

**53-55 Hill Village Road,
Sutton Coldfield,
Birmingham.**

**Archaeological observation and
recording 2001**

Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit
Project No. 844
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53-55 Hill Village Road, Sutton Coldfield, Birmingham
Archaeological observation and recording
2001

by
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53-55 Hill Village Road, Sutton Coldfield

Archaeological observation and recording

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1.0 Summary

Archaeological observation and recording was carried out at 53-55 Hill Village Road, Sutton Coldfield, Birmingham (NGR SP 114 993, planning application N/00812/01/FUL) during groundworks for the construction of new apartments.

A series of site inspections was carried out in October 2001 during groundworks. Remains of a cellar, a well and a brick-lined pit were observed and recorded. All were constructed from bricks dated to the Victorian period. No other archaeological deposits were located.

2.0 Introduction (Fig. 1)

This report describes the results of archaeological observation and recording carried out during demolition of existing dwellings and the construction of apartments, with access and landscaping, at 53-55 Hill Village Road, Sutton Coldfield, Birmingham (NGR SP 114 993, planning application N/00812/01/FUL). The fieldwork was carried out by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit on behalf of Tweeds Construction Consultancy.

The site lies on the western side of Hill Village Road. Prior to redevelopment it was occupied by two houses and their outbuildings and gardens.

The observation and recording was carried out in accordance with a Design Brief prepared by Dr Michael Hodder, Planning Archaeologist for Birmingham City Council (Hodder 2001). The guidelines set down in the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (Institute of Field Archaeologists 1999) were followed.

3.0 Historical and Archaeological Background

A summary of existing archaeological knowledge relating to the village of Hill is provided in Hodder (2001): 'the village of Hill extended along both sides of Hill Village Road. Its extent in the 18th and 19th centuries is shown on historic maps. This is likely to correspond to the extent of the settlement of Hill mentioned in medieval documents. The first reference to Hill is in 1153. The medieval village, like its successors, would have consisted of dwellings along the Hill Village Road frontage, in crofts extending back from the frontage. Hill had three open fields associated with it. In addition to the evidence for medieval activity, a Roman pottery kiln has been found to the east of Hill Village Road, in Sherifoot Lane'.

4.0 Aims and Methodology

The aims of the observation and recording were to provide a record of any archaeological deposits or features which might be present below the modern ground surface, and to provide an understanding of the history and significance of the archaeology as a whole.

The aims were achieved by a series of visits to the site in October 2001, whilst the principal groundworks were being undertaken. No hand excavation was undertaken, except for the cleaning of exposed deposits in plan and section, for better definition. A full record of all stratigraphic sequences, supplemented by scale drawings, was made. Stratigraphy was recorded using pro-forma context and feature record cards. Plans, sections and photographs form the site archive, and are currently stored at Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit.

5.0 Archaeological Results (Fig. 2)

Topsoil was stripped from the site, and the three standing buildings were demolished. After demolition of the house in the northeast corner of the site, a barrel-roofed structure (F102) was recorded. This appeared to be a series of cellar walls, which were below the level of the demolished building. The structure measured approximately 3m in length, 1.2m in width and 1m in depth. To the southwest of F102 a brick well (F101) was discovered, 1.1m in diameter and 6m in depth. The feature was dry and had been capped with concrete just below the level of the demolished building. On the eastern side of the site a small brick lined feature (F100) was observed and recorded during the excavation of footings for the new apartments. The feature was circular and measured 2.2m in diameter and 0.75m in depth. It had a stone base, and a cut for its construction could be seen through the natural. Several pieces of modern tile were recorded under the stone base. All the features were constructed using bricks from the Victorian period (Litherland, *pers. comm.*). A depression was recorded to the west of the demolished buildings, although this could not be dated. No features were recorded in the southern area of the site, although this area was lower than the northern part of the site, and may have previously been landscaped.

Subsequent to the main groundworks, two storm soakaways, each 2.1m in diameter, were excavated. These were not observed by an archaeologist, but were reported to be excavated through 'virgin ground, sand and rock' (Squires, *pers. comm.*).

