5th and the 8th September 2000. The groundworks included the stripping of topsoil over an area of the site and the excavation of foundation and service trenches.

All observed deposits were recorded using pre-printed *pro-forma* recording cards for features and contexts, supplemented by scale drawings of sections and plans. Colour-slide and black and white photographs were also taken as appropriate. These records form the site archive which will be deposited with the Worcestershire Sites and Monuments Record.

6.0 Archaeological Results (Fig. 3)

The topsoil was stripped over an area of approximately 10m by 10m to the immediate west of the Coach House (Plate 1). The groundworks showed the topsoil (1000) to be between 0.20-0.30m in depth, overlying a reddish-brown clay subsoil. Cleaning of the area produced finds of 16th-century pottery and animal bone. Three foundation trenches for the house extension were then excavated (Fig. 3). Trenches A and C were aligned east-west, and were 5.5m and 5m in length respectively and 0.6m wide and 1m deep. Trench B was aligned north-south and was 8.5m in length. No archaeological deposits were present in any of the trenches. The whole of Trench A and the northern end of Trench B were cut through the natural clay subsoil while the southern half of Trench B and the whole of Trench C were cut through a layer of redeposited material (1003).

The redeposited material was a brown silty-clay containing bricks which represented 20th-century landscaping to construct a house platform. The landscaping had erased all traces of any earlier deposits that were previously thought to have survived. The natural north-south slope of the hillside was visible in the section of Trench B (Plate 2).

7.0 Acknowledgements

The watching brief was sponsored by Mr Roger Weaver and was carried out by the staff of Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit. The report was written by Chris Patrick and edited by Catharine Mould. Illustrations were prepared by John Halsted and plates by Graham Norrie. The project was managed for BUFAU by Catharine Mould. Thanks are due to Malcolm Atkin, County Archaeological Officer for Worcestershire and Mr Roger Weaver.

