

**An Archaeological Watching
Brief at
Fladbury C of E First School,
Fladbury,
Worcestershire**

Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit
Project No. 793
July 2001

**An Archaeological Watching Brief at
Fladbury C of E First School,
Church Street,
Fladbury,
Worcestershire**

NGR SO 9955 4534

Site Code: WSM30518

by

Laurence Jones

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>

An Archaeological Watching Brief at Fladbury C of E First School, Church Street, Fladbury, Worcestershire

Contents

1.0	Summary.....	1
2.0	Introduction.....	1
3.0	Site location and description.....	1
4.0	Archaeological background.....	1
5.0	Aims.....	2
6.0	Method.....	2
7.0	Results.....	3
8.0	Finds.....	4
9.0	Discussion.....	4
10.0	Acknowledgements.....	4
11.0	References.....	4

List of Figures (at end of report)

Fig. 1: Location plan

Fig. 2: Location of development site with SMR reference nos.

Fig. 3: Plan of foundation trenches monitored

Fig. 4: Sections of foundation trenches and test pit

An Archaeological Watching Brief at Fladbury C of E First School, Church Street, Fladbury, Worcestershire (WSM 30518)

1.0 Summary

An archaeological watching brief was carried out at Fladbury Church of England First School, Church Street, Fladbury, Worcestershire (NGR SO 9955 4534) by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit during groundworks for the construction of a single storey brick link building. The watching brief was commissioned by E. G. Carter and Co. Ltd, building contractors, and was carried out between April and May 2001. The development is situated in the historic core of the village in close proximity to a site known to contain archaeological features dating from the Bronze Age to the Anglo-Saxon period, and including a Romano-British cemetery. The purpose of the watching brief was to obtain a record of any surviving archaeological deposits uncovered during the groundworks. Two linear ditches aligned northwest-southeast were recorded, but no datable finds were recovered from them. No other significant archaeological features or deposits were observed.

2.0 Introduction

An archaeological watching brief was carried out by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (BUFAU) at Fladbury C of E First School, Church Street, Fladbury, Worcestershire (NGR SO 9955 4534), between 12th April and 2nd May 2001. The watching brief was commissioned by E. G. Carter and Co. Ltd, building contractors and carried out during groundworks for the construction of a single storey brick link building. It was carried out in accordance with a specification prepared by BUFAU (BUFAU 2001) and approved by the Planning Advisory Section, Worcestershire Archaeological Service, Worcestershire County Council.

The watching brief was required as a condition of planning permission by Worcestershire County Council (Planning Application Reference W/00/312) in order to comply with Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 and Worcestershire County Council archaeological policy.

3.0 Site location and description

The site is located at Church Street, Fladbury (NGR SO 9955 4534, Fig. 1) on the west bank of the River Avon at 26m above Ordnance Datum. The current land use of the site is as a school. The underlying geology is river terrace sands and gravels.

4.0 Archaeological background (Fig. 2)

The site lies within the historic core of the village of Fladbury, which contains important evidence of Neolithic, Bronze Age, Romano-British, Anglo-Saxon and Medieval settlement. The Worcestershire Sites and Monuments Record records the existence of a number of significant archaeological sites. Evidence of archaeological

activity dates from the prehistoric period including a find of worked flints of possible Palaeolithic date found close to the Old Rectory (WSM 07823, Smith 1953). An archaeological evaluation at the Recreation Ground, Station Road revealed three Neolithic or early Bronze Age postholes (WSM 26910, Cook and Buteux 1998). Immediately to the north of the development site several pits of Bronze Age date and a large 'V'-shaped ditch of late prehistoric date, were uncovered during the construction of an extension to the Working Mens Club (WSM 07822, Peacock 1967).

A Romano-British cemetery containing ten inhumations was also revealed close to the Working Mens Club as well as a find of a 2nd century A.D. vessel near to the Rectory (WSM 07822). An archaeological watching brief at Chequers Lane recorded a Roman-British ditch containing 2nd century A.D. pottery and other probable Romano-British features (WSM 27102, Deeks 1999).

A large Anglo-Saxon sunken floored building containing a circular oven and a posthole structure was also uncovered during the extension to the Working Mens Club (WSM 7819, Peacock 1967). An Anglo-Saxon saucer brooch dated to the 6th century was discovered at Churchlands allotments (WSM 07306, Bond 1975). A human skeleton thought to be of Anglo-Saxon date was discovered on a building site at the Chantry, but no dating evidence was recovered (WSM 7307, Bond 1975). There is documentary evidence in a late 7th century A.D. charter for the re-establishment of a 'monastery' at Fladbury (WSM 07820, not illustrated, Cook and Buteux 1998). Fladbury became the property of the Bishop of Worcester between A.D. 798 and 821 and it has been suggested that the Bishop may have had a palace here.