6.0 Discussion

The three features recorded on the site were of Post-medieval date and were probably associated with buildings on the site prior to the recently demolished buildings. The depression west of the demolished buildings appeared to be a sunken garden feature associated with the recently demolished buildings. It is likely that any archaeology associated with the medieval settlement of Hill will have been destroyed by the construction of these buildings. No archaeology was recorded in the south side of the

site, but this area appeared to already have been landscaped. It is possible, though unlikely, that there is archaeological survival at a greater depth than that excavated; if so it was not disturbed by the groundwork programme.

7.0 References

Hodder, M. 2001 *53-55 Hill Village Road, Sutton Coldfield. Brief for Archaeological Observation and Recording.*

8.0 Acknowledgements

The project was sponsored by Tweeds Construction Consultancy. The watching brief was carried out by Kate Bain for Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit. The report was written by Josh Williams, illustrated by Mark Breedon and edited by Simon Buteux.

Appendix : Design Brief

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**BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING DEPARTMENT**

Application number N/00812/01/FUL

53-55 Hill Village Road, Sutton Coldfield (SP114 993; PRN 20640)

Brief for archaeological observation and recording during development as a condition of planning permission

1. Summary

Development at Hill Village Road may expose and disturb below-ground archaeological remains, including remains of medieval and post-medieval buildings and other features. This brief is for archaeological observation and recording of any archaeological features exposed by the development.

2. Site location and description

The site lies on the western side of Hill Village Road. It is currently occupied by two houses and their outbuildings and gardens.

3. Planning background

Application no. N/00812/01/FUL is for demolition of the existing dwellings and construction of apartments with landscaping and access. The site is within the medieval village of Hill. Planning permission has therefore been granted on condition that archaeological observation and recording be carried out during development, at the applicant's expense.

4. Existing archaeological information

The village of Hill extended along both sides of Hill Village Road. Its extent in the 18th and 19th centuries is shown on historic maps. This is likely to correspond to the extent of the settlement of Hill mentioned in medieval documents. The first reference to Hill is in 1153. The medieval village like its successors would have consisted of dwellings along the Hill Village Road frontage, in crofts extending back from the frontage. Hill had three open fields associated with it. In addition to the evidence for medieval activity, a Roman pottery kiln has been found to the east of Hill Village Road, in Sherfoot Lane.

5. Requirements for work

The development site may contain below-ground archaeological remains of medieval and post-medieval dwellings and other features which would be affected by the proposed development. In accordance with Policy 8.36 of the Council's Unitary Development Plan and, government advice in Planning Policy Guidance Note 16, Archaeology and Planning, archaeological observation and recording is required during development.

6. Stages of work

An appropriately skilled and qualified archaeologist is to be on site to observe all groundworks for the development, including topsoil stripping, foundation trenches, access and services. Any archaeological features exposed are to be

recorded by written description, drawing and photography. No archaeological excavation is to be undertaken other than cleaning exposed deposits for better definition. Adequate time is to be allowed for observation and recording to take place. Finds are to be retrieved as they are revealed during groundworks or cleaning. Finds are to be cleaned, marked and bagged and any remedial conservation work undertaken.

7. Staffing

The archaeological observation and recording is to be carried out in accordance with the Code of Conduct, Standards, Guidelines and practices of the Institute of Field Archaeologists, and all staff are to be suitably qualified and experienced for their roles in the project. It is recommended that the project be under the direct supervision of a Member or Associate Member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists.

8. Written Scheme of Investigation

Potential contractors should present a Written Scheme of Investigation which details methods and staffing. It is recommended that the proposal be submitted to the City Council's Planning Archaeologist before a contractor is commissioned, to ensure that it meets the requirements of this brief.

9. Monitoring

The archaeological observation and recording must be carried out to the satisfaction of the Chief Planning Officer, Birmingham City Council, and will be monitored on his behalf by the Planning Archaeologist.

10. Reporting

The results of the archaeological observation and recording are to be presented as a written report, containing appropriate illustrations. A copy must be sent to the Planning Archaeologist.

11. Archive deposition

The written, drawn and photographic records of the archaeological observation and recording, together with any finds, must be deposited with an appropriate repository within a reasonable time of completion, following consultation with the Planning Archaeologist.

