



THE UNIVERSITY  
OF BIRMINGHAM

**No. 1 Redlands, Hartopp  
Road, Sutton Coldfield**

**An Archaeological  
Evaluation**

*Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit*



THE QUEEN'S  
ANNIVERSARY PRIZES  
FOR HIGHER AND FURTHER EDUCATION

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**No.1 Redlands, Hartopp Road, Sutton Coldfield  
An Archaeological Evaluation**

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## **No. 1 Redlands, Hartopp Road, Sutton Coldfield An Archaeological Evaluation**

### **1.0 Summary**

*An archaeological evaluation was carried out at 1 Hartopp Road, Four Oaks, Sutton Coldfield (NGR SP 110983), ahead of the proposed construction of a security fence and brick entrance walls. The site had been identified as being located within an area of known archaeological significance and development of the site was likely to affect below-ground archaeological remains of an icehouse (SMR 20146). It was hoped that archaeological evaluation would determine the location and survival of the icehouse so that the proposed development could avoid damaging any archaeological remains. However, two evaluation trenches located in north-western corner of the garden failed to locate the icehouse or any associated features.*

### **2.0 Introduction**

This report describes the results of an archaeological evaluation undertaken in the garden of 1 Hartopp Road, Four Oaks, Sutton Coldfield. The work was carried out by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit on behalf of Mr. A.G. Williams, ahead of a proposed construction of a security fence and brick entrance walls. The location of an icehouse on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition of the Ordnance Survey 25" map indicated the potential archaeological importance of this site. In accordance with government guidance and the City Council's planning policies there was, therefore, a requirement for archaeological evaluation in advance of development.

The archaeological evaluation was conducted in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists Standard and Guidance for Field Evaluation (Institute of Field Archaeologists 1999), a Design Brief prepared by Dr Michael Hodder (2000), Planning Archaeologist for Birmingham City Council and a Specification prepared by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (BUFAU 2000). This evaluation conformed to Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (Department of the Environment 1990).

### **3.0 Site Location and Description**

The site is centred on NGR SP 110983 (Fig. 1), on the south-eastern side of Hartopp Road, within the Four Oaks area of Sutton Coldfield. The site comprises a lawned garden, with several trees and is bounded by a holly hedge. A driveway extends from Hartopp Road, near to the supposed location of the icehouse, to the house, which is at the bottom of a slope.

### **4.0 Archaeological Background**

The 1<sup>st</sup> edition of the Ordnance Survey 25" map shows an icehouse (SMR 20146) located in what is now the north-western corner of the garden of No.1 Redlands, Hartopp Road. The icehouse belonged to Four Oaks Hall and was probably built in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The

icehouse had a passage leading to a domed storage chamber, which would have been partially underground. It is one of only five icehouses recorded on the Birmingham Sites and Monuments Record. Two trenches had to be excavated to allow for any inaccuracy of overlying the 1<sup>st</sup> edition and the modern Ordnance Survey maps. It was possible that the icehouse lay further to the east where Trench 1 was located.

## 5.0 Objectives

The objectives of this archaeological evaluation were to:

- establish the presence or absence of any archaeological deposits and features relating to the icehouse.
- define the nature, extent and significance of surviving deposits and features.
- provide information to allow the formulation of a mitigation scheme to avoid damaging the surviving remains.

## 6.0 Methodology

Two trenches were excavated (Fig. 2), one to the north-east of the driveway (Trench 1) and one, to the south-west of the driveway (Trench 2). Trench 1 measured 6.2m and was located as close as possible to the agreed trench position, but the existence of several trees were a constraining factor on the positioning. The location of Trench 2 was also affected by trees, but not to such a great extent. The south-eastern arm of Trench 2 measured 4.3m in length and was linked to the northern arm at the eastern end of the trench. This part measured 3.1m.

The overburden was removed by a JCB with a toothless ditching bucket, under archaeological supervision, to a depth of 1.1m in Trench 1 and 0.8m in Trench 2. Neither of the trenches revealed any archaeological deposits and they were cleaned by hand. Recording was carried out using pre-printed *pro-forma* record cards for contexts, supplemented by plans (at 1:20 and 1:50), sections (at 1:20), monochrome print and colour print photography.