The site is also close to the Medieval St John the Baptist's Church (WSM 02699) within the Medieval village (WSM 22790, not illustrated).

The development site appears to be depicted as small parcel of land, probably a garden on the First Edition OS map.

5.0 Aims

The objective of the archaeological watching brief, as stated in the specification (BUFAU 2001) was to obtain a record of any surviving archaeological deposits and features uncovered during groundworks associated with the construction of the link building and to recover any artefactual evidence and environmental material.

6.0 Method

All groundworks, including surface stripping, excavation of foundation trenches and service trenches were monitored and recorded by a qualified archaeologist. This was complemented by salvage recording of any archaeological deposits and features revealed by contractors groundworks. Any artefacts were recovered, recorded, washed and marked.

All stratigraphic sequences were recorded, even where no archaeology was present. Contextual information was supplemented by scale drawings, plans, sections and photographs which, together with any recovered artefacts, form the site archive. Features were assigned unique numbers from F1 onwards. Contexts were assigned unique numbers from 1000 onwards, except where layers were recognised as being the same in different foundation trenches.

Subject to the approval of the landowner the site archive will be deposited with an appropriate repository within a reasonable time, after the completion of the project.

7.0 Results (Figs. 3 and 4)

An area of former tarmac playground, approximately 5m x 9m, between the two existing buildings was stripped by machine to a depth of 0.60-0.70m below the present ground surface (Fig. 4, Section 2). Much of this area was disturbed by modern service trenches. In the south part of this area a brick floor (F3) was revealed at 0.70m below the present ground surface, extending to the southeast beyond the edge of excavations and truncated by a service trench to the west. The floor was 5m wide and made of blue and red bricks (1006). Overlying floor F3 was a 0.65m thick layer of brick demolition rubble (1005). To the north and west of F3, was a layer of dark brown sandy loam (1001), at least 0.30m deep, containing brick fragments. Above layer 1001 was a modern layer of crushed brick rubble and sand (1000), 0.40m deep. All these contexts were sealed by tarmac. Excavation did not reach the natural subsoil in this area, except in a test-pit.

In the northeast corner of this area the building contractors excavated a test pit 2m x 2m and 1.40m deep (Fig. 4, Section 5). A ridge of natural sand (1004) was visible at the base of the test pit between two negative features (F1 and F2), probably linear ditches, extending beyond the edges of the test pit. Ditches F1 and F2 appeared to be aligned northwest-southeast and were at a depth of 0.90m below the modern ground surface. Ditch F1 was at least 1.20m wide and 0.45m deep and was filled with greenish grey sandy silty clay (1002) containing tiny fragments of animal bone. Ditch F2 cut ditch F1 and was on a similar alignment, at least 1.2m wide and 0.50m deep. It was filled with a dark greenish grey sandy silty clay (1003) containing tiny fragments of animal bone. Layer 1001, 0.45m thick, sealed the two ditches F1 and F2. This was sealed by layer 1000.

In a foundation trench to the northwest (Fig. 4, Section 1) natural sand and gravel (1004) was revealed at the north end of the trench at a depth of 0.55m, below the modern ground surface. This was cut by an east-west aligned ditch (F4) at least 5.5m wide, with its south side truncated by a modern service trench. Excavation by the contractors revealed ditch F4 to be 2.0m deep. It was filled with dark brown sandy loam (1001) containing brick fragments and forming a layer, 0.30m deep, at the north end of the trench. This fill layer was overlain by a modern layer of crushed brick rubble and sand (1000), 0.20m deep, covered by slabs.

The southwest arm of this trench was excavated to a depth of 0.60-1.10m below the present ground surface (Fig.4, Sections 2 and 3). The earliest deposit here was a brown sandy silt (1008), at least 0.50m deep, containing a sherd of 19th century

pottery. This was sealed by a brown clayey silty sand with gravel (1007), at least 0.55m deep. Layer 1007 was overlain by a dark brown sandy loam (1001), 0.20m-0.40m deep. This was sealed by a modern layer of crushed brick rubble and sand (1000), 0.40m deep, which was sealed by tarmac. The natural subsoil was not recorded in this area.