12. Publication

The written report will become publicly accessible, as part of the Birmingham Sites and Monuments Record, within six months of completion. The contractor must submit a short summary report for inclusion in *West Midlands Archaeology* and appropriate period journals.

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

Date prepared: 25 June 2001

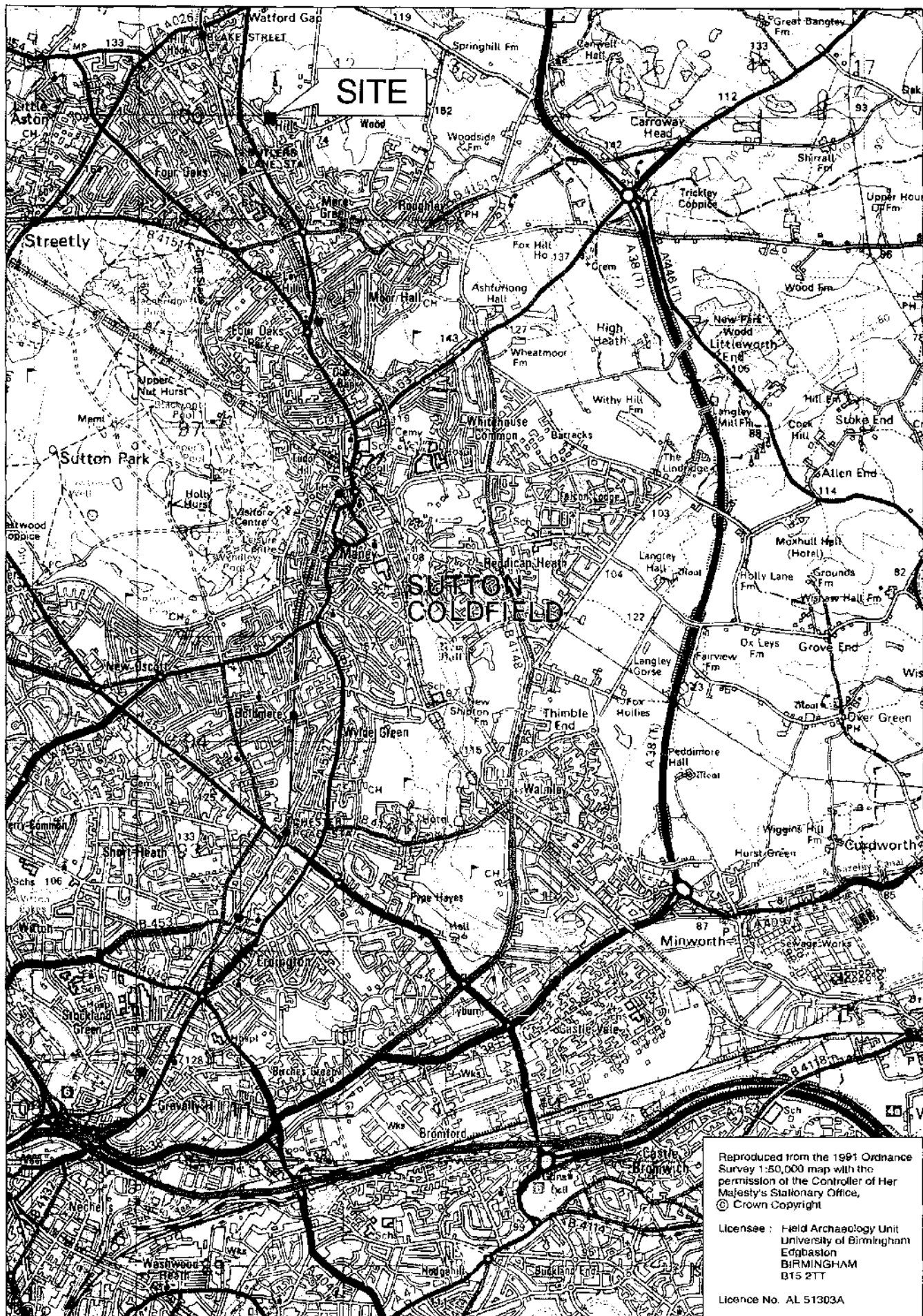


Fig.1

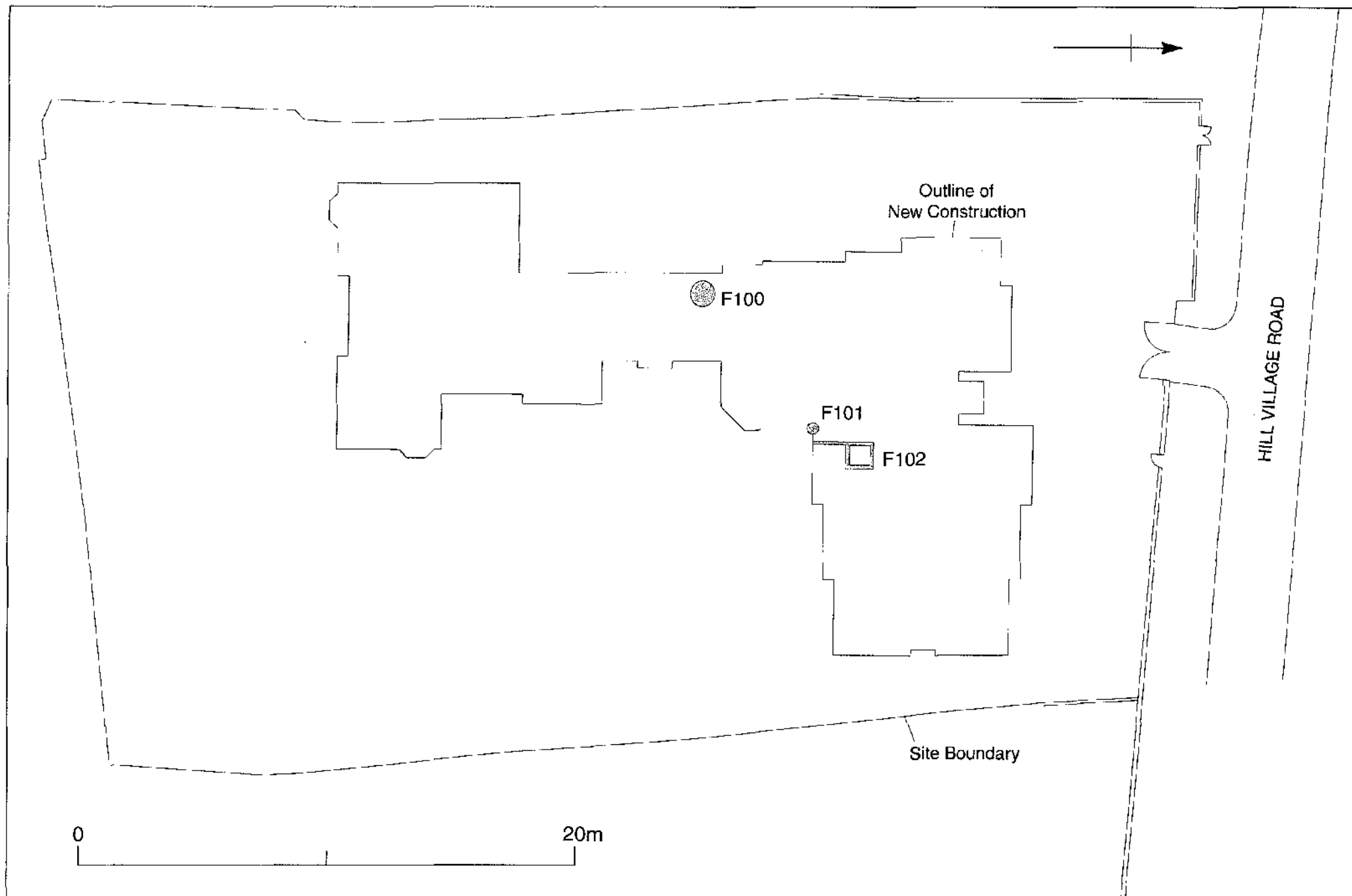


Fig.2