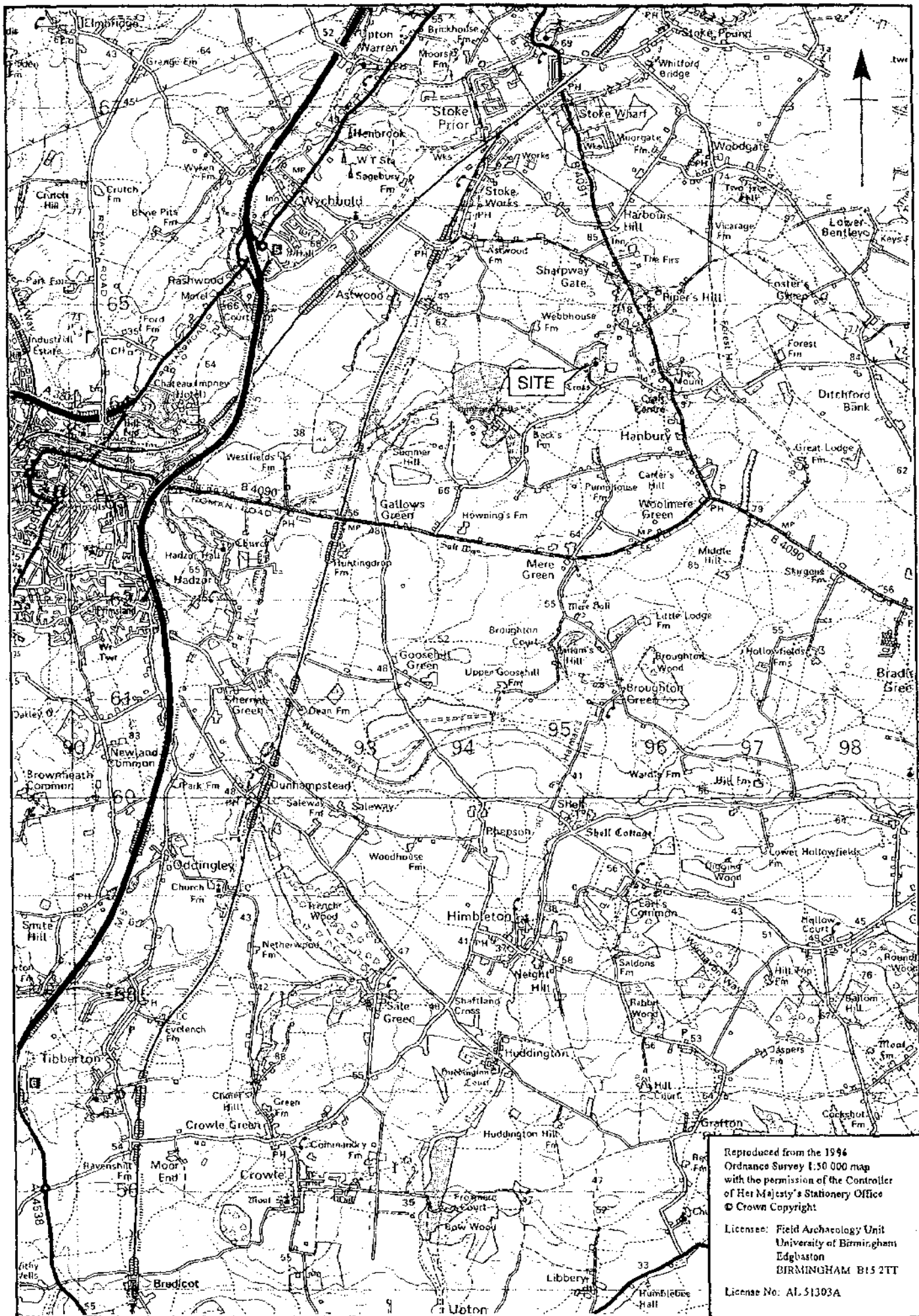


Fig.1

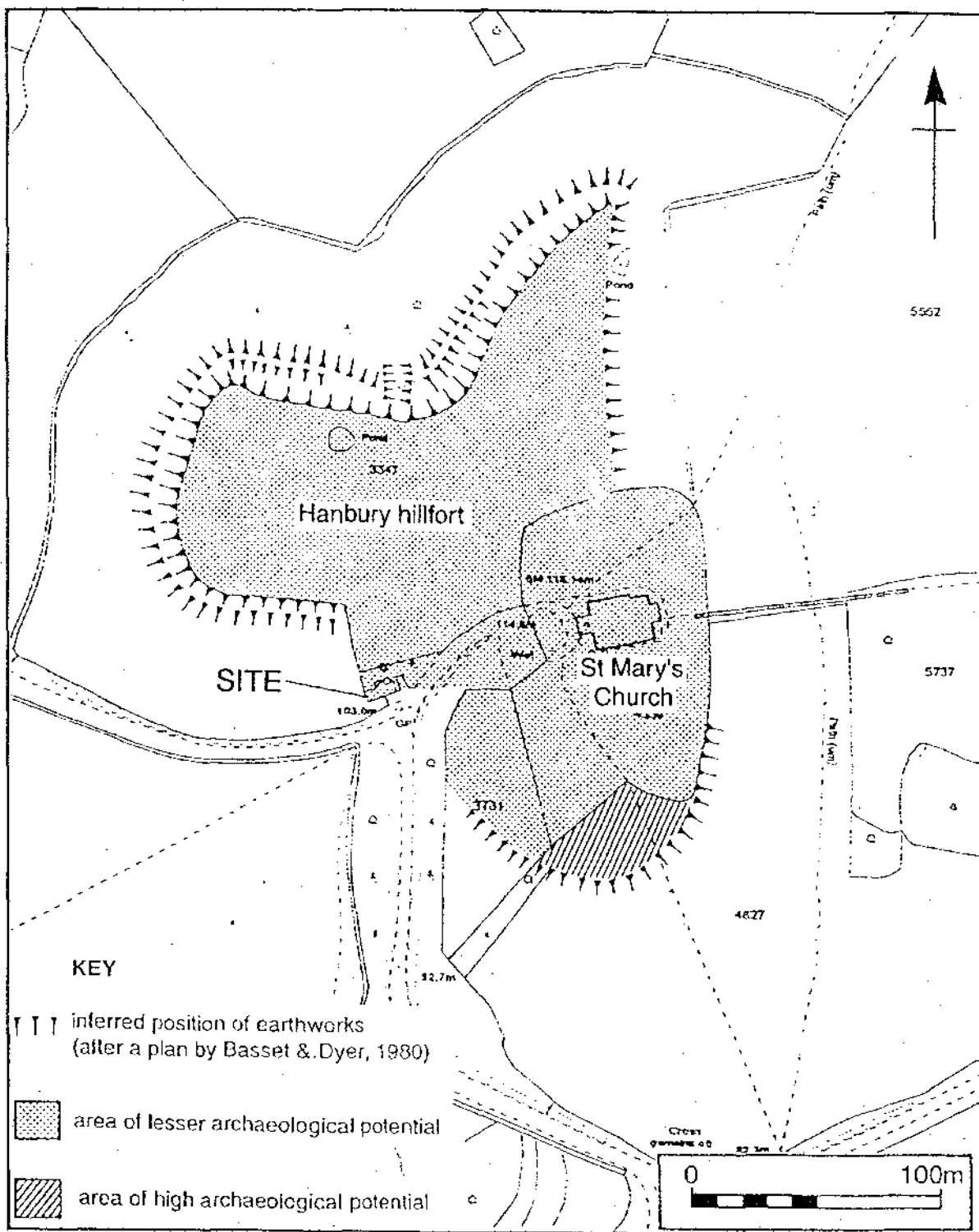


Fig.2

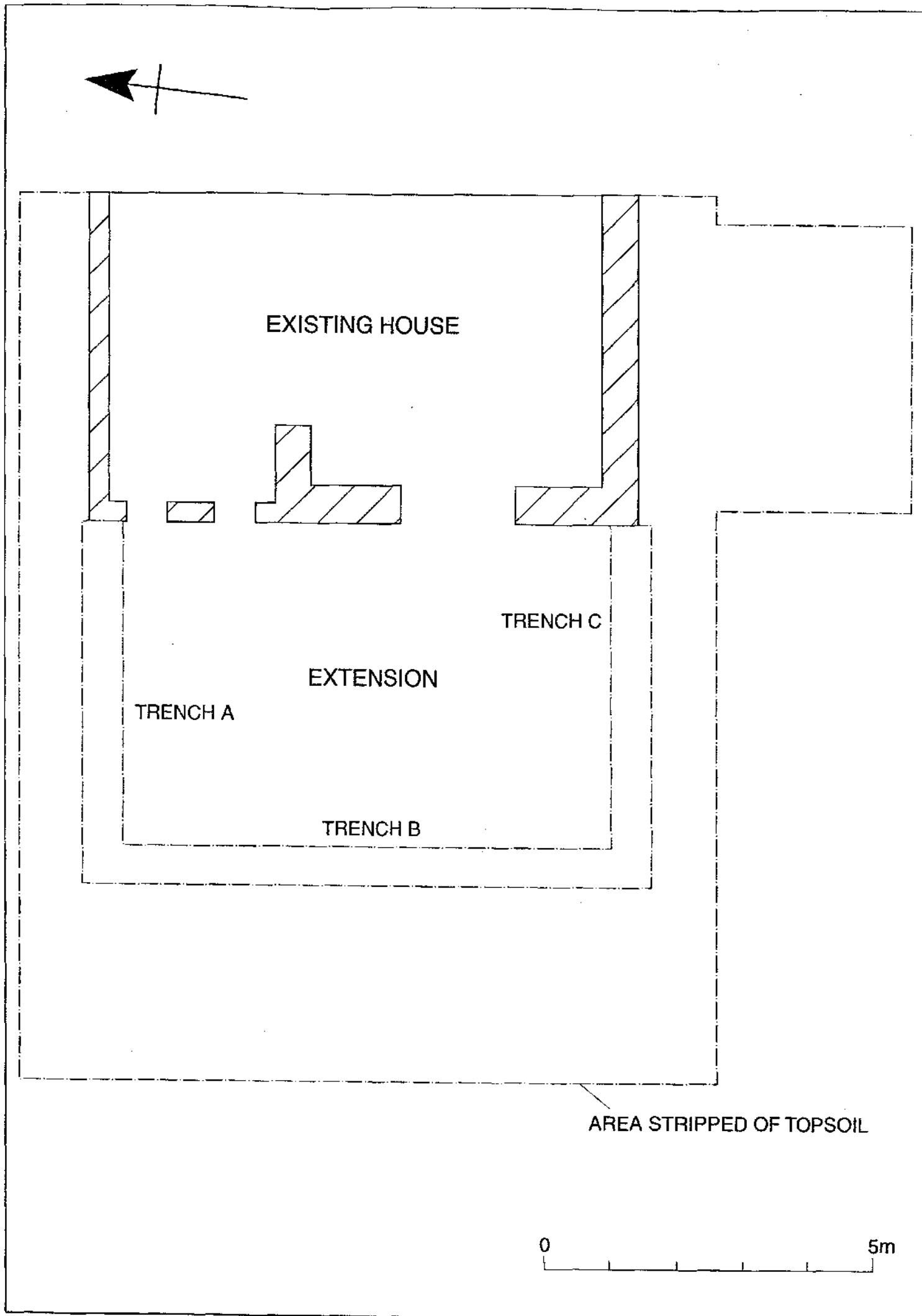


Fig.3



Plate 1



Plate 2

**BRIEF FOR AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF AT
THE COACH HOUSE, ASTWOOD LANE, HANBURY,
WORCESTERSHIRE.**

Planning Application reference: W98/1662

Archaeological Planning reference: WSM 814

Date: 3 February 1999

**All archaeological projects carried out in the County must fulfil the requirements set out in the
*Requirements and Guidelines for Archaeological Projects in the County of Worcestershire.***