8.0 Finds

Only finds of recent date were recovered.

9.0 Discussion

No datable archaeological remains were detected. The two undated possible parallel ditches, F1 and F2, recorded in a contractors test pit could possibly be related to prehistoric, Romano-British or Anglo-Saxon archaeological features excavated at the site of the Working Mens Club immediately to the north of the development site. The natural sand and gravel subsoil appears to have been sealed in places by deep deposits of probable Post-Medieval cultivation or garden soils. There was evidence of a large Post-Medieval ditch (F4) and the floor of a demolished 19th century brick outbuilding possibly associated with the school. The site was also extensively disturbed by modern service trenches.

10.0 Acknowledgements

The watching brief was carried out by Laurence Jones, Roy Krackowicz and Chris Patrick. The illustrations were prepared by Nigel Dodds and the report was edited by Alex Jones. The project was managed by Laurence Jones.

11.0 References

- Bond, C.J. 1975. Two recent Saxon discoveries in Fladbury, *Vale of Evesham Hist Soc Rep*, V, 17-24.
- BUFAU 2001. *Fladbury C of E First School, Church Street, Fladbury Worcestershire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*.
- Cook, M. and Buteux V. 1998 *Evaluation of Land at the Sports Ground, Station Road, Fladbury*. Worcestershire Archaeological Service, report no. 658, unpublished.
- Dceks, A. 1999 *Watching brief at 'Ferndale', Fladbury*. Worcestershire Archaeological Service, report no. 744, unpublished.
- Peacock, D. 1967 Fladbury. *Current Archaeology*, 1, 5, 123-4.

Smith, C. N. S. 1953 Two Romano-British Sites in *Trans. Worcs. Arch. Soc.*, **30**, 81-82.