Backfilling of the trenches was carried out using a JCB and under archaeological supervision. Care was taken at all times to keep disturbance of the garden to a minimum.

## 7.0 Results

### Trench 1 (Fig. 3)

Trench 1 was located to the east of the drive and was excavated on a north-east to south-west alignment, it was 6.2m in length and was stepped due to the presence of trees. It was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.1m.

Trench 1 was excavated to the natural soil (1002), which was an orange to mid-brown sand-clay-silt. The depth of this layer varied; at the south-western end of the trench it

was recorded at 0.18m below the ground surface, whereas in the middle it reached a depth of 0.88m below the surface. Overlying this was a black-dark brown sand-silt-clay (1003), in which 19<sup>th</sup>-century brick, roof-tile and a bottle were found. Above 1003 was 1001, a mixed layer of topsoil and redeposited natural, brown-orange in colour, with substantial root disturbance. This layer reached a maximum thickness of 0.26m and was only seen in the middle of the section. A layer of topsoil (1000) was recorded overlying the whole section, in which a sherd of very coarse sandy greyware, possibly of medieval date was found.

### Trench 2 (Fig. 3)

Trench 2 was located to the west of the drive and was excavated with two 'arms' to avoid destroying a garden shrub. The northern arm was 3.1m in length and the southern arm was 4.3m, which reached a maximum depth of 0.8m.

Trench 2 was excavated to a layer of orange sand and gravel (2004), which was the natural, this was found to slope steeply to the south-east. Overlying this was a layer of black clayey silt (2003), which was difficult to excavate in places due to the presence of some large tree roots. This layer may represent a former turf-line, which had been subsequently buried by redeposited natural. Two different deposits overlay 2003, which appeared to be slumped layers of redeposited natural. Approximately 2m from the north-eastern end of Trench 2 was (2001), a layer of dark orange-brown clayey silt with tree root disturbance. Slumped over this layer was (2002), a pinkish orange clayey sand-gravel. Topsoil (2000) approximately 0.14m in depth overlay 2001 and 2002.

### **8.0 The Finds by Annette Hancocks**

A small quantity of material was recovered from the evaluation. A total of four finds was recovered from Trench 1 (1003). These finds comprised a single rectangular ceramic building brick, a brown glass Schweppes bottle, a fragment and a complete flat roof-tile. All of these finds were of 19<sup>th</sup>-century date.

A further, large manufactured ceramic brick lining was recovered from Trench 2 (2000). The exact function of this remains unknown, but it appears to be some sort of collar or support.

In addition, a single sherd of very coarse sandy greyware, possibly of medieval date was recovered from the topsoil of Trench 1.

### **9.0 Discussion and Implications**

The two evaluation trenches failed to locate the icehouse shown on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map. This does not mean that the icehouse no longer exists. It could be that the correlation between early and modern Ordnance Survey maps is slightly inaccurate and that the icehouse is under Hartopp Road or under the drive of No. 1

Redlands, or in fact to the south-west of Trench 2. Inaccuracies in early maps are not uncommon.

It is also possible that the icehouse was dismantled, but had it been located in the two excavated trenches, it is very likely that traces of it would have been discovered.

### **10.0 Acknowledgements**

The evaluation was carried out by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit on behalf of Mr. A.G. Williams. We are grateful to Dr. Mike Hodder, Birmingham City Council's Planning Archaeologist for his advice and guidance and to Mr. A.G. Williams, Mr. P. Sutton and Mr. D. Hayes for their co-operation and assistance throughout the project. Work on site was carried out by John Halsted and Charlotte Neilson. The report was written by Charlotte Neilson, with contributions by Annette Hancocks and illustrations by John Halsted. It was edited by Catharine Mould. The project was managed by Catharine Mould.