This brief was prepared by:
Planning Advisory Section
County Archaeological Service
Worcestershire County Council
Tolladine Road
Worcester WR4 9NB

**Brief for an archaeological watching brief at
The Coach House, Astwood Lane, Hanbury,
Worcestershire.**

WSM 814

Definition

'An Archaeological Watching Brief is defined as a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non archaeological reasons within a specified area or site, where there is a possibility that archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed. The programme will result in the preparation of a report and ordered archive.' *IFA Standard and Guidance for Watching Briefs*

1 The site

The site is located at NGR SO 9532 6436 as shown on the attached plan. The planning application indicates that the site covers an area of 100 sq. m, and that the current land-use on the site is domestic curtilage (this has not been confirmed by a site visit).

2 Planning background

A planning application has been submitted to Wychavon District Council by Mr S Wearing (reference W/98/1662). The application proposes the construction of an extension.

The proposed development may affect an archaeological site registered on the County Sites and Monuments Record (reference WSM 814) as a site of archaeological interest (Statutory Instruments 1988 no 1813). In line with guidance given in Planning Policy Guidance Note 16, section 30, the Planning Authority has been advised that a programme of archaeological work is required, in this case taking the form of an archaeological watching brief. The watching brief is necessary to fulfil the aims of the County Structure Plan (Hereford and Worcester County Council 1993; policy CTC5) and the district local plan, Wychavon District Local Plan, 1993, policy CB18).

3 Archaeological background

The Coach House is situated within the site of an Iron Age hillfort. A recent evaluation near St Mary's Church revealed well preserved Iron Age deposits, including evidence for roundhouses. The defences of the hillfort can be traced as earthworks around most of the site. There is, however, a break in these defences that is likely to have occurred due to later landscaping (see attached plan). The proposed development lies within this gap and may possibly lie on the line of the defences or entrance works. It is understood that much of this area has been landscaped, however the potential for the identification of buried defences may still be quite high. Consequently any deposits disturbed may be of archaeological significance.

The above is not a documentary study as required by this brief.

4 Scope of the project

- Observation of all ground breaking activity.
 - A stratigraphic record of deposits exposed by groundworks must be made.
 - A record of the extent and depth of groundworks must be made.
 - A record of all finds and environmental material recovered must be made.
- Negative evidence must also be reported and its implications considered.
- If significant archaeology is observed the applicant must allow a period of up to but not exceeding one day of uninterrupted access to record archaeological deposits. This potential for delay should be built into the development programme.
- Primary and secondary documentary sources relating to the area should be consulted.

5 Research aims

An archaeological watching brief aims to establish the presence and significance of archaeological deposits, and of artefactual and ecofactual assemblages. The results should inform the research cycle and should take into account local, regional and national research frameworks.

Fulfilment of the research aims will be by the submission of a final report, in accordance with the IFA Code of Conduct, Principle 2.

6 Requirements

- The Code of Conduct of the Institute of Field Archaeologists will be followed.
- Fieldwork must be carried out in accordance with the *Requirements and Guidelines for Archaeological Projects in Worcestershire*. Copies are available from the Planning Advisory Section on request.
- Before the project commences a methods statement must be submitted to and approved by the Planning Advisory Section.
- The County Sites and Monuments Record must be consulted before fieldwork commences, and must be appropriately cited. A charge will be levied for this service.
- The project must include appropriate specialist provision.
- An assessment of the state of archaeological preservation and significance must be undertaken. Physical, artefactual and environmental aspects must all be considered.

- The landowner must be encouraged to deposit artefacts with a local or relevant specialist museum. This must have Museum and Galleries Commission approved storage facilities. Artefacts may only be deposited in accordance with the selected museum's collections policy.
- A written report must be produced and disseminated as part of the project.
- Within three months of completion of fieldwork one copy of the report must be submitted to the Planning Advisory Section and a second copy must be lodged with the County Sites and Monuments Record.
- The Planning Advisory Section of the County Archaeological Service must be invited to monitor the fieldwork.
- One week's notice shall be given to the Planning Advisory Section prior to commencement of fieldwork, unless otherwise agreed.

7 Disclaimer

- This brief has been prepared on the basis of information available through the County Sites and Monuments Record. If the Applicant has further information which may be relevant to the site they should contact the Planning Advisory Section as soon as possible.
- The Planning Advisory Section cannot accept responsibility for the following:
 - * notification of hazards, eg. services, contaminated ground
 - * obstacles to fieldwork
 - * access to the site
- It will be the responsibility of the contractor, any sub contractors and the applicant to establish safe working practices based on Construction Design and Management (regulations) and other current health and safety legislation.