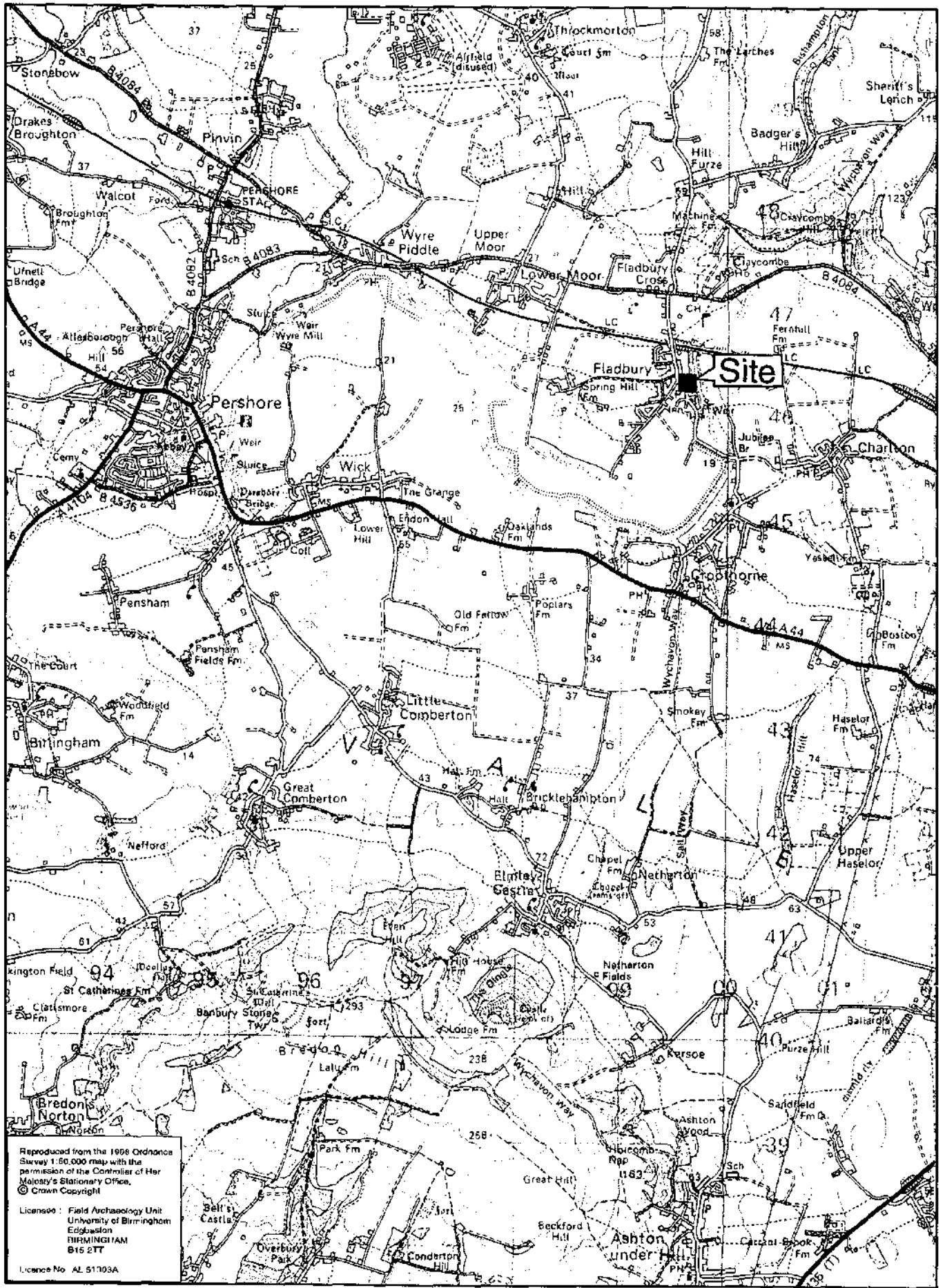
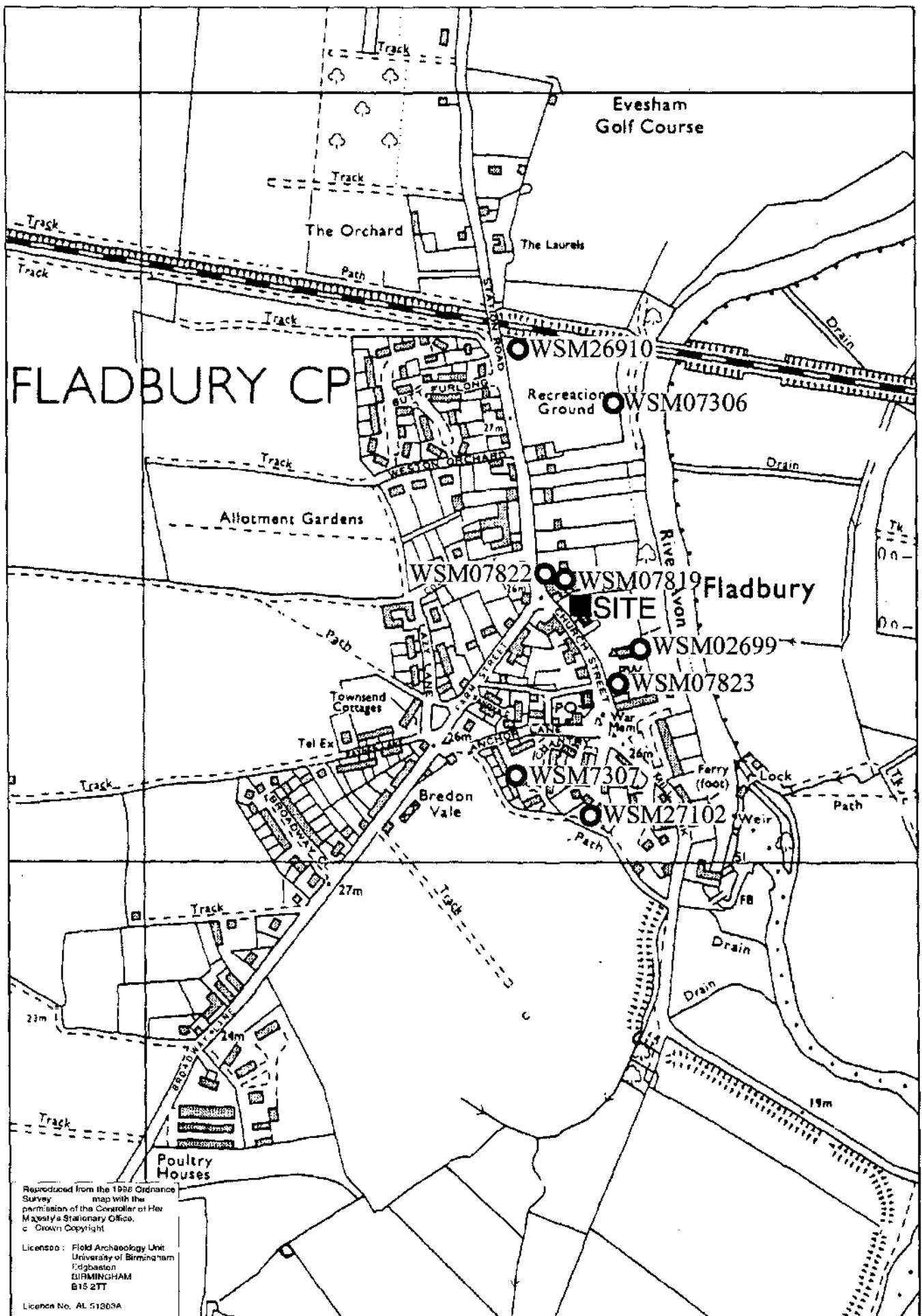