### **11.0 References**

BUFAU 2000 *1, Hartopp Road, Four Oaks, Sutton Coldfield. Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Investigations.*

Hodder, M. 2000 *1, Hartopp Road, Sutton Coldfield: Remains of Icehouse (SP 110983; SMR 20146). Brief for Archaeological Field Evaluation as Part of Proposals for Security Gates and Boundary Wall.*

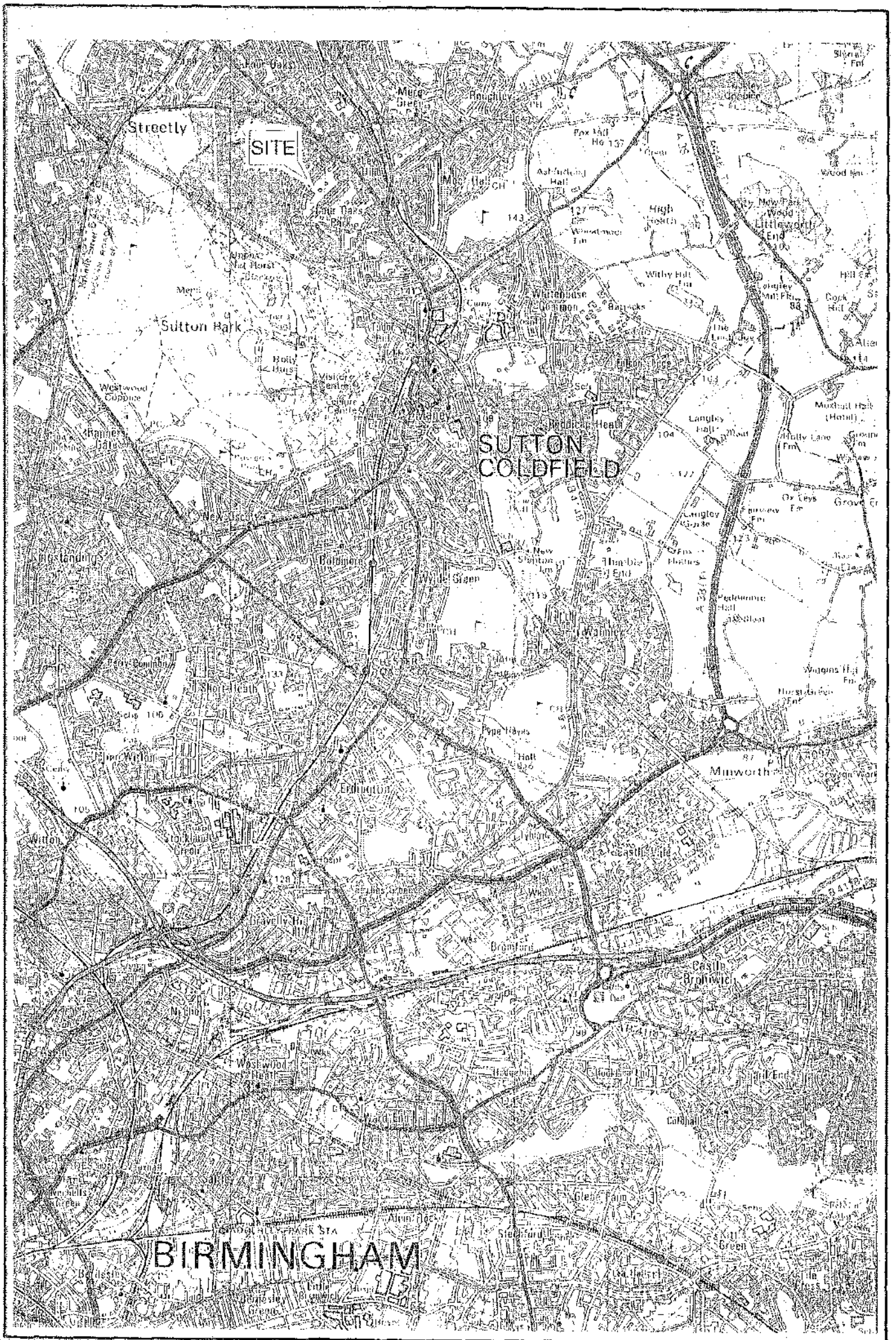


Fig. 1



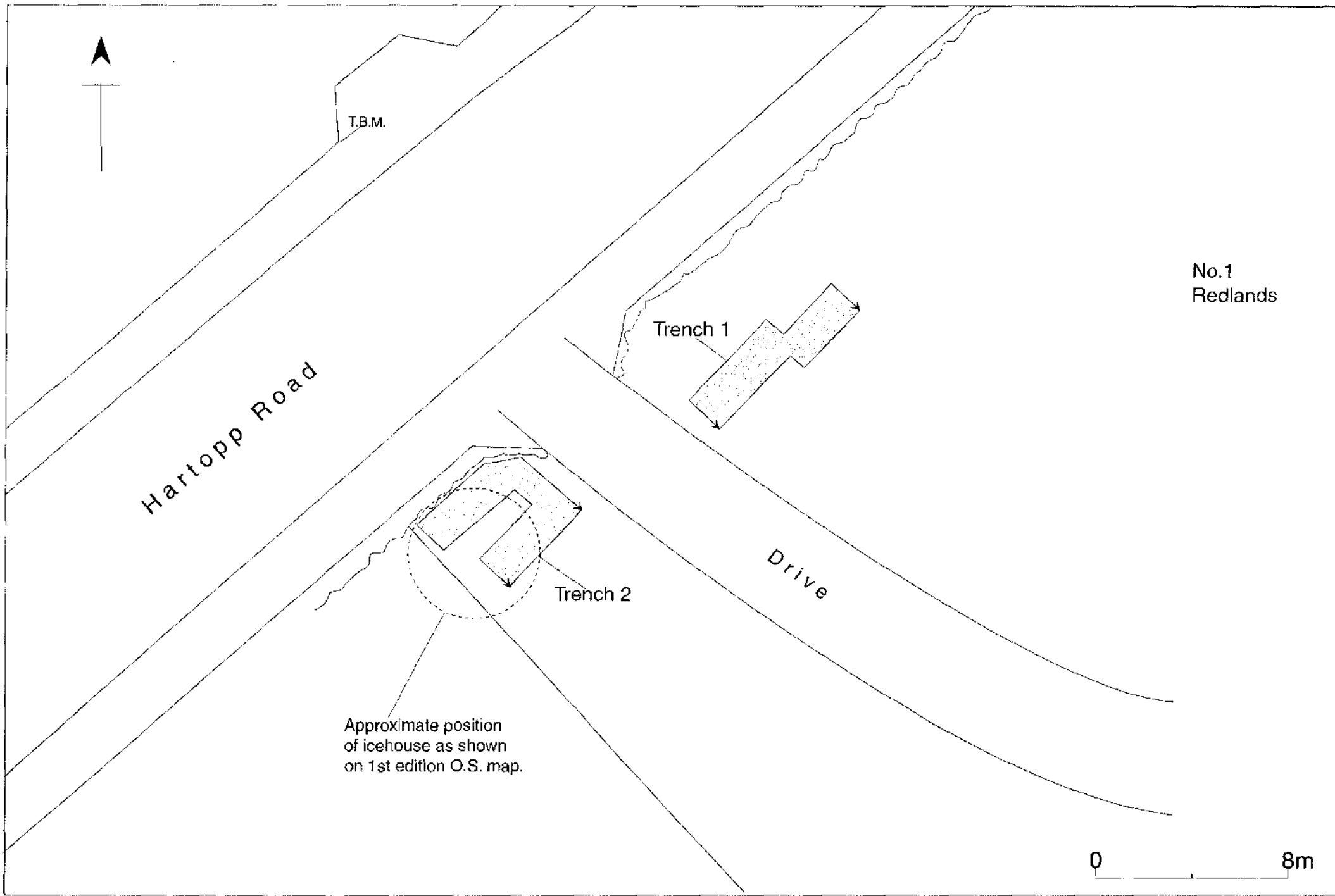


Fig.2

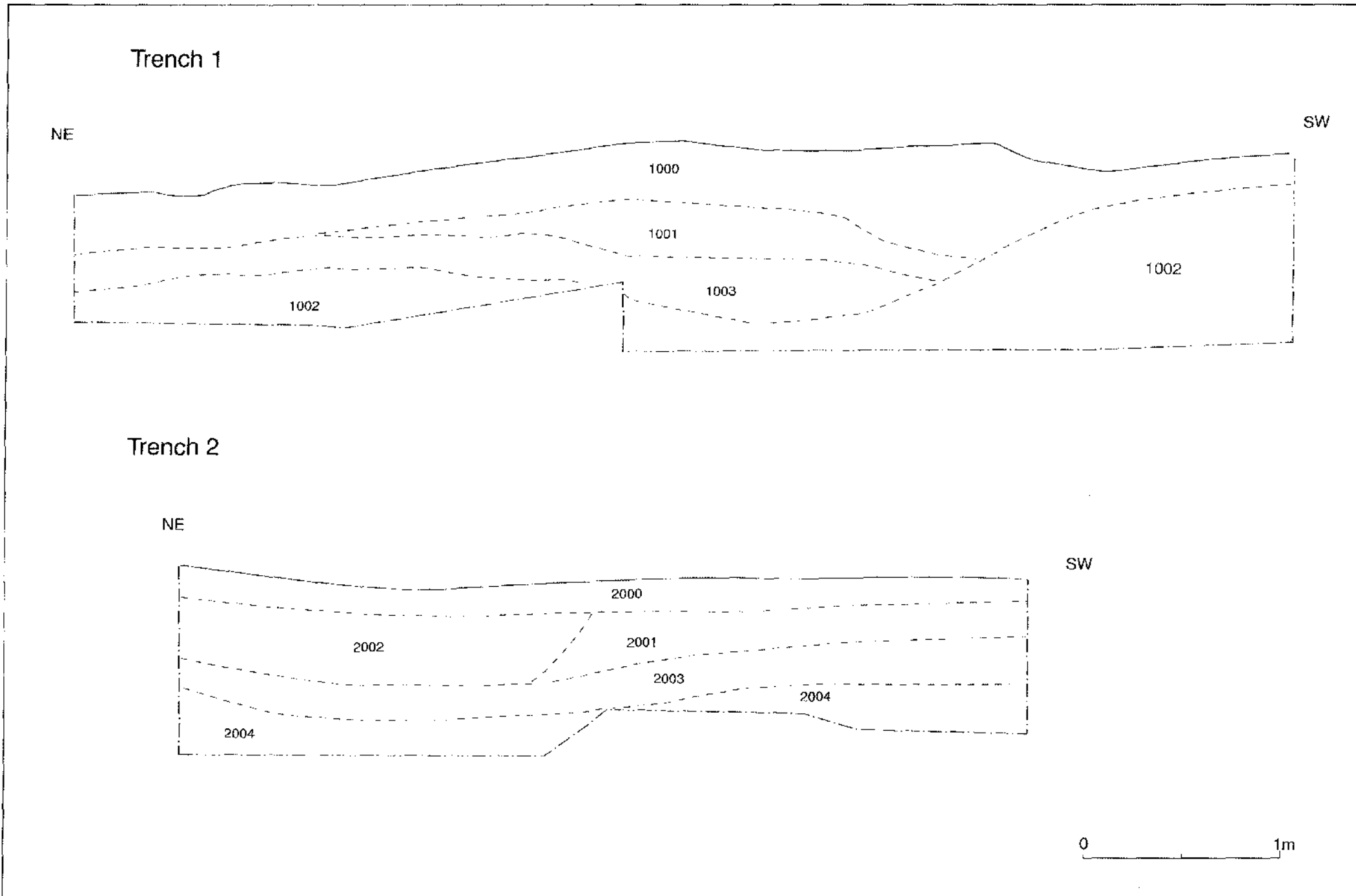


Fig.3