Fig.1



Reproduced from the 1988 Ordnance Survey map with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office. © Crown Copyright

Licensed to: Field Archaeology Unit
University of Birmingham
Edgbaston
BIRMINGHAM
B15 2TT

Licence No. AL 51805A

Fig.2

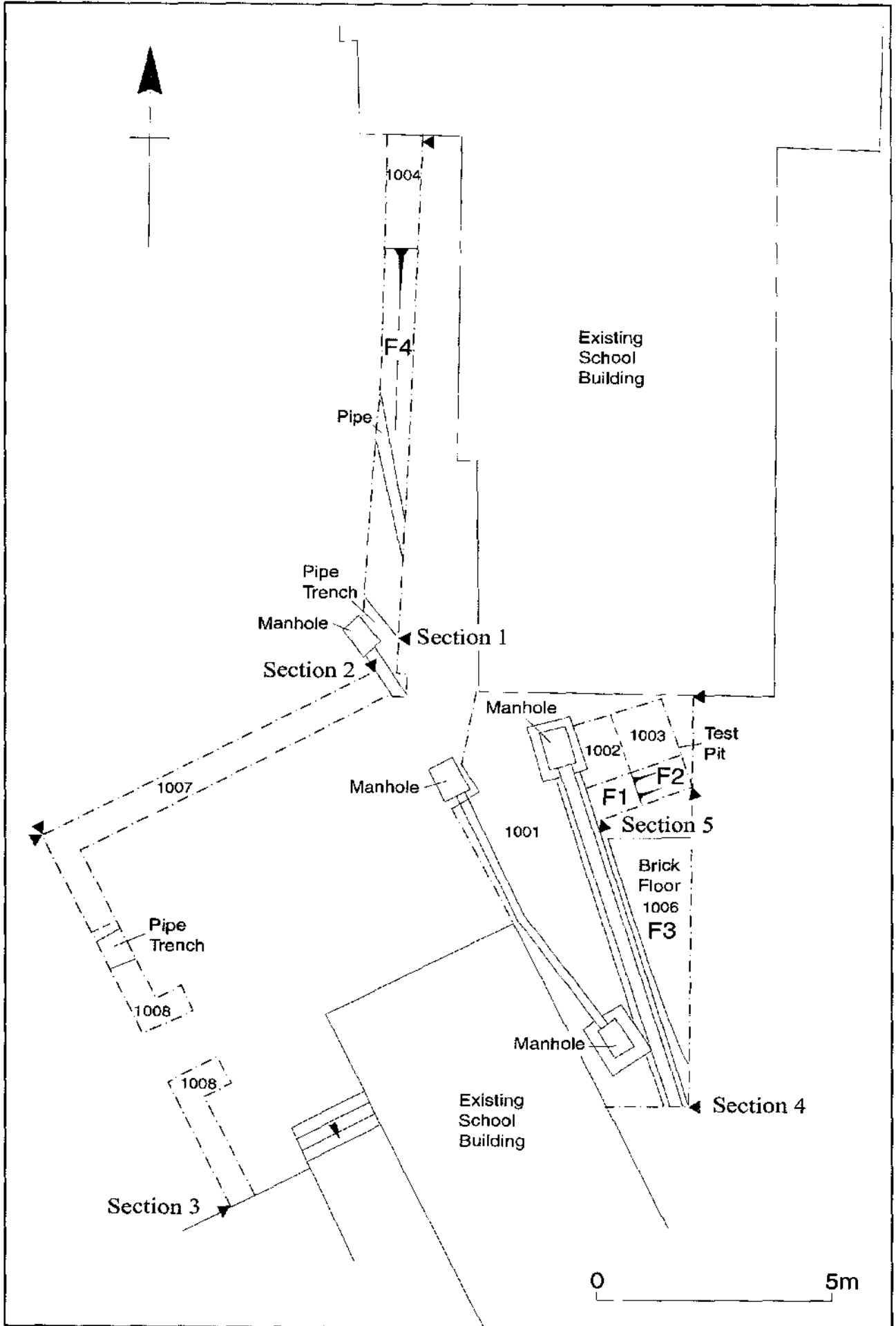


Fig.3

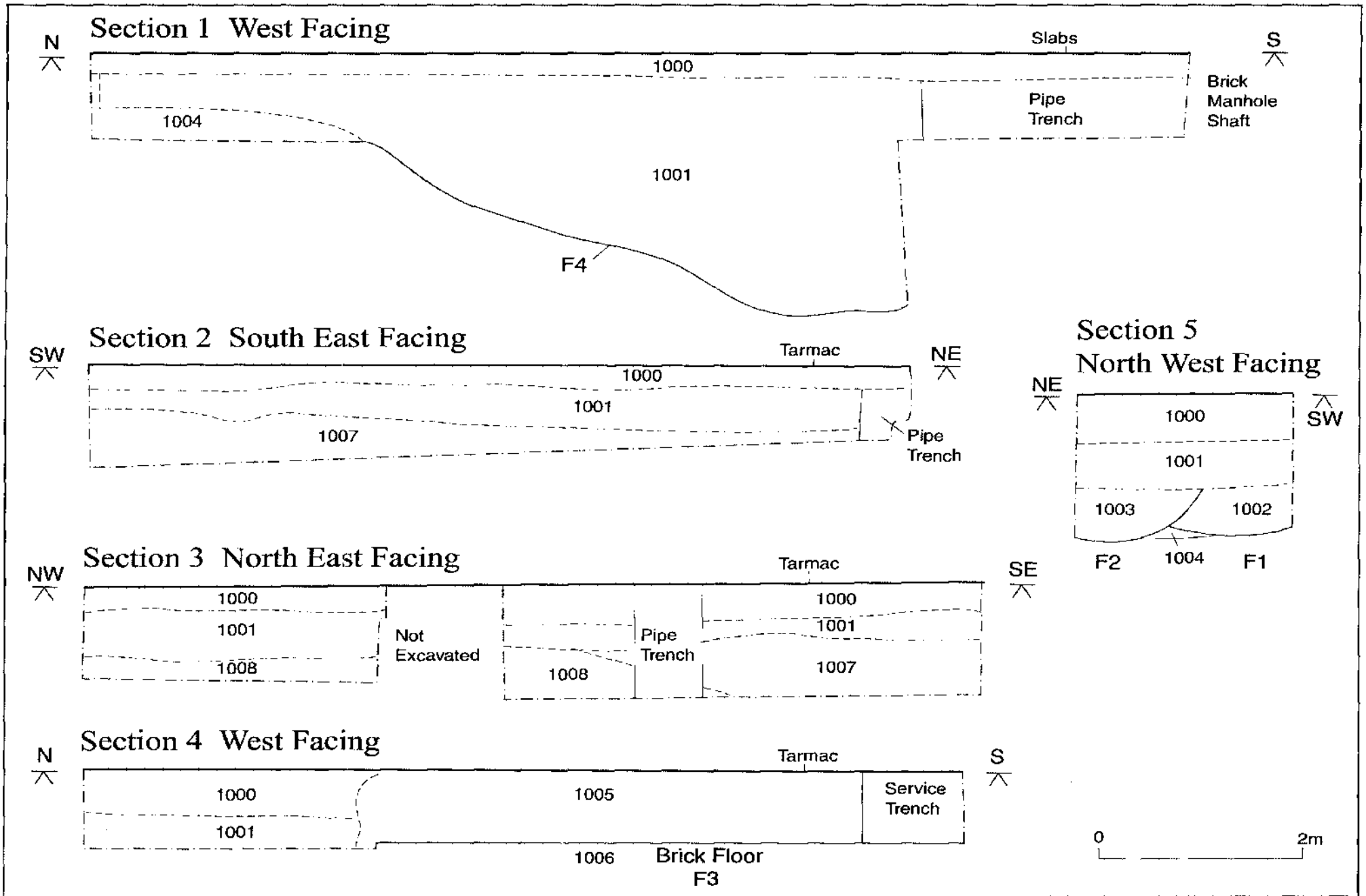


Fig.4